

## Higher Tremarcoombe Pipewell and Toyz Pond Restoration Breeding Bird Survey 2013

Introduction In 2011 I carried out a bird survey to establish a record of bird species inhabiting the project area. The object of this survey was to establish a reference datum prior to the commencement of restoration work on the Pipewell and Toyz Pond plus the attempted eradication of Himalayan Balsam.

Then in 2012 a survey was undertaken to record the impact of restoration work on the on the bird population density and the variety of species.

Now, in 2013, with the restoration work completed, a survey was made to discover if the restored areas had made any difference to the previously recorded bird observations. As in previous years the British Trust for Ornithology's (BTO) Territory Mapping method was again used. During the breeding season territories can be ascertained by conspicuous bird song, display and periodic disputes with neighbours. These territories are revealed on the maps by a series of clusters. Additionally this method can identify nesting, feeding and fledged young.

Observations of birds and their activities are recorded on the maps using a code system. These codes are shown below and the Symbols for Bird Activities may be found in the 2011 report

Standard bird mapping codes This list relates to all birds recorded over 3 surveys (2011-2013)

B - Blackbird*	CH – Chaffinch*	R - Robin*
WR – Wren*	WP – Woodpigeon*	CD – Collared Dove*
CC – Chiffchaff*	GT – Great Tit*	BT – Blue Tit*
ST – Song Thrush*	D - Dunnock	BC – Black Cap*
WW – Willow Warbler*	JD – Jackdaw*	HS – House Sparrow*
GO – Gold Finch*	MG – Magpie*	SD – Stock Dove ✓
C - Carrion Crow	PW – Pied Wagtail✓	LT – Long Tailed Tit*
GR – Greenfinch✓	BZ - Buzzard✓	J - Jay*
BF – Bullfinch*	CT – Coal Tit–	GW - Garden Warbler✓
GC – Goldcrest*	SK – Siskin–	RN - Raven–
SL - Swallow–	MA – Mallard*	SG - Starling✓
RW - Redwing✓	RO - Rook–	M - Mistle Thrush✓
SH - Sparrowhawk✓	GS – Great Spotted Woodpecker✓	HM – House Martin*

Overall Total = 39

On this survey a total of 34 different bird species were recorded; a further increase on the 2011 and 2012 recordings of 29 and 31 respectively. This year 24 species were identified as holding breeding territories ( indicated by \* above). Ten species did not indicate positive breeding activity (✓ above). A dash– indicates no sightings in 2013 of species that were recorded in the two previous years.

The main feature of the 2013 survey was a very long cold spring. Migrant birds such as Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler were first recorded 3-4 weeks later than in 2011 and 2012. Resident birds delayed nesting activity. Most surprising was the recording of Redwing on Visit A. These birds would normally have been well on their way migrating back to their breeding grounds in Scandanavia! However , it was encouraging to note an increase in species diversity. Notably the arrival of a pair of Mallards on Toyz Pond. Due to the unusual climatic conditions, I intend to carry out a further survey in 2014. Hopefully the spring weather will be more normal. Also the area around the perimeter of the pond will have developed further with plant growth.

I suggest that restoration work measures are continued. Light activity on clearing Himalayan Balsam can be carried out from August. Then in Autumn and Winter periods undertake more extensive and rigorous clearance and maintenance.

Considering the area surveyed is not large – indeed it is quite small; it was good to have recorded a total of 24 different species showing signs of breeding. However, may I suggest a further management activity that could improve upon the diversity and number of bird species in the surveyed area. What was noticeable was sparsity of ground vegetation in parts of the wooded area. The tree canopy needs to be opened slightly to allow in more light to facilitate the growth of ground cover. This measure will increase wildlife diversity.

Bob Stockhausen – September 2013.