

SURVEY OF BIRD SPECIES, 2001 - INKBERROW MILLENNIUM GREEN

Last year I tried to do a count of the bird species heard and seen around the Millennium Green up to the end of September, and an estimate of the numbers present within each species. I made a chart of all the birds identified, giving approximate numbers as far as I could estimate. Sadly, because of the limited access to the site I have not been able to continue the survey this year. The important months for recording numbers are March, April and May, and it wasn't until June that regular access was possible again. By this time most bird activity had diminished, so it's not possible to make any comparison of numbers with last year.

I continued to walk the lane adjacent to the site throughout the spring, and have made some notes on the bird population in general.

As last year, the most vocal birds were robins, wrens, blackbirds, woodpigeon and tits. The chiff chaff was singing very early, and there appeared to be a number of different birds singing across the area. By the end of April, the chiff chaff was the most common call heard.

In June, when I was able to resume regular walks, I heard both a garden warbler and a willow warbler on several occasions. Both of these birds are a first for me in the Millennium Green area, but others may have heard them before. The blackcap was also present, and singing for most of the summer.

At the end of June I was lucky enough to see a pair of Great Spotted Woodpeckers in a tall ash tree close to the border with Gaby Allison's field.

I wasn't able to keep a reliable count of the mallards and moorhens on the moat. There were two mallard ducks, with broods at roughly the same time, but I believe that a brood early in the year was lost. The moorhens didn't do too well, and I think only one chick survived. I wonder if the principal predator was a heron, who certainly accounted for all of the moorhen chicks on Gaby's lake.

Three species in particular struck me as being in high numbers, and this not just in the area of the Millennium Green, but generally around the village. Robins were very numerous, so that on walks I had hardly left the territory of one singing bird before I entered the next. Greenfinches were around in great numbers, and very noisy, and most surprising of all, there were large flocks of Goldfinches around all through the summer. They are usually more noticeable in winter, but this summer they could be heard and seen almost everywhere you looked. I even saw numbers of them in the trees when I was in the car park in Alcester.

The green woodpecker is still much in evidence, but I don't know where or if it nested this year.

I also regularly sighted a sparrowhawk, and in early September saw a young bird. It would be interesting to know if anyone in the village knows where they nested.

✓

✓

A bird notable for its decline is the cuckoo. I heard one in the very early morning on just two occasions early in April. These birds were passing through, and not heard again, and for the first time in the 20 years I've lived here, I heard no cuckoos anywhere in the village throughout the summer. The BTO issued a warning about the decline in cuckoo numbers in their Spring Bulletin, and the reasons for this are not clear. It is possibly related to a decline in the numbers of host birds, such as reed warbler and dunnock, but there is no clear answer at present.

There also seemed to be even fewer starlings around than last year. There was a noisy gang of 30 or so that occupied various roosting sites throughout the village last year, but I have not noticed them around so far this year.

If anyone has any records to add to this very general picture, then please let me know.

Judith Chamberlayne

3 Buzzards over site

1 Raven - passing over site
(early in year)

grey wagtail by moat Oct.

* Do butterfly report for next adv. mtg.

✓