



SECOS GARDEN BIRD SURVEY FOR OCTOBER 2008 TO MARCH 2009

The Survey Recorders

In this survey the number of registered participants was fifty-five. In the 2008 part of the survey records were received from fifty-two, with fifty-one received for the second session in 2009. The number of contributors remained substantially the same as in the last survey, with five new recorders joining and five previous contributors not continuing. Six survey members are not members of SECOS, one less than last year. Again the level of support is most encouraging and a big thank-you is extended to all contributors new and old.

Table 1 below lists the people who recorded for this survey together with their registration number. Please note your number for the next survey.

Table 1

<u>Reg. No.</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Reg. No.</u>	<u>Name</u>
8501	Hilary Clowes	8731	John P. Barker
8502	Bryan Perkins	0432	Avril Watkins
9703	John & Wendy Smith	0333	Alan Robson
9704	Janet Grice	0334	Bill Bellamy
8505	David & Elaine Meakin	9635	Ron & Doreen Jones
0406	Glyn Jones	9636	Geoff Yarwood
0107	Christine Howarth	0237	Derek Leigh
0208	Stan Wildig	0838	Richard Howells
0409	Marie Turner	0639	Chris Parry
0610	Andy Firth	0240	Cynthia Cadman
8511	Alan & Joan Soper	0341	Howard Nixon
0612	Alan Straw	0342	Brian Sankey
9813	John Thompson	0343	John Fuller
9814	Colin Lythgoe	0844	Dave O'Hara
0316	Paul & Margaret Harvey	0645	Julie Cartlidge
8518	Ann Pym	0347	Sylvia Jarvis
0119	George & Barbara Fisher	0548	Anne & Chris Furness
9820	Bill & Betty Brookes	0849	Howard and Phyllis Yates
9921	Barbara Hubbard	0851	Tony Dickenson
0522	David Braithwaite	0552	Lillian Shufflebotham
9923	Janet & Peter Roberts	0853	David Bromont
0024	Derek Owen	0754	Brian Burke
0026	Charles Hull	0556	Bill & Jan Fox
0227	Andrew Bailey	0757	Gordon and Valerie Squire
0128	Gordon Fleet & Kath Conroy	0758	Brian & Susan Plowright
0430	John Goulding	0759	Rachel Minshull

The Cumulative (All Time) Bird Species List

Since the beginning of SECOS Garden Bird Surveys in 1985, seventy-six different species of birds have now been recorded as listed in *Table 2* below in alphabetical order. No additional species were recorded this year

Table 2

<u>No.</u>	<u>Bird Species</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Bird Species</u>
1	Black-headed Gull	3	Blackcap
2	Blackbird	4	Blue Tit

Table 2 (continued)

No.	Bird Species	No.	Bird Species
5	Brambling	41	Mallard
6	Bullfinch	42	Marsh/ Willow Tit
7	Buzzard	43	Meadow Pipit
8	Chaffinch	44	Merlin
9	Chiffchaff	45	Mistle Thrush
10	Coal Tit	46	Moorhen
11	Collared Dove	47	Mute Swan
12	Common Gull	48	Nuthatch
13	Corn Bunting	49	Pheasant
14	Crow	50	Pied Wagtail
15	Duncock	51	Raven
16	Feral Pigeon	52	Red-headed Bunting
17	Fieldfare	53	Red-legged Partridge
18	Garden Warbler	54	Redpoll (Lesser)
19	Goldcrest	55	Redwing
20	Goldfinch	56	Reed Bunting
21	Great Spotted Woodpecker	57	Ring-necked Parakeet
22	Great Tit	58	Robin
23	Green Woodpecker	59	Rook
24	Greenfinch	60	Siskin
25	Grey Heron	61	Skylark
26	Grey Wagtail	62	Snipe
27	Herring Gull	63	Song Thrush
28	House Martin	64	Sparrowhawk
29	House Sparrow	65	Starling
30	Jackdaw	66	Stock Dove
31	Jay	67	Swallow
32	Kestrel	68	Tawny Owl
33	Kingfisher	69	Tree Sparrow
34	Lapwing	70	Treecreeper
35	Lesser Black-backed Gull	71	Water Rail
36	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	72	Willow Warbler
37	Linnet	73	Woodcock
38	Little Owl	74	Wood Pigeon
39	Long-tailed Tit	75	Wren
40	Magpie	76	Yellowhammer

The Current Survey

Fifty-two participants producing bird records over a period of twenty-six weeks could produce a maximum of 1352 bird/week records (52x26 =1352). Due to people being not available to record at various times, for reasons like holidays and sickness, the actual number of bird/week records produced was reduced by 80 to a very creditable 1272.

The “Listed Species”

In *Table 3* below the species entered on the “listed species” section of the input forms “A1” & “A2” are listed in descending order of number of bird/week record occurrences, as a measure of their commonality within this survey.

Also shown in the table is the number of gardens visited, the highest single count recorded for each species and the registration number of the member(s) who recorded the highest count.

Table 3 – ‘Ranking of Listed Species’

Rank No.	Species	Number of Bird/Week Records (Out of 1272)	Number of Gardens Visited (Out of 52)	Highest Single Count	
				Count	Reg. No.
1 [1]	Blackbird	1230 [1227]	52 [52]	16	9923 & 0237
2 [4]	Wood Pigeon	1129 [1104]	51 [52]	27	0639
3 [3]	Blue Tit	1123 [1134]	52 [52]	20	0612
4 [2]	Robin	1118 [1146]	52 [52]	4	#1
5 [5]	House Sparrow	1039 [999]	47 [47]	45	0759
6 [10]	Dunnock	992 [847]	49 [51]	6	0430
7 [8]	Collared Dove	903 [886]	49 [50]	11	0341
8 [7]	Starling	872 [928]	48 [51]	350	0430
9 [6]	Great Tit	852 [937]	50 [50]	20	0612
10 [9]	Chaffinch	836 [853]	48 [46]	17	8518
11 [11]	Coal Tit	832 [688]	51 [49]	10	0548
12 [15]	Goldfinch	674 [547]	48 [45]	21	8505 & 0610
13 [12]	Magpie	652 [624]	45 [46]	7	0639
14 [13]	Greenfinch	623 [603]	42 [41]	25	0612
15 [14]	Wren	553 [577]	47 [48]	10	0612
16 [16]	Long-tailed Tit	515 [371]	46 [42]	20	#2
17 [17]	Nuthatch	343 [292]	36 [29]	3	0612
18 [20]	Crow	315 [269]	31 [30]	11	0548
19 [18]	Song Thrush	281 [288]	40 [43]	3	0347
20 [19]	Jackdaw	241 [281]	19 [26]	34	0334
21 [21]	Pied Wagtail	153 [121]	31 [19]	3	0208
22 [22]	Sparrowhawk	119 [86]	34 [26]	2	#3

[] Denotes the corresponding ranking or count in the previous survey for comparison.

(See *Table 1* for correlation of registration No. to members’ names.)

#1 (Robin) - Joint equal count of 4 from four members, registration Nos. 9923, 0026, 0430 & 9635

#2 (Long-tailed tit) - Joint equal count of 20 from three members, registration Nos. 0208, 0347 & 0754

#3 (Sparrowhawk) - Joint equal count of 2 from three members, registration Nos. 0208, 9636 & 0639

As with the last survey, rankings within the table were little changed from the previous survey. Three species, blackbird, blue tit, and robin had a presence in every garden of the survey, with woodpigeon present in all but one garden.

The same species occupied the top ten list with minor juxtapositions in order.

Dunnocks progressed from tenth to sixth, with an increased record count approaching twenty per cent.

Great tit records declined by about ten per cent.

Since 2001, woodpigeons have leapt from eleventh in the ranking to second, although even in 2001 they had a presence in most gardens, but were far less common.

Pied wagtails appeared in far more gardens than in the previous survey, thus increasing their count record.

Eighteen contributors from the total of fifty-two recorded the highest or joint highest count for at least one bird species. One member recorded the highest count for five species, two members for three species and two members for two species.

The “Other Species”

In *Table 4* below the species entered on the “Other Species” section of the input forms “A1” & “A2” are listed in descending order of number of bird/week record occurrences, as a measure of their commonality within this survey. A further thirty-one species were recorded, giving a total number of fifty-three species recorded in this year’s survey {last survey fifty-four} from the seventy-six in the “all-time” list (*Table 2*). Any species recorded in the last survey, but not recorded in this survey, are included for reference.

Table 4 – ‘Ranking of Other Species’

<u>Rank No.</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Number of Bird/Week Records (Out of 636)</u>	<u>Number of Gardens Visited (Out of 52)</u>
1 [1]	Great Spotted Woodpecker	192 [177]	23 [21]
2 [3]	Bullfinch	135 [118]	15 [19]
3 [2]	Siskin	120 [141]	21 [24]
4 [4]	Goldcrest	113 [112]	23 [19]
5 [7]	Mistle Thrush	90 [86]	17 [15]
6 [6]	Pheasant	80 [87]	6 [6]
7 [18]	Blackcap	72 [24]	16 [10]
8 [5]	Jay	57 [94]	11 [12]
8 [13]	Fieldfare	57 [26]	13 [5]
10 [9]	Tree Sparrow	56 [52]	5 [10]
11 [20]	Lesser Redpoll	52 [15]	12 [4]
12 [8]	Rook	50 [62]	8 [6]
13 [15]	Black Headed Gull	46 [25]	8 [7]
14 [22]	Treecreeper	40 [13]	15 [6]
15 [19]	Tawny Owl	39 [23]	4 [5]
15 [25]	Brambling	39 [7]	8 [5]
17 [11]	Mallard	37 [36]	7 [6]
18 [10]	Redwing	36 [42]	10 [11]
19 [12]	Stock Dove	32 [32]	2 [3]
20 [15]	Grey Wagtail	30 [25]	13 [7]
21 [21]	Grey Heron	15 [14]	6 [6]
22 [15]	Reed Bunting	12 [25]	4 [5]
23 [23]	Kestrel	9 [11]	4 [2]
24 [*]	Marsh/Willow Tit	7 [0]	2 [0]
25 [26]	Buzzard	6 [6]	3 [5]
26 [27]	Red-legged Partridge	4 [5]	1 [1]
27 [27]	Chiffchaff	3 [5]	2 [4]
28 [13]	Feral Pigeon	2 [26]	1 [1]
28 [29]	Yellow Hammer	2 [3]	1 [2]
30 [24]	Moorhen	1 [10]	1 [4]
30 [32]	Willow Warbler	1 [1]	1 [1]
30 [*]	Common Gull	1 [0]	1 [0]
30 [*]	Lesser Black-backed Gull	1 [0]	1 [0]
[29]	Little Owl	0 [3]	0 [1]
[31]	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	0 [2]	0 [3]

[] Denotes corresponding figures to the previous {2007/08} survey for comparison

[*] Denotes did not appear in the previous survey.

The “Other Species.”

Records of lesser black-backed gull and common gull had a small presence in this survey, having been absent from the last.

Marsh tits visited two gardens, producing seven records in total. None was present in the last survey.

Lesser spotted woodpecker and little owl were recorded in the last survey, but not this time.

Blackcap records multiplied by a factor of three from fifty per cent more gardens..

Twice as many fieldfares were recorded in this survey when compared to the last survey, with redwings staying substantially the same.

Siskins continued to have a good presence.

More than twice as many goldcrests were recorded, with more gardens visited.

Lesser redpolls were far more widespread, visiting three times more gardens resulting in three times more records than in the last survey

Treecreeper records also increased threefold from more than twice as many gardens..

Bramblings visited more gardens with five times more records

Grey wagtails visited twice as many gardens.

Once more, great spotted woodpecker records retained last year’s position of being the most common bird of the “Other Species” table.

The garden reporting the highest number of different species in this survey was that of member No. 0026 with thirty-eight, closely followed by member No. 0556 with thirty-seven.

News from the Comments Column (Section “B1” &”B2” of the input forms)

A number of members reported first time specie records for their garden. Amongst those mentioned were brambling, bullfinch, goldcrest, grey wagtail, fieldfare and redpoll.

A rope-style nest box often used as a wren roost was seen to house ten.

Nijer seed was generally the seed of choice for goldfinch, redpoll and siskin.

Sunflower hearts seemed to provide a similar attraction for blackcap, chaffinch, nuthatch and robin. Bullfinch also found them attractive.

Fatballs attracted crows, blackcaps and black-headed gulls.

A tawny owl roosted on a chimney cowl and was attacked by a jay and a mistle thrush.

Another tawny owl appeared to be flushed from a tree by a brave goldcrest.

Sparrowhawks attacked blackcap, goldfinch and blackbird successfully. The blackcap was persistently chased within a bush before capture and the blackbird was carried from the scene for remote processing. Unsuccessful attacks on chaffinch and coal tit gained a mention.

Chaffinches once more were reported to have a fungal infection on their legs.

One member was more than usually appreciative of bad weather, because it reduced cat intrusion whilst a bout of rheumatism limited activity in his throwing shoulder.

The same member also offered a new collective noun for a group of long-tailed tits – a “flickering.”

As usual there were numerous reports of over-flying buzzards and opportunist herons visiting garden ponds containing fish.

Immediate benefits from moving home were reported by member No. 9923 in that more bird species were recorded in the new garden in the first twelve months than were recorded in twenty-six years for the old.

Finally another member designated his bungalow roof as a ‘large’ feeding table, using it to attract gulls and crows to offerings of bread.

Weather Conditions

Table 5 provides a brief overview of weather conditions for the twenty-six week survey period, which, as usual, is provided courtesy of John Barker's detailed records.

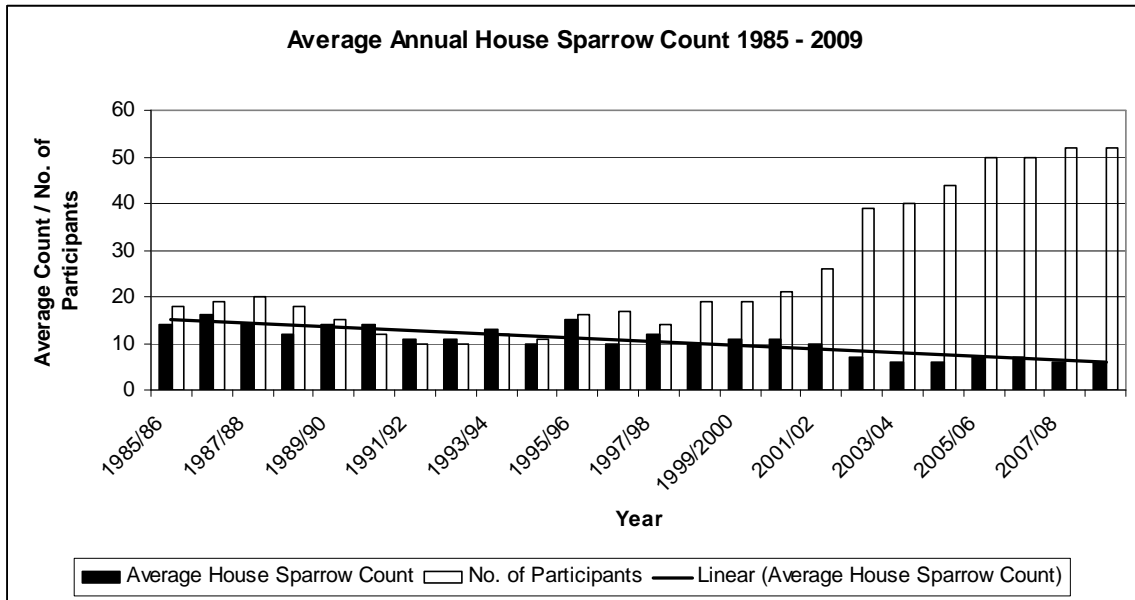
Table 5 – Weather Summary

<u>Week No.</u>	<u>Number of Days</u>			<u>Inches of Rain</u>	<u>Temp. °F</u>		<u>Wind</u>		<u>One Word Notes</u>
	<u>Sunny Periods</u>	<u>Frost Snow Sleet</u>	<u>Wet cloudy</u>		<u>Max</u>	<u>Min</u>	<u>Direction</u>	<u>Strength</u>	
1	0	0	4	0.76	65	34	SE/ NW/SW	Strong	Mixed
2	0	0	6	0.74	64	38	SW-NW	Light	Mixed
3	3	0	3	0.3	60	37	SW-NW	Moderate	Cloudy
4	2	6F	6	1.55	52	25	SW/NE	Light	Colder
5	0	0	4	0.52	54	34	NE/ SW	Light	Cloudy
6	0	0	6	0.95	56	34	SW-NW	Light	Cloudy
7	0	1F	4	0.23	50	27	SW-NW	Light	Cloudy
8	2	1F	3	0.50	50	25	NW - SW	Light	Mixed
9	3	7F1S	4	0.75	44	17	W-N	Light	Frosty
10	3	7F	4	1.27	43	20	NW	Light	Frosty
11	2	4F	6	0.47	49	24	NW	Light	Cloudy
12	1	2F	1	0.05	50	20	NW	Light	Variable
13	0	7F	0	0.00	37	19	NE	Light	Cloudy
14	7	7F1S	2	0.20	38	16	E/SE	Light	Sunny
15	0	2F	7	0.93	47	28	SW	Fresh	Wetter
16	0	7F	7	0.80	41	27	SW	Light	Frosty
17	0	3F1S	5	0.69	38	29	SW	Light	Cloudy
18	0	7F1S	5	0.39	39	22	SE/NW	Light	Frosty
19	1	7F	6	0.59	43	24	NW	Light	Frosty
20	0	1F	2	0.05	48	28	NW	Calm	Cloudy
21	0	0	3	0.04	50	34	NW	Light	Cloudy
22	0	6F1S	5	0.27	55	24	NW-SW	Blustery	Rain
23	0	1F1S	6	0.48	56	30	NW	Blustery	Cloudy
24	6	2F	0	0.00	59	30	NW-SE	Fresh	Sunny
25	0	1F	6	0.46	52	25	NW	Strong	Windy
26	5	1F	1	0.12	66	25	NW	Light	Sunny

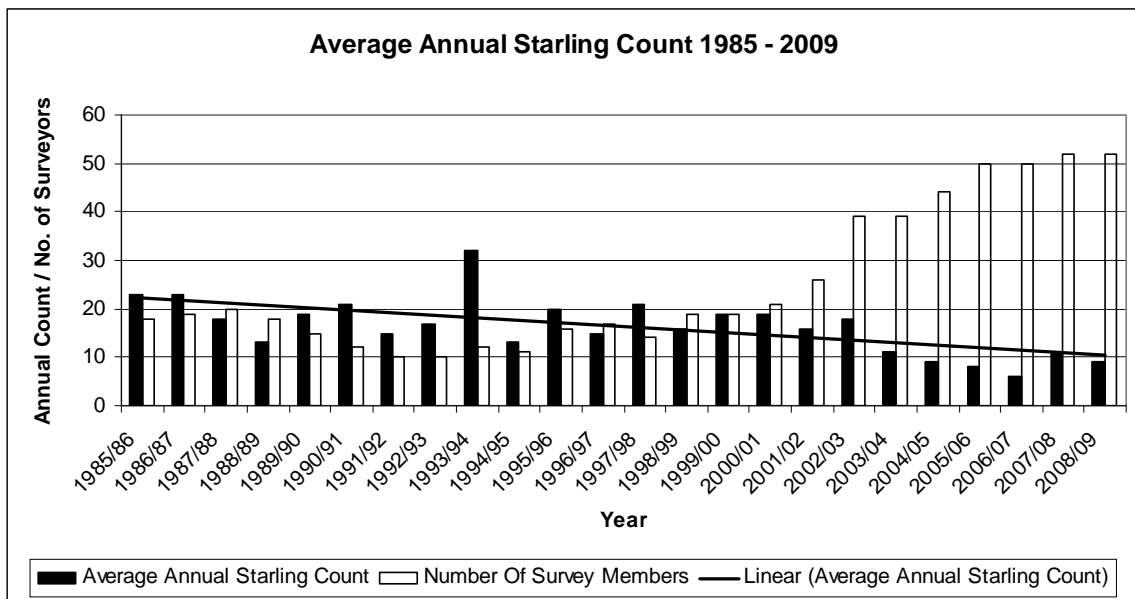
House Sparrow and Starling Research from the Garden Bird Survey Archives 1985 to 2009

The two bar charts used in previous reports have once more been updated to include the latest data from this survey and are presented below.

The average count in this survey is six as it was in the last survey. The twenty four year trend line on the chart shows that the house sparrow population continues to decline. Since 2002 the number of gardens included in our survey has been far higher than in the early years and for this period the average count has been six or seven. It is possible that records for the early years are not as truly representative as they would have been had more people supported the survey



The average count for starlings in this survey showed a slight decline from eleven last time to nine in this. The trend line shows a continued decline over the twenty-four year period of the survey.



Our survey still supports the general concerns that a decline in both populations is under way. The data is contained in two Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, with pages for each year of the survey so far and can be made available to anyone who would like to perform more analysis.

The Next Survey

In anticipation and hope of your continued support forms for the 2009/10 Winter Garden Bird Survey will be provided to all present members of the survey team. Those who take email distribution will be in receipt by that medium and the remainder will receive forms with the pre-season newsletter.

I include my usual plea to be informed if anyone wishes to discontinue supporting the survey, so that I know when I am in receipt of the full complement of completed forms able to commence the task of analysing the data and preparation of the report.

As usual forms for any new recruits to the next survey will be available at the first club meeting in September. Please encourage others to join up, whether SECOS members or not, and emphasise the process is simple and undemanding.

If any further members are willing to receive the forms, guidelines and reports as e-mail attachments for the next Garden Bird Survey, please let me have your e-mail address. Where I have e-mail addresses I assume willingness for this form of transaction (it's far preferable, being quicker, more legible, greener, cheaper-saves photocopying costs to the club). My e-mail address is _____ for contact and returning your completed forms.

Finally I include the usual offer to anyone who wishes to perform a more detailed analysis of the 2008/09 survey data than is contained in this report. I can make all of the data available to them as a copy of the database in Microsoft Access 2003 format, either as an e-mail attachment, on a 3.5" floppy disk or CD-ROM.

The early production of this report was greatly facilitated by the prompt return of the survey forms.

Again, many thanks to all contributors.

Trevor Clowes.

20th May 2009