

Bird Atlas 2007-11

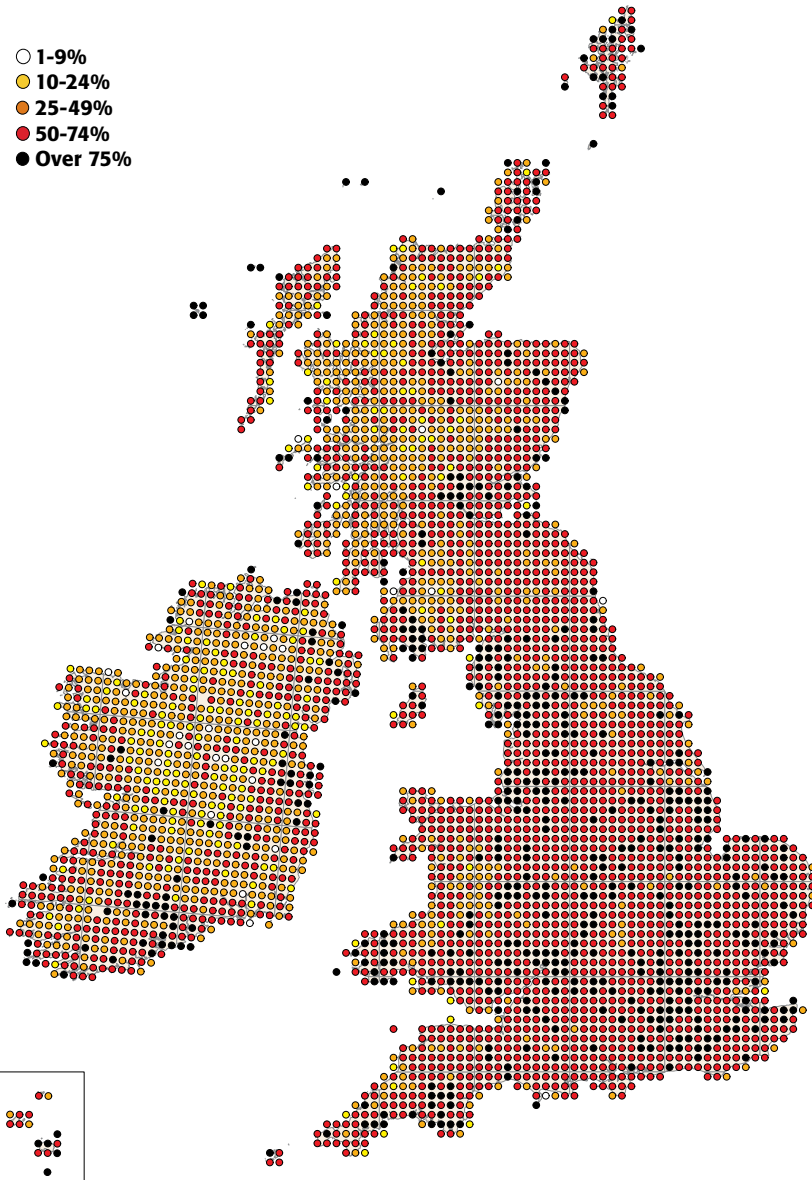
March 2011



Final breeding season

Welcome to the March 2011 issue of the Bird Atlas 2007-11 Newsletter. As we start the final season of fieldwork we are in an excellent position to achieve comprehensive coverage across Britain and Ireland. Thank you for your help.

- 1-9%
- 10-24%
- 25-49%
- 50-74%
- Over 75%



▲ SONG THRUSH BY EDMUND FELLOWES

From 1 April we begin in earnest fieldwork for the final breeding season. Already many of you will have been Atlasing during March to seek out those early nesting species such as Crossbills, Grey Herons and Rooks. The challenge between now and the end of the breeding season is to ensure the species list for every 10-km square in Britain and Ireland is as complete as possible and to record the highest level of breeding evidence for each species, based on our observations whilst out Atlasing.

As a guide to target fieldwork effort this breeding season, the map to the left shows the percentage of species confirmed breeding in every 10-km square. Those squares coloured white, yellow and orange all need more time and effort. Visits spaced throughout the breeding season will maximize your chances of confirming breeding for a wide range of species. If you have access to the Atlas website, login to Data Home and use the 'My Local Gaps' and 'Any Square Summary' to help you target your effort – see p6 –7.

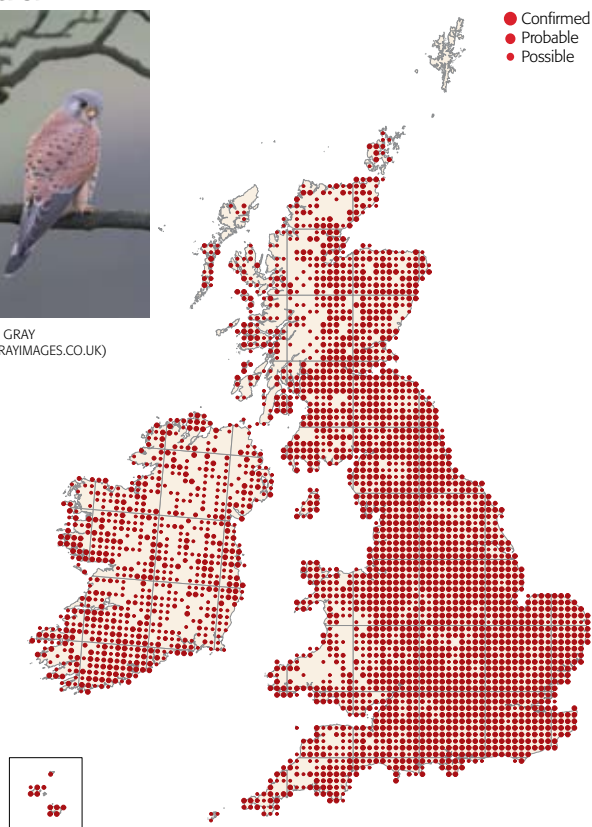
▲ **Figure 1. Map showing the percentage of species confirmed breeding in every 10-km square in Britain and Ireland.** The target squares for fieldwork this summer are those where fewer than 50% of the species have been confirmed breeding.

Provisional maps

Kestrel



▲ SEAN GRAY
(WWW.GRAYIMAGES.CO.UK)



▲ **Figure 2. Kestrel – breeding distribution 2008-2010**

Kestrels are widespread across England. Since the Breeding Atlas in 1988-91 there have been losses in western Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Can you fill any gaps this summer?

Blackcap



▲ LARS PETERSON (WWW.LARSFOTO.SE)



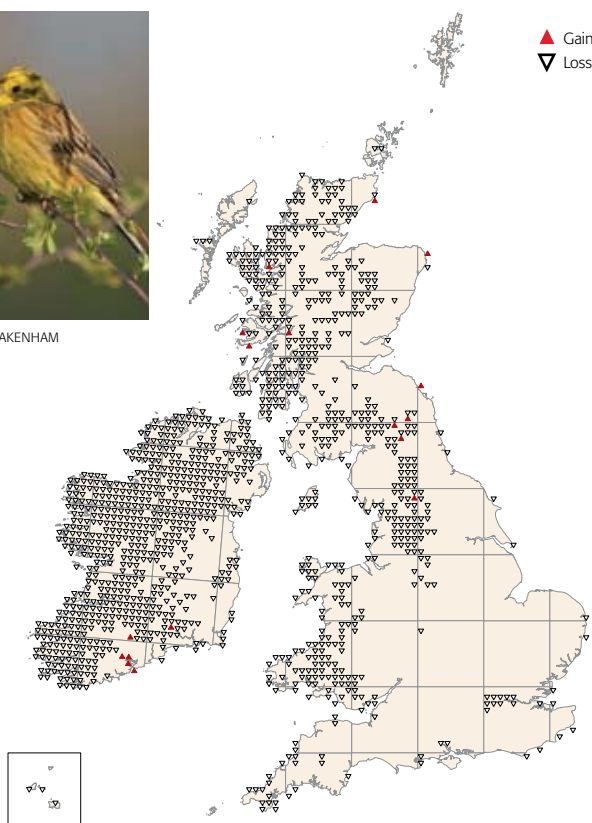
▲ **Figure 3. Blackcap – breeding distribution 2008-2010**

There is range expansion in Scotland and Ireland since the 1988-91 Breeding Atlas. There is a large number of 10-km squares where breeding is still to be confirmed. Look out for adults carrying food.

Yellowhammer



▲ JILL PAKENHAM



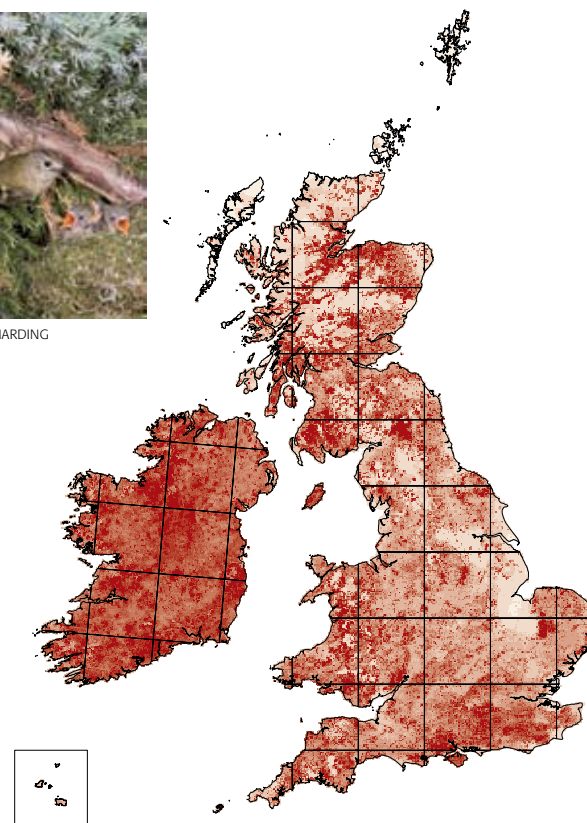
▲ **Figure 4. Yellowhammer – change in breeding distribution between 1968-72 and 2008-10**

Provisional results suggest a loss of range in Ireland, Wales, western Scotland and parts of England.

Goldcrest



▲ JOHN HARDING



▲ **Figure 5. Goldcrest - Relative abundance of Goldcrest in the breeding season 2008-2010**

The darker red indicates areas of higher relative abundance. Well wooded areas stand out well on the map. Overall relative abundance appears to be higher in Ireland.

BirdTrack – adding value to your records

With over 3.3 million records from BirdTrack feeding into the Atlas, these observations have played an important part in compiling species lists in 10-km squares across Britain and Ireland. By defining your birdwatching sites in BirdTrack, the Bird Atlas can then make use of your records at the 10-km scale and also provide added value at the tetrad level for local Atlas projects. It is worth having a quick check to see if any of your sites can be defined; do any fit wholly within a 10-km square, tetrad or 1-km square? In 'Data Home' go to 'Define my sites' and then click on 'define site' against the place name.

The other simple thing you can do this summer is add any evidence of breeding you see to your records. For records to be included in the Breeding Atlas, we need information on breeding status. The easiest way to add breeding evidence in BirdTrack is to use the one column layout. You can select this by clicking on 'My Details & Settings' in 'Data Home' and selecting '1 column layout'. It is then really easy to enter a breeding status against all species you record without having to open up the pop-up window.

One column layout - Easier to add evidence

Two column layout

Post-Atlas fieldwork

When fieldwork for the national Bird Atlas draws to a close at the end of the breeding season you might be wondering what to do next? BTO and BirdWatch Ireland organise a wide range of annual surveys and new volunteers are needed across Britain and Ireland. We'll have more details in the next issue of the Atlas Newsletter but, just to get you thinking ahead to next year, brief details are shown below. More information can be found online at www.bto.org and www.birdwatchireland.ie

Breeding Bird Survey (UK) and **Countryside Bird Survey (Republic of Ireland)** – breeding season transect surveys in 1-km squares. Contact Kate Risely at BTO bbs@bto.org or Dick Coombes at BWI rcoombes@birdwatchireland.ie

Wetland Bird Survey (UK) and **Irish Wetland Bird Survey (Republic of Ireland)** – winter surveys on all kinds of waterbodies from small ponds to estuaries. Contact Heidi Mellan at BTO webs@bto.org or Helen Boland at BWI hboland@birdwatchireland.ie

Nest Record Scheme (UK) – develop your nest finding skills and become a fully-fledged nest recorder. Contact Carl Barimore at BTO nrs@bto.org for a starter pack

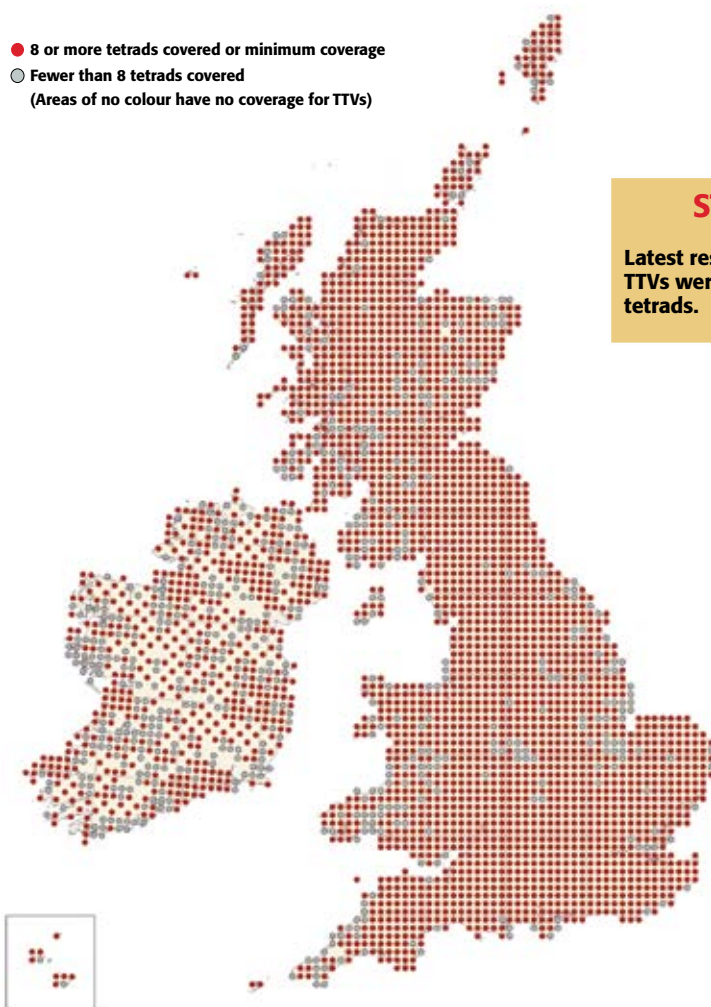
Heronries Survey – many new heronries have been found as a result of Atlas fieldwork. Can you offer to monitor a local site? Contact John Marchant at BTO john.marchant@bto.org

BirdTrack – continue to submit your birdwatching records online at www.birdatlas.net and help contribute to national and local bird recording



▲ TEAL BY EDMUND FELLOWES

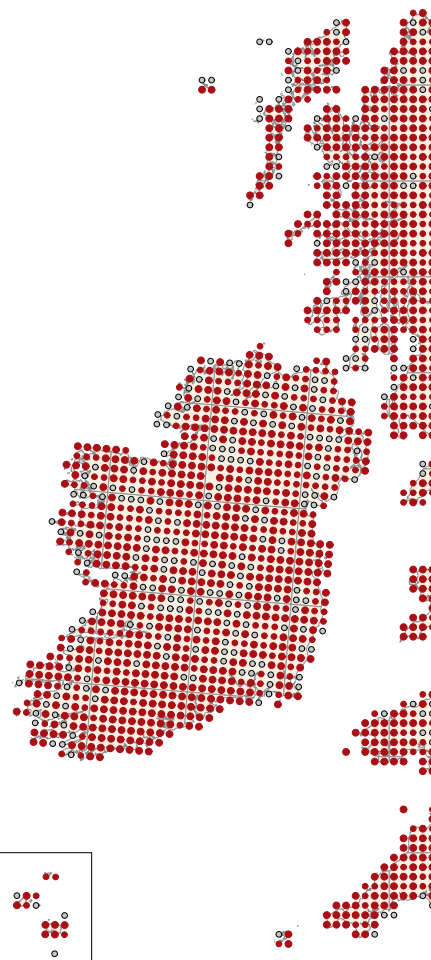
Focus on Final Breeding Season



▲ **Figure 6. Progress of Timed Tetrad Visits in the breeding season 2008-2010.**

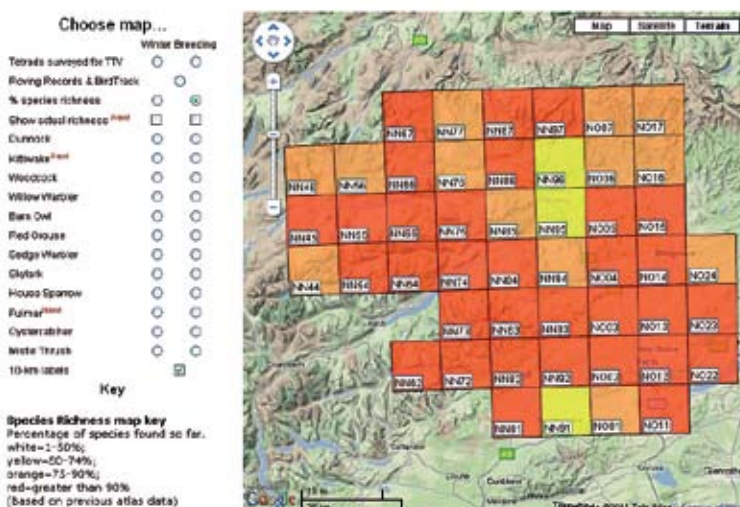
In each 10-km square we aim to cover a minimum of eight tetrads (2 x 2 km squares), or all of them if there are fewer than eight valid tetrads, for timed counts. In Ireland we have adopted a chequerboard approach to ensure even coverage across the country so every other square is a 'high-priority' square for TTVs. We have made excellent progress over the first three years of the Atlas.

- >90%
- 75-89%
- <75%



▲ **Figure 7. Percentage of expected species richness.** Using lists of birds found in each 10-km square in the proportion of the expected number of species we have shown by a small red dot or a grey dot need more effort. Large red dots show there can still be more species richness are high priority.

Perthshire Results

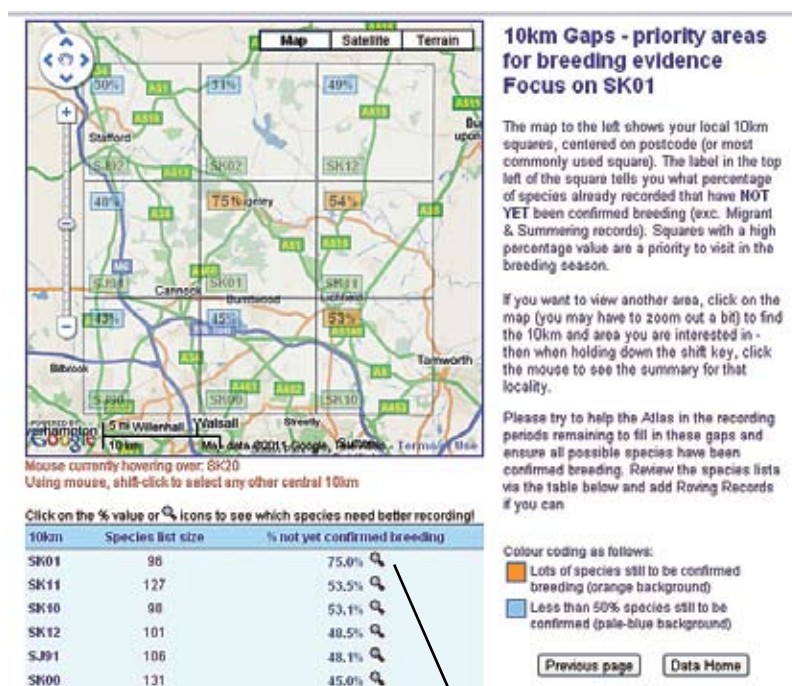


◀ The 'Regional Results' pages accessed from the Atlas home page gives you the latest information on coverage in all BTO regions. The page shown here shows progress towards the percentage of expected species richness in Perthshire. The yellow and orange squares all need more time to be spent to compile a comprehensive species list for the breeding season.

Breeding Season

This is the final breeding season of Bird Atlas 2007-11. Thank you for all your help so far. Over the next five to six months we need your help with the following tasks:

- **10-km species lists** – ensure species lists are as comprehensive as possible for every 10-km square in Britain and Ireland. Help is especially needed in Ireland to compile species lists in the 10-km squares not covered by TTVs on the chequerboard.
- **Breeding evidence** – for every species in suitable nesting habitat record the highest level of breeding status. Remember, early and late observations are important. Look in March for early nesting species such as Rook and Heron. In August and September look for signs of confirmed breeding for species such as Reed Warbler and Spotted Flycatcher.
- **Timed Tetrad Visits** – please complete your early and late visits to all tetrads allocated to you. If you can no longer complete your tetrad please contact your Regional Organiser as soon as possible. Check progress of TTVs in a 10-km square in 'Regional Results'.



Work in the breeding season.

Since the 1988-91 Breeding Atlas we can work out what species are recorded for the breeding season. 10-km squares are used to improve the species list. Even in the squares where there are no records, it is important to find. Squares with <75% of the expected

You can use the 'My Local Gaps' feature to find 10-km squares that need more help with recording breeding evidence. This feature lists species not yet confirmed breeding in a 10-km square. Go to the Atlas website (www.birdatlas.net), login and in 'Data Home' click on 'My Local Gaps'.

Bird Atlas 2007-11
Mapping Britain and Ireland's birds

10km Square species 'Gaps in confirmed breeding' summary for SK01

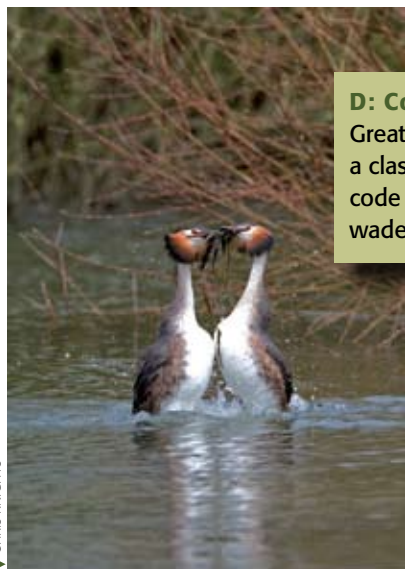
The table(s) below shows the species that all recorders have seen for this 10km square, which have NOT YET been given Confirmed Breeding status. The top table shows those species so far with only possible or probable breeding status, while the lower table shows species that may be incidental migrants (which may never reach possible/probable). Please note that some species in this lower table may be typical breeding species for this square, but as yet no breeding evidence has been submitted, so please review this table for likely breeding species.

Please note: Confidential species NOT shown. This is in accordance with the Rare Breeding Birds Panel (click here to open new window), where details of certain species cannot be made public at the 10km resolution.

Add Roving Records for this square

Species with possible or probable breeding status already	Max recorded breeding status
Shelduck	H - Seen in suitable nesting habitat
Red-legged Partridge	H - Seen in suitable nesting habitat
Pheasant	S - Singing/breeding calls heard
Buzzard	P - Pair present
Kestrel	H - Seen in suitable nesting habitat
Hobby	D - Courtship and display
Lapwing	S - Singing/breeding calls heard
Woodpigeon	D - Courtship and display
Collared Dove	S - Singing/breeding calls heard
Cuckoo	P - Pair present
Nighthawk	T - Territoriality over 1 week
Green Woodpecker	S - Singing/breeding calls heard
Starling	P - Pair present
Bank Martin	H - Seen in suitable nesting habitat
Swallow	P - Pair present
House Martin	H - Seen in suitable nesting habitat

Recording Breeding



D: Courtship and display
Great Crested Grebes displaying is a classic example of this code. The code can also be applied to some waders and raptors.

CHRIS KNIGHTS

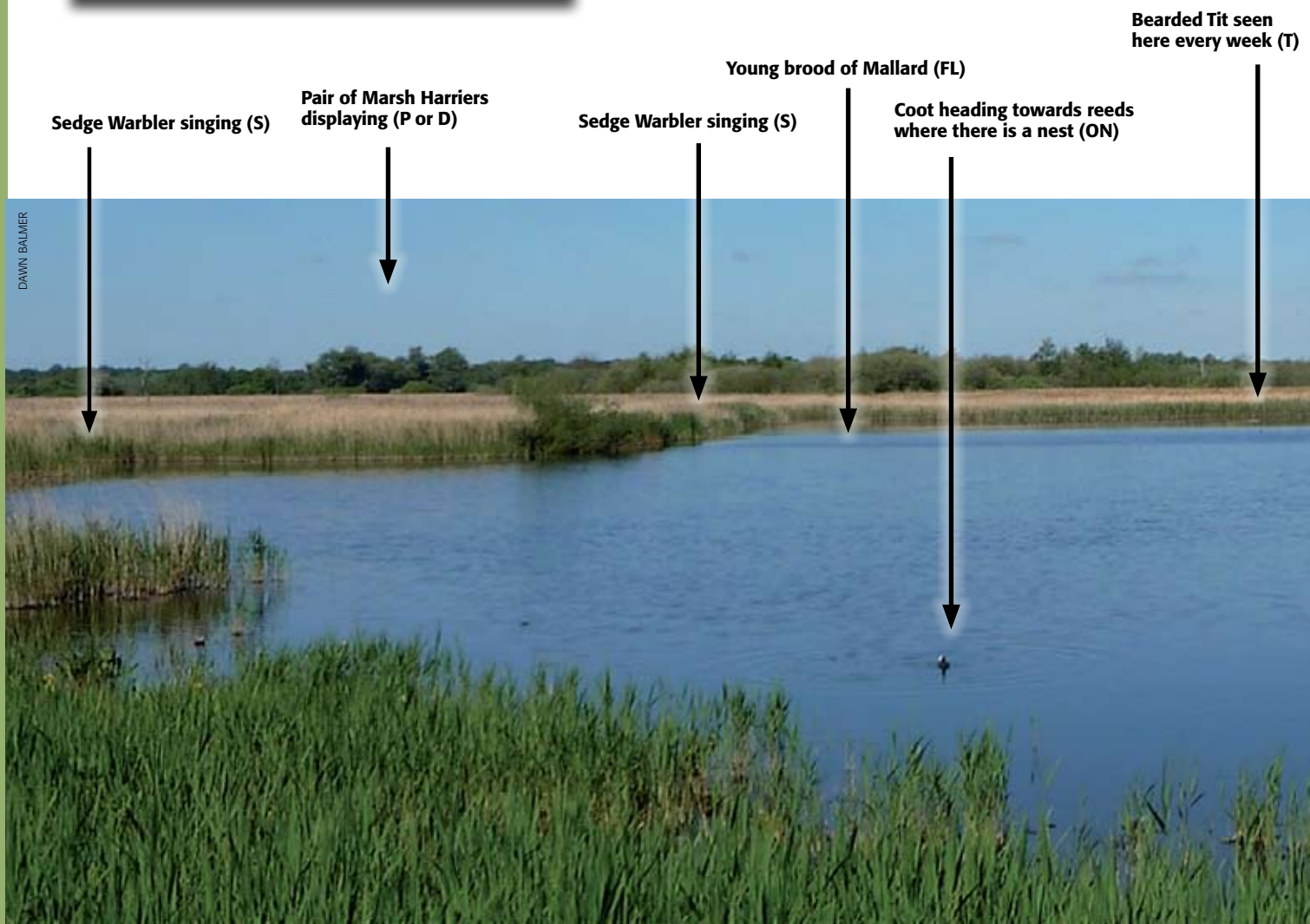


FL: Recently fledged young or downy young
FL must apply to young still showing some dependency on adults so we can be sure they have not moved far from the breeding area.

CHRIS KNIGHTS

Looking for signs of breeding and recording the evidence we see is a priority this spring and summer. Whether Roving, carrying out a Timed Tetrad Visit or recording for BirdTrack, we need to keep our eyes open, observe the behaviour of the birds we see, listen out for singing birds and record the most appropriate code. During the breeding season, we ought to be able to add a code for most of the species we see or hear in suitable breeding habitat. The aim is to record the highest level of breeding status for each species. Breeding codes can be added online on the Roving Record and TTV pages, entered into BirdTrack or onto paper forms. A full list of codes can be found at www.birdatlas.net or on the back of paper forms.

Below is a photo taken at Strumpshaw Fen in Norfolk. Birds seen and heard on a typical visit in late May are shown below. The screen shot to the right shows some of these observations entered as Roving Records online. Note the use of T (permanent territory) for Sedge Warbler. On this visit there were many Sedge Warblers singing (S) at the same time so the code T can be applied to denote 'many individuals on one day'. This use of T is particularly useful if you are visiting remote areas where follow-up visits are not possible. T can also be applied to birds that you record in the same place on visits at least a week apart, for example, Bearded Tit below.



DAWN BALMER

Sedge Warbler singing (S)

Pair of Marsh Harriers displaying (P or D)

Sedge Warbler singing (S)

Young brood of Mallard (FL)

Coot heading towards reeds where there is a nest (ON)

Bearded Tit seen here every week (T)

A photograph of a wetland area. In the foreground, there is a body of water with a small island in the middle. The island is covered with green vegetation and has several white birds (likely egrets or herons) standing on it. The water is blue and reflects the sky. On the right side, there is a dense stand of tall, brown reeds. In the background, there is a line of green trees under a blue sky with some clouds. Five black arrows point to specific locations: three arrows point to the far bank (left, center, and right), one arrow points to the island, and one arrow points to the reeds on the right.

Timeline to end of project



▲ BLACKBIRD BY DAWN BALMER

1 April 2011 Early visit to TTVs can start. Good time to look for breeding evidence of resident species like Blackbird, Robin and Dunnock

March 2011 Look for early breeding evidence e.g. Long-tailed Tits building, Goshawk displaying



▲ GREY HERON BY JOHN BOWERS

Migrant warblers arrive on territory - lots of individuals singing constitutes T code for permanent territory

31 May 2011 Last date for early TTVs

1 June 2011 Late visit to TTVs

Mid June 2011 Make an evening visit to woods and marshes to listen for Nightingale and Grasshopper Warbler. Also listen out for young owls

Late June 2011 Good time to visit a seabird colony



▲ WILLOW WARBLER BY NEIL CALBRADE

31 July 2011 Last date for late visit TTVs. Enter your data as soon as possible. Also look for Yellowhammer and Corn Bunting feeding young

August 2011 Look for signs of confirmed breeding e.g. Sedge Warbler carrying food, late broods of Swallow, Spotted Flycatcher feeding young



▲ SPOTTED FLYCATCHER BY EDMUND FELLOWES

31 Dec 2011 Deadline for entering all Atlas data from last four years



▲ GUILLEMOTS BY STUART NEWSON

Validation ongoing

Help by responding to queries received from local validation teams

BTO loading data from other sources, e.g. WeBS, Ringing and Bird Clubs



▲ SWALLOWS BY JOHN HARDING



▲ CORN BUNTING BY SIMON GILLINGS

April 2012 Master dataset complete

2013 Publication and delivery of Atlas!