

Rowlands and Chillingwood Ornithological Survey 2006.

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Introduction.

During 2006 a total of Ten visits were made to the area, primarily to record breeding birds but any wintering species of interest were also noted during the early months.

The visit dates were:

February 18th.

March 18th.

March 29th.

April 9th.

April 23rd.

May 28th.

June 11th.

July 2nd.

July 16th.

July 30th.

In addition a number of casual observations were made outside of the official visit dates as the location was very close to the authors home. Each visit lasted three hours with the main aim of recording probable breeding birds by locating singing(territorial) males. As the site is divided by features such as a railway line and a road, a tally of species for each individual section was kept. These sections comprise Rowlands Wood to the North of the railway line(Rowlands Wood North), Rowlands Wood to the South of the railway line(Rowlands Wood South) and Chillingwood.

Systematic List.

A list of all species recorded follows. For each species a brief description of its Isle of Wight Status is provided. Also given is an indication of each species UK and European Conservation Status using the following categories:

Red List- a species of high conservation concern.

Amber List- a species of medium conservation concern.

Green List- a species of low conservation concern.

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Widespread common resident, numbers augmented by released birds.

Probably breeding. One male on territory Rowlands Wood North.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Widespread common breeding resident and occasional passage migrant.

Green List.

Possibly breeding. A single seen in Rowlands Wood South on April 9th.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Resident, breeding in increasing numbers and occasional passage migrant.
Green List.

One-two birds seen on several dates over the area and a single was disturbed from Rowlands Wood South on April 23rd. No confirmation of breeding.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Regular passage migrant, increasing summer records. Occasionally breeds.
Green List.

A confirmed breeding species. A pair of Adult birds were on territory from June 11th and breeding was confirmed when two juveniles were seen on the wing with an adult on August 25th and 26th. The exact nest site was not located.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Uncommon breeding resident and winter visitor.
Amber List.

Probably breeding. One observed flying over Rowlands Wood South on March 15th. Two were observed at Rowlands Wood South on May 28th, one male roding(territorial display) overhead and a second bird that flew into the wood.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Widespread very common breeding resident; variable numbers on autumn passage.
Green List.

Probably breeding. A total of nine singing males comprised five in Rowlands North, two in Rowlands South and two in Chillingwood.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Fairly common breeding resident.
Amber List.

One sighting. On March 3rd a bird was seen perched on the gate at the entrance to Rowlands Wood North at dawn. This species was not breeding in the study area but occasionally using the area for hunting.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Widespread fairly common breeding resident.
Amber List.

Probably breeding. Single singing males in Rowlands Wood N on March 29th and Chillingwood on April 9th.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Widespread fairly common breeding resident
Green List.

A total of seven recorded on February 18th comprised four in Rowlands Wood North (one drumming male), one in Rowlands Wood South and two in Chillingwood (one drumming male). Breeding was confirmed on May 28th when young were heard calling from a nest hole in Chillingwood.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*
Widespread very common breeding resident.
Green List.

Confirmed breeding. A total of 27 singing males comprised nine in Rowlands Wood North, 12 in Rowlands Wood South and six in Chillingwood. Several young also noted.

Duncock *Prunella modularis*
Widespread very common breeding resident, numbers augmented in autumn
Amber List.

Probably breeding. A single singing male in Rowlands Wood North.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*
Widespread very common breeding resident; numbers increased during autumn passage.
Green List.

Confirmed breeding. A total of 25 singing males comprised seven in Rowlands Wood North, nine in Rowlands Wood South and nine in Chillingwood. Fledged young were observed in Rowlands Wood North on June 11th.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*
Widespread very common breeding resident; increased numbers during autumn passage.
Green List.

Probably breeding. A total of seven singing males comprised one in Rowlands Wood North, four in Rowlands Wood South and two in Chillingwood.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*
Widespread common breeding resident although less so than formerly. Numbers augmented in autumn.
Red List.

Confirmed Breeding Bird. A total of nine singing males comprised three in Rowlands Wood North, three in Rowlands Wood South and three in Chillingwood. One fledged young seen in Rowlands Wood North on May 28th.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*
Common winter visitor and passage migrant.
Amber List.

A feeding flock of 180 in Rowlands Wood South on February 18th.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*
Widespread common breeding resident.
Amber List.

One seen in Rowlands Wood North on February 18th. Bred outside the study area.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*
Widespread common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant. Small numbers over-winter.
Green List.

Confirmed breeding bird. A total of five singing males comprised three in Rowlands Wood North and two in Rowlands Wood South. A pair with fledged young were observed in Rowlands Wood North on June 11th.

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*
Widespread common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant. Increasing numbers over-winter.
Green List.

Confirmed breeding bird. A total of five singing males comprised two in Rowlands Wood North, two in Rowlands Wood South and one in Chillingwood. Two fledged young were seen in Rowlands Wood South on June 11th.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*
Common breeding resident and common passage migrant, mainly in late autumn.
Amber List.

Confirmed breeding bird. A total of five singing males comprised two in Rowlands Wood North, two in Rowlands Wood South and one in Chillingwood. Four fledged young were observed in Rowlands Wood South on June 11th.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*
Widespread fairly common breeding resident.
Green List.

Confirmed breeding bird. Frequent sightings of up to ten birds during March-April and fledged juveniles seen in Rowlands Wood North on June 11th.

Coal Tit *Parus ater*
Widespread fairly common breeding resident
Green List.

Confirmed breeding bird. A total of 11 singing males comprised six in Rowlands Wood North, two in Rowlands Wood South and three in Chillingwood. Several fledged young observed June-July.

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*

Widespread very common breeding resident
Green List.

Confirmed breeding bird. A total of ten singing males comprised three in Rowlands Wood North, three in Rowlands Wood South and four in Chillingwood. Several fledged young observed in Rowlands Wood North on June 11th.

Great Tit *Parus major*
Widespread very common breeding resident
Green List.

Confirmed Breeding bird. A total of eight singing males comprised one in Rowlands Wood North, three in Rowlands Wood South and four in Chillingwood. Several fledged young in Rowlands Wood South on June 11th.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*
Widespread fairly common breeding resident
Green List.

Confirmed breeding bird. Records indicate a total of four pairs in the study area. A pair collecting food in Rowlands Wood North on June 11th, two singing males in Rowlands Wood South and one bird carrying nest material in Chillingwood on April 9th.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*
Widespread common breeding resident
Green List.

Possibly breeding. Regularly present in Chillingwood but breeding not confirmed. Fledged young were observed just outside the study area.

Magpie *Pica pica*
Widespread very common breeding resident.
Green List.

Possibly breeding. Occasional sightings in Rowlands Wood North and Chillingwood.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*
Widespread very common breeding resident and occasional passage migrant.
Green List.

Probably breeding. Pairs regularly seen in Rowlands Wood North and Rowlands Wood South.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*
Widespread very common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Probably breeding. A total of five singing males comprised two in Rowlands Wood North, two in Rowlands Wood South and one in Chillingwood.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Widespread common breeding resident and passage migrant.

Green List.

Possibly breeding. A pair seen in Rowlands Wood South on July 2nd.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Green List.

Two seen on March 15th in Rowlands Wood South. One in Rowlands Wood North on March 29th.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Widespread fairly common breeding resident.

Red List.

Possibly breeding. One in Chillingwood on April 9th and a juvenile in Rowlands Wood North on August 26th. However as no adults were observed on territory here it seems likely that this bird fledged outside the study area.

Missing Species

Two species recorded by the author during casual observations along the boundary of the site in previous years were not recorded during the survey in 2006. Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*, has been confirmed breeding here in the past, the last time being in 2000. However this species breeding population is prone to fluctuations and many adults do not attempt to breed in poor vole years.

Marsh Tit *Parus palustris*, was last recorded in the area in 2003. It is difficult to be certain if any recent management practices have had a detrimental effect on the species. Marsh Tits do prefer 'untouched woodland' that contains mature trees such as Oak and Beech with natural cavities for nesting and an under storey for foraging. However there is evidence that this species has been undergoing a serious decline throughout the Island in recent years and there are probably a number of unknown factors involved in the downturn in numbers, perhaps including climatic change.

Summary

A total of ten 'official' three hour visits were made to the Rowlands and Chillingwood area between February 18th and July 30th. In addition a number of casual observations were also made. A total of 31 species were recorded in the study area, 13 were confirmed as breeding and an additional eight species were probably breeding. Two species recorded are in the Red conservation concern category; Song Thrush and Bullfinch. However the most notable record at a local level concerned the confirmed breeding of Hobby. Although this species has increased its population across much of Southern England, it remains a rare breeding species on the Island. This represents the first confirmed breeding on the Island since 2001.

Overall the range and numbers of species present was typical of this type of Woodland. The healthy population of Song Thrush is probably helped by the boggy

conditions underfoot, which allow easier access to invertebrates in the soil. The current management regime with ride maintenance and clearance of glades helps to increase the variety of breeding birds by attracting warbler species such as Blackcap and Chiffchaff that nest in low level vegetation.

It is worth considering that Hobbies favour old crows nests in mature pine trees when undertaking any thinning operations.