



RSPB VOLUNTEER & FARMER ALLIANCE

Survey Report: Wroxall Manor Farm

Survey area: 77.63 hectares
Contact: Mr. Poland
Volunteer: William Keatley

The 24 species listed overleaf are those that were observed at Wroxall Manor Farm during the Volunteer & Farmer Alliance surveys 2005.

The map and list provide a good indication of the range and population of species present during the breeding season but are not definitive. A few species may have been missed due to chance or because they are hard to see; and a number of wintering species or those which visit the farm very infrequently will inevitably not have been recorded.

The list also shows which category of Conservation Concern each species currently falls into. These Red, Amber and Green lists were initially drawn up in 1996 by the leading conservation organisations, and were updated in 2002 to include species such as the house sparrow, which were of lower concern in 1996 but have declined so rapidly since that they have now been added to the Red List.

Red List species are those species that we are most concerned about, whose populations have generally more than halved in the UK over the last 25 years. Amber List species have typically undergone a 25-49% decline, although there are a number of other reasons for inclusion, such as historical decline or their UK populations being important due to an unfavourable conservation status in Europe. All other species form the Green list.

The Red and Amber listed species are marked on your laminated map. For colonial nesting species, such as swallow, house sparrow, house martin, and starling we have marked as one territory, or presence only, even if there are more, as it is difficult to calculate the exact number of pairs. Territorial birds (those which are circled on the map) are birds that showed signs of breeding behaviour on your farm and for which your land management could be especially useful.

It was great to see that you have 5 species of high conservation concern of which 2 were found to be breeding. These red listed species are the house sparrow, marsh tit, skylark, spotted flycatcher and yellowhammer.

House Sparrows

Please note that we haven't included house sparrows on the map because we are not sure of their exact location. House sparrows are seed-eating birds that live around human habitation in both urban and rural areas. Those found on farmland are unlikely to be found far away from the farmhouse or other buildings and this was the case on . They usually nest under roof tiles or within farm buildings. They feed on seeds such as those found on over-wintered stubbles close to buildings or spilt grain in the farmyard. Like many seed-eating birds, they feed their chicks on insects, and benefit from insect-rich habitats in the spring such as rough grass margins and wildflower strips around fields close to the farmyard.

Marsh Tit

The marsh tit breeds in deciduous woodland, especially extensive beech and oakwoods. Also in orchards, mature gardens and parkland. Marsh tits occupy well-structured climax woodland and could be affected by silvicultural management or by inappropriate conservation management. A good proportion of mature trees with natural holes need to be retained, amid healthy shrub layer should be encouraged through for example deer control and shade reduction. Good scrub structure on the woodland and ride edge is a valuable source of fruit in winter, and deadwood provides year round foraging.

Skylark

Although still visible on many farms, the number of pairs per farm has declined by almost 50% in most areas. Skylarks need areas of sparse vegetation between March and August to nest in and need to rear two or three broods of young a year in order to maintain their population. Winter cereals only provide suitable habitat for them to rear one or two broods, so inclusion of spring cereals or a break crop (other than oil seed rape) will provide ideal nesting habitat where viable. Set-aside can be managed in several ways to benefit skylarks having a mixture of rotational and non-rotational set-aside to provide both nesting and feeding areas throughout the year.

Spotted Flycatcher

The Spotted Flycatcher is on the red list of birds of conservation concern, with numbers in the UK having fallen by 75% since the mid 1970's. They are summer migrants, breeding in Britain and other parts of Europe and wintering in southwest Africa. They are one of the latest of our summer migrants to arrive, often not appearing until the middle of May.

Spotted Flycatchers will nest in a variety of habitats, and can often be found in close association with human habitation. A creeper-clad wall or tree is often chosen as a nest site, but they will also use open-fronted nestboxes and sometimes nest inside buildings. Typically, birds on farms will be found around the farmyard and buildings, although orchards and mature farm woodland are also possible locations.

As implied by the name, spotted flycatchers are invertebrate feeders, preferring large, flying insects, which they hunt from favoured perches. A mosaic of mature trees and open space will provide an ideal foraging site.

Suggestions for causes of recent declines in this species include, a decrease in the availability of large invertebrates, habitat simplification, climate change and the possibility of decreased over-winter survival. RSPB is currently undertaking research to establish which of these mechanisms are important and seek measures that will reverse the downward trend.

Yellowhammer

Yellowhammers ideally need thick hedges, with ditches and a wide grass margin for nesting in. Cutting the margins on a three-year rotation in the autumn would provide ideal nesting and feeding habitat during the breeding season. Adults feed almost exclusively on seeds and areas such as rotational set-aside, wild bird cover and winter stubbles provide ideal feeding areas all year round.

We hope that you find these results both interesting and informative and that the advisory sheets prove to be useful. For any further information on implementing this management advice, please contact your local FWAG advisor. For any queries regarding your 2005 V&FA survey results, please contact Alex Moore da Luz at the RSPB South East Regional Office.

Wroxall Manor Farm		
Species	BTO Code	Status
Blackbird	B	Green
Blue tit	BT	Green
Buzzard	BZ	Green
Carrion Crow	C	Green
Chaffinch	CH	Green
Dunnock	D	Amber
Great Tit	GT	Green
Green Woodpecker	G	Amber
House Sparrow	HS	Red
Jackdaw	JD	Green
Lesser Whitethroat	LW	Green
Long-tailed Tit	LT	Green
Magpie	MG	Green
Marsh Tit	MT	Red
Nightingale	N	Amber
Redstart	RT	Amber
Robin	R	Green
Skylark	S	Red
Spotted Flycatcher	SF	Red
Swallow	SL	Amber
Whitethroat	WH	Green
Wood Pigeon	WP	Green
Wren	WR	Green
Yellowhammer	Y	Red
Total no of Species	24	