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A close-up photograph of a woodpecker perched on a tree branch. The bird has a black cap, a white face with a black stripe through the eye, and a long, pointed beak. Its body is primarily white with black spots on the back and a red patch on the tail. The background is a soft-focus blue sky with green leaves.

Breeding Bird
Survey 2013
Queen's Wood

David Darrell-Lambert, Bird Brain UK Limited

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Experts in the field



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1.0 Introduction.....	3
2.0 Summary	3
3.0 Method.....	3
4.0 Equipment	3
5.0 Results - Breeding Birds	3
6.0 Breeding Bird Totals	5
7.0 Changes In The Bird Population.....	5
8.0 Recommendations	8
References.....	10
Appendix 1 Weather.....	10
Appendix 2 Maps	11



1.0 Introduction

This report reviews the current bird population in Queen's Wood during 2013 and compares it with the previous survey completed in 2008. All field surveys have been undertaken by David Darrell-Lambert.

2.0 Summary

In 2013 twenty six species of bird were breeding in Queen's Wood with between 286 and 347 pairs were present. An increase on the 2008 survey by a maximum of 15% (45 pairs). Two new breeding species were recorded since 2008 Mallard and Goldfinch whilst three species were lost Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Mistle Thrush and Greenfinch, all of the birds only had single pairs present in 2008.

3.0 Method

The site was surveyed from February to June 2013, with four visits starting one hour before sunrise and completed within three hours. All birds were recorded on maps with special focus on the breeding bird activities. Route was varied and surveys were completed in optimum field conditions.

4.0 Equipment

Binoculars Swarovski 8.5 x 42 swarobright, camera Nikon D300s 80-400mm and Panasonic DMC LX5 and sound recording equipment Sennheiser ME66 with K6 power module and Roland R05 recorder.

5.0 Results - Breeding Birds

26 February 2013

Twenty two species of birds were recorded, nineteen of these showed signs of breeding these were: Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Western Lesser Black-backed Gull, Woodpigeon (1), Rose-ringed Parakeet, Great Spotted Woodpecker (3), Eurasian Green Woodpecker (1), European Jay, Common Magpie (1), Carrion Crow (3), Great Tit (8), Blue Tit (12), Coal Tit (2), Long-tailed Tit (1), Goldcrest (1), British Wren (10), Eurasian Nuthatch (4), Eurasian Treecreeper (2), Eurasian Blackbird (3), Song Thrush (3), European Robin (22), Dunnock (4), European Goldfinch (1). The numbers in brackets represent the total number of breeding pairs calculated.

*Red List = species that are either globally threatened or have suffered serious decline.

One species, Song Thrush is on Red List with three singing birds in the south section of the site.

Observations took place between - 06:00 to 08:07 hrs

1 April 2013

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Thirty species of birds were recorded, twenty four of these showed signs of breeding these were: Canada Goose, Mallard (1), Eurasian Sparrowhawk (1), European Herring Gull, Common Black-headed Gull, Stock Dove (3 to 9), Woodpigeon (11 to 13), Tawny Owl (1 to 2), Great Spotted Woodpecker (10), Eurasian Green Woodpecker (3), Eurasian Jay (1), Common Magpie (1), Eurasian Jackdaw, Carrion Crow (3 to 4), Great Tit (24), Blue Tit (11 to 17), Coal Tit (2), Long-tailed Tit (1), Goldcrest (1), British Wren (22), Eurasian Nuthatch (5), Eurasian Treecreeper (4), Eurasian Blackbird (12 to 14), Redwing, Song Thrush (2), European Robin (32), Dunnock (1), Chaffinch (3), Eurasian Siskin and European Goldfinch (1). The numbers in brackets represent the total number of breeding pairs calculated.

*Red List = species that are either globally threatened or have suffered serious decline.

One species, Song Thrush is on Red List with three singing birds in the south section of the site.

Observations took place between - 05:48 to 08:31 hrs

25 April 2013

Twenty two species of birds were recorded, all of these showed signs of breeding these were: Mallard (1), Stock Dove (11 to 14), Woodpigeon (27), Tawny Owl (2), Great Spotted Woodpecker (6), Eurasian Green Woodpecker (4), Eurasian Jay (5), Common Magpie (1), Carrion Crow (2), Great Tit (34), Blue Tit (35), Coal Tit (4), Long-tailed Tit (1), Common Chiffchaff (1), Blackcap (8), British Wren (36), Eurasian Nuthatch (4), Eurasian Treecreeper (3), Eurasian Blackbird (29), Song Thrush (4), European Robin (51) and Chaffinch (1). The numbers in brackets represent the total number of breeding pairs calculated.

*Red List = species that are either globally threatened or have suffered serious decline.

One species, Song Thrush is on Red List with three singing birds in the south section of the site.

Observations took place between - 04:24 to 07:13 hrs

9 June 2013

Twenty species of birds were recorded, eighteen of these showed signs of breeding these were: Lesser Black-backed Gull, Stock Dove (3 to 5), Woodpigeon (23), Rose-ringed Parakeet, Tawny Owl (1), Great Spotted Woodpecker (1), Eurasian Green Woodpecker (1), Common Magpie (1), Carrion Crow (1), Great Tit (5), Blue Tit (1), Coal Tit, Blackcap (2), Goldcrest (1), British Wren (33), Eurasian Nuthatch (1), Eurasian Treecreeper (1), Eurasian Blackbird (27), Song Thrush (11) and European Robin (39). The numbers in brackets represent the total number of breeding pairs calculated.

*Red List = species that are either globally threatened or have suffered serious decline.

One species, Song Thrush is on Red List with three singing birds in the south section of the site.

Observations took place between - 03:51 to 06:43 hrs



6.0 Breeding Bird Totals

Twenty six species of bird were recorded breeding in Queen's Wood. These are listed below with the number of territories present with in brackets the totals for the 2008 survey:-

Mallard - 1 to 2 pairs (0)
Eurasian Sparrowhawk - 1 territory (1)
Stock Dove - 10 to 12 territories (5 to 7)
Woodpigeon - 27 to 36 territories (19 to 39)
Tawny Owl - 1 to 2 territories (1)
Great Spotted Woodpecker - 10 to 12 territories (8 to 10)
Eurasian Green Woodpecker - 1 to 5 territories (1 to 2)
Eurasian Jay - 5 to 7 territories (3 to 5)
Common Magpie - 1 to 3 territories (2 to 5)
Carrion Crow - 3 to 4 territories (2 to 4)
Great Tit - 34 to 37 territories (28 to 32)
Blue Tit - 35 to 38 territories (30 to 38)
Coal Tit - 3 to 5 territories (2 to 3)
Long-tailed Tit - 1 to 2 territories (2)
Common Chiffchaff - 0 to 1 territories (3 to 4)
Blackcap - 8 territories (9 to 11)
Goldcrest - 1 to 2 territories (2 to 3)
British Wren - 36 to 42 territories (35 to 42)
Eurasian Nuthatch - 5 to 8 territories (3 to 5)
Eurasian Treecreeper - 4 to 7 territories (2)
Eurasian Blackbird - 29 to 36 territories (24 to 36)
Song Thrush - 10 to 12 territories (6 to 9)
European Robin - 51 to 56 territories (36 to 40)
Dunnock - 5 territories (2)
Chaffinch - 3 territories (3 to 5)
European Goldfinch - 1 territories (0)

7.0 Changes In The Bird Population

Since 2008 the average bird population has increased from two hundred and seventy one to three hundred and twenty three. Comparing minimum and maximum levels between 2008 and 2013, the minimum increase is 15% and the maximum of 23%. Twenty six different species of bird were breeding compared to twenty seven in 2008.

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Species	Maximum population change (Max 2013 less Min 2008)	Minimum population change (Min 2013 less min 2008)	Average population change	National Trend (for 2012)
Mallard	+2	+1	+2	Rapid increase
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	-	-	-	Rapid increase
Stock Dove	+7	+5	+5	Rapid increase
Woodpigeon	+17	+8	+7	Rapid increase
Tawny Owl	+1	-	+1	Shallow decline
Great Spotted Woodpecker	+4	+2	+2	Rapid increase
Eurasian Green Woodpecker	+4	-	+2	Rapid increase
Eurasian Jay	+4	+2	+2	Fluctuation (no long term trend)
Common Magpie	+1	-1	-2	Moderate increase
Carrion Crow	+2	+1	+1	Rapid increase
Great Tit	+9	+6	+6	Rapid increase
Blue Tit	+8	+5	+3	Shallow increase
Coal Tit	+3	+1	+1	Moderate increase
Long-tailed Tit	-	-1	-	Rapid increase
Common Chiffchaff	-2	-3	-3	Moderate increase
Blackcap	-1	-1	-2	Rapid increase
Goldcrest	-	-1	-1	Fluctuation (no long term trend)
British Wren	+7	1	-	Moderate increase
Eurasian Nuthatch	+5	+2	+3	Rapid increase
Eurasian Treecreeper	+5	+2	+4	Fluctuation (no long term trend)
Eurasian Blackbird	+12	+5	+3	Shallow decline



Species	Maximum population change (Max 2013 less Min 2008)	Minimum population change (Min 2013 less min 2008)	Average population change	National Trend (for 2012)
Song Thrush	+6	+4	+4	Moderate decline
European Robin	+20	+15	+16	Shallow increase
Dunnock	+3	+3	+3	Moderate decline
Chaffinch	-	-	-1	Shallow increase
European Goldfinch	+1	+1	+1	Moderate increase

Eighteen species have increased in numbers, which most are following the national trend. However the following species are declining nationally Tawny Owl, Eurasian Blackbird, Song Thrush and Dunnock but have increased in the wood. The change in population in Tawny Owl is marginal and is unlikely to increase further due to the size of the wood. The Eurasian Blackbirds population has increased by 10% may not be able expand further also due to size of wood. The Song Thrush population has increased by 38%, given this is not their preferred habitat (scrubland) it is hard to understand why they increase significantly. The Dunnocks population has more than doubled from two pairs to five pair this can be attributed to the cleared area where pairs have taken advantage of scrub growing here.

Eight species of bird decreased in numbers and five of these went against that individual species national trend, Common Magpie, Common Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Goldcrest and Chaffinch. Three of these species are insect feeders and this may be a result of the colder winters recently and the cold weather in April. For both Common Magpie and Chaffinch their population reduction were low numbers but high percentages.

Two new species of bird were recorded breeding with Mallard and European Goldfinch, both of these show national trends that they are increasing. The newly formed wildlife pond in the middle of the wood with undoubtedly been pivotal in the Mallards using the wood.

Three species were lost as breeding species which were Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Mistle Thrush and European Greenfinch. All three of these species were only had single pairs breeding and so do not represent a significant loss in terms of total numbers. Both the Mistle Thrush and European Greenfinch are likely to be breeding in the area but since either are woodland species it will hit or miss if they return in future years. Lesser Spotted Woodpecker might still be present, during the survey on 26 February a small woodpecker species was seen breathily in the wood but the identification could not be confirmed. No further signs or noises indicated that this species was present after this date. The population of this species is has crashed in the UK so it is not surprising it would not be confirmed.



8.0 Recommendations

Queen's Wood has an abundant bird population and is probably nearing the maximum levels achievable given the size of the site. All of these recommendation which only likely change the populations but possibly increase the success rate of the birds present.

- Increased the cleared area. Since the 2008 an area in the southeast section of the wood was cleared, which created a scrub area. Another area should also be cleared and then allow both areas to grow up before looking at a third area being created. I would suggest the area due west of here before reaching the road. This will increase the numbers of some species breeding including Blackcap, Song Thrush, Dunnock and Long-tailed Tit. Due to the small size of the wood increasing the number of cleared areas beyond two is likely to reduce the numbers of breeding birds present.
- Keeping the large areas of holly and ivy cover tree across the site. These provide dense areas for birds to roost in and provide berries during the autumn and winter.
- Expand the numbers and type of nestboxes present. This will provide more secure nesting areas and to increase the number of different species that can use them. Taking into account this is an urban area the nest boxes should be placed as high as possible to reduce the chances of vandalism. Since there are woodpecker and Grey Squirrels in the wood it, which are able to break into wooden nestboxes, using Schwegler nestboxes (available from www.nhbs.com) should stop predators. The table below shows the quantities and types suggested for the wood.

Nest Box Type	What species is it for?	Location	Quantities
Small hole	Blue, Coal and Great Tits	Throughout	20
Medium hole	Starling	Throughout	10
Large hole	Stock Dove	Throughout	10
Large open fronted	Tawny Owl	Opposite end of the wood	2

- There is a large amount of food available in the wood throughout the year which supports the large bird population present. Seeing these species is not always easy and to provide extra food but also to display diversity of birds present, a feeding station could be created. The involves placing several bird feeders close together. This would encourage the birds to come down to feed allowing close views. Species such as Nuthatch, Great Spotted Woodpecker and Coal Tit could be encouraged to use them. The wildlife garden at the back of the cafe is an idea area to place them. The following should be taken into account
 - A variety of food available that would include: mixed seed, peanuts, nyjer seed and fat balls
 - Purchase squirrel proof feeders
 - Keep them high up to stop vandalism or in secure area
 - They should be cleaned out every three to six months with disinfectant
 - Kept full throughout the year

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- Various education events could be held at the site. This would increase the number of visitors, draw awareness to the site and attract future members. This is a long term project looking at highlighting the site. Other activities could be devised based around other wildlife present in the wood. Events could include:-
 - Nest box building - a children and adult activity
 - Listening to birds - using microphones to hear all the different birds present - children and adult activity
 - Making your own bird feeders - covering pine cones in fat and then rolling them in bird mixed seed, these can be hung up - children and adult activity
 - Drawings birds - once the bird feeders are up then people could watch and draw the bird
 - Bird ringing - once nestboxes are being used local ringing could be asked to come in and ring the young birds but also showing people the birds in the hand plus possibly providing information and where these birds travel to and from.
 - Cleaning out nest boxes - during autumn (September) the nest boxes could have all nesting material cleared out. Any owl boxes could also be checked for owl pellets which if analysed would identify what the Tawny Owls are feeding on.

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British Trust for Ornithology www.bto.org.uk

Appendix 1 Weather

Visit	Date	Time	Weather Conditions	Survey Conditions
1	26 February 2013	06:00 to 08:07 hrs		
2	1 April 2013	05:48 to 08:31 hrs		
3	25 April 2013			
4	9 June 2013	03:51 to 06:43 hrs		



Key

Code	Species
B.	Eurasian Blackbird
BC	Blackcap
BT	Blue Tit
C.	Carrion Crow
CC	Common Chiffchaff
CH	Chaffinch
CT	Coal Tit
D.	Dunnock
G.	Eurasian Green Woodpecker
GC	Goldcrest
GO	European Goldfinch
GS	Great Spotted Woodpecker
GT	Great Tit
J.	Eurasian Jay
LT	Long-tailed Tit
MA	Mallard
MG	Common Magpie
NH	Eurasian Nuthatch
R.	European Robin
SD	Stock Dove

Code	Species
SH	Eurasian Sparrowhawk
SK	Eurasian Siskin
ST	Song Thrush
TC	Eurasian Treecreeper
TO	Tawny Owl
WP	Woodpigeon
WR	British Wren

Code	Behaviour/sex
a	Alarm
c	Call
d	Display
df	Display flight
n	Nest
sgg	Singing
(m)	male