

Notes on the Wadhurst Park Estate 2024 Bird Surveys

Weather

The weather for January started damp and mild, followed by a cold snap, before returning to damp and mild weather at the month end. February was a very wet month, and it rained most days. It continued to rain persistently for most of the month in March although it was dryer than February. The month ended with cool and unsettled weather with a blustery wind. April became a little more settled but with some strong northerly winds and from mid-month onwards temperatures remained below average. The rather unsettled conditions continued, with a warmer spell developing in the second week of May, but this was rather short-lived, the wind and rain returned, and temperatures stubbornly remained well below the seasonal average.

Peak Registrations

Peak registrations over six years of point count survey are shown below. As always, results are based solely on the highest number of registrations of a species on a single point count visit, so should not be taken as statistically accurate. However, they do indicate general trends over the six seasons.

The Wadhurst Park surveys cover different sets of points in alternate years (Wadhurst Park South and Wadhurst Park Central), but the six points represented here (43; 40; 26; 20; 33 & 23) are included in both survey areas, so are visited annually, as is Batt's Wood.

Selected Species Notes

There were no records for **lesser spotted woodpecker** or **mistle thrush** this season. No doubt the birds were present elsewhere on the Estate. Most other species remained at average numbers without significant increases or losses. Exceptions were **great spotted woodpecker**, with just two registrations across the park, and **chaffinch** with one. These two fared better in Batt's Wood, with 5 and 2 respectively. A further chaffinch territory was found at Batt's Wood cottage. **Robin** showed the lowest count since 2019 in Batt's Wood, with 28. **Song thrush** numbers had picked up on the park but remained low in Batt's Wood.

Marsh tit was very well represented in Batt's Wood in 2024 with seven registrations from the point counts, and a wide mapped distribution. Only one bird was heard on the park during point counts, but two further birds were located away from the counts. **Cuckoos** were heard from both the park and Batt's Wood. **Spotted flycatchers** were present at their usual location at Hampden Oast. Other birds were found at Dog Leg Wood on the park, and along the main top ride in Batt's Wood.

It was good to record a singing **willow warbler** along the track running alongside the lake in Batt's Wood on 19th May. This was the first record in Batt's Wood since 2018.

There was a report of **hawfinch** sightings on the park this spring (Mike Scott-Ham pers. com.). His email reads: '**The 2 HF's were just NE of Rolf's Ghyll on OS map; flew from SE to NW and lost from sight quickly.**' The date of this sighting was 23rd June. Mike also recorded a female **goshawk** over the

eastern end of the park on 4th August, where it was harassing a large flock of jackdaws. I believe goshawks had been seen in Batt's Wood during the breeding season.

Wadhurst Park Peak Registrations 2018 – 2024 (six points only)

Species	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Blackbird	19	22	20	22	18	21	20
Blackcap	7	7	9	9	10	10	12
Blue Tit	12	14	18	15	17	11	11
Bullfinch	3	-	-	1	2	-	-
Buzzard	-	-	1	-		-	-
Carrion Crow	7	7	12	9	9	10	6
Chaffinch	1	3	4	5	5	3	1
Chiffchaff	8	9	9	11	11	12	11
Coal Tit	3	2	2	1	1	3	1
Cuckoo	-	-	3	2	-	-	1
Dunnock	3	1	2	4	3	3	3
Garden Warbler	1	1	1	1	2	3	3
Goldcrest	1	2	1	1	3	2	1
Goldfinch	-	-	1	1	2	2	-
Great Spotted Woodpecker	7	6	5	8	6	1	2
Great Tit	9	7	9	11	12	4	7
Green Woodpecker	1	3	1	1	-	-	-
Hawfinch	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Jackdaw	7	5	7	10	10	7	3
Jay	1	2	2	1	4	1	2
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Linnet	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Long-tailed Tit	1	-	1	1	1	1	2
Magpie	2	3	4	-	4	1	-
Marsh Tit	2	2	1	1	5	1	1
Mistle Thrush	1	-	2	1	5	1	-
Nuthatch	4	1	2	3	4	4	2
Pheasant	14	13	12	13	8	7	8
Raven	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Robin	15	15	15	13	11	14	14
Rook	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Siskin	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Song Thrush	4	7	7	10	6	4	8
Spotted Flycatcher	-	1	-	1	-	1	2
Stock Dove	1	3	-	2	-	3	1
Tawny Owl	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Treecreeper	4	3	3	3	4	4	4
Willow Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Woodpigeon	14	12	17	18	14	16	11
Wren	15	20	21	15	19	16	18

Batt's Wood Peak Registrations 2018 – 2024 (no data for 2021)

Species	2018	2019	2020	2022	2023	2024
Blackbird	24	26	22	20	27	28
Blackcap	20	19	18	20	15	12
Blue Tit	17	14	16	15	18	13
Bullfinch	2	2	2	-	-	4
Buzzard	-	-	5	1	-	1
Carrion Crow	9	11	17	11	7	11
Chaffinch	4	1	3	-	3	2
Chiffchaff	20	16	22	15	17	19
Coal Tit	9	10	8	3	6	6
Cuckoo	-	2	3	-	1	1
Dunnock	3	2	1	-	1	1
Garden Warbler	4	4	5	3	3	3
Goldcrest	5	3	3	2	2	5
Goldfinch	1	-	1	-	1	P
Great Spotted Woodpecker	10	11	9	4	7	5
Great Tit	8	16	10	5	9	7
Green Woodpecker	4	1	5	2	1	1
Jackdaw	6	4	1	3	1	1
Jay	5	3	5	3	1	1
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	-	-	1	-	-	-
Long-tailed Tit	3	3	2	3	4	4
Magpie	2	-	1	1	-	-
Marsh Tit	2	3	3	2	1	7
Mistle Thrush	6	6	4	-	4	-
Nuthatch	1	2	3	1	1	3
Pheasant	13	9	8	8	11	9
Raven	2	-	-	2	-	2
Robin	29	28	36	29	37	28
Rook	-	-	2	-	-	-
Siskin	-	1	-	-	-	-
Song Thrush	4	11	20	16	8	8
Spotted Flycatcher	-	-	1	-	1	P
Stock Dove	5	4	2	2	3	6
Tawny Owl	2	-	-	1	-	-
Treecreeper	3	2	5	2	5	2
Willow Warbler	3	-	-	-	-	1
Woodpigeon	32	27	22	24	25	27
Wren	37	43	44	50	37	44

Martin Allison
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