

Chilton Parish Biodiversity Study Report

(A SEASONAL OVERVIEW FROM MARCH 2019 THROUGH JANUARY 2020)

DATED: 18th September 2020



Introduction

Firstly, let me tell you what a joy it was to visit the Buckinghamshire countryside, as a passionate naturalist and professional bird surveyor. I, Tony William Powell, was tasked with assessing the breeding and non-breeding bird potential within the Chilton parish, Buckinghamshire, in the locations stated down the page. I carried out some *seven* site visits to *six* different land sections with *two* sections surveyed per day. I would gather any evidence by adhering to the Common Bird Census (CBC) methodology protocols. Additionally, as is true of a more comprehensive biodiversity study, I attempted to highlight other species, I deemed noteworthy. When gathering breeding evidence, I never set out to deliberately search for nests, as proof of breeding was acquired using other methods. To achieve this, I'd utilise my lifetime experience of the species in question, in conjunction with a combination of both visual and aural clues. I attempted to walk the same route on each occasion and loitered in especially bird-rich parts of the site when conditions allowed. I tried to do so, consistently on each visit.

The site locations

WHITCOMBE BARN & GROVE SPINNEY SECTION – CENTRAL WEST REGION
CHILTON PARK FARM SECTION – NORTHWEST REGION
EASINGTON SECTION – CENTRAL SOUTH REGION
HORNAGE FARM SECTION – SOUTHWEST REGION
CHILTON GROUNDS FARM SECTION – EASTERN REGION
WOMBWELLS SECTION – SOUTHEAST REGION

Individual Survey Data Summaries

These day listings were consistently provided to Duncan Parker throughout, and again, if anyone requests copies of them, he should be able to offer them to interested parties. As it is often best to look instead at things in the round, I will provide the headline data summaries on pages 3 and 4 below.

Headline Summary of Results

- TOTAL RANGE OF BIRD SPECIES OBSERVED THROUGHOUT
(INCLUDES *PROBABLE* SIGHTINGS) **96**
- TOTAL NUMBER OF BIRDS ON “CONSERVATION CONCERN”
LISTING, WHETHER SHOWN AS AMBER OR RED **42**
(*CLICK ON THE URL BELOW FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE BOCC 4 LIST*)

BIRDS OF CONSERVATION CONCERN 4:

- ABOVE TOTAL EXPRESSED AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE OVERALL
POPULATION **44%**
- TOTAL NUMBER OF BIRDS DEEMED AS TO HAVE BRED, OR LIKELY
TO HAVE BRED ON SITE **46**
- ABOVE TOTAL EXPRESSED AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE OVERALL
POPULATION **48%**
- TOTAL NUMBER OF HOURS SPENT IN-THE-FIELD WALKING THE
TRANSECT ROUTES **105**

Other Key Wildlife Conservation Indicators

- TOTAL RANGE OF BUTTERFLY SPECIES OBSERVED THROUGHOUT
(INCLUDES *PROBABLE* SIGHTINGS) **24**
- PEAK MONTHLY COUNT OF HARES OBSERVED THROUGHOUT
(ACHIEVED IN MARCH 2019) **12**

Brief seasonal overview of biodiversity present.

In addition to the vast diversity of bird species I witnessed, the full list shown on pages 5 to 7, there were several other notable findings. Land mammals included Hares as mentioned, alongside their leverets, plus Roe Deer and Muntjac, and a probable pair of Chinese Water deer in **January 2020**. Additionally, I observed Fox cubs, Rabbits and many Grey Squirrels. Plentiful Dragonflies and Damselflies were to be found at the right season. An abundance of rare trees and flowering plants were omnipresent.

Exciting periods during **March** and **April** saw large [falls](#) of warblers, pipits, larks and wagtails, brought down by the weather conditions. I even heard a Turtle dove on such occasions and one other besides. The rookeries were very active at this time, and I suggest there was at least *three* present around the parish, hosting a population of around *100* pairs.

During **May** and **June**, I sadly observed several predation attempts, namely Magpies predated on our Songbirds and Red Kites attacking corvids and potentially other birds as well. **June** provided me with Toadlets, proving they had bred in the locality and is not something you witness every day. This was the month I briefly became a [film star](#) alongside a particular farmer.

In **July**, the large gatherings of hirundines, i.e. Swallows and Martins, weren't seen in such abundance anywhere else I surveyed. Witnessing Yellow dung flies on the cow pats and insect swarms in **December** were a personal highlight, given hints at arguable local extinctions.

The Full List and their corresponding Maximum numbers, where stated.

FULL LISTING OF BIRD SPECIES	SPECIES CONSERVATION STATUS WHERE APPLICABLE	MAXIMUM NUMBERS DETECTED FROM AN INDIVIDUAL LAND SECTION	LAND SECTION WHERE PEAK COUNT WAS OBSERVED, IF APPLICABLE
BARN OWL		1	CHILTON PARK FARM
BLACKBIRD		18	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS
BLACKCAP		16	WOMBWELLS
BLACK-HEADED GULL	AMBER LIST	PRESENT	N/A
BLUE TIT		38	HORNAGE FARM
BULLFINCH	AMBER LIST	4	CHILTON PARK FARM
BUZZARD		4	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS
CANADA GOOSE		45	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS
CARRION CROW		12	WOMBWELLS
CHAFFINCH		32	WOMBWELLS
CHIFFCHAFF		10	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS
COAL TIT		5	EASINGTON VILLAGE AND SURROUNDINGS
COLLARED DOVE		4	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS
COOT		12	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS
CORMORANT		5	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS
CROSSBILL		PRESENT	WOMBWELLS
CUCKOO	RED LIST	2	EASINGTON VILLAGE AND SURROUNDINGS
CURLEW	RED LIST	1 (FLYOVER)	HORNAGE FARM
DUNNOCK	AMBER LIST	10	WHITCOMBE BARN & GROVE SPINNEY, HORNAGE FARM, WOMBWELLS
EGYPTIAN GOOSE		2	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS
FIELDFARE	RED LIST	45	WHITCOMBE BARN & GROVE SPINNEY
GARDEN WARBLER		1	WHITCOMBE BARN & GROVE SPINNEY
GOLDCREST		2	EASINGTON VILLAGE AND SURROUNDINGS, HORNAGE FARM
GOLDEN PLOVER		120	WOMBWELLS
GOLDFINCH		18	EASINGTON VILLAGE AND SURROUNDINGS
GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL	AMBER LIST	PRESENT	N/A
GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER		4	HORNAGE FARM
GREAT TIT		28	EASINGTON VILLAGE AND SURROUNDINGS
GREEN SANDPIPER	AMBER LIST	1	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS
GREEN WOODPECKER		2	CHILTON PARK FARM, HORNAGE FARM, CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS, WOMBWELLS
GREENFINCH		4	EASINGTON VILLAGE AND SURROUNDINGS
GREYLAG GOOSE	AMBER LIST	9	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS
GREY HERON		2	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS
GREY PARTRIDGE	RED LIST	2	WHITCOMBE BARN & GROVE SPINNEY, WOMBWELLS
GREY WAGTAIL	RED LIST	1	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS

FULL LISTING OF BIRD SPECIES	SPECIES CONSERVATION STATUS WHERE APPLICABLE	MAXIMUM NUMBERS DETECTED FROM AN INDIVIDUAL LAND SECTION	LAND SECTION WHERE PEAK COUNT WAS OBSERVED, IF APPLICABLE
HERRING GULL	RED LIST	PRESENT	N/A
HOBBY		1	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS, WOMBWELLS
HOUSE MARTIN	AMBER LIST	20	WOMBWELLS
HOUSE SPARROW	RED LIST	PRESENT	N/A
JACKDAW		PRESENT	N/A
JAY		3	HORNAGE FARM
KESTREL	AMBER LIST	2	EASINGTON VILLAGE AND SURROUNDINGS, HORNAGE FARM
LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL	AMBER LIST	PRESENT	
LESSER WHITETHROAT		5	HORNAGE FARM
LINNET	RED LIST	30	WOMBWELLS
LITTLE EGRET		2	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS, WOMBWELLS
LITTLE GREBE		3	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS
LITTLE OWL		2	HORNAGE FARM
LONG-EARED OWL		1	WHITCOMBE BARN & GROVE SPINNEY
LONG-TAILED TIT		18	EASINGTON VILLAGE AND SURROUNDINGS, WOMBWELLS
MAGPIE		6	HORNAGE FARM
MALLARD	AMBER LIST	45	WHITCOMBE BARN & GROVE SPINNEY
MARSH TIT	RED LIST	2	CHILTON PARK FARM
MEADOW PIPIT	AMBER LIST	8	WOMBWELLS
MISTLE THRUSH	RED LIST	2	HORNAGE FARM
MOORHEN		5	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS
MUTE SWAN	AMBER LIST	2	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS
NUTHATCH		2	HORNAGE FARM
PEREGRINE		1	HORNAGE FARM
PHEASANT		PRESENT	N/A
PIED WAGTAIL		16	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS
QUAIL	AMBER LIST	1	EASINGTON VILLAGE AND SURROUNDINGS
RAVEN		12	CHILTON PARK FARM
RED KITE		10	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS
RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE		PRESENT	N/A
REDSTART	AMBER LIST	1	EASINGTON VILLAGE AND SURROUNDINGS
REDWING	RED LIST	75	CHILTON PARK FARM
REED BUNTING	AMBER LIST	8	WOMBWELLS
ROBIN		25	EASINGTON VILLAGE AND SURROUNDINGS
ROOK		PRESENT	N/A

FULL LISTING OF BIRD SPECIES	SPECIES CONSERVATION STATUS WHERE APPLICABLE	MAXIMUM NUMBERS DETECTED FROM AN INDIVIDUAL LAND SECTION	LAND SECTION WHERE PEAK COUNT WAS OBSERVED, IF APPLICABLE
SEDGE WARBLER		1	WOMBWELLS
SHOVELER	AMBER LIST	2	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS
SISKIN		1	WHITCOMBE BARN & GROVE SPINNEY, CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS
SKYLARK	RED LIST	40	WHITCOMBE BARN & GROVE SPINNEY
SONG THRUSH	RED LIST	15	WOMBWELLS
SPARROWHAWK		PRESENT	N/A
SPOTTED FLYCATCHER	RED LIST	1	EASINGTON VILLAGE AND SURROUNDINGS
STARLING	RED LIST	600	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS
STOCK DOVE	AMBER LIST	12	WOMBWELLS
SWALLOW		70	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS
SWIFT	AMBER LIST	7	EASINGTON VILLAGE AND SURROUNDINGS
TAWNY OWL	AMBER LIST	1	HORNAGE FARM, WHITCOMBE BARN & GROVE SPINNEY
TEAL	AMBER LIST	2	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS
TREECREEPER		6	HORNAGE FARM
TUFTED DUCK		2	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS
TURTLE DOVE	RED LIST	1	WHITCOMBE BARN & GROVE SPINNEY, WOMBWELLS
WHEATEAR		1	WHITCOMBE BARN & GROVE SPINNEY
WHITETHROAT		10	WHITCOMBE BARN & GROVE SPINNEY, WOMBWELLS
WIGEON	AMBER LIST	250	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS
WILLOW WARBLER	AMBER LIST	1	WHITCOMBE BARN & GROVE SPINNEY
WOODCOCK	RED LIST	2	WHITCOMBE BARN & GROVE SPINNEY
WOODPIGEON		PRESENT	N/A
WREN		16	CHILTON PARK FARM, WOMBELLS
YELLOW WAGTAIL	RED LIST	2	EASINGTON VILLAGE AND SURROUNDINGS, CHILTON GROUNDS FARM AND SURROUNDINGS, WOMBWELLS
YELLOWHAMMER	RED LIST	16	WOMBWELLS
YELLOW-LEGGED GULL	AMBER LIST	PRESENT	N/A

Those numbers and what they might mean for the conservation end-game!

Firstly, let's discuss the overall range count, which returned a figure of some **96** different species across the survey period. Anyone with a remote interest in the Chilton parishes' bird communities should quickly realise just how suitable the existing habitats must be. Several examples of this are witnessed throughout this report by merely browsing the photographs within. And where you possess the ability to understand each individual's requirements as I do, the broader "conservation" impression soon hits home. None more so perhaps, when you consider some **42** of the species witnessed were of significant importance, be it regionally or nationally. Add to this fact, at least **48** per cent of all those encountered, were deemed likely to have bred. This scenario again highlights the importance of this region for our feathered friends.

Land management and its implications on local bird populations.

Every bird requires food in abundance from the get-go, plentiful cover and often several opportunities to breed in peace. Increasingly, this is a massive ask of our birds and all manner of wildlife, given the spread of humanity and its associated infrastructure pressures, climate change threats and a range of other issues exacerbating their plight. However, as the data above shows, there clearly are, specific habitat types which suit particular species and such places provide beacons of hope.

By investigating the varying land management practices around the parish, certain factors appear to draw in different species types. Where Gamekeeping and [supplementary feeding](#) was routine practice, you had more finches and buntings, for instance. Where grazing pastures dominated the landscape, large populations of Starlings, various thrushes and wagtails were in existence and often bred more profusely there. Any region which has adequate coverage of wetland habitat features obviously attracted the highest proportions of Gulls, ducks, geese and members of the heron family, to name but a few. The thorniest thickset hedgerows attracted the many warblers present in the parish and provided safe areas in which to breed, largely unaffected by predators. Predatory types such as the Corvids, Owls, and several other raptor species were also well catered for. Given that Chilton hosts many a rare tree or shrub, with pockets of ancient woodland scattered about; it is no surprise that those birds mentioned earlier should be thriving.

Things never stand still for long, however. The changing seasons, of course, affected the maximum numbers witnessed.

Measuring bird population fluctuations through “timed effort” index calculations.

The fuller findings were recently provided to Duncan Parker and should anyone want to review the specifics; please contact him or myself. More on this in the closing remarks section on page 24 of this report. For now, I will attempt to explain what is meant by “timed effort” indices.

A system of analysis which is becoming much quoted in certain birding circles of late, and increasingly in the broader scientific community, is that of, “**biomass data**”. Put simply, these “**biomass**” figures, relate to the number of *individual* birds detected per visit, bundled together as one sum. These can then be averaged across the whole year or utilised as stand-alone average counts per species, per hour. This estimated total often excludes generalist gamebirds, gulls, commoner corvids, pigeon species, and those which are difficult to assess accurately. Effectively, such indices can act as habitat-quality indicators for particular bird populations or groups of species. It will soon determine what *is*, or *is not*, bird-friendly habitat on any relevant landholding or field section. I find it is most useful when utilised as a bird-by-bird, year-by-year conservation monitoring approach.

With my bespoke "indices" also accommodating the breeding evidence, it acts as proof just how the Chilton countryside as a whole is of significant environmental value. Of course, I will not have ticked off every bird that others had seen during the year, and a recollection of past observations is referenced on page 21.

On the snapshot spreadsheet images on pages 10 to 12, I indicate those species which stood out from the crowd during 2019. The birds in discussion highlighted with a yellow background stood out as “top-performing species” and are only those which could be readily and accurately monitored. Such figures are correct up to the time of publishing.

I draw your attention to the figures quoted in the *second* and *fourth* columns entitled "PEAK TIMED EFFORT AVERAGE HOURLY RETURN". Where they consistently fall below 1.00, there is some concern for the species in question. Such figures should be viewed as a conservation wake-up call when they don't rebound beyond the stated threshold in the coming months and years. The reason being, for the readily recorded types, it typically means that only one pair or an individual of a pairing is observed during a whole hour in-the-field. In the *third* and *fifth* columns, you will note the month in which the peak "timed effort" count was achieved. I imagine this information could prove very useful for the whole farming community. For example, it might be of use to aid any specific farmland bird conservation plans, individual farmers are considering in future. Finally, in the last column, as highlighted in blue, this confirms where said species stood up to the competition.

FIGURES SHOWN WITH YELLOW BACKGROUND ARE THE HIGHEST RETURNS OF ALL MY 2019 CLIENTELE	PEAK TIMED EFFORT AVERAGE HOURLY RETURN (SPRING 2019 TO WINTER 2020)	MONTH OF PEAK COUNT	PEAK TIMED EFFORT AVERAGE HOURLY RETURN (SPRING 2019 TO WINTER 2020)	MONTH OF PEAK COUNT	HIGHEST AVERAGE HOURLY RETURN FROM ALL CLIENT SITES DURING 2019
BIRD SURVEY LOCATION	<u>CHILTON PARISH, WHITCOMBE BARN & GROVE SPINNEY SECTION, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE</u>		<u>CHILTON PARISH, CHILTON PARK FARM SECTION, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE</u>		<u>ALL SITES</u>
BLACKCAP	6.22	JUNE	5.33	JULY	6.22
RAVEN	1.09	JULY	4.80	APRIL	4.80
REDWING	PRESENT	N/A	37.50	DECEMBER	37.50
SKYLARK	20.00	DECEMBER	2.40	APRIL	20.00
WREN	5.09	JULY	7.11	JULY	7.11

Above example indicates the Peak Timed Effort Average Hourly Returns of most significance for the Whitcome Barn & Grove Spinney and Chilton Park Farm land sections.

FIGURES SHOWN WITH YELLOW BACKGROUND ARE THE HIGHEST RETURNS OF ALL MY 2019 CLIENTELE	PEAK TIMED EFFORT AVERAGE HOURLY RETURN (SPRING 2019 TO WINTER 2020)	MONTH OF PEAK COUNT	PEAK TIMED EFFORT AVERAGE HOURLY RETURN (SPRING 2019 TO WINTER 2020)	MONTH OF PEAK COUNT	HIGHEST AVERAGE HOURLY RETURN FROM ALL CLIENT SITES DURING 2019
BIRD SURVEY LOCATION	CHILTON PARISH, EASINGTON SECTION, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE		CHILTON PARISH, HORNAGE FARM SECTION, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE		ALL SITES
BLUE TIT	12.73	JULY	12.80	JUNE	12.80
GREAT TIT	10.18	JULY	8.00	JUNE/JULY	10.18
LESSER WHITETHROAT	0.33	MAY	2.00	MAY	2.00
TREECREEPER	0.36	JULY	2.67	JULY	2.67

Above example indicates the Peak Timed Effort Average Hourly Returns of most significance for the Easington and Hornage Farm land sections.

FIGURES SHOWN WITH YELLOW BACKGROUND ARE THE HIGHEST RETURNS OF ALL MY 2019 CLIENTELE	PEAK TIMED EFFORT AVERAGE HOURLY RETURN (SPRING 2019 TO WINTER 2020)	MONTH OF PEAK COUNT	PEAK TIMED EFFORT AVERAGE HOURLY RETURN (SPRING 2019 TO WINTER 2020)	MONTH OF PEAK COUNT	HIGHEST AVERAGE HOURLY RETURN FROM ALL CLIENT SITES DURING 2019
BIRD SURVEY LOCATION	<u>CHILTON PARISH, CHILTON GROUNDS FARM SECTION, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE</u>		<u>CHILTON PARISH, WOMBWELLS SECTION, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE</u>		<u>ALL SITES</u>
CARRION CROW	2.67	MARCH	4.36	APRIL	4.36
CHAFFINCH	6.33	MAY	11.64	MARCH/DECEMBER	11.64
HOUSE MARTIN	4.00	JULY	8.89	JULY	8.89
PIED WAGTAIL	5.33	MARCH	0.73	DECEMBER	5.33
REED BUNTING	0.67	JUNE	2.91	DECEMBER	2.91
SONG THRUSH	3.00	JANUARY	5.45	DECEMBER	5.45
STARLING	240.00	DECEMBER	3.64	MARCH	240.00
STOCK DOVE	2.67	JULY	4.36	APRIL	4.36
SWALLOW	23.33	JULY	PRESENT	N/A	23.33

Above example indicates the Peak Timed Effort Average Hourly Returns of most significance for the Chilton Grounds Farm and Wombwells land sections.

Chilton parishes' potential winners and losers.

Although Chilton had several “kingpin” species in amongst my overall tally, as witnessed by the images above (*eighteen* in total), there is still room to improve the fate of others. Taken at face value, it could mean we need to address the problems currently affecting the remaining **78**. Clearly, not every one of those remaining would ever stay on-site or even breed here. However, any improvements that can be made might yield a wider variety to loiter. And with the ecological crises well documented by groups such as “Extinction Rebellion”, I guess we all must attempt to do our bit.

In saying all of the above, I might suggest that the relevant landowners or indeed homeowners in the parish, perhaps look at doing things differently in future. Arguably a bizarre if not controversial stance for some, my perspective is that birds and other wildlife can adapt to changes in the environment quite quickly. Ultimately, our managed UK countryside primarily consisting of farmland, is becoming increasingly fragmented. Therefore, the ecological features which exist here alter significantly as the months pass by. More often than not, much of our wildlife does require additional assistance in order to survive. Above all else, our management routines must be maintained in a manner which conserves nature for the next generation and beyond.

Exploring species' differing habitat preferences through the breeding data.

When bearing in mind, specific habitat niches for particular birds, note how *two* adjacent locations might work in tandem. For instance, if a farmstead has predator-proof thickset hedges surrounding its grazed pastures and the neighbouring farm has annual cereal crops, that farming system benefits a wide diversity of bird species. Clearly, without such abutting landscapes being in-situ, many birds might simply desert the area, and the habitat would become all the poorer for their absence. It is thereby vital that such wildlife corridors exist and that habitats the like of which I describe remain free from further desecration. That said, where a bird was known to breed, the habitat definitely fulfilled the species' requirements at that time. Now for a recap of the breeding evidence, gathered during 2019 on pages 14 (B to K) through 15 (L to Y). The keys explaining the chart codes used in these examples follow on page 16.

BIRD SPECIES	SPECIES CONSERVATION STATUS WHERE APPLICABLE	WHITCOMBE BARN							NEARBY
		& GROVE SPINNEY SECTION	CHILTON PARK FARM SECTION	EASINGTON SECTION	HORNAGE FARM SECTION	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM SECTION	WOMBWELLS SECTION		
BLACKBIRD		FL		FL	FL	FL?	FL?		
BLACKCAP		FL*	FL*	FL	FL	FL*			
BLUE TIT		FL*	FL*	FL*	FL*	FL*	FL*		
BULLFINCH	AMBER LIST				FL?	FL			
BUZZARD					FL	FL	FL?		
CANADA GOOSE		FL							
CARRION CROW		FL?	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL		
CHAFFINCH		FL	FL	FL*	FL	FL*	FL*		
CHIFFCHAFF		FL	FL		FL*	FL*			
COAL TIT				FL					
COLLARED DOVE						FL			
COOT						FL			
DUNNOCK	AMBER LIST	FL*		FL*	FL	FL*	FL		
GOLDFINCH		FL		FL	FL	FL	FL*		
GREAT TIT		FL*	FL*	FL*	FL*	FL	FL		
GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER		FL?			FL?				
GREEN WOODPECKER		FL			FL	FL	FL		
GREENFINCH				FL					
HOUSE MARTIN	AMBER LIST					FL			
HOUSE SPARROW	RED LIST			FL	FL	FL?	FL		
JACKDAW		FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL		
KESTREL	AMBER LIST					FL			

BIRD SPECIES	SPECIES CONSERVATION STATUS WHERE APPLICABLE	WHITCOMBE BARN						
		& GROVE SPINNEY SECTION	CHILTON PARK FARM SECTION	EASINGTON SECTION	HORNAGE FARM SECTION	CHILTON GROUNDS FARM SECTION	WOMBWELLS SECTION	NEARBY
LESSER WHITETHROAT						FL		
LINNET	RED LIST				FL		FL	
LITTLE OWL					FL?			
LONG-TAILED TIT		FL?	FL*	FL	FL	FL		
MAGPIE		FL?	FL	FL	FL	FL		
MALLARD	AMBER LIST	FL				FL?		
MARSH TIT	RED LIST		FL					
MOORHEN		FL				FL?		
PIED WAGTAIL					FL	FL?		
RAVEN			FL			FL		
RED KITE			FL	FL?	FL?			
ROBIN		FL*	FL*	FL*	FL*	FL*	FL*	
ROOK		FL	FL	FL	FL	FL		
SKYLARK	RED LIST	FL				FL	FL	
SONG THRUSH	RED LIST					FL?		
STARLING	RED LIST				FL	FL		
STOCK DOVE	AMBER LIST					FL		
SWALLOW				FL				FL
SWIFT	AMBER LIST			FL?				
TREECREEPER					FL	FL		
WHITETHROAT		FL*	FL?	FL			FL	
WREN		FL	FL*	FL	FL	FL*	FL	
YELLOW WAGTAIL	RED LIST					FL?		
YELLOWHAMMER	RED LIST			FL				

FL	Recently F Ledged young (nidicolous species) or downy young (nidifugous species). Careful consideration should be given to the likely provenance of any fledged juvenile capable of significant geographical movement. Evidence of dependency on adults (e.g. feeding) is helpful. Be cautious, even if the record comes from suitable habitat.
FL?	As above, but a probable instance of FLedged young, rather than confirmed.

Land Management practices and the correlation of species success rates.

From a conservation perspective, it’s all very well looking at the numbers and thinking that everything is fine; you still need to dig a little deeper. If I again refer you to my comments about adjoining habitat types (see page 13), you might note the abundance of breeding opportunities afforded to birds at Chilton Grounds Farm which abuts Wombwell. They have very different farming systems in place, similar to that previously described. Because of the mix of habitats present here, this enhances the diversity of wildlife found in this locale. Equally, you can get “village” effects which assist certain other species and, this is witnessed by looking into the Easington section breeding data. Again, this takes me back to my reference to how homeowners can make a difference. Several of these people fed the birds. As a result, the following no doubt benefitted from such activities.

- Blackbird
- Blue tit
- Chaffinch
- Coal tit
- Goldfinch
- Great tit
- Greenfinch
- House Sparrow
- Long-tailed Tit
- Robin

The previous page's listing is not exhaustive. Additionally, provisioning of food alone does not conserve our birds into the future. The birds must have safe areas in which to breed and roost, some requiring this for merely a few months at a time, others more permanently. Predation issues are of course still very much of relevance here as they are anywhere else. Like it or not, it often needs managing or at least mitigating against, if we are to protect and enhance our most desirable of species' situations. Beneath and on the following pages, I have reproduced some images of what I would best describe as "Songbird heaven" and "wildlife havens".









Birds from yesteryear and those near-misses. Could they yet return?

Having had little experience of the Buckinghamshire countryside, other than briefly passing through it on my travels, I soon found out what the varying habitats offered the many birds and wildlife in general. Despite my overall tally of **96** bird species, the figure still doesn't come close to what this region's full potential *actually* is or could yet become. Some of the local people's knowledge and observations are discussed on page 21.

Local knowledge is vital if you truly want to get "under the skin" of what wildlife is out there or has been witnessed in the past. I will reiterate some birds which are missing from my list.

- Common Snipe
- Grasshopper Warbler
- Hen Harrier
- Lapwing
- Lesser Spotted Woodpecker
- Merlin
- Nightingale
- Osprey
- Oystercatcher
- Short-eared Owl
- Tree Pipit
- White-tailed Eagle

When considering the above listing, the *actual* total would now exceed **100** by some margin. Given opportunities to mitigate against any further land degradation threats, the parish could yet achieve the broader county standard set by the official [Bucks Bird Club life listing](#). I hope this summary aids us in understanding what the community might eventually bring back from the brink?

Protecting the diversity of habitats and species surrounding Chilton and why it matters.

The topography and associated varying soil types saw different birds, plants and insects thrive in separate parts of the parish. On several occasions, I came across large numbers of passage migrants and, a lot of those birds which didn't breed here used it as a [staging area](#). This latter aspect should not be understated and, the value of the Chilton countryside to our Avian communities has wider-ranging implications than you could imagine. Take, for example, the many ducks, gulls and other waterfowl which utilised both the smaller and larger water bodies around the parish. Such species (on passage or otherwise) did so at all seasons, and many likely bred elsewhere. For example, maybe they bred at nearby [RSPB Otmoor](#) or even in distant countries, as in the case of the Wigeon.

As already mentioned, some land sections undoubtedly work harder for certain birds than adjacent habitats might do. More precisely, a bird chooses a particular habitat type where it is of the appropriate structure for nesting or roosting in. The various warblers which frequented Hornage Farm and Chilton Grounds Farm to name but two locations were tantamount to this. Here, the pastures and hedgerows enclosing them provisioned sufficient enough food sources for these voracious tiny songbirds. Where the soils were arguably in better condition, the winter thrushes and resident members of the same family, plus others, feasted there, particularly in the wetter spells. The sections which hosted the highest diversity of butterflies, obviously again, had the rightful food plants in place, either as nectar sources or as caterpillar feasting zones. These delightful biodiversity indicator species are listed in full on page 23.

BUTTERFLY SPECIES
BRIMSTONE
COMMA
COMMON BLUE
GATEKEEPER
GREEN-VEINED WHITE
HOLLY BLUE
LARGE SKIPPER
LARGE WHITE
MARBLED WHITE
MEADOW BROWN
ORANGE-TIP
PAINTED LADY
PEACOCK
RED ADMIRAL
RINGLET
SMALL COPPER
SMALL HEATH
SMALL SKIPPER
SMALL TORTOISESHELL
SMALL WHITE
SPECKLED WOOD
GRAYLING?
SILVER-WASHED FRITILLARY?
UNKNOWN BLUE?

Closing remarks

By way of a final reminder, copies of the survey datasheets, “timed effort” counts, indices and breeding data breakdowns are available on request. People desiring hard or electronic document versions should make contact with me via email [here](#) or reach out to Duncan Parker. Finally, I would like to express my thanks to all involved in organising and funding the studies. I think the image below sums things up rather nicely.



Best Wishes, Tony William Powell and [naturestimeline](#)