

Common Bird Census for Wharncliffe Heath Nature Reserve - 2011

The survey was conducted from 03/04/11 to 07/07/11 and comprised of 10 visits. Below are the numbers of territories for the bird species recorded from 1999 to 2011. The CBC in 1999 was conducted by Paul Medforth, 2000-2002 by David Buttle and 2009 onwards by Andrew Hill.

<u>Species</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
Tree Pipit <i>Anthus trivialis</i>	6	6	5	3	4	6
Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	31	14	14	22	19	23
Robin <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	18	13	6	15	10	7
Redstart <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1
Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	26	22	20	22	9	11
Blackcap <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	1	1	0	0	0	1
Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1
Blue Tit <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1
Great Tit <i>Parus major</i>	1	0	0	0	0	2
Coal Tit <i>Parus ater</i>	2	0	0	0	0	1
Nuthatch <i>Sitta europea</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1
Chaffinch <i>Fingilla coelebs</i>	4	3	0	4	2	5
Linnet <i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	1	1	4	1	2	3
Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>	2	2	1	7	4	1

Other species recorded

Siskin, Sparrowhawk, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Green Woodpecker, Feral Pigeon, Collared Dove, Wood Pigeon, Carrion Crow, Lesser black backed Gull, Swift, Swallow, Goldfinch, Kestrel, Goldcrest, Long tailed Tit, Treecreeper

Habitat changes

The clearance of trees below Wharncliffe Craggs that began in 2010 continued in 2011. Most Silver birch trees were removed from the area below Wharncliffe Craggs, with the Sessile Oaks being retained. The result has been the creation of an open habitat that will be managed to form woodland glades. 5 nest boxes were placed in these glades with the hope of attracting various woodland species, but these remained unoccupied in 2011. The heath remained largely unchanged from the previous year. Sheep grazed the area throughout the census period and 2 Shetland cattle were added to the N and S enclosures between 19/6/11 and 3/7/11.

Census Conclusions

The 2011 CBC differed from the earlier surveys due to the inclusion of the woodland parts of Wharncliffe Heath Nature Reserve. The same path was walked on each of the ten visits which was a similar route taken from the previous year, but with an extension into the woodland. If compared with the survey in 1999, there has been a significant decline of Robin and Wren territories. This is likely due to the succession of harsh winters that have occurred in the last three years. The other woodland species show little change, although Redstart and

Nuthatch are now breeding on the reserve. The Redstart territory was found in the open glade area that separates the south of the reserve and Wharnccliffe Chase. The Nuthatch territory was found near the dam pond. On the heathland, the territories of Willow Warbler have increased from the previous year and are now at the highest numbers for 11 years. Most Willow Warbler territories were located on the fringes of the woodland and below Wharnccliffe Craggs. Tree Pipits also had a good year, with 6 territories present, returning to the previous highest territory count, and bucking the national trend of continuous decline. 3 territories were present in the northern enclosure, with 2 in the southern and 1 on the reserves boundary to the south. Linnets also had a good year with 3 territories, 2 in the southern enclosure and one in the northern enclosure. The number of Dunnock territories declined heavily in 2011, with only one being found on the reserve, in the northern enclosure. As with Robins and Wrens, this is likely a result of the harsh winter of 2010-2011. No Nightjars were flushed during the census time, but a pair was present on the reserve in 2011, with both male and female birds being observed on various dates. Woodcock also roded on various dates, involving at least 2 birds.