

Wood Farm Nature Reserve *Bird Report 2021*



Introduction

This is the second annual report about the bird life of Wood Farm. Situated near the summit of Stanmore Hill, and with a mix of open grassy habitat, shrubby cover and surrounded by woodland, it is very attractive as a stopover spot for migrant birds, particularly in autumn. It also has a good range of resident and wintering species.

Bird observations were disrupted for the second year running because of restrictions placed on mobility by the Covid-19 pandemic. This greatly restricted the number of birdwatching visits in January, February and March. Coverage returned to normal from April onwards.

Overview of the site

Wood Farm is a 22 hectare nature reserve in Stanmore, in the London Borough of Harrow. Formerly a working farm and rubbish dump, the site was handed over to Harrow Council in 2015 and designated a reserve. Thereafter, the charity Harrow Nature Conservation Forum began management on behalf of the council.

A small car park is available for public use, from which an all-weather gravel path leads to the panoramic London viewpoint, a feature with bench seating, which attracts many visitors. From this point, visitors can follow a sign-posted circular path round the reserve. The car park opens at 10am and is locked at 8:30pm in summer and around 5:30pm at other times, but check signage on-site for accurate information. Visitors can also walk up from Stanmore Station, through Stanmore Country Park, via Kerry Avenue.



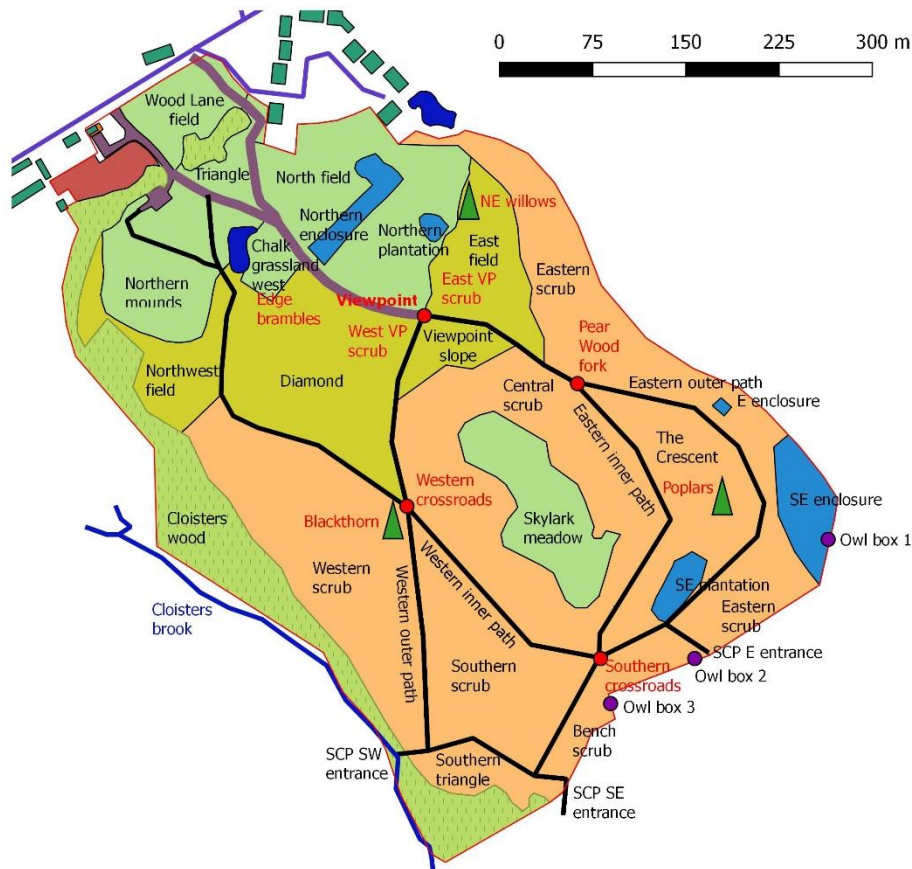
A complete rainbow over the site on 4th May 2021

Wood Farm forms an important part of the Greater Stanmore Country Park nature reserve complex: Pear Wood sits to the east and Stanmore Country Park to the south, giving the reserve a wooded edge. The vast and mostly open environment creates a highly valuable and underrepresented habitat in the north London area – it provides space for a great range of scrub and grassland associated wildlife to feed, breed and shelter throughout the year. Aside from birds, Wood Farm is used by a huge array of other species: from butterflies, bees and other pollinating insects to mammals, including bats, stoats and badgers, as well as grass snakes and newts.

The reserve's main habitats are rough grassland interspersed with scrubland, comprising bramble, blackthorn and other regenerating trees; here, much of the management involves stepping back to let nature take control. However, most of the grassland areas to the north of the site are managed on rotation, being cut once every few years, whilst one area, designated a wildflower meadow, is cut annually. Within the centre of the site, an area of grassland, Skylark Meadow, lies reasonably well-enclosed by bramble. The majority of the reserve sits atop the clay cap, placed post-landfill, though the best wildflower meadows grow where the farm buildings once stood. A wildlife pond close to these meadows can also be explored. Some of the fenced zones near the bordering reserves demarcate sapling plantation, where copses will grow, softening the boundary between woodland and grassy scrub.

The site is managed by volunteer wardens supported by a management committee. Through the annual production of this report, it is the hope of the committee that, in addition to the recording of birds, a wider audience can be engaged with the wildlife of Wood Farm.

Map and location information



Vehicular entrance: [///digs.cook.admits](http://digs.cook.admits). NGR: TQ 168 935. Nearest post code: HA7 4LG

Scope of this report

This report primarily covers records of birds seen within the Wood Farm reserve boundary. Since the site is contiguous with Pear Wood and Stanmore Country Park, many observers will visit those areas as well. The report therefore includes some interesting records from the adjacent areas but, where this is the case, it is indicated in the text in the species accounts.

The data source for this report is the personal records of visiting birdwatchers. Between April and August 2021, this included results from systematic monthly site surveys. This involved walking a set route around the site and noting all the birds seen and has helped to produce some evidence of breeding.

Wood Farm is an excellent location for observing bird migration. Many species migrate unseen, at night. However, it is possible to observe visible migration for several daytime migrant species. For example, sitting at the London viewpoint on a morning in October in light cloudy or clear weather is ideal for this, and Wood Farm is excellent for watching passing thrushes, finches and pipits. This type of observation is colloquially known as “vizmig” and necessarily means seeing species that pass through the site’s airspace without landing. These are an integral part of birdwatching at Wood Farm and such flyover records are included in this report.

Format of this report

The heart of this report is a systematic list of the species recorded at Wood Farm in 2021. The species are presented in the taxonomic order used by the International Ornithological Congress (IOC)¹. The text aims to provide a short summary of each species’ overall status at Wood Farm and an overview of its occurrence in 2021. Comments about breeding success are included where known.

Species names use the British English vernacular name from the IOC list. The scientific name is shown alongside to remove any ambiguity.

2021 highlights

For the second year running Covid-19 restrictions limited the amount of observer visits during the early part of the year. Notable sightings before April were very few and included an early drumming **Great Spotted Woodpecker** on 10th Jan and 11 **Linnets** on 10th Feb, a high winter count for the site. Two **Coots** were present on 3rd Mar, which was the first record at Wood Farm, as distinct from Pear Wood, and the first of several sightings of the species through to June. There were five drake **Mallards** on 23rd Mar.

A limited experiment with passive nocturnal audio monitoring produced recordings of **Tawny Owl** vocalisations on 3rd Apr.

A **Willow Warbler** on 11 Apr, a few metres beyond the Wood Farm boundary into Stanmore Country Park, was a mixed singer – blending Willow Warbler and Chiffchaff song.

¹ IOC list v7.3 www.worldbirdnames.org/new/ioc-lists/master-list-2/

The highlight of the spring was a female **Redstart** seen around the gate to Skylark Meadow on 19th Apr. A smart **Wheatear** was also seen on 19th Apr. A pair of **Wheatears** was seen on 21st Apr and a **Yellow Wagtail** was heard flying overhead on 27th Apr.

The most frustrating sighting of the year was in the early morning on 21st Apr when a possible **Little Owl** was seen in flight near the northern plantation. Looking into bright sun, the observer was unable to confirm the identification, but this is clearly a species to look out for and is known to occur within two miles of Wood Farm.

An adult **Moorhen** seen with three chicks at the pond on 7th May provided the first proven evidence of breeding at Wood Farm.

Another **Willow Warbler** was seen on 7th May and remained until 20th Jun, singing. This looked different from the April mixed singer, but was also occasionally heard to incorporate Chiffchaff elements into its song - mixed singing in Willow Warblers seems to be an increasing phenomenon. Two **Garden Warblers** were present on 9th May and at least two on 16th, giving hope that they breed on the site. There was a very high count of 23 **Whitethroats** on 16th May, emphasising just how important the site is for the species.

Autumn passage began with two **Willow Warblers** seen on 10th Aug, followed by others 18th, 20th and 29th. Other August passage sightings included two **Spotted Flycatchers** on 20th Aug, a juvenile **Skylark** and a **Reed Bunting** on 22nd and a **Wheatear** on 29th.

In September, there was good passage on 4th with a further **Spotted Flycatcher**, a **Lesser Whitethroat** and two **Whinchats**. A different **Lesser Whitethroat** was seen on 5th and further recordings of a **Tawny Owl** were obtained on 18th. Seven **Mistle Thrushes** passing through were notable on 18th.

October saw a high count of around 40 **Meadow Pipits** on 3rd, many of them on newly cut grass. At least three **Stonechats** were present on 3rd, with two on 17th. The first **Redwings** of the autumn involved a count of around 75 on 17th.

A **Reed Bunting** was seen on 7th Nov and a relatively high **Starling** count was on 14th Nov when 27 flew over heading north east.

The most remarkable sighting of the year was of a **Hawfinch** in the morning of 14th Nov seen flying over the eastern boundary with Stanmore Country Park. The sighting meant that seven species of finch were seen at the site during the year.

Another **Stonechat** was seen on 21st Nov.

December brought two records of note. On 12th there was the dramatic sight of a **Sparrowhawk** in hot pursuit of a **Green Woodpecker**. The woodpecker called agitatedly and somehow managed to escape to a tree trunk. The 12th also provided the reserve's first site record of a **Little Egret**, a bird which flew south east in the mid-morning.

List of observers

Tony Blake (TB)

Mark McManus (MMcM)

Ian Jackson (IJ)

Tim Rymer (TR)

Josh Kalms (JK)

Sightings from a wider pool of observers are welcome and encouraged. Please send any records to: woodfarmbirds@gmail.com If you post any sightings on Twitter, please consider using the hashtag: *#woodfarmbirds*

Photographs

A selection of photographs of birds taken at Wood Farm is included in the systematic list. All photos were taken at Wood Farm by Tony Blake in 2021. If you have photos taken at the site, preferably in 2022, that you would like to consider for inclusion in next year's report, please send them to: woodfarmbirds@gmail.com

Cover photo: Wheatear, on 19th April 2022.

Tony Blake, member of Greater Stanmore Country Park Management Committee and Josh Kalms, Wood Farm Volunteer Warden.

Systematic list

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Occasionally encountered, generally as a flyover sighting.

Three records in 2021 were all flyovers – two over on 10th Feb, two pairs over on 2nd Apr and three birds on 18th Apr.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Frequently recorded flying over and occasionally on the pond or scrape.

The maximum count this year was five males on 23rd Mar – one was at the pond and four on the scrape.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

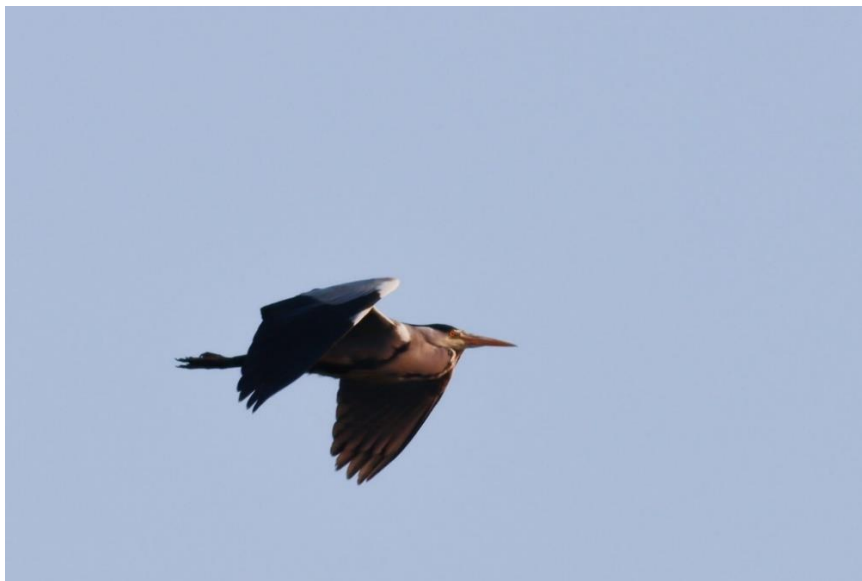
Regularly seen in small numbers, normally when disturbed.

There were records this year in March, April, June, August and October. As was noted in 2020, more study is needed to determine the species' status at Wood Farm.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Occasionally seen, normally flying through the site.

There were four records in 2021, including one bird which landed at the pond on 7th Nov. This is likely to represent a considerable under recording given the frequency with which the species is seen at water bodies in the surrounding area.



A fly through Grey Heron on 19th April 2021

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Very rarely seen flying over – but records likely to increase in line with population spread.

The first site record occurred this year. A single bird flew through, heading south east, on the morning of 12th Dec (TB).

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Occasionally seen flying over.

These records are likely to involve birds moving between the large water bodies in the area (they occur at Hilfield Park and Brent Reservoirs, as well as lakes in the Colne Valley). There were records of single birds in January, March and May and of two birds on 3rd Oct and 5th and 12th Dec.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Regularly present, year-round.

There were 10 records in 2021, all of single birds. The most dramatic sighting was of a bird closely chasing a Green Woodpecker on 12th Dec. The woodpecker evaded its would be predator and recuperated on a tree trunk.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Regularly present, year-round.

There were eight records in 2021, mostly of single birds but with two seen on 2nd and 18th Apr.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Regularly present, year-round, with occasional evidence of passage.

Most 2021 records were of single birds apart from a pair in the air together on 23rd Mar and records of three birds on 29th Aug and 4th Sep.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Irregularly seen at the pond.

There was proven breeding of Moorhens at the pond in 2021. An adult was seen with three chicks on 7th May (MMcM).

Coot *Fulica atra*

Irregularly seen at the pond.

One or two birds were frequently seen at the pond between early March and early June. The species had not been recorded at Wood Farm before this year, though had been seen previously at Pear Wood.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Regularly seen in flight over the site including birds heading to roost at Hilfield Park Reservoir.
A few records in 2021 but no counts of birds passing over on their way to roost.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Regularly seen in flight over the site including birds heading to roost at Hilfield Park Reservoir.
One bird was noted flying over the site on 7th Nov. This must represent significant under-recording.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Regularly seen in flight over the site including birds heading to roost at Hilfield Park Reservoir.
In 2021, the maximum daytime count was two birds on 31st Mar and on two dates in August. There are no count data of birds flying to roost as yet.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Regularly seen in flight over the site including birds heading to roost at Hilfield Park Reservoir.
In 2021, the maximum daytime count was three birds on 16th May. As with Herring Gull, numbers increase on winter evenings when birds fly over on their way to roost at Hilfield Park Reservoir. There are no count data of these roost flights as yet.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Small numbers of birds are present year-round.
The maximum count during the year was of five birds on 16th May. There is no proof of breeding at Wood Farm yet but the species is likely to breed at the site and a bird was seen at the entrance to an owl nest box on 4th Apr.



Stock Dove in April 2021

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Very common resident species and expected to be encountered on any visit to the site.

One result of the very common status of this species is that few accurate counts are made, and the highest of the year was around 50 birds on 10th Jan. Larger numbers can be seen in parts of London flying west or south west in late October/early November as part of a visible autumn migration. No counts were made on the peak migration days in the autumn at Wood Farm in 2021 but a strong Woodpigeon passage is a realistic target for visible migration observation from the London Viewpoint.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Irregularly seen flying over.

There were five records in the year, all flyovers, with one in May, two in August and two in November.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Presumed resident in the surrounding woodland.

Passive nocturnal audio monitoring produced recordings of Tawny Owl vocalisations on 3rd Apr and 18th Sep. Two birds were present on the April date – the recording captures both “kee wick” (female) and “twoo ooo” (male) calls. A recording of the female calls from September can be heard here:

[XC777780 Tawny Owl \(Strix aluco\) :: xeno-canto](#)

Swift *Apus apus*

Regularly seen over and from the site from late spring to the end of July.

The first 2021 record was of two birds on 4th May. The maximum count was of around 20 birds on 20th Jun.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Regularly seen year-round and is assumed to breed in the wooded areas around Wood Farm.

Drumming was heard on several dates between 10th Jan and 31st Mar. Most 2021 records were of single birds but two were heard on 10th Jan.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Present at the site year-round and can be expected to be seen or heard on most visits.

Regularly recorded throughout 2021. Two males were seen confronting each other on the ground on 14th Jun.



Two male Green Woodpeckers following a stand off in June 2021

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Resident, often seen hovering over the site.

Singles were regularly seen throughout the year.



A female Kestrel on a spring morning

Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameria*

Recorded in all months of the year and can be expected to be seen or heard screeching on any visit.
The maximum 2021 count was of around 10 birds on 3rd Oct.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Present in small numbers and seen year-round typically at the wooded reserve perimeter.
Four birds were seen on 17th Oct, a time of year when the species is most visible collecting food for burial and use over the winter.

Magpie *Pica pica*

A common resident species that can be expected to be seen on any visit to the site.
The highest count of the year was six on 3rd Oct.

Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula*

Resident with passage sometimes in evidence in the autumn.
Seen throughout the year with a maximum count of around 10 individuals on 3rd Oct.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

A common resident species that can be expected to be seen on any visit to the site.
The highest 2021 count was an exceptionally large flock of around 50 birds to the south west of the Wood Farm perimeter just in Stanmore Country Park on 16th May.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Common resident.
The maximum count at Wood Farm in 2021 was five on 16th May. Larger numbers can be seen in Pear Wood.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Resident.
The largest count of the year was six on 10th Apr, which included five individuals together engaged in aggression display.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Principally an autumn flyover passage migrant.

There was one record this year, of a juvenile bird on 22nd Aug, initially seen on the eastern inner path and which then flew to Skylark Meadow (TB). There were no flyover records in autumn 2021 – this is much more likely to reflect the level of observer activity than a genuine absence of passage.



Juvenile Skylark on 22nd August

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Scarce autumn migrant.

One record in 2021 - a single was seen flying south east on 4th Sep (TB).

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Occasionally seen throughout spring and summer with a peak of records during autumn passage.

The first record in 2021 was of three birds heading north on 27th Apr with five further spring and summer records. Notable autumn passage records involved around 10 seen flying south east on 4th Sep and a further 10 the next day.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Erratically seen in summer with a later autumn passage than the previous species.

There was just one 2021 record, of five birds on 3rd Oct.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Probably present at or around the site all year round, but most records are from late summer to winter.

The highest counts of 2021 were from Pear Wood (around eight on 10th Jan and six on 20th Aug), and this suggests that the species strays to Wood Farm from the adjacent woodland.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Regular passage migrant in small numbers.

The first record of the year was a bird heard singing at the south of the site on 11th Apr (TB). The observer was intrigued also to hear Chiffchaff song from the same location and stalked the bird to a small clearing just into Stanmore Country Park. It was a “mixed” singer – singing both Willow Warbler and Chiffchaff phrases. On plumage, it was a Willow Warbler. Reports of mixed singing individuals have become more frequent in recent years in southern England, possibly as a function of population decline. A Willow Warbler was also singing at the edge of Stanmore Country Park on 19th Apr and it or another was seen on 7th May, remaining until 20th Jun. This bird also sometimes produced some Chiffchaff phrases. The first return passage birds were two juveniles seen on 10th Aug, with further records of singles on 18th, 20th and 29th Aug.



The Willow Warbler that spent two months from spring to early summer on territory

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Common summer visitor that breeds at the site.

The first record of the year was a singing bird on 23rd Mar. Multiple individuals were present throughout spring and summer and into the autumn. There was proof of breeding with an adult carrying food for young on 30th May. The final record was a single bird calling on 17th Oct.



An early spring Chiffchaff

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Common summer visitor which almost certainly breeds at the site.

The first record of the year was on 31st Mar and numbers quickly built with five present on 2nd Apr. The highest count was eight birds on 16th May. The final birds of the year were seen on 18th Sep.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Summer visitor in small numbers and probably breeds at the site.

After the first site records last year, there was another good showing for this species that is more often heard than seen. There were two on 9th May and at least two on 16th May, including a pair in suitable breeding habitat. The final sighting was a single bird on 21st Aug.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Scarce passage migrant.

There were two records this year, singles on 4th and 5th Sep. Subtle plumage features suggest that they were different individuals (TB).

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Common summer visitor that breeds at the site.

This is Wood Farm's summer flagship species, easily detected by its scratchy song and in the spring its soaring song flight a few metres above its scrub habitat. The first record was of a presumably recently arrived skulking bird, giving a muted song on 18th Apr. By 21st Apr, 10 were present and the highest count of the year was 23 on 16th May. There was clear evidence of breeding – an adult carrying food on 7th Jun and the first sighting of a juvenile on 18th Jul. The final sighting of the year was of 10 birds, including six in the same bush, on 5th Sep.



Female Whitethroat

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Occasionally seen at Wood Farm and regularly present in Pear Wood.

There were three records of single birds in 2021, on 16th and 30th May and on 12th Dec.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Resident and proved to breed at the site in 2021.

A juvenile was seen on 13th Aug, making calls begging for food. The highest count was of five individuals on 18th Apr.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Resident and often encountered in the trees around the perimeter of the site.

Most records were of single birds and often heard but not seen. Two birds were seen on 3rd Mar.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Not yet recorded at Wood Farm, but present in Stanmore Country Park and Pear Wood.

A single was noted just over the perimeter in Stanmore Country Park on 11th Apr.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Most frequently seen as an autumn flyover on passage.

Birds were noted on three dates in 2021: one on 17th Oct, around 10 heading north on 31st Oct and 27 moving north east on 14th Nov.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Present at the site throughout the year, sometimes with numbers increasing in the autumn and winter with the arrival of Scandinavian birds.

Recorded throughout the year. The highest count was eight seen on 16th May during a thorough survey.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Autumn passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were only two records in 2021 of this autumn migrant and winter visitor. Two were seen on 3rd Jan and around 10 on 7th Nov.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Autumn passage migrant and winter visitor.

The highest count in the first winter period was 35 on 3rd Jan. The largest autumn passage count was of 75 birds, mostly heading west, on 17th Oct. The highest count of the second winter period was of 25 on 12th Dec (all counts TB).



A flock of Redwings in January

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Resident and probably breeds on site and/or in the adjacent woodland.

Recorded throughout the year. Five were counted in a survey on 16th May, the highest number seen in 2021. Two were singing on 29th Nov.



Song Thrush

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Can be seen year-round, but with largest counts associated with autumn passage.

There were records between January and May and then in September and October. A single bird was heard singing on 19th Apr. The highest count in 2021 was a total of seven birds heading south west in two small flocks on 18th Sep.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Occasional late summer and early autumn passage migrant.

After a blank year in 2020, it was pleasing to have two autumn passage records. Two birds were present on 20th Aug and one on 4th Sep. It is worth scanning the tops of the trees in late August and early September for this species – passage birds like to perch up high and can be quite obvious on a dead branch.



One of the autumn passage Spotted Flycatchers, perching typically on a dead branch

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Regularly present apart from the period from mid-spring to mid-summer.

The pattern of occurrence in 2021 was consistent with previous years. Our understanding at the site will develop but this seems consistent with the theory expressed in last year's report that a lot of the birds seen in autumn and winter move into gardens to breed. There were no counts higher than two birds, though more were seen in Pear Wood.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Occasional passage migrant, mainly in late summer and early autumn.

Just one record this year, unusually a spring one, on 19th Apr. This was a female seen at the gate to Skylark Meadow. (MMcM).

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

A late summer and early autumn migrant, in small numbers.

Two birds were seen on 4th Sep, a rather poor showing compared with 2020 (TB).

Additional 2020 record: we have been notified of an additional 2020 record, a single bird on 9th Sep (TR).



Whinchat in typical habitat in September 2021

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Autumn migrant and occasional winter visitor.

There were three autumn records in 2021 – at least three birds on 3rd Oct, a male and female on 17th Oct and a single on 21st Nov.



A beautifully concealed Stonechat in November 2021

Wheatear *Oenanthe Oenanthe*

A regular spring and autumn migrant in small numbers.

Recorded on three dates in 2021. In April, a male was present on 19th and possibly the same bird was with a female on 21st (both McMM). The only autumn record was one bird seen briefly in flight on 29th Aug (TB).

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Common breeding resident.

There were records in every month of the year. Breeding was proved with an adult seen feeding young on 10th Aug. There were several high counts in April – the maximum was eight birds seen on 18th.



Dunnock in November

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Occasional spring and autumn flyover, often heard but not seen.

There was just one record in 2021 – a bird heard calling, presumably as a flyover, on 27th Apr but was not seen (MMcM).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Occasionally seen, normally as a flyover.

There were three records in 2021. A bird flew south west on 3rd Jan and one was seen in flight but dropped down near the pond on 17th Oct. The final record was a bird heard on 12th Dec.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Occasionally seen flying over the site.

There were six records in 2021 – one in January, February and March; two in early April; and one on 3rd Oct.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Regular spring and, particularly, autumn migrant.

There was one spring record, a single on 2nd Apr. Autumn records occurred on five dates between 19th Sep and 7th Nov. Most involved small numbers but there was a high count of around 40 on 3rd Oct. Many were flying over, but around 20 were seen on the ground in a newly cut area of grass.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Mainly known at Wood Farm as an autumn passage migrant when it can sometimes be seen in small flocks flying over, normally heading north west.

A poor showing in 2021 with just three records. The highest count was eight most of which headed north or north west with two stopping to perch at the site. The other records were singles on 21st Nov and 5th Dec. Our lack of records may reflect low coverage on days when the species was moving, but concerningly could also reflect a known decline in the species. This has been estimated at 30% in the UK between 2007 and 2018².

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Extreme local rarity.

The sighting of the year, though a brief one. A bird was seen on the morning of 14th Nov in flight above the tree line at the south of Wood Farm, heading north east (TB). It caught the eye as an obviously large finch with broad white wing flashes across its primary feathers. Hawfinch is sometimes seen in the London area as an autumn passage migrant or winter visitor. The species used to occur regularly in small numbers at nearby Bentley Priory but has been seen there only occasionally in recent years. The most realistic chance of a further sighting at Wood Farm will be a flyover passage bird on a day when finches are moving in autumn.

² BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey Data – see here: <https://www.bto.org/how-you-can-help/help-fund-our-work/appeals/chaffinch-appeal>

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Resident in small numbers and probably breeds in the woodland around the site.

Small numbers were seen or heard throughout the year. The highest count was four birds on 12th Dec.



Bullfinch on a freezing morning in early January

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

Seen occasionally, often as a flyover.

Three records only in 2021, no doubt reflecting the recent population declines caused by the avian disease, *trichomonosis*. One bird was seen on 10th Jan and two on 16th May and 14th Nov.

Linnet *Linaria cannabina*

Breeds at the site and is most common in spring and summer but small numbers have been present in the last two winters.

There were records in all months except September and December. The highest count was of 11 birds on 10th Feb. Breeding was also proved this year. First a bird was seen carrying nesting material to an area of brambles on 19th Apr and a juvenile was seen being fed on 10th Aug and it or another was seen on 13th Aug.



Linnet

Lesser Redpoll *Acanthis cabaret*

An occasional autumn and winter visitor, normally in small flocks.

Three records in early winter were at a typical time of year but represented a much smaller showing than in 2020. A single was heard in flight on 7th Nov, two birds were seen by the moat on 14th Nov and a further single bird was heard on 12th Dec.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Resident for most of the year, but scarce or absent in early to mid-summer.

Recorded in every month. The highest count of the first winter period was 19 on 10th Jan. Numbers then fell but a large flock built up in August, with 25 birds seen on 20th and 21st. The highest count was 30 birds on 4th Sep.



Goldfinches at work on teasels in September

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Occasional passage migrant, particularly in autumn, and winter visitor.

There were two records in 2021 – an adult male on 22nd Aug and another on 7th Nov.



Reed Bunting in November

List of species recorded at Wood Farm

The species listed below have all been recorded in or from Wood Farm (so this list includes birds seen flying over). The “last recorded (year)” column excludes Pear Wood records.

An additional 12 species have been recorded in Pear Wood, which has a longer recording history, but not at Wood Farm³.

Species	Scientific name	Last recorded (year)
Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	2021
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	2017
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	2020
Mandarin Duck	<i>Aix galericulata</i>	2018
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	2020
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	2021
Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	2021
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	2021
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	2021
Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	2021
Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	2021
Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	2021
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	2021
Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	2021
Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	2021
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	2018
Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	2020
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	2021
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	2021
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	2021
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	2021
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	2021
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	2021
Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	2021
Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	2020
Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>	2021
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	2016
Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	2021
Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	2020
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	2021
Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	2021
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	2021
Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	2020

³ Tufted Duck; Smew; Goosander; Woodcock; Common Tern; Lesser Spotted Woodpecker; Coat Tit; Marsh Tit; Grasshopper Warbler; Treecreeper; Nightingale; Tree Sparrow.

Species	Scientific name	Last recorded (year)
Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	2020
Ring-necked Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	2021
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	2021
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	2021
Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	2021
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	2021
Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	2020
Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	2021
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	2021
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	2021
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	2021
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	2021
House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	2021
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	2021
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	2021
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	2021
Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	2018
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	2021
Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	2021
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	2021
Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	2021
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	2021
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	2021
Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	2021
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	2021
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	2021
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	2021
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	2021
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	2021
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	2021
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	2021
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	2021
Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	2021
Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	2021
Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	2021
Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	2021
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	2020
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	2021
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	2021
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	2021
Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	2021
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	2021
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	2020
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	2021
Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	2021

Species	Scientific name	Last recorded (year)
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	2021
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	2021
Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	2021
Lesser Redpoll	<i>Acanthis cabaret</i>	2021
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	2021
Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>	2020
Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	2021

We are eager to plug any gaps in this list of species already recorded and hope continued birding at the site will produce some new additions. If you are aware of sightings of a species not covered here, please e-mail with details: woodfarmbirds@gmail.com