

Sutton Neighbourhood Plan



Consultation Report

Appendix CR20

Sutton Village Wildlife Reports

info@suttonneighbourhoodplan.uk

www.suttonneighbourhoodplan.uk

<http://facebook.com/suttonneighbourhoodplan>

[This page is left intentionally blank]

Sutton General Wildlife (Fauna) Survey

Interim Report for February 2020

First, a big thank you to the 6 people who submitted their observations in time to be included in this report. If you have results for February, it's not too late to have them included in the final report for the month.

Between them the 6 people:

- Recorded 426 observations of which all but 18 were of birds
- They identified:
 - 41 species of birds (of which 4 are on the UK biodiversity watch list)
 - Even so, several species of birds I would have expected to have reported in Zone B (Church Road), have yet to feature in the survey
 - 7 species of mammals (of which 1 is on the UK biodiversity watch list)
 - 1 species of insect
- A total of 1,352 individual animals (birds, mammals and insects) were reported
- We achieved reasonable coverage of areas B, D and F but need observations from the remaining areas, especially C and E
- Already there is strong evidence that the species recorded either side of High Street (Zones D & F) differ substantially from those recorded along Church Road (Zone B), although blue tits, goldfinches and jackdaws are abundant throughout the main part of the village.

Having made such an encouraging start we need to continue the survey for at least another four months if we are to observe and record the migratory and nesting animals. At the same time I will be including the information we collect in an appendix of supporting evidence that will form part of the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan.

Please find attached an updated copy of the recording sheet which makes it clearer that animals heard can be counted alongside animals seen (not forgetting the footprints and other evidence that they often leave as evidence that they have visited our gardens and fields).

Please come back to me if you have any questions or need help with the survey,

Mike Kingdon

Sutton General wildlife (Fauna) Survey

Interim Report for March 2020

A big thank you to all those who have sent me their record sheets for March. If you still have sheets for March to submit, it's not too late.

Mammals

Rabbits, Foxes, Badgers, Grey and Black Squirrels, Muntjac, Roe Deer and Field Mice were all reported in March but only the Grey Squirrels were recorded enough times to be described as Common. While evidence of Hedgehog activity was reported, there were no actual live sightings. Hedgehogs are on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, so please keep looking out for them.

Birds

In March 891 sightings of birds and 1824 individuals were recorded. Ten new species of birds were added to those seen in February making a total of exactly 50 bird species recorded since the survey began. Recorded for the first time in March were:

1. Chiffchaffs
2. Mallards
3. An Egret
4. Canada Geese
5. Greylag Geese
6. Skylarks
7. Grey Partridges
8. A Golden Pheasant
9. Mute Swans
10. Tree Creepers

Conversely, the following birds recorded in February were not reported in March:

1. Brambling
2. Barn Owl
3. Little Owl
4. Tawney Owl
5. Grey Wagtail

The fact that few of us are going out at night probably explains why the owls have not been reported.

Of the birds on the United Kingdom Biodiversity Action Plan, six were reported in Sutton in March:

- Grey Partridges
- Starlings
- Song Thrush
- Skylarks
- Yellow Hammers
- Sparrows

The small number of sightings of the first 3 suggest that they are rare in Sutton. There were sufficient sightings of Skylarks (6 sightings and a total of 12 individuals) and Yellow Hammers (6 sightings, 9 individuals) to suggest that they are common and Sparrows were abundant (33 sightings, 97 individuals).

There are two UK species of Sparrows – House and Tree – both of which are on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, so it would be a plus if we could count them separately.

It is now possible to begin the classification of Sutton's birds as Abundant, Common or Rare:

Abundant:		
Blackbirds	Jackdaws	Great Tits
Crows	Magpies	Long Tail Tits
Dunnocks	Pheasants	Greater Spotted Woodpeckers
Chaffinches	Robins	Wood Pigeons
Green Finches	Sparrows	Wrens
Gold Finches	Blue Tits	
Common		
Buzzards	Jays	Red Kites
Collared Doves	Skylarks	Yellow Hammers
Black Headed Gulls	Red Legged Partridges	
Rare		
Brambling	Nuthatches	Swans
Reed Buntings	Ban Owls	Mistle Thrushes
Chiffchaffs	Little Owls	Song Thrushes
Mallards	Tawney Owls	Coal Tits
Egrets	Grey Partridges	Tre Creepers
Canada Geese	Golden Pheasants	Grey Wagtails
Greylag Geese	Rooks	Pied Wagtails
Sparrow Hawks	Starlings	Green Woodpeckers
Kestrels		

Reptiles

No sightings of reptiles (snakes, slow worms or lizards) were reported. Given March's weather that's not so surprising.

Amphibians

Midwife Toads have returned to Sue McClymont's pond. While they are not on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, they are special. (I'll leave it to Sue to explain why.)

Insects

Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral, Peacock, Brimstone and Large White Butterflies were all reported, as were 6, 7 and 16-spot Ladybirds. So many Buff Tailed Bumble Bees were reported they can definitely be described as common.

Coverage of Zones

Almost all of the sightings of birds are from Zones B, D and F, while those of mammals are more evenly spread. It would be good to have more sightings from Zones A, C and E. So if you're undecided where to take your daily exercise please bear these zones in mind.

The Wildlife Survey So Far

To have 50 different species of birds recorded in the second half of February and into March demonstrates that Sutton has wildlife worth protecting. The mammals, amphibians and insects reported all strengthen our argument that Sutton is special and every animal recorded strengthens our case for adequate green gaps.

Looking forward, we need to maintain the record keeping for another two month, by which time the spring migrations will have been completed and summer residents will be raising their families. Animals to look out for and record include:

Mammals: Hedgehogs, Hares, Otters (there is a lot of evidence that Otters are active in the brook) and a sighting of a Water Vole would be a real bonus.

Birds to look (and listen) for include: Cuckoos, Corn Buntings, Lapwings and Terns, plus Kingfishers, Moor Hens and possibly even Coots along the brook. I've seen (and/ or heard) all seven in previous years and it would be good to know they are still with us. And, if you do see Sparrows please try to identify whether they are the House or Tree varieties.

Reptiles: all reptiles are well worth recording.

Amphibians: I have seen Great Crested Newts in Sutton but not in recent years. Any new sightings would be valuable evidence of Sutton's unique and varied wildlife.

Insects: Mary has had to put the moth hunt on hold until the virus subsides. Nevertheless, April will bring even more insects that were recorded in March.

Sutton General Wildlife (Fauna) Survey: Results to end April 2020

Again, a big thank you to all those who have sent me their record sheets for April, and if you still have sheets to submit, it's not too late.

16 households sent in results for April and between them made 1,295 sightings (complete with date, approximate time and location) of 2,730 birds, mammals, amphibians, insects and fish, plus literally hundreds of tadpoles in garden ponds. Over the 11 weeks of the survey, Sutton residents made a total 2,757 recorded sightings of 6,138 animals (+ *the aforementioned tadpoles*) – a fantastic effort. The only downsides are that we're missing sightings of some of Sutton's regular fauna and no reptiles have been reported to date.

The survey demonstrates that Sutton has wildlife, well worth preserving. Meanwhile, other environmental work undertaken to support the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan is demonstrating how strategically important Sutton is to the local and wider movement of wildlife. Traditionally, instead of fences Sutton's farmers have used streams, ditches and hedges to delineate field boundaries, leaving animals free to roam across the open farmland that covers three quarters of the parsh.

Mammals

If the grey and black squirrels are counted separately, 9 species of mammals were reported in April including photographs of hedgehogs taken by a wildlife camera. Additionally, there have been unconfirmed sightings of a water vole, a mink and a wildlife camera on the golf club recorded an otter. There were multiple sightings of Muntjak and Roe deer, and black squirrels were reported at both ends of the village. While the evidence of resident bat populations has been strong, the first sightings of bats flying were not reported until early May.

Otters, **hedgehogs, water voles and some species of bats are all on the Natural England priority list** so further sightings would strengthen the argument that Sutton is special. Conspicuous by the absence are **hares** which are also on the priority list.

Birds

In April there were 1,044 reported sightings of birds and 2,071 individuals were recorded. Twelve new species of birds were added to those seen in February and March making a total of 62 bird species recorded since the survey began. Recorded for the first time in April were:

- Blackcaps;
- **Cuckoos**
- House Martins
- Kingfishers
- **Marsh tits**
- Moorhens
- Swallows
- Garden and Grey Warblers
- **Yellow Wagtails**
- Whitethroats

And in response to last month's request, there have been sightings of both **House** and **Tree Sparrows**, bringing the number of birds on the **Natural England Priority List to 10**.

Birds to look and listen out for in May include Lapwings, Corn Buntings, Nightingales and Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers, all of which have been reported in Sutton in past years and are on the priority list.

It is now possible to update the classification of Sutton's birds as Abundant, Common or Rare:

Abundant:		
Blackbirds Crows Dunnocks Chaffinches Green Finches Gold Finches Jackdaws	Magpies Pheasants Robins House Sparrows Tree Sparrows Starlings Blue Tits	Great Tits Long Tail Tits Greater Spotted Woodpeckers Wood Pigeons Wrens
Common		
Buzzards Collared Doves Black Headed Gulls Mallards	Jays Skylarks Red Legged Partridges Red Kites	Rooks Green Woodpeckers Yellow Hammers
Rare		

Blackcaps	Moorhens	Song Thrushes
Bramblings	House Martins	Coal Tits
Reed Buntings	Nuthatches	Marsh Tits
Chiffchaffs	Barn Owls	Tree Creepers
Cuckoos	Little Owls	Garden Warblers
Little Egrets	Tawney Owls	Grey Warbler
Canada Geese	Grey Partridges	Grey Wagtails
Greylag Geese	Golden Pheasants	Pied Wagtails
Sparrow Hawks	Swans	Yellow Wagtails
Kestrels	Swallows	Whitethroats
Kingfishers	Mistle Thrushes	

Reptiles

Still no sightings of reptiles (snakes, slow worms or lizards).

Amphibians

More Midwife Toads have been reported plus Common Tads, Newts and lots of tadpoles. It would be good to receive sightings of frogs, know the parentage of the hundreds of tadpoles, and the species of newts.

Insects

April has been a very warm month and insects have flourished. A total of 121 sightings of butterflies and moths were reported and some 236 were identified as belonging to 15 different species. Sufficient numbers of Orange Tip and Peacock butterflies were reported for them to be described as abundant. Holly blues, Brimstones, Large Whites and Red Admirals were all common, with rare sightings of Common Blues, Small Whites, Cabbage Whites, Commas, Speckled Woods, Nut Tree Moths, **Small Blues** and **Small Tortoiseshells**. The last two are on the Natural England priority list

11 other species of bees, bumblebees, wasps, flies and beetles were reported of which the Buff Tailed Bumblebees and Honey Bees were sufficiently numerous for them to be described respectively as abundant and common.

Fish

Finally, the sunshine and warm water have meant that are visible again in the brook. Darren and Claire were able to photograph some which were identified by their red fins as roach.

Going forward

As reported in my last e-mail, the timetable for the submission of the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan may be brought forward so the environmental report I'm collating will include the results this survey up to April. However, I'm sure we will find another means of updating the report to include new species.

I'm reluctant to stop the wildlife survey immediately because May will bring more summer migrants, and others have expressed similar views. It has also provided an interest for many in a difficult time and, as far as social-distancing has permitted, it's become a talking point. Therefore, I propose we continue the survey in the following way:

1. We continue to observe and record the wildlife we see in and around Sutton but recording everything down to each robin, pigeon and squirrel becomes optional.
2. We focus on recording the mammals, amphibians and reptiles, plus birds that are "firsts" for each of us;
3. We report the insects that interest us. When everything returns to normal, Mary will try to arrange for the County Moth Recorder to organise a moth hunt for us;
4. You continue to submit the records of the wildlife you see (or hear etc.) and I will continue to collate and circulate the results.

Thank you again for the results you submitted for February, March and April. The Steering Committee is making good use of the collated results. Thank you, in anticipation, for the further sightings you will be making and reporting.

Mike K

Sutton General Wildlife Survey: Result for May 2020

To date I've received results from 12 people in the village, which is slightly down on previous months. If anyone has any further results for May, it's not too late for me to include them.

Although the emphasis of the survey changed at the beginning of the month, the results are still impressive:

- 56 species of birds were reported of which:
 - Four – **Bullfinches**, Stock Doves, Swifts and two species of Crows - were new to the survey but not to Sutton, having been reported regularly in the golf club's records;
 - Before you question my addition, Barbara McC was able to differentiate sightings of Crows into the Hooded and Carrion varieties and, as Crows have been reporting in all the previous months' results, I've only counted them as one extra species;
 - **Bullfinches** are a priority species giving us a total to date of 11 priority bird species;
 - Pleasingly, the May results included repeat sightings of what seem to be some of Sutton's rarest birds – Tree Creepers, Blackcaps, **Marsh Tits** and White Throats.
- 10 species of mammals were reported. While this is the same number as for May the species seen were different and included two sightings of a **Brown Hare** and one sighting each of a Shrew and a House Mouse. **Brown Hares** are a priority species so their return to Sutton is particularly welcome.
- Although they have been recorded in previous months, there were multiple sightings in May of **Hedgehogs** in the gardens either side of High Street. Muntjac and Roe Deer were both reported throughout Sutton.
- Three species of amphibians were reported in May – the Midwife Toads were reported in three gardens on the south side of High Street and I saw two species of frogs in my front garden on several occasions – one small and black, the other larger and tan coloured. Unfortunately, neither stayed around long enough for their species to be determined.
- Towards the end of May I reported, and photographed, the **Grass Snake** that Phil Lane found in his garden. Since then there have been at least three further sightings of **Grass Snakes** – all in gardens on the south side of High Street - and the reported lengths are sufficiently different for repeated sightings of a single snake to be discounted.
- Nine species of butterflies were reported including, Copper Edge Whites, Small Skippers, and Painted ladies;
- Eight other insect species were reported, including a colony of Purse Spiders off Lantern Lane;
- Small shoals fish continue to be reported in the brook and conditions haven't permitted identification;
- Finally, an unusual slug has been reported.

Sutton General Wildlife Survey: Result for June 2020

First an apology for the delay in sending the June summary. My only excuses at that a lot of things got in the way and it has taken some time to identify and/ or confirm several of the species reported.

The number of observers submitting sightings and the average numbers of sightings each submitted were both down. Given the amounts of natural food and cover available, the reductions were probably inevitable.

Results for the month included:

- **Birds:** 40 species of birds were reported in June, including two that were new to the GWFS survey – Herons and a Reed Warble. The total number of bird species recorded in our survey now totals 69 and the overall number recorded in both the village and golf club surveys rises to 110.
- **Mammals:** 10 species of mammals were reported in June, the same number reported in May. An addition to the June list was a bank vole, a first for the GWFS survey
- **Amphibians and reptiles:** two species of amphibians were reported but no reptiles.
- **Butterflies:** June proved to be a prolific month for butterfly sightings. 25 different species were reported of which 10 were new to the survey. Of particular interest were:
 - **Small Heath Butterflies**, which are on the Natural /England priority list;
 - Meadow Browns, which were abundant in village gardens but absent from the golf club records; and,
 - Orange Tips which were conspicuous by their absence, having been common or abundant in previous months.

In total the June sightings bring the number of butterflies recorded in our survey to 25, including three that are on the Natural England priority list.

- **Moths** featured significantly in the June sightings. Seven different species were reported of which five were new to the survey. Of particular interest were the:
 - The bright red Cinnabar Moth;
 - The equally spectacular Scarlet Tiger Moth;
 - Hummingbird Hawk Moths, which made welcome returns to village gardens;
 - Adult White Spotted Pinion Moths, which are unique to habitats with residual clusters of elm saplings - Sutton has several. Sightings of the caterpillars, were also reported.
- **Other insects:** A dozen or so other species of insects – bees, bumblebees, wasps, damselfly and dragon flies, other flies, beetles, spiders and bugs - were included in the June reports.
- Last but not least, more Tiger Slugs were reported and one observer identified fish in the brook as chub.

Reed Warblers, Meadow Brown Butterflies, and Scarlet Tiger Moths are probably not new to Sutton, and Hummingbird Hawk Moths are regular summer visitors to Sutton's gardens however, they have not been recorded in other current or recent surveys.

Comments

Although the sightings for June were lower than previous months, they continue to demonstrate the huge variety of Sutton's wildlife and the importance of its large range of habitats. Sutton is acquiring a number of important strategic roles:

1. As a hub for wildlife to move through the parish, unhindered by fences, major roads and urban development;
2. As a refuge for wildlife displaced from adjacent parishes.

Compiling the survey results has its interesting moments. Back in April Mary and I walked the footpath that skirts the golf course and Pegnut Wood. We crossed the B1040 and walked up Galley Hill. The elm saplings were already in leaf and the ends of many twigs were curled up in what at first sight we took for leaf-curl. Closer inspection reveals that many of the curled-up leaves contained green-striped caterpillars, which we assumed belonged to White Spotted Pinion Moths.

We photographed them and forwarded the photographs to Bedfordshire's official moth recorder. His reply was disappointing. He suggested that many moths have similar caterpillars, the ones we'd seem might well belong to the Silver Ground Carpet Moth and the only way to be sure was wait until they hatched.

We returned some weeks later and collected another large green-striped caterpillar, tight inside its nest of leaves. Mary fed it fresh elm leaves, provided some water to keep it from drying out and a couple of days later it pupated. Three weeks passed and the moth hatched out. We photographed it and released it in an elm hedge. Mary sent the new photographs to the moth recorder and yesterday she received an e-mail to confirm that the photographs were indeed of a White Spotted Pinion Moth and she was invited to log the sighting on the official Bedfordshire moth website.

And the usual reminder

The end of July is almost on us and I hope to receive your sighting for the month. As usual, please e-mail them to me at the above address or post them through the door of 32 High Street. They are helping.

Mike K