

Platt Fields Park

Appendix four: Breeding Bird Survey 2009

1 Background

As part of a Biodiversity Assessment of Platt Fields Park in south/central Manchester the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) was commissioned to carry out a breeding bird survey of the park in Spring 2009.

2 Methodology

The surveys were carried out on the 24/04/2009 and 08/05/2009 (6 am to 10 am) by Stephen Atkins AIEEM, Assistant County Bird Recorder for Greater Manchester, and Derek Richardson MIEEM, Principal Ecologist, Greater Manchester Ecology Unit. On both occasions the weather was overcast but dry.

A transect was walked though the Park and at a number of points the surveyors stopped for ten minutes and recorded all the birds seen and/or heard. The recording points are shown on Map 1. They were chosen to give comprehensive coverage of the entire Park.

Signs of breeding behaviour were noted as follows:

FL	–	fledgling birds seen
ON	–	bird seen on the nest
D	–	courtship and display behaviour seen
S	–	singing male present
FF	–	adult carrying food for young or fecal sac
P	–	pair observed in suitable nest building habitat

2.1 Limitations

Two visits carried out in Spring / Summer will not give a comprehensive list of bird species that may use the Park. Such a list would need to be compiled by visiting the Park on a regular basis throughout the year. However, two visits is sufficient to give a good representative sample.

3 Results

The detailed results are presented in Table 1.

In summary

Number of species recorded = **34**

Number of species showing breeding signs = **17**

Notable species recorded included –

Song thrush (UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species)

Nuthatch (relatively uncommon in urbanised locations)

Great Spotted Woodpecker (relatively uncommon in central Manchester)

House Sparrow (red status, in decline and in need of urgent conservation action)

Lesser Redpoll (red status, in decline and in need of urgent conservation action)

Mistle Thrush (amber status, numbers declining in UK)

Dunnock (amber status, numbers declining in UK)

The majority of species were recorded either on or near to the Park lake or within the woodland belt running though the park along the line of Platt Brook.

The most numerous bird recorded was starling, with 64 individuals seen on the first visit and 61 on the second.

4 Conclusions and recommendations

Platt Fields Park supports a varied species composition, including some notable species.

To improve the Park for birds, artificial nesting places (e.g. boxes) should be installed and the habitats present should be diversified as much as possible (as described in the main text).