

Garden Birdwatch – the First Quarter

As with the national garden birdwatch schemes, results are worked out on the basis of the species seen in the highest number of gardens each week, rather than the most individuals of a species seen which doesn't give quite the same result!

Thought that there was a change to the pecking order, but had misread the chart – it's still as in the first month!

No 1
Super Songster Blackbird
Seen in 98.87 % of the gardens





In 2nd Place
Waddling Woody Woodpigeon

Seen in 95.74 % of gardens

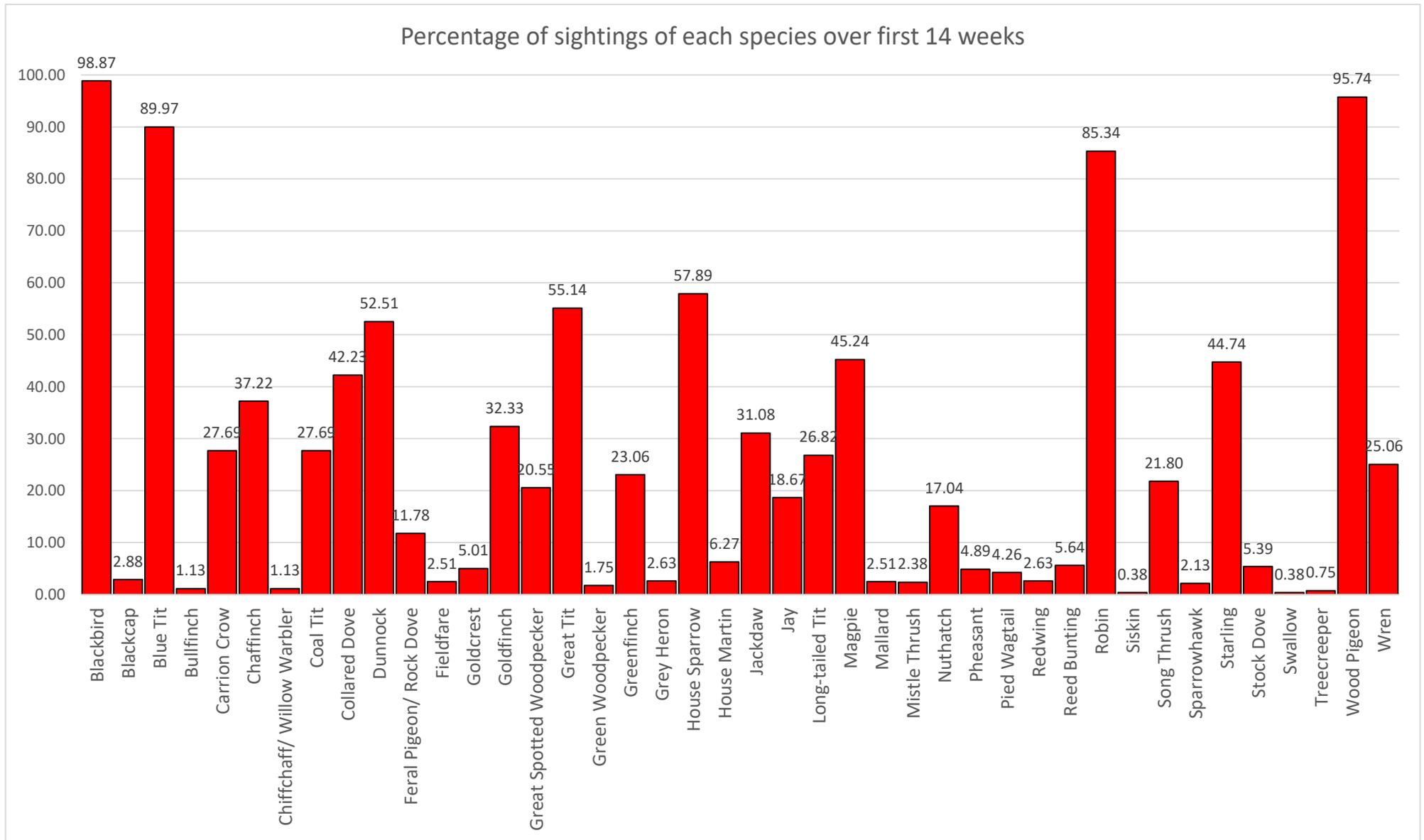
And 3rd
Cheeky Blue Tit

Not far behind on 89.97%



- 4th Robin 5th House Sparrow 6th Great Tit 7th Dunnock 8th Magpie 9th Starling 10th Collared Dove
11th Chaffinch 12th Goldfinch 13th Jackdaw 14th Coal Tit 15th Carrion Crow 16th Long-tailed Tit 17th Wren
18th Greenfinch 19th Song Thrush 20th Great Spotted Woodpecker

Sara Taylor has put together a brilliant chart from your observations showing percentages of gardens visited by ALL the birds we have listed on the website form for all entries made up to the end of March. (The Swallow entry must be an input error!)



In the 1999 Garden Bird Survey the results were written up by Graham Smith and he analysed the results for the whole year, coming up with a top 20 that bears much similarity to what we have discovered so far, but with some noticeable differences:

	
Woodpigeon - up from 9 th equal to 2 nd	Starling – down from 2 nd = to 9 th
Duncock – up from 14 th to 7 th	Chaffinch – down from 4 th = to 11 th
Goldfinch – up from 17 th to 12 th	Greenfinch – down from 9 th = to 18 th
Jackdaw – up from 20 th to 13 th	Song Thrush – down from 12 th = to 19 th
Coal Tit – up from 19 th to 14 th	Wren – down from 12 th = to 17 th

And a few interesting comments from the “notes” columns

I saw my one and only Redpoll ever!(it obviously fancied a change from Nigel and Debbie's...) (Liz H)

2 Badgers 1 Fox A large flock of about 150 Starlings settled briefly in trees surrounding garden, followed by a mixed flock of Redwing and Fieldfare, about 70 birds. (Roger K)

Putting a few peanuts on the lawn is attracting a couple of Jays for the first time. (Peter & Emma T)

4 Reed Buntings (2 male, 2 female) (Tony & Pat J)

2 Herring Gulls on our roof top, flock of Greenfinches landed in trees at bottom of garden (Rose W)

Nothing different in my garden, BUT actually remembered binoculars last week, and one day saw the herons in the heronry along the Downs link! Plus another by the stream. (Tarah S)

Working in the garden in the twilight on Saturday was constantly buzzed by 3 bats - don't know which type though. (Martin T)

Every time I have Lucy to stay, (she's a labrador!), I give her a brush and leave her hair in an old plant pot in the garden. The blue and great tits have now been helping themselves to it for nesting material! (Lesley M)

And a few other birds that have been seen!



Grey Wagtail



Red-legged Partridge



Treecreeper



Coal Tit

Interestingly the results from the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch have been recently released, but scrutiny of their website reveals that they work out their results on the basis of how many individuals are seen overall rather than how many gardens are visited by particular species. This does make a difference, because this method leads to them putting House Sparrow top, with Starling 2nd, Blue Tit 3rd, Blackbird 4th and Wood Pigeon 5th. However Henfield Birdwatch will stick to our previous tried and tested method – and the one which has been used by the British Trust for Ornithology since their national weekly survey started in 1995. Reconfiguring the RSPB order on the basis of percentage of gardens visited immediately whizzes Blackbird up to the top again, demotes House Sparrow to 5th and Starling to 10th, more in line with our own results!

It's still not too late to start but if you've really decided not to do it then you can let us know by emailing gardenbirdsurvey@henfieldbirdwatch.co.uk

Look out for.....

The first House Martin was seen in the Deer Park Estate on 7th April, Swallows can't be far behind, and Swifts should be arriving at the end of the month or early May. If you are lucky enough to have any of these species nesting at your house or nearby, please make a special note of this in your "Comments" box.

So keep on looking, keep on recording (making sure you enter your figures against the correct week date), and keep on enjoying your garden birds.

And once again

Many thanks!