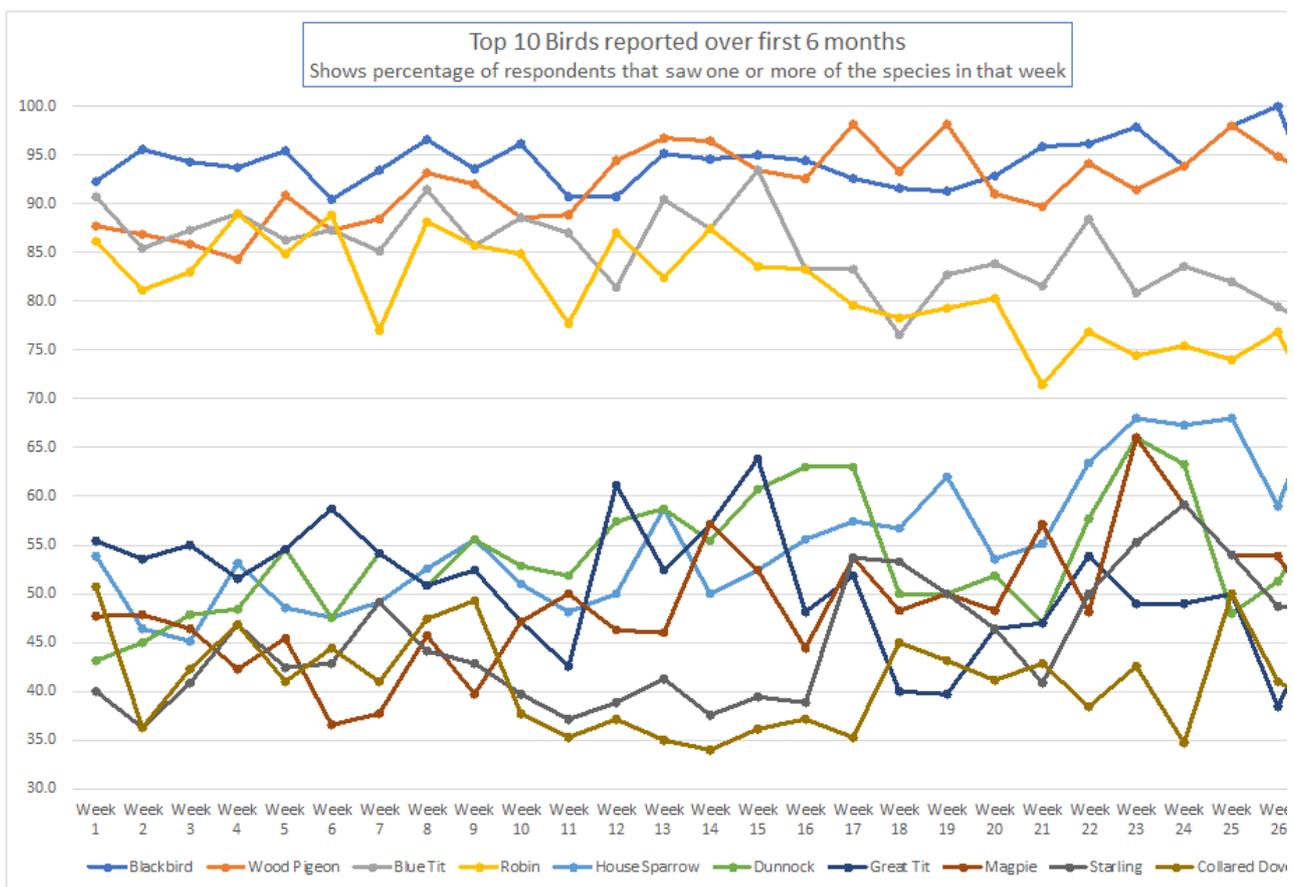


Garden Birdwatch – the First 6 months

First of all a big thank you to all who have managed to stay the course and completed the first six months of garden birdwatching!

I'm glad to report that apart from holidays I've just about managed to keep up, though it is a regular habit as I've been taking part in the national BTO Garden Birdwatch scheme for a few years now.

Sara Taylor has produced an interesting chart detailing the percentage of gardens which have seen the "Top 10" species, and it's rather interesting.



The top four remain Blackbird, Wood Pigeon, Blue Tit and Robin, but on occasion Wood Pigeon has overtaken Blackbird and both Blue Tit and Robin seem to have dropped slightly during June. Of course, Blackbird and Wood Pigeon are rather larger than Robins and Blue Tits, so are more easily seen – Blue Tits flit quickly in and out of bushes and to and from feeders, while

Robins are poking around in the vegetation, and the brown mottled youngsters are particularly hard to see – a very sensible anti-predator precaution!



Blackbird with lots of hungry mouths to feed!

What is noticeable though is that lines for the first four and the remaining six Top Ten birds never overlap. Even on the lowest percentage for Robins and the highest percentage for House Sparrow, there's still a gap and does demonstrate that other than the top 4, the other species are less widely distributed – even if there may actually be more of them about!

A FEW SNIPPETS FROM THE COMMENTS COLUMN AND PHOTOS FROM BIRDWATCH MEMBERS!

“For the past, at least 5 years or more, we have had great tits nesting at the bottom of a 5ft hollow concrete post that our back gate is attached to. We watch them from our conservatory window, the parents coming and going with food. We are always intrigued how the young manage to fledge from down in the deep concrete hole. We were supposed to put a finishing cap on the post years ago but we will leave it as it is now as we are always pleased to see the great tits each spring.”
Maureen Fletcher



Nesting Mistle Thrush (Libby Serpis)

"We started to get evening visits from a badger who cleaned up any remaining bird food on the ground and also started to dig up plants! We discovered he could get through the bars on our metal gate so have put a strip of chicken wire across the bottom. Problem solved!"
Malcolm & Pam Cusack

At dusk on Friday evening the most beautiful Barn Owl flew backwards and forwards over the garden to the delight of my friends who had come round for a gin!
Angela Ripp



Mr & Mrs Blackcap in Paula Blake’s garden (showing interest in an area behind a large, high bank of Honeysuckle as a potential nest site.)

Hedgehogs in Malcolm & Daphne Staley’s garden, and at Malcolm & Pam’s. Slow worm seen by Maureen Fletcher, 2 Grey Partridge at Roger Keen’s – unusual for the latter to turn up in gardens!

“All week have had furious chirping in the mornings every minute or so from nest full of Starling fledglings in the gutter by my bedroom window.”
Brenda Moffatt

“Visited by at least 12 young starlings who demolished three 'golden balls' and disappeared. Two adults came unaccompanied.”
Ernie Gillians

"I can hear a new generation of starlings in our swift box where they have nested and produced young every year for the last 17 years!"

Rose Wade

The photo taken by Simon Grinyer in Batts Drive



Ralph Gilbert's large pond (lake?) at Bramlands Lane had a Muscovy duck with 32 ducklings! Later in May Canada Geese produce 3 goslings, and pair of Tufted Ducks returned in early June.

"Baby sparrows in one bird box, baby blue tits in the other. 99% sure I spotted & heard a garden warbler on my TVs aerial."

Eric Holder



At one stage Debbie & Nigel Colgate had no less than 7 fox cubs frolicking about their garden!

"1 greenfinch flew into window, fell to ground stone dead. Cats may have caught a blackbird "



Jenny Lees

"Have now seen House Martins flying over the Hooks, impossible to count them. Don't think they can use the nest on our house as there seems to be a dispute over it with sparrows."

Tarah Sampson

"Dead male Stag Beetle on the lawn, 2 (1 male and 1 female) getting intimate in the flower bed and a male under each of our 2 garden waste bins."

Martin Tooth

" I found two in a secret tryst on my buddleia- felt rather guilty when they fell off while I was trying to take a photo!"

Val Bentley

"one stag beetle in flight knocked down by a blackbird performing a vertical take off to get to it!"

Rose Wade



Some Peacocks had some fun and games round the village in June & July – starting off in a garden in Chanctonbury View, then passing by the former Gardeners Arms, the village hall and spending a day in the front drive of a house in the Daisycroft. Ros Dean said they were back in Chanctonbury View again in August too!



<p>"2 Magpies having a fracas trying to see off 4 young Jackdaws and parents from the fat balls!" <i>Leslie Ainslie</i></p>	<p>"11 rabbits, and a lizard in communal pathway" <i>Janet Bridgewater</i></p>	<p>"Last week 4 baby Greenfinches and 2 baby Robins" <i>Jenny Lees</i></p>
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By now (August) we are well over half way through the year of garden watching. There have been good numbers of young birds around this year, particularly the tits – as can be seen from the photo below. All the yellow faced Blue Tits are the youngsters while the white-faced adult is watching over their bath-time antics!

Bath-time supervision at Debbie & Nigel's (photo by Debbie)



Please carry on with the survey – only 4 ½ months to go!