

## **Fairfield Nature Reserve Breeding Birds 2021: an Overview**

Please read this with reference to the spreadsheet and annotated field maps.

This year the spreadsheet compares the season's breeding information with that of 2020 and 2019. Hence, species that have not been recorded as breeding post-2018 are omitted from the comparison.

With this in mind you might notice that Linnet and Lapwing have 'dropped off the chart'. While these have only been occasional breeders here these are key conservation species. In the case of Lapwing (for which some management work had been undertaken in winter to 'prepare' the arable field for this species) the non-appearance of even prospective males was a disappointment and is probably due to the dwindling population near the estuary at Aldcliffe, for which Fairfield could be considered an overspill site. Unless this local decline in the core populations reverses I'm not optimistic that Lapwings will return.

In better news you'll see that the numbers of the woodland / garden suite of passerines we have breeding on the reserve appear mostly to be stable or slightly increasing. In terms of the wetland / wet farmland loving Reed Bunting is on an upward trend, with two pairs holding territory this spring / summer. This is perhaps due to the supplementary feeding scheme in the run up to the breeding season which saw a record thirty individuals in late winter.

The amber-listed Whitethroat rose to two pairs for the first time since monitoring began. In order to consolidate numbers and increase nesting habitat / shelter for songbirds I'd strongly recommend increasing the width of hedgerows on site, particularly along 'long pads'.

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