

## FAUNA BREEDING BIRD SURVEY 2012

*This is a report on the first annual Breeding Bird Survey of the Fauna site. It was conducted by Dan Haywood, a local Lancaster resident who is a qualified ornithologist, using the official methodology of the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO): see <http://www.bto.org/about-birds/birdtrends/2011/methods/breeding-bird-survey>. We are committed to surveying the Fauna and Flora sites annually, and will be updating the website as new surveys are completed.*

Three two-hour visits were made to the site in what was a cool and wet breeding season.

The poor weather limited the availability of suitable survey opportunities, and probably will have impacted on the breeding success of the birds too, but I feel a reasonably accurate picture of how the site was used by birds was achieved nonetheless.

The first visit was perhaps a little late in the Spring (May 2<sup>nd</sup>) but I feel this acceptable and perhaps advantageous given the late arrival dates of certain migrant breeders in 2012, both locally and nationwide. A 'late' Spring in some senses.

Across the three survey visits, 42 bird species were encountered while on site. This figure includes passage migrant flyovers (e.g. Siskins and Swallows), local breeders foraging on the ground in the open areas (e.g. Starlings and Jackdaws), aerial specialists (e.g. Swifts and Martins) using FAUNA airspace, and other forms of use.

Twenty-three of those species were deemed to be breeding on the site itself (mainly woodland and garden species) and figures for numbers of pairs are tabulated below. In addition, Swifts, House Martins, House Sparrows and Jackdaws were casually observed to be nesting in houses immediately adjacent to the site, so FAUNA can also be seen to be of benefit for those marginally extra-limital breeding species.

The presence of Tree Pipit, Northern Wheatear and Common Redstart on the May 2<sup>nd</sup> visit further highlights the importance of this habitat for resting/feeding off-passage migrant songbirds, a category which has in previous years included my own records of Whinchats, Pied Flycatcher, Wood Warbler and Cuckoo.

Although all the species encountered are in the table, I'd like to draw particular attention to the Lapwing record.

The Lapwing was a male which was present on the first visit only in suitable breeding habitat, and was possibly the same individual that was casually noted there on April 26<sup>th</sup>. Though there was no display behaviour or female, it lingered on site on the first survey date and this could be considered encouraging, as this species formerly bred on this very spot in most years between 1995-2000 and probably before, but not since.

On a less positive note, familiar breeding period species Whitethroat and Lesser Whitethroat (1-2 pairs breed here in some years) were nowhere to be seen on any visit, and just one, non-singing male Reed Bunting was a disappointing return for a traditional breeding site.

**FAUNA BREEDING BIRD SURVEY 2012 – SIGHTINGS TABLE**

<b>Jackdaw</b>	Corvus monedula	Up to 5 feeding in open areas. Likely to breed in adjacent housing.	Green
<b>Kestrel</b>	Falco tinnunculus	1 flyover.	Amber
<b>Lapwing</b>	Vanellus vanellus	1 male on 1st visit.	Red. Lancashire BAP species
<b>Long-tailed Tit</b>	Aegithalos caudatus	1pair	Green
<b>Magpie</b>	Pica pica	1-2 pairs	Green
<b>Mallard</b>	Anas platyrhynchos	1-2 pairs	Amber
<b>Meadow Pipit</b>	Anthus pratensis	2 presumed off-passage birds on 1 <sup>st</sup> visit.	Amber
<b>Mistle Thrush</b>	Turdus viscivorus	1 pair	Amber
<b>Moorhen</b>	Gallinula chloropus	1-2 pairs	Green
<b>Pied Wagtail</b>	Motacilla alba	1 pair	Green
<b>Redstart</b>	Phoenicurus phoenicurus	1 off-passage bird 1 <sup>st</sup> visit.	Green
<b>Reed Bunting</b>	Emberiza schoeniclus	1 male on 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> visits.	Amber. Lancashire BAP species
<b>Robin</b>	Erithacus rubecula	2 pairs	Green
<b>Shelduck</b>	Tadorna tadorna	One record- a pair circled the site on 1 <sup>st</sup> visit as if wishing to land. Species breeds locally.	Amber
<b>Siskin</b>	Carduelis spinus	2 passage migrants over.	Green
<b>Song Thrush</b>	Turdus philomelos	2 pairs.	Red. Lancashire BAP species
<b>Starling</b>	Sturnus vulgaris	1 pair, with more nesting in adjacent houses.	Red
<b>Stock Dove</b>	Columba aenas	2 records of single birds. Has bred locally.	Amber
<b>Swallow</b>	Hirundo rustica	A few passage migrants and feeding local breeders.	Amber
<b>Swift</b>	Apus apus	A few passage migrants and feeding local breeders.	Amber
<b>Wheatear</b>	Oenanthe oenanthe	4 females on 1 <sup>st</sup> visit-- off-passage migrants.	Amber
<b>Willow Warbler</b>	Phylloscopus trochilus	0-1 pairs.	Amber
<b>Woodpigeon</b>	Columba palumbus	2-3 pairs.	Green
<b>Wren</b>	Troglodytes troglodytes	8-10 pairs.	Green