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2014 Big Farmland Bird Count Results

GWCT's first Big Farmland Bird Count took place between the 1st and 7th February 2014. Here is a summary of the results -

Participation.

Over 500 farmers took part and recorded 116 species.

The average farm size of those taking part was 924 acres giving a total area farmed of nearly half a million acres.

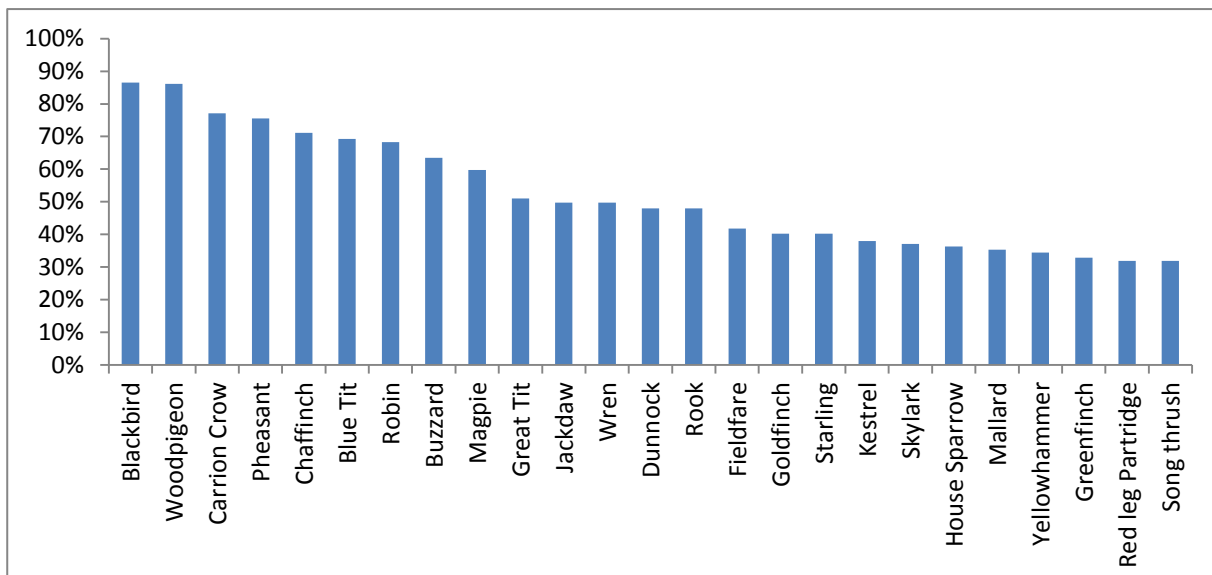
What did farmers see?

The graph below shows the percentage of farms seeing each species.

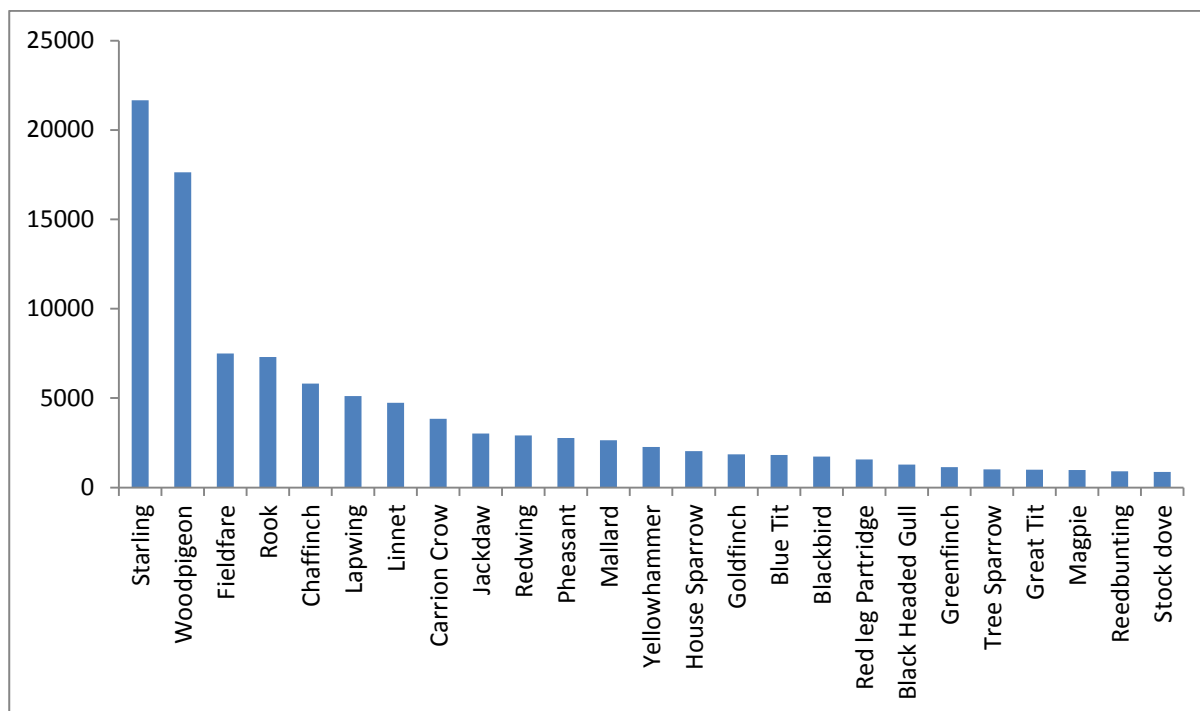
Woodpigeon, blackbird, carrion crow, pheasant and chaffinch were seen by over 70 % of the farmers taking part.

There are 11 red list species in this list – corn bunting, fieldfare, grey partridge, house sparrow, lapwing, linnet, skylark, song thrush, tree sparrow and yellow hammer.

We also had sightings of twite, lesser spotted woodpecker, bittern, wax wing and great grey shrike.



The graph below shows the actual number of each of the top 25 species seen.



The five most abundant birds seen were Starling, Woodpigeon, Fieldfare, Rook and Chaffinch.

Starlings were seen on over 40% of the farms taking part and were the most abundant bird recorded in the survey. Followed

Six of the top 25 most abundant species are on the Red List of Conservation concern; these are linnet, yellowhammer, house sparrow, tree sparrow, starling and lapwing.

12 different species of raptors were recorded.

Who Counted?

The average farm size of those taking part was just over 920 acres.

The type of farm enterprise taking part reflected the full range farm businesses we had hoped to see.

70% of farm grew combinable crops, 55% had beef or sheep; more than 10% grew field vegetables. There were a number of dairy farms, horticulture units, poultry producers and pig producers submitting counts.

Over 75% of participants are in some form of agri-environment scheme.

Nearly 60% of participants have shoots on their farm.

Over 60% of participants were providing some form of seed feed for birds, either as wild seed mixes, by scatter feeding or by feeding via hoppers.

Where were they from?

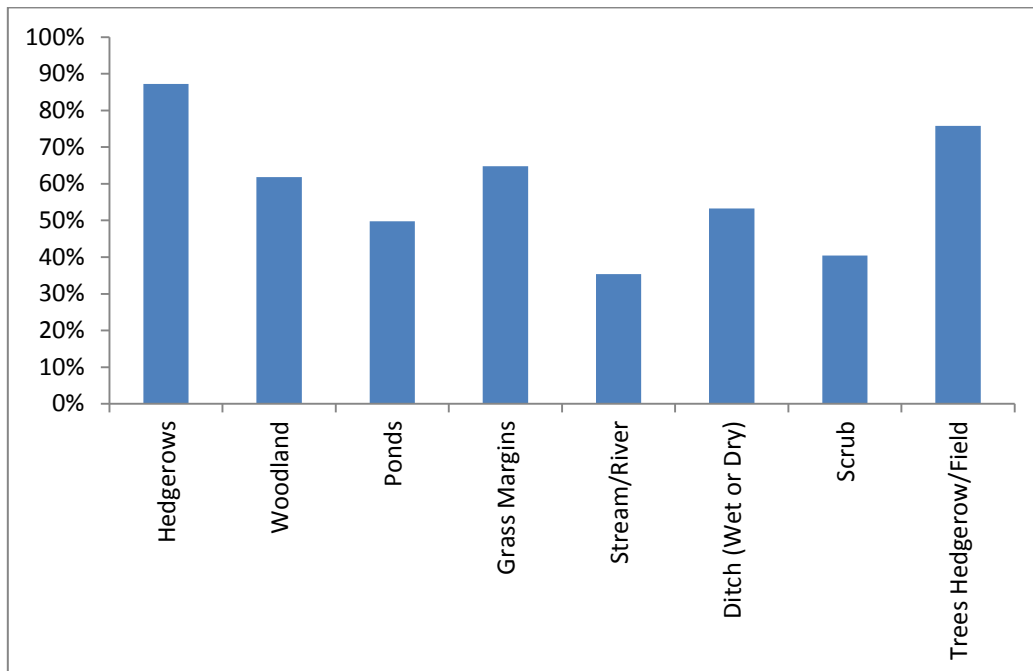
Farmers from every county in England took and there were responses from Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Norfolk had the most returns with 35 farmers completing the survey, closely followed by Yorkshire with 31.

We even had one return from Austria.

Where did they count?

The survey areas included important environmental features such as hedges, woodland ponds, grass margins, ditches and trees. This is shown in the graph below.



Most survey sites were next to winter cereals, grassland or over wintered stubbles.

What next?

The second Big Farmland Bird Count will take place during the week of 7th – 15th February 2015.

Thank you for taking part in the count / taking an interest in our results.

For more information please visit www.gwct.org.uk/BFBC or contact Morag Walker on 01425 651000 or mwalker@gwct.org.uk.