

# Rare Breeding Birds In Bedfordshire

*Compiled by the  
Records and Research Committee  
Bedfordshire Bird Club*

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## **Rare Breeding Birds in Bedfordshire.**

This document has been compiled by the Records and Research Committee of the Bedfordshire Bird Club. All three authors serve in an honorary capacity under the following titles:

- Graham Goodall; Research Officer.
- Steve Blain; Bedfordshire Bird Recorder.
- Roger Hicks; British Trust for Ornithology Regional Representative.

### **Criteria and definitions**

The document supports the bird criteria for the identification of county Wildlife Sites. In order to assist users, certain criteria and definitions have been applied.

### **Rarity**

The criteria used to determine 'rarity' are relevant to the bird species that breed, or have bred, in Bedfordshire, based on the latest Bedfordshire Breeding Atlas. Relevant thresholds e.g. number of pairs and/or number of sites or tetrads occupied have been applied following data analysis of three county breeding atlases and annual Bird Reports. As a result, rarity has been determined as less than (<) 25 pairs and/or <38 'sites' or tetrads occupied. The number (threshold) of occupied tetrads was determined as a percentage of the county; i.e. the county has 378 tetrads and 38 tetrads represents 10% of the land area of the county.

### **Breeding**

The breeding season is nationally accepted as running from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> August, with the proviso that resident species may breed during February and March depending on prevailing weather conditions at the time. Proof of breeding or an attempt to breed can take several forms; therefore, the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) definitions have been used:

#### **Probable breeder:**

- Pair in suitable nesting habitat.
- Permanent Territory (defended over at least 1 week).
- Visiting probable nest site.
- Agitated behaviour.
- Brood patch of incubating bird (seen on bird in the hand).
- Nest building or excavating a nest hole.

#### **Confirmed breeder:**

- Distraction display or injury feigning.
- Used nest or eggshells found from current season.
- Recently fledged young or downy young.
- Adults entering or leaving nest site in circumstances indicating occupied nest.
- Adult carrying faecal sac or food for young.
- Nest containing eggs.
- Nest with young seen or heard.

### **Review**

A review of this document will take place after the 2017 breeding season.

## References

Annual Bird Reports; 2008 – 2012.

Bedfordshire Breeding Bird Atlas 1968-1975 (Harding, 1979).

Bedfordshire Breeding Bird Atlas 1988-1992 (Dazley & Trodd, 1994).

Bedfordshire Breeding Bird Atlas 2007-2011 (Bedfordshire Bird Club website).

British Birds. September 2014. Volume 107. *Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 2012.*

Mark Holling and the Rare Breeding Birds Panel.

### Species:

Whooper Swan

Barnacle Goose \*

Egyptian Goose \*

Common Shelduck

Mandarin Duck \*

Eurasian Wigeon

Gadwall

Eurasian Teal

Pintail

Garganey

Shoveler

Red-crested Pochard

Common Pochard

Tufted Duck

Goosander [PB]

Common Quail

Great Cormorant

Eurasian Bittern

Little Egret

Black-necked Grebe [PB]

Grey Heron

Honey Buzzard [PB]

Red Kite

Marsh Harrier [PB]

Montagu's Harrier [PB]

Northern Goshawk [PB]

Water Rail

Oystercatcher

Avocet [PB]

Little Ringed Plover

Ringed Plover

Eurasian Curlew

Common Redshank

Woodcock [PB]

Common Snipe [PB]

Common Tern

Black-headed Gull

Mediterranean Gull [PB]

Lesser Black-backed Gull

Herring Gull

Turtle Dove

Long-eared Owl

European Nightjar [PB]

Common Kingfisher

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

Peregrine [PB]

Rose-ringed Parakeet [PB] \*

Common Raven

Firecrest

Bearded Tit [PB]

Woodlark [PB]

Sand Martin

Cetti's Warbler

Dartford Warbler [PB]

Common Nightingale

Black Redstart [PB]

Common Redstart [PB]

European Stonechat [PB]

Northern Wheatear [PB]

Tree Sparrow [PB]

Tree Pipit [PB]

Hawfinch [PB]

Lesser Redpoll

Common Crossbill

Siskin

### Note:

Potential colonists - breeders (PB) have been added to the list, based on recent occurrences and that breeding has taken place in close proximity – neighbouring county - to Bedfordshire (British Birds, 2014). Some species have bred in the past and may do so again.

\* Introduced species should not be used to support the identification of a county Wildlife Site if they are the only rare breeding bird present.