

# Rare Breeding Birds In Bedfordshire

## Criteria for selection

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

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### 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 county '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, county 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.

National rarity is defined as 30-300 breeding pairs (Holling et al. 2015). The suffix NRBB has been used to identify nationally, rare breeding bird species that occur in Bedfordshire.

### Breeding

The breeding season is nationally accepted as running from 1<sup>st</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> August (RSPB; Natural England), with the proviso that resident species may breed in other months 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.** This document will be reviewed annually.

#### Species List

Whooper Swan (Amber) NRBB

Barnacle Goose \* (Amber)

Egyptian Goose \*

Common Shelduck (Amber)

Mandarin Duck \*

Eurasian Wigeon (Amber) NRBB

Gadwall (Amber)

Eurasian Teal (Amber)

Pintail (Amber) NRBB

Garganey (Amber) NRBB

Shoveler (Amber) NRBB

Red-crested Pochard \*

Common Pochard (Red) NRBB

Tufted Duck (Green)

Goldeneye (Amber)

Goosander (Green)  
 Common Quail (Amber) NRBB  
 Great Cormorant (Green)  
 Eurasian Bittern (Amber) NRBB  
 Little Egret (Green) NRBB  
 Black-necked Grebe (Amber) NRBB [PB]  
 Grey Heron (Green)  
 Honey Buzzard (Amber) NRBB [PB]  
 Red Kite (Green)  
 Marsh Harrier (Amber) NRBB  
 Montagu's Harrier (Amber) NRBB [PB]  
 Northern Goshawk (Green) NRBB [PB]  
 Water Rail (Green) NRBB  
 Spotted Crake (Amber) NRBB [PB]  
 Oystercatcher (Amber)  
 Avocet (Amber) NRBB [PB]  
 Little Ringed Plover (Green) NRBB  
 Ringed Plover (Red)  
 Eurasian Curlew (Red)  
 Common Redshank (Amber)  
 Woodcock (Red) [PB]  
 Common Snipe (Amber) [PB]  
 Common Tern (Amber)  
 Black-headed Gull (Amber)  
 Mediterranean Gull (Amber) NRBB [PB]  
 Lesser Black-backed Gull (Amber)  
 Herring Gull (Red)  
 Turtle Dove (Red) NRBB  
 Long-eared Owl (Green) NRBB  
 European Nightjar (Amber)  
 Common Kingfisher (Amber)  
 Ls Spotted Woodpecker (Red) NRBB  
 Hobby (Green) NRBB  
 Peregrine (Green) NRBB  
 Rose-ringed Parakeet [PB] \*  
 Common Raven (Green)  
 Firecrest (Green) NRBB  
 Bearded Tit (Green) NRBB  
 Woodlark (Green) [PB]  
 Sand Martin (Green)  
 Cetti's Warbler (Green) NRBB  
 Dartford Warbler (Amber) NRBB [PB]

Marsh Warbler (Red) NRBB  
 Common Nightingale (Red)  
 Black Redstart (Red) NRBB  
 Common Redstart (Amber) [PB]  
 European Stonechat (Green) [PB]  
 Northern Wheatear (Green) [PB]  
 Tree Sparrow (Red) [PB]  
 Tree Pipit (Red) [PB]  
 Hawfinch (Red) [PB]  
 Lesser Redpoll (Red)  
 Common Crossbill (Green)  
 Siskin (Green)

#### Notes:

National status is shown in parenthesis.

NRBB: nationally rare breeding bird species.

PB: potential breeders have been added to the list, based on recent occurrences and that breeding has taken place in close proximity (neighbouring counties) to Bedfordshire. Some species have bred in the past and may do so again.

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

#### References

Annual Bird Reports; 2010 onwards.

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

Eaton, M A, Aebisher, N J, Brown, A F, Hearn, R, Lock, L, Musgrove, A J, Noble D G, Stroud, D G, and Gregory, R D. (2015). *Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man*. British Birds 108, pp708-746.

Mark Holling and the Rare Breeding Birds Panel. *Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 2017*. British Birds. December 2019. Volume 112.