

New Forest Biodiversity Forum

New Forest Bird Surveys

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The Hampshire Ornithological Society has been organizing bird surveys since the 1970s, and a number of these have focused on the New Forest in recent years. Since 2002 we have carried out monthly bird counts across 37 New Forest routes in winter. This dataset allows long term trends to be detected, and as we also count people and other recreational activities too; we hope this data will be of use to those studying impacts on the land. Hen Harrier roosts have been studied over most of this time, and now HOS has dedicated teams at two sites monitoring the birds on a daily basis from October to March. Numbers have declined steadily over time, but the reasons for this may simply be climatic, as birds may not need to come to Britain from the continent and birds originating in Britain may winter further north. In 2023 we carried out a Dartford Warbler Breeding Survey which revealed 571 territories in the New Forest, the highest number on record for the area. Clearly the mostly mild winters of recent times have favoured them. In 2024 we are carrying out a repeat Woodlark Breeding Survey, which we will compare to our 2019 survey that identified 169 territories in the New Forest. We are happy to work with other groups in the New Forest and help to collect data that informs all of us on the state of our National Park's birds.