

**Kemerton Conservation Trust**

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## Big Farmland Bird Count 2019

### Introduction

The Big Farmland Bird Count (BFBC) is run by Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust and aims to gather information on farmland birds across the UK to monitor population trends and highlight positive farm conservation work. It has been running since 2014 and is getting more participants every year. The survey period is a week in February each year and the survey itself lasts 30 minutes, with surveyors asked to record any birds seen from a list of typical farmland bird species (additional species could be recorded too). Although the survey can be carried out anywhere on a farm, the BFBC suggests choosing a site where there is supplementary wild bird feeding taking place or a bird seed crop is being grown.

Kemerton Estate has taken part in BFBC for several years, recording data from one location on Bredon Hill (23 Acres). This year, local conservation partnership Carrant Catchment Area Restoration Project (CCARP), of which both Kemerton Conservation Trust (KCT) and Kemerton Estate are members, asked that as many farmers as possible within the group take part to contribute more records for the area. Any members of CCARP that submitted records would be included in a local analysis which would help the partnership gain a better picture of birds in the area and what conservation work may be helping most. Kemerton Estate therefore asked KCT if they would like to help expand the survey on Kemerton Estate farmed land, some of which KCT assists in managing for wildlife. All records would be added to KCT's biological recording database, and the survey for 23 Acres would be submitted to BFBC (unfortunately only one survey per farm can currently be submitted as part of the official survey). The data would also be useful in giving the Estate a better understanding of how well supplementary feeding is working in supporting other conservation measures on the farm.

Five sites were chosen as follows;

1. **23 Acres:** this is permanent grassland on South Bredon Hill with an arable strip of bird seed crop grown over the winter and hedgerow boundaries on three sides. The farm also carries out supplementary wild bird seed feeding using hoppers and scatter feeding. Previous surveys had been carried out here so this site was chosen as the official submission site for BFBC.
2. **Black Barn Site 1 (Jackson Brook):** this is an arable field with winter crop and hedgerow boundaries on all sides. The farm carries out supplementary wild bird seed feeding using hoppers and scatter feeding.
3. **Black Barn Site 2 (28 Acres):** this is an arable field with winter crop and hedgerow boundaries on all sides. The farm carries out supplementary wild bird seed feeding using hoppers and scatter feeding.
4. **Cheltenham Road:** this is an arable field with winter crop, arable strip of bird seed

crop grown over the winter and hedgerow boundaries on all sides. The farm also carries out supplementary wild bird seed feeding using hoppers and scatter feeding.

- Collins:** part of Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve, this is an arable field with winter crop, an area left fallow, hedgerow boundaries on two sides and woodland on one side. No supplementary feeding takes place.

Volunteers carried out the surveys for KCT. All had a good knowledge of birds and were given detailed survey instructions to ensure the surveys were consistent. All surveyors returned the data to KCT for collation after the surveys were completed. The official submission to BFBC was completed by Kemerton Estate staff. All survey results will be added to KCT's biological recording database.

## Results:

Bird Species	Location & Quantity Recorded					Total
	23 Acres	Black Barn 1	Black Barn 2	Cheltenham Road	Collin's	
Blackbird	3	2	3	2	2	12
Blue Tit	1	5	4	2	1	13
Buzzard				1	2	3
Carrion Crow	7		4	3		14
Chaffinch	2	4	3	1	1	11
Coal Tit				1		1
Common Gull				2		2
Dunnock		3	2	1		6
Goldcrest			1			1
Goldfinch			2	2		4
Great Tit		3	2	2		7
Green Woodpecker		1	1			2
Greenfinch			1			1
Greylag Goose				2		2
Herring Gull	1					1
Jackdaw			2			2
Kestrel			1			1
Magpie			3	1		4
Meadow Pipit	4					4
Pheasant	1	2	1	1	12	17
Raven		2	1			3
Red-legged Partridge			1			1
Robin	2	1	2	3	3	11
Skylark	2		1	1		4
Song Thrush			1	2		3
Stock Dove			2			2
Wood Pigeon	4	21	6			31
Wren			1	2		3
Yellowhammer			2			2
<b>Total Birds Recorded</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>168</b>
<b>Number of different species recorded</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>29</b>

- The site with the highest number of birds recorded was Black Barn Site 2.
- The site with the lowest number of birds recorded was Collin's.
- The site with the highest number of species recorded was Black Barn Site 2.
- The site with the lowest number of species recorded was Collin's.

## **Analysis**

Previous year survey results from 23 Acres were submitted online to BFBC but no copies were kept and we have not yet got access to the prior year data so it is not included here. It is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from only one year's worth of data but the raw data has been collated into some charts below to give an overview of the surveys and compare it to BFBC's national results from 2018.

In 2018, the national results for BFBC showed the top 5 birds most commonly recorded across all surveys were Blackbird, Woodpigeon (both recorded on more than 80% of farms), Robin, Blue Tit and Pheasant (recorded on more than 70% of farms). On Kemerton Estate sites, the following were recorded on all five sites; Blackbird, Chaffinch, Pheasant and Robin (see table 1).

In 2018, the national results for BFBC showed the five most abundant birds seen were Starling, Woodpigeon, Fieldfare, Rook and Chaffinch. On Kemerton Estate sites, the most abundant birds seen were Wood Pigeon, Carrion Crow, Blackbird, Robin and Dunnock (see Table 2).

The following birds recorded in our surveys are on the Red List for Birds of Conservation Concern; Herring Gull, Skylark, Song Thrush and Yellowhammer.

The site which had the highest number of birds and the highest number of species, Black Barn Site 2 (28 Acres) is an arable field with winter crop and hedgerow boundaries on all sides. The farm carries out supplementary wild bird seed feeding using hoppers and scatter feeding. The count was carried out early in the morning, when birds are often most active.

The site which had the lowest number of birds and the lowest number of species, Collin's, is an arable field with winter crop, an area left fallow, hedgerow boundaries on two sides and woodland on one side. However, no supplementary feeding takes place. The count was carried out mid-afternoon, when birds are often less active.

Broadly, the birds which were most abundant are those that might be expected in this area but we had hoped for higher numbers of finches and tits, which often form large mixed flocks over winter and feed on the seed mixes.

*Note: Any surveys carried out by members of local partnership Carrant Catchment Area Restoration Project, including our submitted survey, has been noted as such on the online submissions this year so data can be collated about the project area, which may help provide a bigger picture locally, especially once several years' worth of data is accumulated.*

## **Acknowledgements**

The Trust would like to thank our volunteer surveyors Gavin Peplow, Gill Onions, Paul Jackson, Terry & Ann Mann and our Chairman Adrian Darby for kindly giving us their time and expertise to carry out these surveys.

Table 1: Number of birds recorded per species & location

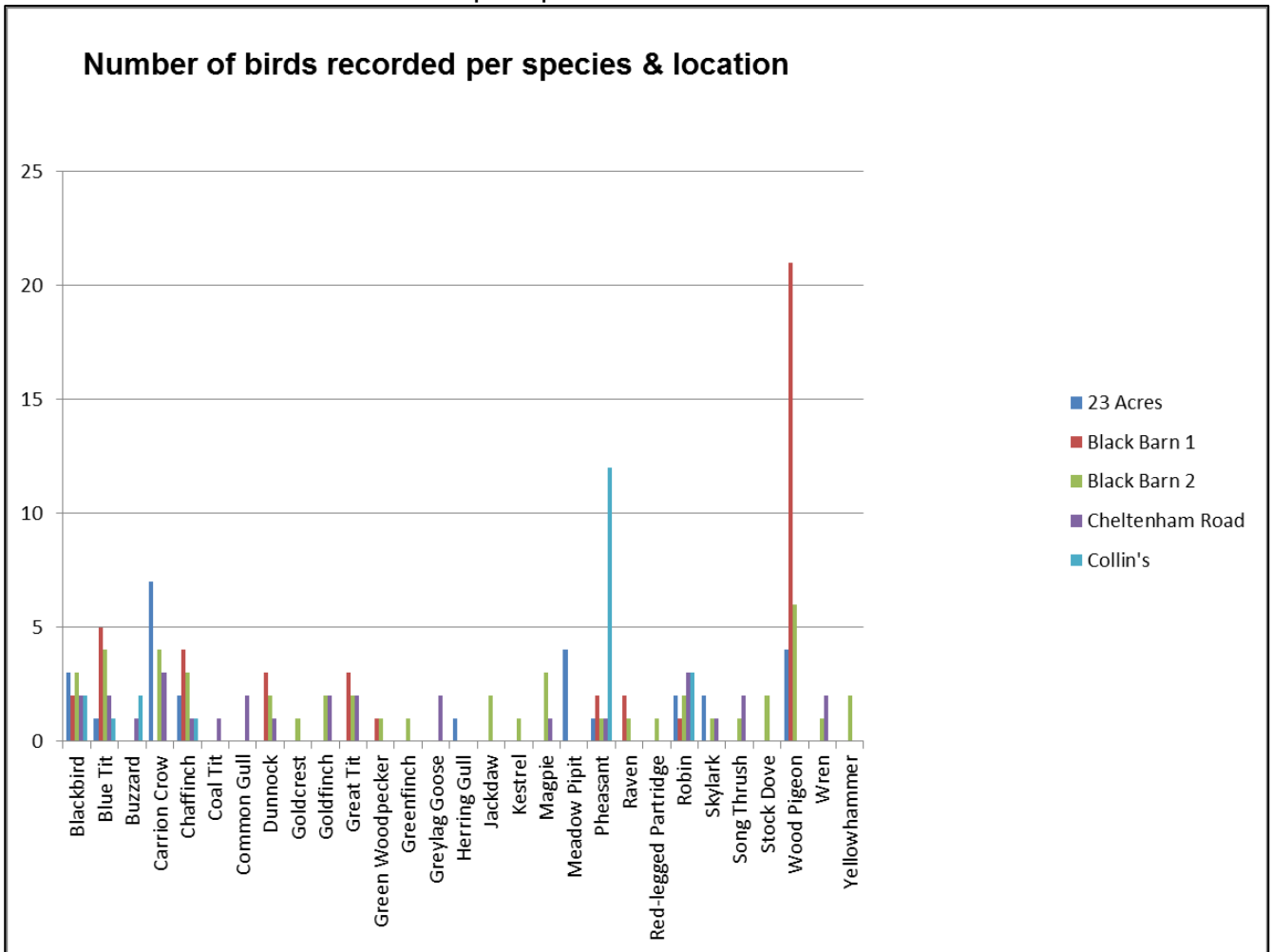


Table 2: Number of birds recorded across all surveys by species

