

Nottinghamshire's Birds of Conservation Concern (Revised and Updated 2016)

Carl Cornish, Nick Crouch & David T. Parkin

Introduction

A list of Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) for Nottinghamshire was produced in 2004 (Parkin & Cornish 2004) and updated in 2010 (Cornish, Parkin & Crouch 2010) to highlight those species that, for one reason or another, needed special monitoring in the county, or were priorities for conservation activity. It was based upon the national Red and Amber Lists produced in 2002 by the statutory agencies in association with the RSPB and other conservation bodies. Since then, these lists have been revised and updated, with significant changes to the status of some species (Eaton *et al.* 2009; Eaton *et al.* 2015). This is the third update of the Nottinghamshire list in parallel with the national data.

National changes to the species list relevant to Nottinghamshire

Full details of the national changes are given by Eaton *et al.* in the December 2015 issue of *British Birds*. Some of the changes are birds moving from a higher risk category to a lower risk one (Red to Amber, and Amber to Green), often as the result of concerted efforts to improve the conservation status of a species (e.g. for Bittern). Conversely, the conservation status of other species has become less favourable because of population declines or range contractions, resulting in species moving categories (Green to Amber, and Amber to Red).

Many of the changes are not relevant to species that breed or winter in Nottinghamshire; those that are relevant are summarised in Tables 1.

Table 1. Species changes between BoCC 3 (Eaton et al. 2009) and BoCC 4 (Eaton et al. 2015) relevant to Nottinghamshire.

Species	Reason for change
Moved from Red List to Amber List	
Eurasian Bittern	BoCC 3 Red listed for historic decline. Moved to Amber list in BoCC 4 because of recovery of historic decline by increased breeding population.
European Nightjar	BoCC 3 Red listed for breeding range decline. Moved to Amber list in BoCC 4 because breeding range contraction is now moderate at -45%.
Moved from Amber List to Green List	
Tufted Duck	BoCC 3 Amber listed because of European conservation status (formerly Species of European Conservation Concern assessment (SPEC)). SPEC now not used as a criterion for BoCC 4 (because awaiting update).
Little Egret	BoCC 3 Amber listed because of localised breeding. Moved to Green list because of expansion in breeding range and number of sites.
Little Grebe	BoCC 3 Amber listed for moderate decline in breeding population. Moved to Green list because breeding population increases means it no longer has a moderate decline in last 25 years and longer term.
Red Kite	BoCC 3 Amber listed because of European conservation status (formerly Species of European Conservation Concern assessment (SPEC)). SPEC now not used as a criterion for BoCC 4 (because awaiting update).
European Golden Plover	BoCC 3 Amber listed for International importance of non-breeding population. Moved to Green list because it no longer qualifies for non-breeding international importance.
Barn Owl	BoCC 3 Amber listed because of European conservation status (formerly Species of European Conservation Concern assessment (SPEC)). SPEC now not used as a criterion for BoCC 4 (because awaiting update).
Green Woodpecker	BoCC 3 Amber listed because of European conservation status (formerly Species of European Conservation Concern assessment (SPEC)). SPEC now not used as a criterion for BoCC 4 (because awaiting update).
Bearded Tit	BoCC 3 Amber listed because of moderate decline in breeding population and localised breeding. Moved to Green list because range expansion means it no

	longer qualifies as localised breeder and for moderate range contraction in last 25 years.
Woodlark	BoCC 3 Amber listed because of European conservation status (formerly Species of European Conservation Concern assessment (SPEC)), moderate decline in breeding population over long term and localised breeding. SPEC now not used as a criterion for BoCC 4 (because awaiting update). Also moved to Green list because of increase in breeding population and range.
Sand Martin	BoCC 3 Amber listed because of European conservation status (formerly Species of European Conservation Concern assessment (SPEC)). SPEC now not used as a criterion for BoCC 4 (because awaiting update).
Barn Swallow	BoCC 3 Amber listed because of European conservation status (formerly Species of European Conservation Concern assessment (SPEC)). SPEC now not used as a criterion for BoCC 4 (because awaiting update).
Common Whitethroat	BoCC 3 Amber listed because of moderate population decline over long term. Moved to Green list because of increase in breeding population.
Moved from Amber List to Red List	
Common Pochard	Now listed as Globally Threatened (IUCN) and severe declines in non-breeding population.
Ringed Plover	Severe decline in non-breeding population.
Eurasian Curlew	Severe long term decline in breeding population.
Woodcock	Severe decline in non-breeding range.
Mistle Thrush	Severe long term decline in breeding population.
Common Nightingale	Severe decline in breeding population over last 25 years and the long term.
Black Redstart	Severe breeding population decline over the last 25 years.
Whinchat	Severe breeding population decline over the last 25 years.
Grey Wagtail	Severe long term decline in breeding population.
Moved from Green List to Amber List	
Mute Swan	Importance of non-breeding population.
Tawny Owl	Moderate decline in breeding population over last 25 years and long term.

Other changes to the Nottinghamshire list

A couple of species on the list, Whinchat and Lesser Redpoll, have not bred in the last five years and their national breeding distributions have shifted northwards. It seems unlikely that they will re-colonise Nottinghamshire so they have been removed from the Nottinghamshire BoCC list. Two other species are rare and sporadic (Black Redstart) and rare and restricted to a single site (Common Nightingale). Common Nightingale now appears extinct at its sole breeding site in the county but it is proposed that it be retained for this list to further monitor the situation. Likewise, Black Redstart is retained to monitor its breeding status in Nottingham.

In the last Nottinghamshire BoCC list, some species were included because they were considered to be potential colonists and were of national conservation concern. The welcome news is that some of these species - Eurasian Bittern, Little Egret and Bearded Tit - have bred since 2010, although remain rare and localised. One other species identified as a potential colonist, Osprey, has not bred since 2010 but is retained on the list because of breeding range expansion elsewhere in England. Four species have been removed because two are lost breeding species and show no sign of re-colonisation (Pied Flycatcher and Northern Wheatear); they were on the edge of their range in Nottinghamshire and other factors such as shifting range with climate change (Balmer *et al.* 2013) and a lack of suitable habitat makes re-colonisation highly unlikely. The other two (Ruff and Black-tailed Godwit) are rare and localised breeding species nationally (Balmer *et al.* 2013) and the habitat they require does not exist in the county.

Previous Amber List species that are now on the Green List have been removed from the Nottinghamshire BoCC list because of their increasing national populations and recent trends show less cause for concern - these are Tufted Duck, Green Woodpecker, Barn Swallow and Common Whitethroat. Golden Plover has also been removed as wintering numbers have declined with milder winters - a trend that is likely to continue with projected climate change scenarios.

We have also included species if more than 1% of the national wintering population winters in the county, following Musgrove *et al.* 2013 (Gadwall, Shoveler and Coot). Some species no longer qualify for their wintering population, but four of those species have been reclassified for their breeding status: Eurasian Wigeon, Eurasian Teal and

Common Pochard (rare breeding species), and Great Cormorant (a restricted breeding species). The Green Listed Great Crested and Little Grebes no longer occur in numbers >1% of national wintering population so have been removed from the Nottinghamshire BoCC list.

Species that have moved from the Amber to Green List but which have been retained on the Nottinghamshire BoCC list are listed below in Table 2 (with reasoning), along with the other Green List species which are included in the list. One Green List species that was previously included, Lesser Whitethroat, is now removed as data gathered during the most recent atlas period (Balmer *et al.* 2013) indicates that this species is now more widespread in the county than was previously thought.

Table 2. Green List species included in the Nottinghamshire BoCC list

Species	Reason for inclusion in Nottinghamshire BoCC list
Cormorant	A restricted breeder; colonial.
Grey Heron	A restricted breeder; colonial.
Little Egret	A rare breeder (currently one site); colonial. Monitored by Rare Breeding Birds Panel.
Red Kite	A rare breeder. Monitored by Rare Breeding Birds Panel.
Goshawk	A rare breeder. Monitored by Rare Breeding Birds Panel.
Hobby	A scarce breeder on the edge of its range in Notts. Monitored by Rare Breeding Birds Panel.
Peregrine	A rare breeder. Monitored by Rare Breeding Birds Panel.
Water Rail	A scarce breeder with specific habitat requirements. Monitored by Rare Breeding Birds Panel.
Coot	Significant winter numbers, >1% of national wintering population.
Little Ringed Plover	A scarce breeder with specific habitat requirements. Monitored by Rare Breeding Birds Panel.
Barn Owl	A scarce breeder, although fairly widespread and increasing; heavily dependent on human interventions (i.e. nest boxes).
Long-eared Owl	A scarce breeder (incomplete data). Monitored by Rare Breeding Birds Panel.
Raven	A scarce breeder on the edge of its range in Notts.
Bearded Tit	A rare breeder (currently one site). Monitored by Rare Breeding Birds Panel.
Woodlark	A scarce breeder with specific habitat requirements.
Sand Martin	Restricted in distribution with specific habitat requirements.
Cetti's Warbler	A recent colonist with a restricted range in Notts. Monitored by Rare Breeding Birds Panel.
Reed Warbler	Restricted in distribution with specific habitat requirements.
Stonechat	A rare breeder.
Crossbill	A scarce breeder.

A new addition to the Nottinghamshire BoCC list is Mute Swan as it has moved from the national Green List to Amber List; Tawny Owl, which has undergone the same status change, was already included. Mediterranean Gull and Lesser Black-backed Gull have also been added to the list, the latter having been previously omitted in error and the former having recently bred in the county for the first time.

Regarding 'scarce or rare' wintering species, these are included where they occur regularly and with a degree of predictability, and where Nottinghamshire can reasonably be considered to support wintering populations that are of conservation significance. It should be noted that Smew is now omitted from the Nottinghamshire BoCC list on the basis that it does not meet this requirement, whilst Goldeneye and Herring Gull are also omitted as they are considered to be too common/widespread to be of conservation concern in Nottinghamshire.

With the removal of 14 species from the Nottinghamshire BoCC List and the omission of a further 3, as detailed above (Tufted Duck, Great Crested Grebe, Little Grebe, Golden Plover, Ruff, Black-tailed Godwit, Green Woodpecker, Swallow, Common Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, Whinchat, Northern Wheatear, Pied Flycatcher and Lesser Redpoll, plus Smew, Goldeneye and Herring Gull), and the addition of 3 species (Mute Swan,

Mediterranean Gull and Lesser Black-backed Gull), the total number of species on the Nottinghamshire BoCC list now stands at 88 (Table 3). Of these, 29 are Red Listed, 39 are Amber Listed and 20 are Green Listed.

Table 3. Revised and updated list of Birds of Conservation Concern in Nottinghamshire

	Species	National Red, Amber or Green	Breeding			Winter	
			Potential breeder	Scarce, rare, restricted or declining	RBBP species	>1% national	Scarce or rare
1	Bewick's Swan	Amber					Yes
2	Whooper Swan	Amber					Yes
3	Mute Swan	Amber		n/a*			
4	Shelduck	Amber		Scarce			
5	Eurasian Wigeon	Amber		Rare	Yes		
6	Gadwall	Amber		Scarce		Yes	
7	Eurasian Teal	Amber		Rare			
8	Mallard	Amber		Declining			
9	Garganey	Amber		Rare	Yes		
10	Shoveler	Amber		Scarce	Yes	Yes	
11	Common Pochard	Red		Rare	Yes		
12	Grey Partridge	Red		Declining			
13	Quail	Amber		Scarce	Yes		
14	Great Cormorant	Green		Restricted			
15	Eurasian Bittern	Amber		Rare	Yes		Yes
16	Grey Heron	Green		Restricted			
17	Little Egret	Green		Rare	Yes		
18	Black-necked Grebe	Amber		Rare	Yes		
19	Honey Buzzard	Amber		Rare	Yes		
20	Red Kite	Green		Rare			
21	Marsh Harrier	Amber		Rare	Yes		
22	Hen Harrier	Red					Yes
23	Goshawk	Green		Rare	Yes		
24	Osprey	Amber	Yes		(Yes)		
25	Kestrel	Amber		Declining			
26	Hobby	Green		Scarce	Yes		
27	Peregrine	Green		Rare	Yes		Yes
28	Water Rail	Green		Rare	Yes		
29	Coot	Green		n/a		Yes	
30	Oystercatcher	Amber		Scarce			
31	Avocet	Amber		Rare	Yes		
32	Little Ringed Plover	Green		Scarce	Yes		
33	Ringed Plover	Red		Scarce			
34	Northern Lapwing	Red		Declining			
35	Jack Snipe	Amber					Yes
36	Snipe	Amber		Rare			
37	Woodcock	Red		Declining			
38	Eurasian Curlew	Red		Rare			
39	Common Redshank	Amber		Rare			
40	Black-headed Gull	Amber		Restricted			
41	Mediterranean Gull	Amber		Rare	Yes		
42	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Amber		Rare			
43	Common Tern	Amber		Restricted			
44	Stock Dove	Amber		Declining			

45	Turtle Dove	Red		Declining			
46	Common Cuckoo	Red		Declining			
47	Barn Owl	Green		Scarce			
48	Tawny Owl	Amber		Declining			
49	Long-eared Owl	Green		Scarce	Yes		Yes
50	Short-eared Owl	Amber					Yes
51	European Nightjar	Amber		Scarce			
52	Common Swift	Amber		Declining			
53	Common Kingfisher	Amber		Scarce			
54	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Red		Declining	Yes		
55	Raven	Green		Rare			
56	Bearded Tit	Green		Rare	Yes		
57	Marsh Tit	Red		Declining			
58	Willow Tit	Red		Declining	Yes		
59	Woodlark	Green		Scarce			
60	Skylark	Red		Declining			
61	Sand Martin	Green		Restricted			
62	House Martin	Amber		Declining			
63	Cetti's Warbler	Green		Rare	Yes		
64	Willow Warbler	Amber		Declining			
65	Grasshopper Warbler	Red		Declining			
66	Reed Warbler	Green		Restricted			
67	Common Starling	Red		Declining			
68	Song Thrush	Red		Declining			
69	Mistle Thrush	Red		Declining			
70	Nightingale	Red		Rare			
71	Black Redstart	Red		Rare	Yes		
72	Common Redstart	Amber		Scarce			
73	European Stonechat	Green		Rare			
74	Spotted Flycatcher	Red		Declining			
75	Dunnock	Amber		Declining			
76	House Sparrow	Red		Declining			
77	Tree Sparrow	Red		Declining			
78	Yellow Wagtail	Red		Declining			
79	Grey Wagtail	Red		Scarce			
80	Tree Pipit	Red		Declining			
81	Meadow Pipit	Amber		Declining			
82	Linnet	Red		Declining			
83	Common Crossbill	Green		Scarce			
84	Bullfinch	Amber		Declining			
85	Hawfinch	Red		Scarce	Yes		
86	Yellowhammer	Red		Declining			
87	Reed Bunting	Amber		Declining			
88	Corn Bunting	Red		Declining			

*Mute Swan is included on the basis that Nottinghamshire contributes to the UK's now European important non-breeding populations.

Future revisions

This Nottinghamshire BoCC list will be updated when the next national Red and Amber Lists are produced, or when a significant change occurs to the Nottinghamshire avifauna, such as colonisation by a new Red or Amber species (e.g. Dartford Warbler). Should a species become extinct as a breeder in Nottinghamshire, its inclusion

on the BoCC list will be considered as part of the next revision, and will be removed or retained depending on the likelihood of recolonisation.

References and bibliography

Balmer, D.E., Gillings, S., Caffrey, B.J., Swann, R.L., Downie, I.S. and Fuller, R.J. (2013). *Bird Atlas 2007-11: the breeding and wintering birds of Britain and Ireland*. BTO Books, Thetford.

Cornish, C., Parkin, D.T. & Crouch, N. (2010). Nottinghamshire's Birds of Conservation Concern (Revised and Updated). *The Birds of Nottinghamshire Annual Report for 2009*. Nottinghamshire Birdwatchers.

Eaton, M.A., Brown, A.F., Noble, D.G., Musgrove, A.J., Hearn, R., Aebischer, N.J., Gibbins, D.W., Evans, A. and Gregory, R.D. (2009). Birds of Conservation Concern 3: the population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. *British Birds* 108: 708-746.

Eaton, M.A., Aebischer, N.J., Brown, A.F., Hearn, R.D., Lock, L., Musgrove, A.J., Noble, D.G., Stroud, D.A. and Gregory, R.D. (2015). Birds of Conservation Concern 3: the population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. *British Birds* 108: 708-746.

Musgrove, A.J., Aebischer, N.J., Eaton, M.A., Hearn, R.D., Newson, S.E., Noble, D.G., Parsons, M., Risely, K., and Stroud, D.A. (2013). Population estimates of birds in Great Britain and the United Kingdom. *British Birds* 106: 64-100.

Parkin D.T. and Cornish C. (2004). Nottinghamshire's Birds of Conservation Concern. *The Birds of Nottinghamshire Annual Report for 2003*. Nottinghamshire Birdwatchers.

Reece, J. (2009). *The Status of Birds in Nottinghamshire*. Hoopoe Press, East Bridgford.