

# Sparrow Top Spot – 2022 Garden Bird Watch

Our 25<sup>th</sup> Garden Birdwatch took place on the weekend of 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> January 2022. The weather was generally mild on both days, but with Saturday being slightly worse weather wise with strong winds and gale force gusts. Unfortunately this year only 25 gardens were part of the survey, compared to 33 last year. This could have had some impact on the results shown, as a larger sample size increases the likelihood of more reliable data. 31 species were recorded this year.

Most species in the top ten this year appear to have declined compared to last. Two factors could have impacted this; these are the smaller sample size and the poor conditions for birds created by the strong winds on Saturday. Birds are more likely to hunker down in these conditions to conserve energy, thereby impacting the results if some surveys were conducted on Saturday as appose to Sunday.

House Sparrow retained the No1 spot this year, but showed a decline of 31% compared to 2021, it was however seen in 7% more gardens. This species remains the most numerous in Lancashire according to RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch results. Goldfinch jumped up a place in 2022 to 2<sup>nd</sup>, but with a decline of 22% compared to last year. It was recorded in 44% of gardens, slightly more than last year. Our results continue to show we have a good number of Goldfinch in our area, as the Lancashire results only place this species 6<sup>th</sup>.

Blackbirds jump from 4<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> this year, with an average of 2 birds per garden. It is our most widely distributed bird this year, in 80% of gardens. Blue Tits dropped from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> this year, a decline of 99%. They were also recorded in 19% less gardens this year. This result looks very significant, but it could have been heavily influenced by sample size and weather. The Lancashire results also place this species in 4<sup>th</sup>.

Great Tit moves up one place to 5<sup>th</sup>, but shows no change in numbers. Woodpigeon and Long Tailed Tit are tied for 6<sup>th</sup> spot, Woodpigeon increased by 2% and Long Tailed Tit declined by 41% despite going up one place. Robin stays 8<sup>th</sup> with a decline of 30% on 2021, but in 72% of gardens.

Jackdaw, Chaffinch and Greenfinch all tie for 9<sup>th</sup> spot and have all moved up from outside the top ten. Jackdaws increased by 31% and Chaffinch by 1%. Greenfinch increased by 44% this year, and were recorded in 24% of gardens, that's an increase of 6% compared to 2021. Countrywide this species has shown a small increase this year, this may present some hope of a population recovery for these birds, having been impacted by the outbreak of the trichomonosis disease since 1993 (RSPB, 2022).

Starling dropped out of the top ten for the first time, showing a decline of 127% compared to 2021. Tree Sparrow were not recorded last year, but were recorded in 2 gardens within the area this year.

Countrywide results showed an increase in Jays this year, however the number recorded in our survey remained about

	Bird Species	Total Number	Mean/ garden	Gardens (%)
1	House Sparrow	68	2.72	52
2	Goldfinch	62	2.48	44
3	Blackbird	52	2.08	80
4	Blue Tit	51	2.04	64
5	Great Tit	44	1.76	56
6	Woodpigeon	30	1.2	52
6	Long tailed tit	30	1.2	32
8	Robin	25	1	72
9	Jackdaw	23	0.92	24
9	Chaffinch	23	0.92	36
9	Greenfinch	23	0.92	24
12	Magpie	22	0.88	52
13	Dunnock	21	0.84	44
13	Coal Tit	21	0.84	44
15	Starling	19	0.76	24
16	Collared Dove	11	0.44	28
16	Nuthatch	11	0.44	24
18	Tree Sparrow	10	0.4	8
19	Bullfinch	8	0.32	16
20	Jay	5	0.2	16
21	Lesser Redpoll	4	0.16	4
22	G S Woodpecker	3	0.12	8
22	Wren	3	0.12	12
22	Song Thrush	3	0.12	12
25	Carrion Crow	2	0.08	8
25	Siskin	2	0.08	4
27	Pheasant	1	0.04	4
27	Tawny Owl	1	0.04	4
27	Goldcrest	1	0.04	4
27	Treecreeper	1	0.04	4
27	Reed Bunting	1	0.04	4

the same. It is known that an individual Jay can store around 8,000 acorns each year, which it stores for food during the winter months. The exact reason for the increase is not known, but it is reported that last year was a poor one for acorns, meaning more birds are forced to forage in gardens (RSPB, 2022). Thanks to all those who took part this year. If you know anyone who could take part please ask them, but remember to explain the rules please, that's the most number of birds of a particular species seen at one time in the garden. Birds flying over the garden may not be counted, but birds such as Sparrowhawks flying through hunting may be counted. The next birdwatch will take place on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

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Reference – RSPB (2022). Retrieved on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2022 from <https://www.rspb.org.uk/about-the-rspb/about-us/media-centre/press-releases/bgbw-2022-results/>