

Goldfinch No. 1 – 17th Garden Bird watch

2014s garden bird watch on 25th and 26th of January brought a few surprise results. Goldfinch became the most abundant bird in gardens across the area. In fact it is the first time in 17 years of the garden bird watch that another species besides house sparrow or starling has taken the number one spot. It is also the first time in 17 years that starling has dropped below number 2 on the list (to joint 7th), an astonishing statistic! The survey was not as well supported this year as last, with 34 gardens having taken part. The weather was quite mild over the weekend of the watch, which probably accounted for the lack of redwing and fieldfare this year. 36 species were recorded.

Song thrush increased by 71.43% from 2013 to 2014 and was found in 15% of gardens (compared to 7% in 2013). Bullfinch also increased this year up to number 18, a 100% increase from 2013. Bullfinches were present in 26% of gardens compared to 14% in 2013. Greenfinch stayed at number 10 and showed a 7.09% decline, robin also showed the same decline. However these changes are negligible given the fact that fewer gardens were involved in 2014.

Magpie jumped from 13th to 9th this year, a 16.38% increase on 2013. Great tits also showed a similar increase from 2013. Chaffinches averaged 1.82 birds per garden at number 6 and increased by 19.74% on 2013 numbers. Blue tits stayed at number 5 this year, showing a negligible change in numbers. Woodpigeon increased from 6th in 2013 to 4th in 2014 with an average of 2.15 birds per garden, an increase of 35.22%. From 2012 to 2014 birds have increased in gardens by 66.67%! On the RSPB Big garden birdwatch (BGBW) for Lancashire woodpigeon only ranked at number 8. Clearly in this area birds are increasingly relying on gardens for food.

House sparrow dropped to number 3 for the first time in the survey's 17 year history with 2.5 birds per garden, a decrease of 29.97% on 2013 numbers. On the RSPB BGBW for Lancashire house sparrow was 1st with 3.601 birds per garden. Birds were also present in fewer gardens, 44% of gardens this year compared to 64% in 2013. Starlings dropped to joint 7th in 2014 with only 1.71 birds per garden compared to 3.43 in 2013 (2nd in Lancashire RSPB BGBW), a decline of 50.15% from 2013 to 2014. Birds were present in 21% of gardens this year, compared to 43% last year. This decline could be the result of milder weather, meaning fewer birds need to come to gardens for food and more remain on the continent. However the decline of both these species may be more serious than that.

Blackbirds increased from 4th in 2013 to 2nd in 2014 with 2.53 birds per garden. Goldfinch became the most common bird in 2014 with 3.97 birds per garden and birds were present in 47% of gardens (a figure that has risen from 35% in 2012). On the

	Bird Species	Total Number	Mean/ garden	Frequency (%)
1	Goldfinch	135	3.97	47
2	Blackbird	86	2.53	88
3	House Sparrow	85	2.5	44
4	Woodpigeon	73	2.15	71
5	Blue Tit	72	2.12	68
6	Chaffinch	62	1.82	47
7	Great Tit	58	1.71	74
7	Starling	58	1.71	21
9	Magpie	46	1.35	71
10	Robin	40	1.18	82
10	Greenfinch	40	1.18	35
12	Collared Dove	39	1.15	53
12	Long tailed tit	39	1.15	29
14	Jackdaw	33	0.97	21
15	Dunnock	31	0.91	50
15	Coal Tit	31	0.91	53
17	Carrion Crow	21	0.62	24
18	Bullfinch	17	0.5	26
19	Nuthatch	12	0.35	24
20	Wren	8	0.24	21
20	Song Thrush	8	0.24	15
22	Sparrowhawk	5	0.15	15
23	Buzzard	4	0.12	6
23	Great s woodpecker	4	0.12	12
25	Pheasant	3	0.09	6
25	Pied Wagtail	3	0.09	6
25	Tree Sparrow	3	0.09	6
25	Lesser Redpoll	3	0.09	3
29	Treecreeper	2	0.06	6
29	Rook	2	0.06	3
29	Siskin	2	0.06	6
32	Mistle Thrush	1	0.03	3
32	Blackcap	1	0.03	3
32	Goldcrest	1	0.03	3
32	Jay	1	0.03	3
32	Brambling	1	0.03	3

RSPB BGBW for Lancashire goldfinch ranked only at number 5 with 1.5 birds per garden. Goldfinches increased by 35.49% from 2013 to 2014 and increased by a staggering 118.13% from 2012 to 2014. This appears to show that goldfinches are increasing and are visiting more gardens in the area.

Thanks to all those who took part this year. Next year's garden bird watch will be on 24th and 25th January 2015.

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