**DerwentWISE Woodland Bird Survey Protocol**

1. Read the risk assessment / health and safety guidelines before you go. Ideally, go with a friend or family member. If ‘lone-working’, please let someone you trust know where you are going and when you expect to return. If you’re out longer than expected then let them know. Make sure they understand what to do if you don’t show up, e.g. give you a call before raising the alarm.

If this is difficult to do for whatever reason, please discuss with us.

1. Each site will have up to 5 people on a rota, each person should aim to visit approx. once a month, i.e. every 4 to 5 weeks, between April and September.
2. When it is your week, pick a day / time that suits you depending on your commitments and the weather forecast. If you can’t do your allocated week, please try and swap with someone else.
3. Time of walk – woodland birds are generally more active early in the morning, and often disappear early in the afternoon. Some birds, e.g. Song Thrush and Woodcock, are more commonly seen / heard around dusk.
4. Follow the transect route as shown on the map. If you go round in reverse, mark this on the map. If there is no fixed route for your site, walk in a circular or figure-of-eight route that covers most of the wood and mark the route on the map as you go.
5. You may find it helpful to record the sounds of unfamiliar birds for future playback. Please do not play bird song to attract birds as this could make them feel threatened and drive them away.
6. Use the recording form to list the birds you see / hear. Record each species only once per list. Note how you spotted the bird – if seen and not heard, put ‘V’, if only heard singing but not seen, put ‘S’. If you heard say a blackbird singing, then saw it as it saw you and flew off calling an alarm, put ‘SVC’. If a bird makes a non-vocal identifiable noise, i.e. woodpecker drumming, or woodpigeon wingbeats, put ‘N’. When you have ten different species, start a new list. Don’t put the same species on line 1 as on the previous line 10. Mark on the map the point at which you start each new list.
7. Try to only put woodland birds on the list, and put any other birds in the ‘Notes’ section, e.g. Grey Wagtail seen during list 3. Also, if you feel confident, record anything else of interest such as butterflies, mammals, etc. in the ‘Any other’ section at the bottom of the page.
8. If you think you’ve identified a bird but are not totally sure, put it down with a question mark, e.g. ‘Sparrowhawk?’. Don’t mix two names, ‘Willow Warbler?/ Chiffchaff?’ is ok, ‘Willowchiff?’ is too confusing. Don’t put ‘LBJ’ (Little Brown Job) down.
9. You can add more detail if you wish, try to keep it brief, signs of nesting behaviour are of particular interest.
10. Remember to include the visit information on the top of the form and also on the map.
11. How to send in your records:
    1. Ideally, use the spreadsheet and draw/edit a copy of the map, then upload them to the website.
    2. Or, take a photo of the paper form and map and upload them.
    3. Or, scan the form and map and upload them.
    4. If you have problems uploading your records you can email them in. When emailing, please CC the rest of your site team so everyone gets an idea of what they may find next time.
    5. Or, post the paper copies to us (Freepost envelopes available on request).
12. I will acknowledge receipt and raise any identification queries as soon as I can.
13. Be happy with what you can identify, and don’t worry if you miss something. The more you practice the better you will get, but there is no magic wand to help you learn more quickly.
14. Try not to treat it as a competition, there are lots of reasons why a bird is found one day and not the next.
15. This protocol may change as we find out what works best in practice.
16. Have fun!