

# **Garden Bird Survey**

## **Results from 1996**



## **Croydon Members Group**

**Edited by John Birkett**

on behalf of the environmental sub-committee.

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This report lists all the species which were recorded by Garden Bird Survey participants in or from their gardens during 1996. In addition, some information has been included this year about some of the other species recorded in Croydon, either in gardens or at other sites.

The more astute readers of this report may already be asking why there is a picture of Buzzards on the front cover. Perhaps that was what persuaded you to buy this copy. Even though we have not yet had a fully confirmed record, this species featured on several record forms during the year. There is a special section devoted to the records which have come to our attention, although no attempt has been made to determine whether all, or any, of them relate to genuine wild birds.

During the year record forms were received from 142 gardens with some additional individual reports of less common species such as Buzzard, Woodcock and Redstart. As last year, coverage varied from month to month and the number of gardens participating each month is shown in the table below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No of gardens	106	106	106	107	106	108	102	103	105	111	115	112

Once again, for many species the percentage of gardens in which that species was recorded for a particular month is given as the relative abundance or 'ra'. This enables records to be compared from month to month or year to year.

Thanks go to all those who contributed information; there are too many to list you all by name. Even though coverage has increased this year there are still areas of Croydon from no garden records have been received. It may well be that these areas have comparatively fewer species present and members who live there do not feel their records are worth submitting. To complete the picture we need records from even the least bird friendly environments. If nothing else, they may prove to be a benchmark by which we could see what effects overdevelopment might have if allowed in some of the more bird-rich parts of the borough.

80 species (including the Honey Buzzard) were recorded as part of the garden survey in 1996. One additional species (Woodcock) is included on the basis of an individual report from a garden. The total does not include Buzzard (because of a lack of descriptions and a possible doubt about their origin) nor the Bluethroat (details of which have been submitted to the London Natural History Society). One other species, Red Grouse, was reported. This, however,

has not been listed because it is an extremely unlikely vagrant to Croydon and there is no description available. Over the two years a total of 89 species have been recorded with question marks over two others.

The monthly summarised totals shown in the species list do not take into account the fact that the same birds may be recorded in more than one garden during a particular month. For example, there are two adjoining gardens in Coulsdon where birds are quite likely to be using both. Less obvious are sites which are close to each other but may be in two or three different recording squares; there are three such gardens in Sanderstead that are a few hundred yards apart and are more or less visible from each other. Thus, birds such as Sparrowhawk may well be recorded from one garden while it is flying over one of the others. This latter situation is less likely to be critical for smaller birds as can be seen in the disparity of some species turning up in one garden but not the other two.

### Most common species

Listed below are the ten most common species listed both by the percentage of gardens in which they appeared at least once during the year and by the total number of records. The positions and figures for 1995 are also given.

By gardens			By totals		
Magpie	100%	(1 <sup>st</sup> = 100%)	Magpie	96%	(1 <sup>st</sup> 95%)
Blackbird	100%	(1 <sup>st</sup> = 100%)	Blackbird	95%	(4 <sup>th</sup> 93%)
Blue Tit	100%	(4 <sup>th</sup> 99%)	Blue Tit	94%	(3 <sup>rd</sup> 93%)
Starling	99%	(5 <sup>th</sup> 98%)	Robin	91%	(2 <sup>nd</sup> 94%)
Robin	98%	(1 <sup>st</sup> = 100%)	Starling	89%	(6 <sup>th</sup> 86%)
Woodpigeon	96%	(7 <sup>th</sup> 97%)	Woodpigeon	86%	(5 <sup>th</sup> 88%)
Carrion Crow	94%	(5 <sup>th</sup> 98%)	Collared Dove	82%	(9 <sup>th</sup> 77%)
Great Tit	94%	(9 <sup>th</sup> 93%)	Carrion Crow	82%	(7 <sup>th</sup> 85%)
Collared Dove	93%	(8 <sup>th</sup> 94%)	House Sparrow	76%	(8 <sup>th</sup> 82%)
Jay	93%	( - 89%)	Great Tit	73%	(10 <sup>th</sup> 75%)

The major changes between 1995 and 1996 concern the House Sparrow. It has lost its place in the top 10 gardens list, declining from 91% to 89%. More serious is the drop in the percentage of total records. This suggests that, while it is still turning in approximately the same proportion of gardens, it is becoming a less frequent visitor. This, in turn, may indicate a declining population. Certainly one participant noted only one single bird in the first half of the year and none in the second half.

Two other species may also be giving cause for concern. Despite an increase in the number of participating gardens, the actual number of gardens reporting Kestrels dropped from 54 to 48 and the total number of records fell from 154 to 141. House Martins saw similar reductions; 50 gardens down to 46 and actual records showing a very slight decrease.

For comparison, the top ten species from the BTO Garden Bird Feeding Survey for winter 1995/6<sup>1</sup> are included below.

<b>BTO GBFS</b>			
%age Gardens (out of 246)			
Blue Tit	100	Dunnock	95
Blackbird	99	Starling	95
Robin	99	Chaffinch	94
Great Tit	96	House Sparrow	93
Greenfinch	96	Collared Dove	84

The top three species in this survey are comparable to ours but rather interestingly the BTO survey does not include Magpie which was top for both 1995 and 1996 in Croydon. It would appear that this species has not yet invaded some of the gardens covered by the GBFS. The other big differences relate to the presence of Greenfinch, Dunnock and Chaffinch which are less frequently reported in Croydon.

JB, July 1997

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<sup>1</sup> Source - BTO News no 205, July-August 1996

## Cormorant

There were four records of this species during the year. Two sites (Love Lane and Pittville Gardens) had records which presumably related to birds using South Norwood Country Park and South Norwood Lake respectively. The others were from locations with no obvious bodies of water suitable for Cormorants.

Love Lane, SE25	April
Pittville Gardens, SE25	May
Briton Hill Road, Sanderstead	September (flew from direction of Purley Beeches)
The Pines	November (a bird also reported from here in 1995)

## Grey Heron

Mainly reported outside the summer (January to April and September to December) but there are records from all months. The trend of occurrence is similar to that of last year. While the majority probably relate to birds looking around for suitable garden ponds at least one observer commented that some birds clearly seemed to be flying NW to SE in the mornings, returning in the opposite direction later in the day. This could suggest that they were heading towards the Gatton Park area. Any other reports of birds following particular flight paths would be welcomed.

This year there were reports from 72 gardens (49 in 1995).

Monthly totals:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1995	13	11	13	14	8	3	6	9	7	14	17	14
1996	16	13	11	12	7	4	8	7	13	25	21	20

## Mute Swan

These were reported from four gardens during the year. A further record was received of an unidentified swan species flying over Hurst Way in December (the same month as the report from The Pines which is relatively close).

Cricket Green, Mitcham	March and September
Farm Lane, Purley	April
The Ridgeway, Waddon	August and December (close to Waddon Ponds)
The Pines	December

## Canada Goose

This species was reported from 19 gardens in 1996 (14 in 1995). As with last year, the majority of the records are from the north eastern sector.

Monthly totals:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1995	5	7	11	8	9	1	4	5	4	4	3	3
1996	7	11	14	13	9	3	3	6	8	5	5	5

## Mallard

Another species showing a slight increase with the number of gardens reporting this species rising to 25 (18 in 1995).

Once again there is a distinct peak in late spring/early summer.

Monthly totals:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1995	1	4	6	10	12	7	2	2	2	3	0	4
1996	4	5	12	13	14	10	2	5	2	4	3	2

## Honey Buzzard

This is not strictly a garden bird but I have used a little bit of licence to include it. It was observed on June 4<sup>th</sup> initially flying over Purley Beeches before it headed off towards Sanderstead where it would have been very close to (and visible from) the observer's garden.

## Red Kite

A bird was reported from Willis Court, West Wickham on February 24th heading towards Spring Park Wood.

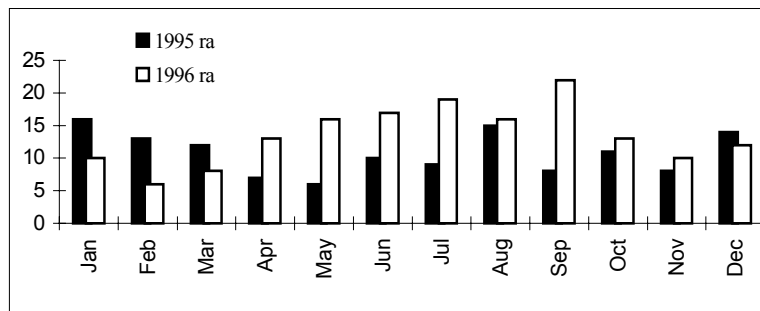
## Buzzard

There were several 'garden' reports of Buzzard this year; a significant increase over 1995. These and various other records of this species are dealt with in Appendix B.

## Sparrowhawk

Even allowing for additional gardens participating in the survey, there was a significant increase in the number of reports to 62 gardens in 1996 (38 in 1995). The records are spread throughout the borough and in 1996 the main dip in occurrence was in late winter/early spring with a peak in September. Once again there are several sets of records which suggest local breeding. The figures quoted below show the relative abundances for 1995 and 1996 as well as this year's actual totals.

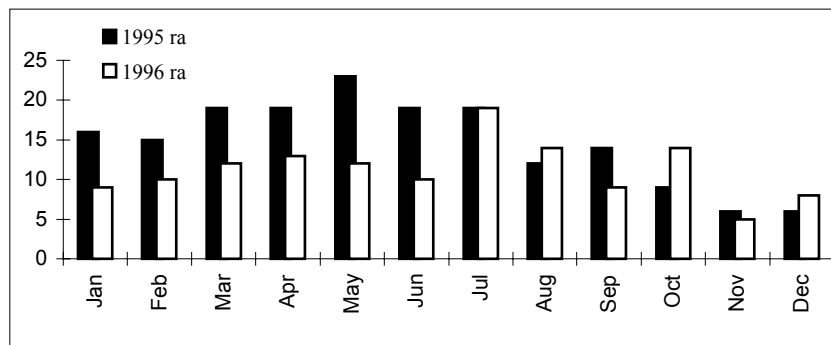
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	11	6	9	14	17	18	19	16	23	14	12	13
1996 ra	10	6	8	13	16	17	19	16	22	13	10	12
1995 ra	16	13	12	7	6	10	9	15	8	11	8	14



## Kestrel

Unlike the previous species, Kestrels showed an actual decrease in the number of gardens reporting them to 48 in 1996 (54 in 1995) despite an increase in the number of participants. This is surprising and the implication may be that Kestrels are declining. The next year's reports will be interesting. They continue, however, to succeed at South Norwood Country Park where several pairs bred again this year. One record, from Mayfield Road was of a youngster being fed. These birds, and those involved in records from Florence Road, probably originated from South Croydon Rec where they nested. As with Sparrowhawk this year's actual figures and the two sets of RA are given.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	10	11	13	14	13	11	19	14	9	15	6	9
1996 ra	9	10	12	13	12	10	19	14	9	14	5	8
1995 ra	16	15	19	19	23	19	19	12	14	9	6	6



## Hobby

This is a new species for the garden survey with a bird being reported from a garden in Briton Hill Road, Sanderstead on July 11th. Apart from this, the majority of records came from South Norwood Country Park as usual with birds seen there in both spring and autumn.

## Pheasant

Another new species for the garden survey. Pheasants were reported from six gardens during the year. Most sites only had single occurrences but they were present in three months out of six in Love Lane - these birds almost certainly relate to the nearby Country Park and cemetery.

Pine Coombe, Shirley Hills	March
Love Lane, SE25	April, May, June
Bushey Road, Shirley	April
Farm Drive, Shirley	April
Shirley Church Road	October
Willis Court, West Wickham	December

## Lapwing

Reported from six gardens in 1996 (two in 1995). The records are widespread in both time and location. Information about flock sizes and direction of flight of any future sightings would be most appreciated.

Jasmine Court, Wallington	January
Brookcroft, Linton Glade	February
The Pines, St James Road	50+ flew over on March 5 <sup>th</sup>
Princes Avenue, Hamsey Green	June
Shirley Avenue	July and September
Hurst Way, South Croydon	About 10 in December

## Snipe

The vast majority of Croydon's Snipe records come from just one site, namely South Norwood Country Park with records from elsewhere being unusual. It was a pleasure to have a garden record but even better was the fact that the bird was apparently probing the observer's lawn for food!

Bennetts Way, Shirley	September
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## Woodcock

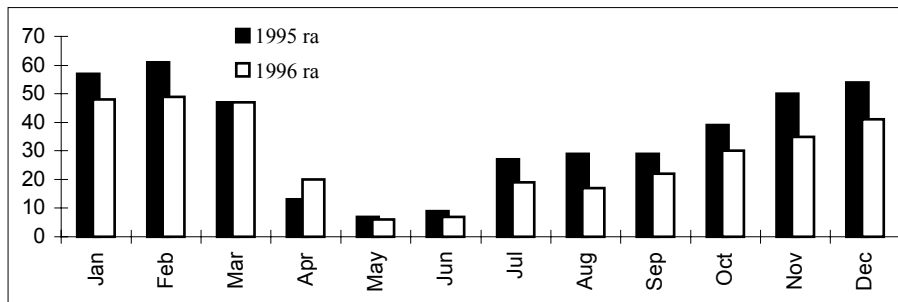
A single bird was found trapped in loganberries at a garden in Shirley during early November. This is a time when incoming migrants are occasionally found in gardens.

Woodmere Avenue, Shirley                      November

## Black-headed Gull

There was very little change in the number of gardens reporting this species with 79 this year (75 in 1995). There must be some concern, however, when looking at the records of Black-headed and Common Gulls, which is commented on under the latter species. The fluctuation of occurrence during the year reflects last year with maximum numbers in the first three months dropping drastically in April as birds fly off to their breeding grounds. Numbers then built up slowly again from July to the end of the year.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	51	52	50	21	6	7	19	18	23	33	40	46
1996 ra	48	49	47	20	6	7	19	17	22	30	35	41
1995 ra	57	61	47	13	7	9	27	29	29	39	50	54



## Common Gull

Although all records of this species have been included in the table below they should be regarded with some caution. General observations from other sites such as South Norwood Country Park and playing fields suggest that the most likely gull species to be seen in Croydon is Black-headed. Although there may be some instances where only Common Gulls are to be seen, many of the reports gave records of Common Gulls for most months of the year with few if any Black-headed Gulls. It is likely, therefore, that there has been mis-identification in some instances.

Monthly totals:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	26	26	21	12	10	5	7	6	11	12	19	24

## Lesser Black-backed Gull

Reported from 11 gardens during the year spread over all months except May. This species can occur almost anywhere, usually loafing on playing fields or flying over.

Cricket Green, Mitcham	January to March and July to December
Pittville Gardens, SE25	January, June to December
Briton Hill Road	January, February, April, July, September to December
Caterham Drive, Old Coulsdon	January
Church Road, Purley	February, December
The Ridgeway	March
Oak Avenue, Shirley	March
Chichester Road	September
Croham Valley Road	September to November
Bradley Road, SE19	December
Chepstow Rise	December

## Herring Gull

Reported from eight gardens during the year, again with a widespread distribution.

Virginia Road, Thornton Heath	January to April
Shirley Avenue	January
Pittville Gardens, SE25	February, March, May, September to December
Grenaby Avenue	February
Kingswood Way	February
Bradley Road, SE19	April, July
Chichester Road	September, October, December
Dalmeny Road, Carshalton	December

## Greater Black-backed Gull

This is a new species for the garden survey and was reported from only two gardens.

Briton Hill Road, Sanderstead	February and November
Woodcote Valley Road	December

## Feral Pigeon

The records for this species probably give a truer reflection of its actual status than did the figures for 1995. It was found in 99 gardens (27 in 1995) being present in about half of the gardens each month. The table gives this year's numbers plus the two sets of *ra*.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	50	54	57	62	58	67	52	51	51	49	61	57
1996 <i>ra</i>	47	51	54	58	55	62	51	50	49	44	53	51
1995 <i>ra</i>	17	13	15	15	16	16	23	19	22	22	24	24

## Stock Dove

Once again this species was reported from only four gardens. It seems likely that birds bred near Pittville Gardens given the records throughout the summer months. There were also seen at several other sites during the year.

Pittville Gdns, SE25	April, June to August and November
Freshfields, Shirley	June
Onslow Gardens	July
Briton Hill Road	December

## Woodpigeon

Reported from 136 gardens (119 in 1995). This species has a widespread distribution and was present in 80-90% of the participating sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	88	85	91	95	96	96	92	86	86	87	96	98
<i>ra</i>	83	80	86	89	91	89	90	83	82	78	83	88

## Collared Dove

Reported from 132 gardens (116 in 1995). This again has a widespread distribution although appears to be slightly less regular in the extreme north of the borough. Information regarding the numbers of birds seen (from selected sites) may help to confirm this.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	88	87	88	92	90	91	86	85	82	87	91	91
<i>ra</i>	83	82	83	86	85	84	84	83	78	78	79	81

## Turtle Dove

There was only one record for this species, which had not been reported in 1995.

Lower Barn Road	July
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## Ring-necked Parakeet

Reported from 16 gardens during 1996 which was twice as many as the previous year (8 gardens), Once again there are two main centres with some sites reporting the species every month. There were also some large groups with flocks of 9 and 15 being recorded in November. There is one record away from the main centres, with a report from Kenley in December. Could the species be spreading from its main core areas?

Freshfields, Shirley	January to December
Oak Gardens, Shirley	January to December
Bushey Road, Shirley	January to December
do	October to December
Ash Road, Shirley	January to June
Oak Avenue, Shirley	January to June
do	July to December
Farm Drive, Shirley	January to May, October to December
Rochester Gardens	February
Shirley Church Road	February
Willis Court, West Wickham	March
Bennetts Way, Shirley	September, November, December
Chichester Road	November, December
Shirley Avenue	November, December
Rushmead Close	December
Valley Road, Kenley	December

## Cuckoo

This year saw four records from three sites.

Love Lane, SE25	April
Caterham Drive, Old Coulsdon	May, June
Brighton Road, Hooley	June

## Tawny Owl

There was a slight increase in the number of gardens reporting Tawny Owls, including one again in South Norwood.

Downsway, Sanderstead	January
Caterham Drive, Old Coulsdon	April
Pittville Gardens, SE25	June
Shirley Church Road	July
The Pines, St James Road	July
Lower Barn Road	July to December
Fairoak Close, Kenley	August

Tithepitshaw Lane, Warlingham *	September October
Oak Gardens, Shirley	October, November
Chapel View	November
Austin Close, Coulsdon	November, December
Hayes Lane, Kenley	December

\* = also recorded frequently during the first half of the year but no specific months noted.

Birds were also noted as being frequently heard at both Chestnut Grove and Old Farleigh Road but no specific months are given.

## Swift

There was little change in the number of sites reporting Swifts, being seen over 92 gardens (90 in 1995). The period of sightings extended into October but there were fewer records from September suggesting that most birds had migrated earlier this year.

Reports of any specific nesting sites would be appreciated.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
1996	1	56	66	68	51	6	2
<i>1996 ra</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>1995 ra</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>62</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>0</i>

## Green Woodpecker

Reported from 70 gardens (52 in 1995). In most months it was recorded from a higher percentage of gardens than in 1995. It was recorded in each month from many gardens suggesting resident birds which were presumably breeding in the locality. Although present throughout Croydon, records were again scarcer from the extreme north.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	19	25	29	25	24	28	25	32	26	31	32	25
<i>1996 ra</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>1995 ra</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>18</i>

## Great Spotted Woodpecker

The most frequently reported woodpecker, Great Spotted was seen in 96 gardens (64 in 1995). Once again this species is quite widespread with many gardens having birds throughout the year.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	38	33	34	38	35	43	37	34	33	38	50	48
<i>1996 ra</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>1995 ra</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>38</i>

## Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

This species has a very localised distribution with records from only eight gardens (six in 1995). Most records are from the second half of the year, perhaps suggesting movement into gardens during the autumn.

Brighton Road, Hooley	June
Marlpit Lane, Coulsdon	August
Maryland Road, Thornton Heath	September
Briton Hill Road	September
Oaks Road, Kenley	September
Riddlesdown Road	October
Hurst Way, South Croydon	November
Goodwin Road	November, December

## Skylark

Once again this species shows that it is not really a garden bird being reported from only four gardens (six in 1995) all of which are towards the outskirts of the borough. The Mead Way records are likely to relate to birds from Farthing Downs where they breed with the others potentially being passage birds.

Eskdale Gardens	April, May
Mead Way, Old Coulsdon	July, August
Briton Hill Road	September, October
Brookcroft, Linton Glade	October

## Sand Martin

The only garden record is of a flock of about 30 seen over Farm Fields, Sanderstead in September. They are regularly seen on passage at South Norwood Country Park.

## Swallow

Reported from just two more gardens this year - 29 (27 in 1995).

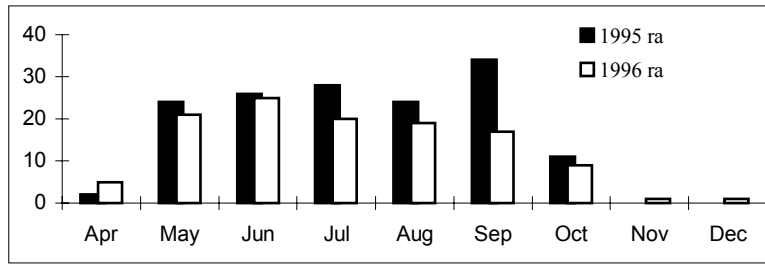
Monthly totals:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
1996	5	11	12	6	8	8	6	1
1995	5	8	5	9	6	7	3	0

## House Martin

This species was actually reported from less gardens than in 1995 being seen in only 46 (50 in 1995). The table shows the actual number of gardens this year together with the RA for both years. Although birds seem to have remained until later in the year, there are significantly fewer autumn records.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	5	22	27	20	20	18	10	1	1
1996 ra	5	21	25	20	19	17	9	1	1
1995 ra	2	24	26	28	24	34	11	0	0



## Grey Wagtail

All of the birds reported this year came in October and November suggesting birds passing through. The Grange Road birds were seen on a rooftop.

Somerset Gardens, SW16	October
Grange Road	October
Kingswood Way	October
Gravel Hill	November

## Pied Wagtail

This species was reported from 36 gardens (one more than 1995). The distribution throughout the year was also similar with peak numbers in January and December.

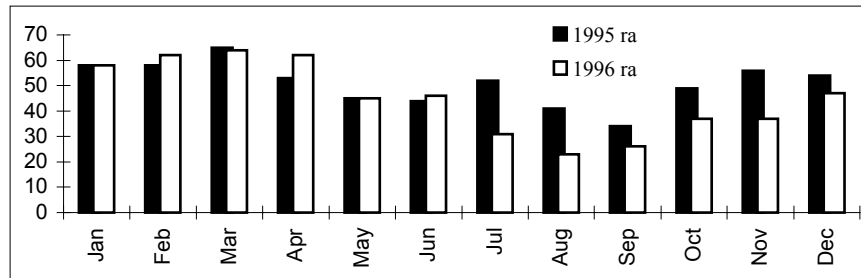
Monthly totals:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	14	7	10	9	3	5	3	2	4	5	9	14
1995	16	6	5	8	4	6	4	4	4	9	11	13

## Wren

Reported from 119 gardens (100 in 1995). Although elusive at times it was often present throughout the year. The table shows this year's figures and the *ra* from both 1995 and 1996.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	61	66	68	66	48	50	32	24	27	41	42	53
1996 <i>ra</i>	58	62	64	62	45	46	31	23	26	37	37	47
1995 <i>ra</i>	58	58	65	53	45	44	52	41	34	49	56	54



## Duncock

Reported from 119 gardens (89 in 1995). The *ra* for both 1995 and 1996 show a similar dip in the autumn.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	69	72	72	76	70	61	54	50	46	56	71	74
1996 <i>ra</i>	65	68	68	71	66	56	53	49	44	50	62	66
1995 <i>ra</i>	64	70	65	67	62	59	53	50	48	49	58	59

## Robin

Reported from all but two of the 142 gardens (in all 123 in 1995). Despite not being seen in every garden, the monthly *ras* were generally higher in 1996.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	104	100	98	98	96	93	85	84	92	98	105	105
1996 <i>ra</i>	98	94	92	92	91	86	83	82	88	88	91	94
1995 <i>ra</i>	93	92	90	88	86	86	80	78	82	89	93	95

## Redstart

This species was reported from two gardens participating in the garden survey. The one in Briton Hill Road was found about 20 minutes after I received a telephone call from Shirley saying that there had been a Redstart in the garden for the previous four days.

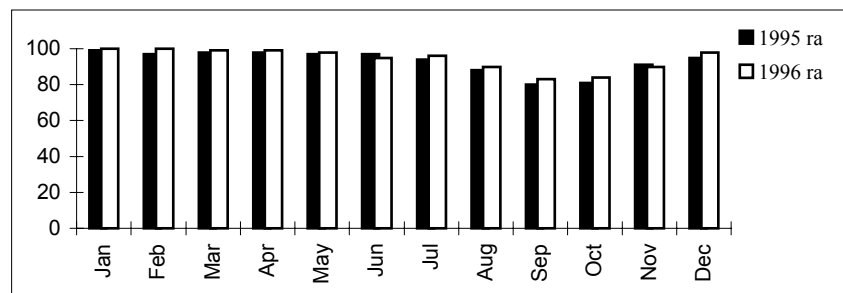
Palace Square, SE19  
Briton Hill Road

April  
One on September 14<sup>th</sup>.

## Blackbird

Reported from all 142 gardens (all 123 in 1995). Once again there was a noticeable dip in appearances during the autumn when the population is likely to be at its highest.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	106	106	105	106	104	103	98	93	87	93	104	110
<i>1996 ra</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>99</i>	<i>99</i>	<i>98</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>98</i>
<i>1995 ra</i>	<i>99</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>98</i>	<i>98</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>94</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>95</i>



## Fieldfare

The weather obviously affected this species with sightings from 29 gardens during the year as against just five records from four gardens in 1995. The BTO garden bird feeding survey<sup>2</sup> shows a similar increase with birds having been seen in only 7% of gardens during 1994/5 rising to 30% during 1995/6. Surprisingly, none of the 1996 birds were in the same gardens as in 1995. At least two gardens had a flock of 100 or so during February feeding on old apples. The two very early autumn records (August and September) were from the same garden and should perhaps be treated with some caution.

Monthly totals:

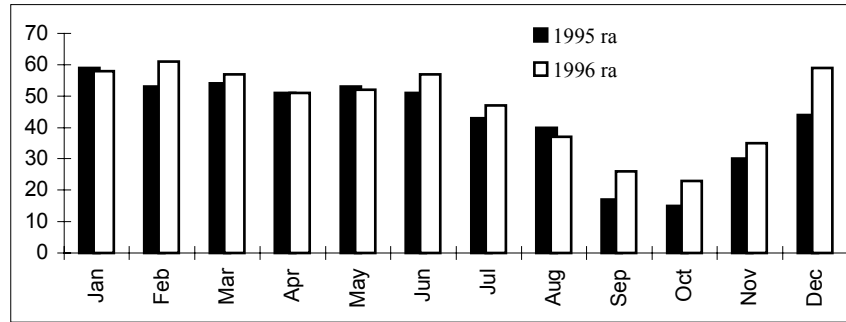
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	16	20	2	1	1	0	3	7

<sup>2</sup> BTO News no 205, July - August 1996

## Song Thrush

Reported from 118 gardens during the year (95 in 1995). Like the Blackbird, this species again showed a marked decline in the autumn.

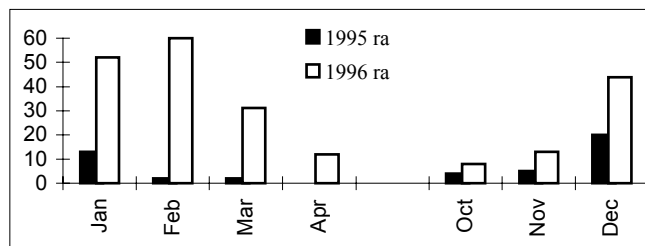
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	62	65	60	55	55	62	48	38	27	25	40	66
1996 ra	58	61	57	51	52	57	47	37	26	23	35	59
1995 ra	59	53	54	51	53	51	43	40	17	15	30	44



## Redwing

Like the other winter thrush, the Fieldfare, this species also showed a very large increase particularly during January and February. It was reported from 93 gardens (27 in 1995). The BTO garden bird feeding survey<sup>2</sup> again showed an increase from 7% in 1994/5 to 33% in 1995/6. Our records show an increase from the maximum figure of 13% in January 1995 to the maximum of 60% in February 1996, *ie* about double the GBFS figures.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	55	64	33	13	9	15	49
1996 ra	52	60	31	12	8	13	44
1995 ra	13	2	2	0	4	5	20



<sup>2</sup> BTO News no 205, July - August 1996

## Mistle Thrush

Reported from 69 gardens (59 in 1995). This species was again most prevalent in winter but high numbers of gardens continued reporting them until March, whereas they appeared to have dispersed by February in 1995.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	33	26	34	17	20	19	13	11	11	17	16	27
<i>1996 ra</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>1995 ra</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>21</i>

## Lesser Whitethroat

This species was reported from two gardens this year. One of these had also reported Lesser Whitethroat in 1995 but, unlike last year, it did not appear to have bred during 1996 partly at least due to scrub clearance by the railway line.

Pittville Gardens, SE25	June
Hayes Lane, Kenley	June

## Whitethroat

Reported from five gardens, an increase from the two of last year. It must be assumed, however, that the same bird was involved in sightings from Austin Close and so they have been combined below, making only four records.

Love Lane, SE25	April to June
Princes Avenue, Hamsey Green	May
Austin Close, Coulsdon	July
Palace Square, SE19	August

## Garden Warbler

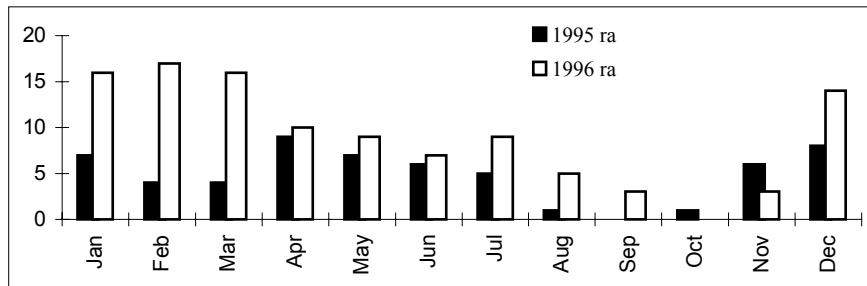
Once again this species belied its name, being reported only from a single garden.

Grenaby Avenue	September
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## Blackcap

Once again the Blackcap was by far the most frequently reported warbler from gardens with most records coming from the winter months. Reported from 53 gardens during the year (24 in 1995). There were again several gardens which reported birds throughout the summer suggesting local breeding. The very high numbers in the first three months reflect the increases in winter thrushes when far more birds appeared in gardens in search of food.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	17	18	17	11	10	8	9	5	3	0	3	15
1996 ra	16	17	16	10	9	7	9	5	3	0	3	14
1995 ra	7	4	4	9	7	6	5	1	0	1	6	8



## Wood Warbler

This addition to the garden survey list was definitely reported from one garden in August and was thought to have been present at another in September but this was not confirmed.

Purley Vale

August

## Chiffchaff

Reported from nine gardens during the year (ten in 1995). Whereas all but one of last year's birds seemed to be mainly spring migrants with a couple of autumn sightings and only one possible breeding record, at least three of this year's sites are likely to relate to breeding birds. Apart from these there was only one other spring record, the majority being in the autumn.

Pittville Gardens, SE25

March

Love Lane, SE25

April to June

Brookcroft, Linton Glade

April to July

Hayes Lane, Kenley

April to June

Church Way, Sanderstead

July

The Pines, St James Road

July, September, October

Onslow Gardens

August

Briton Hill Road

August, September

The Vale

October



## Pied Flycatcher

Once again there was a single record of this uncommon species for Croydon. As with last year's bird, this one was also in August.

Wattendon Road, Kenley                      August.

## Long-tailed Tit

Reported from 113 gardens during the year (87 in 1995). Long-tailed Tits were found in over half the gardens during the winter with birds present in about a third during the summer. One particularly large flock of about 50 birds was reported from Freshfields in July coming from the nearby Bethlem Hospital grounds. For one site, unfortunately, the only record was of a single dead bird in February.

One participant made a comment that Long-tailed Tits had used a nut feeder on two occasions, an action not normally associated with this species.

The BTO garden bird feeding survey<sup>2</sup> showed an increase from 33% in 1994/5 to 44% in 1995/6. This latter figure represents our minimum percentage during winter months.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	55	60	52	51	33	30	33	41	34	43	55	56
<i>1996 ra</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>1995 ra</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>44</i>

## Marsh Tit

Once again there were confirmed records from only four gardens, mainly foraging wintering birds but there were some summer records.

Brookcroft, Linton Glade	January to March, July, November, December
Holmwood Avenue	January, February, November
Tithepitslaw Lane, Warlingham	January to March, June
Deepfield Way	July, August

## Marsh/Willow Tit

There were two or three reports of birds which could have been either Marsh or Willow Tits but were not specifically identified.

Briton Hill Road	February
Arkwright Road	August
Lower Barn Road	December

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<sup>2</sup> BTO News no 205, July - August 1996

## Coal Tit

Reported from 96 gardens during the year (74 in 1995). Again, although they were most prevalent in the winter they were also present in quite a few gardens throughout the whole year suggesting local breeding. A few people responded to the request about conifers in the area. One garden has no conifers around but suggested that the birds were being attracted into the garden from a wide area. The other (and my own, *ed*) garden has conifers in it.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	39	42	39	39	31	28	23	35	30	40	54	56
<i>1996 ra</i>	37	40	37	36	29	26	23	34	29	36	47	50
<i>1995 ra</i>	49	39	37	35	25	21	23	29	25	23	41	38

## Blue Tit

Reported from all 142 gardens (one better than 1995 when it was seen in all but one of the 123 gardens).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	103	103	104	106	104	100	87	88	91	97	108	106
<i>1996 ra</i>	97	97	98	99	98	93	85	85	87	87	94	95
<i>1995 ra</i>	99	99	99	96	94	91	81	90	94	87	94	96

## Great Tit

Reported from 134 gardens (114 in 1995).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996 Gdns	79	80	85	87	77	76	65	66	69	75	88	88
<i>1996 ra</i>	75	75	80	81	73	70	64	64	66	68	77	79
<i>1995 ra</i>	85	84	84	82	81	76	65	60	65	68	74	74

## Nuthatch

Reported from 42 gardens (well up on the 25 in 1995). Numbers in the first half of the year were similar to last year but there was a significant increase from August onwards.

Monthly totals:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	10	8	10	8	9	10	13	15	21	18	23	20
1995	8	6	7	10	10	10	11	10	10	9	10	8

## Treecreeper

Reported from 15 gardens (seven in 1995). Many of these sites are quite close to woodland.

Shirley Church Road	January, February, April, August
Croham Valley Road	January, May
Brookcroft, Linton Glade	January
Kingswood Way (two sites)	January, February, November
Wattendon Road, Kenley	February, June
Church Way, Sanderstead	March
Princes Avenue, Hamsey Green	March
Hayes Lane, Kenley	April, November
Tithepitshaw Lane, Warlingham	May
Coulsdon Road	July, August
Oak Avenue, Shirley	August
Brighton Road, Hooley	August, September
Hollingsworth Road	September
Chapel View	November

## Jay

This species was reported from 132 gardens (110 in 1995) and entered the top ten list. For the early part of the year the percentage of gardens was similar to that in 1995 but numbers were significantly higher towards the end of the year.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	58	56	66	66	67	64	64	53	63	84	90	86
<i>1996 ra</i>	55	53	62	62	63	59	63	51	60	76	78	77
<i>1995 ra</i>	61	56	61	68	67	61	47	46	48	57	53	54

## Magpie

The top species in both 1995 and 1996 Magpies were recorded from all 142 gardens.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	101	103	103	102	99	99	99	97	100	108	112	109
<i>1996 ra</i>	95	97	97	95	93	92	97	94	95	97	97	97
<i>1995 ra</i>	93	92	92	94	96	96	95	87	95	99	98	99

## Jackdaw

Reported from 15 gardens (13 in 1995). Once again the majority of records came from the southern half of the borough mainly reflecting the colony at the Rose and Crown pit. There apparently used to be a colony in the old quarry at Coulsdon but this has declined since the industrial estate developed there. One possible ray of hope is that there may be some slight spreading northwards towards South Croydon.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	5	4	6	6	7	8	3	1	3	6	5	2
1995	4	4	4	5	7	8	0	1	1	2	1	2

## Rook

The number of records increased this year, being seen in four gardens (2 in 1995). All four sites, however, are clustered in a small area around Spring Park. The only other site from which Rooks were reported (in the second half of the year) was Riddlesdown.

Bushey Road, Shirley	January to June
Willis Court, West Wickham	January to June
Oak Avenue, Shirley	January
Rushmead Close	March

## Carrion Crow

Reported from 134 gardens during the year (120 in 1995). This species remains widespread although the *ra* was generally down in the first half of the year.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	83	85	90	89	92	90	82	79	81	90	95	91
1996 <i>ra</i>	78	80	85	83	87	83	80	77	77	81	83	81
1995 <i>ra</i>	86	85	91	87	88	90	77	81	78	82	86	83

## Starling

Reported from 141 gardens (120 in 1995). This is another very common species although one or two people commented that numbers were declining in their gardens. If anything records were higher in the second half of 1996 than for the corresponding period last year.

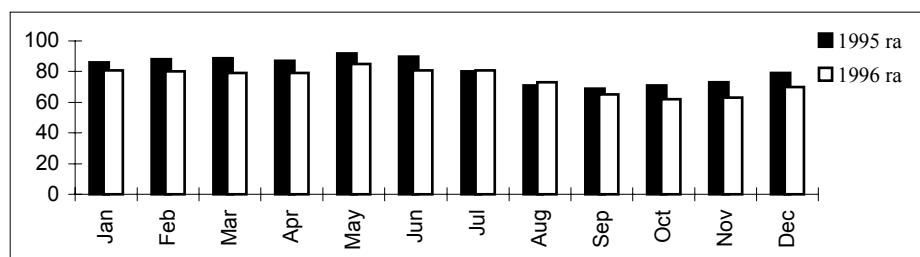
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	94	95	97	104	104	104	90	82	80	86	99	101
1996 <i>ra</i>	89	90	92	97	98	96	88	80	76	77	86	90
1995 <i>ra</i>	89	85	97	97	98	96	78	74	75	72	79	91

## House Sparrow

Reported from 127 gardens during the year (112 in 1995). The overall percentage of gardens recording this species fell only slightly but there were significant decreases in *ra* for most months. Once again there were specific comments about declining numbers with one participant recording just a single bird on one date throughout the whole year whereas they had been common a few years earlier.

More information about the numbers of birds seen each month, including counts of young birds, would be most appreciated.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	86	85	84	85	90	88	83	75	68	69	73	78
<i>1996 ra</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>79</i>	<i>79</i>	<i>85</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>62</i>	<i>63</i>	<i>70</i>
<i>1995 ra</i>	<i>86</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>79</i>



## Tree Sparrow

A welcome addition to the garden survey, although there is a lack of information about numbers or the precise date. This species continues to flourish (for the time being at least) just outside our borders at Beddington SF. The only other known records for Croydon this year relate to occasional birds at South Norwood Country Park.

Lansdowne Road, Purley

November

## Chaffinch

Reported from 104 gardens (79 in 1995). Chaffinches have a rather patchy distribution in the north of the borough but are more widespread in the south. Numbers were highest in the winter but they were present throughout the summer in well over a third of the gardens.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	51	49	46	52	47	43	29	26	25	38	62	62
<i>1996 ra</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>1995 ra</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>43</i>

## Brambling

There were just two records this year against last year's three.

Briton Hill Road  
Hurst Way

January  
November

## Greenfinch

Reported from 113 gardens (94 in 1995). This species has more of a foothold in the northern parts of the borough than Chaffinch.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	46	45	50	60	54	46	42	31	21	25	44	56
<i>1996 ra</i>	43	42	47	56	51	43	41	30	20	23	38	50
<i>1995 ra</i>	51	51	60	57	55	53	44	35	23	33	36	39

## Goldfinch

Reported from 68 gardens (41 in 1995). It was recorded most at both ends of the year with records again dropping off during the autumn.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	15	16	12	12	8	12	8	4	5	6	15	22
<i>1996 ra</i>	14	15	11	11	8	11	8	4	5	5	13	20
<i>1995 ra</i>	20	12	8	16	11	10	8	8	3	5	6	4

## Siskin

This species suffered a sharp decline from its status in 1995. It was reported from only seven gardens in 1996 (33 in 1995). One of these, if the identification was correct, referred to birds in late summer well outside the normal dates for this species; these are not included below. Apart from this the records were spread evenly between both ends of the year.

The decline (which included a total lack of birds in late 1995) was, if anything, even more pronounced than that noted by the BTO in their Garden Bird Feeding Survey which reported the number of gardens with Siskins decreasing from 59% in 1994/5 to 36% in 1995/6.<sup>2</sup>

Monthly totals:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	2	1	1	1	1	2	2
1995	17	26	25	9	0	0	0

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<sup>2</sup> Source: BTO News no 205, July - August 1996

## Linnet

Reported from four gardens, the same number as 1995 but three of these were different sites. Rather surprisingly the repeat location was in Chichester Road which is close to central Croydon!

Princes Avenue, Hamsey Green	May
Hayes Lane, Kenley	June
Chichester Road	July, August
Pittville Gardens, SE25	September

## Redpoll

Reported from only three gardens (six in 1995). Two of the sites\* also had birds last year

*Church Way, Sanderstead	January to March
*Kingswood Way	February to April, November
Willis Court, West Wickham	November

## Bullfinch

Reported from 41 gardens (32 in 1995). There is a distinct peak during the summer months with another high count in November.

Monthly totals:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1996	11	7	8	5	11	13	10	6	2	2	13	5
1995	9	5	5	7	9	11	6	6	3	0	3	7

## Yellowhammer

Once again this was reported from only one garden, but at least it was actually inside Croydon this year.

Thorold Close	March, April
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## Reed Bunting

Another new species for the garden survey. Reed Buntings are known to visit garden feeding stations during the winter. The Love Lane birds in May are likely to have been linked to the nearby country park where several pairs bred.

Love Lane, SE25	March and May
Princes Avenue, Hamsey Green	March
Church Way, Sanderstead	November, December

## **Bluethroat**

A female/young bird of the White-spotted race was reported from a garden in Old Coulsdon during March. Details have been forwarded to the London Natural History Society. Until the record is accepted by them, this species will be excluded from the total count of birds seen in gardens.

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## **Appendix A Birds Reported from Other Sites**

### **Waterfowl**

Most waterfowl in Croydon are associated with three main sites and, with the notable exception of **Canada Geese** and **Mallard** and a few **Cormorants**, do not really feature in the garden survey, excluding those gardens which virtually back onto lakes/ponds.

Two species of **grebe (Little and Great Crested)**, several of the more common ducks, **Coots** and **Moorhens** can be found at different times of year at South Norwood Country Park, South Norwood Lake and Waddon Ponds.

South Norwood Country Park hosted occasional **Shelduck, Pintail, Wigeon, Gadwall** and **Goosander** at various times with three **White-fronted Geese** flying over on December 11<sup>th</sup>. The best wildfowl record of the year is probably the female **Red-breasted Merganser** (the first Croydon record) which frequented South Norwood Lake from late December into 1997. Several **Water Rails** could be found in both winter periods at South Norwood Country Park.

### **Raptors**

Most raptor species have already been mentioned in the main text or are dealt with in the section on **Buzzard** reports. The only other notable record was of a male **Merlin** which showed itself at South Norwood Country Park on several dates in January.

### **Waders**

Apart from **Lapwings** and the **Snipe** mentioned in the main text, most of the known wader records for Croydon in 1996 came from South Norwood Country Park. There were no major surprises with records of **Common Sandpiper, Green Sandpiper, Redshank, Greenshank** and **Little Ringed Plover** passing through in spring or autumn. One slight surprise was the presence of a summer plumaged **Dunlin** there on the evening of July 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Woodcock** were found at South Norwood Country Park and, more unusually, South Norwood Lake. At least one **Jack Snipe** as usual shared the wetland at South Norwood Country Park with the wintering **Snipe**.

## Owls

Even though some **Tawny Owls** were reported in the garden survey, there is little information about them from other sites. Indeed, owls in general are almost certainly under-recorded in Croydon.

**Little Owls** should be more common than just the two birds reported from South Norwood Lake in May (and a possible record from South Norwood Country Park in Jan/Feb). The only other known sighting relates to a **Barn Owl** which was present at South Norwood Country Park for a few days.

## Warblers

The garden survey does not do justice to warblers in Croydon although at least one **Wood Warbler** was reported to compensate for their apparent absence from their usual breeding site. Only the garden **Blackcap** records give any hint as to the species' true status. Even so they are far more widespread during the summer, although there is a strong winter showing.

It is likely that at least nine warbler species bred in the borough during 1996 but in most cases they were not found in or around gardens. Some species bred at a number of sites while three were presumably confined to South Norwood Country Park. **Sedge** and **Reed Warblers** are well established there but the late discovery of an apparently breeding pair of **Marsh Warblers** was totally unexpected. This was surely the ornithological event of the year in Croydon. Ironically, the site these birds chose could have been converted into a refuse transfer station if Bromley had gone ahead with their plans a few years ago.

## Miscellaneous

Unlike 1995, no **Spotted Flycatchers** were reported in the garden survey although they were seen on passage at various sites. They also undoubtedly bred in the borough including a pair at the club house of Addington Palace Golf Club.

The **Corn Bunting** decline has not been checked with only occasional birds at South Norwood Country Park being reported where once there was a roost of 50 plus in winter.

## Appendix B

### Influx of Buzzard Reports in the Croydon Area in 1996

The 1995 Garden Bird Survey included one report of a 'Buzzard' from Sanderstead but the description was insufficient and the record was not accepted by the London Natural History Society

The 1996 survey showed an increase in the number of reports which coincided with reports from other sources not directly involved in the garden survey. The full extent of the situation did not become apparent until late in 1996 and most of the records appear to be independent of each other.

Unfortunately, despite the number of reports, to date there have been no fully detailed descriptions and few records have specific dates. To further complicate matters the one known full description of a buzzard species actually relates not to a *buteo* but to a Honey Buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*) which flew over the Purley Beeches area then up towards Sanderstead Pond at 8am on June 4<sup>th</sup>.

#### Chronological list of reports

This list details all the records as received and does not attempt to justify any of them as genuine Buzzards. The majority of sightings lie in a quite narrow corridor from Titsey up through Woldingham and Warlingham to Riddlesdown/Sanderstead almost as far as the Brighton Road.

**March** - (Exact date unknown.) A bird reported from **Florence Road** (South Croydon) was described as "a large bird of prey, *not* a Kestrel"

**May** - A bird was reported flying high over **Beechwood Road** (Sanderstead) then headed off towards London.

#### **June** -

- (Exact date not known.) A bird again reported from **Florence Road**. The only description was of a large bird of prey but the observer heard the bird "mewing". Although this is only about 100 or so yards from the flight path taken by the Honey Buzzard on June 4<sup>th</sup>, this relates to a different bird.
- (Exact date not known.) A bird seen **near Woldingham** was described as "a lumpy raptor". The bird was large and although Buzzard could not be ruled out no full description is available as the person was driving along at the time.

#### **July** -

- (Exact date unknown) A bird was reported from **Riddlesdown**. No description available but the observer identified the bird as a Buzzard when going through a field guide with an experienced bird watcher.
- (Exact date not specified.) A bird was reported from **Church Way** (Sanderstead) but no description available.

**July/August** A member of the Croydon RSPB Group had brief views of a bird at Purley Downs bowling club (**near Riddlesdown**). No description available due to short time of viewing and lack of binoculars.

**August 19<sup>th</sup>** - A bird reported **near Titsey Hill**.

**September** - (Exact date not known.) Reported from **Austin Close** (Coulsdon).

**October** - (No details.) A bird seen at **Beechwood Road**, mobbed by Crows.

There are several other potential records.

- Birds were apparently seen near **Hartley Old Road** on at least three dates.
- Two adults and a juvenile were seen at **Keston Common** on an unspecified date before the Austin Close report in September.
- A participant from Court Hill (Sanderstead) recorded a Sparrowhawk in July but had originally considered that it may have been a Buzzard as tail looked shorter than that of a Sparrowhawk. No real description was taken and the limited information available, which does not include size, does not resolve the issue one way or the other.
- Finally, a gamekeeper near Woldingham has apparently been aware of up to four 'wild Buzzards' in the area, particularly around Botley Hill Farm/Titsey, for a little while.

#### Other information

Looking back through the most recent London Bird Reports there are two published records which fit in with the above pattern. Birds were seen at Clacketts Lane service station (Titsey Wood) on October 16 1994 and at Woldingham on December 3 1992.

Some attempts have been made to try to sort out the possible origin of these birds, apart from birds on migration.

One possibility is that a free flying captive bird from Merstham has flown up as far as Sanderstead. If all the reports do relate to this bird, however, it would have taken quite a few awaydays.

A second suggestion is that there has been an attempted re-introduction scheme somewhere in the vicinity.

These suggestions are, at present, purely anecdotal. It would be preferable to confirm the presence of Buzzards out on the North Downs then to establish their origins. I would appeal to all members to supply records - with as full a description as possible - of any potential Buzzard sightings. If necessary I can supply a copy of the London Natural History Society 'unusual record' form to put the information on.