

Woodtown, Ballycullen, Co Dublin, Breeding Bird Survey Report 2025

Introduction

Two breeding bird surveys were conducted at lands at Woodtown, Ballycullen, Co Dublin. The surveys were conducted by Hugh Delaney, a freelance Ecologist (Birds primarily) who has extensive bird surveying experience on numerous sites with ecological consultancies for over 15+ years. Hugh is local to the Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown area in Dublin and is especially familiar with the bird life and its ecology in the environs going back over 30 years.

Specific Site Breeding Bird Survey Methodology

The survey site is situated in South Dublin adjacent to Ballycullen, situated southwest of the M50. Breeding bird surveys are conducted early in the day to optimize the species range recorded with this time coinciding with the maximal number of birds in song. Breeding indications specifically looked for on-site include birds singing or alarm calling, visible nest locations, nest building, birds provisioning food to young or a nest site, recently fledged young etc. All species noted on-site (including foraging over site) were recorded, with all breeding indications recorded. The results are outlined below. For the purposes of the survey the site is subdivided into area 1 (west half delineated by the tree line), and area 2 (east half).

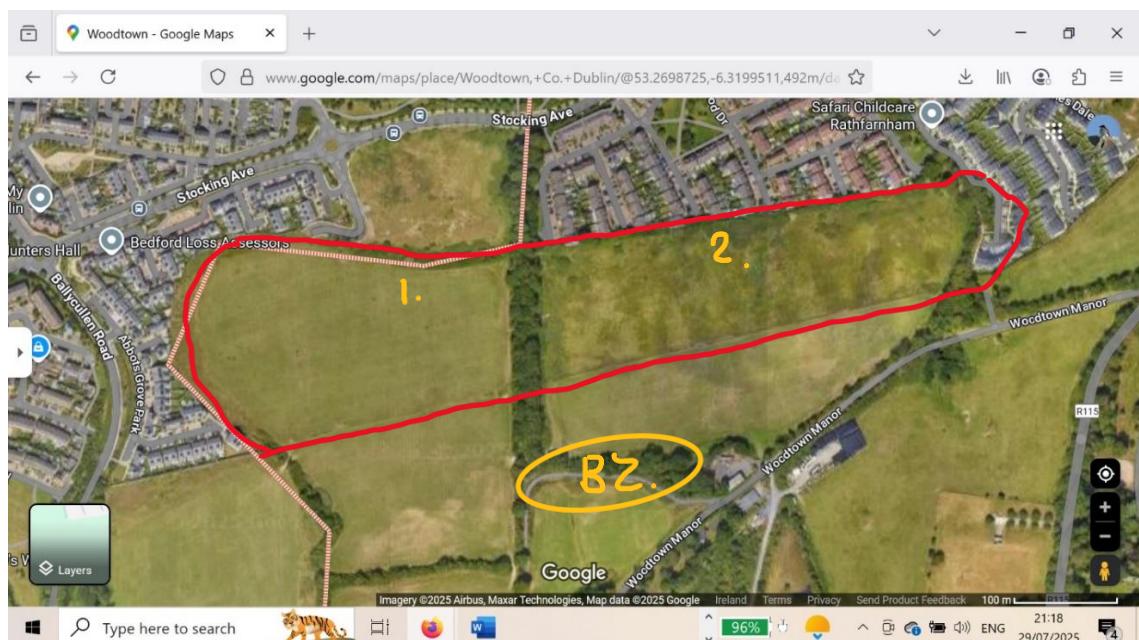


Fig 1. Woodtown breeding bird survey site. The west side (divided by the tree line midway through the site) is marked 1. and the east side is marked 2. A Buzzard breeding pair location is marked in the yellow circle to the south of the site.

Site Description

The site comprises a green field area bordered by suburban housing to the north and east and fields to south and west. The site is bordered by a fence at the south side of the site and by trees and

hedgerows along remainder of the boundary of the site. Area 2. was being grazed by a small number of horses during the surveys.

BREEDING BIRD SURVEY RESULTS

Woodtown 20/06/25

Weather – Wind F2 Southeast, 3/8 cloud cover, 18c, Dry, Excellent visibility. Sunrise 04.56hrs/Sunset 21.56hrs. On-Site 05.45-08.00hrs.

Species recorded – Buzzard, Herring Gull, Woodpigeon, Swallow, House Martin, Dunnock, Robin, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Chiffchaff, Wren, Blue Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Magpie, Jackdaw, Starling, Chaffinch, Goldfinch.

Buzzard – (<2) A pair were present south of the site in a tree corridor (see map above for location-yellow circle marked BZ) mobbed the observer continually when in this vicinity was indicative of a nest location. One bird appearing to be attending nest with a second bird noted on guard duty on nearby pylon pole.

Herring Gull – (<8) Occasional birds noted passing over the site, not noted foraging on-site.

Woodpigeon -(<22) Singles noted passing over the site during morning, small foraging flocks on ground noted in parts of the site with a peak count of 8 at area 2 at 07.45hrs. No breeding activity noted.

Swallow – (<15) Birds noted foraging over the site, both in area 1 and area 2, no breeding activity noted on-site.

House Martin – (<6) Birds noted foraging over site, all noted foraging over area 2, no breeding activity noted.

Dunnock – (<3) Two in song in area 2 and one observed foraging in area 1.

Robin - (<8) Minimum of 4 in song noted in song around the site, with 3 in area 2. and one in area 2. Three Juveniles were noted at the west side of area 2, being provisioned food by adults at 07.25hrs.

Song Thrush – (<1) One noted in song in the tree line at the west side of area 2.

Blackbird – (<5) Two in song at area 2, one at the north side and one at the west side, 3 fledged juveniles also noted on-site were likely indicative of breeding on-site.

Chiffchaff – (<1) One noted song at the southwest corner of area 2.

Wren – (<2) Two noted in song in area 2.

Blue Tit – (<4) A pair were noted provisioning food to two recently fledged young in the northeast corner of area 2, not determined if nesting on-site.

Long-tailed Tit – (<4) Four noted foraging along the west side of area 2 at 06.20hrs.

Magpie – (<3) Three birds noted foraging on-site, one in area 1 and 2 in area 2.

Jackdaw – (<10) Singles noted passing over the site, mainly over area 1.

Starling – (<35) Post-breeding flocks noted foraging on-site in area 2, with a foraging flock noted in center of area 2 during the morning, birds roosting on overhead wires when not foraging. Breeding on-site not determined.

Chaffinch – (<1) One noted in song in the tree line at the east side of area 2.

Goldfinch – (<14) Five noted foraging in area 1 and nine noted foraging in area 2 during the morning, breeding not determined on-site.

Woodtown 08/07/25

Weather – Wind F2 West, 6/8 cloud cover, 15c, Dry, Excellent visibility. Sunrise 05.08hrs/Sunset 21.51hrs. On-Site 06.00-08.00hrs.

Species recorded – Buzzard, Herring Gull, Woodpigeon, Swift, Swallow, House Martin, Pied Wagtail, Robin, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Magpie, Jackdaw, Starling, Chaffinch, Goldfinch.

Buzzard – (<2) Pair still present south of the site in a tree corridor (see map above for location-yellow circle marked BZ). Single Buzzard observed provisioning food to a nest location in this area at 07.42hrs.

Herring Gull – (<11) Occasional birds noted passing over the site, mainly over north side of area 2, not noted foraging on-site.

Woodpigeon – (<28) One in song at the west side of area 2. Singles noted passing over the site during morning, small foraging flocks noted in parts of the site with a peak count of 12 at area 1 at 06.40hrs.

Swift – (<2) Two observed foraging over area 2 at 07.15hrs.

Swallow – (<10) Birds noted foraging over the site, both in area 1 and area 2, no breeding activity noted on-site.

House Martin – (<8) Birds noted foraging over site, mainly noted foraging over area 2, no breeding activity noted.

Pied Wagtail – One noted foraging intermittently in area 2 during the morning.

Dunnock – (4) Two adults noted provisioning food to two young at the north side of area 1 at 07.35hrs.

Robin – (<6) Two in song noted in song in area 2. Four Juveniles were at the east side of area 2 being provisioned food by adults.

Song Thrush – (<1) One noted in song in the tree line at the west side of area 2. One juvenile noted at the east side of area 2.

Blackbird – (<4) One in song at area 2 at the west side in tree line, singles noted in other parts of the site.

Great Tit – (<3) Pair noted provisioning food to a juvenile at the northwest corner of area 2 at 07.05hrs.

Wren – (<6) One in song at the west side of area 2, a pair were noted provisioning food to three young along the north boundary of area 2.

Blue Tit – (<4) A pair were noted provisioning food to two recently fledged young in the northeast corner of area 2, not determined if nesting on-site.

Magpie – (<5) Five birds noted foraging on-site, two in area 1 and 3 in area 2.

Jackdaw – (<15) Singles noted passing over the site, mainly over area 1.

Starling – (<50) Post-breeding flocks noted foraging on-site in area 1 and 2, peak count of 38 birds foraging in area 1 at 06.30hrs, birds roosting on overhead wires when not foraging. Breeding on-site not determined.

Chaffinch – (<2) Two noted at the tree line at the east side of area 2.

Goldfinch – (<22) Small flocks including some with juveniles noted foraging on-site, breeding not determined on-site.

Comments and observations on the survey results

Over the course of two breeding bird surveys at the Woodtown site 19 bird species were recorded. Six breeding species were noted to have likely bred on-site – Wren, Dunnock, Robin, Great Tit, Blue Tit and Blackbird. All six are green listed on Birdwatch Ireland's list of birds of conservation concern in Ireland (2020-2026). A pair of Buzzard nesting adjacent to the site was noteworthy, reflecting the continued expansion of the species in the area and now filling niches bordering suburban Dublin habitat.