

YACWAG
STRAWBERRY LINE
YATTON TO CONGRESBURY
ST424660 (A) to ST429642 (J)
BIRD SURVEY
Spring and Summer
2026



Grasshopper Warbler



Registered charity No. 1076362

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Background

The railway that formerly ran on the Strawberry Line footpath closed in 1963, allowing for some clearing up operations it is reasonable to say that the habitat has been gently re-wilding for about 60 years.

Sadly, there are few records from the 1960's and 1970's when there was likely to have been a different suite of species present. The landscape was open in the early days; the trees and hedges have all colonised naturally. In former time, lineside fires caused by steam trains helped to suppress any vegetation growth.

Sections A to E inclusive now comprise a mixture of woodland and tall overgrown hedges. Sections F to G are still open with visible reedbeds along the ditches and Section H is bordered by mature hedges. The original Section J which, became impassable by early May, has open areas, hedges and woodland whilst the replacement Section J is mostly mature woodland.

2026 Survey Comments

Spring 2026 arrived earlier than usual which resulted in resident birds nesting earlier and migrant birds arriving and then nesting earlier than usual. One consequence of this was that by June song was diminished, resulting in slightly lower counts. The Breeding Passerine Index (page 5) has dipped slightly this year.

Housing development continued adjacent to Section E and to a lesser extent Section D. There did appear to be less bird activity in Section D but my impression was that in Section E birds were singing more loudly to overcome the construction noise. Just a single House Sparrow was observed but perhaps the species will colonise the new housing estate as has happened at Chestnut Park, Yatton. More development is planned for fields adjacent to Section C.

Woodpigeon numbers were down but many records are of feeding rather than nesting birds so this may not be significant. But Moorhen records are also less and these needs watching in future years. There were very mixed results for the warblers. Surprisingly, Chiffchaffs were in deficit but more Blackcaps were recorded. Reed and Cetti's Warblers were up but we only recorded one Sedge Warbler. The three Grasshopper Warblers heard was a record, only nil or a single in previous years. They stopped singing after a couple of weeks so no evidence that they stayed to nest. Whitethroats arrived and sang in record numbers despite my comment in last year's report!) and we heard a couple of Lesser Whitethroats.

Wrens are now the most common breeding bird in the UK and they continue to be the most common breeding bird on this section of the Strawberry Line. Robins are faring well but there were less Dunnocks. Greenfinch territories were reduced from a very high level last year but there is still a healthy population. Goldfinches have also declined but after years of increase their numbers are dropping nationally.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Andrea Murray, Sarah Waring and Jon Thobroe for their survey work.

Jon created the survey record forms, collated and aggregated the data and designed, edited and produced this report.

Trevor Riddle June 2026

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Methodology

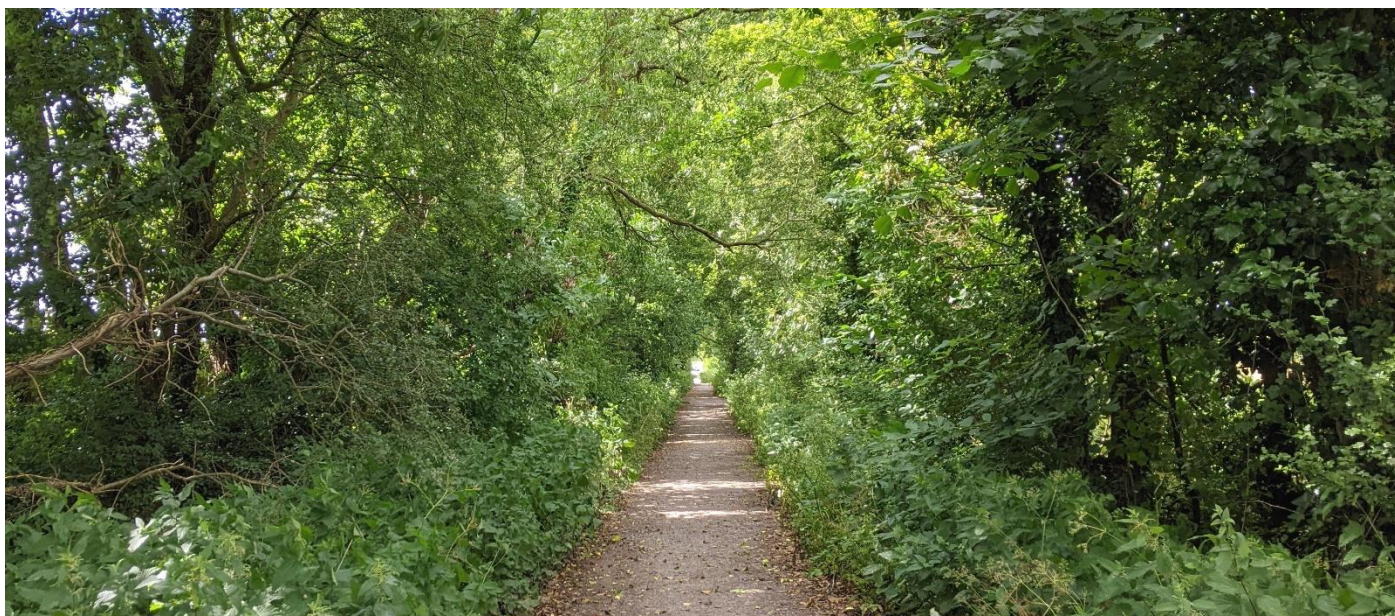


The line is surveyed by walking north to south, usually starting at 8.30am. The survey period averages 100 minutes. This is the time taken for the outward walk plus some extra time if additional birds are noted on the return walk. Additional birds are those that were not recorded on the outward walk but warrant inclusion in the counts. Six surveys are conducted each year, about two weeks apart, between late March/early April and mid-June.

For the purpose of the survey the line is divided into nine sections: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H and J. All birds observed using the habitats on the line and the immediate vicinity of the line are counted and, within the totals, the number of birds that are heard to be singing are itemised.

Birds that fly over or are observed at a distance, in surrounding open spaces, may be noted but are not counted if they are deemed not to be directly using the habitats and resources provided by the line.

The footpath in Section J was very overgrown from the end of April so the alternative route, following the cycle path, was taken (see the map on page six).



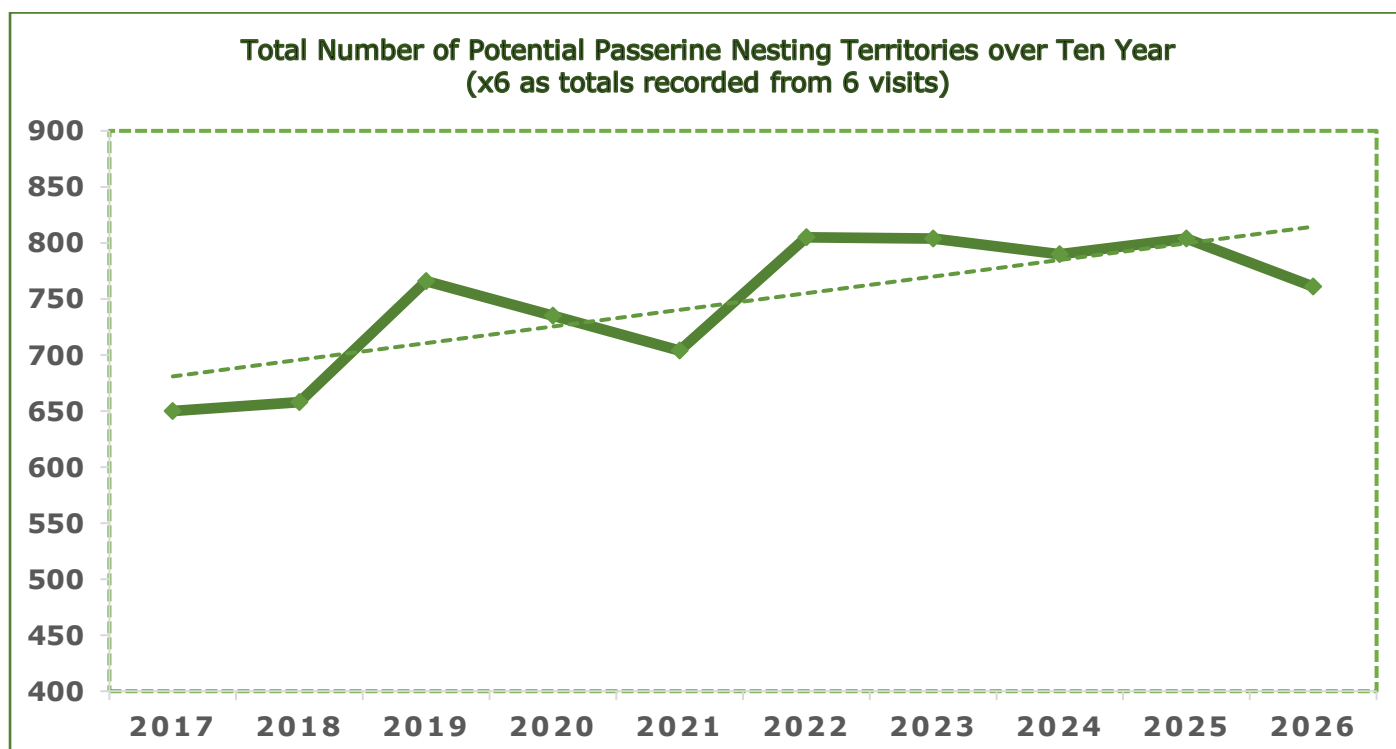
Breeding Passerine Index

The table and graph provide an indication of the populations of breeding small passerines along the line. (Small passerines include small field, hedgerow and reedbed birds but exclude, for example, pigeons, corvids and ducks.)

The graph shows the total potential territories from six visits during the season, so the approximate number of territories is one sixth of the figures shown. Not all birds recorded are nesting, some may be missed by the observers and some will have bred earlier in the season or will breed later.

The graph should be read as an estimate of the rise and fall in breeding activity from one year to the next.

YEAR	COUNT	NOTE
2017	650	
2018	658	
2019	766	
2020	735	There was no count in 2020 so the figure is taken as the average of 2019 and 2021.
2021	704	
2022	805	
2023	804	Includes 1 Lesser Redpoll and 1 Willow Warbler recorded on 30th March and 1 Grasshopper Warbler recorded on 17th April which were, most likely, en route to breeding sites elsewhere.
2024	790	Includes 4 Willow Warblers recorded on 30th March and 1 on 17th April. 1 Grasshopper Warbler recorded singing on 17th June and 1 juvenile Yellow Wagtail recorded on 5th June.
2025	804	Includes 1 Willow Warbler that was resident and singing for most of the season but may not have found a mate.
2026	761	Includes 1 Willow Warbler recorded on 1st April and 3 on 16th April. 1 Grasshopper Warbler recorded singing on 16th April.



Number of Birds Recorded by Section

SECTION/DATE	01 April	16 April	07 May	26 May	08 June	15 June	Total
A	20	26	23	23	23	17	132
B	30	22	17	21	23	11	124
C	20	34	21	27	26	22	150
D	18	19	11	9	9	11	77
E	21	14	15	25	21	17	113
F	7	9	19	15	20	17	87
G	10	8	14	12	13	7	64
H	17	13	17	13	13	21	94
J	18	15	29	7	5	7	81
Total	161	160	166	152	153	130	922

Number of Passerines and Non-Passerines Recorded

ORDER/DATE	01 April	16 April	07 May	26 May	08 June	15 June	Total
Passerine	125	135	151	129	120	101	761
Non-passerine	36	25	15	23	33	29	161
Total	161	160	166	152	153	130	922

Number of Passerines Recorded by Date

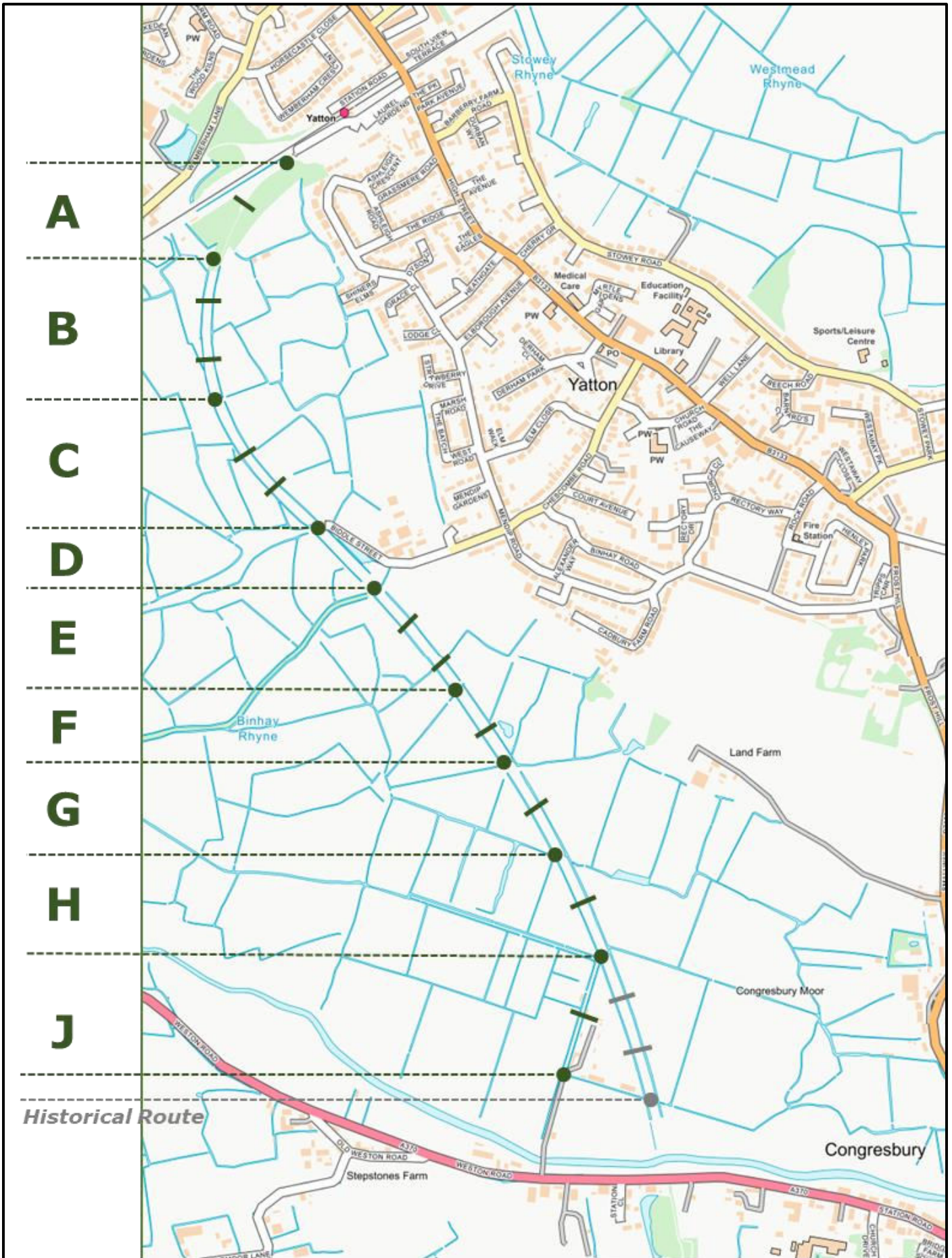
DATE		01 April		16 April		07 May		26 May		08 June		15 June		TOTALS	
LIST	Total	Sing	Total	Sing	Total	Sing	Total	Sing	Total	Sing	Total	Sing	Total	Sing	
BT Blue Tit	14		8		7		8		7		8		52		
GT Great Tit	5	2	4	2	3	1	2		5		3	1	22	6	
SL Swallow	1		1										2		
HM House Martin									1				1		
CW Cetti's Warbler	7	7	10	10	10	10	6	6	6	6	6	6	45	45	
LT Long Tailed Tit	6		4		4		8		5		2		29		
WW Willow Warbler	1	1	3	3									4	4	
CC Chiffchaff	14	14	17	10	12	10	8	7	9	8	9	8	69	57	
SW Sedge Warbler							1	1					1	1	
RW Reed Warbler			8	8	13	13	14	12	12	11	10	10	57	54	
GH Grasshopper W.			1	1									1	1	
BC Blackcap	4	3	13	13	10	10	9	7	12	10	6	6	54	49	
LW Lesser Whitethroat							1	1			1		2	1	
WH Whitethroat			1		6	4	3	3	4	3	5	5	19	15	
WR Wren	19	17	26	25	19	19	23	22	18	17	23	22	128	122	
ST Song Thrush	3	2	5	4	3	1	2	2	6	5	3	2	22	16	
B. Blackbird	11	2	6		11	1	7	2	10	4	6	2	51	11	
R. Robin	18	14	15	13	22	19	19	16	7	3	4	2	85	67	
SC Stonechat							2						2		
HS House Sparrow									2		1		3		
D. Dunnock	2	2	6	5	10	8	3	3	4	3			25	21	
CH Chaffinch	5	4	2	2	1	1	2	2	3	3	1	1	14	13	
BF Bullfinch					3						2		5		
GR Greenfinch	8	6	4	3	10	4	6	4	3	1	5	4	36	22	
GO Goldfinch	6	1	1		6	3	4		4		4		25	4	
SK Siskin					1								1		
RB Reed Bunting	1						1	1	2	1	2	1	6	3	
TOTALS	125	75	135	99	151	104	129	89	120	75	101	70	761	512	

Number of Birds Recorded by Date

DATE		01 April		16 April		07 May		26 May		08 June		15 June		TOTALS	
		Total	Sing	Total	Sing	Total	Sing	Total	Sing	Total	Sing	Total	Sing	Total	Sing
PH	Pheasant													-	
MA	Mallard	3		1										4	
SI	Swift									9				9	
WP	Woodpigeon	20	1	11	4	9	3	9	3	16	2	9	4	74	17
CD	Collared Dove	2		1				2				1		6	
MH	Moorhen	3		2		2		1						8	
H.	Grey Heron													-	
SH	Sparrowhawk					1		1						2	
BZ	Buzzard													-	
GS	G S Woodpecker			1										1	
G.	Green Woodpecker													-	
K.	Kestrel									1				1	
J.	Jay			1										1	
MG	Magpie	6		6		2		6		4		9		33	
JD	Jackdaw			2		1		4		2		9		18	
C.	Carrion Crow	2								1		1		4	
RV	Raven													-	
BT	Blue Tit	14		8		7		8		7		8		52	
GT	Great Tit	5	2	4	2	3	1	2		5		3	1	22	6
SL	Swallow	1		1										2	
HM	House Martin									1				1	
CW	Cetti's Warbler	7	7	10	10	10	10	6	6	6	6	6	6	45	45
LT	Long Tailed Tit	6		4		4		8		5		2		29	
WW	Willow Warbler	1	1	3	3									4	4
CC	Chiffchaff	14	14	17	10	12	10	8	7	9	8	9	8	69	57
SW	Sedge Warbler							1	1					1	1
RW	Reed Warbler			8	8	13	13	14	12	12	11	10	10	57	54
GH	Grasshopper W.			1	1									1	1
BC	Blackcap	4	3	13	13	10	10	9	7	12	10	6	6	54	49
GW	Garden Warbler													-	
LW	Lesser Whitethroat							1	1			1		2	1
WH	Whitethroat			1		6	4	3	3	4	3	5	5	19	15
GC	Goldcrest													-	
WR	Wren	19	17	26	25	19	19	23	22	18	17	23	22	128	122
TC	Treecreeper													-	
SG	Starling													-	
ST	Song Thrush	3	2	5	4	3	1	2	2	6	5	3	2	22	16
B.	Blackbird	11	2	6		11	1	7	2	10	4	6	2	51	11
R.	Robin	18	14	15	13	22	19	19	16	7	3	4	2	85	67
SC	Stonechat							2						2	
HS	House Sparrow									2		1		3	
D.	Dunnock	2	2	6	5	10	8	3	3	4	3			25	21
YW	Yellow Wagtail													-	
PW	Pied Wagtail													-	
CH	Chaffinch	5	4	2	2	1	1	2	2	3	3	1	1	14	13
BF	Bullfinch					3						2		5	
GR	Greenfinch	8	6	4	3	10	4	6	4	3	1	5	4	36	22
LR	Lesser Redpoll													-	
GO	Goldfinch	6	1	1		6	3	4		4		4		25	4
SK	Siskin					1								1	
RB	Reed Bunting	1						1	1	2	1	2	1	6	3
TOTALS		161	76	160	103	166	107	152	92	153	77	130	74	922	529

51 Species listed above, based on previous survey records.
39 Species recorded this year.

Map Showing Sections and Waypoints



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First Visit- 1st April

Date: 01/04/2026
 Start time: 08:30
 End time: 10:20

Weather: Overcast, light wind
 Observers: Trevor Riddle, Jon Thobroe, Andrea Murray

LIST	SECTION	A		B		C		D		E		F		G		H		J		TOTALS	
		T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	Total	Sing
MA	Mallard											1				2				3	
WP	Woodpigeon	4		5	1			3		3				1		3		1		20	1
CD	Collared Dove							2												2	
MH	Moorhen					1		1								1				3	
MG	Magpie	2		3												1				6	
C.	Carrion Crow															1				2	
BT	Blue Tit	2		5				1		3				2				1		14	
GT	Great Tit	2	2			1										1		1		5	2
SL	Swallow							1												1	
CW	Cetti's Warbler					2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1			1	1			7	7
LT	Long Tailed Tit					2								4						6	
WW	Willow Warbler					1	1													1	1
CC	Chiffchaff	3	3	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	1			1	1	2	2	2	2	14	14
BC	Blackcap	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1											4	3
WR	Wren	2	2	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1			5	3	19	17
ST	Song Thrush			1		1	1											1	1	3	2
B.	Blackbird			3		1		1		4	1						2	1	11	2	
R.	Robin	4	4	2	1	2	2	2	2	4	4	2	1			1	1	1	1	18	14
D.	Dunnock							1	1	1	1									2	2
CH	Chaffinch			2	2	2	1							1	1					5	4
GR	Greenfinch			6	4							1	1			1	1			8	6
GO	Goldfinch														3	1	3			6	1
RB	Reed Bunting											1								1	
TOTALS		20	12	30	10	20	14	18	7	21	12	7	4	10	3	17	6	18	8	161	76

Notes: Weasel in Section A,
 Kestrel with prey on Congresbury Moor, Section H

Second Visit- 16th April

Date: 16/04/2026
 Start time: 08:25
 End time: 10:45

Weather: Bright cloud, light wind
 Observers: Trevor Riddle, Jon Thobroe, Sarah Waring

LIST	SECTION	A		B		C		D		E		F		G		H		J		TOTALS	
		T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	Total	Sing
MA	Mallard			1																1	
WP	Woodpigeon	2	1	2	1	2		2	1	1				1				1	1	11	4
CD	Collared Dove					1														1	
MH	Moorhen					1		1												2	
GS	G S Woodpecker									1										1	
J.	Jay							1												1	
MG	Magpie	4																2		6	
JD	Jackdaw											2								2	
BT	Blue Tit	1		3		3		1												8	
GT	Great Tit	2												1	1			1	1	4	2
SL	Swallow									1										1	
CW	Cetti's Warbler			2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1			2	2			10	10
LT	Long Tailed Tit					1										2		1		4	
WW	Willow Warbler			1	1	2	2													3	3
CC	Chiffchaff	2	1	2	1	5	3	2	1	3	2			2	2			1		17	10
RW	Reed Warbler							2	2			3	3	2	2	1	1			8	8
GH	Grasshopper W.							1	1											1	1
BC	Blackcap	4	4	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1			1	1	1	1	2	2	13	13
WH	Whitethroat															1				1	
WR	Wren	5	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	4	4	2	2	1	1	1	1	3	3	26	25
ST	Song Thrush	1	1	1		1	1	1	1							1	1			5	4
B.	Blackbird			1		3												2		6	
R.	Robin	4	3	1	1	2	2	3	2	2	2					1	1	2	2	15	13
D.	Dunnock			1	1	3	2					1	1			1	1			6	5
CH	Chaffinch			1	1	1	1													2	2
GR	Greenfinch	1		1	1	1	1									1	1			4	3
GO	Goldfinch															1				1	
TOTALS		26	14	22	14	34	20	19	13	14	10	9	7	8	7	13	9	15	9	160	103

Notes: Section A - Whitethroat singing across railway
 Section C - Whitethroat singing in field to the east of the line
 Section E - Two Grasshopper Warblers and a Sedge Warbler singing from Footmead, west of the line

Third Visit- 7th May

Date: 07/05/2026 Weather: Bright. Light E
 Start time: 07:55 Observers: Trevor Riddle, Jon Thobroe
 End time: 09:55

LIST	SECTION	A		B		C		D		E		F		G		H		J		TOTALS	
		T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	Total	Sing
WP	Woodpigeon	2	1	2	1									2	1	1		2		9	3
MH	Moorhen															2				2	
SH	Sparrowhawk									1										1	
MG	Magpie	1												1						2	
JD	Jackdaw							1												1	
BT	Blue Tit	1		1		1				1		2						1		7	
GT	Great Tit	2										1	1							3	1
CW	Cetti's Warbler					2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	10	10
LT	Long Tailed Tit					1		1										2		4	
CC	Chiffchaff	3	3			1	1			1	1	1		1	1	1	1	4	3	12	10
RW	Reed Warbler			1	1			2	2			3	3	4	4	3	3			13	13
BC	Blackcap	2	2	1	1	4	4	1	1	1	1							1	1	10	10
WH	Whitethroat	1	1			1	1	1				2				2	2			6	4
WR	Wren	3	3	2	2	4	4			3	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	3	3	19	19
ST	Song Thrush							1		1	1	1								3	1
B.	Blackbird	3		1				1	1	1		2						3		11	1
R.	Robin	5	4	3	3	4	4	2	2	3	1			1	1	1	1	3	3	22	19
D.	Dunnock			2	2			1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	10	8
CH	Chaffinch					1	1													1	1
BF	Bullfinch					1												2		3	
GR	Greenfinch			2	2	1	1					1				2		4	1	10	4
GO	Goldfinch			1								2	2	2				1	1	6	3
SK	Siskin			1																1	
TOTALS		23	14	17	12	21	18	11	8	15	9	19	10	14	10	17	11	29	15	166	107

Notes: Section A - Noisy construction work
 Section J (original route) - Sparrowhawk high overhead

Fourth Visit- 26th May

Date: 26/05/2026 Weather: Sunny, calm, hot
 Start time: 08:00 Observers: Trevor Riddle, Jon Thobroe, Andrea Murray
 End time: 10:00

LIST	SECTION	A		B		C		D		E		F		G		H		J		TOTALS	
		T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	Total	Sing
WP	Woodpigeon	3	1			2		1	1	2				1	1					9	3
CD	Collared Dove			2																2	
MH	Moorhen															1				1	
SH	Sparrowhawk			1																1	
MG	Magpie	2		1						2		1								6	
JD	Jackdaw	4																		4	
BT	Blue Tit	1		1		1				3						1		1		8	
GT	Great Tit					1												1		2	
CW	Cetti's Warbler					2	2			1	1	2	2			1	1			6	6
LT	Long Tailed Tit			1		2		2		2								1		8	
CC	Chiffchaff	1	1	1		2	2			3	3					1	1			8	7
SW	Sedge Warbler															1	1			1	1
RW	Reed Warbler					1	1	1	1	1	1	4	3	3	3	4	3			14	12
BC	Blackcap	2	2			1	1			4	2	1	1			1	1			9	7
LW	Lesser Whitethroat					1	1													1	1
WH	Whitethroat			1	1											2	2			3	3
WR	Wren	6	5	3	3	5	5	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3					23	22
ST	Song Thrush					1	1			1	1									2	2
B.	Blackbird	1		2	1			1		1				1				1	1	7	2
R.	Robin	3	3	3	2	4	4	2	2	3	1	1	1					3	3	19	16
SC	Stonechat											2								2	
D.	Dunnock					1	1					1	1	1	1					3	3
CH	Chaffinch			1	1	1	1													2	2
GR	Greenfinch			1	1	1	1					1	1	2		1	1			6	4
GO	Goldfinch			3		1														4	
RB	Reed Bunting													1	1					1	1
TOTALS		23	12	21	9	27	20	9	6	25	11	15	11	12	9	13	10	7	4	152	92

Notes: Conditions like Midsummer
 Juv Stonechat with adults
 Original Section J impassable

Fifth Visit – 8th June

Date: 08/06/2026 **Weather:** Overcast, bright later, light SW
Start time: 09:25 **Observers:** Trevor Riddle, Jon Thobroe
End time: 11:20

LIST	SECTION	A		B		C		D		E		F		G		H		J		TOTALS	
		T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	Total	Sing
SI	Swift					2				7										9	
WP	Woodpigeon	1	1	3		3		1		3		1		2	1	2				16	2
K.	Kestrel																	1		1	
MG	Magpie	1				1						2								4	
JD	Jackdaw	2																		2	
C.	Carrion Crow					1														1	
BT	Blue Tit	3		2		1						1								7	
GT	Great Tit	1		1		1						2								5	
HM	House Martin					1														1	
CW	Cetti's Warbler			1	1	2	2	1	1					1	1	1	1			6	6
LT	Long Tailed Tit	2						1					2							5	
CC	Chiffchaff	2	2	2	2	1	1			1		1	1	2	2					9	8
SW	Sedge Warbler																				
RW	Reed Warbler			2	2	2	2			1	1	4	3	2	2	1	1			12	11
BC	Blackcap	3	3	1		3	2	2	2	2	2					1	1			12	10
WH	Whitethroat	1	1											1	1	2	1			4	3
WR	Wren	2	2	2	2	2	2			3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	18	17
ST	Song Thrush	2	1			1	1	1	1	1	1					1	1			6	5
B.	Blackbird	1		3	2	1		2	2	2								1		10	4
R.	Robin	2				3	2			1				1	1					7	3
HS	House Sparrow													2						2	
D.	Dunnock			2	1	1	1					1	1							4	3
CH	Chaffinch			2	2											1	1			3	3
GR	Greenfinch			1								2	1							3	1
GO	Goldfinch			1				1								2				4	
RB	Reed Bunting											2	1							2	1
TOTALS		23	10	23	12	26	13	9	6	21	7	20	9	13	10	13	8	5	2	153	77

Notes:

Sixth Visit- 15th June

Date: 15/06/2026 **Weather:** Sunny, light S
Start time: 08:30 **Observers:** Trevor Riddle, Jon Thobroe, Andrea Murray
End time: 10:35

LIST	SECTION	A		B		C		D		E		F		G		H		J		TOTALS	
		T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	Total	Sing
WP	Woodpigeon	2	1			1	1	2	1			1				2		1	1	9	4
CD	Collared Dove													1						1	
MG	Magpie					4				1		2		1		1				9	
JD	Jackdaw	5		4																9	
C.	Carrion Crow									1										1	
BT	Blue Tit			1		2		1		3		1								8	
GT	Great Tit	1	1													2				3	1
CW	Cetti's Warbler					1	1	1	1			2	2			1	1	1	1	6	6
LT	Long Tailed Tit											2								2	
CC	Chiffchaff	1	1	1	1	4	3	1	1	1	1							1	1	9	8
RW	Reed Warbler			1	1	1	1			1	1	3	3	2	2	2	2			10	10
BC	Blackcap	3	3			1	1	1	1							1	1			6	6
LW	Lesser Whitethroat							1												1	
WH	Whitethroat	1	1			1	1					1	1	1	1	1	1			5	5
WR	Wren	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	5	4			1	1	2	2	2	2	23	22
ST	Song Thrush							1	1	2	1									3	2
B.	Blackbird	1		1		1	1			1						1	1	1		6	2
R.	Robin					1	1			1						1	1	1		4	2
HS	House Sparrow															1				1	
CH	Chaffinch					1	1													1	1
BF	Bullfinch															2				2	
GR	Greenfinch									1		3	3			1	1			5	4
GO	Goldfinch													1		3				4	
RB	Reed Bunting											2	1							2	1
TOTALS		17	10	11	5	22	15	11	8	17	7	17	10	7	4	21	10	7	5	130	74

Notes: Red Kite high up, observed from Section G.

About YACWAG

Yatton and Congresbury Wildlife Action Group (YACWAG) is a registered charity whose aims are to establish and maintain nature reserves in the North Somerset Parishes of Yatton and Congresbury for the benefit of the public, and to advance education in natural history and nature conservation.

<https://yacwag.org.uk>



Registered charity No. 1076362