

BTO Bird Trends Explorer

Key Findings 2023



Turtle Dove, by Liz Cutting / BTO

This document summarises some of the major changes observed over the long term (34 years) and short term (5 years) in terrestrial bird population sizes presented in the latest version of the BTO Trends Explorer.

Long-term population decreases

The 10 largest statistically significant population decreases in population size over the long term (1967–2021) were:

Species	Change (95% confidence limits)	Scheme
Turtle Dove	-99 (-100 – -98)	CBC–BBS
Whinchat	-99 (-100 – -91)	CBC–BBS
Tree Sparrow	-97 (-99 – -92)	CBC–BBS
Willow Tit	-96 (-98 – -90)	CBC–BBS
Spotted Flycatcher	-93 (-96 – -90)	CBC–BBS
Grey Partridge	-92 (-95 – -88)	CBC–BBS
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	-92 (-98 – -62)	CBC–BBS
Tree Pipit	-92 (-96 – -82)	CBC–BBS
Nightingale	-91 (-98 – -47)	CBC–BBS
Starling	-90 (-93 – -86)	CBC–BBS

Long-term population increases

The 10 largest population increases in the long term (1967–2021) were:

Species	Change (95% confidence limits)	Scheme
Goldfinch	132 (73 – 228)	CBC–BBS
Chiffchaff	135 (95 – 228)	CBC–BBS
Mallard	141 (89 – 235)	CBC–BBS
Jackdaw	144 (54 – 300)	CBC–BBS
Woodpigeon	150 (20 – 576)	CBC–BBS
Mute Swan	260 (48 – 794)	CBC–BBS
Nuthatch	280 (172 – 424)	CBC–BBS
Blackcap	378 (284 – 526)	CBC–BBS
Great Spotted Woodpecker	399 (231 – 757)	CBC–BBS
Buzzard	824 (492 – 3,988)	CBC–BBS

Short-term population decreases

The 10 largest statistically significant population decreases in United Kingdom population size over the short term (2016–2021) observed were:

Species	Change (95% confidence limits)	Scheme
Turtle Dove	-50 (-68 – -26)	BBS
Wood Warbler	-47 (-62 – -32)	BBS
Willow Tit	-47 (-62 – -25)	BBS
Spotted Flycatcher	-46 (-57 – -34)	BBS
Swallow	-35 (-38 – -32)	BBS
House Martin	-33 (-38 – -27)	BBS
Greenfinch	-32 (-35 – -29)	BBS
Dipper	-29 (-43 – -8)	BBS
Peregrine	-28 (-45 – -6)	BBS
Little Owl	-27 (-42 – -4)	BBS

Short-term population increases

The 10 largest increases in United Kingdom population size over the short term (2016–2021) observed were:

Species	Change (95% confidence limits)	Scheme
Stock Dove	21 (13 – 28)	BBS
Gadwall	21 (0 – 56)	BBS
Blackcap	21 (18 – 24)	BBS
Ring-necked Parakeet	23 (3 – 45)	BBS
Canada Goose	23 (3 – 44)	BBS
Corn Bunting	28 (2 – 56)	BBS
Red Kite	39 (27 – 52)	BBS
Stonechat	59 (42 – 80)	BBS
Cetti's Warbler	108 (73 – 157)	BBS
Fieldfare	190 (87 – 365)	BBS

Population changes in individual countries

Decreasing Species

The following table highlights the 10 species showing the greatest significant population decreases in each country in the short term (2016–2021). Note trends are not produced for all species in all countries, and fewer than 10 species may be decreasing significantly in any one country.

Species	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Chaffinch	-30 (-32 – -28)	–	-25 (-30 – -18)	-18 (-24 – -11)
Curlew	–	–	-26 (-46 – -2)	–
Dipper	-36 (-48 – -16)	–	–	–
Dunnock	–	-14 (-23 – -4)	–	–
Goldcrest	–	-21 (-34 – -2)	–	–
Greenfinch	-30 (-33 – -27)	-28 (-42 – -13)	-48 (-59 – -35)	-52 (-67 – -29)
House Martin	-34 (-41 – -25)	-32 (-47 – -14)	-46 (-57 – -31)	–
Linnet	–	–	–	-27 (-45 – -3)
Little Owl	-26 (-44 – -5)	–	–	–
Long-tailed Tit	–	–	-30 (-46 – -15)	–
Mistle Thrush	–	–	–	-24 (-37 – -9)
Pied/White Wagtail	–	-22 (-32 – -13)	–	-25 (-36 – -11)
Red Grouse	–	-33 (-45 – -20)	–	–
Redstart	–	–	-20 (-30 – -8)	–
Reed Bunting	–	–	–	-26 (-43 – -4)
Robin	–	-16 (-23 – -10)	–	–
Siskin	–	-23 (-37 – -4)	–	–
Skylark	–	–	-24 (-36 – -7)	–
Spotted Flycatcher	-27 (-42 – -7)	–	–	–
Starling	–	–	–	-12 (-25 – 0)
Swallow	-38 (-42 – -35)	-26 (-35 – -18)	-40 (-48 – -31)	-26 (-33 – -16)
Swift	–	–	-30 (-47 – -10)	–
Tree Pipit	-37 (-51 – -20)	–	–	–
Turtle Dove	-49 (-68 – -22)	–	–	–
Whinchat	-28 (-46 – -4)	–	–	–
Willow Warbler	–	–	–	-12 (-20 – -1)
Wren	–	-17 (-23 – -12)	–	-11 (-17 – -4)
Yellowhammer	–	–	-51 (-69 – -35)	–

Increasing Species

The following table highlights the 10 species showing the greatest population increases in each country in the short term (2016–2021). Note trends are not produced for all species in all countries, and fewer than 10 species may be increasing significantly in any one country.

Species	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Blackbird	–	–	8 (2 – 14)	–
Blackcap	–	37 (20 – 55)	19 (12 – 28)	21 (7 – 38)
Cetti's Warbler	115 (69 – 157)	–	–	–
Chiffchaff	–	39 (22 – 56)	–	–
Corn Bunting	29 (2 – 66)	–	–	–
Cuckoo	–	15 (2 – 32)	24 (1 – 47)	–
Egyptian Goose	57 (19 – 102)	–	–	–
Fieldfare	271 (131 – 537)	–	–	–
Goldfinch	–	–	10 (1 – 20)	–
House Sparrow	–	–	14 (2 – 24)	–
Jackdaw	–	20 (3 – 38)	–	–
Long-tailed Tit	–	46 (10 – 90)	–	–
Mandarin Duck	56 (17 – 101)	–	–	–
Red-legged Partridge	20 (12 – 29)	–	–	–
Red Kite	49 (37 – 62)	–	–	–
Ring-necked Parakeet	23 (9 – 39)	–	–	–
Siskin	–	–	50 (3 – 103)	–
Skylark	–	10 (0 – 21)	–	–
Stock Dove	22 (15 – 30)	–	–	–
Stonechat	69 (44 – 108)	51 (24 – 87)	60 (41 – 90)	–
Willow Warbler	–	13 (2 – 24)	–	–