

Woodlark Survey Instructions 2025

Firstly, please register and select your survey square(s) from the Heathland Birds Survey webpage (www.bto.org/heathland-birds-survey), using the Request Square map. You can then download and print the square map in a variety of formats as well as display the areas with known suitable/unsuitable habitat. A survey Visit and Habitat Recording Form should be downloaded and printed for each square covered. A Letter of Introduction and other useful information can be found on the Resources section of the website.

The aim of the survey is to record all occupied Woodlark territories on the square by recording singing males and other individuals located during two visits. Please see examples below of how to record your survey observations on the map and recording forms.

Field methods:

The survey runs from the middle of February to the end of May. The square should be visited at least two times (additional visits are welcome), each visit falling within one of the following periods and not less than 10 days apart:

Visit A: 15 Feb - 31 Mar

Visit B: 1 Apr – 31 May

Ideally each visit should take place before midday on mild clear, dry days with little wind. Do not survey if daytime temperatures stay below 5 °C for more than 3 days previously. Woodlarks are likely to be located on heather and grass heaths (particularly those which are mown, grazed or burnt) and in conifer plantations where compartments have recently been cleared or replanted up to 7 years ago. Within conifer plantations they may also be found along rides and in areas of permanent open space. Arable habitats are now increasingly being used, such as set-aside, field margins and open ground, which has recently been disturbed. Other potentially suitable areas include well-drained sites on sand, gravel or chalk, with areas of short vegetation (<10cm high) and/or patches of bare ground. The survey maps indicate the known likely suitable habitat (heath, young woodland and preferred soil types = without grey hatching) but please check the whole square for other or new suitable areas.

The square to be surveyed should be covered as fully as possible, preferably by walking to within 100m of all parts of the square and covering all areas of potentially suitable habitat (without grey cross-hatching on site map). If this is not possible, survey from public rights of way or areas of public access. **Always obtain permission from landowners before entering privately owned land.** If the site is not a 1-km square, please outline the rough boundary of the site visited on the map. Mark on the map (using cross hatching) any areas that were not visited during the survey (**see Example on back page**) and fill in the section on 'Coverage of Square'. Any new areas of suitable habitat should be covered and marked on the map, a copy of which should be emailed to the survey organiser after the last survey visit.

Bird Recording:

Please complete (or amend, if necessary) the site and observer information in the appropriate boxes. Please ensure that a four figure 1-km square grid reference (eg TL1234) is given. Record the date of each visit in the boxes provided. Where more than 2 visits were undertaken please enter information in the Visit Details section, in the grey boxes provided. **NOTE If you are also surveying Dartford Warbler at the same square;** please record all observations, even if they fall outside the recommended survey periods.

Record the number of singing males located during each visit. Neighbouring birds can only be separated with certainty if they are heard simultaneously. However, for the purposes of this survey assume that singing males are different individuals if they are heard at points more than 200m apart. Most territories are likely to be detected through the presence of a singing male but sometimes evidence of territories (eg a bird feeding young) may be obtained even though a singing male was never recorded. Please record these as additional territories in the relevant box on each visit. After each visit fill in the total number of territories per visit column from the information gathered from the visit records of singing males and other territorial contacts. Note that the number of territories given for each visit should be the number recorded on that visit only and not the running total across that and the previous visits.

Each record should also be marked on the accompanying site map - **see Example on back page:** For the first visit mark the locations of the first recorded singing male as A1, the second as A2, etc.; for the second visit as B1, B2, etc.; for the third visit as C1, C2, etc. Where the same male is known to have moved location, join the sequential locations with a solid line (e.g. A1 — A2). Where different males are detected on a single visit, join their locations with a dashed line (e.g. A1 - - - A2). If unsure mark as A1 — ? — A3. Mark the records of other individuals on the site map by using standard BTO (CBC) symbols - **see Example on back page.** Also, mark the locations of any other individuals recorded outside the survey square on the edge of the map. Sound lures or call playback should **NOT** be used for this survey.

After the final visit please record the estimated total number of minimum/maximum territories in the appropriate box. This total should be the number of territories that you consider the square contains, based upon the number recorded across all visits.

Habitat details (within 50m of each male/pair):

For each male/pair (coded A1, A2, B1, etc), where first observed, please indicate the main habitat by putting a "1" in only one of the grey boxes (categories 1-4) to describe the main habitat Use a single row per male/pair on each visit— see example over the page. However, if the predominant land use is equally split between two categories, please tick each of the appropriate grey boxes (categories 1-4). Then enter 'Y' for all types that apply from the white subcategories and any from section 5). For the grass/heather/bracken-dominated heath categories, dominance is defined as greater than 50% coverage. A plantation or woodland can be defined as mixed if the area contains more than 10% of both broadleaf trees and conifers.

Other Heathland Assemblage Species

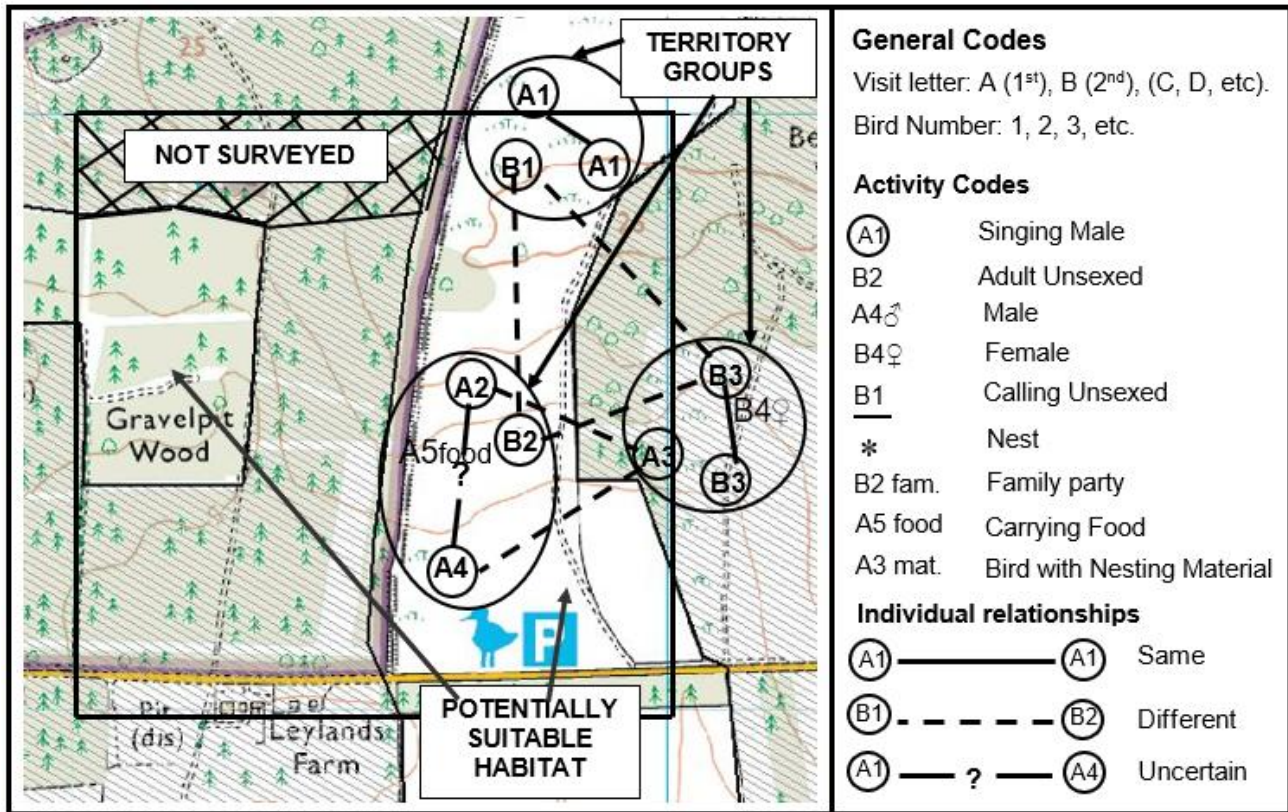
Records of the following species are also requested: Cuckoo, Curlew, Grasshopper Warbler, Hobby, Linnet, Long-eared Owl, Redstart, Redshank, Snipe, Stone Curlew, Stonechat, Tree Pipit, Wheatear, Whinchat and Woodcock. Please record the number of males/territories detected on each visit. If you make any additional or casual visits e.g. for Woodcock or Long-eared Owl, etc, please enter these records into BirdTrack (www.birdtrack.net) for the 1-km square or actual location (use the Pinpoint option).

Confidentiality:

Woodlark and **Stone Curlew** are protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). Breeding birds and their nest sites must NOT be disturbed unless an appropriate licence is held. Please note that searching for nests is NOT part of this survey. All site details will be treated as confidential.

Examples of bird and habitat recording

Map of plotted Woodlark registrations and codes



Example of Habitat details recorded for each territorial/singing male or pair.

Habitat Recording Form (males/pairs only). Species : Woodlark / Dartford Warbler / Nightjar (delete as required) Square: |

For the 50m radius around each territorial male/pair, select one main Habitat Category (1-4) and as many items that apply in each subcategory, plus any items from 5)

Bird	1) Farmland	2) Heathland	3) Woodland/forestry	4) Other Habitats	5) General	Bare ground present - natural	Bare ground present - burnt	Grazed (Y/N)
A1			1					N Y N
A2		1						N Y Y
B1	1							N Y N

Submitting your data and survey help

Please submit your survey data using the dedicated online survey application: www.bto.org/heathland-bird-survey
 If you don't have access to a computer then please send your completed maps and survey forms to your **local organiser** by 31st July, who will enter them on your behalf, or to **David Norfolk, British Trust for Ornithology, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk, IP24 2PU.**
 Email: heathlandbirds@bto.org

