

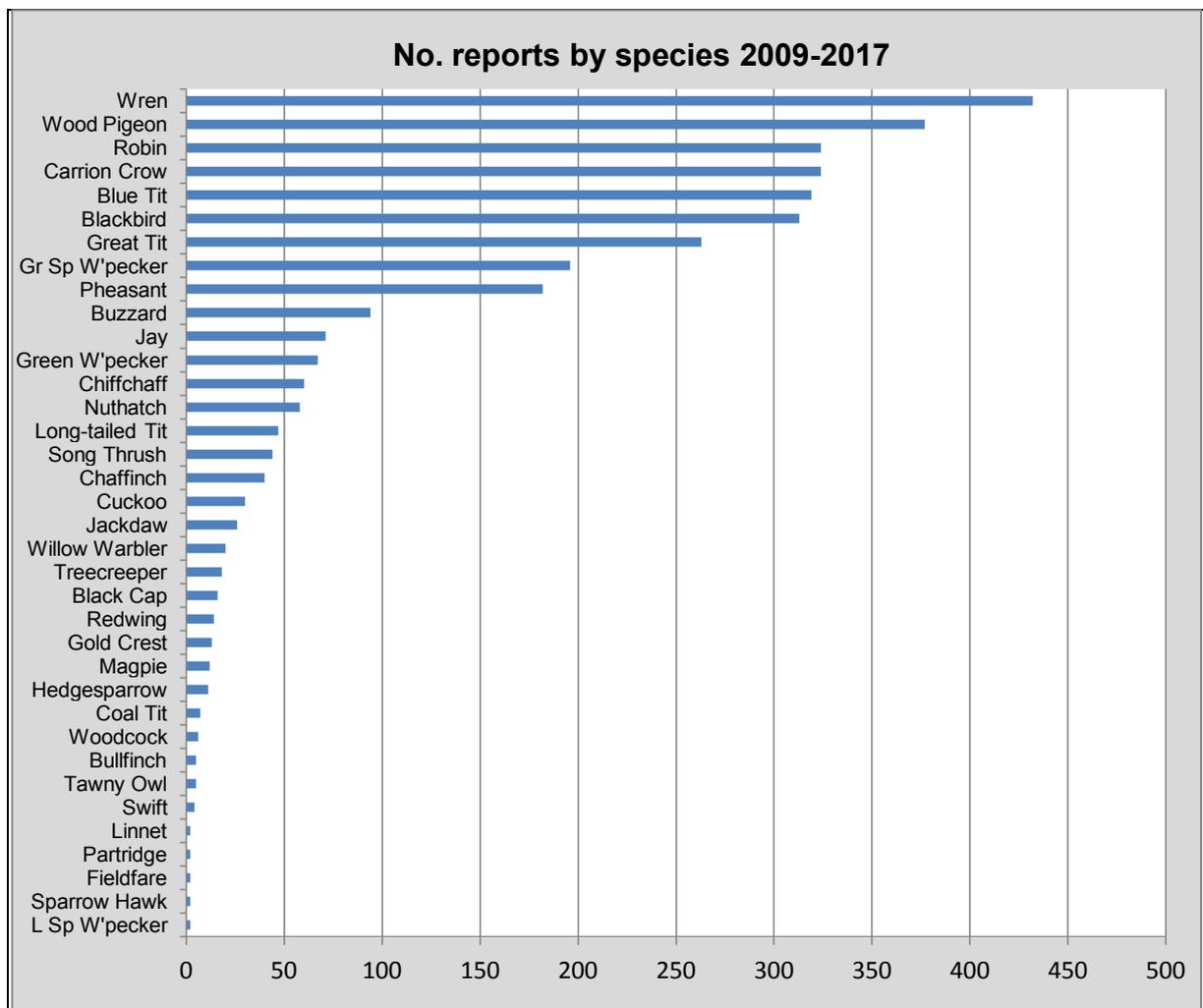


Sandhurst Copse & Sheepwalk

BIRD SURVEYS 2009 - 2017

The purpose of the surveys is to determine which species are present and any trends. Thirty six species have been recorded over the period 2009 – 2017. The graph below shows the number of reports for each species.

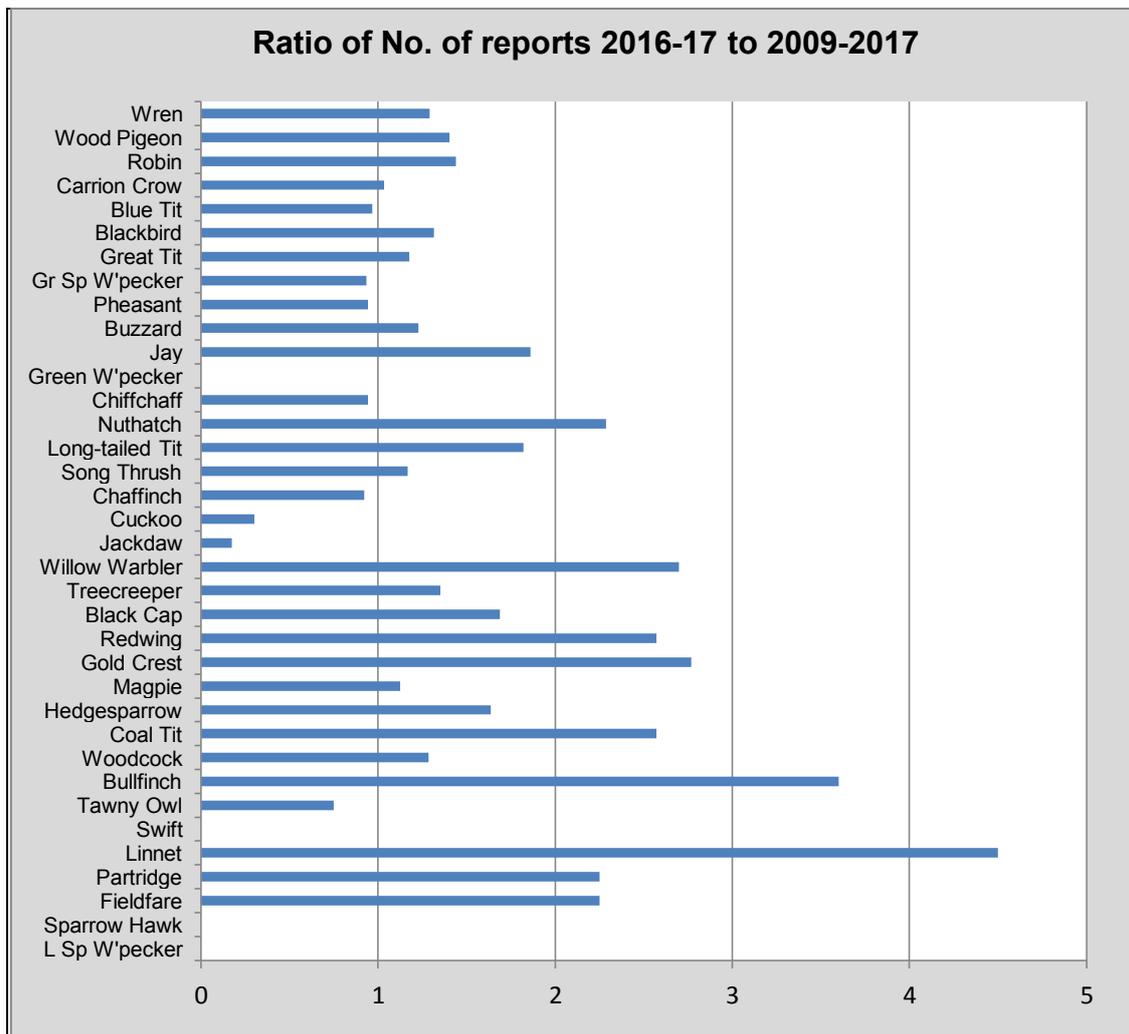
The survey path is divided into 12 segments, in each segment a species heard or seen is recorded once. Of the order of 7 to 9 surveys are carried out each year. The average number of records per survey for each year for the last four years was 55 to 59, confirming a reasonable consistency of survey methodology. The average number of species recorded for each survey was 13 to 15. Surveys for the last 5 years have been carried out by Jackie Blizard. Earlier surveys from 2009 were carried out by Dr Alan Behn and in some cases Malcolm Hodgson. It is possible that different approaches might have slightly influenced the reports.



The surveys do not give a measure of the actual size of the populations. Numerous species will be under reported as only one report is recorded in each stage of the path. Species with

relatively rare appearances and itinerant species are not recorded if they are not present when the survey takes place; but this does not mean they are never present.

The graph below shows the ratio of the number of reports per year for each species in the last 2 year period compared with the number of reports per year for the 9 year period. The species are listed in the order of the above graph. A ratio of 1 indicates that there is no change; more than 1 indicates an increase, suggesting an increase in population; less than 1 suggests a reduction. There appears to be stability of the most numerous species (Wren – Pheasant). The number of reports, less than 5 per species, for Swift and below are two small for a meaningful comparison. Linnets were reported for the first time in 2017.



It appears there may be a significant decline in Tawny Owl, Jackdaw, Cuckoo and in particular Green Woodpecker, see the graph below. At the same time a number of species may be showing an increase, see the second graph below, Bullfinch, Coal Tit, Hedgesparrow, Gold Crest, Redwing, Blackcap, Tree Creeper and Willow Warbler.

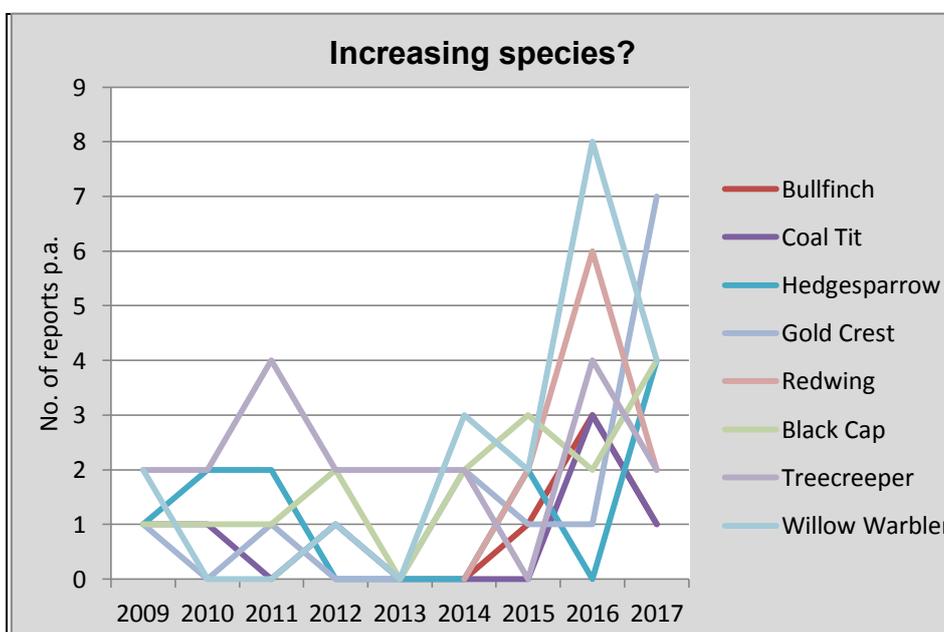
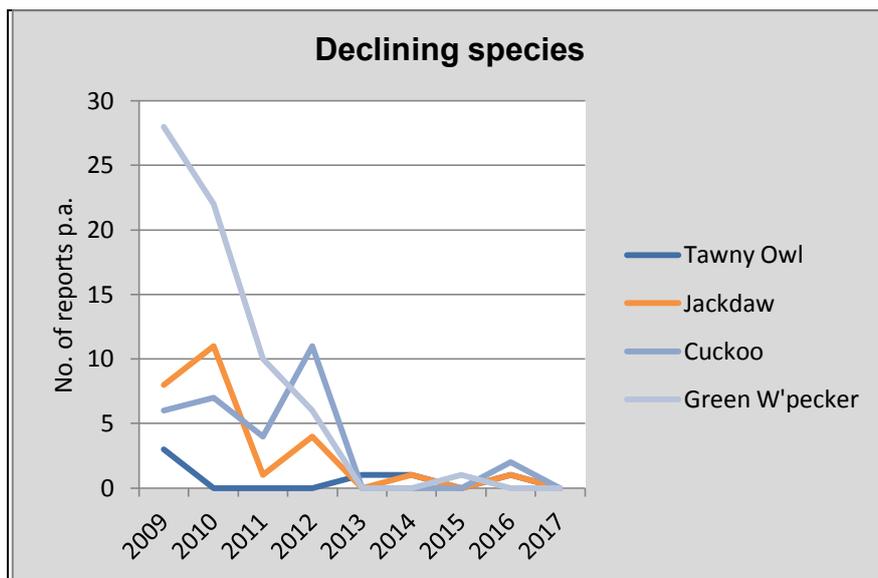
In the case of a declining, or rarer, species a zero record in a year does not mean that it is not there, only that it was not reported during the very brief window of the surveys.

However in the case of Green Woodpecker, Tawny Owl and Cuckoo, the suggestion of decline correlates with my own impression of what I have heard, when frequently visiting or

working in the wood. With all three I have in recent years heard occasional calls; but not in the immediate vicinity. When the species are present, it is also possible that they are over recorded as the calls travel and the individuals move around.

It is possible that the Tawny Owl has been disturbed by conifer thinning and felling in the adjacent Albury Estates.

In the case of the Green Woodpecker, in March 2012 the remains of one were found, almost certainly the result of a Sparrow Hawk attack. Announcing its presence by a raucous call, maybe exaggerating the numbers, and more than one such incident, could indeed have caused the decline reported.



A significant event in 2013 was a successful Lesser Spotted Woodpecker nest. Photographed by Dominic Greves.



[Sandhurst Copse and Sheepwalk are adjacent broadleaf woodlands of approximately equal area, in total about 32ha between Shamley Green and Farley Green (GU5), to the north of Farley Heath Road, OS grid reference TQ046445. Both are named on the OS Plan.]

Note. I can only locate records for three surveys in 2013. Therefore the actual numbers of reports for that year in the above two graphs may be understated. However this does not invalidate the conclusions.]

Patrick Mannix

15 April 2018