

**THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA**

BOROUGH BREEDING BIRD SURVEY
2006

SURVEY REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The survey period ran from the beginning of April until the end of August. The sites surveyed included all of the Sites of Metropolitan Importance, as defined by the Borough Ecological Survey 1993, as well as a single Site of Borough Importance Grade 1 (the Chelsea Physic Garden).

A sample of gardens from the Ladbroke Grove Garden Complex, (a series of private gardens, amongst housing in the centre of the Borough), were also surveyed. These are classed as Sites of Borough Importance Grade 2 and the largest, Ladbroke Square Garden, has been surveyed several times previously.

Holland Park was the main focus of attention, because the Park is large and contains a number of enclosures that are actively managed for wildlife, and the continued gathering of ornithological data aids conservation initiatives at the site.

In addition to the sites already mentioned, smaller ones, such as Meanwhile Wildlife Garden and Kensal Green Gas Works were also partly surveyed, and are analysed in the context of the larger sites which they border.

SURVEY TECHNIQUES

The major sites were visited on a regular basis throughout the breeding season, with efforts sometimes concentrated on locally uncommon species. All of the major sites received at least one early morning visit in April or May, to note singing birds.

Birds were confirmed as breeding when nests were found, or when recently fledged juveniles were seen, and when adults were observed carrying nest material or food. In cases where only an adult male was singing regularly from suitable habitat, or when fully grown young were seen (which may have arrived from a different site), this is described as possible breeding. Therefore, for example, where a species is said to have 1-2 breeding pairs,

this implies that 1 pair was confirmed as having bred with a second pair possibly having bred.

In a small number of cases it was not possible to obtain the exact numbers of birds at a site. In these instances the number of confirmed breeding birds is indicated followed by a plus sign, implying that there may have been more.

Bird ringing was carried out in Holland Park and a range of nests was inspected at most sites. All ringing and nest inspection activities were carried out under BTO/EN (British Trust for Ornithology/English Nature) Licence. The author is a BTO/EN A-Permit holder.

WEATHER DURING THE SURVEY PERIOD

Weather affects birds in several ways, for example: aiding or inhibiting breeding, affecting winter survival rates, and determining the arrival and departure dates of migrants.

The winter of 2005/06, immediately prior to the survey period, was unusually dry and mild, until March, when it turned cold. However, these cold spells did not last long enough to cause any major population declines in the Borough's birds.

Spring weather arrived later in April, but unfortunately a week of wind and rain in early May coincided with nesting Blue Tits, and just as the broods of Tits were near to fledging, which may have caused a few mortalities. From mid May onwards though the weather remained very settled, although at times very hot, and was on the whole helpful to the nesting birds.

NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The original Borough Bird Survey of 1995-96 described how, despite having the highest concentration of people in London and the least amount of green space, some of the sites within Kensington and Chelsea are remarkably rich in avifauna. The same can still be said and this year's survey found 58 wild bird species, with 35 breeding and another 4 species possibly breeding. These are slightly higher than last year's figures. The weather was settled, which aided breeding success, and we were visited by a few uncommon passage migrants.

Of special interest are the uncommon species for inner London, which include: Sparrowhawk (1 pair), Kestrel (2 pairs), Stock Dove (3 pairs), Tawny Owl (1 pair), Green Woodpecker (1 pair), Great Spotted Woodpecker (2 pairs), House Martin (18 pairs), Grey Wagtail (1 pair), Blackcap (8 pairs), Goldcrest (4 pairs) and Long Tailed Tit (8 pairs). Good numbers of common garden birds continue to exist at the larger sites, such as Holland Park, and common wildfowl can be found at the Borough's two riverine sites. The exotic Ring-Necked Parakeet (also known as the Rose Ringed Parakeet) are now an increasingly regular sight in the Borough and several pairs nested for the first time.

By the River Thames, for the fifth year running, Grey Wagtails successfully nested and the colony of House Martins reared good numbers of young. This is one of only two large colonies of House Martins in central London.

Song Thrushes remain present but in reduced numbers and the same can be said for Mistle Thrush. Blackbirds, Robins and Wrens are common throughout the Borough. House Sparrows have not bred since 2001 and only 1 was seen this year. Other finches are faring better, due to a concentrated effort to provide additional feeding from seed feeders. Numbers of Chaffinches, Greenfinches and Goldfinches were found to have increased by about 20%.

LIST OF BIRDS OBSERVED IN THE BOROUGH April - August 2005
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SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME	BREEDING STATUS
Gt CRESTED GREBE	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	non breeding
CORMORANT	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	non breeding
GREY HERON	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	non breeding
MUTE SWAN	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	non breeding
GREYLAG GOOSE	<i>Anser anser</i> (feral)	1+ pairs bred
CANADA GOOSE	<i>Branta canadensis</i> (feral)	4 pairs bred
EGYPTIAN GOOSE	<i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i> (feral)	non breeding
MALLARD	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	3+ pairs bred
TUFTED DUCK	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	1 pair bred
COMMON BUZZARD	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	passage migrant ?
SPARROWHAWK	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	1 pair bred
PEREGRINE FALCON	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	non breeding
KESTREL	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	1-2 pairs bred
MOORHEN	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	8-9 pairs bred
COOT	<i>Fulica atra</i>	9 pairs bred
COMMON SANDPIPER	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	passage migrant
BLACK HEADED GULL	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	non breeding
LESSER BLACK BACKED GULL	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	bred nearby
GREATER BLACK BACKED GULL	<i>Larus marinus</i>	non breeding
HERRING GULL	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	bred nearby
COMMON TERN	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	bred nearby
FERAL PIGEON	<i>Columba livia</i> (feral)	bred at most sites
STOCK DOVE	<i>Columba oenas</i>	2-3 pairs bred
WOODPIGEON	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	bred at most sites
TAWNY OWL	<i>Strix aluco</i>	1-2 pairs possibly bred
SWIFT	<i>Apus apus</i>	1-3 pairs bred
RING-NECKED PARAKEET	<i>Psittacula krameri</i> (feral)	3+ pairs bred
GREEN WOODPECKER	<i>Picus viridis</i>	1 pair bred
Gt SPOTTED WOODPECKER	<i>Dendrocopus major</i>	2 pairs bred
HOUSE MARTIN	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	18 pairs bred
SWALLOW	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	passage migrant
PIED WAGTAIL	<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>	1 pair probably bred
GREY WAGTAIL	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	1 pair bred

WREN	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	bred at most sites
DUNNOCK	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	bred at most sites
WHEATEAR	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	passage migrant
ROBIN	<i>Erithicus rubecula</i>	bred at most sites
BLACKBIRD	<i>Turdus merula</i>	bred at most sites
SONG THRUSH	<i>Turdus philomilos</i>	3-6 pairs bred
MISTLE THRUSH	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	1 pair possibly bred
SEDGE WARBLER	<i>Acrocephalus shoenobaenus</i>	passage migrant
WHITETHROAT	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	2 pairs bred
BLACKCAP	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	7 pairs bred
CHIFFCHAFF	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	1 pair possibly bred
WILLOW WARBLER	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	passage migrant
GOLDCREST	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	3-5 pairs bred
LONG TAILED TIT	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	7-9 pairs bred
COAL TIT	<i>Parus ater</i>	2-3 pairs bred
BLUE TIT	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	bred at most sites
GREAT TIT	<i>Parus major</i>	bred at most sites
SPOTTED FLYCATCHER	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	passage migrant
PIED FLYCATCHER	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	passage migrant
JAY	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	2-4 pairs bred
MAGPIE	<i>Pica pica</i>	3-5 pairs bred
CARRION CROW	<i>Corvus corone</i>	6-7 pairs bred
STARLING	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	a few bred at most sites
CHAFFINCH	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	1-5 pairs bred
GREENFINCH	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	11-14 pairs bred
GOLDFINCH	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	4-5 pairs bred
HOUSE SPARROW	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	non breeding

TOTAL= 58 species (excluding feral pigeon)

NUMBER BREEDING= 35

NUMBER POSSIBLY BREEDING = 4

HOLLAND PARK

SITE OF METROPOLITAN IMPORTANCE

Grid Ref: TQ2479

Size: 16ha (40 acres)

Owner/manager: RBK&C

Number of visits: 6

OBSERVATIONS (40 species recorded, including 23-27 breeding)

CORMORANT: individuals and small flocks were regularly seen flying over.

GREY HERON: 1 or 2 were irregular early morning visitors to the ponds.

EGYPTIAN GOOSE: 3 were seen on the Sports Field on the morning of the 8th of May, (the first records for the site). During the last 15 years the feral population of this species has been steadily expanding throughout West London, being mainly concentrated around larger ponds and the River Thames.

MALLARD: Late in the summer a female was seen with a brood of ducklings. The numbers using the Park in the last 2 summers are lower than in previous years, possibly due to the reduction in aquatic habitat. Lord Holland's Pond has been drained for long periods of time and the Wildlife Pond has shrunk. Predation by Corvids, foxes and rats may also be a problem.

SPARROWHAWK: No nest was found in the Park but adults were seen hunting. Then, in July and August, reports were received of 4 juveniles observed in the North of the Park.. It seems likely that a pair successfully nested just outside, (a similar thing happened last year).

KESTREL. An adult male flew South over the Park on the 4th of April.

MOORHEN: 3-4 pairs were present but breeding success was again inhibited by human intervention. The water level on the Wildlife Pond was very low all summer, making the Moorhen's nest easy to predate, and Lord

Holland's Pond has undergone some restoration work. Despite this at least 2 pairs did raise small broods of young.

One of the adults at Kyoto was ringed as an adult in 2000 and it was again present this summer (making it at least 8 years old).

HERRING GULL: small numbers were seen flying over and feeding in the early mornings on the Sports Field. These may be breeding birds from other areas in and around London.

LESSER BLACK BACKED GULL: small numbers were seen flying over. These may be breeding birds from other areas in and around London.

WOODPIGEON: At least 10 pairs bred.

STOCK DOVE: This species appeared in the Park for the first time in 2001, and although breeding has been suspected, it has never been confirmed. This year a pair was again seen displaying in the Wildlife Reserve and 6 adults were also feeding on the Sports Field on the morning of the 13th of May.

TAWNY OWL: 1 pair probably bred. Adults were heard calling in April.

SWIFT: 1-2 pairs bred nearby. The maximum count was 8, on the 13th of May.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER: 1 pair bred. The resident pair were omnipresent and were observed feeding young in May.

GREEN WOODPECKER: not as common as in 2002 and 2003, with only single birds occasionally heard in the early spring.

RINGED-NECKED PARAKEET (also known as Rose-Ringed Parakeet): 1 pair bred. Following over a decade of rapid population expansion throughout West London, this species has become increasingly common in the last few years in Holland Park. A pair took over an old Great Spotted Woodpecker nest site, by enlarging the entrance hole. However, it is not known if they fledged any young.

SWALLOW: 2 flew North over the Park on the 4th of April.

HOUSE MARTIN: 3 were flying high over the Park on the 11th of July. These are likely to have been from the River colony (see page 16).

GREY WAGTAIL: In early June a single bird was reported feeding around the Commonwealth Institute, and on the 16th of July 2 adults and a juvenile were seen near Kensington High Street (less than a 1km) from the Park.. A pair bred by the River Thames and this species has appeared several times in the Park in recent years, most notably as an autumn migrant. It is likely that recent summer sightings relate to the breeding pair by the River.

WREN: 11-12 pairs bred. The same numbers as last year. This species remains common in the Park.

DUNNOCK: 1-2 pairs bred. An alarmingly low number for this once common species. In recent years evidence has been found of nests being predated around the formal gardens, with ornate hedges being cut too fiercely to allow thick enough cover for nesting birds.

ROBIN: 10-11 pairs bred. A similar number to last year.

BLACKBIRD: 20+ pairs bred. A similar number to last year.

SONG THRUSH: 1-2 pairs bred. Another decrease on 2005 and 2004. 2 juveniles were seen in July.

MISTLE THRUSH: There were few sightings this year and only of single birds on the Sports Field. It is not known if any nested.

SEDGE WARBLER: On the 5th of August one was seen in the Wildlife Reserve. This is only the 4th record for the Park, the others being found in 1969, 1996 and 2004. Sedge Warblers prefer freshwater marshes with reedbeds and scrubby willows, and so they rarely occur in the woodland of Holland Park. It is likely that this individual was on migration and that it was temporarily attracted by the habitat surrounding the Wildlife Pond.

BLACKCAP: 4 pairs bred. Young were seen at several locations in the second half of the summer.

CHIFFCHAFF: a male was regularly singing in April and May, but there was no further evidence to suggest that breeding took place.

GOLDCREST: 2 pairs bred. Only 2 of the usual 3 territories were occupied.

LONG TAILED TIT: 2-3 pairs bred. A similar number to last year and lots of juveniles were seen from the beginning of May onwards.

COAL TIT: 1-2 pairs probably bred, although no young could be confirmed.

BLUE TIT: 30 pairs bred (26 in nest boxes), which was a tiny increase on last year's number. Due to cold weather in March and April, the Blue Tits nested a week later than is the norm. The average brood size (see below) was 9.9 per nest, which is the best ever recorded in the Park. However although good sized clutches of eggs were laid and hatched, there was a week of wind and rain which coincided with the time when the chicks needed lots of insect food. Fledging success may therefore have been inhibited by the poor weather.

The table below shows the results of the nest box survey, undertaken on May 12th and 13th. Boxes were used by both Great Tits and Blue Tits. The average brood size only refers to Blue Tits.

number of boxes checked = 47 number of boxes with broods = 33 number of boxes not used = 14

largest brood = 13 smallest brood = 8 <i>average* brood size = 9.9</i>
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**average taken from 12 broods checked.*

See page 33 for a comparative chart of brood sizes 1995-2006.

GREAT TIT: 10 pairs bred (7 in nest boxes), which is similar to last year. More pairs are using the nest boxes, probably because boxes with larger holes have been put up in the Park in recent years. 3 broods were ringed,

with brood sizes of 5,7 and 8. As with the Blue Tit, this species is believed to have had a reasonably good breeding season.

JAY: 1-2 pairs bred. The same number as last year.

MAGPIE: 1 pair bred. A similar number to last year.

CARRION CROW: 2 pairs bred, a slight increase on last year. No accurate counts were made, but the numbers of Carrion Crows in the Park are much lower than they were in the 1990s, following the removal of some of the birds in 2001. Perhaps they are now staging something of a comeback.

STARLING: 4-5 pairs bred nearby, a similar number to last year. Most pairs nest just outside of the Park and visit to look for food. Several juveniles were seen from June onwards.

CHAFFINCH: 1-2 pairs bred, a similar number to last year. Small numbers of Chaffinches are frequently seen feeding from the seed feeders, and it is thought that these have helped them to remain in the area.

GREENFINCH: 2-3 pairs bred. A similar number to last year but the number of nesting Greenfinches remains low, when they are increasing elsewhere in the Borough. Possibly because nesting birds are frequently disturbed by over zealous hedge trimming in and around the Park. Small numbers of Greenfinches regularly visit the seed feeders.

GOLDFINCH: 1 pair probably bred. A male held a territory in the South of the Park in likely nesting habitat. Reports were also received of up to 12 birds feeding on seed feeders in private gardens close to the Park. Goldfinches have not occurred as regularly, nor have they nested in the Park for several decades. The additional seed feeders, both within the park and in nearby private gardens, have helped this species to re-colonise.

HOLLAND PARK RINGING TOTALS

Due to the later than average nesting of the Blue Tits, no pulli were of a size capable of being ringed, hence the lower than average numbers ringed.

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>FULL GROWN</u>	<u>PULLI</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
GREAT TIT	1	20	21
BLUE TIT	6		6
<i>GRAND TOTAL</i>			27

2 breeding adult female Blue Tits and 2 breeding adult female Great Tits were retrapped in May, their ringing details are given below, (all had been ringed in the Park).

BLUE TITS

<u>RING No.</u>	<u>DATE AND AGE WHEN RINGED</u>	
P727746	10.05.02	2 or more years old
R833227	09.05.04	1 year old

Since being ringed in 2002, P727746 has been retrapped each year and is now at least 6 years old, which is well over the average expected age for the species.

GREAT TITS

<u>RING No.</u>	<u>DATE AND AGE WHEN RINGED</u>	
T117886	07.05.05	1 year old
TE56911	15.05.05	pullus

TE56911, which was found to be breeding this year, had been previously ringed in 2005 as a pullus.

MOORHEN

One of the adult Moorhens at Kyoto was ringed as an adult in 2000 and it was again present this summer (making it at least 8 years old).

COMMENTS AND COMPARISONS WITH PREVIOUS YEARS

The number of species remained similar to previous years. This year, after prolonged stable weather, there was evidence to suggest that good numbers of young were produced by most species. However Song Thrush and Mistle Thrush did not fare as well.

There are several species present which are not normally associated with central London: Sparrowhawk, Tawny Owl, Stock Dove, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Blackcap, Long Tailed Tit and Goldcrest. There has been a steady increase in the number of Ringed-Necked Parakeets visiting the Park and nesting took place for the first time. This exotic feral species has been expanding its range throughout West London for several decades.

More information and analysis from the site can be found on page 32 .

GRAND UNION CANAL (PADDINGTON BRANCH)

**Also including Kensal Green Gas Works, Meanwhile Wildlife Garden
and part of the railway embankment.**

SITE OF METROPOLITAN IMPORTANCE

Grid Ref: TQ2382

Length: 1.2km (0.75 miles) in RBK&C

Owner/manager: British Waterways

Number of visits: 3

LIST OF SPECIES OBSERVED

B = breeding (with number of pairs in brackets)

PB = possible breeding

M = passage migrant

CORMORANT

GREY HERON

MUTE SWAN

CANADA GOOSE – B (4)

MALLARD – B (1+)

TUFTED DUCK - B (1)

PEREGRINE

KESTREL PB (1) nearby

COOT – B (9)

MOORHEN – B ()

BLACK HEADED GULL

HERRING GULL

LESSER BLACK BACKED GULL

COMMON TERN

WOODPIGEON -B (3+)

STOCK DOVE – B nearby

SWIFT - PB nearby

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER - B nearby

GREEN WOODPECKER - B nearby

RINGED-NECKED PARAKEET - flying over

PIED WAGTAIL – B nearby

WREN – B (2-3)

DUNNOCK – B (1)

ROBIN – B (1-2)

BLACKBIRD – B (2+).

SONG THRUSH - B nearby

WHITETHROAT – M & B nearby

BLACKCAP - B nearby
CHIFFCHAFF - M
WILLOW WARBLER - M
LONG TAILED TIT - B nearby
BLUE TIT - B nearby
GREAT TIT - B nearby
JAY - B nearby
MAGPIE – B (1)
CARRION CROW -B nearby
STARLING – B (2)
CHAFFINCH
GREENFINCH – B (1)
GOLDFINCH – PB (1)
HOUSE SPARROW

COMMENTS AND COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEARS

Nesting waterfowl continue to do well, with Coot and Moorhen a common sight and plenty of young in evidence from June onwards. The highest count of Canada Geese was made on the 11th of July, when 71 birds were present in a moulting flock, including 36 goslings. A few pairs of Tufted Duck were again present and in July a female was seen with 3 young. Small numbers of Common Terns fished in the Canal, and, throughout the summer, adult Lesser Black Backed Gulls were often seen flying over. Black Headed Gulls began to return in July, having bred outside central London.

A male Peregrine Falcon flew South East over the Eastern end of the site on the 4th of April. This could have been one of the breeding birds from a different area of London. A migrant Common Sandpiper flew West along the Canal on the 4th of April. Unfortunately the pair of Lapwing, that appeared to nest on the derelict land beside the Gas towers last year, could not be found this year.

Several common species of warbler were observed on migration, with only Blackcap and Whitethroat staying to breed nearby. Greenfinches and Goldfinches remain common in small numbers and 1 House Sparrow was seen near to the Sainsburys supermarket. The Sparrow flew back to the

Northern side of the Canal (outside of the Borough), where there is a population. It is hoped that new bird feeders erected at Meanwhile Wildlife Garden might help the House Sparrow to make something of a return to the Borough. A female Chaffinch was seen in a similar area in April.

The Eastern end of the site, which is the more built up, still suffers from the dumping of litter and mindless vandalism, and sadly it seems the area will never be allowed to live up to its potential. The ornamental pond, together with Meanwhile Gardens was sympathetically planted and landscaped in 2000. However, many of the plants have been disturbed and some areas completely wrecked.

RINGING INFORMATION

2 Canada Geese with rings on were noted and their ringing details are listed below:

5208651 (an adult male) was ringed on 04.07.2000 at Kew Bridge.

5208856 (an unsexed adult) was ringed on 11.07.2000 at Isleworth.

More information and analysis from the site can be found on page 31..

THE RIVER THAMES AND CHELSEA CREEK

SITE OF METROPOLITAN IMPORTANCE

Gride Ref: TQ2777

Length: 2.7km (1.7 miles) in RBK&C

*Owner/manager: Port of London Authority & Environment Agency.
RBK&C own Chelsea Creek.
Number of visits: 3*

LIST OF SPECIES OBSERVED

B = breeding (with number of pairs in brackets)

PB = possibly breeding

M = passage migrant

GREAT CRESTED GREBE

CORMORANT

GREY HERON - B nearby

MUTE SWAN

GREYLAG GOOSE – B (1+)

CANADA GOOSE - B nearby

MALLARD – B (1)

SPARROWHAWK

KESTREL – B nearby

MOORHEN – PB (1)

COOT

BLACK HEADED GULL

HERRING GULL - PB nearby

LESSER BLACK BACKED GULL - PB nearby

GREATER BLACK BACKED GULL – PBnearby

COMMON TERN - M

WOODPIGEON - PB nearby

SWIFT - B nearby (3+)

PIED WAGTAIL

GREY WAGTAIL - B (1)

HOUSE MARTIN – B (10)

WREN – B (1)

DUNNOCK – B (1)

ROBIN – B (1)

BLACKBIRD – PB (1+)

GREAT TIT – B (1)

BLUE TIT – B (1)

CHIFFCHAFF - M

MAGPIE - PB nearby

CARRION CROW - PB nearby

STARLING
GREENFINCH – B (3)
GOLDFINCH – B (2)

COMMENTS AND COMPARISONS WITH PREVIOUS YEARS

Cormorants, Grey Herons, Greylag Geese and Mallard remained common along this stretch of the Thames, although the wildfowl appeared to produce lower numbers of young this year. In April, 2 Great Crested Grebes were again using the mouth of Chelsea Creek. A pair of second year (not sexually mature) Mute Swans were present in April.

Pied and Grey Wagtails were seen, and 1 pair of Grey Wagtails successfully nested near to Chelsea Wharf. The colony of House Martins, based around the streets just North of Chelsea Wharf, increased dramatically to 18 pairs (only 10 pairs in 2005, 12 in 2004). The numbers are very important within the context of central London, as this colony is only one of a few in central London and it is the only one in the Borough.

Sadly several of the houses in Stadium Street have attempted to dissuade the House Martins from constructing their nests, by installing strands of wire. In most cases these have failed and the birds built their nests in their usual favoured places. At one house (Thames Lodge, Stadium Street) scaffolding had been erected to aid in the renovation and painting of the front of the building. At least 2 nests on the property had large broods of young in them. I pointed this out to the builders, who seemed aware of the birds, but they were not aware that the young needed to be left undisturbed for a week or so longer. It is worth stating that under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it is illegal to disturb such nests.

CHELSEA CREEK

The numbers of Grey Herons using the Creek seemed lower than in previous years. A male Sparrowhawk flew over the site on the 4th of April. A pair of

Kestrels successfully nested in a nearby building. One of the fledglings was found grounded in late June and was re-released.

A pair of Moorhens probably nested in what is not ideal habitat, they are normally a freshwater species, (they have been present there for several years). In recent years the number of 'garden' birds have increased as the habitat around the basin has grown up. Single pairs of Blackbird, Robin, Dunnock and Wren were present and nested in the scrub around the Eastern end of the Creek. Most impressive though were the numbers of finches, with 2 pairs of Goldfinch and 2 pairs of Greenfinch also nesting in this area. Family flocks were very evident from July onwards. A pair of Great Tits and a pair of Blue Tits nested in the brickwork of one of the adjacent old buildings.

**KENSINGTON GARDENS AND KENSINGTON
PALACE GROUNDS**

SITE OF METROPOLITAN IMPORTANCE

Grid Ref: TQ2588

Size: 13.5ha (24 acres)
Owner/manager: Royal Parks Agency
Number of visits: 2

LIST OF SPECIES OBSERVED

B = breeding (with number of pairs in brackets)

PB = possibly breeding

M = passage migrant

GREY HERON

COMMON BUZZARD – M ?

MALLARD

MOORHEN – B (1)

COMMON SANDPIPER - M

WOODPIGEON – B (3+)

SWIFT

RINGED-NECKED PARAKEET

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER - PB nearby

GREEN WOODPECKER - PB nearby

HOUSE MARTIN

WREN – B (2+)

DUNNOCK – B (1+)

ROBIN – B (2+)

WHEATEAR - M

BLACKBIRD – B (4+)

SONG THRUSH – PB (1)

MISTLE THRUSH – PB (1)

BLACKCAP – PB (1)

CHIFFCHAFF - M

WILLOW WARBLER - M

(WOOD WARBLER* - M)

GOLDCREST- PB (1)

LONG TAILED TIT – B (2)

COAL TIT –PB (1)

BLUE TIT – B (3+)

GREAT TIT – B (1+)

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER - M

PIED FLYCATCHER - M
JAY - PB nearby
MAGPIE – PB (1)
CARRION CROW – PB (1)
STARLING - B nearby
CHAFFINCH PB (1)
GREENFINCH – B (2+)

*A Wood Warbler was reported as being seen or heard on the 24th of April. One was also reported last year. However, due to the potential confusion between this species and other *Pyloscopus* Warblers, I am unsure as to whether this was a genuine sighting. The London Natural History Society annual bird report describes this species as a ‘scarce passage migrant’ with only 12 being found in the whole of Greater London in 2000. Only 3 have been seen before in the Borough, during the 1960’s. Suitable habitat for this species does not exist in the Borough, but occasionally migrant Warblers do turn up in strange places.

COMMENTS AND COMPARISONS WITH PREVIOUS YEARS

On the 3rd of May 2 Common Buzzards drifted high over the site, heading West. These were probably migrants, (a small proportion of juveniles from the UK population head into Southern Europe for the winter and return in the spring), or juveniles from the expanding populations that are now breeding close to the outskirts of the Capital. The last record for this species came from the same site on 09.02.2001.

A pair of Moorhens successfully nested again on the ornamental pond, where Grey Herons were also sometimes seen fishing. Migrant Blackcaps, Willow Warblers and Chiffchaffs were heard singing in the spring, but whereas in most years these birds quickly move on, for the third year running a male Blackcap continued to sing for most of the early summer, suggesting that a pair may have bred. Migrant Spotted Flycatchers were seen on the 12th of May and on the 27th of August. More unusual was the sighting of a male Pied Flycatcher on the 19th of April and a Wheatear was seen on the 2nd of May.

Some of the shrubberies, created in recent years near to the new children's play area, have matured and present good nesting habitats for species such as Blackbird and Long Tailed Tit. Some of the formal hedging in the Palace grounds was left untrimmed (at the suggestion of Paul Clark), and therefore some Blackbirds and Robins nested undisturbed.

As with last year, Song Thrushes seemed to be low in numbers. Mistle Thrushes were also harder to find than usual, possibly because the dry summer ruined their favoured feeding areas. Juvenile Robins, Wrens and Dunnocks were seen.

At least 2 pairs of Greenfinches nested and it seems likely that a pair of chaffinches also did. There were several sightings of small flocks of Rose-Ringed Parakeets.

KENSAL GREEN CEMETERY

SITE OF METROPOLITAN IMPORTANCE

Grid Ref: TQ2382

Size: 17.8ha (44.5 acres) in RBK&C

Owner/manager: The General Cemetery Company
Number of visits: 3

LIST OF SPECIES OBSERVED

B = breeding (with number of pairs in brackets)

PB = possibly breeding

M = passage migrant

CORMORANT - flying over
GREY HERON - flying over
MALLARD
SPARROWHAWK
KESTREL – PB nearby
STOCK DOVE – B (2)
WOODPIGEON – B (15+)
TAWNY OWL
GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER – B (1)
GREEN WOODPECKER – PB (1)
RINGED-NECKED PARAKEET – B (2+)
SWALLOW - M
PIED WAGTAIL
WREN – B (9)
DUNNOCK – B (1+)
ROBIN – B (8+)
BLACKBIRD – B (9+)
MISTLE THRUSH – PB (1)
SONG THRUSH – PB (1)
BLACKCAP - M and B (2)
WHITETHROAT - M and B (2)
CHIFFCHAFF – M and PB (1)
WILLOW WARBLER - M
GOLDCREST – PB (1)
LONG TAILED TIT – B (1-2)
COAL TIT – PB (1)
BLUE TIT – B (3+)
GREAT TIT – B (3+)
JAY – B (1)
MAGPIE – B (1)
CARRION CROW – B (3)

STARLING – B (4)
CHAFFINCH - PB
GREENFINCH – B (2-3)
GOLDFINCH – B (1)

COMMENTS AND COMPARISONS WITH PREVIOUS YEARS

Maximum counts of 4 adult Stock Doves were made on several dates and 2 nest holes were occupied. No Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers were found this year but both Great Spotted and Green Woodpeckers bred. Ringed-Necked Parakeets were regularly using the tall trees and at least 2 pairs nested (the first records for the site). This year a single male Sparrowhawk was seen and there was a pair of Kestrels that probably bred nearby.

In April and early May migrant Warblers and Swallows passed through the area. 2 pairs of Blackcaps stayed to nest, as well as 2 pairs of Whitethroats. Both of these species have benefited from the large areas of scrub left uncut for most of the summer. In the last 3 or 4 years there does not seem to have been as much drastic cutting back of ivy and woodland scrub as in the past, which will have helped nesting birds. Greenfinches continue to do well here and a pair of Goldfinches nested. A pair of Chaffinches was also present and are thought to have bred.

CHELSEA PHYSIC GARDEN

SITE OF BOROUGH IMPORTANCE: GRADE 1

Grid Ref: TQ2777

Size: 2ha (5 acres)

Owner/manager: Cadogan Estate, run by CPG Management Council

Number of visits: 1

LIST OF SPECIES OBSERVED

B = breeding (with number of pairs in brackets)

PB = possible breeding

M = passage migrant

CORMORANT - flying over
GREY HERON
MUTE SWAN - flying over
MALLARD
HERRING GULL - flying over
LESSER BLACK BACKED GULL - flying over
WOODPIGEON - B nearby (2+)
GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER
RINGED-NECKED PARAKEET
WREN – B (1-2)
DUNNOCK – PB (1)
ROBIN – B (1-2)
MISTLE THRUSH
SONG THRUSH
BLACKBIRD – B (2+)
LONG TAILED TIT – PB (1)
COAL TIT
BLUE TIT – B (1)
GREAT TIT - PB (1)
JAY
MAGPIE - B nearby
CARRION CROW - B nearby
STARLING - B nearby
CHAFFINCH – PB (1)
GREENFINCH – B (1)

COMMENTS AND COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEARS

In recent years there has been a slight reduction in the numbers of birds using the Garden. For example, fewer sightings of Mistle and Song Thrush, lower numbers of Tits using the nest boxes and fewer Finches. The garden is

still sympathetically run but perhaps an increase in events, attracting more people, has unwittingly led to some disturbance to breeding birds. The bird feeder was also left empty in April, just when Tits and Finches are trying to get into good breeding condition.

A Great Spotted Woodpecker made visits to the peanut feeder as did all 3 Tits species and Greenfinches. A pair of Chaffinches were also present and they may have nested. The number of visiting Parakeets has increased in the last 3 years, as they have at most sites.

LADBROKE SQUARE GARDEN

SITE OF BOROUGH IMPORTANCE: Grade 2

Grid Ref: TQ2480

Size: 5ha (12.5 acres)

Owner/manager: communal association

Number of visits: 3

This site was covered in the original Borough Bird Survey 1995/96, as part of the Ladbroke Garden Square Complex, and again in more detail in 2003, 2004 and 2005.

This year, due to a change of locks and lack of availability of a new key, only 1 visit was made inside the Garden. Other observations were made from the perimeter.

LIST OF SPECIES OBSERVED

B = breeding (with number of pairs in brackets)

PB = possibly breeding

M = passage migrant

WOODPIGEON – B (2+)
GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER
RINGED-NECKED PARAKEET
SWIFT - flying over
HOUSE MARTIN – flying over
WREN – B (1-2)
ROBIN – B (2)
BLACKBIRD – B (4+)
SONG THRUSH – PB (1)
BLACKCAP – B (1)
GOLDCREST – B (1)
LONG TAILED TIT – B (1)
COAL TIT – B (1)
BLUE TIT – B (1+)
GREAT TIT – PB (1)
JAY – B (1)
MAGPIE – PB (1)
CARRION CROW
STARLING
GREENFINCH

COMMENTS: There exists at the Garden a good number of mature trees, including species beneficial to birds (oak, silver birch, hawthorn, holly etc), and areas of hedging around the perimeter. There are also shrubs situated in clumps, but despite this a lot of the birds which feed in the Garden nest in

the private gardens that border the site on the Northern edge. The reason being that the hedging and shrubs in the Garden are not generally thick enough to safely hide nests from predators.

There are some tit nest boxes, but the majority were unused. Possibly the garden is only big enough to support a few pairs, but it could also be that the boxes need replacing and repositioning. A bird feeder, near to the Gardener's house, was sometimes empty. The provision of sunflower seeds or mixed seed throughout the summer would help those species already present as well as supporting a wider range of species. For example, only a few Greenfinches were seen, where as at Stanley Crescent Garden (only 500 metres to the North), where 2 feeders were kept topped up, Greenfinches and Chaffinches were common.

A reasonable number of garden bird species are resident at the site together with a few less common London species. For example, a male Blackcap was singing in April and stayed to breed. A pair of Goldcrests again nested and Single Great Spotted Woodpeckers were occasionally recorded.

LADBROKE GROVE GARDEN COMPLEX

In addition to Ladbroke Square Garden, a sample of the smaller gardens within this complex were surveyed. A single visit was made to each of the following privately owned and communal association gardens. Some of these were surveyed in 1995/96, and the following 3 were all surveyed in 2004 and 2005.

These are all SITES OF BOROUGH IMPORTANCE : GRADE 2

B = Breeding
PB = possibly breeding

STANLEY CRESCENT GARDEN

(Site surveyed from the perimeter)

HABITAT: large ash, turkey oak and plane trees, with a good mixture of hawthorns, birches, prunus and some holly, together with areas of lawn. There is a nest box but it is in a poor state. 2 seed feeders were kept topped up throughout the summer, attracting Finches to the area.

BIRDS: Woodpigeon - PB, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Wren - B, Robin - B, Blackbird - B, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Coal Tit, Long Tailed Tit, Jay, Magpie, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch and Greenfinch - PB.

COMMENT: All 3 species of tit occur and so a few new nest boxes, with metal fronts, would provide more safe nest sites for them. Natural nest sites exist in the bushes on the edge of the garden, but more could be created to aid species such as Blackbird and Robin.

The problem of squirrels raiding the seed feeders has been eradicated, through the use of plastic domes, placed over the top of the feeders. The provision of food throughout the summer has help attract Finches. Due to the formal planting, the garden offers no natural food for Finches.

ARUNDEL AND LADBROKE GARDENS

(Site surveyed from the perimeter)

HABITAT: mainly tall plane trees, with some limes, horse chestnut, turkey oak, some smaller hawthorns, prunus, holly, ornamentals and a tall privet hedge, together with areas of lawn. There were 2 tit nest boxes but one was upside down and the other was poorly sited. The small seed feeder was empty.

BIRDS: Woodpigeon - PB, Dunnock - PB, Robin - PB, Blue Tit - PB, Magpie and Carrion Crow - PB.

COMMENT: the large London plane trees cast heavy shadows over this small garden. These non native trees do not attract much bird life and therefore the garden is poorer than others nearby. However, an area of tall privet hedging could offer nest sites to Thrushes, Robin and Dunnock. The provision of some new nest boxes and keeping the seed feeder filled up would help attract more birds into the garden.

ELGIN/LANSDOWNE COMMUNAL GARDEN

HABITAT: weeping willow, horse chestnut, ash, holm oak, holly, yew, prunus, silver birch, hawthorn and rowan, together with areas of lawn. There are also areas of privet hedge. There are 2 well positioned tit boxes but, due to a child's nut allergy, the seed feeder was empty.

BIRDS: Woodpigeon - PB, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Wren - B, Dunnock - PB, Robin - B, Blackbird - B, Song Thrush, Long Tailed Tit – PB here or nearby, Blue Tit - PB, Great Tit - PB, Jay, Magpie, Carrion Crow, Starling, Chaffinch – PB, Greenfinch.- PB and Goldfinch – PB. In addition to these, I understand that Coal Tit has been seen on the seed feeder and that Goldcrests sometimes occur in the evergreens.

COMMENT: of all of these smaller gardens, this one had the best variety of habitat. Consequently it had the greatest variety of bird species. When it has been kept topped up, the feeder has attracted Woodpecker, Tits and Finches, (the latter being uncommon in the Borough). Chaffinch, Greenfinch and Goldfinch all benefit from the provision of food during the summer. The nest boxes looked usable and there were natural nest sites in hedges and shrubs. I also understand that they have a policy of trying to plant sympathetically for wildlife, and the presence of hawthorns and hollies will certainly help the local birds.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In general, it could be said that considering the lack of green space within the Borough, there are a good number of wild birds, including some uncommonly found in London. Those that are in decline, such as the House Sparrow and the Dunnock, are also in decline elsewhere in London and throughout the UK.

During the last couple of summers, hedges have been left untrimmed in the formal gardens of Kensington Palace, at the suggestion of Paul Clark (bird watcher and gardener) and as a result nests were left undisturbed. Could this policy not be replicated throughout the Borough? Trees in the Borough are

often felled or cut back during the bird's breeding season, leading to a likelihood of nest failures. In some of the Enclosures in Holland Park, where members of the public are excluded, weeds and brambles are needlessly cleared during the summer, thereby robbing wild birds of food and nesting habitat. Could a more considerate regime not be draw up ?

The provision of seed feeders in Holland Park, Kensington Palace, Chelsea Physic Garden, the Ladroke Grove Gardens and other smaller private gardens have attracted increased numbers of Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Tits, Chaffinches, Greenfinches and Goldfinches. However, some of the feeders are still not kept topped up. The finch species especially benefit from the provision of this extra food, as their natural food of weed seeds does not exist in great quantities in formal parks and gardens. Recent national studies indicate that the breeding success of some Finches increases when extra food is provided. It is therefore highly recommended that the feeders are maintained, squirrel proofed and kept topped up throughout the year.

OVERALL COMPARISONS WITH PREVIOUS YEARS

The following 2 tables show the breeding species at 2 different sites in the Borough, Holland Park and The Grand Union Canal. The Park represents the largest area of woodland within the Borough, some of which is managed for wildlife. The Canal represents the only large area of freshwater habitat with continuous areas of bankside vegetation.

The numbers of pairs in the tables below represent only the numbers of confirmed breeding pairs. Please note that no breeding survey was done in 1996.

GRAND UNION CANAL

SPECIES	1995	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Canada Goose	4	4	3	3	6	6	6	5	5	3	4
Mallard	2	2	2	3	3	3	1	0	1	0	1
Tufted Duck	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Pochard	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coot	9	5	5	8	8	10	11	11	11	9	9
Moorhen	5	4	5	4	6	4	5	6	7	6	6

COMMENTS: Coot and Moorhen continue to breed in good numbers and Canada Geese are still common. Grey Herons are no longer as common, possibly because of the increased water traffic.. The lack of breeding success of Mallard, which, despite being very common on the Canal, have only hatched a small number of broods in recent years, may be caused by increased predation by foxes and rats. The same is happening elsewhere in the Borough, for instance in Holland Park. The bankside vegetation at the Western end of the Canal has become thicker and less frequently disturbed, which should create safer nesting sites. However, it may also provide habitat for families of foxes.

For the first time in several years a female Tufted Duck produced young. The number of Canada Geese, Coot and Moorhen have reached saturation point, and so the slight decrease in their numbers gives no cause for alarm. Other aquatic non breeding birds observed include Cormorant, Black Headed Gull, Lesser Black Backed Gull and Common Tern.

HOLLAND PARK

SPECIES	1995	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Mallard	3	3	4	2	1	1	3	0	1	0	1
Sparrowhawk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
Moorhen	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	2	1	2
Woodpigeon	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Stock Dove	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tawny Owl	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Gt Sp Woodpecker	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Wren	7	10	9	10	15	12	13	11	11	11	11
Dunnock	6	5	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	1
Robin	13	13	10	9	10	11	10	10	11	11	10

Blackbird	30	26	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
Song Thrush	3	3	5	5	3	2	3	2	3	2	1
Mistle Thrush	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
Blackcap	4	6	5	5	5	4	4	4	3	4	4
Chiffchaff	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	1
Goldcrest	1	0	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	3	2
Long Tailed Tit	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2
Coal Tit	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
Blue Tit	20	30	25	31	37	32	38	36	34	29	30
Great Tit	5	4	5	7	9	7	8	8	6	11	10
Jay	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Magpie	2	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Carrion Crow	2	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Starling	3	4	3	4	2	3	3	4	5	5	4
House Sparrow	30	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chaffinch	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Greenfinch	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2

As part of the annual survey work, each year in Holland Park the average brood size of the nesting Blue Tits has been calculated from the many broods that have been ringed in nest boxes, and the results are shown below:

HOLLAND PARK BLUE TIT AVERAGE BROOD SIZE

1995	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
9.0	8.7	9.4	8.7	8.0	8.3	6.6	5.1	8.7	8.6	9.9

COMMENTS: The average brood size of nesting Blue Tits (see the previous page) reflects the condition that the females were in prior to nesting. If the weather in the early spring is wet or cold, they will not be in peak condition to lay lots of eggs. Therefore, although in recent years we have had mild winters, wet springs in 2002 and 2003 resulted in lower than average brood sizes. Following a cold March and beginning of April, spring arrived and during the second half of April the females were able to find plenty of food and be in good condition to lay lots of eggs. Consequently the Blue Tits had a good breeding season, with their best average brood size.

Other common smaller birds such as the Wren and the Robin have kept a steady presence in the Park but the Dunnock has suffered an alarming decrease in numbers. In the last couple of years nesting attempts have been ruined by predation (by either Corvids, foxes or squirrels) and by being exposed by unnecessary hedge trimming. The Dunnock's decline has been mirrored at other sites in the Borough and Nationally.

The 3 resident Thrushes have suffered mixed fortunes. The Song Thrush has been declining nationally for some years, and numbers were low in the Park at the beginning of the survey period. Last year 2-3 pairs bred, this year only 1-2 pairs. The Blackbird, although still a common garden and woodland bird, has declined slightly nationally and in the Borough. The reasons for these problems are not fully understood. It may be, as with the Dunnock, due to increased predation at the nest.

The fortunes of the Mistle Thrush, which has only ever been present in small numbers, suffered in 1998-99 after the disturbance of tree felling and the drying out of their favoured feeding area (the Sports Field). That area is now in better condition and the birds bred in 2004 and 2005. Sadly this year they seem to have failed to nest.

Within Holland Park there exists good woodland habitat that still supports uncommon London birds such as Sparrowhawk, Tawny Owl, Stock Dove, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Blackcap, Chiffchaff and Long Tailed Tit.

The House Sparrow is now extinct in most of central London and is unlikely to return. I would suggest that conservation efforts be put into viable schemes such as providing better habitat for other finches. The Greenfinch is now the most common finch, with a few Chaffinches and Goldfinches also present in the Park. Seed feeders have helped both species to maintain their foothold and begin to increase, but there is little natural food available, and the regular trimming of hedges and shrubs in the formal gardens presents the constant danger of nest disturbance.

BOROUGH BIRD BREEDING INDICATOR

It is recommended that the 15 species listed below be used as a guide to the fortunes of the birds within the Borough. The selection of species covers waterfowl, birds of prey, common garden songbirds, migrant warblers, corvids and finches. The table lists the total numbers breeding at 6 main sites in the Borough that have been repeatedly surveyed.

The numbers of pairs in the tables below represent only the numbers of confirmed breeding pairs at the sites surveyed. These are not the total numbers of pairs in the whole of the Borough. Please also note that no breeding survey was done in 1996.

<i>SPECIES</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>SUMMARY</i>
Sparrowhawk	4	2	2	2	3	1	1	0	0	0	1	stable
Moorhen	8	7	7	9	10	9	9	10	11	8	9	stable
G'S'Woodp'	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	stable
Wren	25	26	23	29	32	28	28	25	25	25	27	stable
Dunnock	20	14	10	9	11	9	7	7	7	5	6	marked decrease
Robin	20	18	24	21	23	24	24	24	25	24	25	stable
Blackbird	70	59	54	51	52	49	45	45	45	45	46	stable
Song Thrush	9	7	7	6	4	3	5	3	6	5	4	decrease
Blackcap	4	7	6	8	6	5	5	5	6	6	8	stable
Blue Tit	35	41	30	38	48	41	45	45	42	40	40	stable
Magpie	5	5	5	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	4	stable
Carrion Crow	8	8	8	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	6	stable
Starling	15	14	13	12	8	10	10	10	9	9	7	decrease
House Spar'	70	35	35	10	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	extinct
Greenfinch	10	6	6	3	1	2	3	6	6	9	13	increase

CONCLUSIONS

SPARROWHAWK. Prior to 1995 this species was almost completely absent from inner London. Then followed a period of re-colonisation, which peaked as the Borough surveys began in 1995, when 4 pairs nested. Only 1 pair was confirmed as nesting in 2002, then there was a gap until last year, when it turns out that a pair probably did nest, followed by confirmation that a pair raised 4 young this summer. There is a fatal disease (*Trichomoniasis*) that is afflicting the feral pigeon population in West London, which may be past on to the Sparrowhawks who feed on them. National statistics also show that, following the peak of the mid 1990's, numbers have recently slightly declined.

MOORHEN. The making of the wildlife pond in Holland Park, just prior to the original survey, together with better nesting habitat that now exists on the Canal have helped this species to increase and remain a common sight at several sites in the Borough. However, last year human activity in Holland park meant that breeding success was down on recent years. Numbers of pairs have also peaked and fallen slightly at the Canal, possibly due to increased predation or increase in water traffic.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER. Being tied to areas with sufficient woodland, this species is unlikely to expand its range. It remains locally common at sites such as Holland Park and Kensal Green Cemetery.

WREN. A run of mild winters helped this small bird survive and increase in numbers. There has been a slight drop in numbers in the last 3 years but they remain common.

DUNNOCK. In the last 10 years, the population has fallen by 75%, which is similar to national statistics. The reasons are unclear but it seems that they are experiencing heavy nest predation at some sites.

ROBIN. The population remains high at all of the larger sites.

BLACKBIRD. A reduction of about 20% has occurred since 1995, which is not quite as bad as national statistics, but the population is stable and they remain common.

SONG THRUSH. Small populations appear stable in the Borough although, in Holland Park their numbers have fallen. The Song Thrush has been staging something of a come back nationally, after suffering a severe decline in numbers. Hopefully the Borough's population will soon recover too.

BLACKCAP. Nationally this is one of the commonest species of warbler, which has been on the increase. Numbers peaked in 1999 in the Borough, but although they have recently dropped slightly at some sites, the numbers present still remain impressive for inner London.

BLUE TIT. This species remains common, especially in Holland Park, where the provision of Nest boxes has aided breeding success.

MAGPIE. Numbers have remained fairly stable. Lack of nesting habitat and competition with Carrion Crows prevent them from increasing. The species was recently controlled at Kensington Palace.

CARRION CROW. The population has slightly increased following some controls on numbers at Kensington Palace and Holland Park.

STARLING. Numbers have stabilised at a low number, which is similar to national statistics. It is possible that like the House Sparrows, they have been catching diseases off the feral pigeons, with whom they often feed. The number of breeding pairs has been stable for several years, and plenty of juveniles were evident in the second half of the summer.

HOUSE SPARROW. A severe decline has been witnessed nationally, especially in London. Apart from brief sightings in the North of the Borough, this finch is now extinct from all of the sites in Kensington and Chelsea, where only a few years ago it used to be prolific. The reasons are discussed in detail in the *Borough Breeding Bird Survey 2003 page 31*.

GREENFINCH. Formerly more common, this species suffered losses to Sparrowhawk predation and loss of habitat in Holland Park. Then new seed feeders in the Park and elsewhere seemed to be encourage them to return. In the North of the Borough, at Kensal Green Cemetery, where more natural feeding and nesting habitat exists, there is a more stable population. This year there was a noticeable and welcome increase in Greenfinches in the Borough.

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