

HOS survey of Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers 2022

Hampshire is probably the most important county in England and Wales for breeding Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers (LSW). Rob Clements in his 2020 paper (Clements 2020) estimated the Hampshire population as up to 250-300 pairs. This is probably more than 10% of the national total (Smith *et al.* 2021). There is strong evidence from the Hampshire breeding atlases (Eyre *et al.* 2015) that the numbers and distribution of LSW in Hampshire outside the New Forest are declining. There are still good numbers in the Forest but we don't know for sure whether they are stable or declining.

The key aim of the 2022 survey is to survey LSWs in a randomly selected sample of 1km squares across Hampshire using standard and repeatable methods. In this way we can establish a good baseline to allow future monitoring of the species. The selection of squares to survey will be based on sites with records of LSW over the last 10 years. The same methods will be used both within the Forest and elsewhere in the county although the numbers of squares surveyed will be higher within the Forest.

Surveys should take place during the period late February until mid-April which is the best time to detect LSW. A minimum of three visits, at least a week apart, of three hours duration, starting ideally around 7.00 am in good weather conditions will be needed. Contacts with LSW (drumming, calling, sightings) should be noted and six figure map references for each contact entered on the recording sheet. Repeated sightings, especially of pairs and other birds interacting, should enable us to build up a picture of occupied territories within the chosen study-areas.

Observers can see the selected squares, sign up for the survey and obtain maps from the dedicated website (<http://hantslesserspots.birdsurvey.org.uk/>). Volunteers who find pairs of LSW will be encouraged to follow up their sightings in late May/early June, when successful nests can be located and their contents monitored by Ken and Linda Smith. The county map shows the top priority survey squares, other survey squares are available if/when these have been allocated, please contact Ken or Rob for details. The survey runs from now through until May, so there is still time to join in.

Coordinators:

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Rob will be coordinating the New Forest surveys and Ken the sites outside the Forest.