



THE LONDON ATLAS

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING BREEDING RECORDS PROFORMA

Introduction

The London Atlas aims to map the distribution of all birds within the London Natural History Society (LNHS) recording area, which includes all locations within 20 miles of St. Paul's Cathedral, during 2007-11. The distribution of species will be compared with that found during the previous London atlases (1968-72 & 1988-94). The project is being run in conjunction with the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), which is undertaking a national Bird Atlas project during the same period.

For the London Atlas, species are being mapped by tetrad (2km square), and we are aiming to collect breeding records for all species within all tetrads in the LNHS area. Once breeding has been confirmed for a species in a particular tetrad, there is no need to collect further information about that species for the Atlas project (although for many species further information will be of interest to the LNHS recorders). This proforma has been produced as a simple method to enable observers to record breeding evidence for a tetrad over the course of a breeding season. After each visit, you can review the list to see if you have recorded any higher levels of breeding evidence for any species.

Completing the General information

The top section of the form contains some general information about yourself and the tetrad you are visiting. Information to help you identify the 10km square number and the tetrad letter can be found on the Atlas website (www.bto.org/birdatlas/taking_part/gridrefs.htm). If your site falls across more than one tetrad, please complete a separate proforma for each tetrad.

Recording breeding evidence

The aim is to record breeding evidence at the highest level possible for all species, with the levels being as follows:

Non-Breeder → Possible Breeder → Probable Breeder → Confirmed Breeder.

Within each of these levels, there are a number of breeding codes that describe the type of behaviour that you have observed, for example a singing male bird (code 'S'), falls within the Possible Breeder level. A full list of the breeding evidence codes is given on page 2.

On your first visit, you should record the highest level of breeding evidence that you see for each species, by writing the code (e.g. 'S') and date in the correct column on the proforma (i.e. 'S' falls in the second column, 'possible breeder'). If you record any scarcer species that are not listed, please add these in the blank spaces provided.

On subsequent visits, you should review your list, and record any instances where you have observed a new species or a higher level of breeding evidence for species you have previously seen.

At the end of the breeding season, please post the completed proforma(s) to Ian Woodward, 245 Larkshall Road, London, E4 9HY.

CATEGORIES OF BREEDING EVIDENCE

Select a code that best describes what you have seen. Categories further down the list infer a higher level of evidence of breeding.

Note that except for codes 'M', 'U' and 'F', all codes relate to individuals or pairs seen in suitable nesting habitat. You should be especially careful when using code 'S' (singing male), as many birds will sing at stopover points during their migration. A singing bird that is known to be a migrant should be recorded as 'M', even if the habitat is possibly suitable for the species.

Non-breeder codes

- F – Flying over
- M – Migrant
- U – SUMmering non-breeder

(Note – use code 'U' if a species is making use of a tetrad during the breeding season but breeding in another tetrad, e.g. a Grey heron at a site away from the heronry)

Possible breeder codes

- H - Observed in suitable nesting Habitat
- S – Singing male in suitable nesting habitat

Probable breeder codes

- P – Pair in suitable nesting habitat
- T – Permanent Territory - either a territory defended by a bird in suitable habitat over at least one week; or several males (at least 5+) singing against each other in suitable habitat.
- D – Courtship and Display
- N – Visiting probable Nest site
- A – Agitated behaviour (e.g. towards other birds, indicating the presence of a nest nearby)
- I – Brood patch of Incubating bird (i.e. seen by ringers on a trapped bird)
- B – Nest Building or excavating nest hole

Confirmed breeder codes

- DD – Distraction-Display or injury feigning
- UN – Used Nest or eggshells from this season
- FL – Recently FLedged young or downy young
- ON – Adults entering or leaving nest-site in circumstances indicating Occupied Nest
- FF – Adult carrying Faecal-sac or Food for young
- NE – Nest containing Eggs
- NY – Nest with Young seen or heard