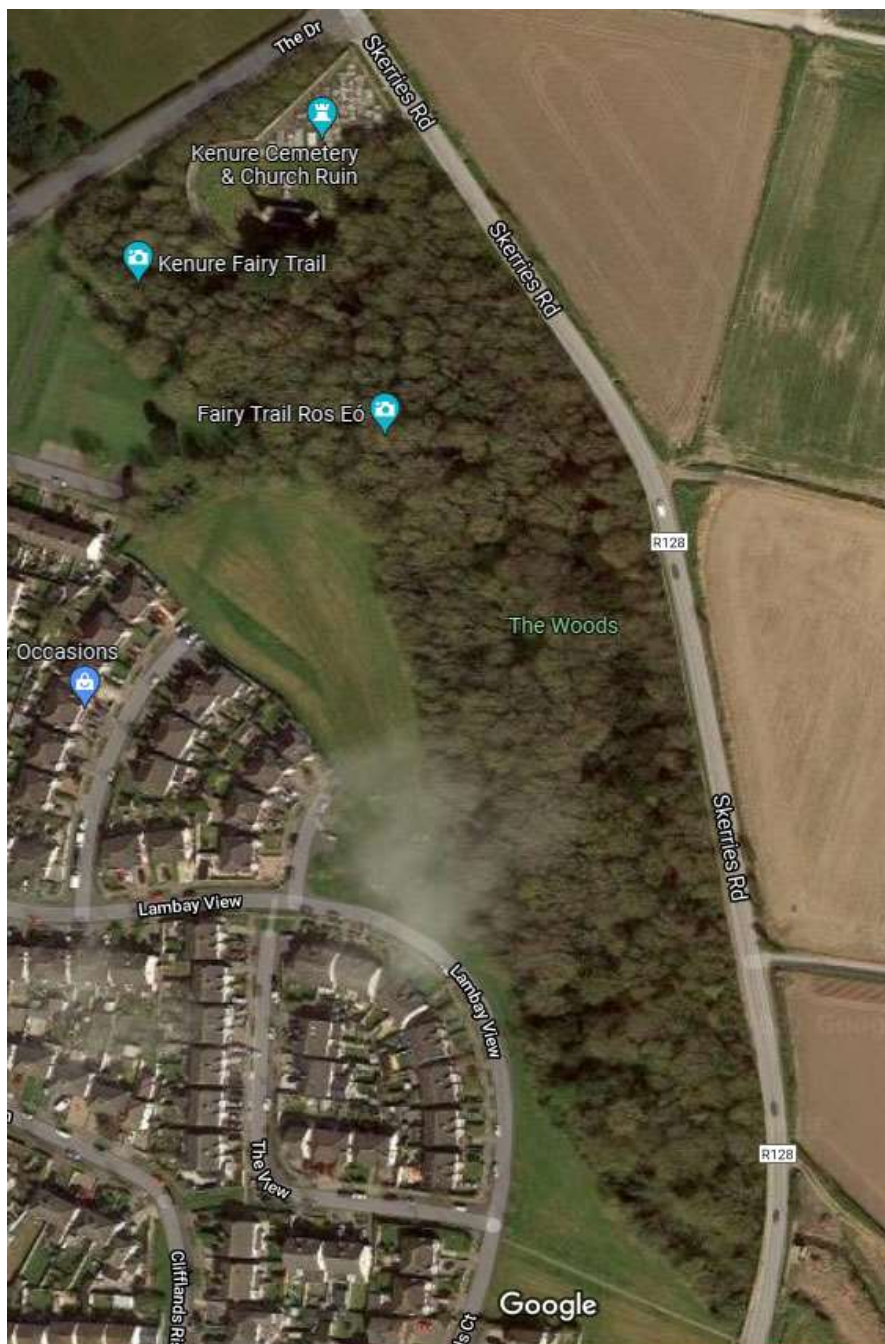


St Catherine's Wood Bird Survey 2021

Introduction

St Catherine's Wood is a small, wooded area which consists of typical parkland mix of trees and understory plants. The park is approximately 9.7 acres(3.9Ha) in size and measures about 120m wide at the North end, narrowing down to about 20m at the South end and is 450m long. St. Catherine's Stream runs down the centre. There are several tracks through the wood that can get mucky in wet weather. The wood has a Fairy Trail and is used by local kids and some dog walkers.



St Catherine's Wood, locally known as 'The Woods'

This survey was carried out to get a count of species and numbers at an optimal time of year when the birds are establishing territories and proclaiming them through song. The survey took place between 6.20 and 7.30 am on the 2nd May 2021 and again between 5.00 and 6.05 on the 29th May 2021. On both occasions it was dry, little wind and visibility was good. The wood was divided into two transects, one either side of the stream. Each transect was walked and all birds seen and heard were recorded. Due to the amount of vegetation cover, there was a high reliance on bird song to detect and identify species.



Transect 1(red), Transect 2 (yellow)

Results

Below is a list of the total number of birds recorded in the survey. A total of 21 species were recorded. Other species no doubt use the wood but were not recorded during the survey. Buzzards regularly sit on the lamp posts at the edge of the wood and hunt in the surrounding fields but are not nesting in the wood at this point. It should be noted that only males sing at this time of year so in cases where birds were detected and identified by song the numbers may be undercounted as females may have been present but not seen.

	Visit 1			Visit 2		
	Transect 1	Transect 2	Total	Transect 1	Transect 2	Total
Sparrowhawk		2	2	1		1
Moorhen		1	1		1	1
Woodpigeon	7	6	13	8	5	13
Collard Dove	1		1			0
Wren	5	8	13	7	7	14
Dunnock	1		1			0
Robin	2		2	3	2	5
Blackbird	3	3	6	4	3	7
Song Thrush	1		1	1		1
Mistle Thrush	1		1	1		1
Blackcap	2	3	5	2		2
Chiffchaff	1	1	2			0
Goldcrest	2	1	3	1	2	3
Blue Tit	3	2	5	1	3	4
Great Tit	1	1	2		2	2
Hooded Crow	1	1	2		1	1
Magpie		1	1	2		2
Starling	3	2	5			0
Chaffinch		3	3		2	2
Goldfinch		1	1		2	2
Bullfinch		1	1			0

Table 1: Shows the number of species recorded in the survey.

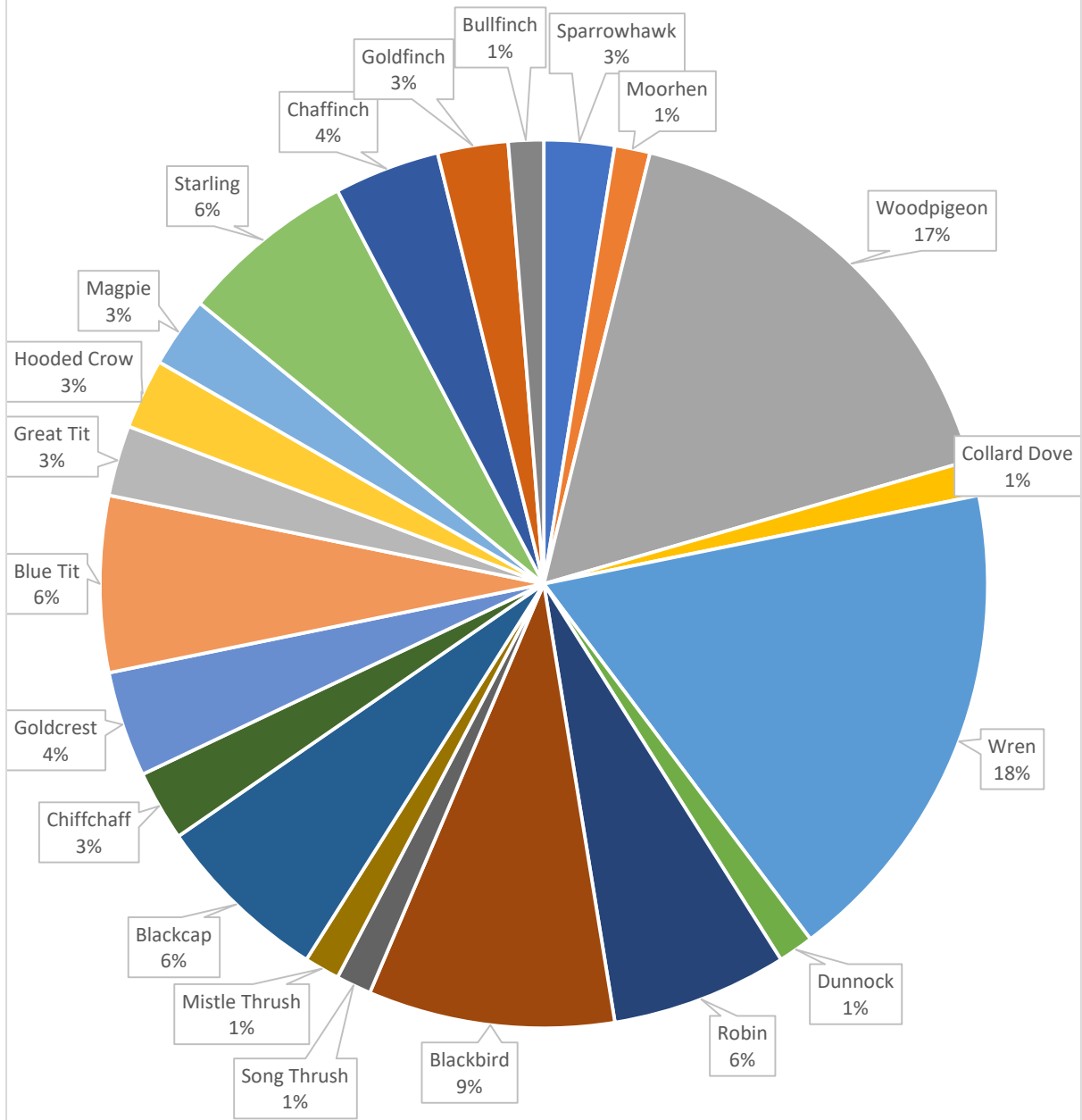
The Starlings seen visit 1 were flyovers. Collared Dove, Dunnock, Chiffchaff and Bullfinch were all recorded in visit 1 but not in 2. It may be that they moved on to establish a territory elsewhere or were simply present but not detected in the second visit.

Due to the amount of undergrowth, it is ideal habitat for Wren and hence this was the most numerous species, closely followed by Woodpigeon.

Moorhen use the stream but its not clear if they nest inside or outside the survey area.

The other species are all typical woodland birds, and their abundance is reflected by the size of the park and how many territories it can hold. All were seen or were in song and therefore are probably breeding.

Bird Species Recorded



- Sparrowhawk ■ Moorhen ■ Woodpigeon ■ Collard Dove ■ Wren ■ Dunnock
- Robin ■ Blackbird ■ Song Thrush ■ Mistle Thrush ■ Blackcap ■ Chiffchaff
- Goldcrest ■ Blue Tit ■ Great Tit ■ Hooded Crow ■ Magpie ■ Starling
- Chaffinch ■ Goldfinch ■ Bullfinch

Discussion:

The wood is an invaluable **green oasis** for both the local human population and wildlife in an increasingly urbanised area.

The birds recorded in the survey represents a reasonably **varied population** of the more common species of Irish passerine birds. The presence of apex predators like the Sparrowhawk reflects the healthy biodiversity of the wood.

The growth of the **human population** is naturally increasing the pressure on the park and its habitats. **Respect** for the park and its regulation are vital for its long-term viability both as a recreational venue for local residents and a safe home for nature. With that local interest an increasing human population can contribute to the **protection** of the park and its environs.

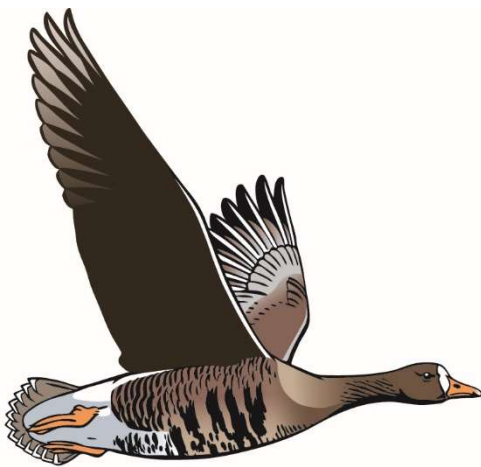
There are no ground nesting birds other than Moorhen in the park therefor, the only disturbance caused by **dogs walked** off the leash is to ones that are feeding on the ground.

Cats preying birds in the park from the nearby estates are also a problem for nesting birds.

Litter is generally cosmetic.

Paul Lynch

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