

Big Garden Birdwatch in the City 26/27th January 2013

This was the 6th year volunteers have counted birds in City gardens as part of the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch.

The weather during the 2012 breeding season was poor with a cold spring followed by a cool wet summer. This may be the reason why both the total number of species and the number of individual birds of each species counted in 2013 were down from the numbers in 2012. In total 13 different species of garden bird were observed and 115 individual birds counted.



Woodpigeons headed the list of most numerous birds, followed by blue tits. Counters were surprised at the drop in the number of blackbirds, as they are usually amongst the most numerous of garden birds found in the City. It was also disappointing to note that only a single house sparrow, wren and goldfinch were spotted this year and no green finches, although a pair had been observed nesting in Cleary Garden last summer. For the second year running no starlings were observed.

However it was good to see that the number of great tits had increased and a pair were seen checking out the nest boxes in Christchurch Greyfriars.

2009 - 2013 count results

	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
Total birds counted					
Woodpigeon	28	23	10	20	24
Blue tit	27	26	33	26	13
Blackbird	19	29	12	29	29
Great tit	11	5	9	11	10
Robin	7	12	9	13	9
Carrion crow	7	8	1	3	6
Magpie	4	8	2	11	9
Duncock	3	5	3	4	3
Chaffinch	3	2		1	2
House sparrow	1	3	3	28	13
Wren	1	3	1	4	1
Goldfinch	1	12	1		1
Greenfinch		6	12	12	8
Others	1	3	7	5	
Total number of species (exc. feral pigeon)	13	16	17	17	13
Total number of birds (exc. feral pigeon)	115	151	109	170	128

Nest box survey November 2012

Volunteers helped clean and survey all the nest boxes in the City at the end of the 2012 breeding season. In total there are 48 nest boxes; 14 (29%) had been used during the 2012 nesting season in comparison to 35% in the 2011 nesting season.

The majority of nests were those of blue tits (69%) with the remainder being those of great tits and one possible coal tit.

Six of the nests had either a number of abandoned eggs or bodies of nearly fledged chicks. This compares with five such nests in 2011. This may be the result of the poor weather during the summer of 2012 and may explain the drop in bird numbers observed during the 2013 bird count.



Blue tit nest Bunhill with nine abandoned eggs