

## PILLEY BRIDGE BIRD SURVEY

A sunny mid-May morning along the abandoned railway line that is now Pilley Bridge Nature Reserve. Entering the orchard the sweet, melodic song of a Blackcap filled the air. This male bird had competition because at least four others were singing along the path. But here, accompanying the Blackcap, was the softer, laid back song of a Blackbird. Blue Tits flitted through the trees and a Magpie signalled its presence with its rattle like call. Down from the orchard onto the path a Chiffchaff delivered its onomatopoeic song from high in an Ash tree. It was sad to see some of the Ash trees succumbing to ash dieback disease. From deep in the path-side vegetation the loud song of a Wren added to the chorus with ever-present contributions from Woodpigeons. Not to be outdone Robins and Chaffinches joined the throng. Adding to this symphony of bird song, overhead Jackdaws and Lesser Black-backed Gulls provided their own contributions as did a Green Woodpecker.

Whilst listening to and watching the birds other wildlife was seen including the ubiquitous Grey Squirrel and as the temperature crept up Speckled Wood butterflies appeared. These were in pairs spiralling upwards as they engaged in their courtship dance. Elsewhere Holly Blue and Orange Tip butterflies were seen.

### Species seen and numbers counted:

Woodpigeon	15	Magpie	6
Jackdaw (overhead)	3	Jay	3
Great Tit	4	Blue Tit	6
Long-tailed Tit	1	Blackbird	8
Song Thrush	1	Robin	7
Dunnock	3	Wren	4
Blackcap	5	Chiffchaff	3
Chaffinch	2	Green Woodpecker	1

Lesser Black-backed Gull (overhead) 2

In summary a total of 17 species and 72 individual birds. There were, no doubt, many more birds in the reserve but many would have been busy sitting on eggs whilst others hidden by the leaves in their search for food.



*Chiffchaff*

**David Cramp**