



# Breeding Bird Survey

## *Queen's Wood, Highgate*

### February to May 2008

Report by David Darrell-Lambert  
Bird Brain UK



<b>BREEDING BIRD SURVEY AT QUEEN'S WOOD IN 2008</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Method</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Habitat</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Results</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Saturday 23 February 2008 .....	3
Saturday 29 March 2008 .....	4
Saturday 26 April 2008 .....	4
Saturday 17 May 2008 .....	5
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Breeding Birds .....	6
Other birds .....	7
Recommendations .....	7
<b>Appendix 1 – Species seen, their status in this country and number of breeding pairs</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Appendix 2 – List of all species seen and their status at the site</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Appendix 3 – Queen's Wood, London map for 28 February 2008</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Appendix 4 – Queen's Wood, London map for 29 March 2008</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Appendix 5 – Queen's Wood, London map for 26 April 2008</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Appendix 6 – Queen's Wood, London map for 17 May 2008</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Appendix 7 – Bird species key</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Appendix 8 – Bird behaviour key</b> .....	<b>17</b>



## Breeding Bird Survey at Queen's Wood in 2008

### Method

A total of four visits – one per month were made to the site in February, March, April and May 2008 starting half an hour before dawn and lasting for three hours. The whole of the site was walked, stopping to listen for birds holding territory and looking for any other signs of breeding activity. All the birds present were mapped to give an indication of their territory.

### Habitat

Area	Habitat	Potential for birds
North of Queen's Wood Road	High density of deciduous trees with at least one coppiced area. Some areas of holly were identified.	Excellent habitat for woodland species including all three species of woodpecker. (Lesser Spotted, Great Spotted and Green)
South of Queen's Wood Road	High density of deciduous trees with some bushes.	Not a prime area for woodland species but the closeness of the north section and gardens added value. Birds would use both sections equally as there is very little difference between them and therefore no difference should be given to either in scale of importance.

### Results

#### Saturday 23 February 2008

Twenty five species of bird were seen in the area, twenty one species of these were thought to be breeding on the site, these were: Stock Dove (4), Wood Pigeon (6), Tawny Owl (1), Lesser Spotted Woodpecker\* (1), Great Spotted Woodpecker (8), Green Woodpecker (1), Eurasian Jay (1), Common Magpie (1), Carrion Crow (2), Great Tit (14), Blue Tit (17), Coal Tit (2), Long-tailed Tit (2), Goldcrest (3), Winter Wren (21), Eurasian Nuthatch (2), Eurasian Blackbird (3), Song Thrush\* (6), Mistle Thrush (1), European Robin (25) and Chaffinch (1). The numbers in brackets represent the total number of breeding pairs calculated.

\*Red List = species that are either globally threatened or have suffered serious decline.

From the Red List, one male, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was heard singing along the northern edge that borders Queen's Wood Road (section E on the map provided by the client). Although the bird was not seen or heard again, the presence of a male provides strong evidence that a pair of Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers are breeding in this wood.



This species is notoriously difficult to locate and to prove with absolute certainty that they are breeding as they do not hold territory for long periods and are generally silent during the breeding season, unlike Great Spotted Woodpeckers.

The other species present on the site that is also on the Red List was Song Thrush. Six singing males were located holding single territories in section W (at the east end), section X (at the southern end), section Q (at the south east corner), section H (at the west end), section C (along the south edge) and section N (at the southern point).

Other species seen flying over, feeding in the area or breeding just outside of the site were: Redwing, European Greenfinch and Eurasian Siskin.

**Observations took place between – 06:31 hrs to 09:17 hrs**

## **Saturday 29 March 2008**

Thirty species of bird were seen in the area, of these twenty two species were thought to be breeding on the site, these were: Sparrowhawk (1), Stock Dove (5), Woodpigeon (13), Great Spotted Woodpecker (4), Green Woodpecker (2), Eurasian Jay (1), Common Magpie (5), Carrion Crow (2), Great Tit (21), Blue Tit (30), Coal Tit (3), Long-tailed Tit (1), Goldcrest (1), Winter Wren (35), Eurasian Treecreeper (2), Eurasian Nuthatch (3), Eurasian Blackbird (17), Song Thrush\* (3), Mistle Thrush (1), European Robin (35), Chaffinch (3) and Greenfinch (1).

\*Red List = species that are either globally threatened or have suffered serious decline.

Song Thrush which is on the red list, were heard singing and holding territories in three areas. Two singing males were found at section V (northern and southern edges) and a single male was heard in the middle of section N. The two birds in section V are considered additional territories to those found in February, which now brings the total population up to eight territories.

A further eight other species were seen flying over, feeding in the area or breeding just outside of the site. These were: Canada Goose, Grey Heron, Great Cormorant, Harris's Hawk (an escaped falconer's bird), Feral Pigeon, Redwing, Eurasian Siskin and European Goldfinch.

**Observations took place between – 04:57 hrs to 07:52 hrs**

## **Saturday 26 April 2008**

Twenty-two species of bird were seen in the area, twenty of these were thought to be breeding on the site, these were: Sparrowhawk (1), Stock Dove (4), Woodpigeon (19), Great Spotted Woodpecker (1), Green Woodpecker (2), Eurasian Jay (3), Common Magpie (2), Carrion Crow (1), Great Tit (28), Blue Tit (23), Willow Warbler (1), Chiffchaff (3), Blackcap (6), Goldcrest (1), Winter Wren (30), Eurasian Treecreeper (2), Eurasian Nuthatch (1), Eurasian Blackbird (13), Song Thrush\* (2) and European Robin (31).

\*Red List = species that are either globally threatened or have suffered serious decline.

On the red list, two territories of Song Thrush were found. The territories were located at section N (the southern edge) and section A (along the east edge). The bird located at section A is considered to be a new territory for site. Therefore, the total number of territories for the site now stands at nine.



Two other species seen flying over, feeding in the area or breeding just outside of the site were: Canada Goose and Ring-necked Parakeet.

**Observations took place between – 05:00 hrs to 07:56 hrs**

## **Saturday 17 May 2008**

Twenty five species of bird were seen in the area, twenty two species of these were thought to be breeding on the site, these were: Stock Dove (3), Wood Pigeon (15), Tawny Owl (1), Great Spotted Woodpecker (6), Green Woodpecker (2), Eurasian Jay (3), Common Magpie (3), Carrion Crow (1), Great Tit (23), Blue Tit (3), Coal Tit (1), Chiffchaff (3), Blackcap (9), Winter Wren (34), Eurasian Treecreeper (2), Eurasian Nuthatch (1), Eurasian Blackbird (24), Song Thrush\* (5), Mistle Thrush (1), European Robin (36), Dunnock (2) and Chaffinch (2)

\*Red List = species that are either globally threatened or have suffered serious decline.

Song Thrush was the only species recorded that is on the Red List. Five territories were located these were at section N two males singing (one in the middle and the other at the west end), section W (along the north edge), section P (at the east end) and section C (at the east end).

A further three species were seen flying over, feeding in the area or breeding just outside of the site. These were: Harris's Hawk, Lesser Black-backed Gull and Starling.

**Observations took place between – 04:35 hrs to 06:09 hrs and again from 08:47 hrs to 11:15 hrs**



## **Conclusion**

### **Breeding Birds**

The survey concluded that twenty-seven species of bird were proven to be breeding on the site. They are listed below with the evidence: -

- Sparrowhawk (1) – a single male was seen hunting and perched in the tree, mewing from their display flight was also heard.
- Stock Dove (5 – 7) – singing males or males on display flight.
- Woodpigeon (19 – 30) – singing birds
- Tawny Owl (1) – one young bird was rescued from after falling out of the nest site.
- Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (1) – singing bird
- Great Spotted Woodpecker (8 – 10) – singing birds
- Green Woodpecker (1 – 2) – singing birds
- Eurasian Jay (3 – 5) – singing birds
- Common Magpie (2 – 5) – singing birds
- Carrion Crow (2 – 4) – singing birds
- Great Tit (28 – 32) – singing birds
- Blue Tit (30 – 38) – singing birds
- Coal Tit (2 – 3) – singing birds
- Long-tailed Tit (2) – pair located
- Chiffchaff (3 – 4) – singing birds
- Blackcap (9 – 11) – singing birds
- Goldcrest (2 – 3) – singing birds
- Winter Wren (35 – 42) – singing birds
- Eurasian Treecreeper (2) – singing birds
- Eurasian Nuthatch (3 – 5) – singing birds
- Eurasian Blackbird (24 – 36) – singing birds
- Song Thrush (6 – 9) – singing birds
- Mistle Thrush (1) – singing bird
- European Robin (36 – 40) – singing birds
- Dunnock (2) – singing birds
- Chaffinch (3 – 5) – singing birds
- Greenfinch (1) – singing bird

One species of bird were present on the site and considered to be breeding although there was no concrete evidence to confirm this. This was: -

- Willow Warbler (1) – a singing bird was heard during the April survey. It is possible this bird stayed longer but it was not heard again unlike the other warbler species (Chiffchaff and Blackcap). This Willow Warbler like the other warblers was the only migratory bird recorded singing. The other warblers were all heard on more than one occasion. When a bird is holding territory they sometimes only sing for a week or two, this bird was only recorded during the April survey and the possibility of it being a migrant bird can not be excluded.





## Other birds

Eleven more species of bird were present in the wood. Canada Geese were heard flying over during the March and April counts. Grey Heron was seen flying over during the March count, as was a Great Cormorant, but there is no suitable habitat for any of these species to breed. An escaped Harris's Hawk was seen during the March and May surveys, this bird had escaped from a local falconer. Two Lesser Black-backed Gulls flew over during the May survey, these were probably locally breeding birds, which often nest on roof tops in London. Feral Pigeons flew over during the February and March surveys. At the end of the April survey a Ring-necked Parakeet flew over. Several family groups of Starlings were present during the May survey. Redwings were present in the February and March surveys, these were heard singing but did not stay. A single Eurasian Siskin was present during the February and March counts. One Goldfinch flew over during the March survey.

## Recommendations

The site holds a high density of breeding birds. There is little room to improve on the site without increasing the size of the site. The following recommendations should be considered to aid the breeding population of birds:-

- **The erection of bird nest boxes** – several types of boxes should be used and all (where required) should have protective metal plates to stop woodpeckers or squirrels breaking into them to steal young birds or eggs.

Small hole-entrance nest boxes should be used to encourage Blue, Great and Coal Tits and Nuthatches. Medium hole-entrance nest boxes should be used for Starlings and Great Spotted Woodpeckers.

Large hole-entrance nest boxes are suitable for Stock Dove and Tawny Owl and small open-fronted nest boxes should be used for Robins and Spotted Flycatchers.

Providing nest sites will help to contribute to and improve the success rate of the breeding species and must be maintained. It is recommended that they are inspected in late winter and any repairs carried out. After they have been used they should be cleaned out with the nesting material removed and any parasites larva/eggs present. A useful source of information is The British Trust for Ornithology Nest box Guide by Chris du Feu. ISBN 1-902576-81-0

- **The removal of all Japanese Knotweed.** This is an alien plant and should be removed as it has no natural enemies, excludes native species from the areas it grows in and causes soil erosion.
- **The removal of all but one Holly Bush.** This should be deemed a long term project. Over a number of years, the Holly Bush will grow to provide further cover and protection for roosting birds including Tawny Owls.



- **Killing of standing trees**, for the size of the wood only one or two standing trees should be killed. This would provide excellent breeding and feeding habitat for woodpeckers in six years or so.

It is not recommended that wood is coppiced, as the wood works very well and coppicing would only bring short term benefits such as opening up the canopy to allow the ground plant life to grow. This is likely to attract more species like Song Thrush or Dunnock but needs to be constantly maintained and will affect the composition of the wood. This may have a knock on effect on the current population density and the species present. Currently Queen's Wood works very well and is rich in bird and wildlife. With such a high density of breeding species in this area, the focus should be on creating more breeding and feeding habitat.





## **Appendix 1 – Species seen, their status in this country and number of breeding pairs**

**The following is a list of all species found on the site, their status in this country and the number of breeding pairs given in brackets.**

Schedule 1 = Provides legal protection to rare birds and their young. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb at, on, or near an active nest.

Red List = species that are either globally threatened or have suffered serious decline.

Amber List = Moderate decline in population size and range.

Green List = No identified threat to the population's status.

Introduced = Species that have escaped and bred in the wild and have no specific conservation status here.

### **Breeding Species**

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker – Red list  
 Song Thrush – Red list

Stock Dove – Amber list  
 Green Woodpecker – Amber list  
 Willow Warbler – Amber list  
 Goldcrest – Amber list  
 Mistle Thrush – Amber list  
 Dunnock – Amber list

Sparrowhawk – Green list  
 Woodpigeon – Green list  
 Tawny Owl (1) – Green list  
 Great Spotted Woodpecker – Green list  
 Eurasian Jay – Green list  
 Common Magpie – Green list  
 Carrion Crow – Green list  
 Great Tit – Green list  
 Blue Tit – Green list  
 Coal Tit – Green list  
 Long-tailed Tit – Green list  
 Chiffchaff – Green list  
 Blackcap – Green list  
 Winter Wren – Green list  
 Eurasian Treecreeper – Green list  
 Eurasian Nuthatch – Green list  
 Eurasian Blackbird – Green  
 European Robin – Green list  
 Chaffinch – Green list  
 European Greenfinch – Green list

### **Non-Breeding Species**

Starling – Red list

Great Cormorant – Amber list  
 Lesser Black-backed Gull – Amber list  
 Redwing – Amber list

Grey Heron – Green list  
 Feral Pigeon – Green list  
 Eurasian Siskin – Green list  
 European Goldfinch – Green list

Canada Goose – No status  
 Harris's Hawk – No status  
 Ring-necked Parakeet – No status



## ***Appendix 2 – List of all species seen and their status at the site***

<b>Species (Latin name)</b>	<b>Status at the site</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Canada Goose (Branta canadensis)	Non-breeding	Heard flying over the site
Grey Heron (Ardea cinerea)	Non-breeding	Seen flying over the site
Great Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo)	Non-breeding	Seen flying over the site
Sparrowhawk (Accipiter nisus)	Breeding	Mewing heard and a male seen hunting
Harris's Hawk (Parabuteo unicinctus)	Non-breeding	An escaped falconers bird was seen on two dates
Lesser Black-backed Gull (Larus fuscus graellsii)	Non-breeding	Seen flying over the site
Feral Pigeon (Columba livia 'feral')	Non-breeding	Seen flying over the site
Stock Dove (Columba oenas)	Breeding	Up to seven males were heard singing and seen in display flight
Woodpigeon (Columba palumbus)	Breeding	Up to thirty singing males were located
Tawny Owl (Strix aluco)	Breeding	One male was heard, an adult was seen in May and a young bird was rescued.
Ring-necked Parakeet (Psittacula krameri)	Non-breeding	Seen flying over the site
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (Dendrocopos minor)	Breeding	One male was heard during the February survey.
Great Spotted Woodpecker (Dendrocopos major)	Breeding	Up to ten territories were located
Green Woodpecker (Picus viridis)	Breeding	One or two territories were located
Eurasian Jay (Garrulus glandarius)	Breeding	Up to five pairs were located
Common Magpie (Pica pica)	Breeding	Up to five pairs bred
Carrion Crow (Corvus corone)	Breeding	Up to four territories were located
Great Tit (Parus major)	Breeding	Up to thirty two territories were located
Blue Tit (Parus caeruleus)	Breeding	Up to thirty eight territories were located



Species (Latin name)	Status at the site	Notes
Coal Tit ( <i>Parus ater</i> )	Breeding	Up to three territories were located
Long-tailed Tit ( <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i> )	Breeding	Two pairs were located
Willow Warbler ( <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i> )	Possible breeding	A single male was heard in April but not seen or heard on subsequent visits
Chiffchaff ( <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i> )	Breeding	Four territories were located
Blackcap ( <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i> )	Breeding	Up to eleven territories were located
Goldcrest ( <i>Regulus regulus</i> )	Breeding	Up to three territories were located
Winter Wren ( <i>Troglodytes troglodytes hiemalis</i> )	Breeding	Up to forty two territories were located
Eurasian Treecreeper ( <i>Certhia familiaris</i> )	Breeding	Two territories were located
Eurasian Nuthatch ( <i>Sitta europaea</i> )	Breeding	Up to five territories were located
Starling ( <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> )	Non-breeding	Family groups were seen in May but no evidence of breeding on site was discovered
Eurasian Blackbird ( <i>Turdus merula</i> )	Breeding	Up to thirty six territories were located
Redwing ( <i>Turdus iliacus</i> )	Winter visitor	Up to ten birds present during February and March.
Song Thrush ( <i>Turdus philomelos</i> )	Breeding	Up to nine territories were located
Mistle Thrush ( <i>Turdus viscivorus</i> )	Breeding	One breeding pair were present
European Robin ( <i>Erithacus rubecula</i> )	Breeding	Up to forty territories were present
Dunnock ( <i>Prunella modularis</i> )	Breeding	Two singing males were located
Chaffinch ( <i>Fringilla coelebs</i> )	Breeding	Up to five territories were located
European Greenfinch ( <i>Carduelis chloris</i> )	Breeding	One singing male was located
Eurasian Siskin ( <i>Carduelis spinus</i> )	Non-breeding	Heard flying over the site
European Goldfinch ( <i>Carduelis carduelis</i> )	Non-breeding	Heard flying over the site

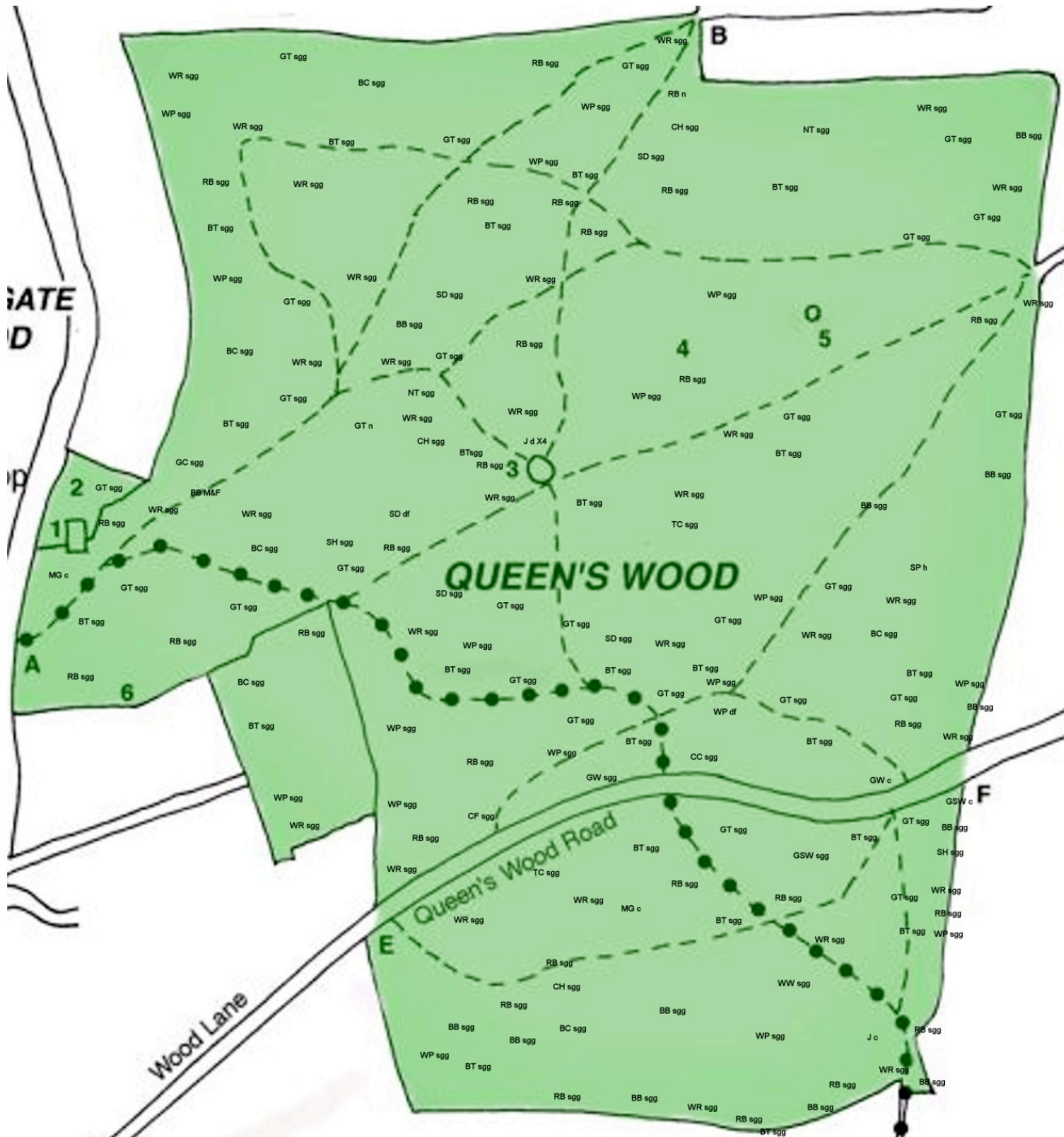
[illegible]



[illegible]



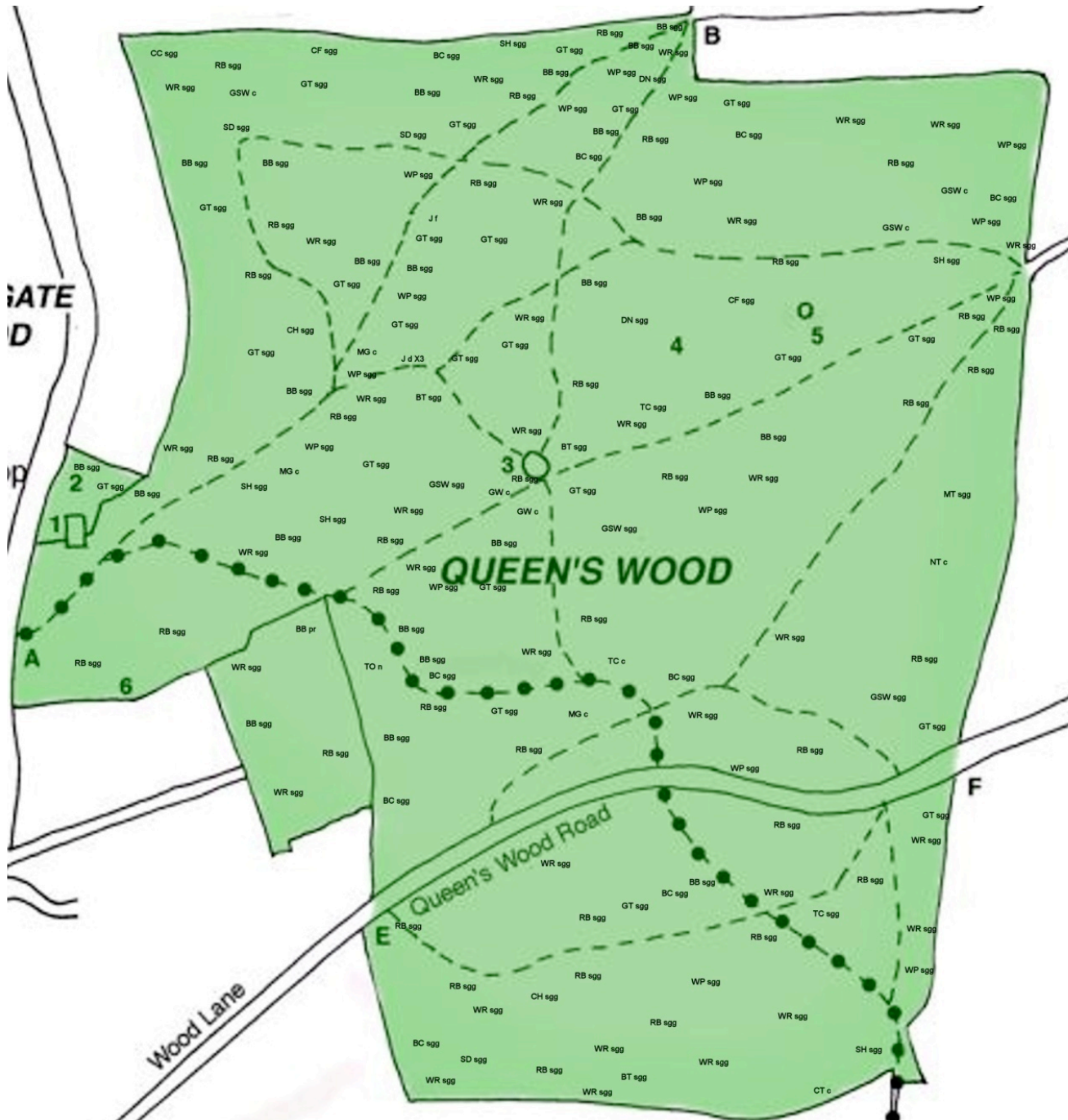
## Appendix 5 – Queen's Wood, London map for 26 April 2008







## Appendix 6 – Queen's Wood, London map for 17 May 2008





## Appendix 7 – Bird species key

Key for maps on pages 12 – 15

Species	Code
Blackbird	BB
Blackcap	BC
Blue Tit	BT
Carrion Crow	CC
Chaffinch	CF
Chiffchaff	CH
Coal Tit	CT
Dunnock	DN
Goldcrest	GC
Goldfinch	GD
Great Spotted Woodpecker	GSW
Great Tit	GT
Green Woodpecker	GW
Greenfinch	GR
Jay	J
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	LSW
Long-tailed Tit	LTT
Magpie	MG
Mistle Thrush	MT
Nuthatch	NT
Redwing	RW
Robin	RB
Song Thrush	SH
Sparrowhawk	SP
Starling	ST
Stock Dove	SD
Tawny Owl	TO
Treecreeper	TR
Willow Warbler	WW
Wood Pigeon	WP
Wren	WR



## **Appendix 8 – Bird behaviour key**

Key for maps on pages 12 – 15

Behaviour	Code
Alarm	a
Calling	c
Carrying food	cf
Carrying nesting material	cn
Display flight	df
Displaying	d
Family group	fg
Feeding	f
Female	F
Fighting	ft
Flying	fy
Male	M
Mating	m
Nesting	n
Pair	pr
Possible nest site	pn
Singing	sgg
Young	y

### **Report completed by:**

David Darrell-Lambert  
Bird Brain UK  
Mobile 07500 373 256  
Email [david@birdbrainuk.com](mailto:david@birdbrainuk.com)  
[www.birdbrainuk.com](http://www.birdbrainuk.com)