

## CHANGES TO RED LIST STATUS OF MALDON'S BREEDING BIRD SPECIES

(Update to reflect publication of new Red List of UK species, December 2021)

“Birds of Conservation Concern” is a listing compiled by the UK’s leading bird conservation and monitoring organisations and reviews the status of all regularly occurring birds in the UK, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. The process used is a globally recognised approach developed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The species are assessed against a set of objective criteria based on population and range changes over time and placed on the Green, Amber or Red lists to reflect the level of conservation concern identified; the Red List contains the species that are most endangered.

At the time of publication of “Wildlife of Maldon”, the latest version of the listing was version 4, published in 2015. Now the 5<sup>th</sup> version has been published (December 2021) and this newer listing reflects some changes in the national status of a number of Maldon’s bird species. Overall, the picture presented by this latest report is one of continuing population decline.

The full report was published in the December 2021 issue of British Birds magazine and is also available for download from the magazine’s website.

The chart below identifies those species that are on the new Red List as well as those on the previous Red List published in 2015.

	BoCC 4 (2015)	BoCC 5 (2021)		BoCC 4 (2015)	BoCC 5 (2021)
Grey Partridge	Red	Red	Song Thrush	Red	White
Turtle Dove	Red	Red	Mistle Thrush	Red	Red
Swift	White	Red	Nightingale	Red	Red
Cuckoo	Red	Red	House Sparrow	Red	Red
Herring Gull	Red	Red	Yellow Wagtail	Red	Red
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Red	Red	Grey Wagtail	Red	White
Skylark	Red	Red	Greenfinch	White	Red
House Martin	White	Red	Linnet	Red	Red
Starling	Red	Red	Corn Bunting	Red	Red
			Yellowhammer	Red	Red

## CURRENT STATUS OF MALDON'S RED-LISTED BREEDING SPECIES

Note that it will be seen that in many cases lack of data means changes have not been quantified however comments made are based on impressions gained by regular observers.

**Grey Partridge:** Any breeding birds now considered to be a consequence of game releases.

**Turtle Dove:** Continuing decline, in 2021 prolonged presence only recorded from one site (along the canal near Langford).

**Swift:** New addition to Red List. Still present around centre of town but declining generally around Maldon as elsewhere.

**Cuckoo:** Calling birds still encountered in both reedbed and farmland habitats but impression is that numbers have reduced.

- Herring Gull:** Well-established colony (with Lesser Black-backed Gulls) on roofs of industrial estates near Fullbridge appears stable. (Red listing is due to significant reductions in colonies nesting on coasts and offshore islands).
- Lesser Spotted Woodpecker:** Only one record in 2021 (Hazeleigh - calling bird) with last actual sighting in 2017. No evidence of breeding for some time.
- Skylark/ Yellow Wagtail/ Corn Bunting/ Yellowhammer:** Gradually disappearing, exacerbated by intensive farming practices reducing availability of food and nesting sites.
- House Martin:** New addition to Red List. It was a surprise in 2021 to find no sign of breeding pairs in Maldon area- hopefully more will return in 2022.
- Starling/ House Sparrow:** Apparently stable populations, helped no doubt by people supplying bird food in their gardens. Nesting sites may be reduced as more people fit plastic soffits to their roofs and fill in gaps in tiling. Will be interesting to see if population increases as new housing developments become established.
- Song Thrush:** No longer on Red List. Around Maldon, species has increased somewhat in urban areas and can be found in a variety of wooded habitats throughout district.
- Mistle Thrush:** Still to be found in regular haunts eg around Beeleigh and Chigborough Lakes.
- Nightingale:** Where odd pairs used to breed they have mostly disappeared. Local population is now very much concentrated in Hazeleigh Wood and nearby scrubby copses.
- Grey Wagtail:** No longer on Red Listed due to national trends however their remains just one known regular local breeding site, at Beeleigh. In 2021 birds were seen around Fullbridge and at Langford, so possibly there were breeding attempts elsewhere.
- Greenfinch:** New addition to Red List. Against apparent national trend, around Maldon, Greenfinch appear to have had a minor resurgence with an increase in sightings throughout 2021.
- Linnet:** Still regular. Numbers may be helped by the species ability to feed on the saltmarshes and so not as dependent on farmland as some of the other species on this list.

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