



Survey Instructions

Survey your allocated 1km squares as follows:

- Pre-survey visit to identify the edges of your area, paths, landmarks and best areas of habitat, including clearings and areas of newly planted conifers within woodland
- Minimum of two survey visits (14+ days apart), one within each of the periods:
 - 15th February – 31st March
 - 1st April – 31st May
- You may wish to do additional visits if weather conditions are not ideal or if you feel you did not cover all the area effectively
- Visits should commence asap after dawn and finish by midday on mild, clear, dry days with little wind
- All suitable habitat should be walked to at least within 100m to maximise detection of territorial birds. You do not need to walk across wet mires, and within woodland only clearings and very young plantations need to be checked.
- Your maps have an 'overlap zone' around the edge. Please check this area, especially where there are strips of potentially suitable habitat adjacent to your square that have not been allocated to other surveyors (e.g. where heathland borders woodland or farmland).

Record the locations of all Woodlarks on the map on the Recording Form provided:

- Singing males, noting especially if singing simultaneously with neighbouring birds
- All other observations (including alarm calls, feeding birds, birds carrying food and birds in flight).
- Use a separate map/form for each visit or use a different colour to distinguish different visits.

Use the following notations when recording Woodlark observations on the map:

W♂ W♀ 3Wjuvs	Male, female and juveniles with number if appropriate		
<u>W</u>	Calls	<u>W</u>	Alarm calls
W ♀♂	Pair	(W)	Singing
*W	Occupied nest	W food	Carrying food
WF	Feeding	W mat	Carrying nest material
W —→ W	Bird moving between locations		
(W) — (W)	Same bird singing from two locations		
(W) - - - (W)	Two different singing birds		

Further information about timing and surveying

In the New Forest the easiest time of year to find territorial Woodlarks is mid February to mid March – i.e. at the beginning of the nationally recognised survey period. They pair up and lay eggs by 7 April, and become more secretive. Visits in the latter three weeks of May may therefore be least fruitful. Especially as the survey season progresses, you may have to search hard, e.g. for birds feeding quietly on the ground, since they often allow close approach before flying.



Hampshire Ornithological Society 2024 New Forest Woodlark Survey

How will we count territories?

Survey organisers will estimate the number of territories using the information provided by volunteer surveyors. Records of birds more than 300m apart will be assumed to relate to different pairs. Except where they are seen or heard simultaneously, those closer than 300m will generally be assumed to be the same pair. The estimated number and location of territories will be based on a well-studied area of maximum Woodlark density where the average territory size is approximately 18 hectares (maximum of about five pairs per 1km square).

Habitats

Most Woodlarks will be in well-drained heathland with patches of grass, heather or other short vegetation for nesting, bare ground or sparse ground cover for feeding and scattered trees or other elevated perches to use as lookouts and song posts. Some will be in and around clearings within woodland or in very young conifer plantations. Please annotate the map on your Recording Form if it doesn't correctly indicate the habitat where you found Woodlarks.

Sending in your results

Please send your results to nigel@matthews-online.co.uk in two different ways:

1. During the survey: Please send an email listing the 1km squares you have visited, saying whether or not you have found Woodlarks in them. This will give us 'live' information on how the survey is progressing and help us build a provisional distribution map on the website, linked from the home page. Ideally, we would like to hear from everyone by the end of March when all the first visits will have been done, and again in mid April and at the end of May.
2. When you have finished your visits and by 10 June at the latest: Take a photo or scan of each Recording Form and send it to Nigel.

Additional information

You may wish to refresh your memory of the calls and song of Woodlarks. Click on some of the recordings on the [xeno-canto website](#). Apps such as the Collins Bird Guide and Merlin also have good sound recordings.

We are not recording recreational disturbance as part of the survey. However, if you see serious incidents please report them to Forestry England's Lyndhurst office by email, with location, date, time and details so they have a record of what happened:

southern.reception@forestryengland.uk or call 0300 067 4600 if it is in progress and immediate action is required.