

# **BIRD ATLAS NEWSLETTER**

## **Summer 2011**

*As the weather improves into spring, we can look forward to more pleasant conditions for fieldwork on the next breeding season during summer 2011.*

*Once again atlasing proved to be difficult to fit around the various vagaries of the weather in winter 2010-11, as it had the previous winter.*

*Nevertheless substantial progress was achieved towards our target of 100% coverage for the winter project.*

*While always six months behind the winter atlas, the summer atlas still requires much effort. While we managed to reach the minimum requirement for the BTO's needs by the end of last summer, 33% coverage in all 10km squares, we are perhaps just over halfway through*

*covering SE Scotland properly for the breeding season in the local atlas scheme.*

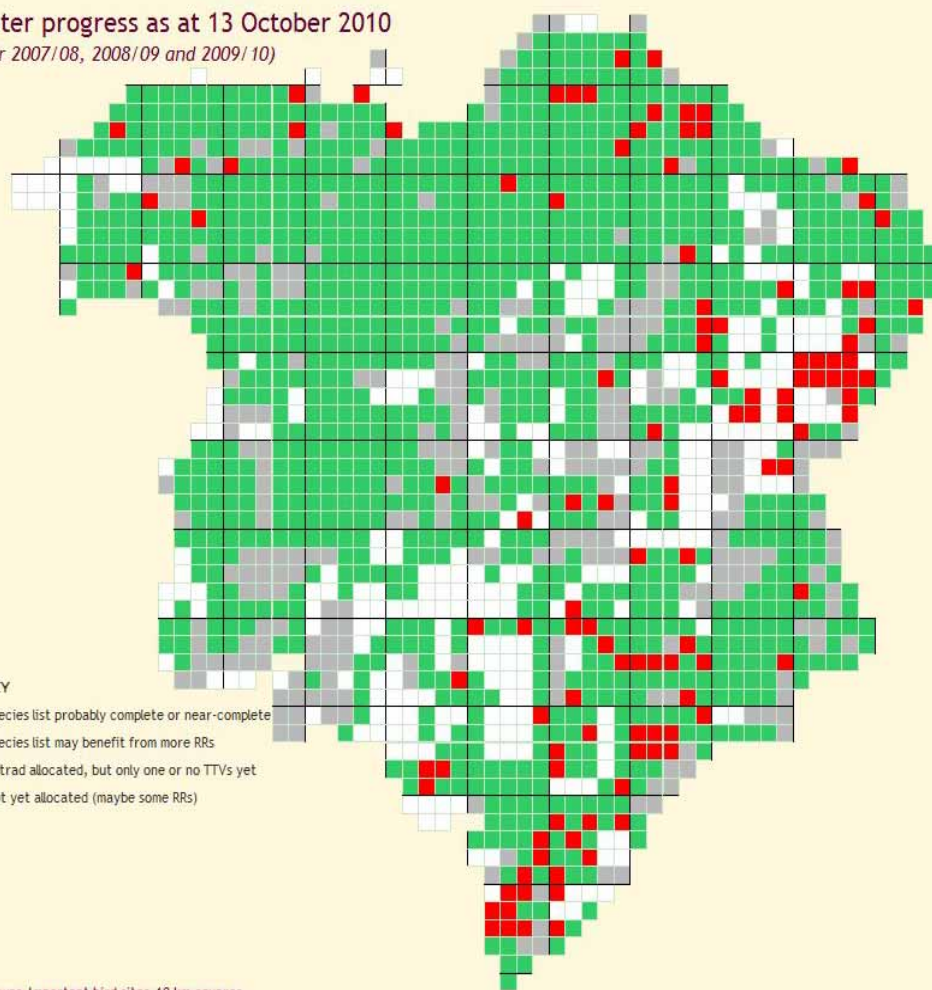
*So please volunteer once more, even if just doing a couple of tetrads, or perhaps locating 'missing' species for the BTO 10km squares in what is the final season of that project.*

**Great progress made but more volunteers for TTVs needed, and some effort required to upgrade breeding status codes to 1988-94 levels**



### Winter progress as at 13 October 2010

(after 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10)

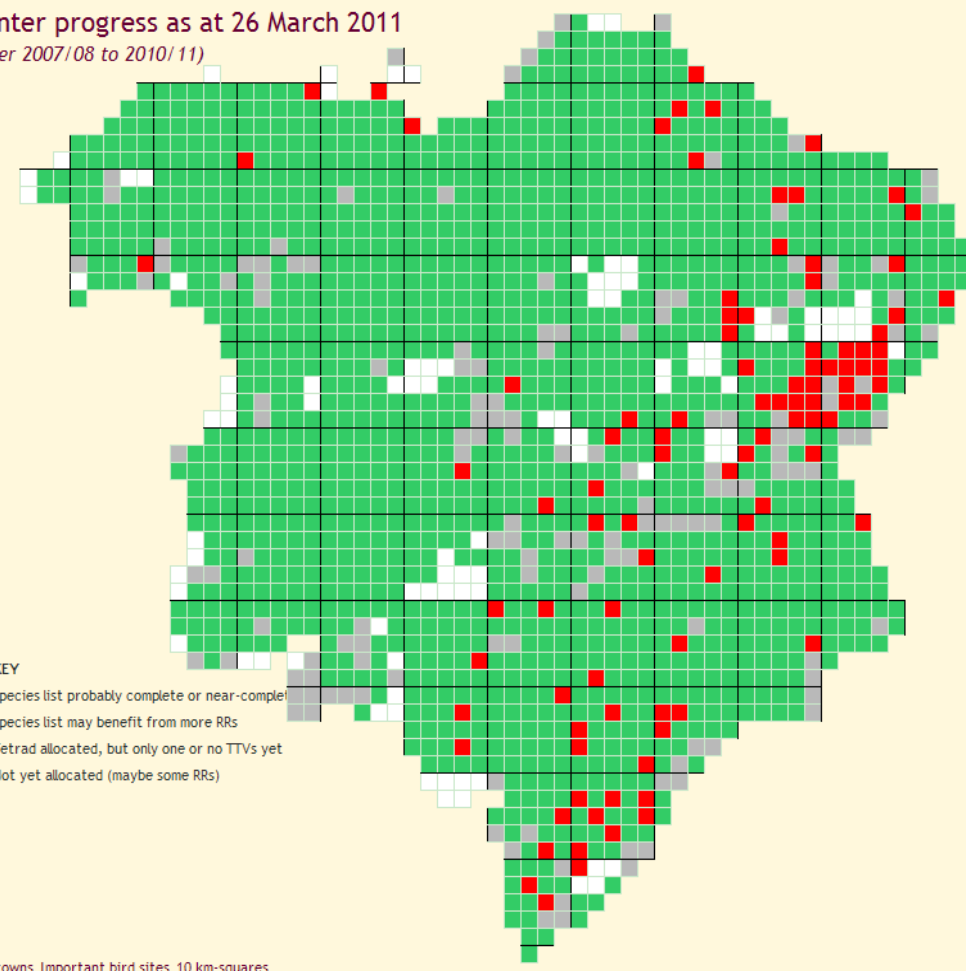


**KEY**  
 ■ Species list probably complete or near-complete  
 ■ Species list may benefit from more RRs  
 ■ Tetrad allocated, but only one or no TTVs yet  
 ■ Not yet allocated (maybe some RRs)

Major towns Important bird sites 10 km-squares

### Winter progress as at 26 March 2011

(after 2007/08 to 2010/11)



**KEY**  
 ■ Species list probably complete or near-complete  
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 ■ Not yet allocated (maybe some RRs)

Major towns Important bird sites 10 km-squares

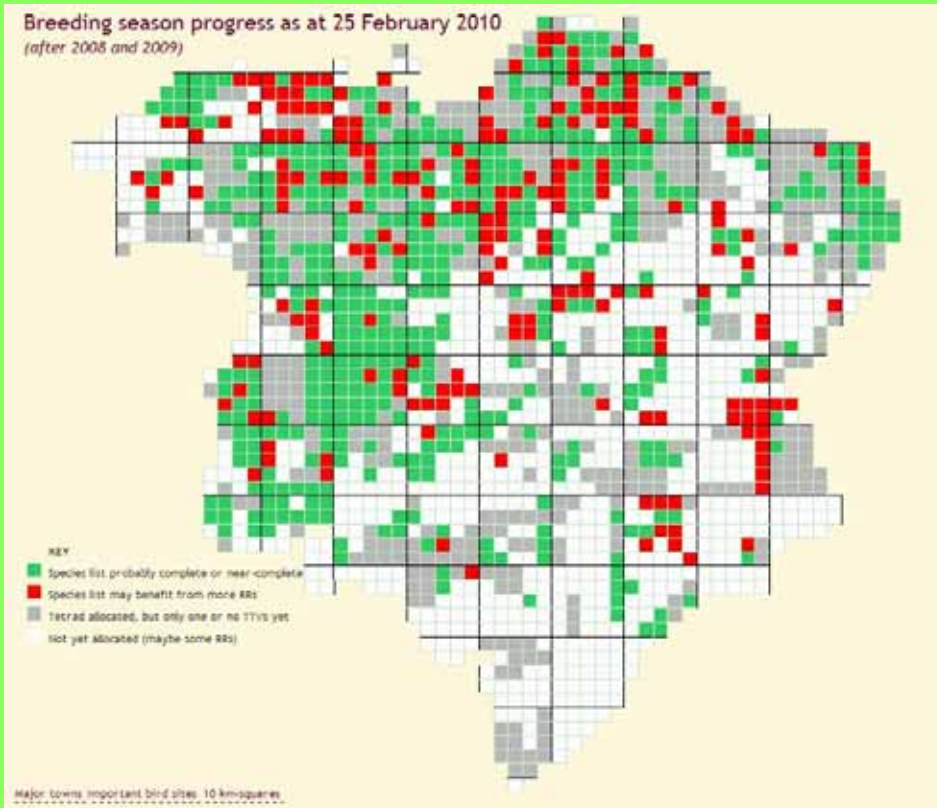
## Winter Progress

The fourth winter for the BTO-SOC Atlas finished at the end of February. As a measure of what we have achieved thus far, the accompanying table shows the numbers of tetrads for which TTVs were submitted up to the end of February 2011.

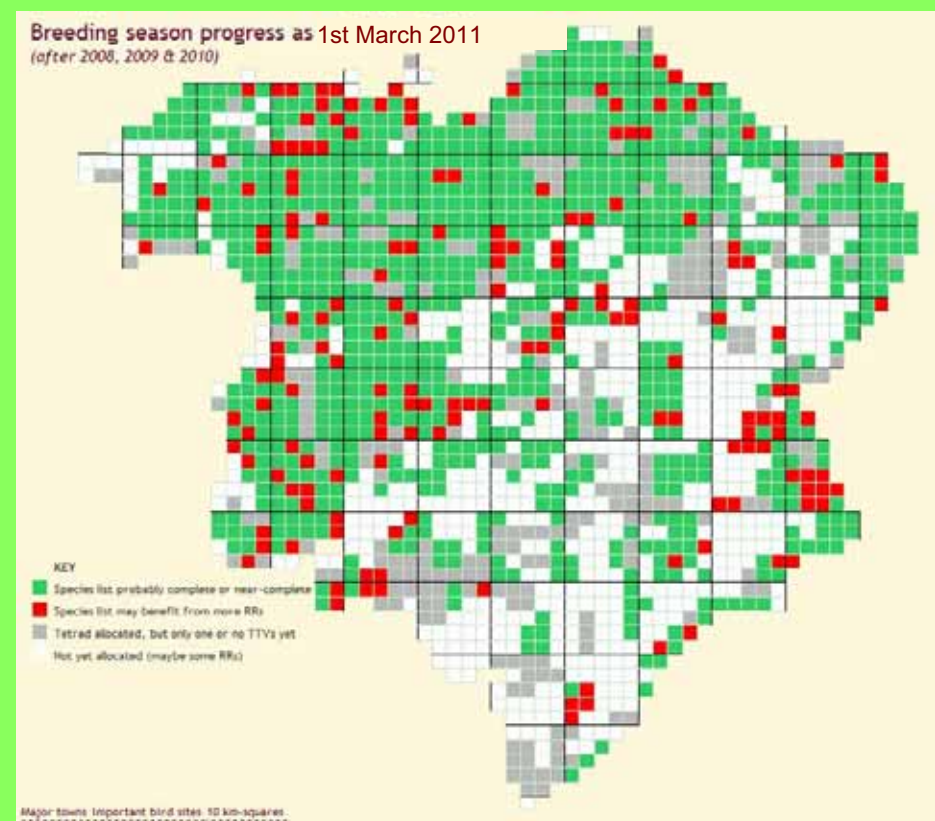
In terms of coverage for the BTO atlas, with 90% of the area having had TTVs, we have gone well beyond the minimum 33% coverage (just 8 out of 25 tetrads) in each 10km square. While the BTO Winter Atlas has now been completed, there are still 182 tetrads in SE Scotland yet to get a TTV done, with another 84 with just a single visit completed so far. Our intention is to do these in winter 2011-12.

As we managed to survey about 340 tetrads in winter 2010-11, despite the weather, these totals seem relatively modest. Next winter's work may complete the effort for the local winter atlas, and plans are already in train to start writing the book, even before the final season has started.

| <b>Borders</b><br>(1167 tetrads)     | TTVs surveyed |         | % of<br>all tetrads |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|---------|---------------------|
|                                      | 1 visit       | 2 visit |                     |
| Winter                               | 1023          | 963     | 88%                 |
| <b>Lothian</b><br>(632 tetrads)      |               |         |                     |
| Winter                               | 584           | 539     | 92%                 |
| <b>SE Scotland</b><br>(1799 tetrads) |               |         |                     |
|                                      | 1617          | 1502    | 90%                 |



The progress is measured by the spread of the green 'completed' tetrads. The red 'needs more effort' tetrads change to green when effort is applied but our analysis generates more new 'underachieved' tetrads as work progresses and standards improve.



## Breeding season

As the maps show there is a considerable contrast between the progress in summer and winter. It should be recalled however that we are one season behind compared with the winter project. Nevertheless it paradoxically seems easier to get observers out in the depths of winter than it is in summer. Despite the longer days and better weather, there are perhaps many more competing activities in summer. It may also be said that early April and late July fieldwork is less 'rewarding', as for some species breeding has either not started, or has already finished.

### % TTV coverage achieved

| Season             | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|
| <b>Borders</b>     | 22%  | 40%  | 61%  |
| <b>Lothian</b>     | 43%  | 67%  | 82%  |
| <b>SE Scotland</b> | 29%  | 49%  | 68%  |

However we are making steady progress with between 20-30% of the area covered, at least for TTVs, each season. It seems likely, if the existing effort continues, that this summer Borders may reach 80% coverage and Lothian will be almost totally 'TTV'ed'.

The last local tetrad atlas ran for seven seasons between 1988 and 1994. It is probable that we may achieve comparable coverage a year earlier this time, and perhaps finish by summer 2013. The BTO will maintain the atlas website at least to 2012.

### Progress at end of third season 2010

| Borders<br>(1167 tetrads)            | TTVs surveyed |          | % of<br>all tetrads |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|----------|---------------------|
|                                      | 1 visit       | 2 visits |                     |
|                                      | 711           | 527      | 61%                 |
| <b>Lothian</b><br>(632 tetrads)      | 519           | 489      | 82%                 |
| <b>SE Scotland</b><br>(1799 tetrads) | 1230          | 1011     | 68%                 |

## Priorities for season 2011

Do more TTVs

Find 'missing' species for BTO 10km squares

Top-up any tetrads that require more effort

Submit Roving Records or

use BirdTrack **with** atlas breeding codes

## Do more TTVs

Please complete any TTVs already allocated to you.

Consider taking on more.

Either go to the BTO website and see which tetrads are available or look at the SE Scotland Bird Atlas website with this link:

[http://www.the-soc.org.uk/se-atlas/sesa2br/sesa2\\_breeding\\_progress.html](http://www.the-soc.org.uk/se-atlas/sesa2br/sesa2_breeding_progress.html)

That link is to the map on the last page. It shows that there are plenty to choose from. If your local area has already been 'completed', please consider travelling a bit further afield, or joining our blitz groups to do more distant fieldwork.

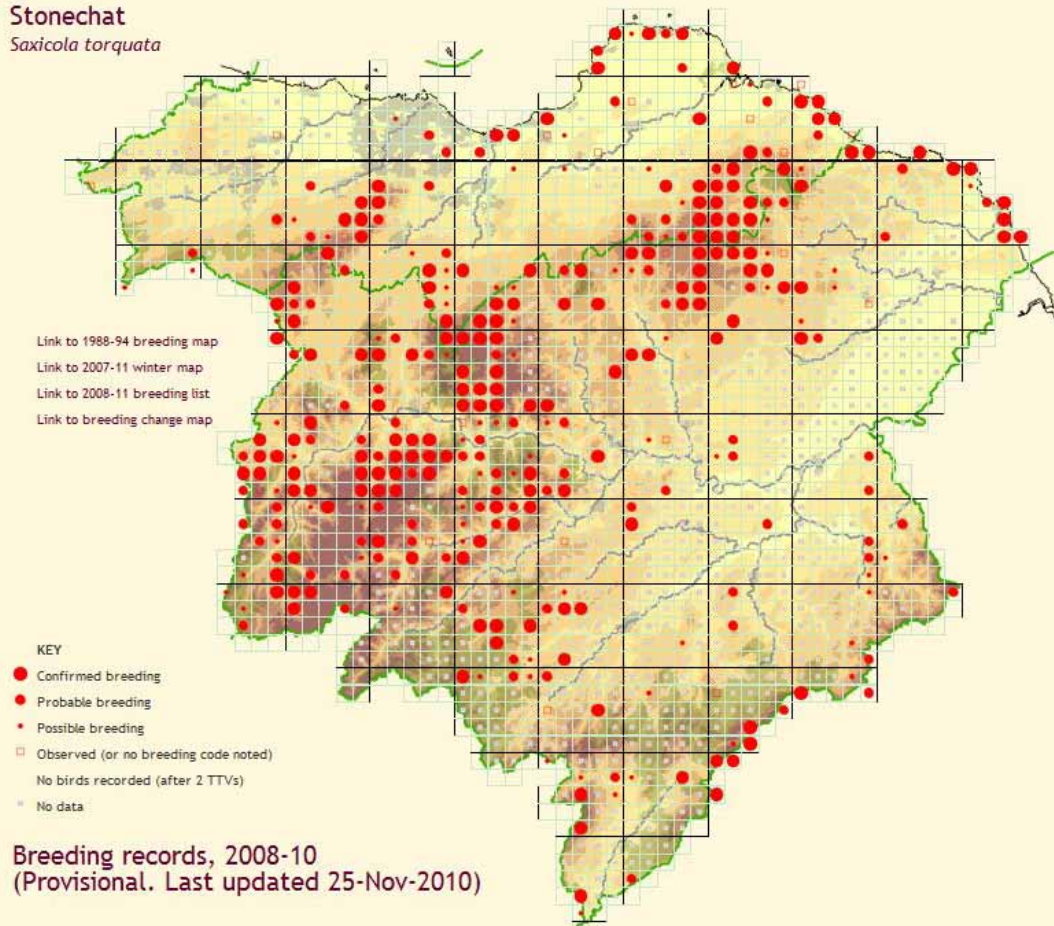
Remember that for remote TTVs in Borders there may be financial assistance, of 10p per mile, towards travelling expenses. (Contact Graham Pyatt for details).

**Please remember that proving breeding status codes is a priority. We need as many confirmed records as possible. You can take a 'time-out' from the TTV in order to take an extra few minutes to prove breeding.**



*Stonechat proved to be well distributed in the hills and along the coast in the summers of 2008 & 2009. It suffered high mortality levels during the hard winter weather during the winters of 2009-10 and 2010-11. Few have been seen since, but it seems a very few have survived. All records in 2011 would help us to pin down where the future population of the area is to re-establish itself from.*

Stonechat  
*Saxicola torquata*



# Find 'missing' species for BTO 10km squares

This is the last chance to find 'missing' species for the BTO Atlas. As they will be mapped on a 10km square basis in the national atlas, it is a question of searching a 10km square for those that may be there but have not been recorded so far.

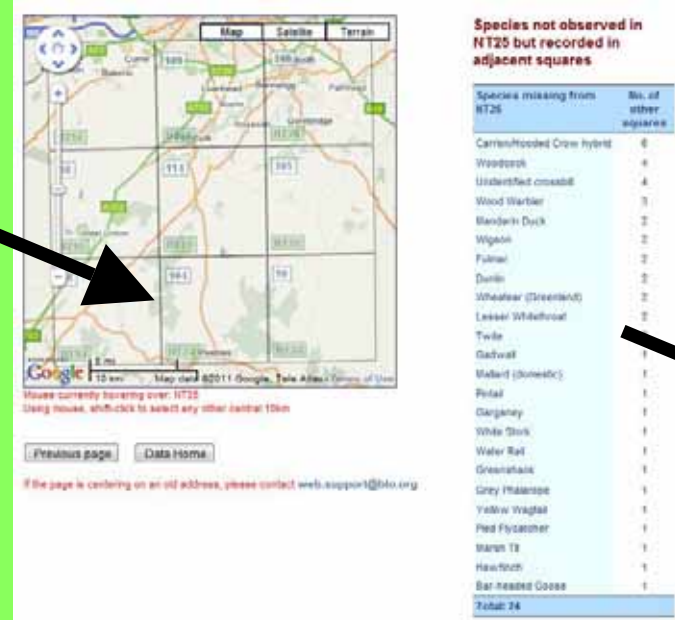
The BTO website button 'Priority Squares' is the link to what is missing.

This provides a list of missing species for a 10km square. The BTO computer lists those species that have been found in neighbouring squares that may be present in the one that you are interested in.

In the example used, NT25, around Leadburn, some species are present in several of the neighbouring squares, others in just one or two of the neighbours. In this case it is likely that hybrid crows and Woodcock may be present, if searched for. Crossbill has already been identified, so *unidentified* Crossbill can be dismissed. The possibility of any other species in this list being present decreases with the number of neighbouring 10km squares that has been recorded from. Gladhouse Reservoir might produce one of the ducks, as a migrant, but breeding is less likely.

The best bet on these low-ranking species might be Water Rail. I would try tape-luring at one of the ponds in the area, such as that at Milkhall, near Howgate. Wood Warbler is also a possibility in some of the wooded deans around Penicuik House.

Each 10km square and the BTO 'missing list' list should be examined on its merits but it is a useful starting point for a targeted hunt. Certainly in NT25 a tour round a few of the plantations at night for Woodcock and 10 minutes at Milkhall Pond would not go amiss and potentially increase our coverage.



## Species not observed in NT25 but recorded in adjacent squares

| Species missing from NT25  | No. of other squares |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Carrion/Hooded Crow hybrid | 6                    |
| Woodcock                   | 4                    |
| Unidentified crossbill     | 4                    |
| Wood Warbler               | 3                    |
| Mandarin Duck              | 2                    |
| Wigeon                     | 2                    |
| Fulmar                     | 2                    |
| Dunlin                     | 2                    |
| Wheatear (Greenland)       | 2                    |
| Lesser Whitethroat         | 2                    |
| Twite                      | 2                    |
| Gadwall                    | 1                    |
| Mallard (domestic)         | 1                    |
| Pintail                    | 1                    |
| Garganey                   | 1                    |
| White Stork                | 1                    |
| Water Rail                 | 1                    |
| Greenshank                 | 1                    |
| Grey Phalarope             | 1                    |
| Yellow Wagtail             | 1                    |
| Pied Flycatcher            | 1                    |
| Marsh Tit                  | 1                    |
| Haw finch                  | 1                    |
| Bar-headed Goose           | 1                    |
| <b>Total: 24</b>           |                      |



*Are they there?*

*Only a search will find out!*

# Top-up any tetrads that require more effort

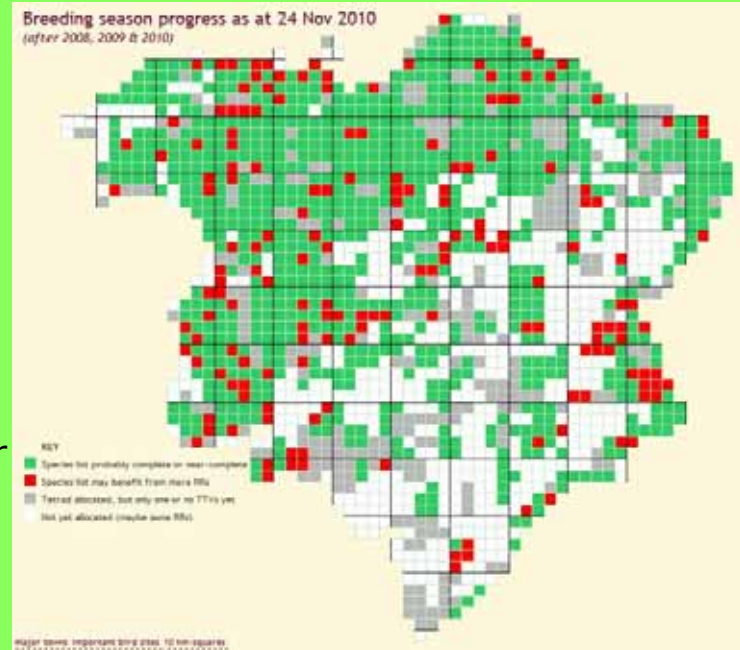
The tetrads marked in red on the progress map on the website shows tetrads that are deemed to need additional effort.:

[http://www.the-soc.org.uk/se-atlas/sesa2br/sesa2\\_breeding\\_progress.html](http://www.the-soc.org.uk/se-atlas/sesa2br/sesa2_breeding_progress.html)

This selection is done by a computer program that looks at the last atlas, and at neighbouring tetrads and calculates that there are either *species missing* or that the tetrad requires more effort in *getting confirmation of breeding*.

To see what the current situation is in these (or any) tetrad, just hover your cursor over the square in question on the map. The tetrad number and name should appear. If you click on this it will bring up a pdf file that will show the current state of play.

In the example used, NT25L, 'observed' is indicated by a dot, 'possible breeding' by a stroke, 'probable breeding' by a cross and 'confirmed breeding' by a solid black square. Also notice that some species names are in italics. These species have been recorded in some of the adjacent tetrads... and so are possibly also in this tetrad.



**NT25L** Scarce Rig [Borders], both TTVs and 16 RRs (as of 25 November 2010)  
50 species were recorded in 1988-94, of 24 so far in 2008-11; 21 with a breeding code (43% probable or confirmed)

|                           |                         |                            |                           |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Mute Swan</i>          | Great Crested Gre       | <i>Common Gull</i>         | Rock Pipit                | Pied Flycatcher         |
| Whooper Swan              | Fulmar                  | <b>Lesser Black-ba</b> 4 * | Yellow Wagtail            | Long-tailed Tit         |
| Pink-footed Goose         | Gannet                  | <i>Herring Gull</i>        | <i>Grey Wagtail</i>       | Marsh Tit               |
| <i>Greylag Goose</i>      | Cormorant               | Great Black-backe          | <b>Pied Wagtail</b> 1 ■   | <i>Coal Tit</i>         |
| Canada Goose              | Shag                    | Kittiwake                  | Dipper                    | <i>Blue Tit</i>         |
| <i>Shelduck</i>           | <i>Grey Heron</i>       | Sandwich Tern              | <b>Wren</b> 2 ↘           | <b>Great Tit</b> 1 ↘    |
| Wigeon                    | <i>Sparrowhawk</i>      | Common Tern                | <i>Dunrook</i>            | Nuthatch                |
| Godwall                   | <i>Buzzard</i>          | Gulliemot                  | <b>Robin</b> 2 ↘          | Treecreeper             |
| Teal                      | <b>Kestrel</b> 3 ■      | Razorbill                  | <i>Redstart</i>           | Jay                     |
| <b>Mallard</b> 2 ✕        | Water Rail              | Puffin                     | <i>Whinchat</i>           | <b>Maggie</b> 3 ↘       |
| Pinball                   | Moorhen                 | <i>Feral Pigeon</i>        | <i>Stonechat</i>          | <i>Jackdaw</i>          |
| Shoveler                  | Coot                    | Stock Dove                 | <i>Wheatear</i>           | <b>Rook</b> 4 ■         |
| Podchar                   | <b>Oystercatcher</b> ✕  | <b>Woodpigeon</b> 6 ↘      | Ring Ouzel                | <b>Carrion Crow</b> 6 ■ |
| <i>Tufted Duck</i>        | Ringed Plover           | Collared Dove              | <b>Blackbird</b> 1 ↘      | Hybrid crow             |
| Eider                     | Golden Plover           | Cuckoo                     | <i>Fieldfare</i>          | Raven                   |
| Long-tailed Duck          | Grey Plover             | Barn Owl                   | <b>Song Thrush</b> 2 ■    | <b>Starling</b> 6 ↘     |
| Common Scoter             | <b>Lapwing</b> 2 ■      | <i>Tawny Owl</i>           | Redwing                   | House Sparrow           |
| Velvet Scoter             | Knot                    | Long-eared Owl             | <i>Mistle Thrush</i>      | Tree Sparrow            |
| Goldeneye                 | Purple Sandpiper        | Short-eared Owl            | Grasshopper Warb          | <b>Chaffinch</b> 6 ↘    |
| Red-breasted Mer          | Dunlin                  | Swift                      | <i>Sedge Warbler</i>      | Brambling               |
| Goosander                 | Snipe                   | Kingfisher                 | <i>Blackcap</i>           | <i>Greenfinch</i>       |
| Red Grouse                | Woodcock                | Green Woodpecke            | Garden Warbler            | <i>Goldfinch</i>        |
| Black Grouse              | Bar-tailed Godwit       | <i>Great Spotted Wo</i>    | Lesser Whitethroat        | <i>Siskin</i>           |
| <i>Red-legged Partria</i> | Whimbrel                | <b>Skylark</b> 5 ↘         | Whitethroat               | <i>Linnet</i>           |
| Grey Partridge            | <b>Curlew</b> 4 ■       | <i>Sand Martin</i>         | Wood Warbler              | <i>Lesser Redpoll</i>   |
| Quail                     | Common Sandpiper        | <b>Swallow</b> 3 ↘         | Chiffchaff                | <i>Crossbill</i>        |
| <b>Pheasant</b> 1 *       | <i>Redshank</i>         | <i>House Martin</i>        | <i>Willow Warbler</i>     | Bullfinch               |
| Red-throated Dive         | Turnstone               | Tree Pipit                 | <b>Goldcrest</b> 2 ↘      | Yellowhammer            |
| Little Grebe              | <b>Black-headed G</b> * | <b>Meadow Pipit</b> 8 ↘    | <i>Spotted Flycatcher</i> | <i>Reed Bunting</i>     |

This tetrad had twice as many species recorded in the last atlas, and quite a number of species are only at possible level, despite some high numbers counted (e.g. Wren, Skylark, Meadow Pipit). An hour of so at the right time of year, such as in early-mid June, might well push this tetrad out of the 'red' category, in both terms of species totals and confirmed breeding.

*High counts of species like **Wren** and **Meadow Pipit** can usually be 'upgraded' from H or S to T, possible to probable, when songs and displays should be mutually audible or visible. Of course the Meadow Pipit, carrying food, represents confirmed breeding, FF.*



# Improving breeding status

Preliminary analysis of the current data shows that we are some way behind the last atlas as far as breeding status is concerned. So please make every effort to get breeding evidence to as high a level as possible.

There are two ways to see where coverage might be improved:

Look at 'My local gaps' on the BTO website.

This provides an oversight as to which of your local 10km squares has the poorest percentage of confirmed breeding records.

Ideally we would like 100% but in the last tetrad atlas we managed to get over 75% probable or confirmed in almost all tetrads.



**10km Gaps - priority areas for breeding evidence Focus on NT25**

The map to the left shows your local 10km squares, centered on postcode (or most commonly used square). The label in the top left of the square tells you what percentage of species already recorded that have NOT YET been confirmed breeding (exc. Migrant & Summering records). Squares with a high percentage value are a priority to visit in the breeding season.

If you want to view another area, click on the map (you may have to zoom out a bit) to find the 10km and area you are interested in - then when holding down the shift key, click the mouse to see the summary for that locally.

Please try to help the Atlas in the recording periods remaining to fill in these gaps and ensure all possible species have been confirmed breeding. Review the species lists via the table below and add Roving Records if you can.

Click on the % value or icons to see which species need better recording!

| 10km | Species list size | % not yet confirmed breeding |
|------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| NT04 | 80                | 44.4%                        |
| NT06 | 112               | 38.3%                        |
| NT04 | 85                | 35.8%                        |
| NT06 | 100               | 35.0%                        |
| NT25 | 114               | 30.7%                        |
| NT08 | 109               | 30.3%                        |
| NT24 | 104               | 27.8%                        |
| NT05 | 105               | 27.6%                        |
| NT15 | 90                | 27.2%                        |

Colour coding as follows:  
 Lots of species still to be confirmed breeding (orange background)  
 Less than 50% species still to be confirmed (pale-blue background)

Previous page | Data Home

If the page is centering on an old address, please contact [web.support@bto.org](mailto:web.support@bto.org)

Another way is to download a spreadsheet from the SE Scotland Bird Atlas website.

Here there is a full list of the breeding status for all 10km squares in SE Scotland. It can be accessed at;

[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SEScotBirdAtlas/files/Breeding\\_targets/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SEScotBirdAtlas/files/Breeding_targets/)

A series of instructions accompanies it, that will allow users to modify it, highlight their target species and print out a field copy. This may also be useful for topping up and looking for likely 10km 'missing' species.

| SPECIES                  | MAX | MIN | %  | NS96 | NS97 | NT05 | NT06 | NT07 | NT15 | NT16 | NT17 | NT25 |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| CONFIRMED                | 75  | 37  | 60 | 42   | 52   | 37   | 55   | 60   | 63   | 58   | 60   | 69   |
| PROBABLE                 | 27  | 10  | 18 | 27   | 23   | 20   | 22   | 19   | 13   | 20   | 22   | 23   |
| POSSIBLE                 | 19  | 4   | 11 | 9    | 7    | 19   | 9    | 9    | 11   | 11   | 10   | 9    |
| % CONFIRMED              |     |     |    | 54   | 63   | 49   | 64   | 68   | 72   | 65   | 65   | 68   |
| ALL                      | 121 | 51  | 88 | 78   | 82   | 76   | 86   | 88   | 87   | 89   | 92   | 101  |
| Little Grebe             |     |     | 78 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Great Crested Grebe      |     |     | 28 |      |      |      |      |      |      | X    |      |      |
| Fulmar                   |     |     | 31 |      |      |      |      |      |      | X    |      |      |
| Gannet                   |     |     | 4  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Cormorant                |     |     | 16 |      | X    | X    | X    | X    | X    | X    |      |      |
| Shag                     |     |     | 8  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | X    |      |
| Grey Heron               |     |     | 65 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Mute Swan                |     |     | 92 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Greylag Goose            |     |     | 86 |      | X    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Greylag Goose (domestic) |     |     | 11 |      | X    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Canada Goose             |     |     | 28 | X    |      |      |      | X    |      |      | X    |      |
| Shelduck                 |     |     | 54 | X    |      |      |      |      |      | X    |      |      |
| Mandarin Duck            |     |     | 3  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Wigeon                   |     |     | 15 |      |      | X    |      | X    |      | X    | X    |      |
| Gadwall                  |     |     | 14 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Teal                     |     |     | 50 |      | X    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Mallard                  |     |     | 99 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Mallard (domestic)       |     |     | 7  |      | X    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Garganey                 |     |     | 5  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |

**KEY**

Confirmed breeding

Probable breeding

Possible breeding

X Observed

# Submit Roving Records or use BirdTrack **with** atlas breeding codes

Top-ups for tetrads can be added as Roving Records on the Atlas BTO website.

However if you are a BirdTrack user, any records submitted on that system will automatically be added to the Atlas dataset. However remember that we are looking for breeding evidence, so please always fill in the box about breeding status.



Tufted Duck - NE



Sand Martin - NE



Blackbird - FF



Starling - FF

A screenshot of the BirdTrack website's 'Casual Records Form'. The form includes fields for 'Date', 'Hour', 'Species', and 'Breeding Status'. A red circle highlights the 'Breeding Status' field, which has a dropdown menu with a small icon next to it. The form also has sections for 'Site Selection or Fast-track site creation' with options A, B, and C.

Ringed Plover -DD



Stonechat - FL



Oystercatcher - ON



Greylag - ON



Osprey - NY



Pochard - FL