



Kingfishers in Berkshire



The Newbury District Ornithological Club (NDOC) and Reading Ornithological Club (ROC) are organising a survey of Kingfishers in Berkshire to understand the status of the birds and to engage the public in understanding more about birds and local habitats.

The Kingfisher is an 'amber list' bird hence of moderate conservation concern due to its unfavourable conservation status in Europe and while it is frequently observed in Berkshire the status is not well known. It is an easy bird to see and identify and the respective clubs have decided it would be a good subject for a county wide survey involving the public. The very simple survey runs from now to the end of July and participants will receive a free summary of the results later in the year.

The Kingfisher is a striking species and can often be seen around rivers, canals and lakes or reservoirs in the county. The presence of a Kingfisher is often first known by hearing its loud peeping call and then seeing a flash of electric blue over the water as the bird flies low straight and fast to its next perch. When perched the orangey brown breast shows clearly as it sits often watching the water for signs of fish below.

In the light of continuing conservation and environmental pressures in West Berkshire, the NDOC wishes to involve as many of the public as possible in visiting and seeing the many wonderful waterside habitats we have in the Newbury area. Their visits can be made more valuable and enjoyable by watching for these wonderful birds and helping to collect records to inform them of the status of Kingfishers.

Records of Kingfishers can be sent from anywhere in Berkshire and with its many lakes, rivers and the Kennet and Avon canal there is no shortage of habitats where they can be seen. Of particular interest are sightings from the lakes and gravel pits to the east of Newbury at Thatcham and Woolhampton, the Kennet and Avon canal, the River Kennet, Hungerford Marsh and the Pang Valley.

1. The survey needs only simple records of sightings to be provided. These are: date and time, number of birds, location (with a map reference if possible) and any notes about activity seen e.g. at nest hole, feeding young, catching fish etc. Records can be sent by post to Mr C. Robinson, 2 Beckfords, Upper Basildon, Reading RG8 8PB or by email to kingfishersurvey@ndoc.org
2. The NDOC in conjunction with the ROC will publish a report at the end of the survey period that will be provided free to members and to participants in the survey, providing contact details are given.
3. Further details are available on www.theroc.org.uk