
Goose Moul Count in the Wandle Valley 2016



This report aims to identify and analyse the results of the 2016 Wandle Valley Goose Moul survey (18th June – 10th July)

A report by the Living Wandle
Landscape Partnership Scheme

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1.0 Introduction

The Living Wandle Landscape Partnership Scheme created a goose management toolkit in May 2015 for the Wandle Valley. One of the next steps identified was a 'coordinated monitoring of goose numbers' across the Wandle Valley. Canada geese have a moult period every year around June-July; this is the ideal time to count the numbers across the Valley as the birds cannot fly. The LWLPS aimed to coordinate a count of geese in the River Wandle and open spaces across the Wandle Valley to address this next step. The LWLPS highlighted the open spaces that required surveying and asked landowners and local recorders to gather the data to help understand the distribution of geese across the valley. In addition, the LWLPS took the opportunity to count Greylag and Egyptian geese and any other species that may be present, including hybrids.

Dates: The count period was set between 18th June and 10th July 2016

Method: Count of Canada (Priority), Egyptian and Greylag geese up and down the River and across the relevant open spaces in the Wandle Valley. The count excluded the River Thames, however Derek Coleman carried out a count to allow a comparison between previous Thames counts, as it is believed a lot of geese spend their moult period on the Thames. The LWLPS asked for a single count of the three geese species in each location during the three week moult period 18th June – 10th July. The count included the number of adult and juvenile geese at each site.

2.0 Results

Key: CG - Canada geese EG - Egyptian geese GJ - Greylag geese

2.1 Wandle Valley

The count in the Wandle Valley included all green spaces with open water and a count of the length of the River Wandle. The entire length of the river was covered but only sites with geese are listed in the table. Away from the river, Cranmer Green and Three King's Pond were also checked but no geese were present. The counts are divided into adults and juveniles of each species but some large young were within the adult total at Beddington Farmlands.

| | Count Date | CG adults | CG juvs | EG | EG juvs | GJ | GJ juvs | Site Totals |
|----------------------------------|------------|-----------|---------|----|---------|----|---------|-------------|
| <i>Sites on the river</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Waddon Ponds | 20/06/2016 | 50 | | | | 1 | | 51 |
| Beddington Park | 20/06/2016 | 12 | 6 | 2 | | | | 20 |
| Wilderness Island | 26/6/21016 | 3 | 3 | | | | | 6 |
| Morden Hall Park | 22/06/2016 | 7 | 14 | 2 | 3 | | | 26 |
| King George's Park | 24/06/2016 | | | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Totals | | 72 | 23 | 6 | 3 | 1 | | |
| <i>Sites away from the river</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Beddington Farmlands | 27/06/2016 | 76 | 13 | | | 2 | 4 | 95 |
| Mitcham Common | 27/06/2016 | 27 | 25 | 2 | 3 | | | 57 |
| Cannon Hill | 18/06/2016 | | | 3 | | | | 3 |
| Tooting Bec Common | 03/07/2016 | 2 | | | | | | 2 |
| Wandsworth Common | 07/07/2016 | 9 | | 2 | | | | 11 |
| Wimbledon Park Lake | 25/06/2016 | 63 | | 67 | | 6 | 15 | 151 |
| Totals | | 177 | 38 | 74 | 3 | 8 | 19 | |
| Grand totals | | 249 | 61 | 80 | 6 | 9 | 19 | 424 |

A count of 230 roosting Canada geese was made at Beddington Farmlands on 27th July 2016 when birds had finished their moult.

Appended is a map that gives a visual analysis of the data gathered, identifying the goose moult hot spots. This map has been created by GiGL and can be sought from the Wandle Landscape and Biodiversity group.

2.2 River Thames

A count was conducted on the Thames via public boat, between Westminster Pier and Hampton Court Bridge on 4th July 2016. The totals include juveniles.

| | CG | EG | GJ | Total |
|--------|-----|-----|----|-------|
| Thames | 828 | 148 | 18 | 994 |

The same count in 2000 between Putney Bridge and Hampton Court counted a total of 943, only slightly less than the 2016 count. A previous study shows that the Thames is clearly a favourable moult location for the three species of goose - H Baker and D Coleman (2000). *Status of the Canada goose, Greylag goose and other naturalised geese in Greater London, 2000*. London Bird Report 2000 pages 199-2005.

2.3 Further Afield

We collected data for Battersea Park and Clapham Common as although they are not in the Wandle Valley; these open spaces have expanses of open water where there are goose populations present throughout the year.

| | Count Date | CG adults | CG juvs | EG | EG juvs | GJ | GJ juvs |
|----------------|------------|-----------|---------|----|---------|----|---------|
| Battersea Park | 07/07/2016 | | | 3 | | | |
| Clapham Common | 04/07/2016 | 5 | 4 | 3 | | | |

3.0 Discussion

3.1 Canada geese

A total of 310 Canada geese were counted with 95 on the river and 215 away from the river respectively. The counts for the Wandle Valley show that there are three main moulting sites: Beddington Farmlands, Waddon Ponds and Wimbledon Park Lake. The larger water bodies had higher counts probably because they afforded more protection so the river was not the main moulting site. Waddon Ponds was the exception, perhaps supplementary feeding is important to retaining birds during the moult period. Other sites tended to have both adults and juveniles, where adults did not move to the main moulting sites because their young still could not fly. The high count on the Thames and roosting at Beddington Farmlands after the moult suggest that many geese leave the Wandle Valley to moult.

3.2 Egyptian geese

A total of 86 Egyptian geese were counted with 67 being at Wimbledon Park Lake and juveniles at Morden Hall Park and Mitcham Common. A national survey of naturalised geese in 2000 found just 13 geese in Greater London. There has been a large increase in Egyptian goose populations since 2000, control of their numbers needs to be carried out in order to prevent the species becoming as widespread as the Canada goose.

3.3 Greylag geese

A total of 28 Greylag geese were counted with juveniles at Wimbledon Park Lake and Beddington Farmlands; at the latter, it was the first year they had bred. A national survey of naturalised geese in 2000 found 363 geese in Greater London. Within the Wandle Valley, they do not seem to be increasing as fast as Egyptian geese, although more juvenile Greylag were counted than Egyptian geese.

4.0 Recommendations

Counts during the moult period may not be very informative as many birds leave the Wandle Valley to moult. Counts at other times may be more informative but require a much greater intensity of effort.

- A breeding survey is the highest priority identified. Canada geese do not breed until three years old so there is always a large non-breeding component to the population.
- A count during mid-winter, preferably at roost sites, would also be a valuable.
- Breeding, moulting and wintering counts spanning several years would give a better insight into goose distribution in the Valley.
- It is recommended that a breeding survey be attempted in the near future. The moult counts should be repeated every 3 -5 years. Once the viability of breeding/wintering counts has been established then they could also be repeated.

5.0 Thanks

The goose count would not have been possible without the support of the counters.

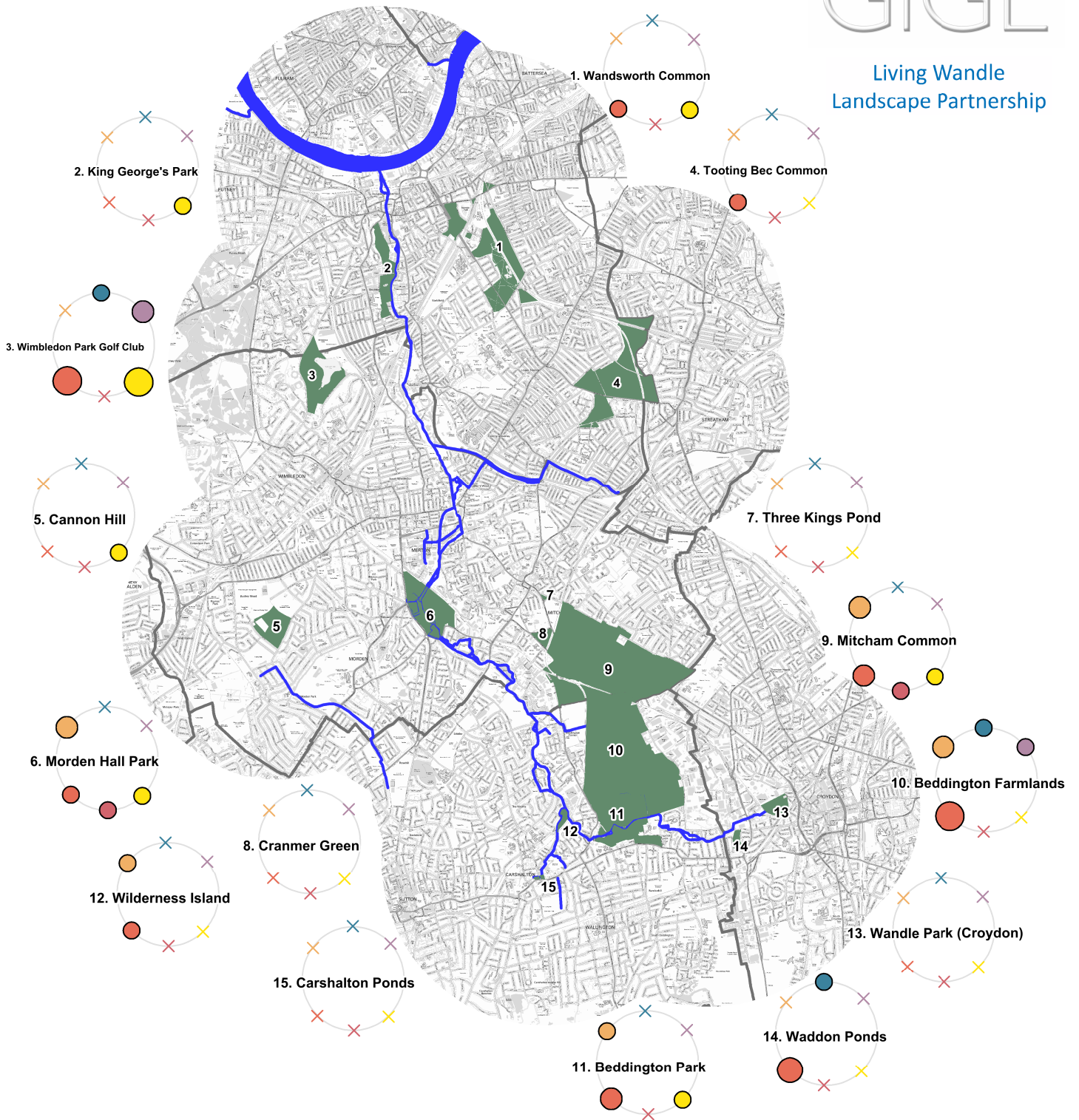
Thanks to: Dave Dawson, Ian Kitching, Kevin Freed, Martin Boyle & Paul Moorhouse. Special thanks to Derek Coleman for all his efforts and invaluable input to this project.

This report was put together by Louise Crothall on behalf of the Living Wandle Landscape Partnership Scheme.

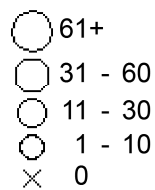
Wandle Valley Goose Count 2016

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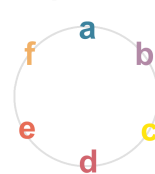
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Number of Individuals



Species



a = Greylag Goose (adult)
 b = Greylag Goose (juvenile)
 c = Egyptian Goose (adult)
 d = Egyptian Goose (juvenile)
 e = Canada Goose (adult)
 f = Canada Goose (juvenile)

Scale 1:90000

Produced by Greenspace

Information for Greater London CIC

www.gigl.org.uk

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