



Birding Bird Survey

Cremorne Gardens, Kensington

by David Darrell-Lambert, Bird Brain UK
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Bird Brain UK

Experts in the field



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<i>Breeding Bird Survey at Cremorne Gardens from February to May 2009</i>	3
<i>Method</i>	3
<i>Weather</i>	3
<i>Habitat</i>	4
<i>Results</i>	5
<i>Conclusion</i>	7
<i>Appendix 1 – Species seen on or over the site and their status in this country</i>	10
<i>Appendix 2 - List of all species seen and their activity at the site</i>	12
<i>Appendix 3 - Cremorne Garden map for 22 February 2009</i>	14
<i>Appendix 4 - Avondale, Kensington map for 27 March 2009</i>	15
<i>Appendix 5 - Avondale, Kensington map for 4 May 2009</i>	16
<i>Appendix 6 - Avondale, Kensington map for 25 May 2009</i>	17
<i>Appendix 7 - Bird species key</i>	18
<i>Appendix 8 - Bird behaviour key</i>	19



Breeding Bird Survey at Cremorne Gardens from February to May 2009

Method

Four visits were made in February, March and May 2009 starting either half an hour before or after dawn and lasting for thirty minutes. The whole of the site was walked, stopping to listen for birds holding territory and looking for any other signs of breeding activity. All birds were mapped indicating where the territories were.

Weather

Visit	Date	Duration	Weather conditions	Survey conditions
1	22 February 2009	06:55 to 07:29 hrs	10c, northwest wind up to 10 kph and overcast	Very good
2	27 March 2009	05:10 to 05:52 hrs	4 to 5c, west up to 15 kph and 50:50 cloud cover	Good
3	4 May 2009	06:29 to 07:03 hrs	9c, no wind and overcast	Excellent
4	25 May 2009	06:24 to 07:11 hrs	16c, southeast wind up to 11 kph and 50:50 cloud cover	Very good



Habitat

Area	Habitat	Potential for birds
East section	The majority of this area is concrete with a few beds and a jetty that extends into the River Thames.	The beds provide some sources of food and cover but is limited by its small size. The jetty provides an excellent view of River Thames but it is of little attraction to birds.
West section	Grass covers ninety percent of the site. There are some trees along the north and south edges, which stand in beds. The northeast corner is dominated by a wildflower meadow.	The rich meadow proves excellent habitat for seed feeding species and invertebrates to thrive on. The trees also provide cover and food, but again it is limited by the site of the site.



Results

Sunday 22 February 2009

Twenty-two species of bird were recorded, seven of these were considered to be breeding. These were Woodpigeon (1), Common Magpie (1), Winter Wren (1), Eurasian Blackbird (1), European Robin (1), European Greenfinch (1) and European Goldfinch (2). The numbers in brackets represent the total number of breeding pairs calculated.

Fifteen other species were recorded but were not considered to be breeding: three Feral Pigeons flew over the site, one Carrion Crow flew over the site, House Sparrows were heard calling from the bushes on the south side of the River Thames and one Dunnock was heard singing from the south side of the River Thames. In addition to the above the following species were recorded either on or flying along the River Thames: two Greylag Geese, five Canada Goose, thirty-three Mallards, one Great Crested Grebe, fifty-five Great Cormorants, five Common Moorhens, five Common Gulls, two Great Black-backed Gulls, one Western Lesser Black-backed Gull, approximately two hundred Common Black-headed Gulls and one Pied Wagtail.

House Sparrows could be heard calling from the bushes on the opposite side of the River Thames, these are on the Red List, which are species that are either globally threatened or have suffered serious decline. There was no indication that they crossed the river into Cremorne Gardens.

Observations took place between - 06:55 to 07:29 hr

Friday 27 March 2009

Twenty-three species of bird were recorded, seven of these were considered to be breeding: Gadwall (1), Common Moorhen (1), Blue Tit (1), Winter Wren (1), Eurasian Blackbird (2), Dunnock (1) and European Greenfinch (1).

Sixteen other species were recorded but were not considered to be breeding: one Woodpigeon flew over the site, a pair of Carrion Crows were nesting north of the site, one Great Tit was heard calling to the north of the site, ten European Starlings flew over the site, one European Robin was heard singing to the south of the site, one Pied Wagtail was seen flying over the site and two European Goldfinch were seen in the trees along Lots Road. In addition to the above, the following species were recorded either on or flying along the River Thames: one Greylag Geese, two Canada Geese, four Egyptian Geese, ten Mallards, five Great Cormorants, two Herring Gulls, three Western Lesser Black-backed Gulls and one Grey Wagtail.

The two immature Herring Gulls (which were not mature enough to breed) were also seen. This species breeds predominantly in London on the roofs of tall buildings, which are not present on the site. The ten European Starlings seen flying over the site showed no interest in the site and therefore neither species, which are both on the Red List were considered to be breeding or near the site.

Observations took place between - 05:10 to 05:52 hrs

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Monday 4 May 2009

Nineteen species of bird were recorded, six of these were considered to be breeding. These were Winter Wren (1), Eurasian Blackbird (1), European Robin (1), Dunnock (1), European Greenfinch (2) and European Goldfinch (2).

Thirteen other species were recorded but were not considered to be breeding: ten Feral Pigeons were present on the building due south of the site, two Rose-ringed Parakeets were disturbed from the trees in the southwest corner of the site and one Pied Wagtail was seen flying over the site. In addition to the above, the following species were recorded either on or flying along the River Thames: two Greylag Geese, two Mute Swans, seven Gadwall, two Mallard, eight Tufted Duck, two Grey Herons, two Great Cormorants, two Common Moorhens, two Common Coots and ten Herring Gulls.

The ten Herring Gulls observed were all immature birds which do not breed until they reach adult plumage. They were not considered to be breeding on or near the site.

Observations took place between - 06:29 to 07:03 hrs

Monday 25 May 2009

Twenty five species of bird were recorded, five of these were considered to be breeding. These were Winter Wren (1), Eurasian Blackbird (1), Dunnock (1), European Greenfinch (1) and European Goldfinch (1).

Twenty other species were recorded but were not considered to be breeding: one Feral Pigeon flew over the site, one Woodpigeon flew over the site, one Carrion Crow was singing on the site but was thought to be part of the pair nesting to the north of the site, three Northern House Martins were seen flying over the site and one adult male Pied Wagtail was seen collecting food from the grass on the site before flying. This indicates he was nesting elsewhere and was carrying food to his nest site. Also seen was a female Chaffinch which was calling just north of the site, no other records of this species was made indicating it bred nearby but not on the site. In addition to the above, the following species were recorded either on or flying along the River Thames: one Greylag Geese, two Canada Geese, one Mute Swan, one Gadwall, five Mallards, two Tufted Ducks, three Great Cormorants, one Grey Heron, one Common Moorhen, one Common Coot, fifteen Herring Gulls, one Western Lesser Black-backed Gull, eleven Common Black-headed Gulls and one Grey Wagtail.

The site does not hold any suitable habitat for Herring Gulls to breed, therefore the fifteen birds present along the River Thames were not considered to be breeding.

Observations took place between - 06:24 to 07:11 hrs



Conclusion

Breeding Species

The surveys revealed eight species of bird which, were proven to be breeding on the site, they are listed below with the evidence: -

- Woodpigeon (1) – singing bird holding territory
- Blue Tit (1) – singing bird holding territory
- Winter Wren (1) – singing bird holding territory
- Eurasian Blackbird (1) – singing bird holding territory and a recently fledged juvenile
- European Robin (1) – singing bird holding territory
- Dunnock (1) – singing bird holding territory and a recently fledged juvenile
- European Greenfinch (2) – singing bird holding territory
- European Goldfinch (2) – singing bird holding territory

Four species of bird were present on the site and considered to be breeding although there was no concrete evidence to confirm this:-

- Gadwall (1) – a single male was present on the foreshore of the River Thames during the survey on 27th March. During other visits up to seven birds were present along the River Thames and it is possible a female Gadwall could nest in the dense cover found on the site.
- Common Moorhen (1) – several birds were present along the foreshore of the River Thames, they were often noted displaying indicating they were breeding in the vicinity. There was no confirmed observations to suggest they were breeding on the site but it was unclear where along this tidal section of the river they could be breeding. It was concluded they were breeding away from the waters edge in this area and hence could be breeding in the park. They normally nest along the waters edge but with the tidal river this would be impossible so they would need to nest away from the shore line to protect their nest from flooding.
- Rose-ringed Parakeet (1) – a pair of bird were present in the gardens on 4th May. Although no other sightings were made of this species, there is just enough habitat for a single pair to breed here.
- Common Magpie (1) – a pair were present during the survey on 22nd February, they were a bonded pair and appeared to be settling down to breed on the site. Future visits to the site did not relocate the pair and it is possible the pair of Carrion Crows breeding nearby saw these birds off out of their territory.

Other birds

Nine more species of bird were recorded and were not considered to be breeding these were:-

- Feral Pigeon – several were present on the building to the south of the site and were thought to be breeding there but on the site surveyed.
- Carrion Crow (1) – a male was holding territory in the gardens on 25th May 2009. This was possibly the pair that bred just north of the site along Cremorne Road. It is thought that a pair would be unlikely



to breed on the site as they prefer taller trees such as the London Planetrees that were used along Cremorne Road. This is the only species that frequently uses these trees to nest in

- Great Tit – heard calling to the north of the site on 27th March and was not thought to be breeding on or near the site.
- Northern House Martin – seen flying over the site on 25th May and were thought to be breeding locally but no nest sites were located nearby.
- European Starlings – seen flying over the site, no territorial behaviour was noted on or near the site.
- House Sparrows – heard calling from the bushes on the opposite side of the River Thames. There was no evidence to suggest this species used the site.
- Grey Wagtail – a female was located feeding on the foreshore of the River Thames on 25th May, this was likely to be a local breeding bird collecting food for its young. The habitat along the foreshore plus the buildings in the gardens are an ideal habitat for a pair of Grey Wagtails but no further observations were made to indicate breeding.
- Pied Wagtail – an adult male was seen collecting food from the grass on the site, this indicates breeding locally but not on the site itself.
- Chaffinch – a female was calling from the trees to the north of the site but no males were observed or heard calling. It is possible that a pair bred just north of the site but this is unlikely considering the lack of other records during the survey.

The following fifteen species were seen flying along or feeding on the River Thames and showed no interest in the site: Greylag Goose, Canada Geese, Mute Swan, Egyptian Geese, Mallard, Tufted Duck, Great Crested Grebe, Grey Heron, Great Cormorant, Common Coot, Common Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Western Lesser Black-backed Gull and Common Black-headed Gull

Recommendations

The site is the smallest in the group but has an excellent meadow which attracts an abundance of insects to it. This habitat also provides seeds and two adult Goldfinch were observed feeding on them. With what land is available some improvements can be made. Using the suggestions below would improve the potential for birds to use the site.

- **Habitat Improvement** - the site could be improved by planting a native hedgerow with either blackthorn or hawthorn, the plants create thick cover for nesting birds and attract healthy populations of insects. During the autumn and winter berries are also present which are an important food source for birds. Additional planting of insect attracting plants such as buddleja or honey suckle should also be considered. Non native plants can also be used such as pyracantha which also produces berries during the autumn. I would also recommend extending the meadow in the eastern corner.
- **Food Sources** - feeders are being used on the site but were not kept fully stocked. The variety of food should be adjusted to allow for the presence of European Goldfinch e.g. niger seed but also meal worms. A source of fresh water should also be provided with a bird bath which is kept full and frost free throughout the year.
- **Nestboxes** - with limited sites for breeding, nestboxes can provide safe sites for species to breed in. Species such as Blue Tit, Winter Wren, European Starling, European Robin and Pied Wagtail would all benefit from such habitat. The following nestboxes should be used for these species. I would also suggest House Sparrow nestboxes to encourage this species to the site.

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Nestbox type	Species
Small hole-entrance	Blue Tit and Great Tit
Double small hole-entrance	House Sparrow
Medium hole-entrance	European Starling
Small open-fronted	European Robin, Winter Wren and Pied Wagtail



Appendix 1 – Species seen on or over the site and their status in this country

Red List = species that are either globally threatened or have suffered serious decline.

Amber List = Moderate decline in population size and range.

Green List = No identified threat to the population's status.

Breeding Species	Non-Breeding Species
	Herring Gull - Red list
	European Starling - Red list
	House Sparrow - Red list
Dunnock - Amber list	Greylag Goose - Amber list
Gadwall - Amber list	Mallard - Amber list
	Tufted Duck - Amber list
	Common Gull - Amber list
	Great Black-backed Gull - Amber list
	Western Lesser Black-backed Gull - Amber list
	Common Black-headed Gull - Amber list
	Northern House Martin - Amber list
	Grey Wagtail - Amber list
Blue Tit - Green list	Mute Swan - Green list
Common Magpie - Green list	Great Crested Grebe - Green list
Common Moorhen - Green list	Grey Heron - Green list

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Breeding Species	Non-Breeding Species
Eurasian Blackbird - Green list	Great Cormorant - Green list
European Goldfinch - Green list	Common Coot - Green list
European Greenfinch - Green list	Carrion Crow - Green list
European Robin - Green list	Feral Pigeon - Green list
Winter Wren - Green list	Great Tit - Green list
Woodpigeon - Green list	Pied Wagtail - Green list
	Chaffinch - Green list
Rose-ringed Parakeet - Introduced	Canada Goose - Introduced
	Egyptian Goose - Introduced



Appendix 2 - List of all species seen and their activity at the site

Species (latin name)	Note
Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>)	Recorded along the River Thames
Canada Goose (<i>Branta canadensis</i>)	Recorded along the River Thames
Mute Swan (<i>Cygnus olor</i>)	Recorded along the River Thames
Egyptian Goose (<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>)	Recorded along the River Thames
Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera strepera</i>)	Breeding species
Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)	Recorded along the River Thames
Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>)	Recorded along the River Thames
Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>)	Recorded along the River Thames
Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>)	Recorded along the River Thames
Great Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>)	Recorded along the River Thames
Common Moorhen (<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>)	Breeding species
Common Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>)	Recorded along the River Thames
Common Gull (<i>Larus canus canus</i>)	Recorded along the River Thames
Great Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus marinus</i>)	Recorded along the River Thames
Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>)	Recorded along the River Thames
Western Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus graellsii</i>)	Recorded along the River Thames
Common Black-headed Gull (<i>Larus ridibundus</i>)	Recorded along the River Thames
Feral Pigeon (<i>Columba livia 'feral'</i>)	Recorded only flying over
Woodpigeon (<i>Columba palumbus</i>)	Breeding species
Rose-ringed Parakeet (<i>Psittacula krameri</i>)	Breeding species
Common Magpie (<i>Pica pica</i>)	Recorded only flying over

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Species (latin name)	Note
Carrion Crow (<i>Corvus corone</i>)	Recorded only flying over
Great Tit (<i>Parus major</i>)	Heard in neighbouring area
Blue Tit (<i>Parus caeruleus</i>)	Breeding species
Northern House Martin (<i>Delichon urbicum</i>)	Recorded only flying over
Winter Wren (<i>Troglodytes troglodytes hiemalis</i>)	Breeding species
European Starling (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>)	Recorded only flying over
Eurasian Blackbird (<i>Turdus merula</i>)	Breeding species
European Robin (<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>)	Breeding species
House Sparrow (<i>Passer domesticus</i>)	Heard in neighbouring area
Dunnock (<i>Prunella modularis</i>)	Breeding species
Grey Wagtail (<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>)	Present but not breeding
Pied Wagtail (<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>)	Present but not breeding
Chaffinch (<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>)	Present but not breeding
European Greenfinch (<i>Carduelis chloris</i>)	Breeding species
European Goldfinch (<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>)	Breeding species

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Appendix 3 - Cremorne Gardens map for 22 February 2009



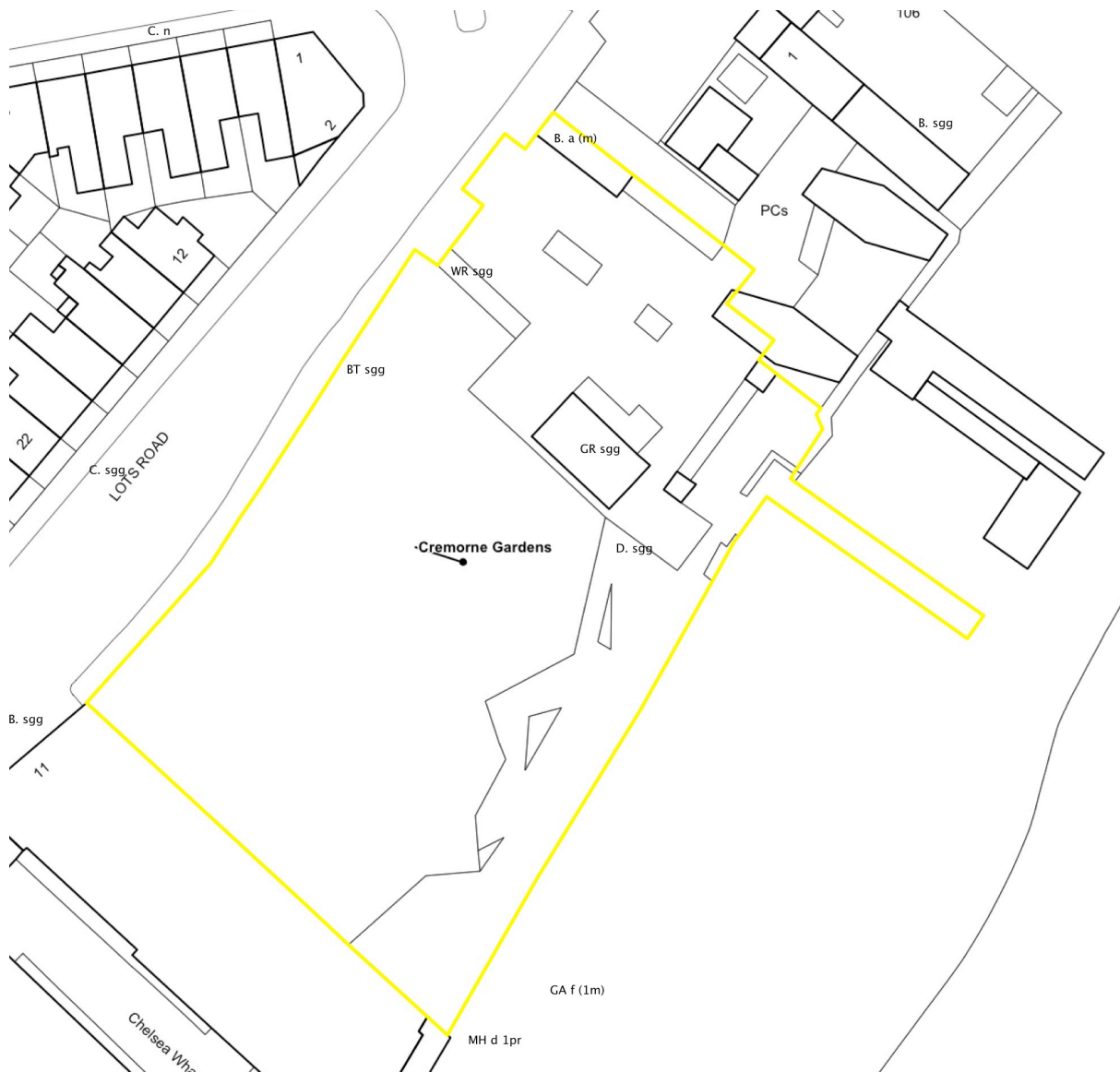
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Appendix 4 - Cremorne Gardens map for 27 March 2009



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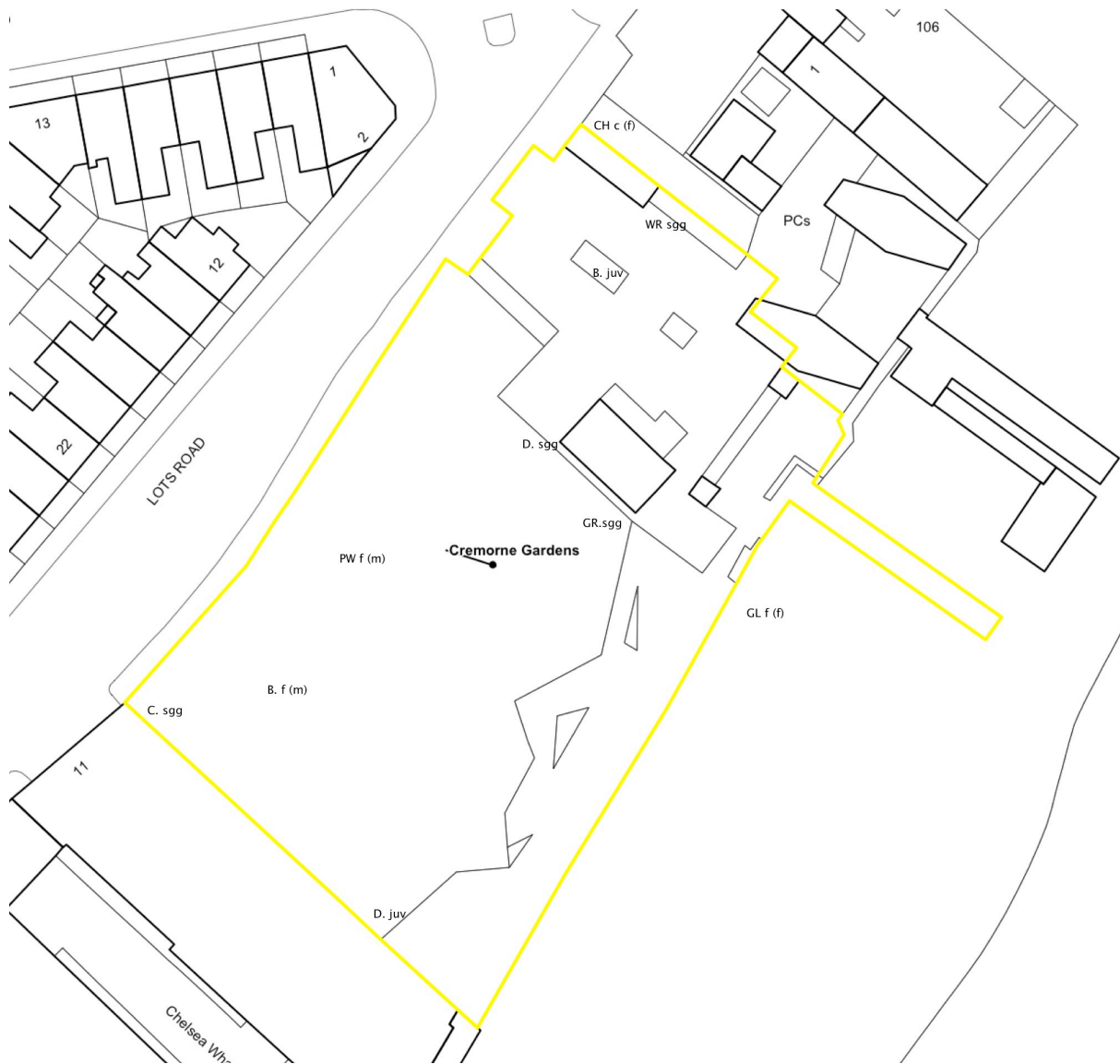
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Appendix 5 - Cremorne Gardens map for 4 May 2009





Appendix 6 - Cremorne Gardens map for 25 May 2009





Appendix 7 - Bird species key

Keys for maps on pages 15 to 18

Species	Code
Gadwall	GA
Moorhen	MH
Woodpigeon	WP
Rose-ringed Parakeet	RI
Common Magpie	MG
Carrion Crow	C.
Blue Tit	BT
Winter Wren	WR
Eurasian Blackbird	B.
European Robin	R.
Dunnock	D.
Pied Wagtail	PW
Grey Wagtail	GL
Chaffinch	CH
European Greenfinch	GR
European Goldfinch	GO

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Appendix 8 - Bird behaviour key

Keys for maps on pages 15 to 18

Behaviour	Code
Alarm	a
Call	c
Carrying food	cf
Displaying	d
Feeding	f
Female	(f)
Juvenile	juv
Male	(m)
Nest	n
Pair	pr
Singing	sgg

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