

BirdLife Cyprus CBMS

INSTRUCTIONS

Thank you for volunteering for the Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (CBMS) – a volunteer based monitoring scheme to keep track of breeding bird populations in Cyprus. The survey compares standardised annual counts from sites in randomly selected 1-km squares to measure changes in populations of widespread breeding birds.

The CBMS is organised by BirdLife Cyprus who will assign survey sites to volunteers and answer any queries about the survey. For more information please contact the survey organiser – Monitoring & Research Coordinator Christina Ieronymidou.

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Tel: +357-22-455072

www.birdlifecyprus.org

YOUR SITE

The survey organiser will give you the location of your site (a 1km x 1km square), **please survey the site that is assigned to you** as we cannot use data from other (non-CBMS) sites. Please remember that records from sites containing only a few species or small numbers of birds are just as valuable as those from sites with a lot of species or birds. If it's not possible to survey your site for any reason (access problems, construction etc) please contact the survey organiser. The most valuable information comes from sites that are surveyed over a number of years, preferably by the same person. This consistency allows bird numbers to be compared more reliably. We hope therefore that when you take on survey sites you consider this to be a long-term commitment.

THE FIELD RECORDING FORM

Please use the standard CBMS Field Recording Form to record your survey observations **in the field**. The form is appended below and is also available to download from the BirdLife Cyprus website (www.birdlifecyprus.org) or from the survey organiser. Make sure you **write your full name and the site name & code** (provided by the survey organiser) on the form when you do your survey.

YOUR SURVEY ROUTE - A LINE TRANSECT

When you visit the site for the first time, you need to plan a route for the survey. The ideal route is through the middle of the 1-km square using an existing linear feature such as a dirt track. However, this ideal situation rarely occurs in the field and you will have to adapt your route accordingly. The transect should be around 1km in length (minimum length is 500m) and the route does not have to be a straight line (but should not loop back on itself). **Routes should be easy to follow** – recording birds is difficult when also fighting with vegetation or climbing over walls!

For future reference, all survey routes will be recorded as GPS 'tracks' and stored in both electronic and paper form by BirdLife Cyprus. The survey organiser will coordinate with you to arrange for this recording of new survey routes.

Again **consistency is important** and the same route should be used for all visits to the site. When surveying in future years, the route should not change unless absolutely necessary – please consult the survey organiser if your route has to be changed for some reason. Any unusual features or problems with your route can be recorded in the notes on site/transect route box.

WHEN TO VISIT

Each site should be surveyed twice each year – one ‘Early’ season visit and one ‘Late’ season visit. This will ensure that both resident breeding species and late-arriving migrant breeding species are covered effectively by the survey.

The ‘early’ visit should be between mid-March and end April, but earlier in March (March 1st – 14th) is OK if your diary is too full to allow a later visit. Delaying the early season visit until after mid-March avoids recording too many winter visitors or migrant non-breeding birds.

The ‘Late’ visit should be between May 1st and end June.

The Early and Late CBMS visits should be at least one week apart (ideally two weeks apart if possible). Surveys should be done in the morning, in the 4 hours after sunrise. This timing is to avoid the period of reduced bird activity from late morning onwards. ***Always record the date of the visit and the start and end time of your transect on the Field Recording Form.***

If for any reason you will not be able to complete one or both of your visits to a site in a given year please inform the survey organiser as soon as possible.

If possible, visit the site before your early survey to check the area and become familiar with both the site and bird species present. You can also practice distance estimation on this preparatory visit (see DISTANCE BANDS below). This visit does not count as one of the two survey visits.

SURVEY TIMETABLE

Early March	Optional visit to get to know your site and the birds
Mid-March – April	Early CBMS visit
May – June	Late CBMS visit
June – July	Return data to BirdLife Cyprus

WEATHER

Please ***do not survey birds in poor weather*** - persistent heavy rain, very poor visibility or strong wind. Weather conditions should be recorded on the form in the relevant box using the codes below, one code for each of the listed categories. If during your survey visit conditions change, please select the single category that best represents the overall conditions.

Code	Cloud	Wind	Rain	Visibility	Temperature
1	0 -33%	Calm	None	Good	Cool
2	33 – 66%	Light	Drizzle	Moderate	Warm
3	66 – 100%	Windy	Showers	Poor	Hot

RECORDING BIRDS

The method used for the CBMS is a **simple line-transect survey**. Using your Field Recording Form write down **all the birds you see or hear** as you walk along your transect route at a **slow, steady pace**. A 1km transect should take 40-60 minutes to complete. **Birds are recorded in distance bands** on either side of your transect line (see DISTANCE BANDS below). Pause to scan for birds or identify a bird, but avoid stopping for long periods or wasting too much time trying to identify a bird that simply refuses to 'show'. The trick is to try to keep to a steady pace, to avoid birds flying ahead of you along the transect, as this increases the risk of counting the same individual bird twice ('double-counting'). Birds will of course move during the survey, so please use your judgement to decide which individual birds you may have already recorded. A cautious approach is best, so if you are not sure the bird a 'new' individual, don't record it (it is better to under-estimate rather than over-estimate bird numbers).

- Record **all birds seen, whether flying perched or on the ground and also all birds that are only heard. Note the species and the number of individuals, where they are first detected** (see DISTANCE BANDS below).
- Record all birds on or to either side of your transect line. Don't record birds that are behind you, or beyond the end of the transect as you finish.
- Record the **sex and/or age** of the birds where possible. Sex can be indicated using the appropriate symbols (♂ for male or ♀ for female) or 'm' for male and 'f' for female, and age by 'juv' for juvenile birds.
- Any **breeding evidence** (such as birds carrying food or nesting material) is recorded in the additional notes box at the bottom of page 2 of the recording form.
- **Birds heard but not seen**. If you identify a bird by song or call but don't see the bird please add an 'h' next to this record. If you subsequently see the same individual bird (and you are sure it is the same individual) then underline the specific entry to indicate it is no longer a 'heard only' record. *For example if you hear a Cyprus Warbler write 'Cyprus warbler – h', if you then see the bird it would become 'Cyprus warbler – h'.*
- If you are unsure of a species then please record as best you can – e.g. warbler sp. or Cyprus/Sardinian warbler. If you subsequently identify the species you can correct the specific entry accordingly.
- Flocks and family groups should be recorded with an estimate of numbers. In mixed flocks of adults and juveniles give your best estimate of how many adults were present. **Please indicate flocks by writing 'fl' next to the species name and for family group use 'fg'**. For example a flock of nine Woodpigeon would be noted as 'woodpigeon – 9 fl' and a pair of Greenfinch with three young birds would be recorded as 'greenfinch – 5 fg'.
- **Colony counts**: birds nesting in colonies in the square (e.g. House Martins, Spanish Sparrows) are not properly monitored using transect counts, so if possible just count or estimate the number of adult birds in any colony you come across. This information can be recorded in the 'additional notes' box at the end of the form. Note where the colony was in the relevant distance band column, recording the species and adding a 'C' notation for 'colony'. Colony counts are 'separate' data from your transect counts, but of course birds from a colony may be seen along the transect and should be recorded in the standard manner.
- At the end of the transect the survey is finished. **Do not record birds beyond the end of the transect or when walking back to the starting point** - any new species or interesting observations after the transect is ended should be recorded in the additional notes box and not as part of the survey.

DISTANCE BANDS

Using the columns set out in the recording form, record birds in one of the following distance bands, according to ***where they are when first detected*** (ignore where they move to subsequently):

1. ***Within 25 metres*** either side (right or left) of the transect line.
2. ***Between 25 and 100 metres*** either side of the transect line.
3. ***More than 100 metres*** either side of the transect line. This includes even distant birds up to about 250m away.
4. ***Flying birds***. Birds flying overhead that are judged to be 'passing through' and not actually using the site (e.g. for hunting) are considered 'overflying' birds and should be recorded in the middle, ***overflying***, column on the form. If, however, a flying bird is deemed to be using the site (i.e. not 'overflying') it should be recorded in the band it was first seen in, with a ↗ symbol to indicate the bird was in flight. For example, hovering kestrels, larks in display flight and feeding swallows are considered to be 'using' the site, whereas a hooded crow or woodpigeon flying over you at a great height is probably not using the site, but just moving through and on to another area. Use your judgement to decide which birds are 'using' the site but try to be consistent in your choices.

Distances are estimated at right angles to the transect line. So, for example, a bird seen 200m ahead of you but within 25m of the transect line should be recorded in the first distance band (0 – 25m). The form does not have to be an accurate map of bird locations but recording birds on the left or right depending on which side of the transect route you first detect them will help you keep track of individuals and avoid 'double counting'.

CODES FOR RECORDING BREEDING EVIDENCE

Breeding evidence is recorded in the separate '*Breeding Evidence*' table on page 2 of the recording form, on the basis of the codes shown immediately below. Add each new species identified into this second table as you progress along your transect, adding the appropriate breeding evidence code. Each species should be entered only once in the breeding evidence table, adding codes for any further breeding evidence seen next to the species as you progress along the transect. For example, you might enter a Greenfinch in the '*Breeding Evidence*' table with an '**H**' for suitable nesting habitat and then add an '**FF**' next to the '**H**' when, further along the same transect, you see a Greenfinch carrying a caterpillar.

Notes

1. All codes for 'Possible', 'Probable' and 'Confirmed' breeding must relate to individuals in potentially suitable nesting habitat.
2. The code '**T**' for 'territory' should only be used if the territorial behaviour is observed on at least two occasions on different days in the same place or from many individuals on the same day.

NON-BREEDING	PROBABLE BREEDING	CONFIRMED BREEDING
M - Migrant	P - Pair in suitable nesting habitat in breeding season	DD - Distraction Display or injury-feigning
U - SUMmering	T - Permanent Territory presumed through territorial behaviour (song etc.)	UN - Used Nest or eggshells found (occupied or laid within period of survey)
F - OverFlying	D - Courtship and Display	FL - Recently FLedged young (nidicolous species) or downy young (nidifugous species)
POSSIBLE BREEDING	N - Visiting probable Nest site	ON - Adults entering or leaving nest-site indicating Occupied Nest or adult seen incubating
H - Observed in suitable nesting Habitat in breeding season	A - Agitated behaviour or anxiety calls from adults	
S - Singing male present in breeding season	B - Nest Building or excavating of nest-hole	FF - Adults carrying Faecal sac or Food for young
		NE - Nest containing Eggs
		NY - Nest with Young seen or heard

RETURN OF DATA

All completed forms should be returned to the survey organiser soon after all your site visits are completed.

You may want to make a neat copy of your surveys before returning them to the survey organiser – please remember to transfer all visit information (date, times etc) from your Field Recording Forms and if possible make the neat copy soon after each visit when it is still fresh in your mind.

If possible, please also use the standard **Excel template** file provided by the survey coordinator to enter up all your survey data electronically and then email this to the coordinator.

If you have any queries please contact the survey organiser:

Christina Ieronymidou, Monitoring & Research Coordinator, BirdLife Cyprus, PO Box 12026, Nicosia 2340
Tel: (+357) 22 455 072, Fax: (+357) 22 455 073,
Email: christina.ieronymidou@birdlifecyprus.org.cy

Finally, thanks for volunteering for the CBMS, and we hope that you enjoy taking part in the survey!

Data gathered by volunteers under BirdLife Cyprus recording schemes, while remaining the property of the person undertaking the survey, can be used by BirdLife Cyprus for the purpose of relevant reports and can be added to the BirdLife Cyprus database of bird records to be used for conservation purposes and may be provided to third parties, always under the terms & conditions of the BirdLife Cyprus data provision and access policy.



BirdLife Cyprus CBMS Survey form

Recorder(s)		Site name & code (e.g. T619)	
Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	/ /	Early (E) or Late (L) Visit	
Weather Codes <i>1, 2 or 3</i> (see page 3)	Cloud Wind Rain — — —	Transect Start Time (hh:mm)	:
	Visibility Temp	Transect End Time (hh:mm)	:

> 100m	25–100m	0-25m	OVERFLYING	0-25m	25-100m	> 100m
			<u>Start</u>			

Other Notes for survey:**Survey Date:****Transect code:****Notes on recording birds in main form**

Record sex and age ('Juv') of birds where possible.	Indicate flocks (fl) and family groups (fg)
Use ' h ' to denote a bird identified only by song/call.	Record birds as Overflying (in middle column) only if it is clear they are NOT using the site.
Record any breeding evidence and denote colonies with a 'c'.	Indicate flying birds using an arrow ↗
Do not record birds beyond the end of the transect or when walking back to the start as part of the survey (you can record such additional information in the 'other notes' box instead)	

WEATHER CODES

Code	Cloud	Wind	Rain	Visibility	Temperature
1	0 -33%	Calm	None	Good	Cool
2	33 – 66%	Light	Drizzle	Moderate	Warm
3	66 – 100%	Windy	Showers	Poor	Hot

Please return to: Christina Ieronymidou, Monitoring & Research Coordinator, BirdLife Cyprus, PO Box 28076, Nicosia 2090 Email: christina.ieronymidou@birdlifecyprus.org.cy

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