

Birds of Conservation Concern

What is BoCC4?

Often referred to as the “UK Red List of Birds”, Birds of Conservation Concern 4 (BoCC4) is the fourth review and update to the UK status list of birds and has been in use since its publication in December 2015. This list categorizes 244 breeding, passage and wintering birds into three categories: red, amber and green. The list was compiled and reviewed by a range of experts from various NGOs, including the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), as well as the Governmental advisors the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC).

What determines the bird’s classification?

The birds are assigned to red, amber or green status based on a variety of criteria, including their population status at global levels, European levels, as well as their status within the British Isles. The classification also takes into account historical trends in population, expanding and contracting ranges, species rarity and the international importance of the species. As of the fourth review, the BoCC list has also been updated to exclude several species from the list, including three former breeding species.

What does BoCC4 tell us?

Unfortunately, the fourth review of BoCC shows us that more and more species are coming under threat, with 19 species being added to the red list for the first time, and one species, the Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) being returned to the red list from its previous position in the Amber list. This has been due mainly to evidence from breeding bird monitoring schemes from the BTO, RSPB and JNCC showing severe declines in breeding populations.

BoCC4 – Birds of Petersfield Heath Pond

As seen on the Water Birds identification poster located on the heath, Petersfield heath pond houses a variety of green, amber and red listed wildfowl and wetland birds. The poster shows the most commonly found and recognisable birds on the pond, including 10 green listed wetland birds, 15 amber listed birds, 2 red listed wetland birds (Pochard and Herring Gull), as well as an additional 4 introduced species which do not qualify under BoCC4. The Pochard has become red listed under the BoCC4 review due to the fact that the species is threatened globally, having been identified as vulnerable under the IUCN due to a

decreasing population trend globally, with the European populations having declined by 30-49% in just under 23 years. The Herring Gull is also red listed due to a decreasing population trend, both nationally and globally, with the national wintering population declining and the Herring Gull being flagged as “Least concern” by the IUCN red list of threatened species.

Further Reading

Further information regarding Birds of Conservation Concern 4, can be found at the following:

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/uk-conservation-status-explained/>

<https://www.bto.org/our-science/publications/psob>

Further reading on the IUCN red list of threated species can be found at:

<https://www.iucnredlist.org/>