

Dear RSPB Member,

Thank you for getting in touch – apologies for the delayed response.

The article you included lists a range of observations, but as an evidence-based organisation, the RSPB looks to science and research to form our Policies and Position Statements.

At present, we are not aware of any robust population-level studies that link songbird declines with corvid predation. We acknowledge the public are concerned about this, so commissioned the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) to undertake a study into magpie populations, which you are more than welcome to read more about [here](#). The RSPB knows that other mammals will also predate ground-nesting species, but there is no evidence that clearly shows foxes and badgers are driving bird declines.

In fact, the most recent [State of Nature report](#) concluded that the effects of global warming and the loss of habitat due to agriculture are driving the decline in most wild birds in the UK. Additionally, wild bird populations [naturally fluctuate](#) throughout the year due to various factors such as weather conditions, food availability and predation – these can all play a role in the number of birds seen.

Regarding [sparrowhawks](#), these birds of prey hunt garden birds, which is completely natural behaviour. In fact, the number of sparrowhawks is limited by the “carrying capacity” of the habitat. This means that the amount of food and the number of nesting sites limit the number of sparrowhawks that can survive – if the number of songbirds increase, the number of sparrowhawks also increase and vice versa. We must appreciate that sparrowhawks are natural predators and it is impossible to stop them from hunting. We acknowledge that birds of prey hunt garden species and this can be an emotive subject, but it is actually a misconception that they negatively impact the number of songbirds.

The RSPB cares deeply for all our native species and making every effort to support songbirds. As such, our Policy and Campaigns teams are working hard to liaise with Government to improve legislation for the benefit of nature via the Environmental Bill, Agriculture Bill and other climate change initiatives. You can read more about our Campaign work [here](#). We are also asking Government to form legally-binding targets to help Revive Our World. You can also show your support by signing the petition [here](#).

We also offer lots of [advice](#) for the public with ways to support wildlife in their area such as feeding, siting nest boxes, growing wildlife-friendly plants and how to support other garden wildlife. Loss of suitable nesting sites can affect birds and why we always encourage people to allow this behaviour and even have a working partnership with [Barratt Homes](#) who now include lots of wildlife-friendly features in all of their new developments. As you can see, the RSPB works diligently to support wildlife in order to give nature a home.

Hope this offers you with plenty of information and you are keeping safe!

Sian Denney

Supporter Adviser

Supporter Services: 01767 693680 (Mon-Fri, 09:00-17:00)

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[rspb.org.uk](https://www.rspb.org.uk)

Let's give nature a home



The RSPB is the UK's largest nature conservation charity, inspiring everyone to give nature a home. Together with our partners, we protect threatened birds and wildlife so our towns, coast and countryside will teem with life once again. We play a leading role in BirdLife International, a worldwide partnership of nature conservation organisations.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity: England and Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654