

## TVNP Community grant Case Study

This is a case study for Tees Valley Nature Partnership written by Gwynn Dunn from [Stillington and Whitton parish council](#).

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### Proposal

This project supported two wild bird feeding stations from November 2021 to May 2022. One feeding station is in Stillington Forest Park, the other in Stillington and Whitton Community Orchard. The sites are less than 1km apart. Both sites are open to the public so people can easily observe the birds visiting the feeders. In addition, robust nest boxes were provided at both locations to increase the number of potential nesting sites available. While all wild birds were supported, we were particularly keen to support our population of Tree Sparrows and discover more about the range and population size of this species in this area.

### Project report

A variety of suitable food for wild birds was provided and the bird feeders were very well used throughout the winter and early spring. The feeders were visited daily by volunteers to top up the food supplies. A group of licensed bird ringers visited the Forest Park three times over the winter and the Community Orchard once. On these visits 132 birds, 10 different species,



were trapped and ringed at the Community Orchard for the first time and 172 of 13 different species at Stillington Forest Park. In addition, 63 birds that had been ringed during a previous visit were trapped at the Forest Park, only one at the Community Orchard. Full details of the ringing sessions have been supplied with this report. 31 'new' Tree Sparrows were ringed at the Forest Park and 10 at the Community Orchard. A number of other bird species that were not trapped by the bird ringing

team were also observed using the feeding stations over the winter. The new nest boxes were installed in March and will be monitored over the summer to see if they are in use. Two organised visits were made by groups to the feeding stations as well as many informal visits by local residents.

## Project outcomes and future plans

In addition to the support this project has given to the wild bird population, two new volunteers have been involved with the bird feeding and have also become regular attendees at volunteer work sessions at the Community Orchard and at another woodland site in the area. 6 other volunteers have been involved with the maintenance of the bird feeding areas.



Initial results from the bird ringing work seem to indicate that we have different groups of tree sparrows and other species that use the two feeding areas rather than the same birds moving between the two sites – further monitoring work will be required in the future to have more certainty that this is the case.

A bench for people to use while observing the Forest Park feeding station was detailed in the project proposal but was not installed for various reasons. It is anticipated that a seat will be installed in the autumn of 2022.



Subject to further funding being secured the bird feeding areas will be set up at both sites again in November 2022 so support for the local bird population can continue. Stillington and Whitton Parish Council would like to thank Tees Valley Nature Partnership and Teesmouth Bird Club and their Bird Ringing Team for their financial and practical support with this project. Thanks also to the volunteers who make the project possible.