

## **"Counting birds" in allotments:**

### **New counting activities in January and April 2018.**

Black bird, song thrush, fink and starling – our feathered roommates enjoy the marvellous nature on allotments in the same way as we humans do. They find their food, raise their young ones and bring us much joy with their sweet singing. Therefore, the first bird survey took place in spring, on the Lower Austrian allotments. The bird protection organisation BirdLife Austria presented these exciting results in 2017.

All together, at the end of April, 10 allotment associations, which had participated with enthusiasm in the bird counting action, reported their most common garden birds to Obmann Franz Riederer. "Most of the bird reports were from the Krems allotment gardens followed by Stattersdorf and Traisenstrand/Edelwies. The action was a complete success – the allotment gardener's heart also beats for birds!" the chairman reports full of pride.

### **The most common birds on allotments**

The field sparrow grabbed the gold medal in the first allotment competition, closely followed by the blackbird and the great tit. The garden red tail just missed the podium, but was nevertheless sighted on 60% of all the allotments. These results of the survey from Lower Austria also coincide with the bird species, which are found on Austria's local gardens, commented Norbert Teufelbauer from BirdLife, specialist in ornithology.

### **Record holder St. Pölten Kollerberg**

Particularly exciting is the biodiversity observed on Kollerberg's allotments: The bird friends spotted 22 of the 31 sighted bird species! With this result the allotment garden association Stattersdorf (15 species), Klosterneuburg Rollföhre and also Krems with 8 spotted species could be clearly left behind. Birds visit natural gardens with a diverse garden design and presenting many native crops, hedges and fruit trees. Such allotments are especially attractive to the feathered friends and one will soon be rewarded with a multitude of bird species.

Special highlights of the bird counting were the sighted lesser spotted woodpecker, one chiffchaff and one wren. These small birds like gardens with some higher trees, but also presenting denser corners with shrubs and hedges and a large range of insects. "Birds are considered to be important indicators of an intact and a livable environment. The more bird species you can observe on the allotment, the more valuable it is for the animal world" stated the biologist.

The national federation of allotment gardeners of Lower Austria and the federation of the ÖBB Agriculture, with their local departments in Lower Austria invited all the associations, to report people ready to count birds for the „hour of winter birds“ – beginning of January 2018 – and people ready to count birds for the activity "spring and birds on the allotments" – end of April 2018. Not much effort and input is needed, just an hour of one's time. The people ready to count birds that have been reported to the organisers will receive the necessary information and documents in due time. Those members, who already counted birds as "pioneers" last year informed that they will also be available for this action this year, because this „work“ in the garden brings them special pleasure.

BirdLife is the only countrywide and international bird protection organisation in Austria. For the last 8 years already BirdLife has been successfully running the Austrian wide bird survey "hour of the winter birds" around the 6<sup>th</sup> January. More information can be found at [www.birdlife.at](http://www.birdlife.at)

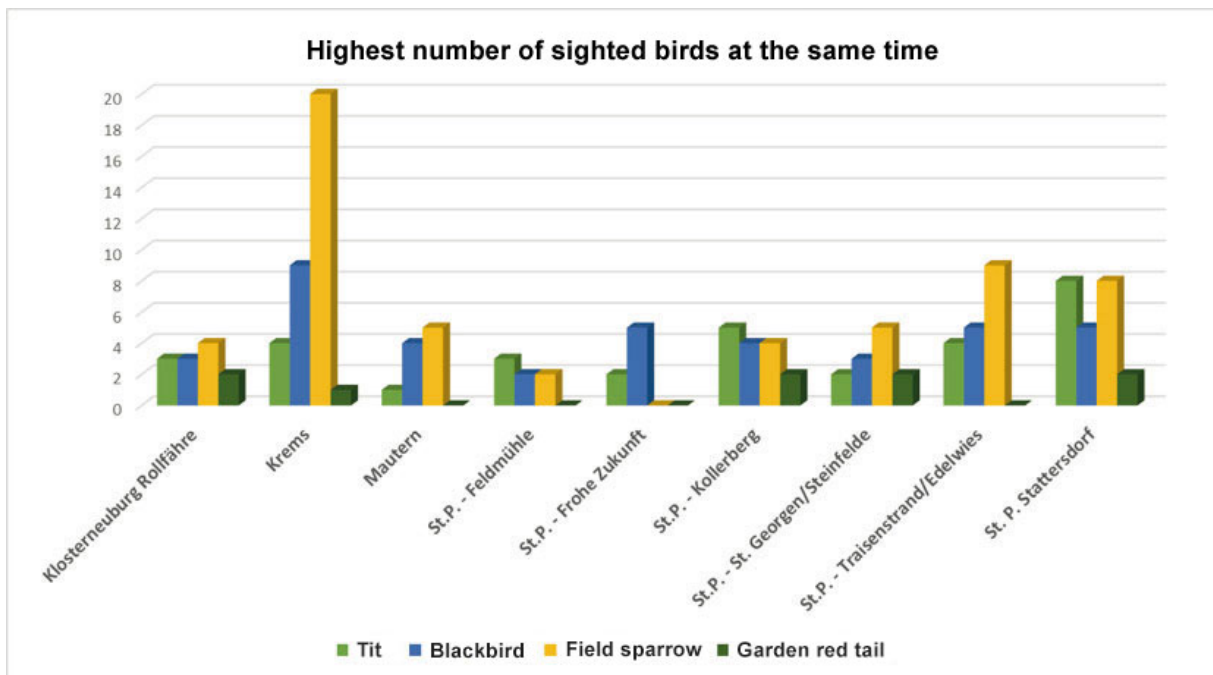


Figure 1



