

Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 1973

J. T. R. Sharrock, I. J. Ferguson-Lees and the Rare Breeding Birds Panel

Although first formed in 1968, as a sub-committee of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, 1973 was the Rare Breeding Birds Panel's first year as an autonomous body. The panel is supported and funded jointly by *British Birds*, the British Trust for Ornithology and the RSPB, and includes members from each of these bodies, and from the Nature Conservancy Council.

David Lea, secretary of the panel since its formation, retired in December 1972. With the necessary approval of the councils of the BTO and RSPB and the editors of *British Birds*, his place on the panel was taken by R. H. Dennis; and Dr J. T. R. Sharrock, previously an ordinary member of the panel, became secretary. The panel now consists of A. W. Colling, Peter Conder, R. H. Dennis, I. J. Ferguson-Lees and Dr J. T. R. Sharrock.

The aims and methods of operation of the panel have been set out in *Bird Study*, 20: 147-148; *Brit. Birds*, 66: 172-174; *Ibis*, 115: 481-482; *Irish Nat. J.*, 17 (no. 12): iii-iv; *Nature in Wales*, 14:44-46; and *Scot. Birds*, 7: 226-227. Briefly, the aims are to collect in one place all information on rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom so that changes in status—both increases and decreases—can be monitored and so that essential information is not lost (as has happened in the past) through the deaths of individuals keeping such records secret.

The panel recognises that it may take some years before complete trust is established and before the benefits of submitting all records become apparent. This first report is known to be incomplete. The counties which have submitted data are shown in fig. 1. Individual members of the panel have personal knowledge of records which are not included here because details have not been officially submitted by the county authorities. We hope that the publication of our annual reports will soon show that undue secrecy is unnecessary, and that a complete knowledge of each species' changing status is essential for conservation plans. The panel guarantees not to divulge data submitted to it to any other person without the permission of the person supplying the information (during his or her lifetime). We will never mention localities (or even counties) in this report unless permission has been specifically granted to us to do so.



Fig. 1. Areas covered by this report. Records (or a negative return) were supplied to the panel by all the county or regional report editors of the areas shown black. In some cases individual observers supplied data for the counties left white, but records were not received from the local editor, so the picture is incomplete for these areas. The panel does not collect records from the Republic of Ireland

The majority of records have reached us via county report editors. In the few cases where records have been submitted by individual observers, we have sought permission to pass the information to the county recorder concerned.

Records in this report are listed under county headings. County names are those in existence before the boundary and name changes were implemented on 1st April 1974, since these are still in use by the recorders who supplied data to us. Future policy will be dictated by whatever recommendation is made by the Report Editors' Committee and the policy adopted by the report editors. In instances where we cannot name the county for security reasons, we have adopted a system of lettering ('County A', 'County B', etc) under each species. A species' records for one such county will be designated in this way in subsequent reports (until it is safe to name the county), so that the history of colonisation (or extinction) can be followed, even if the exact location cannot be revealed.

We are most grateful to all those who have supplied data. In some cases, the naming of the person concerned could be a clue to the birds' location. Therefore, rather than give an incomplete list

of contributors, we hope that all those who have co-operated with us will accept this acknowledgement of their help.

The general comments following the actual records have this year been written by IJF-L. They are based primarily on Parslow (1973) and British Ornithologists' Union (1971); the references to recent range changes will mostly be found in the former. In future years the species comments will be largely concerned with comparing the current year's data with those in the panel's previous reports, but in this first report (and perhaps to be repeated at five-yearly intervals) a more comprehensive background picture is provided. The system adopted is to give the zoogeographical regions in which each species breeds and then to amplify the Palearctic range with particular reference to Europe. A summary of the status changes in Britain (and, where appropriate, Ireland) is then followed by an outline of the distribution up to 1972. Finally, reference is made to any relevant status changes in continental Europe.

Records for the panel's files should be submitted as soon as possible after the breeding season (we hope that future reports will be published much earlier than this first one) *on the special forms*, obtainable from Dr J. T. R. Sharrock, 59 Curlew Crescent, Bedford MK41 7HY. Unless there are special reasons for not doing so, we ask that individual observers send their records to the relevant county report editor, who will then pass on a summary of his county's records to us.

Systematic list of 1973 records

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

No records received.

Northern Nearctic and marginally Palearctic (Iceland, ?Bear Island, ?Jan Mayen, summering north Norway). Single birds and pairs have long summered in Scotland and breeding suspected on various occasions back to 1868, but not proved until 1970 when pair and two young seen in Wester Ross; in 1971 hybrid Great Northern × Black-throated *G. arctica* and normal Black-throated present with young on same loch; none in 1972.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

22 sites: over 50 pairs.

Caithness: two pairs probably bred at one site: one young 1st July and two birds that were possibly juveniles 29th July.

Inverness: 43 pairs located at 18 lochs; in one area 19 pairs reared 27 young. Numbers and breeding success higher than 1971 or 1972.

Moray: five or six pairs at one site: two or three young reared.

Perth: one pair hatched four young, three of which were probably eaten by Pike *Esox lucius* and the fourth was killed by a Coot *Fulica atra*. An adult with one young at a second site on 7th August. These are the first county records.

Northern Nearctic and Palearctic (Iceland, south Fenno-Scandia, Baltic States and Russia eastwards). Breeding first proved 1908 in Inverness, where subsequently slowly increased and spread more or less regularly to Sutherland and Caithness and, more recently, to Moray, Aberdeen and now Perth; for some years estimated at 50 pairs or less. Corresponding increase has taken place in Sweden and southward range extension in Norway.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Four sites: 19 or fewer pairs; breeding proved at three sites.

County A: three pairs had moderate success at one site (maximum of four young seen on any one visit) and one pair reared two young at a second site.

County B: up to 14 pairs and five young at one site. An adult on 13th May at a second site.

Ethiopian, Nearctic and Palearctic (locally and erratically over much of central and south Europe from Sweden to Spain east across Russia to central Asia). First colonised England and Ireland around 1915, and Scotland around 1929 when colony of up to 250 pairs also established in Ireland, but marked decline in recent decades, partly due to drainage, so that now extinct in Ireland and nowhere firmly established in Britain except at about three sites in central Scotland, occupied since at least early 1950's, where probably less than 20 pairs; other recent nestings in widely separated counties of Scotland, England and Wales have been temporary. Colonisations coincided with striking spread west from Caspian region around 1915-20 and 1929-32.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Records received from only one site; we suspect that there must have been others which have not been submitted.

Cambridge: two or three pairs bred on Ouse Washes.

Mainly Nearctic and Palearctic (Iceland and north Europe eastwards, erratically farther south). Colonised Scotland towards end of 19th century and England about 1910, but only at scattered sites and few of those persistently occupied; in recent years has nested regularly in about four counties in Scotland (Caithness, Inverness, Aberdeen and Kinross) and two in England (Cambridge/Norfolk and Kent).

Scaup *Aythya marila*

No records received.

Northern Nearctic and Palearctic (Iceland, Fenno-Scandia and north Russia eastwards). Has bred sporadically north Scotland

since 1897; since 1945 has nested Orkney (in about eight years), Outer Hebrides, Wester Ross, Perth and perhaps elsewhere; female and brood seen Lincoln 1944 and infertile clutches laid Suffolk 1967-71. During 20th century southern edge of breeding range has been receding northwards in Fenno-Scandia.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

One site: three pairs hatched at least 22 young.

Inverness: females with broods of eight, six and eight were seen on 12th, 24th and 28th May; on 4th June two of these females had broods of six and four or more. Two laid in nest boxes, but the nest-site of the third is not known.

Northern Nearctic and Palearctic (Fenno-Scandia, Baltic States and north Russia eastwards). Said to have bred Cheshire 1931-32 and nesting suspected Scotland in 1960's, but not proved until 1970-72 when one pair bred in each year.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Ten sites, with a maximum of 133 pairs but Caithness not surveyed.

Argyll: females with two young and four young at two separate sites on 8th July and 18th August.

Caithness: present on several lochs in summer but no survey carried out.

Fermanagh: 122 pairs on Lower Lough Erne; breeding success apparently poor.

Perth: one pair: eight eggs on 11th June, female with seven small young on 26th July and two well-grown young on 18th August.

Shetland: a pair bred at one site, three pairs located at a second site and summering pairs at four further sites, but breeding success not known.

North-west Nearctic and northern Palearctic (Iceland, Faeroes, Ireland, Fenno-Scandia and north Russia eastwards). Has long bred in Scotland, since at least latter part of 19th century, and Ireland, since 1905, but only at small number of sites and irregularly at some of those; in recent years has nested in several Scottish counties from Perth north to Shetland and, in Ireland, in Fermanagh and Mayo.

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Ten or eleven sites: four pairs proved breeding. Many others are known to us individually, but were not officially reported to the panel.

Northumberland: one pair laid eggs but did not rear any young.

County A: female found dead in May was on point of laying.

County B: pair seen repeatedly in May and June in area where rumoured to have attempted breeding in this and previous years.

County C: one pair bred successfully.

County D: pairs successfully reared young (three and number not known) at two sites and birds present at three or four other sites.

Nearctic and Palearctic (throughout much of continental Europe and Mediterranean islands eastwards). Bred sporadically in 19th century and apparently regularly in earlier times; nested Sussex from 1938 (?1921) to 1951, and in 1960's bred in at least six widely separated areas of Scotland, England and Wales, probably regularly in at least two. Not known how many of these, or of still more recent ones (see above), are truly wild or birds liberated by or escaped from falconers. It is perhaps significant, however, that this trend conflicts with one of decrease in adjacent areas of Continent (e.g. France, Netherlands).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

26 pairs nested, one pair repeating at a second site after early failure. Only ten pairs successful, rearing 14 young.

County A: two pairs, both unsuccessful. One clutch of two incubated beyond normal period; second failed soon after laying, from unknown cause.

County B: one pair, unsuccessful. Two eggs incubated beyond normal period.

County C: 18 pairs, nine successful. Five pairs reared one young and three pairs reared two young; two pairs failed quickly, but one repeated at a second site and reared two young; five pairs laid clutches which failed to hatch; one pair failed when collector took one egg of clutch of two; one pair failed when tree climbed by unknown person; and one pair failed about hatching date.

County D: two pairs, both unsuccessful, with no hatching.

County E: three pairs, one successful. Two pairs failed about hatching date; one pair reared one young after one egg had been removed by collector.

Western Palearctic (France, south Sweden and Baltic States south to south Europe, Asia Minor, north-west Africa and Canary and Cape Verde islands). Formerly widespread in Britain, but apparently reduced to about four pairs in central Wales in early 20th century; fluctuated between four and ten pairs up to 1940, about 15 pairs in 1950's and about 20 pairs in later 1960's; also nested Devon 1913 and Cornwall 1920. Much decreased on Continent over last 15 years.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

No records received, though known to be present at more than one site. We hope to be able to summarise records in future reports.

Western Palearctic (much of Europe and west Asia except extreme north). Long a regular breeder in very small numbers, north to Ross and Aberdeen in 19th century. For last 30-40 years has maintained population of several pairs in Hampshire and, more recently, has bred sporadically in several counties north to Welsh border and central England (almost certainly also once in Fife) and regularly at one other site.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Three sites: three males and five females present, four of the females rearing a total of 14 young.

Suffolk: at one site a male and two females reared four and two young. At a second site one pair reared three young while a second female was present and may have attempted to nest. At a third site, new and very vulnerable, one pair reared five young.

Ethiopian, Australasian and Palearctic (locally through much of Europe north to south Fenno-Scandia, east across Asia). At one time more numerous and widespread, ceased to breed in England, apart from sporadic attempts, from end of 19th century to 1927 and became extinct in Ireland by 1917; then followed gradual recolonisation of England until by 1957-58 there were nearly 20 pairs. Since then there has been another marked decline, variously attributed to human disturbance, spread of Coypu *Myocastor coypus* and chemical pesticides; by 1970 only two or three pairs remained. Corresponding decrease in Netherlands was attributed to food shortage, especially decrease in Rabbits *Oryctolagus cuniculus*.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

The only ones reported had no breeding success.

Norfolk: nest with four eggs found at one site but the birds deserted following hay-cutting in the vicinity. At a second site, female present and nest with two eggs found, but these did not hatch (no male was seen).

Western and central Palearctic (north-west Africa and much of Europe north to Denmark and south Sweden, east to west Asia). Small but fluctuating population increased markedly during 1945-55 to maximum of 40-50 pairs in England and first breeding records in Scotland and Ireland; then began steady decline with population reaching 15-25 pairs by mid-1960's, less than ten pairs by 1970 and probably only two or three pairs by 1972. Corresponding decrease in Netherlands and elsewhere. Now probably Britain's rarest diurnal bird of prey.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

16 or more sites, ten pairs rearing 21 young. A few further pairs and eyries were suspected or rumoured but details were not submitted to the panel.

Inverness: three eggs laid at Loch Garten and two young reared.

Perth: two young reared at Loch of Lowes.

County A: three eggs laid and one young reared at one site; nest-building at two other sites in April but birds then left.

County B: six pairs, five of which successfully reared young (three, two, two, two and two); the sixth pair was present throughout the summer and rebuilt a nest but did not line it properly.

County C: at one site a female lined a nest but probably failed to find a mate; an eyrie was found at a second site in June but no birds were ever seen—possibly a nest from late 1972 or early 1973.

County D: two pairs bred successfully, one rearing three and the other two young.

County E: pair present at new eyrie in early August: considered to be a non-breeding young pair or failed breeders.

Almost cosmopolitan including much of Palearctic (some Mediterranean area, but mainly north and east Europe from Fenno-Scandia and Germany east across Asia). Once widespread in Scotland, was reduced to two pairs by 1900 and became extinct in 1916; recolonised 1954 or 1955, increasing to three pairs by 1967, five by 1968 and seven by 1971. This recolonisation followed recovery in numbers in Scandinavia.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

51 sites and 16 pairs proved breeding, but no details available from two of the species' main counties (Hampshire and Sussex). Where outcome known, eleven pairs successfully reared at least 23 young and five pairs failed to rear young.

Bedford: pair at one site in July considered to have probably attempted to breed in area; one bird in suitable area on 18th May, but site not revisited.

Berkshire: pairs present at two sites possibly bred.

Buckingham: single birds at two sites in early summer but areas not revisited; one pair at a third site may have nested; early August records at a fourth site suggest possible breeding in the area. Recorder comments that there are probably other pairs overlooked or unreported.

Devon: ten sites, six pairs nested, but only two or three were successful (three and two young) and three were robbed by Carrion Crows *Corvus corone*. At the other four sites, two pairs probably nested and two pairs possibly nested.

Dorset: five sites, one pair proved breeding and four more probably bred. No further details available.

Hampshire: no details available.

Hereford: pair present from late May was seen with flying young in early August.

Northampton: one pair reared two young.

Oxford: pairs seen regularly at three sites; two young reared at one of these.

Somerset: pairs at four sites (only during May at one) and young being fed at one of these in August.

Surrey: seven pairs present at six sites: five pairs known to have reared twelve young (three, three, three, two and one), one pair unsuccessful and outcome not known for the seventh pair.

Wiltshire: pairs at four sites: one pair known to have been robbed by collector; other three pairs probably bred but outcome unknown.

County A: one pair with at least one flying young in August.

County B: two pairs possibly bred: observers have not supplied full details to county recorder.

County C: four pairs possibly bred: observers have not supplied full details to county recorder.

County D: one pair bred, but outcome unknown. First breeding record for the county.

Marginally Oriental and mainly Palearctic (north-west Africa and most of continental Europe north to south Finland and east across Asia). Decreased in 19th century, but subsequently has maintained population variously estimated at 60-100 pairs (probably at least 85), mainly in Hampshire and adjacent counties but less regularly north to Wales and central (occasionally even north) England.

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*

No records received.

Palearctic (mainly France to south Fenno-Scandia and east across much of Europe, except north, to west Asia). Marked decrease before mid-19th century and largely sporadic since early 1900's, though increased 1926-37 and 1963-70. Records of birds breeding or summering in those periods in about ten widely scattered counties of England and Wales and, more recently, in four or five counties of Scotland. Second increase followed spread in Sweden.

Dotterel *Eudromias morinellus*

Information very incomplete.

Aberdeen: present but no details available.

Banff: one pair present on 3rd June.

Inverness: present but no details available.

Northern Palearctic (Fenno-Scandia, Netherlands, Poland, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Romania east to north-central Asia). Decreased markedly during latter half of 19th century through shooting and collecting, but population has since remained fairly steady at 1950-60 estimates of 60-80 pairs; in recent years decrease in Cairngorms, probably due to human disturbance, has been offset by spread outside main range in central Highlands of Scotland. Remarkable colonisation of Dutch polders since early 1960's is only recent evidence of spread on Continent, and that represents entirely new habitat for species otherwise restricted to mountains and tundra.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Eight sites: 54 pairs proved breeding, one more probably breeding and five more possibly breeding.

Cambridge: 51 breeding pairs at one site but number of young reared not known.

Cumberland: at least two pairs at one site and one nest found, but eggs destroyed.

Lincoln: one pair holding territory in May and June, actions suggesting to one observer that young were present.

Norfolk: one pair reared two young.

Shetland: one pair hatched at least two young.

Somerset: two pairs and one single bird present at one site but breeding almost certainly unsuccessful because of spraying and rolling of fields. One pair and single bird at a second site were probably also disturbed by cultivation activities.

County A: pair present and displaying early in season almost certainly did not breed, probably due to drought conditions and drainage of area.

Palaearctic (Iceland, Low Countries north to Baltic States, south to Ukraine, east across Asia). Once widespread in eastern England, but became extinct before mid-19th century through drainage, disturbance and shooting; bred sporadically 1937-42 and annually since 1952 in increasing numbers, particularly in East Anglia but latterly in up to ten other areas, north to Scotland, total population in 1971 being about 75-80 pairs. Habitat changes have caused decreases in central Europe, but has been marked increase in Iceland and Netherlands since about 1920 and slight northward expansion in range.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Sightings of single birds at two sites.

Caithness: one bird holding territory on 9th June: area not revisited until 29th July, when none seen.

County A: one bird seen at a new site on 4th June.

Palaearctic (Denmark and Fenno-Scandia east across north Asia). Bred Northumberland 1853; began to colonise north Scotland in 1959, subsequently breeding in at least four or five counties south probably to Perth and seemed firmly established in small numbers by 1970. One of several Scandinavian species to spread or return to Scotland in last two decades.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

One site: one or two pairs.

County A: at least one (probably two) pairs, one of which almost certainly bred successfully.

Northern Palaearctic (Fenno-Scandia east across north Asia). Attempted unsuccessfully to breed in central Scotland (Cairngorms) or Yorkshire in four years 1934-56; one or two pairs established Scotland since 1969. Another Scandinavian species showing recent spread to Scotland.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Reported from only one site.

Cambridge: eight breeding females estimated at one site but breeding success not known.

Palaearctic (Fenno-Scandia and Low Countries east across north Europe and Asia). Formerly widespread in England, but marked

decline in 18th and first half 19th centuries until ceased to breed regularly in 1871; nested sporadically, chiefly in Norfolk, till 1922 and then no further record until 1963, since when one or two nests have gradually increased to ten or more.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Four sites: 149 pairs reared about 115 young.

Suffolk: 112 pairs reared about 50 young at Havergate Island. 33 pairs reared about 65 young at Minsmere.

County A: one and three pairs bred at two sites.

Ethiopian and Palearctic (coasts of west Europe from south Sweden round Iberia to south France, and central and south-east Europe east across Asia). Bred regularly east England before mid-19th century, then after long interval sporadically in Ireland (1938) and East Anglia (1941-46) before becoming re-established Suffolk 1947; increased at Havergate from four or five pairs in 1947 to nearly 100 pairs by 1957 and subsequently fluctuated about this mark, and at Minsmere from up to four pairs in 1947 and 1963 to 34 pairs in 1972; small numbers have occasionally nested in this period in other areas and other counties. Recolonisation followed marked increase in Netherlands and Denmark, and species has also recolonised south Sweden.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

Details received from only three sites; other sites occupied but data not submitted to the panel.

Outer Hebrides: at one site one pair nested unsuccessfully; one or two pairs present at a second site but no further details known.

Shetland: no counts available.

County A: a pair and an extra female in May and early June, but area not revisited until early August, when none present.

Northern Nearctic and Palearctic (Iceland, Faeroes and north continental Europe south to south Norway and Baltic States, east across arctic Asia). Although on extreme southern fringe of range, formerly much more numerous, but marked decrease as result of collecting in 19th century; some recovery (and colonisation of north-west Ireland) in first 30 years of 20th century, but then further decrease; in recent years small but fluctuating numbers have nested Shetland, Orkney, Outer Hebrides, Tiree, and one or two sites on Scottish mainland, as well as Mayo in Ireland.

Stone Curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*

Over 100 pairs reported but data are very incomplete.

Berkshire: pairs present at four sites possibly bred.

Cambridge: considered that current population is certainly below 20 pairs; breeding proved for four pairs.

Cambridge/Essex/Hertford: over 70 contacts during a special two-night survey; maximum activity occurred at 03.00 GMT and those responsible for this survey consider that this species may be under-recorded.

Essex: four pairs possibly bred at one site.

Hampshire: at least 20 sites known but real number considered to be well in excess of this.

Norfolk: numerous sites but numbers completely unknown.

Oxford: two pairs at one site, one of them successfully rearing two young.

Suffolk: five pairs proved breeding in coastal belt and 13 in Breckland; a further six pairs probably bred in the county and the total summering population is possibly about 50 pairs.

Wiltshire: four sites, with two pairs with young at one of these and one pair hatching eggs at another.

Oriental and west Palearctic (mainly central and south Europe, and north Africa, east across south Asia). Steady decrease due to cultivation, afforestation and disturbance since early 19th century, apart from partial recovery in 1920's and 1930's; in last 20 years rate of decrease seems to have accelerated and in Breckland, for example, population declined from over 300 pairs in 1949 to fewer than 50 by 1963; now largely confined to chalk areas from Dorset, Hampshire and Sussex to east Norfolk, with few pairs near Suffolk coast; in late 1960's total population estimated at 200-400 pairs. Corresponding decrease in central European countries and gradual extinction in Netherlands between early 1920's and late 1950's.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

No records received.

South-central and west Palearctic (scattered range in south Russia, Asia Minor and Balkans, with sporadic breeding north and west to Baltic and Netherlands). Pair bred Hampshire 1968, another male mated with female Black-headed Gull *L. ridibundus*, and another female with hybrid between the two species. In subsequent years various Mediterranean Gulls were seen in spring or summer at this site, but only hybrid bred, with female Black-headed.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

No records received.

Nearctic and western Palearctic (continental Europe north to south Sweden and Baltic States, east to west Asia). Formerly nested commonly in eastern England, but became extinct as result of drainage of habitat and taking of eggs before mid-19th century; nested sporadically in Norfolk and Kent 1853-85, then not again

until few pairs on Cambridge/Norfolk border in 1966 and 1969 and one pair in Ireland in 1967.

Snowy Owl *Nyctea scandiaca*

Records received from only one site.

Shetland: one male mated to two females on Fetlar; one hatched five young, two of which were reared but one then died in September; the second female laid three eggs but deserted during incubation.

Northern Nearctic and Palearctic (Iceland, north Fenno-Scandia and north Russia). One pair has bred Shetland each year since 1967, but 1973 saw a third bird involved for first time.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

No records received.

Ethiopian, Oriental and Palearctic (continental Europe north to Baltic States, east right across Asia). Has bred sporadically since early in 19th century, with one to four records each decade since 1830's, chiefly in south coast counties, but north to Buckingham and Hereford.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Only one pair reported.

Kent: one pair present and carrying food in June.

Ethiopian and Palearctic (continental Europe north to southern half of Fenno-Scandia, east across Asia). In mid-19th century bred north to Westmorland and occasionally in almost every county of England and Wales, but steady decline since then has reduced population to few pairs in Kent and occasionally elsewhere in south-east England (even as late as 1950's breeding was still taking place in 10-20 counties and population was 100-200 pairs); in 1965, however, two pairs appeared in Inverness and may have nested, since when summering has been recorded each year in that county and three nests were found in 1969. A corresponding, though not quite so drastic, decline has occurred over much of western Europe, but spread to Scotland is presumably another example of colonisation from Scandinavia.

Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

Present and almost certainly bred at a locality near where first seen in summer in 1972.

County A: male singing on 24th June; pair one kilometre away on 10th July; pair (and non-flying young suspected) two kilometres away on 14th, 15th and 18th August.

Mainly Nearctic and Palearctic (north Fenno-Scandia and north Russia, east across Asia, and discontinuously in north-west Africa,

Balkans, Middle East and south Russia eastwards). No suggestion of breeding until seen in summer 1972.

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

One pair bred successfully and up to six other males present.

Suffolk: a pair seen with five young; up to six other singing males were also heard during the summer but no nests were located.

Oriental and west and central Palearctic (continental Europe north to south Sweden and Finland, east to central Asia). Long a sporadic breeder, fairly frequent in Kent in 19th century when otherwise in about ten other counties of southern England and East Anglia; 20th century has seen fewer proved or probable records, but these have been west to Devon and Wales and north to Lancashire (and seen in summer north to Kinross); some evidence of becoming established in recent years. Recently there has been increase in Denmark and spread to Sweden.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Three sites: two pairs proved breeding.

Aberdeen: one bird on 25th June.

Kincardine: young bird unable to fly properly but no adults seen.

Shetland: one pair nested but success not known.

Palearctic (northern two-thirds of Europe from Switzerland, Germany and Fenno-Scandia east across much of Asia). First bred Orkney 1967 and Shetland 1968, since when the published records show few pairs each year in north-east Scotland and once in north-east England. This is another Scandinavian species which has recently colonised Scotland; it has also been extending its range in central Europe and colonised Denmark as recently as 1960.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Nine sites: at least three pairs nested. We suspect that many have gone unrecorded or unreported; if this is not the case, there has been a very considerable decrease since 1972.

Banff: one singing male.

Inverness: one pair nested successfully.

Perth: singing males at three sites and an adult carrying food at a fourth site.

Ross: two pairs at one site.

Sutherland: one pair feeding young in nest at one site and a singing male at a second site.

Palearctic (Iceland, Faeroes, Fenno-Scandia and Poland east across Russia and much of Asia). First nested Sutherland 1925 and then sporadically in four northern counties of Scotland up to 1941; no further breeding proved until 1953, since when known popula-

tion has gradually built up from three or four pairs in late 1950's and early 1960's to 40-50 pairs in 1971-72, mainly in Sutherland, Ross and Inverness, but also in Moray, Caithness and Shetland; pair also attempted to breed in Ireland in 1951. Yet another Scandinavian species which has recently colonised Scotland.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

27 sites: 44 pairs proved breeding, another eight probably breeding and seven more possibly breeding.

Bedford: one pair hatched four or five young, of which two died and two or three fledged. A singing male at another site may have been the male from the first site. This is the first record of successful breeding in the county.

Berkshire: one pair reared four young.

Essex: one pair reared at least one young.

Kent: five pairs present at one site and single pairs at four others. The five pairs raised 'fair numbers' of young, two of the single pairs raised at least one young, one raised three young and the fourth had young in the nest but outcome unknown.

London: two pairs nested at each of two sites, rearing four and three young at one site and an unknown number (though both pairs successful) at the other.

Middlesex: two pairs (one non-breeding) at one site.

Norfolk: 18 pairs at one site and one pair at another. 17 pairs reared a minimum of 50 young at the first site and the pair at the second site reared two young. These numbers are unusual and a special study was made at the major site.

Northampton: a male sang from 9th to 14th May.

Orkney: nest with four eggs and female seen: male never seen. First Scottish breeding record.

Stafford: male seen at traditional site but no effort made to prove breeding in 1973.

Suffolk: ten pairs proved breeding and a further two probably breeding at four sites; no details of breeding success.

Sussex: one pair reared four young at one site; one pair laid eggs at a second site but building then demolished. There may well be other unreported records for Sussex.

Warwick: male present throughout summer at traditional site.

Worcester: one pair reared six young. This is the first breeding record for the county.

Mainly Palearctic (north-west Africa, west Europe north to south Sweden, east to Baltic States, and thence south-east through south Russia and Asia Minor east to Himalayas, China and central Asia). After two or three sporadic attempts, first nested 1923 and regularly since 1939, mainly in south-east England and East Anglia, but sporadically west to Cornwall, Shropshire and Lancashire and north to Yorkshire; peak of 53-55 sites was reached in 1950-52, after which there was general decline to low of 16 in 1962, as wartime bombed sites disappeared, and then gradual increase again, as large industrial power stations developed.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

No records received.

Mainly Palearctic (north Europe south, in some cases locally, to Spain, France, Germany, Yugoslavia, and Caucasus, east across Asia). Only record is of female flushed from nest and eggs in Inverness in 1968, but this is another example of a colonist from, probably, Scandinavia.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

Six sites: one pair proved breeding and at least 15 other singing males present.

Kent: one pair with three recently fledged young and a second singing male at one site; 13 singing males at four other sites (seven, four, one and one).

Suffolk: at Minsmere, singles from 22nd February to 24th April, 4th October and 7th October and two from 30th October into 1974; no evidence of breeding.

Southern Palearctic (north-west Africa across south Europe through Turkey, Middle East and south-west Asia; recently spreading north in west Europe). After series of individual occurrences in southern England since 1961, steadily increasing in number, began to colonise Kent in 1972. This follows spread north in France, extending gradually to Channel Islands, Belgium and Netherlands.

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*

Three sites: twelve singing males.

Kent: three males singing throughout the summer at one site, but no evidence of breeding.

Suffolk: six singing males at one site, and considered that six pairs probably bred. Three singing males at a second site, and similarly considered that three pairs probably bred.

Western Palearctic (north-west Africa and across south Europe north to Netherlands and Germany, east to south-west Asia). Formerly bred in East Anglian fens in Norfolk, Cambridge and Huntingdon until mid-19th century; became re-established in Kent in 1960 (possibly as early as 1951) and by 1968 was being recorded in summer in various other counties (including Norfolk and Cambridge, but also Somerset and Hampshire); since at least 1970 has nested in Suffolk. Nested in Netherlands throughout hundred years or more it was absent from Britain, and recolonisation may have taken place from there at time of decrease through habitat destruction or may have been connected with westward expansion noted in Poland and Germany.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

50-80 pairs probably bred.

Kent: six sites. Seven pairs at one site; pair carrying food at a second site; pair with two or three juveniles at a third site; and singing males at three further sites (two, one and one).

Worcester: 40-70 pairs in the traditional areas, an increase on recent years; one pair reared three young at a new site.

Western Palearctic (Low Countries and east France across Europe, north to southernmost Fenno-Scandia, east to south Urals and Caucasus, and south-east into Iran). Has long bred southern and western England, mainly in nine counties but occasionally in another eleven; in last 50 years most regular nesting has been in Worcester, Hereford, Gloucester, Somerset, Dorset, Sussex and Kent but has greatly decreased, probably partly at least as result of habitat destruction, since 1945-50 and now largely confined to Worcester, Gloucester and the south-east.

Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*

Over 220 pairs reported but data are incomplete.

Dorset: 120 pairs present at 19 sites.

Hampshire: at least 100 pairs.

Surrey: two or three pairs present at one site but no proof of breeding; one pair reared two young at a second site.

County A: four or five birds at a new site which was first discovered in 1972.

Western Palearctic (France, Iberia to Italy and north-west Africa). Formerly bred Kent to Cornwall, north to Berkshire, and occasionally north to Shropshire and Essex; marked contraction of breeding range during 20th century, as result of steady fragmentation of specialised habitat, with periodic population crashes due to severe winters; population was estimated at 450 pairs in 1961, but only ten pairs in 1963 after hard weather in two successive winters; this was probably lowest total ever, but long series of mild winters since then has resulted in steady increase; even so, most of population is still confined to Dorset and Hampshire with smaller numbers in two or three other counties.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*

Four sites: two pairs proved breeding and a further 14 singing males recorded.

Buckingham: eleven males holding territory at one site.

Dorset: one pair seen with young.

Hampshire: one pair seen with three fledged young.

Northampton: three males singing at one site in May and June.

Western Palearctic (north-west Africa and Iberia north to Denmark and east to west Russia, Balkans and Asia Minor). First found

breeding in Hampshire in 1961, when small but regular population was located in New Forest; species has also been established in Buckingham since 1971 and breeding has been proved or at least singing males recorded in summer in six other counties: Bedford, Dorset, Kent, Somerset, Suffolk and now Northampton. May well have been established in Britain for much longer and been overlooked.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

About 40 pairs reported but data are very incomplete.

Berkshire: one pair possibly bred.

Essex: one pair bred successfully but number of young reared not reported.

Hampshire: details not available.

Kent: pairs present at two sites and one behaved as if young were present.

Norfolk: seven pairs present at four sites (three, two, one and one) and at least two bred successfully. Details from other sites are not available.

Suffolk: probably not more than 30 pairs in the county, but information not all available to county recorder; 22 pairs were proved to breed, 14 in the coastal belt and eight in Breckland.

Palaearctic (much of Europe from north Spain north to south Fenno-Scandia and east across Asia). Formerly widespread in England and Wales, but steady decrease has been proceeding for last 100 years or more and has accelerated since 1940; population was reduced to 172 known pairs by 1960, about 127 by 1966 and only about 81 by 1971; now mainly confined to coastal counties from Norfolk to Hampshire with small number in other counties of south-east England. Species has decreased throughout north-west Europe since about 1930 and it has been suggested that long-term climatic changes are primary cause.

Serin *Serinus serinus*

No records received.

Western Palaearctic (north-west Africa, Asia Minor and much of continental Europe east to Ukraine and north to south Sweden and Baltic States). First bred southern England in 1967 and in subsequent years in at least three southern counties. Has been spreading steadily north in Europe during 19th and 20th centuries and further colonisation is expected.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Five sites: at least five pairs bred successfully.

Inverness: four to six pairs nested at one site, rearing good numbers of young (probably the best year this century); two pairs at a second site, one rearing four young and the other (less fully watched) probably also successful; a singing male in June/July at a third site.

Perth: singing male in early June.

County A: singing male at a new site on 4th June.

Northern Nearctic and Palearctic (Iceland, Faeroes, north Fenno-Scandia and north Russia east across Asia). Probably more regular and widespread than now in 19th and early 20th centuries, but numbers always very small; has bred Sutherland, Ross, Perth, and even St Kilda, but in last 60 years largely confined to Inverness, particularly Cairngorms.

REFERENCES

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PARSLOW, J. L. F. 1973. *Breeding Birds of Britain and Ireland*. Berkhamsted.

Additions and corrections to this 1973 report will be greatly welcomed by the panel, and will form an addendum to the 1974 report. They should be sent to the first address below.

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