

Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 1974

J. T. R. Sharrock and the Rare Breeding Birds Panel

This is the second report of the Rare Breeding Birds Panel. The functions and mode of operation were identical to those described in detail in the first report (*Brit. Birds*, 68: 5-23). The members of the panel in 1974, as in 1973, were A. W. Colling, Peter Conder, R. H. Dennis, I. J. Ferguson-Lees and Dr J. T. R. Sharrock.

There were no staggering new developments during 1974, though the presence of Sanderlings in the breeding season for the second year running prompts interesting speculation. Some recent colonists maintained or improved their positions, notably Goldeneye, Osprey, Temminck's Stint, Golden Oriole, Fieldfare and Cetti's Warbler. This last species, together with Dartford Warbler and Firecrest, no doubt benefited from another in our recent series of mild winters. Hobbies appeared to have had a successful breeding season. On the debit side, Wood Sandpiper and Redwing numbers were again low, though this may perhaps partly result from reduced coverage of Scotland after the end of the 1968-72 fieldwork for the British Trust for Ornithology/Irish Wildbird Conservancy Atlas Project. Montagu's Harrier now seems but one step from extinction as a British breeding species, while Wryneck had apparently reached that stage in England in 1974. The biggest single disappointment was perhaps the exceptionally low breeding success of the Avocets on Havergate Island.

It is encouraging to note that only three counties failed to supply records in 1974 (see fig. 1), compared with 15 in 1973. The panel recognises that it may well take several more years before complete trust is established and the benefits of submitting all records (so that the annual report gives a full picture for the United Kingdom) are fully understood in all quarters. Even now, although 73 county recorders supplied records, we do not have a complete picture for all of these counties. Several recorders commented that they had heard rumours of records in their areas which had not been submitted to them and which, in consequence, they could not send to us. The panel's safeguards are such, however, that we hope such over-cautious observers will in time be willing to submit their records. Most records reached us via the county recorders (listed in *Brit. Birds*, 68: 255-260). In the few cases where observers bypassed their county recorder, we sought permission to inform him or her, and in all but a few cases this was granted. We wish to thank all those who supplied records to the panel. Since, in some cases, the observer's or reporter's name could give a clue to the birds' exact



Fig. 1. Areas covered by this report. Records (or a negative return) were supplied to the panel by the recorders for all 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 very incomplete for these three areas. The panel does not collect records from the Republic of Ireland

location, we continue our practice of not naming our correspondents.

The counties under which records are listed are those by which they were submitted to us. They mostly follow the boundaries which were in existence before the changes made in April 1974. Where it has been necessary to omit a county name in order to protect the birds from disturbance, we have again used the device of calling them 'County A', 'County B', etc., and these letters are the same as those used in the 1973 report. Thus, the history in each county may be traced even though the locations are concealed. As is our practice, we have never listed the name of a locality or of a county unless we have been given specific permission to do so.

The comprehensive background information which accompanied each species entry in the 1973 report is not repeated this year. The brief comments mostly compare the situation in 1974 with that in 1973. We hope that these comparisons will become increasingly valuable (and valid) over the years.

This report is appearing considerably later than we had hoped. Data were received from 43 counties by the end of February, but those from 20 counties were still outstanding by the end of July.

The report would be more useful if it appeared in spring or early summer, so that increases or decreases could be followed up by observers in the subsequent year. We (and the county recorders) are in observers' hands in this matter. If records were submitted immediately after the end of the breeding season, these reports could appear much earlier. Therefore, we appeal to observers to submit their 1975 records to their county recorder NOW, if they have not already done so. The county recorders will pass them on to us *on the panel's special forms*, which are obtainable from Dr J. T. R. Sharrock, 59 Curlew Crescent, Bedford, MK41 7HY, on request. Observers wishing to inform the panel, but not their county recorder, of a record are also asked to use these special forms; but we hope such instances will continue to be the exception.

Systematic list of 1974 records

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

No records received. There was also none in 1973, but a pair with two young was seen in 1970, and the following year a hybrid Great Northern × Black-throated *G. arctica* paired with a Black-throated was seen with young at the same site.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Present at 24 sites, with a total of 57-62 pairs.

Aberdeen: one pair and one young seen.

Caithness: two pairs with three and five young on 30th June; at least four probably survived.

Inverness: 47-51 pairs on 19 lochs; at least 16 young from 18-20 pairs in north and 29 young from 28-30 pairs south of Great Glen; one pair with one or two young in Strathspey.

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

Perth: a pair at the first 1973 site, and another nearby site, possibly attempted to breed, but had no success. The second 1973 site was again occupied and the single pair successfully fledged two young.

The number of fledged young remains low, but 1974 was a better season than any of the previous three years. The colonisation of Perth in 1973 and 1974 is a considerable shift southwards.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

About 15 pairs, rearing at least 11 young.

County A: about six pairs, but poor season and only two young seen.

County B: nine pairs and three single birds present at the first 1973 site, and on 9th July three pairs had single well-fledged young, one pair had two well-

fledged young, two pairs had at least two well-fledged young, and three pairs appeared to have no young. No birds were seen at the second 1973 site.

There were three or four fewer breeding pairs than in 1973, but about the same number of young were reared.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Only ten pairs reported.

Antrim/Derry: nest with eight eggs found in May.

Cambridge/Norfolk: three pairs bred and at least two young reared.

Kent: single pairs at two sites; one bred successfully and the other possibly nested.

Orkney: at least three pairs nested; success unknown.

Perth: a female seen with five or six small young.

Even with late additions (see page 504), only three to five pairs were reported in 1973.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

No records received. There was also none in 1973, the last instances of recorded breeding being in 1970 (three nests at one site in Perth) and 1967-71 (infertile clutches laid by a female in Suffolk).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Three pairs nested successfully, hatching a total of 19 young.

Inverness: three pairs nested in nest boxes at two sites, hatching broods of nine, five and five young. Immediately after hatching, the females move the broods up to several km and they are then very difficult to census.

After nesting by single pairs in 1970-72, there were three pairs in both 1973 and 1974. Fledging success was good and increasing numbers of non-breeders were recorded in summer.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Probably about 140 pairs.

Argyll: single female seen on 15th July.

Caithness: broods of seven and three young seen on 6th July; other pairs present.

Dunbarton/Stirling: at two sites in Loch Lomond, pair seen 25th May and three males and two females in early June.

Fermanagh: 110 pairs and eleven males and six females unpaired, but very poor breeding success and only one brood of five seen.

Inverness: three sites. Single females at two lochs in late June; about 15 pairs and six nests found (four clutches of seven eggs and two of six) at the third site on 22nd June.

Perth: one pair, at same site as in 1973, had nest with seven eggs on 10th June and four large young on 20th July.

Shetland: a total of four or five pairs at four sites, but breeding not proved.

Though nearly 80% of the pairs are in Fermanagh, the breeding success at this major site has been very poor in recent years. The

Loch Lomond birds follow on the rearing of at least one young by one pair there in 1971 and the establishment of territories by three pairs in 1972 (perhaps due only to lack of coverage, none was seen there in 1973).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

At least 13 pairs, of which at least three nested successfully.

Inverness: one or more pairs at one site, displaying and mobbing observer.

County C: two pairs nested, one successfully (though number of young reared was not reported) and one failed, due to storm damage.

County D: three sites with at least four pairs. One reared three young, but success of other three not known.

County E: one seen displaying, but no nest found.

County F: three pairs present, but no details reported to us.

County G: one pair present and flying young seen in late summer.

County H: one pair seen in one area.

Though the number reported was higher than in 1973 (10-11 sites: four pairs proved breeding), there are still some sites which are known to us individually, but which were not officially reported to the panel.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Of 32-33 pairs, 27 nested; only nine pairs successful, rearing 12 young.

County A: two single birds in April, but no breeding attempts known.

County B: two pairs, both unsuccessful. One pair failed to hatch eggs and the other only partly built a nest.

County C: 23 pairs, eight successful. Six pairs reared one young and two pairs reared two young; four pairs hatched eggs but then failed; five pairs failed at egg stage (in one case, eggs were robbed by collector); one pair failed at unspecified stage; five pairs or apparent pairs (plus several unattached non-breeders) made no breeding attempts.

County D: five pairs, one successful. One pair reared two young; three pairs failed to hatch eggs; nest of one pair collapsed at egg stage.

County E: two or more pairs, none successful. Two pairs nested but both failed, one after hatching. At least four additional birds, two of them possibly paired.

There was one more nesting pair than in 1973, but the number of young successfully reared dropped by two.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

Four to six pairs were reported.

Hampshire: single pairs at two sites; neither disturbed during breeding season, but large nest found at one site in November was probably Honey Buzzard's. Full details of the New Forest population were not reported to the county recorder.

Norfolk: one pair reared three young to flying stage.

County A: one pair present at regular site but did not breed: this was attributed to disturbance by birdwatchers, including coach-parties. Observers who know of the location of this pair are asked not to pass on their knowledge and not to visit the area. One pair (perhaps the same birds, displaced from the regular site) reared at least one young at a new site.

County B: one or two present on several June/July dates at one locality.

We are beginning to show a more truthful picture of Honey Buzzards in Britain than the single report in 1973 (see page 504), but the data supplied to the panel are still fewer than are known to us individually.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Five males and six females reared a total of ten young.

Suffolk: three sites. At Minsmere, two males, one with two females; one nest of bigamous male produced three young; both other nesting attempts failed. At two other sites, single pairs reared three and one young.

County A: one pair successfully reared three young.

All records were from the same sites as in 1973. Though one extra adult male was present in 1974, the number of young successfully reared dropped from 16 to ten. (A late 1973 record is listed on page 504.)

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

Only one pair, which may not have bred.

County A: one pair seen irregularly in May/June.

After one pair and an apparently unmated female failed to rear young in 1973, the 1974 situation appears to have been even more bleak.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Fourteen or more pairs present, ten successfully rearing at least 20 young.

Inverness: one pair reared three young at Loch Garten.

Perth: one pair reared two young at Loch of Lowes.

County A: one pair reared one young.

County B: six pairs. One reared three young; one reared two young; one reared one young from three eggs; one reared at least one young from two eggs; one laid one egg but failed to rear young; the nest of the sixth pair, with two eggs, collapsed.

County C: single pairs at two sites, but both failed to rear young.

County D: two sites occupied by single pairs, successfully rearing three and two young.

County E: one pair reared two young from three eggs.

County F: single birds seen at several places and breeding suspected but not proved.

The situation was very similar to that in 1973, when there were 16 or more sites and ten pairs reared 21 young.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Present at about 90 sites, with at least 35 pairs proved breeding; at least 24 of them successful, rearing at least 48 young.

Avon: possible breeding at two sites; pairs seen in display flight in mid-June, and on dates in mid-May and August.

Bedford: records from three sites (9th June, 1st-15th July, and 15th July and 5th September), but no evidence of breeding.

Berkshire: pairs at three sites. Three young known to have fledged at one; and nests at other two contained one and two young with half-grown primaries in early August. Probably at least three other pairs in the county.

Buckingham: single pairs reported from four sites. Seen regularly through season at one site, on the only visit to a regular site, and on single dates at sites near Bedford and Berkshire borders. None proved to breed; recorder comments that the species is under-recorded in the county.

Devon: pairs at eight sites and at least nine young fledged, but several nests believed to have been robbed by Carrion Crows *Corvus corone*.

Dorset: present at about 15 sites, with three pairs proved breeding (all successful, one rearing two young, others not known precisely) and another two probably breeding.

Hampshire: 13-15 pairs were located, but this was considered to represent less than 50% of the actual county total; two pairs reared at least two young each; other details not reported.

Huntingdon: one pair reared at least one young.

Leicester: one pair reared two young.

Lincolnshire/south Humberside: up to three seen at one site in first half of June.

Northampton: one pair reared two young; perhaps three other pairs in the county.

Oxford: two pairs proved breeding (success not reported), two more probably bred and a further two or more possibly bred.

Somerset: single birds seen in an area where breeding suspected in previous years.

Surrey: 17 sites. Three pairs at one of these, single pairs at 12 and only single birds recorded at four: 15 pairs probably bred, of which ten were proved. A good year, with high breeding success and no evidence of human interference: the ten proved pairs reared at least 24 (and possibly 29) young.

Warwick: three pairs proved breeding and another two probably bred, but full details not supplied to the recorder.

Wiltshire: one pair reared at least one young.

Once again, Sussex records were not supplied to the panel; nor do we have 1973 Hampshire data. Outside Hampshire and Sussex, however, there was a 28% increase in the number of sites at which Hobbies were reported in 1974 compared with 1973, and the number of proved breeding records, the number of pairs known to have been successful, and the number of young known to have been reared all doubled, so 1974 was clearly a successful year. (Late 1973 records are listed on page 504.)

Spotted Crane *Porzana porzana*

Present at four sites, but no records of proved breeding.

Aberdeen: at one site, heard on 29th April, 6th May (at least two birds), 16th May and some other unspecified dates.

Argyll: one heard on 1st-2nd July.

Inverness: one heard from 20th June to 9th July.

Perth: at least one and possibly a pair heard in June/July.

None was reported in 1973. More than half of the records of summering Spotted Crakes supplied to the British Trust for Ornithology/Irish Wildbird Conservancy Atlas Project in 1968-72 were in Scotland and the four 1974 records continue this trend.

Dotterel *Eudromias morinellus*

Data very incomplete.

Aberdeen: present, but no details available.

Angus: reported from two sites, at least seven adults and four young at one site and one adult and three young (thought to be two broods) at the other.

Banff: at one site, one pair bred (nest with four eggs) and up to ten others possibly bred (flock of ten females and a male, and one pair seen).

Inverness: present, but no details available.

As in 1973, there was no detailed information available for the main counties and it is impossible to comment on trends. (1973 addition and corrections are given on page 504.)

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Present at nine sites, 51-55 pairs rearing 47-66 young.

Cambridge/Norfolk: 42-45 pairs reared 40-55 young to fledging on the Ouse Washes.

Cumbria: two pairs nested at regular site. One pair reared two young from clutch of four eggs, but the other pair's clutch of three eggs was lost to predators, probably gulls *Larus sp.*

Kent: one pair reared two young to fledging at same site as in 1973.

Lincolnshire/south Humberside: single pairs at two sites. One reared one young, and the other probably bred: after display and defence of territory in May-June, three adults and three juveniles seen on 21st July.

Somerset: present at same two sites as in 1973. Two pairs acted as if they had small young at one site, and one pair with nest and one egg at the other.

County B: one pair reared two young.

County C: one pair established territory but there was no proof of breeding.

A very similar situation to 1973, when 55-61 pairs nested at nine sites. (A late 1973 record is listed on page 505.)

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

At least one pair nested.

Caithness: single birds at two sites on 1st-2nd June.

Inverness: at one site, two males displaying and singing 19th-22nd May and nest with four eggs found on 2nd July, but probably failed.

Compared with seven or eight pairs in Scotland in 1972, two sightings of single birds in 1973 and the above records in 1974 appear to be a disappointing reverse.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

One or two pairs probably bred.

County A: display first seen on 23rd May and at least three birds present in June; at least one and probably two pairs probably attempted to breed.

County B: two birds at one site on 22nd June, but no proof of breeding.

One or two pairs have been present at the site in County A in every year since 1969, with breeding proved there in 1971.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

One pair seen.

County B: a pair seen on a mountain top on 9th June, but not found on 15th June.

This interesting record follows one the previous year of a pair seen displaying over another mountain (see page 505). Though there is still no evidence that these were other than late migrants, it seems worth putting them on record at this time.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Reported from only one site.

Cambridge/Norfolk: probably twelve females nested, possibly rearing at least five young.

This compares with about eight nesting Reeves in 1973.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

125 pairs nested, but only 64 young reared.

Suffolk: at Minsmere, 40 pairs in April but only 35 pairs actually nested, rearing at least 58 young. At Havergate Island, 86 pairs produced 98 nests, but only six young reared, due to poor weather and feeding conditions.

County A: two sites. Three pairs at one site, success not known; one pair failed at the other.

This was a disastrous year at Havergate Island, with the smallest number of pairs for seven years and abysmal breeding success. The number of pairs at Minsmere equalled the highest ever, though fewer young were reared than in 1973.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

Fewer than 20 pairs reported.

Outer Hebrides: about four sites. One pair attempted breeding but no young seen; one or two birds at lochs nearby; perhaps one or two pairs at other sites, but details not known.

Shetland: nine to 14 pairs at four sites.

County A: one bird seen on one date.

The details received in 1973 and 1974 are so incomplete that an accurate assessment of changes is impossible. (Late 1973 records are given on page 505.)

Stone Curlew *Burhinus oedicanus*

Over 50 pairs reported, but data very incomplete.

Berkshire: one pair and two juveniles seen at one site on 21st July.

Cambridge: only one pair proved breeding (pair with one juvenile), but a total of ten or more pairs possibly bred at seven sites.

Dorset: one or two pairs probably bred.

Essex: four pairs at one site, but success unknown.

Hampshire: no details were reported to the county recorder.

Norfolk: 'present in some numbers but no accurate figures available, due to birds breeding in forest rides and/or agricultural land'.

Norfolk/Suffolk: 25 nests found in Breckland and, with at least 22 young seen, about 30 young thought to have been reared. (Note overlap to unknown extent with separate Norfolk and Suffolk entries.)

Oxford: three pairs nested but, to avoid disturbance, nests were not visited and the outcome is therefore unknown.

Suffolk: data are known to be incomplete, but four pairs in coastal belt and 12-15 pairs in Breckland were reported.

Wiltshire: at least 14 sites with single pairs probably breeding at each. Eight pairs proved breeding.

With incomplete coverage and no reports from Hampshire or Sussex where they were certainly present, it is impossible to assess the current situation. (An additional 1973 record is given on page 505.)

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

No records received. None was present at the Hampshire site where one pair bred in 1968 and mixed Mediterranean × Black-headed Gull *L. ridibundus* pairs nested then and in subsequent years.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

No records received. The only breeding records this century were a few pairs in Cambridge/Norfolk in 1966 and 1969, and one pair in Ireland in 1967.

Snowy Owl *Nyctea scandiaca*

Records from only the traditional site.

Shetland: male with two females on Fetlar. The established pairing resulted in two young being fledged from five eggs, but one died soon afterwards; the other

was later found injured but was released after treatment. The second nest, with only one egg, failed at an early stage.

As in 1973, one male and two females succeeded in rearing only one young

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

No records received. The only instances of confirmed breeding in the past seven years were in Cornwall in 1968 and 1969 and in Sussex in 1971.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Reported from five sites, but no successful breeding.

Inverness: singing birds at three sites (15th-22nd May, 23rd May and 1st June).

Ross: two sites. At one, singing heard from beginning of June and pair entering nest-box; male found dead nearby on 27th June and other bird left soon afterwards; no eggs in box. At other site, song heard on one date in late June.

After only one pair in southern England in 1973, in Kent, there was none in 1974, for the first time since ornithological recording began. After only one in Scotland in 1973 (see page 505), the slight resurgence there seems now to be the main hope for this species' continuation as a British breeder.

Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

No records received. After presence in summer in 1972 and 1973, with probable breeding in the latter year, none was reported to us this year.

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

Two pairs confirmed breeding and others present.

Fife: one pair reared two young. Female seen on 3rd June and pair feeding two fledged young on 17th July. The site was about 600 metres from the location of the 1973 Fife record (see page 505).

Norfolk: male heard singing on 9th July.

Suffolk: more than one pair present, and one pair seen with young.

This species has been breeding here annually in recent years and appears to be becoming firmly established in Suffolk, though still in small numbers.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Seven or eight sites: three pairs certainly bred and three more probably did so.

Derby: one pair present in June; probable used nest found later.

Midlothian: at one site, a male singing on 13th June and seen again on 15th June; one giving alarm calls 3 km away on 17th June.

Orkney: one pair feeding two young in mid-June.

Ross: one pair feeding at least one fledgling on 11th July.

Stafford: two sites. One pair reared four young; second pair probably bred.

Shetland: scolding birds at usual site on 9th June, but breeding not proved.

After the first British breeding record in Orkney in 1967, this species has increased in numbers annually. We suspect that other records were not reported to us.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

A total of 25 sites, with about 19 pairs probably breeding.

Banff: one singing male on 14th April at site where nest with four young was found in May 1971.

Inverness: singing birds at three sites, but no proof of breeding.

Moray: one singing male on 14th April, not relocated two weeks later.

Perth: a pair summered at one site, but apparently did not nest successfully; a singing bird at a second site on 12th May.

Ross: 13 pairs reported in Wester Ross and one pair (rearing three young) in Easter Ross.

Sutherland: two sites. One pair nesting 16th June; one of second pair found dead on 23rd May.

Shetland: summering birds on Unst and Mainland, but no proof of breeding.

Even if every singing bird represented a breeding pair, the 1973 and 1974 totals were only eleven and 25, a considerable decrease compared with 1969-72, and birds were absent in 1974 from areas occupied in that period. (A late 1973 record is given on page 505.)

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Present at 46 sites, with at least 47 pairs confirmed breeding, another nine probably breeding and 13 more possibly breeding.

Bedford: one pair at the site discovered in 1973 reared two broods of three each in March/April and June, and male seen carrying food on 10th July.

Berkshire: two sites. One pair reared three young from clutch of four eggs at one site; a male sang for about ten days from 11th April at the other.

Cheshire: two sites. Nest with four eggs (destroyed on the day it was found) and female at one; activity of pair at the other suggested breeding in inaccessible position in June/July, but site vandalised.

Essex: seven sites, with single pairs or single males at each. Two pairs reared young; one pair and one male seen carrying food throughout breeding season; one pair present but no breeding proved; and single singing males, throughout June and on 1st July.

Hertford: one pair reared three young at one site; at another site two males and a female were seen on 4th April and breeding possibly occurred.

Huntingdon: one heard singing in April for the third successive year at one site.

Kent: 13-14 pairs and a singing male at ten sites (five or six at one site); 12-13 pairs bred, rearing more than 41 young (at least one pair double-brooded).

Leicester: one pair reared two broods, of two and three young.

Lincoln/south Humberside: one pair reared five young.

London: eight pairs nested at seven sites, at least seven pairs successfully rearing more than 18 young.

Middlesex: one pair breeding.

Norfolk: three sites. Nine singing males, two pairs breeding successfully, at one site; at the other two sites there were single pairs, one of which certainly bred and the other probably did so.

Stafford: one pair at traditional site, but breeding not proved.

Suffolk: ten pairs proved breeding and another three probably bred at three sites; one pair double-brooded, two others known to be successful.

Surrey: a single female at one site; no confirmed breeding.

Warwick: two sites. One pair reared three young at a new site; one pair present at a traditional site, but breeding not proved.

Worcester: one pair, with broods of four and five, was only second county breeding record.

Though present at eleven more sites than in 1973, breeding numbers were similar, with 47-69 pairs compared with 46-68. (Late 1973 records are listed on page 505.)

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

No records received. The only previous record relates to a female with nest and eggs in Inverness in 1968.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

Seven sites: five pairs proved breeding and another five possibly bred.

Devon: none in breeding season, but recorded at three sites in late autumn/winter.

Kent: four sites. Four pairs proved breeding and five more possibly bred. Site totals as follows: six singing, three pairs definitely bred; five birds (two pairs), one pair feeding young; two pairs; two males singing May-August.

Norfolk: four singing males at three sites and one pair reared four young.

This was the first year in which more than one pair was proved to breed in Britain. The number of singing males was approximately the same as in 1973. The spread of Cetti's Warblers in north-west Europe has recently been documented by P. F. Bonham and J. C. M. Robertson (*Brit. Birds*, 68: 393-408).

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*

Five sites: eight singing males and one pair confirmed breeding.

Devon: at the 1973 site, one from 20th May to early July, but again no evidence of breeding.

Kent: two pairs present at one site, one of them seen carrying food for young.

Norfolk: one singing on 14th-16th June.

Suffolk: two sites. Three pairs and one pair, but success not known.

There were smaller numbers at all three regular sites than in 1973, when there was a total of 13 (including the late report given on page 506).

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

44-78 pairs probably bred.

Gloucester: five sites. Single pairs probably bred at two sites; two birds (presumed pair) at a third; and single singing males at two further sites (perhaps two males at one of these).

Kent: two pairs thought to have bred at one site.

Worcester: no change from 1973, with 40-70 pairs probably breeding.

Total numbers were approximately the same in 1973 and 1974.

Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*

About 560 pairs probably bred.

Devon: present at three sites, but no evidence of breeding.

Dorset: about 286 pairs, 282 in east Dorset and four in west Dorset.

Hampshire: no details were reported to the county recorder, but C. J. Bibby and C. R. Tubbs (*Brit. Birds*, 68: 177-195) gave a total of 250 pairs in the New Forest.

Isle of Wight: records were not submitted to the panel, but Bibby and Tubbs (see Hampshire) gave a total of six pairs.

Surrey: none at the first 1973 site, due to habitat destruction; one pair again at the second site, raising three broods.

Sussex: records were not submitted to the panel, but Bibby and Tubbs (see Hampshire) gave a total of 15 pairs.

County A: four or five birds at the same site as in 1972-73.

The total of about 560 pairs in 1974 compares with about 460 pairs in 1960-61 and 11 pairs in 1963, immediately before and after the hard winters of 1961/62 and 1962/63.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*

Over 30 singing males reported.

Bedford: one pair, success not known.

Berkshire: one pair probably bred at one site. One bird seen on 1st April, one in song on three dates during 11th-22nd June and a probable family party on 16th September.

Buckingham: a total of 24 singing males at the same site as 1971-73; one at a second site.

Dorset: one pair probably bred.

Hampshire: the New Forest population is presumably still extant, but no details were reported to the county recorder, and no census has been undertaken recently.

Northampton: two singing at same site as 1973, from 12th-18th May, but not found subsequently.

Suffolk: a male paired with a female Goldcrest *R. regulus* reared seven young.

Yet another increase at the main Buckingham site (11 males in 1973) and reports from more counties than in any previous year.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Fewer than 50 pairs reported.

Bedford: one pair at an established site on 18th May, but no evidence of breeding.

Essex: a pair at one site and a female at a second site, but no breeding proved.

Hampshire: three or four pairs located, only one of which was proved breeding; total population is thought to be not more than six pairs.

Hertford: one pair stayed for two weeks and breeding possibly occurred, but was not proved.

Kent: single pairs at two sites, one rearing at least two young.

Norfolk: three sites, with single pairs at two of these and five pairs (only six young reared) at the third.

Norfolk/Suffolk: 28 pairs found in Breckland, making 38 nesting attempts due to predation: at least 83 young fledged. (Note overlap to unknown extent with separate Norfolk and Suffolk entries.)

Suffolk: 12 pairs in the coastal belt and at least 16 pairs in Breckland, but success not known.

Surrey: up to two males at the first 1973 site but no evidence of either being paired or having bred.

Even though the data are not complete, it seems likely that the 1973 and 1974 totals were both lower than the 81 pairs recorded in 1971 (see C. J. Bibby in *Bird Study*, 20: 103-110). (Late 1973 records are given on page 506.)

Serim *Serinus serinus*

No records received. The expected colonisation of Britain, following breeding in Dorset in 1967 and Sussex in 1969, appears not to have occurred yet. The pattern of records up to 1970 and the European spread were summarised by V. Olsson (*Brit. Birds*, 64: 213-223).

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Seven to 11 pairs.

Aberdeen/Banff/Inverness: three sites. Probably about six pairs at one, with nest and six eggs found; two males and one female in June at the second; male in song in June at the third.

Perth: a first-year male and a female at one site, but no proof of breeding.

Sutherland: two sites. Pair with four eggs on about 10th June at one site; single male on 30th May at the other.

The numbers reported were almost identical to those in 1973. (1973 addition and corrections are listed on page 506.)

Additions and corrections for 1973

(cf *Brit. Birds*, 68: 5-23)

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Cumberland: a female seen with seven small young.

Kent: pair on 4th June and male on several subsequent dates at one site, but no other indication of breeding.

These records bring the 1973 total to three to five pairs breeding.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

County A: apparently only a single bird present at a regular site.

This is the only report for 1973, which gives a completely false impression of the actual situation in Britain.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

County A: one pair successfully reared two young.

This increases the 1973 totals to four sites with four males and six females, and 16 young reared.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Surrey: the following revised summary includes the seven pairs at six sites noted in last year's report. Noted in breeding season at 13 sites, including two pairs at one of these. Of 14 pairs that possibly bred, 11 probably bred and seven pairs were proved breeding. Five successful pairs reared 12 young, immature birds were seen at another site and only one of the proved breeding pairs was unsuccessful.

Yorkshire: seen singly at one site on several dates between 2nd June and 24th August, where two were seen together in August 1972 and where a local informant states that 'they breed every year', though this has yet to be verified by an ornithologist.

These records raise the 1973 total to about 60 pairs present, with 16 of them proved breeding, eleven rearing at least 23 young. No details have been supplied for two of this species' main counties: Hampshire and Sussex.

Dotterel *Eudromias morinellus*

County A: single bird seen on 30th June at a site where Dotterels have bred in the past.

The comment made last year, that the population has remained fairly steady at 1950-60 estimates of 60-80 pairs, and that there has been a recent decrease in the Cairngorms, probably due to human disturbance, may be incorrect. Dr Adam Watson (*in litt.*) points out that D. Nethersole-Thompson's *The Dotterel* (1973) gave evidence for a recent increase, and that there is also no sign of any decrease in areas where there are many people.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Kent: one pair reared four young to fledging.

This increases the 1973 totals to nine sites with 55 pairs proved breeding, one more probably breeding and five more possibly breeding.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

County A: pair display-fighting over a mountain top in June.

This was the first ever indication of the possibility of a breeding attempt in Britain.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

Outer Hebrides (EXTRA RECORDS): single pairs at two sites, one of them rearing three young, the other not watched. (The site with the successful pair was occupied every year during 1968-73, with breeding there in every year except 1972.)

Stone Curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*

Dorset: one or two pairs probably bred.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Inverness: one singing on 18th June.

This record and one pair in Kent were the only reports.

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

Fife: singing heard during May at one site, but no other evidence of nesting.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Shetland: pair with nest and four young ready to fledge on 20th July.

This record brings the 1973 totals to ten sites (two pairs at one) and four pairs confirmed breeding.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Cheshire: one pair. Male first seen in May, and nest with four eggs and female incubating on 3rd July; subsequently deserted and eggs found to contain well-grown embryos. The first county breeding record.

Huntingdon: one heard singing in April at a site where also heard in 1972.

Surrey: present at seven sites. One pair proved breeding, rearing three young; pairs at two other sites and single singing males at the other four sites (one of which may have wandered from one of the London sites).

These records bring the 1973 totals to 35 sites, with 46 pairs confirmed breeding, a further ten probably breeding and another twelve possibly breeding.

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*

Devon: one from 27th May to 24th June, but no other evidence of breeding.

This raises the 1973 total to 13 singing males, with at least nine pairs probably breeding.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Kent: the second pair mentioned in the last report reared four young.

Surrey: two sites. Pair nested successfully at one, two young being seen on 2nd August; and a single male was present during April-June at the other, though breeding was considered to be probable.

This brings the total to over 40, but details are still incomplete.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Angus: a pair on 31st May and a singing male at the same site in early June.

Perth (DELETION): the record listed in last year's report is erroneous.

Aberdeen/Banff/Inverness (CORRECTION): the records attributed to Inverness in last year's report should be listed under these three counties.

Additions and corrections to the 1973 and this 1974 report will be greatly welcomed by the panel, and will form an addendum to the 1975 report. They should be sent to the address below. 1975 records should be submitted to the relevant county or regional recorder (see Brit. Birds, 68: 255-260), who will then pass on all his county's records on the panel's special forms.

Dr J. T. R. Sharrock, 59 Curlew Crescent, Bedford MK41 7HY