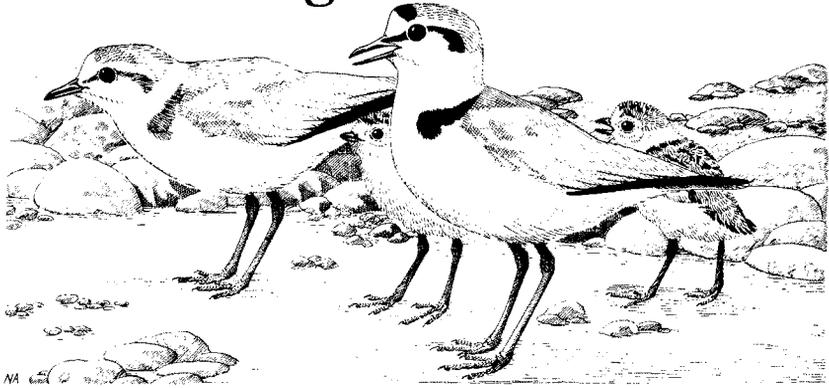


# Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 1979



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

Periodically, there have been criticisms accusing the Panel of revealing too much information. The Panel having been in operation for seven years, we considered that the time was ripe for testing the opinions of all those responsible for collecting, assessing, collating and publishing bird records in the UK: the county and regional report editors. In early spring 1980, therefore, we sent out a questionnaire to each of the 85 county and regional recorders in the UK, with the request that they each consult their colleagues on their local editorial committee and then complete and return the form to us. We stated that 'The direction which the Panel takes in the coming years will be determined by your response to our questions.' The replies from 70 returned questionnaires are given below:

The Rare Breeding Birds Panel

(1) is too secretive and publishes insufficient detail	3 (4%)
(2) provides a balanced and responsible published report	62 (89%)
(3) occasionally reveals too much information	3 (4%)
(4) often misguidedly reveals too much information	2 (3%)

The Panel has always published only that information which it considered to be safe, sometimes suppressing data for which county societies had given clearance. It is reassuring to discover that the majority of county societies support this stance. Even our critics, however, were constructive in their suggestions, and all comments have been noted and will lead to various improvements in our reports.

The primary function of the Rare Breeding Birds Panel is to provide a safe store for confidential information, so that this is collected in one file for posterity. In the past, details of important records have been lost for ever through the deaths of the only people having knowledge of the circumstances; storing of confidential records in the scattered files of individual county societies is also unsatisfactory, since they will not be easily

accessible to researchers in the future and, inevitably, some will be mislaid over the years. Records submitted to the panel on its special forms (two copies of each) are filed in locked containers at two places, to guard against loss by fire. As the years pass, the accumulated information becomes more and more valuable. We are pleased, therefore, that co-operation from county and regional recorders is being maintained and, in many cases, is improving. A few societies or recorders do not supply full data for their most sensitive species (which are, of course, different in each area). We regret this, since the confidentiality of the panel is now thoroughly established and neither posterity nor present-day conservationists will welcome less than the full picture. We are pleased, however, that information for past years is now being supplied by an increasing number of recorders so that the scientific record is completed.

Serving conservation is our second function. It is obviously important for the RSPB, the Nature Conservancy Council and others to know which species are increasing and which decreasing, whether breeding success is improving or declining, whether breeding ranges are expanding or contracting, and so on. Such information can be obtained only by collection of much otherwise confidential data into one central register, from which summaries (but not details) can be fed to the conservation bodies. The Panel is funded and supported jointly by *British Birds*, the BTO, the RSPB and the NCC. During 1979, the panel's members were Dr L. A. Batten, R. H. Dennis, Ian Prestt, Dr J. T. R. Sharrock (secretary) and Robert Spencer.

Most records reach the Panel from the county and regional recorders (see names and addresses in *Brit. Birds* 72: 446-449). Individual observers are strongly encouraged to submit their data via the relevant county recorder, although it is recognised that there may very occasionally be exceptional reasons for sending a record directly to the panel's secretary. The special forms for submitting records are available free from the address at the end of this report.

So far, 1979 details have been received from 76 areas (fig. 1); nine are still outstanding, but we expect to receive data from most if not all in due course. The policy in our published reports is to include information only when safe to do so, and provided that we have received permission; we publish basic details, sufficient for the purposes of most researchers and enough to give birdwatchers a balanced annual summary of the events concerning the United Kingdom's rarest breeding birds.

In this report, counties are named only when permission has been given. In other cases, code letters are used: these are the same as in previous reports, so that histories of decline or colonisation can be followed, even though the locations must remain confidential to ensure freedom from disturbance. This report contains a mixture of old and new county names: we have used those supplied by the recorders.

For most species, we have given a range of figures for 'pairs breeding', the lower representing the number confirmed breeding and the upper the maximum if, for instance, every singing male or single sighting represented a nesting pair. Although these ranges are often very wide, they can be

Fig. 1. Areas covered by this report. Records (or negative returns) were supplied for the 76 areas shown black. Some individual observers supplied data for the counties left white, but records were not received from the local recorders, and so the picture may be very incomplete for these nine areas. The panel does not collect records from the Republic of Ireland



consistently calculated each year and will, we hope, be valuable for comparisons.

### Summary of the year

Fears that the severe winter of 1978/79 would have a serious effect on our rarer breeding birds were partly justified. Compared with 1978, the 1979 breeding numbers of Dartford Warblers fell by over 40%, but Cetti's Warblers proved to be hardy, declining by only 7%, and the number of breeding Bitterns was almost unaffected.

The year included some indications of what may perhaps come in the future, with summering or long stays by Red-necked Grebe, Little Bittern, Purple Heron and Great Reed Warbler. Some species have not waited for a mate of their own kind to appear before indulging in breeding activities and in 1979 these included Black Duck, King Eider and Glaucous Gull.

A very welcome event occurred in 1979. One of the only two breeding species lost to Britain this century did manage what could prove to be its first step towards recolonisation. The White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* will return only as a result of reintroduction, but the Kentish Plover has returned of its own accord: a pair hatched chicks and must have given their discoverers the thrill of a lifetime. If lucky birders who come across a pair—or even a single in suitable habitat (perhaps it has a mate on eggs nearby)—show restraint, perhaps this delightful bird will return as a regular breeder.

Every year has its successes and its failures. Our report notes pleasing events concerning Whooper Swan, Goldeneye, Montagu's Harrier, Goshawk (despite a fearful degree of interference), Osprey, Hobby, Ruff, Mediterranean Gull, Savi's Warbler, Marsh Warbler, Firecrest, Golden Oriole and Brambling. There is also remarkable news of Redwings in 1975 and 1976; that for 1979, however, was dismal for this species, and Wryneck (no proved breeding) and Serin (no relevant records, after encouraging events in 1978) both also provided disappointments.

### Systematic list

We have received no relevant 1979 records of the following species:

Great Northern Diver <i>Gavia immer</i>	Little Gull <i>Larus minutus</i>
Rough-legged Buzzard <i>Buteo lagopus</i>	Black Tern <i>Chlidonia niger</i>
Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i>	Hoopoe <i>Upupa epops</i>
Pectoral Sandpiper <i>C. melanotos</i>	Shore Lark <i>Eremophila alpestris</i>
Purple Sandpiper <i>C. maritima</i>	Citrine Wagtail <i>Motacilla citreola</i>
Jack Snipe <i>Lymnocyrtus minimus</i>	Bluethroat <i>Luscinia svecica</i>
Spotted Sandpiper <i>Actitis macularia</i>	Great Grey Shrike <i>Lanius excubitor</i>
Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Serin <i>Serinus serinus</i>

### Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

One site: single summered.

**County A** One site: single adult from at least 2nd May to 27th July.

A return to the 1975-77 situation, after no summer records in 1978. Breeding has never been suspected, but eventual colonisation seems distinctly possible.

### Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Incomplete data.

**County A** One site: seven or eight broods totalling 13 young; 'most successful season in the present decade.'

**County B** Two sites: (1) pair reared two young; (2) single on three dates in May and early June, but none late June or July.

We hope to have the 1979 Inverness-shire data available for inclusion in our next report.

### Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Six sites: 12-14 pairs breeding, 23 young.

**County A** Two sites: (1) four pairs reared six young; (2) three pairs reared six young.

**County D** One site: four broods (3, 3, 2 & 1) in July.

**County E** One site: single from 15th April to 1st July.

**County G** One site: pair from mid April to mid May (courtship on 6th May), single early August, pair throughout September.

**County I** One site: pair with two newly-hatched young on 14th June, all four still present 30th June.

Totals have been in the range 10-19 pairs every year since 1973.

### Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

19 sites: one to 47 pairs breeding.

**Lancashire** Two sites: (1) 11 booming males; (2) one booming male.

**Lincolnshire/south Humber side** Two sites: (1) one booming male April-May; (2) one booming male in mid May.

**Norfolk** Nine sites: (1) one male and two females reared two broods; (2) (3) two booming males; (4)-(9) one booming male.

**Suffolk** Four sites: (1) nine pairs; (2) seven pairs; (3) two booming males on 13th April; (4) two present from 1st-12th June.

**County A** Two sites: (1) (2) one booming male.

**1978 Suffolk** Two sites: (1) (2) total of 'probably 20 pairs'.

The severe 1978/79 winter apparently had little effect: the two previous years' totals were 0-42 pairs at 17 sites in 1977 and 2-47 pairs at 17 sites in 1978.

### **Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus*

One site: single male (and possibly pair) held territory.

**County A** One site: male present and thumping song heard from early May to at least 19th June; second, duller individual seen on one date, assumed to be female.

Breeding probably occurred in East Anglia in the 19th century and on a few occasions in southeast England in the 1940s and 1950s, but has never been proved in Britain or Ireland. A male's thumping song was heard at one site in southern England for six weeks in June-July 1970 and a male—seen on single dates in June and August—may have summered in West Glamorgan in 1976.

### **Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*

One site: single summered.

**Dyfed** One site: single from 21st May to 14th July.

Singles summered in West Glamorgan in 1976 and 1977, but there is no suggestion of the presence of pairs or attempted breeding; none has ever been recorded nesting in Britain or Ireland.

### **Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus*

Three sites: one pair with two young and two non-breeding pairs; also escaped pair reared one young.

**Scotland** Three sites: (1) pair with two young during 11th-17th July; (2) (3) pair present.

**Dunbartonshire** One site: feral pair escaped from nearby wildfowl collection, nest found 28th May, one young reared.

After no breeding records during the 30 years from 1948-77, two come in quick succession, with single pairs rearing three young in 1978 and two young in 1979.

### **Black Duck** *Anas rubripes*

One female paired with male Mallard *A. platyrhynchos* and reared hybrid young.

**Scilly** One site: single female paired with male Mallard, three hybrid young seen on 30th May and 4th June, but only two remained on 16th July.

The third successive year in which presumably the same female reared hybrid young.

### **Pintail** *Anas acuta*

17 sites: nine to 39 pairs breeding.

**Angus** Two sites: (1) three pairs in early May; (2) nine adults on 13th May.

**Argyll** Two sites: (1) eight young on 17th July; (2) two females with young on 7th July.

**Cambridgeshire** Four sites: (1) two males and single female in May-June, brood of six young on 17th June, three broods on 29th June, female with six young on 15th July; (2) male and female in May; (3) pair from 5th-19th April; (4) male in May.

**Cheshire** One site: three males and two females on 13th June, six males and four females on 16th June.

**Kent** Two sites: (1) pair with three almost full-grown young on 25th July; (2) three pairs in late March and April, none seen in May, but female in early June and with flying young in late June.

**Orkney** Four sites: (1) four females, one with eight well-grown young on 19th June; (2) pair on 13th June; (3) male on 14th June; (4) two males and one female on 16th June.

**Suffolk** Two sites: (1) pair throughout summer; (2) single summered.

The average during 1973-78 was eight to 18 pairs breeding.

### **Scaup** *Aythya marila*

Two sites: 0-1 pair breeding, and one hybrid pairing with Tufted Duck *A. fuligula*.

**Argyll** One site: pair from 23rd-28th May.

**North Yorkshire** One site: female, probably not 100% pure-bred, assumed to be same as in 1978 (*Brit. Birds* 73: 11), paired with male Tufted Duck, seen later with brood of eight young.

The only confirmed breeding records in the present decade were three pairs at one site in 1970 and single pairs in 1973 and 1978.

### **King Eider** *Somateria spectabilis*

Single male mating with female Eider *S. mollissima*.

**County A** One site: male mating on several occasions with female Eider.

Another instance of a summering vagrant or migrant outside its normal breeding range mating, pairing or breeding with a close congener.

### **Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*

16 sites: 98-125 pairs breeding.

**Argyll** One site: two females with four well-grown young.

**Caithness** Eight sites: (1) five pairs in June; (2) three pairs in June; (3) two males and one female on 10th June; (4) single male and female on 10th June; (5) three pairs in June; (6) two pairs in June; (7) (8) pair in June.

**Dunbartonshire/west Stirlingshire** One site: three pairs and fourth male in May, brood of six young on 8th August depleted to three young by 6th September and last seen with another female with one young on 8th September.

**Fermanagh** One site: 183 adults, including 89 paired females, with maximum of 37 young on one day (27th July).

**Perthshire** Two sites: (1) four females with broods of ten, seven, one and one on 11th July; (2) male and four females or juveniles on 18th August, assumed to have come from site 1.

**Shetland** Three sites: (1) female with two young; (2) female on nest; (3) up to three pairs in May-June.

The lowest maximum since these reports started in 1973; average during 1973-78 was 18-148 breeding pairs.

### **Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

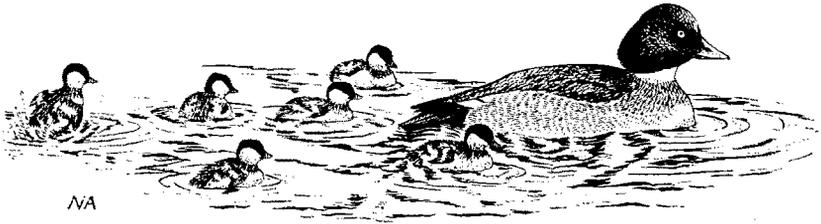
Over 14 sites: 22-40 pairs breeding, with at least 110 young hatched.

**Cheshire** One site: male until 29th June.

**Cumbria** Seven sites: (1)-(7) one to five on various dates from May to August; recorder gave opinion that 'we will add Goldeneye to our county breeding birds before long.'

**Dunbartonshire/west Stirlingshire** One site: pair until at least 22nd May, then female reported with flightless young on the very late dates of 8th and 15th September (also two males on last date).

**Highland** Number of sites not noted: 19 females laid a total of 162-165 eggs in nest-boxes and two other females nested in natural sites; 14 females hatched a total of 110 young.



N/A

**Midlothian** One site: female on 25th May; male on 15th June and, on adjacent water, on 24th June.

**North Yorkshire** One site: immature male on 20th June.

**1976 Cleveland** One site: female from 22nd June to 13th August.

**1978 North Yorkshire** One site: female on 17th June, two females on 26th July.

The minimum number of nesting females has increased spectacularly throughout the 1970s: 1, 1, 1, 3, 3, 2, 5, 6, 12 and 22. The number of young hatched in 1979 was also more than double the previous highest totals (46 in 1976 and 40+ in 1978).

### **Smew** *Mergus albellus*

Two sites: single individuals summering.

**Cheshire** One site: male stayed until 16th June.

**Suffolk** One site: female summered.

Not unexpected, following the winter 1978/79 influx.

### **Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus*

Information incomplete.

**Norfolk** One site: one or two summered from 3rd June.

**County A** One site: two from 19th May to at least August.

**County F** One site: single throughout July.

With no data supplied from the main breeding area, the Panel is unable to assess or report on trends.

### **Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

40 pairs: 18 young reared from 14 successful nests.

**County A** Two separate singles in April.

**County B** Five sites: (1) pair reared one young; (2) (3) pair laid eggs, but failed; (4) two, probably pair, but no nest; (5) two, perhaps pair, but no nest.

**County C** 27 sites: (1) (2) pair reared two young; (3)-(7) pair reared one young; (8)-(18) pair laid eggs, but failed; (19) pair laid eggs, robbed by egg-collectors; (20)-(25) pair built nest, but did not lay eggs; (26) pair built five nests, but did not lay eggs; (27) pair present all spring, but no nest-building seen. Also about ten unmated and unsettled individuals. Reporter commented: 'A notably unsuccessful season in this part of the range, due mainly to the exceptionally cold and late spring. Several pairs deserted eggs in snow of late April/early May, the males being unable to feed females. The proportion of pairs building but failing to lay was unprecedented.'

**County D** Four sites: (1) pair reared two young; (2) (3) pair reared one young; (4) pair in March, but not seen later.

**County E** Three sites: (1) pair reared two young; (2) pair reared one young; (3) pair laid eggs, but failed, probably owing to cold weather in early May.

**County F** One site: pair reared one young. Probably also wandering, unmated single.

The number of nesting pairs (36) was the highest this century, exceeding the 1977 and 1978 totals of 33 and 34, but neither the number of successful

nests (14) nor the number of young reared (18) reached the 1975 peaks of 15 and 24. Despite the cold, late spring (see comment under County C), however, pairs present, pairs nesting, successful nests and young reared were all above the 1973-78 average.

### **Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*

18 sites: 24 males and 26 females breeding, 12 pairs rearing 39 young.

**Norfolk** Eight sites: (1) two males and three females present, five young reared; (2) pair reared four young; (3) (4) pair reared three young; (5) pair laid eggs, which were removed by man; (6) pair built nest, but no eggs laid; (7) pair summered; (8) pair nest-building in April.

**Suffolk** Six sites: (1) ten young reared from three nests; (2) two pairs (one male with two females, one infertile) each reared four young; (3) (4) three young reared from one nest; (5) pair built nest, but probably no young reared; (6) pair summered.

**County B** One site: female from 5th May to 17th September, but no male seen.

**County C** One site: female from mid May to at least mid June in area where almost certainly bred in 1950s.

**County D** One site: pair from 5th May to early June, displaying on 14th May, second female in mid May, probably made breeding attempt.

**County E** One site: pair from May to late July, display and nest-building only.

The recent upsurge in number of young reared was maintained (the 1973-75 average was only 14, compared with 34 during 1976-78), but did not reach the 20th-century high of 44 in 1977. The summerers outside the two main counties are an encouraging sign.

### **Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus*

Four sites: two to four pairs breeding, total of seven young reared.

**County A** One site: male from 7th May to 10th June, nest built, but female on only 28th May.

**County C** One site: pair reared three young.

**County D** One site: pair reared four young.

**County G** One site: female from mid May to end of June.

**1978 County C** One site: pair nested, but cattle trod on clutch of four eggs.

The most successful year since 1972, but the existence of this species as a British breeding species remains very tenuous. We appeal to bird-watchers to resist the temptation to visit known sites and to be very circumspect if breeding in a new site is suspected.



### **Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

32 sites: 20-38 pairs breeding.

**Argyll** One site: female displaying.

**Caernarvonshire** Two sites: (1) pair from mid February to mid April, often displaying, rumours of occasional sightings in summer; (2) female on 27th June and 20th October, male on 1st July.

**Cumbria** One site: female on 5th May.

**Dumfriesshire** One site: female on 30th May.

**County C** One site: male on 7th April, female at nest on 21st April, none in July, when nest-tree showed signs of climbing irons.



**County D** Four sites: (1) four pairs, one reared one young, one laid three eggs which were taken, one laid three or four eggs but deserted owing to human disturbance, fourth pair may have held territory; (2) two pairs, one reared two young, second pair had eggs taken; (3) pair had three young removed by falconer; (4) pair laid three eggs, but young removed by falconer.

**County K** Two sites: (1) pair reared at least two young; (2) in April, male seen several times and female once.

**County L** One site: pair displaying 5th, 7th and 8th May.

**County M** Present, but no details made available to county recorder.

**County N** Two sites: (1) (2) pair fledged young.

**County P** Five sites: (1) pair had eggs taken but remained on territory; (2) two pairs, one reared three young, second laid four eggs, but clutch taken; (3) pair built nest, this pulled out, pair rebuilt, but failed to lay, second pair or unmated male built up nest of Sparrowhawk *A. nisus* and then built new nest, but no eggs laid; (4) pair laid clutches of two twice, but eggs removed; (5) sightings of probably unmated single.

**County T** Three sites: (1) pair until at least 17th April, no nest found; (2) used nest found; (3) male on 14th and 18th April.

**County U** One site: pair summered, built nest, possibly laid eggs.

**County V** Four sites: (1) (2) pair built nest, but breeding failed; (3) (4) pair, perhaps nested.

**County X** One site: pair displaying in April, presence noted in June.

**County Y** One site: pair displaying, then with juveniles on 27th August.

**County Z** One site: pair, did not breed.

**1977 Caernarvonshire** Two sites: (1) single on 22nd June; (2) female on 14th June.

**1977 County D** Four sites: (1) two pairs nested, both probably reared young; (2) two pairs, one probably reared young, second had clutch of three eggs taken; (3) two pairs, one had eggs taken, attempted to nest again and then deserted, second pair present but no other evidence; (4) pair reared at least two young. This entry replaces the earlier one (*Brit. Birds* 72: 370).

**1977 County P** Five sites: (1) pair probably laid, but failed to rear young; (2) two pairs, one built up nest but failed to breed, second pair in territory but no nest located; (3) pair present and display observed; (4) two pairs, one reared three young, second (both immatures) built nest but were both shot; (5) pair displaying but no nest located.

**1978 Buckinghamshire** One site: single on 21st July.

**1978 Herefordshire** One site: pair seen.

**1978 County D** Four sites: (1) pair had clutch of four eggs taken, moved to another site and three young either died in bad weather when small or were removed; (2) two pairs both had eggs taken; (3) two pairs, one reared three young, second seen displaying but no nest located; (4) pair reared three young. This entry replaces the earlier one (*Brit. Birds* 73: 14).

**1978 County P** Five sites: (1) pair laid clutch of four eggs, deserted after deliberate disturbance and then relined nest over top of old clutch and reared one young; (2) two pairs, one built up 1976 nest but failed to lay or nested elsewhere, second pair reared three young; (3) pair nested but clutch of four eggs taken when close to hatching; (4) two pairs, one laid four eggs but clutch taken, second hatched three young which were removed when quite large; (5) either pair or unmated single.

Despite disturbance (both criminally careless by birdwatchers and deliberate by keepers), the activities of egg-collectors and the stealing of its young by falconers, this fine raptor continues to increase. The totals of pairs breeding during 1973/79 have been 6-12, 8-17, 4-31, 11-22, 14-36, 13-32 and 20-38.

### **Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*

27-28 sites: 25-26 pairs, 16 or 17 successful nests, with 30-33 young reared.

**Inverness-shire** Loch Garten: pair reared three young.

**Perth** Loch of the Lowes: pair reared two young.

**Scotland** 23 sites: (1) three eggs, but female disappeared about 20th June, male alone reared one young; (2) three eggs, one young reared; (3) one small young ringed on 9th July; (4) three eggs but female disappeared and two eggs nearly ready to hatch deserted in nest and one broken below it; (5) three eggs laid but for fifth successive year failed to hatch; (6) three large young ringed on 12th July; (7)-(10) three young reared; (11) three eggs laid, but failed in about mid May; (12)-(15) one young reared; (16) three eggs laid, two young reared; (17) pair and a third bird, at least one egg laid, later found broken below nest; (18) pair; (19) three eggs laid but nest-tree blew down on night of 17th May; (20) two eggs, one failed to hatch, one young reared; (21) new pair, failed during incubation; (22) pair built nest in new area, outcome unknown; (23) pair built nest, but no eggs laid.

**County D** One site: two or three young in nest on 19th July (perhaps already included under 'Scotland').

**County H** One site: singles on at least eight occasions from 19th May to 23rd August.

**County J** One site: single from late April regularly to June and intermittently until 10th August, second also present for some days in May.

The most successful year this century, the previous highest number of young reared being 21 in 1973 and 1974.

### **Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*

107 sites: 75-124 pairs, 39 pairs rearing at least 69 young.

**Avon** Three sites: (1) pair reared three young; (2) singles regularly June-August; (3) single on 1st June.

**Bedfordshire** Three sites: (1) pair reared at least one young; (2) single on many occasions from 9th June to 23rd September; (3) three, very vocal, aerial foodpasses seen, from 1st September to first week of October.

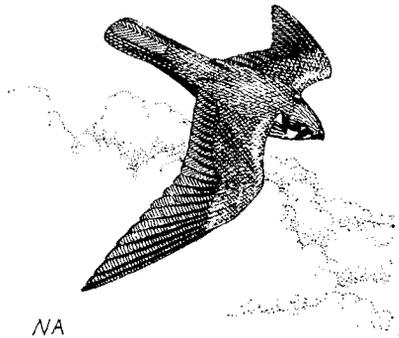
**Berkshire** Four sites: (1) two adults and two juveniles on 26th-27th August, five together on 31st August; (2) pair displaying on 29th May, single on 3rd August; (3) singles on 4th and 19th August; (4) single on 26th June. Records from east Berkshire were not supplied to the county recorder.

**Cambridgeshire** Three sites: (1) pair reared three young; (2) pair probably reared one young; (3) pair displaying on 29th May, adult feeding flying juveniles on 5th September.

**Devon** 'A reasonably good breeding season, but some failures probably due to human interference.' Regrettably, no details were supplied to the Panel, apart from one independent report of a pair which laid two clutches, both of which were stolen.

**Dorset** 'At least 14 pairs successful, raising at least 20 young, and a few more were unsuccessful.' We have assumed that 'a few more' was at least three. Regrettably, neither the county recorder nor the Panel received full details.

**Durham/Tyne & Wear** Singles on five dates from 2nd June to 29th August, then immature female recently escaped from captivity on 8th January 1980 suggested likelihood of theft from local nest.



NA

**East Sussex** Two sites: (1) pair reared two young; (2) pair present.

**Essex** One site: pair reared three young, the first proved breeding in Essex since 1890.

**Gloucestershire** Five sites: (1) pair reared at least one and probably two young; (2) regular sightings during summer; (3) one or two from 7th June to 11th September; (4) juvenile in late September 'said to have been bred nearby'; (5) many sightings from May to September.

**Hampshire** 17 sites: (1) at least 12 pairs, two rearing young; (2) pair reared three young; (3) pair reared two young; (4) pair, female on nest on 22nd July, pair last seen 28th July, no young reared; (5) pair present; (6) pair nested but no young reared; (7) single regularly, two once, no attempt made to locate nest; (8)-(17) pair in territory.

**Herefordshire** One site: pair feeding calling young.

**Kent** Four sites: (1) pair with three young from 19th August to 21st September; (2)-(4) single on single date in May-June.

**Leicestershire** Seven sites: (1)-(3) pair reared one young; (4)-(5) seen repeatedly around former breeding site; (6) (7) seen repeatedly.

**Lincolnshire/south Humberside** One site: pair reared three young.

**North Yorkshire** One site: single on 19th June.

**Oxfordshire** 11 sites: 'seven pairs proved breeding, another four pairs possibly bred'. Regrettably, no details of success were made available to the county recorder or to the Panel.

**Somerset** Five sites: (1) 'probably two pairs'; (2) 'probably one pair'; (3) 'possibly one pair'; (4) pair on 14th June, single on 8th July; (5) three together on 6th May and 17th June.

**Suffolk** Six sites: (1) 'pair bred'; (2) seen regularly, pair and food pass on 5th July; (3) single on 14th June; (4) single from 17th May to 18th June; (5) single on 27th June; (6) single on 20th July.

**Surrey** Seven sites: (1) (2) pair reared three young; (3) two pairs, one robbed, second reared one young; (4) (5) pair reared at least one young; (6) pair 'successful'; (7) pair.

**Warwickshire** Two sites: (1) pair and nest; (2) casual sightings suggested at least one additional pair.

**West Sussex** One site: pair, with two flying young on 21st August.

**Wiltshire** Six sites: 'no confirmed breeding, three pairs probably bred, another three pairs possibly bred'. No details were supplied to the Panel.

**Worcestershire** Two sites: (1) pair reared four young; (2) pair displaying.

**1976 Suffolk** One site: pair attempted to breed.

**1977 Suffolk** Extra sites: (5) pair bred; (6) pair probably bred.

**1978 Herefordshire** Three sites: (1) pair and one juvenile; (2) single flying to nest; (3) sightings suggest third pair.

**1978 Lincolnshire/south Humberside** One site: two on 22nd July.

Despite the absence of any data for Devon and east Berkshire, and the lack of details for Dorset, the main Hampshire site, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire, all of which we hope will eventually be supplied for our archive files, it is clear that 1979 was a very good year for the presence of breeding Hobbies, but success was not good. The number of pairs confirmed breeding was higher than in any of the previous six years, but the number of young known to have been reared was down to the 1976 level, after high totals in 1977 and 1978 (table 1).

**Table 1. Breeding pairs of Hobbies *Falco subbuteo* and number of young reared in the United Kingdom during 1973-79**

Data have not been made available from some counties; in general, coverage has improved annually

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
Minimum number of pairs	22	43	37	59	51	70	75
Maximum number of pairs	60	91	132	141	119	156	124
Minimum number of young reared	24	49	40	69	78	96	69

**Spotted Crake** *Porzana porzana*

Three sites: 0-7 pairs breeding.

**Cambridgeshire** One site: 'five territories held, breeding probable.'

**Outer Hebrides** Two sites: (1) (2) male singing in early June.

This poor showing is actually well above the average for recent years: annual totals of pairs breeding during 1973-79 have been 0, 0-5, 0, 0-1, 0-8, 0-6 and 0-7.

**Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Three sites: 147-156 pairs reared 99 young.

**Norfolk** One site: eight pairs reared 30 young.

**Suffolk** Two sites: (1) at Havergate, 95-100 pairs reared six young (severe predation by gulls *Larus*); (2) at Minsmere, 44-48 pairs reared 63 young.

The 1979 totals were about the average for recent years.

**Stone-curlew** *Burhinus oedicnemus*

31 sites: 34-81 pairs breeding.

**Berkshire** Three sites: (1) (2) present at former breeding site; (3) singles on 23rd and 29th June, two on 1st July.

**Cambridgeshire** Two sites: (1) six pairs, two each rearing two young; (2) six pairs, two each rearing one young.

**Dorset** Three sites: (1)-(3) pair.

**Essex** One site: pair in May-June.

**Norfolk** Five sites: (1)-(3) total of 15 pairs breeding; (4) two pairs breeding; (5) ten to 13 pairs breeding. Reporter commented: 'Vast areas of suitable habitat not covered.'

**Oxfordshire** Three sites: (1) pair reared young; (2) heard in mid May; (3) August record.

**Suffolk** 11 sites: (1)-(11) totals of 13 pairs in Breckland and seven pairs in coastal strip.

**West Sussex** One site: pair from 8th May to 24th September, but site ploughed in mid June.

**Wiltshire** Two sites: (1) two pairs with young; (2) no firm information, but four to six pairs probably bred.

A co-ordinated nocturnal census by experts, and liaison with farmers and other landowners, will be necessary to determine the true status of Stone-curlews in Britain.

**Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*

One site: one pair hatched two young.

**Lincolnshire/south Humberside** One site: female on two eggs on 30th June, two newly hatched young with both adults on 10th July. In addition, a male present at Gibraltar Point in June and July.

Breeding did not take place at this site in 1980. The last published record of this engaging wader breeding in the UK was in 1956.

**Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus*

At least 11 sites: 13-24 pairs breeding.

**Angus** Two sites: (1) male on clutch of three eggs on 16th June; (2) six pairs bred, with 'average breeding success'.

**Cumbria** One site: 12 adults on 24th May, three pairs each with clutches of three eggs, two young in nest on 18th June, two males with one three-day-old chick on 6th July, one probably unsuccessful, probably one to two extra pairs.

**Grampian** 'Usual adult stock in Cairngorms and east Grampians. Good breeding season in latter area, but poorer than average in Cairngorms due to bad weather on the plateau in summer.' Regrettably, this is the only information made available to the county recorder and to the Panel.

**Perthshire** Three sites: (1) adult and one young on 14th July; (2) single performing distraction display on 1st July; (3) female on 8th August.

**County E** One site: up to 14 during 13th-20th May.

**County F** One site: pair, three small young with male on 6th July, male, female and three fledged young on 22nd August.

**County I** One site: two on 25th June.

**1977 County G** One site: unconfirmed report of adult in June, then adult with barely fledged juvenile on 31st July, adult and flying juvenile, presumably same two, nearby on 6th August.

**1978 Perthshire** One site: adult with three young on 25th June.

**1978 County F** Two sites: (1) pair and second male, three eggs on 24th May, two chicks and addled egg on 18th June, two well-grown young with male on 6th July, one fledged young with male and female on 29th July; (2) pair and three recently fledged young on 9th July.

**1978 County G** The entry in last year's report (*Brit. Birds* 73: 17) referred to 1977 and should be deleted.

As usual, we must note our regret at the lack of detail from the main area which makes it impossible for us to monitor UK population changes.

### **Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii*

Data probably incomplete: one nest and eggs.

**County D** One site: single on 13th June, sitting on four eggs on 18th, still sitting 2nd July, but eggs and bird gone on 5th.

No information from sites in Counties A and B which have been occupied annually since 1973 and 1974 respectively.

### **Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos*

No relevant 1979 records.

**1974 Caithness** One site: single displaying on 28th-29th May; observer comments: 'Not followed up—should have been, in view of subsequent breeding by Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia*.'

Displaced Nearctic vagrants are potential colonisers and this species must be one of the most likely to breed in the UK.

### **Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*

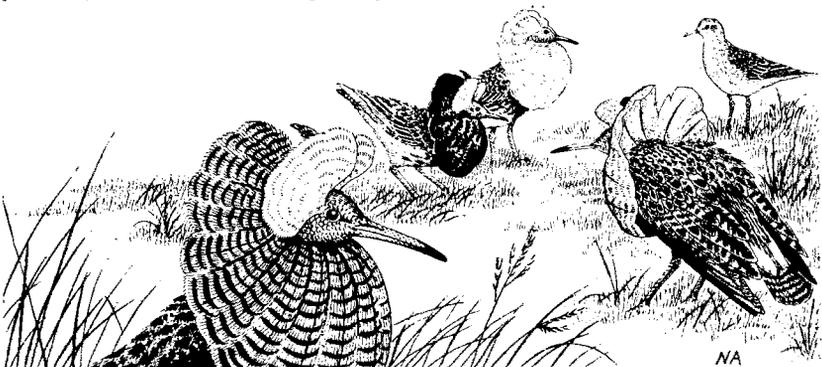
11 sites: three to 21 females breeding.

**Cambridgeshire** Four sites: (1) female with young on 25th June; (2) three males and two females in May; (3) female on 16th June; (4) 'arriving birds washed out by floods—no breeding.'

**Kent** One site: up to nine males and two females at lek in May.

**Lancashire** One site: female with at least two small young, probably only one or two days old, on 1st July.

**Lincolnshire/south Humberside** One site: two males and four females, lekking, on 20th May, two males on 21st and 24th May, other single males on 26th-28th May and 4th June, two males and two females on 19th June, two males on 20th-23rd June; observer thought there was possibility of unsuccessful breeding attempt.



**Suffolk** One site: two males and varying number of females at lek in April and May, pair 'thought to have bred'.

**Western Isles** One site: male at lek with two or three females in May.

**County B** One site: female twice returning to particular marshy area.

**County C** One site: several males and up to four females in early summer, one hatching at least two young.

More sites than in any year this century and the most breeding females since 1972.

### **Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*

13 sites: 39-64 pairs breeding.

**Cambridgeshire** Five sites: (1) two pairs throughout summer, but no search made for nests; (2) one breeding pair and one perhaps non-breeding pair; (3) five pairs; total of five or six pairs bred successfully at sites 1-3; (4) pair on 14th April; (5) '32 territories before floods, two-thirds re-nested, but success poor.'

**Lincolnshire/south Humberside** One site: nest and eggs on 24th April, pair with two half-grown young on 27th May, also third adult.

**Norfolk** Three sites: (1) five pairs reared young; (2) two pairs, young of one pair killed by Black-headed Gulls *Larus ridibundus*, female on other nest killed by stoat *Mustela erminea*; (3) pair song-fighting and prospecting in May.

**Shetland** One site: pair with unfledged young.

**Somerset** One site: five pairs on 24th April, four pairs on 6th May and at least one pair on 17th June.

**Suffolk** One site: three pairs bred, two young seen, but only one known to have fledged.

**County A** One site: 11 (eight in breeding plumage) on 21st May and three on 16th June, at new site.

The best year in this decade was 1976, with 72-87 pairs breeding at 13 sites.

### **Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*

One site: two pairs breeding.

**Inverness-shire** One site: song and display flight on 12th May, two pairs each hatched four young, but fledging success not known.

Three to seven sites were occupied annually during 1973-78.

### **Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*

13 sites: 13-40 pairs breeding.

**Argyll** Two sites: (1) three females and one male in early July; (2) one female.

**Shetland** Five sites: (1) 20-22 pairs, at least ten hatching chicks, at least 12 juveniles seen, an extended breeding season probably due to bad weather (e.g. fledged young on 18th July, clutch of three eggs hatched on 20th July, newly hatched chicks on 1st August); (2) (3) pair; (4) (5) pair probably bred.

**Western Isles** Four sites: (1) two or three pairs bred successfully; (2) one pair reared two young and second pair present; (3) two pairs present, one pair mating, no further evidence; (4) pair possibly bred.

**County B** One site on mainland Scotland: female and two males from 28th May to 2nd June, one or two often absent during afternoons, copulation on 2nd June.

**County D** One site: pair display fighting on 11th June, pair agitated on 24th June, single on 2nd July, none on 11th or 23rd July.

The 1973-79 totals of pairs breeding have been 2-7 (excluding Shetland), 2-21, 18-32, 1-21, 20-31, 22-36 and 13-40. Thus, the maximum in 1979 was the highest noted in these reports.

**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*

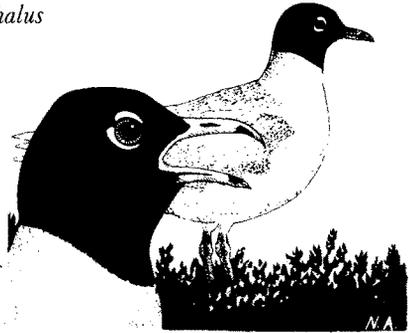
Three sites: two to three pairs breeding, one rearing two young.

**Hampshire** One site: pair, clutch of three eggs flooded in high tide.

**Suffolk** One site: pair displaying in April.

**County B** One site: pair, first clutch of two eggs found broken, replacement clutch of two eggs, two young reared.

Only the fourth and fifth instances of confirmed breeding by pairs of Mediterranean Gulls in the UK.

**Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus*

One site: Glaucous × Herring Gull *L. argentatus* pair reared at least two hybrid young.

**Shetland** One site: for fifth successive year, same adult Glaucous paired with Herring Gull, three eggs laid and at least two young reared.

**Snowy Owl** *Nyctea scandiaca*

One site: no breeding.

**Shetland** One site: on Fetlar, two females throughout summer, with third up to 20th April and on 31st July, but no male (although an adult male was seen on Fair Isle from 19th-22nd April).

The fourth year with unpaired females, after nine years of breeding on Fetlar during 1967-75.

**Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla*

Three sites: 0-4 pairs breeding.

**Grampian** Two sites: (1) up to four singing during 16th-19th June, at least one staying to at least 1st July; (2) single singing on 29th May.

**Surrey** One site: at same tree as in 1978, single from 13th May to 3rd June.

Records perhaps incomplete; if not, 1979 was the first year on record with no instance of confirmed breeding.

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*

Five sites: one to five pairs breeding.

**Bedfordshire** One site: agitated adult reluctant to leave area (close to 1976 site) on 21st and 28th April.

**East Sussex** One site: apparent Fieldfare described by member of public and nest, examined by Rarities Committee, similar to that of Redwing *T. iliacus* but too large, sent to Dr C. J. O. Harrison for expert examination, but lost in post; regarded as 'possible breeding'.

**Grampian** One site: single on one date.

**Perthshire** One site: two adults with three fledged young from 13th-18th June.

**Suffolk** One site: single from 2nd May to 6th July.

Below the 1973-78 average of 2-5.5 pairs breeding.

**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*

Four sites: one to seven pairs breeding.

**Argyll** One site: male singing on 3rd June.

**Inverness-shire** Three sites: (1) pair clearly carrying food to young on 2nd July; (2) three singing males; (3) two singing males.

**1973 Kent** One site: single on 10th June.

**1974 Kent** One site: single stayed until 31st May.

**1975 Kent** Two sites: (1) three pairs clearly carrying food to young, and 15 other singing males; (2) single on 2nd June.



**1976 Kent** Three sites: (1) pair nested, and six other singing males; (2) single singing male; (3) juvenile with prominent gape, and down still present, possibly from site 1.

**1977 Kent** Two sites: (1) (2) two singing males.

**1978 Inverness** Extra sites: (7) (8) pair reared young; (9) single singing male.

**1978 Kent** Two sites: (1) male with brood patch on 5th June; (2) two singing males.

The 1979 totals are the lowest for 13 years. The series of occurrences in Kent during 1973-78, with proved breeding in 1975 and 1976, is remarkable; presence in summer in more than one year during 1968-

72 was reported for this general area but—it now appears ill-advisedly—was not included in *The Atlas*. The revised totals of breeding pairs during 1973-79 are 4-12, 3-27, 13-53, 3-15, 2-16, 3-17 and 1-7.

### **Cetti's Warbler** *Cettia cetti*

39 sites: 46-161 pairs breeding.

**Berkshire** One site: single singing on 8th April.

**Cornwall** One site: pair throughout year.

**Devon** Six sites, but breeding probable or possible at only three: (1) single from January to 13th April; (2) up to 17 singing until the end of April, but only eight during June, increasing to at least 15 by October; (3) single singing on 7th and 14th April; (4) single singing on 1st November and 1st and 23rd December; (5) two singing on 14th October; (6) singles on five occasions from 3rd October to end of the year, with three on 22nd November.

**Dorset** Three sites: (1) three singing, at least one pair bred; (2) ten pairs reared a total of at least 21 young; (3) three singing.

**Essex** Five sites: (1)-(5) single singing.

**Hampshire** Three sites, with confirmed breeding for one pair: (1) four pairs; (2) (3) one pair.

**Hertfordshire** Two sites: (1) single singing from 5th-13th May, seen regularly in August, including three on 12th and 17th, and five first-years ringed; (2) two singing from 25th-27th April.

**Isle of Wight** Two sites: (1) single singing on four dates from 17th April to 16th June; (2) singles singing on 18th April and 8th September.

**Kent** Eight sites: (1) nine singing; (2) 6+ singing, at least 43 pairs, at least 23 bred; (3) three singing; (4) two singing; (5) single singing; (6) pair reared young; (7) pair probably bred; (8) pair nest-building in May.

**Norfolk** Four sites: (1) nine pairs bred; (2)-(4) five, four and three singing males in spring.

**Somerset** One site: single singing on 29th May, site not revisited.

**Suffolk** Three sites: (1) single singing from April to July; (2) two singing in May-June; (3) 'thought to have bred'.

**1978 Berkshire** One site: female on 3rd and 10th June.

**1978 Essex** One site: single singing from 21st May to 6th June.

The severe winter of 1978/79 checked the growth of the English Cetti's population, but there was no serious decline (-7%). Numbers of pairs breeding during 1973-79 have been 1-14, 5-16, 8-75, 8-80, 13-153, 30-174 and 46-161. This species is clearly better able to cope with hard weather than, for instance, the Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*, which decreased on average, according to Common Birds Census figures, by 43% on farmland and by 47% in woodland.

**Savi's Warbler** *Locustella luscinioides*

15 sites: six to 30 pairs breeding.

**Cambridgeshire** One site: three singing in June-July.

**Devon** Three sites: (1) single singing from 22nd April to 8th May; (2) two from 16th-21st April, one staying until 20th May; (3) single singing on 26th-27th June.

**Dorset** Two sites: (1) two pairs nest-building, but washed out by floods on 30th May; (2) singing from early June, perhaps birds from site 1.

**Kent** One site: six occupied territories, four or five pairs attempted breeding and three pairs were confirmed breeding.

**Lancashire** One site: tailless male singing from 20th April to 1st May, male with complete tail singing from 25th May to 7th June.

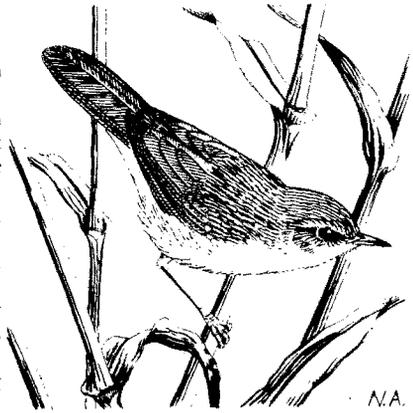
**Norfolk** Four sites: (1) four regularly singing from 13th April to 18th August, at least one pair reared young; (2) two regularly singing; (3) single regularly singing; (4) single singing from 24th-28th April.

**Suffolk** Two sites: (1) two singing from 14th May to 20th July, breeding by one pair suspected; (2) two singing on 12th May, but only one thought to have remained.

**County C** One site: pair from 27th April to 4th July and second male on 27th April.

**1978 Hampshire** One site: four or possibly six males from 5th May to 18th July, juvenile trapped 6th July, two or possibly three pairs bred (*Brit. Birds* 72: 535-536).

The third successive good year; more were proved breeding than in any year since at least 1972. Totals of pairs breeding during 1973-79 have been 0-13, 1-8, 1-3, 0-9, 3-26, 4-28 and 6-30.

**Marsh Warbler** *Acrocephalus palustris*

17 sites: 'no change' at main site, one to 24 pairs breeding elsewhere.

**Avon** One site: singing male from 19th May to 1st July, song infrequent in June, two *Acrocephalus* warblers chasing through bushes and one collecting nest material, but female not positively identified.

**Dorset** One site: one pair building, believed to have bred, and second singing male in June.

**East Sussex** One site: singing male on 18th June.

**Gloucestershire** Three sites: (1) singing male on 7th June; (2) singing male on 25th and 27th June, 'possibly bred'; (3) singing male heard several times in early June, but site disturbed by fishermen and did not breed.

**Isle of Wight** One site: singing male on 1st, 2nd and 11th June, two individuals on 2nd June, one carrying nest material.

**Kent** Three sites: (1) singing male on 1st and 10th June; (2) singing male on 9th June; (3) singing male from 13th-23rd June and second individual seen on 23rd.

**Wiltshire** Two sites: (1) (2) singing male for short period.

**Worcestershire** Five sites: (1) main area, 'no change in status reported'; (2) four or five singing males; (3) four singing males; (4) (5) single singing male.

The welcome trend towards increasing occurrence of singing males outside the main area continues: annual totals of pairs breeding during 1973-79 have been 3-13, 0-7, 0-5, 0-5, 2-11, 4-15 and 1-24; the total of eight counties is also a record.

**Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

Two sites: two singing males.

**Gloucestershire** One site: singing male from 23rd-26th June.

**Lincolnshire/south Humberside** One site: singing male from 6th-22nd July.

None has yet been proved to breed in the UK.

### **Dartford Warbler** *Sylvia undata*

Estimated 70 pairs in the New Forest; elsewhere, 23 sites: 15-46 pairs breeding.

**Devon** One site: two or possibly three on 20th March.

**Dorset** Six sites: (1)-(6) a total of about four pairs confirmed breeding and a further two or more probably bred.

**Hampshire** Six sites: (1) in the New Forest, survey of 70% of available habitat suggested a total of 70 pairs, a 41% reduction from the 1978 estimate; (2) two pairs bred; (3) three males, at least one pair, pair feeding young; (4)-(6) single male, probably unmated.

**Isle of Wight** Two sites: (1) two singing males in early July; (2) male on 23rd June.

**Surrey** Eight sites: (1) seven or eight pairs, some success; (2) (3) total of four pairs, some success; (4) three pairs, some success; (5) pair successful; (6) about seven pairs, three successful; (7) two individuals; (8) unmated male.

**West Sussex** One site: pair in territory and second singing male.

The number of occupied sites dropped by two and the total population by over 40% as a result of the severe winter of 1978/79.

### **Firecrest** *Regulus ignicapillus*

23 sites: eight to 71 pairs breeding.

**Berkshire** Eight sites: (1) three or four singing males on 7th May; (2) four including three singing males on 20th May; (3)-(8) single singing male on one date in late April or May. Same observer-effort as in 1978, when none found.

**Buckinghamshire** Four sites: (1) nine males in May-June; (2) three males at end of May/June; (3) (4) single on one date in May.

**Gwent** One site: up to five singing males from 6th May to 22nd July, one nest found on 20th June was being dismantled by a nest-building female Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*, as in 1977.

**Hampshire** Two sites: (1) pair bred successfully; (2) two pairs, but breeding not proved.

Recorder commented: 'There is no reason to suppose that the species does not breed widely and regularly throughout suitable habitat in the New Forest.'

**Hertfordshire** One site: singing male throughout June.

**Kent** Three sites: (1) three singing males on 28th April, 22 singing males on 31st May and some territories still occupied in early June; (2) singing male on 30th May; (3) singing male.

**Nottinghamshire** One site: singing male on 28th June.

**Oxfordshire** One site: male on 27th April, female on 7th May.

**Suffolk** One site: six pairs confirmed breeding but success not known.

**1978 Buckinghamshire** Extra sites and extra records: (1) five singing males on 29th May assumed to include male of mixed Firecrest × Golderest *R. regulus* pair already noted; (2) male on 29th April, female on 21st May; (3) singing male on 18th May.

After 1978's very low numbers, 1979 proved to be the second-best year ever, exceeded only by the 4-121 pairs at 30 sites in 1975. Totals of pairs breeding during 1973-79 have been 2-18, 0-33, 4-121, 4-27, 2-31, 1-10 and 8-71.





### Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

16 sites: three to 29 pairs breeding.

**Essex** One site: pair for much of summer.

**Gloucestershire** Two sites: (1) first-summer male singing on 15th May; (2) male singing on 5th July.

**Kent** Seven sites: (1) one pair reared four young, second pair probably attempted breeding (broken, fresh eggshell on 26th June suggested clutch taken by predator); (2) one pair reared at least one young, second pair probably bred (female aggressively chasing Jackdaw *Corvus monedula* from suspected nest site on 1st July), third male heard on 9th June; (3) pair from at least 6th June to at least 14th July; (4) pair reared four young; (5) singing male, also probably a female; (6) female uttering calls associated with breeding in late May; (7) male in May-June, female on one date in June.

**Lincolnshire/south Humberside** One site: singing male on 19th May, and 7th and 13th June.

**Mid Glamorgan** One site: singing male on 1st June.

**Suffolk** Four sites: (1) male from 3rd June to 28th July, female on 20th June, 'considered to have bred'; (2) ten or 11 pairs; (3) male on 26th July; (4) pair in late May and first-summer male on 3rd June.

**1976 Kent** One site: pair from 4th June to 18th July, when female feeding at least one young. First proved breeding in Kent since 1940s.

**1977 Kent** Extra site: (4) juvenile located by its begging calls.

**1978 Lincolnshire/south Humberside** One site: male from 6th-8th May, singing on 27th June.

The fourth successive good year. Totals of pairs breeding during 1973-79 have been 1-8, 2-4, 2-7, 7-23, 6-21, 7-28 and 3-29.

### Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

41 sites: seven to 44 pairs breeding.

**Bedfordshire** Two sites: (1) male on 22nd June; (2) male dead at roadside on 17th June.

**Norfolk** Four sites: (1) three pairs reared only one or two young; (2) one or two pairs; (3) pair reared three young; (4) pair.

**Nottinghamshire** One site: male singing on 19th May.

**Suffolk** 30 sites: total of four pairs confirmed breeding and a further 26 pairs probably breeding: 15 pairs in Breckland; and 15 pairs in coastal strip, which reared nine young.

**County B** Three sites: (1) pair reared at least three young, second male may have been present early in season; (2) male on 10th June; (3) male from 11th-13th June.

**County C** One site: male from 2nd-10th June, singing on 10th.

Average numbers (1973-78 mean was 29-44 pairs breeding).

**Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*

Three sites: one to four pairs breeding.

**Grampian** One site: singing male and incubating female in late June and early July, but nest and eggs (at least three) deserted and then damaged (*Brit. Birds* 73: 360-361).

**Shetland** Two sites: (1) male singing on 11th July; (2) two singing males and one female in late June and July.

The Grampian record is only the second instance of nesting in the UK; the first was in Sutherland in 1920.

**Lapland Bunting** *Calcarius lapponicus*

Two sites: 0-3 pairs breeding.

**Scotland** Two sites: (1) two males and one female on 16th June; (2) male.

Data probably incomplete. Breeding of two pairs was confirmed in both 1977 and 1978, the first such records in the UK.

**Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Data incomplete.

**Argyll/Inverness-shire** Two sites: (1) pair in late May/early June; (2) male.

**Grampian** The only information made available to the county recorder was: 'Small numbers present in Cairngorms—breeding better than in 1978, several pairs rearing two broods.'

Regrettably, the continuing lack of details foils any attempt to monitor population changes.

*Rare Breeding Birds Panel, Fountains, Park Lane, Blunham, Bedford MK44 3NJ*