

# British Birds

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## Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 1981

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

**T**he functions of the Panel and our methods of working are now well known and accepted by the network of county and regional recorders and are familiar to regular readers of our annual report. Although last year's achievement of including records from every area of the United Kingdom was not matched this time, we have every hope that reports from the four outstanding areas will be forthcoming in due course. Completeness is essential for full use to be made of the Panel's main functions: (1) to provide a safe, central archive repository for detailed information which might otherwise be lost to posterity; and (2) to provide a general summary for each species so that scientific studies can be made of current trends which, in turn, will enable appropriate strategies for the benefit of each species to be adopted by the nature conservation bodies.

The Panel is supported, both morally and financially, by *British Birds*, the BTO, the RSPB and the NCC. As in 1980, the Panel's members during 1981 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. 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 report

directly to the Panel's secretary. The special forms for submitting records are available free from the address at the end of this report.

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 (those 'possibly breeding') 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 calculated consistently each year and are, we believe, valuable for comparisons. As well as being updated, the figures in several tables have been revised. Readers should note that some records of apparent migrants and of definitely non-breeding summering flocks or individuals have been intentionally omitted.

### Summary of the year

There was no single spectacular event to make the 1981 breeding season memorable, but it was, on the whole, a satisfactory year. Goldeneyes *Bucephala clangula* showed a further increase and a record number of ducklings was seen. Marsh Harriers *Circus aeruginosus* and Ospreys *Pandion haliaetus* both achieved 20th-century peak numbers of successful nesting pairs and record numbers of young reared. Hobbies *Falco subbuteo* also had a good season, with a high level of breeding success, as measured by number



Fig. 1. Areas covered by this report. Records (or negative returns) were supplied for the 81 area 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 four areas. The Panel does not collect records from the Republic of Ireland

of young reared per brood. Avocets *Recurvirostra avosetta*, which owe their thriving position largely to the RSPB, had their best season for at least 150 years, with high numbers of breeding pairs and record numbers of young reared. Cetti's Warblers *Cettia cetti* continued to spread to new sites and new counties, consolidating their already firm position. Firecrests *Regulus ignicapillus* showed a resurgence, with the 1981 population the best since the record numbers of 1975. Serins *Serinus serinus* at last managed more than a lone pair in a year, and two pairs notched up the fourth and fifth British breeding records, rearing a total of nine young, and a third pair may have attempted to breed. Another would-be colonist, the Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*, nested for the third year running, but the three pairs in 1981 managed to rear only one young. One new species appears in our report: an Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina* which sang for over three weeks in Huntingdonshire.

The news was, however, not all good. Black-necked Grebes *Podiceps nigricollis* were in very low numbers (but Slavonian Grebes *P. auritus* had an average season). Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa* not only had a disastrous season on the Ouse Washes, due to spring flooding, but were also present at fewer sites than in any summer for over 20 years. The number of Redwings *Turdus iliacus* was the lowest for more than a decade. In contrast to the Cetti's Warblers' success story, Savi's Warblers *Locustella luscinioides* were at their lowest level for five years and Marsh Warblers *Acrocephalus palustris* were scarcer, at least outside their main stronghold, than for at least eight years. Finally, after four years of annual breeding, there was only one report of a single Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*.

### Systematic list

We have received no relevant 1980 records of the following species:

Great Northern Diver <i>Gavia immer</i>	Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Purple Heron <i>Ardea purpurea</i>	Little Gull <i>Larus minutus</i>
King Eider <i>Somateria spectabilis</i>	Glaucous Gull <i>L. hyperboreus</i>
Rough-legged Buzzard <i>Buteo lagopus</i>	Black Tern <i>Chlidonias niger</i>
Kentish Plover <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	Shore Lark <i>Eremophila alpestris</i>
Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i>	Citrine Wagtail <i>Motacilla citreola</i>
Pectoral Sandpiper <i>Calidris melanotos</i>	Great Grey Shrike <i>Lanius excubitor</i>
Jack Snipe <i>Lymnocyrtus minimus</i>	Woodchat Shrike <i>L. senator</i>
Spotted Sandpiper <i>Actitis macularia</i>	

### Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Two sites, but probably only one individual summering.

**County B** Two sites, but probably one bird: (1) single adult on 17th April and 9th-11th May; (2) single from 20th May to at least 10th June.

**1977 Perthshire** ADDITIONAL DATE: adult seen on 17th June as well as 11th April and 14th August (*Brit. Birds* 73: 9).

A disappointing reverse from the events of 1974-80, which seemed to be heralding colonisation, with a pair nest-building and copulating in 1980:

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	0	1	2	5	2	0	1	3	2
Pairs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Individuals in summer	0	1	2	5	2	0	1	4	1

**Slavonian Grebe** *Podiceps auritus*

35 sites: 52-71 pairs breeding.

**Argyll** One site: juvenile on 7th August.**Inverness-shire** 32 sites: (1)-(32) total of 61-64 pairs of which 50-54 pairs bred, 33-40 young seen.**Morayshire** One site: five pairs, five young on 26th July.**Perthshire** One site: pair on 27th July, feeding one young in August.**1977 Perthshire** CORRECTION: site (3), 19th April, not 9th April.

Numbers in 1981 were about normal, for, excluding 1975, when there was only incomplete coverage of Inverness-shire, the 1973-80 average was 53-65 pairs:

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	22	25	12	23	15	18	27	36	35
Pairs proved breeding	52	58	39	70	42	37	58	53	52
Pairs possibly breeding	53	63	43	75	51	55	77	80	71

**Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*

Three sites: 3-9 pairs breeding.

**Gwynedd** One site: adult 29th April to 17th June.**County B** One site: three pairs in April, single individual on 12th June.**County D** One site: four or five pairs in May, three pairs in June, total of five young (broods of one, one and three) seen between mid July and early August.**1977 County B** CORRECTION AND ADDITION: Two sites: (1) adult on 19th (not 9th) April; (2) pair on 26th March.**1978 County B** One site: single in full breeding plumage.

The 1981 position was very discouraging, after four good years:

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	4	2	4	2	7	6	6	9	3
Pairs proved breeding	18	15	2	10	11	13	12	11	3
Pairs possibly breeding	19	18	11	11	16	15	14	21	9

**Black-browed Albatross** *Diomedea melanophrys*One site: single again summered with Gannets *Sula bassana*.**Shetland** One site: adult from 21st February to mid August.

The February arrival was the earliest recorded for this individual, which has frequented the Hermaness gannetry annually since 1974.

**Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*

16 sites: 1-47 pairs breeding.

**Glamorgan, West** One site: single on 22nd March and 4th April.**Gwynedd** One site: male booming, also eight records of singles in breeding season.**Kent** One site: male booming up to mid June, at least one adult thought to be feeding young on 7th July, but breeding not proved conclusively.**Lancashire** Two sites: (1) 13 males booming; (2) male booming.**Lincolnshire/south Humberside** One site: male booming on two dates in May.**Norfolk** Seven sites: (1) two males booming, one brood reared; (2) two or three males booming; (3)(4) two males booming; (5)-(7) single males booming.**Suffolk** Three sites: (1) eight males booming; (2) seven or eight males booming; (3) male booming.**1979 Glamorgan, West** CORRECTION: Booming from 8th May to 9th June (not 'March to June' as stated, *Brit. Birds* 75: 157).

With 60% of the British population concentrated in just three sites, this

species remains in a very vulnerable position:

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	18	17	21	19	16
Pairs proved breeding	0	2	1	4	1
Pairs possibly breeding	43	47	51	48	47

### Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

One site: single dead female with brood-patch.

**Cambridgeshire** One site: female with brood-patch dead on road beneath overhead wires near suitable breeding habitat on 8th June.

**1979 Glamorgan, West** One site: male on 25th May and 30th June, where singles also in June and August 1976 and September 1977.

**1980 Glamorgan, West** DELETION: records listed (*Brit. Birds* 75: 157) actually referred to 1979 (see above).

Breeding has still never been proved in Britain, although it probably took place in the 19th Century and in the 1940s and 1950s, and 'singing' males were heard in summer in 1970, 1979 and 1980, and, in the last two years, pairs were present.

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	1
Individuals in summer	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	2	1

### Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

None reported.

**1973 Argyll** One site: single agitated adult on 25th May, site checked again on 5th July, but none present.

**1974 Argyll** One site: pair on 20th July, no nest found.

After wild pairs breeding successfully in 1978 and 1979, it is disappointing to have none in 1980 or 1981; single pairs in 1979 and 1980 included female escape from nearby collection.

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	1	1	0	0	0	1	3	3	0
Pairs proved breeding	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0
Pairs possibly breeding	1	1	0	0	0	1	4	3	0

### Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

One site: single individual.

**County A** One site: single on 7th July.

This site was close to that where a pair was showing territorial behaviour on 1st June 1980.

### Black Duck *Anas rubripes*

Two sites: single male and single female, latter breeding with male Mallard *A. platyrhynchos*.

**Gwynedd** One site: male all year; three immature hybrids in autumn may have been 1980 offspring.

**Silly** One site: female paired with male Mallard; three hybrid young seen from 8th June.

**1979 Gwynedd** One site: male from 11th February to 24th May, 19th and 22nd June and 4th November into 1980.

**1980 Gwynedd** One site: male present throughout year, consorted with female Mallard, three full-grown apparent hybrid young on 11th October.

Hybridisation with Mallards, as in Scilly (1977-81) and Gwynedd (1980), is also frequent in the species' main North American breeding range.

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

15 sites: 8-30 pairs breeding.

**Angus** Two sites: (1) pair from 25th April to 30th May; (2) pair from 6th May.

**Cambridgeshire** Two sites: (1) six pairs, of which one proved breeding and five probably bred; (2) two May records: 'possibly failed due to flooding in spring'.

**Cumbria** One site: male on 7th May, 18th May and 3rd June, also two females on first date.

**Lancashire** Three sites: (1) two males on 13th May, then one on 16th May and 21st June; (2) male on 8th May; (3) male on 27th June.

**Norfolk** One site: pair in June.

**Orkney** Three sites: (1) five or six pairs bred; (2) pair, the female with six young on 24th May; (3) pair, the female with five juveniles on 2nd July.

**Shetland** Two sites: (1) three pairs present; (2) pair present.

**Suffolk** One site: two males and one female on 13th June.

**1976 Perthshire** One site: pair on 11th April.

This elegant species remains one of the rarest of British breeding ducks:

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	3	7	11	10	15	10	19	15	15
Pairs proved breeding	3	10	12	6	10	7	10	9	8
Pairs possibly breeding	5	11	25	16	26	23	41	25	30

### **Garganey** *Anas querquedula*

37 sites: 5-49 pairs breeding.

**Avon** One site: pair on 14th May, male from 8th June to 9th August, two females on 18th June, two from 12th August to 6th September.

**Cambridgeshire** Two sites: (1) four pairs, two with broods of eight and six young, other two strongly suspected of breeding; (2) five pairs probably bred.

**Devon** Three sites: (1) pair from 27th March to 17th April; (2) pair from 20th May to 7th June; (3) male on 4th May.

**Dunbartonshire** One site: male on 9th May.

**Essex** Two sites: (1) male on 31st May; (2) female on 25th June.

**Kent** Two sites: (1) two pairs summered: 'lowest total for at least 21 years and compares with peak of 23 pairs in 1962'; (2) two pairs perhaps bred.

**Lancashire** Two sites: (1) male overwintered from 1980, pair on 10th April, all three staying until 1st May, female on 12th July; (2) pair on 7th May, male on 12th June, pair on 19th June.

**Lincolnshire/south Humberside** Two sites: (1) pair reared four young; (2) pair during 8th-22nd May, female injury-feigning on 13th June.

**Norfolk** 15 sites: (1)-(15) one to three individuals at each, but no confirmed breeding.

**Nottinghamshire** One site: pair on 10th April and on 24th-25th May.

**Outer Hebrides** Three sites: (1) two males during 12th-14th May; (2) male on 1st June; (3) two males on 6th June.

**Suffolk** Two sites: (1) pair with eight small ducklings in mid May; (2) pair probably bred.

**Warwickshire** One site: pair, male displaying.

**1980 Warwickshire** One site: pair bred but failed, male from 22nd April, female from 13th May, egg partly eaten by predator in late May, female last seen 27th July.

This species was added to our list only last year, when the (revised) totals were 4-54 pairs at 34 sites.

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

Two sites: 0-3 pairs breeding.

**Outer Hebrides** Two sites: (1) two females on 14th May, male on 10th June; (2) female during 17th-26th April, male until 10th May.

**1973 Gwent** One site: male from 20th May to 12th July.

**1974 Argyll** One site: pair on 15th July.

**1976 Argyll** One site: three males and two females from 30th April to 7th May.

A few sometimes stay in late spring or into summer, but breeding remains very rare. Apart from a probable hybrid female paired to a male Tufted Duck *A. fuligula* in North Yorkshire in 1978 and 1979 (not shown in the table), the only recent instances of breeding were in Perthshire in 1970 and in Orkney in 1973 and 1978:

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	2	1	0	1	0	1	1	2	2
Pairs proved breeding	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Pairs possibly breeding	2	1	0	3	0	1	1	2	3

**Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra***

Six sites: 5-82 pairs breeding.

**Caithness** One site: six females. Very incomplete census.

**Dunbartonshire/Stirlingshire** One site: four pairs and one male on 26th May, six females but no young on 8th July.

**Fermanagh** One site: 63 pairs, up to 21 young (four broods) on 17th July.

**Perthshire** Three sites: (1) pair on 15th April, five pairs on 9th May, female with four young and additional female on 12th July; (2) male and female on 9th May; (3) male on 13th June.

**1979 County A** One site: up to three males and three females from 10th May to 24th July.

Unless successful (and broods are seen), breeding is difficult to prove, so that the maximum figure is perhaps the most valid for comparisons. On that basis, the last four years have seen a progressive decline:

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	13	13	12	14	13	9	17	10	6
Pairs proved breeding	4	10	32	22	24	16	98	7	5
Pairs possibly breeding	133	142	159	159	156	141	128	113	82

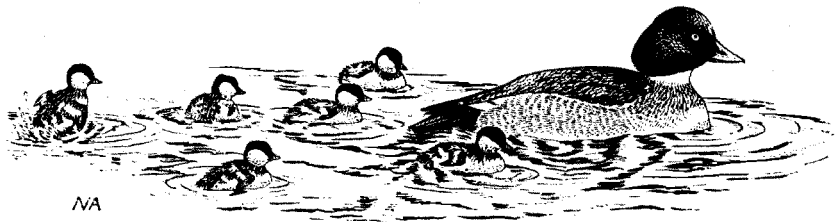
**Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula***

11 sites: 29-52 pairs breeding.

**Argyll** One site: two 'brownheads', probably juveniles, on 7th August.

**Bedfordshire** It should be placed on record that a small free-winged flock of deliberately released Goldeneyes now remains throughout the year on flooded gravel-pits along the River Ivel.

**Cumbria** Four sites: (1) female from 14th May to 29th June; (2) female on 24th June and during 16th-24th July; (3) female on 6th July; (4) female on 8th July. At fifth site, 23 on 9th July.



**Dunbartonshire/Stirlingshire** One site: male and two females on 1st August.

**Lothian, West** One site: male on 31st May, pair and immature male on 1st June, adult male and immature male on 12th June.

**Perthshire** Two sites: (1) two males and female on 14th June; (2) female on 25th May.

**County B** Two sites: (1)(2) eggs laid in 41 nests, all but one in nest-boxes, 29 successful broods hatched, 286 young, 97 juveniles in late July suggesting very good fledging success; population level and success best ever.

**1974 Perthshire** Three sites: (1) pair on 12th May; (2) female on 20th May, two males on 23rd July; (3) female on 10th May and 14th June.

**1975 Perthshire** One site: male until 25th June.

**1976 Perthshire** Two sites: (1) two pairs on 11th May; (2) male from 18th May to 4th June.

**1977 Perthshire** Two sites: (1) two males on 21st May; (2) two males and a female on 4th June.

**1978 Perthshire** Three sites: (1) adult male, two first-summer males and three females on 3rd May; (2) four on 7th May; (3) male on 28th May.

**1979 Perthshire** One site: female on 13th June.

The steady improvement in numbers continues, with the fourth successive good year: 1973 1974 1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981

Sites	1	5	3	8	12	18	17	11	11
Pairs proved breeding	3	3	3	5	6	12	22	26	29
Pairs possibly breeding	3	7	6	12	14	27	43	37	52
Young hatched	22	19	10	46	11	40	110	165	286

### Smew *Mergus albellus*

Two sites: two females and one male, but no evidence of breeding.

**Renfrewshire** One site: female from 11th July to 29th September.

**Stirlingshire** One site: female on 12th April, male during 1st-29th May.

**1975 County A** One site: female on 27th April and, presumed same, 11th May.

There has never been any suspicion of breeding, but this is the sort of build-up which could be a prelude to colonisation:

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	2	2
Individuals in summer	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	2	3

### Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

Eight sites: 2-9 pairs breeding.

**Norfolk** One site: at least one from 20th May to 9th August.

**Nottinghamshire** One site: two pairs, one rearing two young and the other one young.

**Suffolk** One site: single on 6th July.

**County D** One site: single displaying during breeding season.

**County F** One site: single on 1st June.

**County G** One site: single on 13th June.

**County H** Two sites: (1)(2) singles on 27th June and 19th July.

We have no information concerning the New Forest population, for which we hope in due course to receive data on nest-site habitats, breeding success, reasons for failures, and so on, as well as population trends.

Outside the New Forest, the position looks encouraging:

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	1	3	2	7	8	8	3	3	8
Pairs proved breeding	0	1	0	0	2	1	1	2	2
Pairs possibly breeding	1	3	2	7	8	8	3	4	9



**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

46 pairs: 21 young reared by 18 pairs.

**Central Wales** Total of 42 pairs known, of which 31 (probably 32) laid eggs, and a further six started to build nests. There were 28-30 other unmated individuals, so total Welsh population was about 120 in April: the highest this century. Two nests were robbed of eggs, and third may have been robbed; one of these pairs repeated and reared a chick. Total of 18 pairs nested successfully, rearing 21 young. 'Main cause of failure and brood reduction seems to have been the cool weather in May and June.'

The Kite Committee has revised the figures for 1976-80, with the inclusion of some late records. The minimum 1973-81 totals were as follows:

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Total pairs	26	32	32	36	34	39	42	42	46
Breeding pairs	26	27	28	29	28	32	30	29	32
Successful pairs	10	9	15	15	12	13	14	21	18
Young reared	14	12	24	18	17	22	18	27	21

**White-tailed Eagle** *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Reintroduced: no breeding yet.

**Western Scotland** Of 37 individuals released by spring 1981, 24-26 are known to have survived. Display and stick-carrying provided evidence of pair formation, but no breeding attempts known.

**Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*

22 sites: 49 young reared from 16 of 20 known nests.

**Cambridgeshire** Three sites: (1) pair reared three young, the first breeding in the county this century; (2) five individuals from April to June; (3) female summered, from 31st May to at least 26th August.

**Essex** Three sites: (1) pair all summer; (2) female on 10th June, female on 14th June; (3) single on 21st June.

**Humberside** One site: pair present from 28th May to early September, display and nest-building in early June, but no other evidence of breeding.

**Lincolnshire/south Humberside** Two sites: (1) pair on 23rd May, male in June and July, female in August, two juveniles in August and September; (2) female from June to August, male on 29th July.

**Norfolk** Eight sites: (1) male and two females reared three and two young; (2) three pairs, rearing four, three and no young; (3) two males and three females reared five and four young; (4) two males and three females reared three and no young (one nest robbed); (5) pair reared two young; (6) pair reared at least one young; (7) pair reared no young; (8) pair summered.

**Suffolk** Five sites: (1) two males and three females reared four, four and no young (one nest flooded); (2) three nests, three, two and one young reared; (3) pair reared four young; (4) pair on 3rd June; (5) pair on 12th June.

From the depressingly low level of the early 1970s, the Marsh Harrier has, with the aid of the conservation bodies, achieved the century's peak of successful nests and young reared in the early 1980s; prospects look rosy for expansion into new sites.

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Total sites	4	4	8	11	14	12	19	32	22
Sites with successful nests	4	4	3	6	9	9	8	11	10
Breeding males	4	5	5	13	15	15	24	21	18
Breeding females	6	6	7	13	16	16	26	23	22
Nests	5	6	7	11	15	15	15	22	20
Successful nests	5	4	5	9	13	12	12	14	16
Young reared	16	10	18	25	44	34	39	40	49

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

Eight sites: 2-9 pairs breeding, one pair reared four young.

**Lincolnshire/south Humberside** Three sites: (1) at least six individuals between 16th May and 15th August, including a first-summer male from 7th July to 15th August; (2) female during 10th-12th May; (3) first-summer male on five dates between 9th June and 1st August.

**Norfolk** One site: pair displaying and nest-building, but then disappeared.

**County A** Three sites: (1) 'ringtail' on 6th June, two juveniles on 13th August; (2) pair on 8th July; (3) ringtail during 12th-30th July.

**County D** One site: pair nested twice, one nest deserted and then young in second nest killed by predator, probably stoat *Mustela erminea*.

**County M** One site: pair hatched five young and reared four.

**1980 Humberside** One site: male from 28th May to 16th June.

The Montagu's Harrier is not matching the upsurge shown by the Marsh Harrier: perhaps there is less undisturbed farmland than there is undisturbed reedbed habitat.

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	5	3	3	4	2	7	4	8	8
Pairs proved breeding	2	0	0	3	1	2	2	2	2
Pairs possibly breeding	5	3	3	5	2	7	4	8	9
Young reared	0	0	0	6	0	3	7	4	4

Birdwatchers can help by (1) not visiting the regular sites unless engaged in official survey for the RSPB or county society, and (2) immediately reporting any new site to the RSPB (Richard Porter or Mike Everett at Sandy (0767) 80551) so that appropriate arrangements can be made with the farmer or landowner.

**Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

32 sites: 2-33 pairs breeding.

**Argyll** Two sites: (1) male on 3rd March; (2) female on 1st August.

**Carmarthenshire** Two sites: (1) present throughout the year, two on 18th April; (2) male on 26th April, pair on 29th April.

**Cumbria** Four sites: (1) pair displaying on 14th April, present up to mid June; (2) singly on 22nd April and 14th May; (3) female on 16th May; (4) single on 22nd April; (5) single on 14th May, perhaps same bird as at site 3.

**Dunbartonshire/west Stirlingshire** One site: pair from 20th July to 4th September.

**Durham** One site: pair displaying on 25th April and 20th June.

**Greater Manchester** One site: pair throughout breeding season.

**Gwent** One site: single on 4th May.

**Nottinghamshire** One site: single sightings of one female and one probable male.

**Pembrokeshire** One site: pair displaying on several dates.

**Somerset** One site: single on 17th April.

**County C** One site: pair probably bred.

**County J** One site: pair bred successfully.

**County K** One site: pair reared young.

**County M** 'A decrease in the number of records compared with recent years.'

**County U** Two sites: (1) 'one or two pairs almost certainly present'; (2) pair in display flight on 2nd June.

**County V** Three sites: (1) pair seen once and singles often; (2) female on 5th May; (3) female on 6th May.

**County CC** Two sites: (1) pair on 5th April, single seen later; (2) pair.

**County EE** Two sites: (1) male and female present most of year, no proof of breeding or pairing; (2) female present.

**County FF** Four sites: (1)-(4) present, but details not released to recorder by observers.

**County GG** Total of 15 records from 13 sites (January 2, February 4, April 2, June 1, August

2, October 2, November 1 and December 1), but several obviously migrants and 'no real evidence of breeding'.

**County HH** One site: pair in spring, male displaying on 31st March.

**1975 Perthshire** Two sites: (1) single on 18th January and 13th March; (2) female on 3rd August.

**1976 Argyll** Two sites: (1) pair on 13th March, pair carrying prey and 'alarming' in May; (2) single on 8th April and 14th June.

**1976 Perthshire** Three sites: (1) three adults and one immature on 2nd November; (2) single on 24th July; (3) single on 24th August.

**1978 Argyll** Three sites: (1) single on 14th April; (2) single on 24th April; (3) single on 25th August.

**1978 Perthshire** One site: single on 19th March.

**1979 Perthshire** Two sites: (1) single on 29th July; (2) 'possible pair' on 6th April.

The level of presence, as shown by number of counties, number of sites and maximum number of pairs possibly breeding, is being maintained, but the number of instances of confirmed breeding has slumped from the peak of 21 pairs in 1979 to only two in 1981, an all-time low since these reports started. This is a logical consequence of the pressures (shooting, egg-collecting and removal of young) described by Dr M. Marquiss and Dr I. Newton in their paper on 'The Goshawk in Britain' (*Brit. Birds* 75: 243-260), but it is possible that some further reports of confirmed breeding have not yet been submitted to the Panel.

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Counties	6	10	14	10	15	18	20	19	21
Sites	12	20	32	28	33	37	36	26	32
Pairs proved breeding	6	9	5	12	15	14	21	6	2
Pairs possibly breeding	12	21	34	28	37	40	43	32	33

**Osprey *Pandion haliaetus***

25 sites: 22 pairs laid eggs, 20 pairs reared total of 42 young.

**Inverness-shire** Loch Garten: pair reared two young (one egg failed to hatch).

**Perthshire** Loch of the Lowes: pair reared three young.

**Elsewhere in Scotland** 23 pairs: 20 laid eggs and 18 bred successfully, rearing 37 young (5 × 3, 9 × 2 and 4 × 1).

**1973 County K** One site: single for some weeks from 18th May and on 18th July.

Momentum has been maintained: for the third successive year we can take pleasure in saying 'This was the most successful year this century, with record numbers both of successful pairs and of young reared.'



	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Pairs	16	14	14	14	20	22	25	25	25
Successful pairs	10	10	7	10	7	11	16	19	20
Young reared	21	20	16	20	13	19	30	41	42

**Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*

158 sites: 51-160 pairs breeding, with 45 pairs rearing at least 89 young.

**Avon** Two sites: (1) pair attacking Carrion Crows *Corvus corone* and entering wood on 8th June; (2) pair on 16th June, nest site located later, single adult on 12th September.

**Bedfordshire** One site: single on 16th July.

**Berkshire** Four sites: (1) two pairs, one failed, outcome of other not known; (2) pair summered; (3) single on 24th May; (4) single on 29th June.

**Cambridgeshire** Nine sites: (1) pair bred; (2)-(9) reports in May-June.

**Devon** One site: pair attempted to breed, nest deserted. We regret that other records were withheld from the Panel.

**Dorset** 12 sites: (1)-(12) '12 pairs, a few pairs raised three young, two nests failed.'

**Essex** Two sites: (1) pair reared three young; (2) single on 10th June.

**Gloucestershire** Two sites: (1) pair, two or three flying young seen; (2) pair, displaying on 24th May, sightings throughout breeding season.

**Hampshire** 20 sites outside New Forest: (1)(2) pairs each reared three young; (3)-(5) pairs each reared two young; (6) pair reared at least one young; (7) pair probably bred; (8) one or two during 7th-13th August; (9)-(20) 'records indicative of possible breeding'. For New Forest, where, in the past, 15-25 pairs have been estimated: 'Little meaningful data available at present.'

**Herefordshire** Three sites: (1) pair and juvenile; (2) pair and juvenile, perhaps same as at site 1; (3) single.

**Hertfordshire** Six sites: (1) pair frequently in June; (2) pair displaying on 4th June; (3) pair calling and displaying on 29th August; (4) pair on four dates from 26th July to 16th August; (5) singly on five dates from 19th May to 5th July; (6) single on 28th June.

**Huntingdonshire** Three sites: (1) pair regularly from 12th May to 23rd July; (2) three 'apparently in territorial dispute in suitable breeding area' on 9th May, not followed up; (3) seen singly from 28th June to 14th August.

**Kent** Two sites: (1) pair reared at least one young; (2) pair from late May to late August, 'probably raised two young', but breeding not proved.

**Leicestershire** Two sites: (1) pair reared three young; (2) after three records earlier in summer, three (thought to be one adult and two recently fledged young) during 5th-7th September.

**Lincolnshire/south Humberside** Eight sites: (1)-(8) records of singles between 25th June and 15th August 'all near farmland with shelter belts and copses. The increase in county records since 1976 is well pronounced, most previous records being of spring adults ... this will hopefully lead to full colonisation.'

**Nottinghamshire** Two sites: (1) pair reared two young; (2) adult with two juveniles. 'Widespread sightings suggest possibility of other sites.'

**Oxfordshire** Nine sites: (1) heard in mid August, noisy pair with juvenile on 1st-2nd September; (2) pair proved breeding; (3)-(8) pairs probably breeding; (9) pair possibly breeding.

**Somerset** 24 sites: (1) pair reared two or three young; (2) pair reared one or two young; (3) pair with two young on 27th August; (4) 'breeding seems certain' (counted here as probable); (5) pair displaying; (6) seen frequently in July-August; (7) single carrying food on 1st August, two in September; (8)-(24) singles or sometimes two on various dates from May to September.

**Suffolk** Four sites: (1) single mobbed observer on one date in July; (2) single on 29th June at previous nesting site; (3) single from 15th May to 10th June; (4) single on 26th July.

**Surrey** 12 sites: (1)-(3) pairs reared three young; (4) pair reared two or perhaps three young; (5)-(7) pairs reared two young; (8) pair reared one young; (9) one or probably two pairs throughout season, both unsuccessful; (10) one or two individuals present; (11)(12) singles present.

**Sussex, East** Two sites: (1)(2) pairs reared two young.

**Sussex, West** Three sites: (1) pair reared one or two young; (2) pair feeding two young in early August; (3) pair present.

**Warwickshire** Five sites: (1)-(4) 'four pairs raised nine young'; (5) sightings suggest at least one additional pair.

**Wiltshire** 15 sites: (1) pair reared three young; (2)(3) pairs reared two young; (4)-(12) pairs probably breeding; (13)-(15) pairs possibly breeding.

**Worcestershire** One site: pair 'believed bred', flying young seen nearby in autumn, but no proof that they were bred locally.

**County G** Two sites: (1) scattered sightings suggest presence of pair; (2) four in late August, perhaps family party, but perhaps not bred locally.

**County H** Two sites: (1) one or two throughout summer; (2) two in mid August.

Monitoring continues to be hampered by the virtual absence of information from Devon and the New Forest. The trends known to us are summarised below, but all of the figures should be regarded as minima.

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Pairs proved breeding	24	47	38	59	51	70	80	64	51
Pairs possibly breeding	65	96	133	143	119	156	132	155	160
Young reared	24	51	42	69	78	96	72	86	89

It is noteworthy that breeding success was better in 1981 than in any previous year (1.74 young per proved breeding pair). Guessing that there may be another dozen breeding pairs both in Devon and in the New Forest, one can assess the known British population in 1981 at 75-180 pairs (probably around 100), with 130-175 young being reared. It would be helpful not to have to guess.

**Spotted Crake** *Porzana porzana*

Four sites; 0-9 pairs breeding.

**Cambridgeshire** Two sites: (1) male singing from 20th May, two from 22nd May, last heard 7th June; (2) male singing on 26th/27th May.

**Suffolk** One site: male singing during 5th-9th May.

**County A** One site: male singing during 15th-18th May, up to five singing during 4th-10th June.

**1976 Inverness-shire** One site: single singing during 21st-25th June.

No discoverer of a singing Spotted Crake should try to find the nest, since habitat disturbance would be unavoidable. The best chance of proving breeding would probably come from dusk and dawn visits near a stretch of open water and mud within the probable breeding area. Even singing males are scarce, but there does seem to be an encouraging trend:

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	0	4	0	2	4	6	4	3	4
Singing males	0	5	0	2	7	6	8	4	9

**Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*

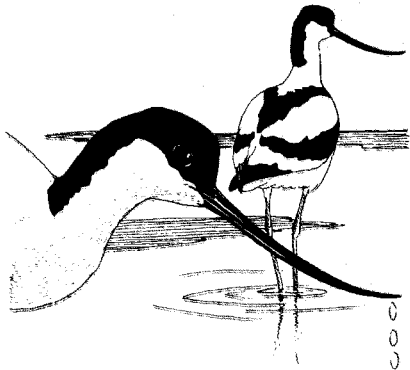
Seven sites: successful breeding at four sites, 201-203 pairs rearing 155-160 young.

**Essex** One site: singly on 14th June and 21st June.

**Lancashire** One site: two during 11th-19th May, certainly did not breed.

**Norfolk** Two sites: (1) 26 pairs reared 30-35 young; (2) pair reared three young.

**Suffolk** Three sites: (1) on Havergate Island, at least 115 pairs reared at least 68 young; (2) at Minsmere, 58 pairs reared 54 young; (3) three pairs present, but only one pair hatched young and outcome unknown.



It was another good year, with, for the second successive year, numbers of breeding pairs and of young reared being the highest for over 150 years:

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Breeding sites	4	4	6	5	6	3	3	5	5
Breeding pairs (minimum)	149	125	158	151	146	145	147	168	201
Breeding pairs (maximum)	149	125	158	151	146	145	156	180	203
Young reared (minimum)	115	64	142	68	14	92	99	101	155

The population is still very vulnerable, with 86% at the two original sites, but it is pleasing to see the build-up at the third main site (4-5-8-20-26 in the past five years).

### Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*

71 sites: 10-83 pairs breeding.

**Berkshire** Three sites: (1) pair with two young; (2) pair bred, probably reared three young; (3) present in summer.

**Cambridgeshire** Ten sites: (1)-(10) occupied territories, but no proof of breeding.

**Dorset** One site: four pairs all bred successfully, but some not until third attempt.

**Essex** Three sites: (1) two pairs, at least one successful; (2)(3) occupied territories, but perhaps both refer to site 1.

**Hampshire** No records submitted to the Panel; 50 pairs were estimated in 1975.

**Hertfordshire** Four sites: (1) pair with two juveniles in July; (2) single on 8th April and up to three on 21st July; (3)(4) occupied territories, but perhaps these refer to sites 1 and 2.

**Norfolk** 30 sites: (1)-(30) present; 'undoubtedly many others not recorded'.

**Oxfordshire** Two sites: (1)(2) single sightings.

**Suffolk** Ten sites: (1) pair and two juveniles on 21st June; (2) five pairs; (3) four pairs; (4) two pairs; (5)-(7) single pairs; (8)(9) singly on single dates in June; (10) occupied territory, but perhaps refers to one of other nine sites.

**Sussex, West** One site: pair on 2nd June.

**Wiltshire** Seven sites: (1) pair laid eggs; (2)-(7) pairs probably breeding.

Excluding Hampshire and Norfolk, for which we have very patchy figures, the totals reported to the Panel have been as follows:

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Pairs proved breeding	26	28	47	16	4	20	34	8	10
Pairs possibly breeding	90	67	72	109	27	34	81	45	53

It should be noted, however, that neither of the two main habitats of Stone-curlew—extensive farmland with huge fields and military training areas—is helpful to the would-be censuser. The species' crepuscular and nocturnal habits, with the song period often reaching a peak after midnight, also create difficulties, so that casual observations do not reflect the true situation. J. L. F. Parslow estimated the population at 200-400 pairs in 1967 (*Breeding Birds of Britain and Ireland*, 1973) and Dr J. T. R. Sharrock assessed the 1968-72 numbers at 300-500 pairs (*The Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland*, 1976). There has certainly been a contraction in range since then, and perhaps a decrease in numbers. We made a guess last year that the 1980 population was 'around 150 pairs', though admitted that even this could be a serious underestimate. A recent study has suggested that there are currently about 300 pairs in southern England: 100 in Dorset/

Wiltshire/Hampshire and 200 in Cambridgeshire/Essex/Hertfordshire/Norfolk/Suffolk (unpublished report to the NCC).

### **Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus*

Totals cannot be calculated from the data available.

**Angus** One site: present but no details available.

**Borders** None reported.

**Grampian** 'Study area in the Cairngorms and East Grampians had the usual adult stocks with stable numbers. Much poorer than average success in East Grampians, but better than average success in Cairngorms.'

**Inverness-shire** Two sites: (1) two on 12th May; (2) single on 11th May; both regarded as migrants.

**Perthshire** Two sites: (1) male possibly with young on 2nd July, two juveniles on 1st August, but perhaps reared elsewhere; (2) single and three females on 12th June.

**1979 County M** Four sites: (1) male and nest with three eggs in mid-late June, male brooding on 1st July, nest empty on 13th July; (2) male giving distraction display on 12th July; (3) two, probably both males, on 20th July; (4) female on 6th June.

As usual, the details available to us from the main area are so meagre that we cannot even guess at trends. In the peripheral areas, however, 1981 seems to have been a poor year:

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Counties	1	1	3	3	5	4	4	3	3
Sites	1	1	7	4	7	7	8	4	5
Pairs proved breeding	0	1	3	3	4	5	6	4	0
Pairs possibly breeding	1	1	7	11	12	20	19	14	7

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

One site: single sighting.

**County D** One site: single on 17th July.

It is probable that data for other regular sites will be submitted in due course.

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	1	2	1	2	3	3	4	5	1
Pairs proved breeding	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	0
Pairs possibly breeding	2	3	2	4	6	6	6	6	1

### **Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima*

One site: single sighting.

**Scotland** One site: single on 25th May.

No data were received concerning the site where breeding took place in 1978, 1979 and 1980.

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

Ten sites: 0-13 females breeding.

**Cambridgeshire** Two sites: (1) lek involving up to 12 males in April-June, one female 'showing brooding behaviour', two females thought to have probably bred; (2) a few males in April-May, but no real lek.

**Essex** Three sites: (1) 20 on 20th June; (2) five on 27th June; (3) single on 30th May; all assumed to be migrants/non-breeders.

**Humberside** One site: up to eight males and three females from 4th-21st May, display on several dates.

**Kent** One site: 'present, breeding suspected'.

**Lancashire** One site: up to 12 males and four females at lek in May and three males and three females in June.

**Suffolk** One site: up to 20 at lek in May, and up to 45 during breeding season, 'breeding may have taken place nearby'.

**Outer Hebrides** One site: up to four males and one or two females present most of summer, much display, may have bred.

**1973 Argyll** One site: single on 7th June.

**1974 Argyll** One site: male from 30th July to 6th August.

**1975 Argyll** One site: pair displaying on 18th May.

**1978 Argyll** One site: single from 26th April to 10th May.

Although breeding was not proved in 1981, this does not necessarily mean that it did not occur: observers are commendably loth to disturb areas where Ruffs may be nesting.

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	2	2	5	6	6	4	12	10	10
Pairs proved breeding	0	2	2	4	0	0	3	3	0
Max. no. females breeding	8	12	27	17	16	4	22	13	13

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

Five sites: 22-26 pairs breeding.

**Cambridgeshire** Two sites: (1) nine breeding pairs, tenth pair and three singles also present in survey during 21st-31st May, 'many juveniles in June'; (2) on the Ouse Washes 'Spring flooding caused disastrous breeding season, with only one chick confirmed as raised, and a few others from adjacent fields' (counted here as two pairs proved breeding).

**Norfolk** One site: four pairs each raised young.

**Somerset** One site: five pairs nested, four successfully reared young.

**Suffolk** One site: two pairs nested, at least two young reared.

**1974 County H** Two sites: (1) single on 27th May; (2) single on 13th June.

Not only did the flooding on the Ouse Washes result in a 'disastrous breeding season' there, but it was also a meagre year elsewhere, with the number of occupied sites being the lowest for over 20 years:

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	9	12	10	13	11	13	13	11	5
Pairs proved breeding	55	51	63	72	37	50	39	52	22
Pairs possibly breeding	61	58	71	87	70	68	64	77	26

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

One site: one pair bred.

**Inverness-shire** One site: pair bred, brood seen.

**1974 Perthshire** One site: single on 17th June.

Unless there are other records still to be submitted, 1981 was the worst year since 1973, when only three single individuals were seen.

	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	5	3	4	5	3	4	7	3	4	1
Pairs proved breeding	5	0	1	2	1	2	4	2	7	1
Pairs possibly breeding	8	3	5	6	3	5	10	4	12	1

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

Six sites: 24-38 pairs breeding.



**Outer Hebrides** Five sites: (1) two pairs from 6th June to 31st July 'apparently breeding'; (2) up to seven individuals, probably three pairs, no young seen; (3) at least three pairs, young seen; (4) seven individuals reported; (5) present at former site.

**Shetland** One site: 21-24 pairs, thought to have hatched 18 clutches.

**1974 Shetland** ADDITIONAL: increase number of pairs from 'nine to 14' to 'ten to 16'.

**1977 Shetland** ADDITIONAL DATA: 19 clutches thought to have hatched.

**1978 Shetland** ADDITIONAL DATA: nine clutches thought to have hatched.

**1979 Shetland** ADDITIONAL DATA: ten clutches thought to have hatched.

**1980 Shetland** ADDITIONAL DATA: 18 clutches thought to have hatched.

Numbers have changed remarkably little in recent years (the Shetland population was not counted in 1973), but it is disappointing that the spread to new sites which was apparently occurring in 1978-79 has had a setback. In the following table, the figures have been recalculated:

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	5	6	9	3	7	8	12	6	6
Pairs proved breeding	2	11	18	17	22	22	23	24	24
Pairs possibly breeding	7	21	31	21	31	36	40	32	38

### **Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*

Four sites: 3-6 pairs breeding, but only one young reared.

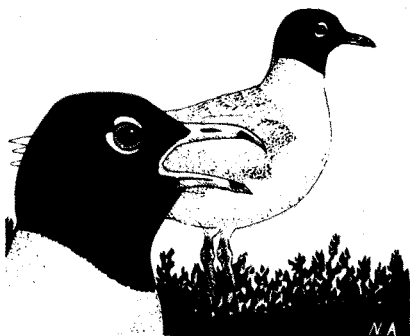
**Essex** One site: adult from March to June, first-summer on 20th June.

**Hampshire** One site: single from 15th March to mid May.

**Suffolk** One site: up to two adults on 5th-6th June.

**County B** One site: three pairs bred, only one young fledged.

The best year yet, but not much success.



	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	0	0	0	1	2	1	3	5	4
Pairs proved breeding	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	3
Max. no. pairs or singles	0	0	0	1	2	1	3	5	6

### **Snowy Owl** *Nyctea scandiaca*

One site: four females, one laying unfertilised clutch.

**Shetland** One site: on Fetlar, up to four females present, one laid eggs, but later abandoned them; no male present.

Breeding was annual during 1967-75, but no male has been present since.

### **Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*

No 1981 records.

**1976 Sussex, West** One site: first heard on 30th May, adult carrying food on 29th June, nest found on 1st July, juvenile sticking head out of nest-hole on 11th July, one juvenile left nest on 17th July, last sighting on 27th July.

The events in 1977 remain unique.

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	0	0	1	2	4	4	0	2	0
Pairs proved breeding	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0
Pairs possibly breeding	0	0	1	2	4	4	0	2	0

### Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Two sites: 0-2 pairs breeding.

**County B** One site: pair, breeding not proved.

**County C** One site: male, at least, present from 24th April into June, two individuals on 5th September.

**1974 Perthshire** One site: single on 14th July.

**1978 Perthshire** One site: single found dying beside road on 11th May.

Unless there are others not yet reported to us, 1981 was the worst year ever and the first with no confirmed breeding:

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	3	6	10	7	17	22	7	11	2
Pairs proved breeding	2	1	3	1	7	4	1	1	0
Pairs possibly breeding	3	6	10	7	19	23	9	14	2

### Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

One site: male held territory for eight days.

**Humberside** One site: male white-spotted *L. s. cyanecula* singing and displaying during 12th-19th May.

**1979 Nottinghamshire** Male (apparently lacking spot) singing and holding territory for six weeks, from early April to 12th May.

**1980 Nottinghamshire** DELETION: record (*Brit. Birds* 75: 171) referred to 1979, see above.

We live in hope!

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Singing males	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1

### Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Records not collected for 1981.

**1976 Huntingdonshire** Second site: (2) pair reared young; perhaps these were those seen at site 1 in July-August.

This late record raises the 1976 totals to 34-82 pairs breeding at 53 sites. The Panel listed records during 1973-76 and continues to publish additions and corrections for those four years.

### Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Six sites: 0-6 pairs breeding.

**Borders** One site: territorial pair throughout May and into mid June.

**Cumbria** One site: male on 30th May.

**Grampian** One site: pair on 17th May, one on 24th May.

**Perthshire** Two sites: (1) two or more on 19th July; (2) singly on 27th May and 8th June.

**Sutherland** One site: pair during 3rd-16th May.

**1975 Derbyshire** One site: pair with four recently fledged young on 28th-29th June.

**1978 Derbyshire**. One site: pair carrying food in summer, perhaps a second pair present.

**1980 Yorkshire, South** One site: nest containing about five young almost ready to fly on 7th June.

Rather than the expected consolidation and expansion, colonisation seems to be petering out.

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	3	8	10	11	6	3	6	5	6
Pairs proved breeding	2	3	2	3	4	1	1	1	0
Pairs possibly breeding	3	7	10	12	6	4	6	5	6

### Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Four sites: 1-7 pairs breeding.

**Sutherland** Three sites: (1) adult carrying food into plantation on 9th July; (2) agitated adult on 9th September; (3) at least one pair, male singing several times during 3rd-16th May.

**Inverness-shire** One site: 'one pair probably bred and a few other singing males heard' ('a few' is taken here as three).

**1974 Kent** One site: adult carrying food to young in nest.

**1979 County B** One site: adult dead on road on 26th July.

Unless further records come to light, 1981 was the worst year for more than a decade.

	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	?	11	28	25	10	10	12	6	18	4
Pairs proved breeding	12	4	4	13	3	2	3	2	7	1
Pairs possibly breeding	42	12	28	53	15	16	17	9	32	7

### Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

59 sites: 56-162 pairs breeding.

**Berkshire** One site: single singing on 16th July.

**Cambridgeshire** Two sites: (1) four singing in spring, later presence of juveniles confirmed breeding; (2) single singing on 19th May.

**Cornwall** Three sites: (1) two singing during 22nd-24th April, pair bred, two juveniles on 14th July; (2) two males on 30th April and 9th May, one on 10th June; (3) singles singing on 22nd March and 27th September.

**Devon** Eight sites: (1) 20-25 breeding pairs resident; (2) two or three breeding pairs resident; (3) three from January to April, four trapped during September to November; (4) present throughout breeding season, single singing on 3rd June; (5) single on 21st February; (6) ones and twos during January, February and October to December; (7) three on 25th January, two singing on 28th February, one on 28th October; (8) single singing on 9th May.

**Dorset** Seven sites: (1) nine singing males, 21 females, 66 young fledged; (2) five singing males; (3) four singing males; (4)(5) three singing males; (6)(7) single singing males.

**Essex** Two sites: (1) two pairs bred successfully, third pair seen at nest; (2) single singing on 24th May, two singing on 29th May, three singing from 6th to 13th June, one still singing on 28th June.

**Hampshire** Seven sites: (1) pair reared at least two young; (2) pair reared two young; (3) eight pairs estimated; (4) two pairs probably bred; (5)-(7) single pairs probably bred.

**Hertfordshire** Five sites: (1) one or two all year, one brood seen; (2) single on 16th April, male singing from 1st May to early June, one or two carrying food on 12th June; (3) male from 14th April, female from 28th April, pair feeding two young on 4th July; (4) three singing males in June; (5) singing male during 14th-21st August.



**Huntingdonshire** One site: female with brood-patch trapped.

**Isle of Wight** Two sites: (1) singing during April-July and October-November; (2) heard on 21st June.

**Kent** Six sites: (1)-(6) survey of east Kent lowlands showed 80 pairs probably breeding and 18 broods in the main area.

**Middlesex/Greater London** One site: singing male from 23rd May to 12th July.

**Norfolk** Ten sites: (1) one pair bred (three juveniles ringed) and second pair probably bred; (2)-(10) total of 29 pairs probably bred: 14, 6, 2, 2, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1.

**Somerset** Two sites: (1) singing male and female with brood-patch trapped, present April to June; (2) two singing males on 15th November, where not present in breeding season.

**Suffolk** Seven sites: (1) two pairs proved breeding, three additional singing males; (2) one or two singing from 12th March to late July, three singing in autumn; (3)-(7) total of seven singing during April-June: 2, 2, 1, 1, 1.

**County A** One site: single singing during 15th-27th March.

**1979 Glamorgan, West** CORRECTION: last date should be 27th April, not 27th August (*Brit. Birds* 75: 173).

**1980 Hampshire** ADDITIONS: (1) at site where two pairs reared four and two young (*Brit. Birds* 75: 172), one additional singing male; (2) five singing males; (3) male on 14th April, area not revisited; (4) male throughout season; (5) male on 29th June.

The continuing spread is shown by the increases in number of counties and sites occupied in 1981; the drop in the number of pairs possibly breeding may reflect decreasing observer-interest in searching for Cetti's Warblers in the main areas rather than any numerical decrease in singing Cetti's Warblers.

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Counties	2	3	3	8	10	14	14	11	16
Sites (excluding Kent)	1	3	8	14	32	41	33	50	59
Pairs proved breeding	1	5	8	8	13	30	46	19	56
Pairs possibly breeding	14	16	75	80	153	174	163	198	162

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

Eight sites: 5-15 pairs breeding.

**Dorset** One site: singing male from 30th April to 2nd May.

**Hampshire** One site: pair from 13th April to at least 16th June.

**Kent** One site: four singing males, three pairs, two confirmed breeding.

**Norfolk** Three sites: (1) two pairs nested, a third singing male; (2) two singing males; (3) single singing male.

**Suffolk** Two sites: (1) male from 22nd April, one pair bred; (2) two singing males from 15th April to 27th June, sporadic records until 25th August.

There seems to have been something of a setback in 1981, with the lowest totals for five years.

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	4	5	3	8	13	15	15	14	8
Pairs proved breeding	0	1	1	0	3	4	6	2	5
Pairs possibly breeding	13	8	3	9	26	28	30	29	15

**Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris***

Outside main area, three sites: 0-3 pairs breeding.

**Gloucestershire** One site: singing male on 1st July.

**Isle of Wight** One site: single seen and heard on 25th April and 3rd July.

**Worcestershire** 'Surprisingly few reports, with no singing males away from the main stronghold; no details, but understood to be no change in status.'

**County D** One site: singing male during 6th-30th June.

The last available figures for the main Worcestershire stronghold are the 50-60 pairs estimated from 46 singing males counted in 1977 (*Brit. Birds* 72: 378). If regular monitoring of numbers in this area is being maintained, we ask those responsible to supply details to the county recorder and to the Panel; if this isolated population is not being counted each year, we suggest that local ornithologists should initiate an annual organised census by a small group of careful specialists.

Outside the main area, 1981 was the worst year since these reports started:

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	9	6	3	5	6	15	15	8	3
Pairs proved breeding	5	0	0	0	2	4	1	2	0
Pairs possibly breeding	15	7	5	5	11	15	23	12	3

### Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

Two sites: two singing males.

**Cambridgeshire** One site: singing male from 24th May to 17th June.

**Gloucestershire** One site: singing male from 31st May to 28th June.

**1975 Hampshire** One site: singing male from 20th May to 1st June.

**1975 Shetland** One site: singing male from 8th June to 8th July.

**1980 Hampshire** One site: singing male from 26th May to 4th June.

Vagrant Great Reed Warblers often sing in spring (indeed, are unlikely to be discovered otherwise), so we have noted in these reports only the long-staying individuals:

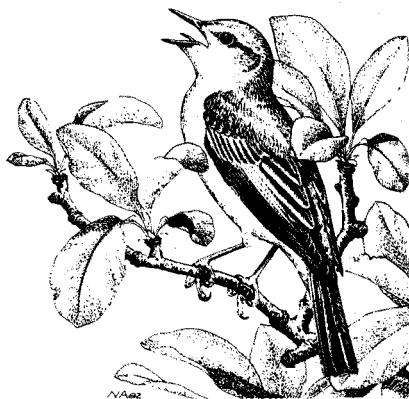
	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Singing males	0	0	2	1	0	1	1	1	2

### Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*

One site: single singing male.

**Huntingdonshire** One site: singing male during at least 6th-30th June.

This species has not previously appeared in our reports.



### Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*

Outside the New Forest, 33 sites: 50-119 pairs breeding.

**Cornwall** Six sites (1)-(4) single pairs bred; (5) present in early summer; (6) one or two pairs.

**Devon** One site: pair on 4th April, male singing then and on 30th April.

**Dorset** Ten sites: (1)-(6) at least 42 pairs: 20, 10, 8, 2 or more, 1, 1; (7) probably at least one pair; (8)-(10) probably single pairs.

**Hampshire** No information for New Forest. Elsewhere, six sites: (1) two pairs each reared

young; (2) two or three pairs reared young; (3) two males on 16th April, not seen again; (4)-(6) singles on 16th February, 20th February and 14th March.

**Isle of Wight** One site: singly on 8th May and 6th June.

**Surrey** Eight sites: (1) 16 pairs, majority reared young; (2) 13-15 pairs, majority reared young; (3) ten pairs, majority reared young, at least three reared two broods; (4) three pairs bred, a fourth male present; (5) pair bred, second singing male present; (6) pair reared young; (7) two males in summer; (8) male in summer.

**Sussex, West** One site: three pairs, two proved breeding, one with four young and other seen carrying food to nest.

The 1981 totals compare favourably with those for other recent years, but annual totals cannot be calculated consistently because of the difficulty of making assessments when numbers are high.

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

35 sites: 15-102 pairs breeding.

**Berkshire** Three sites: (1)-(3) three, two and one singing males.

**Buckinghamshire** Four sites: (1) singing males: first on 28th March, nine in April, at least 14 in June; (2) singing male on 29th June; (3) at least one, possibly two, on 31st August; (4) single on 28th March.

**Derbyshire** One site: pair bred, singing male on 30th May, pair feeding about five newly fledged young on 20th June, first county breeding record.

**Devon** One site: female trapped on 13th May, male trapped on 21st June.

**Dorset** Three sites: (1) pair throughout May, one on three dates in June; (2) singing male on 5th May and again two weeks later; (3) pair from 30th January to 10th March and one on 15th May.

**Essex** Three sites: (1) singing male throughout May; (2)(3) single singing males, both on 6th June.

**Hampshire** Five sites: (1) 14 singing males located in thorough survey; (2) pair throughout breeding season; (3) pair; (4)(5) single singing males.

**Hertfordshire** Three sites: (1) singing male from 10th May to 11th July; (2)(3) single singing males on 5th April and on 12th May.

**Kent** Two sites: (1) 36 occupied territories, at least 28 pairs, 13 broods; (2) two singing males on 8th and 21st June.

**Oxfordshire** Two sites: (1) adult with party of young; (2) 'reported to have bred' (counted as only probable).

**Staffordshire** Two sites: (1) singing male on 1st, 5th and 21st-27th March; (2) singing male in June, ringed, joined by second individual in October, both still present at end of year.

**Suffolk** Three sites: (1) two singing males in May-June; (2)(3) single singing males on 17th April and on 27th May.

**Sussex, East** One site: two males and one female.

**Worcestershire** Two sites: (1) pair, singing male from 3rd May to at least 20th June; (2) singing male on 20th April.

**1975 Middlesex/Greater London** One site: singing male from 22nd May to 1st June.

**1976 Middlesex/Greater London** Additional site: (3) singing male on 16th May.

After the depressing decline from 1975 to 1978, numbers were back in 1981 almost to the peak 1975 figures. Three sites, in Kent, Hampshire and Buckinghamshire, held 63% of the population. It does seem likely that other such concentrations remain to be discovered elsewhere.



	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	5	13	32	15	12	7	25	30	35
Pairs proved breeding	2	1	4	4	2	1	9	7	15
Pairs possibly breeding	18	37	123	28	31	11	73	78	102

**Golden Oriole** *Oriolus oriolus*

13 sites: 4-26 pairs breeding; probably only one breeding site.

**Hertfordshire** Four sites: (1) female on 5th July, pair on 8th July; (2) male during 17th-20th April; (3) male on 30th-31st May; (4) singing male on 28th June.

**Kent** Three sites: (1) two from mid May to early July; (2) two from 12th May to 7th June; (3) single in late May.

**Lincolnshire/south Humberside** One site: singing male during 17th-19th June and on 4th July.

**Somerset** Three sites: (1) singing male on 14th May; (2) male on 23rd May; (3) subadult male on 28th June.

**Suffolk** Two sites: (1) 12-14 pairs, two nests found, family parties of 4, 4, 3 and 2; (2) single on 4th June.

**1979 Glamorgan, West** CORRECTION: singing male on 16th (not 15th) May.

Despite the apparent continued absence from 'County A' since 1976, when there were at least 24 individuals at four sites, and the disappointing cessation of breeding in Kent (last in 1979), numbers seem to be holding up. All observers are, however, asked to avoid any disturbance at possible breeding sites. At least two of the Suffolk territories were subjected to undergrowth trampling in 1981, although most visiting birdwatchers did keep to public rights of way.

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	2	3	4	11	16	14	17	17	13
Pairs proved breeding	1	2	2	7	6	7	3	2	4
Pairs possibly breeding	8	4	7	23	21	28	30	28	26

**Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio*

At least 19 sites: 10-39 pairs breeding.

**Carmarthenshire** One site: male (regularly) and female (occasionally) from 8th July to 5th August.

**Essex** One site: pair reared four young.

**Hampshire** Two sites: (1) male from 20th May to 8th July; (2) female from 5th June to early August.

**Norfolk** Three to five sites: (1) pair bred successfully; (2) pair proved breeding; (3) pair reared four young; (4) pair reared at least one young; (5) pair present, but breeding not confirmed. (Unknown overlap between sites 1-2 and 3-5, and between sites 1-5 and the Norfolk/Suffolk entry.)

**Norfolk/Suffolk** Six sites: (1)-(6) single pairs nested, five rearing a total of 19 young.

**Suffolk** 13 sites: (1) six pairs nested, three robbed by egg-collectors; (2)(3) pairs each reared four young; (4)(5) pairs each reared three young; (6) pair present, but breeding not confirmed; (7) three pairs, one male feeding juveniles on 25th June; (8) two pairs; (9) female in mid June; (10)-(13) single males on 26th May, on 5th June, on 16th June and on 23rd June. (Unknown degree of overlap between sites 1 and 2-6, and between sites 1-6 and the Norfolk/Suffolk entry.)

**1973 Gwent** Two sites: (1) single during 2nd-9th June; (2) single on 17th June.

**1973 Hampshire** Three sites: (1)-(3) three pairs proved breeding, two reared young.

**1980 Gwent** DELETION: records (*Brit. Birds* 75: 175) referred to 1973, see above.

**1980 Hampshire** DELETION: records (*Brit. Birds* 75: 175) referred to 1973, see above.

It is disappointing that the colonisation of Scotland, which seemed to be imminent in 1977-79, has not materialised. The possible duplication (or even triplication) with the Norfolk/Suffolk records makes the 1981 figures

very unreliable; we hope that this problem will eventually be resolved.

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Counties	8	8	7	5	13	11	10	5	5
Pairs proved breeding	30	30	51	3	48	13	14	23	10
Pairs possibly breeding	48	52	56	25	64	37	52	31	39

### Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

No relevant records in 1981.

**1977 Inverness-shire** One site: singing male in early May.

**1978 Gwent** One site: male singing on 14th May.

A disappointing reverse:

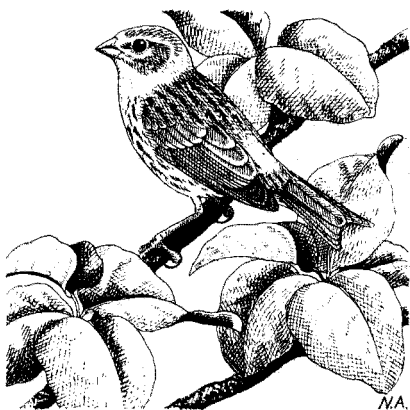
	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	1	0	0	0	2	2	3	3	0
Pairs proved breeding	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Pairs possibly breeding	1	0	0	0	3	2	4	4	0

### Serín *Serinus serinus*

Three sites: 2-6 pairs breeding.

**Devon** Three sites: (1) present from 21st April to 28th August, pair reared six young from two broods (3 and 3), second singing male present; (2) present from 12th April to 29th July, pair reared at least three young, at least one extra singing male; (3) present from 9th April to 10th July, two singing males and a probable female, breeding probably attempted but presumed unsuccessful.

These—only the fourth and fifth instances of proved breeding in Britain—give hope that the long-awaited colonisation may develop from this Devon nucleus. The previous instances were in Dorset in 1967, East Sussex in 1969 and Devon in 1978 (*Brit. Birds* 61: 357; 63: 290; 72: 541).



	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	0	0	0	2	0	4	0	1	3
Pairs proved breeding	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Pairs possibly breeding	0	0	0	2	0	4	0	1	6

### Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

One site: single seen.

**Scotland** One site: single on 21st June.

After four years with confirmed breeding, 1981 was disappointing:

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	0	1	0	0	6	3	5	1	1
Pairs proved breeding	0	0	0	0	2	2	11	1	0
Pairs possibly breeding	0	1	0	0	16	6	14	1	1



**Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Two sites: 2-11 pairs breeding.

**Grampian** Two sites: (1) seven males, young seen; (2) four males, young seen. An observer who regularly covers this area but who never reports any details to the county recorder commented: 'About average stock in Cairngorms. Good breeding, several second broods reared.'

**1974 Argyll** One site: first-year male and female present.

**1974 Perth** DELETION: record (*Brit. Birds* 68: 503) referred to Argyll (see above).

**1979 Cumbria** One site: three individuals in mid July.

**1979 County F** One site: male singing and female carrying food on 11th July.

Whilst general statements do help to fill in the picture, we should like to encourage all observers to submit data (and not merely opinions and generalisations) so that annual fluctuations can be monitored. The following table summarises the information supplied to us, but the quality for the main area has varied from year to year.

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Sites	5	7	13	1	5	3	13	4	2
Pairs proved breeding	6	2	2	4	4	3	7	4	2
Pairs possibly breeding	11	13	20	7	15	6	21	10	11

**Cirl Bunting** *Emberiza cirrus*

Outside Devon, 27 sites: 5-31 pairs breeding.

**Buckinghamshire** Two sites: (1) singing male from 2nd March to 21st April; (2) single on 11th February, 'in spring' and on 13th December. Recorder appeals to anyone who has observations at these sites to report them to him.

**Cornwall** Six sites: (1) two pairs bred; (2) pair, nest with one egg on 14th May, male carrying food on 2nd August; (3) pair, nest-building on 10th June; (4) pair on 10th June; (5)(6) single singing males, both on 28th July.

**Devon** No information supplied to the Panel.

**Durham** One site: male from 4th April to 5th June.

**Huntingdonshire** Two sites: (1) pair, three young and one infertile egg on 20th June; (2) pair on 17th May, not found on 20th June, perhaps same as at site 1.

**Somerset** 12 sites: (1) pair and two extra singing males during May-July; (2) pair and second singing male on 25th May; (3) pair on 20th-21st April; (4) pair in late May; (5)-(10) single singing males: May-July, 9th May, 8th June, 14th June, mid June, and 5th August; (11) male on 27th March; (12) female on 2nd August.

**Surrey** One site: singing male throughout breeding season.

**Sussex, East** Two sites: (1) singing male; (2) female 'seen occasionally'.

**Sussex, West** One site: 'Occasional sightings suggest presence of a pair somewhere.'

**1980 Durham** One site: male singing persistently, female 'tentatively identified'.

**1980 Lincolnshire/south Humberside** DELETION: record (*Brit. Birds* 75: 177) resulted from a transcription error (actually Black-headed Bunting *E. melanocephala*).

This is only the second year that records of this species have been collected by the Panel. Outside the main county (Devon), the totals have been:

	1980	1981
Sites	21	27
Pairs proved breeding	6	5
Pairs possibly breeding	26	31