



Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 1984

Compiled by Robert Spencer and the Rare Breeding Birds Panel

This is the twelfth annual report published by the Panel. In the eleventh report, for 1983 (*Brit. Birds* 79: 53-81), we introduced some changes in presentation, the most fundamental of which was the adoption of regions in order to give greater concealment to the more vulnerable species and yet to offer a better geographical picture of distribution. In doing so, we wrote 'The reactions of county recorders and of readers will help to determine whether it is a once-only experiment or, broadly speaking, the basis of a pattern for several years to come'. We had only a moderate response to that invitation to comment, but all who did take the trouble to write welcomed the changes. We are grateful for this encouragement and gratified, too, by the fine co-operation we have received from county recorders. The reader who cares to compare this report with its predecessor will find that for some species—Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis* is a good example—we have been enabled to present a much fuller picture.

In the presentation of this report for 1984, we have made only one significant change, and that is to the summary tables. Hitherto, the total of 'possible' breeders also included all pairs which had been proved to breed, and for some readers this gave an inflated estimate of population size. We now therefore give two separate figures for proved and possible breeders, labelled 'confirmed (pairs)' and 'possible (pairs)' respectively and have

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then added a line 'Max. total (pairs)', the meaning of which is self-explanatory. The 'possible' category has always been (and remains) a broad one. It ranges from pairs keeping together throughout the breeding season, but still providing no concrete evidence of breeding, to a single bird seen on one day in the breeding season in a habitat judged suitable for breeding. It is the inclusion of records in this last category which sometimes attracts criticism. Some such birds undoubtedly are late passage migrants, or displaced; others really are potential colonists or their vanguard. In the absence of a ready way of distinguishing between the two categories, it is safer to list them all: the important thing is to be as consistent as possible. Who can deny that the lone male Black-browed Albatross *Diomedea melanophris* which summers year after year with a colony of Gannets *Sula bassana* lacks only a mate to become a British breeding bird?

It has been suggested to us that we should define what we mean by a 'rare breeding bird'. The attempt to do so has given us much interesting debate and has helped to clear our thoughts. Our conclusion is that we need information about all species (other than wholly feral ones, such as Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*) which have a breeding population of fewer than 300 pairs. Let us acknowledge immediately that at present we fall short of this aim, and it will perhaps be helpful to list the three types of exception we have made.

1. There are species whose numbers fluctuate widely, dropping well below the ceiling of 300 after severe winters, but perhaps almost doubling for a short time after favourable winters and breeding seasons. The Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata* is a prime example. We think it sensible to be on the safe side and include such species, especially if the habitat which they prefer is at all threatened.

2. At present we omit some species from our list on grounds of practicability. For example, there are fewer than 150 pairs of Black-throated Divers *Gavia arctica* in Scotland, but we know that the numbers reported through the county network reflect varying amounts of fieldwork rather than population changes. For such species we believe that a system of 'core-sampling'—a kind of Rare Breeding Birds Census—should be adopted. By this means, the same carefully chosen sample of localities could be checked each year, with the aim of measuring population changes. Species which may perhaps be best dealt with by standard sampling techniques include Black-throated Diver, Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*, Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*, Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedipnemus*, Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus* and Snow Bunting. We are in the process of establishing such sample censuses.

3. As distinct from the physical problems of censusing common to the species in section two, above, there may be 'psychological' problems, typified by the Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*. It calls for a very special degree of dedication to walk the streets of industrial suburbs birdwatching, and even more so when it has to be done early in the morning to minimise the roar of traffic, or to obtain permission to visit power stations or other industrial complexes. To expect people to do this annually is unrealistic, so perhaps a comprehensive survey every—say—five years would be a better approach. Elsewhere, in habitats more congenial to bird-watchers, we can rely on the normal network of observers to pass data to their local recorders and, through them, to the Panel.

It is always difficult to fit the infinite variety of nature into the rigid categories conceived by mankind. Nowhere is this more true in the Panel's work than in the concept of a breeding locality or site. A discrete reedbed

with several pairs of Savi's Warblers *Locustella luscinioides* is clearly one site or locality, as is a loch with ten pairs of grebes. But decisions become somewhat arbitrary with Cetti's Warblers *Cettia cetti* spread thinly along 50 km of riverside habitat. Again, a Surrey heath with Dartford Warblers is discrete (so clearly a single locality), but we have treated the whole of the New Forest similarly. We acknowledge that, in this report (and in previous ones), there is some inconsistency in this respect, partly because of the difficulty of interpreting, without detailed local knowledge, the data submitted by observers or recorders.

By publishing two reports in the space of a calendar year, the Panel has caught up. We hope that from now on we shall be able to adhere to a timetable of regular publication each February, but this will depend on recorders being able to submit their forms by late July, and they in turn will be dependent upon the promptness of observers. At the time of writing (mid June 1986), barely half the forms for 1985 have reached the Panel. We are aware of the time-consuming demands which we make on recorders and are profoundly grateful for the painstaking co-operation which we receive from the great majority of them. We hope gradually to win the support of those who still have lingering doubts about offering their wholehearted allegiance.

We see the Panel's role as becoming practical rather than academic. In this context, we may mention that, at a recent public enquiry concerning proposals to develop the breeding site of a rare bird, the Panel was called upon to put into national perspective the rarity of the bird in question. This it was able to do without even naming any counties. More such cases will arise in the future, and it is important that the Panel's files should be as complete as possible.

During 1984, the membership of the Panel remained unchanged, namely Dr L. A. Batten, R. H. Dennis, Ian Prestt, Dr J. T. R. Sharrock and Robert Spencer (secretary). As noted in our last report (*Brit. Birds* 79: 56), Richard Porter succeeded Ian Prestt in 1985, and was much involved with data collection and report presentation for both the 1983 report and this 1984 report. Whilst the work of the Panel is sponsored by the NCC, the RSPB, the BTO and *British Birds*, the Panel is autonomous. Its members are appointed in a personal capacity, albeit with a specialised knowledge of the interests and requirements of the sponsoring bodies.

The year 1984

Like most years, 1984 was one in which some rare species prospered, some fared poorly, and many performed more or less within the limits which we have come to expect. One pair of the introduced White-tailed Eagles *Haliaeetus albicilla* reached egg stage, but failed to hatch them, whilst the probably native, spinstar Snowy Owls *Nyctea scandiaca* this year did not bother to lay their unfertilised eggs. The Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*, which has several times been suspected of breeding, finally did so, and to the accompanying publicity of television cameras. Television almost managed to capture moments in the life of a River Warbler *Locustella*

fluviatilis sequestering in East Anglia. It is interesting to think that its precise location must have become known to hundreds if not thousands, although in the Panel's files it has no more than the name of a county at the head of the record sheet. Another unexpected visitor, which probably stayed the entire summer and was seen displaying, was a Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*. Both the warbler and the snipe were lone individuals, but it is not impossible that these species might breed here in some future year.

For some species, such as Pintail *Anas acuta* and Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*, rain and flooding interfered with breeding. Elsewhere, the egg thieves were again busy with their unwholesome activities. Although the two pairs of Whooper Swans *Cygnus cygnus* to lay eggs were feral, they both had them stolen. Red Kite *Milvus milvus*, Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* and Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* were once again the victims of nest robbers. It is difficult to assess the long-term influence of these year-by-year thefts, but morally the perpetrators are helping themselves to part of the national heritage as much as if they were to remove a stone from Stonehenge.

The Woodlark *Lullula arborea* is the latest, sad, addition to the Panel's list, prompted by an all-too-evident decline, but the response from observers and recorders has been gratifying and we have been able to publish information from nine counties. It will be several years before population trends become clear.

Amongst the species which occupied additional localities in 1984, Goldeneyes *Bucephala clangula* are still responding well to the provision of nest-boxes; Avocets *Recurvirostra avosetta* are slowly breaking away from the tight confines of their original colonies at Havergate and Minsmere; Cetti's Warblers appear to be doing some 'infilling', as distinct from range expansion; whilst Marsh Warblers *Acrocephalus palustris* are perhaps on the threshold of establishing a genuine secondary breeding area. Time will tell.

Key to geographical regions used in this report

Northern Ireland Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, Tyrone

England, SW Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Isles of Scilly, Somerset, Wiltshire

England, SE Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex, Greater London, Hertfordshire, Kent, Middlesex, Oxfordshire, Surrey, Sussex (East and West)

England, E Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Lincolnshire and South Humberside, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Suffolk

England, Central Derbyshire, Herefordshire, Leicestershire (with Rutland), Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire (West Midlands, in the new county structure), Worcestershire

England, N Cheshire, Cleveland, Cumbria, Durham, Greater Manchester, Isle of Man, Lancashire, Merseyside, Northumberland, North Humberside, Tyne & Wear, Yorkshire (North, South and West)

Wales All present-day counties (i.e. includes the former Monmouth)

Scotland, S The former counties of Ayrshire, Berwickshire, Dumfriesshire, Kirkcudbrightshire, Lanarkshire, Lothian (East, Mid and West), Peeblesshire, Renfrewshire, Roxburghshire, Selkirkshire, Wigtownshire

Scotland, Mid Aberdeenshire, Angus, Banffshire, Clackmannanshire, Dunbartonshire, Fife, Kincardineshire, Kinross, Moray, Nairn, Perthshire, Stirlingshire

Scotland, N & W Argyllshire, Bute, Caithness, Inverness-shire, Orkney, Ross and Cromarty, Shetland, Sutherland, Western Isles (Outer Hebrides)

Systematic list

We have received no relevant 1984 records for the following species:

Great Northern Diver <i>Gavia immer</i>	Spotted Sandpiper <i>Actitis macularia</i>
Little Shearwater <i>Puffinus assimilis</i>	Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Purple Heron <i>Ardea purpurea</i>	Little Gull <i>Larus minutus</i>
Pink-footed Goose <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	Glaucous Gull <i>L. hyperboreus</i>
Scaup <i>Aythya marila</i>	Black Tern <i>Chlidonias niger</i>
King Eider <i>Somateria spectabilis</i>	Bee-eater <i>Merops apiaster</i>
Long-tailed Duck <i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	Shore Lark <i>Eremophila alpestris</i>
Smew <i>Mergus albellus</i>	Citrine Wagtail <i>Motacilla citreola</i>
Honey Buzzard <i>Pernis apivorus</i>	Bluethroat <i>Luscinia svecica</i>
Rough-legged Buzzard <i>Buteo lagopus</i>	Great Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>
Black-winged Stilt <i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	Short-toed Treecreeper <i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>
Kentish Plover <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	Great Grey Shrike <i>Lanius excubitor</i>
Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i>	Lapland Bunting <i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>
Green Sandpiper <i>Tringa ochropus</i>	

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

One locality: one individual.

Scotland, S One locality: adult in breeding plumage from 3rd May to 6th June. This species has frequented site in question for several consecutive springs.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. localities	1	2	5	2	0	1	3	3	2	2	1
No. individuals	1	2	5	2	0	1	4	2	2	3	1
No. pairs	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0

Observations in recent years have suggested a real possibility of the species breeding at this site.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

26 localities: 39-60 pairs breeding.

Scotland, Mid Two localities.

MORAYSHIRE Two localities: (1) five pairs on 19th May, but only one young reared to mid July; (2) one adult on 6th May.

Scotland, N & W 24 localities.

INVERNESS-SHIRE 24 localities: (1)-(24) a total of 55 pairs, 34 of which are known to have reared total of 19 or 20 young.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. localities	25	23	23	15	18	27	36	35	25	44	26
Confirmed (pairs)	58	54	70	42	37	58	53	52	51	41	39
Possible (pairs)	5	12	5	9	18	19	27	19	8	38	21
Max. total (pairs)	63	66	75	51	55	77	80	71	59	79	60

The number of pairs reported is greatly influenced by the number of waters visited and by the timing of those visits. Fewer waters were surveyed in 1984 than in 1983, and there is no reason to suspect any significant decline.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

15 localities: 16-28 pairs breeding.

England, SE Four localities, involving two counties: (1) one from 8th July to 6th August; (2) one on 26th July; (3) pair, from 5th to 8th June, may have been present during the two previous weeks; (4) one from 5th to 7th May, two from 8th to 30th May and again on 10th to 11th June, one from 21st to 25th June; up to three juveniles throughout 2nd to 31st August.

England, E Four localities in one county: (1) pair in breeding plumage on 29th and 30th March; (2) pair displaying on 25th April; (3) two adults in breeding plumage on 14th May; (4) pair in breeding plumage from 6th to 9th June, copulation observed on the first date and an immature noted on 13th July. Two of the localities could have involved the same birds.

England, Central One locality: pair in early June built probable nesting platforms and copulated; for a while, female presumed to be sitting, but both birds reappeared and the site was then deserted.

England, N Three localities, involving two counties: (1) pair nested, two downy chicks being first seen on 11th July; (2) two adults, presumed to be pair, in fading breeding plumage on 22nd August; (3) at least ten pairs reared nine first broods comprising minimum of 26 young. Nine of the pairs had second broods and produced a further 18 young.

Scotland, Mid Three localities involving two counties: (1) three adults, each with one small chick, one adult with a larger chick and two juveniles, and a further three adults (one in winter plumage), all on 10th August; (2) single adult present throughout breeding season; (3) pair on 2nd May and single on 2nd July.

1983 Scotland, Mid Second locality: (2) at least eight adults and possibly up to six pairs; one juvenile seen later.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. localities	2	4	2	7	6	6	9	7	12	19	15
Confirmed (pairs)	15	2	10	11	13	12	11	5	11	11	16
Possible (pairs)	3	9	1	5	2	2	10	7	10	21	12
Max. total (pairs)	18	11	11	16	15	14	21	12	21	32	28

The table indicates a slow increase in the breeding population, and it is gratifying that at least 51 young were reared, compared with 36 in 1983. On the other hand, this encouraging position is much influenced by one thriving population, and the birds at two localities are threatened by recreational activities.

Black-browed Albatross *Diomedea melanophris*

One locality: one summered with Gannets *Sula bassana*.

Scotland, N & W One locality.

SHETLAND One locality: adult in colony from 27th February to 7th October.

This was the thirteenth year that this albatross has summered with the breeding Gannets.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

18 localities: at least 36 booming males.

England, SE and E 15 localities, of which 11 were in Norfolk: (1) singles seen on 6th and 20th April and one booming on 6th May; (2)(3) two booming at each locality; (3)-(11) singles booming at each locality, one pair known to have bred successfully; (12)(13) four pairs bred at each; (14) five booming males, and breeding thought probable; (15) one in suitable breeding habitat on 28th June.

England, N One locality: 11 booming.

Wales Two localities: (1)(2) singles booming at each.

1983 England, SE and E Revised information and three additional localities: (3) ten pairs, one known to have reared two young; (14)-(16) two pairs at each.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. localities	18	17	21	19	16	15	18	18
Confirmed (pairs)	0	2	1	4	1	1	1	5
Booming males	43	47	51	48	47	35	44-45	36

This species was not added to our list until 1977.

**Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus*

One locality: pair breeding.

England, N One locality, pair present for some time, and on 29th July male observed to feed a chick which, although of adult size, still had a downy head.

Although breeding has been suspected on a number of occasions, this constitutes the first proved record this century.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Two localities: two feral pairs.

England, N One locality.

GREATER MANCHESTER One locality: feral pair, whose eggs were stolen.

Scotland, Mid One locality.

DUNBARTONSHIRE One locality: feral pair nested and had four eggs on 23rd May; nest empty on 29th May, and eggs presumed to have been stolen. Including the breeding pair, six individuals summered at this locality.

Black Duck *Anas rubripes*

One locality: male mated with female Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*.

Wales One locality.

GWYNEDD One locality: male present until 18th December and hybrids seen as follows: three on 23rd February, two on 16th March, eight on 16th September and two on 18th December.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

14 localities: five to 17 pairs breeding.

England, SW One locality.

DORSET One locality: single males on 1st May and 28th June.

England, SE Three localities.

KENT Three localities: (1) pair on 22nd May; (2) two males on 2nd May; (3) one to three individuals throughout May and a male throughout June and July.

England, E One locality.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE One locality: female giving distraction display was almost certainly on eggs, but was probably flooded out in late May.

Scotland, N & W Nine localities.

INVERNESS-SHIRE One locality: pair possibly bred.

WESTERN ISLES Two localities: (1) pair possibly bred; (2) pair raised nine young, first seen when newly hatched, and again when fully grown on 30th July.

ORKNEY Six localities: (1) two or three pairs bred, juveniles being seen in July and August; (2) pair present in May; (3) two pairs bred, broods of two and four on 26th June; (4)(5) single pairs in May; (6) pair in March and April, and juveniles in September.

1983 England, E Fifth locality.

1983 SUFFOLK One locality: pair summered, but no evidence of breeding obtained.

1974 1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984

No. localities	7	11	10	15	10	19	15	16	18	22	14
Confirmed (pairs)	10	12	6	10	7	10	9	8	7	12	5
Possible (pairs)	1	13	10	16	16	31	16	23	25	15	12
Max. total (pairs)	11	25	16	26	23	41	25	31	32	27	17

Although all the totals are lower than for 1983, there is no reason to suppose that the Pintail is declining as a breeding species. Part of the variation arises from variation in observer cover.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

45 localities: four to 56 pairs breeding.

England, SW Four localities.

AVON One locality: three males and one female on 15th May, two males and a female remaining until 10th June; two records of singles in July, then ones and twos from 16th August to 9th September.

CORNWALL One locality: male from 13th May to 1st June.

DEVON Two localities: (1) male on 8th April and 10th May and pair from 1st June to 16th July, but no evidence of breeding; (2) male on 17th March and pair on 6th May. Males seen briefly at six other localities were all judged to be on passage.

England, SE Six localities.

ESSEX One locality: pair, no dates supplied, but breeding thought 'possible'.

KENT Five localities: (1) male on several dates between 5th and 31st May, 1st and 22nd June, and on 29th July; (2) pair on 19th May and single on 21st June; (3) pairs on 14th May, 3rd and 6th June and 4th July, it is possible that two pairs attempted breeding, but only one of them is thought likely to have produced young; (4) single male from 3rd to 18th May and on 13th June, two individuals on 1st July, and male from 6th to 9th July; (5) male from 5th to 9th May and on 20th and 23rd June.

England, E 27 localities.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE Four localities: (1) maximum of ten males in mid May, two broods observed, and one nest with 11 eggs flooded out; (2) two pairs, one of which hatched brood of five; (3) one or two on various dates between 22nd March and 8th April; (4) male on 4th and 30th May.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE One locality: pair in suitable breeding habitat from 1st to 7th May, but not seen subsequently.

LINCOLNSHIRE/SOUTH HUMBERSIDE One locality: female acting in agitated manner and returning frequently to the same spot in the reed edge, present from 30th June to 5th July.

NORFOLK 17 localities: (1)-(17) from one to six individuals reported from each of these localities, and breeding probable at one of them.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE Three localities: (1) male from 17th April to 12th June and two females on 19th April only; (2) pair on 24th April only; (3) pair from 15th to 19th May.

SUFFOLK One locality: pair summered in suitable breeding habitat, but showed no evidence of breeding.

England, N Seven localities.

CHESHIRE Three localities: (1) pair on 11th April, a male on 13th May and from 8th to 10th June; (2) pair on 11th May and five immatures on nearby river from 4th to 11th September; (3) male from 19th to 25th April.

GREATER MANCHESTER One locality: pair from 28th April to early May, two males in late May and one on 3rd June.

LANCASHIRE Two localities: (1) male on 2nd and 3rd May, female on 17th May, male on 3rd June, singles on three days in July, 12 days in August, and on 2nd September; (2) pair from 13th April into June, the female remaining until 5th July, breeding attempt suspected, but no young seen.

WEST YORKSHIRE One locality: pair suspected of breeding.

Scotland, S One locality.

EAST LOTHIAN One locality: pair from 30th April to 9th May.

1983 England, E Revised total, 29 sites.

1983 SUFFOLK Three localities: (1) revised information: one or two pairs, one pair hatched at least five young and reared at least four; (2) pair bred, but success unknown; (3) male present on 29th May could have been breeding locally.

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. localities	34	48	66	59	45
Confirmed (pairs)	4	8	10	15	4
Possible (pairs)	50	50	84	51	52
Max. total (pairs)	54	58	94	66	56

For those duck species which spend much time in small reed-enclosed waters, breeding can be difficult to prove. This is a species whose numbers do tend to fluctuate considerably from year to year, and 1984 could be regarded as about average. This species was not added to our list until 1980.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Nine localities: 17-67 pairs breeding.

Northern Ireland One locality.

FERMANAGH One locality: a maximum of 46 potential breeding pairs, with minimum productivity of 36 young hatched from seven clutches.

Scotland, Mid Three localities.

DUNBARTONSHIRE/STIRLINGSHIRE One locality: an early-morning census on 29th May indicated six pairs and two additional males. There were no subsequent reports of young.

PERTHSHIRE Two localities: (1) three pairs on 6th May, female with three young on 15th July and again on 26th July; (2) pair on 6th May.

Scotland, N & W Five localities.

ARGYLL One locality: female seen with two young on 6th August.

INVERNESS-SHIRE Two localities: (1) three pairs on 25th May and on 8th June, female with six ducklings and six other females on 4th July, three females with broods and four other females on 13th July, three females with broods of seven, six and three on 16th July; (2) clutch of nine with the female on the nest on 5th June, and nests with clutches of eight and ten on 13th June.

ROSS-SHIRE One locality: female with five small young (no date given).

SUTHERLAND One locality: male and two females seen on 2nd May.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. localities	13	12	14	13	9	17	10	6	17	6	9
Confirmed (pairs)	10	32	22	24	16	98	7	5	14	10	17
Possible (pairs)	132	127	137	132	125	30	106	77	98	75	50
Max. total (pairs)	142	159	159	156	141	128	113	82	112	85	67

The reports suggest a decline in some key localities, but it is certain that in Scotland an unknown number of pairs escape detection every year. Scoters riding out on choppy water may be very difficult to see from the shore.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Five localities: 53-56 pairs breeding.

England, SE One locality.

ESSEX One locality: three summered.

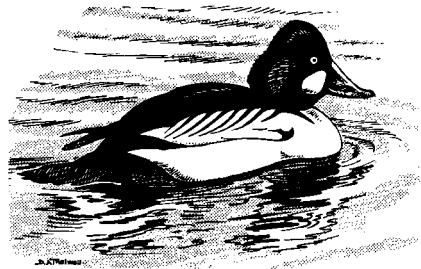
England, N One locality.

LANCASHIRE One locality: pair on 25th May.

Scotland, S One locality.

MID/WEST LOTHIAN One locality: male present from 29th April to 18th August and female seen in association on 1st June, 7th and 13th August.

Scotland, N & W Total of 53 clutches laid, of which 34 were successfully incubated to pro-



duce a record total of 311 young. A significant and encouraging development was the occupation of two nest boxes about 48 km away from the river system where most of the boxes are located.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. localities	5	3	8	12	18	17	11	13	11	11	5
Confirmed (pairs)	3	3	5	6	12	22	26	29	27	47	53
Possible (pairs)	4	3	7	8	15	21	11	25	30	9	3
Max. total (pairs)	7	6	12	14	27	43	37	54	57	56	56
Young hatched	19	10	46	11	40	110	165	286	220	209	311

In Scotland, breeding has arbitrarily been regarded as occurring in two localities. This is perhaps less misleading than regarding each nest as being in a separate locality. The systematic collection and publication of late-spring and summer records would be impossible in Scotland, but the Panel is anxious to receive all such records for England, Wales and Northern Ireland in the belief that they could be precursors of spreading breeding populations.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

No records were submitted to the Panel, but it is known that breeding or attempted breeding occurred in at least four localities in Britain.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

46 pairs, 33 breeding, only 13 successful, rearing 21 young.

Wales 46 pairs known: 21 young reared. Of the known pairs, 33 laid eggs—the same figures as in 1983. Only 13 nests were successful, with six broods of one, six broods of two, and one of three. Of the 13 unsuccessful or non-breeding pairs located, eight built or repaired nests, and one or two of these could have laid and failed quickly. In addition, at least 26 unmated individuals were identified in April, giving a known population of at least 118 individuals, or about ten more than in 1983. Of the known failures, three were robbed of eggs, one nest collapsed, one female died at the nest, two clutches were probably taken by Carrion Crows *Corvus corone* or Ravens *C. corax*, three clutches failed to hatch after full-term incubation, six others failed about, or soon after, the expected hatch date, and four nests definitely lost small young, grey squirrels *Sciurus carolinensis* and polecats *Mustela putorius* being implicated at two. (The Panel is indebted to Peter Davis and the Kite Committee for this detailed summary.)

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Total pairs	32	32	36	34	39	42	42	46	47	46	46
Breeding pairs	27	28	29	28	32	30	29	32	38	33	33
Successful pairs	9	15	15	12	13	14	21	18	19	21	13
Young reared	12	24	18	17	22	18	27	21	23	24	21

But for the good productivity of those pairs which were successful, 1984 would have been a very poor year. The potential for further growth and the colonisation of areas outside Wales is still there, but the report from the Kite Committee gives a valuable insight into the range of problems which beset breeding Red Kites.

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

The project to reintroduce this species to Scotland continued in 1984, when ten young were imported from Norway and successfully released on Rhum National Nature Reserve by the Nature Conservancy Council. White-tailed Eagles were found in seven suitable breeding sites in western

Scotland, and two pairs laid eggs, but both failed. The trio which laid eggs in 1983, a male and two females, were present at the 1983 nest, but did not breed. (The Panel is grateful to John A. Love for preparing this statement.)

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

28 localities: 66 young reared.

A total of 66 young was reared from 28 nests, 18 of the males being monogamous and five bigamous. Once again, the bulk of the population was in Norfolk and Suffolk, where 61 young were reared. Two pairs nested elsewhere and reared five young. Four nests failed, one probably due to human disturbance and an egg-collector, the other three for unknown reasons. At one nest, the male disappeared just before the eggs were due to hatch, but the female reared three young with the help of food put out by observers. The mean productivity was 2.36 young per nest, just slightly lower than the 1983 figure of 2.56. Two nests were in arable crops, and the remainder in reeds. At least eight other individuals summered and a colour-ringed juvenile from 1983 was seen briefly. (The Panel is indebted to John Day, who compiled this report, making use of his personal files to amplify the data submitted to the Panel.)

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Breeding males	4	5	11	13	14	11	16	17	19	21	27
Breeding females	5	7	11	15	14	16	20	20	24	28	32
Fledged young	7	18	27	44	36	38	44	48	59	71	66
Mean fledged young per nest	1.4	2.6	2.4	2.9	2.6	2.4	2.2	2.0	2.5	2.5	2.4

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

Two localities involving two counties: three young fledged.

England, SW and E Two localities: (1) pair present in the breeding season; (2) pair nested in an arable crop, but failed when heavy rain flattened the crop across the nest, which contained five eggs, the female remated with a different male and successfully reared three young from a nest in the same field. (This statement was compiled by John Day.)

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. localities	3	3	4	2	7	4	8	8	7	8	2
Confirmed (pairs)	0	0	3	1	2	2	2	2	3	6	1
Possible (pairs)	3	3	2	1	5	2	6	7	5	4	1
Max. total (pairs)	3	3	5	2	7	4	8	9	8	10	2
Fledged young	0	0	6	0	3	7	4	4	4	9	3

After several years of improving numbers, 1984 marks a setback, only the successful rearing of young putting it above the worst recent year (1977).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

61 localities: 29-68 pairs breeding.

England, SW 16 localities: (1) female in suitable habitat on 10th April; (2)-(12) six pairs which, between them, reared 17 young to flying stage, and further five pairs which probably bred; (13)-(16) singles, mainly females, on various dates between March and July.

England, SE Two localities: (1) female carrying food into a wood on 26th June; (2) pair frequenting wood.

England, E Nine localities: (1) pair from 8th April; (2) pair from 1st May (possibility of these being the same as those at locality 1 not fully precluded); (3) pair from 21st April; (4) male from 12th May, female on 29th May, pair from 3rd June, two males and possibly two females on 15th June; (5) male on 12th April, two males and female on 13th April (possibility of some overlap with those at locality 4); (6) male on 10th May and 12th June; (7) female on 22nd April, male on 21st June and pair from 24th June onwards, frequenting two different woods; (8) pair

displaying on 15th April and 19th May; (9) pair on 19th April, female on 24th April and male on 19th May.

England, Central Three localities: (1) female on 3rd and 15th April, single males on seven dates between 14th and 29th April, two males on 20th and 22nd April; (2) pair on 9th June, female still present on 1st September; (3) three, thought to be a male and two females, present throughout year.

England, N 16 localities: (1) empty nest with recently fledged young nearby on 7th August; (2)-(15) 14 nests known, only three of which successful, rearing nine young: of remaining nests, nine robbed or otherwise interfered with by man, and two deserted; (6) male on 28th May.

Wales Four localities: (1) two pairs, rearing broods of two and four; (2) two pairs, rearing broods of three and four; (3) one or two individuals, up to 20th April, and again on 29th July; (4) three pairs, but no proof of breeding.

Scotland, S Nine localities: (1) two pairs, one of which reared brood; (2)(3) single pairs, each of which reared brood; (4) pair possibly reared young; (5)(6) two pairs at each, but breeding status not known; (7) two, or possibly three pairs, but breeding status not known; (8) minimum of 12 sightings, thought to represent one or two pairs; (9) pair soaring in April.

Scotland, Mid One locality: pair displaying on 15th and 22nd April.

Scotland, N & W One locality: pair reared three young from four eggs hatched.

1983 England, Central One additional locality: (6) pair in suitable locality.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Counties	10	14	10	15	18	21	21	27	16	17	21
No. localities	20	32	28	33	37	37	42	50	39	57	61
Confirmed (pairs)	9	5	12	15	14	23	17	15	23	30	29
Possible (pairs)	12	29	16	22	26	21	32	37	18	25	39
Max. total (pairs)	21	34	28	37	40	44	49	52	41	55	68

Except when soaring, the Goshawk is generally very unobtrusive, and easily overlooked in areas of substantial woodland. The table suggests that there is a slow build-up in numbers, and this despite evidence of sustained persecution by the illegal taking of eggs or young.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

33 localities: 29 pairs reared 47 young; five nests robbed by egg-collectors.

Scotland, Mid One locality.

PERTSHIRE Loch of Lowes: male arrived on 20th April and stayed two months, but apparently failed to attract a mate.

Scotland, N & W One locality.

INVERNESS-SHIRE Loch Garten: pair fledged two young from three eggs.

Elsewhere in Scotland 31 pairs: 29 laid eggs and there were 21 successful broods. Three nests failed during incubation, including a case of bigamy with two females on nests about 500 m apart. At fledging, there were three broods of one, ten broods of two, and eight broods of three. (All data compiled by Roy Dennis on behalf of the RSPB.)

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Pairs	14	14	14	20	22	25	25	25	30	30	33
Successful pairs	10	7	10	7	11	16	19	20	21	20	21
Young reared	20	16	20	13	19	30	41	42	45	45	47

Although 1984 was a record year for the number of young reared, the theft of five clutches of eggs must slow down the rate of future increase and expansion of the population.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

214 localities: 93-209 pairs reared at least 93 young.

England, SW 28-76 pairs, rearing at least 40 young.

AVON Six localities: (1) many records of one, sometimes two individuals; (2) four sightings of pair by 10th June, then singles on 9th July, 23rd August and 4th September; (3) singles on 21st May, 13th June and three dates in July and August, and two on 5th September; (4) single on 9th August and injured male on 19th August; (5) singles on 22nd July and 1st September; (6) singles on 4th May, 3rd June, 26th July and 10th September.

DEVON One locality: one possible pair. Information about other pairs in county not yet available.

DORSET 18 localities: (1)-(18) single pairs, of which 15 reared total of 35 young, one nest robbed, and two pairs failed.

HAMPSHIRE 16 localities: (1)-(16) five pairs known to have bred, rearing at least nine young; most of remainder thought to be probable breeders, but picture for county regarded as very incomplete.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE Four localities: (1) one or two pairs, one flying juvenile; (2) several sightings during summer; (3) up to three in May, two adults and juvenile in September; (4) several sightings between June and September.

SOMERSET 18 localities: (1) pair reared two young; (2)-(5) pairs in May or June; (6) one or two between 11th and 25th June, and again on 15th August; (7)-(14) singles on more than one date during breeding season, 'regularly' at two localities; (15)-(18) single sightings.

WILTSHIRE 20 localities: (1)-(4) one pair confirmed breeding at each site, with total of at least three young reared; (5)-(8) pairs or individuals present during breeding season in circumstances suggestive of breeding; (9)-(20) one or more sightings during breeding season in habitats suitable for breeding.

England, SE 50-92 pairs, rearing at least 27 young.

BERKSHIRE Five localities: (1) seen on eight dates May-July; (2)-(5) seen on two or more dates during breeding season.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE 40 localities: (1)-(26) breeding proved, but no information received about breeding success; (27)-(34) pairs seen regularly, but without proof of breeding; (35)-(40) other sightings during breeding season, in areas suitable for breeding.

KENT Three localities: (1)(2) pattern of records suggestive of territory holding; (3) pair behaving territorially in May, two in early August, food-passing, last seen on 7th September.

ESSEX One locality: pair reared two young.

HERTFORDSHIRE 13 localities: (1) pair, with two or possibly three young on 22nd August; (2) single in previous breeding territory on 2nd and 3rd June; (3) one or two all summer and juvenile in September; (4) pair on 19th July; (5)(6) regular sightings over at least a month; (7)-(13) singles on one or more occasions during breeding season.

OXFORDSHIRE Six localities: (1)-(6) six nests found, 'probably a small proportion of the real total for the county'.

SURREY 16 localities: (1) nest with three eggs, from which three young fledged; (2)-(4) nests with three young, each fledging at least two; (5) a nest with four eggs from which some young fledged; (6)(7) nests with three eggs, from which some young fledged; (8) nest with three young; (9) nest with two eggs from which both young fledged; (10) nest from which some young fledged; (11)-(13) pairs on more than one occasion in known breeding areas; (14)-(16) singles in known breeding areas.

SUSSEX Six localities: (1)-(6) breeding pairs, with total of five to seven young known to have been reared.

England, E Eight to 26 pairs, rearing at least 14 young.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE Five localities: (1)(2) pairs, rearing one and two young; (3) regular sightings between 10th May and 12th September, with local breeding indicated; (4) single observed carrying food; (5) various sightings but no evidence of breeding. 'Some observers believe that ten or more pairs could be nesting.'

HUNTINGDONSHIRE Two localities: (1) pair, present from mid May, fledged two young in first week of August; (2) many sightings from 7th May and seen carrying prey, almost certainly nesting locally, but nest not found.

LINCOLNSHIRE/SOUTH HUMBERSIDE Two localities: (1) singles on five dates between 13th May and 9th August; (2) adult on 24th June.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE 14 localities: (1) pair reared two or three young; (2) pair reared at least two young; (3) pair reared two young which fledged on 23rd August; (4) pair reared one young; (5) five on 8th September: probably bred nearby as seen throughout summer; (6)-(11)

pairs during breeding season; (12)-(14) singles throughout summer. Singles seen on odd occasions at 27 other localities, but probably on passage.

SUFFOLK Three localities: (1) pair reared at least two young; (2)(3) pairs probably bred.

England, Central Six to 11 pairs, rearing at least 11 young.

DERBYSHIRE Three localities: (1) pair reared three young, still in nest on 12th August, but fledged by 20th; (2)(3) pairs seen, with food-passing at one site, but no evidence of breeding.

HEREFORDSHIRE One locality: one pair bred.

LEICESTERSHIRE Three localities: (1) pair with two young, seen late in August; (2) territorial pair, presumed to be breeding; (3) pair displaying, and carrying food in early August. All three sites on open farmland.

SHROPSHIRE One locality: many sightings, of individuals and pairs, between 28th April and 22nd July, breeding judged probable.

WARWICKSHIRE One locality: pair reared three young. Casual sightings (not available to the Panel) suggest presence of five or six pairs.

WORCESTERSHIRE Two localities: (1) pair reared two young; (2) pair reared one young.

Wales One to four pairs, rearing at least one young.

GWENT Three localities: (1) pair fledged at least one young; (2)(3) singles in suitable habitats on 3rd and 16th June respectively.

GWYNEDD One locality: single on 8th July.

1983 England, SW Additional information.

1983 **GLOUCESTERSHIRE** One locality: pair present all summer.

1983 England, E Additional information.

1983 **SUFFOLK** Five localities: (1) single with prey on 18th June and at least five other sightings in June; (2) one hawking for insects on 19th June; (3) single on 10th June; (4) pair displaying on 12th July; (5) juvenile on 24th July.

1983 England, Central Additional information.

1983 **HEREFORDSHIRE** One additional locality: (2) one pair bred.

1983 **SHROPSHIRE** One locality: pair fledged three young.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Confirmed (pairs)	47	38	59	51	70	80	64	51	97	80	93
Possible (pairs)	49	95	84	68	86	52	91	109	105	182	116
Max. total (pairs)	96	133	143	119	156	132	155	160	202	262	209
Young reared (minimum)	51	42	69	78	96	72	86	89	63	104	93

The reports of Hobbies breeding on open farmland, together with the growing totals for those counties where detailed fieldwork is taking place, suggest that the species is under-recorded and that the increasing totals revealed in the table are in part due to more-thorough survey-work.

Spotted Crane *Porzana porzana*

Four localities: 0-10 pairs breeding.

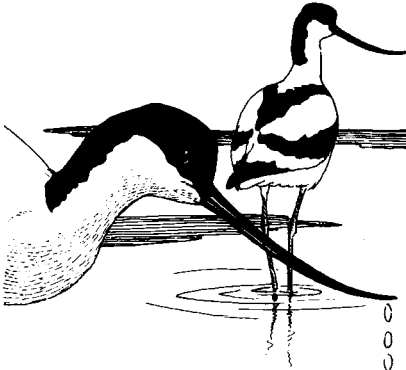
England, E Three localities: (1) two calling on 31st May and 1st June, three on 3rd June, thereafter one until 14th June, one seen on 3rd August, thought likely to have bred following floods; (2) one calling nightly from 31st May to 14th June; (3) heard calling in suitable habitat on 31st May, but not subsequently.

Scotland, N & W One locality: two calling on 15th, 16th and 30th May, three calling on 14th and 27th May, and five calling on 17th and 18th May, but no proof of breeding.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Counties	4	0	1	3	6	2	1	3	1	3	3
No. localities	4	0	2	4	6	4	3	4	2	6	4
Calling males	5	0	2	7	6	8	4	9	3	12	10

A second consecutive year with rather-better-than-average numbers. As

with the Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*, detection of the presence of the species is almost totally dependent upon vocalisations.



Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

11 localities: 235-240 pairs reared at least 108 young.

England, SE & E Eleven localities. The key sites remain Havergate Island, Suffolk, where 117 pairs succeeded in fledging only 47 young, and Minsmere, also Suffolk, where 52 pairs bred, but reared no young at all. Predation, by foxes *Vulpes vulpes*, Black-headed Gulls *Larus ridibundus* and Kestrels *Falco tinnunculus*, remains a problem at some sites.

N.A.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	
No. localities		4	6	5	6	3	3	5	5	9	9	11
Confirmed (pairs)		125	158	151	146	145	147	168	201	190	238	237
Young reared (minima)		64	142	68	14	92	99	101	155	150	192	108

The year 1984 was one of mixed fortunes for the species, with breeding or attempting breeding at more localities than ever, but with poor breeding success.

Stone-curlew *Burhinus oediconemus*

44 localities: 19-71 pairs breeding, but data known to be incomplete.

England, SW 19 localities: (1) five nests known, at all of which young hatched, but nothing known of survival rate; (2) eggs laid in one nest, but outcome unknown; (3) two adults and juvenile seen on 8th August; (4) two pairs present on eggs in May, but outcome unknown; (5) five pairs present in mid April; (6)-(10) pairs present at each in mid April; (11) a pair present in early June; (12) pair present in late May; (13) ten pairs present, but no further details available; (14) pair present; (15) two pairs displaying in April; (16) pair in young plantation; (17) single calling on 18th June; (18) single in late-sown barley on 19th May, previously heard calling on 10th and 11th May; (19) single calling on 27th April.

England, SE Eight localities: (1)-(8) total of three to 11 breeding pairs, but only two young known.

England, E 18 localities: (1)-(9) nine pairs, at least six of which bred successfully: at one site, adult killed flying into overhead wires; one chick taken by foxes and another was traffic victim; (10)-(13) present, but information too vague to summarise; (14)(15) at least one pair at each; (16) pair; (17) two pairs, one of which reared two or three young; (18) four pairs. It is thought that the true figures could be considerably higher.

1983 England, E Eight additional localities: (16)-(23) total of 29 or 30 pairs.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Confirmed (pairs)	28	47	16	4	20	3	8	10	8	20	19
Possible (pairs)	39	25	93	23	14	47	37	43	59	77	52
Max. total (pairs)	67	72	109	27	34	81	45	53	67	98	71

Although the breeding population is thought to be significantly bigger

than the numbers given here suggest, there is ample evidence that the species is increasingly threatened by loss of habitat. As usual, we urge observers with information to send it to the Panel.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Incomplete data.

England Five sites: (1) two pairs, each with three eggs, but only one chick hatched; (2) pair with three eggs on 19th May, which had been deserted by 14th June; (3) male with ten-day-old chick on 17th July; (4) female on 26th May; (5) two females on 28th May.

Scotland Reports received for five localities: (1) eight on summit not frequented in recent years were judged to be on passage (no date provided); (2) pair; (3) male on nest, male holding territory, and pair, all on 6th July, male and two young on 29th July; (4) two pairs on 26th May; (5) 'breeding about average, but poorer than usual in the east'.

Although woefully incomplete, this is a rather fuller report than we have often been able to publish, and we are grateful for the co-operation we have received. In England, it was an outstanding year for passage Dotterels, and there were more proved breeders than for some years.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

One locality: 0-1 breeding pair.

Scotland, N One locality: one or two from 19th May to 26th June, with display on 25th May, but breeding not proved.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. localities	2	1	2	3	3	4	5	1	3	1	1
Confirmed (pairs)	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	0
Possible (pairs)	3	2	3	5	5	4	5	1	2	2	1
Max. total (pairs)	3	2	4	5	6	6	6	1	3	2	1

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

One locality: one or two pairs breeding.

Scotland, Mid and N One locality: individuals present from 7th June to 22nd July, adult clearly off a nest on 14th June and calling activity in another area 1 km distant on 19th June, and adult very agitated on 21st July. It is thought that two nesting attempts were made, and that at least one was successful, but it is not known whether there was one, 1½ or two pairs.

There is still no indication of the species spreading far from the original locality where breeding first occurred in 1978.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Six localities: three to six females breeding.

England, SE Two localities: (1) up to 13 present in May and June; (2) up to 42 in May, and five in June.

England, E Two localities: (1) lekking first noted 14th April, with 16 males and eight females, numbers increasing to 43 males and 20 females: although no proof, thought that three to six females may have bred; (2) four males at suitable breeding habitat in May.

England, N Two localities: (1) male in former locality on 28th May; (2) one, sex not indicated, on 20th May.

1983 England, E Two additional localities: (3) eight males in suitable breeding habitat on 5th May, but no subsequent proof of breeding; (4) male in suitable breeding habitat on 1st June.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. localities	2	5	6	6	4	12	10	10	13	8	6
Nests	2	2	4	0	0	3	3	0	1	2	0
Max. no females possibly nesting	12	27	17	16	4	22	13	13	23	32	6

When most of those reported are males, it is difficult to give a realistic figure for the number of females possibly nesting! The figure six is derived entirely from the report from a single locality.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

One locality: single.

England, SE One locality.

ESSEX/HERTFORDSHIRE One locality: solitary individual in March, June and July (and presumably in April and May, although apparently not observed), seen displaying.

This is a most unusual occurrence, the nearest breeding population being in central southern Sweden. The species has bred outside its normal breeding range, but very infrequently, and not in recent years.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

12 localities: 55-80 pairs breeding.

England, SW One locality: one or two pairs breeding.

SOMERSET One locality: two pairs, adult with flying young from 15th to 17th June.

England, SE Three localities: 0-20 pairs breeding.

ESSEX One locality: two in suitable habitat on 18th June.

KENT Two localities: (1) four on 18th May, three pairs and two males in June; (2) maxima of 22 in May and 34 in June.

England, E Five localities: 51-53 pairs breeding.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE Two localities: (1) 33 pairs breeding, only nine of which succeeded in rearing young, due to flooding; (2) nine pairs, four of which succeeded in fledging some young.

NORFOLK One locality: nine pairs breeding, but no chicks survived to flying stage, due to thunderstorms and flooding.

SUFFOLK Two localities: (1) pair probably bred; (2) pair in display flight on 1st May.

England, N Two localities: one to three pairs breeding.

LANCASHIRE One locality: pair on 28th May with two well-grown, but still downy, young.

CUMBRIA One locality: four in full breeding plumage on 27th April, two in breeding plumage on 15th July, five, including two juveniles, on 29th July. This site has not been known to be used before.

Scotland, N & W One locality.

SHETLAND One locality: one pair breeding.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. localities	12	10	13	11	13	13	11	5	13	10	12
Confirmed (pairs)	51	63	72	37	50	39	52	22	38	32	55
Possible (pairs)	7	8	15	33	18	25	25	4	31	12	25
Max. total (pairs)	58	71	87	70	68	64	77	26	69	44	80

The long-term position seems to be one of some stability, but the breeding season of 1984 was undoubtedly a poor one.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

The Panel now collects information about breeding outside the northern isles, Shetland and Orkney

Scotland, N One locality: pair on territory on 19th May.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Four localities: four or five pairs breeding.

Scotland, N Four localities.

INVERNESS-SHIRE Three localities: (1) two pairs, only one of which nested, hatching three young from clutch of four on 28th June; (2) one to three in suitable habitat from 12th to 20th May, then, from 22nd to 29th June, a very agitated adult, suggestive that young had hatched; (3) pair with four eggs, at new site.

SUTHERLAND One locality: agitated adult on loch shore with unknown number of young on 24th July.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. localities	4	5	3	4	7	3	4	1	4	3	4
Confirmed (pairs)	1	2	1	2	4	2	7	1	3	1	4
Possible (pairs)	4	4	2	3	6	2	5	0	3	4	1
Max. total (pairs)	5	6	3	5	10	4	12	1	6	5	5

It seems possible that some pairs of this species breed undetected every year in various of the most remote glens of Scotland.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

Four localities: 19-24 pairs breeding.

Scotland, N & W Four sites in three counties: (1) female from late May to late June, but no sign of male; (2) pair possibly breeding; (3) 17 or 18 pairs breeding; (4) four pairs, two breeding and two possibly breeding.

These figures are much the same as for 1983, and indicate little change in the species' fortunes.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Four localities in three counties: four or five pairs breeding.

England, SW & SE Four localities: (1) first-summer in colony of Black-headed Gulls *Larus ridibundus*; (2) pair bred unsuccessfully; (3) pair, first seen on 1st April, bred, but outcome unknown; (4) two pairs in May, one of which reared two young.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. localities	0	0	1	2	1	3	5	4	2	6	4
Confirmed (pairs)	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	3	2	2	4
Possible (pairs)	0	0	0	1	1	1	4	3	1	6	1
Max. total (pairs)	0	0	1	2	1	3	5	6	3	8	5

Although it is proving a very protracted process, there are encouraging signs that this species is becoming established as a breeder in southern England.

Snowy Owl *Nyctea scandiaca*

Three localities: single females only.

Scotland, N & W Three localities: (1)-(3) lone females summered on Fetlar and two other islands.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Three localities: 0-3 pairs breeding.

England, SE Two localities: (1) single seen and heard on one day in June; (2) single seen on several dates between 22nd April and 7th July, inactive for long periods, and not thought likely that it bred.

England, E One locality: one for a few days before 12th June, calling regularly, two together on 15th June, at least one until 22nd June.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Nine localities: 0-10 pairs breeding.

England, E One locality.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE One locality: single singing on 17th May, but not subsequently.

Scotland, N & W Eight localities.

INVERNESS-SHIRE Eight localities: (1) pair entering nest hole of Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* during last week in May; (2)(3) singles calling on 30th May, but not subsequently; (4) one on 23rd May; (5) two calling on 10th June, but not seen on 14th July; (6) one, apparently without a mate, calling in May and June; (7) one calling on 15th and 16th June; (8) pair in first week of June.

1983 Scotland, N & W Revised total, 11 localities.

1983 **INVERNESS-SHIRE** Nine additional localities: (2) one singing on 30th May and 28th June; (3) one sang on 19th May; (4) one sang on 18th May; (5) one sang during second week of June; (6) one sang on 9th July; (7) one sang on 28th May; (8) one sang on 3rd June; (9) one sang on 13th June; (10) two calling on 22nd May.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. localities	6	10	7	17	22	7	11	2	9	14	9
Confirmed (pairs)	1	3	1	7	4	1	1	0	0	0	0
Possible (pairs)	5	7	6	12	19	8	13	2	10	15	10
Max. total (pairs)	6	10	7	19	23	9	14	2	10	15	10

Many of the reports are clearly of passage birds, but it is possible that when breeding does occur it is by displaced Scandinavian migrants. Since singing ceases almost as soon as pairing takes place, and the birds become very secretive and elusive, it is very difficult to distinguish between short-staying, singing migrants and breeding pairs.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

76 localities: 16-201 pairs breeding.

England, SW 27 localities, two to 90 pairs breeding.

CORNWALL Four localities: (1) two males on 24th March, single male on 21st and 25th June; (2) male on 15th May, two males on 24th May; (3) male on 25th May; (4) male during summer.

DEVON Six localities: (1) pair with four flying young on 1st July; (2) seven pairs located; (3) two singing on 19th May; (4) two singing on 8th April; (5) present February to October, six, including fledged young, on 18th May; (6) pair in suitable breeding habitat on 23rd April.

DORSET Five localities: (1) three pairs; (2) two pairs; (3) male on 1st May; (4) male on 15th June; (5) autumn flock of up to 18 represented local breeding population.

HAMPSHIRE 12 localities: (1)-(12) total of 59-63 pairs.

England, SE 13 localities: 14-27 pairs breeding.

BERKSHIRE Three localities: (1) pair carrying food on 13th and 14th June; (2) one to four seen on four dates between 6th May and 24th June; (3) one in song flight on 19th June.

SURREY Eight localities: (1) five pairs, three of which known to have bred; (2) one pair bred; (3) at least four pairs, of which two known to have bred; (4) three pairs bred; (5) one pair;



(6) at least one pair; (7) at least five pairs, of which three known to have bred; (8) one pair bred. One regular site was not visited and another had no Woodlarks in 1984.

SUSSEX Two localities: (1)(2) total of three singing during breeding season.

England, E 36 localities: 0-84 pairs breeding.

NORFOLK 23 localities: 23 singing.

SUFFOLK 13 localities: (1)-(12) total of 28 pairs; (13) 22 pairs.

The Woodlark is a new addition to the list of species for which the Panel collects data, and this first report presents a useful picture. Some 'localities' may be an isolated heath, others much larger areas of continuous distribution.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Three localities: 0-3 pairs breeding.

England, N Two localities.

GREATER MANCHESTER One locality: pair, considered to have attempted breeding, but unsuccessfully.

NORTH YORKSHIRE One locality: single calling from a tree-top on 30th June.

Scotland, N One locality.

SUTHERLAND One locality: two seen carrying food on 3rd July.

1983 Wales One locality.

1983 WEST GLAMORGAN One locality: two, one in partial moult, in association with Mistle Thrushes *Turdus viscivorus*. (For association with Mistle Thrushes see the Panel's report for 1983.)

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. localities	8	10	11	6	3	6	5	6	7	10	3
Confirmed (pairs)	3	2	3	4	1	1	1	0	2	3	0
Possible (pairs)	4	8	9	2	3	5	4	6	5	9	3
Max. total (pairs)	7	10	12	6	4	6	5	6	7	12	3

This was the poorest year for breeding Fieldfares since 1973, but, because 1983 was a relatively good year for the species, it would be premature to attempt any conclusions.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

57 localities: 31-78 pairs breeding.

England, SE One locality.

KENT One locality: pair found at nest on 15th and 16th May, but they deserted before eggs were laid.

Scotland, N & W 56 localities.

ABERDEENSHIRE One locality: very vocal pair on 15th July.

INVERNESS-SHIRE 21 localities: (1) nest on 3rd June; (2) pair nesting on 10th June; (3) pair with young on 28th May; (4) agitated adult on 24th and 25th May; (5) adult carrying food on 15th June; (6)(7) total of six or seven singing males; (8) three singing males on 13th May; (9) three singing males on 28th May; (10) two singing on 2nd May; (11) two from late May to 2nd June, apparently not breeding; (12)-(21) singles, mostly singing, on dates between 2nd May and 24th June.

ROSS-SHIRE Three localities: (1)(2) total of four singing on 21st May; (3) one on 7th July.

SUTHERLAND 31 localities: (1)-(14) total of 26 pairs proved breeding; (15)-(31) total of at least 17 singing, and possibly several more.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. localities	28	25	10	10	12	6	18	6	42	65	57
Confirmed (pairs)	4	13	3	2	3	2	7	4	30	17	31
Possible (pairs)	24	40	12	14	14	7	25	7	32	51	47
Max. total (pairs)	28	53	15	16	17	9	32	11	62	68	78

Once again, the high figures are as much a reflection of the amount of fieldwork devoted to the species as of true population levels. Many of those nesting are found in plantations of Sitka spruce *Picea sitchensis*, at heights of up to 25 feet (8 m), and the most common proof of breeding is the presence of adults carrying food.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

108 localities: 78-318 pairs breeding.

England, SW 56 localities: 75-157 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Cornwall	5	1	0	10	11
Devon	9	30	0	0	30
Dorset	11	44	21-23	0	67
Hampshire	17	0	22-26	0	26
Isle of Wight	4	0	0	7	7
Somerset	10	0	16	0	16

England, SE Seven localities: one to 63 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Essex	1	1	0	0	1
Kent	5	0	61	0	61
Hertfordshire	1	0	0	1	1

England, E 45 localities: two to 98 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Cambridgeshire	3	1	3	0	4
Norfolk	35	0	63	0	63
Suffolk	7	1	30	0	31

1983 England, E Revised totals, 28 localities, 3-72 pairs breeding.

1983 SUFFOLK Revised totals: seven localities: (1)-(7) two pairs proved breeding and 20 judged probable.

1983 England, Central One locality.

1983 SHROPSHIRE One locality: single singing in June.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Counties	3	3	8	10	14	14	11	16	12	13	12
Confirmed (pairs)	5	8	8	13	30	46	19	56	29	90	78
Possible (pairs)	11	67	72	140	144	117	179	106	173	157	240
Max. total (pairs)	16	75	80	153	174	163	198	162	202	247	318

Although the figures suggest that there is some variation between counties concerning what is proven breeding and what is probable breeding, the trend as measured by the maximum possible interpretation of the figures continues to rise steeply. On the other hand, there appears to have been no significant extension of range for several years.

River Warbler *Locustella fluviatilis*

One locality: single male.

England, E One locality: male sang from 13th July to 2nd August in site typical of species' breeding habitat on Continent.

This is the first time that this species has appeared in the Panel's reports.

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*

Ten localities: 0-12 pairs breeding.

England, SW Two localities: (1) one singing on 14th April and 23rd June; (2) one singing on 23rd and 29th April.

England, SE Three localities: (1) three individuals holding territories, the earliest date being 18th April; (2) male singing on 4th May; (3) male singing at regular site and possible female present for a month, but breeding not suspected.

England, E Four localities: (1)-(3) single singing males at each; (4) pair, which possibly bred.

England, Central One locality: singing male for at least four days, 2nd to 5th May.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. localities	5	3	8	13	15	15	14	8	11	12	10
Confirmed (pairs)	1	1	0	3	4	6	2	5	0	2	0
Possible (pairs)	7	2	9	23	24	24	27	10	18	15	12
Max. total (pairs)	8	3	9	26	28	30	29	15	18	17	12

After four good years, from 1977 to 1980, this species now seems barely to be holding its own.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

28 localities: 26-51 pairs breeding.

England, SW Five localities: one to four pairs breeding.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE Two localities: (1) singing male plus one other; (2) singing male, and nest found on 28th October.

ISLE OF WIGHT Two localities: (1) one on 9th and 14th August; (2) one on 11th May and 13th July.

SOMERSET One locality: male singing from 29th June to at least 14th July.

England, SE Six localities: three to eight pairs breeding.

ESSEX One locality: singing male from 22nd to 24th June.

KENT Two localities: (1) at least one pair, adults carrying food on 5th July, and first young left nest on 17th July, four young eventually fledged, but eight were trapped in general area, so second pair could have been present; (2) singing male on 18th and 19th June (not present prior to 16th June), two adults with one juvenile on 18th July, at least one juvenile on 28th July, and three on 15th and 16th August. These birds were occupying stands of rosebay willowherb *Epilobium angustifolium* and were very inconspicuous.

SUSSEX Three localities: (1)-(3) singing males at each, breeding not suspected.

England, E One locality: one individual.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE One locality: male singing from 2nd to 8th May near where breeding occurred in 1983.

England, Central 16 localities: 22-27 pairs.

WORCESTERSHIRE 16 localities: (1)-(16) total of 38 singing males, but only 22-27 pairs discovered as result of intensive fieldwork.

1983 England, SW Revised total, six localities.

1983 GLOUCESTERSHIRE Two localities: (1) singing male on 14th June; (2) singing male from 8th June to 24th June.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. localities	6	3	5	6	15	15	8	3	8	10	12
Confirmed (pairs)	0	0	0	2	4	1	2	0	2	3	4
Possible (pairs)	7	5	5	9	11	22	10	3	7	9	9
Max. total (pairs)	7	5	5	11	15	23	12	3	9	11	13

Since it has been difficult to obtain reliable information on a regular basis, this table omits reports from the stronghold of the species in Worcestershire. The exceptionally good information available from Worcestershire in this report is the result of full-time research. Although there are fears for the future well-being of the species, especially because of habitat loss, the scatter of records from southern counties, and particularly the breeding records from Kent, hint at a more secure future.

Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*

34 localities: 11-440 pairs or singing males.

England, SW 25 localities.

CORNWALL Four localities: (1)-(4) total of at least four pairs bred, with young seen at each site.

DEVON Seven localities: (1) probably at least three pairs bred; (2) immature male on 8th July and two juveniles on 1st September; (3) one on 9th February and family party on 4th September; (4) one singing in March; (5) pair reared one brood; (6) male displaying on 7th April and female seen on 18th May; (7) male seen on 11th June.

DORSET Four extensive localities: (1)-(4) total of 127 pairs ($\pm 10\%$), these figures being result of detailed survey commissioned by RSPB.

HAMPSHIRE Seven localities, one of which very extensive: (1)-(7) total of 219 pairs or singing males, most probably bred, but only three reports of confirmed breeding received.

ISLE OF WIGHT Three localities: (1) male seen on 22nd July, and 4th and 10th November; (2) two males on 8th January, and one on 6th and 17th January; (3) one on 14th March, scolding.

England, SE Nine localities: (1) 23 pairs; (2) 17-20 pairs; (3) ten pairs; (4) 12-15 pairs; (5)(6) two pairs at each; (7)-(9) one pair at each.

This is the highest estimate since the last full survey, in 1974.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*

46 localities: four to 82 pairs.

England, SW 13 localities: 0-12 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Gloucestershire	2	0	0	2	2
Hampshire	9	0	7	0	7
Wiltshire	2	0	0	3	3

England, SE 23 localities: one to 46 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Berkshire	5	0	0	5	5
Bedfordshire	1	1	0	0	1
Buckinghamshire	5	0	17	2	19
Essex	2	0	0	2	2
Hertfordshire	2	0	0	2	2
Kent	5	0	12	2	14
Surrey	3	0	1	2	3

England, E Nine localities: two to 23 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Norfolk	1	1	0	0	1
Northamptonshire	2	1	10	0	11
Suffolk	6	0	2	9	11

Wales One locality: one pair breeding.

POWYS One locality: pair fledged three young.

1983 England, SW Revised totals, 41 localities, 3-120 pairs breeding.

1983 **GLOUCESTERSHIRE** Five additional localities: (3)-(7) total of ten singing males.

1983 England, E Revised total, two sites.

1983 **SUFFOLK** One locality: at least three singing males in early summer at locality frequented by the species in 1982.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. localities	13	32	15	12	7	25	30	35	21	74	46
Confirmed (pairs)	1	4	4	2	1	9	7	15	4	5	4
Possible (pairs)	36	119	24	29	10	64	71	87	40	169	78
Max. total (pairs)	37	123	28	31	11	73	78	102	44	174	82

Compared with 1983, the totals show a sharp decline, especially in Hampshire and Kent. It is possible that the breeding numbers in any year are much influenced by the weather at the time of the spring migration. The long-term trend is, nevertheless, slowly upwards.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

One locality: male in summer.

1983 Scotland, Mid One locality.

1983 **PERTSHIRE** One locality: male frequented edge of spruce plantation/deciduous woodland on south-facing hillside from 21st May to 26th June (*Brit. Birds* 78: 576).

This is the first time that this species has featured in the Panel's reports. The Greenish Warbler has been slowly extending its range westwards for perhaps thirty years, and nowadays there are many more records of migrants/vagrants (see *Brit. Birds* 78: 437-451).

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

Ten localities: four to 18 pairs breeding.

England, SW One locality: pair bred, fledging two young in late June/early July.

England, SE One locality: male heard on 6th May.

England, E Seven localities: (1) pair nested at previously used site; (2) male on 7th June, but series of sightings suggest that there could be regular breeding site nearby; (3) male carrying nesting material on 4th May and 6th May, pair present on 9th May, male from 17th June until August, female last seen on 27th May; (4) seven or eight pairs held territory and probably bred, at least two family parties reported; (5) pair on 15th July; (6) two males on 6th June; (7) pair possibly bred.

England, Central One locality: male and female from 4th to 23rd May, male heard on 17th June and seen on 16th August.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. localities	3	4	11	16	14	17	17	13	12	14	10
Confirmed (pairs)	2	2	7	6	7	3	2	4	3	2	4
Possible (pairs)	2	5	16	15	21	27	26	22	18	21	14
Max. total (pairs)	4	7	23	21	28	30	28	26	21	23	18

Unless there are records yet to be reported, 1984 was the poorest year for this species since 1975.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Five localities: six to ten pairs breeding.

England, E Four extensive localities: (1)-(3) single pairs reared total of seven young; (4) six pairs, three of which reared total of nine young.

Scotland, Mid One locality: male from mid May to late July and female on 22nd May, but no evidence of breeding.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Counties	8	7	5	13	11	10	5	6	2	3	4
Confirmed (pairs)	30	51	3	48	13	14	23	11	5	11	6
Possible (pairs)	22	5	22	16	24	38	8	29	3	1	4
Max. total (pairs)	52	56	25	64	37	52	31	40	8	17	10

Save that more young were reared, the position was, if anything, worse than in 1983.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Five localities: one to nine pairs breeding.

England, N One locality: flock of 30 stayed until at least 29th April. On 1st September, juvenile male in full body moult and adult male moulting wings and tail were mist-netted and female called loudly from 2 m away.

Scotland, S Three localities: (1) three on 8th July; (2) one on 30th July; (3) six on 31st August.

Scotland, N One locality: singing male on 11th June.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. localities	0	0	0	2	2	3	3	1	10	8	5
Confirmed (pairs)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	1
Possible (pairs)	0	0	0	3	2	3	4	0	8	7	8
Max. total (pairs)	0	0	0	3	2	4	4	1	10	8	9

The presence in northern England and southern Scotland may perhaps be connected. The English birds were in a garden 1½ km from birch scrub and could perhaps have been escaped cage-birds living ferally; but this could hardly be true of all the Scottish records.

Serin *Serinus serinus*

Four localities: two to five pairs breeding.

England, SW Three localities.

DEVON Two localities: (1) observed or heard between 6th April and 25th July, male singing and/or displaying on eight dates, nest found in December; (2) observed or heard between 11th April and 25th August, originally two males and two females, but one female disappeared, pair reared five young from two broods.

DORSET One locality: pair showed intentions of breeding, nest material being carried by female on two occasions in late April.

England, Central One locality.

SHROPSHIRE One locality: male singing on 30th May; the same, or another, male singing 4 km away on 9th June.

1983 England, E Revised total, two localities.

1983 SUFFOLK One locality: singing male on 30th May, not seen or heard subsequently.

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. localities	0	0	2	0	4	0	1	3	5	7	4
Confirmed (pairs)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	2	2
Possible (pairs)	0	0	2	0	3	0	1	4	6	5	3
Max. total (pairs)	0	0	2	0	4	0	1	6	7	7	5

The year 1984 continued the slightly better sequence which began in 1981, but the breeding population is still far from being firmly established.

Parrot Crossbill *Loxia pytyopsittacus*

Two localities: one or two pairs breeding.

England, E Two localities: (1) in Norfolk, pair bred and fledged four young, of which only one survived, then two young fledged from second brood; (2) two males and two females with three fledged juveniles from 29th April onwards into late summer, assumed to have bred reasonably locally.

The first known breeding attempt in Britain by this species occurred in northern England in 1983.

Scarlet Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

Two localities: 0-2 pairs breeding.

England, SW One locality.

DEVON One locality: male from 4th June to 12th July, frequently singing, seen briefly with female on 12th June.

Scotland, N & W One locality.

ROSS-SHIRE One locality: male on 1st June.

1983 Scotland, N & W Three additional localities: (2) male singing regularly in gardens and wood from 4th to 27th June; (3) male sang for one day only, 24th June; (4) on Fair Isle, Shetland, male in song during 31st May to 21st July.

This is a species which, like the Greenish Warbler, is extending its range westwards, and it bred in Scotland in 1982 (*Brit. Birds* 77: 133-135).

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Ten localities: five to 16 pairs breeding.

Scotland, Mid and N & W Ten localities: (1) four or five pairs, one clutch of four just hatching on 22nd July; (2) pair on 2nd May and later; (3) two females feeding broods of two and one on 23rd July; (4) female on 8th May; (5) singing male on 9th May, female nearby on 16th June; (6) pair on 28th June and seven, mainly juveniles, on 16th August; (7) two males in song on 30th June; (8) male in song on 23rd June; (9) male in song on 4th July; (10) 'stock above average', but no numbers given.

This is a rather fuller report than we have been able to publish for several years, and we are grateful to all those observers who contributed records.

Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus*

67 localities: 0-69 pairs breeding.

England, SW 66 localities.

CORNWALL Two localities: (1) pair and singing male on 28th May, one on 22nd June, two males on 24th August.

DEVON 55 localities: (1)-(55) total of 55 pairs, but this thought to be less than half the true county total.

SOMERSET Nine localities: (1) pair and singing male, one male seen to carry food; (2) two singing males; (3) pair; (4)-(9) single males.

England, SE One locality.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE One locality: singles on 14th October, 1st December and 13th December, the last mentioned being sexed as male: reported by Recorder as 'the remaining Bucks pair, despite lack of breeding season reports.'

Although the figures are much lower than the 37-145 pairs reported for 1983, a full count in Devon would certainly have narrowed the gap.