

# British Birds

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## Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 1986

*Robert Spencer and the Rare Breeding Birds Panel*

This is the fourteenth annual report published by the Panel and in style of presentation it follows the conventions used in that for 1985 (*Brit. Birds* 81: 99-125). It is relatively complete, in that counties which normally have data to submit have once again kindly co-operated with the Panel. The Panel is warmly appreciative of the many recorders, and some individual observers, who take great trouble to submit exemplarily detailed reports. Whilst any record is very welcome, the somewhat sketchy returns from a few recorders could be made infinitely more valuable by the provision of rather more detail. Those who edit their reports to the Panel on the grounds of security may note that the Panel rarely names sites (Avocets *Recurvirostra avosetta* on Havergate would be a typical exception—and all exceptions have been authorised by the reporter), names counties only when authorised to do so by the recorder, and sometimes prefers to refer only to the region even when permitted to name the county.

The membership of the Panel remained unchanged in 1986, being Dr L. A. Batten, R. H. Dennis, Richard Porter, Dr J. T. R. Sharrock and Robert Spencer (Secretary). Whilst the work of the Panel is sponsored and wholly funded by the NCC, the RSPB, the BTO and *British Birds*, it is considered important that, in the framework of the Panel's activities, the members should be free to have allegiance primarily to the birds. For that reason, their appointments to the Panel are in a personal capacity, albeit

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with a specialised knowledge of the interests and requirements of the sponsoring bodies.

Of the natural phenomena which affect birds, climate—the sum of our daily weather patterns—is generally the most pervasive, and there are a number of telling illustrations of this to be found in the present report. Various of the recorders, on submitting data for Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*, Red Kite *Milvus milvus*, Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* (now almost extinct in its former stronghold of Kent), Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata* and Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*, commented that severe winter cold of February 1986 had reduced the breeding stock. The cold about which they remarked is detailed vividly in the relevant numbers of *Climate Monitor*\*: 'Bitter east-northeast winds aggravated the effects of daytime maximum temperatures, which did not rise above 0°C for days. Mean temperatures were often 4-5°C below average . . . It was generally the coldest February since 1947, and the second coldest of the century.'

If low winter temperatures reduced the potential breeding stock of some species, the weather experienced in spring and early summer was often unhelpful to pairs attempting to breed. The spring of 1986, to quote again from *Climate Monitor*, was 'the coldest since 1979, and the eleventh coldest this century in central England.' Nor was it just a matter of temperature. One nest of Marsh Harriers *Circus aeruginosus* was washed out; Roy Dennis, in summing up the breeding season for the Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*, wrote that the weather had been 'cold, wet and very windy', with at least three nests being blown out; elsewhere the nesting attempts by Ruffs *Philomachus pugnax* and Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa* were thwarted by high, or rising, water levels. Of April, *Climate Monitor* records 'It rained frequently—20 to 25 days of the month in many places . . . May continued wet except in East Anglia and southeast England . . . apart from East Anglia, sunshine totals were low.'

Next to weather, it is possible that people often pose the greatest threat to the breeding attempts of rare birds: a threat which may be an innocent or unthinking one, as was probably the case where the nest-tree of a Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* was felled during routine forestry operations outside the breeding season. The Panel members, as individuals, share the widespread concern about some of the tree planting which is taking place in areas such as the Flow Country of northern Scotland, but have generally found that those foresters responsible for managing mature forest are very sympathetic towards the needs of wildlife, and it is to be hoped that the nest-trees of rare species such as Honey Buzzard, Red Kite, Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* and Hobby *Falco subbuteo* will always receive sensitive attention. In a somewhat different, yet analagous, situation, how gratifying it is to learn of farmers delaying the harvesting of fields in order that Montagu's Harriers *Circus pygargus* might safely fledge their young.

There are, alas, still cases of 'malice aforethought'—of deliberate intent: the theft of six clutches of Red Kite eggs, of three Osprey clutches, and of an unknowable number of Goshawk clutches. These are all Schedule I

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species, and, if their nests were as inviolate as the law intends them to be, much of the money which has to be spent trying to protect individual nests could be used for reserve acquisition. In *Gulliver's Travels*, Jonathan Swift drew attention to the absurdity of some human behaviour. Were he alive today, he would surely make some trenchant comments about the 'fossilised dinosaurs' who carry into the late twentieth century the untutored collecting instincts of their Victorian forebears. Perhaps there is a lesson in the fact that a pair of Roseate Terns *Sterna dougallii*, so threatened in their African winter quarters, were able to breed successfully on territory controlled by the Ministry of Defence, and that various pairs of Stone-curlews, Dartford Warblers and other species bred securely on MoD firing ranges.

When the Panel precisely defined 'rare breeding birds' as being those species with breeding populations below, or sometimes falling below, 300 pairs, it became apparent that several species hitherto ignored would have to be added to its list. Thus it comes about, that this report includes information about Pochard *Aythya ferina*, with a preponderance of pairs in the metropolitan counties; Quail *Coturnix coturnix*, the generally late arrival of which might lend some credence to the suggestion (made in discussions between the late Reg Moreau and the late Kenneth Williamson) that those breeding in Britain have already bred once in Mediterranean Europe; the ever-dwindling Corncrake *Crex crex*; Woodlark *Lullula arborea*, a species which seems to be finding the earliest stages of afforestation and of post clear-felling very attractive; and Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*, the most northerly individuals of which have now reached the fringes of mountain Britain, a habitat which differs little from that of some of their Continental strongholds: will the limestone crags and the millstone grit of the Pennines soon be echoing to their song, or will the sixty-fifth generation of city-bred individuals no longer recognise their true biotope and continue to seek out power-stations, gas-works and similar industrial buildings? Time will tell.

The species for which the Panel requires data were listed in the March 1988 issue (*Brit. Birds* 81: 102-103); Quail *Coturnix coturnix* and Corncrake *Crex crex* should be added to this list.

## Key to geographical regions used in this report

Numbers refer to fig. 1.

1. NORTHERN IRELAND Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, Tyrone
2. ENGLAND, SW Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Isles of Scilly, Somerset, Wiltshire
3. ENGLAND, SE Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex, Greater London, Hertfordshire, Kent, Middlesex, Oxfordshire, Surrey, Sussex (East and West)
4. ENGLAND, E Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Lincolnshire & South Humberside, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Suffolk
5. ENGLAND, CENTRAL Derbyshire, Herefordshire, Leicestershire (with Rutland), Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire (West Midlands in the new county structure), Worcestershire
6. ENGLAND, N Cheshire, Cleveland, Cumbria, Durham, Greater Manchester, Isle of Man, Lancashire, Merseyside, Northumberland, North Humberside, Tyne & Wear, Yorkshire (North, South and West)
7. WALES All present-day counties (i.e. includes the former Monmouth)

8. SCOTLAND S The former counties of Ayrshire, Berwickshire, Dumfriesshire, Kirkcudbrightshire, Lanarkshire, Lothian (East, Mid and West), Peeblesshire, Renfrewshire, Roxburghshire, Selkirkshire, Wigtownshire
9. SCOTLAND, MID Aberdeenshire, Angus, Banffshire, Clackmannanshire, Dunbartonshire, Fife, Kincardineshire, Kinross, Morayshire, Nairn, Perthshire, Stirlingshire
10. SCOTLAND, N & W Argyll, Bute, Caithness, Inverness-shire, Orkney, Ross & Cromarty, Shetland, Sutherland, Western Isles (Outer Hebrides)



Fig. 1. Geographical regions of the United Kingdom used in this report. Numbers refer to counties listed above.

## Systematic list

### Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

One locality: one individual.

**Scotland, N & W** One locality: adult ♀ mated with ♂ Black-throated Diver *G. arctica*. Laid twice: the first clutch was flooded out; the second, of one egg, hatched, but the chick disappeared.

This is the second consecutive year that a hybrid pair has attempted to breed in northwest Scotland.

### Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Five localities: one pair and at least three other individuals.

**England, E** Two localities: (1) one in full breeding plumage from 17th April to 29th May; (2) thought to be the same individual as at locality 1 from 6th June to 20th August.

**Wales** One locality: one in full breeding plumage from 14th April to 20th June.

**Scotland, S** Two localities: (1) single on 4th May; (2) one from 21st April to 9th July, pair from 13th May to 20th June: thought to have chosen nest site, but breeding abandoned because of heavy rain and disturbance by small boats.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. localities	5	2	0	1	3	3	2	2	1	1	5
No. individuals	5	2	0	1	4	2	2	3	1	4	5
No. pairs	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1

The pair in Scotland was at the site occupied in 1985, but breeding success remains elusive.

### Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

43 localities: 68-87 pairs breeding.

**England, SW** One locality: pair in breeding plumage in habitat suitable for breeding from 26th April to 6th May, and some display seen.

**Scotland, S** One locality: one summered for second consecutive year, from 4th May to 12th October.

**Scotland, N & W** 41 localities.

INVERNESS-SHIRE 38 localities: (1)-(38) total of 63 pairs, rearing at least 37 young.

ELSEWHERE Three localities: (1)-(3) total of five pairs, one of which reared two young.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. localities	23	15	18	27	36	35	25	44	26	40	43
Confirmed (pairs)	70	42	37	58	53	52	51	41	39	63	68
Possible (pairs)	5	9	18	19	27	19	8	38	21	18	19
Max. total (pairs)	75	51	55	77	80	71	59	79	60	81	87

There was again good coverage of the breeding sites in 1986. Of the 68 established pairs in 1986, 53 pairs are known to have reared 39 young.

### Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

14 localities: 11-32 pairs breeding.

**England, E** Six localities: (1) three adults displaying in ideal habitat during 24th May to 4th June; (2)-(5) two pairs moving between four sites, the extreme dates being 4th May and 14th July, with much display, juveniles present in August, but judged unlikely that they were bred at any of the four sites; (6) pair present in breeding plumage at potentially suitable site from 24th to 30th May.

**England, Central** One locality: one from 5th to 12th May, two, displaying, from 8th to 12th May, not seen thereafter.

**England, N** Two localities: (1) birds present, but no apparent nesting attempt; (2) nine or ten pairs hatched 15-18 young during July, nine well-grown young still present on 19th August.

**Wales** One locality: one on 12th July.

**Scotland, Mid** Four localities: (1)(2) two to five pairs reared unknown number of young; (3) seven on 31st March, with maximum of 18 on 11th May, and one, moulting, on 14th September; (4) two, thought to be pair, from 7th to 13th May.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. localities	2	7	6	6	9	7	12	19	15	15	14
Confirmed (pairs)	10	11	13	12	11	5	11	11	16	8	11
Possible (pairs)	1	5	2	2	10	7	10	21	12	13	21
Max. total (pairs)	11	16	15	14	21	12	21	32	28	21	32

There has been at least one recent case of pairs of Black-necked Grebes moving about between waters for two or more years before eventually settling at one of them and breeding.

### Black-browed Albatross *Diomedea melanophris*

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

**Scotland, N & W** One locality.

SHETLAND One locality: adult in gannetry from 18th March to 6th September.

Another year of solitary attendance.

### Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

12 localities: 23 or 24 booming males.

**England, E** 11 localities: (1) five booming in April; (2) up to three in spring, including one booming ♂; (3) at least two booming in April; (4) two booming; (5)-(11) singles booming at each locality.

**England, N** One locality: six or seven booming.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. localities	18	17	21	19	16	15	18	18	15	12
Confirmed (pairs)	0	2	1	4	1	1	0	5	0	0
Booming ♂♂	43	47	51	48	47	35	44-45	36	28-29	23-24

A further decline, with both fewer localities holding Bitterns and fewer males booming. As in 1985, the decline may have been due to the cold winter.

**Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus*

One locality: one calling male.

**England, E** One locality.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE One locality: single ♂ spent long periods calling from a reedbed throughout 28th and 29th June.

The first proved breeding this century occurred in the north of England in 1984.

**Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus*

Four localities: two feral pairs and 12 singles.

**Scotland, Mid** One locality.

DUNBARTONSHIRE One locality: two feral pairs built nests, but were flooded out and did not re-lay.

**Scotland, N & W** Three localities: (1) ten adults from 24th May to 7th June, but no evidence of breeding activity; (2) single adult on 23rd June, but nothing to suggest breeding; (3) single on several dates between 16th June and 23rd July.

The most recent cases reported to the Panel of breeding by wild Whooper Swans were in 1978 and 1979.

**American Black Duck** *Anas rubripes*

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

**Scotland, S** One locality.

EAST LOTHIAN One locality: ♀ seen between 8th February and 27th April, but no subsequent sign of any hybrid young.

The same individual was present at this locality, paired to a male Mallard, in 1985 (but was not seen in 1987).

**Pintail** *Anas acuta*

12 localities: 6-16 pairs breeding.

**England, SE** Two localities.

KENT Two localities: (1) pair from 10th to 12th May; (2) one on 29th June, ♀ on 30th June, three on 3rd July, and singles on five dates in July.

**England, E** Two localities.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE Two localities: (1) pair on 30th April, and singles on five dates in May; (2) pair, which possibly bred.

**England, N** Two localities.

CHESHIRE One locality: two pairs in late April, but no nest found, nor brood seen.

CUMBRIA One locality: pair from 23rd March to 27th April.

**Wales** One locality.

ANGLESEY One locality: pair present on 6th May at a regular wintering site.

**Scotland, N & W** Five localities.

ARGYLL One locality: two or three ♂♂ and a ♀ in suitable breeding habitat between 10th and 14th May, pair on 6th June.

CAITHNESS One locality: three ♂♂ and a ♀ on a loch on 6th May.

ORKNEY Three localities: (1) at least four pairs bred, a ♀ and seven young being seen on 8th June; (2)(3) single pairs bred.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. localities	10	15	10	19	15	16	18	22	15	13	12
Confirmed (pairs)	6	10	7	10	9	8	7	12	5	9	6
Possible (pairs)	10	16	16	31	16	23	25	15	13	8	10
Max. total (pairs)	16	26	23	41	25	31	32	27	18	17	16

Except in Scotland, few counties report regular breeding by this species.

**Garganey** *Anas querquedula*

38 localities: 9-51 pairs breeding.

**England, SW** Four localities: 2-4 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Avon	1	0	1	0	1
Gloucestershire	2	0	1	1	2
Hampshire	1	0	0	1	1

**England, SE** Three localities: 0-3 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Kent	3	0	0	3	3

**England, E** 24 localities: 7-44 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Cambridgeshire	3	7	0	9	16
Lincolnshire/South Humberside	1	0	0	1	1
Norfolk	15	0	0	15	15
Northamptonshire	3	0	0	3	3
Suffolk	2	0	0	2	2

**England, Central** Three localities: 0-3 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Staffordshire	3	0	0	3	3

**England, N** One locality: one pair breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
North Humberside	1	1	0	0	1

**Wales** One locality: 0-1 pair breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Gwent	1	0	0	1	1

**Scotland** Two localities: 1-2 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
East Lothian	1	0	0	1	1
Dunbarton	1	1	0	0	1

The Dunbarton pair was flooded out at an early stage.

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. localities	34	48	66	58	46	29	38
Confirmed (pairs)	4	8	10	15	4	4	9
Possible (pairs)	50	50	84	51	53	33	42
Max. total (pairs)	54	58	94	66	57	37	51

As in 1985, the region 'England, E' has provided the greatest number of records.

### **Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

54 localities: 98-139 pairs breeding.

**England, SW** Four localities: 7-9 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Wiltshire	4	7	1	1	9

**England, SE** 26 localities: 65-82 pairs breeding, 40 young reported.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Buckinghamshire	2	3	0	0	3
Essex	4	12	0	2	14
Hertfordshire	5	6	0	0	6
Kent	5	7	10	0	17
Middlesex	7	35	4	0	39
Surrey	3	2	0	1	3

**England, E** Nine localities: 16-25 pairs breeding, 51 young reported.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Lincolnshire/South Humberside	3	7	7	0	14
Suffolk	6	9	0	2	11

**England, Central** Seven localities: 3-7 pairs breeding, seven young reported.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Leicestershire	2	2	0	0	2
Shropshire	1	1	0	0	1
Staffordshire	4	0	0	4	4

**England, N** Seven localities: 7-10 pairs breeding, 23 young reported.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Cleveland	1	1	0	0	1
Cumbria	3	0	0	3	3
Greater Manchester	2	2	0	0	2
Lancashire	1	4	0	0	4

**Wales** One locality: 0-6 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Carmarthen	1	0	6	0	6

This is the first year in which the Pochard has featured in the Panel's report. The distribution is similar to that for the years 1968-72 mapped in *The Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland* (1976), but the summary tables provide new information on the size of the breeding population.

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

Two localities: two males.

**Scotland, Mid** One locality.

PERTHSHIRE One locality: ♂ on 11th, 21st and 27th May, and 4th June.



**Scotland, N & W** One locality.

SUTHERLAND One locality: ♂ on 23rd June (not seen during visits on 28th May and 12th June).

These are the first reports of summering Scaups submitted to the Panel since 1981.

**Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra***

35 localities: 8-100 pairs breeding.

**Northern Ireland** One locality.

CO. FERMANAGH One locality: probably 17 pairs breeding, but potentially 21 pairs.

**England, N** Two localities: (1) ♂ on 21st May, ♀ on 13th July, ♂ on 27th July, five ♂♂ and one ♀ on 7th August; (2) six on 23rd June.

**Scotland, S** One locality: pair watched 4th-8th May, only ♂ present on 10th June; in July, ♀ with single chick, which disappeared when about half grown.

**Scotland, Mid** Two localities.

DUNBARTONSHIRE/STIRLINGSHIRE One locality: minimum of two pairs plus single ♂.

PERTSHIRE One locality: four pairs on 5th May, 14th May and 8th June, five ♀♀ on 27th June, two ♀♀ on 10th July.

**Scotland, N & W** 29 localities.

ARGYLL One locality: eight ♂♂, seven ♀♀ and three not sexed present on 23rd June; two nests located in July.

INVERNESS-SHIRE Nine localities: (1) four ♂♂ and nine ♀♀ on 13th June, 11 ♀♀ on 5th July, (2) two pairs on 5th May; (3) pair, ♀ off nest on 11th July; (4) ♀ off nest on 11th July; (5)-(8) pairs in May; (9) ♀ on 30th July.

ROSS & CROMARTY Two localities: (1) ♂ on 1st May, pair on 6th May, ♂ and two ♀♀ on 21st May, four pairs on 10th June; (2) two pairs on 6th May, ♀ on 10th June.

SUTHERLAND AND CAITHNESS 17 localities: (1) five pairs, ♀ with three young; (2) four pairs; (3) three pairs; (4) two pairs plus single ♂; (5)(6) two pairs at each; (7) ♀ with three young; (8) ♀ with seven eggs; (9) pair plus single ♀; (10)-(15) single pairs at each; (17) lone ♀.

1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986

No. localities	14	13	9	17	10	6	17	6	9	21	35
Confirmed (pairs)	22	24	16	98	7	5	14	10	17	2	8
Possible (pairs)	137	132	125	30	106	77	98	75	52	56	92
Max. total (pairs)	159	156	141	128	113	82	112	85	69	58	100

The considerable increases between 1985 and 1986 reflect increased fieldwork in Scotland. Especially in Co. Fermanagh, the trend has been steadily downwards; Dr Karl Partridge of the RSPB has provided annual figures for that population showing a decrease from an estimated 95 pairs in 1973—the year in which the Panel started assembling data—to 17 in 1986. Including pairs in the Republic of Ireland, Dr Partridge estimates the total Irish population at probably about 100 pairs. The summer birds in northern England are perhaps not significant, but note the breeding attempt in southern Scotland.

**Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula***

11 localities: 77-86 pairs breeding.

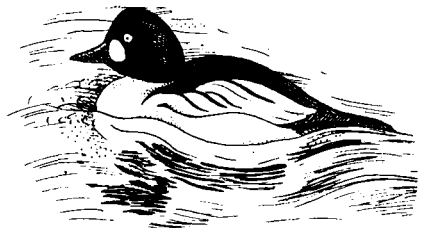
**England, Central** One locality.

LEICESTERSHIRE One locality: ♀ on 16th and 17th July.

**England, N** Three localities.

CUMBRIA Three localities: (1) four in June and July; (2) ♀ summered; (3) ♀ in June and July.

**Wales** One locality.



ANGLESEY One locality: ♂ on 16th May, pair on 8th June, and pair nearby on 27th June.

**Scotland, Mid** Four localities.

PERTSHIRE Four localities: (1) two on 1st June; (2) pair on 7th May; (3)(4) singles in May.

**Scotland, N & W** Of 77 clutches laid, 52 were incubated and the resulting 46 broods totalled at least 390 young. The average brood size was 8.48.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Confirmed (pairs)	5	6	12	22	26	29	27	47	53	67	77
Young hatched	46	11	40	110	165	286	220	209	311	336	390

The species continued to thrive in its Highland Region heartland and there are the first signs of an extension of the Scottish breeding range, encouraged by the provision of nestboxes. There is also a possible slight increase in the numbers summering south of the breeding range, although those in May could well be late-departing winter visitors.

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

One locality: one individual.

**Scotland, N** One locality: adult ♂ from early May until at least 7th September, at loch also frequented in 1985; assumed to be the same individual.

One year, perhaps . . .

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

Six localities: 1-6 pairs breeding.

**England, SW & SE** Five localities: (1) pair nested, but young died in nest; (2) one on several dates between 26th April and 29th June in possible breeding habitat; (3) pair on several dates between July and August, but the tree in which Honey Buzzards have apparently nested in recent years was felled during routine forestry operations; (4) one, sometimes two, seen during the breeding season, but not often, and no proof of breeding; (5) one, perched in centre of a wood, on 12th June: known that it did not nest in that particular wood, but other suitable woods within 5-10 km.

**England, E** One locality: one in brief soaring display on 23rd May.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Confirmed (pairs)	0	2	1	2	3	2	2	1	1	1	1
Max. total (pairs)	7	8	8	4	5	9	3	3	1	4	6

The Panel is aware that there are gaps in the information on this species, and we hope that coverage will improve in the future.

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

57 pairs, of which 23 pairs reared 29 young.

**England, SW** One broad area: 'seen fairly frequently' from mid March and a local belief that breeding might have occurred, but no significant evidence.

**Wales** 57 localities: (1)-(57) at least 39 pairs laid eggs and a further 18 pairs were known, of which 13 built nests, but apparently did not lay. Possibly a few of these had laid eggs and failed quickly, but in most cases the nests were incomplete. In addition, at least 24 unmated birds were identified in April, giving a total population of 138 or more. Twenty-three successful pairs reared 29 young between them, six broods of 2 and 17 of 1, the best breeding result for at least a century. This was despite the robbery of at least six clutches of eggs by egg-collectors and attempts to rob other nests. The number of breeding pairs fell slightly compared with 1985, probably owing to abnormally high mortality over the winter period. No fewer than six Red Kites were found dead between January and March, including one ringed as a nestling in 1969, the oldest recorded Welsh Kite to date. Two of these had been poisoned (by baits laced with *Fenthion*) but the other four were probably hard-weather casualties. The total population at the end of the breeding season stood at 167 or more.

The Panel is grateful to Peter Davis and the Kite Committee for providing this most informative report.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Total pairs	36	34	39	42	42	46	47	46	46	54	57
Breeding pairs	29	28	32	30	29	32	38	33	33	43	39
Successful pairs	15	12	13	14	21	18	19	20	13	19	23
Young reared	18	17	22	18	27	21	23	24	21	25	29

It is very satisfying to compare the present position with that of only ten years ago.

### White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Re-introduction: five pairs nested.

**Scotland** Five pairs nested, an increase of one on the total for 1985, and one pair reared two young, but the other four pairs failed.

All records of White-tailed Eagles in Scotland should be sent to Roy Dennis, RSPB Highland Office, Munloch, Ross & Cromarty IV3 3ND, or to the Panel's Secretary (see address at the end of this report).

### Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

24 localities: 82 young reared from 34 nests.

**England, E** 24 localities: (1)-(24) 33 ♀♀ paired to 26 ♂♂ (of the latter, five were bigynous and one trigynous). There were 27 successful nests, which produced a mean of three fledged young, or 2.4 young per nest started. Two other pairs may have nested, one of which may have reared young. Fledged brood sizes were two of 1, nine of 2, five of 3, eight of 4 and three of 5. Nests failed owing to probable flooding (1), predation (1) and desertion by the ♂ (1) or ♀ (1). One pair failed when the ♂ and three young died, probably after ingesting poison. A ♀ failed probably because the eggs were infertile, and another pair failed for unknown reasons but re-nested and reared two young. Four nests were in cereals and the remainder in reeds. A minimum of 20 ♀♀ and 13 ♂♂ summered, but did not breed. Once again this was a slight increase on the previous record number of nests in any one season this century, and might have been higher but for the poor spring weather. Productivity was about the average for the previous ten years. Since 1972, the failure rate of the known 291 Marsh Harrier nests has been 16.8%.

The Panel is grateful to John Day for providing this summary.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Breeding ♂♂	11	13	14	11	16	17	19	21	27	28	26
Breeding ♀♀	11	15	14	16	20	20	24	28	32	31	33
Fledged young	27	44	36	38	44	48	59	71	66	86	82
Mean fledged young per nest	2.4	2.9	2.6	2.4	2.2	2.0	2.5	2.5	2.4	3.0	2.4

This species is occurring with increasing frequency, and the Panel is anxious to receive all breeding-season records.

### Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

Six localities: 7 pairs breeding.

**England** Six localities: (1)-(6) seven pairs reared 13 young from eight nests, fledged two broods of 1, three broods of 2, and one of 5. One ♀ abandoned a single egg after prolonged heavy rain, but subsequently paired with a different ♂ and re-nested; this second nest also failed, when the young were taken by a predator, probably a fox *Vulpes vulpes*. All the nests were in cereal crops. The number of breeding pairs was the highest since 1972, in which year 14 young fledged from eight nests. Productivity was, however, disappointing, with the mean brood size, at 1.6, well below the average of 2.2 recorded for this species in Britain.

The Panel is grateful to John Day for compiling this summary. As with the Marsh Harrier, the Panel is anxious to receive all breeding-season records.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. localities	4	2	7	4	8	8	7	8	2	8	6
Confirmed (pairs)	3	1	2	2	2	2	3	6	1	3	7
Possible (pairs)	2	1	5	2	6	7	5	4	1	5	3
Max. total (pairs)	5	2	7	4	8	9	8	10	2	8	10
Fledged young	6	0	3	7	4	4	4	9	3	7	13

The readiness of this species to nest in cereals, and the co-operation of the farmers concerned in modifying their farming practices, together hold out the promise of a better future for it in Britain.

### Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

112 localities: 53-112 pairs breeding.

**England & Wales** 92 localities involving 25 counties: (1)-(92) 48 pairs known to have attempted breeding, rearing at least 46 young; also 15 pairs 'probably' breeding and 29 pairs 'possibly' breeding, giving a maximum total of 92 pairs.

**Scotland** 20 localities, involving five regions: (1)-(20) five pairs known to have attempted breeding, rearing at least 11 young; also seven 'probable' and eight 'possible' pairs, giving a maximum total of 20 pairs.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Counties*	10	15	18	21	21	27	16	17	21	17	30
Confirmed (pairs)	12	15	14	23	17	15	23	30	35	32	53
Possible (pairs)	16	22	26	21	32	37	18	25	41	33	59
Max. total (pairs)	28	37	40	44	49	52	41	55	76	65	112

\*In Scotland, from 1985, regions, not counties.

The summary table shows that, with few interruptions, the trend is still upwards, despite continued severe persecution in certain counties. The increase is widespread, and the Goshawk is now breeding in several counties which, until recently, might have been judged unsuitable for it.

### Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

42 eyries: 24 pairs reared 48 young.

**Scotland** 42 pairs occupied eyries and clutches of eggs were laid in 34 nests, in one case two ♀♀ laying in the same nest. Twenty-four of the nests were successful, a total of 48 young fledging. The mean brood size was 2.0, and the productivity per occupied nest was 1.4, the lowest figure since 1978. A wet and windy breeding season contributed to the poor success, and three pairs were robbed by egg-thieves. (All breeding data compiled by Roy Dennis on behalf of the RSPB.)

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Pairs	14	20	22	25	25	25	30	30	31	34	42
Successful pairs	10	7	11	16	19	20	21	20	21	22	24
Young reared	20	13	19	30	41	42	45	45	47	53	48

The upward trend continues.

### Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

32 counties: 91-291 pairs breeding.

**England, SW** 34-122 pairs breeding, 54 young known.

County	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Avon	0	4	3	7
Cornwall	0	0	2	2
Devon	4	0	0	4
Dorset	13	5	0	18
Gloucestershire	2	0	0	2
Hampshire	10	0	c. 30	c. 40
Somerset	2	4	17	23
Wiltshire	3	8	15	26

**England, SE** 35-106 pairs breeding, 43 young known.

County	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Bedfordshire	4	3	2	9
Berkshire	0	0	4	4
Buckinghamshire	11	7	0	18
Essex	2	3	0	5
Hertfordshire	3	6	28	37
Kent	0	2	2	4
Surrey	11	2	4	17
Middlesex	1	0	0	1
Sussex	3	6	2	11

**England, E** 10-38 pairs breeding, nine young known.

County	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Cambridgeshire	3	0	3	6
Huntingdonshire	1	2	1	4
Lincolnshire/South Humberside	0	0	2	2
Norfolk	3	0	0	3
Northamptonshire	3	11	3	17
Suffolk	0	1	5	6

**England, Central** 10-21 pairs breeding, 17 young known.

County	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Derbyshire	1	0	1	2
Herefordshire	0	0	3	3
Leicestershire	3	1	1	5
Shropshire	2	0	0	2
Staffordshire	0	0	3	3
Warwickshire	1	0	1	2
Worcestershire	3	1	0	4

**England, N** One pair breeding, at least one young reared.

YORKSHIRE One pair bred.

**Wales** 1-3 pairs breeding, two young known.

GWENT One pair bred, rearing two young, and there were two additional 'possible' pairs.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Confirmed (pairs)	59	51	70	80	64	51	97	80	93	76	91
Possible (pairs)	84	68	86	52	91	109	105	182	116	143	200
Max. total (pairs)	143	119	156	132	155	160	202	262	209	219	291
Young reared (minimum)	69	78	96	72	86	89	63	104	91	82	126

These are the highest figures since the Panel started collecting data in 1973. Some of the increase is due to additional sources of information



which have become available, and some to increased fieldwork by groups of enthusiasts. The data presented are nevertheless known still to be incomplete, and there are grounds for believing that the population of this splendid little falcon is increasing.

It is interesting to look at the fluctuating regional distribution of the species, taking the maximum figures and expressing each regional population as a percentage of the whole.

	England SW	England SE	England E	England Central	England N	Wales
1984	36.4	44.0	12.5	5.3	0	1.9
1985	40.6	38.8	14.6	3.6	0	2.3
1986	41.9	36.4	13.0	7.2	0.3	1.0

The consistently low proportion from eastern England may be a reflection of the intensive agriculture there, although the species is breeding successfully in areas of mixed farmland far removed from the more characteristic lowland-heath habitat.

### Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

75 localities: 1-99 pairs breeding.

**England, SW** 31 localities: 0-43 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Devon	4	0	0	4	4
Dorset	9	0	0	9	9
Wiltshire	18	0	15	15	30

**England, SE** 19 localities: 0-25 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Berkshire	1	0	0	1	1
Buckinghamshire	7	0	4	4	8
Essex	2	0	0	2	2
Kent	3	0	0	3	3
Sussex	6	0	0	11	11

**England, E** 10 localities: 0-13 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Cambridgeshire	2	0	0	2	2
Huntingdonshire	3	0	0	6	6
Lincolnshire/South Humberside	5	0	0	5	5

**England, Central** 12 localities: 1-12 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Leicestershire	5	0	0	5	5
Staffordshire	2	0	1	1	2
Shropshire	5	1	1	3	5

**England, N** Two localities: 0-5 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Cleveland	2	0	1	4	5

**Scotland, N & W** One locality: one individual.

OUTER HEBRIDES One singing.



This is the first time that the Quail has featured in the Panel's reports, and possibly the first time in many years that Quail data have been brought together nationally. A feature common to many of the reports is the apparent late arrival, with much singing in June and the first half of July.

### **Corncrake** *Crex crex*

Two localities: two singing.

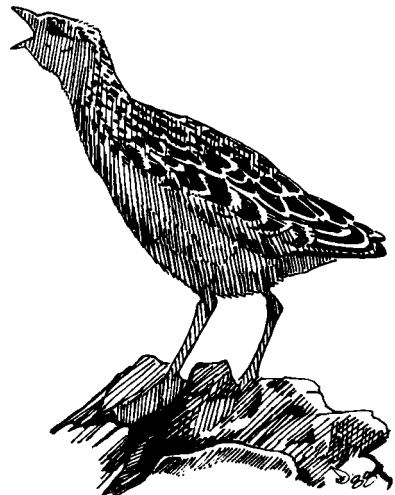
#### **England, Central**

STAFFORDSHIRE One locality: one singing at dusk on 25th March, a very early date.

#### **Scotland, N & W**

CAITHNESS One locality: one singing: 'This is the least number ever recorded for the county.'

The Corncrake is a 1986 addition to the Panel's list, and it is likely that some recorders have omitted to send records on this first occasion. No attempt is being made to collect data from the Hebrides or Northern Ireland, but records from anywhere else in Britain are requested.



**Spotted Crane** *Porzana porzana*

Three localities: 0-4 pairs breeding.

**England, E** Two localities: (1) heard singing on 18th and 19th May and 17th and 18th June; (2) one singing from 22nd April to 4th May, and probably a different individual from 29th May to 19th June.

**England, Central** One locality: single singing on numerous occasions between 29th June and 9th August, and seen once.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Counties	1	3	6	2	1	3	1	3	3	2	3
No. localities	2	4	6	4	3	4	2	6	4	2	3
Singing ♂♂	2	7	6	8	4	9	3	12	10	3	4

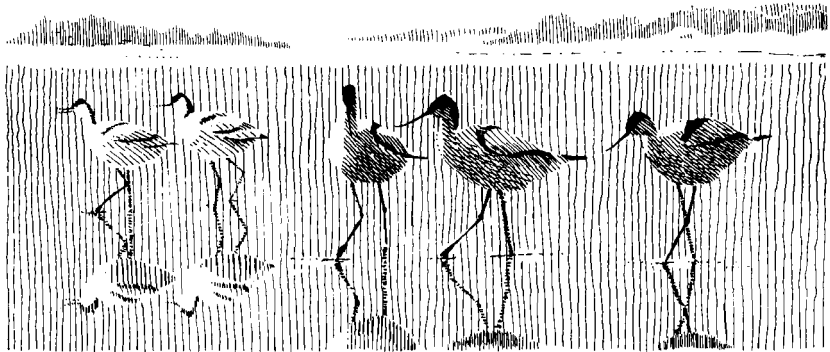
The somewhat erratic breeding-season occurrences of the species may be determined, at least in part, by the suitability of weather conditions for 'overshooting' on spring migration.

**Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*

15 localities: 255-292 pairs reared at least 227 young.

**England, SE & E** 15 localities. The year was characterised by poor breeding success at the key Suffolk sites of Havergate, where 100 pairs fledged only 23 young, and Minsmere, where 40 pairs reared 30 young.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. localities	5	6	3	3	5	5	9	9	11	14	15
Confirmed (pairs)	151	146	145	147	168	201	190	238	237	269	255
Young reared (minima)	68	14	92	99	101	155	150	192	118	245	227



A second consecutive year with over 200 young reared and, if present trends continue, the population will soon exceed 300 pairs.

**Stone-curlew** *Burhinus oedipnemus*

Eight counties: 117-118 pairs, of which 103 are known to have laid eggs.

**England, SW** 30 pairs, of which 11 are known to have laid eggs and four to have hatched young. Half the nests were on arable land and the remainder on downland.

**England, SE** Six, or possibly seven, pairs, four of which are known to have laid eggs. Four of the nests were on arable land, one on downland, and one unspecified.

**England, E** 81 pairs, most of which are known to have laid eggs. About half of the total number of nests were on arable land and half on heathland.



	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Confirmed (pairs)	16	4	20	34	8	10	8	20	19	68	103
Possible (pairs)	93	23	14	47	37	43	59	76	52	47	15
Max. total (pairs)	109	27	34	81	45	53	67	96	71	115	118

The information for 1986 is based largely, but not exclusively, on a major survey by the staff of the RSPB, and the Panel is most grateful for the co-operation afforded by the survey leader, Dr R. E. Green. In connection with this survey, it would be a great help if observers who have submitted Stone-curlew records to the Panel in the last ten years (whether directly or through their recorders) could check their areas again *and submit negative records if the species is now absent*.

As the RSPB survey did not begin until 1985, it would be unwise to compare the totals in the table for the earlier years with those for 1985 and 1986.

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

Estimate of at least 600 pairs breeding.

**England** Four localities: (1) two pairs bred; (2)-(4) single pairs, but no evidence of breeding.

**Scotland** A paper by Dr Adam Watson and Robert Rae (*Scot. Birds* 14: 191-198) reported on fieldwork covering 15 years, and estimated the breeding population in Scotland as at least 600 pairs.

In view of this report, the data submitted to the Panel are too fragmentary to merit separate publication. At the same time, since the estimate is described by the authors as 'rough', the Panel thinks it important to continue collecting as much precise information as possible. To ensure that the net is cast widely enough, it may be added that, in Scotland, Watson & Rae found Dotterels summering, and sometimes breeding, on partly bare grouse moorland as low as 450 m.

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

Two localities: 1-3 pairs breeding.

**Scotland, N & W** Two localities: (1) four adults on 15th June, two of them song-fighting, at least one nest successful, with two young seen on 16th-17th July; (2) one adult, seen once on 17th June, but at a regular site.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Localities	2	3	3	4	5	1	3	1	1	2	2
Confirmed (pairs)	1	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Possible (pairs)	3	5	5	4	5	1	2	2	1	2	2
Max. total (pairs)	4	5	6	6	6	1	3	2	1	2	3

The report of a parent with two small chicks, no locality given, has been omitted on the grounds that it could refer to locality 1, above.

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

One locality: 1-2 pairs breeding.

**Scotland, N & W** One locality: at least one, and probably two pairs, clutch of four eggs located, and adult with small young seen on 11th July.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. localities	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	3	1
Confirmed (pairs)	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Possible (pairs)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	1
Max. total (pairs)	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	3	2

A third consecutive year of successful breeding, but a tiny population such as this must remain very vulnerable.

### Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Seven localities: at least one pair bred.

**England, SE** Two localities: (1) one on 25th May, 14 on 22nd June; (2) eight on 29th/30th June.

**England, E** Three localities: (1) 18 ♂♂ displaying in May and 22 ♂♂ in June, but water levels too high for nesting; (2) 50 ♂♂ and 3 ♀♀ observed at lek, one ♀ with well-grown young on 17th July; (3) at least seven ♂♂ and three ♀♀ in suitable breeding habitat in June.

**England, N** Two localities: 2-4 ♂♂ lekking to 3-4 ♀♀ and possibly moving between the two sites.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. localities	6	6	4	12	10	10	13	8	6	6	7
Nests	4	0	0	3	3	0	1	2	0	0	1
Max. no. ♀♀ possibly nesting	17	16	4	22	13	13	23	32	6	?	9

Some of the dates are atypically late for passage migrants.

### Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

19 localities: 23-47 pairs breeding.

**England, SW** One locality.

SOMERSET One locality: three present to 1st June, but no evidence of breeding attempt.

**England, SE** Two localities: (1) two pairs bred and one additional ♂ displaying, two broods, but only one young reared; (2) nine on 6th May.

**England, E** 13 localities: 20-34 pairs breeding.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE Six localities: (1) five pairs, all with clutches of 4; (2) four pairs all with clutches of 4; (3) one pair, clutch size not known; (4) one pair with repeat clutch of 4; (5) one pair, with unsuccessful clutch of 4 eggs, which re-nested on adjacent arable; (6) at least two pairs which nested in arable and led their chicks to wetland.

NORFOLK Two localities: (1) five pairs laid four clutches of 4 and one of 5; (2) five pairs summered, but only one pair bred successfully, rearing single chick.

LINCOLNSHIRE/SOUTH HUMBERSIDE One locality: six on 30th March, one displaying on 20th April, and up to nine in June.

ELSEWHERE Four localities: (1) pair displaying at end of May; (2) three pairs probably bred; (3) pair probably bred; (4) individuals present in breeding season, but no further information disclosed.

**England, N** One locality.

LANCASHIRE One locality: two pairs at site where breeding has occurred in past.

**Scotland, N & W** Two localities.

ORKNEY One locality: pair bred, two fledged young on 27th July.

SHETLAND One locality: pair present, no nest found but alarm behaviour suggested presence of young.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. localities	13	11	13	13	11	5	13	10	12	10	19
Confirmed (pairs)	72	37	50	39	52	22	38	32	55	22	23
Possible (pairs)	15	33	18	25	25	4	31	12	25	14	24
Max. total (pairs)	87	70	68	64	77	26	69	44	80	36	47

This species remains tolerably widespread, but it seems possible that the large increase in the number of localities reported for 1986 has arisen at least partly as a result of some areas having been subdivided.

### Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Two localities: 2-3 pairs breeding.

**Scotland, N & W** Two localities.

INVERNESS-SHIRE Two localities: (1) up to three adults between 4th May and 15th July, adults with young on 16th to 19th June and 4th to 15th July: two different broods; (2) singles seen between 20th May and 6th June, and on 21st June and 30th July, display, but no proof of breeding.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. localities	3	4	7	3	4	1	4	3	4	3	2
Confirmed (pairs)	1	2	4	2	7	1	3	1	4	2	2
Possible (pairs)	2	3	6	2	5	0	3	4	1	1	1
Max. total (pairs)	3	5	10	4	12	1	6	5	5	3	3

Like those of Temminck's Stint and Purple Sandpiper, this is a tiny population, apparently just managing to sustain itself, mainly at two localities.

### Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

Two localities: 14-16 pairs breeding.

**Scotland, N & W** Two localities: (1) two pairs probably bred; (2) 12-14 pairs present and most presumably bred.

The results for 1986 continue the seemingly inexorable decline of recent years.

### Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Five localities in four counties: 1-5 pairs breeding.

**England, SE** One locality.

KENT One locality: breeding pair present from 15th April to 28th May, nest with three eggs on 13th May, eggs apparently hatched, but no young located.

**England, E** Three localities.

LINCOLNSHIRE/SOUTH HUMBERSIDE Two localities: (1) pair of adults in full breeding plumage, with regular courtship between 29th March and 12th April, possibly longer; (2) first-summer individual present in colony of Black-headed Gulls *Larus ridibundus* on 9th May.

SUFFOLK One locality: pair established scrape, and copulation observed, but they were harassed by Black-headed Gulls and both left after a brief stay.

**Scotland, Mid** One locality: one in hill-top colony of Common Gulls *Larus canus*, thought not to have built nest, but remained for about three months.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. localities	1	2	1	3	5	4	2	6	4	2	5
Confirmed (pairs)	1	1	0	2	1	3	2	2	4	3	1
Possible (pairs)	0	1	1	1	4	3	1	6	1	3	4
Max. total (pairs)	1	2	1	3	5	6	3	8	5	6	5

The optimism generated by the promising situation in 1985 seems to have been a little premature. On the other hand, there are now genuine pairs of the species, whereas in the early years many of the records were of this species mating with Black-headed Gulls.

### Roseate Tern *Sterna dougalli*

The Panel has, since 1985, collected reports of Roseate Terns breeding

away from the larger colonies, which are already subject to regular monitoring.

**England, SW** Two localities: (1) pair reared two young; (2) present in ternery during breeding season.

**Scotland, S** One locality: 24 pairs reared at least 34 young.

**Scotland, N & W** Two island localities, with several on each; two pairs seen feeding dependent young on 19th August.

Dr Mark Avery, who is making a special study of this species, writes 'Since 1969, when the British breeding population was estimated at 670 pairs, the population has fallen to about 120 known pairs in 1987. Similar declines have taken place in Ireland (both in the Republic and in Northern Ireland) and in France. The West Palearctic stronghold for the species is now known to be the Azores, where over 600 pairs were found in 1984. As indicated by the colony in S. Scotland, breeding success is generally high in British colonies (although better data are required), so it may be that the status of this species is largely affected by factors acting outside the breeding grounds, e.g. trapping in West Africa.'

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

One locality: one individual.

**Wales** One locality.

CAERNARVONSHIRE One locality: one on 24th June.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. localities	2	4	4	0	2	0	0	1	2	2	1
Confirmed (pairs)	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Possible (pairs)	1	0	4	0	2	0	0	1	2	2	1
Max. total (pairs)	2	4	4	0	2	0	0	1	2	2	1

The species seems to be moving towards becoming a rare non-breeding bird, although one or two springs with warm southerly winds could bring it back to this northwestern extremity of its range.

### **Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla*

Nine localities: 1-9 pairs breeding.

**England, SW** Two localities.

DEVON One locality: one singing from 5th May to 22nd June.

WILTSHIRE One locality: one singing on 10th June.

**England, SE** One locality.

ESSEX One locality: one singing in suitable breeding habitat on 5th May.

**England, E** One locality.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE One locality: one singing in typical breeding habitat in May.

**Scotland, N & W** Five localities.

INVERNESS-SHIRE Four localities: (1) one pair fledged at least three young; (2) one singing on 30th May; (3) one singing on 1st July; (4) one singing on 13th July.

ROSS-SHIRE One locality: one singing on 30th June.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. localities	7	17	22	7	11	2	9	14	9	9	9
Confirmed (pairs)	1	7	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Possible (pairs)	6	12	19	8	13	2	10	15	10	8	8
Max. total (pairs)	7	19	23	9	14	2	10	15	10	9	9

Once an isolated male has found a mate, the advertising song is usually little used, and it seems likely that some of the individuals listed here were unmated passage birds.

**Woodlark *Lullula arborea***

13 counties: 47-228 pairs breeding.

**England, SW** 7-95 pairs breeding.

CORNWALL Three localities: (1) one or two ♂♂ regularly from 23rd March to 25th May, but four on 5th April; (2)(3) singing ♂♂ on 22nd and 23rd March respectively.

DEVON Six localities: (1) five pairs located during breeding season; (2) five song-fighting in April, two adults and four juveniles in August; (3) singles on two dates; (4) singing individuals in May and June; (5) one pair probably bred, one pair possibly bred, and a third ♂ present but probably unpaired; (6) pair bred, fledging three young, and three other singing ♂♂.

DORSET Five localities: (1)-(3) pairs present during breeding season, but no proof of breeding; (4)(5) singles during breeding season in suitable habitat.

HAMPSHIRE Three broad localities: (1) 34-36 pairs present and assumed to be breeding; (2) 34 pairs present at 15 sites; (3) two or three pairs in breeding season. Allowing for incomplete coverage, it was thought that the population might total about 90 pairs.

SOMERSET One locality: one singing on 20th June (there had been county records of only two other singing Woodlarks in the previous ten years).

WILTSHIRE One locality: two singing on 10th May and pair in June.

**England, SE** 16 localities: 27-49 pairs breeding.

BERKSHIRE Six localities: (1) pair fledged four young at site on marginal farmland; (2) two, apparently a pair, on 29th March and 8th May; (3) pair on two dates in May; (4)(5) combined total of three or possibly four pairs during breeding season; (6) singles on 29th April and 29th May, two on 7th May.

KENT One locality: two on 7th June, not known if they were a pair.

SUSSEX One locality: one singing on 17th March.

SURREY Eight localities: (1) eight pairs breeding plus four unmated ♂♂; (2) nine pairs; (3) four pairs, of which one proved to breed; (4) three pairs bred; (5) three pairs, of which one proved to breed; (6) three pairs; (7) two pairs; (8) one pair.

**England, E** Four broad localities: 11-76 pairs breeding.

NORFOLK One broad locality: ten pairs proved to breed and an additional 16 pairs probably bred.

COUNTY NOT NAMED One locality: three on 30th March, ♂ singing plus two others to late July, family party of six on 3rd and 9th August.

COUNTY NOT NAMED Two broad localities: (1) 22 pairs, of which seven proved to breed; (2) 25-28 singing ♂♂.

The year 1986 is only the third for which the Panel has collected information. The totals are considerably up on those for 1985, but this is certainly in part due to increased fieldwork prompted by a BTO survey. The Panel acknowledges the special help of Chris Bowden.

**Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros***

60 localities: 25-74 pairs breeding.

**England, SW** Four localities.

AVON Two localities: singing ♂ at two different localities, close enough together that same individual might have been involved.

CORNWALL One locality: juvenile seen on 9th September and pair with three juveniles on 14th September; if immigrants, they would have been the earliest ever, but this site was former breeding place.

DEVON One locality: pair prospecting nest holes on 10th May.

**England, SE** 44 localities: 15-54 pairs breeding.

ESSEX Two localities: (1) four pairs; (2) pair bred.

KENT One locality: family party on 19th July, two pairs on 6th August, two family parties on 31st August.

MIDDLESEX Seven localities: (1) two singing ♂♂ on 23rd June; (2) ♂ on 23rd July; (3) singing ♂ on 8th June and 6th July; (4) two singing ♂♂ in May and June; (5) singing ♂ on 22nd June; (6) ♂ singing in June; (7) pair, which may have bred, in July.

INNER LONDON 17 localities: (1) pair reared three young; (2) pair feeding young in late July and early August; (3) one carrying food into building on 29th May; (4)-(17) singing ♂♂ on dates in May, June and—some—July.

SURREY 14 localities: (1)-(3) pairs proved breeding; (4)-(7) pairs probably breeding; (8) six possible pairs breeding; (9) three possible pairs breeding; (10)-(14) single possible pairs breeding.

SUSSEX Three localities: (1)(2) pairs reared two and four young respectively; (3) singing ♂ on 1st May.

England, E Six localities: 4-7 pairs breeding.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE Two localities: (1)(2) singing individuals holding territories in April and May.

LINCOLNSHIRE/SOUTH HUMBERSIDE Three localities: (1) pair fledged four young in late May and second ♂ present in early June; (2) pair fledged broods of three on 23rd June and three on 6th August; (3) ♀ feeding young in nest on 6th August, fully grown juvenile nearby thought to be from earlier brood.

ELSEWHERE One locality: pair fledged three young and additional singing ♂ nearby.

England, Central Three localities: 2-4 pairs breeding.

DERBYSHIRE One locality: ♂ singing on three occasions, but not seen after 21st May.

STAFFORDSHIRE Two localities: (1) thought to be two pairs, both feeding young (site examined from a distance); (2) pair, estimated to have hatched young on 11th June.

England, N Three localities: 3-6 pairs breeding.

CLEVELAND One locality: pair with four eggs, from which at least two young fledged in mid July.

YORKSHIRE Two localities: (1) four pairs, one of which known to have fledged two broods; (2) pair with three or four young.



This species was dropped from the Panel's list after 1976 (*Brit. Birds* 71:

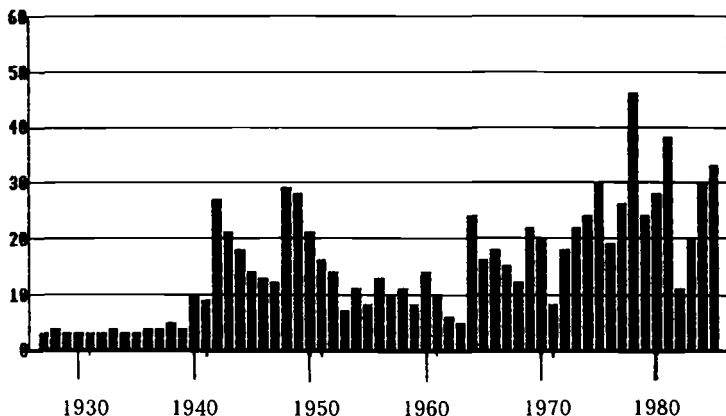


Fig. 2. Total number of pairs (proved breeding and not proved breeding) of Black Redstarts *Phoenicurus ochruros* in the London area during 1927-1985

13), but was restored in 1985, and we are delighted with the response from observers and recorders alike. The heartland remains in the Southeast, and the Panel is particularly indebted to Andrew Moon for providing a wealth of information as well as the histogram showing the fortunes of the species in the recording area of the London Natural History Society (fig. 2). The maximum possible total is significantly lower than that of 104 which Morgan & Glue reported for 1977 (*Bird Study* 28: 163-168), but it is possible that some recorders have not yet noticed the addition of the species to the Panel's list.

### Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Two localities: two pairs breeding.

**England, N** One locality.

CUMBRIA One locality: adult with three juveniles, on 4th August and 3rd September.

**Scotland, N & W** One locality.

INVERNESS-SHIRE One locality: pair laid two clutches of five eggs, fledging one from the first and five from the second.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. localities	11	6	3	6	5	6	7	10	4	2	2
Confirmed (pairs)	3	4	1	1	1	0	2	3	0	0	2
Possible (pairs)	9	2	3	5	4	6	5	9	4	2	0
Max. total (pairs)	12	6	4	6	5	6	7	12	4	2	2

The summertime appearance of the species is now very erratic, with no area being occupied in successive summers as they were a few years ago.

### Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

32 localities: 20-46 pairs breeding.

**England, SE** One locality.

KENT One locality: two singles in June.

**England, E** One locality.

SUFFOLK One locality: two ♂♂ singing in suitable breeding habitat in mid May.

**England, N** One locality.

CUMBRIA One locality: six together on 3rd July; the observer was unable to determine whether they were a family party or a group of non-breeding adults.

**Scotland, Mid** One locality.

GRAMPIAN One locality: pair on 26th April.

**Scotland, N & W** 28 localities.

INVERNESS-SHIRE Two localities: (1)(2) pair at each, both fledging five young.

SUTHERLAND 26 localities: (1)-(26) 18 pairs proved to be breeding and a further 21 for which proof of breeding not obtained.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. localities	10	10	12	6	18	6	42	65	57	33	32
Confirmed (pairs)	3	2	3	2	7	4	30	17	31	11	20
Possible (pairs)	12	14	14	7	25	7	32	51	47	22	26
Max. total (pairs)	15	16	17	9	32	11	62	68	78	33	46

With the exception of Sutherland, where the Panel is indebted to an invaluable contribution from J. & C. F. Barrett, much less information than usual has been submitted to the Panel from Scotland so that the 'maximum total' probably understates the true population by an appreciable amount.

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

79 localities: 4-173 pairs breeding.

**England, SW** 51 localities: 3-123 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Cornwall	4	0	5	5	10
Devon	10	0	21	11	32
Dorset	12	2	25	10	37
Hampshire	18	0	35	0	35
Somerset	7	1	8	0	9

**England, SE** Two localities: 1-4 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Kent	1	0	0	2	2
Elsewhere	1	1	1	0	2

**England, E** 24 localities: 0-44 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Norfolk	22	0	41	0	41
Suffolk	2	0	3	0	3

**Wales** One locality: one individual.

CARMARTHENSHIRE One locality: one singing from 4th April; possibly two singing towards the end of the year.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Counties	8	10	14	14	11	16	12	13	12	12	10
Confirmed (pairs)	8	13	30	46	19	56	29	90	78	58	4
Possible (pairs)	72	140	144	117	179	106	173	157	235	152	169
Max. total (pairs)	80	153	174	163	198	162	202	247	313	210	173

The decline of the Kent population—from a total of 80 pairs possibly breeding in 1981 to near extinction in 1986—is striking, and is probably due to a succession of winters with severe cold spells. The small Essex population also disappeared, and it would be interesting to know why the Norfolk birds seem to be less affected. Note the first presence in south Wales.

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

Nine localities: 1-12 pairs breeding.

**England, SW** Three localities: (1) one singing from 23rd to 27th June; (2)(3) singing ♂♂ heard during spring, presumed to be passage migrants.**England, SE** One locality: ♂ singing from 1st April to 2nd June.**England, E** Five localities: (1) one singing from at least 18th June to 25th June; (2) four ♂♂ singing; (3) ♂ singing; (4) pair bred, rearing two young; (5) ♂ singing during the first half of May, but not subsequently.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. localities	8	13	15	15	14	8	11	12	10	8	9
Confirmed (pairs)	0	3	4	6	2	5	0	2	0	1	1
Possible (pairs)	9	23	24	24	27	10	18	15	12	9	11
Max. total (pairs)	9	26	28	30	29	15	18	17	12	10	12

An improvement in distribution, with the species present in six counties compared with only two in 1985, but it seems likely that at least half of them were overshooting migrants.



**Marsh Warbler** *Acrocephalus palustris*

18 localities: 12-28 pairs breeding.

**England, SW** Three localities.

HAMPSHIRE Two localities: (1)(2) singing ♂♂ from 14th to 25th June and from 29th June to 11th July respectively.

ISLE OF WIGHT One locality: ♂ singing from 28th to 30th May.

**England, SE** Seven localities in two counties: (1) two pairs reared total of seven young, laying dates being 31st May and 6th June; (2) two pairs, but not known whether they bred; (3) only one pair thought to be present during breeding season, rearing at least two young, but second nest found after end of breeding season; (4) ♂ singing on 12th June and seen again on 8th July; (5) ♂ singing from 16th to 18th June; (6) ♂ singing on 14th June; (7) ♂ singing from 8th to 13th June, two more singing on 26th June, with pair present from 8th June, seen carrying food on 9th July.**England, E** Two localities.

LINCOLNSHIRE/SOUTH HUMBERSIDE One locality: ♂ singing in suitable habitat on 4th June.

SUFFOLK One locality: ♂ singing on 1st June (first county record of the species).

**England, Central** Five localities: 7-9 pairs breeding.

WORCESTERSHIRE Five localities: (1) five pairs bred; (2)(3) single pairs bred; (4)(5) unpaired singing ♂♂ in June.

**Wales** One locality: one individual.

ANGLESEY One locality: ♂ singing on 15th and 16th June.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. localities	5	6	15	15	8	3	8	10	12	9	15
Confirmed (pairs)	0	2	4	1	2	0	2	3	4	2	5
Possible (pairs)	5	9	11	22	10	3	7	9	9	7	14
Max. total (pairs)	5	11	15	23	12	3	9	12	13	9	19

The table excludes data from Worcestershire, which for many years has been the stronghold of the species in England, but where there is now a prolonged and serious decline. On the Continent, the species is, however, extending its range, and this may account for the slight increase elsewhere in England.

**Dartford Warbler** *Sylvia undata*

Five counties: 15-308 pairs breeding.

**England, SW**

CORNWALL At least three territories located and young seen in each.

DEVON Present throughout the year on three commons, and successful breeding took place at all three localities, with a total of four pairs reported.

DORSET Total of 76 pairs located during breeding season. It is known that four pairs bred successfully and in addition many sites reported 'good breeding season' or 'many young seen'.

HAMPSHIRE In the main extensive area, the sample of pairs reported made it possible to estimate a total population for the area of about 200 pairs, or much as in 1985. Elsewhere in the county, five pairs or singing ♂♂ located in one area and one pair bred at another site.

**England, SE**

SURREY Five localities: (1) six pairs, four known to have young; (2) six pairs, at least one of which bred; (3) five pairs, two of which were proved to breed; (4) two pairs; (5) one pair.

Severe winter weather seems to have taken a considerable toll of the Surrey population, but left the southwestern populations relatively intact.

**Firecrest** *Regulus ignicapillus*

19 localities: 1-29 pairs breeding.

**England, SW** Two localities: five apparently unmated ♂♂.

HAMPSHIRE Two localities: (1) four singing ♂♂; (2) one singing ♂.

**England, SE** Fifteen localities: 1-21 pairs breeding.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE Two localities: (1) two singing ♂♂ in a regularly occupied site; (2) five territories, and one family party seen.

ESSEX Three localities: (1) pair, the ♂ singing; (2)(3) single singing ♂♂ during May and June.

KENT One locality: pair and additional ♂ on 24th May.

SURREY Seven localities: (1) one or two singing ♂♂; (2)-(7) single singing ♂♂, but known that one did not remain in the locality.

SUSSEX Two localities: (1) singing ♂ on 2nd June; (2) agitated individual on 8th June.

**England, E** One locality: one possible pair.

HUNTINGDON One locality: ♂ singing and duller individual, presumed to be ♀, in suitable breeding area on 2nd May.

**England, Central** One locality: one individual.

LEICESTERSHIRE One locality: ♂ singing on one day in mid June, not found on subsequent visits.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. localities	15	12	7	25	30	35	21	75	47	24	19
Confirmed (pairs)	4	2	1	9	7	15	4	6	4	5	1
Possible (pairs)	24	29	10	64	71	87	40	169	78	41	28
Max. total (pairs)	28	31	11	73	78	102	44	175	82	46	29

A continued steep decline from the peak numbers of 1983.

### Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

13 localities: 5-16 pairs breeding.

**England, SE & E** 12 localities: (1) alarm calls on 15th and 29th June; (2) singing ♂ on 22nd June; (3) pair with young; (4)-(6) singing ♂♂ holding territory; (7) two pairs with nests, one with young; (8)(9) single pairs with broods of four; (10) at least three pairs present and probably bred; (11) pair probably bred; (12) singing ♂ on 2nd July.

**Wales** One locality: one individual.

ANGLESEY One locality: ♂ singing on 26th June.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. localities	11	16	14	17	17	13	12	14	10	12	13
Confirmed (pairs)	7	6	7	3	2	4	3	2	4	4	5
Possible (pairs)	16	15	21	27	26	22	18	19	13	11	11
Max. total (pairs)	23	21	28	30	28	26	21	21	17	15	16

Apart from local habitat loss, the chief threat is probably undue disturbance by birdwatchers.

### Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Six localities: 4-6 pairs breeding.

**England, E** Six localities: (1) pair laid five eggs and fledged two young; (2) pair bred, fledging four young from six eggs; (3) pair present late in breeding season, but no evidence of any young being reared; (4) pair probably bred, but nest may have been raided by predator; (5) pair laid five eggs, but abandoned nest; (6) ♂ held well-defined territory from 14th to 30th July, but no sign of any female.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Counties	5	13	11	10	5	6	3	3	4	6	3
Confirmed (pairs)	3	48	13	14	23	11	5	11	6	6	4
Possible (pairs)	22	16	24	38	8	29	3	1	4	5	2
Max. total (pairs)	25	64	37	52	31	40	8	17	10	11	6

The protracted decline of the species is accelerating and perhaps nothing short of an input of new blood can save the species from extinction in Britain.

**Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*

One locality: one individual.

**Scotland, S** One locality.

BORDERS One locality: ♂ feeding in mixed flock of finches on 2nd August: the fourth consecutive year that a Brambling has been seen in summer in the same general area.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. localities	0	2	2	3	3	1	10	8	10	3	1
Confirmed (pairs)	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	1	0	0
Possible (pairs)	0	3	2	3	4	0	8	7	8	1	1
Max. total (pairs)	0	3	2	4	4	1	10	8	9	3	1

A second consecutive poor year.

**Serín** *Serinus serinus*

Two localities: three individuals.

**England, SW** One locality.

DEVON One locality: two ♂♂ from 24th April to mid August, but no sign of a ♀, the first break after five successful years.

**England, SE** One locality.

KENT One locality: ♂ singing on 1st July, but no suggestion of breeding.

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. localities	2	0	4	0	1	3	5	7	4	4	2
Confirmed (pairs)	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	2	2	1	0
Possible (pairs)	2	0	3	0	1	4	6	5	3	4	3
Max. total (pairs)	2	0	4	0	1	6	7	7	5	5	3

A poor year after five which encouraged one to believe that the species was established as a regular breeder. In the light of the enormous extension of range on the Continent, it would appear that the water barrier of the English Channel tends to inhibit movement into Britain.

**Scarlet Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus*

Five localities: five individuals.

**England, E** One locality.

LINCOLNSHIRE/SOUTH HUMBERSIDE One locality: ♀ or immature on 23rd June in habitat typical of that occupied by the species in Scandinavia.

**Wales** One locality.

GWYNEDD One locality: singing ♂ on 7th June.

**Scotland, N and W** Three localities: (1) ♂ singing from 28th June into July, the second consecutive year at this locality; (2) ♂ in song from 14th June to 14th July; (3) ♂ singing in suitable habitat, but no date mentioned.

The species is occurring with greater frequency in spring, but the only confirmed breeding to date was in 1982.

**Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Two localities: 1-2 pairs breeding.

**Scotland, N & W** Two localities: (1) ♂ singing repeatedly and joined by ♀; (2) ♀ feeding on summit on 1st May.

This is all the information submitted to the Panel, and can hardly be complete. We would appreciate any records of this species seen in the mountains between May and August.

**Cirl Bunting** *Emberiza cirlus*

Three counties: 13-62 pairs breeding.

**England, SW**

CORNWALL. Two localities: (1) two ♂♂ on 26th May, then regularly to 26th July, but no proof of breeding; (2) ♂ feeding juvenile.

DEVON. An estimated 45-50 pairs, representing little change from 1985 situation; proof of breeding obtained for at least 12 pairs, and majority assumed to have done so.

SOMERSET. Six localities: (1) up to three ♂♂ singing regularly between 3rd May and 22nd July, with four on 11th June; (2) two ♂♂ singing on 23rd May; (3)-(6) single ♂♂ singing on single dates.

The much diminished population now seems to be confined to southwestern England, yet last century the species occurred as far north as Cumberland and even 50 years ago was widely distributed along the north coast of Wales.

*Rare Breeding Birds Panel, Iredale Place Cottage, Loweswater, Cockermouth, Cumbria*

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