

Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 1987



Robert Spencer and the Rare Breeding Birds Panel

This is the fifteenth annual report published by the Panel: the fourteenth report, for 1986, was published last year (*Brit. Birds* 81: 417-444). Recorders have been generous with their time in supplying data to the Panel and it is a pleasure to acknowledge their support. In a report such as this, the aim must ever be to obtain full cover, but this is not always achieved. Changes in the recording arrangements for the large and ornithologically important county of Yorkshire have, for a second year, delayed submission of data, and there has been a hitch in the provision of information from the equally important county of Inverness-shire. In partial compensation, forms have been submitted by some individual observers, and, in addition, the Panel has access to the returns—for the species it covers—which each holder of a Schedule 1 licence must make to the Nature Conservancy Council.

As a Panel, we have been much encouraged by the trouble which readers have taken to augment or correct our published statements. In particular, the comment in the 1986 report under Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*, 'Note the first presence in South Wales', led to several letters which, taken together, give a history of presence going back over a decade. In like manner, a note that the Panel would appreciate any records of Snow Buntings *Plectrophenax nivalis* seen in the high mountains between May and August sent several hill walkers thumbing through their field notebooks. In this report, we have not published as separate entries the records which we have received relating to former years, but these past data will be published next year. The species year-tables have, however, been updated, and, in a sense, they form the heart of the report; more of them will be introduced as the files grow fuller, or more complete. Contributions and corrections to any entries in the Panel's reports will always be welcome, but we recommend that, unless there are special circumstances, the normal line for initial reporting should be through the appropriate

[The publication of this report has been subsidised by a donation from the RSPB]

[*Brit. Birds* 82: 477-504, October 1989]

county or regional recorder. Anything of national interest is likely to be of regional interest, and often the local recorder is the person best able to put an observation in its wider context, whether temporally or geographically.

There is, of course, another aspect. Records of rare birds are all subject to the rigorous discipline of scrutiny and evaluation by the Rarities Committee. What does one do about the records of rare *breeding* birds which, by virtue of their confidentiality, cannot be subjected to external scrutiny without breaching the solemn undertakings of confidentiality which the Panel gives? Proof of identity must be separated from proof of breeding. The Panel can send identification notes to the Rarities Committee and withhold names or places. A trusting chain of relationships, between the observer and the recorder, and between the recorder and the Panel, is probably the most effective way of resolving this particular problem.

Trust is, to be sure, a vital element in the Panel's relationship with others. If, for example, a person with some recognised 'rights' over a first-time breeder decrees that not even a mention that it is breeding somewhere in the UK may be published, the Panel must observe such a dictate. In the end, it is not the Panel, but the observers and the recorders who determine what, and in what detail, may be published.

It is time to look at events in 1987—the year in question—and to seek some yardstick by which to measure change. Fortunately, we are well served. Thirty years ago, this journal published a survey by several authors entitled 'The rarer birds of prey: their present status in the British Isles' (*Brit. Birds* 50: 129-155) and this permits some fascinating comparisons. Thus, P. A. D. Hollom, writing about the Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*, quoted D. A. Bannerman 'There does not appear to have been any reliable evidence of nesting since 1951', but he was able to add in a postscript that Col. Meinertzhagen had in 1956 seen one carrying food into a tree in circumstances indicative of breeding. Records available to us suggest a present-day population, despite continuing persecution, which is probably somewhere between 60 and 120 pairs.

Of the Red Kite *Milvus milvus*, Col. Morrey Salmon was able to write that, at the end of a good breeding season in 1954, the known population was about 55 individuals and that '61 young Kites were seen to fly in the six years 1949-54', an average of only ten a year. Thirty-nine young fledged in 1987.

Max Nicholson contributed the feature on the Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*, noting that the number of broods reared 'rose again to 1 by ca. 1908', and concluded that the species 'now appears to have a fair prospect of recovery under vigilant protection.' Despite severe setbacks in the 1950s and 1960s, apparently due to the effects of pesticides, the recovery continues, and, from some 45 nests, 122 or more young fledged in 1987.

Philip Brown, at that time the head of the RSPB, prepared the text on the Hobby *Falco subbuteo*. 'It breeds in strength', he wrote, 'only in Hampshire, Sussex, Dorset and Wiltshire . . . the grand total for the whole four counties would be unlikely to be above 50 . . . The number of breeding pairs in any one season in Great Britain may well fall between 60

and 90 pairs.' Today, the upper limit almost certainly exceeds 250 pairs, perhaps by a wide margin.

How does one evaluate these striking changes? What proportion of the increase should be attributed to better coverage (almost certainly partly true of the Hobby, for example) and how much to genuine population growth, often under the strenuous guardianship of various formal and informal protection bodies? That all is not due simply to better counting may be seen in the far less happy story of Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*. Of this species, Max Nicholson was able to write 'the total British breeding population is probably of the order of some 40-50 pairs.' Today's much bigger network of observers cannot put the figure above four or five pairs. Clearly, there has been a prolonged and substantial decline in the status of this harrier, and, if the position is beginning to look slightly more hopeful, this is partly due, as we commented last year, to the willingness of farmers to reschedule their harvesting routines.

This measurement of change, be it long-term or short-term, swift or slow, is an important function of the Panel, and the speed of change, like the advance of a cold front, or the growth of inflation, can exceed expectation. Just one year ago, we wrote of the Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* 'If the present trends continue, the population will soon exceed 300 pairs.' 'Soon' in this case was to mean 'next year'—i.e. in 1987! In all such attempts to foresee future trends, one needs a long run of data. In the cases of the Quail *Coturnix coturnix* and of the Corncrake *Crex crex*, both species introduced for the first time in the report for 1986, there is no such long run. Certain it is that the numbers of both these species were much higher in 1987, but in these early days how are we to determine whether 1987 was a bumper year and 1986 'normal', or 1987 normal and 1986 poor? With reports of Corncrakes breeding in two western English counties—a sadly rare event these days—we may perhaps suspect the former to be the case.

The winter of 1986/87 was not, on balance, kindly to the smaller birds. After an unusually mild December, early January produced—to quote *Climate Monitor* (16: 12)—'one of the coldest spells on record in many areas . . . By 12th Central England Temperature had dropped to -7.6°C , making it the coldest day since 1945.' Perhaps one need seek no further to account for the continued low fortunes of the easterly populations of our two rare wintering warblers, Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* and Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*. The former was reported to be extinct in Cambridgeshire and Essex and, more surprisingly, for it was once a major stronghold, even in Kent. The Surrey centres of the Dartford Warbler all had lower numbers to report. In contrast, the westerly populations of both warblers were judged by many observers to be little changed. Two successive very mild winters since then may, in due course, be found to have done something to permit a recovery in the east.

The species dealt with by the Panel fall naturally into two categories: the 'regulars', which may be relied upon to nest annually, or almost so, and the 'irregulars', with a habit of making occasional summer forays to brave our sometimes inhospitable climate. So far, this introduction has been devoted solely to the regulars, and it is clear that many of them fared

reasonably safely or even prospered in 1987. Not so the occasionals, the fortunes of which were very uneven. There was no suggestion of breeding by Bluethroats *Luscinia svecica* or Scarlet Rosefinches *Carpodacus erythrinus*, let alone by Shore Larks *Eremophila alpestris* and Lapland Buntings *Calcarius lapponicus* which, a decade ago, it was tempting to regard as regulars. Yet the picture was not entirely one of absences, for there was the first attempted breeding by Little Gulls *Larus minutus* since 1978, unhappily ending in failure, and the first successful breeding by Black-winged Stilts *Himantopus himantopus* since 1945, although a pair did lay eggs in Cambridgeshire in 1983.

This report is being finalised for the printers in April 1989. The rare breeding bird events of 1988 are already history, although the Panel has as yet received data from only one-tenth of recorders. Furthermore, at this very moment, pairs of rare birds are settling themselves into their breeding territories, whilst by the time that you—the reader—see these pages another entire breeding season will have run its course. How good it would be, and how singularly useful to the NCC and the RSPB, if the entire process of passing data from observers to recorders, and from recorders to the Panel, could somehow be shortened so that the information, at least in provisional form, was available to them in time to use before the next breeding season. The starting point must lie with the observers, who could surely report their breeding-season findings by—say—October.

The Panel

The membership of the Panel remained unchanged in 1987: 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 with a specialised knowledge of the interests and requirements of the sponsoring bodies.

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)

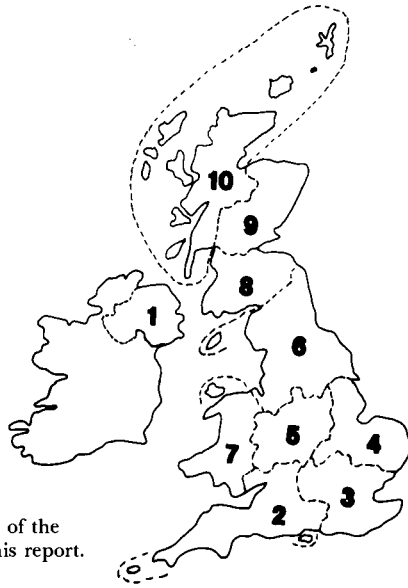


Fig. 1 Geographical regions of the United Kingdom used in this report.

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)

Systematic list

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Two localities: probably one individual.

Scotland, Mid Two localities: (1) one on 22nd July; (2) one on 5th August; the two lochs concerned are about 20 km apart, so records presumed to relate to the same individual.

The circumstances suggest that this was a non-breeding subadult.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Ten localities: one pair and at least seven other individuals.

England, S & E Five localities: (1) adult present all summer, with two in August, accompanied by a very young juvenile, thought probable that they could have bred in the area; (2) one on adjacent waters on 22nd March, 9th April, from 6th June to 19th August and during 7th-27th September; (3) one from 7th June to 30th August; (4) one from 29th March to 5th May, and from 19th July to 4th October; (5) one from 15th to 17th April.

England, N Two localities: (1) one on 25th May, very vocal; (2) one on nearby water on 30th May, possibly the same individual.

Scotland Three localities: (1) one on 22nd June; (2) one, presumed to be the same individual, on 6th July; (3) one from 23rd April to 27th May, at site where pair thought to have attempted nesting in 1986.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. localities	2	0	1	3	3	2	2	1	1	5	10
No. individuals	2	0	1	4	2	2	3	1	4	5	9
No. pairs	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1

Although the presence of a 'very young' juvenile in August might not be thought to constitute absolute proof of breeding in the UK, there can be little doubt that there is an increasing summer presence of this lovely grebe.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

35 localities: 60-70 pairs breeding.

Scotland, S Three localities: (1)-(3) probably one individual moving between three waters, and thought to be the bird which summered in 1986.

Scotland, Mid Two localities: (1) one on 11th April and pair on 15th April; (2) one in June.

Scotland, N & W 30 localities: (1)-(30) combined total of 60 pairs monitored, of which 57 pairs were judged to have attempted breeding, with a minimum of 46 young known.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. localities	15	18	27	36	35	25	44	26	40	43	35
Confirmed (pairs)	42	37	58	53	52	51	41	39	63	68	60
Possible (pairs)	9	18	19	27	19	8	38	21	18	19	10
Max. total (pairs)	51	55	77	80	71	59	79	60	81	87	70

It is possible that several waters were either not reported on or not visited, and so the totals above suggest that no change has taken place. The numbers of young reported were encouragingly high.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

16 localities: 26-36 pairs breeding.

England, SW, SE, E & Central Six localities: (1) adult with two young from 26th July to 4th August, the juveniles lingering until 14th August; (2) maximum of five in spring, including a displaying pair, and a pair feeding one young in early August; (3) one, in breeding plumage, on 3rd and 24th April, 6th and 14th May and 27th June; (4) pair on 20th April; (5) pair on 23rd April (probably the pair from locality 4) and one from 30th April to 14th May; (6) three from 7th May to 5th August.

England, N Two localities: (1) three adults from 10th May to 22nd August, two young reared, and presence of a third, much younger, juvenile indicated the possibility of a bigamous male; (2) 13 pairs reared 25-26 young.

Scotland, S & Mid Eight localities: (1) one on inland water from 21st to 23rd June; (2) pair made two breeding attempts, the first brood being eaten by a pike *Esox lucius*, and the second brood, of two, did not survive beyond about one week; (3) two pairs, each with two well-grown young in August, and a third pair present; (4) two pairs displaying on 15th May, reducing to two individuals on 1st June and to singles on 12th and 19th June; (5) two adults and two fledged young on 23rd July; (6) two on 24th April and one on 7th June; (7) 14 on 24th April, two pairs with three young on 2nd June, seven pairs, five with broods of two, one with a single chick, and one large, unattached juvenile, all on 14th July; (8) six on 27th April and one juvenile on 23rd July.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. localities	7	6	6	9	7	13	19	17	17	15	16
Confirmed (pairs)	11	13	12	11	5	11	11	17	9	11	26
Possible (pairs)	5	2	2	10	7	12	21	13	13	22	10
Max. total (pairs)	16	15	14	21	12	23	32	30	22	33	36

The best year for this species since the Panel started collecting data, with breeding widely distributed.

Black-browed Albatross *Diomedea melanophris*

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

Scotland, N & W One locality.

SHETLAND One locality: adult in gannetry at Hermaness, Unst, from 16th February to 2nd July.

An early arrival and a very early departure.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

12 localities: 22 or 23 booming males.

England, E 11 localities: (1) two boomers, and a young bird found starving; (2)-(7) one booming regularly at each locality; (8)(9) three booming at each in spring; (10)(11) single boomers.

England, N One locality: six or seven boomers.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. localities	18	17	21	19	16	15	18	18	15	12	12
Confirmed (pairs)	0	2	1	4	1	1	0	5	0	0	1
Booming males	43	47	51	48	47	35	44	36	28	23	22

The population has halved in a decade. One must hope that the mild winters 1987/88 and 1988/89 will have done something to halt the decline.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Seven localities: two feral pairs, four wild pairs.

Scotland, Mid One locality.

DUNBARTONSHIRE One locality: two feral pairs, one of which reared four young.

Scotland, N & W Six localities: (1) one on 8th-10th June; (2) pair from 10th June to 20th July; (3) two pairs on 11th-13th June; (4) one all summer; (5) pair on 16th June; (6) one on 29th June and 7th July.

More pairs in June than usual, some individuals possibly originating in Dunbartonshire.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

15 localities: 7-20 pairs breeding.

England, SW Two localities.

DORSET Two localities: (1)(2) summering male, moving between two localities, and joined by a female at least once; possibly of feral origin.

England, E Five localities.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE Two localities: (1) three pairs in early April, reducing to one pair by 16th April and not seen thereafter; (2) singles throughout the summer and one eggshell found.

SUFFOLK Three localities: (1) pair probably bred; (2)(3) singles on single dates.

England, N Two localities.

CHESHIRE Two localities: (1) individuals from March to June, but no evidence of nesting; (2) pair until late April, but no evidence of nesting.

Scotland, N & W Seven localities.

ARGYLL One locality: female with young on 19th June.

ORKNEY Six localities: (1) five or possibly six pairs bred, females seen with broods of one, four and five; (2) pair in April and May, and female in June, probably bred; (3) pair in April and female in June, probably bred; (4) pair with three young on 5th June; (5) pair in May, thought to have bred; (6) agitated female on 5th June, probably bred.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. localities	15	10	19	15	16	18	23	15	15	13	15
Confirmed (pairs)	10	7	10	9	8	7	12	5	9	6	7
Possible (pairs)	16	16	31	16	23	25	20	13	10	11	13
Max. total (pairs)	26	23	41	25	31	32	32	18	19	17	20

There has been little change in the population level for several years.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

36 localities: 8-45 pairs breeding.

England, SW Five localities: 1-6 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Avon	1	1	0	1	2
Devon	4	0	3	1	4

England, SE Seven localities: 2-7 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Buckinghamshire	1	0	0	1	1
Hertfordshire	1	1	0	0	1
Kent	3	0	0	3	3
Sussex	2	1	1	0	2

England, E 23 localities: 5-31 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Cambridgeshire	2	4	6	0	10
Lincolnshire	1	1	0	0	1
Norfolk	17	0	2	15	17
Northamptonshire	2	0	0	2	2
Suffolk	1	0	1	0	1

England, N One locality: 0-1 pair breeding.

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

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. localities	34	48	66	59	46	32	42	36
Confirmed (pairs)	4	8	10	15	4	4	8	8
Possible (pairs)	50	50	84	55	53	36	47	37
Max. total (pairs)	54	58	94	70	57	40	55	45

Except in the two peak years, the population seems to be consistently between 40 and 60 pairs.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

62 localities: 87-117 pairs breeding.

England, SW Seven localities: 19-20 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Dorset	2	1	1	0	2
Hampshire	3	13	0	0	13
Wiltshire	2	5	0	0	5

England, SE 24 localities: 60-86 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Buckinghamshire	2	4	0	0	4
Kent	5	9	24	0	33
Essex	2	8	1	0	9
Hertfordshire	6	9	0	0	9
London/Middlesex/ Surrey	9	30	0	1	31

England, E Ten localities: 16-19 pairs breeding, 51 young reported.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Huntingdonshire	1	1	0	0	1
Lincolnshire	4	6	2	1	9
Northamptonshire	1	1	0	0	1
Suffolk	4	8	0	0	8

England, Central Six localities: 2-7 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Shropshire	6	2	0	5	7

England, N Eight localities: 24-26 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Cheshire	3	10	1	1	12
Cleveland	1	1	0	0	1
Lancashire	2	6	0	0	6
Northumberland	2	7	0	0	7

Wales Two localities: 3-6 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Carmarthen/Dyfed	1	0	3	0	3
West Glamorgan	1	3	0	0	3

Scotland Five localities: 5-9 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Borders	4	3	0	4	7
Grampian	1	2	0	0	2

The totals are very similar to those recorded in 1986—the first year in which the Pochard featured in the Panel's reports. A paper by Dr Tony Fox reviewing the Pochard breeding population will be published shortly.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Three localities: 0-3 pairs breeding.

Scotland, Mid One locality.

PERTSHIRE One locality: a male trying to associate with a female Tufted Duck *A. fuligula* on 15th May.

Scotland, N & W Two confidential localities: (1) two pairs on 26th April; (2) 8-10 individuals on 8th May.

This species has shown no signs of emulating the Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Ten localities: 27-46 pairs breeding.

Northern Ireland One locality.

CO. FERMANAGH One locality: ten pairs, with minimum total of four broods reared.

Scotland, Mid Two localities.

DUNBARTONSHIRE/STIRLINGSHIRE One locality: pair and two additional males.

PERTSHIRE One locality: three males and two females on 11th June, female with six downy young, and four separate females on 4th July, female with four downy young on 11th July (perhaps a different brood).

Scotland, N & W Seven localities.

CAITHNESS Three localities: (1) three males on 5th June, five males and two females on 12th July, three females on 15th August; (2) pair on 29th May; (3) female on 28th June.

INVERNESS-SHIRE Three localities: (1)-(3) total of 16-21 pairs.

ROSS-SHIRE One locality: two broods of four and possible third pair.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. localities	13	9	17	10	6	17	6	9	25	35	10
Confirmed (pairs)	24	16	98	7	5	14	10	17	2	8	27
Possible (pairs)	137	125	30	106	77	98	75	52	72	92	19
Max. total (pairs)	156	141	128	113	82	112	85	69	74	100	46

Part of the dramatic reduction of numbers in 1987 was probably due to fewer breeding waters being visited, but at least in Northern Ireland there is clear evidence of a long-term decline. The species has nevertheless been reported in midsummer from inland waters in northern England and southern Scotland.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

16 localities: 80-96 pairs breeding.

England, N Eight localities.

COUNTY CONFIDENTIAL Two localities: (1) two males and one female until 8th June, one male remaining until 11th July, and seen with a female on 9th July; (2) two adult and one immature males with one female until 31st May.

CUMBRIA Six localities: (1) two pairs in May and June; (2) immature on 9th June; (3) pair at a river site on 15th June; (4) female on a tarn on 27th July; (5) female on 17th July; (6) immature during 2nd-5th July.

Scotland, S Four localities.

BORDERS Four localities: (1) immature male on 21st May and adult male on 22nd July; (2) female to 30th June and possibly the same female on 19th August; (3) two females on 27th June; (4) female on 13th June.

Scotland, Mid Three localities.

LOTHIAN Two localities: (1) five arrived on 20th June and summered; (2) immature male from 5th June to 1st July.

PERTSHIRE One locality: two females on 29th May.

Scotland, N & W One extended locality. Of 80 nests, 48 contained incubated eggs, and at least 332 ducklings hatched from the 37 successful clutches.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Confirmed (pairs)	6	12	22	26	29	27	47	53	67	77	80
Young hatched	11	40	110	165	286	220	209	311	336	390	332

With so many young hatching each year, it must be only a matter of time before there is a marked extension of the current breeding range. The Panel is indebted to Roy Dennis and his RSPB colleagues for the detailed information about breeding success in Highland Scotland.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

Seven localities: 1-7 pairs breeding.

Great Britain Seven localities: (1) pair reared one young, and a sub-adult also present nearby; (2) several sightings during May-July; (3) one displaying on 2nd May and seen again on 25th August; (4) one on 7th August; (5) seen on five dates between 31st May and 5th September, with pair in wing-clapping display on 30th August, in area frequented in 1985 and 1986; (6) one displaying at a regular site on 16th June; (7) one on 4th July.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Confirmed (pairs)	2	1	2	3	2	2	3	2	1	1	1
Max. total (pairs)	8	9	4	5	9	3	5	2	4	6	7

This species can live unobtrusively, and is probably under-recorded. It is certainly under-reported, and the Panel members hope that those observers withholding information on the grounds of security will now feel able to forward their data.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

57 pairs, of which 43 pairs laid eggs and fledged 39 young.

England, Central Two localities: (1) one for four weeks up to 5th April; (2) one on 26th July.

Wales 57 localities: (1)-(57) total of 57 pairs known, of which 50 built nests and 43 laid eggs. Of these, 27 pairs reared a total of 39 young to fledging from 16 broods of 1, ten broods of 2, and one brood of 3. An uncommonly high proportion of the juveniles survived and remained in Wales. Failures included two robberies, three clutches which failed to hatch after full-term incubation, one nest blown down, and three desertions, one of them due to human recreational activities. One chick choked to death on a ball of wool. The remainder were losses of eggs or young from unknown causes.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Total pairs	34	39	42	42	46	47	46	46	54	57	57
Breeding pairs	28	32	30	29	32	38	33	33	43	39	50
Successful pairs	12	13	14	21	18	19	20	13	19	23	27
Young reared	17	22	18	27	21	23	24	21	25	29	39

The best year for many decades. The Panel is very grateful to Peter Davis of the NCC for this detailed account of developments in Wales.

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Re-introduction: six pairs nested.

Scotland Six pairs nested, two of them successfully, rearing broods of one and two respectively.

Slow, steady, pleasing progress.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

45 nests: 122-125 young reared.

Great Britain As the population continues to increase, breeding numbers and results for this species become more and more difficult to monitor each year. Of 45 known breeding attempts, six failed due to: flooding (2), disturbance by reed-cutters (1), predation (1), deliberate destruction (1) and removal of eggs by a collector (1). Mean fledged young per attempt was 2.7, and for successful nests 3.1. Thirty-one per cent of all nests were occupied by females mated to bigamous males. A further 20 individuals summered, of which 12 were paired, and three of these pairs may have bred and failed.

	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Breeding males	14	11	16	17	19	21	27	28	26	39
Breeding females	14	16	20	20	24	28	32	31	32	45
Fledged young	36	38	44	48	59	71	66	86	82	122
Mean fledged young	2.6	2.4	2.2	2.0	2.5	2.5	2.4	3.0	2.5	2.7

Over the last ten years, the mean annual breeding population increase has been 12.8%, rising to 33.3% during 1986-87. This has been a remarkable recovery by a species on the edge of extinction in Britain, with just one breeding pair (at Minsmere) only 16 years ago, in 1971.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

Six nests: 13 young reared.

Great Britain The population of this species remains low, although productivity returned to normal after last year's poor results. Five nests, four in cereal crops and one in rough grass

and reeds, were successful, with broods of 2, 4 and 4 young reared by pairs, and of 2 and 3 young reared from two nests by females paired to the same male. The unsuccessful nest, in long grass, was probably robbed by a predator.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. localities	2	7	4	8	8	7	8	2	8	6	10
Confirmed (pairs)	1	2	2	2	2	3	6	1	3	7	6
Possible (pairs)	1	5	2	6	7	5	4	1	6	3	4
Max. total (pairs)	2	7	4	8	9	8	10	2	9	10	10
Fledged young	0	3	7	4	4	4	9	3	7	13	13

The Panel is grateful to John Day for assembling much detailed information about this and the preceding species, and for preparing the texts.

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

77 localities: 48-87 pairs breeding.

England & Wales 58 localities involving 26 counties: (1)-(58) 41 pairs known to have attempted breeding, rearing about 59 young, with a further seven pairs regarded as 'probables' and 20 as 'possibles'.

Scotland Nineteen localities, involving five regions: (1)-(19) seven pairs said to have bred, with one case of probable breeding and a further 11 'possibles'.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Counties*	15	19	22	21	27	17	19	22	18	30	31
Confirmed (pairs)	15	15	24	17	16	24	34	36	34	54	48
Possible (pairs)	22	26	21	32	36	19	27	42	39	59	39
Max. total (pairs)	37	41	45	49	52	43	61	78	73	113	87

*Regions in Scotland.

Of all the raptors monitored by the Panel, the Goshawk is the most persecuted, and a direct result of this is that some observers are reluctant to supply data to the Panel. Whilst entirely sympathising with the concern over persecution, it is the Panel's opinion that its report, couched in such general terms, cannot in any way endanger the welfare of the species. Despite the acknowledged persecution, which is relentless in some counties, the species is beginning to prosper.

Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*

One locality: one individual.

England, E One locality.

SUFFOLK One locality: one in suitably afforested country between 22nd and 26th June.

The only previous entry in the Panel's files referred to spring 1975.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

51 known pairs: 30 pairs fledged 56 young.

Scotland Of the 51 pairs traced, 44 are known to have laid eggs, 30 pairs hatched eggs and reared young. The mean brood size was 1.87 young, and productivity was only 1.12 per occupied nest, which is the lowest since 1978. Ten pairs failed, mainly in late May and June, during very bad weather, four nests were robbed, and two pairs were disturbed by illegal bird-photography. One pair summered to the south of the central lowlands of Scotland.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Pairs	20	22	25	25	25	30	30	31	34	42	51
Successful pairs	7	11	16	19	20	21	20	21	22	24	30
Young reared	13	19	30	41	42	45	45	47	53	48	56

The Panel members are grateful to Roy Dennis and his RSPB colleagues for yet another admirably detailed report. The best year for many decades and, since Ospreys do not normally breed until they are three years old, there are grounds for believing that the process of recolonisation will gather momentum.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

262 localities: 107-266 pairs breeding.

England, SW 62-124 pairs breeding, 89 young known.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Avon	3	3	0	0	3
Devon	5	6	0	0	6
Dorset	28	16	12	0	28
Gloucestershire	3	2	0	2	4
Hampshire	52	25	0	27	52
Somerset	9	3	2	5	10
Wiltshire	20	7	5	9	21

England, SE 22-81 pairs breeding, 36 young known.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Bedfordshire	2	1	1	0	2
Buckinghamshire	8	4	4	0	8
Essex	4	1	2	1	4
Hertfordshire	42	2	6	34	42
Kent	4	3	0	1	4
Middlesex	3	3	0	0	3
Surrey	13	7	6	0	13
Sussex	5	1	4	0	5

England, E 18-41 pairs breeding, 23 young known.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Cambridgeshire	9	7	0	2	9
Huntingdonshire	5	2	3	0	5
Lincolnshire/South Humberside	2	1	1	0	2
Norfolk	2	2	0	0	2
Northamptonshire	15	6	5	4	15
Suffolk	8	0	6	2	8

England, Central 3-12 pairs breeding, five young known.

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

England, N Probably only one individual, but displaying for six weeks.

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

Wales 2-7 pairs breeding, five young known.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Gwent	6	2	2	2	6
Montgomeryshire	1	0	1	0	1

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Confirmed (pairs)	51	70	80	64	51	97	80	93	98	91	107
Possible (pairs)	68	86	52	91	109	105	182	116	148	202	159
Max. total (pairs)	119	156	132	155	160	202	262	209	246	293	266
Young reared (minimum)	78	96	72	86	89	63	104	91	117	126	158

There remain inconsistencies between counties regarding the reporting of casual records, the recorders for some counties reporting every sighting of a bird in a suitable habitat, in that it is technically a 'possible', whereas other recorders select what they submit to the Panel. It is unlikely, therefore, that the figures presented exaggerate the true situation.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

147 localities: 1-241 pairs breeding.

England, SW 57 localities: 0-83 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable/possible	Maximum total
Devon	10	0	6	6
Dorset	16	0	16	16
Hampshire	11	0	16	16
Somerset	8	0	12	12
Wiltshire	12	0	33	33

England, SE 34 localities: 0-70 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable/possible	Maximum total
Buckinghamshire	2	0	2	2
Essex	5	0	6	6
Hertfordshire	6	0	8	8
Kent	7	0	22	22
Sussex	14	0	32	32

England, E 28 localities: 0-50 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable/possible	Maximum total
Cambridgeshire	4	0	7	7
Lincolnshire/South Humberside	5	0	12	12
Northamptonshire	6	0	6	6
Suffolk	13	0	25	25

England, Central 20 localities: 1-27 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable/possible	Maximum total
Derbyshire	6	0	8	8
Leicestershire	1	0	1	1
Shropshire	5	0	9	9
Warwickshire	3	1	2	3
Worcestershire	5	0	6	6

England, N Seven localities: 0-10 pairs breeding.

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

Scotland, S One locality: one individual.

BORDERS One present throughout June.

The year 1987 was only the second for which the Panel collated information about Quail numbers, so some of the increase (the numbers more than doubled compared with 1986) could be due to better reporting. Even allowing for that, the evidence points to 1987 being 'a Quail year'.

Spotted Crane *Porzana porzana*

Seven localities: 2-20 pairs breeding.

England, SE Two localities: (1) one singing on 25th June; (2) one singing on 14th and 25th August.

England, E Four localities: (1) up to three singing in late May, silent in June, and juveniles seen in two areas in September; (2) singing from 24th April to 6th May, with two singing on 29th April, thought possible that breeding was attempted; (3) five singing from early May to late June; (4) one singing on 16th June.

Scotland One locality.

INVERNESS-SHIRE One locality: present from 26th May to 6th July, with five to seven singing.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Counties	3	6	2	1	3	1	3	3	2	3	4
No. localities	4	6	4	3	4	2	6	4	2	3	7
No. singing	7	6	8	4	9	3	12	10	3	4	18

The best year on record for this species, but as yet there is no understanding of what factors regulate the numbers present each year.

Corncrake *Crex crex*

18 localities: 2-24 pairs breeding.

England, S One locality: 1 pair breeding.

DEVON One locality: singing from 24th May, three juveniles with adult about first week of July.

England, E One locality: 0-1 pair breeding.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE One locality: one singing from 13th to 15th May and one flushed from another area on 11th August.

England, N Five localities: 1-8 pairs breeding.

CHESHIRE One locality: female in mid May and male on 1st June, both evidently road casualties.

CUMBRIA One locality: adult with four juveniles from 15th to 18th July.

ISLE OF MAN Two localities: (1) one on 25th May; (2) two singing simultaneously on 27th June.

COUNTY NAME WITHHELD One locality: three pairs probably bred.

Scotland 11 localities: 0-14 pairs breeding.

BORDERS One locality: one singing on 5th and 6th June.

INVERNESS-SHIRE One locality: adult caught by ringer.

CAITHNESS Seven localities: (1) one singing from 5th to 28th June; (2) one singing from 13th to 23rd June; (3) one singing on 5th and 9th June; (4)-(6) singles singing on single dates between 28th May and 26th June; (7) two singing on 7th June.

SHETLAND Two localities: (1) three singing on 23rd June and one on 24th June; (2) one singing on 9th July.

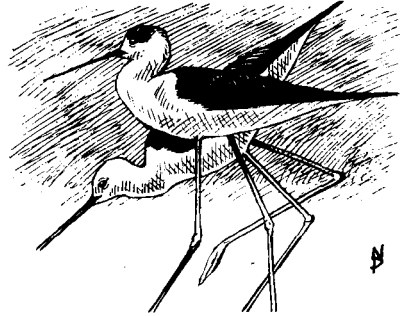
This remarkable series of records suggests that Corncrakes reached Britain in larger numbers than for several years. This was only the second year in which the Panel had compiled data, and we do not yet know whether this is a species whose numbers can fluctuate considerably from year to year.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

One locality: one pair breeding.

England, E One locality.

NORFOLK One locality: pair arrived at Holme on 17th May and laid the first egg only four days later. Three young hatched and two fledged. The adults departed on 18th August and the juveniles on 31st August; the latter were at Belvide Reservoir, Staffordshire, from 1st to 7th September.



The only previous instance of successful breeding in the UK was in Nottinghamshire in 1945, but a pair which laid eggs in Cambridgeshire in 1983 was robbed, probably by a fox *Vulpes vulpes* (*Brit. Birds* 79: 69). The 1987 breeding is described in detail in the *Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report 1987*.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

18 localities: 341-342 pairs reared at least 315 young.

England, S & E 18 localities: at Havergate, 109 pairs bred, but only eight young were reared; in contrast, 64 pairs at Minsmere reared 94 young, and it was a good breeding season at many colonies.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. localities	6	3	3	5	5	9	9	11	14	15	18
Confirmed (pairs)	146	145	147	168	201	190	238	237	269	255	341
Young reared (minima)	14	92	99	101	155	150	192	118	245	227	315

A great leap forward in the affairs of the species, with some of the additional pairs founding new colonies and others finding room in existing communities. If further new colonies become established, the Panel is confident that observers will accord them the same freedom from disturbance which has made possible the rapid build-up of numbers.

Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*

Nine counties: 137 pairs laid a total of 178 clutches, of which 24 are known to have hatched young.

England, SW Three counties: 30 pairs laid 44 clutches.

England, SE Three counties: nine pairs laid 11 clutches.

England, E Three counties: 98 pairs laid 123 clutches.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Confirmed (pairs)	4	20	34	8	10	8	20	19	68	103	137
Possible (pairs)	23	14	47	37	43	59	76	52	47	12	0
Max. total (pairs)	27	34	81	45	53	67	96	71	115	115	137

The figures are based on extensive work by an RSPB team led by Dr R. E. Green, to whom grateful acknowledgment is made. The yearly totals give the impression of a growing population, but the reverse is, alas, true, and the higher numbers recorded in recent years reflect the thoroughness of the survey work.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Census revealed 613 individuals in May; probably 520 breeding pairs.



Great Britain The most comprehensive survey of Dotterels so far undertaken was coordinated by the NCC: 71 observers took part, covering 175 mountains, totalling 190 km². A total of 613 individuals was seen in May, and breeding was proved in 57 10-km squares. An estimate of at least 520 pairs breeding in Britain was made by extrapolating from the density of numbers of pairs observed in the area covered to the number likely to be present in the total area suitable for the species. Only one breeding pair was found in England; and a single individual was seen in Wales on likely habitat in mid summer, but there was no evidence of breeding. A detailed report on the 1987 and 1988 results is being prepared by the organisers for publication in due course.

The Panel is most grateful to Dr Des Thompson for preparing this summary.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

One locality: 4-5 pairs breeding.

Scotland, N & W One locality: four pairs proved to have bred and fifth possibly did so; nine young ringed.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. localities	3	3	4	5	1	3	1	1	2	2	1
Confirmed (pairs)	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	4
Possible (pairs)	5	5	4	5	1	2	2	1	2	2	1
Max. total (pairs)	5	6	6	6	1	3	2	1	2	3	5

An important year, with at least four pairs breeding and possibly a fifth. No report was received for two localities which normally have the species present in the breeding season, possibly because they were not visited by observers in 1987.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

One locality: 3 pairs breeding.

Scotland, N & W One locality: three pairs, one with an unknown clutch size, one with a clutch of 3 and one with a brood of 3.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. localities	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1
Confirmed (pairs)	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	3
Possible (pairs)	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	1	0
Max. total (pairs)	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	3	2	3

The best year to date, with three breeding pairs.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

15 localities: at least one pair attempted breeding.

England, SE Six localities: (1) 11 males lekking until late May; (2) four males displaying; (3) up to five until mid May, with a female on 27th June; (4) 57 on 12th April, five of them lekking; (5) 47 on 4th May; (6) two, probably late migrants, on 25th April.

England, E Three localities: (1) lekking by presumed migrants to mid April, later 13 males and 14 females seen at lek, but only seven females regularly, no females between 18th May and 13th June: suggestive of breeding; (2) up to six leks reported, with a total population on 7th May of 99 males and 56 females, but no evidence of breeding; (3) two males and two females displaying on 2nd June.

England, N Five localities: (1) one or two males displaying to several females at a locality frequented in 1986; (2) one or two on five dates in May and two dates in June, with a black-headed male displaying to a female on the very late date of 30th July; (3) three males and three females, lekking in May and still present in early June; (4) two males and up to 18 females in late April, lekking and copulation observed; (5) nest with four eggs on 4th June, deserted during second half of the month.

Scotland, N & W One locality: male on 5th June.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. localities	6	4	12	10	10	13	8	6	8	7	15
Nests	0	0	3	3	0	1	2	0	0	1	1
Max. no. females possibly nesting	16	4	22	13	13	23	32	6	8	9	68

An under-performer, in stock-market terms, which never seems to live up to its potential in Britain. Or is the female unusually good at concealing her domestic life?

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

13 localities: 28-40 pairs breeding.

England, SW Two localities.

SOMERSET Two localities: (1) one displaying on 26th April; (2) nest and eggs found, but later destroyed, probably by a mammal.

England, SE Two localities: (1) three pairs attempted breeding, but all failed; (2) pair at a known breeding site from 24th May to 6th June, no evidence of breeding.

England, E Five localities: 23-30 pairs breeding.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE Two localities: (1) ten pairs, with four clutches of 4 eggs between 16th and 25th April, at least six fledged from the 13 eggs known to have hatched; (2) seven or more pairs bred, five known to have been successful and at least 15 young fledged.

NORFOLK One locality: five pairs attempted breeding, but, due to adverse weather, reared only one young to flying stage.

ELSEWHERE Two localities: (1) pair displayed in May, but moved away because of farming activities; (2) four pairs probably bred.

England, N One locality.

CHESHIRE One locality: six records during May, including pair displaying on 4th.

Scotland, Mid Two localities: (1) pair displaying in May; (2) pair on 8th June; single seen about 1½ km distant could have been one of the pair.

Scotland, N & W One locality.

SHEPHERD One locality: pair of Icelandic race *L. l. islandica* reared two young; said to be the only pair of this race breeding in Britain.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. localities	11	13	13	11	5	13	10	12	11	19	13
Confirmed (pairs)	37	50	39	52	22	38	32	55	22	23	28
Possible (pairs)	33	18	25	25	4	31	12	25	17	24	12
Max. total (pairs)	70	68	64	77	26	69	44	80	39	47	40

Few amongst our established rarer breeding species show such a tendency to annual fluctuations in numbers.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Three localities: 2-4 pairs breeding.

Scotland, N & W Three localities: (1) pair bred, and possibly a second pair; (2) pair with young on 26th June; (3) pair displaying on 21st June.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. localities	4	7	3	4	1	4	3	4	3	2	3
Confirmed (pairs)	2	4	2	7	1	3	1	4	2	2	2
Possible (pairs)	3	6	2	5	0	3	4	1	1	1	2
Max. total (pairs)	5	10	4	12	1	6	5	5	3	3	4

There are grounds for thinking that this species sometimes goes undetected (or unreported) and that individuals may have been present at a fourth site. In the absence of more precise information, it seems preferable to report known minima.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

Seven localities: 12-17 pairs breeding.

Scotland, N & W Seven localities: (1) two males with two females on 16th June; (2)-(5) 12 or 13 pairs bred and 12 broods located, with the first one fledging on 12th July; (6)(7) pair at each site, said to have bred, but no details supplied.

If anything, a slightly better result than in 1986, but still giving little cause for optimism.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Three localities in three counties: 1-3 pairs breeding.

England, SE One locality.

KENT One locality: three eggs laid, two hatched, but believed that neither young fledged.

England, E One locality.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE One locality: pair in full adult plumage displaying on the edge of a colony of Black-headed Gulls *Larus ridibundus* on 5th April and at least one present on 11th April, but no evidence of breeding.

Scotland, N One locality: one in May.

Despite the presence of small flocks at some localities, this species is still not showing any real signs of becoming established as a British breeding bird.

Little Gull *Larus minutus*

One locality: one pair.

England, Central One locality: a breeding attempt failed at the egg stage.

The fourth nesting record: single pairs laid eggs on the Ouse Washes in Cambridgeshire/Norfolk in 1975, and at a site in Norfolk and at Fairburn

Ings in North Yorkshire in 1978, but in each case the eggs failed to hatch or were taken by a predator. There has still been no successful breeding in the UK.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

Ten localities: 169-333 pairs nesting.

England, SW Two localities: (1) two pairs bred, possibly a third; (2) one or two present in a ternery.

England, N One locality: 17 pairs bred and there was one non-breeding pair; from nine clutches of 1 and eight clutches of 2, a total of 23 eggs hatched, and 16 young fledged.

Wales Two localities: (1) 21 pairs bred, laying 14 clutches of 1 and seven clutches of 2 eggs, with at least 15 young fledging; (2) about 200 pairs present, but only 40 pairs attempted breeding; of those pairs laying eggs, at least 22 deserted; only seven young were seen, of which only one is known to have fledged.

Scotland Two localities: (1) 20 pairs nested and at least ten had broods, a total of 15 chicks being found for ringing; (2) two pairs reared two chicks between them.

Northern Ireland Three localities: (1)-(3) a total of 67 pairs attempted breeding, but no data regarding breeding success.

This is our rarest and most vulnerable seabird, and the Panel would appreciate any records suggestive of breeding. Observers may assume that major colonies will be fully monitored.

Snowy Owl *Nyctea scandiaca*

One locality: one female.

Scotland, N & W One locality.

SHETLAND One locality: of two females early in the year, one remained throughout May and June and laid a clutch of unfertilised eggs.

No male has been present to accompany the females since 1975. If birds experience loneliness, only the Black-browed Albatross in a Shetland gannetry may be as lonely as this female Snowy Owl.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Five localities: 1-5 pairs breeding.

England, SE One locality.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE One locality: a pair said to have bred in a private garden, in 1985, 1986 and 1987. (No evidence of breeding in 1988, but the presence of at least one Wryneck was confirmed by an independent observer.)

England, E Three localities.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE Three localities: (1)-(3) singles on 26th April, 7th May and 19th May, respectively.

Scotland, N & W One locality: one singing and seen on 21st June, in habitat suitable for breeding.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. localities	17	22	7	11	2	9	14	9	9	9	5
Confirmed (pairs)	7	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Possible (pairs)	12	19	8	13	2	10	15	10	8	8	4
Max. total (pairs)	19	23	9	14	2	10	15	10	9	9	5

The interlude in Buckinghamshire does nothing to alter the impression that this is a species in terminal decline.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

109 localities: 28-193 pairs breeding.

England, SW 24 localities: 0-78 pairs breeding.

CORNWALL Three localities: (1)-(3) total of four singing, March to June.

DEVON Eight localities: (1)-(8) four singing in April and May were thought to represent probable breeding pairs; three others were present and singing for shorter periods.

DORSET Ten localities: (1)-(10) thought that 11 pairs probably bred and that three others possibly did so; no details available.

HAMPSHIRE Three broad localities: (1) 16 pairs or singing males, but coverage partial; (2) 36 pairs or singing males; (3) one pair or singing male.

England, SE Nine localities: 25-38 pairs breeding.

SURREY Seven localities: (1)-(7) total of 24 pairs proved to have bred, with a further nine probable and three possible pairs. (The position is confused because data from two separate sources have been received, and it would appear, in the absence of map references, that different names may be used for the same locality.)

SUSSEX Two localities: (1) pair from 8th February, carrying food on 20th July, but no young seen, four present on 9th August, three remaining into October; (2) one singing from 17th April, with pair on 5th May, but not after 9th.

England, E 74 localities: 2-75 pairs breeding.

COUNTY NOT NAMED About 50 sites in two broad localities: (1) 26 pairs or singing males; (2) 24 pairs or singing males.

LINCOLNSHIRE One locality: two pairs and single male; one pair reared three young, but the other failed.

NORFOLK Several localities: 23 pairs or singing males, all of them in clear-felled forest and none on open heathland.

England, Central One locality: pair fledged three young on 1st July.

Wales One locality.

GWENT One locality: one at clear-felled forestry site from 7th to 14th May.

The influence of forestry operations on this species—adverse after the early stages of planting and beneficial at the clear-felling stage—is becoming increasingly apparent. Once again, the Panel is indebted to Chris Bowden for very detailed information on productivity of 22 pairs.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

77 localities: 46-109 pairs breeding.

England, SW Three localities: 2-3 pairs breeding.

DEVON One locality: pair displaying on 13th March.

DORSET One locality: pair reared four young, only the third record of successful breeding for the county.

HAMPSHIRE One locality: male singing on 5th April and female carrying food into a farm building on 9th July; an immature male held territory from 13th April to 3rd July.

England, SE 43 localities: 21-56 pairs breeding.

ESSEX Four localities: (1) two singing males, one pair bred successfully; (2) pair bred; (3)(4) single singing males.

KENT 11 localities: (1)-(11) five pairs bred, with a further ten probable and three possible cases of breeding. One pair nested in an open filing cabinet at an abandoned colliery. The recording area of the London Natural History Society extends into Kent (as well as into other Home Counties) and it is hoped that no duplication has crept into the figures.

LONDON/MIDDLESEX 14 localities: (1)-(14) seven pairs bred, with a further ten probable and two possible pairs.

SURREY Eight localities: one brood of 1, one of 2 and three broods of 3 reported, and there were a further three cases of possible breeding.

SUSSEX Six localities: (1) male with a fledged juvenile on 30th May; (2) pair fledged two young; (3) pair; (4)-(6) singing males.

England, E 24 localities: 23-42 pairs breeding.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE One locality: one singing on a number of June days.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE Six localities: (1)-(6) singles singing at each.

LINCOLNSHIRE/SOUTH HUMBERSIDE Five localities: (1) two pairs bred and a third pair probably did so; (2) two pairs fledged young, one double-brooding; (3) pair bred successfully; (4) pair summered, not known to have bred; (5) one singing from 6th to 13th June.

NORFOLK Six localities: (1) two pairs bred; (2)(3) single pairs bred at sugar beet factories; (4)(5) single pairs bred; (6) five singing males.

SUFFOLK Six localities: (1) six pairs reared a minimum combined total of 12 young; (2) pair bred; (3) pair reared three young, and a further two pairs probably bred; (4) one probable and one possible breeding pair; (5) two pairs bred; (6) pair bred.

England, Central One locality: one male.

SHROPSHIRE One locality: one singing in suitable habitat on 4th June.

England, N Six localities.

LANCASHIRE Six localities: (1) one singing from 20th May to June, female occasionally present and three birds on 30th June, at a dock site; (2) one on 16th June, at a dock site; (3) one singing on 22nd April, 7th and 9th June; (4) one singing on 14th July; (5) one singing on 27th June; (6) one at a farm on 28th May.

This species was dropped from the Panel's list after 1976, and not restored until 1985. The numbers involved are possibly the highest ever, and it would seem that the species is well established on the East Coast (as far north as Cleveland in 1986) and is now present on the Lancashire coast.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Seven localities: 1-7 pairs breeding.

England, E One locality.

SUFFOLK One locality: one trapped at a coastal site on 28th June.

England, N One locality.

LANCASHIRE One singing in fell country on 11th June.

Scotland, S Three localities.

BORDERS Three localities: (1) one giving anxiety calls on 26th April; (2) two giving anxiety calls from 25th to 28th April; (3) one calling persistently from 22nd to 31st May and one nearby from 7th to 10th June.

Scotland, Mid One locality.

LOTHIAN One locality: single during 12th-17th July.

Scotland, N & W One locality.

INVERNESS-SHIRE One locality: pair laid two clutches, but both infertile.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. localities	6	3	6	5	6	7	10	4	3	2	7
Confirmed (pairs)	4	1	1	1	0	2	3	0	0	2	1
Possible (pairs)	2	3	5	4	6	5	9	4	3	0	6
Max. total (pairs)	6	4	6	5	6	7	12	4	3	2	7

The summer occurrences were rather more widespread than for several years, but hardly constitute evidence that the process of colonisation has resumed.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

28 localities: 6-37 pairs breeding.

England, E Two localities.

SUFFOLK Two localities: (1) one in suitable breeding habitat on 13th June; (2) one singing on 14th June.

England, N One locality.

CUMBRIA One locality: one on 25th July.

Scotland, Mid One locality.

PERTHSHIRE One locality: one singing, date not supplied to Recorder.

Scotland, N & W 24 localities.

CAITHNESS One locality: one carrying food, date not supplied to Recorder.

INVERNESS-SHIRE One locality: pair carrying food, one adult giving alarm calls suggestive of presence of fledged young.

SHETLAND One locality: one singing on 2nd July, 'definitely did not breed'.

SUTHERLAND 21 localities:(1)-(21) a repeat survey by J. & C. F. Barrett located three breeding pairs, five pairs probably breeding and 21 pairs possibly breeding (most of the 'possible' pairs probably did attempt breeding).

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. localities	10	12	6	18	6	42	65	57	35	32	28
Confirmed (pairs)	2	3	2	7	4	30	17	31	12	20	6
Possible (pairs)	14	14	7	25	7	32	51	47	23	26	31
Max. total (pairs)	16	17	9	32	11	62	68	78	35	46	37

As in 1986, it seems likely that the reduced totals result from reduced fieldwork, especially in the northern counties of Scotland, or else from observers omitting to submit their data.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

74 localities: 31-187 pairs breeding.

England, SW 51 localities: 29-142 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Cornwall	4	1	10	0	11
Devon	8	0	20	8	28
Dorset	12	26	13	0	39
Hampshire	21	0	55	0	55
Isle of Wight	1	0	0	1	1
Somerset	3	1	0	5	6
Wiltshire	2	1	1	0	2

England, SE Two localities: two individuals.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Kent	1	0	0	1	1
Sussex	1	0	0	1	1

England, E 17 localities: 0-28 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
County not named	1	0	1	1	2
Norfolk	16	0	26	0	26

Wales Four localities: 2-15 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Dyfed (Carmarthen)	2	0	3	0	3
Dyfed (Pembroke)	1	2	0	0	2
West Glamorgan	1	0	10	0	10

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. counties	10	14	14	11	16	12	13	13	13	11	14
Confirmed (pairs)	13	30	46	19	56	29	90	78	59	4	31
Possible (pairs)	140	144	117	179	106	173	157	238	190	175	156
Max. total (pairs)	153	174	163	198	162	202	247	316	249	179	187

An erroneous comment in the report for 1986—'note the first presence in south Wales'—prompted several observers to submit data for a sequence of past years. The Panel is indebted to these correspondents. Wales may now hold as much as 8% of the total population and SW England nearly 76%, whilst the components from SE England and Eastern

England are reduced to about 1% and 15% respectively. It will be interesting to learn whether the two consecutive mild winters, 1987/88 and 1988/89, bring about any changes in numbers or distribution.

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*

16 localities: 0-20 pairs breeding.

England, SW Three localities: (1) one singing from 22nd April to 19th May; (2) male on 4th, 13th and 14th June; (3) male on 25th and 26th April.

England, SE One locality: maximum of three males singing between 21st April and 19th May.

England, E Ten localities: (1) two singing between 16th April and end of May; (2) singing males during 23rd-25th April; (3) singing male during 19th-27th May; (4) singing male on 19th and 20th May, and 4th June; (5) one singing on 25th May; (6) one singing on 13th July; (7) one singing on 17th and 18th June; (8) one singing between 31st May and 12th July; (9) two singing between 30th May and 15th June; (10) one singing on 20th May.

England, Central One locality: one singing between 26th April and 23rd May.

Wales One locality: one singing daily during 13th-20th May.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. localities	13	15	15	14	8	11	12	10	12	9	16
Confirmed (pairs)	3	4	6	2	5	0	2	0	1	1	0
Possible (pairs)	23	24	24	27	10	18	15	12	14	11	20
Max. total (pairs)	26	28	30	29	15	18	17	12	15	12	20

There would seem to have been a more widespread arrival than usual, with the species reported from eight counties.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

11 localities: 10-21 pairs breeding.

England, SW One locality.

HAMPSHIRE One locality: one singing from 14th to 21st June.

England, SE Seven localities, in two counties: (1) present from 30th May, with up to three males, and three fledged young seen on 24th August; (2) present from 8th June, a pair reared three young, and second male during 4th-17th July; (3) present from 14th June, five pairs rearing at least 13 young; (4) one singing on 13th and 15th June; (5) two singing from 1st to 21st June, with occasional song into July; (6)(7) singles singing on 16th June and 13th July respectively.

England, Central Two localities: 3-4 pairs breeding.

WORCESTERSHIRE Two localities: (1) three pairs bred, fledging young between 4th and 17th July; (2) one singing from late May to early July.

England, N One locality: one singing for at least four days at the end of June.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. localities	6	15	15	8	3	8	10	12	10	15	9
Confirmed (pairs)	2	4	1	2	0	2	3	4	2	5	7
Possible (pairs)	9	11	22	10	3	7	9	9	9	14	10
Max. total (pairs)	11	15	23	12	3	9	12	13	11	19	17

As usual, the year-table omits figures from the fast-declining Worcestershire population. Fortunately, the recently established population in SE England seems to be increasing slowly, and breeding successfully. The recent history of the Marsh Warbler as a British breeding species has been the subject of a detailed paper (*Brit. Birds* 82: 239-256).

Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*

Eight counties: 8-247 pairs breeding.

England, SW 33 localities.

CORNWALL Two localities: (1) pair present from March to July may have bred; (2) pair on 23rd April. (Also four autumn sightings, of at least three individuals, at a third site, a former breeding stronghold.)

DEVON Two localities: (1) four pairs reared a minimum of four broods; (2) two pairs present.

DORSET 22 localities: (1)-(22) poor cover: 'the majority of reports were of the "present/several pairs" type: the cold early winter thought to have had little effect on the population.'

HAMPSHIRE Six localities, one extensive: (1) two pairs, one rearing four young; (2)-(6) combined total estimated to be about 200 breeding pairs.

ISLE OF WIGHT One locality: one pair fledged four young on 25th July, thought to be a second brood.

England, SE Three localities.

SURREY Two localities: (1) six pairs or singing males, and breeding proved; (2) one singing.

SUSSEX One locality: one singing on 23rd May, but not subsequently.

England, Central One locality.

HEREFORDSHIRE One locality: one singing from 24th May to 1st June.

The Surrey population was even more depleted, but the westerly populations seem still to be secure. There would appear to be parallels with the fortunes of Cetti's Warbler.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*

37 localities: 8-82 pairs breeding.

England, SW 15 localities.

DEVON One locality: juvenile accompanying adult on 28th July.

DORSET Two localities: (1) adult feeding two—perhaps six—fledged young on 29th May; (2) juvenile on 1st August.

HAMPSHIRE Nine localities: (1)-(9) total of 28 pairs or singing males, breeding success apparently poor, with no evidence of breeding at four of the localities.

WILTSHIRE Three localities: (1) one singing on 4th and 16th May, 6th June and 4th July, with two males singing on 9th and 10th May; (2) one, sometimes two, males singing between 3rd June and 7th August, with female on 3rd June; (3) two singing on 6th June and one on 26th June, at site of first proved breeding for the county.

England, SE 14 localities.

BEDFORDSHIRE One locality: one singing on 26th April.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE One locality: 16 territories in 100-ha study area, two broods seen and a female carrying either food or nesting material in another territory.

ESSEX Two localities: (1) one pair bred, with two young present in July, and a second male singing in late May; (2) one singing in late May.

HERTFORDSHIRE Two localities: (1) one singing throughout May; (2) a male displaying to a Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*.

KENT One locality: four singing males on 17th June.

SURREY Four localities: (1) singing male, thought to be probably breeding; (2) three singing males, also thought probably breeding; (3)(4) single singing males.

SUSSEX Three localities: (1) male singing from 1st May to 21st June; (2)(3) single singing males on 11th May and 16th June respectively.

England, E Three localities.

COUNTY NOT NAMED One locality: one caught on 5th April in wood where breeding occurred in 1970s.

SUFFOLK Two localities: (1) pair bred, but nestlings taken by predator; (2) pair and additional male present in suitable habitat during May.

England, Central One locality.

WORCESTERSHIRE One locality: two singing males present during April and May.

Wales Four localities.

GWENT Three localities: (1) pair with four young in August; (2) one singing in May and June; (3) one singing on 26th May.

MONTGOMERYSHIRE One locality: two singing males, dates not submitted.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. localities	12	7	25	30	35	21	75	47	24	19	37
Confirmed (pairs)	2	1	9	7	15	4	6	4	5	1	8
Possible (pairs)	29	10	64	71	87	40	169	78	41	28	74
Max. total (pairs)	31	11	73	78	102	44	175	82	46	29	82

This was a better year for the species, whose numbers are presumably much determined by the strength of the spring migration.



Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

22 localities: 11-31 pairs breeding.

England, SE & E 22 localities: (1) two pairs and two unmated males from 27th April to 3rd September, one pair rearing four young; (2) female on 4th May; (3) pair during the breeding season; (4) possible pair on 16th May; (5)-(8) singing males on dates between 3rd May and 10th June; (9)-(11) single pairs bred; (12) male present from 12th June to 16th July; (13) up to six singing males, but only one pair proved to have bred; (14) pair bred; (15) two singing between 8th May and 2nd June, but no evidence of breeding; (16)-(20) single pairs bred; (21) male on 30th April, male and female on 28th May and female on 11th June; (22) singing male, on 14th June, and possibly a female present.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. localities	16	14	17	17	13	12	14	11	12	13	22
Confirmed (pairs)	6	7	3	2	4	3	2	4	4	5	11
Possible (pairs)	15	21	27	26	22	18	19	14	11	11	20
Max. total (pairs)	21	28	30	28	26	21	21	18	15	16	31

In terms of numbers, the best year since the Panel started collecting data on a national scale. This may reflect a special survey which took place rather than a steady build-up, but, as with so many species, judgment must be suspended until more years' data are available. It was, unfortunately, a poor breeding season.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Ten localities: 2-10 pairs breeding.

England Six localities in five counties: (1) male singing occasionally on 25th May; (2) female on 25th May; (3) male on 30th May; (4) male in suitable breeding habitat on 21st June, not seen subsequently; (5) pair reared four young; (6) pair nested, but eggs taken by predator, probably weasel *Mustela nivalis* or stoat *M. erminea*.

Scotland Four localities: (1)(2) at adjacent localities, one on 14th June, with impaled prey reported, and one on 5th July; (3) male from second week in June, with pair from 14th to about 24th June, a probable female (but possibly an immature) on 9th August; (4) one, sex not reported, on 21st July.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. counties	13	11	10	5	6	2	3	4	7	3	7
Confirmed (pairs)	48	13	14	23	11	5	11	6	6	4	2
Possible (pairs)	16	24	38	8	29	3	1	4	6	2	8
Max. total (pairs)	64	37	52	31	40	8	12	10	12	6	10

Most of the records listed above seem all too likely to relate to migrants, and the true breeding population is now so low that the chances of a male finding a female must be very small indeed.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Three localities: 1-3 pairs breeding.

England, N One locality.

CUMBRIA One locality: pair with four young, in last week of July.

Scotland, N & W Two localities.

SHETLAND One locality: territorial male from 25th June to 8th July.

SUTHERLAND One locality: pair sitting on telegraph wires on 31st May.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. localities	2	2	3	3	1	10	8	10	3	1	3
Confirmed (pairs)	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	1
Possible (pairs)	3	2	3	4	0	8	7	8	3	1	2
Max. total (pairs)	3	2	4	4	1	10	8	9	3	1	3

This was the fourth successive year in which summer Bramblings have been reported from either Cumbria or the Borders.

Serin *Serinus serinus*

Five localities: 0-6 pairs breeding.

England, SW One locality.

DEVON One locality: two males, irregularly, between 30th April and early August, at established breeding site.

England, SE One locality: singing male from 15th to 17th April and female on 1st and 3rd June.

England, E Two localities.

NORFOLK One locality: one singing in June and July.

SUFFOLK One locality: pair present in suitable breeding habitat during 14th-20th June.

Wales One locality.

DYFED (CARMARTHENSHIRE) One locality: pair, with the male singing, on 12th April; said to have been present for two preceding weeks.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
No. localities	0	4	0	1	3	5	7	4	5	2	5
Confirmed (pairs)	0	1	0	0	2	1	2	2	1	0	0
Possible (pairs)	0	3	0	1	4	6	5	3	5	3	6
Max. total (pairs)	0	4	0	1	6	7	7	5	6	3	6

Although there was no known case of breeding, the presence of pairs or, at least, of males and females holds out some promise for the future.

Scarlet Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

One locality: one individual.

England, SW One locality.

ISLES OF SCILLY One locality: one singing from 16th to 19th June.

With five individuals reported in 1986, it seemed then that the process of colonisation was proceeding apace. Perhaps not so!

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

One locality: 5-13 pairs breeding.

Scotland, N & W One locality: five nests found and an estimated five to eight additional pairs probably breeding.

The Panel is glad to receive all records of this species seen in the high mountains between May and August, but please give accurate map references so that possible duplications can be recognised and allowed for.

Girl Bunting *Emberiza cirrus*

Four counties: 12-57 pairs breeding.

England, SW

CORNWALL One locality: up to four, including three males, present, with pair feeding young in late July.

DEVON About 50 localities: (1)-(50) 11 pairs known to have bred, and, although only six more were judged 'probable', it seems likely that most of the pairs attempted breeding.

SOMERSET Two localities: (1) singing males on 28th March, one or two between 17th April and 30th May, and one from 10th to 18th August; (2) one singing on 7th May.

COUNTY NOT NAMED One locality: one seen in suitable habitat on 8th June.

A further small decline, showing up most markedly in Somerset.

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