

## Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 2005

The following updated species accounts reflect additional data and corrections received after publication of the 2005 RBBP report in *British Birds* 101:276-316 (June 2008). This update includes all known amendments as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2008.

Six species are affected: Greater Scaup (additional records from Caithness), Northern Goshawk (revised totals for England and Scotland), Merlin (revised totals for northern England), Hobby (two additional pairs in Devon), Red-backed Shrike (additional male) and Common Crossbill correction for Orkney). Changed figures and new text are highlighted.

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### Greater Scaup *Aythya marila*

Two sites: 0–2 pairs. The last confirmed breeding of this species was in Northern Ireland in 1999. In addition to the single pair in Argyll and the sightings in Caithness, a male summered in Leicestershire & Rutland.

#### Scotland, N & W

**Argyll** One site: one pair was present during the breeding season but did not breed.

**Caithness** One site: a male was present from March to late May, and at a nearby site five Scaup were seen on one date in mid July.

### Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

251–424 pairs. After a slow increase until the mid 1990s, followed by a period of relative stability, the number of Goshawks reported in 2005 has increased again. Despite the species reaching a new peak, these figures are still thought to be an underestimate as this is a secretive species that is easily overlooked. A lack of accurate totals for some counties also hinders the compilation of robust figures. Nevertheless, the maximum figure given here now exceeds the UK population estimate of 410 pairs by Baker *et al.* (2006).

#### England

Reported from 22 counties: 118 pairs confirmed breeding plus 94 other pairs.

#### Wales

Reported from 13 counties: 82 pairs confirmed breeding plus 44 other pairs.

#### Scotland

Reported from six Scottish Raptor Study Group areas: 51 pairs confirmed breeding plus 31 other pairs.

#### Northern Ireland

Four pairs reported but breeding not confirmed.

### Merlin *Falco columbarius*

294–533 pairs. The table below is based on sample monitoring areas only and the figures, especially for England and Wales, are incomplete; county summaries for key areas of Wales and northern England were not available for this report. The number of occupied territories reported is the highest during the ten years that data have been

Revised totals for rare birds breeding in 2005, using data received up to 31 August 2008.

collected, although it represents less than half the most recent UK population estimate (for 1993–94; Rebecca & Bainbridge 1998). The apparent increase in territories in the Outer Hebrides is because of improved monitoring and reporting from that area in 2005. No data were available for Northern Ireland.

<b>Merlin</b>	<b>Territories occupied by pairs</b>	<b>Territories known to have fledged young</b>	<b>Min. no. young fledged</b>
England, SW	1	0	0
England, C	20	15	50
England, N	198	112	303
Wales	24	11	17
Scotland			
Dumfries & Galloway	6	5	15
Lothian & Borders	30	15	59
South Strathclyde	16	7	25
North-east Scotland	45	29	87
Tayside	53	27	75
Argyll	7	3	7
Highland	47	27	91
Orkney	20	13	48
Outer Hebrides	57	23	63
Shetland	9	7	30
Northern Ireland	–	–	–
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>870</b>

### *Hobby Falco subbuteo*

265–872 pairs. The figures here represent only a sample of the population, thought to be 2,200 pairs (Clements 2001). Results of the fieldwork for Bird Atlas 2007–11 are expected to show an increase in the range of the Hobby but, from the data available here, there is no sign of any significant spread north of a line between the Mersey and the Humber. The Kent Ornithological Society has recently reassessed the breeding population in Kent, which appears to be the most important county for Hobby. They supplied the following figures for recent years: 1999–2001 (150–200 pairs each year); 2002–04 (175–225 pairs) and 2005–07 (200–250 pairs). These figures are based on the increase in reported numbers.

<b>Hobby</b>	<b>Total pairs</b>	<b>Confirmed pairs</b>
England, SW	165	54
Avon	10	6
Devon	25	9
Dorset	19	1
Gloucestershire	11	8
Hampshire	16	12
Isle of Wight	2	0
Somerset	22	2
Wiltshire	60	16
England, SE	403	72
Bedfordshire	4	4

Berkshire	15	5
Buckinghamshire	12	4
Essex	37	9
Hertfordshire	65	7
Kent	200	35
Oxfordshire	23	3
Surrey	27	2
Sussex	20	3
<b>England, E</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>41</b>
Cambridgeshire	21	10
Lincolnshire	18	3
Norfolk	26	21
Northamptonshire	2	2
Suffolk	56	5
<b>England, C</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>71</b>
Derbyshire	35	35
Herefordshire	20	3
Leicestershire & Rutland	15	7
Nottinghamshire	12	12
Shropshire	10	0
Warwickshire	30	12
Worcestershire	2	2
<b>England, N</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>19</b>
Cheshire & Wirral	14	14
Greater Manchester	1	0
Lancashire & N Merseyside	3	0
Yorkshire	20	5
<b>Wales</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

### Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Two sites: two pairs. Red-backed Shrikes were last recorded breeding in 1999 and 2004, so the occurrence of two widely separated pairs, both successfully rearing young, is noteworthy. In addition, single birds were seen in suitable breeding habitat in three Scottish counties in May and June, including one which remained for more than ten days in mid to late May. In Highland, a male was also reported in August, close to the site which held a singing male in 2003, although the late date suggests that this may have been a passage bird.

#### Wales

One site: one pair fledged two young. The nest was found after fledging, and the pair returned to the same site in 2006. Subsequent searches of the area in 2006 revealed a third nest, which may indicate that the pair nested in the same area undetected in 2004.

#### Scotland, N & W

One site: one pair bred and one fledged young seen on 13th July.

### Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

..... No data are presented for Scotland, as the information there is even more incomplete [than for England and Wales]. It is notable, however, that breeding was confirmed in Orkney. [In fact it is now understood that the juveniles reported from Orkney had not fledged locally].