

Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 2011

Mark Holling and the Rare Breeding Birds Panel



Alan Harris

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Review of the year 2011

This report, covering the 2011 breeding season, is the 38th report of the Rare Breeding Birds Panel (RBBP) and includes details of 88 species or distinctive races that bred (or showed signs of breeding) in the UK in 2011. A further eight potential breeding species are listed in Appendix 1. The overall list of species considered by the RBBP was the same as in 2010 (when a total of 99 species, including five in the appendix, were reported).

As in 2010, numbers of some resident or partially migratory species in 2011 were affected to some degree by the severe weather in the preceding winter (December 2010 was the coldest December for over 100 years according to the Met Office). However, February 2011 was the mildest since 2002 and the spring was warmer than average, especially April. For many parts of the UK, May was dry, with below-average rainfall, but Cumbria and much of Scotland were wetter. The remainder of the summer was cool – and wet in eastern Scotland and northeast England, in contrast to the English Midlands, which were largely dry.

It may have been the meteorological condi-

tions in southern Europe that led to the largest number of Common Quails *Coturnix coturnix* yet recorded in any year (1,992 singing males) and we explore this influx further in this report. That total was undoubtedly boosted by the impact of fieldwork for the final season of the BTO/BirdWatch Ireland/SOC *Bird Atlas 2007–11* project, which also had an effect on the recording rate of some other species (see below). The impact of recent cold winters led to reduced numbers of several species including Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*, Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* and Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*, and may have held back the growth of the Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* population witnessed in the last ten years.

In 2006 we added three species to the RBBP list: Shoveler *Anas clypeata*, Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* and Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*. In this report we look in a little more detail at what we have learnt about these three species from the six years of data collected. For Shoveler, it seemed likely that there were fewer than 2,000 pairs breeding in the UK, and our reports support that. The Water Rail, a cryptic inhabitant of marshy areas that are difficult to survey, had

a low UK population estimate but this figure was believed to be low mainly because of a lack of information. The data now suggest that there may be over 2,000 breeding pairs of Water Rail, so this species is more abundant than published estimates indicate. Finally, the Hawfinch, a species where there were suggestions of a decline and shrinkage in range, has turned out to be considerably rarer than imagined, although this is another species that is also difficult to locate in the breeding season.

What was probably the first-ever successful breeding by a wild pair of Whooper Swans *Cygnus cygnus* in England was recorded in 2011. An injured female remained at Welney, Norfolk, in the spring; her mate stayed with her and they successfully hatched two young. Meanwhile in Shetland, where about half of the breeding pairs of the UK's Whooper Swans breed, a record nine pairs laid eggs. For the first time in five years, there was a drop in the number of reported Common Pochards *Aythya ferina*, affecting all parts of the UK. Reduced monitoring of some species undermines our attempts to present reliable annual counts, and this is noticeable for three waterbirds: Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*, Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula* and Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*. These nest almost exclusively on mainland waterbodies in northern and western Scotland and there are opportunities for resident and visiting birders alike to help by ensuring that their observations are reported to local recorders.

Eurasian Bitterns *Botaurus stellaris* continue to increase in numbers and range, and Little Bitterns *Ixobrychus minutus* bred again in the extensive Avalon Marshes in Somerset. This area is becoming renowned for its marshland bird community, and the Great White Egret *Ardea alba* was almost added to the list of breeding birds in 2011 (but in the end we had to wait until 2012 for proof of breeding). Somerset was the county which saw the first breeding by Cattle Egrets *Bubulcus ibis* in 2008, but there has been no confirmed breeding since then and there were no records in 2011 even to warrant an entry in this report. Eurasian Spoonbills *Platalea leucorodia* had a second successful season in



Dave Rogers

309. Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*, adult with young, Stodmarsh, Kent, September 2011. The standard count unit for Bitterns is the booming male, and the number of these exceeded 100 in 2011. This family of young Bitterns at Stodmarsh provided the first confirmation of breeding at this site for over 40 years.

Norfolk with an increase to nine pairs. There was less favourable news on the two regularly breeding rare grebes: both Slavonian *Podiceps auritus* and Black-necked Grebes *P. nigricollis* showed further signs of decline.

We report the highest-ever totals for five species of raptor: Red Kite *Milvus milvus*, White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*, Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*, Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* and Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*. Signs are not so good for Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*, however, especially in England, which now supports fewer than ten pairs.

In 2011, Avocets *Recurvirostra avosetta* bred at over 100 sites, the first time that milestone has been passed. A national survey of Dotterels *Charadrius morinellus* updated the population estimate to 423 breeding males, a significant decline since the last survey, in 1999. Although there was only limited searching for them, no breeding Purple Sandpipers *Calidris maritima* were found in 2011. In contrast, we include the highest-ever totals of both Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* (up to six pairs breeding) and Wood Sandpiper *T. glareola* (up to 29 pairs breeding). The unusually high number of Greenshanks *T. nebularia* reported (for the second year in a row) was a consequence of the additional survey effort for *Bird Atlas 2007–11*. The Greenshank is another species where focused data collection and reporting in highland Scotland could benefit our knowledge of its status.

Little Terns *Sternula albifrons* had a productive year, especially in Norfolk, thanks to site protection and a new offshore colony. At the other end of the country, Arctic Skuas *Stercorarius parasiticus* had another poor year in Shetland and a pair of Little Gulls *Hydrocoloeus minutus* looked as if they might breed at a Caithness loch – sadly, nothing came of the attempt after display and nest-building had been observed over a four-week period.

Two passerines that have always been rare in the RBBP era (since 1972), but which were more numerous in earlier reporting years, are Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* (with a peak of 41 pairs reported in 1988) and Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* (64 pairs in 1977). These two species had differing fortunes in 2011. The Golden Oriole has now not bred for two years and there was little evidence of a breeding attempt in 2011, whereas Red-backed Shrikes again nested in Devon and there was a total of up to four pairs in England.

One pair of Fieldfares *Turdus pilaris* bred in Highland and there were two singing male White-spotted Bluethroats *Luscinia svecica cyanecula*. The survey of Snow Buntings *Plectrophenax nivalis* found almost 80 pairs, much along the lines of recent estimates. A single Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus* in potential breeding habitat was the first to be reported to the RBBP since 1997.

Data sources

Records are collated from all counties of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and the Isle of Man, but not from the Channel Islands. Because several other UK-wide reporting schemes, such as the BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) and the Birds of Conservation Concern (e.g. Eaton *et al.* 2009), include the Channel Islands, we also hope to include data from those islands with effect from the 2012 season.

Over 5,800 unique records of rare breeding birds in 2011 were submitted to the RBBP from a range of sources, mainly from the county recorder network, but other sources include: the returns from Schedule 1 licence holders, the Nest Record Scheme, Raptor Study Group data, national surveys, counts from RSPB reserves, and other single-species studies (see Acknowledgments for

details). The number of contributing recording areas was rather fewer than in 2010: 62 full returns supplemented by extracts from five bird reports (66 and six respectively, in 2010). The differences that this may make to year-to-year comparisons are noted below. Most recording areas supplied grid-reference data and also made use of the new RBBP recording spreadsheet for county recorders, available from our website. The use of this spreadsheet simplifies the process of checking of original submissions and also loading records into our database. The inclusion of accurate grid references in all data supplied to the RBBP is essential for the validation of records and for the detection of duplicates, ensuring that the figures in this report are as accurate as possible. Some otherwise good records cannot be used if the location cannot be verified.

Participation in record submission from across the country was poorer in 2011 than in recent years, and a considerable number of counties submitted data well past the RBBP deadline for receipt. Late submission in this way hampers our goal of reporting back as soon as possible to the conservation bodies and birdwatching community. There seems to have been a high turnover of county recorders in the last 12 months and this often leads to a delay in ‘catching up’ and of course new relationships with the RBBP have to be built up. Areas from which we received data in 2010 but not 2011 (by mid July 2013) were as follows. In England, there were no full submissions from Berkshire, Essex, Oxfordshire, the Isles of Scilly and Warwickshire, and in Scotland from Ayrshire, Clyde Islands and the Outer Hebrides. Similarly, there was no return from the Isle of Man. Two counties, West Midlands in England and Caithness in Scotland, did not submit data in either year. A special effort was made to acquire data for these counties from other sources, most importantly from *Bird Atlas 2007–11*. On the plus side, Herefordshire (absent in 2010) submitted data in 2011, and for the first time some data were received from all Welsh counties, albeit only in the form of a bird report for Carmarthenshire and Gwent. It is particularly welcome to be able to add Montgomeryshire to the list of contributing counties, as there has been no submission for

this county for many years.

Readers should take into account any gaps in the coverage when reviewing the data presented in this report. As usual, however, at least some data were available for all counties and regions and so the numbers of pairs of each species in this report are broadly comparable with those in recent RBBP reports.

Raptor monitoring in many parts of the UK is achieved largely by the work of the various Raptor Study Groups (RSGs). In Scotland, these groups provided area totals, via the Scottish Raptor Monitoring Scheme, and in some cases these data cannot always be matched with the bird recording areas used in this report, so the Scottish Raptor Study Group areas are used instead. In much of northern England, mainly upland raptors are monitored by an array of groups operating under the Northern England Raptor Forum (NERF). Schedule 1 raptor data from Wales were collated for the RBBP under contract from the Countryside Council for Wales/Natural Resources Wales by RSPB Wales. No data on birds of prey were available from the Northern Ireland Raptor Study Group.

To help us to continue to maintain the definitive archive of rare breeding bird records, we always welcome any late submissions and updates to our published records. Such records are added to our confidential archives to ensure that annual statistics and the inventory of breeding sites are updated. Any additions, amendments and corrections to our published reports covering 2005 to 2011 are made available on the RBBP website (www.rbbp.org.uk/rbbp-reports). Research workers using published RBBP reports should always consult the website for any potential changes to the reported numbers of species.

Bird Atlas 2007–11

Fieldwork concluded in the summer of 2011, and the increased efforts associated with this project had further beneficial consequences for the RBBP. By cross-referencing atlas records with submissions from recorders, we were able to identify a further 900 or so unique records, which were added to our archive for 2011 and contribute to this report. The contribution of *Bird Atlas 2007–11* to the RBBP files for 2011 was there-

fore at least 13% of the overall total number of records (c. 6,800). These extra data covered 53 species, with those classed by RBBP as ‘less scarce’ (i.e. over 1,000 breeding pairs) contributing the most records. Species such as Common Quail, Water Rail, Green-shank and Long-eared Owl *Asio otus* were particularly prevalent; these are species which, because of their remote habitats or skulking or nocturnal habits, are poorly recorded without more systematic effort. Atlas data were also helpful in supplementing records for those counties lacking a return from the county recorder (see above).

It remains to be seen how submission levels will change now that atlas fieldwork has ceased but it seems likely that there will be a decrease in more remote areas. The BTO has encouraged atlas workers to continue to log their records using BirdTrack (www.birdtrack.net) and the RBBP recommends that observers use BirdTrack to store their records securely in the knowledge that they are then available to the relevant county recorders, who can extract and submit them to the RBBP following local interpretation.

We are proud that the RBBP has been able to work so closely with BTO, BirdWatch Ireland and SOC on the *Bird Atlas 2007–11* project and feel confident that the eventual publication will include an accurate picture of the status of rare breeding birds in Britain and Ireland in the four breeding seasons in 2008–11. The atlas (Balmer *et al.* in press) will be published this autumn and its conclusions will be a valuable reference source for future RBBP reports. Some provisional results have greatly helped our interpretation of the status of species described in this report.

Record submission: guidelines and standards

Records should be submitted by the end of each calendar year for the *previous* year’s breeding season, i.e. data for 2012 should be submitted by 31st December 2013. Guidelines on data submission are available on the RBBP website. The website also includes the evaluation criteria for records contained in these reports. The recommendations and guidelines introduced in 2009 (see www.rbbp.org.uk/rbbp-recording-standards) have continued to help improve the quality

of information submitted, including the provision of grid references and the reporting of negative records (distinguishing sites surveyed with no birds found from sites not visited). We are preparing species-specific recording guidelines and these are published on the RBBP website as they become available (www.rbbp.org.uk/rbbp-species-recording). Anyone with particular experience in monitoring a species on the RBBP list is invited to offer their expertise in compiling these guidelines.

Conservation and other uses of RBBP data

It is RBBP policy to make data available for relevant conservation uses, with appropriate controls. Site-specific information is used by JNCC and the country conservation agencies, and national datasets by the RSPB, for survey and conservation planning. Over the last 12 months, RBBP data have been used to support a large number of projects, with a total of 17 requests handled, a sample of which are noted here. The involvement of RBBP and its data with *Bird Atlas 2007–11* has already been discussed. A project to review the use of protected areas such as nature reserves by wetland bird species colonising the UK (e.g. Little Egret and

Cetti's Warbler) used RBBP data (Hiley *et al.* 2013). It concluded that the protected areas played a significant role in aiding the establishment of a population, which was then able to spread out to other areas. The review of the breeding birds of Inner London (Woodward & Arnold 2012) used RBBP data on Black Redstarts *Phoenicurus ochruros*. Conservation and survey planning work by the RSPB has been aided by information from the RBBP archives on Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*, Corn Crake *Crex crex*, Savi's *Locustella luscinioides* and Marsh Warblers *Acrocephalus palustris*, and European Serin *Serinus serinus*. The RSPB has also been able to make use of data on species such as Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*, Osprey and Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* in developing windfarm sensitivity maps. Further work on the impact of climate change on Cetti's and Dartford Warblers, and on the use of Special Protection Areas in the Pennines by Merlins *Falco columbarius* and Peregrine Falcons is also underway using data from the RBBP archives.

Panel data were widely used in the update of national population estimates by the Avian Population Estimates Panel (Musgrove *et al.* 2013). These estimates and site-related data have continued to support a review of the



Mark Hamblin

310. Female Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*, North-east Scotland, June 2011. Numbers of Hen Harriers continue to fall in the moorlands of England, southern and eastern Scotland.

UK's Special Protection Area network coordinated by JNCC, as well as the first of a future series of six-yearly reviews of national species status required for the EU Birds Directive. This latter project is the UK contribution to a major new assessment of the status of all European bird species due for publication in early 2015. It will also derive a first Red List of European bird species. We hope to feature aspects of the SPA Review – which reports on changes at key sites between the 1990s and 2000s – in a future Panel report.

The population totals published in the *BB* reports are also widely used by conservation staff at the RSPB, BTO and the four country-side agencies. A number of data requests received by the Panel Secretary relate to information already published in RBBP reports, all but the most recent of which are available to read on the RBBP website (www.rbbp.org.uk/rbbp-reports). We have recently implemented a new online facility to access these reports directly, firstly by species and then by year, which opens up this resource to a wider audience. We are confident that this will provide a rich seam for the mining of information by interested birders, who we hope will be inspired to compile species reviews for potential future publication as stand-alone papers or within the annual RBBP reports. This new archive is

accessible at www.rbbp.org.uk/rbbp-online-reports. Anyone interested in performing status reviews on RBBP species is invited to prepare a brief proposal and submit it to the Panel Secretary.

In all cases where RBBP data are used or referred to, we ask that the contribution of the Panel is acknowledged and that we receive copies of any new datasets compiled and any papers produced. Our data access policy is available on our website at www.rbbp.org.uk/rbbp-access-policy.

The Panel

The current membership of the Panel (September 2013) is Mark Eaton (Chairman), Ian Francis, Simon Gillings, Andrew King, David Norman, David Stroud and Mark Holling (Secretary). Members serve in a personal capacity, but some also reflect the interests and requirements of the funding partners, JNCC (on behalf of the country conservation agencies) and RSPB, as well as the BTO. Panel membership aims to achieve broadly representative geographic coverage and to include members who have active involvement in monitoring schemes and specialist research groups, or who participate in various external groups, to facilitate liaison between the Panel and researchers, nest recorders, ringers, surveyors and conservation practitioners.

Terminology

Recording areas

The recording areas used in this report are the same as in previous reports (see Holling *et al.* 2007 and www.rbbp.org.uk); these match the bird recording areas used by recorders across the UK, with Gower and East Glamorgan presented separately *contra* Ballance & Smith (2008). We attempt to collate all breeding records by recording area (usually 'county') wherever possible and urge contributors to submit records in the same manner, via recorders. In some cases, records are presented under different area groupings, for instance by Raptor Study Group (RSG) area, although it is our intention to summarise data by recording area wherever possible. Thus, the Central Scotland RSG covers an area roughly equivalent to the Upper Forth recording area, but does include parts of neighbouring recording areas, including Clyde; the South Strathclyde RSG area includes both Ayrshire and Clyde and some of the Clyde Islands; and the

Tayside RSG area equates approximately to the recording areas of Angus & Dundee together with Perth & Kinross. However, North-east Scotland RSG includes both that recording area and the eastern part of the Moray & Nairn recording area, and Highland RSG includes not only the Highland recording area but also the western part of Moray & Nairn. Scottish Raptor Study Group area boundaries are shown on their website at www.scottishraptorgroups.org/areas.

Records from the Greater London recording area, which covers all areas within a 20-mile radius of St Paul's Cathedral, are reported as follows, in order to reduce the possibility of duplication with surrounding county recording areas. Under the Greater London heading we list records from the Inner London area and the old county of Middlesex only. Records away from this area and within the counties surrounding London – Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent and Surrey – are listed under those county headings.

Species banners

For all regular breeding species (those which have bred at least once in the UK and have been recorded at least as present in eight out of the last ten years), we give four pieces of information:

1. An indication of population status in one of four categories:
 - **Very rare** (<30 breeding pairs (bp) per annum);
 - **Rare** (30–300 breeding pairs per annum);
 - **Scarce** (301–1,000 breeding pairs per annum);
 - **Less scarce** (>1,000 breeding pairs per annum).
2. A population estimate, based where possible on the mean maximum population size from the last five years and shown as '5-yr mean' (in this report the five years are 2007–11). In some cases, we show the totals estimated in national surveys, or, particularly for species with poor coverage, the best available national population estimate.
3. The degree of coverage, defined as follows:
 - **near-complete** (RBBP reports present more or less accurate annual totals);
 - **high** (a good estimate of the number of pairs breeding annually, though a small but unknown proportion has not been recorded/reported);
 - **moderate** (a less accurate estimate of the number of pairs breeding annually, which is nonetheless a significant proportion of the total population);
 - **low** (the quality of the data received is so poor that population estimates are of little value for conservation or status reviews; however, maintaining an archive of known sites is useful, and this information can be used in the design of future targeted surveys).
4. The population status as determined by Birds of Conservation Concern 3 (BoCC3) (Eaton *et al.* 2009).

The BoCC3 status can be Red, Amber or Green. The majority of Red- and Amber-listed species on the RBBP list are categorised as such because of some criteria related to their breeding status, whether it be population size (rarity or recent/historical decline), breeding range (localisation or decline) or international importance of the UK breeding population. Some Amber-listed species are also noted as being Species of European Conservation Concern (SPEC). The only species in this report which is Amber-listed for criteria that are not breeding-related is the Eurasian Wigeon *Anas*

penelope, which owes its status to the localised distribution and international importance of its wintering population.

Occasional and potential breeding species are labelled as such, with additional information where applicable. Species which have not previously bred in the UK, but which are known to have done so in the years between that covered by this report and the publication date, are labelled as 'new colonist'.

Definitions of breeding evidence

The definitions of 'Confirmed breeding', 'Probable breeding' and 'Possible breeding' follow those recommended by the European Bird Census Council (Hagemeijer & Blair 1997). Within tables, the abbreviation 'Confirmed breeding pairs' means 'Number of pairs confirmed breeding'. Where tables show the number of occupied territories, these are the sum of confirmed and probable breeding pairs, as territorial birds are classed as being probably breeding, unless a nest has (at least) progressed to the stage where eggs have been laid, in which case the pair is classified as a confirmed breeding pair. It is important to note that confirmed breeding is *not* the same as successful breeding; nests that fail with eggs or with young still fall into the confirmed category. A successful breeding pair is one that fledges at least one young bird from a nesting attempt. In species accounts, the following terminology is used: *x* pairs bred (= confirmed breeding), *y* probable breeding pairs and *z* possible breeding pairs.

Readers should note that in all cases the identity of the birds has been confirmed; it is only breeding *status* that is possible/probable/confirmed. Probable breeding is as defined by EBCC (e.g. a pair holding territory), and does not mean that a breeding attempt probably (i.e. was likely to have) occurred.

The Panel does not routinely include breeding records of hybrids (where one of the parents is a species on the RBBP list) in its reports, e.g. hybrids between Black Duck *Anas rubripes* and Mallard *A. platyrhynchos*, but where young are hatched they will be noted in an Appendix.

Definition of numbers used

Within each species account, numbers given in the format '1–4 pairs' indicate (in this case) one confirmed breeding pair and a possible maximum total of four breeding pairs. In the tables, 'n/a' indicates that no data were received from that county, but the species normally breeds there. For some species, estimated totals (in round brackets) are also included, where these have been provided by county recorders according to the criteria given on the RBBP website.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus***Very rare: 5-yr mean 19 bp****Coverage: near-complete****Amber**

19 sites: 17–23 pairs. The bulk of the population was, as usual, in north and west Scotland, with a small increase there, notably in Shetland where there was a total of ten pairs, nine of which bred – a new record. The three breeding pairs in Northern Ireland also set a new record.

The tenacity of the pair bond was illustrated by the pair in Norfolk, nesting well out of range because the injured female could not migrate in the spring. This is the first breeding by a pair of wild Whooper Swans in England documented by the RBBP. Brown & Grice (2005) noted a pair that bred in Norfolk in 1928, but there is some doubt about their provenance.

In addition, two naturalised pairs of breeding Whooper Swans nested in Bedfordshire.

England, E

Norfolk One site: one pair bred. A female injured on an overhead power line remained at Welney with her mate and the pair nested, hatching at least two young.

Wales

Meirionnydd One site: one possible breeding pair.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll One site: two pairs bred. **Caithness** One site: one pair bred. **Highland** Two sites: one pair bred and one probable breeding pair. **Outer Hebrides** Limited data. One site: one pair present at a traditional site, but did not breed. **Shetland** Ten sites: nine pairs bred, five pairs hatched young and ten young fledged from the three successful pairs; also one probable breeding pair.

Northern Ireland

Co. Derry One site: two pairs bred, fledging six and one young respectively; two other possible breeding pairs.

Co. Fermanagh One site: one pair bred, seen with one young.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope***Rare: 5-yr mean 159 bp****Coverage: low****Amber**

118 sites: 72–218 pairs. The accepted population estimate for Eurasian Wigeon is still that from the 1968–72 *Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock 1976): 300–500 pairs, based on the number of pairs per occupied square at that time (Musgrove *et al.* 2013). Since Wigeon was added to the RBBP list in 1996, this is the first time that we have reported over 200 pairs but the remote nature of many breeding sites means that coverage each year is variable. Birdwatchers should be aware of pairs remaining on waterbodies suitable for breeding, especially in upland areas, and be suspicious if a male is alone from mid May onwards – he may be ‘guarding’ a female on a nest close by, and a repeat visit to look for a brood of ducklings should be made if at all possible.

As in previous reports, records of summering birds and pairs that showed no evidence of breeding are noted but not included in the totals. Such pairs remain together throughout the summer, often at lowland sites that may occasionally be used for breeding, but seem often not to be.

England, SW

Somerset Two sites: six possible breeding pairs. **Wiltshire** One site: one possible breeding pair. Summering birds were also reported from **Cornwall**.

England, SE

Kent Two sites: three pairs bred. Summering birds were also reported from **Bedfordshire** and **Sussex** (35 birds).

England, E

Cambridgeshire Three sites: one pair bred and 12 possible breeding pairs. **Norfolk** Three sites: eight possible breeding pairs. **Northamptonshire** Two sites: two possible breeding pairs.

England, C

Nottinghamshire Three sites: one pair bred and eight possible breeding pairs.

England, N

Cumbria One site: one possible breeding pair. **Co. Durham** Six sites: five pairs bred (five broods totalling 34 young), one probable breeding pair and one possible breeding pair. **Northumberland** Four sites: six pairs bred

and one probable breeding pair. Yorkshire Four sites: one pair bred and seven possible breeding pairs. Also summering birds in Lancashire & N Merseyside.

Scotland, S

Borders Two sites: two possible breeding pairs. Clyde One site: one probable breeding pair. Dumfries & Galloway Two sites: three probable breeding pairs.

Scotland, Mid

Angus & Dundee Three sites: three pairs bred. Fife Two sites: two possible breeding pairs. North-east Scotland Three sites: four pairs bred. Perth & Kinross Six sites: two pairs bred, 14 probable breeding pairs and one possible breeding pair. Upper Forth One site: one possible breeding pair.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Five sites: one pair bred and seven possible breeding pairs. Caithness Seven extensive sites: two pairs bred and ten probable breeding pairs. Highland 26 sites: 19 pairs bred, 32 probable breeding pairs and one possible breeding pair. Orkney 18 sites: 12 pairs bred, 20 probable breeding pairs and one possible breeding pair. Outer Hebrides Four sites: three pairs bred, two probable breeding pairs and one possible breeding pair. Shetland Seven sites: nine pairs bred.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Rare: 5-yr mean 33 bp

Coverage: high

Amber

17 sites: 8–25 pairs. After three years with over 30 pairs reported, breeding Pintails seem to have been less numerous in 2011, when Orkney was even more dominant in the listings, with 56% of all pairs.

England, SE

Bedfordshire One site: one possible breeding pair.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One site: one pair bred. Norfolk One site: one pair bred. The brood of three seen in May represented the first successful breeding in the county for 11 years. Suffolk One site: one probable breeding pair.



Richard Bedford

311. Male Pintail *Anas acuta*, Minsmere, Suffolk, April 2011. Pintail is our rarest regularly breeding duck with over half of all breeding pairs in Orkney.

Scotland, S

Dumfries & Galloway One site: one probable breeding pair.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll One site: two pairs bred (two broods totalling nine fledged young) and three probable breeding pairs.

Highland One site: one pair bred. **Orkney** Ten sites: three pairs bred, one probable breeding pair and ten possible breeding pairs.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Rare: 5-yr mean 95 bp

Coverage: high

Amber

51 sites: 18–92 pairs. The total number of pairs each year is remarkably consistent, ranging from 87 to 103 in the last five years. The location of breeding sites varies from year to year, and although East Anglia dominates, in 2011 confirmed breeding occurred from Somerset to Orkney.

England, SW

Avon One site: one probable breeding pair. **Gloucestershire** One site: one probable breeding pair. **Hampshire**

One site: one possible breeding pair. **Somerset** Two sites: two pairs bred and five possible breeding pairs.

England, SE

Hertfordshire One site: one possible breeding pair. **Kent** Five sites: five pairs bred and two probable breeding

pairs. **Oxfordshire** One site: four possible breeding pairs. **Sussex** Two sites: two probable breeding pairs.

England, E

Cambridgeshire Three sites: 13 possible breeding pairs. **Lincolnshire** Two sites: three probable breeding pairs.

Norfolk Six sites: four pairs bred, one probable breeding pair and four possible breeding pairs.

Northamptonshire One site: one possible breeding pair. **Suffolk** Three sites: one pair bred and three probable breeding pairs.

England, C

Derbyshire One site: one possible breeding pair. **Nottinghamshire** At least one site: eight possible breeding pairs. **Shropshire** One site: one probable breeding pair.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral One site: one probable breeding pair. **Cleveland** One site: one pair bred, female seen with

three young. **Lancashire & N Merseyside** One site: one pair bred, one young fledged. **Northumberland** One

site: one possible breeding pair. **Yorkshire** Five sites: two pairs bred (two broods totalling at least five young recorded), two probable breeding pairs and three possible breeding pairs.

Wales

Anglesey One site: four possible breeding pairs. **Pembrokeshire** One site: one possible breeding pair.

Scotland, S

Clyde One site: one probable breeding pair. **Dumfries & Galloway** Two sites: one pair bred and one possible breeding pair.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland One site: three possible breeding pairs.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll One site: one possible breeding pair. **Orkney** One site: one pair bred. A female with a fledged juvenile was seen on 10th and 28th July.

Northern Ireland

Co. Antrim One site: two probable breeding pairs. **Co. Derry** One site: two possible breeding pairs.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,014 bp

Coverage: high

Amber

295–924 pairs. The Shoveler is associated with small, shallow, permanent waterbodies at low-altitude sites. Since it was added to the RBBP list in 2006, it has been apparent that the addition was justified since the highest total number of pairs reported has never been more than 1,157, with a maximum of 401 confirmed breeding pairs in 2006. RBBP reports for the period 2006–10 were used to update the UK breeding population estimate to 310–1,020 pairs (Musgrove *et al.* 2013).

The bulk of the population breeds in eastern England – Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Yorkshire consistently hold over 100 pairs each – associated largely with damp, low-lying pastures such as



Dan Powell

those found in the East Anglian Fens and the carrs and ings of south and east Yorkshire, particularly the Lower Derwent Valley where 145 pairs bred in 1993 (Brown & Grice 2005). The Washes of the Nene and the Ouse in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk are two other important sites for breeding, the latter being the UK’s only Special Protection Area for this species. However, these sites are prone to late spring flooding, which can destroy any breeding attempts, as in 2007 and 2008 (Holling *et al.* 2010a,b). There are also notable concentrations in Essex, Kent and Lancashire & N Merseyside. Rather fewer nest in Wales (32–39 pairs in 2006–10, though in 2011 there were only 24), where most records come from Anglesey (79% of all Welsh records during 2006–11).

Outlying populations of note occur in Scotland in the Argyll islands, Orkney and the Outer Hebrides, but as a breeding species in Scotland, the Shoveler seems to be rather rare. Forrester *et al.* (2007) stated that there may be 100–150 pairs in central and southern Scotland, but totals submitted to the RBBP in the last six years range from 22 to 55, which suggests one or more of the following: that the species has declined, that there is significant under-recording, or that the Forrester *et al.* estimate was optimistic. The wetlands of the north Solway (Dumfries & Galloway) probably hold the largest numbers in southern Scotland. In Northern Ireland, most Shovelers breed around Lough Neagh, but numbers reported to the Panel are low, with a maximum of five in 2008.

In the breeding season, the Shoveler is a species that birdwatchers should always be aware of: pairs in suitable breeding habitat (and of course broods of ducklings) should always be reported to county recorders or logged on BirdTrack (see also comments under Wigeon). Although pairs remain together throughout the summer without breeding at some sites, careful observation of the behaviour of others will allow breeding attempts to be identified.

Shoveler	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs			
			Isle of Wight	0	1
			Somerset	0	20
England, SW	5	32	Wiltshire	0	2
Avon	0	1	England, SE	24	126
Dorset	0	2	Berkshire	0	1
Gloucestershire	4	5	Essex	2	47
Hampshire	1	1	Greater London	0	3

Rare breeding birds in the UK in 2011

<i>Shoveler cont.</i>	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs			
			Yorkshire	44	123
			Wales	4	25
			Anglesey	1	18
Hertfordshire	3	10	Ceredigion	1	2
Kent	19	54	East Glamorgan	0	1
Oxfordshire	0	9	Gwent	0	2
Surrey	0	2	Meirionnydd	1	1
England, E	151	403	Pembrokeshire	1	1
Cambridgeshire	2	151	Scotland, S	1	14
Lincolnshire	15	20	Borders	0	2
Norfolk	66	163	Clyde	0	1
Northamptonshire	2	3	Dumfries & Galloway	1	11
Suffolk	66	66	Scotland, Mid	11	23
England, C	8	13	Fife	1	2
Derbyshire	1	1	North-east Scotland	0	3
Leicestershire & Rutland	1	1	Perth & Kinross	10	16
Nottinghamshire	5	7	Upper Forth	0	2
Shropshire	0	3	Scotland, N & W	37	88
Staffordshire	1	1	Argyll	2	22
England, N	53	198	Highland	0	3
Cheshire & Wirral	1	23	Orkney	32	46
Cleveland	2	5	Outer Hebrides	1	15
Cumbria	0	3	Shetland	2	2
Co. Durham	1	1	Northern Ireland	1	2
Greater Manchester	2	7	Co. Antrim	1	2
Lancashire & N Merseyside	2	35	TOTALS	295	924
Northumberland	1	1			

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 641 bp

Coverage: high

Amber

348–592 pairs. For the first time in five years the total number of pairs of Common Pochards has fallen, having reached a peak of 700 in 2010. Time will tell whether this is a temporary setback but the reduction in numbers in 2011 was evident across all regions.

Common Pochard	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs			
			England, E	70	108
			Cambridgeshire	16	20
			Lincolnshire	10	11
England, SW	5	70	Norfolk	40	71
Devon	0	1	Northamptonshire	0	2
Dorset	1	16	Suffolk	4	4
Gloucestershire	0	3	England, C	15	20
Hampshire	3	3	Nottinghamshire	13	16
Somerset	1	46	Shropshire	0	2
Wiltshire	0	1	Worcestershire	2	2
England, SE	125	215	England, N	87	123
Bedfordshire	0	8	Cheshire & Wirral	13	16
Berkshire	1	3	Cleveland	2	15
Essex	15	50	Co. Durham	1	1
Greater London	8	9	Greater Manchester	1	4
Hertfordshire	22	45	Lancashire & N Merseyside	2	15
Kent	71	83	Northumberland	5	5
Oxfordshire	0	2	Yorkshire	63	67
Surrey	1	8	Wales	32	35
Sussex	7	7	Anglesey	26	26

Common Pochard <i>cont.</i>	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs			
			Perth & Kinross	0	4
			Scotland, N & W	1	4
			Orkney	1	4
Carmarthenshire	4	4	Northern Ireland	12	12
Gwent	2	5	Co. Armagh	11	11
Scotland, Mid	1	5	Co. Tyrone	1	1
Fife	1	1	TOTALS	348	592

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Rare: 52 bp (Eaton *et al.* 2008)

Coverage: moderate

Red

14–26 pairs. The number of confirmed breeding pairs in 2011 was only about a quarter of the 2007 survey total; that (low) level of reporting is typical for this species in non-survey years.

Scotland, Mid

Perth & Kinross One site: two possible breeding pairs.

Scotland, N & W

Six extensive sites. In the Flow Country (Caithness/Highland), 11 pairs bred, fledging a minimum of six young. Elsewhere in Highland records were received from five sites: (1) one pair bred, being seen with a brood of five newly hatched chicks on 12th July, plus four probable breeding pairs; (2)(3) one pair bred; (4) five displaying pairs in May; (5) one probable breeding pair.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Rare: 5-yr mean 174 bp

Coverage: low

Amber

A minimum of 86 breeding females. This total is about 100 fewer than that normally reported because data on the main population in Highland were incomplete. Pairs lingered into the summer in Co. Antrim, Fife and Perth & Kinross but there was no further evidence of breeding in those counties.

England, N

Northumberland One site: one pair bred. A brood of four ducklings in May was reduced to three in June.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland Deeside: 41 nests in nestboxes and one in a natural hole contained clutches of between six and 17 eggs. At least 25 young were hatched from 16 nests.

Scotland, N & W

Highland Badenoch & Strathspey: information was received on 43 breeding pairs but the data are incomplete.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 853 singing males

Coverage: high

Amber

10–1,992 singing males or pairs. It was widely recognised that 2011 was a ‘Quail year’, but few would have expected the total to exceed the previous record of 1,655 singing males in 1989. The distribution in 2011 had more in common with the 2009 influx, however, with the majority in northern Britain (Holling *et al.* 2011). In 2011, 58% of all records were in northern England, mid and south Scotland (fig. 1.). Four counties (Angus & Dundee, Borders, Fife and Yorkshire) recorded over 100 singing males each, while some central and southern areas also fared well, notably Shropshire, with 85, and Wiltshire, with 80.

The totals in some counties may have been boosted by a few observers who made special efforts to search for singing Quails, while 25% of all submissions came directly from *Bird Atlas 2007–11*. Many records were single-date reports only but this is typical, since many birds are found casually or by dedicated observers searching new areas. The first dates for records fell mainly between late May and early July.

There were ten instances of confirmed breeding, in six counties: Borders (one pair),



Dan Powell

Lincolnshire (one), Lothian (one), Staffordshire (three), Wiltshire (three) and Yorkshire (one).

Norman Elkins made the following comments on the meteorological circumstances associated with the influx.

April 2011 was the warmest on record in the UK, with anticyclonic conditions across the whole of western Europe. These persisted throughout May over France and Spain and into June, although weaker. In northern Spain, after a winter with rainfall slightly above average and a wet March, April was much hotter than normal; May and June continued to be extremely hot but dry, with less than half the normal rainfall. In France, April and May were also exceptionally warm and also extremely dry, but June was much wetter than normal. (Note that the greatest breeding density of Common Quails in Europe is in the northern half of Spain and southern France, where the birds are migratory, arriving in early April – some Quails overwinter in southern Iberia.)

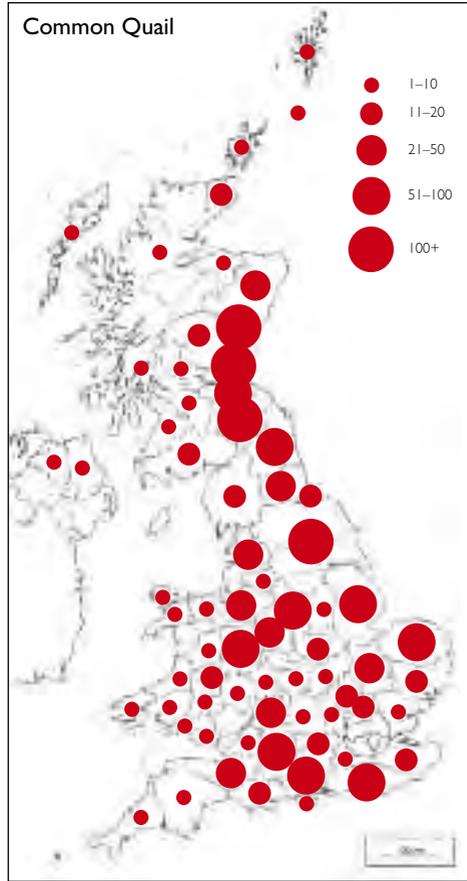


Fig. 1. The distribution of Common Quails *Coturnix coturnix* reported to the RBBP in 2011, showing the dominance of northeastern Britain.

Common Quail	Total pairs or singing males		
England, SW	233	Buckinghamshire	2
Avon	6	Essex	4
Cornwall	2	Hertfordshire	14
Devon	9	Kent	12
Dorset	18	Oxfordshire	2
Gloucestershire	32	Surrey	3
Hampshire	61	Sussex	54
Isle of Wight	2	England, E	193
Somerset	23	Cambridgeshire	27
Wiltshire	80	Lincolnshire	65
England, SE	118	Norfolk	76
Bedfordshire	14	Northamptonshire	6
Berkshire	13	Suffolk	19
		England, C	207
		Derbyshire	57

Common Quail cont.		Total pairs or singing males		
			Montgomeryshire	9
			Pembrokeshire	8
			Radnorshire	11
Herefordshire	6		Scotland, S	309
Leicestershire & Rutland	20		Ayrshire	2
Nottinghamshire	4		Borders	198
Shropshire	85		Clyde	5
Staffordshire	25		Dumfries & Galloway	16
Warwickshire	3		Lothian	88
Worcestershire	7		Scotland, Mid	321
England, N	520		Angus & Dundee	121
Cheshire & Wirral	23		Fife	140
Cleveland	17		Moray & Nairn	10
Cumbria	12		North-east Scotland	35
Co. Durham	34		Perth & Kinross	13
Greater Manchester	9		Upper Forth	2
Lancashire & N Merseyside	31		Scotland, N & W	37
Northumberland	64		Argyll	2
Yorkshire	330		Caithness	12
Wales	52		Fair Isle	1
Anglesey	6		Highland	7
Breconshire	2		Orkney	9
Caernarfonshire	4		Outer Hebrides	1
Carmarthenshire	2		Shetland	5
Ceredigion	6		Northern Ireland	2
Denbigh & Flint	1		Co. Antrim	1
East Glamorgan	1		Co. Derry	1
Gower	2		TOTAL	1,992

Rainfall has an indirect effect on the Quail's breeding season through the effect on cereal ripening and birds move on more rapidly in dry, anticyclonic years. Southerly winds may help but do not seem to be a pre-requisite, since winds in anticyclones are usually light. The first arrivals in the UK were in May but most birds arrived in June and it appears that the exceptional heat and drought in Spain and France in late spring may have triggered this bout of overshooting. The climatic patterns showed some similarity to those in the earlier invasion years of 1970, 1989, 1997 and 2009. Intriguingly, 1970, 1989, 2009 and 2011 were all also Breeding Atlas years, so it is likely that the numbers recorded were enhanced by the increased fieldwork.

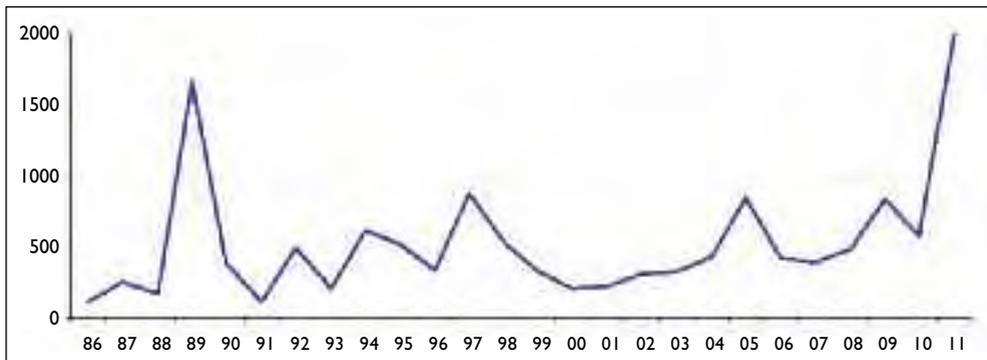


Fig. 2. The maximum total number of Common Quails *Coturnix coturnix* reported by the RBBP, 1986–2011. The scale of the numbers in 2011 is clear when compared with other good Quail years such as 1997, 2005 and 2009.

Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus***Rare: 5-yr mean 213 lekking males****Coverage: moderate****Red**

110 leks were monitored, the highest number since RBBP reporting began; of these, 72 were active and a total of 223 displaying males were counted. The estimated number of individual birds derived from a transect survey in the 2009/10 winter was 1,285 (see Ewing *et al.* 2012).

Scotland, S

Clyde One lek monitored but no activity recorded.

Scotland, Mid

Moray & Nairn Ten active leks: 20 males. North-east Scotland 12 active leks: 24 males. Perth & Kinross Five active leks: six males.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 45 active leks: 173 males. In the Abernethy Forest RSPB recording area, 34 hens with 12 chicks were counted.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata***Less scarce: 1,255 bp (Dillon *et al.* 2009) Coverage: low****Amber**

Details were received for 398 nesting pairs, twice as many as in 2010, but less than a third of the estimated 1,255 pairs breeding in Scotland (Dillon *et al.* 2009). Since we are unable to provide accurate figures for most recording areas, we present only those records away from the core area of north and west Scotland, adding some details from intensively monitored areas in the Northern Isles.

At least 96 pairs were confirmed breeding in Orkney, with the majority of monitored sites on Hoy. In Shetland, selected areas covering at least five islands were sampled and a total of 129 breeding pairs located. In the core study area monitored by the Shetland Ringing Group, the total number of pairs with chicks was higher than the 2007–10 average, but still lower than that for 2002–06. Fewer broods of two chicks were recorded than in any other year since the study began in 1979. It is speculated that the scarcity of two-chick broods is due to a shortage of the preferred chick prey, Lesser Sandeels *Ammodytes marinus* (Heubeck & Parnaby 2012).



Brydon Thomason

312. Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata* with chicks, Shetland, June 2011. The best coverage of Red-throated Divers is achieved in survey years, the last being in 2007 when the total was estimated to be over 1,200 pairs. Annual monitoring of productivity and counts of pairs in study sites continues in other years in Orkney and Shetland.

Scotland, S

Clyde Three sites: one pair bred and two probable breeding pairs. Clyde Islands On Arran and Bute, at least four pairs bred and seven probable breeding pairs.

Scotland, Mid

Moray & Nairn One possible breeding pair. North-east Scotland One probable breeding pair and one possible breeding pair.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Rare: 217 bp (Dillon et al. 2009)

Coverage: moderate

Amber

34–67 pairs. The reduction in structured monitoring again had an effect on overall numbers reported, with the lowest total since RBBP reporting began in 1996 (apart from 2001, when fieldwork was limited by foot-and-mouth restrictions). For example, in 2009, 60 pairs were reported in Highland alone. All birdwatchers are encouraged to report all sightings of pairs of this species on potential nesting lochs.

Scotland, S

Clyde Islands No details of breeding or numbers available, but pairs known to be present. Dumfries & Galloway Two pairs bred, at one the nest was washed out and at the other the outcome was unknown.

Scotland, Mid

Two pairs bred, one failed at the egg stage and the other hatched one chick. In addition there were three probable breeding pairs and one possible breeding pair.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Six pairs bred and three probable breeding pairs. Caithness Four pairs bred and one probable breeding pair. Highland Details were received on 41 pairs of which 19 pairs bred, 21 were probable breeding pairs and there was one possible breeding pair. Outer Hebrides Details were received on just four pairs of which one pair bred and three were probable breeding pairs.

Macaronesian Shearwater *Puffinus baroli*

Potential breeder

0–1 pairs. This was the second or perhaps third year that Lundy played host to a visiting Macaronesian Shearwater, although the bird arrived and departed much earlier than in 2010 (Hudson et al. 2012).

England, SW

Devon A male was again heard on Lundy, calling from a burrow from 21st April to at least 5th May.

Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Rare: 5-yr mean 97 booming males

Coverage: near-complete

Red

66 sites: 104–127 booming males with at least 61 breeding attempts at 26 sites. These figures are based on the RSPB monitoring methods; the minimum figure is the closest to the number of occupied territories. The minimum number of booming males is based on residency at a site for at least a week (although this may include some wintering birds early in the season), while the maximum figure includes males booming for a shorter period only or where it was not possible to confirm that different males were involved.

Continuing the trends of recent years, the number of booming male Bitterns increased (from 87 in 2010 to 104 this year), as did the number of confirmed nests and the number of sites occupied. The most eye-catching statistics came from the Avalon Marshes, in Somerset, where numbers rose from a minimum of 14 to 25 booming males in a year. Another notable feature of 2011 was the first nesting in over 40 years at Stodmarsh, in Kent (see plate 309, p. 497).

England, SW

Somerset Ten sites: 25–28 booming males; 19 confirmed nests. Wiltshire One site: one booming male.

England, SE

Kent Four sites: 3–4 booming males; four confirmed nests. Sussex One site: one booming male.

England, E

Cambridgeshire Nine sites: 7–10 booming males; four confirmed nests. **Lincolnshire** Three sites: four booming males. **Norfolk** *North Norfolk coast* Four sites: 3–4 booming males; two confirmed nests. **Norfolk Broads** 14 sites: 20–25 booming males; nine confirmed nests. **Suffolk** *Suffolk coast* Seven sites: 25–29 booming males; 14 confirmed nests. **Fens** Two sites: 8–10 booming males; seven confirmed nests.

England, C

Nottinghamshire One site: one booming male. **Staffordshire** One site: 0–1 booming male.

England, N

Greater Manchester One site: 0–1 booming male. **Lancashire & N Merseyside** One site: one booming male. **Yorkshire** Six sites: 5–6 booming males; two confirmed nests.

Scotland, Mid

Perth & Kinross One site: 0–1 booming male.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

Occasional breeder; previously recorded in 1984 and 2010

One site: one pair. Following the second record of confirmed breeding by Little Bitterns in the UK in 2010, birds bred at the same site in 2011.

England, SW

Somerset One site: one pair bred at Ham Wall RSPB reserve. The male was in song from 10th May to 11th August, with a female seen on just one date, 30th June. What may well have been feeding flights were seen in mid June but activity then diminished so it was not certain whether a nesting attempt had occurred. However, feeding flights were again seen from 13th July to 11th August, suggesting that a second attempt had been made and that there were young in the nest. No juveniles were seen, however.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 799 bp

Coverage: moderate

Amber

95 sites: 778–783 pairs. The number of colonies (95) is a new record – just ten years ago only 18 colonies were reported to the RBBP. The total number of pairs seems to have levelled off, perhaps because of a reduction in reporting effort (especially of accurate counts of nests in colonies),

Little Egret			England, E	24	185
			Cambridgeshire	2	11
			Lincolnshire	8	46
			Norfolk	8	90
			Northamptonshire	1	2
			Suffolk	5	36
England, SW	29	228	England, C	1	2
Cornwall	6	23	Leicestershire & Rutland	1	2
Devon	7	57	England, N	2	21
Dorset	5	43	Cheshire & Wirral	1	20
Gloucestershire	1	14	Yorkshire	1	1
Hampshire*	4	50	Wales	10	81
Somerset	4	28	Anglesey	2	3
Wiltshire	2	13	England, SE	28	265
England, SE	28	265	Caernarfonshire	2	53
Berkshire	1	1	Carmarthenshire	1	4
Buckinghamshire	2	6	Ceredigion	1	6
Essex	4	38	Gower	2	13
Hertfordshire	3	3	Gwent**	1	1+
Kent	7	174	Pembrokeshire	1	1
Oxfordshire	1	8	Northern Ireland	1	1
Surrey	1	2	Co. Down	1	1
Sussex	9	33	TOTALS	95	783

* Two other colonies in Hampshire not counted. ** Colony at site but no count.

although there may also have been a genuine stall following a run of colder winters. Although the Little Egret is a conspicuous species, obtaining nest counts is not always straightforward, especially in large colonies. It is essential that colony counts are submitted with an accurate six-figure grid reference to allow neighbouring colonies to be separated when analysing results.

Further signs of range expansion in 2011 were the first breeding in Hertfordshire (three pairs) and Leicestershire & Rutland (two pairs).

Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

New colonist

One site: 0–1 pairs. Insufficient evidence was available in 2011 to confirm breeding of Great White Egrets in Somerset. The purpose of this report is to summarise breeding activity in 2011, but with hindsight we can see that the evidence in 2010 and 2011 was a prelude to the first confirmed breeding of Great White Egrets in Britain in 2012 (Anderson *et al.* 2013). Holt (2013) provided a review of the changing status of the species in Britain, records of which have increased significantly in the last 20 years.

England, SW

Somerset One extensive site: regular sightings of 1–2 at three different areas in the Avalon Marshes from April to August with up to six birds in the general area. All of the birds were in areas that were difficult to gain access to and hence observe. Regular flights in June suggested that a pair may have been making feeding flights, which might indicate young in a nest, but overall there was insufficient evidence for confirmed breeding.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 4 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Amber

One site: 8–9 pairs. After the successful establishment of a colony at Holkham in 2010, the number of nesting pairs increased by two and a further 14 young birds fledged in 2011. Some of the adults bore colour rings, which showed that they had been fledged in various sites in Europe, including Germany, the Netherlands and Spain. There have been breeding attempts by Spoonbills in Britain in seven out of the last ten years, and with breeding reoccurring in 2012, for the first time the Spoonbill is promoted to the status of a regular breeder in the RBBP list.

England, E

Norfolk One site: eight pairs bred, fledging 14 young, with one other pair present.



Andrew Bloomfield

313. Eurasian Spoonbills *Platalea leucorodia*, Holkham, Norfolk, May 2011. Successful breeding was reported for the second consecutive year at Holkham.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus***Very rare: 5-yr mean 28 bp****Coverage: near-complete****Amber**

11 sites: 29 pairs bred but only three sites produced young, the lowest number of productive sites since monitoring began. Since 2008, there have been fewer than 30 breeding pairs reported and, given the high levels of monitoring of this species by RSPB Scotland, the Slavonian Grebe is now classed as 'Very rare' by the RBBP.

Scotland, Mid and N & W

Highland/Moray & Nairn 11 sites: 29 pairs reared 14 young. Loch Ruthven was again the major site with 13 breeding pairs and 11 young fledged. Orkney As in 2010, a single bird was present in June and July.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis***Rare: 5-yr mean 48 bp****Coverage: near-complete****Amber**

14 sites: 23–46 pairs. Fourteen sites is the lowest number of locations for breeding Black-necked Grebes since 1982, when there were only 11–21 breeding pairs at 12 sites. The number of young fledged also slumped from 64 in 2010 and 52 in 2009 to a maximum of 30. What was once the major site, Woolston Eyes in Cheshire & Wirral, and which consistently had 14–15 pairs in 2005–2008, had only four confirmed breeding pairs (producing just three young) in 2011. No pairs were reported in Scotland and the last confirmed breeding there was in Borders in 2004. Nonetheless, the largest colony in 2011, in Kent, produced ten young and 2011 was 'the best year ever for Black-necked Grebe' at that site.

It would be interesting to have more information on the sites currently and recently occupied to help us to understand what might be driving the apparent change in fortunes of this species in the UK. Is it habitat change, through loss of emergent vegetation or loss of open water; or is it perhaps related to changes in the numbers of breeding Black-headed Gulls *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*, which Black-necked Grebes often nest in association with, since they offer some degree of nest protection?

England, SE

Hertfordshire Two sites: (1) one pair bred, fledging one young, and eight possible breeding pairs; (2) one pair bred but failed. Kent One site: eight pairs bred, fledging ten young.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One site: one probable breeding pair. Display, nest-building and copulation were all seen, but no further evidence. Lincolnshire One site: one probable breeding pair and one possible breeding pair.

England, C

Nottinghamshire One site: one pair bred; three young fledged. This was the first breeding at this site.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral One site: four pairs bred and fledged three young, four possible breeding pairs. Greater Manchester Two sites: (1) three pairs bred and fledged three young; (2) two pairs bred and one possible breeding pair. Two broods totalling four young were counted in July. Northumberland Two sites: (1) two pairs bred, fledging five young; (2) two probable breeding pairs, on site to July but no sign of nesting. Yorkshire Three sites: (1) one pair bred, a brood of one counted; (2) three possible breeding pairs; (3) two possible breeding pairs.

Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus***Rare: 5-yr mean 42 bp****Coverage: high****Amber**

26–44 pairs; up to 40 young fledged. The number of pairs of breeding Honey-buzzards reported to the Panel remains steady, a little over 40 pairs, but probably does not describe the full picture. A paper currently being prepared will review the breeding behaviour of British Honey-buzzards and reassess the distribution and size of the British population. Meanwhile, the lack of site information supplied to the Panel has hindered the ability to bring potential prosecutions of egg-collectors and has restricted the ability to safeguard breeding sites. With a 40-year history and no

Alan Harris



instance of inappropriate use or loss of data, the RBBP has a sound record of keeping data safe, and we encourage the provision of full details for our confidential archive.

For the first time in our reports, data for England and Scotland are presented by county, matching the approach taken by county bird reports. In an effort to encourage better reporting, we hope also that this will help to improve awareness among observers.

England, SW

Dorset Two pairs bred, broods of two and one recorded in nests, and a further location with a single bird present. **Hampshire** Six pairs bred, fledging a total of seven young from six successful nests, and two probable breeding pairs. At least one other location, occupied by a single bird. **Wiltshire** Two pairs bred, two broods each of two young recorded, and two probable breeding pairs.

England, SE

Kent One probable breeding pair. A nest was built but no eggs were laid. **Surrey** One pair bred and raised a brood of two. **Sussex** Five pairs bred, fledging nine young, one probable breeding pair (on territory but did not breed), and three possible breeding pairs (pairs present but not monitored, so may have bred).

England, E

Norfolk One probable breeding pair and two locations occupied by single birds.

England, C

Nottinghamshire Two probable breeding pairs.

England, N

Cumbria One pair bred, fledging one young, and one probable breeding pair. **Yorkshire** Two pairs bred, with two broods of two recorded, two probable breeding pairs and three possible breeding pairs.

Wales

Three pairs bred in south Wales, fledging five young. Up to seven other birds present elsewhere, but it was not possible to follow up these sites to check for further evidence.

Scotland

Dumfries & Galloway Three pairs bred, fledging four young. **Moray & Nairn** One pair bred, fledging one young. In addition, no information was received from a third county where it is believed birds were at least present during the breeding season.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,191 bp

Coverage: moderate

Amber

A minimum of 1,234 pairs. The table mainly shows the number of pairs where nests are found and monitored; in Wales and the Chilterns (*) these figures are known to be gross underestimates. Nevertheless, this is still the highest total ever recorded by the RBBP.

Red Kite		Confirmed and probable breeding pairs		
			Co. Durham	21
			Yorkshire	96
			Wales	520*
England, SW		47	Breconshire	58
Dorset		1	Caernarfonshire	1
Gloucestershire		2	Carmarthenshire	76
Hampshire		31	Ceredigion	161
Wiltshire		13	East Glamorgan	6
England, SE		163*	Gower	13
Bedfordshire		4	Gwent	6
Berkshire		31	Meirionnydd	4
Buckinghamshire		52*	Montgomeryshire	51
Hertfordshire		31	Pembrokeshire	31
Oxfordshire		42*	Radnorshire	113
Sussex		3	Scotland, S	65
England, E		145	Dumfries & Galloway	65
Cambridgeshire		10	Scotland, Mid	79
Lincolnshire		14	Angus & Dundee	1
Norfolk		5	North-east Scotland	17
Northamptonshire		116	Perth & Kinross	38
England, C		31	Upper Forth	23
Herefordshire		6	Scotland, N & W	56
Leicestershire & Rutland		4	Highland	56
Shropshire		21	Northern Ireland	9
England, N		119	Co. Down	9
Cumbria		2	TOTAL	1,234

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Rare: 5-yr mean 48 bp

Coverage: near-complete



50–57 pairs fledged 43 young. There was a 10% increase in the number of occupied territories between 2010 and 2011, with 28 of the 50 nesting pairs successfully fledging young.



Mark Caunt

314. White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*, Skye, June 2011. The number of breeding pairs in Scotland has risen consistently since 1994; with the completion of a reintroduction project in eastern Scotland, it is anticipated that the first breeding there will occur soon, bolstering the population further.

In the six years leading up to autumn 2012, 85 young White-tailed Eagles had been released in eastern Scotland in an attempt to establish a separate population from that in the west. All being well, pair bonds will be being formed and the first signs of nesting may be anticipated soon.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll 16 pairs bred, with a further three territorial pairs. **Highland (including Skye, Small Isles and mainland)** 20 pairs bred plus a further three territorial pairs. **Outer Hebrides** 14 pairs bred plus one other territorial pair.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 381 bp

Coverage: moderate

Amber

278–354 breeding females/pairs. Marsh Harriers are now quite widespread in many parts of eastern England and Kent, where they are to some extent under-recorded. Counts are more accurate in areas where the species is more unusual, such as southwest, central and northern England, Wales and Scotland. If the population in the core area was similar to that recorded in the 2005 survey – 395 confirmed and probable breeding pairs in Cambridgeshire, Essex, Kent, Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk (Holling *et al.* 2008) – then in 2011 the UK population would have been in the region of 450 pairs.

Marsh Harriers have now been present for the last three years in Co. Down and in Pembrokeshire, suggesting that these range expansions are permanent, while the higher numbers in Scotland (up to 12 pairs compared to six in both 2009 and 2010) are also encouraging.

England, SW

Dorset Two females (paired to one male) bred and one probable breeding pair. **Somerset** Two females bred with one male.

England, SE

Essex Probably under-recorded: 12 pairs bred and three probable breeding pairs. **Kent** Certainly under-recorded; the county estimate is 100 pairs, but evidence of only 14 breeding pairs received. **Sussex** Two pairs bred and one probable breeding pair.

England, E

Cambridgeshire 23 pairs bred and seven probable breeding pairs. **Lincolnshire** 27 pairs bred and 29 probable breeding pairs, but limited coverage around the Wash. **Norfolk** 87 pairs bred, eight probable breeding pairs and three possible breeding pairs. **Suffolk** 72 pairs bred, three probable breeding pairs and four possible breeding pairs.

England, C

Nottinghamshire One possible breeding pair.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral One pair bred, fledging two young. **Greater Manchester** A single female was recorded nest-building and stayed on site until August, but no male was seen. **Lancashire & N Merseyside** Four pairs bred, one probable breeding pair and one possible breeding pair. **Northumberland** One pair bred, fledging two young. **Yorkshire** 24 pairs bred, five probable breeding pairs and one possible breeding pair.

Wales

Pembrokeshire One probable breeding pair.

Scotland, S

Lothian One possible breeding pair.

Scotland, Mid

Angus & Dundee One pair bred. **Fife** One pair bred fledging two young. **Moray & Nairn** One probable breeding pair. **North-east Scotland** One probable breeding pair. **Perth & Kinross** Four pairs bred, three successful pairs fledging eight young.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll One possible breeding pair. **Highland** One probable breeding pair. **Orkney** A single female at a former breeding site was seen collecting nest material in June but no male appeared.

Northern Ireland

Co. Down One pair bred, fledging three young.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus***Scarce: 662 bp (Hayhow et al. in press) Coverage: moderate****Red**

We received information on 332 monitored pairs, of which 238 were confirmed breeding. From available data on the successful pairs, a minimum of 342 young were fledged (17 in England, 44 in Wales and 291 in Scotland).

Hen Harrier	Confirmed breeding pairs	Territories occupied by pairs			
			South Strathclyde RSG	12	14
			Scotland, Mid	34	40
			Moray & Nairn	4	4
			North-east Scotland	1	1
England, C	1	1	Perth & Kinross	26	31
England, N	8	8	Upper Forth	3	4
Wales	26	38	Scotland, N & W	144	214
Breconshire	0	1	Argyll	24	39
Caernarfonshire	0	6	Caithness	12	13
Denbigh & Flint	7	7	Highland	29	32
Meirionnydd	6	6	Orkney	71	120
Montgomeryshire	9	10	Outer Hebrides	8	10
Radnorshire	4	8	Northern Ireland	2	3
Scotland, S	22	27	Co. Antrim	2	3
Borders	2	3	Isle of Man	1	1
Dumfries & Galloway	8	10	TOTALS	238	332

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus***Very rare: 5-yr mean 15 bp****Coverage: near-complete****Amber**

12 sites: 12–15 pairs fledged a minimum of 18 young. With data from one area incomplete, it may be that there were more than 15 breeding pairs of Montagu's Harrier in England in 2011. The number of young fledged in the last five years has fluctuated between 14 and 25 (mean 19.8).

England, S

Six sites: seven 'pairs' bred, of which at least six females fledged 12 young, but data from one area are incomplete. Also, two further probable breeding pairs.

England, E

Lincolnshire Two sites: two pairs bred, one was successful fledging three young. Norfolk Three sites: three pairs bred, two of which were successful, fledging three young.

England, N

Yorkshire One site: one possible breeding pair. A pair returned to the 2010 nest-site in early May, but the male was not seen again after just two days.

Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis***Scarce: 5-yr mean 445 bp****Coverage: high****Green**

359–491 pairs. Fig. 3 shows that 2011 marked the highest numbers of Northern Goshawks reported to the Panel since monitoring started, in 1973, although the high proportion of confirmed breeding pairs (and their close relationship with the total number of pairs) demonstrates that much of our data come from the nest monitoring activity of raptor workers. An unknown number of other pairs go either undetected or unreported and until that number can be quantified some uncertainty over the size of the Goshawk population will remain. Nonetheless, there is currently no better estimate (Musgrove *et al.* 2013). Birdwatchers are encouraged to report all sightings of Goshawks, especially in the late winter and spring, to allow county recorders to form better estimates of the numbers of breeding pairs in their recording areas.

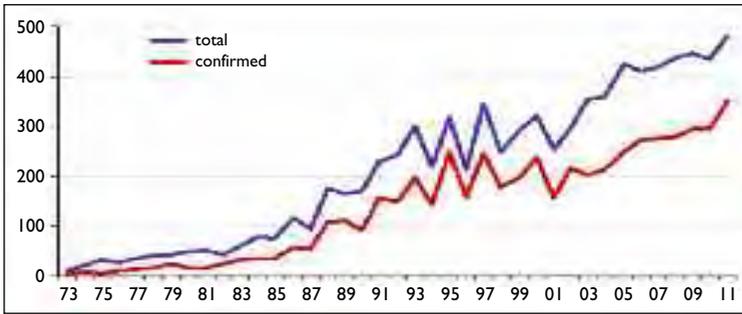


Fig. 3. The number of Northern Goshawks *Accipiter gentilis* reported by the RBBP, 1973–2011. Variations from the overall trend are probably due to annual variations in reporting.

Northern Goshawk			Lancashire & N Merseyside	0	4
	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs	Northumberland	33	47
England, SW	71	80	Yorkshire	20	26
Cornwall	1	1	Wales	69	111
Devon	12	12	Breconshire	7	15
Gloucestershire	20	28	Caernarfonshire	0	1
Hampshire	30	30	Carmarthenshire	2	4
Somerset	1	2	Ceredigion	3	6
Wiltshire	7	7	Denbigh & Flint	6	6
England, SE	2	5	East Glamorgan	7	7
Kent	0	1	Gwent	25	27
Surrey	0	1	Meirionnydd	3	6
Sussex	2	3	Montgomeryshire	7	14
England, E	9	12	Pembrokeshire	3	3
Lincolnshire	0	1	Radnorshire	6	22
Norfolk	7	8	Scotland, S	51	58
Suffolk	2	3	Borders	31	34
England, C	39	67	Clyde Islands	0	1
Derbyshire	9	21	Dumfries & Galloway	16	19
Herefordshire	5	20	Lothian	2	2
Nottinghamshire	7	7	South Strathclyde RSG	2	2
Shropshire	13	13	Scotland, Mid	53	60
Staffordshire	0	1	Central Scotland RSG	1	2
Warwickshire	2	2	North-east Scotland	48	50
Worcestershire	3	3	Tayside RSG	4	8
England, N	58	90	Scotland, N & W	1	2
Cleveland	0	2	Highland	1	2
Cumbria	5	6	Northern Ireland	6	6
Co. Durham	0	5	Co. Antrim	5	5
			Co. Down	1	1
			TOTALS	359	491

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

Scarce: 442 bp (Eaton *et al.* 2007)

Coverage: moderate

Amber

165–280 pairs. Results of monitoring by Scottish Raptor Study Groups (Etheridge *et al.* 2013) and the Northern England Raptor Forum (Smith *et al.* 2012) are presented below. In Scotland, a total of 345 home ranges were checked, of which 280 were occupied by pairs and 26 by single birds only. This compares with the population of 442 pairs estimated after the 2003 national survey (Eaton *et al.* 2007). Of the 165 nests monitored in Scotland, a total of 108 young were fledged from 91 nests. Satellite tracking of young Golden Eagles shows that some range widely before they settle into a territory (see for example www.raptortrack.org), which increases their vulnerability to poisoned baits used illegally by some upland estates. It is thought that the reduced survival of immature Golden Eagles due to such persecution is a significant factor constraining the distribution and numbers in the UK (Whitfield *et al.* 2008).



Robert Snell

315. Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* with European Hare *Lepus europaeus*, Argyll, February 2011. Subject to funding, a repeat national survey of Golden Eagles will take place in 2015.

Golden Eagle	Singles ¹	Probable breeding pairs ²	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs	Min. no. young fledged
England, N	1	0	0	0	0
Scotland, S	2	1	1	2	0
Angus & Dundee	1	2	4	6	7
Central Scotland RSG	0	3	2	5	1
North-east Scotland	0	7	9	16	9
Perth & Kinross	3	5	11	16	10
Argyll	2	29	25	54	17
Highland	18	55	80	135	48
Outer Hebrides (Lewis & Harris)	0	7	25	32	11
Outer Hebrides (Uists)	0	6	8	14	5
TOTALS	27	115	165	280	108

¹ Total includes home ranges occupied by single birds or showing signs of occupation but no pair seen.
² May include some pairs that laid eggs but failed early, and pairs on territory that were not fully monitored, so evidence of egg-laying was not available.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Rare: 5-yr mean 196 bp

Coverage: moderate

Amber

189–225 pairs. There was another small increase in numbers across all areas, and consolidation within those parts more recently colonised, notably in northern England and west Wales. Although all pairs are reported from many areas, this is not the case everywhere and the total number may be as high as 250. We strongly encourage observers to submit full data on any nesting attempt, including grid references, to enable us to calculate a more accurate annual population figure.

England, E

Northamptonshire One pair bred, and fledged two young.

England, C

Leicestershire & Rutland Four pairs bred.

England, N

Cumbria Five pairs bred. Northumberland Two pairs bred, fledging three young between them; two further pairs present on territory.

Wales

Meirionnydd One pair bred fledging three young; one pair at a second site may also have laid but the birds were thought to be inexperienced. Montgomeryshire One pair bred and fledged three young; the first breeding for this county.

Scotland, S

Borders Eight pairs bred, fledging at least 20 young, and one other territorial pair. Clyde/Ayrshire Nine pairs bred and of these, five successful pairs fledged eight young; four other territorial pairs present. Clyde Islands One pair bred, the first for the islands. Two young fledged. Dumfries & Galloway Four successful pairs bred, fledging eight young, and three other territorial pairs. Lothian One prospecting pair.

Scotland, Mid

Angus & Dundee Seven pairs bred, five were successful, fledging at least eight young. One other pair present. Moray & Nairn 14 pairs bred fledging a minimum of 25 young; two late arriving pairs did not nest. North-east Scotland 18 pairs bred, eight were successful and fledged at least 15 young, and five other territorial pairs. Perth & Kinross 40 pairs bred, 17 were successful fledging a minimum of 34 young; four other territorial pairs. Upper Forth 12 pairs bred, seven were successful fledging a minimum of 15 young; two other territorial pairs.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll 14 pairs bred, six successful pairs fledged at least 13 young; five other pairs present. Caithness/Highland 48 pairs bred, 33 successful pairs fledged at least 64 young; five other territorial pairs.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Less scarce: 1,160 bp (Ewing *et al.* 2011) Coverage: moderate

Amber

253–352 pairs monitored. The variation in numbers reported each year largely reflects variation in monitoring effort by dedicated volunteers. This total represents less than a third of that estimated in the last full survey (Ewing *et al.* 2011). Etheridge *et al.* (2013) suggested a reduced occupancy of known home ranges in 2010–11, though no reduction in the productivity of breeding pairs.

Merlin	Confirmed breeding pairs	Territories occupied by pairs			
			Radnorshire	2	6
			Scotland, S	34	45
			Borders	10	17
			Dumfries & Galloway	9	12
England, C	4	16	Lothian	5	5
Derbyshire	3	14	South Strathclyde RSG	10	11
Shropshire	1	1	Scotland, Mid	61	82
Staffordshire	0	1	Angus & Dundee	13	14
England, N	93	124	Moray & Nairn	9	15
Cumbria	8	13	North-east Scotland	28	29
Co. Durham	27	30	Perth & Kinross	11	22
Greater Manchester	0	1	Upper Forth	0	2
Lancashire & N Merseyside	7	17	Scotland, N & W	50	65
Northumberland	19	26	Argyll	2	4
Yorkshire	32	37	Caithness	1	1
Wales	7	16	Highland	15	23
Breconshire	1	3	Orkney	5	8
Caernarfonshire	0	1	Outer Hebrides	5	7
Ceredigion	1	1	Shetland	22	22
Denbigh & Flint	0	1	Northern Ireland	4	4
Meirionnydd	1	2	Co. Antrim	4	4
Montgomeryshire	2	2	TOTALS	253	352

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,038 bp

Coverage: moderate

Green

324–879 pairs. The figures in the table show the total number of pairs reported based on a combination of returns by licensed nest recorders and casual observations. In most counties south of a line between Morecambe Bay and the Humber, the totals are an unknown proportion of the county population. However, where Hobbies are still relatively scarce – in parts of Wales, northern England and Scotland – they are probably close to accurate counts of breeding pairs. Some realistic estimates of county totals provided in 2011 were: Cheshire & Wirral 60 pairs, Derbyshire 60–80 pairs, Kent 300 pairs and Lincolnshire 100–150 pairs.



Simon Stirrup

316. Hobby *Falco subbuteo* chick, Cambridgeshire, 2011. Much of the data on breeding raptors that are available to the RBBP come from licensed observers who monitor nests and ring the young. These and other records of confirmed breeding provide a minimum number of breeding pairs, but other birders can add to this by careful observation of pairs in breeding habitat without the need for any disturbance of birds at the nest.

Hobby	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs			
			Derbyshire	31	35
			Herefordshire	3	12
			Leicestershire & Rutland	0	17
England, SW	68	226	Nottinghamshire	10	21
Avon	1	18	Shropshire	5	27
Cornwall	1	6	Staffordshire	2	17
Devon	15	20	Warwickshire	1	1
Dorset	5	30	Worcestershire	4	18
Gloucestershire	6	18	England, N	46	153
Hampshire	16	35	Cheshire & Wirral	19	43
Isle of Wight	1	2	Co. Durham	1	2
Somerset	5	25	Greater Manchester	2	8
Wiltshire	18	72	Lancashire & N Merseyside	2	48
England, SE	75	168	Northumberland	1	1
Bedfordshire	1	4	Yorkshire	21	51
Berkshire	8	8	Wales	19	46
Buckinghamshire	4	19	Breconshire	4	16
Essex	4	13	Carmarthenshire	3	3
Greater London	3	3	Ceredigion	0	1
Hertfordshire	7	20	Denbigh & Flint	0	0
Kent	22	37	East Glamorgan	2	2
Oxfordshire	16	16	Gower	0	0
Surrey	4	12	Gwent	3	5
Sussex	6	36	Meirionnydd	2	3
England, E	60	136	Montgomeryshire	1	6
Cambridgeshire	8	13	Radnorshire	4	10
Lincolnshire	11	11	Scotland, Mid	0	1
Norfolk	11	20	Moray & Nairn	0	1
Northamptonshire	12	12	Scotland, N & W	0	1
Suffolk	18	80	Highland	0	1
England, C	56	148	TOTALS	324	879

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

Less scarce: 1,530 pairs (Banks et al. 2010)

Coverage: moderate

Green

905–1,126 pairs. In recent years the annual total of Peregrine Falcons in this report has been 400–500 pairs less than the actual population – in many areas not all pairs are monitored each year, although complete data are received for most lowland counties. However, the figure of 1,126 territorial pairs is the highest RBBP total since the species was added to our list in 1996.

The fourth national survey is planned for 2014, and RBBP data will help to direct fieldworkers and maximise the effort available. Any data on nesting Peregrines that has not yet been submitted to the RBBP would be gratefully received and will contribute to that census.

Peregrine Falcon	Confirmed breeding pairs	Territories occupied by pairs			
			Cumbria	56	56
			Co. Durham	5	7
			Greater Manchester	6	8
			Lancashire & N Merseyside	50	75
England, SW	123	150	Northumberland	16	23
Avon	12	12	Yorkshire	45	45
Cornwall	29	39	Wales	129	176
Devon	18	19	Anglesey	9	9
Dorset	30	30	Breconshire	11	13
Gloucestershire	12	15	Caernarfonshire	3	7
Hampshire	11	11	Carmarthenshire	7	12
Isle of Wight	2	6	Ceredigion	2	3
Isles of Scilly	1	1	Denbigh & Flint	13	13
Somerset	5	14	East Glamorgan	22	36
Wiltshire	3	3	Gower	3	4
England, SE	56	71	Gwent	5	7
Bedfordshire	2	2	Meirionnydd	7	7
Berkshire	1	1	Montgomeryshire	9	9
Buckinghamshire	2	2	Pembrokeshire	32	43
Essex	4	7	Radnorshire	6	13
Greater London	13	16	Scotland, S	127	152
Kent	8	9	Borders	40	51
Surrey	5	6	Dumfries & Galloway RSG	52	60
Sussex	21	28	Lothian & Borders RSG	13	13
England, E	21	24	South Strathclyde RSG	22	28
Cambridgeshire	1	4	Scotland, Mid	85	119
Lincolnshire	15	15	Angus & Dundee	13	19
Norfolk	2	2	Central Scotland RSG	21	26
Northamptonshire	1	1	Isle of May	1	1
Suffolk	2	2	North-east Scotland	18	33
England, C	70	86	Perth & Kinross and Fife	32	40
Derbyshire	24	24	Scotland, N & W	39	52
Herefordshire	0	12	Argyll	13	21
Leicestershire & Rutland	9	10	Fair Isle	0	1
Nottinghamshire	6	8	Highland RSG	12	13
Shropshire	19	19	Orkney	6	7
Staffordshire	8	8	Outer Hebrides	6	8
West Midlands	1	1	Shetland	2	2
Worcestershire	3	4	Northern Ireland	64	64
England, N	187	228	Isle of Man	4	4
Cheshire & Wirral	6	9	TOTALS	905	1,126
Cleveland	3	5			

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus***Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,078 bp****Coverage: moderate****Green**

384 sites: a minimum of 1,205 territories; 159 pairs confirmed breeding. Six years of data on Water Rails have now been compiled by the RBBP. By adding Water Rail to the RBBP list (in 2006), we hoped firstly to be able to gain a better understanding of the population size, and secondly to compile an inventory of sites occupied. The mean number of territories reported annually has generally been over 1,000 but it is widely accepted that even this is a gross underestimate of the population, so there may be some way to go to fulfil the first objective. With over 900 sites, the inventory is now a useful resource, however.



Rosemary Powell

Judith Smith, a former Panel member, has studied Water Rails in wetlands in her native Greater Manchester:

The forthcoming *Bird Atlas 2007–11* will show virtually no change in range (a contraction of just 1%) since the *1968–72 Breeding Atlas*. Between the latter and the *1988–91 Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons *et al.* 1993) there was an apparent contraction of 34.5%, but this was subsequently offset by a 51% expansion between 1988–91 and 2007–11 (D. Balmer pers. comm.). Two factors may account for that apparent increase: the resources employed over the last 20 years or so to restore reedbeds throughout the UK for Bitterns, which will also have benefited Water Rails; and work by some committed individuals, especially in Scotland, to monitor Water Rails in suitable habitat, using voice playback. It may also be that Water Rails were under-recorded in 1988–91 compared with 2007–11, when there was a greater focus on collecting all records from 10-km squares.

Where detailed local studies have been carried out (e.g. Jenkins *et al.* 1995, Ellison 2003), the numbers detected have invariably been far higher – sometimes twice as high – as previous estimates. A complete survey of Poole Harbour (Dorset) using the standard playback methodology call in 2004 (Chown 2004) and repeated in 2013 (Hopper 2013) revealed a stable population with single calling birds or pairs at 289 different locations across this large site. This compares to a maximum of 150 territories in Dorset recorded by the RBBP in 2006–2011.

The methodology of censusing is well known (Gilbert *et al.* 1998; Smith 2012; Murray 2013) and, while rewarding, it is also time-consuming and ideally should be undertaken in a fairly short period of time (end of March to mid April) – this may explain why the majority of sites in the inventory where censusing has been carried out in all six years (2006–11) are under RSPB management (49 out of 64). Volunteer patch-workers may move on to other survey work, having devoted a few years to Water Rails. Thus, 64 sites were surveyed for three years out of six, 46 sites for four years and 34 for five years.

A revision of the RBBP database for these years revealed some inevitable duplication, where recorders used different names or grid references, but a bonus was the number of extra sites

found in fieldwork for the Atlas – over 100 in 2011 alone. The total number of sites where Water Rails were recorded in 2006–11 is now 904, but there are undoubtedly many more wetlands that are known to contain rails and are missing from the inventory, and even more that have never been checked, especially in Northern Ireland. Systematic counts are not available for most sites, so for many the number of territories is arbitrarily set at one per site. Even taking this into account, totalling the maximum number of singing males/pairs/territories recorded at each site for which Water Rails were present during the breeding season in 2006–11 gives around 2,500 pairs. This is much higher than the 1988–91 *Breeding Atlas* estimate (450–900 pairs in Britain), and twice as high as the five-year mean reported to the RBBP. The latter figure was used in Musgrove et al. (2013) and is a significant underestimate (Murray 2013). This discrepancy is presumably caused by many sites not being surveyed every year and an inconsistent approach to recording.

Water Rail	Sites	Territories			
			Co. Durham	6	7
			Greater Manchester	17	28
			Lancashire & N Merseyside	7	158
England, SW	35	163	Northumberland	13	13
Avon	2	2	Yorkshire	23	75
Cornwall	1	1	Wales	29	40
Devon	5	9	Anglesey	3	10
Dorset	3	102	Breconshire	1	1
Gloucestershire	n/a	n/a	Caernarfonshire	2	2
Hampshire	13	21	Carmarthenshire	3	3
Isle of Wight	4	4	Ceredigion	3	4
Isles of Scilly	n/a	n/a	Denbigh & Flint	n/a	n/a
Somerset	3	20	East Glamorgan	2	2
Wiltshire	4	4	Gower	4	4
England, SE	35	123	Gwent	2	3
Bedfordshire	5	5	Meirionnydd	1	1
Berkshire	2	2	Montgomeryshire	n/a	n/a
Buckinghamshire	1	1	Pembrokeshire	2	4
Essex	7	17	Radnorshire	6	6
Hertfordshire	3	6	Scotland, S	45	76
Kent	6	56	Ayrshire	3	3
Oxfordshire	n/a	n/a	Borders	24	50
Surrey	6	9	Clyde	6	8
Sussex	5	27	Clyde Islands	1	1
England, E	52	316	Dumfries & Galloway	9	11
Cambridgeshire	11	28	Lothian	2	3
Lincolnshire	7	10	Scotland, Mid	25	46
Norfolk	11	12	Angus & Dundee	3	17
Northamptonshire	n/a	n/a	Fife	3	3
Suffolk	23	266	Moray & Nairn	7	7
England, C	24	54	North-east Scotland	4	6
Derbyshire	2	3	Perth & Kinross	6	9
Leicestershire & Rutland	3	5	Upper Forth	2	4
Nottinghamshire	5	16	Scotland, N & W	35	54
Shropshire	2	2	Argyll	13	27
Staffordshire	4	17	Caithness	3	3
Warwickshire	1	1	Highland	8	9
West Midlands	2	2	Orkney	6	9
Worcestershire	5	8	Outer Hebrides	3	4
England, N	85	314	Shetland	2	2
Cheshire & Wirral	11	16	Northern Ireland	19	19
Cleveland	3	12	TOTALS	384	1,205
Cumbria	5	5			

While territorial presence is relatively easy to establish with playback, it is much more difficult to confirm that breeding occurred, so the great majority of Atlas/RBBP records are assigned to possible breeding level.

The Water Rail was Green-listed in BoCC3 (Eaton *et al.* 2009), having been revised from Amber on the previous list. With the caveat of the possible deleterious effects of climate change, the outlook for this species seems bright, but it might be a disincentive to 'railers' if it was to be removed from the RBBP list. There is clearly more work to be done, both in the field and at the computer, to further unravel the data available.

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*

Rare: 5-yr mean 25 singing males

Coverage: moderate

Amber

13 sites: 0–17 pairs/singing males. All counts refer to singing males; at five sites there were signs of territories being maintained but no further breeding evidence, typical of this cryptic species. The maximum total of 17 was the lowest since 2004, but Stroud *et al.* (2012) showed that many records of this species do not reach the Panel's archives through the normal county recorder route: the average difference over the ten years 2000–09 was almost nine territories.

England, SW

Somerset Two sites: (1) two heard on 22nd May; (2) one heard on 18th May.

England, E

Cambridgeshire Two sites: (1) Nene Washes: one heard during 4th–19th May; (2) Ouse Washes: one heard on the late date of 31st August.

England, C

Staffordshire One site: one heard on 10th April.

England, N

Yorkshire Two sites: (1) extensive site with three singing males; (2) one heard.

Wales

Anglesey One site: two heard. One was recorded on 3rd–10th May, and another on 6th–13th May.

Scotland, S

Dumfries & Galloway One site: one heard.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Two sites: (1) one heard on 25th April; (2) one heard on 24th June. Highland One site: one heard in early June and again on 30th June. Orkney One site: one heard on 12th and 18th June and 1st August.

Corn Crake *Crex crex*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,238 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Red

1,282 singing males. All counts refer to singing males. The maximum total is again an increase on the 2009 national survey, indicating further consolidation or expansion of the population, although there was a decline in the number of calling males at the reintroduction site at the Nene Washes. Some birds reported away from the core population in the Hebrides may relate to passage birds, as they are usually heard only briefly with no repeat records in subsequent years, but such records represent less than 1% of the total.

England, SW

Cornwall One site: one on 31st May.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One extensive site (Nene Washes): 14. Lincolnshire One site: one in May and June.

England, N

Yorkshire One extensive site: one recorded on at least two days in June.

Wales

Anglesey One site: one on 13th–21st May.

Scotland, S

Dumfries & Galloway One site: one on 3rd August.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland One site: one on 12th–16th June; perhaps the same bird at a second site on 25th and 28th June.

Perth & Kinross Two sites: (1) one on 20th–22nd June; (2) one on 12th July.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Total 689: Coll 121, Colonsay 39, Garvallaachs 2, Iona 24, Islay 85, McCormaig Islands 3, Mull 7, Oronsay 19, Tiree 385, Treshnish Isles 4. **Caithness** Total 1. **Highland** Total 36: Canna 5, Mainland 13, Skye 18. **Orkney** Total 28. **Outer Hebrides** Total 493: Barra 69, Benbecula 14, Berneray 6, Berneray (south of Barra) 2, Harris 12, Lewis 180, Mingulay 2, North Uist 113, Sandray 1, South Uist 84, Vatersay 10. **Shetland** Total 3.

Northern Ireland

Co. Antrim Three sites: (1) one on 1st May; (2) one on 16th June; (3) one on 5th July. **Co. Armagh** One site: one on 18th July. **Co. Derry** Two sites: (1) one on 13th May; (2) one 30th June. **Co. Down** Two sites: (1) one on 5th July; (2) one 18th July. **Co. Tyrone** Two sites: (1) one male 11th May; (2) one 4th–6th June.



Gary Jenkins

317. Corn Crake *Crex crex*, Iona, Argyll, May 2011. The number of Corn Crakes reported to the RBBP continues to rise steadily, although over 97% of all birds are still reported from northern and western Scotland.

Common Crane *Grus grus*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 16 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Amber

Nine sites: 11–19 pairs. The productivity of Britain's breeding Cranes remains low, with only six young fledged in 2011. Nests are vulnerable to flooding and predation by ground predators, and nesting pairs to disturbance. However, pairs are appearing at new sites and there are indications of an increase in the Yorkshire population, so the long-term prospects look good.

England, SE

Kent One site: one pair present from May to July.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One site: one pair bred and fledged one young. **Norfolk** One extensive site (Norfolk Broads): six pairs bred, with three successful pairs fledging four young, three probable breeding pairs and one possible breeding pair. **Suffolk** One site (Lakenheath): two pairs bred; one pair fledged one young.

England, N

Yorkshire Two extensive sites: (1) two pairs bred. At one site two young were hatched but were lost to predators, and at the other the eggs were predated; (2) two displaying pairs, both began nest-building but abandoned the attempts, possibly due to rising water levels and/or disturbance.

UK, elsewhere

Three counties: (1) one pair, present in April, was seen mating; (2) three birds summered in suitable habitat; (3) a single bird on several dates from mid March to early May.

Great Bustard *Otis tarda*

Reintroduced population first bred in 2008

One extensive site: two pairs bred. The reintroduction scheme has seen breeding in each year from 2008 and a total of six young fledged so far. Both young hatched in 2011 were predated and the number of breeding females has been static at between two and four in the last three years.

England, SW

Wiltshire One site: two females nested in a winter wheat crop and both successfully hatched eggs. The chicks were predated, probably by Foxes *Vulpes vulpes*, one at 14 days the other at 28 days.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,584 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Amber

At least 104 sites: 1,762 pairs. For the first time, the number of sites with breeding Avocets has exceeded 100, and fig. 4 shows the steady rise in the number of sites and counties with breeding Avocets since 1992, with the growth accelerating since the late 1990s. Back in 1992, when there were fewer than 500 breeding pairs, breeding occurred in just five counties – Essex, Kent, Norfolk, Suffolk and Yorkshire – and all sites were in coastal locations. Now, 20 years on, Avocets breed in 19 counties. Breeding attempts away from the coast began in 1996 – at Welney, Norfolk, and Rutland Water, Leicestershire & Rutland. In 2011 there were the first breeding records in both Greater Manchester and Northumberland, with young fledged at both sites. In Leicestershire & Rutland, the first nesting since the failed attempt in 1996 again resulted in failure when the chicks were predated.

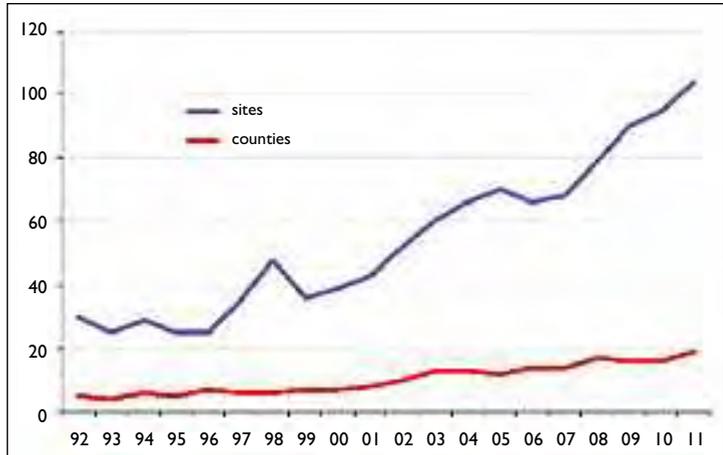


Fig. 4. Changes in the number of sites and counties with confirmed breeding Avocets *Recurvirostra avosetta*, 1992–2011.

Avocet	No. sites	Confirmed breeding pairs	England, C		
			Leicestershire & Rutland	1	5
			Nottinghamshire	2	6
			Worcestershire	1	8
England, SW	3	26	England, N	22	206
Hampshire	3	26	Cheshire & Wirral	2	6
England, SE	27	493	Cleveland	1	18
Essex	14	136	Co. Durham	1	2
Kent	9	303	Greater Manchester	1	1
Sussex	4	54	Lancashire & N Merseyside	6	81
England, E	47	1,001	Northumberland	1	2
Cambridgeshire	4	29	Yorkshire	10	96
Lincolnshire	18	286	Wales	1	17
Norfolk	15	497	Gwent	1	17
Suffolk	10	189	TOTALS	104	1,762

Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 371 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Amber

Seven counties: 422 confirmed breeding pairs fledged 250 young. The year 2011 saw the highest number of confirmed breeding pairs, exceeding 400 for the first time, with increases in Hampshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Wiltshire.

Stone-curlew	Confirmed breeding pairs	Young fledged			
			Oxfordshire	3	4
			Sussex	2	3
England, SW	133	88	England, E	276	146
Hampshire	36	22	Cambridgeshire	0	0
Wiltshire	97	66	Norfolk	144	74
England, SE	13	16	Suffolk	132	72
Berkshire	8	9	TOTALS	422	250

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 695 bp

Coverage: moderate

Green



Mike Lane

318. A pair of Little Ringed Plovers *Charadrius dubius*, West Midlands, May 2011. Widespread across England and parts of Wales, Little Ringed Plovers are still expanding into southern and eastern Scotland.

741 pairs. Perhaps reflecting its status as a species still colonising the north of Britain, the only regions to report an increase were northern England and Scotland. *Bird Atlas 2007–11* will show how the distribution has spread north in the last 20 years. In the *1988–91 Breeding Atlas*, there was only one confirmed breeding record in Scotland, in Fife, but in 2011 there were 12 breeding pairs, with a further nine probable breeding pairs, distributed across nine Scottish counties.

Little Ringed Plover	Confirmed and probable breeding pairs		
		Hertfordshire	5
		Kent	6
		Oxfordshire	4
England, SW	49	Surrey	14
Dorset	2	Sussex	13
Gloucestershire	8	England, E	88
Hampshire	22	Cambridgeshire	17
Somerset	5	Lincolnshire	34
Wiltshire	12	Norfolk	19
England, SE	85	Northamptonshire	11
Bedfordshire	4	Suffolk	7
Berkshire	13	England, C	165
Buckinghamshire	12	Derbyshire	41
Essex	9	Herefordshire	7
Greater London	5	Leicestershire & Rutland	24

<i>Little Ringed Plover cont.</i>			
	Confirmed and probable breeding pairs		
		Carmarthenshire	61
		Ceredigion	1
		Denbigh & Flint	2
Nottinghamshire	10	East Glamorgan	4
Shropshire	16	Gower	4
Staffordshire	52	Gwent	3
Warwickshire	2	Meirionnydd	2
West Midlands	4	Montgomeryshire	4
Worcestershire	9	Radnorshire	4
England, N	243	Scotland, S	12
Cheshire & Wirral	12	Borders	4
Cleveland	6	Clyde	3
Cumbria	14	Dumfries & Galloway	2
Co. Durham	8	Lothian	3
Greater Manchester	20	Scotland, Mid	9
Lancashire & N Merseyside	100*	Angus & Dundee	2
Northumberland	8	Fife	2
Yorkshire	75	Moray & Nairn	1
Wales	90	North-east Scotland	3
Breconshire	3	Upper Forth	1
Caernarfonshire	2	TOTAL	741

* Fieldwork for a local atlas in Lancashire & N Merseyside during 2008–11 indicated a county population of 100 pairs.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Scarce: 423 breeding males (2011 survey)

Coverage: high

Amber

The 2011 RSPB/SNH national survey combined with other data found an estimated 423 breeding males in Scotland and one in England. Breeding was confirmed in Cumbria, Highland, Moray & Nairn and North-east Scotland.

Daniel Hayhow, RSPB Conservation Scientist, outlines the results of the survey:

The second national survey for Dotterels was conducted by the RSPB and SNH in 2011. The first survey, in 1999, found 510–750 pairs (Whitfield 2002). The 2011 survey covered all SPAs and/or SSSIs with Dotterel as a designating feature, together with a stratified random sample of other sites with suitable breeding habitat. Overall, some 342 km² of land across 206 sites was surveyed, approximately 51% of the potential breeding area.

There were no records of breeding Dotterels in England, Wales or southern Scotland during the survey, although we are aware of a breeding record in northern England detected outwith the survey visits in 2011.



Alan Harris

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus* (and Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*). Like many waders on the nest, a sitting Dotterel is marvellously camouflaged in its typical montane nesting habitat.

The survey estimated the population to be 423 breeding males (95% CL 279–644), a significant decline of 43% since 1999. A majority (61%) of the population was found in the East Highlands, as in 1999, and 90% of males were in the three regions that held the core of the population in 1999 (East, Central and North Highlands). The rate of site occupancy has declined from 33% to 17% in 2011, further evidence of a retraction to core areas.

The table presents national and regional breakdowns using the 2011 RSPB/SNH national survey data.

	1999 ^a		2011		% change
	Estimate	Confidence limits	Estimate	Confidence limits	
UK	747	592–1,357	423	279–644	-43.3*
England & Wales	0		0		
South Scotland	2	0–16	0		
East Highlands	380	294–698	257	170–396	-32.4*
Tayside Highlands	29	0–92	0		
Central Highlands	205	80–446	73	39–139	-64.2 ns
Southwest Highlands	8	0–42	5	0–24	-39.2 ns
West Highlands	28	12–66	39	0–122	39.16 ns
North Highlands	95	73–234	49	21–135	-48.2 ns

* = Statistically significant, P<0.05; ns = not statistically significant.

^a To allow comparable estimates, a new methodology was used to analyse both the 1999 and 2011 datasets (producing national and regional estimates not significantly different from estimates reported by Whitfield 2002). The 2011 method uses a standard approach whereby counts from randomly selected sites are extrapolated across unsurveyed areas and the total summed with counts from census sites. This is done region by region and the national estimate is the sum of these regional estimates.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Scarce: 300+ bp (Jackson 2009)

Coverage: low

Red

81–140 apparently occupied territories (AOTs).

Scotland, N & W

Caithness One extensive site: one pair bred. **Orkney** One site: three pairs bred. **Outer Hebrides** No information received. **Shetland** Data from three islands (Fetlar, Mainland and Unst) totalled 135 AOTs including 77 nests. Also recorded as present on Yell, but no counts submitted.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Rare: 5-yr mean 63 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Red

Ten sites: 53–56 pairs. The main site, on the Nene Washes, failed to produce any young because of the very dry conditions, and overall these were the lowest numbers reported for eight years.

L. l. limosa 49–52 pairs

England, SW

One site: one pair bred, outcome unknown.

England, SE

Kent Two sites: (1) one pair bred; (2) one probable breeding pair.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One site (Nene Washes): 43 pairs bred but no young fledged. **Norfolk** One site (Welney): four pairs bred, at least six young fledged.

England, N

Lancashire & N Merseyside One site: possible breeding. **Yorkshire** One site: one probable breeding pair.

L. l. islandica 4 pairs

Scotland, N & W

Orkney One site: two pairs bred and fledged at least one young. **Shetland** Two sites: two pairs bred.

Ruff *Calidris pugnax*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 12 females

Coverage: high

Red

Six sites: at least ten females. The sites occupied in 2011 consistently report Ruff in spring. Leks of Ruff are conspicuous but once females have mated they become less noticeable and breeding is consequently difficult to prove. The last reported confirmed breeding occurred in Lancashire & N Merseyside in 2006.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One site: nine males were displaying to at least two females at the Ouse Washes on 16th April.

England, N

Lancashire & N Merseyside Three sites: (1) 12 males lekking into May; (2) six birds lekking into May; (3) 12 birds lekking on 29th April. Although there may be some duplication of birds at these three sites, and there was no specific count of any females, the records do suggest at least possible breeding in the Ribble Marshes. Yorkshire One site: up to 19 males and seven females present at leks from late March into May. Three or four males remained into June.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll One site: one male was recorded lekking to a female on 26th April and the male was seen again on 17th May.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 26 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Red

17 sites: 26–39 breeding males. Intensive monitoring by RSPB staff of potential breeding lochans in the Scottish islands was rewarded by the highest totals since 2005 and a wider spread of sites away from the main site on Fetlar, Shetland.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Two sites: one male bred (seen with two small chicks in July) and two probable breeding males. Outer Hebrides Four sites: three breeding males, one probable and six possible breeding males. Shetland 11 sites: 22 males bred, two probable and two possible breeding males.



Brydon Thomason

319. Red-necked Phalaropes *Phalaropus lobatus*, Shetland, June 2011. The number of breeding males, at up to 39 in 2011, was the highest total reported since 2005.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 3 bp

Coverage: high

Amber

Two sites: 5–6 pairs. These are the highest figures yet reported to the Panel. No young were recorded, but this may reflect efforts to keep disturbance to a minimum when checking sites. However, there are indications that some birdwatchers are seeking out this species in the breeding season; given the sensitive nature of the woodland habitat we urge that monitoring is undertaken **only** by those issued with a Schedule 1 licence.

Scotland, N & W

Highland Two extensive sites: five pairs bred plus one singing male.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Less scarce: 1,080 bp (Hancock et al. 1997)

Coverage: low

Green

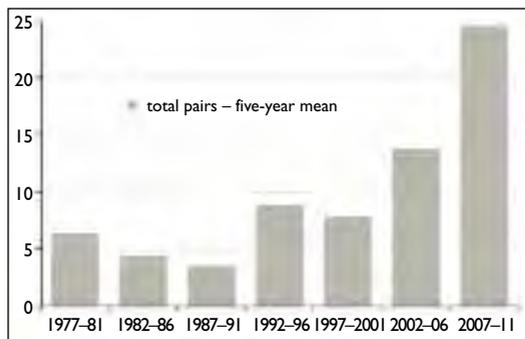
Data were received for a minimum of 147 pairs (with at least 76 pairs confirmed breeding). Records came from five recording areas: Argyll (4), Caithness (37), Highland (97), Outer Hebrides (7) and Shetland (2). Over 75% of the records submitted were attributed to atlas fieldwork. The Greenshank was added to the RBBP list in 1996 after the national survey (Hancock et al. 1997) reported 780–1,420 pairs, but we do not receive sufficient data each year to determine population trends.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 25 bp

Coverage: moderate

Amber



Ten sites: 4–29 pairs. The maximum number of pairs reached another new peak, and reflects the increase in breeding numbers in the last decade (fig. 5).

Scotland, N & W

Caithness One extensive site: three pairs bred. Highland Nine sites: one pair bred, 24 probable and one possible breeding pair.

Fig. 5. Five-year means of the total number of breeding pairs of Wood Sandpipers *Tringa glareola* in the UK, 1977–2011.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Scarce: 2,136 bp (Mitchell et al. 2004)

Coverage: moderate

Red

202 AOTs. Results from well-monitored colonies on Fair Isle, Foula (Shetland), Handa (Highland) and St Kilda (Outer Hebrides) continue the story of declining numbers and low productivity described in the previous report. The total number reported in 2010 was boosted by a county-wide survey in Orkney.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Probable breeding was reported from Lungay, Treshnish Islands, and birds were present, but not recorded breeding, on Coll. Caithness At least one pair bred and three other AOTs noted. Fair Isle Only 29 pairs bred, but no chicks fledged. Highland On Handa there were 11 AOTs and one pair bred on the mainland. Orkney Casual counts and regular seabird monitoring provided evidence of at least 89 AOTs, about 25% of the all-county survey in 2010. Outer Hebrides Limited data provided evidence of one pair breeding on Lewis and just three on St Kilda, two of which bred, fledging two young. Shetland Limited data included evidence of 53 confirmed breeding pairs and a further ten AOTs. At 41 territories surveyed on Foula, 32 pairs laid eggs and 11 chicks were found, but none fledged.

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus***Occasional breeder**

One site: one bird.

Scotland, N & W

Shetland One site: for the third year running, one adult held territory on East Burra, present from 12th May to 3rd July.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons***Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,482 bp****Coverage: moderate****Amber**

Minimum of 1,601 pairs at 56 colonies. With a minimum of 886 young fledged from colonies in the UK, 2011 was a more productive year than 2010 and several other recent years. Sites in Norfolk fared particularly well thanks to both fencing (to limit predation) and wardening at mainland sites but also because of a new colony established on an offshore sandbank where 100 pairs fledged 80 young.

Little Tern	No. sites	Confirmed pairs	Min. young fledged
England, SW	4	82	13
Dorset	1	18	12
Hampshire	3	64	1
England, SE	8	87	24
Essex	3	51	18
Kent	2	16	0
Sussex	3	20	6
England, E	17	912	470
Lincolnshire	2	19	2
Norfolk	9	786	459
Suffolk	6	107	9
England, N	6	222	239
Cleveland	1	84	147
Cumbria	1	62	35
Northumberland	2	46	36
Yorkshire	2	30	21
Wales	1	126	65
Denbigh & Flint	1	126	65
Scotland, S	1	1	0
Lothian	1	1	0
Scotland, Mid	4	36	34
Moray & Nairn	3	5	0
North-east Scotland	1	31	34
Scotland, N & W	14	119	32
Argyll	8	66	32
Highland	3	40	n/a
Orkney	1	6	n/a
Outer Hebrides	2	7	n/a
Isle of Man	1	16	9
TOTALS	56	1,601	886

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii***Rare: 5-yr mean 84 bp****Coverage: near-complete****Red**

Six sites: 80–81 pairs and two mixed pairs.

England, N

Lancashire & N Merseyside One site: a female paired with a Common Tern *S. hirundo* laid eggs but the whole colony was predated. Northumberland One site (Coquet Island): 78 pairs raised at least 97 large young from 108 hatched.

Wales

Anglesey One site: a Roseate paired with a Common Tern laid two eggs and fledged two young.

Scotland, Mid

Fife One site: one pair bred, and one chick was recorded in the nest. **North-east Scotland** One site: one possible breeding pair, present in a tern colony from 18th June to 30th July.

Northern Ireland

Co. Antrim One site: one pair bred, probably fledging at least one young.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Occasional breeder

One site: 0–1 pairs. Little Gulls occasionally stay on at potential breeding sites, the most recent instances being in 2009, when pairs held territory at sites in Norfolk and Yorkshire. The last confirmed breeding attempt was in Norfolk in 2007.

Scotland, N & W

Caithness One site: one possible breeding pair present from 13th May to 7th June. The birds were first-summerers but were watched nest-building and displaying.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 705 bp

Coverage: moderate

Amber

33 sites: 755–805 pairs. The total number of pairs recorded in 2011 was considerably less than in 2010, but much of this apparent decrease is due to the absence of data from the large colonies on the Medway, in Kent. In addition, some larger colonies were not counted accurately in 2011. Taking these factors into account, it is likely that the population was stable or increased slightly in 2011. There was no indication of any further spread or increase away from the core areas along the south coast between Dorset and the Thames Estuary.

England, SW

Dorset One site: breeding birds not counted but estimated to be at least 80 pairs. **Hampshire** Four sites: (1) 498 breeding pairs at Langstone Harbour but no young fledged owing to high spring tides and Fox predation; (2) 19 pairs bred and fledged nine young; (3) two pairs bred and fledged two young – this being the first inland breeding in the county; (4) one pair bred.

England, SE

Essex Four sites: (1) three pairs bred; (2) (3) one pair bred at each; (4) two probable breeding pairs. **Kent** One site: one pair bred. However, counts of the large colonies on the Medway Islands were lost after the death of a regular observer; these totalled 283 pairs in 2010. **Sussex** Three sites: (1) approximately 100 pairs bred (vegetation obscured many nests making accurate counting difficult); (2) 26 probable breeding pairs appeared to have deserted the colony after nest-building; (3) one pair bred, fledging two young.

England, E

Norfolk Three sites: (1) 11 pairs fledged 11 young; (2) ten pairs fledged 27 young; (3) nine possible breeding pairs. **Suffolk** One site: (1) four pairs bred, but no young fledged.

England, C

Staffordshire Two sites: (1) two pairs bred; (2) one pair bred.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral One site: two pairs bred. **Greater Manchester** One site: one probable breeding pair was seen nest-building in March. **Lancashire & N Merseyside** Three sites: (1) an estimated nine pairs bred, fledging at least six young; (2) two pairs fledged five young with four probable breeding pairs also present; (3) site not monitored but likely to have held at least five probable breeding pairs. **Yorkshire** Three sites: (1) one pair bred, fledging one young; (2) one pair bred but failed; (3) one possible breeding pair.

Wales

Anglesey One site: one pair bred but no young fledged. **Montgomeryshire** One site: one possible breeding pair.

Scotland, N & W

Orkney One site: a Mediterranean Gull was paired with a Black-headed Gull from late May until the end of June but deserted the site when the colony failed.

Northern Ireland

Co. Antrim One site: two pairs bred, fledging one young. Co. Down Two sites: two pairs bred.

In addition there were single summering or displaying birds at Black-headed Gull colonies in Borders, Cumbria, Fife, Isle of Wight and Leicestershire & Rutland.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 4 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Amber

Three sites: One pair plus 1–2 mixed pairs.

England, SW

Dorset One site: one pair bred, hatching two chicks but fledging only one. Hampshire One site: a Yellow-legged Gull paired with a Herring Gull *L. argentatus* fledged three hybrid young for the fourth year in a row.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One site: as in 2010, copulation between a Yellow-legged and a Lesser Black-backed Gull *L. fuscus* was seen but there was no further evidence of breeding.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otis*

Scarce/Less scarce: 1,800–6,000 bp*

Coverage: unknown

Green

* (Musgrove *et al.* 2013)

240–326 pairs. The reports listed here are broadly similar, and with an almost identical distribution, to those included in the 2010 report. There are a few long-term projects studying Long-eared Owls, such as those in Co. Durham, Greater Manchester and Northumberland, and most reports come from chance findings and limited local searches. Four years of Atlas fieldwork have

Long-eared Owl	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs			
			Lancashire & N Merseyside	16	17
			Northumberland	10	12
			Yorkshire	46	65
England, SW	9	17	Wales	16	19
Avon	1	1	Breconshire	1	3
Cornwall	0	2	Caernarfonshire	1	1
Devon	0	1	Ceredigion	2	2
Hampshire	2	2	Gwent	8	8
Isle of Wight	3	5	Meirionnydd	1	1
Somerset	1	2	Montgomeryshire	0	1
Wiltshire	2	4	Radnorshire	3	3
England, SE	3	15	Scotland, S	23	38
Berkshire	1	1	Ayrshire	3	3
Essex	1	1	Borders	4	9
Kent	1	10	Clyde	8	13
Oxfordshire	0	1	Clyde Islands	0	1
Sussex	0	2	Dumfries & Galloway	4	5
England, E	12	18	Lothian	4	7
Cambridgeshire	7	12	Scotland, Mid	12	19
Lincolnshire	2	2	Angus & Dundee	5	5
Norfolk	2	2	Fife	1	3
Suffolk	1	2	Moray & Nairn	1	3
England, C	19	20	North-east Scotland	1	4
Derbyshire	6	6	Perth & Kinross	4	4
Nottinghamshire	12	12	Scotland, N & W	16	19
Staffordshire	1	2	Argyll	3	4
England, N	106	137	Caithness	1	1
Cheshire & Wirral	1	1	Highland	11	13
Cleveland	1	2	Orkney	1	1
Cumbria	5	6	Northern Ireland	23	23
Co. Durham	13	18	Isle of Man	1	1
Greater Manchester	14	16	TOTALS	240	326

also provided a snapshot of the distribution across Britain & Ireland, which shows that the species, although never abundant, is generally widespread with breeding records in most counties, mainly in eastern Britain and in Ireland. It is noticeably scarce in Wales and in England south and west of a line from the Mersey to the Thames. An indication of the effects of under-recording when data are viewed only on an annual basis comes from Lancashire & N Merseyside, where atlas work over four years (2007–11) suggests a county population of 60 breeding pairs, compared with the 17 reported in 2011.

The recently revised UK estimate of 1,800–6,000 pairs (Musgrove *et al.* 2013), based on a scaling of the ratio of 10-km squares with breeding evidence between the 1968–72 and 2007–11 atlases, is thought to be unreliable, so any new data on breeding numbers could help to refine this.

There must be many remote areas of rough grazing with scattered conifer plantations along the fringes of uplands in the north and west of Britain where Long-eared Owls may nest, unseen and unheard by birdwatchers. Similarly, in the lowlands there are potentially suitable damp mosses and dry heaths, overgrown railway sidings and dune slacks. We repeat our request for all records of Long-eared Owls in potential breeding habitat to be submitted to county recorders to help build our knowledge of this cryptic and elusive species.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Scarce/Less scarce: 620–2,180 bp*

Coverage: unknown

Amber

* (Musgrove *et al.* 2013)

127–292 pairs. In the second year of reporting, the total number of Short-eared Owls was very similar to that in 2010, with a broadly comparable distribution and again 67–68% of records being from Scotland. Almost twice as many pairs on Orkney were recorded in 2011, however, probably reflecting the high numbers of Orkney Voles *Microtus arvalis orcadensis* present throughout the year. The lower number in the Outer Hebrides is an artefact of reduced reporting. However, there is little indication of breeding in coastal dunes and marshes as was still evident in the 1988–91 *Breeding Atlas*.

Short-eared Owl	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs			
			Scotland, S	17	35
			Ayrshire	1	1
			Borders	3	8
England, SE	1	1	Clyde	1	3
Kent	1	1	Clyde Islands	2	12
England, E	1	2	Dumfries & Galloway	10	11
Lincolnshire	1	2	Scotland, Mid	28	47
England, C	4	15	Angus & Dundee	1	4
Derbyshire	4	12	Moray & Nairn	0	4
Staffordshire	0	3	North-east Scotland	2	2
England, N	36	70	Perth & Kinross	21	29
Cheshire & Wirral	0	2	Upper Forth	4	8
Cumbria	5	11	Scotland, N & W	33	114
Co. Durham	2	5	Argyll	5	6
Greater Manchester	1	2	Caithness	4	6
Lancashire & N Merseyside	6	11	Highland	3	3
Northumberland	3	7	Orkney	11	83
Yorkshire	19	32	Outer Hebrides	10	16
Wales	5	6	Northern Ireland	2	2
Meirionnydd	1	1	Co. Antrim	2	2
Pembrokeshire	1	1	TOTALS	127	292
Radnorshire	3	4			

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla***Very rare: 5-yr mean 3 bp****Coverage: moderate****Red**

Five sites: 0–5 pairs. Five reports in June is an encouraging total but again there was no further evidence of breeding at any of these sites. The last confirmed breeding was ten years ago, in 2002 (see review in Holling *et al.* 2012).

Scotland, Mid

Upper Forth One site: one singing male on 6th June only.

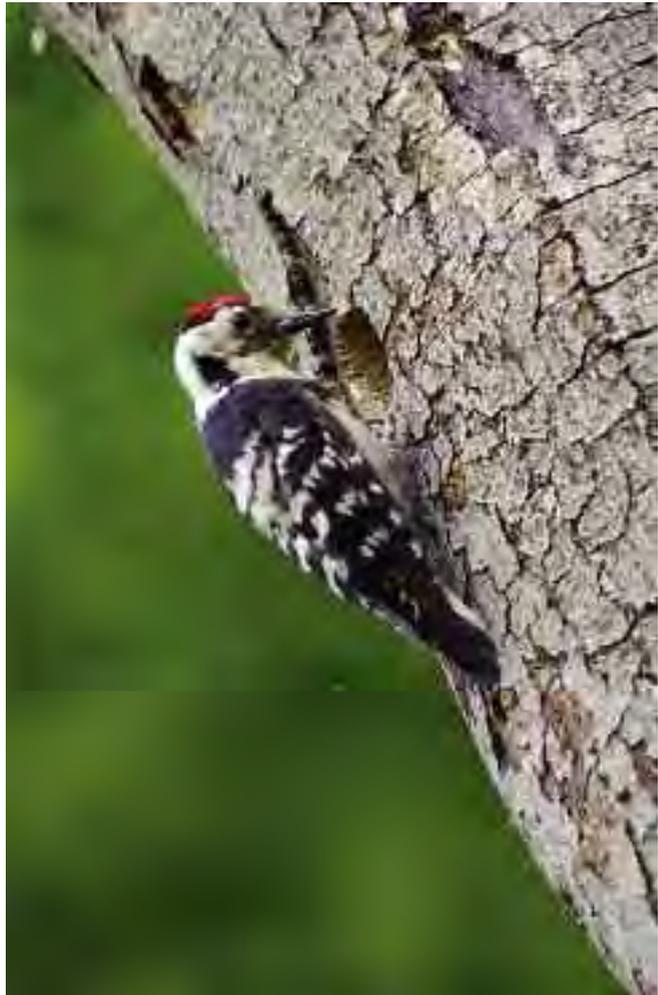
Scotland, N & W

Highland Four sites: four single birds, at least two of which were reported singing, between 5th and 16th June.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor***Less scarce: 1,000–2,000 bp (Musgrove *et al.* 2013)****Coverage: low****Red**

56–611 pairs. The addition of Lesser Spotted Woodpecker to the Panel list seems to have captivated the public interest and there was some useful media coverage in 2011. Perhaps because of heightened awareness, there was an increase in the number of reported pairs, from 486 to 611. More intensive fieldwork in areas such as the New Forest, Herefordshire and Kent has provided further evidence of presence. We encourage woodland surveys for this species in southern and central England and in Wales. However, at some breeding sites there have been concerns about excessive disturbance of Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers by birdwatchers and photographers, so observers should exercise caution in monitoring nests.

Where birds are present in suitable habitat in the spring, from March to June, they can at least be assigned to the possible breeding category. Probable breeding usually depends on evidence of territories through recording one or more drumming males at least a week apart, or by finding birds excavating nest cavities. More information on the criteria for assessing breeding evidence for this species can be found at www.rbbp.org.uk/downloads/sp_guidelines_lesser_spotted_woodpecker.pdf.



Stuart Clewlow

320. Male Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*, Hertfordshire, May 2011. In 2011 data were collected by the RBBP for only the second year, and the totals demonstrate how scarce and localised this elusive species has now become.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker			England, C	13	80
	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs	Derbyshire	5	10
			Herefordshire	3	30
			Leicestershire & Rutland	1	4
England, SW	6	172	Nottinghamshire	1	2
Avon	0	7	Shropshire	1	15
Cornwall	0	3	Staffordshire	1	3
Devon	2	22	Warwickshire	0	1
Dorset	0	9	West Midlands	1	1
Gloucestershire	2	13	Worcestershire	0	14
Hampshire	2	90	England, N	1	63
Somerset	0	15	Cheshire & Wirral	1	26
Wiltshire	0	13	Co. Durham	0	6
England, SE	24	223	Greater Manchester	0	4
Bedfordshire	0	7	Lancashire & N Merseyside	0	3
Berkshire	0	3	Yorkshire	0	24
Buckinghamshire	0	9	Wales	10	38
Essex	0	5	Caernarfonshire	0	1
Greater London	1	6	Carmarthenshire	2	3
Hertfordshire	2	10	Ceredigion	3	3
Kent	13	152	Denbigh & Flint	0	3
Surrey	4	20	East Glamorgan	0	5
Sussex	4	11	Gower	0	1
England, E	2	35	Gwent	1	9
Cambridgeshire	1	5	Meirionnydd	2	4
Lincolnshire	0	7	Montgomeryshire	0	2
Norfolk	0	15	Pembrokeshire	0	2
Northamptonshire	1	2	Radnorshire	2	5
Suffolk	0	6	TOTALS	56	611

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 4 bp

Coverage: near-complete



Two sites: 0–3 pairs. Lakenheath is now the only regular site for Golden Orioles but birds have not stayed to breed since 2009. The loss of this species as a British breeding bird looks sadly inevitable.

England, E

Norfolk One site: one male singing for one to two weeks in June, and a female or juvenile recorded on 2nd July, but no further evidence of any breeding attempt. **Suffolk** One site (Lakenheath): up to two males and a probable female present. On 23rd–24th May two males were singing but for the rest of that month and into June there was just a single male, seen nest-building in early June, about three weeks later than normal. A female was reported but was not confirmed.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 4 bp

Coverage: moderate



Three sites: 2–4 pairs. Two pairs again bred in Devon and were both successful despite the attention of egg-collectors. It is encouraging to hear of a third pair in the county although there was no repeat breeding in Scotland, following the success in Highland in 2010.

England, SW

Devon Two sites: (1) Two pairs bred. Thanks to a round-the-clock protection scheme, both pairs fledged young. One pair failed on the first attempt, but then raised a second brood of four. The other pair raised one brood of three. (2) One probable breeding pair. A singing male was joined by a female. Although there may have been a nesting attempt, the site suffered from disturbance and was subsequently abandoned.

England, elsewhere

One site: one male seen on four dates in June.

Red-billed Chough *Pyrhcorax pyrrhcorax*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 415 bp

Coverage: high

Amber

250–308 pairs. These figures are just a sample of the total population, last fully censused in 2002 (Johnstone *et al.* 2007), and include only monitored pairs, but we understand that there was full coverage in Cornwall, north Wales, Pembrokeshire, Colonsay and Oronsay, and Northern Ireland. The 2002 survey estimated 429–497 breeding pairs, so the five-year mean reported by the RBBP is reasonably close to this figure.

Red-billed Chough	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs			
			Gower	3	4
			Meirionnydd	15	21
England, SW	5	5	Pembrokeshire	58	65
Cornwall	5	5	Scotland	23	24
Wales	204	261	Argyll: Colonsay & Oronsay	13	13
Anglesey	32	41	Argyll: Islay	10	11
Caernarfonshire	77	101	Northern Ireland	1	1
Ceredigion	18	26	Co. Antrim	1	1
Denbigh & Flint	1	2	Isle of Man	17	17
East Glamorgan	0	1	TOTALS	250	308

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 636 bp

Coverage: moderate

Amber

758 territories or singing males. In the Firecrest's strongholds in south and southeast England, from Hampshire to Norfolk, birds may be widespread in suitable woodlands but tend to be both overlooked and under-reported. The total of 27 in Kent is based on a survey of just a small part of east Kent and the observer estimates that the county may hold 100–200 territories, with similar or greater numbers in neighbouring Sussex. There are also reliable numbers from the New Forest and Thetford Forest. More annual counts from pre-defined areas, or indeed county-wide surveys, would help us to understand the population size better and to track any changes between years. However, even in areas where Firecrests are relatively numerous, it is important that birdwatchers report all singing males and pairs in suitable breeding habitat so that county minima can be calculated, thus increasing the robustness of the annual RBBP totals.

Firecrest	Singing males/territories		
		Kent	27
		Surrey	11
		Sussex	18
England, SW	469	England, E	129
Dorset	3	Cambridgeshire	3
Gloucestershire	12	Norfolk	93
Hampshire	415	Suffolk	33
Isle of Wight	2	England, C	2
Somerset	4	Herefordshire	1
Wiltshire	33	Warwickshire	1
England, SE	154	Wales	4
Bedfordshire	4	Gwent	1
Berkshire	15	Montgomeryshire	2
Buckinghamshire	70	Radnorshire	1
Essex	2	TOTAL	758
Hertfordshire	7		

Willow Tit *Poecile montana*

Less scarce: 3,400 bp (in 2009)*

Coverage: moderate

Red

* (Musgrove *et al.* 2013)

208–667 pairs. The addition of Willow Tit to the Panel’s list has generated a good number of returns, with some counties, mainly in northern England and the English midlands, and Dumfries & Galloway in Scotland, reporting the largest numbers, although many of these counties also say that coverage is incomplete. Other areas are finding that there are only a few records of the species reported each year, or none at all. In 2012, only just over 1% of sampled squares for the BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) recorded Willow Tit (Risely *et al.* 2013), and with the long-term trend (1995–2011) at -82%, it may not be long before trends cannot be calculated for this species.

It is not yet known how representative of the total population the sample of 600+ pairs reported are, but after a few years the RBBP should hopefully be able to provide information to supplement the annual BBS trends – in that context it would be useful to know which counties provide complete or near-complete coverage. To help your records contribute to this initiative, please visit the RBBP website: www.rbbp.org.uk/downloads/sp_guidelines_willow_tit.pdf.

Willow Tit	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs			
			Warwickshire	2	5
			West Midlands	1	2
			Worcestershire	0	1
England, SW	15	63	England, N	125	303
Avon	0	2	Cheshire & Wirral	10	31
Cornwall	1	6	Cumbria	1	3
Devon	2	23	Co. Durham	29	48
Gloucestershire	4	13	Greater Manchester	13	57
Hampshire	4	9	Lancashire & N Merseyside	9	24
Wiltshire	4	10	Northumberland	7	32
England, SE	5	6	Yorkshire	56	108
Berkshire	3	3	Wales	13	69
Buckinghamshire	0	1	Breconshire	1	10
Oxfordshire	2	2	Carmarthenshire	0	16
England, E	7	57	Ceredigion	3	5
Lincolnshire	7	41	Denbigh & Flint	1	2
Norfolk	0	2	East Glamorgan	0	8
Northamptonshire	0	11	Gwent	0	3
Suffolk	0	3	Meirionnydd	1	1
England, C	25	145	Montgomeryshire	0	4
Derbyshire	12	25	Pembrokeshire	2	10
Herefordshire	0	20	Radnorshire	5	10
Leicestershire & Rutland	2	26	Scotland, S	18	24
Nottinghamshire	2	14	Dumfries & Galloway	18	24
Shropshire	1	12	TOTALS	208	667
Staffordshire	5	40			

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 577 bp

Coverage: moderate

Amber

At least 59 sites: a minimum of 360 pairs. The number of sites reporting Bearded Tits in 2011 was comparable with recent years (the median value of the last ten years is 54 sites, ranging from 40 to 71 in 2002 when there was a national survey). However, the total number of probable and confirmed breeding pairs in 2011 plummeted to half of the 2010 total. The percentage changes in numbers of pairs since 2010 are shown in the table, with the largest declines apparently in eastern and northern England. Some major UK sites such as Minsmere in Suffolk were not counted in 2011, but others received equivalent coverage in both years – the large Tay Estuary reedbed site in

Rare breeding birds in the UK in 2011

Bearded Tit	Minimum no. sites	Confirmed and probable breeding pairs (change in number of pairs between 2010 and 2011)	Sussex	3	17
			England, E	26	205 (-53.2%)
			Cambridgeshire	5	10
			Lincolnshire	2	3
			Norfolk	11	84
			Suffolk	8	108
England, SW	9	27 (-6.9%)	England, N	4	40 (-76.0%)
Devon	1	1	Lancs & N Merseyside	1	12
Dorset	4	9	Yorkshire	3	28
Hampshire	2	8	Wales	1	5 (-16.7%)
Somerset	2	9	Gwent	1	5
England, SE	18	83 (+6.4%)	Scotland, Mid	1	n/a
Bedfordshire	1	1	Perth & Kinross	1	n/a
Essex	5	15	TOTALS	59	360 (-49.9%)
Kent	9	50			

Perth & Kinross (where 70 pairs were reported in 2004, with an estimate of 250 for that extensive site at that time) was not counted in either year. The decline may have been in response to the extreme cold in December 2010, which affected freshwater sites badly and potentially reduced the breeding population prior to the 2011 season.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

Less scarce: 3,064 bp (Conway et al. 2009)

Coverage: moderate

Amber

836 territories. Despite successive cold winters in the main range of the Woodlark, and in contrast to species such as the Dartford Warbler, the number reported in 2011 is much the same as in 2010, remaining at just under a third of the estimated UK total of around 3,100 pairs.

Woodlark	Singing males/ territories	Sussex	66
		England, E	266
		Lincolnshire	11
		Norfolk	125
		Suffolk	130
England, SW	287	England, C	30
Devon	3	Nottinghamshire	14
Dorset	32	Staffordshire	16
Gloucestershire	1	England, N	32
Hampshire	246	Yorkshire	32
Wiltshire	5	Wales	2
England, SE	219	Gwent	2
Bedfordshire	1	TOTAL	836
Berkshire	3		
Buckinghamshire	1		
Surrey	148		

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 2,003 bp

Coverage: high

Green

1,484 singing males or territories. The number of Cetti's Warblers reported in 2011 was 22% lower than in 2010, although the 2011 total should probably be higher since Kent provided a county estimate of 500, based on extrapolation of recent fieldwork. Indeed, all figures in the table are based on reported totals or site estimates, so it is likely that populations are actually higher. In some areas, where the Cetti's Warbler has become a common and expected species in lowland wetlands, birders are becoming less thorough about reporting, which reduces the ability to track population changes between years more accurately.

It is clear that numbers have fallen in the last two breeding seasons, undoubtedly a result of the prolonged cold periods in spring 2009, winter 2009/10 and in early winter 2010/11. However,

Cetti's Warbler	Singing males/ territories		
		Norfolk	174
		Northamptonshire	35
		Suffolk	214
England, SW	597	England, C	31
Avon	32	Derbyshire	10
Cornwall	15	Leicestershire & Rutland	5
Devon	52	Nottinghamshire	3
Dorset	46	Staffordshire	8
Gloucestershire	21	Warwickshire	3
Hampshire	250	West Midlands	1
Isle of Wight	22	Worcestershire	1
Somerset	120	England, N	18
Wiltshire	39	Cheshire & Wirral	6
England, SE	257	Cleveland	1
Bedfordshire	9	Lancashire & N Merseyside	8
Berkshire	29	Yorkshire	3
Buckinghamshire	8	Wales	94
Essex	51	Anglesey	5
Greater London	7	Breconshire	4
Hertfordshire	22	Caernarfonshire	8
Kent	75	Carmarthenshire	17
Oxfordshire	1	Ceredigion	2
Surrey	5	East Glamorgan	3
Sussex	50	Gower	20
England, E	487	Gwent	29
Cambridgeshire	62	Pembrokeshire	6
Lincolnshire	2	TOTAL	1,484

with more than 1,500 territories remaining in 2011, this species has a much more favourable status than after the cold winters of the mid 1980s, not least because it is now much more widespread across England and Wales. In fact, the small populations in northern England and north Wales actually increased between 2010 and 2011.

Western Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli*

Potential breeder

One site: one singing male. This species has not previously appeared in these reports, and although the occurrence could be considered rather late in the season, the bird held territory for almost a month in scrub birch *Betula* and willow *Salix*. The nearest regular breeding population is in northern France, where the species nests in open woodland, both deciduous and coniferous, and eggs are normally laid in late April (*BWP*).

England, C

Derbyshire One site: a male singing from 2nd to 28th July.

Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*

Less scarce: 3,214 bp (Wotton *et al.* 2009)

Coverage: moderate

Amber

530 territories. The estimated total of 3,214 pairs in the UK in 2006 were all in the southern half of Britain (Wotton *et al.* 2009). Reports to the RBBP comprise usually 50–75% of the national total but the information sources are generally consistent – and thus provide an accurate estimate of trends. Fig. 6 shows a peak in 2006, with numbers steady at around 2,100 in 2007 and 2008, but a decline in each year since. Regional differences, shown in the table, reveal across-the-board decreases, with an overall decline of -74.9%.

This resident, insectivorous species has clearly been affected by the run of cold winters since



Gary Thoburn

321. Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*, north Wales, April 2011. The run of cold winters has reduced the population of Dartford Warblers to less than half of what it was in the national survey year of 2006.

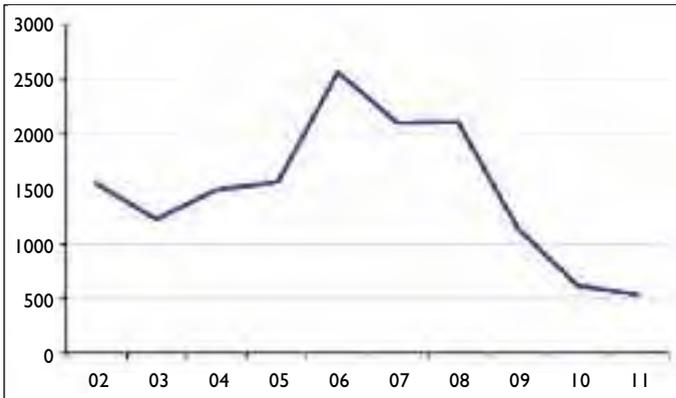


Fig. 6. Numbers of Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata* territories reported to the RBBP, 2002–11.

2008, including the very cold spell late in 2010, which further reduced the population, especially in southern England. Yet 2011 still saw the first breeding records for two recording areas in the north of Wales: Caernarfonshire and Denbigh & Flint, while the isolated Staffordshire population held steady at three pairs.

Dartford Warbler	Total territories (with regional change from 2008 to 2011)		
England, E	100 (-8.3%)	England, E	100 (-8.3%)
		Norfolk	3
		Suffolk	97
England, SW	359 (-71.5%)	England, C	3 (-75%)
Cornwall	12	Staffordshire	3
Devon	25	England, N	0 (-100%)
Dorset	188	Yorkshire	0
Hampshire	120	Wales	25 (-68.4%)
Isle of Wight	8	Caernarfonshire	3
Somerset	6	Denbigh & Flint	1
England, SE	43 (-93.4%)	East Glamorgan	3
Berkshire	6	Gower	9
Kent	0	Pembrokeshire	9
Surrey	25	TOTAL	530 (-74.9%)
Sussex	12		

Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans*

Potential breeder

One site: 0–1 pairs. In 2009 we reported a territorial male Subalpine Warbler in Shetland and in 2010 a pair on Bardsey, Caernarfonshire, present for up to eight days. The 2011 bird on Fair Isle follows a similar pattern: holding territory for more than a few days late in the spring. These birds are a long way from their usual haunts: dense, dry, Mediterranean scrub.

Scotland, N & W

Fair Isle One site: one singing male of the eastern race *S. c. albistriata*. Present from 29th April to 4th June, associating at times with a Lesser Whitethroat *S. curruca*.

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 4 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Red

Three/four sites: 0–3 pairs. A typical showing, although the Panel is aware of other records which have not yet been submitted to BBRC.

England, SW

Devon/Dorset One/two sites: one singing male at Slapton Ley, Devon, was present for seven days from 24th April and then what is assumed to have been the same bird was relocated at Lodmoor in Dorset, where it sang from 11th May to 1st June.

England, SE

Sussex One site: one singing male from 27th May to 24th June.

England, E

Norfolk One site: one singing male from 18th to 28th July.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 9 bp

Coverage: high

Red

Six/seven sites: 0–7 pairs. There are frequent late-spring records of presumed migrant birds singing for one or two days at coastal sites, but this report lists only those birds that lingered for at least a week. Observers should take great care not to disturb vegetation close to any Marsh Warblers found, as recent experience demonstrates that these secretive birds could set up territory and breed in almost any small patch of low dense vegetation; all recent breeding records have been on or close to the east coast of Britain. There was no confirmed breeding reported in 2011.

England, SE

Kent One site: one singing male. Sussex Two sites: (1) two singing males during 11th–28th June; (2) one singing male, from 27th May to 24th June, at a site frequented for the fourth year in a row.

England, E

Norfolk One site: one singing male from 30th May to at least 25th June.

England, N

Northumberland One/two sites: there were two records of singing males, one on 1st–2nd June and another on 10th and 13th July at a site less than 10 km away. Although both were apparently present for less than a week, one singing male has been included given that breeding probably took place at one of these sites in 2010.

Scotland, N & W

Shetland One site: one singing male from 11th June to 5th July.

Fair Isle Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes fridariensis*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 30 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Red

A total of 37 territories was logged in an all-island survey.

St Kilda Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes hirtensis*

Rare: 136 bp (1993 partial survey)

Coverage: low

Red

No data were collected in 2011.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 2 bp

Coverage: moderate

Red

One site: one pair bred. There is no real consistency of site usage over the years, other than a general tendency for pairs to settle in areas at higher altitude.

Scotland, N & W

Highland One site: one pair bred. In late April a male was seen taking food to a nest, but there were no records after 1st May, so the breeding attempt may have failed. This is an unusually early date for breeding Fieldfares.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 16 bp

Coverage: low

Red

Nine sites: 4–11 pairs. Perhaps surprisingly, records from Atlas fieldwork provided only a few records of breeding Redwings, and so the figures here do not appear to do justice to the numbers in Highland. In 2008, the first full year of fieldwork for *Bird Atlas 2007–11*, details of no fewer than 27 pairs were submitted. Observers living in or visiting Highland region are encouraged to report all Redwings in suitable breeding habitat from May to early August.

Scotland, N & W

Highland Five sites: (1)–(4) two pairs bred, one probable and one possible breeding pair, all in June; (5) two singing males on 4th May. **Orkney** One site: one pair bred, fledging two young. **Outer Hebrides** One site: one singing male summered but did not breed. **Shetland** Two sites: at site (1), where breeding has occurred in the last three years, one pair bred, again fledging young, and there was a second singing male; (2) one male in May and early June at a site where breeding has occurred in the recent past.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

Occasional breeder, last bred in 1995 (Red-spotted) and 1996 (White-spotted)

Two sites: two singing males. For three consecutive years we have reported singing White-spotted Bluethroats *L. s. cyaneacula* and in 2011 there were two males, both in fenland habitats, in areas where we might expect this race to occur given that it breeds as close to East Anglia as the Netherlands.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One site: one singing male White-spotted was reported on both 1st and 10th June. **Norfolk** One site: one singing White-spotted male at Welney, presumably the same bird present in 2010, returned on 24th March and remained on territory until at least 4th June.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Rare: 5-yr mean 47 bp

Coverage: high

Amber

42 sites: 17–44 pairs. In 2011 there was good coverage of potential sites for Black Redstarts in the centre of London and this was rewarded by the location of 21 potential breeding pairs. Not all Black Redstarts nest in town centres, though; some are associated with coastal habitats or man-made sites such as quarries where access may be limited. The occurrence of adults or fully fledged juveniles in midsummer at sites where there is no previous evidence of Black Redstarts nesting may suggest that breeding has gone undetected and we encourage observers to be alert to such possibilities. There have been such instances in Scotland in recent years, for example in Highland and the Outer Hebrides in 2010 and in Lothian in 2011, yet breeding is almost unknown in

Scotland – there are just two confirmed breeding records, from North-east Scotland in 1976 (Francis & Cook 2011) and from the Isle of May in 1994 (Forrester *et al.* 2007).

England, SE

Greater London 21 sites: four pairs bred plus three probable and five possible breeding pairs and nine singing males. **Kent** Three sites: three pairs bred and one probable breeding pair. **Surrey** One site: one singing male, a first-summer bird, held territory for six weeks. **Sussex** Three sites: one probable and one possible breeding pair and one singing male.

England, E

Cambridgeshire Two sites: one pair bred and one singing male. **Norfolk** One site: two pairs bred. **Suffolk** Five sites: four pairs bred and one singing male.

England, C

Derbyshire One site: one singing male at a likely breeding site, but recorded on one date only.

England, N

Co. Durham Two sites: two females recorded in suitable breeding habitat constitutes possible breeding. **Greater Manchester** One site: one pair bred. **Lancashire & N Merseyside** One site: one pair bred.

Wales

Breconshire One site: one pair bred at the site used in 2010. Two broods were again raised, three young fledging in mid July and two in mid August.

Blue-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava flava*

Occasional breeder

One site: 0–1 mixed pairs.

England, SW

Gloucestershire One site: one male paired with a female *M. f. flavissima*, but no evidence of any further attempts at breeding.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba alba*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 1 bp

Coverage: high

Green

Four sites: one pair and three mixed pairs.

England, SE

Sussex One site: one pair bred, assumed to be a mixed pair. On 1st June, an unsexed *M. a. alba* flew to a nest-site carrying food, but its mate was not seen.

England, E

Norfolk One site: one mixed pair bred. A female paired with a Pied Wagtail *M. a. yarrellii* fledged three young.

Wales

East Glamorgan One site: one mixed pair bred. One *M. a. alba* was seen feeding several recently fledged young birds in June.

Scotland, N & W

Shetland One site: one pair bred, seen with recently fledged juveniles on 20th June.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Occasional breeder

One site: 0–1 pairs.

Scotland, N & W

Highland One site: a pair in suitable habitat on 22nd May was not reported subsequently.

Common Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 4 bp

Coverage: low

Green

Nine sites: 5–9 pairs. Both Common and Lesser Redpolls *C. cabaret* breed in north and west Scot-

land with apparent overlap in range on the Hebrides, the Northern Isles, in Caithness and in Sutherland (Highland). Since the species were split and *flammea* added to the RBBP list, we have documented confirmed breeding in five out of eight years, but proof of breeding is difficult to obtain, especially as the first step is to establish species identity. In 2011, Argyll had its first breeding records, both on Tiree.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Two sites, both on Tiree: two pairs bred. One pair fledged three young while the other fledged 4–5 young. These are the first records of successful breeding in Argyll. **Caithness** One site: at least one pair bred. Juveniles were photographed on 8th and 10th July and a mixed flock of redpolls nearby in July also contained juvenile *flammea*. **Orkney** Four sites: two pairs bred, confirmed by the observation of family parties, and two possible breeding pairs based on observations of displaying males. **Shetland** Two sites: (1) one probable breeding pair (song flight seen in late June, a pair in early July and a flock of six in late August at the same site may have been a family party); (2) a male in song flight on 7th June.

Parrot Crossbill *Loxia pytyopsittacus*

Rare: 50 bp (Summers & Buckland 2010) Coverage: low

Amber

Two sites: two pairs. As with the previous species, there are identification issues with confusion species (Common *L. curvirostra* and Scottish Crossbills *L. scotica*) which may breed in the same forests as Parrot Crossbills, and this problem affects the number of records submitted to the Panel.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland One site: one pair bred.

Scotland, N & W

Highland One site: one pair bred. An adult with three fledged juveniles was seen on 6th August.

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

Occasional breeder

Two sites: 0–2 pairs. A typical record from Scotland but a more unusual one from Wales.

Wales

Anglesey One site: one singing male from 29th May to 8th June. This is the fourth consecutive year that a male has been recorded in north Anglesey but the first to stay for a significant period.

Scotland, N & W

Highland One site: one singing male was present from 23rd June to 4th July.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean: 85 bp* Coverage: low

Red

* 2011 estimate was 500–1,000 bp (Clements 2013).

47–138 pairs. This is the highest number of potential pairs yet reported to the Panel, perhaps reflecting the wider recognition that the Hawfinch is indeed a rare species and the importance of recording birds and locations in the breeding season. Fig. 7, from the forthcoming *Bird Atlas 2007–11*, shows quite clearly that there are just five main concentrations of breeding Hawfinches in Britain: (1) south Cumbria and north Lancashire, (2) the Meirionnydd area of west Wales, (3) the Wye Valley and the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire and Gwent, (4) the New Forest (Hampshire) and (5) Kent; with only a few outlying occupied 10-km squares elsewhere. This map represents four years of survey work, compared with the single year reported here, but there is nevertheless a close match.

Hawfinch was added to the RBBP list in 2006 and with six years of data now collected we can pull out some statistics from the database. Data have been received from a total of at least 148 sites in 23 counties, but at present there are few comprehensive site counts, so only an approximate minimum number of pairs can be calculated. Summing the maximum counts at all sites registered

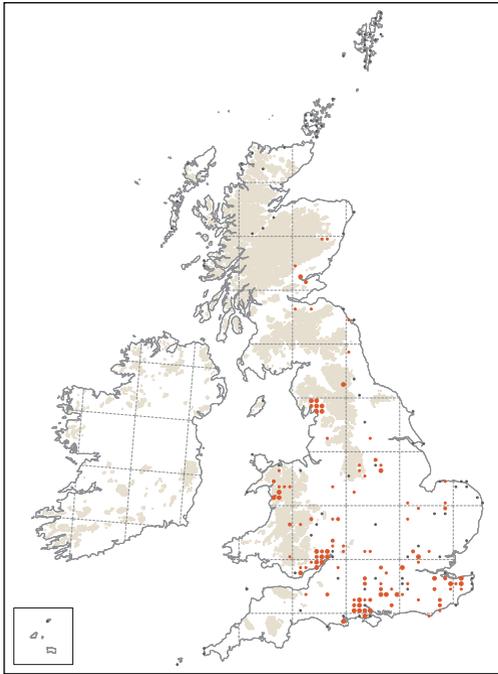


Fig. 7. The provisional distribution map from *Bird Atlas 2007–11* shows how restricted the Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* has become, with just five main centres of population (see text). Red dots show records with breeding evidence; other records ('present') represent migrant birds or those seen away from potential breeding habitat.

gives a total of only 259 pairs, far fewer than the 3,000–6,500+ estimated in the 1988–91 *Breeding Atlas*. The total derived from RBBP data can be broken down as follows: England 207 pairs, Wales 50 pairs and Scotland two pairs. Clements (2013) also reviewed the status of the Hawfinch in the UK, based on conclusions from a Hawfinch Workshop held in November 2011. Local experts provided estimates for six areas of the country and, coupled with an estimate for other areas, a total population of 800–900 breeding pairs was produced, although, more cautiously, the range could be 500–1,000 pairs.

There is significant under-reporting of Hawfinches to the Panel. To help improve the accuracy of our data and to refine these figures further, we ask that birdwatchers report all sightings of Hawfinches during the breeding season (mid April to July), providing information on the number of birds, a six-figure grid reference and details of the breeding evidence witnessed, using standard atlas breeding definitions. Guidelines on recording Hawfinches can be found at: www.rbbp.org.uk/downloads/sp_guide_lines_hawfinch.pdf

County recorders should also refer to these guidelines when reviewing the number of pairs at each site in their recording area. As well as details of the annual data collated, an estimate of the county breeding population would be useful.

England, SW

Gloucestershire Forest of Dean: five pairs bred, nine probable and 11 possible breeding pairs; elsewhere: one singing male. Hampshire New Forest: 13 pairs bred and ten possible breeding pairs. Wiltshire Two pairs bred and one possible breeding pair.

England, SE

Hertfordshire Two possible breeding pairs. Kent In one North Downs area, 15 pairs were located and of these nine fledged young. Elsewhere in the county, there were an estimated minimum 35 other pairs. Surrey One possible breeding pair.



Chris Knights

322. Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*, Breckland, Norfolk, May 2011. A review of the records received by the RBBP since 2006, when Hawfinch was added to the list of species considered, shows that, even though this is a scarce and localised species, it is significantly under-recorded.

Sussex One possible breeding pair.

England, E

Norfolk In Thetford Forest, the presence of up to eight birds in April and again from October suggests that at least one pair bred locally.

England, C

Derbyshire One possible breeding pair. **Nottinghamshire** One pair bred and four probable breeding pairs.

England, N

Cumbria One pair bred, one probable and two possible breeding pairs, but poor coverage in the county.

Lancashire & N Merseyside One probable and one possible breeding pair, but also poor coverage.

Wales

Ceredigion At least one possible breeding pair. **East Glamorgan** At least one possible breeding pair but no records from main area. **Gwent** Two pairs bred and two possible breeding pairs. **Meirionnydd** Five pairs bred in the Mawddach valley and confirmed breeding records from seven further atlas tetrads in the Dolgellau area. **Radnorshire** At least two pairs fledged young.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Rare: 79 bp (2011 survey)

Coverage: low

Amber

A national survey of Snow Buntings was conducted in 2011; Daniel Hayhow, RSPB Conservation Scientist, outlines the results of the survey:

The first national survey for the Snow Bunting was carried out as part of the 2011 RSPB/SNH Montane Bird Survey. Preliminary analyses suggest that in 2011 a minimum 35 territorial pairs were present (using standard BTO breeding evidence codes). Including sightings of all males (single birds in habitat and singing males) in this estimate gives a minimum of 79 possible territories. However, it should be noted that work to correct for birds undetected during survey visits may result in the final estimates being revised upwards. The survey involved visits to sites where Snow Buntings had been recorded during the breeding season at any time since the 1970s, but it is very likely that a small number of birds are present but remain undetected at other locations. While a number of the sites in the core range of the central Cairngorms have been studied intensively in recent decades, elsewhere in Scotland Snow Bunting records have typically been ad hoc in nature, resulting in low confidence in previous estimates of the population.

In 2011 a total of 58 sites was surveyed. A site was defined as a discrete hill, which may encompass one or more suitable areas of Snow Bunting habitat, for example corries and boulder fields. The percentage of occupied sites was 40%. Within the central Cairngorms area, all of the sites were occupied and this area produced around 80% of the records. Previous estimates, including Musgrove *et al.* (2013), suggest a national total of 50–100 pairs. This survey suggests that these estimates are not unreasonable.



Alan Harris

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

Occasional breeder

A summer-plumaged male was in the former breeding area in the Cairngorm Massif (Moray & Nairn/NE Scotland) on 30th July. This is the first time that the Lapland Bunting has appeared in these reports since 1997, when one or two males were also seen in the high tops in midsummer.

Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus*

Scarce: 862 bp (Stanbury *et al.* 2010)

Coverage: low

Red

104 territories. The increase in the number of nests or territories recorded in 2011 reflects observer coverage rather than any change in the numbers of Cirl Buntings, given that the most recent survey, in 2009, estimated 862 territories in Cornwall and Devon.

England, SW

Cornwall 30 territories. Devon 74 territories recorded in four areas of south Devon.

Appendix I. Other species considered by the Panel also recorded in 2011.

The following occasional or potential breeding species were recorded during the breeding season in 2011, but showed no further signs of breeding than are documented here.

Black Duck *Anas rubripes*

In Lothian, a female, thought to be a second-generation hybrid, was seen with a brood of 12 hybrid ducklings in May. A presumed Mallard *A. platyrhynchos* × Black Duck hybrid had been recorded at this site in autumn 2009.

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*

A drake in breeding plumage was present in Somerset in June; nearby in Avon there were also records of one male, perhaps the same one, reported from three sites up to early May and from late July. This is the area where breeding may have occurred in 2004 (Holling *et al.* 2010; Davis & Vinicombe 2011).

Greater Scaup *Aythya marila*

The only record was of a male in eclipse at a loch in Caithness in August.

Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Two juveniles seen at Stodmarsh, Kent, in July may have fledged locally, but there were no sightings of adults to substantiate that claim.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

Two birds arrived at last year's breeding site in Kent on 29th April, but they departed after 6th May.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

A single male was again present at a site in Yorkshire, from 8th April to 4th July. This was its eighth consecutive year of summer residence here.

Great Snipe *Gallinago media*

One of the surprises of the year was the discovery of a displaying male Great Snipe at Cley, Norfolk, on 11th–16th May. Typically found on autumn passage, this cryptic species is far less often located in spring and it is unlikely that this male attracted a mate: the nearest breeding populations are in Norway and eastern Poland.

Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus*

There were three records of singing male Iberian Chiffchaffs in 2011, in Cornwall, Lancashire & N Merseyside and Norfolk, but none stayed longer than five days.

Acknowledgments

The Rare Breeding Birds Panel would like to thank the many contributors who have supplied the data upon which this report is based. In particular, we wish to recognise the willing co-operation and assistance of county and regional recorders throughout the UK (named on our website) – county data form the backbone of this report and without the effort of these volunteers it would be much poorer in its coverage. Many recorders also reviewed an early draft of this report, helping to ensure the accuracy of the data presented, and this additional help is very much appreciated. Birdwatchers who submit sightings of rare breeding birds directly to these recorders, or who log their records on BirdTrack, must also be recognised for they provide many of the original observations.

Input from the many specialist study groups, conservation organisations and numerous individuals means that the report can be even more comprehensive. Valuable supplementary data were submitted from a number of national monitoring schemes, both by professional organisations and by dedicated amateurs (referenced in the species accounts where appropriate). Particular assistance from the Scottish Raptor Monitoring Group, the Scottish Raptor Study Groups, the Shropshire and Wiltshire Raptor Groups, the North of England Raptor Forum, and the JNCC/RSPB/SOTEAG Seabird Monitoring Programme is recognised and appreciated. The BTO has been especially helpful in allowing access to various datasets, including the BTO/WWT/RSPB/JNCC Wetland Bird Survey, *Bird Atlas 2007–11*, the Nest Record Scheme and the Heronries census. The RSPB also gave freely of its expertise in data management and species monitoring.

The Secretary would like to thank the following individuals, who have been particularly helpful during the compilation of this report: Dawn Balmer, Carl Barimore, Brian Etheridge, Will George, John Marchant, Andy Musgrove, David Raw and Chris Wernham. Many other individuals have also been involved over the past year, too many to name, yet all deserve our gratitude.

Information for many species was supplied via the Schedule 1 licensing system by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), Natural England (NE), Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)/Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), the BTO and the RSPB. We are especially grateful to the licensing officers responsible for Schedule 1 licences who supplied data for 2011: Jez Blackburn (BTO), Nigel Shelton (NE), Carys Roberts (NRW) and Ben Ross and Liz Scott (SNH); and to Adrienne Stratford (RSPB Wales), who collated Schedule 1 species data from Wales on behalf of NRW and the Panel.

Thanks are also due to those who provided additional text: Norman Elkins (Common Quail), Daniel Hayhow (Dotterel and Snow Bunting) and Judith Smith (Water Rail). The Secretary would also like to express his gratitude for the support and encouragement given by all current and past members of the Panel, to Jill Andrews for data entry from many paper forms and to both Daniel and Aisling Holling for assistance with some Excel datasets. Ian Andrews and Stephen Hunter built the new website facility to access our library of reports, and provided advice and technical support in other ways.

References

- Anderson, K., Clarke, S., & Lucken, R. 2013. Nesting behaviour of the first breeding Great White Egrets in Britain. *Brit. Birds* 106: 258–263.
- Ballance, D. K., & Smith, A. J. 2008. Recording areas of Great Britain. *Brit. Birds* 101: 364–375.
- Balmer, D., Gillings, S., Caffrey, B., Swann, B., Downie, I., & Fuller, R. (eds.) In press. *Bird Atlas 2007–11*. BTO, Thetford.
- Banks, A. N., Crick, H. Q. P., Coombes, R., Benn, S., Ratcliffe, D. A., & Humphreys, E. M. 2010. The breeding status of Peregrine Falcons *Falco peregrinus* in the UK and Isle of Man in 2002. *Bird Study* 57: 421–436.
- Brown, A., & Grice, P. 2005. *Birds in England*. Poyser, London.
- Chown, D. 2004. Breeding Season Survey of Water Rails in Poole Harbour Reedbeds, 2004. A report to Poole Harbour Study Group.
www.birdsofpooleharbour.co.uk/sites/default/files/Water%20Rail%20Survey%202004_1.pdf
- Clements, R. 2013. A UK population estimate for the Hawfinch. *Brit. Birds* 106: 43–44.
- Conway, G., Wotton, S., Henderson, I., Eaton, M., Drewitt, A., & Spencer, J. 2009. The status of breeding Woodlarks *Lullula arborea* in Britain in 2006. *Bird Study* 56: 310–325.
- Davis, A. H., & Vinicombe, K. E. 2011. The probable breeding of Ferruginous Ducks in Avon. *Brit. Birds* 104: 77–83.
- Dillon, I. A., Smith, T. D., Williams, S. J., Haysom, S., & Eaton, M. A. 2009. Status of Red-throated Divers in Britain in 2006. *Bird Study* 56: 147–157.
- Eaton, M. A., Dillon, I. A., Stirling-Aird, P. K., & Whitfield, D. P. 2007. The status of the Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* in Britain in 2003. *Bird Study* 54: 212–220.
- , Balmer, D., Burton, N., Grice, P. V., Musgrove, A. J., Hearn, R., Hilton, G., Leech, D., Noble, D. G., Ratcliffe, N., Rehfish, M. M., Whitehead, S., & Wotton, S. 2008. *The State of the UK's Birds 2007*. RSPB, BTO, WWT, CCW, EHS, NE and SNH, Sandy.
- , Brown, A. F., Noble, D. G., Musgrove, A. J., Hearn, R. D., Aebischer, N. J., Gibbons, D. W., Evans, A., & Gregory, R. D. 2009. Birds of Conservation Concern 3: the population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. *Brit. Birds* 102: 296–341.
- Ellison, M. 2003. Kent Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* survey, 2003 and 2005. *Kent Bird Report* 52: 167–173.
- Etheridge, B., Riley, H. T., Wernham, C. V., Holling, M., & Stevenson, A. 2013. *Scottish Raptor Monitoring Scheme Report 2011*. Scottish Raptor Study Groups, Inverness.
- Ewing, S. A., Eaton, M. A., Poole, T. F., Davies, S., & Haysom, S. 2012. The size of the Scottish population of Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*: results of the fourth national survey. *Bird Study* 59: 126–138.
- , Rebecca, G. W., Heavisides, A., Court, I. R., Lindley, P., Ruddock, M., Cohen, S., & Eaton, M. A. 2011. Breeding status of Merlins *Falco columbarius* in the UK in 2008. *Bird Study* 58: 379–389.
- Forrester, R. W., Andrews, I. J., McInerney, C. J., Murray, R. D., McGowan, R. Y., Zonfrillo, B., Betts, M. W., Jardine, D. C., &

- Grundy, D. S. 2007. *The Birds of Scotland*. SOC, Aberlady.
- Francis, I., & Cook, M. (eds.) 2011. *The Breeding Birds of North-East Scotland*. SOC, Aberdeen.
- Gibbons, D. W., Reid, J. B., & Chapman, R. A. (eds.) 1993. *The New Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988–1991*. Poyser, London.
- Gilbert, G., Gibbons, D. W., & Evans, J. 1998. *Bird Monitoring Methods*. RSPB, Sandy.
- Hagemeyer, W. J. M., & Blair, M. J. (eds.) 1997. *The EBCC Atlas of European Breeding Birds*. Poyser, London.
- Hancock, M. H., Gibbons, D. W., & Thompson, P. S. 1997. The status of the breeding Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* in the United Kingdom in 1995. *Bird Study* 44: 290–302.
- Hayhow, D. B., Eaton, M. A., Bladwell, S., Etheridge, B., Ewing, S. E., Ruddock, M., Saunders, R., Sharpe, C., Sim, I. M. W. & Stevenson, A. In press. The status of the Hen Harrier, *Circus cyaneus*, in the UK and Isle of Man in 2010. *Bird Study*.
- Heubeck, M., & Parnaby, D. 2012. Shetland's breeding seabirds in 2011. *Shetland Bird Report* 2011: 114–125.
- Hiley, J. R., Bradbury, R. B., Holling, M., & Thomas, C. D. 2013. Protected Areas act as establishment centres for species colonising the United Kingdom. *Proc. Roy. Soc. B* 280:201223310 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2012.2310>.
- Holling, M., & the Rare Breeding Birds Panel. 2007. Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 2003 and 2004. *Brit. Birds* 100: 321–367.
- & —. 2008. Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 2005. *Brit. Birds* 101: 276–316.
- & —. 2010a. Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 2007. *Brit. Birds* 103: 2–52.
- & —. 2010b. Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 2008. *Brit. Birds* 103: 482–538.
- & —. 2011. Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 2009. *Brit. Birds* 104: 476–537.
- & —. 2012. Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 2010. *Brit. Birds* 105: 352–416.
- Holt, C. 2013. The changing status of the Great White Egret in Britain. *Brit. Birds* 106: 246–257.
- Hopper, N. 2013. *Breeding Season Survey of Water Rails in Poole Harbour: spring 2013*. A report to Poole Harbour Study Group. www.birdsofpooleharbour.co.uk/sites/default/files/Water%20Rail%20Survey%202013%20new.pdf
- Hudson, N., & the Rarities Committee. 2012. Report on rare birds in Great Britain in 2011. *Brit. Birds* 105: 556–625.
- Jackson, D. 2009. Interim Report on 2009 Breeding Whimbrel Surveys. Unpublished report to Natural Research.
- Jenkins, R. K. B., Buckton, S. T., & Ormerod, S. J. 1995. Local movements and population density of Water Rails *Rallus aquaticus* in a small inland reedbed. *Bird Study* 42: 82–87.
- Johnstone, I., Thorpe, R., Moore, A., & Finney, S. 2007. Breeding status of Choughs *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* in the UK and Isle of Man in 2002. *Bird Study* 54: 23–34.
- Mitchell, P. I., Newton, S. F., Ratcliffe, N., & Dunn, T. E. 2004. *Seabird Populations of Britain and Ireland*. Poyser, London.
- Murray, R. 2013. Water Rails in Britain. *Brit. Birds* 106: 229–231.
- Musgrove, A. J., Aebischer, N. J., Eaton, M. A., Hearn, R. D., Newson, S. E., Noble, D. G., Parsons, M., Risely, K., & Stroud, D. A. 2013. Population estimates of birds in Great Britain and the United Kingdom. *Brit. Birds* 106: 64–100.
- Risely, K., Massimino, D., Newson, S. E., Eaton, M. A., Musgrove, A. J., Noble, D. G., Procter, D., & Baillie, S. R. 2013. *The Breeding Bird Survey 2012*. BTO Research Report 645, Thetford.
- Sharrock, J. T. R. (ed.) 1976. *The Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland*. Poyser, Calton.
- Smith, J. 2012. Exposing the squealers. *WeBS News* 28: 13.
- & NERF. 2012. *Northern England Raptor Forum Annual Review 2011*. NERF, Hebden Bridge.
- Stanbury, A., Davies, M., Grice, P., Gregory, R., & Wotton, S. 2010. The status of the Cirl Bunting in the UK in 2009. *Brit. Birds* 103: 702–711.
- Stroud, D. A., Francis, I., & Stroud, R. 2012. Spotted Crakes breeding in Britain and Ireland: a history and evaluation of current status. *Brit. Birds* 105: 197–220.
- Summers, R. W., & Buckland, S. T. 2010. A first survey of the global population size and distribution of the Scottish Crossbill *Loxia scotica*. *Bird Conservation International* doi:10.1017/S0959270909990323
- Whitfield, D. P. 2002. Status of breeding Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus* in Britain in 1999. *Bird Study* 49: 237–249.
- , Fielding, A. H., McLeod, D. R. A., & Haworth, P. F. 2008. *A Conservation Framework for Golden Eagles: implications for their conservation and management in Scotland*. Scottish Natural Heritage Report 193, Inverness.
- Woodward, I., & Arnold, R. 2012. The changing status of the breeding birds of the Inner London area. *Brit. Birds* 105: 433–457.
- Wotton, S., Conway, G., Eaton, M., Henderson, I., & Grice, P. 2009. The status of the Dartford Warbler in the UK and the Channel Islands in 2006. *Brit. Birds* 102: 230–246.

Mark Holling, *The Old Orchard, Grange Road, North Berwick, East Lothian EH39 4QT*;
e-mail secretary@rbbp.org.uk

The Rare Breeding Birds Panel is supported by JNCC, RSPB and the BTO

Secretary Mark Holling, The Old Orchard, Grange Road, North Berwick,
East Lothian EH39 4QT; e-mail secretary@rbbp.org.uk

Find out more about the Panel at www.rbbp.org.uk

