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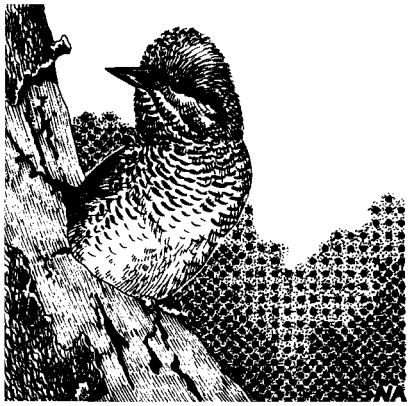
Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 1985



Compiled by Robert Spencer and the Rare Breeding Birds Panel

This is the thirteenth annual report published by the Panel, and it follows the style of presentation introduced progressively in the reports for 1983 (*Brit. Birds* 79: 53-81) and 1984 (*Brit. Birds* 79: 470-495). It is relatively complete in so far as nearly all county recorders have been able to submit data. It should, however, be noted that no data have been received from Northern Ireland, nor—officially—from Yorkshire, although one or two records submitted privately are incorporated.

In the introduction to the report for 1984 we wrote 'It is always difficult to fit the infinite variety of nature into rigid categories conceived by man', and we continue to experience difficulties of interpretation and expression whenever the boundaries of natural ecological units differ markedly from familiar administrative boundaries. Examples are not hard to find. The chalk uplands of southern and southeastern England are prime habitat for the Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*, and anyone carrying out a detailed survey of that species will have little if any reason to be conscious of county boundaries. County recorders, on the other hand, must stick to their patches. The great—and growing—conifer forests of northern England and southern Scotland are beginning to form a single biotope, where fieldworkers will have little difficulty in determining natural boundaries. Yet, through the middle of those forests runs the now

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arbitrary-seeming country boundary. Thus, if the Panel is presented with a total figure for the forest population, there is no ready method of determining which individuals, if any, were in England and which in Scotland.

It would be fair to ask whether this uncertainty is important. The theoretical answer is probably no, yet in practice it is desirable and important to know. Records for an area often come in from two sources—the recorder, who has to observe county boundaries, and an individual specialist, who bases his study on the ecological unit. To try to avoid duplication, the two sets of figures must be compared, but this is often impossible because the locality descriptions are too imprecise and map references are lacking. The Panel appreciates the desire of fieldworkers to protect their 'charges', but nevertheless does appeal for the regular use of map references. Observers may rest assured that information submitted on a confidential basis will remain confidential. In published reports, localities (other than reserves such as Havergate Island) are never named, and county names are used only when the Panel has been authorised to do so. Many published records are placed only within a region, and the regions (listed below) represent very large areas of land. A further stage in preventing the chance of a site being identified from a Panel report is the combining of regions: for example, 'England, SW & SE'.

For some time now, ornithological recording in Scotland has officially been based on the new political regions, but the old counties are retained as districts within the regions; and old habits die hard. Some reports received by the Panel relate to the regions, and others to districts, and it is often convenient to retain this dichotomy of approach. It would certainly be very time-consuming for the Panel to have to trace every locality on the map in order to standardise on the new terminology, and, so long as the meaning is clear, it perhaps does not matter that the name in capital letters is sometimes that of a region, and sometimes that of a district.

Also in the introduction to the report for 1984 was the statement that 'we see the Panel's role as becoming practical rather than academic'. The Panel was established to document for posterity the processes of colonisation and retreat—the endless ebb and flow of bird populations—but in recent years it has become clear that the data in the Panel's files could and should be used to further the aims of conservation. From our admittedly privileged position of insight, we reaffirm that view. At the same time, and unexpectedly, we must report an increased academic interest in the data. In a paper entitled 'Biological characteristics of invaders among bird species in Britain' (*Phil. Trans. R. Soc. Lond.* B314, 583-598), Dr R. J. O'Connor made use of the Panel's published reports in an attempt to identify the underlying causes of colonisation. Probably few of us browse through the reports without occasionally wondering 'Why?' Why has the colonisation of Scotland by Shore Larks *Eremophila alpestris* and Lapland Buntings *Calcarius lapponicus* apparently come to an end? And why did it begin in the first place? Why has the Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* secured a stronger base in England than has the Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*, and in a fraction of the time? Dr O'Connor suggested three main

considerations: (1) a propensity for long-distance migration may be disadvantageous in facilitating successful invasion, (2) invasion is likely to be more successful if a source of population is nearby to sustain and reinforce the invaders until the new population has become self-sustaining, and (3) a high rate of population increase is advantageous, especially if produced as a series of clutches each season rather than as a single clutch. Inevitably, there will be exceptions—such as the Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*, which ought surely to have settled here by now—but it will be interesting to watch future developments in the light of these three points. Meanwhile, presumably as a result of Dr O'Connor's paper, workers in a number of countries have shown interest in the Panel's work and have requested copies of current Panel reports.

In 1985, Ian Prestt retired from the Panel, his place being taken by Richard Porter, the other members being Dr L. A. Batten, R. H. Dennis, Dr J. T. R. Sharrock and Robert Spencer (Secretary). Whilst the work of the Panel is sponsored by the NCC, the RSPB, the BTO and *British Birds*, it is considered important that, in the framework of the Panel's activities, members should be free to have allegiance only to the birds. For that reason, their appointments are in a personal capacity, albeit with a specialised knowledge of the interests and requirements of the sponsoring bodies.

The year 1985

The profit and loss account for the year 1985 is a difficult one to draw. It was, perhaps, weak on oddities or the spectacular, although the early pages of the systematic list offer, *inter alia*, a mixed pairing of Great Northern Diver with Black-throated Diver *Gavia immer* × *G. arctica*, the nearest to British breeding yet recorded for Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*, the attempted mixed pairing of Smew with Goldeneye *Mergus albellus* × *Bucephala clangula* and, towards the end of the list, the first known successful breeding of Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*.

Birds of prey offered some of the nest success stories, including the long-awaited first successful breeding of White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*, and record numbers fledged of Red Kite *Milvus milvus*, Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* and Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*. Avocets *Recurvirostra avosetta* prospered, in a breeding season which seems to have suited neither Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* nor Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*, whilst Purple Sandpipers *Calidris maritima* and Mediterranean Gulls *Larus melanocephalus* began to look a trifle more secure in their new-found homes. There was the first recorded breeding for several years of Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*, and the improved reporting of Snow Buntings *Plectrophenax nivalis* was maintained.

Adverse weather certainly affected the breeding populations of some species and the breeding success of others. Presumably one need look no farther than the severe cold of January and February 1985 to account for the decline in numbers of Bitterns *Botaurus stellaris*, and it is remarkable that the two resident warblers, Cetti's and Dartford *Sylvia undata*, came through the cold with relatively small population losses. Doubtless their

fecundity is in line with Dr O'Connor's third desideratum for successful colonists. Breeding of Black-necked Grebes *Podiceps nigricollis* is reported to have been adversely affected by a cold spring, high water levels, and slow growth of vegetation.

Garganeys *Anas querquedula*, notoriously given to population fluctuations, arrived in numbers well below those of 1984, as did Firecrests *Regulus ignicapillus*, but it is doubtful that the two species were responding to a common environmental factor.

These lines, written towards the end of the 1987 breeding season, hark back to events two years earlier, but are inevitably coloured by the vivid recollection of more recent weather. What can small song birds do to protect their young when two inches of rain falls in three hours? How can parents both brood their tiny young throughout 48 hours of steady, cold rain and yet also find and secure the necessary food for them? Weather and slight changes of climate must always play a part in the changing fortunes of small, and therefore more-vulnerable, bird populations.

Species for which the Panel requires data

The following species, together with any which are breeding in Britain or Ireland for the first time, or for the first time in many years:

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*
Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*
Slavonian Grebe *P. auritus*
Black-necked Grebe *P. nigricollis*
Black-browed Albatross *Diomedea melanophris*
Little Shearwater *Puffinus assimilis*
Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*
Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*
Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*
Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*
Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*
American Black Duck *Anas rubripes*
Pintail *A. acuta*
Garganey *A. querquedula*
Scaup *Aythya marila*
King Eider *Somateria spectabilis*
Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*
Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*
Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*
Smew *Mergus albellus*
Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*
Red Kite *Milvus milvus*
White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*
Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*
Montagu's Harrier *C. pygargus*
Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*
Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*
Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*
Hobby *Falco subbuteo*
Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*
Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*
Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*
Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*
Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*
Sanderling *Calidris alba*
Temminck's Stint *C. temminckii*
Purple Sandpiper *C. maritima*
Jack Snipe *Lymnocryptes minimus*
Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*
Whimbrel* *Numenius phaeopus*
Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*
Wood Sandpiper *T. glareola*
Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia*
Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*
Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*
Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*
Little Gull *L. minutus*
Glaucous Gull *L. hyperboreus*
Roseate Tern† *Sterna dougallii*
Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*
Snowy Owl *Nyctea scandiaca*
Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*
Hoopoe *Upupa epops*
Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*
Woodlark *Lullula arborea*
Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*
Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*
Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*
Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*
Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*
Redwing *T. iliacus*
Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*
Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*
Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*
Great Reed Warbler *A. arundinaceus*
Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*

* away from Northern Isles. † away from main breeding sites.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*
Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla*
Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*
Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*
Great Grey Shrike *L. excubitor*
Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*
Serin *Serinus serinus*
Parrot Crossbill *Loxia pytyopsittacus*
Scarlet Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*
Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*
Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*
Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus*

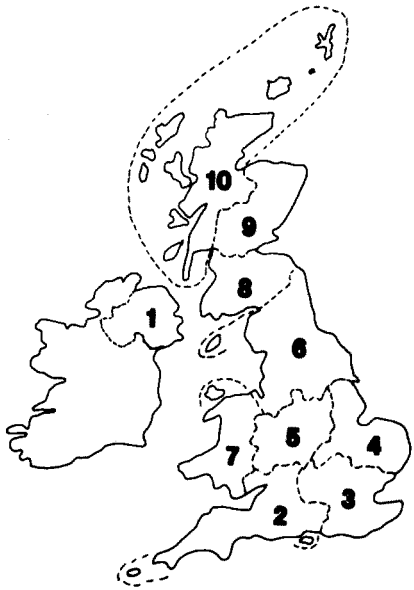


Fig. 1. Geographical regions of the United Kingdom used in this report. Numbers refer to counties listed below

Key to geographical regions used in this report

Numbers refer to fig. 1.

1. NORTHERN IRELAND Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, Tyrone
2. ENGLAND, SW Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Isles of Scilly, Somerset, Wiltshire
3. ENGLAND, SE Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex, Greater London, Hertfordshire, Kent, Middlesex, Oxfordshire, Surrey, Sussex (East and West)
4. ENGLAND, E Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Lincolnshire & South Humberside, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Suffolk
5. ENGLAND, CENTRAL Derbyshire, Herefordshire, Leicestershire (with Rutland), Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire (West Midlands in the new county structure), Worcestershire
6. ENGLAND, N Cheshire, Cleveland, Cumbria, Durham, Greater Manchester, Isle of Man, Lancashire, Merseyside, Northumberland, North Humberside, Tyne & Wear, Yorkshire (North, South and West)
7. WALES All present-day counties (i.e. includes the former Monmouth)
8. SCOTLAND, S The former counties of Ayrshire, Berwickshire, Dumfriesshire, Kirkcudbrightshire, Lanarkshire, Lothian (East, Mid and West), Peeblesshire, Renfrewshire, Roxburghshire, Selkirkshire, Wigtownshire
9. SCOTLAND, MID Aberdeenshire, Angus, Banffshire, Clackmannanshire, Dunbartonshire, Fife, Kincardineshire, Kinross, Morayshire, Nairn, Perthshire, Stirlingshire
10. SCOTLAND, N & W Argyll, Bute, Caithness, Inverness-shire, Orkney, Ross & Cromarty, Shetland, Sutherland, Western Isles (Outer Hebrides)

Systematic list

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

One locality: one individual.

Scotland, N One locality: adult, paired with Black-throated Diver *G. arctica*, from 8th May to June, but no evidence of breeding.

A pair of Great Northern Divers bred in 1970 and there was a hybrid pairing Great Northern × Black-throated in 1971.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

One locality: one, possibly two, pairs.

Scotland, S One locality: present in breeding plumage from 23rd May to 27th July; pair, with much display, carrying of nest material, and attempted mating; third on nine dates, thought to be a female, and one report, on 3rd July, of four.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	2	5	2	0	1	3	3	2	2	1	1
No. individuals	2	5	2	0	1	4	2	2	3	1	4
No. pairs	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1

The observations summarised above encourage the belief that breeding will eventually be attempted at this site.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

40 localities: 63-81 pairs breeding.

Scotland, S One locality: one at a suitable water from 28th May to 22nd October, eventually moulting there.

Scotland, Mid Three localities.

PERTHSHIRE One locality: single present from 31st July to 3rd August, said (by anglers) to have been present for two to three weeks before 31st July.

ELSEWHERE Two localities: (1) two pairs, one of which reared two young; (2) adult from 17th April to 20th May.

Scotland, N 36 localities.

INVERNESS-SHIRE 36 localities: (1)-(36) total of 62 pairs, rearing 29-47 young.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	23	23	15	18	27	36	35	25	44	26	40
Confirmed (pairs)	54	70	42	37	58	53	52	51	41	39	63
Possible (pairs)	12	5	9	18	19	27	19	8	38	21	18
Max. total (pairs)	66	75	51	55	77	80	71	59	79	60	81

The higher figures are largely attributable to more waters being surveyed in 1985 compared with 1984, but it was the best breeding season since 1973.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

15 localities: 8-21 pairs breeding.

England, E Three localities, in same county: (1) three on 28th March; (2) one, in full breeding plumage, on 5th April; (3) one, in breeding plumage, on 5th May. 'The birds seem to have a look at each site and move around.'

England, Central One locality: following up report of nest, observers found two moulting birds which, by their behaviour, were obviously paired.

England, N Six localities, involving three counties: (1) one on 26th May, 'no possibility of undetected breeding'; (2) one or two adults on various dates between 8th March and 15th May at locality where breeding occurred in 1984; (3) one to three adults in breeding plumage

on various dates between 26th May and 13th July; (4) adult in breeding plumage on 16th May; (5) five pairs reared only 13 young; (6) two adults on 20th April and from 20th to 25th May, one immature from 17th August to 21st September.

Scotland, Mid Five localities, involving two counties: (1) two pairs reared three young; (2) pair in May, but no proof of breeding; (3) three on 25th March, one adult with two juveniles plus one separate juvenile on 1st August; (4) single juveniles, at least two involved, from 6th to 16th August, thought to be from locality 3; (5) pair on 21st and 25th April and single nearby from 27th May to 10th July.

Addendum

1984 GREATER MANCHESTER Two visited several waters between 24th April and 20th May.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	4	2	7	6	6	9	7	12	19	15	15
Confirmed (pairs)	2	10	11	13	12	11	5	11	11	16	8
Possible (pairs)	9	1	5	2	2	10	7	10	21	12	13
Max. total (pairs)	11	11	16	15	14	21	12	21	32	28	21

The species evidently suffered a reverse of fortunes in 1985. From the most successful site in recent years came the observation that 'The cold spring, high water levels, and slow growth of vegetation delayed breeding and no young were seen until July.'

Black-browed Albatross *Diomedea melanophris*

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

Scotland, N One locality.

SHETLAND One locality: adult in colony from 10th March to late September.

Still no mate.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

15 localities: at least 28 booming males.

England, E 14 localities, of which 11 were in Norfolk: (1) up to five males and seven females during the year; (2) three booming males; (3) two booming males; (4)-(14) single booming males. No proof of breeding obtained.

England, N One locality: seven or eight booming males.

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

The figures are the lowest since the Bittern was added to the Panel's list in 1977 and it seems likely that the species was adversely affected by cold weather in January and the early part of February 1985.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Six localities: two or three feral pairs and five singles.

Scotland, Mid One locality.

DUNBARTONSHIRE One locality: pair reared two cygnets from clutch of five eggs, second pair abandoned their nest about 17th June, and third pair was present at beginning of the season but 'tended to come and go'; also single male, often seen soliciting female Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*.

Scotland, N Four localities: (1)-(4) single adults on separate lochs in June, with no evidence to suggest that any of them was paired.

The status hardly changes from year to year.

American Black Duck *Anas rubripes*

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

Scotland, S One locality.

EAST LOTHIAN One locality: female recorded 9th February to 23rd May, 20th July and 31st August. Copulation observed on at least two occasions, but no signs of any subsequent young.

In recent years, similar hybrid pairings have been reported from the Isles of Scilly and from Gwynedd.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

13 localities: 9-17 pairs breeding.

England, SW Two localities.

CORNWALL One locality: broods of two and five noted at water where pinioned pair released several years ago.

DORSET One locality: two pairs present until 14th May and a single on 12th June, but no proof of breeding.

England, E One locality.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE One locality: two males and one female present throughout summer, female giving distraction display to fox *Vulpes vulpes* on 25th May, but any nest would have been flooded out several days later.

England, N One locality.

DURHAM One locality: female with two or three ducklings (date not reported).

Scotland, N Nine localities.

ARGYLL Two localities: (1) female with young 20th June; (2) female with young 16th June.

CAITHNESS One locality: pair on 28th and 29th May.

INVERNESS-SHIRE One locality: pair from 9th to 24th April and male on 7th June.

ORKNEY Four localities: (1) three nests located and brood of about four seen on 30th June; (2) pair in late April and female on 17th May; (3) pair in mid April; (4) pair displaying on 25th April.

WESTERN ISLES One locality: pair and second female throughout April, pair remaining until 5th May and second female until 10th June; may have attempted to breed.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	11	10	15	10	19	15	16	18	22	15	13
Confirmed (pairs)	12	6	10	7	10	9	8	7	12	5	9
Possible (pairs)	13	10	16	16	31	16	23	25	15	13	8
Max. total (pairs)	25	16	26	23	41	25	31	32	27	17	17

It seems likely that the small Scottish population is relatively stable.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

29 localities: 4-41 pairs breeding.

England, SW Two localities: 0-2 pairs breeding.

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

England, SE Three localities: 1-4 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Kent	3	1	0	3	4

England, E 18 localities: 3-28 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Cambridgeshire	2	1	0	10	11
Lincolnshire/South Humberside	1	0	1	0	1
Norfolk	13	2	1	11	14
Northamptonshire	1	0	0	1	1
Suffolk	1	0	1	0	1

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

County	Locality	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Leicestershire	1	0	1	0	1

England, N Three localities: 0-3 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Greater Manchester	1	0	0	1	1
Lancashire	1	0	0	1	1
Yorkshire	1	0	0	1	1

Scotland Two localities: 0-3 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Borders	1	0	0	2	2
Kinross	1	0	0	1	1

Addendum

1984 GREATER MANCHESTER One locality: pair from 28th April to early May, two males in late May and singing male on 3rd June.

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	34	48	66	58	46	29
Confirmed (pairs)	4	8	10	15	4	4
Possible (pairs)	50	50	84	51	53	33
Max. total (pairs)	54	58	94	66	57	41

The year 1985 was the poorest for this species since it was added to the Panel's list in 1980, the paucity of records from SE England being particularly striking. It is well established, however, that numbers tend to fluctuate considerably from year to year.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

20 localities: 2-47 pairs breeding.

Scotland, Mid Three localities.

DUNBARTONSHIRE/STIRLINGSHIRE One locality: early-morning census on 22nd May located four pairs plus two additional males; but no subsequent reports of young.

PERTHSHIRE Two localities: (1) four males and three females on 2nd June, one female with six young and party of six females on 11th July; (2) party of six, with no adult male among them, on 3rd May.

Scotland, N 17 localities.

ARGYLL Two localities: (1) male and two females on 9th and 20th May; (2) nine, not sexed, on 14th May.

INVERNESS-SHIRE Three localities: (1) three pairs plus male and two females on 25th May,

seven females adjacent on 13th July; (2) one seen; (3) four agitated females on 21st June.
ROSS-SHIRE One locality: two pairs displaying on 30th May, female and brood of five young on 30th July.
SHETLAND 11 localities: (1)-(11) from one to six at each locality, some until 28th June, but no proof of breeding.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	12	14	13	9	17	10	6	17	6	9	20
Confirmed (pairs)	32	22	24	16	98	7	5	14	10	17	2
Possible (pairs)	127	137	132	125	30	106	77	98	75	52	45
Max. total (pairs)	159	159	156	141	128	113	82	112	85	69	47

The figures should be interpreted with considerable caution. In the first place, no data have been received from the single most important community in Northern Ireland, whilst the number of localities is evidently swollen by the unusually high figure for Shetland. Several of the regular sites were not visited in 1985.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Six localities: 67-71 pairs breeding.

England, N One locality.
CUMBRIA One locality: pair on 1st June.
Scotland, S Two localities.
BORDERS Two localities: (1) three pairs and eight immatures on 7th May, three pairs and four immatures on 22nd May, female on 4th August; (2) female on 4th August.
Scotland, N & W Total of 67 clutches laid, of which 49 successfully incubated, to produce minimum of 336 ducklings, with average brood-size of 8.40.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	3	8	12	18	17	11	13	11	11	5	4
Confirmed (pairs)	3	5	6	12	22	26	29	27	47	53	67
Possible (pairs)	3	7	8	15	21	11	25	30	9	3	4
Max. total (pairs)	6	12	14	27	43	37	54	57	56	56	71
Young hatched	10	46	11	40	110	165	286	220	209	311	336

In this continuing success story, it should be stressed that the number of localities where breeding is occurring is actually increasing, but, rather than individual nest sites, it seems more meaningful to think in terms of broad localities. Records from northern England and from southern Scotland seem, at this stage, to represent late-departing winter visitors, but, as the breeding population increases, an eventual overspill into quite new areas seems likely.

Smew *Mergus albellus*

One locality: one individual.

Scotland, N One locality: male displaying to two female Goldeneyes *Bucephala clangula* on 12th May, seen with female Goldeneye at regular nesting location for that species on 18th May; last seen 29th May.

Hybrids between these two species do occur in northern Scandinavia.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

Three localities: 0-3 pairs breeding.

England, SW One locality: two present on 2nd June, with the male displaying; pair not very far away on 10th June; existence of nest suspected.

England, SE One locality: two, with display flights, and one observer claiming that three were present; no evidence of nesting.
England, E One locality: single located on 23rd June, apparently did not remain in area.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	2	7	8	8	3	3	8	2	2	0	3
Confirmed (pairs)	0	0	2	1	1	2	2	1	0	0	0
Max. total (pairs)	2	7	8	8	3	4	9	2	2	0	3

The above entry excludes data from the main breeding area of the species in Britain, where, it is understood, there are normally about ten pairs breeding.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

43 breeding pairs of which 19 pairs reared 25 young.

England, SW One locality: one for first two weeks of July.
Wales 54 localities: 54 pairs known, of which 43 laid eggs. Of these, 19 pairs were successful, rearing 25 young, with 12 broods of one, four broods of two and one brood of three. Five clutches were incubated full term, but failed to hatch. Up to eight nests were robbed of eggs and in only one of these was a repeat clutch laid (which was unsuccessful). This was the worst year for egg robberies in modern times. Other causes of failure included predation by Carrion Crows *Corvus corone* and Buzzards *Buteo buteo*, wet weather during the chick stage, and the death (probably by shooting) of an incubating female. One adult was killed by a jet aircraft shortly before the breeding season.

In addition to the above, at least 27 unmated non-breeders were identified in spring, so that the minimum population in April was 135 individuals.

Once again, the Panel is deeply indebted to Peter Davis and the Kite Committee for the provision of an admirably detailed summary.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Total pairs	32	36	34	39	42	42	46	47	46	46	54
Breeding pairs	28	29	28	32	30	29	32	38	33	33	43
Successful pairs	15	15	12	13	14	21	18	19	20	13	19
Young reared	24	18	17	22	18	27	21	23	24	21	25

Another successful year, despite persecution by egg thieves. The Panel is interested in breeding-season records away from the recognised breeding area. Such records may be precursors of eventual breeding attempts away from Wales.

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Re-introduction: 4 pairs laid eggs, 1 young reared.

Scotland The White-tailed Eagle project received ten young eagles from Norway and they were successfully released on Rhum, Highland, this bringing the total released since 1975 to 82. Nesting activity occurred at at least six sites, and four pairs laid eggs. One pair successfully reared one young, the first young fledged in Britain since early this century, and a second youngster died in the nest. Three other pairs failed before or close to hatching time, probably influenced by severe snow blizzards. (The Panel is grateful to John A. Love for preparing this summary.)

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

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

24 localities: 86 young reared from 31 nests.

England, E 24 localities. Number of young reared from two nests not known, although both believed to have been successful. From remaining nests, total of 86 young reared to flying stage, with mean of three young fledged per nest. This is substantially better than mean of 2.5 young per nest recorded during previous 14 years. Only one nest in crops, remainder being in more-typical reedbed sites. There were three bigamous males at two sites. At least 11 non-breeding pairs summered, as well as two adult females, one immature female and three immature males. Since 1970, at least 575 young Marsh Harriers have fledged from 231 nests in Britain (fig. 2). (Based on report by John Day, augmented by data from the Panel's files.)

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Breeding ♂♂	5	11	13	14	11	16	17	19	21	27	28
Breeding ♀♀	7	11	15	14	16	20	20	24	28	32	31
Fledged young	18	27	44	36	38	44	48	59	71	66	86
Mean fledged young per nest	2.6	2.4	2.9	2.6	2.4	2.2	2.0	2.5	2.5	2.4	3.0

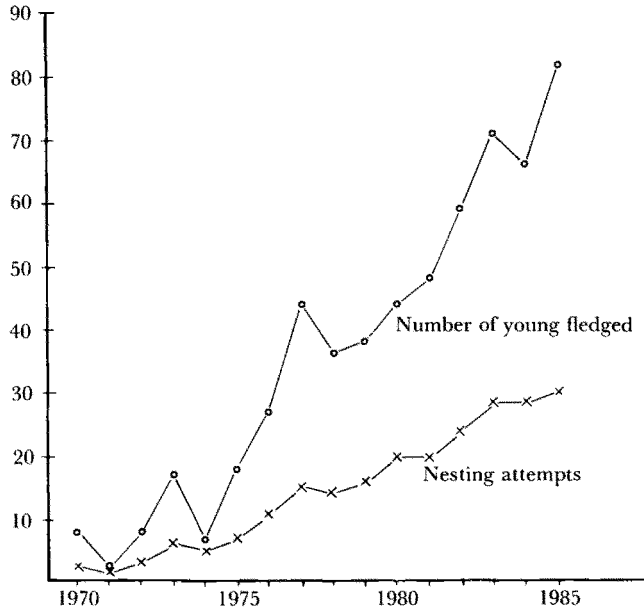


Fig. 2. Number of nesting attempts and total young fledged per annum by British Marsh Harriers *Circus aeruginosus* in Britain during 1970-85 (prepared by John Day)

The continued success of this species may be attributed partly to much hard work on the part of conservation bodies and partly to a thriving population in the Netherlands, elements of which may have 'overflowed' into East Anglia.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

Eight localities: 3-8 pairs breeding.

England, SW Five localities: (1) female on 23rd and 26th May, pair on 5th June; (2) female on 27th and 28th April and 3rd May, immature male on 25th May and 22nd June, female on 22nd June, immature male on 29th June: these records relate to four different sites in same general area; (3) female over cereals on 1st June; (4) male on 12th June; (5) pair hatched three young, but lost them during poor weather some time between 20th and 25th July.

England, E Two localities: (1) two pairs nested, rearing broods of three and four from nests located in crops; (2) male on 14th July in remote, under-watched area possibly suitable for breeding.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	3	4	2	7	4	8	8	7	8	2	8
Confirmed (pairs)	0	3	1	2	2	2	2	6	6	1	3
Possible (pairs)	3	2	1	5	2	6	7	5	4	1	5
Max. total (pairs)	3	5	2	7	4	8	9	8	10	2	8
Fledged young	0	6	0	3	7	4	4	4	9	3	7

The species continues to have a somewhat tenuous toe-hold in Britain, and it may be that our damp maritime climate militates against it in wet summers. The Panel acknowledges the assistance of John Day in preparing the entry for this species.

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

64 localities: 36-65 pairs breeding.

England and Wales 48 localities, involving 17 counties: (1)-(48) 30 pairs known to have attempted breeding, rearing at least 36 young; also nine 'probable' and ten 'possible' pairs, giving total of 49 pairs.

Scotland 16 localities, involving two regions: (1)-(16) six pairs known to have attempted breeding, rearing at least seven young; also ten 'possible' pairs, giving total of 16 pairs.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Counties*	14	10	15	18	21	21	27	16	17	22	19
Confirmed (pairs)	5	12	15	14	23	17	15	23	30	35	36
Possible (pairs)	29	16	22	26	21	32	37	18	25	41	29
Max. total (pairs)	34	28	37	40	44	49	52	41	55	76	65

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

As in all recent years, the Panel has received reports both of eggs and of young being taken, and of a number of pairs deserting apparently owing to disturbance. Despite such persecution and interference, the Goshawk population is probably increasing slowly, but part of any indicated increase could be due to the Panel learning about well-established pairs which had not hitherto been reported.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

36 localities: 28 pairs reared 53 young.

Scotland, S Two localities: (1)-(2) one summered at each, from May to August.

Elsewhere in Scotland 34 pairs: 28 pairs laid eggs and there were 22 successful broods, including one of four, the first four-chick brood this century. Individuals in a variety of other places, suggesting increased numbers of prospecting sub-adults, so outlook for the future looks very encouraging. (All breeding data compiled by Roy Dennis on behalf of the RSPB.)

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Pairs	14	14	20	22	25	25	25	30	30	31	34
Successful pairs	7	10	7	11	16	19	20	21	20	21	22
Young reared	16	20	13	19	30	41	42	45	45	47	53

The successful rearing of over 50 young in a single season represents a significant landmark in the recolonisation of Scotland by the Osprey.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

216 localities: 76-219 pairs breeding.

England, SW 87 localities: 12-89 pairs breeding, 21 young known.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Avon	5	1	0	4	5
Gloucestershire	3	0	0	4	4
Hampshire	50	7	0	43	50
Somerset	10	1	4	5	10
Wiltshire	19	3	10	7	20

England, SE 84 localities: 45-85 pairs breeding, 35 young known.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Bedfordshire	4	3	1	0	4
Berkshire	5	0	0	5	5
Buckinghamshire	19	15	0	4	19
Essex	2	2	0	0	2
Hertfordshire	25	5	7	13	25
Kent	4	1	2	1	4
Oxfordshire	5	5	0	0	5
Surrey	14	9	1	5	15
Sussex	6	5	1	0	6

England, E 32 localities: 13-32 breeding pairs, 22 young known.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Cambridgeshire	6	4	2	0	6
Lincolnshire/South Humberside	2	0	0	2	2
Norfolk	2	2	0	0	2
Northamptonshire	17	4	13	0	17
Suffolk	5	3	0	2	5

England, Central Eight localities: 4-8 pairs breeding, 4 young known

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

Wales Five localities: 2-5 pairs breeding, no young reported.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Gwent	5	2	1	2	5

Addenda

1984 BEDFORDSHIRE Four localities: (1) pair bred; (2)-(3) one and two pairs, respectively, in suitable habitat during breeding season; (4) pair regarded as possibly breeding.

1984 HERTFORDSHIRE One locality: pair reared two young.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Confirmed (pairs)	38	59	51	70	80	64	51	97	80	93	76
Possible (pairs)	95	84	68	86	52	91	109	105	182	116	143
Max. total (pairs)	133	143	119	156	132	155	160	202	262	209	219
Young reared (minima)	42	69	78	96	72	86	89	63	104	91	82

It should be emphasised that the numbers given are minima. Not only is the species easily overlooked or difficult to track down, but there are no numbers available for Devon, where the Hobby is relatively numerous. The figures for young fledged are equally conservative. It is possible to determine brood size without climbing the nest tree, but not always easy to do so accurately.

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*

Two localities: 0-3 pairs breeding.

England, E Two localities: (1) one calling 30th June to 3rd July and another on 4th and 6th July: presumed to have bred; (2) one calling in late June and early July.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Counties	0	1	3	6	2	1	3	1	3	3	2
No. localities	0	2	4	6	4	3	4	2	6	4	2
Calling ♂♂	0	2	7	6	8	4	9	3	12	10	3

A marked decline, following two outstanding years.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

14 localities: 269-272 pairs reared at least 245 young.

England, SE & E 14 localities. As in 1984, main sites were Havergate Island, Suffolk, where 132 pairs reared 122 young, and Minsmere, Suffolk, where 42 pairs reared 26 young.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	6	5	6	3	3	5	5	9	9	11	14
Confirmed (pairs)	158	151	146	145	147	168	201	190	238	237	269
Young reared (minima)	142	68	14	92	99	101	155	150	192	118	245

The year 1985 was a very good one for the Avocet, with more localities occupied than ever before and a record number of young reared. Whilst breeding success will continue to vary, it is clear that the species is no longer a 'reserves only' breeder, and its future as a British breeding bird will in part depend on the good sense of birdwatchers in allowing it freedom from disturbance.

Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*

128 localities: 81-128 pairs breeding.

The Panel has received two sets of data, one in the normal manner, through county recorders and based on county boundaries; the other from the RSPB, derived from considerable fieldwork, and based on large ecological divisions, in one case impinging on four counties. In general, the 'county' figures are more detailed, whereas the RSPB figures appear to be fuller, but lack the details, including map references, which alone would permit thorough cross-checking. In what follows, the RSPB data cover 'England, South Central' and 'East Anglia', whilst the 'England, SE' figures are derived from customary sources.

England, South Central Estimate of 45 pairs, but fieldwork in 1986 indicated that this was

probably an overestimate, and 30 pairs is the likely total.
England, SE Ten localities: 8-10 pairs breeding, four young reared.
East Anglia 73 pairs, of which 60 pairs produced 76 nests; 51 of the 60 monitored pairs hatched young and at least 51 young fledged; 13 of the 73 pairs were not monitored.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Confirmed (pairs)	47	16	4	20	34	8	10	8	20	19	81
Possible (pairs)	25	93	23	14	47	37	43	59	76	52	47
Max. total (pairs)	72	109	27	34	81	45	53	67	97	71	128

The high figures in 1985 are directly attributable to the fieldwork programme by the RSPB, but note that subsequent experience has indicated that some totals will have to be revised downwards. The RSPB study has already highlighted disturbance, egg-collecting and the destruction of habitat by agricultural activity as causes of the species' declining status.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

One locality: 1-2 individuals.

England, SE One locality.
KENT One locality: 1-2 between 14th May and 5th June.

This is the first time since 1982 that the Kentish Plover has featured in the Panel's report.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

19 localities: 14-27 pairs breeding.

Scotland, S One locality: seven on 4th May, presumed to be on passage, but habitat suitable for breeding.
Scotland, Mid Five localities: (1) male with two fledged young on 28th July; (2) three adults with two juveniles on 28th July; (3) two juveniles, but no adults, on 4th August; (4) four adults with two newly hatched young on 16th June; (5) party of eight on 5th May.
Scotland, N & W 13 localities: (1) six adults on 7th May, male with three young on 29th June; (2) two pairs on 20th May, 14 adults on 27th July, male with two large young on 17th August; (3) pair with eggs on 29th June; (4) male on 15th June; (5) 12 on 10th June, seven adults and three juveniles on 28th July; (6) pair reared young; (7) male with three eggs on 10th June; (8) two on 15th June; (9) adult with nest and one egg; (10) maximum of four on 4th September, probably bred; (11) pair with three eggs on 3rd July, male nearby with one young on 3rd July; (12) adult with two young on 19th June; (13) one on 25th May.

Although these data are still very incomplete, the picture is the most detailed which the Panel has been able to present for several years. Note that regular sites in northern England were covered, but no potential breeding Dotterels were located.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

Two localities: 0-2 pairs breeding.

Scotland, N Two localities: (1) two song-flighting during 6th-8th June; (2) one song-flighting on 1st May, 21st May and 4th June.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	1	2	3	3	4	5	1	3	1	1	2
Confirmed (pairs)	0	1	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
Possible (pairs)	2	3	5	5	4	5	1	2	2	1	2
Max. total (pairs)	2	4	5	6	6	6	1	3	2	1	2

The species' status in Britain, never very secure, seems to have been in decline for several years.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Three localities: 1-3 pairs breeding.

Scotland, Mid and N Three localities: (1) two in display flight, no date mentioned; (2) pair bred, adult with three young on 22nd July and adult with one young on 27th July; (3) noisy pair, 2nd to 8th June, and adult on 20th June.

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

The year 1985 was the best for Purple Sandpiper since its first recorded nesting in Britain in 1978, with the first signs of range extension.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Six localities: no known case of breeding.

England, SE Three localities: (1) up to 20 until late April, reducing to two by 4th May; (2) 19 on 9th May; (3) one or two until 13th May. These records all relate to the same county.
England, E Three localities: (1) lekking observed from 18th April, with nine males and 11 females in a May census, but subsequently flooding would have thwarted any nesting attempt; (2) 18 in early May, with much display; (3) two males displaying to several females in early May.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	5	6	6	4	12	10	10	13	8	6	6
Nests	2	4	0	0	3	3	0	1	2	0	0
Max. no. ♀♀ possibly nesting	27	17	16	4	22	13	13	23	32	3-6	?

The location of the birds listed—in the south and east of England—make it possible (even probable) that all concerned were on passage to Scandinavia.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Nine localities: 22-36 pairs breeding.

England, SW One locality: one pair bred.
SOMERSET One locality: up to three, one pair bred, but all disappeared about two weeks after hatching.
England, SE Two localities: (1) pair in April and May, outcome unknown; (2) pair bred, rearing two young.
England, E Five localities: 19-27 pairs breeding.
CAMBRIDGESHIRE Two localities: (1) three pairs fledged young, five pairs probably fledged young, four pairs failed due to predators, one pair deserted during severe frost; (2) four pairs, three of which were probably successful.
LINCOLNSHIRE/SOUTH HUMBERSIDE One locality: up to 17 from April to August; one juvenile in August, which may or may not have been bred locally.
NORFOLK One locality: six pairs, only one of which may have been successful because of mid-summer flooding.
SUFFOLK One locality: two pairs each reared three young, and third pair possibly bred.
England, N One locality.
LANCASHIRE One locality: three pairs summered, one of which known to have reared two young.

Scotland, N One locality.
SHETLAND One locality: pair and a third adult, but no young known to have been reared.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	10	13	11	13	13	11	5	13	10	12	10
Confirmed (pairs)	63	72	37	50	39	52	22	38	32	55	22
Possible (pairs)	8	15	33	18	25	25	4	31	12	25	14
Max. total (pairs)	71	87	70	68	64	77	26	69	44	80	36

Since most of the main sites are under regular observation, the low figures for 1985 can probably be taken at face value. There can be little doubt that species breeding in damp grasslands are very vulnerable to rainfall in May and June.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

The Panel now collects information about breeding on the Scottish mainland.

Scotland, N One locality: two adults at one regular site on 19th May, only one on 16th June and no sign of young.

There is no indication at present of any expansion from the main areas.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Three localities: 2-3 pairs breeding.

Scotland, N Three localities.
INVERNESS-SHIRE Three localities: (1) one or two on 20th May, three adults on 17th June, at least one pair bred; (2) present from 12th May to 14th July, one pair bred, with young seen from 9th to 28th June; (3) one on 21st May, not seen subsequently.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	5	3	4	7	3	4	1	4	3	4	3
Confirmed (pairs)	2	1	2	4	2	7	1	3	1	4	2
Possible (pairs)	4	2	3	6	2	5	0	3	4	1	1
Max. total (pairs)	6	3	5	10	4	12	1	6	5	5	3

Apart from occasional 'good' years, such as 1978 and 1980, numbers remain very low.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

Five localities: 15-18 pairs breeding.

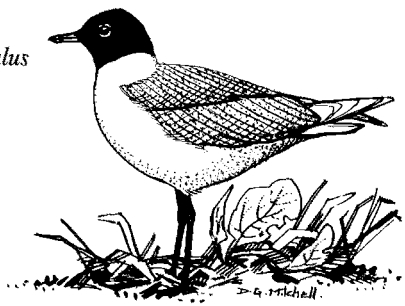
Scotland, N & W Five localities: (1) male on several occasions between 18th and 24th June at locality where up to ten are said to have been present in late May and early June; (2) pair from 18th to 24th June, male thought to be incubating; (3) female present from 25th May to 12th June; (4) 13 pairs hatched young; (5) two pairs.

A situation not greatly dissimilar to that in 1984.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Two localities in two counties: 3-6 pairs breeding.

England, SE Two localities: (1) five pairs, two thought not to have bred, the others with broods of 1, 2 and 3—five fledged; (2) pair present for long period in April, May and early June, but no sign of breeding.



	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	0	1	2	1	3	5	4	2	6	4	2
Confirmed (pairs)	0	1	1	0	2	1	3	2	2	4	3
Possible (pairs)	0	0	1	1	1	4	3	1	6	1	3
Max. total (pairs)	0	1	2	1	3	5	6	3	8	5	6

There are signs of a growing colony at one locality and this will probably provide a better base from which the species can extend its breeding range than would a number of single pairs or individuals in colonies of Black-headed Gulls *Larus ridibundus*. Many of the pairs in the early years were, in fact, hybrid ones.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

The Panel now collects reports of Roseate Terns breeding away from the larger colonies.

Scotland, S One locality: two pairs reared four young.

This species is now the subject of regular monitoring.

Snowy Owl *Nyctea scandiaca*

No male, but females summered.

Scotland, N

SHETLAND Three of four females summered, mostly on Fetlar and Unst.

With no males, the prospect is bleak.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Two localities: 0-2 pairs breeding.

England, SW One locality.

DEVON One locality: one calling daily from 14th to 24th May, and watched prospecting three potential nest holes.

England, Central One locality.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE One locality: one calling on 30th June and 1st July.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	1	2	4	4	0	2	0	0	1	2	2
Confirmed (pairs)	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Possible (pairs)	1	1	0	4	0	2	0	0	1	2	2
Max. total (pairs)	1	2	4	4	0	2	0	0	1	2	2

The Hoopoe is clearly a sporadic breeder in Britain and it would be interesting to know the circumstances which brought four pairs to breed here in 1977.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Nine localities: 1-9 pairs breeding.

Scotland, Mid & N Nine localities.

PERTHSHIRE One locality: one calling on 23rd June in apparently suitable breeding site.

GRAMPIAN One locality: five on 2nd June and three on 9th June, but not seen nor heard subsequently.

INVERNESS-SHIRE Seven localities: (1) one in desultory song on 15th and 16th June; (2)-(4) singles in late May and early June; (5) one singing from 23rd to 25th May apparently did not find mate; (6) pair feeding at least two young in hole in dead birch stump on 15th July, two fledged young being seen the following day; (7) one singing in June.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	10	7	17	22	7	11	2	9	14	9	9
Confirmed (pairs)	3	1	7	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
Possible (pairs)	7	6	12	19	8	13	2	10	15	10	8
Max. total (pairs)	10	7	19	23	9	14	2	10	15	10	9

Those at the Inverness-shire locality number 6 were the first to have been proved breeding in Britain since 1980.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

63 localities: 5-127 pairs breeding.

England, SW 11 localities: 2-53 pairs breeding.

CORNWALL Two localities: (1) one singing briefly; (2) one in full song over bulb field.

DEVON Five localities: (1) two adults and four juveniles on 19th May; (2) pair in breeding season, with two adults and four juveniles on 16th June; (3) two on 21st May; (4) one, singing frequently, from 28th January to 10th May; (5) one singing on 10th June.

HAMPSHIRE Three broad localities: (1) 16 pairs or singing males; (2) 23-24 pairs or singing males; (3) four pairs or singing males.

WILTSHIRE One locality: one singing on 8th April.

England, SE 15 localities: 0-33 pairs breeding.

BERKSHIRE Four localities: (1) one singing in April and May; (2) adult carrying food in June and adult and juvenile in July; (3) pair in May and July; (4) male singing in suitable habitat in May.

SURREY Ten localities: (1) two pairs; (2)-(5) three pairs at each; (6) four or five pairs; (7) ten pairs; (8)-(9) pair at each; (10) present, but numbers not reported.

SUSSEX One locality: agitated male, but no other evidence to suggest breeding.

England, E 37 localities.

NORFOLK 15 singing males; no indication of how many localities involved.

SUFFOLK Two broad localities: (1) 22 singing males; (2) about 15 pairs, of which at least two bred successfully. (One report for area evidently straddling Norfolk and Suffolk indicated 14 young fledged from four nests.)

The figures given above are considerably lower than those for 1984. It is too early to reach any conclusions, although a report from Suffolk comments that 'former breeding areas are now well overgrown as the young trees develop'.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Five localities: 1-5 pairs breeding.

England, SE Four localities.

SUSSEX Four localities: (1)-(4) pair at each, at least one thought to have bred successfully.

England, E One locality.

SUFFOLK One locality: pair fledged four young.

We know that these data are incomplete and hope to publish further summaries next year.

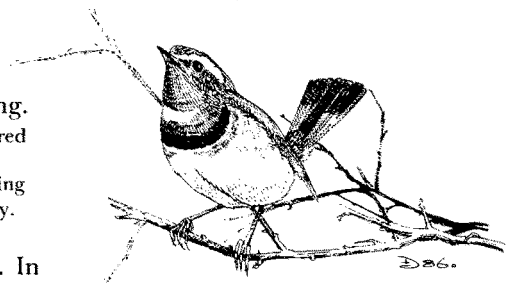
Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

Two localities: one pair breeding.

Scotland, N One locality: one pair reared two young.

Scotland, Mid One locality: male singing on 31st May, but not seen subsequently.

This is the first record of successful breeding for Britain. In



1968, a female was flushed from a nest with eggs, but no male was found. Bluethroats pass through Scotland every spring, en route to Scandinavia, and it may be significant that the spring passage in 1985 was of record proportions.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Three localities: 1-3 pairs breeding.

England, SE One locality.

KENT One locality: one on 14th and 23rd June.

England, Central One locality.

STAFFORDSHIRE One locality: one pair bred.

Scotland, S One locality.

BORDERS One locality: one fledged juvenile seen on 3rd June; down still showing on rump, flight weak, and movements 'unco-ordinated'. The recorder considers breeding in the locality to be still not proven, but adds that it was suspected in the general area in both 1983 and 1984.

Addenda

1984 BORDERS One locality: pair showing signs of maintaining territory, and agitated when seen on 29th and 30th April, but not located subsequently.

1984 POWYS One locality: female giving alarm call in suitable breeding area on 12th June, but not seen subsequently.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	10	11	6	3	6	5	6	7	10	4	3
Confirmed (pairs)	2	3	4	1	1	1	0	2	3	0	1
Possible (pairs)	8	9	2	3	5	4	6	5	9	4	2
Max. total (pairs)	10	12	6	4	6	5	6	7	12	4	3

If not hatched in the vicinity of where it was found, the Borders bird must surely have been reared in Britain. Even so, from the low 1985 figures, one must conclude that the Fieldfare has lost something of its momentum in the colonisation of Britain.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

32 localities: 11-33 pairs breeding.

England, SE One locality.

KENT One locality: one on 30th June.

England, Central One locality.

DERBYSHIRE One locality: one in full song on 18th May in typical habitat (mixture of pine *Pinus* plantation, birch *Betula* and rhododendron *Rhododendron ponticum*).

Scotland, Mid One locality.

GRAMPIAN One locality: pair on 9th June in old birch wood, not seen subsequently.

Scotland, N 29 localities.

INVERNESS-SHIRE 21 localities: (1) pair feeding young in nest during 14th to 20th July; (2) pair feeding fledged young in July; (3) female feeding five young on 3rd July; (4) pair with five young; (5)-(6) pairs with three and four fledged young in June; (7) nest with five eggs on 11th June, young fledged on 3rd July; (8) nest with young in May; (9) agitated pair on 18th May; (10) two adults, one of them singing, on 23rd May; (11) male singing and mobbing Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*; (12) three singing males; (13) two singing males; (14)-(21) singles, mostly singing.

WESTER ROSS Six localities: (1) nest with four eggs on 16th May; (2) pair feeding together; (3) two singing males on 16th May and three individuals on 23rd May; (4) male singing from conifer plantation on 18th May; (5) male singing persistently on 22nd May; (6) singing male on 1st June.

SUTHERLAND Two localities: (1) adult collecting food; (2) male singing on 29th May.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	25	10	10	12	6	18	6	42	65	57	33
Confirmed (pairs)	13	3	2	3	2	7	4	30	17	31	11
Possible (pairs)	40	12	14	14	7	25	7	32	51	47	22
Max. total (pairs)	53	15	16	17	9	32	11	62	68	78	33

Although there are some grounds for thinking that the breeding population is reduced by cold winters (where do Scottish birds winter?), the chief reason for the apparent population fluctuations is variation in the amount of fieldwork. Two observers who normally supply much detailed information did not visit the breeding areas in 1985.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

71 localities: 58-210 pairs breeding.

England, SW 44 localities: 54-156 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Cornwall	4	0	10	5	15
Devon	11	1	37	7	45
Dorset	2	48	0	0	48
Gloucestershire	2	1	0	1	2
Hampshire	15	2	33	0	35
Somerset	10	2	3	6	11

England, SE Nine localities: 4-27 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Essex	1	0	0	1	1
Hertfordshire	1	0	0	1	1
Kent	6	4	12	8	24
Sussex	1	0	0	1	1

England, E 18 localities: 0-27 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Cambridgeshire	1	0	1	0	1
Norfolk	15	0	23	0	23
Suffolk	2	0	1	2	3

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Counties	3	8	10	14	14	11	16	12	13	12	12
Confirmed (pairs)	8	8	13	30	46	19	56	29	90	78	58
Possible (pairs)	67	72	140	144	117	179	106	173	157	235	152
Max. total (pairs)	75	80	153	174	163	198	162	202	247	313	210

A comparison of the regional maxima for the two years 1984 and 1985 reveals in striking manner how much better Cetti's Warbler fares in the milder southwest: England, SW 157:156, England, SE 63:27, England, E 98:27

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*

Six localities: 1-10 pairs breeding.

England, SE Two localities: (1) two territorial males, one pair breeding successfully; (2) male singing for three weeks in a regular site, but breeding not suspected.
England, E Six localities: (1) pair probably bred; (2) male singing between 4th May and 1st July; (3) male singing on 16th June; (4) two males apparently holding territory; (5)-(6) singing male at each.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	3	8	13	15	15	14	8	11	12	10	8
Confirmed (pairs)	1	0	3	4	6	2	5	0	2	0	1
Possible (pairs)	2	9	23	24	24	27	10	18	15	12	9
Max. total (pairs)	3	9	26	28	30	29	15	18	17	12	10

The Savi's Warbler population now appears to be at its lowest level for ten years and in 1985 was confined to two counties.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

22 localities: 18-26 pairs breeding.

England, SE Six localities in two counties, two to six pairs breeding: (1) pair arrived on 25th May and fledged two young on 20th July; (2) pair arrived on about 17th June and fledged three, possibly four, young; (3) one singing on 25th May and 3rd June; (4) one singing on 27th May; (5) one singing from 8th to 30th June; (6) one singing on 30th June; breeding not suspected at localities 4, 5 or 6.
England, E One locality: 0-1 pair breeding.
LINCOLNSHIRE/SOUTH HUMBERSIDE One locality: one singing on 3rd June at suitable locality which held singing male in 1983.
England, Central 15 localities: 16-19 pairs breeding.
WORCESTERSHIRE 13 localities: (1)-(13) 16 or 17 pairs breeding plus 13 or 14 unmated males.
DERBYSHIRE Two localities: (1) one singing from 29th May to 2nd June in rough herbage by stream; (2) one singing from 9th to 16th June in riverside reeds *Phragmites* and coarse vegetation with willows *Salix*.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	3	5	6	15	15	8	3	8	10	12	9
Confirmed (pairs)	0	0	2	4	1	2	0	2	3	4	2
Possible (pairs)	5	5	9	11	22	10	3	7	9	9	7
Max. total (pairs)	5	5	11	15	23	12	3	9	11	13	9

As in previous reports, the summary table omits records from the stronghold of the species. Detailed fieldwork in Worcestershire, where most sites were visited weekly, revealed a further reduction in the number of pairs breeding and the alarmingly high figure of 13 or 14 unmated males. It seems probable that most of those in other counties were also unmated males. The Panel is indebted to Martin Kelsey of the Edward Grey Institute for a detailed report on the position of the species in Worcestershire, where only seven breeding pairs and two or three unpaired males could be found in 1986.

Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*

24 localities: 26-316 pairs breeding.

England, SW 16 localities.
CORNWALL 11 localities: (1)-(6) pairs, and juveniles at some; (7)-(8) pairs in April; (9) one in April; (10) male singing on 15th April, female on 13th October; (11) one seen and others heard on 13th July.
DEVON Two localities: (1) pair reared at least four young from two broods, and two unpaired males; (2) one, probably two, pairs bred and reared total of five young. (There were also many August to December records of adults and immatures along the southern coast.)

DORSET One locality: 18 or 19 pairs present and presumed to have bred.
HAMPSHIRE Two extensive areas: (1) sample counts suggested a 4% increase in the population since 1984, despite the severe weather in February 1985; this gives an estimated population of 211 pairs; (2) eight to 11 pairs bred.
England, SE Eight localities.
SURREY Eight localities: (1) ten pairs; (2) four or five pairs, but area not well covered; (3) three pairs; (4)-(5) one pair at each; (6) 25 pairs; (7) 15 pairs; (8) two pairs. Recorder suggested a maximum decrease of one-third, despite severe weather in January and February 1985, and stated that breeding success was good at the main sites.

Despite the cold winter, the maximum total was the second-highest of recent years.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*

24 localities: 5-44 pairs breeding.

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

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Devon	1	0	1	0	1
Gloucestershire	1	0	0	2	2
Somerset	1	1	0	0	1
Wiltshire	1	0	2	0	2

England, SE 12 localities: 0-25 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Bedfordshire	2	0	1	1	2
Berkshire	1	0	0	1	1
Buckinghamshire	3	0	8	2	10
Hertfordshire	2	0	1	1	2
Kent	4	0	6	4	10

England, E Six localities: 3-9 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Northamptonshire	1	0	0	1	1
Suffolk	5	3	0	5	8

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

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

Wales One locality: 1-3 pairs breeding.

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Powys	1	1	0	2	3

Addendum

1983 POWYS One locality: male paired with female Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* reared 12 young from two broods (see *Ardea* 73: 191-192).

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	32	15	12	7	25	30	35	21	75	47	24
Confirmed (pairs)	4	4	2	1	9	7	15	4	6	4	5
Possible (pairs)	119	24	29	10	64	71	87	40	169	78	41
Max. total (pairs)	123	28	31	11	73	78	102	44	175	82	46

The Firecrest is a small species with a poor expectation of life, but a large clutch size. The marked differences between high and low points in the population level must be partly linked with differing overwinter survival.

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

12 localities: 4-15 pairs breeding.

England, SW One locality: one pair, may have bred, but breeding not proved; a probable immature seen 3rd July.

England, SE Three localities: (1) pair on 27th May; (2) male from 27th May to 18th June; (3) immature male singing on 8th June.

England, E Seven localities: (1)-(2) adults and nests seen; (3) nest found only when leaves had fallen; (4) up to eight singing males in late May, but thought likely that only four or five pairs bred, four juveniles being seen on 30th July; (5) pair present in June; (6) pair together on 26th May, but breeding not suspected; (7) male singing on 3rd June.

Scotland, Mid One locality.

GRAMPIAN One locality: pair present in second half of June, female seen twice and male heard singing on several dates.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	4	11	16	14	17	17	13	12	14	10	12
Confirmed (pairs)	2	7	6	7	3	2	4	3	2	4	4
Possible (pairs)	5	16	15	21	27	26	22	18	21	13	11
Max. total (pairs)	7	23	21	28	30	28	26	21	21	17	15

The reduced numbers are largely attributable to habitat destruction in one of the main breeding areas.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

11 localities: 6-11 pairs breeding.

England, SW One locality: male singing on 20th June, but could not be located on subsequent visits.

England, E Eight localities: (1)-(2) pair bred at each; (3) pair reared five young; (4) pair reared four young; (5)-(6) pairs each reared three young; (7) male on 27th June; (8) male in ideal breeding habitat on 30th June. The Panel also has a report for this region of a minimum

of 22 young being reared by six pairs from seven nests: overlap with some of the foregoing records seems almost certain, but the strict confidentiality under which records are submitted at present prevents a resolution of the problem.

Scotland, S One locality: male 31st July and female from 2nd to 9th August; it is thought certain that they did not nest in the immediate vicinity, but could have summered, and perhaps have bred, nearby.

Scotland, N One locality: male in song on 28th May and 6th June, and present to 9th August.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Counties	7	5	13	11	10	5	6	2	3	4	6
Confirmed (pairs)	51	3	48	13	14	23	11	5	11	6	6
Possible (pairs)	5	22	16	24	38	8	29	3	1	4	5
Max. total (pairs)	56	25	64	37	52	31	40	8	17	10	11

An exceptionally good spring passage on parts of the East Coast may have contributed partly to the picture, but the population remains critically low. Only the breeding success—perhaps even better than the Panel has been able to indicate—holds out some promise for the future.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Three localities: 0-3 pairs breeding.

England, SE One locality.

ESSEX One locality: male on 28th June.

Scotland, S One locality.

BORDERS One locality: male in summer plumage sang briefly on 12th June, but not located thereafter.

Scotland, N & W One locality.

SUTHERLAND One locality: male sang on 4th June.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	0	0	2	2	3	3	1	10	8	10	3
Confirmed (pairs)	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	1	0
Possible (pairs)	0	0	3	2	3	4	0	8	7	8	3
Max. total (pairs)	0	0	3	2	4	4	1	10	8	9	3

A poor year, after three better ones, but a longer time-scale will be needed to detect trends.

Serin *Serinus serinus*

Four localities: 1-5 pairs breeding.

England, SW Three localities.

DEVON Three localities: (1) two males and one female from 8th April to August, only one brood (of 3) reared; (2) female on 27th April, immature on 3rd August and 11th and 13th October, and male and female on 28th October; (3) male singing at a former breeding site on 6th and 10th June.

England, SE One locality.

KENT One locality: nine bird-days between 1st April and 15th May, with singing males on 16th, 26th and 30th April, and females on other dates, then one female from 8th to 15th May.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
No. localities	0	2	0	4	0	1	3	5	7	4	4
Confirmed (pairs)	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	2	2	1
Possible (pairs)	0	2	0	3	0	1	4	6	5	3	4
Max. total (pairs)	0	2	0	4	0	1	6	7	7	5	5

A fifth relatively good year in the protracted process of colonisation.

Parrot Crossbill *Loxia pytyopsittacus*

Two localities: 1-2 pairs breeding.

England, E Two localities.

NORFOLK One locality: pair reared broods of 4 and 2.

SUFFOLK One locality: pair with two juveniles from 4th to 21st April, and the adult male to at least 12th May; thought probable that the pair bred at the site, where breeding was suspected in 1984.

This was the third successive year in which breeding was proved or strongly suspected in Britain.

Scarlet Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

One locality.

Scotland, N One locality: male singing in very suitable habitat on 14th June, where the species was also present in 1984.

The only confirmed breeding record in Britain to date was in 1982 (*Brit. Birds* 77: 133-135).

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

12 localities: 3-15 pairs breeding.

Scotland, Mid and N & W 12 localities: (1) pair on 2nd June; (2) five singing males on 29th June, pair with three fledged young on 22nd July, male feeding one young on 27th July; (3) pair feeding young in nest on 25th July; (4) pair on 11th May; (5)-(6) singing male at each on 8th June; (7) singing male on 10th June; (8) singing male on 19th June; (9) two singing males on 13th July; (10) singing male on 14th July; (11) two or three singing males on 20th June; (12) one on 30th May.

For the second successive year, we are able to publish a rather fuller—although doubtless still incomplete—report. The Panel is grateful to (as well as envious of!) the seven fieldworkers who covered the high tops.

Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus*

57 localities: 4-57 pairs breeding.

England, SW 56 localities.

CORNWALL Two localities: (1) pair carrying caterpillar into clump of brambles *Rubus* and second male in next field; (2) singing male on 21st April.

DEVON 45 localities: (1)-(45) pair at each. No records from several traditional sites, but this could reflect lack of coverage.

AVON One locality: first located on 26th May, three fledged young on 24th July.

SOMERSET Eight localities: (1) pair feeding young in June and July; (2) singing male near to locality 1 on 1st June; (3) three males and one female on 2nd February, single males on 30th March and 4th July; (4) singing male on 4th July; (5) singing male from 9th April to 18th May; (6) pair with fledged young on 15th June; (7)-(8) single males on 20th April and 26th May respectively.

England, SE One locality.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE One locality: one, sex not reported, on 23rd May at locality where breeding has occurred in recent years.

These figures suggest a further decline from the 0-69 pairs in 1984.

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