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Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 1989

Robert Spencer and the Rare Breeding Birds Panel

This is the seventeenth annual report published by the Panel; the sixteenth report, for 1988, was published last year (*Brit. Birds* 83: 353-390). It is, as usual, based on material submitted by county or regional recorders, supplemented by data extracted from Schedule 1 licence returns to the NCC, and from letters from observers reporting directly to the Panel. The support which the Panel has received has been most encouraging: of the more-important contributing counties in a normal year, only Devon is missing. Some Devon data are included, drawn from sources outside the recording network.

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[*Brit. Birds* 84: 349-370, 379-392, September 1991]

Thanks to the publicity of bodies such as the RSPB, the NCC, the WWF, Greenpeace and the ICBP, we are all made aware of threats to rare or declining species. Scarcely a month passes without the attention of the public being drawn to some newly assessed danger. 'There are now only 10,000', we are informed about the black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis*, and maybe that sounds abundant until we are also told that 30 years ago the figure was 100,000. We must not forget that the extinct Passenger Pigeon *Ectopistes migratorius* at one time existed in such vast numbers that a single flock is said to have taken a whole day to fly past. Clearly, if such stupendous declines can take place, it is essential to attempt to measure numbers, however approximately, and it is even more essential to examine the ecology and prospects of species which appear to be declining. Just as a stitch in time saves nine, so does an early start to ecological investigation offer the best chance of preventing that decline from becoming terminal. In a migratory population, unless pair formation occurs in winter quarters or on spring passage, the chance of isolated males and females locating each other without the aid of some far-reaching pheromone can be little greater than that of a jackpot win on the football pools. Such must be the position of any Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* now reaching Britain. Its ancestors may have bred with us for thousands of years, for its fossil remains date back to the last Ice Age. In 1989, for the first time in millenia, no pair is known to have nested with us. Do we bear a responsibility?

In compensation for the loss of the Red-backed Shrike there has been one extraordinary addition to the British list of rare breeding species: in the years since 1981, a still-tiny community of Cranes *Grus grus* has established a base here, after an absence of nearly 400 years.

Some years ago, the Panel, when asked what it meant by 'rare', proposed a figure of below 300 pairs. Second thoughts showed this to be too simplistic a definition, ill suited to species such as the Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*, whose numbers each spring are much influenced by the preceding winter's weather. In 1979, for example, there were fewer than 120 pairs, whereas for 1989 the figure was 522 pairs. To meet the situation posed by such volatile species, the threshold was redefined as 'species normally with fewer than 300 pairs'. It was, perhaps, fortunate that no absolute ceiling was thought necessary, for of Quail *Coturnix coturnix*, not adopted by the Panel until 1986, more than 1,600 were recorded in 1989. Doubtless, the 1990 population will be well below 300 again.

Threats to our breeding birds, rare and common alike, fall into three broad categories, which may be defined as follows: (i) 'acts of God', (ii) concomitants of legal, unavoidable or innocent activity, and (iii) deliberate acts. In the first category come such happenings as spontaneous heathland fires, the floods which too often wash out the nests of Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa*, the freak storms which kill young in open nests, winter's severe cold, and the spring tides when they sweep away the eggs of gulls and terns. Even in these cases, however, the hand of man may be at work, as a result of habitat fragmentation, altered drainage arrangements or rising sea levels caused by the greenhouse effect.

The second category of threats is in some respects the most difficult to reduce, yet potentially the most serious one in its effects. It is probably now a consensus view that legal, commonplace farming activities in the past 30 years have done much to degrade the landscape, reduce available habitat, and sometimes to harm wildlife directly. But is the harvesting of a wood in which a pair of Honey Buzzards *Pernis apivorus* is nesting any different in principle from mowing the meadow where Corncrakes *Crex crex*, Curlews *Numenius arquata* or harvest mice *Micromys minutus* are nesting? Provided that they know of the existence of nesting birds, many farmers, foresters (the Forestry Commission has its own Wildlife and Conservation Research Branch) and road engineers have often been most considerate in rescheduling their work until the young have flown.

A new, inadvertent, threat is mentioned in this report: the promotion of long-distance footpaths. How can one object to an activity which fosters an appreciation of the countryside and promotes health? Yet long-distance mountain footpaths, many of which grow wider by the year with the tread of thousands of boots, pass by summits where not long ago Dotterels *Charadrius morinellus* were the only higher form of life present. And, as with mountains, so waters. Few are immune to the magic of following the sea's edge, and the long-distance coastal footpath runs through prime, occupied, Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* habitat. Habituation is the process which enables motorwayside bird populations to ignore the constant traffic, provided that the vehicles do not stop. Dare we assume that rare breeding bird species through whose territories our footpaths lead will gradually learn to accept people passing by? And will the price of their doing so be that we are not free to stop?

The third category of threat, deliberate activity, is one which the majority of observers and recorders dread most, and let us candidly admit that, in terms of numbers, though not of intention, thoughtless birdwatchers are potentially among the conservation problems. Not long ago, the indiscreet publishing of the locality of a long-established pair of Honey Buzzards meant that special arrangements had to be made to protect them from excessive visitation. Yet sometimes there is needless apprehension about intrusion by birdwatchers, and the supposed role which this report can play in bringing unwelcome attention. Bearing in mind that a report is not published until two years after the end of the season it covers, there is, perhaps, no good case for requesting that the county name be suppressed in reporting the breeding of—say—a Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*, for which suitable breeding habitat is widely distributed. Where habitat requirements are specialised (e.g. reed beds, in a county with few such areas), the Panel is certainly sympathetic towards requests for secrecy. Too much secrecy, however, can be as harmful as too little: the suppression of one Honey Buzzard site (even from the landowner) resulted in the nest-tree being felled when it would otherwise proudly have been retained. Collectors remain an anachronistic threat from Victorian times. As these lines are being written, our television screens have shown pictures of camouflaged Gurkha troops brought into Wales to defend nesting Red Kites *Milvus milvus* from egg-thieves. Here is a species

which suffers, too, from poisoning. It matters not that the poison was sold legally, for use in a prescribed manner against legitimate pest species. The crime is that it was deliberately used in a manner which could not ensure that all other species were safeguarded.

In the long term, conservation research resources must always go towards the internationally important, and to established species with small, declining populations. Newcomers, and those of spasmodic presence, may sometimes be given temporary wardening, but for the most part they have to take their chance. There were more than usual of these shooting stars in 1989: Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*, Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*, Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis*, Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina* and Melodious Warbler *H. polyglotta*, only one of which seems a likely coloniser. The Spoonbill could well become established here and might then achieve a population of international importance, for it is rare and vulnerable elsewhere in Europe. Almost as scarce was the Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*, featured after a gap of eight years.

There are two disturbing accounts. The first is the continued decline of the Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*, a decline so severe one wonders whether all regular waters were checked and reported on. Should more birds come to light, details will be included in the next report. The second concern is for the Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*, whose numbers continue to increase in a most satisfactory manner, but whose 1989 breeding success in some colonies was at a pathetically low level.

In contrast, the report lists many modest successes: a good year for Garganeys *Anas querquedula* and Honey Buzzards, Hobbies *Falco subbuteo* at a new high level and apparently still increasing, Purple Sandpipers *Calidris maritima* discovered nesting on a second mountain range, Fieldfares *Turdus pilaris* just exceeding their previous highest total, Firecrests thriving in Wales, and a detailed survey revealing that, if only in their stronghold county of Devon, there are still more Cirl Buntings *Emberiza cirlus* than had been feared.

The Panel

The membership of the Panel remained unchanged in 1989: Dr L. A. Batten, R. H. Dennis, Richard Porter, Dr J. T. R. Sharrock and Robert Spencer (secretary). Although they reflect the interests and needs of the Panel's sponsoring bodies, the NCC, the RSPB, the BTO and *British Birds*, the individual members each serve on the Panel in a personal capacity.

The Panel's work was commissioned by the NCC as part of its programme for nature conservation. The Panel's other sponsoring bodies, the BTO, the RSPB and *British Birds*, also supported the work financially.

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Systematic list Part 1. Non-passerines

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Six localities in six counties: two pairs built nests.

England, E* Three localities: (1) male, at site where breeding attempted in 1988, built nest, but no female joined him; (2) one from 11th March to 29th August, with two present on 2nd April, and nest-building activity noted on 13th May; (3) pair from 22nd May to 7th June, with courtship behaviour, one remaining until 26th June.

England, N One locality: probably same individual, in breeding plumage, at adjacent localities on 24th and 25th April.

Scotland Two localities: (1) pair from 14th May to at least 14th July, built two platforms and nest, but presumably did not lay; (2) adult at regular site from 29th March to 20th April.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	1	3	3	2	2	1	1	5	10	8	6
No. individuals	1	4	2	2	3	1	4	5	9	12	9
No. pairs	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	3	3

Summer occurrences continue to be widespread. Although events in 1989 were not quite so encouraging as those in 1988 (*Brit. Birds* 84: 188-191; *Scot. Birds* 15: 133), there must still be a good prospect that the species will soon breed successfully in Britain.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

39 localities: 70 pairs, 62 of which attempted breeding, and 21 of which reared a total of 49 young.



Scotland, S One locality: one from 18th April to early May. Site also occupied in 1987 and 1988.

Scotland, Mid Three localities: (1) adult from 18th April to 28th June; (2) adult on 7th June; (3) one summered, and in winter plumage by 7th September.

Scotland, N 35 localities: (1)-(35) 70 pairs and four singles summered. 62 pairs bred, 21 of which succeeded in fledging a probable total of 49 young.

*Geographic regions are as in previous years (see, e.g., *Brit. Birds* 83: 356-357).

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	27	36	35	25	44	26	40	43	39	22	39
Confirmed (pairs)	58	53	52	51	41	39	63	68	33	31	70
Possible (pairs)	19	27	19	8	38	21	18	19	6	6	8
Max. total (pairs)	77	80	71	59	79	60	81	87	39	37	78

The high figures in 1989 are the result of detailed survey work, and the Panel is much indebted to Colin Crooke of the RSPB and Malcolm Harvey. Some regularly used sites appear to have been abandoned, and a programme to safeguard sites is urgently required.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

19 localities in 15 counties: 25-40 pairs breeding.

England, SE & E Six localities: (1) one on 4th, 5th and 7th May; (2) pair on 13th June had two juveniles on 29th July, one juvenile until 31st August; (3) one in full breeding plumage on 11th and 12th June at site which has formerly attracted pairs; (4) three, in breeding plumage, on 22nd May and pair on 29th May; (5) adult on 3rd-4th June; (6) two in breeding plumage on 4th June. (Sites (4)-(6) are only 20 km apart and movement between them is not ruled out.)

England, Central Three localities: (1) up to four in spring, five to 12 from mid July to the end of the year, but no juveniles reported; (2) pair bred at hitherto unreported site, where breeding also occurred in 1987 and 1988; (3) pair probably bred.

England, N Four localities: (1) two pairs produced eight young from three broods, at least four of which fledged; (2) one in suitable habitat on 9th and 10th June; (3) pair plus presumed male from 3rd May to at least 1st June; (4) 17 pairs hatched 28 young at the single most important site in Britain.

Scotland Six localities: (1) one from 29th April to 4th May; (2) pair on 15th June; (3) three adults from April to July, two broods, one young fledging from each; (4) singles on 14th June and 22nd September; (5) two pairs, but no young seen; (6) two pairs and two singles on 27th March, four pairs and single on 17th April and 5th May, three pairs with broods, of 1, 2 and 3, on 18th July.

1987 England, Central One locality: pair bred.

1987 England, N One locality: adult from 4th-16th June.

1988 England, Central One locality: pair bred.

1988 England, N One locality: pair from at least 30th May to 4th June.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	6	9	7	13	19	17	17	15	19	22	19
Confirmed (pairs)	12	11	5	11	11	17	9	11	27	15	25
Possible (pairs)	2	10	7	12	21	13	13	22	12	20	15
Max. total (pairs)	14	21	12	23	32	30	22	33	39	35	40

This rare breeding species at present is more than holding its own. Whilst the total is much influenced by numbers at one key water, the species is now quite widespread in its distribution. It shows a preference for small, eutrophic, reed-fringed waters, and over the years has bred successfully even on a sewage-farm and a beet-factory settling-pond. The fact that the species is most successful on private waters suggests that disturbance (angling is mentioned in some reports) is a key factor.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

14 localities: 3-35 pairs bred.

England, SW One locality: single flew into reed-bed on evenings of 31st July and 1st August.

England, E 12 localities: (1)(2) two males booming at each; (3)-(8) single males booming; (9) pair fledged young; (10) eight males booming in April; (11)(12) combined total of about eight males booming during breeding season.

England, N One locality: six or seven males booming, and two nests found.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	21	19	16	15	18	18	15	12	17	14	14
Confirmed (pairs)	1	4	1	1	0	5	0	0	1	2	3
Booming males	51	48	47	35	44	36	28	23	22	30	33

Recent research by the RSPB has revealed that a male may boom from places considerably farther apart than had previously been appreciated. The figures for booming males in the table may, therefore, suggest a population bigger than it really is.

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

One locality: one pair.

England, E One locality: pair started to build nest in early July.

This is the first time that this species has featured in the Panel's reports. As it is well established in the Netherlands, colonisation of Britain is, perhaps, a realistic possibility.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Five localities: 2-9 pairs breeding.

Scotland, S One locality.

BORDERS One locality: single present at least during 25th June to 3rd July.

Scotland, Mid One locality.

DUNBARTONSHIRE One locality: two feral pairs, one rearing a single young to at least December and the second with a weak cygnet which had disappeared by 4th June.

Scotland, N & W Three localities.

ARGYLL Two localities: (1) two summered, separately; (2) nine summered, only three of which were capable of flight; one consorted with a Mute Swan *C. olor*.

SHETLAND One locality: one incubated an infertile egg in a nest about 10 m from a Mute Swan's nest with five eggs; it apparently associated with the male Mute Swan.

These are the highest numbers so far reported, but they represent 'much ado about nothing'.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

16 localities: 11-39 pairs breeding.

England, SE Four localities.

ESSEX Three localities: (1) female on 9th July and two females on 17th July; (2) single on 7th June; (3) single during July.

KENT One locality: pair almost certainly bred at site also occupied in 1987.

England, E Two localities.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE Two localities: (1) brood in July; (2) pair in spring prospecting for nest site.

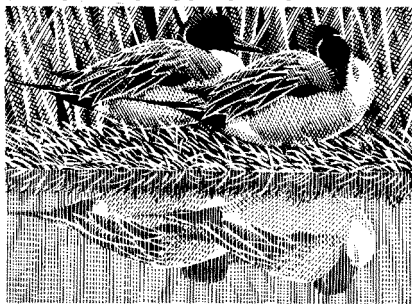
England, N Three localities.

CHESHIRE Two localities: (1) female from 20th June to 7th July; (2) two males and a female from 12th-25th June.

YORKSHIRE One locality: female with four young in early July (the first breeding in Yorkshire since 1983).

Wales Two localities.

DYFED Two localities: (1) female with six ducklings at end of May; (2) three pairs fledged broods of 3, 3 and 4, and fourth female thought to have nested.



Scotland, S One locality.

BORDERS One locality: pair from 16th-24th April, not seen thereafter.

Scotland, N & W Four localities.

ARGYLL One locality: four to six pairs bred, four broods recorded, and possibly a fifth.

ORKNEY Three localities: (1) up to six pairs, but no broods seen; (2) pair fledged three young; (3) at least ten pairs.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	19	15	16	18	23	15	17	14	16	20	16
Confirmed (pairs)	10	9	8	7	12	5	9	6	7	14	11
Possible (pairs)	31	16	23	25	20	13	12	12	14	15	28
Max. total (pairs)	41	25	31	32	32	18	21	18	21	29	39

The second highest maximum total since the Panel started keeping records in 1973.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

81 localities: 18-98 pairs breeding.

England, SW Four localities: 0-4 pairs breeding.

England, SE 23 localities: 5-28 pairs breeding.

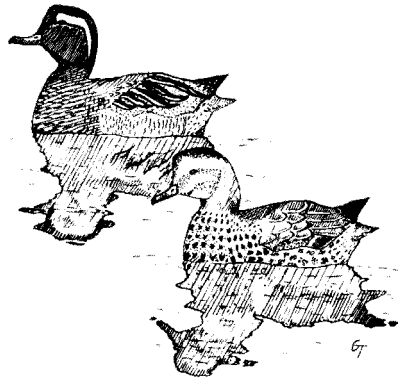
England, E 33 localities: 11-43 pairs breeding.

England, Central Eight localities: 0-8 pairs breeding.

England, N Ten localities: 2-13 pairs breeding.

Scotland, S Three localities: 0-2 pairs breeding.

In every respect, 1989 was the best year for this species since the Panel started collecting data about it in 1980. The individual county totals are listed in the Appendix.



	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	34	48	66	59	46	32	42	36	37	81
Confirmed (pairs)	4	8	10	15	4	4	8	8	11	18
Possible (pairs)	50	50	84	55	53	36	47	37	40	80
Max. total (pairs)	54	58	94	70	57	40	55	45	51	98

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

116 localities: 260-336 pairs breeding.

England, SW Seven localities: 10-11 pairs breeding.

England, SE 37 localities: 90-119 pairs breeding.

England, E 31 localities: 67-86 pairs breeding.

England, Central Ten localities: 16-19 pairs breeding.

England, N 20 localities: 70-77 pairs breeding.

Wales Three localities: 1-2 pairs breeding (one pair moved to a new site).

Scotland, S Six localities: 4-10 pairs breeding.

Scotland, Mid Two localities: 2-12 pairs breeding.

1988 England, SW Two localities: two pairs breeding.

1988 England, Central Two localities: 1-6 pairs breeding.

1988 England, N Two localities: two pairs breeding.

	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	68	63	138	116
Confirmed (pairs)	126	130	185	260
Possible (pairs)	59	44	162	76
Max. total (pairs)	185	174	347	336

This species was not added to the Panel's list until 1986 and it is likely that, for the first two years, some recorders were not aware of the addition. The detailed county totals, which appear in the Appendix, reveal a marked easterly bias in the distribution which does not seem to be related solely to the presence or absence of suitable, eutrophic waters.

In a recent paper (*Brit. Birds* 84: 83-98), Dr A. D. Fox estimated the British breeding population at 370-395 pairs in 1986, considerably higher than the total suggested by the records reported to the Panel.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Five localities: 1-5 pairs breeding.

England, E One locality.

LINCOLNSHIRE One locality: two females, one to at least 5th August, with first-summer male from 22nd May to at least 5th August.

Scotland, Mid Two localities.

ANGUS One locality: two males and a female present from 28th May to 22nd June.

DUNBARTONSHIRE One locality: female with three young during last week of July.

Scotland, N & W Two localities: (1) pair from 14th-16th May; (2) three males and a female on 16th-17th May, two males on 18th May, one male on 20th May.

The Lincolnshire record of this northern duck should be seen in the context of successful breeding in Anglesey in 1988.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

One locality: one individual.

Scotland, Mid One locality.

FIFE One locality: female present from 14th April to 22nd November (and summered again in 1990), but made no attempt to pair with a drake of any species.

This is the first report to the Panel of a summering Long-tailed Duck. Campbell & Ferguson-Lees (1972, *A Field Guide to Birds' Nests*) noted that eggs were reported to have been taken in Shetland at least three times in the nineteenth century and in Orkney in 1911 and probably 1912, and that nesting was suspected in the Outer Hebrides in 1969.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Seven localities: 8-40 pairs breeding.

Scotland, Mid One locality: two pairs at regular site, but breeding not proved.

Scotland, N & W Six localities.

ARGYLL One locality: maximum of 14 pairs plus two additional males, three nests known and two broods seen.

INVERNESS-SHIRE Three localities: (1) 14 males and eight females on 26th April, female with a recently-hatched brood of 6 on 1st August; (2) ten in May and two nests in June; (3) male on 28th May.

ROSS-SHIRE One locality: pair on 31st May.

SHETLAND One locality: five males and two females throughout, two broods, of 3 and 5 ducklings, on 18th July.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	17	10	6	17	6	9	25	35	15	36	7
Confirmed (pairs)	98	7	5	14	10	17	2	8	29	14	8
Possible (pairs)	30	106	77	98	75	52	72	92	33	76	32
Max. total (pairs)	128	113	82	112	85	69	74	100	62	90	40

The population of this species has been declining for some time, but the

exceptionally low figures for 1989 arise partly because at least two important areas have submitted no data. Holidaying ornithologists seeing Common Scoters between May and early August are urged to report their observations to the relevant recorder, or, failing that, to the Panel.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Breeding mainly confined to one extensive nest-box scheme.

England, SE Three localities.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE One locality: two females summered.

ESSEX One locality: male from June to September.

KENT One locality: one or two from 19th June throughout the summer.

England, E One locality.

LINCOLNSHIRE One locality: up to three males and nine females to late April, a male and female to 10th May, and a female to mid August.

England, N Eight localities.

CHESHIRE Six localities: (1) female on 1st June; (2) female on 17th June; (3) female from 8th-16th July; (4) female on 13th July; (5) female from 14th-26th August; (6) male on three dates between 5th June and 11th July.

DURHAM One locality: male on 20th May.

LANCASHIRE One locality: three feral pairs had eggs stolen from nest-boxes.

Scotland, S Two localities.

BORDERS One locality: female summered to at least 21st July.

LOTHIAN One locality: single on 3rd June.

Scotland, Mid Two localities.

ANGUS Two localities: (1) two females to 21st June; (2) one adult and five immature males on 3rd June, four individuals on 25th June, breeding not attempted.

PERTH & KINROSS Two localities: (1) pair on 5th May; (2) 'present' on 7th May, with singles on 11th June and 22nd July.

Scotland, N & W Two localities.

CAITHNESS One locality: pair on 13th April.

NAIRN One locality: male and female present intermittently between 8th April and 10th July.

HIGHLAND REGION ELSEWHERE One extended locality: 85 nests occupied, 67 clutches incubated, and at least 460 ducklings hatched from 55 successful nests.

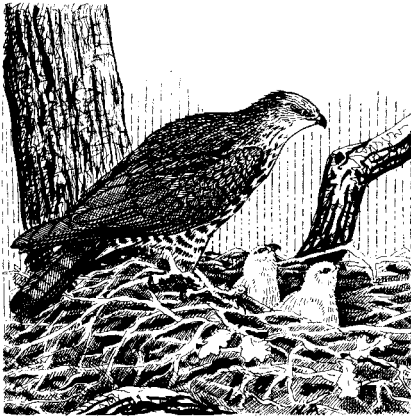
	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Confirmed (pairs)	22	26	29	27	47	53	67	77	80	90	88
Young hatched	110	165	286	220	209	311	336	390	332	427	455

The main nest-box population is steadily increasing, but, as yet, is showing few signs of colonising areas farther afield by leap-frogging in the way that the Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* did. The tendency of a few individuals, not all of them immature, to summer far to the south of the breeding range in Scotland continues unabated. The Panel is grateful to Roy Dennis and his RSPB colleagues for the detailed information on breeding in Scotland.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

20 localities in 11 counties: 2-20 pairs breeding.

Great Britain 20 localities: (1) pair fledged two young, and two immatures present in vicinity; (2) pair seen several times, and displaying once; (3) single, displaying on 27th and 29th May, at new site; (4) single on 31st July; (5) single on 15th May, two, one displaying, on 29th May, singles on 17th June, and 19th and 28th August; (6) singles on 20th and 28th May, and 23rd and 29th July, with soaring and display on May dates; (7) single soaring on 3rd June and over woodland on 24th June; (8) one, possibly two, on 17th August; (9) pair on 27th and 29th May, two calling on 6th June, pair on 30th July, and singles on three dates to 28th August; (10) single on 7th August; (11) one soaring on 7th August; (12) male displaying regularly from late May to early September; (13) records from late May, with pair displaying



in early June: may have bred successfully as juvenile present nearby on 21st August; (14) pair in breeding season; (15) single on 16th June; (16) single on 27th August; (17) Honey Buzzard present, but nest claimed as that of Buzzard *Buteo buteo*; (18) single on several occasions between 18th June and 10th August; (19) single throughout summer, previous nest having been destroyed by winter storms; (20) pair in breeding season.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Confirmed (pairs)	2	3	2	2	3	2	1	1	1	1	2
Max. total (pairs)	4	5	9	3	5	2	4	6	7	10	20

These are the highest numbers which the Panel has been able to report. Data from two areas are being withheld, on the grounds of security, but six of the sites noted above do lie in those two key areas.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

69 pairs and at least another 58 unmated birds.

England, SW One locality: single throughout the year, joined by a second for one day only, on 21st May.

Wales 69 localities: (1)-(69) 53 pairs attempted breeding, and 33 of them reared a total of 48 young, 16 other pairs mostly confirmed as non-breeding, but three or four may possibly have laid and failed early. April population was at least 195 individuals, and August population estimated at about 232.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Total pairs	42	42	46	47	46	46	54	58	59	67	69
Breeding pairs	30	29	32	38	33	33	43	40	44	48	53
Successful pairs	14	21	18	19	20	13	19	23	27	27	33
Young reared	18	27	21	23	24	21	25	29	39	38	48

Another very successful season, with increases in each category. Set against this, no fewer than eight individuals, including two breeding males from pairs with eggs, were poisoned by illegally used *Fenthion*. This series of poisoning incidents is by far the worst recorded in any one year this century. As usual, the Panel is indebted to Peter Davis, the NCC contract worker on Red Kites, for much detailed information.

The background to the current programme aimed at reintroducing Red Kites to England and Scotland was outlined in a recent paper by Dr Ian M. Evans and Dr M. W. Pienkowski (*Brit. Birds* 84: 171-187). These recently released individuals could breed in any suitable habitat in Britain, so the Panel requests that all summer records of this species should be submitted, preferably via the relevant county recorder.

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* Reintroduction.

Scotland At least six pairs nested, two pairs each rearing two young and one pair rearing a single young.

This is the most successful year to date, but it is still too early to be sure that the long-term future of the species in Scotland is secure.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

64 nests: at least 172 young reared.

Great Britain Of 64 known nests, eight failed, and the result from two was not known. The remaining 54 successful nests produced 172 fledged young (average 2.8 per nest where result known, 3.2 per successful nest), which was, once again, the highest number of nests and young in any year this century. Eight males were bigamous. The reason for nest failure was not known in most cases, but one nest was flooded out and three were possibly affected by human disturbance. Despite the rapid increase in the population of this species in recent years, most nests were still in traditional strongholds in East Anglia, and few bred outside this region.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Breeding males	11	16	17	19	21	27	29	26	40	42	58
Breeding females	16	20	20	24	28	32	31	32	46	56	66
Fledged young	38	44	48	59	71	66	86	82	126	145	172

When Marsh Harriers are nesting close together, it is not always easy to know when a male is paired with two females. Hence statements such as '47 young reared from 21 nests', whilst making clear how many females were involved, give no indication of the number of males. 1989 again beat previous records, the species again benefiting from much protection work, and sympathetic farmers. The possibility of a long-distance coastal footpath does represent a threat to a species which is not tolerant of disturbance.

The panel is grateful to John Day for providing the summary.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

15 localities: 7-15 pairs breeding.

England, SW Five localities: (1) pair at regular site, outcome not known; (2) 'ringtail' at two adjacent sites on 27th May, but reports may refer to same bird; (3) 'ringtail' on 29th May; (4) immature male on 21st June; (5) first-summer male on 3rd-4th June. (Note that localities (2)-(4) are in the same county.)

England, SE Three localities: (1) 'ringtail' on 17th July, the first record for the county concerned since 1975; (2) male, displaying and defending territory from 5th-16th May, did not attract a mate; (3) female near recently used breeding site in early May, but did not remain.

England, E Seven localities: (1) pair hatched five eggs, but only one young fledged; (2) up to two females and an immature male on six dates between 25th May and 4th July, wandering extensively; (3)-(7) single females at each, these five females paired with three males, four pairs successful, fledging combined total of 13 young.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	4	8	8	7	8	2	9	10	10	14	15
Confirmed (pairs)	2	2	2	3	6	1	3	7	6	6	7
Possible (pairs)	2	6	7	5	4	1	6	3	4	8	8
Max. total (pairs)	4	8	9	8	10	2	9	10	10	14	15
Fledged young	7	4	4	4	9	3	7	13	15	17	14

The general trend since the low levels of 1974-82 has been upwards. This has not happened without careful wardening, and the sympathetic

attitude of the farmers in whose crops the species is nesting. As with the Marsh Harrier *C. aeruginosus*, the projected long-distance coastal footpath poses a threat to the continued recovery of this, the rarest of our nesting raptors.

The Panel is grateful to R. A. Image for supplying information about numbers and breeding success in eastern England.

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

153 localities: 112-166 pairs breeding.

England & Wales 124 localities involving 18 counties: (1)-(124) 91 pairs known to have attempted breeding, hatching at least 101 young, with a further 27 pairs probably attempting breeding and 19 pairs possibly doing so.

Scotland 29 localities in five regions: (1)-(29) 21 pairs known to have attempted to breed, hatching about 52 young, with a further two pairs probably attempting breeding, and another six possible pairs.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. counties*	22	22	28	17	19	22	20	31	31	31	23
Confirmed (pairs)	25	17	17	24	34	36	36	57	54	108	112
Possible (pairs)	20	33	36	19	27	42	39	59	40	68	54
Max. total (pairs)	45	50	53	43	61	78	75	116	94	176	166

*Regions in Scotland

Reports reaching the Panel indicate that this is possibly the most persecuted raptor in Britain. Eggs and young disappear from nests, and there is strong inferential evidence of killing by keepers. Against this background, it is perhaps not surprising that those attempting to monitor Goshawk breeding success tend to be uncommunicative. Thus, there are reasons for thinking that this report falls appreciably short of a full documentation. The Panel is particularly indebted to S. J. Petty of the Forestry Commission Wildlife and Conservation Research Branch and his colleagues for invaluable help in making the picture as complete as it is.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

54 pairs: 36 pairs hatched 78 young.

England, SE One locality: one on 27th-28th March, 20th, 21st and 29th April, and 7th and 9th May, with three on 15th and 16th May, including a displaying pair which remained until 27th May, one on five dates during 28th May to 11th June, with two on 12th June.

Scotland, S Three broad localities: (1) singles on 4th and 25th April, and 14th-16th May, with one found shot on 8th April; (2) one from 4th July to 3rd August and one on 25th August; (3) one seen in 'May/June'.

Elsewhere in Scotland A total of 54 eyries known to be occupied by pairs, an increase of one on 1988. Two nests held single adults. Two new eyries found, but two first used in 1988 were not occupied. Clutches laid in 49 nests, the same number as in 1988; 36 successful pairs reared a total of 78 young, both figures being a little down on those for 1988. The mean brood size was also lower, at 2.17 young, and productivity, at 1.44 young per occupied nest, was also on the low side. Cold weather at peak hatching time is believed to have caused chick losses, and nine nests were robbed of eggs despite efforts to protect them.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Pairs	25	25	25	30	30	31	34	42	50	53	54
Successful pairs	16	19	20	21	20	21	22	24	30	39	36
Young reared	30	41	42	45	45	47	53	48	56	81	78

Despite the events listed above, it remains unlikely that Ospreys will

nest in southern England in the foreseeable future. The boundaries of this species' terrain in Scotland are, however, edging southwards, a process which is likely to accelerate as more Scottish-bred Ospreys reach breeding age.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

384 localities: 140-390 pairs breeding.

England, SW 45-97 pairs breeding, 60 young reported.

England, SE 37-176 pairs breeding, 39 young reported.

England, E 35-77 pairs breeding, 67 young reported.

England, Central 18-29 pairs breeding, 31 young reported.

England, N 2-4 pairs breeding, 4 young reported.

Wales 3-7 pairs breeding, 4 young reported.

1988 England, SW One locality: pair fledged 3 young.

1987 England, Central One locality: pair with 2 young in September.

1988 England, Central Same locality as in 1987: pair with 2 young at nest.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Confirmed (pairs)	80	64	51	97	80	93	98	91	108	103	140
Possible (pairs)	52	91	109	105	182	116	148	202	164	226	250
Max. total (pairs)	132	155	160	202	262	209	246	293	272	329	390
Young reared (minima)	72	86	89	63	104	91	117	126	160	133	205

The population reported has more than doubled in ten years, and so has the number of young being reared annually. Some of the increase may be attributed to a growing awareness that the Hobby is not confined to southern heaths, but there can be no doubting that a genuine extension of range is occurring. With few potential enemies, the possibility of a milder climate as a result of the 'greenhouse effect', and ample suitable breeding habitat, we may expect the upward trend to continue, and perhaps the eventual removal of the species from the Panel's list. Detailed county totals are given in the Appendix.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

904 localities: 27-1,655 pairs breeding.

England, SW 123 localities: 2-454 pairs breeding.

England, SE 81 localities: 3-123 pairs breeding.

England, E 109 localities: 3-197 pairs breeding.

England, Central 199 localities: 3-279 pairs breeding.

England, N 164 localities: 9-285 pairs breeding.

Wales 58 localities: 1-99 pairs breeding.

Scotland, S 111 localities: 4-159 pairs breeding.

Scotland, Mid and N & W 59 localities: 2-59 pairs breeding.

1987 England, SW One locality: pair on 23rd June.

1987 England, N Four localities: (1) one singing on 6th-7th May; (2) one singing during 13th-18th May; (3) one singing on 3rd-4th June; (4) pair heard and seen on 17th June.

1988 England, N Five localities: (1) two males from 2nd June to early July; (2) one singing from 20th-27th July; (3) one on 1st August; (4) one from at least 31st May to 5th June; (5) pair seen and two singing throughout July and August.

1988 Scotland, S Two localities: (1) one singing during June to August; (2) one singing in May and June.

Only by setting out the four years for which the Panel has data can the truly remarkable size of the 1989 'invasion' be made clear. It seems likely that even these figures greatly understate the true scale of the influx. For

example, the Shropshire recorder commented ‘This large response (150 maximum total) was due to appeals for information in county newspapers.’ Not every county will have gathered in such information from public sources. The individual county totals for 1989 are listed in the Appendix.

	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	84	152	130	904
Confirmed (pairs)	1	1	5	27
Possible (pairs)	110	245	158	1,628
Max. total (pairs)	111	246	163	1,655

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*

14 localities: 0-21 pairs breeding.

England, E Seven localities.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE Four localities: (1) one to three singing from 25th April to 5th May; (2) maximum of six singing and at least four sites occupied from 10th May to mid June, occasionally heard in July; (3) one singing from 29th April to 2nd May; (4) two singing on 30th April.

NORFOLK Three localities: (1) one singing from 13th-15th April; (2) one singing from 9th-14th June; (3) one singing from 8th-13th July.

England, Central One locality.

STAFFORDSHIRE One locality: pair from 10th June to 18th August.

England, N One locality.

CLEVELAND One locality: single present from 5th August, joined by second (perhaps a juvenile) on 10th August.

Scotland Five localities.

ARGYL One locality: one singing from 14th-20th June.

GRAMPIAN Three localities: (1) one singing on several days, ‘probably a regular site’; (2) one singing on several dates at another site thought to be used regularly; (3) single, at site thought not to be used regularly.

HIGHLAND One locality: one singing from 1st-13th June.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. counties*	2	1	3	1	3	3	2	3	4	5	7
No. localities	4	3	4	2	6	4	2	3	7	6	14
No. singing	8	4	9	3	12	10	3	4	18	10	21

*Regions in Scotland.

The best year to date for this species, with an encouraging spread of counties.



Corncrake *Crex crex*

16 localities: 0-16 pairs breeding.

England, SW One locality.

AVON One locality: one singing on 21st June.

England, E Two localities.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE One locality: one singing on 20th June.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE One locality: one singing from 16th-20th June.

England, N Two localities.

NORTHUMBERLAND One locality: one singing on 22nd May.

YORKSHIRE One locality: one singing from 11th-30th June, and two juveniles about 1km away on 26th-28th July.

Scotland, S Three localities.

BORDERS One locality: single for at least a week prior to 13th July, said to have been very agitated during hay-cutting.

LOTHIAN Two localities: (1) one singing from 13th-25th May and on 11th June; (2) one singing from hayfield on 4th June.

Scotland, Mid Two localities.

TAYSIDE Two localities: (1) one singing in hayfield from mid June to mid July; (2) two seen in suitable terrain on a number of occasions in April and May.

Scotland, N Six localities.

GATHNESS Six localities: (1) one heard, on a golf course, on 12th and 26th May and in July; (2) one singing from field of oilseed rape from 13th-17th May; (3) one seen on 1st June; (4) one heard on 5th June; (5) one heard on 27th-28th June; (6) one heard on 25th May.

At present the Panel is collecting records of Corncrakes only away from the Northern and Western Isles.

Crane *Grus grus*

Data have been supplied to the Panel over the past several years with the strict instruction that no information should be published in our annual reports. The book *Red Data Birds in Britain* has, however, included the following entry for this species: 'The Crane is a rare breeding resident in Britain. It formerly bred in East Anglia until about 1600 when it became extinct,

possibly due to hunting. At least one pair has bred or attempted to breed every year since 1981, a total of four young being raised up to 1988. Due to the need for large, undisturbed wetlands, Cranes will at best always be scarce as a breeding bird in Britain. Protection from disturbance and ground predators is essential if a colony is to be established. The breeding of Cranes in Britain has not been publicized in the past as adequate arrangements for their protection were not then in existence.'

There were two breeding attempts in 1989, both unsuccessful. It is of great interest that this northerly breeding species is also attempting to breed in France.

**Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*

24 localities: 521-526 pairs reared at least 150 young.

England, SE & E 24 localities: (1) 29 pairs bred with good success; (2) four pairs summered;

(3) 24 pairs fledged 37 young; (4) 13 pairs on 42 eggs on 10th June, trampled by cattle; (5) 18 pairs fledged 12 young; (6) pair defending territory on 21st May; (7) five on 31st May and a pair mating on 2nd June, but no further evidence; (8) Havergate: 64 pairs reared only 7 young; (9) Minsmere: 91 pairs reared about 40 young; (10)-(17) total of 106 pairs reared about 22 young; (18) 35 pairs 'fared very badly'; (19) one pair, which failed; (20) 45 pairs reared 20 young; (21) three pairs failed in breeding attempts; (22) 15 pairs bred, but fledged few young; (23) 75 pairs bred, but only about 12 young fledged; (24) one pair laid twice, but failed on both occasions.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	3	5	5	9	9	11	14	15	18	27	24
Confirmed (pairs)	147	168	201	190	238	237	269	255	341	389	521
Young reared (minima)	99	101	155	150	192	118	245	227	315	136	150

The large increase in the population may in part be a reflection of the good breeding season in 1987, for Avocets do not breed until they are two, or even three, years old. Whilst some numbers of chicks could have been overlooked, it is clear that breeding success in 1989 was very low. One assumes that a warm, dry spring should assist breeding, but, in parts of East Anglia, hatching coincided with the lagoons drying out. The chicks had to visit the tide's edge to feed, but were unable to get back up the bank on to the saltings and high numbers drowned.

Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicanus*

Ten counties: 126-143 pairs.

England, SW Three counties: 40-49 pairs, 14 young known.

England, SE Three counties: 3-10 pairs, no young reported.

England, E Four counties: 83-84 pairs, 65 young reported.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Confirmed (pairs)	34	8	10	8	20	19	68	103	137	126	126
Possible (pairs)	47	37	43	59	76	52	47	12	0	3	17
Max. total (pairs)	81	45	53	67	96	71	115	115	137	129	143

Stone-curlews often choose to breed in areas where the county boundaries wander across rather featureless open country. In some instances, when map-references were not supplied, it has been difficult to ensure that there has been no duplication in reporting. There are no grounds for believing that the species is increasing in numbers, and the high figures result from extensive survey work on behalf of the RSPB.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Seven localities: 4-7 pairs breeding.

England, N Two localities.

CUMBRIA Two localities: (1) male with one chick on 24th June; (2) male with two chicks on 24th June.

Isle of Man One locality: single on 9th May, the third record at this site in three consecutive years (but probably merely on passage).

Scotland, S Four localities.

BORDERS Four localities: (1) male with three eggs on 28th May, two males with three eggs each on 3rd June, but no birds present on 14th June; (2) one, possibly two, on 5th May; (3) two males and a female on 7th May; (4) two males and three females on 10th May.

In recent years the NCC field teams have discovered that the main Scottish population of this species may exceed 800 pairs. The records listed above relate only to the area south of the central lowlands of



Scotland. It is probable that most such records will be of passage birds, but attempted breeding does occur annually in Cumbria. We shall publish the available details of the main Scottish population in 1989 in next year's report.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

One locality: two young fledged.

Scotland, N One locality: four or five adults on 22nd May, thereafter five. Three nests found and at least two young fledged from four broods.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	4	5	1	3	1	1	2	2	1	2	1
Confirmed (pairs)	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	4	2	2
Possible (pairs)	4	5	1	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	1
Max. total (pairs)	6	6	1	3	2	1	2	3	5	4	3

It is fortunate that the site, which is used year after year, is relatively secure, but a species which is based on a single site must always be particularly vulnerable.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Two localities: 2-4 pairs breeding.

Scotland, N & W Two localities: (1) adult with one downy chick on 18th July, at completely new locality, well away from main breeding area; (2) pair hatched four eggs and at least one young fledged, and two other pairs in same general area.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	0	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	2
Confirmed (pairs)	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	3	2	2
Possible (pairs)	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	2
Max. total (pairs)	0	1	1	1	1	2	3	2	3	2	4

It is encouraging to learn that this species has bred successfully on a summit well removed from the scene of the first-known nest.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

15 localities: 1-17 females nesting.

England, SE Six localities.

ESSEX Four localities: (1) female and two males from April until early June, the males remaining until July, one 'very young' individual was present in late June and July; (2) two males and two females in May and June; (3) two males and two females in May, one of each sex in June; (4) a male and two females during June.

KENT Two localities: (1) five on 30th April, one displaying, 20 on 7th May, two or three from 21st May to 2nd June; (2) 41 on 1st May, reduced to eight by 6th May, five from 27th-30th May.

England, E Three localities: 1-3 females nesting.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE Two localities: (1) nine lek sites, one nest incubated for three weeks, but no young seen; (2) one lek site, but no nesting proved.

NORFOLK One locality: male and female present during breeding season.

England, N Six localities.

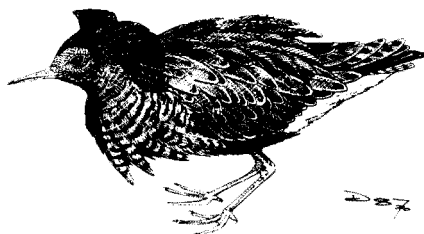
LANCASHIRE Two localities: (1) two males and one female from 12th-27th May, an additional 19 females on 22nd May, lekking on 26th May; (2) three males and up to seven females from 25th March to 26th May, lekking observed several times.

YORKSHIRE Three localities: (1) lekking at three sites and breeding thought to have been attempted at at least one; (2)(3) one to four males throughout June and July, but not thought to have attempted breeding.

UNNAMED COUNTY One locality: 'this species summered once more'.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	12	10	10	13	8	6	8	7	16	14	15
Nests	3	3	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	1	1
Max. no. females possibly nesting	22	13	13	23	32	6	8	9	69	11	17

There were probably few breeding birds amongst the numbers listed, and arbitrary minimum values have been given to obtain an indication of the number of females possibly nesting. The text takes precedence over the table.



Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

14 localities: 34-56 pairs breeding.

England, SW One locality.

SOMERSET One locality: breeding pair from 15th March, but no nest found.

England, SE Three localities: (1) three pairs attempted breeding, but all failed during incubation; (2) pair present in May and June, in area occupied in 1988, with third individual present on two June dates; (3) up to five in May, at a traditional site.

England, E Five localities.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE Two localities: (1) 21 pairs, and 15-20 young fledged from 12 broods; (2) nine pairs, four broods, three of 2 and one of 3, and nine young fledged.

NORFOLK Two localities: (1) three pairs breeding; (2) eight pairs breeding.

ELSEWHERE One locality: one or two pairs showing territorial behaviour in May.

England, N Two localities: (1) 'small flock' summered; (2) four displaying on 18th May, and said to have nested at this site in 1988, the eggs being taken by a collector.

Scotland, Mid One locality.

ANGUS One locality: four on 4th May, two on 6th, one on 13th May and two on 9th-10th June, habitat described as being very suitable for breeding.

Scotland, N Two localities.

ORKNEY One locality: pair with two young about five days old on 30th May, pair still showing aggression on 7th June.

SHETLAND One locality: pair reared two young.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	13	11	5	13	10	12	11	19	13	17	14
Confirmed (pairs)	39	52	22	38	32	55	22	23	28	36	34
Possible (pairs)	25	25	4	31	12	25	17	24	12	28	22
Max. total (pairs)	64	77	26	69	44	80	39	47	40	64	56

There is very little evidence of any consistent trend in the 1980s.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

One locality.

Scotland, N One locality.

GATHNESS One locality: one holding territory on 24th June.

The Panel collects records of breeding-season Whimbrels only away from the Northern Isles.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Six localities: 2-6 pairs breeding.

Scotland, N Six localities.

HIGHLAND Six localities: (1) single on 6th May, two on 25th May, three or four on 13th May, two regularly in June, with young at the end of the month; (2) pair from late May to June, agitated on 4th June; (3) two on 3rd June and single on three July dates; (4) one singing on 15th June; (5) one flushed, calling, on 17th July; (6) pair on 15th June with at least two chicks two or three days old.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	3	4	1	4	3	4	3	2	3	4	6
Confirmed (pairs)	2	7	1	3	1	4	2	2	3	3	2
Possible (pairs)	2	5	0	3	4	1	1	1	1	1	4
Max. total (pairs)	4	12	1	6	5	5	3	3	4	4	6

A good year, in that the species occurred in more localities than in any year since 1978, when seven were occupied and 4-10 pairs bred.

Red-necked Phalarope

Phalaropus lobatus

Four localities: 13-17 pairs breeding.

Scotland, N & W Four localities.

ARGYLL One locality: pair fledged two or three young.

SHETLAND Three localities: (1) 12-14 pairs, but only six broods recorded; (2) pair reared three young; (3) male on 16th July.

It is good that at least one pair is still nesting away from the species' last, lingering stronghold in Shetland.



Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Five localities: 6-9 pairs breeding.

England, SE Four localities: (1) two pairs attempted breeding and hatched eggs, but no fledged young seen; (2) two adults, on different nests, outcome not known, adult and first-

year later seen together; (3) pair attempted nesting, outcome not known; (4) two pairs, first clutches of one and two eggs, both washed out, and one replacement clutch of two also washed out, single second-summer individual also present.

England, E One locality.

SUFFOLK One locality: adult in breeding plumage displaying to a Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* on 24th May. (In addition, adult ringed in East Germany summered at Felixstowe, far from any suitable breeding habitat.)

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	3	5	4	2	6	4	3	5	3	9	5
Confirmed (pairs)	2	1	3	2	2	4	3	1	1	5	6
Possible (pairs)	1	4	3	1	6	1	5	4	2	10	3
Max. total pairs)	3	5	6	3	8	5	8	5	3	15	9

More pairs attempted breeding than ever before, but their success was poor.

Little Gull *Larus minutus*

Three localities: no known pair.

England, SE Three localities: (1) ten present throughout June; (2) four from early May to early June; (3) four in early June.

Four instances are known of this species nesting in Britain, with eggs being laid in Cambridgeshire/Norfolk in 1975, Norfolk and North Yorkshire in 1978 and Central England in 1987, but no young have ever been reared.

Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis*

One locality: one bird reared hybrid young.

England, N One locality.

NORTHUMBERLAND One locality: single 7th May to 1st July (*Brit. Birds* 83: 468), displaying to Sandwich Tern *S. sandvicensis* from 1st May, single egg located 30th May, hatched 19th June, adult and chick seen regularly until 1st July. (Adult and juvenile hybrid in Lothian in August and early September presumed to be these individuals: *Brit. Birds* 83: 468.)

1984 Northumberland One locality: single from 4th-13th August (*Brit. Birds* 79: 556), posturing with Sandwich Terns.

1985 Northumberland One locality: single on 20 days between 16th May and 18th July (*Brit. Birds* 79: 556); brooding an egg, identical to Sandwich Tern's, on 29th June, 2nd and 6th July.

1986 Northumberland One locality: single on 14th, 15th and 20th May, 1st June and 8th and 10th July (*Brit. Birds* 81: 567); on the July dates, it was associating with a chick in the Sandwich Tern colony.

1987 Northumberland One locality: single from 18th May to 20th June (*Brit. Birds* 82: 531), and by 25th May was apparently paired with a Sandwich Tern and incubating two eggs, but nest was flooded and one egg was lost, bird sat on other until 11th June.

1988 Northumberland One locality: single on 15 dates from 5th May to 5th June, and again on 13th July (*Brit. Birds* 82: 531); no nesting attempt made.

Had the Farne Islands site not been regularly wardened, one wonders whether even the presence of the adult female would have been detected.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

17 localities: 172-177 pairs breeding.

England, SW Five localities.

CORNWALL & ISLES OF SCILLY Two localities: (1) pair reared one young; (2) two pairs, and two young seen.

DORSET Three localities: (1) present regularly at an otherwise deserted tern colony; (2)

present in a tern colony, but no sign of breeding; (3) present all summer, but no tern colony known.

England, SE Two localities: (1) two pairs bred and some young thought to have fledged; (2) pair failed in breeding attempt.

England, N Three localities: (1) 25 pairs reared 21 young; (2) 12 pairs bred, 11 thought to have hatched eggs; (3) five pairs reared seven young.

Wales Three localities: (1) 75 pairs, of which 70 laid eggs, mean clutch size 1.41, no information about fledging; (2) 19 pairs laid 33 eggs in 21 clutches, from which 23 young hatched and 18 fledged; (3) 12 pairs settled to breed, but reduced to seven as a result of predation by Jackdaws *Corvus monedula*, at least one young reared.

Scotland Four localities: (1) five nests and three chicks ringed, more were perhaps hidden in dense vegetation; (2) 13 young on 4th August; (3) 12 pairs reared at least 14 young; (4) one pair hatched two young within a colony of Common Terns *Sterna hirundo*.

This is a particularly threatened species, and it is helpful—and encouraging—to learn of isolated pairs and small colonies, such as those along the south coast of England.

Snowy Owl *Nyctea scandiaca*

One locality: two females.

Scotland, N & W One locality.

SHETLAND One locality: on Fetlar two females throughout year, both of which made scrapes, and one of which laid at least one, infertile, egg. A first-summer male, found exhausted on an oil platform, was released from care on 7th April, but stayed only until 9th before moving elsewhere in Shetland. (*Brit. Birds* 83: 470.)

The release of the migrant male did not change the solitary status of the Fetlar females, at least until 1989.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Eight localities: 1-8 pairs nesting.

England, Central One locality.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE One locality: single singing in suitable breeding habitat from 13th-16th May.

Scotland, N & W Seven localities.

HIGHLAND Seven localities: (1) two on 26th May and song to mid June, one visiting old woodpecker holes; (2) one on 19th May; (3) one singing on 20th-21st May; (4) single on 22nd July and 4th August and juvenile on 6th August; (5) one singing on 14th and 21st May and 16th June; (6) two singing on 3rd June, three on 27th June; (7) pair singing on 23rd May.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	7	11	2	9	14	9	9	9	10	9	8
Confirmed (pairs)	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
Possible (pairs)	8	13	2	10	15	10	8	8	9	9	7
Max. total (pairs)	9	14	2	10	15	10	9	9	10	10	8

A better position than might at first appear, for three of the records involve pairs, and a juvenile was seen at a fourth site.

(Continued on pages 379-392)

Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 1989

(continued from page 370)

Systematic list Part 2. Passerines

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

156-210 pairs breeding.

England, SW 4-55 pairs breeding.

England, SE 13-31 pairs breeding.

England, E 5-120 pairs breeding.

England, Central 3-4 pairs breeding.

This is a classic case where, for good reasons, the concept of 'locality' or 'site' is used inconsistently. It makes ornithological sense to think of a heath, or an even larger unit such as the New Forest, or the Brecks, as an ecological whole, but it is not helpful to equate a unit of two with a unit of—say—fifty. It would be useful to know in how many different places the species is to be found breeding, but there are no accepted guidelines for defining a 'place'.

County totals are shown in the Appendix. It does appear that there has been no marked change in numbers, perhaps only changes in the amount of fieldwork.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

One locality: one individual.

England, SE One locality.

ESSEX One locality: male of the white-spotted race *L. s. cyanecula* singing at a flooded gravel-pit from 9th-15th June.

The damp reed-scrub fringing some gravel-pits is very reminiscent of the habitat where the white-spotted race is to be found nesting in the Netherlands.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochrurus*

56 localities: 36-82 pairs breeding.

England, SW One locality: 0-1 pairs breeding.

England, SE 24 localities: 16-31 pairs breeding.

England, E 20 localities: 13-33 pairs breeding.

England, Central Five localities: 4-11 pairs breeding.

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

1988 England, SE One additional locality: 6 pairs bred.

	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	92	77	70	56
Confirmed (pairs)	81	46	54	36
Possible (pairs)	38	63	58	46
Max. total (pairs)	119	109	118	82

This is a difficult species to monitor thoroughly, for it often frequents places to which the public have no access, such as power stations, or urban industrial areas which offer little appeal as places to go birdwatch-

ing. The year table—published for the first time since the Panel reinstated the species (it was monitored up to 1976, but not during 1977-85)—gives the impression that a decline is occurring. Considering that the species first nested in Britain as long ago as 1923, the progress of colonisation has been painfully slow. All breeding-season records are important if a proper assessment is to be made, and we commend the species as being worthy of further study. The individual county totals in 1989 are listed in the Appendix.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

12 localities: 3-13 pairs breeding.

England, SE One locality.

BERKSHIRE One locality: adult from 24th July to 11th August, four on 14th August and eight on 17th August.

KENT One locality: single on 11th June.

England, E One locality.

SUFFOLK One locality: one, feeding with Mistle Thrushes *T. viscivorus*, on 20th June.

England, Central Three localities.

DERBYSHIRE Three localities: (1) one, carrying food, on 28th and 30th May; (2) one on 1st June; (3) one with bad leg, hopping impaired, date(s) not reported.

England, N One locality.

NORTHUMBERLAND One locality: one collecting food on 20th June.

Isle of Man One locality: one, very agitated, on 19th April, and flock of about nine on 5th August, several of which were judged to be juveniles.

Scotland, S Two localities.

BORDERS Two localities: (1) one in full song on 17th May, but not seen thereafter; (2) one on 14th May, and alarm-calling nearby on 5th June, but no other indications of possible breeding.

Scotland, Mid One locality.

FIFE One locality: single, in suitable habitat for breeding, on dates between 7th June and 14th July.

Scotland, N & W Three localities.

BANFFSHIRE One locality: one carrying food into a dense plantation of Sitka spruce *Picea sitchensis*, and alarm-calling on 25th June.

INVERNESS-SHIRE Two localities: (1) two in late June; (2) territorial adult in late April and May.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	6	5	6	7	10	4	3	2	7	7	12
Confirmed (pairs)	1	1	0	2	3	0	0	2	1	2	3
Possible (pairs)	5	4	6	5	9	4	3	0	6	5	10
Max. total (pairs)	6	5	6	7	12	4	3	2	7	7	13

The best year recorded in the Panel's files, although four pairs were confirmed breeding in 1977. Berkshire might not be the first county to come to mind as a likely breeding area, yet in 1988 there was a report of a party of four fledged young there. The Panel's reports for 1982 and 1984 gave cases of Fieldfares associating with Mistle Thrushes. The assessment of this species' status is complicated by the presence of late winterers/late migrants in May and the occurrence in Britain, as early as July in some years, of juveniles reared on the Continent.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

38 localities: 12-51 pairs breeding.

England, SE One locality.

KENT One locality: single on 26th July.

England, Central One locality.

STAFFORDSHIRE One locality: juvenile on 27th July.

Scotland, S One locality.

BORDERS One locality: pair, male singing and then alarm-calling on 18th May, but not found thereafter.

Scotland, N & W 35 localities.

HIGHLAND 33 localities: (1) nest and eggs on 31st May; (2) one alarm-calling on 14th July; (3) pair feeding young in nest; (4) pair with clutch of two on 2nd May, eggs taken by predator by 7th May; (5) nest with young on 17th June; (6) adult carrying food in June, and two fledged young in July; (7)(8) single pairs feeding young; (9) nest with young; (10) adult carrying food; (11)-(33) sightings of singles, some thought to be breeding.

ORKNEY One locality: one singing from at least 14th May to end of June.

SHETLAND One locality: pair reared two broods.

1988 England, SW GLOUCESTER One locality: single from 28th May to 5th June.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	6	18	6	42	65	58	35	32	39	22	38
Confirmed (pairs)	2	7	4	30	17	31	12	20	9	10	12
Possible (pairs)	7	25	7	32	51	48	23	26	41	30	39
Max. total (pairs)	9	32	11	62	68	79	35	46	50	40	51

The numbers do doubtless vary from year to year, possibly being influenced by the weather in the previous winter (there is no evidence to show where Scottish Redwings winter), but much of the annual variation in the year table may be attributable to variations in the amount of fieldwork, or in the diligence with which the results are collected and collated.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

74 localities: 12-208 pairs breeding.

England, SW 43 localities: 5-158 pairs breeding.

England, SE Five localities: 4-7 pairs breeding.

England, E 22 localities: 2-39 pairs breeding.

Wales Four localities: 1-4 pairs breeding.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. counties	14	11	16	12	13	13	13	11	14	14	15
Confirmed (pairs)	46	19	56	29	90	78	59	4	31	24	12
Possible (pairs)	117	179	106	173	157	238	190	175	156	174	196
Max. total (pairs)	163	198	162	202	247	316	249	179	187	198	208

Unfortunately, no figures have been received for Devon, which in 1988 had eight localities and a maximum of 37 pairs. Thus, it would seem that two consecutive mild winters allowed the population to return to something like the peak level which had been reached prior to the severe cold of February 1986. It is noticeable that Kent, which carried a maximum of 61 pairs in 1984, has not been recolonised, yet there has been a further increase in East Anglia. The individual county totals for 1989 are listed in the Appendix.

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*

13 localities: 0-17 pairs breeding.

England, SW Two localities.

DORSET One locality: one singing from 22nd April to 9th May.

HAMPSHIRE One locality: one singing on 6th May.

England, SE Three localities: (1) one from 2nd-5th May; (2) one from 22nd April to 12th May, with two on 29th April; (3) one singing on 30th April.

England, E Six localities.

NORFOLK Five localities: (1) first arrived 19th April, and thereafter four singing males summered; (2)-(5) singles singing.

ELSEWHERE One locality: one singing from 21st April to 5th May, and two singing from 17th June to 8th July.

England, N Two localities.

YORKSHIRE One locality: one in full song from 23rd May to 5th July, but 'very doubtful if it bred'.

ELSEWHERE One locality: single from at least 24th May to 2nd June.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	15	14	8	11	12	10	12	9	16	10	13
Confirmed (pairs)	6	2	5	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0
Possible (pairs)	24	27	10	18	15	12	14	11	20	13	17
Max. total (pairs)	30	29	15	18	17	12	15	12	20	13	17

It seems likely that, except in eastern England, most of these birds were typical overshoots on spring migration, but that a very few individuals do return to breed in successive years.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

Ten localities: 11-22 pairs breeding.

England, SW One locality.

ISLE OF WIGHT One locality: one singing on 13th May.

England, SE Six localities: (1) one singing on 10th and 11th June; (2) up to three males present; (3) eight pairs, all of which appear to have bred successfully; (4) two successful pairs and one additional male which may have attracted a female; (5) one successful pair; (6) one singing from 29th May to 3rd June, at a site occupied in 1988.

England, E One locality.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE One locality: one singing on 29th May.

England, Central One locality.

WORCESTERSHIRE One locality: one male, colour-ringed elsewhere in 1988, failed to attract a mate.

England, N One locality.

YORKSHIRE One locality: male from 18th-21st June, second male on 19th June.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	15	8	3	8	10	12	10	13	9	10	10
Confirmed (pairs)	1	2	0	2	3	4	2	5	7	4	11
Possible (pairs)	22	10	3	7	9	9	9	14	10	12	11
Max. total (pairs)	23	12	3	9	12	13	11	19	17	16	22

The records for Worcestershire, for so long the British headquarters of the species, have traditionally been omitted from the table, but, now that the centre of gravity of the population has moved elsewhere, the single Worcestershire record has been included. The Marsh Warbler is thriving in adjacent areas of the Continent, and it seems that a more vigorous population may have established a bridgehead in England.

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*

One locality: one individual.

Scotland, N & W One locality.

HIGHLAND One locality: one singing from 5th-10th June.

Nesting has been reported in 1907 and 1970, the clutches, of 3 and 3, being collected or taken by a predator, respectively, before hatching (*Brit. Birds* 19: 311; 83: 381).

Melodious Warbler *Hippolais polyglotta*

One locality: one individual.

England, E One locality.

SUFFOLK One locality: one singing in suitable breeding habitat on 28th June, but not located again.

This species has not previously featured in the Panel's reports. Eggs of this species or Icterine Warbler *H. icterina* were collected in Sussex and Surrey in the late nineteenth century (Campbell & Ferguson-Lees, 1972, *A Field Guide to Birds' Nests*).

Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*

Five counties: 23-522 pairs breeding.

England, SW 24 localities.

DORSET 15 localities: (1) five or six males; (2) two pairs; (3) about 40 pairs and at least 30 young reared; (4) two pairs; (5)-(7) two males at each; (8)(9) one male at each; (10) 28 pairs; (11) 37 pairs; (12) two pairs; (13) 'several' pairs; (14)(15) one pair at each.

HAMPSHIRE Eight localities: (1) New Forest: 375 pairs or singing males located during survey, but one area not covered: 'a total of c. 400 pairs is indicated'; (2) seven pairs or singing males; (3) four to six pairs or singing males; (4) pair bred; (5) singing male; (6) pair with one juvenile; (7) pair feeding young on 9th and 14th May; (8) at least one pair.

ISLE OF WIGHT One locality: pair fledged three young about 5th June.

England, SE 12 localities.

SURREY Eight localities: (1) three pairs bred; (2)-(5) single pairs bred at each; (6) 42 pairs; (7) three pairs; (8) pair reared two young.

ELSEWHERE Four localities: (1)-(3) single pairs bred; (4) pair possibly bred.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. counties	6	7	7	6	6	6	5	5	8	6	5
Confirmed (pairs)	15	19	50	8	14	11	26	15	8	26	23
Possible (pairs)	101	258	69+	304	134	429	368	293	239	616	499
Max. total (pairs)	116	277	119+	312	148	440	394	308	247	639	522

Unusually thorough surveys were carried out in Dorset and Hampshire, resulting in high figures. Unfortunately, no report has been received from Devon, which in 1988 held six, possibly 13, pairs. The high population indicates again that this volatile species is able to make good its numbers very quickly, given mild winters.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*

52 localities: 19-131 pairs breeding.

England, SW 16 localities.

DORSET One locality: two adults with six recently fledged young on 15th August.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE One locality: two pairs probably bred and nine pairs possibly bred, in the best year since 1982.

HAMPSHIRE 11 localities: (1) 13 singing on 14th May; (2) two or three singing on 30th May, and pair with one juvenile on 5th August; (3)(4) single singing at each on 5th May; (5) one singing on 28th March and 3rd April; (6) one singing on 16th April, and on 11th June, when second individual seen; (7) one singing on 3rd June; (8) one singing on 20th May; (9) two singing on 21st April and one on 13th May; (10) one on 11th May; (11) pair bred successfully.

SOMERSET One extended locality: 11 singing, first song on 11th March.

WILTSHIRE Two localities: (1) song from 21st April to 13th May, with two singing on 6th May; (2) one singing on 14th and 16th May.

England, SE 29 localities.

BEDFORDSHIRE Two localities: (1) two males from 21st-23rd March and one on 4th May; (2) male on 5th May.

BERKSHIRE One locality: two or three singing in May.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE Three localities: (1) 14 males holding territory, one brood of seven; (2) one singing on 3rd May; (3) one singing on 26th May.

ESSEX Three localities: (1) one singing from mid May into June; (2) one singing in suitable habitat on 29th May; (3) singles, thought to be one individual, singing in two areas on 13th May.

HERTFORDSHIRE Six localities: (1) pair fledged young, and second male on 9th June; (2) pair during May; (3) one singing on 6th May; (4) one singing throughout June; (5) one singing on 13th-14th June; (6) one singing from 13th-21st June.

KENT One locality: two from 29th May to end of June.

MIDDLESEX Two localities: (1) male on 2nd May; (2) one singing on 28th March.

SURREY Ten localities: (1) one singing from March to June; (2) one singing in May and June; (3) two singing on 29th April; (4) one singing on 11th May; (5) one singing on 16th May; (6) four singing and two more calling on 18th May; (7) one on 18th May; (8) male on 2nd May; (9) male on 1st June; (10) one singing in March and April.

ELSEWHERE One locality: single, but no further details supplied.

England, E One locality.

SUFFOLK One locality: male collecting food on 14th May.

England, Central Two localities.

LEICESTERSHIRE One locality: pair from beginning of year until 25th March, but not located thereafter.

WORCESTERSHIRE Two localities: (1) two pairs breeding, one carrying faecal sacs on 17th June, one carrying food on 2nd July; (2) one singing during March.

Wales Four localities.

DYFED One locality: one singing in mid April.

GWENT Two localities: (1) 21 singing males in territory, with 11 pairs known to have bred, five with two broods each, and at least 75 young fledged; (2) different singing males on 1st April and 7th May.

MONTGOMERY One locality: pair, but no further details supplied.

1988 Gloucestershire One locality: two pairs probably bred, one pair possibly did.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	25	30	35	21	75	47	24	19	37	44	52
Confirmed (pairs)	9	7	15	4	6	4	5	1	8	11	19
Possible (pairs)	64	71	87	40	169	78	41	28	74	72	112
Max. total (pairs)	73	78	102	44	175	82	46	29	82	83	131

Not only the largest population for six years, but the best-ever record for proved breeding. The Gwent population, first commented upon in the report for 1988, is clearly making a major contribution to the national total, but the fact that at least 75 young are known to have fledged is indicative of much careful fieldwork, without which lower numbers would obtain.

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

29 localities: 15-37 pairs breeding.

England, SW One locality: female seen on 9th June, and heard to utter cat-like calls on 10th June.

England, SE Six localities: (1) male on 21st May, with possibly a female nearby; (2) male from 24th May to 17th June; (3) pair nested, and possibly laid, but deserted, a female and two males on 28th May; (4) pair bred and three males on 13th May; (5) male calling on 14th May; (6) male singing on 30th May.

England, E 19 localities: (1) pair on many dates in breeding season, but no nest found; (2) two males singing in May, but no evidence of breeding; (3)(4) pairs each fledging at least two young; (5) pair fledged at least one young; (6) two pairs bred, one of them fledging two or three young; (7) pair present until at least mid July, probably bred; (8) pair nested, but probably failed; (9) pair bred, but outcome not known; (10) pair present from 11th May to 24th June, probably bred; (11) family party seen with at least two young; (12) pair bred; (13) individuals present throughout May and June, probably one pair bred; (14) three pairs bred, young fledging from at least one nest, an additional male present on 3rd and 10th June; (15) individuals present throughout the season, and one pair probably bred; (16) male singing on 4th May; (17) pair probably bred; (18) pair bred; (19) singing male.

England, Central One locality: heard calling on one day.

England, N One locality: pair seen and heard on several dates between early and mid June.

Scotland, Mid One locality: male on 25th June.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	17	17	13	12	14	11	12	13	22	35	29
Confirmed (pairs)	3	2	4	3	2	4	4	5	11	16	15
Possible (pairs)	27	26	22	18	19	14	11	11	20	25	22
Max. total (pairs)	30	28	26	21	21	18	15	16	31	41	37

Once again, the Panel is much indebted to the Golden Oriole Group, which monitors annually all known sites in East Anglia.



Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Five localities: six individuals, but no known pairs.

England E Three localities.

NORFOLK Three localities: (1) male from 18th to 21st June, at the site where breeding took place in 1988; (2) male on 10th May; (3) two females on 2nd July, one remaining until 1st August.

Scotland, Mid One locality.

ANGUS One locality: male, far inland, on 24th May.

Scotland, N & W One locality.

HIGHLAND One locality: male from 14th to at least 23rd July at site occupied in previous years.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. counties	10	5	6	2	3	4	7	3	8	6	3
Confirmed (pairs)	14	23	11	5	11	6	6	4	2	1	0
Possible (pairs)	38	8	29	3	1	4	6	2	11	6	6
Max. total (pairs)	52	31	40	8	12	10	12	6	13	7	6

A decline spanning at least 150 years has brought this fine species to extinction as a breeding bird in England. Climatic change, habitat

degradation and the use of farm chemicals have all been suggested as causes. Certainly, it is not a purely English phenomenon. Suitable habitat still remains in plenty (in Essex in the 1950s, the species nested in hawthorn scrub in a railway siding), and doubtless Red-backed Shrikes will turn up irregularly in spring, but the problems of a male attracting a female when so few individuals are present seem, awesome.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

One locality: one individual.

England, Central One locality.

STAFFORDSHIRE One locality: male in area of oak *Quercus* and birch *Betula* scrub from 24th June to 2nd July.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	3	3	1	10	8	10	3	1	3	2	1
Confirmed (pairs)	1	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	0
Possible (pairs)	3	4	0	8	7	8	3	1	2	1	1
Max. total (pairs)	4	4	1	10	8	9	3	1	3	2	1

Tiny though the presence is, it is worth noting that no Bramblings at all were reported in summer in the three years 1974-76.



Serin *Serinus serinus*

One locality: 0-1 pair breeding.

England, Central One locality.

SHROPSHIRE One locality: pair on 1st May, the male singing, but no subsequent sightings.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	0	1	3	5	7	4	5	2	4	6	1
Confirmed (pairs)	0	0	2	1	2	2	1	0	0	0	0
Possible (pairs)	0	1	4	6	5	3	5	3	5	9	1
Max. total (pairs)	0	1	6	7	7	5	6	3	5	9	1

No records were received from Devon, normally the key county, but, even allowing for that, 1989 was a very poor year for this species. It is interesting that, for the second year in succession, a pair is reported from the very inland county of Shropshire: most records come from localities close to the coast.

Scarlet Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

Three localities: three individuals.

Scotland, Mid One locality.

FIFE One locality: female with brood patch, trapped on 25th July and still present next day (coastal locality, so perhaps most likely to be migrant).

Scotland, N & W Two localities.

HIGHLAND Two localities: (1) one singing in late May; (2) one singing on 8th June.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	5	3	1	3
Confirmed (pairs)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Possible (pairs)	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	5	2	1	3
Max. total (pairs)	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	5	2	1	3

Scarlet Rosefinches have now been present in the breeding season every year since the first recorded breeding in 1982 (*Brit. Birds* 77: 133-135). It is certainly occurring more frequently in summer and the possibility of its breeding should be borne in mind.

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

One locality: one individual.

Scotland, N & W One locality: female on 27th July.

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. localities	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Confirmed (pairs)	11	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Possible (pairs)	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Max. total (pairs)	14	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

A token return after all too long an absence.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

31-52 pairs breeding.

Scotland, Mid, N & W 11 localities: (1) pair feeding young in nest on 18th July and four fledged young nearby; (2) male with a juvenile and one or two other juveniles or females nearby; (3) male singing on 11th June and two fully grown young on 18th July; (4)-(10) single males; (11) three or four on 19th July. In addition to the above, with the possibility of some duplication because sites are not named with adequate precision, are the following statements: (a) 'five pairs, all fledged'; (b) '13 pairs, only two nests visited, both fledged', and (c) 'broods ringed from 20 pairs'.

Annual comparisons are meaningless because of the great variation in the amount of fieldwork on the high tops favoured by this species, and the difficulty of eliminating overlap observations.



Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus*

36-119 pairs breeding.

England, SW

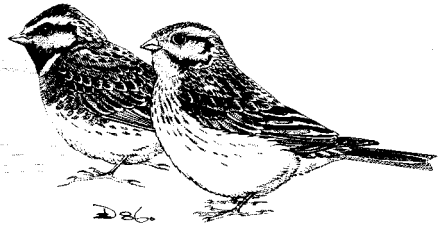
CORNWALL Four localities: (1) male singing on 16th January and 7th April; (2) male singing on 20th April; (3) pair nest-building on 12th April and male on 13th June; (4) pair in April and May, and probably to end of year.

DEVON 50 tetrads: (1)-(50) 35 pairs were proved to have bred, a further 63 pairs were probably breeding, and there were another 16 possible pairs.

SOMERSET For the first time, there were no breeding-season records from this county.

England, SE One locality.

ESSEX One locality: pair in suitable habitat on 5th-6th May.



The Panel is indebted to Dr Andy Evans for very precise details of the Devon population, arising from his study for the RSPB. It is sad to record the disappearance of the species from Somerset. *A New Guide to the Birds of Essex* (1984) gives the status of the species in that county as 'Now a very rare visitor: has bred'. France might be a nearer origin than Devon for the Essex pair, but the French Atlas indicates that the species becomes scarce to the northeast of the Cherbourg peninsula.

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

CA13 0SU

Appendix. Individual county totals (pairs) for 1989 for selected species

For each species, the counties are arranged in alphabetical order within the regions (see *Brit. Birds* 83: 356-357).

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Avon	2	0	0	2	2
Cornwall	1	0	0	1	1
Hampshire	1	0	0	1	1
Bedfordshire	4	0	0	4	4
Essex	5	0	2	6	8
Hertfordshire	2	1	0	0	1
Kent	6	0	1	4	5
Cambridgeshire	5	10	0	5	15
Lincolnshire	2	0	0	2	2
Norfolk	18	1	0	17	18
Northamptonshire	3	0	1	2	3
Suffolk	5	0	0	5	5
Leicestershire	4	0	2	2	4
Nottinghamshire	2	0	0	2	2
Shropshire	1	0	0	1	1
Worcestershire	1	0	0	1	1
Cheshire	5	0	3	4	7
Greater Manchester	2	1	0	1	2
Lancashire	2	0	0	2	2
Yorkshire	1	1	0	1	2
Lanarkshire	2	0	1	0	1
Lothian	1	0	0	1	1

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Dorset	1	1	0	0	1
Hampshire	2	4	0	0	4
Somerset	1	0	0	1	1
Wiltshire	3	5	0	0	5
Buckinghamshire	1	6	0	0	6
Essex	17	37	16	1	54
Hertfordshire	4	9	1	0	10
Kent	6	11	5	0	16
Middlesex	7	26	0	5	31
Surrey	2	1	0	1	2
Cambridgeshire	2	4	0	0	4
Huntingdonshire	1	1	0	0	1
Lincolnshire	2	6	0	6	12
Norfolk	15	49	0	0	49
Northamptonshire	1	3	0	0	3
Suffolk	10	4	7	6	17
Derbyshire	1	1	0	0	1
Leicestershire	3	0	0	3	3
Nottinghamshire	4	8	0	0	8
Warwickshire	2	7	0	0	7
Cheshire	2	8	0	4	12
Cumberland	1	1	0	0	1
Greater Manchester	1	10	0	0	10
Lancashire	2	5	0	0	5
Northumberland	2	5	0	0	5
Yorkshire	11	41	1	2	44
Dyfed	3	1	0	1	2
Borders	5	4	0	5	9
Lothian	1	0	1	0	1
Angus	1	1	3	7	11
Fife	1	1	0	0	1

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Avon	5	3	1	1	5
Cornwall	1	0	0	1	1
Devon	3	2	0	1	3
Dorset	25	16	0	9	25
Gloucestershire	6	1	0	7	8
Hampshire	14	14	0	0	14
Somerset	15	4	1	10	15
Wiltshire	25	5	9	12	26
Bedfordshire	10	5	1	4	10
Berkshire	5	0	2	3	5
Buckinghamshire	18	9	6	4	19
Essex	8	1	3	5	9
Hertfordshire	47	6	8	33	47
Kent	20	1	0	19	20
Middlesex	3	2	1	0	3
Surrey	43	13	28	2	43
Sussex	20	0	20	0	20
Cambridgeshire	20	8	6	6	20
Huntingdonshire	7	3	3	1	7

Hobby *Falco subbuteo* (continued)

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Lincolnshire	13	7	2	4	13
Norfolk	3	3	0	0	3
Northamptonshire	21	6	11	4	21
Suffolk	13	8	0	5	13
Derbyshire	4	2	0	2	4
Leicestershire	5	5	0	0	5
Nottinghamshire	5	3	2	0	5
Shropshire	2	1	1	0	2
Staffordshire	3	1	1	1	3
Warwickshire	3	3	0	1	4
Worcestershire	6	3	1	2	6
Cheshire	2	1	0	1	2
Yorkshire	2	1	0	1	2
Glamorgan	1	0	0	1	1
Gwent	6	3	3	0	6

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Avon	5	0	0	22	22
Cornwall	31	0	3	54	57
Dorset	6	0	0	108	108
Hampshire	7	0	0	67	67
Isles of Scilly	4	0	0	5	5
Isle of Wight	1	1	0	0	1
Somerset	37	0	0	64	64
Wiltshire	32	1	39	90	130
Bedfordshire	12	0	1	14	15
Berkshire	1	0	0	4	4
Buckinghamshire	20	2	8	24	34
Essex	7	0	5	7	12
Hertfordshire	9	1	4	9	14
Kent	20	0	0	30	30
Sussex	12	0	0	14	14
Cambridgeshire	15	1	0	45	45
Huntingdonshire	12	0	17	10	27
Lincolnshire	21	0	0	53	53
Norfolk	39	0	2	37	39
Northamptonshire	18	2	0	22	24
Suffolk	4	0	6	2	8
Derbyshire	2	0	0	29	29
Leicestershire	10	0	0	10	10
Nottinghamshire	4	0	2	2	4
Shropshire	112	3	43	104	150
Staffordshire	29	0	15	18	33
Warwickshire	15	0	2	13	15
West Midlands	3	0	2	1	3
Worcestershire	24	0	23	12	35
Cheshire	35	2	0	48	50
Cleveland	5	0	0	16	16
Cumbria	30	2	0	36	38
Durham	18	1	2	47	50
Isle of Man	3	0	0	25	25
Lancashire	28	0	0	50	50
Yorkshire	45	4	0	52	56
Breconshire	7	1	4	7	12

Quail *Coturnix coturnix* (continued)

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Dyfed, Cardigan	20	0	0	41	41
Dyfed, Carmarthen	2	0	2	1	3
Gwent	8	0	5	11	16
Gwynedd	17	0	0	23	23
Mid Glamorgan	2	0	1	1	2
South Glamorgan	2	0	1	1	2
Borders	68	2	1	86	89
East Lothian	27	1	8	32	41
Lothian, Mid & West	17	1	2	26	29
Angus	4	0	0	4	4
Argyll	2	0	0	2	2
Caithness	6	0	1	5	6
Grampian	39	1	0	38	39
Tayside	8	1	0	7	8

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Dorset	6	4	6	3	13
Hampshire	13	0	40	0	40
Wiltshire	2	0	2	0	2
Berkshire	3	1	0	3	4
Surrey	15	11	8	5	24
Sussex	1	1	2	0	3
Lincolnshire	2	5	0	2	7
Norfolk	39	0	39	0	39
Suffolk	74	0	74	0	74
Nottinghamshire	1	3	0	1	4

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Dorset	1	0	0	1	1
Berkshire	1	0	1	0	1
Essex	4	2	2	2	6
Hertfordshire	1	1	0	0	1
Kent	4	8	0	1	9
London/Middlesex	5	2	0	3	5
Surrey	7	2	5	0	7
Sussex	2	1	0	1	2
Huntingdonshire	2	0	0	2	2
Lincolnshire	4	3	0	3	6
Norfolk	7	3	0	4	7
Suffolk	7	7	8	3	18
Derbyshire	1	1	0	1	2
Nottinghamshire	1	0	0	2	2
West Midlands	5	3	3	1	7
Lancashire	2	0	0	2	2
Yorkshire	4	3	0	1	4

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

County	Localities	Breeding confirmed	Breeding probable	Breeding possible	Maximum total
Avon	1	1	0	0	1
Cornwall	7	0	0	12	12
Dorset	11	0	31	0	31
Hampshire	12	0	93	0	93
Isle of Wight	1	0	0	1	1
Somerset	9	3	1	13	17
Wiltshire	2	1	2	0	3
Berkshire	2	2	0	1	3
Hertfordshire	2	0	1	1	2
Sussex	1	2	0	0	2
Norfolk	19	0	35	0	35
Northamptonshire	2	0	0	2	2
Suffolk	1	2	0	0	2
Dyfed	2	1	1	0	2
Gwent	2	0	1	1	2