

# Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 1998

*Malcolm Ogilvie and the  
Rare Breeding Birds Panel*

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Roseate Terns displaying

The Rare Breeding Birds Panel presents its twenty-sixth annual report on the status of Britain's rarest breeding birds. Because of the ever-continuing threat of nest robbery or intentional disturbance, actual localities are rarely given. Instead, totals are set out by county, region or, occasionally, country. Where counties are given, these are grouped within the Panel's ten regions (see below).

This report will be published just over 18 months after the end of the calendar year with which it deals, and roughly two years after that year's breeding season. The Panel has been discussing ways in which publication might be brought forward so that the valuable information contained in the report can be made available more expeditiously, but recognises the constraints under which the county recorders, who provide so many of the Panel's records, have to work. We

would, though, urge observers to submit their records in good time, so that recorders can begin their task of collation and reporting as soon as possible after the breeding season.

### *The Panel*

The current (May 2000) membership of the Panel is Dr L. A. Batten, Dr C. J. Bibby, Dr H. Q. P. Crick, Dr J. T. R. Sharrock, Mrs A. J. Smith, Dr K. W. Smith, D. A. Stroud and Dr M. A. Ogilvie (Secretary). The individual members of the Panel serve in a personal capacity, but four of them are additionally able to reflect the interests and needs of the respective sponsoring bodies. The work of the Panel is supported financially by the JNCC (on behalf of the country conservation agencies) and the RSPB, with additional support coming from the BTO and *British Birds*.

## Coverage

The Panel collects records from the whole of the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland, but not from the Republic of Ireland. Coverage in 1998 was very good, with at least some records (or nil returns) received from virtually every county and region. Information for some species is, however, lacking from Herefordshire, the Isle of Wight, Yorkshire, the Isle of Man, Clwyd, Glamorgan, Gwent, parts of both Gwynedd and Powys, and from Moray and Nairn.

## Review of the year 1998

For the third year running, cold and wet weather disrupted the breeding season in many parts of the United Kingdom, variously causing high water levels on Scottish lochs, floods on English marshes, and problems for some tree-nesting species. In addition, high tides washed out nests of some coastal-nesting species.

The breeding success of both Red-throated *Gavia stellata* and Black-throated Divers *G. arctica* was poor, owing largely to high water levels and bad weather, which similarly affected Slavonian Grebes *Podiceps auritus*. Black-necked Grebes *P. nigricollis*, however, despite a drop in the number of localities, had a good season, with the highest number of confirmed pairs ever recorded. Great Bitterns *Botaurus stellaris* made a welcome recovery from what, it must be hoped, will turn out to be the low point of the previous year. That recent coloniser, the Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*, continued to increase and spread, while the undoubted highlight of the year was the successful breeding, for the first time in over 300 years, by a pair of Eurasian Spoonbills *Platalea leucorodia*.

Reports of Gadwalls *Anas strepera* increased substantially, and Pintail *A. acuta* numbers were up on the previous year's low figure. Garganeys *A. querquedula* had their best year since 1993.

The re-established populations of Red Kite *Milvus milvus* and White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* both reached record twentieth-century numbers of breeding pairs, as did the native populations of the former and of the Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*. The three species of harrier

*Circus* had mixed fortunes, with Marsh Harriers *C. aeruginosus* producing more young than ever before, though from only a very few more pairs than in the previous year, while a full census of Hen Harriers *C. cyaneus* revealed a population little changed from that of ten years previously, persecution continuing to hold down the numbers. The numbers and productivity of Montagu's Harriers *C. pygargus* were both the worst for several years, not helped by bad weather at critical periods in the breeding cycle.

The number of Common Quails *Coturnix coturnix* was down from the previous year's high, but there were more Spotted Crakes *Porzana porzana* than in any of the last four years. There was a full UK census of Corn Crakes *Crex crex*, for the first time since 1993, revealing a total of 577 singing males, which compares with 480 in 1993 and 574 in 1988. It was a relatively poor year, especially in the Western Isles, but there was a slight increase in mainland Scotland.

As is now usual, productivity of the Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* was badly affected by predation and high tides, but nevertheless record numbers of pairs and young reared were recorded. The numbers of Stone-curlews *Burbinus oedipnemus* also continue to increase. Many breeding pairs of Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa* were flooded out. Red-necked Phalaropes *Phalaropus lobatus* had a disastrous year, with the lowest total of breeding males since 1990. Mediterranean Gulls *Larus melanocephalus* continue to increase and expand, but also to hybridise with other species. Roseate Terns *Sterna dougallii* struggled to maintain even last year's poor showing.

Reporting of both Barn Owl *Tyto alba* and Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* improved again. The latter species is very poorly known in some counties and a prime candidate, one would have thought, for a full census; it is a very useful indicator of water quality.

Britain's two rarest breeding warblers continue to give cause for concern: Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides* has not been proved to breed for five years, while numbers of Marsh Warblers *Acrocephalus palustris* fell back after the previous year's slight increase.

Bearded Tits *Panurus biarmicus* have

been reported to be in decline in recent years, but nearly complete surveys throughout the species' UK range showed that it is still present in very similar numbers to those found at the time of the census in 1992. Golden Orioles *Oriolus oriolus* had a poor year, with one of only ten known clutches stolen. The number of Cirl Buntings *Emberiza cirlus* was revealed by a full census to have continued to increase in the four years since the previous one.

### *Conservation uses of Panel data*

The *Report of the UK Raptor Working Group* was published early in 2000. This important document relied very heavily for its information on the status of birds of prey in the United Kingdom on the data gathered by the Raptor Study Groups, which exist more or less throughout Scotland, as well as in Wales and some parts of England, and on the information gathered by the Rare Breeding Birds Panel. The *Report* recognised the importance of the Raptor Study Groups, and the first two of its 25 recommendations urged the continuation of adequate monitoring of all species, through the Raptor Study Groups and the Panel, and strongly encouraged the continued close co-operation between them. The Panel is very happy to work with the Raptor Study Groups and looks forward to even closer relations in the future. It is also to be hoped that new groups will form to co-ordinate raptor studies in those regions not yet covered.

It is the policy of the Panel to make data available for conservation uses where this is compatible with the constraints of confidentiality. As well as site-specific information (e.g. for reviews of Special Protection Areas), national data sets have been used by the RSPB for planning surveys. Panel data have also played a key role in reviews of birds of conservation concern and national population estimates, together with the development of recovery plans for certain species.

### *Publications*

The bibliography at the end of this report gives details of published results of censuses and surveys of the numbers and distribution of Panel species.

### *Acknowledgments*

The Panel, and in particular its Secretary, very gratefully acknowledges the willing co-operation of all the many county, regional and local recorders throughout the United Kingdom. Completing the forms is just one more burden put upon their willing shoulders, and their help is greatly appreciated.

The following specialist contributors are also deserving of thanks: Jake Allsopp and the Golden Oriole Group, Colin Croke, Peter E. Davis and the Welsh Kite Trust, Roy Dennis, Dr Andy Evans, Ian Carter, Dr Gillian Gilbert, Dr Rhys Green, Bob Image, Malcolm Henderson and Dr Ron Summers.

We are grateful to the licensing officers of the three country agencies - John Holmes (English Nature), John Ralston (Scottish Natural Heritage) and Sian Whitehead (Countryside Council for Wales) - for their ready co-operation in supplying information.

We should also like to express our sincere thanks to all the very many individuals whose fieldwork produced the observations that form the basis for this report.

### *Key to geographical regions used in this report*

Note that recent further reorganisation of local government throughout Britain has made some of the names below obsolete. Exactly as happened after the last major reorganisation, in 1974, however, some English county and area bird societies have changed their recording areas and others have not. So, without defining the precise boundaries of the 'counties' given below, these are, so far as possible, the names used by the local recorders who sent the Panel their information.

For Wales and for Scotland, it has been decided, again so far as possible, to use the names of the recording areas included in the respective annual bird reports of those two countries. Each publishes a map showing the names and boundaries, that for Wales being based on the Watsonian vice-counties, and that for Scotland on the local bird-report areas.

England, SW Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Isles of Scilly, Isle of Wight, Somerset, Wiltshire

England, SE Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, London & Middlesex, Oxfordshire, Surrey, Sussex (East and West)

England, E Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Suffolk

England, Central Derbyshire, Herefordshire, Leicestershire (with Rutland), Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands, Worcestershire

England, N Cheshire, Cleveland, Cumbria, Durham, Greater Manchester, Isle of Man, Lancashire, Merseyside, Northumberland, North Humberside, Tyne & Wear, Yorkshire (North, South and West)

Wales The Watsonian vice-counties of Anglesey (Môn), Brecon (Brycheiniog), Carmarthen (Caerfyrddin), Caernarfon, Ceredigion, Denbigh (Dinbych), Flint (Fflint), Glamorgan and Gower (Morgannwg), Gwent, Meirionnydd, Montgomery (Trefaldwyn), Pembroke (Penfro), Radnor (Maesyfed)

Scotland, S The local bird-recording areas of Dumfries & Galloway, Borders, Lothian, Ayrshire, Clyde (comprising W and E Dunbartonshire including that part now in Argyll & Bute, N and S Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, City of Glasgow, Inverclyde, Stirling-Clyde drainage), Clyde Islands (Arran, the

Cumraes, Bute)

Scotland, Mid The local bird-recording areas of Angus & Dundee, Fife, Forth (Clackmannanshire, Falkirk, Stirling), Perth & Kinross, Northeast Scotland (Aberdeenshire), Moray & Nairn

Scotland, N & W The local bird-recording areas of Argyll & Bute (except Bute and former W Dunbartonshire), Caithness, Highland (Badenoch & Strathspey, Inverness, Ross & Cromarty, Sutherland), Orkney, Shetland and the Outer Hebrides

Northern Ireland Co. Antrim, Co. Armagh, Co. Down, Co. Fermanagh, Co. Londonderry, Co. Tyrone

### Systematic list

The definitions of 'Confirmed breeding', 'Probable breeding' and 'Possible breeding' used in the Panel's reports follow those recommended by the European Ornithological Atlas Committee (now part of the European Bird Census Council) (Hagemeijer & Blair 1997). Within tables, the abbreviations 'Confirmed (pairs)' and 'Possible/probable (pairs)' mean 'Number of pairs confirmed breeding' and 'Number of pairs possibly or probably breeding', respectively.

## Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Two long-term surveys continued. Other, more casual, breeding observations not listed.

Scotland, N & W

ORKNEY Of 104 sites with pairs, breeding occurred at 86, and 51 pairs were successful, rearing 51 young (1.0 per pair) to at least two-thirds grown.

SHETLAND Surveys carried out on three islands

located 43 breeding pairs, but they fledged only 17 young (0.39 per pair), one of the lowest productivity figures recorded. Success was best on Hermaness (eight pairs raised six young), average on Fetlar (23 pairs raised nine young) and very poor on Foula (12 pairs raised just two young).

In the report for 1997, it was wrongly stated that the Shetland survey was a complete one. There, and on Orkney, only a sample of nests is monitored. The total British breeding population was estimated at 935 pairs in 1994 (Stone *et al.* 1997).

## Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

The RSPB monitored 114 sites, of which 82 were occupied. Rafts have been put on several lochs to provide nesting sites that are safer from flooding than those on banks and islands.

Year	Sites monitored	Sites occupied	Rafts used/ available	Young fledged (av. chicks per pair)		
				Rafts	Natural	Total
1996	120	96	27/45	19 (0.70)	28 (0.41)	47 (0.49)
1997	98	82	32/41	17 (0.53)	12 (0.10)	29 (0.35)
1998	114	82	38/45	19 (0.50)	12 (0.28)	31 (0.38)

The number of rafts used increased again, but productivity dropped, probably linked to the prolonged cold, wet weather in May and June. Breeding success at natural sites was even poorer for the same reason, plus persistently high water levels.

The following detailed information is included in the totals in the table.

Scotland, N & W

ARGYLL Ten pairs were monitored, of which eight (three natural, five rafts) bred, producing just two young, both at raft sites.

TAYSIDE Of four monitored sites, one produced a single young.

WESTERN ISLES Two pairs bred at monitored sites, producing three young.

The provision of rafts improved chick productivity of the Scottish population by over 40% in the period 1987-97 (Hancock 2000).

**Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena***

Ten localities in six counties: four or five pairs and five adults in summer plumage.

England, SE

Two localities: (1) two adults and one juvenile in August, plus sightings of at least two other adults; (2) two adults and one juvenile in August.

England, E

Two localities: (1) adult from 27th March to 21st August at usual site; (2) summer-plumaged adult (perhaps same bird).

England, Central

One locality: adult from 5th May to 6th October, calling and holding territory.

England, N

Three localities: (1)(2) same adult in summer plumage seen at both, June to August; (3) adult in summer plumage on 24th June, believed to be different bird.

Scotland, S

One locality: pair on 27th June.

Scotland, Mid

One locality: pair, copulation and nest-building observed on 6th May, but not seen subsequently.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	8	6	5	3	9	7	10	6	8	4	10
No. pairs	3	3	2	1	3	0	1	4	2	1	4-5
No. individuals	12	9	3	4	12	7	13	10	10	3	5

A better showing than for a few years. The long-standing pair in South Scotland, which had been attempting to breed almost every year since 1983, failed to put in an appearance.

**Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus***

25 localities: 42 pairs breeding, fledging 16 young.

Scotland, Mid and N & W

25 localities: (1)-(25) total of 42 pairs bred, fledging 16 young; also eight unpaired singles.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	22	39	36	31	34	33	32	31	24	22	25
Confirmed (pairs)	31	70	74	61	72	73	51	58	49	53	42
Possible/ probable (pairs)	6	8	12	13	5	4	8	7	6	3	8
Max. total pairs	37	78	86	74	77	77	59	65	55	56	50

Productivity remained below the long-term average for the second year running. Heavy rain around the time of hatching is thought to have caused several breeding failures. The Panel is grateful to the North of Scotland Regional Office of the RSPB for information on numbers and breeding performance.

**Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis***

18 localities in 11 counties: 35-48 pairs bred, fledging at least 51 young.

England, SW

One locality: one pair. AVON One locality: pair bred, two small young in early June, not known if fledged.

England, E

Seven localities: 2-8 pairs. CAMBRIDGESHIRE One

locality: three adults in May. HUNTINGDON & PETERBOROUGH One locality: pair in late May, single in June. LINCOLNSHIRE Two localities: (1) two pairs fledged five young; (2) pair fledged two young. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE Three localities: (1) pair displaying on 30th May; (2) pair in summer

plumage on 14th June; (3) summer-plumaged adult in late April.

England, Central

Five localities: 3-7 pairs. LEICESTERSHIRE Four localities: (1) two summer-plumaged adults in May; (2)-(4) single summer-plumaged adults in April-May. NOTTINGHAMSHIRE One locality: three pairs bred, two successfully, fledging five young.

England, N

Four localities: 28-31 pairs. CHESHIRE One locality:

nine pairs bred successfully, fledging 9-12 young, tenth pair present. GREATER MANCHESTER Two localities: (1) two pairs fledged eight young; (2) two pairs present March to May and July-August. NORTHUMBERLAND One locality: 17 pairs bred, 16 fledging 27 young.

Scotland, Mid

One locality: one pair. TAYSIDE One locality: at least one pair; incubating in May, success unknown.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	22	19	19	25	29	31	32	30	32	26	18
Confirmed (pairs)	15	25	21	19	26	24	27	30	20	17	35
Possible/ probable (pairs)	20	15	16	34	34	26	54	47	33	29	13
Max. total pairs	35	40	37	53	60	50	81	77	53	46	48

Although the number of localities fell to the lowest since 1986, the number of confirmed breeding pairs was the highest ever recorded, with the two key sites, in Cheshire and in Northumberland, both having an excellent year.

### Great Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

14 localities, of which 12 had a minimum of 13 and a maximum of 18 booming males; at least 17 young fledged from minimum of 13 nests.

England, SW

Three localities: (1) booming male (intermittent), early March to mid May; (2) booming male late April and in mid May; (3) single seen at intervals through summer.

England, SE

One locality: booming male until 10th May, one seen until 15th.

England, E

Six localities: (1) two, possibly three, booming males, six nests hatched 14 young, at least ten

fledged (one female double-brooded); (2) two, possibly three, booming males, three nests, at least one young fledged; (3) booming male, two nests each fledged at least one young; (4) booming male, one nest fledged one young; (5) booming male; (6) booming male (intermittent).

England, N

Four localities: (1) three booming males, one nest fledged three young; (2) booming male; (3) booming male (intermittent); (4) single flushed on 29th March.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. booming localities	14	14	12	13	14	13	16	13	10	10	12
Confirmed nests	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	11	8	15	13
Booming males (min.)	nc	nc	18	16	18	15	15	19	22	11	13
Booming males (max.)	30	30	20	17	19	17	16	20	22	12	18

A small increase in the number of localities and booming males. At two sites where booming was heard, nesting may have been prevented or ended by flooding. Strict criteria are applied to records of booming males, with records included in the minimum figure of 13 only where (1) sound analysis of the boom showed that the bird was different from those nearby, (2) the booming period overlapped those at nearby sites or (3) booming was heard at the same time as those in nearby territories. In addition, the birds must be heard for at least a week and reported by a reliable observer (e.g. site wardens, county recorders). The additional five booming males heard this year were confirmed but did not meet enough of the above criteria. Totals in the table

since 1990 have been adjusted to take these criteria into account.

Research effort sponsored by the RSPB and EN continues. The Panel is grateful to both organisations for supplying many of these data.

### Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Six localities: 14-18 pairs bred.

#### England, SW

Five localities: 14-17 pairs. CORNWALL One locality: juvenile in late July probably locally bred. DORSET Two localities: (1) 9-11 pairs bred, number of fledged young unknown; (2) pair fledged two or three young. HAMPSHIRE One locality: two pairs bred, one fledging one young. SOMERSET One

locality: two pairs bred, fledged four or five young.

#### England, Central

One locality: 0-1 pair. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE One locality: adult in summer plumage during 23rd June to 17th August, seen carrying sticks and displaying to two Mute Swans *Cygnus olor*.

Breeding has now spread from the original Dorset site where the first pair bred in 1996. There were many other sightings of individuals and small flocks, but these were the only definite breeding or possible breeding records.

### Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Two localities: 1-2 pairs bred.

#### England, E

One locality: pair bred and fledged two young.

#### Scotland, Mid

One locality: pair May-July, seen copulating, no nest built.

This splendid record is believed to be the first successful breeding in Britain since about 1668. In earlier times, it certainly bred in Norfolk, Suffolk, Middlesex, Sussex and Pembrokeshire. There have been signs of potential breeding in Britain in recent years, mainly in Eastern and Northern England, where nest-building has been reported, presumably by colonists from that part of the Continent adjoining the North Sea. No activity of this kind has previously been reported from Scotland.

### Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

20 localities: 2-9 pairs bred unsuccessfully; at least 14 singles.

#### Scotland, N & W

19 localities: (1) pair laid two eggs, but none hatched; (2) pair built nest, but driven off by Mute Swans *C. olor*; (3)-(6) single pairs; (7)-(19) singles.

#### Northern Ireland

One locality: three pairs and a single; not known whether breeding attempted.

The above are all thought to be of wild origin. Records of escaped birds are now included in the Panel's report on non-native breeding birds.

### Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Breeding reports were received as follows:

#### England, SW

AVON Up to three males and one female at two localities. SOMERSET Four pairs and two males at four localities.

#### England, SE

ESSEX Single summering pairs at five localities. GREATER LONDON Young of captive pair left full-winged. KENT Pair bred at one locality, pair present at second. SUSSEX Single pairs at three localities.

#### England, E

NORFOLK Single pairs may have bred at two localities; summering birds at nine more. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE Single pairs may have bred at three localities; summering birds at two more.

#### England, Central

LEICESTERSHIRE Summering pairs or birds at three localities. NOTTINGHAMSHIRE Summering pairs, including display, or birds at four localities. WARWICKSHIRE Summering pairs or birds at three localities.

#### England, N

CHESHIRE Summering birds at three localities. NORTHUMBERLAND Nine broods seen at three localities.

#### Scotland, Mid

ABERDEENSHIRE Six pairs at two localities; two bred. FIFE Single summering pairs at two localities.

## Scotland, N &amp; W

ARGYLL Pairs bred at two localities; present at third. HIGHLAND Pair bred at one locality.

ORKNEY Seven pairs bred at four localities; 23

pairs suspected of breeding at five more.

SHETLAND Single pairs at three localities.

WESTERN ISLES Five pairs bred at three localities.

The number of pairs represented above remains at the level of around 100 reported in the previous two years, though with more reports from England and fewer from Scotland. The most recent estimate of the British population is 300-500 pairs (Gibbons *et al.* 1993).

*Gadwall Anas strepera*

Breeding reports were received as follows:

## England, SW

AVON Seven pairs at two localities. DEVON Two pairs bred at one locality. DORSET Up to ten pairs. GLOUCESTERSHIRE 30-40 pairs at and around Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust centre at Slimbridge. HAMPSHIRE At least 33 pairs. SOMERSET 56 pairs. WILTSHIRE Six broods at two localities.

## England, SE

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE 15 pairs. ESSEX 68-70 pairs with broods at three localities.

GREATER LONDON Number of young left full-winged at one locality, from captive stock.

HERTFORDSHIRE 11 broods at four localities.

KENT 66 pairs, increasing. MIDDLESEX Pair bred at one locality, present at second. OXFORDSHIRE Ten pairs.

SURREY Pairs present at ten localities. SUSSEX Present at eight localities.

## England, E

CAMBRIDGESHIRE 30 pairs at one locality, 23 at second, only two broods seen. HUNTINGDON & PETERBOROUGH 17 pairs.

LINCOLNSHIRE Four pairs. NORFOLK 115 pairs at 25 localities, but county total probably 150+ pairs.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE Nine pairs raised young at five localities; pairs present at ten more. SUFFOLK 63 pairs at main localities only.

## England, Central

DERBYSHIRE At least ten pairs. LEICESTERSHIRE

Five pairs bred at three localities; pairs at seven others. NOTTINGHAMSHIRE 28 pairs at three localities. STAFFORDSHIRE 14 pairs fledged 127 young at one locality. WARWICKSHIRE At least 13 pairs. WORCESTERSHIRE Two pairs.

## England, N

CHESHIRE 18 broods at one locality; single broods at two more. CLEVELAND Single pairs bred at three localities.

GREATER MANCHESTER Eight broods at three localities. LANCASHIRE Seven pairs bred at five localities.

NORTHUMBERLAND Seven pairs bred at four localities.

## Wales

ANGLESEY At least one pair bred. BRECON Pair in April. CARMARTHEN Five pairs at two localities.

## Scotland, S

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY Single males at two localities.

## Scotland, Mid

FIFE Pair bred. STIRLING Three pairs at one locality. ABERDEENSHIRE Three pairs at one locality.

TAYSIDE Male in early May.

## Scotland, N &amp; W

SUTHERLAND Pair bred. ORKNEY About 15 pairs, with five broods at two localities, pairs at four more. WESTERN ISLES Pair bred.

This was the best year yet of reporting of this species, the above records totalling nearly 800 pairs, compared with 500-550 in 1996 and 1997. The 27 pairs reported from Scotland compares with eight in 1996 and six in 1997. The most recent estimate of the British population is about 770 pairs (Gibbons *et al.* 1993).

*Northern Pintail Anas acuta*

28 localities: 13-50 pairs breeding.

## England, SW

One locality: 0-1 pair. AVON One locality: pair in late May and early June, no breeding evidence.

## England, SE

Nine localities: 0-12 pairs. ESSEX One locality: pair displaying in early spring. GREATER LONDON One locality: pair from March.

KENT Four localities: (1) male and two females in May-June; (2) pair in June; (3)(4) single females in June or July.

OXFORDSHIRE One locality: pair summered. SURREY Two localities: (1) up to three pairs in June; (2) pair in May.

## England, E

One locality: 0-1 pair. CAMBRIDGESHIRE One locality: male until June.

## England, Central

Two localities: 0-2 pairs. LEICESTERSHIRE One locality: pair in early May. WARWICKSHIRE One locality: pair April-June, male seen later than female.

## England, N

Four localities: 0-12 pairs. CHESHIRE Three localities: (1) six pairs and three males in early May, some display, but no proof of breeding; (2) pair in May; (3) male in June.

CUMBRIA One locality: pair in late April.



Scotland, N & W

11 localities: 13-22 pairs. INVERNESS One locality: pair March-May, breeding suspected. ORKNEY Nine

localities: (1) six pairs bred; (2) four pairs bred, fifth pair present; (3) two pairs bred; (4) two pairs; (5)-(9) single pairs. WESTERN ISLES One locality: pair bred.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	20	16	20	28	23	23	49	25	33	22	28
Confirmed (pairs)	14	11	9	4	13	4	20	11	8	5	13
Possible/ probable (pairs)	15	28	27	39	35	43	56	34	45	28	37
Max. total pairs	29	38	36	43	48	47	76	45	53	33	50

A good year after the previous year's disappointing reports. Orkney always dominates the total; there was no full survey there, but the nine localities monitored held 12 confirmed breeding pairs and eight possibles, compared with three and ten, respectively, in 1997.

*Garganey Anas querquedula*

86 localities: 22-144 pairs breeding.

England, SW

Six localities: 3-14 pairs. AVON One locality: male in May. DEVON One locality: pair bred. SOMERSET Four localities: (1) pair bred, five other pairs including display; (2) pair bred, and two males; (3) pair and male; (4) pair.

England, SE

24 localities: 6-40 pairs. BERKSHIRE One locality: male in May and June. ESSEX Five localities: (1) pair bred; (2)-(4) single pairs; (5) two singles in June. KENT 11 localities: (1) three pairs believed to have bred; (2)(3) single pairs bred, probably unsuccessfully; (4) two pairs in May; (5) pair and four males; (6) pair and two males; (7) pair to late May, male into June; (8)(9) single pairs in June; (10) up to four males in May; (11) single in mid June. MIDDLESEX Two localities: (1)(2) singles in May and June. SURREY One locality: pair and single from April to July. SUSSEX Four localities: (1)(2) two pairs at each; (3) pair; (4) single.

England, E

22 localities: 11-43 pairs. CAMBRIDGESHIRE Three localities: (1) two broods seen, nine other pairs present; (2) four pairs fledged 24 young, plus three males; (3) pair and single in June. HUNTINGDON & PETERBOROUGH Three localities: (1)-(3) single males in late May and June. LINCOLNSHIRE Two localities: (1) pair from May to September; (2) female in June. NORFOLK Five localities: (1)-(4) single pairs bred; (5) pair and male. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE Six localities: (1) two pairs in March-April; (2) pair and single; (3)(4) single

pairs; (5)(6) singles. SUFFOLK Three localities: (1) pair bred; (2) two pairs; (3) pair.

England, Central

Three localities: 0-8 pairs. DERBYSHIRE One locality: pair and male. LEICESTERSHIRE One locality: three pairs and two males, display and mating seen. WARWICKSHIRE One locality: male in late May and June.

England, N

12 localities: 33-50 pairs. CHESHIRE Seven localities: (1) pair may have bred unsuccessfully; (2)-(4) single pairs; (5) two males; (6)(7) single males. CLEVELAND One locality: pair bred. GREATER MANCHESTER One locality: three singles. LANCASHIRE Three localities: (1) two pairs; (2) pair; (3) three males in June.

Wales

12 localities: 0-12 pairs. CEREDIGION One locality: pair. OTHER WELSH COUNTIES 11 localities: (1)-(11) singles.

Scotland, S

Three localities: 0-3 pairs. DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY One locality: pair in April, male in May. LOTHIAN One locality: pair. AYRSHIRE One locality: male.

Scotland, Mid

Three localities: 0-3 pairs. ABERDEENSHIRE One locality: male. FIFE One locality: male. TAYSIDE One locality: male.

Scotland, N & W

One locality: 1-3 pairs. ORKNEY One locality: pair bred, two other pairs.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	37	81	87	90	90	73	65	80	60	85	86
Confirmed (pairs)	11	18	14	12	16	14	13	9	15	10	22
Possible/ probable (pairs)	40	80	97	82	144	149	98	108	63	119	122
Max. total pairs	51	98	111	94	160	163	111	117	78	129	144

A better-than-average year, though fewer than usual reached as far north as Scotland.

## Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

At least 96 localities or areas (unspecified for some counties): 386-444 pairs breeding.

### England, SW

Ten localities: 12-18 pairs. AVON One locality: seven pairs bred. HAMPSHIRE Four pairs bred; has declined. SOMERSET Five localities: pair bred, plus six pairs.

### England, SE

Minimum 24 localities: 220-236 pairs. BERKSHIRE Two localities: pair bred, plus two pairs. BUCKINGHAMSHIRE One locality: two pairs bred. ESSEX 52 pairs bred, plus ten pairs. HERTFORDSHIRE One locality: two pairs bred. MIDDLESEX/INNER LONDON Six localities: 35 pairs bred. KENT 117 pairs bred. OXFORDSHIRE Two localities: three pairs bred. SURREY Seven localities: five pairs bred, plus four pairs. SUSSEX Three localities: three pairs bred.

### England, E

At least ten localities: 82-84 pairs. HUNTINGDON & PETERBOROUGH One locality: pair bred. LINCOLNSHIRE 36 broods at five localities. NORFOLK 44 pairs bred (incomplete, county total about 100 pairs). NORTHAMPTONSHIRE Three localities: pair bred, plus two pairs.

### England, Central

29 localities: 7-34 pairs. DERBYSHIRE Six localities:

six pairs. LEICESTERSHIRE Ten localities: ten pairs. NOTTINGHAMSHIRE Four localities: four pairs bred, plus one pair. SHROPSHIRE One locality: one pair. STAFFORDSHIRE One locality: pair bred. WARWICKSHIRE Five localities: pair bred, plus eight pairs. WEST MIDLANDS One locality: pair bred. WORCESTERSHIRE One locality: single summering.

### England, N

15 localities: 36 pairs. CHESHIRE Five localities: 12 pairs bred. CLEVELAND One locality: four pairs bred. CUMBRIA One locality: pair bred. GREATER MANCHESTER Two localities: three pairs bred. LANCASHIRE Three localities: 11 pairs bred. NORTHUMBERLAND Three localities: five pairs bred.

### Wales

Four localities: 29-30 pairs. ANGLESEY One locality: one pair. CARMARTHEN Two localities: 26 pairs bred. GLAMORGAN One locality: three pairs bred.

### Scotland, Mid

Four localities: 0-6 pairs. FIFE Three localities: three pairs. TAYSIDE One locality: three pairs.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	138	116	133	161	145	117	158	142	98+	96+	96+
Confirmed (pairs)	185	260	207	284	266	237	347	309	269	246	386
Possible/ probable (pairs)	162	76	86	144	292	179	291	185	100	134	58
Max. total pairs	347	336	293	428	558	416	638	494	369	380	444

This is the best year since this species was transferred to the Less Scarce Species list and full details were no longer requested. It is to be hoped that reporting continues to improve.

## Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

16 localities: 6-41 pairs.

### Scotland, S

One locality: prospecting pair in late May.

### Scotland, Mid

Two localities: (1)(2) two pairs bred, plus male and female.

### Scotland, N & W

ARGYLL Three localities: (1)-(3) pair bred, plus

eight pairs. HIGHLAND Nine localities: (1)-(9) three pairs bred, plus 22 pairs.

### Northern Ireland

One locality: two males.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	36	7	9	14	32	38	47	61	10	8	16
Confirmed (pairs)	14	8	6	9	9	16	5	nc	11	2	6
Possible/ probable (pairs)	76	32	23	21	62	72	79	76-89	32	33	35
Max. total pairs	90	40	29	30	71	88	84	89	43	35	41

A few important localities are being covered annually, but most of the range will be surveyed only at intervals. The last full census was in 1995 (Underhill *et al.* 1998).

### Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Breeding occurs predominantly in two nestbox schemes in Scotland for which only sample data are available, so there is no longer an estimate of the total number of breeding pairs. No breeding occurred away from the core range.

#### England, E

Six localities: 0-8 pairs. HUNTINGDON & PETERBOROUGH Two localities: (1) two males summered, female from August. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE Four localities: (1)(2) single males summered; (3)(4) single females summered.

#### England, Central

Three localities: (1)-(3) 0-3 pairs. LEICESTERSHIRE One locality: single summered. NOTTINGHAMSHIRE Two localities: (1)(2) single females summered.

#### England, N

Two localities: 0-2 pairs. CHESHIRE Two localities: (1) male summered; (2) female from May to early June.

#### Scotland, Mid

Three localities: 0-7 pairs. TAYSIDE Three localities: (1) pair in May, plus male; (2) three females summered; (3) two birds summered.

#### Scotland, N & W

About 124 pairs. HIGHLAND Two localities: (1) RSPB Abernethy Reserve: only 12 pairs nested in boxes (23 in 1997) and raised total of 39 young (81 in 1997); (2) RSPB Insh Marshes Reserve: 52 pairs bred, 47 in boxes, five in natural sites, 30 successful, hatching 267 young, fledging success unknown. An estimated 60 pairs bred elsewhere in the region.

The results from Highland Region refer to only a sample of the many boxes available to the species. Elsewhere, no successful breeding was reported, though the number summering in England continues to increase slowly.

### European Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

32 localities in 16 counties: 17 pairs breeding; minimum of 12 young reared.

#### Great Britain

32 localities: (1) pair fledged two young; (2) pair fledged one young, second male in July; (3)-(11) single pairs each fledged one young; (12) pair bred and thought to have fledged one young; (13) pair bred, but failed; (14) pair bred, result unknown; (15) pair built nest and male seen carrying food,

second female present; (16) two pairs almost certainly bred; (17) pair plus female all summer; (18) pair plus single all summer; (19)-(26) single pairs; (27) adult male, plus immature male and female; (28) one, possibly two, birds in August; (29)-(32) singles.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Confirmed (pairs)	1	2	3	2	8	6	9	9	14	14	17
Max. total pairs	10	20	19	22	26	27	28	30	34	39	37

Although conclusive proof of breeding was lacking at two nests, the total represents a further satisfactory increase in the number of pairs, though the number of young known to have fledged is well down on last year's 18. As Roberts *et al.* (1999) suggested, the true population of this species in Britain is probably over 50 pairs. A census, organised by the Panel, is taking place in 2000.

### Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

200 pairs in Wales reared 174 young, and at least 100 breeding pairs from released stock in England and Scotland reared 195 young.

#### Wales

167 pairs were proved to breed, of which 110 were successful, rearing 171 young. All these totals are the highest in the twentieth century, while it is particularly welcome that the fledging success was

equal to the highest recorded, after some poor years. As usual, nest failures could in most cases be attributed to bad weather, especially heavy rain, though it is known that at least three nests were robbed by egg-collectors.

In addition to the breeding pairs, there were 33 non-breeding pairs and 132 unmated singles were counted during the spring. The total population stood at 536 in April and 700 in August.

The known breeding range changed very little this year, with most of the increase occurring through infilling. More and more non-breeding birds are, however, living in peripheral areas, and further range expansion is likely.

Wales	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Total pairs	68	71	84	92	101	115	138	146	161	180	200
Breeding pairs	49	54	65	76	84	104	111	127	130	152	167
Successful pairs	27	33	47	41	60	61	70	79	90	99	112
Young reared	38	49	73	62	96	82	99	117	119	129	174
Young/territorial pair	0.6	0.7	0.9	0.7	1.0	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.9

The Panel wishes to thank Peter Davis and the Welsh Kite Trust for the above information.

#### England

A total of 78 pairs of the re-established population was located at or around the release site in the Chilterns; of these, 71 pairs bred, 65 successfully fledging 143 young. In the East Midlands release area, five pairs bred, but only two were successful,

fledging three young between them. Four more pairs built nests, but did not lay. A further 21 individuals were released at this site. An untagged pair, perhaps of Continental origin, bred for the third year, but failed.

England	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Total territorial pairs	2	7	12	22	26	nc	61	87
Breeding pairs	2	4	9	20	24	37+	57	76
Successful pairs	0	4	8	17	22	nc	50	67
Young reared	0	9	14	37	55	80	111	146
Young/territorial pair	-	1.3	1.2	1.7	2.1	-	1.8	1.7

#### Scotland

A total of 28 pairs was located in the area of the North of Scotland release site; of these, 23 laid and 20 of them fledged 44 young. In addition, the first breeding took place at the Central Scotland release

site, with two pairs breeding, both successfully, rearing three young between them. One of these pairs comprised a male reared in the North of Scotland area in 1996 paired to a female released in Central Scotland the same year.

Scotland	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Total territorial pairs	2	8	11	17	22	27	30
Breeding pairs	1	5	8	15	17	23	25
Successful pairs	1	3	6	11	16	19	22
Young reared	1	7	13	26	39	39	47
Young/territorial pair	2.0	0.9	1.2	1.5	1.8	1.4	1.6

The Panel is grateful to Ian Carter of English Nature and Colin Crooke of the RSPB for the above information.

Note that, in previous reports, breeding success has been expressed as young per successful pair. This has been changed in the tables above to young per territorial pair, which we consider to be a better measure of the average output of the breeding pairs in the population.

## White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

### Re-establishment.

#### Scotland

A total of 18 pairs or trios of territory-holding birds laid an estimated 16-17 clutches. Nine of these were known to have hatched and at least one young fledged from each of the nine nests, to

produce a total of 13 fledged. This is the most successful breeding result since the re-establishment began back in 1975, and might have been even better had not two nests been robbed by egg-collectors.

The year 1998 was the last in the current chick-release programme: a further 12 birds were brought from Norway and all were successfully released.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Breeding pairs/trios (min)	6	6	9	8	9	6	8	9	12	11	18
Successful pairs	1	3	2	4	4	4	4	5	7	5	9
Young reared	2	5	2	7	7	5	5	7	9	9	13
Young/territorial pair	0.3	0.8	0.2	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7

By far the most successful year to date, though the threat from egg-collectors continues. The Panel is grateful to Colin Crooke and the Sea Eagle Project Team for providing it with information. The Project is supported jointly by the JNCC, SNH and the RSPB.

Note that breeding success is expressed as young per territorial pair (see under Red Kite *Milvus milvus*).

### Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

137 pairs bred, rearing at least 292 young.

England, SW

Two localities: three pairs. SOMERSET Two localities: (1) one male and two females fledged five young; (2) pair (including male from locality 1) fledged four young.

England, SE

Seven localities or areas: 30-33 pairs. KENT Six localities: (1) 24 females nested, of which 14 successful, fledging 42 young; (2) three pairs fledged 12 young; (3) pair fledged four young; (4)(5) single pairs each fledged two young; (6) single female. SUSSEX One locality: male and two females during summer, no breeding evidence.

England, E

28 localities or areas: 92-98 pairs bred. CAMBRIDGESHIRE Three localities: (1) pair fledged two young, second pair probably bred; (2) pair fledged two young, second pair present; (3) two pairs bred unsuccessfully. LINCOLNSHIRE Two localities: (1) two pairs fledged four young; (2) pair fledged four young. NORFOLK Up to 16 localities

or areas: 61 pairs fledged at least 121 young. SUFFOLK Seven localities: (1) nine pairs fledged 21 young; (2) eight pairs fledged 25 young; (3) four pairs fledged 12 young; (4) four pairs fledged 12 young; (5) pair fledged two young; (6) pair bred, but failed; (7) pair probably bred.

England, N

Four localities: 6-10 pairs bred. LANCASHIRE Two localities: (1) three pairs fledged ten young; (2) two immatures summered. YORKSHIRE Two localities: (1) two pairs bred, no details; (2) pair bred, no details.

Wales

One locality: 0-1 pair. ANGLESEY One locality: male displaying during May-July.

Scotland, Mid

Four localities: 3-5 pairs. ABERDEENSHIRE One locality: two males and two females in May. TAYSIDE Three localities: (1)-(3) single pairs bred, fledging total of six young.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Breeding males	42	58	73	83	92	84	114	151	135	131	137
Breeding females	56	66	110	91	107	110	129	156	136	132	138
Young	145	172	145	198	229	244	255	277	263	206	292

Although the number of breeding birds was higher than in the last two years, it was still lower than that recorded in the record year of 1995. This may not represent the true picture, however, since information from Lincolnshire is known to be incomplete, and keeping track of all breeding attempts in some other counties is becoming increasingly difficult. On the other hand, the count of young fledged was the highest ever.

### Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

The following summary information has been received. For each area, it is based on a non-randomised sample rather than a complete survey.

Area	Occupied territories	Territories known to have fledged young	Min. no. young fledged	Min. young/territorial pair
England, N (all counties)	20	9	28	1.4
Wales	28	20	12	3.0 <sup>1</sup>
Borders & Lothian	8	4	9	1.1
Dumfries & Galloway	34	20	63	1.9
South Strathclyde	44	13-14	46	1.0
Stirling	4	1	0	-
Angus	2	1	2	1.0
Perthshire	42	17	61	1.5
Northeast Scotland	19	6	19	1.0
Moray & Nairn	16	8	25	1.6
Argyll & Bute	27	18	52	1.9
Highland	23	9	27	1.2
Orkney	46	9	20	0.4
Western Isles	16	5	3	3.0 <sup>2</sup>
TOTALS	329	140-141	367	1.2

<sup>1</sup> brood size known for only four nests, area omitted from total calculation of young/territorial pair.

<sup>2</sup> brood size known for only one nest, area omitted from total calculation of young/territorial pair.

The figures above represent a significant increase in the number of occupied territories monitored, up from 229 in 1996 and 220 in 1997, though the number of young fledged is little changed, thanks to a very poor summer with much heavy rain at critical times. The reason why the monitoring improved was that a national census was carried out in 1998, the results of which will be published in *Bird Study* later this year. The total of territorial pairs estimated from the census was 570 (range 499-640), little changed from the previous census in 1988.

The Panel is grateful to the Scottish, Welsh and Cumbrian Raptor Study Groups, as well as many individuals, for the above information.

Note that breeding success is expressed in young/territorial pair (see under Red Kite *Milvus milvus*).

### Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

11 localities: 3-14 pairs reared eight young.

England, SW

Eight localities: (1) pair fledged four young; (2) pair laid, but nest destroyed by predator; (3)(4) pairs seen; (5)-(7) single males seen; (8) female seen.

England, SE

Two localities: (1)(2) single males seen.

England, E

One locality: four males and three females present, but only one pair bred, fledging four young.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	14	15	9	14	12	8	15	14	16	13	11
Breeding males	5	4	8	5	7	5	7	8	6	7	3
Other males	4	5	4	3	2	2	9	8	8	6	10
Breeding females	6	6	11	7	8	6	12	9	7	9	3
Other females	4	7	2	6	4	1	11	4	7	3	5
Young	17	14	20	14	12	9	13	26	14	11	8

An even worse year than 1997, with bad weather at critical periods in the breeding cycle again to blame. The number of young fledged is the lowest since 1985, when similarly it is thought that just three pairs bred.

### Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

At least 255 localities or areas: 179-249 pairs breeding.

**England**

132 localities in 26 counties; 73 pairs known to have bred, plus 55 other pairs.

**Wales**

Over 39 localities in six counties: 39 pairs known

to have bred.

**Scotland**

84 localities in six recording areas: 67 pairs known to have bred, plus 15 other pairs.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. counties	31	23	30	36	34	35	33	38	33	41	38
Confirmed (pairs)	108	112	93	158	150	199	145	249	160	247	179
Possible/ probable (pairs)	68	54	79	71	93	100	80	70	53	100	70
Max. total pairs	176	166	172	229	243	299	225	319	213	347	249

Records received from Wales were much less complete than in 1997, when 92 pairs were known to have bred. Although the number of localities with birds in England was substantially up on last year, when there were reports from 85, the number of pairs known to have bred was ten fewer.

Some observers are still withholding information because of the risk of persecution of the birds. We do, however, urge that all information should be deposited with the Panel to assist the conservation of this species, not least by having available more-complete data on the scale of persecution.

### Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

The following summary information has been received. For each area other than Northern England, it is based on a non-randomised sample rather than a complete census.

Area	Occupied territories	Territories known to have fledged young	Min. no. young fledged	Min. young/territorial pair
England, N	2	0	0	
Dumfries & Galloway	2	1	1	0.5
Borders	1	0	0	
Central Scotland	7	5	5	0.7
Tayside	22	9	13	0.6
Northeast Scotland	15	10	14-16	0.9-1.1
Argyll	54	22	27	0.5
Highland	92	43	55	0.6
Western Isles	18	7	9	0.5
TOTALS	213	97	124-126	0.6

Breeding success was slightly better almost everywhere than it was in 1997, when 95 pairs fledged 113 young (1.2/successful pair). Two pairs laid in northern England, but neither hatched their single egg. The Panel is grateful to the Scottish and Cumbrian Raptor Study Groups for much of the above information.

Note that breeding success is expressed as young/territorial pair (see under Red Kite *Milvus milvus*).

## Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

131 pairs: 117 pairs laid eggs, rearing 194 young.

England, SW

SOMERSET One locality: single summered for the fourth successive year.

England, Central

RUTLAND: 12 more young were translocated from Scotland to Rutland Water, all of which fledged and left the area. A pair was present in mid April, and some display was seen.

Scotland, S

BORDERS One locality: pair bred, fledging one young. LOTHIAN One locality: one summered for the second successive year.

Scotland, Mid and N & W

A total of 130 occupied nests was found. Eggs were laid in 116 nests, of which 103 clutches hatched, and 193 young were reared from 92 nests.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Pairs with nests	53	58	62	73	76	88	95	99	104	111	131
Pairs with eggs	49	51	56	64	63	78	83	92	93	102	117
Successful pairs	38	38	44	44	47	56	69	73	74	77	93
Young reared	81	81	90	82	103	111	146	146	155	159	194
Young/territorial pair	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.1	1.4	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.5

Once again, records were broken in every way. Had the weather not been poor, with a severe storm in late May, followed by cold winds and gales when the chicks were newly hatched, the breeding success might have been even better. The successful breeding by a pair in southern Scotland is a welcome sign of natural range expansion.

Among the nest failures, three clutches are known to have been taken by egg-collectors, and at least two clutches were destroyed when nests were blown out of trees by high winds.

The Panel is grateful for the information supplied to it by Roy Dennis, Colin Crooke and the Osprey Study Group.

Note that breeding success is expressed as young/territorial pair (see under Red Kite *Milvus milvus*).

## Merlin *Falco columbarius*

The following summary information has been received. For each area, it is based on a non-randomised sample rather than a complete census.

Area	Occupied territories	Territories known to have fledged young	Min. no. young fledged	Min. young/territorial pair
England, SW	1	No data	No data	
England, Central	25	11	32	1.3
England, N	200	133	442-445	2.2
Wales	30	16	12 <sup>1</sup>	-
Borders & Lothian	29	10	36	1.2
Dumfries & Galloway	18	6	17	0.9
South Strathclyde	17	6	11 <sup>1</sup>	-
Angus	12	9	26	2.2
Stirling	1	0	0	-
Perthshire	22	12	40	1.8
Northeast Scotland	40	27	93	2.3
Argyll & Bute	5	2	7	1.4
Highland	29	15	43	1.5
Orkney	20	9	32	1.6
Shetland	17	15	36 <sup>1</sup>	-
Western Isles	12	3	3 <sup>1</sup>	-
TOTALS	478	274	830-833	1.9

<sup>1</sup> Number of young fledged known to be incomplete; these areas omitted from total calculation of young/territorial pair.



On the whole, quite a successful year, in terms of both the number of pairs monitored and their productivity. The number of occupied territories monitored was up from the 448 of 1997, when the number of successful pairs was 241 and total breeding success 1.6 young/territorial pair.

The Panel is grateful to the Cumbria and Scottish Raptor Study Groups and many individuals for the information included in the table. The most recent estimate of the British population is 1,300 (1,100-1,500) pairs in 1993-94 (Rebecca & Bainbridge 1998).

Note that breeding success is expressed as young/territorial pair (see under Red Kite *Milvus milvus*).

### Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Minimum of 161-675 pairs breeding.

#### England, SW

44-153 pairs. AVON 3-13 pairs. CORNWALL 1-3 pairs. DEVON 16-17 pairs. DORSET 0-20 pairs. HAMPSHIRE 16-55 pairs. SOMERSET 2-19 pairs. WILTSHIRE 6-26 pairs.

#### England, SE

43-311 pairs. BEDFORDSHIRE 0-2 pairs. BERKSHIRE 9-12 pairs. BUCKINGHAMSHIRE 5-13 pairs. ESSEX 8-50+ pairs. INNER LONDON 1-4 pairs. HERTFORDSHIRE 0-2 pairs. KENT 100+ pairs. OXFORDSHIRE 1-15 pairs. SURREY 11-47 pairs. SUSSEX 8-66 pairs.

#### England, E

29-87 pairs. CAMBRIDGESHIRE 0-15 pairs. HUNTINGDON & PETERBOROUGH 2-14 pairs. LINCOLNSHIRE 0-3 pairs. NORFOLK 7-12 pairs. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE 16-31 pairs. SUFFOLK 4-12 pairs.

#### England, Central

37-104 pairs. DERBYSHIRE 20-28 pairs. LEICESTERSHIRE 3-24 pairs. NOTTINGHAMSHIRE 3-7 pairs. SHROPSHIRE 2-7 pairs. STAFFORDSHIRE Two pairs. WARWICKSHIRE 4-20+ pairs. WORCESTERSHIRE 0-12 pairs. WEST MIDLANDS 3-4 pairs.

#### England, N

8-12 pairs. CHESHIRE Three pairs. LANCASHIRE 0-1 pair. NORTHUMBERLAND Two pairs. YORKSHIRE 3-6 pairs.

#### Wales

0-7 pairs. BRECON 0-6 pairs. MONTGOMERY 0-1 pair.

#### Scotland, N & W

0-1 pair. INVERNESS 0-1 pair.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Confirmed (pairs)	103	140	154	159	255	152	170	161	190	167	161
Possible/ probable (pairs)	226	250	287	310	327	341	330	269	264	457	514
Max. total pairs	329	390	441	469	582	493	500	430	454	624	675

A further rise in the total pairs, even though there is increasing difficulty in some areas in deciding how the many sightings sent by observers relate to actual breeding. The slow spread northwards continues. The decline in Wales is thought to reflect a paucity of submitted records rather than a genuine decrease in the number of pairs present.

### Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

The following summary information has been received. For each area, it is based on a non-randomised sample rather than a complete census.

Area	Occupied territories	Territories known to have fledged young	Min. no. young fledged	Min. young/territorial pair
England, SW	92	49	81	0.9
England, SE	18	6	19	1.1
England, E	1	0	0	-
England, Central	21	11	24	1.1
England, N	181	104	254	1.4
Wales	119	102	106 <sup>1</sup>	-
Borders & Lothian	39	30	93	2.4
Dumfries & Galloway	95	65	141	1.5

South Strathclyde	19	12	32	1.7
Angus	25	21	28	1.1
Central	26	19	39	1.5
Fife	10	10	8 <sup>1</sup>	-
Perthshire	43	25	53	1.2
Northeast Scotland	72	25	49	0.7
Argyll & Bute	32	14	33	1.0
Highland	34	20	35	1.0
Orkney	16	5	10	0.6
Shetland	1	1	2	2.0
Western Isles	14	6	16	1.1
TOTALS	858	525	1,023	1.2

<sup>1</sup> Number of young fledged known to be very incomplete; these areas omitted from total calculation of young/territorial pair.

There has been a further increase in all the totals compared with 1997, when 829 occupied territories had 453 pairs known to have fledged 949 young. It should be noted that, in addition to the two areas for which fledging success is known to have been incomplete, the data for other areas are usually minima.

The Panel is grateful to the Scottish Raptor Study Groups for most of the Scottish information. The most recent estimate of the United Kingdom Peregrine population is 1,263 pairs in 1991 (Crick & Ratcliffe 1995).

Note that breeding success is expressed as young/territorial pair (see under Red Kite *Milvus milvus*).

### Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

5-528 pairs breeding.

#### England, SW

3-156 pairs. CORNWALL Two singing males. DEVON Two singing males. DORSET 13 singing males. GLOUCESTERSHIRE 20 singing males. HAMPSHIRE 22 singing males. SOMERSET Two pairs bred and 15 singing males. WILTSHIRE One pair bred and 79 singing males.

#### England, SE

0-70 pairs. BERKSHIRE Four singing males. BUCKINGHAMSHIRE Three singing males. ESSEX Nine singing males. HERTFORDSHIRE One singing male. KENT 16 singing males. OXFORDSHIRE 18 singing males. SUSSEX 19 singing males.

#### England, E

0-123 pairs. CAMBRIDGESHIRE Eight singing males. HUNTINGDON & PETERBOROUGH Five singing males. LINCOLNSHIRE 11 singing males. NORFOLK 71 singing males. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE 12 singing males. SUFFOLK 16 singing males.

#### England, Central

0-70 pairs. LEICESTERSHIRE 13 singing males. NOTTINGHAMSHIRE 20 singing males. SHROPSHIRE 16 singing males. STAFFORDSHIRE 11 singing males. WARWICKSHIRE Six singing males. WEST MIDLANDS One singing male.

#### WORCESTERSHIRE Three singing males.

#### England, N

0-42 pairs. CHESHIRE Seven singing males. CUMBRIA One singing male. LANCASHIRE 16 singing males. NORTHUMBERLAND 16 singing males.

#### Wales

0-25 pairs. BRECON Two singing males. CAERNARFON One singing male. CARMARTHEN Five singing males. CEREDIGION Eight singing males. GLAMORGAN One singing male. MEIRIONNYDD Three singing males. PEMBROKE Five singing males.

#### Scotland, S

0-11 pairs. AYRSHIRE One singing male. DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY Four singing males. LOTHIAN Six singing males.

#### Scotland, Mid

0-9 pairs. ABERDEENSHIRE Four singing males. FIFE Five singing males.

#### Scotland, N & W

2-22 pairs. ARGYLL Three singing males. HIGHLAND Two pairs bred and six singing males. ORKNEY Seven singing males. SHETLAND Two singing males. WESTERN ISLES Two singing males.

#### Isle of Man

Two singing males.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Confirmed (pairs)	5	27	13	2	9	1	8	15	5	4	5
Possible/ probable (pairs)	158	1,628	364	105	481	202	604	500	330	863	523
Max. total pairs	163	1,655	377	107	490	203	612	515	335	867	528

A less good year than 1998, with many fewer in the north of England and also in Scotland, where there were 42 in 1998 compared with 120 in 1997.

### Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*

16 localities: 0-34 pairs breeding.

England, SW

Two localities: 0-2 pairs. SOMERSET Two localities: (1) singing male, second bird seen; (2) singing male.

England, SE

Two localities: 0-2 pairs. OXFORDSHIRE Two localities: (1)(2) single singing males.

England, E

Four localities: 0-20 pairs. CAMBRIDGESHIRE Three localities: (1) 13 singing males; (2) three singing males; (3) singing male. HUNTINGDON & PETERBOROUGH One locality: three singing males.

England, N

One locality: 0-1 pair. NORTHUMBERLAND One

locality: singing male.

Wales

Two localities: 0-2 pairs. ANGLESEY One locality: singing male. CAERNARFON One locality: singing male.

Scotland, Mid

One locality: 0-1 pair. ABERDEENSHIRE One locality: one singing male.

Scotland, N & W

Four localities: 0-6 pairs. HIGHLAND One locality: three singing males. ORKNEY One locality: singing male. WESTERN ISLES Two localities: (1)(2) single singing males.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. counties	5	7	6	5	9	12	4	5	5	7	11
No. localities	6	14	14	7	12	19	5	8	8	13	16
No. pairs/singing males	10	21	21	14	14	31	11	10	13	14	31

A good year, with the most localities and birds since 1993. There were higher numbers than in previous years at the main Cambridgeshire site. The results of the 1999 census organised by the RSPB should soon be available.

### Corn Crake *Crex crex*

583 pairs or singing males.

England, SW

Two localities: 0-2 pairs. DORSET Two localities: (1)(2) singing males.

England, SE

One locality: 0-1 pair. BUCKINGHAMSHIRE One locality: singing male.

England, N

Four localities: 0-4 pairs. CLEVELAND Two localities: (1)(2) singing males in June. CUMBRIA One locality: singing male in late June and July. NORTHUMBERLAND One locality: singing male in June.

Wales

One locality: 0-2 pairs. PEMBROKE Two localities: (1)(2) singing males.

Scotland, S

One locality: 0-1 pair. AYRSHIRE One locality: singing male in June.

Scotland, Mid

One locality: 0-1 pair. ABERDEENSHIRE One

locality: singing male mid June.

Scotland, N & W: Mainland

Up to 12 localities: 0-22 pairs. CAITHNESS Up to seven localities: total of nine singing males. ROSS & CROMARTY Two localities: (1) two singing males; (2) one singing male. SUTHERLAND Three localities: (1) 6-8 singing males; (2)(3) single singing males.

Scotland, N & W: Hebrides and Orkney

17 localities or areas: 0-546 pairs. Totals of singing males: HIGHLAND - INNER HEBRIDES 14 (Canna 2, Skye 12), STRATHCLYDE - INNER HEBRIDES 211 (Coll 40, Tiree 136, Mull 2, Iona 12, Treshnish Isles 3, Colonsay & Oronsay 14, Islay 4), ORKNEY 13, WESTERN ISLES 308 (Lewis 77, Harris 3, Berneray 2, North Uist 73, Benbecula 41, South Uist 65, Barra & Vatersay 47).

Scotland, N & W: Shetland

Three localities: 0-4 pairs. SHETLAND Three localities: (1) two singing males; (2)(3) singing males.

The total of 550 found on all Scottish islands in 1998 was well down on the previous year's 584, with the main decrease in the Outer Hebrides. The presence of two birds on Canna was a welcome return after several years of absence and a reward for the hard work put into suitable management on the island.

A full census was carried out over the whole of Britain, for the first time since 1993 (Green & Gibbons 2000). The presence of birds scattered across the mainland of Scotland and in England was encouraging. The total of 583 compares with only 480 in 1993 and with 574 at the time of the previous survey in 1988. The total in 1978/79 was estimated at 723. The large conservation effort of the last few years can be credited with having reversed a very long-running decline.

### Common Crane *Grus grus*

One extensive locality.

England, E

NORFOLK One locality: four pairs nested, one pair fledging one young.

The second successive year of successful breeding, following eight years of failure, giving some cause for optimism that this tiny population may increase.

### Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

One locality: single male present.

England, E

One locality: male present all year.

The single bird present at Titchwell, Norfolk, for the last five years stayed on in 1998, too (*Brit. Birds* 92: 569).

### Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

At least 48 localities: up to 834 pairs reared a minimum of 536 young.

England, SE

24 localities: up to 324 pairs. ESSEX 13 localities: (1) 40 pairs, of which 12 reared 26 young; (2) 30 pairs bred, fledging about 45 young; (3) 21 pairs fledged 17 young from six broods; (4) 19 pairs bred, hatching four young; (5) ten pairs bred, success unknown; (6) eight pairs produced four broods; (7) six pairs bred, no further information; (8) five pairs bred, two fledged eight young; (9) four pairs each fledged two young; (10) two pairs fledged four young; (11) two pairs bred, one fledged three young; (12) two pairs bred, one fledged two young; (13) pair laid four eggs, no further information. KENT Nine localities: (1) 72 pairs fledged 54 young; (2) 30-34 pairs, of which 26 bred, fledging 72 young; (3) 32 pairs, success unknown; (4) 20 pairs bred, fledging 13 young; (5) 11 pairs bred, success unknown; (6) pair bred unsuccessfully; (7) pair present; (8) pair in June; (9) one or two adults seen irregularly. SUSSEX Two localities: (1)(2) single pairs in May and June.

England, E

24 localities: at least 534 pairs. CAMBRIDGESHIRE One locality: three pairs bred, all failed. LINCOLNSHIRE One locality: 12 pairs fledged at least 26 young. NORFOLK 15 localities: (1) 75 pairs fledged 44 young; (2) 40-50 pairs fledged 50 young; (3) 30-34 pairs fledged eight young; (4) 26 pairs fledged 30 young; (5) 21 pairs bred, success unknown; (6) 14 pairs fledged 26 young; (7) 11 pairs bred, success unknown; (8) eight pairs fledged 13 young; (9) seven pairs bred, all failed; (10) seven pairs bred, success unknown; (11) five pairs bred, all failed; (12) of five pairs, four bred, fledging four young; (13) three pairs bred, but all failed; (14) one pair fledged four young; (15) pair bred, but failed. SUFFOLK Seven localities: (1) 140 pairs fledged 47 young; (2) 51 pairs fledged 15 young; (3) 18 pairs bred, all failed; (4) eight pairs fledged six young; (5) six pairs bred, two fledged two young; (6) two pairs bred, no further information; (7) two pairs present.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	27	24	21	21	29	25	29	25	25	35	48
Confirmed (pairs)	389	521	355	448	492	436	623	613	592	654	834
Young reared (min)	136	150	200	305	336	347	181	149	189	238	536

A substantial increase has taken place both in the number of breeding pairs and in the number of young produced. Some caution must, however, be attached to the latter figure, because it is not always certain whether the number of young quoted is the number hatched or the number reared to fledging. Just as significant is the considerable increase, for the second year running, in the number of localities where breeding is being attempted.

The breeding record from Lincolnshire is the first in the county since 1837 and follows the creation in 1997 of new habitat for the birds.

### Stone-curlew *Burbinus oedicnemus*

Six counties: 215-226 pairs fledged a minimum of 165 young.

England, SW  
59-66 pairs. HAMPSHIRE 20-22 pairs, of which 20 bred and fledged 11 young. WILTSHIRE 39-44 pairs, of which 39 bred and fledged 30 young.

England, SE  
Seven pairs. BERKSHIRE Seven pairs bred, fledging four young.

England, E

149-152 pairs. CAMBRIDGESHIRE Single female summered. NORFOLK Brecks: 73 out of 75 pairs bred and fledged 60 young. Elsewhere: four pairs bred and fledged two young. SUFFOLK Brecks: 69 out of 70 pairs bred and fledged 51 young. Elsewhere: three pairs bred and fledged seven young.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Confirmed (pairs)	126	126	139	139	155	146	141	165	174	192	215
Possible/ probable (pairs)	3	17	10	16	4	16	32	9	14	11	11
Max. total pairs	129	143	149	155	159	162	173	174	188	203	226
Min. no. of young fledged	62	79	112	123	111	101	91	164	155	167	165

The population showed a further welcome increase, which occurred in all counties, though was greatest in Norfolk and Suffolk. Fledging success was, however, down.

The Panel wishes to thank Dr Rhys Green, RSPB, for his assistance in compiling the data.

### Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

The following summary information has been received. For each area, it is based on a non-randomised sample rather than a complete census.

Area	Possible/ probable pairs	Definite breeding pairs	Total pairs
England, SW	24	20	44
England, SE	56	66	122
England, E	19	58	77
England, Central	73	66	139
England, N	46	122	168
Wales	4	57	61
Dumfries & Galloway	1	0	1
TOTALS	223	389	612

This is the highest total recorded since the Panel included this species on its list. The most recent estimate of the British population was 825-1,070 pairs in 1991 (Gibbons *et al.* 1993).

*Dotterel Charadrius morinellus*

Outside main Scottish breeding areas: one or two pairs possibly breeding.

England, N

One area. CUMBRIA One area: pair in May and July and a single at a different site on 12th June, a very late date for a migrant and at a site which has been used for breeding in the past.

The Panel seeks records only if away from the main breeding range, which lies north of a line from the Firth of Clyde to the Firth of Tay, and accepts that at least some of the birds on hilltops in southern Scotland and northern England will be on passage. A paper examining the history of breeding by Dotterels in northern England will be published in *British Birds* shortly.

*Temminck's Stint Calidris temminckii*

One locality: up to three pairs.

Scotland, N & W

One locality: a male chasing a female while two other males were displaying was the most seen on any visit; no nest searches were made.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Confirmed (pairs)	2	2	1	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	0
Possible/ probable (pairs)	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	2	1	2	3
Max. total pairs	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	3	3

To avoid unnecessary disturbance, the minimum amount of monitoring of this species is carried out, just enough to establish presence. The number of pairs remains remarkably constant.

*Purple Sandpiper Calidris maritima*

Two localities: up to three pairs bred.

Scotland, N & W

Two localities: (1) brood seen, second pair present; (2) adult with at least one young.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
Confirmed (pairs)	2	2	1	3	1	1	4	1	2	3	2
Possible/ probable (pairs)	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Max. total pairs	2	4	1	4	2	1	4	1	2	3	3

As with the preceding species, only minimal monitoring is carried out. The presence at two sites, for the second year running, is encouraging.

*Ruff Philomachus pugnax*

Five localities: two leks reported, but no evidence of breeding.

England, E

One locality. CAMBRIDGESHIRE One locality: two males and one female lekking in April.

England, N

Three localities. CHESHIRE Two localities: (1) 13 birds lekking in April; (2) three males in breeding

plumage in mid May. LANCASHIRE One locality: three males, in breeding plumage, and one female on 1st May.

Scotland, N & W

One locality. HIGHLAND One locality: two females in suitable habitat on 6th May.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	14	15	8	9	21	10	13	7	8	6	5
No. of leks	6	6	1	4	7	7	3	3	3	5	2
Nests/broods	1	1	3	7	0	0	2	0	1	0	0

The fewest localities since 1978.

### Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

13 localities: 38-50 pairs breeding.

#### England, SE

Four localities: 5-8 pairs bred. KENT Four localities: (1) four pairs bred, at least one brood of three or four young; (2) pair fledged two young; (3) two pairs displaying and copulating, but no nests found or young seen, flock of up to 50 also present; (3) pair present. SUSSEX Several reports during summer months, but no evidence of breeding.

#### England, E

Three localities: 29-32 pairs bred. CAMBRIDGE-SHIRE Two localities: (1) 18 pairs bred, but flooded out; then, after two re-layings, eight pairs with young in June; (2) 11 of 13 pairs definitely bred, but

all flooded out. NORFOLK One locality: pair holding territory in May, did not breed.

#### England, N

One locality: 1-3 pairs bred. LANCASHIRE One locality: pair bred, but robbed by egg-collector, as has happened annually since the early 1990s.

#### Scotland, N & W

Five localities: 3-7 pairs bred. LOTHIAN One locality: one present from 22nd April to at least 2nd August. ORKNEY Two localities: (1) pair bred; (2) pair present in May. SHETLAND Two localities: (1) two pairs bred, each fledging one young; (2) two pairs on territory, but abandoned early in season.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	17	14	16	18	24	16	22	15	12	11	13
Confirmed (pairs)	36	34	33	28	20	28	20	28	34	42	38
Possible/ probable (pairs)	28	22	33	25	38	5	16	7	7	5	12
Max. total pairs	64	56	66	53	58	33	36	35	41	47	50

A slight recovery in the number of localities, but a fall in the number of confirmed pairs after last year's increase. Only seven young were definitely reared, compared with 26 in 1997 and 16 in 1996.

### Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Away from Orkney and Shetland: one pair possibly bred.

#### Scotland, N & W

HIGHLAND One locality: an apparently territory-holding bird may have been breeding.

### Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

The following limited information was received:

#### Scotland, Mid

TAYSIDE One locality: agitated pair in early July probably bred.

#### Scotland, N & W

ARGYLL Single calling birds at three localities.

CAITHNESS & SUTHERLAND 11 pairs reported from 11 localities. SHETLAND Two territory-holding pairs reported.

The above bears no relationship to the actual population (estimated at 1,100-1,600 pairs: Gibbons *et al.* 1993). More records would be welcome, perhaps especially from birdwatchers visiting the Highlands and seeing or hearing display or song.

### Green Sandpiper *Tringa ocbropus*

Two localities: 0-2 pairs.

#### Scotland, N & W

HIGHLAND Two localities: (1)(2) single birds flushed from suitable habitat, one in early June, one in late July.

This is the first time that this species has figured in the Panel reports and, while the possibility that these were migrants cannot be ruled out, breeding was confirmed in Inverness-shire in 1959 (*Brit. Birds* 52: 430-432), while occasional displaying pairs have been recorded since.

### Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Five localities: 8-10 pairs bred.

Scotland, N & W

Five localities: (1) five pairs bred, some or all of which had young, though exact success unknown; (2) two pairs, including noisy display in mid June;

(3) pair produced unknown number of young; (4) adult alarming, almost certainly with young, in June; (5) single displaying in mid May.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	4	6	2	2	4	4	8	6	3	5	5
Confirmed (pairs)	3	2	1	1	1	2	6	7	8	0	8
Possible/ probable (pairs)	1	4	1	1	5	6	5	4	0	9	2
Max. total pairs	4	6	2	2	6	8	11	11	8	9	10

The population has remained fairly stable over the last five years, allowing for varying degrees of monitoring and the fact that nests are never searched for.

### Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

Four localities: 17 breeding males reared 5-8 young.

Scotland, N & W

Four localities. SHETLAND Two localities on Fetlar: (1)(2) 15 breeding males, only five to eight young estimated to have fledged. WESTERN ISLES Two localities: (1) pair copulating on 20th May and five

present on 15th June, with agitated behaviour but no young seen on 12th July; (2) pair present, no further details.

This was by far the worst year on Fetlar since 1990, though census methods have changed. The weather was probably responsible for the poor production of young, but a number of marked birds were seen on only single occasions in the spring, suggesting some additional factors inhibiting them from starting to breed. Although breeding was not confirmed in the Western Isles, presence at two sites is encouraging.

### Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

27 localities: 54-65 pairs, plus three hybrid pairs and one pair including hybrid individual.

England, SW

Four localities: 21-24 pairs. DORSET One locality: three pairs probably bred, but washed out by high tides. UNNAMED COUNTY Two localities: (1) 14 pairs bred, 12 young fledged from eight nests; (2) two pairs bred, one fledging two young. ISLE OF WIGHT One locality: five pairs fledged at least five young.

England, SE

Seven localities: 24-28 pairs. ESSEX Three localities: (1) two pairs laid up to three clutches each, all failed, plus two adults; (2) two pairs bred, but flooded out; (3) one or two pairs bred, outcome unknown. KENT Two localities: (1) 12 pairs laid, but were flooded out by high tides; (2) six pairs bred, success unknown. SUSSEX Two localities: (1) three pairs, of which at least one laid, but unsuccessful; (2) pair displaying.

England, E

Six localities: 7-9 pairs. HUNTINGDON & PETER-

BOROUGH One locality: pair bred, but success unknown. NORFOLK Three localities: (1)(2) two pairs bred at each, success unknown; (3) pair present. SUFFOLK Two localities: (1) two pairs bred, one young surviving to at least 17 days; (2) pair present.

England, Central

One locality: pair involving hybrid. NOTTINGHAM-SHIRE One locality: hybrid Mediterranean Gull (presumed with Black-headed Gull *L. ridibundus*) attempted to breed with a pure Mediterranean Gull, but no young produced. Last year, at this site, what was presumably the same hybrid bred successfully with a Black-headed Gull.

England, N

Seven localities: 1-7 pairs, plus two hybrid pairs. CHESHIRE Three localities: (1) displaying pair in June; (2)(3) single adults in May. CUMBRIA One locality: two territorial males. LANCASHIRE Three localities: (1) pair bred unsuccessfully, hybrid pair



(with Black-headed Gull) bred successfully though number of young not reported; (2) male bred with Black-headed Gull, success unknown; (3) territorial male summered.  
 Scotland, N & W  
 One locality: one hybrid pair. ORKNEY One

locality: hybrid pair (with Common Gull *L. canus*), hatched single young, but not known if it fledged.  
 Northern Ireland  
 One locality: pair. CO. DOWN One locality: pair bred, but outcome unknown.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	9	5	10	13	15	14	16	16	18	24	27
Confirmed (pairs)	5	6	11	15	19	15	16	18	31	33	54
Possible/ probable (pairs)	10	3	5	8	12	17	14	10	14	20	11
Max. total pairs	15	9	16	23	31	32	30	28	45	53	65

The largest increase reported in a single year, in both localities and confirmed breeding pairs, though high tides prevented many of them from being successful. The hybrid story continues to develop.

### Yellow-legged Gull *Larus cachinnans*

Two localities: up to eight summering.

England, N

YORKSHIRE Two localities: (1) two summering; (2) up to six summering.

After successful breeding in 1997, a return to summering birds only.

### Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

11 localities: 50-57 pairs breeding, fledging a minimum of 37 young.

England, SW

Two localities: (1) pair bred and raised one young; (2) pair probably bred, as two fledged young seen in July.

England, E

Two localities: (1)(2) total of two pairs and a fifth adult moving between sites, pair nested but failed at one site, then moved to second, where both pairs made nest scrapes but did not lay.

England, N

Three localities: (1) 29 pairs bred, laying 39 eggs,

from which 27 young fledged; (2) three pairs fledged three young; (3) three pairs bred, but no further details.

Wales

Two localities: (1) two or three pairs bred, fledging one young; (2) three pairs seen, but none bred.

Scotland, Mid

One locality: eight pairs bred, fledging three young.

Northern Ireland

One locality: three pairs bred, but all failed.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	13	17	15	13	15	18	14	15	11	14	11
Confirmed (pairs)	164	172	93	52	62	84	74	72	66	54	50
Possible/ probable (pairs)	33	5	31	5	10	21	24	13	9	1	7
Max. total pairs	197	177	124	57	72	105	98	85	75	55	57

Another poor year for breeding pairs and productivity.

### Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*

The following summary information has been received. For each area, it is based on a sample rather than a complete census.

Area	Pairs in 1997	Pairs in 1998
England, SW	260	218
England, SE	182	152

England, E	561	642
England, NE	104	146
England, NW	9	42
Wales	80	45
Scotland	185	215
<hr/>		
TOTAL	1,381	1,460

Although coverage was not strictly comparable between the two years, it seems worth setting out the data for both years.

### Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

The following information has been received. Several county recorders emphasised how incomplete their information was, so their best estimates have, therefore, been used.

Area	Pairs in 1996	Pairs in 1997	Pairs in 1998
Avon	5	7	16
Cornwall	11	1++	30
Devon	42	58	43
Dorset	nc	nc	12-18
Gloucestershire	nc	nc	20
Hampshire	25	60	60
Isle of Wight	nc	22	13
Somerset	nc	19	40
Wiltshire	74	78	81
Bedfordshire	nc	25	36
Berkshire	nc	5-10	5
Buckinghamshire	6	3++	13
Essex	30	30+	50+
Hertfordshire	5	nc	nc
Kent	26	15+	11
Oxfordshire	nc	24+	30
Surrey	13	9	10
Sussex	24+	39	62
Cambridgeshire	26	15	10
Huntingdonshire	3+	11	9
Lincolnshire	22	36	36
Norfolk	59	22+	32
Northamptonshire	55	40	4
Suffolk	20	23	10
Derbyshire	4	12	3
Leicestershire/Rutland	nc	30	7
Nottinghamshire	22	22	23
Shropshire	3	15	6
Staffordshire	nc	1	8
Warwickshire	10	12	12
West Midlands	nc	1	1
Worcestershire	12	10	26
Cheshire	12	12-15	18
Cleveland	1	2	1
Cumbria	7	2	63
Greater Manchester	3	3	9
Lancashire	20+	38	67
Northumberland	16+	19	21
Yorkshire	16	10	78
Anglesey	10	4	23
Brecon	5	17	3
Caernarfon	25-30	25-32	3
Carmarthen	nc	nc	10

Barn Owl (continued)			
Area	Pairs in 1996	Pairs in 1997	Pairs in 1998
Ceredigion	14	14	19
Denbigh	nc	4	3
Glamorgan	nc	22	11
Gwent	3	2	23
Meirionnydd	nc	nc	5
Montgomery	11	21	34
Pembroke	20	21	28
Borders	1	85	3
Ayr	14	8	25
Clyde	10	12	nc
Clyde islands	4	nc	nc
Dumfries & Galloway	62+	150	165
Lothian	2	6	5
Forth	2	nc	nc
Aberdeenshire	3	2	nc
Fife	0	0	nc
Moray & Nairn	10	nc	1
Argyll	41	47	85
Highland	12	80	115
TOTALS	821-826	1,251-1,266	1,578-1,584

A number of additional counties reported this year, though others were unable to better their previous estimates. A breeding survey took place in several Welsh counties, which has improved the information from the Principality.

### Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

The following information has been received. Several county recorders emphasised how incomplete their information was, and we have, therefore, used estimates.

Area	Pairs in 1996	Pairs in 1997	Pairs in 1998
Avon	nc	20	20
Cornwall	2	nc	4
Devon	19	91-110	91-110
Dorset	nc	nc	7-15
Gloucestershire	nc	10++	3++
Hampshire	28	13++	87+
Somerset	nc	14	38
Wiltshire	18	21	25
Bedfordshire	nc	7++	nc
Berkshire	nc	11+	16+
Buckinghamshire	c.50	4++	c.100
Essex	c.100	17	28
Hertfordshire	30	13+	9
Kent	24	7+	7+
Middlesex	6	6	13
Oxfordshire	nc	nc	40
Surrey	29	20	33
Sussex	11	27	5
Cambridgeshire	31	10-19	11
Huntingdonshire	6	3	14
Lincolnshire	nc	nc	12
Norfolk	10-13	15	18
Northamptonshire	27	6++	34
Suffolk	30	12	34
Derbyshire	20++	11+	13+

Herefordshire	nc	nc	2++
Leicestershire/Rutland	nc	30	30+
Nottinghamshire	nc	70-100	30++
Shropshire	nc	12	11
Warwickshire	11+	10	14+
West Midlands	6	20	6
Worcestershire	27	15++	31
Cheshire	7	22	11
Cleveland	1	5	2
Greater Manchester	30-40	35	51-57
Lancashire	16	50	94
Northumberland	15+	23	20-21
Yorkshire	4	nc	16
Brecon	12	nc	nc
Ceredigion	3+	1	2
Gwent	5	nc	nc
Montgomery	nc	10-20	nc
Pembroke	nc	c.50	5
Borders	16	c.30	nc
Clyde & Ayr	11	19	7
Dumfries & Galloway	3-5	12	12
Lothian	6	4+	4
Forth	6	nc	nc
Angus & Dundee	5	nc	nc
Fife	5	10	4
Stirling	nc	nc	7
Perthshire & Kinross	1	nc	nc
Moray & Nairn	2	nc	nc
Argyll	1	nc	nc
Highland	2-4	6	7
TOTALS	636-653	765-833	1,028-1,062

Whilst much of the information above is very incomplete, surveys were carried out in 1998 in Greater Manchester and over part of Lancashire and we would urge other counties to follow suit.

### *Wryneck Jynx torquilla*

Two localities: two singing males.

Scotland, N & W

Two localities: (1)(2) single singing males in June.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	9	8	6	6	1	6	1	3	4	5	2
Confirmed (pairs)	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Possible/ probable (pairs)	9	7	6	5	2	5	1	3	4	4	2
Max. total pairs	10	8	6	6	2	6	1	3	4	5	2

After last year's breeding record, this year is disappointingly poor.

### *Wood Lark Lullula arborea*

County totals were received, which are compared with the results of the 1997 census (see page 386).

In the year following a full census, it is inevitable that totals for many counties will be lower as a result of reduced effort. More intensive studies continued in Norfolk and Suffolk, however, showing further increases, which was also strikingly true in the north of the range, in Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire. The results of the 1997 census have recently been published (Wotton & Gillings 2000).

Wood Lark County	Pairs in 1997	Pairs in 1998
Cornwall	0	0
Devon	53	7
Dorset	105	54
Hampshire	294	174
Somerset	0	0
Wiltshire	3	2
Bedfordshire	1	1
Berkshire	63	2
Buckinghamshire	6	3
Essex	0	3
Kent	3	6
Surrey	171	134
Sussex	71	60
Lincolnshire	37	40
Norfolk	248	326
Suffolk	457	459
Nottinghamshire	31	78
Staffordshire	7	3
Yorkshire	2	19
TOTALS	1,552	1,370

### Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

White Wagtail *M. a. alba*

One locality: hybrid pair with Pied Wagtail *M. a. yarrellii*.

Scotland, N & W

ORKNEY One locality: female paired with male Pied Wagtail.

Pairs involving birds of these two races first appeared in these reports in 1994. They may be more regular than has been supposed.

### Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

Three localities: three singing males.

England, E

Two localities. NORFOLK Two localities: (1)(2) single singing males in May, one red-spotted *L. s. svecica*, one white-spotted *L. s. cyanecula*.

Scotland, N & W

One locality. HIGHLAND One locality: singing male in suitable habitat in mid June.

There were no records at all in 1997, while the last in Scotland was the breeding report in 1995.

### Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochrurus*

71 localities: 32-91 pairs breeding.

England, SW

Two localities: 1-6 pairs. DORSET One locality: two singing males. HAMPSHIRE One locality: pair fledged two young, three other pairs.

England, SE

48 localities: 21-61 pairs breeding. BERKSHIRE One locality: pair fledged three young. ESSEX Nine localities: (1)(2) single pairs bred; (3) six singing males; (4)-(8) single singing males; (9) female seen in May. INNER LONDON & MIDDLESEX 15 localities: (1)-(3) single pairs bred, one fledging two young; (4)-(6) single pairs present; (7)-(13) single singing males; (14)(15) singles seen. HERTFORD-

SHIRE One locality: female in mid April. KENT 18 localities: (1) three pairs bred; (2) two pairs each fledged two young, plus singing male; (3) two pairs fledged three young; (4) two pairs bred; (5) pair bred, plus second pair and singing male; (6)-(10) single pairs bred; (11) pair probably bred; (12)-(16) single pairs present; (17) singing male; (18) female seen. SURREY Three localities: (1)(2) single singing males; (3) female in May. SUSSEX One locality: possible breeding pair.

England, E

Nine localities: 6-10 pairs breeding. LINCOLNSHIRE One locality: pair bred. NORFOLK One locality: pair

fledged at least six young from two broods. SUFFOLK Seven localities: (1) pair bred, plus singing male; (2)-(4) single pairs bred; (5)-(7) single singing males.

England, Central

Nine localities: 2-11 pairs breeding. DERBYSHIRE Three localities: (1) pair bred, plus second pair; (2)(3) single pairs. NOTTINGHAMSHIRE Two localities: (1) pair; (2) two singing males.

STAFFORDSHIRE One locality: pair in May. WEST MIDLANDS Three localities: (1) pair bred; (2)(3) single singing males.

England, N

Three localities: 2-3 pairs breeding. GREATER MANCHESTER One locality: pair fledged four young. LANCASHIRE Two localities: (1) pair fledged at least one young; (2) singing male.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	70	56	50	36	44	53	66	58	46	67	71
Confirmed (pairs)	54	36	28	23	14	32	32	19	28	33	32
Possible/ probable (pairs)	58	46	46	46	57	44	63	63	37	66	59
Max. total pairs	118	82	74	69	71	76	95	82	65	99	91

The improved coverage of last year has been maintained, though there was no coverage of, for example, Manchester city centre.

### Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Four localities: 0-4 pairs breeding.

England, N

One locality: single in early July.

Scotland, N & W

Three localities: (1) singing male in early May; (2)(3) singles in suitable habitat in mid May.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	7	12	12	13	7	5	5	6	6	2	4
Confirmed (pairs)	2	3	5	2	2	2	0	1	1	0	0
Possible/ probable (pairs)	5	10	7	11	8	3	5	5	5	2	4
Max. total pairs	7	13	12	13	11	5	5	6	6	2	4

Slightly better than last year, but still very poor compared with just a few years ago.

### Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

15 localities: 0-18 pairs breeding.

England, SE

One locality: male holding territory from mid May to early June.

Scotland, Mid

Two localities: (1) two singing males; (2) singing

male.

Scotland, N & W

12 localities: (1)-(12) total of one pair and a further 13 singing males.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	22	38	17	15	13	22	15	9	28	7	15
Confirmed (pairs)	10	12	6	7	9	5	4	3	3	2	0
Possible/ probable (pairs)	30	39	15	13	15	22	15	11	35	14	18
Max. total pairs	49	51	21	20	24	27	19	14	38	17	18

While a complete census of this species' numbers and distribution is probably too difficult to achieve, it would be good to receive more records from the Highlands so that some check could be kept on possible range changes. There has been a handful of breeding records from southeast England in the last 25 years, so that late-staying birds, especially if singing (as distinct from indulging in communal subsong), are always worth investigating.

### Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

491-496 'pairs' or singing males.

#### England, SW

316-317 pairs or singing males. AVON One pair and seven or eight singing males. DEVON 71 singing males. DORSET 55 singing males. GLOUCESTERSHIRE Four pairs. HAMPSHIRE 95 singing males. SOMERSET Eight pairs and 61 singing males. WILTSHIRE Four pairs and ten singing males.

#### England, SE

48-50 pairs or singing males. BERKSHIRE 15-16 pairs and one singing male. ESSEX One or two singing males. HERTFORDSHIRE One singing male. KENT One pair and 14 singing males. MIDDLESEX One singing male. OXFORDSHIRE Four singing males. SUSSEX One pair and nine singing males.

#### England, E

73-75 singing males. NORFOLK 59-61 singing males. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE Three singing males. SUFFOLK One pair and ten singing males.

#### England, Central

Six pairs or singing males. LEICESTERSHIRE One singing male. WARWICKSHIRE One pair and three singing males. WORCESTERSHIRE One pair.

#### Wales

48 pairs or singing males. ANGLESEY Two singing males. CARMARTHEN 16 singing males. CEREDIGION & PEMBROKE Four pairs and three singing males. GLAMORGAN One pair and 15 singing males. GWENT One pair and six singing males.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. counties	14	15	21	17	18	21	23	25	28	24	27
Confirmed (pairs)	24	12	19	27	15	11	14	15	nc	nc	nc
Possible/ probable (pairs)	174	196	326	214	273	306	318	426	574	361	491
Max. total pairs	198	208	345	241	298	317	332	441	574	361	496

The sharp fall in 1997 (after the full census in 1996) was to be expected and may merely reflect reduced observer activity. The totals in 1998, however, are higher than in any 'non-census year', suggesting that there has been a real increase and that the range continues to develop and to consolidate.

### River Warbler *Locustella fluviatilis*

One locality: one singing male (*Brit. Birds* 92: 594).

#### England, E

LINCOLNSHIRE One locality: singing male at Gibraltar Point on 29th May.

A singing male for the sixth successive year.

### Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*

Two localities: 0-2 pairs breeding.

#### England, E

Two localities. NORFOLK One locality: singing male from 18th May to 20th June. SUFFOLK One locality: singing male from 11th April to at least 30th May.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	10	13	5	13	13	5	7	2	3	4	2
Confirmed (pairs)	0	0	1	0	2	4	1	0	0	0	0
Possible/ probable (pairs)	13	17	9	16	20	4	9	3	3	5	2
Max. total pairs	13	17	10	16	22	8	10	3	3	5	2

The poorest record since the Panel began monitoring this species in 1973.

*Marsh Warbler Acrocephalus palustris*

Ten localities: 9-24 pairs breeding.

**England, SE**

Four localities: (1) eight pairs bred, plus four more pairs; (2) pair bred and two pairs probably did so; (3) pair probably bred; (4) singing male in May.

**England, E**

Four localities: (1) pair seen, including nest-

building; (2) two singing males; (3)(4) single singing males.

**England, Central**

Two localities: (1)(2) single singing males.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	13	10	12	15	13	15	22	16	11	17	10
Confirmed (pairs)	6	11	13	9	9	12	0	2	3	5	9
Possible/ probable (pairs)	14	11	11	23	26	46	48	29	19	27	15
Max. total pairs	20	22	24	32	35	58	48	31	22	32	24

A disappointing year after the better position in 1997.

*Great Reed Warbler Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

One locality: one singing male and second bird (*Brit. Birds* 92: 595).

**England, E**

NORFOLK One locality: two birds on 26th May at Berney Marshes, one in song.

The only record this year, but the ninth consecutive year with singing males.

*Icterine Warbler Hippolais icterina*

Five localities: pair probably bred, plus three singing males and a single.

**England, E**

NORFOLK Two localities: (1)(2) single singing males in May.

**Scotland, N & W**

Three localities: (1) two adults trapped and ringed

in early June, breeding strongly suspected, but not proved; (2) singing male in mid May; (3) adult trapped and ringed on 10th July, perhaps a migrant, but possibly a summering bird.

A tantalising probable breeding record (the first and, so far, the only breeding record was in Scotland in 1992), plus no fewer than three other singing males.

*Dartford Warbler Sylvia undata*

Up to 947 territories identified.

**England, SW**

County totals: AVON 1, DEVON 277, DORSET 1 (casual record), but estimated 300, HAMPSHIRE 117 in very incomplete survey, ISLE OF WIGHT 6, SOMERSET 37.

**England, SE**

County totals: BERKSHIRE 7, SURREY 411, SUSSEX 76.

**England, E**

County totals: NORFOLK 1, SUFFOLK 12.

**Wales**

County total: GWENT 1.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	6	5	8	8	7	11	10	12	12	11	12
Confirmed (pairs)	26	23	55	67	63	93	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Possible/ probable (pairs)	616	499	873	634	863	1,053	1,675	1,679	552	915	947
Max. total pairs	639	522	928	701	926	1,146	1,675	1,679	552	915	947

Only some counties attempted a complete survey, and these did not include Hampshire or Dorset, key counties for the species. The spread into East Anglia continues.

The first recorded breeding took place in Wales, where a pair successfully reared two broods, though a third failed.



### Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

Two localities: two singing males (*Brit. Birds* 92: 597).

England, E

NORFOLK Two localities: (1) singing male at Blakeney Point on 30th May; (2) singing male at North Lopham on 1st June.

The fourth time that this species has featured in these reports, though the first since 1993.

### Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*

30 localities or areas: 0-62 pairs breeding.

England, SW

Nine localities or areas: 0-29 pairs breeding. GLOUCESTERSHIRE One locality: (1) pair in late May and early June. HAMPSHIRE County total of 18 pairs, including 15 in the New Forest. WILTSHIRE Seven localities: (1) two pairs; (2) pair in May and June; (3)(4) two singing males; (5)-(7) single singing males.

England, SE

18 localities: 0-29 pairs breeding. BUCKINGHAMSHIRE One locality: four singing males. ESSEX

Seven localities: (1) two singing males; (2)-(5) single singing males; (6)(7) singles seen. GREATER LONDON One locality: female seen. SURREY Six localities: (1) pair and singing male; (2) two singing males (3)-(6) single singing males. SUSSEX Three localities: (1) two pairs and two singing males; (2) three singing males; (3) singing male.

England, E

Three localities: 0-4 pairs breeding. NORFOLK Two localities: (1) two singing males; (2) singing male. SUFFOLK One locality: singing male.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	44	52	48	19	15	20	41	35	35	26	30
Confirmed (pairs)	11	19	9	2	3	3	4	4	4	2	0
Possible/ probable (pairs)	72	112	88	20	16	25	62	52	56	46	62
Max. total pairs	83	131	97	22	19	28	66	56	60	48	62

Slightly better coverage than in 1997, though there were still a number of areas that were incompletely surveyed.

### Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

The following information has been received, amounting to 384-396 pairs.

England, SW

DORSET 16 pairs. HAMPSHIRE 13-15 pairs. SOMERSET 8-15 pairs.

England, SE

ESSEX 13-15 pairs. KENT 19 pairs. SUSSEX 16 pairs.

England, E

CAMBRIDGESHIRE 1-2 pairs. LINCOLNSHIRE Five pairs. NORFOLK 76 pairs. SUFFOLK 87 pairs.

England, N

LANCASHIRE 55 pairs. YORKSHIRE 75 pairs.

Recorders for all the counties listed above believed that their submitted figures were reasonably complete, with the exception of Somerset, where the recorder suggested that a figure of 8-15 pairs was probably more accurate than the actual nine pairs reported. The total of 384-396 pairs is very close to the 339-408 pairs estimated for 1992 by Campbell *et al.* (1996), suggesting that the population either has not declined since then as had been suggested, or has since recovered.

### Crested Tit *Parus cristatus*

12 areas: up to 256 pairs.

Scotland, Mid

MORAY & NAIRN Three areas: (1)-(3) total of 12-16 pairs bred, but only four broods fledged. ABERDEENSHIRE One locality: single seen regularly.

Scotland, N & W

HIGHLAND Eight areas or localities: (1) 230 territories estimated in Abernethy Forest; (2)-(8) total of up to nine breeding pairs.

Although this species has been on the Panel's list for the last three years, this is the first time that we have considered the data to be worth reporting; even now, the information is obviously very incomplete. Even casual records are welcome as a means of monitoring the extent of the species' range.

## Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

19 localities: 10-22 pairs breeding, producing a minimum of 15 young.

England, SE

Two localities: (1) male on three dates during May-July; (2) male from June to August.

England, E

45 sites surveyed, with presence confirmed at 16. Ten pairs were confirmed as breeding, of which

nine are known to have fledged at least 15 young. The tenth nest was robbed by an egg-collector. Two other pairs probably bred; there were also seven singing males.

England, Central

One locality: female on 14th June, and male in July.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	35	29	38	27	37	33	34	34	22	23	19
Confirmed (pairs)	16	15	10	16	14	14	7	8	7	9	10
Possible/ probable (pairs)	25	22	32	12	23	19	28	27	15	15	12
Max. total pairs	41	37	42	28	37	33	35	35	22	24	22

Another relatively poor year, with the added insult of a known theft of eggs from one nest.

The Panel is most grateful for the detailed information on the eastern England population supplied by the Golden Oriole Group.

## Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Nine localities: 0-9 pairs breeding.

Scotland, Mid

Five localities: (1) pair in suitable habitat in July-August, but definitely no nest or young; (2)-(4) single males in breeding season; (5) female during

May-July.

Scotland, N & W

Four localities: (1)(2) single males in breeding season; (3)(4) single females in breeding season.

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No. localities	6	3	7	5	13	6	7	1	3	6	9
Confirmed (pairs)	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0
Possible/ probable (pairs)	6	6	7	4	12	6	7	1	3	5	9
Max. total pairs	7	6	8	5	13	6	8	1	3	6	9

Although there was no breeding record, unlike in 1997, there was a welcome increase in the total number of sightings.

## Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

The following information was received:

Area	Occupied sites	Successful pairs	Young reared	Young/territorial pair
Isle of Man	88	45	109	1.2
Wales				
Anglesey	32	Not known	Not known	-
Caernarfon	71	Not known	Not known	-
Ceredigion	19	19	52	2.7
Glamorgan	1	0	0	0.0
Meirionnydd	15	Not known	Not known	-
Montgomery	1	1	3	3.0
Pembroke	46	33	84	1.8
Scotland				
Dumfries & Galloway	1	1	4	4.0

Red-billed Chough (continued) Area	Occupied sites	Successful pairs	Young reared	Young/territorial pair
Colonsay & Oronsay	14	9	25	1.8
Islay	49	43	89	1.8
Jura	1	1	2	2.0
Mull	2	0	0	0.0
Northern Ireland Co. Antrim	2	0	0	0.0
TOTALS	342	150	368	1.6

This represents a reasonably complete survey of breeding Red-billed Choughs in the United Kingdom and the Isle of Man. Productivity was maintained at similar levels to those of 1997.

Note that breeding success is expressed as young/territorial pair (see under Red Kite *Milvus milvus*).

### European Serin *Serinus serinus*

One locality: 0-1 pair.

England, E

One locality. NORFOLK One locality: (1) singing male on 13th June only.

As in 1997, just one report, this time of a singing male. The species seems to have disappeared from its former haunts in southwest England.

### Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

The following information was received for England and Wales.

England, SW

DORSET 28 pairs. GLOUCESTERSHIRE One pair. HAMPSHIRE Seven pairs, but no records received from New Forest. SOMERSET 44 pairs in two localities.

England, SE

ESSEX Four pairs at three localities. SURREY Ten pairs. SUSSEX Single pairs at two localities.

England, E

LINCOLNSHIRE Seven pairs. NORFOLK Ten pairs, but probably more in Brecks. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE 118 pairs at 20 localities. SUFFOLK 34 pairs

at four localities.

England, Central

LEICESTERSHIRE 26 pairs. NOTTINGHAMSHIRE Ten pairs. WORCESTERSHIRE 25 pairs.

England, N

LANCASHIRE Nine pairs at three localities. NORTHUMBERLAND Many pairs in Border forests. YORKSHIRE Seven pairs.

Wales

CARMARTHEN Eight pairs. CEREDIGION One pair. DENBIGH One pair. GLAMORGAN Five pairs.

Information for several of the above counties, other than those with extensive forestry plantations, is reasonably complete. No meaningful information was received from Scotland.

### Scottish Crossbill *Loxia scotica*

The following information was received from two study areas.

Scotland, Mid

One study area: of 26 pairs monitored, 13 fledged 27 young, with most failures following a late heavy snowfall.

Scotland, N & W

One study area: at least 24 pairs thought to have bred in Abernethy Forest.

Studies of this species continue and should reveal more about numbers and distribution as they proceed.

### Parrot Crossbill *Loxia pytyopsittacus*

One study area: little information available.

Scotland, N & W

One study area: only report from Abernethy Forest was of eight birds in late January.

The status of this species continues to require further study.

## Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

Seven localities: seven singing males.

England, E

Three localities: (1)-(3) single singing males.

Scotland, Mid

One locality: immature singing male in June.

Scotland, N & W

Three localities: (1) adult singing male in June;

(2)(3) single immature singing males.

An average-to-poor year. A paper on the history of this species in Britain and Ireland since 1869 was published in *British Birds* last year (Wallace 1999).

## Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

11 areas or localities: up to 41 pairs breeding.

Scotland, Mid and N & W

11 areas or localities: 41 pairs or singing males.

The above is the result of limited survey work in one area, plus casual records.

## Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus*

455 breeding pairs.

England, SW

CORNWALL Two localities: (1)(2) single pairs present in April. DEVON A full census was carried out for the first time since 1994, revealing 453 pairs. In a sample of 22 nests, 11 produced at least 32 fledged young.

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Confirmed (pairs)	48	98	113	92	43	42	nc	nc	nc
Possible/ probable (pairs)	85	143	207	269	369	337	337	380	455
Max. total pairs	133	241	320	361	412	379	337	380	455

The first full census for four years shows a 10% increase over that period (Wotton *et al.* 2000).

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