

Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 2003 and 2004

Mark Holling and the Rare Breeding Birds Panel



A national survey of Hen Harriers *Circus cyaneus* was carried out in the UK in 2004. Alan Harris

This, the thirty-first report of the Rare Breeding Birds Panel, presents details of the status of the rarest breeding birds in the UK for both 2003 and 2004. Two years are included here in order to catch up with the delay in processing the Panel's records. Because of the larger volume of records to report, analysis and comment has unfortunately had to be reduced. Future reports will again cover a single breeding season, in more depth, and the synopsis for 2005 will be published early in 2008.

The Panel

The current membership of the Panel (June 2007) is Humphrey Crick, Ian Francis, David

Norman, Judith Smith, Ken Smith, David Stroud and Mark Holling (Secretary). David Norman joined the Panel in 2005. The individual members of the Panel serve in a personal capacity, but three of them are also able to reflect the interests and requirements of the respective sponsoring bodies and one of them those of the Association of County Recorders and Editors. The work of the Panel is supported financially by JNCC (on behalf of the country conservation agencies) and the RSPB, with additional support coming from the BTO.

This is the first report to be produced by Mark Holling, who replaced Malcolm Ogilvie as Secretary in May 2006. Malcolm served as Secretary from 1993 until 2006, thus becoming

the Panel's longest-serving Secretary. During this period the volume of material submitted increased enormously and, as well as carrying out his normal duties, Malcolm developed comprehensive database systems which are still being used today. The Panel would like to take this opportunity of thanking Malcolm for his efforts during his 13 years as the public face of the Rare Breeding Birds Panel and we hope that he enjoys many more years on his beloved Islay.

In addition, we wish to pay a further tribute to Colin Bibby, who died in August 2004, just as the last RBBP report was being finalised for publication. Colin's achievements for ornithology and conservation have been well reported in many obituaries (see, for example, *Brit. Birds* 98: 220–221), but his pivotal role in the development of the Rare Breeding Birds Panel has been less well documented. Colin championed the great potential for the Panel to provide vital data for bird conservation. It was Colin who pushed what was, at the time, a somewhat reluctant Panel to move to computerise the RBBP data, then a sensitive issue. These facilities are now taken for granted and it is difficult to conceive using any other system.

The Panel will miss Colin's outstanding input, particularly his vision, but most of all we shall miss him as a friend and someone who always managed to turn serious work into good fun.

Coverage

The Panel collects records from the whole of the UK, including the Isle of Man and Northern Ireland, but not from the Channel Islands or the Republic of Ireland. Most of the information presented in this report is submitted by county and regional bird recorders and the Panel is extremely grateful for their support. Coverage for the years reported here was good, with some data received from most counties. The most notable exceptions were Cornwall and Nottinghamshire (both years), and Argyll for 2004. In part, this was due to a delay in data processing of those counties' records and the data will be added to the Panel's archives in due course. There were also limited returns from some counties in Wales. Additional data are received from some specialist groups, from Schedule 1 Licence returns and from RSPB reserves. Maps showing a representation of the coverage in both years are shown in fig. 1.

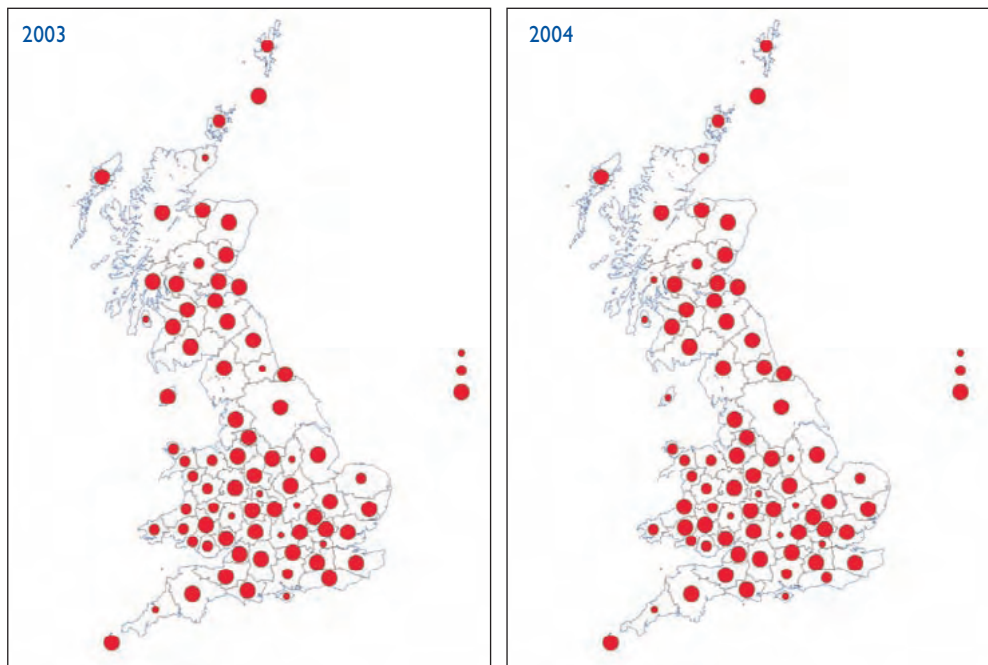


Fig. 1. Data submission to the Rare Breeding Birds Panel, 2003 and 2004. This shows the level of detail provided to the Panel, by recording area. Large dots indicate full submission for all species from county/regional recorders, with supplementary data from other sources where applicable; medium-size dots indicate data extracted from local bird reports for all species, with supplementary data from other sources where applicable; small dots indicate limited species coverage – data extracted from Schedule 1 licence returns, local raptor study group reports or RSPB reserve logs only. A blank indicates that no data were submitted. Note that for Northern Ireland, bird report data were made available to the Panel in both years.

Data inclusion and recording standards

There have been no changes to the acceptance criteria for records since the Panel's last report (Ogilvie *et al.* 2004). It is the Panel's policy to follow the opinions of the appropriate county recorder and local committees, and to publish records that have not been vetted in this way only in exceptional circumstances. In terms of breeding evidence, the Panel follows the recommendations of the European Ornithological Atlas Committee. However, although all records of species on the Panel's list are welcomed and will be archived alongside other information, we will not normally publish records of birds which appear to be passing migrants and which are recorded for a few days only, even if the record is of a singing male.

The Panel is in the process of developing new Recording Standards. These will be widely circulated and we hope that they will provide guidance in the collection of the most useful information and in the submission of records of rare breeding birds. In addition, species-specific guidance is being compiled and will be made available on the Panel's website www.rbbp.org.uk.

In cases where new data for years already reported upon are submitted to the Panel, the archives are updated and annual totals revised and included in these reports. The presentation of species data in this report is similar to that of previous ones although, since this report covers two years, some information has not been repeated and readers are referred to previous reports.

For 2003–04, the list of species considered remained unchanged except for the addition of Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*, now a Schedule 1 species. The list includes all species which have UK populations of less than 300 pairs in a typical year, and all species on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981. The full list is available from the Panel's website. This list is kept under regular review and future changes will be announced in *BB*.

Conservation uses of Panel data

It is the Panel's policy to make data available for relevant conservation uses, always maintaining appropriate controls to ensure the safety of the birds and their breeding sites. Site-specific information is used by JNCC and the country conservation agencies, and national datasets are used to help to plan surveys – for example, the RSPB survey of breeding Common Scoters *Melanitta nigra* and the national BTO survey of

Little Ringed Plovers *Charadrius dubius*, both in 2007. Extensive use of Panel data is made in the annual *State of the UK's Birds* publication.

The Panel is keen to encourage bona fide individuals to use Panel data in compiling reviews of the status and population of rare breeding species. Recent publications have included one on Wood Sandpipers *Tringa glareola* (Chisholm 2007) and one on Black-necked Grebes *Podiceps nigricollis* (Martin & Smith 2007; pp. 268–278). The Panel maintains a Data Access Policy, to which prospective users of data should refer (see www.rbbp.org.uk). Currently, Panel data are being used in reviews of breeding Spotted Crakes *Porzana porzana*, parakeets (Psittacidae), Redwings *Turdus iliacus* in Kent and Bramblings *Fringilla montifringilla* in Highland. The Secretary has worked closely with the editors of the new *Birds of Scotland* (Forrester *et al.* in press) and the Panel is grateful to the authors for the additional data which have come to light during the compilation of that book.

Review of the years 2003 and 2004

The year 2003 will be remembered by many for the long hot, dry period in July and August, the UK temperature record being broken in mid August when 38.5°C was recorded in Kent. These warm conditions may have encouraged the nesting attempts by European Serins *Serinus serinus* in Norfolk. Much of this dry weather was after the breeding season for most species, however, and following the dry and warm early spring, there were overnight frosts and some heavy rain in May and June. The rain and floods in early June caused some brood losses at a critical time, Red Kites *Milvus milvus* being among the species affected.

Following another mild winter, allowing high over-winter survival for resident passerines such as Cetti's *Cettia cetti* and Dartford Warblers *Sylvia undata*, May 2004 proved to be warm and sunny, which favoured nesting by many species, but the remainder of the summer was changeable and showery. Without the heavy rainstorms of summer 2003, however, 2004 was the more productive breeding season for many species.

This report includes details of 90 species breeding or showing indications of breeding over the two years 2003 and 2004.

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis* appears in the Panel's reports for the first time, owing to the record of a male paired with a (presumed) female Eurasian Teal *A. crecca* in Lancashire &

Dan Powell

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

North Merseyside in 2004. Numbers of Pintails *A. acuta* in 2004 reached their lowest level since 1987, with a maximum of just 22 pairs. Garganey *A. querquedula* was recorded breeding in Wiltshire for the first time in 2003, although numbers overall appeared to be higher in 2004, with up to 78 pairs noted compared with 56 in 2003. In 2004, a Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris* paired with a Tufted Duck *A. fuligula* in the Outer Hebrides hatched two young. This is the first confirmed breeding for this species in these reports, albeit by a hybrid pair. A male Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis* summered in Cumbria, but there was no hint of a pairing; this was also the case for the male Smew *Mergellus albellus* present in Highland in June 2004. Rather more encouragingly, however, was the pair of Smew in Clyde in 2003, which were seen mating in late May.

The total number of Common Quails *Coturnix coturnix* reported in 2004 was close to the ten-year mean at 407 pairs or singing males, but the 18 confirmed breeding pairs was well above average for this secretive species. For Red-throated Divers *Gavia stellata* in Orkney, a successful season in 2004 was thought to be due to reduced chick predation by Great Skuas *Stercorarius skua*, because many skuas left the islands early after widespread breeding failure among most seabirds. In Shetland, by contrast, 2004 was the poorest season since 1979, with many diver chicks dying of starvation or being pre-

dated. It is always encouraging to report more unusual species, such as the displaying Great Northern Divers *G. immer* in the Outer Hebrides in July 2003, but there was no more to report there after that. For Slavonian Grebes *Podiceps auritus*, the two years provided contrasting productivity figures, with 2004 being poor despite the number of pairs being the highest since 1997. All Slavonian Grebes breed in Scotland, but it is beginning to look as though all the Black-necked Grebes *P. nigricollis* will be in England soon, as former sites in Scotland were found deserted and only one chick fledged there in 2004.

The RSPB/Natural England study of Eurasian Bitterns *Botaurus stellaris* showed that by 2004 the numbers had exceeded the UK Biodiversity Action Plan target of 50 booming males by 2010, when 55–69 boomers were found at 37 sites, including one in Wales. The huge growth in numbers of Little Egrets *Egretta garzetta* continues, with over 350 pairs nesting in 2004 and three counties reporting their first breeding records in 2003–04.

Owing to the success of the Red Kite release programme and the continuing recovery of the Welsh population, the number of pairs of kites is still climbing and the number of young fledged was at least 892 in 2004. There are clear signs of range expansion in southern England, based on the original releases in the Chilterns. This contrasts with the situation in northern

Scotland, however, where the number of breeding pairs remains static. This seems to reflect the loss of young birds as they leave the core area, illegal persecution being the likely cause. This is also a factor in the static or declining populations of both Hen Harriers *Circus cyaneus* and Golden Eagles *Aquila chrysaetos* in some areas, as shown by the results of national surveys of these raptors during the period under review. In contrast, Marsh Harriers *C. aeruginosus* are faring significantly better. As birds of prey become more widespread, fewer specific details of nesting sites and productivity are received, which is a pity as the Panel's archives are the only place where this information is held for posterity.

Numbers of singing male Corn Crakes *Crex crex* continue to rise, reflecting the success of management schemes in northern Scotland; over 1,000 were recorded in 2004 and the first confirmed breeding record for the reintroduction programme in Cambridgeshire is also notable. Common Crane *Grus grus* is becoming more established as a breeding species as the first young away from the Norfolk population were hatched in 2004 (although sadly these were lost to predators). Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* was added to the list of breeding bird species in Wales in 2003, and two pairs nested there in 2004. Less welcome news is the apparent permanent loss of Dotterels *Charadrius morinellus* as a breeding species in southern Scotland, and the apparent demise of Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* (only a single bird was recorded in 2003 and none in 2004). Pectoral Sandpipers *C. melanotos* joined the list of UK breeding species, however, with two breeding attempts in 2004, one successful, and possibly a total of four pairs present.

After what had appeared to be a reduction in 2001–02, numbers of Mediterranean Gulls *Larus melanocephalus* increased to a new peak, with up to 241 pairs in 2004. By contrast, Yellow-legged Gull *L. michahellis* remains an apparently reluctant colonist; the only pure pairs of this species were reported in Dorset, although again they failed to produce young in either year.

For Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*, a record of successful breeding in 2003 was the first since 1977. Although birds were present at the same site in 2004, breeding could not be proved in that year. This is one of those passerines which are sometimes located in the vastness of the Highland region of Scotland, where encounters

are brief and, frustratingly, often not repeated. Such circumstances also applied to the lone Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus* and three singing Bluethroats *Luscinia svecica* that were each seen on one day only. Fieldfares *Turdus pilaris* can also fall into that category, although they occur more widely. Singles only were reported in 2003 but there were several records in 2004 which involved confirmed breeding or were strongly indicative of it, in counties from Orkney south to Lincolnshire. Cetti's Warbler, restricted to the southern half of England and to parts of Wales, continues to increase, with over 1,000 singing males in both years and indications that these are underestimates. In contrast, Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris* remains on the brink, with only Kent reporting proved breeding, despite at least 11 birds in Shetland in June 2004, where copulation was recorded.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla* is probably an under-recorded species, but this report includes the highest number of singing males ever recorded: up to 283 in 2004. The first breeding record for Cheshire & Wirral was reported in 2003, but sadly not repeated in 2004. Another species clearly on the rise is Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*, the sample reported to the Panel in 2004 being close to the population estimate for 2002, when a thorough survey was undertaken. The story for Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* though is less welcome. A continuing decline is evident and only 3–8 pairs bred in 2004, at just eight sites, compared to 8–35 at 34 sites ten years earlier.

The first successful breeding for Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* since 1999 was reported from Shetland in 2004. Norfolk produced one, possibly two, breeding pairs of European Serin in 2003, the first for Norfolk and the first nesting in the UK since 1996. Since the split from Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*, breeding records of Common Redpolls *C. flammea* have taken on more interest, and 21 pairs were reported to the Panel in 2004, all in Shetland and the Outer Hebrides.

Key to geographical regions used in this report

The names of recording areas listed below are normally based on the names used by local recorders who sent the Panel their information. In Wales, the recording areas are based on Watsonian vice-counties, as shown in the *Welsh Bird Report* (e.g. Green *et al.* 2007). In Scotland, the recording areas are based on local bird-report areas and are shown on the SOC website (www.the-soc.org.uk). Scottish Raptor Study

Group areas are, however, different. As some raptor data are available only by these areas, these names are used where necessary in this report. A map showing the boundaries of these is on the website of the Scottish Raptor Study Groups www.scottishraptorgroups.org/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, Oxfordshire, Surrey, Sussex

England, E

Cambridgeshire (including Huntingdon & Peterborough), Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Suffolk

England, Central

Derbyshire, Herefordshire, Leicestershire & Rutland, Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands, Worcestershire

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral, Cleveland, Cumbria, Co. Durham, Greater Manchester, Isle of Man, Lancashire & North Merseyside, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear, Yorkshire

Wales

The Watsonian vice-counties of Anglesey (Môn), Brecon (Brycheiniog), Caernarfon, Carmarthen (Caerfyrddin), Ceredigion, Denbigh (Dinbych), Flint (Fflint), Glamorgan (Morgannwg), Gower, Gwent, Meirionnydd, Mont-

gomery (Trefaldwyn), Pembroke (Penfro), Radnor (Maesyfed)

Scotland, S

The local bird-recording areas of Ayrshire, Borders, Clyde, Clyde Islands, Dumfries & Galloway, Lothian

Scotland, Mid

The local bird-recording areas of Angus & Dundee, Fife, Isle of May, Moray & Nairn, North-east Scotland, Perth & Kinross, Upper Forth

Scotland, N & W

The local bird-recording areas of Argyll, Caithness, Fair Isle, Highland, Orkney, Outer Hebrides, Shetland

Northern Ireland

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

Terminology

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. Within tables, the abbreviations 'Confirmed (pairs)' and 'Possible/probable (pairs)' mean, respectively, 'Number of pairs confirmed breeding' and 'Number of pairs possibly or probably breeding'.

Within each species account, numbers given in the format '1–4 pairs' indicate (in this case) one proven breeding pair and a possible maximum total of four breeding pairs. In the tables, zeros mean that there were no birds recorded in that area in that year, whereas a rule (–) indicates that no data were received.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

2003 Four sites: four pairs. **2004** Six sites: seven pairs. In both years, three pairs bred in Shetland, fledging a total of 13 young in 2003 and 14 in 2004. After successful breeding in the Outer Hebrides in 2002, two pairs summered in 2003 (one at the 2002 nesting loch) but did not breed and one pair nested in 2004. The pair in Ayrshire bred again in both years and although their provenance is unclear, the remote location of the site points towards a wild origin. Two pairs raised three young between them in Northern Ireland. Summering individuals or pairs of unknown origin were also recorded in Argyll, Cumbria and Gwent (all 2003 only), Borders, Dumfries & Galloway, Highland and Orkney (in both years). Breeding records of known and assumed escapes will be summarised in the Panel's report on rare non-native breeding birds (*Brit. Birds* in press).

Scotland, S

Ayrshire **2003** One site: one pair raised two young. Ayrshire **2004** One site: one pair raised one young.

Scotland, N & W

Outer Hebrides **2004** One site: one pair reared four young. Shetland **2003** Three sites: three pairs reared broods of

six, four and three. **Shetland 2004** Three sites: three pairs reared broods of six, five and three. In addition, one paired with a Mute Swan *C. olor* hatched two chicks, which subsequently died.

Northern Ireland

Co. Londonderry 2004 One site: two pairs raised three young.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

2003 At least 89 sites: 77–121 pairs. **2004** At least 87 sites: 88–159 pairs. Although there are widespread reports of summering birds, the bulk of the breeding population occurs in the north of Britain, especially the Yorkshire Dales, Highland, Orkney and the Outer Hebrides. A significant proportion of breeding records come from RSPB reserves, but this may be a reporting artefact as the most recent breeding population estimate for the UK is considerably higher, at 300–500 breeding pairs (Baker *et al.* 2006).

England, SW

Somerset 2003 One site: ten singles summered. **Somerset 2004** One site: six singles summered.

England, SE

Essex 2003 Three sites: one pair bred and four other pairs summered. **Essex 2004** Three sites: one pair bred and four other pairs summered. **Hertfordshire 2004** One site: one summering male. **Kent 2003** Summering at seven sites. **Kent 2004** Two extensive sites: 7–13 birds summered. **Oxfordshire 2004** One site: four pairs probably bred.

England, E

Cambridgeshire 2003 Four sites: up to six pairs summered. **Cambridgeshire 2004** Four sites: two pairs probably bred at one site and four pairs present at three other sites. **Norfolk 2003** 13 sites: 71 birds summered but no indication of breeding. **Norfolk 2004** 19 sites: eight pairs probably bred at five sites; 68 birds summered at 14 other sites. **Suffolk 2003** Four sites: four pairs possibly bred. **Suffolk 2004** Seven sites: seven pairs possibly bred.

England, C

Derbyshire 2003 One site: two birds summered. **Leicestershire & Rutland 2003** One site: up to six birds summered. **Leicestershire & Rutland 2004** Three sites: up to six birds summered.

England, N

Co. Durham 2003 13 sites: at least 28 pairs bred; this number is thought to represent about half of the actual county population. **Lancashire & North Merseyside 2003** Seven pairs summered but unlikely to have bred. **Greater Manchester 2003** One site: one male summered and a pair was present on one date. **Northumberland 2003** Two sites: four pairs bred. **Northumberland 2004** Two sites: four pairs bred. **Yorkshire 2003** 16 pairs raised 29 young in Yorkshire Dales National Park. **Yorkshire 2004** 15 pairs with at least five confirmed breeding in Yorkshire Dales National Park.

Wales

Anglesey 2004 Two sites: three pairs probably bred. **Caernarfon 2003** One site: one pair probably bred. **Gwent 2003** One site: one summered. **Gwent 2004** One site: four summered.

Scotland, S

Borders 2003 Three sites: one pair bred and two birds summered at two other sites. **Borders 2004** Four sites: one pair bred and one pair possibly bred at one site, two pairs possibly bred at two other sites, and one bird summered at a fourth site. **Clyde 2004** One site: one pair possibly bred. **Dumfries & Galloway 2003** Two sites: one possible and two probable breeding pairs. **Dumfries & Galloway 2004** One site: one pair probably bred. **Lothian 2003** One site: one pair possibly bred. **Lothian 2004** Two sites: two birds summered.

Scotland, Mid

Moray & Nairn 2003 One site: one pair bred. **Moray & Nairn 2004** One site: one pair bred. **North-east Scotland 2003** One site: three pairs probably bred. **North-east Scotland 2004** Five sites: five pairs possibly bred. Note that in survey work for the local North-east Scotland Atlas (Francis & Cook in prep.) there were 13 confirmed breeding records in 2002–04. **Perth & Kinross 2003** Two sites: one pair bred and one pair possibly bred. **Perth & Kinross 2004** Two sites: five pairs bred.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll 2003 Two sites: three pairs bred and three pairs probably bred. **Argyll 2004** One site: one pair probably bred. **Highland 2003** Ten sites: three pairs bred, 22 pairs probably bred and two birds summered. **Highland 2004** Five sites: 40 pairs bred at four sites, one pair present at another. **Orkney 2003** Seven sites: seven pairs bred. **Orkney 2004** 13 sites: 25 pairs bred, five pairs probably bred. **Outer Hebrides 2003** Four extensive sites: ten pairs bred, five pairs probably bred, one pair possibly bred and up to 13 birds summered. **Outer Hebrides 2004** Three extensive sites: three pairs bred, at least 11 pairs probably bred and ten pairs possibly bred. **Shetland 2003** Two sites: two pairs bred. **Shetland 2004** Two sites: three pairs bred.

Northern Ireland

Co. Down 2003 One site: three birds summered.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

2003 1,413 pairs. 2004 1,520 pairs. Although these figures are maxima for the data received, being sums of confirmed, probable and possible breeding pairs in each year, some counties, especially those with large populations, could provide only a minimum county figure.

Gadwall	2003	2004		2003	2004
	Total	Total		Total	Total
England, SW	210	276	England, N	206	181
Avon	5	3	Cheshire & Wirral	46	31
Devon	4	5	Cleveland	10	3
Dorset	30	32	Cumbria	2	2
Gloucestershire	4	9	Greater Manchester	5	9
Hampshire	25	50	Lancashire & N Merseyside	22	29
Isles of Scilly	0	4	Northumberland	13	15
Somerset	138	160	Yorkshire	108	92
Wiltshire	4	13	Wales	41	30
England, SE	310	373	Anglesey	28	26
Bedfordshire	7	7	Brecon	2	0
Berkshire	4	6	Caernarfon	3	0
Buckinghamshire	8	6	Denbigh & Flint	0	1
Essex	57	61	Gwent	8	2
Hertfordshire	95	151	Pembroke	0	1
Kent	135	125	Scotland, S	11	23
Oxfordshire	–	9	Borders	2	2
Surrey	0	3	Clyde	4	18
Sussex	4	5	Dumfries & Galloway	3	3
England, E	424	370	Lothian	2	0
Cambridgeshire	102	73	Scotland, Mid	99	132
Lincolnshire	21	27	Angus & Dundee	6	13
Norfolk	158	179	Fife	0	4
Suffolk	143	91	Perth & Kinross	93	114
England, C	93	97	Upper Forth	0	1
Derbyshire	24	30	Scotland, N & W	19	29
Leicestershire & Rutland	25	22	Argyll	4	2
Shropshire	5	2	Orkney	12	22
Staffordshire	13	10	Outer Hebrides	3	5
Warwickshire	21	18	Northern Ireland	0	9
West Midlands	1	11	Co. Down	0	1
Worcestershire	4	4	Co. Tyrone	0	8

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis*

2004 One site: one mixed pair. This is the first time that this species has occurred in the Panel's reports.

England, N

Lancashire & North Merseyside 2004 One male was seen paired with a (presumed) female Eurasian Teal *A. crecca* for three weeks in June. There was no indication that this was not a wild bird.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

2003 24 sites: 8–37 pairs. 2004 22 sites: 12–22 pairs. The ten-year mean (1995–2004) of maximum total pairs is 36, so 2003 would seem to be a typical year. There was a respectable total of 12 confirmed breeding pairs in 2004, but the number of sites and maximum total pairs were the lowest in the ten-year period. However, only incomplete data for Argyll were available in 2004. Argyll, Orkney and the Outer Hebrides are the strongholds for this species. Summering birds were more widely reported, mostly single males or obvious migrants, but these are excluded from the figures presented here.

England, SE

Essex 2003 Three sites: up to three summering birds only. Essex 2004 One site: one pair bred. Kent 2003 One site: one pair possibly bred. Kent 2004 Three sites: 3–5 summering birds only. Oxfordshire 2004 One site: one pair

probably bred.

England, E

Cambridgeshire 2003 One site: two pairs possibly bred. Cambridgeshire 2004 One site: one pair probably bred. Lincolnshire 2004 One site: one pair possibly bred. Norfolk 2003 Four sites: three pairs probably bred, two pairs possibly bred. Norfolk 2004 Up to 11 single birds summering at four sites. Suffolk 2003 Two sites: two pairs possibly bred. Suffolk 2004 Three sites: up to three summering birds only.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral 2004 One site: three pairs probably bred.

Wales

Anglesey 2004 One site: one pair probably bred.

Scotland, S

Dumfries & Galloway 2003 One site: one pair bred.

Scotland, Mid

Perth & Kinross 2003 Summering single male only. Perth & Kinross 2004 One site: one pair possibly bred.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll 2003 Five sites: 14 pairs probably bred and one pair possibly bred. Argyll 2004 Two sites: two pairs bred. Orkney 2003 Three sites: six pairs bred and one pair probably bred. Orkney 2004 Two sites: nine pairs bred. Outer Hebrides 2003 Three sites: one pair bred and three pairs probably bred. Outer Hebrides 2004 One site: two pairs probably bred.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

2003 41 sites: 6–56 pairs. 2004 53 sites: 6–78 pairs. None bred in the Outer Hebrides, where the first breeding record occurred in 2002, but the first confirmed breeding record for Wiltshire occurred in 2003. As in the 2002 report, the data below exclude presumed migrants. The numbers of breeding pairs in 2003 are comparable with those in 2002, although rather more were apparently breeding in 2004.

England, SW

Avon 2003 One site: one pair probably bred. Avon 2004 One site: one pair possibly bred. Devon 2004 One site: one pair probably bred. Gloucestershire 2003 One site: one pair possibly bred. Somerset 2003 Two sites: three pairs probably bred and three pairs possibly bred. Somerset 2004 Two sites: two pairs probably bred and four pairs possibly bred. Wiltshire 2003 One site: one pair bred; this is the first confirmed breeding record for Wiltshire.

England, SE

Bedfordshire 2004 One site: three pairs possibly bred. Essex 2003 Two sites: two pairs probably bred. Essex 2004 One site: one pair possibly bred. Hertfordshire 2003 One site: one pair possibly bred. Kent 2003 Six sites: two pairs bred, four pairs probably bred and four pairs possibly bred. Kent 2004 12 sites: two pairs bred, five pairs probably bred and 11 pairs possibly bred. Sussex 2004 One site: two pairs possibly bred.

England, E

Cambridgeshire 2003 Two sites: six pairs probably bred, one pair possibly bred. Cambridgeshire 2004 Two sites: one pair bred and eight pairs possibly bred. Lincolnshire 2004 Two sites: two pairs possibly bred. Norfolk 2003 Four sites: four pairs probably bred, one pair possibly bred. Norfolk 2004 Ten sites: one pair bred and nine pairs possibly bred. Suffolk 2003 Five sites: two pairs probably bred, three pairs possibly bred. Suffolk 2004 Three sites: three pairs probably bred, three pairs possibly bred.

England, C

Leicestershire & Rutland 2004 Two sites: two pairs possibly bred. Shropshire 2003 One pair probably bred.

England, N

Cleveland 2004 One site: one pair bred, hatching ten young. This is the first breeding record for Cleveland since 1998 and only the second since 1975. Cumbria 2004 Two sites: two pairs possibly bred. Lancashire & North Merseyside 2003 Two sites: two pairs bred. Lancashire & North Merseyside 2004 One site: one pair probably bred. Yorkshire 2003 One site: one pair possibly bred. Yorkshire 2004 Two sites: three pairs probably bred.

Wales

Anglesey 2003 Two sites: three pairs probably bred. Anglesey 2004 One site: one pair possibly bred. Gwent 2004 One site: two pairs possibly bred.

Scotland, S

Clyde 2003 Two sites: two pairs possibly bred. Dumfries & Galloway 2003 Three sites: one pair bred, two pairs possibly bred. Dumfries & Galloway 2004 Two sites: two pairs possibly bred.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland 2003 One site: one pair possibly bred. North-east Scotland 2004 One site: one pair bred. Perth & Kinross 2003 One site: one pair probably bred, one pair possibly bred. Perth & Kinross 2004 Two sites: one pair probably bred, one pair possibly bred.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll 2003 One site: one pair possibly bred. **Argyll 2004** One site: one pair probably bred. **Caithness 2004** One site: one pair possibly bred. **Highland 2003** One site: one pair possibly bred.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

2003 461 pairs. **2004** 482 pairs. The totals here represent a maximum number of pairs reported to the Panel as breeding, as they include all breeding-season records except for singles recorded at a site for one day only and apparent non-breeding flocks. The number of pairs in both years is above the ten-year mean of 436 (range 309–545). The fluctuation in numbers may be purely an artefact of reporting, as numbers for some sites are not always available annually. The majority of breeding Pochards are concentrated in the English coastal counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Kent, which between them accounted for 56% of pairs reported in 2004. This species is more local and much scarcer in most other counties.

Common Pochard	2003	2004	2003	2004
	Total	Total	Total	Total
England, SW	42	54	England, N	62
Avon	3	2	Cheshire & Wirral	15
Devon	3	3	Cleveland	8
Dorset	3	5	Greater Manchester	1
Gloucestershire	0	2	Lancashire & N Merseyside	12
Hampshire	2	6	Northumberland	6
Isles of Scilly	4	2	Yorkshire	20
Somerset	27	33	Wales	23
Wiltshire	0	1	Anglesey	22
England, SE	236	208	Brecon	0
Bedfordshire	1	1	Caernarfon	1
Buckinghamshire	4	0	Gwent	0
Essex	53	43	Scotland, S	5
Hertfordshire	22	11	Borders	4
Kent	156	141	Clyde	0
Oxfordshire	–	12	Dumfries & Galloway	1
England, E	76	111	Lothian	0
Cambridgeshire	7	12	Scotland, Mid	4
Lincolnshire	7	11	Angus & Dundee	0
Norfolk	39	59	Fife	2
Suffolk	23	29	Perth & Kinross	2
England, C	6	6	Scotland, N & W	5
Leicestershire & Rutland	0	2	Caithness	–
Shropshire	2	2	Highland	1
Warwickshire	2	0	Orkney	3
Worcestershire	2	2	Outer Hebrides	1
			Northern Ireland	2
			Co. Londonderry	2

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*

2003 One site: one male present. **2004** One site: one mixed pair hatched two young. Ring-necked Ducks were previously reported paired with Common Pochards in both 1977 and 1998 but no young have been recorded before.

England, E

Lincolnshire 2003 Single male for nine days in May.

Scotland, N & W

Outer Hebrides 2004 One male, present from late April to mid September, paired with a female Tufted Duck *A. fuligula*. Two young hatched but are not known to have fledged.

Greater Scaup *Aythya marila*

2003 Three sites: 0–3 pairs. **2004** Five sites: 0–8 pairs. A welcome increase in reports, but no firm evidence of breeding. Female Scaups appear to have been in short supply in 2004.



Kit Day

145. Male Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*, with Tufted Duck *A. fuligula*, Swadlincote, Derbyshire, April 2007.

Scotland, S

Lothian 2003 One site: male present at an inland reservoir in June and July, and a juvenile seen there in September; the youngster may not have been raised locally.

Scotland, Mid

Perth & Kinross 2004 One site: four males and two females on one date in May.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 2003 Two sites: (1) male present in June and July; (2) male on one date in May. **Highland 2004** Two sites: (1) male in May appeared to be paired with a Tufted Duck; (2) male on one date in July also possibly paired with a Tufted Duck. **Outer Hebrides 2004** Two sites: (1) pair on one date in May and single males on nearby lochs on two other dates in May; (2) male from late May into June, loosely associating with two pairs of Tufted Ducks.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

2003 One site: one male summered.

England, N

Cumbria 2003 One male remained during summer.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

2003 Nine sites: 12–25 pairs. **2004** Five sites: 0–15 pairs. The overall numbers appear to be much lower than in the mid 1990s, and a decline on Islay, Argyll, was noted specifically. The records here relate to data from RSPB reserves plus some casual reports. The stronghold now appears to be in Highland, where 21 pairs bred or probably bred in 2003. A full survey is planned for 2007.

Scotland, S

Lothian 2003 Two sites: (1) six males on one date in June; (2) 14 males on one date in July.

Scotland, Mid

Perth & Kinross 2003 One site: one pair with brood of four in July. **Perth & Kinross 2004** One site: one pair possibly bred.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll 2003 Two sites: 2–3 pairs possibly bred. **Argyll 2004** One site: one pair possibly bred. **Highland 2003** Four sites: (1) ten pairs raised 43 young; (2) nine pairs probably bred, but no young seen; (3) one pair hatched four young but none fledged; (4) one pair probably bred, but no young seen. **Highland 2004** Three sites: (1) one pair probably bred; (2) three pairs probably bred; (3) nine pairs probably bred.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

2003 104–156 pairs bred in three regions of Scotland, and birds summered in three other areas of Scotland and England. **2004** 98–146 pairs bred in three regions of Scotland, and birds summered in

three other areas of Scotland and England. Details received from the Goldeneye Study Group indicate that a minimum of 97 clutches in 2003 and 88 clutches in 2004 were laid in nestboxes in Badenoch & Strathspey. In 2003, 75 of the 97 clutches were incubated and 53 were successful with a mean brood-size of 8.4 young (range 2–20). In 2004, 59 were incubated and 46 were successful with a mean brood-size of 8.3 young (range 1–13). It is known that as many as two-thirds of nests contain eggs laid by other females, so the total population in this area in 2003 was estimated at 150 egg-laying females, and an equivalent estimate for 2004 gave 133 egg-laying females.

England, C

Derbyshire 2004 One site: one pair summered. **Leicestershire & Rutland 2003** One site: one pair summered.

England, N

Cumbria 2003 Four sites: six females summered. **Cumbria 2004** Three sites: two males, one female summered.

Scotland, S

Lothian 2003 One site: up to three summered. **Lothian 2004** At least two sites: one pair in June and other summering individuals elsewhere.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland 2003 Two sites: five pairs bred. **North-east Scotland 2004** At least nine pairs bred in Deeside, with two broods recorded. **Perth & Kinross 2003** One pair bred and up to 67 birds summered at four sites. **Perth & Kinross 2004** One site: 1–2 pairs bred.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 2003 One extensive and one other site: 98–150 pairs bred. In addition, a brood of six hatched from a box in Sutherland. **Highland 2004** One extensive site: 88–133 pairs bred.

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

2003 One site: 0–1 pair. **2004** One site: 0–1 pair. Summering birds have been reported before, but the 2003 record hints that breeding may yet occur.

Scotland, S

Clyde 2003 One site: pair copulating at an inland loch in late May.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 2004 One site: male on one date in June.

Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*

As Capercaillie is now a Schedule 1 species, it has been added to the Panel's list of species to be monitored, and this is the first report to include this dramatic but elusive grouse. The data here are clearly incomplete. A national survey conducted by the RSPB in winter 2003/04 gave an estimate of 1,980 individuals, which compares with 1,073 for the previous comparable survey, in 1998/99. Although this is suggestive of an increase, the fact that it lies within the wide confidence limits of the previous survey means that it does not demonstrate a statistically significant increase. It does, however, suggest that the previous decline has levelled out.

Scotland, Mid

Angus & Dundee 2004 One site: nest with four eggs. **Moray & Nairn 2003** Minimum of 15 males. **Moray & Nairn 2004** 13 males at three sites; also one brood of two. **North-east Scotland 2003** Two sites: (1) five males and one female in April; (2) two males and one female in April. **Perth & Kinross 2003** One site: one female in April. **Perth & Kinross 2004** Three sites: three separate individuals in January and April. **Upper Forth 2003** No birds believed to be present in Stirlingshire.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 2003 Population estimated at 40–66 males. Data were received from four nests, with a total of 33 eggs. **Highland 2004** Data from three nests, with a total of 22 eggs.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

2003 4–320 pairs. **2004** 18–407 pairs. The majority of reports of Common Quail refer to singing males, many of which are recorded for one date only, and it is not known how many of these relate to breeding attempts. Given the species' preferred habitat of arable fields, which are both extensive and not well checked by birdwatchers, the upper estimates of the totals given here are probably minima for each year. Clearly there were more Quails around in 2004 than in 2003, and although the figure of 407 pairs is close to the ten-year mean of 402, the total of 18 confirmed pairs is the highest since the 'Quail year' of 1989. The table shows the combined totals of calling birds, pairs and broods reported to the Panel, with the

number of confirmed pairs in parentheses after the total. All confirmed records relate to broods seen.

Common Quail	2003 Total (confirmed)	2004 Total (confirmed)		2003 Total (confirmed)	2004 Total (confirmed)
England, SW	53	105 (1)	Isle of Man	2	–
Avon	2	16	Lancashire &	8	5
Dorset	8	12	N Merseyside		
Gloucestershire	5	5	Northumberland	6	7
Hampshire	11	15	Yorkshire	20	13
Somerset	–	5	Wales	8	12
Wiltshire	27	52 (1)	Anglesey	3	–
England, SE	28	48	Brecon	–	2
Bedfordshire	7	1	Caernarfon	–	2
Berkshire	–	9	Ceredigion	2	1
Buckinghamshire	5	7	Denbigh & Flint	–	1
Essex	3	9	Glamorgan	1	1
Hertfordshire	4	2	Montgomery	–	2
Kent	6	–	Pembroke	2	3
Oxfordshire	–	1	Scotland, S	17 (1)	23 (4)
Sussex	3	19	Borders	9 (1)	15
England, E	73 (1)	86 (7)	Lothian	8	8 (4)
Cambridgeshire	15	19	Scotland, Mid	47 (1)	53 (1)
Lincolnshire	17	21 (7)	Angus & Dundee	18	14
Norfolk	39 (1)	39	Fife	5 (1)	3
Suffolk	2	7	Moray & Nairn	4	2
England, C	23	22 (3)	North-east Scotland	16	31 (1)
Derbyshire	5	7	Perth & Kinross	4	–
Leicestershire & Rutland	5	3	Upper Forth	–	3
Shropshire	6	9 (2)	Scotland, N & W	10 (1)	19
Staffordshire	1	–	Fair Isle	1 (1)	–
Warwickshire	6	3 (1)	Highland	1	7
England, N	60	38 (2)	Orkney	1	4
Cheshire & Wirral	10	11 (2)	Shetland	7	8
Cleveland	4	–	Northern Ireland	1	1
Cumbria	5	2	Co. Armagh	1	–
Greater Manchester	5	–	Co. Antrim	–	1

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Baker *et al.* (2006) estimated the British population of Red-throated Divers at 935–1,500 pairs. The Panel received casual data for over 200 pairs in both years under review, but only the results of long-term monitoring studies and records away from the main nesting areas in north and west Scotland are listed here. In Orkney, 2004 was the most successful season for at least eight years, contrasting with poor seabird success. The high productivity was possibly due to reduced chick predation by Great Skuas *Stercorarius skua*; that species left its breeding grounds early owing to breeding failures. In contrast, Shetland had its poorest season since studies began in 1979, with chicks dying of starvation or predation. The following information on productivity is from the RSPB's regular monitoring sites.

Scotland, S

Clyde 2003 Two sites: (1) pair laid eggs but failed; (2) pair probably bred but one of pair found shot. Clyde 2004 Two sites: (1) pair on territory but did not nest; (2) single on one date only. Clyde Islands 2003 Three pairs raised five young on Arran. Clyde Islands 2004 Three pairs raised three young on Arran.

Scotland, Mid

Moray & Nairn 2003 One site: one pair possibly bred. Moray & Nairn 2004 One site: pair on one date only. North-east Scotland 2003 One site: two pairs probably bred. North-east Scotland 2004 One site: one pair probably bred. Perth & Kinross 2004 One site: one pair probably bred. Upper Forth 2003 No birds at a former regular site for the third consecutive year.

Scotland, N & W

Orkney 2003 On Hoy, a survey located 64 pairs; 32 pairs fledged 40 young (0.63 young per occupied site). On

Mainland, 17 pairs bred on Birsay Moors and 14 of these raised 13 young (0.76 young per occupied site). Elsewhere in Orkney, at least 16 pairs also bred. **Orkney 2004** On Hoy, a full survey located 56 pairs; 38 pairs fledged 53 young (0.95 young per occupied site). On Mainland (including Birsay Moors), 20 pairs raised 20 chicks (1.00 young per occupied site). Elsewhere in Orkney, at least nine pairs also bred. **Shetland 2003** Site occupancy at study areas on three islands was down, with five pairs on Unst at Hermaness (productivity 0.20 young per laying pair), 19 pairs on Fetlar (0.63) and eight pairs on Foula (0.88). **Shetland 2004** Details for three study areas were six pairs at Hermaness (productivity 0.83 young per laying pair), 20 pairs on Fetlar (0.25) and seven pairs on Foula (0.57).

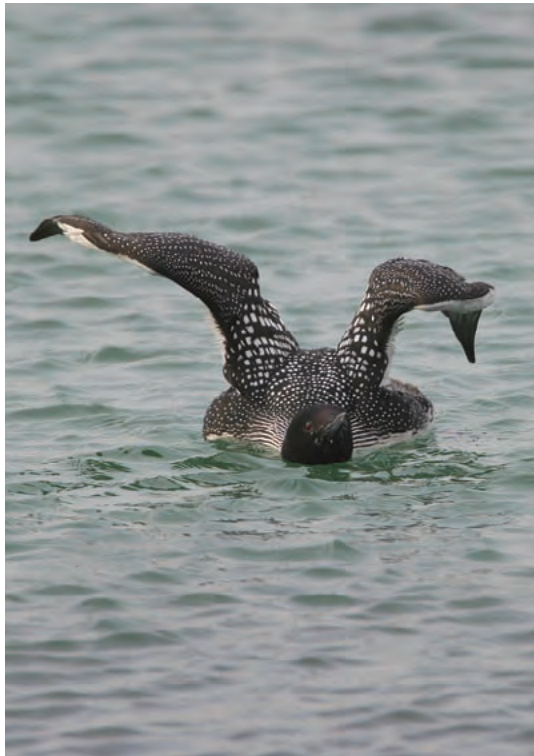
Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

2003 140 sites checked, 114 Apparently Occupied Territories (AOT) found. **2004** 187 sites checked, 149 AOT found. Monitoring by RSPB of Black-throated Diver lochs showed again that those nesting on rafts provided for them raised more young than those which chose natural sites.

2003 42 out of 51 raft territories were occupied and 33 raft-nesting pairs fledged 24 chicks (0.73 young per laying pair). Breeding was not proven at five occupied raft territories and four pairs in raft territories used natural sites. Only three young fledged from 18 pairs proved breeding at non-raft nests on the North Scotland mainland (0.17 young per laying pair).

2004 38 raft-nesting pairs fledged 16 chicks (0.42 young per laying pair). On the North Scotland mainland, 48 pairs were proved breeding at natural nest-sites and fledged 12 young (0.25 young per laying pair).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*



Hugh Harrop

146. Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*, Grutness, Shetland, June 2003.

Scotland, S

2003 One site: one at the 2001 breeding site between 1st May and 2nd June.

Scotland, Mid

2003 One site: one present 17th May to 6th July. **2004** Two sites: (1) one male on 25th July; (2) presumed same male at a nearby site on 26th July.

2003 One site: 0–1 pair. The last time the Panel reported possible breeding was in 1997, when a pair with a juvenile was seen landing on the sea in late July.

Scotland, N & W

Outer Hebrides 2003 One site: pair displaying on the sea close to a potential breeding loch in July.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

2003 Four sites: four singles in summer. **2004** Four sites: three singles in summer. As there has been no further indication of breeding since the first confirmed case in 2001, it seems that the status of Red-necked Grebe has returned to one of single summer-plumaged adults summering on inland waters.

England, SE

2004 One site: one present 17th May to 6th July.

England, E

2003 Two sites: (1) one present 26th May to 27th October; (2) one present 13th April to 31st July. Neither of these sites was where Red-necked Grebes have regularly summered before, but there were no records from this county in 2004.

England, C

2004 One site: one remained from 2003 until 14th May.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

2003 16 sites: 43 pairs raised 37 young. **2004** 14 sites: 51 pairs raised 24 young. The number of Slavonian Grebes in 2004 was the highest since 1997, but the productivity was poor at 0.47 young per territorial pair. In comparison, the equivalent figure for 2003 was 0.84, the fourth highest on record. The long-term average is 0.58 young per territorial pair. Loch Ruthven remains the main site, with around half of the total breeding population, as in 2002. The proportion of the year's total young produced at Loch Ruthven was 57% in 2003 but only 17% in 2004. There continues to be a reduction in the total number of sites and the transitory nature of many sites is demonstrated by the fact that only nine lochs held pairs in both 2003 and 2004. Each year all sites with a history of occupation in the last 20 years are monitored, so it is believed that the totals reported here are complete.

Scotland, Mid and N & W

2003 16 sites: (1) Loch Ruthven: 20 pairs reared 16 young, nine singles also present; (2)–(16) 23 pairs reared 21 young. One further site held just one bird. **2004** 14 sites: (1) Loch Ruthven: 27 pairs reared four young, five singles also present; (2)–(14) 24 pairs reared 20 young. A further four sites held just single birds.

Slavonian Grebe	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
No. sites	27	24	22	22	21	15	18	16	16	14
Confirmed pairs	58	50	53	42	35	31	40	46	44	51
Young reared	47	17	15	16	12	33	41	36	37	24
Young/territorial pair	0.81	0.34	0.28	0.38	0.34	1.06	1.03	0.78	0.84	0.47

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

2003 22 sites: 44–59 pairs bred. **2004** 25 sites: 43–67 pairs bred. Northern England remains the stronghold for Black-necked Grebes in the UK, holding almost 70% of the confirmed nests in 2004. In Scotland, however, former nesting sites are being deserted or hold fewer birds: only one young was fledged there in 2004. A full analysis of breeding by Black-necked Grebes in Britain is published elsewhere in this issue (Martin & Smith 2007). As a consequence of this analysis, the number of sites and pairs in the table in this report have been updated to include only sites judged to hold confirmed, probable or possible breeding pairs.

England, SW

Avon **2003** Single bird in March. **Avon** **2004** Single bird in April. **Gloucestershire** **2004** Two sites: (1) one pair fledged one young; (2) pair mated and built a nest in June but then moved on. **Hampshire** **2003** One site: one pair present in June and July. **Hampshire** **2004** One site: one pair bred but the single young did not survive.

England, SE

Essex **2003** Two sites: (1) pair present March to July, but did not breed; (2) pair reported on two dates in June and July also did not breed. **Essex** **2004** One site: one pair present until April but not subsequently. No birds at the other 2003 site. **Hertfordshire** **2003** One site: five pairs fledged ten young. Singles also reported briefly at two other sites. **Hertfordshire** **2004** Two sites: (1) eight pairs fledged 12 young; (2) a pair displaying in March did not stay. **Kent** **2003** One site: one pair fledged two young.

England, E

Lincolnshire **2003** One site: one pair fledged three young, plus one other adult. **Lincolnshire** **2004** Three sites: (1) one pair bred; (2)–(3) two single pairs did not linger.

England, C

Leicestershire & Rutland **2003** Five adults on one date in April at a former breeding site. **Leicestershire & Rutland** **2004** A pair at one site, singles at two other sites, all present for one day only. **Nottinghamshire** **2003** One site: three pairs present, two pairs bred and fledged three young; one adult also present in breeding season at another site. **Nottinghamshire** **2004** Two sites: (1) four pairs present, three pairs bred and two of these fledged three young; (2) one pair, breeding suspected but not proven. **Staffordshire** **2004** One site: one pair fledged two young despite disturbance at this unprotected site.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral **2003** Two sites: (1) 11 pairs fledged five young; (2) two pairs fledged three young. **Cheshire & Wirral** **2004** Two sites: (1) ten pairs fledged 14 young and one other pair possibly bred. At least four pairs laid second clutches but no young were raised; (2) one pair fledged one young. **Cleveland** **2004** One site: one pair attempted to breed but did not lay following harassment by Common Coots *Fulica atra*. **Greater Manchester** **2003** One site: five pairs fledged ten young. **Greater Manchester** **2004** One site: four pairs bred, each raising second

broods, with a total of 16 young fledging. Ten hatched and eight fledged from the first broods. The second broods fledged eight young from eight hatched, a remarkable success rate for this species. **Northumberland 2003** Four sites: (1) five pairs fledged six young; (2) one pair laid eggs but displaced by Coots; four other pairs present but did not breed; (3) one pair attempted to breed but displaced by Coots; (4) display by two pairs noted in late April with third pair present, but none later in season. **Northumberland 2004** One site: 5–6 pairs bred raising 11–12 young. **Yorkshire 2003** Three sites: (1) two pairs fledged three young; (2) one pair fledged two young; (3) one pair fledged two young. **Yorkshire 2004** Four sites: (1) four pairs bred and six pairs probably bred, producing at least 11 young; (2) two pairs bred but one clutch was predated and the other pair deserted; (3) one pair raised two young and one pair possibly bred; (4) one pair present in June and July was seen to collect nest material.

Scotland, S

Borders 2003 Two sites: (1) four pairs and four single birds present, one pair fledged three young; (2) one pair fledged three young. **Borders 2004** One site: one pair raised one young, two other pairs present but did not breed. This site has become more unsuitable because of the loss of emergent vegetation. In addition, one single on one date at another former breeding site.

Scotland, Mid

Angus & Dundee 2003 One site: one pair bred. **Angus & Dundee 2004** One bird on one date in April only. **Fife 2003** One site: three pairs nested but failed due to flooding. **Fife 2004** One site: one pair present but did not breed. **North-east Scotland 2004** One site: one pair probably bred. **Perth & Kinross 2003** One site: one pair fledged one young and incubated a second clutch, success unknown. **Perth & Kinross 2004** One site: pair displaying and carrying nest material in May, but did not stay.

Black-necked Grebe	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
No. sites	16	16	12	16	20	20	20	20	22	25
Confirmed pairs	32	25	18	50	39	47	41	48	44	43
Max. total pairs	49	38	22	58	51	57	63	57	59	67

Leach's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

No meaningful data received. The UK population was given as 48,047 pairs in Baker *et al.* (2006).

Scotland, N & W

Shetland 2004 The only information received was from the Ramna Stacks and Gruney RSPB reserve, where 30 burrows were checked for occupancy. Ten were found to be occupied.

Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

2003 34 sites: 43–52 booming males, with 34 confirmed nests. **2004** 37 sites: 55–69 booming males, with 31 confirmed nests.

England, SW

2003 One site: one booming male. **2004** One site: one booming male.

England, SE

Kent 2003 Three sites: 1–2 booming males. **Kent 2004** Four sites: 3–5 booming males. Elsewhere **2003** Two sites: 1–2 booming males in two counties.

England, E

Cambridgeshire 2003 Three sites: three booming males. **Cambridgeshire 2004** Three sites: 2–3 booming males. **Lincolnshire 2003** Four sites: 4–5 booming males and five confirmed nests. **Lincolnshire 2004** Six sites: 6–8 booming males and four confirmed nests. **Norfolk 2003** *North Norfolk coast* One site: one booming male. **Norfolk Broads** Ten sites: 12–15 booming males and seven confirmed nests. **Norfolk 2004** *North Norfolk coast* Three sites: 2–3 booming males and two confirmed nests. **Norfolk Broads** Nine sites: 17–23 booming males and seven confirmed nests. **Suffolk 2003** Six sites: 18–19 booming males and 20 confirmed nests. **Suffolk 2004** Six sites: 19–21 booming males and 15 confirmed nests.

England, N

Lancashire & North Merseyside 2003 One site: one booming male and two confirmed nests. **Lancashire & North Merseyside 2004** One site: one booming male and two confirmed nests. **Yorkshire 2003** Three sites: 1–3 booming males. **Yorkshire 2004** Three sites: three booming males and one confirmed nest.

Wales

2004 One site: one booming male.

Simon Wotton, RSPB, has commented as follows: ‘The number of confirmed Bitterns increased sharply



Alan Harris

Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

between 2002 and 2004, from 31 to 55 booming males. Much of this increase was from the Norfolk Broads and Humber populations. In 2004, more than one “boomer” was heard on the North Norfolk coast for the first time in six years, and booming was heard at three new sites in the Humber area. The 2004 figure actually exceeded the UK Biodiversity Action Plan target of 50 booming males by 2010.

‘There was a big jump in the number of nests in 2003, from 26 in 2002 to 34, although there was a slight drop in 2004. The Suffolk coast is the stronghold for nesting Bitterns in the UK, and Minsmere is the prime site, with 11 nests in 2003 and nine in 2004. It is interesting to note that the increase in the number of booming males at the Humber sites has been matched by an increase in the number of nests, with five nests recorded in that area in both years.

‘Of the 55 booming males present in 2004, 35% were on sites that are immediately threatened by sea-level rise, and this proportion was even higher for the breeding females, with over 50% in danger. As new reedbed sites are created away from the coast, it is hoped that ultimately birds will colonise these sites and secure a more stable future for the Bittern in the UK.

‘The research and monitoring of Bitterns in the UK is led by RSPB and Natural England, but also involves many other organisations, landowners and volunteers. The second EU-Life programme (2002–2006) provided major funding for habitat creation and restoration at 20 sites.’

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

2003 One site: 0–1 pairs. 2004 One site: 0–1 pairs. These are the first records of this species in the Panel’s reports since 1997, when a male was reported singing in June in eastern England. A number of Little Bitterns occur as overshooting migrants in most springs in southern England. The Panel aims to publish records of singing males or individuals in suitable nesting habitat. The only confirmed breeding record of Little Bitterns in the UK was in 1984, when a pair raised two young in South Yorkshire.

England, SE

Kent 2003 One site: one male singing 11th–18th May.

England, E

Lincolnshire 2004 One site: one male in suitable habitat in June.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

2003 28 sites: 176–186 pairs. 2004 36 sites: 354–357 pairs. Numbers in 2003 appear to be only a little higher than those in 2002, but a count for one large colony in Essex (32 pairs in 2002) was not available so the real total may have been around 220 pairs. However, a substantial increase in 2004 is apparent, with a record total of sites and pairs. New colonies were again reported in the core range in

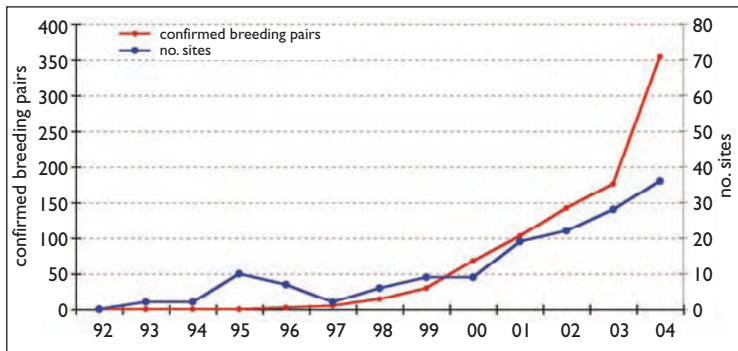


Fig. 2. The rapid growth in the number of nesting pairs of Little Egrets *Egretta garzetta* in the UK continues, and although most growth in the numbers of pairs is within established colonies along the east and southeast coasts of England, with modest increase or stability elsewhere, there were still ten new sites occupied in 2004.

south and east England. Buckinghamshire, Ceredigion and Gloucestershire all reported their first breeding records. Numbers in Wales and North England seem to be stalling, however, and the species remains a scarce visitor to Scotland. In Northern Ireland the number of records continues to increase and Little Egret now breeds in the Republic of

Ireland. The largest colonies in 2004 included here were at Foulness, Essex, with 51 pairs and at Northward Hill, Kent, with 45 pairs.

England, SW

Avon 2003 One site: one pair copulating in April. **Avon 2004** No breeding but up to 15 adults summered. **Devon 2003** One site: nine pairs bred. **Devon 2004** Two sites: 22 pairs bred. **Dorset 2003** Two sites: 48 pairs bred. **Dorset 2004** Four sites: 50 pairs bred. **Gloucestershire 2003** One site: one pair bred. **Gloucestershire 2004** One (different) site: two pairs bred. **Hampshire 2003** Two sites: 21–25 pairs bred. **Hampshire 2004** Three sites: 33 pairs bred. **Somerset 2003** Two sites: four pairs bred and two pairs probably bred. **Somerset 2004** Four sites: eight pairs bred, three pairs possibly bred. **Wiltshire 2003** One site: two pairs bred. **Wiltshire 2004** One site: three pairs bred.

England, SE

Buckinghamshire 2003 One site: one pair bred. **Buckinghamshire 2004** One site: one pair bred. **Essex 2003** Two sites (1) not counted but similar to 2002 when 32 pairs; (2) two pairs bred. **Essex 2004** Three sites: 62 pairs bred. **Hertfordshire 2003** Recorded from four sites during spring but no breeding. **Hertfordshire 2004** Recorded from three sites during spring, including from a heronry, but again not thought to have bred. **Kent 2003** Two sites: 40 pairs bred. **Kent 2004** Two sites: 55 pairs bred. **Sussex 2003** Three sites: four pairs bred. **Sussex 2004** Five sites: 17 pairs bred.

England, E

Cambridgeshire 2003 No breeding reports. **Cambridgeshire 2004** One site: at least 12 pairs bred. **Lincolnshire 2003 & 2004** Birds summering but no evidence of breeding. **Norfolk 2003** Two sites: 21 pairs bred. **Norfolk 2004** Three sites: 55 pairs bred. **Suffolk 2003** Two sites: 14 pairs bred. **Suffolk 2004** Three sites: 26 pairs bred. In both years recorded at another site but nesting not attempted.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral 2003 Present at one site but did not breed. **Cheshire & Wirral 2004** One site: a wild bird paired with an escape from Chester Zoo bred, but it is not known if young were reared. **Cumbria 2003** Two sites: two pairs displaying but did not breed. **Cumbria 2004** No breeding reports. **Lancashire & North Merseyside 2003** Reports of up to six escaped birds, no breeding. **Lancashire & North Merseyside 2004** No breeding reports.

Wales

Anglesey 2003 One site: three pairs bred. **Anglesey 2004** Present but did not breed at site used in 2002–03. **Ceredigion 2003** No breeding reports. **Ceredigion 2004** One site: two pairs bred. **Gwent 2003** One site: five pairs bred. **Gwent 2004** One site: five pairs bred. **Pembroke 2003** One site: one pair bred.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

After successful breeding in 1999 and nest-building in Suffolk in 2002, nest-building was again seen in 2004, at a new site in northern England.

England, SE

Kent 2003 An adult was present in a heronry throughout April, but no nest was built. During April to August, 1–2 birds were also present at three other sites but with no indication of breeding.

England, E

Suffolk 2003 One site: up to 11 birds at the colony where nest-building occurred in 2002 but none was present in

May or June. **2004** One site: two adults and two first-year birds visited the site but no breeding was attempted.
 England, N

2004 One site: three summering birds were seen displaying and nest-building.

Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

2003 16–41 pairs; a minimum of 30 young fledged. **2004** 19–41 pairs; a minimum of 28 young fledged. It is believed that data were received by the Panel from most areas of Britain where Honey-buzzards are known to breed, for both 2003 and 2004, although these totals may still underestimate the population, especially in remote areas. The maximum total number of pairs and the number of pairs for which breeding was confirmed are a little higher than the figures reported during the 1990s, but lower than the apparent peaks of 2000 and 2001 when a special effort was made to find and record all Honey-buzzards in Britain (*Brit. Birds* 94: 143–144). A decline in the wasp (Hymenoptera) population in SW England was noted in 2003, and two apparent nest robberies occurred in 2004; these factors will not assist any expansion of the population. In 2003, 14 pairs fledged two young and two pairs fledged one young. In 2004, one pair fledged three young, 11 pairs fledged two young and three pairs fledged one young; two pairs failed at the egg stage and the number fledged at the remaining nests was unknown.

England

2003 30 territories occupied; 11 pairs bred, raising 20 young. **2004** 30 territories occupied; 14 pairs bred, raising 25 young.

Wales

2003 Six territories occupied; four pairs bred, raising eight young. **2004** Seven territories occupied; four pairs bred, raising just one young.

Scotland

2003 Five territories occupied; one pair bred, raising two young. **2004** Four territories occupied; one pair bred, raising two young.

Honey-buzzard	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Confirmed pairs	9	14	14	17	13	33	27	20	16	19
Max. total pairs	30	34	39	37	43	69	54	34	34	41

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

2003 A minimum of 533 pairs; fledging at least 689 young. **2004** A minimum of 646 pairs; fledging at least 892 young. In the years under review, kites bred in Wales and in the six areas of England and Scotland where release programmes had been completed or were still underway. These areas are (in England) Chilterns, Northamptonshire and Yorkshire and (in Scotland) Highland, Upper Forth and Dumfries & Galloway. Some breeding was also reported away from these release areas, and this is summarised here alongside the information on the monitored Welsh population and from the release areas. During the period under review, releases continued only in Dumfries & Galloway in both 2003 and 2004. A new release area ('Northern Kites') started close to Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, in June 2004 (see www.northernkites.org.uk). For further information on all Red Kite monitoring schemes, see www.gjgrin.co.uk.

England, S

Chilterns The core area for this population is the Oxfordshire/Buckinghamshire border. The Panel also received data from some other counties which probably relate to birds derived from this population. These birds are listed separately below, to document the spread away from the core area, but these pairs are included in the totals for southern England in the table below. Note that, for convenience, Somerset is treated here as southern England. **2003** A total of 177 breeding pairs were located and at least 163 pairs were successful with about 312 young fledging. **2004** 213 pairs were located of which 205 were successful, rearing approximately 383 young. **Berkshire & Essex 2003 & 2004** Red Kites were present during the breeding season, but no nesting was reported. **Devon 2004** One pair attempted to breed but failed. **Gloucestershire 2003** One pair present but did not breed. **Gloucestershire 2004** A single bird on one date only. **Hampshire 2003** One pair bred, fledging two young. **Hampshire 2004** One pair bred, fledging two young. Recent breeding was also reported from this county in 1995 and 1996. **Somerset 2003** One pair displaying but did not breed. **Somerset 2004** One pair laid eggs but failed at that stage. **Sussex 2003** Two sites: two pairs displaying but did not breed. **Sussex 2004** One pair bred, fledging two young. This is the first

breeding record in Sussex since the early nineteenth century. **Wiltshire 2003** Two sites: (1) one pair bred fledging three young; (2) one pair failed. **Wiltshire 2004** Two pairs bred fledging five young.

England, E

Cambridgeshire 2004 Two sites: (1) one pair bred fledging two young; (2) used nest found in 2005. **Lincolnshire 2003** Two pairs resident in suitable nesting habitat but no breeding attempts. **Lincolnshire 2004** 1–2 birds present and breeding suspected. **Northamptonshire 2003** 24 breeding pairs were located, an increase of only one on 2002. 21 pairs were successful and 45 young fledged. **Northamptonshire 2004** 27 nests were successful, with 61 young raised. There was no expansion in breeding range although much suitable woodland in the core area remains unoccupied.

England, C

Derbyshire 2004 One bird in suitable habitat in March and April. **Herefordshire 2004** One pair fledged one young. **Shropshire 2003** Red Kites were present during the breeding season, but no nesting was reported. **Shropshire 2004** Two sites with frequent records of one bird at each.

England, N

Yorkshire 2003 16 breeding pairs raised 32 young. **Yorkshire 2004** 27 territorial pairs were located, of which 24 made breeding attempts and 44 young fledged. Encouragingly, a number of pairs nested away from the release area.

Wales

Total coverage of the Welsh kites is no longer possible. The estimated total numbers of pairs and young fledged in Wales in 2003 are 350–400 and 273–312 respectively, and the equivalent figures for 2004 are 400–450 and 361–400. **2003** 299 territories were occupied and 259 monitored. There were at least 147 successful nests, with a minimum of 194 young fledged. Productivity was lower than usual at 0.75 young per territorial pair at monitored sites. Most failures occurred at the time of hatching, which coincided with a period of heavy rain. **2004** 369 territories were occupied and 320 monitored. There were at least 200 successful nests, with a minimum of 286 young fledged.

Scotland, S

Dumfries & Galloway 2003 Four pairs laid eggs and one chick fledged, the first for the release programme in this area and the first breeding in Dumfries & Galloway for over 120 years. **Dumfries & Galloway 2004** Seven territories were occupied and three nests with eggs were found. Two were successful, rearing three chicks.

Scotland, Mid

Perth & Kinross/Upper Forth 2003 19 territorial pairs were located, 18 pairs laid eggs and 14 pairs fledged 34 young. **Perth & Kinross/Upper Forth 2004** 23 pairs were located and 22 went on to lay eggs. Of these, 17 pairs raised 32 young, giving 1.45 young per laying pair, the lowest since 2000, perhaps due to persistent rain when broods had recently hatched.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 2003 The North Scotland reintroduction project started at the same time as that in the Chilterns, but by contrast the population in Highland remains stable at 35 pairs. A total of 33 pairs fledged 71 young, lower than in 2002. It is believed that numbers here are being suppressed by illegal persecution. **Highland 2004** For the third year in a row the breeding population remained at 35 pairs despite excellent productivity during this period, again pointing to persecution of dispersing young kites. Adults tend to be resident on their territories and have high survival rates. In total, 42 territories were occupied, 35 pairs bred and 30 pairs were successful, rearing 80 young. Mean brood size was a healthy 2.29 young per laying pair.

Northern Ireland

2003 Only one bird was present at a site where breeding was attempted in 2002.

Red Kite	2003			2004		
	Breeding pairs monitored	Young fledged	Young per monitored pair	Breeding pairs monitored	Young fledged	Young per monitored pair
England, S	177	312	1.76	213	383	1.80
England, E	24	45	1.88	28	63	2.25
England, C	0	0	–	1	1	1.00
England, N	16	32	2.00	24	44	1.83
Wales (min)	259	194	0.75	320	286	0.89
Scotland, S	4	1	0.25	3	3	1.00
Scotland, Mid	18	34	1.89	22	32	1.45
Scotland, N	35	71	2.03	35	80	2.29
TOTAL	533	689	1.29	646	892	1.38

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

2003 31 territorial pairs of which 25 bred, rearing 26 young. 2004 32 territorial pairs of which 28 bred, rearing 19 young. The reintroduced population of White-tailed Eagles in Scotland increased a little in the two years under review, to a new high of 32 territorial pairs in 2004, of which 28 laid eggs. Productivity was higher in 2003, when 26 young fledged from 16 successful nests, making it the most successful year since the start of the reintroduction project in 1975.

White-tailed Eagle	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Territorial pairs	11	12	14	19	20	22	23	25	31	32
Clutches laid	10	12	11	16	16	19	17	22	25	28
Successful pairs	5	7	5	9	6	8	7	8	16	15
Young reared	7	9	9	13	11	12	11	12	26	19
Young/breeding pair	0.70	0.75	0.64	0.81	0.69	0.63	0.65	0.55	1.04	0.68
Young/territorial pair	0.64	0.75	0.64	0.68	0.55	0.55	0.48	0.48	0.84	0.59

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

2003 205–233 pairs. 2004 249–284 pairs. As Marsh Harriers have become more numerous in the core counties of eastern England, the data received have become less detailed and in many areas it is no longer possible to give separate totals of breeding females and males, or of young produced. With totals of 147 pairs proved breeding in 2003 and 190 in 2004 (72% and 76% of the UK totals respectively), eastern England remains the stronghold for Marsh Harriers. This species was the subject of a full survey in 2005, which will be detailed in the Panel's next report.

England, SW

Somerset 2003 One site: one adult female and at least 14 immatures summered. **Somerset 2004** One site: one pair bred fledging at least one young.

England, SE

Essex 2003 Seven sites: (1)–(3) nine pairs bred, fledging 14 young; (4)–(7) four pairs probably bred. **Essex 2004** Five sites: (1)–(3) six pairs bred, fledging 12–13 young; (4)–(5) three pairs probably bred. **Kent 2003** Eight sites (one extensive): 36 pairs bred. **Kent 2004** Eight sites (one extensive): 38 pairs bred and six pairs probably bred. **Sussex 2004** One site: one pair fledged two young.

England, E

Cambridgeshire 2003 Seven sites: eight pairs bred, fledging 15 young; three pairs probably bred; three pairs possibly bred. **Cambridgeshire 2004** Eight sites: eight pairs bred, fledging at least 13 young; one pair probably bred; one pair possibly bred. **Lincolnshire 2003** Eight sites (one extensive): 37 pairs bred and two pairs possibly bred. Ten successful nests monitored produced 38 young. **Lincolnshire 2004** 23 sites (one extensive): 57 pairs bred; nine pairs probably bred and eight pairs possibly bred. Seven successful nests monitored produced 25 young. **Norfolk 2003** A minimum of 59 pairs bred and seven pairs probably bred. **Norfolk 2004** 81 pairs bred and a total of 139 young fledged. **Suffolk 2003** 13 sites: 43 pairs bred fledging at least 120 young; three pairs probably bred. **Suffolk 2004** 11 sites: 44 pairs bred fledging at least 107 young; three pairs probably bred and one pair possibly bred.

England, N

Lancashire 2003 One site: three females and one male; three nests from which two broods fledged, with a total of nine young. **Lancashire 2004** Three sites: (1) three females and one male; three nests from which two broods fledged, with a total of eight young; (2) one pair fledged four young; (3) two females summered. **Yorkshire 2003** Seven sites: four pairs bred and fledged seven young; four pairs probably bred and one pair possibly bred. **Yorkshire 2004** One site: four pairs bred fledging six young.

Wales

2003 One site: pair present but no territorial behaviour. **2004** One county: a male ranged across several sites but never in the presence of a female.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland 2004 Two sites: two pairs on territory but did not lay eggs. **Tayside 2003** Two sites: five pairs fledged 15 young. **Tayside 2004** Two sites: four pairs fledged 13 young.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 2004 One site: one pair on territory but did not lay eggs. **Orkney 2003** One site: one pair fledged three young. **Orkney 2004** One site: one pair fledged two young.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

2003 403–411 territorial pairs reared at least 618 young. 2004 589 territorial pairs reared at least 722 young. In both years, the selection of records received was, as usual, based on a non-random sample, and the summary of those results is presented in the table below. These cover records of pairs monitored by Raptor Study Groups, where nests are followed through to fledging stage. A pair nested in southern England in 2003, but although a male was present in spring 2004, with a female later, no nesting occurred. In addition, summering birds were reported in eastern England.

Hen Harrier Raptor Study Group Areas	2003			2004		
	Occupied territories	Territories that fledged young	Min. no. young fledged	Occupied territories	Territories that fledged young	Min. no. young fledged
England, N	18–23	8+	16+	11	9+	28+
England, S	1	1	3	0	0	0
Isle of Man	9	–	–	57	–	–
Wales	26	–	70	43	37	64+
Dumfries & Galloway	18	9	26	18	6	15
Lothian & Borders	2	1	5	5	4	14
South Strathclyde	38	14	45	48	19	69
Central Scotland	9	6	16	10	5	12
Tayside	30	16	50	29	19	67
North-east Scotland	18	7	26	14	4	14
Argyll & Bute and Arran	92	59	175	130	73	190
Highland (incl. west Moray)	45	26	94	53	35	121
Orkney	51	20	56	74	33	68
Outer Hebrides	32	13	36	34	21	60
Northern Ireland	14–17	–	–	63	–	–
TOTAL	403–411	180+	618+	589	265+	722+

[In the table above, '–' indicates that no comparable figures were available, and '+' indicates that some data were unavailable so the totals represent minimum figures.]

The third national survey of Hen Harriers in the UK took place in 2004 (Sim *et al.* in press). This found an estimated 806 territorial pairs in the UK and Isle of Man in 2004, a significant 41% increase from the 1998 estimate of 570 pairs. These figures are higher than the numbers of pairs typically reported to the Panel (compare 2003 and 2004 totals in the table). Increases were found throughout,



Stephen Murphy



Stephen Murphy

147 & 148. Young Hen Harriers *Circus cyaneus*, Bowland Fells SSSI, Lancashire, June 2005. Wing-tagging and radio-marking are essential to the study of such a mobile species as Hen Harrier. Since 2002, 84 harriers have been fitted with 'backpack'-mounted radio-transmitters by staff from the Hen Harrier Recovery Project (Natural England, formerly English Nature). The aim of the radio-tracking work is to monitor and record post-natal dispersal. Data from these studies will be used to help to inform land managers along known dispersal routes and in important wintering areas of sympathetic management prescriptions. Sightings of wing-tagged birds can be sent to davidswotter@freenet.co.uk and/or stephen.murphy@naturalengland.org.uk.

with the exception of south and east Scotland and England, where numbers decreased. Continuing illegal persecution arising from perceived conflicts between breeding Hen Harriers and driven grouse shooting may be a major cause of these regional declines.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

2003 9–12 pairs fledged at least 19 young. **2004** 10–12 pairs fledged at least 19 young. Montagu's Harriers occurred at a total of nine sites in both 2003 and 2004, a marginal improvement on the eight sites in 2002 but still lower than in any other year since 1993. Productivity though was above average, with 19 young fledging in both years (the ten-year mean for 1995–2004 was 14.8 young).

England, SW

2003 Four sites: 1–4 pairs. (1) Pair fledged four young at a traditional site; (2) pair present but did not breed; (3)–(4) male present at both sites, much 'sky-dancing' but failed to attract mate. It is possible that the same male was involved at both sites. **2004** Five sites: 4–5 pairs bred. (1) Pair fledged four young at a traditional site; (2) pair fledged four young; (3)–(4) two pairs bred but number of young fledged unknown; (5) at least one other pair present but no other details.

England, SE

2003 Two sites: two pairs bred. (1) Pair fledged three young; (2) pair bred but number of young fledged unknown. **2004** One site: one pair possibly bred, present in suitable habitat in June, close to the site used in 2002, but no further evidence.

England, E

2003 Three sites: six pairs bred. (1) Four pairs bred, one failing at the egg stage while the other three fledged a total of six young; (2) one pair fledged four young; (3) one pair fledged two young. **2004** Three sites: six pairs bred. (1) Three pairs bred, with a total of six young fledged; (2) two pairs bred, one failing at the egg stage while the other fledged two young; (3) one pair fledged at least three young.

Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

2003 203–354 pairs. **2004** 213–359 pairs. The quality of data received for this species varies greatly, making it sometimes impossible to avoid double-counting records. We would urge all county recorders and local raptor study groups to assess county populations and provide, as a minimum, numbers of pairs proved breeding and numbers of other pairs probably or possibly breeding. Data are known to be incomplete for Wales.

England

2003 Reports from 22 counties: 114 pairs confirmed breeding plus 78 other pairs. **2004** Reports from 20 counties: 103 pairs confirmed breeding plus 55 other pairs.

Wales

2003 Reports from nine counties: at least 27 pairs confirmed breeding plus at least 47 other pairs. **2004** Reports from ten counties: at least 43 pairs confirmed breeding plus at least 70 other pairs.

Scotland

2003 Reports from five Scottish Raptor Study Group areas: 62 pairs confirmed breeding plus 22 other pairs. **2004** Reports from six Scottish Raptor Study Group areas: 67 pairs confirmed breeding plus 19 other pairs.

Northern Ireland

2003 Four pairs reported but breeding not confirmed. **2004** Two pairs reported but breeding not confirmed.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

The third national survey of Golden Eagles was carried out in 2003. Almost 700 known home ranges were checked and 442 of these were occupied by a pair of eagles, compared with 439 in the previous survey in 1992 (using comparable criteria). An additional 71 ranges were occupied by one or more individuals but these lacked either a pair or evidence of a nest being built up. The apparent stability in numbers masks an increase in the Outer Hebrides, with very high densities on Lewis and Harris,

Golden Eagle	Home ranges checked	Home ranges occupied by a pair	Pairs laying eggs	Pairs hatching eggs	Min. young fledged	Mean no. fledged per monitored nest
2003	698	442	262	171	160	0.61
2004	232	194	109	87	97	0.89

whereas decreases were recorded in the eastern and south-central Highlands. Furthermore, there remain many apparently suitable areas unoccupied by eagles, particularly in the south and east of the current range, and there is little evidence of expansion into these localities. The full results are presented in Eaton *et al.* (in press). The pair in northern England built up the nest in 2003 but did not lay; in 2004 the female died and the male remained on site, unpaired.

The table gives the breeding performance of all monitored pairs both in the 2003 survey and in 2004, when a sample of home ranges were monitored as usual by members of the Scottish Raptor Study Groups.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

2003 144–169 pairs. **2004** 160–189 pairs. In the main breeding range in Scotland, there were 184 pairs present at nests in 2004. A total of 156 of these laid eggs and 115 fledged 235 young, again setting a new record. The first nesting occurred in Dumfries & Galloway, with one pair there in both years. In Wales, after the first recorded nesting attempt in 2003, two pairs hatched young in 2004. At least one of the Welsh birds originated from the Rutland release scheme. In Rutland itself, two pairs bred for the first time in 2003. There is an increasing incidence of summering birds away from the main breeding areas in Scotland north of the Clyde–Forth valley and where data are available these are listed here as they may indicate future breeding locations.

England, C

Leicestershire & Rutland 2003 One site (Rutland Water), three pairs: one pair fledged three young, one pair fledged two young, one pair built a nest but did not lay. **Leicestershire & Rutland 2004** One site (Rutland Water), two pairs: one pair bred, fledging two young; one pair present but no breeding attempt; and one single on territory. **Northamptonshire 2003** One site: single bird present displaying over nest platform. **Northamptonshire 2004** One site: 1–2 birds present displaying over nest platform. **Shropshire 2003** One site: single bird present between late March and late June. **Shropshire 2004** One site: single bird present between April and July.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral 2003 One bird ranged over several sites in June and July. **Cumbria 2003** One site (Bassenthwaite Lake): pair bred, fledging one young. **Cumbria 2004** One site (Bassenthwaite Lake): pair bred, fledging one young.

Wales

2003 Two sites: (1) pair built nest but did not lay; (2) single bird seen displaying on two dates. **2004** Three sites: (1) pair bred and fledged one young; (2) pair bred, but failed when the two chicks were blown out of the nest in June; (3) single bird summered.

Scotland, S

Borders 2003 Three pairs bred, two of which fledged six young. **Borders 2004** Three pairs bred, fledging seven young. **Clyde 2003** Two sites: (1) pair bred, fledging three young; (2) pair held territory. **Clyde 2004** Two sites: (1) pair bred, fledging two young; (2) pair built nest but did not lay. **Dumfries & Galloway 2003** One pair fledged one young. **Dumfries & Galloway 2004** One pair fledged two young. **Lothian 2003** One site: 1–2 birds from late May into July but no further evidence of breeding.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland 2003 18 pairs present, 17 bred and 15 fledged 31 young. **North-east Scotland 2004** 18 pairs bred, 13 of which fledged 26 young. **Tayside 2003** 45 pairs present, 38 bred and 29 fledged 60 young. **Tayside 2004** 57 pairs present, 40 bred and 27 fledged 56 young. **Upper Forth 2003** 12 pairs bred, nine of which fledged 23 young. **Upper Forth 2004** 14 pairs present, 12 bred and ten fledged 20 young.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll 2003 Seven pairs bred, six of which fledged nine young. **Argyll 2004** Eight pairs present, seven bred and six fledged 12 young. **Highland 2003** 76 pairs present, 62 bred and 47 fledged 99 young. **Highland 2004** 81 pairs present, 74 bred and 54 fledged 110 young.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

2003 286–452 pairs. **2004** 233–444 pairs. The table summarises the data received by the Panel, based largely on fieldwork by Raptor Study Groups. Data for Scotland are presented by Scottish Raptor Study Group area rather than by county. Productivity was higher in 2003, many nest failures in 2004 being attributed to the heavy rainfall which occurred on a few days in June. Since Merlin was added to the list of species considered by the Panel in 1996, the mean number of young fledged per occupied territory has been 1.86. The most recent UK population estimate is 1,330 pairs (Baker *et al.* 2006).

Merlin	2003				2004			
	Territories occupied by pairs	Territories known to have fledged young	Min. no. young fledged	Min. young/occupied territory	Territories occupied by pairs	Territories known to have fledged young	Min. no. young fledged	Min. young/occupied territory
England, SW	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
England, C	15	13	51	3.40	20	15	57	2.85
England, N	147	109	355	2.41	126	82	286	2.27
Wales	40	18	46	1.15	28	17	43	1.54
Scotland								
Dumfries & Galloway	9	2	8	0.89	9	8	13	1.44
Lothian & Borders	35	26	92	2.63	29	14	54	1.86
South Strathclyde	11	7	21	1.91	15	7	15	1.00
Central Scotland	0	0	0	–	1	0	0	0
North-east Scotland	52	39	142	2.73	48	28	80	1.67
Tayside	46	25	86	1.87	45	25	73	1.62
Argyll	5	2	2	0.40	11	1	1	0.09
Highland	54	24	81	1.50	67	19	53	0.79
Orkney	16	10	29	1.81	22	9	21	0.95
Shetland	5	2	7	1.40	7	4	9	1.29
Uists	9	4	8	0.89	–	–	–	–
Northern Ireland	7	5	11	1.57	14	4	9	0.64
TOTAL/MEAN	452	286	939	2.08	444	233	714	1.61

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

2003 212–864 pairs. 2004 220–916 pairs. The total numbers of pairs reported to the Panel in 2003 and 2004 were the highest ever, although still well short of the most recent estimate of 2,200 pairs for the British breeding population (Baker *et al.* 2006). However, the number of confirmed pairs for both years is lower than the ten-year average of 248. Depending on the county, the figures are based on a mix of best estimates of local recorders and the actual number of confirmed pairs. However, Hobby is such a difficult species to pin down that the numbers of confirmed pairs must represent a massive

Hobby (pairs)	2003		2004		2003		2004	
	Total	Confirmed	Total	Confirmed	Total	Confirmed	Total	Confirmed
England, SW	147	55	147	49	Northamptonshire	1	1	0
Avon	10	5	10	4	Suffolk	40	14	9
Devon	20	18	10	10	England, C	103	61	63
Dorset	21	3	22	3	Derbyshire	36	29	21
Gloucestershire	8	5	11	8	Herefordshire	–	–	3
Hampshire	23	11	30	8	Leicestershire	13	6	3
Somerset	23	3	23	3	& Rutland			
Wiltshire	42	10	41	13	Nottinghamshire	9	8	14
England, SE	455	38	481	55	Shropshire	11	1	1
Bedfordshire	2	2	3	1	Staffordshire	3	1	–
Buckinghamshire	16	2	16	2	Warwickshire	28	13	21
Essex	33	14	44	44	Worcestershire	3	3	–
Greater London	1	0	1	0	England, N	21	9	13
Hertfordshire	49	3	50	1	Cheshire & Wirral	9	9	10
Kent	300	1	300	0	Gr. Manchester	1	0	1
Oxfordshire	4	4	5	5	Lancashire &	1	0	0
Surrey	21	3	27	2	N Merseyside			
Sussex	29	9	35	0	Northumberland	–	–	0
England, E	105	35	126	33	Yorkshire	10	0	2
Cambridgeshire	28	7	20	7	Wales	30	13	7
Lincolnshire	14	5	38	7	Scotland	3	1	0
Norfolk	22	8	20	10	TOTAL	864	212	916

underestimate of the real population. It is difficult to determine trends from these figures; certainly there is no indication of an increase in number of pairs in the peripheral parts of the Hobby's range, including Wales and Scotland.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

2003 479–902 pairs. 2004 509–821 pairs. The following summary information was received. For Scotland, parts of Wales and some English counties, this is comprehensive data for a non-random sample of monitored territories. Elsewhere, coverage varies and the productivity figures for all areas outside Scotland are minima. Data for Scotland are presented by Scottish Raptor Study Group area rather than by county. Peregrine Falcons can now be found breeding in most counties, only eastern and parts of inland southeast England still being vacant. Thefts from nests and deliberate disturbance are, however, still being reported from some areas, most notably northern England and Scotland. The national survey in 2002 estimated the UK population at 1,492 pairs (Banks *et al.* 2003). Further information is also available at www.bto.org/survey/complete/peregrine.htm

Peregrine Falcon	2003				2004			
	Territories occupied by pairs	Territories known to have fledged young	Min. no. young fledged	Min. young/occupied territory	Territories occupied by pairs	Territories known to have fledged young	Min. no. young fledged	Min. young/occupied territory
England, SW	75	62	80	1.07	43	36	42	0.98
England, SE	34	22	39	1.15	36	23	50	1.39
England, C	68	44	89	1.31	46	28	70	1.52
England, N	172	78	154	0.90	153	110	242	1.58
Wales	99	64	125	1.26	113	75	152	1.35
Scotland								
Dumfries & Galloway	75	37	74	0.99	67	44	101	1.51
Lothian & Borders	59	30	76	1.29	54	28	68	1.26
South Strathclyde	28	15	34	1.21	26	18	39	1.50
Central Scotland	23	14	21	0.91	29	18	36	1.24
Northeast Scotland	59	25	56	0.95	57	36	81	1.42
Tayside	81	47	90	1.11	76	54	114	1.50
Argyll	24	12	18	0.75	23	13	24	1.04
Highland	30	17	45	1.50	28	19	44	1.57
Orkney	13	4	10	0.77	13	5	9	0.69
Uists	10	8	16	1.60	2	2	5	2.50
Northern Ireland	52	–	–	–	55	–	–	–
TOTAL/MEAN	902	479	927	1.09	821	509	1,077	1.41

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*

2003 Ten sites: 1–14 pairs. 2004 Ten sites: 0–15 pairs. All records of singing males, or any other evidence, are presented here. Some refer to one-day records or birds calling late in the season, but are included for completeness, given the enigmatic nature of this species. The regular site in Orkney was not used in 2003 or 2004, and there were no records from the Outer Hebrides or from the once-regular site of Insh Marshes in Highland. However, Shetland recorded the first confirmed breeding there in 2003.

England, SE

Sussex 2004 One site: one singing male for one date in early May.

England, E

Cambridgeshire 2003 One site: two singing males. For the first time since 1976, there was none at another site in this county. Cambridgeshire 2004 Two sites: (1) four singing males; (2) one singing male, at the site vacated in 2003. Norfolk 2004 One site: one singing male in May. Suffolk 2003 One site: one singing male in July was thought to be a passage bird.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral 2003 One site: one singing male. Cheshire & Wirral 2004 One site: one singing male. Yorkshire 2003 One site: one male heard regularly in May and June, also September; two further singing males on single

dates. **Yorkshire 2004** One site: two males singing in May, one for just one day.

Wales

Pembroke 2003 One site: one male singing from mid May into June. **Pembroke 2004** One site: one male singing for one date in May.

Scotland, S

Clyde 2003 One site: one male heard on one date in July.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll 2003 Two sites: two singing males. **Argyll 2004** Two sites: two singing males. **Highland 2003** One site (not Insh Marshes): one male singing in June. **Shetland 2003** One site: 1–2 pairs. Breeding was confirmed when one male heard singing in June (the third successive year at this location) was followed by sightings of an adult and juvenile between 6th August and 7th September. In addition, a second male was singing between 20th May and 17th July; see Maher *et al.* 2004. **Shetland 2004** One site: one singing male at last year's breeding site on 22nd May was not heard again until 22nd June when two birds were calling, then one was heard until at least mid July.

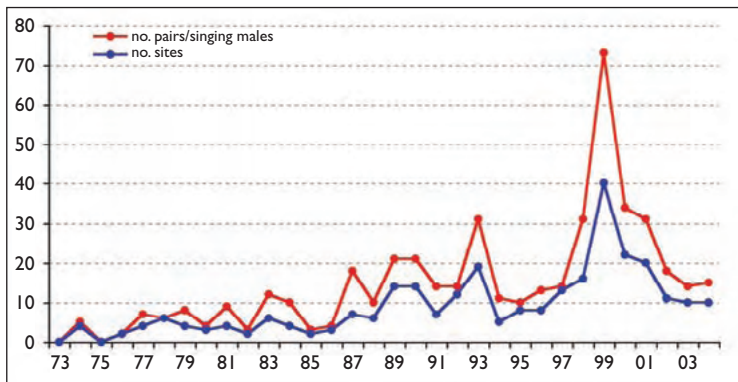


Fig. 3. Number of pairs or singing male Spotted Crakes *Porzana porzana* in the UK, 1973–2004, and the number of sites involved.

Ian Francis and David Stroud have commented as follows: 'According to RBBP records, in the UK around 10–30 pairs of Spotted Crakes probably nest annually in suitable wetlands, though most breeding-season records are simply of singing birds, with very few instances of confirmed breeding. The relationship

between singing and breeding activity is not clear, and indeed very little is known generally about the breeding biology of this skulking bird. However, recording standards are also poor, and many records are not submitted. An intensive search of locally published information and reserve records (Stroud & Francis in prep.) shows that most years more than twice the number of pairs are breeding than the official record suggests, and that totals also reflect observer effort. A more intensive national survey in 1999 (Gilbert 2002) recorded 73 singing males. We believe that in all years except 1999 the known totals are significant underestimates and published atlas maps provide an incomplete picture.

'Since the 1960s, numbers have apparently increased, though from 2002 onwards there seems to have been a sharp decline, with far fewer records across the UK and clear absences, not related to survey effort, at some known strongholds such as Insh Marshes. If there has been a genuine increase in recent decades, this would be contrary to general declines within Europe and similarly the recent sharp drop in numbers in the last two or three years does not appear to have been shared by some other European countries.

'The annual occupancy of sites and singing behaviour of potentially breeding birds are still little understood, and there appears to be considerable annual variation in numbers at well-recorded sites, probably related to weather during spring migration or breeding-site conditions. These factors are poorly known and greater intensity of monitoring is the highest research priority. However, the lack of submission of records by observers is a major factor hampering the protection of sites of importance to Spotted Crakes, and the process of rectifying this is time-consuming. Better information flows are urgently needed, and we urge all observers to submit records of this cryptic species to local recorders, and for these to be reported fully.'

Corn Crake *Crex crex*

2003 832 singing males. **2004** 1,067 singing males. The Panel received nest histories for ten broods on Coll in 2003, totalling 30 young (brood sizes ranged from one to nine), and for two broods on Islay in 2003, of five young each. Much of the data here are from the annual Corn Crake surveys co-ordinated by the RSPB, which cover the core areas of the British range (Inner and Outer Hebrides and Orkney).

O'Brien *et al.* (2006) gave a full account of the partial recovery of Corn Crakes in Britain during 1993–2004. The confirmed breeding record in Cambridgeshire represents the first successful breeding as a result of the reintroduction scheme being carried out by RSPB, Natural England and the Zoological Society of London.

England, SW

Avon 2003 One site: one singing male for one date in late May.

England, E

Cambridgeshire 2004 Two sites: one brood of three young and one singing male.

England, N

Greater Manchester 2003 One site: one singing male. **Isle of Man 2003** Three sites: six singing males.

Scotland, Mid

Angus & Dundee 2004 One site: one singing male for one date only.

Scotland, N & W: mainland

Highland 2003 17 singing males. **Highland 2004** 12 singing males.

Scotland, N & W: Hebrides and Orkney (the 'core' area) Total numbers of singing males by island.

Argyll 2003 Total 343: Coll 90, Colonsay & Oronsay 32, Gigha 1, Iona 24, Islay 10, Mull 0, Tiree 184, Treshnish Isles 2. **Argyll 2004** Total 505: Coll 134, Colonsay & Oronsay 46, Gigha 0, Iona 24, Islay 31, Mull 5, Tiree 260, Treshnish Isles 5. **Highland 2003** Total 32: Canna 4, Eigg 0, Muck 5, Skye 23. **Highland 2004** Total 40: Canna 4, Eigg 1, Muck 3, Skye 32. **Orkney 2003** 31. **Orkney 2004** 17. **Outer Hebrides 2003** Total 395: Barra & Vatersay 68, Benbecula 30, Berneray 1, Harris 11, Lewis 105, North Uist 77, Pabbay & Mingulay 2, South Uist 101. **Outer Hebrides 2004** Total 488: Barra & Vatersay 72, Benbecula 35, Berneray 3, Harris 24, Lewis 118, North Uist 112, Pabbay & Mingulay 5, South Uist 119.

Scotland, N & W: elsewhere

Shetland 2003 Four singing males. **Shetland 2004** Two singing males.

Northern Ireland

2003 Two singing males.

The RSPB provided the following comments. 'Corn Crakes are counted annually within the core part of the species' range and every five years in the whole of the UK. The fourth full survey was undertaken in 2003, when 832 singing males were counted. This represents a considerable increase since previous full surveys in 1998 (589 males) and 1993 (480 males). Annual monitoring of the core area for



David Tipling/Windrush

149. Corn Crane *Crex crex*, South Uist, Outer Hebrides, June 1998.

Corn Crakes in Scotland (which holds more than 90% of the UK population) indicates that numbers increased in ten of the last 11 years, so that by 2004 there were more than twice the number in the same areas than in 1993.

'Between 1978 and 1993, the Corn Crane population declined by an average of more than 3% each year, but since 1993 it has been increasing by more than 5% per year. Schemes to enhance conditions for Corn Crakes were implemented during this period of increase. By 2003, more than 5,500 ha of land were under management to change the timing and method of hay and silage mowing or to provide suitable habitat in spring and autumn. The estimated improvement in Corn Crane breeding productivity from these actions has been sufficient to account for the observed change in population trend.'

Common Crane *Grus grus*

2003 Two sites: two pairs. 2004 Three sites: five pairs.

England, E

Norfolk 2003 One site: two pairs bred rearing three young. **Norfolk 2004** One site: four pairs bred, two were successful and reared two young each. At the end of the year there were 20 adult and four juvenile cranes in this area.

England, elsewhere

2003 One site: one bird summered. 2004 Two sites: (1) one pair bred and laid a clutch of two eggs, which hatched but were lost to foxes *Vulpes vulpes*; (2) one bird summered.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

2003 One site: single male. 2004 One site: single male.

England, E

Norfolk 2003 & 2004 The solitary male present at Titchwell since 1993 remained throughout both years, and into 2005.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

2003 60 sites: 1,353–1,374 pairs. 2004 66 sites: 1,359–1,386 pairs. The period under review saw another increase in the number of nesting colonies, up to 60 in 2003 and 66 in 2004. In 2003, Wales gained its first breeding Avocets, and two pairs bred at the same site in Gwent in 2004. However, apart from this there seems to be little sign of further spread away from the core range in England, which lies south and east of a line drawn between Morecambe Bay and the Humber. The number of confirmed breeding pairs also reached a new high in 2004, although there are signs of a levelling off in the numbers of pairs. The number of young fledged reported to the Panel each year is inconsistent, making comparisons between years difficult.

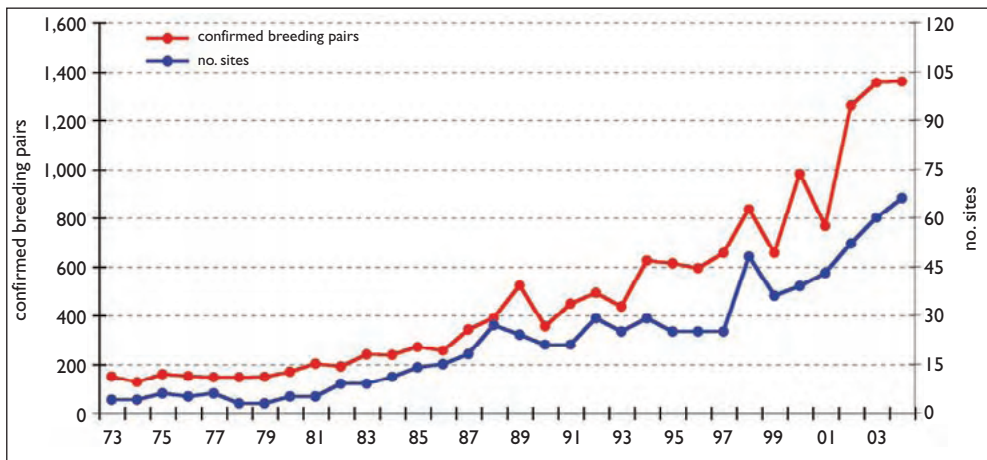


Fig. 4. After a period of sustained growth in the number of confirmed pairs from the late 1980s until 2002, it would appear that the population of breeding Avocets *Recurvirostra avosetta* in the UK is stabilising. Perhaps low productivity is now checking the growth.

Avocet	2003			2004		
	No. sites	Confirmed pairs	Min. young fledged	No. sites	Confirmed pairs	Min. young fledged
England, SW						
Hampshire	1	2	1	2	5	9
England, SE						
Essex	8	158	44	7	151	24
Kent	10	328	60	4	200	?
Sussex	1	4	7	4	10	30
England, E						
Cambridgeshire	4	4	6	5	5	3
Lincolnshire	2	121	?	4	135	10
Norfolk	14	397	84	19	479	8
Suffolk	11	251	29	12	278	26
England, C						
Worcestershire	1	1	4	1	1	4
England, N						
Cheshire & Wirral	2	3	0	1	0	0
Lancashire & N Merseyside	2	13	18	3	24	16
Yorkshire	3	70	43	3	69	32
Wales						
Gwent	1	1	4	1	2	5
TOTAL	60	1,353	300	66	1,359	167

Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*

2003 Six counties: 261 confirmed pairs; 210 monitored pairs fledged 156 young. 2004 Six counties: 294 confirmed pairs; 242 monitored pairs fledged 136 young. Monitoring by the RSPB, supported by English Nature (now Natural England), covers most of the population each year but is incomplete in the Brecklands of Norfolk and Suffolk. The figures given in the table below are for proved breeding pairs only. The total number of pairs confirmed breeding was 261 in 2003 and 294 in 2004, which compare with 272 in 2002. The detailed breakdown of the monitored pairs is shown in the table below. Despite some regional variation, the increase in the number of pairs since 1988 has continued.

Stone-curlew	2003		2004	
	Monitored pairs	Young fledged	Monitored pairs	Young fledged
England, SW				
Hampshire	24	9	20	5
Wiltshire	50	35	60	32
England, SE				
Two counties	8	9	13	9
England, E				
Norfolk	95	84	115	74
Suffolk	33	19	34	16
TOTAL	210	156	242	136

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

2003 458–689 pairs. 2004 458–690 pairs. These figures show an increase on 2002 data, but this may be a function of improved coverage and better submissions to the Panel. A nationwide survey of Little Ringed Plovers is being organised by the BTO for the 2007 breeding season. The following table shows number of pairs in each region; details of county totals are posted on the Panel's website. Baker *et al.* (2006) estimated the UK population to be 825–1,070 pairs.

Little Ringed Plover	2003		2004	
	Confirmed breeding	Max. total	Confirmed breeding	Max. total
England, SW	25	54	26	48
England, SE	87	151	88	145
England, E	55	65	49	79
England, C	116	144	86	132
England, N	120	206	89	150
Wales	46	50	113	125
Scotland, S	3	4	1	2
Scotland, Mid	6	14	6	9
Scotland, N & W	0	1	0	0
TOTAL	458	689	458	690

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

One report was received from outside the main Scottish range. The Panel seeks to record only those away from the core breeding range, which lies north of a line from the Firth of Clyde to the Firth of Tay and holds in the region of 510–750 pairs (Baker *et al.* 2006). A thorough search of once-suitable hilltops in Borders was conducted in both 2003 and 2004, but no Dotterels were located. The observer noted that the vegetation here was becoming more rank than previously, perhaps because of reduced grazing pressure and warmer summers, and was therefore less suitable for this species.

Scotland, S

Dumfries & Galloway 2003 Two birds on one hilltop on 6th July.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

2003 One site: one single bird. 2004 None. Despite extensive searching of the regular site in both years, no birds were seen here, and the only record concerned a single bird present briefly at another site.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 2003 One site: one bird present in suitable habitat for two days in June.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

2003 One site: one single bird. 2004 Four sites: 1–4 pairs. After just a single bird in 2003, events in 2004 proved to be quite remarkable, with at least two widely separated breeding attempts, possibly the first



Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

Richard Johnson

for the Western Palearctic. Given the circumstances leading up to the discovery of a freshly plumaged juvenile in North-east Scotland, it seems very likely that breeding did in fact occur at this site. Meanwhile, on the opposite side of Scotland, other birds appeared to be attempting to breed. In the light of these records, it is interesting to note a record from the Outer Hebrides in 2001 (which has not previously appeared in these reports) where a female in May was seen to feed and then disappear into long grass at the side of a loch.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland 2003 One site: one bird present in mid July and one seen again on one date in August. **North-east Scotland 2004** One site (same as 2003): one bird from 18th May then a pair from early June with display seen subsequently. In early July an adult and very fresh juvenile were seen together, remaining into October.

Scotland, N & W

Outer Hebrides 2004 Three sites, all on different islands: (1) pair displaying and holding territory 3rd–18th June; (2) two birds 5th June; (3) single male with Dunlin *C. alpina* on 25th June.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

2003 Four sites: 3–4 pairs. **2004** One site: one pair possibly bred.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland 2003 One site: one adult in late May near a former breeding site.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 2003 Three sites: three pairs bred, each seen with one recently fledged young. **Highland 2004** One site: pair present at one of 2003's breeding sites, but no further evidence of breeding.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

2003 Three sites: 2–3 females bred. **2004** Six sites: three leks, 1–9 females bred. Confirmed nesting was reported in both 2003 and 2004 from Shetland and the Outer Hebrides respectively, with leks and hints of breeding also noted elsewhere. These are the first records of confirmed breeding since 1996, but there is little consistency in the location or number of breeding Ruffs in Britain.

England, E

Norfolk 2003 One site: two males and a female at an inland site in June. **Suffolk 2004** One site: four displaying males and two females but did not stay and no suggestion of local breeding.

England, N

Lancashire & North Merseyside 2004 One site: a lek of up to 20 males and four females late April into May with copulation seen.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll 2004 One site: pair present but no further evidence of breeding. **Outer Hebrides 2004** Three sites: one pair bred. (1) Female seen with chick in June; (2) two displaying males in May, but did not stay; (3) one flushed from possible breeding habitat in June, but not seen subsequently. **Shetland 2003** Two sites: two pairs bred. (1) Female with two chicks seen in July; (2) female on nest of four eggs found in June but nest later abandoned.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

2003 13 sites: at least 45–54 pairs. **2004** 15 sites: 63–75 pairs. After a recent reduction in the number of sites, these years saw an increase in the number of both sites used and confirmed pairs. These records combine data for *L. l. limosa* in England and *L. l. islandica* in the Northern Isles and Outer Hebrides.

England, SE

Kent 2003 One site: three pairs bred. **Kent 2004** One site: two pairs each laid three eggs; one was successful fledging two young.

England, E

Cambridgeshire 2003 Two sites: (1) 29 nests found and a further four pairs probably bred – 22 of the nests hatched chicks and at least 27 young fledged; (2) one pair bred. **Cambridgeshire 2004** Two sites: (1) 42 pairs bred; (2) two pairs bred. **Norfolk 2003** One site: three pairs bred, two of these fledged three young each. **Norfolk 2004** One site: four pairs bred, two pairs were successful fledging six young. **Suffolk 2003 & 2004** One site: single bird displaying in both years.

England, N

Lancashire & North Merseyside 2003 One site: two pairs bred, fledging 1–2 young. **Lancashire & North Merseyside 2004** Two sites: (1) two pairs bred, hatching five and fledging three young in total; (2) one pair present but no further evidence. **Yorkshire 2004** One site: two pairs fledged two young.

Wales

Gwent 2003 One site: up to 35 birds displaying from April to June, breeding suspected.

Scotland, S

Dumfries & Galloway 2004 One site: one pair present late May to July.

Scotland, N & W

Caithness 2004 One site: 1–2 pairs possibly bred. There were four birds in May with two remaining until 22nd June, but breeding was not confirmed. **Orkney 2003** Two sites: 4–6 pairs bred with at least two fledging young. **Orkney 2004** One site: five pairs bred and two pairs probably bred. **Outer Hebrides 2003** One site: three pairs probably bred. Mating seen but any nesting attempts were not successful. **Outer Hebrides 2004** Three sites: six pairs probably bred. **Shetland 2003** Three sites: three pairs bred, two fledging three young in total. **Shetland 2004** One site: four pairs bred, two pairs fledging a total of two young.

Black-tailed Godwit	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
No. sites	15	12	11	13	18	17	11	8	13	15
Confirmed pairs	28	34	42	38	45	39	52	47	45	63

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

The following record was received away from the species' stronghold in Orkney and Shetland. There is some indication that there has been a decline in both Orkney and Shetland but there are no quantitative data to substantiate this. The most recent population estimate is 530 pairs (Baker *et al.* 2006).

Scotland, N & W

Outer Hebrides 2004 A survey of an SPA in North Uist located five pairs, with two other pairs close by.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

The following limited information was received, providing only a very small sample of the estimated Scottish breeding population of 720–1,480 pairs (Baker *et al.* 2006). Few reports give details of clutch or brood sizes. As stated in previous reports, the Panel would like to be able to monitor this species better and we encourage submission of all records from breeding habitat, in particular nest histories and notes of displaying birds or singing males.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll 2003 Records of birds in June but no indications of breeding. **Caithness 2004** Records of birds at four possible breeding sites. **Highland 2003** 24 pairs reported of which ten were confirmed breeding. At one site, clutches of four, four and two translated to three, two and zero young respectively. **Highland 2004** 37 pairs reported of which 11 were confirmed breeding. **Outer Hebrides 2003** Ten pairs reported, but none was proved breeding. **Outer Hebrides 2004** 24 reports of pairs, of which one was confirmed breeding. The population of the Lewis Peatlands SPA was estimated to be at least 150 pairs. **Shetland 2003** Only one pair heard calling on one occasion.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

2003 One site: one pair. **2004** Two sites: 2–3 pairs. It is encouraging that birds are returning to the site used since 1999 and producing young in most years, two pairs being present in 2004. A second site was also occupied in 2004, making this one of the most productive years on record for Green Sandpiper.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 2003 One site: one bird displaying in April and a pair alarm-calling with young close by in June. **Highland 2004** Two sites: (1) two pairs alarm-calling with young present; (2) one pair also alarming, on two dates.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

2003 Nine sites: 13–18 pairs. **2004** 13 sites: 18–22 pairs. A paper analysing the historical records of Wood Sandpiper in Britain, up to 2004, was published earlier this year (Chisholm 2007). The Panel has since received two or three other extralimital records from the breeding season, which are reported here.

England, N

2004 One site: a pair was seen singing and displaying in late May and into June, but there was no further evidence of breeding.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 2003 Eight sites: 13–16 pairs bred. **Highland (including Caithness) 2004** 12 sites: 18–21 pairs bred. **Outer**

Hebrides 2003 A displaying bird on 21st May only and a single bird in suitable habitat in late May could relate to the same individual; no further records were made, despite searching.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

2003 Seven sites: 25–30 pairs. **2004** Seven sites: 31–36 pairs. The signs of a comeback mentioned in the last report seem to be continuing with further modest increases in the number of breeding males.

Scotland, N & W

Outer Hebrides 2003 Four sites: five pairs probably bred but no evidence of any young. **Outer Hebrides 2004** Four sites: three pairs bred and five pairs probably bred. **Shetland 2003** Three sites: (1) Fetlar: at least 19 breeding males (the highest since 1997) and at least 12 young fledged; (2)–(3) six pairs fledged at least five young. **Shetland 2004** Three sites: (1) Fetlar: at least 19 breeding males; (2)–(3) another nine breeding males. A total of seven young fledged from the Shetland colonies.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

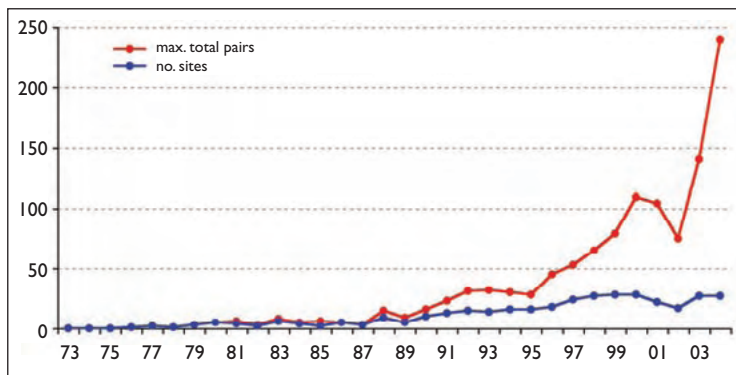


Fig. 5. The number of breeding Mediterranean Gulls *Larus melanocephalus* started to climb in the late 1990s but in 2003–04 reached record levels, with up to 241 pairs breeding in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

2003 27 sites: 122–140 pairs. **2004** 26 sites: 183–241 pairs. Although the number of localities remained stable, the number of pairs reached a new high in 2004, after what appeared to be a downturn in numbers in 2001–02. The largest colony is at Langstone Harbour in Hampshire where a record total of 80 young was raised in 2004. The first

confirmed breeding reports from Greater Manchester (in 2003) and Cheshire & Wirral (in 2004) were received, while successful breeding in Northern Ireland in both years is notable.

England, SW

Dorset 2003 Two sites: four pairs bred and one pair probably bred. **Dorset 2004** Two sites: six pairs probably bred. **Hampshire 2003** Three sites: (1) Langstone Harbour: 33 pairs bred, raising 18 young – the low productivity is thought to have been caused by a shortage of earthworms in the dry weather; (2)–(3) three pairs bred and four pairs probably bred. **Hampshire 2004** Three sites: (1) Langstone Harbour: 57 pairs bred, raising 80 young; (2)–(3) two pairs possibly bred.

England, SE

Bedfordshire 2003 One site: one single bird. **Bedfordshire 2004** One site: one single bird. An adult first appeared at this Black-headed Gull *L. ridibundus* colony in 2002, but in 2004 it was noted on one date only. **Essex 2003** Three sites: four pairs bred and two pairs probably bred. **Essex 2004** One site: three pairs bred. **Kent 2003** Three sites: 37 pairs bred and one pair possibly bred. **Kent 2004** Four sites: (1) 26 pairs bred raising four young; (2)–(4) 48 pairs bred and one pair possibly bred. **Sussex 2003** One site: at least 22 pairs bred, raising 22 young. **Sussex 2004** Two sites: (1) 27 pairs bred, raising 36 young; (2) 40 pairs in April to mid May did not breed.

England, E

Lincolnshire 2003 At least two sites: three pairs possibly bred but display with Black-headed Gull also noted. **Lincolnshire 2004** Two sites: one pair bred, seen feeding one chick, and one single bird. **Norfolk 2003** Three sites: three pairs bred but failed and three pairs probably bred. **Norfolk 2004** Three sites: five pairs bred, raising eight young, one pair probably bred. **Suffolk 2003** Two sites: seven pairs bred raising at least seven young, and two pairs possibly bred. **Suffolk 2004** One site: nine pairs bred, raising 8–10 young.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral 2004 One site: two pairs bred raising six young and one pair possibly bred. **Cumbria 2004** One site: one bird held territory. **Greater Manchester 2003** One site: one pair bred, two young fledged. **Greater Manchester 2004** One site: one pair of second-year birds bred but failed; five other birds also present. **Lancashire & North Merseyside 2003** Two sites: six pairs bred, one pair probably bred. **Lancashire & North Merseyside 2004** Two

sites: three pairs bred, two pairs possibly bred. **Northumberland 2003** One site: single bird present but did not breed. **Wales**

Anglesey 2004 One site: a second-summer was seen with nest material on 30th April and was also present on other dates.

Northern Ireland

2003 Three sites: two pairs bred and one pair possibly bred. **2004** Three sites: one pair bred, one pair probably bred and two pairs possibly bred.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

2003 Four sites: 1–2 pairs, plus 1–2 mixed pairs. **2004** Three sites: 1 pair plus 0–2 mixed pairs. Since the first reported nesting of a pair of Yellow-legged Gulls in Dorset in 1995, there has been little growth in the population, although mixed pairs, all with Lesser Black-backed Gulls *L. fuscus*, are now being reported more widely. The first in Northern Ireland is reported here. Only hybrid young have been raised since 2001.

England, SW

Dorset 2003 Two sites: (1) pair bred but failed at egg stage; (2) two birds present early in year but not known whether breeding was attempted. **Dorset 2004** One site: pair bred but again failed at egg stage. **Hampshire 2003** One site: one mixed pair raised three young.

England, SE

Bedfordshire 2003 One site: one mixed pair. **Bedfordshire 2004** One site: one mixed pair. In both instances a male was paired with a female Lesser Black-backed Gull, but no young were reported.

Northern Ireland

Co. Fermanagh 2004 One site: one female in colony of Lesser Black-backed Gulls, but it is not known if it was paired.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

2003 Min. 1,548 pairs. **2004** Min. 1,494 pairs. Summary information for each area is presented, based on a non-random sample rather than a complete survey. Numbers should be treated as minima. The same divisions are used as in previous reports of the Panel. The year 2003 was a very successful one for productivity with over 1,300 young fledged. Owing to flooding or disturbance, some colonies relocated but one of these relocations (in East Anglia) became the most successful site, with 233 pairs fledging

Little Tern	2003	2004
England, SW	40	56
England, SE	255	159
England, E	744	733
England, NE	196	196
England, NW	44	33
Wales	110	89
Scotland	159	228
TOTAL	1,548	1,494

450–500 young, the largest number from a single colony since recording began, in 1969. In comparison, productivity at monitored sites was down in 2004 to around 0.41 chicks per pair, less than half of 2003's figure. Poor weather and gales in June, plus localised food shortages and high levels of predation at some sites, all contributed to the poor levels of success. Overall, colonies in Norfolk and south England fared worst while Scottish colonies were more productive. The table shows numbers of confirmed breeding pairs.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

2003 Five sites: 101 pairs bred. **2004** Five sites: 88 pairs bred. Although the number of pairs in 2003 was the highest since 1989, the number of colonies continues to decline. Coquet Island was the largest colony in the UK, the total of 73 pairs being the highest there since 1972. The increase over the last four years is attributed to the creation of nesting terraces and nestboxes over recent years. However, the lack of nesting birds on the nearby Farne Islands means that 2003 was the first time that none have nested there since recording began. Furthermore, 2004 was the first year that Roseate Terns did not nest in Wales since seabird recording began there, in 1969. No birds nested in Cleveland, where one pair bred in 2002. In both years, though, there were records of small numbers prospecting at other sites.

England, S

2003 One site: two pairs bred but nests abandoned. **2004** Two sites: three pairs bred but two nests were washed out at one site.

England, N

Northumberland One site, Coquet Island: 2003 70 pairs bred; 2004 73 pairs bred.

Wales

Anglesey 2003 One site: two pairs bred but chicks died before fledging.

Scotland, Mid

Fife 2003 One site: eight pairs fledged ten young. **Fife 2004** One site: four pairs, with five young fledging from three nests.

Northern Ireland

Co. Antrim 2003 One site: 19 pairs. **Co. Antrim 2004** One site: eight pairs.

Roseate Tern	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
No. of sites	15	11	14	11	8	7	7	8	5	5
Confirmed pairs	72	66	54	50	61	52	58	73	101	88

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

2003 2,953 pairs. **2004** 2,985 pairs. The Panel requests only county summaries for Barn Owl, asking recorders to provide a minimum figure for the number of pairs in their areas. The data provided thus range from detailed minima based on actual sightings, to broad-brush estimates where a large local population is poorly reported. In addition, nest details from Schedule 1 licence returns are received and

Barn Owl	2003	2004
England, SW	484	446
England, SE	427	318
England, E	365	783
England, C	290	187
England, N	731	575
Wales	243	180
Scotland, S	272	270
Scotland, Mid	91	103
Scotland, N & W	50	63
Northern Ireland	–	60
TOTAL	2,953	2,985

in some areas they add to the local picture. Where there appears to be some duplication, a cautious approach is taken, using minimum figures. Looking at 2003 and 2004, the accumulated numbers of pairs are similar, and continue the trend towards an increasing population. Taking the higher total for each recording area in the two years gives a larger figure of 3,625, which is within the estimated UK population of 3,000–5,000 pairs (Baker *et al.* 2006). Given that the figures presented here represent a limited sample, it may be that the real population is now higher than this. The table shows the regional breakdown, giving details of number of pairs; details of county totals are posted on the Panel's website.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Common Kingfisher	2003	2004
England, SW	82	104
England, SE	270	284
England, E	137	173
England, C	145	145
England, N	333	261
Wales	90	94
Scotland, S	85	41
Scotland, Mid	18	17
Scotland, N & W	5	1
Northern Ireland	0	2
TOTALS	1,165	1,122

2003 1,165 pairs. **2004** 1,122 pairs. Although the composition of records across the country was not entirely comparable between the two years, the total number of pairs in 2003 and 2004 were similar; the total for 2003 was the highest ever submitted to the Panel. The table shows the regional breakdown, giving details of number of pairs; details of county totals are posted on the Panel's website. Taking the higher total for each recording area in the two years gives a larger figure of 1,441, which is still well below the estimated UK population of 4,800–8,000 pairs (Baker *et al.* 2006) and suggests that this species is under-recorded in many areas.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

2004 One site: one individual only.

England, E

Lincolnshire 2004 One bird was present for several weeks in midsummer. This is the first record in the Panel's reports since 1999, when a male sang regularly from May to July on the Gloucestershire/Worcestershire border.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

2003 Three sites: three singles. **2004** Three sites: three singles. A similar, rather subdued, showing in both years, with just one singing male reported in each year. It is encouraging that records are again being received from former breeding areas in Scotland, but all of the records presented here refer to one-day sightings only. The last confirmed breeding record was in 1999.

England, SE

Hertfordshire **2004** One site: one bird in May.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland **2003** One site: one bird in suitable habitat in late June.

Scotland, N & W

Highland **2003** Two sites: two birds in May, one reported as singing. **Highland 2004** Two sites: (1) one singing in May could not be relocated; (2) one in August close to a former breeding site.

Wood Lark *Lullula arborea*

2003 1,058 pairs. **2004** 767 pairs. The following county totals were received, most of which are based on counts of singing males. Although full surveys were attempted in the Brecklands of Norfolk and Suffolk, and on the Suffolk coast, coverage in other areas was less complete and varied between years. Consequently, the apparent decline between 2003 and 2004 is probably an artefact of recording effort. The last national survey, in 1997, found 1,552 pairs; another full census was conducted in 2006 and will be reported here in due course. The table shows totals compiled from local surveys or nest studies. In addition, the following county estimates were received: Dorset 138 pairs (2003), Surrey 200 pairs (2003 and 2004) and Nottinghamshire 125 pairs (2004).

Wood Lark	2003 Total (confirmed)	2004 Total (confirmed)		2003 Total (confirmed)	2004 Total (confirmed)
England, SW	250 (54)	64 (3)	England, E	511 (342)	449 (31)
Devon	9	9	Lincolnshire	12 (10)	20 (2)
Dorset	54 (46)	45	Norfolk	211 (177)	147 (14)
Hampshire	186 (8)	10 (3)*	Suffolk	288 (155)	282 (15)
Wiltshire	1	–	England, C	55 (9)	21 (14)
England, SE	215 (51)	213 (65)	Nottinghamshire	34 (9)	20 (14)
Bedfordshire	1	–	Staffordshire	21	1*
Berkshire	33 (8)	35 (3)	England, N	27 (7)	20 (5)
Buckinghamshire	3	1	Yorkshire	27 (7)	20 (5)
Kent	3	2	TOTAL	1,058 (463)	767 (118)
Surrey	105 (6)	114 (8)			
Sussex	70 (37)	61 (54)			

* Known to be incomplete.

Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

2003 Two sites: 1–2 pairs. **2004** One site: 0–1 pair. The breeding record in 2003 is the first since 1977 and follows presence in seven out of the last eight years at this site. Although not included in the Panel's report for 2002, a pair was also present at this site in 2002. The two sites in 2003 are in different mountain ranges.

Scotland, N & W

Highland **2003** Two sites: (1) one pair bred, female seen with food in mid July and one fledged juvenile seen in early August; (2) male in suitable habitat in mid June. **Highland 2004** One site: pair seen at the 2003 breeding site but no further evidence of breeding.

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

2004 One site: one individual in June.

Scotland, N & W

Highland **2004** An intriguing record was received of one feeding on apples in a west-coast garden between 9th and 11th June.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

2003 Two sites: 0–2 pairs. 2004 One site: 0–1 pair. Three enticing reports were received of single males in potential breeding habitat. All the reports concerned birds of the red-spotted race *L. s. svecica*, seen for one day only, but the low density of observers in Highland region reduces the likelihood of repeat sightings.

Scotland, S

Clyde 2003 One site: one singing male in mid June.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 2003 One site: one singing male in late May. Highland 2004 One site: one male seen in mid May, at a different location from the bird in 2003.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

2003 24 sites: 12–32 pairs. 2004 20 sites: 9–23 pairs. The total number of pairs of Black Redstarts reported to the Panel in both 2003 and 2004 was substantially lower than the ten-year mean of 67. This is mainly due to a lack of reports from the main concentration in London, which held 18 pairs at 17 sites in 2002. Elsewhere, breeding Black Redstarts are found in urban environments from Lancashire southeast to Kent, and in industrial settings along the east coast from Great Yarmouth south to the Thames estuary. Most of the records of possible breeding refer to singing males, many of which are heard only for a short time. Proof of nesting in these urban/industrial settings is often difficult to achieve, and censusing such habitat adequately for this species is problematic.

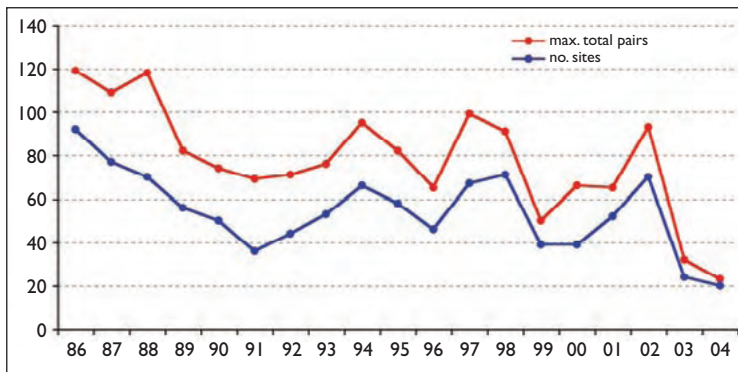


Fig. 6. The long-term trend of Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* numbers indicates a decline although the thorough survey of London in 2002 found significant numbers, which may contradict this apparent trend.

England, SE

Berkshire 2003 One site: one pair fledged two young and two other pairs probably bred.

Berkshire 2004 One site: two pairs possibly bred.

Buckinghamshire 2003 Three sites (in one town): three pairs possibly bred.

Buckinghamshire 2004 One site: one pair possibly bred.

Essex 2003 Two sites: three pairs possibly bred.

Essex 2004 Five sites: seven pairs bred.

Kent 2003 Four sites: four pairs bred, two

pairs probably bred and one pair possibly bred.

England, E

Cambridgeshire 2003 Three sites: one pair bred (raising two broods) and two pairs possibly bred.

Cambridgeshire 2004 Two sites (in one town): one pair probably bred and one pair possibly bred.

Lincolnshire 2003 Two sites: two pairs possibly bred.

Lincolnshire 2004 Two sites: one pair probably bred and one pair possibly bred.

Norfolk 2003 One site: two pairs fledged a total of eight young.

Suffolk 2003 Three sites: one pair bred and two pairs possibly bred.

Suffolk 2004 Five sites: two pairs bred, one pair probably bred and two pairs possibly bred.

England, C

Derbyshire 2003 One site: one pair bred.

Derbyshire 2004 One site: one pair possibly bred.

Nottinghamshire 2003 One site: one pair bred.

Nottinghamshire 2004 One site: one pair probably bred.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

2003 Two sites: two single birds only. **2004** Seven sites: 2–7 pairs. Although 1–2 pairs bred in 2000–02, there were only two breeding-season records in 2003, in Yorkshire and Northern Ireland. In 2004, however, there were two definite breeding records, both in Scotland, as well as a third record which points to another pair nesting in Scotland or northeast England. Despite their conspicuous nature at other times of year, Fieldfares can be surprisingly elusive during the breeding season and breeding is not always easy to confirm, so the four records in England may also relate to breeding attempts.

England, E

Lincolnshire 2004 Two sites: (1) single bird on 30th May; (2) single bird on 8th June.

England, C

Derbyshire 2004 Two sites: (1) single bird apparently engaged in distraction display on 2nd June; (2) single bird seen on two dates in June.

England, N

Yorkshire 2003 One site: single bird on 8th June.

Scotland, S

Borders 2004 One site: a juvenile on 10th August at a coastal location seemed early for a Scandinavian migrant, but may not have fledged locally.

Scotland, Mid

Fife 2004 One site: one pair bred, present 28th April to 26th May, and food-carrying and excited alarming seen until 22nd May. A search under licence could not locate a nest and no young were seen. The observer felt that the nesting attempt may have failed at the chick stage or the young may have died soon after fledging.

Scotland, N & W

Orkney 2004 One site: one pair bred. Three recently fledged juveniles were seen on 14th June.

Northern Ireland

Co. Down 2003 One bird in a garden on 28th June.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

2003 At least 12 sites: 5–17 pairs. **2004** At least nine sites: 2–15 pairs. All records received by the Panel are listed here, although some refer to one-day sightings only and may not relate to breeding birds. Nevertheless, the number of records remains low and probably does not reflect the true status of Redwings in their main breeding area in Highland Scotland.

England, SW

Hampshire 2004 One site: single on 13th June.

England, C

Derbyshire 2003 One site: one singing male on 17th May.

England, N

Yorkshire 2003 One site: an adult with what was suspected to be a recently fledged juvenile was seen at a coastal location on 2nd August, but there had been no previous indication that Redwings were present here during the breeding season.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland 2003 One site: single bird on 20th July.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 2003 Five extensive sites: five pairs bred and five other singing males. **Highland 2004** Five extensive sites: two pairs bred and nine pairs probably bred. **Orkney 2003** Two sites: two singing males in early May did not linger. **Orkney 2004** One site: one singing male in early May and two further sightings in late June and early July. **Outer Hebrides 2004** One site: one singing male for 13 days in late May. **Shetland 2003** Two sites: two singing males in early June did not linger, and no breeding is thought to have occurred on the islands. **Shetland 2004** One site: one singing male for five days in late May into early June.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

2003 1,043 singing males. **2004** 1,137 singing males. The data presented here refer largely to counts of singing males and there were few reports of fledged young or single birds seen or trapped in the breeding season. Once again, these figures set new records for the numbers of Cetti's Warblers in the UK. Southwest England remains the stronghold with a consistent 53.5% of the total in both years. Recorders in a number of counties, including Dorset, Hampshire and Norfolk, suggested that the figures underestimate the true population.

Cetti's Warbler	2003	2004		2003	2004
	Total (confirmed)	Total (confirmed)		Total (confirmed)	Total (confirmed)
England, SW	559 (0)	606 (18)	England, E	222 (4)	231 (0)
Avon	21	19	Cambridgeshire	0	1
Cornwall	9	10	Norfolk	165 (3)	176
Devon	67	65	Suffolk	57 (1)	54
Dorset	55	82	England, C	9 (1)	14 (10)
Gloucestershire	10	15 (3)	Leicestershire	1	2
Hampshire	185	186	Warwickshire	5	8 (6)
Isle of Wight	34	35	Worcestershire	3 (1)	4 (4)
Somerset	150	172 (13)	Wales	91 (1)	114 (0)
Wiltshire	28	22 (2)	Anglesey	9	8
England, SE	162 (8)	172 (12)	Brecon	2	1
Bedfordshire	0	1	Caernarfon	1	1
Berkshire	25 (2)	31 (3)	Carmarthen	17	–
Buckinghamshire	1	2	Glamorgan	9 (1)	11
Essex	16	23	Gower	25	38
Kent	73 (2)	96 (4)	Gwent	27	49
Oxfordshire	–	2	Pembroke	1	6
Sussex	47 (4)	17 (5)	TOTAL	1,043 (14)	1,137 (40)

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*

2003 Four sites: 0–4 pairs. **2004** Seven sites: 0–7 pairs. The last confirmed breeding record was in Sussex in 2000. Most records refer to singing males but note that in 2003 a nesting attempt was made in Kent.

England, SW

Devon 2003 One site: one singing male from 27th April to 1st May. **Hampshire 2004** One site: one singing male on 4th July.

England, SE

Kent 2003 Two sites: (1) one pair probably bred (nest-building took place but the pair was thought not to have laid); (2) one singing male on 7th June. **Kent 2004** Two sites: (1) one singing male on 14th July; (2) one singing male from 17th July to 3rd August.

England, E

Norfolk 2004 Two sites: (1) one singing male from 24th April to 5th June; (2) one singing male on 1st May. **Suffolk 2004** One site: one singing male on 9th–10th June.

England, C

Warwickshire 2004 One site: one singing male on 21st May.

England, N

Lancashire & North Merseyside 2003 One site: one singing male on 9th–23rd May.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

2003 Six sites: 4–10 pairs. **2004** 14 sites: 2–17 pairs. The sequence of poor years for this species was continued in 2003 and 2004; the apparent increase in sites in 2004 is due largely to singing Marsh Warblers occupying nine sites in Shetland alone. Kent is now the stronghold for this species in Britain, and the only county to report proved breeding.

England, SE

Essex 2004 One site: one pair probably bred. A male held territory and breeding is thought to have occurred. **Kent 2003** Three sites: (1) four pairs bred, three fledging young, and one other singing male; (2)–(3) two separate singing males, each on a single date only. **Kent 2004** One site: 2–4 pairs bred, with at least one pair successfully fledging young. **Sussex 2004** One site: one pair possibly bred. A male was trapped on 20th June and juveniles were present on 13th August and 9th September, but may not have been locally bred.

England, E

Norfolk 2003 Two sites: (1) one pair probably bred at a site used in 1999, as there was a male in song on 5th–8th June and a second bird present on 10th–11th June; (2) one singing male for up to two weeks in June but no sign of a second bird or a nest. **Norfolk 2004** One site: one singing male 6th–8th June. **Suffolk 2004** One site: one pair probably bred. A singing male was present throughout most of June and another bird was also seen on several days.

England, C

Derbyshire 2003 One site: one singing male in suitable habitat on 12th June only.

Scotland, N & W

Shetland 2004 Nine sites: (1) two males and a female on 15th and 16th June. The males were singing and mating was observed, but the birds did not stay; (2) one singing male 5th–27th June; (3)–(9) at least seven singing males for 1–3 days in June.

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

2003 Two sites: 0–2 pairs. **2004** Two sites: 0–2 pairs. Two males singing from suitable habitat were reported in each year, a typical showing.

England, SW

Devon 2004 One site: singing male on 3rd–4th June.

England, SE

Essex 2004 One site: singing male on 17th–30th May. **Kent 2003** One site: singing male on 15th May.

England, N

Lancashire & North Merseyside 2003 One site: singing male on 21st–29th May.

Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*

2003 1,225 pairs. **2004** 1,496 pairs. The data presented here are known to be incomplete for some areas, most notably Hampshire, where the New Forest population was not counted. The higher number in 2004 reflects a local survey in the other parts of Hampshire. Three records of single birds in 2003 are also included as they hint at possible range expansions. The records in Bedfordshire and Norfolk were of single birds in the breeding season. The record in Lancashire refers to a male that was reported singing and carrying nest material in suitable habitat for two weeks in May, but was not recorded subsequently.

Dartford Warbler	2003	2004		2003	2004
England, SW	330	658	England, E	80	92
Devon	132	186	Norfolk	1	0
Dorset	82	118	Suffolk	79	92
Hampshire	29	282	England, N	1	0
Isle of Wight	7	2	Lancashire &	1	0
Somerset	80	70	N Merseyside		
England, SE	799	735	Wales	15	11
Bedfordshire	1	0	Denbigh	1	–
Berkshire	31	22	Glamorgan	2	1
Buckinghamshire	3	1	Gower	6	9
Kent	2	0	Pembroke	6	1
Surrey	653	610	TOTAL	1,225	1,496
Sussex	109	102			

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*

2003 83 sites: 10–253 pairs. **2004** At least 50 sites: 5–283 pairs. The number of Firecrests reported each year varies with the effort allocated to searching for them but, even taking this into account, the totals presented here are much higher than ever reported before, the previous highest being 175 pairs in 1983. The latest population estimate is 80–250 males, based on results from the last national Atlas (Baker *et al.* 2006); it seems likely that this has now been exceeded. The breeding range is still largely restricted to southern England, with outlying birds in Wales. Cheshire & Wirral reported its first proved breeding record in 2003 but this was not repeated in 2004.

England, SW

Gloucestershire 2003 Three sites: two pairs probably bred and one pair possibly bred. **Gloucestershire 2004** Two sites: one pair bred and one singing male. **Hampshire 2003** 45 sites: a survey revealed 109 singing males. **Hampshire 2004** At least ten sites: a total of 109 singing males were again recorded. The number of sites in the main area of the New Forest was not specified in 2004. **Somerset 2003** Three sites: four singing males. **Somerset 2004** Three sites: three singing males. **Wiltshire 2003** Three sites: one pair probably bred and two singing males. **Wiltshire 2004** Five sites: seven pairs probably bred and five singing males.

England, SE

Berkshire 2003 Six sites: four pairs bred, 19 pairs probably bred and a further 47 singing males. **Berkshire 2004** Three pairs bred, 14 pairs probably bred and a further 56 singing males. The number of sites was not specified. **Buckinghamshire 2003** Two sites: five pairs probably bred and one singing male. **Buckinghamshire 2004** Two sites: five pairs possibly bred. **Essex 2003** Two sites: two pairs probably bred. **Essex 2004** Six sites: 31 pairs probably bred. **Hertfordshire 2003** Two sites: two pairs possibly bred. **Hertfordshire 2004** Three sites: two pairs probably bred and one pair possibly bred. **Kent 2003** Four sites: one pair bred, one pair possibly bred and two singing males. **Kent 2004** In the absence of a survey, there was only one breeding-season report, of a single bird in May. **Surrey 2003** One site: two singing males. **Surrey 2004** Five sites: five pairs possibly bred. **Sussex 2003** Three sites: 25 singing males. **Sussex 2004** Two sites: two pairs possibly bred and 12 singing males.

England, E

Cambridgeshire 2003 One site: one singing male. **Norfolk 2003** One extensive site: three pairs bred and seven singing males. **Norfolk 2004** Seven sites: one pair bred, two pairs probably bred and 12 singing males. **Suffolk 2003** Five sites: one pair bred, four pairs probably bred, two pairs possibly bred and three singing males. **Suffolk 2004** One site: five singing males.

England, C

Derbyshire 2004 One site: two singing males.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral 2003 One site: one pair bred, fledging three young; first county breeding record.

Wales

Montgomery 2003 One site: one pair probably bred. **Montgomery 2004** One site: two singing males. **Radnor 2004** One site: one pair possibly bred.

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

2003 51 sites: at least 367–376 pairs. **2004** 51 sites: 534–556 pairs. A national survey in 2002 estimated 504–559 pairs in Britain (Baker *et al.* 2006), the highest number since the Panel began monitoring Bearded Tits. The figures presented here for 2004 are close to the higher value, indicating that numbers have increased further in recent years.

England, SW

Dorset 2003 Five sites: eight pairs. **Dorset 2004** Three sites: four pairs. **Hampshire 2003** Three sites: 7–8 pairs. **Hampshire 2004** Three sites: 10–12 pairs. **Somerset 2003** One site: five pairs fledged 20 young. **Somerset 2004** Three sites: 18 pairs.

England, SE

Essex 2003 Six sites: 15 pairs. **Essex 2004** One site: 14 pairs. **Hertfordshire 2003** One site: one pair bred but no young fledged. This represents the first attempted breeding in the county since 1973; none was recorded in 2004. **Kent 2003** Six sites: 46 pairs. **Kent 2004** 11 sites: 63 pairs. **Sussex 2003** Three sites: 13 pairs. Three pairs fledged 34 young at one site. **Sussex 2004** Three sites: ten pairs.

England, E

Cambridgeshire 2003 Two sites: two pairs possibly bred. **Cambridgeshire 2004** One site: single female in July. **Lincolnshire 2004** Three sites: seven pairs probably bred. **Norfolk 2003** Ten sites: 47–53 pairs; no counts from two other occupied sites. **Norfolk 2004** 11 sites: 103–115 pairs. **Suffolk 2003** Nine sites: 155 pairs. **Suffolk 2004** Seven sites: 169 pairs.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral 2003 One site: one pair bred fledging 2–3 young. This is the first breeding record for the county. **Cheshire & Wirral 2004** One site: one pair bred fledging three young. **Lancashire & North Merseyside 2003** One site: 18 pairs of which 12 fledged 55 young. **Lancashire & North Merseyside 2004** One site: 25 pairs fledged a minimum of 75 young. **Yorkshire 2003** One site: 50 pairs. **Yorkshire 2004** One site: 45 pairs.

Scotland, Mid

Moray & Nairn 2003 One site: one pair fledged seven young. **Moray & Nairn 2004** One site: two pairs. **Perth & Kinross 2003** One site: no counts available. **Perth & Kinross 2004** One site: at least 70 pairs estimated.

Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus*

Only a limited amount of information was received by the Panel from the main range in Highland and Moray & Nairn. However, a record of a pair breeding to the southwest of the main range in 2003 is noteworthy. A minimum of four birds, including juveniles, were reported from near Acharacle in Moidart, some 50 km away from the nearest known breeding areas in the Great Glen.

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

2003 Nine sites: 5–11 pairs. **2004** Eight sites: 3–8 pairs. The Panel’s dataset from 1973 to 2004 suggests that the population has stabilised at a maximum of 8–11 pairs since 2000, following a steep decline in the number of both pairs and sites since 1990. In 2003 and 2004, the Golden Oriole Group catalogued a total of 56 sites, all in East Anglia. In 2003, 32 of these were surveyed but birds were present at only nine. In 2004, 39 sites were surveyed and orioles found at eight. Based on these results, the total number of young fledged in each year was estimated by the Group as nine in 2003 and 3–11 in 2004. In addition, in southeast England, four singing birds were reported to the Panel in 2003. Although all were at inland sites, none stayed longer than one day.

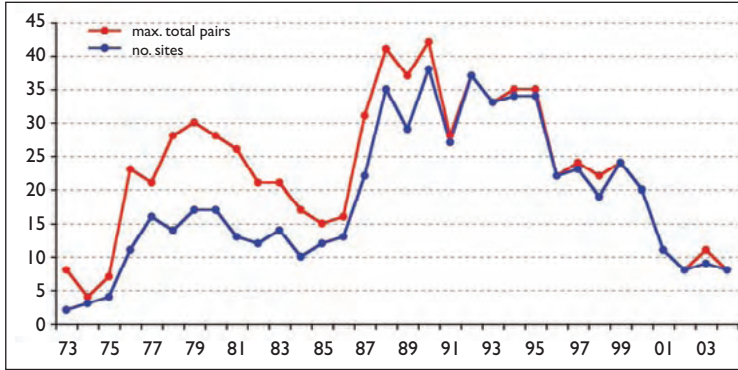


Fig. 7. The Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* population in England reached a peak in the late 1980s but has been declining ever since, numbers now being just 20% of what they were in 1990.

The Golden Oriole Group is to be commended for its continued monitoring efforts but, sadly, very few sites are now occupied following the peak years of the 1980s and 1990s. There is now a real prospect that this species will be lost as a regular breeding bird in Britain. In the last few decades, Golden Orioles have bred largely in plantations

of commercial poplar *Populus* cultivars in fenland. There is no longer a strong market for the timber, so some of the larger plantations have now gone and not been replanted. Although there are still suitable poplar plantations present in the area, they are not occupied by orioles, for reasons which are not clear.

England, E

Cambridgeshire 2003 Two sites: two pairs possibly bred. **Norfolk 2003** Four sites: two pairs bred and at least four young fledged; three pairs possibly bred. **Norfolk 2004** Four sites: one pair probably bred and three pairs possibly bred. **Suffolk 2003** Three sites: three pairs bred and at least five young fledged; one pair probably bred. **Suffolk 2004** Four sites: three pairs bred and at least three young fledged; one pair probably bred.

Golden Oriole	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Confirmed pairs	8	7	9	10	5	5	3	4	5	3
Max. total pairs	35	22	24	22	24	20	11	8	11	8
No. localities	34	22	23	19	24	20	11	8	9	8

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

2003 One site: 0–1 pair. **2004** Three sites: 1–3 pairs. The successful breeding in Shetland is the first confirmed breeding record since 1999, when a pair nested on the Scottish mainland, and is the second time that Red-backed Shrikes have nested in Shetland (Pennington *et al.* 2005).

Scotland, N & W

Highland 2003 One site: one singing male in June. **Highland 2004** Two sites: two singing males on single dates in June. **Shetland 2004** One site: one pair present in an overgrown garden of an uninhabited house from mid June to mid August fledged four young, one of which subsequently died.

Red-billed Chough *Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

The following incomplete data were received. The most recent UK population estimate is 429–497 pairs (Baker *et al.* 2006).

Red-billed Chough	2003			2004		
	Pairs	Young reared	Young per territorial pair	Pairs	Young reared	Young per territorial pair
Cornwall	1	3	3.00	1	4	4.00
Isle of Man	42	89	2.12	–	–	–
Anglesey	38	na	–	39	75	1.92
Caernarfon	81	na	–	83	144	1.73
Ceredigion	23	na	–	24	na	–
Denbigh & Flint	4	na	–	1	3	3.00
Glamorgan	2	0	0	1	0	0
Gower	1	3	3.00	2	4	2.00
Meirionnydd	16	na	–	14	na	–
Montgomery	1	na	–	0	–	–
Pembroke	64	120	1.88	50–52	83	1.66
Argyll: Colonsay & Oronsay	18	19	1.06	18	35	1.94
Argyll: Islay	13	na	–	34	73	2.15
Dumfries & Galloway	1	na	–	1	1	1.00
Antrim	1	2	2.00	1	2	2.00
TOTALS	306	236		269–271	424	

European Serin *Serinus serinus*

2003 Three sites: 1–3 pairs. The confirmed breeding record in Norfolk was the first for that county, while another breeding attempt was reported elsewhere in the same county. Both are documented by Bloomfield (2004). It is speculated that the prolonged spells of warm and sunny weather in spring and summer 2003 contributed to this occurrence. This was also the first confirmed nesting reported to the Panel since 1996, when a pair bred in Kent.

England, SE

Essex 2003 One site: one singing male on 3rd August.

England, E

Norfolk 2003 Two sites: (1) pair bred at Holkham, fledging at least two young; (2) pair built nest and was seen copulating near Norwich, but no further evidence of breeding was recorded.

Common Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

2004 Four sites: 21 pairs. Common Redpoll was separated from Lesser Redpoll *C. cabaret* in 2001 (Knox *et al.* 2001). The closest regular-breeding populations of the former are in Norway. However, Common Redpolls occur in Highland, the Outer Hebrides and the Northern Isles in summer and occasionally breed, although this is the first time that this species has appeared in the Panel's reports. In 2004, numbers were not insignificant, with at least 19 pairs breeding on two island groups in the Outer Hebrides. Not all of the breeding birds were identified to subspecies, and although most are assumed to be of the race *flammea* ('Mealy Redpoll'), it is possible that some could be of the northwestern races *rostrata* and *islandica*.



Common Redpolls *Carduelis flammea*

Jan Witzcur

Scotland, N & W

Outer Hebrides 2004 Two islands: (1) at least 11 pairs bred; (2) at least eight pairs bred. **Shetland 2004** Two sites: (1) pair bred fledging three young; (2) a pair was seen in July, and in August a flock of 11 included three juveniles.

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

2003 At least 332 pairs in England and Wales. **2004** At least 107 pairs in England and Wales. Data are presented for England and Wales only, but even these tell only a partial story, as some counties supplied minima based on confirmed nesting pairs, and others higher figures based on presence of birds in the spring. What is clear, however, is that Common Crossbills were more numerous in the early part of 2003, leading to widespread breeding records, but were scarcer after the middle of the year; and that this relative scarcity of crossbills continued into 2004. In Northern Ireland, there were widespread reports but no confirmed breeding in 2003; in contrast, there were just three reports of Common Crossbills in 2004. Few data were supplied for Scotland and Northumberland, where Common Crossbills can sometimes be numerous in coniferous forests and yet it is very difficult to assess numbers. The figures in the table are therefore likely to be gross underestimates for counties with large areas of conifer plantations, but for lowland counties the totals are more complete.

Common Crossbill	2003	2004		2003	2004
	Total (confirmed)	Total (confirmed)		Total (confirmed)	Total (confirmed)
England, SW	29 (7)	10 (3)	Shropshire	30	10
Dorset	3	7	Staffordshire	4	0
Gloucestershire	6 (2)	0	England, N	43 (7)	33 (3)
Hampshire	4 (4)	2 (2)	Cleveland	4	0
Somerset	16 (1)	1 (1)	Cumbria	5 (4)	0
England, SE	99 (13)	19 (10)	Lancashire &	3 (3)	0
Bedfordshire	1	0	N Merseyside		
Berkshire	3 (3)	2	Northumberland	4	3 (3)
Hertfordshire	20	0	Yorkshire	27	30
Kent	52	0	Wales	22 (10)	25 (1)
Surrey	5 (1)	10 (3)	Anglesey	0	4
Sussex	18 (9)	7 (7)	Brecon	10 (4)	3 (1)
England, E	56 (2)	7 (2)	Caernarfon	0	4
Cambridgeshire	1	0	Ceredigion	1	3
Lincolnshire	12	5 (1)	Denbigh & Flint	3 (3)	0
Norfolk	3 (2)	0	Glamorgan	4	4
Suffolk	40	2 (1)	Gower	0	4
England, C	83 (2)	13 (0)	Gwent	3 (3)	3
Derbyshire	2	3	Meirionnydd	1	0
Leicestershire	47 (2)	0	TOTAL	332 (41)	107 (19)

Scottish Crossbill *Loxia scotica*

The only information submitted was from two RSPB reserves in Highland and the data give little indication of the true status of this species.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 2003 Two sites: two pairs probably bred. **Highland 2004** Two sites: (1) five pairs probably bred; (2) two pairs possibly bred.

Parrot Crossbill *Loxia pytyopsittacus*

As for the previous species, the only information submitted was from an RSPB reserve in Highland (Abernethy Forest) and the data give little indication of the true status of this species.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 2003 One site: one pair probably bred. **Highland 2004** One site: two pairs possibly bred.

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

2003 Two sites: 0–2 pairs. **2004** One site: 0–1 pairs. Clearly the flurry of breeding activity in the early to mid 1990s was a false dawn. The last confirmed breeding was in 2000 and 2001 in Yorkshire, but 2002 was a blank year. The reports listed below all concern birds in potential breeding habitat.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 2003 Two sites: (1) one female trapped on 31st May; (2) one singing male on 10th June. **Caithness 2004** One site: one singing male from 23rd June to 3rd July.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

2003 3–21 pairs. **2004** 2–14 pairs. Though there is an improvement in the numbers reported to the Panel, the totals are but a fraction of the estimated UK population of 70–100 pairs, all in Scotland (Baker *et al.* 2006).

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland 2003 One pair bred and eight pairs possibly bred. **North-east Scotland 2004** Two pairs bred, eight pairs probably bred and one pair possibly bred.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 2003 Two pairs bred, three pairs probably bred plus a further seven singing males. **Highland 2004** One pair probably bred, one pair possibly bred plus one singing male.

Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus*

A full survey of breeding Cirl Buntings was carried out in 2003 and an estimated 697 territories were recorded, all in Devon (Wotton *et al.* 2004). This represents an increase of 54% since the last full survey in 1998. No data were submitted to the Panel for this species in 2004.

A reintroduction scheme began in 2006, when more than 70 Cirl Buntings were released in south Cornwall as part of an innovative project by the RSPB, Paignton Zoo, Natural England and the National Trust. This aims to restore sustainable populations of this species to its former haunts and the releases will continue until 2008.

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