

Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 2012

Mark Holling and the Rare Breeding Birds Panel



Alan Harris

Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla*

Abstract This report documents the status of 94 rare or scarce species which were recorded breeding, or potentially breeding, in the UK in 2012. The year was marked by the first breeding by Great White Egrets *Ardea alba* and a significant influx of Baillon's Crakes *Porzana pusilla*, unprecedented in modern times. Late spring and summer were exceptionally wet, which hampered fieldwork and reduced productivity of some species.

This report marks 40 years of documenting rare breeding birds in the UK by the Rare Breeding Birds Panel (RBBP). It includes details of 88 species or distinctive races that bred (or showed signs of breeding) in the UK in 2012. A further six potential breeding species are listed in Appendix 1. This total of 94 species compares with 96 (including eight potential breeders) in 2011. Back in 1973, when the Panel focused on rare or very rare species only, its 21-page first report covered just 40 species (*Brit. Birds* 68: 5–23).

Previously, this report has covered the four countries of the UK: England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, plus the Isle

of Man since it is part of the same biogeographical area. From 2012 (and in this report), however, we shall also include the Channel Islands. This new unit (for which we shall still use 'the UK' as a shorthand reference) brings us into line with other reporting systems, such as the BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey (BBS; e.g. Risely *et al.* 2013) and Birds of Conservation Concern (e.g. Eaton *et al.* 2009).

Review of the year 2012

A defining feature of 2012 for many species was the impact of a wet and stormy late spring. The 2011/12 winter was milder than the three preceding winters, comparable to

those in the decade leading up to 2008. March was the warmest since 1957 but April and most of May were relatively cold. Northern Ireland and western Britain had a dry spring, but the east and south (and parts of Wales) were extremely wet, ending a long-term drought in these areas. The jet stream settled south of Britain, making the summer months generally cool – June was the coldest since 1991 – and damp. Across the UK it was the wettest June for 100 years, the only exception being northwest Scotland (www.metoffice.gov.uk). Many low-lying areas were flooded and there was storm damage to some trees, affecting species such as the Red Kite *Milvus milvus*.

Five species recorded in 2012 but absent from the 2011 report were Greater Scaup *Aythya marila*, Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*, Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla*, Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* and Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*. Greater Scaup has not bred in the UK since 1999 so a female with a brood in North-east Scotland was one of the surprises of the year, but the habitat (a lowland farm pond) was atypical and the male parent may have been a Tufted Duck *A. fuligula*. Dry conditions in southern Europe apparently forced some typical Mediterranean species northwards, such as Baillon's Crake (at least six calling birds located) and Black-winged Stilt (two pairs attempted to breed). One pair of stilts laid eggs but deserted them in heavy rain. Perhaps the most surprising record of the year was the pair of Rough-legged Buzzards in Co. Durham; display and nest-building were seen in April, but both birds had departed by early May.

Although the anticipated colonisation by Cattle Egrets *Bubulcus ibis* following the first breeding in 2008 has not materialised, numbers of several related species continue to increase. Great White Egrets *Ardea alba* (two pairs) bred in the UK for the first time in 2012, in Somerset, where Little Bitterns *Ixobrychus minutus* (one pair) bred again and the numbers of Eurasian Bitterns *Botaurus stellaris* reached another new peak (34 booming males in that county alone). More Little Egrets *Egretta garzetta* nested in Britain than ever before (866 pairs), and four pairs in Co. Down were the first to breed in Northern

Ireland. Ten pairs of Eurasian Spoonbills *Platalea leucorodia* bred at the colony in Norfolk where they have nested annually since 2010.

Stormy conditions in late May and early June affected the productivity of several raptors, and also limited the opportunities of fieldworkers to visit nests. The poor weather had a serious impact on both tree nesters (notably Red Kites and Honey-buzzards *Pernis apivorus*) and some ground-nesting species, including Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus* and Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*.

The national Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana* survey proved challenging: poor weather hampered census work and some sites were flooded and thus unsuitable for breeding. Nevertheless, it is thought that the 28 singing birds represent a fair estimate of the current population, which has declined substantially since the first survey in 1999. However, the fieldwork for this survey led to the discovery of Baillon's Crakes at three sites (at least). Other species that fared badly during the heavy rain and flooding included Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* (numbers fell to 481 pairs, the lowest for ten years) and the nominate race of Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa l. limosa* (only three young fledged from 51 pairs on territory). Reduced monitoring and consequent under-recording, especially in upland Scotland, probably explains the low numbers of some other species in the report, such as Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*, Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica* and Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*.

Of the few seabirds in this report, Arctic Skuas *Stercorarius parasiticus* continue to cause concern (just 29 fledged young reported in 2012) while, at the opposite end of the UK, Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus* numbers continue to increase, with over 1,000 pairs noted for the first time.

There was no confirmed breeding of Golden Orioles *Oriolus oriolus* for the third consecutive year. Over those same three years, Red-backed Shrikes *Lanius collurio* have bred in Devon, but in 2012 they were unsuccessful for the first time, another victim of the weather. After the run of colder than average winters, winter 2011/12 was generally

mild enabling populations of cold-weather-sensitive species to recover, for example Cetti's *Cettia cetti* and Dartford Warblers *Sylvia undata*. Rarer warblers recorded in 2012 comprised two regular breeders (Savi's *Locustella luscinioides* and Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*) and two which have not yet bred in the UK: Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus* and Great Reed Warbler *A. arundinaceus*.

The 2012 report

This is the first RBBP report since the publication of *Bird Atlas 2007–11* (Balmer *et al.* 2013). The new national atlas presents the results of four years of fieldwork in the breeding season (2008–11) and the positive impact on the volume of data for rarer species has been referred to in previous RBBP reports. References to and comparison with these published atlas results are made throughout this report. *Bird Atlas 2007–11* enables comparison of distribution changes over both 20- and 40-year periods, and some are referred to in this report. For example, Whooper Swans *Cygnus cygnus* showed a 40-year change of +475%, which means that the number of occupied 10-km squares increased by 475% between the first breeding atlas (Sharrock 1976) and *Bird Atlas 2007–11*.

RBBP data form one of the key resources used by Government scientists when making assessments of conservation policies in the UK, in particular the health of networks of conservation sites. These sites are 'classified' on account of their conservation importance and a review of them has been undertaken in the last 12 months. The 2012 report therefore includes summaries by species (where relevant) from this assessment, underlining the conservation importance of collating data on rare breeding birds. The section below gives more detail.

Assessment of the UK SPA network for rare breeding birds

The protection and management of important breeding areas is a major element of the conservation of the UK's rare breeding birds. These areas are legally notified as SSSIs (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) in Britain and as ASSIs (Areas of Special Scientific Interest) in Northern Ireland, and some are also classi-

fied as SPAs (Special Protection Areas) designated under the EU Wild Birds Directive. SPAs are classified for species (or subspecies) listed on Annex I of the Directive and for regularly occurring migratory birds. Selection of key sites for each relevant species gives a 'suite' of sites and together, across all species, these form the UK's SPA network, which currently comprises 269 SPAs covering 28,087.15 km² (about 11% of the area of the UK).

Stroud *et al.* (2001) gave the background to the selection of these areas. Not all UK rare breeding birds have an SPA suite. This is for a range of different reasons, but typically because they are neither listed on Annex I of the Directive nor migratory (for example Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*).

Following earlier reviews of the SPA network (Stroud *et al.* 1990, 2001), JNCC has co-ordinated a third ten-year review of the status of species within the network (JNCC 2014). For rare breeding birds, much of the data come from the RBBP archive and, with permission, we present summaries of status changes within relevant SPA suites in the appropriate species accounts below. For more detail and interpretation see JNCC (2014) – in particular, on the implications of changes in population sizes and distribution.

The proportion of UK populations within the SPA network are typically based on national population estimates presented by the Avian Population Estimates Panel (APEP; Musgrove *et al.* 2013). For species where APEP presents a population range, proportions are typically calculated against the minimum of that range, as undertaken by the second network review (Stroud *et al.* 2001).

The efforts of many UK birdwatchers to report rare breeding birds are central to the UK's ability to report on the status of birds within the SPA network. Of all the assessments needed (total number of sites classified for different individual species), 224 (or 14.5% of the whole network) relate to species on the Panel's list. Thus data actually or potentially collated by the Panel for these sites will continue to provide a significant element of future network assessments.

For the third SPA Review, a number of data issues relating to rare breeding birds

were encountered. Many of these were similar to those highlighted by Stroud *et al.* (2012) relating to Spotted Crakes in particular (a study initiated in the context of the SPA Review). These include:

- Lack of precise locations, such as four- or six-figure grid references for a significant number of records, greatly restricting their value.
- In some years, missing data from regular sites, with no indication whether this reflected a species' absence or simply a lack of survey counts.
- Assumptions about whether birds were present or absent in years lacking data introduced uncertainty to some conclusions about sites and species.
- Lack of data for whole sites – typically for some large sites classified for species such as Greenshank and other widely dispersed upland species.

Data sources and submission

Data for 2012 were received in time for this report from all but two recording areas, one of the best returns ever. The missing areas are Berkshire and West Midlands, neither of which submitted data for the 2011 report either. We hope that the recorders or the bird clubs for these two counties will be able to provide data for these missing years, and for

future years, in due course. However, some data for these counties were available from other sources so the numbers of pairs of each species in this report are broadly comparable with those in other recent RBBP reports.

Bird-of-prey monitoring in many parts of the UK is achieved largely through the work of the various Raptor Study Groups (RSGs). In Scotland, these groups provided area totals, via the Scottish Raptor Monitoring Scheme; in some cases these data cannot be matched with general bird recording areas, so the Scottish RSG areas are used instead. In much of northern England, mainly upland raptors are monitored by an array of groups operating under the Northern England Raptor Forum (NERF). Schedule 1 raptor data from Wales are collated by RSPB Wales under contract to Natural Resources Wales. No data were available from the Northern Ireland RSG, so totals for several raptors that nested in the province in 2012 will be underestimated, in particular Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*, Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*, Merlin *Falco columbarius* and Peregrine Falcon *F. peregrinus*.

Holling *et al.* (2013) suggested that survey work for *Bird Atlas 2007–11* boosted the number of records submitted to the Panel. In fact, the number of unique records submitted to the Panel by the end of June 2014 was



Robert Snell

261. White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*, Mull, Argyll, August 2012. It was another record year for breeding White-tailed Eagles in the UK since the re-establishment programme began.

almost 6,500, a welcome 12% increase over 2011. Less welcome was the fact that ten counties provided data only in the form of published bird reports – although useful, reports generally contain only summary data and we ask counties wherever possible to submit more detailed information, as outlined on our website (www.rbbp.org.uk/rbbp-data-submission). Data from over half of all counties were also submitted past the deadline (31st December), putting pressure on the analysis and report writing stage, and meaning that this report is published in September rather than July.

Other data sources include the reports from Schedule 1 licence holders, Nest Record Scheme returns, national surveys and counts from RSPB reserves. An increasing number of records now come with site details including grid references: the inclusion of accurate grid references is *essential* for validation and eliminating duplicate records. Unfortunately, as in previous years, some otherwise good records could not be used because the location could not be verified. In addition, wherever possible, the number of pairs of less scarce species in a particular year should be based on birds recorded *in that year*, not estimates based on past surveys, since we would rather publish minimum data for the year under review.

Records should be submitted by the end of each calendar year, for the *previous* year's breeding season. Thus, data for 2013 should be submitted by 31st December 2014. The recommendations and guidelines introduced in 2009 (see www.rbbp.org.uk/rbbp-recording-standards) have continued to help to improve the quality of information submitted, and we again refer observers to the scope for improvements in recording identified by Stroud *et al.* (2012). Species-specific recording guidelines are added to the RBBP website as they become available (www.rbbp.org.uk/rbbp-species-recording). Anyone with particular experience in monitoring a rare breeding bird is encouraged to offer their expertise in compiling these guidelines. Finally, to help us to continue to maintain the definitive archive of rare breeding bird records, we always welcome any late submissions and updates to published records. Any additions, amendments and corrections to

published reports covering 2005–11 are made available on the RBBP website (www.rbbp.org.uk/rbbp-reports).

The RBBP List

There was no change to the list of species covered by the RBBP in 2012, but in March 2014, the RBBP List was reviewed against the findings of *Bird Atlas 2007–11*. According to our current criteria for inclusion (see www.rbbp.org.uk/downloads/rbbp_species_selection_criteria.pdf), any species with fewer than 2,000 breeding pairs in a typical year is eligible; species where the population now regularly exceeds this figure will no longer be considered. That review established that two species will be removed with immediate effect (i.e. from next year's report, covering 2013): Red Kite and Woodlark *Lullula arborea*. Other less scarce species whose populations may be close to or above 2,000 breeding pairs include Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*, Hobby *Falco subbuteo* and Cetti's Warbler, but for the time being these will continue to remain on the RBBP list.

Conservation and other uses of RBBP data

It is RBBP policy to make data available for relevant conservation uses, with appropriate controls. Site-specific information is used by JNCC and the country conservation agencies, and national datasets by the RSPB, for survey and conservation planning (as in the SPA Review, above). Over the last 12 months, requests for the use of RBBP data have been received for 11 species, mainly to support survey work.

The population totals published in the *British Birds* reports are also widely used by conservation staff at the RSPB, BTO, JNCC and the four country agencies. All but the most recent RBBP reports are available on the RBBP website (www.rbbp.org.uk/rbbp-reports); the 'Explore the Reports' feature (www.rbbp.org.uk/rbbp-online-reports) permits access to those reports, firstly by species and then by year. We are keen to encourage individuals to use this to compile species reviews for potential future publication as stand-alone papers or within the annual RBBP reports – please contact the Panel Secretary. In all cases where RBBP data

are used we ask that the RBBP is acknowledged and that we receive copies of any new datasets compiled and papers published. Our data access policy is available at www.rbbp.org.uk/rbbp-access-policy.

The Panel

The current membership of the Panel is: Mark Eaton (Chairman), Ian Francis, Simon Gillings, Andrew King, David Norman, David Stroud and Mark Holling (Secretary). Members serve in a personal capacity, but some also reflect the interests and requirements of the funding partners. The Panel is funded by the JNCC (on behalf of the country conservation agencies) and the RSPB.

This year, for the first time, we also welcome a financial contribution from the BTO. Panel membership aims to achieve broadly representative geographic coverage and to include members who have active involvement in monitoring schemes and specialist research groups, or who participate in various external groups, to facilitate liaison between the Panel and conservationists, nest recorders, researchers, ringers, surveyors and others.

The RBBP twitter account was launched in April and you can keep up to date with the work of the Panel and changes to the RBBP website by following us at [@ukrbbp](https://twitter.com/ukrbbp), although we request that no sensitive data are broadcast via twitter.

Terminology

Recording areas

The recording areas used in this report are the same as in previous reports (see Holling *et al.* 2007 and www.rbbp.org.uk); these match the bird recording areas used by recorders across the UK, with Gower and East Glamorgan presented separately *contra* Ballance & Smith (2008). We attempt to collate all breeding records by recording area (usually 'county') wherever possible and urge contributors to submit records in the same manner, via recorders. In some cases, records are presented under different area groupings, for instance by Raptor Study Group (RSG) area, although it is our intention to summarise data by recording area wherever possible. Thus, the Central Scotland RSG covers an area roughly equivalent to the Upper Forth recording area, but does include parts of neighbouring recording areas including Clyde; the South Strathclyde RSG area includes both Ayrshire and Clyde and some of the Clyde Islands; and the Tayside RSG area equates approximately to the recording areas of Angus & Dundee together with Perth & Kinross. However, North-east Scotland RSG includes both that recording area and the eastern part of the Moray & Nairn recording area; and Highland RSG includes not only the Highland and Caithness recording areas but also the western part of Moray & Nairn. Scottish Raptor Study Group area boundaries are shown on their website: www.scottishraptorstudygroup.org/aboutus.html

Records from the Greater London recording area, which covers all areas within a 20-mile radius of St Paul's Cathedral, are reported as follows, in order to reduce the possibility of duplication with surrounding county recording areas. Under the Greater London heading we list only records from

the Inner London area and the old county of Middlesex. Records away from this area and within the counties surrounding London – Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent and Surrey – are listed under those county headings.

Species banners

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

1. An indication of population status in one of four categories:
 - **very rare** (<30 breeding pairs (bp) per annum);
 - **rare** (30–300 breeding pairs per annum);
 - **scarce** (301–1,000 breeding pairs per annum);
 - **less scarce** (>1,000 breeding pairs per annum).
2. A population estimate, based where possible on the mean maximum population size from the last five years and shown as '5-yr mean' (in this report the five years are 2008–12). In some cases, we show the totals estimated in national surveys, or, particularly for species with poor coverage, the best available national population estimate.
3. The degree of coverage, defined as follows:
 - **near-complete** (RBBP reports present more or less accurate annual totals);
 - **high** (a good estimate of the number of pairs breeding annually, though a small but unknown proportion has not been recorded/reported);
 - **moderate** (a less accurate estimate of the number of pairs breeding annually, which is

nonetheless a significant proportion of the total population);

- **low** (the quality of the data received is so poor that population estimates are of little value for conservation or status reviews; however, maintaining an archive of known sites is useful, and this information can be used in the design of future targeted surveys).
4. The population status as determined by Birds of Conservation Concern 3 (BoCC3) (Eaton *et al.* 2009).

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

Occasional breeding species are defined as having bred at least once in the UK but are not regular breeders. Potential breeding species have not previously bred in the UK but, in some years, show signs that they may do so (e.g. presence of singing males holding territory, pairs in suitable breeding habitat). New colonists are those species that first bred in the UK in 2012, or have been proved to breed in the UK subsequent to 2012.

Definitions of breeding evidence

The definitions of ‘confirmed breeding’, ‘probable breeding’ and ‘possible breeding’ follow those recommended by the European Bird Census Council (Hagemeijer & Blair 1997). Within tables, the

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

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

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

Definition of numbers used

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

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 22 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Amber

26 sites: 18–26 pairs, including one mixed pair. Over the last 40 years, RBBP reports have shown how the Whooper Swan has become established as a regular breeding species with the main population in Shetland, where in the last five years 6–9 pairs have bred (see Holling *et al.* 2010). *Bird Atlas 2007–11* shows a 40-year change of +475%.

England, E

Norfolk One site: one pair bred. The same pair that bred in 2011, which included an injured female, again bred at Welney and this year fledged four young.

Scotland, S

Ayrshire One site: one pair bred. **Clyde** One site: one mixed pair bred. An injured female, which had

summered for the previous ten years, paired with a Mute Swan *C. olor*; eggs were laid but did not hatch.

[Scotland, Mid](#)

North-east Scotland One site: one pair, including an injured bird, summered but did not breed.

[Scotland, N & W](#)

Argyll Two sites: two possible breeding pairs. **Caithness** One site: one probable breeding pair. **Highland** Four sites: two pairs bred and two probable breeding pairs. **Outer Hebrides** Two sites: one pair bred, hatching four but fledging only two young; one probable breeding pair. **Shetland** Eight sites: eight pairs bred. All eight pairs laid eggs, but eggs hatched at only four nests; two pairs fledged young successfully (one and four).

[Northern Ireland](#)

Co. Armagh One site: one pair bred, seen with one young. **Co. Derry** Four sites: three pairs bred, with broods of seven, six and three recorded; one probable breeding pair.

Summering individuals or late-staying pairs were also recorded in a number of counties, including Cambridgeshire, Cumbria, Dumfries & Galloway and North-east Scotland. In addition, a naturalised pair bred in Bedfordshire.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Rare: 5-yr mean 168 bp

Coverage: low

Amber

88 sites: 43–165 pairs. Just two SPAs are classified for breeding Eurasian Wigeons: the Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands and the River Spey–Insh Marshes. Monitoring data are available from the latter site but no whole-site assessments exist for the Peatlands. Assuming that numbers there remain unchanged from the 1990s, a total of 60 pairs are thought to occur at these two sites – 20% of the lower estimate of the British breeding population (300–500 pairs; Sharrock 1976). Numbers reported to the RBBP are typically only about half of the lower end of the estimate and consistent under-recording of pairs in suitable breeding habitat is a problem, especially in the Scottish Highlands and islands and in the North Pennines.

[England, SW](#)

Gloucestershire Two sites: two possible breeding pairs. **Somerset** Two sites: four possible breeding pairs.

[England, SE](#)

Essex Two sites: one pair bred, one probable breeding pair. **Sussex** One site: one probable and one possible breeding pair.

[England, E](#)

Cambridgeshire Three sites: eight possible breeding pairs. **Lincolnshire** Three sites: one probable and three possible breeding pairs. **Northamptonshire** One site: one possible breeding pair.

[England, C](#)

Nottinghamshire One site: four possible breeding pairs. **Staffordshire** One site: one possible breeding pair.

[England, N](#)

Cumbria Five sites: five possible breeding pairs. **Co. Durham** Nine sites: four pairs bred (four broods with 12 young in total), three probable and three possible breeding pairs. **Northumberland** Two sites: two pairs bred.

Yorkshire Four sites: one pair bred (one brood of five), one probable and nine possible breeding pairs.

[Scotland, S](#)

Borders One site: one probable and one possible breeding pair. **Lothian** One site: one possible breeding pair.

[Scotland, Mid](#)

Angus & Dundee Three sites: two pairs bred and two possible breeding pairs. **Moray & Nairn** One site: one possible breeding pair. **North-east Scotland** One site: one possible breeding pair. **Perth & Kinross** Two sites: one probable and one possible breeding pair.

[Scotland, N & W](#)

Argyll Three sites: one probable and three possible breeding pairs. **Caithness** Four extensive sites: nine probable breeding pairs. **Highland** 11 sites: six pairs bred, 31 probable breeding pairs and one possible breeding pair. **Orkney** Eight sites: 14 pairs bred, two probable breeding pairs. **Outer Hebrides** 11 sites: three pairs bred, one probable and 16 possible breeding pairs. **Shetland** Six sites: ten pairs bred, one possible breeding pair.

Records of summering birds and pairs that showed no evidence of breeding are not included in the totals. Such pairs remain together throughout the summer, often at lowland sites, which may occasionally be used for breeding. As well as the counties listed above, summering pairs were reported from Anglesey, Dumfries & Galloway, Fife, Kent, Lancashire & N Merseyside, Leicestershire & Rutland, and Norfolk.

Pintail *Anas acuta***Rare: 5-yr mean 32 bp****Coverage: high****Amber**

15 sites: 3–23 pairs. As few as three confirmed breeding pairs has been recorded only twice before in the 40 years of the RBBP, in 1973 and in 2001 – both years when there was little or no reporting from Orkney, the species' stronghold. A full survey in Orkney in 1994 revealed 17 pairs and nine other males. It is unlikely that many pairs have been missed in Orkney in recent years, so it is notable that

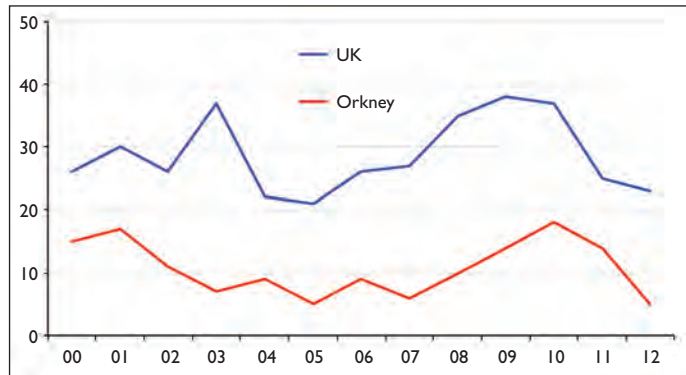


Fig. 1. The maximum total number of breeding pairs of Pintails *Anas acuta* in the UK and in Orkney, 2000–12.

there was no confirmed breeding there in 2012, for only the second time since 2001. Fig. 1 shows the sudden decline in Orkney; it remains to be seen if the current low numbers reflect just a temporary decline, similar to that a decade earlier. Counts of wintering Pintails in the UK have also fallen, by 50% between 2005/06 and 2011/12, and numbers are at their lowest level for 40 years (Austin *et al.* 2014).

England, SE

Essex One site: one possible breeding pair. Kent One site: one possible breeding pair.

England, E

Cambridgeshire Two sites: two possible breeding pairs. Norfolk Two sites: two probable breeding pairs.

England, N

Co. Durham One site: one pair bred – female was found on a nest with five eggs.

Scotland, S

Dumfries & Galloway One site: one probable breeding pair.

Scotland, Mid

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

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Two sites: two pairs bred (two broods, ten fledged young in total) and five probable breeding pairs.

Orkney Four sites: two probable and three possible breeding pairs.

Garganey *Anas querquedula***Rare: 5-yr mean 93 bp****Coverage: high****Amber**

52 sites: 13–83 pairs. *Bird Atlas 2007–11* confirms the difficulty in assessing the numbers of breeding Garganeys, as migrating pairs occur in potential breeding habitats. We check the dates of occurrence and the numbers of males and females present through the breeding season in making our annual assessment.

England, SW

Avon One site: one possible breeding pair. Cornwall One site: one possible breeding pair. Devon One site: one probable breeding pair. Gloucestershire One site: one possible breeding pair. Hampshire One site: one probable breeding pair. Somerset Three extensive sites: four probable and two possible breeding pairs.

England, SE

Buckinghamshire One site: one possible breeding pair. Essex Two sites: one probable and one possible breeding pair. Kent Three sites: three pairs bred, six probable breeding pairs. Oxfordshire One site: one probable breeding pair. Sussex Four sites: one pair bred, five probable breeding pairs.

England, E

Cambridgeshire Three sites: one pair bred, eight probable and one possible breeding pair. Lincolnshire Five sites: eight possible breeding pairs. Norfolk Three sites: two pairs bred, one probable and one possible

breeding pair. **Suffolk** Three sites: one probable and two possible breeding pairs.

[England, C](#)

Nottinghamshire Two sites: two possible breeding pairs. **Staffordshire** One site: one possible breeding pair.

[England, N](#)

Cheshire & Wirral One site: one pair bred, three young fledged. **Cleveland** One site: two possible breeding pairs. **Lancashire & N Merseyside** Three sites: one pair bred and two possible breeding pairs. **Yorkshire** Seven sites: four pairs bred, five probable and five possible breeding pairs.

[Scotland, S](#)

Clyde One site: one probable breeding pair. **Dumfries & Galloway** One site: two possible breeding pairs.

[Scotland, N & W](#)

Outer Hebrides One site: one possible breeding pair.

[Northern Ireland](#)

Co. Antrim One site: one possible breeding pair.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,012 bp

Coverage: high

Amber

350–872 pairs. The Ouse Washes is the only SPA classified for breeding Shoveler and numbers there are well monitored by RSPB and WWT. Since the 1990s, numbers at all the UK's SPAs have increased from 155 to 169 pairs (based on counts of pairs or males; see Gilbert *et al.* 1998). This represents 54% of the minimum estimate of the British population (310 breeding pairs, based on a 5-year mean of the number of confirmed breeding pairs reported to RBBP). *Bird Atlas 2007–11* results suggest that some pairs go unreported to RBBP each year.

Shoveler	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs			
			Co. Durham	1	1
			Greater Manchester	0	2
England, SW	2	28	Lancashire & N Merseyside	29	29
Avon	0	1	Northumberland	1	1
Devon	0	3	Yorkshire	56	147
Dorset	0	1	Wales	6	22
Gloucestershire	1	5	Anglesey	1	12
Isle of Wight	0	1	Ceredigion	0	2
Somerset	1	16	Denbigh & Flint	1	3
Wiltshire	0	1	East Glamorgan	0	1
England, SE	64	131	Gwent	4	4
Bedfordshire	0	1	Scotland, S	0	11
Essex	30	44	Ayrshire	0	1
Greater London	0	1	Clyde	0	6
Hertfordshire	0	10	Dumfries & Galloway	0	3
Kent	33	50	Lothian	0	1
Oxfordshire	0	8	Scotland, Mid	9	34
Surrey	0	1	Angus & Dundee	0	5
Sussex	1	16	Fife	1	1
England, E	148	342	North-east Scotland	0	4
Cambridgeshire	35	91	Perth & Kinross	8	24
Lincolnshire	7	28	Scotland, N & W	20	75
Norfolk	104	105	Argyll	2	29
Northamptonshire	1	6	Highland	0	5
Suffolk	1	112	Orkney	15	18
England, C	6	22	Outer Hebrides	3	20
Leicestershire & Rutland	2	2	Shetland	0	3
Nottinghamshire	3	12	Northern Ireland	0	6
Shropshire	0	3	Co. Antrim	0	3
Staffordshire	1	3	Co. Armagh	0	2
Warwickshire	0	2	Co. Down	0	1
England, N	94	200	Channel Islands	1	1
Cheshire & Wirral	3	9	Jersey	1	1
Cleveland	3	10	TOTALS	350	872
Cumbria	1	1			



Dan Powell

Common Pochards *Aythya ferina*

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 659 bp

Coverage: high

Amber

417–653 pairs. Following a sharp decline in 2011, the total number of breeding Common Pochards rallied in 2012. The trend in RBBP data since the mid 1990s has been one of steady increase (fig. 2), which contrasts with a 38% loss of breeding range in Britain since the 1968–72 Atlas. Much of the recent range contraction is in Scotland and central England.

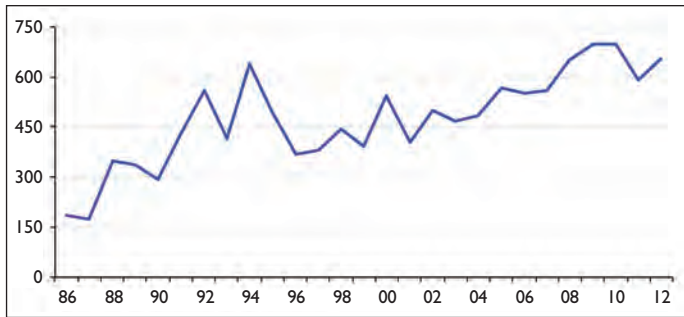


Fig. 2. The maximum total number of breeding pairs of Common Pochards *Aythya ferina* in the UK, 1986–2012.

Common Pochard	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs			
			England, E	52	107
			Cambridgeshire	10	40
			Lincolnshire	5	29
England, SW	22	104	Norfolk	33	33
Avon	4	4	Northamptonshire	1	1
Devon	1	1	Suffolk	3	4
Dorset	2	6	England, C	7	8
Gloucestershire	2	2	Nottinghamshire	3	3
Hampshire	7	7	Shropshire	0	1
Somerset	5	80	Staffordshire	1	1
Wiltshire	1	4	Worcestershire	3	3
England, SE	176	226	England, N	110	122
Bedfordshire	1	1	Cheshire & Wirral	14	14
Essex	73	74	Cleveland	15	15
Greater London	14	14	Co. Durham	1	1
Hertfordshire	13	39	Greater Manchester	3	5
Kent	69	87	Lancashire & N Merseyside	12	13
Oxfordshire	1	6	Northumberland	7	7
Sussex	5	5	Yorkshire	58	67

Common Pochard <i>cont.</i>	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs			
			Scotland, Mid	3	13
			Fife	0	2
			North-east Scotland	0	1
Wales	16	37	Perth & Kinross	3	10
Anglesey	4	25	Northern Ireland	31	31
Carmarthenshire	3	3	Co. Armagh	27	27
Gwent	9	9	Co. Down	4	4
Scotland, S	0	3	Channel Islands	0	2
Borders	0	2	Jersey	0	2
Clyde	0	1	TOTALS	417	653

Greater Scaup *Aythya marila*

Occasional breeder

1–2 (mixed?) pairs. Greater Scaup was last proved to breed in the UK in 1999 (in Co. Armagh) and since then there have been several years with not even a fleeting presence in breeding habitats. The discovery of a female with a brood of six young on a farm pond in North-east Scotland in August was therefore a great surprise. The habitat was atypical for this species, however, and while the identity of the female was confirmed no male was ever seen, which raises suspicion about a mixed pairing, probably with Tufted Duck. There was a second record of a female, paired with a male Tufted Duck, at an inland site in Perth & Kinross in May.

Scotland, Mid

Perth & Kinross: One site: a female paired with a Tufted Duck in May. North-east Scotland One site: one pair bred, though no male seen. Six young seen with a female on 4th August; once fledged the brood moved to nearby pools.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Rare: 52 bp (Eaton et al. 2008)

Coverage: moderate

Red

Seven sites: 10–39 pairs. With the classification of West Inverness-shire Lochs (Highland) in 2009, there are now three SPAs for Common Scoter, which hold most of the British population. The most important is the extensive Flow Country in Caithness/Highland, where reports indicate a continuing decline in the number of breeding pairs, but good survival of young once they are on the water.

Scotland, Mid

Perth & Kinross Two sites: one pair bred, four possible breeding pairs.

Scotland, N & W

Five extensive sites. In the Flow Country (Caithness/Highland) at least seven pairs bred, with a further eight probable breeding pairs. A count of 17 fully grown young was made in early August. At another site in Caithness two pairs bred – nine small young counted and at least three young fledged. Elsewhere in Highland records were received from three sites, where there was a total of 17 probable breeding pairs.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Rare: 5-yr mean 156 bp

Coverage: low

Amber

A minimum of 95 breeding females. The main population, in Strathspey, Highland, was again not monitored fully so totals are less representative than those prior to 2011. In Co. Antrim, four pairs summered at one site, and a record of four immatures in Dumfries & Galloway in late June suggests local breeding, but there was no other evidence. For the third consecutive year, successful breeding was confirmed in Northumberland.

England, N

Northumberland One site: one pair bred. A clutch of ten eggs was found and subsequently three well-grown young were seen.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland Deeside: 43 pairs bred.

Scotland, N & W

Highland Badenoch & Strathspey: at least 51 pairs bred.

Pairs and individuals lingered into the summer in Bedfordshire, Fife, Leicestershire & Rutland, Northamptonshire and Yorkshire.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 888 singing males

Coverage: high

Amber

5–547 singing males or pairs. Compared with 2011, and a record total of 2,009 singing males (additional data were received after publication of the 2011 report), 2012 saw a return to average numbers of Common Quails. Relatively fewer Quails were recorded in northern Britain than in 2011 (35% of all records in northern England, mid and south Scotland, compared with 58% in 2011). There were records of confirmed breeding from East Glamorgan, Lothian, Northumberland and Yorkshire (two).

Common Quail	Total pairs or singing males		
		Greater Manchester	2
		Lancashire & N Merseyside	5
England, SW	121	Northumberland	14
Avon	4	Yorkshire	72
Devon	2	Wales	24
Dorset	5	Anglesey	2
Gloucestershire	24	Caernarfonshire	7
Hampshire	17	Ceredigion	4
Somerset	1	Denbigh & Flint	2
Wiltshire	68	East Glamorgan	1
England, SE	48	Montgomeryshire	1
Bedfordshire	3	Pembrokeshire	1
Buckinghamshire	9	Radnorshire	6
Hertfordshire	5	Scotland, S	48
Kent	4	Ayrshire	3
Oxfordshire	10	Borders	29
Sussex	17	Lothian	16
England, E	79	Scotland, Mid	19
Cambridgeshire	15	Angus & Dundee	2
Lincolnshire	26	Fife	2
Norfolk	32	North-east Scotland	12
Northamptonshire	6	Perth & Kinross	2
England, C	54	Upper Forth	1
Derbyshire	12	Scotland, N & W	29
Herefordshire	3	Argyll	11
Leicestershire & Rutland	8	Caithness	2
Shropshire	24	Highland	5
Staffordshire	5	Orkney	4
Warwickshire	2	Outer Hebrides	7
England, N	122	Northern Ireland	3
Cheshire & Wirral	7	Co. Derry	1
Cleveland	5	Co. Fermanagh	2
Cumbria	4	TOTAL	547
Co. Durham	13		

Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus***Rare: 5-yr mean 209 lekking males****Coverage: moderate****Red**

113 leks were monitored, a further increase in the number checked since RBBP reporting began in 2003, but a similar number (71) were active and the 202 displaying males was a small decrease on the totals in 2010–11. The estimated number of individuals on a transect survey in the 2009/10 winter was 1,285 (see Ewing *et al.* 2012).

Five additional SPAs were classified for Capercaillie in the early 2000s, in Highland and Moray & Nairn (Anagach Woods, Craigmore Wood, Darnaway and Lethen Forest, Morangie Forest, and Novar) bringing to 11 the number of sites in the suite. Together, these held 125 lekking males in the 2000s (cf. 369 in the 1990s).

Scotland, S

Clyde Four leks monitored, no activity recorded.

Scotland, Mid

Moray & Nairn 11 active leks: 16 males. North-east Scotland 12 active leks: 19 males. Perth & Kinross Two active leks: three males.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 46 active leks: 164 males. In the Abernethy Forest recording area, 27 males and 24 females were counted but no young found.

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

Details were received for 324 nesting pairs, a fraction of the estimated 1,255 pairs breeding in Scotland (Dillon *et al.* 2009). In Orkney, 44 monitored sites on four islands produced 27 fledged young. In Shetland, a generally improved breeding season compared to 2011 was reported, although success was poor on Fetlar. For data in other regions, see below.

Ten SPAs have been classified for Red-throated Divers with the total in the 2000s (397 pairs) being similar to that in the 1990s, although an increase in the national population means that the SPA suite now represents a smaller proportion of the British population (42% cf. 30%).

Scotland, S

Clyde Islands On Arran and Bute, at least four pairs bred.

Scotland, Mid

Perth & Kinross Two pairs bred, with three young hatched, and one possible breeding pair. North-east Scotland One pair bred; two eggs were laid but the attempt probably failed.

Scotland, N & W

Highland At least 26 pairs bred with successful breeding at 13 sites at least and 14+ young fledged.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica***Rare: 217 bp (Dillon *et al.* 2009)****Coverage: moderate****Amber**

18–32 pairs. A lack of monitoring effort affects the value of RBBP figures for this species. Twelve SPAs are now classified for Black-throated Divers with the addition of the West Inverness-shire Lochs in 2009. These sites held 100 breeding pairs in the 2000s (45% of the British population, cf. 61% in the 1990s, reflecting an increase in the population elsewhere). Poor breeding performance at some SPAs was reviewed by Brown (2010).

Scotland, S

Clyde Islands No details available, but pairs known to be present.

Scotland, Mid

One pair bred; failed at the egg stage. Also two probable and five possible breeding pairs.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Four pairs bred but only eight out of 13 traditional sites were checked for occupancy. No young known to have fledged. Caithness One pair bred, one young fledged. Highland 11 pairs bred, few data on

productivity; also two probable and one possible breeding pairs. Outer Hebrides Details received for just five pairs: one pair bred (fledging one young), three probable and one possible breeding pairs.

Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Rare: 5-yr mean 110 booming males

Coverage: near-complete



Mark Rayment

66 sites: 106–129 booming males with at least 44 breeding attempts at 19 sites. Six SPAs are classified for breeding Bitterns, and following the addition of Humber Estuary SPA in 2007, they now hold 45 booming males (59% of the estimate for Britain). Proportionately, this is less than in the 1990s (18 males, 90%), which is a consequence of the welcome recovery of the population following major

262. Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*, Minsmere, Suffolk, April 2012.

Eurasian Bittern	No. sites	Minimum no. booming males	Maximum no. booming males	Minimum no. nests	Maximum no. nests
England, SW	11	30	36	14	17
Dorset	1	0	1	0	0
Gloucestershire	1	1	1	0	1
Somerset	9	29	34	14	16
England, SE	5	6	8	2	2
Essex	1	1	1	0	0
Kent	3	4	6	2	2
Sussex	1	1	1	0	0
England, E	35	57	67	21	26
Cambridgeshire	7	9	10	2	2
Lincolnshire	3	1	3	0	0
Norfolk	15	16	20	1	1
Suffolk	10	31	34	18	23
England, C	2	2	2	0	1
Nottinghamshire	2	2	2	0	1
England, N	12	11	15	7	7
Cleveland	1	1	1	0	0
Cumbria	1	1	1	0	0
Greater Manchester	1	0	1	0	0
Lancashire & N Merseyside	1	1	1	0	0
Yorkshire	8	8	11	7	7
Wales	1	0	1	0	0
Anglesey	1	0	1	0	0
TOTALS	66	106	129	44	53

habitat creation and restoration efforts. The 5-year national mean tops 100 for the first time in the Panel's history and *Bird Atlas 2007–11* documents a 40-year range change of +134%.

These data are based on the RSPB's monitoring methodology; the minimum figure is the closest to the number of occupied territories. The minimum number of booming males is based on presence at a site for at least a week (although this may include some wintering birds early in the season), while the maximum figure includes males booming for shorter periods or where it was not possible to confirm that different males were involved.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

Occasional breeder; previously recorded in 1984 and 2010–11

One site: one pair. Evidence that the Little Bittern is becoming established on the Somerset Levels is gradually mounting, with young being raised there in three consecutive years.

England, SW

Somerset One site: one pair bred at Ham Wall RSPB reserve. At least one brood of three fledged; there may have been a second brood, and there was some evidence that a second male was present.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 819 bp

Coverage: moderate

Amber

95 sites: 887–902 pairs. Contributors to the BTO's long-running Heronries Census provide many of the counts included here and without these our totals would be much poorer. Little Egret colonies can be difficult to survey and in some areas, notably southwest England, colonies are under-recorded or not counted. The number of sites is the same as in 2011, yet *Bird Atlas 2007–11* shows confirmed breeding in 122 10-km squares; since egrets are site-faithful, it would seem likely that some colonies are not reported to the RBBP. Nonetheless, the total number of breeding pairs reported increased from 783 in 2011 to a new record of 902. Including colonies in the Channel Islands for the first time makes only a small difference and most of the increase was in eastern and northern England. Two colonies in Co. Down provide the first confirmed breeding records for Northern Ireland.

Little Egret	No. sites	Confirmed and probable breeding pairs			
			Lincolnshire	6	63
			Norfolk	6	114
			Northamptonshire	2	3
England, SW	26	182	Suffolk	8	43
Cornwall	4	8	England, C	2	3
Devon	6	61	Leicestershire & Rutland	2	3
Dorset	3	5	England, N	3	74
Gloucestershire	2	14	Cheshire & Wirral	1	70
Hampshire	4	49	Cumbria	1	3
Somerset	4	27	Yorkshire	1	1
Wiltshire	3	18	Wales	9	75
England, SE	24	310	Anglesey	2	13
Berkshire	1	2	Caernarfonshire	2	40
Buckinghamshire	2	5	Carmarthenshire	2	5
Essex	6	79	Ceredigion	1	4
Hertfordshire	2	7	Gower	1	12
Kent	5	171	Gwent	1*	1+
Oxfordshire	1	1	Northern Ireland	2	4
Sussex	7	45	Co. Down	2	4
England, E	25	237	Channel Islands	4	17
Cambridgeshire	3	14	TOTALS	95	902

* Colony at site but no count.

Alan Harris



Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

New colonist

One site: two pairs. With a large increase in the wintering population of Great White Egrets (records in 6% of 10-km squares in Britain in *Bird Atlas 2007–11*) and in the number of summering birds (Holt 2013), breeding was widely anticipated and two pairs in the Somerset Levels in 2012 were the first confirmed breeding records in the UK (Anderson *et al.* 2013).

England, SW

Somerset One site: two pairs bred fledging a total of four young.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 5 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Amber

Two sites: 10–11 pairs. The breeding colony in Norfolk appears now to be a permanent feature of this report, and it seems likely that nesting elsewhere is to be expected. Indeed, the new RSPB reserve at Wallasea, in Essex, will include nesting lagoons designed for Spoonbills, based on experience of colonies in the Netherlands. Until 2007, there were only one or two colonies in Denmark, numbering up to 34 pairs, but in 2012 there were 103 pairs breeding in five colonies (Nyegaard *et al.* 2014) indicating the speed with which this species can become established.

England, SW

Cornwall One site: one possible breeding pair. Two birds were present for 11 days in May, one staying until late June. There was some indication of nest-building during this period.

England, E

Norfolk One site (Holkham): ten pairs bred; nine successful pairs fledged a total of 19 young.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 27 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Amber

14 sites: 34 pairs bred; five sites produced a total of ten young. This is the lowest number of fledged young since 2007. The six Slavonian Grebe SPAs now hold just 14 pairs: a significant decline since the 1990s (37 pairs). In most years, the majority of the UK population (61% of the 2009 national survey total) occurs within the SPA network. This species' downward trend is the subject of continuing RSPB research.

Scotland, Mid and N & W

Highland/Moray & Nairn 14 sites: 34 pairs reared ten young. Loch Ruthven was again the major site with 13 breeding pairs but only two young fledged there.

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

19 sites: 21–49 pairs. Martin & Smith (2007) showed that numbers rose from around ten confirmed breeding pairs in the early 1970s to 40–50 by the early part of the 2000s. Numbers have since declined, although *Bird Atlas 2007–11* still shows a 40-year change of +382% in terms of 10-km squares occupied. In 2012 only a single bird was recorded at a former breeding site in Scotland, the country that was once their stronghold in the UK.

England, SE

Hertfordshire One site: one pair bred, fledging one young; eight probable breeding pairs. **Kent** One site: one pair bred, one young probably fledged; six probable breeding pairs.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One site: one probable breeding pair, plus two other adults. **Lincolnshire** Two sites: (1) one pair bred, one probable breeding pair; (2) one pair bred.

England, C

Nottinghamshire One site: one pair bred, with three young fledged from four hatched; one possible breeding pair.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral One site: 11 pairs bred and fledged 19 young; one probable breeding pair. **Northumberland** Three sites: (1) one pair bred, fledging two young, and one probable breeding pair; (2) one possible breeding pair; (3) one possible breeding pair. **Yorkshire** Eight sites: (1)–(4) one pair bred; (5) one probable and two possible breeding pairs; (6)–(7) one probable breeding pair; (8) one possible breeding pair.

Wales

East Glamorgan One possible breeding pair on 7th May; the birds moved to a nearby site where they displayed and stayed for a further two days.



Mike Lawrence

263. Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*, Bedfordshire, April 2012.

Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus***Rare: 5-yr mean 43 bp****Coverage: high****Amber**

14–42 pairs and at least five territories with only single birds present; at least ten young fledged. The low number of confirmed breeding pairs resembles the situation in 2007 when there was also wet and windy weather in June and July, restricting fieldwork. In 2007 there were only 12 confirmed breeding pairs, but 23 young fledged. Success in 2012 was much poorer, perhaps because the cold, wet weather occurred earlier in the season, or because the weather prevented some nests being checked later in the season. These data suggest that many pairs did not attempt to lay eggs in 2012. Fieldworkers in Wiltshire reported that 2012 saw an almost complete absence of social wasps (a major food source) and this was the first year since 1975 that there was no confirmed breeding in that county.

The New Forest is the UK's only SPA for the Honey-buzzard, holding four pairs, 12% of the British population. Numbers and trends in this area over a 58-year period were reviewed by Wiseman (2012). The SPA Review highlights the continuing poor quality of surveillance data for this species and specifically requests the Panel to work with recorders to further develop our understanding of the population status and trends of the Honey-buzzard.

England, SW

Dorset Two probable breeding pairs and a further territory with just a single bird present. **Hampshire** Four pairs bred, fledging a total of three young from two successful nests, and three probable breeding pairs. Two other territories occupied by single birds. **Wiltshire** Two probable and one possible breeding pair, and a further territory with a single bird present.

England, SE

Kent One pair bred and fledged one young. **Surrey** Two probable breeding pairs. **Sussex** One pair bred, fledging two young, and six possible breeding pairs.

England, E

Norfolk One pair bred, no young recorded but adults seen taking food into the nest site.

England, C

Nottinghamshire One pair bred (young fledged but number unknown) and one territory with a single bird present.

England, N

Cumbria One pair bred, one possible breeding pair. **Yorkshire** At least two pairs bred, with four young fledged; also two probable and three possible breeding pairs.

Wales

One pair bred (which failed on eggs) and two probable breeding pairs.

Scotland

Dumfries & Galloway Two pairs bred, but no young known to have fledged; also one probable breeding pair.

Moray & Nairn At least one possible breeding pair. **Highland** One probable and one possible breeding pair.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus***Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,121 bp****Coverage: moderate****Amber**

A minimum of 1,087 pairs. The weather had a major impact on the nesting success of Red Kites in many areas, with nests blown out and large chicks lost. For example, of 14 monitored nests in Pembrokeshire, several early clutches were lost to gales in late April and any remaining nests failed following the gales of 7th–8th June.

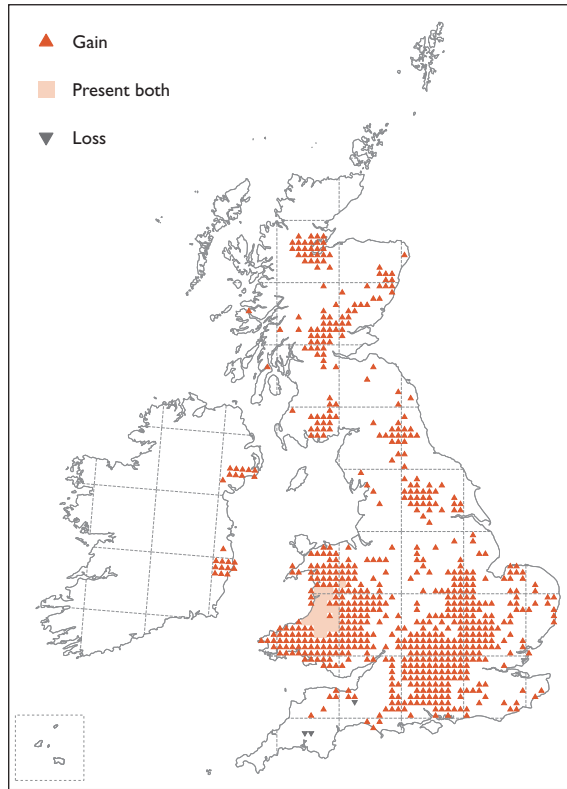
The maps in *Bird Atlas 2007–11* demonstrate very clearly the major range expansion of Red Kites, with a 40-year change of +1,971% and new populations established around the ten different re-establishment programmes in Britain & Ireland (fig. 3). The first modern breeding in Staffordshire was notable in 2012.

Fewer pairs were reported than in 2011, despite the well-documented increases across most areas – the key exception being northern Scotland, where the small population continues to be constrained by illegal persecution, mainly poisoning (Smart *et al.* 2010). The abundance of this species as reported by the RBBP is underestimated because the main populations in Wales and

Fig. 3. Map showing changes in distribution in the breeding season of the Red Kite *Milvus milvus* in Britain & Ireland between 1968–72 and 2008–11 (reproduced with permission from *Bird Atlas 2007–11*).

the Chilterns (marked with an asterisk in the table) are no longer monitored fully. The Welsh Kite Trust estimated that in 2011 populations in these two areas were over 1,000 and 800 pairs respectively, which means that the UK population is likely to be nearer 2,500 pairs.

For a number of years, the Red Kite has been monitored by the BBS, occurring on 104 survey squares in 2013 and showing a +805% change over the period 1995–2012 (Harris *et al.* 2014). The Red Kite now exceeds the criteria for inclusion on the RBBP list of monitored species and this is the last report that will include this species. There are still large parts of England and Scotland where the species has not yet bred, and we hope that the county



Red Kite			
	Total pairs		
England, SW	66	Co. Durham	27
Gloucestershire	5	Northumberland	1
Hampshire	50	Yorkshire	100
Wiltshire	11	Wales	270*
England, SE	169*	Breconshire	50*
Bedfordshire	2	Caernarfonshire	3*
Berkshire	2*	Carmarthenshire	47*
Buckinghamshire	77*	Ceredigion	51*
Hertfordshire	26	Denbigh & Flint	1*
Oxfordshire	42*	East Glamorgan	2*
Surrey	5	Gower	15*
Sussex	15	Gwent	6*
England, E	163	Meirionnydd	4*
Cambridgeshire	8	Montgomeryshire	12*
Lincolnshire	10	Pembrokeshire	44*
Norfolk	7	Radnorshire	35*
Northamptonshire	137	Scotland, S	73
Suffolk	1	Dumfries & Galloway	73
England, C	43	Scotland, Mid	101
Herefordshire	12	Angus & Dundee	1
Leicestershire & Rutland	3	North-east Scotland	19
Nottinghamshire	1	Perth & Kinross	54
Shropshire	25	Upper Forth	27
Staffordshire	1	Scotland, N & W	62
Worcestershire	1	Highland	62
England, N	128	Northern Ireland	12
		Co. Down	12
		TOTAL	1,087

recording network will monitor the predicted expansion of range.

Elenydd-Mallaeln SPA in mid Wales is the single SPA classified for Red Kite and numbers nesting there increased from 15 pairs in the 1990s to 18 pairs a decade later. However, given the major growth of the re-established population elsewhere, this now represents <1% of the British population.

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Rare: 5-yr mean 53 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Red

59–67 pairs; 60 young fledged. Following two re-establishment projects in western Scotland, the population reaches another new peak, with an additional ten confirmed breeding pairs compared with 2011. By 2012, no pairs from the more recent project in eastern Scotland had yet set up territories. However, if they are left unmolested, and if results in Denmark are any guide, we might expect the birds in eastern Scotland to do well. In Denmark, from one pair in 1995 there were 48 breeding pairs, which fledged 52 young, in 2012 (Nyegaard *et al.* 2014).

[Scotland, N & W](#)

Argyll 18 pairs bred, two further territorial pairs. **Highland** 23 pairs bred, and a further five territorial pairs. **Outer Hebrides** 18 pairs bred, and one other territorial pair.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 363 bp

Coverage: moderate

Amber

272–336 breeding females/pairs. Marsh Harrier suffers from a lack of complete recording in the main part of its range (particularly East Anglia, Essex and Kent) so the figures here are an underestimate. The 2005 national survey found 429 breeding females/pairs (Holling *et al.* 2008) yet, without a full survey, 423 pairs were reported to us in 2007, indicating that numbers have continued to increase. Given the range expansion documented by *Bird Atlas 2007–11*, it is likely that the UK population falls in the range 450–500 pairs. To confirm this, it is essential that birders report all nesting Marsh Harriers to county recorders directly or via BirdTrack.

Ten SPAs are classified for breeding Marsh Harriers. No data were available to the SPA Review for four of these, but assuming that numbers there were unchanged from the 1990s, the suite total increased from 116 to 164 pairs (51% of the UK population, based on Musgrove *et al.* 2013).

[England, SW](#)

Dorset Two pairs bred although one nest was flooded out; also a displaying female. **Somerset** Four breeding females, but only one nest was successful.

[England, SE](#)

Essex 21 pairs bred, two probable and one possible breeding pairs. **Kent** Ten pairs bred, five probable breeding pairs. Markedly under-recorded, the county estimate is 100 pairs. **Sussex** Two pairs bred, eight young fledged.

[England, E](#)

Cambridgeshire 23 pairs bred and five probable breeding pairs, but a minimum of 24 other pairs were at least possibly breeding. **Lincolnshire** 33 pairs bred and 11 probable breeding pairs, but limited coverage around the Wash. **Norfolk** A minimum of 60 pairs bred, plus four probable breeding pairs but coverage incomplete, especially in the Broads. **Suffolk** 58 pairs bred and one probable breeding pair.

[England, C](#)

Nottinghamshire One pair bred, fledging two young, and one possible breeding pair.

[England, N](#)

Cheshire & Wirral One pair bred, fledging one young. **Lancashire & N Merseyside** Ten pairs bred. **Northumberland** Two breeding females, paired with one male: both laid eggs but only one was successful, fledging two young. **Yorkshire** 26 pairs bred, eight probable and one possible breeding pairs.

[Scotland, Mid](#)

Angus & Dundee Two pairs bred, one of which fledged two young. **Fife** One pair bred, fledging one young. **Moray & Nairn** One pair bred, fledging two young. **Perth & Kinross** Six pairs bred, and two successful pairs fledged seven young.

[Channel Islands](#)

Jersey Six pairs bred. **Guernsey** At least three pairs bred.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus***Scarce: 662 bp (Hayhow et al. 2013)****Coverage: moderate****Red**

204–329 monitored pairs. From available data on the successful pairs, a minimum of 302 young were fledged (four in England, 23 in Wales and 275 in Scotland). There was only one nest in England, down from eight in 2011, mainly due to the lack of breeding pairs in the Forest of Bowland (Lancashire & N Merseyside).

With the classification of Antrim Hills, Slieve Beagh-Mullaghfad-Lisnaskea (both in Northern Ireland), Renfrewshire Heights (Clyde), and Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors (Highland) in the 2000s, there are now 17 SPAs for breeding Hen Harriers. Together, these hold 207 pairs (30% of GB and 19% of all-Ireland populations), only a slight increase from 201 pairs in the 1990s, despite the new classifications. This reflects the fact that there have been significant declines at several other sites.

Hen Harrier	Confirmed breeding pairs	Territories occupied by pairs			
			Dumfries & Galloway	2	5
			Scotland, Mid	29	47
			Moray & Nairn	4	9
England	1	1	North-east Scotland	0	1
Wales	32	40	Perth & Kinross	23	35
Breconshire	1	1	Upper Forth	2	2
Caernarfonshire	4	4	Scotland, N & W	126	212
Denbigh & Flint	7	8	Argyll	24	51
Meirionnydd	9	11	Caithness	3	14
Montgomeryshire	9	9	Highland	15	18
Radnorshire	2	7	Orkney	66	110
Scotland, S	8	15	Outer Hebrides	18	19
Ayrshire	3	3	Northern Ireland	3	4
Borders	2	4	Co. Antrim	3	4
Clyde	0	2	Isle of Man	5	10
Clyde Islands	1	1	TOTALS	204	329

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus***Very rare: 5-yr mean 14 bp****Coverage: near-complete****Amber**

Six sites: 6–9 pairs fledged a minimum of 15 young. Up to seven single birds were also recorded, two of those at former breeding sites in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk. This is the lowest number of nesting pairs since 1999, when there were 4–11 pairs. The low numbers largely reflect the species' fortunes in East Anglia. It seems that birds returned to traditional areas but did not pair up, perhaps because of the inclement weather early in the season. Despite this setback, those pairs that did nest were all successful and 15 fledged young is only a little below the 5-year mean of 17.8 (2008–12).

England, S

Five sites: five 'pairs' bred (at one site a polygamous male paired with two females), 11 young fledged; one probable and two possible breeding pairs. Four single birds were associating with pairs or visiting former nest sites.

England, E

Lincolnshire One site: one pair bred, four young fledged.

Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis***Scarce: 5-yr mean 464 bp****Coverage: moderate****Green**

363–514 pairs. This is the highest maximum total reported by RBBP in our 40-year history, but is still believed to be an underestimate. *Bird Atlas 2007–11* reports confirmed or probable breeding from 400 10-km squares, yet in some areas measured breeding density is much greater than one

pair per 10-km square. In 2012, 11 nests were monitored in a single 10-km square in the New Forest (Hampshire) while in Gwent one square held eight pairs.

Northern Goshawk	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs			
			Northumberland	21	35
			Yorkshire	20	36
			Wales	64	100
England, SW	88	102	Anglesey	0	1
Cornwall	1	1	Breconshire	10	17
Devon	18	20	Caernarfonshire	0	4
Gloucestershire	29	30	Carmarthenshire	5	5
Hampshire	31	38	Ceredigion	2	4
Somerset	0	4	Denbigh & Flint	4	6
Wiltshire	9	9	East Glamorgan	3	5
England, SE	2	5	Gower	3	6
Essex	1	1	Gwent	24	24
Kent	0	1	Meirionnydd	0	2
Surrey	0	1	Montgomeryshire	5	5
Sussex	1	2	Pembrokeshire	0	3
England, E	8	11	Radnorshire	8	18
Cambridgeshire	0	1	Scotland, S	56	65
Norfolk	3	5	Ayrshire	1	5
Suffolk	5	5	Borders	28	31
England, C	34	56	Clyde	0	1
Derbyshire	10	11	Dumfries & Galloway	26	26
Herefordshire	5	20	Lothian	1	2
Nottinghamshire	7	8	Scotland, Mid	58	64
Shropshire	10	11	Central Scotland RSG	2	3
Staffordshire	1	3	North-east Scotland	50	53
Warwickshire	0	2	Tayside RSG	6	8
Worcestershire	1	1	Scotland, N & W	3	3
England, N	48	105	Highland	3	3
Cheshire & Wirral	0	1	Northern Ireland	2	3
Cleveland	0	1	Co. Antrim	2	2
Cumbria	3	12	Co. Down	0	1
Co. Durham	3	10	TOTALS	363	514
Lancashire & N Merseyside	1	10			

Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*

Potential breeder



Dan Powell

Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*

One site: 0–1 pairs. Rough-legged Buzzard has appeared in our reports on only two previous occasions: in 1975, nest-building and display were observed in Lincolnshire (Sharrock *et al.* 1978), while in 1987 a single bird was seen in woodland in June in Suffolk (Spencer *et al.* 1989). The 2012 record recalls the first of those but, as then, the birds left the area without progressing beyond nest-building.

England, N

Co. Durham One site: one probable breeding pair. Two birds present since October 2011 were seen displaying and nest-building in April, but the male was not seen after 22nd April and the female stayed only until 1st May.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

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

Coverage: moderate

Amber

171–311 pairs. Six new SPAs for Golden Eagles were classified in 2010: Cairngorms Massif, Foinaven, Glen Affric to Strathconon, Glen Etive and Glen Fyne, and Moidart and Ardgour (all Highland) and Jura, Scarba and the Garvellachs (Argyll). At the time of the 2003 national survey (Eaton *et al.* 2007), all 12 SPAs in the current suite held 124 pairs – 28% of the UK population and 2.4% of the European population.

Golden Eagle	Singles ¹	Probable breeding pairs ²	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs	Min. no. young fledged
England, N	1	0	0	0	0
Scotland, S (mainland)	2	2	1	3	0
Scotland, S (Clyde Islands)	0	0	5	5	3
Angus & Dundee	0	1	4	5	5
Central Scotland RSG	0	7	3	10	2
North-east Scotland	4	5	9	14	10
Perth & Kinross	1	7	11	18	8
Argyll	0	27	35	62	22
Highland RSG	7	73	76	149	45
Outer Hebrides (Lewis & Harris)	0	7	17	24	11
Outer Hebrides (Uists)	1	11	10	21	6
TOTALS	16	140	171	311	112

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

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Rare: 5-yr mean 208 bp

Coverage: moderate

Amber

192–209 pairs. A minimum of 300 young fledged. Summering or possible breeding pairs were also widely reported but are not included in these totals. Not all nests within the core area of central and northern Scotland are recorded each year, leading to a small underestimate, but newer populations in southern Scotland, England and Wales continue to increase slowly. Nine SPAs are classified for Osprey and these sites are used for feeding as well as nesting. In the 2000s, 17 pairs nested within these SPAs, although a much greater number (76 pairs or 38% of the UK population) use lochs within the SPA suite for some or all of their feeding requirements (i.e. those territories within c. 20 km of the nine sites).

England, E

Northamptonshire One pair bred, two young thought to have fledged.

England, C

Leicestershire & Rutland Three pairs bred, fledging seven young.



Dale Benham

264. A migrant juvenile Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* in Yorkshire, August 2012.

England, N

Cumbria Three pairs bred, with three young known to have fledged from two of these. **Northumberland** Two pairs bred, each hatched three young but torrential rain ensured that only three fledged; one other pair on territory did not breed.

Wales

Meirionnydd Two pairs bred, fledging four young. **Montgomeryshire** One pair bred, three young were hatched but only one fledged.

Scotland, S

Borders Ten pairs bred; seven successful pairs fledged 16 young. **Clyde** Six pairs bred, five successful pairs fledged eight young; four other territorial pairs. **Clyde Islands** One pair bred, two young fledged. **Dumfries & Galloway** Six pairs bred, four successful pairs fledged six young. **Lothian** One probable breeding pair.

Scotland, Mid

Angus & Dundee Nine pairs bred; eight successful pairs fledged 14 young. **Moray & Nairn** 11 pairs bred, nine successful pairs fledged 18 young. **North-east Scotland** 20 pairs bred, 15 successful pairs fledged 25 young; one other territorial pair. **Perth & Kinross** 32 pairs bred, 25 successful pairs fledged 44 young; two other territorial pairs. **Upper Forth** 17 pairs bred, 12 successful pairs fledged 22 young; two other territorial pairs.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll 17 pairs bred, 14 successful pairs fledged 39 young; two other territorial pairs. **Caithness** Two pairs bred fledging five young. **Highland** 49 pairs bred, 41 successful pairs fledged 81 young; four other territorial pairs.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean: 1,184 bp

Coverage: moderate

Green

At least 340 sites: a minimum of 1,531 territories; 84 confirmed breeding pairs. *Bird Atlas 2007–11* confirms that the Water Rail is a widespread but local breeding species, which is difficult to record easily. The RBBP's records supplement the atlas maps with numerical data but this is compromised by uneven patterns of recording. We ask counties to provide data relating to the breeding season in question, but three counties had no detailed numbers for 2012 (these counties provided estimates based on survey work conducted in recent years – numbers given in parentheses in the table) and for three there were no site details. We ask all observers to report all records of Water Rails from the March to August period so that the national population estimate can be refined.

Water Rail	Sites	Territories			
			Co. Durham	8	8
			Greater Manchester	5	29
			Lancashire & N Merseyside	–	(175)
England, SW	32	234	Northumberland	14	15
Avon	3	5	Yorkshire	22	68
Cornwall	1	1	Wales	25	48
Devon	6	6	Anglesey	2	15
Dorset	5	104	Breconshire	1	1
Gloucestershire	4	4	Caernarfonshire	1	4
Hampshire	8	30	Carmarthenshire	1	1
Isle of Wight	1	4	Ceredigion	1	3
Somerset	2	78	East Glamorgan	6	6
Wiltshire	2	2	Gower	4	4
England, SE	69	339	Gwent	1	6
Bedfordshire	6	8	Montgomeryshire	2	2
Essex	6	20	Radnorshire	6	6
Hertfordshire	4	6	Scotland, S	32	65
Kent	38	(250)	Ayrshire	3	4
Oxfordshire	1	1	Borders	17	46
Surrey	7	10	Clyde	4	5
Sussex	7	44	Dumfries & Galloway	7	9
England, E	41	322	Lothian	1	1
Cambridgeshire	3	17	Scotland, Mid	12	61
Lincolnshire	11	13	Angus & Dundee	2	2
Norfolk	10	13	Moray & Nairn	–	(40)
Northamptonshire	2	4	North-east Scotland	4	6
Suffolk	15	275	Perth & Kinross	6	13
England, C	17	56	Scotland, N & W	28	35
Derbyshire	4	5	Argyll	13	17
Leicestershire & Rutland	1	5	Caithness	1	1
Nottinghamshire	5	11	Highland	7	7
Shropshire	1	1	Orkney	7	10
Staffordshire	4	20	Northern Ireland	1	1
Warwickshire	–	8	Co. Antrim	1	1
Worcestershire	2	6	Isle of Man	1	1
England, N	76	366	Channel Islands	3	3
Cheshire & Wirral	8	17	Jersey	3	3
Cleveland	10	42	TOTALS	337	1,531
Cumbria	9	12			

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 26 singing males Coverage: moderate

Amber

11 sites: 0–28 pairs/singing males. A national survey of Spotted Crakes was undertaken in 2012 and national organiser Sabine Schmitt supplied the following summary of the results.

‘During the second UK-wide survey of Spotted Crakes under the Statutory Conservation Agency and RSPB Annual Breeding Bird Scheme (SCARABBS), 28 singing males were recorded at 11 sites in Scotland and England, a decline of 65% since the first national survey, in 1999. Surveying aimed to cover all 135 sites where Spotted Crakes had been recorded in the breeding season between 1999 and 2011, but full coverage could not quite be achieved due to adverse weather conditions and subsequent flooding of sites – it is not thought, however, that many birds were missed. Some regular sites, such as the Ouse Washes, were completely flooded and so unsuitable for crakes in 2012, but this seems unlikely to be the cause of a decline of such magnitude; numbers reported annually to the Panel have declined steadily since 1999, which appears to represent a modern high point for Spotted Crakes in the UK. The reasons for the

recent decline are unknown; Stroud *et al.* (2012) presented evidence for the widespread loss of breeding habitat (land drainage and wetland conversion) being the cause of decline from a much larger population in the early nineteenth century.'

The SPA suite for Spotted Crake comprises four sites, and the number of calling males in these areas has declined from 23 to 11 (thought to represent 39% of the UK population in 2012).

England, SW

Somerset One site: up to four heard, with earliest on 16th May and last on 20th July.

England, E

Cambridgeshire Two sites: (1) Nene Washes: up to three heard from 20th May to 27th June; (2) one heard from 26th June to 11th July. Lincolnshire One site: one heard between 11th and 21st May.

England, N

Co. Durham One site: one heard occasionally in early July. Lancashire & N Merseyside One site: two heard on 12th June. Yorkshire Three sites: (1) extensive site with eight singing males; (2) two heard on 21st June; (3) one heard for two weeks in early June.

Scotland, Mid

Angus & Dundee One site: up to four heard, between 9th and 25th May.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll One site: one heard on 2nd or 3rd May only.

Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla*

Potential breeder

Three sites: 0–6 pairs/singing males. The only previous entry for Baillon's Crake in the RBBP reports was in 2001, when a singing male took up residence in Kent for 11 days in late June/July (Ogilvie *et al.* 2003), although there was also a comparable record of one in song in 1999, also in Kent, from 6th June to 20th July (Rogers *et al.* 2000). Breeding occurred in England in the nineteenth century but has not been reported since (Brown & Grice 2005), so the mini-influx of 2012 was unprecedented, and may have gone unnoticed had it not coincided with extra fieldwork for the Spotted Crake survey, which required listening for singing birds in suitable crake habitats at night. At least six birds were identified and accepted by BBRC (Hudson *et al.* 2013) but there were also unverified reports from Somerset and Norfolk. For further details, see Ausden *et al.* (2013).

The nearest regularly breeding Baillon's Crakes are in southern and eastern Europe where the unusually dry conditions in spring 2012, particularly in southern Spain, may have encouraged migrating Baillon's Crakes to continue north in search of more suitable habitat. The very wet conditions in England and Wales in spring 2012 meant that many marshes were, at least initially, potentially more suitable for settlement than normal.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One site: one heard from 7th to 19th June.

Wales

Anglesey One site: at least four (but possibly up to six) calling birds. The first was heard on 22nd May, and the last record was on 14th July. Ceredigion One site: one (but possibly two) calling birds from 25th to 28th June.

Corn Crake *Crex crex*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,233 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Red

1,280 singing males. Oronsay and South Colonsay SPA (Argyll) was classified for Corn Crakes in 2008 bringing the SPA suite for this species to 11 sites. Data from the 2009 national survey (Wotton *et al.* in prep.) shows that the full SPA suite now holds c. 350 calling males (29% UK), significantly more than the 204 in ten SPAs in the 1990s (then 42% UK). The increasing number and declining proportion reflect the welcome increase in numbers both inside and outside SPAs as a consequence of focused encouragement of appropriate agricultural habitat management.

The standard recording unit for Corn Crakes is the singing male and all counts below refer to the maximum total of singing males in each area.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One extensive site (Nene Washes): six. Lincolnshire One site: one.

Wales

Anglesey One site: one on 15th–23rd July.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland One site: two from 16th May to 10th July.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Total 668: Coll 103, Colonsay & Oronsay 71, Iona 31, Islay 86, Mull 2, Staffa 2, Tiree 371, Treshnish Isles 2. Caithness Total 1. Highland Total 53: Canna 4, Eigg 1, Mainland 10, Skye 38. Orkney Total 32. Outer Hebrides Total 514: Barra and Vatersay 98, Benbecula 13, Berneray 6, Harris 11, Lewis 142, North Uist 131, South Uist 113. Shetland Total 1.

Northern Ireland

One site: one heard.

Common Crane *Grus grus*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 18 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Amber

Seven sites: 12–19 pairs. Thirteen young fledged. The breeding population seems to have stabilised yet there was a significant range expansion in 2012, with the first successful breeding in Scotland in modern times (breeding may have occurred in Caithness in 1997 but could not be confirmed; Forrester *et al.* 2007). The Great Crane Project, which has been reintroducing Common Cranes to the Somerset Levels since 2010, had its first success in 2014.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One site: one pair bred and fledged one young; one probable breeding pair. Norfolk One extensive site (Norfolk Broads): six pairs bred, all were successful and nine young fledged; also one probable and two possible breeding pairs plus four other adults. Suffolk One site (Lakenheath): two pairs bred, each fledging one young.

England, C

Shropshire One extensive site: one possible breeding pair. What was presumably this pair was also seen at several locations in Cheshire & Wirral and Greater Manchester.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral/Greater Manchester See under Shropshire. Yorkshire Two extensive sites: (1) two pairs bred but no young were fledged; also one probable breeding pair; (2) one possible breeding pair and up to four other adults.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland: One site: one pair bred, fledging one young.

Great Bustard *Otis tarda*

Reintroduced population first bred in 2007

One extensive site: 1–2 pairs. After six years of breeding, young have fledged in only one year, 2009.

England, SW

Wiltshire One site: one pair bred and one probable breeding pair. At least one egg was laid in at least one nest but it was lost to a predator (possibly Fox *Vulpes vulpes*) before hatching.

Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 396 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Amber

Seven counties: 473 confirmed breeding pairs fledged a minimum of 168 young. This is the highest number of breeding pairs of Stone-curlew reported by the RBBP. Porton Down, Salisbury Plain and Breckland comprise the SPA suite for Stone-curlew. In the 1990s, these sites held 157

pairs (84% UK) and by 2011 they held 230 pairs (66% UK). This reflects the increase in numbers away from these SPAs – the population increased by 84% between the five-year periods of 1994–98 and 2006–10 based on RBBP data, showing the impact of long-term focused conservation efforts.

Stone-curlew	Confirmed breeding pairs	Min. no. young fledged			
			Oxfordshire	4	0*
			Sussex	1	0
England, SW	125	61*	England, E	336	104*
Hampshire	28	8*	Norfolk	149	28*
Wiltshire	97	53	Suffolk	187	76
England, SE	12	3*	TOTALS	473	168
Berkshire	7	3			

* Number of young fledged not based on all pairs present.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Occasional breeder

Two sites: 1–2 pairs. These are the first reports since 2008, when a pair unsuccessfully bred in Cheshire & Wirral. Only once before has there been more than one pair in a year in the UK, in 2005, but the two pairs in spring 2012 were part of a wider influx of at least 30 birds into England and Wales and also the Netherlands (Hudson *et al.* 2013). Drought conditions in southern Europe may have led to these birds moving north, but the wet summer in Britain caused the nest in Somerset to be deserted.

England, SW

Hampshire One site: one probable breeding pair. A female arrived on 27th May, joined by a male on 2nd June. Copulation and nest-scraping were observed, but no eggs were laid and the birds were last seen on 9th June. **Somerset** One site: one pair bred. Three birds arrived at Curry Moor on 2nd June and four eggs were laid, but the nest was subsequently deserted, probably due to the wet and cold conditions; the birds had already moved on by 9th June.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,663 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Amber

At least 110 sites: 1,934 pairs. The Stour and Orwell, and Humber Estuary were added to the SPA suite in 2005 and 2007 respectively and bring the total sites classified for Avocet to eight. Together these sites held 885 pairs (59% UK) using RBBP data for the period 2005–09 (and making assumptions as to missing counts in some years). This is a substantial increase from the 1990s

Avocet	No. sites	Confirmed breeding pairs			
			England, C	4	16
			Leicestershire & Rutland	1	5
England, SW	6	36	Nottinghamshire	1	5
Gloucestershire	1	2	Staffordshire	1	1
Hampshire	4	33	Worcestershire	1	5
Somerset	1	1	England, N	22	240
England, SE	30	508	Cheshire & Wirral	2	27
Essex	14	178	Cleveland	2	28
Kent	10	273	Co. Durham	1	4
Sussex	6	57	Lancashire & N Merseyside	4	87
England, E	47	1,107	Northumberland	2	3
Cambridgeshire	1	29	Yorkshire	11	91
Lincolnshire	11	374	Wales	1	27
Norfolk	24	496	Gwent	1	27
Suffolk	11	208	TOTALS	110	1,934

when six of these sites held 549 pairs – 93% of the then UK total. This is a consequence of the significant spread in the last decade as well as increasing numbers at sites within the existing range (see fig. 4 in Holling *et al.* 2013). The rapid increase in the number of breeding pairs continued in 2012 with another new peak and the first breeding in Somerset and Staffordshire. Success generally in 2012 was poor because many nests were flooded out in heavy rain in the late spring.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 611 bp

Coverage: moderate

Green

481 pairs. This is the lowest total for ten years, which reflects the unusually wet spring. In many areas, pairs arrived but did not settle and were therefore not included in county totals. A large proportion of those that remained lost their nests in floods; some nesting attempts had probably already failed before monitoring visits were made.

Little Ringed Plover	Confirmed and probable breeding pairs	Warwickshire	3
		West Midlands	3
		Worcestershire	8
England, SW	41	England, N	166
Avon	1	Cheshire & Wirral	16
Gloucestershire	11	Cleveland	5
Hampshire	18	Cumbria	10
Somerset	5	Co. Durham	6
Wiltshire	6	Greater Manchester	10
England, SE	60	Lancashire & N Merseyside	39
Bedfordshire	11	Northumberland	9
Berkshire	1	Yorkshire	71
Buckinghamshire	4	Wales	58
Essex	6	Breconshire	3
Greater London	8	Carmarthenshire	40
Hertfordshire	5	Denbigh & Flint	3
Kent	12	East Glamorgan	5
Oxfordshire	6	Gower	1
Surrey	3	Montgomeryshire	3
Sussex	4	Radnorshire	3
England, E	41	Scotland, S	4
Cambridgeshire	9	Borders	1
Lincolnshire	8	Clyde	1
Norfolk	14	Dumfries & Galloway	1
Northamptonshire	4	Lothian	1
Suffolk	6	Scotland, Mid	9
England, C	102	Angus & Dundee	1
Derbyshire	15	Fife	4
Herefordshire	5	Moray & Nairn	1
Leicestershire & Rutland	11	North-east Scotland	2
Nottinghamshire	12	Upper Forth	1
Shropshire	10	TOTAL	481
Staffordshire	35		

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Scarce: 423 breeding males (Hayhow *et al.* in prep.)

Coverage: low

Amber

In 2012, data were received for 45 breeding pairs nesting within the main Scottish range, with records from mountain ranges within the recording areas of **Angus & Dundee**, **Highland**, **North-east Scotland** and **Perth & Kinross**. There were also records of two birds in likely nesting

habitat on Arran (Clyde Islands) and from Argyll, although the latter may have been late passage birds. In northern England, a male was recorded on two dates in June.

Eight SPAs have been classified for Dotterel. Although in the 1990s these held 469 'pairs' (56% of the UK total), the recent national survey in 2011 (Hayhow *et al.* in prep.) found just 241 'pairs' (38% UK).

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Scarce: 300+ bp (Jackson 2009)

Coverage: low

Red

42–56 apparently occupied territories. The low total reflects the poor coverage and reporting from Shetland. Fetlar is the single SPA for Whimbrel and numbers there have fallen from 65 pairs in the 1990s to just 20 (mean of 2010–12 counts; 6% of the UK total). The decline on Fetlar mirrors declines elsewhere in Shetland (Jackson 2009).

Scotland, N & W

Orkney Two sites: two probable breeding pairs. Shetland Counts from Fetlar and Unst totalled 42 confirmed and 12 probable breeding pairs. Also present on Yell and Mainland, but no data submitted.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Rare: 5-yr mean 61 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Red

Ten sites: 52–55 pairs.

L. l. limosa

Seven sites: 48–51 pairs. The Nene and Ouse Washes are the two SPAs classified for breeding Black-tailed Godwits (*L. l. limosa*). Numbers there increased slightly from 42 pairs in the 1990s to 47 (87% of the UK total) in 2005–09. Although overall numbers in 2012 were virtually identical to those in 2011, success was very poor, largely due to flooding. Just three young fledged, at one site.

England, SW

One site: one pair bred, but was unsuccessful.

England, SE

Kent One site: one probable breeding pair.

England, E

Cambridgeshire Two sites: (1) Nene Washes: 41 pairs bred but no young fledged; (2) Ouse Washes: one pair bred, the first for seven years, and fledged three young. Norfolk One site (Welney): five pairs bred, three young seen but none fledged.

England, N

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



Alan Harris

Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa*

L. l. islandica

Three sites: four pairs and one single. Only one young fledged from the Northern Isles in 2012.

Scotland, N & W

Orkney Two sites: (1) one pair bred, thought to have failed at the egg stage; (2) one pair bred and fledged one young. **Shetland** One site: two pairs bred, but both failed. Elsewhere, a single male held territory at a recently used site.

Ruff Calidris pugnax

Very rare: 5-yr mean 9 females

Coverage: high

Red

Four sites: 2–9 females. This year's reports include the first records from Wales in the RBBP era.

Four SPAs (Lower Derwent Valley, Nene Washes, Ouse Washes, and Ribble and Alt Estuaries) are classified for breeding Ruff, although only one of these reported breeding in the 2005–09 period. The long-term decline of the Ruff as a UK breeding species mirrors trends across continental Europe (Girard *et al.* 2009; Rakhimberdiev *et al.* 2011). Huntley *et al.* (2007) predicted that the Ruff would be extinct as a UK breeding bird by the end of the twenty-first century, which seems close to being realised already. Even in Denmark, where numbers of breeding pairs in the last five years have been stable at 36–69, the total is less than half that recorded in 2002 (124–126 pairs; Nyegaard *et al.* 2014). Austin *et al.* (2014) described how numbers of migrating Ruffs in western Europe have also decreased, indicating a decline in breeding populations and/or an eastwards shift in migration routes or breeding populations.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One site: a male and female were displaying on 29th May but all sites in the county were affected by flooding. Lekking males were also recorded in **Norfolk** but were present only briefly early in the season.

England, N

Lancashire & N Merseyside One site: 14 males and at least two females attended a lek in late April. The dominant male was seen to mate with two females on 2nd May. Two very small young were seen in August. **Yorkshire** One site: up to 15 males and four females were present at leks early in the season; three males and a single female remained into May. Four newly hatched young were seen on 7th June.

Wales

Denbigh & Flint One site: in late May, three males and two females attended a lek but no birds remained after 29th May. Larger numbers of birds at this site were recorded in April and early May, with up to 14 displaying males, but these had departed by 18th May.

Purple Sandpiper Calidris maritima

Very rare: 5-yr mean 1 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Amber

One site: one pair. After a blank year in 2011, one pair was again reported in 2012.

Scotland, N

One site: one pair bred, fledging one young.

Red-necked Phalarope Phalaropus lobatus

Very rare: 5-yr mean 30 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Red

17 sites: 33–39 breeding males. Fetlar is the only SPA classified for Red-necked Phalarope, and numbers there declined markedly from 30 'pairs' in the 1990s to 11 in 2005–09 (based on RBBP data). This currently represents about half of the British population. However, numbers at other sites in Shetland, and elsewhere in Scotland, have increased recently.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll One site: two probable breeding males bred. **Outer Hebrides** One site: three breeding males. **Shetland** 15 sites: 30 males bred, plus four probable breeding males.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus***Very rare: 5-yr mean 4 bp****Coverage: high****Amber**

Three sites: 0–3 pairs. In Denmark, numbers have increased from 6–11 pairs in 2001 to 27–34 pairs (Nyegaard *et al.* 2014). The Scottish population is much smaller, but regular breeding began only in the mid 1990s, perhaps in response to factors similar to those affecting the expanding Danish population.

Scotland, N & W

Highland Three sites: three possible breeding pairs.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia***Less scarce: 1,080 bp (Hancock *et al.* 1997)****Coverage: low****Green**

Data were received for a minimum of 80 pairs (with at least 16 pairs confirmed breeding). Records came from five recording areas: Argyll (one pair), Caithness (24), Highland (46), Outer Hebrides (8) and Perth & Kinross (1). Without the rigour of fieldwork for *Bird Atlas 2007–11*, numbers are again low and quite unrepresentative of the population in northern Scotland, which has not been surveyed fully for almost 20 years.

Two SPAs are classified for Greenshank: the Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands, and Lewis Peatlands. A survey in 2009 of the former (Bellamy & Eaton 2010) showed a significant increase there (256 to 653 pairs), while for Lewis there has been no recent survey. However, adjusting the 1990s Lewis total (152) by the (low quality) BBS trend of +12.3% for Greenshank would give a current total there of 171 pairs. Given these apparent increases, assessing either total against the sole population estimate from 1995 (Hancock *et al.* 1997) is problematic, but it is likely that these two major peatland SPAs hold a significant proportion of the British population.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola***Very rare: 5-yr mean 26 bp****Coverage: good****Amber**

14 sites: 5–32 pairs. In line with recent increases, 32 pairs is the largest number ever reported by the Panel, partly due to good coverage of sites in the main range. Three SPAs are classified for Wood Sandpiper and numbers within them have remained essentially stable based on RBBP data. The SPA total represented most (c. 80%) of the small UK breeding population, but recent increases may have reduced that proportion.

Scotland, N & W

Caithness Two sites: one pair bred, one probable breeding pair. Highland Eleven sites: four pairs bred, 21 probable and four possible breeding pairs. Outer Hebrides One site: one possible breeding pair.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus***Scarce: 2,136 bp (in 1998–2002)*****Coverage: moderate****Red**

* (Mitchell *et al.* 2004)

207 apparently occupied territories (AOTs). At least 29 young fledged. Numbers remain similar to those in 2011, but not all sites (especially in the Northern Isles) are counted every year. Monitored nests confirmed the continuing low productivity.

Seven SPAs are classified for breeding Arctic Skuas. Numbers at these sites have decreased by over half, from 780 pairs in the 1990s to 343 pairs in the 2000s (most sites surveyed in 2010 and 2011). The 56% decline on SPAs is not dissimilar from the -61% national population trend shown by JNCC's Seabird Monitoring Programme between 1990 and 2011 (JNCC 2012), a rapid drop that led to the inclusion of Arctic Skua on the RBBP list from 2010.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Probable breeding was reported from Coll (three AOTs) and Oronsay (one AOT). Caithness Four AOTs

at two coastal sites. Fair Isle A further reduction in numbers: 20 pairs bred, and only one young fledged. Highland On Handa there were 13 AOTs; elsewhere there was one other probable breeding pair. Orkney A total of 74 AOTs were counted from 12 sites (not a full survey); at least 19 young fledged. Outer Hebrides Four AOTs were reported from North Uist, one nest with eggs on Lewis, two AOTs on St Kilda. Shetland A total of 84 AOTs were counted from ten sites. Four chicks fledged from the 37 nesting pairs on Foula, at least four fledged from a study area in north and west Mainland, and one chick fledged from a site in south Mainland.

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Occasional breeder

One site: one bird.

Scotland, N & W

Shetland One site: for the fourth year running, one adult held territory on East Burra, present from 12th May to at least 19th July.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,546 bp

Coverage: moderate

Amber

Minimum of 1,676 pairs at 55 colonies. A minimum of 780 young fledged. *Bird Atlas 2007–11* shows a 40-year reduction of 30% in the breeding range of Little Terns, suggesting a shift into fewer, larger colonies. Most sites in England, and the single one in Wales, are wardened and

Little Tern	No. sites	Confirmed breeding pairs	Min. young fledged
England, SW	6	90	9
Dorset	1	21	9
Hampshire	5	69	0
England, SE	12	115	4
Essex	8	67	0
Kent	1	2	0
Sussex	3	46	4
England, E	13	951	643
Lincolnshire	*		
Norfolk	10	847	643
Suffolk	3	104	0
England, N	5	231	17
Cleveland	1	110	0
Cumbria	1	44	0
Northumberland	2	54	6
Yorkshire	1	23	11
Wales	1	140	37
Denbigh & Flint	1	140	37
Scotland, S	1	1	0
Lothian	1	1	0
Scotland, Mid	2	28	3
Moray & Nairn	1	1	0
North-east Scotland	1	27	3
Scotland, N & W	14	109	62
Argyll	7	73	58
Caithness	*		
Highland	3	16	4
Orkney	1	2	0
Outer Hebrides	3	18	0
Isle of Man	1	11	5
TOTALS	55	1,676	780

* Birds attended one colony but no eggs were laid.

counted each year; monitoring of some Scottish sites is less than annual, though there are few large colonies there. Norfolk remains the most important county with around 57% of all breeding pairs in 2012.

There are 27 SPAs classified for breeding Little Terns. These held 1,156 pairs in the 2000s (61% UK), an absolute and proportional decline from the 68% in the 1990s (1,629 pairs).

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

Rare: 5-yr mean 83 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Red

Four sites: 73 pairs and two mixed pairs. A total of 88 young fledged. No birds bred in Scotland for the first time since the mid 1980s.

Seven SPAs are classified for Roseate Terns. Numbers have increased in these sites from 56 pairs in the 1990s to 81 pairs in 2009–11. However, this increase has been at just one site, Coquet Island, with five other sites being abandoned and the sixth showing a major decline. Although small in absolute numbers, UK SPAs hold nearly 4% of the European population.

England, N

Northumberland One site (Coquet Island): 71 pairs raised at least 83 large young.

Wales

Anglesey Two sites: (1) one pair fledged two young; (2) two mixed pairs bred, each fledging one hybrid young; in both cases the Roseate Tern was paired with a Common Tern *S. hirundo*.

Northern Ireland

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

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 812 bp

Coverage: moderate

Amber

32 sites: 1,028–1,047 pairs. This is the highest total reported by RBBP but includes only a minimum estimate for an important colony in Dorset. There was no significant range expansion in 2012, although *Bird Atlas 2007–11* shows a 40-year increase of +6,500%. Mediterranean Gulls have shown one of the largest population changes within the SPA network. Numbers at the five classified SPAs have increased from 23 pairs in the 1990s to 145 pairs in 2003–07. As a proportion of the national total, that shows a decline from 74% to 24%, illustrating the growth and spread of this species in Britain outside the current SPA network.

England, SW

Dorset One site: at least 80 pairs normally breed, but there was no accurate count in 2012. Hampshire Four sites: (1) 58 breeding pairs at Langstone Harbour (a large decrease in numbers) and only two young fledged; (2) 66 pairs bred, fledging only two young due to the impact of high spring tides; (3) 28 pairs bred, success not known but believed to be poor; (4) three possible breeding pairs. Isle of Wight One site: one possible breeding pair.

England, SE

Essex Five sites: (1) two pairs bred, six possible breeding pairs; (2)–(4) two pairs bred at each; (5) one pair bred. Kent Two sites: (1) 597 pairs bred; (2) two pairs bred. Sussex Two sites: (1) 80 pairs bred; (2) 55 pairs bred and fledged ten young.

England, E

Norfolk Three sites: (1) 12 pairs bred and fledged a minimum of 40 young; (2) six pairs bred; (3) three pairs bred. Suffolk One site: four pairs bred, but no young fledged.

England, C

Staffordshire One site: one probable breeding pair.

England, N

Cumbria Two sites: one pair bred at each. Lancashire & N Merseyside One site: 15 pairs bred, three possible breeding pairs. Northumberland One site: one pair bred and fledged one young. Yorkshire Four sites: (1) three pairs bred; (2) one probable breeding pair; (3)(4) one possible breeding pair at each.

Wales

Anglesey Two sites: one probable breeding pair at each.

Northern Ireland

Co. Antrim One site: six pairs bred, fledging four young. Co. Fermanagh One site: one pair bred.

In addition unpaired summering or displaying birds were present at Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* colonies in Lincolnshire and Shropshire.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 4 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Amber

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

England, SW

Dorset One site: one pair bred, but no young fledged. Hampshire One site: one mixed pair bred; a Yellow-legged Gull paired with a Herring Gull *L. argentatus* fledged three hybrid young for the fifth year in a row.

Wales

Breconshire One site: one possible breeding mixed pair. A single Yellow-legged Gull, paired with a Lesser Black-backed Gull *L. fuscus* summered but no breeding attempt was suspected.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Scarce/Less scarce: 1,800–6,000 bp*

Coverage: unknown

Green

* (Musgrove *et al.* 2013)

176–401 pairs. There was a modest but welcome increase in the number of pairs reported but breeding was confirmed for only 26% of pairs, compared with 68% and 73% in 2010 and 2011 respectively. This was probably a reflection of the wet summer in 2012, which hindered recording, but is also likely to be a good indication of the low productivity of Long-eared Owls in poor weather. *Bird Atlas 2007–11* shows the main concentrations of Long-eared Owls in Britain in southern and eastern Scotland, northeast England and in a belt across England from Lancashire to Derbyshire and south Yorkshire. There are smaller concentrations in East Anglia and Kent. However, the Long-eared Owl is under-recorded to an unknown extent. Confirmed breeding is usually associated with records of squeaking juveniles, giving a bias towards successful breeding pairs.

In Britain, Long-eared Owls were detected in 18% of 10-km squares in the breeding season;



Jon Evans

265. Juvenile Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*, Suffolk, June 2012.

but throughout Ireland, where there are no Tawny Owls *Strix aluco*, they were detected in 40% of 10-km squares (*Bird Atlas 2007–11*). In 2012 no records from Northern Ireland were submitted to the RBBP for this species.

Long-eared Owl		Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs			
				Wales	6	17
				Breconshire	1	1
England, SW		11	12	Ceredigion	1	1
Hampshire		0	1	Gwent	0	6
Isle of Wight		10	10	Meirionnydd	1	2
Somerset		1	1	Montgomeryshire	0	1
England, SE		7	9	Radnorshire	3	6
Essex		2	2	Scotland, S	7	18
Kent		4	5	Ayrshire	0	1
Oxfordshire		0	1	Borders	5	13
Sussex		1	1	Dumfries & Galloway	1	1
England, E		16	23	Lothian	1	3
Cambridgeshire		5	10	Scotland, Mid	16	59
Lincolnshire		3	3	Angus & Dundee	7	8
Norfolk		4	5	Fife	2	2
Suffolk		4	5	Moray & Nairn	0	40*
England, C		14	24	North-east Scotland	4	5
Derbyshire		2	5	Perth & Kinross	1	2
Leicestershire & Rutland		0	1	Upper Forth	2	2
Nottinghamshire		6	7	Scotland, N & W	4	14
Shropshire		1	3	Argyll	0	1
Staffordshire		5	8	Highland	3	6
England, N		83	206	Orkney	0	6
Cheshire & Wirral		2	2	Outer Hebrides	1	1
Cleveland		0	2	Northern Ireland	n/a	n/a
Cumbria		0	1	Isle of Man	1	1
Co. Durham		17	23	Channel Islands	11	18
Greater Manchester		10	14	Jersey	11	11
Lancashire & N Merseyside		7	75*	Guernsey	0	5
Northumberland		4	18	Alderney	0	2
Yorkshire		43	71	TOTALS	176	401

* Estimate based on local atlas work.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Scarce/Less scarce: 620–2,180 bp*

Coverage: unknown



* (Musgrove *et al.* 2013)

99–465 pairs. There was a widely reported influx of Short-eared Owls in autumn 2011, with higher numbers and a wider distribution than in most winters, and this seemingly resulted in more pairs remaining to breed. We received records from 47 counties (compared with 29 in 2010 and 30 in 2011) and the total number of pairs reported is 27% higher than in 2011. The wet summer of 2012 meant that many breeding attempts failed or were abandoned, or the outcome was unknown because of the impact on fieldwork.

Six SPAs are classified for Short-eared Owls, although site totals from the 2000s were available only for Skomer and Skokholm and the Forest of Clunie (Perth & Kinross). The SPA suite holds about 121 pairs or 18% of the UK population. This species remains one of the least tractable of the UK's birds to survey and monitor (Calladine *et al.* 2008).



Jon Evans

266. Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*, Suffolk, April 2012.

Short-eared Owl		Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs			
				Breconshire	0	1
				Carmarthenshire	0	1
England, SW	2	5		Ceredigion	1	3
Cornwall	0	1		Denbigh & Flint	0	2
Somerset	0	1		Meirionnydd	0	9
Wiltshire	2	3		Pembrokeshire	2	3
England, SE	3	5		Radnorshire	1	4
Essex	0	1		Scotland, S	8	33
Kent	3	4		Ayrshire	0	3
England, E	3	34		Borders	6	13
Cambridgeshire	0	1		Clyde	1	10
Lincolnshire	0	14		Dumfries & Galloway	1	5
Norfolk	3	16		Lothian	0	2
Northamptonshire	0	3		Scotland, Mid	9	59
England, C	10	19		Angus & Dundee	1	15
Derbyshire	9	10		Moray & Nairn	0	8
Nottinghamshire	0	1		North-east Scotland	4	15
Shropshire	0	1		Perth & Kinross	4	14
Staffordshire	1	4		Upper Forth	0	7
Warwickshire	0	3		Scotland, N & W	32	159
England, N	27	123		Argyll	5	19
Cleveland	3	3		Caithness	0	7
Cumbria	2	14		Highland	5	6
Co. Durham	4	7		Orkney	17	109
Greater Manchester	0	1		Outer Hebrides	5	18
Lancashire & N Merseyside	1	10		Northern Ireland	1	2
Northumberland	4	25		Co. Antrim	1	1
Yorkshire	13	63		Co. Down	0	1
Wales	4	24		Isle of Man	0	2
Anglesey	0	1		TOTALS	99	465

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 3 bp

Coverage: moderate

Red

Five sites: 0–6 pairs. Singing birds continue to be recorded occasionally in potential breeding habitat in northern Scotland, though with no further evidence of breeding. Six is the highest total since 2005.

Scotland, N & W

Highland Five sites: six singing males, between 7th June and 10th July.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*

Less scarce: 1,000–2,000 bp (Musgrove *et al.* 2013)

Coverage: low

Red

23–526 pairs. *Bird Atlas 2007–11* shows concentrations of Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers in south-east England and the Welsh borders. With breeding evidence in 560 10-km squares across the four breeding seasons of the atlas, and presence in winter in 615 squares, it is clear that the species suffers from under-reporting, and the 526 pairs noted here is an underestimate.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker			England, C	1	51
	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs	Derbyshire	0	10
			Herefordshire	0	14
			Leicestershire & Rutland	0	4
England, SW	6	123	Nottinghamshire	0	7
Avon	0	3	Shropshire	0	4
Devon	4	9	Staffordshire	0	4
Dorset	0	1	Warwickshire	0	5
Gloucestershire	0	9	Worcestershire	1	3
Hampshire	1	75	England, N	3	59
Somerset	0	15	Cheshire & Wirral	1	6
Wiltshire	1	11	Cumbria	0	1
England, SE	8	230	Co. Durham	0	5
Bedfordshire	0	1	Greater Manchester	0	1
Buckinghamshire	0	5	Lancashire & N Merseyside	0	5
Essex	1	6	Yorkshire	2	41
Greater London	0	6	Wales	4	31
Hertfordshire	1	15	Breconshire	0	1
Kent	0	(175)*	Carmarthenshire	3	4
Oxfordshire	0	1	Ceredigion	0	4
Surrey	5	13	East Glamorgan	0	2
Sussex	1	8	Gower	0	2
England, E	1	32	Gwent	1	5
Cambridgeshire	0	10	Meirionnydd	0	3
Lincolnshire	0	6	Montgomeryshire	0	2
Norfolk	1	4	Pembrokeshire	0	2
Northamptonshire	0	6	Radnorshire	0	6
Suffolk	0	6	TOTALS	23	526

* Estimate based on local atlas work.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

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

Amber

275–346 pairs monitored. The Antrim Hills in Northern Ireland was classified in 2006, bringing the Merlin SPA suite to 15 sites. In total these held 246 pairs based on the 2008 survey (Ewing *et al.* 2011) or more recent data, a major decline from 425 pairs (on 14 SPAs) in the 1990s. SPAs currently hold about 22% of the British and 6% of the all-Ireland breeding populations.



Brydon Thomason

267. Female Merlin *Falco columbarius* feeding a prey item to a well-grown chick at a nest in Shetland, July 2012.

Merlin	Confirmed breeding pairs	Territories occupied by pairs	Radnorshire	1	7
			Scotland, S	26	35
			Borders	13	16
England, C	12	12	Dumfries & Galloway	4	6
Derbyshire	11	11	Lothian	2	3
Shropshire	1	1	South Strathclyde RSG	7	10
England, N	92	115	Scotland, Mid	67	76
Cumbria	5	5	Angus & Dundee	11	12
Co. Durham	31	33	Moray & Nairn	11	11
Lancashire & N Merseyside	6	10	North-east Scotland	34	35
Northumberland	17	21	Perth & Kinross	11	18
Yorkshire	33	46	Scotland, N & W	64	80
Wales	14	28	Argyll	2	2
Breconshire	6	8	Caithness	1	1
Caernarfonshire	0	1	Highland	26	31
Ceredigion	3	4	Orkney	8	14
Denbigh & Flint	0	1	Outer Hebrides	7	11
Meirionnydd	2	4	Shetland	20	21
Montgomeryshire	2	3	TOTALS	275	346

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,075 bp

Coverage: moderate

Green

243–1,097 pairs. Musgrove *et al.* (2013) extrapolated the estimates in Clements (2001) using BBS trends to provide a revised estimate of 2,800 pairs. BBS trends (fig. 4) show a gentle increase since 1994, but the sample size is small: in 2013 only 43 plots (Harris *et al.* 2014). RBBP data, based on nesting pairs, should be more robust, and these show a more consistent long-term upward trend in numbers, which is mirrored by the growth in the number of counties recording breeding Hobbies (fig. 5). In the first RBBP report, the Hobby was reported from just 16 counties; in 2012 it was reported from 49. In similar vein, *Bird Atlas 2007–11* shows a 40-year change in distribution of +295%.



Simon Stirrup

268. Hobby *Falco subbuteo*, Wicken Fen, Cambridgeshire, May 2012.

Nonetheless, the maximum number of pairs for which we have received data in any one year is just 1,200, in 2009. Although the Hobby is grossly under-recorded in some southern counties, the level of uncertainty over the estimate by Clements (2001) adds some doubt to the current estimate. The Hobby thus remains on the RBBP list, in order to track the population and encourage more comprehensive recording across the range. Guidelines on recording Hobbies are available on the Panel’s website.

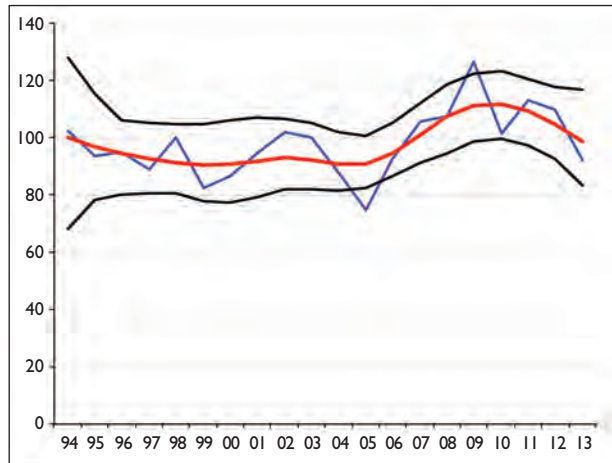


Fig. 4. The UK population trend for Hobby *Falco subbuteo*, 1994–2013, based on BBS data (Harris et al. 2014). The graph shows the annual index values (blue) and a statistically smoothed trend (red) with 85% confidence limits (black).

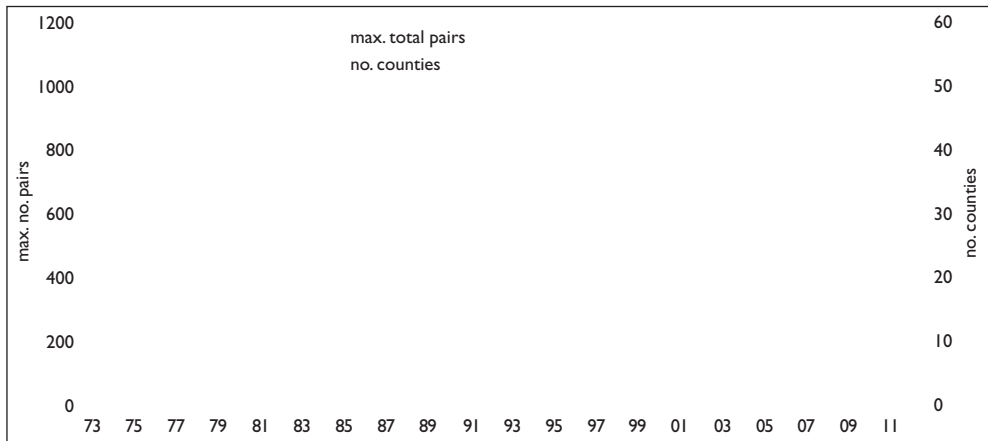


Fig. 5. The maximum total number of breeding pairs of Hobby *Falco subbuteo* in the UK, 1973–2012.

Hobby	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs			
			Herefordshire	2	10
			Leicestershire & Rutland	0	22
England, SW	36	203	Nottinghamshire	9	11
Avon	1	7	Shropshire	4	37
Cornwall	2	2	Staffordshire	1	20
Devon	2	(30)*	Warwickshire	1	16
Dorset	4	20	Worcestershire	1	10
Gloucestershire	1	22	England, N	35	109
Hampshire	14	25	Cheshire & Wirral	17	38
Isle of Wight	0	6	Co. Durham	1	2
Somerset	4	24	Greater Manchester	2	7
Wiltshire	8	67	Lancashire & N Merseyside	2	15
England, SE	45	417	Yorkshire	13	47
Bedfordshire	2	3	Wales	9	33
Berkshire	n/a	n/a	Breconshire	1	13
Buckinghamshire	3	12	Cardiganshire	2	2
Essex	14	14	Denbigh & Flint	0	1
Greater London	12	13	East Glamorgan	1	1
Hertfordshire	3	21	Gwent	3	6
Kent	0	(300)*	Meirionnydd	0	2
Oxfordshire	6	15	Montgomeryshire	0	2
Surrey	3	11	Radnorshire	2	6
Sussex	2	28	Scotland, S	0	1
England, E	55	162	Borders	0	1
Cambridgeshire	3	13	Scotland, Mid	2	3
Lincolnshire	7	80	Angus & Dundee	1	1
Norfolk	8	11	Perth & Kinross	1	2
Northamptonshire	21	27	Scotland, N & W	1	1
Suffolk	16	31	Highland	1	1
England, C	60	168	TOTALS	243	1,097
Derbyshire	42	42			

* County estimates.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

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

Coverage: moderate

Green

736–1,093 pairs. The national survey in 2002 reported 1,530 breeding pairs (Banks *et al.* 2010); the latest survey was carried out in 2014, and results were unavailable when this report was being finalised. One trend apparent from RBBP data in the last decade has been the marked increase in the numbers of breeding pairs in lowland England, especially in east, southeast and central areas (which now account for 22% of the national total, up from 5% ten years earlier), often at well-watched urban sites. This reflects the changing patterns of distribution and abundance shown in *Bird Atlas 2007–11*: lowland increases offset by northern and upland declines.

Migneint-Arenig-Dduallt in mid Wales was classified as an additional SPA for Peregrines in 2003 bringing the total SPA suite to 11 sites. In 2002 these held 72 pairs (5% GB and 1% all-Ireland), a decline from the 1990s total of 106 pairs at ten sites.

Peregrine Falcon	Confirmed breeding pairs	Territories occupied by pairs			
			Gloucestershire	4	8
			Hampshire	14	14
			Isle of Wight	2	5
England, SW	99	149	Isles of Scilly	2	2
Avon	9	12	Somerset	6	10
Cornwall	26	38	Wiltshire	4	8
Devon	21	25	England, SE	45	118
Dorset	11	27	Bedfordshire	2	2

Peregrine Falcon <i>cont.</i>	Confirmed breeding pairs	Territories occupied by pairs			
			Ceredigion	4	4
			Denbigh & Flint	16	17
			East Glamorgan	19	31
Buckinghamshire	1	1	Gower	3	9
Essex	9	12	Gwent	4	8
Greater London	17	29	Meirionnydd	4	8
Kent	3	35	Montgomeryshire	3	4
Oxfordshire	2	3	Pembrokeshire	22	34
Surrey	5	6	Radnorshire	6	12
Sussex	6	30	Scotland, S	120	147
England, E	26	31	Ayrshire	17	22
Cambridgeshire	3	3	Borders	30	37
Lincolnshire	19	19	Clyde	3	4
Norfolk	2	2	Clyde Islands	6	7
Northamptonshire	0	2	Dumfries & Galloway	48	57
Suffolk	2	5	Lothian	16	20
England, C	72	96	Scotland, Mid	77	106
Derbyshire	24	24	Angus & Dundee	15	20
Herefordshire	0	12	Central Scotland RSG	13	19
Leicestershire & Rutland	6	11	Fife	8	9
Nottinghamshire	12	13	Isle of May	1	1
Shropshire	19	19	North-east Scotland RSG	24	36
Staffordshire	4	8	Perth & Kinross	16	21
Warwickshire	2	4	Scotland, N & W	44	65
West Midlands	1	1	Argyll	13	23
Worcestershire	4	4	Fair Isle	0	1
England, N	135	185	Highland RSG	12	19
Cheshire & Wirral	9	10	Orkney	13	16
Cleveland	3	3	Outer Hebrides	5	5
Cumbria	49	57	Shetland	1	1
Co. Durham	7	9	Northern Ireland	3	3
Greater Manchester	8	8	Co. Antrim	3	3
Lancashire & N Merseyside	16	22	Isle of Man	4	6
Northumberland	18	19	Channel Islands	12	14
Yorkshire	25	57	Alderney	0	2
Wales	99	173	Guernsey	4	4
Anglesey	1	9	Herm	1	1
Breconshire	7	13	Jersey	5	5
Caernarfonshire	5	12	Sark	2	2
Carmarthenshire	5	12	TOTALS	736	1,093

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 4 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Red

Two sites: 0–2 pairs. There have been no records of confirmed breeding since 2009 and the outlook for this species in the UK is bleak. Presumed migrants were also recorded singing for no more than two days in mid to late May in **Cambridgeshire** (3), **Kent** (1), **North-east Scotland** (1), **Sussex** (1–2) and **Yorkshire** (1).

England, E

Suffolk Two sites (1, Lakenheath): one probable breeding pair – two males and a female or immature male (carrying nest material) in June; (2) one male singing and cat-calling between 20th May and 20th June.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 4 bp

Coverage: moderate

Red

Three sites: 1–3 pairs. Red-backed Shrikes bred in England for the third consecutive year in 2012 but were unsuccessful in the poor summer weather.

England, SW

Devon Two sites: (1) One pair bred. The pair made two nesting attempts but both failed before fledging. A second, unpaired male was also present. (2) A female was trapped in suitable breeding habitat in late May.

England, E

One site: one singing male on three dates between 30th May and 16th June.

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 406 bp

Coverage: high

Amber

261–328 pairs. The five-year mean is only a little below the 429–497 pairs estimated in the last full survey in 2002 (Johnstone *et al.* 2007), a reflection of almost complete coverage. A repeat survey under the SCARABBS programme was undertaken in 2014.

Oronsay and South Colonsay, together with The Oa and Gruinart Flats (both on Islay) have been classified as SPAs for Chough since the 2001 SPA Review. In the 1990s the suite of nine SPAs (seven of those in Wales) held 122 pairs (36% of the UK total) while in the 2000s there were 149 pairs on the 12 sites (50% UK). This represents about 12% of the nominate race, which is restricted to the UK, Isle of Man and Ireland.

Red-billed Chough	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs			
			Gower	4	6
			Meirionnydd	17	20
			Pembrokeshire	56	68
England, SW	5	7	Scotland	27	27
Cornwall	5	7	Argyll: Colonsay & Oronsay	13	13
Wales	204	261	Argyll: Islay	14	14
Anglesey	35	41	Northern Ireland	1	1
Caernarfonshire	70	96	Co. Antrim	1	1
Ceredigion	21	27	Isle of Man	24	32
Denbigh & Flint	1	2	TOTALS	261	328
East Glamorgan	0	1			

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 650 bp

Coverage: moderate

Amber

683 territories or singing males. *Bird Atlas 2007–11* shows breeding Firecrests concentrated in central southern and southeast England with the main populations in and around the New Forest, Hampshire. Firecrests may now be under-recorded in some areas where the species is perceived to be ‘common’, and this may explain the decrease in the overall total since the peak of 800 in 2010. A survey in Hampshire found 138 territories at 57 sites outside the New Forest, and a minimum of 135 territories within the Forest. In Kent, survey work found Firecrests to be more widespread than had been thought, with a conservative estimate of 100 territories. The Firecrest is still too scarce to be monitored by BBS, so RBBP data remain the main source of information on the population.

Firecrest	Singing males/territories		
		Hampshire	273
England, SW	359	Isle of Wight	1
Dorset	9	Somerset	22
Gloucestershire	8	Wiltshire	46

Firecrest cont.	Singing males/ territories	Suffolk	26
England, SE	210	England, C	2
Bedfordshire	5	Derbyshire	1
Buckinghamshire	40	Herefordshire	1
Hertfordshire	3	England, N	1
Kent	(100)	Yorkshire	1
Oxfordshire	5	Wales	5
Surrey	27	Gwent	2
Sussex	30	Montgomeryshire	2
England, E	100	Radnorshire	1
Cambridgeshire	4	Channel Islands	6
Norfolk	70	Jersey	6
		TOTAL	683

Willow Tit *Poecile montana*

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

Coverage: moderate



* (Musgrove *et al.* 2013)

121–649 pairs. The national totals of Willow Tit pairs in the three years it has been monitored by RBBP have been similar, with a mean of 652. The distribution has been similar too, with most in central or northern England, a pattern confirmed in *Bird Atlas 2007–11*, which shows a 40-year distribution change of -55%. That loss has accelerated in the last 20 years, such that Willow Tits are now virtually absent from large parts of England south and east of a line from the Wash to Dorset, and the species has been lost from the northern parts of its former range in Scotland. *Bird Atlas 2007–11* explores some of the reasons why this might have happened, but as yet there are no clear answers.

Willow Tit	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs	England, N	50	318
			Cheshire & Wirral	10	31
England, SW	32	64	Cleveland	1	1
Cornwall	1	1	Cumbria	0	5
Devon	1	6	Co. Durham	12	36
Gloucestershire	7	10	Greater Manchester	7	45
Hampshire	0	24	Lancashire & N Merseyside	0	50
Wiltshire	23	23	Northumberland	2	19
England, SE	2	3	Yorkshire	18	131
Berkshire	2	2	Wales	8	49
Oxfordshire	0	1	Anglesey	0	1
England, E	8	62	Breconshire	4	7
Lincolnshire	5	47	Carmarthenshire	0	17
Norfolk	3	5	Ceredigion	0	6
Northamptonshire	0	7	Denbigh & Flint	1	3
Suffolk	0	3	East Glamorgan	1	3
England, C	21	131	Gower	0	2
Derbyshire	3	22	Gwent	0	2
Herefordshire	0	20	Meirionnydd	1	1
Leicestershire & Rutland	3	25	Montgomeryshire	0	5
Nottinghamshire	6	18	Pembrokeshire	1	2
Shropshire	0	10	Radnorshire	n/a	n/a
Staffordshire	8	25	Scotland, S	0	22
Warwickshire	0	10	Ayrshire	0	2
West Midlands	1	1	Dumfries & Galloway	0	20
			TOTALS	121	649



Robin Chittenden

269. Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*, Strumpshaw Fen, Norfolk, October 2012.

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 527 bp

Coverage: moderate

Amber

At least 63 sites: a minimum of 566 pairs. Breeding Bearded Tits are difficult to monitor and the total depends heavily on information from the main sites. Perhaps the largest UK colony is in the extensive Tay reedbeds (Perth & Kinross), where breeding was first recorded only in 1991. There was no count here in either 2010 or 2011, while in 2009 there was an estimate of at least 35 pairs. The figure of 130 pairs in 2012 was derived from ringing data. Numbers at this site fluctuate markedly but some estimates put the population at up to 250 pairs, over a third of the UK population. Reedbed management to maintain a mix of tall mature and short young and growing reeds is essential to support this population.

Bearded Tit	Minimum no. sites	Confirmed and probable breeding pairs			
			Lincolnshire	2	5
			Norfolk	14	87
			Suffolk	5	92
England, SW	10	26	England, N	3	66
Devon	1	1	Lancashire & N Merseyside	1	18
Dorset	3	10	Yorkshire	2	48
Hampshire	4	5	Wales	2	3
Somerset	2	10	Breconshire	1	1
England, SE	21	147	Gwent	1	2
Bedfordshire	1	1	Scotland, Mid	2	131
Essex	4	10	Angus & Dundee	1	1
Kent	13	125	Perth & Kinross	1	130
Sussex	3	11	Channel Islands	1	2
England, E	24	191	Jersey	1	2
Cambridgeshire	3	7	TOTALS	63	566

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

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

Coverage: moderate

Amber

951 territories. The most recent survey of Woodlarks, in 2006 (Conway et al. 2009), found that the number of territories had increased by 88% since the previous survey, in 1997. Fig. 6 shows RBBP data on this species since 1984, which includes the 241 territories counted during a national survey in 1986. Numbers began to climb in the early 1990s and in the years following the 1997 survey fluctuated between about 850 and 1,550 territories (the peaks in 1997 and 2006

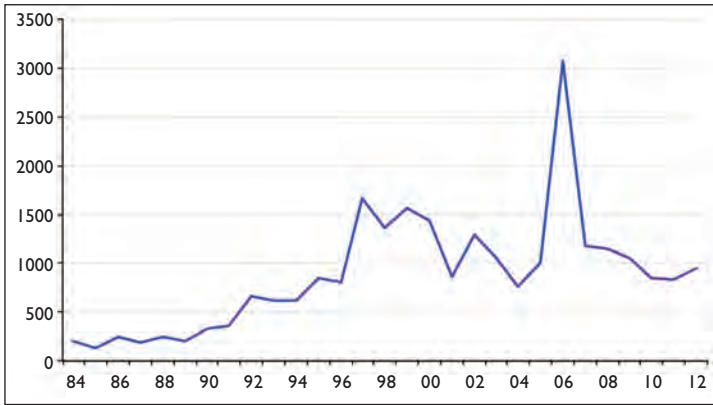


Fig. 6. The maximum total number of breeding pairs of Woodlark *Lullula arborea* in the UK, 1984–2012.

correspond with national survey years). The numbers reported to RBBP have declined since 2006 and the ten-year mean (2002–12, excluding 2006) was 1,012, about a third of the total derived from the national survey.

There is no indication that the population as a whole has declined since the last national survey, despite a run of colder winters.

Nonetheless, a stable population of over 3,000 territories is well in excess of the RBBP threshold of 2,000 pairs and this will be the last report to include this species. Adequate monitoring will continue because of the conservation interest in this species and its heathland/woodland sites, and it is likely that a repeat SCARABBS survey will take place in the future.

The SPA suite for Woodlark comprises seven sites, which held 1,102 pairs in 1997 (73% of the UK population), but had fallen to 960 pairs in 2006 (31% UK). Overall, this reflects the growth of the national population away from core sites. At site level there have been contrasting fortunes – increases at Minsmere–Walberswick, Dorset Heathlands and Thames Basin Heaths SPAs and declines at Breckland, Wealden Heaths, Suffolk Sandlings and the New Forest.

Woodlark	Singing males/ territories	Sussex	64
England, SW	264	England, E	332
Cornwall	4	Lincolnshire	37
Devon	4	Norfolk	124
Dorset	30	Suffolk	171
Hampshire	223	England, C	45
Wiltshire	3	Nottinghamshire	27
England, SE	279	Staffordshire	18
Berkshire	13	England, N	31
Buckinghamshire	1	Yorkshire	31
Kent	11	Wales	0
Surrey	190	Gwent	0
		TOTAL	951

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,873 bp

Coverage: moderate

Green

1,373 singing males or territories. The number of reported territories fell slightly from the 2011 figure (1,484), although in many counties where this species is numerous there is an element of under-recording, often in extensive wetland sites where access is restricted. In Kent, for example, just 53 territories were reported, but Kent Ornithological Society believes that the population is 500–1,000 territories (based on tetrad atlas fieldwork). It is likely that the real population in the UK is close to 2,000 pairs; numbers seem to be recovering after the recent colder winters, although there are no new counties in the table this year. *Bird Atlas 2007–11* shows breeding evidence for Cetti's Warblers in 15% of all British 10-km squares.



Nick Appleton

270. Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*, Hardley Marshes, Norfolk, April 2012.

Cetti's Warbler	Singing males/ territories	England, C	68
		Derbyshire	11
		Leicestershire & Rutland	11
England, SW	420	Nottinghamshire	18
Avon	25	Staffordshire	6
Cornwall	21	Warwickshire	18
Devon	37	West Midlands	1
Dorset	59	Worcestershire	3
Gloucestershire	16	England, N	41
Hampshire	96	Cheshire & Wirral	26
Isle of Wight	24	Cleveland	1
Somerset	110	Greater Manchester	1
Wiltshire	32	Lancashire & N Merseyside	6
England, SE	238	Yorkshire	7
Bedfordshire	8	Wales	141
Berkshire	13	Anglesey	8
Buckinghamshire	5	Breconshire	4
Essex	38	Caernarfonshire	8
Greater London	21	Carmarthenshire	19
Hertfordshire	21	Ceredigion	2
Kent	53	East Glamorgan	19
Oxfordshire	8	Gower	18
Surrey	2	Gwent	56
Sussex	69	Meirionnydd	1
England, E	444	Pembrokeshire	6
Cambridgeshire	72	Channel Islands	21
Lincolnshire	9	Jersey	20
Norfolk	164	Guernsey	1
Northamptonshire	37	TOTAL	1,373
Suffolk	162		

Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus*

Potential breeder

Two sites: two singing males. There have been long-staying singing males in four of the last ten years. The 2012 records have been accepted by BBRC (Hudson *et al.* 2013).

England, SW

Cornwall One site: a male singing from 28th May to 24th June. Somerset One site: a male singing from 5th June to 29th July.

Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*

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

Coverage: moderate

Amber

832 territories. After two years with lower numbers, the total for 2012 increased, in part because of the inclusion of 70 pairs from the Channel Islands, although the increase may also herald a recovery from the effects of recent colder winters (see fig. 6 in Holling *et al.* 2013). However, comments from recorders in southwest England suggest that this may not yet be the case in that area.

There are six SPAs classified for Dartford Warbler and the numbers of pairs breeding within these has been stable: from 1,681 pairs in the 1990s to 1,654 pairs at the time of the 2006 national survey (Wotton *et al.* 2009). In the 1990s, these SPAs held essentially the whole UK population, but population growth elsewhere meant that by 2006 they held only about half (52%) the national total – a fascinating example of the changing conservation significance of protected areas at different stages in the growth of populations.

Dartford Warbler	Total pairs		
England, SW	570	Norfolk	3
Cornwall	14	Suffolk	82
Devon	23	England, C	4
Dorset	263	Staffordshire	4
Hampshire	250	Wales	32
Isle of Wight	8	Caernarfonshire	4
Somerset	12	Denbigh & Flint	1
England, SE	71	East Glamorgan	1
Berkshire	9	Gower	15
Surrey	52	Pembrokeshire	11
Sussex	10	Channel Islands	70
England, E	85	Jersey	68
		Sark	2
		TOTAL	832

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 5 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Red

Two sites: 0–2 pairs. There were also short-stayers in Hertfordshire and Leicestershire & Rutland. The 2011 total was boosted by some late records, giving revised figures of five/six sites: 0–7 pairs, including three singing birds in Kent (Hudson *et al.* 2012). Savi's Warbler is a BBRC species and records will be included in this report only if they are accepted by BBRC; some records for 2011 and 2012 are still in circulation. To help RBBP to assess the numbers of breeding or potentially breeding Savi's Warblers accurately, it is essential that observers' submissions to BBRC contain sufficient detail about the circumstances of the observation, the previous experience of the observers, a detailed description of the song, and any other calls, plumage and structure if appropriate. Preferably, this should be accompanied by supporting evidence in the form of sound recordings and/or photographs. There have been recent examples of experienced observers confusing this species and Grasshopper Warbler *L. naevia* in Britain, so BBRC takes a cautious approach to acceptance.

England, SW

Devon One site: one singing male, 11th–23rd June.

England, E

Norfolk One site: one singing male, 4th–20th May.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 9 bp

Coverage: high

Red

Six sites: 1–7 pairs. *Bird Atlas 2007–11* clearly shows that the majority of breeding-season records are in eastern England, from Sussex to Northumberland, with a separate cluster in Shetland. Although most of these relate to passage birds, this species has been proved to breed in these coastal habitats. There have been 20 records of confirmed breeding in the last ten years, and the disturbance to any areas containing a singing Marsh Warbler in spring or summer must be minimised. The breeding attempt in Sussex in 2012 was curtailed when the nest was destroyed by a mower before the young fledged.

England, SE

Essex One site: two singing males. Sussex One site: one pair bred, the nest destroyed before the young fledged (see above).

England, E

Lincolnshire One site: one singing male from 28th May to 19th June.

England, N

Northumberland One site: one singing male from 5th June to 10th July.

Scotland, N & W

Orkney One site: one bird was trapped with a brood patch and was present for at least four days from 27th June. There was no indication that the bird had bred locally, but there were two singing males elsewhere in Orkney in June, although present for only one day.

Shetland One site: one singing male on 19th–28th June.

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

Potential breeder

One site: 0–1 pairs. Since 1990 there have been records of singing Great Reed Warblers in every year except 2002. We still await the discovery of a pair or, better still, a nest.

England, SW

Avon One site: one singing male from 19th May to 2nd June.

Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla*

Scarce: new to the list in 2012

Coverage: low

Red

Short-toed Treecreeper remains a rare vagrant to Britain, with 27 accepted records to the end of 2012, all from England (Hudson *et al.* 2013). It is a common and widespread species on the Channel Islands, with the population on Jersey estimated to be 250 breeding pairs.

Fair Isle Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes fridariensis*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 32 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Red

The population of this endemic race is contained within the SPA on Fair Isle. Numbers there declined from a five-year mean of 37 pairs (in 1997) to 29 pairs (2007–11; Aspinall & Aspinall 2011). The all-island survey in 2012 produced a total of 38 territories, one more than in 2011 and the highest since 2006 when there were also 38. The first fledged chicks were seen on 10th June and fledged broods were noted in 18 of the territories.

St Kilda Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes hirtensis***Rare: 136 bp (1993 partial survey)****Coverage: low****Red**

Since this race was added to the RBBP list in 2009, there have been no all-island counts (the last census was in 1993). Forrester *et al.* (2007) considered the population to be 230–250 breeding pairs.

Shannon *et al.* (2014) considered the genetic relationships among island races of Wren in the northeast Atlantic and concluded that they were most closely related to mainland British and European (rather than Nearctic) populations.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris***Very rare: 5-yr mean 3 bp****Coverage: moderate****Red**

Five sites: 2–5 pairs. The occurrence of potentially nesting Fieldfares is highly unpredictable and it is sometimes difficult to distinguish potential breeders from late migrants. Breeding has been confirmed in May, but often it is later, as illustrated by the two breeding records in 2012, both in Northumberland.

[England, E](#)

Norfolk One site: one singing male on 3rd June.

[England, N](#)

Northumberland Two sites: (1) One pair bred. A recently fledged juvenile was photographed on 5th–6th August. (2) One pair bred. One bird was seen collecting and carrying food into woodland on 27th May.

Yorkshire One site: one singing male on 8th May and then it or another bird seen feeding nearby on three dates until 27th May.

[Scotland, S](#)

Dumfries & Galloway One site: one possible breeding pair. A single bird was recorded from May through to October, with it or another reported from a nearby farm in summer (no dates).

Redwing *Turdus iliacus***Very rare: 5-yr mean 15 bp****Coverage: low****Red**

11 sites: 5–12 pairs. These are typical of the numbers reported annually to the Panel, though must under-represent breeding numbers in northern Scotland. *Bird Atlas 2007–11* showed confirmed and probable breeding records in 28 10-km squares, all in the northern or central Highlands, or in Shetland. The breeding pair in Perth & Kinross in 2012 (where there is only one previous record of confirmed breeding, in 2000) is thus unusual.

[Scotland, Mid](#)

Perth & Kinross One site: one pair bred.

[Scotland, N & W](#)

Highland Nine sites: four pairs bred, two possible breeding pairs and four singing males. Shetland One site: one singing male in June.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica***Occasional breeder, last bred in 1995 (Red-spotted) and 1996 (White-spotted)**

One site: one singing male. Given that there were 314 singing males of the White-spotted race *L. s. cyaneola* in Denmark in 2012, and that numbers there have increased by 133% since 2004 (Nyegaard *et al.* 2014), we might expect more records in the expanding fen habitats of East Anglia in the future.

[England, E](#)

Cambridgeshire One site: one singing male of the White-spotted race present at the same site as in 2011, from 6th May to 15th June.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Rare: 5-yr mean 54 bp

Coverage: high

Amber

58 sites: 30–65 pairs. There has been a 40-year range change of +94% according to *Bird Atlas 2007–11*, but some sites are used only for a few years leading to some fluidity in the range. The trend from RBBP data (fig. 7) certainly shows a decline over the latter half of that period, and the slight recovery in recent years may be an artefact of atlas fieldwork. A few confirmed breeding records come from sightings of recently fledged juveniles in areas where there have been no records of adults, suggesting that breeding has occurred unnoticed. We have assumed that there is suitable breeding habitat in the area and included these records in our analyses.

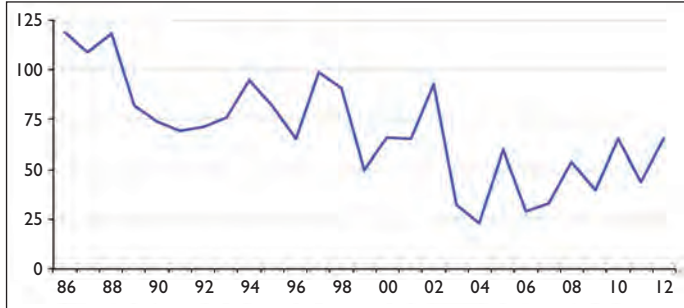


Fig. 7. The maximum total number of breeding pairs of Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* in the UK, 1986–2012.

England, SW

Devon One site: one pair bred, fledging three young. **Dorset** One site: one pair bred, fledging three young. **Hampshire** One site: one pair bred, fledging four young. **Wiltshire** One site: one pair bred, fledging two broods.

England, SE

Bedfordshire One site: one singing male. **Berkshire** One site: one pair bred with two broods (of four and of one) recorded. **Essex** One site: one pair bred, fledging two young. **Greater London** 20 sites: six pairs bred, two probable and seven possible breeding pairs, and five singing males. **Kent** 11 sites: 11 pairs bred, four probable breeding pairs. **Surrey** One site: one possible breeding pair. **Sussex** One site: one pair bred, fledging one young.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One site: one singing male. **Lincolnshire** One site: one possible breeding pair. **Norfolk** One site: one pair bred, two singing males. **Suffolk** Four sites: two pairs bred, three singing males.

England, C

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

England, N

Co. Durham One site: one pair bred: a recently fledged juvenile was seen in suitable breeding habitat in June but no adults were recorded. **Greater Manchester** One site: one singing male.

Wales

Breconshire One site: one singing male at the same site used in 2010 and 2011, but appeared to be unpaired. **Ceredigion** One site: one probable breeding pair. A recently fledged juvenile in August was believed to have fledged locally. **Denbigh & Flint** One site: one pair bred, fledging at least one young. **Meirionnydd** One site: one singing (immature) male, which held territory for three weeks in May and June.

Scotland, S

Lothian One site: one possible breeding pair.

Channel Islands

Jersey Two sites: one pair bred and one singing male.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba alba*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 2 bp

Coverage: high

Green

Seven sites: at least 12 pairs and up to four mixed pairs. The inclusion of the Channel Islands in this report has led to considerably more records than normal, but elsewhere two pure and four mixed pairs is still the most we have ever reported. Channel Islands data for 2012 have not been included in the five-year mean.

England, SW

Isles of Scilly One site: one mixed pair bred, two young were seen on 28th July.

England, SE

Sussex One site: one pair bred, assumed to be a mixed pair. On 17th May a female *alba* was reported with three young; the male was not seen.

England, E

Suffolk One site: one mixed pair bred, seen feeding recently fledged young on 9th June.

Scotland, N & W

Orkney One site: one probable breeding mixed pair. The pair was seen nest-building on 8th May but there was no further evidence.

Shetland One site: one pair bred, seen with three juveniles on 14th June.

Northern Ireland

Co. Derry One site: one pair bred, a female seen feeding recently fledged young on 22nd June and the male seen on 24th June. This is the first recorded breeding of White Wagtail in Northern Ireland.

Channel Islands

Approximately ten pairs bred on Jersey. White Wagtails also breed on Guernsey and Alderney but were not counted in 2012.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 112 bp*

Coverage: low

Red

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

23–182 pairs. This is the highest number of pairs reported by RBBP, perhaps because of surveys in two key areas for this species: the Forest of Dean and the New Forest, which together accounted for 102 pairs. There is clearly still a measure of under-recording elsewhere, especially in Wales, although *Bird Atlas 2007–11* shows records of breeding evidence in just 113 10-km squares. The breeding record from Dumfries & Galloway was unusual as there are no recent records from this area. This species is now very scarce in Scotland; it is known to breed in Perth & Kinross, but breeding records are infrequent.

England, SW

Gloucestershire A partial survey of the Forest of Dean located 22 probable and 21 possible breeding pairs.

Hampshire In the New Forest, 59 territories at 24 sites were located, including 15 confirmed breeding pairs.

Somerset One possible breeding pair. Wiltshire Two pairs bred and one possible breeding pair.

England, SE

Kent Based on previous survey work, the county population was estimated at 50 pairs. Sussex One possible breeding pair and one singing male.

England, E

Norfolk One pair bred and one possible breeding pair.

England, C

Derbyshire Two possible breeding pairs.

England, N

Cumbria One pair bred, with birds present at two other sites. Lancashire & N Merseyside Based on previous survey work, the county population was estimated at five pairs. Yorkshire One possible breeding pair.

Wales

East Glamorgan At least one probable breeding pair. Gwent Two pairs bred, three probable breeding pairs.

Meirionnydd One possible breeding pair. Radnorshire One pair bred, four probable breeding pairs.

Scotland, S

Dumfries & Galloway One site: one pair bred.

Common Redpoll *Acanthis flammea*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 5 bp

Coverage: low

Green

Four sites: 4–7 pairs. The only clear pattern emerging from records of breeding Common Redpolls is that small numbers breed in most years on offshore islands, most frequently Shetland. But confusion with Lesser Redpoll *A. cabaret*, which also occurs in these islands (though it is the scarcer species in Shetland), means that some breeding Common Redpolls may well be overlooked.



Alan Harris

Common Redpoll *Acanthis f. flammea*

Scotland, N & W

Argyll One site: one pair bred, fledging one brood of four in July and a second brood of two in August; also one possible breeding pair. Shetland Three sites: (1) one pair bred, fledging three young in July, plus two possible breeding pairs; (2) one pair bred, fledging three young; (3) one pair bred, fledging two young in July.

Parrot Crossbill *Loxia pytyopsittacus*

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

Amber

Five sites: 1–6 pairs. These records represent only a small sample of the breeding population of northern Scotland.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland One site: one pair bred and at least one probable breeding pair.

Scotland, N & W

Highland Four sites: birds recorded in April to June, including a flock of 20 on 7th June.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Rare: 79 bp (2011 survey)

Coverage: low

Amber

Casual records from the main breeding areas of the Cairngorms (Highland/North-east Scotland) provided evidence of three confirmed and six other breeding pairs. On Arran (Clyde Islands) there was also a single April record from a mountain summit. This is only a fraction of the estimated 50–100 pairs, based on the 2011 survey.

Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus*

Scarce: 862 bp (Stanbury et al. 2010)

Coverage: low

Red

A minimum of 122 territories. The addition of the Channel Islands to the area covered by the RBBP adds only one pair of Cirl Buntings – the species is now scarce on the islands, having undergone a substantial decline and a brief period of local extinction.

England, SW

Cornwall 44 territories including 37 confirmed breeding pairs, which fledged a total of 50 young. Devon Confirmed or possible breeding was recorded from 76 sites in south Devon, mainly in the coastal strip. Away from the coast, one singing male held territory between 2nd June and 1st July. Cirl Buntings were recorded from 4% of all BBS squares in Devon, the same proportion as in 2011.

Channel Islands

Jersey One pair bred.

Appendix I. Other species considered by the Panel also recorded in 2012.

The following occasional or potential breeding species were recorded during the breeding season in 2012, but showed no further signs of breeding than are documented here.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

In Highland, an adult associated with Black-throated Divers at an inland loch.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

In Nottinghamshire, a lone male present from January to May was recorded nest-building. The origin of the bird is not known but it had a metal ring. Elsewhere, four birds toured Somerset during the summer months, being seen regularly at around seven different locations from 24th May until 17th August.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

In its ninth consecutive year of residence, a single male was again recorded on several occasions at a site in Yorkshire, from 12th March to 23rd June. Another bird was present at a site in Cambridgeshire from 24th March to 24th August. This bird summered at the same site in 2011 (these details were not available for the 2011 report).

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

The only record submitted was of a single bird in Highland on 13th June. Although it was recorded on only one date and was away from former traditional sites, the habitat was suitable for breeding.

European Serin *Serinus serinus*

In Devon, a male was singing at a coastal site for three days in May. This species last bred in the Channel Islands in 2001.

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

A female was noted in Moray & Nairn on 31st May only, but not from the formerly traditional breeding area in the Cairngorms.

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Input from many specialist study groups, conservation organisations and numerous individuals means that the report can be even more comprehensive. Valuable supplementary data were submitted from a number of national monitoring schemes, which are referenced in the species accounts where appropriate. Information for many species was supplied via the Schedule 1 licensing system by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), Natural England (NE), Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), the BTO and the RSPB. Particular assistance from the Scottish Raptor Monitoring Group, the Scottish Raptor Study Groups, the Shropshire and Wiltshire Raptor Groups, the North of England Raptor Forum, and the JNCC/RSPB/SOTEAG Seabird Monitoring Programme is also recognised and appreciated. The BTO has allowed access to various datasets, including the BTO/WWT/RSPB/JNCC Wetland Bird Survey, the Nest Record Scheme and the Heronries Census. The RSPB also gave freely of its expertise in data management and species monitoring. We thank all the individuals in these organisations who provided friendly advice and information.

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