

Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 2009

Mark Holling and the Rare Breeding Birds Panel



Dan Powell

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*

Review of the year 2009

This, the 36th report of the Rare Breeding Birds Panel (RBBP), includes details of 86 species or distinctive races that bred (or showed signs of breeding) in the UK in 2009, four more than in 2008. A further two species are listed in Appendix 1. Two species appear for the first time (Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* and Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus*) and five of the 86 did not feature in the 2008 report (Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*, Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans*, Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*, Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica* and Common Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*).

After rather wet summers in 2007 and 2008, the breeding season of 2009 was less disrupted by storms and flooding. Generally, the months March to June were warmer and sunnier than average and, in most areas, drier

too. In July, however, rainfall was significantly above average almost everywhere, particularly in a broad swathe stretching from southwest England, through Wales, the Midlands and northern England into eastern Scotland. Prolonged wet weather affected fieldwork and the productivity of some species in certain areas, such as Honey-buzzards *Pernis apivorus* in Wales. Another weather-related factor was an unusually cold spell in January and early February in England and Wales, which affected some resident passerines, such as Dartford Warblers *Sylvia undata*.

Fieldwork for Bird Atlas 2007–11 contributed to higher figures for some species, perhaps especially in Scotland, for example Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*, where the main breeding population is in Highland, on lochs which normally receive only occasional

coverage. In a review of the status of Gadwall *A. strepera*, we report over 1,800 pairs and, given the year-on-year increase and the widespread breeding population, this will be the last report to include this species. We show that most breeding Gadwalls are in England, and the same applies to Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* for which the overall increase seems to be fuelled by English breeding pairs only.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix* numbers in 2009 were the highest since 2005 but the distribution of records suggests that the 2009 influx was mainly into northern Britain.

A feature of recent years has been the number of rarer herons attempting to breed. Eurasian Bitterns *Botaurus stellaris* continued their increase and range expansion in 2009, while Little Egrets *Egretta garzetta* topped 800 pairs for the first time. Cattle Egrets *Bubulcus ibis* probably bred for the second year in a row, and two sites in southwest England held Little Bitterns, although no breeding was recorded in 2009.

Overall, 2009 was a good year for Honey-buzzards, with the highest number of pairs reported for eight years and high rates of fledging, perhaps assisted by more clement weather in England and Scotland. However, pairs in Wales struggled even to hatch young, and none fledged for the first time in at least seven years. Marsh Harriers *Circus aeruginosus* bred for the first time in over 160 years in Northern Ireland, and showed signs of spreading into southwest England, though the Scottish population has become more restricted in range.

A nationwide survey of Corn Crakes *Crex crex* found that overall numbers are holding up, yet there is still no indication of range expansion away from the core areas in northwest Scotland or from the reintroduction scheme in Cambridgeshire. Another reintroduction project reported successes, with the first fledged Great Bustards *Otis tarda* from the scheme in Wiltshire. The Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* is now one of the most abundant of the rare breeding birds in this report, yet it remains vulnerable because it nests in discrete and often small colonies, and productivity is poor at many sites.

A single Ring-billed Gull in Scotland, paired with a Common Gull *L. canus*,

appeared to be sitting on eggs; this would have been the first confirmed breeding for Britain if more evidence had been gathered. (Note that it now appears that there was a successful mixed pairing in Northern Ireland in 2004.) The status of the UK's breeding Little Terns *Sternula albifrons* is reviewed in this report and we show that the population seems to be stable. Roseate Terns *Sterna dougallii* were found at 11 sites, including locations in five counties where they did not attempt to breed in 2008. A single Pallid Swift in Lancashire & N Merseyside was unusual in that it remained for a month at a site where Common Swifts *Apus apus* breed.

The first proof of breeding by Cetti's Warblers *Cettia cetti* in the UK, in 1973, coincided with the first RBBP report, and we include a review of the status of this species since then. Although there were over 2,300 territories in 40 counties in 2009, there is some uncertainty over the effect of the recent run of cold winters (especially 2009/10 and 2010/11). It appears that the cold snap in early 2009 did not have much effect on this species, however. Our ability to record accurately the numbers of three other passerines, the populations of which are concentrated in southeast England, is limited without full surveys but data submitted for this report indicate that Dartford Warbler numbers crashed in some areas, while populations of both Woodlark *Lullula arborea* and Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla* seem to have held up.

Prolonged easterly winds in May might have been responsible for the arrival of three species of rare warbler. A male Subalpine Warbler *S. cantillans* sang for 11 days in Shetland, a pair of Icterine Warblers *Hippolais icterina* bred in Highland (and there were at least four other singing males in suitable breeding habitat elsewhere in Highland), while Marsh Warblers *Acrocephalus palustris* were present at 12 sites and at least five pairs bred – most records being away from the former regular breeding areas in Kent. It is not clear whether a pair of Waxwings *Bombus garrulus* in Caithness had stayed on after the winter or arrived during May but, whatever the origin, seeing two together in potential nesting habitat must have been an exciting discovery.

A few species occur in most years yet are

strangely absent in others. In 2008, we reported up to seven pairs of Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*, yet there were no reports in 2009. Conversely, there were no reports of Common Redpoll in 2008, yet a pair bred in Shetland in 2009 and records in the Outer Hebrides raised the possibility of other breeding attempts. A survey of Cirl Buntings *Emberiza cirlus* found an increase of 24% since the last survey, in 2003, but little expansion of range from the core area of south Devon.

The 2009 report

Following a review of criteria for the inclusion of species, we felt it was opportune to include more detailed analyses of selected species that typically have over 1,000 breeding pairs in a year. Three species are thus treated in more depth: Gadwall, Little Tern and Cetti's Warbler, with texts by Tony Fox, Sabine Schmitt and David Norman respectively. As usual, there are additional summaries for species covered by a national survey; in 2009 these involved Corn Crake and Cirl Bunting, and these RSPB-led surveys

are summarised by Mark Eaton and Simon Wotton.

This report also updates the criteria used to select species for the RBBP list. We explain further why we ask for the type of data we do (in particular whether detailed site information or only county totals are requested). For the first time we have categorised the population ranges of each of the regularly breeding species, and have attempted to provide an indication of how complete we consider the data to be. This new information is presented in a banner for each regularly breeding species. Each banner shows four key pieces of information: (1) the population status (very rare, rare, scarce and less scarce), which is determined by (2) the mean breeding population size for the last five years, the total estimated in the last national survey, or the best recent population estimate if neither of the aforementioned is available; (3) an indication of how representative the data we present are ('coverage'); and (4) the BoCC3 listing (Red, Amber or Green; see Eaton *et al.* 2009). Full definitions of these terms are included under 'Terminology', below.



Dan Powell

Little Terns *Sternula albifrons*

The criteria used to select species for the RBBP list

In the early years, after its formation in 1972, the RBBP included only the rarest breeding birds in the UK, mostly those with fewer than 300 breeding pairs in a typical year. With effect from the 1996 season, however, the list was extended to include all species on Schedule 1 of the 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act (Ogilvie 1997). This allowed the inclusion of all species with a population size of up to 1,500 breeding pairs, many of which were not monitored by any other national scheme. There have been minimal changes since then. For most species on the list, we have requested full site details (of nests or territories), but for the more numerous species (over 300 pairs nationally) we have asked for county totals only, as long as there are more than ten pairs or sites within the recording area (otherwise full site details have been requested).

In March 2011, the current species list was reviewed, along with the criteria used to determine the species included and the type of information we should attempt to collect for each species. The results of that review are presented here.

Regular breeders

The main part of the list is composed of species which attempt to breed in most years. All of these have been proved to breed in the UK at least once, and our reports show that they bred, attempted to breed, or were recorded as present in at least eight of the last ten years. For each of these species, the species banner shows the mean number of breeding pairs during 2005–09 (or the most recent population estimate) and, based on this information, the relevant population-status category; these are **very rare** (fewer than 30 pairs), **rare** (30–300 pairs), **scarce** (301–1,000 pairs), and **less scarce** (more than 1,000 breeding pairs).

There are now 76 species on the Regular Breeders List. For the rare and very rare species, we shall continue to request records for all sites. For more numerous species that nest in colonies, or where compiling a site gazetteer is an important role of the RBBP, we shall also now request all site data. These species are Eurasian Wigeon, Red-throated

Diver *Gavia stellata*, Little Egret, Marsh Harrier, Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*, Avocet, Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*, Whimbrel, Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*, Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*, Little Tern and Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*. For other scarce and less scarce species, where there are more than ten pairs or sites within the recording area, we shall continue to collect county totals only. A full breakdown of species and categories is given on our website www.rbbp.org.uk.

All regularly breeding species with estimated breeding populations of fewer than 1,500 breeding pairs will qualify automatically for inclusion on the RBBP list. More numerous species will be judged periodically against a series of criteria to decide whether they remain on the list (see Box 1).

BOX 1

The inclusion of species on the RBBP list

All species with fewer than 1,500 pairs in a typical year are included on the list, but more numerous species are judged against the following criteria; if one or more of these apply, a species currently on the RBBP list will be retained.

- the population is believed to be in decline;
- population monitoring is poor;
- RBBP data can usefully document edge-of-range expansion/contraction;
- the breeding range is restricted;
- there is other conservation need (e.g. influence of persecution or habitat loss);
- RBBP reporting may help to boost monitoring effort;
- the collation of data provides useful site information;
- population trends indicate that there may be a downturn in the population in the short to medium term;
- RBBP monitoring offers something that no other monitoring does;
- the UK population is of international significance;
- the current estimated UK population is fewer than c. 2,000 pairs.

Occasional breeders

These are species which have bred at least once in the UK but not sufficiently often to be included as a regular breeder. We aim to collect full nest and site details for any records of all of these species.

Potential breeders

These are species which have not yet bred in the UK but have shown behaviour indicating that they may do so in the future. They include pairs present in suitable breeding habitat during the breeding season and singing male passerines that remain in suitable habitat for at least a week. We aim to collect full site details for any records of all of these species, preferably also to include the dates when the birds were present.

Data quality and coverage definitions

In addition to reviewing the species on the RBBP list, we have reviewed the quality of data received. Reporting varies from comprehensive coverage of entire populations for species which are relatively easy to find and present in small numbers (e.g. Common Crane *Grus grus*), occur entirely/mostly within monitored reserve networks (e.g. Roseate Tern), or are the recipients of dedicated monitoring effort (e.g. Eurasian Bittern), to very poor coverage for species that typically occur away from reserves at low densities across widespread habitats (e.g. Cirl Bunting), in poorly observed areas (e.g. Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*), or are cryptic (e.g. Hawfinch). In other cases reporting coverage may be incomplete because detailed data are withheld from the Panel (e.g. Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*). We have thus categorised the degree of coverage of regularly reported species, 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).

We expect that the classifications for some species may change between years, owing to variation in observer coverage (or reporting); we might expect an improvement for some species during the period of the 2007–11 Atlas, and for species surveyed under the Statutory Conservation Agencies/RSPB Annual Breeding Bird Scheme (SCARABBS) there will be periodic improvements in coverage. For example, coverage of Cirl Buntings in 2009 was complete because of a national survey but coverage of this species between survey years is poor.

We hope that these classifications will help readers to understand the strengths and weaknesses of RBBP data for each species and thus aid interpretation. For example, readers should have faith that between-year variation in the number of White-tailed Eagles *Haliaeetus albicilla* reported is due to genuine changes in the number of breeding pairs (in the case of this species, a steady increase), whereas between-year fluctuations in the number of Redwings *Turdus iliacus* may reflect variation in observer effort or in the tendency of observers to report sightings.

The RBBP list

The review process described above examined each of the current regular breeders on the RBBP list, and also other species where the population is now believed to be under or close to 1,500 breeding pairs. The results are as follows.

All species currently on the RBBP list will be retained, with three exceptions: Gadwall, Leach's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* and Scottish Crossbill *Loxia scotica*. None of the criteria listed in Box 1 now applies to these species (more detail is included in the species accounts). They are removed from the list with immediate effect and this will therefore be the last RBBP report to include them. Other species with over 1,000 pairs will be reviewed every two years to establish whether the retention criteria are still being met. Red Kite *Milvus milvus* and Cetti's

Warbler look to be the most likely candidates for removal, given the current rates of population increase. However, at this point in time, it is felt that the annual county reviews presented in these reports currently offer something unique in assessing the changing status of these species. In future, species will be removed only if none of the qualifying criteria given in Box 1 apply.

Looking at other species where the estimated population is now less than 1,500 pairs, we found five new species that fulfil our criteria: Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*, Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*, Short-eared Owl *A. flammeus*, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor* and Willow Tit *Poecile montana*.

In BoCC3 (Eaton *et al.* 2009), Arctic Skua moved from Green to Red because of a severe decline in its breeding population (56% between 1987 and 2008) and the RBBP would now like to collect details of numbers at each breeding site. Applying this rate of decline to the population of 2,136 apparently occupied territories (AOTs) estimated in the Seabird 2000 census (Mitchell *et al.* 2004) suggests that the number of pairs now could be little more than 1,000 and that annual monitoring is desirable.

Both the owls are notoriously difficult to census and a national survey is at present unlikely to take place. There is some uncertainty over the size of their populations, and the last breeding Atlas (Gibbons *et al.* 1993) suggested populations of around 1,500 breeding pairs of Long-eared Owls and around 1,000 breeding pairs of Short-eared Owls. We feel that by collecting county totals of both species (or details of all sites where there are fewer than ten pairs in a county), we will be able to provide an annual status review of these species at the UK level, something which is not currently available.

BBS and provisional Atlas data show that there has been a reduction in both numbers and range of Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers, with populations now perhaps around 1,000 pairs. In 2009 the species was recorded in just 19 BBS squares (Risely *et al.* 2010). For the Willow Tit, there has been some considerable range contraction but the species remains reasonably common in its core range in some northern and central counties of England, South Wales and Dumfries & Galloway. However, in 2009 it occurred in just 42 (1%) of BBS squares (Risely *et al.* 2010), so it may no longer be possible to continue to monitor Willow Tits using BBS trends. For both these



Kevin Du Rose

272. Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*, Yorkshire, January 2009. Short-eared Owl is one of the five new species which the RBBP will report on from 2010.

species, RBBP reporting could fulfil a useful monitoring role providing status and distribution at the county level on an annual basis, information not currently available.

To achieve reasonable results for these five new species, as for other species on the RBBP list, we will be dependent on the collation and submission of totals by county recorders and (for the owls) Raptor Study Groups. We therefore ask that all county recorders and others who submit data to the Panel include these species in all future submissions, including those for 2010. The Panel has compiled some guidelines for the collection of records of these five species and these can be found on our website www.rbbp.org.uk.

Data sources

Records are collated from all counties of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and the Isle of Man, but not from the Channel Islands. Most of the information presented is submitted by county and regional bird recorders, for whose support we are extremely grateful. We also receive information from a number of other sources, including valuable returns from Schedule 1 licence holders, Raptor Study Groups, data from national surveys, counts from RSPB reserves, and other single-species studies (see Acknowledgments).

The number of contributing recording areas (or 'counties') is similar to that in 2008, at 66 full returns supplemented by extracts from five bird reports. It is most welcome to see Gower, Greater London and Perth & Kinross back among the list of contributing counties, though disappointing not to receive data in time for inclusion in the report from two areas (Clyde Islands and Essex) that did submit data for 2008. However, at least some data were available from all counties and regions and so the numbers of pairs of each species in this report are broadly comparable with those in recent RBBP reports.

Data were received from all counties in England except Essex. No data were available directly for the Welsh counties of Gwent, Montgomeryshire and Radnorshire, so some records were extracted from the *Welsh Bird Report* (Pritchard 2011). In Scotland, no returns were received from Caithness and Clyde Islands, and some data were not avail-

able from the Outer Hebrides (specifically Lewis & Harris).

Bird of prey monitoring in many parts of the UK is achieved largely by the work of the various Raptor Study Groups (RSGs). In Scotland, these groups provided area totals, via the Scottish Raptor Monitoring Scheme, although some of these data cannot always be matched with the bird recording areas used in this report. In much of northern England, mainly upland raptors are monitored by an array of groups now operating under the Northern England Raptor Forum (NERF). NERF produced their first report in 2010; this covered the 2009 breeding season and, where possible, their summaries are used in this report. Schedule 1 raptor data from Wales were collated for RBBP under contract from the Countryside Council for Wales by RSPB Wales. Lastly, having received full details of rare birds of prey in Northern Ireland for 2008 from the Northern Ireland Raptor Study Group, data provided for 2009 was sadly rather more piecemeal, so the 2009 raptor data presented in this report for Northern Ireland are incomplete.

Readers should take into account any gaps in the coverage when reviewing the data presented in this report.

Because the annual RBBP reports represent an important source of information for conservation bodies, we strive to maximise coverage across the whole of the UK. Consequently, any late submissions are still welcome and important; such records will be added to our confidential archives to ensure that annual statistics and the inventory of breeding sites are updated. Amendments and corrections to our published reports are included on the RBBP website (www.rbbp.org.uk/rbbp-reports); in the course of the last year we have provided such updates to the published reports for 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008.

Recording standards

Most records are now received electronically and we are most grateful to all those who were able to submit data in time for inclusion in this report. Records should be submitted by the end of each calendar-year, for the *previous* year's breeding season. Thus, data for 2010 should be submitted by 31st



Rebecca Nason

273. Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*, Suffolk, April 2009. There are uncertainties about the numbers of this species following colder than average weather in early 2009 in southern England, and prolonged cold conditions nationwide in the two subsequent winters. Thus, despite there being over 3,000 breeding pairs in the last national survey, Dartford Warbler will remain on the RBBP list for the time being.

December 2011, and so on. Guidelines on data submission are available on the RBBP website.

The website also includes the acceptance criteria for records contained in these reports; these have not changed in recent years. It is pleasing to see a continued improvement in the quality of information submitted, following the recommendations and guidelines introduced in 2009 (see www.rbbp.org.uk/rbbp-recording-standards).

Conservation 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 planning. Over the last 12 months, RBBP data for selected species have been used to review the historical distribution of Cetti's and Dartford Warblers against the effects of climate change, to review the status of Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*, and to prepare for RSPB-led surveys of Dotterel and

Snow Bunting. Work also continued with the review of the UK's Special Protection Area network.

The Panel

The current membership of the Panel (September 2011) is as follows: Mark Eaton, Ian Francis, Simon Gillings, Andrew King, David Norman, David Stroud (Chairman) and Mark Holling (Secretary). Members serve in a personal capacity, but some also reflect the interests and requirements of the funding partners, JNCC (on behalf of the country conservation agencies) and RSPB, as well as 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 researchers, ringers, surveyors and conservation practitioners. Andrew King joined the Panel as an independent member in November 2010 (*Brit. Birds* 103: 746).

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. 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 recording area but also the western part of Moray & Nairn. Scottish Raptor Study Group area boundaries are shown on their website at www.scottishraptorgroups.org/areas.

Readers should note the treatment of records listed in this report from the Greater London recording area, which covers all areas within a 20-mile radius of St Paul's Cathedral. Where possible, all records from within this circle are listed under Greater London only, and not within the counties surrounding London, namely Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent and Surrey. This removes the possibility of double recording from these areas.

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.

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.

Definition of numbers used

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

Species banners

For all regular breeding species, we give four pieces of information, as follows: (1) an indication of population status in one of four categories (see below); (2) a population estimate based, where possible, on the mean maximum population size from the last five years reported by the RBBP, shown as '5-yr mean' – in some cases, we show the totals estimated in national surveys, or, particularly for species with poor coverage, the best national population estimate; (3) the degree of coverage, described under 'Data quality and coverage definitions' above; and (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 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 which are not breeding-related is the Eurasian Wigeon, which owes its status to the localised distribution and international importance of its wintering population.

Occasional and potential breeding species are labelled as such, with additional information where applicable.

Population status	UK population size
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

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus***Very rare: 5-yr mean 11 bp****Coverage: near-complete****Amber**

16 sites: 12–17 pairs. The numbers here suggest no change since 2008 after several years of increase, although the main population in Shetland reached a new record of eight pairs. No data were received from Lewis, where a pair bred in 2008. In addition, another 3–4 naturalised pairs bred and other single birds summered in at least three other counties.

Scotland, S

Ayrshire One site: one pair bred, raising two cygnets.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll One site: three birds present in suitable nesting habitat but did not breed. **Highland** One site: one summering pair. **Orkney** Two sites: two summering pairs. **Outer Hebrides** One site: one pair bred, hatching seven cygnets in May, with five still present in September. **Shetland** Eight sites: eight pairs bred. Seven successful pairs fledged 23 young.

Northern Ireland

Co. Derry Two sites: (1) two pairs present, one of which bred, seen with five large young; (2) one pair bred at a new site, fledging one young.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope***Rare: 5-yr mean 144 bp****Coverage: low****Amber**

88 sites: 65–166 pairs. The total number of pairs is the highest since 2005, perhaps a result of atlas fieldwork in Scotland. Nonetheless, this is an under-reported species and all records of pairs in breeding habitat, especially in northern England and Scotland, should be submitted to help improve coverage of the population. As in previous reports, individuals apparently just summering and pairs present but without showing evidence of breeding are noted but not included in the totals.

England, SE

Essex One site: one pair probably bred. **Kent** Two sites: three pairs probably bred. Also summering birds reported from **Bedfordshire** (three males) and **Sussex** (four birds).

England, E

Cambridgeshire One site: 11 pairs possibly bred. **Norfolk** Four sites: nine pairs possibly bred. **Northamptonshire** One site: two pairs probably bred. **Suffolk** Four sites: four pairs possibly bred.

England, C

Leicestershire & Rutland One site: one pair possibly bred; also one summering male. **Nottinghamshire** One site: one pair bred with a brood of one reported.

England, N

Cumbria Two sites: one pair probably bred and one pair possibly bred. **Co. Durham** Five sites: five pairs bred and three pairs probably bred. Three broods counted totalled just six young, with the low productivity being put down to poor weather at a critical time. **Northumberland** Two sites: two pairs bred, one brood counted had two young. **Yorkshire** Five sites: three pairs bred, three pairs probably bred and five pairs possibly bred.

Wales

Anglesey Two sites: two pairs probably bred and one pair possibly bred.

Scotland, S

Borders Four sites: one pair probably bred and three pairs possibly bred, with only single birds at two other sites. **Dumfries & Galloway** Five sites: two pairs bred and six pairs possibly bred.

Scotland, Mid

Moray & Nairn Although 2–3 pairs are thought to breed annually, there was only one record, of a single female in mid June. **North-east Scotland** One site: one pair bred, with two ducklings seen, and one pair probably bred. **Perth & Kinross** Five sites: five pairs bred and three pairs probably bred.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Two sites: two pairs possibly bred. **Caithness** Two sites: six pairs probably bred. **Highland** 12 sites: seven pairs bred and 19 pairs probably bred. This is believed to be a considerable underestimate of the breeding population in the recording area. **Orkney** 11 sites: 31 pairs bred. **Outer Hebrides** 11 sites: three pairs bred and 13 pairs possibly bred. **Shetland** Four sites: five pairs bred. One record was a nest with eggs while the other four records related to broods totalling 21 young.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,684 bp

Coverage: moderate

Amber

868–1,860 pairs. Again, the number of pairs reported is a new record. Given these numbers, and the widespread nature of the distribution (recorded in 61 counties, including every English county, in 2009), this will be the last report to include Gadwall. Tony Fox has compiled this review of the changing status of this successful species.

Continued increase and expansion of the Gadwall breeding population means that the total of over 1,800 pairs will underestimate the true numbers present, especially in the core areas of south and east England, where it is likely that only a proportion of pairs are reported. The total breeding population must now exceed 2,000 nesting pairs, but remains difficult to estimate by casual reporting. Many county annual totals reflect substantial under-recording, and counties contributing the greatest numbers of pairs show large between-year fluctuations. For example, the annual totals reported for Cambridgeshire during 1996–2009 were between ten and 219 pairs, but with no overall trend; while those for Hampshire have been regularly recorded as 25–50 pairs, yet recorders have been aware that the true county totals were likely to fall between 50 and 100 pairs. In other areas, county recorders are convinced of general increases since 1996, an example being Kent, where numbers still seem to be rising despite the county being long colonised by Gadwalls.

The British breeding population increased at 4.5–5% per annum during 1960 to 1985 (Fox 1988), and the maximum total numbers of pairs reported to the RBBP since then have shown an increase of 14.1% per annum during 1995–2003, but only 4.0% per annum during 2003–09. While it is tempting to suggest that suitable habitat is being filled and/or that density-dependent regulation may be slowing this species' expansion, it is extraordinarily difficult to draw any clear conclusions when coverage in time and space is highly variable. Surprisingly, some of the counties that were among the first to be colonised, such as Norfolk and Suffolk, and which enjoy generally good observer coverage, show signs of continued increase in the county totals, even though individual key sites (such as Minsmere and the Mid Yare Valley) have shown stable numbers over the last 10–15 years. At several of the more important breeding sites (which contribute most to the regional and national totals, such as the Avalon Marshes in Somerset and the Ouse Washes in Cambridgeshire), a full survey is often impossible, with the result that it has been hard to estimate realistic total numbers and trends. However, it does seem likely that after increasing from 260 pairs in the early 1970s (Sharrock 1976), to 600 pairs in 1983 (Fox 1988) and over 2,000 currently, the UK population is still increasing and therefore the species is likely to become even more numerous in the future.

There is no doubt that Gadwalls have been expanding their range north and west into Europe from what are considered to be their former original core breeding areas (between the Volga and Dneiper Rivers in southern Russia and Ukraine), perhaps linked to climate change (Burton 1995). Certainly, the Gadwall arrived as a nesting species to the eastern Baltic (i.e. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Kaliningrad) only in the early 1960s (Švažas 2001), where it continues to expand. The species was a late arrival to the Nordic countries, where present numbers (1,650–3,000 pairs in Finland, Sweden and Denmark combined) also continue to increase. Breeding numbers increased by 30–50% in Denmark during 1990–2000 (Dansk Ornitologisk Forening *in litt.*) and by more than 80% in Sweden during 1997–2006 (Ottvall *et al.* 2009). The breeding population in the Netherlands increased by 9.5% per annum, based on data presented by van Turnhout *et al.* (2008). There is no doubt that the expansion in the UK reflects a wider and continuing expansion throughout western Europe, perhaps linked to climate amelioration, in a species for which these areas formerly represented the cool and wet edge of its original continental range (Burton 1995; Švažas 2001). Intriguingly, Gadwalls are also increasing in North America, at more than 50% per decade (Butcher & Niven 2007).

Although we cannot prove that they were breeding, fossil and sub-fossil remains show that Gadwalls have occurred in Britain since at least the Ipswichian Interglacial Period (130,000 years BP; Harrison & Walker 1977), through the Iron Age (Gray 1966) and Roman times (Yalden



Dan Powell

Gadwalls *Anas strepera*

Gadwall	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs			
			West Midlands	8	9
			Worcestershire	3	4
			England, N	222	350
England, SW	85	224	Cheshire & Wirral	39	47
Avon	9	9	Cleveland	28	28
Cornwall	0	2	Cumbria	0	15
Devon	5	5	Co. Durham	6	6
Dorset	1	1	Greater Manchester	20	20
Gloucestershire	5	37	Lancashire & N Merseyside	18	67
Hampshire	46	47	Northumberland	17	17
Isles of Scilly	5	9	Yorkshire	94	150
Somerset	10	110	Wales	16	47
Wiltshire	4	4	Anglesey	5	31
England, SE	122	352	Breconshire	0	2
Bedfordshire	4	4	Caernarfonshire	2	2
Berkshire	6	10	Carmarthenshire	8	8
Buckinghamshire	3	3	Denbigh & Flint	0	2
Essex	1	36	Gower	0	1
Greater London	32	33	Gwent	1	1
Hertfordshire	33	117	Scotland, S	6	17
Kent	37	102	Ayrshire	1	2
Oxfordshire	3	22	Borders	3	4
Sussex	3	25	Clyde	0	8
England, E	221	587	Dumfries & Galloway	2	3
Cambridgeshire	0	165	Scotland, Mid	34	37
Lincolnshire	6	91	Angus & Dundee	4	4
Norfolk	167	190	Fife	2	3
Northamptonshire	6	6	North-east Scotland	3	4
Suffolk	42	135	Perth & Kinross	25	26
England, C	103	152	Scotland, N & W	24	50
Derbyshire	20	28	Argyll	2	2
Herefordshire	3	3	Orkney	18	37
Leicestershire & Rutland	21	21	Outer Hebrides	4	11
Nottinghamshire	6	8	Northern Ireland	35	44
Shropshire	0	4	Co. Antrim	32	37
Staffordshire	29	32	Co. Down	1	1
Warwickshire	13	43	Co. Tyrone	2	6
			TOTALS	868	1,860

& Albarella 2009). There is good evidence to suggest that some of the present breeding population originated from introduced stock, but there is little doubt that continental birds have contributed to the species' recent spread in Britain (Fox 1988). Whatever the source of the breeding birds, the population has shown a sustained increase and expansion of range, and there is no doubt that the species has attained favourable conservation status and sufficient abundance and that its future population size can now be monitored by other means, such as BBS. It was recorded as present in 58 BBS sites in 2009 (Risely et al. 2010).

Pintail *Anas acuta***Rare: 5-yr mean 30 bp****Coverage: high****Amber**

26 sites: 9–38 pairs. The number and spread of Pintails in 2009 were typical, with the usual concentrations in southeast and eastern England (37% of the total), and north and west Scotland (53%). Orkney had a good year with 14 pairs in total.

England, SE

Essex One site: one pair bred. Kent One site: one pair possibly bred. Sussex One male summered.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One site: one pair bred and three pairs possibly bred. Norfolk Two sites: five pairs possibly bred, although at one site only three males were recorded. Suffolk Three sites: two pairs probably bred and one pair possibly bred. At one site, a juvenile seen in early July is likely to have fledged close by.

England, N

Yorkshire One site: one pair possibly bred but not seen after early May.

Scotland, S

Dumfries & Galloway Two sites: one pair bred and one pair possibly bred (single male on two dates in May).

Scotland, Mid

Perth & Kinross One site: one pair possibly bred.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Three sites: two pairs bred (two broods produced, totalling 15 young, of which at least 11 fledged), two pairs probably bred and one pair possibly bred. Orkney Nine sites: three pairs bred, three pairs probably bred and eight pairs possibly bred. At least 11 ducklings recorded in the three broods. Outer Hebrides One site: one pair bred with a brood of two recorded.

Garganey *Anas querquedula***Rare: 5-yr mean 86 bp****Coverage: high****Amber**

53 sites: 12–90 pairs. Garganeys occur widely on passage and both pairs and single birds can remain at a site for several days before moving on. Some potential breeding pairs may thus be overlooked, yet equally some migrants may be assumed to be breeding birds. Where possible, these records include only those where there appears to be occupancy of a site for at least one week from mid May onwards.

England, SW

Hampshire Two sites: two pairs possibly bred. Somerset Two sites: a minimum of seven pairs probably bred.

England, SE

Essex One site: one pair probably bred. Greater London One site: one pair possibly bred. Kent Eight sites: three pairs bred, 14 pairs probably bred and four pairs possibly bred. Oxfordshire One site: two pairs probably bred. Sussex Four sites: one pair bred, three pairs probably bred and one pair possibly bred.

England, E

Cambridgeshire Five sites: two pairs bred, nine pairs probably bred and two pairs possibly bred.

Lincolnshire One site: two pairs bred. Norfolk Four sites: four pairs probably bred and one pair possibly bred. Suffolk Three sites: one pair bred and three pairs probably bred.

England, C

Derbyshire One site: one pair possibly bred. Nottinghamshire One site: one pair possibly bred.

Warwickshire One site: one pair possibly bred.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral One site: one pair possibly bred. Cleveland One site: one pair probably bred.

Cumbria Two sites: two pairs possibly bred. Greater Manchester One site: one pair possibly bred. Lancashire & N Merseyside One site: one pair probably bred and one pair possibly bred. Yorkshire Three sites: three pairs probably bred and three pairs possibly bred.

Wales

Gwent One site: one pair possibly bred. Pembrokeshire One site: one pair possibly bred.

Scotland, S

Clyde One site: one pair probably bred. Dumfries & Galloway Two sites: two pairs possibly bred.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland Two sites: one pair bred and two pairs probably bred.

Northern Ireland

Co. Antrim One site: two pairs bred. Co. Down One site: one pair possibly bred.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Less scarce: 4-yr mean 1,018 bp

Coverage: high

Amber

317–1,102 pairs. The RBBP has collected data on Shoveler since 2006, since when the total has ranged between 882 and 1,157 pairs. This compares with an estimated UK population of 1,000–1,500 pairs in 1988–91 (based on autumn WeBS counts; Kirby & Mitchell 1993), so at present it would appear that reporting rates to RBBP are good. Birdwatchers should always report potential breeding pairs and sightings of broods to county recorders to help make these figures as complete as possible.

Shoveler	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs			
			Cumbria	1	1
			Co. Durham	1	1
			Greater Manchester	4	4
England, SW	16	49	Lancashire & N Merseyside	17	66
Avon	1	1	Northumberland	3	3
Cornwall	0	2	Yorkshire	42	109
Devon	0	1	Wales	3	39
Dorset	0	4	Anglesey	1	34
Gloucestershire	1	1	Carmarthenshire	0	1
Hampshire	9	9	Denbigh & Flint	1	1
Isle of Wight	0	3	Gwent	1	2
Somerset	5	28	Meirionnydd	0	1
England, SE	24	197	Scotland, S	4	31
Bedfordshire	0	1	Ayrshire	2	2
Essex	2	75	Borders	0	4
Greater London	7	7	Clyde	0	3
Hertfordshire	4	9	Dumfries & Galloway	2	21
Kent	7	70	Lothian	0	1
Oxfordshire	2	19	Scotland, Mid	9	14
Sussex	2	16	Angus & Dundee	2	4
England, E	155	454	North-east Scotland	1	2
Cambridgeshire	49	227	Perth & Kinross	6	8
Lincolnshire	13	15	Scotland, N & W	27	93
Norfolk	80	141	Argyll	7	30
Northamptonshire	0	1	Caithness	0	1
Suffolk	13	70	Highland	0	1
England, C	6	24	Orkney	15	36
Nottinghamshire	2	5	Outer Hebrides	4	24
Shropshire	0	4	Shetland	1	1
Staffordshire	3	13	Northern Ireland	1	3
Warwickshire	0	1	Co. Antrim	1	1
West Midlands	1	1	Co. Armagh	0	1
England, N	72	198	Co. Tyrone	0	1
Cheshire & Wirral	1	6	TOTALS	317	1,102
Cleveland	3	8			

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 600 bp

Coverage: high

Amber

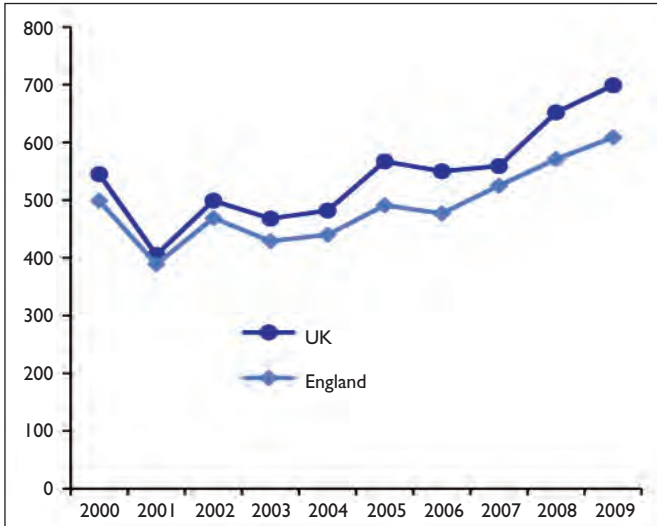


Fig. 1. Annual variation in the maximum total number of breeding pairs of Common Pochards *Aythya ferina*, 2000–09, showing that the increase in the UK as a whole is mirrored closely by numbers in England. The number of breeding pairs in both Scotland and Wales has remained stable with a combined total of fewer than 60 pairs.

338–700 pairs. Over the last ten years, the mean number of pairs reported has been 543, but in both 2008 and 2009 the total was over 600 pairs, continuing the steady increase over the decade. Fig. 1. shows that this change in status has been driven largely by increasing numbers in England. In 2009, 86% of pairs occurred in English counties south of a line between Morecambe Bay and the Tees. Pochards are late breeders, with most clutches being laid in June. We encourage birders to check lowland pools and lakes in late summer and report females with broods.

Common Pochard		Nottinghamshire	5	10	
	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs			
England, SW	30	114	Shropshire	0	1
Avon	2	2	Warwickshire	0	1
Devon	1	1	Worcestershire	2	2
Dorset	3	3	England, N	83	124
Gloucestershire	0	2	Cheshire & Wirral	16	16
Hampshire	7	14	Cleveland	19	19
Isle of Wight	1	1	Greater Manchester	8	8
Isles of Scilly	1	1	Lancashire & N Merseyside	6	31
Somerset	15	90	Northumberland	5	5
England, SE	107	243	Yorkshire	29	45
Bedfordshire	3	3	Wales	12	44
Berkshire	1	1	Anglesey	5	37
Essex	7	63	Carmarthenshire	4	4
Greater London	17	17	Gwent	3	3
Hertfordshire	21	36	Scotland, S	1	2
Kent	41	91	Borders	1	1
Oxfordshire	14	14	Lothian	0	1
Surrey	1	1	Scotland, Mid	1	8
Sussex	2	17	Perth & Kinross	1	8
England, E	68	115	Scotland, N & W	4	4
Cambridgeshire	2	27	Orkney	4	4
Lincolnshire	13	15	Northern Ireland	25	32
Norfolk	46	62	Co. Antrim	4	4
Suffolk	7	11	Co. Armagh	17	22
England, C	7	14	Co. Armagh/Tyrone	4	4
			Co. Tyrone	0	2
			TOTALS	338	700

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Rare: 52 bp (2007 survey)

Coverage: moderate

Red

Seven sites: 1–19 pairs. These figures are similar to those for 2008. In the absence of a complete census (the most recent one was in 2007, when 52 pairs were found), it appears that birdwatchers are rarely finding and reporting breeding Common Scoters. Consequently, this summary offers little evidence to suggest whether the population is still in decline, as is suspected. The Common Scoter is Red-listed because of the long-term decline in the breeding population and the RSPB is researching the potential causes of this decline.

Scotland, Mid

Perth & Kinross One site: one pair possibly bred.

Scotland, N & W

Caithness One extensive site: one pair bred (brood of four fledged), 11 pairs probably bred and one pair possibly bred. Highland Five sites: four pairs probably bred and one pair possibly bred.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Rare: 5-yr mean 187 bp

Coverage: moderate

Amber

218 breeding females. Data on at least 136 breeding pairs were received, from which the Goldeneye Study Group (GSG) estimates a population of at least 218 breeding females in northern Scotland. This is the highest total reported by RBBP and compares with five-year means of 115 in 2000–04 and 187 in 2005–09. Totals derived from GSG data are based on the assumption that around two-thirds of all clutches laid involve more than one female.

England, SE

Bedfordshire A male was present for a week in June at least.

England, C

Leicestershire & Rutland As in both 2007 and 2008, a lone male summered.

England, N

Cumbria A single bird, probably an eclipse male, was present from late June to mid July.

Northumberland A male and four females were recorded on 28th June.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland Deeside: eggs were laid in 31 nests, and those in 19 nests hatched. On one date, 73 ducklings were present on one loch, and at least 54 were known to have fledged, indicating the most productive season since monitoring began. Perth & Kinross One site: three pairs bred.

Scotland, N & W

Highland Badenoch & Strathspey: of 102 recorded nests in which eggs were laid, a minimum of 58 clutches were incubated.

Northern Ireland

Two males and seven females over-summered in the Lough Neagh area.

Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*

Rare: 5-yr mean 217 lekking males

Coverage: high

Red

101 leks with a total of 196 displaying males were counted, the same number of males as in 2008. A Capercaillie census was undertaken in the winter of 2009/10, which will provide a revised estimate for the Scottish population. The previous census (Eaton *et al.* 2007a) estimated 1,980 adults in winter 2003/04. Capercaillie is Red-listed because of the decline in range both in the last 25 years and in the longer term.

Scotland, S

Clyde One lek: one male.

Scotland, Mid

Moray & Nairn 18 leks: 21 males. North-east Scotland 21 leks: 26 males and six females. Productivity was again low with just three chicks found with five hens, as in 2008. Perth & Kinross Seven leks: eight males.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 54 leks: 140 males. In the Abernethy Forest RSPB recording area, 29 hens with 37 chicks were counted.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 592 singing males Coverage: high

Amber

14–832 calling males or pairs. Confirmed breeding was recorded in eight counties: Anglesey (one pair), Angus & Dundee (three pairs), Borders (four pairs), Caithness (one pair), Lothian (one pair), Radnorshire (two pairs), Suffolk (one pair) and Yorkshire (one pair).

The minimum total of 832 calling males is similar to those in other recent ‘Quail years’ (842 in 2005 and 867 in 1997), though all of these are overshadowed by the 1,655 calling males/pairs recorded in 1989. A comparison of the regional distribution of the birds in these four years is interesting (fig. 2). In 2009 there was a marked northerly bias to the distribution, with around 32% of birds reported from Scotland and 22% from northern England. Two counties, Yorkshire

Common Quail	Total pairs or singing males		
		Co. Durham	40
		Greater Manchester	2
		Lancashire & N Merseyside	20
England, SW	104	Northumberland	25
Avon	10	Yorkshire	68
Cornwall	3	Wales	24
Devon	8	Anglesey	1
Dorset	7	Ceredigion	2
Gloucestershire	27	Denbigh & Flint	5
Hampshire	7	East Glamorgan	7
Somerset	12	Meirionnydd	1
Wiltshire	30	Montgomeryshire	2
England, SE	78	Pembrokeshire	1
Bedfordshire	8	Radnorshire	5
Berkshire	15	Scotland, S	122
Buckinghamshire	6	Ayrshire	4
Essex	2	Borders	33
Hertfordshire	10	Clyde	7
Kent	14	Clyde Islands	1
Oxfordshire	17	Dumfries & Galloway	4
Sussex	6	Lothian	73
England, E	88	Scotland, Mid	89
Cambridgeshire	23	Angus & Dundee	28
Lincolnshire	17	Fife	8
Norfolk	35	Moray & Nairn	5
Northamptonshire	9	North-east Scotland	40
Suffolk	4	Perth & Kinross	4
England, C	89	Upper Forth	4
Derbyshire	13	Scotland, N & W	54
Herefordshire	3	Argyll	8
Leicestershire & Rutland	6	Caithness	4
Nottinghamshire	10	Fair Isle	2
Shropshire	27	Highland	14
Staffordshire	13	Orkney	6
Warwickshire	13	Outer Hebrides	1
Worcestershire	4	Shetland	19
England, N	183	Northern Ireland	1
Cheshire & Wirral	7	Co. Derry	1
Cleveland	13	TOTAL	832
Cumbria	8		

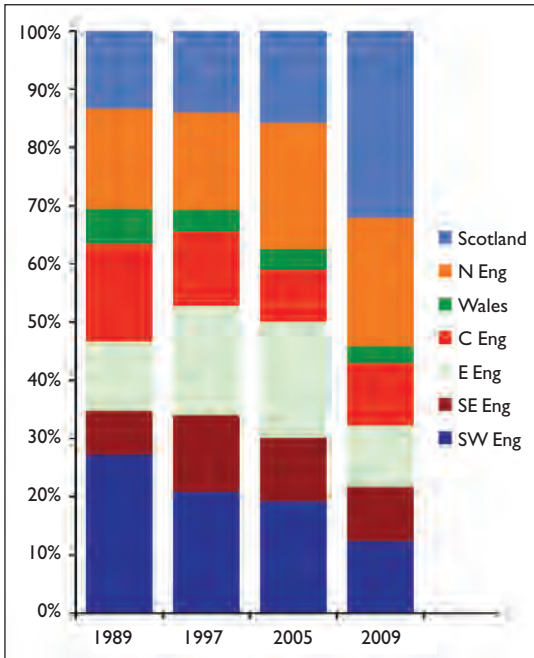


Fig. 2. The regional distribution of singing Common Quails *Coturnix coturnix* in the four most recent ‘Quail years’.



Phil Jones

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

(68) and Lothian (73), held 17% of all birds reported in 2009, although the Lothian total will have been boosted by the efforts to locate calling birds once an influx was apparent (Welch 2010). The birds in Lothian arrived in a series of waves, with the peak arrival in early July.

Looking across these four ‘Quail’ years, there appears to be an increasing proportion of birds in northern England and Scotland, contrasting with a

decreasing proportion in southwest England and Wales. Could it be that climatic conditions now enable them to move farther north when they arrive in Britain?

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Less scarce: 1,255 bp (2006 survey) Coverage: low

Amber

Details were received for 460 nesting pairs, almost twice as many as for 2008; much of this increase is attributable to Atlas fieldwork. However, these still represent only a sample of the estimated 1,255 pairs breeding in Scotland (Dillon *et al.* 2009). Since we are unable to provide accurate figures for most recording areas, we present only those records away from the core area of north and west Scotland, adding some details from intensively monitored areas in the Northern Isles.

In Orkney, 2009 seemed to be a relatively productive year. On Hoy, there were 62 apparently occupied sites (AOS) and 56 chicks fledged. For the first time since monitoring there began, the number of broods with two chicks (19) exceeded those with only one (18). On Rousay, six pairs reared eight young and on the West Mainland RSPB reserves 18 pairs fledged 17 chicks. Overall productivity at the Orkney monitored sites was 0.94 fledglings per AOS.

In contrast, in monitored areas of Shetland, the number of successful pairs was the lowest ever and productivity was also low, especially in Unst and West Mainland. On Fetlar, 20 pairs fledged just ten chicks, and at Lumbister, Yell, 12 pairs reared ten chicks. In the North Mainland study area, however, there was confirmed breeding at 19 lochs, the highest since 1990, while it was the most successful season on Foula for at least ten years, with 11 breeding pairs rearing at least six young.

Scotland, S

Clyde At one site a pair was present but showed no sign of nesting, and at a second site only one bird was recorded, through June into early July. Clyde Islands Two pairs bred (but limited information received).

Scotland, Mid

Moray & Nairn One pair probably bred. North-east Scotland One pair bred. Perth & Kinross One pair bred.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica***Rare: 217 bp (2006 survey)****Coverage: moderate****Amber**

75–96 pairs. The population was estimated at 217 breeding pairs in 2006 (Eaton *et al.* 2007c). Each year we receive records for only a sample of the population, although a proportion of the Highland population has been monitored by professional fieldworkers each year to date, allowing some comparison between years.

Scotland, S

Clyde One pair bred but was unsuccessful because of changes in water levels. Dumfries & Galloway One pair possibly bred.

Scotland, Mid

Three pairs bred, one pair probably bred and three pairs possibly bred. Single birds recorded on one date only at a further three sites may also have been possible breeding pairs.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Eight sites were monitored, at which five pairs bred, two of which fledged a single chick each. Caithness Five pairs bred and one pair possibly bred. Highland At 71 regularly monitored sites in three large areas of Highland, 60 pairs were found, of which 52 bred. At least 22 young fledged from the 54 nests checked for productivity, giving 0.41 young fledged per AOS. Outer Hebrides Nine pairs bred, four pairs probably bred and three pairs possibly bred.

Leach's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa***Less scarce: 48,047 bp (Seabird 2000) Coverage: low****Amber**

Leach's Storm-petrel was added to the RBBP list in 1996, since it is on Schedule 1 of the 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act; however, unlike that for most Schedule 1 species, the population size is well above the Panel's notional ceiling and we have rarely had data on this species to include in our reports.

Mitchell *et al.* (2004) reported 48,047 (range 36,432–64,883) AOS and 11 traditional colonies in Scotland. The two Shetland sites (Foula and Gruney) held only 35 AOS between them and the Orkney site (Sule Skerry) had no nests in 2001. The remaining colonies are all in the Outer Hebrides, with the largest numbers (45,433 AOS in 1999–2000) in the St Kilda archipelago. The other major colonies are on the Flannan Isles (1,425 AOS) and North Rona (1,132 AOS). These figures were the first accurate population estimates available so there is currently no information on population trends. Leach's Storm-petrel is Amber-listed because of the small number of breeding colonies.

Given the size of the population and since almost no information is submitted to the Panel each year, Leach's Storm-petrel is removed from the RBBP list with immediate effect. Regular seabird censuses provide the best way of monitoring the population of this species.

Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris***Rare: 5-yr mean 72 booming males****Coverage: near-complete****Red**

55 sites: 82–100 booming males with 39 breeding attempts at 18 sites. The numbers show the minimum number of booming males (based on residency 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 a shorter period only or where it was not possible to confirm that different males were involved. Since Bitterns were first included on the RBBP list, in 1977, there have never previously been more than 50 sites occupied or as many as 100 booming males. Simon Wotton, RSPB, commented as follows.

Encouragingly, there was another increase in the number of booming Bitterns in 2009. A minimum of 82 booming males in England and Wales is an increase of 9% on the 2008 figure of 75. The population of booming males is now at or above the twentieth-century peak that was reached in the 1950s, when most of the population was found in the Norfolk Broads. The

number of sites supporting at least one booming male in 2009 increased by two to 43. The same number of active nests was found as in 2008, 39, following a 44% increase between 2007 and 2008. The number of sites with nesting females dropped slightly, from 20 in 2008 to 18 in 2009. The cold spell during January and February 2009 may have affected Bitterns across the country, with booming being recorded later than usual at a number of sites. The first booming Bittern in 2009 was heard on 14th February on the Suffolk coast, 18 days later than the earliest report in 2008.

England, SW

Somerset Three sites: 3–5 booming males; seven confirmed nests.

England, SE

Essex One site: one booming male. **Hertfordshire** One site: 0–1 booming male. **Kent** Three sites: 2–3 booming males. **Sussex** Two sites: 1–2 booming males.

England, E

Cambridgeshire Eight sites: 8–11 booming males. **Lincolnshire** Four sites: 4–6 booming males. **Norfolk** *North Norfolk coast* Four sites: five booming males; three confirmed nests. *Norfolk Broads* 13 sites: 19–23 booming males; seven confirmed nests. **Suffolk** *Suffolk coast* Seven sites: 28–30 booming males; 14 confirmed nests. *Fens* One site: four booming males; four confirmed nests.

England, C

Nottinghamshire One site: one booming male. **Staffordshire** One site: 0–1 booming male.

England, N

Greater Manchester Two sites: 1–2 booming males. **Lancashire & N Merseyside** One site: one booming male and one confirmed nest. **Yorkshire** Two sites: three booming males; three confirmed nests.

Wales

Breconshire One site: one booming male.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

Occasional breeder; last bred in 1984

Two sites: 0–2 pairs. The only confirmed breeding of Little Bittern in the UK was in Yorkshire in 1984. The last time this species featured in these reports was 2004, and it is unusual for two sites to be occupied in the same year. In both cases, there was no evidence that breeding occurred, although the Somerset record now looks as though it was a precursor for successful breeding in 2010!

England, SW

Isles of Scilly One site: one pair possibly bred. A male was recorded in potential breeding habitat on 10th–25th May and 6th June, with a female present on 10th–19th May. The male sustained a wing injury and it is not thought that a breeding attempt was made. **Somerset** One site: one male booming from 6th June to 22nd September, but no female seen.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Occasional breeder; first bred in 2008

Two sites: 0–3 pairs. Although Cattle Egrets returned to Somerset following confirmed breeding in 2008, nesting was not proved there in 2009. However, the presence of a juvenile in neighbouring Avon suggests that at least one pair bred successfully in southwest England in 2009.

England, SW

Avon One site: one pair possibly bred. A pair with a juvenile on 30th July was thought to have been raised somewhere in southwest England but not at this site.

Somerset Two sites: (1) two adults within a heronry probably bred and may have been the pair seen in Avon; (2) one pair seen in a heronry in April possibly bred, but these birds were not seen again. However, access was difficult, so they may have stayed.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 666 bp

Coverage: high

Amber

84 sites: 701–820 pairs. Despite a 5-year mean (2005–09) of 666 breeding pairs, in both 2007 and 2008 there were almost 800 pairs reported and in 2009 that milestone was exceeded for the first

time. More sites were also reported, yet it is believed that some nests are being overlooked and other colonies not reported to recorders, so these figures will be minima. Further consolidation of the UK range is suggested by the presence of potential breeding birds at sites in three English counties in which breeding has not yet occurred, but there is as yet no indication of birds breeding in northern counties of England or in Scotland.



Phil Jones

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Little Egret	No. sites	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs
England, SW	30	223	283
Avon	1	0	1
Cornwall	4	14	14
Devon	8	67	67
Dorset	5	37	49
Gloucestershire	1	12	12
Hampshire	6	44	80
Somerset	4	34	40
Wiltshire	1	15	20
England, SE	24	232	276
Bedfordshire	1	0	1
Berkshire	1	1	1
Buckinghamshire	2	3	4
Essex (data incomplete)	[8]	[46]	[85]
Greater London (data incomplete)	[2]	[2]	[2]
Kent	4	139	139
Oxfordshire	1	1	1
Sussex	5	40	43
England, E	17	133	138
Cambridgeshire (data incomplete)	[2]	[1]	[2]
Lincolnshire	3	21	21
Norfolk	6	72	75
Suffolk	6	39	40
England, C	1	0	3
Warwickshire	1	0	3
England, N	2	31	31
Cheshire & Wirral	1	30	30
Yorkshire	1	1	1

Little Egret <i>cont.</i>	No. sites	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs
Wales	10	82	89
Anglesey	1	0	1
Caernarfonshire	3	44	44
Carmarthenshire	1	8	8
Ceredigion	1	13	13
Gower	2	13	18
Gwent	1	4	4
Pembrokeshire	1	0	1
TOTALS	84	701	820

The winter population of Little Egrets has recently been estimated at a minimum of 4,500 individuals (Musgrove *et al.* 2011), based on WeBS counts, which perhaps indicates that the breeding population of 820 pairs is an underestimate. Little Egrets often nest with Grey Herons *Ardea cinerea* but can be surprisingly inconspicuous, especially if nesting in conifers. Field-workers are encouraged to check potential nest-sites based on the location of existing heronries or egret roost sites and report all nest counts to county recorders, to enable the RBBP to collate accurate numbers. If nests cannot be counted, then a record of a colony and an indication of its size is still useful information.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Occasional breeder; last bred in 2008

After the successful breeding in Dumfries & Galloway in 2008, there were no breeding records submitted for 2009, and so the pattern of sporadic breeding activity by Spoonbills over recent decades continues. Summering birds were reported from Kent, Norfolk and Suffolk. In Dumfries & Galloway, two adults and two immatures were recorded in early June; perhaps the 2008 family returning? None of this hinted at the establishment of a colony in Norfolk in 2010 (*Brit. Birds* 103: 556–557), which will be covered in our next report.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Very rare: 23 bp (2009 survey)

Coverage: near-complete

Amber

Ten sites: 23 pairs and one single bird at one other site. Stuart Benn, RSPB, commented as follows.

In total, 23 pairs were located and 16 young reared (29 and 14, respectively, in 2008) and this was the lowest number of pairs since regular monitoring began, in 1971. Productivity was 0.70 young per territorial pair, well above the long-term average of 0.56. Ten sites were occupied by pairs in 2009 (the lowest ever) and a further one by just a single bird; only six sites produced young (the equal second-lowest ever). The population is in steep decline and there is little doubt that the Slavonian Grebe is in big trouble as a UK breeding species. In order to understand this decline, RSPB Scotland has begun to research what is affecting the birds' productivity (*Brit. Birds* 103: 690–691).

In 2009, SPAs held 14 pairs (61% of the total), compared with the late 1990s when these same SPAs held 53% of the then British population of 70 pairs (Stroud *et al.* 2001). SPAs thus hold proportionately slightly more breeding pairs than ten years ago, although in 2009 those 14 pairs produced only three of the 16 young reared.

Scotland, Mid and N & W

Highland/Moray & Nairn Ten sites: 23 pairs reared 16 young, plus one bird present at another site.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis***Rare: 5-yr mean 52 bp****Coverage: near-complete****Amber**

21 sites: 30–54 pairs. Up to 52 young fledged. After six years of decreasing numbers of confirmed breeding pairs and sites, there was a slight upturn in 2009, although nesting occurred in the same counties as in 2008. It was a disappointing year at the main site, Woolston Eyes in Cheshire & Wirral, where only six pairs were confirmed breeding. The number of adults present at that site was the lowest since 2000 and the number of broods the lowest since 1997.

England, SE

Hertfordshire One site: nine pairs fledged 20 young. Kent One site: two pairs bred, with four young fledged from this site.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One site: one pair possibly bred, with a third bird also present. Lincolnshire Three sites: (1) two pairs bred, fledging five young; (2) two pairs probably bred; (3) one pair possibly bred.

England, C

Nottinghamshire Two sites: (1) one pair probably bred; (2) one pair possibly bred. Staffordshire One site: one pair possibly bred, but again no attempt to nest because of disturbance.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral Four sites: (1) six pairs bred and five pairs possibly bred; just seven young fledged at this site; (2) & (3) two pairs probably bred at each site; (4) one pair possibly bred. Greater Manchester One site: one pair bred; one young fledged after American Mink *Neovison vison* were eliminated from this site. Northumberland Three sites: (1) one pair bred and a third adult present. Two out of a brood of three fledged; (2) one pair bred, hatching at least one young, but none fledged; (3) one pair possibly bred. Yorkshire Three sites: (1) six pairs bred, two of which fledged 11 young, and four pairs possibly bred; (2) one pair bred, seen with a brood of two; (3) one pair bred, no data on productivity.

Scotland, S

Borders One site: two pairs possibly bred. Present from March until July but no nests were built.



Steve Young/Birdwatch

274. Black-necked Grebes *Podiceps nigricollis*, Cheshire & Wirral, May 2009.

Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

Rare: 5-yr mean 40 bp

Coverage: high

Amber

27–46 pairs; at least 46 young fledged. These are the highest numbers reported since the survey years of 2000 and 2001, partly reflecting improved reporting but perhaps also an increase in the

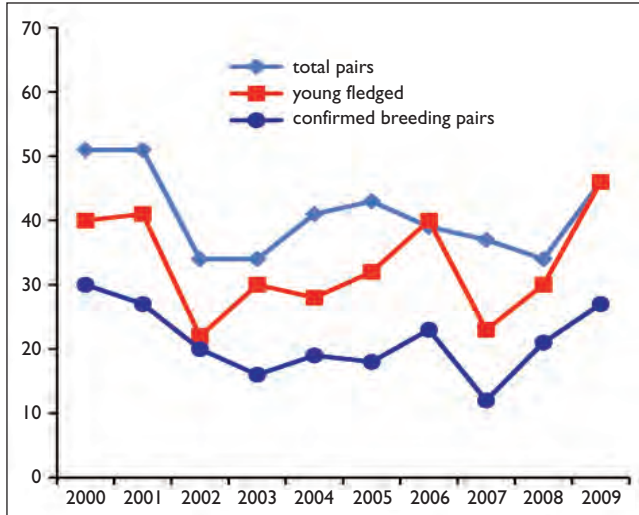


Fig. 3. The number of breeding pairs of Honey-buzzards *Pernis apivorus* and the minimum number of young fledged, 2000–09.

number of pairs found (fig. 3). All regions except Wales posted higher figures than in 2008. Forty-six young fledged is the highest total reported to the RBBP, even though productivity in Wales was the lowest on record. This was the third successive season when prolonged periods of strong winds and heavy rain came at the height of the summer – the critical time for breeding Honey-buzzards, as well as for field-workers trying to check regular sites and search for new pairs elsewhere.

England, SW

Fifteen territories occupied in three counties. Twelve pairs bred, fledging at least 20 young.

England, SE

Eleven territories occupied in three counties. Nine pairs bred, fledging 18 young.

England, E, C & N

Nine territories occupied in five counties. At least two pairs bred; one of these fledged three young and the other is believed to also have been successful.

Wales

Five territories occupied. Only one pair bred, hatching just one chick, which died of starvation before fledging.

Scotland

Six territories occupied in four counties. Three pairs bred, fledging at least five young.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,043 bp

Coverage: high

Amber

A minimum of 1,156 pairs. The continued (overall) success of the Red Kite reintroduction schemes and resurgence of the native Welsh population means that in some areas not all nests are found and reported, but it is believed that the UK population is now in excess of 1,500 pairs; Red Kites were reported from 6% of BBS squares in 2009 (Risely *et al.* 2010). The county totals presented here show the range and relative numbers of pairs across the UK, bringing diverse local reporting together in one place.

Red Kite		England, SE	
	Confirmed and probable breeding pairs		
England, SW	31	Berkshire	4
Hampshire	14	Buckinghamshire	68
Wiltshire	17	Hertfordshire	9
		Oxfordshire	26
		Sussex	4

Red Kite cont.		Ceredigion	176
	Confirmed and probable breeding pairs	Denbigh & Flint	1
		East Glamorgan	2
England, E	117	Gower	12
Cambridgeshire	8	Gwent	4
Lincolnshire	6	Meirionnydd	7
Norfolk	2	Montgomeryshire	71
Northamptonshire	101	Pembrokeshire	14
England, C	16	Radnorshire	130
Herefordshire	2	Scotland, S	41
Leicestershire & Rutland	4	Dumfries & Galloway	41
Shropshire	10	Scotland, Mid	127
England, N	109	North-east Scotland	5
Co. Durham	30	Perth & Kinross	33
Northumberland	2	Upper Forth	89
Yorkshire	77	Scotland, N & W	53
Wales	551	Highland	53
Breconshire	58	TOTALS	1,156
Caernarfonshire	3		
Carmarthenshire	73		

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Rare: 5-yr mean 40 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Red

39–46 pairs fledged 36 young. The maximum total of pairs of this iconic species has increased year on year for the last 15 years. Birds from the east-coast reintroduction scheme will soon reach breeding age but there has not yet been any breeding activity by birds from this project.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Ten pairs bred, of which eight fledged 11 young, and a further two territorial pairs.

Highland (including Skye, Small Isles and mainland) 18 pairs bred, of which nine fledged 16 young, and a further four territorial pairs.

Outer Hebrides 11 pairs bred, of which seven pairs fledged nine young, and one further territorial pair.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 404 bp

Coverage: high

Amber

364–408 breeding females/pairs. These numbers are close to those revealed by the 2005 survey, though there is some under-reporting from coastal counties of eastern England and Kent, meaning that the overall total may be around 450 pairs. There are indications of spread in south-west England, with breeding confirmed in Dorset and Somerset. Most notably, though, a pair bred in Northern Ireland, the first to do so since the 1840s. However, several former Scottish sites, such as in Moray & Nairn and Orkney, held no breeding birds, and the only recorded nesting was in the reedbeds of the Tay estuary.

England, SW

Dorset One pair bred, fledging three young, the first breeding in the county since 1962. Somerset One pair bred, fledging two young, and one pair possibly bred. The last confirmed breeding here was in 2004.

England, SE

Essex 13 pairs bred and one pair probably bred. Kent A minimum of 60 pairs bred and a further 15 pairs probably bred. Sussex Four pairs bred and one pair probably bred.

England, E

Cambridgeshire 22 pairs fledged at least 26 young. Lincolnshire 106 pairs bred, with a minimum of 215 young fledging. Norfolk A minimum of 72 pairs bred, with a further nine pairs probably breeding and four pairs possibly breeding. Suffolk At least 55 pairs bred, three pairs probably bred and three pairs possibly bred.

England, C

Nottinghamshire One site: one pair bred, fledging two young. This is the first confirmed breeding in the county.

England, N

Lancashire & N Merseyside Five pairs bred and one pair probably bred. **Northumberland** One pair bred, fledging two young. This is the first confirmed successful breeding in the county since the 1880s. **Yorkshire** 18 pairs bred, fledging a minimum of 30 young, and four pairs probably bred.

Wales

Two widely separated sites held single birds. At one, a male, regular in recent years, summered, displayed, and built a nest, but attracted no mate. At the other, a female also summered, but remained single. Marsh Harriers bred only sporadically in Wales in the last century and the last confirmed nest was in 1992 (Lovegrove *et al.* 1994).

Scotland, Mid

Fife/Perth & Kinross Four pairs bred; three successful pairs fledged ten young. **North-east Scotland** One pair present, but not thought to have made a breeding attempt.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll A male and a female were present together for several days in May but did not nest.

Northern Ireland

Co. Down One pair bred, fledging two young, even though both birds were subadults.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Scarce: 646 bp (2010 survey)

Coverage: moderate

Red

269–345 monitored pairs fledged a minimum of 432 young. As usual, the table summarises the results of local monitoring, mainly by raptor study group workers, but the numbers reported in west Scotland (Argyll, Highland and Outer Hebrides), Isle of Man and Northern Ireland are merely a sample from the larger populations in these areas. In England, the breeding range is restricted by persecution across most of the potential range. However, an interesting development in 2009 was a pair in southern England which fledged one young from a nest in a cereal field, which is not usual habitat for breeding birds in the UK but is typical of those breeding on the mainland of western Europe.

Numbers continue to be depressed in those areas of eastern Scotland and England dominated by grouse moors. A recent review of the factors affecting Hen Harrier populations (Fielding *et al.* 2011) showed that only four (out of 21) Natural Heritage Zones of Scotland were deemed to be of favourable conservation status for Hen Harriers. Both England and Wales also failed to reach favourable status although there has been a recent recovery in Wales, which may reverse this position in the future. The principal constraint on the population was persecution on grouse moors, although food shortage early in the breeding season affected birds breeding in both Orkney and northern Caithness.

The latest national survey of Hen Harriers found an estimated 646 breeding pairs (*Brit. Birds* 104: 232), which constitutes a decline of almost 20% since the previous survey in 2004. The results of this survey will be covered in more detail in the 2010 report.

Hen Harrier	Occupied territories	Confirmed breeding pairs	Territories believed to fledge young	Min. no. young fledged
England	12	11	6	15
Cumbria	2	2	1	4
Lancashire & N Merseyside	8	8	4	10
Northumberland	1	0	0	0
England, S	1	1	1	1
Isle of Man	7	6	2	5
Wales	47	42	29	80
Breconshire	3	3	2	4
Caernarfonshire	2	2	1	4

Hen Harrier <i>cont.</i>	Occupied territories	Confirmed breeding pairs	Territories believed to fledge young	Min. no. young fledged
Denbigh & Flint	9	9	8	33
Meirionnydd	16	13	10	27
Montgomeryshire	10	9	8	12
Radnorshire	7	6	n/a	n/a
Scotland, S	41	31	17	54
Borders	4	2	2	8
Dumfries & Galloway	9	6	4	16
S Strathclyde RSG (Ayrshire, Clyde, Clyde Islands)	28	23	11	30
Scotland, Mid	54	41	16	58
Central Scotland RSG	1	1	1	5
Moray & Nairn	3	3	1	4
North-east Scotland	3	1	0	0
Perth & Kinross	47	36	14	49
Scotland, N & W	175	129	82	220
Argyll	42	26	20	50
Highland RSG (incl. Caithness)	47	37	23	62
Orkney	72	53	32	92
Outer Hebrides (Uists only)	14	13	7	16
Northern Ireland	9	9	n/a	n/a
Co. Antrim	9	9	n/a	n/a
TOTALS	345	269	152	432

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 15 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Amber

13 sites: 13–16 pairs fledged a minimum of 25 young. 2009 saw a return to an above-average number of young fledged (2005–09 mean is 21 young fledged).

England, S

Six sites: six pairs bred, of which three pairs fledged 11 young, one pair probably bred and two pairs possibly bred.

England, E

Lincolnshire Two sites: two pairs bred, no young fledged. **Norfolk** Five sites: five pairs bred, four of which were successful, fledging 14 young.



James McCallum

Juvenile Montagu's Harriers *Circus pygargus*

Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 431 bp

Coverage: high

Green

295–446 pairs. This species is well monitored in key counties (mainly through nest visits by licensed individuals) but, being an easily overlooked species, a small but unknown proportion of the population goes unrecorded each year.

Northern Goshawk				
	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs		
			Lancashire & N Merseyside	0 4
			Northumberland	33 36
			Yorkshire	13 16
England, SW	66	83	Wales	51 119
Avon	0	1	Breconshire	8 16
Devon	10	17	Caernarfonshire	0 1
Gloucestershire	32	37	Carmarthenshire	8 10
Hampshire	15	15	Ceredigion	3 3
Somerset	1	5	Denbig & Flint	1 1
Wiltshire	8	8	East Glamorgan	2 23
England, SE	1	6	Gower	0 6
Buckinghamshire	0	3	Gwent	20 20
Surrey	0	2	Meirionnydd	n/c n/c
Sussex	1	1	Montgomeryshire	7 10
England, E	9	12	Pembrokeshire	1 9
Lincolnshire	0	1	Radnorshire	1 20
Norfolk	6	8	Scotland, S	42 49
Suffolk	3	3	Ayrshire	0 3
England, C	32	55	Borders	22 25
Derbyshire	13	16	Dumfries & Galloway	19 20
Herefordshire	10	25	Lothian	1 1
Nottinghamshire	2	2	Scotland, Mid	40 45
Shropshire	7	7	Angus & Dundee	0 2
Staffordshire	0	5	North-east Scotland	39 42
England, N	49	72	Perth & Kinross	1 1
Cleveland	0	4	Northern Ireland	5 5
Cumbria	3	5	Co. Antrim	5 5
Co. Durham	0	7	TOTALS	295 446

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

Scarce: 442 bp (2003 survey)

Coverage: moderate

Amber

Results of Golden Eagle monitoring by Scottish Raptor Study Groups and the Northern England Raptor Forum (NERF 2010) are presented below. Data were available on a total of 259 home ranges, against the population of 442 pairs estimated after the 2003 national survey (Eaton *et al.* 2007b). The mean number of young fledged per monitored nest was 0.5, similar to that in recent years.

Golden Eagle	Singles *	Probable breeding pairs	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs	Min. no. young fledged
England, N & Scotland, S	4	0	4	4	4
Angus & Dundee	7	0	5	5	1
Central Scotland RSG	1	2	3	5	1
North-east Scotland RSG	2	7	9	16	13
Perth & Kinross	2	5	10	15	7
Argyll	2	17	42	59	19
Highland RSG	21	54	57	111	50

Golden Eagle cont.	Singles *	Probable breeding pairs	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs	Min. no. young fledged
Outer Hebrides (Lewis & Harris)	0	6	15	21	12
Outer Hebrides (Uists)	0	4	19	23	13
TOTALS	39	95	164	259	120

* Total includes home ranges occupied by single birds or showing signs of occupation but no pair seen.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Rare: 5-yr mean 180 bp

Coverage: moderate

Amber

171–191 pairs. At least 291 young fledged. Full site data for all pairs in England, Wales, southern Scotland and North-east Scotland are received for this species, so for these areas numbers and trends are accurate (fig. 4). Pairs in England and Borders have shown significant improvements in productivity in 2008 and 2009 as the populations have become established.

Data quality from other parts of Scotland is much more variable, which has several consequences. Not all pairs are reported each year, which means that the totals in this report are underestimates, and that we cannot present figures by local recording area – so Raptor Study Group area totals have to be used. Furthermore, it is not possible to identify potential duplicate records when simple area totals are reported from different sources. Consequently, it is unclear whether Osprey populations north of the Forth–Clyde valley are merely stable or continuing to increase, although the figures for North-east Scotland suggest that the population there has been stable since 2004.

England, C

Leicestershire & Rutland Three pairs bred, all were successful, fledging seven young. Five other birds summered in the county.

England, N

Cumbria One pair again fledged three young at Bassenthwaite Lake. Northumberland One pair bred and fledged three young. This was the first confirmed breeding in the county.

England, elsewhere

One pair bred successfully.

Wales

Meirionnydd One pair fledged three young at Glaslyn. Wales elsewhere One pair probably bred (attending a nest platform) and one pair possibly bred, remaining on site through May and June.

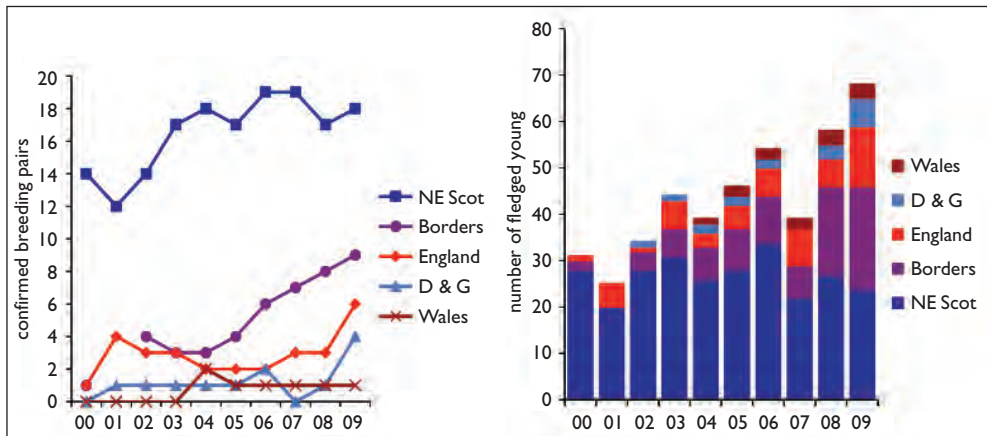


Fig. 4. Numbers of confirmed breeding pairs (left) and young fledged (right) for Ospreys *Pandion haliaetus* in North-east Scotland, southern Scotland (Dumfries & Galloway and Borders), England and Wales, 2000–09. No data were available for Borders in 2001, owing to foot-and-mouth disease restrictions. Comparable data for other regions of Scotland are not available.

Scotland, S & Mid

Borders Nine pairs bred, fledging 22 young. **Central Scotland RSG** 20 pairs bred, fledging 39 young, and at least two other territorial pairs. **Dumfries & Galloway** Four pairs bred, fledging six young, and two other territorial pairs. **North-east Scotland** 18 pairs bred, fledging 24 young, and two other territorial pairs. **South Strathclyde RSG** One pair bred but failed. **Tayside RSG** 46 pairs bred, fledging 68 young, and two other territorial pairs.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll RSG 14 pairs bred, fledging 28 young, and one other territorial pair. **Highland RSG** 52 pairs bred, fledging 88 young, and at least nine other territorial pairs.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Less scarce: 1,160 bp (2008 survey)

Coverage: moderate

Amber

270–359 pairs monitored. After the 2008 survey (Ewing *et al.* in press), when the UK population was estimated at 1,160 pairs, reported numbers are back to typically lower levels, roughly 20%–30% of the total. Some parts of England (Co. Durham and parts of Derbyshire and Yorkshire) receive almost total coverage each year, and these data suggest that Merlins are prospering in some areas but not others (NERF 2010). Only limited data were received from some Scottish recording areas (189 pairs reported compared with an estimated 733 pairs in 2008) and only the moors of eastern Scotland and Orkney receive reasonably thorough coverage.

Merlin	Confirmed breeding pairs	Territories occupied by pairs			
			Gwent	0	0
			Meirionnydd	0	12
			Montgomeryshire	1	4
			Radnorshire	0	7
England, SW	1	1	Scotland, S	26	38
Devon	1	1	Ayrshire	7	10
England, C	19	25	Dumfries & Galloway RSG	5	11
Derbyshire	15	20	Lothian & Borders RSG	14	17
Herefordshire	0	1	Scotland, Mid	71	76
Shropshire	1	1	Angus & Dundee	13	13
Staffordshire	3	3	Moray & Nairn	12	12
England, N	94	106	North-east Scotland	31	32
Cumbria	13	14	Perth & Kinross	13	17
Co. Durham	33	39	Upper Forth	2	2
Greater Manchester	1	1	Scotland, N & W	46	75
Lancashire & N Merseyside	5	5	Argyll	1	1
Northumberland	20	20	Highland		
Yorkshire	22	27	(including Caithness)	22	29
Wales	9	34	Orkney	8	14
Breconshire	5	6	Outer Hebrides		
Caernarfonshire	1	1	(Lewis & Harris)	5	9
Carmarthenshire	0	1	Outer Hebrides (Uists)	8	20
Ceredigion	0	1	Shetland	2	2
Denbigh & Flint	2	2	Northern Ireland	4	4
East Glamorgan	0	0	TOTALS	270	359

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 993 bp*

Coverage: moderate

Green

* Clements (2001) suggested that the UK population is in the order of 2,200 bp.

297–1,196 pairs. As noted in earlier reports, monitoring of the increasing UK Hobby population is hampered by uneven reporting. In those counties with higher populations, the number of pairs reported nesting tends to be low and county estimates less precise. Elsewhere, numbers are monitored more precisely and several counties now follow the standard guidelines described on the



Mike Lane

275. Hobby *Falco subbuteo*, Staffordshire, September 2009.

RBBP website. Regional totals for 2009 are largely similar to those for 2008, except for northern England where all areas showed an increase and the first confirmed breeding record for Co. Durham was noted.

Hobby	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs			
			Suffolk	20	64
			England, C	80	158
			Derbyshire	34	34
England, SW	58	241	Herefordshire	8	21
Avon	4	13	Leicestershire & Rutland	4	16
Devon	14	21	Nottinghamshire	14	17
Dorset	2	40	Shropshire	4	28
Gloucestershire	9	21	Staffordshire	5	5
Hampshire	14	53	Warwickshire	6	32
Isle of Wight	0	3	West Midlands	1	1
Somerset	4	33	Worcestershire	4	4
Wiltshire	11	57	England, N	28	81 (108)*
England, SE	64	201 (494)*	Cheshire & Wirral	16	33 (60)*
Bedfordshire	3	3	Co. Durham	1	1
Berkshire	2	4	Greater Manchester	0	10
Buckinghamshire	4	15	Lancashire & N Merseyside	1	12
Essex	6	6	Yorkshire	10	25
Greater London	5	7	Wales	5	27
Hertfordshire	18	73	Breconshire	1	8
Kent	2	7 (300)*	Carmarthenshire	2	6
Oxfordshire	11	15	Denbigh & Flint	0	3
Surrey	9	15	Gwent	2	2
Sussex	4	56	Meirionnydd	0	1
England, E	61	121 (167)*	Montgomeryshire	0	2
Cambridgeshire	11	13	Radnorshire	0	5
Lincolnshire	4	4 (50)*	Scotland, N & W	1	1
Norfolk	20	30	Highland	1	1
Northamptonshire	6	10	TOTALS	297	830 (1,196)*

* Figures in parentheses represent estimated totals.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

Less scarce: 1,530 pairs (2002 survey) Coverage: moderate

Green

833–1,046 pairs. The total number reported in 2009 was almost identical to that in 2008. This conceals increases in all regions of England (by 11%) and in Wales (19%), which are offset by a decline in the reporting rate in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Low site occupation and productivity was reported from study areas where much of the land is managed as grouse moor.

Peregrine Falcon	Confirmed breeding pairs	Territories occupied by pairs			
England, SW	170	185	Yorkshire	23	34
Avon	13	13	Wales	111	183
Cornwall	26	27	Anglesey	1	9
Devon	69	69	Breconshire	10	10
Dorset	28	28	Caernarfonshire	4	5
Gloucestershire	10	14	Carmarthenshire	10	14
Hampshire	8	9	Ceredigion	0	1
Isle of Wight	4	6	Denbigh & Flint	14	14
Isles of Scilly	1	1	East Glamorgan	14	34
Somerset	9	15	Gower	0	7
Wiltshire	2	3	Gwent	5	5
England, SE	43	61	Meirionnydd	11	20
Bedfordshire	1	1	Montgomeryshire	5	7
Berkshire	0	1	Pembrokeshire	36	41
Essex	n/a	n/a	Radnorshire	1	16
Greater London	11	16	Scotland, S	119	146
Kent	6	12	Dumfries & Galloway RSG	48	57
Oxfordshire	1	1	Lothian & Borders RSG	48	56
Surrey	2	3	South Strathclyde RSG	23	33
Sussex	22	27	Scotland, Mid	62	90
England, E	10	10	Angus & Dundee	12	19
Cambridgeshire	2	2	Central Scotland RSG	15	20
Lincolnshire	7	7	Isle of May	1	1
Suffolk	1	1	North-east Scotland	5	9
England, C	85	90	Perth & Kinross	29	41
Derbyshire	20	20	Scotland, N & W	42	59
Herefordshire	12	15	Argyll	15	23
Leicestershire & Rutland	8	8	Fair Isle	1	1
Nottinghamshire	7	7	Highland RSG	12	16
Shropshire	20	20	Orkney	8	11
Staffordshire	6	6	Outer Hebrides	6	8
Warwickshire	4	5	Shetland	0	0
West Midlands	4	4	Northern Ireland	45	45
Worcestershire	4	5	TOTALS	833	1,046
England, N	146	177			
Cheshire & Wirral	3	3			
Cleveland	4	4			
Cumbria	48	60			
Co. Durham	1	4			
Greater Manchester	9	9			
Isle of Man	10	10			
Lancashire & N Merseyside	24	29			
Northumberland	24	24			

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Less scarce: 4-yr mean 1,108 bp

Coverage: moderate

Green

364 sites: a minimum of 1,182 territories; 187 pairs confirmed breeding. The secretive nature of this species means that most county totals are probably underestimates, hence there is only moderate confidence in coverage. Atlas fieldwork is helping to identify new sites and we now have a growing gazetteer of breeding locations for Water Rails, even if records are not received for every site each year.

Water Rail	Sites	Territories			
England, SW	37	119	Yorkshire	20	61
Avon	1	6	Wales	41	72
Cornwall	1	1	Anglesey	4	11
Devon	5	6	Breconshire	3	5
Dorset	3	25	Caernarfonshire	1	8
Hampshire	12	31	Carmarthenshire	8	8
Isle of Wight	3	3	Ceredigion	3	3
Isles of Scilly	1	1	Denbigh & Flint	1	8
Somerset	8	41	East Glamorgan	5	11
Wiltshire	3	5	Gower	5	5
England, SE	47	102	Montgomeryshire	2	2
Bedfordshire	4	4	Pembrokeshire	1	3
Berkshire	2	2	Radnorshire	8	8
Buckinghamshire	1	1	Scotland, S	50	69
Essex	7	14	Ayrshire	5	6
Greater London	2	2	Borders	21	35
Hertfordshire	4	6	Clyde	13	15
Kent	15	47	Dumfries & Galloway	10	12
Oxfordshire	3	10	Lothian	1	1
Surrey	5	9	Scotland, Mid	23	94
Sussex	4	7	Angus & Dundee	5	13
England, E	42	328	Fife	5	5
Cambridgeshire	10	17	Moray & Nairn	3	3
Lincolnshire	5	5	North-east Scotland	4	20
Norfolk	8	14	Perth & Kinross	5	52
Northamptonshire	8	9	Upper Forth	1	1
Suffolk	11	283	Scotland, N & W	28	73
England, C	24	65	Argyll	3	32
Derbyshire	2	2	Highland	12	26
Leicestershire & Rutland	3	3	Orkney	9	11
Nottinghamshire	2	8	Outer Hebrides	1	1
Staffordshire	3	23	Shetland	3	3
Warwickshire	7	11	Northern Ireland	9	9
West Midlands	2	4	Co. Antrim	1	1
Worcestershire	5	14	Co. Down	6	6
England, N	63	251	Co. Fermanagh	1	1
Cheshire & Wirral	5	10	Co. Tyrone	1	1
Cleveland	2	2	TOTALS	364	1,182
Cumbria	7	12			
Co. Durham	6	7			
Greater Manchester	11	29			
Lancashire & N Merseyside	3	121			
Northumberland	9	9			



Graham Catley

276. Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*, Lincolnshire, September 2009.

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*

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

Amber

21 sites: 1–41 pairs/singing males. These are the highest figures reported since the national survey year of 1999, with more than double the number of sites reporting Spotted Crakes in 2008. But it is difficult to draw conclusions from this apparent increase as the numbers depend very much on the effort put into finding birds, which requires listening during the hours of darkness for the whiplash-like whistling ‘song’ at potential breeding marshland sites.

England, SW

Dorset One site: one singing male, 25th–28th May. Somerset One site: two singing males in June, while a juvenile in August and September had perhaps fledged at this site.

England, E

Cambridgeshire Two sites: (1) two singing males from 24th April into May; (2) one singing male on one night only. Suffolk Two sites: (1) one singing male on three dates in early May and on 21st June; (2) one singing male on 23rd April.

England, N

Yorkshire Two sites: (1) extensive site with up to 12 singing males in late April; some may have been passage birds but there were still three singing in June and at least one fledged juvenile was recorded later in the season; (2) two singing males.

Wales

Anglesey One site: one singing male on 10th May.

Scotland, Mid

Angus & Dundee One site: three singing males on 23rd May and 23rd June.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Six sites: six singing males. Highland Two sites: (1) three singing males; (2) three singing males. Outer Hebrides Two sites: (1) one singing male, 22nd–29th May; (2) one singing male, 22nd June to 4th July. Shetland One site: one singing male, 23rd June to 5th July.

Corn Crake *Crex crex*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,188 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Red

1,167 singing males. A national survey of Corn Crakes is organised by the RSPB every six years and one was carried out in 2009. Mark Eaton, RSPB, reports on the findings.

Corn Crakes have increased steadily in the UK since a low point of 489 singing males in 1993. A full national survey in 2009, funded by the RSPB and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, revealed an increase of 141% since then. The recovery in numbers since 1993 has occurred in the 'core areas' that Corn Crakes had retreated to, in the Hebrides and Orkney, where low-intensity, cattle-based crofting still provides suitable habitat. Within these areas, targeted conservation effort (working with crofters and farmers to provide suitable spring cover and modify mowing and grazing regimes) has been shown to deliver the right conditions for breeding Corn Crakes and has enabled this recovery (O'Brien et al. 2006).

Full survey coverage of the core areas is achieved every year, while periodic national surveys provide increased effort away from these areas in an attempt to measure any expansion in range and increase in numbers away from the core. If birds from the reintroduced population at the Nene Washes are excluded, the total away from core areas in 2009 was 47, only 11 higher than in 2003. Clearly, there has been little expansion from the core areas, which suggests that without the provision of targeted conservation action the current population is unlikely to overspill into new areas. On the plus side, there are some encouraging signs from the pilot reintroduction of Corn Crakes to the Nene Washes in Cambridgeshire, with 23 singing males recorded in 2009.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One extensive site: 23 singing males.



Cliff Reddick

277. Corn Crake *Crex crex*, Outer Hebrides, May 2009.

England, N

Cleveland One site: one singing male for a few nights only. **Co. Durham** Two sites: (1) two singing males, one on 22nd–29th June and the second on 29th June only; (2) one singing male on 30th July only. **Yorkshire** Two sites: (1) one extensive site held seven singing males; (2) one singing male.

Scotland, S

Clyde Two sites: (1) one singing male, 21st May to 1st June; (2) one singing male on 6th May only. **Dumfries & Galloway** One site: one singing male on 4th June only.

Scotland, Mid

Angus & Dundee One site: one singing male for three weeks in June. **North-east Scotland** Five sites: five singing males. **Perth & Kinross** One site: one singing male on 17th June.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Total 711: Mainland 2, Coll 122, Colonsay & Oronsay 61, Iona 46, Islay 84, McCormac Islands 3, Mull 2, Staffa no count, Tiree 389, Treshnish Isles 2. **Highland** Total 21: Mainland 10, Canna 4, Eigg no count, Muck no count, Rum no count, Skye 7. **Orkney** Total 17. **Outer Hebrides** Total 368: Barra & Vatersay 76, Benbecula 18, Berneray 6, Gigha 1, Harris 2, Lewis 81, Mingulay 1, North Uist 93, South Uist 90. **Shetland** Total 3.

Northern Ireland

Co. Armagh One site: one singing male on 10th July. **Co. Down** One site: one singing male, 12th–20th June.

Common Crane *Grus grus*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 12 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Amber

Six sites: 10–17 pairs. The numbers are similar to those in 2008 but there are indications that pairs are exploring other areas so a small expansion of range may be anticipated. The breeding pairs at the RSPB reserve at Lakenheath Fen fledged one young, the first successful breeding in Suffolk in modern times.

The status of Common Crane was reviewed by Stanbury *et al.* (2011). All available data, including records held by the RBBP, were analysed to produce definitive totals for each year since recolonisation in 1981. The table below summarises key dates and numbers of young fledged from each area, using data collected by the RBBP and the Crane Working Group, up to and including the 2009 breeding season.

Area	Year first present in the breeding season	Year of first confirmed breeding	Year of first successful breeding	Minimum no. young fledged, to 2009
Norfolk Broads	1980	1981	1982	35
Yorkshire	2001	2002	2005	5
Fens	2007	2007	2009	2

England, E

Cambridgeshire One site: one pair present but did not breed. **Norfolk** Norfolk Broads: seven pairs bred, fledging four young. There were also three other, non-breeding pairs present. **Suffolk** One site: two pairs bred; one pair fledged one young.

England, N

Yorkshire One extensive site: one pair bred, fledging one young, and there was also a second, non-breeding pair.

UK, elsewhere

Two sites in two counties, involving two non-breeding pairs in potential breeding habitat, each ranging widely. In addition, there were other records of up to three pairs reported in four counties, where there was insufficient information to establish whether a breeding attempt had occurred and which are thought to involve prospecting pairs or lingering migrants. These are not included in the totals.

Great Bustard *Otis tarda*

Reintroduced population first bred in 2008

One extensive site: two pairs bred. Following unsuccessful breeding by reintroduced birds in 2008, four eggs hatched and two young fledged in 2009. The world Great Bustard population is estimated at 43,500–51,200 individual birds (Palacín & Alonso 2008), of which c. 60% occur in Spain. The species has undergone a long-term and marked decline, especially since the early nineteenth century. This decline continues virtually across its entire range, except in Iberia (where populations are considered to be stable) and west Russia (where a population increase has been reported).

England, SW

Wiltshire One site: two females from the reintroduction scheme fledged two young, the first young to be raised in Britain for 177 years.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,492 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Amber

At least 90 sites: 1,693 pairs. Although the population continues to increase and has exceeded 1,500 pairs in three of the last four years, we shall continue to monitor this species because it nests in a limited number of well-defined but potentially vulnerable sites, which is why it is Amber-listed. RBBP data show a marked increase in the number of sites with breeding Avocets, however, up from 79 in 2008, and a further expansion to inland sites; for example, note the three small colonies in Nottinghamshire.

Avocet	No. sites	Confirmed breeding pairs			
			Suffolk	10	173
			England, C	4	8
			Nottinghamshire	3	6
England, SW	3	22	Worcestershire	1	2
Hampshire	3	22	England, N	16	370
England, SE	27	395	Cheshire & Wirral	1	7
Essex	12	143	Cleveland	1	10
Kent	11	219	Co. Durham	1	1
Sussex	4	33	Lancashire & N Merseyside	6	145
England, E	39	892	Yorkshire	7	207
Cambridgeshire	4	39	Wales	1	6
Lincolnshire	10	114	Gwent	1	6
Norfolk	15	566	TOTALS	90	1,693

Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 341 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Amber

Eight counties: 361 confirmed breeding pairs fledged 168 young. Stone-curlew is Amber-listed because of a moderate decline in its breeding range since 1970, although recent range expansion has resulted in a move off the Red list (Eaton *et al.* 2009). Furthermore, because it nests in a restricted number of locations, it is categorised as a Species of European Conservation Concern. Almost all of the population is currently monitored by RSPB or by a few individuals with access to private estates, meaning that coverage is virtually complete.

Stone-curlew	Confirmed breeding pairs	Young fledged			
			Oxfordshire	4	1
			Sussex	2	3
England, SW	110	64	England, E	236	97
Hampshire	21	11	Cambridgeshire	0	0
Wiltshire	89	53	Norfolk	131	38
England, SE	15	7	Suffolk	105	59
Berkshire	9	3	TOTALS	361	168

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 717 bp

Coverage: moderate

Green

601 pairs. The total number of pairs and distribution across Britain are similar to those in 2008, and represent around 67% of the totals estimated in the 2007 survey (report in prep.). To enable comparison with that survey, only those pairs deemed to be at least of probable breeding status are included in the table, though there were another 83 possible breeding pairs reported.

Little Ringed Plover			
	Confirmed and probable breeding pairs		
		Staffordshire	35
		Warwickshire	20
		West Midlands	5
		Worcestershire	11
England, SW	62	England, N	129
Avon	1	Cheshire & Wirral	6
Devon	1	Cleveland	5
Dorset	1	Cumbria	9
Gloucestershire	16	Co. Durham	7
Hampshire	28	Greater Manchester	12
Somerset	2	Lancashire & N Merseyside	21
Wiltshire	13	Northumberland	15
England, SE	91	Yorkshire	54
Bedfordshire	7	Wales	90
Berkshire	14	Anglesey	1
Buckinghamshire	5	Breconshire	8
Essex	12	Carmarthenshire	57
Greater London	4	Ceredigion	2
Hertfordshire	7	Denbigh & Flint	2
Kent	15	East Glamorgan	4
Oxfordshire	9	Gower	1
Surrey	3	Gwent	1
Sussex	15	Meirionnydd	3
England, E	59	Montgomeryshire	7
Cambridgeshire	21	Radnorshire	4
Lincolnshire	13	Scotland, S	3
Norfolk	13	Borders	2
Northamptonshire	7	Clyde	1
Suffolk	5	Scotland, Mid	11
England, C	156	Angus & Dundee	3
Derbyshire	25	Fife	2
Herefordshire	25	Moray & Nairn	2
Leicestershire & Rutland	12	North-east Scotland	4
Nottinghamshire	13	TOTAL	601
Shropshire	10		

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Scarce: 510–750 bp (1999 survey)

Coverage: low

Amber

In 2009, data were received relating to 50 breeding pairs nesting within the main Scottish range, which is the mountainous area of Highland, Moray & Nairn, North-east Scotland and Perth & Kinross; many of these records came from fieldwork for Bird Atlas 2007–11. This is nevertheless a small sample of the likely breeding population, leading to the low confidence label. The only way to improve this would be for repeated and consistent surveys of defined sites to be reported annually, or for a full national census. Such a survey of montane birds was conducted by the RSPB and SNH in 2011 and the results of this, coupled with the new Atlas distribution maps, will provide the best update on the status of this species. The last survey, in 1999, found 510–750 pairs (Whitfield 2002).

Colin Richards



Purple Sandpipers *Calidris maritima*

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 1 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Amber

One site: two pairs. This is the first confirmed breeding of this species since 2003, when three pairs bred.

Scotland, N & W

Highland One site: two pairs bred. An adult was found on a nest and another was seen with chicks.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 9 females

Coverage: high

Red

Two sites: two females. Its rarity as a breeding species and the long-term decline in breeding numbers, plus its status as a Species of European Conservation Concern, led to Ruff being Red-listed in 2009. Since the first RBBP report in 1973, breeding has occurred in just 18 years, most recently in 2006 (Lancashire & N Merseyside), 2004 (Outer Hebrides) and in 2003 (Shetland). The highest numbers were reported in 1991, when seven pairs nested in eastern England.

England, N

Lancashire & N Merseyside One site: a female was recorded at a lek (no count of males submitted).

Scotland, N & W

Argyll One site: a single male was present on 9th–11th May at least, while nearby a female was seen behaving as if near a nest on 18th May; there was no further evidence of a breeding attempt having been made.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Rare: 5-yr mean 67 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Red

11 sites: 57–62 pairs. The limited distribution of breeding Black-tailed Godwits, largely on nature reserves, means that most if not all pairs are counted each year. In England, numbers of the nominate race have shown a slow decline since the peak of 68 confirmed breeding pairs in 2006.

L. l. limosa 50–52 pairs

England, SW

One site: one pair bred, with at least two one-day-old chicks seen in late May.

England, SE

Kent Two sites: (1) three pairs bred, all failed; (2) one pair bred, also unsuccessful.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One site: 42 pairs bred; nine of these fledged a total of ten young. **Norfolk** One site: three pairs bred, but young in all nests were predated. **Suffolk** One extensive site: a single male, present for the twelfth consecutive spring, was seen displaying to a single *islandica* female.

England, N

Lancashire & N Merseyside One site: one pair probably bred. Two males were seen displaying from late April to early May, but no further evidence was obtained.

L. I. islandica 7–10 pairs

Scotland, N & W

Orkney One site: five pairs bred, two broods seen. **Shetland** Three sites: two pairs bred, fledging one young each, and three pairs probably bred.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Scarce: 300+ bp (2009 partial survey) Coverage: near-complete

Red

Three counties: provisional minimum of c. 300 pairs. Normally, the poor coverage of Whimbrels in the breeding season gives us low confidence in the data we are able to present in this report, but in 2009 Natural Research organised a transect-based survey of Whimbrels, directing effort to all known parts of the range including areas with little recent information, and incorporating other records collected mainly by RSPB staff (Jackson 2009). Areas previously known to hold Whimbrels in parts of Caithness and Sutherland (Highland), North Uist and Lewis (Outer Hebrides), Orkney and Shetland were all covered. The available results to date are preliminary because some follow-up fieldwork was planned for the 2010 and 2011 seasons.

These figures suggest a decline from the latest UK estimate of 400–500 pairs (Forrester *et al.* 2007), although indications are that declines are localised and that some island populations are stable. The full results of the survey will be needed to make a clearer assessment.

Scotland, N & W

Orkney One site: three pairs bred. **Outer Hebrides** North Uist: five pairs; Lewis: four pairs. **Shetland** Provisional total of c. 290 pairs.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 3 bp Coverage: high

Amber

Two sites: three pairs. This is the highest number of breeding pairs recorded in the UK since the first record of confirmed breeding in 1959 (Forrester *et al.* 2007). Although conspicuous when displaying or with dependent young, it is otherwise a secretive nester and some nesting pairs may go unrecorded each year.

Scotland, N & W

Highland Two sites: three pairs bred.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Less scarce: 1,080 bp (1995 survey) Coverage: low

Green

Data were received for a minimum of 129 pairs in five recording areas: Argyll (2), Caithness (53), Highland (58), Outer Hebrides (14) and Shetland (2). Atlas fieldwork contributed to this being the highest number of pairs ever recorded in a RBBP report. However, this total represents just a fraction of the estimated number of breeding pairs, meaning that we cannot compile annual population estimates.

Forrester *et al.* (2007) described the current and historical distribution of the Greenshank in Scotland. Currently, the bulk of the breeding population is found in Highland (mainly Sutherland, Wester Ross and west Inverness-shire) and the Outer Hebrides (mainly Lewis and Harris). In the

nineteenth century it had a more extensive distribution, expanding south to Badenoch & Strathspey (Highland), Moray & Nairn and Perth & Kinross, and it also bred in Deeside (North-east Scotland) from the 1920s to the mid 1980s. However, some of these areas have been largely abandoned because of a change in habitat caused by afforestation, the removal of sheep and tourism.

A survey by RSPB/SNH of the Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SPA in 2009 produced an estimate of 653 pairs (95% confidence limits 389–917) of Greenshanks, which suggests an increase in numbers since the 1990s (Bellamy & Eaton 2010). This survey also suggested a total of 1,082 (465–1,700) pairs within the larger Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands 'Natural Heritage Futures' zone. As with Dotterel, the only way to improve the low data confidence would be for repeated and consistent surveys of defined sites, or for a full national census repeating that undertaken in 1995 (Hancock *et al.* 1997).

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 17 bp

Coverage: moderate

Amber

Eight sites: 1–21 pairs. The last full census, in 2007 (summarised in Holling *et al.* 2010a), recorded Wood Sandpipers at 20 sites, so it is clear that not all the population is monitored each year and, given the remote locations of some of the nesting habitats, some pairs may be going unrecorded. Consequently, a decline in numbers cannot be ruled out.

Scotland, Mid

Perth & Kinross One site: one pair probably bred.

Scotland, N & W

Highland Seven sites: one pair bred and 19 pairs probably bred.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 28 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Red

14 sites: 22–27 breeding males. All known sites are monitored each year, so we can be confident in stating that this is the highest total reported since 2006. The species is Red-listed because of historical decline in numbers.

Scotland, N & W

Outer Hebrides Four sites: three breeding males, plus one male probably bred and one male possibly bred.

Shetland Ten sites: 19 males bred and three other males probably bred.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 490 bp

Coverage: high

Amber

39 sites: 573–659 pairs/territories, including two mixed pairs. The steady increase continues and the minimum of 573 pairs is yet another new record; and this does not include the colony in Dorset which had 87 nests in 2008 but which was not counted in 2009. We believe that most colonies are reported and that any breeding birds missed are odd pairs and single birds prospecting in other gull colonies. In 2009, the first breeding attempts were reported from Oxfordshire and Derbyshire while, in addition to those described below, single birds were recorded at a minimum of ten other sites in six counties (Borders, Cumbria, Lincolnshire (five sites) and Lothian, plus additional sites in Cheshire & Wirral and Suffolk), some only briefly but several lingering. These records may be pointers to the next counties to be colonised.

England, SW

Dorset One site, breeding birds present but not counted. Hampshire Three sites: (1) 137 pairs at Langstone Harbour fledged 90 young; (2) three pairs bred but only one young reported; an additional 44 pairs held territory but are not thought to have laid eggs; (3) three pairs bred. Isle of Wight One site: four pairs possibly bred.

England, SE

Essex Three sites: (1) three pairs bred; (2) at least one pair bred; (3) seven pairs possibly bred.

Kent Four sites: (1) 137 pairs bred; (2) 76 pairs bred; (3) 52 pairs bred; (4) four pairs bred. **Oxfordshire** One site: one pair bred but no young were seen. This was the first breeding attempt for the county. **Sussex** Two sites: (1) 73 pairs bred with at least 64 young fledged, and a further 17 pairs probably bred; (2) 26 pairs bred.

England, E

Norfolk Seven sites: (1) 11 pairs fledged three young; (2) five pairs fledged seven young; (3) at least one pair bred; (4)–(7) in total, four pairs probably bred and two pairs possibly bred. **Suffolk** Two sites: (1) five pairs bred, fledging two young; (2) two pairs bred fledging five young.

England, C

Derbyshire One site: one pair bred but failed. This was the first breeding attempt for the county. **Staffordshire** One site: two pairs bred, one fledging two young.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral Two sites: (1) three pairs bred with three young seen in nests; (2) one pair possibly bred. **Greater Manchester** One site: one pair possibly bred. Two adults were present but did not pair up; one later appeared to be paired with a Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*. **Lancashire & N Merseyside** Three sites: (1) 13 pairs bred, fledging at least eight young, and two pairs possibly bred; (2) five pairs bred, fledging six young; (3) at least three pairs bred. **Northumberland** Two sites: (1) two pairs bred, fledging three young; the first successful breeding in the county; (2) one pair probably bred, seen mating in April. **Yorkshire** One site: one pair probably bred and one pair probably bred.

Wales

Anglesey One site: one potential mixed pair. An adult male held territory throughout the breeding season and attempted to mate with a Black-headed Gull. **Carmarthenshire** One site: at least one pair bred.

Northern Ireland

Co. Antrim One site: two pairs bred. **Co. Down** One site: one pair bred.

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*

Occasional breeder; mixed pairs recorded in 2004 and 2009

One site: one mixed pair. With this American species now recorded regularly in the UK, it seemed likely that one or two would linger in the summer and perhaps associate with Common Gulls. Although Ring-billed Gull has not previously appeared in these reports, it now seems that one bred with a Common Gull in Northern Ireland in 2004. An adult held a territory in a Common Gull colony that year but at the time was not known to be nesting. However, in 2008 a colour-ringed hybrid Ring-billed/Common Gull was identified in Northern Ireland and the rings indicated that it was a chick ringed in that colony in 2004 (Charles 2009).

In 2009, an adult Ring-billed Gull was found paired with a Common Gull in a colony in Scotland. It was photographed sitting on a nest (plate 278) but the contents of the nest were never seen. It seems likely, but cannot be proved, that the bird was sitting on eggs. If so, it would constitute the first confirmed breeding record for this species in Britain, albeit as part of a mixed pair. Full details of the record are given in Barden (2010).

Scotland, Mid

One site: one individual, paired with a Common Gull, was observed sitting on a nest, although the nest contents were never seen.



P. J. Barden

278. Adult Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* (right) and Common Gull *L. canus*, Scotland, June 2009.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 4 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Amber

Three sites: one pair bred plus 2–3 mixed pairs. Yellow-legged Gull is Amber-listed because of its breeding rarity and these low numbers are typical of annual figures since breeding was first noted in Dorset in 1995.

England, SW

Dorset One site: one pair bred, hatching one chick. **Hampshire** One extensive site: two mixed pairs bred, both with Herring Gulls *L. argentatus*, producing five hybrid young.

England, SW

Bedfordshire One site: one mixed pair possibly bred. A single bird, paired with a Lesser Black-backed Gull *L. fuscus* was seen at a number of potential breeding sites but did not settle to breed at any.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,507 bp

Coverage: moderate

Amber

Minimum of 1,499 pairs at 51 colonies. Little Tern is one of the more abundant species on the RBBP list, and a sample of colonies is monitored annually as part of the JNCC Seabird Monitoring Programme. However, because it nests in a small number of discrete colonies, it is vulnerable both to disturbance and to egg-collectors, and for the time being is retained on the RBBP list. Sabine Schmitt, RSPB, here reviews the recent status of Little Tern.

Little Tern	No. sites	Confirmed breeding pairs	Min. young fledged
England, SW	4	75	5
Dorset	1	0	0
Hampshire	2	75	5
Isle of Wight	1	0	0
England, SE	8	123	15
Essex	4	80	15
Kent	2	21	0
Sussex	2	22	0
England, E	14	807	122
Lincolnshire	2	21	0
Norfolk	8	743	118
Suffolk	4	43	4
England, N	7	216	201
Cleveland	2	61	120
Cumbria	1	65	40
Isle of Man	1	15	19
Northumberland	2	49	22
Yorkshire	1	26	0
Wales	1	115	123
Denbigh & Flint	1	115	123
Scotland, Mid	3	54	73
Angus & Dundee	1	14	0
Moray & Nairn	1	3	0
North-east Scotland	1	37	73
Scotland, N & W	14	109	50
Argyll	8	72	42
Caithness	1	2	2
Highland	2	9	6
Orkney	1	4	0
Outer Hebrides	2	22	n/c
TOTALS	51	1,499	589

The Little Tern is the second-rarest tern species nesting in the UK and breeds at coastal sites from southern England to Orkney, in internationally important numbers (Mitchell *et al.* 2004.) Seabird 2000, the first complete national census since the mid 1980s, estimated 1,947 Apparently Occupied Nests in the UK (including Isle of Man).

Monitoring breeding Little Terns is not always easy and various factors (predation, disturbance, habitat change and local food shortages) contribute to relatively low site fidelity. In addition, reporting rates from remote sandy beaches in Scotland may be low and also vary between years. Nonetheless, RBBP data show that numbers of breeding Little Terns in the UK have remained broadly stable since 1996, when the species was added to the RBBP list. (Note that these data are based on a sample of colonies and not on a complete count, and that differences in reporting rates may obscure the true trends slightly.)

The table shows that more than half the current population nest on beaches in eastern England (although, as noted already, Little Terns in Scotland are likely to be under-recorded). Numbers in eastern England typically vary considerably between years, particularly as a result of disturbance or food shortages, but in both 2008 and 2009 numbers exceeded 800 breeding pairs. Norfolk is the top county and contains the largest colony, Great Yarmouth (the 369 breeding pairs in 2006 is the highest-ever count of a single UK colony).

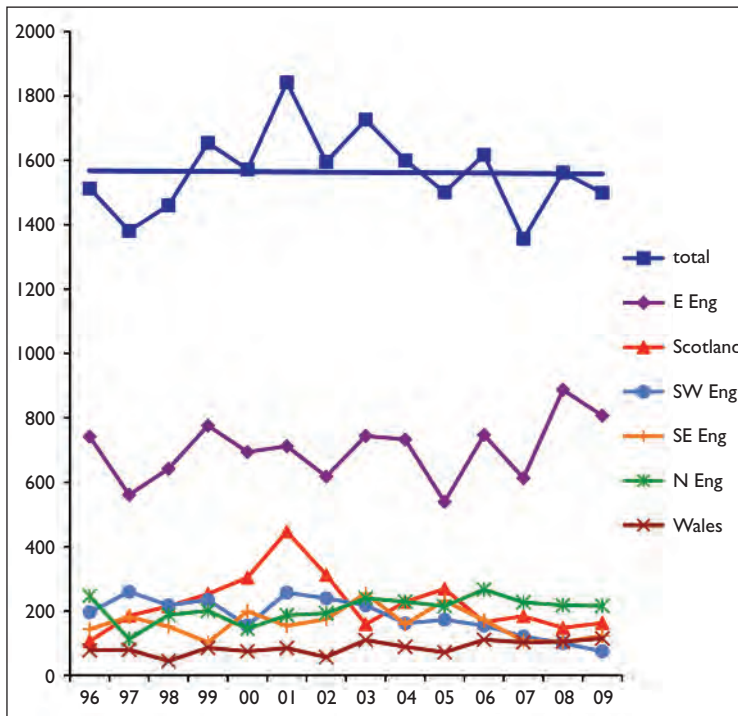


Fig. 5. Numbers of confirmed breeding pairs of Little Terns *Sternula albifrons* in the UK, 1996–2009. The solid bar represents the smoothed trend over this 14-year period, showing that recorded totals have been consistent, averaging just short of 1,600 pairs. The variance in the actual totals recorded closely mirrors the numbers in eastern England, where the majority of Little Terns nest.

Northern Ireland, with six pairs counted at one site in Co. Derry in 1969–70 and two pairs in 1984, but none was recorded in Seabird 2000 (Mitchell *et al.* 2004).

The Seabird Monitoring Programme monitors a large sample of Little Tern colonies each year, mainly those in England and Wales. Further information on Little Tern trends can be found at www.jncc.gov.uk/page-2897

Fig. 5 suggests a steady decline in southwest England since 2001, while in Wales there is currently only one surviving colony, at Gronant in Denbigh & Flint, which is now heavily warded and, happily, thriving, with over 100 pairs in each of the last four years (between the mid 1970s and the mid 1980s, Little Terns used at least five sites in Wales regularly). Numbers in Scotland appear to have peaked in 2001 and declined since, but this is likely to be an artefact of increased effort for the Seabird 2000 census in that year.

In the past, Little Terns bred in

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

Rare: 5-yr mean 94 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Red

11 sites: 98–101 pairs, including two mixed pairs. Eleven sites is the highest total in a decade, although the highest number of pairs reported since 1990 was 110 in 2006. Breeding attempts were made in Dorset, Lothian and Suffolk, and mixed pairs (with Common Terns *Sterna hirundo*) were reported from Lancashire & N Merseyside (plate 279) and Anglesey; these were all counties which did not appear in the 2008 report.

England, SW

Dorset One site: one pair bred, fledging one young. This was the first successful breeding in the county since 1988. Hampshire One site: one pair possibly bred. They were seen in a Common Tern colony in late May but not subsequently.

England, E

Suffolk One site: one pair bred but failed on eggs. This was the first breeding attempt in Suffolk.

England, N

Lancashire & N Merseyside One site: one mixed pair probably bred. A Roseate Tern was paired with a Common Tern. They were seen mating and building a nest scrape, but no eggs were laid. Northumberland Two sites: (1) Coquet Island: 90 pairs raised at least 101 large young, the best productivity figure ever recorded; (2) two pairs nested but all three chicks were predated.

Wales

Anglesey One site: one mixed pair bred. A Roseate Tern paired with a Common Tern failed at the small chick stage. What may have been another mixed pair seen at a nearby second site has not been included in the totals.

Scotland, S

Lothian One site: one pair bred.

Scotland, Mid

Fife One site: one pair bred. Isle of May One site: one pair possibly bred, but birds were present early in the season only.

Northern Ireland

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



Steve Young/Birdwatch

279. Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii* (left), with Common Tern *S. hirundo*, Seaforth, Lancashire & N Merseyside, June 2009.

Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus***Potential breeder**

One site: one bird. This species has not featured in these reports before, and although there was no indication that a breeding attempt was made, presence among breeding Common Swifts *Apus apus* in the breeding season is still worthy of note. It would be difficult to prove whether the bird was paired or attending a nest.

England, N

Lancashire & N Merseyside One site: one bird was present for an extended period, between at least 28th April and 27th May, associating with Common Swifts, and often seen over established Common Swift breeding sites.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla***Very rare: 5-yr mean 3 bp****Coverage: moderate****Red**

Three sites: 0–3 pairs. Despite extensive Atlas fieldwork in the Highlands in 2009, only three singing birds were reported. This species could easily be overlooked, however, hence the reduced confidence in how representative these figures may be.

Scotland, N & W

Highland Three sites: three singing males.

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus***Very rare: 5-yr mean 6 bp****Coverage: near-complete****Red**

Two sites: 1–3 pairs. The last time a pair of UK Golden Orioles bred outside Suffolk was in 2003, and since then records have become concentrated at just one site. The presence of a pair in southern Scotland is therefore particularly notable.

In contrast to the decline of the Golden Oriole in Britain, where its range has always been highly restricted, European populations appear to be expanding. Trends monitored in 17 countries indicate a 28% increase between 1990 and 2009 (PECBMS 2011). Climatic modelling predicts a significant expansion of this species' future range into southeast England (Huntley *et al.* 2007), so it will be interesting to see whether the current increase on the Continent translates into new population centres in southern England.

England, E

Suffolk One site: two singing males from late April to May; at least one of these paired and bred, fledging four young. Singing males were recorded at four other locations in the county but on single dates only.

Scotland, S

One site: a pair was seen and heard together on two days in early June in suitable breeding habitat, but could not be relocated.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio***Very rare: 5-yr mean 3 bp****Coverage: moderate****Red**

Four or five unpaired males. In recent years, the propensity of this species to occur in remote areas means that some individuals may be missed. The last confirmed breeding was in 2007, when pairs bred in both Scotland and Wales.

England, SW

As in 2008, three males were recorded apparently holding territory in suitable breeding habitat from late May through to June, but again no females were seen.

Scotland, N & W

Highland One or two males were recorded over a period of one week in mid June at two sites over 10 km apart.

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 391 bp

Coverage: moderate

Amber

281–487 pairs. Full annual coverage of nesting pairs is restricted to Cornwall, north Wales, Pembrokeshire, Scotland (except Islay) and Northern Ireland. We would welcome county estimates as well as detailed nest information to make a better assessment of the population between national censuses.

Red-billed Chough	Confirmed breeding pairs	Total pairs			
			Gower	9	9
			Meirionnydd	15	24
			Montgomeryshire	0	1
			Pembrokeshire	66	74
			Scotland	24	28
			Dumfries & Galloway	0	1
			Argyll: Colonsay & Oronsay	12	15
			Argyll: Islay	12	12
			Northern Ireland	1	1
			Co. Antrim	1	1
			TOTALS	281	487
			() estimated total.		
England, SW	5	5			
Cornwall	5	5			
Isle of Man	29	(160)			
Isle of Man	29	(160)			
Wales	222	293			
Anglesey	31	40			
Caernarfonshire	74	100			
Ceredigion	23	39			
Denbigh & Flint	3	5			
East Glamorgan	1	1			

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 443 bp

Coverage: moderate

Amber



James McCallum

Firecrests *Regulus ignicapilla*

427 territories or singing males. This total is lower than the peaks of 613 and 584 in 2007 and 2008 respectively, but higher than the ten-year mean of 309 territories (2000–09). As noted previously, numbers submitted to the RBBP depend very much on targeted effort by committed individuals, and this becomes increasingly difficult in areas where this species is now well established, such as Berkshire, Hampshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Sussex. The New Forest alone held 165 territories (compared with 112 in 2008). Firecrests prefer mature plantations of Norway Spruce *Picea abies*, where they occupy territories about 2–3 times larger than those of Goldcrests *R. regulus*. Thus registrations of singing males within 200 m of one another probably relate to the same male (Gilbert et al. 1998).

Firecrest		Oxfordshire	3
	Singing males/ territories	Surrey	4
		Sussex	30
England, SW	260	England, E	63
Gloucestershire	5	Cambridgeshire	1
Hampshire	228	Norfolk	43
Somerset	1	Suffolk	19
Wiltshire	26	England, C	5
England, SE	89	Derbyshire	4
Bedfordshire	1	Herefordshire	1
Berkshire	34	Wales	10
Buckinghamshire	7	Breconshire	1
Essex	1	Gwent	2
Greater London	1	Radnorshire	7
Hertfordshire	7	TOTAL	427
Kent	1		

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 596 bp

Coverage: moderate

Amber

At least 61 sites: a minimum of 606 pairs. We receive annual totals for most sites that hold Bearded Tits, but this is a difficult species to count accurately and these totals are minima. Three young fledged from a site in Angus & Dundee and constitute the first breeding record for that county, but the regular breeding site farther north, in Moray & Nairn, which has held 1–2 pairs since at least 2003, appears to have been abandoned.

Although the number of Bearded Tits reported by the RBBP in recent years has been fairly static, lying consistently within the range 559–614 pairs in the last five years, the British population was once almost wiped out, with just 2–4 pairs in 1947 following a particularly cold winter. Recovery was slow as the reedbeds in East Anglia were flooded with saltwater a few years later. Expansion in the 1960s was fuelled by immigration from the Netherlands, where large populations had become established on newly created polders. O’Sullivan (1976) reviewed the status of Bearded Tits between 1966 and 1974 and at that time the population was estimated at 590 pairs, breeding in 11 counties, a not dissimilar picture to that of today. Since that time, though, there has been some expansion of range into Somerset, Gwent and eastern Scotland.

The extensive reedbeds in the Tay estuary (Perth & Kinross) may now hold the largest numbers of Bearded Tits at one site, but obtaining satisfactory counts is very difficult owing to the site’s size and difficulty of access. The first breeding in the Tay reedbeds was recorded in 1991 and in 2004 the population here was estimated at 250 pairs, based on mark-recapture data (Forrester *et al.* 2007). If the numbers at this site are still of this magnitude, the RBBP data published annually must under-represent the real UK totals by as much as 35%.

Bearded Tit	Minimum no. sites	Confirmed and probable breeding pairs	Lincolnshire	3	5
			Norfolk	16	106
			Suffolk	7	214
England, SW	8	30	England, N	3	155
Dorset	3	14	Lancashire & N Merseyside	1	26
Hampshire	3	13	Yorkshire	2	129
Somerset	2	3	Wales	1	3
England, SE	18	48	Gwent	1	3
Essex	2	8	Scotland, Mid	2	36
Kent	13	29	Angus & Dundee	1	1
Sussex	3	11	Perth & Kinross	1	35
England, E	29	334	TOTALS	61	606
Cambridgeshire	3	9			

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

Less scarce: 3,064 bp (2006 survey)

Coverage: moderate

Amber

1,054 territories. As usual, we are able to report around a third of the estimated UK population of 3,064 territories (Conway *et al.* 2009). All areas suffer equally from this level of under-recording. Although the population exceeded 3,000 territories in 2006, a large proportion of British breeders are thought to remain in Britain during the winter (Wernham *et al.* 2002) and there is some uncertainty about how the population has been affected by recent colder winters. The species is Amber-listed because its breeding habitat is localised and there has been a contraction in range during the last 25 years. For these reasons it will remain on the RBBP list for the time being.

Wood Lark	Singing males/ territories		
		Surrey	150
		Sussex	48
England, SW	317	England, E	412
Devon	7	Lincolnshire	9
Dorset	22	Norfolk	167
Gloucestershire	1	Suffolk	236
Hampshire	285	England, C	49
Wiltshire	2	Nottinghamshire	27
England, SE	245	Staffordshire	22
Bedfordshire	1	England, N	31
Berkshire	45	Yorkshire	31
Kent	1	TOTAL	1,054

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,876 bp

Coverage: high

Green

2,347 singing males or territories. This is another record total and pushes the population beyond the normal levels for consideration by the RBBP. David Norman, who in 2009 recorded the first confirmed breeding for Cheshire & Wirral, has analysed the Panel's data and presents a synopsis of this species' breeding history in the UK.

Cetti's Warblers were first proved to breed in Britain in 1973, the year of the first RBBP annual report. Their population and range expanded rapidly: after five years there were 153 singing



males and they had reached 11 counties in southern England, with the first breeding record for Wales in 1977. Breeding numbers fell slightly following the harsh winter of 1978/79, but the population subsequently increased steadily to a total of 316 singing males by 1984. By this time they had been recorded breeding in 23 counties, although once only in several of

Dan Powell

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

them; 95% of the population was then in the coastal counties of southern England, from Cornwall to Norfolk.

Following severe winters in 1984/85 and 1985/86, the population fell back to 179 singing males in 1986 (Cetti's Warblers were temporarily extinct in Kent by 1988) before reaching a new peak of 345 in 1990. A national survey in 1996 revealed a new record total of 574 singing males, predominantly in the south and southwest, with two-thirds of the population in the counties of Devon, Dorset, Hampshire and Somerset (Wotton *et al.* 1998). No obvious changes in habitat quality had been noted in their former strongholds and the westward shift in the centre of the population was attributed to the harder winters in eastern England – perhaps especially in Kent, where the Stour Valley (the area of the initial colonisation) held no birds in the 1996 survey, and in Suffolk, where the four territories in 1996 contrasted with a high of 31 in 1984.

Population growth continued after 1996 and accelerated after 2000, doubling by 2004 and then again by 2008. Winter conditions have apparently not affected their success in recent years and the majority of the UK population is now found in the coastal counties of Hampshire, Sussex, Kent, Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk. The species has continued to expand its range, and has now been found on territory in more than 50 county recording areas, with a high of 40 occupied in 2009. Fig. 6 shows that this is still a southern species, however, with less than 2% of the national total north of a line from Cardigan Bay to The Wash.

The species' colonisation of Britain may have been fuelled by an increase in the continental European population. The Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECBMS) reported a 466% rise in 1990–2009, the largest change of the 137 species covered by the scheme, although that growth was recorded entirely in France (the only country providing sufficient data) in the first half of the 1990s; continental population figures have been stable for the last decade or more (PECBMS 2011). Immigration still continues, with two French-ringed Cetti's Warblers caught in Sussex in October 2008, and a Belgian-ringed bird in Nottinghamshire in October 2010 (Robinson & Clark 2010). Juveniles and females tend to disperse farther than adults and males respectively.

It can be tricky to prove breeding because of the behaviour of this species (Bibby 1982) and the Panel collects records mainly of singing males or territories. Males spend most of their time singing and defending the territory but take no part in nest-building or incubation; indeed, only some of them bother even to feed their young in the nest, although most males feed the chicks once they have fledged. Many male Cetti's Warblers are polygamous, holding large territories with up to three females. Some females, in southern Britain at least, may have two broods.

The species' habitat preference is scattered scrub in damp areas (reed-swamp, reedbed, fen/marsh or by open water; Wotton *et al.* 1998), which is relatively patchy in Britain,

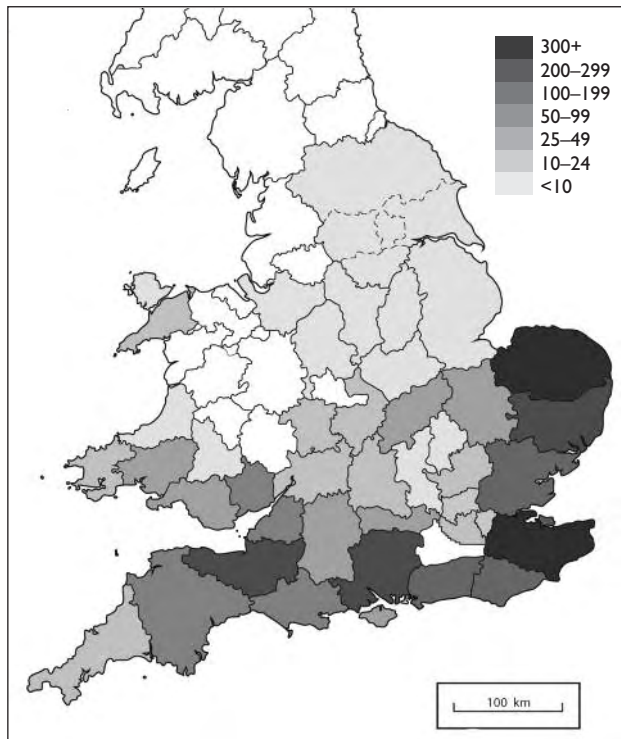


Fig. 6. Distribution of singing male/territory-holding Cetti's Warblers *Cettia cetti* in the UK in 2009.

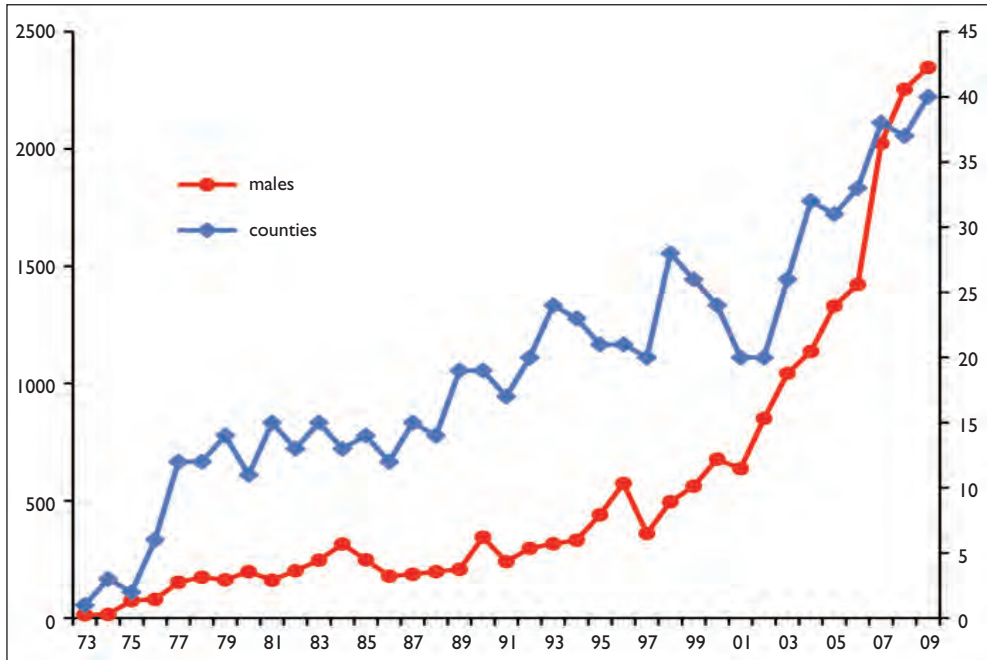


Fig. 7. Number of singing males/territories (left scale), and of counties with breeding presence (right scale) of Cetti's Warblers *Cettia cetti* in the UK, 1973–2009.

particularly farther north and west, so this could limit their further spread. Such habitat is often frequented by ringers, including as part of the Constant Effort Sites network, so CES population and productivity indices are already available; Cetti's Warbler is the rarest breeding

Cetti's Warbler	Singing males/ territories		
		Norfolk	305
		Northamptonshire	25
England, SW	736	Suffolk	223
Avon	61	England, C	45
Cornwall	12	Derbyshire	2
Devon	73	Leicestershire & Rutland	2
Dorset	60	Nottinghamshire	2
Gloucestershire	22	Staffordshire	5
Hampshire	(200)	Warwickshire	18
Isle of Wight	29	Worcestershire	16
Somerset	(250)	England, N	2
Wiltshire	29	Cheshire & Wirral	1
England, SE	777	Yorkshire	1
Bedfordshire	2	Wales	184
Berkshire	39	Anglesey	5
Buckinghamshire	5	Breconshire	2
Essex	130	Caernarfonshire	16
Greater London	11	Carmarthenshire	45
Hertfordshire	14	Ceredigion	4
Kent	(388)	East Glamorgan	13
Oxfordshire	15	Gower	30
Sussex	173	Gwent	59
England, E	603	Pembrokeshire	10
Cambridgeshire	47	TOTAL	2,347
Lincolnshire	3		
() estimated totals.			

species for which such figures are produced (Baillie *et al.* 2010). Most of the rise in CES captures occurred from 1999 onwards, mirroring the population surge of the last decade (fig. 7), and analysis of CES data shows that productivity (juveniles per adult) has been constant, suggesting that survival/mortality drives the population dynamics (Robinson *et al.* 2007). From 1995 to 2004 there was a significant correlation between annual population change and winter severity, i.e. density-dependent population regulation (Robinson *et al.* 2007).

The Cetti's Warbler population is now beyond the normal levels for consideration by RBBP but will remain on the list (subject to an annual review) while questions remain about how robust the British population is. Like other resident insectivores, such as the Dartford Warbler, it is susceptible to hard weather, and the effects of harsh winters in 2009/10 and 2010/11 are not yet known. RBBP data show that new records, and new counties, are being added every year as the range expansion continues, but perhaps recording fatigue is developing in the most populous counties, which could mask recent population changes. Nonetheless, in 2009 Cetti's Warbler was recorded on 46 BBS squares, double the 2005 figure (Risely *et al.* 2010), and it could soon become sufficiently abundant and widespread for annual population monitoring by BBS.

Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*

Less scarce: 3,214 bp (2006 survey)

Coverage: moderate

Amber

1,137 territories. As for Woodlark, submissions to the RBBP normally account for about a third of the national population, last estimated at 3,214 in 2006 (Wotton *et al.* 2009). The 2009 total matches this expectation, but this is not the full story, for there were reports of significant losses from many southern heaths. This followed a long spell of unusually cold weather for southern Britain in January and February 2009. Notable declines in the 2009 breeding season were reported from Sussex, Hampshire, Somerset, Devon, East Glamorgan and Gower. Indeed, the well-monitored Welsh population crashed from 79 pairs in 2008 to just 15 in 2009, while the recently established small population in the West Midlands (two pairs in 2006 and 2007, eight pairs in 2008) vanished. In the Thames Basin and Wealden Heaths of Hampshire, there was an 81.5% decline from an estimated 271 territories in 2008 to 50 in 2009, although numbers held up in the New Forest and in coastal Hampshire.

All of this happened before the even colder weather in winter 2009/10, and in November and December 2010, when it appears that the population may have been further reduced. To compound matters, fires on heathland breeding sites in June 2011 seem likely to have had an adverse impact on remnant populations that maintained a toehold at these sites. To measure the impact of these factors it will be important to get the best possible submissions from counties that have held Dartford Warblers in recent years.

In contrast to the general increase in numbers in Britain, populations in continental Europe have declined in recent years. An index of French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese populations shows a 34% decline between 1998 and 2009 (PECBMS 2011).

Dartford Warbler	Total	Sussex	67
England, SW	847	England, E	137
Cornwall	6	Norfolk	2
Devon	35	Suffolk	135
Dorset	410	England, C	5
Hampshire	381	Staffordshire	5
Isle of Wight	5	Wales	15
Somerset	10	East Glamorgan	1
England, SE	133	Gower	9
Berkshire	5	Pembrokeshire	5
Surrey	61	TOTAL	1,137

Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans*

Potential breeder

One site: one singing male. Although this species has featured in our reports previously, in 1994 (three singing males) and 1997 (two singing males), these records were all of short-stay passage birds, which would no longer be included according to current RBBP criteria – some evidence of a territory being held for *at least* a week. This record is potentially more relevant, as a male held territory and carried nest material, although there was no sign of a female. The number of vagrant Subalpine Warblers has increased in recent years, especially in spring, but this 2009 bird was believed to be of the race *moltonii*, which occurs in northern and central Italy, Corsica, Mallorca and Sardinia, and was identified mainly by its distinctive song (Pennington 2010). This subspecies attribution is still under consideration by BBRC and BOURC.

Scotland, N & W

Shetland One site: a male held territory on 1st–11th June, and was also seen carrying nest material.

River Warbler *Locustella fluviatilis*

Potential breeder

One site: one singing male. After a singing bird in Orkney for nine days in June 2008, another vagrant held territory at Applecross, in Wester Ross, in 2009 (Hudson *et al.* 2010).

Scotland, N & W

Highland One site: one singing male from 28th June to 14th July.

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 4 bp

Coverage: near-complete

Red

Four sites: 1–4 pairs. The Sussex record is the first confirmed breeding record since 2000, also in Sussex. Obtaining proof of breeding is difficult for warblers that skulk in dense reedbeds and most records are of singing males. Hudson *et al.* (2010) included details of these records and reviewed the occurrence of Savi's Warbler in Britain since 1950.

England, SW

Hampshire One site: one singing male held territory from 1st May to 27th June.

England, SE

Greater London One site: one singing male, 1st–30th May (within Essex part of Greater London recording area). Kent One site: one singing male, 11th–27th April. Sussex One site: one pair bred. A male was recorded singing from 26th April to 5th May and then from 14th July into early August. An adult male was trapped and ringed on 26th July and on 15th September. Two juveniles were trapped and ringed, the first in late July and a second in September, suggesting two breeding attempts. Note that some details presented have not yet been verified by BBRC.

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*

Occasional breeder, last bred in 2002

Five sites: 1–5 pairs. Atlas fieldwork coincided with a year when there was a small influx of Icterine Warblers into Scotland and eastern England following a spell of easterly winds in mid May. How many others may have gone undetected in Highland glens in 2009? Although some of the birds listed here were recorded on one day only, they were found in suitable, inland, breeding habitat and, because of the remote locations, they are assumed to represent potential breeding pairs.

The circumstances behind the discovery of the confirmed breeding record, only the fourth ever in the UK, were described by Swann (2010). The three previous records were also in Scotland: Highland 1992, Highland 1998 and Orkney 2002.

Scotland, N & W

Highland Five sites: one pair bred and four other singing males were recorded on dates between 17th May and 22nd June. The breeding record was of an alarm-calling bird carrying food on 28th June.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 8 bp

Coverage: high

Red

12 sites: 5–14 pairs. This is the highest number of confirmed breeding pairs since 2001 when there were also five, in Essex, Greater London, Kent (two pairs) and Yorkshire. In 2009 Marsh Warblers were reported from eight counties but at widely dispersed sites, indicating a spring influx into eastern Britain with some staying to breed, and several settling well away from the coast. Other singing birds, recorded for less than a week, were reported from Hertfordshire, Suffolk and Yorkshire. The larger numbers found in 2009 may have been part of a weather-related influx, similar to that of Icterine Warblers, and they mask the longer-term decline.

England, SE

Kent Three sites: three singing males. **Oxfordshire** One site: one male held a territory. **Sussex** One site: one pair bred. A male was singing in July, and in early August a juvenile was trapped.

England, E

Norfolk One site: one pair bred. A male was trapped in July and two juveniles were trapped at the same site on 31st July.

England, C

Derbyshire One site: one pair possibly bred. A singing male was seen collecting nest material on 16th June. **Nottinghamshire** One site: one pair possibly bred. Up to four adults were present for at least nine days in late June.

England, N

Yorkshire Three sites: (1) one pair bred (nest with three eggs found, under licence; three young fledged) and one other singing male; (2) one pair bred (female seen carrying food for young) and one other singing male; (3) one pair bred (male singing and two weeks later an adult seen taking food into nesting habitat).

Scotland, N & W

Shetland One site: one singing male, recorded between 9th and 24th June.



John Hewitt

280. Juvenile Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*, Yorkshire, July 2009.

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

Potential breeder

One site: one singing male. Great Reed Warblers singing from potential breeding habitat (reeds) are virtually annual but there has never been an instance of proved breeding in the UK. Over the long term, numbers reported from continental Europe are increasing (PECBMS 2011), so this species may occur more frequently in future.

England, N

Northumberland One site: one singing male on 7th June to at least 29th June.

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

Potential breeder

One site: 0–1 pair. Wintering Waxwings do sometimes linger into May but sightings from late May to July are much rarer and breeding has never been reported. The only record previously submitted which referred to birds in potential breeding habitat was from a site in Highland where there were two birds on 2nd May 2000, with one still present on 5th June. The sighting of two together flying into a Caithness wood on 1st June 2009 is perhaps the best evidence yet that a breeding attempt may have been made. Despite searches they could not be relocated, although the wood was damp, with thick undergrowth, which restricted access. The birds had also been seen during the latter half of May.

Scotland, N & W

Caithness One site: a pair in potential breeding habitat on 1st June.

Fair Isle Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes fridariensis*

Very rare: 29 bp (2009 survey)

Coverage: near-complete

Red

29 territories. This island race is Red-listed because of its very small population and restricted distribution, but on Fair Isle all territories are counted as part of annual monitoring. The status of this species from 1950 to 2010 was described by Aspinall & Aspinall (2011). The race is also listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive, which resulted in Fair Isle being classified as a Special Protection Area in 1994 to protect its habitat (as well as that of the Fair Isle seabirds, of course).

Scotland, N & W

Fair Isle 29 territories identified in an all-island survey, close to the five-year mean (2005–09) of 28.8 territories.

St Kilda Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes hirtensis*

Rare: 136 bp (1993 partial survey)

Coverage: low

Red

In 2009, the only population monitoring of St Kilda Wrens was a sample count of the village area of Hirta, the main island of St Kilda. Ten early morning counts, mapping all wren activity, identified 12 separate territories.

Like the Fair Isle Wren, the St Kilda Wren is Red-listed because of its very small population and restricted distribution. Curiously, this race was not included in Annex I of the Birds Directive when this was agreed in 1979. It is poorly monitored, with sample counts being undertaken in some years only, and the last full census being in 1993, when all islands except for Dun and Stac an Armin were counted, leading to a total for the archipelago of at least 136 territories. Miles (2011) summarised all published estimates of the St Kilda Wren.

Scotland, N & W

Outer Hebrides Twelve territories were found in a survey of the Head Dyke (village) area of Hirta.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 15 bp

Coverage: low

Red

15 sites: 5–16 pairs. The long-term decline of breeding numbers (see fig. 8 in Holling *et al.* 2010a) explains why the Redwing is Red-listed. However, on the Scottish mainland this species can be unobtrusive when nesting and an unknown number of pairs must be overlooked. Even so, with Atlas fieldworkers covering many of these infrequently visited areas in 2009, the numbers found were still low. Potential breeding records from England are now unusual; the last was in Kent in July 2004.

England, N

Cumbria One site: a singing male on 17th May was still present on 26th June.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 12 sites: three pairs bred, and at least nine pairs possibly bred, based largely on the occurrence of singing males. Shetland Two sites: two pairs bred and one pair probably bred.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

Occasional breeder, last bred in 1995 (red-spotted) and 1996 (white-spotted)

One site: one singing male. Bluethroats of the red-spotted race *L. s. svecica* have bred in Scotland on three occasions: 1968, 1985 and 1995 (Forrester *et al.* 2007). The only breeding record of white-spotted Bluethroats *L. s. cyaneacula* is of two pairs in Yorkshire in 1996 (Brown & Grice 2005), and it was a bird of this race which took up a brief residence in 2009. White-spotted Bluethroats nest as close to Britain as the Netherlands and the Channel coast of France.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland One site: one singing male of the white-spotted race. Although recorded for only three days, the bird was in suitable breeding habitat in mid June.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Rare: 5-yr mean 43 bp

Coverage: high

Amber

35 sites: 15–40 pairs. This is a typical spread, with numbers boosted by improved coverage in central London, one of the few consistently used nesting areas.

England, SW

Dorset One site: one pair bred.

England, SE

Berkshire One site: one pair bred. Buckinghamshire One site: one pair possibly bred. Essex One site: one pair bred. Greater London 11 sites: six pairs probably bred, five pairs possibly bred and one other singing male. Kent Four sites: four pairs bred and one singing male. Sussex Three sites: two pairs probably bred, one pair possibly bred, and a singing male.

England, E

Cambridgeshire Three sites: one pair bred, one pair probably bred and two singing males. Norfolk One site: two pairs bred. Suffolk Two sites: two pairs bred.

England, C

West Midlands Two sites: one pair bred and one singing male, but a low level of reporting might underestimate the true population.

England, N

Cleveland One site: one pair possibly bred. Greater Manchester Two sites: two pairs bred. Lancashire & N Merseyside One site: one pair probably bred. Yorkshire One site: one pair possibly bred.

Blue-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava flava*

Occasional breeder

Three sites: three mixed pairs. The historical status of this race as a breeding bird was reviewed in Holling *et al.* (2010b) and this is only the second year we have collected records.

England, E

Cambridgeshire Two sites: two mixed pairs bred. At both, female *M. f. flava* were paired with male Yellow Wagtails *M. f. flavissima*. One pairing produced two fledged young.

England, N

Northumberland One site: a male that was seen collecting food for young in June was assumed to be paired with a female Yellow Wagtail (which breed regularly in this area).

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba alba*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 1 bp

Coverage: high

Green

One site: one pair. A review of breeding White Wagtails in Scotland (Forrester *et al.* 2007) found that in the period 1968–2004 there had been 32 breeding records of *alba* × *alba* pairs, with 21 of these in the Northern Isles.

Scotland, N & W

Shetland One site: one pair bred, seen with four recently fledged young on 20th July.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Occasional breeder, last bred in 2002

Five sites: 0–5 pairs. Although Bramblings possibly breed annually, records of potentially breeding birds have become less frequent in recent years. They were recorded in every year during 1980–89, for eight years during 1990–99, but in just six years in the decade 2000–09. Five potential pairs is in fact the highest total since 1999.

England, N

Yorkshire One site: a singing male, 15th–25th June.

Scotland, N & W

Highland Four sites: one pair possibly bred and three other singing males.

Common Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 3 bp

Coverage: low

Green

Five sites: 1–5 pairs. This is another overlooked or under-recorded species, not helped by its similarity to the more numerous Lesser Redpoll *C. cabaret* and general confusion over the taxonomy of redpolls. Good views are necessary to confirm identification. Nevertheless, in both the Northern Isles and the Outer Hebrides, where this species appears to breed at least occasionally in small numbers, it seems to favour gardens with plenty of trees or small plantations, so it can be searched for. Most confirmed breeding records refer to fledged juveniles.

Scotland, N & W

Outer Hebrides Four sites: single birds were seen in potential breeding habitat at three of these sites, while at the fourth site three birds were seen together. No further evidence of breeding was recorded.

Shetland One site: one pair bred. At least three recently fledged juveniles were seen.

Scottish Crossbill *Loxia scotica*

Less scarce: 6,800 bp (2008 survey)

Coverage: low

Amber

Records of four breeding pairs from just two sites (one in Highland and one in North-east Scotland) were received by RBBP, but this is a trivial total compared to the estimated population of around 6,800 pairs (Summers & Buckland 2010). Given the lack of useful information submitted to the Panel on Scottish Crossbills, and knowing now that the population greatly exceeds our inclusion threshold, we have removed this species from the RBBP list.

Parrot Crossbill *Loxia pytyopsittacus*

Rare: 50 bp (2008 survey)

Coverage: low

Amber

Four sites: four pairs. Numbers reported were, as usual, small, but limited effort is given to separating the three crossbill species in the Scottish pine forests so the data add little to our knowledge of Parrot Crossbills. The 2008 crossbill survey (Summers & Buckland 2010) suggested that there were around 100 Parrot Crossbills in Scotland early in 2008, equating to about 50 breeding pairs.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland One extensive site: at least one pair bred.

Scotland, N & W

Highland Three sites: three pairs bred.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Less scarce: 4-yr mean: 68 bp*

Coverage: low

Red

* 1988–91 estimate was 3,000–6,000 bp, but this species is believed to have declined.

At least 67 sites: 18–78 pairs. These reports confirm the main centres of Hawfinch distribution to be southeast Wales, the New Forest, and perhaps Kent, with smaller numbers in neighbouring counties. There seem to be smaller outlying populations in parts of the English Midlands and northwest England. The Scottish record is the first to be mentioned in these reports since Hawfinch was added to our list in 2006. There is a regular wintering flock in Perth & Kinross which is believed to disperse to breed but there are very few breeding-season records in Scotland now, compared with presence in 20 10-km squares in the 1988–91 Atlas (Gibbons *et al.* 1993).

European Hawfinch populations also seem to be struggling, with a 31% decline between 1990 and 2009 based on monitoring in 18 countries (PECBMS 2011).

England, SW

Gloucestershire Two sites: two pairs probably bred. Hampshire At least 25 sites within the New Forest plus five other sites in the county: four pairs bred, 17 pairs probably bred and 14 pairs possibly bred. Wiltshire Two sites: three pairs bred.

England, SE

Essex Two sites: one pair probably bred and one pair possibly bred. Hertfordshire One site: one pair probably bred. Kent Two sites: one pair probably bred and five pairs possibly bred; but an estimated 50 pairs in the county. Sussex Three sites: two pairs probably bred and one pair possibly bred.

England, C

Derbyshire One site: one pair possibly bred. Nottinghamshire One site: one pair bred.

England, N

Cumbria Three sites: three pairs bred. Lancashire & N Merseyside Two sites: two pairs probably bred and one pair possibly bred. Yorkshire One site: one pair probably bred.

Wales

Breconshire One site: one pair probably bred. Caernarfonshire One site: one pair possibly bred. East Glamorgan One site: one pair bred. Gwent Two sites: two pairs possibly bred. Meirionnydd Six sites: one pair bred and five pairs possibly bred. Radnorshire Five sites: five pairs bred.

Scotland, Mid

Perth & Kinross One site: one pair possibly bred.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Rare: 70–100 bp (1988–91 Atlas)

Coverage: low

Amber

Casual reports from the main breeding areas of the Cairngorms (within both the Highland and North-east Scotland recording areas) amounted to just six confirmed breeding pairs and one singing male. Such data do little to tell us about any change in status, hence the low confidence in the coverage for this species. Only repeated and consistent annual surveys of defined sites, or a full national census, can offer some improvement. As for Dotterel, the 2011 RSPB/SNH Montane Bird Survey, together with the new Atlas distribution maps, will provide the best update on the status of this species. The last Atlas (Gibbons *et al.* 1993) suggested a population of 70–100 breeding pairs.

Andy Hay (rsqb-images.com)



281. Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus*, Cornwall, July 2009.

Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus*

Scarce: 862 bp (2009 survey)

Coverage: near-complete

Red

862 territories. Normally, the RBBP receives rather sparse data on the Cirl Bunting population, but a national survey in 2009 provided a detailed insight into the present population (Stanbury *et al.* 2010). The county totals represent the total number of territories counted during the survey, from which the population was estimated. Simon Wotton, RSPB, commented as follows.

A full census of Cirl Buntings took place in 2009, the first since 2003. In south Devon, 289 tetrads were surveyed, while in neighbouring southeast Cornwall the number surveyed was five. A further 16 tetrads were covered to survey the re-established population in west Cornwall. In addition, there have been a few reported sightings elsewhere in southern England in recent years, so these areas were searched although no Cirl Buntings were found there. An estimated 862 territories (785–975, 95% confidence limits) were recorded, an increase of 24% since 2003. These were largely confined to south Devon, but a small population now exists as a result of the ongoing RSPB/Natural England reintroduction project in west Cornwall. There was little sign of range expansion beyond the core south Devon range, however, although the number of occupied tetrads had increased by 15% since 2003.

England, SW

Cornwall 13 territories. Devon 741 territories.

Appendix I. Other species considered by the Panel also recorded in 2009.

The following two occasional breeding species were recorded during the breeding season in 2009, but showed no further signs of breeding than are documented here.

Greater Scaup *Aythya marila* The only report was of a female recorded on two dates in May at a loch in the Outer Hebrides, seen associating with a male Tufted Duck *A. fuligula* on the second occasion. Greater Scaup is now only an occasional breeder in the UK; the last confirmed breeding recorded was in 1999, in Co. Armagh. It was added to the Red list in BoCC3 (Eaton *et al.* 2009), but because of a long-term decline in the wintering population rather than because of its breeding status.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena* One frequented a loch in Orkney from 12th June to 19th July. The last confirmed breeding was in Borders in 2001 but since then the only records have been of single birds in the summer months, apart from two together in Northamptonshire for four weeks in June and July 2006.

Acknowledgments

As usual, we are most grateful to the large number of contributors who have supplied the data that this report is based upon. Without their efforts the report would be much less comprehensive and useful. We wish to recognise in particular the willing co-operation and assistance of county and regional recorders throughout the UK, as well as the many specialist study groups, conservation organisations and numerous individuals. Many recorders reviewed an early draft of this report, thus helping to ensure the accuracy of the data presented.

Valuable supplementary data are also submitted from a number of national monitoring schemes, by both professional organisations and dedicated amateurs. These are referenced in the species accounts where appropriate.

Important information for many species was supplied by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), Natural England (NE), Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), the BTO and the RSPB. We are especially grateful to the licensing officers responsible for Schedule 1 licences who supplied data for 2009: Jez Blackburn (BTO), Jo Oldaker and Natasha Ewins (NE), Carys Roberts (CCW) and Ben Ross (SNH); and to Andy Young (RSPB Wales), who collated Schedule 1 species data from Wales on behalf of CCW and the Panel.

The following individuals and groups provided information on their specialist species, collated data from other schemes on behalf of the Panel, or were helpful and supportive in other ways: Carl Barimore, Stuart Benn, Dave Butterfield, Ian Court, Tony Cross and the Welsh Kite Trust, Brian Etheridge, William George, Paul Hillis, Digger Jackson, Dave Leech, John Marchant, Will Miles, Carl Mitchell, Andy Musgrove, Tim Poole, David Raw, Staffan Roos, Sabine Schmitt, Chris Wernham, Simon Wotton, Malcolm Wright, Robin Wynde and Andy Young, plus all the other individuals, too many to name, who have provided support or advice over the last 12 months. Some data for Northern Ireland were supplied by the Irish Rare Breeding Birds Panel (Hillis 2010).

The following volunteer authors were responsible for the additional texts: Stuart Benn (Slavonian Grebe), Tony Fox (Gadwall), Mark Eaton (Corn Crane), David Norman (Cetti's Warbler), Sabine Schmitt (Little Tern) and Simon Wotton (Eurasian Bittern and Cirl Bunting).

Thanks are also due to the Scottish Raptor Monitoring Group, the Scottish and Welsh Raptor Study Groups, the Wiltshire Raptor Group, the North of England Raptor Forum, and the Sea Eagle Project Team, who monitor important raptor populations, the JNCC/RSPB/SOTEAG Seabird Monitoring Programme for allowing the Panel to use its data on seabirds and the BTO for access to various datasets. These include the BTO/WWT/RSPB/JNCC Wetland Bird Survey, Bird Atlas 2007–11 and the heronries census, and also, for the first time, the BTO Nest Record Scheme, for which we would particularly like to thank Dave Leech and Carl Barimore. In addition, both Mark Grantham and Nick Moran alerted the Secretary about relevant records submitted to the BTO/RSPB/BWI/SOC BirdTrack scheme, and Fiona Barclay also informed us of some records of RBBP species submitted to BirdGuides. The Bittern Monitoring Programme is organised annually by the RSPB and Natural England, through Action for Birds in England.

The Secretary would also like to express his gratitude for the support and encouragement given by all current and past members of the Panel, and to Jill Andrews and Aisling Holling for assembling much of the data for this report. Thanks are also due to Ian Andrews, who has provided guidance on the best use of the RBBP database and helped in the extraction of records for analysis. Denis Corley has continued to search through published data for records which have not been submitted to the Panel, and his efforts are much appreciated.

References

- Aspinall, S., & Aspinall, R. 2011. The Fair Isle Wren: population and territory occupancy, 1950–2010. *Brit. Birds* 104: 312–324.
- Baillie, S. R., Marchant, J. H., Leech, D. I., Joys, A. C., Noble, D. G., Barimore, C., Downie, I. S., Grantham, M. J., Risely, K., & Robinson, R. A. 2010. *Breeding Birds in the Wider Countryside: their conservation status 2009*. BTO Research Report 541, Thetford. (www.bto.org/birdtrends2010/wcrctwa.shtml)
- Ballance, D. K., & Smith, A. J. 2008. Recording areas of Great Britain. *Brit. Birds* 101: 364–375.
- Barden, P. 2010. Breeding attempt by Ring-billed Gull in Scotland in 2009. *Scott. Birds* 30: 31–32.
- Bellamy, P. E., & Eaton, M. A. 2010. '2009 CSM bird monitoring of Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SPA.' Unpublished report to SNH.
- Bibby, C. J. 1982. Polygyny and breeding ecology of the Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*. *Ibis* 124: 288–301.
- Brown, A., & Grice, P. 2005. *Birds in England*. Poyser, London.
- Burton, J. 1995. *Birds and Climate Change*. A&C Black, London.
- Butcher, G. S., & Niven, D. K. 2007. *Combining Data from the Christmas Bird Count and the Breeding Bird Survey to Determine the Continental Status and Trends of North America Birds*. National Audubon Society, New York. www.audubon.org/bird/stateofthebirds/CBID/report.php
- Clements, R. 2001. The Hobby in Britain: a new population estimate. *Brit. Birds* 94: 402–408.
- Conway, G., Wotton, S., Henderson, I., Eaton, M., Drewitt, A., & Spencer, J. 2009. The status of breeding Woodlarks *Lullula arborea* in Britain in 2006. *Bird Study* 56: 310–325.
- Dillon, I. A., Smith, T. D., Williams, S. J., Haysom, S., & Eaton, M. A. 2009. Status of Red-throated Divers in Britain in 2006. *Bird Study* 56: 147–157.

- Eaton, M. A., Marshall, K. B., & Gregory, R. D. 2007a. Status of Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus* in Scotland during winter 2003/04. *Bird Study* 54: 145–153.
- , Dillon, I. A., Stirling-Aird, P. K., & Whitfield, D. P. 2007b. The status of the Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* in Britain in 2003. *Bird Study* 54: 212–220.
- , Austin, G. E., Banks, A. N., Conway, G., Douse, A., Grice, P.V., Hearn, R., Hilton, G., Hoccom, D., Musgrove, A. J., Noble, D. G., Ratcliffe, N., Rehlfisch, M. M., Worden, J., & Wotton, S. 2007c. *The State of the UK's Birds 2006*. RSPB, BTO, WWF, CCW, EHS, NE and SNH, Sandy.
- , Brown, A. F., Noble, D. G., Musgrove, A. J., Hearn, R. D., Aebischer, N. J., Gibbons, D. W., Evans, A., & Gregory, R. D. 2009. Birds of Conservation Concern 3: the population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. *Brit. Birds* 102: 296–341.
- Ewing, S. R., Rebecca, G. W., Heavisides, A., Court, I., Lindley, P., Ruddock, M., Cohen, S., & Eaton, M. A. In press. Breeding Status of the Merlin *Falco columbarius* in the UK in 2008. *Bird Study*.
- Fielding, A., Haworth, P., Whitfield, P., McLeod, D., & Riley, H. 2011. *A Conservation Framework for Hen Harriers in the United Kingdom*. JNCC Report 441, Peterborough.
- Forrester, R. W., Andrews, I. J., McInerny, C. J., Murray, R. D., McGowan, R. Y., Zonfrillo, B., Betts, M. W., Jardine, D. C., & Grundy, D. S. 2007. *The Birds of Scotland*. SOC, Aberlady.
- Fox, A. D. 1988. Breeding status of the Gadwall in Britain and Ireland. *Brit. Birds* 81: 51–66.
- Gilbert, G., Gibbons, D. W., & Evans, J. 1998. *Bird Monitoring Methods*. RSPB, Sandy.
- Gibbons, D. W., Reid, J. B., & Chapman, R. A. 1993. *The New Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988–1991*. Poyser, London.
- Gray, H. S. G. 1966. *The Meare Lake Village. Vol. 3. A full description of the excavation and relics from the eastern half of the West Village, 1910–1933*. Privately published, Taunton.
- Hagemeyer, W. J. M., & Blair, M. J. (eds.) 1997. *The EBCC Atlas of European Breeding Birds*. Poyser, London.
- Hancock, M. H., Gibbons, D. W., & Thompson, P. S. 1997. The status of the breeding Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* in the United Kingdom in 1995. *Bird Study* 44: 290–302.
- Harrison, C. J. O., & Walker, C. A. 1977. A re-examination of the fossil birds from the Upper Pleistocene in the London Basin. *London Naturalist* 56: 6–9.
- Hillis, J. P. 2008. Rare Irish breeding birds, 2007. The Seventh Annual Report of the Irish Rare Breeding Birds Panel (IRBBP). *Irish Birds* 8: 365–372.
- 2010. Rare Irish breeding birds, 2009. The Annual Report of the Irish Rare Breeding Birds Panel (IRBBP). *Irish Birds* 9: 67–76.
- Holling, M., & the Rare Breeding Birds Panel. 2007. Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 2003 and 2004. *Brit. Birds* 100: 321–367.
- 2010a. Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 2007. *Brit. Birds* 103: 2–52.
- 2010b. Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 2008. *Brit. Birds* 103: 482–538.
- Hudson, N., & the Rarities Committee. 2010. Report on rare birds in Great Britain in 2009. *Brit. Birds* 103: 562–638.
- Huntley, B., Green, R. E., Collingham, Y. C., & Willis, S. G. 2007. *A Climatic Atlas of European Breeding Birds*. Durham University, RSPB and Lynx Edicions, Barcelona.
- Jackson, D. 2009. 'Interim Report on 2009 Breeding Whimbrel Surveys.' Unpublished report to Natural Research.
- Kirby, J. S., & Mitchell, C. 1993. Distribution and status of wintering Shoveler in Great Britain. *Bird Study* 40: 170–180.
- Lovegrove, R., Williams, G., & Williams, I. 1994. *Birds in Wales*. Poyser, London.
- Miles, W. 2011. The appearance and status of the St Kilda Wren. *Brit. Birds* 104: 325–328.
- Mitchell, P. I., Newton, S. F., Ratcliffe, N., & Dunn, T. E. 2004. *Seabird Populations of Britain and Ireland*. Poyser, London.
- Musgrove, A. J., Austin, G. E., Hearn, R. D., Holt, C. A., Stroud, D. A., & Wotton, S. R. 2011. Overwinter population estimates of British waterbirds. *Brit. Birds* 104: 364–397.
- NERF. 2010. *Northern England Raptor Forum Annual Review 2009*. Hebden Bridge.
- O'Brien, M., Green, R., & Wilson, J. 2006. Partial recovery of the population of Corncrakes *Crex crex* in Britain, 1993–2004. *Bird Study* 53: 213–224.
- O'Sullivan, J. M. 1976. Bearded Tits in Britain and Ireland, 1966–74. *Brit. Birds* 69: 473–489.
- Ogilvie, M. A. 1997. Rare Breeding Birds Panel Plans for future coverage. *Brit. Birds* 90: 351–352.
- Ottvall, R., Edenius, L., Elmberg, J., Engström, H., Green, M., Holmqvist, N., Linström, Å., Pärt, T., & Tjernberg, M. 2009. Population trends for Swedish breeding birds. *Ornis Svecica* 19: 117–192.
- Palacín, C., & Alonso, J. C. 2008. An updated estimate of the world status and population trends of the Great Bustard *Otis tarda*. *Ardeola* 55: 13–25.
- PECBMS. 2011. www.ebcc.info/index.php?ID=458
- Pennington, M. G. 2010. Moltoni's Subalpine Warbler on Unst: first for Britain. *Shetland Bird Report 2009*: 121–122.
- Pritchard, R. 2011. Welsh Bird Report No. 23: 2009. *Welsh Birds* 7: 166–324.
- Risely, K., Baillie, S. R., Eaton, M. A., Joys, A. C., Musgrove, A. J., Noble, D. G., Renwick, A. R., & Wright, L. J. 2010. *The Breeding Bird Survey 2009*. BTO Research Report 559. BTO, Thetford.
- Robinson, R. A., & Clark, J. A. 2010. *The Online Ringing Report: bird ringing in Britain & Ireland in 2010*. BTO, Thetford. (www.bto.org/ringing-report, accessed on 1st May 2011)
- , Freeman, S. N., Balmer, D. E., & Grantham, M. J. 2007. Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*: analysis of an expanding population. *Bird Study* 54: 230–235.
- Sharrock, J. T. R. 1976. *The Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland*. Poyser, Berkhamsted.
- Stanbury, A., & the UK Crane Working Group. 2011. The changing status of the Common Crane in the UK. *Brit. Birds* 104: 432–447.
- , Davies, M., Grice, P., Gregory, R., & Wotton, S. 2010. The status of the Cirl Bunting in the UK in 2009.

- Brit. Birds* 103: 702–711.
- Stroud, D. A., Chambers, D., Cook, S., Buxton, N., Fraser, B., Clement, P., Lewis, P., McLean, I., Baker, H., & Whitehead, S. (eds.). 2001. *The UK SPA Network: its scope and content*. Vols. 1–3. JNCC, Peterborough.
- Summers, R. W., & Buckland, S. T. 2010. A first survey of the global population size and distribution of the Scottish Crossbill *Loxia scotica*. *Bird Conservation International*. Available on CJO, 11th Jan 2010. doi:10.1017/S0959270909990323
- Švažas, S. 2001. Possible impacts of climate conditions on changes in numbers and in distribution of certain breeding and staging wildfowl species in Lithuania. *Acta Zoologica Lituanica* 11: 163–182.
- Swann, R. 2010. Icterine Warblers breeding in Sutherland in 2009. *Scott. Birds* 30: 126.
- van Turnout, C. A. M., Willems, F., Plate, C., van Strien, A., Teunissen, W., van Dijk, A., & Foppen, R. 2008. Monitoring common and scarce breeding birds in the Netherlands: applying a post-hoc stratification and weighting procedure to obtain less biased population trends. *Revista Catalana d'Ornitologia* 24: 15–29.
- Welch, S. 2010. The influx of Quail to East Lothian in 2009. *Scott. Birds* 30: 147–152.
- Wernham, C. V., Toms, M. P., Marchant, J. H., Clark, J. A., Siriwardena, G. M., & Baillie, S. R. (eds). 2002. *The Migration Atlas: movements of the birds of Britain and Ireland*. Poyser, London.
- Whitfield, P. 2002. Status of breeding Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus* in Britain in 1999. *Bird Study* 49: 237–249.
- Wotton, S., Gibbons, D. W., Dilger, M., & Grice, P. V. 1998. Cetti's Warblers in the United Kingdom and the Channel Islands in 1996. *Brit. Birds* 91: 77–89.
- , Conway, G., Eaton, M., Henderson, I., & Grice, P. 2009. The status of the Dartford Warbler in the UK and the Channel Islands in 2006. *Brit. Birds* 102: 230–246.
- Yalden, D. W., & Albarella, U. 2009. *The History of British Birds*. OUP, Oxford.

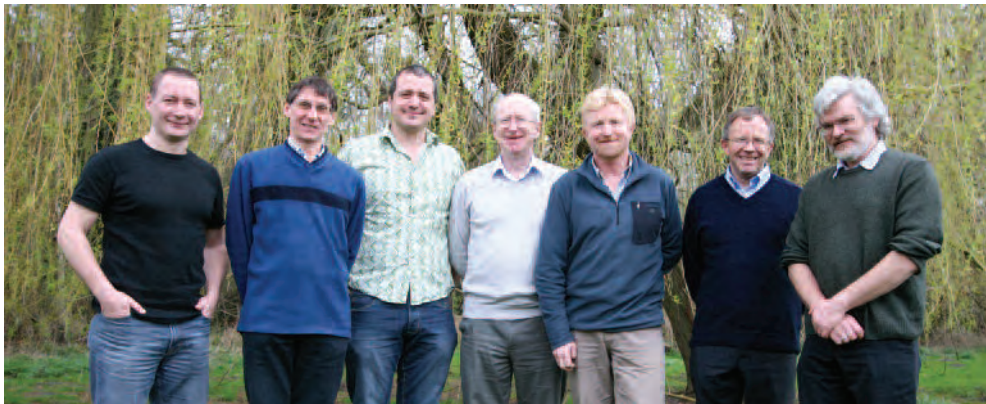
Mark Holling, *The Old Orchard, Grange Road, North Berwick, East Lothian EH39 4QT*;
e-mail secretary@rbbp.org.uk



The Rare Breeding Birds Panel is supported by JNCC, RSPB and the BTO

Secretary Mark Holling, The Old Orchard, Grange Road, North Berwick,
East Lothian EH39 4QT; e-mail secretary@rbbp.org.uk

Find out more about the Panel at www.rbbp.org.uk



Dawn Balmer

282. The Rare Breeding Birds Panel, March 2011. From left, Simon Gillings, Mark Holling, Mark Eaton, David Norman, Ian Francis, Andrew King, David Stroud.