

SOMERSET BIRDS 2007

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Production of this report has been supported by generous donations from:



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FOREWORD

I can hardly write this, the Foreword for the 2007 Report, without mentioning the momentous events of 2008. First came the exciting, though predictable, news that Bitterns had returned to the County as a breeding species. This was followed by an altogether less expected event: the announcement that Cattle Egrets had bred for the first time, not only in Somerset but in the United Kingdom. With no shortage of Grey Herons, Little Egrets now commonplace and even Great White Egrets passing through quite regularly, Somerset is certainly the 'Heron County'. There will, of course, be more about this subject in *Somerset Birds 2008*.

As predicted last year, there have been a number of changes in personnel. The outcome, in my view, is the creation of the strongest General Committee for some time. Jeff Hazell as an *ex-officio* member has been an asset for some years, looking after our Indoor Meetings. He took on the position of Treasurer at the last AGM. As Treasurer he is also Membership Secretary and has overhauled our recruiting structure, making it much easier to monitor applications and welcome the resulting new members. This is probably the most demanding Committee job, and Jeff is proving ideal in this role.

Sarah Beavis moved to Australia early in 2008, and the job of Secretary is now shared between me and our Vice-President, David Ballance. David also looks after much of the liaison work between us and other organisations such as the Wildlife Trust and the RSPB. There are new faces, in John Hansford and Roger Dickey as Meetings Secretaries, and other members of the General Committee bring to its workings a wide range of experience. They are all extremely supportive of the Officers.

Members will have noticed changes to our website too (www.somersetbirds.net). We owe a great debt of gratitude to Nigel Milbourne, who created the site and has looked after it since inception. James Packer is now Webmaster, and has made a number of refreshing changes to both the presentation and content. The website is hugely important for the Society and has gained us many new members.

The Society continues to keep a weather eye on developments within the County that are likely to affect our birds. Debate about the proposed Severn Barrage and a number of similar, less expensive, schemes continues to rumble on, as it has done for years. We await outcomes with interest. The proposed wind farm at Brent Knoll failed to gain planning consent, but other applications are likely to follow. Ever mindful of the difficult choices that need to be made about renewable energy and the environment, the Society will, in consultation with other wildlife organisations, oppose any development where the welfare of birds is likely to be seriously compromised.

For many years now we have enjoyed generous sponsorship from the owners of the Hinkley Point A Station, Magnox South. I am very pleased to report that, thanks to Committee member Nick Wall who works there, they have been joined in supporting us by British Energy at Hinkley Point B. We are very grateful to both.

This welcome increase in sponsorship, and the healthy state of our finances, has allowed us to take a critical look at the Report, with a view to improving its style, presentation and, in particular, the photographic content. Our Recorder, Brian Gibbs, Assistant Recorder, Julian Thomas, and the Editorial Committee have worked particularly hard this year to achieve this aim. I hope you like the result.

Brian Hill
President, Somerset Ornithological Society

WEATHER 2007

2007 NATIONAL SUMMARY

2007 was again a very warm year, with a mean temperature of 10.40 deg C (+1.30 deg C over the 1961-90 average). Sunshine at 1590 hours and rainfall at 937mm were also above average.

The year will be remembered for its very stormy start, leading to the beaching of the *MSV Napoli* at Branscombe (Devon), and for the extremely wet summer, with several pulses of intense rainfall crossing England. The worst occurrences are summarised as follows:

- 1) 13th to 17th June. A deep depression to the south-west of the British Isles moved slowly north-east. Heavy thundery rain pushed north, with up to 70mm (2.80 ins) of rain falling at Edgbaston in 12 hours on 15th. This led to extensive flooding in the Midlands.
- 2) 25th June. A deepening depression became slow-moving bringing heavy rain to Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and the Midlands, which again led to widespread flooding. Fylingdales (Yorkshire) received 100mm (4 ins) of rain in 24 hours.
- 3) 19th and 20th July. A stationary low fed bands of intense rain through the south and west of England, resulting in extensive flooding of the Severn Valley and Upper Thames. Pershore College (Worcestershire) recorded 120.8mm (4.80 ins) on 20th and 157.4mm (6.30 ins) in the 48-hour period of 19th/20th!

Rainfall

- 937.3mm
- 113% of average (1961-90)

Average Temperature

- 10.4 deg C
- 1.3 deg C above average (1961-90)

Total Sunshine

- 1589.8 hrs
- 111% of average (1961-90)

ANNUAL STATISTICS (SOMERSET)

The following data have been supplied by CMS from observations at Staplegrove, and by the Nettlecombe Field Study Centre.

Temperature

Highest Temperature 27.8 deg C (82 deg F)
June 10th

Lowest Temperature -3.8 deg C (25 deg F)
December 13th

Number of Days with Air Frost – 22

January	3
February	5
March	1
November	4
December	9

Last Air frost – March 21st

First Air frost – November 15th

Rainfall

The Nettlecombe Field Study Centre supplied data for rainfall.

Total Rainfall 1156.1 mm (45.5 ins)

Rainfall of 25mm (1 inch) or more occurred on the following dates:

January 18th	26.10mm	1.04 ins
January 22nd	26.00mm	1.04 ins
May 14th	27.50mm	1.10 ins
October 17th	28.00mm	1.12 ins
December 8th	29.30mm	1.17 ins

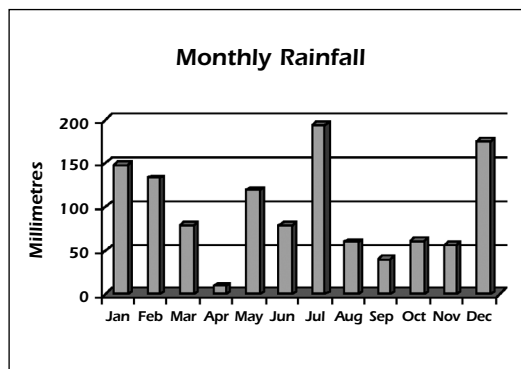
Rain fell on 165 days (45.2%).

The longest dry spell was from March 31st to April 22nd (23 days).

The longest wet spell was from January 2nd to January 14th (13 days).

The driest month was April, with 8.70mm (0.3 ins).

The wettest month was July, with 194.70mm (7.7 ins).



Wind

Month	Highest Gust (knots)	Date	Dominant Direction
January	56	18	W
February	44	28	SW
March	45	5	N
April	29	1	NE
May	35	11	NW
June	32	20	SSW
July	33	6	WSW
August	30	14	N
September	32	24	N
October	27	17	E
November	38	30	NW
December	49	7	SSW

The gust of 56 knots on January 18th is equivalent to Force 11 (Violent Storm) on the Beaufort Scale.

Winds of gale force strength (Force 8 / 34 knots) or greater were recorded on 19 days:

Winter and Spring	
January 11th	W
January 18th	W
January 20th	WSW
February 12th	W
February 15th	SSE
February 22nd	S
February 28th	WSW
March 5th	SSW
March 6th	SW
March 18th	WNW
May 11th	SSW

Autumn and Winter	
November 30th	SSW
December 2nd	W
December 6th	WSW
December 7th	WNW
December 8th	WSW
December 9th	NW
December 10th	NW
December 28th	SSW

MONTHLY SUMMARIES

The monthly summaries are divided into two sections, a national summary followed by a local review.

January

A very mild month (second-warmest ever after January 1916), except for one colder spell around 22nd to 26th. Rainfall was above average despite a fairly dry last week.

1st to 21st:

An extremely unsettled start to the year with fast moving Atlantic lows passing through the West Country. These produced some prolonged periods of rain followed by heavy showers that were sometimes accompanied by thunder. Winds were gale force at

times. The culmination was the worst storm for 17 years on the 18th with winds reaching Force 11 on the Beaufort Scale. This led to the abandonment of the MSV Napoli off the south-west approaches and its eventual beaching at Branscombe on 20th.

22nd to 31st:

High pressure became established to the west of Ireland, giving the first prolonged spell of sunshine since late December. There were several frosts and it was distinctly chilly in the brisk variable wind, with a maximum daytime temperature of 3 deg C on 23rd. The 25th was cloudless.

February

The month started with some fine dry weather, but then it became gradually unsettled, with rainfall above average for the month. Widespread snow fell on the

8th and 9th. Mean temperatures were 2 deg C above average, and the South West had double its average rainfall, giving the wettest February since 1990.

1st to 9th:

The cold settled spell continued into February, with more air frosts and cloudless days (3rd, 4th and 5th). From 6th, cloudy conditions prevailed, with heavy rain on the 8th and 9th, which fell as snow on Exmoor; resulting in several villages being temporarily cut off. Winds were mostly from the easterly sector.

10th to 28th:

A much milder spell occurred from mid-month onwards, with mostly cloudy conditions resulting in periods of rain and gales. These were followed by showers, which were very heavy at times (11th, 12th, 23rd). Sunshine was in short supply.

March

A mild and sunny month with slightly below-average rainfall. A cold snap after mid month brought snow to some areas. This was the sunniest March since 1929, and the fifth sunniest overall.

1st to 16th:

Generally unsettled, with periods of rain and gales. The rain was particularly intense on the 4th. Heavy showers were frequent, particularly on the 3rd and 6th. It was generally mild, with some warm sunshine (7th, 10th), but cloudier conditions prevailed at the end of the period and it became chilly.

17th to 31st:

A much colder period. Heavy showers brought hail and sleet on 18th and 19th, with snow on the moors. The northerly wind brought a significant wind chill. A calmer spell on the 21st brought frost and cloudless skies. It gradually became warmer for a while with increasing amounts of cloud. However, colder conditions returned on 26th, giving unbroken sunshine from 26th to 29th with associated frost.

April

An exceptional month. Mean temperatures were well above average, with above-average sunshine. There was very little rainfall. Record highs of 25 deg C were recorded in Eastern England between 23rd and 25th. It is no surprise this was the warmest April on record, the second sunniest and the fourth driest.

1st to 23rd:

High pressure brought a calm, settled spell for the majority of the month. Although it started chilly, with the odd ground frost, from the 5th temperatures rose,

giving very warm conditions reaching 22 deg C on 14th and 15th. The high pressure brought cloudless skies on 2nd, from 4th to 8th, 14th, and from 19th to 21st. Winds were light and mostly from the easterly quadrant.

24th to 30th:

A brief unsettled spell, with the first significant rainfall for 23 days occurring on 23rd. High pressure soon returned, giving fine sunny weather on 29th and 30th.

May

A very wet month, with some areas setting new rainfall records. Mean temperatures were above average, although sunshine amounts were below normal. The 7 deg C recorded in London on the 28th was the coldest Test Match day ever! The month was the 4th wettest May on record and the wettest since 1967.

1st to 5th:

The fine weather of April continued, with the 1st to 3rd being warm and completely cloudless.

6th to 18th:

The weather became very unsettled. A series of depressions swept across the South West, with a particularly deep area of low pressure on 9th bringing bands of heavy rain. Torrential rain fell on 11th and 13th. Thereafter, conditions remained generally cloudy, with periods of rain alternating with sunshine. The north-westerly winds produced a stiff breeze.

19th to 26th:

A more settled interlude as high pressure moved in, although it remained chilly. The 22nd and 24th were virtually cloudless.

27th to 31st:

Further spells of rain marked the end of the month and it became much colder. Heavy rain fell on 27th and 30th, followed by showers.

June

The month started off warm and dry, but became increasingly unsettled. This was the wettest June on record, with almost double the average rainfall. As a consequence, sunshine was in short supply, resulting in the dullest June since 1998. The first six months of the year produced 627mm of rain, the average being 511mm.

1st to 10th:

The unsettled weather of late May continued into June. Heavy showers fell on 3rd, but thereafter it remained dry with varying amounts of cloud.

However, the 8th to 10th were particularly sunny, the latter date being the hottest day of the year (28 deg C).

11th to 30th:

Heavy rain fell on 11th, with further spells of rain or heavy showers, which were often prolonged, occurring until the 18th. A large stationary low then became established, giving severe thunderstorms on 19th and further periods of extremely wet weather resulting in flooding (Central England and the Southern Midlands were particularly badly hit, and the recently constructed flood defences in Boscastle were severely tested). Further heavy rain and strong winds occurred on 25th, which led to further extensive flooding – this time in North and Central England. The remainder of the month continued very wet.

July

Another unsettled month, with rainfall well above average. England and Wales recorded over double their average rainfall. This was the fourth wettest July on record and the wettest since 1988.

1st to 29th:

July can be summarized as low pressure, strong winds, heavy showers and prolonged periods of rain. Heavy showers brought on by strong north-westerly winds dominated the early part of the month. Persistent rain fell on the 13th and 15th before torrential showers returned on 17th and 19th, the latter being accompanied by thunder. It was on 20th that explosive devices were used to split the MSV Napoli into two sections. Further rain fell throughout the South West until 29th and was particularly heavy on 26th. Rain occurred on 23 days during July resulting in 194.7mm (7.7 inches) of rain in Somerset.

30th to 31st:

The sun finally broke through as the first spell of high pressure since April moved briefly into the South West. The last two days of the month were warm and sunny, with very little in the way of cloud.

August

It was largely settled at first and for the last week, but more unsettled around mid month. Despite temperatures being close to normal, this was the coldest August since 1993. Sunshine levels were mostly close to or above average across England and Wales, with some areas having over 120% of their average.

1st to 7th:

The start of the month was changeable, the 2nd being mostly cloudy with heavy rain and north-westerly

winds until mid afternoon. The following three days were cloudy, warm (26 deg C on 5th) and humid with light south-easterly winds. The 7th was mostly sunny, but very heavy showers fell in parts of the South West.

8th to 11th:

High pressure built across the region, bringing four days of almost uninterrupted sunshine and light variable winds. Temperatures rose accordingly.

12th to 21st:

A further unsettled spell occurred mid month and it became much cooler. Heavy rain fell on 13th and 14th, followed by two days of very heavy showers, which were accompanied by thunder on 15th. The weekend of 18th and 19th was cold and cloudy with periods of drizzle. Further heavy rain fell on 20th, which led to localized flooding. There was a strong breeze emanating from between the south-west and north-west that kept temperatures on the cool side.

22nd to 27th:

High pressure built across the South West once more resulting in cloudless skies between the 22nd and 26th. Temperatures were significantly higher, reaching 25 deg C on 25th. Winds were light and variable.

28th to 31st:

Cooler conditions arrived on brisk northerly winds, although it remained dry.

September

It was often fine and dry during the first half of the month. However, the weather became more unsettled later with rain at times, and became colder for a while.

1st to 18th:

The cloudy conditions at the end of August continued for the first few days of September. However, as high pressure moved in the weather improved and it became warmer, although it was very humid on 5th. The 7th and 8th were warm and cloudless, the temperature reaching 23 deg C on 7th. A cloudy, chilly spell then intervened, interspersed with extensive sunshine on 11th, 13th, 15th and 18th, which marked the end of summer. Winds were mainly from the north or east.

19th to 30th:

Mostly cloudy and breezy with periods of drizzle on 21st and 23rd. Heavy overnight rain fell on 24th followed by heavy showers on 24th and 25th brought on strong north-westerly winds. Further rain fell daily on strong north-westerly winds. Further rain fell daily between the 28th and 30th, with easterly winds becoming dominant.

October

A very quiet month across England, with high pressure dominant for much of the time. However, brief spells of unsettled weather brought some locally heavy rain. It was the driest October since 1985, with only 56% of the average monthly rainfall.

1st to 3rd:

Cloudy and cold with periods of drizzle on light south-easterly winds.

4th to 26th:

High pressure began to build, resulting in warm sunny conditions, particularly between the 4th and 6th. There was a spell of drizzle on 9th and 13th with heavy rain on 16th during a period of mostly cloudy weather. However, the 17th to 19th, 21st and 23rd were virtually cloudless. As the high pressure drifted away, cloudier weather replaced the sunshine. Winds were mainly light from the east.

27th to 29th:

An unsettled spell with drizzle then heavy rain on 28th and 29th as a depression crossed the region giving a fresh south-westerly breeze.

30th to 31st:

High pressure returned, although not with the intensity of earlier in the month. The 30th was sunny, but drizzle fell on 31st.

November

It was generally more anticyclonic than usual but with a couple of notable, unsettled periods either side of mid-month. Temperatures a little above average, particularly in the north, but with some cold nights. Many places recorded near, or below-average rainfall. A significant storm surge occurred in East Anglia on 8th.

1st to 7th:

High pressure continued, with mostly sunny conditions, particularly on 3rd, 4th and 6th, a temperature of 17 deg C being recorded on 1st. Winds were mainly light from the west, which brought a spell of drizzle on 5th. It was generally mild.

8th to 11th:

Much colder conditions arrived as a front moved south over the region, producing a strong north-westerly wind, with rain falling from midday. Thereafter, it remained breezy, although with increased amounts of sunshine.

12th to 17th:

High pressure returned, giving cloudless skies on 12th. Some rain fell on 14th, but it became very cold on 15th as the first air frost of the autumn occurred.

18th to 30th:

A series of fronts crossed the region, producing very heavy rain on 18th, 19th and 20th. These were followed by a cloudy period with the odd spot of rain. A ridge of high pressure brought frost and plenty of sunshine on 23rd. The 26th to 28th were mostly cloudy with the odd spell of rain. A further ridge of high pressure occurred on 29th. A very unsettled spell commenced on 30th, with very heavy rain and gale-force south-westerly winds.

December

The weather during December was divided into three roughly equal parts: an unsettled period, followed by an anticyclonic spell and a further unsettled weather for the remainder of the month. However, it was the 5th sunniest on record and the sunniest since 2001.

1st to 9th:

A very unsettled, stormy spell with heavy rain on 2nd, 5th, 6th and 8th (the wettest day of the year), accompanied by blustery showers. Gales were an almost daily occurrence. Winds were mostly from the westerly sector.

10th to 23rd:

Although gales continued on the 10th, high pressure over Norway brought easterly winds and calmer conditions. Anticyclonic gloom dominated the 14th to 16th, leaving it feeling very cold during the day. The cloud lifted on 17th, although it remained overcast. The easterly wind increased, giving a significant wind-chill factor on the 18th and 19th. Fog and accompanying frost became widespread from 20th to 23rd, although the fog was patchy in places.

24th to 31st:

A further unsettled spell marked the end of the year. Heavy rain fell on 24th and 28th, accompanied by south-westerly gales on the last date. Showers or cloudy conditions occurred during the final days of the month.

References

- BBC Weather on-line
- Met Office on-line

A REVIEW OF 2007

The highlight must have been the finding of a Yellow-nosed Albatross on a driveway at Brea, a first for Britain and possibly only the second for the Western Palearctic, on June 29th. Two other species were recorded for the first time in Somerset: Lesser Scaup at Cheddar Reservoir and Caspian Gull at the Torr Works Reservoir. Other national rarities included a Glossy Ibis and two Cattle Egrets. There were also 17 species classed as County rarities requiring descriptions. In all a total of 237 species were recorded, five fewer than the previous year.

January to March

The number of Bewick's Swans in this period was comparable with the previous year; 22 on King's Sedge Moor on February 17th were the most. A Pink-footed Goose at Porlock Marsh on January 1st was most likely to have been the one in the Minehead Marshes area on February 2nd and between March 12th and 22nd. There were eight White-fronted Geese at Catcott Lows from January 4th to 8th; they were joined by a ninth on the 7th; four were also at West Moor on this date and possibly these were at Steart the following day. Eight Barnacle Geese at Steart on the 27th were unlikely to have been the local feral birds. Numbers of Dark-bellied Brent Geese along the coast appear to be declining, with 12 at Steart on February 19th being the most.

Wintering numbers of duck at West Sedge Moor were up on the previous two years with 22,112 Wigeon, 19,806 Teal and 446 Pintail on January 21st; Shoveler peaked at 1,200 on the 29th. A Green-winged Teal found on the Axe Estuary on the 7th was seen until the 12th and then again from February 18th until April 1st. The only Ring-necked Duck was a female at Hawkridge Reservoir, which was present throughout the period. The long-awaited first Lesser Scaup for the County was at Cheddar Reservoir from March 25th to 31st; it was seen with four Greater Scaup enabling comparisons to be made.

Only one Red-throated Diver was in the west, on January 27th at Hurlstone Point. A Great Northern Diver at Cheddar Reservoir from the start of the year was joined by a second bird from the 16th until February 18th; a third bird was seen on January 28th and on February 11th. A Slavonian Grebe was on the sea at Stolford on January 26th; inland, a Black-necked Grebe was on Cheddar Reservoir on February 11th.

Most unseasonable were two Manx Shearwaters at Steart on January 2nd and 3rd, so it was not totally surprising when a Leach's Storm-petrel was picked up

at Glastonbury on the 2nd. Single Bitterns were at six sites within the Avalon Marshes.

There were thirteen reports of Red Kites, two of these being of two together: at Ember Combe on February 4th and Exford on March 3rd. There were at least three different Marsh Harriers within the Avalon Marshes during the period. Single Hen Harriers were seen along the coast and on the Levels; at an Exmoor site, up to three roosted in March. In the same month early migrating Ospreys were at Easthams near Crewkerne on the 19th and Orchardleigh Lake on the 28th.

The wintering Avocet flock on the R. Parrett totalled 33 at the start of the year, an increase of five on the same period in 2006. Two Little Ringed Plovers were at Torr Works Reservoir on March 16th, and another at Cheddar Reservoir on the 26th. The 11,062 Golden Plover at West Sedge Moor on January 21st were a record for the County; the previous was 8,849 in 1998. The peak count of Lapwing here was 28,339 on February 18th, 4,000 down on the previous year. A Little Stint was on the falling tide at Steart on February 20th; another was at Wall Common amongst the Dunlin on March 22nd, and it or another was seen here on several dates until April 17th. More unusual was a Curlew Sandpiper at Stolford on February 21st. The only Purple Sandpiper of the period was along the coast between Doniford and Watchet from January 12th to 27th. The first returning Whimbrel was at Stolford on March 28th. Wintering Greenshanks are not common, but one was in the Brue Estuary on many dates within this period.

The gales at the start of the year resulted in three Great Skuas being seen at Burnham on January 2nd and 4th, and single birds at Berrow, Stolford and Watchet. Mediterranean Gulls are either becoming common or are being looked for more intensely; records came from at least 12 locations. More unusual were the seven Little Gulls at Burnham on January 1st; three were at Chard Reservoir on March 4th. Intense gull-watching in the east of the County led to the first Somerset record of Caspian Gull at Torr Works Reservoir, where a first-winter was present on the 13th. This was followed by three different Iceland Gulls at sites in the east during February and March; two of these were in the roost at Cheddar Reservoir on various dates between February 11th and April 3rd. A first-winter Glaucous Gull followed the same pattern, being seen at Dimmer Landfill between March 11th to 17th and roosting at Cheddar Reservoir from the 12th to 27th. The first January record of Sandwich Tern was a first-winter bird at Wall Common on January 5th. A

Little Auk at Hurlstone Point on the 14th could have been left over the gales earlier in the month.

There were only five records of Short-eared Owls: two of these were probably of the same bird at Steart but six were on East Waste during February. Among anticipated early-spring arrivals are Hoopoes, and one at Knighton was well watched from March 18th to 27th. The first returning Sand Martin was at Meare Heath on February 23rd, Swallow at Horton Cross on March 13th and ten House Martins over Brean Down on the 28th. The only Water Pipits were three at Catsford Common on March 20th. The flock of 49 White Wagtails feeding on plough at Knighton on March 25th was the largest recorded in the County. Only two wintering Black Redstarts were found at Knighton and Hurlstone Point. An early Wheatear was at Brean Down on March 8th. What was presumably a wintering Ring Ouzel was seen at Higher Dumbledeer on February 1st.

The Yellow-browed Warbler that had been present at Burnham-on-Sea during the previous December was last seen on January 3rd. Single Firecrests were at Ham Wall, Hawkridge Reservoir and Porlock Weir, but there were at least three in the east in the Harridge Wood area.

One of the highlights for many was the appearance of two Choughs on Brean Down on March 8th, only to be joined by three more on the 9th/10th; one remained on the 11th. The highest count of Brambling was of only four at Clatworthy Reservoir on January 1st, Crossbills only fared slightly better, with a maximum of ten at Alfred's Tower on February 13th.

April and May

A late Dark-bellied Brent Goose was at Steart on May 5th; single Ruddy Shelducks were at Porlock Marsh on the 14th and Axe Estuary on the 25th. The first Garganey were at Ham Wall and Catcott Lows on April 10th; they were then passing through throughout the period, the most being five drakes at Meare Heath on May 24th. Another female Ring-necked Duck was at Wimbleball Lake on April 14th; the Hawkridge bird was last seen on the 30th. The Lesser Scaup moved to the Burtle Road fishing ponds on April 2nd to 7th; it spent much of its time pursuing a female Tufted Duck!

Single Quail, which were scarce in 2007, were heard at West Sedge Moor on May 25th and 29th.

A Black-throated Diver flew east at Minehead on May 7th. Both the wintering Great Northern Divers at Cheddar Reservoir were seen until April 15th, one remaining until the 28th. A flock of 1,093 Manx Shearwaters flew past Hurlstone Point and further up-Channel two European Storm-petrels were off Berrow on May 19th.

An elusive Night Heron was roosting at Dunster Hawn on April 22nd to 25th. A White Stork flying north over Sutton Bingham Reservoir during the evening of April 16th could have been the same as the bird over Berrow the next day. A Spoonbill was on Stert Island on the 24th; another was in flight over Westhay Moor on May 26th.

A Honey-buzzard flew over offices in central Taunton on May 30th. There were a large number of reports of Red Kites throughout the period, all singles apart from two over Cary Moor on April 15th and Williton on May 24th. Away from the Levels the only Marsh Harrier was a female/immature heading east at Doniford on May 2nd. Late Hen Harriers included two in the Dunkery area on April 2nd; the last was one on May 19th. There were 12 reports of Ospreys, the majority from the Avalon Marshes but also from Bridgwater and Sutton Bingham Reservoir. The now annual gathering of Hobbies in the Shapwick Heath area peaked at 52 on May 5th.

A Common Crane, the first since 2002, flew south over Ham Wall on April 18th. A single Avocet was on the Axe Estuary on the 15th. Further passage Little Ringed Plovers were seen at seven more sites, the maximum being three at Wall Common on the 4th and Catcott Lows on the 9th/10th. Two Little Stints at Steart were probably those seen along the coast in March and were last seen on April 3rd, another was at Wall Common on May 19th. A single Curlew Sandpiper was here on the 28th to 31st. The only Purple Sandpiper of the period was at Dunster Beach on the 14th. There was an excellent passage of Bar-tailed Godwits, with up to 350 at Berrow on April 29th/30th; 111 Whimbrel were here also. The only Wood Sandpipers of the year were singles at Torr Works Reservoir and Catcott Lows, both on April 30th.

Skuas in the Parrett Estuary included up to five Arctics on April 24th and single Greats on the 30th and May 8th. Little Gulls were seen at five places, the most being four at Cheddar Reservoir on April 11th. A first-winter Iceland Gull was on the sea at Berrow on April 30th. It was a far better spring for terns: single Little Terns on five dates; one Black at Cheddar Reservoir on April 29th, and four at Torr Works Reservoir on the 30th; 11 records of Sandwich Tern, including five at Minehead on May 11th; up to 100 Commics off Brean Down on April 29th, and at least 50 Arctics at Steart on May 2nd.

The only Turtle Dove of the year was at Kilve on April 28th. There were single Long-eared Owls near the King's Sedgemoor Drain on May 16th and on Butleigh Moor on the 30th; a late Short-eared was at Greylake Reserve on the 17th. The second Hoopoe of the year flew south along the beach at Burnham before

heading off inland on April 21st. Blue-headed Wagtails were at Catcott Lows, Greylake Reserve and West Sedge Moor. Among the warblers arriving Lesser Whitethroats appeared early in numbers not seen for sometime. Bearded Tits have declined sharply at Berrow, but are increasing on the Levels at Ham Wall.

One of the Choughs returned to Brean Down on April 6th but was not seen again after this date.

Selected breeding records

Two species bred successfully for the first time in the County within the Avalon Marshes: four pairs of Cormorants nested and at least two were successful; one pair of Common Terns raised three young.

There were no confirmed breeding records of Garganey although up to eight pairs were present at Ham Wall, or of Teal. A total of four families of Shovelers and nine of Pochard were seen, all within the Avalon Marshes. Two families of Goosander were seen along the R. Barle.

Only three Quail were heard calling: one at Priddy Mineries, the others at West Sedge Moor. Four Fulmars were on the cliffs at Glenthorne. A Bittern was heard booming at the Avalon Marshes on the late date of June 15th. It is difficult to know exactly how many pairs of Little Egrets are breeding in the heronries, but there were at least 12 pairs. This is likely to have been an underestimation.

Peregrines were present at at least 14 traditional sites but others were not visited or reported upon. Few pairs of Hobby were reported.

A Spotted Crake was calling at West Sedge Moor on June 6th, 7th and 12th. A pair of Little Ringed Plover raised four young at Torr Works Reservoir. Despite increased efforts only six pairs of Ringed Plover were found breeding along the coast; some of these were double-brooded. Inland, 108 breeding pairs of Lapwing were located, 70 pairs of Common Snipe and 41 pairs of Curlew. All these showed another slight increase, but 26 pairs of Redshank again showed a decrease.

For the first time in a number of years there were no reports of breeding Long-eared Owls at the traditional sites. Nightjars must have been hit by the poor weather from the moment they arrived until July. Nightingales were poorly reported; are there fewer or are observers going to the popular Thurlbear site, where there were up to eight, and not looking for others? Wheatears appear to be holding their own at Exmoor sites.

Although Cetti's Warblers were not surveyed at Shapwick Heath there were 184 at three other of the main Avalon Marshes sites, plus others from further expansion elsewhere in the County. Dartford Warblers

and Stonechats appeared to have suffered from the poor weather in the breeding season and declines were noted for the first time on the Quantocks. In the east at least five Firecrests held territory. Tree Sparrows appear to have had a disastrous year, with some colonies disappearing and others being reduced by a half.

June and July

The bird of the year and probably of the century was the Yellow-nosed Albatross that was found at Brean on June 29th and released the following day after being taken into care. More on this bird appears in the article contained within this Report.

A Sooty Shearwater was on the sea at Burnham over high tide on July 6th. The number of Manx Shearwaters feeding up-Channel appear to be decreasing; the maximum in this period were 923 on June 29th at Minehead. The winds that no doubt had pushed the Sooty Shearwater up-Channel resulted in nine European Storm-petrels at Burnham on July 7th; smaller numbers were recorded at Brean, Steart and Minehead, and five were present off Dunster Beach on the 8th.

A Bittern was in the Avalon Marshes from June 17th. Although Little Egrets are now recorded widely from across the County, the 62, in small groups, at the Huntspill Sluice prior to high tide on July 7th were noteworthy. More unusual was the Great White Egret seen in flight and perched at Ham Wall, June 26th.

A Honey-buzzard drifted over the caravan park at Brean on June 9th. Reports of Red Kite dropped away, with only two records after June 9th. Single Ospreys were seen at Meare Heath on the 12th, Burnham on the 17th, Shapwick Heath on the 17th and July 2nd, and Clatworthy Reservoir on the last date.

Four Avocets at Steart on July 29th were unusual for that month. A Curlew Sandpiper lingered at Steart until June 3rd. Greenshank were returning from July 12th; 11 were at Steart on the 16th. Green Sandpipers were present during both months.

Single Arctic Skuas were recorded on six dates; a Great Skua was at Burnham on July 7th. There were 11 Yellow-legged Gulls in the roost at Torr Works Reservoir on July 31st. A Black Tern was there on June 7th, two Little Terns were at Berrow on June 17th and one at Hinkley Point on July 23rd; small numbers of Sandwich, Common and Arctics were also seen.

The inclement weather deterred observers from searching for Nightjars and reports were fewer than normal. A pair of Blue-headed Wagtails were reported from West Moor on June 20th.

A female Red-backed Shrike was present around Manor Farm at Steart all day on June 6th. A more elusive Woodchat Shrike was on Exmoor in the Thurley Combe area on July 20th.

August and September

Early returning geese included ten Light-bellied Brent Geese at Stolford on September 21st/22nd. A Ruddy Shelduck was at the Axe Estuary on August 4th. Five Red-breasted Mergansers were seen from Minehead on September 29th.

The last Quail of the year was flushed at West Sedge Moor on August 24th.

A Balearic Shearwater appeared amongst a gathering of terns and 15 Manx Shearwaters off Dunster Beach on September 25th; also seen here on the same date was the only Leach's Storm-petrel of the autumn. A flock of 14 Shags at Hurlstone Point were by far the most seen in a poor year for this species.

In a good autumn for herons a juvenile Purple Heron at Meare Heath stayed from September 1st to early November; another was along the R. Soway at Aller Moor from September 2nd to the 8th. A Great White Egret at Westhay Moor was present from the 9th to the 16th.

A Honey-buzzard circled over the Nettlebridge Valley on the 15th. There were only three reports of Red Kites, all single birds, at Charlton Horethorne, Bratton and Porlock Hill. The first Hen Harriers of the autumn were single birds at the Axe Estuary on the 28th and Black Down the next day. An Osprey drifted slowly over Aller on August 30th; at least two were present in the Avalon Marshes between September 3rd and October 23rd.

Avocets arrived back in the Parrett Estuary from September 12th; by the end of the month 18 had returned. The only Little Ringed Plovers of the period were two at the Brue Estuary on August 11th. An approachable Dotterel, the only one of the year, was reported by walkers on Dunkery Beacon on September 19th. Little Stints, Curlew Sandpipers and Greenshanks were not present in any great numbers along the coast. A Pectoral Sandpiper kept up the good run of these in the past few years; this one was at Meare Heath on the 26th. The same evening a Grey Phalarope was feeding on the tide edge at Wall Common.

It was not an autumn for passage skuas in the west, with only moderate numbers; the highlight was a juvenile Long-tailed on September 10th. Little Gulls were present along the coast between the Brue Estuary and Minehead from the 21st to 30th; two were the maximum recorded. A juvenile Sabine's Gull was feeding off the Huntspill Sea Wall and an adult flew west at Kilve on August 31st; another juvenile was on the outfall at Hinkley Point on September 10th. Two Little Terns were at Hurlstone Point on August 20th and Steart on the 30th. No Black Terns were reported and only small numbers of Sandwich and Common. Late in the period Arctics began to become more

widely recorded: 16 at Minehead on the 28th and 17 at Hinkley Point on the 30th.

A Long-eared Owl was on Kennard Moor on August 4th. A Nightjar was flushed from a tree and pursued by a Sparrowhawk in Bridgwater on the 30th. Two late Swifts were over Shapwick Heath on September 20th. Single Wrynecks were reported from six places across the County from Kilmersdon in the east to Thurley Combe in the west between August 27th and September 18th. A late Nightingale was seen at Berrow on August 12th. The only Black Redstart of the period was at Porlock on September 22nd. On the last day of September two Ring Ouzels were on Brean Down and another was at Ley Hill. The first Redwing of the autumn flew over Bridgwater on the 27th.

There were late Grasshopper Warblers at Brean Down and Steart on September 15th. Away from the east the only passage Firecrest was at Lilstock on the 29th. A juvenile Pied Flycatcher was unusual find at Creech St Michael on August 17th.

A Lapland Bunting photographed on the shingle at Stolford on September 11th was the earliest autumn record for the County; another was at Wall Common on the 28th.

October

A family of Whooper Swans arrived at Meare Heath on October 25th before moving across the South Drain to Shapwick Heath. A Greenland White-fronted Goose was on Stert Island on the 19th and stayed in the Parrett Estuary until the 23rd. A flock of 32 Light-bellied Brent Geese flew west close inshore at Steart on 29th. The second Somerset record of Lesser Scaup was of a drake at Torr Works Reservoir on the 12th.

Two Great Northern Divers flew over Torr Works Reservoir during rain on the afternoon of the 28th. The last Manx Shearwater was one picked up inland at Wells on the 3rd; it died overnight before it could be returned to the coast.

There were five records of Red Kites, but three of these were from the same area of Exmoor on the 21st. Single Hen Harriers were recorded on 14 dates during the month, eight of these from the Steart peninsula. The last of the Ospreys in the Avalon Marshes was seen at Westhay Moor on the 21st.

The second Pectoral Sandpiper of the year was at Meare Heath from the 4th to 16th. There were more Curlew Sandpipers than in the previous two months, peaking at 15 in the Brue Estuary on the 5th; a Grey Phalarope was here on the 9th.

The only Little Gull of the month flew west at Hurlstone Point on the 4th. A Little Tern was at this location on the 4th; the only Black Tern of the autumn was inland at Meare Heath on the 8th. There were up

to five Common and 25 Arctic Terns at Hinkley Point during the month.

There was a Short-eared Owl at Steart on the 4th; others were at Berrow, Gold Corner, Chilton Moor and West Sedge Moor later in the month. Water Pipits which had been very scarce in the first part of the year, were seen from the 22nd; the peak number was five at Meare Heath on the 27th. A Yellow Wagtail was seen on Tealham Moor on the 14th. After the September record of Black Redstart the next did not appear until the 20th, after which they were seen at 11 places, the most being three at Brean Down Cove on the 23rd. Ring Ouzels were seen at both Brean Down and Hurlstone Point; the most were four at the latter on 14th.

A Yellow-browed Warbler showed well during the morning of the 29th at Bruton. Only six Firecrests were seen during the month, the maximum being two at Brean Down on the 6th. In what was to prove an exceptional second part of the year for Great Grey Shrikes, one was on Kennard Moor from 7th until November 17th, and others were at Black Down on the 20th/21st and Cloutsham Gate on the 28th.

There were several large movements of Siskins, including 400 at Stolford on the 14th and 450 at Dunster Beach the next day. The third Lapland Bunting of the year was at Wall Common on the 13th. The first Snow Bunting of the autumn was at Dunkery Beacon from the 5th to 9th.

November and December

Bewick's Swans were seen from November 23rd, when two were at Wet Moor; eight were at Greylake on December 22nd. The family of Whooper Swans were present at Shapwick Heath, although they could be extremely elusive in the reed beds; others were an immature at Hay Moor on November 2nd, two adults at Aller Moor on the 3rd, and possibly the same at Greylake Reserve on the 15th. Small numbers of both races of Brent Geese continued to be seen, mainly along the coast near Stolford; a single Dark-bellied was inland at Cheddar Reservoir from December 17th to 22nd. An Egyptian Goose was seen on November 11th and 25th at Wimbleball Lake. A drake Red-crested Pochard was on Cheddar Reservoir on a number of dates between December 23rd and 31st, but could have been the one at Glastonbury Heath on the 26th. The drake Lesser Scaup was back at Torr Works Reservoir on November 10th; it spent the rest of the time over the Wiltshire border at Stourhead. An immature female Long-tailed Duck arrived at Wimbleball Lake on December 24th and stayed until the end of the year. In a poor year for Common Scoter a flock of 27 inland at Shapwick Heath on November 23rd was the second largest of the year, although there were 25 at Hinkley Point on the 25th. A pair of Red-

breasted Mergansers were among the Shelduck at Steart on the 12th.

Numbers of Red-throated Divers off the coast in the west were generally low; the only count in double figures was when 42 moved west in Minehead Bay on December 1st. A Black-throated Diver was in Porlock Bay on the 4th. A summer-plumaged Great Northern Diver flew west at Minehead on November 11th; there was another on December 28th, and inland singles at Decoy Lake (Shapwick Heath) and Cheddar Reservoir, both on the 31st. A Red-necked Grebe was at Cheddar Reservoir on November 24th/25th; also here from December 11th until the end of the year were two Black-necked Grebes.

There were 17 reports of Bitterns during the period, two of them of two birds at Meare Heath on November 9th and Westhay Moor on December 25th. A Cattle Egret was feeding among pigs at Holywell Lake on the 11th to 14th; another was near Long Load with cattle from the 29th. The Purple Heron at Meare Heath was last seen on November 2nd. A Great White Egret flew past Five Bells at Watchet on December 23rd; details of one reported at Catcott Lows on the 25th were never submitted. A Glossy Ibis found at Catcott Lows on November 3rd flew off east; when it returned the following day the hide was soon being packed with birders anxious to add it to their County lists, though it was elusive in the sedge. On the 7th it had moved to Greylake where it fed in the open only metres from watchers; it was seen to fly off high to the west on the 16th.

The final Red Kite of the year was at Downscombe, near Exford, on November 10th. There were at least three different Marsh Harriers wintering in the Avalon Marshes; the only report away from this area was of one at Wick Moor, near Hinkley Point, on November 15th. A Goshawk was in pursuit of a Wood Pigeon at Longstone Hill on December 23rd.

The wintering flock of Avocets along the Parrett reached record numbers when 68 were recorded on November 11th. The last Little Stint of the year was at Steart on November 4th. A White-rumped Sandpiper was seen in flight independently by two groups of observers looking for the Glossy Ibis at Catcott Heath on the 3rd. In December it was found that Purple Sandpipers were roosting on the water intake structure at Hinkley Point which is off-shore; 13 there on the 29th was a County record, such numbers have not been reported before, but how long has this been occurring? A flock of 21 Ruff were on King's Sedge Moor on the 26th. A wintering Greenshank was at Combwich Pill on the 7th. Two Grey Phalaropes were seen during a period of strong winds at Huntspill Sea Wall on November 8th; another was off Minehead on the 10th and one on the beach at Berrow on the 13th.

A Pomarine Skua was at Stolford on November 4th, and there were four juveniles at Minehead on the 10th and one at Berrow on the 13th. Arctics were also seen: two at Minehead on the 10th and one at Steart on December 2nd. A Ring-billed Gull was at Torr Works Reservoir for short periods on the 29th/30th. The last terns of the year were two Arctics at Hinkley Point on November 6th.

Five Short-eared Owls were found at West Sedge Moor on December 11th; others were at Stolford, Wall Common, Steart, Kennard Moor and Wet Moor, but only up to two birds were present.

The only Woodlark of the year flew over Bruton on November 23rd. After single Black Redstarts at Williton on the 1st and Kennard Moor on the 2nd all the others were along the coast, the most being three at Hinkley Point on December 15th. The last Wheatear of the year was at Berrow on November 4th; a Yellow-

browed Warbler was here on the same date. Single Firecrests were reported at six places during the period.

The Kennard Moor Great Grey Shrike was last seen on the 17th. There were three or four others: in Sweetworthy Combe on the 2nd; it or another on the same day at Thurley Combe, seen again on the 3rd; on Wavering Down from the 3rd to at least 17th; and at Priddy Mineries on the 25th. Bramblings arrived in numbers: 50 at Triscombe Stone on December 21st and 100 at Broomfield Hill on the 23rd. There were four Snow Buntings at Stolford on November 2nd, at least two of these staying until the 7th; there were others singly around Combwich Pill and adjoining gardens from the 25th to December 21st, at Hinkley Point on November 27th to 30th (a second bird present on the last date), and Huntspill Sea Wall from the 27th to 29th.

EDITORIAL NOTES

BIRD RECORDS

Records for *Somerset Birds 2008* should be sent as promptly as possible after the New Year, and **not later than the end of January**, to the County Recorder:

Brian Gibbs, 23 Lyngford Road, Taunton, Somerset TA2 7EE or by email to brian.gibbs@somersetbirds.net

STATUS DESCRIPTIONS

An explanation of each term used is given below. There will be, of course, variations from the rule, an example being Dunlin, which is an abundant winter visitor to the coast but not to the centre of Exmoor.

Abundant: Occurs in large numbers in suitable habitats and seasons.

Common: Occurs regularly, or is widely distributed in suitable habitats.

Fairly Common: Occurs annually in small numbers in suitable habitats.

Uncommon: Occurs annually in very small numbers.

Scarce: One or two annual records or restricted to very limited habitats.

Rare: Occurs less than annually, but more often than the classes below.

Very Rare: From three to 15 individuals recorded in the last 30 years.

Accidental: Fewer than three individuals recorded in the last 30 years.

National Rarities

Records of species considered by the *British Birds Rarities Committee* can be submitted directly or, preferably, via the County Recorder, from whom the appropriate forms can be obtained.

Local Rarities

Full descriptions from all observers are required for all records of the following County rarities:

Bean Goose	Ferruginous Duck
Pink-footed Goose	Red Grouse
American Wigeon	Black-throated Diver*
Green-winged Teal	Balearic Shearwater
Blue-winged Teal	Cory's Shearwater
Ring-necked Duck	Great Shearwater

Sooty Shearwater	Little Auk
Wilson's Storm-petrel	Alpine Swift
Night Heron	Bee-eater
Great White Egret	Short-toed Lark
Purple Heron	Shore Lark
White Stork	Red-rumped Swallow
Honey-buzzard	Tawny Pipit
Black Kite	Red-throated Pipit
Montagu's Harrier	Bluethroat
Rough-legged Buzzard	Savi's Warbler
Red-footed Falcon	Aquatic Warbler
Spotted Crake	Marsh Warbler
Corn Crake	Icterine Warbler
Common Crane	Melodious Warbler
Stone Curlew	Barred Warbler
Kentish Plover	Pallas's Leaf Warbler
American Golden Plover	Dusky Warbler
Temminck's Stint	Red-breasted Flycatcher
White-rumped Sandpiper	Willow Tit
Pectoral Sandpiper	Red-backed Shrike
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Woodchat Shrike
Red-necked Phalarope	Serin
Long-tailed Skua	Chough
Ring-billed Gull	Hooded Crow
Caspian Gull	Rose-coloured Starling
White-winged Black Tern	Common Redpoll
Roseate Tern	Common Rosefinch
Black Guillemot	Ortolan Bunting
Puffin	Little Bunting
	Girl Bunting

Short notes are required for the following species:

Whooper Swan	Pomarine Skua
White-fronted Goose	Sabine's Gull
Red-crested Pochard	Yellow-legged Gull
Long-tailed Duck	Iceland Gull
Velvet Scoter	Glaucous Gull
Red-throated Diver*	Hoopoe
Great Northern Diver	Wryneck
Red-necked Grebe	Woodlark
Slavonian Grebe	Richard's Pipit
Black-necked Grebe	Waxwing
Shag*	Yellow-browed Warbler
European Storm-petrel	Golden Oriole
Leach's Storm-petrel	Great Grey Shrike
Spoonbill	Twite
Goshawk	Hawfinch
Osprey	Lapland Bunting
Dotterel	Snow Bunting
Grey Phalarope	

*away from coast west of Minehead

Apart from these, descriptions are required for any species or subspecies not currently on the Somerset List, even if they are not *British Birds* rarities.

Guidelines on how to submit descriptions are available on the website.

DEFINITIONS OF LEVELS NORTH OF THE POLDENS

The term 'Avalon Marshes' is now used to cover the area formerly referred to in Somerset ornithological literature as the 'Peat Moors'. Strictly, it applies for survey purposes to two separate areas: the 'Northern Peat Production Zone', consisting of Westhay Moor; and the 'Southern Peat Production Zone', which covers the area from Sharpham and the west end of Glastonbury Heath WNW to Westhay Heath, and includes within it Street Heath, Walton Heath, part of Ashcott Heath, Meare Heath and Shapwick Heath. In some looser contexts it may include land to the west of this: Catcott Heath, Catcott Lows, Burtle Moor and Chilton Moor. 'Ham Wall', which is not yet marked on O.S. maps (except as a Rhyne), is within the area, north of Walton and Street Heaths.

HISTORY OF THE ARRANGEMENT OF RECORDS

From 1924 to 1983, the Editors of the Report divided the County into VII Districts, numbered roughly from east to west. Of these, District I was lost to "Avon" in 1974, though it continued to be reported on in *Somerset Birds* until 1978. The boundaries between them were complicated, and the system was increasingly difficult to operate.

So, in 1984, the "new" County was divided into six Districts:

- E** = east of the ST60 Grid Line.
- N** = from ST60 west to ST20 and south to ST40. This had the advantage of including the whole coast of Bridgwater Bay, but it split what we now know as the Avalon Marshes, since the ST40 line bisects Shapwick Heath.
- C** = Central Somerset to the south of the ST40 line as far as ST20 and west to ST30.
- S** = west of ST60 and south of ST20.
- SW** = a somewhat awkward area, designed to include the Quantocks and their coast, and also the Vale of Taunton Deane; from ST30 west to ST10 and south from the sea to ST20, apart from the area around the Parrett Estuary.

W = west of ST10.

These divisions are still given for places in the Gazetteer.

They were used in *Somerset Birds* from 1984 to 1987 in much the same way as the old Districts had been, the records of most species being arranged on that basis. A new County map showed them.

In 1988, this system, which had proved too inflexible, was abandoned, though records were still organised within species in something like the old order, from east to west, and the map continued in use until 1993. It was then replaced by a folding map, which did not show the formal divisions.

During the years that followed the abandonment of these, records came to be arranged according to two principles:

a) Breeding and wintering records

These are in order of places which is mainly east to west, as follows: East Somerset; the western Mendips; the coastal strip from Breaun Down to Hinkley Point; Levels north of the Poldens; King's Sedge Moor and other Levels south of the Poldens and north of Langport; West Sedge Moor (with Curry Moor and Hay Moor); Central Somerset (Somerton, Langport and the area east to ST60); South Somerset, from Yeovil west to Chard, including all the South Levels; the Blackdowns; the Vale of Taunton Deane; the north-east foothills of the Quantocks, including Durleigh Reservoir; the Quantock coast from Hinkley Point to Doniford; the higher Quantocks, in which places are normally described in a clockwise direction from the north, round the east and south-west slopes; the area between the Quantocks and the Brendons (including Crowcombe Heathfield); the Brendons from east to west; Exmoor and its coast, where the northern side is given first, followed by the areas around Exford and Simonsbath and the Barle Valley. Places within all these areas are generally arranged from east to west, unless it is more convenient to group them otherwise.

b) Records of passage-migrants

Often given in date order, so that a pattern for the County can be established. In commoner duck and waders, which are usually tabulated, the two systems are combined, the counting sites being arranged in the order given above.

CHANGES IN SOMERSET BIRDS 2007

Slight changes have now been made in the order in which sites are mentioned, though the principle of listing from east to west has in general been

maintained.

The main alterations are:

East Somerset

Sites are listed from south to north, beginning therefore at Milborne Port and running up to the East Mendips. This provides a more natural link with the remaining Mendip sites that follow.

Levels North of the Poldens

Sites are listed in two east-west strips: first from Wells to Cheddar Reservoir and the coast (roughly, that is, along the Axe Valley and the Wedmore Ridge); then from Queen's Sedge Moor and Levels around Glastonbury west along the Lower Brue Valley to Highbridge.

Bridgwater Area

This is now dealt with as a unit, including Bawdrip Level, the various clay-pits, the northern reaches of the Bridgwater–Taunton Canal, and Durleigh Reservoir. However, areas north of Dunball remain in the coastal area, and those east of Chedzoy remain with King's Sedge Moor.

South Levels

These now follow the Tone Levels (West Sedge Moor etc.) and their adjacent escarpments; they therefore precede Central Somerset, instead of being placed towards the end of South Somerset.

Quantocks

These were formerly described clockwise, beginning with the northern combes and circling south-east, then around the southern and south-western slopes. This order has now been superseded by a south-east/north-west slant, beginning with sites from King's Cliff Wood to Wills Neck, followed by the eastern combes and adjacent tops, then continuing from Crowcombe Park Gate along the ridge and the south-western combes to St Audrie's, and finishing with the northern combes.

Although Editors are asked to follow these guidelines, there may be occasions when the order is broken for the sake of clarity or compression.

THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

Classification broadly follows the sequence and nomenclature of the *British Birds* List of Palearctic Birds, but we did not adopt all the new English names. A number of changes made during 2005 have been adopted, especially with regard to terns and tits. There have recently been further changes, especially relative to gulls.

Records of rarities are always submitted to the *British Birds* Rarities Committee and are published when a decision has been reached. This may mean that some of them will not appear until the Report of the year following the observation. Rejection does not necessarily preclude a record from being mentioned in *Somerset Birds*, and where this has occurred it will be clearly stated. The list of species considered by the Committee has recently been greatly reduced, and the task of validation transferred to County Rare Birds Committees.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Fairly common resident breeder; non-breeding summer and winter visitor.

The breeding figures for the Avalon Marshes area are not as complete as in previous years; single pairs/families unless stated: eight families, Westhay Moor; two families, Sharpham; two pairs, Ham Wall; Loxton's Marsh; three families, Shapwick Heath and Westhay Heath; Catcott Lows; Catcott Heath.

All other breeding records: two or three pairs bred, Apex Leisure Park; Catsford Common; Wall Common; Chilton Moor; Tealham Moor; seven nests and four/five families seen later, Greylake Reserve; five pairs, King's Sedge Moor SSSI; Somerton Moor; two pairs, Southlake Moor; four nests, Curry Moor; Hay Moor; pair with 14 cygnets, Stan Moor; 23 pairs, West Sedge Moor; five families, West Moor; two families, Westport; Nine Springs; Creech St Michael; Blackbrook Business Park and Firepool, Taunton; Otterhead Lakes; Hopkins' Farm, Halse; Ashford Reservoir. Unusually, no breeding recorded from Dunster Beach to Minehead.

All other counts of 25 and over: 64, Westbury Moor, January 19th, and 55, October 21st; 73, Upper Axe Valley, April 8th; 54, Sharpham, January 6th; 120, in fields south of Walton, March 25th; 31, Pawlett Hams, December 22nd; 96, Bawdrip, February 10th; 131, Fowler's Plot, January 21st; 120, Moorland, January 5th; 67, Aller Moor, February 4th, and 46 on April 18th; 33, West Moor, June 20th.

Mute Swan – main counts												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cheddar Reservoir	4	4							15	25		3
Westhay Moor	62	35	116	94	79	70	80	75	70	54	88	148
Ham Wall	37	33	25	12	17			2	8	45	53	50
Shapwick/ Meare Heaths	82	95	60	74	64	122	94	179	155	172		200
Westhay Heath	9	8	9		15	7	17			15	14	23
Catcott Lows/ Heath	35	31	36	29	26							46
Tealham Moor	76	91	140	45								31
King's Sedge Moor (exc. Greylake)	51	59		19	20	33						
Greylake Reserve	67	12	14	9	16	24			20		47	24
Curry/Hay Moors	35	69		56						61		63
West Sedge Moor	84	94	56	92	36	19				67	91	80
Wet Moor	42		40	98	25							
Dunster Beach/ Minehead Marshes		1	3		10	11	1		5	4		

A family of six were in flight low over Knowle Moor on November 25th when one of the juveniles collided with a three-cable power line, a ball of fire and an ear-shattering thunderclap followed and the group was down to five (RK).

Aggression is well known amongst this species and this was highlighted at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on April 26th when two males became engaged in a territorial dispute. Fairly equally matched, they were engaged in neck-pushing for about ten minutes, each trying to force the other's head under the water. The victor was eventually able to get on top of his adversary and have a brief rest while the other submerged bird gasped for air. The mate of the weaker bird meekly tried to intervene but was seen off by the other bird's partner. In a final last desperate attempt the defeated bird swam about 30 yards to the shore, while still submerged, with the stronger bird firmly grasping its head. It managed to get to the bank and collapsed but the attack still did not end there, with the victor continuing to peck at the prostrate bird's eyes for at least a further ten minutes. Unfortunately, NAS, who witnessed this, had to leave at this point but on his return later there was no sign of a body and all four birds had gone.

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

Uncommon winter visitor. Declining.

In the first winter period as in the previous year the majority of records came from Greylake/King's Sedge Moor: up to 20 in January and February; the last were two on February 25th.

Other records: 21, Curry Moor, January 14th (which was the largest count of the year), ten still present the next day, and two on February 3rd; only two counts from West Sedge Moor, of seven near Stathe, January 26th, and nine on the Reserve on February 9th; nine, Wet Moor, January 7th. No March records.

Slightly earlier return in the second winter period than in 2006: two at Wet Moor, November 23rd and December 11th, and four on the 13th. All other records: two, West Sedge Moor, November 30th, were possibly the birds from nearby Wet Moor; two, Blackmoor Vale, December 12th/13th; two, Hinkley Point, on 18th were in the Steart area from 22nd to 30th; two, Meare Heath, on 21st; eight, Greylake Reserve, on 22nd.

WHOOOPER SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

Scarce winter visitor.

No records in the first winter period.

A family consisting of two adults and a juvenile arrived at Meare Heath on October 25th and stayed into 2008. They were usually in the Shapwick Heath (East) part of the Reserve and could be extremely difficult to see, spending long periods hidden in the reeds. An immature was at Hay Moor, November 2nd; two adults were present the next day on Aller Moor; possibly the same as two in flight over Greylake Reserve on the 15th.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Rare winter visitor.

Two records of single birds: Porlock Marsh, January 1st (CS); possibly the same at Minehead Marshes, February 3rd-March 18th (CG, BJH, JLT, JRW).

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

Scarce winter visitor and passage-migrant, now irregular.

Eight, at Catcott Lows from January 5th-8th, were joined on the 9th by an additional bird. Four were at Wet Moor, on the 7th, and possibly the same at Steart the next day.

In second winter period: two, Shapwick Heath, November 3rd.

Greenland White-fronted Goose *A. a. flavirostris*

One, Parrett Estuary, October 19th-23rd (JLT *et al.*)

About the 11th County record for this race.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser****Uncommon feral resident breeder; rare winter visitor and passage-migrant.***

At least eight families seen within the Avalon Marshes, the same as in 2006: two, Westhay Moor and Glastonbury Heath; at least one, Meare Heath; and three, Catcott Lows.

Very few counts from this area, the highest being 34 in January and 44 on August 15th.

All other counts: one, Dunster Beach/Minehead Marshes, March 27th-April 15th; one, Stolford, April 14th; two, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, September 2nd; seven, West Sedge Moor, November 21st, and eight on December 11th; nine in flight, Coleford, on the 27th.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis****Common resident breeder and irregular visitor. Increasing.***

Either it was a very bad breeding season within the Avalon Marshes or hardly any one chose to submit records: only single families at Westhay Moor and Ashcott Heath reported!

Other breeding records, of single pairs/families unless stated: Torr Works Reservoir; two families, Steart; two pairs, Greylake Reserve; three pairs, West Sedge Moor; Wet Moor; two families, Sutton Bingham Reservoir; Montacute; Mancombe; Wellington; Hawkridge Reservoir; Torweston; Williton; Wimbleball Lake; three families, Dunster Hawn; at least two families, Butlin's, Minehead.

Canada Goose – main counts												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Torr Works Res.	82	50	30		54	30	28	83	71	44	44	69
Parrett Estuary	18	51		5	12		138	30	90	180	100	40
Cheddar Res.								22	11	38		16
Westhay Moor	70	11	28	12	2	40	9			7	17	55
Ham Wall	2		4	2				36		3	8	
Meare/Shapwick Heaths	28	6	35	2		12		20	40	24		49
Catcott Lows	40	48	11	6	6					40		70
West Sedge Moor	233	5	4	13							101	259
Sutton Bingham Res.	190	126		17				20	17		202	
Chard Res.	19	6	2					1	20	18		
Hawkridge Res.	69	42	31	8		6	16		7		7	
Clatworthy Res.			40	1			68					
Wimbleball Lake	120	117	14	4	20		39	37	90	81	138	49
Minehead-Blue Anchor		56	60			230		180	300			50
Porlock Marsh	16	26	20	4	6							14

All other counts of 40 and over: 68, Apex Leisure Park, was the maximum during the year; 73, Combwich, July 22nd, and 75 on August 18th; 68, Durleigh Reservoir, October 19th; 133, Curry Moor, December 9th; 108, Athelney, on the 11th; 53, King's Moor, November 11th; 100, Wet Moor, January 6th and December 17th; 40, Greenham, November; 42, Tracebridge, October 27th.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis**Rare winter visitor; most records probably of escaped or feral birds.*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Wet Moor	2			1								1
Sutton Bingham Res.	2	2	1		1			1				
Wimbleball Lake	5	5			1			1		1	3	

All other records: one, Porlock Marsh, January 1st/2nd; eight, Steart, on the 27th; one, Torr Works, March 6th-25th and three on August 20th; four, Berrow, April 12th; one, West Sedge Moor, December 11th.

BRENT GOOSE**Dark-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla bernicla****Uncommon winter visitor and passage-migrant.*

In the first winter period all records were from the coast between Burnham and Hinkley Point: nine, January 1st; six from 3rd to 25th; seven from 26th to 28th; up to 12, February 7th-20th; three, March 23rd; and one on May 5th.

The second winter period saw fewer records but more widely distributed than the first: one, Axe Estuary, November 3rd; one, Stolford, on the 10th, increasing to seven by the 30th, and singles on December 22nd and 29th; singles, Huntspill Sea Wall, on the 29th, and Wall Common the next day.

An inland record; one, Cheddar Reservoir, December 17th-22nd.

Light-bellied Brent Goose *B. b. hrota**Rare winter visitor and passage-migrant.*

The flock of five adults from 2007 at Stolford were seen regularly until February 7th; two here on March 23rd.

In the second winter period the vast majority of records were again along the coast from Burnham to Hinkley Point: ten, September 21st/22nd; 32 flew inshore at Steart, October 29th; eight the next day; two at the beginning of November, then seven from the 14th until December 12th; up to ten for the rest of the year. The only other records were from Dunster Beach: six, December 4th, seven on the 7th, and two on the 23rd.

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiaca**Scarce or rare visitor. Has bred.*

One, Wimbleball Lake, October 7th, November 11th and 25th.

The first here since the long-staying bird that had been present for a number of years was last seen in January 1997.

RUDDY SHELDUCK *Tadorna ferruginea**Rare feral or accidental winter visitor.*

The free-flying pair from the collection at Stockland Bristol were seen in the area between June and August.

All other records of single birds: Axe Estuary, May 25th and August 4th; Berrow, June 10th/11th; Steart, July 30th; Porlock Marsh, May 14th.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna**Uncommon resident breeder; common summer, autumn and winter visitor, and passage-migrant.*

One of the best breeding seasons for a number of years: two families, Axe Estuary; at least five along the Parrett between Combwich and Steart; two, Porlock Marsh. A crèche of 19 young were seen at Burnham on July 22nd. Inland, three pairs at Greylake Reserve but no proof of breeding.

Shelduck – main counts												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Parrett Estuary	1200	320	300	275	1000	880	2755	2970	3440	1950	1700	1075
Dunster Beach	57	72	54	26	3	3	1	7	4	34	88	89
Porlock Marsh	50	48	35	24	26	12	2				40	

The Parrett Estuary counts were comparable with the previous year. Only two counts submitted for the Axe Estuary: 100, June 30th, and 538, October 28th.

The only inland counts of over ten and over were from Greylake Reserve, where 11 on March 21st and ten on April 21st. Others were at Cheddar Reservoir, Shapwick Heath, Catcott Lows, King's Sedge Moor, West Sedge Moor, Wet Moor, Chard Reservoir, Bilbrook and Wimbleball Lake.

A tame bird at Hawkridge Reservoir no doubt came from the large collection nearby at Winter's Farm, which does not appear to have been mentioned before in SB, but does contain a number of species, including several scarce ones that have been recorded at the Reservoir in the past!

MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata*

Scarce feral resident or escapee. Has bred.

Although breeding was not confirmed, display was recorded at Sutton Bingham Reservoir: seven males and five females were engaged in courtship on February 24th; a female was presumably looking for a nest site on April 5th. Numbers suggest that breeding did take place, since up to 24 were present in September. It would appear that movement takes place between here and West Coker House, where there were 12 in December. A pair at Orchardleigh Lake in spring, breeding has occurred here in the past.

Birds suspected to have come from nearby collections were three adult males at Bruton on February 6th and up to seven on various dates at Hawkridge Reservoir. Two other single males: Chard Reservoir, March 13th; R. Tone at Creech St Michael, June 28th-30th.

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

Common (or locally abundant) winter visitor and passage-migrant. Breeding unconfirmed.

The usual small number of summering birds but nothing to suggest breeding took place.

Wigeon – main counts												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cheddar Res.	14	10	3							8		2
Parrett Estuary	820	330	220	20				5	200	250	450	250
Westhay Moor	200	90	110	37		1		7	40	115	90	115
Sharpham	32	27	20	2						22	60	26
Ham Wall	176	167	100						3	93	236	285
Shapwick Heath/ Meare Heath	680	240	6	2					2	355		60
Westhay Heath	85	65	55							30	190	70
Catcott Lows	1200	1564	800	30	2					100	500	1600
King's Sedge Moor/Greylake	3050	20	2							70	1400	1500

Wigeon – main counts, continued												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Athelney	38	45										
Curry Moor	72											122
West Sedge Moor	22112	17270	2867	20	6					400	1836	10571
Wet Moor	1000		850									600
West Moor	310		600									
Sutton Bingham Res.	146	110	89	4						61	90	105
Wimbleball Lake	50	40	1						1	26	24	52
Doniford	130										120	
Dunster Beach/ Minehead Marshes	130	122	126						44	127	136	194

A return to higher numbers in the first winter period on West Sedge Moor following a dip in the previous two years. The Levels are the third most important wintering site in the U.K. The total for the County in January was around 30,000.

All other counts of 30 and over: 40, Blackmoor Vale, November 25th; 140, Tealham Moor, December 22nd; 240, Gold Corner, on the Area of Raised Water, February 18th.

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

Locally fairly common breeder; autumn and winter visitor and passage-migrant. Increasing.

A total of ten families were at Westhay Moor, of which eight were within the Reserve. A family was found on a newly flooded area on the north side of Glastonbury Heath. A total of 35 males were present in the Ham Wall area in the breeding season; slightly down on the 37 in 2005 and 39 in 2006; several families were reported later. Coverage of Shapwick Heath/Meare Heath was incomplete and only one family was reported, although there were 27 moulting drakes in May. A family were also on Westhay Heath.

Summer records from five other sites, all of single pairs/families unless stated: probably bred for first time, Cary Moor; Wells; first confirmed breeding, Kennard Moor; four pairs but no proof of breeding, Greylake Reserve; possibly bred, West Sedge Moor.

Gadwall – main counts												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Torr Works Res.	8		7								3	2
Cheddar Res.	15	11						2	1	3		6
Westhay Moor	68	50	41	37				108	143	250	151	94
Sharpham	37	22	14	9	14	10	6	24	72	133	166	160
Ham Wall	189	181	108	29	35				6	105	304	312
Shapwick Heath/ Meare Heath	68	48	46	12	28	52		2	7	226	80	150
Westhay Heath	7	40	28					9	55	57	27	39
Catcott Lows	10	3	2	11	12							10

Gadwall – main counts, continued												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Greylake Reserve	10	4	8	8	13	4	1		2		2	
West Sedge Moor	64	49	20	6	2							
Sutton Bingham Res.	7	1		1				6	1		1	

The Levels are still ranked the third most important site for this species in the U.K. The December total for the Avalon Marshes of at least 765 is of international importance the threshold being 600. Sharpham has not featured in the Table before, which possibly accounts for the decrease in numbers from other sites within the area in the second winter period.

The only other records were all in January: two, Brue Estuary; a pair, Chard Reservoir; three, Wimbleball Lake.

TEAL *Anas crecca*

Scarce breeder; common (or locally abundant) winter visitor and passage-migrant.

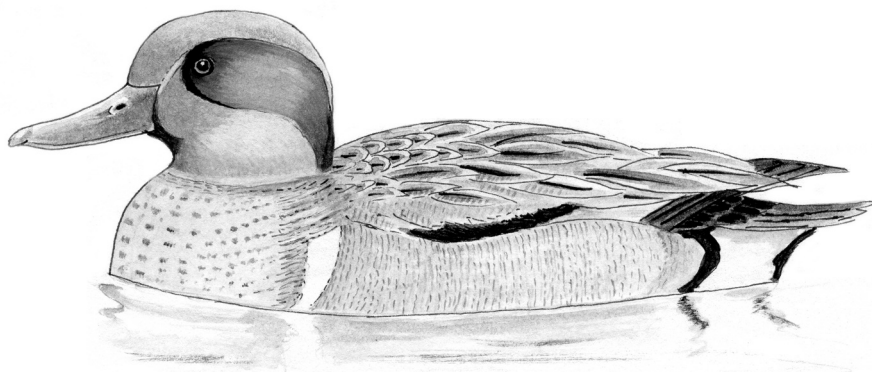
There were no confirmed breeding records; seven pairs were present at West Sedge Moor, and single pairs at Meare Heath and Greylake Reserve.

Teal – main counts												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cheddar Res.	40	15										33
Axe Estuary	40	25	25	18								225
Parrett/Brue Estuary	490	300	60	120		1	4	60	100	50	450	820
Kennard Moor			25								10	100
Westhay Moor	290	80	75	2			9	26	140	132	70	145
Sharpham	55	18	14					1	5	2	12	40
Ham Wall	325	122	49	23					10	42	70	310
Shapwick Heath/Meare Heath	266	240	78		2	1				290		100
Westhay Heath	75	85	34						2	7	11	59
Catcott Lows	200	396	100	96						10	100	300
Greylake Reserve	200	130	40	2	2	1		14	10	20	102	180
King's Sedge Moor	150	150	46									500
West Sedge Moor	19806	18055	3877	450	14					50	207	8624
Wet Moor	160		250									200
Sutton Bingham Res.	147	150	68	12				5	35	140	113	83
Chard Res.	16	19	3	1				3	6	50	55	72
Dunster Beach/Minehead Marshes	4	3	34	20					5	30	12	28

Teal – main counts, continued												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Wimbleball Lake	25	11	8		1					36	46	76
Porlock Marsh	36	100							50	28	50	

After two poor years in 2005 and 2006 a return to normal numbers at West Sedge Moor. The January count was above the average of 19,216 for the whole of the Levels between 2001 and 2006; this remains the most important site in the U.K. The threshold of international importance is 5,000.

All other counts of 30 and over: 38, Blackmoor Vale, August 29th; 35, Westbury Moor, December 23rd; 190, Gold Corner Raised Water Level Area, February 18th; 250, West Moor (Hambridge), on the 20th; 30, Otterhead Lakes, January 25th.



Green-winged Teal

GREEN-WINGED TEAL *Anas carolinensis*

Very rare visitor.

A male, Axe Estuary, January 7th-12th, and February 18th-April 1st (RJH *et al.*).

The 13th or 14th County record.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

Common resident breeder, winter visitor and passage-migrant.

As in 2007, very difficult to get an accurate picture of breeding numbers within the Avalon Marshes. Numbers of families/pairs reported: 21, Westhay Moor; three, Sharpham; 77 males, Ham Wall; one, Ashcott Heath; only two families reported for the whole of Shapwick Heath, but this clearly is not accurate; six, Westhay Heath. Just outside the area there were ten families at Catcott Lows. A breeding population of 57 pairs in the Upper Axe Valley. At least 10 families at Greylake Reserve. A total of 98 pairs at West Sedge Moor but no indication of success.

All other reports of families/pairs, singly unless stated: one family, Berrow, but up to 12 pairs present all year; Wall Common; two, Kennard Moor; Butleigh Moor; two, east of Edithmead; three, Weston Level; three pairs, Southlake Moor; two, Wet Moor; at least three families, Sutton Bingham Reservoir; two, R. Parrett, Norton-sub-Hamdon; around Crewkerne at Easthams, Mancombe, Millwater and New Mill; Chard Reservoir; R. Tone, Taunton; Hawkridge Reservoir; three, Wimbleball Lake; Dunster Hawn; Bratton; Bossington; Porlock Marsh; Withypool.

Mallard – main counts												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Torr Works Res.	52	40	9		3			27	20	20	36	45
Cheddar Res.	181	21	30	44					75	55		238
Parrett Estuary	20	27		2	5			52		9		60
Westhay Moor	140	72	47	64			197	178	115	115	73	182
Sharpham	91	38	24	14	21	15	29	16	29	58	40	29
Ham Wall	210	63	46	26	91					95	128	225
Meare/Shapwick Heaths	125	84	28			8			10	60		
Westhay Heath	57	43	24				40	14	12	9	14	13
Catcott Lows	6	6		40	4						80	50
Tealham Moor	15	8	6			6						
Greylake Reserve	50	30	24	36	23	17	32		2		77	46
Curry Moor	15	7								61		151
West Sedge Moor	573	144	105	151	159	111				202	254	311
Wet Moor	27		20	4	12							
Sutton Bingham Res.	92	8	16	6					133	130		
Chard Res.	140	60	50			88	131	121		154	65	104
Hankridge LNR			16	16	20			52	20			
R. Tone, Taunton	76	56	58	20	30	40	58	48	70	60	60	58
Wellington Basins	36	36	32	14	24	54	42	48	48	32	62	56
Durleigh Res.												
Hawkridge Res.	40	21	12	32	20	28	49	56	15	18	55	45
Ashford Res.	17								16		52	11
Wimbleball Lake	114	63	38		54			57	122	124	129	109
Dunster Hawn/ Beach	50	50	50	14							50	
Porlock Marsh		30	13	6	4	30			50	26	20	

All other counts of 50 and over: 85 Orchardleigh Lake, January 6th, and Cary Moor, September 5th; 200, Kennard Moor, July 7th, and 100 on August 27th; 70, Dunwear Ponds, January 8th; 60, Clatworthy Reservoir, July 20th; 50, Butlin's, Minehead, June 23rd.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

Locally fairly common winter visitor; also passage-migrant. Has bred.

Pintail – main counts												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cheddar Res.	2											2
Parrett Estuary	109	60	20	6					25	106	103	56
Ham Wall		6										8
Shapwick/Meare Heath		4				1				7		2
Catcott Lows	50	113	41							2	10	76
Chilton Moor/ Gold Corner RWLA		17										
Greylake Reserve/ King's Sedge Moor	38	2		1								13
Athelney		18										
West Sedge Moor	446	296	6	2							30	259
Wet Moor			12									1

A slight recovery in numbers at West Sedge Moor but still well below the counts of 2003. Records from Parrett Estuary are from Steart to Hinkley Point and no doubt would be higher if the coast was counted from a number of points at a set time, as birds drift with the tide.

Only one other count in double figures: 15 on the sea at Hurlstone Point on an early returning date of August 4th. Only other records from: Blackmoor Vale; Torr Works Reservoir; Orchardleigh Lake; Sharpham; Chard Reservoir; Hawkridge Reservoir.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

Scarce and very local migrant breeder; uncommon passage-migrant, chiefly in spring.

The first arrivals were a pair at Ham Wall and a male at Catcott Lows, April 10th, followed the next day by another male at Meare Heath. A total of 46 records from the Avalon Marshes and Catcott Lows; no indication of successful breeding, although eight pairs were present at Ham Wall. The most seen were at Meare Heath, where there were five males on May 24th. Away from this area there were two males and a female at Greylake Reserve, May 4th-June 5th. A pair was present during the breeding season at West Sedge Moor.

Two other records: a pair, East Waste, April 16th; a male, Chard Reservoir, May 10th.

No reports from June 5th to October 3rd and 5th, when a juvenile was at Meare Heath.

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

Scarce breeder; locally fairly common winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Four families reported: two, Westhay Moor; and singles at Walton Heath and Shapwick Heath (East). There were also a number of other reports from this period: two pairs and five males, Ham Wall; two males, Meare Heath and Catcott Lows; and a single male at Sharpham. Two pairs, Greylake Reserve, and four at West Sedge Moor.

The table (overleaf) shows a return to numbers at West Sedge Moor which have not been recorded since 2003. The Levels are now the second most important location for this species in the U.K. Following the poor numbers over the last four years, the Ouse Washes are now the premier site.

Recorded from a further 12 sites but double-figure counts only at: ten, Blackmoor Vale, November 11th; 40, Gold Corner Raised Water Area, February 18th.

Shoveler – main counts												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Torr Works Res.	8	8	5					3	3	5	5	16
Cheddar Res.	3	1	5	4						1		5
Parrett/Brue Estuary	20	7		3				2	2		20	4
Westhay Moor	115	46	15				4	4	18	31	27	35
Sharpham	35	32	39	27	1			2		6	10	10
Ham Wall	33	40	39	3	9			1		44	128	49
Meare/Shapwick Heaths	14	70	8	2	1				9	52		43
Catcott Lows	200	210	150	54		2				30	100	156
Greylake Reserve	45	8	4	2	4			1	2		9	6
West Sedge Moor	1200	1070	850	41	8					20	50	255
Wet Moor			21		1	1						12
Sutton Bingham Res.		4	2					4	2	1		
Chard Res.		3	3	5						3	5	5

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

Scare feral visitor.

Three records: one, Cheddar Reservoir, August 11th, and an adult male from December 23rd to 31st; a male, Glastonbury Heath, on the 26th was possibly the same as this was the only date during its stay that it was not recorded.

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

Scare and very local breeder; fairly common winter visitor.

An improved breeding season: four families at Glastonbury Heath; two at Ham Wall and Meare Heath; and one at Street Heath. There were 26 adult males at Ham Wall, compared to 21 in 2006. The records from Shapwick Heath are incomplete and therefore a comparison cannot be made with previous years.

Pochard – main counts												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Torr Works Res.	20	20	5				1		1	5	7	11
Cheddar Res.	111	120	15					2		10	107	240
Westhay Moor	30	25	18	6		2				2	1	12
Sharpham	1	3	6	15		7						7
Ham Wall	12	100	39	18		26						25
Meare/Shapwick Heaths	7	4	5	1	2					18		

Pochard – main counts, continued												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sutton Bingham Res.	30	1				1						
Chard Res.		1									3	1
Hawkridge Res.	4	1									2	5
Wimbleball Lake	13	14	1								1	

Only four other counts of ten and above: 23, Glastonbury Heath, January 6th, 15, Blakeway, February 9th, and 35 on 16th; 22, Durleigh Reservoir January 22nd. Single birds recorded at four other locations.

RING-NECKED DUCK *Aythya collaris*

Rare visitor, mainly in winter.

Only two records: the long-staying female, Hawkridge Reservoir, until April 30th (BDG *et al.*); female, Wimbleball Lake, on 15th (RJB).

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Uncommon breeder; fairly common winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Another poor breeding year, not just in the Avalon Marshes but at other locations as well. Apart from a family at Torr Works Reservoir, all other families were within the Avalon Marshes, singly unless stated otherwise: two, Westhay Moor and Sharpham; Glastonbury Heath; Walton Heath; three, Meare Heath; Westhay Heath. A total of 22 pairs/males at Ham Wall compared to 36 in 2006. As the Avalon Marshes continue to expand it is becoming increasingly difficult to survey some of the more remote areas.

Tufted Duck – main counts												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Torr Works Res.	76	54	61		42	25	76	122	86	62	63	42
Orchardleigh Lake	51										62	
Cheddar Res.	82	76	15	6				2	1		60	160
Westhay Moor	81	102	109	72	31	38			8	8	28	43
Blakeway	58	92	93									
Sharpham	39	28	31	31	9	13		1			1	12
Ham Wall	113	111	110	35	14						10	33
Shapwick/Meare Heaths	28	52	47	5		2		3				
Westhay Heath	26	22	18		2	4						1
Catcott Lows	20	7	6	6							1	8
Sutton Bingham Res.	12	8		33	33	7			3	4	12	
Chard Res.	12	15	10	23	8	6	19	8	14	10	9	11
Enmore Castle Lake		12										14

Tufted Duck – main counts, continued												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Hawkridge Res.	60	64	36	22	14	26	17	12	13	9	55	56
Ashford Res.	16		12	9					11		14	14
Clatworthy Res.		15	50				20					
Wimbleball Lake	31	20	5	10	12		15	19	21	9	23	46

The only other notable counts were: 17, Apex Leisure Park, November 27th; 28, Glastonbury Heath, January 6th. Recorded in small numbers at a further 15 sites.

Hybrids at Blakeway, February 9th, and Ham Wall, April 17th, were thought to be Tufted Duck x Pochard (JAH).

GREATER SCAUP *Aythya marila*

Uncommon and irregular winter visitor.

First winter period: four, Cheddar Reservoir, from 2006 to March 31st, one remaining to April 5th; two females, Stolford, January 2nd and 26th to 28th; two at Steart, January 7th, possibly the same birds; one, Hinkley Point, February 2nd.

Second winter period: two, Cheddar Reservoir, October 19th-27th; one there November 24th-December 22nd, was joined by two others from 24th-26th, and at least one stayed into 2008; one, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, on four dates between October 19th and November 8th and again on the 29th; a male, Stolford, on the 3rd; one, Shapwick Heath, December 18th and 24th, two on the 22nd; and two, Ham Wall, on the 27th.

LESSER SCAUP *Aythya affinis*

Accidental.

Two records of adult males, the first for the County.

One, Cheddar Reservoir, March 24th-31st (NRM *et al.*), and Westhay Heath, April 2nd-7th (JJP *et al.*), had originally been found by NRM over the Avon border at Blagdon Lake. It moved from Cheddar to the fishing pools beside Burtle Road, where it frequently displayed to a female Tufted Duck!

A second was at Torr Works Reservoir on October 12th and November 10th (BAT). After the first date it was regularly seen over the Wiltshire border at Stourhead.

Both accepted by BBRC.

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*

Scarce and irregular winter visitor.

An immature female, Wimbleball Lake, December 24th into the New Year (BDG).

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

Uncommon visitor, chiefly offshore.

Brean Down to West Quantoxhead												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of dates recorded	5		1	2	3	1	1		2	1	7	4
Maximum count	30		2	5	5	4	1		4	1	25	13
Total number	38		2	8	12	4	1		5	1	111	32

The total count for November includes a flock of up to 25 seen at Hinkley Point on five dates.

Blue Anchor to Porlock Bay												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of dates recorded	1	1		1		2			3	2	4	1
Maximum count	1	16		4		6			8	10	16	1
Total number	1	16		4		8			11	12	23	1

Two inland records: one, Chard Reservoir, July 29th; 27, Shapwick Heath (East), November 23rd, stayed for about ten minutes on Noah's Lake.

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Goldeneye – maximum monthly counts												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cheddar Res.	12	18	1	2							6	22
Westhay Moor	3	5	8	2							1	5
Blakeway	3	2	5									
Ham Wall	4	4										
Shapwick Heath/ Meare Heath	5	8	7									1
Wimbleball Lake	2	4	4								2	3

There appears to be a slow decline at Cheddar Reservoir; numbers today are a far cry from the record 119 in February 1988.

Only three other records, all of singles: Chard Reservoir, June 27th and November 24th; Dunster Hawn, October 22nd.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

Scarce and irregular, chiefly as winter visitor and passage-migrant.

In the first winter period: one female, Cheddar Reservoir, February 10th, and March 10th-27th.

In the second winter period: five, Minehead, September 29th; two, Steart, November 12th.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

Scarce and very local breeder (first record 1993); locally fairly common winter visitor. Increasing.

As in 2006, only two families seen along the R. Barle, although there may have been four pairs present (DKB).

The roost at Wimbleball appears to be declining: although the number of dawn or dusk counts were also down, so were the numbers of birds arriving or departing.

As in previous years the R. Barle records are not given, these ranged from Simonsbath to Dulverton. The other Exmoor records were: one, Loxhole Bridge, January 21st; three, Chalk Water, August 27th; four, Nutscale Reservoir, September.

Goosander – maximum monthly counts												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Orchardleigh Lake	5	12										5
Cheddar Res.	25	25	35	2							9	20
Westhay Moor	16	31	11	1							7	23
Huntspill/Cripps Rivers	14	5	4								7	14
Wimbleball Lake	8	34								16		18

Other records in first winter period, singly unless stated: nine, Emborough Pond; January 1st; Catcott Lows, on the 20th; Bruton, on 29th; two, Aller Moor, February 11th; two, South Drain, Catcott, on the 17th; four, Tealham Moor, March 1st.

An unusual record of one flying over Sutton Bingham Reservoir with a Great-crested Grebe on August 17th.

Second winter period, singly unless stated: Parrett Estuary, November 27th; Chard Reservoir, November 27th and 30th, and two on December 23rd; Catcott Lows, December 3rd; Ham Wall, on the 20th.

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Rare breeder (first record 1994); uncommon visitor, chiefly in winter. Threatened by culls.

No breeding records apart from a displaying male at Ham Wall in April.

Ruddy Duck – maximum monthly counts												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Torr Works Res.				1	2							
Cheddar Res.	4	17									2	1

These were the only records received.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

Resident breeder, originally introduced; uncommon as self-sustaining species, but now locally abundant through releases.

One family reported: Locombe Wood, July.

The usual reports of huge releases in the east and the west: 500, Asham Wood area, January; 100, Langham Hill, January 10th, 200 on September 14th, and 300 on December 18th; 200, Weir Water, September 14th.

Apart from these there were scattered counts from across the County but none in double figures away from the shooting areas.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Scarce and very local resident breeder. Still decreasing, and perhaps almost extinct

Recorded from six sites: two, Upper Axe Valley, April 7th/8th; pair, Somerton Moor, July 7th; one, Greylake Reserve, on 21st; two, Over Stratton, August 21st-28th; two, Milverton, March 20th; and one, Combwich, June 1st.

Another very poor year but at least comparable to the previous one.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

Scarce and erratic migrant breeder and passage-migrant.

A poor year for this species. One, Priddy Mineries, June 1st, was the only record away from West Sedge Moor, where singles were heard on May 25th and 29th, two were present in June, and one was flushed on August 24th (RSPB).

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

Common resident breeder, locally abundant through releases.

A few breeding records including a female hatching at least six eggs in a Porlock garden.

Still large numbers released for shooting in the traditional areas mainly in the east and on the Brendons and Exmoor. The largest counts were 254, north of Faulkland on October 28th, and 200 in the Langham Hill area, January 10th.

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Monthly counts from coast between Hinkley Point and Porlock Weir			
	January	November	December
No. of dates recorded	1	5	5
Total number	1	8	42
Maximum counts	1	23	65

BLACK-THROATED DIVER *Gavia arctica*

Rare winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Only two records: one flew east, Minehead, May 7th (BDG, RLM); one, Porlock Bay, December 4th (IH, GS).

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*

Scarce winter visitor and passage-migrant

Seven records involving nine birds: up to three first-winters, Cheddar Reservoir, January 1st to April 28th, and one, December 31st; two flew over Torr Works Reservoir, October 28th; one in nearly full summer plumage, off Minehead, November 11th, was seen later in the day in Porlock Bay; another past Minehead, December 28th; and one, Shapwick Heath (East), on 31st.

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Fairly common resident or migrant breeder; perhaps passage-migrant.

Another poor year in the Avalon Marshes: 11 pairs noted at Ham Wall covering all of the Reserve including Sharpham Pools (20 in 2006). No records received from Shapwick Heath area.

Elsewhere, breeding attempted by pairs at the following sites, with * where proved: Orchardleigh Lake*; Frome; Torr Works Quarry* (two families); Cary Moor* (two families); Catsford Common*; Greylake Reserve; West Sedge Moor Reserve; West Coker; Hankridge Farm, Taunton; Williton*; Ford, (Wootton Courtenay)*.

Highest counts outside breeding season were: 21, Torr Works Reservoir, and 12, Ashford Reservoir, January 7th; 12, Otterhead Lakes, on the 27th; 13, Westhay Moor, throughout March; ten, Clatworthy Reservoir, throughout October; ten, Steart, October 30th; 18, Wimbleball Lake, December 16th.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

Fairly common resident breeder, winter visitor and passage-migrant.

In Avalon Marshes, another poor breeding season: Ham Wall, six families in full coverage of Reserve, but not of Sharpham Pools, and two on Meare Heath; no surveys of Shapwick Heath this year, so these figures may not

truly reflect the position.

Other sites: two pairs bred successfully, Orchardleigh Lake; up to three pairs present, Apex Leisure Park, and four, Dunwear Ponds; on reservoirs, eight families at Durleigh, nine at Chard, and two each at Hawkridge and Clatworthy, but no summer records received from Sutton Bingham, where eight nests produced two broods in 2006; at Wimbleball, three pairs in spring, but only one juvenile seen in August.

Great Crested Grebe – maximum monthly counts												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cheddar Res.	40	70	56	22				1	4	32	30	35
Avalon Marshes	11	15	32	18	12	15	21	20	11	14		
Dunwear Ponds	6	6	6	8	8	8	10	7	7	6		
Durleigh Res.	25	25	16	18						4	28	26
Sutton Bingham Res.	22	40	32	52			21	10	4	7	17	6
Chard Res.	37	41	13	16	22	26	41	30	45	44	59	65
Hawkridge Res.	3	4	1	2	2			6	6	2	2	2
Wimbleball Lake	4	3	3	2	6	2	3	7	4	3	2	1

Coastal records: two in the Parrett Estuary, March 15th and August 18th; two, Porlock Bay, December 4th; one, Hinkley Point, on the 15th.

RED-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps grisegena*

Scarce winter visitor and passage-migrant.

One, Cheddar Reservoir, November 24th/25th (NAS *et al.*). The first since 2004.

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus*

Rare winter visitor and passage-migrant.

One, Stolford, January 26th (JJP). The first since 2005.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

Rare winter visitor and passage-migrant. Has bred.

Two records from Cheddar Reservoir, involving three birds: one, February 11th (AG, JAH *et al.*); two, December 11th into 2008 (DGM *et al.*).

YELLOW-NOSED ALBATROSS *Diomedea chlororhynchos*

Accidental.

One, picked up on a driveway in Brean, June 29th, was taken to Secret World Animal Centre, East Huntspill, where it recuperated overnight before being released from Brean Down, June 30th (Hugh Harris, Pauline Kidner).

Record still in circulation with the BBRC and BOURC. If accepted becomes the first County and British record.

FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis*

Scarce migrant breeder; as offshore visitor, fairly common in spring and summer, but scarce in winter.

Up to four pairs on cliffs at Glenthorne, April 10th and June 30th (DKB, JDH), but success unknown.

Fulmar – monthly counts from Brean Down to Steart					
	Jan	May	Jul	Aug	Sep
No. of dates recorded	2	2	3	1	1
Maximum count	2	12	3	1	1
Total number	3	15	10	2	1

Fulmar – monthly counts from Dunster Beach to Porlock Weir							
	Feb	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
No. of dates recorded	1	4	5	5	4	3	2
Maximum count	1	12	17	37	4	1	1
Total number	1	6	32	50	9	3	2

SOOTY SHEARWATER *Puffinus griseus*

Very rare visitor.

One, Burnham, July 6th (JAH *et al.*). This bird appeared after strong overnight storms and was watched at close quarters between 12.30 and 14.30. The second year running this species has been recorded in the County, bringing the total to 22.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*

Common offshore summer visitor and occasional autumn storm-vagrant.

Two at Steart on January 2nd/3rd were the first records in this month since 2004.

Ten off Hurlstone Point, April 29th, were the first of the year there, followed by 25 off Burnham and 82 past Minehead on May 7th. The only movement in excess of 1,000 was on May 19th when 1,093 flew west past Hurlstone Point. Peak counts during June and July included up to 1,000 birds in the Parrett Estuary, July 2nd-4th; further west, 923 flew past Minehead, June 29th, and 828 past Hurlstone Point on the 1st. Only one high count during August when 405 passed Hurlstone Point on the 4th; the last birds of the year off the coast were on September 25th, with 15 at Dunster Beach and 20 past Minehead.

Manx Shearwater – monthly counts from Berrow to Steart						
	Jan	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
No. of dates recorded	2	4	1	5	1	1
Maximum count	2	100	1	1000	10	1
Total number	4	271	1	2247	10	1

Manx Shearwater – monthly counts from Dunster Beach to Porlock Weir						
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
No. of dates recorded	1	5	7	4	2	3
Maximum count	10	1093	923	194	405	20
Total number	10	1631	2639	481	466	42

One inland record: one picked up alive after strong overnight gales, Wells, October 3rd (DW), unfortunately died the next day.

BALEARIC SHEARWATER *Puffinus mauretanicus*

Very rare passage migrant.

One, Dunster Beach, September 25th (CG). The first record since 2004; the County total now stands at 16.

EUROPEAN STORM-PETREL *Hydrobates pelagicus*

Scarce offshore summer visitor, storm-vagrant and passage-migrant.

Eight records, involving about 30 birds: two off Berrow, May 19th (BES) and off Minehead, June 29th (RLM); on July 6th, up to 11 in Parrett Estuary, where there may have been some duplication of records (PG, GS), and eight off Minehead (BDG, RLM, JLT, NEW); on the 7th, five off Dunster Beach (JRW) and two off Hurlstone Point (BDG).

LEACH'S STORM-PETREL *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

Rare visitor, chiefly as storm-vagrant in autumn.

Only two records this year after the excellent numbers in 2006. One, picked up dead on a grass verge in Glastonbury, January 2nd (GU); one, flew west, Dunster Beach, September 25th (JRW).

GANNET *Morus bassanus*

Fairly common offshore visitor, chiefly in summer.

Gannet – maximum monthly counts from Brean Down to Stolford				
	Apr	May	Jun	Nov
No. of dates recorded	1	3	6	1
Maximum count	3	28	13	1
Total number	3	35	39	1

Gannet – maximum monthly counts from Dunster Beach to Glenthorne											
	Jan	Feb	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of dates recorded	1	1	1	10	13	5	7	5	1	2	1
Maximum counts	1	1	4	21	32	50	24	4	1	5	3
Total number	1	1	4	117	128	85	41	11	1	7	3

Two inland records: one, flying south-west over King Sedge Moor, July 3rd (TR); one found dead, Cheddar Reservoir, on the 14th (RJH).

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Fairly common winter visitor, passage-migrant and non-breeding summer visitor.

Breeding season record: four pairs attempted to nest at a site within the Avalon Marshes, of these two were successful both fledging three young. This is the first breeding record for the present County (JAH *et al.*).

Peak counts at pylon roosts: 11, Lang Moor, January 30th and Aller Moor, February 11th; 13, Crab Hole, near Compton Bishop, November 9th; 34, Weston Level, on the 10th. The large numbers roosting in dead trees at Noah's Lake are included in the Avalon Marshes counts in the Table.

Cormorant – maximum monthly counts												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cheddar Res.	17	43	14	3			5	12	13	19	23	21
Parrett Estuary	20	14	10	2	2	3	2	2	22	25	5	11
Westhay Moor	19	15	14	12	8	8	18	16	19	24	18	26
Avalon Marshes	30	58	49	16	20	64	96	73	115	58	150	150
West Sedge Moor	11	12	6	7	4						4	4
Sutton Bingham Res.	38	36	34	22			22	45	47	33	47	
Chard Res.	19	20	12	5	4	4	9	8	10	14	17	20
Wimbleball Lake	10	19	6	1	3		1		5	18	26	22
Dunster Beach	2	6	1	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	3

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Uncommon offshore visitor, chiefly in autumn; rare storm-vagrant inland.

A very poor year for this species in Somerset waters with only three records totalling 16 birds: one fishing off Gore Point, July 6th; 14, past Hurlstone Point, August 25th; and one there the next day.

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

Scarce winter visitor. Has bred, and recently recorded in summer.

All records were from within the Avalon Marshes. Four single birds reported from four sites, January 3rd-March 24th (RSPB, NAS *et al.*). Booming heard at one site, June 15th, but not subsequently (*per* JAH); single birds reported at two other sites during the summer months.

First bird in autumn, August 30th. From then to the end of the year, a total of five birds at four sites, usually singly but two on November 11th, December 25th, 26th and 31st, at three separate sites (DLB, RSPB *et al.*).

NIGHT HERON *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Very rare visitor. Has summered.

Adult, Dunster Hawn, April 22nd-25th (CG, JRW). There were nine previous records, involving ten birds.

CATTLE EGRET *Bubulcus ibis*

Very rare visitor.

One, Holywell Lake, December 11th-14th (CMS *et al.*). One, Long Load, December 29th into 2008 (DJC *et al.*).

Both records accepted by the BBRC; the County total now moves to seven.

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

Scarce and very local resident breeder; irregular year-round visitor. Increasing.

Breeding took place or was suspected at five sites, an increase on 2006:

- A. Several pairs nested successfully.
- B. Birds seen entering heronry; breeding possible though not proved.
- C. Thought to be nesting, though not proved.
- D. Pair attempted to nest in conifer hedge, but no young seen.
- E. Nine pairs nested.

Little Egret – maximum monthly counts												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Parrett Estuary inc. Huntspill River	11	37	14	16	14	31	62	14	42	26	15	6
Avalon Marshes	27	17	13	23	16	8	40	16	65	50	10	7
Kennard Moor	10	2	4	2			3			7	16	10
Greylake Reserve	18	16	31	8	4	1	3	18	2	1	2	
West Sedge Moor	1	13	21	12	8	6	6	1			2	
Sutton Bingham Res.					2	4	1	1	1	1	1	
Chard Res.	3	6				1	1	1	1	6	4	6
Dunster Beach	3	2	4	1	1	4	4	2	2	4	3	3
Porlock Marsh	6	5	5	1	1	2	3	5	4	3	2	4

Recorded from 60 other sites and one should fully expect to encounter a Little Egret almost anywhere in the County.

Some other counts and interesting records: 12, Eleighwater, throughout February; 12, Baltonsborough, on the 17th; 20, South Moor, Street, July 7th; 11, Westbury Moor, October 21st; 15, Wet Moor, December 20th.

GREAT WHITE EGRET *Ardea alba*

Very rare visitor.

Three records: one, Ham Wall, June 22nd (RSPB); adult, Westhay Moor, September 9th-16th (DLB *et al.*); one, flying east, Five Bells, Watchet, December 23rd (WJW).

County total now stands at 13 (involving 14 birds), first record was as recent as 1992.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Fairly common resident breeder; also passage-migrant and occasional winter visitor.

Herony totals		
Site	Total of occupied nests	Recorder
Orchardleigh Lake	8	BAT
Thickthorn Wood, Marston Park	3	EMT
Butleigh/Moorhouse	2	C&JN
Bere Wall, Edgarley Hall	9	DKB
Little Ranch, Glastonbury Heath	10	JAH
The Bungalow, Tadham Moor	Birds present but no count	
Lympsham Manor	At least 5	DKB
West Huntspill	At least 3	DKB
Swell Wood	104	RSPB
The Shields, Somerton Erleigh	33	RCD
Nince Care Plantation, Midelney	No record	
Batch Moor Copse, Wayford Woods	3	AJP
Hopkins' Farm, Ash Priors	possibly 1	DKB

Heronry totals, continued		
Site	Total of occupied nests	Recorder
Home Covert, Otterhampton	Birds present but no count	
Bossington Lane, Porlock	4	DGM
Oare House	3	RJB
Week Wood, Winsford	8	RJB
Hayes Wood, Withypool	4 or 5	DKB

Grey Heron – maximum monthly counts at selected sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Parrett Estuary inc. Pawlett Hams	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	3	10	3	2	8
Avalon Marshes	22	19	25	11	10	17	11	15	11	22	9	16
Greylake Reserve	3	1	2	3	2	2	1	5	2	1	2	3
West Sedge Moor	21	22	48	72	17	29				9	13	16
Sutton Bingham Res.	2	3	3	1	3	4	3	3	5		6	9
Chard Res.	3	2	1	1	2	2	3	9	4	2	2	2
Wimbleball Lake	4	1	1						1	3		3
Dunster Beach	1	1	2	1			3	3	7	2	1	
Porlock Marsh	1	3	7	2	1	3	1	5	1	4	1	2

Correction *SB 2006*: The reference to a supposed heronry in Dry Bridge Combe, Simonsbath, was an error.

PURPLE HERON *Ardea purpurea*

Very rare spring and summer visitor.

Two records, both of juveniles: Meare Heath, September 1st-November 2nd (G. Manning *et al.*); Aller Moor, September 2nd-8th (AGS *et al.*). The 13th and 14th County records.

WHITE STORK *Ciconia alba*

Rare visitor from spring to autumn.

One over Sutton Bingham Reservoir, April 16th (P & D Harris); one flying north-east over Berrow, on 17th (BES) could have been the same bird.

GLOSSY IBIS *Plegadis falcinellus*

Accidental.

One, Catcott Lows, November 3rd-5th (M.Jackson, ANE *et al.*), appeared at Greylake Reserve between 7th-16th (RSPB *et al.*).

Record accepted by the BBRC; the sixth County record, and the first since 1996.



Grey Heron



White Stork

SPOONBILL *Platalea leucorodia*

Rare passage-migrant.

Two records: one, Stert Island, April 24th (RSC); one circling over Westhay Moor, May 26th (TR).

HONEY-BUZZARD *Pernis apivorus*

Rare passage-migrant or summer visitor. Has bred.

Three records: one over Taunton, May 30th (JLT); another, over Warren Farm at Brean, June 9th (JPM); one Nettlebridge Valley, September 15th (JHa).

Almost annual recently; recorded in 13 of the last 17 years, mostly one or two, but four in 2002 and five in 1995.

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

Scarce summer and winter visitor and passage-migrant. Formerly bred and has recently attempted to do so.

A total of 72 records (16 fewer than in 2006), singly unless otherwise noted, perhaps involving about 56 birds, but very difficult to determine especially when considering possible wandering individuals. Only one record reported any wing-tags: one of two birds at Williton, May 24th, white – left wing, blue – right; thus originated in Northamptonshire.

Table shows monthly spread of records, most in spring/early-summer, with an attempt (in brackets) to rationalise possible wanderers; this seems to lend further support to possible immigration from the Continent, see *SB 2005*.

January	February	March	April	May
4 (3)	3 (2)	6	27 (19)	12
June	July/August	September	October	November
10 (7)	2	2	5 (3)	1

In first winter period: north-east over Bruton, January 1st; Bincombe Hill, March 4th. On Exmoor, at Porlock Post, January 20th; Great Headon Plantation, on the 26th; presumed the same, Exford Common, on the 28th and February 3rd and at Long Combe on the later date; two, Ember Combe on the 4th; and perhaps another two, Exford, March 3rd; then one of these, or possibly another, on the 13th.

The majority of records in spring/early summer from March 11th to June 28th, given here chronologically within the usual recognised areas. In the east: Nettlebridge, April 8th; two, Cary Moor, on 15th (when seen sky-dancing and talon grappling) and one on May 1st, also several undated reports from here and nearby in early summer; East Woodlands, May 27th, and North Barrow, June 15th. On Mendips, at Crook Peak, May 26th. Coast from Axe Estuary to Lilstock: north-east over Steart, March 11th; over Brean Down for 30 minutes, then drifting west on the 23rd; Combwich, April 7th; possibly the same, Steart and Brean Down, on the 9th; Hinkley Point, May 24th; Combwich, June 8th; presumed the same, Steart, the following day. Levels north of Poldens: west over Glastonbury, April 9th; presumed the same, Meare Heath on 12th and at Catcott Lows the same day and on 17th; Wedmore on 21st; Chilton Polden on 25th; Ham Wall and Meare Heath on 29th; west over Shapwick Heath, May 24th, and Westhay Moor, June 1st. In Central Somerset, north over Aller, April 9th, north-west over Moorlinch, May 24th; and Othery on 18th; West Sedge Moor, April 12th; west over Ruishton, May 1st; Curry Rivel and West Sedge Moor, June 5th. In the south: Crewkerne, April 4th; Sutton Bingham Reservoir on 18th; Street Ash (near Buckland St Mary), May 6th; South Petherton, May 22nd, and Hatch Beauchamp, June 5th. In the south-west: Bishops Lydeard, June 7th. On or near Quantocks: Paradise Combe, March 25th; over Staple Plantation, with two Buzzards, April 9th; over Five Bells, mobbed by gulls, on the 20th; Williton, on May 23rd, and then two on the 24th. Brendons and Exmoor: Minehead and Chetsford Water, April 1st; Hurdle Down on the 6th; possibly the same, South Common near Oare, on the 18th; West Luccombe on 10th; Alcombe Common, May 29th; Winsford Hill, June 6th, and Larkbarrow on 9th. One record in summer, at Porlock on July 28th.

In autumn/second-winter period: around Charlton Horethorne, mainly over Windmill Hill and Charlton Gorse, for three weeks during late August to mid September; Axe Estuary, flying towards Brean Down, October 3rd; at Curry Rivel on 18th. On Exmoor, at Bratton, mobbed by swallows, September 15th; at Porlock Hill on the 30th; at Exford, Exford Common and Greenlands, October 21st, and possibly the same at Downscombe, November 10th.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

Rare and irregular migrant breeder; uncommon summer and winter visitor, and passage-migrant.

A total of 153 sightings, almost twice as many as in 2006, all from the Avalon Marshes apart from the nine noted otherwise.

The juvenile or female (maybe two birds) and the adult male from 2006 were present until February 9th and were joined by a juvenile male during the first week of the year; then only the adult male during March. A male and a female, April 27th to May 4th, then one or two females, possibly some on spring passage, on many dates during May and June. Although a female was present throughout this period, and a male was seen on June 12th and 22nd, there was no evidence of any breeding. A female, July 16th and 28th, and an adult male on the 27th; the same or another female, August 14th-19th. In autumn and winter: a female during September was joined by two males (adult and immature) from the 6th to 25th; then the female and one or other of these males to the end of the year; and a juvenile from mid November onwards. Presumably a different female, Westhay Moor, September 9th and 19th, and another over Wick Moor, near Hinkley, November 15th.

Spring and autumn passage, female/immature unless stated otherwise: cream-coloured bird, probably a male, seen over King's Sedgemoor Drain from motorway, April 2nd; flying east at Doniford, May 2nd; Greylake on the 28th; west over Taunton, July 9th; juvenile, Steart, August 11th; Mark, August 26th; Stockland Reach, September 16th; and Huntspill Sea Wall on the 30th – arrived from south-west, mobbed by gulls, and flew east along R. Brue.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage-migrant. Formerly bred.

In first winter period, about five away from the Brendons/Exmoor, all ringtails. The bird on the Avalon Marshes in late December 2006 was seen at Catcott Lows and Shapwick Heath, until February 15th; then possibly another at Tealham Moor, March 6th, and Burtle Moor on 13th. Others, at Wall Common, February 20th; Greylake, March 6th and 18th; and West Sedge Moor, January 29th-March 26th.

On Brendons/Exmoor: about 11 birds, January 3rd-March 18th, of which five were males; including up to two males and a ringtail at a regularly used roost (MT).

From April 1st to May 19th, eight sightings that should probably be regarded as spring passage, but could well have involved some earlier birds; ringtails unless noted otherwise: Greylake, April 1st; and Ham Wall on 15th. On Quantocks, at Slaughterhouse Combe, May 3rd. On Exmoor, male and ringtail at Ember Combe, April 2nd; Dunkery Hill, on 8th; Withycombe Common, May 1st; and Woodcombe, on 19th.

In autumn and second winter period, ringtails unless noted otherwise: Black Down, September 29th; Axe Estuary on the 28th, and presumably the same, Steart, Wall Common and Stockland Reach on nine dates, October 2nd-November 4th; Tealham Moor, October 3rd; Kennard Moor, November 25th; Catcott Lows/Ham Wall from the 18th to December 16th, and a male, Catcott Lows on 12th; Greylake, November 25th; West Sedge Moor from the 17th to December 11th; Wet Moor from the 1st to the 17th, harassed by a Peregrine on the 4th. On Quantocks, at Longstone Hill, November 22nd. On Exmoor, only two or three, of which one was a male, October 14th-November 8th; and one, Porlock Marsh/Bossington, October 31st-December 29th.

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

Probably rare resident breeder; scarce visitor or passage-migrant.

Again, no positive proof of breeding within the County; breeding season records are given under the reporting areas as outlined in *SB 2005*.

Area 1: a male and female, from mid March (JHa *et al.*).

Area 3: adjacent to this area, pair displaying April 9th; male, sparring with Buzzard, June 5th (GS).

Area 5: pair displaying April 9th (EW).

Area 6: one, probably a female, on April 20th (RSPB).

Area 7: female, May 26th (JGC).

Area 9: a male on March 31st (BDG) and April 7th (JLT).

Outside the nine reporting areas, in the south: a pair displaying March 3rd/4th (BJM *et al.*).

Two other records of single birds: male seen daily, preying on feral pigeons, Hinkley Point, February 12th-16th (NEW); male, chasing a wood pigeon, Longstone Hill, December 23rd (BDG).

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Common resident breeder; also passage-migrant and winter visitor.

The 376 widely spaced records were 13% down on 2006 and the lowest since 2000 (see Table). This appears to be the result of fewer breeding-season records being submitted, but whether this is of any significance remains to be seen.

2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
376	434	490	478	463	439	417	366

In first winter period, 151 records from 75 places; and 162 from 60 (mostly the same) in second winter period.

During the breeding season there were 143 records from 63 places, compared with 171 from 81 in 2006. However, except for the spring display-period, this hawk can be elusive, so perhaps not too much should be read into these figures especially as no negative comments were received. Breeding or suspected breeding was reported from 21 places, with fewer reports this year from the Avalon Marshes, where, apart from the more obvious Buzzard, it is probably the most seen of the commoner raptors.

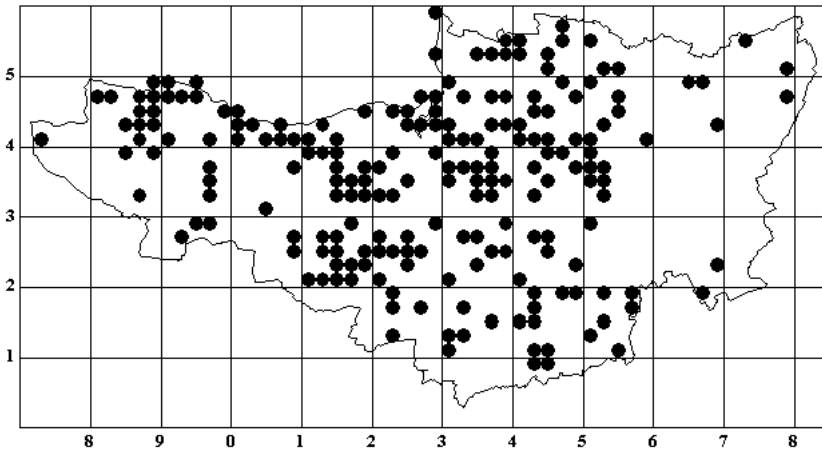
Prey taken or attempted included Red-legged Partridge (taken by a female), Robin, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Starling (especially at winter-roosts on Avalon Marshes), House Sparrow and Greenfinch. Garden bird-feeders again proved attractive to this small, fierce hawk, which may use them as a ready source of prey.

COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Common resident breeder; also passage-migrant and perhaps winter visitor

The 752 records received were of a total of 2,152 birds, which would seem comparable to the all time high in *SB 2005* where the comment regarding population would still hold true across most of the County. However, a

Buzzard distribution in Somerset



closer look shows these records were from 246 widespread places and if the Buzzard is regarded as being mostly sedentary, especially in the breeding season, then adding together the largest count from each place gives a revised total of 941 birds, which is surely well below the actual population figure.

Only seventeen gatherings of ten or more reported, of which the three highest were: 17, soaring over Cross, March 13th; 18, feeding on freshly cut hay-meadows, Mark Moor, June 7th, and 40, likewise, King's Sedge Moor, August 29th.

On Exmoor reported as being widespread but probably less numerous than in some years, though there appeared to be many rabbits, and no more than six seen together even on fine spring days (DKB).

Large gatherings seen in spring are mostly soaring birds maintaining territorial boundaries; at other times of the year they are generally birds feeding on invertebrates made readily available by recent farming activity. In the west, large numbers are generally associated with the carrion possibilities of game farms and Pheasant-rearing estates.

During the breeding season, territorial soaring, mentioned above, was seen at many widely spread sites, but again very few nesting successes reported although there must have been many. Successful breeding records, together with some comments received were: at least ten pairs in the Nettlebridge Valley (NPW); two pairs, each raising one young, north of Faulkland; about 20 pairs (42 birds seen) in the Upper Axe Valley (DLB); four or five pairs in the immediate area around Steart (NPW); pairs at 24 sites in and around the Avalon Marshes and one family seen (JAMcG *et al.*); a 20 sq-km survey area around Williton located 19 pairs, of which at least 13 pairs raised a minimum of 20 young (JDH). Single pairs, each raising one or two young, at Stawell, Langport, Bincombe Hill, Crewkerne, Stogumber and Bratton.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce passage-migrant. Has summered.

A good year, with about 16 records, all but one probably of single birds: seven in spring, three in early summer and six in autumn.

In spring: R. Parrett at Higher Easthams, March 19th-22nd (L. Carter per AJP); Orchardleigh Lake, on 28th (ID); flying north-east, high over Shapwick Heath, April 2nd (JAH); drifting over Bridgwater, mobbed by many gulls, on 3rd (RLM); Meare Heath and Catcott Lows, from 9th to 20th, when possibly two birds involved (RJH, JAH, JLT *et al.*); Sutton Bingham Reservoir, from 16th to 21st (NAS, BJW); and over Shapwick Heath, May 28th (RJH).

In early summer: fishing at Meare Heath, June 12th (JDH) and, presumably the same, at Shapwick Heath on 17th (P. Grant), when also one flying north over Burnham (AMS); and flying south-east over Shapwick Heath, July 2nd (AA), when also one at Clatworthy Reservoir (S.Cubbage).

In autumn: drifting slowly ESE over Aller, August 30th (TR); long-staying bird, seen to catch several fish, Shapwick Heath, September 3rd-19th (MS, JLT *et al.*), joined briefly by a second on 6th (W.Middlemist), and, presumably same bird, Westhay Moor, on 16th (P. Marshall); adult on most days, Shapwick Heath, from 30th to October 23rd (J. Crabb, JAH *et al.*), and a juvenile there from at least October 3rd until the 15th (BDG, JLT *et al.*); presumably one of these fishing at Westhay Moor on 20th/21st (AA, DLB, TR),

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Common resident breeder; also passage-migrant and probably winter visitor.

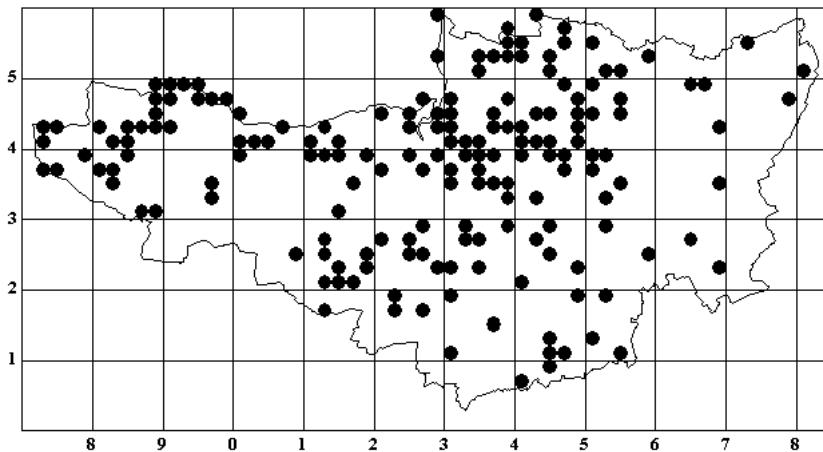
Excluding the Mendip survey (below), records totalled 545, slightly better than the 465 of last year, but only 167 were in the breeding season. Many of these were duplicates from well-watched places and perhaps this signifies another poor breeding year.

From mid March to the end of July, present at about 120 sites, including 36 pairs, of which ten were proved to breed: five in the east, including three pairs and two families; a survey on Mendip, covering much of the western part of the plateau and slopes, found 16 breeding pairs in 30 tetrads within the Somerset border; it also mentioned their apparent absence from suitable grassland along much of the southern scarp (MFBS); to these can be added a family at Walcombe Hangings, and singles at Cheddar George, Black Down and Crook Peak; at ten coastal sites from Brean Down to Wall Common, including one family; 23 sites on Levels north of Poldens, including two families on Kennard Moor; at 19 on Levels south of Poldens, including two families; at only one site in East-Central Somerset; at eight in the South, including two pairs, and reported as uncommon around Combe St Nicholas; at 13 in south-west, including four pairs and two families; at eight around Quantocks, including one pair; and at 13 on Brendons and Exmoor, including two pairs.

In winter, recorded at 81 widely spaced sites in first period and at 117 in the second; the largest count was five at Steart and at Nynehead.

At Greylake, on January 5th, one was seen to join in with Carrion Crows mobbing a Buzzard (DWa). On two occasions, at different places, both in September, one (sex not given) was briefly described as in 'sandpiper' display flight as it flew across a road (BHJG).

Kestrel distribution in Somerset



MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

Scarce and very local breeder; uncommon winter visitor and passage-migrant.

A total of 157 records, of which 37 (23%) were males, are summarised numerically, but many are duplicates especially at well-watched places.

At a traditional site on Exmoor a pair again nested in a hawthorn, but failed later in the season for unknown reason (per DKB). Two other sightings on the Moor in spring/summer: a female, April 7th, and one, sex not given, July 11th.

From January to mid March, about 59 records from 30 places: south of Cucklington, January 15th; north of Faulkland, February 19th; Cary Moor on the 4th; Priddy, January 1st; about 20, on coast around Bridgwater Bay, of which about ten at Steart; 11, on Levels north of Poldens, mostly at Catcott Lows; 29, including four records of two birds, on South Levels, mostly at Greylake and West Sedge Moor; Wellington, January 1st; Williton on the 27th and March 8th; Bratton/Woodcombe, February 3rd-8th; only two on Exmoor, at Weir Water, February 26th, and Alderman's Barrow, March 7th.

Only about nine during a poor spring passage: near Oakhill, April 13th; about five, coastline around Bridgwater Bay, late March to early May; two, different birds, Catcott Lows, April 11th and 17th; Greylake on the 1st, and at West Sedge Moor, March 26th and April 2nd.

Single birds: in August, at Huntspill Sea Wall on the 21st and Mark Moor on the 27th; in September, at Wall Common on the 16th, and Lilstock on the 23rd.

From October 1st to end of December, 64 records from 25 places: Ham, near Edford, December 16th; 30, including four records of two birds, on coast from Axe Estuary to Shurton; 18, including one record of two birds, on Levels north of Poldens, mostly at Catcott Lows; 11, including two records of two birds, from King's Sedge Moor; Staplegrove, November 28th; Smith's Combe on the 11th; and Grabbist (Dunster), October 26th.

Prey taken or chased included Redshank (see below), Skylark, Meadow Pipit, Starling (especially at winter-roosts on Avalon Marshes), Linnets and Reed Bunting.

An unusual prey item was large dragonflies, most probably Migrant Hawkers *Aeshna mixta*, that were being taken and eaten on the wing, in Hobby-fashion, by a female or immature at Meare Heath on October 3rd (JAH).

At Catcott Lows, on April 17th, a hunting female flushed a Redshank which, to avoid capture, promptly flew low and landed on the water with head and neck extended flat along the water. The Merlin hovered close above it for at least ten seconds before giving up and flying off (JAH).

A dead male, found hanging from the lower branches of a hawthorn, at King's Sedge Moor in late November (TR), was examined and from its poor physical condition thought to have possibly been the victim of a Peregrine (NPW). At Wet Moor, a female only just evaded being taken by a Peregrine on November 4th (NS).

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

Scarce migrant breeder; uncommon passage-migrant, but locally numerous in spring.

Total of 212 records from 78 sites; 52% from Avalon Marshes and adjacent areas; little change from previous year, but again, some probably not submitted from well-watched sites, where many records are duplicates.

First arrivals: Catcott Heath, April 2nd, and Burtle on the 17th; then a trickle of birds until the 24th, when 14 at Shapwick Heath; the main arrival continued into mid May. Apart from Avalon Marshes, West Sedge Moor and other known or presumed breeding sites, about 31 on spring passage April 21st to mid June. On Avalon Marshes, usual reports of feeding gatherings from April 24th to late May and some to early June: most counts of ten or more, April 24th-May 22nd; peak of 30 on Meare Heath/Shapwick Heath, April 27th, and 25, May 4th; largest count, 52 on Meare Heath/Shapwick Heath/Ham Wall on the 5th (NPW). At West Sedge Moor, a poor year: mostly one to three, late April to mid June, with peak of five, May 4th.

Birds present during summer as follows: at five sites in East Somerset, where a fledged juvenile at one site and juveniles heard calling at another; regular at three sites on Levels north of Poldens, including counts of nine and eleven at one of these sites on June 12th and July 14th, though some were probably non-breeding, second-calendar-year birds; at one escarpment site on Levels south of Poldens; at two sites in south-west: where at one site a family with two juveniles were hunting dragonflies, August 25th; at coastal site well west of Parrett; and two sites near Quantocks.

Usual, thinly scattered summer records at: Milborne Port; North Brewham; Cross and Cheddar; Combwich; Steart; Westonzoyland; in South Somerset; and on the Quantocks and the Brendons.

In Avalon Marshes, most records were of one or two in September, up to the 26th, with three on two dates and a maximum of four on the 9th, then one record, the last of the year, on October 26th/27th. Elsewhere, only ten records in September.

At Shapwick Heath, four hunting insects at 22:00 (20 minutes before complete darkness fell) on June 14th (JAH); one hunting, bat-like, at dusk on July 11th (SMo). Other prey, taken or chased, were Swallow and House Martin.

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

Uncommon resident breeder, dispersing in winter over wider range; presumably also winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Total of 387 records from about 101 sites, very little change from last year.

Breeding proved or suspected, from continual presence, at 14 sites: seven inland, mostly at quarries, the remainder coastal. Of these, nine pairs fledged at least 19 young; the result from another successful breeding pair was unknown.

Detail of three sites in East Somerset: at one, three young hatched, though only one fledged; at the second, breeding was proved, but number of fledged young unknown; at the third, eggs did not hatch, and then disappeared. On Mendips, three young fledged at a well-known site and two at another, but no reports from two other known quarry sites. From a pylon site in the south-west (also used in 2006), two young fledged, and possibly three. At two inland sites in the west, two young fledged at one and a sitting female was seen at the other. At six known coastal sites, three produced two young each and another produced three.

As usual, outside the breeding season most records were from Levels, coast and western hills. The most reported was six (apparently two non-breeding pairs and two second-calendar year females) at Steart, May 13th (NPW), and five, West Sedge Moor, December 10th. Reported as surprisingly scarce at Dunster Beach, with only five sightings throughout the year (JRW). Favoured lookouts included the main building at Yeovil Hospital, electricity pylons (commonly), and radio and mobile-phone masts.

At Steart, seen to half-heartedly attack a Little Egret (WPB). Other prey taken or chased included Wigeon, Teal, Mallard, Lapwing, Whimbrel, Redshank, Wood and Feral Pigeons, Blackbird, Fieldfare, Redwing, an unidentified corvid, and Starling.

Interactions noted with other raptors were: in brief pursuit of a Kestrel (BOC); unsuccessful attack on a Merlin (NS); adult, pursued by Merlin, then tables turned and it almost took the Merlin (EW); defended recent duck-kill by driving off female Marsh Harrier (EW); stooped several times at a Common Buzzard (PJE), and seen to pursue/mob a ringtail Hen Harrier on two separate occasions (AHa, MS).

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

Fairly common but very local resident breeder; more widespread as winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Confirmed breeding: eight families seen, Westhay Moor, although they had been located at 18 sites in the summer; three families, Westhay Heath. Also 31 'sharming' males at Ham Wall in the breeding season. No records received from the Shapwick Heath area this year. Present in breeding season at Berrow, West Sedge Moor and West Moor (Thorney).

Water Rail – maximum monthly counts												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Westhay Moor	22	23	27	1					3	12	22	25
Ham Wall	2	9	4			31				9	18	11
Shapwick Heath/ Meare Moor	5	8	8	1	1				2	14	3	
Westhay Heath	9	9	16	22						3	16	15
Dunster Hawn	1	1		1						2	3	3

The Levels are the most important wintering site for this species in the U.K.

Other records: up to ten, Blackmoor Vale, in both winter periods; eight, Berrow, February 18th, and up to four during rest of year; maximum of three, Steart; and three, Huntspill River, December 23rd. One or two seen or heard at 17 other sites across the County.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Common resident breeder; occasional winter visitor.

Breeding records of families from the Avalon Marshes: 73, Westhay Moor; three, Sharpham; 23, Westhay Heath. No meaningful records from Ham Wall or Shapwick Heath. A total of 28 pairs present in breeding season at West Sedge Moor.

Other breeding records away from the Avalon Marshes and West Sedge Moor, of single pairs/families unless stated: three families, Bruton and Rodden Nature Reserve (Frome); Torr Works Reservoir; present at seven sites, Berrow; two families, Steart; Stolford; Kennard Moor; Tealham Moor; Combwich; 29 adult and 22 juveniles along the canal between Huntworth and Creech St Michael; at least seven families, Greylake Reserve; 11 pairs, King's Sedge Moor; three pairs, Southlake Moor; two families, Wet Moor and West Moor (Thorney); Thorney; Sutton Bingham Reservoir; two families, West Coker; around Crewkerne, at Millwater, Mancombe and New Mill and the Sewage Works; Line Wood, Hatch Beauchamp; two families, Wayford Woods; Chard Reservoir; Pudleigh Sewage Works; West Monkton; four families, Taunton; Wellington; Combe Sydenham; Bratton.

Moorhen – monthly maximum counts												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Westhay Moor	175	190	244	268					47	215	162	153
Sharpham	3	10	7	6	3	5	7	12	8	11	8	14
Ham Wall/ Loxton's Marsh	6	5	71	66	87	1		3	2	40	33	27
Shapwick/Meare Heaths	22	34	28							70		
Westhay Heath	22	78	90							62	40	51
Greylake Reserve	1		3	3	24	6	4				1	
West Sedge Moor	3	17	7	24	19	56				3	4	6
West Coker	9	9	6	6		2	4	7	9	6	8	9
Chard Res.	16	5						11		22	16	10
Pudleigh Sewage Works	12										19	23
Hankridge LNR			6	8	2		8	6	6	4		
Wellington Basins		6		4	6	6			8	6	8	9
Ashford Res.	8		8								3	4
Dunster Hawn	28	17	2				3				7	30

The Westhay Heath count for March was a site record.

An Otter was recorded taking an adult bird at Meare Heath on February 22nd.

All other records of ten and over: 25 on the new wetland, Cary Moor, September 3rd; 11, Upper Axe Valley, April 8th; 13, Cheddar Reservoir, December 22nd; ten, Durlough Reservoir, October 19th; 65, along the canal between Huntworth and Creech St Michael, October 31st; 11, Otterhead Lakes, January 25th; 20, Hawkridge Reservoir, August 28th; ten, Combe Sydenham, February 2nd; 12, Clatworthy Reservoir, March 30th; ten, Minehead, January 4th.

COOT *Fulica atra*

Locally common resident breeder and winter visitor.

Records of families from Avalon Marshes: six, Westhay Moor; two, Sharpham and Ham Wall; one, Meare Heath; five, Westhay Heath; three birds on nests, Catcott Lows. Incomplete coverage of some areas but on the whole a poor breeding season.

All other breeding records: two families, Torr Works Quarry and four at the Reservoir; four families, Cary Moor; three pairs, Greylake Reserve and West Sedge Moor; two families, Dunwear Ponds; two families, Chard Reservoir; two pairs nesting, Enmore Castle Lake; one family, Hawkridge Reservoir.

Coot – maximum monthly counts												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Torr Works Res.	100	63	25		10	12		25	60	55	32	42
Cheddar Res.	1800	300	289	63				114	164	1650	2100	2500
Westhay Moor	74	103	70	54					45	26	39	20
Sharpsham	31	35	24	20	25	17	19	10	13	17	54	70
Ham Wall	54	59	72	20	20					53	131	81
Shapwick/Meare Heaths	22	44	35	6				27		6		
Westhay Heath		14	10						12		2	1
West Sedge Moor	2	58	71	28	4	6						1
Sutton Bingham Res.	15		7	1								
Chard Res.	17	16	9	12		6		9	6	9	9	7
Hankridge LNR			8	10	12		8	8	8	4		
Hawkridge Res.	11	19	9	4	8	4	4	9	11	10	12	10
Ashford Res.	2		2						3		1	2
Wimbleball Lake	72	30	5		4			44	63	92	95	91

A poor year at Cheddar Reservoir in comparison with the previous two; it is now the fifth most important site in the U.K.

All other counts of ten and over: up to 21, Apex Leisure Park; ten, Durleigh Reservoir, April 12th, and 32 on October 19th; 24, Clatworthy Reservoir, March 30th, and 40 on July 20th.

COMMON CRANE *Grus grus*

Very rare passage-migrant.

One flew south over Ham Wall, April 18th (JCr). The first since 2002.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

Scarce breeder; fairly common winter visitor, non-breeding summer visitor and passage-migrant.

Up to eight pairs were recorded as successfully breeding or attempting to breed: one on the Axe Estuary, at least two (probably three) pairs around the Parrett Estuary (young seen and one pair had two broods), two pairs at Stolford, one at Hinkley Point, one at Porlock Marsh and a recently fledged family at Gore Point, which may have been from Porlock Marsh.

Recorded at localities along the whole coast, the peak concentrations being on the Axe Estuary, Bridgwater Bay and Dunster Beach – the usual pattern and numbers fairly typical of recent years. Up to four were seen regularly near Combswich between April and September; these may well have been associated with breeding attempts at Pawlett Hams.

Four inland records of single birds: Catcott Lows, February 10th; Cheddar Reservoir, July 10th; Victoria Park, Taunton, on morning of 15th (a very unusual record); and Chard Reservoir, on 28th.

Oystercatcher – monthly maxima at main sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Axe Estuary					5		45	132	144	160		145
E. Parrett Estuary (inc. Berrow)	170	119	18	170	144	66	130	261	208	193	77	120
Stear Point/ Stert Island	61	10		83	3	131	19	248	130		95	53
Dunster Beach	104	130	38	19	12	13	40	115	65	91	101	107
Porlock Bay	12	9	1	4	1	3	2	8	56	33	20	
Other sites	45	101	24	71	4	4	17	3	47	162	120	55
Totals (inc. higher Parrett Est. counts)	331	359	81	264	166	151	234	519	520	639	318	427

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Scarce and very local winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Avocet – monthly maxima												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Axe Estuary				1							1	
Parrett Estuary	32	23							18	45	68	14

Birds were recorded from the R. Parrett only between Stockland Reach and Steart Point as the Table. Best-ever counts for this species were made from the Parrett Estuary in the second winter period, when several in November exceeded 50, and 68 were present on 11th during the WeBS count. The only records away from this area were from the Axe Estuary on April 15th and November 3rd.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

Rare migrant breeder; uncommon passage-migrant.

Breeding was confirmed at Torr Works Reservoir where a pair arrived on March 16th, and were seen mating on April 11th, four young hatched on June 15th and all survived. They were last seen on July 22nd.

Little Ringed Plover – monthly maxima												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Totals			3	13	2	2	3	2				

The first record of the spring was of the breeding birds followed by one at Cheddar Reservoir on March 26th. After that, one was at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on April 3rd/4th, three at Wall Common on the 4th, one in the Upper Axe Valley on 7th/8th, two at both West Moor on the 12th and Meare Heath on the 19th, and one at Wall Common the 20th. In all a good spring showing.

By contrast only three on return passage: one at Torr Works Reservoir on July 6th in addition to the breeding birds; and two on the Brue Estuary on August 11th.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

Scarce breeder; fairly common visitor and passage-migrant.

A BTO Breeding Survey was targeted at this species in 2007; despite this extra effort only one or two more pairs were found than normal, probably because the breeding sites are generally well-watched. Two pairs were found around Steart Point, three along Wall Common and one at Dunster Beach. At least two of those at Wall Common attempted second broods.

Ringed Plover – monthly maxima at main sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Axe Estuary				1	17		1		1			
Berrow – Brue Estuary	88	63						120	51		87	
Stert Island/Steart Point/Wall	29	4	15	63	603	56	86	380	640	40	1	1
Dunster Beach	20	10	9	27	42	4	37	52	70	35	25	23
Other sites	8	12			1	5		12	1	26	31	78
Totals (inc. higher Parrett Est. counts)	145	89	34	91	663	65	124	564	763	101	144	102

A small increase was evident in the number of wintering birds, which bucked the recent national decline in wintering birds. An above-average spring passage was followed by a relatively low return passage when compared to the numbers in 2006.

Coastal records at 'other sites' were from Stolford (up to 50 in December), Knighton Beach (up to 30 in the second winter period), and lower numbers at Hinkley Point, Watchet and Minehead; 12 were seen on the mud at Comwich on August 24th. Further inland a number of records from Greylake, mainly of birds in flight over: one on May 18th, three on 26th, and two on June 5th; and one was at Sutton Bingham Reservoir from September 18th to 23rd.

DOTTEREL *Charadrius morinellus*

Rare passage-migrant.

One, Dunkery Beacon, at around noon on September 19th (A. & J. Booth).

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Common winter visitor and passage-migrant. Formerly bred.

Golden Plover – monthly maxima at main sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
West Sedge Moor	11062	9000		1					25	1500	2300	5500
Other sites on the Levels	2500	2974	451								164	330
Parrett Estuary	3300	2800	1625	340				3	82	635	3418	2356
Dunster Beach/ Minehead Marshes			92	2						218	306	18
Exmoor (inc. Porlock Marsh)	133		200	1379					2	54	165	
Other sites away from the Levels	15	7		12					20	372	8	68
Totals	17010	14781	2368	1734				3	129	2779	6361	8272

Good numbers were recorded in both winter periods, particularly on the Levels, where counts well above the recent WeBS mean of about 5,600 were made. The 11,062 Golden Plover at West Sedge Moor on January 21st was a record for the County, the previous total at the same location was 8,849 in 1998. High numbers were also seen at Dunkery in the first two weeks of April where up to 380 were recorded on a number of dates and as many as 1,000 were present on the 11th. The first returning birds were seen at Steart Point on August 13th.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola**Fairly common, but very local, winter visitor and passage-migrant.*

Grey Plover – monthly maxima at main sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
E. Parrett Estuary	35	200	150	20	8	1	1	25	2	35	100	62
Stear Point	150	138		23	11			15	31	45	100	25
Dunster Beach	4	5	4							1		4
Other sites	6			4	7			1	5	2	3	5
Totals (inc. higher Parrett Est. counts)	160	205	154	27	18	1	1	26	36	48	103	71

Numbers wintering in the U.K. have declined over the last 15 years, a trend reflected in Somerset counts. As usual, most were around Parrett Estuary, where recorded in every month. Small numbers fairly regular at Dunster Beach, and also recorded in Axe Estuary, at Berrow, from Stolford to Lilstock and in Doniford/Watchet area. Five at Lilstock, September 30th, flew in off the sea and headed inland.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus**Fairly common local breeder; abundant winter visitor and passage-migrant*

In 2007, the RSPB, FWAG, NE and BASC (British Assoc. for Shooting & Conservation) launched the Somerset Lapwing Project, with the aim of understanding more about breeding Lapwing in non-protected areas and of seeking opportunities to conserve the remaining population. The area for the project extends from the coast of Bridgwater Bay across the Levels to the A30/A303. Priority areas were identified, based on breeding data since 2000, and these were surveyed in 2007 by staff and volunteers.

For this Report, the figures provided to us by RA, for the RSPB, have been merged with some others from our own members, some of whom (notably JL) took part in the survey. A few records are of attempted breeding outside the survey area.

Breeding conditions for Lapwing in 2007 were notably poor. An almost rainless April was followed by heavy rain in late May and early June. Many nests were evidently abandoned and the chicks perished. Those attempting to breed in spring-sown maize and other crops are in any case liable to be destroyed by agricultural machinery. On Greylake RSPB Reserve, where water levels could be controlled, birds that had failed elsewhere arrived to make second attempts, but few could survive attacks by foxes.

A maximum of 180 pairs attempted to breed, or at least displayed in habitat that appeared suitable, as follows. An asterisk shows that at least one pair produced young, even if these did not survive.

East Somerset

Three pairs, Mells Down; one bird north of Faulkland in May.

Mendips

One pair breeding on stubble, Bendall's Farm, near Green Ore (MFBS).

Levels between Mendips and Poldens & west to the Parrett

Along Upper Axe, 20 pairs on Stoke Moor and four on Westbury Moor in early April, but no later observations. Around and east of Glastonbury: 11 pairs on Queen's Sedge Moor all deserted the site without breeding; single pairs at Wallyer's Bridge and on Kennard Moor, but no breeding attempted.

On Avalon Marshes: three pairs on Walton Heath* and one on Glastonbury Heath; total of ten pairs, Ham Wall, Meare Heath, Sharpham and Shapwick Heath, but few of these seem to have bred; on Catcott Low's*, about 16 pairs, of which at least some were successful but even these probably lost most of their young; and one pair on Westhay Moor*.

Further west: six pairs, Tealham Moor*, of which at least two were successful; five at Gold Corner; eight on Ford Common; and two on Pawlett Hams.

King's Sedge Moor

East of A361: five on Walton Moor, two on Butleigh Moor and ten on south part of Somerton Moor; four on King's Sedge Moor RWA. West of A361: 22 eventually on Greylake Reserve; six on North Moor (Moorland) and four (perhaps different) nearby at Godfrey's Corner; four on Sutton Hams/Lang Moor; and one on Earlake Moor.

West Sedge Moor

Only two pairs.

South Levels

Total of 24: seven on King's Moor/Witcombe Bottom*; ten on Wet Moor; one between Langport and Muchelney; two from Drayton to Middelney; and two on West Moor (Hambridge).

Central Somerset

Two pairs at Kingweston.

South Somerset

A remarkable 12 pairs near Tintinhull, and three near Martock.

West Somerset

One or two pairs on Minehead Marshes in March, but none later.

The following other areas were visited without result: Steart to Cannington; Aller Moor, Stan Moor and Horlake Moor; Somerton Randle; the Isle Valley; and Park Farm, Lilstock (where bred in 2006 and probably in 2008).

On the basis of these figures, about 190 pairs may have taken up Somerset territories, however briefly. One can only guess at the number of young produced, but it was probably very small.

Lapwing – monthly maxima at main sites on Levels												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Avalon Marshes	1520	570	27	13	13	60			165	290	740	600
Catcott Lows	2500	1500	30	55	20	8				10	3000	4000
Greylake Reserve	5000	5000	200	18	31	22	3			100	500	250
King's Sedge Moor	8000	4500	7	9	9						3500	4000
West Sedge Moor	21091	28339	3	4	2	2	1	2	13	1100	457	8749
Other sites on Levels	11985	3445	75	114	38	17		30	160	161	2125	2550
Totals	50096	43354	342	213	78	109	4	32	338	1661	10322	20149

Lapwing – monthly maxima at main sites on coast												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
E. Parrett Estuary	2150	3300		4	1				100	550	2165	1450
Steart	2500	1800					1		240	5000	850	2300
Dunster Beach/ Minehead Marshes	190	190	6	7					14	30	74	200
Porlock Marsh	50	110								20		
Other sites	40	801	2		7		21	20		29	731	538
Totals (combining Parrett Est. count)	2780	4401	8	13	8		22	20	254	5079	2970	3038

Despite an apparent drop in wintering numbers from 2006, the counts on the Levels were well above their five year mean and this area remains at or near the top of the list of sites of international importance in the U.K. for this species. Away from the Levels first winter period numbers were about half that of 2006, second winter period numbers average.

KNOT *Calidris canutus*

Locally common winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Knot – monthly maxima at main sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Berrow	2000		4	6	4		8	352	650	15		
E. Parrett Estuary	1000		100	100			1	77	200	600	1500	500
Steart/Stolford	380	420			1				122	220	1650	1050
Other sites		3		1	1		1	1	89			46
Totals (combining Parrett Est. count)	3000	423	104	107	6		10	430	939	615	1650	1096

Reasonably good numbers in both winter periods, continuing the recent apparent recovery. Away from Parrett Estuary, coastal records were: up to 60, Axe Estuary, September; up to 45 at Hinkley Point, December; on Blue Anchor-Minehead coast, three on February 21st, 28 on September 10th, and single birds in April/May, July/August and December.

There was one inland record from Chard Reservoir on September 12th.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

Locally fairly common passage-migrant; uncommon winter visitor.

Sanderling – monthly maxima at main sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Berrow/Brean	148	3		90	160	5	450	327	216	248	253	
Parrett Estuary (inc.Steart)	1				75	1	155	26	4	6		
Dunster Beach	4	1	8	30	9	2	28	1	2	2	5	11
Other sites									8			
Totals	153	4	8	120	244	8	633	354	230	256	258	11

Most wintering birds were to be found at Berrow; a good passage was noted both here and around the Parrett Estuary. Smaller numbers were found at Dunster Beach throughout the year; elsewhere, eight at Stolford on September 15th. There were no inland records.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Uncommon autumn passage-migrant; rare in spring and as winter visitor.

Little Stint – monthly maxima at main sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Steart Point/Wall Common		1	1	2	1	1			16	10	1	

Little Stint – monthly maxima at main sites, continued												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Other sites								2	3	10		
Totals		1	1	2	1	1		2	19	20	1	

Away from the area of Steart Point and Wall Common, recorded as follows: a single at the Axe Estuary on September 29th; up to five at Berrow during October; and up to two around the Brue Estuary and Huntspill Sea Wall area. Further west one was at Dunster Beach on September 22nd/23rd.

Inland, one was at Ham Wall on August 9th and up to two at Meare Heath, October 27th-30th.

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER *Calidris fuscicollis*

Very rare autumn visitor.

One seen well in flight at Catcott Heath on November 3rd (JAH, BDG, RLM) has been accepted by the Somerset Rarities Committee.

This is the first record of this species in the County since one on the Brue Estuary on August 17th, 2004, and is the fifth County record.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER *Calidris melanotos*

Rare passage-migrant, chiefly in autumn.

One record: a juvenile, Meare Heath, September 26th-October 16th (JAH, MS *et al.*).

This species has occurred with increasing regularity in the County over recent years and is now almost annual.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

Uncommon passage-migrant, chiefly in autumn; rare winter visitor.

Curlew Sandpiper – monthly maxima at main sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Berrow/Brue Estuary								1	23	16		
Steart Point/Wall Common					1	3		3	14	6		
Other sites		1						5	3	1		
Totals		1			1	3		9	40	23		

The bulk of the records came from the Parrett Estuary and Berrow, as shown in the table. Although some duplication of records may have occurred, it is notable that on September 29th 31 birds were recorded at three different sites around the Parrett Estuary. Other records consisted of an unseasonal bird at Stolford on February 21st (the first County record for the month), five adults at Hinkley Point on August 28th, three at Meare Heath on September 29th/30th and one on the Axe Estuary on October 6th.

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima*

Scarce and very local winter visitor; rare passage-migrant.

The only record in the first winter period was of one at the traditional Doniford/Watchet site throughout January. Another was at Dunster Beach on May 14th – this species has been unusual in spring recently.

More were present in the second winter period: at Hinkley Point one was on the sea wall on September 10th, after this two were there on November 21st, and numbers were up to 13 by the end of the year, when they could often be seen roosting on the Power Station intake structure. This is apparently the largest party ever seen in Somerset. In the Watchet area up to two were present in December.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina**Abundant winter visitor; common passage-migrant. Has bred.*

Dunlin – monthly maxima at main coastal sites away from the Levels												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Axe Estuary					75		13	2	12	6		
E. Parrett Estuary inc. Berrow	19000	19040	6000	303	4500		1107	1541	1185	4050	15000	10200
Stear Point/Stoford	7510	1300			3800	85	180	440	972	5540	3800	7000
Dunster Beach	76	53	7	8	32	3	11	7	14	5	40	89
Other sites	23	42	2	3	14	1	5	6	6		31	29
Totals (inc. higher Parrett Est. count)	19099	19135	6009	314	4621	89	1136	1556	1217	5551	15071	10318

Other records came from: the Blackmoor Vale; Torr Works and Cheddar Reservoirs; Pawlett Hams, Combwich and Hinkley Point; Sutton Bingham and Chard Reservoirs; Doniford/Watchet, Minehead and Porlock Marsh.

Dunlin – monthly maxima at main inland sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
West Sedge Moor	74	184									6	21
Other sites on the Levels	230	287	2	2	22				2		12	213
Totals	303	471	2	2	22				2		18	234

The largest numbers on the Levels were to be found on King's Sedge Moor, Greylake Reserve and West Sedge Moor.

The numbers in the first winter period around the Parrett Estuary indicated that an influx took place following the end of 2006, when only about 10,000 were counted. Numbers in the second winter period were slightly below average. There has been a steady decline in the numbers of Dunlin wintering in the U.K. over the last decade or so. This has been mirrored by a rise in the counts made in the Wadden Sea in the Netherlands, suggesting that birds from the Russian Arctic are stopping short of the U.K. as a result of the less severe weather in recent winters.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax**Uncommon winter visitor and passage-migrant.*

Ruff – monthly maxima at main sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Levels	45	37	38	2	6				2	19	13	33
Other sites			1				1	2	20	8		
Totals	45	37	39	2	6		1	2	22	27	13	33

These were average numbers. Largest flocks were: in first winter period, 20 at Greylake Reserve, January 7th; 25, West Sedge Moor, February 18th; and 35, King's Sedge Moor, on 23rd; in autumn and second winter period, 18 at Steart Point, late September; and 21, King's Sedge Moor, December 26th.

JACK SNIFE *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage-migrant.

In first winter period, 16 recorded: single birds, Wall Common, January 1st, and at Steart Point from then to February 18th; two, Axe Estuary, January 10th; one, Cary Moor, from 13th to February 18th; up to six, West Sedge Moor, January 21st-March 18th; two, Greylake Reserve, January 31st, and Shapwick Heath, March 19th; and one, Tealham Moor on 25th.

In autumn and second winter period, 11: single birds, West Sedge Moor, October 7th-23rd, and Tealham Moor, from 14th to November 24th; up to three, Greylake Reserve, October 24th to December 12th; one, Kennard Moor, November 10th; two, Brue Estuary, on 27th; and at Steart Point, December 4th-12th; one, King's Sedge Moor, from 21st to 26th.

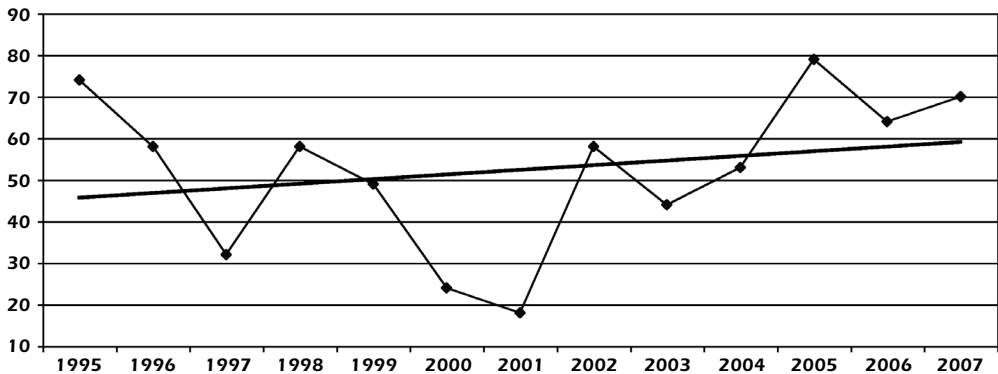
A typical year: as usual, the secretive nature of the species is likely to ensure that those recorded are only a sample of the total present.

COMMON SNIFE *Gallinago gallinago*

Uncommon resident or migrant breeder; common winter visitor and passage-migrant.

A total of 70 pairs bred, a small increase from 2006, thus sustaining the slow growth of the population over the last few years. Of these, 39 were on West Sedge Moor, where a further five performed 'wing-arching' display flights. Elsewhere on the Levels, nine pairs were recorded at Tealham Moor and at King's Sedge Moor, and five at Greylake Reserve; lower numbers were at Catcott Lows and Aller Moor. Away from the Levels, single displaying birds were noted at Sutton Bingham Reservoir and in Squallacombe on Exmoor.

Breeding Snipe in Somerset (pairs)



Common Snipe – monthly maxima at main sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
West Sedge Moor	558	381	35	55	39	47	2		20	46	208	165
Other sites on the Levels	113	252	80	56	37	25	8	119	105	365	286	471
Exmoor (inc. coastal marshes)			7	3		1		11	5	2	17	3
Other sites	88	87	78	45	1		30	22	46	63	119	66
Totals	759	720	200	159	77	73	40	142	176	476	630	555

Winter numbers were down for the second successive year; counts away from West Sedge Moor in January were particularly low. Totals on the Levels were about 25% lower than the mean of the last five years.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Rare or scarce breeder; fairly common winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Woodcock – monthly numbers (all sites)												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Totals	8	20	2				1				13	9

No breeding-season records were received for 2007. However, one was seen in Edford Wood in July suggesting that Woodcock may well still breed in the County.

Wintering numbers were typical: the best counts were of seven at Dommatt Wood on February 10th and at least four in the Shapwick Heath area in the first winter period.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

Locally common winter visitor and passage-migrant. Has bred.

Black-tailed Godwit – monthly maxima at main sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Parrett Estuary (inc. Berrow)		1		1	1	9	50	40	65	69	76	10
Catcott Lows	10	1	18	12							11	1
Other sites on the Levels	6	6	1	2	17	47	15	1		2	3	18
Other sites				1			19					
Totals	16	8	19	16	18	56	84	41	65	71	90	29

Very low numbers were seen in winter and on passage this year, even allowing for some likely duplication around the Parrett Estuary; conversely numbers in the summer months around the Levels were higher than in recent years and ‘probable’ breeding was reported at one site.

The only records in the ‘other sites’ category were one at Cheddar Reservoir on April 1st and 19 near Combwich on July 22nd which were presumably associated with some of the records from further down the Parrett Estuary.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

Scarce winter visitor and erratic passage-migrant.

Bar-tailed Godwit – monthly maxima at main sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Parrett Estuary (inc. Berrow)				450	527				15	5	2	1
Other sites	2			4	6			3	2	1		
Totals	2			454	441			3	17	6	2	1

Good spring numbers this year, the bulk of the birds being seen in Bridgwater Bay. ‘Other’ records consisted of singles on the Axe Estuary in September, Hinkley Point in April and three there in September, at West Sedge Moor on January 28th, up to three at Dunster Beach in April and May and one there in September and October. The numbers in Bridgwater Bay are estimates; the peak passage was concentrated between April 29th and May

3rd, during which time up to 350 were counted at Berrow and 327 at Steart Point. The numbers in the table were derived from consideration of specific dates and counts, however there is potential for duplication if birds moved roosts during the days.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

Passage-migrant, commoner in spring than in autumn.

Whimbrel – monthly maxima at main sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Levels				144	117		1					
Parrett Estuary (inc. Berrow)			1	184	195		21	12				
Other sites				44	65		15	4	1			
Totals			1	372	377		37	16	1			

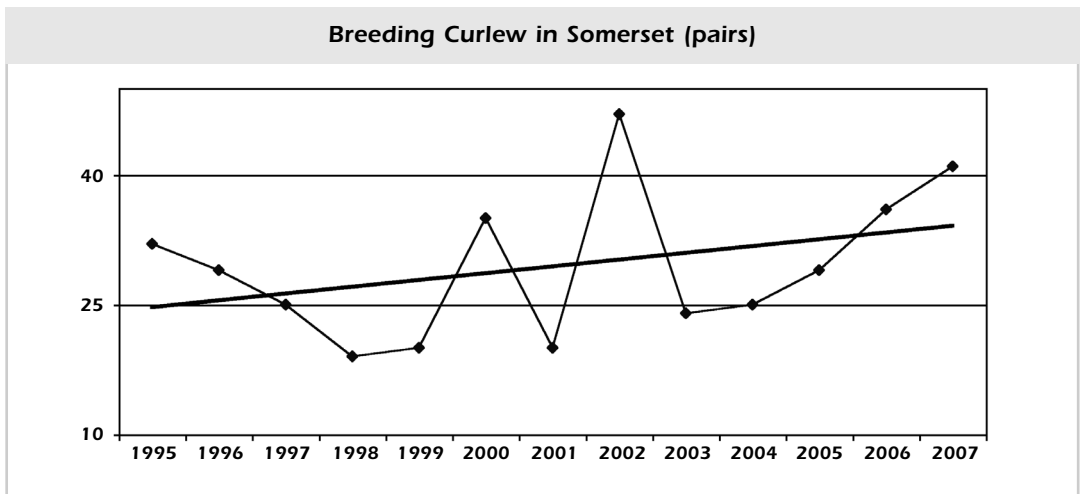
The first bird of the year was at Stolford on March 28th. Numbers during spring passage were higher than in recent years, the largest spring roosts being of up to 111 birds at Berrow on several dates from late April to mid May, so it is possible that larger numbers of birds were involved. Autumn passage was dismal even by the low standards of 2006.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

Uncommon breeder; common winter visitor and passage-migrant.

As many as 41 pairs bred this year, an increase for the fifth consecutive year. Note that the 2006 breeding total has been corrected as there were actually 21 rather than 15 pairs on West Sedge Moor in that year, in this year there were 27 at this site. Ten were to be found elsewhere on the Levels and on Exmoor birds were heard ‘bubbling’ or seen displaying at four sites around Dunkery Hill/Wilmersham Common area although there may have been some duplication.

Lower first winter numbers than in previous years, particularly around Steart Point where winter numbers typically top the 1,000 mark. There has been a small decrease in the annual numbers of Curlew in the U.K. over the last seven years; the recent Somerset counts may be a reflection of this.



Curlew – monthly maxima at main sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Axe Estuary				1	1	12	29	26	30			
Levels	1	22	54	52	60	57	6	1			1	
E. Parrett Estuary (inc. Berrow)	152	10		9	1	2	39	65	15	19	4	51
Stearth	850	865	460	500	78	125	696	400	800	970	1390	1230
Dunster Beach/ Minehead	110	115	31	4		53	64	60	65	55	54	52
Porlock Marsh	50	80	14	1		1	14			30		5
Exmoor				3	1	2						
Other sites	31	57	13	11		7	5	44	3	12	6	41
Totals (inc. higher Parrett Est. count)	1014	1139	572	122	140	257	814	531	898	1067	1451	1328

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

Fairly common passage-migrant; rare in winter. Has bred.

Common Sandpiper – monthly maxima at main sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Parrett Estuary	1	1	1	1	1	1	29	10	5	2	3	
Cheddar Res.				20	10		3	2				
Levels				3	2							
Sutton Bingham Res.				5	2		8	11	5	3		
Other sites	2		1	18	8		30	17	18	2	6	3
Totals	3	1	2	47	23	1	70	40	28	7	9	3

Spring passage was relatively poor, except at Cheddar Reservoir, where numbers peaked on April 29th.

Autumn numbers were similar to those in 2006, but passage was more protracted, with more birds noted well into November. During a July boat trip along the Parrett from Dunball to the Brue, 20 were seen along the banks, which suggests that many normally go unrecorded by observers on the sea walls.

Wintering birds were noted around Parrett and Brue Estuaries in both seasons, and at Torr Works Reservoir in the second period.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Green Sandpiper – monthly maxima at main sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Levels	14	9	9	5		9	1	6	8	10	20	14
Other sites	2	5	2	2		1	2	18	11	7	9	5
Totals	16	14	11	7		10	3	24	19	17	29	19

Winter numbers were normal for recent years; however, autumn passage was poor – only about half of those seen last year were noted.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

Scarce winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Spotted Redshank – monthly maxima at main sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Steart	2	2		1			1	2	4	7	3	2
Brue Estuary/ Huntspill Sea Wall		2					1	1	4	2	3	2
Other sites	1	1	1	1	2					2		
Totals (inc. higher Parrett Est. count)	3	3	1	2	2		1	2	4	9	3	2

Most records came from the Parrett Estuary, the favoured location in the County. However, slightly more than usual were seen away from this area: one on the Axe Estuary from January to April; one flew south-west over Butleigh, October 29th; one was at Meare and Shapwick Heaths from May 2nd to 5th; and one was at Stolford on October 21st.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

Locally fairly common passage-migrant, chiefly in autumn; rare winter visitor.

Greenshank – monthly maxima at main sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Levels				5	7		1	8	2		1	
Parrett Estuary	1	1	1	2			11	12	7	6	1	
Other sites				3	1			18	13	1	2	1
Totals	1	1	1	10	8		12	38	22	7	4	1

A fairly typical year for this species: although more than usual lingered into November, only one bird stayed into December, at Combwich. Away from the Levels and coast: singles of this species were recorded at Stretcholt in April, Sutton Bingham Reservoir in May and August, Chard Reservoir in August; eight were in the Blackmoor Vale in late August/early September; one flew north over Knighton on October 5th; and one was at Combwich Pill on December 7th.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

Uncommon passage-migrant, chiefly in autumn.

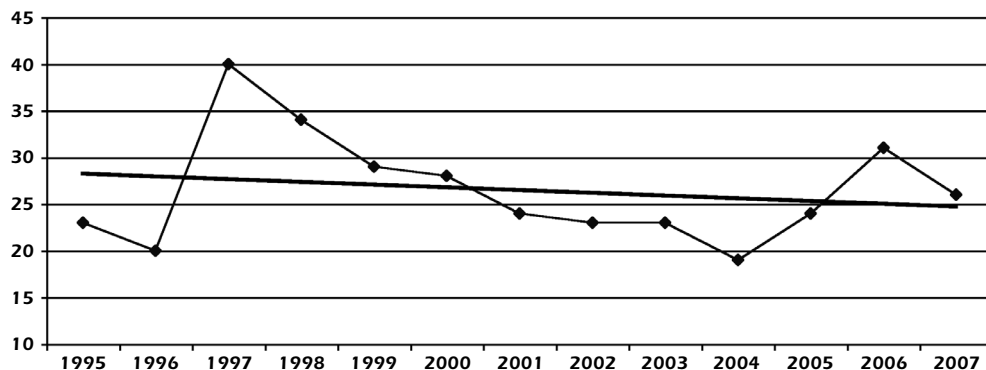
Only two birds, both on the same spring date of April 30th: Torr Works Reservoir (JHa, BAT) and Greylake Reserve (DJC, RSPB).

These bring the spring total to about 48. There have been none in autumn since 2004, though historically they are six or seven times more likely to appear then.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Uncommon breeder; fairly common winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Maximum pairs of breeding Redshank in Somerset since 1995



Up to 26 pairs were found attempting to breed, all except one on the Levels, as follows: four at both Catcott Lows and Tealham Moor; seven at both Greylake Reserve and West Sedge Moor; single pairs at Gold Corner RWLA, King's Sedge Moor and Curry Moor; and a possible pair at Porlock Marsh. Numbers in 2006 have been adjusted, as it appears that there were nine pairs at West Sedge Moor rather than the four previously recorded. Whatever the statistics, it is apparent that there is a slow long-term decline in breeding numbers in the County. Given the reported poor breeding success this year it does not look set to be reversed in the near future.

Redshank – monthly maxima at main sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Axe Estuary			220	150			45	124	290	250		
Levels		2	13	31	57	38	5			1		1
E. Parrett Estuary	100	79	140	810	1	20	290	1500	1000	1000	250	1070
Stear	500	200	4				1	100	700	450	469	60
Porlock Marsh	3	2	9	8	6	3	1		2			2
Other sites	3	5	1	2	1		2	1	10		23	17
Totals (inc. higher Parrett Est. count)	506	209	383	1001	65	61	343	1625	1302	1251	492	1090

Lower than average numbers were recorded in the first winter period. Spring passage was strong, as was the autumn passage, when up to 1,500 could be found on the Parrett Estuary. Second winter counts were typical of recent years. Records from other sites were all from coasts west of Steart Point. Most were from Stolford, but ones and twos could be found further west; a noteworthy 'local patch' record was of ten birds that flew west over Dunster Beach and then inland on September 11th.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres**Locally common winter visitor and passage-migrant.*

Turnstone – monthly maxima at main sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
E. Parrett Estuary	180	43	149				52	154	140	280		
Stear Point to Knighton Beach	40	125	191	161	11	21	68	8	399	162	88	128
E. Quantoxhead to Dunster Beach	85	110	68	34	4		15	15	32	65	80	57
Other sites	15	30	1		1			2		8		
Totals	320	308	409	195	16	21	135	179	571	515	168	185

Significantly higher numbers were recorded in 2007 than previously although it is possible that this may be down to duplication; however some counts during passage periods were made within a day of each other at sites either side of Bridgwater Bay so the extent of this is difficult to judge. One explanation may be that increased observer coverage is detecting mobility in roost sites of migrant Turnstones.

Only one inland: Cheddar Rservoir, May 5th. The remaining records in the 'Others' category were from Minehead (which are usually the same birds as those on Dunster Beach), apart from one or two around the Axe Estuary and at Berrow in August.

GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius**Uncommon passage migrant.*

Five records: an adult, Wall Common, September 26th, was relocated at Steart Point the next day (JRB, BDG, RLM); one, Brue Estuary, October 9th (BJH); two together Huntspill Sea Wall, November 8th (BJH); one off Minehead, the 10th (RLM); a first-winter, Berrow, the 13th (PB,AMS).

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus**Scarce offshore passage-migrant or storm-vagrant; rare winter visitor.*

No spring records this year, the first year since 2003.

Only six autumn records involving eight birds. Two in the Parrett Estuary, singles seen on Berrow beach, November 3rd (PG), and past Stolford, on the 4th (SCJF). In the west of the County, singles were off Hurlstone Point, August 20th and Minehead the next day. On November 10th, four juveniles were seen flying west past Minehead, two of these also being seen at Greenaleigh Point (BDG, RLM, ASt, JLT).

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus**Uncommon offshore passage-migrant; occasional in summer; rare winter visitor.*

Arctic Skua – monthly counts from Berrow to Kilve					
	April	May	June	July	October
No. of dates recorded	2	7	2	4	1
Maximum count	5	3	1	1	1
Total number	6	13	2	4	1

Arctic Skua – monthly counts from Watchet to Porlock Weir					
	May	July	August	September	November
No. of dates recorded	2	1	1	3	1
Maximum count	1	1	7	6	2
Total number	3	1	9	13	2

LONG-TAILED SKUA *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Rare offshore passage-migrant or storm-vagrant, chiefly in autumn.

Single juvenile west past Minehead, September 10th (JLT). The poorest showing since 2003.

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua*

Uncommon offshore passage-migrant; occasional in summer; rare winter visitor.

Great Skua – monthly counts from Berrow to Stolford					
	January	April	May	July	August
No. of dates recorded	3	1	1	1	1
Maximum count	3	1	1	1	1
Total number	10	1	1	1	1

Great Skua – monthly counts from Kilve Beach to Porlock Weir			
	January	August	September
No. of dates recorded	1	2	7
Maximum count	1	5	4
Total number	1	6	12

SKUA sp. *Stercorarius* sp.

There were two skuas that evaded identification; they were both in December at Steart on the 2nd and off Minehead on the 8th.

SABINE'S GULL *Xema sabini*

Rare offshore storm-vagrant in autumn; accidental in spring.

A juvenile, Parrett Estuary, August 31st (TR *et al.*), this bird as is often the case was very approachable and was enjoyed by many birders; an adult, west past Kilve, on the same date (BJH); juvenile feeding with Black-headed Gulls, Hinkley Point, September 10th (JRB).

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

Fairly common offshore, as summer and winter visitor, storm-vagrant and passage-migrant.

Kittiwake – summary of coastal records												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Total number	295		20	1	67	2	5				1142	379
Maximum count	80		20	1	50	1	3				1000	100
No. of days recorded	10		1	1	5	1	2				5	6

Only two large counts: 100 were in the Parrett Estuary off Steart, December 2nd, and 1,000, moving west off Minehead, November 10th.

Three inland records: adult in the roost at Cheddar Reservoir, January 21st, and one picked up dead there on February 3rd; one in a rhyne on Bawdrip Level, March 2nd.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Abundant winter visitor and passage-migrant. Has bred.

Black-headed Gull – monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Torr Works Res.	600	800	7		3	3	10	10	40	150	2000	1000
Parrett Estuary	1200	1000	340	150		100	2746	520	5000	1200	740	1300
Cheddar Res.	3700	630	350	15					22	60		5500
Sutton Bingham Res.	220	450				4	13	44	30		155	
Chard Res.	350	900	5	3	1	1	21	43	69	400	330	500
Porlock Marsh	300	350	200	40								

First signs of post-breeding dispersal were noted at several sites from the second week of June, rather earlier than in recent years perhaps, indicating a failed breeding season.

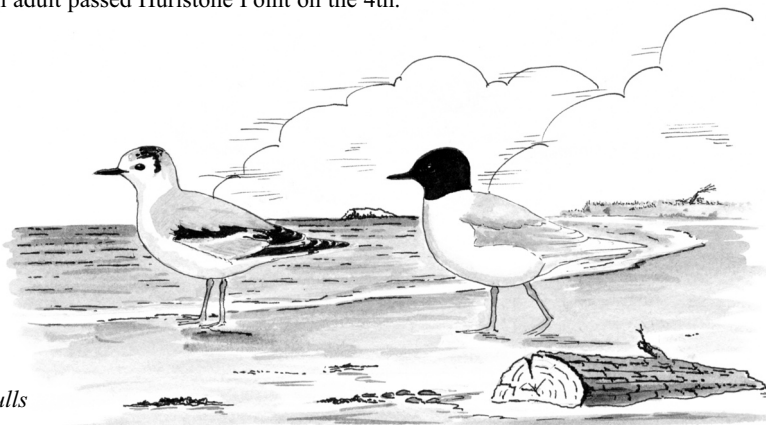
A few selected high counts: 650, West Moor, Hambridge, January 3rd; 200, Wimbleball Lake, on the 14th; 580, Catcott Lows, on 20th; 300, Hawkridge Reservoir, on 26th; 600, Dimmer Landfill, on 27th; 200, Axe Estuary, June 30th; 300, Combwich, July 28th.

LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Uncommon passage-migrant or storm-vagrant; scarce winter visitor.

A total of 32 in the first winter/spring period, singly unless stated: seven, Burnham, January 1st, and one on March 19th; Stolford, January 2nd; Catcott Lows, January 2nd and March 5th; Dunster Beach, January 4th; West Sedge Moor, on the 5th; second-winter, Brue Estuary, on the 22nd; three adults, Chard Reservoir, March 4th; Blue Anchor on the 18th; Porlock Marsh, on 21st and 26th; Shapwick Heath, April 1st and 22nd; a second-winter, Cheddar Reservoir, on the 8th, four there on the 11th, an adult on the 12th; adult, Axe Estuary, on the 13th; two (first and second-winters), Berrow, on 21st/22nd; one, Burnham, May 1st.

A least 15 in the autumn/second winter period: two first-winters, Minehead, September 21st; up to three, Dunster Beach, on 22nd and 23rd; two, Brue Estuary, on 25th; seven adults, Steart, on 30th. Only one October record when an adult passed Hurlstone Point on the 4th.



Little Gulls

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage-migrant. Increasing.

See below for monthly summary of numbers and ages, and reservoir records. Other records of single birds, all but one of adults: Dunwear Ponds, January 8th; Mark, on 13th: a first-winter bird, Catcott Lows, on 20th/21st and an adult there, February 25th; Meare Heath, October 3rd-27th, and that or another there, November 10th.

Records of colour-ringed birds can be found in the Ringing Report.

Mediterranean Gull – monthly summary of numbers and ages													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Axe Estuary		2											2
Berrow		4					4	1					9
Parrett Estuary		3					5	1	1				10
Blue Anchor – Minehead	4	2	2				5	2	4	4	4	3	30
Porlock Bay		1	2	1									4
Juvenile							1	1					2
First-year		1							1	1			3
Second-year	2	2	1	1			4		1		1		12
Adult	2	9	3				9	3	3	3	3	3	38

Mediterranean Gull – reservoir records													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Torr Works	3	1					1				1	2	8
Cheddar	2	2	2								1		7
Sutton Bingham Res.		1						1					2
Chard		1						1		1			3
Juvenile								1					1
First-year			1					1					2
Second-year	1	1					1						3
Adult	3	4	1							1	2	2	13

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Common winter visitor and passage-migrant, but recently decreased, especially in west.

Common Gull – monthly maxima from selected sites													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Torr Works Res.	2000	500						2	4				1000
Parrett Estuary	60	20	2	1	1		1		5				

Common Gull – monthly maxima from selected sites, continued												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cheddar Res.	750	10	1							1		138
Sutton Bingham Res.	5	5	5								9	9
Chard Res.	3	6								3	2	4

A few selected high counts: 45, Dunster Beach, January 15th; 200, Porlock Marsh, February 10th; 465, Charterhouse, November 11th.

RING-BILLED GULL *Larus delawarensis*

Scarce winter visitor.

An adult, Torr Works Reservoir, December 29th/30th (BAT *et al.*). It appeared two evenings running before on both occasions flying off to roost, presumably on Chew Valley Lake. This is the second year in a row that this species has been recorded at the site.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

Fairly common breeder; common winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Lesser Black-backed Gull – breeding pairs	
Hinkley Point	30
Bridgwater	up to 30
Chard	one pair possibly bred
Watchet Paper Mills	9
Butlin's, Minehead	1

Breeding is controlled in most town centres and industrial estates, especially in Bridgwater, Yeovil and Chard, falconers being used to deter birds. The Bridgwater total is a probably an underestimate, as several sites in the town were not checked.

Lesser Black-backed Gull – monthly maxima at selected sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Torr Works Res.	110	30	30	20	320	200	900	2100	7000	7435	4000	100
Dimmer Landfill	300		300									
Parrett Estuary	400	200		10	2			15	30			5
Cheddar Res.	30	100	400	44					25	5		100
Sutton Bingham Res.	5		30	97		103			2			
Chard Res.	5	5	8	5	4	4	5	6	1	1	2	1
Wimbleball Lake		20			3	4		29		39		

A few selected high counts: 72, south of Yeovil, March 19th; 80, Glastonbury, on 29th; 124, Taunton Vale, April 6th; 100, Bruton, on the 9th; 60, north of Faulkland, August 27th.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

Fairly common resident breeder; also winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Herring Gull – breeding pairs	
Bridgwater	up to 50
Hinkley Point	125
Misterton	4
Wellington	bred
Williton (new site)	3
Watchet	66
Butlin's Camp, Minehead	45
Minehead Town sites	up to 5
Glenthorne	bred, fledgling seen

Breeding was again controlled in Bridgwater, Yeovil and Chard, although the Bridgwater total was probably much higher, as several sites in the town were not checked. At Watchet the number of breeding pairs decreased from 80 in 2006 to 66; the same decrease was also noted at Butlin's with 77 pairs in 2006 down to 45.

Herring Gull – monthly maxima at selected sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Torr Works Res.	410	95	2	3	15		20	8	50	110	500	800
Dimmer Landfill	1000	400	500									
Parrett Estuary	20	156	30	30	2	2	4	10	60	50	20	20
Hinkley Point							350		500			
Cheddar Res.	200		250	19						3		800
Sutton Bingham Res.	150	340	50	250		60			30	120	90	480
Chard Res.	155	180	32	44	45	40	68	101	60	37	50	116
Wimbleball Lake	20	10				2	10	10	20	6		

A few selected high counts: 100, Watchet, January 4th; 270, south of Yeovil, March 12th; 131, Dunster Beach, May 7th; 182, Poole Tip, Wellington, on 24th; 160, Wembdon, September 24th.

CASPIAN GULL *Larus cachinnans*

Accidental.

First-winter, Torr Works Reservoir, January 13th (BAT).

A first County record and just reward for almost daily visits to the gull roost. The species may have been overlooked in the past. There have been five Avon records since 2002.

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahellis*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Regular visits to the gull roost at Torr Works Reservoir again reaped dividends with a total of 17 bird-days, birds being absent only during March and April (BAT *et al.*).

Yellow-legged Gull – monthly maxima from Torr Works Reservoir												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Juvenile							1	1				
First-year	1	1					1	1	1			
Second-year					1		1		1			
Third-year					1		2	1				
Adult	2					1	8	8	9	7	3	1
Total	3	1			2	1	13	11	11	7	3	1

Other records: at Dimmer Landfill, a first-winter on February 3rd, an adult on 18th, and a second-summer on 28th (BAT), and second-summer on the 28th (BAT); adult and a probable third-winter, Cheddar Reservoir, on the 17th (AMS, JJP, JLT); first-summer, Steart, May 17th (GS); adult, Berrow, August 12th (AMS, BES); adult, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, from 17th to October 13th (BJW *et al.*); adult, Axe Estuary, September 28th (PB); adult, Faulkland, October 8th (GS); adult, Rodden Nature Reserve, Frome, December 27th (BAT).

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides*

Rare winter visitor and passage-migrant.

First-winter birds, Bruton, February 11th and Wyke Champflower, February 11th (BAT); three different first-winters, but always seen singly, Dimmer Landfill, February 17th to March 28th (BAT *et al.*); one or two, roosting at Cheddar Reservoir, February 11th to April 3rd (AMS, JLT *et al.*). It is thought due to photographs taken that all the above records involved the same three birds.

One other record of possibly a different first-winter bird: Berrow, April 30th (RJI, JJP, BES).

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*

Rare winter visitor and passage migrant.

One record: a first-winter bird at Dimmer Landfill, March 11th-17th (BAT), was identical to one roosting at Cheddar Reservoir from the 12th to the 27th (BDG, RLM, AMS *et al.*).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Rare and irregular resident breeder; regular visitor, chiefly to coasts.

No breeding attempts noted.

Great Black-backed Gull – monthly maxima from coastal sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Parrett Estuary	3	15	1	2	4		4	2	37	19	2	5
Dunster Beach/ Minehead	4	3	3		2					1	1	
Hurlstone Point	1	1		2	7	7						1
Porlock Marsh	4		4	5	1	7	8		1	2		

Inland records, of single adults unless otherwise stated: Butt Moor, January 7th; at Dimmer Landfill, two on 13th, joined by another and a first-winter bird on 14th, and one on February 4th; Walton Heath, January 15th, and Butleigh Moor, on 19th; Wimbleball Lake, on 20th; Torr Works Reservoir, February 3rd; Cheddar Reservoir, March 12th and April 12th; Durleigh Reservoir, July 9th; adult and two juveniles, Wimbleball, September 15th, and two, October 20th; Hawkridge Reservoir, on that date and on November 24th.

LITTLE TERN *Sternula albifrons****Uncommon passage-migrant. Has bred.***

A total of seven were seen during spring-passage: singles off Berrow on April 20th and 29th, May 3rd and 20th and two on June 17th; also one Minehead, May 7th.

Six on autumn passage: one, Hinkley Point, July 23rd; two, Hurlstone Point, August 20th; two, Steart, August 30th; and one at Hurlstone, October 4th.

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger****Uncommon passage-migrant, chiefly in autumn.***

A very poor year for this species, with only four records, involving seven birds. one, Cheddar Reservoir, April 29th; four, Torr Works Reservoir, April 30th, and one on June 7th; one, Meare Heath, October 8th.

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis****Uncommon passage-migrant or storm-vagrant.***

The first record of the year came on the exceptionally early date of January 5th, when a bird in first-winter plumage was noted off Wall Common (JRB); the earliest previous County record had been on March 21st.

Sandwich Tern – monthly counts from Brean Down to Wall Common				
	January	April	June	July
No. of dates recorded	1	4	1	3
Maximum count	1	2	1	4
Total birds	1	5	1	8

Sandwich Tern – monthly counts from Dunster Beach to Porlock Weir							
	April	May	June	July	August	September	October
No. of dates recorded	1	5	3	4	1	1	2
Maximum counts	1	5	2	4	2	2	2
Total birds	1	13	4	12	2	2	4

Inland records: two, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, July 17th; two, Cheddar Reservoir, August 22nd.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo****(including “Commic” Tern *St. hirundo/paradisaea*)******Fairly common passage-migrant or storm-vagrant, and occasional summer visitor. Has bred.***

After failed breeding attempts in 2005 and 2006, this summer finally brought success when a pair raised three young on a site within the Avalon Marshes. Breeding was first suspected in late June and the three young were fledged on July 27th; they were still present in the area until the first week of August.

Spring passage was first noted in April with a bird at Greylake Reserve on the 18th, one was at Shapwick Heath on the 24th and a flock of ten passed Brean Down on the 29th. Spring passage was no better than in 2006 and apart from the Brean Down record there were no double-figure counts; on 21 bird-days only 39 birds were recorded, the most being eight, Berrow, June 11th.

Autumn passage was again poor with only 13 bird days comprising 43 individuals, mostly single birds, the larger counts being: ten, Dunster Beach, September 24th; four, Cheddar Reservoir, October 3rd; four, Wall Common, and five, Hinkley Point, on the 4th.

A total of 207 in spring and 26 in autumn were not specifically identified.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea**Fairly common passage-migrant or storm-vagrant.*

First in spring: three off Brean Down, April 29th; 21 passing Berrow on 30th. In Parrett Estuary, 50 off Wall Common, and a further 107 from then to the 4th.

Inland there were five at Meare Heath on June 21st.

Autumn passage: one off Berrow, July 27th; total of 16 along coast, August 20th-30th. One, Axe Estuary, September 16th; total of 63 from 22nd-30th; highest coastal count, 17 off Hinkley Point on last date, and others inland at Torr Works Reservoir, Cheddar Reservoir, Durlough Reservoir and Sutton Bingham Reservoir and on Walton Heath and Meare Heath; a further 47 in October, of which 35 were at Wall Common or off Hinkley Point, three at Cheddar Reservoir and nine off Dunster Beach; three off Hinkley Point in November, the last on the 6th.

GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge**Fairly common offshore visitor or storm-vagrant. May have formerly bred.*

Only one record away from the west: one close in to the sea wall, Hinkley Point, December 31st.

Guillemot – monthly counts from Dunster Beach to Hurlstone Point												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of dates recorded		1		2	2	4	2	1	1		4	
Maximum count		1		3	7	13	1	1	1		7	
Total birds		1		4	8	47	2	1	1		11	

RAZORBILL *Alca torda**Fairly common offshore visitor or storm-vagrant.*

Three records of singles in the Parrett Estuary: January 7th and 11th and December 2nd.

Razorbill – maximum monthly counts from Dunster Beach to Porlock Weir												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of dates recorded				3	2	7	2		2	3	4	
Maximum count				2	7	15	1		1	1	5	
Total birds				4	9	51	2		2	3	14	

AUK sp.

The following auks not specifically identified as Guillemots or Razorbills were recorded along the coast from Minehead to Hurlstone Point:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of dates recorded					2	3				1	3	3
Maximum count					3	10				2	9	8
Total birds					5	21				2	20	12

LITTLE AUK *Alle alle*

Rare offshore winter visitor or storm-vagrant.

One flew west, Hurlstone Point, January 14th (BDG).

ROCK DOVE (feral form) *Columba livia*

Fairly common resident breeder.

As ever, a familiar but very poorly recorded species, with populations in and around many towns and farms, no doubt, but records only received from: Rodden NR, Westbury-sub-Mendip, Catcott Lows, Westonzoyleand, Bridgwater, Stolford, various sites in Taunton, Tonedale, Bilbrook, Carhampton, Alcombe, Minehead and Bratton. This species is of little or no conservation concern, but ironically is one of those that we might learn the most about from the new Atlas.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Fairly common resident breeder; also winter visitor and presumably passage-migrant.

Breeding-season records, with * for confirmed nesting: Stowell, Wanstrow and Faulkland; estimate of 18 pairs in Somerset parts of Mendip Plateau (MFBS); Upper Axe Valley; Kennard Moor, Westhay, Shapwick Heath East and Tealham Moor; Somerton Moor, Westonzoyleand*, Southlake Moor, Earlake Moor, Fordgate and Stan Moor; Hay Moor, West Sedge Moor and Fivehead*; Wet Moor, West Moor (Hambridge) and Kingsbury Episcopi; Butleigh; Sutton Bingham Reservoir and Hamdon Hill; Over Stratton, Merriott, Millwater*, Crewkerne (four sites) and Ilford; Chard Reservoir, Chard and Snowdon Hill; Rumwell, Milverton*, Nynehead, Runnington and Langford Heathfield; Dowsborough and Lowsey Thorn; Wimbleball Lake, Paradise Combe and Rodhuish Common; Woolston Moor, Outmoor Wood/Five Bells and Stream; Dunster Beach; Selworthy, Porlock Hill and East Water/Cloutsham Ball; Warren Bridge; and along Barle at Hayes Wood, Knaplock Wood, Tarr Steps and Hawkridge.

Maximum counts in first winter period and early spring: 40, West Moor (Hambridge), January 14th; 20, Burton Pynsent, on 26th; 30, Luxhay Reservoir, on 27th; 22, Knighton, March 23rd/24th; and 20, Priddy, April 26th. The only parties of over ten in second part of year were 13 at Fivehead, July 24th, and 12 at Tonedale, November 25th. Has certainly decreased over last five years in West Somerset, where there is a long history of fluctuations.

WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Abundant resident breeder; also winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Confirmed breeding records only from: Berrow ("a common breeding bird"), Crewkerne, Hatch Beauchamp, Ilminster, Porlock, Taunton and West Sedge Moor. However, the welcome upward trend in reporting of this common species continues, with records sent in from a total of 98 localities spread across the County.

The most noteworthy concentrations in the first winter period were: 400, Langham Hill, January 10th; 86 north of Faulkland, on the 12th; 350, Selworthy, February 3rd; 60 near Burton Pynsent Monument, March 15th; and 100 at North Hill, Minehead, April 4th.

Some large autumn flocks mirrored widespread autumn movements elsewhere. A first wave of flocks passing through on courses between south and west had begun on October 20th, with 630 over the Berrow/Burnham coast; on the 29th, there were then flocks of 300 over Sutton Bingham Reservoir on the 29th and over Butleigh on the 31st. These were followed on November 1st/2nd by 80 over Hamdon Hill, 70 over Crewkerne and 500 at Selworthy. A larger movement began on the 11th, when 810 passed over Minehead in less than two hours; on the 17th there were 99 over Dunster Beach and 1,100 in half an hour over Porlock. On the 24th, there were northerly movements of 500 over Comwich and 300 over North Hill.

Large concentrations also noted in second winter period: 300, Nettlebridge, November 25th, and up to 400 at Langham Hill from 27th to December 18th; 150, Wembdon Hill, December 15th, on sprouting oilseed rape; peak count of 358, north of Faulkland, and 800, Hinkley Point, on 21st; 700, Blackford (Tivington), on 22nd, on stubbles; 195, Westbury Moor, on 23rd; 750 on stubbles at Mells on 31st; and up to 200 regularly on North Hill throughout November/December.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common resident breeder and occasional passage-migrant.

A total of 131 records submitted, from a minimum of 39 places. A reversal of the upward trend in the reporting of this species, which we hope will be resumed for 2008.

Some breeding records: common breeding bird at Berrow (BES); apparently declining at Crewkerne, but no counts made (AJP); bred over front door of house in Porlock (ENHS).

Maximum counts (over ten): 50, Steart, and at least 15, Coxbridge, January 1st; up to 13 in Westbury-sub-Mendip in the first winter period; 15, Dunster Hawn, March 15th; 22, north of Faulkland, November 5th; up to 18 at Tonedale in December; 23, Hawkwell Cross, on the 22nd.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

Rare migrant breeder, perhaps now extinct; also passage migrant.

Only one record: one visited a garden in Kilve briefly on April 28th (PS).

A very poor showing even by recent standards; officially the worst year on record in the County and with no hint that the species may still breed with us.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Locally fairly common migrant breeder, and passage migrant, chiefly in spring. Greatly decreased in lowland farmland.

First record: Swell Wood, April 7th.

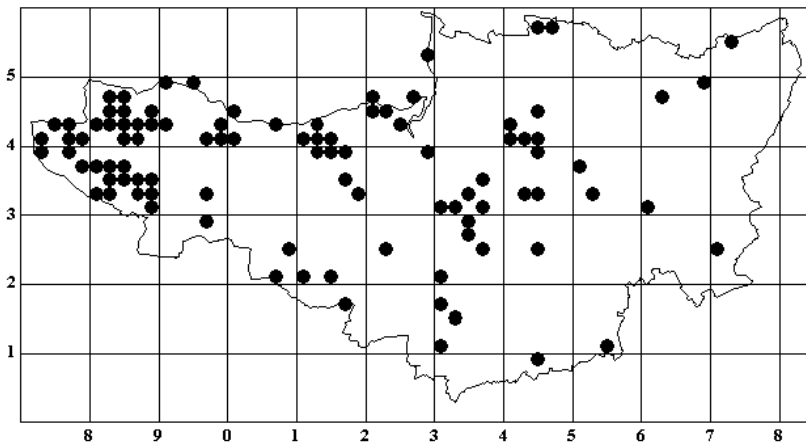
A total of 250 records, from 133 localities, of which very nearly half (66) were in the west – chiefly Exmoor, where the species appears to be holding its own. EMP recorded 37 contacts, of which at least 30 were males. This was a similar result to that in 2006. Many records were also received from the Avalon Marshes, though these were from only nine localities, so inevitably involve quite a lot of duplication.

Rather sparser elsewhere, however, with records from only 14 localities in the Quantocks and only seven in the Somerset portion of Mendip, despite a full survey of the area (MFBS). The comment that this species was “almost non-existent in the east this year” (RCFH) was borne out by only three records having been received from there, and the Blackdown Hills fared even more poorly, with only one calling male reported. Also a “very poor year” at Berrow (BES).

An hepatic bird was seen at Shapwick Heath, June 13th.

No records after July 14th, when a juvenile (the only one noted this year) was seen on a gate on Black Barrow Down.

Cuckoo distribution in Somerset



BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Uncommon and now very local resident breeder.

Breeding-season records, with * where nesting confirmed: Blackmoor Vale (bred, but just over Dorset border), South Cheriton, Hadsphen, Cary Moor, Marston Park, Mells Down* and Coleford; Huntspill Sluice and Steart; Westbury-sub-Mendip; Pilton*, Kennard Moor (one or two pairs)*, Ham Wall (two pairs)*, Meare Heath*, Shapwick Heath (two to three pairs, including regular pair in tin shed at Noah's Lake)*, Catcott Lows, Burtle*, Tealham Moor and Gold Corner; Somerton Moor, Butleigh Moor, Cock Hill, Greylake Reserve, Moorlinch, Moorland and North Newton*; Burrow Bridge and West Sedge Moor*; West Moor (Hambridge); Sutton Bingham Reservoir and Ilchester; Creech St Michael, Wyvern Road (Taunton), Trull and Staplegrove*; Stogursey; Brompton Regis; Washford; Piles Mill; Exford and Newlands area; Hawkwell Cross.

Some worrying casualties on Kennard Moor: one found dead at the Coxbridge end of the moor, November 6th, then two more in Cinnamon Lane on 15th, possibly poisoned but this has not been confirmed (GU). One found dead on the A372 at Aller, January 25th, seems to have been a simple road casualty.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Uncommon and increasingly local resident breeder.

Breeding-season records, with * where nesting confirmed: Blackmoor Vale (at least two pairs)*, Wyke Champflower, Cary Moor (at least two pairs)*, Mells Down, Hardington, Nettlebridge, Oakhill, Dinder and East Horrington; Upper Axe Valley (where DLB reports it as "much reduced") and Westbury-sub-Mendip; Brean Down, Mark, Kennard Moor (up to six pairs, of which five successful)*, Ashcott, Meare and Westhay; Lytes Cary*, Babcary and Butleigh*; Ilminster (one or two pairs) and Chard Junction; Staple Fitzpaine; Steart, Combwich*, Perry Green, Otterhampton*, Knighton, Shurton and Burton (one or two pairs); Williton (three pairs, two of which raised young)*; and Dunster Station/Minehead Marshes.

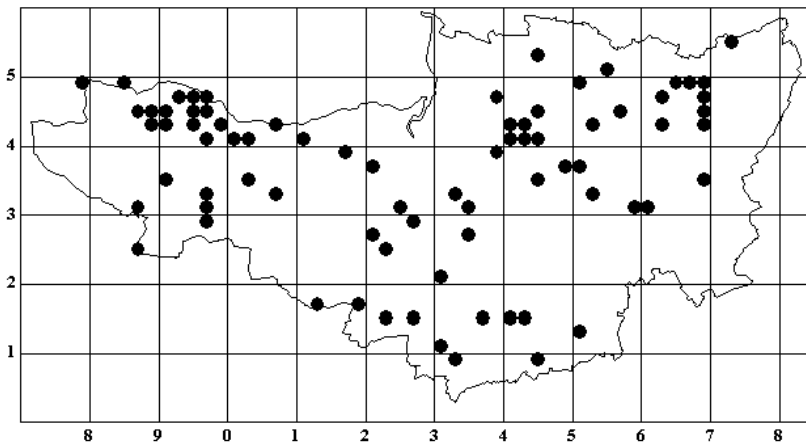
Also recorded outside the breeding season at: Stembridge; Coleford; Charlton; Brean Down; Hinkley Point; Knowle Moor; Glastonbury; Blakeway; East Waste; Edington; Moorland; North Petherton; Wet Moor. One road casualty, on the east side of Williton, November 24th.

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Common resident breeder.

Breeding-season records, with * where nesting confirmed: Torr Works Reservoir*, Tadhil (two pairs)*, Faulkland, Edford*, Coleford (three pairs) and Harridge Wood (Nettlebridge)*; Westbury-sub-Mendip*, Rowberrow Warren*; Mark*; Westhay Moor, Ham Wall, Catcott, Catcott Heath, Burtle; Butleigh Moor,

Tawny Owl distribution in Somerset



Burrowbridge*, and West Sedge Moor, Butleigh; Crewkerne*, Millwater*, Over Stratton, Ilminster (two pairs); Hatch Beauchamp (up to five pairs), Chard Reservoir (two pairs), Combe St Nicholas; Otterford, Staple Common, West Monkton*, Lower Stonehouse*, Hawkridge*; Bin Combe*; Raleghs Cross, Wimbleball Lake, West Hill Wood (Wimbleball), Croydon Hill and Higher Dumbledeer; Alcombe Common, Bratton (one or two pairs)*, Selworthy, Tivington Common, Luccombe, Webber's Post, Horner Wood, Cloutsham, Hawk Combe*, Yearnor Wood, Coscombe, Hawkwell Cross.

Records outside the breeding season were submitted from 37 other sites spread right across the County – many of these will also refer to birds which are resident and breeding, though even then the species, as with all nightbirds, is likely to remain under-recorded.

Two road casualties were noted: Lovington, October 24th; Dunster, November 11th.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Rare resident breeder; scarce winter visitor and passage-migrant.

No records were received from the previously regular breeding sites, but two, possibly three, records in the breeding season: one on a fence post, Kings Sedge Moor, May 16th (BHJG), and one flushed from a bush on Kennard Moor, August 4th (GU); an owl heard calling at dusk on Butleigh Moor, May 30th, was also thought possibly to be of this species (JAH).

No records were received from either winter period.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Uncommon and irregular winter visitor and passage-migrant. Has bred.

Only five records (probably involving nine birds) in the first winter period: singles at Steart on January 1st and 8th (probably the same bird), at West Moor (Hambridge) on the 28th, by Harridge Wood, east of Nettlebridge, February 7th, and six birds on the February WeBS count on East Waste.

One spring record: a single at Greylake Reserve, May 17th.

Total of 22 records in autumn and second winter period, though some duplication is likely, and perhaps only about 15 birds involved: one, Steart, October 4th; single birds at Berrow, on 21st, at Gold Corner on 22nd and on West Sedge Moor on 23rd; two, Wet Moor, November 4th, and one there on 21st; five, West Sedge Moor, December 11th; at least two, Steart/Wall Common, in mid December; two, Kennard Moor, on 20th, and one still there on 26th.

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Locally fairly common migrant breeder; occasional passage-migrant.

First observation: Dunkery, May 12th.

Breeding season records – numbers are of churring males unless otherwise stated:

Mendips

Stock Hill: at least seven birds present, including four males.

Black Down: six birds in total, including a pair at a site not occupied in 2006.

Rowberrow Warren: six, including two churring in daylight.

Beacon Batch: one churring male, plus one other bird in a different area.

Blackdowns

Staple Hill: one, plus a second bird in flight.

North Down Plantation: a single bird seen in flight briefly.

Quantocks

Triscombe Stone/Cockercombe: four or five.

Staple Plain: three, plus two other birds seen.

Brendons & Exmoor

Haddon Hill: none found.

Galloping Bottom: not visited, but permission now obtained, and should be included in 2008.

Kennisham Hill: none found; Collyhill Plantation and Langham Hill not visited.

Croydon Hill massif: about 15, in reasonably full coverage, but sometimes in poor weather conditions, of Slowley Wood west to Timberscombe Common, north to Rodhuish Common, Broadwood Plantation and Nutcombe Bottom

Withycombe Hill: two.

Gallax Hill/Bat's Castle Camp: one, or perhaps two.

North Hill/Selworthy Beacon/Bury Castle/Lynch Combe: at least six, in two groups: one of at least two around the North Hill Army Camp; and one of four around Bury Castle; the North Hill birds could be seen feeding on private setaside near Moor Wood, and one was seen over housing south-west of St Michael's church.

Dunster to Tivington ridge: about 13 birds seen, but very little churring.

Little Headon Plantation: one pair.

Crawter Hill/Ley Hill/Doverhay Plantation/Halse Combe: at least three pairs.

Cloutsham Ball and Webber's Post to moorland above Brockwell/Ford: about nine churring, including single males on Cloutsham Ball and in Luccombe Plantation.

Culbone Hill area: none found (Met Combe, Stent Hill and Squallacombe; Pitt Combe not visited).

Coscombe: none in exploratory visit.

Total of about 45 churring males west of Quantocks; there were 62 in 2006. The result can be partly attributed to persistent cold, wet and windy weather in July. Many sites are much exposed to the WNW winds that prevailed, and even where birds were found, they were often almost silent. Breeding success must have been low, and most sites were evidently deserted by August (DKB, RJB, RHD, JR, CS, R&MV *et al.*).

The practice of clear-felling, once so favourable to Nightjars within a large mosaic of sites such as Croydon Hill, is now falling out of fashion with foresters. Our populations may become more dependent on heathland sites, some of which are very exposed to wind and weather, though restoration projects may help, as on Haddon Hill, Black Hill and Ley Hill.

One record which is sadly now unusual was of a bird seen in flight and perched on a branch at Shapwick Heath, July 5th (P. Gawthorpe).

The last record of the year was also unusual: in Bridgwater, August 30th, a male was flushed from an ash tree in Saxon Green at 09.15 by a Sparrowhawk which gave chase and nearly caught the bird before the Nightjar flew off high south (RLM).

SWIFT *Apus apus*

Common migrant breeder and passage-migrant.

First arrival was one over Brean Down, April 16th.

Breeding records: 11-12 pairs in Bruton (no change); Knighton (15-20 pairs); "above average numbers" in and around Crewkerne; an unsuccessful attempt at Wadeford; around 12 pairs in Creech St Michael, but thought to have had a poor breeding season; in Taunton, at least 30 birds around Manor Road, two pairs bred in Priory Avenue, and a pair bred in air vents at the Hydrographic Office; approximately 30 pairs in Wellington; very few at Dunster, and the repairs to the castle roof may have all but extinguished that colony.

Records submitted from many other locations, but breeding attempts/success must be vastly under-recorded.

Concentrations were mostly over wetland areas on spring passage: 100, Ham Wall, April 24th; four counts of 150 to 200 over Avalon Marshes, Cheddar Reservoir and Steart, May 10th-13th; 1,000, Shapwick Heath, on 16th and 26th, and several counts of over 200 there until the 29th, when also 500 at Ham Wall, 150 at Torr Works Reservoir, and 400 at West Sedge Moor.

A count of 300 at Parchey/Chedzoy, July 25th, marked the beginning of the return passage.

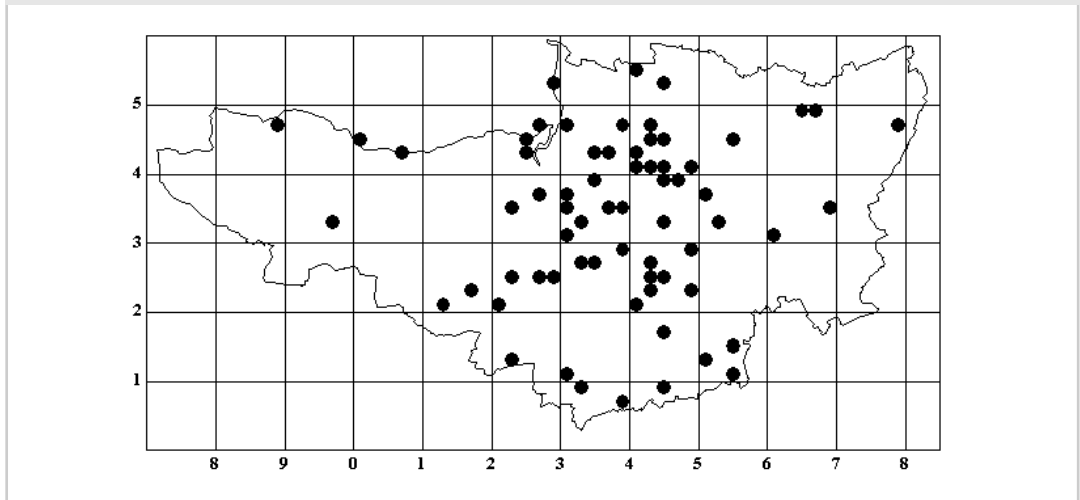
Most had gone by mid August, with only isolated records later that month. The last record was of two birds over Shapwick Heath on the relatively late date of September 22nd.

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Uncommon resident breeder: perhaps winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Breeding-season records, with * where nesting confirmed: Cary Moor, Bruton*, Rodden NR, Harridge Wood*, Edford Wood; Wells, Cross, Berrow, Apex Park (Highbridge), Steart; Sharpham, Westhay Moor, Glastonbury Heath, Street Heath, Loxton's Marsh, Walton Heath, Ham Wall, Shapwick Heath, Canada Farm, Tealham Moor, Gold Corner; Bawdrip Level, Bridgwater, Durleigh Reservoir; Somerton Moor, Greylake Reserve, Fordgate and

Kingfisher distribution in Somerset



Edithmead, West Sedge Moor, Langport, Muchelney, Wet Moor, West Moor (Hambridge); Sutton Bingham Reservoir, West Coker, Easthams, Crewkerne, South Petherton, Wayford Woods, Chard Reservoir, Ham, Creech St Michael* (one-two pairs), Taunton, Wellington*, Tonedale*, Westford*, North Newton, Enmore Castle Lake, Dunster Beach.

A juvenile trapped at Millwater, October 24th, was considered likely to be a locally-bred bird (AJP). Otherwise recorded from many of the above localities and a number of others during late summer/autumn and both winter periods.

HOOPOE *Upupa epops*

Rare passage migrant, chiefly in spring. Has bred (last in 1977).

Two records: one, Knighton, March 18th–27th, photographed (D. Webber, R. J. Hunt, JLT, NEW *et al.*); one, Burnham, April 21st, flew south along seafront, photographed (AMS).

The lingering Knighton bird was seen by many observers, attracting national attention as it was the first ‘twitchable’ bird of the year.

WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*

Rare passage-migrant, chiefly in autumn. Formerly migrant breeder.

Six records, all of single birds: Kilmersdon, (JHa), Steart (M. Kirk) and Kennard Moor (GU), all on August 27th; Staple Fitzpaine, September 2nd-3rd (M. Stewart); Thurley Combe, on the 8th (DKB, CS); Westbury-sub-Mendip, the 18th (JBl).

This was the highest annual total of modern times. Note the coincidence of date of the first three records, which ties in with a much wider national influx. The preponderance of brief sightings and/or birds in private gardens is also typical for this unobtrusive species.

Wrynecks have occurred annually in autumn since 1998; there were 34 from then to 2006. There has been only one spring record. Dates ranged from August 21st to October 13th. In the same period, Devon have had 136 in autumn, and six in spring.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Common resident breeder.

Confirmed breeding only at the following sites: Cadbury Castle, Bruton, Holcombe (three pairs), Wells, Hinkley Point, Cinnamon Lane, East Lydford, Butleigh, Mancombe, West Sedge Moor, Creech St Michael, and West Monkton. A total of 22 breeding pairs were estimated within the County on Mendip (MFBS).

Recorded at 89 other sites in the breeding season.

The most unusual record was of three together (with a Great Spotted Woodpecker) on a telegraph pole at Moorland, June 23rd.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Common resident breeder; scarce passage-migrant.

Breeding proved at the following localities: north of Faulkland, Edford Wood (two pairs), Holcombe, Coleford; Berrow; Westhay Moor, Ham Wall, Shapwick Heath, Burtle; Butleigh; Crewkerne (at least five pairs), Mancombe, Hatch Beauchamp (five pairs), Wayford Woods, Knowle St Giles; Dommatt Wood; Creech St Michael, West Monkton; Rams Combe, Somerton Combe, Bicknoller Combe, Weacombe; West Hill Wood (Wimbleball); Woodcombe, Bratton, West Luccombe, Withypool, Hawkwell Cross.

Recorded from at least 90 other sites in breeding season.

Two casualties reported: a male found dead on a lawn, Exford, May 1st; and an immature male was a road casualty near the hide at Sutton Bingham Reservoir, August 17th.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos minor*

Uncommon resident breeder; decreasing.

Probably under-recorded, with no records at all between late June and late October. Noted at the following sites: Orchardleigh Lake, Harridge Vale, Holcombe Wood, Edford Wood and Coleford; Ashcott Corner; Yeovil (visiting a bird table) and Broadway; Bin Combe (the only proved breeding, a pair feeding young in late May), Frog Combe, Hodder's Combe and Slaughterhouse Combe; Wimbleball Lake; Withycombe; Porlock Parks; Horner, Stoke Pero, Pool Bridge and Culbone.

WOODLARK *Lullula arborea*

Rare passage-migrant, chiefly in autumn. Formerly bred.

One record: one flew over Bruton, November 23rd; it called and the short tail was seen (BAT).

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

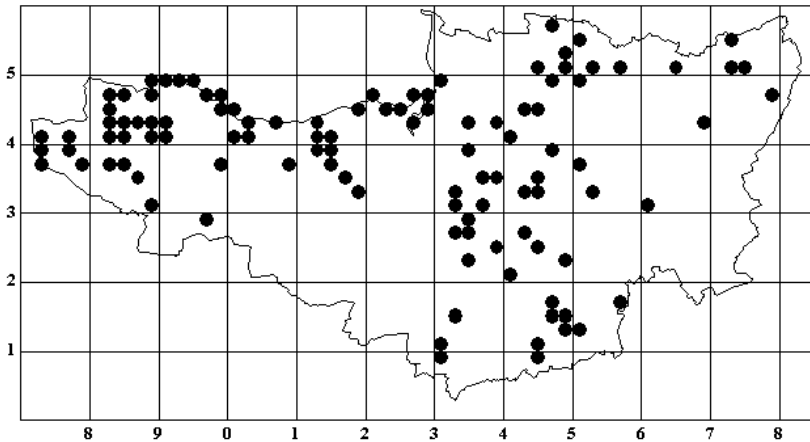
Locally common resident breeder, winter visitor and passage-migrant. Has decreased in many areas.

Breeding-season records, with number of birds or singing males/pairs* in brackets where more than one. In the east, where coverage is very patchy, recorded only on Cary Moor (12*), at Torr Works (two*), from Mellis to Buckland Dinham (30*), in area north of Faulkland (20 to 30*) and at Killing Knap Farm, Stratton-on-the-Fosse (eight*). On Mendips: at Black Down (up to seven*), from Green Ore to Torhole Bottom (25* in an area that has been little recorded), at Wellington Farm, Priddy (5*), and in smaller numbers at Ubley Warren, Charterhouse, Draycott Sleights, Cheddar Head and Tynings Farm; the almost complete Survey of the plateau west of the A39 found about 130 birds, with concentrations between Chewton Mendip and Green Ore (roughly the area just mentioned), around Priddy, above Rodney Stoke, and on Black Down (MFBS). On coast from Parrett Estuary to Stolford: three* along Huntspill Sea Wall, about 15* on Pawlett Hams, up to ten* around Steart, four* at Stolford and 12* at Knighton.

Again under-recorded on Levels north of Poldens, where nine* in Upper Axe Valley, but only one or two pairs at Sharpham, Catcott Lows and Chilton Moor. More widespread south of Poldens (where there is now more arable): recorded from Bawdrip Level (about five*), Somerton Moor (17*), Butleigh Moor (18*), King's Sedge Moor SSSI (33* in April, but only about 20 in May/June), Moorlinch Moor (12*), Greylake Reserve (17*), Stan Moor (three*), North Moor, Moorland (four*) and Southlake Moor (14*). On West Sedge Moor, 181 pairs in May, a welcome return after last year's poor season; nearby, 13 on Curry Moor*, five on Hay Moor*, and (over the ridge) ten* at Home Farm, Wiltown, and three* at Fivehead. On South Levels: 18* on Wet Moor, 13* on West Moor, six* on King's Moor and two* between Langport and Muchelney

In Central Somerset, only two at Butleigh in April. In the south, only at Pen Mill (one*), Hamdon Hill (eight* in March), and one or two at Chiselborough Hill, Lower Severalls and around Crewkerne. Up to three*

Skylark distribution in Somerset



at Broadway (following change from rape to pasture) and six* on Snowdon Hill, but HCS comments on further decline around Chard. Not one bird was reported from the Blackdowns, where there is now a serious shortage of observers, or (more surprisingly) from the Vale of Taunton Deane.

On Quantocks, 52* in a fairly complete coverage, almost all north of Crowcombe Park Gate (BDG). On the Brendons, only on Haddon Hill (about 12*). On the coast, present at several lowland sites from Watchet to Porlock Weir, including at least four* on Minehead Marshes and five* on Porlock Marsh; also at least ten* from North Hill to Bossington Beacon. Few Exmoor counts, but, as usual, commonest on grass-moorland or on recently burnt heather: about ten* around Chetsford Water, from Pinkworthy Pond down to Goat Hill Bridge, and in the upper reaches of Squallacombe and Great Woolcombe; 17 birds in March on Brady Moor, which was burnt in 2006.

In first winter period, many singing as early as February, including ten above Westbury-sub-Mendip and 22 on south side of Dunkery. The largest flocks in January/February were of 22 north of Faulkland, 50 along Huntspill Sea Wall, 60 on West Sedge Moor and 67 on Minehead Golf Course, the second-highest count for the site.

Skylarks (or their recorders?) disappear rather mysteriously in late summer. The four August records included ten on Mill Hill (Oareford), on the 27th. Of only 35 reported in September, 12 were north of Faulkland. The few records of passage in October and early November included 25 south over Black Down on October 5th and at Huntspill Sluice on the 6th, ten east in an hour over Knighton on the 7th, and a "fall" of 150 at Porlock Marsh on November 3rd.

Highest counts for second winter period, mostly on stubbles: 445, west of Hinkley Point; 200, Kennard Moor; 53, Mells Down; up to 36, Crewkerne; and up to 75 in fields behind and to the east of Porlock Marsh.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Uncommon migrant breeder; common passage-migrant.

First arrival: a very early bird at Meare Heath, February 23rd-March 1st. A thin trickle followed, making a total of 25 on Levels and coasts up to the 17th. More numerous from then, and especially from 28th, to April 1st, almost all over Avalon Marshes or reservoirs, where ten counts of over 100, the highest of 850 in Avalon Marshes and 600 at Cheddar Reservoir on March 31st. The new wetland on Cary Moor attracted up to 11 and has been provided with an artificial nesting bank (BAT). Movements continued intermittently, mainly on the Levels, even up to late May, but the only high counts were: 100-200 on Avalon Marshes, April 9th and 25th; 80, Cheddar Reservoir, on 29th; 300, West Sedge Moor, May 10th; 150, Cheddar, on 12th; and 50 at Sharpham, on 15th. Highest coastal counts: 50, Brean Down, April 13th, and at Dunster Beach on 21st.

Breeding confirmed or suspected at following sites: about ten pairs in drain-holes, Ashford Reservoir; four, Creech St Michael, but flooded out; six, Bathpool; ten, Bradford-on-Tone, May 1st, though no later records; one, Tonedale; about 22, ARC Sandpits, Greenham, by May 1st, which probably had some success, as there were 60

on wires in early September, though former site at Whiteball now too overgrown (BC); on Barle, three to five pairs from Pickedstones to Sherdon Hutch, though none at Acklands, under Brady Moor or on island below Landacre Bridge, and Hillway Bend site was not checked. No records from Axe at Chard Junction, but main colony there is (or has been) in Dorset. Presence of midsummer birds at Torr Works Reservoir and Exebridge Fisheries suggests the possibility of small undiscovered colonies nearby.

Very thin autumn passage from mid July to October 3rd; last straggler passed Brean Down on 21st. Apart from breeding sites at Ashford Reservoir and Greenham, where some remained until mid September, only counts of over ten were: 20, Steart, July 20th, 30, Meare Heath, September 17th-19th; and ten, Torr Works, on 27th.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Common migrant breeder and passage-migrant.

First arrival: Horton Cross, March 13th. Apart from 28 at Knighton on 27th, no more than a trickle until April 11th, when 12 at Steart. Although 50 passed north over Brean Down on 13th, there was then another gap until larger numbers appeared from 17th to 19th, including 250 west at Bratton on evening of 17th. Movements then again small and irregular up to May 6th, with only seven double-figure counts. Much heavier passage followed up to the 15th, including seven counts of 100 to 500, and one of 5,000, at Steart on 15th. Some continued through rest of month.

Very few breeding records submitted: about 25 pairs enjoyed a successful season in five kilometre squares around Crewkerne; remote sites occupied on Exmoor at Mole's Chamber and Blackpitts. The last brood produced by four pairs at Bawdrip did not fledge until September 29th.

Autumn movements began in early August, with 200 over Bratton on 5th. Later in August, four counts of over 100, including 300 at Greenham on 29th. Main passage from September 9th, when 250 moved in three directions over Brean Down. Three other counts of over 200 from then to the 15th, including 250 at Steart on 12th and 226 in two hours moving east in small parties over Black Down on 13th. Some strong movements continued up to October 2nd, including 4,000 over Street, September 24th, and 1,000 passing east at Lilstock from 09.15 to 10.00 on 30th. Last count of over 100 was at West Myne and Hurlstone Point on October 4th, where 760 came off Channel from 08.30 to 09.40 and moved steadily south over Selworthy Beacon – evidently a sudden release from a South Wales overnight roost. After last double-figure count, of 20 at Kennard Moor on 16th, only five seen up to 19th, followed by a single, ragged straggler at Steart, November 15th.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

Common migrant breeder and passage-migrant.

First arrival: ten, Brean Down, March 28th. Thin passage from 31st to April 23rd, with only two double-figure counts, though first summer visitors were visiting nest sites at Burtle, Combwich and Allerford on 12th/13th. Passage intensified from 24th to May 8th, though only ten counts of over ten, the highest being of 50 at Shapwick Heath, April 24th, and 60 at Bossington on 29th. On May 8th, three pairs arrived at Barnfield, Crewkerne, but then vanished, only to return to nest on June 8th. Passage continued to end of May: notable counts were of 200 coming in off sea at Dunster Beach on the 13th, 100 at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on 15th, and 300, Orchardleigh Lake, on 28th.

Breeding notes included: ten to 12 nests along a terrace of houses at Coleford; 14 nests on two houses at Burtle; nine pairs at Barnfield, which reared about 50 young in 12 broods; and a remote but flourishing colony on ranch cottage of Acklands on the Upper Barle.

Autumn passage from late July, apparently in greater numbers than other hirundines. Peak from August 11th to late September, with 13 counts of over 100. Exceptional numbers were: 700, Bratton, September 7th, which arrived from north and west and eventually flew off eastward; on 30th, 3,000 passed east at Lilstock from 09.15 to 10.00. Small movements continued into October; last bird over Exford Common on 31st.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Uncommon migrant breeder; also passage-migrant. Has decreased.

First arrival: one north-east, Hinkley Point, April 10th. The next were three north over Brean Down and one singing on Haddon Hill, April 14th. From 15th to 30th, 16 at various places, mainly coastal, as well as birds singing in four breeding areas.

Breeding-season records, with number of singing males/pairs where more than one: on Mendips, at Stock Hill/Priddy Mineries (four), Black Down (eight) and Rowberrow Warren (six), though MFBS found only three, two on Black Down and one on the county boundary at Compton Hill; on Blackdowns, at Quants and Ringdown Common; on Quantocks, at Cothelstone Hill (three), Lydeard Hill, Fire Beacon, Marrow Hill (two), Aisholt Common, Cockercombe, Over Stowey Common and Dowsborough (two each), Knacker's Hole, Frog Hill (two), Hare Knap (three or more), Somerton Combe and Stert Combe (two each), Slaughterhouse Combe, Black Ball Hill and Bicknoller Combe.

On Brendons, only on Haddon Hill (nine) and Croydon Hill/Monkham Hill/Black Hill (at least four). On western coastal heaths, on North Hill (two) and at Bury Castle and Met Combe. On Exmoor: in North Dunkery combes/Webber's Post/Cloutsham Ball (five), and at Prescott Down, Thurley Combe, Curr Cleeve (three), Varle Hill (two), Winsford Hill (13), Exe Head Bridge (displaying from telegraph pole!) and Warren to Orchard Bottom (seven), Squallacombe (four) and Long Holcombe (six), both these sites being along lines of old beeches. Total for EMP walks was 23, as opposed to 11 in 2006, but difference was almost exactly made up by addition of Winsford Hill, a major site. No coverage of Dunster-Tivington ridge, another important area, and Croydon Hill massif was under-recorded.

Only two records from breeding sites, July 1st to August 5th. About 28 on autumn passage, August 25th-September 9th, including total of 11 over Hadspen Hill and nine north-west over Brean Down, September 8th. A straggler flew south over Burnham, October 5th.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Locally common resident or migrant breeder, winter visitor and passage-migrant.

From January to mid April, 13 flocks of 20 or more, including spring migrants, the largest being: 60, Catcott Lows, January; up to 62, West Sedge Moor, January/February; 50, Porlock Marsh, March 28th; 142 north, Brean Down, April 2nd; total of 800 moving north in small groups, Steart, on 3rd; 44 north-west, Upper Axe Valley, on 8th, followed by 16 there the next day; 40, West Myne, on 8th; and 101, West Sedge Moor, on 17th. Many smaller groups, mainly on Levels, but some along edges of Exmoor, where main return of breeding birds is in late March.

In summer, only records outside Quantocks, Brendons and Exmoor were the following pairs, of which all but the first were on the Levels: on Mendips, MFBS found 58 birds in Somerset, of which 20 were on Black Down and others were widely scattered between there and Green Ore, though few on improved grassland, and also four on Wavering Down, which were the only Mendip birds otherwise reported; King's Sedge Moor SSSI (12), Greylake Reserve (one), Moorlinch Moor (about three), Southlake Moor (two), West Sedge Moor (at least 46), Wet Moor (two); and the Steart peninsula (one or two).

About 90 pairs found in partial survey of Quantock tops, 11 on Haddon Hill, and widespread records from Exmoor, where only counts were of 48 on Weir Water/Chalk Water circuit, July 14th, and 60 around Colley Water Fold, August 23rd.

Many passage records, largely coastal, September 10th-November 20th, and wintering birds returning to lowland farms from September 20th. Migration in two waves: the first from September 13th to 26th, when highest count was of 60 at Brean Down on 15th; the second and larger from October 5th to 7th; on 5th, 96 moved south over Black Down and 80 over West Myne (where they had come off Channel); on 6th, 150 flew south over Brean Down and 120 east and south at West Myne/Hurlstone Point, and there were also 100 at Steart. Flock of 46 north of Faulkland, September 24th, was largest in 12 years' coverage of the site (GS).

Many counts of up to 50 wintering on farmland, especially on stubbles, which are now often the aftermath of maize. Higher counts included 200 near Crewkerne, October 21st, 100 on Kennard Moor, November 17th, and 150 on West Sedge Moor, December 11th.

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Only one spring record: three, Catsford Common, March 20th (GS).

In autumn and second winter period, at least 12 from October 22nd to end of year: one, Huntspill Sea Wall area, October 22nd-27th (TR *et al.*); at least four, Meare Heath and Shapwick Heath (East), from 27th to November 8th (RCFH, JAH, JLT); two, Greylake Reserve, on 14th (RSPB); one, Loxton's Marsh, from 27th to December 10th (RSPB), and two others there on 31st (DLB); and single birds, Catcott Lows, November 24th (RCFH), and Wall Common, December 11th (JRB).

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

Uncommon resident breeder, winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Present in breeding season at following sites, with number of pairs in brackets: Brean Down (three); Hinkley Point (up to five); Shurton Bars (two); Lilstock to Kilve Beach (about three); East Quantoxhead to Blue Ben (four); St Audrie's (two); Doniford (two, of which one already had three young on May 2nd); cliffs from Watchet to Blue Anchor (four); Hurlstone Point (at least one); and Glenthorne. Fuller coverage than has been recently achieved, especially along Quantock coast (JDH).

More widespread in rest of year: occasional records from Brean to Huntspill Sluice and counts of up to six on Dunster Beach, where present in all months except June/July.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava flavissima*

Uncommon migrant breeder and passage-migrant.

First arrival: male, Catcott Lows: April 11th. From the 12th to first week of May, slow build-up on Levels of breeding populations, including 12 at West Sedge Moor on April 17th, and about 12 on passage at various other sites, mostly on coast. Later movement on May 13th brought 22 to Porlock Marsh and up to three at Dunster Beach.

Breeding-season records: seven pairs, Pawlett Hams, where 20 on August 4th included many juveniles; perhaps one pair around Comwich; at least one pair bred, Greylake Reserve; 28 pairs, West Sedge Moor; about six, Wet Moor, early May, of which one may have bred; two, West Moor (Hambridge) of which one certainly bred; and one or two birds seen intermittently on Tealham Moor and North Moor (Moorland).

Autumn passage from July 22nd (a juvenile at Cary Moor) to October 14th, but mainly August 6th-September 16th; total of about 60, singly or in parties of up to six. Of these, 16 in East Somerset, including four flying south over Hadspen Hill and ten at Dunster Beach.

Blue-headed Wagtail *M. f. flava****Scarce summer visitor and passage-migrant. Has bred.***

At least four records: male, Catcott Lows, April 11th-21st; female, West Sedge Moor, possibly paired with a Yellow, on 26th; male, West Moor (Hambridge), May 4th, and again there on June 20th, when may have been paired; single male, Greylake Reserve, May 5th-23rd.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Fairly common resident or migrant breeder, winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Breeding-season records, mainly of pairs or proved nesting: in East Somerset, at Bruton, Torr Works Reservoir, Edford and Harridge Wood; in Upper Axe Valley and at Cheddar Reservoir; in South Somerset, at Sutton Bingham Reservoir, Little Norton, Easthams, Millwater, and in the area south of Crewkerne; in south-west, at Broadway, Higher Lock and King's Lock on the Bridgwater-Taunton Canal, Creech St Michael, West Monkton, Taunton, Staplehay, Halse (regular breeding on the pond by Hopkins' Farm), Nynehead and Tonedale; on Blackdowns, only at Otterhead Lakes; on or near the Quantocks at Ashford Reservoir, Enmore Castle Lake, Quantock Combe, Rams Combe, Holford and Holford Combe, Hodder's Combe and Somerton Combe; and on the Brendons at Wimbleball Dam, Cleve Abbey and Walland Farm (Wheddon Cross), where a pair nested in the farmhouse porch.

Most numerous in Exmoor valleys, where often absent in winter, but returning to start breeding in March. Pairs or young seen as follows: Bratton, Bossington, Hawk Combe (two), Chetsford/Nutscale Water through Horner Valley and up East Water (probably five or six), Weir Water and Chalk Water; Badgworthy Water (three or four from Long Combe down to Malmsmead), along Exe from West Nethercote to Larcombe Foot and Winsford; along whole length of Barle and tributaries from Pinkworthy Pond to Marsh Bridge (at least 15, including a new high site at Driver Farm); and in Upper Hoarook Water.

There may be many unknown sites by farm ponds on lower ground and on private ground along rivers.

More widespread on lowlands from autumn to spring. In first winter period, recorded at about 18 sites where not known to breed. From early September to early November, about 50 migrants along coast and at reservoirs, including: four flying north at Brean Down, September 8th; five, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, on the 26th, and five south over Burnham, October 5th. During the same period, and from then to the end of the year,

total of about 70 at various inland sites, almost all on lower ground; a female at Landacre Bridge on December 23rd was unusual for the season.

Correction: in *SB 2006*, the distribution map of Dipper records was actually that of Grey Wagtail.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Common resident or migrant breeder, winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Very few breeding-season comments: three pairs bred in Bruton; at Street, pair raised two broods ten metres from main doors of Clark's Distribution Centre.

At least 250 roosted on trees on The Parade, Taunton, in mid January, but the only other roost count was of 40, Ham Wall, December 31st.

Flocks in first winter period and early spring: 20, Crewkerne STW, and 40, Meare Green STW, January/February; 45 in muck-sprayed field. Hatch Beauchamp, February 3rd; 36 in one field at Barton Road, Butleigh, on 4th, and 50 at Sedgemoor Services on 6th; 25, Porlock Marsh, on 18th; up to 50, Stolford and around Cheddar Reservoir, from 20th to 23rd; 15, Wall Common, March 9th; 60, Cheddar Reservoir, on 10th; 26, Wellington, on 12th; and 18, Cheddar Reservoir, April 8th.

Flocks in autumn and second winter period: 25, Dunster Beach, August 28th; 30, Cheddar Reservoir, September 2nd; 27, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, on 17th; 19 south, Burnham, October 5th; up to 18, Crewkerne STW, November/December; 30, Catcott Lows, November 25th-December 4th.

White Wagtail *M. a. alba*

Fairly common spring passage-migrant. May have bred.

First arrivals: four, Stolford, March 17th, and two, Knighton, on 18th. All others were from 20th to May 1st: largest parties were of 20 at Knighton, March 23rd, and up to 49 there, 25th-27th, the largest flock ever recorded in Somerset (NEW); and 35, Shapwick Heath, April 10th. About 36 others in parties of up to four, all on coasts or at Cheddar Reservoir, apart from four at Creech St Michael, April 6th.

Only one identified in autumn: Steart, September 9th.

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus*

Locally fairly common resident breeder. Decreasing in lowlands and perhaps elsewhere.

The following were recorded outside the Brendons and Exmoor: one pair on Brue at Bruton, the first since 2000; at least nine pairs along Mells River from Nettlebridge to Frome, including one on a new territory near Nettlebridge STW (JHa); one at Wookey Hole, January 1st, and one in song at Wookey, July 31st; in December, one on an Axe tributary at Leigh Lane, Ammerham, perhaps a breeding site, and another singing on Axe at Tatworth, probably from a known pair at the nearby Perry Street Lace Factory; "the usual pair" on Sherford Stream at Staplehay throughout year; frequent breeding-season records along Tone from Tonedale to Nynehead, and also two at Westford in October and at Bradford-on-Tone in November; one on Yarty at Bishopswood in February; on Quantocks, only at Holford and at Hodder's Combe, where two males were singing in December. Determined searches of streams in farmland would undoubtedly find more pairs.

On south side of Brendons, recorded only on Haddeo from Wimbleball Dam (bred) to Bury; two pairs on Doniford Stream between Sampford Brett and Doniford; at least one between Yarde and Williton; two on the Washford River from Hungerford to Watchet, and one further up at Chargot in December.

Along north-east side of Exmoor, only four sightings on the Avill this year, at Ford and North Hawkwell and in Dunster Park; some revival on Horner Water, where at least four pairs from Chetsford Water to West Luccombe (the difficult section from Nutscale to the Pool Bridge campsite was unrecorded), and one or two in East Water; at least one pair in Hawk Combe, and a rare July sighting as far down as Porlock Marsh; single pairs probably bred in Weir Water and Chalk Water; two or three pairs from Hoccombe Water down Badgworthy to Malmsmead.

On the Exe, probably four pairs from Exford down to Larcombe Foot, but none above Westermill Farm; most of the lower river from Winsford to Exebridge is private, and very little recorded, though none reported this year from the accessible section at Bridgetown. On the Barle, not seen above Simonsbath, but at least 13 pairs from Pickedstones Bridge to Marsh Bridge, about the same as in 2006 (DKB, EMP).

Correction: the map published with this species in *SB 2006* belonged to Grey Wagtail.

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Abundant resident breeder.

About 350 records received, but only a national computerised survey can make much sense of casual notes on a very common species.

Counts of more than ten, or made on regular basis: 16 north of Faulkland, June; 23 singing, Black Down, April; ten, Cheddar Reservoir, and 15, Westbury Moor, December (which were reckoned as poor figures from earlier experience of the sites); 17, King's Sedge Moor SSSI, and 11, Southlake Moor, both in April; monthly counts at West Sedge Moor varied from four in March to 33 in June; 15, south of Crewkerne, April; 11, Donyatt and Broadway, in May/June; 12, Combe St Nicholas, November; 52, Britty Common/Mount Fancy, May (only 36 in 2006); 14, North Hill, and 20, Horner Wood, April.

Around Crewkerne, considered a moderately successful breeding season: bred in ST4309 and 4310, and probably in 4409, 4410, 4509 and 4510 (AJP).

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Common resident breeder.

About 380 records received; as in 2006, slightly more than for Wren.

Counts of more than ten: 13, north of Faulkland, April; 22 pairs throughout year, Berrow; ten, Cheddar Reservoir, and 21, Westbury Moor, December; 20, south of Crewkerne, April; ten, Minehead Marshes/Dunster Beach, March; and 13, North Hill, April.

Around Crewkerne, bred in ST4309, 4310 and 4409, and probably in 4410 and 4509, but only small numbers of young seen or ringed.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Abundant resident breeder; also passage-migrant and winter visitor.

About 400 records received, an increase of 33% on 2006.

As with the last two species, hard to know what conclusions can be drawn from these at County level, except where regularly surveyed kilometre squares are concerned. The most notable counts were as follows: 18, north of Faulkland, March; 11, Priddy, November; at least 18 pairs, Berrow, January; 20, Cheddar Reservoir, and 46, Westbury Moor, December; 17, Westhay Moor (not including Reserve), December; 16, West Sedge Moor, January; 36, ST4408 (south of Crewkerne), October, probably reflecting immigration; 20, Combe St Nicholas, November; 15, North Hill, April; ten, Bratton, January and December; ten, Hurlstone Point, October 11th, including a recent fledgling; 21, Weir Water/Chalk Water, February.

Certainly an influx from October 2nd to 6th, when there were 40 at Brean Down, 25 at Shapwick Heath and 30 at Woodcombe.

NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Uncommon migrant breeder, and passage-migrant in spring.

First arrival: Thurlbear Quarrylands, April 10th. Only about 16 singing males from then to June 20th: West Sedge Moor (two), Broadway, old railway on Beercrocombe side of Hatch Beauchamp and Crimson Hill (one each); Thurlbear Quarrylands (four or five); and Hinkley Point (four in western copse and two on southern edge).

By far the lowest figure of recent years, and only half the 2006 figures. Not clear whether all likely sites were visited; no records for traditional site at Merryfield Aerodrome, where none heard in daylight visit; none in Jenny Cridland's Copse.

As in 2006, one bird in autumn: Berrow, August 12th.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Uncommon passage-migrant and winter visitor. Has bred.

All single females or immatures unless otherwise stated.

No overwintering birds from 2006, and only two spring migrants: Hurlstone Point, March 14th, and Knighton, on 23rd.

About 20 in autumn and second winter period, singly unless stated: Porlock, September 22nd; Combwich, October 20th, and Hinkley Point and Porlock Church on 21st; three, Brean Down Cove, including a male, on 23rd; two, Porlock Church on 24th, one remaining till 28th; Walland Farm, Wheddon Cross, October 25th, and Brookes Farm, Wellington, on 26th; Wells, on 30th, and Kennard Moor, Yeovil and Williton on 31st; Stolford, November 10th; two at Brean Down on 23rd, and one at Hinkley Point on 30th; one in Doniford/Helwell Bay area, December 5th-24th; two, Hinkley Point, December 12th; on 15th, one at Brean and three at Hinkley, of which one was a male, and thus different from earlier birds there; one remained there up to the 22nd.

COMMON REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Locally common migrant breeder; also passage-migrant.

First arrival: Brean Down, April 8th. Main arrival from 13th to early May; about 18 on coastal passage from 13th to 30th, including five at Brean Down on 15th.

The following Mendip records were the only ones outside the western hills: male, Edford, May 20th, presumably a late migrant; male, Charterhouse, April 22nd; at Velvet Bottom, one the same day and three adult males on June 16th, of which one was carrying food; single males singing at Black Rock and Cheddar Gorge, May 20th, and one at latter on June 10th; pair, Priddy Mineries, June 1st, probably with young; and singing male, Rowberrow Warren, June 23rd. No Blackdown records, but coverage was poor.

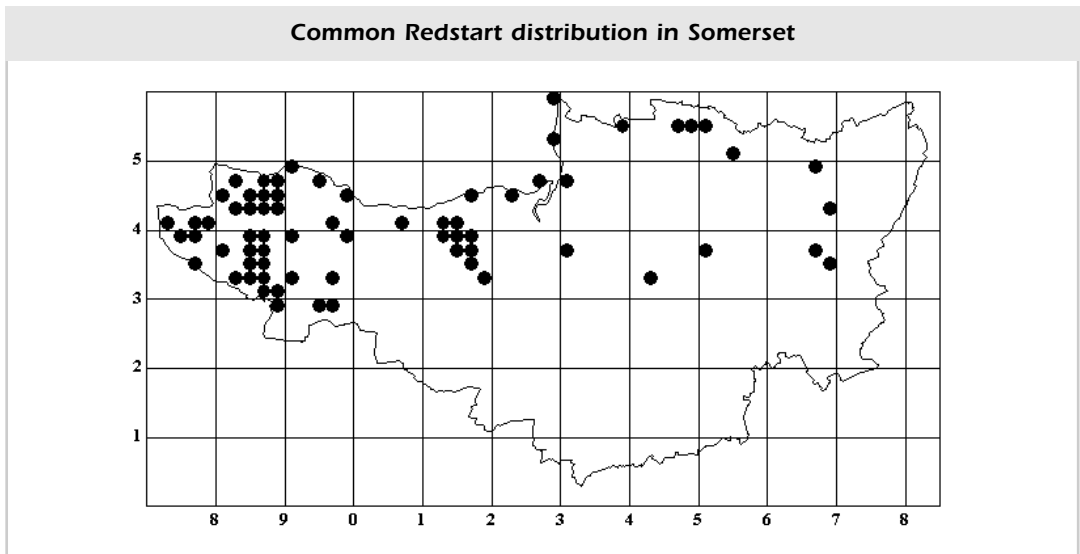
On Quantocks, about 24 singing males or pairs, 15 of which were in wooded combes of the north-east (Dowsborough, Holford Combe and Hodder's Combe and their tributaries); apart from one in Halsway Combe, the rest were from Cothelstone Hill to Crowcombe Park Gate (BDG).

On Brendons, up to 12 pairs around Wimbleball Lake (Haddon Hill, West Hill Wood and Hurscombe Reserve); and at least eight on Croydon Hill massif, including Monkham's Hill and Rodhuish Common.

On Exmoor and coastal outliers: no records from Dunster-Tivington ridge; two singing, Selworthy Woods; one in Hawk Combe and two in Porlock Parks East; at least 21 pairs in and around Horner Wood (including Ley Hill, East Water and its southern tributaries, and Stoke Combe) and another at Ford Farm above Draper's Way; at least one in Chetsford Water; 27 recorded by EMP and other observers working the same routes – five in Weir Water, four in Chalk Water, five on Winsford Hill/Varle Hill, three in Badgworthy Headwaters East (including breeding pair at Larkbarrow), one in Exe Cleave, five in various places along Barle and tributaries from Cornham Brake to Sherdon Hutch, single pairs breeding in nest-box at Pinkery Centre and at Driver, and two in Old Barrow Plantation; single pairs at Higher Combe (Exford) and West Nethercote; 14 in woods along both sides of Lower Barle from Pit Wood to Marsh Bridge (DKB); and one in Long Holcombe. In general, not so good a season on Exmoor as in 2006.

Return movements from June 17th (at Colley Water Fold), but mainly from early July. Total of about 30 straggling breeders or passage birds, up to the last on Crook Peak, September 11th. These include records from Bruton, Creech Hill, East Cranmore, Ubley Warren, Velvet Bottom, Kennard Moor, King's Sedge Moor, Lilstock and gardens at Williton.

Common Redstart distribution in Somerset



WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

Locally fairly common migrant breeder; uncommon passage-migrant. Now almost entirely limited to uplands.

First arrival: Meare Heath, April 22nd. Slow arrival on breeding grounds up to second week in May, and six passage records from Mendips, Levels and coasts in same period.

On Mendips, MFBS found a male singing from gorse on Pen Hill, May 25th, and one carrying food or nesting material at Stock Hill, June 10th; a pair on Compton Hill in June were probably in Avon. These are the first evidence of attempted breeding since 2003. None seen on Levels from May 7th to July 3rd, when three appeared on King's Sedge Moor, where they stayed until the end of August. A family on Kennard Moor, July 28th, may have been locally bred.

On Quantocks, evidently a poor season: only five sites occupied, all north of Crowcombe Park Gate: Black Hill, Hare Knap (three), Halsway Combe (two), Weacombe Hill and Herridge Combe. No breeding recorded on Brendons.

On Exmoor, only three or four pairs on north side of Dunkery (including Stoke Ridge), three on Hoar Moor/Codsend Moors, and probably four or five in Chetsford Water area. Much more numerous west of Hawkcombe Head-Exford road, with six pairs on Almsworthy Common, and at least 16 in upper reaches of Weir Water and Chalk Water (including Hoscombe and Madacombe). Most information was from EMP, which found a total of 66 males in Somerset, about the same as in 2006: four in Weir Water, three in Chalk Water, seven in Badgworthy Headwaters East and West, seven in Hoccombe Water, five in Lanacombe, 16 on Upper Exe from Exe Head Bridge to Orchard Bottom, five on Winsford Hill, five from Pinkworthy Dam to Cornham Brake, 12 from Simonsbath to Hillway, and two in Knighton Combe. To these should be added at least three on Exe Plain, and also, in Barle tributaries, one in Burcombe, three in Dillacombe and two in Great Woolcombe.

Some Exmoor breeders remained until early September. Widely recorded on autumn passage, perhaps because of the high current population on Salisbury Plain, which recent surveys have shown to hold perhaps 1,000 pairs on the MOD Estate. Even allowing for some double-counting, as least 50 on Mendips, in various parts of the Levels (including the Blackmoor Vale), on the coast of Bridgwater Bay, and even at Ilchester and Wellington. Most of these were before mid September, but still five on Kennard Moor on 22nd and six at Catcott Lows on 25th. Highest count was of at least ten, Blackford Moor, August 30th. Three October records, the last at Brean Down and Wellington on 5th.

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

Locally common resident or migrant breeder; fairly common winter visitor and passage-migrant. Has increased.

Almost 550 records received, indicative of widespread increase on lower ground, and perhaps of the popularity of an attractive species.

The fine April no doubt encouraged Stonechats to return early to uplands.

Breeding-season records, with number of pairs or males where more than one.

On Mendips, present at Priddy Mineries/Stock Hill and in area of Yoxter Ranges (six), at Ubley Warren (two or three), on Black Down (nine), and from Waving Down to Crook Peak (five, though not necessarily all in Somerset); in these, MFBS achieved a rather higher total than casual records. Apparently absent this year from Velvet Bottom/Charterhouse area, apart from one male singing in April.

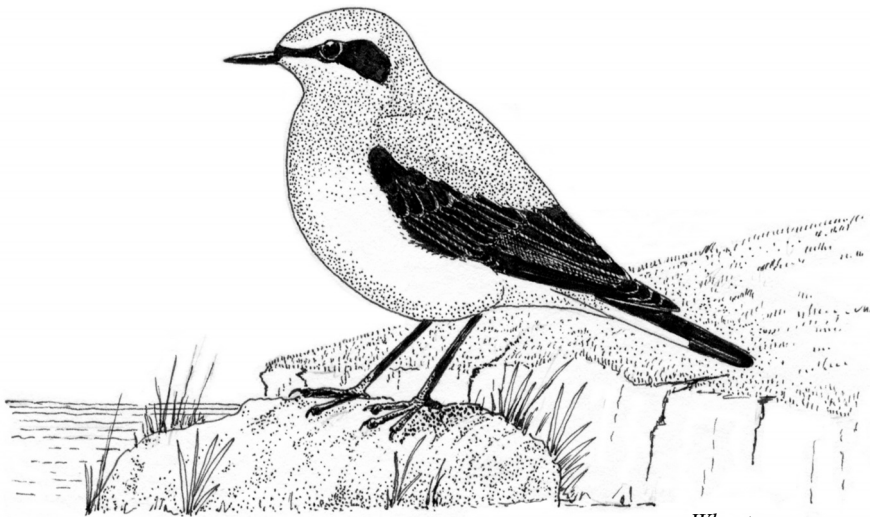
On Levels, hard in some places to separate later spring-passage birds from breeders. Present from mid April, and apparently breeding, on Kennard Moor (four), Tealham Moor (two), Somerton Moor (up to four), Butleigh Moor (three), King's Sedge Moor SSSI, Moorlinch Moor, Southlake Moor, West Sedge Moor, between Langport and Muchelney, King's Moor and Wet Moor; summer records from Avalon Marshes, but only of single birds. On Blackdowns, only at Sampford Point.

On Quantocks, at least 80 pairs/singing males; of these, 17 south of Crowcombe Park Gate and the remainder fairly evenly spread over tops and combes, though few at the northern end; highest concentrations of nine on Hare Knap, five on Great Hill and Thorncombe Hill, and four on Wills Neck, Hurley Beacon and Weacombe Hill. On coast, one or two pairs at Steart, Wall Common and Hinkley Point the whole year, and also bred along Kilve-Quantoxhead cliffs.

On Brendons, up to four pairs on Haddon Hill, two on Black Hill and perhaps one on Withycombe Common.

On western coast, apparently bred between Blue Anchor and Dunster Beach, and probably at least ten pairs from North Hill to Selworthy Beacon. Under-recorded on parts of north-east Exmoor, where at least seven pairs on the northern slopes of Dunkery, one on Codsend Moors, four or five around Chetsford Water, and at least two on Ley Hill. In EMP, about 48 males in Somerset, including eight in Weir Water/Chalk Water and on Winsford Hill; at least another 17 pairs elsewhere on the Moor, including five in Squallacombe.

From July, slow dispersal from higher sites, though Exmoor usually retains a scattering of birds in sheltered spots; in early September, still ten in Weir Water. Many casual records across Levels and on coast, increasing in late September and October. Highest concentrations on autumn passage and in second winter period: 12, Brean Down, September 9th; maximum of six, Cary Moor, October-December; nine, Cheddar Head, October 6th, followed by seven, Black Down, on 9th and six at Charterhouse, November 11th; 14, West Sedge Moor, October 7th, eventually rising to 19, December 11th: nine, Steart, November 13th; and eight, Westhay Moor, December 26th.



Wheatear

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Uncommon and local migrant breeder; common passage-migrant.

First arrival: Brean Down, March 8th. Only two others before 21st, after which numerous as passage-migrants at wide variety of sites, mostly coastal and upland. Many occur in possible breeding habitat, and numbers that actually nest have sometimes been overestimated, especially as larger Greenland birds are still going through at end of May; about 18 thought to be of this race, from 20th to 31st.

None found breeding on Mendips by MFBS. A pair at Wall Common, May 19th, may have been breeding. Only Quantock records were of three single birds from May 26th to June 8th, which were not thought to be breeders. At least one pair bred at Hurlstone Point. EMP and other observers found the following in Somerset: pair by Forest Wall near Stowford Bottom; probably two breeding birds in Hoccombe Water and perhaps one in Upper Lanacombe, though this may have been a Greenland bird; pair in Upper Long Combe, near Larkbarrow; pair in Upper Farley Water; at least four pairs in Upper Hoar oak Water (the most reliable Exmoor site); at least two from Goat Hill Bridge to Squallacombe Foot; and two males between Simonsbath and Pickedstones Bridge at well-known stone-wall sites. Various sightings in late May and June on Dunkery Hill, but a newly-fledged juvenile on Wilmersham Common, July 14th, was only record that clearly indicated local breeding. Adult male between Sherdon Hutch and Landacre Bridge, June 16th, and family on Mill Hill (Oareford), July 31st, at previously used sites.

Total of about 320 (but with some double-counting) on autumn passage from July 1st: 21 in July, 30 in first half of August; 73 in second, 51 in first half of September, and 69 in October. Of these, about 70 were inland. Coastal counts included: ten, Porlock Marsh, July 24th; 12, Huntspill Sea Wall, August 21st; ten, Brean Down, September 8th; and 12, Porlock Marsh, on 22nd, and at Lilstock on 23rd. The last was one at Berrow,

November 4th.

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus****Rare migrant breeder, very local and possibly now extinct (last proved 2002); scarce passage-migrant.***

One at Higher Dumbledeer, Withycombe, February 1st, had probably been wintering; this was the first Somerset record for the month (RHD).

First arrival: female, Wavering Down, April 7th. Total of about 27 on spring passage from then to May 5th: one north of Faulkland, four on Wavering Down/Crook Peak, five on Bridgwater Bay coasts, one on King's Sedge Moor, a party of four at Sheppards Combe on the Quantocks, and 12 on north-east Exmoor. The last included, on April 14th, four on the County boundary at the foot of Hoccombe Combe and three on Goosemoor Common. On 18th, a young male sang briefly on Devon bank of Badgworthy at Hoccombe Water Foot; receiving no response, he crossed the boundary and flew off towards Larkbarrow. No records from May to September. It would be rash to say that no breeding of this ever-wary species occurred, but most known sites were covered. EMP found none.

Modest autumn passage, with maximum of 13 birds: four on Brean Down, one on Ley Hill, and eight at Hurlstone Point; September 30th-October 22nd.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula****Abundant resident breeder; common winter visitor and passage-migrant.***

As commented last year, hard to draw any conclusions from increasing number of records submitted, which

Blackbird – regular monthly counts at three clearly-defined sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
ST 7355 N of Faulkland (GS)	10	17	15	19	20	26	19	10	2	23	19	21
ST 4408 S Crewkerne (BE)	10	22	24	18	17	nc	14	10	10	13	19	22
North Hill (JRi)	11	17	10	21	22	12	16	8	6	14	24	29

AJP, who recorded breeding in the six kilometre squares round Crewkerne, found numbers noticeably lower than in 2003; at Millwater, six pairs reduced to three, of which only one reared young.

Large influx in late November/December, which also occurred in Eastern England. A steady trickle passed Bratton in early-morning watches, November 7th-24th; later, high counts in many places, including: 57 at Combe St Nicholas, November 17th; 102, Cheddar Reservoir, December 2nd, and 101, Westbury Moor, on 3rd; total of 161 on whole area of Westhay Moor, on 25th/26th; 38, Catcott Lows, on 27th; 21, Westhay Heath, on 30th; and 25, Ham Wall, on 31st. The Cheddar Reservoir and Westbury Moor counts were exceptional for Somerset, and appear to be the highest ever made at single sites in the County (DLB).

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris****Common winter visitor and passage-migrant.***

In January/February, widespread over Levels. Highest count was of 800, Kennard Moor, February 5th. Other counts of 200 or more in this period: 400, Butt Moor, Westhay Moor and Wembdon; 600, King's Sedge Moor, and 760, Greylake Reserve; and 400, West Sedge Moor. Numbers on higher ground, as usual, much smaller after berry crop was exhausted, but 300 at Nettlecombe in January. Most March flocks were small, the largest being 100 on Bawdrip Level on 25th, which stayed until April 5th, when also 250 at Knighton. Last sizeable flock was of 120 in Upper Axe Valley on 8th, and last birds were two on Kennard Moor on 22nd.

Autumn passage began with five at Bruton, October 5th, the first small flocks did not arrive until 15th. Main arrival and passage began on 19th, and continued through rest of month, with peaks on the 21st of 590 on Westbury Moor, 246 at Berrow, and 400 at Gold Corner, and on 27th, when 500 on both Butt Moor and Kennard Moor. Second wave passed through from 31st to November 5th, including at least 1,800 at Stolford on 2nd. For

rest of month and through December, numbers were rather low, with only eight counts of over 100, of which highest was of 215 on Kennard Moor, December 12th. Very few anywhere over Christmas, when observers tend to be active; largest flock from 24th to 31st was of only 20.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Common resident breeder, winter visitor and passage-migrant. Has decreased except in woodland.

Total of 410 records submitted, excluding MFBS. Of these, 60% were from western hills – that is, from Quantocks, Brendons, Exmoor and their coasts. A similar result to 2006, but this year less than half of all birds were in the west; this is partly accounted for by increased records from regular sites elsewhere, which tend to give the maxima for a month or for intensive daily searches. No records at all for some wooded areas, especially along Wiltshire and Dorset borders, in the eastern Poldens, and in the now largely neglected Blackdowns.

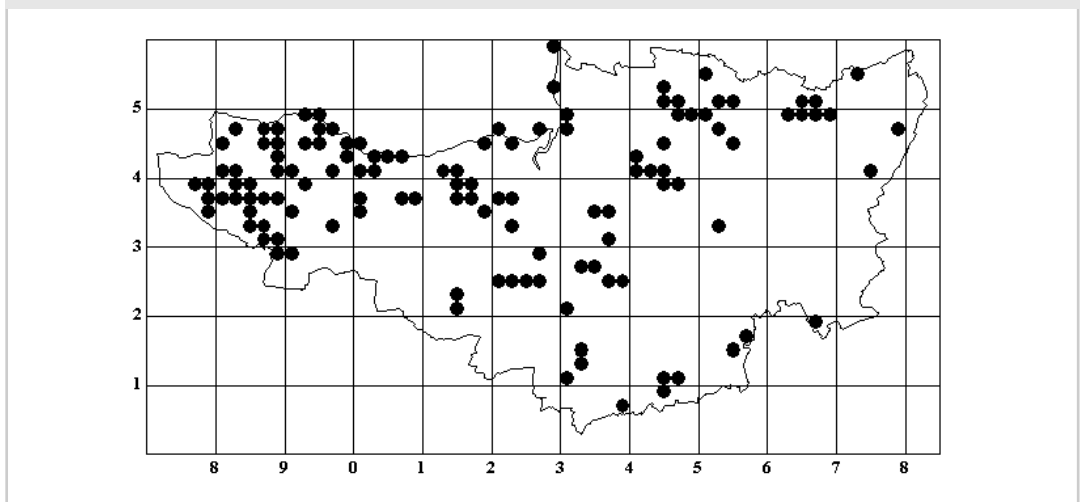
No sign of general return to garden habitats, where in most parts Song Thrushes are now scarce or absent. On Mendips, MFBS found about 47 pairs in Somerset part of area, of which very few were on plateau itself; ten were in a tetrad south-east of Cheddar, four around Wookey Hole, and only three on Stock Hill, where other observers reported ten. It might be objected that the methodology of such surveys is ill-adapted to counting Song Thrushes, which are best found very early and late in the day.

Breeding season evidently poor in some areas: in six kilometre squares around Crewkerne, 27 territories held, but only one juvenile seen; a pair going to roost flew into a developer's fence, and were killed (AJP). Some other local population estimates: eight in Creech St Michael, four in West Monkton, and ten in Wellington; 24 singing down Exe from Exford to Winsford and 70 from Withypool down Barle to Dulverton (DKB).

Some spring passage indicated by presence of 17 in small parties in Upper Axe Valley, March 7th/8th.

In autumn, southward movements at Burnham: 16 on October 5th and five on 21st. On December 22nd, a total of 52 in the Hinkley Point area, west of Shurton to south of Wick (DJC). On the 23rd, an exceptional 41 on Westbury Moor (DLB), so there may have been an influx with the Blackbirds.

Song Thrush distribution in Somerset



REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Common winter visitor and passage-migrant.

In first winter period, many small flocks, almost all on lower ground. Only nine flocks of 100 or more in January/February, the highest counts being of 200 in Harridge Wood, January 26th, and on King's Sedge Moor, February 10th. A flock of 100 on Westbury Beacon all winter had by the end of January exhausted the hawthorn berries and turned to ivy, which sometimes makes them less conspicuous, as in old Exmoor oakwoods. Less frequent in March, apart from 125 at Ham Wall on 23rd; only 36 in April, of which the last were three north of Faulkland on the 13th.

In autumn, first arrivals were two at Bridgwater on September 27th; the earliest date (which passed unannounced in *SB 2006*) is the 10th, but that was a single bird. Another 57 from 29th to 30th, but then only another 200 in all until October 22nd. Larger flocks then appeared, and from then to November 16th seven counts of over 200, the highest being of 350 at Gold Corner on October 31st. Relatively few from November 17th to December 21st, with no count reaching 100, but larger numbers from 22nd, though highest count in late December was of only 270, at Westbury Moor on 23rd. It was another good berry year in the south of England, and Redwings may have been satisfied with what they could find further east. Hardly any records from high ground.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Fairly common, but local, resident breeder; scarce and irregular passage-migrant.

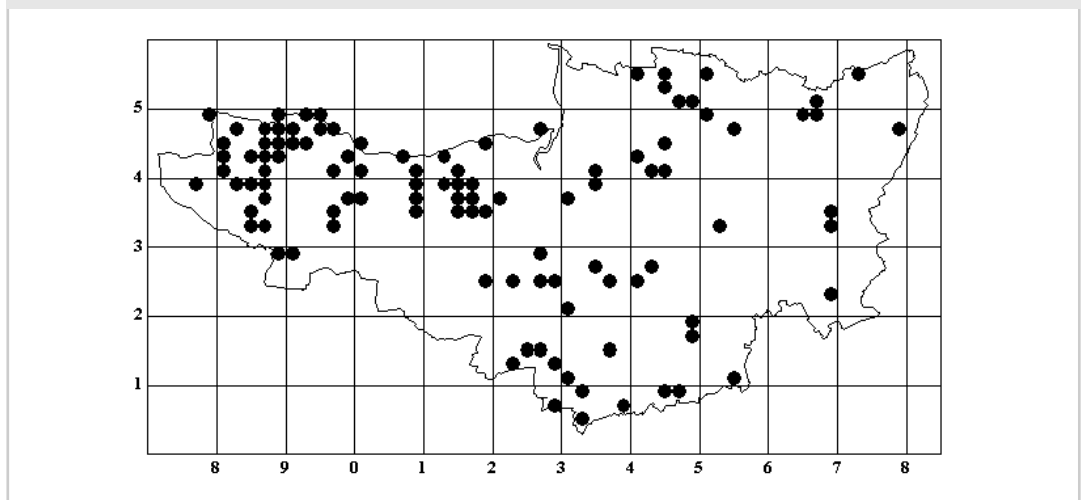
About 140 pairs, families or singing males from January to June; recording of this rather neglected species has improved, though surveys of breeding birds may miss them by not beginning early enough. Breeding-season records are again given in detail; numbers are of singing males, pairs or families.

In east, single pairs at Redlynch Park, Bruton, Edford Wood, Harridge Wood, Locombe Wood (Stratton-on-the-Fosse) and north of Faulkland. On western Mendips, MFBS found about 12 within Somerset, but only one or two on the actual plateau; half were around Wells and in Wavering Down/Crook Peak area, but others were separately reported from Ubley Warren and Cheddar Wood.

On and around Levels, Bridgwater Bay coast and Poldens, at Draycott, Cheddar Reservoir, Westhay Moor, Meare Heath, Ham Wall, Shapwick Heath, Burtle, Blackford, Bawdrip, Bridgwater and West Sedge Moor, together with the Curry Rivel to Wrantage edge and nearby Drayton. In Central Somerset (which was not so well watched as usual) only at Butleigh. In the south, only five pairs in the four kilometre squares around Crewkerne of ST4309, 4310 (two), 4410 and 4510, but probably no young reared (AJP); elsewhere, present at Sutton Bingham Reservoir, Montacute, North Perrott, Ilminster, Wayford Woods (two), Chard Reservoir, Tatworth and Nimmer. In south-west, at Wambrook, Combe St Nicholas, Dommert Wood, Britty Common (about six), Fresh Moor, Otterhead Lakes, Ham, Creech St Michael, Taunton (two), West Monkton (two) and Norton Fitzwarren.

On Quantocks and farmland to the north, noted at 15 sites, on both sides of range. On Brendons, at Vellow, Escott, Sampford Brett, Higher Dumbledeer, behind Watchet, Elworthy, Wimbleball Lake (three pairs in Hurscombe), Langham Hill/Chargot and Croydon Hill. In north-east Exmoor combes and adjacent farmland and coast, at Dunster Park, Dunster Beach Wood, Woodcombe, Bratton, North Hill, Blackford, Luccombe, Porlock/Doverhay Down, Hawk Combe (three), Halse Combe (two), Porlock Parks (five), Cloutsham Ball, Horner Wood (up to three), Stoke Ridge, Codsens Moors, Hookway/Weir Water, Larkbarrow and County Gate; elsewhere on the Moor, along Exe at Silly Bridge, Lyncombe, Curr Cleeve and Yellowcombe, in Horsen Combe, and at least ten along Barle from Knighton Farm down to Burrige Wood.

Mistle Thrush distribution in Somerset



Family parties and flocks formed from June to late August, including ten at Stowell, 22 on Ubley Warren, 11 on Rowberrow Warren, 15 at Cossington, 12 at Larkbarrow, 30 in Chalk Water, and at least 35 on slopes above Lyncombe.

On autumn passage, two passed Hurlstone Point on October 6th, and a total of 12 flew west at West Myne on early mornings, from 10th to 16th. Only about 30 in December, mostly at sites mentioned above, but also at Rodden, Tintinhull and Pibsbury.

CETTI'S WARBLER *Cettia cetti*

Locally fairly common resident breeder; rare passage-migrant.

On east side of Parrett Estuary, at least ten at Berrow throughout year, and single birds in Brue Estuary or at Huntspill Sluice in June and August.

In Avalon Marshes, highest counts of singing males from March to June: 20, Shapwick Heath/Meare Heath, though no full counts this year; 119, Ham Wall (RSPB); 38, Westhay Moor, and 17, Westhay Heath, were both site records (JAMcG); also up to 11 on Loxton's Marsh/Walton Heath, five at Sharpam, at least five on Catcott Lows/Heath, and three on Chilton Moor. Elsewhere north of Poldens: one or two breeding along Huntspill River; and nine on Westbury Moor (a new site) in October.

Around Bridgwater: one under M5 bridge over King's Sedge Moor Drain at Dunball; along the Canal, single birds singing between Somerset Bridge and Lakeside Caravan Park, at Taunton Road Fishing Pits and at Huntworth and Fordgate; and seven at Dunwear Ponds. Up to four regularly at Steart and two on Wall Common, and single birds at Catsford Common in November, and at Hinkley Point.

A few other single birds elsewhere: Apex Leisure Park; Cheddar Reservoir and Lympsham; Greylake Reserve; West Sedge Moor; between Muchelney and Langport; and Sutton Bingham Reservoir.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

Uncommon and irregular migrant breeder; also passage-migrant, chiefly in spring.

First arrival: Brean Down, April 9th. About 32, April 13th-May 3rd, including two at Berrow, April 23rd, and three on south side of Winsford Hill on last date. Most were reeling, but probably on passage; 18 on coast, five in Avalon Marshes, six on north-east Exmoor, and others on Black Down and at Wellington.

A long gap was followed by one reeling on West Sedge Moor, May 19th and 24th. Other summer records from then to August 7th came from Priddy Pools (MFBS), Black Down, Ham Wall, Berrow, Wick Moor, and a number of Brendon Hills and Exmoor sites: Haddon Hill, Hawkcombe Head, Luccombe Hill, Chetsford Water, Little Hill, Wilmersham Common and Porlock Post; Long Combe and East Pinford; Knighton Combe; Exe Plain; the north side of Winsford Hill (two between Folly and Comers Gate); Long Holcombe; and Upper Farley Water (three on June 7th) (EMP *et al.*).

Four on autumn passage, July 28th-September 15th: at Brean Down, Bawdrip Level, Steart and Galmington, the last killed by a cat.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Locally common migrant breeder and passage-migrant.

First arrival: Ham Wall, April 13th, after which slow build-up into early May; already 61 singing on King's Sedge Moor by April 27th.

What at first promised to be a good season was greatly affected by wet weather. Following sites held four or more singing males, or were of special interest: present in Blackmoor Vale and on Shapwick Heath, but no counts; Westhay Moor NNR (only one singing male in early May, and then none until August); Westhay Heath (only three); Tealham Moor (four); Bridgwater-Taunton Canal (11 between Fordgate and North Newton), Somerton Moor (eight) and King's Sedge Moor SSSI (46 in May); Earlake Moor (six) and Southlake Moor (11); Greylake Reserve (11) and Moorlinch Moor (ten); Hay Moor (eight); West Sedge Moor (161, a return to normal, or even high, numbers); Wet Moor and Thorney (six each) and West Moor (ten); Appledoor Quarry (pair bred); Sutton Bingham Reservoir (perhaps one pair); Hankridge Farm (12); and Steart (up to four).

About 80 on passage, July 28th-October 1st, but only three after September 17th. Only substantial count was of 25 at Steart, August 9th; the rest were in breeding areas, on Levels, round Parrett Estuary, and at Torr Works, Rodden, Wellington and two Exmoor sites; one in Weir Water, September 5th, was first record for combe.

Six at Steart, September 12th, responded to attempts to tape-lure Aquatic Warblers *A. paludicola* (PJE, DWa). The last was at West Sedge Moor, October 1st.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Locally common migrant breeder and passage-migrant. Has increased.

First arrival: Meare Heath, April 14th. Most breeding birds probably arrived from April 20th to early May.

Records from selected sites, mainly those with four or more singing males: Cary Moor (12, but should increase as reedbed spreads); Berrow (more than 20); Hinkley Point/Wick Moor (34); Kennard Moor (four in a new reedbed); Westhay Moor (180 in whole area, but only about 40 families after midsummer rain (JAMcG)); Westhay Heath (84, but only seven families); Walton Heath/Loxton's Marsh (ten); Shapwick Heath East (20); Ham Wall (56); Sharpham (13); Dunwear Ponds (11) and Taunton Road Fishing Pits (six); Bridgwater-Taunton Canal from Huntworth to Creech St Michael (24), and another three breeding on the Tone at Creech; West Sedge Moor (ten); Westport (five); Appledoor Quarry (pair bred); Steart (20, but 63 individuals counted on July 19th) and Hinkley Point (four); and Butlin's, Minehead (13). Smaller numbers were also present at Apex Leisure Park, Brue Estuary, Huntspill River, Cheddar Reservoir, Sutton Bingham and Chard Reservoirs, and Dunster Hawn.

Some passage or late-staying birds from mid August to late September; last were two heard at Steart on October 4th.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Common and probably increasing migrant breeder and passage-migrant; uncommon winter visitor.

About 60 birds at 40 sites, January 1st-March 20th. mainly in lowland gardens, singly or up to five together, but 16 at Burnham, February 18th. Notable influx of five in Bruton gardens, January 3rd/4th.

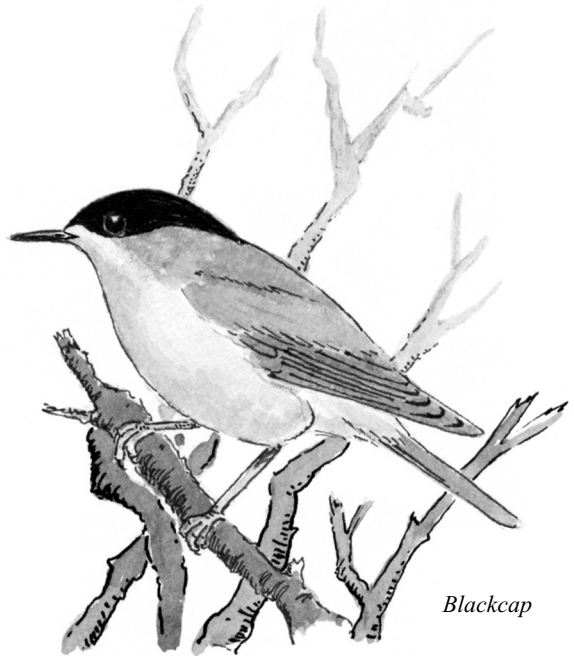
Passage from mid March to early May, including: ten on Brean Down, April 12th, and at least 50 on 15th; 12 in Horner Wood on 28th; and ten males at Canada Farm, May 1st.

In breeding season, about 260 singing males at 65 sites, a reduction of about a third in both on 2006 figures, after making allowance for a large survey in Williton area that year. Some higher counts: Hinkley Point (12); Westhay Moor (34) and Westhay Heath (12); Shapwick Heath/Meare Heath (six), West Sedge Moor (seven); Home Farm, Wiltown (seven), and Langport to Muchelney (five); ST4408 (South Crewkerne) (four); Park Wood, Chaffcombe (five) and Chard Reservoir (six); Donyatt (seven) and Broadway (five); Line Wood, Hatch Beauchamp (ten); Britty Common/Mount Fancy (19); Swannage Lake and Nynehead (four each); Cothelstone Hill (eight); Rams Combe (six) and Hodder's Combe (five); Wimbleball Lake (eight); and Horner Wood (eight).

From August 1st to 27th, only about 14 reported. Autumn passage may have started much earlier than this. There were 12 at Five Bells, Watchet, on June 24th; to this garden, one ringed bird returned for a second summer, two for a third, and one for a fourth (WJW).

Autumn passage mainly concentrated in September: over 60, including 15 on Brean Down on 8th and ten there on 30th.

Wintering birds entered gardens from early October, though probably most arrived in November: about 80 at 25 sites, but these included maximum of 21 at Berrow on November 4th, presumably on sea-buckthorn, and also a few on coastal passage.



Blackcap

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Locally fairly common migrant breeder and passage-migrant.

First arrival: one, Swell Wood, April 7th. No others until 21st, and only three more before 26th, but steady arrival thereafter, peak being probably in the first week of May.

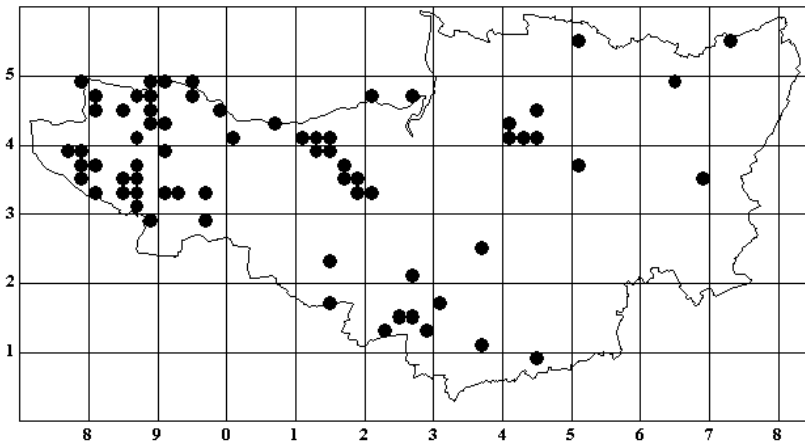
About same number as in 2005: at least 140 singing males at about 75 sites. In East Somerset and on Mendips, only six: Bruton, area north of Faulkland, Harridge Wood, Ubley Warren and Rowberrow Warren. On Levels north of Poldens, about 31, all at Kennard Moor and in the Avalon Marshes, where there were 12 on Westhay Moor and eight on Westhay Heath. The East Poldens, with large areas of apparently suitable woodland Reserves, were apparently unrecorded. In south, single birds singing in area south of Crewkerne and at Barrington and Park Wood, Chaffcombe. On Blackdowns, total of seven, at Thurlbear Quarrylands, Staple Common, Britty Common, Fresh Moor, Otterhead and Quarts Moor. In Vale of Taunton, only one, at Nynehead.

On Quantocks, 22 at 12 sites with enough thick cover, as on Cothelstone Hill, which held ten. Three at Steart and Hinkley Point may have been migrants. On Brendons, about 12 around Wimbleball or on Haddon Hill, and three on Croydon Hill and Withycombe Common. On Exmoor coast, total of five from Five Bells to Selworthy Beacon, and 16 on north-east Exmoor and along western coast, including three in Porlock Parks; further inland, seven on Exe from Curr Cleeve to Bridgetown or on Winsford Hill, and 21 along Barle, from Bale Water down to Ashwick Wood, including three along Pennycombe Water and two along Dane's Brook.

As usual, disappeared after end of June; only four single birds from July 7th to the last, at Hurlstone Point, on August 27th.

The new *Birds of Wiltshire* confirms a suspicion that there may be more along the Selwood Ridge than have yet been found on the Somerset side of the border, though the fieldwork there was completed some nine years ago.

Garden Warbler distribution in Somerset



LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Locally fairly common migrant breeder; uncommon passage-migrant.

First arrival: Combwich, April 13th. In 2006, most of the 24 April records were treated as probable migrants, but this year arrival on the Levels seems to have been much earlier, so the 60 records have been mostly absorbed into those for the breeding season, apart from about 15 of which three were in East Somerset (at Bruton and Clapton), and the rest around Bridgwater Bay (though the coast here is also a breeding area). Also one on Hurlstone Point on 21st, the first in BDG's 14 years' experience of this site.

From April to July 10th, about 80 recorded at following sites, and single males unless otherwise noted: Cary Moor (bred); Brean Down (up to three), Berrow and Hinkley Point (up to four); Cheddar Reservoir, Cheddar Moor and Lower Weare (four); Kennard Moor (five), Westhay and Westhay Moor (two), Shapwick Heath, Catcott Lows, Burtle, Mark and Mark Moor; Edithmead-Brent Knoll (three), Pawlett Hams (two), Bawdrip

Level, Chilton Trinity, Bridgwater (at F.C. ground), and Bridgwater-Taunton Canal from Huntworth to Creech St Michael (six); North Newton, Weston Level, Stan Moor, King's Sedge Moor SSSI and Southlake Moor (two); West Sedge Moor (up to four); Middelney, Wet Moor (two) and Westport; Thorney, Muchelney Ham and King's Moor (two each); Sutton Bingham Reservoir, South Crewkerne, Fivehead, Ilford and Donyatt (two); Broadway (two) and Thurlbear Quarrylands; Creech St Michael (bred) and Lower Stonehouse; Steart (up to three), Combwich (two), Hinkley Point and Stolford (two); and Williton.

About 18 on passage, August 1st to September 12th: five on coast from Huntspill to Steart, seven on Levels, and others at Butleigh, Crewkerne and Over Stratton. Two were with mixed passerine flocks; two at Mark were "gorging themselves on elderberries" (SMo).

COMMON WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Common migrant breeder and passage-migrant.

First arrivals: Meare Heath and Steart, April 14th. Steady arrival and passage from then to early May, including ten on Brean Down, April 24th, and 12 there on 28th.

Breeding-season records from May 1st to July 9th: total of about 325 singing males. Last year's figures were boosted by two large-scale surveys, from the Quantocks and Williton; results in 2007 were similar to those in 2005, but several observers noted poor breeding success.

Apparently few in East Somerset, but a hedgerow species is likely to be found by locals, not sought by visitors, and there are no more than five regular observers between Milborne Port and Radstock; up to 12 bred in area north of Faulkland, at least two in oil-seed rape; six around Bruton, but no young seen; also at Torr Works Reservoir and Edford Wood. On Mendips, nine on Black Down; five others, mostly in Reserves, but the stone-walled plateau has never been good habitat.

On east coast of Bridgwater Bay, only seven at Brean Down. About 75 singing on Levels north of Poldens, including five on Kennard Moor and 36 on Westhay Moor (though these produced only two families; JAMcG), and 15 on Loxton's Marsh/Walton Heath. Between Bridgwater and Taunton, 11 along Canal from Huntworth to Creech St Michael. Over 40 on Levels south of Poldens, including 18 on Butleigh Moor/Somerton Moor and nine in survey of Home Farm, Wiltown. On South Levels, reported only from King's Moor (seven). About 35 at ten sites from Yeovil through South Somerset to Blackdown foothills, though this can be only a sample of the population. About 35 in south-west, where much farmland is hardly ever searched; 12 at Creech St Michael showed a decrease, but three farms around Wellington produced a total of ten.

About 20 in Steart/Stolford area and 30 on the Quantocks, best site being Lydeard Hill with five. At least four on Croydon Hill massif, and odd birds at Five Bells, Watchet. About 25 in heathland around edges of north-east Exmoor; otherwise only single birds or pairs in Chetsford Water, Deddy Combe, Long Combe and Hoccombe Water; the unchecked growth of gorse has allowed them to colonise one or two of these Forest combes.

Recorded from only five sites in July. About 50 later stragglers or passage-migrants, largely on or near coasts, including seven on Black Down, August 29th. Only one after September 15th: near Wellington on 21st.

DARTFORD WARBLER *Sylvia undata*

Locally fairly common resident breeder; rare passage-migrant and perhaps winter visitor.

The arrangement here adopted is the one we used for reporting the National Survey in 2006. Although coverage was naturally not so good, we still received 160 separate records, many from a small selection of the more accessible sites.

On Mendips, seen throughout the year in two main areas: about four pairs at three sites on Black Down (DW *et al.*); and one or two pairs on Wavering Down/Crook Peak.

On Blackdowns, two singing males at Somerset end of Sampford Point.

On Quantocks, no records before April, though presumably most were present. About 40 singing males/pairs/families; distribution from Great Hill and Aisholt Common north to Greenway Path (five pairs); other notable concentrations were around Bicknoller Post (six or seven) and on Longstone Hill (six); about same numbers as in 2006 Survey (BDG, PW *et al.*).

Sites on Croydon Hill massif and on Dunster-Tivington ridge seem not to have been visited.

Over 30 on Exmoor: up to 15 from North Hill to Hurlstone Point; two in Hawk Combe; five on Ley Hill, at least eight on Dunkery Hill (but only part-coverage of the large suitable area), and single birds on Yenworthy Common, Winsford Hill (in November) and Brady Moor.

Some no doubt descend in winter or move westward from sites outside the County: five records of single birds on coast from Breaun Down to Steart, October 6th-December 25th. Three of these were in sea-buckthorn at Berrow, where one remained for six weeks.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Rare passage-migrant and winter visitor.

Three single birds, of which the first had arrived on December 6th, 2006: Burnham, January 3rd-14th; Bruton, October 29th (BAT); and Berrow reedbed, November 4th (AMS, BES). These bring the County total to about 31, of which 19 have been since 2003.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Locally fairly common migrant breeder; uncommon passage-migrant.

First arrivals: Hodder's Combe and Haddon Hill, April 14th. Most breeders had probably arrived by about May 3rd.

Away from western hills, recorded only from Alfred's Tower, where two birds sang on Wiltshire border in May (BAT); also two passage birds, one at Westbury-sub-Mendip on April 26th, the other in Harridge Wood on May 1st. None found in a June search of former Blackdown sites (DWH).

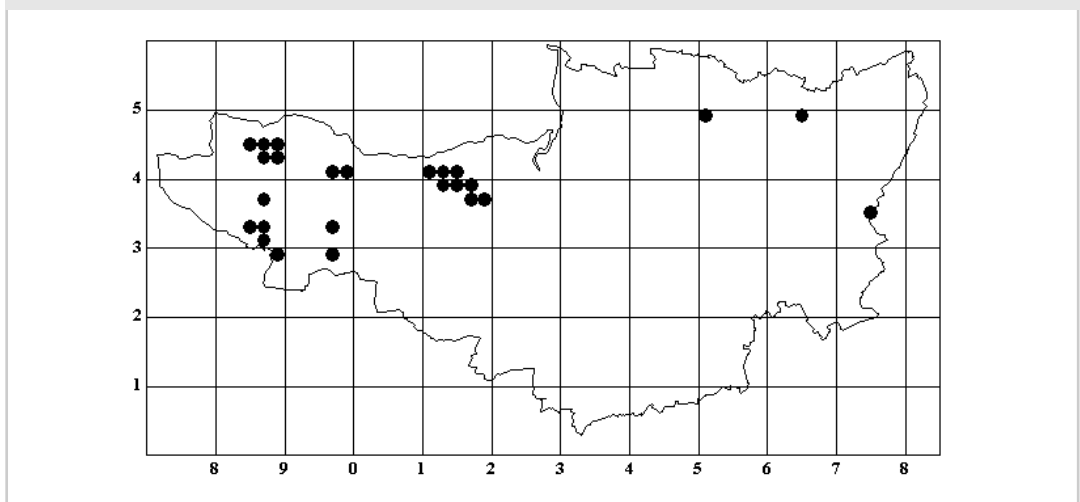
On Quantocks, about 38 singing males, all north of Crowcombe-Nether Stowey road, apart from one each in Cockercombe, Quantock Combe and Rams Combe. Greatest concentrations in Holford Combe/Frog Combe (11) and in Hodder's Combe and its tributaries (16); on west side, only two in Weacombe (BDG, PW *et al.*).

On Brendons: at least nine around Wimbleball Lake, on Haddon Hill, in West Hill Wood and along Haddeo below dam; two on Croydon Hill; and ten in Withycombe Scruffets/Long Combe (JDH).

On Exmoor, main site is Horner Wood, where WJW found 27 nests; this includes the main valley from Pool Bridge down to Horner, East Water, Prickslade Combe and Stoke Combe; population may be up to 40 pairs. Few other records: one between Cloud and Malmsmead, on Somerset side; one in Curr Cleeve, and a total of ten in Barle Valley from Knaplock Wood down to Ashwick Wood.

Coverage of all but a few areas is so irregular that one can only say that the population may be stable, though historically at a low level.

Wood Warbler distribution in Somerset



CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

Common migrant breeder and passage-migrant; uncommon winter visitor.

From January to early March, about 30 at 20 sites, though this year no concentrations of more than four, at Ham Wall in January. Some STWs were not visited by observers.

Spring passage through March, almost daily from the 6th, and earlier than in 2006, thus complicating the already impossible task of separating departures from arrivals and transients. First real spring influx about the 15th, when nine were singing on West Sedge Moor. The next double-figure count was at the same site: 15 on April 2nd. More intensive passage from then to 20th, including ten on Westbury Beacon on 16th, and 22 on West Sedge Moor the next day. Later counts of 20 on North Hill and at Woodcombe, May 4th, were also evidently of migrants.

Breeding-season counts of six or more singing males: 30, Harridge Wood/Edford Wood; 11, Holcombe Wood; 16, West Sedge Moor; only about eight around Crewkerne and 11 to the south; six, Donyatt and Broadway; 12, Britty Common/Mount Fancy, an increase from the four of 2006; seven, Floorey Down, nine in Cockercombe and 11 in Rams Combe; eight, Wimbleball Lake; six, Bratton; and ten, Horner Wood. As usual, not particularly common on Exmoor: only eight down the Barle from Lime Combe to Ashwick Wood.

Only about 15 in August. Main passage from about 27th, when 12 north of Faulkland. This extended to end of first week of October, and included high counts of 30 to 40 on Brean Down on September 15th and 30th, and October 5th and 7th. Other double-figure counts were: 12 north of Faulkland, August 27th; 13, Westhay Moor, September 9th; 11 near Wellington on 13th, and 14, Shapwick Heath, October 6th.

First specifically garden record at Taunton, October 3rd. About 40 in rest of month at various lowland sites.

In November/December, about 56 at 25 sites, a higher total of birds than in 2006; of the sites, Apex Leisure Park, Ham Wall, Westhay Heath, Westhay Moor and Dunster Hawn all held five or six at times.

The following showed characteristics of the Siberian race *Ph. c. tristis*: two, Apex Leisure Park, December 1st-12th (JJP, AMS); single birds, Westhay Moor, on 25th and Westhay Heath, on 30th (DLB). Another at Apex, December 2nd, was thought to be of the Scandinavian race *Ph. c. abietinus* (BJH).

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Common migrant breeder and passage-migrant. Has decreased or disappeared in lowlands.

First arrivals: two, Westhay Moor, March 7th. Two more in March and daily arrivals from the 31st, but main passage (to judge by coastal numbers) was from about April 13th to May 2nd.

Notable passage counts: on April 14th, 100 at Brean Down and 28 on Haddon Hill; 150, Brean Down, on 15th, but no more than ten thereafter; 20, Westbury Beacon; on 16th and a late "fall" of at least 100 on North Hill, May 2nd.

As breeder, very scarce everywhere outside the western hills. In East Somerset and on the Mendips, only records after April were of two at Torr Works (but only on May 1st), seven at Lower Coleford, six on the Mendip Golf Course at Oakhill, eight at Stock Hill, three at Priddy Mineries, and 20 on Black Down. Recorded from 11 sites on the Levels: mainly in ones and twos except in Avalon Marshes, which held 35 singing males in May, of which ten were on Westhay Moor and 12 on Catcott Heath; even there, little sign of successful breeding, though still five at Catcott in June. In South Somerset, almost vanished from former haunts: only single birds at Hamdon Hill and near Roundham, and two singing at Chard Reservoir in May.

Slightly better picture from Blackdowns: at least one pair at Thurlbear Quarrylands, four at Fresh Moor, three on Ringdown Common, 14 on Britty Common/Mount Fancy (down from 20 in 2006), ten on Gortnell Common, five on Quarts Moor and seven on Sampford Common (DWH); and one or two around Wellington.

There must be other unkempt corners on private land that go unrecorded, and we have again received hardly any records from some Reserves on Poldens and Blackdowns, in particular from Langford Heathfield. All Blackdown records were from one observer! This was once a common bird in old orchards, but few of these remain.

On Quantocks, 32 sites held a total of 130 singing birds, of which half were south of Crowcombe-Nether Stowey road and a further ten on Hare Knap (BDG *et al.*). These figures are not comparable with the 2006 Survey, which largely covered open moorland.

On Brendons: three, Clatworthy Reservoir; about 45 around Wimbleball Lake and on Haddon Hill; three on Kennisham Hill; and at least 20 on the Croydon Hill/Black Hill massif; also present in the new plantation on Willett Hill.

On Exmoor: up to ten from Minehead to Bossington but no coverage of coast further west; poor coverage of Dunkery slopes and Horner, where no more than nine reported; five on Codsend Moors; 21 in Weir Water/Chalk Water; seven in Chetsford Water/Thurley Combe; 15 along Badgworthy Water and in its headwaters; 26 in incomplete coverage of Exe from Exe Head Bridge to Bridgetown; 36 in partial coverage of Winsford Hill/Varle Hill/Yellowcombe; 88 along the Barle and some tributaries from Pinkworthy Pond to Tarr Steps, but no coverage lower down; six in Long Holcombe; and three in Upper Hoar Oak Water (DKB, EMP *et al.*).

Thin autumn passage from late July to the last, at Shapwick Heath, September 22nd. Total of about 80, but only one count of more than five together, in a mixed flock on Westhay Moor, August 28th. and only six on coast. The only evidence of movement through Crewkerne was on August 3rd, when four were ringed.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Fairly common resident breeder, winter visitor and passage-migrant.

As in previous years, all records given from April to July except for obvious wanderers.

Sites as follows, with numbers of pairs/singing males if more than one, and * for proved or strongly suspected breeding: north of Faulkland, and Nettlebridge Valley (up to 15); Preston's Wood (Chewton Mendip); Westbury-sub-Mendip* and Upper Axe Valley; Ham Wall and Chilton Moor; Curry Rivel and Swell Wood; five kilometre squares round Crewkerne*; Line Wood (Hatch Beauchamp)*, Dommett Wood and Britty Common/Mount Fancy (15); West Monkton Churchyard*; Cockercombe (14), Triscombe Stone (two), Floorey Down (nine), Quantock Combe (five), Rams Combe (nine), Over Stowey Common (two), Bin Combe (five), Somerton Combe (two), Slaughterhouse Combe (five) and Holford Combe; North Hill, Hawk Combe, Horner Wood (two) and Knaplock Wood. No records from Brendon Hills plantations.

As usual, more widespread outside breeding season. Numbers perhaps down in first winter period: highest counts were of five, at Great Headon Plantation in January and on North Hill in February.

No obvious spring passage, apart from one at Steart, April 14th.

Only six records for July and August. Very small autumn movements: at Brean Down, of 15 on September 30th and ten on October 5th; also at 12, Shapwick Heath, on 6th.

In second winter period, widely reported on lower ground, but not very numerous, highest counts being in Avalon Marshes: in December, up to nine on Westhay Heath, and six on Shapwick Heath and Westhay Moor.

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapilla*

Rare migrant breeder; scarce winter visitor and passage-migrant.

At Alfred's Tower, two held territory in May (BAT). In Nettlebridge area, present from January 26th to September 2nd; possibly up to five in March in Harridge Wood, of which one was ringed; at least three held territories near Edford Bridge, though no proof of breeding (JHa, BAT, JLT).

About 15 others, singly unless otherwise mentioned: Hawkridge Reservoir, January 14th; Porlock Weir, on the 25th; Ham Wall, February 22nd; Lilstock, September 29th; Brean Down, October 5th, joined by another on 6th; Hurlstone Point, on 14th; Five Bells, Watchet, on 22nd; Porlock Weir, on 25th; Shapwick Heath and Dunster Hawn, November 4th; Bratton, on 7th; Gurney Slade, December 22nd; Berrow, on 23rd; and Westhay Moor, on 26th.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

Uncommon migrant breeder and passage-migrant.

First arrivals: two, East Water, April 28th. Thereafter, only ten more until May 17th, when records became daily.

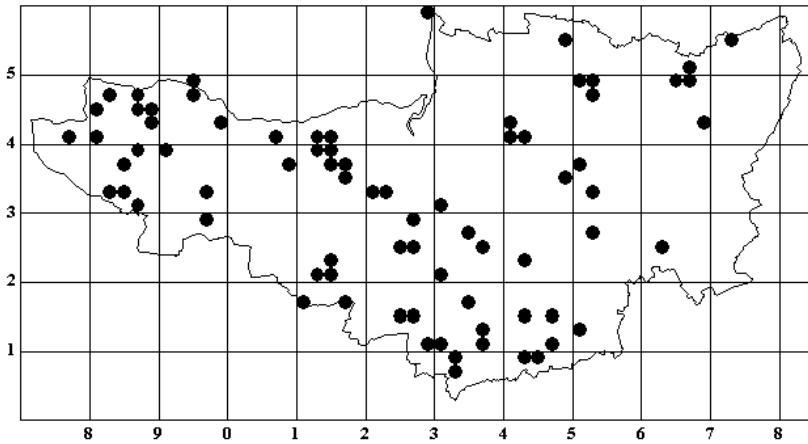
Present up to early August at the following sites, with * for pairs or breeding proved or suspected: Torr Works*; nine pairs at seven sites around Edford Wood, Holcombe, Coleford and Nettlebridge*; north of Faulkland; Black Rock* and Westbury-sub-Mendip (two)*; Canada Farm; Collard Hill; North Newton*; West Sedge Moor; Burton Pynsent*; Thorney; Baltonsborough* (double-brooded); Norton Sub Hamdon and Over Stratton; three sites around Crewkerne*; Park Wood (Chaffcombe), Chard Reservoir, Forton (two)*, Nimmer, Dowlish Wake* and Ashford Mill (Ilton); at least four woodland and garden sites round Hatch Beauchamp*; Creech St Michael*, Ruishton (two*) and West Monkton (two)*; Fulford; Blackbrook*; Nynhead Court* and Wellington (five)*; Dommett Wood, Britty Common, Gortnell Common and Sampford Common.

On Quantocks: Broomfield Hill*, Fyne Court and Marrow Hill; Crowcombe* and Crowcombe Park; and at Lady's Combe* and five sites in Hodder's Combe and its tributaries*.

On Brendons and their coastline: Stogumber; Wimbleball Lake (two)*; and Outmoor Wood* (but numbers down around Williton).

On Exmoor: Dunster Park* and Ford Farm (Draper's Way)*; Bratton; Hawk Combe (two)* and Porlock Weir*; Horner Wood*; Blackpitts, Orchard Bottom, Higher Combe, (Exford)* and Room Hill; Old Barrow Plantation*; and North Barton Wood and Great Birchcleeve Wood.

Spotted Flycatcher distribution in Somerset



Total of about 85 was same as in 2005; the slight improvement of 2006 was not sustained. About 50 on autumn passage from early August to September 5th; on the last date, six at Cadbury Castle, perhaps a late local family.

It must be emphasized that records of this kind are essentially “casual” and at best can give only an irregular sample of a small percentage of populations. To illustrate this, one has only to glance at the work done by some of our neighbours in Devon. In the breeding season of 2004, a survey on behalf of the RSPB and English Nature found 62 pairs of Spotted Flycatchers *in the single parish* of Aveton Gifford in South Devon. The survey was organised by Rodney Bone, a native of the parish, and could only have succeeded in the hands of an observer with wide local connections; see the account given in *Devon Bird Report* for 2004.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Locally fairly common migrant breeder; uncommon passage-migrant.

First arrival: Bin Combe (Quantocks), April 11th. Little evidence of spring passage: the only obvious migrants outside known breeding areas were two on Brean Down, April 15th, and one between Coleford and Leigh-upon-Mendip, May 3rd.

On Blackdowns, no evidence of breeding, though an unmated male stayed hopefully in Dommett Wood from May 21st into June.

On Quantocks, the varying forms in which data has been presented by observers and ringers make it hard to arrive at an estimate of total numbers. Probably at least 27 pairs: two each on Cothelstone Hill; in Govetts Wood and Bin Combe and on Dowsborough; nine in Holford Combe and its tributaries; and 12 in Hodder's Combe and its tributaries.

On Brendons, probably at least six pairs round Wimbleball Lake; and single pairs bred successfully in nestboxes in Treborough Wood, Nutcombe Bottom and Slowley Wood, and on Monkham Hill.

On Exmoor: six or seven pairs in nest-boxes in Hawk Combe (and perhaps others in Shillett Wood); eight males on Cloutsham Ball or in East Water; elsewhere in Horner up to Pool Bridge (including Prickslade Combe and Stoke Combe) and on the north and east slopes of Dunkery, between 30 and 35, about two-thirds of those in nest-boxes being successful; these include outliers at Luckbarrow to the west and Woodcock Gardens to the east; no records this year from Porlock Parks or woodlands between there and Glenthorne; along the Barle, a notably poor year, with only three single males in Worth Wood, West Hollocombe Wood (Dane's Brook) and New Invention Wood, two in Drayton Wood/Ashwick Wood, and a female in Great Birchleeve. Only record from Exe was from West Nethercote.

The last record from a breeding area was on June 16th. Three on autumn passage: two, Selworthy Combe, August 11th; and a juvenile, Creech St Michael, on 17th.

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus*

Scarce and very local resident breeder, winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Breeding confirmed at Ham Wall: up to eight pairs in June and a maximum of 16 birds, September 29th (RSPB). At Berrow, although birds were recorded on April 21st (AMS), June 2nd (JLT) and July 24th (BOC), BES reported that no young were seen, the first time this had happened since regular breeding began in 1983.

Better records for winter periods: at Berrow, 17 on October 24th (RLM) and up to three in early November (PJE, DWa, EW); at Ham Wall, present throughout, with maximum of eight, March 13th (RSPB); on Walton Heath, three, March 24th, and two, November 20th (RSPB); on Shapwick Heath, one on October 10th (DLB) and four on 26th (JAH).

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Common resident breeder; occasional passage-migrant in autumn.

Recorded at many more sites in the breeding season than in 2006. This reflects a national trend, in which Long-tailed Tits appeared to have had a more successful breeding season than other species of tit, possibly due to their earlier breeding before the cold, wet spring.

Breeding confirmed, by evidence of nest building: Burton Pynsent Monument, February 13th; Swell Wood, March 5th; Millwater, Crewkerne, March 27th and by the presence of juveniles at Edford, Holcombe, Harridge Wood and two sites near Coleford; Kennard Moor; Glastonbury Heath; Ham Wall; Street Heath; Shapwick Heath and Westhay Moor; Catcott Heath; Westonzoyland; West Sedge Moor; Chard; Line Wood; Britty Common; Halse; Fire Beacon and Sheppard's Combe; North Hill; Tarr Steps.

Reports of large crèche flocks in May/June: 22, Bruton, May 23rd; 19, West Sedge Moor, May 16th and 13, June 4th.

Outside the breeding season the highest counts were all in the second winter period: 38, Shapwick Heath, October 6th; 26, Kennard Moor, on 31st; 35, Ham Wall, December 31st; 30, Steart, November 4th; and 40, Hinkley Point, November 2nd.

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Abundant resident breeder; occasional winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Recorded in the breeding season at sites throughout the County, nest boxes being used. First record of breeding activity: a very early record of a bird carrying food, Curry Rivel, April 6th. First record of fledging: seven fledglings, Bratton, May 19th. Blue Tits are usually single-brooded and the last evidence of breeding was that of adults entering a nest site, Croydon Hill, June 5th.

Several recorders remarked that breeding success appeared to be lower than in previous years.

Outside the breeding season, the largest counts: 40, Buckland Dinham, February 12th and 30, Bratton Wood, March 1st. Although it is not possible to make a rigorous analysis of the data it does appear that a reduced abundance of birds might have occurred in the second winter period; whereas between October and December 2006 18 sites recorded counts in excess of 20, during the same period in 2007 no such counts were recorded.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Abundant resident breeder; occasional winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Recorded in the breeding season at sites throughout the County, nest boxes being often used. Most breeding attempts were recorded in May, the latest record of newly-fledged young being Bratton, June 13th. AJP recorded a "moderate" number (49) of fledglings ringed.

Outside the breeding season the largest counts were all in the first winter period: 35, West Sedge Moor, March 7th; 20, King's Cliff, February 15th; and in Bratton Wood, 30 on March 1st and 20 on 27th.

COAL TIT *Periparus ater*

Common resident breeder; occasional passage-migrant, and presumably winter visitor.

Breeding confirmed at nine sites; all except one, in the south or the west of the County: Edford Wood; Crewkerne; Wayford Woods; Hatch Beauchamp; Somerton Combe; Croydon Hill; Chetsford Water; Horner Wood. No dates were given for first evidence of breeding. Last date for newly-fledged young was Chetsford Water, June 26th.

Outside the breeding season the largest numbers were in the first winter period: ten, Nettlebridge, January 26th; and Otterhead Lakes, January 25th; eight, New Invention, February 17th.

MARSH TIT *Poecile palustris*

Uncommon resident breeder. Decreasing.

A red-listed species, recently added to the revised list of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species. Recorded from the following sites, with an asterisk to show confirmed breeding: Torr Works Quarry; Orchardleigh and Faulkland; Edford Wood* (possibly 11 pairs and two broods in nest boxes) (JHa) and Nettlebridge*; Ebbor Gorge, Black Rock, Westbury-sub-Mendip and Rowberrow Warren; Shapwick Heath; Burton Pynsent Monument*, Swell Wood; Baltonsborough; Great Breach Wood; Chaffcombe; Sutton Bingham Reservoir*, Crewkerne and Wayford Woods*; Chard Reservoir and Ilminster; Line Woods (Hatch Beauchamp)* and Thurlbear Quarrylands; Mount Fancy, Nynhead and Wellington; Hawkridge Reservoir; Lower Vexford and Crowcombe Heathfield; Croydon Hill; Woodcombe, Minehead, Bratton Wood and Bossington; Porlock; West Luccombe: Cloutsham, Horner Wood, Hawk Combe, Dane's Brook and New Invention.

One seen to fly in from the sea Lilstock, September 9th. An extraordinary record for a largely static species.

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Recorded from the following sites, with an asterisk to show confirmed breeding: Templecombe, North of Faulkland, Chantry, Edford Wood (six, two broods in nest boxes) and Nettlebridge; Ebbor Gorge, Stockhill, Black Rock, Nether Wood, Westbury-sub-Mendip, Cheddar and Rowberrow Warren; West Sedge Moor and Swell Wood; Great Breach Wood, North Perrott*, Baltonsborough Road (Butleigh), Odombe, Hamdon Hill, Crewkerne*, Broadway, Line Wood (Hatch Beauchamp)* and Wayford Woods; Bishopswood Meadows, Southey Moor, Dommett Wood*, Otterhead Lakes, Quarts Moor and Britty Common; Burton Pynsent Monument and West Monkton

On the Quantocks: Enmore; Cothelstone* (four adults), Aisholt; Bin Combe, Holford Combe, Hodder's Combe (six), Somerton Combe, Slaughterhouse Combe and Stert Combe; Wimbleball Lake*, Treborough Wood and Haddon Hill; Minehead, Alcombe Combe, West Luccombe, Timberscombe, Little Headon Plantation, Bratton, North Hill*, Hurlstone Point, Selworthy Combe and Porlock; Hawk Combe*; Horner, Webber's Post (four), Nutscale Reservoir, Weir Water to Oareford, Cutcombe, Cloud, Hookway, Great Bradley, 32 in the Barle Valley between Simonsbath and Tarr Steps (DKB), Great Birchcleeve Wood, Draydon Wood, Dane's Brook and Burridge Wood.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Fairly common resident breeder.

Several reports suggest a reduced abundance, e.g. "surprisingly scarce on the Quantocks" and "very poor year" at Dunster Hawn.

Recorded from the following sites, with an asterisk to show confirmed breeding: Templecombe, north of Faulkland; Edford Wood (five) and Nettlebridge (ten); Westbury-sub-Mendip and Charterhouse; Cheddar Reservoir; Edithmead*; Glastonbury Heath, Wells, Ham Wall, Loxton's Marsh; Shapwick Heath, Catcott Heath, Westhay Heath; Blakeway; West Sedge Moor and Burton Pynsent Monument; Sutton Bingham Reservoir; Chaffcombe*, Millwater* and Wayford Woods*; Chard Reservoir (four); Line Wood (Hatch Beauchamp)*, Southey Moor, Dommett Wood, Otterhead Lakes and Quarts Moor; Wick; Triscombe, Holford Combe, Slaughterhouse Combe and Stert Combe; Wimbleball Lake, Kennisham Hill*; Dunster Park; Minehead, Bratton Wood, North Hill, Bossington, Porlock; Homer Wood, Webber's Post and Pool Bridge, Weir Water, Simonsbath* and Tarr Steps.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE *Lanius collurio*

Very rare summer visitor and passage-migrant. Formerly bred.

Adult female or immature, Steart, June 6th (PJE *et al.*).

Red-backed Shrikes have now been recorded in each of the last three years, three birds in May/June and two in September.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

Rare winter visitor and passage-migrant.

An outstanding year, with three, possibly five, birds in the second winter period. One Kennard Moor, found October 7th and seen regularly until November 17th (GU *et al.*). On the Mendips, one at Black Down, October 20th (GS) and 21st (NRM) and then another, or the same bird, at Wavering Down, November 3rd (JTh) seen on several occasions (BJH, JJP, JTh) until the 17th when last seen by M. Robbins. One very mobile bird on Exmoor found at Cloutsham Gate on October 28th by R. Richardson (per DKB and CS) and, presumably the same bird, seen in Sweetworthy Combe and Thurley Combe, November 2nd (RLM) and last seen close by at Honeycombe Hill (Wilmersham Common), on the 3rd (BDG).

WOODCHAT SHRIKE *Lanius senator*

Very rare visitor.

One, Thurley Combe, July 20th (ENP per DKB).

Remains a rare visitor, being recorded in three of the last seven years.

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Fairly common resident breeder; occasional passage-migrant.

Recorded from the following sites in breeding season, with asterisk to show confirmed breeding: north of Faulkland; Ham Wall, Meare Heath and Westhay Heath; Swell Wood*; Sutton Bingham Reservoir, West Coker and Crewkerne*; Hatch Beauchamp and Broadway; West Monkton*; Bagborough, Cockercombe and Hodder's Combe; Wimbleball Lake/Haddon Hill and Croydon Hill; Watchet; Minehead, Bratton and North Hill; Horner; Curr Cleeve; and Draydon Wood.

Outside the breeding season the largest count: six, Westhay Moor, December 26th.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Very common resident breeder.

Widely reported throughout the County. Again this year several observers reported that, in their study areas, there appeared to be fewer birds and suggest that this may be linked with predator control methods by gamekeepers and farmers.

Largest counts: 25, Westbury Beacon, January 3rd; at Hydrographic Office, Taunton, 15, March 13th and 22, December 24th; 14, Hawkridge Reservoir, January 26th.

CHOUGH *Pyrhcorax pyrrhcorax*

Accidental visitor. Formerly bred.

The long-anticipated visit of Choughs from the expanding population on the South Welsh coast was one of the outstanding ornithological events in 2007; the appearance of a Welsh bird in North Somerset last spring was a hopeful sign but hardly forecast what followed in 2007.

On March 8th BES found two Choughs on Brean Down; both were colour-ringed. On the next day AR and BES found five on Brean Down, the two original birds plus two new colour-ringed birds and one non-ringed bird. These birds were still present on the 10th but during the day four were seen to fly off the Down, leaving the non-ringed bird. This was still present on the 11th but could not be located on the 12th; however, on April 6th JLT found a single colour-ringed Chough, which only stayed for a short while.



Choughs

Upon enquiry, it was confirmed that the colour-ringed birds originated from the Welsh population; furthermore, one of the original birds to appear was the bird found in North Somerset in 2006 and this was also the bird still present in the area on April 6th.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Very common resident breeder; scarce passage-migrant.

Widely reported resident found throughout the County, with some large pre-roost counts especially in pastoral farming areas.

There appeared to be many more high counts than 2006: 300, Chard Junction, January 28th; 200, West Sedge Moor Reserve, February 17th; 450, Isle Abbots, July 9th; 300, Brent Knoll, July 14th; 850, Berrow and 358, Burnham, October 20th; 1,200 Chilton Moor, on 21st; 380, Bruton, November 3rd.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Abundant resident breeder.

Several reports indicate an annual fluctuation in the sizes of many rookeries. A few were received of apparent interspecific competition from Ravens.

Pre-roost and feeding flock counts in excess of 100 birds: 152, West Sedge Moor Reserve, January 21st; 135, Broadway, May 10th and 121, Little Headon Plantation, November 7th.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Abundant resident breeder.

Widespread throughout the County. Counts in excess of 50 were mostly recorded on the Levels or along the coast: 51, Burnham, January 20th; 73, Stolford, February 20th; 54, Donyatt, June 13th; 94, West Sedge Moor, November 11th, and 52, Combe St Nicholas, on the 25th.

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Locally common resident breeder.

Breeding confirmed or suspected at many sites, frequently in quarries or on pylons: two in East Somerset; five on Mendips; six on Levels; seven along coast; one in South Somerset; three on Blackdowns and two on Quantocks. Widespread on Brendons and Exmoor, with breeding proved away from coasts at Nettlecombe and Oareford.

Compared with previous years, large gatherings were reported in the autumn and winter periods, especially on Exmoor and the Blackdowns and Brendons. First winter period: 60, Langham Hill, January 10th; 100, Churchinford, on the 27th; 38, Weir Water, February 28th. Second winter period: 30, Langham Hill, September 14th; 46, Ley Hill, September 22nd; 53, Kinsford, December 23rd.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Very common resident breeder, but declining in some areas; abundant winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Very few records of successful breeding. Largest post-breeding roving flock was recorded at Steart: 480 juveniles, July 6th.

The winter roost on Avalon Marshes has continued to attract large crowds of spectators, prompted by attention in the national media. In the first winter period it was initially at Westhay Moor, with estimates of over one million, January 5th/6th, two million on the 26th and five million on the 29th. By February 13th the roost had vacated Westhay, due to work on the Reserve, and moved to Meare Heath, with an estimate of two million on the 20th. On Exmoor, the Litton roost reported in *SB 2006* as unused that autumn, was again attracting birds by January 2007 (ENHS).

Roosts reported in the second winter period: 1,000, Dunster, October 27th; 2,500, Meare Heath, October 29th, 12,000, Litton, Exmoor, November 11th, and 50,000, Ham Wall, December 31st.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Abundant resident breeder; occasional passage-migrant.

Several reports suggest both a decline in populations and a reduced productivity; although, when comparing records of site counts higher than 60 birds between 2007 and 2006, 25 were reported in 2007 compared with only 16 sites in 2006.

Breeding confirmed or suspected at the following sites: Coleford; Westonzoyland; Wembdon; Hatch Beauchamp; Curry Rivel; Crewkerne; Bratton. Nest boxes were used in several sites and in Crewkerne AJP reported a pair nesting in a House Martin nest, which was subsequently used by martins in the same season.

The largest group outside the breeding season: 100, Bratton, January 23rd.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Uncommon and very local resident breeder and winter visitor; rare passage-migrant. Now increasing in east.

Following the encouraging signs of the re-establishment of breeding colonies in the east of the county in the last few years, it is disappointing that most reports for 2007 are of reduced numbers of breeding pairs or even of a complete local population collapse. All records apart from one were from the east of the County.

Breeding was confirmed on Cary Moor, at the Environmental Centre site, although only half the number of breeding pairs was present, and at a previously successful breeding site near Nunney, although birds were present during the season, breeding was not confirmed (BAT). There were no birds at the site of the previous Blackmoor Vale colony; the possibility of a disease outbreak has been suggested (BAT). One other record within the breeding season: one, Rookery Farm, north of Green Ore, undated (MFBS).

Maximum counts at regular wintering sites: at Cloford, 30 in the first winter period and 10 in the second; at Cary Moor, 20 in the first winter period and 20 in the second (BAT); 12, Green Ore, February 17th (DWH).

Other sites: seven, near Stratton-on-the-Fosse, January 23rd (GMD); one, Trudoxhill, February 2nd (GS); two, Dimmer Landfill, February 18th (RLM); 12, Holcombe, January 10th, 20, Witham Friary, February 18th, and seven, Chilcompton, December (JHa): two, Chard, December 7th (J. Mansell, per DKB).
No records of possible passage-migrants.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Abundant resident breeder, winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Very few breeding records submitted: four pairs on territory, Southlake Moor; a family, Swell Wood; a pair bred, Hatch Beauchamp; bred in four tetrads and probably in another two, Crewkerne, only in moderate numbers and there seemed to be a very poor success rate; families, Bratton and Horner.

Highest counts from first winter period: 400 (possibly as many as 600), Triscombe Stone, January 4th and February 7th; 100, Great Breach Wood, January 9th; 150, Langham Hill, on the 10th; 150 feeding on bird forage, Cary Moor, on the 13th; 150, Holcombe Wood, and 105, Bradley Pool, on the 14th; 200, Lillycombe, on 23rd, 250, Croydon Hill, on 28th; 200, Witham Friary, and 250, Steart, February 18th; and 200, Canada Farm, Shapwick, March 1st.

There was some passage noted in spring, including 100 moving N.E., Steart, April 3rd.

Autumn passage along the coast from Berrow to Burnham was first noted on October 5th, when 166 flew south, followed by 200 on the 7th, 912 on the 21st, 260 on the 30th, and 325 on November 5th. In the west there were six counts of below 100 moving through at West Myne between October 6th and 13th, 227 flew east on the 14th, and 657 on the 15th. At Bratton, 107 flew west on November 5th, and 97 on the 6th, 93 on the 7th and finally 78 on the 17th.

There were larger numbers than normal in the second winter period. Counts of 100 and over: 300, Sweetworthy Combe, November 2nd; 100, Hinkley Point, on 19th; 150, Aisholt Common, and 100, Bagborough Plantation, on the 25th; 800 on bird forage field, Lower Stonehouse, Staplegrove, the 28th; 400 on bird forage, Cary Moor, December 9th and 16th; 120, Blackford, on 9th; 200, Raleigh's Cross, on 15th; 250, Porlock Marsh, on 16th, and 300 on the 23rd; 300, Langham Hill, on the 18th; 500, Triscombe Stone, on 23rd; 350, Stratton-on-the-Fosse, on 26th.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Uncommon and erratic winter visitor and passage-migrant.

A poor first winter period; only 13 records, compared with 110 in 2006: four, Clatworthy Reservoir, January 1st; female, Stogumber, from the 2nd to February 11th; single birds, Triscombe Stone, January 4th, and Holcombe Wood on 14th; up to three, Butleigh, 16th to 21st; two, Aisholt Common, February 4th; and six single birds in East Somerset or on Quantocks, from 20th to March 30th.

A small autumn passage. The first were two in flight over the Axe Estuary on October 2nd. Four flew south at Burnham on the 4th and five the next day at Berrow. Two flew west at Brean Down on the 6th. Inland, one flew east at Shapwick Heath also on the 6th. Singles flew south on six dates between the 21st and December 11th along the coast from Berrow to the Brue Estuary, there were three on October 21st.

Away from the coast a male was amongst the Chaffinches at Cloutsham Gate on October 28th. After this records became widespread from across the County, with counts of ten and over: up to 20, Butleigh, November 15th to December 31st; ten, Hillhead Cross, November 21st to December 31st; ten, Aisholt Common and Bagborough Plantation, November 25th; large numbers along the Alfred's Tower/Gare Hill ridge, December; 30, Raleigh's Cross, December 15th; 12, Tonedale, on 17th; at least 70, Triscombe Stone, from 21st to 31st; 100, Broomfield Hill, and 20, Collard Hill, December 23rd; ten, Apex Leisure Park, on 26th; and 20, Coppleham Cross, on 30th.

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

Common resident breeder, winter visitor and passage-migrant.

The population is showing no signs of recovery after the outbreak of the trichomoniasis disease and there were still several reports of dying birds being found. A number of comments that numbers are severely depressed from across the County.

There were very few breeding records: three pairs, Southlake Moor; a pair feeding young, West Sedge Moor; one family, Hatch Beauchamp; a pair taking material to nest, Yeovil; only nine territories located in Crewkerne area; a family, Bratton.

There were very few flocks in the first winter period, with no more than 20 recorded. Counts of ten and over: 14, Westbury-sub-Mendip, January; 12, Manor Road, Taunton, and 20, Steart, on the 9th; ten, Greylake Reserve on the 13th, Tonedale the 29th and Churchfields, Wellington, on the February 7th; 12, Wellington, and ten, Stogumber, on 24th; ten, south of Crewkerne, during March; ten, North Hill, and 15, Bossington, on the 6th.

In spring: 25 in the Upper Axe Valley, April 8th; 18, North Hill, on 11th; 11, north of Faulkland, on 26th, and 13 on May 11th.

There was a small increase in numbers in June when up to 30 along the coast path between Dunster Beach and Minehead on the 14th, and 25 at Porlock Marsh on the 22nd. A flock of 30 were at Gold Corner on August 10th.

There were very little signs of autumn migration along the coast. Apart from a flock of 100 at Lower Severalls, south-east of Merriott, October 8th, all the larger numbers were further west. A flock of 200 were in feeding in a field sown for birds at Lower Stonehouse, Staplegrove, on the 14th. Up to 120 were recorded at Porlock Marsh during November and December. The only other flocks of note were 40, north of Faulkland, and 50, Steart, on November 5th.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Common resident and migrant breeder, and passage-migrant; probably winter visitor.

Confirmed breeding at: Faulkland; Steart; Westonzoyle; Butleigh; Line Wood, Hatch Beauchamp; Crewkerne; Taunton; Wellington; Drapers Way. A number of other pairs reported from across the County during the breeding season.

In the first winter period there were the following large flocks: 80, Edford Wood; 25, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, January 2nd to 13th; 30, Langham Hill, on the 10th; 50, Britty Common, on 28th; 40, Burton Pynsent Monument, February 5th; 40, Canada Farm, on the 17th and March 1st. Again some evidence of spring migration when small flocks passed along the coast at Brean Down and Hurlstone Point; 50 at Steart on May 20th could also have been migrants.

Post-breeding flocks included: 25, Combwich Common, August 11th; 50, Kennard Moor, on the 27th; 30, Cheddar Reservoir, on the 31st; 30, Roosthitchen, September 11th and Langham Hill, on the 14th; 50, Steart, on the 14th and 120 on the 29th. Numbers were comparable with 2006; the 120 at Steart was the highest count of the year. Only small numbers counted moving along the coast in early October: 16 south at Burnham, on 5th; 20 flew east, Hurlstone Point, on the 6th; ten east, West Myne, on 8th.

Only two late-autumn counts: 50 feeding on seed heads, Dunster Beach, October 13th; 70, Clatworthy Reservoir, on 14th. The only large count of the second winter period was of up to 100, Coleford, during November and December.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Uncommon but increasing resident or migrant breeder; locally common winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Good numbers of singing males and pairs in the breeding season along the eastern boundary of the County from Alfred's Tower to Gare Hill. On the Blackdowns a pair were at North Down Plantation in April 6th, a male was displaying at Britty Common and four were in flight calling at Mount Fancy on the 20th. On the Quantocks there were a number of records of displaying males in the Quantock Forest and two families were seen on Broomfield Hill on July 22nd. On the Brendons, two males were singing and displaying at both Monkham Hill and Croydon Hill on May 19th. To the west birds were seen regularly at Bratton throughout the summer, two families were at Cloutsham Ball on June 16th; and a juvenile at Chalk Water on July 27th was the first record for the area.

In the first winter period, flocks of 20 and over: 25, Dunster Beach, January 4th; 30, Bruton, on the 7th; 70, Croydon Hill, on 28th; 30, Wellington, March 1st.

In contrast to the previous year there was a large autumn migration, the first signs were in late September. It was not until October 6th that the first sizeable count was made, when 104 flew south at Berrow. The main

movement was along the coast to the west: 171 flew east in 14 flocks at Dunster Beach on the 13th; these might have been part of the 400 at Stolford and 50 at Knighton on the same day. However, the 320 at Hurlstone Point early morning the next day had probably passed through before at least 450 flew east at Dunster Beach in the afternoon. On the 15th at West Myne 37 flew east and 20 to the west. Even inland on Exmoor flocks totalling 250 moved through Pittcombe Head on the 20th. In early November at least 85 flew over Berron on the 5th; small numbers passed Bratton on a number of days but the totals did not exceed 22. A flock of 60 flew north-east near junction 25 of the M5.

There were larger flocks in the second winter period with a number of counts of 40 and over: 50, Edford Wood, October 14th; 60, Rowberrow Warren, on the 20th and 83 on December 13th; 40, Westhay Moor, October 21st, and 50 on November 7th; 50, Harridge Wood, November 11th; 65, Kingswood, near Stogumber, December 18th. 40, Bruton, on 21st, up to 60, Canada Farm/Catcott Heath, between 21st and 27th.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

Fairly common resident and migrant breeder, winter visitor and passage-migrant.

On the Quantocks, a total of 97 males/pairs in the breeding season was identical to 2005, this is 43 fewer than in 2006 but that was the year of a full survey. On West Sedge Moor there were 17 pairs present. Other surveys on the Levels located the following pairs: five, King's Sedge Moor; four, Southlake Moor; three, Hay Moor; two or three, Wet Moor; two, West Moor; and one, King's Moor. Other records away from the west were few: they included three pairs in the Curry Mallet/Isle Brewers area and two pairs at Snowdon Hill. Widespread across Exmoor and no doubt the survey being carried out in 2008 will give a better indication of the true population.

Large flocks in the first winter period of 100 and over: 100, Buckland Dinham, February 12th; 140, Steart, on the 18th; 600 on maize stubble, Williton, February until late March; 300, Washford Cross, during March.

Up to 250 birds were moving north-east in small flocks at Steart, April 4th.

There were no reports of large late-summer flocks; the first was of 120 at Hinkley Point, September 5th, rising to 300 on October 6th. Other flocks from the autumn/second winter period of 100 or over: 150, Lilstock, October 7th; 100, Porlock Marsh, November 3rd; 400, Doniford, on the 26th; 100, Staplegrove, on the 28th, and Steart, December 16th.

LESSER REDPOLL *Carduelis cabaret*

Uncommon resident breeder and passage-migrant; fairly common winter visitor.

No confirmed breeding and all the records for this period came from the Quantocks and Exmoor, singly apart from: two males, Aisholt Common, June 4th; six singing males, Haddon Hill, April 29th; and seven, Room Hill, May 22nd.

In the first winter period, counts of ten and over: 12, Meare Heath, January 1st; 15, Westhay Moor, on 14th; ten, Otterhead Lakes, on the 25th; 20, Ashcott Corner, February 20th; 30, Alfred's Tower, and 20, Edford, on March 24th.

Noted on autumn migration along the coast between Brean Down and Berron: ten, October 5th and 7th; 21, on the 6th; singles on the 21st and 26th; three, November 4th.

There were very few records in the second winter period and only one of double figures: 11, Canada Farm, November 26th.

CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

Locally common visitor following irruptions; intermittent breeder.

Recorded every month of the year with the exception of July and August but fewer than in recent years.

In the east: three, Gare Hill, February 12th; ten, Alfred's Tower, on the 13th, and six on the 24th, singles on the 25th and April 1st. On the Mendips: four, Rowberrow Warren, June 5th, and six, December 13th. The only records from the Quantocks were nine, Floorey Down, and one, Triscombe Stone, December 23rd. From the west, seven records from Croydon Hill, the maximum being eight on September 28th. The largest flock of the year was of 20 at Hopcott Common, December 7th, eight were recorded here on November 23rd. One flew over Bratton, November 7th.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Fairly common resident breeder and occasional passage-migrant.

Again widespread across County in breeding season, with a slight increase in sightings of families, singly unless stated: Harridge Woods, two sites near Coleford and Nettlebridge; Cinnamon Lane (Glastonbury); Millwater, Crewkerne STW and Mancombe; two, Broomfield Hill; and Porlock Weir.

No comments made on status apart from at Berrow, where this is now a scarce species.

In the first winter period: 12, Holcombe Wood, January 10th; eight, Wimbleball Lake, on the 20th; ten, Bratton Wood, February 3rd.

In autumn and second winter period: 12, Haddon Hill, September 9th; seven, Crawter Hill, October 6th; ten, Hinkley Point area, December 22nd; nine, Edford, on 25th; 14, Stratton-on-the-Fosse, on 26th.

LAPLAND BUNTING *Calcarius lapponicus*

Rare winter visitor and passage-migrant.

Three records of single birds: photographed, Stolford, September 11th, the earliest autumn record for the County (N. Hallam, J.Hopkins); Wall Common, on the 28th and October 13th (NEW).

There have been eight other records since 2000 of a total of nine birds.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Scarce winter visitor and passage-migrant.

About ten birds, all in autumn and second winter period: one, Dunkery Beacon, October 5th-9th; four, Stolford, November 2nd, of which at least two remained until 7th; one, Combwich, from 25th to at least December 21st, often visited gardens around the Pill; one, Huntspill Sea Wall, November 27th-29th; one, Hinkley Point, November 27th, and two there on 30th.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

Locally common resident breeder; perhaps also passage-migrant.

Breeding-season records from across the County. A flock of 83 were feeding on a young organic cereal crop at Hadspen, April 9th; also many singing males in surrounding fields (BAT). Other records from the east: three pairs, Pitcot Lane, Nettlebridge; 23 in the area north of Faulkland.

The only record from the Mendips was of a male at GB Gruffy Reserve.

A singing male was the only record from the traditional area to the north of Shapwick. A few records from along the Poldens: two singing males, Cossington; a pair, Woolavington; three males, Wood Lane, Butleigh. In the Westonzoyland area there were two singing males at Weston Level.

Two singing males near Hatch Court, Hatch Beauchamp. In a survey of the parishes surrounding Isle Abbots a total of 31 singing males were located in July, ten fewer than in the previous year (DWH). Three singing males were on Somerton Moor, and two along the canal at Westport. A juvenile was seen at Broadway. In the south there were three singing males at locations near Crewkerne, singles at Hewish and Chiselborough Hill and four pairs at Snowdon Hill.

On or around the Blackdowns there were three singing males at Middleroom Drove, Curland, and singles at Gortnell Common, Staple Fitzpaine and Stoke St Mary.

On the Quantocks a total of 82 singing males/pairs; the highest counts were 11 at West Hill and nine at Aisholt Common, considerably fewer than the previous year when a full survey was carried out. To the north, males or pairs at 12 sites around Hinkley Point. To the south, a pair near Milverton. Around Stogumber, four males at Rowdon Farm and two at Ashbeer.

On the Brendons and Exmoor: two males, Hurscombe Reserve, Wimbleball; two males, Forche's Garden; two males, Withycombe; two pairs, Perley Combe; three males, North Hill; a pair, Cloutsham; females at Room Hill and Great Bradley.

In the first winter period: up to 36, north of Faulkland, throughout the period; 40, Hadspen, January 5th; 20, Lower Severalls, Merriott, on the 25th.; 20, Butleigh Wootton, the 27th; 40 on game-cover crop, Cloford,

February 4th; 60, Nether Moor, Middlezoy, also on the 4th; 70 on an old crop field now planted with young trees, Wibble Farm, West Quantoxhead, on 13th; 23, Staplegrove, on 26th.

Second winter period: up to 28, north of Faulkland, throughout the period; 43, Washford, November 12th; 15, Stogumber, on 28th; 110 on bird forage crop, Cary Moor, December 15th, and 40 still present on the 31st; at least 25 on weedy stubble, Shurton, on 22nd; 20, Buckland Dinham, on 30th.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Locally common resident breeder; fairly common winter visitor and passage-migrant.

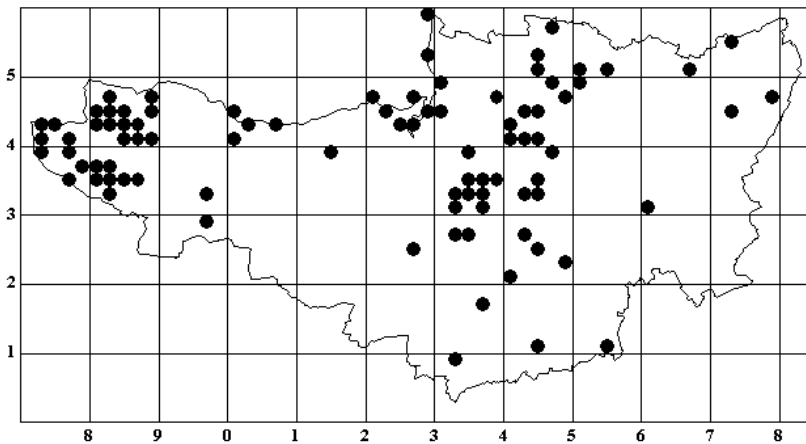
The main breeding figures counts came from the Reserves on the Levels: 122 pairs, West Sedge Moor; 44, Ham Wall; 28, Westhay Moor, including five from outside the NNR; 20, Greylake Reserve; six, Westhay Heath. Breeding success at Westhay was poor, only six families being seen. On Exmoor, about 44 at 29 sites, mostly single males/pairs apart from: two, Wilmersham Common; five, Exe Plain; two, Dillacombe; four, Long Combe; three, Winsford Hill; three, Pinkworthy Pond. Other main breeding-season records of three males/pairs and over: five territories, Upper Axe Valley; eight, Hinkley Point/Wick Moor; ten, Steart; three, Tadham Moor; six, Pawlett Hams; six, Butleigh Moor; 18, King's Sedge Moor; seven, Southlake Moor; nine, Somerton Moor; four, Wet Moor; and 12, West Moor.

First winter period, counts of ten and over: 12, Berrow, throughout the year; 20, Greylake Reserve, January 5th, 30 on February 5th and 50 on the 13th; 20, near Loocombe Wood, January 23rd, Lower Severalls, Merriott on the 25th and Cary Moor on the 27th; 37, West Sedge Moor, February 18th; 34, Ham Wall, the 19th.

A total of 11 flew south at Burnham on October 5th.

In the autumn and second winter period: 50, Steart, October 4th; 29, Westhay Moor, on the 26th, and 42 on November 6th; ten, Lower Severalls, November 12th, and Knowle Moor, on 25th; 40 on bird forage crop, Cary Moor, December 1st, and 60 on the 15th; 50 on maize stubble, Westhay Moor, December 25th.

Reed Bunting distribution in Somerset



EXOTICA AND ESCAPES

All observations of escaped and feral species help to monitor possible colonisation, which in the future may become established. So all records are required.

BLACK SWAN *Cygnus atratus*

One, Aller Moor, April 9th; two, Chard Reservoir, August; and one, Sowey River, Othery, December 13th.

TRUMPETER SWAN *Cygnus buccinator*

One, Butleigh Moor, December 26th.

BAR-HEADED GOOSE *Anser indicus*

Singles: Hawkridge Reservoir, January 1st to March 23rd; Berrow, March 7th and October 2nd; Steart, October 22nd.

SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*

Two, Greylake Reserve, May 22nd-24th and August 31st; one, Wet Moor, December 11th to 17th, and two on the 20th; one, West Sedge Moor, on the 31st.

RED-BREASTED GOOSE *Branta ruficollis*

One, Wet Moor, February 18th.

MUSCOVY DUCK *Cairina moschata*

One, Huntworth, February 2nd; four, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, April 4th; one, Minehead, November 10th.

WOOD DUCK *Aix sponsa*

Two, West Coker, January; one male, Apex Leisure Park, January 28th to April 25th; at Sutton Bingham Reservoir, a pair on February 24th/25th, singles on five dates between August 15th to September 13th, and two on August 31st.

CHILOË WIGEON *Anas sibilatrix*

Two males, Steart, September 28th/29th.

RINGED TEAL *Callonetta leucophrys*

One female, Apex Leisure Park, March 21st to 23rd; a pair, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, September 26th.

WHITE-BACKED VULTURE *Gyps africanus*

One flew north, Catcott Lows, November 3rd.

GREAT BUSTARD *Otis tarda*

One, orange '15' from the Salisbury Plain reintroduction scheme, Butt Moor/Kennard Moor from 2006 until April 6th.

An immature male released in 2005, now minus tags, was present at West Sedge Moor on July 22nd to 26th, on West Moor on August 10th, and on Curry Moor from September 28th until at least November 18th.

Three, orange '15' and yellow '18' and '22', arrived at Kennard Moor on October 7th and were present until November 1st. Presumably the same three were seen in flight over junction 26 of the M5 motorway on the 4th. One of these, yellow '22', was subsequently seen on Tadham Moor on November 11th and 18th.

BUDGERIGAR *Melopsittacus undulatus*

One, Hydrographic Office, Taunton, June 19th.

OBSERVERS

Ashman A.	AA	Grimmond R.	RGr
		Grinter A.	AG
Baker D.F	DFB		
Ball J	JB1	Halsey R.J.	RJH
Ballance D.K	DKB	Hansford J.	JHa
Ballantine R.P	RPB	Harris A.	AHa
Barker J.	JBa	Harris K.	KH
Bartlett T.	TBa	Hastings R.C.F.	RCFH
Beavis S.A.	SAB	Hawkins C.	CH
Best J.R.	JRB	Hazell J.A.	JAH
Bird S.	SB	Helliard D.W.	DWH
Bovett W.P.	WPB	Hill B.J.	BJH
Bowyer P.	PB	Holmes J.D. & C.	JDH
Bristol Ornithological Club	BOC	Hull I.	IH
Buckingham D.L.	DLB		
Butcher R.J.	RJB	Ingram R.J.	RJI
Caola S.	SC	Jessop H.	HJ
Carter B.	BC	Jones R.J.	RJJ
Chace R.	RCh		
Chadwick P.J.	PJC	Kelsh R.N.	RNK
Chapman S.J.	SJC	Klim R.	RK
Chidgey J.W.	JWC		
Chown D.J.	DJC	Leece J.	JLe
Clement P.A.	PAC	Lupton D.	DL
Connolly J.G.	JGC		
Coombes G.	GCo	Martin J.P.	JPM
Cotton D.J.	DJCo	Mathews B.J.	BJM
Craig C.	CC	McGeoch J.A.M.	JAMcG
Crispin J.	JCr	Milbourne N.R.	NRM
Cropper R.S.	RSC	Miller D.F.	DFM
		Mockridge D.G.	DGM
Davies K.D.	KD	Morrison K. & J.	K&JM
Devitt R.H.	RHD	Moss S.	SMo
Dicker G.M.	GMD	Musgrove R.L.	RLM
Edwards P.J.	JE	Nevitt D.	DNe
Ellis B.R.	BRE	Newman C. & J.	C&JN
Evans B.	BE		
Everett A.N.	ANE	Packer J.J.	JJP
Exmoor Natural History Society	ENHS	Parsons A.J.	AJP
		Pimbley A.	APi
Fairweather S.C.J.	SCJF	Pratt R.	RPr
Ford R.L.	RLF	Pugsley A.M.	AMP
Ford T.D.	TDF		
Gawthorpe P.	PGa	Raven T.	TR
Gay P.	PG	Ridge M.A.	MAR
Gibbs B.D.	BDG	Riley A.	AR
Gladman C.	CG	Riley D.	DRy
Goldie P.	PJG	Rivoire J.	JRi
Grant P. & P.	PGr	Robinson R.	RR
Gray B.H.J.	BHJG	Royal Society for the	
Greenwood M. & R.	MG	Protection of Birds	RSPB

Sage C.	CS	Urch G.	GU
Sage M.	MS		
Sawyer C.M.	CMS	Vaughan R. & M.	R&MV
Simmons A.G.	AGS	Vickers J.	JV
Slade A.M.	AMS		
Slade B.E.	BES	Wall E.	EW
Smith N.	NS	Wall N.E.	NEW
Smith N.A.	NAS	Warden D.	DW
Smith P.	PS	Ward-Smith R.	RW-S
Squire H.C.	HCS	Warren G.	GWa
Stevenson A.	ASt	Warren J.E.	JEW
Suter G.	GS	Wawman D.	DWa
		Webber W.J.	WJW
Taylor A.M.	AMT	White J.R.	JRW
Taylor B.A.	BAT	Whitworth P.	PW
Taylor J.	JT	Widden B.J.	BJW
Thomas D.	DTh	Williams A.	AWi
Thomas J.L.	JLT	Williams N.P.	NPW
Thomas S.	STh	Wilson P.H.	PHW
Thorogood J.	JTh	Winn B.	BWi
Tillsley P.	PT	Wolton A.W.	AWW
Tout M.	MT	Wright H.L.	HLW
Treeby R.K.	RKT	Wright S. & T.	T&SW

With apologies for any omissions.

RINGING REPORT 2007

A total of 5,492 birds of 61 species were ringed in Somerset during 2007, a slight decrease on both the total and number of species ringed compared to 2006.

Highlights included the high numbers of both Pied Flycatcher and Wood Warblers ringed (the vast majority being pulli) also single Firecrest and two of both Bearded Tit and Tree Sparrow were noteworthy.

Bruce Taylor's perseverance with the gulls at Torr Works Reservoir and likewise Chris Gladman on the coast between Blue Anchor and Minehead paid dividends with a good return of ringed birds including several from Eastern Europe.

As always, our thanks go to all the ringers and their helpers in the County, and to the landowners for continued permission to ring on their land.

RECOVERIES, CONTROLS & SIGHTINGS

Birds included were recorded over 10 km. From where they were originally ringed, or are of special interest, e.g. long-lived birds or returning migrants.

Age when ringed

1. Pullus: bird ringed in the nest.
- 1j Pullus: bird just about able to fly but after leaving nest.
2. Fully-grown; year of hatching unknown.
3. Definitely hatched during calendar year of ringing.
- 3j Definitely hatched during calendar year, but with juvenile plumage.
4. Hatched before calendar year of ringing, but exact year unknown.
5. Hatched during previous calendar year.
6. Hatched during previous calendar year, but exact year unknown.

M=Male F=Female

Conditions of recovery

- X Found dead.
- XF Found freshly dead or dying.
- XL Found long dead.
- A Alive and probably healthy.
- + Shot or intentionally killed by man.
- +F Shot or intentionally killed by man (fresh).
- +L Shot or intentionally killed by man (not recent).
- V Alive and probably healthy; caught and released by non-ringer.
- R Caught and released by ringer.

Mute Swan

2	21.06.2003	Abbotsbury, Dorset
RR	01.05.2007	Greylake Reserve

Little Egret

1	13.06.2006	Goldcliff, South Wales
RR	01.01.2007	Chapel Cleeve

Present to January 31st and returned December 1st into 2008. Code: Green with black D right leg, Yellow with white A left leg.

Mediterranean Gull

5	04.06.2006	Paczkowski Reservoir, Kozielno, Wroclaw, Poland
RR	16.08.2007	Blue Anchor

Present to September 24th.

4	23.06.2006	Zandvlietsluis, Antwerpen, Belgium
RR	26.08.2007	Blue Anchor

Present to November 2nd.

1	06.06.2003	Verrebroek, Antwerpen, Belgium
RR	24.10.2007	Blue Anchor

Seen on one date only. This bird was also seen at Blue Anchor last October having since been in France in April.

Black-headed Gull

1	11.06.2003	Veluwemmer, Ijsselmeerpolders, Netherlands
RR	23.02.2005	Sutton Bingham Reservoir
1	21.06.2007	Kretuonas Lake, Svencionys, Lithuania
RR	27.08.2007	Blue Anchor

4	11.02.1983	Harelbeke, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium
RR	17.11.2007	Blue Anchor

One day only, this long-lived bird was also seen here on November 16th 2006.

1	16.07.2004	Pylewell Lake, Lymington, Hampshire
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RR 14.08.2007 Blue Anchor
Present to November 28th. This bird was also at Blue Anchor September 2nd 2006 to November 23rd 2006.

4M 14.06.2006 Böhmke und Werder,
Ostvorpommern, Germany

RR 21.09.2007 Minehead
Present to December 21st. This bird was also at Minehead October 4th 2006 to February 24th 2007.

Lesser Black-backed Gull

5 11.11.2006 Hempsted landfill site,
Gloucester, Gloucestershire
RR 26.04.2007 Dunster Beach

4 27.02.2006 Stoke Orchard landfill site,
Gloucestershire
RR 04.02.2007 Torr Works Reservoir

4 04.07.2006 Bristol
RR 22.05.2007 Torr Works Reservoir
This bird was also recorded nr. Lisbon, Portugal in January 2007.

4 02.07.2005 Flat Holm, Glamorgan
RR 22.05.2007 Torr Works Reservoir

4 28.06.2005 Bath
RR 29.05.2007 Torr Works Reservoir
This bird was also recorded at Matosinhos, Northern Portugal in 2005.

4 25.06.2005 Bristol
RR 07.06.2007 Torr Works Reservoir
This bird was also recorded at Matosinhos, Northern Portugal in 2005, 2006.

4 02.07.2005 Bristol
RR 17.07.2007 Torr Works Reservoir
This bird was also recorded at several locations in Spain during 2006 and 2007.

4 28.06.2003 Bristol
RR 23.06.2007 Torr Works Reservoir
Also recorded at Blackborough, Norfolk in May 2005.

4 06.07.2005 Bristol
RR 13.07.2007 Torr Works Reservoir

4 01.07.2003 Flat Holm, Glamorgan
RR 13.07.2007 Torr Works Reservoir

This bird was also recorded at Cadiz, Spain on 19th October 2004.

4 05.02.2007 Stoke Orchard landfill site,
Gloucestershire

RR 16.07.2007 Torr Works Reservoir

4 04.12.2004 Stoke Orchard landfill site,
Gloucestershire

RR 16.07.2007 Torr Works Reservoir

4 27.06.2006 Bristol

RR 18.07.2007 Torr Works Reservoir

4 03.02.2007 Hempsted landfill site,
Gloucester, Gloucestershire

RR 18.07.2007 Torr Works Reservoir

4 02.07.2005 Flat Holm, Glamorgan

RR 11.11.2007 Torr Works Reservoir

4 05.02.2007 Stoke Orchard landfill site,
Gloucestershire

RR 24.11.2007 Torr Works Reservoir

4 24.11.2007 Stoke Orchard landfill site,
Gloucestershire

RR 25.11.2007 Torr Works Reservoir

4 06.07.2004 Bristol

RR 22.12.2007 Orchardleigh Lake

This bird was also recorded in Madrid 18th December 2005.

4 26.06.2007 Bristol

RR 23.12.2007 Torr Works Reservoir

3 08.07.2000 South Walney, Cumbria

RR 24.11.2007 Torr Works Reservoir

This bird was also recorded at Serantes Beach, Spain on 13th December 2005.

4 06.07.2004 Bristol

RR 14.10.2007 Torr Works Reservoir

This bird was also recorded at Talavera de la Reina and Madrid in January and February 2006.

4 26.06.2000 Bristol

RR 14.10.2007 Torr Works Reservoir

A much travelled bird being recorded in Spain at Gijon, October 2000 and Badajoz, December 2001. Also in Portugal nr. Lisbon in December 2000 and March 2002 and at Matosinhos in November 2006.

4	04.07.2003	Bath	3	28.10.2006	Hempsted landfill site,
RR	15.10.2007	Torr Works Reservoir			Gloucester, Gloucestershire
			RR	26.04.2007	Dunster Beach
4	25.06.1996	Bristol	4	26.11.2005	Hempsted landfill site,
RR	15.10.2007	Torr Works Reservoir			Gloucester, Gloucestershire
Another long-lived and much travelled bird, recorded in Vendee, France in December 1999 and January 2007 and Radipole Lake, Dorset in March 1999.					
4	19.07.2006	Zelee-heikent (sportstraat), Oost-vlaanderen, Belgium	RR	3.10.2007	Blue Anchor
RR	10.11.2007	Torr Works Reservoir	4	16.12.2006	Hempsted landfill site,
Also recorded at two locations in the Netherlands on 18th May and 23rd July 2007.					
			RR	10.05.2007	Blue Anchor
Present on and off until October 2nd.					
4	27.06.2002	Flat Holm, Glamorgan	4	16.12.2006	Hempsted landfill site,
RR	16.07.2007	Torr Works Reservoir			Gloucester, Gloucestershire
Also recorded at Rianxo, central northwest Spain on 1st January 2005.					
			RR	01.11.2007	Dunster Beach
4	11.11.2006	Hempsted landfill site, Gloucester, Gloucestershire	4	13.01.2007	Hempsted landfill site,
RR	05.08.2007	Torr Works Reservoir			Gloucester, Gloucestershire
Also recorded at Minehead					
			RR	02.11.2007	
4	03.07.2004	Bristol	1	24.06.2006	Bristol
RR	06.10.2007	Torr Works Reservoir	RR	02.10.2007	Blue Anchor
Also recorded on Hoedic Island, off Finistere, France in September 2004 and in the Gijon area of Spain in January 2005 and March 2007.					
			4	13.01.2007	Hempsted landfill site,
4	04.07.1997	Bristol			Gloucester, Gloucestershire
RR	13.10.2007	Torr Works Reservoir	RR	14.01.2007	Torr Works Reservoir
Also recorded at Matosinhos, Northern Portugal in March 2001 and November 2006 and in Madrid, Spain in January 2007.					
			4	28.10.2006	Hempsted landfill site,
4	06.07.2002	Bristol			Gloucester, Gloucestershire
RR	14.10.2007	Torr Works Reservoir	RR	03.02.2007	Dimmer landfill site
Also seen in Cardiff in May 2006.					
			4	13.01.2007	Hempsted landfill site,
4	25.06.1994	Bristol			Gloucester, Gloucestershire
RR	14.10.2007	Torr Works Reservoir	RR	03.02.2007	Torr Works Reservoir
Recorded at Gijon, Spain in February 1995, February and March 2004 and March 2005.					
			4	28.10.2006	Hempsted landfill site,
Herring Gull					
					Gloucester, Gloucestershire
4	11.11.2005	Hempsted landfill site, Gloucester, Gloucestershire	RR	24.11.2007	Torr Works Reservoir
RR	18.09.2007	Blue Anchor	Sedge Warbler		
3	26.11.2005	Hempsted landfill site, Gloucester, Gloucestershire	4F	14.05.06	Marston Lake, Lower Marston, Frome
RR	17.09.2007	Blue Anchor	R	13.08.07	Oxwich Marsh, Glamorgan

Reed Warbler

4F	20.07.06	Marston Lake, Lower Marston, Frome
R	19.07.07	Longbridge Deverill, Warminster, Wiltshire
3J	02.07.06	Walcot, Wellington, Shropshire
R	24.07.06	Marston Lake, Lower Marston, Frome
4	14.05.06	Marston Lake, Lower Marston, Frome
R	15.08.06	Icklesham, Sussex

Greenfinch

6M	07.07.07	Birchwood, Buckland St Mary
R	20.10.07	Hooke, Beaminster, Dorset

Siskin

5F	18.03.06	Frome
XF	01.08.06	Meikle Richorn, Dalbeattie, Dumfries & Galloway
6M	18.03.06	Frome
R	13.04.06	Neerpelt, Limburg, Belgium

Reed Bunting

3M	01.10.05	Cranborne Common, Alderholt, Dorset
R	21.01.06	Templecombe

R.L. Musgrove
37 Polden Street, Bridgwater

SYSTEMATIC LIST WITH RINGERS' INDIVIDUAL TOTALS FOR 2007

Species	JWC/DFM	DL	AJP	RW-S	W/JW	TOTAL
Sparrowhawk	6				2	8
Kestrel			1		1	2
Herring Gull	1					1
Wood Pigeon	4	1				5
Collared Dove	11					11
Barn Owl	4					4
Kingfisher	1		3			4
Green Woodpecker	1				5	6
Great Spotted Woodpecker	6		4	10	2	22
Swallow	310			17		327
House Martin	10		1	6		17
Meadow Pipit	24					24
Pied Wagtail	19					19
Wren	37	8	17	18	37	117
Dunnock	77	14	12	20	75	198
Robin	78	4	9	25	57	173
Nightingale	2					2
Redstart	1					1
Stonechat	5					5
Blackbird	186	9	20	32	91	338
Fieldfare	7			1	3	11
Song Thrush	33	3		2	12	50
Redwing	1			5	2	8
Mistle Thrush	1			1	4	6
Cetti's Warbler	10					10
Sedge Warbler	59	1				60
Reed Warbler	126	4				130
Blackcap	78	22	19	12	86	217
Garden Warbler	6			2	1	9
Lesser Whitethroat	1					1

Species	JWC/DFM	DL	AJP	RW-S	WJW	TOTAL
Common Whitethroat	9	2			6	17
Wood Warbler					111	111
Chiffchaff	53	7	13	20	19	112
Willow Warbler	9	1	6	2		18
Goldcrest	6	2		7	11	26
Firecrest					1	1
Spotted Flycatcher	7			7		14
Pied Flycatcher	72					72
Bearded Tit	2					2
Long-tailed Tit	57		11	16	41	125
Blue Tit	313	6	47	146	79	591
Great Tit	129	6	66	125	56	382
Coal Tit	5	1	3	31	6	46
Marsh Tit			1	2		3
Nuthatch			1	11		12
Treecreeper	3		3	3		9
Jay			1	1	1	3
Jackdaw			1			1
Starling	151					151
House Sparrow	459		20	2	1	482
Tree Sparrow		2				2
Chaffinch	134	2	6	96	26	264
Brambling				3		3
Greenfinch	430	6	7	88	23	554
Goldfinch	171	1		251	28	451
Siskin				36		36
Linnet	2				2	4
Lesser Redpoll				7		7
Bullfinch	4		2	5	5	16
Yellowhammer	2	14				16
Reed Bunting	175					175
TOTAL	3298	116	274	1010	794	5492

Ringers' initials as in the "List of Observers"

SOMERSET GAZETTEER

Listed below are all the places mentioned in the Systematic List. A six-figure OS map reference is given (except to some large areas) as a fairly accurate guide. The capital letter at the end of each place corresponds with the District reference used on the County map in the Reports from 1984 to 1993.

Acklands,	SS732396, W	Bishops Lydeard	ST167297, SW
Aisholt	ST194357, SW	Bishopswood	ST260128, S
Aisholt Common	ST180354, SW	Bishopswood Meadows	ST252131, S
Alcombe	SS974442, W	Black Ball Hill	ST134396, SW
Alcombe Common	SS975440, W	Black Down	ST475575, N
Alfred's Tower	ST745352, E	Black Hill (Brendons)	SS986401, W
Aller	ST400293, C	Black Hill (Quantocks)	ST148386, SW
Aller Moor (Aller)	ST387287, C	Black Rock	ST485547, N
Allerford (Exmoor)	SS905470, W	Blackbrook	ST259255, SW
Almsworthy Common	SS842419, W	Blackford	SS924453, W
Ammerham	ST367057, S	Blackford Moor	ST400485, N
Apex Leisure Par	ST316475, N	Blackmoor Vale	ST710260, E
Appledoor Quarry	ST484262, C	Blackpitts	SS764417, W
Asham Wood	ST708460, E	Blue Anchor	ST022435, W
Ashbeer	ST087360, SW	Blue Ben	ST122440, SW
Ashbrittle	ST052214, SW	Bossington	SS898479, W
Ashcott	ST437372, C	Bossington Beach	SS893485, W
Ashcott Corner	ST449397, C	Bradford-on-Tone	ST173229, SW
Ashcott Heath	ST445392, C	Bradley New Pond	SS862337, W
Ashford Reservoir	ST235384, SW	Brady Moor	SS815370, W
Ashwick Wood	SS889297, W	Bratton	SS947463, W
Athelney	ST347288, C	Bratton Wood	SS947468, W
Axe Estuary	ST295595, N	Brean	ST295585, N
		Brean Down	ST290590, N
Babcary	ST562288, C	Brean Down Cove	ST294587, N
Badgworthy Water	SS791450, W	Bridgetown	SS923332, W
Bagborough Plantation	ST170343, SW	Bridgwater	ST300370, C
Bale Water	SS762392, W	Britty Common	ST258157, S
Baltonsborough	ST542348, C	Broadway	ST320155, S
Barrington	ST388181, S	Broadwood Plantation	SS977413, W
Batch Moor Copse	ST399066, S	Brompton Regis	SS951315, W
Bathpool	ST253258, SW	Broomfield Hill	ST215328, SW
Bat's Castle	SS988423, W	Brue Estuary	ST302478, N
Bawdrip	ST343396, C	Bruton	ST685347, E
Bawdrip Level	ST350391, C	Buckland Dinham	ST754512, E
Beacon Batch	ST485573, N	Buckland St Mary	ST270134, S
Beercrocombe	ST324204, C	Bungalow, The	ST434443, N
Berrow	ST295524, N	Burcombe	SS749385, W
Bicknoller	ST110395, SW	Burnham (-on-Sea)	ST305495, N
Bicknoller Combe	ST115399, SW	Burridge Wood	SS913285, W
Bicknoller Post	ST128403, SW	Burrowbridge	ST358306, C
Bilbrook	ST032410, W	Burtle	ST397429, N
Bin Combe (Quantocks)	ST175393, SW	Burtle Moor	ST402439, N
Bincombe House	ST434099, S	Burton	ST194440, SW
Bincombe Hill	ST435099, S	Burton Pynsent	ST376252, C
		Bury	SS947272, W
		Bury Castle	SS917473, W
		Butleigh	ST520335, C
		Butleigh Moor	ST440347, C
		Butleigh Wootton	ST505350, C
		Butlin's (Minehead)	SS985461, W
		Butt Moor	ST529359, C

Cadbury Castle	ST628252, E	Compton Bishop	ST396553, N
Canada Farm	ST417407, N	Compton Hill	ST390560, N
Canada Farm Lake	ST414413, N	Coppleham Cross	SS923343, W
Carhampton	ST008426, W	Cornham Brake	SS761387, W
Cary Moor	ST610306, E	Coscombe	SS796489, W
Catcott	ST395394, N	Cossington	ST358403, N
Catcott Heath	ST405415, N	Cothelstone Hill	ST183326, SW
Catcott Lows	ST402413, N	County Gate	SS794486, W
Catsford Common	ST237455, N	Coxbridge	ST544367, C
Chaffcombe	ST352101, S	Crab Hole	ST376548, N
Chalk Water	SS818454, W	Crawter Hill	SS893458, W
Chantry	ST720470, E	Creech Hill	ST672360, E
Chard	ST323082, S	Creech St Michael	ST275255, SW
Chard Junction	ST341049, S	Crewkerne	ST442095, S
Chard Reservoir	ST335097, S	Crewkerne Sewage Works	ST450090, S
Chargot	SS980372, W	Crimson Hill	ST313218, C
Charlton Horethorne	ST665230, E	Cripps River	ST368443, N
Charlton Gorse	ST675236, E	Crook Peak	ST387558, N
Charterhouse	ST501557, N	Cross	ST415547, N
Cheddar	ST455535, N	Crowcombe	ST141367, SW
Cheddar Gorge	ST470542, N	Crowcombe Heathfield	ST136340, SW
Cheddar Head	ST500531, N	Crowcombe Park	ST145375, SW
Cheddar Moor	ST455512, N	Crowcombe Park Gate	ST145375, SW
Cheddar Reservoir	ST442537, N	Croydon Hill	SS972405, W
Cheddar Wood	ST445553, N	Cucklington	ST755275, E
Chedzoy	ST340375, C	Culbone	SS843483, W
Chetsford Water	SS851421, W	Curland	ST277175, SW
Chewton Mendip	ST598530, N	Curr Cleeve	SS865364, W
Chilcompton	ST 646513, E	Curry Mallet	ST332213, C
Chilton Moor	ST380430, N	Curry Moor	ST325275, C
Chilton Polden	ST375400, N/C	Curry Rivel	ST390252, C
Chilton Trinity	ST297391, SW	Cutcombe	SS930392, W
Chiselborough Hill	ST485144, S		
Churchinford	ST213126, S	Dane's Brook	SS835315, W
Cinnamon Lane	ST507380, C	Deddy Combe	SS808476, W
Clapton	ST636527, E	Dillacombe	SS802355, W
Clatworthy Reservoir	ST040310, W	Dimmer Tip	ST615311, E
Cleeve Abbey	ST047407, W	Dinder	ST576447, N
Cloford	ST723440, E	Dommett Wood	ST276145, S
Cloud Farm	SS794467, W	Doniford	ST088428, W
Cloutsham	SS892431, W	Donyatt	ST335143, S
Cloutsham Ball	SS898435, W	Doverhay Down	SS885454, W
Cloutsham Gate	SS886430, W	Dowlish Wake	ST375125, S
Cockercombe	ST180363, SW	Downscombe	SS840390, W
Cock Hill	ST378387, C	Dowsborough	ST163303, SW
Codsand Moors	SS873407, W	Draper's Way	SS917397, W
Coleford	ST687490, E	Draycott	ST477508, N
Collard Hill	ST487342, C	Draycott Sleight	ST486516, N
Colley Water	SS842446, W	Drayton	ST405248, C
Combe St Nicholas	ST301112, S	Driver Farm	SS736405, W
Combe Sydenham	ST076367, W	Drybridge Combe	SS760380, W
Combwich	ST259423, N	Dulverton	SS913278, W
Combwich Common	ST260426, N	Dunball	ST310410, C
Combwich Pill	ST261422, N	Dunkery Beacon	SS892416, W
Comer's Gate	SS860354, W	Dunkery Hill	SS903423, W

Dunster	SS992436, W	Frog Hill	ST152385, SW
Dunster Beach	ST000450, W	Frome	ST777477, E
Dunster Hawn	SS998450, W	Fulford	ST209294, SW
Dunster Marsh	SS994454, W		
Dunster Park	SS993429, W	Gare Hill	ST779402, E
Dunster Station	SS996448, W	GB Gruffy NR	ST476562, N
Dunwear Ponds	ST313360, C	Glastonbury	ST500390, C
Durleigh Reservoir	ST270364, SW	Glastonbury Heath	ST472396, N
		Glenthorne	SS805494, W
Earlake Moor	ST360316, C	Goat Hill Bridge	SS724406, W
East Cranmore	ST683436, E	Godfrey's Corner	ST313315, C
East Horrington	ST581467, N	Gold Corner	ST367432, N
East Huntspill	ST343448, N	Gore Point	SS858483, W
East Lydford	ST574313, E	Goosemoor Common	SS880421, W
East Lynch	SS928463, W	Gortnell Common	ST165175, S
East Pinford	SS802423, W	Govetts Wood	ST170832, SW
East Quantoxhead	ST138437, SW	Grabbist	SS980436, W
East Waste	ST481416, N	Great Birchcleeve Wood	SS872304, W
East Water	SS895430, W	Great Bradley	SS859340, W
East Woodlands	ST790442, E	Great Breach Wood	ST505320, C
Easthams	ST455105, S	Great Headon Plantation	SS943465, W
Ebbor Gorge	ST528490, N	Great Hill (Quantocks)	ST156365, SW
Edithmead	ST329491, N	Great Woolcombe	SS782378, W
Edford	ST671491, E	Greenham	ST078202, W
Edford Wood	ST667485, E	Greenlands	SS844413, W
Eleighwater	ST332110, S	Green Ore	ST578502, N
Elworthy	ST085348, SW	Greenway Path	ST136415, SW
Ember Combe	SS855420, W	Greylake	ST388335, C
Embercombe Head	SS860416, W	Greylake RSPB Reserve	ST379353, C
Emborough Pond	ST613509, E		
Enmore	ST240352, SW	Haddon Hill	SS975285, W
Enmore Castle Lake	ST237352, SW	Hadspen	ST657326, E
Escott	ST090379, SW	Halse Combe	SS895467, W
Exebridge	SS930245, W	Halsway Combe	ST136383, SW
Exe Cleave	SS800422, W	Ham (nr. Edford)	ST675486, E
Exe Head Bridge	SS763416, W	Ham Wall NNR	ST464397, C
Exe Plain	SS755420, W	Hambridge	ST395215, C
Exford	SS855385, W	Hamdon Hill	ST479170, S
Exford Common	SS855408, W	Hankridge LNR	ST253256, SW
		Hardington	ST742526, E
Farley Water	SS757427, W	Hare Knaps	ST148396, SW
Faulkland	ST738546, E	Harridge Wood	ST658484, E
Fire Beacon	ST150370, SW	Hatch Beauchamp	ST303205, C
Firepool	ST235252, SW	Hawk Combe	SS874457, W
Five Bells	ST065423, W	Hawkcombe Head	SS845457, W
Fivehead	ST352228, C	Hawkridge	SS861307, W
Floorey Down	ST177367, SW	Hawkridge Reservoir	ST208362, SW
Folly	SS889338, W	Hawkwell Cross	SS872258, W
Forche's Garden	ST026394, W	Hay Moor (N Curry)	ST324335, C
Ford	SS852335, W	Hayes Wood	SS849346, W
Ford Common	ST305539, N	Helwell Bay	ST078433, W
Fordgate	ST324326, C	Herridge Combe	ST131415, SW
Fowler's Plot	ST338366, C	Hewish	ST420083, S
Fresh Moor	ST282127, S	Highbridge	ST320475, N
Frog Combe	ST153387, SW	Higher Combe	SS869381, W

Higher Dumbledeer	ST001412, W	Knighton	ST193445, N
Higher Lock	ST308294, C	Knighton Beach	ST192458, N
Hillhead Cross	SS851403, W	Knighton Combe	SS829347, W
Hillway	SS827363, W	Knowle Hill	ST498466, N
Hinkley Point	ST215463, N	Knowle Moor	ST487463, N
Hoar Moor	SS860406, W	Knowle St Giles	ST344114, S
Hoar oak Water	SS785434, W		
Hoccombe Water	SS780433, W	Lanacombe	SS774429, W
Hodder's Combe	ST146406, SW	Landacre Bridge	SS816362, W
Holcombe	ST672497, E	Lang Moor	ST355399, C
Holcombe Wood	ST667506, E	Langford Heathfield	ST103230, SW
Holford	ST158411, SW	Langham Hill	SS976357, W
Holford Combe	ST154395, SW	Langport	ST422270, C
Holywell Lake	ST203106, SW	Larcombe Foot	SS895363, W
Home Covert, Otterhampton	ST250429, N	Larkbarrow	SS821429, W
Hookway	SS827464, W	Leigh upon Mendip	ST690472, E
Hopcott Common	SS957443, W	Ley Hill	SS890452, W
Hopkins' Farm, Ash Priors	ST151278, SW	Lillycombe	SS821470, W
Horlake Moor	ST340317, C	Lilstock	ST171454, SW
Horner	SS898455, W	Lime Combe	SS765399, W
Horner Woods	SS894443, W	Line Wood	ST306215, C
Horsen Combe	SS790365, W,	Little Headon Plantation	SS933463, W
Horton Cross	ST338152, S	Little Hill	SS853427, W
Hoscombe	SS827440, W	Little Norton	ST480169, S
Huntspill River	ST340438, N	Little Quantock Combe	ST154367, SW
Huntspill Sea Wall	ST293463, N	Little Ranch	ST474402, N
Huntspill Sluice	ST292458, N	Litton (Exmoor)	SS803337, W
Huntworth	ST312343, C	Long Combe	SS817426, W
Hurdle Down	SS844422, W	Long Load	ST467232, C
Hurley Beacon	ST142381, SW	Long Holcombe	SS773357, W
Hurlstone Point	SS898494, W	Longstone Hill	ST138407, SW
Hurscombe Reserve	SS975323, W	Loocombe Wood	ST667512, E
		Lovington	ST597308, C
Ilchester	ST525234, C	Lower Severalls	ST455115, S
Ilford	ST365175, C	Lower Stonehouse Farm	ST207278, SW
Ilminster	ST360145, S	Lower Vexford	ST117353, SW
Isle Abbotts	ST351209, C	Lower Weare	ST407537, N
Isle Brewers	ST366211, C	Lowsey Thorn	ST134390, SW
		Loxhole Bridge	SS996439, W
Jenny Cridland's Copse	ST055428, W	Loxton's Marsh	ST459396, C
		Luccombe	SS912445, W
Kennard Moor	ST553367, C	Luccombe Plantation	SS903477, W
Kennisham Hill	SS962364, W	Luckbarrow	SS892461, W
Kilmersdon	ST696524, E	Luxborough	SS977378, W
Kilve	ST149430, SW	Luxhay Reservoir	ST203177, S
Kilve Beach	ST144444, SW	Lydeard Hill	ST179343, SW
Kingsbury Episcopi	ST433211, C	Lymphsham Manor	ST334542, N
King's Cliff Wood	ST260320, SW	Lyncombe	SS867375, W
King's Lock (North Newton)	ST305313, C	Lyte's Cary	ST534267, C
King's Moor	ST482239, C		
King's Sedge Moor	ST420338, C	Madacombe	SS831427, W
Kingweston	ST525342, C	Malmsmead	SS795477, W
Kinsford Gate	SS740366, W	Mancombe	ST425101, S
Knacker's Hole	ST158397, SW	Mark	ST380480, N
Knaplock Wood	SS864325, W	Mark Moor	ST370463, N

Marrow Hill	ST160360, SW	Norton Sub Hamdon	ST470159, S
Marsh Bridge	SS907290, W	Nutcombe Bottom	SS977423, W
Marston Park	ST758449, E	Nutscale	SS856432, W
Martock	ST463197, S	Nutscale Reservoir	SS860433, W
Meare	ST455416, N	Nynehead	ST137227, SW
Meare Green	ST335266, C	Nynehead Court	ST138228, SW
Meare Heath	ST440405, N		
Mells	ST730490, E	Oakhill	ST635472, E
Mells Down	ST724515, E	Oare	SS802473, W
Merriott	ST442128, S	Oareford	SS814463, W
Merryfield Airfield	ST340186, C	Odcombe	ST508154, S
Met Combe	SS827467, W	Old Barrow Plantation	SS837324, W
Middlemoor Drove	ST325310, C	Orchard Bottom	SS815404, W
Midelney	ST411229, C	Orchardleigh Lake	ST780508, E
Milbourne Port	ST675189, S	Othery	ST384316, C
Mill Hill (Oareford)	SS828452, W	Otterford	ST223143, S
Millwater	ST4310, S	Otterhampton	ST247431, N
Milverton	ST122259, SW	Otterhead Lakes	ST226135, S
Minehead	SS970465, W	Outmoor Wood	ST066417, W
Minehead Golf Course	SS993463, W	Overlands Plantation	SS968395, W
Minehead Marshes	SS993457, W	Over Stowey Common	ST164381, SW
Misterton	ST456082, S	Over Stratton	ST434155, S
Mole's Chamber	SS719394, W		
Monkham Hill	SS987389, W	Paradise Combe	ST127390, SW
Montacute	ST496170, S	Parchey	ST352377, C
Moorhouse (Butleigh)	ST526346, C	Park Wood (Chaffcombe)	ST360102, S
Moorland	ST335323, C	Parrett Estuary	ST290480, N
Moorlinch	ST397368, C	Pawlett Hams	ST275425, N
Moorlinch Moor	ST390350, C	Pen Hill	ST568487, N
Mount Fancy	ST246165, S	Pen Mill	ST570165, S
Muchelney	ST429249, C	Pennycombe Water	SS834378, W
Muchelney Ham	ST440238, C	Periton Hill	SS950447, W
		Perley Barn	SS982386, W
Nether Stowey	ST190398, SW	Perley Combe	SS982391, W
Nether Moor	ST375320, C	Perry Green	ST277389, SW
Nether Wood	ST508561, N	Perry Street	ST335055, S
Nettlebridge	ST650486, E	Pibsbury	ST437265, C
Nettlecombe	ST057378, W	Pickedstones	SS796369, W
New Invention	SS900292, W	Pickedstones Bridge	SS797369, W
Nimmer	ST319109, S	Piles Mill	SS906467, W
Nine Acre Plantation	ST413227, C	Pilton	ST588408, M.
Nine Springs	ST557153, S	Pinkery Centre	SS723412, W
Noah's Lake	ST436400, N	Pinkworthy Pond	SS723423, W
North Barrow	ST608294, E	Pit Wood	SS855337, W
North Barton Wood	SS858323, W	Pittcombe Head	SS842463, W
North Brewham	ST722368, E	Pool Bridge	SS876447, W
North Curry	ST319253, C	Poole Tip	ST152216, SW
North Down Plantation	ST231163, S	Porlock	SS888467, W
North Hawkwell	SS927400, W	Porlock Bay	SS870485, W
North Hill	SS943481, W	Porlock Hill	SS876463, W
North Moor (Moorland)	ST325315, C	Porlock Marsh	SS880477, W
North Newton	ST300310, C	Porlock Parks	SS875465, W
North Perrott	ST465095, S	Porlock Post	SS861411, W
North Petherton	ST290330, SW	Porlock Weir	SS865478, W
Norton Fitzwarren	ST197259, SW	Prescott Down	SS863399, W

Preston's Wood	ST580525, N	South Common	SS807444, SW
Prickslade Combe	SS886437, W	South Drain (Catcott)	ST380427, N
Priddy	ST527513, N	South Moor, nr. Street	ST502375, C
Priddy Mineries	ST545510, N	South Petherton	ST432170, S
Pudleigh	ST317108, S	Southey Moor	ST192113, SW
Quantock Combe	ST170370, SW	Southlake Moor	ST370300, C
Quants	ST187177, S	Squallacombe	SS731383, W
Quarts Moor	ST149178, S	Stan Moor	ST358290, C
Ralegh's Cross	ST039344, W	Staple Common	ST263157, S
Rams Combe (Quantocks)	ST161377, SW	Staple Fitzpaine	ST263182, S
Red Girts	SS994398, W	Staple Hill	ST240164, S
Redlynch Park Lake	ST698325, E	Staple Plain	ST114413, SW
Ringdown Common	ST180160, S	Staple Plantation	ST113412, SW
Robber's Bridge	SS820464, W	Staplegrove	ST213266, SW
Rode	ST805539, E	Staplehay	ST213217, SW
Rodden NR	ST785475, E	Stathe	ST375290, C
Rodhuish Common	SS996397, W	Stawell	ST368383, C
Rodney Stoke	ST482499, N	Stearth	ST272458, N
Room Hill	SS858363, W	Stert Combe	ST145390, SW
Roosthitchen	SS722401, W	Stert Island	ST292480, N
Roundham	ST425096, S	Stock Hill	ST558507, N
Rowberrow Warren	ST465579, N	Stockland Bristol	ST240437, N
Ruishton	ST263251, SW	Stockland Reach	ST284450, N
Runnington	ST119218, SW	Stogumber	ST098374, W
Rumwell	ST193232, SW	Stogursey	ST202428, N
Sampford Brett	ST089402, W	Stoke Combe	SS880438, W
Sampford Common	ST118169, S	Stoke Pero	SS878435, W
Sampford Point	ST117168, S	Stoke Ridge	SS875429, W
Sedgemoor Services	ST358526, N	Stoke St Mary	ST265224, SW
Selworthy	SS918467, W	Stolford	ST233458, N
Selworthy Beacon	SS919480, W	Stowell	ST682222, E
Selworthy Combe	SS923473, W	Stowford Bottom	SS815444, W
Shapwick	ST418383, C	Stratton-on-the-Fosse	ST658508, E
Shapwick Heath NNR	ST430402, N	Stream	ST068398, W
Sharpham	ST468388, C	Street	ST480360, C
Sheppard's Combe	ST131401, SW	Street Ash	ST285135, S
Sherdon Hutch	SS807361, W	Sutton Bingham Reservoir	ST550110, S
Shields, The	ST511275, C	Sutton Hams	ST364368, C
Shurton	ST202442, N	Sweetworthy	SS888427, W
Shurton Bars	ST192462, SW	Sweetworthy Combe	SS884422, W
Silly Bridge	SS832397, W	Swell Wood	ST360240, C
Simonsbath	SS773393, W	Tadham Moor	ST425445, N
Slaughterhouse Combe	ST137395, SW	Tadhil	ST685465, E
Slowley Wood	SS992381, W	Tarr Steps	SS868321, W
Smith's Combe	ST132420, SW	Tatworth	ST328058, S
Snowdon Hill	ST310090, S	Taunton	ST225247, SW
Somerset Bridge	ST311357, C	Tealham Moor	ST407457, N
Somerton Combe	ST144395, SW	Thickthorn Wood	ST765446, E
Somerton Erleigh	ST512276, C	Thorncombe Hill	ST132390, SW
Somerton Moor	ST460015, C	Thorney	ST427229, C
Somerton Randle	ST501285, C	Thurlbear Quarrylands	ST274208, SW
South Cheriton	ST700250, E	Thurley Combe	SS862425, W
		Timberscombe Common	SS964417, W
		Tintinhull	ST499197, S

Tivington Common	SS942447, W	West Myne	SS927407, W
Tonedale, Wellington	ST126215, SW	West Nethercote	SS874362, W
Torhole Bottom	ST570520, N	West Quantoxhead	ST109417, SW
Torr Works Reservoir	ST688436, E	West Sedge Moor	ST350250, C
Torweston	ST094407, W	Westbury Beacon	ST500507, N
Tracebridge	ST068212, SW	Westbury Moor	ST485477, N
Treborough Woods	ST017369, W	Westbury-sub-Mendip	ST502488, N
Triscombe	ST156356, SW	Westermill	SS823399, W
Triscombe Stone	ST164359, SW	Westford	ST120204, SW
Trudoxhill	ST750437, E	Westhay	ST436424, N
Trull	ST216222, SW	Westhay Heath	ST420418, N
Tyning's Farm	ST470565, N	Westhay Moor	ST455441, N
		Weston Level	ST347333, C
Ubley Warren	ST510555, N	Westonzoyland	ST352348, C
Upper Axe Valley	ST500455, N	Westport	ST386200, C
		Wet Moor	ST452242, C
Varle Hill	SS887318, W	Wheddon Cross	SS924387, W
Yellow	ST096386, W	White Ball	ST097188, S
Velvet Bottom	ST498553, N	Wick	ST215445, N
		Wick Moor	ST217454, N
Wadeford	ST309106, S	Willett Hill	ST096336, W
Walcombe Hangings	ST552473, N	Williton	ST078410, W
Wall Common	ST255453, N	Wills Neck	ST165352, SW
Wallyer's Bridge	ST533346, C	Wilmersham Common	SS864421, W
Walrow Pits	ST335470, N	Wiltown	ST390247, C
Walton	ST461362, C	Wimbleball Lake	SS975305, W
Walton Heath	ST455390, C	Windmill Hill	ST675237, E
Wambrook	ST295076, S	Winsford	SS903350, W
Wanstrow	ST713418, E	Winsford Hill	SS878342, W
Warren (Farm)	SS785407, W	Witcombe Bottom	ST480231, C
Warren Bridge	SS791407, W	Witham Friary	ST744410, E
Washford	ST048412, W	Withycombe	ST017413, W
Watchet	ST072431, W	Withycombe Common	SS987394, W
Wavering Down	ST403558, N	Withycombe Hill	SS998413, W
Wayford Woods	ST398066, S	Withycombe Scuffets	SS985404, W
Weacombe	ST110408, SW	Withypool	SS846355, W
Weacombe Hill	ST120402, SW	Woodcock Gardens	SS907444, W
Webber's Post	SS903437, W	Woodcombe	SS955466, W
Wedmore	ST435477, N	Wookey Hole	ST532475, N
Week Wood	SS919339, W	Woolavington	ST347416, N
Weir Water	SS830461, W	Woolston Moor	ST099400, SW
Wellington	ST140205, SW	Wootton Common	SS948441, W
Wellington Basins	ST129208, SW	Wootton Courtenay	SS937434, W
Wellington Farm	ST490538, N	Worth Wood	SS859331, W
Wells	ST552458, N	Wrantage	ST309225, C
Wembdon	ST287373, N	Wyke Champflower	ST663347, E
Wembdon Hill	ST280379, SW		
West Bagborough	ST170335, SW	Yarty Moor	ST235159, S
West Coker	ST518136, S	Yearnor Wood	SS850484, W
West Hill Wood	SS972296, W	Yellowcombe	SS904338, W
West Hollocombe Wood	SS866304, S	Yenworthy Combe	SS805490, W
West Huntspill	ST305445, N	Yenworthy Common	SS798484, W
West Luccombe	SS899463, W	Yeovil	ST555157, S
West Monkton	ST263285, SW	Yoxter	ST512540, N
West Moor	ST410213, C		

ARRIVAL DATES OF MIGRANTS 2007

(excluding Blackcap and Chiffchaff)

Five species were recorded on their earliest date in the County, two of these (Manx Shearwater and Sandwich Tern) being remarkably early, being seen in January. Little Ringed Plover have been recorded

close to the new date on a number of occasions in the last few years. The Sand Martin arrived two days earlier than previously recorded. It is possible that the Ring Ouzel on February 1st had been over-wintering.

Table 1: Arrival dates of migrant species

Species	Arrival date	Earliest-ever arrival	10-year average (1997-2006)	Last observed
Garganey	April 10	February 16th	March 17th	October 5th
Manx Shearwater	January 2nd	January 11th	April 14th	October 3rd
Hobby	April 2nd	February 18th	April 10th	October 27th
Little Ringed Plover	March 16th	March 18th	March 27th	August 8th
Whimbrel	March 28th	February 19th	March 25th	September 10th
Wood Sandpiper	April 30th	April 18th	May 6th	April 30th
Little Tern	April 20th	April 11th	April 28th	October 4th
Black Tern	April 29th	April 4th	April 22nd	October 8th
Sandwich Tern	January 5th	March 21st	April 5th	October 9th
Common Tern	April 18th	March 19th	April 8th	October 4th
Arctic Tern	April 29th	April 3rd	April 24th	November 6th
Turtle Dove	April 28th	April 12th	May 3rd	April 28th
Cuckoo	April 7th	March 2nd	April 5th	July 14th
Nightjar	May 1st	April 22nd	May 6th	August 30th
Swift	April 16th	April 1st	April 18th	September 22nd
Sand Martin	February 23rd	February 25th	March 10th	October 21st
Swallow	March 13th	January 24th	March 13th	November 15th
House Martin	March 28th	March 10th	March 24th	October 21st
Tree Pipit	April 10th	March 10th	March 31st	October 5th
Yellow Wagtail	April 11th	March 24th	April 6th	October 14th
Nightingale	April 10th	April 2nd	April 14th	August 12th

Table 1: Arrival dates of migrant species, continued

Species	Arrival date	Earliest-ever arrival	10-year average (1997-2006)	Last observed
Common Redstart	April 8th	March 21st	April 5th	September 11th
Whinchat	April 22nd	March 23rd	April 16th	October 5th
Wheatear	March 8th	February 22nd	March 8th	November 4th
Ring Ouzel	February 1st	March 6th	March 20th	October 22nd
Grasshopper Warbler	April 9th	April 5th	April 10th	September 15th
Sedge Warbler	April 13th	March 22nd	April 5th	October 1st
Reed Warbler	April 14th	March 28th	April 6th	October 4th
Lesser Whitethroat	April 13th	April 2nd	April 17th	September 12th
Common Whitethroat	April 14th	March 24th	April 2nd	September 21st
Garden Warbler	April 7th	April 4th	April 13th	August 27th
Wood Warbler	April 14th	March 29th	April 16th	June 26th
Willow Warbler	March 26th	February 21st	March 16th	September 22nd
Spotted Flycatcher	April 28th	April 15th	April 27th	September 5th
Pied Flycatcher	April 11th	April 2nd	April 11th	August 17th

YELLOW-NOSED ALBATROSS – A FIRST FOR THE BRITISH ISLES...

...and it nearly got away! On June 29th a Yellow-nosed Albatross was found in an exhausted state at Brean. This is the first record for the British Isles, perhaps the second for the Western Palearctic. It was taken into care at Secret World, a wildlife rehabilitation unit in East Huntspill, where, on examination, it appeared in fair bodily condition. It was given supportive treatment and the next day appeared to be stronger, at which stage it was assessed as being fit for release. Without the necessary textbooks, or the help of an experienced ornithologist, the staff at the unit were unable to accurately identify the bird, they realised that it might be an albatross but were unaware of its ornithological significance. It was considered more important to release the bird than to retain it in captivity any longer than necessary. A video and photographs were taken and the bird was then released from cliffs on Brean Down, from where it was seen to fly off towards Steep Holm.

A well-respected local birder, with nothing better to do on a Saturday evening than look at the website of the local newspaper, could not believe his eyes when he was struck by an article announcing the release of an albatross on Brean Down, where he had been earlier that day! He might never make a full recovery.

The photographs were of excellent quality and allowed the bird to be identified as an Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross (*Thalassarche chlororhynchos*); the South Atlantic and the Indian Ocean forms of Yellow-nosed Albatross are now commonly accepted as being full species.

This amazing event was associated with a series of even more amazing happenings, as were reported in the magazine *Birdwatch* (Issue 182, August 2007).

Firstly on the day before the Somerset bird was found, a Yellow-nosed Albatross was seen and photographed at sea off the Norwegian coast. Following the release at Brean Down, an albatross was seen two days later inland on a Derbyshire lake and the next day an albatross was found and photographed on fishing lakes in Lincolnshire. The photographs of the Lincolnshire bird showed not only a Yellow-nosed Albatross but, from markings on the beak, that it was the Somerset bird. Then, back in Norway, on July 8th the original bird that was seen at sea on June 28th was still present in the same area, while another Yellow-nosed Albatross was seen flying inland at Malmo, Sweden.

For the birding fraternity this was a major event, although others coming from differing perspectives would view this incident in different ways. The majority of people who handle wildlife casualties are not naturalists by inclination or experience, their main concern being animal welfare. Failure to identify a casualty of an unusual species would lead to the loss of information on the biodiversity of an area, but it might also prevent a wildlife unit from following the best regimes for housing, feeding and release of the casualty through ignorance of the natural history of the species. This case demonstrates the dilemma faced by a wildlife unit when presented with a casualty that would attract a lot of attention from special interest groups or the wider general public and media. Although the bird's rapid release caused great disappointment to many ornithologists, the record was well documented and for the unit the over-riding concern was the welfare of the animal, and not the publicity or extra donations that retaining the casualty in captivity might have brought.

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THE MENDIP HILLS AONB FARMLAND BIRD SURVEY 2007

A significant number of birds in the UK depend on farmland for their survival. National declines in farmland specialists such as Skylark and Yellowhammer have been well documented. There is evidence that declines in South-west England have been greater than elsewhere.

A survey of the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was carried out in 2007 by the RSPB in partnership with the AONB to help understand the current distribution of the most vulnerable farmland bird species in the area, and to further the conservation work.

There is limited information on the historic distribution of farmland birds in the AONB, and little systematic data on the current distribution of key species. Several important breeding species are known to occur, and there is anecdotal evidence of declines in once-widespread species such as Grey Partridge.

The survey was carried out between April and June 2007. Fifty-one tetrads (2x2km grid squares) were surveyed (see figure overleaf), covering about 75% of the AONB area which overlaps the Avon/Somerset border. All major non-wooded farmland habitats were covered, including improved grassland and arable crops, unimproved and semi-improved limestone, acidic and neutral grassland, and peripheral farmland habitats, including scrub, lowland heath and mire. For various reasons, woodland was not surveyed, although woodland-edge species such as Stock Dove and Mistle Thrush were included on a list of priority survey species.

Thirty-three bird species were targeted. Most appear on the national Red or Amber 'Birds of Conservation Concern' lists of threatened and vulnerable species because their UK populations have declined rapidly over the past 25 years. All are either partly or fully reliant on farmland for their survival.

A number of species occurred in 20 or more tetrads. In order of frequency these were: Song Thrush (40), House Sparrow (32), Green Woodpecker (31), Skylark (29), Linnet (25), Kestrel (23), Bullfinch (22), Meadow Pipit (21), Mistle Thrush (20) and Starling (19).

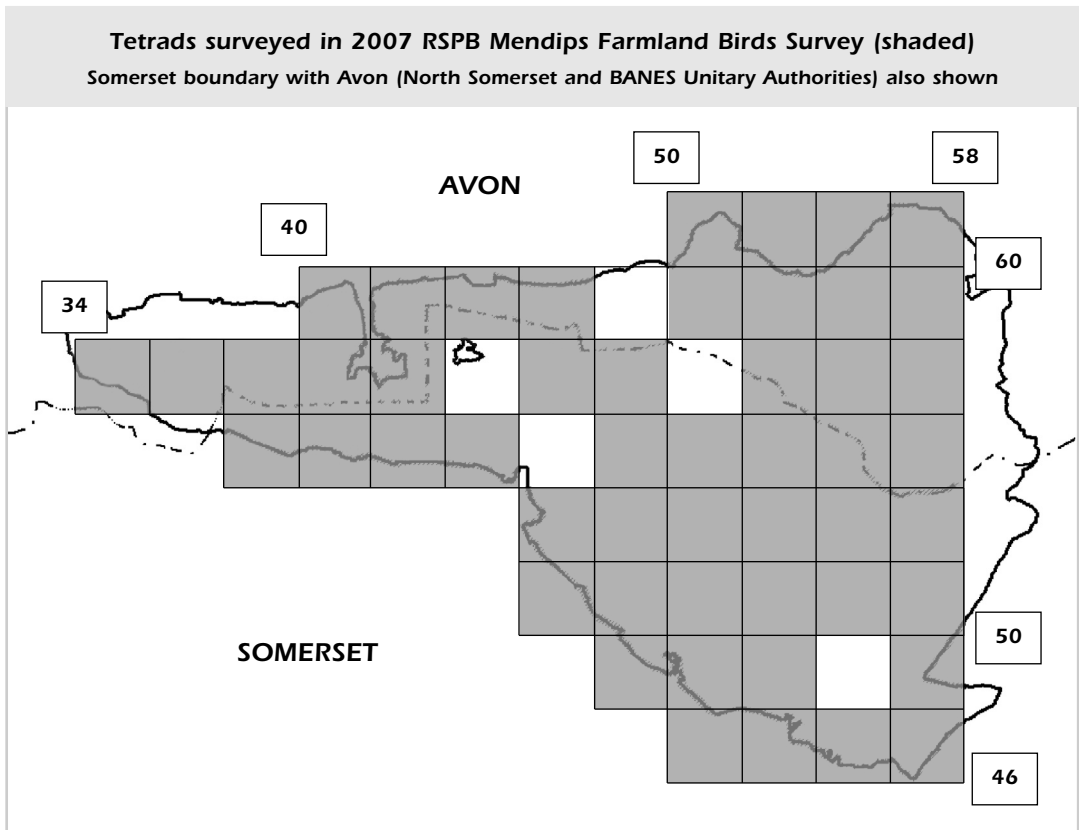
Several species favoured woodland edge habitats, including Song Thrush, Green Woodpecker, Bullfinch and Mistle Thrush. House Sparrow was largely associated with farm buildings and houses. Other species were found in open countryside, and a clear positive association was found between the distribution of Skylarks, Linnets and Meadow Pipits and large areas of semi-natural habitat, particularly semi-improved and

unimproved grassland and lowland heathland. Kestrel, although associated with rough grassland, was not closely associated with large blocks of unimproved habitat. This may be because, as a raptor, it ranges more widely when feeding, and smaller areas of habitat such as rough roadside margins continue to provide suitable habitat. The relative scarcity of Starling may be due to a number of factors, including the lack of feeding opportunities in silage fields.

A number of species were more locally distributed and less abundant, occurring in seven to 18 tetrads. These were Stonechat (11), Stock Dove (11), Yellowhammer (nine), Reed Bunting (nine) and Cuckoo (seven). Stock Dove is one of the species most closely associated with woodland edge habitats. The others showed a close association with large areas of semi-natural habitat, particularly lowland heath and unimproved grassland. Reed Bunting was most closely associated with wetter lowland heath and riparian habitats.

A number of species were very scarce, occurring in fewer than five tetrads. These were Dartford Warbler (three), Tree Pipit (three), Whinchat (three), Corn Bunting (two), Tree Sparrow (two), Wheatear (two), Grasshopper Warbler (one) and Lapwing (one). Dartford Warbler (which are recent arrivals) and Tree Pipit, occur in greater numbers and are more widely distributed than the survey suggests. This is unlikely for the other species, which are highly vulnerable to future declines in their range in the AONB. Apart from Whinchat, it is likely that the other species no longer breed regularly.

The results of the 2007 survey, taken together with the 2000-2005 breeding records from *Somerset Birds* and the *Avon Bird Report*, suggest that the AONB remains an important area for a number of widespread but vulnerable species. Unlike much of lowland Somerset and Avon, it has held on to important areas of semi-natural habitat, notably unimproved neutral and limestone grassland and lowland heath. These areas have helped to buffer it from some of the worst effects of agricultural intensification, particularly in the southern half of the area. It is remarkable that it has kept a small population of breeding Whinchat, given the rapid decline elsewhere in the lowlands. For example, the species has disappeared entirely from the Somerset Levels. The AONB retains a small but probably viable Yellowhammer population, alongside good numbers of Stonechat, Skylark, Linnet and Meadow Pipit.



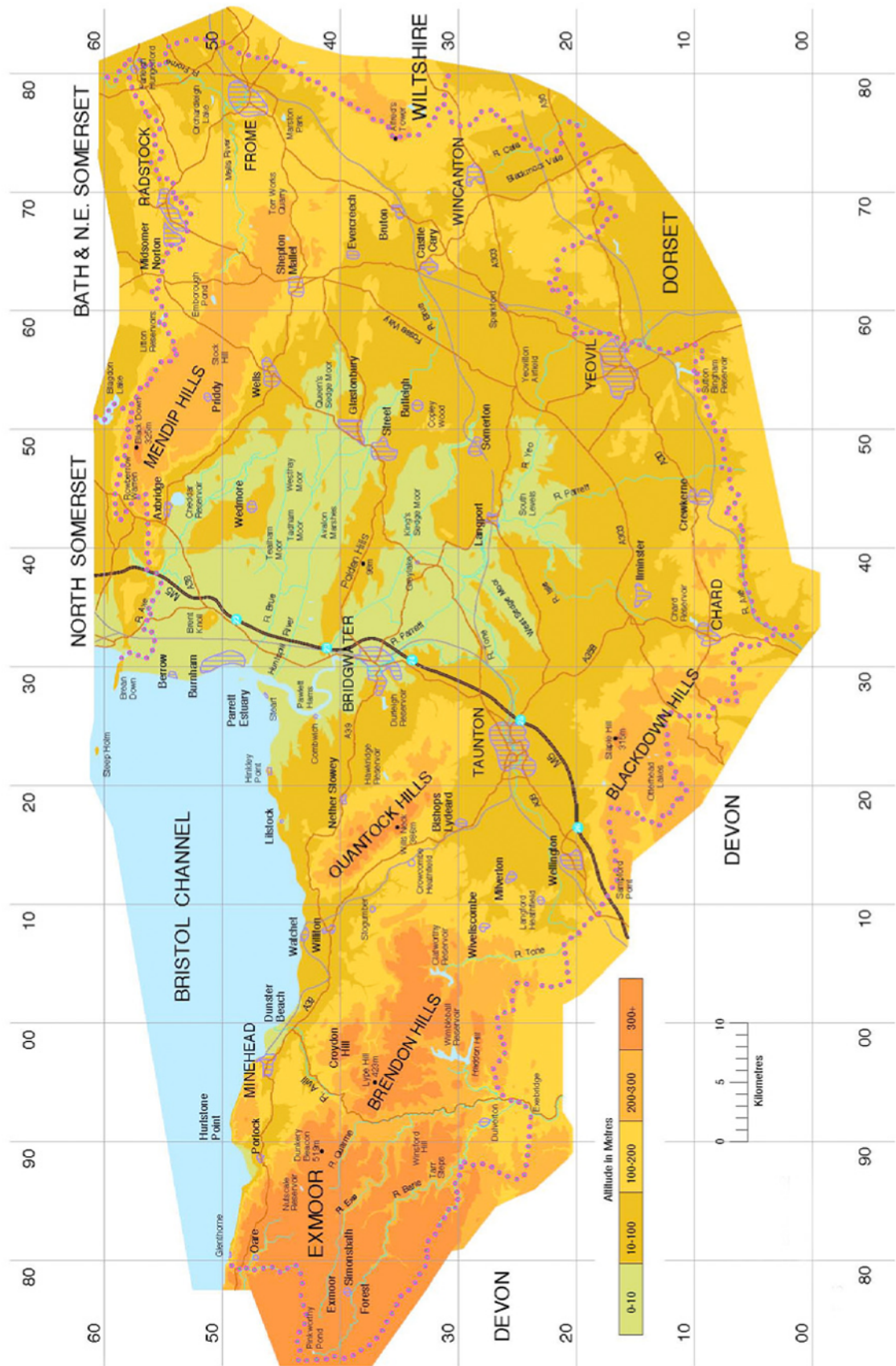
In contrast, the rarity of other species, especially Corn Bunting, Tree Sparrow and Lapwing, together with the absence of Cirl Bunting, Grey Partridge, Common Snipe and Turtle Dove, indicates that the AONB has suffered considerable losses of semi-natural farmland habitat through agricultural intensification. These species are among a suite of important indicators of the health of the countryside and their loss from the AONB is a source of concern. Further intensification, particularly through increased silage, biofuel and maize production, and the continued loss of mixed farming, will see further declines of vulnerable species such as Cuckoo and Yellowhammer unless positive action is taken to address the causes.

A number of recommendations are made in the survey report on how to arrest these declines. Continued effort should be to maintain and enhance existing blocks of semi-natural habitat as a core AONB objective, especially Sites of Special Scientific Interest and County Wildlife Sites. Priority should be given to

linking and buffering existing large areas, the greatest immediate potential being through the opening up of forestry plantation at Rowberrow and Stock Hill for rare and localised species such as Nightjar, Tree Pipit and Curlew. Large-scale changes to pastoral and arable habitats are also needed, including the reintroduction of extensive ‘arable pockets’ in each tetrad, especially on the plateau, and the diversification of improved pasture and silage fields. The promotion of ‘umbrella’ species such as Skylark is proposed as a suitable way to encourage farmers to carry out these measures. Recommendations are also made for further detailed survey, including farmland around Green Ore and Stock Hill.

The 2007 survey was only made possible through the tremendous enthusiasm and effort put in by a large army of volunteers, and by the co-operative efforts of other conservation organizations including the Somerset Wildlife Trust, the Somerset Environmental Records Centre, the British Trust for Ornithology and the National Trust.

Richard Archer
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Front cover: Choughs, Brean Down, 10 March 2007 by James Packer
Above: Red-backed Shrike, Steart, 6 June 2007 by Rob Chace

Design and typesetting by: Tim Davis, DJEnvironmental
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Printed by: Short Run Press Limited
Bittern Road, Sowton Industrial Estate, Exeter EX2 7LW
www.shortrunpress.co.uk