



**Somerset**  
ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

**106th Report**

# SOMERSET BIRDS 2019

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# CONTENTS

<b>Foreword</b>	R.C. Dickey	<b>3</b>
<b>New Publication</b>	D.K. Ballance	<b>3</b>
<b>Weather 2019</b>	B.R. Ellis	<b>4</b>
<b>A Review of 2019</b>	B.D. Gibbs	<b>8</b>
<b>Editorial Notes</b>	B.D. Gibbs	<b>20</b>
<b>The Systematic List</b>		
Brent Goose – Cormorant	B.D. Gibbs	<b>22</b>
Osprey – Buzzard	A. Warne	<b>48</b>
Water Rail – Crane	B.D. Gibbs	<b>52</b>
Stone Curlew – Greenshank	N.E. Wall	<b>56</b>
Kittiwake – Puffin	R.L. Musgrove	<b>69</b>
Feral Pigeon – Green Woodpecker	J.L. Thomas	<b>76</b>
Kestrel – Long-tailed Tit	J.R. Best	<b>87</b>
Willow Warbler – Dipper	D.K. Ballance	<b>95</b>
House Sparrow – Snow Bunting	A. Warne	<b>116</b>
<b>Exotica and Escapes</b>	B.D. Gibbs	<b>128</b>
<b>Observers</b>	B.D. Gibbs	<b>129</b>
<b>Ringing Report 2019</b>	D.C. Wawman	<b>131</b>
<b>Light-bellied Brent Geese on the Somerset coast</b>	J.R. Best	<b>138</b>
<b>News from the Reserves</b>	D.K. Ballance	<b>140</b>
<b>Arrival Dates of Migrants 2019</b>	B.D. Gibbs	<b>142</b>
<b>Somerset Gazetteer</b>	B.D. Gibbs	<b>143</b>
<b>Index to the Species</b>		<b>148</b>
<b>Somerset Ornithological Society Rules</b>		<b>150</b>

## SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

This is due for payment on January 1st and the current annual rate is £14.00.  
Membership is free if you are under 21 – see <https://somersebirding.org.uk> for details.

## FOREWORD

For those new to *Somerset Birds*, it will become apparent that this report punches well above its ornithological weight for detail and breadth of content as it has done for a considerable number of years. Members of long standing will recognise its format and hopefully enjoy the familiarity of style that is becoming ever more important, for reasons that will become apparent. In the closing months of 2019, if not before, it was becoming increasingly clear that climatic events were harder to predict; that extremes of weather were becoming the norm within each season, and that our wildlife was as much at the mercy of these variances as us humans. Many of the population trends were already appearing to us as birders, whether on the reserves, out in the fields or in our gardens. The general northerly expansion of Nuthatch, Blackcap and Willow Warbler may be lost to us here in Somerset, but as a county we have benefited from significant increases in Great Spotted Woodpecker, Goldfinch, Blackcap, Nuthatch and Great Tit, as well as the less glamorous Woodpigeon, Jackdaw and Red-legged Partridge, and sadly, Canada Goose. Our largest population declines, gathered through the pages of this report, include Swift, Cuckoo, Kestrel, Starling and Greenfinch, with Chaffinch, House Martin and Skylark close behind.

For those that need to know more, the question that should be foremost in our minds is whether ‘trends’ are determined through ‘natural’ and climatic influences, or are these changes and shifts influenced, in some cases unwittingly, by ourselves? And if the latter, is there anything that we and those that we seek to influence can do to reduce or halt this change. Over the last year, the Society has assisted with Peregrines in Taunton, Pied Flycatchers in the Quantocks, Nightjars in the Blackdowns and Quantocks, Barn Owl boxes, winter feed for birds at Carymoor and a host of other projects including assistance to the Children’s Hospice South West. Many of these are actively supported by you the membership and we are extremely grateful for your help. While these projects should continue, the next challenge will be to provide the information needed to help answer the question posed above. This is where you, the citizen scientist, whether in the field or your garden, can help provide us with your sightings across the County. As fellow birders, we are asking your help to provide the information needed to determine the status of birds in Somerset and monitor their progress over the years. We will be able to build a picture, based on evidence, of increases and declines of our birdlife, and so better inform those that contribute to and influence the management of this incredibly special county. *Somerset Birds* – this edition and those that preceded it – put us on the starting blocks and, in conjunction with other species groups and organisations in the County, will provide the evidence needed to achieve a comprehensive county-wide status of our wildlife. To achieve this, though, we will need your help and there will be much over the coming year on how we are going to go about it and, hopefully, your role in helping to save birds in Somerset.

In conclusion, and once again, huge thanks go to all our contributors of sightings and to our editors for the dedicated work put into this latest edition of *Somerset Birds*. And once more, a special thanks to you the members of Somerset Ornithological Society for your continuing and much appreciated support to the Society – enjoy the read.

**Roger Dickey**  
Chairman

### New Publication

A new *Annotated List of Somerset Birds* has been prepared by David Ballance. This was necessary for the work of the Editorial Committee, partly because of the many changes in species order, which will be introduced for *Somerset Birds* 2020, but also to provide a summary of records, since the last county avifauna was published in 2006. It was thought that such a work should be available to the whole membership.

It is a plain ring-bound paperback of about 70 pages, describing the historical and current status of all species, with summarized details of distribution, numbers and migration/arrival dates, derived from records in the annual reports, from the *Atlas*, and from a variety of recent surveys. There are no illustrations, and only a brief introduction. Only 50 copies will be printed, of which 40 will be for sale to members at £6.00, including delivery.

To order, please consult the instructions on the SOS website, or contact David Ballance by phone on 01643 706820 (if he is out, leave a phone number on his answering machine) or by post at Flat 2, Dunboyne, Bratton Lane, Minehead TA24 8SQ, but do not send money. First come, first served!

# WEATHER 2019

## 2019 NATIONAL SUMMARY (UK)

2019 was warmer than average. February was particularly mild, and included a UK winter maximum temperature record (21.2 °C at Kew Gardens). March, April, July and December were all warmer than average, with a UK record of 38.7 °C being recorded at Cambridge on July 25th. November was the only month colder than average. It was a rather wet year, with above-average rainfall in March and then most months from June onward. It was also a sunnier year than average.

Notable events during the year included heavy rainfall in February, March, April and June, and numerous incidents of flooding from the end of July. Five named storms affected the UK during 2019. There were the record-breaking warm spells in February and July and record-breaking warmth for both the Easter and late-August bank holiday weekends. Temperatures exceeded 30 °C somewhere in the UK on 10 days during the summer.

### Rainfall

- 1240.0mm
- 107% of average (1981/2010)

### Average Temperature

- 9.4 °C
- 0.6 °C above average (1981/2010)

### Total Sunshine

- 1455 hrs
- 106% of average (1981/2010)

## ANNUAL STATISTICS (SOMERSET)

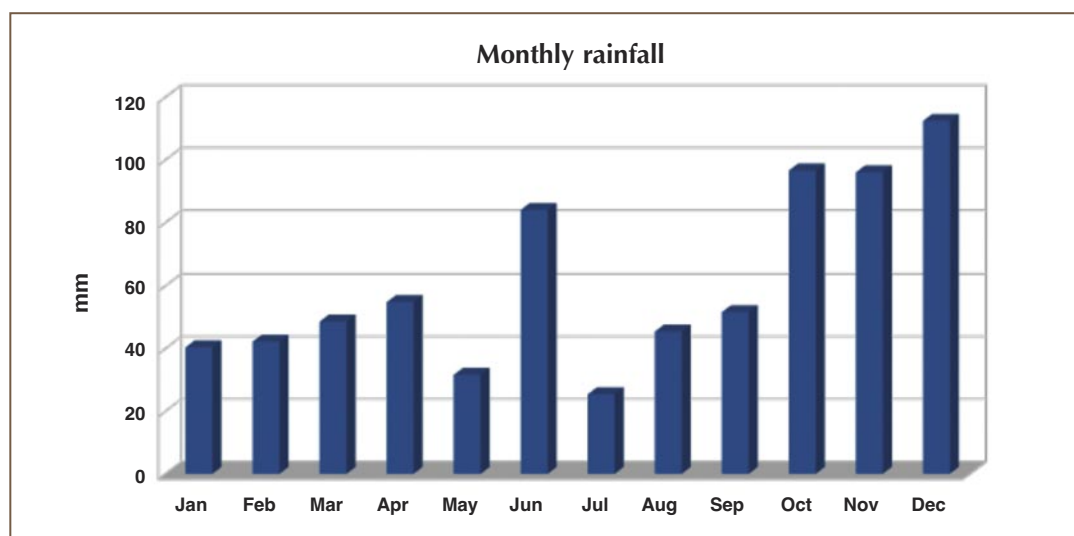
The following data have been supplied by CMS from observations at Staplegrove.

### Temperature

- Highest: 30.3 °C (86 °F) – July 23rd
  - Lowest: –5.7 °C (22 °F) – February 3rd
  - Temperatures exceeded 30 °C on only one day: July 23rd
  - Number of days with air frost: 46
- |          |    |          |   |
|----------|----|----------|---|
| January  | 13 | May      | 2 |
| February | 12 | October  | 1 |
| March    | 4  | November | 5 |
| April    | 2  | December | 7 |
- Last air frost: May 5th
  - First air frost: October 28th
  - The maximum number of consecutive nights with frost was four on two occasions: January 28th – 31st, February 2nd – 5th

### Rainfall

- Total: 728.1mm (28.7 inches)
- Wettest day: October 11th – 17.6mm (0.69 inches)
- Rain fell on 216 days (59.2%)
- Longest dry spell: May 27th to June 11th (16 days)
- Longest wet spell: September 27th to October 19th (22 days)
- Driest month: July with 25.4mm (1.00 inches)
- Wettest month: December with 112.4mm (4.42 inches)



## Wind

The gust of 37 knots on December 8th is equivalent to Force 8 (Gale) on the Beaufort Scale.

Month	Highest gust (knots)	Date	Dominant direction
January	29	27	NW
February	35	7	SW
March	35	10	WNW
April	28	27	N
May	16	3	N
June	21	16	SW
July	21	11	W
August	31	10	SW
September	30	29	SW
October	25	26	WSW
November	33	2	ESE
December	37	8	SW

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

Winter and Spring	
February	1 day
March	1 day
Autumn and Winter	
December	2 days

From autumn 2015, the Met Office allocated names to significant storms. For 2019 these were:

Erik – February 8th  
 Freya – March 3rd  
 Gareth – March 12th and 13th  
 Hannah – April 27th  
 Atiyay – December 8th

## MONTHLY SUMMARIES

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

## January

January started with high pressure, but as this drifted away to the south-west, unsettled conditions prevailed. The second half of the month was mostly cold and changeable.

### *1st to 11th:*

*High pressure dominated the weather but, apart from the 2nd and 3rd, it was generally cloudy.*

### *12th to 26th:*

*Period of drizzle persisted until 18th, when showery rain arrived. Further rain fell on 21st, before a cold front brought much heavier rainfall on 26th.*

### *27th to 31st:*

*Strong north-westerly winds made the weather feel quite cold, culminating in snow falling on Exmoor on 29th, followed by further falls on lower ground on 31st.*

## February

February began cold, with some snow in the south and snow showers in the north-east. Milder conditions dominated from the end of the first week until the 20th. Warm and sunny weather then developed with record-breaking daytime temperatures. It was the second sunniest February on record.

### *1st to 3rd:*

*The cold conditions continued, with some sunny periods, frost and the odd snow flurry.*

### *4th to 10th:*

*A warm front brought rain and milder temperatures on the 4th. An increase in the strength of wind saw Storm Erik arrive on the 8th, with heavy rainfall, followed by blustery showers. The wind reached 66mph at Berry Head in South Devon.*

### *11th to 28th:*

*A ridge of high pressure brought clear skies and an increase in temperature, resulting in the warmest Valentine's Day for 20 years. A brief interlude of cloudier weather resulted as the high pressure declined. However, a second area of high pressure developed to the east bringing exceptionally mild weather to the County.*

## March

The first half of March was unsettled but generally mild. The second half saw high pressure influencing the weather. It was the 9th warmest March on record.

### *1st to 17th:*

*The high pressure broke down on 3rd as Storm Freya brought heavy rain and strong winds. An active jet stream saw bands of rain followed by blustery showers*

sweeping across the region and included Storm Gareth on 12th. This unsettled spell continued until 17th.

**18th to 31st:**

Calmer, cloudier conditions gradually replaced the wet weather as high pressure drifted in from the south west. The high pressure became firmly established on 24th leading to cloudless skies and light north-westerly winds which continued to the month's end.

**April**

April started off cold and unsettled. Easterly winds then persisted until mid-month, initially bringing warmer weather but it turned colder from the 9th to 14th. The weather turned dry, sunny and very warm between the 17th and 22nd, which coincided with the Easter weekend. The last week was more unsettled.

**1st to 10th:**

A bright start to the month soon gave way to rain, followed by heavy showers.

**11th to 23rd:**

High pressure developed to the north, but brought particularly windy conditions, especially on the 15th. As the high pressure became centred over Scandinavia, the winds decreased and several fine sunny days resulted.

**24th to 30th:**

An unsettled end to the month saw heavy rain and showers throughout. Storm Hannah arrived on 27th, bringing north-westerly gales. Calmer conditions prevailed at the end of the month, although it remained changeable.

**May**

May started off generally cool and cloudy. The second week began wet, but then high pressure built across the country, and between the 12th and 24th gave some fine weather. It turned more changeable from the 25th, but the month ended very warm. It was the driest May since 2010.

**1st to 7th:**

A cold front moved through on the 1st, bringing light rain. Thereafter, variable cloud was the norm. Temperatures were not particularly high and this was reflected in the coldest May Bank Holiday on record (6 °C).

**8th to 11th:**

Heavy showery rain on the 8th was followed by light showers.

**12th to 16th:**

A ridge of high pressure resulted in plenty of sunshine and a welcome increase in temperature.

**17th to 31st:**

Bands of intense showers saw some parts of the County accumulating large rainfall totals, whilst others missed the showers entirely. High pressure then dominated until the 26th, after which showery rain and drizzle continued until the end of the month.

**June**

June began fine but it became unsettled between the 3rd and the 20th. A ridge of high pressure brought dry sunny weather on the 21st and 22nd; the rest of the month was mainly warm and humid, with a hot sunny spell from the 27th to the 29th. It was the 8th wettest June on record.

**1st to 20th:**

June began mostly cloudy but dry. An area of low pressure then became trapped by flanking high-pressure cells. This led to heavy thundery rain on several days. The period ended with spells of light rain and drizzle.

**21st to 30th:**

A ridge of high pressure brought some fine weather on 21st and 22nd. A brief interlude of cloudier conditions saw light rain before high pressure became firmly established. This allowed a plume of hot air from the Sahara to extend to the UK bringing high temperatures.

**July**

The first half of the month was mostly dry, with high pressure remaining close to the south and west. The second half was much wetter, due largely to numerous thundery outbreaks, but with an exceptionally hot spell from the 22nd to the 25th, which saw record-breaking temperatures and plenty of sunshine.

**1st to 16th:**

The high pressure continued to dominate, with long sunny periods. There was more cloud between from the 7th to the 11th, but temperatures held.

**17th to 19th:**

An unsettled spell marked mid month, as a front moved through, giving heavy rain.

**20th to 31st:**

Temperatures rose considerably as a second hot plume of air travelled north from the Sahara. The 23rd to the 25th were particularly hot. Increased humidity saw thunderstorms develop on the 24th. There was a slight cooling down on the 26th and the month ended with further thundery showers.

**August**

The first three weeks of August were dominated mostly by bright, showery conditions. However, after a quiet start to the month, deep depressions brought wet and

windy weather on the 9th/10th, 14th and 16th. A hot spell developed from the 21st to the 27th, setting new record high temperatures for the Bank Holiday weekend. The weather turned cooler and more unsettled again from the 28th.

**1st to 7th:**

*The month started sunny with the odd light shower.*

**8th to 19th:**

*The 8th marked the start of an unsettled spell. An active front produced thundery rain on the 9th, and increasing winds resulted in a gust of 60mph at Berry Head. Several days of heavy showers followed before the next period of heavy rain crossed the region on the 16th. The next few days saw light showers and some sunshine.*

**20th to 31st:**

*High pressure developed once more, giving several cloudless days with high temperatures. This resulted in the hottest Late Bank Holiday on record, on the 26th. This fine weather was broken by heavy rain on the 27th and 28th, before drier conditions returned at the end of the month.*

**September**

The first week of September saw changeable conditions before the weather turned more settled. There were numerous dry, sunny days between the 13th and 20th, with warm days and cool nights. The weather turned very wet at times during the last third of the month.

**1st to 12th:**

*A generally settled spell, although it was mostly cloudy. There was thundery rain on the 9th and the remnants of ex-Hurricane Dorian passed through on the 11th and 12th.*

**13th to 21st:**

*High pressure built from the west, giving plenty of autumn sunshine.*

**22nd to 30th:**

*A very unsettled spell, with the 24th and 28th being particularly wet. There were frequent blustery showers towards the end of the month.*

**October**

The jet stream tracked over southern Britain for most of the month, resulting in a wet and cloudy month. Although some areas saw more settled conditions from the 21st, the South West experienced persistent cloud and rain.

**1st to 31st:**

*October was a very unsettled month. Ex-Hurricane*

*Lorenzo brought strong winds on the 4th. It remained very breezy thereafter with heavy rain falling on the 11th. A large area of low pressure then became stationary in the Atlantic, bringing rain on most days. There was a brief interlude of sunny weather between the 20th and 24th, before the return of heavy persistent rain and strong winds.*

**November**

The jet stream continued to track further south than usual, bringing further spells of cloudy and wet weather to most of the country.

**1st to 15th:**

*The poor weather of October continued into November. Heavy rain fell on the 1st and 2nd, followed by showers. Further rain fell on the 8th, after which there was a settled spell on the 9th and 10th. Strong winds brought showers of hail on the 11th. The next period of rain saw a drop in temperature on the 13th and 14th, bringing snow to high ground.*

**16th to 20th:**

*A ridge of high pressure brought some respite to the wet weather.*

**21st to 30th:**

*The unsettled weather returned and brought high rainfall totals on the 21st, 22nd and 26th.*

**December**

The first few days of December started with a spell of cold, dry, frosty weather, with high pressure and plenty of sunshine. However, unsettled conditions then dominated until Christmas. The last week was generally dry, mild and cloudy.

**1st to 5th:**

*High pressure saw plenty of sunshine but was accompanied by frost.*

**6th to 28th:**

*The earth moved for some, as a magnitude 3.2 earthquake centred on Huntworth shook Somerset on the 6th. Storm Atiyay arrived on the 8th, bringing heavy blustery showers. A very unsettled spell of weather marked the majority of the month, with frequent strong winds. It was particularly wet from the 12th to the 14th and from the 18th to the 19th. For a change, Christmas Day was fine and sunny after early fog, but Boxing Day made up for this with continuous heavy rain and strong winds.*

**29th to 31st:**

*A ridge of high pressure brought some calm to the end of the year.*

## A REVIEW OF 2019

A total of 236 species recorded in the County. A Baillon's Crane recorded at night on June 12th at Greylake Reserve was the first in the County since 1912. Other notables were an American Golden Plover at Steart Marshes, two Roseate Terns at Burnham, a White-winged Black Tern at Cheddar Reservoir, an Alpine Swift over Ham Wall and an Aquatic Warbler trapped at Steart. A surprise find at Lilstock was a group of six Cirl Buntings, some of which stayed into the breeding season with two singing males still present on June 23rd and the last sighting on July 24th.

### JANUARY TO MARCH

Light-bellied Brent Geese again outnumbered Dark-bellied with all records coming from Bridgwater Bay. The most were 14 Light-bellied on March 24th and seven Dark-bellied on January 22nd; several larger counts including 23 on 14th where the race was not identified. A flock of 19 Barnacle Geese arrived in Bridgwater Bay on February 2nd and stayed until the 17th; ten of these lingered until the 20th. Apart from the resident Greylags the only other grey geese reported were two White-fronted that flew low along the coastal reedbed at Steart on March 22nd.

It is worth noting that the long-staying escaped Trumpeter Swan was last seen on January 25th. There were more records of Bewick's Swans than in the first winter period of the previous year, the most being a party of 12 at Witcombe Bottom on the 25th and two days later at West Sedge Moor; smaller numbers were reported from the Levels south of the Poldens, but none to the north of here. The now usual small numbers of Whooper Swans were wintering: six at Curry Moor and two at Shapwick Heath may have been returning birds; others were seen at Westhay Moor, Tealham Moor and Ham Wall, and to the south at Southlake/Aller Moors. Two Egyptian Geese were on the flood at Southlake Moor on January 2nd and at Ham Wall on February 26th; there were single birds at four other places. Records of either wintering or early-arriving Garganey are increasing; one at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on February 2nd and 4th was thought to be a first-winter male. Two at Ham Wall on March 19th were the first of a number by the end of March. Once again, numbers of the commoner wintering duck were low; a combined count of all the sites would not total anything like the numbers of Wigeon that occurred in only-recent years. Pintail were another species where there was a big drop: the most were 56 on West Sedge Moor in January, whereas the highest count in 2018 was 320 at Shapwick Heath, but that was exceptionally high

compared with the rest of the year. A male Red-crested Pochard was at Cheddar Reservoir from the start of the year until February 11th. Numbers of wintering Pochard were once again low and becoming largely restricted to Cheddar Reservoir and Ham Wall, where the largest WeBS count was of 149 in February. A first-winter male Scaup at Cheddar Reservoir, from January 1st to March 20th, had been joined by two others on March 19th; these were the only records from the early part of the year. The second largest flock of Common Scoter for the year, of 35, was off Burnham on March 5th. The highest count of Goldeneye was only two, at Noah's Lake, January 21st and February 18th; there were single birds at only three other places.

The only Grey Partridge throughout the year came from the area to the south of Somerton, where in this period two were seen on February 2nd and seven on the 25th. The wintering Red-throated Divers off the coast in the west were present in good numbers at the start of January with 33 at Hurlstone Point on the 10th; they dropped away into February with five on the 5th and, surprisingly, still seven on March 22nd. There were two records of Black-throated Divers, both of single birds at Hurlstone Point on January 6th and 15th. A Great Northern Diver at Cheddar Reservoir from the previous December stayed until March 24th; the other wintering bird at Wimbleball Lake was elusive and only seen occasionally up to January 19th. An early Manx Shearwater was off Minehead on March 10th, the same day 11 Fulmars were seen from Minehead, a good number for early in the year. There were also 24 Gannets from there on that day; 33 had been seen on the 10th. An escaped White Stork was reported from Burtle Moor on March 26th. The only Glossy Ibis of the year was first seen near Blakeway on January 12th before moving to the Avalon Marshes, being last seen on April 23rd. Spoonbills are being increasingly recorded – three which were wintering at Steart Marshes were last seen in the area on February 13th, with singles there then until the end of March. Cattle Egrets were present in large numbers – the highest single count was of 102 at Sharpham on January 13th but on the same day there was also a report of 28 at Blakeway and no doubt there were others as well. Numbers stated to drop away during March but still 78 came into the roost at Long Drove on the 26th. Great White Egrets now seem to spread out over a larger area and not be concentrated just on the Avalon Marshes, although the largest count was of 13 at Catcott Lows on January 13th; the next was of 11 at West Sedge Moor on March 25th. As someone commented 'The commonest egret seen all day'. Little Egrets tend to be



### Garganey, Sutton Bingham Reservoir (Alex Carlisle)

overlooked and numbers of reports are decreasing, although actual numbers seem to be stable. Only two Shags were recorded, both single birds, at Hurlstone on January 10th and Stert Point on February 10th.

Two Ospreys passed through on their way north, at Noah's Lake on March 28th and Five Bells, Watchet, on the 31st. Marsh Harriers were recorded from across the Avalon Marshes and Levels; there were no particularly large counts, the most being six at Ham Wall on a number of dates. Hen Harriers were recorded from 28 sites although a number of these were close together either on the Levels and Exmoor; all were ringtails apart from a male on West Sedge Moor. In January and February there were 12 reports of Red Kites, all of single birds; from mid March there was an obvious increase in records, including three over Cheddar Reservoir on the 23rd, at Combwich on the 26th, and at Meare Heath the following day.

A Stone-curlew was heard calling in the mist at Lilstock on March 29th. There were up to 500 Avocets in the Parrett Estuary on January 6th; long gone are the days of 30 years ago when you had to search for the one regular wintering bird! Once again there were really good numbers of Golden Plover, with an exceptional count of 20,565 on West Sedge Moor on January 21st and still 13,500 in February; there had also been 3,114 at Greylake on the first date. Equally impressive were the January counts of 35,300 Lapwing at West Sedge Moor and 15,360 at Greylake Reserve. The

first returning Little Ringed Plovers were eight at Steart Marshes on March 24th. The numbers of Black-tailed Godwit on the Levels were also very high, with WeBS counts at West Sedge Moor of 635 in January and 530 in February; there were also 507 at Greylake on February 8th. Up to 12 Ruff were on floods at Southlake Moor on January 12th and there were still ten on February 5th, and then low numbers for the rest of the period. There were up to seven Purple Sandpipers at Knighton Beach, which now seems to be the most regular site for them; the only other records were of three at Hinkley Point on March 24th and single birds at Helwell Bay on January 11th and February 11th. In the north, nine Woodcock at Eaker Hill on January 5th and 12 at Rowberrow Warren on February 22nd were noteworthy. A Grey Phalarope on the tideline at Dunster Beach on January 24th was most unusual. A Common Sandpiper wintered at Wimbleball Lake until February 22nd; other single birds were at the Brue Estuary on January 11th, at Huntspill Sea Wall on the 22nd (possibly the same bird), and on Cary Moor on March 2nd. There were up to six Green Sandpipers on a drained area at the Sharpham end of Ham Wall in this period, and three at several other sites. There were low numbers of Spotted Redshank in the Parrett Estuary – the most were five at the Brue Estuary on January 1st and three at Steart Marshes on the 23rd. A Greenshank at Steart Marshes on February 9th was the only record.

Strong winds on March 10th pushed 100 Kittiwakes into Bridgwater Bay; this was the only large count for the period. Mediterranean Gulls were recorded throughout the period: the most were five at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on January 31st and at Cheddar Reservoir on February 23rd. A colour-ringed first-winter Caspian Gull flew into the roost at Torr Works Reservoir on January 20th; it had been ringed in Poland on May 31st, 2018. No white-winged gulls were recorded in 2019. A very early Sandwich Tern was off Minehead on March 13th.

A Long-eared Owl was near West Buckland on February 4th. Records of Short-eared Owls came from across the Levels and from Exmoor and, more unusually, one from the Quantocks; the most were four at Wall Common from the start of the year until April 5th, and three at Tealham Moor on January 19th.

A female Bearded Tit at Steart Marshes on February 27th was probably a first for the Reserve.

All three hirundines were at Ham Wall on the very early date of February 28th: 35 Sand Martins, five Swallows, and a House Martin. Sand Martins were seen most days from this date but the next Swallow was not until March 19th and the next House Martin on the 27th. Willow Warblers arrived from March 20th, when one was ringed at Bratton. At least six Yellow-browed Warblers were present in January: three in the Yeovil area and others at Bruton STW, Perry Street and Tatworth. A Garden Warbler at Keinton Mandeville on March 29th equalled the County's earliest record, but a Lesser Whitethroat singing at Mells Down on March 26th was the earliest-ever. Dartford Warblers survived the winter yet again, with records from Exmoor and the Quantocks and one on Mendip at Crook Peak on the 30th. The only Firecrest of this period was a singing male at Dunster Castle on February 25th. The first Ring Ouzels were two at Thurley Combe on the 24th, followed by one at Brean Down on the 30th. In general, numbers of winter thrushes had been low, the highest counts being of 170 Fieldfares at Queen's Sedge Moor on January 11th and 140 Redwings at Combe St Nicholas on the 1st. In line with other migrants, the first Wheatear was also early, on February 28th at Huntspill Sea Wall.

Tree Sparrows were as usual confined to the east of the County: the most were 19 at Chewton Mendip and up to 12 visiting a garden near West Horrington. Four Water Pipits were at Catcott Lows on January 10th; three on a drained area at the Sharpam end of Ham Wall proved very popular through this period, and there were single birds on the coast at the Brue Estuary and Steart Marshes. A Richard's Pipit was flushed during a WeBS count at Sutton Moor on February 19th. The first Yellow Wagtail was at Steart on March 29th. There were two large flocks of Bramblings, both in traditional areas: 110 feeding under the

beech trees along the drove from Triscombe Stone to Crowcombe Park, and 76 in a game crop, but also under beech trees, at Chipstable, both on January 19th. A Twite was in the Steart Gate area, moving with the Linnet flock, between January 14th and 20th. Crossbills were reported from most suitable areas of forest across the County, including 30 in the Cockercombe area and 20 at Stockhill in mid January.

The biggest surprise of the year was a party of six Cirl Buntings in the coastal strip west of Lilstock. They were found on February 2nd and stayed until June, although the numbers decreased. Nearly 60 Yellowhammers were wintering at Knighton Farm.

## APRIL AND MAY

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All the Brent Geese had gone by the start of April. Three Egyptian Geese at Chard Reservoir on May 13th were the first record for the site; perhaps the same birds were at Ham Wall on the 20th, and two had been at West Sedge Moor on the 4th. Away from the Avalon Marshes and Greylake Reserve, the only Garganey reported were three at Steart Marshes on April 22nd and two there on a number of dates, and two at Cary Moor on April 21st. A summer-plumaged Red-throated Diver flew past Burnham on April 27th, and the next day a Black-throated Diver was off Hurlstone. The same strong winds were responsible for 37 Fulmars moving back west at Minehead on the 27th. The first big feeding movement of Manx Shearwaters was of 1,971 at Hurlstone Point on May 17th.

The escaped White Stork was seen again, first at Crannel Moor, then over Westhay Moor, before settling in a cattle field at Lower Godney on April 18th. One over Westbury-sub-Mendip on May 22nd could have been a wild one, as no rings could be seen, but it was gliding over at height. There were more records of Spoonbills, all singly, at Steart Marshes on April 10th and May 4th, and then, presumably the same, over the Brue Estuary on the 5th and at Pawlett Hams on the 12th. The Glossy Ibis was last seen at Noah's Lake on April 23rd. Little Bitterns returned to Ham Wall from May 6th but proved to be very elusive. Cattle Egrets continued to be seen in good numbers throughout April; 74 came into roost on the 20th, but from the 26th numbers declined sharply until only single figures were present in late May, apart from 14 at Catcott Lows on the 14th and 15 there on the 28th. In contrast to the earlier months, most records of Great White Egrets now came from the Avalon Marshes and the surrounding area; one over Brean Down on May 6th and another at Minehead Marshes the following day were unusual – records from the west are still very rare. There were up to 48 Little Egrets in April and 44 in May around Steart Marshes; these were by far the highest counts. A Gannet at Cheddar Reservoir on April 28th was taken



### White Stork, Lower Godney (Brian Gibbs)

into care but unfortunately it died.

Single Ospreys were seen at eight places, of which three were in and around the Avalon Marshes from April 4th to May 23rd; the others were at Roughmoor (Taunton) on April 1st, Cheddar Reservoir on the 5th, Sutton Bingham Reservoir on the 9th, Bishop's Lydeard on the 23rd and Steart Marshes on May 23rd. A Honey-buzzard was over Fire Beacon on the Quantocks on April 23rd. A male Hen Harrier was at Wall Common on April 14th; there were ringtails at Catsford Common and nearby at Steart Marshes on the 17th and a late bird at King's Sedge Moor on May 20th. The only Montagu's Harrier of the year was a male quartering Dunkery Beacon before heading off north on May 5th. The now annual movement of Red Kites took place but not in such large groups; the largest was of 15 at Tracebridge on May 24th, and then a big drop down to six at Williton on the 22nd.

Two Black-winged Stilts were found at Catcott Lows on May 26th and stayed until the 28th. The only Little Ringed Plover apart from the returning breeding birds were two at Greylake Reserve on April 7th and one on the Fenning at Stert Point on the 25th. The first Whimbrel were two at Burnham on the 13th; the highest count since 2015, of 102, was also here on May 7th. Bar-tailed Godwits moved through in relatively low numbers, the most being 35 in the Brue Estuary on April 22nd; the highest count of Black-tailed Godwits was of 189 in the Bridgwater Bay WeBS count on the 21st. There was only one Curlew Sandpiper, at Catsford

Common on May 19th. Common Sandpipers were recorded from most of the usual sites but not in particularly big numbers; the most were 12 at Cheddar Reservoir on April 19th. There were records of Green Sandpiper from only four places, all singly apart from two near Frome on April 14th and 20th. Only single Spotted Redshanks were around the Parrett Estuary up to April 22nd. The number of Greenshank passing through was also low; all were single birds apart from three at Ham Wall on May 14th, and two at Minehead Marshes on the 8th, at Catcott Lows from the 13th to the 19th, and at Steart Marshes on the 16th. Two Wood Sandpipers were at Catcott Lows on May 1st/2nd, one remaining to the 3rd, and there was another there on the 15th. There was a most unusual record of a Wood Sandpiper flushed from the restored mire at Blackpitts on Exmoor on May 15th.

Little Gulls passed through mainly in April, the peak counts being of 17 at Cheddar Reservoir on the 6th and ten in the Parrett Estuary on the 23rd. Up to 40 Kittiwakes were in Bridgwater Bay on the 27th; apart from these, there were only low numbers in the west. The only record of Mediterranean Gulls was of three at Dunster Beach on April 5th, the rest having already left for their breeding grounds. There were only two records of Sandwich Tern: three from Hurlstone Point on April 19th and two off Minehead on the 27th. Two Roseate Terns that flew south along the shore at Burnham on the 27th were the first in the County since 2008. It was a very poor passage of Common Terns,

the highest number being three at Cheddar Reservoir on May 8th. Arctic Terns fared slightly better, with counts of 40 from the Parrett Estuary on April 22nd and 45 on the 27th; inland, there were 22 at Cheddar Reservoir on the 27th. A summer-plumaged White-winged Black Tern attracted a lot of attention at Cheddar Reservoir on the 28th, which was not surprising, since it was the first since 2006. There were also 31 Black Terns there on May 8th; seven had been present the day before. All but one of the skua records came from Bridgwater Bay. Great Skuas were recorded on six April dates, with a maximum of two on the 26th/27th and including one circling over Combwich Ponds on the 27th. Two Pomarine Skuas were seen from both Burnham and Stert Point on the 27th; there were also two from Burnham on May 9th, one there on the 16th, and one at Berrow on the 19th. Arctic Skuas were recorded on five dates from April 9th to May 9th, the peak being ten on 27th from Burnham. The only skua away from here was an Arctic at Hurlstone Point on April 28th. Feeding parties of auks started to appear in the west, the most being 40 Guillemots on May 19th and 18 Razorbills on the 26th, both at Hurlstone Point.

Apart from the Wall Common Short-eared Owls, which were last seen on April 5th, the only other reports came from Tealham Moor, where single birds were seen on April 10th and 19th, and on May 3rd, and finally two on the 6th. The first Nightjars back were three on Croydon Hill on May 13th. The first Alpine Swift since August 2011 was over Ham Wall on April 25th; Swifts had been seen there on the 11th. A Hoopoe was seen from the A39 near Moorlinch on April 20th. A Hobby over Ebbor Gorge on April 2nd was the first; the largest gathering over the Avalon Marshes was 41 at Ham Wall on May 5th.

There were large numbers of hirundines over the Avalon Marshes and reservoirs, including 1,000 Sand Martins at Cheddar Reservoir on April 4th; also along the coast, there were 150 Swallows at Dunster Beach on April 18th and at Burnham on May 8th. The Yellow-browed Warbler at Pen Mill Riverside Walk at Yeovil was present until April 6th, when it was singing. Away from the breeding areas, two Firecrests were at Somerton on April 15th and one at Catsford Common on the 19th. Ring Ouzels were reported from nine places: four on Exmoor, as still to be expected, three on the Quantocks, two on Mendip, two on the coast and one at White Post near Chilcompton. The largest group was of five at Chetsford Water on April 21st/22nd. The last of the winter thrushes were a flock of 58 Fieldfare at Crowcombe Heathfield on April 16th and a Redwing at Shapwick Heath on the 19th. Only two Black Redstarts were reported: one was a male in the unusual location of Chetsford Water on Exmoor on April 6th, the other was the wintering bird at Breaun Down Cove, which was last seen on the 12th.



**White-winged Black Tern, Cheddar Reservoir  
(James Packer)**

### **Selected breeding records**

The Barnacle Geese bred again successfully at Torr Works Reservoir. Five families of Shelduck were seen along the coast; two pairs were inland at West Sedge Moor, but it is unclear if these bred. Four families of Mandarin Duck were seen, including a first breeding at Hawkridge Reservoir. Although Garganey were present in the Avalon Marshes and on West Sedge Moor, no families were seen. There were eight pairs of Shoveler at Greylake Reserve, where three families were later seen, the only ones to be reported. Gadwall were more successful, with 70 pairs at Ham Wall, six at Greylake Reserve, and seven at West Sedge Moor. A rare event was the first confirmed breeding of Wigeon in the County, when a female with six young were seen at Catcott Lows on June 12th. Although Teal were present in the Avalon Marshes and copulation was observed, there was no confirmed breeding. On Ham Wall, there were 66 pairs of Pochard, and later in the season 31 young were seen.

Quail were recorded from eight sites. The number of booming Bitterns dropped this year from 55 to 48, hopefully only a temporary blip. Two male Little Bitterns were barking at Ham Wall and it was assumed from their actions that breeding was at least attempted. No Night-herons were reported. Once again it was difficult to judge how many, if any, Cattle Egrets bred in the Avalon Marshes, but six juveniles were seen later in the summer; a pair were displaying at a site where breeding has taken place on the coast of Bridgwater Bay. Great White Egrets were more easily located, and of the 14 breeding attempts a total of 27 young fledged. Little Egrets go almost unnoticed in the breeding season now; there were 20 pairs at West Huntspill, 17 on Queen's Sedge Moor, and two at Swell Wood, but the count here is made late in the season, so there are likely to be more.

Goshawks bred successfully at sites in the east



**Avocet, Little Ringed Plovers and Oystercatcher, Steart Marshes (Chris Hooper)**

and west of the County. Marsh Harriers are well established: the Avalon Marshes pairs raised 20 young; elsewhere attempts were made, though it was difficult to know how many had been successful, but a pair at a new site raised three young.

Spotted Crakes were present at two sites: two were calling at one of these and one at the other. There were 11 confirmed and probable nesting attempts by Cranes from the reintroduction project; from these, nine young fledged, although two of these died in August. The Avocet colony at Steart Marshes continues to expand; 31 pairs were present, but productivity was low because of high spring tides and predation, mainly by Grey Herons. Up to 83 pairs of Lapwing, 41 of Curlew, 182 of Snipe, and 29 of Redshank bred across the County, the vast majority on the Levels. Little Ringed Plover again bred at Chard Junction and Steart Marshes and attempted to breed at the site of Hinkley Point C. Two pairs of Dunlin were found at an undisclosed site on Exmoor; although no young were seen, an eggshell was found, so a breeding attempt was at least made.

Reports of Barn Owls were down again this year, particularly in the north-east. Young Long-eared Owls were heard calling at a site on the coast of Bridgwater Bay. Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers were present in the usual Quantock Combes, with successful breeding at one; there were an encouraging number of reports from the Horner area and several from sites where there have been none in recent years. Breeding Hobbies were reported from only four sites – there must be a lot more that are missed, given the numbers present in the summer. Likewise, a number of traditional Peregrine sites, particularly in the quarries, have not been recorded for a number of years.

Bearded Tits look to have had another very successful breeding season, given the number of birds located in the autumn Avalon Marshes Survey, with 288 at Ham Wall alone. A Savi's Warbler was singing at Ham Wall from late May until June 20th. Dartford

Warblers were recovering: a singing male at Crook Peak on March 30th was joined by another on April 1st; on the Quantocks, there were at least four sites in the breeding season; the Exmoor records came from the North Hill to Bossington Hill ridge. All the breeding Firecrests were in the east of the County.

The main concentrations of Nightingales were at Templecombe, Merryfield Airfield and along the canal between Charlton and Cogload. A singing male at Shapwick Heath proved extremely popular with the large number of visitors to the reserve. Pied Flycatchers continue to flourish, mainly because of the provision of nest boxes. Whinchats were restricted to Exmoor, where at least the population appears to be stable, but Wheatears on Exmoor are still declining. The only successful breeding Tree Sparrows reported were from a West Horrington garden, where one pair bred in a nest-box and another under the eaves. The Cirl Buntings mentioned previously were present in the breeding season but are not thought to have been successful, despite singing and the male carrying twigs.

## **JUNE AND JULY**

Probably the three Egyptian Geese mentioned above were at Catcott Lows on June 19th/20th; a family of seven arrived at Steart Marshes on the 25th and stayed until July 27th, the same day that seven were at Cheddar Reservoir. There were no large flocks of Common Scoter off the coast in the west, as can happen at this time; 11 on July 25th and 27th were the most. A group of seven Goosanders were in St Audrie's Bay on July 5th; as they were all brown-heads, possibly a family party?

Three Quail were reported from the Butleigh/Walton Moor area on June 1st and 2nd, another was near Burtle on the 8th, two were heard on Queen's Sedge Moor on the 12th and one again on the 17th, singles at Treble's Holford on the 23rd, Coleford on the 28th and one calling near Triscombe Stone on July 1st.

Offshore feeding movements included 29 Fulmars from Greenaleigh Point on June 8th, 2,000 Manx Shearwaters on July 17th at Hurlstone Point, and 24 Gannets there on July 13th.

Spoonbills are becoming regular now, particularly at Steart Marshes, where both Otterhampton and Stockland Marsh are very much to their liking; there were two there on July 8th and single birds there on the 27th and over Wall Common on the 29th. An adult Purple Heron first seen in the evening of June 15th was presumably the same as the one around Shapwick Heath from the 20th to July 14th. Dispersing Great White Egrets in this period included one at Cheddar Reservoir, two at Sutton Bingham Reservoir, four at Durleigh Reservoir and two at Hawkridge Reservoir.

An Osprey was at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on July 9th and 15th; there was another at Ham Wall on

the 17th, and one flew over Bridgwater on the 27th. A Honey-buzzard was seen twice on the Quantocks in June and one was photographed near there, over Higher Vexford, on July 24th. The number of reports of Red Kite dropped away steadily, five at Mells Down on June 29th being the largest group.

A Baillon's Crake was recorded at night at Greylake Reserve on June 12th – the first in the County since 1912! The first returning Common Sandpiper was at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on June 23rd; 26 were there on July 26th. A Green Sandpiper was just in Somerset at Chard Junction Gravel Pits on June 7th; the peak count during this period was of 11 at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on July 30th. A Wood Sandpiper was also at Sutton Bingham Reservoir from the 25th to the 30th; another was briefly at Cheddar Reservoir on the 30th before flying off to the west. A Spotted Redshank was seen on the Brue Estuary between the 9th and the 31st; one was also at Steart Marshes. Two Greenshanks were at Steart Marshes on July 16th, with single birds at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on the 7th, and at Catcott Lows and Cheddar Reservoir on the 30th.

Mediterranean Gulls were recorded throughout the period, and once again there was a noted movement west along the coast, including 24 at Hurlstone Point on June 29th. Sandwich Terns were recorded from three places; three at Gore Point on June 30th were the most. At the start of June there were 100 'Commic' Terns and three Common at Burnham on the 5th, and eight Common at Chard Reservoir and three at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on July 30th. The only Great Skuas in this period were two seen from Huntspill Sea Wall on July 28th. An Arctic Skua was in Porlock Bay on June 29th, and single birds were seen moving west from Hurlstone Point on July 10th and 12th. The feeding

auks in the west peaked at 22 Guillemots on June 20th and 63 Razorbills on the 30th. The only Puffin with the auks was one off Minehead on the 18th.

Turtle Doves are now real rarities: one was photographed at feeders at Aller on the 9th, and it returned briefly the next day. A Rose-colored Starling was videoed early morning at Larkhill Open Space, Yeovil, on June 21st; unfortunately, it could not be found later. A female or possibly a juvenile Black Redstart was photographed on a garden fence at Montacute on July 6th. The last record for the Cirl Bunting at Lilstock was of one on July 24th.

## AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

At Hinkley Point, a flock of 11 Brent Geese had returned on September 12th; there were up to 22 Light-bellied there on the 16th, and two Dark-bellied on the 15th. Two Egyptian Geese were at Ham Wall on the 16th. Mandarin Ducks continue to thrive at Nine Springs, with 27 on the 25th. The first Wigeon was back at Meare Heath on August 19th. A female Goldeneye at Hawkridge Reservoir on September 13th may have come from the local collection. A flock of ten Red-breasted Mergansers flew into Porlock Bay from the north-west on August 30th, and there was one at Stert Point on September 27th.

There were only two Storm Petrel records this year: the first at Burnham on August 10th met an unfortunate end when it was taken by a gull; the other flew west at Minehead on September 28th. The numbers of Manx Shearwater normally fall away quickly in August, so 1,362 at Hurlstone Point on the 30th and 1,037 the next day were exceptional. Those blown into Bridgwater Bay in autumn gales are usually in trouble:



of the 60 on September 4th, seven were taken by gulls and, unusually, two by foxes on Stert Island.

Another escaped White Stork was on the roof of a house in Bridgwater for a couple of days around August 24th and was then seen in flight over Watchet on the 26th. Spoonbills were again at Steart Marshes during this period: three regularly from September 5th were joined by a fourth on the 14th, five were seen on the 15th, and then a group of eight flew off south on the 17th; two were at Ham Wall from the 21st to the 26th and one remained to the 28th. Numbers of Cattle Egrets mirrored the events of 2018: there was a marked increase through the period and by September 25th there were 66 at Catcott Lows. Great White Egrets were spread widely across the central part of the County, and turning up at several new sites, including two at Nine Springs on August 25th, which later moved to Sutton Bingham Reservoir. In recent years, Shags have become scarce even on the western coast and no late-August movement has taken place; this year, there were only single birds at Hurlstone Point on the 4th and 8th and two on the 12th; further east, there were two at Stolford on September 8th.

An Osprey was at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on August 3rd; the August Bank Holiday bird at Noah's Lake arrived a few days earlier than usual, on the 22nd, and it stayed until the 30th; others were at Cricket St Thomas on September 3rd and on Exmoor at Cow Castle on the 8th. Red Kites were reported in both months; three at Bruton on August 16th and September 3rd, also at Mells Down on August 30th and Hinkley Point on September 20th were the most.

A juvenile Spotted Crake was in front of the hide at the Greylake Reserve from September 18th to October 10th. Flocks of Avocets began to build in the Parrett Estuary, and by the end of September at least 320 had arrived. A juvenile Black-winged Stilt was at Ham Wall from September 21st to the 26th; they are not the rarity they once were in the County. A real rarity was a juvenile American Golden Plover at Steart Marshes from the 29th to October 8th; there were 640 Golden Plover there at the same time. Away from the breeding areas, a juvenile Little Ringed Plover was at Ham Wall on August 7th; there were up to five juveniles at Durlleigh Reservoir from September 3rd, and one at Chard Reservoir on the 7th. Meare Heath lagoon was again not drained in 2019, so areas suitable for waders were limited in the Avalon Marshes, and also Cheddar Reservoir remained fairly high. Curlew Sandpipers arrived from August 28th in the Parrett Estuary area; they peaked at eight at Steart Marshes on September 25th. One or two Little Stints were found in the same

**Spotted Crake, Greylake Reserve**  
(Alex Carlisle)



**American Golden Plover, Steart Marshes**  
(James Packer)

area on a number of dates in September. For the first time for a number of years, not one Pectoral Sandpiper was recorded.

Strong winds on September 4th pushed at least two Grey Phalaropes into the Parrett Estuary. Both Common and Green Sandpipers continued to pass through at a number of sites, but there were no high counts. It proved to be a good year for Wood Sandpipers: there were single birds at Catcott Lows on August 3rd/4th and at a new site, Stockmoor Country Park, Bridgwater, on the 3rd; two at Ham Wall from the 7th to the 24th, one remaining to the 30th, and this or another on September 6th; and single birds at Porlock Marsh on September 1st and at Steart Marshes on the 29th. At Steart Marshes, four Spotted Redshanks were present on September 16th and on the 29th/30th, and there were smaller numbers on other dates; elsewhere, there were single birds at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on August 15th, at Durlleigh Reservoir on September 2nd/3rd, and at Porlock Marsh on the 17th. Steart Marshes were again the main site for passing Green-shanks, with a peak of 14 on the 28th.

Of the seven records of Sandwich Terns, two were inland at Ham Wall, where there were two on September 22nd and one on the 26th. It was another poor year for Little Terns: there were only two records, one of which was of three flying up the Brue at Burnham on August 10th. Seven Common Terns were at Chard Reservoir on the August 9th; there were smaller numbers at four other places up to the 24th, when there were 13 at Cheddar Reservoir; four later records included four at Minehead on September 25th. There were only two records of Arctic Terns: 25 in the Parrett Estuary on September 2nd and five at Cheddar Reservoir on the 7th. There were reasonable numbers of Black Terns, the largest counts being of 18 flying west at Minehead on August 21st and 17 at Noah's Lake on the 24th. There was only one day of decent skua passage, when 15 Great and 13 Arctic Skuas passed to the west at Minehead in the afternoon of September 7th; otherwise, low numbers of both were low. Two adult Long-tailed

Skuas flew west past Hurlstone on September 1st, and the only Pomarine was there on the 8th.

Juvenile Cuckoos were seen at Catcott Lows on August 4th and at Shapwick Heath on the 21st. September Nightjars are uncommon, but this year one was photographed at Curry Rivel on the 17th on a garden fence, and the next day one at Otterhampton was roosting on a child's swing! The last Swifts of the year were two at Cheddar Reservoir and one over Wellington on the 10th. There were eight Wrynecks, all but one present only for a single day: at Aldon Estate, Yeovil, on August 25th, Long Load and Steart on the 26th, Combwich on the 30th/31st, Bossington Beach on the 31st, Higher Vexford on September 3rd, Ham Wall on the 12th, and Draycott Sleights on the 13th.

A survey of Bearded Tits at Ham Wall in September recorded a new record for the Reserve with 288 being counted. A Woodlark on the Blackdowns at Trickey Warren on September 19th was the first for these hills for some considerable time. An Aquatic Warbler was trapped and ringed at Steart on August 26th. It was to prove an exceptional autumn and winter for Firecrests: three records away from breeding areas in the east; a pair at Swell Wood on September 14th; and then single birds on the Quantocks, at Great Hill on the 20th and at Wills Neck on the 30th. There were only two September Ring Ouzels: one at Draycott Sleights on the 7th and the other at East Quantoxhead on the 15th. At least 18 Tree Sparrows were photographed on feeders at West Horrington on September 21st. Flocks of Yellow Wagtails are not uncommon in late summer: the largest gathering this year was of 24 at Wall Common on August 26th.

## OCTOBER

There were 18 Brent Geese in Bridgwater Bay on the 29th; this was the largest flock recorded; the race was not given but it contained ten juveniles. Other parties had a number of juveniles, which indicates that they had a good breeding season compared with recent years. A flock of up to 70 Barnacle Geese were around Bridgwater Bay on the 29th/30th; other large flocks were seen in the South West at this time. A Pink-footed Goose at Torr Works Reservoir from the 1st to the 15th may have been the one that had summered at Chew Valley Lake, and was thought to be an escape. A flock of 18 White-fronted Geese flew east over Combwich on the 29th. Five Whooper Swans arrived at Catcott Lows on the 21st. Two Egyptian Geese were at Aller Moor on the 18th, West Sedge Moor on the 19th, and Ham Wall on the 20th. Every October there seems to be an influx of Mandarin Ducks to Hawkridge Reservoir; this year there were more than ever, and they peaked at 38 on the 10th. There were three records

of single Garganey: at Steart Marshes on the 1st, at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on the 24th, and in the Brue Estuary on the 31st. The Goldeneye was still at Hawkridge Reservoir throughout the month; two others were at Berrow on the 31st. There were two records of single Red-breasted Mergansers: at Minehead on the 2nd and Hurlstone Point on the 16th.

The first returning Red-throated Diver was one in summer plumage off Minehead on the 4th; there was another at Hurlstone Point on the 12th and three in Porlock Bay on the 23rd. The only Leach's Petrels of the year were two at Hinkley Point on the 4th. There were two records of Manx Shearwaters: one at Hurlstone Point on the 2nd and two off Minehead on the 6th. One or two Spoonbills stayed throughout the month at Steart Marshes. Cattle Egret records were mainly from around the Avalon Marshes or close by, with a peak of 69 at Westhay Moor on the 27th; there were five on two dates at Greylake Reserve. There were no large roost counts of Great White Egrets, the most recorded being six at Ham Wall on the 14th; up to three were present at both Durleigh and Hawkridge Reservoirs while water levels remained low. The highest count of Little Egrets was of 82 at Steart Marshes.

There were three Hen Harrier records, all of single ringtails: at Greylake Reserve on the 18th, Black Down on the 24th, and Priddy Mineries on the 30th. Nine records of Red Kites included two at Butleigh on the 8th, one of which was feeding on a road kill in the carriageway; all the others were of single birds.

The highest count of Avocets in the Parrett Estuary for the month was of 510. Curlew Sandpipers remained at Steart Marshes until the 10th, when five were present; the following day one was at Wall Common. There were only two records of single Little Stints, at Steart Marshes on the 5th and 10th. A Grey Phalarope at Huntspill Sea Wall on the 4th flew towards Stert Point, where it passed the tower hide; a juvenile was at Cheddar Reservoir for two days from the 12th. In the last couple of years, Spotted Redshanks that formerly roosted at high tide on the lagoons at Stert Point have moved to Steart Marshes, where up to three were present during the month. The same has happened to Greenshanks on passage; they are now using Otterhampton Marsh, where there were seven on the 8th and five on the 21st.

The only Sabine's Gull of the year flew west close off Hurlstone Point on October 2nd. There was only one inland record of Mediterranean Gull, at Cheddar Reservoir on the 14th; all the others came from the coast, where the highest count was of 11 at Dunster Beach on the 23rd. The only Yellow-legged Gulls of the month were two at the favoured place in the County, Torr Works Reservoir, on the 15th. Sandwich Terns were recorded on three dates: six at Hurlstone



Marsh Harrier and (above) Hen Harrier,  
Greylake Reserve (James Packer)

Point was the highest count. The second of the two Little Tern records for the year was of two at Steart Marshes on the 6th. Single Common Terns were reported on three dates, the last at Stolford on the 6th. There were only slightly more Arctic Terns: one at Burnham on the 4th, two at Hinkley Point on the 13th, and finally one at Minehead on the 21st. A juvenile Black Tern lingered at Cheddar Reservoir from the 2nd to 14th; there were others at Steart Marshes on the 2nd and at Noah's Lake on the 3rd. A Great Skua was off Minehead and Hurlstone Point on the 2nd, and there was another at Minehead on the 4th. Two Arctic Skuas flew back west at Hinkley Point, possibly one of these the bird seen from Burnham, on the 4th; another was at Minehead on the same date. The second Puffin of the year was among a group of Razorbills off Hurlstone Point on the 10th.

There was a large movement of Woodpigeons at the end of the month: 5,000 at Wall Common on the 29th and 7,000 over the Parrett Estuary on the 30th. The only Short-eared Owl of the month was one at Steart on the 18th. A Wryneck was feeding on the track between Wall Common and Catsford Common on the 1st. The first Merlin of the autumn was one at Burnham on the 4th; there followed another 17 reports. The last Hobby of the year was one at Shapwick Heath on the 15th.

A Great Grey Shrike was reported at Stockhill on the 23rd but could not be found the following day. A Woodlark was flushed from the ground on Cothelstone Hill on the 17th. What almost seems annual now is the arrival of Yellow-browed Warblers: the first this autumn was one at Brean Down on the 14th; there were two

here the next day, and single birds on the 28th and 29th; four other single birds followed, at Bishops Hull on the 16th, Steart on the 17th, Langport on the 20th and Berrow LNR on the 27th. As mentioned above, it was an exceptional period for Firecrests, of which 11 were recorded during the month, including two at Porlock on the 20th.

There was a Ring Ouzel on Mendip at Black Down on the 2nd; on the 12th there was a loose flock of 13 in the area. In the west, a total of 23 were recorded in the Chetsford Water area from the 15th to the 27th; away from Exmoor, there was one at West Monkton on the 22nd. The first Fieldfares were at Chetsford Water on the 14th; the highest count was of 300 in Thurley Combe on the 21st. Four Redwings over West Luccombe on the 5th were the first; there was a strong passage between the 20th and 23rd, including 1,000 over Selworthy Beacon on the 23rd. An exceptionally late Pied Flycatcher was at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on the 31st. There were Black Redstarts on the coast at Brean Down on the 28th and 30th, and also at Dunster Beach during the month; inland, there was an adult male at Edington on the 28th. A Redstart at Catsford Common on the 19th and 20th was possibly of the eastern race *samamiscus*. The last Whinchat was at Butleigh Moor on the 24th.

A Richard's Pipit flew along the Huntspill Sea Wall with Meadow Pipits on the 15th, and landed on Pawlett Hams.

The first Brambling of the autumn was at Chetsford Water on the 20th; there were only three more records in the month, of single birds apart from three at Stockhill on the 30th. The only Hawfinch of the year flew over Apex Park, Highbridge, on the 25th. There were up to 50 Crossbills at Stockhill late in the month. On the 15th, a Snow Bunting was photographed in a very odd location, on a track in the middle of West Sedge Moor!

## NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER

Brent Geese were recorded throughout both months: 12 Dark-bellied on November 16th and 39 Light-bellied on December 15th were the highest counts. There was one Barnacle Goose at Stert Point on November 16th. Apart from the resident Greylags, there were no grey geese recorded, and there were no Bewick's Swans. The November WeBS count at West Sedge Moor located seven Whooper Swans on the 18th; on Curry Moor, there were up to five from November 6th to December 31st, and there were one or two on the Avalon Marshes and the South Levels on various dates from November 25th to at least December 16th. Two Egyptian Geese were recorded from Tealham Moor, Catcott Lows, West Sedge Moor and Sutton Bingham



### Redhead Smew, Chard Reservoir (Alex Carlisle)

Reservoir in both months. An adult male Garganey of unknown origin was at Nine Springs at Yeovil on December 17th, before moving to Sutton Bingham Reservoir on the 27th. A Green-winged Teal was found at Ham Wall on November 10th, but was not seen subsequently. There were up to four Red-crested Pochards at Cheddar Reservoir from November 16th to December 2nd. A Scaup was reported from Cheddar Reservoir on December 28th. On November 11th at Minehead, four male Velvet Scoter were drifting on the falling tide; there was an adult male Goldeneye at Chard Reservoir from December 11th to the 26th; a female was at Wimbleball Lake from December 4th to the 31st; and an adult male was at Cheddar Reservoir on the 26th. A redhead Smew at Chard Reservoir from November 23rd was present into 2020, the first here since 2008. A total of 49 Goosanders flew into the roost at Wimbleball Lake on December 20th. There were three more records of Red-breasted Mergansers: one at Hurlstone Point on November 29th, three at Greenaleigh Point on December 1st, and one at Stert Point on the 15th.

It was a poor second winter period for Red-throated Divers off the West Somerset coast, the highest counts being of 35 at Hurlstone Point on December 2nd, and 36 there on the 29th. There were five records of single Black-throated Divers in Minehead Bay from November 3rd to December 2nd. All five records of Great Northern Divers came from the west, including one at Dunster Beach on December 2nd; the rest were singles apart from two at Minehead also on the 2nd. The last Manx Shearwater of the year was off Burnham on November 2nd.

Another escaped White Stork, this time from a West Midlands source, was on a roof at Burnham sea-front on November 10th; the following day it was at Street, before finally being re-captured at Ham Wall on the 16th. Two Spoonbills were at Steart Marshes up to November 18th and there was one there from December 7th to the 16th. If all the Cattle Egrets from around the

Avalon Marshes roost at Long Drove, then the wintering total was 137 on December 20th; the only records away from here were of two at Cary Marsh on November 9th and Steart Marshes on the 11th. As in the last winter period, Great White Egrets spread out across the Levels to feed: five were still at Durlleigh Reservoir on November 3rd before the water levels rose; one was at Chard Reservoir on the 18th; four at Lang Moor, December 16th; and five at West Sedge Moor on the 17th and 23rd. On the morning of November 11th a total of 11 Gannets flew back west at Greenaleigh Point, a large number for the time of year. Two Shags were recorded: one at Dunster Beach on November 4th and the other at Hurlstone Point on December 18th.

A count of three roost sites of Marsh Harriers on November 17th revealed some 24 coming in at dusk. There were reports of Hen Harriers from 16 places, of which six were from the Levels, seven from Exmoor, one from Steart Marshes, one from the Quantocks, and one that flew over the centre of Bridgwater on the 10th, disturbing all the local gulls. There were only two records of Red Kites for each month, all singly: Great Hill on November 1st, Steart on the 18th, Friggie Street on December 13th, and Coleford on the 18th.

The December total of 514 Avocets in the Parrett Estuary on the 3rd was down on the previous year, when there had been 550, and the November count was even lower, with a maximum of 454 against the 900 in 2018. A Kentish Plover was on the beach at Burnham on December 26th, the first since 2015. It is worth noting the almost complete absence of Black-tailed Godwits in December: there were only four records, all inland and three of these were of single birds; the last was of 12 at West Sedge Moor on December 24th. A Purple Sandpiper was in the roost at Helwell Bay on November 8th; four were present in the Bridgwater Bay WeBs count on November 16th and 12 in the December one; the vast majority of these were on Knighton Beach. Six Woodcock were flushed

during a Pheasant shoot at Rowberrow Warren; none of these were shot at. A Common Sandpiper at Hawkridge was possibly the last migrant; wintering birds were at three sites, the first two, Wimbleball Lake and Porlock Marsh, being probably the same as in the previous winter, the other being at a regular site in Combwich Pill. There was a Spotted Redshank at Steart Marshes on four dates from November 10th to December 31st; another had been at the Brue Estuary on November 13th. Single Greenshanks were also at Steart Marshes on November 16th and 19th, and on December 18th.

Off Burnham, there were five Little Gulls and 300 Kittiwakes on November 2nd, by far the highest count of the year. The adult Mediterranean Gull returned to Minehead for its 15th winter on November 10th; amongst others were three at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on the 17th and four at Dunster Beach on December 23rd. Single Yellow-legged Gulls were at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on November 10th and 24th, and at Torr Works Reservoir on December 14th; there were two at Cheddar Reservoir on the 29th. On November 3rd, a first-winter Sandwich Tern flew west at Helwell Bay and was also seen a little later passing Porlock Weir. The only skuas of the period were two Greats at Burnham during the strong winds on November 2nd. The third Puffin of the year was at Hurlstone Point on November 1st with other feeding auks; like the divers, these were not in particularly high numbers in this winter period.

There were two Short-eared Owls on Wall Common in both months and also single birds at Aller Moor on November 5th and Ham Wall on the 8th, and two at Steart Marshes on the 10th, which could have been the same as the first record. A Hoopoe on Minehead Golf Course on November 13th was a surprising find; it stayed until the 15th but according to the greenkeepers had been present for a few days before these dates.

A Great Grey Shrike at Room Hill on December 31st was a reward for the finder, who had spent some time looking for one on Exmoor in 2019. The third Woodlark of the year flew south over Burnham on December 18th. Two Bearded Tits at Steart Marshes on November 5th followed the first in February. There were seven records of Swallows in November; even more unusual were the two December ones of a juvenile, possibly the same bird, at Combwich on the 9th and along the sea wall at Hinkley Point on the 15th.

Chiffchaffs were present in good numbers, and as usual at this time the old-fashioned type of sewage treatment works attracted the most; there were about 25 at Crewkerne on December 25th. There were also a number of birds of the Eastern races which did not

respond to tapes of the nominate race. There were three Yellow-browed Warblers: the first in Yeovil, from November 11th to 16th; and others at Greylake Reserve from December 3rd to 8th, and at Ham Wall from the 21st into January 2020. Firecrests were recorded at 20 places in these months, including four at Berrow LNR on December 21st, and three at Ham Wall on the 15th and 31st; this was probably the highest annual total for the County.

The last Ring Ouzels of the year were two at Hurlstone Point on November 1st. There was a large movement of winter thrushes on November 19th when 2,000 of both Fieldfares and Redwings were over Combwich. Further along the coast at East Quantoxhead between 09:00 and 12:00 was a very large passage all flying east along the coast, estimated at 10,000 birds. Of these two-thirds were Fieldfares and the rest Redwings. Passage much reduced after 12:00 when some birds dropped to feed on holly berries. It had been cold, calm overnight but a strong southern breeze until 11:30.

Black Redstarts were at five places: two through November and up to December 5th at Dunster Beach, and one there on the 24th; two in Porlock on November 2nd; one at Stockland Bristol, on the 13th; a female returning to a garden at Stockmoor for the second winter; and single birds in Bridgwater on December 25th and at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on the 27th and 30th. There was a Wheatear at Bossington Beach up to November 5th and another on Minehead Golf Course at the same time as the Hoopoe.

In what had been a very poor year for Tree Sparrows, two were in flight over Wincanton town centre on November 17th. A Richard's Pipit was in the same area of Sutton Moor as earlier in the year on November 13th; a returning bird? Bramblings were in low numbers, the most being ten at Lydeard Hill on November 18th and 20 at Triscombe Stone on the 30th. There were still at least 30 Crossbills present at Stockhill on the 15th. The second Snow Bunting of the year was at Bossington Beach on November 1st to 5th and again on the 16th and 17th.



**Snow Bunting, Bossington Beach**  
(Dave Dawe)

# EDITORIAL NOTES

## BIRD RECORDS

Records for *Somerset Birds 2020* 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 TA2 7EE or by email to [brian.gibbs@somersetbirding.org.uk](mailto:brian.gibbs@somersetbirding.org.uk).

## 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 Geese (both spp.)	Surf Scoter
Pink-footed Goose	Red Grouse
American Wigeon	Black-throated Diver*
Green-winged Teal	Cory's Shearwater
Ring-necked Duck	Great Shearwater
Ferruginous Duck	Sooty Shearwater

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

Short notes may be required for the following species:

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

\*away from coast west of Minehead

Apart from these, descriptions are required for all 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 AVALON MARSHES

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 some OS 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 were still given for places in the Gazetteer until 2016. 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 most wintering records

These are in order of places, which is mainly east to west, as follows: East Somerset; West Mendip; 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 from south-east to north-west; 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; in river valleys, they are given in downstream order.

### 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 introduced first in SB 2009

In this issue, **bold** headings were introduced for seasons and *italics* for areas. The nomenclature of these is flexible, but the places are still arranged from east to west wherever possible.

# THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

Classification broadly follows the sequence and nomenclature of the *British Birds* 'List of Palearctic Birds'. English names correspond to the BOU's recommendations for UK work, where the international ones are unnecessary. Changes made since 2005 in scientific names and the order of species have all been adopted.

Records of rarities are always submitted to the *British Birds* Rarities Committee and are usually 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.

All references to 'Atlas' are to the *Somerset Atlas of Breeding and Wintering Birds 2007–2012* unless otherwise stated.

## BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

### Dark-bellied Brent Goose *B. b. bernicla*

*Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.*

#### Dark-bellied Brent Goose

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bridgwater Bay	9	6	2							8	12	2

#### All other records

Two, Hurlstone Point, October 16th and November 1st, and singles on October 23rd and November 17th; one, Helwell Bay, October 21st; two, Minehead, November 3rd.

### Light-bellied Brent Goose *B. b. hrota*

*Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.*

#### Light-bellied Brent Goose

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bridgwater Bay	10	8	14						20	9	22	39

#### All other records

Two, Hurlstone Point, October 20th, and six on December 2nd; nine, Helwell Bay, October 21st.

There were a number of records from Bridgwater Bay which were not assigned to race; these included 23 on January 14th and 18 on October 29th.

## CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

*Common resident breeder and irregular visitor. Increasing.*

### Breeding season

#### East

At least two families, Cary Marsh.

#### Avalon Marshes

One family, Westhay Moor.

#### Bridgwater area

Two families, Durleigh Reservoir.

#### Levels south of Poldens

Single pairs/families, Greylake Reserve and West Sedge Moor.

#### South

One family, Sutton Bingham Reservoir.

#### West

Three families but possibly as many as six, Dunster Beach/Hawn.



Light-bellied Brent Geese, Stolford (Dick Best)

Canada Goose – main counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mells Park	56	77		40	53							
Orchardleigh Lake	9	12	3	11	9		5		24			
Torr Works Reservoir	136	217	225	136		140	167	127	394	280	220	108
Bridgwater Bay incl. Steart Marshes	75	10	60	4	20	8	50	40	150	500	497	127
Apex Park/Brue Estuary	58		40								7	
Cheddar Reservoir	1		6	2	14			45	19	300		
Tealham Moor	8	6	4							10		6
Westhay Moor		7	1	5	8		11		19	5	8	7
Long Drove/Sharpham		9	26							20		
Ham Wall	20	9	3	12	4	7	8	15		10	12	24
Shapwick/Meare Heaths	5	6	8	12	9	14	7	50		65	2	162
Catcott Lows			3	6	4			39	32	80	50	40
Edington/Chilton Moors	60	29	31									40
Greylake Reserve	50	8	2									175
West Sedge Moor	15	8	6							5		700
Sutton Bingham Reservoir	25	40	2		16					90	100	76
Pavyott's Mill, East Coker	40	26	36	25	8	12	44	6				
Chard Reservoir	32	3	5	2	2	16		7	2	53	32	21
Durleigh Reservoir	30	20		7		65	84	164	347	290	203	173
Hawkridge Reservoir	24	22	6	4		19	27			13	33	12
Wimbleball Lake	166	78	18	2	4	95	110		52	27	7	16
Blue Anchor – Minehead	40	52	43	34	29	40	45	200	289	116	31	43

**Other counts of ten or more**

Up to 90, Berrow during the year; 214, Southlake/Aller Moors, January 2nd; 30, Exebridge Lakes, May 20th; 26, Walrow Ponds, September 17th; 20, Brean Down, on 28th; 30, Wet Moor, November 17th; 24, Priddy Mineries, on 24th; 47, Curry Moor, on 26th, and 22 there, December 16th.

**BARNACLE GOOSE** *Branta leucopsis*

*Scarce winter visitor; many records probably of escaped or feral birds. Now occasional feral breeder.*

**Breeding season**

Two pairs bred, raising four young, Torr Works Reservoir, June 3rd (JMH). The second year they have bred here.



**Barnacle Geese, Parrett Estuary (James Packer)**

**Non-breeding records**

Flock of 19 around Bridgwater Bay, February 2nd–17th, of which ten remained until the 20th. In the autumn a flock of about 70 again in Bridgwater Bay, October 29th/30th. Other flocks were seen in the South West at this time. Also one at Stert Point, November 16th.

**GREYLAG GOOSE** *Anser anser*

*Uncommon resident breeder, originally from introductions; scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.*

**Breeding season, single pairs/families unless stated**

Two families each, Ham Wall and West Sedge Moor; one family, Shapwick Heath (East); at least six families, Catcott Lows; and three pairs, Greylake Reserve.

**Non-breeding records**

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay*

One, Steart Marshes, February, April and July; two, Apex Park, February 11th, and then up to 13 from September to December; and three, Walrow Ponds, September 18th.

*Levels north of Poldens*

On Edington/Chilton Moors, two on February 18th, 12 on March 22nd, and 35 on November 17th; seven, Cheddar Reservoir, March 31st, and three, Tealham Moor, November 25th.

*Avalon Marshes*

Highest counts of 110, Sharpham, January 15th, and possibly as many as 200, Catcott Lows, November 26th. Return to normal numbers after a drop in 2018.

*Bridgwater area*

Two, Durleigh Reservoir, September 9th, and single birds, October 4th–12th.

*Levels south of Poldens*

Two, Greylake Reserve, February 19th, and 15 on March 25th and April 6th; on West Sedge Moor, 16 on January 2nd, seven on February 13th, nine on March 31st, and 25 on December 23rd; three, Wet Moor, April 10th, and four on 19th; and two, Curry Moor, November 26th.

*South*

Single birds, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, May 3rd and June 6th, and Chard Reservoir, March 29th and November 24th, and four at the latter on April 15th.

*West*

Dunster Beach, April 9th.

**PINK-FOOTED GOOSE** *Anser brachyrhynchus*

*Rare winter visitor.*

One of unknown origins, Torr Works Reservoir, October 1st–15th (JMH *et al.*). One had summered at nearby Chew Valley Lake.

**WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** *Anser albifrons***Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, now irregular.**

Only two records: two, Stert Point, March 22nd (PJE); and 18 flew to the east over Combwich, October 29th (RLM).

**MUTE SWAN** *Cygnus olor***Fairly common resident breeder; non-breeding summer and winter visitor.****Breeding season, single pairs/families unless stated***East*

Rodden NR, Frome; Torr Works Reservoir.

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay*

Apex Park; Wall Common; and five pairs, Steart Marshes.

*Levels north of Poldens*

Two families, Queen's Sedge Moor.

*Avalon Marshes*

Westhay Moor; 29 pairs, Ham Wall, raised 32 young; one family, Shapwick Heath.

*Levels south of Poldens*

Thirteen pairs, Greylake Reserve; seven pairs, West Sedge Moor; and three families, Curry Moor.

*Bridgwater area*

Ashford Reservoir.

*South and South-west*

Two families, Creech St Michael; Chard Reservoir; and Firepool (Taunton).

*West*

Tesco's Pit, Minehead.

**Mute Swan – main counts including WeBS**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rodden NR, Frome	2	2	3	2	2	6	1	6				
Mells Park	14	4		4	5							
Orchardleigh Lake	2	2	3	2	3	5		2	3	3		
Torr Works Reservoir	4	2	1	2	10	9	9	9	9	4	7	7
Parrett Estuary incl. Steart Marshes	26	11	58	44	41	20	5	14	11	24	16	28
Cheddar Reservoir	2		2	5	2	2	6	22	46	5	1	
Tealham/Tadham Moors	72	96	41							48		84
Westhay Moor	52	40	23	25	44	12	51		53	43	59	52
Sharpham/Long Drove	90	102	130							34	64	82
Ham Wall	22	33	27	22	26	23	25	22	22	31	37	34
Shapwick/Meare Heaths	66	36	17	35	54	70	142	76		48	73	97
Westhay Heath	14	14	8							4	1	19
Catcott Lows/Fen	19	13	9	17	25	14				10	69	12
Catcott, Edington, Chilton & Burtle Moors	79	154	189	14						51	32	57
Butleigh Moor	18	28	12							36	36	22
Walton Moor	7	7	10							9	4	9
Sutton Moor	15	68	12							25	27	18
Sutton Hams	8	6	6							2	6	7
Moorlinch Moor	20	7	9							18	10	10
King's Sedge Moor (excl. Greylake and Huish Moor)	97	82	92	43							30	35
Greylake Reserve	18	6	17	6	50	2			4	10	39	31
Lang Moor (Westonzoyland)	4	25	2							26	15	
Weston Level	2	4	2									
North Moor (Moorland)	36		21								40	28
Southlake Moor	119	8		15								
Curry/Hay Moors	153	72	93	35	3	11				32	52	102

Mute Swan cont'd	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
West Sedge Moor	93	43	59							6	131	108
Aller Moor	50										20	
King's Moor										35	75	35
Thorney Moor	7	22		29					17			
West Moor (Hambridge)	24	28		9							22	13
Wet Moor	45	26	28							40	30	18
Hay Moor (Muchelney)												
Sutton Bingham Reservoir	9	4	58							36	42	88
Chard Reservoir	2	2	3	1	6	3	3	3	5	4	3	5
Ashford Reservoir	7	7	7		4	4	7	6	6	6	6	9
Dunster Beach/ Minehead Marshes	2	1	2	1	11	12	7			6	8	1

### All other counts of ten and over

About 60, R.Isle, Hambridge, January 20th; 15, Witcombe Bottom, February 9th; 14, Templecombe, April 24th; ten, Apex Park, October 30th.

## BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

### Uncommon winter visitor. Declining.

#### First winter period

Flooding on Southlake Moor attracted five adults from January 1st to 3rd, six on 2nd, and four on 7th; five at King's Sedge Moor on 8th probably the same, and two still there on 9th; two at Greylake Reserve on the 10th probably the same. A number of later records: one on West Sedge Moor on 10th; three on King's Sedge Moor, on 15th; 12 at Witcombe Bottom on 25th and at West Sedge Moor on 27th; five on floods at Athelney, February 6th; seven on Hay Moor (Muchelney) on 10th; and single birds at Wet Moor on 17th and at Long Drove on 18th.

#### Second winter period

After a very good first winter period compared with recent years not one was recorded later in the year.

## WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

### Uncommon winter visitor. Increasing.

#### First winter period

Flooding at Southlake Moor brought in two from January 2nd to 8th, increasing to three on last date; one, Westhay Moor, on 3rd/4th; two, Aller Moor, on 10th; five or six adults, Curry Moor, from 20th to February 23rd; and two adults, Noah's Lake, January 21st–March 21st.

#### Autumn and second winter period

The first were five at Catcott Lows on October 21st; seven, West Sedge Moor, November 18th; six, Curry Moor, on 17th, and five the next day, could have been returning birds from earlier in the year, and were seen on a number of dates up to December 20th, three being still present on 31st; one, Long Load, November 25th–December 1st; two, Noah's Lake, November 30th to at least December 16th; one, Wet Moor, December 3rd could have been the bird from Long Load.

## EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

### Scarce or rare visitor. Has bred.

#### All records, singly unless stated

##### East

Friggle Street, March 6th; Torr Works Reservoir, on 17th; presumably the family of seven seen at Steart Marshes on July 29th at Cheddar Reservoir.

##### Coast of Bridgwater Bay

A family party of seven, Steart Marshes, June 25th–July 27th.

##### Levels north of Poldens

Two, Tealham Moor, November 22nd.

*Avalon Marshes*

At Ham Wall, two on February 26th, three on May 20th, two on June 2nd and October 20th; Noah's Lake, on 13th; three, Catcott Lows, 19th to July 1st, two, November 16th.

*Levels south of Poldens*

Two, Southlake Moor, January 2nd, one on 11th; Thorney Moor on 21st; West Sedge Moor, March 25th and April 25th, two on May 4th, and on seven dates between October 19th and December 17th; two, Aller Moor, November 19th.

*South*

Three, Chard Reservoir, May 13th – only third record here; two, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, December 14th.

A big increase in the number of sightings although it would appear that a pair may have toured the County in the late autumn.

**SHELDUCK** *Tadorna tadorna*

***Uncommon resident breeder. Common summer, autumn and winter visitor, and passage migrant.***

**Breeding season**

One family, Burnham; two families, Steart Marshes; two pairs, West Sedge Moor, but unclear if breeding; possibly two families, Porlock Marsh.



Shelduck, Steart Marshes (Chris Hooper)

## Shelduck – main counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Axe Estuary/Brean Down			5	30								
Berrow	130	160	60	45	55	1	40	18	70	14	50	2
Bridgwater Bay incl. Steart Marshes	876	392	704	335	389	125	3350	4050	4650	3275	2523	988
Lilstock				7						34		
Blue Anchor/Greenaleigh Point	45	44	12	17	4	58	1		6	85	104	97
Hurlstone Point/Porlock Marsh	16	5	9	9	25	33	6	7		2	16	24

## Shelduck – inland records

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Souhlake Moor	18											
West Sedge Moor			5	2	3							
Wet Moor	2				2							

## Other records of two and over

Two unless stated: Helwell Bay, February 11th; Chard Reservoir, May 2nd; St Audrie's Bay, April 11th; near Lymsham, April 28th and June 1st; Shapwick Heath, July 6th; three juveniles, Durleigh Reservoir, September 13th and 15th; Hay Moor (Muchelney), December 15th; three, Curry Moor, on 16th; five, King's Moor on 17th.

MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata*

*Scarce feral resident or escapee. Increasing.*

## Breeding season

Four families: a family, Lyde Road, Yeovil, May 14th; a female with ten young, Hadspen, on 23rd; a family, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, June; a female with two small young, Hawkridge Reservoir, July 5th.

## Mandarin Duck – main counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Orchardleigh Lake	1		8	2	11	3	2	5				
Nine Springs	21		22					23	27			
Sutton Bingham Reservoir			2			3	10	3	9	15		3
Hawkridge Reservoir	6		1				3		6	38	10	

## All other counts, singly unless stated

## East

Friggle Street and three near Frome, July 18th.

## Levels north of Poldens

The long-staying male at Cheddar Reservoir last reported on March 24th.

## Coast of Bridgwater Bay

Steart Marshes, October 8th.

## South

Donyatt, April 19th and nearby Forton on 26th; five, Pavyott's Mill, July 13th; a pair, Chard Reservoir, October 1st, one on 19th, and three on 26th.

## South-west

Two, Lower Vexford, April 6th; Rowdon Farm, Stogumber, December 27th.

GARGANEY *Spatula querquedula*

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

## Arrival and spring passage

A drake, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, February 2nd and 4th, had possibly overwintered, but not here. First: pair at Ham Wall and drake at Noah's Lake on March 19th. Followed by four at Catcott Lows on 22nd, possibly the same drake as earlier at Sutton Bingham from 23rd to 25th, and single birds, Westhay Moor, on 24th and Wall

Common on 30th. In April, four at Steart Marshes, one at Greylake Reserve, up to four at Ham Wall, three at Westhay Moor, and single birds at Shapwick Heath and Catcott Lows; away from usual areas, two at Cary Moor on 21st. In May, highest count of six at Ham Wall on 21st; all other records came from Avalon or Steart Marshes.

### Breeding season

Two territories located at Ham Wall but nothing to indicate they were successful here or elsewhere. Three in flight at Shapwick Heath on August 26th and again on 28th could have been a female and two juveniles; two pairs, Greylake Reserve; and calling male, West Sedge Moor.

### July to autumn

All records except one were of single birds: in July, at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on 25th and Ham Wall on 28th; in August, at Ham Wall on three dates (and two on 30th), at Wall Common on 6th, Sutton Bingham on 9th and 25th, Meare Heath on 15th, and Steart Marshes on 17th; three in September, at Ham Wall on 7th and 15th, and Steart Marshes on 11th; and three in October, at Steart Marshes on 1st, a drake at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on 24th, and one in Brue Estuary on 30th.

A drake of unknown origins at Nine Springs in Yeovil on December 16th/17th was not from a local collection; it was also seen at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on 27th.

## SHOVELER *Spatula clypeata*

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

### Breeding season

Eight pairs and subsequently at least three families seen, Greylake Reserve were the only records received; none from the Avalon Marshes where there was a decline from 20 pairs in 2002 to only two in 2018.

Shoveler – main counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Torr Works Reservoir	6		4			2						
Cheddar Reservoir	9	19	14	9					12		5	
Parrett Estuary incl. Steart Marshes	160	91	140	42	2	2			4	77	110	201
Tealham Moor	28	26								4		
Westhay Moor	58	42	33	1						30	114	132
Ham Wall/Walton Heath	24	209	196	46					12	46	119	175
Shapwick/Meare Heaths	20	42	64	20						4	67	131
Westhay Heath	8	16	6								2	
Catcott Lows/Heath	126	75	32	38	6					6	50	40
Walton Moor	2	2	2									
Greylake Reserve	244	222	14							4	108	200
Curry Moor/Athelney	20	70	2							10		3
West Sedge Moor	270	54									1	10
Chard Reservoir	2	3	6	2					1	2		10
Dunster Beach/ Minehead Marshes	1	1	1									1

### All other counts

Two, Durlleigh Reservoir, January 2nd; 20, Southlake Moor, on 3rd; seven, Orchardleigh Lake, on 9th; ten, Witham Hall Farm, and two, Witcombe Bottom, February 9th; two, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, April 11th, two on August 5th and October 13th; six, Pawlett Hams, April 13th; 28, Edington Moor, November 17th; four, Marston Park, and three, Long Drove, on 18th; 15, Hay Moor, Muchelney, December 15th.

## GADWALL *Mareca strepera*

*Locally fairly common breeder, autumn and winter visitor, and passage migrant.*

### Breeding season

A total of 70 territories, Ham Wall, 11 young birds seen later; six pairs, Greylake Reserve, and later three families seen; and seven, West Sedge Moor.

## Gadwall – main counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cheddar Reservoir	15	2	4		2	2				5	3	
Stear Marshes	53	45	42	18	9	5	2	4	11	24	10	
Westhay Moor	222	125	56	64					99	184	327	172
Long Drove/Sharpham	7		7							12	3	6
Ham Wall/Walton Heath	241	199	69						30	193	160	262
Shapwick/Meare Heaths	56	51	35	4		15	25			204	254	470
Westhay Heath	36	24	19							47	30	30
Catcott Lows/Heath		8	12	21	27				4			
Greylake Reserve	5	20	17							2		10
West Sedge Moor	60	46	3									2
Chard Reservoir	7	3	4						5		7	2

**Other records of three and over (first half year, all records of four unless stated)**

Ashford Reservoir, January 18th; Sutton Bingham Reservoir, on 27th; Edington Moor, February 18th, and six on March 22nd; Walton Moor, February 19th; five, King's Sedge Moor, March 5th and four on April 20th; Stert Point, March 22nd and May 4th.

**Autumn and second winter period**

Forty-two, Tealham Moor, December 15th.

**WIGEON** *Mareca penelope*

**Common (or locally abundant) winter visitor and passage migrant. Breeding now confirmed.**

**Breeding season**

A female with six young, Catcott Lows, June 12th (JAH); first certain breeding for the County.

**Wigeon, Catcott Lows (Brian Gibbs)**

## Wigeon – main counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cheddar Reservoir	5	34	2	3	2				18	27	4	
Bridgwater Bay												
incl. Steart Marshes	629	784	365	4		1			6	365	837	952
Westhay Moor	37	35	14	3					2	10	102	46
Long Drove	10										19	2
Ham Wall/Walton Heath	60	70	17						12	120	53	119
Shapwick/Meare Heaths	4350	3630	262	18						60	1680	2600
Westhay Heath	130	98								14	20	
Catcott Lows	700	1200	220	24	4	7			9	60	300	400
Greylake Reserve excl.												
Moorlinch Moor/Sutton Hams	1750	1830	276	50	2						318	254
Curry Moor/Athelney	1200	200	480								800	5
West Sedge Moor	2850	4434										539
Sutton Bingham Reservoir	150	160	73						3	15	86	170
Kilve Beach	42	31										
Helwell Bay	60	29								9	36	46
Blue Anchor/Dunster Beach	271	350	198	3						63	199	295

The combined January total was down again to 12,244 from 13,808 in 2018, and still far below the 23,385 in 2017. The flooding at the Athelney end of Curry Moor at the start of the year may have attracted some of the birds away from West Sedge Moor.

**All other counts of 20 or over**

Twenty-five, Orchardleigh Lake, January 9th; 64, Tealham Moor, on 20th, and 20 on February 17th; 60, Witcombe Bottom, February 9th; 50, Berrow, March 23rd; 350, Edington Moor, November 17th; 30, Hay Moor, Muchelney, December 15th; 46, King's Moor, on 17th.

**MALLARD** *Anas platyrhynchos*

**Common resident breeder, winter visitor and passage migrant.**

**Breeding season, single pairs/families unless stated***East*

Cary Marsh; two families, Torr Works Reservoir.

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay*

Five pairs, Berrow, but very few young survived; 13 pairs, Steart Marshes.

*Levels north of the Poldens*

Queen's Sedge Moor; Crannel Moor and Cheddar Reservoir.

*Avalon Marshes*

A total of 63 territories located at Ham Wall, and 88 young seen; two families, Catcott Lows.

*Bridgwater area*

Three families, Durleigh Reservoir; Hawkridge Reservoir.

*Levels south of the Poldens*

Twenty-nine pairs, Greylake Reserve, where at least ten families comprising of 49 young; 48 pairs, West Sedge Moor; and two families, Curry Moor.

*South and South-west*

Three families, Creech St Michael; two families, Sutton Bingham Reservoir; three families, Pavyott's Mill; two families, Chard Reservoir.

*Brendons*

Four families, Wimbleball Lake.

## Mallard – main counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Milborne Port		44	70	48	45	31						
Friggle Street	25	25	10	5	7	2	6	3	30	70	11	71
Marston Park	50	12	40									
Mells Park	44	15		15	11							
Witham Friary	110	4	11	21	26	12	14	21	100		4	39

<b>Mallard cont'd</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>
Orchardleigh Lake	53	22	28	14	17	19	22	17	13	1		
Torr Works Reservoir	23	31	23	21		14	33	23	47	58	34	64
Cary Moor	4	4	3	5	6	2	3	5	35	66	54	
Cheddar Reservoir	32	36	39	34	43	27	81	78	56	3	18	27
Apex Park, Highbridge	50				12			60			71	100
Walrow Ponds, Highbridge					15			44	16			
Bridgwater Bay												
incl. Steart Marshes	153	168	52	59	64	64	35	175	300	450	52	155
Tealham Moor	56		27							12		8
Westhay Moor	75	52	25	29					64	40	64	22
Ham Wall	205	125	45	50	46	40	86	48	140	173	133	194
Shapwick/Meare Heaths	30	26	14	14	20	16	60	40		70	132	28
Westhay Heath	8	18	18							28	2	58
Catcott Lows/Heath			5	8	30	26	7	9		9	9	6
Walton Moor	33	67	7							1	30	2
Sutton Moor	12	12	23									
Butleigh Moor	4	8	6									
Moorlinch Moor	16	17	22							21	17	22
Greylake Reserve	228	82	28	6	9				18	30	56	500
King's Sedge Moor	24	6	46	25							26	5
Lang Moor, Westonzoyland	2	2								46	6	1
Weston Level	13		9									
North Moor, Moorland	33		26								12	9
Curry Moor/Athelney	50	32	32	8		6				40	100	20
West Sedge Moor	109	119	23								109	86
Wet Moor	12	19								20	2	6
Hay Moor (Muchelney)	4	4	6							30	3	38
Sutton Bingham Reservoir	71	100								100	54	100
Pavyott's Mill, East Coker	22	26	28	28	26	39	17	31	15	11		32
Chard Reservoir	130	72	60	30	40	55	47	80	92	120	100	145
Otterhead Lakes	27		7		6	17	17	28				28
Durleigh Reservoir			10	8	2	42	40	45	20	101	8	25
Hawkridge Reservoir	57	12	7	6		32	60	52	33	64	72	48
Ashford Reservoir	6	13	2	8	3	29	24	28	2		8	9
Wimbleball Lake	129	112	44	13	37	41	93	78	100	75	125	78
Dunster Hawn/Beach	66	74	40	28	25	32	19	95	81	85	68	81
Porlock Marsh	47	11	5	12		2	2	5	21	32	38	69

**All other counts of 25 and over**

Fifty-four, Litton Lake, January 3rd; 47, Gold Corner RWLA, December 15th; 30, Rowdon Farm, Stogumber, on 27th; and 230, Holcombe, on 29th

**PINTAIL** *Anas acuta*

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

**Pintail – main counts**

	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>
Bridgwater Bay												
incl. Steart Marshes	34	88	89	1					15	68	108	53
Cheddar Reservoir	4									9		
Westhay Moor	24	35	2									3
Ham Wall	4	16	2									1
Shapwick/Meare Heaths	26	13									4	55
Catcott Lows	29	25	27	5						3	10	4
Greylake Reserve	14	50										3
Curry Moor/Athelney	22										60	100
West Sedge Moor	56	26										60



Pintail, Catcott Lows (Chris Hooper)

**All other records, singly unless stated**

Fourteen, Southlake Moor, and one, Aller Moor, January 2nd; Sutton Bingham Reservoir, February 2nd and 8th; two, Minehead Marshes, April 4th; Pawlett Hams, on 13th; Chard Reservoir, September 19th and three, December 9th.

**TEAL** *Anas crecca*

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

**Breeding season, single pairs unless stated**

Eleven territories located, Ham Wall, but not thought to have bred. One pair copulating, Catcott Lows, April 26th.

**Teal – main counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Orchardleigh Lake	2		8						4			
Torr Works Quarry	29								5	5		2
Cary Moor	17	4	5						3	14	11	
Cheddar Reservoir	80	18						9	23	3	15	
Bridgwater Bay incl. Steart Marshes	846	586	450	150	18	2		8	55	1000	765	1874
Tealham Moor	39	10										38
Westhay Moor	21	28	6	2						3	6	
Ham Wall	271	252	160	42				30	36	158	349	254
Shapwick/Meare Heaths	11	12	16	10						2	13	26
Westhay Heath	20	68	10							1	9	3
Catcott Lows/Heath	180	111	98	123	4	3					50	15
Walton Moor	19	31	8									5

Teal cont'd	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Butleigh Moor	11	107	3								16	
Sutton Moor	21	30	2									1
Moorlinch Moor	7	5	5									5
Greylake Reserve	1350	413	57	130	2					3	870	1000
King's Sedge Moor	562	835									50	220
Durleigh Reservoir								1	8	12		
Curry/Hay Moors incl. Athelney	800	240	52								200	25
West Sedge Moor	4242	3729									84	1034
Hay Moor (Muchelney)	112	52	150									
West Moor, Hambridge	84	38									3	
Wet Moor	75	270										
Sutton Bingham Reservoir	20	300	30	2			3	6	12	1	6	26
Chard Reservoir	16	23	10	4				1	4	2	11	10
Otterhead Lakes	35		2		2					2	5	
Dunster Beach/ Minehead Marshes	34	41	55	48					41	15	60	46
Porlock Marsh	103	59	14						11	54	90	92
Wimbleball Lake	6	30							4	6		

### Counts of 20 and over

Five hundred, Southlake Moor, January 3rd; 100, Westbury Moor, on 21st; 20, Witcombe Bottom, February 9th; 25, Burtle Moor, November 18th; 20, Screech Owl, December 15th.

### GREEN-WINGED TEAL *Anas carolinensis*

#### *Rare visitor.*

One record: a male, Ham Wall, November 10th (AFM, DR).

### RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

#### *Scarce feral visitor.*

Two records, both from Cheddar Reservoir: a male, January 1st–February 11th, two from November 16th, increasing to four, including an odd-looking leucistic bird, from the 20th to December 2nd.

### POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

#### *Scarce and very local breeder; fairly common winter visitor, though declining.*

#### **Breeding season**

At least 66 territories located, Ham Wall, and 31 young seen later in the breeding season; one family, Shapwick Heath.

#### Pochard – main counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Torr Works Reservoir		4	1									
Cheddar Reservoir	50	12						5	60	42	73	170
Walrow Ponds	2										2	2
Westhay Moor	12	4	2									2
Long Drove		8	26								33	9
Ham Wall/Walton Heath	145	149	72	68	25	11	3	1	4	6		17
Shapwick/Meare Heaths	10	25	15	10	9		2	1				3

#### **All other records**

Three, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, January 25th, and singles on February 4th and 25th; three, Chard Reservoir, March 19th; three flew north, Berrow LNR, April 9th; two, Catcott Lows, May 6th and 15th; two, Apex Park, November 11th and December 17th; one, Westhay Heath, November 15th, and three on December 2nd to 10th; three, Curry Moor, on 16th.

**TUFTED DUCK** *Aythya fuligula**Uncommon breeder; fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.***Breeding season, single pairs/family unless stated***East and Mendip*

Up to 20 young on a small lake east of Frome; Torr Works Reservoir, July 1st; Litton Lakes, on 20th.

*Avalon Marshes*

Surprisingly, no breeding records submitted!

*South and South-west*

Plainsfield, on July 30th.

*Brendons*

Three families, Rowdon Farm, Stogumber, on 29th; Wimbleball Lake, on 14th.

**Tufted Duck – main counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mells Park	9	18		3	7							
Orchardleigh Lake	35	12	21	2	1	5	2	2	14	6		
Torr Works Reservoir	39	34	51	46		36	26	52	56	44	42	34
Cheddar Reservoir	14	12	8				4	10	32	8	24	47
Westhay Moor	26	55	20	2								59
Long Drove	13	11	22							1		9
Ham Wall	62	118	118	28						4	22	51
Shapwick/Meare Heaths	85	84	111	25						10		79
Catcott Lows	4	9	7	4	2							
Pavyott's Mill, East Coker		1	1	7	9	2				1		6
Sutton Bingham Reservoir	8	33	3	3	4	1	1	2	1	1	1	11
Chard Reservoir	23	18	23	16	5	3	11	10	7	10	17	17
Hawkridge Reservoir	55	61	64	26		10	41	5	21	28	37	19
Ashford Reservoir	60	2	7	5	10	12	1	27	14	28	4	3
Wimbleball Lake	12	46	22	29	18	18	18	9	20	12	38	57
Exebridge Lakes			11		6	9					11	

**Counts of five or more**

Twenty, Litton Lakes, January 3rd; 13, Marston Park, February 19th; 19, Rowdon Farm, Stogumber, April 4th; five flew east, Hinkley Point, November 13th; six, Wet Moor, December 27th and ten there on 31st.

**SCAUP** *Aythya marila**Uncommon and irregular winter visitor.*

Only four recorded, all at Cheddar Reservoir: immature male, January 1st – March 20th, joined by two other males on 19th; and another immature male on December 28th.



Scaup, Cheddar Reservoir  
(James Packer)

**VELVET SCOTER** *Melanitta fusca**Rare winter visitor and passage migrant.*

One record: four males flew west, Minehead, November 11th (BDG, CMS).

**COMMON SCOTER** *Melanitta nigra**Uncommon visitor, chiefly offshore.***Monthly counts from Berrow to Lilstock**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of dates recorded		1	3		1	1			3	1		1
Maximum count		4	35		12	2			3	1		3
Total number		4	65		12	2			6	1		3

**Monthly counts from Blue Anchor to Gore Point**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of dates recorded	3	2	4	2		1	5	5	11	6	12	7
Maximum count	3	3	8	3		1	11	14	12	13	28	2
Total number	5	4	17	4		1	37	30	61	40	125	8

**GOLDENEYE** *Bucephala clangula**Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Declining.***All records, singly unless stated***Coast of Bridgwater Bay*

Two, Berrow, October 31st, and one, November 6th to 10th.

*Levels north of Poldens*

Cheddar Reservoir, January 1st, February 9th and 23rd, December 26th.

*Avalon Marshes*

Two, Shapwick Heath (East), January 21st and February 18th; Ham Wall, February 8th.

*South*

Chard Reservoir, November 11th–26th.

*South-west*

Hawkridge Reservoir, on four dates, September 9th–October 30th, was possibly of captive origin.

*West*

Wimbleball Lake, January 5th–February 21st, and December 4th–31st.

**SMEW** *Mergellus albellus**Scarce and irregular winter visitor.*One record: a redhead, Chard Reservoir, November 23rd–December 31st (DWH *et al.*). The first here since 2008.**GOOSANDER** *Mergus merganser**Scarce and very local breeder; locally fairly common winter visitor; uncommon passage migrant. Increasing.***Breeding records**

A family, Marsh Bridge, May 23rd.

**Goosander – maximum monthly counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Orchardleigh Lake	9	9										
Cheddar Reservoir	11	5	13									19
Huntspill/Cripps Rivers	19	6										6
Westhay Moor	13	8	4									9
Wimbleball Lake	29	15	10					2		3	55	49



### Goosanders, Bossington Beach (Brian Gibbs)

**All other records, excluding those from Barle and Exe, where present all year (singly unless stated)**

#### **First half year period**

Frome, January 4th and 24th; two, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, on 5th; a pair, Nutscale Reservoir, on 6th, one on April 12th and 14th; two flew west, Hurlstone Point, January 10th; three, Rodden NR, on 29th, and one on March 13th; Shapwick Heath (East), January 31st; and two, Mells Park, February 20th.

#### **Second half year period**

Seven, possibly a family party, St Audrie's Bay, July 5th; Chard Reservoir, October 28th and December 13th; Porlock Marsh, October 28th; Bridgwater–Taunton Canal, November 5th; two, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, on 7th and one on 11th; Stert Point, on 16th and December 22nd; a pair, Bossington Beach, December 2nd to 31st; Apex Park, on 10th.

### **RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** *Mergus serrator*

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

#### **All records, singly unless stated**

A flock of ten flying west, Hurlstone Point, August 30th, singles there on October 16th and November 29th; three, Stert Point, September 27th and one on December 15th; Minehead, October 2nd; three, Greenaleigh Point, December 1st.

### **RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE** *Alectoris rufa*

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

#### **Breeding season**

No breeding records received.

#### **Records of five and over**

Only five of these: eight, Butleigh, and 13 Leather Barrow, January 5th; 30, Small Down Knoll (Chesterblade), March 17th; seven, Norton St Philip, May 1st; and six, Shearston, November 3rd.

### **GREY PARTRIDGE** *Perdix perdix*

*Scarce and very local resident breeder. Decreasing.*

The only records all came from the area just to the south of Somerton: two on February 22nd, April 18th and 19th, June 14th; seven on February 25th, August 3rd and 19th; four on May 11th and five on September 7th (RCD).

**QUAIL** *Coturnix coturnix*

*Scarce and erratic migrant breeder and passage migrant.*

Records from eight sites: one calling, Greylake Reserve and two, West Sedge Moor, June (RSPB); two, Burtle/Walton Moors, on 1st (PAC, JLT), and three on 2nd (PB, JAH); one, Burtle, on 8th (AS); two, Queen’s Sedge Moor, on 12th (JMH), and one on 17th (BDG); one, Treble’s Holford, on 23rd (WL); and one, Triscombe Stone, July 1st (RPB).

**PHEASANT** *Phasianus colchicus*

*Common resident breeder, locally abundant through releases.*

**Breeding season**

The only breeding record submitted was of a nest with nine eggs in a flower bed at Glencot which was eventually abandoned (NA).

**Records of 20 and above**

Twenty, Bratton, January 10th; 30, Porlock Marsh, March 6th; 20, Simonsbath, April 23rd; 60, Great Hill, August 20th and similar numbers from here up to December 1st; 73, Dunster Marsh, October 24th; 20, Heathfield, December 11th.

An odd record concerned 30 mainly young birds that flew low down around Hurlstone Point on August 30th – one of them got it badly wrong and was seen drifting back on the falling tide into Porlock Bay!

**RED-THROATED DIVER** *Gavia stellata*

*Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.*

**Monthly counts from Dunster Beach to Gore Point**

	January	February	March	October	November	December
No. of dates recorded	13	4	4	3	10	19
Maximum count	33	5	7	3	26	36
<b>Total number</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>210</b>

Numbers wintering at the start of the year were high; the count of 33 at Hurlstone Point on January 10th was noteworthy. In contrast, although numbers in November were comparable with last year’s, the December maximum of 36 was the lowest since 2008.

Away from the west one other record: one in summer plumage, Burnham, April 27th.

**BLACK-THROATED DIVER** *Gavia arctica*

*Rare winter visitor and passage migrant.*

**All records of single birds**

**First half year**

Hurlstone Point, January 6th and 15th; Minehead, April 28th, which also flew by Hurlstone Point.

**Autumn and second winter period**

Minehead, on five dates, November 3rd–December 2nd; Greenaleigh Point, November 27th.  
Comparable with 2018.

**GREAT NORTHERN DIVER** *Gavia immer*

*Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.*

Five records, singly unless stated: Cheddar Reservoir, January 1st–March 23rd; Wimbleball Lake, January 2nd–19th; two, Minehead, December 2nd and presumably one of these off Dunster Beach on the same day; Minehead Bay, December 9th and 13th.

**STORM PETREL** *Hydrobates pelagicus*

*Scarce visitor, chiefly as storm vagrant in summer and early autumn.*

Two records: one taken and eaten by Herring Gulls, Burnham, August 10th (DW); one, Minehead, September 28th (BDG, CMS).

**LEACH'S PETREL** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa**Scarce visitor, chiefly as storm vagrant in autumn and early winter.*

One record: two, Hinkley Point, October 4th (C. Brookes).

**FULMAR** *Fulmarus glacialis**Migrant breeder; as offshore visitor, fairly common in spring and summer, but scarce in winter.***Breeding season**

It would appear no-one visited the breeding colony at Glenthorne this year.

**Monthly counts from Minehead to Gore Point**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
No. of dates recorded	3	2	7	5	5	7	10	13	7
Maximum count	4	1	11	37	6	29	11	22	3
<b>Total number</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>12</b>

All other records away from the west: one, Stert Point, April 25th; two, Burnham, on 27th, eight on June 8th, one on September 4th; two, Knighton Beach; April 27th; one, Hinkley Point, October 4th.

**MANX SHEARWATER** *Puffinus puffinus**Common offshore summer visitor and occasional autumn storm vagrant.***Monthly counts from Brean Down to Wall Common**

	May	June	July	September	November
No. of dates recorded	1	2	1	7	1
Maximum count	25	110	50	60	1
<b>Total number</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>1</b>

**Monthly counts from Minehead to Gore Point**

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
No. of dates recorded	1	2	6	10	16	11	7	2
Maximum count	1	30	1971	1318	2000	1362	11	2
<b>Total number</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>3844</b>	<b>5673</b>	<b>12057</b>	<b>3107</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>3</b>

The first of the year was one off Minehead on the early date of March 10th. The sizes of the feeding flocks were down on 2018 but the maximum monthly total for July was similar; the largest was about 2,000 that flew back west off Hurlstone on the 17th. There were two unusual high counts at the end of August, when numbers are normally low, of 1,362 on the 30th and 1,037 the following day; these were not weather-related.

On September 4th, about 60 were pushed into Bridgwater Bay, of which at least seven were taken by Great Black-backed Gulls and two were killed by foxes on Stert Island. The last of the year was at Burnham on November 2nd.

**LITTLE GREBE** *Tachybaptus ruficollis**Fairly common resident or migrant breeder; perhaps passage migrant.***Breeding season, single pairs/families unless stated***East and Mendip*

Two families, Cary Moor; Litton Lakes.

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay*

Berrow.

*Avalon Marshes*

Several families, Ham Wall, but no figures given.

*Level south of Poldens*

Greylake Reserve.

*South*

Two families, Nine Springs, Yeovil.

*South-west*

Creech St Michael Flood Relief Pond.

*Brendons*

Combe Sydenham; at least one family, Rowdon Farm, Stogumber, where count of 11 in July.

**Little Grebe – main counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Torr Works Reservoir	14	8	8			2	5	16	18	22	32	4
Cary Moor	1	1	1	2		4			1	3	2	
Litton Lake	15						8			18		
Parrett Estuary incl. Steart Marshes	6	6	6	3	3	4	4	5	4	6	6	5
Westhay Moor	2	9	11	4	1	1	2	2	7	6	4	2
Ham Wall	14	16	28	11	7	3	20	8	5	5	13	4
Long Drove	5	7	5							5	6	6
Shapwick Heath	1	2	3	3	2		3	2		4		4
Catcott Fen	4		3	3	3		1	2			2	3
Curry Moor	6	3										3
Chard Reservoir	3	3	2			1	2		1	2	1	1
Otterhead Lakes	7		1		2	1		4		7	4	
Ashford Reservoir	4		2						2	4	3	4
Combe Sydenham	8	4					2					4
Wimbleball Lake	16	2	1		2		1	4	13	6	13	13
Exebridge Lakes	3	5									5	

**Other counts of three or over**

Three, West Moor, Hambridge, February 15th; Apex Park, November 15th and 27th; and Bishops Lydeard on 30th.

**GREAT CRESTED GREBE** *Podiceps cristatus*

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

**Breeding season**

Single pairs/families unless stated.

*Mendip*

Vobster Quarry.

**Great Crested Grebes, Westhay Moor (Chris Hooper)**



*Coast of Bridgwater Bay*

Three pairs, Apex Park.

*Avalon Marshes*

Only one family at Ham Wall reported for the whole of the Avalon Marshes where the breeding survey in 2018 estimated the population to be 56 pairs.

*Bridgwater area*

One family, Durleigh Reservoir – another poor year here; and two families, Hawkridge Reservoir.

*South*

Six families, Sutton Bingham Reservoir; and four families, Chard Reservoir.

*Brendons*

One possibly two pairs, Wimbleball Lake.

**Great Crested Grebe – main counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Orchardleigh Lake			2	2	3	7	4	6	6	6		
Torr Works Reservoir			2	3		1		1				
Cheddar Reservoir	30	44	29	36	12	13	1	17	20	36	44	48
Westhay Moor	5	12	16	18	6	6	7	6	3	3	3	1
Ham Wall	9	13	15			7		6		2	3	
Long Drove	3	2	6							7	2	
Shapwick Heath/Meare Heath	12	12	21	11	3	10	6		7	4		5
Sutton Bingham Reservoir	14	17	35	50	19		40	45	40			
Chard Reservoir	46	38	35	19	18	25	26	22	26	21	36	33
Durleigh Reservoir	8	26	32	19	36	19	20	11	13	27	30	23
Hawkridge Reservoir	6	5	6	2		10	11	8	7	8	5	6
Ashford Reservoir			2	2		2		1	1	1		
Wimbleball Lake	11	7	8	4	6	8	2	1	5	7	5	5

Only two records of three and over: six, Walrow Ponds, January 21st, and eight on October 21st.

**Coastal records of single birds**

Hurlstone Point, February 4th; Minehead, on the 9th, also seen at Greenaleigh Point; Parrett Estuary, April 1st and November 16th.

**WHITE STORK** *Ciconia ciconia***Rare visitor, mainly in spring.**

A number of records, mostly of three escaped/released birds: one, Burtle Moor, March 26th, and then presumably same at a number of places on April 18th, before finally settling at Lower Godney; this bird was from the breeding programme at Knepp Estate in West Sussex and had been seen at a number of sites in England (JAH *et al.*); one gliding at height over Westbury-sub-Mendip, May 22nd, may have been a wild bird (JBI); another released bird at Bridgwater for two or three days, August 24th, and in flight over Watchet on 26th (per D. Bridge); and finally an escaped bird from a West Midlands Wildlife Park, seen at Burnham and Street on November 10th/11th, was recaptured at Ham Wall on 16th (BTO, G. Hall).

**GLOSSY IBIS** *Plegadis falcinellus***Rare visitor.**

Two records: one, Blakeway, January 12th (PGH); this or another, Ham Wall, March 13th then moving between there and Shapwick Heath (East) and last seen on April 23rd (DR, JAH *et al.*)

**SPOONBILL** *Platalea leucorodia***Scarce passage migrant.****All records***Coast of Bridgwater Bay*

Three, Steart Marshes, January 1st to February 13th, one remaining to probably April 10th; an immature,



### Spoonbill, Greylake Reserve (Chris Hooper)

May 4th was seen in flight over the Brue Estuary on the 5th and Pawlett Hams on 15th; two Steart Marshes, July 8th, and one from 27th to August 8th; three, September 5th were joined by a fourth on the 14th and a fifth was seen the next day; on the 17th, eight were seen to fly off south; then one or two from the 19th to November 18th; one, December 7th to 16th.

#### *Avalon Marshes*

Two, Ham Wall, September 21st to 26th, one remaining on 28th.

### **BITTERN** *Botaurus stellaris*

***Scarce and local resident or breeding summer visitor; scarce winter visitor.***

#### **Breeding season**

Number of confirmed booming males dropped by 13%, from 55 to 48, although more sites were occupied. Of these, 38 at Ham Wall, Shapwick Heath, and Westhay Moor; five at other sites in Avalon Marshes, and also five at sites elsewhere on Levels, including the first at West Sedge Moor. Of these, nine attempted to nest at Ham Wall, two of which were just outside the Reserve; of these nine, five were successful, including one outside Reserve (RSPB). No reports away from these breeding areas.

### **LITTLE BITTERN** *Ixobrychus minutus*

***Very rare breeder. Breeding confirmed or suspected 2010 to 2013; had summered before.***

Two males heard barking sporadically in two different compartments at Ham Wall, May 6th–June 17th; two visitors reported sightings as well. It would appear there may have been two breeding attempts, judging by reports of calling males submitted to BBRC (RSPB).

### **NIGHT-HERON** *Nycticorax nycticorax*

***Very rare visitor.***

No reports in 2019.

### **CATTLE EGRET** *Bubulcus ibis*

***Rare visitor; has bred.***

#### **Breeding season**

##### *Coast of Bridgwater Bay*

One displaying at a site where breeding has taken place but no further reports.

##### *Avalon Marshes*

As in 2018, very difficult to know where breeding took place but up to six juveniles seen at Catcott Lows from July through to September.

**Cattle Egret – Monthly maximum at main sites**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Stear Marshes	1	2			3				1		2	
Tealham/Tadham Moors	46	40	6						3	15		17
Westhay Moor/Blakeway	42	29	28	35	15				1	69	68	
Westhay Level										56		
Ham Wall/Long Drove/ Sharpham	102	64	18	74			2			23	108	137
Shapwick Heath/Meare				50	1				60		4	
Catcott Lows/Burtle	28	2		1	14	8	22	33	58	70		45
Greylake Reserve					3	1		7	11	5		

A similar pattern of records to those in 2018 with large numbers in the first few months of the year and then a steady drop off from the end of April. A large increase again September through to December. A new record count of 137 coming into roost at Long Drove on December 20th. It would appear the summer records relate to just the breeding birds with others moving away before returning in the autumn.

**Other records, singly unless stated**

Fewer reports away from the Avalon Marshes in 2019.

*East*

Two, Cary Moor, March 2nd and two, Cary Marsh, November 9th.

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay*

Brue Estuary, February 21st; six, Huntspill River/Sluice, March 19th, and eight on June 19th.

*Levels north of Poldens*

Three, Theale, January 14th and Common Moor, Glastonbury, February 3rd; eight, Edington Moor, October 14th; 58, Small Moor, N of Walton, November 12th.

*Levels south of Poldens*

Southlake Moor, January 3rd; Thorney Moor, on 21st and February 17th; up to 15, Nythe, King's Sedge Moor, February 2nd–11th.

*West*

One, Minehead Marshes, January 1st, and four there on April 30th.

**GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea***

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

**Grey Heron – heronry totals**

Site	Total of occupied nests	Recorder
Orchardleigh Lake	Not counted	–
Butleigh/Moorhouse	Seven	KA
Queen's Sedge Moor	Four	JMH
Sharpham/Ham Wall	Eight	RPSB
The Bungalow, Tadham Moor	Not counted	–
Noah's Lake, Shapwick Heath (East)	Not counted	–
Lymsham Manor	Not counted	–
West Huntspill	Five	SMo
Swell Wood	90	RSPB
Somerton Wood	15	RCD
Nine Acre Plantation, Midelney	Eight	PCo
Batch Moor Copse, Wayford Woods	Two	AJP
Home Covert, Otterhampton	Four	RLM
Durleigh Reservoir	None	–
Dunster Hawn	One	DKB
Bossington Lane, Porlock	One	DKB
Week Wood, Winsford	Five	RJB
Hayes Wood, Withypool	Apparently deserted	ASt
Oaremead	Two	RJB

## Grey Heron – maximum monthly counts at selected sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mells Park	7	4			6							
Marston Park	2	7	3									
Friggle Street	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	1
Litton Lake	1	4			3	2	2					
Orchardleigh Lake	5	8	6	4	4	2	1	2		1		
Parrett Estuary incl. Steart Marshes	4	6	4	6	4	8	11	7	6	10	7	9
Tealham/Tadham Moors	7	4	9		9				25	9	3	
Westhay Moor	3	2	3	5	2	2	2		3	2	2	1
Ham Wall	4	11	4		16			1		6	4	7
Long Drove	4	3								7	6	3
Shapwick/Meare Heaths	2	1	1	1		1	1	1		3	3	2
Catcott Lows	2	2	5	2	1	3	2	1			2	5
Walton Moor	2	2	4							2	2	3
Butleigh Moor	7	1	1							3	4	2
Sutton Moor	3	3								5	4	4
Moorlinch Moor	2	2								1	2	2
Greylake Reserve	1	2								2	1	1
King's Sedge Moor	7	5	6	6								
Lang Moor	1									4		4
North Moor (Moorland)	6		4								2	
Curry/Hay Moors	5	8	3	4		1				3	4	1
West Sedge Moor	15	39	15								15	12
King's Moor/Long Load										9	2	7
Thorney Moor	2	1		1					2			
Wet Moor	3	3	1							3	4	4
Hay Moor (Muchelney)	3	1								2	2	1
West Moor (Hambridge)	5	5		5							3	2
Sutton Bingham Reservoir	2						6	11				
Chard Reservoir	3	4	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	3	2	2
Durleigh Reservoir	1		2			4	10	16	13	15	4	1
Hawkridge Reservoir	2	4	1				7	1	2	2	1	2
Dunster Hawn/Beach	1	2	3	1	2	1	3		3	4	9	2
Wimbleball Lake	4	4	1		2	2	3	3	3	2	3	
Porlock Marsh	1	2				1		2	5	3	2	1

Only one count of five and more elsewhere: five, Mark, July 7th.

## PURPLE HERON *Ardea purpurea*

### *Very rare visitor.*

One record: an adult flew across Catcott Lows, late evening on June 15th (JJP, DW); presumably the same, Shapwick Heath (East), on six dates from the 20th to July 14th (RPB, AFM *et al.*).

## GREAT WHITE EGRET *Ardea alba*

### *Scarce and very local resident breeder. Increasing.*

#### Breeding season

Fourteen breeding attempts across Avalon Marshes: three outside Ham Wall boundary, where four fledged from two nests; and 11 on Shapwick Heath, where 27 chicks fledged, and all nests were successful.

#### Other records

Outside the breeding season the largest number recorded within the Avalon Marshes was 11; birds are now dispersing quicker to surrounding areas and becoming more widespread, as the records below the table show. There were 295 records submitted of a species that first bred here in 2012, an indication of how widespread they now are around the County.

A new French colour-ringed bird was at Westhay Moor on September 30th and had been ringed in the nest earlier in the year on May 16th at Beslé (Loire Atlantique). This is the same area that one of the original birds came from in 2010 (AA).

**Great White Egret – maximum monthly counts at selected sites away from Avalon Marshes**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Parrett Estuary/Stear Marshes	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	1		2		
Tealham/Tadham Moors	4	2	4	3						1	2	6
Catcott Lows	13	5	5	3	3			2	2	2	4	5
Edington/Chilton Moors	2	3	2								2	
Greylake Reserve	6	5	8	5	3	5	1	5	3	3	3	1
Moorlinch Moor		5								1	1	1
King's Sedge Moor	1	6	1								1	4
Sutton Hams		1									1	1
Lang Moor										3		4
Durleigh Reservoir							1	3	5	5		
Curry/Athelney	1	2	2								1	2
Aller Moor, Aller	3										1	
West Sedge Moor	4	5	11	3	4		1				2	5
Wet Moor			3	3	1							
Sutton Bingham Reservoir							1	3	2	1		

**All other records (singly unless stated)**

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay*

Brean Down, May 6th; Berrow, on 15th; Brue Estuary, September 14th.

*Levels north of Poldens*

Two, Blakeway, January 2nd, one on 4th; Cradle Bridge, on 3rd; Burtle Moor, on 21st and December 16th; Cocklake, February 22nd; Cheddar Reservoir, March 12th and 29th, July 1st; Yeo Moor, March 28th; four flew high over Combwich, July 15th; two, Chilton Moor, December 29th.

*Levels south of Poldens*

Southlake Moor, January 1st–15th, two on 14th, one on December 5th; Pathe, January 2nd; R. Isle, Hambridge, on 20th; two, Weston Level, February 17th; two, Muchelney, March 8th; Sutton Hams, July 9th; two, Low Ham Moor, November 13th; two, Fowler's Plot, December 1st.

*Bridgwater area*

Two, Hawkridge Reservoir, July 15th, and one on a number of dates between the 23rd and October 30th; Screech Owl NR, July 24th.

*South*

Chard Reservoir, January 8th, August 27th, September 15th and November 18th; two, Nine Springs, Yeovil, August 25th, probably same at Sutton Bingham later in the day.

*West*

Minthead Marshes, May 7th.

**LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta***

**Scarce and very local resident breeder; irregular but increasing year-round visitor.**

**Breeding season**

Nest counts for heronries: 20, West Huntspill; 17, Queen's Sedge Moor; two, Swell Wood, but likely to have been more.

**Little Egret – maximum monthly counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Friggle Street				6	2	2						
Cary Moor		1	17	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	3	
Orchardleigh Lake	2	1			1				1	1		
Axe Estuary/Brean Down			6	7			2					
Parrett Estuary incl. Brue Estuary												
Huntspill Riv. & Steart Marshes	10	17	21	48	44	35	46	36	66	82	13	8



#### Little Egret, Catcott Lows (Chris Hooper)

Little Egret cont'd	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Tealham/Tadham Moors	11	6	2							2		4
Westhay Moor/Blakeway	11	8	15		4	5	14	3	1	20	5	4
Ham Wall	3	2	9	8	4	2	4	3	2	2	2	1
Shapwick/Meare Heaths			1	2	4	3	3	10		1		
Westhay Heath/Level	2	1								1	10	14
Catcott Lows	3	4	1	3	7	7	4	3	2	1	1	
Greylake Reserve	1	9	12	3	1				1	3	1	
King's Sedge Moor		5	1									
Lang Moor	5	5										
Southlake Moor	4	1										2
Aller Moor	1			24							5	
West Sedge Moor	28	22	12	1							15	45
Thorney Moor	2		7	1								
King's Moor										5	11	1
Sutton Bingham Reservoir			2		1	2	7	3	2	1	1	1
Chard Reservoir	12	12	8	1			7	3	6	8	16	5
Durleigh Reservoir							10	8	14	1		
Dunster Beach/Minehead Marshes	6	15	15	6	3	3	2	3	7	10	17	17
Hurlstone Point/Porlock Marsh	5	7	7	3	1	3	3	6	7	7	10	8

Numbers appear to be well down on the previous year; even at Steart Marshes, where the highest counts were recorded, the September maximum of 66 is 73 below that in 2018.

A colour-ringed bird at Westhay Moor on February 21st had been ringed in the nest at Besthorpe Gravel Pits, Notts on August 1st, 2013. It had been seen six times before, all in 2013 and all in Notts; this was the first sighting since (AA).

#### Other counts of five and over

Five, Theale, January 14th, and Sutton Hams, March 19th; 27, Wick Moor (Muchelney); March 15th; 20, Stathe, April 6th; nine in flight, Helwell Bay, August 6th; 24, Queen's Sedge Moor, October 30th; 33, Small Moor, north of Walton, November 12th.

**GANNET** *Morus bassanus*

*Fairly common offshore visitor, chiefly in summer. Probably increasing.*

**Monthly counts from Berrow to Hinkley Point**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of dates recorded			2	1	1	1			1		1	
Maximum count			1	5	2	4			1		1	
<b>Total number</b>			<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>			<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>	

**Monthly counts from Minehead to Gore Point**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of dates recorded	3	3	7	3	7	10	16	10	6	2	3	1
Maximum count	1	2	33	15	15	20	24	40	2	1	11	4
<b>Total number</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>

The largest count was of 40 at Hurlstone Point, August 31st. Numbers have been poor over the last few years.

**Inland**

One taken into care, Cheddar Reservoir, April 28th, but unfortunately died.

**SHAG** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

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

**All records**

Only eight records, one up on 2018, singly unless stated: Hurlstone Point, January 10th, August 4th and 8th, two on 12th, and one on November 18th; Stert Point, February 10th; two, Stolford, September 8th; Dunster Beach, November 4th.

**CORMORANT** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

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

**Breeding season**

As in 2018 breeding took place in both colonies: 38 pairs, Ham Wall, and 20 pairs at Canada Farm Lake. A pair at a nest on the water intake at Hinkley Point, April 21st, was the first coastal breeding record, two young seen there on June 16th. A further increase in the number of breeding pairs from 41 in 2018 to 57 in 2019.

**Cormorant – maximum monthly counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mells Park	3	5		2	5							
Orchardleigh Lake	9	6	2				2		3	2	1	
Bridgwater Bay incl. Steart Marshes	29	22	20	8	4	9	4	7	23	12	20	22
Walrow Ponds, Highbridge	3								2		2	6
Cheddar Reservoir	14	7	14	6	7	5	3	2	4	5	9	18
Westhay Moor	28	31	25	16	4	7	18	18	14	36	24	33
Long Drove/Sharpham	10	4	10							15	15	20
Ham Wall	13	6	12	22				2	1	17	17	13
Shapwick Heath incl. Meare Heath	39	30	14	2		4	4			28	48	36
Westhay Heath		4	1							2	3	
Catcott Lows	1	1	2	1	1			13			10	
Godney Moor												
Sutton Hams	6	4								6	2	9
Butleigh Moor	1	1	1							3		2
King's Sedge Moor	10	17	3	6							3	
Greylake Reserve		1	5								1	1

<b>Cormorant cont'd</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>
North Moor (Moorland)	4		3								4	
West Sedge Moor	4	3									2	2
West Moor Hambridge	11	1		3							6	2
Wet Moor/Muchelney Level	2	2	17							3	7	3
Hay Moor (Muchelney)	19	35	4							12	12	15
King's Moor										7	33	13
Sutton Bingham Reservoir	5	3	2					35			22	10
Chard Reservoir	25	26	11	2		1	3	6	6	14	34	23
Durleigh Reservoir	20	23	9	8	2	2	10	18	17	22	5	
Hawkridge Reservoir	17	25	9			1	2	4	11	18	9	
Ashford Reservoir	2							1	1	2	6	
Wimbleball Lake	41	30	15		7	7	12	20	21	30	27	18
Minehead	10	11	10			1	1	2		3	10	4
Hurlstone Point	3	1			3	1	2	1	3	5	6	6
Porlock Marsh			1				1	3	4	2	1	1

### Other counts of three and over

Up to five, Curry Moor, throughout the year; three, Berkley Lake, January 19th and February 19th; three, Torr Works Reservoir, January 17th; ten, Knapp, February 15th; three, Edington Moor, March 22nd; four, Brean, June 1st; six, Moorlinch Moor, October 13th; three, Sutton Moor, November; ten flying over Tatworth to roost, November 6th and December 16th; and three, Huntspill River, December 30th.

## OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

### *Scarce passage migrant. Has summered.*

A broadly similar year to 2018, with 33 records received from 12 sites, perhaps amounting to 17 or 18 individual birds.

#### Spring passage

The first was over Noah's Lake, on March 28th (P. Coles). Single birds thereafter: Five Bells, Watchet, March 31st (WJW); one made an unsuccessful fishing attempt at Roughmoor, Taunton, April 1st (M. Tilley); Shapwick Heath, April 4th (BTO); north over Cheddar Reservoir on the 5th (DW); Catcott Lows on the 6th (JAH); Sutton Bingham Reservoir on the 9th (TMF); Ham Wall on 20th and 21st (JAH *et al.*); Bishops Lydeard on 23rd (NG); Steart Marshes on 16th May (JRB); the last passage bird was seen over the Avalon Marshes on 21st/22nd May (BTO).

#### Autumn passage

Return passage started with one seen at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on three occasions between July 9th and 16th, and either this or another there on August 3rd (TMF). Four later single birds: Ham Wall, July 19th (DR); one being mobbed by gulls over Bridgwater, on 27th (RLM); Avalon Marshes complex, August 22nd–30th (JMS *et al.*); and one with a fish, Cricket St Thomas, September 3rd (R. Martin).



Osprey, Noah's Lake,  
Shapwick Heath  
(Chris Hooper)

**HONEY-BUZZARD** *Pernis apivorus***Rare passage migrant or summer visitor. Formerly bred.**

Four records this year, probably of three individual birds. One over Fire Beacon, April 23rd (TJH); one over Wills Neck on both June 20th and 27th (TJH); and finally one photographed near Stogumber, July 24th (WL).

**SPARROWHAWK** *Accipiter nisus***Common resident breeder; also passage migrant and winter visitor.**

A total of 326 records were submitted (11% decrease on 2018) from some 135 sites across the County.

**Breeding season**

Only two breeding records submitted: pair breeding in a copse at Lilstock; and pair at Milverton successfully raising two young.

**Prey and interaction**

Successfully taken prey items were documented as follows: a House Sparrow at Horton Cross; a Magpie at Lilstock; a Stock Dove at Mells Down; a Blackbird at Minehead; and a juvenile Great Spotted Woodpecker at Middlecombe. An unsuccessful attempt to take a Kingfisher was seen at Westhay Moor.

**GOSHAWK** *Accipiter gentilis***Rare resident breeder; scarce visitor or passage migrant.**

Broadly similar range of records as 2018, with 31 records submitted. All records from potential breeding sites are listed under the general reporting areas established in *SB* 2005.

**Winter periods and breeding season**

Area 1: two sites

Site A. A pair successfully raised a single chick to fledging.

Site B. A pair raised two chicks (both thought to be male) at a nest last used in 2017.

Area 7: four sites

Site A. Nine records submitted from February 1st to May 13th, mostly of a single female in flight but occasionally a pair; display flight noted on four occasions.

Site B. Female seen on February 3rd; one heard calling on 14th and 17th but not seen; and an unsexed bird seen on 20th.

Site C. Four records: an unsexed bird seen on March 8th and May 29th; one photographed in flight carrying a squirrel May 23rd; and a male seen on June 29th.

Site D. Female being mobbed by a Raven pair seen on both 13th and 15th February.

Area 8: Two, and possibly a third on March 19th.

Area 9: A male on May 23rd.

Sightings from outside these areas: an unsexed bird seen near Monksilver, February 1st; one photographed over Shapwick Moor on 26th; a female over Ham Wall, April 25th; and one, Willet Hill on November 20th.

**MARSH HARRIER** *Circus aeruginosus***Scarce local breeder; uncommon passage migrant and increasing winter visitor.**

Once again a large increase year on year in the number of records submitted; 499, compared with 388 (2018) and 260 (2017). The Levels accounted for 83% of all records. The Avalon Marshes complex remains the breeding stronghold for this species, and 2019 proved the most successful year so far with a minimum of 20 young successfully fledged from here.

**First winter period**

The well-watched Levels provided nearly all the 138 records submitted for this period; unlike in previous years, surprisingly few observations of birds being seen on the coast of Bridgwater Bay which historically has been the haunt of dispersing juveniles. Of note, an older adult male was seen several times at Steart and along the Parrett Estuary.

**Breeding season***Avalon Marshes*

Area A1: one male formed a polygamous bond with two females and these females occupied two nest sites; a separate pair also nested. One of the polygamous pairings raised two young, the other failed; the nesting pair also failed to fledge any young.



**Marsh Harrier, Westhay Moor (Mike Roberts)**

Area A2: two pairs nested; one fledged four young, the other a single fledged young.

Area A3: one pair fledged two young.

Area A4/5: a male at A4 formed a polygamous bond with females that nested at A4 and A5; also another pair at A5. The polygamous pairing at A4 fledged a single young; the polygamous pairing at A5 fledged two young. The A5 pair raised three young successfully.

Area B: three nesting attempts, two of which were a polygamous male with two females; also a pair. The polygamous pairings produced three young successfully from one nest, the other failed. The other pair also failed to raise any young.

Area C: a pair fledged two young.

#### **Other breeding records**

There were four sites away from the Avalon Marshes complex where breeding attempts were recorded: a pair raised three young at a new site where breeding not attempted before; at another site where breeding has taken place a single pair were suspected of breeding, but this was not proven; at a third site there were two nests, but no record of numbers of juveniles fledged; at the fourth site, three nests were recorded as probable, but again no numbers of fledged juveniles recorded.

#### **Second winter period**

The overall numbers of birds appear to be either stable or increasing slightly. A co-ordinated roost count in the Avalon Marshes on November 17th (*per* JDH) identified a total of 24 individual birds coming in to roost at three sites (20 last year). Up to five birds were seen frequenting the Steart peninsula, a male and four females/immatures. West Sedge Moor frequently held up to six birds by late December. Post-breeding, the County would appear to support about 35 to 37 wintering birds.

### **HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus***

***Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Formerly bred. Recent summer records.***

Another good year after the exceptional year of 2018, with 89 records submitted from 35 sites. Ringtail records predominated with only 14% of submissions being reported as males. All single ringtails unless otherwise stated.

**First winter period and early spring***Bridgwater Bay*

One frequented the Steart peninsula, being seen on 21 dates from January 1st to April 17th; presumably the same bird was also seen across the Parrett at Pawlett Hams on January 10th; and male, Wall Common, April 14th.

*Levels*

Greinton, January 1st; Greylake Reserve, 3rd–4th; Kings Sedge Moor, 5th; a male at Aller Moor on the 10th; Catcott Lows on January 11th and 15th and February 7th; a male frequented West Sedge Moor, being seen on January 13th–February 14th; Tealham Moor on January 15th–19th; Westhay Moor, January 21st; Chilton Polden, January 26th; Southlake Moor, February 5th; Weston Level on 10th; a male, Wet Moor on 14th; Burtle on 17th; Greylake Reserve, March 15th; and Shapwick Moor on 31st.

*South-west*

One flew north over Kingston St Mary on March 24th.

*Exmoor*

Kinsford Gate, January 19th; Hangley Cleave on February 11th; Brendon Two Gates on 18th; Brightworthy on 27th; Almsworthy Common, March 9th; Dunkery Hill on 17th; Chetsford Water 26th–28th; and Alderman's Barrow on 31st.

**Spring passage/summer**

One, West Sedge Moor, May 20th.

**Autumn and second winter period***Mendips*

Black Down and Priddy Mineries on October 30th.

*Bridgwater and Bridgwater Bay*

One flew over Bridgwater town centre being mobbed by gulls, November 10th; and one, Steart on 15th.

*Levels*

Greylake Reserve, October 18th; one frequented Catcott Lows being seen on seven dates November 5th–30th; Long Load on 7th and 9th; Tealham Moor on 10th; a male at West Moor on 14th; a male at Aller Moor on 29th; and a male at West Sedge Moor on December 7th and 25th.

*Quantocks*

One, Great Hill on November 7th.

*Exmoor*

Sandyway, November 10th; Weir Water on 30th; Chetsford Water had a male on December 9th and a ringtail on 25th; Alderman's Barrow on 17th; Blue Gate on 29th; a male at Prayway Head on 29th; and a male at both Blue Gate and Horsen, on 30th.

**MONTAGU'S HARRIER** *Circus pygargus***Rare summer visitor and passage migrant. Formerly bred.**

Just a single record: an adult male quartering the ground at Dunkery Hill, May 5th (JLT).

**RED KITE** *Milvus milvus***Scarce, but increasing, summer and winter visitor and passage migrant. Formerly bred and has recently attempted to do so.**

A total of 211 records received, a significant decrease on 2018 (347 records) but still a large increase over 2017 (158 records). Once again, some observers were keen to speculate on breeding, particularly in the eastern extremities of the County, but as before, no evidence was submitted of successful (or otherwise) breeding attempts.

**Red Kite – monthly records (probable number of birds involved in brackets)**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
6 (6)	6 (6)	26 (32)	26 (31)	84 (124)	21 (31)	16 (24)	8 (14)	4 (9)	9 (10)	2 (2)	3 (3)

Selected records listed in chronological order: six were following a tractor ploughing near Williton, May 22nd; one feeding on Pheasant roadkill at Baronsdown, on 24th; a group of 15 were seen at Tracebridge, also on 24th; one was commented upon as “flying surprisingly low over gardens”, Westonzoyland, May 25th; five were

circling over Hornblotton, on 26th; three were circling over a dead fox near Bruton, August 16th; three flew in off the sea between Stolford and Hinkley Point, September 20th; one was flushed from roadkill near Butleigh, October 8th; and one was seen to take a prey item into a tree on Aller Moor, October 21st.

**BUZZARD** *Buteo buteo*

**Common resident breeder; also passage migrant and perhaps winter visitor.**

A good recording year on a par with 2018; 786 records (742 in 2018) of some 1,707 individual birds (1,628 in 2018).

**Highest counts and gatherings**

Fifteen circling a field at Bishops Lydeard, March 23rd; 23 at Ham Wall on 26th, 18 on 30th and 22 on May 4th; 18 at Higher Vexford, April 8th; and 15 on a newly sown field at Churchinford on December 31st.

**Spring and breeding season**

Display and territorial soaring seen at many widespread sites. Selected records of pairs breeding or suspected.

*East*

A nest with a single chick at both King’s Wood Warren and West End Wood, both on June 28th.

*Levels south of Poldens*

A pair bred in a tree at Langmead; and two pairs bred on Weston Level.

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay*

At least one pair bred at Steart, where two juveniles seen August 17th.

*South-west*

Two pairs bred at Creech St Michael.

*Brendons*

Pair raised one young at Stogumber.

**WATER RAIL** *Rallus aquaticus*

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

**Breeding season**

Following the Avalon Marshes Breeding Bird Survey in 2018 when the estimated population was 423 pairs, very few records were submitted: three families, Ham Wall; present at both Greylake Reserve and West Sedge Moor.

**Water Rail – maximum monthly counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bridgwater Bay/Steart Marshes	1	1	1	1	2	1			1		1	1
Westhay Moor	7	7	9	4		1			4	6	6	
Long Drove	3	1								1	3	4
Ham Wall	6	5	6	4	3	2	1	3	4	4	3	5
Shapwick/Meare Heaths	1	2	2	3	1	1	2	2		1		1
Westhay Heath	2			3						1		
Greylake Reserve	1	3							2		1	2
Dunster Hawn/Beach	1	1								1	2	1

**Other records**

Records of two apart from the first: estimated to be five along the canal between Charlton and Creech St Michael in both winter periods; two in both winter periods, Mill Lane, Creech St Michael; Catcott Lows, January 2nd; Nine Springs, Yeovil, March 1st; West Sedge Moor, November 18th. Singles at a further eight sites.

**BAILLON’S CRAKE** *Porzana pusilla*

**Accidental.**

A female recorded at night, Greylake Reserve, on June 12th only (RSPB). Record accepted by BBRC. The sixth County record and the first since 1912.

**SPOTTED CRAKE** *Porzana porzana*

*Rare passage migrant or winter visitor. Formerly occasional (probably regular) breeder; and possibly again breeding at several sites.*

**Breeding season**

*Levels south of Poldens*

Two calling males at one site and one at another.

One other record: a juvenile, Greylake Reserve, September 18th to October 10th (JAH *et al.*).

**MOORHEN** *Gallinula chloropus*

*Common resident breeder; occasional winter visitor.*

**Breeding season, single families/pairs unless stated**

*East*

Three families, Cary Marsh; two families, Cary Marsh; Cranmore.

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay*

Wall Common; three families, Steart Marshes; Burnham.

*Levels south of Poldens*

Ham Wall.

*Bridgwater area*

Durleigh Reservoir; Hawkridge Reservoir; two families, Ashford Reservoir.

*Levels south of Poldens*

Three pairs, Greylake Reserve; five pairs, West Sedge Moor; Curry Moor.

*South*

Two families, Sutton Bingham Reservoir; Chard Reservoir; Burnworthy.

*South-west*

At least five pairs along the canal, Charlton to Creech St Michael; three pairs, West Monkton.

*Brendons*

Three families, Wimbleball Lake; Rowdon Farm Lake, Stogumber and Lower Rodhuish Farm; Dunster Hawn.

**Moorhen – maximum monthly counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Witham Hall Farm	1		3	4	1	1	7	6	2	7		
Mells Park		4		1	2							
Rodden NR	1		2	3	3	9	5	1				1
Orchardleigh Lake	8		2	2	1	2	7	8	5	2		
Torr Works Reservoir	3	3	9	4		3		5	6	3	4	
Apex Park	10										6	12
Cary Moor/Cary Marsh		1	2	4	2	2	7	10	11	6	6	4
Bridgwater Bay/Steart Marshes	20	13	8	9	6	4	16	14	12	14	10	18
Westhay Moor	12	9	12	4					13	15	10	
Long Drove/Sharpham	3	5	1							11	6	4
Ham Wall/Loxton's Marsh	15	11	24	16	7	4	35	7	12	11	13	20
Shapwick/Meare Heaths	5	2	6	4	10	15	4			2	1	1
Westhay Heath	3	1	2								4	6
Catcott Fen	2	1	2	2	2		2			1	1	
Greylake Reserve	4	1	1	3					12	4	2	2
Ilminster	10	12			2						8	
Pavyott's Mill, East Coker	3	4	3	5	10	3	7	6	6	6		8
Chard Reservoir	9	10	5	2	2	1	2	14	18	18	14	9
Otterhead Lakes	15		6		2	6	9	8		18	7	
Durleigh Reservoir		2	1			1	1	4				3
Ashford Reservoir	13	8	6	4	2	1	7	9	8	9	13	17
Hawkridge Reservoir	8	6	3	2		2	4	10	13	8	6	3
Combe Sydenham	16	18	6	3								12
Wimbleball Lake			1		3	1	8	4	9	3		
Dunster Hawn	7	6	3	3	4	2	1	3	3	6	8	5

**Other counts of five or more***Coast of Bridgwater Bay*

Up to 11, Berrow, January to April; seven, Brean, June 1st.

*Bridgwater area*

Five, Screech Owl, November 17th, and Bridgwater–Taunton Canal at both Maunsel and Coxhill Locks, December.

*South*

Seven, Pudleigh STW, January 5th and five on December 4th; six, Nine Springs, Yeovil, March 21st.

**COOT *Fulica atra******Locally common resident breeder and winter visitor.*****Breeding season, single families/pairs unless stated***East and Mendip*

Three families, Cary Marsh; two on nests, Litton Lake; Priddy Mineries.

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay*

Berrow; Wall Common.

*Avalon Marshes*

Catcott Lows.

*Bridgwater area*

Two pairs at nests, Ashford Reservoir.

*Levels south of Poldens*

Three pairs, Greylake Reserve, fewer pairs nested here probably due to lower water levels in early spring and success was poor – only three or four broods seen in June; West Sedge Moor.

*South*

Pavyott's Mill, East Coker.

*Quantocks*

Plainsfield.

*Brendons*

Rowdon Farm, Stogumber.

**Coot – maximum monthly counts at major waters**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Witham Hall Farm		2	7	4	1	1	1					
Marston Park	1	12	12									
Mells Park	1			4	1							
Torr Works Reservoir	41	27	46	24		19	20	43	31	34	4	18
Orchardleigh Lake	22	8	16	8	8	9	19	36	26	12		
Cary Marsh/Moor	2	2	3	3	4	10	9	8	6	6	8	
Litton Lakes	2	4	8			15	40					
Cheddar Reservoir	957	682	126	3	2	2	8	127	1273	870	2285	1163
Stearth Marshes	72	58	73	23	14	12	30	5	1	5	35	37
Westhay Moor	132	80	36	30					123	111	290	137
Long Drove	12	20	13							19	28	45
Ham Wall	286	188	124	25			6			78	162	187
Shapwick Heath/Meare Heath	125	107	97	15			10			70	37	28
Catcott Lows		2	4	6	12							
Greylake Reserve		6	3		6							
Chard Reservoir	12	12	8	7	4	6	4	6	8	7	7	5
Pavyott's Mill, East Coker	2	5	6	7	4	8	6	14	4			3
Sutton Bingham Reservoir		1		1	1	1			1			1
Durleigh Reservoir				3	2	1						1
Ashford Reservoir	8	4	5	12	4	9	8	3	3	4		2
Wimbleball Lake	8	9	3	2			1	6	14	24	8	12

**Other counts of three and over**

Four, Greylake Reserve, February 16th and March 25th, six on February 19th; six, Westhay Heath, March 15th; 13, Rowdon Farm, Stogumber, April 4th and 12 on December 27th; six, Apex Park, November 28th.

**CRANE** *Grus grus*

***Very rare passage migrant. Reintroduced from 2010.***

There were attempts to breed by 11 pairs on the Levels, from these nine young fledged although two of these died later in August.

From the original birds of the reintroduction project, at least 52 were still alive at the end of 2019, although not all these were in Somerset; others were at Slimbridge and one in Cambridgeshire. These were supplemented by a further 23 including second-generation birds.

Records came from mainly the Levels south of the Poldens or from those to the north on what would be a flight path to Slimbridge.

**Juvenile Crane, West Sedge Moor (Alick Simmons)**



**STONE CURLEW** *Burhinus oedicnemus*

*Formerly occasional passage migrant, now scarce migrant.*

One record: a bird heard calling in the fog at Lilstock early on March 29th (BJH), the first since two in 2014.

**OYSTERCATCHER** *Haematopus ostralegus*

*Formely scarce breeder, locally common winter visitor, non-breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.*

**Breeding season**

Up to ten pairs nested or attempted to do so, one more than in 2018, but no records from Pawlett Hams which held a pair last year.

*East*

One pair raised three young, Torr Works Reservoir.

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay*

Two pairs, Stert Point; five pairs (but no records of young), Steart Marshes; one pair, Catsford Common; one pair raised two young, Hinkley Point.

**Oystercatcher – monthly maxima at main sites**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Berrow	40	47	75	132	109	32	130	240	112	140	100	41
Bridgwater Bay incl. Steart Marshes	97	73	127	111	94	72	20	25	401	256	197	113
Knighton Beach to Blue Anchor	137	91	2	4				40		48	56	61
Dunster Beach/ Minehead	140	100	31	39	7	7	7		124	144	121	95
Hurlstone Pt to Porlock Weir	17	39	37	25	21	10	24	52	53	52	63	55
Other sites (inland)		1	3	2		3	2			1		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>365</b>

**Inland**

In addition to the breeding birds at Torr Works Reservoir, inland records related to singles at Cheddar Reservoir on June 6th, Wimbleball Lake on February 16th and July 15th, others heard over Coleford, Horton Cross and Yeovil.



**BLACK-WINGED STILT**

*Himantopus himantopus*

*Rare but increasing visitor, breeding attempted in 2012.*

Two records: a pair at Ham Wall on May 26th moved to Catcott Lows on the same day and remained until 28th (JLa, PAC, ANE *et al.*); and a juvenile was at Ham Wall from September 22nd to 26th (CC, CH, FM, AFM, DR).

**Black-winged Stilt, Catcott Lows**  
(Rob Chace)

**AVOCET** *Recurvirostra avosetta*

*Local winter visitor and passage migrant. Increasing, and bred in 2012 and annually since 2015.*

**Breeding season**

The colony at Steart Marshes more than doubled in size to 31 pairs – an exponential increase over the last few years. Productivity was low due to high spring tides causing some early nest failures and significant predation was observed, particularly from Grey Herons – it is estimated that only ten to 15 young successfully fledged.

## Avocet – monthly maxima

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Parrett Estuary incl. Steart Marshes	500	200	429	77	94	64	53	300	510	530	454	514

All records from Bridgwater Bay, mainly from Parrett Estuary and Steart Marshes; however, birds also sometimes seen from Burnham sea-front, Wall & Catsford Commons. The wintering birds are often tricky to count as they can be obscured by mud banks, but the December count is believed to be very accurate, as it was made from a boat trip on the 3rd between Stockland Reach and Stert Island.

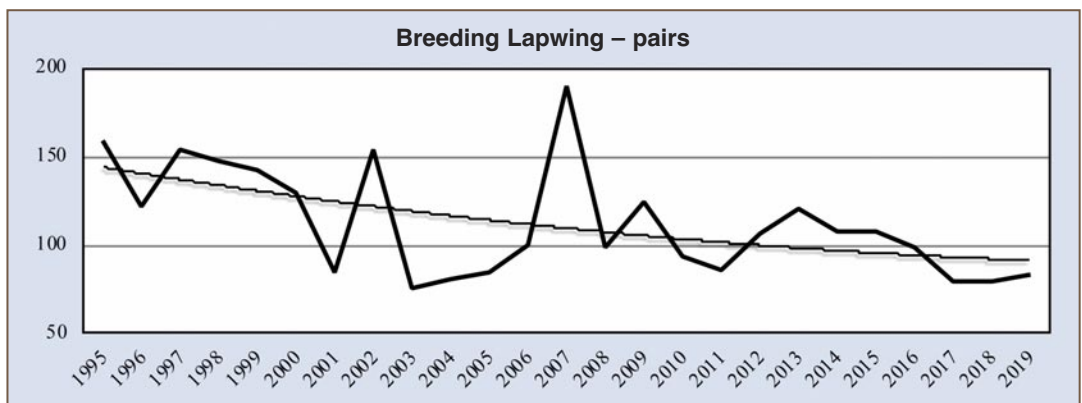
LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

*Uncommon local breeder, greatly decreased; abundant winter visitor and passage migrant.*

## Breeding season

Up to 83 pairs bred, the last three breeding seasons possibly stabilising the long-term downward trend in the County. The RSPB conducted a survey of the Somerset Levels & Moors which covered most of the likely breeding sites in this area and found 69 pairs; nine additional pairs were reported across the Levels at other sites by various observers and five pairs away from the Levels.

Core counts of breeding pairs: 39, Greylake Reserve; 13, Avalon Marshes; five at West Sedge Moor and Wet Moor, and lower numbers at other sites in this area. Elsewhere, breeding only confirmed at Steart Marshes where three or four pairs held territory, and by single pairs at Pawlett Hams and Friggle Street, near Frome, where three young observed. Four pairs in game cover at West Moor, Hambridge benefited from a considerate farmer who carefully located nests and erected predator-proof fencing around them.



## Lapwing – monthly maxima at main sites on the Levels

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
West Sedge Moor	35300	15362									8527	8877
Other sites on the Levels	28397	10796	77	25	28	21	183	108	120	161	2452	8436
<b>Totals</b>	<b>63697</b>	<b>26158</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>10979</b>	<b>17313</b>

## Lapwing – monthly maxima at main sites away from the Levels

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Parrett Est. incl. Steart Marshes	8466	9204	4	8	20	8		19	32	427	2751	7229
Other sites	919	54	2	4	6	6	6			45	56	63
<b>Totals</b>	<b>9385</b>	<b>9258</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>2807</b>	<b>7292</b>

## Winter and passage

Apparently more wintering birds than recent years, particularly in the first winter period on the Levels. Estimating the likely monthly total across a range of dates is always going to carry a reasonable margin of error due to duplication. However, on January 21st WeBS counts recorded 53,359 across seven sites on the Levels –

99% of them being at West Sedge Moor, Greylake Reserve and Ham Wall – so it is considered that the January total represents a reasonable assessment.

## GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

*Locally common winter visitor and passage migrant. Formerly bred (last in 1914).*

### Golden Plover – monthly maxima at main sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sites on the Levels	26946	18348	80							201	8497	7131
Parrett Estuary	1918	1650	175						676	582	1800	1490
Exmoor	294	205	1026	149					12	433	904	434
Other sites	251	26								234	3	16
<b>Totals</b>	<b>29409</b>	<b>20229</b>	<b>1281</b>	<b>149</b>					<b>688</b>	<b>1450</b>	<b>11204</b>	<b>9071</b>

Another notable increase in wintering numbers on the Levels, particularly pronounced in the first period. Most were from West Sedge Moor, where the WeBS counts in January and February were 20,565 and 13,500 respectively; also up to 3,114 at Greylake Reserve in January. More typical numbers on Exmoor, although some flocks of up to 400 noted in March; last spring birds were 129 at Dunkery Beacon on April 20th.

First autumn birds arrived in September as follows: one, Steart Marshes, on 9th, 20 on the 12th and up to 640 by the 30th, also 12 on Exmoor at Lucott Moor, on the 12th.

## AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis dominica*

*Accidental.*

One record: juvenile was present at Otterhampton Marshes, at Steart Marshes from September 28th to October 8th (DW *et al.*). It was initially elusive but then settled down enabling many observers to appreciate this bird.

The first in the County since one at nearby Wall Common, November 5th–7th, 2005.

## 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
Berrow					5				1			
Bridgwater Bay	175	79	180	20	44			1	45	69	110	170
Helwell Bay to Dunster Beach	6	6	1							2	4	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>49</b>			<b>1</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>172</b>

As usual, most wintering birds around Stolford, Steart and Parrett Estuary, plus a handful of passage birds at Berrow.

## RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

*Uncommon breeder, fairly common passage migrant and declining winter visitor.*

**Breeding season**

No breeding recorded – although previous sites checked, it is now only sporadic. Regular breeding, albeit of only one or two pairs occurred up to 2015 around Bridgwater Bay; since then only one pair in 2018.

### Ringed Plover – monthly maxima at main sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Berrow	2				25			260	71	5		
Bridgwater Bay	50	30	13	6	71	15		100	280	66	32	100
Dunster Beach to Minehead	48	38	33	17				89	15	19	35	45
Other sites (coast)	9	9			3			1	5	1	12	13
Other sites (inland)				1				2	10	3		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>15</b>		<b>452</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>158</b>

Average wintering numbers at the usual coastal sites; both spring and autumn passages relatively poor. Highest count was 240 at the Wall Common roost on September 12th.

### Inland

Recorded from Greylake Reserve in April, from Cheddar Reservoir in August and October, and from Durlough Reservoir, where up to four spent the first two weeks of September; more unusually up to five at Sutton Bingham Reservoir at this time. Also heard over Horton Cross and at Wimbleball Lake on September 12th.

## LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

*Scarce migrant breeder (since 1995); uncommon passage migrant.*

### Breeding season

Five pairs attempted to breed, the same as in the last two years, although apparent success was lower.

#### Coast of Bridgwater Bay

Three displaying males/pairs at Steart Marshes; only one chick noted, however seven young with two adults on July 16th may have been local birds or migrants. One pair at a water management zone at the Hinkley Point C construction site where young were noted but disappeared within a few days, probably predated by Crows.

#### South

One pair again bred at Chard Junction using the same demolition rubble for the third successive year – all birds also vanished within a few days.

Little Ringed Plover – monthly maxima at main sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Steart Marshes			10	9	6	6	9		1			
Other sites			2	5	2	2		1	5			
<b>Totals</b>			<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>			

Other than breeding birds, passage birds noted around the Steart/Stert area in March, April and September. The following inland sites held birds: one, Torr Works Reservoir, March 30th; one, Cary Moor, on 31st; two, Greylake Reserve, on April 7th; up to five juveniles, Durlough Reservoir over the first two weeks of September; and one juvenile at Chard Reservoir on 7th.

## KENTISH PLOVER *Charadrius alexandrinus*

*Very rare passage migrant and winter visitor.*

One at Burnham on December 26th (AMS) was first in County since 2015 and was 19th record [or the 21st, if records in three consecutive winters, 1988–91, were not of the same bird!]. What was presumably the 2019 bird was recorded on a number of dates in early spring 2020 on Stert Island, which suggested that it wintered.

## WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

*Passage migrant, declining. Commoner in spring than autumn.*

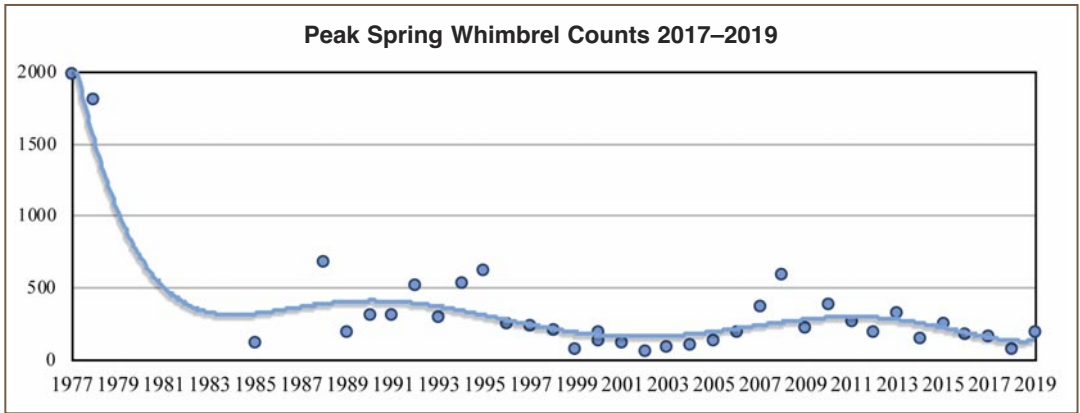
Whimbrel – monthly maxima at main sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Levels				1	31				1			
Bridgwater Bay												
incl. Steart Marshes			2	97	138		2	1	2			
Berrow				12	27							
Other sites				38	1	3	2	5	2			
<b>Totals</b>			<b>2</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>			

Higher spring numbers than in last two years. However, the graph overleaf puts the decline over the last 40 years into perspective.

The first two birds appeared at Steart Marshes in March, no specific date given. Thereafter, most birds in the Bridgwater Bay area, peak count of 102 at Burnham on May 7th.

Now becoming rare in autumn – just a handful of birds, all single records.

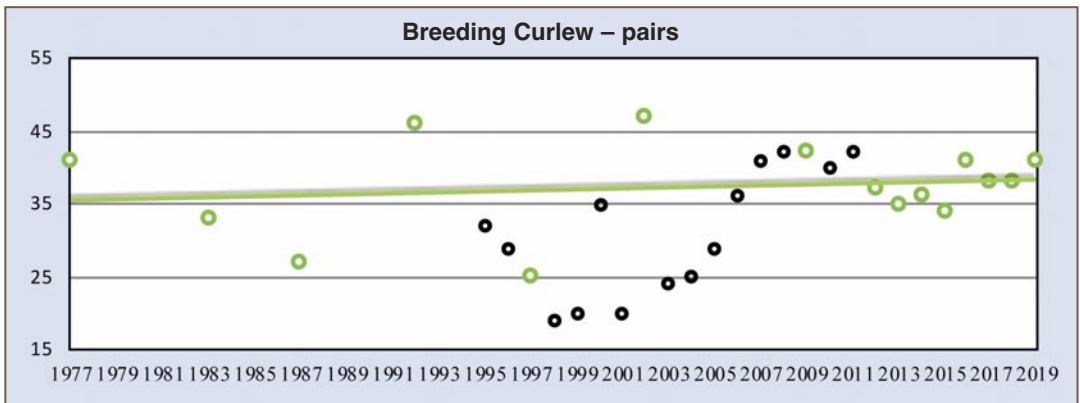


**CURLEW** *Numenius arquata*

*Uncommon breeder; common winter visitor and passage migrant. Now almost extinct in uplands.*

**Breeding season**

Up to 41 pairs bred, 40 on the Levels. The RSPB provided a comprehensive report on breeding waders on the Somerset Levels & Moors this year; from this it would appear that previous years’ data provided by the RSPB used a standard survey methodology which is considered to overestimate the number of breeding pairs where there are relatively dense Curlew populations, in particular at West Sedge Moor. Data previously published in *Somerset Birds* was not adjusted to correct this overestimate, which in survey years has caused spikes in reported counts as well overstating the absolute number of breeding pairs by about 15 to 20%. The corrected graph is included below which shows green dots for survey year totals and black dots for non-survey years.



The long-term trend based on surveys is slowly increasing, as evidenced by the RSPB surveys, and mainly driven by the strongholds of West Sedge Moor, where approximately 21 pairs bred, and King’s Sedge Moor, where seven pairs bred. Ones and twos were found at other sites across the Levels; away from here it was encouraging that a displaying bird was present near Dunkery Hill on a number of dates and that a second bird was also noted here in early May.



**Hatchling Curlew and adult taken by nest camera, West Sedge Moor, 2019 (RSPB)**

The RSPB have spent significant effort to determine Curlew productivity at West Sedge Moor. The following is paraphrased from their report: “This year it is estimated that of the 21 nesting pairs on the moor, nine went on to hatch and get to chick-rearing stage. (This figure is the number of territorial birds alarm calling in a way that indicates young are present on the third breeding wader visit.) The number of young fledged is unknown. This figure is the same as 2018; however, 2019 is thought to have been a more productive year than 2018 as the nesting period was earlier and these alarm calling birds would have been in late-stage chick rearing. In 2018, productivity was thought to be lower, with anecdotal observations indicating Curlew had disappeared from the moor prior to fledging – presumably after losing their broods. This year, a subset of seven nests were also monitored using nest cameras for the first time and of these seven monitored nests, four were predated (three by foxes, one by Marsh Harrier), two hatched, and one pair sat on infertile eggs.”

#### Curlew – monthly maxima at main sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Levels	2	7	31	82	76	13		1			2	
Bridgwater Bay incl. Steart Marshes	681	352	534	55	24	34	8	320	571	680	536	491
Dunster Beach & Minehead	70	58	20	1		3	30	20	53	70	110	105
Exmoor & Porlock Marsh	33	19	2	2	5		7	13	27	14	16	42
Other sites	28	44	38	21			14	17	18	27	16	6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>814</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>791</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>644</b>

#### Winter and passage

Numbers similar to 2018. The colour-ringed bird seen in 2018 at Minehead Marshes and ringed on the nest at Dellstedt, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany on July 17th, 2017 was at Dunster Beach on January 25th.

#### 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
Bridgwater Bay incl. Berrow	5	6	5	53	21				37	15	5	5
Other sites	1				5				4			
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>26</b>				<b>41</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>

Both spring and autumn passage average for recent years; peak count of 35 at the Brue Estuary on April 22nd. Away from Bridgwater Bay recorded only at Berrow in January and February, Dunster Beach in September.

#### BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

*Locally common winter visitor and passage migrant. Has bred (1963–85 and 1991; suspected, 2007).*

#### Black-tailed Godwit – monthly maxima at main sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Avalon Marshes	1	3	18	55	175	123	4	15	2		107	1
Levels (south of the Poldens)	635	667	92	2							75	24
Parrett Est. incl. Berrow & Steart Marshes	156		86	189	43	45	80	187	160	211	87	
Other sites	1						3			1	129	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>25</b>

Record counts in the first winter period preceded a rather lower set of monthly totals than seen in recent years. The WeBS count at West Sedge Moor on January 21st found 635; over 500 here on three other occasions in January and February. A number of records of flocks between 150 and 300 at Southlake and Greylake were assumed to be part of this wintering population and are excluded as additional birds in the totals.



### Black-tailed Godwits, Catcott Lows (Chris Hooper)

Other records included two at Cheddar Reservoir on July 19th, and single birds at Durleigh Reservoir on October 11th and Dunster Beach on January 31st and November 30th. An unusual record of a flock of 128 at Hinkley Point on November 1st was probably related to the 150 which were noted around Steart and Stockland Marshes in October.

No birds were assigned to specific race; most wintering and passage birds will be of Icelandic origin.

### TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

*Locally common winter visitor and passage migrant. Has decreased.*

Turnstone – monthly maxima at main sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Parrett Est. to Knighton Beach	104	132	127		3		75	81	434	262	160	160
East Quantoxhead to Minehead	74	48	23					21	4	55	32	42
Other sites		1					5	7	1	1	1	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>150</b>		<b>3</b>		<b>80</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>206</b>

Typical winter numbers in both periods. Autumn passage appeared to be healthy, but possibly some duplication of counts around Bridgwater Bay may have inflated the totals in autumn; the co-ordinated WeBS count of this area found 210 birds on September 15th.

The other coastal records were all of small numbers at Berrow, Hurlstone Point and Porlock Marsh; inland, five were at Cheddar Reservoir on July 30th and one there on October 6th.

As mentioned in *SB 2017*, Turnstone numbers have declined in the Severn Estuary over the last 30 to 40 years. A study published in the 2018/19 annual WeBS report showed that local populations were more stable in Northumberland, where Turnstones had close access to an offshore refuge away from high tide human disturbance.

### 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
Bridgwater Bay incl. Berrow	2100	1100	150	50	11		4	440	46	450	1351	2001
Other sites			1				1		19			1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2100</b>	<b>1100</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>11</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>1351</b>	<b>2002</b>

Good numbers, both wintering and passage. The only inland records at Durleigh Reservoir: 17 on September 1st, and two on 6th.

**RUFF** *Calidris pugnax**Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Decreasing.***Ruff – monthly maxima at main sites**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Levels	14	3	1	2	3				2		3	2
Stear (WWT & NNR areas)	1		2	2	1			6	8	6		
Other sites							1	1				
<b>Totals</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>

**Winter periods**

Low numbers in both periods again, although a few more than in 2017. Best numbers were of up to 12 in the Moors around Stathe, January 1st–5th, otherwise up to three on King’s Sedgemoor in January and February and one at Steart. In the second winter period one or two recorded at West Sedge Moor, King’s Sedge Moor and Ham Wall.

**Passage**

Only single birds in spring at sites across the Levels and up to two at Steart Marshes. Up to six around Steart Marshes in the autumn and two at Ham Wall. Otherwise a juvenile at Wimbleball Lake from July 15th to August 15th was unusual for this site.

**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
Bridgwater Bay					1			5	15	5		
<b>Totals</b>					<b>1</b>			<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>		

Another poor year; possibly only one in spring, at Catsford Common on May 19th, also at Steart Marshes. All autumn records from around Bridgwater Bay at high tide roosts or feeding on Otterhampton Marshes. Such totals are best estimates, and are helped where observers provide age details: for example seven at Wall Common on September 13th that included a bird ringed in Norway were probably a different flock (at least partially) to eight there on September 25th which consisted of two adults and six juveniles.

**Curlew Sandpiper, Huntspill Sea Wall (James Packer)**

**SANDERLING** *Calidris alba**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	108	320	200	150	330		6	260	300	140		48
Bridgwater Bay								36	23			1
Dunster Beach & Minehead	53	39		2				27		1	1	9
Other sites					1							
<b>Totals</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>58</b>

Rather below usual numbers, particularly in the second winter period. Away from the main coastal sites just one bird at Cheddar Reservoir on July 7th.

**DUNLIN** *Calidris alpina**Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Has bred (last nest in 1914).***Breeding season**

Amazingly, two pairs were found at an undisclosed Exmoor site on May 15th. No young were seen and the adults did not flush; however, an egg shell was found indicating that a breeding attempt was made. The observer rightly left the area in case nests or young were still present so the outcome of this event is not known.

**Dunlin – monthly maxima at main sites**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Berrow	650	2500	140	140	60		4	1500	100	150		
Bridgwater Bay	18000	12150	2100	310	1003	30	490	3542	2647	4950	15050	1701
Dunster Beach & Minehead	142	80	44					10	25	5	150	2
Other sites (coastal)		1			11	1		3	20	4	4	3
Other sites (inland)				1	13		2	4	3			
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18792</b>	<b>14731</b>	<b>2284</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>1087</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>5059</b>	<b>2795</b>	<b>5109</b>	<b>15204</b>	<b>1706</b>

Overall lower numbers this year, particularly around Berrow, where disturbance is cited as a significant factor; none recorded here in November and December. Although numbers around Steart were correspondingly greater in the first winter period, which may account for birds displaced from Berrow, this was not the case in the second winter period.

**PURPLE SANDPIPER** *Calidris maritima**Scarce and very local winter visitor; rare passage migrant.*

In the first winter period, up to seven at Knighton Beach and one at Helwell Bay, Watchet. In the second winter period, one again at Helwell Bay and up to 12 in the Knighton Beach, Hinkley Point and Stolford area.

**Purple Sandpiper, Knighton Beach**  
(Nick Wall)

**LITTLE STINT** *Calidris minuta**Uncommon autumn passage migrant; rare in spring and as a winter visitor.*

A very poor year for this species.

**Little Stint – monthly maxima at main sites**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Steart Marshes & Stert Point						1			2	1		1

**WOODCOCK** *Scolopax rusticola**Rare or scarce breeder; fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.***Woodcock – monthly maxima at main sites**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Totals</b>	34	17	9			2	1			1	4	17

**Breeding season**

Records of single birds at Rod's Pot (near Black Down) and Henlade in June, and at Westhay Heath in July, may be related to local breeding birds.

**Winter periods**

Significantly higher first winter period totals than in 2017, boosted by counts of nine at Eaker Hill, five at Staple Fitzpaine and four at Canada Farm in January, and 12 at Rowberrow Warren in February. With the exception of six at Rowberrow in December, only ones and twos at widespread sites in second period.

**JACK SNIPE** *Lymnocyptes minimus**Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.***Jack Snipe – monthly maxima at main sites**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Levels	1	5	2	1							1	
Bridgwater Bay	2	5	1							2		
Other sites	1	1	3								2	1
<b>Totals</b>	4	11	6	1						2	3	1

Low numbers in both winter periods, especially second. No more than three found at any site and birds were confirmed as absent at habitual sites on the Steart peninsula.

Away from expected sites, individuals were also found at Friggie Street in January and Pen Mill in December.

**SNIPE** *Gallinago gallinago**Uncommon resident and migrant breeder; common winter visitor and passage migrant.***Breeding season**

An estimated total of 182 pairs may have bred, including a welcome two on Exmoor.

**Snipe, Greylake Reserve (Chris Hooper)**



*Levels*

Partial RSPB surveys of the Moors and Levels found a minimum of 121 pairs. Large areas were left unsurveyed due to the presence of nesting Cranes and the need to avoid disturbance. A total of 156 pairs is conservatively estimated based on the known unsurveyed birds at West Sedge Moor. Over the wider Levels the total is thought to be greater than 180 pairs.

Minimum numbers found:

*Levels north of Poldens*

Eleven, Tealham and Tadham Moor; three, Burtle Moor; five, Catcott Lows.

*Levels south of Poldens*

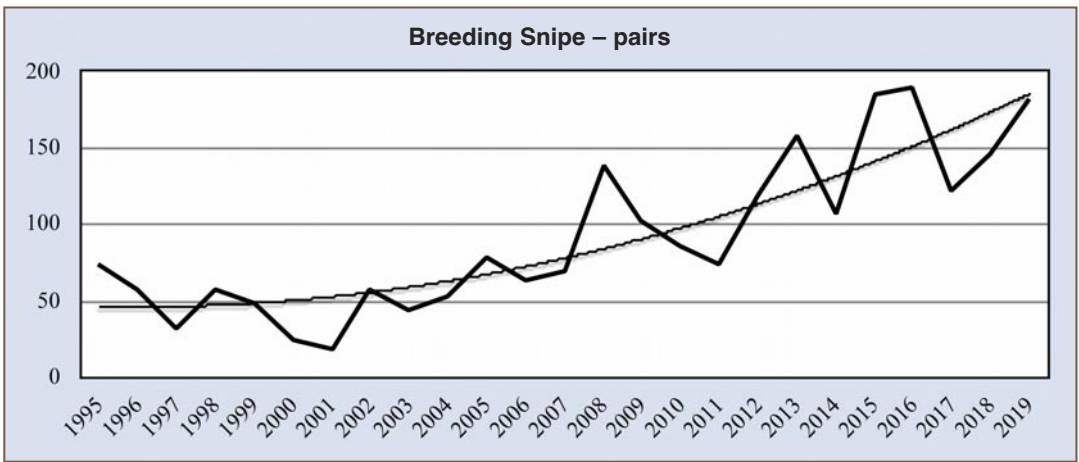
Twelve, Greylake Reserve; 13, Moorlinch Moor; 12, King’s Sedge Moor; 63, West Sedge Moor.

*Stuart Marshes*

One recorded in July, but no evidence of breeding.

*Exmoor*

Two birds (one of which was displaying) Codsand Moors, June 11th; one, Blackpitts Mires, June 28th. These birds appear to be benefiting from the mires restoration work.



**Snipe – monthly maxima at main sites**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Levels	475	566	165	5	3	1	4	10	36	46	273	387
Bridgwater Bay	287	450	63	4			1		21	24	45	147
Exmoor incl. coastal marshes	36	19	1	1		3			1	5	2	50
Other sites	72	71	20	2					10	10	9	7
<b>Totals</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>1106</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>591</b>

**Winter and passage**

Another apparent drop in numbers this year and a marked reduction on the Levels counts, partly offset by increases around Bridgwater Bay.

**GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius***

*Scarce passage migrant or storm vagrant, nearly always in autumn.*

Up to seven birds: single at Dunster Beach on January 24th (DCW); one or two Burnham/Huntspill Sluice September 4th (BJH, JLT); two at Stert Point on the same day may have been different birds (RLM, JAS); another around the Parrett Estuary on October 4th (JAS); and one (photo right by Alex Carlisle) at Cheddar Reservoir on 12th/13th (A.Hockey *et al.*).



**COMMON SANDPIPER** *Actitis hypoleucos**Fairly common passage migrant and rare winter visitor. Has bred (last in 1970).***Common Sandpiper – monthly maxima at main sites**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bridgwater Bay	1			2	3		11	7	32	2		
Reservoirs	1	1	1	33	15	4	45	37	15	2	2	1
Levels			9	3	5		3	7	1			
Other sites	1			6	1		4	2	5		1	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>

**Winter periods**

Single birds recorded at Wimbleball Lake in both periods, around the Parrett Estuary in the first and at Combwich Pill in the second. Birds at Hawkridge Reservoir and Porlock Marsh in November may have been wintering birds.

**Passage**

Average passage numbers, largest count of 26 at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on July 27th. The reservoirs held the bulk of the passage birds in both periods, elsewhere only Steart Marshes and the Brue Estuary saw double figures.

**GREEN SANDPIPER** *Tringa ochropus**Locally fairly common passage migrant, chiefly in autumn; uncommon in winter and spring.***Green Sandpiper – monthly maxima at main sites**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Levels	23	15	13	1		1	1	11	11	2	3	2
Reservoirs	1						18	22	13	3	2	
Bridgwater Bay	2	3	3	2			8	11	6	2	1	1
Other sites	1	2	1	3				4	3	3	3	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>

Fairly typical numbers again. Perhaps fewer in the second winter period than in recent years. Most birds recorded from inland reservoirs, the only double figure count (of 11) coming from Sutton Bingham Reservoir on July 30th.

**REDSHANK** *Tringa totanus**Scarce breeder, locally common winter visitor and passage migrant.***Winter and passage**

Good numbers in the first winter period and both spring and autumn passages, apparently rather low numbers in the second winter period.

The large number in the 'Other sites (coastal)' category for September was due to a record of 800 on the Axe Estuary on the 9th, which was the only record for this species from this site all year suggesting that some may have gone unrecorded here.

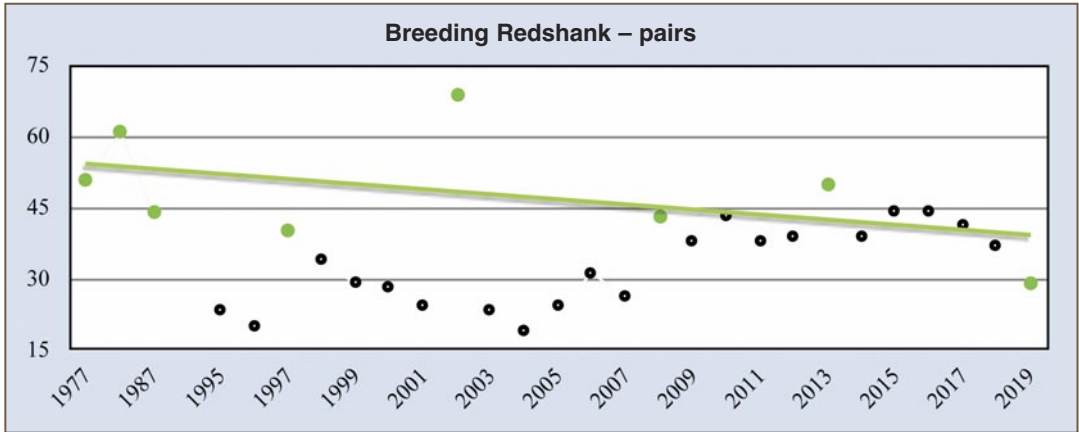
Inland records away from the Levels all from Cheddar Reservoir except one at Durleigh Reservoir in September.

**Redshank – monthly maxima at main sites**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Levels			1	6	64	57	1		5		1	
Bridgwater Bay	1857	1062	1425	523	2	66	600	1056	1920	1215	915	475
Other sites (coastal)	16	12	14	11		1			801	1	8	8
Other sites (inland)			1	1			3	2	1			
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1873</b>	<b>1074</b>	<b>1441</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>1058</b>	<b>2727</b>	<b>1216</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>483</b>

**Breeding season**

A total of 29 pairs was found in the 2019 Levels and Moors survey which is considered to be comprehensive for this area as the population is entirely confined to SWT or RSPB reserves. Twenty-five of these pairs bred within the predator-proof fence at the Greylake Reserve, three at West Sedge Moor and one at Catcott Lows. The graph shows the long-term trend and highlights survey years (green dots) along with annual totals based on ‘casual’ records (black dots). As the species’ range has retracted the survey and ‘casual’ trends have tended to converge; the long-term trend is clearly negative and is especially steep over the last few years.



**WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola***

*Uncommon autumn passage migrant; chiefly in autumn.*

Very good numbers, including birds at sites away from the regular ‘hot spots’ for this species. Probably over 12 birds in total as follows:

**Spring**

Up to two at Catcott Lows from May 1st to 15th (multiple observers); one flushed from a pool at Blackpitts Mire on Exmoor on 15th (JDH).

**Autumn (singly unless stated)**

Up to two at Sutton Bingham Reservoir from July 25th to 30th (TMF *et al.*); Shapwick Heath on 29th (NAS); Cheddar Reservoir on 30th (DW); one at Stockmoor Country Park in Bridgwater on August 3rd was the first wader to be recorded at this newly created habitat (RPB); at least two Ham Wall, August 7th–September 6th (multiple observers); at Porlock Marsh on September 1st (BJH); and Otterhampton Marsh, September 29th–October 1st (JLT *et al.*).

**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
Bridgwater Bay	5	1	2	3			2	2	5	5	2	1
Other sites								1	2			
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>			<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

A typical year: most records from around the Parrett Estuary, although no more than five were seen together here – it is possible that more birds could winter in this area as records were scattered from Apex Park, the Brue Estuary, Hunstpill Sluice, Otterhampton and Stockland Marshes.

Elsewhere, three single birds: at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on August 15th; Porlock Marsh, September 1st–17th, the first here since 1999; and Durlleigh Reservoir on 2nd/3rd.

**GREENSHANK** *Tringa nebularia**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					7		1		1			
Bridgwater Bay		1		1	2		2	10	14	7	1	
Other sites				1	1	1	2	3	6			
<b>Totals</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	

An improvement on 2018 numbers, but still not particularly impressive. The only double-figure counts came from Otterhampton Marsh in the autumn.

**KITTIWAKE** *Rissa tridactyla**Fairly common offshore, mainly as storm vagrant in late autumn winter and spring. Has decreased.***Kittiwake – monthly counts from Parrett Estuary**

	March	April	November
No. of dates recorded	3	1	1
Maximum count	100	40	300
<b>Total birds</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>300</b>

**Kittiwake – monthly counts from Dunster Beach to Hurlstone Point**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of dates recorded	5	1	3	1	4	5	2	2	3	2	3	5
Maximum count	10	6	12	3	9	7	2	1	4	6	30	31
<b>Total birds</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>64</b>

**Inland**

Two, Cheddar Reservoir, March 14th, and one on the 18th.

**SABINE'S GULL** *Xema sabini**Rare offshore storm vagrant in autumn.*

One record: a juvenile, close inshore past Hurlstone Point, October 2nd (BDG, CMS).

**BLACK-HEADED GULL** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus**Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant. Has bred.***Breeding season**

No reports.

**Black-headed Gull – monthly maxima at regularly counted sites**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Orchardleigh Lake	30	85	85					4	3			
Torr Works Reservoir	250	220	60	5						20	200	35
Parrett Estuary	7000	9000	3000	400	21	288	5600	2000	1443	812	2000	3000
Cheddar Reservoir		100	79	31	2		7	31	65	12	92	20
Avalon Marshes	380	201	6	8	2	2	15	20	16	50	30	464
Durleigh Reservoir	67	24					8	37	43	265	53	37
Sutton Bingham Reservoir	1000	500	500	2					500		1000	
Chard Reservoir	1500	300	600	1	1	2	56	46	97	130	110	100
Dunster Beach/Minehead Marshes	400	450	50	50		10	40	100	50	900	500	2500
Wimbleball Lake	3100	204	15				3		9	500	2600	2300
Hurlstone Point/Porlock Bay			50		3	14	91	43	10	108	118	

Still under-recorded at a few of the regular sites.

A few other high counts: 300, feeding in sheep fields at Allerford, March 9th; 110, Tealham Moor, October 13th; 90, Cary Moor, November 16th; 213, King’s Moor, on 18th; 274, Red Post, east of Porlock, December 8th; 338, West Sedge Moor, on 17th; 2,000, South Moor, Westonzoyland, on 25th.

First signs of post-breeding dispersal were noted from late May with the first juveniles reported in the first few days of July.

**LITTLE GULL** *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

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

**First winter period and spring passage**

No winter records. All the spring sightings were in April: 17, Cheddar Reservoir, on the 6th and singles on 9th, 15th, 16th and 22nd; one, Noah’s Lake, on 6th, and two on 20th; two, Parrett Estuary, on 9th, one on 22nd, ten on 23rd, four on 24th and three on 27th; four, Dunwear Ponds, on the 9th.

**Autumn passage and second winter period**

An exceptionally poor period, the only record being of five in the Parrett Estuary, November 2nd.

**MEDITERRANEAN GULL** *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*

*Uncommon but increasing winter visitor and passage migrant.*

**Mediterranean Gull – monthly maxima from coastal sites**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Parrett Estuary			1			4	3	1				
Steart Marshes						4	1			2		
Wall Common/Hinkley Point								2		2		
East Quantoxhead – Watchet										1		
Blue Anchor – Dunster Beach	1			3		2				11	1	4
Minehead Bay	1		1			1			1	1	1	1
Hurlstone Point – Porlock Bay		1	2			24	6	1	2	6		

**Mediterranean Gull – monthly maxima from inland sites**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Torr Works Reservoir			1									
Cheddar Reservoir	4	5	2				1			1		1
Athelney	1											
Yeovil		3	2									
Sutton Bingham Reservoir	5	1				2					3	1
Durleigh Reservoir			1				1					
Chard Reservoir	1											



Mediterranean Gull, Minehead  
(Dave Dawe)

**COMMON GULL** *Larus canus**Locally common winter visitor and passage migrant. Probably decreasing.***Common Gull – monthly maxima from selected sites**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Torr Works Reservoir	80	4		10							9	1
Cheddar Reservoir	1			1							7	
Parrett Estuary	2	2						1	1	6	7	10
Avalon Marshes	1	4										
Quantock Reservoirs	7											
Sutton Bingham Reservoir	13										3	
Chard Reservoir	4	25	160	61						1		4
Wimbleball Lake	300	15	112	40			1				200	550
Blue Anchor/Dunster Beach	200	8	24								180	150
Allerford/Hurlstone Point/ Porlock Bay	16	27	250	7				2	2	50	22	36

A few other counts: 150, Lamb Bottom, Mendips, January 8th; 250, near Westbury Beacon, on 13th; 41, Priddy Nine Barrows, on 22nd; 800 in pasture fields, Stockhill, on 27th; 30, Blackford Moor, December 24th.

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus marinus**Rare and irregular resident breeder; regular visitor, chiefly to coasts.***Breeding season**

There were no reported breeding attempts.

**Great Black-backed Gull – monthly maxima from selected sites**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Orchardleigh Lake			2					1				
Cheddar Reservoir		2	1									
Parrett Estuary	5	6	7	6	12	12	4	32	88	26	12	6
Sutton Bingham Reservoir	2	2	4	2	2	2	2	1	2	1		1
Chard Reservoir		3	4		1				1			1
Durleigh Reservoir		2	2				1	1	2	1		
Hawkridge Reservoir	1	1	1	1			1			1	3	
Wimbleball Lake	3		3						1		2	1
Watchet to Minehead	2	1	5			2		3			2	3
Hurlstone Point/Porlock Bay	6	3	4	4	7	3	3	3	2	3	2	5

**Other inland records**

One over Greylake Reserve, April 6th, and five over Chalk Water, on 7th, were unusual.

**HERRING GULL** *Larus argentatus**Fairly common resident breeder, increasing in towns; also winter visitor and passage migrant.***Herring Gull – breeding pairs**

Alcombe – No reports received	Chard – 15 pairs bred, and 33 young seen
Brean – No reports received	Ilminster – 27 to 41 pairs present
Berrow – Eight pairs bred	Taunton – Numbers thought to be down, but no count made
Burnham – No reports received	Williton – 40–50 pairs bred, 80 youngsters present
Highbridge – No breeding report received	Watchet Paper Mills – 20 pairs, but no young seen
Bridgwater – 58 breeding pairs, though probably an underestimation	Butlin's, Minehead – Not visited
Street – Pair with two young at Clarks HQ	Minehead – 41 nests/broods
Yeovil – No reports received	Hurlstone Point – Nil
Crewkerne – No reports received	Porlock – No reports received

As with 2018, numbers of breeding pairs hugely under-recorded compared to 2016, particularly in the Sedgemoor DC area, where no survey of roof-nesting gulls being undertaken on behalf of the council.

### Herring Gull – monthly maxima at selected sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Torr Works Reservoir		9	80	5		15	10			100	17	2
Cary Moor	500	700		500	500	500	500	700	600	600	700	
Cheddar Reservoir	3	21	19		24	7	26	3		5		
Parrett Estuary	10000	8000	7000	5000	181	200	50	500	134	220	600	800
Sutton Bingham Reservoir	500	12				400		600				
Chard Reservoir	113	47	209	110		306	300	400	100	70	102	50
Durleigh Reservoir	9	15	15	37			59	46		86	31	19
Wimbleball Lake	2600	38	15						7	3100	8000	4200
Blue Anchor/Dunster Beach	150	60	500	50	100	90	20	5	100	350	2100	1200
Minehead	50	5	40		30	80	300				70	

One other notable count: 200, Thorney Moor, September 15th.

### CASPIAN GULL *Larus cachinnans*

*Very rare winter visitor.*

One record: a Polish colour-ringed first-winter, Torr Works Reservoir, January 20th (C. Smith).

### YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahellis*

*Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.*

#### Yellow-legged Gull – monthly maxima at selected sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Torr Works Reservoir	1	2	1							2		1
Cheddar Reservoir	3			2								2
Sutton Bingham Reservoir	1						1	1	1		1	

One other record: adult, Catcott Lows, February 5th.

### LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

*Fairly common migrant or resident breeder in towns; common winter visitor and passage migrant.*

#### Lesser Black-backed Gull – breeding pairs

Berrow – One pair bred, first record for the site	Crewkerne – No reports received
Burnham – No reports received	Chard – One pair bred; three youngsters seen
Highbridge – No reports received	Taunton – Numbers thought to be down, but no count made
Bridgwater – 36 breeding pairs, though probably an underestimation	Watchet Paper Mills – No reports received
Glastonbury – One pair bred	Butlin's, Minehead – No visit made in 2019
Ilminster – Seven to nine pairs bred	Minehead – No breeding noted

#### Lesser Black-backed Gull – monthly maxima at selected sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Torr Works Reservoir		160	1500	70		80	70	15		2000	50	40
Cary Moor	10	10		60	40	50	50	50	1		10	
Cheddar Reservoir	1	9		11	30	32	20	25	6			1
Parrett Estuary	300	400	500	2600	24	6	1	4	22	4	50	15
Avalon Marshes			42	54	1	6	25					4
Sutton Bingham Reservoir	20	1				30		100				
Chard Reservoir	2	7	11	8	8	12	41	23	12	5		

Lesser B-b Gull cont'd	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Durleigh Reservoir		2	12	28		1	17	14	19	16	2	1
Wimbleball Lake	180	67	38				13		12	2000	3100	415
Blue Anchor/Dunster Beach	4		2	1	1		2		2		4	1

Two other high counts: 200, Friggle Street, nr. Frome, January 17th; 83, Lympsham, April 28th.

## SANDWICH TERN *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

*Uncommon passage migrant or storm vagrant.*

### Sandwich Tern – monthly counts from the Parrett Estuary

	June	October
No. of dates recorded	1	2
Maximum count	1	4
<b>Total birds</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>

### Sandwich Tern – monthly counts from Helwell Bay to Gore Point

	March	April	June	August	September	October	November
No. of dates recorded	1	2	3	4	1	2	1
Maximum count	1	3	3	3	1	6	1
<b>Total birds</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>

The first of the year off Minehead on March 13th, equalling earliest County date, in 2011.

#### Inland

Two records: two, Ham Wall, September 22nd, and one on the 26th.

The last was a first-winter flying west on November 3rd; seen at both Helwell Bay and a little later from Porlock Weir.

## LITTLE TERN *Sternula albifrons*

*Uncommon passage migrant. Has bred (last in 1930).*

Only two records: three, Parrett Estuary, which flew off up the Brue River, August 10th; and two, Steart Marshes, October 6th.

## ROSEATE TERN *Sterna dougallii*

*Very rare passage migrant or storm vagrant.*

One record: two flying together south along the Burnham shore edge, and joining 40 Arctic Terns, April 27th (AMS, BES). First since 2008, 12th and 13th Somerset birds, and earliest date.

## COMMON TERN (including 'COMMIC' TERN) *Sterna hirundo*

*Fairly common passage migrant or storm vagrant. Has recently bred.*

#### Breeding season

No breeding attempts.

#### Spring passage

The first were two, Chard Reservoir, April 6th. Then afterwards during April and May recorded in ones and twos at Cheddar Reservoir (five dates), Ham Wall and the Parrett Estuary. Two counts during June and both given as 'Commic' Tern with 100, Parrett Estuary on the 5th and three on the 8th.

#### Autumn passage

First returning birds on July 30th when eight, Chard Reservoir and three, Sutton Bingham Reservoir. Three higher counts: seven, Chard Reservoir, August 9th; 13, Cheddar Reservoir, on 24th; and four off Minehead, September 25th. Otherwise recorded in ones and twos at a further five sites during these two months. Three or four records during October and all singly; Wall Common on the 1st, Minehead and Hurlstone Point on the 2nd which may have involved the same bird and finally a "Commic" off Stolford on the 6th.

**ARCTIC TERN** *Sterna paradisaea*

*Fairly common passage migrant or storm vagrant.*

**Spring passage**

First on April 22nd, when one at Cheddar Reservoir and 40 in the Parrett Estuary; one at Noah's Lake on 23rd, and two at Ham Wall on 25th. On 27th, large passage, with up to 45 in Parrett Estuary, 22 at Cheddar Reservoir, and two at both Durleigh Reservoir and Minehead; still eight next day at Cheddar Reservoir, where one remained to 29th. One off Berrow on May 2nd; 25 in Parrett Estuary on May 7th, and on the 8th one off Berrow and two at Cheddar Reservoir, which increased to five the next day.

**Autumn passage**

Twenty-five, Parrett Estuary, September 2nd and one on October 4th; five, Cheddar Reservoir, September 7th; two, Hinkley Point, October 13th and lastly one past Minehead on 21st.

**WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN** *Chlidonias leucopterus*

*Very rare passage migrant.*

One record: an adult, Cheddar Reservoir, April 28th (DW *et al.*) The first since 2006, and the earliest of only three spring birds.

**BLACK TERN** *Chlidonias niger*

*Uncommon passage migrant, chiefly in autumn.*

**Spring passage**

One, Noah's Lake, April 20th, and single birds in Parrett Estuary on 22nd, and at Cheddar Reservoir and Minehead on 28th. From May 7th to 9th, up to 31 at Cheddar Reservoir, four at Noah's Lake, two each at Catcott Lows and the Parrett Estuary, and one on Westhay Moor. Straggler was at Ham Wall on the 19th.

**Autumn passage**

First returning birds were 18 past Minehead, August 21st, and another 18 there on 24th, when also nine at Chard Reservoir (highest count there since 1999), two at Cheddar Reservoir, and 17 at Noah's Lake; one at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on 26th. Later, about five single birds: Noah's Lake, September 7th–13th and October 3rd; Cheddar Reservoir, September 24th and October 2nd–14th; and Huntspill Sluice, September 30th, which was presumably the bird roosting with Black-headed Gulls on Otterhampton Marsh on October 2nd.

**Black Tern, Cheddar Reservoir (James Packer)**



**GREAT SKUA** *Stercorarius skua*

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

**Great Skua – monthly counts from Berrow to Stert Point (including Combwich Pond)**

	April	July	August	September	November
No. of dates recorded	6	1	1	2	1
Maximum count	2	2	1	1	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

**Great Skua – monthly counts from Minehead to Hurlstone Point**

	October	November	December
No. of dates recorded	4	4	2
Maximum count	2	15	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>2</b>

**POMARINE SKUA** *Stercorarius pomarinus*

*Uncommon offshore passage migrant or storm vagrant; rare winter visitor.*

A very poor year for this species in Somerset waters. Four records involving six birds during spring and all from the Parrett Estuary: two, seen from both Burnham and Stert Point, April 27th; two, Burnham, May 9th, a single there on the 16th; also one off Berrow on the 19th.

Only one in autumn passage, past Hurlstone Point, September 8th.

**ARCTIC SKUA** *Stercorarius parasiticus*

*Uncommon offshore passage migrant or storm vagrant; occasional in summer; rare winter visitor.*

**Arctic Skua – monthly counts from Berrow to Hinkley Point**

	April	May	September	October
No. of dates recorded	3	1	1	1
Maximum count	10	1	1	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>

**Arctic Skua – monthly counts from Minehead to Gore Point**

	April	June	July	August	September	October
No. of dates recorded	1	1	2	4	6	1
Maximum count	1	1	1	1	13	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1</b>

**LONG-TAILED SKUA** *Stercorarius longicaudus*

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

One record: two adults flew west past Hurlstone Point, September 1st (BDG, CMS).

**COMMON GUILLEMOT** *Uria aalge*

*Fairly common offshore visitor or storm vagrant.*

One record away from the west of the County: up to five in the Parrett Estuary off Stert Point and Burnham on September 4th.

**Guillemot – monthly counts from Minehead to Gore Point**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of dates recorded	6	1	1	1	9	9	6		1	4	4	2
Maximum count	3	1	1	3	40	22	9		1	3	8	2
<b>Total birds</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>21</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>3</b>

**RAZORBILL** *Alca torda**Fairly common offshore visitor or storm vagrant.***Razorbill – monthly counts from Minehead to Gore Point**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of dates recorded	5	1	1	3	8	8	8	2	4	4	3	1
Maximum count	1	2	1	4	18	63	13	2	1	8	4	1
<b>Total birds</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>

**AUK** sp.

The following auks not specifically identified as Guillemots or Razorbills were recorded along coast from Minehead to Porlock Weir.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of dates recorded	6	2	2	1	9	7	7	1	5	11	14	4
Maximum count	11	8	1	2	59	39	6	1	2	280	40	44
<b>Total birds</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>49</b>

**PUFFIN** *Fratercula arctica**Rare offshore winter visitor or storm vagrant.*

Three records of single birds; Minehead, June 18th, and flying past Hurlstone Point on October 10th and November 11th (BDG).

**FERAL PIGEON** *Columba livia**Fairly common resident breeder.*

Records submitted from 21 sites, another slight increase.

The only breeding record was of six pairs at Huntspill Sluice, but very likely to be nesting in all the main towns, as well as in smaller colonies around farms etc. Highest counts included 40 each in Taunton and at Bridgwater Docks, 65 in Minehead, and 100 at Apex Park, Highbridge.

**STOCK DOVE** *Columba oenas**Fairly common resident breeder; also winter visitor and presumably passage migrant. Probably decreasing.***All seasons**

Probable or confirmed breeding asterisked.

*East and Mendip*

North Cheriton; Hadspen and Cary Moor; Friggle Street, Rodden NR, Norwood Farm, Norton St Philip, Buckland Dinham, and Hardington; Mells Down and Coleford\*; Cheddar Gorge, Charterhouse, Rowberrow Warren and King's Wood.

*Levels north of Poldens*

Westbury-sub-Mendip\*; Cheddar Reservoir\*, Weare, Lower Weare, Cross, Rooks Bridge and Lymsham; Ham Wall, Shapwick Heath, Shapwick Moor, Westhay Moor, Burtle, Catcott Lows and Tealham Moor.

*Bridgwater area, Levels south of Poldens, and Tone and South Levels*

King's Down (Bridgwater); Greinton and Greylake Reserve; Muchelney\*; West Sedge Moor, Aller Moor and Swell Wood; Curry Moor, Knapp and Charlton (Creech Heathfield).

*Central and South Somerset*

Great Breach Wood, Collard Hill and The Shields, Somerton\*; Sutton Bingham Reservoir; Lower Severalls, ST4408 (south of Crewkerne), Crewkerne\* and Bincombe Beeches; Tatworth; Stocklinch Ottersey, Horton Cross, Ashill and Combe St Nicholas.

*Blackdowns*

Whitestaunton; Trickey Warren, three pairs, Stapley\*; and Sampford Point.

*South-west*

Six pairs, Creech St Michael\*; Hankridge LNR and Netherclay; two pairs, Kingston St Mary\*; Bishops Lydeard, Ash Priors Common and Ash Priors; Voxmoor (Wellington)\*, Langford Heathfield and Wiveliscombe.

*Bridgewater Bay*

Brean, Brue Estuary, West Huntspill and Huntspill Sluice; Steart, Steart Marshes, Wall Common, Hinkley Point, Knighton and Lilstock.

*Quantocks*

Fyne Court and Cothelstone Hill; Treble's Holford; Lydeard Hill, Wills Neck, Great Hill and Fire Beacon; Merridge and Plainsfield.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Crowcombe Heathfield, Willett, Lower Vexford, Higher Vexford, Stogumber and Rowdon Farm; Skilgate Wood, Wimbleball Lake, Bury and Bridgetown; Higher Dumbledeer, Broadwood Plantation and Croydon Hill; Dunster, Dunster Hawn, Minehead Marshes, Minehead, Bratton, Blackford, Selworthy, Holnicote, Allerford, Bossington and Porlock Marsh; Brightworthy, Hawkridge and West Hollowcombe Wood; Dulverton, Exebridge Lakes and Hawkwell Cross.

**Flocks**

Flocks of ten or more: at Steart Marshes, peak count in first winter period of 28, January 3rd, exceeded later in year only by 33 on October 5th; 26, Croydon Hill, and 26 also at Higher Dumbledeer, both on March 1st; 17 at Steart village, on 10th; 11, Higher Vexford, April 3rd; 30, Mells Down, August 30th; 20, Sutton Moor, October 10th; 12, Minehead Marshes, November 4th; and by far the largest flock of the year, about 180 feeding in winter wheat crop, Charlton, December 24th.

**Nest sites**

Details of only one nest site: in Barn Owl box near Westbury-sub-Mendip.

Significant increases again in records (292, up 44% on 2018) and sites (116, up 20%), the latter higher than in any year since the *Atlas* period, and the former outstripping even those years. Notable cluster in corridor between Quantocks and Brendons, due to coverage by WL. Proportion of probable or confirmed breeding records is low, but many records mention two birds, which are likely to have been pairs.

**WOODPIGEON** *Columba palumbus****Abundant resident breeder; also winter visitor and passage migrant.***

Ubiquitous, but little analysis possible (or indeed necessary) of the few submitted breeding records.

**Autumn movements**

First indication of the now-regular autumn migration was 500 south over West Monkton, October 22nd. A larger and more concerted movement on 29th included 5,000 over Wall Common in just half an hour (08:00 to 08:30), 760 over Wills Neck and 400–500 over Wimbleball Lake. The next day (30th) saw an estimated 5,000 over the Brue estuary and 7,000 over the Parrett estuary (though presumably a large amount of duplication is involved here), with smaller numbers noted from a number of other sites.

Early November saw further mass movements: 600 north-west in an hour over North Hill on 1st, 500 at Minehead Marshes on 2nd, 560 over Wills Neck on 3rd, and about 1,000 south over Eaker Hill and 450 over the Brue Estuary on 6th. Smaller numbers were noted from other sites on these and other dates in this period. On 19th, 'thousands' flew east along the coast at West Quantoxhead, associated with a large thrush movement. In contrast, regular watches at West Myne only recorded small numbers throughout this period. The last notable movement was of about 1,000 at Sandyway on 24th.

**Other flocks**

No flocks of 100 or more in the early part of the year; the autumn flocks listed here are most likely associated with the movements noted above.

On November 16th, flocks of 150 and 300 round Wimbleball Lake, respectively, and 250 flew into roost at Durlough Reservoir; 250 at West Porlock on 18th; 300 at Comerslade on 21st, and regular counts at Great Hill peaking at 231 on December 1st.

One plea to observers would be to note specifically whether large autumn numbers are flying over on passage or in flocks on the ground or in woodland (some observers routinely do so, others do not) as this will help in ensuring portrayal of an accurate picture in future reports.

**TURTLE DOVE** *Streptopelia turtur*

**Formerly local migrant breeder; now rare visitor.**

One record: an adult in an Aller garden, June 9th/10th, photographed (J. Lee-Potter).

**COLLARED DOVE** *Streptopelia decaocto*

**Common resident breeder and occasional passage migrant.**

**All seasons**

Pairs and confirmed breeding asterisked.

*East*

Milborne Port; Cary Moor; Friggle Street, Buckland Dinham, Hardington, Charlton (Kilmersdon) and Chilcompton.

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay and Bridgwater area*

Berrow, Burnham and Apex Park; Steart, Steart Marshes, Wall Common, Catsford Common and Stolford; Shearston, North Petherton, Stockmoor CP, Bridgwater, Keenthorne and Hawkridge Reservoir.

*Poldens and Levels to north*

Yeo Moor, Draycott, ST4652 (south-east of Cheddar), Cheddar Reservoir, ST4154 (south of Cross), Cradle Bridge and Weare; Ivy Thorn and Ashcott; Westhay, Westhay Moor and Gold Corner.

*Levels south of Poldens and South Levels*

Pedwell, Greinton and Greylake Reserve; Othery, Southlake Moor; East and West Lyng; Bridgwater–Taunton Canal, Durston and North Curry; and Wet Moor.

*Central and South Somerset*

Keinton Mandeville and Somerton; Sutton Bingham Reservoir, East Coker, ST4408 (south of Crewkerne) and Crewkerne\*; Dinnington, Horton Cross\* and Tatworth.

*South-west*

Charlton, Monkton Heathfield and two pairs at Creech St Michael\*; Taunton, Cotford St Luke and Bishops Lydeard; Heathfield, Oake and Wiveliscombe; Poole and about 20 pairs in Wellington\*; Wrangway, Sampford Arundel; and Greenham.

*Quantocks*

Holford, Kilve and East Quantoxhead.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Skilgate; Willett, Higher Vexford and Stogumber; Williton, Washford, Bilbrook and Carhampton; Minehead Marshes, Minehead\* and Bratton; Bossington, Bossington Beach, Porlock Marsh and Porlock; Horner Wood; Withypool, Hawkridge and Hawkwell Cross.

**Counts**

Peak counts of ten or more: 12 in a garden, Wiveliscombe, January 12th; 12, including juveniles, Porlock, June 10th; 14, Buckland Dinham, on 13th; 22, Apex Park, August 2nd; 12, Kilve, September 28th; 20, Hawkwell Cross, October (peak monthly count for year); 14, Minehead Marshes, October 22nd; 11, in a garden, Taunton, November 4th; and 30, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, December 8th.

Both numbers of records submitted (263) and of sites (89) are lower than last year's peak, but still noticeably higher than the latest ten-year average. Comments received were mixed: DKB noted this species was 'apparently scarce or absent now in most of Minehead', and one or two pairs that regularly bred in a Tatworth garden were absent in 2018 (RSO), but RJK and BJH noted that the species was still common in Wellington and Creech St Michael, respectively.

**CUCKOO** *Cuculus canorus*

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

**Spring passage and breeding season**

First record: April 13th at Spire Cross, Winsford Hill. As ever, most records, including first, were of single calling males.

*East and Mendip*

Milborne Port, North Brewham and Friggle Street; Nettlebridge; Black Down and Rowberrow Warren.

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay*

Brean, ST3056 (east of Brean), Berrow and Burnham; Steart, Steart Marshes and Wall Common.

*Levels north of Poldens*

Mark; ST 3560 (south of Rooks Bridge); Ham Wall, Shapwick Heath, Shapwick Moor and Westhay Moor; Tealham Moor, Catcott Lows, Edington Moor, Chilton Moor and Chilton Polden.

*Levels south of Poldens*

Somerton Moor; Greylake Reserve, Moorlinch, Sutton Hams, Weston Level and Moorland.

*South and Tone Levels*

Wet Moor and West Moor (Hambridge); and West Sedge Moor.

*South and South-west*

Pavyott's Mill (East Coker), and near North Coker; Peasmarsh; and Charlton.

*Quantocks*

Cothelstone Hill and Lydeard Hill; Middle Hill, Wills Neck, Great Hill, Fire Beacon and Crowcombe Park Gate; Dowsborough, Frog Hill, Holford Combe, Hare Knap, Stert Combe, Somerton Combe and Hodder's Combe; Lowsey Thorn; Bicknoller, Beacon Hill, Vinny Combe and West Quantoxhead.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Britannia's Shield and Haddon Hill; Brendon Hill; Withycombe, Higher Dumbledeer and Croydon Hill; Periton Hill, Wootton Courtenay and Brockwell; Moor Wood, North Hill and Grexy Combe; Westcott Brake; Hanny Combe, and at many places along north side of Dunkery Hill, on Robin How, and round Horner Valley and Ley Hill; Chetsford Water, Hurdle Down and Lucott Cross; Weir Water, Chalk Water and Malmsmead; Alderman's Barrow, Long Combe and South Common; Blackpitts, Upper Farley Water and Brendon Two Gates; Higher Combe (Exford), Great Nurcott, many parts of Winsford Hill, and Great Bradley Pond; at least eight places down Barle from Pinkery Centre and Driver to Simonsbath, Pickedstones, Landacre Bridge and Brady Moor; and at Sandyway, Old Barrow Plantation and along Dane's Brook.

**Departure**

Only three records after end of June, the last two being of juveniles, at Catcott Lows on August 4th and Shapwick Heath on 21st.

A rufous-phase female was at Greylake Reserve on May 12th.

Both records submitted (276) and sites (117) were down on last year, the latter noticeably so. DKB reports 'a poorish year on Exmoor in general', with EMP recording only 38 males, down from 47 last year, which suggests that the wider picture may be genuine rather than an artefact related to observer effort or some other factor. Hopefully this is a temporary reversal in what has generally been an encouraging trend in recent years.

**BARN OWL** *Tyto alba****Uncommon and now very local resident breeder.*****All seasons**

Pairs and confirmed breeding asterisked.

*East and Mendip*

Friggle Street, Frome, Lullington, Green Parlour, Charlton (Kilmersdon); Coleford\*, Holcombe; East Compton; Priddy Nine Barrows and Priddy; Cook's Field NR\*.

*Levels north of Poldens*

Westbury-sub-Mendip, Cheddar, Chapel Allerton; Queen's Sedge Moor, Common Moor, Panborough, Tadham Moor, Tealham Moor; three pairs, Ham Wall\*, Shapwick Heath, Catcott Lows, Burtle and Edington.

*Levels south of Poldens and Bridgwater area*

Butleigh Moor, Walton Moor, King's Sedge Moor, Greylake Reserve, Weston Level; King's Down, Pawlett Hams; and Spaxton.

*Tone and South Levels, and surrounding areas*

Long Load, Wet Moor; Aller Moor and West Sedge Moor.

*South*

Vagg Hill, Ilchester; Easthams, ST4408 (S of Crewkerne); Chard; and Ashill.

*Bridgwater Bay*

Steart, Steart Marshes and Wall Common.

*Quantocks*

Fyne Court; Treble's Holford and Willett.

*South-west*

Pickney; and Kittisford\*.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Wimbleball Lake; Williton, Bilbrook, Higher Dumbledeer, Dunster Beach, Minehead Marshes; Horner, Hurdle Down, Chetsford Water; Driver Farm and Simonsbath.

**Casualties**

Two birds found dead: one by the A39 near Bilbrook, January 27th, the other at Chetsford Water, October 15th.

Numbers of records submitted (107) and of sites (60) were both noticeably down on 2018 (37% and 20%, respectively); they are, however, very similar to those for 2017. It is difficult, therefore, to draw any conclusions from this – was 2018 an upward spike in the population, or merely of recording effort? The latter seems more likely, though it is of course a popular species with observers and the general public alike. The paucity of data on fledging success for the few confirmed breeding records here unfortunately offers no pointers either way (but see also the Ringing Report).

**TAWNY OWL** *Strix aluco*

***Common resident breeder.***

**All seasons**

Pairs and confirmed breeding asterisked.

*East and Mendip*

Coleford and Stoke St Michael; two pairs, Shepton Mallet\*; East Horrington; Glencot\*, Stockhill, Priddy Mineries and East Harptree Wood; Ubley Warren, Blackmoor NR and Cheddar Gorge; and Rowberrow Warren.

*Levels north of Poldens*

Wells, Westbury-sub-Mendip and Cheddar; Cheddar Reservoir and Lower Weare; Queen's Sedge Moor; Westhay Moor\*, Ham Wall\*, Ashcott Corner, Shapwick Heath, Shapwick and Catcott Lows; Burtle\*, Tealham Moor and Meare.

*Levels south of Poldens and Bridgwater area*

Greylake Reserve; Shearston, North Petherton and Spaxton.

*South*

Sutton Bingham Reservoir, East Coker\* and Yeovil; Crewkerne and Bincombe Beeches; Barrington, Horton Cross and Ilminster; Tatworth; Muchelney and Langport.

*Blackdowns*

Buckland St Mary, Staple Fitzpaine, Staple Common, North Down Plantation and Quants.

*South-west*

Thornfalcon; two pairs, West Monkton\*; Taunton and Galmington; Kingston St Mary\*; Wellington, Kittisford, Bathealton and Milverton; Wiveliscombe and Langley Marsh.

*Quantocks and coast*

Cothelstone Hill, Merridge, Lydeard Hill, Wills Neck, Great Hill and Treble's Holford; Bin Combe; Staple Plantation; Holford and Knighton.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Higher Vexford and two pairs, Stogumber\*; Combe Sydenham; Clatworthy, Cuckold's Combe, Haddon Hill, Wimbleball Lake and Withiel Florey; Chargot Wood, Kennisham Hill and Wheddon Cross; Higher Dumbledeer, Slowley Wood and two pairs, Croydon Hill\*; Timberscombe; Hopcott Common, Periton Hill, Wootton Common and Tivington Plantation; Minehead, Greenaleigh Point, North Hill, Woodcombe, Bratton, Little Headon Plantation, Selworthy, Bury Castle, Bossington and Porlock\*; Webber's Post, Horner Wood and West Luccombe; Chibbet Ford; and Hawkwell Cross.

**Casualties**

One found dead in a garden at Greencombe, Porlock, May 23rd; and two road casualties, one on the A39 near Holford, August 8th, and one, Kittisford, September 2nd.

As noted in *SB* 2018, the BTO conducted a Tawny Owl Calling Survey from October 2018 to March 2019 – not only have they made relevant data available to SOS, but it seems it may have had a more general positive effect on records submitted to us too (191 records from 108 sites, both significant increases compared to 2018). As ever, most calling birds are likely to refer to resident pairs, but that a modicum of caution is needed is illustrated by our Recorder (BDG) hearing the first one from his house in 45 years!



Little Owl, Launcherley (John Hansford)

**LITTLE OWL** *Athene noctua*

***Uncommon and increasingly local resident breeder.***

**All seasons**

Pairs or confirmed breeding asterisked.

*East and Mendip*

Three Ashes (North Cadbury) and Ansford; Hardington\*, Litton Wood\*; and Yoxter.

*Levels north of Poldens*

Launcherley\* and Wells; Cheddar Reservoir; Westhay, Edington, Mark\* and Bason Bridge\*.

*Bridgwater area and Bridgwater Bay*

Shearston\*; Spaxton; Combwich\*, Moxhill\*, Stockland Bristol\*, Stogursey\*, Knighton\* and Shurton\*.

*Central Somerset*

Butleigh\*.

*South Somerset, including South and Tone Levels*

Tatworth; Kingsbury Episcopi\*; Durston and Stoke St Gregory\*.

*South-west*

Creech St Michael\* and Bradford-on-Tone.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Brompton Ralph\*; Dunster Station\*; Porlock and Porlock Marsh.

Numbers of records submitted (78) and sites (33) are similar to the last two years. Though the decline over the last decade or two is no doubt real, and quite worrying, again the turnover of sites between years suggests a larger population than indicated here.

## **LONG-EARED OWL** *Asio otus*

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

### **Breeding**

At least one juvenile fledged from regular site on east side of Bridgwater Bay. Single adults also seen at a new Quantock site and during a survey in West Somerset.

### **First winter period**

One record: one, West Buckland, February 4th.



**Short-eared Owl, Tealham Moor (Jeff Hazell)**

## **SHORT-EARED OWL** *Asio flammeus*

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

### **First winter period/spring (Jan–early May)**

#### *Mendip*

One, Black Down, February 9th and March 23rd.

#### *Levels north of Poldens*

Up to three, Tealham Moor, January 14th–May 6th.

#### *Levels south of Poldens*

One, Aller Moor, February 26th.

#### *Bridgwater Bay*

Up to 4 around the Steart peninsula in January, and still at least two in mid-February, with one lingering until April 5th.

#### *Quantocks*

Singles at Beacon Hill, January 20th, and Great Hill, February 6th–19th.

### *Exmoor*

At least two in the Blue Gate/Kinsford Gate/Hangleby Cleave area, January 15th–February 11th; one Withypool Common, February 11th.

### **Autumn/second winter period (Oct–Dec)**

#### *Levels north of Poldens*

One, Ham Wall, November 8th.

#### *Levels south of Poldens*

One, Aller Moor, November 5th.

#### *Bridgwater Bay*

One or two, Steart peninsula, noted on several dates between October 18th and December 31st; one, Pawlett Hams, December 31st.

A relatively poor showing after 2018's largesse: only 59 records submitted, and nearly half (29) of these were from various parts of the Steart peninsula. Taking maximum counts from sites gives a total of just 17 individuals over the course of the year.

## **NIGHTJAR** *Caprimulgus europaeus*

**Locally fairly common migrant breeder; occasional passage migrant.**

### **Arrival and breeding season**

All figures are of churring males unless otherwise stated. First: Croydon Hill, May 13th; present at six other sites by 19th.

#### *Mendip*

About four, Stockhill/Pridy Mineries; pair, Rod's Pot, Black Down; no record for Rowberrow Warren.

#### *Blackdowns*

Two pairs each, Staple Hill and North Down Plantation.

#### *Quantocks*

First attempt at full survey for many years. Total of 51, an impressive result: one, Buncombe Wood; five, Aisholt Combe and Common/Black Knap; three, Wills Neck; four, Cockercombe, and one in Great Wood; two



### Nightjar, Curry Rivel (Paul Cook)

each, Great Bear, Dowsborough and Knacker's Hole, and one on Woodlands Hill; five, Hare Knap; two each, Longstone Hill, Lowsey Thorn and Black Ball Hill; one, Bicknoller Post, and three each, Weacombe Combe/Hill and Beacon Hill; three, Vinny Combe, and two each, Staple Plain, St Audrie's Deer Park, Smith's Combe and Dens Combe; and one, Greenway Path (QAONB *et al.*).

#### *Brendons and Exmoor*

At least two, Haddon Hill (all west of dam road), and two on Britannia's Shield; nest in Hazery Plantation, Treborough, a new site; three or four, Black Hill/Red Girts; one, Monkham Hill, and two, west side of Withycombe Scruffets; one, Slowley Wood; three, Croydon Hill ridge-track, and two in clear-fell above Long Wood; one above Perley Barn; none along contouring track on west side of Croydon Hill; two, south-west of Broadwood Plantation; three in new clear-fell along perimeter track north-east of Timberscombe Common, and three south-west of Towns Wood, in new clear-fell; one or two around Higher Dumbledeer or on Withycombe Hill; and three, Bat's Castle (Dunster Park). Further east, Bird's Hill and east side of Galloping Bottom visited, but none found in apparently ideal habitat, though they might be deterred by corvid roost.

About four, Grabbist Hill and Alcombe Common to Wootton Common, including Hopcott Common and Periton Combe; one, Little Headon Plantation; three, reservoir area above Woodcombe, and two west of old Army Camp; one in Selworthy Combe; remarkable gathering of nine birds, Bury Castle, July 4th, which were apparently not locally bred; none on west side of Selworthy Beacon, or in Lynch Combe; up to six, Brockwell to Webber's Post, and two, Easter Hill; three in new area south-east of Robin How; two in clear-fell above Luccombe Plantation; at least four, east or west of road, Crawter Hill/Halse Combe/Doverhay Plantation; and one, Smallacombe, but none in Met Combe; Cloutsham Ball not covered.

A good year, with up to 60 churring males on Brendon Hills/Exmoor, the second-highest figure since 2006 (DKB, RJB, RHD, JDH, CPH, DEBL, JRi, CS, Ast, M. Thole, DCW, & FC team organised by AHa). See also the Ringing Report.

#### **Departure**

Two records after August 18th: single migrants at Curry Rivel, September 17th, and Otterhampton, on 18th.

### **ALPINE SWIFT** *Tachymarptis melba*

#### *Very rare visitor.*

One record: one, Ham Wall, April 25th (JLa *et al.*). First seen at around 08:25, then re-found mid-afternoon, it continued to delight visitors until well into the evening. The 11th County record, and the first since 2011.



**Alpine Swift, Ham Wall (Brian Gibbs)**

## **SWIFT** *Apus apus*

**Locally common migrant breeder and passage migrant. Has recently decreased.**

### **Arrival, spring passage and breeding**

First record: one, Ham Wall, April 11th – a full ten days earlier than the first record in 2018 and four days earlier than the latest ten-year average. First flock of note was 40 at Combwich on 30th.

Confirmed or probable breeding at the following sites:

#### *Mendip*

Estimated 25–30 pairs, Coleford; Wookey Hole.

#### *Levels north of Poldens*

Four pairs, Westbury-sub-Mendip; six pairs, Street.

#### *Bridgwater Bay*

Probably bred, Berrow; 20 pairs, Knighton.

#### *Central and South Somerset*

Four pairs, Ruishton\*; eight pairs, Creech St Michael\*; and six pairs, Wadeford\*.

#### *Brendons and Exmoor*

Two or three pairs, Stogumber\*, and three or four at Hawkridge. Apparently no breeding at Williton, Dunster, Minehead or Porlock.,

### **Departure**

Last records: two, Cheddar Reservoir, and one, Wellington, both on September 10th.

### **Counts of 60 or more**

Seventy, Ham Wall, May 1st (and 80 there on 4th); 300, Shapwick Heath, 7th; 100, Cheddar Reservoir, 9th; 110, Catcott Lows, 26th (and 100–150 there on 28th); 118, Gore Point, June 23rd; 80, Croford (near Milverton), July 22nd; and 62, Street, also 22nd.

Numbers of records submitted (325) and sites (135) were both up again on the already high figures of last year, but the number of confirmed breeding records fell once again too. Observers' reports and assessments were similarly mixed. The number of pairs reported from Coleford by JMH increased noticeably, the 'breeding population seems to be doing well' in Langport (J. Leece), and 'numbers in Wellington appeared to be comparable to previous years' (RJK). On the other hand, numbers over Ilminster town centre seemed lower this year (JLT), BES reported 'a poor year' in Berrow, and previously regular sites in Taunton and Williton were known not to be used.

For those sites where it is known, however, productivity appeared to be good: three of four pairs in one house in Westbury-sub-Mendip fledged two young each (the fate of the fourth is unknown), and the six regularly monitored pairs in Wadeford fledged a total of 15 young.

## **KINGFISHER** *Alcedo atthis*

**Uncommon resident breeder; also winter visitor and passage migrant.**

### **All seasons**

Pairs and confirmed breeding asterisked.

#### *East and Mendip*

Cary Moor; Witham Hall Farm, Rodden NR and Orchardleigh Lake; Coleford; Cranmore; Litton and Litton Lakes; Glencot and Priddy Mineries.

#### *Coast of Bridgwater Bay and Bridgwater area*

Berrow, Burnham, Apex Park, Brue Estuary, Huntspill Sea Wall and Sloway Bridge; Steart, Steart Marshes, Wall Common, Catsford Common, Stolford, Stogursey and Knighton; Screech Owl Pits; Ashford and Hawkridge Reservoirs.

#### *Levels north of Poldens*

Rackley\* and Webbington; Wells\*, Queen's Sedge Moor; Sharpham, four pairs at Ham Wall\*, Long Drove, Shapwick Heath, Canada Farm, Catcott Lows and Westhay Moor; and Tealham Moor;

#### *Levels south of Poldens*

Butleigh Moor, Sutton Moor, King's Sedge Moor and Greylake Reserve.

#### *South and Tone Levels*

Long Load, Wet Moor, Muchelney, Thorney Moor; Aller Moor, Southlake Moor, Burrowbridge, West Sedge Moor; Curry Moor and Knapp.

*Central and South Somerset*

Baltonsborough; Sutton Bingham Reservoir\* and East Coker; Crewkerne, Chard Reservoir and Ilminster.

*Blackdowns and South-west*

Otterhead Lakes; Staplehay; Bridgwater–Taunton Canal and Cogload Junction, two pairs, Creech St Michael\*, Hankridge LNR\*, Taunton, Comeytrowe, Netherclay LNR, Staplegrave\* and Bishops Lydeard.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Chipstable; Wimbleball Lake; Dunster Hawn and Minehead Marshes; Bossington Beach, Porlock Marsh and Porlock Weir; Barle Valley and Dulverton.

Numbers of records submitted (287) and sites (80) were very similar to last year, with similarly few confirmed breeding records. There is, therefore, little evidence to refute the suggested longer-term decline in the fortunes of this species (see *SB* 2018), though some comfort may come from the fact that about half the sites from which Kingfishers were reported this year did not feature last year, suggesting that the overall picture is better than any one year might indicate.

**HOOPOE** *Upupa epops***Scarce passage migrant. Has bred.**

Two records: one seen in flight from the A39 near Moorlinch (T Scott), April 20th; one, Minehead Golf Course, November 13th–15th, and very likely present since 11th (BJH *et al.*).

A welcome return after last year's blank, but well below the average showing in the earlier years of this decade.



**Hoopoe, Minehead Golf Course (Mark Stone)**

**WRYNECK** *Jynx torquilla***Rare passage migrant, chiefly in autumn. Former migrant breeder.**

Nine records, all singles in autumn: Yeovil, August 25th (OJM); in a private garden, Long Load, on 26th (PCo); Steart, on 28th (DCW); in a private garden, Combwich, on 30th (RLM); Bossington Beach, on 31st (DD, CS, JLT); Higher Vexford, September 1st (WL); Ham Wall, on 12th (JC); Draycott Sleights, on 13th (JLa); and Wall Common, October 1st (JAS, AMS).

After two lean years, the best since 2010, and on typical dates. Of the 63 Wrynecks recorded in the County in 2010–19, just three have been in spring (the last in 2015), with 43 being found in the last week of August or the first two weeks of September.

The Higher Vexford record is particularly interesting in that it refers to a single tail feather found and positively identified as being of this species; the bird itself was never seen, despite searching.

**LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER** *Dryobates minor***Uncommon resident breeder. Has greatly decreased.****All seasons**

Pairs and confirmed breeding asterisked.

*Mendip*

Wookey Hole.

*Central and South Somerset*

Somerton; and Nine Springs (Yeovil).

*South-west*

West Monkton.

*Quantocks*

Bin Combe, Duke's Plantation, Shervage Wood, Holford Combe, Hodder's Combe and Slaughterhouse Combe\*.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Haddon Hill; Bratton Wood\*, Horner Gate, Horner Wood\* and Tarr Steps.

The number of records submitted (30) was the same as 2018, but the number of sites (15) was one of the better returns this decade. Given the comment in *SB* 2016, it is encouraging to see a number of records from Horner Wood, as well as a spread of outlying sites from where the species has not been reported in recent years.

As is often the case with this species, many of the records were brief contacts with single birds, but breeding was once again confirmed in Slaughterhouse Combe, with two juveniles known to have fledged.

**GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER** *Dendrocopos major*

**Common resident breeder; scarce passage migrant.**

**Breeding season**

Pairs or confirmed breeding (\*) as follows.

*East*

Cary Marsh NR\*.

*Levels north of Poldens*

Cheddar Reservoir\*; Ham Wall\*, Shapwick Heath\*, Westhay Moor\*, Burtle and Edington\*.

*South*

Yeovil\*; Crewkerne\*; Horton Cross\*; Chaffcombe\*, Nimmer\* and Tatworth\*.

*Tone Levels*

Curry Moor\* and Swell Wood\*.

*Blackdowns*

Southey Moor, and two pairs each at Burnworthy and Ringdown Common; Witch Lodge; and two pairs, Wellington Monument.

*South-west*

At least two pairs, Creech St Michael\*, and three at West Monkton\*; Hankridge LNR and Galmington\*; Wellington\*; and two pairs, Langford Heathfield.

*Quantocks*

Bin Combe, Black Hill\*, Hodder's Combe\* and Holford.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Higher Dumbledeer; Minehead\*; Horner Wood; and Hawkwell Cross\*.

**Casualties**

Three recorded, all juveniles: one flew into a window and died, Wellington, June 2nd; one taken by a Sparrowhawk, Middlecombe, Minehead, July 27th; and another suffered a similar fate, Curry Moor, undated.

The comment in *SB* 2018 is borne out by another large increase in records submitted in 2019 (636) of this noisy and conspicuous species, from all parts of the County bar the most treeless upland areas, and throughout the year.

**GREEN WOODPECKER** *Picus viridis*

**Common resident breeder.**

**All seasons**

Pairs and confirmed breeding asterisked.

*East and Mendip*

Milborne Port, North Cheriton, Cadbury Castle and Cary Moor; North Brewham; Friggle Street, Rodden NR, Norton St Philip and Hardington; Great Elm, Mells, Stoke St Michael, White Post (Chilcompton) and Litton; Milton Hill and Glencot\*; Charterhouse, Cheddar Gorge, Beacon Batch, Black Down, Rowberrow Warren, King's Wood, Cross Plain and Crook Peak.

*Levels north of Poldens*

Wells; Yeo Moor, Draycott, ST4652 (south-east of Cheddar), Cheddar, Cheddar Reservoir\*, Cradle Bridge, Washbrook, Weare, ST4054 (north of Lower Weare), ST4154 (south of Cross) and Cross; Glastonbury, Ham Wall\*, Shapwick Heath, Canada Farm, Westhay Moor, Catcott Heath, Catcott Lows, Edington and Tealham Moor; and Edithmead.

*Poldens and Central Somerset*

Lytes Cary; Somerton; Combe Hill, Collard Hill, Ivy Thorn and Ashcott.

*Levels south of Poldens and Tone and South Levels*

Moorland; Long Load, Langport\*, West Sedge Moor and Burton Pynsent; Bridgwater–Taunton Canal, Cogload, Charlton, Knapp and Ham.

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay and Bridgwater area*

Berrow, Burnham and Huntspill Sluice; Steart, Otterhampton, Catsford Common, Lilstock and Kilve; and Shearston.

*South*

East Coker, Nine Springs, Yeovil, Larkhill Open Space and Montacute; Haselbury Plucknett, Easthams, Crewkerne, ST4408 (south of Crewkerne), Bincombe Beeches and Dinnington; Merryfield; Chaffcombe, Chard Reservoir, Chard, Forton, Perry Street\*, Tatworth\* and Burr ridge Cross; and Combe St Nicholas.

*South-west*

Fyfett and Stapley; Britty Common, Mount Fancy, Staple Hill and Quants; Bishops Lydeard, Ash Priors Common, Ash Priors and Heathfield; Wellington and Langford Heathfield.

*Quantocks*

Cotthelstone Hill, Lydeard Hill, Wills Neck, Great Hill, Fire Beacon, Crowcombe Park and Crowcombe Park Gate; Black Hill and Hurley Beacon; Halsway Hill, Bin Combe\*, Woodlands Hill, Hare Knap, Hodder's Combe\* and Longstone Hill; and Hawkridge Reservoir.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Lydeard St Lawrence, Crowcombe Heathfield, Lower and Higher Vexford, and Stogumber; Haddon Hill and Wimbleball Lake; Williton; Higher Dumbledeer, Withycombe Common, Dunster Lawns, Dunster and Dunster Hawn; Wootton Common and Periton Hill; Minehead\*, Bratton, Bratton Wood, North Hill, Selworthy Beacon, Bossington Hill, Hurlstone Combe, Hurlstone Point\*, Bossington and Bossington Beach; West Luccombe, Porlock, Porlock Marsh and Porlock Weir; Dunkery Hill, Sweetworthy Combe, Horner Wood and Ley Hill; Weir Water and Chalk Water; Higher Combe (Exford); Simonsbath, Horsen Farm and Pickedstones.

Another noticeable increase in both records submitted (414, up 33% on 2018) and sites (163, up 20%) – both numbers now far outstrip their respective peaks in the last year of the *Atlas* period. The distinctive and far-carrying call of this species makes recording presence easy, but finding nests is another matter entirely: most of the few confirmed breeding records refer to observations of juveniles, which of course may have moved some distance from where they fledged.

**KESTREL** *Falco tinnunculus*

**Locally fairly common resident breeder; also passage migrant and probably winter visitor. Has locally decreased.**

Total of 444 records (464 in 2018), an even distribution through the seasons.

**Breeding season**

Total of 128 records, mostly from western uplands and Levels. Breeding suspected or confirmed at 12 sites.

*East*

Nettlebridge.

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay*

Highbridge and Huntspill, where bred in nest-boxes.

*Levels*

Shapwick Heath, in nest-box; Westonzoyland, in abandoned Crow's nest; West Sedge Moor, in nest box; and Wet Moor.

*Quantocks*

Weacombe, Vinny Combe, and Doniford.

*Exmoor*

Pairs present at Chetsford Water and Simonsbath.

**MERLIN** *Falco columbarius*

**Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Formerly scarce and very local breeder.**

Total of 76 records; 87 in 2018. Over 45% of records in first winter period and 47% between October and end of year. Similar pattern to previous years', with coastal records dominating second winter period; in the first, inland sites are preferred.

**All records***Mendip*

Cook's Field NR.

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay*

Brue Estuary, Huntspill Sea Wall and Pawlett Hams; Wall Common, Stert Point, Steart Marshes and Stolford.

*Levels north of Poldens*

Allerton Moor, Tealham Moor and Chilton Moor.

*Avalon Marshes*

Westhay Moor, Shapwick Heath and Catcott Lows.

*Bridgwater area*

Stockmoor Country Park and Shearston.

*Levels south of Poldens and South Somerset*

Sutton Moor, Greylake Reserve, Moorlinch Moor and King's Sedge Moor; Curry Moor, West Sedge Moor and Aller Moor; South Petherton and Yeovil.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Higher Dumbledeer; Hurlstone Point and Porlock Marsh; Chetsford Water, Alderman's Barrow and Lucott Cross; Oare; Withypool Common and Kinsford Gate.

Most records in which age/sex was noted referred to immatures or females; males only at Steart, Catcott Lows and Sutton Moor.

**HOBBY** *Falco subbuteo*

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

Total of 235 records; 191 in 2018, 203 in 2017.

**Arrivals and spring passage**

Earliest records: single birds, Ebbor Gorge, April 2nd, and Oakhill, on 3rd; thereafter regular, mainly from Avalon Marshes. Highest counts all from Ham Wall: ten on April 23rd; 36 on 30th; 41, May 5th, and 33 on 7th.

**Breeding season**

Total of 103 records, mostly of single birds, at 35 sites from June to August across County. Breeding, possible or confirmed, reported from four sites.

**Autumn**

Total of 43 records, significantly more than in 2019, mainly from Levels and coast in September. Latest: two, Shapwick Heath, October 15th.

**Hobby, Westhay Moor (Chris Hooper)**



**PEREGRINE** *Falco peregrinus*

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

Total of 354 records; 301 in 2018, 406 in 2017, and 329 in 2016. 40% from Levels and coastal areas.

**Winter periods**

In first, 60% of records from Levels, 30% from coasts, and 10% from moorland in west. In second, 40% from Levels, 40% coastal, especially around Bridgwater Bay, and 20% from western moorland.

**Breeding season**

Fifty-five records, May to July. Breeding confirmed or suspected at eight sites (eight in 2019, seven in 2017, four in 2016): two urban, three coastal and three quarry sites.

Following on from November/December 2018, juvenile showing characteristics of Scandinavian and Russian race *F. p. calidus*, at Catcott Lows, January 9th and 17th (JAH), and at Southlake Moor, on 15th (BJH); presumably all the same bird.

**RING-NECKED PARAKEET** *Psittacula krameri*

**Rare feral visitor or escapee.**

One record: up to three in gardens, Frome, September 16th.

**GREAT GREY SHRIKE** *Lanius excubitor*

**Rare winter visitor and passage migrant.**

Two records of single birds: Stockhill, October 23rd (R. Edmondson); and Room Hill, December 29th (DD).

**JAY** *Garrulus glandarius*

**Fairly common resident breeder; occasional passage migrant.**

Total of 253 records; 224 in 2018, 159 in 2017 and 170 in 2016.

**Breeding season**

Sixty-three records; widely reported inland, fewer in coastal and wetland areas. Insufficient details submitted to allow analysis.

**Winter periods**

Widely reported inland, but few coastal and wetland records; 105 in first winter period and 83 in second. No significant movements.

**MAGPIE** *Pica pica*

**Very common resident breeder. Has increased.**

Total of 253 records; 224 in 2018, 159 in 2017 and 170 in 2016.

**Breeding season**

Sixty-three records; widely reported inland, fewer in coastal and wetland areas. Insufficient details submitted to allow analysis.

**Winter periods**

Widely reported inland, but few coastal and wetland records; 105 in first winter period and 83 in second. No significant movements.

**JACKDAW** *Coloeus monedula*

**Very common resident breeder; scarce passage migrant.**

Total of 282 records; 304 in 2018, 165 in 2017, 131 in 2016 and 196 in 2015; as with Magpie, significant increase in 2018 appears to have been maintained.

**Breeding season**

Although widely reported with 103 records (132 in 2018 and 52 in 2017), insufficient details submitted to allow analysis.

**Winter periods**

Widely reported, with 108 records in first winter period and 73 in second. Largest gatherings: 375, Edington Moor, January 9th, and 2,000, Allcombe Water, on 25th; 600, Dunster, February 15th, and 1,000 there on December 9th.

**ROOK** *Corvus frugilegus*

**Abundant resident breeder.**

Widely reported, with total of 218 records.

**Breeding season**

Records of 18 rookeries; 16 in 2018, nine in 2017, 34 in 2016, eight in 2015, and 21 in 2014, so wide variation between years, possibly reflecting observer activity.

Colonies and nest counts, most of which are occasional records: 13, Mark Road, Burtle; 18, Chilton Drive; two, of eight and 12, Creech St Michael; 64, RNAS Merryfield; 38, Muchelney (65 in 2018); 144, Bickham Wood; 25, Perry Street; 21, Southey Moor; 45, Greenham; 25, Rockwell Green, Wellington (26 in 2018); 40, Wellington; 31, Bathealton; 25, Holford Glen (18 in 2018); and 20, Vinnyford, Tivington.

**Winter periods**

Widely reported. Largest gatherings: in January, 100, Minehead Marshes, on 13th; 120, Bratton, on 18th, and 300, Dunster Beach, on 23rd; 120, Bishops Lydeard, February 11th; and 500, Dunster Beach, October 21st.

**CARRION CROW** *Corvus corone*

**Abundant resident breeder.**

Widely reported; total of 723 records.

**Breeding season**

Total of 256 records from April to August; 326 in 2018 and 194 in 2017; a wide variation possibly reflecting observer activity.

**Winter periods**

Largest gatherings: 150, Williton, January 21st; 110, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, on 27th; 150, Catsford Common, October 20th; and 120, Hinkley Point, on 21st.

**RAVEN** *Corvus corax*

**Locally common and increasing resident breeder.**

Total of 461 records, especially reported from upland sites.

**Breeding season**

Recent totals of suspected or confirmed breeding attempts:

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Sites	35	30	25	24	29	29	32	29

Earliest reports of nesting behaviour in February: at Cheddar Reservoir on 11th and Hurlstone Point on 22nd.

Confirmed breeding records marked with asterisk.

*East and Mendip*

Fairy Cave Quarry\*; Cheddar Gorge\* and Cheddar Reservoir\*.

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay and Levels south of Poldens*

Brean Down; Pawlett Hams\* and Stockland Bristol; Moorlinch Moor\*; St John’s churchyard, Bridgwater; North Moor, Moorland\*; and Curry Moor.

*South and South-west*

Lufton (Yeovil) and West Coker; Horton Cross, Ilminster and Donyatt; Buckland Wood\*; West Monkton and Creech St. Michael.

*Quantock and coast*

Cothelstone Hill\*; Bicknoller\* and Vinny Combe\*; East and West Quantoxhead\*, and Kilve.

*Brendon Hills and Exmoor*

Wimbleball Lake\*; Stream\* and Rodhuish\*; Hurlstone Point\*; Hanny Combe\*; Tom's Hill Combe\* and Lanacombe\*.

**Winter periods**

Widely reported. Highest counts: 102, Cary Moor, March 31st; 35, Lanacre, September 20th; 40, Whit Stones, October 1st; and 20, Porlock Weir, December 23rd.

**COAL TIT** *Periparus ater*

**Common resident breeder; occasional passage migrant, and presumably winter visitor.**

**Breeding season**

Less than 3% of 123 records were from the coast and Levels, widely reported elsewhere. Insufficient records of confirmed breeding to allow analysis.

**Winter periods**

Scarce in coastal areas and Levels, widely reported elsewhere.

**MARSH TIT** *Poecile palustris*

**Uncommon resident breeder. Has decreased.**

Total of 155 records; 118 in 2018, 96 in 2017, 120 in 2016, 130 in 2015, 123 in 2014, and 84 in 2013. Reports from 74 sites and widespread through County; fewer from sparsely wooded habitats, coastal areas and the Levels.

**Breeding season**

Recorded from 42 sites; confirmed breeding marked by asterisk.

*East*

Alfred's Tower; Great Elm and Edford Wood.

*Mendip*

Cheddar Gorge, Velvet Bottom and Rowberrow Warren.

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay*

Knighton.

*Levels north of Poldens*

Glastonbury and Street.

*Central Somerset*

Combe Hill, Great Breach Wood and Somerton.

*South*

Sutton Bingham Reservoir; Chard and Chaffcombe; Horton Cross\*; and Swell Wood.

*Blackdown Hills*

Whitestaunton; Dommatt Wood\*; Fyfett\*; Southey Moor\*, Stapley and Burnworthy; Witch Lodge; Castle Neroche and Mount Fancy; Wellington Monument.

*South-west*

Langford Heathfield.

*Quantocks*

Broomfield Hill and Cothelstone Hill; and East Quantoxhead.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Crowcombe Heathfield; Chipstable and Huish Champflower; Barlynch; Brockwell\*, Hanny Combe\*, Pool Bridge and Horner Wood; Hawk Combe; Simonsbath and Tarr Steps.

**BLUE TIT** *Cyanistes caeruleus*

**Abundant resident breeder; occasional winter visitor and passage migrant.**

Total of 734 records, widely reported throughout the County.

**GREAT TIT** *Parus major*

**Abundant resident breeder; occasional winter visitor and passage migrant.**

Total of 669 records, widely reported throughout the County.



Bearded Tit, Greylake Reserve (Chris Hooper)

**BEARDED TIT** *Panurus biarmicus*

*Scarce and very local resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

**First winter period**

Two, Shapwick Heath, and single birds at Westhay Moor, Ham Wall, Greylake Reserve and Steart Marshes.

**Breeding season**

Present throughout on Westhay Moor, Ham Wall and Shapwick Heath; in May, 19 pairs at Ham Wall, and in July, at least three family parties on Shapwick Heath.

**Autumn and second winter period**

Highest counts: in September, 288 at Ham Wall, and at least 35 on Westhay Moor, where only three in October; in November, two at both Catcott Fen and Steart Marshes; only December record was of one at Shapwick Heath.

**WOODLARK** *Lullula arborea*

**Rare passage migrant, chiefly in autumn. Formerly bred (at least to 1969, perhaps to 1989).**

Three records, all singly: Trickey Warren, September 19th (DWH); Cothelstone Hill, October 17th (TJH); and Burnham, December 12th (AMS).

**SKYLARK** *Alauda arvensis*

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

A total of 389 records, 334 in 2018, 334 in 2017.

**Breeding season**

Total of sites April to July, 217 (192 in 2018 and 158 in 2017). Reported throughout the County, more commonly on uplands and inland moors. Surveys of singing birds: 51, Steart Marshes, (41 in 2018, 40 in 2017); 13, Queen's Sedge Moor; 17, Butleigh/Sutton and Walton Moors; 16, Greylake Reserve; and 122, West Sedge Moor.

**Winter periods**

Largest flocks: 40, Steart Marshes, January 27th, and 100, on 27th; 30, Dunster Beach on October 10th; 26, Black Down on 19th; 180, Trickey Warren, on November 6th; 50, Sandyway, on 10th; and 60, Steart Marshes on 28th.

**Autumn passage**

No significant records.

**SAND MARTIN** *Riparia riparia*

**Uncommon migrant breeder; common passage migrant.**

**Arrivals and spring passage**

Early records: 35, Ham Wall, February 28th, and 20 on March 1st and 2nd; two, Cheddar Reservoir, on 3rd; three, Chard Reservoir, on 6th; and eight, Catcott Lows, on 8th and ten on 13th; thereafter, daily on coastal and inland waters. Highest counts: 100, Cheddar Reservoir, March 23rd, and 1,500 there on 31st; 600, Ham Wall, and 400, Shapwick Heath, on April 4th.

**Breeding season**

Confirmed or suspected breeding: nine pairs in drainage holes, Bathpool; two pairs, Creech St Michael; present at breeding sites, Ashford Reservoir and Exebridge (where actual nests may be in Devon).

**Late-summer and autumn passage**

Highest counts: 500, Ham Wall, August 19th; and 70, Wimbleball Lake, on 25th. Late records: six, Berrow, September 9th; six, Hinkley Point, on 20th; and two, Steart, on 26th.

**SWALLOW** *Hirundo rustica*

**Common migrant breeder and passage migrant.**

**Arrivals and spring passage**

Early records: one, Ham Wall, February 28th; two, Dunster Beach, March 19th, and two, Bossington Beach, on 21st; thereafter daily across County. Highest counts in April: 30, Stogumber, on 4th; 150, Dunster Beach, on 18th; 30, East Coker, on 22nd; and 64, Lympsham, on 28th.

**Breeding season**

Breeding confirmed throughout County.

**Autumn passage**

Largest gatherings: 110, Black Down, September 14th; 380, Hinkley Point, on 20th; 240, Queen's Sedge Moor, on 24th; and 200, Crewkerne, on 30th. Late records: single juveniles, Combwich, December 9th, and possibly the same, Hinkley Point, on 15th.

**HOUSE MARTIN** *Delichon urbicum*

**Common migrant breeder and passage migrant.**

**Arrivals and spring passage**

Early records: one, Ham Wall, February 28th, the earliest Somerset date; two, Bossington Beach, March 21st; 20, Cheddar Reservoir, on 31st, and thereafter small numbers across County.

**Breeding season**

Reported widely throughout the County. Number of nests recorded at nine sites; eight, Castle Cary; three each, Wookey Hole and Berrow; 68, Combwich (46 in 2018, 73 in 2017); three, Edington; 18, Lytes Cary; ten, Sutton Bingham Reservoir; ten, West Monkton (13 in 2018, 18 in 2017); and eight, Bratton, (14 in 2018).

Largest post-breeding gatherings: 50, Sampford Point, and 450, Wimbleball Lake, both on August 25th.

**Autumn passage**

Highest counts, significantly larger than in previous years: 100, Great Hill, September 19th; 1,150, Hinkley Point, on 20th; 360, Hurlstone Point, on 20th, and 500, Knighton, on 21st. Lastly, four at Ham Wall, October 15th.

**CETTI’S WARBLER *Cettia cetti***

*Locally fairly common resident breeder (from 1982): rare passage migrant.*

**All seasons**

Recent totals of records and sites (most sites relate to singing males):

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Sites	24	24	20	18	21	25	23	30	24	34
Records	98	77	71	88	120	155	115	247	212	362

*East*

Two, Rodden NR.

*Levels north of Poldens*

Single birds, Cheddar Reservoir and Rooks Bridge.

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay and Bridgwater area*

One, Lymphsham, June; five, Berrow, all year; one, Burnham, May; one, Brue Estuary, April; four, Apex

**Cetti’s Warbler, Greylake Reserve (Chris Hooper)**



Park, Highbridge, November; three, Huntspill River, May; up to 15, Steart Marshes and Steart peninsula, all year; two, Stolford, April; six, Dunwear Ponds, and four, Screech Owl, Huntworth, all year at both.

*Avalon Marshes*

Maximum counts reported all year: 20, Westhay Moor; 14, Ham Wall; 15, Shapwick Heath; and four, Catcott Fen.

*Levels south of Poldens*

One, Weston Level, Westonzoyland, May, and eight, Greylake Reserve, all year.

*Minehead coast*

Three, Dunster Hawn, all year and one, Minehead, February.

## **LONG-TAILED TIT** *Aegithalos caudatus*

### **Common resident breeder; occasional passage migrant in autumn.**

Total of 383 records; widely reported throughout County.

#### **Breeding season**

Few records confirm breeding, apart from reports of juveniles in family parties. Largest post-breeding flocks: 25, Porlock, June 10th, 23, Easthams (Crewkerne) and 22, Litton, both on 19th; and 16, Shearston, August 1st.

#### **Winter periods**

Widely reported. Largest flocks: 15, Chewton Plain, January 8th; 18, Higher Town, Minehead, on 17th; 13, Ham Wall, February 14th; 15, Dunster Beach, October 23rd; 17, Wimbleball Lake on 29th; 15, Lydeard Hill, November 4th; 30, Apex Park, on 5th; 20, Alcombe, on 14th; 20, Westhay Moor, December 21st; and 19, Bishops Lydeard, on 29th.

## **WILLOW WARBLER** *Phylloscopus trochilus*

### **Common migrant breeder and passage migrant. Has decreased or disappeared in many lowland areas.**

#### **Arrival and spring passage**

First: Bratton, March 22nd. Main passage from 31st into April, including six coastal and Mendip counts of ten to 35 before 20th, when high counts began from inland areas in west.

#### **Breeding season**

Almost all records were of singing males. Outside Mendip plateau, Avalon Marshes and western uplands, where no decline noted, now absent, or at best very thinly distributed.

#### *East*

Milborne Port; Cary Moor; two, Mells Down; and Chilcompton.

#### *Mendip*

Thirteen, Priddy Mineries/Stockhill; three each, East Harptree Wood and Cheddar Gorge; 11, Charterhouse/Black-moor NR; 24, Black Down/Tyning's Farm; and nine, Rowberrow Warren.

#### *Levels north of Poldens*

Washbrook; 42, Ham Wall; ten, Westhay Moor; and 11, Catcott Heath to Chilton Moor.

#### *South*

Recorded only from Sutton Bingham Reservoir, where bred.

#### *South-west*

Three, Fyfett; seven, Southey Moor; three, Stapley; Burnworthy; two, Ringdown Common; 14, Britty Common/ Mount Fancy; three each, Wellington Monument and Buckland Wood; 11, Sampford Point; and five, Langford Heathfield.

#### *Quantocks*

Total of 93 singing males: 57 south of Crowcombe–Nether Stowey road, including five or more at following sites: 12, Broomfield Hill; 11, Cothelstone Hill, and nine, Lydeard Hill; 16, Wills Neck to Fire Beacon; and seven, Over Stowey Common; 36 north of road, including ten on Hare Knapp and 16 in Hodder's Combe/tributaries.

#### *Brendons and Exmoor*

On Brendons, 51 singing on Haddon Hill and 50 on circuit of Wimbleball (perhaps with some overlap); five in young conifers of Britannia's Shield and two in Brompton Regis Forest. On Exmoor, total of 243 (207 males) by EMP in both counties, the highest count in 14 years, including 37 in Weir Water/Chalk Water, 38 on Winsford

Hill, and 36 from Simonsbath to Hillway. Many casual counts of small numbers elsewhere on north-east Exmoor and from North Hill to Selworthy Beacon.

#### **Autumn passage**

Total of about 55, mid August to mid September, mainly on coast, Levels or Quantocks. Only three later birds, the last on 28th.

### **CHIFFCHAFF** *Phylloscopus collybita*

*Very common migrant breeder and passage migrant; increasing winter visitor.*

#### **January/February**

At least 70 at 27 sites, of which 13 held more than one bird; half the numbers of 2018, but more widely dispersed. About 30 around five STWs, including highest counts of 12 at Pudleigh, six at Ilminster, and five each at Bruton and Milverton. Most others along coast of Bridgwater Bay, around reservoirs, in Avalon Marshes and in Taunton area. As usual, only one or two on higher ground.

#### **Arrival and spring passage**

First song at Bossington, February 22nd. Steady passage from March 13th, with highest counts of 20 at Yeovil on 19th, 12 at Bossington on 20th, and 15 on Butleigh/Sutton/Walton Moors on 27th. More widespread in April, with 12 counts of ten to 14 birds before 20th.

#### **Breeding season**

From April 20th to mid June, 23 counts of six or more singing males.

##### *East and Mendip*

Eight, Cary Moor; nine, Norton St Philip; and eight, Rowberrow Warren.

##### *Levels north of Poldens*

Six, Washbrook; ten, Lower Weare; 16, Ham Wall, and eight, Westhay Moor.

##### *South*

Eleven, East Coker; maximum of 18 territories, Crewkerne parish, and in adjacent parts of neighbouring parishes (AJP); six, Merryfield; and ten, Forton.

##### *South-west*

Nineteen, Witch Lodge; 24, Britty Common/Mount Fancy; 11, Stapley; six each, Burnworthy and Netherclay LNR; and 13, Ash Priors Common.

##### *Quantocks*

Nine, Broomfield Hill; six, Cothelstone Hill; and eight, Over Stowey Common.

##### *Brendons and Exmoor*

Seventeen, Wimbleball Lake; 20, Haddon Hill; and seven, Horner Wood.

#### **Autumn passage**

About 90 in August, and 290 in September, including curious assembly of 28 at Cary Marsh on 8th, and 25 at Brean Down on 18th.

#### **Second winter period**

Passage of small numbers continued to third week of October, followed as usual by pause before winter visitors appeared from mid November; by 30th, 11 at Ham Wall. About 160 in December, all on coast or in lowlands, with concentrations in STWs at Crewkerne, Pudleigh, Ilminster and Bishops Lydeard, and of seven in rank vegetation on Butleigh Drove.

#### **Other races**

About eight single birds, November/December, at Berrow, Steart and Avalon Marshes, and two at Crewkerne STW, with characteristics of Siberian race *Ph. c. tristis*: the Crewkerne birds responded to a *tristis* tape, which was ignored by other Chiffchaffs (KT).

### **WOOD WARBLER** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

*Locally common but declining migrant breeder; uncommon passage migrant. Has decreased.*

#### **Arrival and spring passage**

First: one, Little Headon Plantation, April 3rd, a very early date. Four other obvious migrants: two at The Shields, Somerton, on 16th; and single birds at Greenleigh Point on 20th, and at Burnham on May 1st. Main arrival on Quantocks and Exmoor from April 20th.

**Breeding season***Quantocks*

Maximum of 44 singing males: three each in Aisholt Combe, Over Stowey Common and Bin Combe; one on Wills Neck; and all others at sites north of Crowcombe Park Gate–Nether Stowey road: five, Shervage Wood; 13, Holford Combe/Frog Combe; one, Robin Upright's Hill; and 15, Hodder's Combe and all tributaries.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

At least five around Wimbleball Lake, in Haddon Wood, Hartford Bottom, Wimbleball Wood and Upton Cleave; no records from Barlynch Wood or Croydon Hill; single pairs, North Hill and Little Headon Plantation; total of perhaps 20, Horner Woods and East Water, where no widespread survey, and two from Brockwell to Luccombe Plantation; one, Hawk Combe, and about five, Porlock Parks; single birds, Culbone and Weir Wood; one at Simonsbath; two at Tarr Steps, at least six along Barle and in side combes from Hawkridge to Marsh Bridge, and two in Looseall Wood. Much suitable woodland seldom visited, being private, steep, or remote from roads; in particular, Exe Valley below Winsford and coastal woods west of Porlock Weir.

**Departure**

Last on breeding grounds: one singing in Slade Combe, July 6th. None on autumn passage.

**YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER** *Phylloscopus inornatus*

*Still scarce but increasingly frequent passage migrant and winter visitor.*

**First winter period**

Birds recorded in 2018 for Pen Mill, Yeovil stayed until early April, when one was singing on 6th. Those at Perry Street and Tatworth not seen after mid January. One at Bruton STW, omitted in *SB* 2018, stayed until January 6th; another briefly visited a Chilton Trinity garden on 24th.

**Autumn passage and second winter period**

About nine on passage, singly unless stated: Brean Down, October 14th, joined by another on 15th; Bishop's Hull, on 16th; Start, on 17th; Langport, on 20th; Berrow, on 27th, and Brean Down, on 28th/29th (perhaps two); Greylake Reserve, November 10th; and Cavalier Way, Yeovil, from 11th to 16th; Greylake bird seen again from December 3rd to 8th; and one, Ham Wall, on 21st.

**Yellow-browed Warbler, Greylake Reserve (Brian Gibbs)**

**AQUATIC WARBLER** *Acrocephalus paludicola*

**Rare passage migrant in autumn.**

One caught and ringed, Steart, August 26th (DCW).

**SEDGE WARBLER** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

**Locally common migrant breeder and passage migrant. Has decreased.**

**Arrival and spring passage**

First: Westhay Moor, April 11th. Arrival and odd passage birds from then to mid May, including six at Stert Point, April 21st.

**Breeding season**

All singing males/pairs, April 20th–July 30th, with total for site if more than one.

*East*

Cary Moor; North Brewham; three, Rodden NR; Nettlebridge and Coleford.

*East coast of Bridgwater Bay and Levels north of Poldens*

Nine, east of Brean/Berrow; three, Apex/Brue Estuary; six, north-west of Lympsham; two, Cradle Bridge; Westbury Moor; five, Queen's Sedge Moor; Kennard Moor; seven, Ham Wall, and five, Shapwick Heath; four, Catcott Fen/Catcott Lows; four each, Westhay Moor and Chilton Moor; and Tealham Moor.

*Bridgwater area and Levels south of Poldens, including Tone Levels*

Sixteen, Greylake Reserve; four, Butleigh Moor; six, Weston Level; 24, North Moor, Moorland; 74, West Sedge Moor; and four, Curry Moor.

*South*

Yeovil and South Crewkerne (both probably transients); and 18, West Moor, Hambridge.

*South-west*

Screedy Lakes, Milverton.

*Quantock Coast*

At least 24, Steart to Catsford Common and Wall Common.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

At least one pair, Wimbleball Lake; two, Minehead Marshes; and four, Porlock Marsh (perhaps migrants).

**Autumn passage**

Total of about 12, August–September 7th, excluding 20 lingering around Steart up to September 2nd.

**REED WARBLER** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

**Locally common migrant breeder and passage migrant. Has increased.**

**Correction**

**2018**

On p. 102, seven lines from foot: for “750”, read “250”.

**2019**

**Arrival and spring passage**

First: Ham Wall, March 27th. Main arrival from April 16th; then daily through month, and double-figure counts in Avalon Marshes from 20th.

**Breeding season**

All records of singing males, with site totals where more than one; May and June birds heard in unlikely breeding areas are omitted.

*East and Mendip*

Nine, Cary Marsh; six, Rodden NR; two, Torr Works Reservoir; and five, Priddy Mineries.

*East coast of Bridgwater Bay and Levels between Mendip and Poldens*

Seven each, Berrow/east of Brean, and around Burnham, mostly in Crooked Lane area; two, Apex/Brue Estuary; seven each, north-west of Lympsham and Lower Weare; Crab Hole; eight, Cheddar Reservoir to Cradle Bridge, and seven, Rooks Bridge; in Avalon Marshes, six on Shapwick Heath, 28 on Ham Wall, 30 on Westhay Moor and 22 on Westhay Heath; six, Catcott Fen/Lows; and two, Chilton Moor.

*Bridgwater area and King's Sedge Moor*

Along Bridgwater–Taunton Canal, six from Cogload to Creech St Michael; Durleigh Reservoir; 16, Weston Level, and nine, Greylake Reserve.

*Central and South Somerset*

Baltonsborough; Yeovil and Sutton Bingham Reservoir; six, Pavyott's Mill, East Coker; south of Crewkerne; four, Chard Reservoir; and 13, West Moor, Hambridge.

*Tone Levels*

Four, West Sedge Moor; six, Curry Moor; and near Creech St Michael.

*Quantock coast*

Total of about 25, Steart to Lilstock, including Steart Marshes, Wall Common and Catsford Common.

*Exmoor coast*

Up to six, Dunster Hawn; seven, Tesco's Pit; and Porlock Marsh.

**Autumn passage**

As usual, a few stragglers on breeding grounds in August, but no double-figure counts after 1st. Only 12 in September, the last at Greylake on 27th.

**GRASSHOPPER WARBLER** *Locustella naevia*

**Uncommon and irregular migrant breeder, usually under-recorded; also passage migrant, chiefly in spring.**

**Arrival and spring passage**

First: single birds reeling, Brean Down and Berrow, April 13th. Another 14 in April, including three on Dunkery, two on Brean Down, two on Mendip, and others at Steart, on King's Sedge Moor, on Quantocks, at Dunster, and on Exmoor.

**Breeding season**

Some spring birds may have stayed to breed. An important EMP route on Upper Barle was not covered; only 11 at following sites, May–mid July, usually in song:

*Mendip*

Black Down.

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay*

Steart Marshes.

*Avalon Marshes*

Westhay Moor.

*Exmoor*

Total of nine: one on North Hill; and eight from Dunkery Hill to Lucott Moor and Chalk Water.

No idea of full Exmoor numbers can be obtained without dawn visits during six-year RSPB Surveys, which have now (temporarily?) ceased: in 2008, 327 were heard, and 179 in 2014, but some of these were probably passage birds.

**Autumn passage**

Only four, July 20th–August 30th, all in different areas.

**SAVI'S WARBLER** *Locustella luscinioides*

**Rare but increasingly regular visitor.**

One record: singing male, Ham Wall, late May–June 20th (RSPB, JLT).

**BLACKCAP** *Sylvia atricapilla*

**Very common migrant breeder and passage migrant; uncommon winter visitor.**

**January to mid March**

Total of about 60 at 32 sites, a slight decrease. Mostly in gardens, churchyards and other sheltered sites throughout lowlands, and mainly in ones and twos, but up to five together at Yeovil, Muchelney and Minehead.

**Arrival and spring passage**

First high count: 50, at Ham Wall, April 8th. Widespread by end of month.

**Breeding season**

Counts of five or more singing males.

*East and Mendip*

Ten, Cary Moor; nine, Rode; five, Norton St Philip; 15, Mells Down; six, west of Charlton; five, Priddy Nine Barrows; six each, Beacon Batch and Velvet Bottom; and seven, Rowberrow Warren.

*East coast of Bridgwater Bay and Levels between Mendip and Poldens*

Seven, Berrow, and ten, north-west of Lympsham; 14, Weare/Lower Weare; 13, Shapwick Heath (East), and 25, Ham Wall; 16, Westhay Moor; and 13, Catcott Heath.

*South*

Ten, South Crewkerne; eight, Merryfield; seven, Park Wood, Chaffcombe; and eight each, Forton and West Sedge Moor.

*South-west*

Eight, Southey Moor, and nine, Stapley; 13, Burnworthy; 20, Witch Lodge; 21, Britty Common/Mount Fancy, and five, Wellington Monument; ten, Creech St Michael to Cogload; 11, Netherclay LNR; nine, Ash Priors Common; 15, Langford Heathfield, and five, Greenham.

*Quantocks*

Eight, Broomfield Hill, and 14, Cothelstone Hill; five, Wills Neck; eight, Over Stowey Common; five, Holford Combe, and 16, Hodder's Combe/tributaries.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Nineteen, circuit of Wimbleball Lake, and ten, Bury to Hartford Bottom; 11, Horner to Stoke Pero; nine, Lower Weir Water, and five, Lower Chalk Water; and on Barle, eight from Simonsbath to Cow Castle, and five from Three Waters to Castle Bridge.

**Autumn passage and winter arrivals**

Post-breeding gatherings of 20, Bossington Beach, July 14th and August 4th. In August, 37 records of up to seven together, often in gardens. About 140 passage birds, August 27th–October 11th, mainly on coasts, including 19 at Berrow on first date; on September 18th, 30 on Breaun Down and ten on Bossington Beach. First wintering arrivals from October 21st, but only 17 to end of November, followed by 30 in December, singly or up to three together, at various places

**GARDEN WARBLER** *Sylvia borin*

*Locally fairly common migrant breeder and passage migrant.*

**Arrival and spring passage**

First: Shapwick Heath, April 13th. About 30 more in April; most probably arrived from 30th to May 10th.

**Breeding season**

Total of about 106 singing males, a slight decrease on 2018, but see note on Quantocks. Some Exmoor and Blackdown sites, especially on steep scrub, are seldom visited, and on the whole Garden Warblers are under-recorded. Records of solo singing males unless otherwise stated.

*East and Mendip*

Rodden NR; Buckland Dinham; five, Mells Down; Black Down; five, Blackmoor NR, and two north-east of Charterhouse; and two, Rowberrow Warren.

*Levels between Mendip and Poldens*

Eight, Ham Wall; four each, Shapwick Heath, Westhay Moor and Catcott Heath; Catcott Lows; Tadham Moor; Cheddar Reservoir and north of Lower Weare.

*South*

No records.

*South-west*

Biscombe; Mount Fancy; Quants; Cogload Junction; Ash Priors Common, Langford Heathfield and Kittisford.

*Quantocks*

Five, Broomfield Hill, and two, Lydeard Hill; three each, Aisholt Common and Cothelstone Hill; two each, Wills Neck and Great Hill; Robin Upright's Hill; two, Frog Hill; four, Hodder's Combe/tributaries; Bin Combe, Shervage Wood, Frog Combe and Hare Knap. Northern and north-western combes not covered this year.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Four, Wimbleball Lake/Haddon Hill; Dunster Hawn; Allerford; two, Brockwell; Dunkery Hill Gate; five, Horner/Ley Hill/Crawter Hill; two, Hollow Combe/East Water; Porlock Weir; Chetsford Water; four, Weir Water; Chalk Water; two, Warren Bridge to Orchard Bottom; two from Simonsbath to Cow Castle and one in Horse Wood; Lower Willingford Bridge.

**Autumn passage**

About 11, all but one inland, August 2nd–September 10th.



Lesser Whitethroat, Mells Down (John Hansford)

**LESSER WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia communis*

***Locally fairly common migrant breeder; uncommon passage migrant.***

**Arrival and spring passage**

First in spring: one, Mells Down, March 29th, the earliest Somerset date, followed from April 19th by daily records.

**Breeding season**

About 73 singing males, one more than last year, and almost all on low ground east of a line from Hinkley Point to Chard. All single pairs or singing males, unless otherwise stated.

***East and Mendip***

Two each, Cary Moor, Templecombe, and Blackmoor Vale; Friggle Steet, Frome; three, Mells Down; and Rowbarrow Warren.

***East coast of Bridgwater Bay and Levels between Mendip and Poldens***

Five or six, Brean Down to Burnham and Huntspill Sluice; five, north-west of Lympsham; North Wootton; two each, Queen's Sedge Moor and Ham Wall; Shapwick Heath, Catcott Heath, Catcott Lows, Chilton Moor and Burtle; south of Cross and at Cradle Bridge; three near Cheddar Reservoir; Chilton Polden and Edington.

***Tone Levels***

West Sedge Moor and Knapp.

***Central and South Somerset***

Green Down and Compton Dundon; two, Lyde Road, Yeovil, where bred; two each, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, Merryfield and Donyatt; Chilthorne Domer; King's Moor; and Knowle St Giles.

***South-west***

Cogload Junction.

***Quantock and Exmoor coasts***

About 17 from Steart and Combwich to Wall and Catsford Commons, and at Lilstock; Watchet; and two, Dunster Beach/Minehead Marshes.

**Autumn passage**

Total of 17 birds, June 29th–September 26th, of which three were coastal and two were on Black Down.

## **WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia communis*

**Common migrant breeder and passage migrant.**

### **Arrival and spring passage**

First: Brean Down, April 9th; daily passage from 16th, and main arrival from 19th to first week of May. Five counts of ten to 15 in that period.

### **Breeding season**

All sites listed, with numbers for two or more singing males after April 25th. Total of about 400, similar to 2017/18.

#### *East*

Twelve, Cary Moor; North Brewham; Rodden NR; three, Norton St Philip; 'conservative estimate' of 50, Mells Down (JMH); Buckland Dinham; two, Hardington; west of Charlton; and ten, north of Chilcompton.

#### *Mendip*

Four, Priddy Mineries/Nine Barrows; Draycott; six, north-east of Charterhouse, and three, Nether Wood (perhaps same?); eight each, Velvet Bottom and Blackmoor NR; six, Cheddar Gorge/Black Rock; nine, Black Down West, three south of Beacon Batch, and seven east of Tynning's Farm; three, Rowberrow Warren; and five, Cross Plain/Crook Peak.

#### *East coast of Bridgwater Bay and Levels north of Poldens*

About five, Brean Down; about 20, Brean/Berrow, and three east of Brean; four, Burnham; three, north-west of Lympham; two, Cradle Bridge; Huntspill River; four, Ham Wall, and ten, Shapwick Heath/Moor; four, Westhay Moor, two each, Catcott Heath and Catcott Lows; three, Chilton Moor; and Tealham Moor.

#### *Bridgwater area, Levels south of Poldens and Tone Levels*

Five, Stockmoor Country Park; two, Butleigh Moor; eight, Weston Level; West Sedge Moor; and five, Curry Moor.

#### *Central and South Somerset*

Six, Somerton; Sutton Bingham Reservoir; four, South Crewkerne, and six, Easthams; nine, Dinnington area; two, Merryfield; four, King's Moor; 16, Curry Rivel to Burton Farm; and four, Curry Mallet.

#### *South-west*

As in 2018, apparently none on Blackdowns; five, Creech St Michael to Cogload; two, Netherclay LNR; and Langford Heathfield.

#### *Quantocks and Coast*

Treble's Holford; four, Broomfield Hill, eight on Cothelstone Hill, and 13 on Lydeard Hill; two, Wills Neck, and five, Fire Beacon; six, Great Hill; Frog Hill/Black Hill; five, Hodder's Combe/tributaries; two each, Dowsborough and Woodlands Hill; six, Hare Knap; Bicknoller Post; Vinny Combe; and Spaxton. On coast: four, Steart Marshes; two, Wall Common; five, Stolford; three, Lilstock; and six, Kilve Beach.

#### *Brendons and Exmoor*

Two, Wimbleball Lake; Willet and Williton; seven, Blue Anchor to Minehead Marshes; 12, North Hill, and two, Hurlstone Point; again, none in Porlock Vale; five, Brockwell; three, Easter Hill, and two, Dicky's Path; four, Winsford Hill; and single birds at Horsen, on Barle below Simonsbath, and at Pinkery Centre.

### **Autumn passage**

Most records in first three weeks of August were from breeding areas. After this, 30 records up to September 18th, including 15 at Berrow on August 27th. One later record: one, Rodden NR, November 29th.

## **DARTFORD WARBLER** *Sylvia undata*

**Resident breeder, locally fairly common in some years, but badly affected by hard winters. Also rare passage migrant and perhaps winter visitor.**

#### *Mendip*

Male singing, Crook Peak, March 30th; joined by another male, April 1st (DW).

#### *Quantocks*

Recorded from six sites: one, Longstone Hill, February 2nd (NEW), probably the bird from 2018; male, Woodlands Hill, March 20th (BDG); one, Hare Knap, April 29th–May 11th (MC, CPH, SN), joined by another on 11th, and by second male and juvenile on July 14th and August 1st (BDG); on July 3rd, singing male, Beacon Hill, and pair, Bicknoller Post (JDH); one, Kilve Beach, August 28th (DW); and one, again on Beacon Hill, November 23rd (MS).

*Exmoor*

Present all year on ridge from North Hill to Hurlstone, with day-counts of up to eight; mostly from Moor Wood to Woodcombe, but colour-ringed bird in Hurlstone Combe, March 26th, and several autumn records of ones and twos on Selworthy Beacon and Bossington Hill (BDG, JRi, DCW *et al.*); elsewhere, single birds in Alcombe Combe, November 4th, and on Grabbist, December 2nd (AST).

**FIRECREST** *Regulus ignicapilla*

**Scarce and very local breeder; scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.**

**First winter period and spring passage**

Remarkably, no birds were found to have wintered from 2018 to 2019: three that arrived in November/December did not stay into January, and only one appeared in February, a male that sang at Dunster Castle from 25th to 27th.

Only three on spring passage: two, Somerton, April 15th, and one, Catsford Common, on 19th.

**Breeding season***East and Mendip*

Recorded from four sites: single birds on three dates on Somerset ground by Alfred's Tower, April 27th–May 19th (NAS, JLT); three singing nearby in King's Wood Warren, June 28th (GP); one singing, Stockhill, July 1st (L. Delve); and one at Nettlebridge, August 2nd (JMH, who later found one in a tit flock at Stockhill on 24th, which may have been locally bred).

**Autumn passage and second winter period**

Total of probably 40–50: four in September, 11 in October; eight in November; and perhaps as many as 20 in December, after allowing for much duplication at popular sites. Until then, most had been coastal, from Steart to Porlock Weir, with only one in Avalon Marshes; in December, most were at Ham Wall or Berrow; odd birds at Yeovil, Chard Junction, Taunton and Wiveliscombe STW.

**GOLDCREST** *Regulus regulus*

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

**First winter period**

Many records this year came from English Winter Bird Survey, especially from Mendip Plateau, where conifer plantations are numerous; Rowberrow Warren had counts of up to 11.

**Breeding season**

Selected records, either for numbers or little-recorded sites.

*East*

Present at Hadspen and Friggle Street.

*Mendip*

Four, East Harptree Wood, and 13, Rowberrow Warren.

*Levels north of Poldens*

Present at Cheddar Reservoir and at four sites in Avalon Marshes.

*Bridgwater area*

Possibly bred at Steart, an unlikely site!

*South*

Bred, Sutton Bingham Reservoir; two pairs, Park Wood, Chaffcombe; and families at Forton and Langport in July.

*Blackdowns*

Only single pairs, Witch Lodge and Stapley; present, Langford Heathfield.

*South-west*

Present on Ash Priors Common.



Goldcrest, Shapwick Heath (Jeff Hazell)

*Quantocks*

Widely recorded south of Crowcombe Park road; also present at Treble's Holford.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Many records from area of Crowcombe Heathfield, Stogumber, Willet, and Higher and Lower Vexford; four, Dunster Hawn, in June; in deciduous woods, frequent in Horner/East Water, six along Barle below Simonsbath, and four at Tarr Steps.

**Autumn passage and second winter period**

Some coastal passage, followed by arrival of winter visitors or concentrations of locally bred birds: up to four, Brean Down and Highbridge, on four dates, September 30th–October 15th; 30 in small part of Harridge Wood, Nettlebridge, on 31st; ten, Berrow, November 17th; 12, Ham Wall, December 6th; ten again at Berrow on 21st, and at least five, Ilminster STW, on 29th.

**WREN** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

**Abundant resident breeder.**

**Breeding season**

Counts of over 15 birds (not pairs), from BBS or other sources, April–June.

*East and Mendip*

Twenty-three, East Harptree Wood; 19, Stockhill; 17 each, south of Beacon Batch and Cross Plain.

*Levels between Mendip and Poldens*

Sixteen, Weare, and 18, Lower Weare; and 16, Shapwick Heath (East).

*Bridgwater area*

Sixteen, Catsford Common.

*South and Blackdowns*

Twenty-four, East Coker; 30, South Crewkerne; 40, West Sedge Moor; and 21, Stapley.

*Exmoor*

Seventeen, Simonsbath to Cow Castle.

**NUTHATCH** *Sitta europaea*

**Fairly common resident breeder.**

Not divided into seasons, but \* for proved or probable breeding. Single birds or up to two pairs, unless otherwise stated.

*East*

Alfred's Tower; Hardington; Edford Wood and Harridge Wood.

*Mendip*

Wookey Hole; Litton, Chewton Wood and East Harptree Wood; Priddy Mineries and Stockhill; Black Down; Rowberrow Warren; and Cross Plain\*.

*Avalon Marshes and Poldens*

Ham Wall and Ivy Thorn.

*South*

Yeovil and Nine Springs; Pavyott's Mill; Sutton Bingham Reservoir\*; Bincombe Beeches; Forton\*, Tatworth\* and Chard Reservoir; Horton Cross\*; Langport\* and Swell Wood\*.

*Blackdowns*

Stapley, Burnworthy and Ringdown Common.

*South-west*

Monkton Heathfield and West Monkton\*; Cotford St Luke, Bishops Lydeard, Ash Priors and Pyleigh; Heathfield; Wellington and Langford Heathfield.

*Quantocks and Coast*

King's Cliff; Fyne Court, Broomfield and Broomfield Hill; Cothelstone Hill and Lydeard Hill; Aisholt Combe; Bagborough Plantation; Wills Neck; Triscombe Stone/Quarry; Cockercombe; Great Hill and Fire Beacon; Crowcombe Heathfield; Crowcombe Park and Dead Woman's Ditch; Bin Combe, Duke's Plantation and Woodlands Hill; Holford and Holford Combe\*; Hodder's Combe; Bicknoller Combe; and Staple Plain.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Willet and Lower Vexford; Chipstable\* and Clatworthy Reservoir; up to ten pairs, Haddon Hill and round Wimbleball Lake; Withycombe Common; Dunster Hawn; five sites round Minehead; Holnicote; Brockwell,

Horner and Halse Combe; Weir Water; Culbone; on Exe at Orchard Bottom, Higher Combe, Week Wood, Barlynch and Perry Bridge; The Allotment, Winsford Hill; on Barle at Simonsbath and Tarr Steps; three pairs in Marsh Bridge area, and one in Looseall Wood.

## **TREECREEPER** *Certhia familiaris*

### **Fairly common resident breeder.**

Not divided into seasons, but most are probably sedentary. Asterisk\* for proved or probable breeding.

#### *East and Mendip*

Cary Moor; Alfred's Tower; Great Elm and Mell's Down; seven in song, Cranmore Tower area; Stoke St Michael; Edford Wood; Litton and Chewton Wood; Wookey Hole; Stockhill; north-east of Charterhouse; Rowberrow Warren; and Cross Plain.

#### *Levels between Mendip and Poldens*

Cheddar Reservoir; about three each, Ashcott Corner/Ham Wall\* and Shapwick Heath to Canada Farm; and Westhay Moor.

#### *Central Somerset*

Four in April in The Shields, Somerton; and Great Breach Wood.

#### *South*

Eight at Nine Springs in March; Larkhill Open Space, Yeovil; Sutton Bingham Reservoir\*; South Crewkerne, Lower Severalls and Bincombe Beeches; Park Wood, Chaffcombe; Tatworth, Forton and Chard Reservoir; Langport\*; and Swell Wood.

#### *Blackdowns*

Crickleaze; Fyfett; Otterhead Lakes; Stapley; Burnworthy; Witch Lodge and Castle Neroche\*; and Wellington Monument.

#### *South-west*

West Monkton\*; Netherclay LNR; Bishops Lydeard and Ash Priors Common; Heathfield; Wiveliscombe; Wellington Basins; and Langford Heathfield.

#### *Quantocks*

Fyne Court and Broomfield Hill; Cothelstone Hill and Lydeard Hill; Bagborough Plantation, Wills Neck and Great Hill; Crowcombe Heathfield; Bin Combe; Hodder's Combe\*; and Holford.

#### *Brendons and Exmoor*

Willet, Lower Vexford and Stogumber; Haddon Hill\*; Dunster Hawn; five sites around Minehead; Selworthy, Holnicote and Bossington; Webber's Post, Horner Wood and Brockwell; Porlock Parks; near Exford at Higher Combe and Lincombe Farm; Horsen and Simonsbath\*; and Tarr Steps. A wanderer was at Hurlstone Point on December 16th.

## **ROSE-COLOURED STARLING** *Pastor roseus*

### **Rare summer and autumn visitor.**

One record: adult video'd feeding on Larkhill Open Space, Yeovil, at 05.20 hrs BST, June 21st (OJM).

## **STARLING** *Sturnus vulgaris*

### **Very local and decreasing resident breeder; abundant winter visitor and passage migrant.**

#### **First winter period and spring passage**

Highest counts up to early March: 500,000, Ham Wall roost, January 1st; 800,000, February 2nd, reducing to 1,000 by 13th, and to 100 by 23rd; no other counts of over 1,500 on Mendip or Levels, apart from 2,000 at Burtle, March 7th. At Exmoor roosts, 9,000 approaching Litton, January 23rd, and on 25th, 58,000 at Allcombe Water, which is now much the larger site, and more easily countable, with a public footpath under the main approach line.

#### **Breeding season**

Records for about 30 sites, mid April to late June, but numbers were very low. Some observers probably fail to realise need for submitting records for a species that has been regarded in the recent past as abundant, but is now by no means in that class. All sites are here given; many of the very small number of records received come from BBS, which is much better than nothing, but provides no proof of breeding, or even of singing males.

#### *East and Mendip*

In early April, still 80 at Cary Moor, but no later records; up to eight, Milborne Port to Charlton Horethorne.

*Levels from Mendip to Poldens*

Two, Draycott, and eight, south-east of Cheddar; two at Weare in April, 14 there in late May, and one at Lower Weare; about ten, Crab Hole/Compton Bishop; three, Rooks Bridge and four, east of Brean; eight, Burtle; and flock with young, Edington, late May.

*Central and South Somerset*

Three each, Somerton and Keinton Mandeville; ten pairs bred, Sutton Bingham Reservoir; bred, Crewkerne and Combe St Nicholas.

*Quantock coast*

Two each, Stockland Bristol and Stolford.

*South-west*

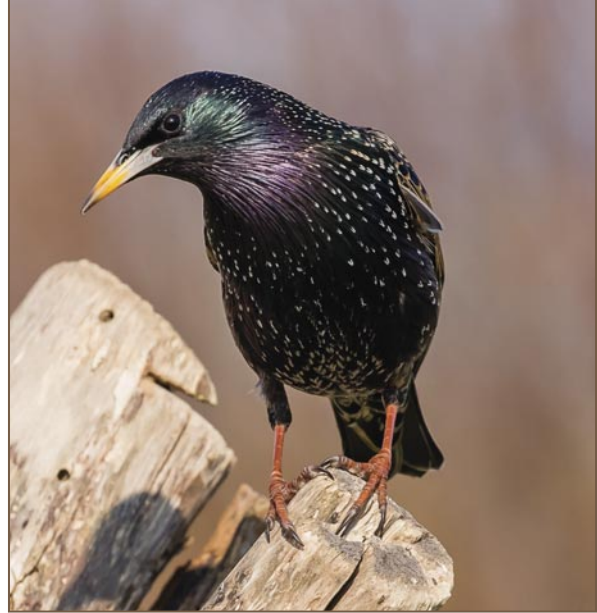
Pair built nest, but abandoned it, at Creech St Michael; one at Charlton; juveniles in Priory Avenue, Taunton; eight, Bishops Lydeard, May; pair bred, Milverton; again, good breeding season in Wellington, with many juveniles throughout town (RJK).

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Up to 20 in Stogumber and Higher Vexford in March, but no later records; ten in Williton, June; at least one pair bred, Porlock; and pair, Brushford, late March.

**Late summer to December**

Recorded from eight sites in July, with highest counts of 45 in Priory Avenue, Taunton, and 35 at Catcott Lows, and from only seven in August, when 300 at Ham Wall on 21st. Still scarce (or at least unreported) in September, when up to 300 at Steart. Slow increase from mid October, but hardly any coastwise passage; 1,000 at Ham Wall on 20th. Main wintering arrival from early November: 10,000 at Litton roost on 6th, and 2,500 at Cary Moor on 9th. By late December, 250,000 at Ham Wall, and at least 70,000 flying into Allcombe Combe from east.



Starling, Greylake Reserve (Chris Hooper)

**RING OUZEL** *Turdus torquatus*

**Scarce passage migrant. Formerly very local migrant breeder (last proved, 2002).**

**Spring passage**

About 20: two, Thurley Combe, March 24th; one, Brean Down, on 31st; one, Crowcombe Park Gate, and three, Great Hill, April 7th; male, White Post, Chilcompton, on 8th; two, Brean Down, on 9th; one, Weir Water, on 13th; up to five, Chetsford Water, from 17th to 22nd; one, Cothelstone Hill, on 22nd; two, Chalk Water, on 23rd; and one, East Quantoxhead, on 25th.

**Autumn passage**

About 40: single birds, Draycott Sleights, September 7th, and East Quantoxhead, on 15th; on Black Down, one on October 2nd, followed by 15 with Redwings on 12th; in Chetsford Water/Thurley Combe, one on 15th, and five or six from 16th to 22nd, rising to 15 on 21st; one, West Monkton, on 22nd; and two each, Nutscale, on 27th and Hurlstone Combe, November 1st.

**BLACKBIRD** *Turdus merula*

**Abundant resident breeder; common winter visitor and passage migrant.**

**First winter period**

Abundant, with many local counts of between ten and 25, frequently from the new English Winter Bird Survey.

**Breeding season**

Highest counts in May and June, of up to 34 from BBS, but nothing worth special notice.

**Autumn passage and second winter period**

Five obvious influxes: 22, Dunster Beach, November 4th, and 18 there on 18th; 25 wary first-winter males, West Monkton, on 28th; 50 similar at Combwich, December 4th; 31, Bossington, on 22nd; and 30, Bishops Lydeard, on 29th.

**FIELDFARE** *Turdus pilaris***Common winter visitor and passage migrant.****First winter period and spring passage**

Only seven flocks of between 150 and 300 in January/February, the largest being of 270 at Queen's Sedge Moor on January 11th. Still 100 at Sutton Bingham Reservoir on March 6th; then 18 records of up to 40 to April 12th, of which six were on high ground, and final 58 at Crowcombe Heathfield on 16th.

**Autumn passage and second winter period**

First in autumn: four, Chetsford Water, October 14th; then none until 20th, after which unusually regular and almost daily arrivals up to December: six counts of 100 to 350, October 21st–November 9th, and then very large numbers from 10th to 20th, starting with 1,000 over Steart Marshes, and finishing with huge passage on 18th/19th, when cold, calm night was followed by strong southerly breeze; in the morning, 2,000 passed east over Combwich (RLM) and 7,000 over West Quantoxhead (JDH), all within three hours; the next day, 500 appeared at High Ham; then no counts of over 100, December 2nd–28th; finally, on 30th/31st, 150 at Cheddar Reservoir, and 215 at Bishops Lydeard.

**REDWING** *Turdus iliacus***Common winter visitor and passage migrant.****First winter period and spring passage**

January began with counts of 140 at Combe St Nicholas, 86 at Cradle Bridge, and 50 at Mark and Curry Moor, but only two other flocks of over 50 in January/February, all on lower ground. In March, 60 at Cary Moor on 1st, and 102 at Charlton (Mendip) on 18th, but then only stragglers until last of five April records on 19th.

**Autumn passage and second winter period**

First in autumn: four, West Luccombe, October 5th, and 44, Wills Neck, on 16th, preceded first main wave of arrivals, from 20th to 23rd, when five counts of over 150, and one of 1,000 over Selworthy Beacon on 10th; a further wave, November 7th–18th, brought about 1,000, of which half passed over Steart Marshes on 10th; on 18th/19th, total of 5,000 over Bridgwater Bay with Fieldfares, as described above; smaller influx on 30th, with total of about 900; December counts mostly of fewer than 40, except 120 at Bishops Lydeard on 22nd.

Redwing, Broomfield (Chris Hooper)



## **SONG THRUSH** *Turdus philomelos*

***Locally common resident breeder, winter visitor and autumn passage migrant.***

### **First winter period**

Records from about 55 widely scattered sites in January/February, of which seven were counts of five or more: seven each, East Harptree Wood and north-east of Charterhouse; five, Burnham; seven, Ham Wall; six, Gold Corner; seven, Bincombe Beeches; and nine, Watgore (Over Stratton).

### **Breeding season**

As in 2018, only counts of three or more singing birds are listed, from 47 sites (35 in 2018). Most records now come from areas with extensive woodland, though very few from heavily forested parts of Blackdowns or Brendons, where the many singing birds may be taken for granted! In South Somerset, they were received from only six sites.

#### *East*

Six, Cary Moor; three each, Milborne Port and King's Wood Warren; four each, Norton St Philip and Hardington; five, west of Charlton; and three each, White Post and north of Chilcompton.

#### *Mendip*

Nine, East Harptree Wood; five, Stockhill; eight, Velvet Bottom, and three, north-east of Charterhouse; four, Rowberrow Warren; three, Draycott; and four each, Warren Farm, Cheddar Gorge and Cross Plain.

#### *East coast of Bridgwater Bay and Levels north and south of Poldens*

Four each, Berrow and Cheddar Reservoir; nine, Lower Weare; three each, south of Cross and south-east of Cheddar; three, Shapwick Heath; 11, Ham Wall; and six, Butleigh/Walton/Sutton Moors, March 27th.

#### *South*

Four, South Crewkerne, and three, Forton.

#### *South-west*

Three, Wellington Monument; six, West Monkton, and five, Creech St Michael; three, Hankridge Farm; and four each, Ash Priors Common and Langford Heathfield.

#### *Quantocks*

Four each, Broomfield Hill, Cothelstone Hill and Lydeard Hill; three, Treble's Holford; five, Wills Neck; three, Bin Combe; and five, Hodder's Combe/tributaries.

#### *Brendons and Exmoor*

Five, Skilgate to Bury; three, Haddon Hill, and four in circuit of Wimbleball Lake; four, Higher Vexford; three each, Periton Hill, Bratton Wood and Little Headon Plantation; ten, Horner Wood, and six, Brockwell; and six, Simonsbath to Cow Castle.

### **Autumn passage and second winter period**

Up to five at 17 sites from early July to mid November. In December, about 25 scattered records, including ten migrants at Bossington on 22nd; one at King's Down, Bridgwater, sang regularly at night (RJK).

## **MISTLE THRUSH** *Turdus viscivorus*

***Fairly common, but local, resident breeder; scarce and irregular passage migrant.***

For a note on the problems of handling Mistle Thrush records, see *SB* 2018. As this is largely a resident species, it seems best to give all sites. Where no number is given, the original record was of one bird. All higher totals are given, with 'pairs' or 'singing' added if that information was given. An asterisk\* indicates proof of breeding.

#### *East and Mendip*

Three, King's Wood Warren; Hadspen, Rodden NR, Buckland Dinham and Norton St Philip; two, Stoke Camp; four, Litton Lake\*; Wells and East Harptree Wood; five each, Stockhill and Black Down\*; three each, Beacon Batch, north-east of Charterhouse and Rowberrow Warren; two, Wavering Down; Cheddar Gorge; and three, Cross Plain.

#### *Levels between Mendip and Poldens*

Two, Cross; Cheddar Reservoir and Yeo Moor; Queen's Sedge Moor\*; Street; two, Ham Wall; three each, Shapwick Heath, Westhay Moor and Canada Farm; and Catcott Heath.

#### *Coast of Bridgwater Bay and Bridgwater area*

Highbridge and Moorland\*; two, Shearston; and three, Ashford Reservoir.

*South*

Sutton Bingham\*, Pen Mill, West Coker and Bincombe Hill; four, South Petherton; pair, Horton Cross; two, Fivehead; West Sedge Moor and West Hatch; four, Curry Moor; and Forton.

*South-west*

Britty Common and Witch Lodge; Sampford Point\*; three pairs, Creech St Michael\*, four at West Monkton\*, and one at Monkton Heathfield; two each, Galmington and Bishops Lydeard; four, Ash Priors Common; two, Wellington; five, Langford Heathfield; and one at Greenham.

*Quantocks*

Broomfield Hill and Lydeard Hill; three, Cothelstone Hill; two each, Wills Neck and Cockercombe; four, Great Hill, and two at Fire Beacon; Crowcombe Park Gate and Dead Woman's Ditch; two, Treble's Holford; Bin Combe; two each, Knacker's Hole, Shervage Wood, and Hodder's Combe/tributaries; Holford and Hawkridge Reservoir.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Two, Haddon Hill; Wimbleball Lake and Upton; Rowdon Farm, Stogumber; two, Lower Vexford; Willet and Williton; two, Withycombe Common; Croydon Hill; Woodcombe, Bratton Wood and Grexy Combe; two, North Hill, and three, Bury Castle; two, Tivington Plantation; Bossington; four, Horner Wood up to Pool Bridge; two, Porlock Weir; one, Chetsford Water; two pairs, Chalk Water\*; two, Comer's Gate; three each, Simonsbath to Cow Castle and Withypool; Syds Wood and Hawkwell Cross.

**June to October**

Parties of five or more: ten, Fire Beacon, June 17th; six, Great Hill, on 19th, and Charterhouse, on 28th; 20, Shearston, July 19th; five, Chetsford Water, August 18th; 15, Over Stratton, September 11th; ten, Horton Cross, on 20th; 18 on rowan, Spangate Grove, on 26th; and seven, Black Down, October 12th. Only possible migrant was one at Wall Common on 29th.

**Second winter period**

About 40 records of up to four birds; song heard from November 4th at Kittisford.

**SPOTTED FLYCATCHER** *Muscicapa striata*

**Uncommon migrant breeder and passage migrant. Probably still decreasing.**

**Arrival and spring passage**

First: Hodder's Combe and Horner Wood, May 11th. No obvious coastal migrants.

**Breeding season**

About 126 adults, almost the same as 2018. All sites given, with asterisk (\*) for proved or probable breeding; named site with no detail indicates presence of a single bird. More could certainly be found. Most of the small surviving population is reported from villages by local residents, and even they may not find all the birds occupying small territories behind stone walls, to say nothing of those in private woodland.

*East and Mendip*

King's Wood Warren and East Woodlands\*; two pairs, Mells Down\*; Edford Wood, and two pairs in Harridge Wood\*; Litton\* (for 24th consecutive year), Chewton Mendip and Chewton Wood\*; Priddy Mineries; Westbury-sub-Mendip, Draycott, Draycott Sleights, Cheddar Wood and Rowberrow Warren.

*Levels from Mendip to King's Sedge Moor*

Single pairs, Ham Wall\*, Shapwick Heath\*, and Canada Farm\*; two, Catcott Heath; Catcott Lows and Westhay; and pairs, Ivy Thorn\* and Butleigh Moor\*.

*Central and South Somerset*

Collard Hill; Aldon Estate, Yeovil\*; Sutton Bingham Reservoir\*; Easthams, South Crewkerne and Chard Junction; West Sedge Moor\*, Swell Wood\* and Fivehead\*.

*Blackdowns*

Two pairs, Castle Neroche\*; Otterhead Lakes and Stapley; Quants and Sampford Point.

*South-west*

Creech St Michael; three pairs, West Monkton\*; Kingston St Mary\*, Bishops Lydeard and Hestercombe House\*; Maundown\*; Wiveliscombe Covert; two pairs each, Langford Heathfield\* and Kittisford\*; and Greenham.

*Quantocks*

Fyne Court; two pairs, Cothelstone Hill\*; Lydeard Hill and Wills Neck; pair, Great Hill\*; two pairs, Hodder's Combe/tributaries\*; and Hawkridge Reservoir.



### Spotted Flycatcher, Swell Wood (Alick Simmons)

#### *Brendons and Exmoor*

Bulland Ford and Challick Lane in Chipstable; Washbottle Bridge\*; Haddon Hill; pair, Bessom Bridge; Kingswood, Higher Vexford\* and Willet; Dowry Copse, Williton\*; Minehead\* and Selworthy\*; Brockwell; Horner Wood\* and Pool Bridge\*; Weir Water; pair, Chalk Water\*; two pairs, Badgworthy Water; Lyncombe Farm\* and Higher Combe, Exford\*; Exford village; and Oldways End\*.

#### **Autumn passage**

Three on coasts and two inland, August 26th–September 20th, were probably migrants.

### **ROBIN** *Erithacus rubecula*

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

Little can be done with the 700 or so records submitted, confirming its general abundance.

#### **Autumn passage and second winter period**

Late-autumn surge, mainly in coastal scrub: ten, Hinkley Point, October 21st, and Dunster Beach on 23rd; 20, Bishops Lydeard, on 27th; 13, Hinkley Point, November 1st; 21, Dunster Beach, on 4th, and 13 there on 18th.

### **NIGHTINGALE** *Luscinia megarhynchos*

***Uncommon migrant breeder, and passage migrant, usually in spring. Has recently decreased.***

#### **Arrival and breeding season**

First: one singing, Charlton (Creech Heathfield), April 16th. All records relate to period from then to May 18th. Numbers refer to singing birds.

#### *East*

Up to four, Temple Lane, Templecombe, April 24th–26th (BTO), but none at second site found in 2018; three, Blackmoor Vale, on 30th (JMH); one, Cary Moor, May 18th (per NAS); and two, Mells Park, April 27th (JMH).

#### *Levels north of Poldens*

One, Ham Wall, April 20th (BTO); and two at separate sites, Shapwick Heath, from 20th to May 4th (BTO, DR, JLT).

*South*

One, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, May 18th (TMF); four, Merryfield Airfield, May 6th (NAS); and two, Barrington Hill, April 30th–May 20th (J. Bebbington, DWH).

*South-west*

Up to three between Cogload Junction and Durston, April 17th–May 15th (BJH, NEW *et al.*); up to three at Charlton, Creech Heathfield, April 16th to June (JLT *et al.*); and one at Hankridge Farm in May (*per* BJH).

**Autumn passage**

No records.

**PIED FLYCATCHER** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

**Locally fairly common migrant breeder; uncommon passage migrant.**

**Arrival and spring passage**

First: a female at Noah's Lake on April 5th/6th. Four further passage birds: Breaun Down, 9th; there and at Stolford on 17th; and North Hill, May 1st.

**Breeding season**

At least 179 pairs, greatly enhanced by nest-box schemes, mainly controlled by Exeter University and Exmoor NHS.

*Blackdowns*

Male, Domett Wood (former breeding site), May 1st.

*Quantocks*

About 63 pairs, another increase, and a very successful breeding season: one or two, Cothelstone Hill; one each, Aisholt Combe, Rams Combe, Dead Woman's Ditch and Robin Upright's Hill; four in boxes, Lord's Ball; seven in boxes, Over Stowey Common; ten singing, Bin Combe; six, Shervage Wood, and three, Dowsborough; about 11 (seven in boxes), Holford Combe/tributaries; and about 16 (eight in boxes), Hodder's Combe/tributaries (BDG, DHW *et al.*).

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Minimum of 116 pairs, much as last year, and total for Horner uncertain, since few observers give exact references. About six, Wimbleball Lake/Haddon Hill, and three along Haddeo from Hartford to Bury; ten in boxes, Clatworthy Reservoir; no report from Huish Moor; 21 in boxes, Barlynch Wood; two in boxes, Druid's Combe; five in Long Combe and ten on Monkham Hill, all in boxes; two, Little Headon Plantation; perhaps 40 in whole area of Horner Woods, of which 26 in boxes, from Pool Bridge and Horner Gate down to West Luccombe, including Prickslade and Stoke Combes and East Water; also single pairs at Woodcock Gardens and Brockwell; no records from Hawk Combe; three, Porlock Parks, and one each, Weir Wood and Culbone; and on Barle, one at Simonsbath, three from Great Bradley to Tarr Steps, two in Hinam Wood and one each in Dibble Wood and Marsh Wood. As usual, many potential sites on western coast and in Exe and Barle Valleys were not explored (MB, RJB, DHW *et al.*).

**Departure**

Present in breeding areas up to mid June; only one in July. Five later birds: Berrow, August 24th–27th; two, Yeovil, and one, North Cheriton, August 25th; and juvenile or female, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, on October 31st, the latest Somerset date (PGA).

The rather elusive female at Shapwick Heath in early April showed some unusual plumage features and was considered by its finder (TR) and some other observers to be a Collared Flycatcher (*F. albicollis*), a species not yet on the Somerset list. It was submitted to BBRC as such, but was considered by them to be 'not proven'. It appears here, therefore, as a Pied, so that the record is not lost to posterity, but we note the ongoing debate as to its true identity.

**BLACK REDSTART** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

**Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor. Has bred, lastly in 2017.**

**First winter period and spring passage**

Maximum of about 11, January–April 12th : one from 2018 wintering at Breaun Down up to late January; this or other single birds there, February 18th, March 30th, and April 12th. Other single transients: Wellington, January 1st; Wells, on 5th and 12th; Dunster Beach, on 19th; Crewkerne STW, February 2nd; Shepton Mallet, on 17th; Shoreditch, on 27th/28th; Yeovil, March 30th; and Chalk Water, April 7th.

**Breeding season**

No breeding, but juvenile or female, Ham Hill Country Park, July 6th.

**Autumn passage and second winter period**

First in autumn: Dunster Beach, October 14th. Total of about 15 from 28th: at Dunster Beach, where at least one on most days from November to December 31st, and occasionally up to three in November; other single birds at Breaun Down, Edington, Bridgwater, Stockland Bristol and Sutton Bingham Reservoir, and two males at Porlock, December 2nd.

**REDSTART** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

*Locally common migrant breeder; also passage migrant.*

**Arrival and spring passage**

First: Charterhouse, March 31st; regular arrivals in breeding areas from April 6th. About 19 other migrants, chiefly on coast, up to 17th.

**Breeding season**

Mainly singing males, singly unless stated.

*East and Mendip*

One, King's Wood Warren; East Harptree Wood; two, Priddy Mineries, and female, Stockhill; one, Westbury Quarry and three, Draycott Sleights; one each, Long Wood, Black Down and Nether Wood; three, Blackmoor NR, and later a family; two, Ubley Warren; one at each of two sites north-east of Charterhouse and at Velvet Bottom; two, Black Rock; and two females and a juvenile, Wavering Down.

*Blackdowns*

One, Burnworthy, as in 2018.

*Quantocks*

About 45 pairs in limited survey, omitting some northern combes: two each, Broomfield Hill and Cothelstone Hill; three, Lydeard Hill; two, Aisholt Common; one, Bagborough Plantation; four, Wills Neck; three, Great Hill; two, Fire Beacon; one each, Crowcombe Park, Over Stowey Common, Dead Woman's Ditch and Bin Combe; two, Shervage Wood; three, Holford Combe/tributaries; one, Hare Knap; 14, Hodder's Combe/tributaries; and one, Vinny Combe.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

On Brendons, total of at least 12 singing males: eight, Haddon Hill, three round Wimbleball Lake, and one, Brompton Ralph, but no records from Croydon Hill/Long Combe. In EMP survey of Exmoor, 34 males in both counties combined; highest total for 2006–2019. Somerset numbers and sites are here combined with records of singing males or pairs from other sources: one, North Hill; about five, Easter Hill to Bagley Combe; four, Horner Wood/Webber's Post; four, Ley Hill; two each, Brockwell and Spangate Grove, and one at Walland Farm; one, Dady Combe, and two, Chetsford Water; one, Weir Water, and five, Chalk Water; two, Warren Bridge to Westernmill Farm, and one at Higher Combe, Exford; one on Somerset bank of Badgworthy above Cloud to Hoccombe Combe Foot, and one in Tom's Hill Combe; six, Simonsbath to Pickedstones Bridge; and four on The Allotment, Winsford Hill; no records from Barle below Withypool.

**Dispersal and autumn passage**

As usual, post-breeding dispersal from late June to late July, often in families; such birds may still be near their breeding sites but must often have wandered far from them. At least 40 in various places inland from August to mid September, especially on South Quantocks; last bird, a female on Stolford coast, October 19th/20th, perhaps of eastern race *Ph. ph. samamiscus*.

**WHINCHAT** *Saxicola rubetra*

*Locally fairly common migrant breeder now confined to Exmoor, except for small passage.*

**Arrival and spring passage**

First: single birds, Tealham Moor, and Chetsford Water, April 18th. Only four others on passage, from 19th to May 5th. Main arrival on Exmoor from April 20th, but, as usual, most did not come until early May.

**Breeding season**

*Quantocks*

No hint of breeding, though possible range, at north end, less intensively covered than usual. Only two records, both at Fire Beacon, on April 19th and August 24th.



Whinchat, Chalk Water (Dave Dawe)

#### *Exmoor*

EMP total for Somerset was imperfect, since communication error meant that most important route, along Upper Barle, was not covered. This list of estimated pairs merges EMP totals with all other 'roving' records: about five, Dunkery North, from Hollow Combe west to Bagley Combe; five, Chetsford Water/Nutscale; 11, Weir Water/Chalk Water; 13, Long Combe/Pinfords; 16, Lanacombe/Hoccombe Water; one each, Prayway Head, Upper Farley Water and Upper Hoarok Water; at least four, Middle Barle from Simonsbath to Landacre Bridge; two, Knighton Combe; and seven, Winsford Hill.

#### **Autumn passage**

At least 60, July 10th–October 24th, of which 20 were coastal and 14 on Levels, where highest day-count was of six, at West Moor, Hambridge, on September 4th.

The ringing/tracking scheme started in 2017 was not repeated, but results are analysed in a highly technical paper by M.D. Burgess *et al.* (*Ibis* 2020: 1–11). From 2016 to 2019, a BTO/RSPB team studied the migration of Whinchats breeding on Exmoor (Chetsford Water and Middle Barle), on Salisbury Plain, and in Cumbria. Geolocators showed that in autumn birds followed the western fringes of the Sahara to reach a wintering area stretching across a semi-arid belt of farmland from Sierra Leone east to Nigeria, which they shared with Whinchats from north-east Europe. Within this belt, where birds from different breeding populations were intermingled, some birds, chiefly males, moved considerable distances in January; one Exmoor pair wintered 1,100km apart from each other. In spring, all birds returned by a shorter route over the Sahara. It had been suggested that the general decline of the species might be caused by conditions in the wintering area, but such an effect would have to be occurring over a wide range of habitat, for which there is at present no evidence.

### **STONECHAT** *Saxicola rubicola*

***Locally common resident or migrant breeder; fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.***

#### **First winter period and spring passage**

Many records, January to late February: about 50 on coast from Brean Down to Stolford, including 14 at Lilstock, February 18th; about 20 on Levels, largely before mid February; ten on sheltered South Quantocks; male, Trickey Warren, January 6th; ten on western coast and one or two wintering around Wimbleball Lake, but no approach to Exmoor Plateau until six appeared on Ley Hill, February 15th, and no general move upwards until mid March. By late February, about 30 present from North Hill to Hurlstone Point.

## **Breeding season**

### *East*

Five, King's Wood Warren, April 16th, were presumably migrants.

### *Mendip and East coast of Bridgwater Bay*

One or two pairs bred, Priddy Mineries; counts of up to 16, Ubley Warren, April–September, so possibly three pairs; present in spring/early summer, Velvet Bottom and Tynning's Farm; up to five pairs, Black Down/Beacon Batch; one or two, Cheddar Gorge/Black Rock; at least four from Cross Plain west to Crook Peak; occasional spring/summer records, Brean Down/Berrow, but no proof of breeding.

### *Levels*

Pair bred, Queen's Sedge Moor; present on Chilton Moor and West Sedge Moor, but no breeding proved.

### *South*

Pair bred at Easthams, Crewkerne.

### *Blackdowns*

Two pairs bred on Somerset side of Sampford Point.

### *Quantocks*

Probably 40–45 pairs, but many northern sites not covered. Stonechats have large families and may be double-brooded – in this list of sites, where original record may be simple count of individuals, some attempt has been made to guess the number of pairs: two or three, Cothelstone Hill, and three each, Broomfield Hill/Buncombe Wood and Lydeard Hill; three each, Wills Neck and Great Hill; two each, Fire Beacon, Over Stowey Common, and Frog Hill; four, Hare Knap; one or two each, Holford Combe, Hodder's Combe and Stert Combe; one each, Hurley Beacon, Halsway Hill, Lowsey Thorn and Bicknoller Post; two, Beacon Hill; male, St Audrie's Deer Park, and two pairs, Vinny Combe; and single pairs, East Quantoxhead and Kilve Beach.

### *Brendons and Exmoor*

Four pairs, Haddon Hill, and one, Britannia's Shield; four, Black Hill/Croydon Hill, and one on Wootton Common; two, Greenaleigh Point, and at least ten, North Hill to Hurlstone Point. On Exmoor Plateau, EMP total for both counties was 157, of which Somerset had 49 males; the Upper Barle, as explained for Whinchat, was not counted, though several records there from other sources. List of sites incorporates those outside EMP limits, figures being for pairs where possible: at least two, Ley Hill area; five, north slope of Dunkery Beacon, from Luccombe Hill to Bagley Combe, and about nine on south slope from Brockwell to Ham and Dunkery Hill Gate; at least four, Chetsford Water/Nutscale, and one each on Porlock Common, Lucott Moor and Exford Common; three, Weir Water, and six, Chalk Water; five, Long Combe/Tom's Hill, and eight, Hoccombe Water/Lanacombe; three along Upper Exe and at Blackpitts Mires; one each, Upper Farley Water, Pinkery Centre and Goat Hill Bridge; two, Simonsbath to Pickedstones Bridge; one, Worth Hill; and 18, Winsford Hill (but covering only part of area).

## **Autumn passage and second winter period**

Recorded at about 11 sites in August, mainly within Quantock and Exmoor breeding areas, the largest gathering being of 13 on Fire Beacon; and at about 20 in September, by which time scatter of records on coasts and Levels, and counts of 11 to 17 on Black Down, Lydeard Hill, Wills Neck, Bossington Hill, and along road from Hawkcombe Head to Chetsford Water. Widespread in October and November, including 31 on Butleigh/Sutton/Walton Moors in November. Highest coastal counts: ten, Steart Marshes, November 10th, and eight, Minehead Golf Course, on 16th. Smaller numbers in December, mainly on Levels and western coasts; apart from one at Wimbleball on 31st, none on high ground inland, even on South Quantocks, and highest count of nine in Hurlstone Combe.

## **WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe***

### ***Scarce and local migrant breeder; common passage migrant.***

#### **Arrival and spring passage**

First: Stolford, February 28th; almost daily arrivals from March 5th. Only three double-figure counts: ten, Brean Down, April 17th; 19, Dunster Beach, on 18th; and 13, Fire Beacon, on 19th. Passage to mid May, and stragglers to 27th; four in Chetsford Water, May 12th, probably Greenland race birds (*Oe. oe. leucorhoa*).

#### **Breeding season**

##### *Mendip and Quantocks*

No records.



**Wheatear, Bossington Beach (Brian Gibbs)**

*Exmoor*

Two pairs, Hurlstone Point, of which one bred successfully. In EMP, only the following in Somerset, May 15th–June 21st, the lowest-ever total: male, Tom’s Hill, May 31st; male, Simonsbath to Pickedstones, May 25th, but there had been two singing earlier, on April 24th; and three juveniles, Upper Hoarok Water, June 21st, in slightly late coverage of this favoured site.

**Autumn passage**

No July records. At least 285, August–November, mainly on coasts; well above average for recent years. Five double-figure counts: 20–30, Brue Estuary, August 30th; 12, Steart, September 6th, and 17 on 7th; 12, Bossington Beach, September 13th; and ten, Stolford, on 29th. Single Greenland race birds at Huntspill Sea Wall, on 29th, and Bossington Beach, November 6th. Last: one, Minehead Golf Course, on 16th.

**DIPPER** *Cinclus cinclus*

***Fairly common resident breeder. Decreasing in lowlands and perhaps elsewhere.***

List of sites arranged by rivers, but not necessarily by season, though odd winter birds may be wanderers outside breeding sites, or downstream from them. Dippers have always been under-recorded: they are most conspicuous in winter and early spring, smaller streams are seldom bordered by public footpaths, and many are seen only in chance encounters at bridges. Streamside residents are always aware of them; other observers may miss them, especially from May to August, when early breeders disperse and cover grows dense.

*East and Mendip*

No records on Brue/Alham, now without any resident observer; on Frome, bred in nest-box at Rodden NR; on Mells River, two pairs bred, at Nettlebridge and Edford Wood, and one January record from Nunney Brook at Whatley; on Sheppey, young hatched in drain-pipe nest at Lower Lane, Shepton Mallet, but may not have survived flooding; single adults regular in autumn at lower end of town, though no records for Croscombe or Wells; on Mendip Axe, only one record of two together, and no young seen, perhaps because water quality has recently deteriorated (NA); no records from Cheddar Yeo.

*South and South-west*

On Axe and Isle, recorded on Eleigh Water from Wadeford to Nimmer, and on Tatworth stream; on Blackdowns, regular at Otterhead Lakes and on Yarty at Bishopswood. More records than usual from Tone: on higher reaches from Washbattle Bridge, Bulland Ford, Waterrow and Greenham, lower down from Westford and Wellington Basins, and on south-west edge of Taunton at Comeytrowe and Netherclay; also regular on upper section of Hillfarrance Brook between Langley Marsh and Ford.

*Quantocks*

Regular in Holford Glen and Hodder's Combe, and one October record downstream at Kilve Beach; one May record from Peart at Spaxton.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Odd records of single birds on Doniford Stream at Kingswood and Williton, on Washford River in Roadwater and Watchet, and on Avill in Dunster Park. In Horner Valley, one pair each in Chetsford Water and in East Water, four or five territories from Pool Bridge down to New Bridge, and another on the Aller (DW); several records from Hawk Combe; one pair each in Weir Water and Chalk Water, and in Badgworthy Water (at Cloud); none on Upper Exe, but pairs in Exford and at Court Farm; regular on Quarme at Luckwell Bridge and on Pennycombe Water; and also recorded lower down at Perry Bridge and Exebridge, and on Haddeo at Hartford and Bury. On Barle, unrecorded above Cornham Brake; three or four pairs from Simonsbath to Landacre Bridge; recorded at Withypool, Tarr Steps, Great Birchcleeve Wood, Marsh Bridge and Dulverton.

**HOUSE SPARROW** *Passer domesticus*

***Abundant resident breeder; occasional passage migrant. Has decreased, especially in towns.***

**First winter period**

Widely reported, with the largest flock being up to 200 at Bratton, March 20th. Only other notable flock sizes were: about 50 in Chard, from January; and 41, Horton Cross, January 27th.

**Breeding season**

All breeding records received are listed.

*Mendips and east*

Eighteen nests recorded in Coleford.

*Central Somerset*

Noted as breeding in the west of Street.

*South*

Bred successfully, Sutton Bingham Reservoir; second brood noted in Crewkerne; and good breeding season at Horton Cross; eight to ten pairs with two broods, Chard; one or two pairs nested in garage, Tatworth.

*South-west and Quantocks*

Three pairs bred in Creech St Michael, and five pairs in Priory Avenue, Taunton; 'appeared to have a good breeding season' in Wellington, with 'numerous' juveniles in garden; and juveniles at Holford.

*Brendons*

'Plenty of young', Brompton Ralph.

**Autumn and second winter period**

Only two flocks over 50: 70 were recorded at Horton Cross, September 18th; and about 100 were seen at Kilve Beach, October 19th.

**TREE SPARROW** *Passer montanus*

***Uncommon and very local resident breeder and winter visitor; rare passage migrant.***

Still holding on in the east. Presumably large disparity in records between the two winter recording periods is due to variable coverage rather than to other factors.

**First winter period to summer**

Up to 12 in garden, West Horrington, January 1st–March 1st; Chewton Plain held between four and 19 on six dates, January 18th–February 14th; up to six came to feeders at farm near Cranmore, January 17th–April 17th; at Green Ore, two, March 1st, and five on 26th.

**Breeding season**

Two pairs nested in the West Horrington garden, one pair in a provided nest-box, the other under eaves of house.

**Second winter period**

Only two records: remarkably, at least 18 photographed on feeders, West Horrington, on September 21st; and two heard in flight over Wincanton, November 17th.

**DUNNOCK** *Prunella modularis*

**Common resident breeder.**

Very widely reported, with 553 records received; abundant in all habitats across the County with an apparently stable population.

**YELLOW WAGTAIL** *Motacilla flava*

**Uncommon migrant breeder and passage migrant. Now apparently increasing.**

**Arrival and spring passage**

First: male, Steart, March 29th; about 66 on passage, April to mid May, at 11 sites; 15 in sheep field at Brent Knoll was largest gathering.

**Breeding season**

Pairs or other breeding evidence.

*Levels north and south of Poldens*

Up to 77 breeding pairs: one on Tealham Moor; 19 holding territory at Greylake Reserve; pair, with two recently fledged young, Westonzoyland Airfield; at least three, Curry Moor; 52, West Sedge Moor, a significant increase over 2018; and two colonies on Wet Moor, possibly amounting to as many as 20, including several pairs seen feeding fledged young late in season.

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay*

Two pairs, Steart Marshes, throughout season, and two recently fledged juveniles at Stockland Marsh in late July.

**Other races**

One Blue-headed *M. f. flava* was on West Sedge Moor on May 18th; and a 'Channel Wagtail' on Curry Moor from May 11th to June 1st.

**Autumn passage**

From July to late September, significant autumn passage of up to 216 birds at about 18 sites. Higher counts included: 24 at Wall Common, and 12 on Curry Moor, August 26th; up to 20, Steart Marshes, in September; and 12, Tadham/Tealham Moor, on 12th.

**Yellow Wagtail, West Moor (Alick Simmons)**



## **GREY WAGTAIL** *Motacilla cinerea*

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

### **First winter period**

A total of 69 birds recorded from 38 sites; always recorded as singles or pairs.

### **Breeding season**

Pairs holding suitable territory or other evidence of breeding.

#### *East and Mendips*

A pair feeding three young at Wells; and a pair feeding young at Nettlebridge.

#### *South*

A pair seen with nesting material at Thorney Mill, Kingsbury Episcopi; at least one pair (perhaps two) bred successfully raising five young, Sutton Bingham Reservoir; and a pair bred, Chard Reservoir.

#### *Quantocks*

Three pairs bred, Hodder's Combe, all seen feeding young; two pairs, Slaughterhouse Combe; and an adult seen with a juvenile, Holford.

#### *South-west*

A pair bred, Creech St Michael; a male feeding two young on the River Tone at Taunton; a pair, Otterhead Lakes; and a pair at Southey Moor.

#### *Brendons and Exmoor*

Two pairs, Horner Wood; and single pairs, Breakneck Wood (Allerford); and Bossington. EMP recorded total of 63 individuals (23 males) in both counties; the Somerset records listed here are individuals, not pairs: two, Weir Water; five, Chalk Water; five, Hoccombe Water; single birds in Long Combe, between Warren and Orchard Bottom, and in Upper Farley Water; and three, Simonsbath to Sherdon Hutch.

### **Second winter period**

A total of 55 birds recorded from 31 sites.

## **PIED WAGTAIL** *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

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

### **First winter period and early spring**

All double-figure records listed: ten, Dunster Beach, January 2nd rising to 38 by 14th, then dropping to 19 by March 19th; 20, Huntspill Sea Wall, January 24th; 45, Cary Moor, February 15th; 30, Chard Reservoir, February 18th; 44, Somerton, February 22nd; 120, Stolford, March 1st; and 80, Sutton Bingham Reservoir on March 15th.

### **Breeding season**

#### *Mendips*

Two adults were seen feeding three young, Litton Lakes, June 12th.

#### *Levels north of Poldens*

A juvenile was present at Edington, May 29th.

#### *Brendons*

Three juveniles on a farm in Stogumber, July 29th; and a family party was at Sampford Point, June 2nd.

### **Autumn passage**

A flock of 70 were at Sutton Bingham Reservoir, October 13th; and 80 were seen feeding on a newly ploughed field at Chard, October 23rd.

## **White Wagtail** *M. a. alba*

***Fairly common passage migrant. May have bred.***

An interesting year, with some evidence that it is now over-wintering rather than being only a passage migrant, with records from both winter periods.

### **First winter period**

One, Dunster Beach, throughout January; and two, Bratton, on 10th.

### **Spring passage**

A large increase on 2018, with 133 birds at from eight sites, although with birds staying faithful to some sites there is some overlap on records. Highest count: 28, Berrow, April 10th.

**Autumn passage and second winter period**

Some 61 at five sites, the highest count being of 40, Dunster Beach, October 17th. One there, November/December; and four, Steart, November 10th.

**RICHARD'S PIPIT** *Anthus richardi*

*Rare passage migrant, chiefly in autumn; very rare winter visitor.*

Three records: one, Sutton Moor, February 19th (DJC); one, Huntspill Sea Wall, October 15th (JAS); and one (possibly a returning bird) on Sutton Moor, November 13th–15th (DJC).

**MEADOW PIPIT** *Anthus pratensis*

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

**First winter period and spring passage**

All counts of more than 20 are listed: 40, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, January 10th with 30 still there on February 10th; 41 on Black Down, January 19th, rising to 43, March 16th; 25, Stolford, January 20th; 25, Huntspill Sea Wall on 24th, rising to 36 on February 2nd; 26, Cothelstone Hill on 25th, with 21 present on March 19th; 100, south of Crewkerne, February 1st; 21, Priddy Mineries on 21st; 40 at Shearston on 24th; 50 which appeared to be passage birds at Cheddar Reservoir, March 17th; and 27, Cary Moor on 31st.

**Breeding season**

Sites as follows, with numbers of singing males or other evidence of breeding/pairs in suitable habitat.

*Mendip*

Thirty-seven, Black Down was the highest number of birds recorded as present in the breeding season, but unfortunately no reference was made to whether these were singing/displaying or otherwise; for completeness, the record is included here.

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay*

Two displaying males, Steart Marshes.

**Meadow Pipit, Catcott Lows (Chris Hooper)**

*Levels south of the Poldens*

Three pairs held territories, Greylake Reserve; and six pairs held territories at West Sedge Moor.

*Blackdowns*

A pair, Sampford Point.

*Quantocks*

Two, Cothelstone Hill; a family party, Lydeard Hill; five family parties, Beacon Hill; one carrying food, and three family parties later in the year, Hare Knap; one, Dowsborough; one, Frog Hill; three family parties between Wilmot's Pool and Dead Woman's Ditch; one, Black Hill; and six, Hurley Beacon.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Four, Haddon Hill; and one carrying food, Brockwell. The EMP does not record the presence of this species which must nest in good numbers given the large tracts of suitable habitat.

**Autumn passage**

Always difficult to distinguish passage birds from those that have settled to winter, but the following records would likely comprise predominantly passage birds: 120, Brockwell, were recorded moving south on September 30th; 150, Huntspill Sea Wall, on October 1st was by far the largest count here; 137 were noted flying south over Black Down, October 12th; and 220 were noted feeding amongst seaweed, Dunster Beach on October 15th.

**Second winter period**

The largest flocks recorded were: 120, Dunster Beach, November 4th, falling to 50 by 18th; 50 each, Brue Estuary and Kilve, November 28th.

**TREE PIPIT** *Anthus trivialis*

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

**Arrivals and spring passage**

A good spring passage for this species. The first was on Brean Down on April 6th; thereafter a further 65 (38 in 2018) arriving at, or passing though, 28 sites by end of April.

**Breeding season**

*Mendip*

Two, Priddy Mineries; four, Black Down; and Wavering Down.

*Blackdowns*

Castle Neroche; North Down Plantation; and Sampford Point.

*Quantocks*

Singing males, or other evidence of breeding such as food-carrying, singly unless indicated: two in clearfell, Buncombe Wood; six, Broomfield Hill; three, Cothelstone Hill; Lydeard Hill; Dead Woman's Ditch, Robin Upright's Hill and Over Stowey Common; Bin Combe; three, Dowsborough; two, Woodlands Hill; Frog Hill; Hare Knap; two each, Willoughby Cleeve and Slaughterhouse Combe. North Quantocks not fully covered.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

EMP recorded 16 birds over both Counties (14 males), the lowest-ever total; nine males were in Somerset, and are here combined with other records: four, Haddon Hill; about eight, Dunkery Hill North, and one in Hanny Combe; single birds, Chetsford Water and Westcott Brake; ten, Simonsbath to Sherdon Hutch; one, Tudball's Splatts to Old Barrow Plantation; and two, Winsford Hill

**Autumn passage**

Total of about six: on August 25th, three over Yeovil and one over Sutton Bingham Reservoir; other single birds over Yeovil on 26th and September 14th, and over Bossington Hill on 31st.

**WATER PIPIT** *Anthus spinoletta*

*Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.*

**First winter period and spring passage**

A small number of well-watched birds were present: up to four from the Sharpham end of Ham Wall, January 7th–March 30th; four, Catcott Lows, January 10th but only one there from January 19th to February 5th; one was seen at Steart Marshes on February 8th and March 18th; and one, Brue Estuary, February 23rd.

**Second winter period**

Up to four at Ham Wall between November 10th and December 25th; one, Dunster Beach, November 15th; two, Catcott Lows, on 17th; one, Bossington Beach, December 22nd; one on floodwater, Creech St Michael, on 25th; and one, Greylake Reserve, on 30th.



Water Pipit, Catcott Lows (James Packer)

### **ROCK PIPIT** *Anthus petrosus*

*Uncommon resident breeder, winter visitor and passage migrant.*

#### **First winter period**

Twenty-six records from nine coastal sites, totalling some 67 birds. All of ones or twos apart from the following: up to five in Brue Estuary; up to four at Lilstock; seven at Helwell Bay; three at Dunster Beach; and seven at Hurlstone Point.

#### **Breeding season**

Little evidence to support breeding, apart from: three males singing at Hinkley Point and up to four males, singing and displaying at Hurlstone Point.

#### **Second winter period**

Twenty-three records of some 73 birds; highest count at Hinkley Point, 11 on December 15th.

### **CHAFFINCH** *Fringilla coelebs*

*Abundant resident breeder, winter visitor and passage migrant.*

#### **First winter period**

The most significant flocks reported were: 130, Wall Common, January 3rd; 170, Triscombe Stone on 10th, and Bagborough Plantation, on 28th; 450, Crowcombe Park Gate, January 19th, dropping to 250 by 20th; and 150, Wills Neck, February 17th.

#### **Breeding season**

Widely reported from across the County with numbers appearing to remain stable.

#### **Autumn passage**

The following records are deemed to be passage movements: 41 flew east over Brean Down, October 15th; 865 were recorded over West Myne during morning observations between October 15th and November 17th; 100 were on Dunster Beach, October 21st, where the observer had recorded none a few days earlier; and 765 flew north-west over North Hill on November 1st, in an hour's observation.

### **Second winter period**

Three-figure flocks: 112, Wills Neck, November 13th; 200, Hillhead Cross on 17th; 197, Great Hill, on 25th; 200, Higher Dumbledeer on 29th; 800, Triscombe Stone, on 30th; and finally 150 at Chipstable on December 21st.

## **BRAMBLING** *Fringilla montifringilla*

*Uncommon and erratic winter visitor and passage migrant.*

### **First winter period and spring passage**

Far fewer records than in 2018, with only 34 submitted, compared with 97 last year. Of the 14 sites where the species was recorded, the highest counts were: 110 at Crowcombe Park Gate, January 19th; 76, Chipstable also on 19th; and 52, Great Hill, March 15th.

### **Second winter period**

First reports were of singles at both Wall Common and Chetsford Water, both on October 20th; thereafter very few seen, the only double-figure counts being of ten at Lydeard Hill on November 18th and 20 at Triscombe Stone on 30th.

## **HAWFINCH** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

*Rare winter visitor and passage migrant. Has bred.*

A somewhat different year from the 2017/18 invasion, with just a single record: one flew south over Apex Park, October 25th (AMS).

## **BULLFINCH** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

*Fairly common resident breeder and occasional passage migrant and winter visitor.*

### **First winter period**

Widely reported from some 53 sites spread throughout the County, mostly in singles or pairs. Some small flocks encountered, with flocks of six or more listed: seven, Frome, January 4th; seven, Haddon Hill, on 11th; eight, Cothelstone Hill, on 19th; six, Stockmoor Country Park, February 12th; seven, Wills Neck, March 18th; and six, North Brewham on 24th.

### **Breeding season**

All records submitted which support breeding are listed.

#### *South*

Four juveniles seen at Easthams, Crewkerne; also a juvenile seen with adults at a different Crewkerne location.

#### *South-west*

A pair bred in the churchyard at West Monkton; a family seen at Lydeard Hill; and a family party seen, Over Stowey Common.

#### *Exmoor*

A family party seen, Brushford; and four families, Exford.

### **Second winter period**

All reports of six or more: nine, Cothelstone Hill, on October 12th, and six on 23rd; six, Black Down, October 19th; seven, Mell's Down, November 3rd; six, West Sedge Moor, on 16th and 23rd; and seven, Hinkley Point, December 20th.

## **GREENFINCH** *Chloris chloris*

*Common, but recently decreased, resident breeder, winter visitor and passage migrant.*

### **First winter period**

All double-figure counts included: up to 12 were on feeders at Lyngford Road, Taunton on January 1st; 12, Wall Common, on 20th; a flock of between ten and 20 were seen on North Hill in February and early March; ten, Berrow, February 1st, at Selworthy Beacon on March 26th, and at Steart, on 30th.

### **Breeding season**

Very few records of this once common breeder. All records submitted of singing or displaying males, or other breeding records are listed.

*East*

Young heard and seen in Coleford.

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay and Bridgwater Area*

Fledged young seen on Brean Down; a male singing, Steart Marshes; probable breeding recorded with two juveniles present, Steart; and a singing male, Durleigh Reservoir.

*South*

Two pairs bred in Crewkerne, where juveniles and possibly second broods seen; and juvenile, Combe St Nicholas.

*South-west and Quantocks*

Two pairs bred, Creech St Michael, and one in West Monkton; two males singing, Buckland Wood; and two juveniles in Holford.

*Exmoor*

Single males singing or displaying, North Hill, Hurlstone Point and Simonsbath.

**Second winter period**

All double-figure counts listed: 40 were on Dunster Beach feeding on weed seeds, October 21st, rising to 100 by November 4th; 25, Steart, November 1st; up to 20 were using feeders in West Monkton churchyard by December 1st; 65, Ker Moor, Carhampton, on 15th; 75 gathered in a pre-roost in Yeovil, on 25th; and 12, Sutton Bingham Reservoir, on 27th.

**TWITE** *Linaria flavirostris****Rare winter visitor and passage migrant.***

After a barren year in 2018, at least one bird: on Steart peninsula, ranging from Steart Marshes to Wall Common, January 14th–20th (JRB *et al.*); a second bird, or perhaps the same, was in the Parrett Estuary on February 15th (BTO).

**LINNET** *Linaria cannabina****Fairly common resident and migrant breeder, winter visitor and passage migrant. Has decreased.*****First winter period**

Widely reported. Counts of 50 or more: 70, Wall Common, January 3rd; 300, Trickey Warren, on 25th; 170, Dunster Beach, February 1st, falling to 70 by March 19th; 50, Lilstock, March 8th; 65, Small Down Knoll, on 17th; 70, Bossington, and 100 on Bossington Beach, on 20th.

**Breeding season**

Single pairs or singing males, unless otherwise stated.

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay and Bridgwater area*

Burnham; eight, Steart Marshes; three, Wall Common and ten, Catsford Common; two, Lilstock; and one, Durleigh Reservoir.

*Tone Levels*

Curry Moor.

*South and Blackdowns*

Two, Barrington Hill, and one at Bickenhall; two, Trickey Warren, and one, North Down Plantation; two, Sampford Point; and one, Curland.

*Quantocks*

Three, Broomfield Hill, and four, Cothelstone Hill; present, Dowsborough and Woodlands Hill; six, Hare Knap (including three family parties); two, Stert Combe; and three, Hurley Beacon.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

One, Minehead Golf Course; one seen building a nest, Brockwell. EMP recorded the following birds, not pairs: one, Cloud to Hoccombe Combe Foot; four, Long Combe/Pinfords; two, Lower Lanacombe; one, Prayway Head to Exe Head Bridge; six, Portford Bridge to Tudball's Splatts; nine, Winsford Hill; and seven on The Allotment, Winsford Hill.

**Autumn passage and second winter period**

Counts of 50 or more: 100, Porlock Marsh, October 1st; 50, Dunster Beach, on 10th; 55, Cothelstone Hill, on 12th; 80, Cary Moor, on 13th; 250, Bishops Lydeard, November 3rd; and 50, Trickey Warren, December 2nd.



Lesser Redpoll, Coleford (John Hansford)

**LESSER REDPOLL** *Acanthis cabaret*

*Uncommon resident breeder and passage migrant; fairly common winter visitor.*

**First winter period**

Better year than 2018, with 48 reports from 24 sites across the County. All counts of ten or more: 16, Ham Wall, January 1st, with 25 on 11th, 12 on 14th, 126 on 25th, and 30, March 31st; 12, Chewton Plain, January 12th; 25, Wootton Common, on 15th; 38, Croydon Hill, on 16th; and 25, Withycombe Common, March 28th.

**Breeding season**

Singing males, singly unless stated.

*Quantocks*

Frog Hill, Slaughterhouse Combe and Sheppard's Combe.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Six, Haddon Hill. EMP recorded the following (not identified to sex): four, Dunkery North; 16, Comer's Gate to Winsford Hill summit; and three, Winsford Hill summit to Folly.

**Second winter period**

Flocks larger than five: 30, Brockwell, October 5th; 20, Wills Neck, on 22nd, then six on November 8th and ten on December 2nd; 43, Great Hill, November 25th; nine, Ham Wall, on 30th, and 11, December 21st.

**CROSSBILL** *Loxia curvirostra*

*Locally common visitor following irruptions; formerly intermittent breeder, but now probably regular.*

**First winter period into spring (usual breeding period)**

Flocks of ten or more listed; also any singing males recorded or other behaviour suggesting breeding.

*East and Mendip*

Twenty, Stockhill, January 21st; and male singing, East Harptree Wood, February 22nd.

*Quantocks*

At least one juvenile seen in a small flock, Buncombe Wood, April 22nd; 12, Aisholt Common, January 4th; 15, Wills Neck, on 5th with 16 there on 18th; 30, Triscombe Stone, on 20th; 30, Cockercombe, on same date, followed by 21, February 17th and 20 on 20th, 15 on 24th and 22, March 17th.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Twelve, Haddon Hill, January 1st and 6th, then ten on 17th; 12, Hopcott Common, January 15th; 19, Croydon Hill, on 16th; 12, Monkham Hill, March 19th; at least 17, Withycombe Common, March 28th; at least two males feeding young, North Hill, April 20th.

**Autumn and second winter period**

The only significant flocks were recorded at Stockhill, where between 20 and 50 were recorded on eight dates, October 9th–November 15th.

**GOLDFINCH** *Carduelis carduelis*

**Common resident and migrant breeder, and passage migrant; probably winter visitor. Has increased.**

**First winter period**

Widely reported from across the County, but few large flocks recorded. All flocks larger than 20 listed: 33, Crewkerne, January 1st; 50, Dunster Beach, on 2nd and 13th; 25, Charlton, on 5th; 150, Wellington, on 16th; 30, Woodcombe, on 18th; 70, Shapwick Heath, on 31st; 21, Somerton, February 9th; 26, Cheddar, March 9th; 35, Porlock, on 15th; 39, Cary Moor and 40, Bratton, both on 31st.

**Breeding season**

Hardly any records submitted to support the status of this species as a common resident breeder; all those received are listed: a flock of ten included some juveniles, Brean Down, June 1st; four probable breeding territories just south of Crewkerne, June 1st; juveniles seen in Crewkerne on June 25th and July 8th; juvenile, Combe St Nicholas, June 29th; and flock of 15 included juveniles at Chalk Water, August 17th.

**Late summer and second winter period**

All flocks of 50 or more: 100, Steart, September 2nd; 100, Trickey Warren, on 10th; 60, Lilstock, on 18th; 80, Eaker Hill, on 20th with 200 there on October 2nd; 52, Black Down on 21st; 70, Porlock Marsh, on 29th; 60, Hurdle Down, October 1st; up to 170, Dunster Beach between October 4th and November 18th; 100, Sutton Moor, November 13th; 100, Steart Marshes, December 1st; and 54 south of Crewkerne on 1st.

**SISKIN** *Spinus spinus*

**Uncommon, but increasing, resident or migrant breeder; locally common winter visitor and passage migrant.**

**First winter period**

All counts of 20 or more: 20 to 100, Bratton, January 1st to March 31st; 40, Bat's Castle, and 60, Black Hill (Brendons), January 6th; 150, Cockercombe, February 3rd; and 60, Slowley Wood, March 2nd.

**Breeding season**

Very little evidence submitted.

*Blackdowns*

Singing males: two, Mount Fancy, April 30th; at least three, Burnworthy, May 7th; and one, Sampford Point, on 15th.

*South-west*

At least one pair bred, Kingston St Mary.

*Exmoor*

A displaying male, Luckbarrow, June 1st.

**Autumn passage**

Thirty-one flew south, Brean Down, October 14th; five flew east, Brean Down on 15th; and six flew west, Hurlstone Point on 15th.

**Second winter period**

All counts of 20 or more: 29, Hinkley Point, October 21st; 120, North Hill; November 2nd; 40, Fyne Court on 13th; 30 to 50, Dunster Hawn area, on 15th with 70 there on December 23rd; 50, Lydeard Hill, on 18th; 80, Holnicote, on 28th; and 45, Bratton, December 22nd.

## **YELLOWHAMMER** *Emberiza citrinella*

**Locally common resident breeder, and perhaps occasional passage migrant. Generally decreasing.**

### **First winter period**

All double-figure counts: 30, Knighton, January 6th rising to 60 on 13th and February 9th; 12, Eaker Hill, January 9th with 20 there on 12th; 12 near Chilcompton, on 17th with 16 there on February 24th; 13, Lower Severalls, January 31st, and 15 on February 22nd; and at least 20 on Croydon Hill, March 1st.

### **Breeding season**

Singing males in suitable habitat, singly unless otherwise stated.

#### *East*

Three each, Charlton and Stoke St Michael; and two, Vobster.

#### *South*

Two, Curry Mallet; five, Curry Rivel; ten, Dinnington; pair carrying food, Chard, and two, Red Post; one near Barrington Hill, and four, Staple Fitzpaine.

#### *South-west*

Robin Hood's Butts, Churchinford and Churchstanton; four, Sampford Point; and Curland.

#### *Quantocks*

Eight, Broomfield Hill, and two, Lydeard Hill; Great Hill, Fire Beacon and Crowcombe Park Gate; two, Dowsborough; Knacker's Hole; Woodlands Hill and Frog Hill; two, Hare Nap; two, Sheppard's Combe; Hurley Beacon; and three, Vinny Combe.

#### *Brendons and Exmoor*

Three families, Stogumber; five territories, Brockwell; and five, Winsford Hill.

### **Second winter period**

Only double-figure records were 12 on Great Hill, October 24th, and 12 on Eaker Hill, November 20th.

## **CIRL BUNTING** *Emberiza cirius*

**Formerly resident breeder, now occasional vagrant.**

Six birds found in section of scrubby hedgerow alongside coastal footpath at Lilstock on February 11th (CS); next day, confirmed as three males and three females (BDG *et al.*). They remained until at least March 19th; thereafter, highest number seen on any one visit was three, a male and two females. To assist the birds' foraging, SOS Committee members provided supplementary food. Despite several records of the remaining male singing, no evidence found to confirm breeding. Last sighting was of female, July 24th (BJH).

First County records since one at Halse Combe (West Luccombe), May 27th, 2014 (see SB 2015).



**REED BUNTING** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

**Locally common resident breeder and vertical migrant; also winter visitor and passage migrant.**

**First winter period**

Reports of 204 birds from 36 sites, with some double-figure counts: 18, Butleigh Moor during January; 12 at Ham Wall, January 21 and 24th; and ten, Steart Marshes, February 20th.

**Breeding season**

Single, singing males, in suitable habitat, unless stated otherwise.

*East and Mendip*

A juvenile seen at Westbury Moor.

*Coast of Bridgwater Bay*

Burnham; and four, Wall Common.

*Levels north of Poldens*

Two, Queen's Sedge Moor; 133 territories held, Ham Wall; and Catcott Fen.

*Levels south of Poldens*

Twenty-one territories held, Greylake Reserve; seven, Weston Level; six, Curry Moor; and 125 pairs present on West Sedge Moor.

*South and South-west*

Two juveniles raised at Lyde Rd, Yeovil; two, Creech St Michael.

*Brendons and Exmoor*

Wimbleball Lake; Dicky's Path, Dunkery; Hollow Combe; and four, Simonsbath to Cow Castle. EMP recorded males as follows: one, Upper Chalk Water; three, Long Combe/Pinfords; three, Lanacombe; one, Portford Bridge to Tudball's Splatts; and two, Winsford Hill.

**Second winter period**

Far fewer records submitted and no flocks reported.

**SNOW BUNTING** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.**

As in 2018, just two records of single birds: one photographed on West Sedge Moor, October 15th (C. Tracey) and one at Bossington Beach, November 1st–17th (DD *et al.*).

**Cirl Buntings, Lilstock (male, James Packer / female, Brian Gibbs)**



## EXOTICA AND ESCAPES

All observations of escaped and feral species help to monitor possible colonisations, which in the future may become established. So all records are required.

### **BLACK SWAN** *Cygnus atratus*

One, West Sedge Moor, January 6th–10th, and then Aller Moor on 14th.

### **TRUMPETER SWAN** *Cygnus buccinator*

The long-staying bird, first reported in 2005, was last seen on January 25th.

### **BAR-HEADED GOOSE** *Anser indicus*

Two records both of single birds: Durleigh Reservoir, September 1st/2nd; Steart area, September 30th–October 3rd and then presumably the same on the 24th.

### **BLUE-WINGED GOOSE** *Cyanochen cyanoptera*

One present all year at Nine Springs, Yeovil.

### **MUSCOVY DUCK** *Cairina moschata*

Two single birds: Pavyott's Mill, East Coker, February 19th, April 22nd and October 30th; one along the Mineral Line between Watchet and Washford, August 4th.

### **CHILOÉ WIGEON** *Mareca sibilatrix*

A party of four, Steart Marshes, September 19th.

### **WHITE-CHEEKED PINTAIL** *Anas bahamensis*

One, Cheddar Reservoir, August 4th.

### **ROSYBILL** *Netta peposaca*

One, Apex Park, November 13th, presumably had been present all year again.

### **HOODED MERGANSER** *Lophodytes cucullatus*

A female, Hawkridge Reservoir, November 18th, and a male on December 16th. Hybrids seen several times through the year but the dates not recorded.

### **LADY AMHERST'S PHEASANT** *Chrysolophus amherstiae*

One, Croydon Hill, January 17th.

### **RED-BILLED LEIOTHRIX** *Leiothrix lutea*

One photographed at feeders, Rode, February 10th.



Bar-headed Goose, Steart Marshes (Dave Dawe)

# OBSERVERS

Akers P.G.	PGA	Gorringe D.J.	DJG
Allen G.	GA	Griffin J.R.V.	JG
Amos N.	NA	Grimmond R.	RGr
Ashman A.	AA		
		Hall K.	KH
Ball J.	JB1	Hansford J.M.	JMH
Ballance D.K.	DKB	Harris A.	AHa
Ballantine R.P.	RPB	Hawkins A.	AH
Bate P.	PB	Hazell J.A.	JAH
Best J.R.	JRB	Helliard D.W.	DWH
Bodley D.	DB	Hester N.	NH
Booker H.	HB	Hill B.J.	BJH
Bovett W.P.	WPB	Hobbs P.G.	PGH
Braden N.	NB	Holmes J.D.	JDH
Breeze S.	SB	Horsfield C.P.	CPH
British Trust for Ornithology	BTO	Howard T.J.	TJH
Butcher R.J.	RJB	Huggins R.	RH
		Hunt I.	IH
		Hyde C.	CH
Chown D.J.	DJC		
Clement P.A.	PAC	Ibbetson Rev. S.	SI
Collins P.	PC	Ingram R.J.	RJI
Cook P.	PCo		
Craig C.	CC	Jeffrey M.	MJ
Cropper R.S.	RSC	Jennings P.	PJ
Culligan R.	RCu	Jervis R.	RJ
		Jolliffe A.	AJ
Davies S.V.	SVD	Jones J.A.	JAJ
Dawe D.	DD		
Devitt R.H.	RHD	Kelly R.J.	RJK
Dicker G.M.	GMD	Kennett I.	IK
Dickey R.C.	RCD		
Drewitt E.	ED	Last J.	JLa
		Lloyd D.E.B.	DEBL
Edwards P.J.	PJE	Loudon I.F.	IFL
Ellis B.R.	BRE	Lupton D.	DL
Eskins M.G.	MGE		
Evans B.	BE	Macrow F.	FM
Everett A.N.	ANE	Manicom R.G.	RGM
Exmoor Monitoring Project	EMP	Martin J.P.	JPM
Exmoor National Park		Mattick J.J.	JJM
Authority	ENPA	Mears A.F.	AFM
Exmoor Natural History		Merry P.	PM
Society	ENHS	Milligan B.S.	BSM
		Mockridge D.G.	DGM
Farr T.M.	TMF	Mockridge O.J.	OJM
Forestry Commission	FC	Morgan A.J.	AJM
		Morris C.	CM
Gale A.	AG	Morrison R.	RMo
Garnsworthy N.	NG	Moss S.	SMo
Gibbs B.D.	BDG	Murray K.	KM
Gifford T.	TG	Musgrove R.L.	RLM
Gladman C.	CG		

Newman C.J. & J.E.	C&JN	Squire H.C.	HCS
		Stephens C.	CSt
Packer J.J.	JJP	Stevenson A.M.	ASt
Parker S.J.	SJP	Stone M.	MS
Parsons A.J.	AJP	Suter G.	GS
Perry C.	CP	Sutton L.	LS
Pictor G.	GP		
Pratt R.	RPr	Taylor A.	AT
		Thole M.	MTh
Quantock Hills AONB	QAONB	Thomas J.L.	JLT
		Tigwell E.	ET
Raven T.	TR	Towers J.	JT
Reeves D.	DR	Tucker K.	KT
Rivoire J.	JRi		
Robin A.	AR	Vaughan M.	MV
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	RSPB	Vickers J.	JV
		Wall N.E.	NEW
Sage C.	CS	Wall S.	SW
Sage J.M.	JMS	Warden D.	DWa
Sawyer C.M.	CMS	Watson D.	DW
Simmons A.	AS	Wawman D.M.I.C.	DCW
Skinner R.	RS	Webber W.J.	WJW
Slade A.M.	AMS	Weedon C.	CW
Slade B.E.	BES	White J.R.	JRW
Smith N.A.	NAS	Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust	WWT
Smith N.R.	NRS	Wilson P.J.	PJW
Smith T.	TS	Wood L.	LW
Souter R.	RSo	Wright T.R.C.	TCW
Speed D.	DS		
Spencer J.A.	JAS		
Sperring C.P.	CPS		

With apologies for any omissions.



Aquatic Warbler, Steart (Denise Wawman) – see *Ringing Report* opposite

# RINGING REPORT 2019

The SOS received records from 17 BTO licensed bird ringers who reported ringing 5156 birds of 73 species in Somerset in 2019. 27% of these birds were ringed as chicks in the nest, compared with about 20% in Britain and Ireland as a whole, giving the chance to build up full life histories for some of these individuals. A full list of birds ringed in all counties and selected recoveries can be found on the British Trust for Ornithology's website at [www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/ringing/publications/online-ringing-reports](http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/ringing/publications/online-ringing-reports).

Less common species ringed in Somerset in 2019 included Tufted Duck and Grey Heron at Withiel Florey, six Cranes on the Levels and Aquatic Warbler at Steart. However, the most interesting event in the Somerset ringing year has to be the recovery of one of the Peregrines, originally ringed as a 21-day-old chick in Taunton, in Tiznit, Morocco, making it the first UK ringed Peregrine to be recorded reaching mainland Africa, although one made it to Lanzarote in 1999.

Targeted ringing effort as part of ringing projects (see below) continued to find good numbers of some of the less common and specialist species found in the County, such as Pied Flycatchers.

If you spot a ringed bird please report it to the BTO at [www.ring.ac](http://www.ring.ac). You need to include the ring number or colour ring sequence, the type of bird, if you know it, where and when it was found and what happened to the bird, e.g. killed by cat, hit window, etc. Also include your name and contact details so that you can be sent details of the bird's life history.

Our thanks, as always, go to the landowners who have allowed bird ringing to take place on their land, all those who have taken the trouble to report a ringed bird, the nest recorders, bird ringers and their helpers.

## RINGING PROJECTS

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The Constant Effort Site (CES) at Langford Heathfield reported higher adult survival than in the previous three years. Early breeders did well but later breeders and second broods had poor productivity.

There are currently seven Retrapping Adults for Survival (RAS) Projects in the County. The BTO combines these data with those from other RAS studies to produce national trends for these species. Pied Flycatcher numbers remained high at their favoured sites. No Wood Warblers were ringed in Horner Woods in 2019 (WJW). The other five RAS studies are run in Bratton (DCW), looking at House Sparrow, Robin, Blackbird, Dunnock and Siskin. The Robins are colour-ringed. All five species had a poor year in 2019, with a marked decrease in the Siskin breeding population, following a period of stormy weather early in the breeding season.

The Hawk and Owl Trust's Kestrel Highways Project (CM and CP) and Community Barn Owl Project didn't ring any birds in 2019, but eight Barn Owl nests were monitored (CPS). Broods were initially larger than average, but there was high mortality during the reason due to poor weather and the average number of chicks fledged was 2.8 per pair. Two pairs went on to have second broods.

The South West Pied Flycatcher Network continued to flourish with the Somerset-based contributing studies taking place in woodlands on the Quantocks (AHa, RCD, RS and DCW) and Exmoor (AHa, RGM, BSM, DCW and LW). A total of 525 pulli and 70 adults were ringed in 2019. See [www.PiedFly.Net](http://www.PiedFly.Net) for more information and details of papers published by Malcolm Burgess at Exeter University who coordinates the study group.

A project looking at Nightingales at Merryfield (RCD) ringed three birds in 2019.

As might be expected, following the severe weather at the start of 2018 when the Dartford Warbler population on the Bossington Hill to North Hill ridge collapsed to only a few pairs, there were fewer pairs on the study site and only nine were ringed in 2019.

Six young Cranes were ringed on the Somerset Levels (AJM).

Somerset ringers continued to participate in the BTO's Wintering Blackcap Study which is trying to determine whether the Blackcaps wintering in the UK are year-round residents or whether they migrate from continental Europe for the winter, as well as looking at whether there is a genetic basis for the choice of migration route. Please look out for and report any colour-ringed Blackcaps (or other colour-ringed birds).

Somerset ringers have also joined a new nationwide BTO study looking at patterns of moult and survival amongst juvenile Blue Tits, testing the theory that birds which are fitter as juveniles will both complete a more extensive moult and have increased winter survival.

The other ringers who provided totals for the report were ED, AJ, KM and TCW.

## RECOVERIES, CONTROLS AND SIGHTINGS

### Glossary

<b>X</b>	Found dead
<b>XF</b>	Found freshly dead or dying
<b>XL</b>	Found dead (not recent)
<b>R</b>	Caught and released by ringer
<b>RR</b>	Ring read in the field

### Age codes

<b>1</b>	Pullus – a bird ringed in nest
<b>1J</b>	A fledgling flying so weakly that it cannot have flown far from the nest
<b>2</b>	Fully grown; year of hatching unknown
<b>3</b>	Definitely hatched during calendar year
<b>3J</b>	Definitely hatched during current calendar year, still in juvenile plumage
<b>4</b>	Definitely hatched before the current calendar year
<b>5</b>	Hatched during the previous calendar year
<b>6</b>	Hatched before last calendar year (thus a bird described as a 6M in 2019 is a male which hatched in 2017 or earlier)

Species Ring no.	Age/sex	Date ringed Date recovered	Place ringed Place recovered	Distance/Direction	Time interval
<b>Mute Swan</b>					
ZY9051	8M	25-07-2015	Abbotsbury, Dorset		
	8M, F	23-03-2019	WWT Steart Marshes		
<b>Mallard</b>					
GC60446	4M	05-10-2018	Dunster Beach		
	XF	27-01-2019	Fermoy, Cork, Ireland	349 km WNW	114 days
	Shot				
<b>Curlew</b>					
GRY-RGR	1	06-07-2017	Dellstedt, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany		
	RR	21-03-2018	Dunster Beach		
	RR	23-03-2018	Dunster Beach		
	RR	01-03-2019	Dunster Beach		
<b>Great White Egret</b>					
CA83754	1	16/05/2019	Beslé, Loire Atlantique, France		
	RR	30-09-2019	Westhay	450 km	2091 days
<b>Little Egret</b>					
GR08281	1	01-08-2013	Besthorpe Gravel Pit, Newark, Nottinghamshire		
	RR	21-02-2019	Westhay Moor	259 km SSE	
GV77629	1	15-05-2019	Walthamstow Wetlands, Greater London		
	RR	28-10-2019	Dunster Marsh	238 km W	167 days
<b>Great Black-backed Gull</b>					
MA33470	1	09-06-2014	Portland Bill Breakwater, Dorset		
	RR	19-05-2015	Seaton, Cornwall		
	RR	07-04-2016	Radipole Lake, Dorset		
	RR	10-05-2016	Axe Estuary, Devon		
	RR	10-05-2016	Axe Estuary, Devon		
	RR	26-04-2017	Axe Estuary, Devon		
	RR	11-06-2018	Chard Reservoir		
	RR	02-09-2018	Chard Reservoir		
	RR	18-10-2018	Axe Estuary, Devon		

Species Ring no.	Age/sex	Date ringed Date recovered	Place ringed Place recovered	Distance/Direction	Time interval
<b>Great Black-backed Gull cont'd</b>					
	RR	26-02-2019	Chard Junction Quarry, Dorset		
	RR	31-03-2019	Chard Reservoir		
	RR	10-04-2019	Chard Reservoir		
	RR	10-07-2019	Axe Estuary, Devon		
	RR	14-08-2019	Axe Estuary, Devon		
	RR	12-10-2019	Axe Estuary, Devon		
MA42425	1	19-06-2018	Portland Bill Breakwater, Dorset		
	RR	26-04-2019	Dunster Beach		
<b>Lesser Black-backed Gull</b>					
FA76198	10	08-12-1995	Gloucester Landfill Site, near Hempsted, Gloucestershire		
	RR	30-04-2019	Dunster Beach	108 km SW	23 years 143 days
Has also been seen at various landfill sites around Gloucestershire and Wiltshire and at Blue Anchor in 2018, Chapel Cleeve in 2014, and Dunster Beach in 2014, 2015 and 2016.					
<b>Peregrine</b>					
RY	1M	30-05-2019	Taunton		
	3, XF	01-11-2019	Tiznit, Morocco	2432 km SSE	155 days
<b>Kingfisher</b>					
SE32079	3	13-06-2017	Sherpa Marsh, Velator, Braunton, Devon		
	4F, XF	15-05-2018	Wootton Courtenay	47 km E	336 days
Hit glass					
<b>Swallow</b>					
ARF8924	1	02-08-2019	Timberscombe		
	XF	06-09-2019	Burrow	2 km W	35 days
Taken by cat					
<b>Blackcap</b>					
AJE4670	3M	25-09-2018	Litlington, East Sussex, UK		
	R	22-04-2019	Five Bells, Watchet	248 km W	209 days
<b>Blue Tit</b>					
AEE1085	3	27-12-2018	Bratton, near Minehead		
	5, R	08-03-2019	East Anstey, Devon	22 km SSW	71 days
AEE1918	1	31-05-2019	Horner Wood		
	R	24-08-2019	Bratton, near Minehead	6 km NE	85 days
AEE2676	3	18-09-2019	Bossington Beach		
	XF	22-10-2019	Bossington	0 km	37 days
Died of starvation, extremely long claws					
AJD4303	1	22-05-2019	Holford Combe		
	XF	25-06-2019	Holford	0 km	34 days
Taken by cat					
D143762	5	01-03-2014	Rodhuish		
	X	27-09-2019	Roadwater	3 km SSE	2036 days
Drowned in pond					
D468452	6	07-03-2017	Higher Town, Minehead		
	X	10-08-2019	Minehead	0 km N	886 days
Head trapped in a stone house wall					

Species Ring no.	Age/sex	Date ringed Date recovered	Place ringed Place recovered	Distance/Direction	Time interval
<b>Blue Tit cont'd</b>					
S515836	5 R	13-01-2018 20-02-2019	Bratton, near Minehead Withiel Florey	14 km SSE	386 days
<b>Great Tit</b>					
NY49463	1 XF	14-05-2019 30-08-2019	Little Headon Plantation Hindon Farm	0 km N	108 days
Found dead					
<b>Starling</b>					
LK88169	3J RR	23-05-2018 02-01-2019	Nunnery Drive, Thetford, Norfolk Rockwell Green, Wellington	319 km WSW	224 days
<b>Blackbird</b>					
LJ64586	3M 5M	21-10-2018 21-06-2019	Frinningley Airfield, near Doncaster, South Yorkshire Bratton, near Minehead	304 km SW	243 days
<b>Mistle Thrush</b>					
LL08002	3 4, R	04-06-2018 04-01-2019	RSPCA, West Hatch Five Bells, Watchet	32 km NW	214 days
<b>Pied Flycatcher</b>					
AJD4250	1 4F, R	11-06-2018 10-06-2019	Holford Combe Near Rifton, Stoodleigh	34 km SW	364 days
D399084	1 4F, R	13-06-2015 11-05-2019	Forest Coal Pit, Monmouthshire Barlynch Wood	99 km SSW	1428 days
D468782	1 4M, R	02-06-2017 18-05-2018	Clatworthy Reservoir Bovey Valley Woodlands, Devon	71 km SSW	315 days
D468941	1 4F, R	07-06-2018 15-05-2019	Barlynch Wood Armer Wood, Devon	8 km WSW	342 days
D591220	1 R, 4F R, 4F R, 4F	05-06-2014 16-05-2015 12-05-2017 21-05-2018	Bratton Wood, Bratton Fleming, Devon Horner Wood Horner Wood East Anstey, Armer, Devon	27 km ENE 27 km ENE 25 km ESE	345 days 1071 days 1446 days
D609578	1 4F, R	17-06-2013 17-05-2019	Quantock Hills, near Nether Stowey Holford Combe	4 km NNW	2160 days
The BTO longevity record for Pied Flycatcher currently stands at 9 years and 7 days and although this bird is 3 years short of the record and is calculated to have only moved 4 km in just under 6 years, she will have been to Sub-Saharan Africa and back 6 times in her life.					
S516290	1 4F, R	07-06-2018 18-04-2019	Over Stowey Customs Common Neadon Cleave, Manaton, Devon	71 km SW	315 days
S516390	1 4F, R	08-06-2019 31-05-2019	Clatworthy Reservoir Mary Knoll, near Ludlow, Herefordshire	147 km NNE	357 days
S680880	4F R	01-06-2017 17-05-2019	Armer Wood, Devon Croydon Hill	17 km NE	715 days
S680884	1 4F, R	06-06-2017 11-05-2019	Burridge Wood Barlynch Wood	3 km E	707 days
Z113563	1 4F, R 4F, R	25-05-2017 15-05-2018 11-05-2019	Meldon Woods, Devon Barlynch Wood Barlynch Wood	52 km NE 52 km NE	355 days 716 days

Species Ring no.	Age/sex	Date ringed Date recovered	Place ringed Place recovered	Distance/Direction	Time interval
<b>Pied Flycatcher cont'd</b>					
Z135712	1 4F, R	04-05-2016 31-05-2019	Hodders Combe Yarner Wood, Devon	73 km SSW	1091 days
Z590805	1 4M, R	10-06-2016 01-06-2019	Barlynch Wood Neadon Cleave, Manaton, Devon	52 km SSW	1086 days
Z135885	1 4F, R 6F, R 6F, R	10-06-2016 18-05-2017 12-05-2019 20-06-2019	Hodders Combe Near Rifton, Stoodleigh Near Rifton, Stoodleigh Near Rifton, Stoodleigh	34 km SW 34 km SW 34 km SW	342 days 1066 days 1105 days
Z590808	1 4F, R	10-06-2016 24-05-2019	Barlynch Wood Yarner Wood, Devon	54 km SSW	1078 days
Z590866	4F 4F, R 4F, R	18-05-2017 17-06-2018 18-05-2019	Barlynch Wood Near Rifton, Stoodleigh Near Rifton, Stoodleigh	12 km SSW 12 km SSW	364 days 730 days
<b>House Sparrow</b>					
NY49248	3J XF	17-07-2018 08-09-2019	Bratton, near Minehead Porlock	6 km W	418 days
Taken by cat					
<b>Bullfinch</b>					
S515748	3M R R	15-11-2017 14-01-2018 14-01-2019	Croydon Hill Five Bells, Watchet Five Bells, Watchet	10 km E 10 km E	60 days 425 days
<b>Greenfinch</b>					
TX72354	4F R	03-03-2017 04-08-2019	Bratton, near Minehead West Down, Devon	45 km W	884 days
TZ30721	4F R	03-02-2019 18-06-2019	Five Bells, Watchet Sutton Benger, Wiltshire	95 km ENE	135 days
<b>Goldfinch</b>					
AEA2508	3F 6F, R	18-10-2017 08-04-2019	Ballard Down, Dorset Bratton, near Minehead	127 km WNW	537 days
AEE2352	3	22-08-2019 01-11-2019	Bratton, near Minehead Dunkeswell, Honiton, Devon	45 km SSE	71 days
Taken by cat					
<b>Siskin</b>					
AEE1009	3F XF	11-12-2018 02-05-2019	Bratton, near Minehead Periton, Minehead	2 km E	142 days
Found dead. This is an interesting record because most Siskins are thought to overwinter away from their breeding areas.					
AEE1247	5M 5M, R	06-02-2019 13-02-2019	Bratton, near Minehead Crynant, Neath, Port Talbot, West Glamorgan	62 km NNW	7 days
AXE3109	3M 5M, R	10-11-2018 16-02-2019	West Down, Devon Bratton, near Minehead	45 km E	98 days
S515293	3J 6F, R 6F, R	11-07-2017 08-03-2019 13-03-2019	Bratton, near Minehead Drummond, Inverness, Highland Drummond, Inverness, Highland	696 km N 696 km N	605 days 610 days

Species Ring no.	Age/sex	Date ringed Date recovered	Place ringed Place recovered	Distance/Direction	Time interval
<b>Siskin cont'd</b>					
S515886	6M R	06-03-2018 10-04-2019	Bratton, near Minehead Glen Euchar, Argyll and Bute	585 km NNW	400 days
S516473	3J 5F, R	17-06-2018 03-04-2019	Bratton, near Minehead Pope's Hill, Gloucestershire	100 km NE	290 days
Z194259	4F R	10-05-2019 09-06-2019	Colyton, Devon Bratton, near Minehead	61k m NNW	30 days
Z829723	5M XF	16-02-2017 09-04-2019	Bratton, near Minehead Alness, Highland	722 km N	782 days
Taken by cat					
Z829742	6M R	18-02-2017 06-04-2019	Bratton, near Minehead Broadmeadows, Scottish Borders	487 km N	777 days

## SYSTEMATIC LIST WITH TOTAL BIRDS RINGED

Species	Pulli	Full grown	Total
Tufted Duck		1	1
Grey Heron		1	1
Sparrowhawk		4	4
Crane	6		6
Woodcock		2	2
Stock Dove	8		8
Woodpigeon	2	6	8
Collared Dove		1	1
Barn Owl	5		5
Tawny Owl	1		1
Nightjar	2	4	6
Kingfisher		2	2
Green Woodpecker		4	4
Great Spotted Woodpecker		11	11
Peregrine	3		3
Jay		2	2
Magpie		3	3
Jackdaw	36		36
Rook		1	1
Carrion Crow	2		2
Raven	4		4
Coal Tit		40	40
Marsh Tit	7	8	15
Blue Tit	428	486	914
Great Tit	139	216	355
Swallow	50	3	53
House Martin		1	1

Species	Pulli	Full grown	Total
Cetti's Warbler		4	4
Long-tailed Tit		91	91
Willow Warbler	8	77	85
Chiffchaff		175	175
Aquatic Warbler		1	1
Sedge Warbler		51	51
Reed Warbler		43	43
Blackcap	10	335	345
Garden Warbler		11	11
Lesser Whitethroat		7	7
Whitethroat	4	43	47
Dartford Warbler		9	9
Firecrest		2	2
Goldcrest		40	40
Wren	5	67	72
Nuthatch	6	2	8
Treecreeper		6	6
Starling		14	14
Blackbird	14	176	190
Fieldfare		30	30
Redwing		74	74
Song Thrush	9	8	17
Mistle Thrush		5	5
Spotted Flycatcher	12	2	14
Robin	11	174	185
Nightingale		3	3
Pied Flycatcher	525	71	596
Redstart	7	7	14
Whinchat	12		12
Stonechat		5	5
Dipper	13		13
House Sparrow	9	217	226
Dunnock		147	147
Grey Wagtail	2		2
Pied Wagtail	24		24
Meadow Pipit		18	18
Chaffinch		69	69
Brambling		1	1
Bullfinch		34	34
Greenfinch		116	116
Linnet		17	17
Lesser Redpoll		6	6
Goldfinch	10	668	678
Siskin		151	151
Yellowhammer		2	2
Reed Bunting		7	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1374</b>	<b>3782</b>	<b>5156</b>

# LIGHT-BELLIED BRENT GESE ON THE SOMERSET COAST

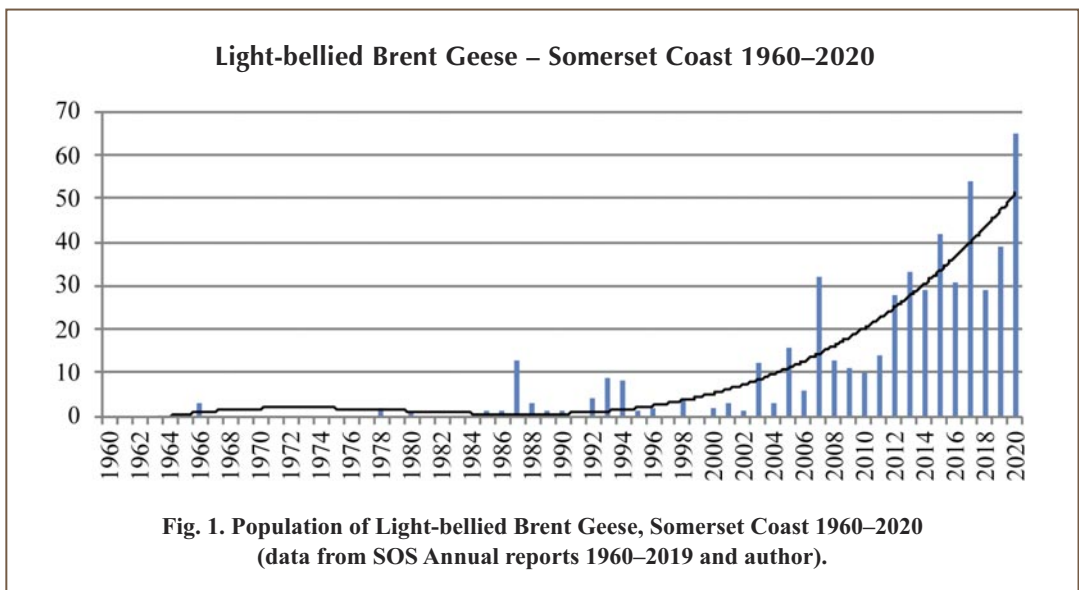
Over the last two decades a feature of winter birding in Bridgwater Bay National Nature Reserve has been a small, but growing, flock of Light-bellied Brent Geese, usually accompanied by smaller numbers of Dark-bellied birds.

The Brent Goose, *Branta bernicla*, has three recognised subspecies. Dark-bellied Brent, *B. b. bernicla*, the nominate race, breeds in west Siberia and winters widely around the west European coast. Black Brant, *B. b. nigricans*, breeds in east Siberia and the west Canadian High Arctic, wintering on North Pacific coasts. Light-bellied Brent, *B. b. hrota*, has two breeding populations, one in Svalbard and Franz Josef Land, wintering in Denmark and Northumberland, and a larger population breeding in north-east Greenland and the east Canadian High Arctic. This latter population winters mainly in Ireland with small numbers in other west European coastal sites, including the Somerset coast. (A further Nearctic race, the so-called Grey-bellied Brent has been described, but is not universally recognised.)

The Canadian population of Light-bellied Brents has a flyway estimate of 36,000 and an international conservation status of “least concern”, while the Great Britain population has an estimate of 1,600 and a UK Bird of Conservation Concern (BoCC) “amber” status, despite an increase of 60% in the past ten years (whereas the Svalbard population has decreased by 10% in the past ten years). They breed on the northern islands in the Canadian Arctic archipelago on the edge of the Arctic Ocean beyond 80° north – a totally remote area on Ellesmere Island that I was lucky enough to visit in the 1990s. Ringing and satellite-tracking studies confirm that, following breeding, the birds fly in family groups to Greenland and over 700km of ice cap to Iceland where they stop to replenish energy reserves. They then fly across the North Atlantic to their wintering grounds, completing a migration totalling 4,500km, giving this Nearctic population the distinction of being a regular trans-Atlantic migrant to the Western Palearctic.

The majority, around 3,600, winter in Ireland, especially around Strangford Lough in the north, with smaller groups in north-west France and in Great Britain, where flocks of several hundred birds gather in Morecambe Bay, the Dee Estuary and Anglesey.

Before the late 1980s there were only a few reports of Light-bellied Brents on the coast between Steart peninsula and Dunster Beach, but since the turn of the new millennium each winter the population has, apart from the odd blip, steadily increased (Fig. 1). In the winter of 2019/2020, the Somerset flock held well over sixty birds and according to current BTO Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) data it is the largest regular flock in south-west Great Britain. These birds have been confirmed as originating from the east Canadian High Arctic population by





### Light-bellied Brent Geese, Stolford (Dick Best)

sightings in 2011, 2012 and 2019/20 of birds ringed either on migration in Iceland or wintering in Northern Ireland.

In most years the flock has included a small number of Dark-bellied Brents, which often arrive independently, but then remain with the Light-bellied birds for the duration of the winter.

Birds arrive in late September–early October and depart by mid-April, often increasing after the New Year. Numbers can vary through the season and there is evidence from sightings of ringed birds that some can move from Bridgwater Bay to the south English coast and further to north-west France. The most consistent daily pattern of behaviour displayed by the flock is governed by the state of the tide. They roost out at sea on the high tide and then as the tide drops work their way onshore to feed in the bay at the east end of Catsford Common, moving west as other feeding sites become available at Stolford, Hinkley Point and Knighton. The flock appears to feed exclusively on littoral vegetation along the inter-tidal zone of the beach and is rarely, if ever, found away from the coast or feeding in fields in the hinterland.

The birds appear to remain in loose family groups through the winter with the ratio of adults to juveniles varying from year to year. In recent years the mean percentage of juveniles in the flock has been 37%, but in 2015 this dropped to 4%. The reasons for this loss of productivity may relate to adverse conditions on migration or on the breeding grounds, but may also be related to predation. In years when rodent (lemming) populations are high then gosling losses from mammalian and avian predators are low and a higher percentage of juveniles survive to arrive in the winter; whereas in those summers when lemming populations crash then predation on goslings increases and fewer survive.

The recent increase in the local population is likely to be a reflection of the five-fold to six-fold increase in birds wintering in Great Britain that has

occurred over the last two decades. The causes are unclear – possibly conditions in the traditional Irish wintering sites are becoming less conducive or alternative sites in Great Britain are becoming more conducive. Perhaps factors such as milder winters, minor disturbance, reduced marine pollution and improving food resources might well apply in Bridgwater Bay.

In the short term the future of this wintering flock might be threatened by the loss of an important feeding area with the proposed creation of a breach in the coast between Wall Common and Catsford Common as part of a managed realignment scheme to mitigate habitat loss elsewhere. The construction of a nuclear power station at Hinkley Point, and its attendant jetty, does not appear to have any significant effect on usage of that area by Brent Geese.

In summary the Light-bellied Brent Goose is a very special bird, breeding, as it does, on the edge of the Arctic Ocean as close to the North Pole as any bird, negotiating a long flight over almost the whole length of the Greenland Ice Cap, performing extensive changes in their physiology to conserve enough energy to both migrate and rear a family. It is fascinating to imagine the sights these birds must see once they leave the relatively benign surroundings in Bridgwater Bay.

#### Resources

<https://monitoring.wwt.org.uk/our-work/goose-swam-monitoring-programme/species-accounts/canadian-light-bellied-brent/>

Irish Brent Goose Research Group: <http://www.irish-brentgoose.com/>

Somerset Ornithological Society, Annual Reports 1960–2019: <https://somensetbirding.org.uk/>

Waterbirds in the UK 2016–2019: [www.bto.org/webs-reporting](http://www.bto.org/webs-reporting)

J.R. Best

# NEWS FROM THE RESERVES AND OTHER IMPORTANT LOCAL SITES

## SOMERSET LEVELS NATIONAL NATURE RESERVES (NATURAL ENGLAND)

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The winter had been mild and the spring came early. February saw displaying Great Crested Grebes and the arrival of a Glossy Ibis, which fed regularly on the islands of Noah's Lake into March. A warm spell in February even brought out wintering butterflies: Brimstone, Red Admiral and Peacock. Winter works on habitat included the opening up of fen areas and the clearance of ditches on our very wet cotton-grass fields, in order to encourage the spread of some specialised flora.

April brought our usual counts of booming Bitterns, undertaken with the RSPB and SWT. We found 47 in the County, including 42 in the Avalon Marshes: a fantastic year! By May, a Nightingale was singing regularly at the Ashcott end of the Reserve, and there were the usual Cuckoos and a variety of warblers. A "Polish" Swan (white cygnet) was hatched. Much of this excitement was captured in a wonderful new mural in Noah's Hide, painted by Mike Langman, the well-known wildlife artist.

There was news for the lovers of invertebrates, from specialist surveys by volunteers from the Recorders of the Avalon Marshes (RoAM), which concentrated on some of our less-visited sites: bucket-loads of Ramsar-cited water beetles, including *Hydrophilus piceus*, *Hydaticus transversalis*, and *Hydrochara caraboides*, and some notable soldier-flies, including the Black Colonel *Odontomyia tigrina*, the Ornate Brigadier *O. ornata*, and the Silver Colonel *O. argentata* (not recorded in Somerset since 1949). The season peaked in August with the re-discovery of the Large Marsh Grasshopper *Stethophyma grossum*, "extinct" in Somerset since the 1990s, but breeding in three distinct areas!

By the end of summer, our colonies of Great White Egrets held 11 successful nests on Shapwick alone, with 27 fledged young, 84% of the UK population. There were nine successful nests of Marsh Harriers in the Avalon Marshes, with 20 fledged young. With the hot weather, Painted Lady butterflies had a bumper year, and there were particularly good numbers of Orange Tips, Brimstones, Ringlets and Gatekeepers. There was a great increase in Scarce Chaser dragonflies, which were not found on the Levels even ten years ago, and Migrant Hawks and Common Darters were on the wing until very late in the year. Shapwick had three visits from Ospreys: one in July, one in mid August, and finally "our" August Bank Holiday bird.

We have continued to welcome school groups, and we now have a newly appointed NE/RSPB Education Officer, Nicholas Badcott. We have also had students from Year Ten at Bridgwater and Taunton College on work-experience placements. Our "Young Wardens" group have completed their Community Service volunteering hours for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and there have been informal engagements, such as "Forest School for All the Family" and a range of Wildlife Walks and Open Days. We even hosted a visit from the Natural England Senior Leadership Team and Board of Directors, including the new Chair, Tony Juniper, who were all impressed with the landscape-scale partnership work so apparent on the Avalon Marshes.

Improvements at the Centre continued. Half of the car park is now finished, including a smart boardwalk onto the site; and there are new log-cabin meeting rooms, for the site staff, and for commercial hire. The South West Heritage Trust has received a replica Viking boat, and has begun the construction of an Iron-Age roundhouse.

**Julie Merrett, Head of Reserves**

## SOMERSET WILDLIFE TRUST

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A full survey of breeding waders was undertaken in 2019 on Burtle Moor, Catcott Lows and Tealham Moor. This provides a base-line for the current population of Lapwing, Snipe, Curlew and Redshank, so that we can assess the factors influencing their distribution in these areas. A total of 26 breeding pairs were found: four Lapwing, 17 Snipe, four Curlew, and one Redshank.

The second of two scrapes was installed at Catcott; these will benefit birds throughout the year. In spring, their importance was highlighted by the results of this year's wader survey, since most nests were associated with them. On completion of the first scrape, it did not take long for a group of over 50 Cattle Egrets to find it and catch Water Voles. Other sightings included a Great White Egret feeding on eels, and a fishing Kingfisher. Hopefully, the second scrape will start to vegetate in spring 2020, and will come into its own in the breeding season.

In September, SWT continued the reedbed cutting regime on Westhay Moor, where channels were opened up, creating age-structure and maintaining sight-lines.

Successes with Bitterns and Marsh Harriers are celebrated in the account above from Natural England; seven of the former were booming on SWT reserves, which also hosted two or three pairs of the latter. Two

pairs of Great White Egrets tried to breed on Westhay Moor, but were unsuccessful.

In winter, WeBS surveys found a peak number of 57 Snipe on Burtle Moor, which was a reduction on previous years' results.

**Rachel Fickweiler**  
**Head of Nature Reserves for SWT**

## **RSPB**

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Unfortunately, because of the pressures of a difficult year, we have not received any notes from the Society, but its records have been submitted as usual, and its Reserves at Greylake and West Sedge Moor had a share in some events described by other contributors.

## **BRIDGWATER BAY NNR AND WWT STEART MARSHES**

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The wintering populations of the most numerous waders, such as Dunlin and Golden Plover, have remained steady. In the Parrett Estuary, Avocets have increased, with counts nearing 500 birds, whereas Knot and Lapwing have declined. Breeding records have been disappointing: only two pairs of Oystercatchers succeeded on the Fenning; there were failed attempts on Catsford Common. For what might be the first year in recent decades, Ringed Plovers have not nested on Steart peninsula or Stert Island. Human and canine disturbance, together with natural predation, are likely to be the significant contributory causes. It is hoped that measures to restrict access to the coast, to be taken by Natural England with EDF funding, may be helpful in addressing this problem.

In the footsteps of the late Doug Miller, ringing attempts have again been made by Denise Wawman in the Steart coastal reedbed. They were successful: a wide range of passerines were caught, including a much-anticipated Aquatic Warbler.

The intertidal coastal marsh on WWT Steart Marshes has now had its fifth summer. The salt-tolerant flora continues to flourish, and vegetation is becoming established in the two heavily silted lagoons. The northern one, by the breach, attracts fewer water birds, since it no longer holds open water, following the collapse of the weir and the ensuing build-up of sediment. It is hoped that by re-establishing the weir, dredging the sediment, and improving the islands, the value of this, the only remaining potential area of open water on the inter-tidal marsh, can be retained. The intermediate habitat of Otterhampton Marsh has proved to be a valuable winter feeding and roosting area for waders and wildfowl, and in summer for increasing numbers of breeding Avocets. The freshwater Stockland

Marsh holds a large and diverse winter population of wildfowl, and has the potential to attract migrant waders in autumn, with regular visits of Wood Sandpipers, Black-tailed Godwits and Ruff.

Apart from birds, monitoring continues of many aspects of the area, and reflects its biodiversity. There have been surveys by volunteers of Otters, small mammals, butterflies and dragonflies, together with post-graduate studies and professional surveys of saltmarsh flora, fish, Water Voles and carbon sequestration.

**Dick Best**

## **EXMOOR**

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The Exmoor Breeding Bird Monitoring Project was continued for its 14th year, and useful records have again been received from the ENPA Wildwatch scheme. From 2020, the organisation of the EMP has passed from me to David Lloyd, who brings to the task a long experience of the Moor and its people. The event of the year has been the return of the Dunlin as an upland breeder, after an absence of 105 years. Members will be glad to know that the access barriers imposed in March 2020 were lifted just in time to permit the summer surveying programme to be carried out. Unfortunately, the series of valuable full moorland breeding-bird surveys by the RSPB has now been brought to a stop by mounting costs. There had been five of these from 1978 to 2014, of which the last three had been at six-year intervals.

**David Ballance**



**Stonechat, Knighton Beach (Nick Wall)**

# ARRIVAL DATES OF MIGRANTS 2019

## (excluding Blackcap and Chiffchaff)

January and December records of Garganey at Sutton Bingham Reservoir and Yeovil have been excluded from the Table as they were possibly overwintering. The House Martin on February 28th was the earliest County record as was the Lesser Whitethroat on March 26th, and the Reed Warbler on the 27th and Garden Warbler on the 29th equalled their earliest. There were several notable last records for Swallow, Whitethroat and Pied Flycatcher.

Species	Arrival date	Earliest-ever arrival	10-year average (2009–2018)	Last observed
Garganey	March 19th	February 16th	March 19th	October 30th
Manx Shearwater	March 10th	January 2nd	May 4th	November 2nd
Little Ringed Plover	March 24th	March 11th	March 17th	September 16th
Whimbrel	April 13th	February 19th	March 27th	September 17th
Wood Sandpiper	May 1st	April 18th	April 29th	October 1st
Sandwich Tern	March 13th	January 5th	March 27th	November 3rd
Little Tern	–	April 10th	May 1st	October 6th
Common Tern	April 6th	March 19th	April 11th	October 2nd
Arctic Tern	April 22nd	April 1st	April 19th	October 21st
Black Tern	April 20th	April 4th	April 25th	October 2nd
Cuckoo	April 13th	March 2nd	April 11th	August 21st
Nightjar	May 13th	April 13th	May 10th	September 18th
Swift	April 11th	March 27th	April 15th	September 10th
Hobby	April 2nd	February 18th	April 8th	October 15th
Sand Martin	February 28th	January 27th	March 6th	September 26th
Swallow	February 28th	January 24th	March 13th	December 15th
House Martin	<b>February 28th</b>	<b>February 28th</b>	March 27th	October 15th
Willow Warbler	March 20th	February 21st	March 23rd	September 28th
Wood Warbler	April 3rd	March 28th	April 15th	July 6th
Sedge Warbler	April 11th	March 22nd	April 5th	September 7th
Reed Warbler	<b>March 27th</b>	<b>March 27th</b>	April 4th	September 27th
Grasshopper Warbler	April 13th	April 5th	April 9th	August 30th
Garden Warbler	<b>March 29th</b>	<b>March 29th</b>	April 12th	September 10th
Lesser Whitethroat	<b>March 26th</b>	<b>March 26th</b>	April 13th	September 26th
Whitethroat	April 9th	March 24th	April 7th	November 29th
Ring Ouzel	March 24th	February 1st	March 22nd	November 1st
Spotted Flycatcher	May 11th	March 29th	April 28th	September 20th
Nightingale	April 16th	April 2nd	April 12th	June 5th
Pied Flycatcher	April 5th	April 1st	April 8th	October 31st
Redstart	March 31st	March 21st	April 5th	October 20th
Whinchat	April 18th	March 24th	April 18th	October 24th
Wheatear	February 28th	February 13th	March 11th	November 16th
Yellow Wagtail	March 29th	March 4th	April 5th	September 25th
Tree Pipit	April 6th	March 10th	April 5th	September 14th

# 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.

- Aisholt Combe, ST182350.  
Aisholt Common, ST180354.  
Alcombe, SS974442.  
Alcombe Common, SS975440.  
Alderman's Barrow, SS843427.  
Aldon Estate, ST555150.  
Alfred's Tower, ST745352.  
Allcombe Water, SS830405.  
Aller, ST400293.  
Aller Combe, SS893426.  
Aller Moor (Aller), ST387287.  
Allerford (Exmoor), SS905470.  
Allerton Moor, ST385515.  
Almsworthy Common, SS842419.  
Allotment, The, SS894336.  
Ammerdown, ST712528.  
Ansford, ST638329.  
Apex Park, ST316475.  
Ash Priors, ST151295.  
Ash Priors Common, ST154287.  
Ashcott, ST437372.  
Ashcott Corner, ST449397.  
Ashford Reservoir, ST235384.  
Ashill, ST323174.  
Athelney, ST347288.  
Avalon Marshes.  
Axe Estuary, ST295595.
- Badgworthy, SS791450.  
Badgworthy Water, SS791450.  
Bagborough Plantation, ST170343.  
Bagley Combe, SS880426.  
Baltonsborough, ST542348.  
Barlynch, SS929290.  
Barlynch Wood, SS935285.  
Baronsdown, SS933289.  
Barrington, ST388181.  
Barrington Hill, ST300170.  
Bason Bridge, ST34746.  
Batch Moor Copse, ST399066.  
Bathealton, ST080240.  
Bathpool, ST253258.  
Bat's Castle, SS988423.  
Beacon Batch, ST485573.  
Beacon Hill, ST359152.  
Beacon Hill (Quantocks), ST125410.  
Berkley, ST811494.  
Berrow, ST295524.  
Berrow (Dunes) LNR, ST292534.  
Bessom Bridge, SS972318.  
Bickenhall, ST285183.  
Bickham Wood, ST272081.  
Bicknoller, ST110395.  
Bicknoller Combe, ST115399.  
Bicknoller Hill, ST121396.  
Bicknoller Post, ST128403.
- Bilbrook, ST032410.  
Bin Combe (Quantocks), ST175393.  
Bincombe Beeches, ST442100.  
Bincombe Hill, ST435099.  
Bird's Hill, ST068365.  
Biscombe, ST175133.  
Bishop's Hull, ST208249.  
Bishops Lydeard, ST167297.  
Bishopswood, ST260128.  
Black Ball Hill, ST134396.  
Black Down, ST475575.  
Black Hill (Brendons), SS986401.  
Black Hill (Quantocks), ST148386.  
Black Knap, ST169353.  
Black Rock, ST485547.  
Blackford, SS924453.  
Blackford Moor, ST400485.  
Blackmoor NR, ST500550.  
Blackmoor Vale, ST710260.  
Blackpitts, SS764417.  
Blackpitts Mire, SS759416.  
Blakeway, ST438442.  
Blue Anchor, ST022435.  
Blue Gate, SS759377.  
Bossington, SS898479.  
Bossington Beach, SS893485.  
Bossington Hill, SS905484.  
Bradford-on-Tone, ST173229.  
Brady Moor, SS815370.  
Bratton, SS947463.  
Bratton Wood, SS947468.  
Breakneck Wood, SS898474.  
Brean, ST295585.  
Brean Down, ST290590.  
Brendon Two Gates, SS765432.  
Brent Knoll, ST342510.  
Bridgetown, SS923332.  
Bridgwater, ST300370.  
Bridgwater Bay, ST236490.  
Bridgwater Docks, ST296375.  
Brightworthy Barrows, SS818350.  
Britannia's Shield, SS985285.  
Britty Common, ST258157.  
Broadwood Plantation, SS977413.  
Brockwell, SS929432.  
Brompton Ralph, ST086323.  
Brompton Regis, SS951315.  
Broomfield, ST223322.  
Broomfield Hill, ST215328.  
Brue Estuary, ST302478.  
Brushford, SS919258.  
Bruton, ST685347.  
Buckland Dinham, ST754512.  
Buckland Wood, ST182176.  
Buckland St Mary, ST270134.  
Bulland Ford, ST056273.
- Buncombe Wood, ST205326.  
Burnham (-on-Sea), ST305495.  
Burnworthy, ST189159.  
Burnworthy Lake, ST191153.  
Burrige Cross, ST318063.  
Burtle, ST397429.  
Burtle Moor, ST402439.  
Burton Pynsent, ST376252.  
Bury, SS947272.  
Bury Castle, SS917473.  
Butleigh, ST520335.  
Butleigh Moor, ST440347.  
Butlin's (Minehead), SS985461.
- Cadbury Castle, ST628252.  
Canada Farm, ST417407.  
Canada Farm Lake, ST414413.  
Carhampton, ST008426.  
Cary Marsh NR, ST620310.  
Cary Moor, ST610306.  
Castle Cary, ST640324.  
Castle Neroche, ST271158.  
Catcott, ST395394.  
Catcott Fen, ST403410.  
Catcott Heath, ST405415.  
Catcott Lows, ST402413.  
Catsford Common, ST237455.  
Chaffcombe, ST352101.  
Challick Lane, ST062274.  
Chalk Water, SS818454.  
Chapel Allerton, ST407501.  
Chard, ST323082.  
Chard Junction, ST341049.  
Chard Reservoir, ST335097.  
Chargot Wood, SS975358.  
Chargot Valley, SS975365.  
Charlton (Creech St Michael), ST292266.  
Charlton (Kilmersdon), ST682523.  
Charlton Horethorne, ST665230.  
Charterhouse, ST501557.  
Cheddar, ST455535.  
Cheddar Gorge, ST470542.  
Cheddar Reservoir, ST442537.  
Cheddar Wood, ST445553.  
Chetsford Water, SS851421.  
Chewton Mendip, ST598530.  
Chewton Plain, ST610543.  
Chewton Wood, ST615552.  
Chibbet Ford, SS843377.  
Chilcompton, ST646513.  
Chilthorne Domer, ST537287.  
Chilton Moor, ST380430.  
Chilton Polden, ST375400.  
Chilton Trinity, ST297391.  
Chipstable, ST043271.

- Churchinford, ST213126.  
Churchstanton, ST196145.  
Clatworthy, ST053309.  
Clatworthy Reservoir, ST040310.  
Cloud Farm, SS794467.  
Cloutsham, SS892431.  
Cloutsham Ball, SS898435.  
Cockercombe, ST180363.  
Cocklake, ST440494.  
Cogload Junction, ST300274.  
Coleford, ST687490.  
Collard Hill, ST487342.  
Combe Hill, ST501331.  
Combe St Nicholas, ST301112.  
Combe Sydenham, ST076367.  
Combwich, ST259423.  
Combwich Pill, ST261422.  
Combwich Ponds, ST258418.  
Comer's Gate, SS860354.  
Comerslade, SS736373.  
Comeytrowe, ST205234.  
Common Moor, ST500406.  
Compton Bishop, ST396553.  
Compton Dundon, ST492330.  
Cook's Field NR, ST515504.  
Copplesham Cross, SS923343.  
Cornham Brake, SS761387.  
Cotford St Luke, ST169272.  
Cothelstone Hill, ST183326.  
Cow Castle, SS794374.  
Coxhill Lock, ST304305.  
Crab Hole, ST376548.  
Cradle Bridge, ST422528.  
Cranmore, ST670432.  
Cranmore Tower, ST677450.  
Crannel Moor, ST505418.  
Crawter Hill, SS893458.  
Creech Heathfield, ST278270.  
Creech St Michael, ST275255.  
Creech St Michael Flood Relief Pond, ST272253.  
Crewkerne, ST442095.  
Crewkerne Sewage Works, ST450090.  
Cricketer St Thomas, ST373087.  
Crickleaze, ST271112.  
Cripps River, ST368443.  
Croford, ST104276.  
Crook Peak, ST387558.  
Croscombe, ST591445.  
Cross, ST415547.  
Cross Plain, ST415555.  
Crowcombe, ST141367.  
Crowcombe Heathfield, ST136340.  
Crowcombe Park, ST145375.  
Crowcombe Park Gate, ST145375.  
Croydon Hill, SS972405.  
Cuckold's Combe, ST001307.  
Culbone, SS843483.  
Curland, ST277175.  
Curry Mallet, ST332213.  
Curry Moor, ST325275.  
Curry Rivel, ST390252.  
Dady Combe, SS868427.  
Dane's Brook, SS835315.  
Dead Woman's Ditch, ST162381.  
Dens Combe, ST140414.  
Dibble Wood, SS885302.  
Dicky's Path, SS893423.  
Dinnington, ST403128.  
Dommett Wood, ST276145.  
Doniford, ST088428.  
Donyatt, ST335143.  
Doverhay Down, SS885454.  
Doverhay Plantation, SS889457.  
Dowry Copse, ST073404.  
Dowsborough, ST163303.  
Draycott, ST477508.  
Draycott Sleights, ST486516.  
Driver Farm, SS736405.  
Druid's Combe, SS995377.  
Duke's Plantation, ST167395.  
Dulverton, SS913278.  
Dunkery Beacon, SS892416.  
Dunkery Hill, SS903423.  
Dunkery Hill Gate, SS895406.  
Dunster, SS992436.  
Dunster Beach, ST000450.  
Dunster Castle, SS991434.  
Dunster Deer Park, SS993429.  
Dunster Hawn, SS998450.  
Dunster Lawns, SS996435.  
Dunster Station, SS996448.  
Dunwear Ponds, ST313360.  
Durleigh Reservoir, ST270364.  
Durstun, ST292282.  
Eaker Hill, ST568523.  
East Coker, ST542123.  
East Compton, ST617415.  
East Harptree Woods, ST552545.  
East Horrington, ST581467.  
East Lyng, ST335290.  
East Pinford, SS802423.  
East Quantoxhead, ST138437.  
East Water, SS895430.  
East Woodlands, ST790442.  
Easter Hill, SS902430.  
Easthams, ST455105.  
Ebbor Gorge, ST528490.  
Edford Wood, ST667485.  
Edington, ST387397.  
Edington Moor, ST390410.  
Edithmead, ST329491.  
Egrove Farm, ST087420.  
Exebridge, SS930245.  
Exebridge Lakes, SS931242.  
Exe Head Bridge, SS763416.  
Exe Plain, SS755420.  
Exford, SS855385.  
Exford Common, SS855408.  
Fairy Cave Quarry, ST656477.  
Farley Water, SS757427.  
Fire Beacon, ST150370.  
Firepool, ST235252.  
Five Bells, ST065423.  
Fivehead, ST352228.  
Folly, SS889338.  
Ford (nr Wiveliscombe), ST095289.  
Forton, ST336070.  
Fowler's Plot, ST338366.  
Friggle Street, ST799457.  
Frog Combe, ST153387.  
Frog Hill, ST152385.  
Frog Lane, ST414264.  
Frome, ST777477.  
Fyfett, ST231145.  
Fyne Court, ST222320.  
Galloping Bottom, ST051350.  
Galmington, ST214238.  
Glastonbury, ST500390.  
Glencot, ST533468.  
Glenthorne, SS805494.  
Goat Hill Bridge, SS724406.  
Godney Moor, ST480439.  
Gold Corner, ST367432.  
Gold Corner RWLA, ST375426.  
Gore Point, SS858483.  
Goosemoor Common, SS880421.  
Grabbist Hill, SS980436.  
Great Bear, ST167385.  
Great Birchleeve Wood, SS872304.  
Great Bradley, SS859340.  
Great Breach Wood, ST505320.  
Great Elm, ST747493.  
Great Hill (Quantocks), ST156365.  
Great Nurcott, SS905363.  
Great Tom's Hill, SS803431.  
Great Wood, ST175370.  
Great Woolcombe, SS782378.  
Greenaleigh Point, SS957403.  
Greenham, ST078202.  
Green Down, ST518289.  
Green Ore, ST578502.  
Green Parlour, ST708542.  
Greenway Path, ST136415.  
Greinton, ST413363.  
Grexy Combe, SS938482.  
Greylake RSPB Reserve, ST379353.  
Haddon Hill, SS975285.  
Haddon Wood, SS950294.  
Hadspen, ST657326.  
Halse Combe, SS895467.  
Halsway Hill, ST135384.  
Ham (Exmoor), SS901408.  
Ham (Thornfalcon), ST289252.  
Ham Hill Country Park, ST479170.  
Ham Wall RSPB Reserve, ST464397.  
Hambridge, ST395215.  
Hamdon Hill, ST479170.  
Hangley Cleave, SS74732.  
Hankridge LNR, ST253256.  
Hanny Combe, SS918419.  
Hardington, ST742526.  
Hare Knap, ST148396.  
Harridge Wood, ST658484.  
Hartford, SS959293.  
Hartford Bottom, SS950293.  
Haselbury Plucknett, ST472110.

- Hawk Combe, SS874457.  
 Hawkridge, SS861307.  
 Hawkridge Reservoir, ST208362.  
 Hawkwell Cross, SS872258.  
 Hay Moor (N. Curry), ST324335.  
 Hay Moor (Muchelney), ST462256.  
 Hayes Wood, SS849346.  
 Hazery Plantation, SS998360.  
 Heathfield, ST160265.  
 Helwell Bay, ST078433.  
 Hestercombe House, ST242288.  
 High Ham, ST427310.  
 Highbridge, ST320475.  
 Higher Combe, SS869381.  
 Higher Dumbledeer, ST001412.  
 Higher Town, SS965466.  
 Higher Vexford, ST108351.  
 Hillhead Cross, SS851403.  
 Hillway, SS827363.  
 Hinam Wood, SS885292.  
 Hinkley Point, ST215463.  
 Hoar oak Water, SS785434.  
 Hoccoombe, ST105297.  
 Hoccoombe Water, SS780433.  
 Hodder's Combe, ST146406.  
 Holcombe, ST672497.  
 Holcombe Water, ST057337.  
 Holford, ST158411.  
 Holford Combe, ST154395.  
 Holford Glen, ST155412.  
 Hollow Combe, SS900428.  
 Holnicote, SS910464.  
 Home Covert, Otterhampton, ST250429.  
 Hopcott Common, SS957443.  
 Horner, SS898455.  
 Horner Gate, SS888442.  
 Horner Water, SS896452.  
 Horner Woods, SS894443.  
 Hornblotton, ST592341.  
 Horse Wood, SS879304.  
 Horsen, SS784788.  
 Horton Cross, ST338152.  
 Huish Moor, ST410343.  
 Huish Moor, ST041287.  
 Huntspill, ST310455.  
 Huntspill River, ST340438.  
 Huntspill Sea Wall, ST293463.  
 Huntspill Sluice, ST292458.  
 Huntworth, ST312343.  
 Hurdle Down, SS844422.  
 Hurley Beacon, ST142381.  
 Hurlstone Combe, SS900489.  
 Hurlstone Point, SS898494.  
  
 Ilchester, ST525234.  
 Ilminster, ST360145.  
 Ivy Thorn, ST475345.  
  
 Keenthorpe, ST215395.  
 Keinton Mandeville, ST550307.  
 Kennard Moor, ST553367.  
 Kennisham Hill, SS962364.  
 Ker Moor, ST012436.  
 Kilve, ST149430.  
  
 Kilve Beach, ST144444.  
 King's Down (Bridgewater), ST313388.  
 King's Cliff Wood, ST260320.  
 King's Moor, ST482239.  
 King's Sedge Moor, ST420338.  
 King's Wood, ST419559.  
 King's Wood Warren, ST750360.  
 Kingsbury Episcopi, ST433211.  
 Kingston St Mary, ST221297.  
 Kingswood, ST104378.  
 Kinsford Gate, SS740366.  
 Kittisford, ST078223.  
 Knacker's Hole, ST158397.  
 Knapp, ST297255.  
 Knighton, ST193445.  
 Knighton Beach, ST192458.  
 Knighton Combe, SS829347.  
 Knowle St Giles, ST344114.  
  
 Lamb Bottom, ST541547.  
 Lanacombe, SS774429.  
 Lanacre, SS823363.  
 Landacre Bridge, SS816362.  
 Landacre Gate, SS807353.  
 Lang Moor, ST349329.  
 Langford Heathfield, ST103230.  
 Langley Marsh, ST075292.  
 Langmead, ST364334.  
 Langpoat, ST422270.  
 Larkhill Open Space, ST535170.  
 Launcherley, ST552428.  
 Leather Barrow, SS989355.  
 Ley Hill, SS890452.  
 Lilstock, ST171454.  
 Little Headon Plantation, SS933463.  
 Litton, ST595546.  
 Litton (Exmoor), SS803337.  
 Litton Lake, ST590552.  
 Litton Wood, ST586543.  
 Long Combe (Exmoor), SS817426.  
 Long Drove, ST455386.  
 Long Load, ST467232.  
 Long Wood (Brendons), SS982407.  
 Long Wood (Mendip), ST487556.  
 Longstone Hill, ST138407.  
 Looseall Wood, SS910294.  
 Lord's Ball, ST166373.  
 Low Ham Moor, ST442327.  
 Lower Godney, ST475428.  
 Lower Rodhuish, ST017396.  
 Lower Severalls, ST455115.  
 Lower Sherdon, SS799354.  
 Lower Vexford, ST117353.  
 Lower Weare, ST407537.  
 Lower Willingford, SS819322.  
 Lowsey Thorn, ST134390.  
 Luccombe Hill, SS907434.  
 Luccombe Plantation, SS903477.  
 Luckbarrow, SS892461.  
 Luckwell Bridge, SS906387.  
 Lucott Cross, SS845432.  
 Lucott Moor, SS851436.  
 Lufton, ST513178.  
 Lullington, ST783519.  
  
 Lydeard Hill, ST179343.  
 Lydeard St Lawrence, ST128234.  
 Lymptsham, ST337541.  
 Lynch Combe, SS905479.  
 Lyncombe, SS867375.  
 Lytes Cary, ST534267.  
  
 Malmsmead, SS795477.  
 Mark, ST380480.  
 Marrow Hill, ST160360.  
 Marsh Bridge, SS907290.  
 Marsh Wood, SS900295.  
 Marston Park, ST758449.  
 Maundown, ST060289.  
 Maunsell Lock, ST308297.  
 Meare, ST455416.  
 Meare Heath, ST440405.  
 Mells, ST730490.  
 Mells Down, ST724515.  
 Mells Park, ST715485.  
 Merridge, ST209344.  
 Merryfield Airfield, ST340186.  
 Met Combe, SS827467.  
 Middle Hill, ST174349.  
 Middlecombe, SS951456.  
 Midelney, ST411229.  
 Milborne Port, ST675189.  
 Milton Hill, ST540470.  
 Milverton, ST122259.  
 Milverton STW, ST132259.  
 Minehead, SS970465.  
 Minehead Golf Course, SS993463.  
 Minehead Marshes, SS993457.  
 Monkham Hill, SS987389.  
 Monksilver, ST074376.  
 Monkton Heathfield, ST255268.  
 Montacute, ST496170.  
 Moor Wood, SS959474.  
 Moorhouse (Butleigh), ST526346.  
 Moorland, ST335323.  
 Moorlinch, ST397368.  
 Moorlinch Moor, ST390350.  
 Mount Fancy, ST246165.  
 Moxhill, ST250415.  
 Muchelney, ST429249.  
 Muchelney Level, ST435257.  
  
 Nether Stowey, ST190398.  
 Nether Wood, ST508561.  
 Netherclay LNR, ST205251.  
 Nettlebridge, ST650486.  
 New Bridge, SS900467.  
 Nimmer, ST319109.  
 Nine Acre Plantation, ST413227.  
 Nine Springs, ST557153.  
 Noah's Lake, ST436400.  
 North Brewham, ST722368.  
 North Cheriton, ST689257.  
 North Curry, ST319253.  
 North Down Plantation, ST231163.  
 North Hill, SS943481.  
 North Moor (Moorland), ST325315.  
 North Petherton, ST290330.  
 North Wootton, ST566417.

*Somerset Birds 2019*

- Norton St Philip, ST774558.  
Nutscale, SS856432.  
Nutscale Reservoir, SS860433.  
Nynehead, ST137227.  
Nythe, ST427347.
- Oake, ST153252.  
Oakhill, ST635472.  
Oare, SS802473.  
Oaremead, SS796477.  
Old Barrow Plantation, SS837324.  
Oldways End, SS870248.  
Orchard Bottom, SS815404.  
Orchardleigh Lake, ST780508.  
Othery, ST384316.  
Otterhampton, ST247431.  
Otterhampton Marsh, ST253435.  
Otterhead Lakes, ST226135.  
Over Stowey Common, ST164381.  
Over Stratton, ST434155.
- Panborough, ST471456.  
Park Wood (Chaffcombe), ST360102.  
Parrett Estuary, ST290480.  
Pavyotts Mill, ST551131.  
Pawlett Hams, ST275425.  
Peasmarsh, ST338123.  
Pedwell, ST426364.  
Pen Mill, ST570165.  
Pennycombe Water, SS834378.  
Periton Combe, SS955454.  
Periton Hill, SS950447.  
Perley Barn, SS982386.  
Perry Bridge, SS935260.  
Perry Street, ST335055.  
Pickedstones, SS796369.  
Pickedstones Bridge, SS797369.  
Pickney, ST195290.  
Pinkery Centre, SS723412.  
Plainsfield, ST196366.  
Pool Bridge, SS876447.  
Poole, ST152216.  
Porlock, SS888467.  
Porlock Bay, SS870485.  
Porlock Marsh, SS880477.  
Porlock Parks, SS875465.  
Porlock Weir, SS865478.  
Portford Bridge, SS832344.  
Prayway Head, SS769410.  
Prickslade Combe, SS886437.  
Priddy, ST527513.  
Priddy Mineries, ST545510.  
Priddy Nine Barrows, ST538515.  
Pudleigh, ST317108.  
Pyleigh, ST128307.
- Quants, ST187177.  
Queen's Sedge Moor, ST530417.
- Rackley, ST395548.  
Rams Combe (Quantocks), ST161377.  
Red Girts, SS994398.  
Red Post, SS897465.  
Ringdown Common, ST180160.
- Roadwater, ST032383.  
Robber's Bridge, SS820464.  
Robin Hood's Butts, ST232144.  
Robin How, SS907427.  
Robin Upright's Hill, ST159385.  
Rockwell Green, ST125203.  
Rode, ST805539.  
Rodden NR, ST785475.  
Rodhuish, ST013397.  
Rod's Pot, ST473583.  
Rooks Bridge, ST368524.  
Room Hill, SS858363.  
Roughmoor, ST208253.  
Rowberrow, ST451583.  
Rowberrow Warren, ST465579.  
Rowdon Farm Lake, ST082381.  
Ruishton, ST263251.
- St Audries's Bay, ST110425.  
St Audrie's Deer Park, ST116422.  
Sampford Arundel, ST110189.  
Sampford Point, ST117168.  
Sandyway, SS794334.  
Screech Owl Pit, ST316350.  
Screedy Lakes, ST089254.  
Selworthy, SS918467.  
Selworthy Beacon, SS919480.  
Selworthy Combe, SS923473.  
Shapwick, ST418383.  
Shapwick Heath NNR, ST430402.  
Shapwick Heath (East), ST423410.  
Shapwick Heath (West), ST285310.  
Shapwick Moor, ST426398.  
Sharpham, ST468388.  
Shearston, ST285310.  
Sheppard's Combe, ST131401.  
Shepton Mallet, ST619437.  
Sherdon Hutch, SS807361.  
Shervage Wood, ST162402.  
Shields, The, ST511275.  
Shoreditch, ST245222.  
Shurton, ST202442.  
Simonsbath, SS773393.  
Skilgate, SS987272.  
Skilgate Wood, SS975266.  
Slade Combe, SS873425.  
Slaughterhouse Combe, ST137395.  
Sloway Bridge, ST302452.  
Slowley Wood, SS992381.  
Small Down Knoll, ST665406.  
Small Moor, ST463370.  
Smallacombe, SS735390.  
Sminhays Corner, ST015345.  
Smith's Combe, ST132420.  
Somerton, ST409285.  
Somerton Combe, ST144395.  
Somerton Moor, ST460015.  
Somerton Wood, ST508277.  
South Common, SS807444.  
South Moor, ST341340.  
South Petherton, ST432170.  
Southey Moor, ST192113.  
Southlake Moor, ST370300.  
Spangate Grove, SS918414.
- Spaxton, ST225370.  
Spire Cross, SS888335.  
Staple Common, ST263157.  
Staple Fitzpaine, ST263182.  
Staple Hill, ST240164.  
Staple Plain, ST114413.  
Staple Plantation, ST113412.  
Staplegrove, ST213266.  
Staplehay, ST213217.  
Stapley, ST189135.  
Stathe, ST375290.  
Stear, ST272458.  
Stear Gate, ST265454.  
Stear Marshes, ST265446.  
Stert Combe, ST145390.  
Stert Island, ST292480.  
Stert Point, ST288471.  
Stockhill, ST558507.  
Stockland Bristol, ST240437.  
Stockland Marsh, ST241440.  
Stockland Reach, ST284450.  
Stocklinch Ottersey, ST383169.  
Stockmoor, ST302351.  
Stogumber, ST098374.  
Stogursey, ST202428.  
Stoke Camp, ST490510.  
Stoke Combe, SS880438.  
Stoke Pero, SS878435.  
Stoke St Gregory, ST348271.  
Stoke St Michael, ST664470.  
Stolford, ST233458.  
Stream, ST068398.  
Street, ST480360.  
Sutton Bingham Reservoir, ST550110.  
Sutton Hams, ST364368.  
Sutton Moor, ST436338.  
Sweetworthy, SS888427.  
Sweetworthy Combe, SS884422.  
Swell Wood, ST360240.  
Syds Wood, SS902288.
- Tadham Moor, ST425445.  
Tarr Steps, SS868321.  
Tatworth, ST328058.  
Taunton, ST225247.  
Tealham Moor, ST407457.  
Templecombe, ST709222.  
Tesco's Pit, Minehead, SS979458.  
The Punchbowl, SS882343.  
Theale, ST464462.  
Thorney Moor, ST425238.  
Thornfalcon, ST282239.  
Three Ashes, ST625285.  
Three Waters, SS873306.  
Thurley Combe, SS862425.  
Timberscombe, SS955422.  
Timberscombe Common, SS964417.  
Tivington, SS932455.  
Tivington Plantation, SS936442.  
Tolland, ST102322.  
Tom's Hill, SS811430.  
Tom's Hill Combe, SS802435.  
Torr Works Reservoir, ST688436.  
Town's Wood, SS973421.

- Tracebridge, ST068212.  
 Treble's Holford, ST149331.  
 Treborough, ST010363.  
 Trickey Warren, ST197150.  
 Triscombe Quarry, ST161357.  
 Triscombe Stone, ST164359.  
 Tudball's Splats, SS831338.  
 Tyning's Farm, ST470565.
- Ubley Warren, ST510555.  
 Upton (Brendons), SS995288.  
 Upton Cleave, SS983287.
- Vagg Hill, ST533186.  
 Velvet Bottom, ST498553.  
 Vinny Combe, ST120414.  
 Vobster, ST705490.  
 Vobster Quarry, ST705498.  
 Voxmoor, ST143181.
- Wadeford, ST309106.  
 Wall Common, ST255453.  
 Walland Farm, ST230153.  
 Walland Farm, SS916401.  
 Walrow Ponds, ST335470.  
 Walton, ST461362.  
 Walton Heath, ST455390.  
 Walton Moor, ST458341.  
 Warren (Farm), SS785407.  
 Warren Farm (Mendip), ST500549.  
 Warren Bridge, SS791407.  
 Washbattle Mills, ST053285.  
 Washbrook, ST420501.  
 Washford, ST048412.  
 Watchet, ST072431.  
 Watergore, ST431158.  
 Wavering Down, ST403558.  
 Wayford, ST404066.  
 Wayford Woods, ST398066.  
 Weacombe Combe, ST118406.  
 Weacombe Hill, ST120402.
- Weare, ST412527.  
 Webber's Post, SS903437.  
 Webbington, ST382556.  
 Week Wood, SS919339.  
 Weir Water, SS830461.  
 Weir Wood, SS832462.  
 Wellington, ST140205.  
 Wellington Basins, ST129208.  
 Wellington Monument, ST137172.  
 Wells, ST552458.  
 West Buckland, ST173205.  
 West Coker, ST518136.  
 West End Wood, ST760375.  
 West Hatch, ST287210.  
 West Hollowcombe Wood, SS865303.  
 West Horrington, ST573475.  
 West Huntspill, ST305445.  
 West Luccombe, SS899463.  
 West Lyng, ST319282.  
 West Monkton, ST263285.  
 West Moor (Hambridge), ST410213.  
 West Myne, SS927407.  
 West Pinford, SS793419.  
 West Quantoxhead, ST109417.  
 West Sedge Moor, ST350250.  
 West Woodlands, ST779439.  
 Westbury Beacon, ST500507.  
 Westbury Moor, ST485477.  
 Westbury-sub-Mendip, ST502488.  
 Westcott Brake, SS852466.  
 Westermill, SS823399.  
 Westford, ST120204.  
 Westhay, ST436424.  
 Westhay Heath, ST420418.  
 Westhay Level, ST422429.  
 Westhay Moor, ST455441.  
 Weston Bampfylde, ST610249.  
 Weston Level, ST347333.  
 Westonzoyland, ST352348.  
 Westonzoyland Airfield, ST365346.  
 Wet Moor, ST452242.
- Whatley, ST733475.  
 Wheddon Cross, SS924387.  
 Whit Stones, SS853463.  
 White Post, ST663520.  
 Whitestaunton, ST280105.  
 Wick Moor, ST392274.  
 Willet, ST105337.  
 Willett Hill, ST096336.  
 Williton, ST078410.  
 Willoughby Cleeve, ST145407.  
 Wills Neck, ST165352.  
 Wilmot's Pool, ST153382.  
 Wimbleball Lake, SS975305.  
 Wimbleball Wood, SS961293.  
 Wincanton, ST715285.  
 Winsford, SS903350.  
 Winsford Hill, SS878342.  
 Witch Lodge, ST250198.  
 Witcombe Bottom, ST480231.  
 Witham Friary, ST744410.  
 Witham Hall Farm, ST758419.  
 Withiel Florey, SS984336.  
 Withycombe, ST017413.  
 Withycombe Common, SS987394.  
 Withycombe Hill, SS998413.  
 Withycombe Scruffets, SS985404.  
 Withypool, SS846355.  
 Withypool Common, SS825349.  
 Wiveliscombe, ST082277.  
 Wiveliscombe Covert, ST099251.  
 Woodcock Gardens, SS907444.  
 Woodcombe, SS955466.  
 Woodlands Hill, ST157400.  
 Wookey Hole, ST532475.  
 Wootton Common, SS948441.  
 Wootton Courtenay, SS937434.  
 Worth Hill, SS833338.
- Yeo Moor, ST460480.  
 Yoxter, ST512540.

## INDEX TO THE SPECIES

Alpine Swift	83	Egyptian Goose	26	Lapwing	57
American Golden Plover	58	Feral Pigeon	76	Leach's Petrel	39
Aquatic Warbler	98	Fieldfare	107	Lesser Black-backed Gull	72
Arctic Skua	75	Firecrest	103	Lesser Redpoll	124
Arctic Tern	74	Fulmar	39	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	85
Avocet	56	Gadwall	29	Lesser Whitethroat	101
Baillon's Crake	52	Gannet	47	Linnet	123
Barn Owl	79	Garden Warbler	100	Little Bittern	42
Barnacle Goose	23	Garganey	28	Little Egret	45
Bar-tailed Godwit	61	Glossy Ibis	41	Little Grebe	39
Bearded Tit	92	Goldcrest	103	Little Gull	70
Bewick's Swan	26	Golden Plover	58	Little Owl	81
Bittern	42	Goldeneye	36	Little Ringed Plover	59
Black Redstart	111	Goldfinch	125	Little Stint	64
Black Tern	74	Goosander	36	Little Tern	73
Blackbird	106	Goshawk	49	Long-eared Owl	82
Blackcap	99	Grasshopper Warbler	99	Long-tailed Skua	75
Black-headed Gull	69	Great Black-backed Gull	71	Long-tailed Tit	95
Black-tailed Godwit	61	Great Crested Grebe	40	Magpie	89
Black-throated Diver	38	Great Grey Shrike	89	Mallard	31
Black-winged Stilt	56	Great Northern Diver	38	Mandarin Duck	28
Blue Tit	91	Great Skua	75	Manx Shearwater	39
Brambling	122	Great Spotted Woodpecker	86	Marsh Harrier	49
Brent Goose	22	Great Tit	91	Marsh Tit	91
Bullfinch	122	Great White Egret	44	Meadow Pipit	119
Buzzard	52	Green Sandpiper	67	Mediterranean Gull	70
Canada Goose	22	Green Woodpecker	86	Merlin	87
Carrion Crow	90	Greenfinch	122	Mistle Thrush	108
Caspian Gull	72	Greenshank	69	Montagu's Harrier	50
Cattle Egret	42	Green-winged Teal	34	Moorhen	53
Cetti's Warbler	94	Grey Heron	43	Mute Swan	25
Chaffinch	121	Grey Partridge	37	Nightingale	110
Chiffchaff	96	Grey Phalarope	66	Nightjar	82
Cirl Bunting	126	Grey Plover	58	Nuthatch	104
Coal Tit	91	Grey Wagtail	118	Osprey	48
Collared Dove	78	Greylag Goose	24	Oystercatcher	56
Common Guillemot	75	Hawfinch	122	Peregrine	89
Common Gull	71	Hen Harrier	50	Pheasant	38
Common Sandpiper	67	Herring Gull	71	Pied Flycatcher	111
Common Scoter	36	Hobby	88	Pied Wagtail	118
Common Tern	73	Honey-buzzard	49	Pink-footed Goose	24
Coot	54	Hoopoe	85	Pintail	32
Cormorant	47	House Martin	93	Pochard	34
Crane	55	House Sparrow	116	Pomarine Skua	75
Crossbill	124	Jack Snipe	65	Puffin	76
Cuckoo	78	Jackdaw	89	Purple Heron	44
Curlew	60	Jay	89	Purple Sandpiper	64
Curlew Sandpiper	63	Kentish Plover	59	Quail	38
Dartford Warbler	102	Kestrel	87	Raven	90
Dipper	115	Kingfisher	84	Razorbill	76
Dunlin	64	Kittiwake	69	Red Kite	50
Dunnock	117	Knot	62	Red-breasted Merganser	37

Red-crested Pochard	34	Short-eared Owl	82	Turtle Dove	78
Red-legged Partridge	37	Shoveler	29	Twite	123
Redshank	67	Siskin	125	Velvet Scoter	36
Redstart	112	Skylark	93	Water Pipit	120
Red-throated Diver	38	Smew	36	Water Rail	52
Redwing	107	Snipe	65	Wheatear	114
Reed Bunting	127	Snow Bunting	127	Whimbrel	59
Reed Warbler	98	Song Thrush	108	Whinchat	112
Richard's Pipit	119	Sparrowhawk	49	White Stork	41
Ring Ouzel	106	Spoonbill	41	White-fronted Goose	25
Ringed Plover	58	Spotted Crake	53	White-winged Black Tern	74
Ring-necked Parakeet	89	Spotted Flycatcher	109	Whitethroat	102
Robin	110	Spotted Redshank	68	Whooper Swan	26
Rock Pipit	121	Starling	105	Wigeon	30
Rook	90	Stock Dove	76	Willow Warbler	95
Roseate Tern	73	Stone-curlew	56	Wood Sandpiper	68
Rose-coloured Starling	105	Stonechat	113	Wood Warbler	96
Ruff	63	Storm Petrel	38	Woodcock	65
Sabine's Gull	69	Swallow	93	Woodlark	93
Sand Martin	93	Swift	84	Woodpigeon	77
Sanderling	64	Tawny Owl	80	Wren	104
Sandwich Tern	73	Teal	33	Wryneck	85
Savi's Warbler	99	Tree Pipit	120	Yellow Wagtail	117
Scaup	35	Tree Sparrow	116	Yellow-browed Warbler	97
Sedge Warbler	98	Treecreeper	105	Yellowhammer	126
Shag	47	Tufted Duck	35	Yellow-legged Gull	72
Shelduck	27	Turnstone	62		



**Whimbrel, Catcott Lows (Rob Chace)**

# SOMERSET ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY RULES

## 1. NAME

The Society shall be called 'The Somerset Ornithological Society'.

## 2. OBJECTS

The objects of the Society shall be:

- a. To further the study of birds.
- b. To assist in their preservation.

## 3. MEMBERSHIP

The Society shall consist of Ordinary Members, Student Members below the age of 21, and such Honorary Life Members as may be elected at an Annual General Meeting of the Society in recognition of outstanding work for the Society.

## 4. SUBSCRIPTION

The annual subscription is payable on the 1st of January. Its amount shall be determined by the General Committee from time to time. Not less than 6 months notice of any increase in subscription shall be given to Members. The husband, wife or partner of an Ordinary Member, and children under 18, may become Associates without extra charge but will not receive a separate copy of each Society publication.

## 5. MANAGEMENT

Each Annual General Meeting of the Society shall elect a President, one or more Vice-Presidents, one or more Secretaries, a Treasurer, Recorder and Assistant Recorder. These shall be termed the Officers of the Society and shall be eligible for re-election. The General Committee shall consist of these Officers, with up to four other Members. Members who are not Officers shall serve for a maximum of four years, unless subsequently appointed as Officers, and shall not be eligible for re-election for a period of one year. Names of candidates as Officers or Committee Members must be submitted to the Secretary at least 14 days prior to the Meeting. The Committee may fill any casual vacancy which occurs, but any replacement must be subject to election at the next Annual General Meeting.

## 6. PROTECTION

In pursuance of Section b. of Rule 2, it is the declared policy of the Society actively to further the effective protection of birds in the County, and to observe the law on the subject. Any member who, being reported to have acted in a manner seriously prejudicial to the declared policy or to the general interest of the Society, fails in the opinion of a two-thirds majority of those present at a meeting (after due announcement on the agenda) to give a satisfactory explanation of his or her conduct, shall cease to be a member of the Society.

## 7. MEETINGS

Meetings shall be held not less than twice a year.

## 8. REPORTS

The Committee shall each year appoint an Editorial Committee to consist of the Recorder and at least three other Members, who shall prepare the Annual Report, *Somerset Birds*.

The Annual General Meeting shall elect the Chairman and Members of the Somerset Ornithological Society Rarities Committee (SOSRC) in accordance with section 3 of the SOSRC constitution. The first election will take place at the 2010 AGM and thence every two years.

## 9. CHANGES IN RULES

Changes in these rules may be proposed at an Annual General Meeting, or at any regular Indoor Meeting, provided that at least 14 days notice be given to all Members of any motion to this effect. A two-thirds majority of Members present will be required.

## 10. DISSOLUTION OF THE SOCIETY

The Society may only be wound up by a vote in favour by two-thirds of the members present at a properly constituted Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting. If the Society is dissolved, any assets remaining after settlement of all its known debts and liabilities shall be disposed of by donation to a charitable organisation chosen by a majority of the members present at the said meeting.



Spotted Crake, Greylake Reserve (Chris Hooper)



Avocet, Steart Marshes (Chris Hooper)



