

The Sussex Bird Report

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THE SUSSEX BIRD REPORT

NUMBER FIFTY-TWO, 1999

Recorder: JA Hobson

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TW Parmenter, RT Pepper, DI Smith & Dr BJ Yates.*

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*Cover photograph by David Sadler
Woodcock, Shoreham Harbour, 11th November 1999.*

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Sussex Bird Report 1998 — Amendments & Corrections.

Very few errors in the 1998 *Report* were brought to the Editor's attention; details of the more significant of these and of any additional records for 1998 can be found under the relevant species in the Systematic List.

Text Illustrations:

<i>Alan Bowley</i>	Black Brant and Dark-bellied Brent Geese together, Hoopoe, Great Grey Shrike and Hawfinches.
<i>John Davis</i>	Pintail, Red-breasted Merganser & Grey Plover together, Ringed Plovers, Golden Plovers and Little Terns.
<i>Bob Greenhalf</i>	Great Crested Grebe, Coots, Black Terns and Swallows.
<i>John Reaney</i>	Goldeneye, Common Buzzard, Mediterranean Gull, Wheatear, Ring Ouzel and Siskin.

Photographic acknowledgements: The Photographic Editor would like to thank those photographers who submitted photographs of Sussex birds, taken in 1999, many of which appear in this *Report*. Once again, the quality of the transparencies received was outstanding.

Those selected are as follows:

<i>Les Bird</i>	Cattle Egret, Little Egret, Knot, Dunlin, Sandwich Tern, Short-eared Owl, Whinchat, Stonechat.
<i>Dave Sadler</i>	Black Brant.
<i>Peter Wilson</i>	Red-footed Falcon, Jack Snipe, Bar-tailed Godwit, Gull-billed Tern, Yellow Wagtail, Wheatear, Reed Warbler.

Views expressed by contributors to the Sussex Bird Report are not necessarily those of the Editor and the Council of the Sussex Ornithological Society.

EDITORIAL

As another year draws to a close, thanks must again go to the contributors who submitted a total of no less than 46,562 records, a figure comparable with the 45,000 records for 1998 entered into the Society's computer database. Without these records there would be no *Sussex Bird Report* to read and, more importantly, no baseline information to assist conservation in our increasingly developed county.

Once again, the species accounts have been written by a large team of authors, namely J Beesley, Mrs VP Bentley, PM Brayshaw, Dr C Brooks, CB Collins, DEG Copeland, DE Crawley, J Curson, M Denny, RJ Fairbank, BR Gilmore, A House, Dr JK Irons, P James, Dr ME Kalaher, AR Kitson, R Knight, L Manns, MJ Mason, Dr JA Newnham, RT Pepper, R Prior, Dr AB Watson, and TJ Wilson. The initials at the end of the species' texts identify all the writers to whom sincere thanks are due. Once again, a special effort has been made to ensure that the *Report* contains all the most significant records submitted to the Society. I would like to acknowledge Richard Fairbank, John Newnham, Robin Pepper, Dave Smith and Barry Yates who carefully read through the Systematic List and suggested a significant number of improvements. Inevitably, some of the species accounts have been altered and edited to ensure a reasonable degree of uniformity throughout the *Report*. I hope that this will not cause offence but if that is the case, I can only apologise. Special thanks must again go to Tony Cocks who undertook the unenviable task of editing the scientific papers and also to Tim Parmenter, the Photographic Editor. Richard Fairbank wrote the *Review of the Year* and also one of the papers. In any Society there are a number of stalwarts, none more so than John Newnham, who again gave up many hours of his free time in organising the computerisation of records, writing species accounts and assembling the *Report*. Without his tremendous efforts, the production of this *Report* would not be possible.

In the summer newsletter, there appeared a list of 100 records of scarce and unusual species for which no supporting description had been received. Some progress has been made in reducing the deficit though there are still a significant number of records outstanding. In the last Report I appealed to those in Sussex who do not submit their records to reconsider their decision. If your notebook contains details of records that do not appear in this Report, please send them to the Hon. Recorder as soon as possible.

Paul James, October 2000

REVIEW OF 1999

by Richard Fairbank

1999 was by no means a classic year and despite highlights being the county's second and third **White-billed Divers**, third **Blue-winged Teal**, fourth **Sardinian Warbler**, fifth and sixth **Surf Scoters**, eighth **Cattle Egret** and **Radde's Warbler** and ninth and tenth **Subalpine Warblers**, most observers had to settle for seeing just two or three of these. Many rated the **Gull-billed Tern** present for three days in July as highly as any of these, if not more so, while a **Snow Goose** had seemingly good credentials for being a wild bird (and a county first), provided one had a fairly open mind and saw the bird concerned! Distinctive races included the county's first and second definite **Siberian Chiffchaffs** and a possible **Spanish Wagtail**. A total of 258 species were seen during the year, very similar to the 257 recorded in 1998 but seven down on the previous two years.

The weather in **January** was generally very mild, wet and windy and proved to be a good indicator for the rest of the year. As usual, many observers were particularly active at the start of the year resulting in a number of interesting sightings. On 1st, these included a **Red-necked Grebe** and, more unusually, two **Velvet Scoter** at Weir Wood Res, an **Arctic Skua W** at Selsey Bill and **Great Grey Shrikes** on Stedham Common and in Ashdown Forest (with two others recorded later in the month). The 2nd produced a total of ten **Great Northern Divers** off Selsey Bill, two colour ringed **Cormorants** at Weir Wood Res (one of the *sinensis* race), 130 **Guillemots** in Rye Bay, a **Bearded Tit** well inland at Pulborough Brooks and three **Snow Buntings** at Sovereign Hbr Marina. The January *WeBS* count, on 3rd, logged 1141 **Canada Geese** at Amberley Wild Brooks, 2601 **Wigeon**, 1886 **Teal**, 5150 **Lapwings**, 50 **Ruff** and five **Black-tailed Godwits** at nearby Pulborough Brooks, 8142 **Brent Geese** and 1175 **Bar-tailed Godwits** in Chichester Hbr, and 2500 **Golden Plover** at Scotney Court GPs. Also of note on 3rd were three **Goosanders** at Barcombe Res, **Mediterranean Gull**, **Kittiwake** and 12 **Bullfinches** at Weir Wood Res, an adult **Glaucous Gull** in Pagham Hbr, a roost of at least 10,000 **Starlings** at Brighton West Pier and two **Hawfinches** near West Dean.

With the holiday period over, things quietened down although a weak **Little Auk** picked up on a Brighton beach on 4 January was the only record of the year and a **Willow Warbler** intermittently at Church Norton from 5th was the first county record for the month. More usual at this time were a long staying **Red-necked Grebe** at Scotney Court GPs and a **Dartford Warbler** at Thorney Island, while 270 **Pied Wagtails** were counted roosting at Brighton Marina on 6th. On 8th, 2500 **Lapwings** flew SE over Hurstpierpoint while on 10th, more notable sightings were 65 **Eider** and ten **Velvet Scoter** off Church Norton, a **Little Gull** near Coombes and a **Scandinavian Herring Gull** at Shoreham (the only record of this race during the year). Passerines were represented by ten **Bramblings** at Pulborough Brooks (in what was a poor winter for the species), a **Snow Bunting** at Rye Hbr (where the wintering **Shore Lark** and up to four **Twite** remained until February) and a colourful flock of 50 **Yellowhammers** near Lewes.

During January, a **Bittern** lurked at Rye Hbr (until late March), up to 106 **Little Egrets** roosted at Thorney Deepes, long staying **Long-tailed Ducks** were at Pagham Hbr and Newhaven Tide Mills, **Scaup** and **Smew** were present in average numbers while **Goosanders** were scarce (again). Wintering waders included up to 23 **Avocets** in Pagham Hbr, 10 **Little Stints** (including six in Chichester Hbr), 3-4 **Whimbrel** and three **Common Sandpipers**, while the peak **Purple Sandpiper** count was 14 at Newhaven Hbr. Wintering **Black Redstarts** included up to four at Newhaven Tide Mills while a total of 13 **Firecrests** was seen in the county during the month.

Twenty-six **Chiffchaffs** at Thorney SF on 11 January was a record winter count while on 12th, searching through **Brent Geese** flocks paid off with a long staying **Black Brant** found at East Head and a **Pale-bellied Brent Goose** at Paghams Hbr (with others seen at East Head and Church Norton later in the month). The following few days were generally quiet with a **Slavonian Grebe** at Weir Wood Res on 13th, 1000 **Fieldfares** on Glynde Levels on 14th, a **Great Northern Diver** in Newhaven Hbr from 15th and 740 **Black-tailed Godwits** at Paghams Hbr, a **Great Skua E** at Brighton Marina, and a **Yellow-legged Gull** at Arlington Res on 19th. Twenty-six **Woodcock** were flushed by beaters at Rushlake Green on 23rd and 29 at Heathfield on 27th.

A **Cattle Egret** at Ovingdean on 24 January was the eighth county record and remained into May, attracting the interest of birders and non-birders alike. On the same day a **Raven** was seen along the Seven Sisters and a large wintering flock of **Chaffinches** near Chilgrove was estimated to contain 800 birds (with 1000 there on 30th, equalling the county record). A second **Bittern** was at Rye Hbr from 28th and 62 **Bewick's Swans** at Pulborough Brooks on 30th. The month ended with eight **Great Northern Divers** together at Selsey Bill, a pair of **Silver Pheasants** skulking in West Dean Woods (as impressive an escape as one might hope to encounter in the county), 17 **Chiffchaffs** at Coldwaltham SF and 1000 **Rooks** near Chichester.

Mild, wet and windy weather continued during **February** with a westerly airstream dominating. The month started with a count of 31 **Jack Snipe** at Thorney Deepes. On 3rd, an adult **Snow Goose** (potentially the first county record) and five **Barnacle Geese** arrived at Scotney Court GPs, joining the flock of over 300 **White-fronted Geese** already there. Also on 3rd, 16 **White-fronted Geese** flew E at Selsey Bill, four **Hen Harriers** were seen at Ambersham Common and a **Glaucous Gull** at Littlehampton Marina (the first of several sightings of what may have been same bird during month). On 4th, two **Tundra Bean Geese** joined the geese at Scotney, **Smew** peaked at 11 at Northpoint Pit on 6th and six **Hen Harriers** roosted at Icklesham.

Thirty-two **Eider** were counted off Bexhill on 8 February with 2000 **Black-headed Gulls** offshore there the following day. On 11th, 249 **Red-throated Divers** flew E off Brighton Marina, the last **Goosander** of the winter was at Weir Wood Res and 70 **Yellowhammers** were at Paghams Hbr. Five **Whooper Swans** were seen at Scotney Court GPs on 12th while **White-fronted Geese** peaked at 380 there on 13th (the highest number seen in Sussex in the last 20 years) with 12 also at Ardingly Res. Also on 13th, a **Bittern** was seen at Ford, 70 **Red-breasted Mergansers** were off Worthing Beach, 1056 **auks** flew E at Brighton Marina, while Wiston was an unusual locality for seven **Wood Larks**. Two **Long-tailed Ducks** were in Thorney Channel from 14th, with 57 **Goldeneye** in Fishbourne Channel and five **Spotted Redshank** at Paghams Hbr. **Scaup** peaked at 32 at Scotney Court GPs on 15th when 15 **Water Rails** were recorded at Filsham Reedbed, along with 13 **Water Pipits** at nearby Combe Haven and 250 **Magpies** at Moulsecomb Wild Park.

The 20 February produced 12 **Dartford Warblers** at Ambersham, the first migrant **Firecrest**, 1600 **Jackdaws** and 600 **Rooks** at North Stoke and a **Raven** at Cuckmere Haven. A **Red-necked Grebe** was at Darwell Res on 21st, the *WeBS* count day, when highlights were 784 **Shelduck**, 106 **Red-breasted Mergansers**, 1626 **Grey Plover** and 1691 **Redshank** in Chichester Hbr and 495 **Tufted Ducks** (a record February count) at Chichester GPs. Eleven **Mediterranean Gulls** were seen at the Southwick gull roost on 23rd (with at least 17 different individuals there during the course of the month), while the next three days were dominated by sea passage, particularly off Brighton, with 146

Fulmars and 1332 **auks** E on 24th, 1058 **Brent Geese** E on 25th and an exceptional flock of 15 **Smew** W on 26th.

The focus moved to smaller birds on 27 February with 18 **Rock Pipits** counted between Birling Gap and Holywell, a party of nine **Scandinavian Rock Pipits** in the lower Cuckmere Valley, the first migrant **Black Redstarts** at Lancing and Birling Gap and a very early **Willow Warbler** singing in Lewes.

The westerly airstream continued throughout much of **March** bringing further mild, wet and windy conditions, with the end of the month being particularly mild. An early **Wheatear** at Hurst Green on 2nd came as no great surprise, while at Thorney on 4th, a **Spoonbill** left the Little Egret roost, 32 **Jack Snipe** broke the county record and up to four **Dartford Warblers** were seen. The first **Garganey** of the year and a **Red Kite** were at Rye Hbr on 5th while 6th produced 600 **Knot** in Pagham Hbr, a **Great Grey Shrike** in Stansted Forest (remaining until mid-April) and a **Black-throated Diver** at Scotney Court GPs.

On 8 March the last **Smew** of the winter, eight at Northpoint Pit, and the county's earliest **Yellow Wagtail** at Widewater made an interesting combination, while 76 **Slavonian Grebes** off Church Norton on 9th was the highest number to be recorded in the county. On 10th, an **Iceland Gull** was seen at Sidlesham Ferry (the first of three recorded during the month) and a very early **Whinchat** at Thorney Deepes. More summer visitors were evident on 11th when the first **Sandwich Terns** and **Sand Martin** were recorded. Also on this date, 29 **Razorbills** were seen off Seaford, 450 **Meadow Pipits** came in at Selsey Bill and eight **Green Woodpeckers** were feeding in a field at Pulborough Brooks.

Corn Buntings peaked at 120 at Newmarket Hill on 12 March while on 13th, five **Bitterns** at Rye Hbr was a county record. **Brent Geese** were on the move along the coast on 13th, with the highest count, 1091E, at Brighton Marina. On 15th, a **Dartford Warbler** was seen at West Itchenor, an exceptional 250 **Carrion Crows** were counted at Forest Mere and 8000 **Common Gulls** roosted at Rye Hbr. The scoter flock off Pett Level was the focus of attention at this time with **Common Scoters** peaking at 130 on 15th, up to 15 **Velvet Scoters**, a first-summer male **Surf Scoter** on 16th, with two then present to 29th (the fifth and sixth county records), and a pair of **Long-tailed Ducks** on 17th. The first **Little Ringed Plover** of the year was seen at Rye Hbr and the first of three **Hoopoes** at Church Norton on 18th.

A **Water Pipit** took up residence at Pagham Hbr and a **Serin** flew N over Littlehampton West Beach on 20 March, while evidence of spring continued with **Common Sandpipers** at Camber and Rye Hbr on 21st, two **Garganey** at Arlington Res, a displaying male **Goldeneye** at Barcombe Res, and three **Ravens** at Beachy Head from 22nd. On 24th, there was another **Serin** (W over Seaford), four **White Wagtails** at both Beachy Head and at Icklesham, and the start of a spectacular fall of **Black Redstarts** with six at Church Norton, five at Sheepcote Valley, 12 at Roedean and seven in the Beachy Head area being impressive, but overshadowed by 46 in the Brighton area on 25th (and one inland at Barcombe). Also on 25th, five **Black-necked Grebes** were off Seaford, where determined sea-watchers were rewarded with the county's third **Blue-winged Teal** and a **Long-tailed Duck**, which had earlier been seen at Selsey Bill, Worthing and Brighton Marina. Four **Swallows** at Pulborough Brooks were the first of the year while a decent fall of **Wheatears** on 25th included 25 at Selsey Bill, 30 at Sheepcote Valley and 15 at Roedean. The first **Ring Ouzel** of the year was at Beachy Head on 26th.

On 27 March three **Black-necked Grebes** were seen at Scotney Court GPs, two **Red Kites** in the Harrow Hill area (where three birds were together on 4-5 April) and 22

Lesser Redpolls in Ashdown Forest (the highest count for the first part of the year)! Migrants at this time included a flock of 40 **Whimbrel** at Church Norton, a **Hoopoe** at the Severals (to 30th), six **House Martins** over Pulborough Brooks (a late first date), a **Tree Pipit** singing in Ashdown Forest and a **Redstart** in Lewes. **Ospreys** passed through Pagham Hbr on 28th and 31st with another at Harting Down on the last date. A **Serin** was seen in Rustington and an **Arctic Skua** flew E at Brighton Marina on 29th. A **Little Tern** at Pilsley Island on 30th was the earliest record for the county. The month finished with 222 **Sandwich Terns** E at Brighton Marina and the first **Common Tern** of the year at Rye Hbr.

April started mild and wet but became colder mid-month (as the winds turned first northerly and then easterly) before finishing drier and milder again. The 1st saw significant easterly sea passage along the coast with the first **Manx Shearwater**, 41 **Teal**, 53 **Red-breasted Mergansers**, 106 **Sanderling** and 563 **Sandwich Terns** at Brighton Marina, 16 **Pintail** and 190 **Shoveler** at Newhaven and 100 **Dunlin** at Worthing and smaller numbers of most of these species elsewhere. The first **Sedge Warblers** arrived at Thorney Deeps, while a **Garden Warbler** at Ebernoe equalled the county record for the earliest arrival and was quickly followed by two at Stedham Common on 3rd. On 2nd, two **Long-tailed Ducks** flew E off Selsey Bill and the first **Nightingales** and **Whitethroats** were early arrivals. A **Stone-Curlew** over Brighton on 4th was the only record of the year while an **Alpine Swift** flew over Abbots Wood and 250 **Sand Martins** were present at Chichester GPs on 6th.

A **Reed Warbler** at Thorney Deeps on 7 April was the earliest county arrival by a day, the first roding **Woodcock** was seen in Ashdown Forest on 8th and 50 **Willow Warblers** were at Pagham Hbr on 9th (a very low peak spring count). The 11th brought a pair of **Garganey** to Pagham (with four others seen up to the month's end), the first **Cuckoo** and the first of just four spring **Pied Flycatchers** (a stunning male at Beachy Head). The same day saw the last **Fieldfare** of the winter and a **Wryneck** at Newhaven Tide Mills, although pride of place must go to a male **Subalpine Warbler** at Whitbread Hollow (the ninth county record). The highest spring count of **House Martins** was just 60, at Bewl Water on 14th, while the first **Redstart** was back on territory on Ashdown Forest on 16th. On 17th, easterly sea passage included a **Black Tern** at Bexhill and nine **Velvet Scoters** at Brighton Marina, with 18 counted in Rye Bay the following day. Two **Scaup** at Scotney Court GPs, also on 18th, were the last of the winter and a **Red-necked Grebe** was again at Darwell Res (with another E at Selsey Bill on 19th the last of spring), while a **Hobby** at Pagham Hbr

was the first of the year. The 19th produced the first **Grasshopper Warbler** (at Amberley Wild Brooks) and the last **Goldeneye** (in Chichester Hbr) as well as an elusive male **Sardinian Warbler** at Hastings CP for a few days (the fourth county record) and the only record of **Tree Sparrow** from the west of the county in 1999 (at Selsey Bill).

A strong SE wind on 20 April was conducive to good sea-watching along the coast and over ten hours of observation at Brighton Marina produced record counts of both **Fulmars** and **Gannets** moving E (600 and 900 respectively) along with 20 **Arctic Skuas** and 46 **Arctic Terns**. Also there, a remarkable flock of 87 **Avocets** headed inland while two **Pomarine Skuas** E at Seaford were the first of 17 recorded in April. **Little Gulls** were much in evidence with 56E at both Selsey Bill and Brighton Marina, an impressive 125E at Seaford and, an equally spectacular, 47 at Arlington Res. Observers at Seaford also recorded 11 **Great** and 43 **Arctic Skuas** on 21st and the first **Swifts** of the year on 22nd. **Turtle Doves** at three sites and **Lesser Whitethroats** at two on 24th were the first of the year, while 25th was a good day for **Whimbrel** passage with 173E at Worthing the highest count. Also on 25th, a **Kentish Plover** was found at Pilsey Sands, being joined two others on 26th, when the only inland **Turnstone** of the year was at Arlington Res and 136 **Little Terns** flew E at Selsey Bill.

April finished with six **Hobbies** at Burton MP on 28th (and four at Pulborough Brooks on 30th), an early **Montagu's Harrier** on the Downs above Amberley and seven **Spotted Redshank** at Sidlesham Ferry on 29th, and a good easterly passage of **Bar-tailed Godwits** on 30th. Observers at Brighton Marina logged 2198 of the latter, while six **Whinchats** were at nearby Sheepcote Valley and **Spotted Flycatcher** (at Pulborough Brooks) and **Wood Warbler** (at Pagham Hbr) were the first for the year.

May was warm and rather changeable, with light NE winds predominating. Potentially the best month for birding in the county, it kicked off with two **Garganey** and a possible **Spanish Wagtail** at Pevensey Bridge Level (with four other records of the former up to 12th), a **Red Kite** E at Beachy Head, a **Hoopoe** at East Preston and the last **Brambling** of the winter at Pagham Hbr on 1st. On 2nd, a **Goshawk** at West Dean Woods was the only record of the year while a **Short-eared Owl** flew in off the sea at Seaford (where 32 **Eider** E was the highest count in a poor spring for the species). Also on 2nd, 22 **Greenshank** were seen at Thorney Deepes, an arrival of **Yellow Wagtails** included 12 at Selsey Bill and a second **Subalpine Warbler** (the tenth county record) was found at Birling Gap. Waders were on the move up-Channel on 3rd with 52 **Knot** at Newhaven and 880 **Bar-tailed Godwits** at Seaford. **Pomarine Skuas** were on the move too with a maximum count of 35E at Bexhill, while an inland **Little Egret** at Weir Wood Res was notable and the first **Nightjar** of the year was heard calling near East Dean. The more interesting sightings over the next few days included **Montagu's Harrier** at Church Norton, **Roseate Tern** off Pilsey Sands and **Wryneck** near Rye on 4th, the last **Jack Snipe** (at Thorney Deepes), 1203 **Bar-tailed Godwits** and 209 **Whimbrel** E at Brighton Marina (with 234 of the latter roosting at Rye Hbr), a **Wood Sandpiper** at Littlehampton (the first of only two in spring) and ten **Spotted Flycatchers** at Church Norton on 5th.

Most years there is one very good spring sea-watch day and it rarely seems to fall at a weekend. 1999 was no exception with 7 May being the day, and to make matters worse it wasn't particularly predictable with a subtle shift in wind direction during the morning opening the floodgates. Easterly passage was recorded from many sites along the coast with some of the more notable counts being 72 **Sanderling** at Selsey Bill, 103 **Grey Plover**, 154 **Dunlin**, a first-summer **Arctic Tern** and 21 **Black Terns** at Brighton Marina and 30 **Pomarine Skuas** and 130 **Little Terns** at Seaford. Counts of **Common/Arctic Terns** included totals of 2705 at Selsey Bill, 3160 at Brighton Marina and 4010 at

Seaford. Three **Black-necked Grebes** were seen at Brighton Marina on 7th and 34 **Black Terns** flew E and six **Mediterranean Gulls** W at Selsey Bill on 8th. A quiet period then ensued, although a **Long-tailed Duck** passed Brighton and Seaford on 9th, when a pair of **Hawfinches** was seen in Ashdown Forest, with another **Serim** at Seaford on 11th.

Arguably the find of the spring was a superb male **Red-footed Falcon** in the Cuckmere Valley on 15 May (remaining until 19th), with a **Merlin** there the same day making for an unusual duo, while a **Red-rumped Swallow** N over Birling Gap and a **Hooded Crow** W at Seaford would have attracted more attention had they stayed. On 16th, a **Black Kite** drifted slowly SE over Beachy Head (where a **Greenland Wheatear** was also seen) and a **Quail** was first heard calling at Beeding Hill. More raptors were seen on 17th with a **Montagu's Harrier** in off the sea at Brighton Marina and the first of several long staying **Ospreys** at Thorney Island, while two **Hen Harriers** lingered in the Arun Valley until 19th. The only May **Black Redstart** was at Beachy Head on 20th.

The last wintering **Purple Sandpiper** remained at Brighton Marina to 21 May, when a **Puffin** was recorded there, and the spring's second and last **Wood Sandpiper** was found in the lower Cuckmere Valley. A **Roseate Tern** flew W at Brighton Marina on 25th. On 27th, the last **Green Sandpiper** was seen at Barcombe Res and 22 **Black-tailed Godwits** flew E at Brighton Marina while a **Pomarine Skua** W there on 28th brought the month's total to a disappointing 100. May finished with a **Honey Buzzard** over Eastbourne on 29th, another **Little Egret** at Weir Wood Res, a **Montagu's Harrier** hunting over Thorney Island and 26 **Black-tailed Godwits** NE over Steyning Bowl on 30th, with a **Marsh Harrier** there from 31st.

As usual some species did well during the breeding season whereas others continued to give cause for concern. **Buzzard** (61-76 pairs), **Lapwing** (157 pairs), **Snipe** (up to ten birds drumming), **Turtle Dove** (20 pairs), **Wood Lark** (78 territories), **Sky Lark** (420 breeding records), **Nightingale** (692 singing birds in 213 different tetrads), **Grasshopper Warbler** (12 reeling males), **Dartford Warbler** (87 territories), **Lesser Whitethroat** (44 sites) and **Reed Bunting** (127 pairs) all increased compared with 1998. There were good numbers of **Sedge** and **Reed Warblers** (including 67 and 153 territories respectively at Rye Hbr) and **Whitethroats** (including 38 pairs at Thorney). Last year's pair of **Honey Buzzards** was again successful, raising one young, while there was good evidence of **Red Kites** pairing at one locality although breeding was not confirmed. A pair of **Montagu's Harriers** appeared to establish a territory on an area of downland although there were no reports indicative of nesting. There were several breeding records of **Whinchats** (normally only an occasional breeder) and an adult **Guillemot** seen with a small chick at sea two miles off Beachy Head, where the species last bred in 1904, was intriguing. Despite hopes raised by three birds present in early spring, there was no evidence of **Ravens** returning to Beachy Head as a breeding species, while **Little Egrets** remain one of the favourites to be the next addition as a breeding species.

Grey Heron (249 occupied nests), **Hobby** (65 territories), **Peregrine** (10-12 pairs), **Woodcock** (roding records from 32 tetrads), **Barn Owl** (57 sites), **Black Redstart** (one bird in suitable habitat), **Redstart** (60 singing males in the east of the county), **Wheatear** (10-13 pairs), **Firecrest** (seven singing males) and **Bearded Tit** (12 pairs) showed little change from 1998. Two pairs of **Mediterranean Gulls** nested but no chicks survived. The **Kittiwake** colony at Newhaven was at its lowest for 20 years while that on the cliffs at nearby Seaford Head continued to grow (with 822 occupied nests). **Little Terns** had mixed fortunes with numbers continuing to decrease at Rye Hbr although four pairs in Chichester Hbr was a four-fold increase.

Only one pair of **Pochard** were confirmed breeding while no **Golden Pheasants** were recorded at Kingley Vale all year making the species' continued presence in the county somewhat tenuous. Potential breeding pairs of **Water Rails** at Icklesham (the main stronghold of the species) decreased by over 50% (although two pairs bred on Amberley Wild Brooks and two pairs were suspected of breeding at Rye Hbr). Eight to ten pairs of **Little Ringed Plovers** were reported but only two pairs are known to have bred successfully while predation of 26 pairs of **Sandwich Terns** at Rye Hbr resulted in total failure. **Nightjars** (148 territories) were well down, although the numbers reported are dependent on observer activity and weather conditions. There would seem to be no similar reason to explain **Tree Pipit** territories in Ashdown Forest declining by a third. **Mistle Thrush** also appears to be declining and just four **Wood Warblers** were heard singing during the breeding season. **Spotted Flycatcher** seems to be heading the same way with just 27 pairs reported and **Tree Sparrow** continued its dramatic decline (with just 14 breeding pairs).

June was very wet and unsettled and, being dominated by a SW airstream, was rarely very warm. A **Red-backed Shrike** at Beachy Head on 2nd was followed by a **White-billed Diver** flying E at Ovingdean (the second county record) and 225 and 135 **Manx Shearwater W** at Selsey Bill and Brighton Marina respectively on 3rd. More rarities were found over the next few days but most did not linger. This was certainly true of a **Little Bittern** seen near Glynde on 5th, although a **Red-footed Falcon** at Lidham Hill was refound at nearby Guestling Thorn on 6th (remaining until 10th) when a **Red Kite** flew N at Sidlesham Ferry. On 7th, an **Alpine Swift** flew over Beeding Hill while the first of four summer **Marsh Warblers** was trapped at Icklesham.

Things quickly quietened down with little of great significance during the rest of June. A **Little Egret** frequented Pulborough Brooks on 8th, a **Honey Buzzard** soared over Brighton on 9th, a **Marsh Harrier** was seen at Thorney Deepes on 10th, while 12th was an unusual date for a **Pied Flycatcher** to be at Sidlesham. The first returning **Green Sandpipers** were recorded at two sites on 13th, when another long-staying **Osprey** arrived at Thorney Island, while the *WeBS* counts included 157 **Mute Swans** at Scotney Court GPs and 196 **Moorhens** at Arundel. Three **Garganey** were recorded at Pagham Hbr on 14th with a **Spotted Redshank** at Coldwaltham Brooks on 15th. A post-breeding flock of 500 juvenile **Starlings** was seen near Seaford on 16th while a **Savi's Warbler** sang at Icklesham from 17th to 26th, with the first returning **Wood Sandpiper** there on 19th. A count of 18 **Mediterranean Gulls** in the lower Chichester Channel on 18th was notable, as was a flock of six **Pomarine Skuas** seen flying SW off Worthing Beach on 24th. June finished rather quietly with a **Marsh Harrier** at Icklesham on 25th, 125 **Linnets** at Selsey West Fields on 26th, two **Mediterranean Shearwaters W** at Brighton Marina on 28th and two **Arctic Terns** in Pagham Hbr and ten **Little Egrets** roosting at Thorney Deepes on 30th.

July was generally warm and sunny with temperatures reaching 30°C on several occasions. Yet another **Osprey** arrived at Thorney on 2nd (remaining for two months) with up to four **Quail** heard near Lewes and two **Roseate Terns** in Pagham Hbr (for a week). A **Goldeneye** in Chichester Hbr on 5th was unusual while on 7th a **Purple Heron** at Rye Hbr (intermittently for over a month) was overshadowed by a **Gull-billed Tern** at Chichester GPs. Although there have been over 60 records of this species in the county, this is the first to have stayed for any length of time (remaining until 9th) and it allowed those somewhat sceptical of some of the old fly-past records to retain the moral high ground while adding the species to their personal lists! A very early returning wintering **Little Grebe** was in the Cuckmere Valley on 13th, with an early **Red-breasted Merganser** and a **Black Redstart** at Rye Hbr on 15th.

The first **Little Stint** of the autumn was at Sidlesham Ferry on 16 July while two **Wood Warblers** were seen at Pulborough Brooks on 17th. At Rye Hbr, at this time, 23 **Shoveler** were counted on 18th, 270 **Cormorants** roosted on 19th and 1500 **Swifts** were recorded on 22nd. On 23rd, the first returning **Golden Plover** was at Rye Hbr and a **Pectoral Sandpiper** was found at Weir Wood Res, remaining until 25th, when two **Curlew Sandpipers** at Pett Level Pools were the first during a good autumn for the species. The first **Purple Sandpiper** returned to Brighton Marina on 26th while on 28th, 255 **Yellow-legged Gulls** were counted in Pagham Hbr and a **Little Tern** at Weir Wood Res was a good inland record. Seven **Crossbills** E over Worthing on 30th were the most notable of several small groups recorded in July and a **Bittern** at Pett Level Pools stayed for two days from 31st.

August started with the warmest day of the year but the good weather did not last and heavy rain brought in by Atlantic fronts made it the wettest August on record in many areas. Forty **Corn Buntings** flew over Steyning Round Hill on 2nd while waders on 3rd included 12 **Little Stints**, 22 **Curlew Sandpipers** and 97 **Greenshank** in Pagham Hbr. The latter appeared after a thunderstorm while 26 recorded at Weir Wood Res was a new inland record for the county. Single **Pied Flycatchers** were found at three different sites on 3rd, with 550 **Sedge Warblers** trapped at Icklesham on 4th, 48 **Little Terns** at Rye Hbr on 5th, four **Nightingales** trapped at Beachy Head on 6th and 62 **Greenshank** at Rye Hbr on 7th.

A **Long-tailed Skua** W off Bulverhythe on 8 August was a very early date (but the first of five recorded during the autumn) while 40 **Black Terns** at Thorney Island was an early peak autumn count. Eleven **Wood Sandpipers** at Pevensey Levels on 9th was the largest party in Sussex since 1956 while a **Great Skua** E at Bexhill was the first of only 19 recorded in autumn. On 10th, 57 **Common Sandpipers** were counted at Pagham Hbr and 150 **Willow Warblers** were at Whitbread Hollow (the peak count in the worst autumn for the species for many years). Two **Aquatic Warblers** (the first of seven recorded during autumn) were trapped at Icklesham on 12th, along with 360 **Reed Warblers**, while 13 **Crossbills** and 120 **Coal**, 25 **Blue** and 55 **Great Tits** were recorded at Old Lodge NR.

A **Montagu's Harrier** was seen at Sidlesham Ferry and ten **Kestrels** were present at Cissbury Ring on 14 August while the *WeBS* count on 15th produced 65 **Little Grebes** and 16 **Green Sandpipers** at Rye Hbr, 104 **Great Crested Grebes** and 1200 **Canada Geese** at Bewl Water, 398 **Greylag Geese** at Scotney Court GPs, 991 **Mallard** at Arundel WWT and 508 **Ringed Plover** and 1923 **Curlew** in Chichester Hbr. The largest autumn flock of

Turtle Doves was just six at Thorney Deeps on 16th, while persistent sea-watching off Brighton Marina produced two **Cory's** and one **Mediterranean Shearwater W** on 17th (with a further 19 of the latter by the month's end).

An early **Hen Harrier** was at Rye Hbr on 18 August when impressive westerly tern passage included 120 **Sandwich** and 1250 **Common Terns** at Selsey Bill, and 65 **Arctic** and 14 **Black Terns** at Brighton Marina. Two **Wood Warblers** were in Ashdown Forest on 19th while a **Dotterel** at Swanborough Hill on 20th was the first of 14 to be seen in this area up to early September. Also on 20th, 37 **Whinchats** were counted at Sheepcote Valley and 15 **Crossbills** flew NW at Bewl Water, while 90 **House Sparrows** at Bewbush on 21st was the highest count in the county all year! The first **Merlin** and **Pintail** of the winter arrived at Pagham Hbr on 22nd and 23rd respectively. On 24th, 281 **Little Egrets** leaving the roost at Thorney Island at dawn was a new British record while a **Long-tailed Skua** flew E at Selsey Bill later the same day. Waders included 60 **Ruff** in Chichester Hbr on 25th, and 147 **Greenshank** at Thorney Deeps on 27th.

On 27 August, 30 **Grasshopper Warblers** were trapped at Icklesham, 80 **Willow Warblers** and 200 **Whitethroats** were recorded at Fairlight CP (with 250 of the latter at Beachy Head on 28th) and the last **Wood Warbler** of the year was at Rye Hbr. A **Bittern** at Rye Hbr on 28th remained until the end of the year while three **Ospreys** were seen at Thorney Island and 20 **Stonechats** counted on the Downs above Lancing. On 29th, observers at Beachy Head recorded two **Honey Buzzards**, seven **Redstarts** and 24 **Spotted Flycatchers** (with 20 of the latter at Sutton Common on 30th), while eight **Pied Flycatchers** at Icklesham was a notable count. Ten **Curlew Sandpipers** were seen at Pagham Hbr the next day (and 13 at Pilsey Island on 31st) while a large flock of 75 **Whimbrel** flew SW over Wych Cross. Three **Honey Buzzards** flew W over Fairlight on 31st while more mundane were counts of 40 **Robins** at Church Norton and 150 **Goldfinches** at Cuckmere Haven.

The warm wet weather continued into **September** with the first week being very warm and the rest of the month, dominated by Atlantic low pressure systems, very wet. The month started with 16 **Garden Warblers** and a **Wryneck** trapped at Icklesham, the latter the first of nine recorded during the month. Five early **Ring Ouzels** arrived at Pagham Hbr on 2nd while on 3rd, a **Little Tern** and a second **Pectoral Sandpiper** were at Weir Wood Res and the first autumn migrant **Firecrest** was recorded at Roedean. A **Black-necked Grebe** was on Arlington Res on 4th, 300 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were at Bury Hill and three **Pied Flycatchers** at Pulborough Brooks. A **Little Gull** and three **Sandwich Terns** were seen at Weir Wood Res on 7th while 18 **Little Egrets** roosted at Rye Hbr on 8th. Migrants on 9th included a **White Stork** in the Rye area, 300 **Yellow Wagtails** at Church Norton and 400 **Blackcaps** at Whitbread Hollow, while 176 **Sedge** and 85 **Reed Warblers** were trapped at Icklesham on 10th.

The last **Wood Sandpiper** of the year was at Duncton on 11 September when 15 **Grey Wagtails** flew over Fairlight. The 12th saw a **Red-necked Grebe** off Brighton Marina, two **Little Egrets** at Darwell Res, two **Garganey** and the year's third **Pectoral Sandpiper** at Pett Level Pools, 149 **Greenshank** at Thorney Deeps, two **Sandwich Terns** at Bewl Water and two **Wrynecks** at Pagham Hbr. The *WeBS* count, also on 12th, logged 59 **Grey Herons** and 1155 **Oystercatchers** in Chichester Hbr and 584 **Turnstone** in Pagham Hbr. **Curlew Sandpipers** peaked mid-month with six at Weir Wood Res and 30 at Pagham Hbr on 13th, three W over Sheepcote Valley on 14th and ten on the River Adur on 15th. Five **Spoonbills** at Scotney Court GPs on 14th were presumably those present at Weir Wood Res on 21st-22nd while another was at Sidlesham Ferry on 15th and 17th. An **Aquatic Warbler** and 32 high-flying **Bearded Tits** were seen at Thorney Deeps on 15th and

westerly passage included 750 **Gannets** at Selsey Bill and 210 **Sandwich Terns** at Brighton Marina on 16th.

Weir Wood Res continued to do well with three **Grey Plovers** (the only inland record all year) and a trapped **Scarlet Rosefinch** on 17 September while 12 **Spotted Redshank** graced Sidlesham Ferry. A **Leach's Petrel** off Southwick Beach came to an untimely end on 18th while a **Long-tailed Skua** flew over Rye Hbr and a huge fall of approximately 1000 **Blackcaps** was witnessed at Whitbread Hollow. A **Honey Buzzard** flew over Chichester GPs on 20th when 2000 **Herring Gulls** were at Steyning Round Hill and a **Red-backed Shrike** was found at Pagham Hbr (remaining until 22nd). On 21st, **Marsh Harriers** were seen at Crowborough and Bewl Water and the last **Little Ringed Plover** of the year was recorded at Sidlesham Ferry, along with 18 **Little Stints**. Also 35 **Whinchats** were counted at Sheepcote Valley and 13 **Lesser Whitethroats** at Church Norton.

Five **Ospreys** were seen at Pilsey Island on 22 September with 200 **Chiffchaffs** at Whitbread Hollow the same day (in what was believed to be the worst autumn for the species since 1964, *c.f.* Willow Warbler). Two **Black-necked Grebes** took up residence at Chichester GPs on 23rd when an unidentified phalarope, thought to be a **Grey**, was seen at Coleman's Hatch, and two **Twite** were found near Steyning Round Hill (very unusual away from the coast). The only record of **Sooty Shearwater** in 1999 was of 1W off Brighton Marina on 24th where a **Long-tailed** and 34 **Arctic Skuas** were recorded during 24-25th. A **Spotted Crake** and 6000 **Swallows** were at Icklesham and a **Mediterranean Gull** at Bewl Water on 24th and a **Honey Buzzard** was seen over Church Norton, five **Marsh Harriers** at Icklesham, 11 **Jays** at Pulborough Brooks and a **Long-tailed Skua** on the beach at Seaford on 25-26th.

A **Pomarine Skua** flew W at Selsey Bill on 26 September, as did 1270 **House Martins** at Worthing Beach (in just 50 minutes), while a **Collared Dove** at Ebernoe Common was the first record for the reserve. **Swifts** departed early, with two at Lewes Priory on 28th the latest. Also on 28th, 13 **Tree Pipits** and 60 **Siskins** were recorded at Sheepcote Valley, 1500 **Meadow Pipits** at Church Norton, an **Icterine Warbler** at Beachy Head and the last **Pied Flycatcher** of the year was at Church Norton. Fourteen **Shags** flew W at Brighton Marina and the first returning **Redwings** were seen at Littlehampton on 29th, with a **Spoonbill** at Pett Level Pools, another **Honey Buzzard** over Chichester GPs, 6000 **House Martins** at Icklesham, and the first returning **Fieldfares** at Pulborough.

Unsettled but mild weather, dominated by SW airstreams, continued throughout much of a surprisingly sunny **October**. SW gales were responsible for the appearance of the year's only **Grey Phalarope**, on the Adur saltings on 2nd which came to an untimely end, as did a **Sabine's Gull** at Pagham Hbr on the same day. Three **Little Terns** in Rye Bay, also on 2nd, were the last of the year while on 3rd, a **Quail** was flushed and 46 **Reed Warblers** trapped at Icklesham, as was a **Dartford Warbler** at Shoreham Sanctuary. On 4th, 17 **Grey Wagtails** flew W over Goring Gap, the last **Whitethroat** was at Rye Hbr (an early departure) and 1000 **Linnets** were on the Downs above Lancing. Five **Sparrowhawks** hunting over the same field at Beachy Head on 5th were bad news for small passerines while the first **Brambling** of the autumn flew over there as did 60 **Redwings**. Also on 5th, another **Spotted Crake** was trapped at Icklesham and two **Dartford Warblers** arrived at Pagham Hbr. An **Egyptian Goose** was seen in Chichester Hbr on 6th while three **White-fronted Geese** W at Selsey Bill, a **Barred Warbler** at Icklesham and 95 **Goldcrests** at Church Norton on 7th were more seasonal. A **Black Brant** at Pilsey Island on 8th remained into November while the first returning **Scaup** flew

W at Selsey Bill and the last **Spotted Flycatcher** of the year was at Brooklands. Twenty-one **Little Gulls** flew W at Selsey Bill and 750 **Goldfinches** were at Fairlight CP on 9th.

Black Tern, **Grasshopper Warbler** and **Lesser Whitethroat** were all last seen on 10 October, coinciding with the first wintering **Jack Snipe** at Icklesham (with 30 Water Rails estimated to be there and at Pett Level). Also on 10th, an early **Snow Bunting** flew E at Newhaven Tide Mills (with another on the Downs above Kingston on 11th) and 40 **Reed Buntings** were at Icklesham (with 46E at Church Norton on 12th). The last **Nightjar** of the year was recorded at Icklesham on 11th, when 31 **Bearded Tits** were at Thorney, with a **Black Redstart** at Nutley and 12 **Spotted Redshank** and five **Wood Larks** at Pagham Hbr on 12th. On 13th, a **Hooded Crow** was seen at Church Norton and a **Coot** offshore there was the only record away from fresh water, while a **Radde's Warbler** briefly at Birling Gap was the eighth county record.

The last **Sedge Warblers** of the year were seen on 14 October while visible migration at Church Norton included 138 **Pied Wagtails**, 1740 **Goldfinches** and 350 **Greenfinches** flying east; the latter along with 300E on 17th is one of the best movements recorded for this species in the county. Winter thrushes were in evidence in Ashdown Forest on 15th with 300 **Fieldfares** and a flock of 120 **Redwings** flying W while at least five **Dartford Warblers** were present at Beachy Head in mid-month. **Brent Geese** were on the move on 16th with 450W off Pagham Hbr and two, unusually large, inland counts of 150SW over Barcombe Cross and 800SW over Bewl Water, while a flock of 20 **Bullfinches** flew over Ashdown Forest and the last **Tree Pipits** of the year flew over Littlehampton.

Marsh Harrier, **Hobby**, **Cuckoo** and **Redstart** were all last recorded on 17 October while 3500 **Golden Plover** on Broomhill Level was exceptional and 30 **Mistle Thrushes** at Pulborough Brooks notable. **Firecrests** delighted observers at West Wittering and Church Norton where ten and five respectively were seen on 18th, with a **Red Kite** W over the latter site. On 19th, both **Bittern** and **Long-tailed Duck** were seen at Icklesham, the former remaining until the end of November. The last **Sand Martin** of the year was at Rye Hbr on 20th when a **Great Grey Shrike** started a week's stay in Ashdown Forest. Two **Ravens** were seen at Birling Gap on 22nd, with three **Great Skuas** W at Bexhill, the last **Arctic Terns** (three at Widewater and one in Shoreham Hbr) and a **Snow Bunting** at Pett Level on 24th.

The 25 October was one of the best days of the autumn with another long staying **Osprey** at Thorney Deep, 400 **Swallows**, 120 **Siskins** and 80 **Lesser Redpolls** at Icklesham and the last **Garden Warbler** of the year at Roedean. It was *phylloscs* and crests that stole the day, however, with **Pallas's Warblers** briefly at Portslade Station and,

more widely appreciated, at Brooklands, a **Siberian Chiffchaff** at Beachy Head (the first acceptable record of this race in the county), a large fall of **Goldcrests** and 17 **Firecrests** (including six at Church Norton and five at Icklesham). On 26th, 100 **Lesser Redpolls** were counted at Whitbread Hollow (with 55 at West Wittering) and **Bullfinches** at West Wittering and Sheepcote Valley were considered to be migrants. **Turtle Dove** and **Willow Warbler** on 27th were the last records of the year while 50 **Song Thrushes** were present at Icklesham, a **Red-backed Shrike** arrived at Selsey East Beach for a two day stay and 1500 **Rooks** flew to roost over Lavington Common.

October finished with a count of 281 **Collared Doves** at Rye Hbr, the year's last **Reed Warbler** and 30 **Bearded Tits** at Icklesham, 400 **Greenfinches** at Shoreham Beach and 50 **Reed Buntings** at Thorney Deepes on 28th. A **Pectoral Sandpiper** at Pagham Hbr on 29th stayed only two days, as did an unseasonally plumaged **Scandinavian Rock Pipit** found there on 30th while a **Goosander** was seen at Shoreham and a late **Quail** was at Rye Hbr on 31st.

The generally mild, wet and windy weather continued throughout much of **November** although there was a cooler period towards the month's end. The last **Wheatear** of the year was seen at Rye Hbr on 1st and the last **Common Tern** at Pagham Hbr on 2nd. On 3rd, two **Slavonian Grebes** were seen at Chichester GPs, 15 **Bramblings** at Church Norton and 100 **Stock Doves** and 14,500 **Wood Pigeons** flew W at Beachy Head (with smaller numbers elsewhere). These numbers paled into insignificance on 7th when an estimated total of 100,000 **Wood Pigeons** flew W at Beachy Head in 2 hours (with 28,370W at Bexhill the same day) in what was probably one of the largest movements ever recorded in the county. Also on 7th, 50 **Wrens** and 25 **Crossbills** were at Old Lodge NR, a **Black Redstart** at Faygate, a **Dartford Warbler** at Beeding Hill, 27 **Crossbills** at Lavington Common and **Snow Buntings** at Selsey West Fields and at Pilsley Island.

Two **Long-tailed Ducks** were off Church Norton on 8 November with one in Pagham Hbr sporadically for a month from 9th and two past Selsey Bill on 11th. A second **Siberian Chiffchaff** was seen at Littlehampton on 9th when the last **Osprey** at Thorney Deepes finally departed. A **Woodcock** amongst seaweed at Shoreham Hbr on 11th was an unusual record while cold NE winds on 12th produced 40 **Red-breasted Mergansers** W off Selsey Bill, the last (late) **Yellow Wagtail** of the year at Icklesham and a **Whinchat** at Newhaven Tide Mills (which would have been a good late record in most other years). On 13th, four **Red-necked Grebes** were on the sea off Church Norton, three **Ruddy Shelducks** at Pagham North Wall, 70 **Blackbirds** at Icklesham, a **Great Grey Shrike** at Old Lodge NR, 35 **Crossbills** at Wych Cross, and five **Snow Buntings** at Sovereign Hbr Marina. Six **Bewick's Swans** near Partridge Green were the first of the winter while 220 **Pochard** were counted at Chichester GPs and six **Velvet Scoter** and a **Pomarine Skua** flew E at Brighton Marina (with another there on 24th).

A **Black-necked Grebe** arrived at Barcombe Res on 15 November, while the last **Ring Ouzel** was seen at Selsey on 16th and the last **Swallow** at Shoreham on 17th, when two late **House Martins** were at Rye Hbr. A **Great Northern Diver** started a week long stay off Southwick Beach on 19th while a flock of **Wood Larks** near Coates Common reached 58 (the largest gathering recorded in the county for many years), with 50 **Crossbills** in the same general area on 20th. Also on 21st, 149 **Common Scoter** were seen off Bexhill and a **Sandwich Tern** flew E at Worthing (with probably the same seen on several dates between Southwick and Brighton Marina to 1 December). On 22nd, 120 **Mute Swans** were counted on Lewes Brooks and a **Snow Bunting** was found at Church Norton (being joined by a second on 27-28th).

Slavonian Grebes off Church Norton built up to 30 by 23 November while a **Goosander** was in Pagham Hbr until the end of the year, 3700 **Lapwings** were counted at Shoreham Airport and four **Little Gulls** flew E at Worthing. A high-tide count at Apuldram produced an exceptional 20 **Rock Pipits** on 24th while two **Moorhens** in Brighton Marina were unusual. A **Long-tailed Duck** arrived at Bewl Water on 25th while the first **Smew** of the winter was at Rye Hbr on 26th. Up to seven **Short-eared Owls** were reported from Pulborough Brooks towards the month's end, while 23 **Dunnocks** were present in a winter census plot at Yapton. A **White-billed Diver** flew E inshore at Selsey Bill on 28th (the third county record) while the *WeBS* count highlights were 461 **Greylag Geese** at Scotney Court GPs, 1144 **Pintail** in Pagham Hbr, 223 **Pochard** (a record November count) and 183 **Snipe** at Rye Hbr, 1261 **Knot** and 16,680 **Dunlin** in Chichester Hbr and 120 **Snipe** on the lower Adur Estuary. Two **Snow Buntings** were at East Head on 30th.

December started mild, wet and windy although was sunny at times and finished with widespread ground frosts. At the start of the month, 146 **Little Egrets** were still using the Thorney Deep's roost, 1550 **Coot** were counted on Chichester GPs, and seven **Mediterranean Gulls** were found at the Southwick gull roost, a **Great Northern Diver** arrived at Bewl Water for a week's stay on 2nd, with a **Pale-bellied Brent Goose** at Pagham Hbr and another **Pomarine Skua** E at Brighton Marina the same day. On 3rd, a flock of 38 **Yellowhammers** moved W over Moulseccomb Wild Park while a **Whinchat** at Beeding Hill departed on 4th, after a four week stay, making it the latest record for the county. On this date, 40 **Long-tailed Tits** were counted at Washington while 35 **Tree Sparrows** in the Brede Valley was the largest wintering flock in the county for several years. A **Treecreeper** at Goring Gap on 6th was unusual while the November **White-billed Diver** was relocated off Church Norton on 7th, but only remained to 8th. Two **Snow Buntings** were present at Shoreham Hbr on 9th, while on 10th, up to eight **Great Northern Divers** and a **Puffin** were reported off Church Norton, with seven **Spotted Redshank** in nearby Pagham Hbr, while three **Twite** were seen at Thorney Island on 11th.

Mid-month 17 **Chiffchaffs** looked set to winter at Thorney SF. A **Great Grey Shrike** was seen near Slindon on 16 December and 72 **Red-breasted Mergansers** were counted off Worthing Beach on 18th. **Sky Larks** were much in evidence on 19th, with counts of 230 at Patching, 200 at Beeding Hill and 160 at Faygate. On 20th, 44 **Little Grebes** were counted at Thorney, a presumed wild **Red-crested Pochard** was found at Chichester GPs (remaining into 2000) and the largest wintering flock of **Linnets** was 200 at Newhaven Tide Mills. Three **Whimbrel** in the western harbours remained to the year's end while 22 **Greenshank** were counted in Chichester Hbr.

A **Mediterranean Shearwater** E at Brighton Marina on 21 December was the first winter record for the county. A total of 134 **Red-breasted Mergansers** were counted at Selsey Bill, also on 21st, while sea-passage continued on 22nd with a 'blue phase' **Fulmar**, **Arctic Skua** and 731 **Kittiwakes** at Brighton Marina, **Arctic Skua** at Seaford and a **Sandwich Tern** at Selsey Bill, with four **Red-necked Grebes** on the sea at the last mentioned site. On 23rd, a **Black-throated Diver** appeared at Chichester GPs while 200 **Lesser Black-backed** and 700 **Greater Black-backed Gulls** were seen at Arlington Res on 24th.

Over the Christmas period, a **Great Grey Shrike** was at Chailey Common and six **Bramblings** visited the tip at Faygate on 26th. The Boxing Day *WeBS* counts recorded 8588 **Brent Geese** and 1461 **Grey Plover** in Chichester Hbr, 2638 **Wigeon**, 1792 **Teal** and 140 **Shoveler** on Pulborough Brooks, 234 **Gadwall** at Chichester GPs and 360 **Sanderling** at Rye Hbr. A record of five **Bewick's Swans** on Lewes Brooks on 27th was

the only one recorded for the east of the county during the year while 32 **Eider** were seen off Shoreham. A **Goosander** was present on Tilgate Park Lake on 27-28th and 300 **Chaffinches** and two **Hawfinches** were seen at West Dean Woods. On 28th, 24 **Avocets** and a **Glaucous Gull** were in Pagham Hbr (remaining into 2000) and a **Waxwing** at Fairlight was the only record of the year.

On 29 December, four **Tundra Bean Geese** flew over Rye Hbr, being relocated at Pett Level, where 16 **Velvet Scoter** were offshore. Also on 29th, eight **Smew** were seen at Northpoint Pit, 6500 **Black-headed Gulls** at Bewl Water (a much lower winter count than usual), 1000 **Fieldfares** at Hardham and 70 **Yellowhammers** at Telscombe. A **Black-throated Diver** was found at Scotney Court GPs from 30th and the year ended with two **Whooper** and 17 **Bewick's Swans** on Amberley Wild Brooks and 13 **Bewick's Swans** and ten **Egyptian Geese** on the Upper Adur Levels (the latter being the largest flock yet recorded in Sussex).

CLASSIFIED RECORDS FOR 1999

This list covers all species in Categories A and C of the *British Ornithologists Union*' check list in the usual systematic order.

Preceding each species account, there is a brief description of its status in the county. In most cases the term used is the same as in *Birds of Sussex* although some have been amended to take into account recent changes in status. The terms and their corresponding numerical ranges are as follows:

	Breeding pairs	Winter / Passage
Very rare		1-10 records in totals
Rare	less than annual	Less than annual
Very scarce	1-10 per year	1-20 per year
Scarce	11-100	21-200
Fairly common	101-1000	201-2000
Common	1001-5000	2001-10,000
Very common	5001-30,000	10,001-60,000
Abundant	30,000+	60,000+

Sea-watching records were received from several sites. The following table lists the hours watched in each month at five locations where logs were kept and details of times recorded:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	36	24	55	122	141	37	31	41	60	29	27	38
Worthing Beach	5	4	20	39	53	6	2	4	15	16	17	13
Brighton Marina	49	52	72	158	193	50	22	30	69	2	45	47
Splash Point, Seaford	17	19	52	68	75	0	0	0	5	4	0	13
Bexhill/Hastings	16	17	51	23	20	6	4	17	8	6	10	4

Many tables which are included in the accounts for wetland bird species refer to the monthly *WeBS*' counts – the *Wetland Bird Survey*. These counts are undertaken on a fixed date each month during the winter, and sometimes during the summer months, as well. During 1999 the recommended dates were 3 Jan, 21 Feb, 21 Mar, 18 Apr, 16 May, 13 June, 18 July, 15 Aug, 12 Sept, 10 Oct, 28 Nov and 26 Dec. It is important to note that figures quoted in the tables may appear to contradict those in the text. This is because counts made on set dates may not reveal higher or lower figures which feature throughout the remainder of each month. In previous years, the sites displayed in these tables have been randomly selected, invariably choosing sites with the highest counts. The tables in this *Report*, however, show all sites where any of the monthly counts held 5% or more of the county total for that month. The counts for Scotney Court GPs have been included for the first time.

The following abbreviations are used in the Systematic List as standard practice: N, S, E, W *etc.*, as cardinal compass points; BTO – British Trust for Ornithology; CBC – Common Birds Census; CP – Country Park; Fm – Farm; GPs – gravel pits; GC – golf course; Hbr – Harbour; MP – Mill Pond; SF – sewage farm or works; LNR – Local Nature Reserve; NR – Nature Reserve; NNR – National Nature Reserve; Res – Reservoir; RSPB – Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest; WWT – Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust; ha – hectares; hrs – hours; km – kilometres; km² – square kilometre; m – metres; nc – no count.

0002. RED-THROATED DIVER*Gavia stellata***Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.**

For this species and the next, estimates of monthly totals have again been made by combining records of birds inland with the totals from coastal sites, having made allowance for duplication. The larger of the counts of birds flying E and W at each site was added to the largest number of birds reported as 'on sea' or 'offshore'. It is probable that most of the birds recorded as 'Diver *spp.*' in the winter months are, in fact, Red-throated, and these accounts should be considered together; indeed, observers at some sites seem to make this assumption.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
678	1044	323	74	27	-	-	-	1	1	173	482

Records from the principal sea-watching sites are summarised below, with estimated monthly totals for *all* sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	176	71	32	34	13		-	12	82
Worthing Beach	5	5	4	6	7		-	9	38
Brighton Marina	248	949	263	52	15		-	144	351
Splash Point, Seaford	17	41	57	22	2		-	-	1
Bexhill/Hastings	316	90	42	13	2		-	16	1
Total (*)	668	1010	303	74	27		1	167	478

(*) adjusted to compensate for duplication.

These figures reflect both a recovery in the number of divers passing along the Sussex coast and the variation in effort of sea-watchers! Compared with the first half of 1998, Seaford's coverage was halved, while the number of hours watched at Brighton was considerably more than doubled. The highest numbers were 120 in Rye Bay on 2 Jan, 208W and 24E at Bexhill on 5 Jan and 249E past Brighton in 140 minutes on 10 Feb. The only birds away from the open sea during the first half of the year were singles at Newhaven Tide Mills on 16 Jan; intermittently at Scotney Court GPs from 31 Jan to 6 Mar (with two there on 7th); and at the Long Pit, Rye Hbr on 18 Mar.

Autumn passage was much less marked than in 1998, and apart singles off Beachy Head on 29 Sept, Church Norton from 5 Oct and Goring on 18 Oct, there was little movement until mid-November. At Brighton Marina, totals of 87W and 22E were recorded between 20th and 22nd. Rather more were seen in December, the largest movements being 68W off Church Norton on 14th and 85E past Brighton Marina two days later. Away from the open sea, one was at Northpoint Pit, Rye on 27 Dec. [BRG]

0003. BLACK-THROATED DIVER*Gavia arctica***Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.**

The decline in numbers of this species over recent years continued further in the latter part of 1999, despite a slight improvement in the spring. The final annual total was even lower than last year.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec

24	11	25	40	51	-	-	-	-	-	9	10
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At the main sea-watching sites, the numbers seen were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	-	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	11	4	3	12	24	-	-	-	3	3
Worthing Beach	2	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	2	
Brighton Marina	7		5	30	29	-	-	-	3	1
Splash Point, Seaford	5	3	11	16	9	-	-	-	-	-
Bexhill/Hastings	4	3	9	7	1	-	-	-	1	-
Total (*)	22	10	24	40	51	-	-	-	9	4

(*) adjusted to compensate for duplication.

The largest movements occurred on 25 Apr, when there were 13E at Brighton Marina and 10E at both Newhaven and Seaford, and on 30 Apr when nine flew E at Brighton Marina. There was an unusually long gap between the last bird of spring on 28 May and the first of the winter on 6 Nov.

Single birds were inside Sovereign Hbr Marina and Brighton Marina on 29 Jan and 24 Nov respectively, the latter a juvenile. Further away from the open sea were single birds at Scotney Court GPs on 6-7 Mar and 30-31 Dec and on Ivy Lake, Chichester GPs from 23 Dec until the end of the year. [BRG]

0004. GREAT NORTHERN DIVER

Gavia immer

Scarce winter visitor and spring passage migrant.

1999 was a remarkable year for this species with at least 54 different birds reported, a county record. In January, the largest numbers occurred at Selsey Bill where totals of 18W and 5E were recorded between 1st and 3rd (BJC, AHo, OM), including 9W and 1E on 2nd. This is the largest movement recorded in the county, exceeding that of 6E at Worthing on 30 Apr 1988 (*Birds of Sussex*). A further eight were seen together at Selsey on 31st (RJLK *et al*). Other records for the month were of one at Brighton Marina on 1st, four there on 5th (IJW), one at Scotney Court GPs from 4th to at least 10th (AFB, SJB, AJH *et al*), and singles off Church Norton on 6-7th (BFF, AHo, DIS) and 16th (AHo) and Ovingdean on 12th (IJW), the latter possibly the same bird as that recorded intermittently in Newhaven Hbr between 15 Jan and 2 Feb (AJH, RTP *et al*). The only other record for February was of 1W at Selsey Bill on 18th (BJC). In March, there were two offshore at Selsey Bill on 23rd (BJC), with singles there on 25th (OM) and 27th (BJC, AHo), while at Brighton Marina, there were singles offshore on 9th and 26th (IJW). At Selsey Bill, there were further singles offshore on 17 and 27 Apr, flying E on 17 and 28 Apr and flying W on 13 May (BJC, AHo *et al*). One was seen offshore at Church Norton on 2 May (AHo) and an unusually late bird in summer plumage was off Worthing on 27 May (CEH, JAN).

The first bird of the second winter period flew W at Selsey Bill on 6 Nov (BJC). One remained off Southwick Beach from 19 to 25 Nov (IJW) and another was off Church Norton on 23 Nov (AHo) and in Pagham Hbr on 28th (SPG). Inland, a juvenile was on Bewl Water from 2 to 9 Dec (PCB, AHL). A number of records for Church Norton during December included a maximum of eight on 10th (IJW). Singles flew E at Brighton Marina on 14th, 20th and 23rd (IJW) and further singles were recorded off Littlehampton on 19th (RJLK), at Pilsley Island on 23rd and 27th (CBC, MAC), and in Pagham Hbr on 24th (AHo). [BRG/PJ]

0005. **WHITE-BILLED DIVER**

Gavia adamsii

Very rare vagrant

A first-summer individual flew E past Ovingdean at a range of *ca.* 100m at 06.55 BST on 3 June (ITB) while one flew E past Selsey Bill at 09.50 GMT on 28 Nov (RAI, DIS). The latter was relocated off Church Norton on 7 Dec but only remained to the following day (BFF, DIS *et al.*). Both have been accepted by *British Birds*, there being just one previous county record (E past Newhaven on 27 Apr 1997). The bird at Church Norton was the first to be seen in Sussex on the water, although it was generally either rather distant, hidden in wave troughs, or submerged. [RJF]

DIVER Species

Gavia spp.

The specific identification of divers in flight is difficult, particularly when they are in winter plumage. Those recorded as ‘diver sp.’ normally form a significant proportion of the birds seen. The following table shows the numbers of divers recorded at the main sea-watching localities in January-May and October-December. The final totals for each site have been calculated by adding the monthly totals of birds flying E to those going W and including the numbers of birds seen on the sea. Some duplication is likely.

	Diver spp.		R-t Diver		B-t Diver		Total		Number per hr	
	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D
Selsey Bill	71	26	338	129	53	6	471*	161	1.48	2.48
Worthing	73	85	22	49	5	1	101*	135	0.83	2.93
Brighton	651	57	176 3	571	71	4	2492*	635*	4.76	6.90
Seaford	828	34	139	1	46	0	101 3	35	4.40	2.50
Bexhill	19	0	559	8	23	0	601	8	4.77	0.78

* Includes Great Northern Divers

No attempt should be made to add the columns, since many birds will have been seen at more than one site. Once again there are two striking features of these data. One is the variation in the number of birds specifically identified, with observers at two sites claiming to achieve a success rate of well over 80%. The other is the masking of annual variation in numbers caused by using the artificial boundary of calendar years. It is interesting to compare totals for successive years with the totals from October of one year to May of the next. By either of these methods, 1999 was a good year for divers, although the apparent decline in Black-throated Divers is worrying. [BRG]

0007. **LITTLE GREBE**

Tachybaptus ruficollis

Scarce resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

The monthly *WeBS* counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	145	139	104	35	38	19	66	105	155	216	185	172
Chichester Hbr	40	46	37	10	8	nc	6	8	8	40	58	43

Pagham Hbr	4	3	2	2	8	1	22	1	10	13	8	10
Chichester GPs	10	10	11	2	2	-	2	-	13	29	16	19

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Burton MP	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bury Brooks	11	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	7	nc
Kneppmill Pond	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brooklands, Worthing	-	-	-	1	-	2	3	3	6	6	5	2
Gravetye Lakes	-	2	1	2	2	-	2	nc	4	4	-	-
Newhaven	8	1	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	2	3
Glynde Levels	1	1	-	1	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	1
Cuckmere Haven	18	21	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	14	23	18	22
Eastbourne Lakes	4	8	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	3	10	10
Bewl Water	23	25	21	nc	nc	nc	15	24	28	38	12	19
Powdermill Res	-	1	2	2	-	2	-	-	-	2	2	-
Pett Level	-	-	2	7	6	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	16	16	19	7	9	8	12	65	53	50	42	35

Reports for early in the year followed much the usual pattern although eight birds were seen at Seaford College, Duncton, a new site, on 22 Feb.

At Rye Hbr SSSI, 7-8 pairs nested with three broods seen. Five pairs were present during the breeding season at Thorney Deeps and four pairs at Chichester GPs whilst at Bewl Water, 14 pairs produced ten young from six broods. A nest at Icklesham contained three eggs on 6 May, young were reported by 30 May and a pair was present until 12 July. A nesting pair was reported from Kneppmill Pond; Holmbush Boundary Pond held a pair with four young, while at Pett Level Pools there were eight adults, four juveniles and four chicks on 23 July. In August, pairs with young were seen at Pease Pottage, Darwell Res and at Brooklands, Worthing.

The first returning wintering birds in the Cuckmere Valley were noted on 13 July, a very early date and almost a month before an equivalent bird at Barcombe Res on 8 Aug.

Within the winter *WeBS*' counts for Chichester Hbr, there were consistently high figures from Thorney Island where 44 birds were also reported on 20 Dec. Among other sites there were additional counts at Brooklands, Worthing with nine birds on 7 Nov and 12 on 12 Nov, reducing to two by the end of December, while at Princes Park, Eastbourne there were ten on 27 Nov. [JKI]

0009. GREAT CRESTED GREBE

Podiceps cristatus

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

The monthly *WeBS*' counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	194	274	269	129	74	165	324	318	319	322	332	193
Chichester Hbr	25	51	18	8	2	nc	1	1	-	6	55	16
Pagham Hbr	2	-	2	1	-	5	8	8	20	18	31	5
Chichester GPs	30	23	15	13	7	8	6	14	21	23	29	38
Burton MP	2	2	4	3	4	6	4	2	1	3	1	1
Kneppmill Pond	-	3	2	-	2	11	8	2	3	6	-	1
Ardingly Res	7	11	18	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	7	5	nc	nc
Weir Wood Res	24	47	43	32	-	53	90	61	36	55	26	7
Arlington Res	10	22	14	12	3	6	14	26	36	31	64	14

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Bewl Water	40	51	75	nc	nc	nc	82	104	85	78	40	35
Darwell Res	21	24	33	23	26	40	71	69	68	34	32	8
Powdermill Res	-	3	4	4	6	6	6	5	3	5	5	1
Pett Level	5	2	-	6	-	1	1	1	-	1	9	22
Rye Hbr	6	9	14	11	11	15	14	7	12	8	5	17
Scotney Court GPs	2	8	5	10	9	7	11	11	8	15	15	8

As noted last year, the table above gives a good indication of the numbers found at the main locations. However, monthly maxima often give significantly different figures. Records from Weir Wood Res, for example, gave counts of 95, 70 and 70 for 25 June, 14 Nov and 5 Dec respectively, while six other months there had maxima in excess of the *WeBS*' count. The monthly maxima for Barcombe Res, noted as very high in November and December 1998, were only 13 and six respectively.

Offshore concentrations were again evident early in the year, with 55 on the sea off Pett on 31 Jan and 30 offshore at Bexhill on 25 Feb. Other February sea-watching figures included monthly totals from Brighton Marina of 39E and 16W, Worthing Beach 4E and 1W and Selsey Bill 6E and 7W. In December, there were nothing like the numbers reported for 1998; in Rye Bay the maximum reported was 16, compared to 327 in the previous year.

The first summer plumaged bird reported was at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr on 25 Feb. At Darwell Res, 17 pairs were present by 23 Mar while a pair at Pond Lye, Goddards Green had two young present on 22 May. Breeding was also confirmed at a number of other sites across the county, though success was variable. At Rye Hbr five pairs nested but no young were reported, at Bewl Water seven nests produced 12 broods and 20 young, at Darwell Res there were at least 14 broods and 20 young, and at Weir Wood Res there were 13 young from five broods. [JKI]

0010. RED-NECKED GREBE

Podiceps grisegena

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

The approximate monthly totals were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
4	6	5	3	-	-	-	-	3	2	9	11

Reports away from the open sea early in the year consisted of single birds at Weir Wood Res on 1 Jan, at Scotney Court GPs on 4 Jan and eight subsequent dates up to 28 Feb, and at Darwell Res on 21 Feb and 18 Apr. All other records for the first part of the year were from the open sea, with the first summer plumaged bird flying E off Brighton Marina on 14 Mar and the last being 1E at Selsey Bill on 19 Apr.

The first autumn record was of one, still in breeding plumage, on the sea off Brighton Marina on 12 Sept. Thereafter, with the exception of singles at Scotney Court GPs on 13 Nov, Carter's Pit, Rye Hbr on seven dates between 16-29 Dec, and Pett Level Pools on 27 Dec, all records were from the open sea, principally in the last two months of the year and centred about Selsey Bill and Church Norton. Most sightings were of single flying birds although four were seen on the sea off Church Norton on 13 Nov and 23 Dec and at Selsey Bill on 22 Dec. [JKI]

0011. SLAVONIAN GREBE

Podiceps auritus

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

The approximate monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	55	64	105	5	1	-	-	-	-	12	36	51
Max off Church Norton	8	46	76	-	1	-	-	-	-	6	30	30

Again, most of the coastal reports for the early part of the year were from the Pagham and Chichester Hbr areas, with monthly maxima at Church Norton of 46 on 25 Feb and 76 on 9 Mar. This last count is the highest to be recorded in the county and reaffirms the national importance of these sites (Evans 2000). The increase in more easterly reports noted last year was not so evident, although there were five offshore in Rye Bay on both 14 and 21 Mar. Inland, two birds were at Scotney Court GPs between 4 and 31 Jan, and singles at Weir Wood Res on 13 Jan and at Shinewater Lake, Eastbourne on 18 Jan and 9 Feb. The last spring record was of one off Church Norton on 9 May.

Following the first autumn record on 3 Oct at Chichester GPs, winter numbers remained fairly constant, with counts at Church Norton of 15 on 14 Nov, 23 on 18th, 30 on 23rd, followed by 30 on 11 Dec and 26 on 20th. The unprecedented movements offshore at Selsey Bill of December 1998 were not repeated, the highest count being 12E on 22 Dec. Inland, two birds were at Ivy Lake, Chichester GPs on 3 Nov and one was at Carter's Pit, Rye Hbr between 28 and 31 Dec. [JKI]

0012. BLACK-NECKED GREBE

Podiceps nigricollis

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

A total of at least 23 was recorded, an almost identical figure to 1998. The first of the year was from Brighton Marina, where a single was on the sea on 24 Jan (IJW). On 16 Mar, at Scotney Court GPs, there was a bird coming into summer plumage (IJW) while on 27 Mar, three birds in summer plumage were recorded there (IJW). Also in March, there was an actively feeding single on the sea off Pett Level on 17th (KBG) and five birds, together with Slavonian Grebes, at Splash Point, Seaford on 25th (BRG, SLi). In April, there were single birds off Brighton Marina on 1st (KBG, IJW), off Climping Beach on 17th (RJK) and offshore at East Worthing on 23rd (RJS). In May, three birds showing a range of plumages were close inshore at Brighton Marina on 7th (KBG *et al*).

In the second half of the year there was a juvenile at Arlington Res on 4 Sept (IJW), possibly the same bird that was seen on 26 Sept (PJW). Two birds were recorded at Ivy Lake, Chichester GPs on a number of occasions between 23 Sept and 9 Nov (BFF, DIS *et al*). A bird first reported at Barcombe Res on 15 Nov (RTP, JW) and then on 21st (JSG) had apparently been there since late September. It remained until 5 December (SLi). Also in November, two birds were on the sea to the west of Brighton Marina on 17th (KBG). [JKI]

0022. **FULMAR***Fulmarus glacialis***Fairly common breeding species and passage migrant, resident on coastal cliffs from November to September.**

A familiar pattern of records although larger numbers than usual were recorded at Brighton Marina in the spring. Movements at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

Direction	Jan – Feb		Mar - May		June – July		Aug – Oct		Nov – Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	-	10	87	343	24	106	19	64	2	-
Worthing Beach	1	2	94	92	3	21	-	6	-	-
Brighton Marina	589	27	3871	441	260	126	40	105	113	147
Splash Point, Seaford	40	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	13	4
Bexhill/Hastings	11	12	186	58	8	2	13	14	-	-

In the first winter period, a steady easterly passage was noted at Brighton Marina, peaking on 24 Feb when 146 were recorded. It is not known what proportion of these were local birds as breeding pairs were present on the cliffs at this time. Evidence of this was provided by counts of 62 birds between Brighton Marina and Saltdean on 12 Feb and 65 at Seaford Head on 15th.

Counts of over 100 were made on nine dates in the spring at Brighton Marina including a county record of 600E in 10.6 hrs on 20 Apr and 215E and 92W on 28th. The highest count away from this site was of 31E and 46W at Selsey Bill, also on 20th, demonstrating that larger numbers are observed further east up-Channel.

A single bird was prospecting the cliffs at the Cuilfail Tunnel, Lewes for 30 minutes on 30 May.

Apart from a count of 121E at Brighton Marina on 3 June, the summer and autumn months were typically uneventful. Singles were seen away from the shore over Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 12 Aug and over Worthing Hospital on 13 Aug. In October, the only birds seen were 2W at Brighton Marina on 24th.

Counts in the last two months were mostly of returning breeding birds although a 'blue phase' bird flying E at Brighton Marina on 22 Dec was clearly from further afield. [TJW]

0036. **CORY'S SHEARWATER***Calonectris diomedea***Rare vagrant**

Two W off Brighton Marina at 19.15 BST on 17 Aug (IJW) was only the second record during the 1990s and the first since 1993 when two flew W off Selsey Bill on 11 Aug. In total there have been 15 county records, involving 19 individuals, four being in August (including three of two birds together), three in both April and early May, two in October and singles in early June, September and November. [RJF]

0043. **SOOTY SHEARWATER***Puffinus griseus***Very scarce autumn visitor**

One W off Brighton Marina at 09.00 BST on 24 Sept (IJW) was the only record. A below average showing which brings the total for the 1990s to 20. All recent records have been between late August and December and, in contrast to this record, most have been seen in the west of the county. [RJF]

0046. **MANX SHEARWATER***Puffinus puffinus***A fairly common spring to autumn passage migrant.**

An exceptional year with a minimum of 1230 birds seen moving along the coast. The following table shows the totals at the main sea-watching localities:

	Apr		May		June		July		Aug		Sept	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	2	41	34	84	-	275	-	26	-	-	-	3
Worthing Beach	-	-	-	9	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brighton Marina	147	25	211	128	125	378	5	60	-	6	1	-
Splash Point, Seaford	9	-	25	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Beachy Head	-	-	24	-	-	40	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bexhill/Hastings	-	-	1	1	1	2	-	-	-	2	-	-
Monthly Total	194		369		590		64		8		5	

The monthly totals are minimum figures that are calculated by taking the largest site count for each day and the larger count (*either* E or W) when birds are recorded flying in both directions.

The first record was of a single E at Brighton Marina on 1 Apr. The peak for that month was on the early date of 11th when 77E and 16W were recorded at the same site in 3.25 hrs. Birds were recorded on 24 dates in May with the largest count being 91E and 11W on 23rd at Brighton Marina. In addition to the records in the table, a total of 14 flew E past Newhaven West Pier on 5-6 May.

Numbers peaked in June with 225W at Selsey Bill and 4E and 135W at Brighton Marina, both on 3rd, 2E and 103W at Brighton Marina on 28th, and 3E and 91W at the same site on 29th. After counts of 26W at Selsey Bill and 1E and 60W at Brighton Marina on 1 July, the species became scarce with records totalling only 17 birds for rest of the year, the last being a single E at Splash Point, Seaford on 19 Sept. [TJW]

0046.01 **MEDITERRANEAN SHEARWATER***Puffinus yelkouan***Very scarce spring to autumn visitor.**

Another exceptional year with 23 seen following the record total in 1998 of 25-27. Last year, most records were in late July and early August. However, in 1999, all but one record were after mid-August. All sightings were from Brighton Marina unless otherwise specified. The first record was of two together flying W on 28 June (IJW). Singles flying W were then seen on 17 and 18 Aug with 3W on 19th (all IJW). A single passed E on 7 Sept (KGB), followed by 2W on 18th, 1E on 19th, which was also seen at Splash Point,

Seaford 43 minutes later (JSG), and 1E and 2W on 23rd (all IJW). Three W on 24th (IJW *et al*), were followed by three more flying W on 25th (ADW, IJW), 1E on 26th (IJW) and finally 1W on 29th (IJW).

The first winter record for the county was of 1E at Brighton Marina on 21 Dec (IJW). [TJW]

0055. LEACH'S PETREL

Oceanodroma leucorhoa

Rare vagrant, mainly in autumn after severe gales or, recently, in mid-summer

One off Southwick Beach on 18 Sept (TJW *et al*) was present for most of the afternoon during a strong SE blow before probably being taken by a Herring Gull off the western arm of Shoreham Hbr (BFF, DIS). It was only the eighth record during the 1990s; two of the others were also in September, four in November and one in January. [RJF]

0071. GANNET

Sula bassana

Common passage migrant and non-breeding summer visitor; once scarce but now increasingly numerous in winter.

Large numbers were again reported including a record spring passage. Movements at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

Direction	Jan – Mar		Apr – May		June – July		Aug – Oct		Nov – Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	2	17	771	795	452	953	240	2043	64	588
Worthing Beach	-	2	206	175	17	20	74	286	59	283
Brighton Marina	102	45	3209	637	1057	542	1544	1718	492	228
Splash Point, Seaford	61	6	1564	156	-	-	111	10	75	25
Bexhill/Hastings	9	98	296	108	42	46	40	201	1	5

Counts in the first two months of the year were small with 36W at Bexhill on 28 Feb being the peak. One was found dead at Seaford on 5 Jan.

Spring passage peaked three days earlier than last year on 20 Apr with a record count of 900E in 10.6 hrs at Brighton Marina and impressive counts of 370E and 90W at Selsey Bill and 351E at Splash Point, Seaford. In May, counts of over 100 were recorded at Brighton Marina on five dates, the largest being 119E and 27W on 23rd. A bird was also seen on several occasions flying low over the centre of Brighton.

Reasonable numbers were present throughout the summer and counts of over 100 were made at Selsey Bill on six dates and at Brighton Marina on four dates. The peak counts were at Selsey Bill with 35E and 175W on 1 July and 100E and 210W on 20 July.

Number increased as autumn passage commenced in August. At Brighton Marina, totals of 215E and 912W were recorded between 15th and 19th while on 26th, 370 flew E. In September, 750 passed W at Selsey Bill during a 10-hour sea-watch on 16th with a further 350W there on 23rd. The peak count for the month at Brighton Marina was 186E and 55W on 19th.

After a poor October, the number of birds in the Channel increased resulting in counts of 285W at Selsey Bill on 5 Nov and 228W, and a further 75 lingering offshore, at

Worthing on 20th. In December, 110E and 56W at Brighton Marina on 22nd was the highest count. [TJW]

0072. CORMORANT

Phalacrocorax carbo

Scarce breeding species and common winter visitor.

The monthly *WeBS*' counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>County total</i>	385	394	271	300	248	240	314	376	530	500	497	526
Chichester Hbr	22	18	16	10	11	nc	27	53	56	81	35	16
Pagham Hbr	31	51	59	114	65	27	50	3	50	50	69	73
Chichester GPs	92	72	34	-	-	-	1	-	53	74	85	85
Climping	4	28	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	14	6	24	5
Arun (Offham-Houghton)	7	3	-	2	-	nc	1	3	4	41	17	3
Weir Wood Res	46	42	27	17	-	8	16	28	16	37	68	24
Lewes Brooks	9	21	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Pevensey Levels	12	19	1	1	2	nc	nc	10	3	14	28	9
Bewl Water	20	16	12	nc	nc	nc	28	40	40	30	35	20
Darwell Res	12	15	12	3	3	3	1	10	18	29	16	12
Rye Hbr	21	34	55	140	152	183	182	206	208	55	31	110
Scotney Court GPs	2	1	7	3	4	3	-	2	6	5	6	73

Although the grand total for the year was similar to those of the previous two years, numbers were distinctly lower than usual in the winter months January to March but this was offset by higher figures in summer and early autumn. Whereas most sites continued to hold maximum numbers from October to March, numbers at Rye Hbr as usual peaked from June to September. The table below shows the breeding explosion that has taken place at Castle Water, Rye Hbr in the last two years. This breeding success, for it was confirmed that many young fledged, possibly explains the higher summer numbers. There was no indication if the breeding birds at Rye Hbr are of the continental race *sinensis*.

1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
1	0	2	6	43-50	80

It is not known if breeding took place at the traditional cliff site at Fairlight CP.

During the year, Cormorants were reported from water bodies, large and small, all around the county. Bognor Pier continued to support one of the most populous daytime loafing roosts with typically 80 birds on 23 Oct. However, two days later the end of the pier was destroyed in a gale and thereafter the roost was abandoned. Many of the displaced birds took to roosting singly on new man made features along the local coast rather than join the Pagham Hbr loafing sites on sandbanks only 5 km away. However, Pagham Hbr loafing roost held a high count of 136 birds on 28 Nov.

The simultaneous counts of the two nocturnal roosts, which serve the birds in the small stretch from Littlehampton westwards, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chichester GPs	176	172	29		113	212	196	168
South Stoke	91	125	74		56	74	138	127
Total	267	297	103		169	286	334	295

This indicates a total decline of some 14% at these two roosts in the last two winters. The nocturnal roost at Wyckham Fm on the Upper Adur held 116 birds on 19 Sept, 128 on 8 Oct, but only 44 on 31 Dec. The pylon nocturnal roost in Lewes Brooks held 45 birds on 12 Dec. The largest nocturnal roost of the year was 270 at Carter's Pit, Rye Hbr on 19 July.

There were two colour ringed birds at Weir Wood Res on 2 Jan. One of these was ringed at Abberton Res in May 1998 whilst the other was of the *sinensis* race ringed in the Netherlands in June 1997. [RK]

0080. **SHAG**

Phalacrocorax aristotelis

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
9	11	4	12	6	-	-	7	15	5	7	3

Typically most records at the start of the year came from the coast between Shoreham and Brighton with up to five at Southwick Canal in January and 4W at Brighton Marina on 26 Feb being notable. Elsewhere, two were regularly seen at Selsey Bill and singles were at the Sovereign Hbr Marina, Eastbourne on 6 Jan, Bexhill on 8 and 22 Feb and Newhaven on 18 Feb. Ones and twos were seen on many dates during the spring at the main wintering locations. Exceptions to this were two at Beachy Head on 2 Apr and 3E at Selsey Bill on 25th. The last spring record was of one off Church Norton on 9 May.

The first returning bird was on the early date of 2 Aug at Brighton Marina. The totals at that site during August and September were 16E and 38W although allowing for possible duplication only the highest day counts have been used in calculating the monthly totals above, these being 6W on 18 Aug and 14W on 29 Sept. Only 12 records were received for the period between 1 Oct and the end of the year, the most notable being an adult in the lower Chichester Channel on 4 Nov, four adults at Southwick Beach on 9th and an immature at Pilsley Island, Chichester Hbr on 27 Dec. [TJW]

0095. **BITTERN**

Botaurus stellaris

Very scarce winter visitor. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Ford, Arun Valley	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lancing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Pett Level	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
Icklesham	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-
Rye Hbr	2	2	5	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	2	1

The table shows records for every month except May and June and reveals Rye Hbr and Icklesham to be the best places to see this elusive species. At Rye Hbr, during the first winter period, single birds were recorded on 20 dates from 1 Jan to 20 Mar, two were observed on five dates between 28 Jan and 12 Mar, with five, a new county record, on 13 Mar (PMT). Three of these five flew off high SE from Castle Water at dusk. Single birds

were at Icklesham on 11 Feb, 23 Feb, 15 Mar and 16 Apr. A presumed returning bird was at Pett Level Pools on 31 July and 1 Aug, then single birds were recorded at Rye Hbr on 25 dates from 28 Aug to 27 Dec, with two there on five dates between 19 Oct and 27 Nov. At Icklesham, single birds were observed on six dates from 19 Oct to 30 Nov.

Just two records were for West Sussex, these being at Ford on 13 Feb and one found injured at Lancing and released at Mill Pond Marsh, Sidlesham on 8 Nov after rehabilitation at Brent Lodge. The records suggest the annual total to be at least ten different birds. [CBC]

0098. LITTLE BITTERN

Ixobrychus minutus

Rare vagrant

A female seen briefly near Glynde on 5 June (ARK) has been accepted by *British Birds*. It is the 30th to have been recorded in the county and the first since 1995. Records have declined, with *ca.* 17 recorded before 1960 and successive decade totals since then falling from four in 1960s and five in 1970s to three in 1980s and just two in 1990s. Most of these records have been in spring, falling in March (on 30th), April (4), May (3) and June (3, latest 8th), the three others were in July and August (2). [RJF]

0104. NIGHT HERON

Nycticorax nycticorax

Rare vagrant

1989: The adult near Piddinghoe from 30 Apr-3 May (*SxBR* 42:14) was also seen on 6th (IJW). Ten have been recorded during the 1990s although the most recent of these were in 1996. [RJF]

0111. CATTLE EGRET

Bulbulcus ibis

Very rare vagrant

1998: One at Castle Water, Rye Hbr on 24 and 26 Apr (BJY *et al*) has been accepted by *British Birds*.

1999: One at Ovingdean from 24 Jan to 10 May (CEM, RTP, ABW *et al*) has been accepted by *British Birds*. Its arrival was closely followed by others in Lancashire and on Shetland (*Birding World* 12:4). It was probably the most widely watched rarity in the county during the year and photographs appeared in *Birding World* (12:46 & 92). A photograph of this bird also appears in this *Report*. These are the first presumed wild birds to be recorded in the county since 1986 and take the total to eight. All previous individuals arrived in April. [RJF]

0119. **LITTLE EGRET**

Egretta garzetta

Formerly rare, but now a fairly common autumn and winter visitor.

The approximate minimum monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	132	133	140	86	26	17	203	367	344	244	259	204
Thorney Deeps	106	106	105	71	14	10	154	281	260	174	202	146
Pagham Hbr	15	19	25	8	2	3	26	52	49	44	36	38
Cuckmere Haven	5	5	6	5	3	-	1	8	6	10	7	9
Rye Hbr	4	2	4	2	2	1	6	16	18	10	10	7

The peak numbers in autumn and winter showed that a minimum of 507 birds were recorded in the county, compared to 388 in 1998. Additional to records shown in the table were singles at Ferring Rife and Rodmell in January and February.

The table shows counts at the Thorney Deeps roost remained constant until March falling to 71 on 1 Apr, 30 on 16 Apr and 14 on 3 May. Only single birds were observed roosting on 18 May and 11 June although nine were seen around Thorney Island on 31 May.

Up to three birds were seen in Chichester Hbr in early June and ten roosted at Thorney Deeps on 30 June. The roost numbers built up rapidly in July with 52 on 16th, 139 on 28th, increasing to 154 on 31st. A maximum of 281 were seen leaving the roost at dawn on 24 Aug (CBC), a new British record. There were still *ca.* 260 on 1 Sept, 174 on 26 Oct, and 202 on 3 Nov, falling to 146 on 1 Dec. Other records of note were 52 at Pagham Hbr on 31 Aug, 18 roosting at Rye Hbr on 8 Sept, high tide counts of 30 at Pilsey Island and 86 at Thorney Deeps on 6 and 12 Sept respectively, 15 at West Wittering on 13 Sept and ten at Cuckmere Haven on 10 Oct.

Sea-watchers logged a total of 6E on three dates in early May, 5E at West Beach, Littlehampton on 18 July, 4W at Brighton Marina on 30 Sept and 2E at Worthing on 16 Oct.

Noteworthy inland records were singles at Weir Wood Res on 3 and 30 May and at Pulborough Brooks on 8 June, five at Arlington Res on 31 July, two at Bewl Water throughout July, two at Darwell Res on 12 Sept and two at Barcombe Res on 2 Oct. [CBC]

0122 **GREY HERON**

Ardea cineria

Fairly common resident.

The monthly *WeBS*' counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	81	100	62	39	34	89	111	137	212	184	138	85
Chichester Hbr	13	14	8	8	6	nc	27	33	59	58	31	20
Pagham Hbr	2	4	2	3	5	26	15	12	14	11	2	3
Chichester GPs	8	4	2	-	4	3	2	1	9	3	8	4
Shillinglee Lake	2	-	-	-	1	2	2	7	2	-	nc	nc
Amberley Wild Brooks	2	11	2	-	1	3	-	4	2	8	-	-
Pulborough Brooks	-	1	7	12	2	8	4	3	4	8	6	6

Kneppmill Pond	-	1	4	1	-	3	2	-	1	-	1	-
Ardingly Res	4	9	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	5	nc	nc

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Weir Wood Res	1	8	8	-	-	8	15	17	13	10	4	3
Glynde Levels	3	2	2	4	7	3	4	3	5	4	4	4
Cuckmere Haven	8	2	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	8	7	20	13
Eastbourne Lakes	1	1	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	7	7	6	-
Pevensey Levels	4	1	2	2	5	2	1	10	3	5	2	3
Bewl Water	2	1	-	nc	nc	nc	11	13	26	9	6	-
Darwell Res	-	-	-	4	2	1	3	6	4	2	7	2
Pett Level	-	21	1	-	1	4	2	4	3	2	-	4
Rye Hbr	19	7	5	4	2	17	5	14	19	13	21	16

In the breeding season all known heronries were counted except for Westbourne, which has only ever been a single nest. The total of occupied nests came to 249. There were small increases or decreases in almost every case, but allowing for no count at Leasam in 1998 the number of occupied nests in Sussex is about the same as last year. Counts for individual heronries, listed from west to east, were as follows:

Westbourne nc; Fishbourne 12; Pagham 12; Flansham 13; Warningcamp 5; Parham 23; Knepp 13; Warnham 3; Henfield 27; Ardingly 12; Weir Wood Res 9; Iford 1; Firle 19; Charleston 19; Hadlow Down 14; Eridge 9; Glynleigh 12; Wartling, Horsebridge Road 14; Burwash 9; Winchelsea 3; Leasam 20.

During the rest of the year, single Herons were seen in suitable habitat throughout the county, with loafing groups at the more favoured sites. Counts at *WeBS*' sites include feeding and loafing birds, and the table shows a selection of these but is not a comprehensive list of sites where herons have been seen. As is usual, there were also occasional birds seen moving on the coast but these movements did not fall into any particular pattern. [ABW]

0124. PURPLE HERON

Ardea purpurea

Rare vagrant

A first-summer individual at Castle Water, Rye Hbr on 7 and 31 July and from 6 to 10 Aug (PMT, IJW, TJW *et al*) may have been present since late June. This was the seventh to be recorded during the 1990s (and the second at Castle Water), but the first in July since 1982 (when one was seen near Arundel on 31st). The other recent records have appeared in April (3), May and October (2). [RJF]

0134. WHITE STORK

Ciconia ciconia

A rare vagrant, mainly in spring

One over Icklesham at 14.00 BST on 9 Sept (TS *et al*) was seen shortly afterwards at Winchelsea Beach (BJY). It was then seen from Rye Hbr heading up the Brede Valley and, in the evening, at the eastern end of Northpoint Pit (PMT). It was the ninth county record during the 1990s, the others appearing in May (5), August (2) and September. Records of this species are often tainted with the possibility of being escapes, although the timing of all these recent records is as one would expect from wild birds and their circumstances give no reason to suppose otherwise. [RJF]

0144. SPOONBILL

*Platalea leucorodia***Very scarce visitor, most frequent in spring and autumn**

Eight or nine were seen in an above average year. An adult left the Little Egret roost at Thorney Deepes at 06.22 GMT on 4 Mar (CBC) and flew W across Chichester Hbr. In September, five at Scotney Court GPs on 14th (AJH) were presumably those present at Weir Wood Res on 21st and 22nd, when seen to fly E at 07.15 BST (DP, GNW). A juvenile flew SE from Sidlesham Ferry on 15 Sept (DIS *et al*) and it or another bird was recorded there on 17th (SJP). A juvenile was at Pett Level Pools during the afternoon of 30 Sept (CHD, JABG).

The March record is the earliest since 1989 (when one was present in same area on 3-4 Mar), although another was at Pett on 10 Mar 1996. Flocks of five were also recorded in 1995 (Beachy Head, 20 May), 1983 (Pagham Hbr, 12 Apr) and 1979 (Cuckmere Haven, 3-6 May) although only once have more been recorded in the county, an extraordinary loose flock of *ca.* 20 off Langney Point on 1 Sept 1964. Most records during the 1990s have been in September (six, involving ten individuals) and May (four, involving eight individuals), although occurrences are fairly evenly distributed across all months between March and November. [RJF]

0152. MUTE SWAN

*Cygnus olor***Fairly common resident.**

The monthly *WeBS*' counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>County total</i>	548	674	464	432	384	449	293	426	667	803	642	770
Chichester Hbr	83	128	45	86	5	nc	91	166	68	187	140	197
Chichester GPs	45	45	24	5	10	10	11	11	41	31	38	58
Climping	4	17	7	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	51	37	22	16
Arundel WWT	23	37	25	21	20	45	16	17	42	31	23	31
Arun (Offham-Houghton)	35	13	28	45	4	nc	4	12	9	15	14	14
Amberley Wild Brooks	19	16	11	67	43	36	14	-	22	28	92	53
Pulborough Brooks	35	53	63	45	50	39	9	7	10	13	14	10
Brooklands Worthing	13	40	28	42	50	9	4	8	47	26	16	10
Widewater Lancing	30	2	2	-	-	-	3	13	9	13	5	10
Henfield Brooks	47	53	42	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	69	64	86
Lower Ouse Valley	nc	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	16	29	nc	56
Lewes Brooks	15	56	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Glynde Levels	13	5	5	16	17	31	29	24	28	26	9	12
Eastbourne Lakes	28	37	48	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	84	64	70	45
Pevensy Levels	80	43	40	50	31	11	nc	45	17	24	35	55
Rye Hbr	17	16	13	25	15	74	71	73	68	59	20	9
Scotney Court GPs	2	3	9	10	121	157	-	68	36	33	7	18

Many of the largest counts are shown in the *WeBS* table but there were additional herds reported in the first winter period. In the Arun Valley at Ford, there were 55 on 10 Jan rising to 81 on 13 Feb and to 86 on 28 Feb, when seen feeding on an arable crop, possibly rape. At Burpham, 33 including 16 immatures, were present on 1 Jan, increasing

to 71 on 31 Jan and 21 Feb. A count of 51 at Greatham Bridge was made on 1 Feb. In the Adur Valley, 59 birds were counted north of Bramber on 1 Jan, while 38 were at Bines Bridge on 31 Jan. Also in the west of the county, 65 birds were on Ivy Lake, Chichester GPs on 1 Feb. East Sussex had its share of birds with 50 recorded near Winchelsea Station on 7 Jan and 45 on Walland Marsh on 10 Jan; 42 was the largest count on Castle Water, Rye Hbr on 27 Mar.

The earliest report of breeding came from New Salts Fm, Lancing, on 28 Mar. Confirmed breeding took place at Thorney Deeps (three young fledged); Ivy Lake (five cygnets fledged) and Vinnetrov Pit at Chichester GPs; Chingford Pond (two pairs with eight young); Patching Pond; Pulborough Brooks; Brooklands, Worthing (two pairs); lower Adur Valley (three pairs); Partridge Green (four young raised); Ifield MP; Ditchling Common; Sharpsbridge; Barcombe Res; Robertsbridge; Pett Level Pools (six cygnets on 27 May, five on 22 July); Icklesham; and Rye Hbr (four pairs). A pair at Swanbourne Lake on 4 June was accompanied by two normal cygnets and a white 'polish' cygnet (PJ).

Several large herds were reported in the summer months: 112 in Fishbourne Channel on 15 June, 80 in the lower Adur Valley on 15 July and 90 at Littlehampton on 4 Sept. During the second winter period, 120 birds were counted on Lewes Brooks on 22 Nov and 92 on Amberley Wild Brooks a week later. A herd, feeding on autumn sown cereal, at Ford reached a peak of 91 on 5 Dec and there were 73 in the Brede Valley on 12 Dec. These apart, all the significant counts in the last three months of the year are included in the *WEBS*' table, the December count at Chichester Hbr being the largest recorded at this site. [MJM]

0153. **BEWICK'S SWAN**

Cygnus columbianus

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

The monthly *WeBS*' counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>County total</i>	43	54	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	32
Arun (Offham-Houghton)	37	52	-	-	-	nc	-	-	-	-	-	7
Amberley Wild Brooks	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Pulborough Brooks	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Henfield Levels	5	2	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	8	13

In the first winter period a number of records for the Arun Valley included 30 adults grazing at Burpham on 1 Jan; 51 on Amberley Wild Brooks on 9 Jan; 30 at both Pulborough Brooks on 29 Jan and Burpham on 10 Feb; and 33 adults with five juveniles at Burpham on 15 Feb. The largest count was of 62 flying S from Pulborough Brooks on 30 Jan. Away from the Arun Valley, there were 15 (12 adults and three juveniles) on the Adur Levels, near Steyning on 16 Jan, and ten on Henfield Levels and 15 at Brighthams Fm, Partridge Green the following day. The last record for the first winter period was of four birds at the latter site on 28 Feb.

The first returning birds, three adults and three juveniles, were at Brighthams Fm on 14 Nov. Most subsequent counts were in single figures though there were 13 on Henfield Levels and 17 on Amberley Wild Brooks on 31 Dec. Five adults on Lewes Brooks on 27 Dec was the only record received for East Sussex during the year. [MJM]

0154. **WHOOPEE SWAN**

Cygnus cygnus

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

The two records considered to be of wild birds were of five (four adults and a juvenile) at Scotney Court GPs on 12 Feb (MS-H) and two adults at Amberley Wild Brooks on 31 Dec (IJW). Details of birds considered to be escapes can be found on page 156. [MJM]

0157. **TUNDRA BEAN GOOSE**

Anser fabalis rossicus

A very scarce winter visitor.

There were two accepted records of this form. The first was of two birds, presumed to be of wild origin, present at Scotney Court GPs between 4 Feb and at least 7 Mar (AFB, AJH, DCL *et al*). The other report, on 29 Dec, concerned a group of four birds first seen in flight over Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr, and re-located later the same day on Pett Level (IJF, NJL, TJW). A paper reviewing past records of Bean Geese in Sussex appears on pages 176-182. [AH]

0159. **WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE**

Anser albifrons

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Once again, the biggest concentration in the first winter period was at Scotney Court GPs, with up to 300 present at the end of January, rising to 380 on 13 Feb and 340 on 21 Feb. These were the highest numbers seen in Sussex in the last twenty years. The only other location to attract a wintering flock was Bewl Water, with 20 present from mid January up to 20 Feb. Elsewhere, the species remained scarce, with singles on the Adur Levels from 1 Jan to 6 Feb and in the lower Cuckmere Valley on 1-2 Jan, three on Pevensy Levels on 3 Jan, five on Amberley Wild Brooks on 4 Jan, 17 on Glynde Levels on 14 Jan, 12N over Littlehampton Marina on 22 Jan, five at Pett Level on 31 Jan, 16E past Selsey Bill on 3 Feb and 12 at Ardingly Res on 13 Feb. Two of the three birds present on farmland to the north of Pagham Hbr between 3 and 10 Feb were shot by local wildfowlers. A single bird, often consorting with Canada and Greylag Geese, remained at Pulborough Brooks until 13 Mar. Whether two birds present at Scotney Court on 13 June were of wild origin must be debatable.

The first recorded in the second winter period were a single at Pulborough Brooks on 19 and 26 Sept and 3W at Selsey Bill on 7 Oct. Few were seen thereafter, with eight at Rye Hbr on 19 Dec being the highest count. The only other multiple counts were of five (two adults and three juveniles) at Barcombe Res between 25 Oct and 6 Nov and on Glynde Levels on 16 Nov, with four at Pett Level on 29-30 Dec. Singles were seen at Langney, near Eastbourne on 10 Oct and on Henfield Levels from 21 Nov to the end of the year. [AH]

0161. GREYLAG GOOSE

Anser anser

Fairly common introduced resident and winter visitor, scarce passage migrant.

The monthly *WeBS*' counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	92	529	359	126	125	235	262	670	420	502	635	131
Petworth Park	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	55	-	-	-
Amberley Wild Brooks	63	8	6	24	-	5	-	-	-	-	15	45
Pulborough Brooks	-	60	41	5	1	6	24	117	-	132	135	2
Ardingly Res	-	72	25	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	83	-	nc	nc
Weir Wood Res	-	-	-	3	-	3	-	113	133	244	-	-
Glynde Levels	25	24	56	42	29	26	37	12	88	4	16	4
Pett Level	-	-	18	1	30	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	-	-	10	20	12	4	1	5	46	1	-	42
Scotney Court GPs	-	363	196	26	50	184	197	398	8	116	461	32

The biggest early year counts, aside from those in the *WeBS*' tables, were of 280 at Scotney Court GPs on 23 Jan and 23 Feb. Away from the regular winter haunts, records were few, but there were several reports of up to five birds from localities in East Sussex.

A number of records from sea-watching sites were received, chiefly from Brighton Marina, where there were 15E on 9 Mar, 3E on 1 Apr, 4W on 28 Apr and 5E and 5W on 1 May. There were also 2E and 3W past Splash Point, Seaford on 1 Apr, 1E past Worthing on 2 Apr and 14NE over Rye Hbr on the same date.

Breeding records were received as follows: Rye Hbr – two or three pairs; Pett Level – one pair with young; Icklesham – one pair with four young; Glynde Reach Clay Pit – 22 adults and 19 young on 6 June; Balcombe Lake – four adults and nine goslings; while at Pulborough Brooks, four pairs successfully fledged young. Also, at Glyndebourne Lakes on 10 June, two pairs with eight goslings were part of a total count of 63 birds present there, the biggest of the summer.

Post-breeding flocks began to form at traditional sites in August, the largest being 328 at Weir Wood Res on 22nd and 126 at Rye Hbr on 25th. The flock at Weir Wood Res peaked at 411 on 19 Sept, the biggest total seen anywhere in the county during the year, while the only other three figure counts were of 290 at Scotney Court GPs on 13 Nov and 180 and 120 at Glynde Levels on 16 Nov and 10 Dec respectively.

A flock of 5-8 birds took up residence in the Pagham Hbr and Selsey West Fields area from 25 July through to the year's end. The species is only infrequently recorded in this part of the county in most years. [AH]

GREY GOOSE species

Anser spp.

The only unassigned reports of grey geese were from seawatching sites, namely 15E on 9 Mar and 10N on 12 Mar from Seaford Head, and 1E on 28 Apr and 3E on 30 Apr from Selsey Bill. [AH]

0163. SNOW GOOSE

Anser caerulescens

Potentially a very rare vagrant, the vast majority of records are likely to be of suspect origin.

An adult white morph at Scotney Court GPs on 3 Feb remained to 23 Mar (JFC, RJF *et al.*). It was seen to fly in from the north with five Barnacle Geese, with which it remained throughout its stay. Snow Geese are normally dismissed out of hand as obvious escapes, but this bird's alertness and wary behaviour caused some observers to consider its origin rather more carefully than would otherwise have been the case. Following consideration by *SOS Records Committee*, it is published as being 'of unknown origin, but a good candidate for being a genuine wild bird.' This species has not definitely been recorded in the county in the wild before, although one individual in a flock in North Kent (and then the Netherlands) in 1980 bore a Canadian ring, indicating that a natural occurrence in the county is well within the bounds of possibility. There was an exceptional influx of nearctic waterbirds into Britain in the early part of 1999 adding further circumstantial support to its wild origins. [RJF]

0166. CANADA GOOSE

Branta canadensis

Fairly common introduced resident and partial migrant.

The monthly *WeBS*' counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>County total</i>	2855	953	834	350	340	361	972	2370	2060	2312	3082	2414
Chichester Hbr	86	30	10	10	7	nc	10	162	45	127	35	58
Shillingee Lake	10	37	24	1	-	20	17	9	50	12	nc	nc
Petworth Park	4	24	22	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	104	35	2	2
Swanbourne Lake	120	100	120	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	90	120	86
Arundel WWT.	32	50	41	34	31	26	25	155	-	71	71	78
Arun (Offham-Houghton)	94	3	4	3	6	nc	-	185	12	66	-	20
Amberley Wild Brooks	1141	63	38	55	31	19	-	-	7	388	343	489
Pulborough Brooks	31	41	125	32	45	-	33	11	3	442	336	3
Henfield Brooks	-	2	22	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	98	104	257
Weir Wood Res	-	6	6	10	-	56	2	18	10	6	-	-
Glynde Levels	13	7	96	73	105	6	1	6	2	35	21	12
Arlington Res	11	2	5	-	1	-	8	198	51	19	62	1
Cuckmere Haven	192	36	22	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	254	343	397	163
Eastbourne Lakes	171	21	32	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	20	181	78	149
Pevensey Levels	60	34	13	59	-	nc	nc	70	nc	29	140	140
Bowl Water	519	210	50	nc	nc	nc	620	1200	600	100	770	475
Darwell Res	21	3	6	3	6	49	44	39	183	1	40	-
Pett Level	69	70	50	27	45	44	64	3	-	24	180	35
Rye Hbr	158	66	79	42	39	81	76	133	257	165	171	81
Scotney Court GPs	-	50	19	9	13	42	43	238	300	5	82	87

As in previous years, numbers rose through the autumn to peak in November. No other counts exceeded the *WeBS*' totals during the first half of the year, and no three figure counts were made after mid-February.

Very few birds were noted from sea-watching locations during the spring, just one past Selsey Bill, 11 past Brighton Marina, three past Seaford and four past Bexhill.

Breeding was confirmed from a wide range of sites throughout the county, including Stansted Forest; Thorney Island; Ebernoe; Bignor Park; Streele Lake, near Billingshurst; Glynde Level; Cuckmere Haven; and Rye Hbr, amongst others.

The first big post-breeding counts were 674 at Bewl Water on 18 June and 133 at Weir Wood Res on 20 June. The only notable counts thereafter, not shown in the *WeBS*' table, were of 654 at Arlington Res on 21 Sept, 187 at Kneppmill Pond on 21 Nov and 255 at nearby Partridge Green on 28 Dec. [AH]

0167. BARNACLE GOOSE

Branta leucopsis

Very scarce winter visitor, usually in severe weather, and increasing feral resident.

The true status of this species in winter is unclear because of the widespread occurrence of feral birds, but occasionally 'wild' birds are presumed to occur. Five birds, thought to have been part of an influx of wild birds in 1998, remained at Thorney Deeps until 20 Feb. Another party of up to eight at Scotney Court GPs from 4 Feb to 7 Mar may also have been of wild origin. All other records were assumed to be of feral birds.

As usual, the most regularly recorded flock was at Barcombe Res, where up to 38 were recorded on a number of dates prior to 28 Feb, then between 44 and 48 there from 13 Sept to the year's end. A similar sized flock, at Arundel WWT, went completely unrecorded throughout the year. Elsewhere, the only other sites where double figure counts were recorded were Scotney Court GPs with up to 14 between June and August, and Rye Hbr, which held up to the same total during September. Otherwise, between one and five birds were recorded at a variety of sites across the county. [AH]

0168. DARK-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE

Branta bernicla bernicla

Very common winter visitor and passage migrant.

The monthly *WeBS*' counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>County total</i>	9113	9100	2077	40	9	4	16	17	14	521	8464	9291
Chichester Hbr	8142	7839	1845	31	3	nc	16	17	14	474	6365	8588
Pagham Hbr	969	1260	223	9	6	4	-	-	-	46	2098	666

Away from the two main wintering sites, records were, as usual, few and far between. One bird was recorded on 3, 13, and 23 Jan at Rye Hbr, and at Scotney Court GPs, three were seen on 23 Jan, two on 31st, and four on 28 Feb.

Month totals from the regular sea-watching sites are shown below:

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		Oct		Nov		Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	35	1	8		874	4	452	1	1	64	20	106		
Worthing Beach			19	1	1028	4	220	15	7	169	16	105	36	32
Brighton Marina	36	16	1107		2360	1	1071	7			84	259	14	102
Splash Point, Seaford	72		98	1	2312	11	591	2						
Bexhill/Hastings			42		1235	1	73				1	45	2	

The first big movement of the spring was on 25 Feb, when 1058 flew E past Brighton Marina; thereafter regular counts were made from all sites until the middle of April. The biggest day of the spring was 13 Mar when 394 birds were recorded at Selsey Bill, 656 at Worthing Beach, 1091 at Brighton Marina, 601 at Splash Point, Seaford and 516 at Bexhill, all flying E. Unusually, passage continued well into May, with 132 seen flying E at Selsey Bill, 100 at Brighton Marina and 121 at Seaford on 12 May. Totals from seawatching sites in May were Selsey Bill – 283E, Worthing Beach – 104E, Brighton Marina – 377E and 15W, Splash Point, Seaford – 327E and Bexhill – 4E.

Most of the summer records came from Chichester Hbr, where between ten and 17 birds were noted intermittently between mid-May and mid-September, and Pagham Hbr where a lone bird resided throughout. Two were seen flying E past Selsey Bill on 13 June and 16 July.

The first returning birds were noted on 16 Sept when there were 10W past Brighton Marina and 11 past Selsey Bill. Numbers remained low until 16 Oct when 450W passed Pagham Hbr and two, unusually large, inland counts were made of 150SW over Barcombe Cross and 800SW, in four flocks, over Bewl Water. By 26 Oct there were 1500, including good numbers of juveniles, at West Wittering and 200 in Pagham Hbr.

There were more records from the east of the county and inland in the second winter period as follows: 21 at Rye Hbr on 24 Oct, 14 at Pett Level on 25 Oct, one at Partridge Green on 14 Nov, one at Barcombe Res on 1 Dec, and finally a flock of 800 at Littlehampton West Beach on 18 Dec, of which between 200 and 350 remained until the end of the year.

A bird that was colour-dyed at Farlington (Hants) on 11 Dec 1998, was seen at Pilsey Island, Chichester Hbr on 23 Mar. [AH]

0168.0 PALE-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE

Branta bernicla hrota

1

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

An adult was seen on four dates between 12 Jan and 4 Mar at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr area and a juvenile on five dates between 21 Jan and 24 Feb at Church Norton. Another adult was seen on three dates in January at West Wittering, where three were also reported on 9 Feb. An adult at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 2 Dec was the only record in the second winter period. [AH]

0168.0 BLACK BRANT

Branta bernicla nigricans

2

Very rare winter visitor.

An adult present with Brent Geese at East Head, West Wittering from 12 Jan to at least 18 Feb (EDU *et al*) was presumably that seen at nearby Pilsey Island on 23 Mar (CBC). A photograph of this bird appears in this *Report*. An adult at Pilsey Island from 8 Oct to 4 Nov (CBC) was presumably the same returning individual (which was again seen at East Head early in 2000). These records have been accepted by *British Birds*. This bird is the first to be recorded since 1994 and possibly only the sixth individual in total, although there were records in each winter from January 1986 to March 1994. [RJF]

0170. EGYPTIAN GOOSE

Alopochon aegyptiacus

A rare visitor from introduced populations elsewhere in Britain, more commonly recorded as an escape.

1996: Two at Scotney Court GPs on 4 May (IJW).

1999: There were three reports of this species during the year. Singles were at Dial Post on 26 Jan (IMS) and at Nutbourne, Chichester Hbr on 6 Oct (GAC). A flock of ten adults and juveniles on the Adur Levels, near Steyning on 31 Dec (ARK) was the largest gathering yet recorded in Sussex, though their origin is unknown. They were still present early in the New Year. [AH]

0171. RUDDY SHELDUCK

Tadorna ferruginea

Rare vagrant, all recent (post 1940) records most likely to be escapes from captivity.

The individual present in Chichester Hbr from 26 Oct 1998 (*SxBR* 51:30) remained until 20 Feb and usually frequented Snowhill Marsh, West Wittering. Another was on Sidlesham Ferry from 16 July to 14 Aug (*Brit. Birds* 92 plate 226), being seen at Pagham North Wall on 26 Aug, where three were recorded on 13 Nov. There would seem no reason to suppose these long staying singles were anything other than escapes from captivity, although the record of three recalls that of three in Pagham Hbr on 24 Nov 1996 which may have come from further afield. Despite a recent paper by Vinicombe & Harrop (1999), the status of the species in Britain remains unresolved. Most are presumed to be

escapes from captivity, although small groups, typically arriving from July onwards may be the result of overshooting moult migrations, which almost certainly do not originate from W Europe. [RJF]

0173. SHELDUCK

Tadorna tadorna

Fairly common breeder and common winter visitor.

The monthly *WeBS*' counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>County total</i>	856	1123	669	451	250	309	127	79	35	101	735	805
Chichester Hbr	618	784	428	185	78	nc	19	27	9	55	595	643
Pagham Hbr	123	156	121	95	63	126	65	27	10	16	101	64
Chichester GPs	2	3	2	11	6	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
Chingford Pond	-	2	1	1	2	1	1	-	2	2	-	-
Arundel WWT	41	68	31	65	52	85	21	13	7	16	8	31
Pett Level	8	25	12	2	-	2	-	-	5	-	-	5
Rye Hbr	28	31	23	39	18	32	8	10	-	-	-	8
Scotney Court GPs	23	16	9	17	5	50	9	2	-	11	19	10

For the third winter running, the *WeBS*' counts were significantly less than the 1974-94 average, and also lower than those in the preceding two years. The only double figure counts not shown in the table were at Icklesham, where 17 were present on 6 Jan, 25 on 21 Feb and 12 on 21-30 Mar.

The month totals at the regular sea-watching sites were as follows:

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May		Nov		Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill		4		2		4	18		2			56		
Worthing Beach		23			12	4	15	6	24	19	5	20	1	22
Brighton Marina	12	82	23	8	11	5	19	16	66	7	10	17		14
Splash Point, Seaford	1	10	3	2	20	4	20	11	31	3	2	4		
Bexhill/Hastings		13	4		14	11	14		2					

Breeding was confirmed at a number of locations. The most successful sites were Chichester Hbr, where a number of broods were known to have fledged, and Pagham Hbr where up to 20 young were seen on Sidlesham Ferry on 6 June. Breeding was also reported from Rye Hbr, where 6-10 pairs held territory, but only one brood was raised, and at Pulborough Brooks where a pair with eight young was seen on 12 May. There were broods of six and ten at Cuckmere Haven on 18 May and a total of 19 young was seen there on 6 June. Three pairs with young were recorded at Arundel WWT, a pair with 13 small young at Chichester GPs on 31 May and finally, a pair with young at Greatham Bridge on 25 May.

The only notable non-breeding flocks were 23 on the Union Channel at East Guldeford on 13 June and 46 on Thorney Deeps on the following day. A flock of 30, observed in flight over Rye Hbr on 19 Sept, may have been the first birds returning from their traditional moulting grounds, though the next double figure count was not until 10 Nov when 22 flew E past the Palace Pier, Brighton. The following day, 34 flew W past Selsey Bill and by 28 Nov there were 70 in Pagham Hbr. The highest count thereafter was of 280 in Thorney Channel on 22 Dec. [AH]

0178. **MANDARIN**

Aix galericulata

Scarce but increasing introduced resident.

During the early part of the year, the largest concentrations reported were up to 44 at Arundel WWT, 11 at both Rackham Woods and Weir Wood Res, and seven at Burton MP.

Although reported from 24 localities between late March and July, breeding was confirmed at just four sites: Arundel WWT (a female with 24 ducklings on 22 May), Bewbush, Crawley (a female with two ducklings on 26 June), Darwell Res (a female with 14 ducklings on 23 May), and Weir Wood Res (a female with five ducklings raised in an owl box on 21 May). At Darwell Res, six young remained on 13 June and five on 18 July.

Up to 36 were recorded at Arundel WWT in the latter part of the year but no more than seven at any other site. Unusually, there was a male at Sidlesham Ferry on 30 Sept and in nearby Pagham Hbr on 25 Oct. [PJ]

0179. **WIGEON**

Anas penelope

Common winter visitor and passage migrant.

The *WeBS*' counts, which show very high monthly totals for both winter periods, were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>County total</i>	8934	7266	2179	22	9	3	5	2	256	2585	5376	8054
Chichester Hbr	786	1277	213	14	-	nc	-	-	80	547	1478	1293
Pagham Hbr	1199	962	133	-	8	1	1	1	44	1037	251	571
Amberley Wild Brooks	1795	683	90	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	714	1530
Pulborough Brooks	2601	1541	887	7	-	1	-	-	45	644	863	2638
Glynde Levels	24	-	13	-	1	1	1	-	-	15	5	80
Cuckmere Haven	823	740	242	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	33	159	547	593
Pevensey Levels	214	255	-	6	-	nc	nc	-	nc	4	370	230
Bewl Water	266	293	197	nc	nc	nc	-	-	6	-	120	302
Pett Level	113	120	14	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	321	225	37	-	-	-	-	1	17	72	244	307
Scotney Court GPs	300	1036	330	-	-	-	-	-	9	46	460	300

The importance of the Arun Valley for this species is again apparent, with approximately half the county's wintering population present in both January and December.

Movements up-Channel in spring were very light, as shown by the monthly totals for the main sea-watching sites:

	Mar		Apr		May	
	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	-	-	-	-	-	-
Worthing Beach	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brighton Marina	-	-	8	-	-	-
Splash Point, Seaford	19	-	11	-	-	-
Bexhill/Hastings	35	-	20	-	-	-

Single males were recorded at Pagham Hbr on 13 May and on three dates in July, at Glynde on 20 June, and at Pulborough Brooks throughout May and June. The first returning birds were earlier than normal with three at Pett Level Pools and Pagham Hbr on 19 July and 3 Aug respectively. A number of coastal movements in the latter part of the year included 190W at Selsey Bill on 10-11 Nov and 75W at Brighton Marina on 16 Dec.

Unusually, there were two at Widewater, Lancing on 28 Oct and a male at Ifield Pond on 23 and 26 Dec. [PJ]

0182. GADWALL

Anas strepera

Very scarce breeder and fairly common winter visitor; passage migrant.

The *WeBS*' counts, which were higher in every month (except May) than in 1998, were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>County total</i>	460	303	91	67	33	70	25	59	142	301	531	569
Chichester Hbr	15	32	-	-	-	nc	-	-	-	3	10	22
Pagham Hbr	-	16	-	3	-	2	-	-	13	35	4	-
Chichester GPs	69	43	10	-	-	-	-	-	20	114	167	234
Swanbourne Lake	20	46	30	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	28	16	16	16
Arundel WWT	32	37	11	25	18	49	21	24	16	14	38	23
Amberley Wild Brooks	-	-	-	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	15	7
Glynde Levels	-	3	4	3	2	-	-	-	3	-	-	3
Eastbourne Lakes	44	41	9	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	19	66	16
Bowl Water	122	34	2	nc	nc	nc	-	-	12	39	100	150
Darwell Res	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	27	20
Pett Level	6	20	2	16	10	7	-	1	10	11	18	17
Rye Hbr	73	3	16	10	1	3	3	29	35	26	40	48
Scotney Court GPs	-	2	-	1	-	6	-	2	2	1	3	4

Significant counts for the first winter period not in the table included 65 at Swanbourne Lake on 1 Jan, 35 at Kneppmill Pond on 3 Jan and 27 at Thorney Deeps on 2 Feb.

Passage up-Channel in spring was heavier than normal as shown by the monthly totals for the main sea-watching sites:

	Mar		Apr		May	
	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	-	-	6	-	2	-
Worthing Beach	-	-	4	-	-	-
Brighton Marina	-	-	77	8	6	-
Splash Point, Seaford	-	-	36	-	4	-
Bexhill/Hastings	-	-	2	-	-	-

The largest movement occurred on 1 Apr when there were 64E at Brighton Marina and 36E at Seaford.

During the summer, birds were reported from 11 sites, five of which were in the Arun Valley. Breeding was confirmed at Glynde, Icklesham, Rye Hbr and Swanbourne Lake.

In the latter part of the year, there were 50 at Swanbourne Lake on 30 Oct and, at Rye Hbr, 45 on 31 Oct and 68 on 14 Nov. [PJ]

Scarce resident and common winter visitor and passage migrant.

The *WeBS*' counts, which again show above average numbers at both ends of the year and a record county total for January, were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>County total</i>	6214	2365	1105	273	1	26	19	211	1191	1760	3054	4883
Chichester Hbr	1380	1048	220	17	-	nc	-	16	151	407	1523	1136
Pagham Hbr	1410	377	83	62	-	-	8	-	444	596	347	481
Amberley Wild Brooks	612	233	107	13	1	-	-	-	7	82	175	388
Waltham Brooks	121	105	16	11	-	3	-	15	12	79	104	160
Pulborough Brooks	1886	162	302	150	-	13	5	22	191	257	452	1792
Weir Wood Res	2	2	2	-	-	-	1	3	21	40	58	27
Glynde Levels	44	12	135	2	-	-	-	4	75	18	21	143
Pevensey Levels	47	92	84	9	-	nc	nc	3	5	-	32	35
Pett Level	444	104	26	8	-	9	2	84	105	116	-	276
Rye Hbr	12	53	36	2	-	-	3	56	62	23	50	77

Counts for the Arun Valley illustrate the success of extensive habitat management in the area, especially at Pulborough Brooks, where the January count was the highest monthly count there since January 1993.

Spring passage was again very light as shown by the monthly totals for the main sea-watching sites:

	Mar		Apr		May	
	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	-	-	-	-	-	-
Worthing Beach	-	-	8	-	-	-
Brighton Marina	14	-	41	-	3	-
Splash Point, Seaford	3	-	40	-	-	-
Bexhill/Hastings	18	-	2	-	-	-

The only significant movement occurred on 1 Apr when there were 41E at Brighton Marina and 39E at Seaford.

During May-June, birds were recorded at Amberley Wild Brooks, Icklesham, Pulborough Brooks and Sidlesham Ferry; breeding was confirmed at Amberley where at least one brood was seen in early June.

Although there were seven at Sidlesham Ferry on 16 June and 14 at Icklesham on 18 June, numbers did not build up until mid-August with 70 at Icklesham on 15th and 200 at Pulborough Brooks on 25th. Other counts for the latter part of the year not shown in the table included 400 at Thorney Deepes and 650 in Pagham Hbr on 12 Sept, 400 at Waltham Brooks on 13 Nov and 380 at Icklesham on 20 Dec. [PJ]

0186. MALLARD

*Anas platyrhynchos***Common resident and winter visitor.**The monthly *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	3999	2265	1897	944	940	1508	2182	3532	3793	3899	3435	4394
Chichester Hbr	252	220	134	41	30	nc	33	222	51	352	302	360
Pagham Hbr	226	211	122	69	85	164	157	201	230	180	275	156
Chichester GPs	130	118	63	20	37	20	24	13	86	120	129	171
Swanbourne Lake	180	120	140	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	160	80	100	120
Arundel WWT	405	418	347	390	267	647	486	991	683	771	284	741
Pulborough Brooks	647	33	19	39	82	57	16	151	277	98	137	221
Brooklands Worthing	58	35	85	48	60	61	128	65	59	77	65	67
Glynde Levels	200	181	133	78	63	98	73	112	170	160	181	183
Bewl Water	417	227	188	nc	nc	nc	670	685	546	413	385	501
Alexandra Park	172	Nc	94	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	157	159	236	205
Pett Level	38	6	81	5	10	60	39	239	79	43	29	87
Rye Hbr	193	52	78	53	29	84	129	250	372	227	263	268
Scotney Court GPs	9	38	18	19	26	80	62	162	86	69	60	37

The only significant coastal movement was on 1 April when there were 17E at Brighton Marina and 15E at Splash Point, Seaford.

Counts of breeding pairs in defined areas are shown on pages 163-164. At Bewl Water, where there was an estimated 94 pairs, 22 broods totalling 121 young were seen.

Post-breeding numbers at Bewl Water included 670 on 18 July, 685 on 15 Aug and 546 on 12 Sept. Elsewhere, there were 450 at Rye Hbr on 31 July and 320 at Shermanbury on 29 Sept. [PJ]

0189. PINTAIL

*Anas acuta***Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant, occasionally summers and has bred.**

The monthly *WeBS*' counts, which show record county totals for January and November and the highest ever count in Pagham Hbr, were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	1252	421	115	7	2	-	-	-	76	396	1281	532
Chichester Hbr	179	253	30	1	2	nc	-	-	5	14	107	163
Pagham Hbr	626	137	59	-	-	-	-	-	61	367	1144	159
Amberley Wild Brooks	229	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23
Pulborough Brooks	218	23	8	4	-	-	-	-	1	11	24	176
Glynde Levels	-	-	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	1	-	-
Scotney Court GPs	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-

A light spring passage was recorded up-Channel as shown by the monthly totals for the main sea-watching localities:

	Mar		Apr		May	
	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	2	-	-	-	-	-
Worthing Beach	-	1	2	-	-	-
Brighton Marina	8	-	9	-	-	-
Splash Point, Seaford	3	-	15	-	-	-
Bexhill/Hastings	5	-	5	-	-	-

The main movement occurred on 1 Apr when there were 16E at Newhaven and 15E at Seaford.

A pair remained at Sidlesham Ferry throughout much of May. Other records possibly indicative of breeding were of single males at Thorney Deeps on four dates between 16 May and 22 June, and at Amberley Wild Brooks on 1 June, Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr on 5 June and Waltham Brooks on 16 June. Five were recorded at Icklesham on 27 May.

The first returning birds were noted in late August with three at Sidlesham Ferry on 23rd and eight at Thorney Deeps on 25th. Numbers built up rapidly with 60 in Pagham Hbr on 4 Sept, 80 there on 26 Sept and 130 on 3 Oct.

A leucistic bird was recorded at Thorney Deeps on 25 Mar and 16 May. [PJ]

0191. GARGANEY

Anas querquedula

Scarce passage migrant and rare summer visitor.

In another poor year, the approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
3	6	6	3	2	9	5

The first recorded was a female at Rye Hbr on 5 Mar; the other only March record was of two at Arlington Res on 22nd. A pair at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 11 Apr was also seen the same day on the village duckpond in Pagham! Another pair was recorded at Rye Hbr from 15-19 Apr with the male still there on 29th. The only other records for the month were of single males at Pulborough Brooks and flying E in Rye Bay, both on 29th.

There were no reports indicative of breeding. The only records during May were of two males at Pevensey Bridge Level on 1st, one remaining until the following day; a male at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 4th; a male E past both Newhaven West Pier and Splash Point, Seaford on 6th; a male at Thorney Deeps on 11th; and a male at Sidlesham Ferry on

11-12th. The next record was not until 14 June when three were recorded at Halsey's Fm, Pagham Hbr.

During the autumn, ones and twos were recorded at eight sites from 11 July up to 12 Sept when there were two at Pett Level Pools. [PJ]

0192. **BLUE-WINGED TEAL**

Anas discors

Very rare vagrant

A male flew E past Splash Pt, Seaford on 25 Mar (BRG, SLi, CL *et al*) at 09.07 GMT accompanying four Mallard. All five landed on the sea for five minutes, enabling a firm identification to be made, before continuing to E. This record has been accepted by *British Birds* and is only the third county record, providing a suitable reward for dedicated sea-watchers. The previous two were in Jan 1922 and May 1970, a more recent bird at Swanbourne Lake, Arundel in Nov 1991 being considered an escape from captivity. [RJF]

0194. **SHOVELER**

Anas clypeata

Very scarce resident and fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.

The monthly *WeBS*' counts, which again show above average numbers in the latter part of the year and the expected peak in December, were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	231	180	160	57	27	11	34	118	153	126	261	428
Pagham Hbr	6	10	6	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chichester GPs	26	11	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	19	58	74
Petworth Park	4	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	21	-
Arundel WWT	4	5	5	5	1	-	8	-	1	-	5	14
Waltham Brooks	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	4	4
Pulborough Brooks	126	26	66	8	-	-	-	-	1	25	52	140
Glynde Levels	2	14	61	4	1	1	-	4	6	2	3	3
Eastbourne Lakes	20	23	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	38	22	35
Pevensey Levels	10	13	4	4	-	nc	nc	-	nc	nc	1	2
Pett Level	6	59	2	30	20	10	2	6	15	11	36	34
Rye Hbr	11	7	7	7	2	-	23	97	123	21	48	55
Scotney Court GPs	2	-	-	3	1	-	1	11	2	-	-	55

Spring passage was more marked than in 1998 as shown by the monthly totals for the main sea-watching localities:

	Feb		Mar		Apr		May	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Worthing Beach	-	-	5	-	60	-	4	4
Brighton Marina	-	-	6	-	163	-	5	-
Splash Point, Seaford	-	-	13	-	160	-	5	-
Bexhill/Hastings	6	-	7	-	60	-	-	-

The main movement was on 1 Apr when totals of 190, 159 and 158 were recorded at Newhaven, Seaford and Brighton Marina respectively.

At least one brood was seen at Icklesham but the only other breeding season records were of two at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr on 16 May and up to two at Glynde in June.

Returning birds were noted from mid-July, with 23 at Rye Hbr on 18th and 3W past Brighton Marina on 21st. Significant counts for the remainder of the year not shown in the table included 35 at Chichester GPs on 29 Aug and, at Icklesham, 35 on 30 Sept and 50 on 17 Oct. [PJ]

0196. RED-CRESTED POCHARD

Netta rufina

Possibly rare winter visitor and passage migrant, although many records probably relate to escaped or feral birds.

A total of eight was recorded as follows: a female at Kneppmill Pond from 3 Jan to 16 Feb; a male at Drayton, Chichester GPs from 11 Apr to 22 May; a leucistic female at Icklesham on 28 June and 5 July; two females or immatures at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr on 5 Aug, one remaining until 7th; a male at Scotney Court GPs from 4-12 Sept; a female at Brooklands, Worthing from 15-19 Sept; and a male at Ivy lake, Chichester GPs from 20 Dec until the end of the year. [PJ]

0198. POCHARD

Aythya ferina

Rare breeder and fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.

The *WeBS*' counts, which show higher than average numbers in both winter periods and a record county total for November, were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>County total</i>	1144	1039	166	15	20	72	65	42	88	273	1094	1023
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	9	6
Chichester GPs	189	232	16	-	3	1	-	9	24	88	115	189
Swanbourne Lake	150	150	60	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	32	-
Arundel WWT	173	143	51	13	16	35	21	7	7	44	130	138
Brooklands Worthing	65	28	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	38	39
Barcombe Res	159	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	17	72	74
Glynde Levels	9	2	5	-	-	-	-	-	6	12	25	2
Eastbourne Lakes	36	14	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	15	13	28
Bewl Water	60	43	10	nc	nc	nc	1	4	10	4	90	40
Rye Hbr	105	61	3	-	1	16	11	1	25	30	223	205
Scotney Court GPs	1	160	4	2	-	19	30	21	9	17	158	160

Significant counts not in the table included 200 at Scotney Court GPs on 23 Jan, and 220 at Chichester GPs and 102 at Barcombe Res, both on 14 Nov.

Although birds were seen at Chichester GPs, Glynde, Rye Hbr and Swanbourne Lake during May-June, the only confirmation of breeding was at the latter site where two ducklings accompanied a pair on 4 June. Another pair and two lone females were also present.

Just two records were received of coastal movements; 14W at Selsey Bill on 3 Jan was the most significant. [PJ]

0203. TUFTED DUCK

*Aythya fuligula***Scarce breeding species and fairly common winter visitor.**

The monthly *WeBS*' counts, which show above average monthly totals for the early part of the year and a record county total for February, were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>County total</i>	1235	1313	770	251	229	173	344	386	583	468	900	1039
Chichester Hbr	12	52	28	3	8	nc	2	4	-	13	32	63
Chichester GPs	429	495	175	2	2	6	8	7	197	135	242	317
Chingford Pond	3	6	8	17	21	18	14	-	7	5	3	2
Swanbourne Lake	150	150	100	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	26	-
Arundel WWT	78	109	54	69	68	49	37	27	47	64	91	89
Glynde Levels	8	9	21	28	22	19	12	23	22	21	12	6
Eastbourne Lakes	55	59	42	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	15	28	64	52
Bewl Water	96	82	106	nc	nc	nc	60	102	23	10	80	84
Powdermill Res	2	25	14	-	-	-	21	29	10	16	15	7
Pett Level	5	12	5	22	23	15	11	3	5	14	8	16
Rye Hbr	155	161	127	55	46	29	44	42	30	75	114	167
Scotney Court GPs	66	27	14	31	22	28	118	120	162	42	86	62

Other counts for Bewl Water not shown in the table included 111 on 7 Feb and 120 on 21 Dec.

Breeding season records were received from 14 sites reflecting the species' widespread distribution throughout the county, as shown by the Atlas map in *Birds of Sussex*. Information on breeding success was, however, limited. At least six broods were seen at Icklesham while at Bewl Water there were two broods of six and one of five. Females at Aldsworth Pond and Glynde were accompanied by eight and ten ducklings respectively.

There were no significant coastal movements during the year. [PJ]

0204. SCAUP

*Aythya marila***Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; rare in summer.**

An average year, the records indicating a county total of about 60 for the winter of 1998/99. The approximate monthly totals and counts at the main sites were as follows:

	1998			1999			Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar				
Chichester Hbr	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pagham Hbr	-	1	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	1
Chichester GPs	-	2	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	1	3	8	8	-	2	-	-	1	3
Scotney Court GPs	-	-	-	7	32	30	2	-	-	2
Monthly total	3	8	12	24	35	34	7	2	3	8

At Bexhill, there was 1E on 1 Jan, two offshore on 29 Jan and 5 Feb, and 5E on 1 Apr. Singles were recorded at Newhaven and Shinewater Marsh, Willingdon on 12 and 21 Mar respectively. The last record in spring was of two at Scotney Court GPs on 18 Apr while the first in autumn was of 1W at Selsey Bill on 8 Oct. The only subsequent records away

from the sites in the table were of singles at Brooklands, Worthing from 28 Oct to 1 Nov and at Barcombe Res on 21 Nov. Two that flew E off Southwick Beach on 22 Dec were later seen passing Brighton Marina. [PJ]

0206. **EIDER**

Somateria mollissima

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, non-breeding birds summer annually.

The monthly *WeBS*' counts again show lower than average numbers wintering in the county:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	55	4	4	4	1	-	3	3	3	7	23	15
Chichester Hbr	8	1	1	1	1	nc	3	3	3	7	11	6
Pagham Hbr	2	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	-
Pett Level	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Rye Hbr	45	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

Significant flocks not featured in the table included 65 off Church Norton on 10 Jan and 32 off Bexhill on 5 Feb. The wintering flock in Rye Bay in the latter part of the year peaked at only 16 whereas, further west, concentrations of 32 off Shoreham on 27 Dec and 23 at Pilsey Island, Chichester Hbr on 21 Nov were more typical.

Spring passage was below average and generally lighter than in 1998 as shown by the monthly totals at the main seawatching locations:

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May		Oct		Nov		Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	4	11	22	26	20	3	60	-	3	-	7	2	3	5	5	16
Worthing Beach	-	-	-	-	2	-	25	-	-	-	3	9	1	11	5	23
Brighton Marina	11	-	12	14	5	2	37	1	15	-	-	-	44	16	30	2
Splash Point, Seaford	4	-	-	-	18	-	45	-	75	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bexhill/Hastings	-	2	-	2	67	6	-	-	30	-	-	-	-	7	-	-

As in 1998, no large movements were recorded, the highest day total being just 36E off Seaford Head on 2 May.

Non-breeding birds summering in the county comprised three in Chichester Hbr from 1 June to 6 Oct; 1E past Widewater, Lancing on 9 Aug; 2E past Selsey Bill on 14 Aug and 8E past Bexhill on 23 Aug. [RPr]

0212. **LONG-TAILED DUCK**

Clangula hyemalis

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Both the singles at Pagham Hbr and Newhaven Tide Mills, first seen on 29 Oct and 27 Nov 1998 respectively, remained into 1999, the former long-staying female remaining until 14 March. Only four other records, involving five birds, were received for the first winter period; one in Chichester Hbr on 2 Jan, 1W past Bexhill on 5 Feb, one offshore at Worthing on 24 Feb, and two in Thorney Channel, Chichester Hbr almost daily between 14 Feb and 15 Apr.

Spring passage was sparse, comprising a pair in Rye Bay on 17 March, a single seen at Selsey Bill, Worthing, Brighton Marina and Splash Point, Seaford on 25 March, 2E past Selsey Bill on 2 Apr and finally a fine adult drake past Brighton and Seaford on 9 May.

The next sightings were not until October, with one at Icklesham on 19th and two in Chichester Hbr on 25th, seen again on 26 Nov. Pagham Hbr once again hosted a wintering female, seen sporadically between 9 Nov and 11 Dec. Two were off Church Norton on 8 Nov and two flew past Selsey Bill on 11th. Of particular note was an inland record of a female at Bewl Water from 25 Nov to 12 Dec (PCB *et al*). [RPr]

0213. COMMON SCOTER

Melanitta nigra

Common spring passage migrant and fairly common winter visitor; scarcer in summer and autumn.

The *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	-	-	1	20	-	-	-	11	-	-	4	120
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	nc	-	-	-	-	3	-
Goring Gap	-	-	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-
Newhaven	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	nc	1	-
Pett Level	-	-	-	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	120
Rye Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	-	-	-

The two largest flocks in the first winter period were in Rye Bay, with 75 on 8 Jan building to 130 by 15 Mar, and off Bexhill where the maximum count of 95 was on 29 Jan.

Spring passage was up on 1998, the peak day being 1 Apr in SE winds. Eastbound totals at the main seawatching localities were as follows:

	Mar	April	May	Totals	Peak day
Selsey Bill	178	688	1194	2060	328 on 7 May
Worthing Beach	54	589	716	1359	314 on 1 Apr
Brighton Marina	1459	3213	2365	6997	1539 on 1 Apr
Splash Point, Seaford	1720	2249	1259	5198	1106 on 1 Apr
Bexhill/Hastings	461	432	223	1116	262 on 13 Mar

The June and July records suggest that at least 200 birds summered in the Channel off Sussex and by 7 Aug the flock in Rye Bay had already reached 80. No significant movements were noted in autumn and the winter gathering off Bexhill reached a maximum of 149 on 21 Nov.

A single bird reported at Weir Wood Res on 15 Feb was the sole inland record. [RPr]

0214. SURF SCOTER

Melanitta perspicillata

Very rare vagrant

A first-summer male was found off Pett Level on 16 Mar, with two first-summer males present from 17th to 29th (RJE, PMT, IJW *et al*). One of the birds was noticeably darker than the other, but it showed a pale belly and no white forehead patch indicating that it too was a first-summer male. These were the third and fourth to be recorded during the 1990s

and take the county total to six. All have been in East Sussex, with the previous records in November, December (2) and April. [RJF]

0215. VELVET SCOTER

Melanitta fusca

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor along the coast; rare inland.

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
28	7	52	59	5	-	-	-	1	-	23	31

The records for January suggested that up to 25 individuals were over-wintering in the Channel, the largest group being ten off Church Norton on 10 Jan. There were, however, only two February records comprising 3W at Bexhill on 5th and 4E past Selsey Bill on 16th. Inland, there were two at Weir Wood Res on New Year`s Day (JCI). There have been seven inland records for the county since 1970, totalling 21 birds, in Jan (1), Feb (1), Apr (14), Nov (4) and Dec (1).

Spring passage was unremarkable; totals at the main sea-watching localities of birds flying E were as follows:

	Mar	April	May	Totals
Selsey Bill	-	-	4	4
Worthing Beach	3	4	2	9
Brighton Marina	9	15	2	26
Splash Point, Seaford	10	7	1	18
Bexhill/Hastings	6	1	-	7

There were no day totals in double figures, nine past Brighton Marina on 17 Apr being the largest movement. The lingering flock in Rye Bay, however, built up from six on 4 Mar to 12 on 15 Mar, 15 on 22 Mar and 18 on 18 Apr.

Apart from a single at Selsey Bill on 19 Sept, the species was absent for exactly six months between 10 May and 10 Nov, when one passed Brighton; further singles were seen off Selsey, Worthing and Brighton the next day. Most of the records for the remainder of the year were of ones, twos and threes, although six flew E past Brighton on 14 Nov and 5E past Selsey on 22 Dec. The only record for Rye Bay, the most regular wintering site in the county, was of 16 off Pett on 29 Dec. [RPr]

0218. GOLDENEYE

Bucephala clangula

Fairly common winter visitor; very rare in summer.

The *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	56	70	17	1	-	-	1	1	-	2	35	35
Chichester Hbr	37	47	7	-	-	nc	1	1	-	-	30	23
Pagham Hbr	9	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Chichester GPs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	2
Barcombe Res	2	6	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Bewl Water	2	4	-	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-	1	-
Darwell Res	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Rye Hbr	2	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Scotney Court GPs	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

In the first winter period, Chichester Hbr was the only locality where counts exceeding those in the table were recorded, notably 56 in Fishbourne Channel on 20 Jan and 57 on 14 Feb. The only records for the open sea were of singles E past Bexhill on 1 Jan, W past Selsey Bill on 18 Feb, and E at both Selsey and Brighton Marina on 25 Mar. Apart from the inland reservoirs, the records away from the coast were confined to Pulborough Brooks, where there were up to five females in January, and Kneppmill Pond where two were recorded on 20 Feb. A displaying male at Barcombe Res on 22 Mar made a fine sight and, although the records for late March and April had a predominately easterly bias, the last spring sighting was at Chichester Hbr on 19 Apr.

Unusually, there was a female in Fishbourne Channel on 5 July (GAC). There were no further records until 16 Oct, after which considerably lower numbers were recorded than at the start of the year. Coastal sightings were, however, more of a feature with ten records including 5E and 1W at Worthing on 12 Nov. [RPr]

0220. SMEW

Mergellus albellus

Very scarce winter visitor except in severe weather when larger numbers may occur.

Another average year, the records indicating a minimum total of 36 for the winter of 1998/99, based on the usual assumption that birds moved between sites in the far east of the county. The monthly totals and site counts were as follows:

	1998		1999		Mar	Nov	Dec
	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb			
Chichester GPs	-	2	2	2	1	-	-
Pulborough Brooks	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
Southwater CP	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
Brighton	-	-	-	15	-	-	-
Weir Wood Res	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
Cuckmere Haven	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
Galley Hill, Bexhill	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	2	9	5	1	4	1	4
Northpoint Pit, Rye	-	6	6	11	8	-	8
Scotney Court GPs	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Monthly total	2	16	10	31	9	1	8

An exceptional flock of 15 (four males) flew W past the Palace Pier, Brighton on 26 Feb (RAI) while at Northpoint Pit, there were 11 (two males) on 6 Feb, with ten still there on 21 Feb and eight on 8 Mar. The only other March record was of four at Rye Hbr on 4th.

The first recorded in the latter part of the year was a redhead at Rye Hbr from 26 Nov. All the December records were for the Rye area, the highest count being eight at Northpoint Pit on 29th. [PJ]

0221. RED-BREASTED MERGANSER

Mergus serrator

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant to the coast; a few summer some years.

The monthly *WeBS*' counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	114	117	215	25	-	3	2	2	1	2	260	123
Chichester Hbr	90	106	105	20	-	nc	2	2	1	2	212	94
Pagham Hbr	20	11	84	4	-	3	-	-	-	-	48	17
Goring Gap	-	-	26	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	10

The largest day counts in the first winter period, excluding the *WeBS*' data, were of 70 off Worthing Beach on 13 Feb, 38 off Church Norton on 3 Feb and 35 off Southwick Beach on 17 Jan.

The monthly totals at the main sea-watching sites were as follows:

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May		Oct		Nov		Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	92	113	67	51	286	93	117	13	4	-	10	22	30	85	222	150
Worthing Beach	17	20	-	-	80	6	17	13	19	-	1	7	7	59	5	31
Brighton Marina	31	65	23	32	74	16	107	18	18	-	-	-	17	14	31	17
Splash Point, Seaford	-	-	2	1	76	-	82	6	17	-	-	-	-	-	3	-
Bexhill/Hastings	-	19	1	1	35	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-

The largest single day movements in spring were 53E past Brighton Marina in 6.5 hrs on 1 Apr, 35E past Seaford Head in 4.5 hrs on the same day and 38E past Selsey Bill on 14 Mar.

During the summer, up to three birds were recorded in Pagham Hbr, three in Chichester Hbr and a male at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr from 15 July to 5 Aug.

The first returning bird was at Saltdean on 12 Sept. Numbers remained low, however, until 12 Nov when cold NE winds produced 40W past Selsey Bill in 3 hrs. Observers at this site recorded day totals of 134 on 21 Dec and 93 the following day, with most birds flying E. The peak count off Worthing Beach was 72 on 18 Dec.

There were no inland records. [RPr]

0223. GOOSANDER

Mergus merganser

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

A poor year, the low numbers recorded reflecting the absence of harsh weather. Analysis of the records indicates a county total of about 38 for the winter of 1998/99, although few of these were recorded in early 1999. The minimum monthly totals and site counts were as follows:

	1998			1999				
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Oct	Nov	Dec
Emsworth MP	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Thorney Deepes	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1

	1998			1999			Oct	Nov	Dec
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Jan			
Petworth Park	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Arundel WWT	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pulborough Brooks	-	1	6	1	-	-	-	-	-
Shoreham	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Tilgate Lake	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Pond Lye	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Weir Wood Res	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Newhaven Tide Mills	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barcombe Res	-	1	1	3	-	-	-	-	-
Glynde Levels	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cuckmere Haven	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Arlington Res	-	2	1	2	-	-	-	-	-
Bewl Water	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-
Monthly total	3	9	28	7	1	1	1	1	2

The highest count in January was three at Barcombe Res on 3rd while the sole February record was of a redhead at Weir Wood Res on 10th.

The first recorded in the latter part of the year was a redhead on the Adur at Shoreham on 31 Oct. The only other records were of redheads at Paghham Hbr from 23 Nov until the end of the year and at Tilgate Park Lake on 27-28 Dec. [PJ]

0225. *Cat. C* **RUDDY DUCK**

Oxyura jamaicensis

Very scarce resident and scarce winter visitor.

Another average year, again reflecting the lack of harsh weather in either winter period. Birds were recorded at eight localities outside the breeding season as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chichester GPs	3	4	3		3	6	10	9
Arundel WWT/Swanbourne Lake	15	8	16	13	21	3	1	2
Barcombe Res	3				2	2	2	2
Broadwater Lake, Eastbourne					1			
Icklesham				7	4	1		
Pett Level Pools			1	5		1		1
Rye Hbr	2	1	4	6	9	1	1	2
Scotney Court GPs						2		1

During the breeding season there were 2-3 pairs at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr; at least one brood was seen. Evidence of successful nesting at Swanbourne Lake was provided by a count of ten on 22 Aug, which included a family party. At Icklesham there were seven adults and four young on 23 June, a pair with five young on 28 July, and five adults and six young on 3 Aug.

Unusually, there was a male at Emsworth MP from 30 June to 2 July. [PJ]

0231. **HONEY BUZZARD***Pernis apivorus***Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant; rare breeding summer visitor.****1998:** One flew slowly over West Chiltington GC on 15 Aug (MEK) offering the observer prolonged views.**1999:** Last year's pair was again successful, raising one young. There were two isolated records for the same general area as the breeding pair but it would seem prudent to reveal neither the localities nor the observers' initials. The risk from egg-collectors is ever present.

No such restrictions apply to obvious migrants. The first was seen flying over Eastbourne on 29 May (APo) and the second, an all-dark adult or near-adult, was mobbed by crows as it soared over the Brighton by-pass, just north of Hollingbury on 9 June (IJW). In the autumn, there were two E over Shooters Bottom, Beachy Head on 29 Aug (RSK *et al*), three W over Fairlight Church on 31 Aug (CHD) and singles over Ivy Lake, Chichester GPs on 20 Sept (KBW) and 30 Sept (AHo) and Church Norton on 25 Sept (AHo), the latter flying SW. [MEK]

0238. **BLACK KITE***Milvus migrans***Very rare vagrant.****1998:** The bird recorded at Thorney on 11 May came in off the sea at Pilsey Island and then flew over to Thorney Island.**1999:** A presumed first-summer individual drifted slowly SE over Beachy Head at 09.00 BST on 16 May (DCo, JFC *et al*) before continuing out to sea where it was lost from view ten minutes later. It has been accepted by *British Birds* and is the 19th county record. Of these, six were recorded during the 1990s, ten in the 1980s and three in the 1970s. Over half the records have been in May with the others in April (5), July (2) and November. [RJF]0239. **RED KITE***Milvus milvus***Very scarce visitor, recorded in all months.**

There was good evidence of pairing at one locality in the west of the county and the possibility of breeding has been raised but not confirmed. The absence of reported activity for August and September would suggest a non-breeding pair. For obvious security reasons, the site is confidential.

The monthly minima were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	-	4	5	3-4	2	-	-	-	1	1-2	1

In the general area of Harrow Hill, Patching one was first seen on 19 Mar (AHo), two were present on 27 Mar (JAN), three birds were observed together at the same locality on 4-5 Apr (CEH, ARK, MEK, JAN) and one remained until 7 Apr (JAN). One was yellow-tagged and two were un-tagged. There were a number of other downland records during the year with singles on 7 May at Stansted Forest (MP) and Cocking (MEK) on 7 May,

Upwaltham on 3 and 27 Nov (ACH, APer), and Watergate, West Marden on 22 Dec (MB). Elsewhere, there was one over Batemans, Burwash on 16 June (GR).

Coastal migrants were recorded flying SW at Rye Hbr on 5 Mar (PMT), E at Beachy Head on 1 May (RJF), N at Sidlesham Ferry on 6 June (SJK), and W at Church Norton on 18 Oct (TJE, BJ, CMJ). [MEK]

0243. WHITE-TAILED EAGLE

Haliaeetus albicilla

Rare vagrant

1945: An immature was snared and then clubbed to death at Holts Fm, East Dean, N of Chichester, on 18 Nov (per CH Simms). The specimen is in the Natural History Museum at Tring (cat. number 1945.46.1) and was unearched by TWP and GCMR. Such an old record is considered worthy of inclusion as it probably relates to the most recent untainted occurrence of the species in the county. There were four or five sight records in winter during the period 1900-08, one on 20 Mar 1929 and one on 30 July 1961 (the very unusual date suggesting the possibility of an escape). [RJF]

0260. MARSH HARRIER

Circus aeruginosus

Scarce spring and autumn passage migrant and very scarce winter visitor.

There were many records received but as usual for just a few localities. The annual total was approximately 45-50 different individuals, with the bulk of the records for late summer and autumn.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County Total</i>	-	-	1	1	8	4	1	13	19	4	-	-
Chichester & Pagham Hbr	-	-	1	-	3	1	1	3	6	1	-	-
Pulborough Brooks	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	3	2	1	-	-
Rye Hbr & Icklesham	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	4	7	2	-	-
Other sites	-	-	-	1	2	1	-	3	4	-	-	-

The first sighting of the year was at Fishbourne, Chichester Hbr on 9 Mar, followed by other singles at Lewes Brooks on 30 Apr, Icklesham on 3 May and Pulborough Brooks on 13 May. Away from the main harbours, there was a female at Pevensy Levels on 26 May and an immature at Steyning Bowl on 31 May.

Unusually, there were four June records. The Steyning bird was still present on 1st, and there were singles at Icklesham on 5th and 25th and at Thorney Deepes on 10th.

The first record for late summer was at Pagham Hbr on 23 July, with other singles at Icklesham on 11 Aug, Pulborough Brooks on 15 Aug and Rye Hbr on 16 Aug. There were then numerous records for all four of these localities with maximum counts of five at Icklesham on 25 Sept and at least two, and possibly four birds, in the Rye Hbr area on 27 Sept.

There are never many inland records but there was a male at Crowborough and an immature female at Bewl Water, both on 21 Sept. The last record for the year was a female at Pulborough Brooks on 17 Oct. [MEK]

0261. **HEN HARRIER***Circus cyaneus***Scarce, but regular, winter visitor and passage migrant.**

There were a good number of records from the traditional localities of Rye Hbr and Pett Level, the whole of the South Downs, the Arun Valley, the commons of NW Sussex and Ashdown Forest. There were, however, surprisingly few sightings for Chichester and Pagham Hbrs. The probable monthly minima were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County Total</i>	14	19	8	6	3	-	-	1	2	10	16	15
Chichester & Pagham Hbrs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	-
West Sussex commons	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Arun Valley	2	1	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
West Sussex downland	3	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	1	3	4	4
East Sussex downland	3	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	1
Ashdown Forest	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	2
Pevensey Levels	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr and Pett Level	2	7	2	-	1	-	-	1	-	2	3	3
Other sites	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	3

Records for January included three ringtails at Westdean Woods on 5th and 3-4 birds on Ashdown Forest on 17th. There was also a regular roost at Pulborough Brooks of 1-2 birds. The following month, four ringtails were seen at Ambersham Common on 3rd and, at the other end of the county, there were six birds roosting at Icklesham on 6th. In March, there were probably still eight different birds in the county, including an adult male and a ringtail recorded on the Downs at Loose Bottom, Falmer on 17th. Six birds were reported in April and three were still present in May: a male at Rye Hbr on 4th and two ringtails in the Arun Valley up to 19th.

In the second part of the year, an adult male flew E through the Brede Valley on 29 July (MJHD), there was an early ringtail at Rye Hbr on 18 Aug and a second-winter male on downland between Storrington and Steyning, which was first seen on 2 Sept. There was another male at Beachy Head on 22 Sept. Numbers peaked in November with 16 different individuals, including males at Pulborough Brooks, Brighton Marina, Newmarket Hill, Ashdown Forest, Icklesham and Rye Hbr. The bird at Brighton Marina on 16th flew W accompanied by a ringtail. There were just two roosts located in December, one on Ashdown Forest which held 2-3 males and another on the Downs near Storrington which held 2-3 birds in a very small area of rough grassland. This latter site was studied over a period of 4-5 months and proved very interesting as different birds visited and re-visited. A minimum total of 8-9 different individuals was identified, including a first-year male, two second-year males, an adult male, a very large adult female and a minimum of three other ringtails (*pers obs*). [MEK]

0263. **MONTAGU'S HARRIER***Circus pygargus***Very scarce spring and autumn visitor; formerly bred in small numbers.**

An excellent year with records of seven different birds. An unusually early adult male gave prolonged views as it quartered a setaside field on the Downs above Amberley on 29 Apr (BFF). There have only been five county records for the month since 1962, the

earliest of which was at Stoughton Down on 21 Apr 1985. Subsequent records during the spring were of a ringtail at Church Norton on 4 May (BFF), an adult female which came in off the sea at Brighton Marina on 17 May (KBG, IJW) and an adult male hunting over Thorney Island on 30-31 May (CBC, MAC, JHR).

A first-summer male established a territory on downland between Worthing and Steyning. There was rudimentary display with a ringtail on 22 May and this ringtail was observed on many occasions over the following weeks but there were no reports of a food pass or any proof of nesting (RAI, ARK, DIS *et al*). On one memorable day, 26 June, an immature male Peregrine mobbed the male bird (whilst it was perched on a fence post) and there ensued a 10 minute episode of aerial jousting (*pers obs*).

The only autumn migrant was a ringtail, seen on 14 Aug, when it disturbed the waders and wildfowl at Sidlesham Ferry (AFC). [MEK]

0267. **GOSHAWK** *Accipiter gentilis*

Rare visitor, mainly in winter; has bred and now appears to be resident in the county.

1998: An immature female was at Icklesham on 22 Nov (SJRR). A scolding crow alerted the observer to its presence.

1999: Only one record was accepted, that of a single female at West Dean Woods, on 2 May (OM *et al*). [MEK]

0269. **SPARROWHAWK** *Accipiter nisus*

Common resident and passage migrant.

A large number of isolated records were received but only 20 pairs were identified from an estimated county population of approximately 800 pairs. Very little data regarding breeding success were received.

The only prey items recorded were Dunlin, Red-legged Partridge, Pied Wagtails and a pigeon. Interesting sightings included a single mobbing a Red Kite at Harrow Hill, Patching on 4 Apr and five birds hunting individually over the same field at the same time at Birling Gap on 5 Oct.

At least 15 probable wanderers or migrants were reported from the coast as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	1	2	1	4	-	-	-	-	3	3	-

[MEK]

0287. **BUZZARD** *Buteo buteo*

A scarce resident and passage migrant and possible winter visitor.

This species continues to do remarkably well, with good evidence of 45-50 territorial pairs in the west of the county and at least 16 pairs in the east. Very few observers confirmed breeding but with the very obvious increase in numbers being recorded, it is reasonable to assume that the current fledging success is high.

Most of the pairs in the west are associated with downland but there are 4-5 pairs in the Petworth area and hopefully this expansion is set to continue. In the east of the county the situation is somewhat less certain as the pairs are more scattered.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to comment on migrants with any accuracy. In the past it has been safe to attribute coastal records to migratory birds, but even this assumption is now far from certain with a possible breeding pair at a coastal locality in the extreme west of the county. This reservation aside, the 38 coastal records are summarised below:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
3	2	6	4	1	1	-	7	10	2	2	1

[MEK]

0301. **OSPREY**

Pandion haliaetus

Scarce passage migrant.

It was a fascinating year with an unusual number of multiple sightings. The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County Total</i>	-	-	3	7	6	3	1	8	17	8	1	-
<i>Chichester & Pagham Hbrs</i>	-	-	2	3	3	1	1	4	6	4	1	-
<i>Weir Wood Res</i>	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	3	3	-	-	-
<i>Other sites</i>	-	-	1	2	3	1	-	1	8	4	-	-

The first migrants passed through Pagham Hbr on 28 and 31 Mar, with another at Harting Down also on 31st. In April, there were singles over Worthing Beach on 5th, Sidlesham Ferry on 7th, Weir Wood Res on 11th and 24-25th, Pagham Hbr on 18th, Bewl Water on 24th and Chichester GPs on 26th. Further singles were recorded in May at Pagham Hbr on 2nd and 19th, Arlington Res on 15th and 19th, a long-stayer at Thorney Island from 17th to 31st, and two different birds over Ashdown Forest on 22nd.

There were several birds in mid-summer with another long-stay individual at Thorney Island from 13 to 26 June and singles at Barcombe Res and Weir Wood Res on 13 and 24 June respectively. Thorney was clearly the Mecca for summering birds as yet another single was seen almost daily from 2 July until at least 31 Aug. Autumn passage began on 8 Aug when a single arrived at Weir Wood Res, with two birds present there on 21 Aug. Two birds were recorded at Thorney Island on 11 Aug, both remaining until the end of the month, with three there on 28th. Two at Sidlesham Ferry also on 28th may or may not have

been different birds. Further singles flew over Cissbury Ring on 29 Aug and Charleston Reedbed on 5 Sept. Subsequent records for September included three at Weir Wood Res on 10th and four at Pilsley Island on 21st, with a remarkable five there the following day (CBC). Single migrants flew E along Goring Beach on 21st, SW over Rye Hbr on 22nd, S over Small Dole on 23rd and E at Brighton Marina on 24 Sept (appearing out of a wave trough on a rough sea).

A total of ten records were received for October, comprising up to eight different birds. Singles were recorded at Darwell Res on 1st and 10th, Shoreham on 2nd, Chingford Pond, Duncton on 17th and Pagham Hbr on 23rd. Two remained at Pilsley Island until 11th. The last record in a very eventful year was of a juvenile at Thorney Deeps from 25 Oct to at least 9 Nov. [MEK]

0304. **KESTREL**

Falco tinnunculus

Common resident and passage migrant.

Details were submitted for just 30-40 pairs of an estimated county population of 800 pairs. Fledging success was high with most pairs raising 3-4 young.

The only large autumn gathering reported was at Cissbury Ring on 14 Aug, when ten different birds were present. At Beachy Head on 6 Sept, two birds locked talons, spinning towards the ground (PJJ); an unusual piece of behaviour for this species.

There were a number of probable migrants recorded at the coast. At Brighton Marina, one was seen in January, two in May, one in September and two in November. Elsewhere, there were singles at Splash Point, Seaford in May and at Worthing in November. [MEK]

0307. **RED-FOOTED FALCON**

Falco vespertinus

Rare vagrant

1989: The female at Newmarket Hill, Woodingdean from 29 May to 3 June (*SxBR* 42:26) was also seen on 4th (IJW).

1999: An adult male was found in a setaside field just north of Exceat Bridge in the Cuckmere Valley from 15 to 19 May (GG, RAI, DIS *et al*) while a first-summer male first seen at Lidham Hill on 5 Jun (CHD) was re-found at nearby Guestling Thorn on 6th, remaining until 10th (AJG *et al*). Both records have been accepted by *British Birds* and were the first since 1995, although 12 were recorded in the county during the 1990s (all during the period 8 May-12 June). The first individual was initially thought to be a Hobby on a brief view as it flew across in front of the finder as he was driving towards Seaford from Exceat Bridge. Something didn't seem quite right about it, however, and a return to the area later in the day on the off chance it might still be around paid off. It attracted many admirers and was probably the highlight of the spring (see *Birding World* 12:174). A photograph of this bird appears in this *Report*. [RJF]

0309. **MERLIN***Falco columbarius***Scarce but regular winter visitor and passage migrant.**

Approximately 200 records were submitted for the usual localities, with just a few isolated reports from elsewhere. There were very few records for the hinterland, but this does to some extent reflect observer activity.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County Total</i>	8	8	9	5	2	-	-	3	5	13	13	11
Chichester & Pagham Hbrs	3	2	3	1	-	-	-	1	2	2	1	2
Pulborough Brooks	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	1
West Sussex downland	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3
East Sussex downland	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	1	1
Beachy Head	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-
Rye Hbr and Pett Level	1	2	3	3	-	-	-	1	2	2	5	1
Other sites	3	2	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	4	3	3

In the early part of the year there were many reports from the western harbours, with at least a male and a female ranging widely. A female was observed attacking Starlings at the Little Egret roost at Thorney Island on 1 Feb. In the Rye Hbr area there were at least two females/immatures and an adult male. Away from the areas listed in the table, there was a female at Chichester GPs on 1 Jan, singles at Glynde Levels and Shinewater Marsh, Eastbourne on 14 and 17 Jan respectively, one at Offham on 11 Feb, a female at Hassocks on 26 Feb, a male at Burgess Hill on 31 Mar and one at Polegate on 11 Apr. Late birds were seen at Pulborough Brooks on 9 May and at Exceat Bridge in the Cuckmere Valley on 15 May.

The second part of the year was very similar with most of the records coming from the western harbours and the Rye Hbr area. The earliest record for late summer was at Pagham Hbr on 22 Aug, with a further 1-2 different birds in this area over the ensuing months. In the Rye Hbr/Pett Level area there were probably five different individuals. There were a number of reports from Pulborough Brooks, including two on 14 Nov. At Beachy Head, there were just two records, with two seen on 13 Oct and a single on 29 Oct.

Few will be able to claim this species as a 'garden bird' but two members had males fly over their gardens; the first at Barcombe Cross on 9 Oct (SLi) and the second at Woodingdean on 31 Oct (CDL).

There were two records of migrants, flying in off the sea, the first at Pett Level on 26 Mar and the second at Selsey Bill on 30 Sept. [MEK]

0310. **HOBBY***Falco subbuteo***Scarce breeding summer visitor and regular passage migrant.**

Once again there were more than 400 records submitted. The first of the year was at Pagham Hbr on 18 Apr, followed by singles at Selsey Bill on 23 and 24 Apr. The first inland sightings were also on 24th at Warningcamp, Westdean Woods and Ashdown Forest.

A total of 65 territories was shown to be occupied, a very similar figure to the past two years, though breeding was confirmed at just a handful of sites. Historically, few members

have attempted to confirm breeding for this species and therefore the usual caution should be exercised when interpreting these results. In late April and the first week in May, records of four birds (or more) are very suggestive of multiple pairs for that general locality (the birds coming together to exploit a good feeding area). There was a particularly interesting record of six birds at Burton MP on 28 Apr, but also four birds at Pulborough Brooks on 30 Apr and four birds at Icklesham on 3 May.

At the various sea-watching sites, there was a minimum of 19 spring migrants with a further 17 passage birds observed in the autumn. At Icklesham, birds were recorded daily in September with a maximum of five on 8th. At nearby Pett Level Pools, there were five on 4 Sept.

There were the usual reports of birds attacking wader roosts (with a Dunlin caught on one occasion), but perhaps the most interesting record submitted was of a bird chasing a Greenshank at Weir Wood Res (presumably with no serious intent!).

In October, birds were observed at ten localities up to 17th, when the last flew W at Bexhill.

A paper detailing the status of the Hobby in Sussex appears on pages 183-188. [MEK]

0320. **PEREGRINE**

Falco peregrinus

Scarce breeding resident.

In excess of 350 records were received, with the majority from coastal localities and clearly relating to known breeding pairs. The data made available was rather less complete compared to the previous year and limited details were submitted for seven out of the probable county total of 10-12 pairs. Three inland pairs each raised three young and another inland pair at least two young, with a coastal pair raising a minimum of one young.

Some interesting data were collected on the pair breeding in the box on Sussex Heights, Brighton with a full clutch present on 7 Apr, the loss of one of the young in a storm on 16 May, and the remaining three young recorded as free-flying by 25 June.

A variety of prey items were recorded, including Lapwing, Dunlin and Common Gull. The wader roost at Pilsey Island remains a favourite target and is arguably the most assured locality, within this county, where this falcon may be observed actively hunting. [MEK]

0358. **RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE**

Alectoris rufa

Introduced resident. Population augmented annually by captive bred stock.

Fewer reports were received than normal totalling no more than 49 different birds. All were of small numbers apart from 20, probably released birds, at Sharpthorne in November. Records were received from eight locations between May and July but no evidence of breeding was presented. In March a presumably disoriented bird was calling from the rooftops in a residential area of Burgess Hill. [RTP]

0367. **GREY PARTRIDGE**

Perdix perdix

Fairly common but decreasing resident. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

The records have a distinctly southern bias. Out of 90 only four came from north of the Downs at Pulborough Brooks (3), and Barcombe Mills. Does this reflect the distribution of birds or observers? In the first winter period the highest count (of 50) came from Winchelsea Marsh. Once again there were good numbers at Goring Gap with counts of 22 in January and 15 in February. Two coveys near Woodingdean totalled 16 birds and 14 were found at Harbour Fm, Rye Hbr.

Breeding, either confirmed or probable, was noted at 15 sites totalling 29 pairs. At Rye Hbr SSSI, only one brood was noted from a possible ten pairs, at Pulborough Brooks a pair fledged four young and at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton a pair with two juveniles was seen in August. An August monthly maximum of 14 at Steep Down, Lancing and 18 on Steyning Round Hill in the same month indicates breeding at both sites. In the second winter period, the highest counts came from Harbour Fm, Rye Hbr (26), Littlehampton GC (32) and West Wittering (21). [RTP]

0370. **QUAIL**

Coturnix coturnix

Scarce summer visitor, recorded in variable numbers from year to year. Formerly occasional in winter.

The first bird of the year was a single heard calling at Beeding Hill on 16 May, the same date as last year. Records were received from a total of eight sites, all of them on the Downs except for singles at Icklesham and the Beach Reserve at Rye Hbr. Most observers reported one or two birds calling except at Houndean Bottom, Lewes where up to four were heard on nine visits between 4 and 13 July and where birds were also noted on two dates in August. The last records of the year were at the comparatively late dates of 3 and 31 Oct. The former was flushed from a field of millet at Icklesham and the latter at the Beach Reserve, Rye Hbr. [RTP]

0394. **PHEASANT**

Phasianus colchicus

Very common introduced resident. Population augmented annually by captive bred stock.

The few reports of this species do not reflect its true status in the county. The majority of the birds seen are likely to have been reared for sporting purposes (Cocks 1999). Figures quoted by the BTO (*BTO News* 227:3) suggest that pheasants now make up almost 30% of the total weight of breeding birds in Britain. Breeding records come mainly from Common Bird Census plots and breeding was confirmed at only 11 sites but included 21 pairs at Ebernoe. The only significant count recorded was of 90 released birds at Kilnwood near Faygate in October. [RTP]

0396. *Cat. C* **GOLDEN PHEASANT**

Chrysolophus pictus

Scarce introduced resident.

Four reports suggest a minimum of two males and a female at Linchball and Westdean Woods. Another pair was reported from West Dean but at neither location was there any indication that breeding had taken place. There were no records from Kingley Vale NNR for the first year since 1968 (when the species was first recorded in the county). Its prospects of long term survival in the county, therefore, look bleak. [RTP]

0407. **WATER RAIL**

Rallus aquaticus

Scarce resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.

The approximate monthly totals from all sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sites	19	21	14	5	2	2	2	8	10	11	15	20
Birds	32	102	88	66	26	24	31	40	32	61	69	52

During the winter periods most records were of one or two birds from sites in coastal areas and the main river valleys. Larger counts came from a few well watched areas: 12 were at Thorney Island on 21 Jan and eight on 20 Feb and 20 Mar, 60 were counted at Pett Level and Icklesham through February to April. There was a minimum of 15 at Filsham Reedbed on 15 Feb but only two on 1 Mar.

Breeding records were confined to only three sites. At least ten pairs bred at Icklesham, two pairs bred on Amberley Wild Brooks and two pairs were suspected of breeding at Rye Hbr SSSI. No evidence of breeding success was presented but an immature bird was seen at Rye Hbr.

The pattern during the second winter period was similar to the first with the only double figure counts coming from Pett Level and Icklesham (30 on 10 Oct) and from Thorney Island (eight on 27 Oct, ten on 15 Nov and 12 on 20 Dec). During the year most reports came from the Pagham Hbr complex. Inland sites included Forest Mere; Chingford Pond, Duncton; Kneppmill Pond; Woods Mill, Henfield; Holmbush Tip, Faygate; Ifield; Weir Wood Res; Mill Fm, Redgate; Shinewater Marsh, Willingdon; Down Level, Pevensey; and Bawl Water. A bird rescued from a NCP car park in Brighton was released on the Lewes Brooks on 30 Dec. [RTP]

0408. **SPOTTED CRAKE**

Porzana porzana

Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant and rare winter visitor

Juvenile males were trapped at Pannel Sewer, Icklesham on 24 Sept and 5 Oct (RBRG). With 46 recorded during the 1990s this is a below average showing, although in other respects these records are typical as 38 of the 46 have been trapped at Icklesham, 17 records were in September and 12 in October. The remaining records were in April (3), July and August (13). [RJF]

0424. **MOORHEN***Gallinula chloropus***Very common resident and winter visitor.**The monthly *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>County total</i>	778	627	754	208	163	319	562	578	824	818	811	951
Chichester Hbr	36	63	50	8	14	nc	10	16	13	54	80	65
Chichester GPs	110	85	78	5	14	7	3	4	95	100	109	127
Swanbourne Lake	125	120	120	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	120	110	80	100
Arundel WWT	142	-	72	-	-	197	119	142	118	85	120	138
Amberley Wild Brooks	12	9	8	17	31	15	8	4	24	17	39	15
Waltham Brooks	4	4	2	2	11	4	12	14	9	3	13	10
Pulborough Brooks	15	2	34	4	11	15	35	3	24	14	18	65
Glynde Levels	2	-	2	10	9	11	13	17	14	16	6	6
Bewl Water	40	70	70	nc	nc	nc	122	110	80	50	60	55
Darwell Res	6	9	14	9	10	7	37	56	33	2	12	15
Alexandra Park	44	nc	29	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	43	40	49	45
Pett Level	45	90	90	62	8	6	60	64	14	60	26	66
Rye Hbr	57	29	66	32	19	8	35	47	31	39	32	96

In addition to the *WeBS*' counts, 65 were noted at Manor Fm, Apuldram on 12 Mar and, at Rye Fm on Henfield Levels, 47 were seen together in one field on 9 Feb.

Breeding records were received from 32 widely dispersed sites. At Bewl Water, 65 pairs held territories and 33 broods were produced but only 46 young were noted. An estimated 44 pairs bred at Rye Hbr SSSI but success "appeared to be low". Elsewhere numbers were lower. At Pulborough Brooks RSPB Reserve there were 15 pairs and 13 at Amberley Wild Brooks. There were 12 pairs at Thorney Deeps where ten young were raised from four broods. Ten active nests were estimated at Darwell Res and 11 territories were identified along a 4km stretch of Aldingbourne Rife.

The most unusual record was of two birds on the pontoons among the boats in Brighton Marina on 24 Nov. [RTP]

0429. **COOT***Fulica atra***Common resident with numbers much increased by visitors outside the breeding season.**The monthly *WeBS*' counts for the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>County total</i>	3278	2604	1315	454	334	583	1740	2587	3159	3120	3011	3400
Pagham Hbr	38	19	23	18	20	24	30	47	47	51	51	45
Chichester GPs	802	666	248	39	36	64	93	128	762	799	791	1061
Swanbourne Lake	140	120	100	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	96	120	100	120
Arundel WWT	102	61	51	55	46	96	61	96	57	88	73	89
Brooklands Worthing	122	74	43	45	40	38	73	113	102	96	110	98
Glynde Levels	50	47	23	13	22	49	36	39	46	75	65	8
Eastbourne Lakes	434	274	108	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	393	443	497	292
Bewl Water	557	462	240	nc	nc	nc	490	621	236	138	160	286

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Darwell Res	31	31	31	28	27	35	77	16	9	2	4	10
Pett Level	92	89	59	81	8	30	125	108	148	123	143	80
Rye Hbr	496	266	115	67	41	33	129	285	275	391	394	554
Scotney Court GPs	236	256	101	33	24	140	501	986	865	608	428	572

Other counts of note in the first winter period were 79 at Brooklands, Worthing on 26 Jan, 527 at Bewl Water on 7 Feb (and exceeding the *WeBS*' count for that month) and 77 at Shinewater Lake on 23 Feb. One hundred were on the Chichester Canal on 4 Mar where, on the same date, the earliest indication of breeding was found when a nest containing three eggs was discovered.

Breeding was confirmed from 19 sites involving a minimum of 270 pairs. At Bewl Water, 87 pairs were present and 20 nests were located which produced 30 broods. In July 55 juveniles were counted. About 24 pairs nested at Rye Hbr SSSI with "generally low success". An estimated 19 pairs were at Darwell Res where 31 juveniles were seen in July. Fourteen pairs were at Thorney Deepes during the breeding season, producing 19 young from five broods. At Vinnetrov Lake 13 nests had eggs but only five hatched young and four young fledged from three of these broods. Also during the breeding season, counts of 83 on 19 June and 118 on 26 June were made at Drayton, Chichester GPs.

During the second winter period, Chichester GPs regularly produced maxima in excess of the *WeBS*' counts: 1380 on 13 Oct, 1120 on 3 Nov and 1550 on 1 Dec. One bird was seen offshore at Church Norton on 13 Oct, the only record away from fresh water. Six dead birds were collected at Icklesham. The cause of death was not determined but could have been due to botulism. [RTP]

0450. OYSTERCATCHER

*Haematopus ostralegus***Scarce breeder, fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Recorded along the whole coast throughout the year. The monthly *WeBS*' counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	1002	1704	880	732	594	196	780	1341	1396	1340	1398	1242
Chichester Hbr	238	1043	515	332	339	nc	403	1034	1155	1030	1037	796
Pagham Hbr	100	83	58	60	48	130	228	206	147	302	177	76
Cuckmere Haven	94	-	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	7	5	2	1
Pett Level	-	1	2	2	8	8	93	48	53	-	1	-
Rye Hbr	552	535	275	327	190	48	38	49	-	2	148	310

The largest concentrations were at Pilsey Island in Chichester Hbr, where the following maxima were recorded:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
400	511	500	280	240	220	589	1000	750	850	611	700

A total of 28-30 pairs bred or attempted to breed. At Rye Hbr (the main breeding site, as usual), 20-22 pairs nested but breeding success was a disaster once again, with no young known to have fledged. In Chichester Hbr, there were three pairs at North Stakes Island, one pair at Ellanore and two pairs at Thorney Island. The North Stakes Island pairs were all washed out, at Thorney Airfield the outcome was not known but one of the pairs hatched two chicks, and at Ellanore a single chick was raised. At Icklesham, two pairs bred but the outcome was not noted. Overall, another very poor year with only a single chick known to have been raised, one less than in the two last years.

Inland records included singles at Weir Wood Res on 15 Feb, Bewl Water on 7 Apr, Pulborough Brooks on 24 Apr, 12 May and 6 June, and two at South Stoke in the Arun Valley on 30 Apr. A partial albino bird was at Pagham Hbr on 28 Mar. [JC]

0456. AVOCET

*Recurvirostra avosetta***Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Has bred.**

1998: Four at Pilsey Island on 10 and 13 Jan were still present on 30th, one remaining until 3 Feb. The monthly totals move to Jan (19) and Feb (83).

1999: The approximate minimum monthly totals were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
24	23	14	105	29	11	5	4	2	20	24	28

As usual, the vast majority of wintering birds were in Pagham Hbr, where up to 23 were recorded in January and 20 in February. The only other records for the first two months of the year were of one at Thorney Island from 22 to 24 Jan, 1E at Bexhill on 8 Feb and 2E past Brighton Marina on 25 Feb. The usual small coastal passage occurred in early spring and included a remarkably large flock of 87 which headed inland to the NE over Brighton Marina on 20 Apr (KGB).

Two birds were seen at the breeding site of two years ago on 7 June but they did not linger and there were no records of breeding this year. There were, however, up to four

birds throughout the summer at Sidlesham Ferry, with singles at Icklesham on 15 June and Rye Hbr on 10 July.

With birds present throughout the summer in the Pagham Hbr area it is difficult to say when the first returning wintering birds appeared, but numbers there had built up to 14 by 11 Oct and to 18 by 23rd. The highest count for the latter part of the year at Pagham Hbr was of 24 on 28 Dec. Elsewhere, there were two at Rye Hbr on 25 Oct and a number of records for Chichester Hbr including six in Thorney Channel on 24 Nov and four there from 7 to 10 Dec. [JC]

0459. **STONE-CURLEW**

Burhinus oedicephalus

A rare passage migrant. Formerly a scarce breeding summer visitor. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

One flew around Whitehawk Hill, Brighton calling in thick fog before departing to NE on 4 Apr (JCu). Always a good bird to find, just 15 were recorded during the 1990s. Records during this period are fairly evenly spread between 29 Mar and 3 Nov (with 1-3 records for each month), although this is the first in April since 1984. [RJF]

0469. **LITTLE RINGED PLOVER**

Charadrius dubius

Scarce breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first of the year was one at Rye Hbr on 18 Mar, four days earlier than last year. There was the usual light spring passage, including one that flew E at Splash Point, Seaford on 25 Apr.

During the breeding season a total of 8-10 pairs was reported, 4-5 from East Sussex and a similar number from West Sussex, but only two pairs are known to have bred successfully (both in East Sussex). These reared a total of at least four young. Five birds were seen at Weir Wood Res on 26 July.

The usual post-breeding dispersal occurred in late summer, with juveniles at Pagham Hbr and Rye Hbr on 1 Aug. Small numbers were seen throughout August at Sidlesham Ferry with a maximum of six on 26th. Elsewhere in August there were up to five at Pagham Hbr on various dates (which may have been the same as the Sidlesham birds), three at Weir Wood Res on 2nd and one on 15th, up to two at Rye Hbr on several dates and one at Pett Level Pools on 22nd. The last of the year was at Sidlesham Ferry on 21 Sept, a day earlier than last year and the only record for the month. [JC]

0470. **RINGED PLOVER**

Charadrius hiaticula

Fairly common breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor.

1998: The number of pairs in the lower Cuckmere Valley should be amended from three to one. This pair attempted to nest three times; two young hatched from 11 eggs.

1999: Recorded along much of the coast for much of the year. The monthly *WeBS*' counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
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<i>County total</i>	443	333	170	227	172	50	94	929	661	601	568	404
Chichester Hbr	170	84	57	69	104	nc	16	508	64	90	292	116
Pagham Hbr	3	-	11	114	19	27	38	335	265	160	31	46
Climping	72	24	7	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	21	98	93	81
Goring Gap	-	17	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	89	46	44	55
Widewater Lancing	-	6	8	6	7	3	6	3	1	-	2	1
Lower Adur Estuary	132	57	8	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	137	149	95	75
Pett Level	8	42	-	-	2	1	-	3	-	2	2	-
Rye Hbr	25	80	59	33	37	19	30	80	51	35	-	23
Scotney Court GPs	4	11	10	5	3	-	2	-	-	-	-	-

As last year, the largest concentrations were generally at Pilsey Island in Chichester Harbour, where the monthly maxima were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
111	110	59	81	111	30	22	600	500	88	141	42

The August and September counts were notably higher than those for last year. Other significant counts, not in the table, were of 200 on the River Adur at Shoreham on 3 Jan, 50 at Pagham Hbr on 24 May, 109 roosting at Rye Hbr on 8 Aug, 100 or more at Pagham Hbr on 22 Aug, 147 roosting at Rye Hbr on 28 Aug, 120 on the Adur Estuary on 8 Sept, 350 at the same site on 16 Nov and 200 roosting on Shoreham Beach on 25 Nov.

The records suggest at least 66 pairs bred or attempted to breed in the county, remarkably consistent with last year! The main site was Rye Hbr where about 51 pairs fledged about ten young. A total of seven pairs hatched 17 young at various sites in Chichester Hbr, at least five of which survived to fledging. A pair hatched two young at Littlehampton West Beach and four pairs were seen displaying at Widewater, Lancing, although no breeding was confirmed there. At Shoreham Beach, a pair hatched two young, one of which survived until mid-June at least, and at Southwick Beach, two pairs attempted to breed but probably failed due to disturbance. At least one pair bred at Pagham Hbr, but appeared to lose their chicks.

There were inland records for three sites. One was at Arlington Res on 25 May; five and one were at Pulborough Brooks on 17 June and 4 July respectively, and at Weir Wood Res, there were two on 17 Aug and four on 19 Sept. [JC]

0477. **KENTISH PLOVER**

Charadrius alexandrinus

Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant, formerly bred

A female was found at Pilsey Sands on 25 Apr being joined by a second female and a male on 26th (CBC). None could be found on 27th, but what was presumed to be a different female was present on 28th (CBC). These records are typical in so far as 30 of the 44 recorded during the 1990s have been at Pilsey, and most records during this period have been in April (15). The other records were in May (12) with 1-5 fairly evenly spread in the other months between late March and mid-October. [RJF]

0482. **DOTTEREL**

Charadrius morinellus

Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant, one winter record

All records were for the Downs between Balsdean and Kingston in autumn. Sightings at Swanborough Hill were of an adult on 20 Aug, a juvenile from 29 to 31 Aug and two juveniles on 3 Sept. At Harvey's Cross, there were six adults and two juveniles on 24 Aug, 11 on 24th, two adults and two juveniles on 26-27th, and a juvenile on 29th (all GAS). At a conservative estimate, 14 individuals were involved, an average showing given that an equally conservative total of 149 was recorded during the 1990s. There have been late August records at Harvey's Cross/Swanborough Hill in five of the last ten years, although these are the first at this time of year since 1994. This is the first year this species has not been recorded in this area in spring (late April/May) since 1987. [RJF]

0485. **GOLDEN PLOVER**

Pluvialis apricaria

Common winter visitor and passage migrant, rare in summer.

The *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	3913	2670	755	3	-	-	2	356	1012	2659	1488	1033
Chichester Hbr	950	1408	604	-	-	nc	-	20	-	513	659	910
Pagham Hbr	361	717	101	3	-	-	-	1	12	135	310	85
Chichester GPs	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Pevensey Levels	16	20	50	-	-	nc	nc	-	nc	nc	nc	nc
Scotney Court GPs	2500	500	-	-	-	-	-	335	1000	2000	500	30

Significant concentrations not shown in the table above included 150 at Pulborough Brooks on 5 Jan; 1000 at East Head on 11th and 17th; 500 at Castle Fm, Rye Hbr on 13th and 420 at Pagham North Wall on 16th, with 600 in Pagham Hbr the following day. Peak counts in February were of 1000 at Thorney Deepes on 4th, 112 at Barcombe Mills on 9th, and on 25th, 1050 in Pagham Hbr and 120 in flight over Harbour Farm, Rye Hbr. Numbers decreased rapidly in March with an unusual record of 35 on the shore at Rye Hbr on 9th and 150 at Pagham on 28th, falling to 60 on 8 Apr. The only other April records were of one at Sidlesham Ferry on 10th, and singles E at Selsey Bill on both 28th and 30th.

The first returning bird was recorded at Rye Hbr on 23 July. Small numbers were then noted until early September when 800 were seen at Scotney Court GPs on 6th, increasing to 880 on 19th. One hundred were at Pagham Harbour on 26th and 146 in flight over Rye

Hbr on 30th. Further increases occurred during October, with peaks of 150 at Castle Fm, Rye Hbr on 12th and 27th, 210 in Pagham Hbr on 8th, increasing to 1000 on 30th, an exceptional 3500 on Broomhill Level on 17th, and 275 at West Wittering on 26th.

The species was more widespread inland during November and December with up to 80 at Barcombe Res, and smaller numbers on the upper Arun and Adur Levels. Additional counts included 153 at Ford on 21 Nov, and a peak of 250 at Icklesham on 27th. By mid-November the wintering population had stabilised, with up to 1400 noted commuting between the inter-tidal areas of Pagham Hbr and the fields behind North Wall to the end of the year, and peaks of 600 at Thorney Airfield and 700 at West Wittering. [PMB]

0486. GREY PLOVER

Pluvialis squatarola

Common winter visitor and passage migrant.

The *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	2314	2455	1757	404	69	37	67	769	943	1606	2170	2332
Chichester Hbr	1621	1626	1093	50	28	nc	-	429	461	1022	1431	1461
Pagham Hbr	457	488	486	353	39	37	67	339	456	535	608	549
Climping	60	61	98	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	12	51	79
Goring Gap	85	98	77	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	24	33	74	161
Pett Level	90	156	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	-

Notable counts not included in the table were of 110 at Pett Level on 15 Jan, 54 at Rye Hbr on 21 Jan, 33 on the Adur Estuary, Shoreham on 31 Jan, 64 at Littlehampton West Beach on 14 Mar, 500 at Emsworth Channel on 22 Aug and 29 at Kingston Gorse on 13 Sept.

The monthly totals of eastbound birds at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Total
Selsey Bill	-	65	43	108
Worthing Beach	-	14	88	102
Brighton Marina	7	30	195	232
Splash Point, Seaford	-	2	29	31
Bexhill/Hastings	4	-	16	20

Peak movement was recorded on 7 May with totals of 34E at Selsey Bill, 62E at Worthing Beach, 103E at Brighton Marina, 32E at Newhaven, 19E at Seaford and 11E at Bexhill/Hastings. Observers at Selsey Bill also recorded 40E and 30W on 22 April. Small numbers were also noted passing offshore during the autumn, with peaks at Selsey Bill of 22W on 19 Aug and 40W on 13 Nov.

The only inland records came from Weir Wood Res where three were present on 17 Sept. [PMB]

Scarce breeder and very common winter visitor.

The *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	18608	8000	581	256	186	1047	1621	4400	4108	4488	12466	14374
Chichester Hbr	910	2516	70	50	30	nc	231	498	402	404	2916	1460
Pagham Hbr	2120	945	224	26	11	21	16	109	66	172	223	1353
Lurgashall MP	-	-	1	2	-	20	120	80	-	-	1	nc
Pulborough Brooks	5150	178	21	18	34	36	79	370	137	244	2820	3122
Lower Adur Estuary	300	5	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	54	193	1090	193
Henfield Brooks	50	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	740
Newhaven	1100	15	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	nc	400	220
Glynde Levels	500	5	64	28	55	82	3	-	-	13	2	545
Cuckmere Haven	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	70	350	450	150
Pevensey Levels	738	164	82	32	25	69	6	26	273	550	6	500
Bewl Water	300	250	4	nc	nc	nc	165	50	50	75	320	300
Pett Level	1330	2100	46	61	8	579	153	650	427	868	1168	930
Rye Hbr	3662	255	14	15	12	177	608	1552	1741	1321	946	1977
Scotney Court GPs	1000	1000	20	8	5	50	160	900	500	192	1000	2000

The mild weather in January saw high numbers in the county, with flocks widespread. Notable counts not shown in the *WeBS*' table for January were of 2000 in the lower Adur Valley on 1st, 2500SE over Hurstpierpoint on 8th and 4000 at Scotney Court on 23rd. Numbers decreased during February with 1000 at both Coombes and at Icklesham on 21st being the last significant counts of the first winter period.

Displaying birds were first noted on 10 Mar. Breeding or possible breeding was noted at 29 sites involving approximately 157 pairs, a welcome improvement on 1998. Birds were also noted at a further 12 sites during the breeding season. The largest concentrations were 24 pairs at Pulborough Brooks, 40 occupied sites at Fieldlands Fm, Henfield, 30-40 pairs at Icklesham, and 10-12 pairs at Rye Hbr. Young were reported from only eight sites, with generally poor fledging success. The exception was Pulborough Brooks where 50 young fledged.

Returning birds were noted from late May, with 60 at Rye Hbr on 31st. Numbers increased during June and July and, by early August, flocks several hundred strong were more widely noted. Few notable counts were received for the autumn and early winter other than those shown in *WeBS*' table, up to 1000 at Icklesham in mid-September, and 3700 at Shoreham Airport on 23 Nov being the exceptions.

The leucistic bird first noted at Newhaven Tide Mills in 1990 was once again present during both winter periods. [PMB]

0496. **KNOT***Calidris canutus***Common winter visitor and fairly common passage migrant.**The monthly *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	213	1208	72	68	10	-	1	19	100	115	1289	137
Chichester Hbr	212	1208	1	1	1	nc	-	13	20	87	1261	137
Pagham Hbr	-	-	71	67	8	-	1	1	76	28	28	-
Widewater Lancing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-

Generally numbers appeared higher in Chichester Hbr and lower in Pagham Hbr than in 1998, probably indicating the mobile nature of flocks between the two sites rather than an actual change in numbers and distribution. Counts not shown in the table included 300-400 regularly recorded in Pagham Hbr during the first winter period, with a particularly large count of 600 on 6 Mar (ARK). Very few were noted elsewhere.

Spring passage was poor as shown by the monthly totals for the sea-watching sites:

	Apr	May	Total
Selsey Bill	6	6	12
Worthing Beach	-	1	1
Brighton Marina	4	22	26
Splash Point, Seaford	12	105	117
Bexhill/Hastings	-	4	4

Most were seen in the first week of May when the largest day totals were 52E at Newhaven on 3rd and 38E at Seaford on 5th.

There were several summering individuals on the larger estuaries, but 11 at Pagham Hbr on 30 June probably heralded the start of the autumn passage. On 3 Aug there were 64 at this site. The only other sites holding double figures were Widewater, Lancing where there was a peak of 15 on 31 Aug, and Rye Hbr where 15 roosted on 29 Aug.

Numbers started to build up in the second winter period from late Sept, when 80 were at Pilsley Sands on 28th. The only significant count for this period not shown in the table was of 455 in Pagham Hbr on 16 Dec. [MD]

0497. **SANDERLING***Calidris alba***Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.**The monthly *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	214	292	192	32	60	4	5	43	42	111	253	646
Chichester Hbr	25	108	60	32	53	nc	4	40	12	88	149	-
Climping	40	22	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	4	-	205
Goring Gap	38	51	91	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	17	12	39	45
Lower Adur Estuary	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	-	-	35
Pett Level	110	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	-	110	41	-	7	4	1	3	10	7	65	360

Counts additional to those shown above included 122 at Pilsey Island on 5 and 21 Jan, 136 at Rye Hbr and 40 at Widewater, Lancing. There were 159 at Pilsey Island on 14 Mar, increasing to the spring peak of 271 on 24 Mar, before decreasing to 218 on 3 Apr, 105 on 7 May, 86 on 31 May and 17 on 12 Jun.

The monthly totals for the main sea-watching sites were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Total
Selsey Bill	-	30	306	336
Worthing Beach	5	47	169	221
Brighton Marina	-	120	143	268
Splash Point, Seaford	-	-	92	92
Bexhill/Hastings	-	6	-	6

Spring passage peaked earlier than usual, with 25E at Worthing Beach and 106E at Brighton Marina on 1 April. More typical was a movement on 7 May comprising 72E at Selsey Bill, 34E at Worthing, 60E at Brighton Marina and 29E at Seaford.

Small numbers were seen during June and July, with a build up at Pilsey Island from 15 on 22 July to a maximum of 156 on 26 July, 140 on 7 Aug and 131 on 25 Sept. Other notable counts in the second winter period were 55 at Rye Hbr on 25 Oct, 115 at Pilsey on 28 Oct, falling to 70 on 10 Dec, 56 at Littlehampton West Beach on 25 Dec and an impressive 280 at Camber on 21 Dec. [PMB].

0501. LITTLE STINT

Calidris minuta

Passage migrant, scarce in autumn and very scarce in spring; a few winter in most years.

The approximate minimum monthly totals, were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
10	7	4	5	5	-	4	47	52	13	9	4

This year was the best autumn since 1996 for this species (when the September total was an unsurpassed 306). There were also more winter records than for many years. In the early part of the year there were up to three at Scotney Court GPs, six in Chichester Hbr and one at Pagham Hbr.

Spring passage was slight, but better than the previous two years, with records from Chichester Hbr, Sidlesham Ferry and Rye Hbr between 13 Apr and 31 May. Autumn passage started on 16 July with a single bird at Sidlesham Ferry. Numbers at this site then built up to a maximum of 18 on 21 Sept. Other significant concentrations included 12 in Pagham Hbr on 3 Aug, up to eight at Pilsey Island during August and ten at Pett Level Pools on various dates in mid-September. Elsewhere, there were two at Rye Hbr in early August, two at Camber Sands on 19 Aug, one on the River Adur at Shoreham on 11 Sept and two in the lower Cuckmere Valley on 16 Sept. Inland, there were singles at Weir Wood Res on 1 Aug and 17 Sept and three at Pulborough Brooks on 19 Sept. Numbers fell off rapidly after the end of September, with ones and twos at various sites through October. The Chichester Hbr area provided most of the records for the end of the year with up to six at East Head in November and three there in December. Elsewhere, there were singles at Pagham Hbr on 20 Nov and at Scotney Court GPs on 30 Dec. [JC]

0507. **PECTORAL SANDPIPER***Calidris melanotos***Rare vagrant, mainly in autumn.****1998:** One at Icklesham on 12 Sept (JWi) took the year's total to three.**1999:** Four were recorded, adults at Weir Wood Res 23-25 July (IJW *et al*) and 3-7 Sept (BMM, DCM *et al*) and juveniles at Pett Level Pools on 12 Sept (AC, AJG *et al*) and the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 29-30 Oct (CWM *et al*). Four in a year is the best showing since 1983 when at least five were seen. Fourteen were recorded during the 1990s, being found in July (2), September (9) and October (3). These records include the equal earliest and the latest during this period. The Pagham record recalls one at the same site in early Oct 1998. [RJF]0509. **CURLEW SANDPIPER***Calidris ferruginea***Passage migrant, scarce in autumn and very scarce in spring; rare in winter.**

1999 was a good year for this species, although there were no spring records. Allowing for considerable duplication of records at well-watched sites such as Sidlesham Ferry, the approximate minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
-	-	-	-	-	-	2	131	197	10	-	-

The first of the autumn were two at Pett Level Pools on 25 July. There appeared to have been influxes in early and late August, with high counts including 22 in Pagham Hbr on 3rd, nine at Pilsey Island on 19th, 11 in Pagham Hbr on 22nd and 24th, ten at Sidlesham Ferry on 29th, ten in fields behind the North Wall at Pagham Hbr on 30th, and 13 at Pilsey Island on 31st. Further influxes occurred in September, with numbers at Sidlesham Ferry peaking at 24 on 11th (though there were double figure counts there throughout much of September). Counts at Pagham Hbr were also in double figures for much of the month, with a peak of 30 on 13th, although most of these were likely to be the same birds noted at Sidlesham Ferry. Other counts included eight at Widewater, Lancing on 11th and a maximum of 10 on the River Adur at Shoreham on 15th. A party of three that flew W over Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 14th constituted the first record of the species at this site. Inland, there were eight at Arlington Res on 5th and six at Weir Wood Res from 13th to 19th. Numbers dropped off rapidly after the end of September, with the peak October count being six at Sidlesham Ferry on 6th. The last of the year was a single bird at Dell Quay on 30 Oct. [JC]

0510. **PURPLE SANDPIPER***Calidris maritima***Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; very rare in summer.**

The species was present at the four regular areas shown in the table below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Shoreham / Southwick	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	4
Brighton Marina	9	9	8	9	1	-	1	2	2	5	10	9
Newhaven Hbr	14	10	9	11	5	-	-	2	-	-	3	5

Glyne Gap, Bexhill	2	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
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The only other records for the first part of the year were of singles at Selsey Bill on 23 Apr and at Southwick Canal the following day. The latter may have involved one of the Shoreham/Southwick birds which were usually to be found either at the entrance to Shoreham Hbr or on nearby Southwick Beach. The last departing spring bird was at Brighton Marina on 21 May, at which location the first returning autumn bird appeared on 26 July. Records for the end of the year, not shown in the table, were of singles at Selsey Bill on 6 Nov and 2 Dec. This is a similar spread and number of records to last year, but still a decline from the higher numbers, particularly at Newhaven, during the early 1980s. [JC]

0512. DUNLIN

Calidris alpina

Abundant winter visitor and common passage migrant. Small numbers summer.

The *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	13500	6406	1913	1453	583	49	381	1995	815	1390	19096	12753
Chichester Hbr	10087	3250	761	171	476	nc	138	872	229	695	16680	9829
Pagham Hbr	1826	1658	965	1264	85	48	199	1003	430	564	1216	2024
Lower Adur Estuary	998	1080	86	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	32	42	930	189
Cuckmere Haven	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	47	23	2	-
Rye Hbr	-	30	68	15	18	1	42	95	36	27	30	181

The apparent decline in numbers noted in 1998 continued, but on a much reduced scale. Notable counts in the first winter period not shown in the table included 530 at Rye Hbr on 21 Jan, and at Pilsley Island, 5000 on 16 Jan, 3000 on 17 Feb and 4500 on 4 Mar.

Easterly spring passage was on a similar scale to last year; the totals at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Total
Selsey Bill	-	45	40	85
Worthing Beach	47	147	72	266
Brighton Marina	43	77	202	322
Splash Point, Seaford	7	41	31	79
Bexhill/Hastings	12	12	11	35

The peak movements were on 1 April, with 100E at Worthing Beach, 50E at Brighton Marina and 35E at Seaford, and 7 May, with 25E at Selsey Bill and 154E at Brighton Marina. No significant autumn movements were noted.

Notable counts in the second winter period not shown in the *WeBS*' table were 1200 roosting on Thorney Airfield on 24 Oct, 153 on Worthing Beach on 21 Nov, 14,000 on Pilsley Sands on 27 Nov and 540 at Rye Hbr on 28 Dec.

Small numbers were recorded at six inland sites with a good series of records from Pulborough Brooks. The peak counts were ten at Pulborough Brooks on 7 May, 12 at Weir Wood Res on 19 Sept and ten at Bewl Water on 19 Nov. The monthly distribution of inland records is shown below:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
-	-	2	-	29	3	2	2	13	20	17	11

[PMB]

0517. **RUFF***Philomachus pugnax***Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.**

The *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>County total</i>	56	10	38	-	-	-	2	11	13	26	8	5
Chichester Hbr	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	2
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	12	1	-	-
Amberley Wild Brooks	-	-	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Waltham Brooks	-	-	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pulborough Brooks	50	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	24	-	2
Cuckmere Haven	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Pett Level	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	-
Scotney Court GPs	1	6	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	7	-

The counts show that, as usual, Pulborough Brooks held most of the wintering population. Significant counts not included in the table were of 32 at Pulborough Brooks on 20 Feb and 12 at Camber Pit on 5 Feb, with 15 there the following day.

Spring passage appeared to start in mid-March with singles at Rye Hbr on 15th and Sidlesham on 16th. A count of 23 at Amberley Wild Brooks on 22 Mar may have been migrants or some of the wintering birds from Pulborough Brooks. Other significant spring counts included 14 at Pulborough on 20-21 Mar, eight there on 11 Apr and seven on 6 May. At Icklesham, there were seven on 28 Mar and 13 on 1 Apr. The last spring bird was one E off Bexhill on 7 May.

Autumn passage started with a breeding-plumaged male at Pagham Hbr on 25 June. Birds were present almost daily throughout July to September, mostly involving small numbers on the coast, particularly at Sidlesham Ferry and in the Pett Level/Rye Hbr area. There were, however, two records of much larger concentrations: 45 at Scotney Court GPs on 7 Aug and 60 at North Stakes Island (Chichester Hbr) on 25 Aug. Also notable were 14 at Rye Hbr on 14 Aug, 20 at Church Norton and ten at Sidlesham Ferry on 19 Sept, and nine at Scotney Court GPs on 22 Sept.

During the latter winter period, the largest numbers were again at Pulborough Brooks, with maximum monthly counts of 16 on 25 Oct, 17 on 15 Nov and 15 on 11 Dec. [JC]

0518. **JACK SNIPE***Lymnocyptes minimus***Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.**

The minimum monthly totals and peak counts at the main sites were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>County total</i>	24	45	41	15	1	-	-	-	-	9	29	13
Number of sites	8	6	6	3	1	-	-	-	-	3	7	3
Thorney Deepes	14	31	32	14	1	-	-	-	-	2	16	11
Pulborough Brooks	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Ferring Rife	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Icklesham	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	6	-
Rye Hbr	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	1

During the first winter period, a minimum of 58 birds was recorded from 14 localities while, in the second winter period, there were at least 30 birds at eight localities.

The key sites are shown in the table but there were also five at Filsham LNR on 27 Feb and additional winter records of single birds at Pagham Hbr, Lavington Common, Arundel WWT, Weir Wood Res, Newhaven Tide Mills and Bewl Water. Clearly Thorney Deeps is the best site for this species in the county and here the peak counts were 31 on 2 Feb and 32 on 4 Mar (CBC). The last count is a county record exceeding the previous high of 29 at the same location on 5 Mar 1998. There were still 14 present on 1 Apr, seven on 16th, three on 29th, with one remaining until 5 May. The only other April record was of one at Charleston Reedbed on 11th, 19th and 24th.

The first autumn birds were at Icklesham and Thorney Deeps on 10 and 19 Oct respectively with peak counts at the former site of five on 30 Oct and six on 2-4 Nov. At Thorney Deeps the highest counts were later with 16 on 30 Nov and 11 on 14 Dec. At Rye Hbr, there were three on 19 Nov but all other records were of single birds. [CBC]

0519. SNIPE

Gallinago gallinago

Now a very scarce breeder and fairly common winter visitor.

The monthly *WeBS*' counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>County total</i>	185	420	319	68	13	7	1	45	85	247	592	192
Chichester Hbr	28	154	49	12	-	-	-	3	10	33	46	31
Pagham Hbr	30	11	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Arundel WWT	35	1	31	1	-	-	-	-	-	18	-	1
Amberley Wild Brooks	10	38	41	15	8	6	-	9	13	27	36	13
Waltham Brooks	11	61	30	3	-	-	-	12	1	36	29	25
Pulborough Brooks	36	74	76	13	-	-	-	-	8	56	92	73
Lower Adur Estuary	-	25	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	120	-
Weir Wood Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	21	6	-
Glynde Levels	4	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	46	5
Eastbourne Lakes	26	24	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	3
Pevensey Levels	5	3	12	22	2	1	-	-	-	31	17	13
Pett Level	-	1	35	2	1	-	1	9	35	19	-	-
Rye Hbr	-	18	6	-	-	-	-	12	2	-	183	24

The *WeBS*' counts were on the whole fairly similar to last year but, in the first winter period, there were fewer in January and considerably more in February (last year's counts were similar for the two months). Apart from the *WeBS*' counts, there were significant counts of 54 at Weir Wood Res on 29 Jan, 70 at Pagham Hbr North Wall on 25 Feb, 78 at Thorney Deeps on 3 Mar, 38 at Rye Hbr on 19 Mar, 55 at one site in the Cuckmere Valley on 13 Feb, and 35 at Icklesham on 18 Mar. All these were maximum site counts for the first winter period.

During the breeding season, a single bird held territory and was heard drumming frequently at Millbrook in Ashdown Forest. Several birds were heard drumming and chipping at Pulborough Brooks, and up to six pairs were present at Amberley Wild Brooks. No breeding was suspected at Rye Hbr.

In the latter winter period, numbers started to build in August with 21 at Coldwaltham Brooks on 21st and 19 at Icklesham on 31st. Numbers in September peaked at 30 at

Icklesham on two dates, while other high counts included 20 at Sidlesham Ferry and 25 at Rye Hbr, both on 30th. In October, significant concentrations apart from the *WeBS*' counts included a maximum of 80 at Pulborough North Brooks on 10th, 70 at Icklesham on 30th and 35 at Weir Wood Res on 17th. The *WeBS*' total for November was very high, due principally to unusually high counts on the Adur Estuary and at Rye Hbr. December numbers were more usual with no particularly large concentrations noted. [JC]

0529. WOODCOCK

Scolopax rusticola

Fairly common resident and winter visitor.

All the highest counts in the first winter period were of birds flushed by beaters including 26 at Rushlake Green on 23 Jan, 29 at Heathfield on 27 Jan, and totals of six, five and seven at Brightling on 11, 23 and 30 Jan respectively.

The first roding recorded was at Millbrook, Ashdown Forest on 8 April. There were records of roding birds from 16 West Sussex tetrads and the same number in East Sussex (including 13 from Ashdown Forest). This was very similar to last year's breeding distribution, but there were no confirmed records of successful breeding this year. A single bird flew over a Lewes garden on 18 July.

There were comparatively few records for the latter winter period and apart from two at Marsh Fm, Yapton on 27 Nov, all involved single birds. One interesting record was of a bird at Shoreham Hbr on 11 Nov which was on the beach amongst seaweed. A photograph of this bird appears on the front cover of this *Report*. [JC]

0532. BLACK-TAILED GODWIT

Limosa limosa

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Small numbers summer.

The monthly *WeBS*' counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>County total</i>	471	438	278	256	3	15	118	460	177	409	496	653
Chichester Hbr	470	189	225	199	-	nc	66	386	148	361	484	579
Pagham Hbr	-	249	53	57	3	4	51	65	29	41	12	74
Pett Level	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	6	-	5	-	-

Other counts during the first winter period included peaks of 740 on 19 Jan and 560 on 4 Mar at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr and 340 at Fishbourne on 17 Feb. The only birds noted away from the western harbours were at Pulborough Brooks, with a peak of five on 3 Jan.

A small passage was noted during the spring. Records included 6W at Selsey Bill on 11 Mar, a peak count of three at Pulborough Brooks on 9 Apr and 1E at Brighton Marina on 27 Apr. In May, 97 were at Thorney Island on 1st, eight flew E at Selsey Bill on 4th, 22E at Brighton Marina on 27th and 26NE over Steyning Bowl on 30th.

Birds were present at Icklesham throughout May and intermittently during June and July, with a peak of 35 on 6 Jun. Reports were received from only three other sites during June, with the summering flock at Sidlesham Ferry increasing from four on 26 Jun to 35 on 14 July, 72 on 20 July and a peak of 89 on 27 July. Inland records comprised singles at Chichester GPs 8 Aug and 18 Sept and at Weir Wood Res on 15 Aug.

The largest numbers in autumn were recorded at Thorney Deepes, with 170 on 25 July, 307 on 12 Aug, 263 on 12 Sept and 300 on 25 Oct. Elsewhere in Chichester Hbr, there were 250 at Dell Quay on 27 Nov and 92 at Prinsted on 10 Dec. The year ended with a single at Pulborough Brooks on 16 Dec and a count of 450 in Pagham Hbr on 27 Dec. [PMB]

0534. **BAR-TAILED GODWIT**

Limosa lapponica

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. A few summer.

The *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	1219	828	213	49	21	-	4	387	365	424	335	353
Chichester Hbr	1175	818	201	45	20	nc	4	375	351	410	329	332
Pagham Hbr	12	10	12	-	-	-	-	12	4	9	4	19
Rye Hbr	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Numbers were highest at the beginning of the year, probably boosted by birds escaping the colder weather on the continent at this time. As usual, birds were concentrated in Chichester Hbr. Having failed to reach the qualifying population level for internationally important numbers (1000) in 1998, it is pleasing to record that numbers exceeded this total in January 1999.

There was a strong spring passage in late April and May as shown by the monthly totals from the main sea-watching sites:

	Mar	Apr	May	Total
Selsey Bill	4	882	719	1605
Worthing Beach	-	476	593	1069
Brighton Marina	27	3704	3701	7432
Splash Point, Seaford	-	302	1912	2214
Bexhill/Hastings	40	290	360	690

The largest movement was on 30 Apr when there were 569E at Selsey Bill in 14 hrs, 380E at Worthing in 1.6 hrs, 2198E at Brighton Marina in 10 hrs, and 286 at Bexhill in 2.5 hrs. Other notable day counts were of 880E in 4.5 hrs at Seaford on 3 May and 1205E in 11.3 hrs at Brighton Marina on 5 May.

Numbers were low for the rest of the year, with Pilsey Sands mustering counts of 150 on the 21 Nov and 80 on 10 Dec. [MD]

0538. **WHIMBREL**

Numenius phaeopus

Common passage migrant; a very scarce summering and wintering species.

The *WeBS* counts were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	1	1	1	24	46	3	91	108	4	2	1	2
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	5	20	nc	83	86	3	2	1	2
Pagham Hbr	1	1	1	14	23	3	7	12	1	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	-	-	-	5	-	-	1	7	-	-	-	-

During the early part of the year, up to two wintering birds were present in Pagham Hbr, with 1-2 occasionally noted at Thorney Island and Furze/Creek in Chichester Hbr. The first obvious passage birds were 3N at Littlehampton West Beach on 27 Mar, with a flock of 40 on the beach at Church Norton the following day.

The monthly totals at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

	Apr	May	Total
Selsey Bill	145	77	222
Worthing Beach	231	149	380
Brighton Marina	379	636	1015
Splash Point, Seaford	106	199	305
Bexhill/Hastings	18	35	53

Peak passage was on 25 Apr, with 173E at Worthing, 156E at Brighton Marina, 69E at Newhaven West Pier and 87E at Seaford, and 5 May, with 209E at Brighton Marina.

The nocturnal roost at Rye Hbr increased from 19 on 23 Apr, to 187 on 29 Apr, and peaked at 234 on 5 May. Numbers then decreased rapidly, with only seven noted on 18 May. Estuarine counts were low, with a peak of only 25 in Pagham Hbr on 9 May.

Inland records were scarce this spring with only five records, all from the Arun valley. The peak counts were 15 and 30 at South Stoke on 30 Apr and 2 May respectively.

Small numbers were present along the coast during the summer with monthly maxima at Pagham Hbr of 20 in July and 42 in August. The peak count in Chichester Hbr was 20 at Pilsley Island on 30 July. Inland sightings included singles at Weir Wood Res on 21 July and Bewl Water on 31 Aug, while a flock of 75 passed SW over Wych Cross, Ashdown Forest on 30 Aug. An early departure was apparent, with no double figure counts in September.

Three individuals remained to the year's end, with two in Chichester Hbr and a single in Pagham Hbr. [PMB]

0541. CURLEW

Numenius arquata

Formerly a very scarce breeder; common passage migrant and winter visitor.

The *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	1736	2210	1490	728	239	77	1968	2670	1316	2487	1971	1944
Chichester Hbr	908	1452	912	421	130	nc	1664	1923	820	1694	884	623
Pagham Hbr	96	242	441	307	109	66	266	476	307	457	303	310
Pett Level	310	340	43	-	-	4	37	124	124	271	372	715
Rye Hbr	359	158	39	-	-	1	-	96	40	47	322	277
Scotney Court GPs	1	4	38	-	-	6	1	51	16	-	-	-

Additional to the *WeBS*' counts were records of 400 at Rye Hbr and 282 at Camber Beach on 14 Jan, up to 220 on partly flooded meadows at Bremere Rife during January and February and 29 at Littlehampton West Beach on 20 Mar. Numbers decreased rapidly in March and April, but movements of 142 and 297NE from Pilsley Island were noted on 18 and 22 Apr respectively.

Coastal movements were typically small as shown by the predominant monthly movements at the main sea-watching sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	11W	-	39E	3E	-	-	-	-	-	-	2W	-
Worthing Beach	-	5W	-	3E	21E	2W	4W	-	-	-	4W	4W
Brighton Marina	-	5E	16E	6E	4E	23W	26W	-	-	-	2W	-
Splash Point, Seaford	-	-	10E	5E	3E	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bexhill/Hastings	4W	-	7E	4E	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Peak movements were 34E at Selsey Bill on 16 Mar, 9E and 6W at Worthing on 9 May and 18W at Brighton Marina on 1 July.

The return of migrants is again best illustrated by the counts from Chichester Hbr:

South Stakes Island		Thorney Deepes	
14 Jun	93	17 Jun	13
30 Jun	350	28 Jun	16
30 Jul	898	16 Jul	172
27 Aug	919	29 Jul	154
		13 Aug	253

Other significant counts not included in the *WeBS* table were 85 at Pagham Hbr on 24 Jun, 300 at Pett Level on 15 July and at Rye Hbr, 200 on 8 Aug, 268 on 6 Sept and 200 on 6 Oct.

Inland records comprised two at Pulborough Brooks on 1 Feb and 13 Mar and singles at Weir Wood Res on 29 Mar and 24 Apr. In autumn, singles were seen at Cissbury Ring on 3 July and 9 Oct, with three there on 25 Sept, and a single W at Lancing Clump on 9 Aug. [PMB].

0545. SPOTTED REDSHANK

Tringa erythropus

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

The approximate minimum monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>County total</i>	9	9	7	12	7	5	4	25	19	15	10	10
Chichester Hbr	4	4	3	2	3	1	1	1	2	2	1	2
Pagham Hbr	4	5	3	7	1	-	-	6	12	12	7	7
Icklesham	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	4	1	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	5	-	-	2	1

During the first winter period, the peak counts were five at Pagham Hbr on 14-16 Feb and four at Thorney Deepes on 30 Jan and 28 Feb.

In spring, one was at Pilsey Island and seven at Sidlesham Ferry on 29 Apr, three were still at the latter site the following day and one remained until 2 May. One flew E at Selsey Bill on 30 Apr and three in summer plumage were at Thorney Deepes on 5 May. The only inland records came from Pulborough Brooks with one on 1 Apr and three on 4-6 May, one of which remained until 19 May, the last spring record.

Autumn passage commenced with single birds at Coldwaltham Brooks and Thorney Deepes on 15 and 17 June respectively. Records of note included five at Rye Hbr on 7 Aug, four at Pett Level on 14 Aug, four at Icklesham on 16 Aug, 3E at Selsey Bill on 25 Aug, 12 at Sidlesham Ferry on 17 Sept and 12 at Pagham Hbr on 12 Oct. Single birds were recorded at Newhaven Tide Mills on 13 Oct and at Snowhill Marsh, West Wittering

on 26 Oct. Inland records during the autumn were of single birds at Weir Wood Res on 15 and 21 Aug, Darwell Res on 12 Sept and Bewl Water on 26 Sept.

During the second winter period, peak counts included seven at Pagham Hbr on 7 Nov and 10 Dec, two at Rye Hbr on 10 Nov and two at Thorney Deeps on 5 and 23 Dec. [CBC]

0546. **REDSHANK**

Tringa totanus

Scarce resident and fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor.

The monthly *WeBS*' counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>County total</i>	2197	2346	1119	886	203	134	1044	1328	1767	1541	1677	2002
Chichester Hbr	1593	1691	720	272	39	nc	902	838	1422	1093	1061	1463
Pagham Hbr	260	319	60	385	85	60	68	328	191	207	192	172
Pulborough Brooks	-	-	5	13	26	22	-	-	-	1	-	-
Lower Adur Estuary	90	113	27	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	50	86	144	55
Glynde Levels	-	-	12	20	7	12	1	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	184	126	195	131	13	26	61	142	71	111	151	226

Typical numbers were present throughout both the winter periods. The *WeBS*' counts for Chichester Hbr in January and February exceeded the internationally significant qualifying level (1500), after dipping just below it in 1998. A peak count of 46 was recorded at Newhaven Tide Mills on 9 Jan. Other notable concentrations were of 40 on the Union Channel at East Guldeford on 24 Feb and 44 at Northpoint Pit, Rye on 18 Apr.

Breeding records came from the main river valleys and coastal plain. The Arun Valley held at least 29 pairs, 21 of these at Pulborough Brooks. Many of these pairs successfully hatched young, but it is unknown whether any fledged. At least 21 pairs were recorded breeding in the Chichester Hbr area, but it is unknown whether any of these were successful. In the east, eight pairs attempted to breed at Icklesham but, due to gull predation, few of these hatched young. At Rye Hbr, 18 pairs bred, but despite several broods being observed, few are thought to have fledged. On Glynde Levels, at least two pairs bred with some success as chicks of differing ages were seen on several occasions.

By mid-July numbers were building up on the estuaries, with 450 at Thorney Deeps on 12th, increasing to 850 by 27 Aug. At the end of the year, the largest concentrations were again in the western harbours.

There were a few non-breeding records of single birds at the inland reservoirs. [MD]

0548. **GREENSHANK**

Tringa nebularia

Fairly common passage migrant; a few winter.

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>County total</i>	18	17	19	30	57	6	156	390	311	79	22	22
Chichester Hbr	18	16	16	22	23	2	122	156	196	65	19	22
Pagham Hbr	-	-	2	1	2	1	18	97	55	6	-	-
Icklesham	-	1	-	-	2	2	4	6	-	1	-	-

Rye Hbr	-	-	-	1	4	-	5	62	15	4	-	-
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During the first winter period, all the records were from Chichester Hbr, except for singles at Icklesham on 5 Feb and Pulborough Brooks on 13 and 29 Mar, and two at Sidlesham Ferry on 21 Mar.

Spring passage was once again particularly heavy at Thorney Deeps where numbers built rapidly in April to 14 on 19th, 20 on 30th and 22 on 2 May; one remained until 19 May. Inland, there were two at Pulborough Brooks on 28 Apr and seven on 19 May, one of which stayed until 31st. One was also at Coldwaltham Brooks on 20 May. A total of 17 birds was observed flying E on spring sea-watches, four in April and 13 in May. The peak count was 3E at Worthing on 3 May.

The June records were of two at Icklesham on 3rd and singles at Pilsey Island on 14th, Weir Wood Res on 24th, Pagham Hbr on 28th and Thorney Deeps on 30th.

Numbers rose during July with counts at Thorney Deeps of nine on 9th, 89 on 15th and 122 on 29th. The highest counts, however, were 147 on 27 Aug and 149 on 12 Sept (CBC). Some exceptional flocks occurred at other sites; 97 were found after a thunder storm at Pagham Hbr on 3 Aug (TJE, LGH), 62 at Rye Hbr on 7 Aug, 30 at Manor Fm, Apuldrum on 8 Sept and 55 at Pagham Hbr on 20 Sept. A party of 11 flew S at Beachy Head on 11 Sept.

Twenty-six at Weir Wood Res on 3 Aug (DWM), coincident with a large flock seen at Pagham Hbr, is a new inland record for the county, doubling the previous highest count of 13 at Darwell Res on 22 Aug 1987 (*Birds of Sussex*). Additional inland records included seven at Henfield Levels on 14 and 18 Aug and six at Bewl Water on 12 Sept.

Records away from Chichester Hbr during the second winter period were of two at Cuckmere Haven on 2 Nov and a single bird at Combe Haven on 9 Nov.

The colour-ringed bird recorded in the winter of 1997/98 at Thorney Deeps returned again for its second and third winters and was observed on ten dates from 10 Jan to 12 May, and from 10 Dec into the new Millennium. [CBC]

00551. LESSER YELLOWLEGS

Tringa flavipes

Very rare vagrant.

1998: One at Icklesham on 3 Oct (IH *et al*) has been accepted by *British Birds*. Although not specifically aged, it is tempting to assume that this was the individual present in the Cuckmere from 25 Sept-1 Oct (*SxBR* 51:78). If so, the county total remains on nine, with records having been during February-April (2) and August-November (7). [RJF]

00553. GREEN SANDPIPER

Tringa ochropus

Scarce spring and fairly common autumn passage migrant. Small numbers winter.

The monthly *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	5	-	4	9	4	11	30	34	30	6	4	6
Chichester Hbr	-	-	1	-	-	nc	1	1	-	-	-	1
Pagham Hbr	-	-	1	1	-	-	3	1	-	-	-	-
Chichester GPs	2	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2

Chingford Pond	-	-	-	2	-	8	6	-	4	2	-	-
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	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Arundel WWT	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
Pulborough Brooks	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	3	1	-	-	-
Weir Wood Res	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	1	-	-	-
Barcombe Res	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
Glynde Levels	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Pevensey Levels	2	-	-	-	-	nc	nc	-	2	2	1	nc
Darwell Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	3	-	-	-
Pett Level	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	6	6	-	-	1
Rye Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	1	15	16	10	2	-	2

An analysis of a the records gives approximate minimum monthly totals as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
24	7	11	35	5	15	89	169	86	24	17	18

These are fairly similar to last year, with May again providing the lowest total.

During the first winter period, mostly ones and twos were recorded from several locations throughout the county, but higher counts included six at Stretham Manor, Henfield and seven at Chichester GPs on 1 Jan, with four there on 23rd. The largest counts in spring were of six at Chichester GPs on 2 Apr and three at Sidlesham Ferry on 4, 13 and 22 Apr. The last was at Barcombe Res on 27 May.

With this species there is often almost an overlap between spring stragglers and the first returning autumn birds (presumably failed breeders). The first presumed autumn birds were one at Rye Hbr and two at Weir Wood Res, both on 13 June. Numbers increased during July and August, with records from 30 sites and a particularly high total in the latter month. Numbers were typically from one to four per site per day but there were several records of larger concentrations, including 11 at Icklesham on 17 July, with ten there on 5 Aug, 11 at Long Pit, Rye Hbr on 11 Aug, 10 at Pulborough Brooks on 27 Aug, and 11 at Castle Water, Rye Hbr on the same date. Numbers tailed off in September but there were still more records than for this month last year and a high count for the month of ten at Icklesham on 1st and 4th. Numbers dropped considerably after the end of September to give the normal scatter of winter records, including up to four at Icklesham in October, four at Thorney Deeps on 6 Oct, three at Selsey West Fields on 10 Nov, and three at Barcombe Res on 15 Dec. [JC]

0554. WOOD SANDPIPER

Tringa glareola

Scarce spring and autumn passage migrant; recorded once in winter.

The monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
-	-	-	-	2	4	3	46	3	-	-	-

Spring numbers were below average with just two birds recorded: at Courtwick, Littlehampton on 5 May and in the lower Cuckmere Valley on 21 May.

There were no further records until 19 June when there was one at Icklesham. Two were recorded there on 26 June and a further single on 30th. July was disappointing with only three recorded: singles at Icklesham on various dates between 1st and 8th and at Pett Level Pools and Weir Wood Res, both on 29th. There was, however, an influx in August

with a minimum of 46 birds recorded. These mostly involved singles or small groups of up to four or five, but of particular note were 11 at Horse Eye Level, Pevensey on 9th (IJW), the largest party in Sussex since 15 were recorded at the Midrips on 3 Sept 1956 (*Birds of Sussex*). Numbers tailed off after 23 Aug with just three September records: singles at Rye Hbr on 1st, Weir Wood Res on 10th and the last of the year at Chingford Pond, Duncton on 11th. [JC]

0556. COMMON SANDPIPER

Actitis hypoleucos

Fairly common passage migrant. A few regularly winter. Has bred at least once.

1998: The bird at Apuldram Manor Fm was on 30 Mar not the 20th.

1999: The monthly *WeBS*' counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
County total	-	-	-	-	11	-	54	144	37	6	2	-
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	-	1	nc	7	22	-	1	-	-
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	10	7	-	-	-
Pulborough Brooks	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Weir Wood Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	5	2	-	-	-
Barcombe Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	9	1	2	-	-
Arlington Res	-	-	-	-	4	-	6	6	3	1	-	-
Cuckmere Haven	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	-	-	-
Bewl Water	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	2	10	1	-	1	-
Darwell Res	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	7	4	-	-	-
Powdermill Res	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	-	-	-	-	1	-	20	64	15	2	1	-
Scotney Court GPs	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	7	-	-	-	-

The approximate minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
3	2	4	51	60	15	158	483	104	21	5	5

These show that spring numbers were slightly down on last year, but that autumn numbers were notably higher than in any of the previous three years, particularly in August and September. The total for August, which was probably much higher and almost certainly over 500, was about three times the number recorded in August last year.

In January, birds were recorded in the Arun Valley at Ford (two), and at Litlington (one). The March records were for Henfield Levels on 9th, Camber Pit and Rye Hbr Saltings on 21st and on the shore at Bexhill on 27-28th. The Henfield bird was probably a wintering bird while the others were probably early returning migrants. Most records for April and May were of ones, twos and threes, but larger concentrations included seven at Sidlesham Ferry on 24 April and five at Shoreham on 18 May. At Brighton Marina, there were six on 30 April, seven on 6 May and five on 19 May.

Numbers were typically low in June; the one flying over Brighton on 6th was probably the last spring migrant and there was then a 17-day gap until the first presumed autumn migrant at Sidlesham Ferry on 23rd, with four there on 30th. Numbers continued to increase through July, while a number of notable concentrations during August included 26 at Pagham Hbr and 25 at Thorney Deeps on 5th, 26 at Rye Hbr on 6th, 57 at Pagham Hbr on 10th, and 30 at the Union Canal, East Guldeford on 15th. Numbers decreased sharply in September (although 104 is still a respectable total for the month) and further

still in October (with three at Ford on 23rd probably being wintering birds). The four records each for November and December referred to wintering birds at Ford (two), Pulborough Brooks, Coombes (near Shoreham), Weir Wood Res, Lewes Brooks, Brede Valley and Rye Hbr saltings. [JC]

0561. TURNSTONE

Arenaria interpres

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Scarce in summer.

The monthly *WeBS*' counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>County total</i>	370	429	411	600	52	29	105	788	1004	776	520	329
Chichester Hbr	69	193	156	130	9	nc	-	138	128	201	165	86
Pagham Hbr	62	102	62	403	19	20	85	577	584	371	133	70
Climping	-	3	35	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	43	12	4
Goring Gap	7	3	46	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	20	14	24	9
Lower Adur Estuary	1	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	29	13	45	15
Glyne Gap	189	78	97	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	194	83	115	111
Pett Level	40	30	14	-	-	-	-	51	49	37	20	34
Rye Hbr	2	20	1	67	21	9	20	21	-	12	6	-
Scotney Court GPs	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Other high counts in the first winter period included 15 at Rye Hbr on 16 Jan and 78 at Pilsley Island on 21 Jan. At Bexhill, there were 148 on 3 Jan, 52 on 28 Feb, 78 on 28 Mar, 26 on 3 Apr and 4 on 9 May. A party of 42 were on a moored yacht at West Wittering on 25 Apr.

The monthly totals of eastbound birds at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Total
Selsey Bill	8	56	5	69
Worthing Beach	-	43	15	58
Brighton Marina	4	6	54	64
Splash Point, Seaford	-	3	11	14
Bexhill/Hastings	180	-	-	180

It is unclear if movements totalling 173E over 10-12 Mar at Bexhill/Hastings refer to roost movements; otherwise the peak movements were 30E at Selsey Bill and Brighton Marina on 27 Apr and 5 May respectively.

Small numbers were noted during the summer and early autumn. More notable counts for the latter part of the year not shown in the *WeBS*' table included 63 at Rye Hbr on 2 Aug, 30 at Goring Beach on 4 Sept, 39 at Selsey Bill on 16 Nov, 34 at Worthing Beach on 24 Nov and 86 at Rustington on 28 Dec. The shore at Bexhill continued to attract large numbers, peaking at 198 on 24 Oct.

The only inland record comprised a single at Arlington Res on 26 Apr. [PMB].

0565. **GREY PHALAROPE**

Phalaropus fulicarius

Very scarce autumn and rare winter visitor, usually occurring after gales.

A rather weak looking juvenile on Adur saltings by the Norfolk Bridge on 2 Oct (BFF, DLa *et al*) sadly flew low across the A259 once too often and, almost unbelievably, was subsequently found in the radiator grill of the Bird Report Editor's car after he had unsuccessfully driven over to see it. The corpse was taken to the Booth Museum of Natural History in Brighton. An unidentified phalarope, thought to be this species, was present on a pool at Parrock Place, Coleman's Hatch on 23 Sept (SHa, RTP) although Red-necked could not be eliminated. Although numbers can sometimes be difficult to determine (notably in Jan 1998), about 24 were recorded during the 1990s, with records falling in January (7), September (6), October (7) and November (4). Few phalaropes have been recorded any distance from the coast. During the 1990s, a Grey was at Chichester GPs in Jan 1998 while a Red-necked was near Glynde in Sept 1992. [RJF]

0566. **POMARINE SKUA**

Stercorarius pomarinus

Passage migrant, regular in varying numbers in spring but very scarce in autumn; a very rare visitor in winter.

The spring total of a minimum of 117 was made up of 17 in April and 100 in May. This was well below the 1988-98 average of 187.

As with 1998, the first record was on 20 Apr when two singles flew E at Splash Point, Seaford. Ones and twos were reported on a further seven dates in the month and a total of 6E was recorded at Brighton Marina on 26th. Although birds were recorded on 16 dates in May, the totals were far lower than usual. The two peak dates were on 3rd with 26E at Worthing, 23E at Brighton Marina and 35E at Bexhill and on 7th with 23E at Brighton Marina and 30E at Splash Point, Seaford. Typically, many of the flocks making up these totals passed in the afternoon when few other birds were migrating. There were only two other dates when double figures were recorded with 14E at Brighton Marina on 2nd and 11E at both Selsey Bill and Brighton Marina on 9th. The last bird flew E on 22nd at Bexhill although a single was recorded flying W at Brighton Marina on 28th.

In June, a flock of six was seen flying SW off Worthing Beach on 24th at 20.00 BST (JAN). This is the latest county record for the month by six days.

In autumn, a juvenile was seen flying W at Selsey Bill on 26 Sept (BFF, RAI, DIS). Three winter records were unusual and were no doubt associated with exceptional numbers in the North Sea at that time. All were juveniles flying E at Brighton Marina on 14 and 24 Nov and 2 Dec (all IJW). [TJW]

0567. **ARCTIC SKUA**

Stercorarius parasiticus

Fairly common to scarce spring and autumn passage migrant; very scarce in summer and rare in winter.

The annual total of 479 birds was lower than last year's total of 506 but still considerably higher than the 1997 total of 346. The total is based on minimum daily

figures and assumes that birds seen on consecutive days were different. The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Birds	1	-	2	187	147	12	12	24	71	11	10	2
Dates	1	-	2	21	24	6	4	11	16	5	6	2

The only record in the first winter period was of a single W at Selsey Bill on 1 Jan. Spring passage began when one flew E at Brighton Marina on 29 Mar, followed by another chasing terns in Rye Bay on 30th. As with last year, numbers in the first half of April were small and the first double figure count was not until 20th when 20 flew E at Brighton Marina. The peak movement was on 21 Apr when 43 flew E at Splash Point, Seaford in 5 hrs. A total of 87 birds was recorded along the coast between 22 and 26 Apr. In May, birds were recorded daily up to 16th with a peak of 27E at Brighton Marina on 6th. Thereafter, only 15 were seen during the remainder of the month.

Monthly totals from the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

	Apr	May	Total	No. per hr watched
Selsey Bill	72	30	102	0.39
Worthing Beach	28	42	70	0.76
Brighton Marina	160	111	271	0.77
Splash Point, Seaford	85	67	152	1.07
Bexhill/Hastings	16	15	31	0.73

All records in June and July were of birds flying E, suggesting late passage, other than 2W at Bexhill on 7 June and 1W at Selsey Bill on 1 July. The largest count was of 9E at Brighton Marina on 1 July.

From August onwards, passage was predominately in a westerly direction. The peak counts were in September including 10W at Selsey Bill on 18th, 15E and 6W at Brighton Marina on 24th, and 2E and 11W at the same site on 25th. The only birds not passing or lingering offshore were singles flying NE over Pilesey Island on 25 Aug, resting at the Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr on 18 Sept and on the River Adur at Shoreham on 8 Oct.

Ones and twos were seen in November, and in December there were singles W at Brighton Marina on 3rd and E at Brighton Marina and Splash Point, Seaford on 22nd. [TJW]

0568. LONG-TAILED SKUA

Stercorarius longicaudus

Rare vagrant

1998: The bird in Chichester Hbr on 20 Sept was also seen on 21 Sept (CBC) when it flew over to Pilesey Sands from the harbour entrance and along the shoreline before returning to the harbour entrance.

1999: Five were recorded in autumn, the best showing in the county to date. An adult flew W off Bulverhythe on 8 Aug (ISta), one (a second/third year individual?) flew E off Selsey Bill at 08.00 BST on 24 Aug (BJC), a juvenile came in off the sea at Rye Hbr on 18 Sept (SS, PMT) and landed on the beach, a juvenile flew E off Shoreham Hbr and Brighton Marina (ADW, IJW) between 11.00 and 11.50 BST on 24 Sept, while another juvenile was present on the beach at Seaford on 25-26 Sept (MFA). Thirteen have been recorded during the 1990s, five during 1991-93 (of which three were in May and one in each of September and October) and eight during 1996-99 (of which one was in May, two

in August and five in September). This might suggest a slight shift in patterns of occurrence although the number of records is probably too small to draw any firm conclusions. The August record is the earliest in autumn in modern times by just over a week (two were obtained in Rye Bay on 9 Aug 1910, but must be considered with a degree of suspicion falling as they do well within the parameters of the Hastings Rarities). [RJF]

0569. **GREAT SKUA**

Catharacta skua

Scarce spring and autumn passage migrant; very scarce but increasing in winter.

The annual total of approximately 97 birds was below last year's total of 116 but above the average for the last three years of 90. The records are summarised in the following table that shows birds flying E, W or lingering offshore:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
E	1	-	1	42	19	5	1	1	1	3	1	-
W	-	-	-	5	1	-	-	3	4	3	-	1
o/s	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	2
Total	1	-	1	47	20	5	1	4	8	6	1	3

Only two records were received for the first three months of the year: singles E at Brighton Marina on 19 Jan and at Bexhill on 13 Mar.

Records in April and May were typically of up to three birds per day at the main sea-watching localities, though there were 5E at Brighton Marina on 20 Apr, 11E at Selsey Bill and 13E at Splash Point, Seaford on 21st and 5E at Newhaven West Pier on 22nd. Singles were noted flying E on five dates in June and one flew E at Selsey Bill on 20 July.

Autumn passage commenced on 9 Aug with 1E at Bexhill. Passage was generally uneventful and the only multiple counts were of 2W at Brighton Marina on 18 Sept, 2E at Selsey Bill on 7 Oct and 3W at Bexhill on 24 Oct. The sole November record was of 1E at Selsey on 21st while, in December, there were singles at Rye Hbr on 25th, flying W at Splash Point, Seaford on 27th and off Newhaven West Pier on 28th. [TJW]

0575. **MEDITERRANEAN GULL**

Larus melanocephalus

Scarce but regular visitor throughout the year. A few pairs have attempted to breed in recent years.

This was another excellent year with the bare statistics of records being remarkably similar to the past few years. The total of 410 records reported 720 sightings on 232 different days. The table, which gives the approximate numbers seen in each month, with those birds of unknown age included in the totals, is shown below. A small spring peak is demonstrated with predominantly adults in February and March and first-year birds in May. In all months, except October, second-year birds formed a small portion of the total.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Adults	16	25	25	11	15	12	15	10	7	13	8	11
2 nd -years	2	2	4	2	2	4	6	3	6	10	1	1
1 st -years	7	6	2	11	22	10	9	4	10	3	-	1
TOTAL	26	38	39	31	57	33	33	19	27	32	18	27

Inland	8	2	5	-	-	-	2	-	2	1	1	1
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With so many records it has become impossible to calculate the number of different birds in the county but the figures suggest, like last year, that a total of between 150-180 individuals may have been seen.

Wintering individuals were recorded at the regular coastal sites with the largest numbers encountered at roosts. At Southwick, at least six different individuals were seen during January and 17 during February with 11, all except one being adults, counted on 23 Feb (IJW). The peak roost count at Ovingdean was nine on 17 Feb and here the observer (KBG) felt that at least 11 different birds were seen during the month.

By early March there were four adults at Rye Hbr, with six there on 17th. Observed coastal movements also increased during March with spring totals (March to May) of 4E and 10W at Selsey Bill, 5E at Worthing, 43E at Brighton Marina, 15E at Splash Point, Seaford, and 7E at Bexhill. The peak movements were 6W at Selsey Bill on 8 May and 5E at Brighton Marina on 10 May.

Despite adults being present at Rye Hbr during the spring there were no breeding attempts. At another site in East Sussex, up to six adults were regularly seen with an additional seven immature birds present on 3 May. At this site, at least two pairs nested but two chicks, ringed from different broods as nestlings, were found dead in July.

From late May until July the largest numbers were recorded in Chichester Hbr with five at Pilsey Sands on 30 May and at least 11 different birds there between 12-14 June (CBC). Eighteen birds, comprising 10 adults, two in second-summer and six in first-summer plumage, were counted in the lower Chichester Channel on 18 June (TJE) and presumably some of these were amongst the 11 counted at the same site on 22 July.

Throughout the autumn, small numbers were recorded at several sites with most seen at Selsey where five or more were recorded either at the 'Bill' or in the nearby fields on four dates between 30 Sept and 21 Oct with 7W on 7 Oct being the most seen. During November, there were ten different birds visiting the Southwick roost and 13 different individuals were seen there in December, seven of which were present on 1st (IJW).

More were recorded inland with most seen at Arlington Res where an adult and three first-year birds were seen on 18 Jan, three adults on 19 Jan, two adults and a first-year on 3 Mar and an adult on 10 Oct. Furthest from the coast were singles at Weir Wood Res on 3 Jan and Bewl Water on 24 Sept. Only one colour-ringed bird was reported this year, '77N' on Hastings Beach on 17 June. [JAN]

0578. **LITTLE GULL***Larus minutus***Scarce visitor and passage migrant, most numerous on passage in spring.**

The total of approximately 609 birds seen during the year showed a small improvement on the past three years and is the fifth largest recorded in the county. The following table of approximate monthly totals shows the pattern of occurrence, demonstrating that the species is mostly encountered at the coast during the spring.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Total</i>	16	5	10	375	55	4	3	9	57	46	17	13
Inland	2	1	2	48	-	-	-	-	3	5	-	-

There was no clear pattern to the records in the first three months with between one and three individuals noted at several sites; of most interest were singles at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 13 Jan and in the Adur Valley between Coombes and Upper Beeding on 10 Jan, 21 Feb and from 7 to 9 Mar.

The spring coastal movements were particularly good in late April as shown by the monthly totals of passing birds at the main sea-watching localities:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	1	-	-	78	23	-	-	2	16	22	2	4
Worthing Beach	-	-	-	8	4	-	-	-	2	3	3	-
Brighton Marina	-	-	3	83	33	-	-	1	24	-	7	2
Splash Point, Seaford	-	-	-	261	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bexhill/Hastings	3	-	1	4	5	-	-	2	-	-	5	-

The first notable movement was on 1 Apr when seven, 10 and 16 passed E at Selsey Bill, Newhaven and Splash Point, Seaford respectively. However, it was not until later in April that large numbers were recorded. On 20 Apr, during a strong SE wind, there were 56E at Selsey Bill, 56E at Brighton Marina and 125E at Seaford, on 21 Apr there were 30 E at Seaford and on 25 Apr there were 33E at Newhaven and 53E at Seaford. During the inclement weather of 20th, a party of 44 adults and 3 immatures were seen at Arlington Res (PJW).

The above table shows that fewer were seen in May with 21E at Selsey Bill and 14E at Brighton Marina on 7th being the only double figure counts. None were recorded from sea-watches after 11 May.

Between June and August mainly singles were recorded at several coastal sites on 15 different dates. The extent and timing of the small autumn passage can be seen from the tables. The largest counts were 11E at Selsey Bill on 4 Sept, 21W there during a 2 hr watch on 9 Oct and 13 in Rye Bay on 18 Oct. Inland records were scarce with singles at Weir Wood Res on 7 Sept, Chichester GPs from 24 to 26 Sept, Arlington Res on 26 Sept and Bewl Water on 16 Oct. Two were seen flying S over Pulborough Brooks on 10 Oct and two were at Arlington Res on 24 Oct. After this date, all the records were for coastal sites with maxima of 4E at Worthing on 23 Nov and 4E at Selsey Bill on 22 Dec. [JAN]

0579. **SABINE'S GULL***Larus sabini***Rare vagrant.**

An adult with an injured wing on pools behind the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 2 Oct (AHO, SJP *et al*) was found dead some while later. The corpse was in such bad condition that it was disposed of. Of seven recorded during the 1990s, four were in October and the remainder in April, August and September. [PJ]

0582. **BLACK-HEADED GULL***Larus ridibundus***Common breeding species and abundant winter visitor and passage migrant.**

The only counts during the early part of the year in excess of 1000 were 1500 at Barcombe Res on 11 Jan and offshore at Bexhill where there were 2000 on 9 Feb, 1200 on 11 Feb and 1000 on 24 Feb.

This species tends to be inconsistently recorded by sea-watchers, but the monthly eastbound totals and peak movements for the spring are shown below:

	Mar	Apr	May	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	266	202	153	146 on 3 May (5 hrs)
Worthing Beach	209	441	425	298 on 30 Apr (1.6 hrs)
Bexhill/Hastings	1415	63	20	283 on 13 Mar (3.8 hrs)

Between 160-200 pairs bred at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr, the first chicks were noted on 8 May but predation of both eggs and chicks by fox, and later possibly by badger, resulted in a total failure. At Icklesham, there were 400 pairs but no reports were received to indicate whether they were successful. In West Sussex, a pair nested on Stakes Island in Chichester Hbr but, as frequently happened in past years, the nest was washed out by high tides. Breeding was noted at Arundel WWT, where a count of 40 was made on 22 May. This is the first year that breeding has been reported at this site.

Counts in the summer were small until 700 were recorded at Southwick Beach on 20 July; a count of 1493 in Bosham Channel on 11 Sept was the only other notable coastal concentration reported during the latter part of the year. At Selsey Bill, a westward movement was noted in October with 520 seen in 2 hrs on 9th and 612 in a similar length watch on 10th.

The maxima of regular counts at Weir Wood Res are shown below:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
340	121	27	13	3	5	33	34	80	46	225	194

The largest inland counts at the end of the year were of 900 at Darwell Res on 28 Nov, 1000 at Barcombe Res on 4 Dec and 6500 at Bewl Water on 29 Dec; observers at this last site reflected that this roost count was poor with usual counts between 10,000 and 20,000.

An albino was seen at Pett Level on 16 July. [JAN]

0590. **COMMON GULL**

Larus canus

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; small numbers summer; bred until 1963.

The highest counts in the first winter period were from coastal areas with 1500 at Pilsley Sands on 22 Jan, 3000 at Southwick Beach on 2 Feb, 1100 in the lower Adur Valley on 20 Feb and 8000 roosting on the shore at Rye Hbr on 15 Mar. The numbers involved were considerably smaller than those recorded in 1998.

With the exception of a count of 1000 at Barpham on 5 Apr, the spring passage was poorly recorded and movements were again small with peaks of 34E at Selsey Bill on 2 Apr and 22E at Worthing on 30 Apr.

Apart from 24 at Pulborough Brooks on 13 June, the few summer records involved very small numbers and again there was no indication of breeding activity. The first adults to be recorded in the autumn were singles at Icklesham on 30 June and at Pagham Hbr on 3 July. The autumn return was well documented by the usual regular counts on Thorney airfield with 61 on 6 July, 250 on 9 July, 400 on 22 July and 800 on 7 Aug. The only other notable early autumn record was of 180 at Stedham Sand Pit on 24 July.

Counts of 1200 at Pilsley Sands on 15 Dec and 2300 roosting at low tide in Thorney Channel on 19 Dec were the highest coastal counts at the end of the year. Inland, the latter part of the year produced higher counts with 800 at Chantry Hill on 13 Nov, 900 at Darwell Res on 28 Nov, and counts at Bewl Water of 450 on 28 Nov and 1400 on 29 Dec. Observers at this last site noted, like Black-headed Gull, that the roost was smaller than usual. At Weir Wood Res, the numbers recorded were small as shown by the monthly maxima below:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
110	89	8	-	-	1	4	2	3	12	30	38

An albino individual was seen roosting at Pilsley Sands on 10 Mar. [JAN]

0591. **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL**

Larus fuscus

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor; small numbers (mainly immatures) summer and a few pairs breed.

During the winter and spring there were only four records of 20 or more birds, they were 30 at Coombes on 21 Feb and, in March, 20 at Barcombe Res on 1st, 100 at Arlington Res on 3rd and 24 at Icklesham on 18th.

Breeding records were few with at least three pairs on rooftops in Worthing and a pair in Brighton. A clearer picture of the numbers now breeding in coastal towns should emerge from the Seabird 2000 survey.

Autumn numbers were slightly better than the spring with 40 at Chichester GPs on 7 Aug and 52 at Harbour Fm, Rye Hbr on 9 Aug. At Bury Hill, there were 300 on 4 Sept (ARK), with 60 still there on 18th, while on nearby Westburton Hill, there were 200 following a drill and roller on 27 Oct. The highest numbers at the end of the year were 24 adults at a dusk roost in Chichester Hbr on 20 Nov and 200 at Arlington Res on 24 Dec. [JAN]

0592. **HERRING GULL***Larus argentatus***Common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.**

There were no co-ordinated winter counts so once again the records of this, and other gulls, do not give a clear picture of the numbers wintering in the county. As usual all the highest counts were from the coast with 400 at Brighton Marina on 4 Jan and 500, which flew W there in just 15 minutes, on 12 Apr.

Roof top breeding was recorded from Chichester, Bognor, Goring, Worthing, Brighton (120 pairs disturbed by Red Arrows display), Saltdean (4 pairs), Woodingdean (3 pairs) Newhaven (5 pairs) and Rye Hbr village (“hundreds”). The extent of roof-nesting in the county will be demonstrated by the Seabird 2000 survey. At Rye Hbr, a total of about nine pairs nested at either Ternery Pool, Castle Water and Long Pit.

Counts in excess of 200 during the autumn and second winter period were 207 at Pilsley Sands on 7 Aug, 2000 on a ploughed field at Steyning Round Hill on 20 Sept (ARK), 250 at Icklesham on 1 Oct, 800 at Brighton Marina on 26 Nov and 470 on the River Adur, Shoreham on 28 Nov.

An adult showing the characteristics of the Scandinavian race *L.a. argentatus* was roosting on a sandbar in the River Adur, Shoreham with other large gulls on 10 Jan (RJF). [JAN]

0593. **YELLOW-LEGGED GULL***Larus argentatus michahellis***Fairly common but localised visitor, mainly in late summer and autumn.**

The following table showing the minimum monthly totals reveals the usual summer peak:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	-	2	-	-	4	264	27	14	184	69	2

As usual, most were recorded in Pagham Hbr with 255 on 28 July (TJE), 120 on 31 July, 180 on 8 Oct, 158 on 20 Oct and 62 on 3 Nov. There were no roosting counts for Pagham Hbr during August and September which accounts for the apparent marked reduction in these months. By comparison the counts elsewhere were small with maxima of four in the Cuckmere Valley on 2 June, eight at East Head and nine at Pilsley Sands on 22 July and 11 on the Adur Estuary, Shoreham on 11 Aug.

Records outside the main period were of singles at Pagham Hbr on 12, 16 and 23 Jan and at Arlington Res on 19 Jan, two at Newhaven Tide Mills on 14 Mar, and two at Pagham Hbr on 2 Dec, with one there on 23 Dec.

There were no substantiated records of birds showing the characteristics of the race *L.a. cachinnans*, now known as Caspian Gull. [JAN]

0598. ICELAND GULL

*Larus glaucooides***Rare winter visitor and passage migrant.**

1998: A first-summer bird, seen at BelleTout, Beachy Head on 28 Mar (MST); may have been the individual seen at several sites between January and April.

1999: The three records were all in March; an immature was at Sidlesham Ferry on 10th (MRW, RFW); a first-summer bird was at Selsey Bill and Pagham Hbr on 25th (AHO, OM *et al*) and an immature, with at least one missing primary from its left wing, was at Splash Point, Seaford on the 28th (BRG, SLi.). [JAN]

0599. GLAUCOUS GULL

*Larus hyperboreus***Very scarce but regular winter visitor and passage migrant.**

1998: The three seen together at Pagham Hbr on 11 Jan (IJW) comprised an adult and two in third-winter plumage bringing the January total to at least five birds. An adult, perhaps the Pagham bird, was seen following a fishing boat and resting on the sea off Pilsey Island on 3 Feb (CBC). The sole autumn bird was seen on 28 Nov rather than 19 Nov.

1999: There were few substantiated sightings with most, like 1998, occurring in the first winter period. In West Sussex, an adult was seen intermittently in Pagham Hbr from 3 to 31 Jan (AFB, SJB, AHO *et al*) and an immature briefly at Littlehampton Marina on 3 Feb (RJLK). A bird in first-winter plumage was seen at Saltdean on 9 Feb (IJW); was still present at Ovingdean on the following day and may have been the same individual as that at Brighton Marina on 21 Feb. A first-winter bird seen at Glyne Gap, Bexhill on 27 Feb (IJW) may have also been the same bird. The only record at the end of the year, an adult in Pagham Hbr on 28-29 Dec (AHO, EDU), was possibly the bird recorded there in January. [JAN]

0600. GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

*Larus marinus***Common winter visitor and passage migrant; small numbers summer.**

The following table, showing the maximum number counted in each month from three sites where this species was regularly recorded during the year, reveals this species to be most numerous in the winter.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep t	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	12	22	20	40	58	99	60	-	-
Littlehampton	-	-	-	-	-	51	35	22	-	28	-	33
Bexhill	87	121	141	63	4	4	2	83	16	83	420	214

There were sporadic counts from several coast sites; those exceeding 150 birds were 180 at Brighton Marina on 6 Jan, 300 on the River Adur, Shoreham on 11 Jan, 163 at Pagham Hbr on 11 Sept and, at Rye Hbr, counts of 212 on 5 Sept and 911 on 22 Dec. More unusual were high numbers inland at Arlington Res with 500 on 19 Jan, 40 on 27 Oct and 700 on 24 Dec.

A Jersey ringed bird carrying an 'Orange C' ring was again seen at Brighton Marina in August and September and on the River Adur in November. [JAN]

602. **KITTIWAKE**

Rissa tridactyla

Common but localised breeding species; common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Most of the records of this species refer to coastal movements and the following table shows the monthly totals for the main sea-watching sites. Clearly most are seen passing Brighton Marina. The close proximity of a breeding colony to Splash Point, Seaford makes recording movements difficult from that site.

	Selsey Bill		Worthing Beach		Brighton Marina		Splash Point, Seaford		Bexhill/Hastings	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Jan	97	181	8	8	444	78	143	22	3	760
Feb	6	-	-	-	929	357	-	-	66	210
Mar	12	3	49	1	1341	156	nc	nc	126	1
Apr	33	22	7	2	709	45	nc	nc	36	19
May	20	82	19	13	1492	97	nc	nc	38	-
June	9	28	-	-	53	15	-	-	62	27
July	-	-	-	-	15	4	-	-	-	9
Aug	3	13	-	-	305	628	-	-	11	52
Sept	-	17	-	7	158	786	-	-	1	62
Oct	-	2	11	2	-	-	-	-	-	27
Nov	-	26	149	41	571	67	-	-	104	79
Dec	354	55	3	15	1230	252	4	-	-	9

Daily movements in excess of 300 were 301W at Bexhill on 1 Jan and 405W there on 5 Jan; all others were noted from Brighton Marina with 355E on 13 Feb, 600E on 11 Mar, 310E on 21 Dec and 731E on 22 Dec. Interestingly the large westward movements noted at Bexhill in the first few days of the year were not seen further west.

During the summer there were 180 occupied nests on the cliffs at Newhaven and 822 at Splash Point, Seaford. The count at Newhaven was the lowest for 20 years.

The summer roost at Brighton Marina started in mid-August with 85 there on 15th, reached a peak of 120 on 4 Sept and still held 82 on 11 Sept. Three were recorded away from the coast, all singles, at Weir Wood Res on 3 Jan and at Arlington Res on 7 Feb and 15 May. [JAN]

0605. **GULL-BILLED TERN**

Gelochelidon nilotica

Rare vagrant

A second-summer individual at Ivy Lake, Chichester GPs from 7 to 9 July (EGH, SJW *et al*) has been accepted by British Birds. Possibly the highlight of the year, photographs of the bird can be found in *British Birds* (92: plate 223 & September cover), *Birding World* (12:266 & 268) and in this *Report*. This is only the second record during the 1990s and the first since 1995 (when two roosted at Rye Hbr one evening in late May). There were six records during the 1980s (involving 12 individuals) and four records during the 1970s. This occurrence was particularly pleasing to those uneasy about earlier fly-past

records and it is only the second to be recorded in the county on more than one day (the first being off Langney Point on 23-24 June 1956. [RJF]

0611. **SANDWICH TERN**

Sterna sandvicensis

Scarce breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant; rarely recorded in winter.

The first spring records were of singles flying E at Selsey Bill, Brighton Marina and Bexhill on 11 Mar. Unusually, birds were then recorded every day that month with peak counts of 119E at Bexhill on 27th, 136E at Brighton Marina on 29th and 222E there on 31st, when 190 were roosting at Rye Hbr.

The easterly spring passage totals at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Total	No. per hr watched
Selsey Bill	58	1518	532	2108	6.7
Worthing Beach	69	669	405	1143	10.2
Brighton Marina	486	2579	801	3866	9.1
Splash Point, Seaford	272	1459	471	2202	11.4
Bexhill/Hastings	228	356	41	625	6.7

The number of birds per hour was higher than last year at all sites and up by 28% in total. In April, the peak counts were 563E at Brighton Marina on 1st, 327E at the same site on 20th, 304E at Seaford on 21st and 321E at Selsey Bill on 24th. Inland, one was at Arlington Res on 20th. Numbers decreased in May with 126E at Worthing on 8th being the only three figure count.

As usual, passage continued into June although at Brighton Marina a westerly passage predominated with monthly totals there of 91E and 125W.

At Rye Hbr LNR 26 pairs nested at Ternery Pool, but predation by fox and possibly Herring Gulls resulted in total failure, with no nests present after mid-May.

In July, 115 were roosting in Pagham Hbr on 28th and in August 120 flew W at Selsey Bill on 18th, where the monthly total was 141E and 259W. Autumn passage peaked in September with totals in that month of 40E and 502W at Selsey Bill and 345E and 704W at Brighton Marina. The largest movement was 23E and 210W at Brighton Marina on 16th. Inland, three were at Weir Wood Res on 7th and two at Bewl Water on 12th. Numbers then diminished rapidly until the last passage bird at West Chidham on 17 Oct.

There were a number of winter records. One was off Bexhill on 14 Nov, one flew E at Worthing on 21 Nov, one (probably the same) was seen on several dates between Southwick and Brighton Marina from 21 Nov to 1 Dec, and one flew E at Selsey Bill on 22 Dec. [TJW]

0614. **ROSEATE TERN**

Sterna dougallii

Very scarce passage migrant and non-breeding summer visitor.

One was seen fishing off Pilsley Sands on 4 May (CBC) and it or another was seen there on 16th (CBC, MAC). At Brighton Marina, a single flew W with Common Terns on 25 May (IJW).

In the summer months, two adults were present in Pagham Hbr between 4 and 7 July (IJW *et al*). One of these birds was ringed and had a foot missing. Two adults were also recorded at Glyne Gap, Bexhill on 1 Aug (ISta). [TJW]

0615. **COMMON TERN**

Sterna hirundo

Scarce breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant.

The first record was of a single at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr LNR on 31 Mar, followed by it or another in Rye Bay on 1 Apr. Although birds were then seen on most days, the numbers were small until 22 Apr when 95 roosted at Rye Hbr. At that site, roost counts increased to 240 on 26 Apr, 350 on 3 May and 385 on 6 May. Elsewhere, 45 were at Chichester GPs on 26 Apr, 114 at Pilsley Sands on 4 May and 294 flew E at Bexhill on 5 May (see also Common/Arctic Tern).

Breeding success was mixed; at Rye Hbr about 70 pairs nested but were severely affected by predation with few chicks after the first on 1 July and none surviving for long. Nearby at Icklesham, 70 pairs also bred but success was good with many chicks noted in July. Details received for other sites was limited; at Chichester GPs 70 adults were noted at New Lake on 14 June and 59 chicks were ringed there on 5 July, a pair displayed at Bewl Water in mid-May and a pair were displaying on the raft at Weir Wood Res on 5 Aug. Away from the breeding sites, 200 were at Pilsley Sands on 27 July and 120 at Pett Level Pools on 12 Aug may have been failed breeders from Icklesham or Rye Hbr.

There was a strong westerly passage in August and September notably on 18 Aug when there were 1250W at Selsey Bill and 1015W at Brighton Marina. Unusually, birds were also moving E and between 24 and 30 Aug totals of 855E and 1015E were recorded at Selsey Bill and Brighton Marina respectively. The last three figure count was of 238W at Brighton Marina on 7 Sept. Numbers decreased thereafter and just 12 birds were recorded in October. The last records were of a juvenile at Rye Hbr on 1 Nov and one at Pagham Hbr on 2nd. [TJW]

0616. **ARCTIC TERN**

Sterna paradisaea

Uncertain, but probably a fairly common spring and autumn passage migrant.

The species was only recorded from four sites in the spring with 46E at Brighton Marina on 20 Apr being both the first record and the maximum daily count. The totals from sea-watching localities were 140E at Brighton Marina, 38E at Splash Point, Seaford and 36E at Bexhill. An additional nine were seen at Sovereign Hbr Marina, Eastbourne on 3 May. A first-summer individual flew E at Brighton Marina on 7 May (IJW). According to *Birds of Sussex*, there has only been one previous record of a first-summer (formerly known as 'portlandica') Arctic Tern in the county.

A small number of birds summered in the Pagham Hbr area with records on five dates in June and July including two on 30 June and three on 9 July.

Autumn passage was noted on 25 dates from 7 Aug and involved approximately 213 birds. The highest coastal counts were at Brighton Marina, where 65 flew W on 18 Aug and a further 27W on 23 Sept, and at Cuckmere Haven where 20 flew W on 29 Sept. Smaller numbers were seen at many other sites, including inland waters, where the peak count was five at Chichester GPs on 3 Oct. The last birds were three at Widewater, Lancing on 24 Oct with possibly one of the same in Shoreham Hbr on the same day. [TJW]

COMMON/ARCTIC TERN

Sterna hirundo/paradisaea

Most birds passing sea-watching localities remain unidentified as ‘Commic’ Terns. The first record was of 3E at Splash Point, Seaford on 1 Apr but only 36 more were recorded until 20 Apr when fresh SE winds produced totals of 1065E at Brighton Marina and 879E at Splash Point, Seaford. As usual passage peaked in May with over one third of the month’s total recorded on 7th. On that day, 2705 passed E at Selsey Bill in 14 hrs, 3160E at Brighton Marina in 14 hrs and 4010E at Splash Point, Seaford in 8.25 hrs, demonstrating that larger numbers are observed further east up-Channel. This movement is one of the largest recorded in the county.

The total at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

	Apr	May	Total	No. per hr watched
Selsey Bill	2226	3764	5990	22.8
Worthing Beach	347	883	1230	13.4
Brighton Marina	2711	5462	8173	23.3
Splash Point, Seaford	1230	5184	6414	45.2
Bexhill/Hastings	270	1008	1278	30.4

The summer months were uneventful apart from an unusual record of 650E at Brighton Marina on 23 Aug. A light westerly passage was noted in September with 300 at Selsey Bill on 5th being by far the largest count. Of the seven birds recorded in October, 3W at Selsey Bill on 9th were the latest. [TJW]

0624. LITTLE TERN

Sterna albifrons

Scarce breeding summer visitor and fairly common passage migrant.

A single bird at Pilsey Island on 30 Mar (JB) is the earliest record for the county. The next was not until 7 Apr when there was 1E at Selsey Bill. The first recorded at Rye Hbr were two on 15 Apr. Spring passage was noted most days until the end of May with peak counts of 78E at Selsey Bill on 25 Apr, 136E at the same site on 26th and 130E at Splash Point, Seaford on 7 May. The number of birds recorded per hour was remarkably similar to last year with Brighton Marina being consistently the lowest of the major sites. This is likely to be due to the fact that this species typically migrates very close inshore and many would therefore pass behind the observers on the west arm of the Marina. The totals at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

	Apr	May	Total	No. per hr watched
Selsey Bill	371	195	566	2.2
Worthing Beach	25	172	197	2.1
Brighton Marina	50	184	234	0.7
Splash Point, Seaford	31	232	263	1.9
Bexhill/Hastings	18	22	40	1.0

Breeding was noted at two locations. At Ellanore, Chichester Hbr, four pairs raised three young but it is not known whether they fledged. This follows last years breeding record at the same site (which was the first there for ten years). At Rye Hbr, numbers continued to decrease with just 24 pairs nesting, but 16 young were fledged compared to none last year. There were minor chick losses to Kestrel and major egg losses outside the protective fence due to fox. In addition, an adult was taken by a Hobby on 30 May.

Autumn passage was typically uneventful. The best counts were 32 at Pilsey Island on 27 July and 48 at Rye Hbr on 5 Aug. Inland, singles were noted at Weir Wood Res on 28 July and 3 Sept and at Shinewater Marsh, Eastbourne on 19 Aug. The last record was of three in Rye Bay on 2 Oct. [TJW]

0627. BLACK TERN

Chlidonias niger

Fairly common passage migrant.

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
4	83	-	2	77	37	10

The first of the spring were singles E at Bexhill on 17 Apr and at Selsey Bill on 22nd. As usual, spring passage peaked in May and in particular on 7-8th. On the first date, 21 flew E at Brighton Marina, eight were at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr and five were at Chichester GPs, while on 8th there were 34E at Selsey Bill. The last spring record was of one at Pilsey Sands on 31 May.

Two adults were at Pilsey Sands on 28 July with presumably one of the same still present on 31st.

Birds were noted on 27 dates during August and September with the clear peak being 40 at Thorney Island on the early date of 8 Aug. The only other double figure count was of 14W at Brighton Marina on 18 Aug. In September, when numbers usually reach their maximum, the best count was just six at Selsey Bill on 7th. Of the ten recorded in October,

four were at Chichester GPs on 2nd, with two until 10th, when two were also recorded flying W at Bexhill. [TJW]

0634. **GUILLEMOT**

Uria aalge

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; formerly bred.

1998: The count at Selsey Bill on 31 Dec was of 5E and 40W.

1999: The approximate monthly totals, mainly birds moving at sea, were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
251	35	53	20	70	9	3	-	2	9	11	58

Numbers this year were up by 15% in total on the previous year, which in turn showed an increase of 50% on 1997. The increase came in the first three months with a notable count of 130, mostly W, on 2 Jan in Rye Bay. Most other counts were in single figures from sea-watches of up to 12 hrs. There was an intriguing record of an adult seen swimming with a small chick two miles off Beachy Head on 8 July. Guillemots last bred in Sussex at Beachy Head in 1904! The monthly totals include six oiled birds. [DEGC]

0636. **RAZORBILL**

Alca torda

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; formerly bred.

The approximate monthly totals, mainly birds moving at sea, were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
29	25	56	9	11	7	-	-	2	3	12	21

The annual total was significantly lower than those for the last three years and was less than half that for 1998. The only count of note was at Splash Point, Seaford on 11 Mar with two offshore and 27E in 2.25 hrs watching. The totals include just one bird found dead (at Saltdean). [DEGC]

0647. **LITTLE AUK**

Alle alle

Very scarce but now annual autumn passage migrant and winter visitor.

After the last four good years, it is disappointing to record just one bird. This was found on a Brighton beach on 4 Jan (DD) and taken, via a vet, to Animal Line sanctuary. Unfortunately it died the next day. [DEGC]

0654. **PUFFIN***Fratercula arctica***Very scarce visitor, most frequently recorded in spring.**

Single birds were recorded flying E at Brighton Marina on 21 May (IJW) and off the Severals, Church Norton on 10 Dec (ADW, IJW). This brings the total for the county since 1962 to 69. [DEGC]

AUK Species*AUK spp.*

Totals at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

Direction of Movement	Jan-Feb		Mar-May		Aug-Oct		Nov-Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	19	15	39	46	3	6	40	43
Worthing Beach	17	4	73	7	1	6	50	347
Brighton Marina	4494	1266	1681	164	6	3	1622	1016
Splash Point, Seaford	1866	157	901	25	-	-	32	16
Bexhill/Hastings	69	357	3	7	-	-	-	-

Numbers were down on last year in November and December, but well up in January and February, particularly off Brighton Marina. The highest counts there were of 1056E in 4 hrs on 13 Feb and 1332E in 5.25 hrs on 24 Feb. The largest movements at Seaford were on the same days, 576E in 2.75 hrs on 13th and 366E in 2 hrs on 24th. [DEGC]

0665. **FERAL ROCK DOVE***Columba livia***Common resident.**

Only seven records were received. A 67ha CBC plot at Marsh Fm, Yapton held maxima of 14 during January and February and 125 during October to December. The highest counts for the year were of 220 at Wicks Fm, Yapton on 22 Feb and 190 at Kents Fm, Climping on 7 Nov. The small flock, present all year at Littlehampton Marina, provided the only confirmed record of breeding. The continued paucity of records makes it impossible to make any comment about the status of this species, except that it is ubiquitous and would appear to be thriving. [DEC]

0668. **STOCK DOVE***Columba oenas***Common resident and possible winter visitor.**

Approximately 140 records were submitted for 40 localities, taking Ashdown Forest as one site.

The largest flocks reported in the early part of the year were 150 at Icklesham and 120 at Rodmell during February, 150 at Rye Hbr on 5 Mar and 200 at Thorney Island on 5 Apr.

Records of confirmed breeding were received for many sites across the county including the probability of birds breeding in nest boxes at Castle Water, Rye Hbr.

Observers in Ashdown Forest provided the greatest number of breeding records where, not surprisingly, the preferred tree-hole nest sites are to be found. However, breeding appears to be extensive across the county in appropriate habitat, as indicated by the Atlas map in *Birds of Sussex*.

There was some evidence of autumn movements with 51 flying E at Beachy Head on 16 Oct, 52W at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 3 Nov, 100 in a large movement of Woodpigeons on the same date at Beachy Head, and 23W at Pagham Hbr on 6 November.

The largest flocks in the second winter period totalled 200 at both Thorney Deeps and Rye Hbr in November. These maximum counts are similar to those in the last few years, perhaps suggesting a stabilising of the species' current status in Sussex. [DEC]

0670. WOODPIGEON

Columba palumbus

Abundant resident and winter visitor.

A flock of approximately 2000 birds at Firlie Beacon in January was the largest reported in the early part of the year. Other large concentrations in the first winter period included 1500 at New Erringham Fm, Shoreham on 6 Feb and 1100 at Shopham Bridge, near Byworth on 27 Feb.

Coastal observations at Bexhill and Hastings produced a maximum of 302 birds on 28 Mar and 152E on 2 May, a late date for movement of this species. Elsewhere, there were 450E in the early morning of 17 Apr at Rye Hbr.

Breeding was confirmed at about 20 sites representing just a fragment of the breeding population of the species in the county. Additional breeding details can be found on pages 163-164.

The impressive autumn movement, which began in October with 550E at Beachy Head on 16th and 1000W at Pagham Hbr on 26th, reached a peak in November. In most instances birds were recorded flying W. On 3 Nov, there were 14,500W at Beachy Head and 6200W at Pagham Hbr whilst smaller parties, totalling 660, flew E at Littlehampton. On 4 Nov, there were 2500W at Church Norton and two days later there were 2600 at Selsey Bill and 1500W at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head. Even these counts become insignificant compared with the movement seen during the early morning of 7 Nov. At Beachy Head, between 0730 and 0930 hrs, an estimated total of 100,000W prompted the observer (RDME) to note "a remarkable movement, possibly one of the largest ever recorded"; indeed the county's record movement was of 70,000SE during the autumn of 1975 when the largest day total was 30,000 on 3 Nov (*Birds of Sussex*). On the same day, observers at Bexhill and Hastings counted 28,370W in 3 hrs; the scale of the movement in West Sussex was, however, markedly smaller with the only notable records being 1000S at Steyning and 900 at Selsey Bill. The last 4-figure record in this incredible period was of 2000NW in off the sea at Brighton Marina on 12 Nov.

There were few subsequent reports of sizeable flocks, the largest being 450 at Coolham on 6 Dec. [DEC]

0684. **COLLARED DOVE**

Streptopelia decaocto

Very common resident.

Approximately 60 records were submitted for this very common species, including 15 of confirmed breeding. Once again, by far the largest flock reported was at Harbour Fm, Rye Hbr with 224 on 21 Jan and 281 on 28 Oct.

The first record of a bird sitting on eggs was for 6 Feb at Bognor Regis. Eggs were also being incubated at West Hove GC on 12 Sept. A single bird at Ebernoe Common on 26 Sept was the first record for the reserve.

Common sense suggests that the species thrives uninterrupted, subject to the availability of abundant food on farmland. There was no indication of any movements or influxes during the year. [DEC].

0687. **TURTLE DOVE**

Streptopelia turtur

Fairly common, but declining, summer visitor and passage migrant. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

The first records of the year were for 24 Apr with singles at Amberley Wild Brooks, Brighton and Thorney Deeps. There were regular sightings thereafter, the highest counts being of eight at Icklesham on 27 May and seven at West Dean on 15 June. A bird at Shoreham Sanctuary on 7 May was the only record at this site where they bred regularly in the past.

Counts of breeding birds in defined areas can be found on pages 163-164. Additionally there were six pairs on Thorney Island, 4-10 pairs at Rye Hbr and five pairs at Icklesham where, in 1996, an estimated 20 pairs bred. There was, however, an increase in the number of records of confirmed breeding from only five in 1998 to about 20 in 1999.

Few birds were recorded on autumn passage, the largest flock being just six at Thorney Deeps on 16 Aug. The last recorded was a single bird at Church Norton on 27 Oct. [DEC]

0712. *Cat. C* **RING-NECKED PARAKEET**

Psittacula krameri

Very scarce introduced breeding resident.

There were just 14 sightings of single birds, widespread both geographically and chronologically, with no evidence of breeding. The records were for January, February (3), April, June (2), August (3), September, October (2) and December. Three of the records between January and June were for the Brighton area and three, between June and October, were for Rye Hbr. The remainder were isolated sightings at Petworth Park, Littlehampton West Beach and Fairlight in February, Bognor Regis GC and Pett Level Pools in August, Robertsbridge on 11 Sept, Southwater on 2 Oct and finally at The Pells, Lewes on several days in December. [DEC]

0724. **CUCKOO**

Cuculus canorus

Fairly common summer visitor.

The first record, a male that flew in off the sea at Brighton Marina on 11 Apr, was just four days later than the average arrival date for the years 1971-1993 (*Birds of Sussex*), although notably later than the current 10-year average of 30 Mar. Singles were at Pulborough Brooks on 12th and at Icklesham on 13th; thereafter there was a steady flow of arrivals with birds seen or heard on most April days. Four were recorded at Pulborough Brooks and Church Norton on 6 and 12 May respectively.

Although birds were seen regularly at several sites, there were few reports of confirmed breeding. Details of breeding surveys can be found on pages 163-164. Additionally, there were four territories on Thorney Island. At Rye Hbr, it was reported that the species "appeared to be more common than usual". A nestling at Icklesham was fostered by Dunnocks, the usual host species in Sussex.

Just two records were received for July and ten for August. The only subsequent records were of juveniles at Pulborough Brooks on 9 Sept and at Henfield on 17 Oct. [DEC]

0735. **BARN OWL**

Tyto alba

Scarce breeding resident.

The monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
16	13	10	9	21	29	22	14	7	6	12	21

The species was encountered across the county throughout the year with a total of 180 sightings.

Breeding was confirmed at 57 sites compared with 62 in 1998. Nest sites included boxes in barns (31), pole boxes (10), tree boxes (3), castles (2), water tower (1) and an old railway bridge (1). A number of nest box schemes were monitored under licence and an encouraging total of at least 123 young were ringed. Of 24 nests for which data are available, 22 raised over 71 young (average 3.2) and two failed. Brood sizes ranged from 2-6, an increase in productivity from 1998. Notably, two broods of five and one of six fledged successfully.

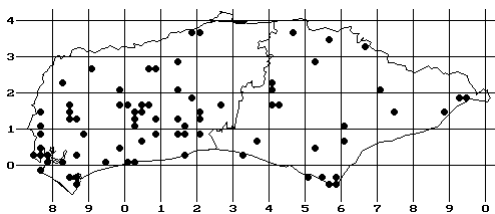
One road death was reported. [GCMR]

0757. **LITTLE OWL**

Athene noctua

Fairly common introduced resident.

The map shows the distinctly western distribution as noted in *Birds of Sussex* - 52 records from the west compared to 23 from the east. Although breeding was confirmed or probable from only 16 sites, every record represents a potential breeding site for this under recorded species. Breeding success was even less frequently noted. Pairs each raised two young at Storrington, Goodwood Park, Newmarket Bottom near Woodingdean and Pevensey and a fledged juvenile was seen at Stump Bottom, Steyning.



One road death was reported from Brighton seafront in September and two were found drowned in a trough at Downs Fm, Amberley Mount in June. [RTP]

0761. TAWNY OWL

Strix aluco

Fairly common resident.

With records received from only 62% of the 10km squares (100% in *Birds of Sussex*) it is not possible to draw any conclusions regarding the distribution or numbers of this species within the county. Breeding was confirmed or considered probable from 31 sites but, with this sedentary species, every one of the 62 tetrads from which records were received is likely to hold at least one breeding pair. The earliest evidence of breeding came from Applesham Fm, Coombes on 19 Apr where a nest with two eggs was found in a box. A pair raised three young in a crows nest at Hardham and five pulli were ringed from three nests on the Bluebell Railway. A fourth nest failed. The first juvenile was recorded at Hanger Wood, Pulborough Brooks on 9 May and a downy fledgling was seen at Wivelsfield on 25 May. Juveniles were also noted at Forewood RSPB reserve, Crowhurst and on Cuilfail, Lewes.

A road casualty was picked up at Horsham in February, a bird died caught in a barbed wire fence at Ebernoe Common in August and one was found dead on a path at Thorney in July. The majority of the other records were of birds calling. More records are required to monitor the status of this species. [RTP]

0767. LONG-EARED OWL

Asio otis

Rare resident and very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

The monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
-	-	3	1	4	7	1	-	-	2	8	5

Records of 18 or 19 birds were received from eight different sites. In nearly all cases confidentiality of site details was requested but the best chance of seeing this species would appear to be on the East Sussex downland. Breeding was confirmed at two sites and two young were fledged at one of them and at least one from the other. Winter roosts of five and six birds were recorded, both on the Downs and one of them in hawthorn thicket. Birds seen at Selsey West Fields and Belle Tout, Beachy Head on 21 and 28 Oct respectively were very likely to have been migrants. [RTP]

0768. **SHORT-EARED OWL***Asio flammeus***Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Has bred.**

The following table shows the approximate monthly totals taking into account duplication at well watched sites.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
12	8	10	5	3	-	-	-	4	10	17	14

A total of 17 birds was recorded in the first winter period from 1 Jan to 25 May. Apart from maxima of six at Thorney Island and four around Shinewater Lake, Eastbourne, all were single birds and all were on the coastal plain, except for one near Falmer on 17 Mar. A bird flew in off the sea at Splash Point, Seaford at 0700 hrs on 2 May being mobbed by gulls.

The first returning bird flew high E over Scotney Court GPs on 4 Sept. Thereafter, 86 sightings were reported from 16 different areas on 54 of the available 119 days to the end of the year. All records were from the coastal plain and the river valleys, the most watched birds being those on Pulborough Brooks where up to seven were reported on 27 Nov. The maximum at Thorney Island was five in a roost on 16 Dec. Two at Pagham on 8 Nov was the only other multiple sighting, where a bird also flew in off the sea on the same day. [RTP]

0778. **NIGHTJAR***Caprimulgus europaeus***Fairly common summer visitor rarely seen on migration. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.**

The first were heard calling near East Dean on 3 May, at Northpark Wood, Parham on 5 May and at Vert Wood, near Loughton on 6 May. From 11 May, birds were present in many parts of the county.

During the breeding season, there were records from 26 tetrads in West Sussex and 21 in East Sussex. Most records, however, were for Ashdown Forest where territorial behaviour was recorded at 64 sites. Elsewhere in East Sussex, there were 16 territories at seven sites. In West Sussex, 68 territories were found at 25 sites, the largest counts being of 11 churring males on the Angmering Park Estate and a total of 13 on Ambersham and Heyshott Commons. The county total of 148 territories compares with 183 in 1998. Observations from the West Sussex Heathland Survey suggest that the population in the areas counted is fairly stable, with the numbers reported far more dependent on observer activity and weather conditions.

During the autumn, a total of 13 was ringed at Icklesham. The last reported birds were singles in a garden at Bognor Regis on 15 Sept and at Icklesham on 11 Oct. [JSB]

0795. **SWIFT***Apus apus***Common summer visitor and passage migrant.**

The first record was of six at Splash Point, Seaford on 22 Apr. Although a week later than the average arrival date for the past ten years, this is the same date as the mean arrival date for the years 1970-93 (*Birds of Sussex*). Small numbers were reported, mostly at

coastal sites, from 26 Apr to 5 May. The first large counts were of 250 at Ivy Lake, Chichester GPs on 6 May, 66 at Selsey Bill on 7 May and 200 at Balcombe Res on 8 May. A count of 160 in off the sea at Brighton Marina on 25 May presumably involved late arrivals. Notable early summer counts included 300 at Barcombe Res on 31 May, 600 at Rye Hbr on 3 June, 500 at Steyning Bowl on 7 June and 800 at Pagham Hbr on 17 June.

The SOS commenced a two-year survey of breeding Swifts as a small-scale repeat of its 1968-70 survey. This involved evening counts of low flying Swifts in a sample of towns/villages in June. It is hoped to include a full report in the 2000 *SxBR*. Results for 1999 were as follows:

Town/Village (West to East)	Evening count of low flying Swifts	Town/Village (West to East)	Evening count of low flying Swifts
Compton	0	Worthing	254-325
South Harting	14	Pulborough	8 (1.7.99)
East Harting	0	Storrington	24
Chichester	120	West Chiltington	10
East Lavant	16	Thakeham	0
Midhurst	45	Steyning	12-16
Easebourne	15	Henfield	4
Petworth	60	Barcombe	12
Byworth	18	Lewes	65-75
Bognor Regis	72	Ringmer	0
Felpham	6	Winchelsea	15
Littlehampton	39		

Information on nest sites was also requested as part of the breeding survey. Nest sites included eight churches (in belfry via louvre, under eaves, church tower and holes in stonework), old houses (under eaves, gable ends and behind tile cladding), shops (under eaves and holes in brickwork) and a barn (behind weatherboard). A traditional nest site in Storrington believed to support *ca.* nine pairs was undergoing roof repairs at the time of the survey!

Presumably return passage had commenced by 22 July when 2000 were recorded at Pagham Hbr, 1500 at Rye Hbr and 500 at Bewl Water. Another notable count was of 1000 at Pagham Hbr on 7 Aug. There were 15 sightings in September, the last for the year being two at Lewes Priory on 28th. [GCMR]

0798. ALPINE SWIFT

Apus melba

Rare vagrant.

Two were recorded, single individuals flying S at Abbots Wood on 6 Apr (CAT *et al*) and with a feeding flock of *ca.* 30 Common Swifts over Beeding Hill on 7 June (SRA). These two take the county total to 35, of which ten were recorded during the 1990s (and 12 in 1980s). The June record is the first in that month since 1978 (at Rye Hbr) while records during 1990s have been in March (on 27th), April (2), May (4), June and August (2). [RJF]

0831. **KINGFISHER***Alcedo atthis***Fairly common resident and probable winter visitor.****1997:** The two at Arundel were on 12 Jan.**1999:** Observations during the winter months were as follows:

	Jan	Feb		Nov	Dec
Number of birds	32	23		62	54
Number of inland sites	6	5		16	12
Number of coastal sites	15	9		22	14

The number of birds increased by more than 25% over last year, mainly in the November-December period. More sites were used this year with a distinct preference for those on the coast. As usual, most records were of single birds but, after the breeding season, there were a number of sightings of twos and threes lending weight to last year's suggestion that there may be growing improvement in breeding success. There were four in the lower Ouse Valley on 10 Oct and three at Thorney Island on 11th, two of which were seen again, fishing in a canal in sight of each other, on 25th. Three were seen at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 26 Oct, 23 Nov and 2 Dec.

Between April and June there were reports from 31 different sites but confirmed breeding records were few with three pairs at Bewl Water, two pairs at Pippingford Park, Ashdown Forest, and a pair at Ifield MP. There were also three broods in an artificial nest bank at Loder Valley, Ardingly. [DEGC]

0846. **HOOPOE***Upupa epops***Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant, has bred**

Three were seen during the spring but none in the autumn. All were singles, at Church Norton Priory on 18 Mar (PW), the Severals, Church Norton from 27-30 Mar (AFo, AHO *et al*) and East Preston on 1 May (JPF). Forty-seven were recorded during the 1990s making this a below average showing. Nearly half the recent records have been in April and those above in late Mar and early May just missed adding to that total. The first March record is the earliest since 1983 when one was seen at Camber on 14th, the next latest since then being at Sidlesham Ferry on 20 Mar 1989. [RJF]

0848. **WRYNECK***Jynx torquilla***Very scarce passage migrant; has bred. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.**

Reports of 11 birds were received. There were two spring records: singles at Newhaven Tide Mills on 11 Apr (MA, SLi *et al*) and Playden, near Rye on 4 May (DCC). The autumn records were for September only, with singles trapped and ringed at Icklesham on 1st, 9th and 30th (RBRG); a single at Belle Tout, Beachy Head on 9th (RT), two on the W side of Pagham Hbr on 12th (AHO, DIS *et al*); and further singles at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 21st (IJW); Castle Water, Rye Hbr on 27th (SS); and Cuckmere Haven on 29th (ARK). [LM]

0856. **GREEN WOODPECKER**

Picus viridis

Fairly common resident.

A total of 345 records was received from 135 sites across the county, with reports from 64 of the sites being in the breeding season.

Estimates of breeding pairs included five at Woolbeding Common; three at Pulborough Brooks; nine at Londonderry Fm, Nutley; eight at Pippingford Park, Ashdown Forest; three at Old Lodge NR, Ashdown Forest; four at Darwell Res and three at Rye Hbr, with 1-2 pairs reported from 51 other locations. Counts from sites of regular surveys are included in the summary table on pages 163-164.

On 11 Mar, eight were feeding on Upperton's Field, Pulborough Brooks, with counts of six on dates in September, November and December at the same location. The maximum count for the year at Old Lodge NR was six on 12 Aug and at Darwell Res was nine on 18 Apr and 18 July. [LM]

0876. **GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER**

Dendrocopos major

Common resident.

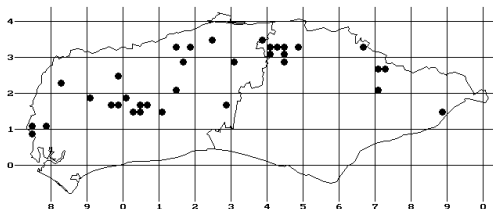
A total of 222 records was received from 127 locations across the county, with reports from 89 of the sites being in the breeding season. The earliest territorial activity reported was on 10 Jan at Isfield. Estimates of breeding pairs included four at Wiggonholt Common, five at Pippingford Park, Ashdown and three at Darwell Res. Reports of 1-2 pairs, nesting activity, or juveniles came from 24 other locations. Counts from sites of regular surveys are included in the summary table on pages 163-164.

No reports of coastal movements were received. [LM]

0887. **LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER**

Dendrocopos minor

Scarce resident.



Records were received from 34 tetrads across the county. The earliest territorial activity reported was of drumming at Pulborough Brooks on 9 March, although individuals had been seen on the reserve since 2 Jan. Reports during the breeding season were received from: Stansted Forest; Ambersham Common; Burton MP; Hilliers Wood, Petworth; Hesworth Common; Pulborough Brooks; Amberley Wild Brooks; Sandgate Park, Storrington; Knepmill Pond; north Horsham; Balcombe SF: Bewbush, near Crawley; Ashdown Forest (7 locations); Bewl Water and Hurst Green. Sightings were reported from a further 11 locations, outside the breeding season: Walderton; Gatehouse

Fm, Trotton; Coates Common; Rackham Woods; Goose Green, Warnham; Denne Park, Horsham; Gossops Green, Crawley; Hurstpierpoint; Darwell Res; Etchingam and Icklesham.

A total of 80 records was received for the year, a significant decline from the 106 for 1998; reports of all records of this species, especially of territorial behaviour or confirmed breeding, would be appreciated. [LM]

0974. **WOOD LARK**

Lullula arborea

Scarce resident and passage migrant. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

In January, over 50 were recorded from seven localities in West Sussex, the largest gatherings being 16 at Broad Halfpenny, near Fittleworth, and eight at nearby Coates Common on 1st, 12 at Itchenor on 17th and 12 on Ambersham Common on 24th. Song was first heard on 5th and copulation was observed on 24th. Unusually, there were seven at Wiston on 13 Feb.

During the breeding season, 78 territories were located at 23 sites in West Sussex, a further increase compared with 1998. As expected, most were on the heathlands with a total of 11 on Ambersham and Heyshott Commons and also on Woolbeding Common. Most unusual was a singing male at Lidsey Rife, Barnham on 8 May. Far fewer were recorded in East Sussex with up to five pairs and two additional males recorded on Ashdown Forest and a single bird singing in Broadwater Forest on 28 May.

A party of up to five at Pulborough Brooks in early July was indicative of post-breeding as were parties of ten at Gatehouse Fm, Trotton and another of nine at Coates Common on 1 Sept. The first sighting on the coast was a single at Pagham Hbr on 1 Oct. A further 21 were recorded during the month between West Wittering and Rye Hbr, including five at Church Norton on 12th.

A flock feeding in linseed stubble near Coates increased from 17 on 31 Oct to 25 on 14 Nov, 58 on 19th (BFF), 49 on 21st, 45 on 2 Dec and 25 on 12th. This gathering is the largest recorded in the county for many years. [JSB]

0976. **SKY LARK**

Alauda arvensis

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

Although flocks in the first two months in 1998 were few in number, they were even fewer in 1999, the largest being just 50 at Highdown, near Worthing on 16 Jan.

The first singing birds were among 40 noted on 2 Feb at Steep Down, Lancing, followed by many singing inland throughout the rest of the month, mainly on Ashdown Forest.

Breeding records rose this year to 420 and included 89 from Ashdown Forest and Pippingford Park combined. The only relatively small area with a notable number was Rye Hbr where 40 were found, compared with 33 in 1998 and 29 in 1997. Whether these increases are due to observers taking more notice of Sky Lark numbers or to more hayfields and set-aside is not ascertainable. Details of breeding surveys can be found on pages 163-164.

Small numbers were seen passing over coastal sites during October. Observed flight directions of parties were N, W, SW, and E, and the largest count was 80N at Church Norton on 11th. Substantial post-breeding flocks were more numerous than in 1998. There were 150 at Steyning Bowl on 13 Oct and counts of 100 on Thorney Island on 27 Oct and 16 Dec, at Beeding Hill on 7 Nov and at Newmarket Hill near Brighton on 21 Nov. On 19 Dec, there were 230 at Lee Fm, Patching, 200 at Beeding Hill and 160 at Holmbush Tip, Faygate. Finally, on 28 Dec, there were 200 at Chantry Hill, near Storrington.

Feeding habitats noted were recently sown cereal, sand-dunes, weedy stubble, set-aside, mixed game-cover plots and linseed stubble. [JSB]

0978. **SHORE LARK**

Eremophila alpestris

Rare winter visitor

1998: One on the beach between Ternery Pool and the mouth of the River Rother at Rye Hbr from 1 Dec remained into 1999 (see below).

1999: One on the beach between Ternery Pool and the mouth of the River Rother at Rye Hbr remained until at least 7 Feb (RJF, NJR, PMT *et al*). Eighteen individuals were recorded during the 1990s, all between 18 Oct and 21 Apr. [RJF]

0981. **SAND MARTIN**

Riparia riparia

Fairly common summer visitor and very common passage migrant.

The first records, both of single birds, came from Galley Hill on 11 Mar and from Barcombe Res on 13th. It was the month's end before larger numbers were seen, for example, 30 over Pulborough Brooks on 30th. Ivy Lake, Chichester GPs attracted 150 and 250 on 5 and 6 Apr respectively; on the former date 70 were over Arlington Res and on the latter 60 at Barcombe Res.

An estimated 60 birds feeding over Duncton Common on 14 June suggested breeding in the area. A minimum of 20 pairs bred at Rock Common, Washington and 2-3 pairs were unsuccessful at Sullington Warren. Sadly, no other breeding records were submitted for the year except for confirmation that no breeding took place at Rye Hbr.

Evidence of birds gathering for migration was noted in early July with 370 in the Rye Hbr area on 4th and 250 at Church Norton on 13th. At the end of the month, 1000 were counted on two days around Pagham Hbr. In August, 10,000 were estimated at Icklesham on 27th, birds being seen coming to roost there on 26 days during the month. Other August records included 300 at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 7th, 200 at Barcombe Res on 15th and, at Ivy Lake, 200 on 17th and 19th, and 250 on 24th. Approximately 500 birds were over Castle Water, Rye Hbr on 27 Aug. Three-figure counts in September were of 250 at Ivy Lake on 9th, 500 there on 18th, 100 at both Beachy Head and Weir Wood Res on 11th and 19th, 200 on the latter day at Arlington Res, and 350 at Rye Hbr on 23rd. Small numbers were recorded in October, the last being one at Castle Water, Rye Hbr on 20th. [MJM]

0992. **SWALLOW**

Hirundo rustica

Common summer visitor and abundant passage migrant.

The first records were of four at Pulborough Brooks on 25 Mar and singles at Barcombe and Galley Hill two days later. This was a notably late arrival; although just three days later than the average for the years 1965-93 (*Birds of Sussex*) it was 17 days later than the average for the past ten years. Throughout much of April, birds arrived singly or in small groups, exceptions being 24 over Pulborough Brooks and 30 at Arlington Res on 5th, 50 at Ivy Lake, Chichester GPs on 6-7th and 60 at Icklesham, also on 7th. The largest counts for the month were 75 at Ivy lake on 20th and a total of 102N at Selsey Bill on 28th.

From the breeding records received, some pairs were apparently quite successful; from four nests at Clayton, 16 young were fledged, and an identical result was achieved by four pairs at Wivelsfield, whilst two pairs raised 12 young at Byworth.

Interesting records in July, before major gatherings for autumn migration built up, included a flock of 130 flying N over the Henfield Levels on 6th and 100 at both Pagham Hbr and roosting on Thorney Deeps on 12th. At the North Wall, Pagham Hbr, there were 1500 on 7 Aug and 2500 on 14th. An estimated 10,000 passed Fairlight CP on 27 Aug whilst on the next day 1009 were counted passing W along the shore at Bexhill and Hastings in 1.5 hrs. Among the larger counts in September were 1000 at Church Norton on 6th, 2000 there on 21st, 3000 passing Rye Hbr in 1 hr on 18th, 4000E there in 20 minutes on 21st, a minimum of 6000 at Icklesham on 24th, 1460W in 50 minutes off Worthing Beach and 2000 NW over Brighton Marina on 26th, and 5000 at Church Norton on 28th, with 2000 there on 30th. Somewhat smaller movements were noted in October, the largest being 1500 at Church Norton on 5th; other significant counts included parties of 300W at Birling Gap also on 5th, 530 at Selsey Bill and 300W at Church Norton on 9th, and 341W at Littlehampton West Beach on 10th. The maximum count at Icklesham was 400 on 25th, a late date for so large a number. There were nine November records, totalling 36 birds, including 20 at Icklesham on 2nd. The last was one at Shoreham on 17th. [MJM]

0995. **RED-RUMPED SWALLOW**

Hirundo daurica

Rare vagrant

One at Birling Gap at 0930 hrs on 15 May (JBU, RJF, PN *et al*) did not linger, slowly moving off in a northerly direction. It has been accepted by *British Birds* and was the ninth to be recorded in the county during the 1990s and the 17th in total. Apart from one September record (in 1997), all have been between 17 Apr-26 May, with most (11) in May. Eight have been in the Beachy Head area. [RJF]

1001. **HOUSE MARTIN**

Delichon urbica

Common summer visitor and abundant passage migrant.

The first sighting of six birds over Pulborough Brooks on 27 Mar was three days earlier than the average arrival date for the years 1965-93 (*Birds of Sussex*) but eight days later than the average date for the past ten years. In East Sussex, 12 at Barcombe Res and

one at Arlington Res on 3 Apr were the first records. The only April counts in excess of 30 birds were of 60 at Bewl Water on 14th and 35 at Ivy Lake, Chichester GPs the following day.

Among breeding records received, five pairs on a new estate at West Durrington was of interest, as were 15 nests at Lee Fm, Patching, 18 in a colony in the High Street, Petworth, 23 nests on the walls of Knepp Castle and ten nests at Quay Fm, Pallingham. Mud collecting was still taking place in mid-July when eight birds were seen doing this at Ebernoe Common. All breeding records of this species should be submitted.

Birds were gathering for return passage by 22 July when 300 birds were counted at Bewl Water. Hundreds were passing in waves all day at Barcombe on 28 Aug while selected records for September included 306E at Littlehampton West Beach on 4th, a “heavy” movement E at Beachy Head on 5th, 300 at Mill Pond Marsh, Sidlesham on 14th, 1000 at Church Norton on 21st, 500 at both Church Norton and Cissbury Ring on 25th, and 1270W at Worthing Beach in 50 minutes and 1200 at Bewl Water on 26th. The highest count of the month at Icklesham was 6000 on 30th.

Passage continued into October with a number of sizeable counts, for example, 3000 at Church Norton on 5th, 500 there the following day, 600 on wires at Harbour Fm, Rye Hbr on 7th, and 700 at Church Norton and 1000 at Icklesham, both on 10th. The only November records were of one at Shoreham Hbr on 10th and two at Rye Hbr on 17th. [MJM]

1009. TREE PIPIT

Anthus trivialis

Fairly common but local summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first recorded was a singing male at Kings Standing, Ashdown on 27 Mar, six days earlier than the average arrival date for 1977-93 (*Birds of Sussex*). In spring, Tree Pipits appear to arrive directly on their breeding grounds. Very few, perhaps worryingly few, were recorded along the coast in 1999, the total being just ten with no more than three on any day. The situation must give rise to concern; *Birds of Sussex* comments that “the number of birds observed on spring passage is small, rarely exceeding 30 in total”. Totals have been much lower than that in recent years, a situation paralleled in Hampshire where “only four were recorded away from breeding sites” in 1998 (*Hampshire Bird Report 1998*).

During the breeding season, a total of 66 territories was reported in West Sussex at 19 different sites. This figure includes 18 at Woolbeding Common (ten in 1998), six at Stedham Common and five at both Blackdown and Iping Common. Young were being fed at Easebourne and near Fernhurst on 14 June. In East Sussex, the majority of breeding records were for Ashdown Forest where up to 63 territories were located (94 in 1998), including ten on 200ha of Pippingford Park (19 in 1997 and 1998). Four males held territory in Broadwater Forest on 28 May. Away from these regular haunts, singing males were at Burwash, Chailey Common and near Heathfield.

Autumn passage began with one at Icklesham on 17 July and another at Pulborough Brooks three days later. Up to three passed through Cissbury Ring on four days between 14 Aug and 12 Sept. In the early dawn on 15 Aug, a group of migrants left a roost at Chelwood Beacon and flew off S. The first birds were also recorded at Beachy Head on this date, with ten there on 20th. Autumn passage was described as “poor” at Sheepcote Valley, though this site recorded the largest counts during the autumn of 12 on 21 Aug and

13 on 28 Sept. At Icklesham, there were four on 20 Aug and three on 12 Sept. A total of ten was recorded in October, the last being 2E at Littlehampton West Beach on 16th. Last year, there were eight double figure counts in the autumn, this year only three. This is becoming a scarce bird at coastal vantage points. [CB]

1011. MEADOW PIPIT

Anthus pratensis

Locally common resident, very common passage migrant, winter visitor.

1998: The number of pairs in the Seven Sisters CP should be amended to ten.

1999: Some 200 birds were counted at eight sites in January (maximum 70 on Lavington Common on 17th) and some 350 at sixteen sites in February. Many of these, for example, 41 at Iping Common and 25 at Stedham on 19 Feb were going to roost. One was seen in display flight at Castle Hill on the early date of 27 Feb.

March brought some high counts as birds passed through the county; 450 came in at Selsey Bill on 11th, 120 flew over Bexhill, mainly moving W, on 15th; at least 100 were at Church Norton on 18th, and on 30th, 200 were at Roedean and 150 at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr. The last substantial count was of 50 at Goring Gap on 8 Apr, after that only occasional and solitary migrants were reported.

In the breeding season, there were seven pairs (as in 1998) on Pilsey Island, 15 at Amberley Wild Brooks and 43 at Pulborough Brooks, five at both Sheepcote Valley and Shinewater Marsh, Willingdon, and 15 around Rye Hbr (17 in 1998).

One flying W over Gatwick on 19 June was probably a failed breeder. There was a disconcerting gap in records for late summer, with only two submissions for the period 11 July to 1 Sept. On the latter day there were 50 at Icklesham. Numbers built up from mid-September, a week or so earlier than in 1998. Movements over the next month are best tabulated:

Date	Place	Count	Duration
14 Sept	Church Norton	800	
15 Sept	Church Norton	350	
22 Sept	Hastings	310	
25 Sept	Worthing	120W	3.8 hrs
	Selsey	300W	1.5 hrs
	Bracklesham Bay	200	
26 Sept	Worthing	455W	0.8 hr
	West Wittering	150	
	Bexhill	1000W	4 hrs
	Bury Hill	100	
	Bewl Water	100	
27 Sept	Nutley	105S	
	Bexhill	400W	
	Birling Gap	200	

Date	Place	Count	Duration
28 Sept	Church Norton	1500	
30 Sept	Church Norton	500	
	Selsey	200	
3 Oct	Bexhill	240W	0.75 hr
	Icklesham	100	
4 Oct	Roedean	200	
11 Oct	Church Norton	300	
12 Oct	Church Norton	200E	
13 Oct	Church Norton	180E	
14 Oct	Church Norton	260E	
17 Oct	Church Norton	155E	
26 Oct	East Head	200	in sand dunes
30 Oct	Beachy Head	200	
7 Nov	Bexhill	105W	3 hrs

Passage seems, as the last record in the table indicates, to have continued at a lower level into November, making it difficult to distinguish counts of passage birds from those which were wintering in the county. Probably wintering were 35 at Holmbush Tip, Faygate on 7 Nov, 40 at Hurstpierpoint on 14 Nov, and 80 roosting at Lavington Common on 27 Nov. Records of some 240 birds in December came from 13 sites. [CB]

1014. **ROCK PIPIT**

Anthus petrosus

Very scarce resident and scarce winter visitor. Rare away from the coast.

January records of 38 birds came from 11 sites, with 13 at the ever-reliable Apuldrum; February produced 34 birds at seven sites, with 18 between Birling Gap and Holywell on the 27th. No records came from further east than Bexhill. Only 14 were reported in March at eight sites and by April the total was down to three singles. The only breeding reports came from cliffs between Roedean and Newhaven, where there were probably 5 pairs.

The first returning bird was at Pagham Hbr on 10 Sept, followed by one at Widewater, Lancing on 21st. In the last three months of the year, birds were present in small groups of up to six from Chichester Hbr to Bexhill, but a high tide count at Apuldrum produced an exceptional 20 on 24 Nov. Two were at Rye Hbr on 6 Oct but there were no subsequent records from east of Bexhill. Last year's high October to December counts in the lower Cuckmere Valley were not repeated. The Rock Pipit appears to be in decline as a wintering and breeding species in Sussex and elsewhere, but a series of co-ordinated counts along the coast would be necessary to clarify its status. [CB]

1014b. **SCANDINAVIAN ROCK PIPIT**

Anthus petrosus littoralis

Probably a very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

A party of nine was observed feeding with Sky Larks, Meadow Pipits and Reed Buntings on the saltmarsh adjacent to Exceat Bridge in lower Cuckmere Valley on 27 Feb (JBU, RJF, JWK), with two still there on 7 Mar (ARK). Subsequent records were of two at Widewater, Lancing on 15 Mar (JCu, PJ) and one at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 30-31 Oct (IJW *et al.*). [PJ]

1015. **WATER PIPIT**

Anthus spinoletta

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

As in 1998, there were three accepted records. On 15 Feb a party of 13, "the usual winter flock", was seen at Combe Haven (BFF *et al.*). A solitary bird, which may have been present for some time, was identified at Pannel Valley on 20 Mar (KBG *et al.*). Finally, one was at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr from 20 Mar to 17 Apr (AHO, ARK *et al.*). This last bird, which was moulting into summer plumage, frequented "muddy islets and fringes to pools" but was often elusive. [CB]

1017. **YELLOW WAGTAIL**

Motacilla flava

Scarce and localised summer visitor and common passage migrant.

1998: The record of seven pairs during the breeding season around Plumpton is an error.

1999: The first, a male at Widewater, Lancing on 8 Mar (SRA) was the earliest for the county, beating the previous earliest (at Rye Hbr on 9 Mar 1997) by one day. The next was on 24 Mar at Rye Beach. Spring passage was distressingly poor with a total of only 64 reported for April. Ten flew east over Rye Hbr on the evening of 23 Apr and, on 27

Apr, nine were at Selsey Bill (where the monthly total was 21). Passage continued into early May, with 12 at Selsey Bill and eight over Bexhill on 2nd.

Breeding numbers around Rye Hbr picked up slightly from recent years, with maxima of seven pairs on the Beach Reserve, four at Castle Fm and 14 around Harbour Fm (*cf.* 66 pairs in 1990). There were two pairs along Glynde Reach and at least eight on Pevensey Levels (seven of them on Manxey Level). A male was seen at Thorney Deeps. No breeding was reported from either the Arun Valley or the Brede Valley (*cf.* 18-23 pairs there in 1994).

Autumn movement began with one at Widewater, Lancing on 14 July. A few birds moved through Icklesham later in the month. There were 19 double figure counts in August (maxima of 180 at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 28th; 85 at Fairlight on 30th, and 80 at Rye Hbr on 21st) and 38 in September (maxima of 200 at Church Norton on 6th and 10th, and 300 on 9th). There were 12 at Weir Wood Res and eight at Bewl Water on 12th. On 15th, 43 were counted at Arlington Res and on the next day, 30 at Beeding Hill. The last double figure count was of 30 at Cuckmere Haven on 29 Sept. About 38 were reported for October, all at coastal sites, continuing the low numbers of the past few years. The last of the year was at Icklesham on 12 Nov.

A bird at Pevensey Bridge Level on 1 May showed some characteristics of both Blue-headed Wagtail *M.f. flava* and Spanish Wagtail *M.f. iberiae* (AFB, SJB, RJF). [CB]

1019. GREY WAGTAIL

Motacilla cinerea

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Nineteen birds were reported from 13 sites in January and 24 from 12 sites in February. These records included a good number from inland: three at both Denne Park, Horsham and at Barcombe Res, and two at both Tilgate Park and Etchingham. A further two in Horsham, at Chennells Brook, were seen throughout the year. Sewage works featured prominently, but birds also graced the centres of Brighton and Worthing, where a bird was still present on 20 Mar. This distribution was very similar to that recorded in 1998.

Breeding was confirmed at ten sites and probable at a further 11. There were also 41 possible sites in West Sussex and 20 in the East. Three young were raised on a roof-top in Chichester, presumably the same as that used in 1998. One at Pagham Hbr on 19 June was considered unusual.

The first migrant was probably that at Weir Wood Res on 25 July. Thereafter birds trickled through the county, with peaks of six over Pett Level Pools on 3 Sept, 15 over Fairlight on 11 Sept and 12 at Sheepcote Valley on 21 Sept. Seventeen flew W over Goring Gap in 1hr on 4 Oct, a movement not noted elsewhere along the coast. At Preston Park, Brighton, birds were recorded from 23 Sept.

There were records of at least 40 birds at 25 sites in November and 22 birds at 11 sites in December. The largest counts were at Redgate Mill Fm, near Crowborough where there were five on 18 Nov and 6 on 10 Dec. Four were recorded around the Old Steine, Brighton on New Year's Eve. The balance of inland and coastal birds was about even. This was a very similar pattern to that of 1998. [CB]

1020. PIED WAGTAIL

Motacilla alba yarelli

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were four roosts of over 100 birds early in the year: 270 at Brighton Marina and 120 at St. Leonards-on-Sea in January and 140 at Apuldram and 100 at the Carfax in Horsham in February. It is not clear whether locations from which large roosts were reported in previous years were not used in 1999, or not checked by observers. Other smaller groups were, characteristically, around sewage works, for example, 75 at Thorney on 9 Feb. Seventeen were noted with sheep at Shopham Bridge, Byworth on 27 Feb. One wonders how many groups of this size there are in the county and how they relate to the large roosts. Cramp *et al* (1988) reports studies suggesting catchment areas for roosts of 5 and 12km radius; the birds roosting at Lymington, Hampshire, studied by Giddens (1999), rarely dispersed more than a few kilometres. Spring passage began while wintering birds were still in the county. The first migrants were noted over Bexhill on 28 Feb and the last wintering bird in Preston Park, Brighton on 25 Mar (31 Mar in 1998). No double figure counts were reported for the coast in spring. Perhaps a flock of 40 at Pease Pottage on 17 April was made up of migrants rather than lingering winterers; Chandler (1980) reported that in the London area "smaller roosts reach their greatest numbers in September and October, and from March to May....[and] are likely to be composed largely of migrants passing through the Area".

Breeding season reports came especially from Ashdown Forest, where five young had fledged from a nest by 6 June. Details of breeding surveys are given on pages 163-164. Additional counts were of three pairs on a 62ha CBC plot at Chiddinglye Fm, West Hoathly and five along 600m of the River Rother at Kilsham Fm, Petworth. By contrast, there was no breeding within the Rye Hbr SSSI.

Small congregations were gathering from late June. The group of ten at Weir Wood Res on 23 June increased to 44 on 26 July, falling to 31 on 2 Aug, before increasing again to 80 on 20 Sept. Twenty-five were at Darwell Res on 18 July and 26 there on 15 Aug; subsequently there were only single figure counts. Twenty-seven were at Hassocks on 24 Aug.

Movement was evident from late August, but more substantial counts were reported from 3 Oct when 32 flew W at Bexhill. Another 32 flew W at Rye Hbr on 6 Oct; 54 were at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head on the same day; and 40 flew W at Church Norton on 9th. Mid-October saw some large movements at Church Norton, notably 138E on 14th (when 70 also flew E at Worthing) and 115E on 17th. The first wintering bird returned to Preston Park on 22 Sept and 30 there on 11 Oct was a high total for the site.

Large roosts built up from late October, with 120 at Gatwick Airport on 21st and 150 at Icklesham on 13 Nov but, characteristically, roosts in December were less substantial than those in the two previous months. After 130 at Thorney Deeps on 16 Dec, the largest count was of 55 at Redgate Mill Fm, near Crowborough on 10 Dec. This pattern follows that reported by Chandler (1979) in his study of roosts in Orpington and Victoria. [CB]

1020.0 **WHITE WAGTAIL**

Motacilla alba alba

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Probably a scarce spring and autumn passage migrant. Both pure and mixed pairs have bred.

An average spring, with a maximum of 30 birds reported, from 7 Mar to 4 May. There were four at both Beachy Head and at Icklesham on 24 Mar and four again at Icklesham on 25 Apr. Subsequently, there were two July records (both from Pulborough Brooks), two in August and three in September, with the last at Pilsey Island on 6 Sept. July to September records totalled 14 birds, rather more than usual. [CB]

1048. **WAXWING**

Bombycilla garrulus

Rare winter visitor

One at Fairlight on 28 Dec (JR) was the only record. A fairly typical showing, there were also singles seen in November 1990 and January 1997, eight during the winter of 1991/92 and the unprecedented irruption of *ca.* 1200 during January to April 1996. [RJF]

1066. **WREN**

Troglodytes troglodytes

Abundant resident.

Counts of breeding birds in defined areas, which indicate an average breeding density of 63 pairs per km², can be found on pages 163-164. Additionally there were about 21 pairs within the Rye Hbr SSSI.

Records from outside the breeding season included maxima of 25 at Icklesham on 3 Oct, 50 at Old Lodge NR, Ashdown Forest on 7 Nov and 25 in a 67ha winter census plot at Marsh Fm, Yapton on 27 Nov. At Cissbury Ring, 17 new birds were ringed during the year up to 23 Oct. [PJ]

1084. **DUNNOCK**

Prunella modularis

Abundant resident.

Counts of breeding birds in defined areas, which indicate an average breeding density of 68 pairs per km², are shown on pages 163-164. Additional to these were 26 pairs within the Rye Hbr SSSI.

Significant concentrations in late autumn included 20 at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head on 28 Oct and 23 in a 67ha winter census plot at Marsh Fm, Yapton on 27 Nov. A total of 50 new birds was ringed at Cissbury Ring during the year up to 23 Oct. [PJ]

1099. **ROBIN**

Erithacus rubecula

Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

The largest concentrations reported for the early part of the year were of 27 on a 67ha winter census plot at Marsh Fm, Yapton on 1 Feb, 27 at Old Lodge NR, Ashdown Forest on 14 Mar and 35 at Darwell Res on 23 Mar.

Counts of breeding birds in defined areas, which indicate an average breeding density of 22 pairs per km², are shown on pages 163-164. Additionally, there were 74 territories on Red House Common, Chailey and 12 territories in Powdermill Wood.

Autumn numbers were much lower than in 1998 with maxima of 40 at Church Norton on 31 Aug, and 35 at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head and 27 at Marsh Fm, Yapton, both on 26 Oct.

A total of 49 new birds was ringed at Cissbury Ring during the year up to 23 Oct. [PJ]

1104. **NIGHTINGALE**

Luscinia megarhynchos

Fairly common summer visitor and infrequently seen passage migrant.

Once again, the first records were remarkably early with two recorded at Park Wood, Maresfield on 2 Apr, one at Arlington Res on 5 Apr and two near Petworth on 7 Apr. On 10 Apr there were seven at Milton Hide and by 13 Apr, the average first arrival date for the period 1962-93 (*Birds of Sussex*), a total of 15 birds had been recorded. After 13 Apr, singing birds were heard daily until 11 June. The details of the full breeding census can be found on pages 190-197 but, in summary, 692 singing Nightingales were found in 213 different tetrads, within 37 of the counties 10km grid squares.

During July just four singles were recorded at four different sites; the main autumn passage was, as usual during August. Three sites dominated the records; at Icklesham, singles were recorded on seven days between 2 and 14 Aug, at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton up to two were recorded on eight autumn dates with a peak of three on 11 Aug and at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head the passage was described as "good" with 15 different birds recorded and peaks of four on both 6 and 17 Aug. The last, at Whitbread Hollow, was on 30 Aug with no September records. [JAN]

1121. **BLACK REDSTART**

Phoenicurus ochruros

Rare resident, fairly common passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.

There were reports from seven sites in January. A male was at Saltdean from New Year's Day to 20 Feb, joined by a female on 22 Jan and by another male on 9 Feb. Up to four were at Newhaven Tide Mills. Eight sites produced records in February. Birds at Lancing and Birling Gap on 27th were presumably the first migrants. A male remained at Southwick Beach from 2 Feb to 13 Mar and one, unsexed, was at Bexhill from 4 Feb to 9 Mar. A clear influx on 24 Mar brought six to Church Norton, five to Sheepcote Valley, 12 to Roedean and seven to the Beachy Head area. The 25th saw even these totals exceeded when there were at least 46 in the Brighton area, with 22 at Sheepcote Valley (IJW). The previous daily maximum appears to have been 18 at Beachy Head on the same day in 1972

(*Birds of Sussex*). A few birds made their way inland: one was at Scobells Fm, Barcombe on 25-26th and another at Pulborough on 26th. The last were at Exceat Bridge on 18 Apr, then four at Icklesham on the 26th, with two there the next day.

There was only one May record, from Beachy Head on 20th. A male was seen at an industrial estate in Crawley on 22 June, but breeding was not established. A female was at Rye on 15 July, but no further records came until three in late September (two, at Icklesham, being trapped). From 12 Oct through to the end of the year there were scattered records of up to three birds. Inland records came from Nutley on 12 Oct and Holmbush Tip, Faygate on 7 Nov. Otherwise all records were from the coast at a maximum of 15 sites in November and eight in December.

Apart from the remarkable and probably unprecedented influx in late March, numbers in 1999 were very similar to those in 1998; but this year a handful of birds were seen earlier in the autumn. [CB]

1122. REDSTART

Phoenicurus phoenicurus

Scarce summer visitor and fairly common passage migrant.

One at Cuilfail, Lewes on 27-28 Mar was the only record for the month; although three days later than the mean arrival date for the past ten years, it was a week earlier than the mean date quoted for 1970-93 (*Birds of Sussex*). There were no further records until 4 Apr, after which there were reports of 1-3 birds on most days, mainly at coastal sites. The first bird was back on territory on Ashdown Forest on 16 Apr, with eight recorded at Old Lodge NR on 18th.

During the breeding season, 33 singing males were on Ashdown Forest and 27 in Pippingford Park. There were no other breeding records for East Sussex. In West Sussex, single pairs bred at Weavers Down, Stanley Common and Buchan Park, Crawley, the latter fledging 3-4 young. A singing male was at Iping Common on 13 June.

One was at Church Norton on the unusual date of 17 June. Single birds were then seen at Pulborough Brooks on 13 and 17 July and at Newmarket Bottom on 24th. From late July, very small numbers were recorded along the coast almost daily. In a poor autumn for the species, there were just 11 records of three birds and three records of four birds. The largest count was of only seven at Beachy Head on 29 Aug. Of seven reported for October, the last was at Bexhill on 17th. [JSB]

1137 WHINCHAT

Saxicola rubetra

Rare summer visitor and fairly common passage migrant.

1998: A pair bred successfully at Church Fm, Hardham and a second male held territory there in May but did not find a mate (ML).

1999: The first bird, a female at Thorney Deepes on 10 Mar (GAC), was very early compared with the average arrival dates of 12 Apr for the years 1970-93 (*Birds of Sussex*) and 28 Mar for the past ten years (see pages 165-166). More than a month elapsed before the main period of characteristically light passage, which lasted from 24 Apr to 11 May. The maximum recorded was six at Sheepcote Valley on 30 Apr. The total number of

records to the end of May was 49 (*cf.* 26 in 1998, but substantially lower than in the mid-1990s).

Although normally only an occasional breeder, there were several breeding records this year. Of two pairs at Hardham, one fledged three young (ML). A pair at Pulborough Brooks RSPB Reserve fledged three young. Another pair was recorded on Amberley Wild Brooks and a female at Wych Cross, Ashdown Forest, both on 1 June.

There were no records for July, return passage commencing on 1 Aug. Records were submitted for most dates between 12 Aug and 11 Oct. As usual, most were recorded on the coast or the Downs, but there was, perhaps, a wider scatter of inland records than is usual (a total of 24 birds at ten sites). The first double figure count was the August maximum, 37 at Sheepcote Valley on 20th. The September maxima were 35 at Sheepcote Valley (where some 220 were recorded over the month as a whole) on 21st and 30 at Icklesham on 22nd. The total for October was 35 (*cf.* 40 in 1998 and 13 in 1997). Autumn passage was more protracted than in some previous years, for example, 1997 when double figure counts were recorded only in the period 24 Aug to 12 Sept. This year, ten were at Cuckmere Haven on 29 Sept. The last recorded were single birds at Newhaven Tide Mills on 12 Nov and in a set-aside field at Beeding Hill from 7 Nov to 4 Dec (ARK *et al.*). The latter is the latest record for the county.

At both Ferring Rife and Widewater, Lancing, observers commented that birds were “scarce this autumn”. The autumn total was, however, not least because of regular counting at Sheepcote Valley, well in excess of the 537 recorded in 1998, with just over 1000 bird days probably representing around 850 birds. [CB]

1139 STONECHAT

Saxicola torquata

Fairly common resident and partial migrant.

Records of *ca.* 55 birds came from 23 localities in January (maximum 11 on Thorney Island) while in February, *ca.* 80 birds were reported from 33 sites (maximum nine on Thorney Island). These numbers represented a perceptible increase over those for 1998. As usual, birds were widely distributed on Ashdown Forest and on the western commons; Newhaven Tide Mills was another productive site. That birds put in brief appearances in unexpected places was shown by records from Stoughton and Robertsbridge.

Breeding records reflected the early year distribution, a concentration on Ashdown Forest, with reasonable numbers on the western commons, along the cliffs from Telscombe to Newhaven, in the river valleys (especially from Amberley to Pulborough) and on the western Downs. Fewer were reported from the Downs in East Sussex. A remarkable ten pairs were counted on Chailey Common on 15 May. Seven pairs were on open heath in Pippingford Park, where the species is “increasing slowly”. Two pairs were on Thorney Island, but no young were seen. A sporadically used breeding area at Whitehawk, Brighton was successfully occupied by three pairs and another in nearby Sheepcote Valley supported one pair. Marklye Fm, Heathfield, appears to be new breeding site. A juvenile was reported from Paghams Hbr as early as 26 May. Young on Steep Down, Lancing on 7 Aug, were thought to have been a second brood.

There were single birds at Icklesham on seven days in the first half of August, then six at Selsey West Fields on 21 Aug. Steep Down, Lancing, a very reliable and productive site for Stonechats, held 20 on 28 Aug. August records were considerably in excess of those for 1998. Ten in Sheepcote Valley on 5 Sept was the monthly maximum there; there

were still 13 at the Isle of Thorns, Ashdown Forest on 28 Sept; and 14 (“more than usual”) were at Cuckmere Haven the next day. There were three double figure counts in October: ten at Steep Down on 4th, 12 at Icklesham on 5th and 15 at Thorney Island on 14th.

There was an abundance of records in November, when the total of 234 reported probably represented about 150 different birds. Seventeen were on Thorney Island on 3rd and 12 (“a healthy wintering population”) were at Newhaven Tide Mills on 27th. Thorney Island hosted 13 on 16 Dec. A maximum of 108 birds was noted at 36 sites in December (cf. 50 at 21 sites in 1998), rounding off an excellent year. [CB]

1146. WHEATEAR

Oenanthe oenanthe

Very scarce breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant.

The first at Cedar Fm, Hurst Green on 2 Mar was nine days earlier than the mean arrival date for 1962-93 quoted in *Birds of Sussex*. Spring passage, which was somewhat lighter than in 1998, was strongest between 24 and 26 Mar with 25 at Selsey Bill, 30 at Sheepcote Valley and 15 at Roedean on 25th in what were described as “classic spring fall conditions”. Birds continued to move throughout April and May, the last migrants being singles at Chailey Common on 28 May and Stump Bottom on 1 June. A bird showing characteristics of the Greenland race *O.o. leucorhoa* was a Beachy Head on 16 May (RJF).

At Rye Hbr 6-8 pairs were present, with young seen from four of them. A pair raised 4-5 young on Southwick Beach. There were no reports from the Seven Sisters CP where four pairs bred in 1998.

One was at Newhaven Tide Mills on 16 July, but return passage commenced in earnest in early August. There were few large counts during the autumn compared with, for example, 1997 (when there were 120 at Beachy Head on 16 Aug and 65 at Steyning Round Hill on 2 Sept). Numbers at both Sheepcote Valley and Moulsecomb Wild Park, Brighton were reported to be “poor”. The largest of ten double figure counts in August was 31 at Thorney Island on 23rd. Of 11 such counts in September, the maximum was 25 at Steyning Round Hill on 6th. The October maximum was eight at Littlehampton West Beach on 10th. Very few of these passage birds were seen north of the Downs. The last bird was at Rye Hbr on 1 Nov, a comparatively early departure. [CB]

1186. **RING OUZEL***Turdus torquatus***Passage migrant, scarce in spring, often fairly common but local in autumn.**

The following table of monthly totals shows that this was a poor year:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
-	-	1	10	4	-	-	-	15	26	2	-

There were only 15 birds recorded in spring, little more than half the 10-year average. The first was a female at Shooters Bottom, Beachy Head on 26 Mar, an average first arrival date. The remainder dribbled in singly, mainly in the Brighton area, until the last two were seen at Balsdean on 6 May.

The autumn movement of about 43 birds was less than a third of the 10-year average and only about a tenth of the previous year's bonanza. The first five arrived at Pagham Hbr on 2 Sept. There was then a gap of three weeks before the next two appeared at Rye Hbr on 26 Sept with four more there on 30th. From then on birds arrived in ones and twos along the length of the coast until the last, a juvenile, was seen at Selsey on 16 Nov. [RK]

1187. **BLACKBIRD***Turdus merula***Abundant resident and winter visitor: perhaps a passage migrant.**

The long term breeding surveys and regular winter counts in both rural and urban sites showed a slight increase in numbers after five years of sharp decline.

In the winter, the highest counts were 50 at Darwell Res on 10 Jan and 45 near the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 9 Feb.

The earliest breeding report showed three young fledged near Partridge Green on 12 Mar. Details of breeding surveys are given on pages 163-164; additional to these were 35 breeding pairs at Rye Hbr.

Autumn counts were generally low with no indication of any migration. The highest counts were 70 at Icklesham on 13 Nov, 42 at Darwell Res on 28 Nov and finally, 32 birds feeding together on fallen apples in the churchyard on Thorney Island on 19 Dec. [RK]

1198. **FIELDFARE***Turdus pilaris***Common to abundant passage migrant and winter visitor.**

In the early part of the year the largest reported concentrations were mainly north of the Downs, particularly on the river levels. Notable flocks were 1000 at Glynde Levels on 14 Jan, 500 at Chilgrove on 24 Jan, and 850 on sheep pasture at Ditchling on 30 Jan. Flocks reduced in size through the next two months with the largest being 300 in February at Bewl Water on 3rd, Icklesham on 6th, and Petworth on 24th. In March the largest flocks were of 200 each at Rye on 13th and Pulborough Brooks on 18th.

By adding the maximum monthly numbers in each 10km square, it is again possible to obtain a rough picture of the distribution of the species across the county:

Eastings	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
SU/SZ 70-99	1000	933	305	0
TQ/TV 00-49	3134	510	386	150
TQ/TV50-99	60	610	260	1

The last report of the spring came from Pulborough on 11 Apr, some three weeks before the average last departure.

The first three birds to return in autumn were seen at Pulborough on 30 Sept, some two weeks later than the average. The first sizeable flock to be reported was of 300 on Ashdown Forest on 15 Oct. Thereafter, there were numerous reports, particularly from the river levels, of parties of more than 50 birds, with 300 at Pagham on 2 Nov, 250 at Partridge Green SF on 6 Nov, 500 at Beeding Brooks on 24 Nov, and a high of 1000 on flooded cereal at Hardham on 29 Dec. [RK]

1200. **SONG THRUSH***Turdus philomelos***Decreasing resident and partial migrant; abundant passage migrant and very common winter visitor. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.**

At the beginning of the year only two were recorded in a 67ha CBC plot at Marsh Fm, Yapton during January and February. Four singing males were at Darwell Reservoir on 21 Feb.

The first breeding records were in April, when three pairs with chicks were at Stedham Common. Subsequently, many breeding attempts were recorded across the county from April to July. Details are contained in the table on pages 163-164. In addition 11 breeding pairs were counted at Pulborough Brooks, eight territories were located on Red House Common, Chailey and six in 200ha at Pippingford Park, Ashdown Forest.

Through the breeding season 27 broods were ringed in approximately 10km² around Graffham, as part of the long-term RSPB study into the species. More detailed information arising from this project will be published in the *Sussex Bird Report* in due course.

In the latter half of the year there was little evidence of passage movement. The only significant counts were a maximum of 50 at Icklesham on 27 Oct and 20 at Pulborough Brooks on 23 Nov. [MD]

1201. REDWING

Turdus iliacus

Abundant passage migrant and very common winter visitor.

Throughout the winter months, birds were widely distributed in moderate numbers with the largest flocks being reported from lowland and wetland areas inland. The monthly maxima were 195 at Amberley on 4 Jan, 180 at Henfield Levels on 9 Feb, and 200 at both Burton MP on 6 Mar and Lower Standean on 17 Mar.

By adding the maximum monthly numbers in each 10km square, it is again possible to obtain a rough picture of the distribution of the species across the county:

Eastings	Jan	Feb	Mar
SU/SZ70-99	258	148	271
TQ/TV00-49	573	659	628
TQ/TV50-99	80	86	9

The last reported sighting was at Pagham on 30 Mar, some three weeks earlier than average.

The first returning birds arrived along the coast about a week later than average when five were seen at Littlehampton on 29 Sept. On 5 Oct there were arrivals at Hollingbury, Beachy Head and Icklesham. The 60 seen at Beachy Head were flying W. In the next few days birds spread west and inland and were being reported in turn from Lancing, Bewl Water, Pulborough Brooks, Ashdown, Littlehampton, and Pagham Hbr. Apart from a flock of 120 flying west at Ashdown on 15 Oct, numbers remained small until mid-November with no groups of more than 50. There were 60 birds at both Hurstpierpoint on 14 Nov and Darwell Res on 28 Nov. Somewhat unusually a party of 25 fed regularly in gardens in Worthing from 18-28 Dec. There was a build up in numbers at the end of the year with 300 reported at the Upper Adur Levels. [RK].

1202. MISTLE THRUSH

Turdus viscivorus

Very common resident and partial migrant.

It would appear that numbers have declined significantly over recent years. All the long term breeding surveys show large declines with some sites no longer having breeding territories. In addition the largest flocks reported in 1999 were lower than in any year since at least 1987. The largest flock during January to March was 17 at Old Lodge NR, Ashdown Forest on 1 Feb.

Results of breeding surveys in defined areas are given on pages 163-164. Moulsecoomb Wild Park with seven territories was the only site to show a slight increase but it is notable that 13-14 pairs were regularly counted at this site in the period 1987 to 1990.

In the second half of the year, there were counts of 12 at Hassocks on 23 Aug, ten at Barcombe on 29 Aug, 15 on Ashdown Forest on 1 Sept, ten at Icklesham on 1 Oct, and 12 at Rye Hbr on 5 Oct. The only substantial group of the autumn was 30 at Pulborough Brooks on 17 Oct [RK].

1220. CETTI'S WARBLER

Cettia cetti

Very scarce resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

A male was heard singing at Icklesham on 5 Jan; between January and April there were records of singles at Thorney Deeps; Snowhill Marsh, West Wittering; Arundel WWT; Warningcamp; and Filsham Reedbed. A pair was trapped on 20 Feb at Icklesham where, unfortunately, a failed nesting attempt occurred in June. At least three birds were singing at Arundel WWT on 22 May.

In the latter part of the year, there were three males at Thorney Deeps from 27 Oct to 15 Nov, with two still present on 14 Dec. In addition to the more usual sites, there were single birds at Hermitage, Emsworth on 15 Oct and at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 26 Oct. In December, there were two males at Thorney Deeps on 14th and single bird at Icklesham and three sites at Rye Hbr. [VPB]

1236. GRASSHOPPER WARBLER

Locustella naevia

Very scarce and declining summer visitor and fairly common passage migrant.

The first record for the year was a single at Amberley Wildbrooks on 19 Apr. There were two singing males at West Dean Woods on 24 Apr and one at Church Norton the following day.

During May to July, reeling males were heard at Pagham Hbr, West Dean Woods, Amberley Wildbrooks (4), Watersfield, Pulborough Brooks (2), Verdley Wood near Fernhurst, Falmer Bottom and Rye Hbr. This is a slight increase over 1998 numbers.

At Icklesham, the first returning migrant was trapped on 17 July. Birds were trapped almost daily there from 23 July until the end of August with maxima of 23 on 26 July and 30 on 27 Aug. In September, birds were trapped on 21 days with a maximum of ten on 6th. However, only five were noted between August and October at Beachy Head where the passage was reported as "poor". The final sightings of the year were singles at Icklesham on 2 Oct and at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head on 10 Oct. [VPB]

1238. SAVI'S WARBLER

Locustella luscinioides

Rare vagrant

One was present at Icklesham from 17-26 June (TS *et al*) and has been accepted by *British Birds*. Despite frequently singing fromallows it was not seen during its stay. It is the ninth record for the 1990s, but only the second since 1993. All other records during the 1990s have been trapped at Icklesham (in mid-April or during June to August), with the exception of one singing at nearby Pett Level Pools in early June 1991. Occurrences have declined nationally and records of this species are once again being considered by *British Birds Rarities Committee*. [RJF]

1241. **MOUSTACHED WARBLER**

Acrocephalus melanopogon

One record, no longer considered to be adequately documented

1979: The record of one in a garden in Ham Manor Close, Angmering on 18 Aug (*SxBR* 32:52) is no longer considered adequately documented following a review by the *British Birds Rarities Committee* (*Brit. Birds* 92:595). This was the only county record and its demise removes the species from the county list. [RJF]

1242. **AQUATIC WARBLER**

Acrocephalus paludicola

Scarce autumn visitor to selected sites, very scarce elsewhere. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

A fairly typical showing with seven juveniles trapped at Icklesham on 12 Aug (2), 13 Aug (2), 14 Aug, 1 Sept and 2 Sept (RBRG) and one seen at Thorney Little Deep on 15 Sept (CBC). The total for the 1990s was 97, of which 88 were at Icklesham and five at Thorney with the other four at Church Norton, the Cuckmere meanders, Charleston Reedbed, and Rye Hbr. Most records are for August, with the species being recorded in the county on 13th or 14th in eight of the last ten years. [RJF]

1243. **SEDGE WARBLER**

Acrocephalus schoenobaenus

Fairly common summer visitor and abundant passage migrant.

The first sightings of the year were of two at Thorney Deeps on 1 Apr and four at Rye Hbr the following day, six days earlier than average date for the years 1964-93 (*Birds of Sussex*) and three days earlier than the mean for the past ten years.

The species was reported from 35 sites during the breeding season with 31 territories at Thorney Deeps and an estimated 67 territories at Rye Hbr, an increase over the 50 in 1998, but still well below the 1997 total of 92. Results from breeding surveys can be found on pp XBx.

At Icklesham, birds were recorded daily between July and September with monthly maxima of 302 trapped on 30 July, 555 on 4 Aug and 176 on 10 Sept. However, only ten passage birds were trapped at Beachy Head, a further decrease on the already low 1998 total of 22. On 15 Sept, there were 18 at Thorney Deeps. The last recorded were singles at both Thorney and Rye Hbr on 14 Oct. [VPB]

1250. **MARSH WARBLER**

Acrocephalus palustris

A very scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

Adults were trapped at Icklesham on 7 June, 11 June, 22 July and 25 July. (RBRG). Most records during the 1990s have come from Icklesham between June and August. [RJF]

1251. REED WARBLER

Acrocephalus scirpaceus

Common summer visitor and very common passage migrant.

The first bird of the year, a singing male at Thorney Deeps on 7 Apr (CBC), was the earliest county record by one day; the next sighting was not until 11 Apr at Weir Wood Res but by the end of the month, males were singing at suitable sites throughout Sussex. Single migrants were heard singing in a Worthing garden on 15 May and in scrub at Cissbury on 23 May.

Good numbers of records were received for the breeding season; there were 70 territories at Thorney Deeps, 72 at Aldingbourne Rife, six at Ferring Rife and at least 153 at Rye Hbr SSSI. Further details of breeding surveys are given on pages 163-164.

A bird at Church Norton in early July was initially identified as a Marsh Warbler though later observers (SKW *et al*) were firmly of the opinion that it was a highly mimetic Reed Warbler.

Numbers trapped on passage at Icklesham showed an increase over the two previous years, with birds recorded on all but one day during August and September. The monthly maxima at the site were 360 on 12 Aug and 85 on 10 Sept. The final record from Beachy Head was of three on 22 Sept but there were still 46 at Icklesham on 3 Oct. The last sighting of the year was at Icklesham on 28 Oct. [VPB]

1259. ICTERINE WARBLER

Hippolais icterina

Rare vagrant

One in a private garden on Beachy Head on 28-30 Sept (MK *et al*) is the latest county record by two days. During the past three decades records have been very uniform with ten during the 1990s, ten during the 1980s and eleven during the 1970s, although this is only the third record since 1993. Beachy Head has recorded 19 out of the county total of 34. Four have been recorded in May (earliest 21st), singles in early June and mid-July, 19 in August and nine in September. [RJF]

1262. DARTFORD WARBLER

Sylvia undata

Scarce resident and partial migrant.

Away from the inland heathland areas, other reports during January to March were from three coastal sites: a male at Thorney Island from 5 Jan to 11 Feb, with up to four there between 4 and 12 Mar, and single birds on the west side of Pagham Hbr on 21 and 23 Feb and 13 Mar, and at West Itchenor on 15 Mar. On Ashdown Forest during January-February there were records from 12 sites, comprising at least 19 individuals. Additionally, seven were seen at Iping Common on 7 Feb, 12 at Ambersham on 20 Feb, and a single at St Leonard's Forest on 13 Feb.

During the breeding season, there were about 60 pairs on Ashdown Forest (67 in 1998). Elsewhere in East Sussex, there was a male at Hollingbury Camp on 1 Apr, two at Fairlight CP on 19 and 24 Apr, and a male at Chailey Common on 5 and 19 June. In West

Sussex, 26 territories were located at eight sites (19 territories at 11 sites in 1998). A pair was seen in unusual habitat at Linchball Wood, West Dean on 5 May and 15 June.

The first record of autumn dispersal was of a first year male caught and ringed on 3 Oct at Shoreham Sanctuary. From October until December there were reports of about 16 birds from a further nine coastal sites, including at least five at Beachy Head in mid Oct and two on the west side of Pagham Hbr from 5 Oct to 12 Nov, one remaining until 5 Dec. On the Downs there were singles at Cissbury Ring on 16 Oct and 8 Nov, Balsdean on 27 Oct, Beeding Hill from 7 Nov to 19 Dec, and North Stoke on 13 Nov. [VPB]

1265. SUBALPINE WARBLER

Sylvia cantillans

Very rare vagrant

A singing male in Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head on 11 Apr (DCo, JFC *et al*) and a female or first-summer male at nearby Birling Gap on 2 May (JAGD, RDME, PDL *et al*) have both been accepted by *British Birds*. These take the county total to ten, of which seven have been at Beachy Head (including six of the seven recorded during the 1990s). The April record is the earliest for the county, the only other record in that month (in 1984) being on 22nd. Most have been recorded in May (6) with the other records in mid-June (1994) and October (1993). [RJF]

1267. SARDINIAN WARBLER

Sylvia melanocephala

Very rare vagrant

A male at Hastings CP, near Fairlight on 19 and 24 Apr (PMT, ADW, IJW *et al*) has been accepted by *British Birds*. Given the species retiring habits, it is perhaps not surprising it was not recorded in the poor weather during the intervening period. It is the fourth county record and the first in spring, the others being found in early July (in 1990) and August (long stayers in 1976 and 1994). [RJF]

1273. BARRED WARBLER

Sylvia nisoria

Very scarce autumn visitor

A juvenile was trapped at Icklesham on 7 Oct (RBRG). Thirteen were recorded during the 1990s, in August (3), September (4) and October (6). Interestingly the majority of the pre-1990 records were in September (26) with just two in October (and four in August). This bird was the fifth to have been trapped at Icklesham (the first being in 1986). [RJF]

1274. LESSER WHITETHROAT

Sylvia curruca

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first records were of singles at Church Norton and Lordings Lock, Billingshurst on 24 Apr, some six days later than the average arrival date for the years 1965-93 (*Birds of*

Sussex) and 12 days later than that for the past ten years shown on pages 165-166. There were 20 others recorded in April and by 1 May the main influx had arrived.

Reports for the breeding season were received for a total of 44 sites, an increase over 1998. There were four pairs at Thorney Deeps, three pairs at both Cissbury and nearby Findon Valley, two pairs at Poverty Bottom, Newhaven and five pairs at Rye Hbr. Details of other breeding survey records can be found on pp XBx.

Autumn ringing brought mixed results for the different sites; at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head, only 30 were ringed, less than half the 1998 total of 71 and the group's second lowest total ever, whereas the Steyning Ringing Group at Cissbury saw an increase in numbers from 15 to 24. On both 21 and 22 September, 13 were recorded at Church Norton, but most birds had departed by the end of the month. The final sighting was of a single bird in Rye Bay Wood on 10 Oct. [VPB]

1275. **WHITETHROAT**

Sylvia communis

Very common summer visitor and passage migrant.

The earliest arrivals were noted at Church Norton, Pulborough Brooks and Rye Hbr on 2 Apr, eight days earlier than the average arrival dates for 1965-93 (*Birds of Sussex*). The main influx came between 18 and 30 Apr with ten at Lullington Heath on 19th.

Breeding season records came from throughout the county, with good numbers reported. There were 38 pairs at Thorney, five pairs at Cissbury, 15 pairs at both Steyning Round Hill and Castle Hill, Falmer, and 48 pairs at Rye Hbr SSSI. Details of other breeding surveys can be found on pages 163-164.

In autumn, approximately 100 were at Sheepcote Valley on 16 Aug, 200 at Fairlight CP on 27 Aug and 250 at Whitbread Hollow on 28th. A total of 181 was ringed at Whitbread Hollow, with 60 trapped on 29 Aug. There were 27 at Climping on 4 Sept and 11 at Church Norton on 15th. Numbers declined rapidly towards the end of the month, with only four October records. The last sighting was of a single at Beach Field, Rye Hbr on 4 Oct, an unusually early final date for this species. [VPB]

1276. **GARDEN WARBLER**

Sylvia borin

Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant.

There were several early arrivals in 1999; a single bird was at Ebernoe on 1 Apr (IMS), this date equalling the county record, followed by two at Stedham Common on 3 Apr and a singing male at Warningcamp on 5th. There were reports from a further 14 sites before the end of the month.

During the breeding season the species was recorded at 36 sites. There seven pairs at Cissbury, the same number as the previous year, and four pairs at Red House Common, Chailey. Details of breeding surveys can be found on pages 163-164.

The Beachy Head Ringing Group reported a very poor autumn at Whitbread Hollow, the peak count there being 30 on 28 Aug. A total of 16 was trapped at Icklesham on 1 Sept; at Church Norton there were four on 21 Sept, six the following day, and five on 28th. Only a few individuals lingered into October, the final sighting being at Roedean, near Brighton on 25th. [VPB]

1277. BLACKCAP

Sylvia atricapilla

Very common summer visitor and passage migrant; small numbers winter.

Between January and March there were 26 records from 21 different sites, a further decrease on the 1996/97 totals of over 60 birds at 45 sites. Two males were heard singing at Billingshurst on 19 Mar.

The species was widely recorded during the breeding season; there were six pairs at Thorney Island, nine singing males in a 1km walk at Bignor Park and 14 pairs in 6.6ha at Cissbury. Results of breeding surveys can be found on pp XBx.

Reasonable numbers were reported on passage at Whitbread Hollow, with 150 on both 28 and 29 Aug, 400 on 9 Sept and a huge fall of approximately 1000 on 19th, of which 204 were trapped for ringing. However, the Steyning Ringing Group had a less successful season, with only 234 ringed at Cissbury, just half the 1998 total.

There were only a few sightings of small numbers of birds after the end of September and between November and December there were 25 reports from 18 sites. [VPB]

1298. PALLAS'S LEAF WARBLER

Phylloscopus proregulus

Very scarce visitor, mostly in late autumn

Two were recorded, both on 25 Oct: one briefly in sycamores in gardens adjoining Portslade Station (TJW) and the other in East Worthing (BFF, DIS *et al*). The former was an unexpected advantage of commuting to work. The latter, despite being a rather dull individual, was widely appreciated as it fed for most of the day, mainly in sycamores, along the western side of the park at Brooklands. There were no records from Beachy Head for the first time since 1993 while, increasingly, the species is found near built up areas (last year's 'star' being by Brighton Marina). Thirty-six were recorded during the 1990s, half in October (from 14th), 16 in November and singles in March (in 1992) and December (in 1998). [RJF]

1300. YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER

Phylloscopus inornatus

Very scarce visitor, mostly in autumn

Three were recorded, two at Rye Hbr on 12 Oct (PMT) and one at Pullborough Brooks RSPB Reserve on 6 Nov (JER). One of the Rye birds was in willows by the caravan park and the other at Narrow Pit. This species finished the 1990s just ahead of the previous one (39 records compared with 36), whereas in the 1980s there were 33 records compared with 11. Two of the recent records were in September (both on 26th), 27 in October and ten in November, the month when the similar Hume's Leaf Warbler *P. humei* has occurred in the county (in 1966 and 1997). [RJF]

1301. **RADDE'S WARBLER**

Phylloscopus schwarzi

Very rare vagrant

One at Birling Gap on 13 Oct (BFF) has been accepted by *British Birds*, but was a rather frustrating encounter being on view for little over a minute before it vanished. It is the eighth county record but, perhaps surprisingly only the third at Beachy Head. The other records were in 1974 and during 1991-95. Most have been seen in October (six, of which this is the earliest by two days) with one each in September (on 30th) and November (2nd-3rd). [RJF]

1308. **WOOD WARBLER**

Phylloscopus sibilatrix

Very scarce summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first arrivals were singing birds at Pagham Hbr on 30 Apr and Burnt Wood, Icklesham on 1 May. Later in May, singles were heard singing in Worth Forest, Buchan Park and at Tabell Ghyll, Ashdown Forest while on 19 June there were two at Blackdown, near Fernhurst.

More were recorded in autumn with two at Pulborough Brooks on 17 July, singles trapped at Icklesham on 28 July and 8 Aug, one trapped at Charleston Reedbed on 15 Aug, singles at Weir Wood Res on 16 and 24 Aug, two at Old Lodge NR, Ashdown Forest on 19 Aug and another at Pulborough Brooks on 23 Aug. The last was at Castle Water, Rye Hbr on 27 Aug.

It appears that we have almost lost this species as a summer visitor to Sussex. [JSB]

1311. **CHIFFCHAFF**

Phylloscopus collybita

Very common summer visitor and passage migrant; small numbers winter.

Until 11 Mar wintering Chiffchaffs were recorded at 49 localities. Except for ten at Redgate Mill Fm, a sewage works near Crowborough, on 1 Jan and one at Weir Wood Res between 13 and 18 Jan, all occurred in the southern half of the county. The high numbers recorded at Thorney SF at the end of 1998 continued with an extraordinary, and record high count, of 26 on 11 Jan (CBC). Numbers there fell subsequently to 16 on 11 Feb and 11 on 10 Mar. There were also 12 at Coldwaltham SF on 17 and 31 Jan, with 15 there on 1 Feb, and at a sewage works near Ford, the peak count of eight was on 13 Feb. Six were recorded between Sidlesham Ferry and Church Norton on 5 Jan and at five other locations there were records of four birds.

Spring passage was unremarkable. The first recorded singing well inland was at Bewl Water on 12 Mar. Numbers thereafter were small with double figure counts of 15 at Chailey Common on both 15 Mar and 15 Apr, 11 at Bewl Water on 20 Mar, and ten at West Dean and Darwell Res on 2 and 18 Apr respectively.

Details of breeding surveys are on pages 163-164. Additional records of probable or confirmed breeding came from 25 sites totalling 97 pairs, including 15 on Chailey Common. This species is so common and universal that it must go largely unrecorded.

The return passage was meagre compared with 1998, the highest counts occurring in late September with 60 at Church Norton and 200 at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head on 22nd, 100 at the latter site on 26th, and 157 ringed at Icklesham and 60 at Rye Hbr on 30th. Several observers commented on the poor passage; at Whitbread Hollow it was reported to be the “worst autumn since 1964” while at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton the maximum count of nine reflected the “poor” autumn. The autumn ringing total of 70 at Cissbury was considered “bad”. Numbers dwindled after the third week of October, the largest subsequent counts being of 17 at Thorney SF on 16 Dec and six at both Ivy Lake, Chichester GPs on 21 Nov and at Coldwaltham SF on 5 Dec. An interesting bird with a broad white collar was at Goring Gap on 6 Dec. [JSB]

1311b. SIBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF

Phylloscopus collybita tristis

Very rare vagrant, though possibly a very scarce autumn passage migrant and winter visitor.

Single birds seen and heard calling at Shooters Bottom, Beachy Head on 25 Oct (PJ) and at Littlehampton on 9 Nov (RJLK) constitute the first acceptable records of this race in Sussex. There have, however, been a number of previous county records of ‘eastern’ Chiffchaffs showing characteristics either of *tristis* or the Scandinavian race *abietinus*. One such bird was at Coldwaltham SF on 1 and 7 Feb (RAI, DIS). For further information on the identification of Siberian Chiffchaffs, see Millington (2000). [PJ]

1312. WILLOW WARBLER

Phylloscopus trochilus

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

One seen on at least five dates at Church Norton between 5 and 31 Jan (DIS *et al*) is the first county record for this month. Equally unusual was one which was seen and heard singing in Lewes on 27 Feb (JCP), arriving nearly a month earlier than the average arrival date for the years 1964-93 (*Birds of Sussex*) and five days earlier than the previous earliest date of 4 Mar 1993. More typical were singles at Littlehampton GC on 14 Mar and Atherington on 20th. There were 11 more birds in March while, during April, migrants were noted daily, mostly in small numbers. *Birds of Sussex* refers to falls of up to 300 birds at coastal sites in spring as not infrequent whereas in 1999 the largest counts were a mere 35 at Pagham Hbr on 8 Apr, with 50 there the following day.

Details of breeding surveys are on pages 163-164. Additionally, there were eight pairs at Thorney Deeps, 60 pairs in 50ha of Red House Common, near Chailey, 30 pairs in 200ha of heath and woodland at Pippingford Park, and 15 pairs at Old Lodge NR, Ashdown Forest.

Autumn passage was poor with only five records exceeding 50 birds. At Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head there were 150 and 60 on 11 and 16 Aug respectively, 90 were trapped at Icklesham on 13 Aug, 80 were at Fairlight on 27th, and 50 at Sheepcote Valley on 31st. At this last site, the August total was 426 but the September total was a “poor” 26. Other observers also commented on the low numbers with the “worst autumn since 1964” at Whitbread Hollow and the “lowest total ringed since 1984” at Cissbury. Numbers dwindled rapidly, with just 17 birds recorded in October, the last being at Sheepcote Valley on 27th. [JSB]

1314. **GOLDCREST**

Regulus regulus

Very common breeding resident, common passage migrant and winter visitor.

A total of 221 records was received from 73 sites across the county (39 sites in the breeding season and 34 at other times of the year). Of the 46 records in the first quarter, all were in single figures, except for counts of 11 at Darwell Res on 10 Jan; 30 at the Isle of Thorns, Ashdown Forest on 31 Jan; 12 at Church Norton on 14 Feb; and at Old Lodge NR, Ashdown Forest of ten on 14 Feb and 20 on 14 Mar.

Details of breeding surveys are on pages 163-164.

There were 100 records for the last four months of the year. A large fall occurred on 25 Oct (coinciding with the appearance of two Pallas's Leaf Warblers), with at least 50 at Belle Tout, Beachy Head; 40 at Brooklands, Worthing; 30 at Goring Gap; and 20 at Rottingdean. Other significant falls occurred on 7 Oct (95 at Church Norton) and 8 Nov (25 at West Wittering and 22 at Church Norton). Away from the coast, there were 45 at Old Lodge NR on 3 Oct and 34 on 7 Nov. [LM]

1315. **FIRECREST**

Regulus ignicapillus

Rare breeder and scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

The total reported for the late winter and spring (77) was above the previous 10-year average of 49 but the autumn and winter total (47) was well below the average of 119. The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
13	13	31	10	12	1	--	-	4	38	4	1

In January and February, up to four were recorded at Church Norton. There were two at West Wittering and Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 21 and 31 Jan respectively but all other records in the period were of single birds at 13 sites, seven of which were coastal. Of those seen inland, the furthest from the coast was at Pulborough Brooks. The presence of birds from 20 Feb at sites where none had been recorded earlier in the winter indicated an early start to spring passage. The total in March was made up of five at each of Church Norton, Beachy Head and Rye Hbr, four at Fairlight Glen, three at Cuckmere Haven, two at Eastbourne, and singles at seven other mainly coastal sites. Subsequent records for the spring were of single birds at Church Norton on 2 and 24 Apr, Hope Gap on 2 Apr, Rye Hbr on 2 and 26 Apr and at Moulsecoomb Wild Park on 8 May. Two were reported at Burton MP on 6 May.

A total of seven singing males were reported in the breeding season at West Dean Woods (4), Tilgate Forest (2) and Holmbush Forest.

The first autumn migrant was recorded at Roedean on 3 Sept. The approximate monthly totals up to the end of the year were as follows:

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pagham Harbour	-	6	1	-
Beachy Head	1	5	-	-
Rye Harbour	1	2	-	-
Other locations	2	25	3	1

The highest daily counts in October were of 16 on 18th and 17 on 25th. The former count was made up largely of ten at West Wittering and five at Church Norton while the latter included six at Church Norton and five at Icklesham. During November, there were singles on one day only at Pulborough Brooks, Glynde Levels and Icklesham. The sole December record was of one well inland at Rackham Woods on 26th. [LM]

1335. **SPOTTED FLYCATCHER**

Muscicapa striata

Scarce summer visitor and fairly common passage migrant. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

The earliest bird to arrive in spring was at Pulborough Brooks on 30 Apr, the same date as last year and near the average of 28 Apr for the years 1965-93 (*Birds of Sussex*). During May, records were mainly of singles, some twos, mainly on passage in coastal areas, and others seeking inland territories. There were ten at Church Norton on 5th and eight on 13th. Just 27 pairs were reported in the breeding season, of which 11 were in Ashdown Forest. Details of breeding surveys are given on pages 163-164.

Family parties of three and four began to be seen towards the end of July, increasing in number in August with fives and sixes, with larger concentrations of seven at Old Lodge NR on 19th, ten at Pulborough Brooks on 21st and 20 at Lords Piece, Sutton Common on the 30th. A major departure of 24 was reported at Beachy Head on 29th and there were 12 at Church Norton and ten at Hollingbury Camp on 31st. Reports for September were many and widespread but involved small numbers, exceeding nine on only two occasions, both for Church Norton with 16 on 2nd and 12 on 21st. Surprisingly, records were few at Beachy Head with nine on 6th, seven on 22nd and finally two on 3 Oct. There were just 11 recorded in October with the last, a little earlier than the recent average, on 8th at Brooklands, Worthing. [DEGC]

1349. **PIED FLYCATCHER**

Ficedula hypoleuca

Scarce passage migrant, more numerous in autumn than spring. Has bred.

The approximate monthly totals were:

Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
5	-	1	-	28	18	-

Records show an improvement on last year's disappointing figures, but notably fewer than the pattern of earlier years. The first was a male at Belle Tout, Beachy Head on 11 Apr after which there were just five other birds, a male and female at Church Norton on 20-21 Apr and singles at Paghham Hbr and Streat, near Plumpton on 25 Apr. There were no records in May and the final spring passage record was a male at Sidlesham MP on 12 June. There were no singing males and no breeding was reported.

Autumn passage began with singles at three different sites on 3 Aug. Birds were recorded at Icklesham on ten dates in August, with a maximum of eight on 29th, but the only other notable record was of three at Church Norton on 31st. In September, there were three at Pulborough Brooks on 4th, two there on 9th and two at Church Norton on 17th. All the other September records were of single birds including the last of the year, at Church Norton on 28th. [DECG]

1364. **BEARDED TIT**

Panurus biarmicus

Very scarce breeder, scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

A difficult species to monitor by virtue of its secretive nature within reedbeds. Unlike our other tits, it is two or three brooded.

At the start of the year, on 2 Jan, one was inland at Pulborough Brooks (MRa), the first record for the reserve. At Thorney Deeps, observations were for 31 days in the year, one or more in each month. Counts in January to August inclusive were of ten or less, yet five pairs were considered to have fledged 25 to 30 young, juveniles being seen from 11 May (CBC), while nest-bound young were reported being fed on 10 June. In September and October, with the advent of autumnal 'high-flying behaviour', larger numbers became visible, with peaks of 32 on 15 Sept and 31 on 11 Oct, dropping to 14 on 27 Oct and single figures thereafter up to 20 Dec. Of the 'high-flyers', 12 on 28 Sept flew S and were not seen to return (CBC). At Icklesham, where there were seven breeding pairs, the September and October maxima were 22 on 15th and 30 on 28th respectively. At Pett Level Pools, there were only four reports, all of five or less, on four dates in March, July and August. The sole record at Filsham LNR was of four on 1 Mar.

In October, wanderers/migrants were recorded away from breeding sites: two at Manor Fm, Apuldram on 10th and four on 16th, up to ten at the Severals, Church Norton from 4th to 27th, one at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 10th and again on 6 Nov, and, at Rye Hbr, six at Castle Water from 10th to 16th and one at Ternery Pool on 17th. One flew E at the Severals on 8 Nov. [ARK]

1437. **LONG-TAILED TIT**

Aegithalos caudatus

Very common resident.

Records were received for 52 widely spread sites across the county, covering a range of habitats including the High Weald, the Downs and the Coastal Plain.

Details of breeding surveys are shown on pages 163-164. Additionally there were an estimated 15 pairs at Darwell Res. Breeding was confirmed at a number of sites, for example, Abbot's Wood, Hailsham where a pair with ten fledged young was seen on 20 May. Two pairs were also successful at Littlehampton GC and the total of 34 'new birds' ringed at Cissbury in the year pointed to prosperous local breeding.

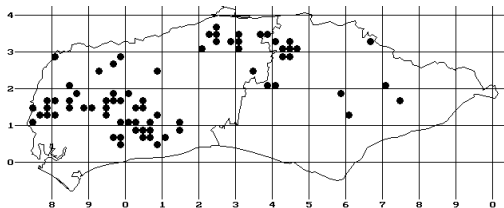
There were a number of high winter counts, such as 32 at Ambersham Common on 30 Jan and, in December, 40 at Warren Hill, Washington on 4th, 19 at Goring Gap on 5th, 24 at Arundel Mill Stream on 11th and 24 at Elmer on 25th.

Two came to peanuts in a garden at Littleworth up to 3 Mar. A pair at Blackwell, East Grinstead was noted gathering honeysuckle bark on 6 Mar. [ARK]

1440. **MARSH TIT**

Parus palustris

Fairly common resident.



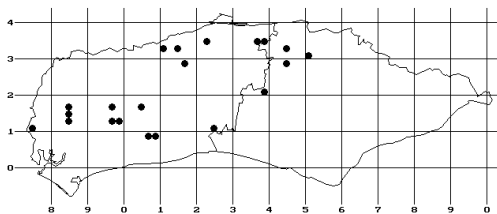
As the map shows, records were received for 72 tetrads, more than 85% of which were contained within two distinct areas of the county. The largest area, extending east along the Downs and adjacent Greensand from the county boundary to Findon Park and Cissbury Ring, held 42 tetrads. The second area, in the north of the county, from St Leonard’s Forest to Ashdown Forest and south to Newick, held 21 tetrads. Elsewhere, there were records for five tetrads well to the north of the Downs in the west of the county and for five scattered sites in the remainder of East Sussex, this meagre showing possibly reflecting the lack of observers in the east. Overall, there were records from 20 of the 55 10km squares entirely within the county. Five pairs were noted in downland woods from Houghton to Bignor Hill on 12 Mar.

At Ardingly Res, a pair nested in a box and fledged four young by 15 Apr. A bird at Colworth Down, Chilgrove was seen to probe bark with a thorn on 13 Mar. [ARK]

1442. **WILLOW TIT**

Parus montanus

Probably now a scarce resident.



As the map shows, records were received from 21 tetrads, mainly in the north and west of the county. In the west, birds were noted on the Downs at Stansted Forest; Stapleash Fm, Chilgrove; Linchball Wood; and Michelgrove, near Patching; and on the northern scarp of Barlavington Down and Bignor Hill. Sites away from the Downs were Burton MP and Pulborough Brooks. In the north, the sites were Roman Woods, Slinfold; the Langhurst Estate and Ends Place, Warnham; Denne Park, Horsham; Buchan Park, Crawley; Gravetye Lakes; Weir Wood Res; St Johns, Crowborough; Londonderry Fm, Nutley; and Chailey Common. The sole record east of Michelgrove and south of Chailey Common was for the Devils Dyke, near Brighton.

There were three records of confirmed breeding. Family parties were seen at Ends Place, Warnham and at Gravetye Lakes on 18 June and 10 Sept respectively and an adult

was observed feeding a juvenile at the Devil's Dyke on 6 June. A single bird visited the "courtyard feeders" at Upperton's Barn, Pulborough Brooks on 20 Dec. [ARK]

1461. COAL TIT

Parus ater

Very common resident.

Reports came from 20 well scattered sites. Other than Selhurst Park, East Dean in West Sussex, there were no reports from the Downs and none from a large area in central Sussex bordered by Pulborough, Darwell Res, Ashdown Forest and Brighton, an area of some 1500km²!

As last year, monthly counts at Old Lodge NR, Ashdown Forest are tabulated:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
24	22	37	29	23	30	40	120	100	70	70	25

The peak in August and September is attributable to the presence of juveniles. Singles were reported in autumn on five dates in October and on one in November at Icklesham, where it is an irregular visitor. [ARK]

1462. BLUE TIT

Parus caeruleus

Abundant resident.

A selection of breeding data additional to those tabulated on pages 163-164 is given here. Of 19 pairs in boxes at Ardingly, two failed and the remainder hatched 124 pulli by 15 Apr. At the Bluebell Railway, only 38 young fledged from 59 nests. Single pairs in nest boxes at Storrington and Thorney raised five and ten young respectively, while 3-5 pairs in 6.6ha at Cissbury Ring raised 25 young.

The monthly peak counts for (a) Hotham Park, a 7ha town park at Bognor, and (b) Old Lodge NR, Ashdown Forest were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
(a)	15	13	13	22	13	17	7	10	7	7	4	6
(b)	12	8	14	22	20	20	16	25	27	22	30	10

A total of 29 birds was counted along 600m of the River Rother at Kilsham Fm, Petworth on 25 May. [ARK]

1464. GREAT TIT

Parus major

Abundant resident.

Additional breeding data to those tabulated in the table on pages 163-164 included seven territories along 2km of Bevern Stream between Barcombe and South Chailey, eight territories at Scobells Fm, Barcombe, and a very high density of 49 pairs or singing males at Moulsecomb Wild Park (including Hollingbury GC and Camp). Of nine pairs in boxes at Ardingly Res, one failed and eight were successful, hatching 43 pulli by 16 Apr. At Thorney Deeps, a pair in a box raised 11 fledglings by 23 May, a large brood but still seven short of the maximum clutch size quoted in Cramp *et al* (1993).

The peak monthly counts at Old Lodge NR, Ashdown Forest were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
17	16	24	30	32	30	10	55	45	16	24	8

At Priory Wood, Church Norton there were seven on 16 Mar, two on 6 Apr and five on 10 May. A total of 17 were counted along a 600m stretch of the River Rother at Kilsham Fm, Petworth on 25 May. [ARK]

1479. NUTHATCH

Sitta europaea

Very common resident.

Records came from 42 unevenly distributed sites. Some 25% of these were in the southern half of the well wooded block of Downs bordered by the River Arun to the west, A24 to the east and A27 to the south, incorporating such sites as Warningcamp, New Down, Wepham Down, The Dover, Michelgrove, and Clapham Woods. On the adjacent downland block to the west, it was reported at Selhurst Park and Oxen Down, near East Dean; Barns Copse, Binsted; Rewell Wood; and Fairmile Bottom. On the Downs east of the A24, the sole record was at Cissbury Ring on 24 June, a site where it has very rarely been recorded in the past. There was also a scattering of records for the Greensand and Gault Clay to the north of the Downs and for the Low Weald, while in the High Weald in East Sussex, there were records for 20 sites extending east to Battle. The largest counts received were of ten at both Burton MP on 24 Feb and Coates Common on 21 Nov.

Details of breeding surveys are given on pages 163-164. Additionally there were three pairs in 200ha of heath and woodland at Pippingford Park and eight pairs in 61.8ha of trees with grass and maize at Chiddinglye Fm, West Hoathly. Breeding outcomes were reported for a number of sites. For example, of four pairs in boxes at Ardingly Res, one failed and three raised 16 young. A total of 13 young from two nests was ringed at the Bluebell Railway. [ARK]

1486. TREECREEPER

Certhia familiaris

Very common resident.

Like Nuthatch, this is an 'observer-friendly' species. As such it is quite well reported, records this year being for 46 sites, some 25% of which were in Ashdown Forest and environs. There were no records for the well wooded, north facing scarp of the Downs, this being a poorly watched habitat. On the gentler, southern aspect of the Downs it was noted at Slindon, the Angmering Park Estate, Cissbury Ring and Moulsecoomb Wild Park, for example. Details of breeding surveys are given on pages 163-164.

Close to the coast it was noted at Manor Fm, Apuldram (one on 13 Sept), Church Norton (two in Nov), Elmer (one on 25-27 Dec), Goring Gap, where it is unusual (one on 6 Dec), Shoreham Sanctuary, where it is also unusual (two on 24 July and one on 31 Dec), Icklesham (up to three in a day), and Rye Bay Wood (a pair in the breeding season and one on 29 Dec).

A pair at Scobells Fm, Barcombe on 4 July was seen in aerial chase around a tree trunk. [ARK]

1515. **RED-BACKED SHRIKE**

Lanius collurio

Very scarce passage migrant; formerly a breeding summer visitor. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

There were records of three birds, the same as last year. The first was on 2 June at Cow Gap, Beachy Head, when the lucky observer watched an adult male for just four minutes before it disappeared (ARK). In the autumn, a well watched juvenile frequented the area around the Pagham Hbr Information Centre, towards the Crab and Lobster public house, between 20 and 22 Sept (BFF, DIS *et al*). Finally, an unaged bird was present at Selsey East Beach on 27-28 Oct (BJC *et al*). [DEGC]

1520. **GREAT GREY SHRIKE**

Lanius excubitor

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

There were many records probably involving at least ten birds in all. A bird first seen on 1 Jan at Stedham Common (but possibly that present at the same site on 26 Oct 1998) was also recorded at Iping and Trotton Commons throughout February and March until 8 Apr (many obs). On three occasions it was seen to take ground beetles and was once seen swallowing a rodent, thought to be a Short-tailed Vole. Another was at Coates Common on 8-9 Jan (AHO) where it was seen taking a Robin. At East Park, Stansted Forest, a well watched bird gave close views from 6 Mar to 14 Apr hunting from power lines, once with a Kestrel (many obs).

There was a plethora of records from Ashdown Forest where up to four had been recorded in late 1998. At least two birds were present, one in the vicinity of Wych Cross from 1 Jan to 27 Mar (RAO *et al*) and the other at and around Old Lodge NR from 31 Jan to 3 Apr (BG, JG *et al*). One at Londonderry Fm, Nutley on 23 Jan and again on 4 Mar (DK) was presumably the same bird.

In the latter part of the year, there were singles on Ashdown Forest in the Isle of Thorns area from 20-27 Oct (NID, RAO *et al*) and at Old Lodge NR on 13 Nov (AES). In December, one was seen at Gaston Fm, Slindon on 16th (RK) and another at Chailey Common on 25th (JFS). [DEGC]

1539. **JAY**

Garrulus glandarius

Very common resident; passage migrant and winter visitor.

The records in the first quarter of the year were all in single figures, the highest count being eight at Darwell Res on 10 Jan. Breeding counts from sites of regular surveys are included in the summary table on pages 163-164.

The autumn and winter reports were from 17 sites, mainly involving one or two birds, but larger counts included 11 at Pulborough Brooks on 25 and 26 Sept, ten at Swanbourne Lake, Arundel on 30 Oct, four at Bignor Park on 2 Nov, and four at Old Lodge NR, Ashdown Forest on 7 Nov. Coastal sightings in this period included three at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton and six at Icklesham on 1 Oct and three at Pagham Hbr on 3 Nov.

There were no reports of possible migratory movements. [LM]

1549. **MAGPIE**

Pica pica

Very common resident.

The highest counts in the first quarter were 160 and 250 at Moulsecomb Wild Park on 28 Jan and 15 Feb respectively, and 62 at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr and 27 at Beach Field, Rye Hbr on 4 Mar.

Counts during May yielded 45 pairs from a survey covering Moulsecomb Wild Park and Hollingbury Camp and five pairs at Rye Hbr. Counts from sites of regular surveys are included in the summary table on pages 163-164. A group of 16 birds was seen at Cow Gap, Beachy Head on 30 May.

In the autumn and early winter the highest counts were 22 at Beach Field, Rye Hbr on 14 Aug; 28 at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head on 30 Aug; 47 at Climping on 26 Oct and 45 there on 27 Dec. [LM]

1560. **JACKDAW**

Corvus monedula

Very common resident.

The highest counts recorded in the first half of the year were 220 at Darwell Res on 10 Jan; 750 at Lee Fm, Patching on 27 Jan and 1600 (with 600 Rooks) at dusk at North Stoke on 20 Feb.

In the second half of the year, 200 passed Houghton in an evening flight towards Arundel Park on 18 July; 210 left a roost at Varncombe Hill, Brighton on the morning of 21 Aug; 150 were on Upperton's Field, Pulborough Brooks on 5 Nov; 160 at Beeding Hill on 7 Nov; and 152 at Mountfield on 18 Nov. There were no reports of coastal movements. [LM]

1563. **ROOK**

Corvus frugilegus

Very common resident.

The highest counts in the first two months were 1000 at Boxgrove, near Chichester on 31 Jan; 220 at Marsh Fm, Yapton on 10 Feb; and 600 (with 1600 Jackdaws) at North Stoke on 20 Feb.

Records for the year again included a number of rookery counts, which will be useful in updating the survey data from 1996.

The highest counts in the second half of the year were 572 at Sidlesham Ferry on 11 Sept; 190 at Marsh Fm, Yapton on 26 Oct; and 1500 flying to roost over Lavington Common on 27 Nov. There were no reports of coastal movements. [LM]

1567. **CARRION CROW**

Corvus corone

Very common resident.

The largest concentrations reported were 47 at Hotham Park, Bognor on 9 Mar; an exceptional count of 250 at Home Park Fm, Forest Mere on 15 Mar; 30 at Bewl Water on 17 Mar; 26 at Amberley Wild Brooks on 19 Apr; 80 at Sidlesham Ferry on 15 Aug; 50 at Weavers Down, Liss on 21 Aug; 64 at Hotham Park on 16 Nov; and 65 at Climping on 31 Dec. A breeding survey of Moulsecomb Wild Park and Hollingbury Camp yielded 19 pairs. Counts from other sites of regular surveys are included in the summary table on pages 163-164.

There were no reports of coastal movements. [LM]

1567.0 **HOODED CROW**

Corvus corone cornix

1

A very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Single birds were recorded flying W at Splash Point, Seaford on 15 May (JBU, RJF, SLi *et al*), and at Church Norton on 13 Oct (RT). [PJ]

1572. **RAVEN**

Corvus corax

Formerly a breeding resident, now a very scarce visitor

One along the Seven Sisters on 24 Jan (DCL) was presumably that seen at Cuckmere Haven on 20 Feb (GG, RI, PJW) and probably one of those at Beachy Head, where three were present from 22-24 Mar with two to at least 5 Apr (RHC *et al*). Two, possibly the same, were seen at Birling Gap on 22 Oct (BDJ, JCP). Assuming these records relate to three individuals, the total for the 1990s becomes ten, a great increase on the 1-2 recorded in each of the previous three decades. Recent records have fallen between 30 Sept and 6 Apr with one in August (in 1994). [RJF]

1582. STARLING

Sturnus vulgaris

Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were nocturnal roosts of at least 10,000 at both Brighton West Pier on 3 Jan and Eastbourne Pier on 15 Feb, appreciably fewer than comparable figures in 1998. The largest winter feeding flocks were 3000 each at Shoreham Airport on 3 Jan and Glynde Levels on 14 Jan.

Details of breeding surveys are shown on pages 163-164. All the long term survey sites experienced a decline in numbers. At Grantley's Fm, Maynards Green there were 17 breeding pairs in 1992 but only four in 1999. A post-breeding flock of 500 juveniles was near Seaford on 16 June. In the autumn, the largest feeding flock was 2000 at Shoreham Airport on 7 Dec. There was a roost of 1000 at Gatwick Airport on 10 Oct and another of 3500 in reed beds at Thorney Deepes on 26 Oct.

In the early mornings of 2 and 8 Nov at Rye Hbr, flocks of 900 and 1800 birds respectively were seen flying SW. At Brighton Marina, on 10 Nov, 130 birds flew in off the sea, as did a further 110 the next day [RK].

1591. HOUSE SPARROW

Passer domesticus

Abundant but declining resident.

The maxima during census counts of Hotham Park, Bognor and Marsh Fm, Yapton, during January and February, were ten (10, 15, 23) and 28 (22, 17, 37) respectively (1998, 1997, 1993 figures in brackets). The only other count in double figures for the first winter period was 25 at Keymer on 1 Jan.

Results of surveys of breeding birds are contained in the table on pages 163-164. In addition, 23 birds were recorded on 25 May during a census of 600m of river at Kilsham Fm, Petworth.

Post-breeding flocks included 44 at Partridge Green on 2 July, 50 at Shoreham Airport on 8 Aug, and 90 at Bewbush, Crawley on 21 Aug.

The only flocks reported for the second winter period were of less than ten. These included seasonal maxima of two and four at Hotham Park and Marsh Fm, respectively.

All records of flocks of this species would be welcomed. [MD]

1598. TREE SPARROW

Passer montanus

Scarce and declining resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

This species has continued its' dramatic decline as a breeding species in the county with 14 breeding pairs recorded in 1999. Only seven pairs nested in nest-boxes at Castle Fm, Rye Hbr, a decrease from 15 pairs in 1998. In the Brede Valley, four pairs used nest-boxes at Float Fm, Udimore. Three pairs bred successfully with 2-3 broods each, fledging at least 20 young in total. Elsewhere in the Brede Valley, a colony at Old Place Fm, Icklesham was checked after several years of 'observer neglect'. Here, a pair nested in a hole in an ash tree; another pair was observed feeding fledglings; and a third pair probably

bred. No breeding was recorded on Pevensey Levels, although ten were seen feeding in stubble on 18 Apr, and three on Manxey Level on 30 June could indicate that breeding took place nearby.

A single at Selsey Bill on 19 Apr was the only record from the west of the county and may have been a migrant. However, in contrast to 1998, there were no records of obvious passage movements. Seven were at Filsham NR on 15 Feb, ten were at The Midrips on 30 Aug, and at Icklesham two were trapped and ringed on 4 Sept and one was seen on 2 Nov. The largest concentration at Rye Hbr LNR, was ten at Harbour Fm in November. However, the largest wintering flock in the county for several years was 35 feeding in kale near Snailham Holt in the Brede Valley on 4 Dec. [MD]

1636. CHAFFINCH

Fringilla coelebs

Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

The large wintering flock at Stapleash Fm, Chilgrove, containing 800 birds on 24 Jan and 1000 on 30 Jan, equalled the largest previous recorded winter flock in the county, at Graffham in January 1986 (*Birds of Sussex*). A regular flock seen at Lickfold Fm, Pulborough Brooks reached a peak of 200 on 18 Jan but other counts were smaller, examples being 90 near Houghton on 23 Jan, 78 at Marsh Fm, Yapton on 1 Feb and 80 at Gravetye Woods on 13 Mar.

The results of breeding surveys are shown on pages 163-164. Additionally, about 24 territories were recorded at Rye Hbr SSSI, 25 were singing at Darwell Res on 23 May, 27 were found along 600m of river at Kilsham Fm, Petworth on 25 May and a minimum of three pairs bred in 6.6ha at Cissbury. There were no notable movements recorded in the autumn and the only noteworthy gatherings were 150 in a linseed field at Castle Fm, Mountfield on 12 Sept and 90 at Whitely Hill, Worth Forest on 13 Oct. The traditional winter flocks were again becoming established at the end of the year with 120 at Lickfold Fm on 22 Nov and 300 at Linchball Wood, West Dean on 27 Dec. [JAN]

1638. BRAMBLING

Fringilla montifringilla

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.

The approximate monthly totals were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
17	6	17	8	1	-	-	-	-	63	77	15

The table clearly shows the dearth of this species in the county during the first winter period with just small numbers recorded at 25 different sites, ten at Pulborough Brooks on 10 Jan being highest count. The last, a female, was at Pagham Hbr on 1 May.

The first autumn bird flew over Birling Gap, Beachy Head on 5 Oct. Between 10 Oct and mid-November, small numbers were encountered most days with peaks at Church Norton of 15 on 3 Nov and 14 on 16 Nov. Most of the 140 seen during the autumn were on passage at coastal sites with only 21 recorded north of the downs. Of seven records received for December, six at Holmbush Refuse Tip, Faygate on 26th was the largest flock. [JAN]

1640. **SERIN**

Serinus serinus

Very scarce passage migrant. Has bred.

1998: A female or first-summer male W over Beachy Head on 28 Mar (IJJF *et al*) and a male in Winchelsea on 18 Apr (JCr, JD, SJRR) take the year's total to five. The former landed for a few minutes at Birling Gap before continuing on its way, while the latter sang from a garden for an hour.

1999: A male flew N over Littlehampton West Beach on 20 Mar (RJLK) while one flew W over Splash Point, Seaford on 24 Mar (AFB, SJB). Both were calling. Males were also seen in a garden in Rustington on 29 Mar (RMe) and at Splash Point, Seaford on 11 May (NJNP). Records have averaged just over six a year during the 1990s, helped by 47 during 1993-97 (*c.f.* just seven during 1988-92), and have been in March (10, earliest 19th), April (23), May (23), June (2, a pair on 16th), October (3) and November. [RJF]

1649. **GREENFINCH**

Carduelis chloris

Very common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

In keeping with the records in recent years, there were only a few flocks noted in the winter. At Pulborough Brooks there were counts of 50 and 100 on 18 and 29 Jan respectively and between 50-60 were seen at Church Norton on 16 Jan and 9 Feb. Other records involved fewer birds.

The details of breeding surveys are shown on pages 163-164. Additionally, about three territories were located at Rye Hbr.

Larger flocks were recorded in autumn with 100 at Thorney Island on 2 Aug and 15 Sept, a similar number at Pagham Hbr on 3 Aug and 160, in three separate groups, on the Angmering Park Estate on 1 Sept. A regular flock at Steep Down, Lancing reached a peak of 65 on 3 Sept, 60 were in an arable field at Splaynes Green, Fletching on 8 Aug, 50 in standing linseed at Castle Fm, Mountfield on 12 Sept and a similar number in the lower Cuckmere Valley on 10 Oct.

Between 12 and 17 Oct, easterly passage was observed at Church Norton. The total of 1000 on four dates, including 350 on 14th and 300 on 17th, ranks amongst the best movements recorded for this species in the county (*Birds of Sussex*). As usual, the largest flocks at this season were seen feeding on shingle beaches, maxima were 400 at Shoreham Beach on 28 Oct, 300 on Pagham Beach on 8 Nov, 125 at Rye Hbr on 25 Oct and 50 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 26 Nov. A count of 100 at Linchball Wood, West Dean was the sole December flock recorded. [JAN]

1653. **GOLDFINCH**

Carduelis carduelis

Common summer visitor and passage migrant and fairly common winter visitor.

Fewer were recorded in the winter, the first quarter producing records of about 210 birds from 14 different sites. The largest charms were 50 at Gravetye Woods on 27 Mar, 37 at Weavers Down, near Liss on 21 Jan and 25 at Long Furlong, Findon on 17 Feb. The

regular winter census at Marsh Fm, Yapton, a 67ha mixed farm, found only one bird compared with 37 in 1998.

Once again spring passage was poor with the sea-watching logs recording totals for the entire season of 43E and 23W at Bexhill and 31E and 2W at Worthing. The only flock noted was 20 at Wakehurst Place on 24 May. Breeding surveys also suggested very low numbers, details of which can be found on pages 163-164.

Autumn flocks appeared in August with 52 at Thorney Island on 18th, 50 at Pagham Hbr on 25th and 150 at Cuckmere Haven on 31st. There were still 70 at Cuckmere Haven on 11 Sept but numbers were low during the month, with between 20 and 80 birds recorded at nine sites.

Although some passage was recorded in September and November, the largest movements were in October as shown in the following table:

	September	October	November	Max movement.
Selsey Bill		295	429	400 on 2 Nov
Church Norton	80	5405E, 210N & 300W		1740E on 14 Oct
Climping Beach		1230E & 213W		870E on 17 Oct
Worthing Beach		1479E & 16W	35E	478E on 19 Oct
Beachy Head	50	910E		710E on 16 Oct
Bexhill and Hastings	158W	44E & 177W	47E & 106W	113W on 10 Oct
Rye Hbr	34	665E, 140W & 312		235E & 140W on 6 Oct

The table shows the sites for which several counts have been submitted; additionally there were 750E at Fairlight CP on 9 Oct. The passage recorded at Church Norton was amongst the largest noted in the county with the movement on 14 Oct being the greatest since Oct 1982 (*Birds of Sussex*). It is interesting to note that the peak day of movement was different at each of the sites mentioned. The maximum daily count at Icklesham was 350 on 11 Oct; there were also feeding flocks of 150 at Birling Gap, Beachy Head on 5 Oct and at Pulborough Brooks on 14th.

In contrast to the plethora of records for the autumn, there were only nine observations for December but these included 100 at both Weir Wood Res and Holmbush refuse tip, Faygate on 5th and 19th respectively.

1654. SISKIN

Carduelis spinus

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Probably now a very scarce breeder.

The following table, which gives the approximate number of birds recorded in each month, shows the pattern of occurrence and can be used for comparison with 1998 and a similar table for Lesser Redpoll:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	109	90	67	1	4	-	1	6	230	103 6	324	177
No. of sites	9	12	16	1	3	-	1	3	12	33	25	14

Flocks in the early months were notably smaller than in 1998; most noteworthy were 30 at Fernhurst on 31 Jan, and 25 and 22 at Millbrook, Ashdown Forest on 12 Feb and 27 Mar respectively. The table shows the scarcity of this species between April and August inclusive with no records suggesting breeding activity.

Although the first autumn birds were recorded at Wych Cross, Ashdown Forest on 30 Aug, there were only 12 other birds seen between this date and 4 Sept, the main autumn passage not starting until later in September. After 25 Sept, Siskins were recorded on most days until mid-November and, like Lesser Redpoll, the peak passage occurred in October. The records showed no clear pattern but suggest that more birds were moving eastward in the early autumn, with westward movements dominating later on. There were eleven dates when more than 40 were recorded at a site, the largest numbers being 60 at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 28 Sept, 120 at Icklesham on 25 Oct and 75 at West Wittering on 26 Oct. Although the numbers decreased later in the year, there were five counts of 30 birds: at Barcombe Res on 20 Nov, at Witherenden Fm, Stonegate on 23 Nov, at Weir Wood Res and Burton MP on 12 Dec and, finally, at Ifield on 26 Dec. [JAN]

1660. LINNET

Carduelis cannabina

Decreasing resident and partial migrant. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

There were only a few winter records, none of particularly large flocks, the total for the first quarter comprising about 500 birds at 18 different sites. Most notable were 70 at both Pulborough Brooks and Malling Down on 8 Jan and 20 Feb respectively and 60 at both Henfield and Steep Down, Lancing in early January.

As usual, passage became evident in March but the largest movements were seen in April. The monthly totals for the sea-watching sites where this species was systematically logged were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Max movement.
Worthing Beach	0	117E & 30W	41E & 12 W	26E on 25 Apr
Splash Point Seaford	0	4E & 146W	0	65W on 11 Apr
Bexhill and Hastings	89E & 83W	98E & 620W	363E & 24W	314W & 37E on 2 Apr

An unusually high proportion of the small movements was in a westward direction, the peak easterly movement being 154 at Bexhill on 2 May. A few flocks were noted during spring, the largest at Rye Hbr where there were 70 on 2 Apr and 200 on 16 May. Elsewhere, there were 50 at Thorney Island on 22 Apr, and 40 at both Pevensey Levels and Levin Down on 15 Apr and 12 May respectively.

Details of breeding surveys can be found on pages 163-164. Additionally, there were seven pairs in 6.6ha at Cissbury, six pairs at Thorney Island and three pairs at Lavington Common. The detailed set of records for Ashdown Forest suggests that about 40 pairs bred in 19 different 1km squares. As usual, nesting was reported as common and widespread at Rye Hbr.

There were 125 at Selsey West Fields on 26 June, 100 at Beeding Hill on 11 July and 50 at Castle Hill on 24 July. As expected, the number and size of flocks increased as autumn progressed, with 720 birds recorded at 11 sites in August, 2175 at 17 sites in September, and 2327 at 16 sites in October. The largest flocks were 1000 at Steep Down, Lancing on 4 Oct, 400 at Harbour Fm, Rye Hbr on 30 Aug and 27 Sept, and 300 at the Crumbles GPs and on the shingle spit at Church Norton on 5 and 7 Sept respectively.

Coastal passage was generally light with the exception of a movement in mid-October at Church Norton. The totals for the sea-watching localities where this species is recorded, and also for Church Norton and Climping were as follows, providing an interesting comparison with the similar table displayed for Goldfinch:

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Max movement
Selsey Bill	100	91	100	100 on 30 Sept & 2 Nov
Church Norton	-	1310E & 150W	-	390E on 13 Oct
Climping	-	64E	-	34E on 16 Oct
Worthing Beach	51W	14E & 15W	0	49W on 26 Sept
Bexhill and Hastings	31W	25W	0	26W on 26 Sept

There were several small parties recorded in November and December, those greater than 100 were 130 encountered on a winter farm survey near Denton, Newhaven on 6 Nov, 120 at Holmbush refuse tip, Faygate on 18 Dec and 200 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 20 Dec. [JAN]

1662. TWITE

Carduelis flavirostris

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Up to four at Rye Hbr remained from 1998 until 13 Feb (PMT *et al*), two near Steyning Round Hill on 23 Sept (JMi) and three at Stanbury Point, Thorney Island during 7-11 Dec (CBC) were the only records to be adequately documented. During 1990-94, annual totals varied from 32 to 119 and averaged 68, compared with annual totals of five to 13 during 1995-99 and an average of nine per year. Extreme dates during the 1990s were 23 Sept (1990 & 1999) and 7 Mar (1991), although most records were between October and January. The only other inland record during this period was of four at Newmarket Hill in Nov 1990. [RJF]

1663. LESSER REDPOLL

Carduelis cabaret

Scarce breeder and fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor.

The following table shows the approximate number of birds recorded in each month. Comparison with the table for 1998 reveals that fewer were seen during the winter and spring but more in October and November.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	27	20	65	93	62	22	17	9	3	757	296	41
No. of sites	6	4	11	16	21	8	6	7	3	37	28	7

There no large flocks recorded, indeed the only double figure counts during the first three months were 12 at Burton MP on 21 Mar and 22 at Millbrook, Ashdown Forest on 27 Mar. Apart from 12 at Ambersham Common on 2 Apr, the small increase in numbers

for this month reflects the records from Ashdown Forest where several small parties were seen and a single group of 24 at Wrens Warren on 10th. Over 87% of the birds recorded in the five months from April to August were on Ashdown Forest but it is difficult to ascertain the number of breeding pairs from the records.

In stark contrast, over 92% of the records in the three months from September to November were recorded away from Ashdown Forest, with migratory parties regularly seen at coastal sites. The largest numbers were recorded at the end of October, particularly at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head, where 100, 75 and 50 were counted on consecutive days from 26 Oct. There were also 80 at Icklesham on 25 Oct and 55 at West Wittering the following day. Coastal movements ceased in mid-November; thereafter the only notable flocks were 15 at Petworth Park on 20 Nov and, on Ashdown Forest, 17 near the old airstrip on 24 Nov and 25 at Crows Nest on 25 Dec. [JAN]

1666. COMMON CROSSBILL

Loxia curvirostra

Scarce visitor occurring in large numbers in irruption years. Breeds occasionally.

The paucity of records at the end of 1998 continued into 1999 but another irruption occurred in the autumn with its peak in November. The following table, showing the approximate numbers recorded in each month, demonstrates this pattern:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	2	-	1	-	8	4	13	78	42	95	238	124
No of sites	1	-	1	-	1	1	5	15	11	12	21	16

Records in the first six months were two at Coates Common on 1 Jan, one at Ambersham Common on 10 Mar, eight at Mayfield on 30 May, and four at Old Lodge NR, Ashdown Forest on two dates in June. From July, small groups were recorded, often flying over, with the most notable being 7E at Broadwater, Worthing on 30 July, 13 at Old Lodge NR on 12 Aug, 15 NW at Bewl Water on 20 Aug and 10SE over Ifield on 11 Sept. From late October, larger numbers were seen on the West Sussex commons and on Ashdown Forest. Peak counts for the former area were 50 at Coates Common on 20 Nov, 27 at Lavington Common on 7 Nov, 20 at Little Bognor on 14 Nov, and 15 at Graffham Common on 17 Oct, Duncton Common on 30 Oct and Ambersham Common on 2 and 12 Dec. The highest counts on Ashdown Forest were 35 at Wych Cross on 13 Nov, 25 at Old Lodge NR on 7 Nov and 12 at Four Counties on 21 Nov.

There were records of smaller numbers from most of the sites above into December but there were also up to 16 in Stansted Forest, 15 in Holmbush Forest, near Colgate on 28 Dec, and 12 at Denne Park, Horsham on 29 Dec. [JAN]

1679. SCARLET ROSEFINCH

Carpodacus erythrinus

Rare vagrant

A first-year was trapped at Weir Wood Res on 17 Sept (RFS *et al*). It was the 17th to be recorded in the county during the 1990s and the 26th in total. It is the furthest inland record, that accolade having previously gone to one at Charleston Reedbed in June 1995. Five have been recorded in each of September, October and May (from 25th), with nine in

June and singles in July and August, although interestingly 12 of the 14 records for May and June were during 1990-95. [RJF]

1710. BULLFINCH

Pyrrhula pyrrhula

Status uncertain but formerly a very common resident. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

The higher level of reporting was sustained in 1999 with small numbers recorded at 68 widespread sites. The largest counts were 12 at Weir Wood Res on 3 Jan, ten at the Hanger, Pulborough Brooks on 22 Jan and eight, comprising four pairs, at Kingley Vale on 14 Feb.

The results of breeding surveys can be found on pages 163-164. Additionally, there were three pairs at Pulborough Brooks, three pairs in 6.6ha at Cissbury Ring and two pairs at both Darwell Res and Mitchelswood Fm, Newick.

A total of 39 was ringed at Cissbury, an increase from the 28 ringed in 1998. Better counts later in the year included 20, which flew over a valley at Wrens Warren, Ashdown Forest on 16 Oct and 12 on the Nature Trail at Pulborough Brooks on 25 Oct.

The observer of one at Roedean on 25 Mar felt that it was probably a migrant, as possibly were three which flew NW at West Wittering and two at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 26 Oct, a day when several finch flocks were seen migrating. Two were feeding on *Viola* seeds in an Angmering garden on 5 June.

As Bullfinch remains on the list of species of High Conservation Concern nationally, it is important that records, especially of breeding pairs, continue to be submitted. [JAN]

1717. HAWFINCH

Coccothraustes coccothraustes

Scarce breeding resident and very scarce passage migrant.

There were just five records from four sites, three of which were close to West Dean. The monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2

The records near West Dean were of two on 3 Jan, 13 Mar and 27 Dec, with one on 7 Jan. A pair at Old Lodge NR, Ashdown Forest on 9 May was the only other sighting. It is possible that only 4 birds were recorded and even if those seen in different parts of Westdean Woods were considered different, then the total of eight is only one better than the previous lowest total noted in 1992 (*Birds of Sussex*). [JAN]

1850. SNOW BUNTING

Plectrophenax nivalis

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Although nine were recorded in Dec 1998, just four (all assumed to be different individuals, but again all in East Sussex) were seen at the start of the year. These were three in the Sovereign Hbr Marina area from 2 to 11 Jan and one on the beach reserve at

Rye Hbr on 10-11 Jan. None were seen subsequently suggesting an early departure (there having been records into February and March in six of the last ten years).

One flew E at Newhaven Tide Mills on 10 Oct (only two were earlier during the 1990s) with another at Swanborough Hill, Kingston on 11th, while one at Pett Level on 24-25 Oct was a more typical first date for the second winter period. In November, singles at Selsey West Fields from 7th to 13th and at Pilsey Island on 7th (before flying towards East Head) were the first records of the year in the west of the county. One seen at Pett Level on 10 Nov may have been the reappearance of the October bird and might be connected to records of singles from nearby Rye Hbr on 13, 19 and 30 Nov. Also in November, five were at Sovereign Hbr Marina on 13th, one on the beach at Church Norton from 22nd to 26th was joined by a second on 27-28th, 1-3 flew inland at Glyne Gap, Bexhill on 23rd, one was seen on Littlehampton West Beach on 28th and two were at East Head, West Wittering on 30th. At the end of the year, two were present at Shoreham Hbr on 9 Dec, one flew W, then E, behind Brighton Marina on 17th and singles were at Rye Hbr beach reserve on 27th and 29th. At a conservative estimate, the 20 records during the second winter period take the year's total to 25. This represents an improvement on the 17 recorded in 1998 and is above the average for the 1990s (of about 20), although numbers have varied considerably during this period, from just two in 1994 (and three in 1993) to 39 in 1990 and 45 in 1996. [RJF]

1857. YELLOWHAMMER

Emberiza citrinella

Status uncertain but once a very common resident.

The total reported in the early part of the year was substantially less than in 1998, though 21 at Thorney Island on 7 Jan, 50 on Offham Hill, near Lewes on 10 Jan and between 22 and 29 from 27 Jan to 10 Mar in a hedge next to a maize field at Lee Fm, Patching were of interest. Forty-six were counted on the west side of Pagham Hbr on 9 Feb and 70 the next day.

Breeding season records came from widely distributed sites: a few all along the coast from Thorney Island (3 pairs) to Jury's Gap (2 pairs); a number along the Downs, especially to the west; more on the western commons and on Ashdown Forest; and few in the north and north-east of the county. There were seven singing at Castle Hill, near Falmer on 20 Mar (though only four there on 11 Apr). In addition, two pairs bred at Littlehampton GC; four at Fieldlands Fm, Henfield; and three along a 600m stretch of the River Rother at Kilsham Fm, near Petworth. Larger numbers were reported from Moulsecomb Wild Park (12 singing males), Chailey Common (21 territories), and on Ashdown Forest (where there were six pairs at Wrens Warren alone). Details of other breeding surveys are shown on pages 163-164.

Up to 20 were recorded at Icklesham in August but only three September records were submitted. Larger concentrations at the end of the year included up to 39 at Pulborough Brooks in November, 20 at Denton and 40 on Chantry Hill on 13 Nov, 24 at Climping on 26 Dec and 70 at Telscombe on 29 Dec. Unusually, 38 moved W in a single flock over Moulsecomb Wild Park on 3 Dec. [CB]

1877. REED BUNTING

Emberiza schoeniclus

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

January brought several double figure counts: 40 were on Down Level, Pevensey on 1st, with 30 remaining on 14 Feb; 32 were at Pulborough Brooks on 8 Jan; and 35 at Amberley Mount on 24th. Flocks of 30 and 20 were recorded on Ashdown Forest in mid-January but, generally, reported numbers were lower than in 1998.

In the breeding season, approximately 127 pairs or territories were reported, a slight increase compared with 1998. These included 11 pairs on Thorney Island (14 in 1998 and larger numbers earlier in the 1990s), eight pairs on Amberley Wild Brooks, 14 pairs on Pulborough Brooks, 50 pairs within the Rye Hbr SSSI (37 in 1998), and about 30 pairs on Ashdown Forest. Four pairs were located along a 4km stretch of Aldingbourne Rife and two pairs at Kilsham Fm, Petworth.

There were 40 at Icklesham on 10 Oct and other counts included 26 at Rye Hbr on 7th and 25 at the Isle of Thorns, Ashdown Forest, on 9th. The latter was still 15 strong on 24 Nov. Sustained movement was noted during October at Church Norton: 20 flew N on 11th and a total of 117E between 12th and 17th, including 46 on 12th. Similar movements were noted at Church Norton in Oct 1997. Fifty were roosting at Thorney Deeps on 28 Oct. Interesting inland records for the latter part of the year included two at Scobells Fm, Barcombe on 5 Dec (where the species is considered to be unusual) and 15 on farmland south of Wivelsfield on 29 Dec. [CB]

1882 CORN BUNTING

Miliaria calandra

Fairly common but decreasing resident. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

Although there were records from only nine sites in January and seven in February, the early part of the year was rather more productive than 1998 had been. Some counts were substantial: up to 70 at Rye Hbr in early January and 50 at Newmarket Hill in early February, with 80 there on 3 Mar, 120 on 12 Mar, but only 15 on 27 Mar. Forty were at North Stoke on 24 Jan and up to 36 roosted at Thorney Deeps between 31 Jan and 23 Feb, declining to 19 by 17 Mar. There were no records of spring movement this year.

Breeding season records were widely but still thinly distributed along the Downs (with 13 singing males between the Arun and A24, and 21 between the A24 and Adur) and near the coast from Thorney Island to Scotney Court (with six territories at Thorney and four at Harbour Fm, Rye). A CBC plot at Marsh Fm, Yapton held one territory, as in 1997 and 1998. Small groups noted during the summer included ten at Cissbury Ring on 10 June, 12 at Selsey West Fields on 26 June and 15 at Beeding Hill on 18 July.

Forty moved south over Steyning Round Hill on 2 Aug and one turned up on a garage roof in Hollingbury, Brighton on 10th, but very few other records were received for August and September. Thirty-six were at Roedean on 8 Oct and a flock of 30 at Newmarket Hill on 7 Nov had grown to 60 by 12 Dec. Numbers at Rye Hbr rose to 43 on 30 Dec and, at Pilsley Island, to 22 on New Year's Eve. Records, though, came from only seven sites in November and nine in December. Both the number of wintering birds and breeding season records suggest some stability; the lack of information from the central and eastern Downs is, however, a concern. [CB]

ESCAPES and FERAL BIRDS

All records of BOU Category C or D species, of apparently feral individuals of other species and of probable or certain escapes from captivity, will be welcomed by the Hon. Recorder for this annual feature. Notes on age/sex, plumage, behaviour, and, where known, status, will be of particular interest. Such records should be submitted in the normal way but on separate recording forms from the main records.

The following escaped or feral birds, other than those Category C species in the main list, were recorded in the county in 1999. It should be noted that the identity of these birds has not been checked by the Records Committee, although clear cases of misidentification have been excluded. Nomenclature and taxonomy follows Howard & Moore (1991). Useful references are Madge & Burn (1988) (wildfowl), Juniper & Parr (1998) (parrots), Clement *et al* (1993) (finches) and Vriends (1988) (cage birds). List compiled by Richard Fairbank unless indicated otherwise.

FULVOUS WHISTLING DUCK

Dendrocygna bicolors

Common resident throughout much of northern South America, East Africa and India. Commonly kept in wildfowl collections, full-winged birds are liable to wander.

Three at Amberley Wild Brooks on 9 Jan had come from a small collection on a pond nearby.

BLACK SWAN

Cygnus atratus

Common resident throughout much of Australia and New Zealand. Commonly kept in wildfowl collections, full-winged birds are liable to wander. Escaped pairs bred at four locations in UK in 1998 (*Brit. Birds* 93: 429).

A pair were present on Benbow Pond, Cowdray Park on 31 Jan & 22 Mar while singles were seen at Brickkiln Pond, Stansted Forest (on 10 Jan), Swanbourne Lake, Arundel (11 Jan), Icklesham (21 May), the Lower Cuckmere Valley (31 Aug-27 Nov) and Emsworth Chanel/Thorney Deeps (16 Aug & 5 Oct). The spread of records suggests little duplication, although some birds were doubtless those present in 1998 (see *SxBR* 51:147).

WHOOPER SWAN

Cygnus cygnus

Breeds N Europe and Asia. Very scarce winter visitor to Sussex (all records mid-October to early May). Escaped pairs bred in Bedfordshire in 1997 (*Brit. Birds* 92: 473) and possibly in Berkshire in 1998 (*Brit. Birds* 93: 429)..

The individual seen at Arlington Res and in the Cuckmere Valley from summer 1998 (*SxBR* 51:147) was seen intermittently until at least 30 Sept. What was considered to be the same bird was also present at Glynde Reach Clay Pit on 16 Nov. One at Bines Bridge, Ashurst on 6 Nov was presumably the individual that had earlier been reported in the Adur Valley and remained into 2000. A record of presumed wild birds appears in the main section of this report.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE

Anser brachyrhynchus

A very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, except in harsh winters when larger numbers may occur.

There was only one bird reported during the year, a presumed feral individual, at Weir Wood Res on 10 and 24 Oct. Introduced and escaped birds are quite widespread in the UK (*Brit. Birds* 93: 429). [AH]

LESSER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE

Anser erythropus

An internationally scarce bird, breeding in the Arctic and wintering in SE Europe. It is a rare winter visitor to the UK, and has not been recorded as a 'wild bird' in Sussex

All the reports of this species referred to one, or possibly two, feral birds seen on a number of dates. The solitary report early in the year was on 4 Jan, at Amberley Wild Brooks. It appears that a single bird at Weir Wood Res reported several times between 22 Aug and 12 Sept then moved to Pulborough Brooks, where it was seen with a flock of Canada Geese on 18 Sept. It was back at Weir Wood the following day and on 10 Oct, having been seen again at Pulborough on 7 Oct, where it was last reported on three dates between 15 and 21 Oct. Given that there is no overlap between these dates it seems probable that they all refer to one wandering bird. [AH]

Anser indicus

BAR-HEADED GOOSE

Breeds central Asia, migrates S to N India for winter. A favourite bird at wildfowl collections, individuals or even small groups can wander on occasions. Six escaped pairs bred in the UK in 1998 (*Brit. Birds* 93:430).

Singles were recorded at Weir Wood Res (16 Mar), Scotney Court GPs (18 Apr & 18 July-Dec), Icklesham (27 Apr), Splash Point, Seaford (flew E on 16 May), Arlington Res (16-17 May) and Bewl Water (15 Aug), while three flew E at Selsey Bill on 30 Apr.

SNOW GOOSE

Anser caerulescens

Breeds arctic N America, winters southern USA and Mexico. Presumed vagrants in UK most winters but greatly outnumbered by escapes. At least three escaped pairs breed in Hampshire in 1998 (*Brit. Birds* 93: 430) but no young were fledged.

Singles were seen at Chichester Hbr on 2 Jan, Barcombe Res on 21 Jan, Bewl Water from 3-18 Jun (a blue morph) and Rye Hbr LNR on 12-13 & 26 Sept. One was also at Scotney Court GPs from 27 Aug into 2000 with two there on at least 12 Sept. There is no reason to suppose these records were anything other than the usual escapes. Another record, with seemingly better credentials, appears in the main body of this report.

EMPEROR GOOSE

Anser canagicus

Breeding mainly confined to Alaska, winters Aleutian Islands. Present in many wildfowl collections.

The two birds recorded at either end of the county in 1998 (*SxBR* 51:148) remained throughout much of 1999. One at Scotney Court GPs to at least late February was

reported again in June, August & October while the other was seen at Thorney Deeps or Aldsworth Pond to late March (when also seen at Brickkiln Pond, Stansted Forest) and again around Thorney Island or in Chichester Hbr from late July to at least mid December. Two presumed new escapes were recorded at Bawl Water from 24 Sept to 6 Oct.

MUSCOVY DUCK

Cairina moschata

Locally common resident on forested lakes of Central and South America.

Widespread in its domesticated form, a pair bred in Surrey in 1998 (*Brit. Birds* 93:431).

A pair on Swanbourne Lake, Arundel on 21 Mar, were doubtless those usually to be seen around the entrance/car park of Arundel WWT. One was present at Weir Wood Res between 19 Apr-23 June.

MANED GOOSE (AUSTRALIAN WOOD DUCK)

Chenonetta jubata

Widespread and common resident in Australia. Present in many wildfowl collections.

Singles were seen along the Mill Stream, Arundel on 3 Apr and at Drayton, Chichester GPs on 31 Oct & 6 Nov. It is very unlikely that the former had come further than the adjoining collection at Arundel WWT.

WOOD DUCK

Aix sponsa

Breeds N USA, winters S USA. A common member of wildfowl collections. Not recorded in the UK as a vagrant although some individuals seen in SW might be.

Singles were recorded at Barcombe Mills from 29 June to 28 Aug, Shinewater Marsh, Willingdon on 10 Oct, and Alexandra Park, Hastings on 30 Nov and 28 Dec. There were no records for Swanbourne Lake where pairs were reported annually between 1978 and 1993, with breeding proved in five of these years (*Birds of Sussex*). [PJ]

CHILOE WIGEON

Anas sibilatrix

Common resident in southern South America. Commonly kept in wildfowl collections.

One in Alexandra Park, Hastings on 13 Sept and 11 Oct.

CAPE TEAL

Anas capensis

Widespread but sparsely-distributed resident in sub-Saharan Africa. Commonly kept in wildfowl collections.

One at Cuckmere Haven from 15 May to 1 Sept.

LANNER FALCON

Falco biarmicus

Mainly resident in SE Europe, African and W Asia.

One at Pilsey Island on 25 Feb. This may have been the bird seen at Pagham on 21 Nov 1998 (*SxBR* 51:149).

SAKER FALCON

Falco cherrug

Mainly scarce resident from central Europe to N India.

Records at West Wittering on 13 Jan, Pilsey Island on 13 Apr & 18 May and in Pagham Hbr on 21 Sept & 20 Nov presumably all relate to the same individual.

CHUKAR PARTRIDGE

Alectoris chukar

Common resident from SE Europe to the Himalayas. Introduced in UK under license to early 1990s but banned from 1992/93.

Thirty released birds plus some red-legged hybrids were reported at Lower Standean, north of Brighton on 3 Feb. According to Cocks (1999) "it is very unlikely that any of these birds [Chukar Partridges or 'ogridge' hybrids] or their progeny have survived in the wild to 1998". Assuming the identification is correct, this record would seem to contest that view, suggesting that either presumably illegal releases are occurring or that the feral populations are more hardy than has hitherto been assumed.

SILVER PHEASANT

Lophura nycthemera

Uncommon resident in SE Asia and S China.

A pair skulking in West Dean Woods on 31 Jan made a change from the more usual, but equally retiring, Golden Pheasants recorded at this site.

COCKATIEL

Nymphicus hollandicus

Common Australian nomad. One of the commonest aviary birds.

Single individuals were seen during the warmer months of the year, perhaps reflecting the birds poor survival prospects in prolonged cold weather. Records were at: Littlehampton West Beach (24 Mar, 11 Sep and 4 Oct), Hollingdean, Brighton (1 Apr), West Worthing (18 Apr), Thorney Deepes (9 July and 28 Sept), Southwick Beach (28 July), Sheepcote Valley, Brighton (25 Aug and 12 Sept), Holmbush Tip, Faygate (2 Sept), Burgess Hill (3 Sept), Pilsey Island (21 Sept) and Gossops Green (13 Oct).

BUDGERIGAR

Melopsittacus undulatus

Common Australian nomad. One of the commonest of all cage birds. Wild birds are invariably green (& yellow)

One was seen at Selsey Bill on 3 May.

PEACH-FACED LOVEBIRD

Agapornis roseicollis

Locally common resident in SW Africa. A very attractive parrot. Apparently an excellent breeder, sometimes rearing three clutches per season.

One was seen at Splash Point, Seaford on 1 May.

ALEXANDRINE PARAKEET

Psittacula eupatria

Resident in Indian sub-continent (where generally common) and SE Asia. Captive birds can survive outside in winter provided they have good shelter.

One at the Pells, Lewes on 31 Mar. This species is very similar to the smaller Ring-necked Parakeet but has prominent maroon shoulder patches.

**PATAGONIAN CONURE
(BURROWING PARROT)**

Cyanoliseus patagonus

Mainly resident in southern South America where locally common, but declining.

One of the most attractive of the smaller South American parrot, but apparently very expensive, extremely noisy and quite destructive!

Two were seen around Ifield Wood or West Ifield on 18 Feb, 2 May, 6 July and 18 Dec, doubtless wanderers from nearby Gatwick Zoo (2km to the north) where two free flying birds were seen in 2000.

Pyrrhura rupicola

BLACK-CAPPED CONURE

Generally common resident in W Amazon Basin (E Peru/W Brazil). Apparently rarely persecuted and scarce in captivity.

One at Littlehampton West Beach on 25 July.

CANARY

Serinus canaria

Common resident on N Atlantic Islands, introduced on Bermuda and Puerto Rico.

One of the commonest cage birds. Not recorded in UK as a vagrant although at least one wild plumaged bird in far SW in autumn might be a contender. First imported into Europe by Spanish conquistadors in 1478.

A wild-plumaged male on rooftops at Old Steine, Brighton on 16 Mar provided a pleasant distraction from language teaching.

ZEBRA FINCH

Poephila guttata

Common resident or nomad in E Indonesia and Australia. One of the commonest cage birds and a prolific breeder.

A single bird was seen at Galley Hill, Bexhill on 16 July - a very similar record to the only one in 1998 (in Hastings on 26 July).

COMMON GRACKLE

Quiscalus quiscula

Common resident and short-distance migrant in North America.

One was reported from Hailsham on 27 Apr.

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Space for Great Crested Grebe Sketch

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SUMMARY OF SOME COMMON BREEDING BIRD COUNTS

Figures relate to pairs or territories. The use of a small hyphen (-) does not necessarily mean that the species was absent. nc = breeding birds present but no count made. ✓ = present during the breeding season but no territories identified.

Species	AL	BC	BW	CF	GF	HC	LC	LP	LW	MF	SC	SF	WP
Mallard	12	1	94	1	2	✓	-	-	-	7	1	-	-
Sparrowhawk	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	✓	-	1
Kestrel	-	-	2	-	-	✓	-	-	-	1	1	-	3
Pheasant	-	1	-	4	1	✓	-	-	2	2	✓	-	1
Moorhen	11	1	65	2	7	4	-	-	-	6	-	-	-
Lapwing	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Woodcock	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-
Stock Dove	-	-	-	2	7	2	-	1	-	✓	-	-	4
Woodpigeon	-	3	-	16	13	nc	-	-	3	5	nc	nc	62
Collared Dove	-	✓	-	6	✓	1	-	-	-	2	-	2	38
Turtle Dove	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	2	-	-	2	-
Cuckoo	-	-	-	1	-	✓	-	-	-	1	✓	✓	-
Tawny Owl	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Nightjar	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	3	-	-	2	-	-
Green Woodpecker	-	1	-	1	2	1	✓	1	-	1	1	-	2
Gt Sp Woodpecker	-	✓	-	1	2	2	1	2	-	1	1	-	1
Wood Lark	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	2	-	-
Sky Lark	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	1	7
Tree Pipit	-	-	-	-	-	✓	5	3	-	-	4	-	-
Pied Wagtail	-	-	-	3	1	✓	-	-	-	✓	-	1	-
Wren	-	15	-	42	31	14	-	-	6	29	19	14	72
Dunnock	-	2	-	26	8	3	-	-	1	14	2	3	55
Robin	-	21	-	42	41	16	-	-	2	24	26	12	136
Stonechat	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	-
Blackbird	-	7	-	41	22	13	-	-	4	16	7	5	120
Song Thrush	-	7	-	13	3	3	-	-	1	2	3	2	16
Mistle Thrush	-	✓	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	7
Sedge Warbler	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-
Reed Warbler	72	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	-	-	-
Dartford Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Lesser Whitethroat	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	2
Whitethroat	5	2	-	-	1	✓	-	1	2	5	-	2	26
Garden Warbler	-	✓	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	2	-	2	1	1
Blackcap	-	4	-	6	5	3	-	-	3	4	3	3	15
Chiffchaff	-	2	-	6	5	4	-	-	1	1	3	8	13
Willow Warbler	-	1	-	-	-	2	✓	-	-	✓	4	-	6
Goldcrest	-	3	-	1	1	3	-	-	-	1	2	-	-
Spotted Flycatcher	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Long-tailed tit	-	2	3	1	2	4	-	-	-	1	-	-	11
Marsh Tit	-	2	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Coal Tit	-	2	-	-	✓	2	-	-	-	-	1	✓	-
Blue Tit	-	18	-	28	17	15	-	-	3	11	12	11	61
Great Tit	-	12	-	19	13	8	-	-	1	9	7	8	49

Species	AL	BC	BW	CF	GF	HC	LC	LP	LW	MF	SC	SF	WP
Nuthatch	-	2	-	8	4	4	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-
Treecreeper	-	1	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-
Jay	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Magpie	-	1	-	3	2	nc	-	-	-	5	1	1	45
Jackdaw	-	-	-	3	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-
Carrión Crow	-	1	-	3	3	nc	-	-	-	4	3	1	19
Starling	-	✓	-	5	4	nc	-	-	-	2	-	nc	30
House Sparrow	-	-	-	9	2	nc	-	-	-	8	-	nc	11
Chaffinch	-	10	-	37	16	5	-	-	6	33	12	9	42
Greenfinch	-	✓	-	13	1	2	-	-	1	4	-	1	31
Goldfinch	-	✓	-	2	1	1	-	-	-	3	✓	-	4
Linnet	-	✓	-	4	1	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	6
Bullfinch	-	1	-	1	1	2	-	-	1	-	✓	-	4
Yellowhammer	-	1	-	-	2	-	10	4	-	4	3	2	12
Reed Bunting	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-

Key to sites:

- AL Aldingbourne and Lidsey Rife. 4.0km of Waterway Bird Survey
- BC Barns Copse, Binstead. 16.1ha deciduous woodland. Common Bird Census.
- BW Bewl Water. 182ha of mixed habitat but predominantly grassland plus 312ha of water.
- CF Chiddinglye Farm, West Hoathly. 61.8ha grass/maize farm. Common Bird Census.
- GF Grantleys Farm, Maynards Green. 45.3ha farmland. Common Bird Census.
- HC High Chimneys Estate, Battle. 24ha of deciduous woodland with some grassland. Territory mapping.
- LC Lavington Common. 28ha lowland heath surrounded by pine & deciduous woods. Common Bird Census.
- LP Lords Piece, Fittleworth. Territory mapping.
- LW Lawrence Copse, West Dean. 4.3ha woodland. Common Bird Census.
- MF Marsh Farm, Binstead. 67.5ha mixed farmland. Common Bird Census.
- SC Stedham Common. 39.7ha heathland with some woodland. Common Bird Census.
- SF Scobells Farm, Barcombe. 10.4ha grass farm with some woodland. Territory mapping.
- WP Moulsecoomb Wild Park, Brighton including Hollingbury Camp and Golf Course and parts of nature reserve. Downland scrub, farmland and setaside. Pairs or single males.

Details of breeding bird censuses were from R Crane, J Bagley, P Bance, PR Belchamber, RG Harris, R Knight, RT Pepper, RJ Poulter, CJ Raymond, B Savage, PC Turner and PJ Whitcomb.

Arrival and departure dates of summer visitors, 1999

	First recorded date			Last recorded date		
	1999	Prior to 1999	10yr average (\pm SD in days)	1999	Prior to 1999	10yr average (\pm SD in days)
Garganey	05 Mar	21 Jan	27 Feb (\pm 15)	12 Sep	13 Dec	03 Oct (\pm 15)
Osprey	28 Mar	10 Mar	01 Apr (\pm 15)	09 Nov	09 Dec	13 Oct (\pm 23)
Hobby	18 Apr	12 Apr	19 Apr (\pm 3)	17 Oct	31 Oct	22 Oct (\pm 10)
Quail	16 May	21 Mar	17 May (\pm 23)	31 Oct	01 Dec	30 Aug (\pm 34)
Little Ringed Plover	18 Mar	06 Mar	05 Apr (\pm 6)	21 Sep	08 Oct	20 Sep (\pm 8)
Wood Sandpiper	05 May	11 Feb	26 Apr (\pm 10)	11 Sep	16 Nov	29 Sep (\pm 18)
Pomarine Skua	20 Apr	02 Apr	15 Apr (\pm 8)	02 Dec	20 Nov	30 Sep (\pm 63)
Arctic Skua ¹	29 Mar	29 Feb	06 Mar (\pm 15)	31 Dec	22 Dec	03 Dec (\pm 15)
Roseate Tern	04 May	29 Feb	05 May (\pm 15)	01 Aug	30 Sep	18 Jul (\pm 15)
Common Tern ²	31 Mar	21 Mar	03 Apr (\pm 7)	02 Nov	26 Nov	24 Oct (\pm 16)
Arctic Tern ²	20 Apr	13 Apr	18 Apr (\pm 9)	24 Oct	23 Nov	14 Oct (\pm 23)
Little Tern	07 Apr	02 Apr	09 Apr (\pm 4)	02 Oct	04 Nov	02 Oct (\pm 14)
Black Tern	17 Apr	04 Apr	16 Apr (\pm 6)	10 Oct	21 Nov	04 Oct (\pm 11)
Turtle Dove	24 Apr	22 Mar	14 Apr (\pm 10)	27 Oct	12 Nov	22 Oct (\pm 20)
Cuckoo	11 Apr	15 Mar	30 Mar (\pm 7)	17 Oct	11 Nov	24 Sep (\pm 15)
Nightjar	03 May	08 Apr	03 May (\pm 11)	11 Oct	05 Nov	10 Sep (\pm 22)
Swift	22 Apr	10 Apr	15 Apr (\pm 4)	28 Sep	22 Nov	17 Oct (\pm 17)
Wryneck	11 Apr	09 Mar	27 Apr (\pm 35)	30 Sep	05 Nov	06 Oct (\pm 15)
Sand Martin	11 Mar	05 Mar	11 Mar (\pm 5)	20 Oct	05 Dec	31 Oct (\pm 11)
Swallow	25 Mar	04 Feb	08 Mar (\pm 11)	17 Nov	28 Dec	27 Nov (\pm 8)
House Martin	27 Mar	01 Feb	19 Mar (\pm 9)	17 Nov	22 Dec	23 Nov (\pm 10)
Tree Pipit	27 Mar	17 Mar	30 Mar (\pm 5)	16 Oct	09 Nov	18 Oct (\pm 11)
Yellow Wagtail	24 Mar	09 Mar	21 Mar (\pm 7)	12 Nov	23 Nov	01 Nov (\pm 13)
Nightingale	02 Apr	21 Mar	08 Apr (\pm 4)	30 Aug	19 Oct	13 Sep (\pm 6)
Redstart	27 Mar	13 Mar	24 Mar (\pm 8)	17 Oct	29 Nov	22 Oct (\pm 14)
Whinchat	10 Mar	18 Feb	28 Mar (\pm 17)	12 Nov	02 Dec	01 Nov (\pm 10)
Wheatear	02 Mar	13 Feb	02 Mar (\pm 7)	01 Nov	31 Dec	15 Nov (\pm 14)
Ring Ouzel	26 Mar	02 Feb	18 Mar (\pm 19)	16 Nov	27 Dec	25 Nov (\pm 19)
Grasshopper Warbler	19 Apr	04 Apr	14 Apr (\pm 4)	10 Oct	01 Nov	11 Oct (\pm 11)
Sedge Warbler	01 Apr	27 Mar	04 Apr (\pm 5)	14 Oct	29 Oct	11 Oct (\pm 9)
Reed Warbler	07 Apr	09 Apr	15 Apr (\pm 5)	28 Oct	13 Nov	10 Oct (\pm 10)
Lesser Whitethroat	24 Apr	04 Apr	12 Apr (\pm 6)	10 Oct	21 Nov	18 Oct (\pm 11)
Whitethroat	02 Apr	19 Mar	03 Apr (\pm 5)	04 Oct	17 Dec	23 Oct (\pm 15)
Garden Warbler	01 Apr	01 Apr	08 Apr (\pm 5)	25 Oct	16 Nov	20 Oct (\pm 14)
Wood Warbler	30 Apr	07 Apr	19 Apr (\pm 6)	27 Aug	01 Oct	09 Sep (\pm 12)
Willow Warbler ³	27 Feb	04 Mar	13 Mar (\pm 7)	27 Oct	26 Dec	27 Oct (\pm 16)
Spotted Flycatcher	30 Apr	08 Apr	14 Apr (\pm 19)	08 Oct	18 Nov	14 Oct (\pm 10)
Pied Flycatcher	11 Apr	05 Apr	11 Apr (\pm 8)	28 Sep	01 Nov	05 Oct (\pm 5)

Departure and Arrival Dates of Winter Visitors, 1999

	Last date			First date		
	1999	Prior to 1999	10yr Average (\pm SD) in days	1999	Prior to 1999	10yr Average (\pm SD) in days
Black-throated Diver	28 May	30 Jun	02 May (\pm 21)	06 Nov	20 Aug	28 Sep (\pm 20)
Great Northern Diver	27 May	21 Jun	24 Apr (\pm 37)	19 Nov	14 Jul	25 Oct (\pm 41)
Red-necked Grebe	19 Apr	31 May	22 Mar (\pm 18)	12 Sep	18 Aug	10 Sep (\pm 16)
Bewick's Swan	28 Feb	26 Apr	21 Mar (\pm 18)	14 Nov	16 Oct	25 Oct (\pm 8)
White-fronted Goose	13 Mar	11 Apr	29 Apr (\pm 28)	13 Jun	12 Sep	24 Oct (\pm 20)
Long-tailed Duck	09 May	11 Jun	22 May (\pm 12)	19 Oct	23 Aug	24 Oct (\pm 30)
Velvet Scoter	10 May	15 Jun	22 May (\pm 12)	19 Sep	10 Jul	07 Oct (\pm 35)
Goldeneye ⁴	19 Apr	23 May	01 May (\pm 32)	10 Oct	05 Sep	04 Oct (\pm 28)
Smew	14 Mar	24 Apr	23 Feb (\pm 33)	26 Nov	03 Nov	05 Dec (\pm 16)
Goosander	10 Feb	22 May	04 Apr (\pm 29)	31 Oct	12 Sep	20 Oct (\pm 19)
Hen Harrier	19 May	19 Jun	16 May (\pm 23)	18 Aug	27 Jul	02 Sep (\pm 18)
Purple Sandpiper	21 May	26 May	11 May (\pm 7)	26 Jul	05 Aug	03 Sep (\pm 37)
Jack Snipe	19 May	12 May	22 Apr (\pm 14)	01 Oct	29 Aug	19 Sep (\pm 14)
Water Pipit	17 Apr	28 May	10 Apr (\pm 20)	No record	01 Sep	18 Oct (\pm 13)
Fieldfare	11 Apr	05 Jun	30 Apr (\pm 15)	30 Sep	06 Aug	20 Sep (\pm 18)
Redwing	30 Mar	26 May	19 Apr (\pm 16)	29 Sep	05 Sep	14 Sep (\pm 15)
Great Grey Shrike	14 Apr	14 May	24 Mar (\pm 25)	20 Oct	07 Sep	09 Oct (\pm 7)
Brambling	01 May	12 May	22 Apr (\pm 11)	05 Oct	17 Sep	01 Oct (\pm 10)

Arrival and Departure Dates

It is often difficult to distinguish genuine early and late migrants from birds which have overwintered or are attempting to overwinter. This is particularly the case with late records where individuals have been unable to accumulate sufficient fat reserves for migration and linger on our shores and probably perish. Following the arbitrary lead adopted by the BTO in *Early and Late Dates for Summer Migrants, BTO Guide 15 (1973)* all the January records have been omitted from the table of summer migrants and from the calculation of the mean dates but can be found in the footnotes.

The average dates for the previous ten years have been added to these tables to make the information more interesting and more useful. In each case, the standard deviation has been calculated as an indication of the reliability of the data (i.e. 64% of the dates lie within one standard deviation of the mean value and 95% within two standard deviations). Thus it is probable that the first Hobby will arrive within three days of 19 Apr and this figure can be used for prediction. The date for 1999 (4 Apr) is thus highly unusual. Conversely, the average date for Quail with a standard deviation of \pm 23 is unreliable and not of much use for predicting the first arrival date. The average standard deviations for departure dates are much higher reflecting the more leisurely pace of outward migration.

- 1). There were six January records. Arctic Skuas were seen in every month except February.
- 2). Records submitted as 'Common/Arctic', where the observer has been unable to ascribe specific status, have not been included.
- 3). There were four observations, of the same bird, at Church Norton in January.
- 4). A bird in Chichester Hbr between 5 July and 15 Aug was most likely an escape or was injured.

CONTRIBUTORS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, 1999

We are grateful to the following observers for records for the 1999 *Sussex Bird Report*, with apologies for any omissions:

* contributor to Nightingale Survey only.

** contributor to both Nightingale Survey and general records.

A Adams *	P Brown	D Cooper (DCo)	R Edwards **
D Adams *	D Buckingham (DBuc) **	FE Cooper *	TJ Edwards
ER Adays *	M Buckley	I Cooper	PR Ells
D Airey *	J Bujok (JBu)	JES Cooper	GM Evans
SR Allen	D Burges (DBur)	JF Cooper	RD Evans
P Allfrey *	J Burgess (JBur)	C Corrigan	S Evans *
AC Armitage	AF Burtenshaw	A Cotton	M Eveleigh
KS Arthur	SJ Burtenshaw	M Cowlard	AN Everett **
J Ashbee	M Butler	AFJ Cox **	
M Atherton *	TN Buttle **	B Cox	IJJ Faichnie
MF Austin		R Crane	RJ Fairbank
	T Callaway	A Crawford	JM Fairs
J Bacon (JBac)	IK Callister	DE Crawley **	M Feeney-Brown **
J Badley (JBad)	A Cameron	J Cresford (JCr)	JA Feast
J Bagley (JBa) **	G Carrington	D Crespin (DCr) **	B Fellows **
K Baldwin *	A Carter	S Cross	JP Finch Gasson
A Ball	BJ Carter	PR Cullen	P Fitt
PC Bance	S Carter **	J Curson (JCu)	BH Flack
DG Barber	R Carver	C Cuthbert	D Flack
L Barnaby *	W Cater *		BF Forbes
IT Barnard	E Catlett	E Daniels	A Ford (AFo)
MH Barnard	E Chadwell *	P Davys *	P Forsdick *
PJ Barnes	C Chambers	JM Daykin	A Foster (AFos) **
B Barratt *	GL Champion **	A de Poitier **	CJ Fox **
D Barrett (DBa) *	NJ Champion	CH Dean	R French
C Barwood	RH Champion	M Denness **	P Friston
R Batchelor	B Chapman	MJH Denny	A Funnell (AFu) *
PC Belchamber	RH Charlwood	D Dey	CA Furlepa *
JSS Beesley **	A Cheale	M Dicker *	
V Bentley **	HA Clapham	B Dickeson **	SP Gaites
RW Berry	F Clarke	S Diserens **	JAB Gale
PJ Biggs	PB Clarke **	JW Dodds	R Gallagher
G Binns **	RJ Clarke	P Doran *	M Gilbert *
LR Bird	BR Clay	F Dougharty *	S Gilbert
RF Bird	N Cleere	M Dougharty *	A Gill *
J Birdsey (JBir)	J Clingo (JCl)	JE Dover *	KB Gillam
EA Blackwell	GA Cockburn	NA Driver	AG Gillham
S Bolton	S Cocker **	SM Dungey	BR Gilmore
RV Bond *	JA Cocks **	J Dunk	J Glover (JGI)
C Booty **	C Collins	JAG Dunlop	DJ Golds
A Borrows	CB Collins **	NI Dunsmore-Rouse	B Goodchild
JF Boulcott	M Collins	S Dunsmore-Rouse **	J Goodchild
DP Bowtell	MA Collins	PR Durnell	JA Goodman
C Brand *	S Colquhoun *		J Goodspeed (JGo)
PM Brayshaw	M Constantine	AR Eales	PJ Goodwin *
D Bridges (DBr) **	DC Cooke	RDM Edgar	H Gordon
C Brooks	BE Cooper	P Edwards	A Gorsuch *

P Gorsuch *	D Hogan *	AR Kitson	D Mead
N Goulden	AJ Holcombe **	SJ Knapp	CW Meigar
JS Gowers **	BJ Holcombe **	D Knight (DKn) *	R Menhenett (RMe) **
G Gowlett	D Holdstock	L Knight *	V Miles **
AJ Grace	R Hollins (RHo)	R Knight (RKn) **	J Miller (JMi)
AS Grace **	PA Hollow **		D Mitchell *
M Granville	LG Holloway	D Labdon (DLab)	O Mitchell
W Green *	R Holmes (RHol) **	L Lacy-Johnson	H Montgomery
F Greenaway	CA Holt	M Lambert	J Moorland (JMo) *
N Greenaway **	JC Holt **	M Lanaway	J Morley (JMor) *
RR Greenhalf **	S Hooper (SHo)	PD Lanaway	CE Morris
AJ Griffiths	CE Hope **	RJ Lanaway **	R Morris (RMo)
J Grover (JGr) *	J Houlden	MB Lancaster	BM Mortlock
AJ Guest **	A House (AHou)	D Land (DLan)	DC Mortlock
AC Gutteridge **	AC Howard **	DC Lang **	C Mulcock
	MJ Howard	S Langford (SLa)	P Mulcock
P Hadland	RCE Howard	CD Law	BE Murray *
D Hall *	M Hoyle	J Layson (JLa) *	
MP Hall	NAJ Hudson	N Lear **	P Neatherway
CH Hamilton **	T Humber *	HJA Lee **	S Newell **
SG Hamilton **	J Hunt	B Leete *	JA Newnham **
R Hanning (RHan) *	I Hunter	MP LeGrys **	K Nicholls *
J Harding	AM Hutson **	NJ Lever	J Nobbs **
A Harman (AHa)		S Linington (SLi)	
R Harman (RHar) **	RA Ives	J Litston (JLi)	J O Driscoll
EG Harris	R Izzard	DR Livett	J Oliphant *
N Harris		AH Lloyd	B Osborne
RG Harris **	B James	KA Lloyd *	G Osborne
M Hartley *	BD James	P Lloyd	LW Osborne *
F Hartwright	CM James	M Love	RA Owen
M Harvey *	P James	S Love (SLov)	
W Harvey *	R James *	S Lewis (SLOW) *	R Page
P Haskell *	P Jones	C Lowmass	D Pankhurst *
L Hatfield	J Joseph *	JC Luck	J Parish
J Hatton	CB Joyce	PJ Luffingham **	D Parker
JR Havers **	D Julian	C Lutman	J Parker *
S Hayes (SHa)		J Lynton (JLy)	Mrs Parker
M J Helps **	W Kail *		TW Parmenter
PKW Herbert	ME Kalaher **	A Madgewick	J Parry *
JL Herring	G Kalli	S Mainwaring *	M Parry *
G Hersey	RS Kelly	A Malpass	A Parsons (APar) *
M Hibbard *	R Kemp (RKe) *	L Manns **	PT Patton
JL Hill	RJL Kemp	PG Marchant	SJ Patton
A Hillman (AHi)	M Kenefick	S Marley	R Payne *
DA Hilton	G Kennett	M Marr **	D Pennington
SR Hilton	J Kilbride *	C Marrable	RT Pepper **
T Hitchman	W Killner *	A Martin	A Pery (APer) **
RN Hobbs	D King (Dki) **	J Martin (JMar) *	NR Peters
JA Hobson **	JW King	MJ Mason **	JC Petrie
A Hodson (AHo) *	M King *	DW Mawford	N Petrie-hay
C Hogan *	J Kirkman *	J Maynard (JMay) *	C Peverett

A Phillips (APh)	G Roland	DI Smith	D Upton *
AP Phillips	JC Roper	M Smith	ED Urquhart
M Phillips *	PP Roper	PA Smith **	
S Phillips	JH Ross	R Smith	CA Walker
P Philpot	G Rowe	S Smith	D Walker
R Pidgeon *	SJR Rumsey	JF Smitherman **	GN Walker
S Pike *	G Rudman	T Squire	AJ Wandle *
SM Pinder *	SR Ruscoe	B Stacey	R Warren *
D Pomeroy **	J Russel *	I Standivan (ISta) **	C Watkins
CR Poole	M Russell (MRu)	J Steedman	P Watkins
M Pooley	Rye Bay Ringing Group	JC Steedman	AB Watson **
NJN Pope		N Steer	RF Watson
DA Potter	D Sadler	V Stevens	AJ Wende
RJ Poulter **	RF Sanderson	J Stone *	B West
W Potter *	RJ Sandison **	K Stouse	DR West
HDV Prendergast	RJ Saunders	PJ Strangeman	J Westcott (JWe) *
MG Prince	B Savage	I Streeter (IStr)	JD Weston
M Prior	G Scholey	C Sutton	AD Whitcomb
R Prior	M Scott-ham **	GA Sutton	IJ Whitcomb
D Pritty	A Scutt *	S Sutton **	PJ Whitcomb
H Pugh	CM Seaton	R Symes *	GC White
J Pullin	P Selby		A Whitehead
S Purdey	MV Sennitt	G Tanner *	CA Whiteman
B Puttock **	GR Serres	CA Taylor **	AM Whitman
	M Shaft	Rita Taylor *	JH Whitman
JR Rance	C Sharp	R Taylor	JA Wicks **
M Raven (MRa)	D Shepherd	C Tazzyman	BE Williams
CJ Raymond **	S Siems *	M Thomas	P Williams
EM Raynor	M Simmonds	S Thomas	J Willsher (JWi)
PJ Raynor	A Simpson **	R Thurlow *	G Wilson
C Reader	IM Simpson **	R Ticehurst *	PJ Wilson
M Reader (Mre)	J Simpson	PC Tinning	TJ Wilson
NJ Redman	K Simpson *	PM Troake	Miss Windsor
J Relfe	SE Sinclair *	JE Trowell	M Wood *
JE Richardson	AE Skinner	WH Truckle	P Wood *
GCM Roberts **	A Slaughter	M Turner *	SJ Woolley
HM Robinson	AW Smith	PC Turner **	NA Wren *
R Robinson **	CM Smith		L Wright
BM Rogers **	Dot Smith *	ST Underdown **	BJ Yates **
S Rogers	D Smith	B Upton *	S Young

SURVEYS:

Society members again gave a great deal of their time during the year to a wide range of national, county and local surveys. Their invaluable support and contributions are acknowledged with grateful thanks. Details of the surveys and the Sussex organisers follow.

Heronry Census: This long-standing census is organised in Sussex by Dr AB Watson, 83 Buckingham Road, Shoreham-by-sea, West Sussex. Counts of known heronries are given in the systematic list, contributors in 1999 were: M Baggs, D Buckingham, PB Clarke, CH Dean, MN Dennes, J Hargreaves, R Henning, R Holmes, R Knight, DC Lang, PJ Luffingham, Mrs BM Mortlock, Dr JA Newnham, S Sutton, Dr AB Watson.

Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS): Monthly counts were carried out for this BTO/WWT/RSPB/JNCC survey and organised by CD Lowmass, 33 Barn Close, Seaford, East Sussex. Counts for Chichester Harbour were organised by Ms A de Potier, Harbour Office, Chichester Harbour Conservancy, Itchenor, Chichester, West Sussex. Thanks are due to the two survey organisers and to the following counters: J Badley, PC Bance, D Ball, K Benyon-Tinker, G Binns, GF Boniface, Dr C Brooks, M Buckley, DJ Burges, KF Burn, T Callaway, P Cameron, R Carver, Dr J Chapman, GA Cockburn, Mrs S Cocker, D Codd, CB Collins, C Cook, I Cooper, A Cotton, Ms A de Potier, G Durey, P Durnell, AR Eales, RDM Edgar, P Edwards, M Emery, S Evans, Mrs AN Everett, Dr B Fellows, M Freeman, R French, J Glover, DJ Golds, Miss H Gordon, J Gowen, A Grace, NM Greenaway, RR Greenhalf, G Griffin, E Griffiths, RG Harris, JL Herring, D Heryett, R Hill, DA & Mrs SR Hilton, Mrs PA Hollow, J Houlden, A House, P Jones, D Julian, A Kirkwood, Ms J Knight, R Knight, DC Lang, I Lang, HJA Lee, M Love, CD Lowmass, O Mitchell, R Morris, Mrs BM Mortlock, Dr JA Newnham, C & Mrs S Nye, P Outhwaite, A Parfitt, Ms S Patton, RT Pepper, A Phillips, M Phillips, W Potter, B Puttock, T Quittenden, M Raven, CJ Raymond, J Reaney, S Richardson, R Robinson, B Savage, P Selby, A and Mrs IM Simpson, Miss A Skinner, Ms C Skinner, DI Smith, M Smith, P Smith, J Spencer, Miss CA Taylor, P Troake, JE Trowell, ED Urquhart, M Welcome, J Weston, Mrs P Williams, RLC Williamson, J Willsher, PJ Wilson, H Wingfield-Hayes, CW and Mrs KI Woodburn, K and Mrs J Wright, Dr BJ Yates, S Young and S Younger.

Breeding Bird Survey: This BTO annual national breeding survey, based on selected one km squares, is organised in Sussex by Dr AB Watson.

Thames Basin and Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey: This continuing survey of heaths and heath woodlands is undertaken in collaboration with the RSPB and the bird clubs of Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey. The Sussex organiser is A Perry, Edgehill Barn, Byworth near Petworth West Sussex. Thanks are due to the following observers, JTA Bagley, DJ Burges, T Callaway, KC Hearne, D and Mrs PA Hollow, HJA Lee, M Marr, JL Nobbs, J Parker, RJ Poulter, BM Rogers and J Songhurst.

Co-ordination of Spring Sea-watching records: The annual co-ordination of these records for the Society is carried out by Dr JA Newnham, 61 Grand Avenue, Worthing, West Sussex.

Cormorant roost counts: Simultaneous counts were carried out monthly from Sept 1998 to Mar 1999 at Chichester Gravel Pits and South Stoke, West Sussex, by A Cox and R Knight for the Cormorant Research Group.

We are grateful for summaries of detailed observations at Chichester Harbour from Ms A de Potier; Thorney and Pilsey Islands from CB and Mrs MA Collins; Selsey Bill from BJ Carter; Pagham Harbour from B Williams and Mrs S Patton; Pulborough Brooks from T Callaway and A Cotton; Worthing from Dr JA Newnham; Weir Wood Reservoir from

Mrs BM Mortlock; Ashdown Forest from R Harman and D King; Bewl Water from PC Bance; Beachy Head from RDM Edgar; Splash Point, Seaford, from BR Gilmore; Glyne Gap, Bexhill from I Standivan; Icklesham from J Willsher, Pett Level from JAB Gale; and at Rye Harbour from Dr BJ Yates.

Thanks are due to Ms S Dawkins for maintaining detailed records of ringing in the county and to all ringers who contributed data.

The Recorder is especially grateful to Dr JA Newnham and the following team of helpers for coding and inputting the records onto the computer: L Bird, PM Brayshaw, D Bridges, T Callaway, BR Clay, JES Cooper, DE Crawley, MR Crowe, MJH Denny, Ms A de Potier, B Fellows, A Gilham, BR Gilmore, J Gowers, AC Gutteridge, JA Hobson, D Holdstock, JR Hollins, R Holtham, CE Hope, A House, RA Ives, D King, R Knight, C Law, S Linington, L Manns, Mrs BM Mortlock, Mrs P Mulcock, G Osborne, Mrs S Patton, A Perry, A Phillips, C Raymond, GCM Roberts, Mrs IM Simpson, DI Smith, I Standivan, JC Steedman, SWT volunteers, Dr AB Watson, Mrs AJ Wende, IJ Whitcomb, J Whitman, BE Williams, J Willsher, and Dr BJ Yates.

THE SUSSEX RINGING REPORT FOR 1999

By Sarah Dawkins

Introduction

There were at least 23 registered ringers active individually or in groups in Sussex during 1999. Of these, records were received from 17, a slight decrease on last year when 20 contributed. The total number of birds ringed (33,776) was 15,455 less than the 49,231 ringed during 1998. Although a number of ringers retired from the scheme in 1999, it is unclear (and unlikely) that this factor drove the 31.4% decrease in the numbers of birds ringed. The Sussex ringing activity was again dominated by Rye Bay Ringing Group (RBRG) with a total of 27,739 compared to 6,037 by all other Sussex ringers. These figures show a decrease of 7,670 (21.7%) and 7,785 (56.3%) respectively compared to 1998. RBRG trapped a wide diversity of 119 species and in the rest of the county 64 species were trapped. County rarities were two Spotted Crakes, seven Aquatic Warblers and one Bared Warbler ringed at Icklesham, and, a Scarlet Rosefinch ringed at Weir Wood Reservoir. No new species were added to the County Ringing list in 1999 which remains at 192 species since 1979.

Ringling Totals

Table 1 lists the 20 species most regularly trapped in 1999 in descending order of magnitude compared to 1998. Whilst year to year comparisons are not necessarily sound, a number of interesting and worrying points can be raised. As in last year's report (Sanderson and Newnham 1999), the totals for RBRG are given to demonstrate the considerable contribution this group makes to Sussex ringing.

	1998		1999		%		1998		1999		%
	Total	Total	RBRG	Change		Total	Total	RBRG	Change		
Sedge Warbler	7233	9906	9686	+ 37	Goldcrest	412	584	445	+ 42		
Reed Warbler	4557	5749	5301	+ 26	Robin	987	495	253	- 50		
Blackcap	4362	3627	2734	- 17	Garden Warbler	562	477	404	- 15		
Willow Warbler	2938	1722	1211	- 41	Goldfinch	328	458	381	+ 40		
Chiffchaff	4573	1623	1344	- 65	Blackbird *	569	457	228	- 20		
Blue Tit	2501	1213	406	- 51	Grasshopper Warbler *	513	454	449	- 12		
Sand Martin *	3113	924	924	- 70	Wren	388	360	221	- 7		
Whitethroat	696	789	527	+ 13	Duncock *	548	327	132	- 40		
Great Tit	1107	776	218	- 30	Song Thrush **	537	317	107	- 40		
Swallow *	7450	670	485	- 91	Lesser Redpoll	122	288	212	+ 136		

Table 1:- Sussex Ringing totals for the 20 most ringed species.

*Birds of Conservation Concern (RSPB 1996) - ** Red listed, * Amber listed.*

The 20 species listed in Table 1 account for 92.4% of all birds ringed in Sussex, and eight warbler species account for 72.1% of the ringing total. Sedge Warbler numbers (9906) were higher than either during 1997 (8960) or 1998 (7233), not quite reaching 10,000 but still a highly significant proportion of the Sussex total. RBRG ringed at least 40% of each of the species on this list with the exception of Blue Tit (33.4%), Great Tit (28.0%) and Song Thrush (33.7%), and, ringed more than 90% of all the Sedge Warblers, Reed Warblers, Sand Martins, and Grasshopper Warblers ringed during 1999.

Notably, some species no longer figure in the list of most ringed species. The Bullfinch has shown a dramatic decrease in the number of birds ringed which is worrying given the red list status of the species. The number of House Martins ringed has fallen from 752 in 1998 to 122 in 1999 a negative change of 83.8%, resulting in this species

dropping well down the “most ringed” list. This decrease comes at a time when conservation organisations are expressing concern about declines in the UK population of House Martins. Numbers of hirundines ringed in 1999 were much less than in previous years, which could be evidence of a serious conservation problem, or, as is more likely, reduced ringing effort, or, data held by ringers from whom no records were received.

The ringing data suggests that both Blue Tit and Great Tit have shown significant and worrying declines in their numbers during 1999. One ringer stated that neither species was ringed by them in 1999, and listed the numbers of birds trapped and released unringed. These figures were not added to the dataset for any comparisons and therefore the declines should be treated with caution. It is likely that other ringers have adopted this policy. Suggestions of poor productivity in tit species due to the cold wet spring (Balmer & Wernham 2000) may account for the declines.

Not all species have shown declines. Lesser Redpoll, Goldcrest, Goldfinch, Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler and Whitethroat have shown positive changes.

As indicated in Table 1, much data has been collected during 1999 for all the species listed as red (high) or amber (medium) birds of conservation concern. There were 13 red listed species out of 36 and 42 out of the 110 amber listed species trapped in 1999. However, only one ringer declared a specific project, including a ringing element, for a species of conservation concern. An RSPB research project again accounted for the greater proportion of the Sussex ringed Song Thrushes.

Nestlings

As in previous years, the number of nestlings ringed (2111) was only a very small percentage (6%) of the Sussex ringing effort. The data in Table 2 lists those species where ringed nestlings accounted for more than 40% of the species total. The data provided by ringing nestlings are particularly valuable because age and origin information are known and therefore accurate for lifespan studies.

	Total ringed	Total nestlings	% nestlings		Total Ringed	Total nestlings	% nestlings
Oystercatcher	4	4	100	Tawny Owl	9	6	66
Mediterranean Gull	3	3	100	Black-headed Gull	9	6	66
Peregrine	3	3	100	Great Tit	776	479	61
Little Tern	1	1	100	Grey Heron	5	3	60
Barn Owl	128	123	96	Jackdaw	12	7	59
Lesser black-backed Gull	8	7	88	Tufted Duck	18	10	55
Tree Sparrow	12	10	83	Jay	6	3	50
Kestrel	40	33	82	Mallard	81	36	48
Common Tern	100	82	82	Blue Tit	1213	566	46
Stock Dove	9	7	77	Marsh Tit	34	15	44
Nuthatch	53	39	74	Mute Swan	16	7	43
Herring Gull	150	109	72	Bearded Tit	58	25	43
Linnet	59	40	68	Song Thrush	317	134	42

Table 2:- Nestlings ringed in Sussex in 1999

Birds of prey and seabirds again feature quite prominently among the species in Table 2. The total number of Barn Owls ringed (128) was slightly down on the county record achieved during 1998 (145 to 180) and includes the results of a number of nest box projects. Artificial nest sites have proved to be quite a conservation success story with a

wide range of species utilising “man-made homes” including Common Tern, Barn Owl, Kestrel, Peregrine and Tree Sparrow as well as the more usual species.

Recoveries

Many ringers submitted only edited highlights of the recoveries and controls (birds trapped that have a ring from another site) that were reported to them during 1998. Nonetheless, it seems to have been a quiet year for recoveries.

The recoveries from previous years of intensive gull ringing are gradually decreasing and no reports of note were received for Sussex ringed birds. A **Black-headed Gull** ringed in Finland in 1989 was sighted at Southwick nearly 10 years later, a distance of 1906 km.

Barn Owl recoveries continue to highlight the numbers killed on roads each year with two found during 1998. Barn Owls seldom move far and the Sussex recoveries demonstrate this with three chicks found 6, 15 and 20km from their natal sites.

Wildfowl ringing in Sussex is still limited but some interesting recoveries are now being reported. A juvenile **Mallard** ringed at Icklesham on 8 Aug 1993 was at Off Otterup, Denmark on 10 Oct 1999. A **Garganey** ringed as a first year bird on 2 Aug 1993 at Icklesham was recovered on the River Niger in Mali on 14 Feb 1999. This appears to be the second foreign record of a Sussex ringed bird (Wilson, 1996).

A **Kingfisher** ringed on 14 May 1999 at Rossbach, Germany was controlled at Icklesham on 23 Aug 1999 a distance of 780km. This is the second known recovery of a foreign ringed Kingfisher in Sussex, the first being of a bird ringed in Belgium and found dead in 1975 (Edgar, 1996).

The migration routes of many birds have been well documented through ringing studies. **Swallows** are no exception and the recoveries reported by RBRG for 1999 almost demonstrates this by itself. Birds ringed at Icklesham and found elsewhere in the summer have been recovered from East Sussex, Bedfordshire, Cumbria, Highland Region and Longford, Eire. Four birds ringed at Icklesham were found abroad in 1999. One ringed on 3 Sept 1998 was found in Morocco on 2 May 1999, and, three birds were found in South Africa at Bloemfontein, King William’s Town and Alexandria almost the most southerly point that a Swallow could reach in Africa.

The majority of ringing in Sussex is undertaken during the autumn at sites which could be considered as “migration staging posts”. The logical direction of travel for birds leaving these sites is to continue on a southward journey. During 1999, 14 **Sedge Warbler** recoveries were made of birds ringed earlier in that season. Of these, five were later found in one of the Benelux countries and had in all cases, moved swiftly south. The remaining birds dispersed from Sussex in a number of directions with birds being found further east in Kent (5), to the west in Dorset (2) and oddly, having travelled a considerable distance north to Norfolk (2).

The second recorded Norwegian **Goldcrest**, ringed on 3 Oct 1998, was trapped at Beachy Head 12 days and 994 km later.

Siskin recoveries again featured amongst those of interest for Sussex. Two recoveries were reported for birds ringed in the same Sussex garden. One ringed on 27 Jan 1998 was controlled 342 km away near Antwerp, Belgium, and the other, ringed on 13 Mar 1999, was controlled 18 days later in Norfolk.

Conclusion

In the light of the new BTO ringing strategy, this report was written to emphasise the importance of ringing in conservation work. This was not designed to undervalue “hobby” ringers, but rather to show the value of all ringing work for nature conservation in Sussex. Looking at the data, it is unclear whether any Sussex ringers are focussing their efforts on BTO ringing projects such as Constant Effort Sites or Retrapping Adults for Survival.

Acknowledgements

My grateful thanks to the following ringers who made their records available for this 1999 Ringing Report: BR Clay (Steyning Ringing Group), D Crawley, JAG Dunlop, RDM Edgar (Beachy Head Ringing Group), D Gruar (RSPB Song Thrush Project), DM Gyngell, R Lanaway, L Manns, P Maynard, Dr JA Newnham, TW Parmenter (Cuckmere Ringing Group), C Raymond, GCM Roberts, RF Sanderson, Dr AB Watson (Chichester Ringing Group), J Willsher (Rye Bay Ringing Group).

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Guidelines for the Future

I would like to increase the conservation element of future ringing reports and for this reason make the following requests:

- If you are participating in any of the BTO ringing projects, please let me know the details when you submit your ringing totals next year.
- If you are undertaking any specific projects on a species of conservation please let me know the details. I have already been notified of the intention of one ringer to concentrate on the House Sparrow which will hopefully provide some interesting and useful data.
- Ringers who undertake ringing nestlings, please let me know the number of broods for each species ringed. For some species, such as Barn Owl, this will help double check the number of breeding pairs involved. For some species where the numbers of pulli ringed are quite high, this information may, over time, give some valuable information on brood productivity.
- If you know of a ringer who is active in Sussex but does not submit their data for the ringing report, please encourage them to do so.

A REVIEW OF THE STATUS OF TAIGA AND TUNDRA BEAN GEESE IN SUSSEX.

By Richard Fairbank

Summary.

All occurrences of Bean Geese in Sussex have been examined with a view to establishing which records can be confidently assigned to the Taiga or the Tundra forms. Reference is made to taxonomy, identification criteria and distribution. An annotated list of all records up to 1999 is presented in an appendix.

1 Introduction.

Most Sussex records of Bean Goose are not ascribed to a form, although Taiga Bean Goose (*fabalis*) has traditionally been considered to be the more frequent. In actual fact there is only one published record of this form (a flock of five on Hooe Levels, Pevensey on 3 February 1979), compared with more than 40 individuals of Tundra Bean Goose (*rossicus*). Records in southern Britain away from the Yare Valley in east Norfolk suggest that, in recent winters at least, Tundra Bean Goose is the more frequent possibly by a considerable margin. Is this the case in Sussex, or is Taiga Bean Goose more common than was originally supposed? Has the status of the two forms changed? Given that the identification criteria have only recently become better defined, has Taiga Bean Goose been reliably recorded in the county at all? The need to address these questions has gained importance with suggestions that both forms of Bean Goose deserve specific status.

2 Taxonomy and nomenclature.

Cramp & Simmonds (1997) in Birds of the Western Palearctic (BWP) recognised five races (or subspecies) of Bean Goose, two of which occur regularly in Britain (the taiga breeding *fabalis* and the tundra breeding *rossicus*). Sangster & Oreel (1996), however, present a compelling case for the complex to be considered as consisting of two monotypic species, Taiga Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*, and, Tundra Bean Goose *A. serrirostris* of which *rossicus* is a synonym. This treatment has been adopted by the Commissie Systematic Nederlandse Avifauna (CSNA), the Dutch equivalent of the British Ornithologists Union Records Committee's recently formed Taxonomic Sub-committee which is currently considering Bean Geese, along with several other taxonomic issues. In this paper, *fabalis* are referred to as Taiga Bean Geese and *rossicus* as Tundra Bean Geese (whether considered taxonomically as *A. f. rossicus* or synonymous with *A. serrirostris*). Referring to Taiga and Tundra Bean Geese as forms skirts the question of their specific status.

3 Identification.

Both forms are considered sufficiently distinct to be identifiable in the field under optimal conditions, although wild geese are invariably wary and the views obtained often indeterminate even with modern optics. Some of the identification criteria have only recently been clarified (see for example Svenson & Grant 1999, Oates 1997, Evans 1997), with structural, and to a lesser extent, vocal differences being the most important in distinguishing between the two forms. Bill pattern, which used to be regarded as the main difference, has been shown to be variable although a bird with a predominantly orange bill is still very likely to be a Taiga Bean Goose. The following table summarises the main identification features, as currently understood.

	Taiga Bean Goose	Tundra Bean Goose
size	Big, longer necked (c.f. Greylag Goose <i>A. anser</i>)	small, shorter necked (c.f. Pink-footed Goose <i>A. brachyrhynchus</i>)
head shape	Wedge-shaped	Rounded
bill shape	Long and thin with concave upper mandible, sharp-pointed	short and deep-based, blunt
bill colour	60% (of sample of 2792) predominantly orange (with black restricted to nail), 10% showed typical Tundra pattern, rest in between.	60% (of sample of 4555) predominantly black with an orange sub-terminal band, 40% bill half orange, but none were predominantly orange.
call	'gang gang' but usually silent.	high pitched 'ayayak', recalling Pink-footed Goose

4.1 Breeding distribution.

According to BWP, the Taiga Bean Goose (*fabalis*) breeds around bogs in the taiga¹ from Scandinavia to the Urals while the Tundra Bean Goose (*rossicus*) breeds on the arctic tundra² from Kanin in extreme NW Russia to the Taymyr peninsular with other races occurring further east. Sangster & Oreel (1996) argue for two monotypic species, on the basis of one breeding right across the Russian taiga and the other the Russian tundra. The gradual size increase from west to east apparent in both forms is considered by them to be consistent with a clinal variation pattern.

4.2 Winter distribution in Europe.

In the Netherlands, the Taiga Bean Goose is described as a scarce sometimes common winter visitor, while the Tundra Bean Goose is described as a common migrant and winter visitor (van den Berg & Bosman 1999). The Dutch wintering populations comprise about 1500 Taiga Bean Geese (rising to 20,000-30,000 in hard winters) and 40,000-50,000 Tundra Bean Geese in mild winters rising to 200,000 in severe ones (Madsen, Cracknell & Fox 1999). The Tundra Bean Goose also winters regularly in Belgium and France (Oates 1997). The Concise Edition of BWP (Snow & Perrins 1998) quotes a stable wintering population of 80,000 birds for western *fabalis* in the late 1980s/early 1990s compared with 300,000 birds (trend unknown) for western *rossicus*, but mistakenly refers to the former as the tundra population and the latter as the taiga population! More recent figures from a 1995-97 census (Madsen *et al* 1999) suggests an increase, with a European wintering population of Taiga Bean Goose of 90,000-100,000 and a Tundra Bean Goose population of 535,000-600,000 birds.

4.3 Winter distribution in Britain.

The Winter Atlas (Wright 1986) does not differentiate between the forms of Bean Goose, but suggests that its overall status has changed considerably over the last 100 years. Numbers in Scotland appear to have declined (it was stated, in 1886, to be the common grey goose of the Solway) while those in the Yare Valley in Norfolk have been increasing. It was perhaps not surprising that in 1981/82, the most severe of the 'Atlas' winters, more geese than usual appeared to have crossed the North Sea from the Netherlands, and, during a severe cold spell in the early part of 1979 more than double the usual numbers of Bean

¹ taiga is cold climate coniferous forest occurring in high latitudes from northernmost Europe right across Asia and in North America

² tundra is arctic, or near arctic, moorland typified by stunted vegetation and permafrost and is more northerly than taiga

Geese were present in Norfolk. Currently, in the UK, the Taiga Bean Goose winters regularly in the Yare Valley, and, the Avon Valley, Central Scotland (Evans 1998). It is likely that in most years the Tundra Bean Goose provides the majority of the records in the UK away from these two sites, and this was certainly the case in 1997 (*Birding World* 10:4 & 10:44).

4.4 Status in Hampshire and Kent.

Of the 110 birds recorded in Hampshire during 1960-92, 49 showed characteristics of Tundra Bean Goose and just three of Taiga Bean Goose (Clark & Eyre 1993), although the latter were all in the 1980s, with few earlier birds, including none of those in 1963 and 1979, being ascribed to a form (J Clark *pers. comm.*). The general perception in Kent is that the Taiga Bean Goose is considered to be a scarce passage migrant and winter visitor, and, the Tundra Bean Goose a very rare winter visitor (C Bradshaw *pers. comm.*).

4.5 The winters of 1963 and 1979.

Given that more Bean Geese are seen in the UK in prolonged hard winters, it comes as no surprise that the largest numbers of Bean Geese to have been seen in SE England were in early 1963 and early 1979. In Kent, the first two months of 1979 constituted the hardest winter since 1962/63 and produced spectacular influxes of wild geese. At least 250 Bean Geese were recorded involving both forms, but a detailed analysis of these was not possible (*Kent Bird Report* 28:2, 28:20). In 1979, 26 Bean Geese were recorded in Hampshire (nearly one-quarter of the county total during 1960-92), and at least 76 in Sussex (representing a similar proportion of the total in that period). The Sussex birds included both forms, but no details could be found in the Society's files, precluding any meaningful analysis. The Society's files for 1963 were equally devoid of descriptions of the birds involved and whether the birds involved in these large bad weather influxes were predominantly one form or the other remains unknown.

5.1 Review methods.

Material contained in the Society's files formed the basis for this review. That no details of records for 1979 were on file was disappointing as it was the best year on record for the species in the county, and, the year with the only published, but apparently undocumented and possibly questionable, Taiga Bean Goose record. As 1979 was not too long ago to pre-date many current observers, information was therefore sought from some of those involved. A request was also made in the SOS Newsletter, but unfortunately, little new evidence came to light.

5.2 Scope of the review.

The review did not consider whether any of the published Bean Goose records might have related to another goose species, neither were Pink-footed Goose descriptions examined to see if any might have referred to Tundra Bean Goose, which is similar in many respects but has orange legs.

5.3 Record assessment.

Descriptions were matched against the criteria set out in Section 3 above, and where possible, birds were provisionally ascribed to a form. Copies of the relevant descriptions, or notes of salient features extracted from the files held in Chichester, were circulated to members of the SOS Records Committee for comment. The views of the author and individual members of the SOS Records Committee were combined and records receiving six or seven (out of seven) definite 'votes' for a particular form, or five definite and two probable votes were considered to be proven. This is broadly consistent with SOS

Records Committee policy when assessing the identification of other records. Records receiving four definite and two probable votes or three definite and three probably votes (out of seven) were not considered proven but were worthy of mention as ‘suggesting’ a particular identification.

6.1 Findings.

The Birds of Sussex (James 1996) documented 35 of the individuals recorded in the county as showing the characteristics of Tundra Bean Goose and five of Taiga Bean Goose, out of a total of 348 recorded up to the end of 1994. A further 43 individuals were recorded up to the end of 1999 of which 11 were published as Tundra. Examination of the files, when matched against the criteria in Section 3, has enabled more birds to be ascribed to one or other form. There were no details on file for one 1979 Tundra record, and another in 1988 published as Tundra, is now considered best left indeterminate and was probably an escape.

6.2 Taiga Bean Goose.

Convincing details of the single published county record of Taiga Bean Geese (with Tundra Bean Geese at Pevensey on 3 February 1979) were obtained from the observer (MJ Rogers *pers. comm.*). Details held in the Society’s files indicated that Taiga Bean Geese have definitely been recorded in the county on at least two other occasions (December 1968 and February 1976), while those in February-March 1959, October 1974 and December 1996 suggest Taiga Bean Goose. The three proven records account for 25 individuals.

6.3 Tundra Bean Goose.

A total of 12 records involving 62 individuals were considered as definite Tundra Bean Goose, while a 13th, involving three individuals in February 1979, was published as such, but with no details on file is best regarded as a probable, given that the main identification criteria at that time, bill pattern, is no longer considered reliable.

6.4 Trends.

Allowing for some duplication a total of 369 Bean Geese were recorded in the county up to the end of 1999, and, ignoring the influxes in 1963 and 1979, no particular trends in their overall occurrence were evident. Just over 75% of these remain indeterminate and therefore any trends relating to particular forms are likely to be very tenuous. However, the first Tundra Bean Geese were not recorded until January 1977 and half of the records were in the 1990s, an increase which may suggest a subtle change in its status in recent years. While the numbers of Taiga records appear to be in decline, they are so small as to make any trend statistically insignificant.

6.5 Records.

The status of individual records following this review is shown in the appendix to this paper. Every effort should be made to identify future records of Bean Geese to form, and the SOS Records Committee would also welcome new information on any indeterminate records which might enable them to be assigned to a form. Subsequent changes will be published in future Bird Reports and the Scarce Birds database on the Society’s web-site (www.susos.org.uk/species/records.html) will be updated accordingly.

7 Conclusion.

Although currently treated as a single species the Bean Goose may not remain that way for long with the recognition of the Tundra and Taiga forms. There have been three

definite records of Taiga Bean Goose in the county (1968, 1976, 1979) totalling 25 individuals, although it is likely that others have occurred on at least three further occasions. Records of definite Tundra Bean Goose number 12, involving 62 individuals and, with half being during the 1990s (and all dating from 1977), appear to be increasing. The Tundra Bean Goose in Sussex is best described as a rare winter visitor, and, the Taiga Bean Goose as a very rare winter visitor.

8 Acknowledgements.

Leonard Manns, the Society's Archives Officer, intercepted one file before it was sent to the West Sussex Records Office and provided access details to enable the files held there to be viewed. Chris Bradshaw, John Clark, Malcolm Ogilvie and Robin Pepper helpfully answered various e-mail queries. Mike Rogers and Robert Edgar provided details of birds in 1979, and, the SOS Records Committee assessed the provisional findings of the review.

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APPENDIX:

ANNOTATED LIST OF ALL ACCEPTED RECORDS OF BEAN GOOSE IN SUSSEX

Walpole-Bond (1938) includes a number of Bean Goose records (all presumed to be *fabalis*) for the period up to 1919 but des Forges & Harber (1963) considered them all to be “more or less dubious”, and listed just four subsequent records up to 1961. Acceptable records in the County follow (publication references are dFH = des Forges & Harber, SxBR = Sussex Bird Report number 16-52, 1963 to 1999). Identifications as Tundra or Taiga underlined in the comments column are considered proven.

Year	Details of record	reference	Comments
1939	1 shot near Hastings prior to 15 Jan	dFH	record not on file (predates SxBR)
1940	12 in lower Cuckmere Valley on 22 Jan	dFH	record not on file (predates SxBR)
1951	12 at Pevensey Levels on 7 Jan with 11 on 18th & 20th (1 having been shot)	dFH	details on file indeterminate
1959	1 at Manhood End between 22 Feb-22 Mar	dFH	details on file suggest Taiga
1963	2 at Broomhill Level on 4 Jan	SxBR 16	no details on file
	4 at Bracklesham Bay from 11-16 Jan & 6 on 28 th	SxBR 16	no details on file
	2 at Cuckmere on 20 Jan	SxBR 16	no details on file
	2, probably the same, at Newhaven Tidemills on 20 Jan	SxBR 16	no details on file
	2, probably the same, on Lewes Brooks on 21 Jan	SxBR 16	no details on file
	3 at Newhaven Tidemills on 24 Jan	SxBR 16	no details on file
	5 on Pevensey Levels on 27 Jan	SxBR 16	no details on file
	4 between Ovingdean & Roedean from 27-29 Jan & 5 from 4-6 Feb	SxBR 16	no details on file
	17 in Greatham-Pulborough-Wiggonholt area from 1 Feb-17 March	SxBR 16	no details on file
	4 in Lower Cuckmere on 6 Feb	SxBR 16	no details on file
	3 on Pevensey Levels on 24 Feb	SxBR 16	no details on file
	8 at Sidlesham during 25 Dec-15 Feb 1964	SxBR 16 & 17	no details on file
1964	8 in Angmering Park Estate during 8-22 Feb	SxBR 17	no details on file
	2 on Pevensey Levels from 6-9 Mar	SxBR 17	no details on file
	7 at Wiston Pond from 9-21 Mar	SxBR 17	details on file indeterminate
1968	4 at Iford on 14 Dec	SxBR 21	details on file relate to <u>Taiga</u>
1971	3 at Paghham from 2 to 7 Jan	SxBR 24	no details on file
1974	10 at Litlington on 14 Oct	SxBR 27	details on file suggest Taiga
1976	16 at Amberley from 14-21 Feb & 4 on 22nd	SxBR 29	details on file relate to <u>Taiga</u>
	14 at Sidlesham on 24 Dec	SxBR 29	details on file indeterminate
1977	10 on Pevensey Levels on 2 Jan & 3 Feb	SxBR 30	published as <u>Tundra</u> , supported by details on file
1978	1 at Amberley Wild Brooks on 26 Apr	SxBR 31	details on file indeterminate
1979	12W over Heighton Hill on 2 Feb	SxBR 32	no details on file
	11 on Hooe Level, Pevensey on 3 Feb, also 6 (Tundra) still present on 8 Feb (<i>per RDM Edgar</i>)	SxBR 32	published as 5 <u>Taiga</u> and 6 <u>Tundra</u> but no details on file. Observer contacted and details supplied support the published record

	3 at Amberley & North Bersted on 8 Feb	SxBR 32	no details on file
	3 in Cuckmere Valley on 18 Feb	SxBR 32	published as Tundra but no details on file
Year	Details of record	Reference	Comments
	5 on Mountney Level on 22 Feb	SxBR 32	no details on file
	1 at Langney Point on 22 Feb	SxBR 32	no details on file
	18NE over & later 7 on Pevensey Levels on 24 Feb, 22 on 25th & 20 on 27th	SxBR 32	no details on file, all those on 24 Feb thought by observer to be Taiga
	12E over Rye Harbour on 27 Feb	SxBR 32	no details on file
	4 at Henfield Brooks on 4 Mar	SxBR 32	no details on file
1981	1 in lower Cuckmere Valley on 20 Dec	SxBR 34	published as Tundra , supported by details on file
	7 at Pevensey Levels on 24 Dec & 9 on 26th	SxBR 34	published as Tundra , supported by details on file
1982	5 at Pagham Harbour on 18 Dec	SxBR 35	no details on file
1985	1 at Pagham Harbour from 6-19 Jan	SxBR 38	details on file indeterminate
	10 at Weir Wood Res. on 19 Jan	SxBR 41	details on file indeterminate
	26 in a field north of Atherington on 2 Feb	SxBR 38	details on file indeterminate
1986	8 at Waltham Brooks on 13 Dec	SxBR 39	details on file indeterminate
1987	1 at Weir Wood Res. from 10 to 15 Dec	SxBR 40	details on file relate to Tundra
1988	5 at Scotney Court GP from 20 Feb-1 Mar	SxBR 41	no details on file
	2 at Scotney Court GP on 13 & 16 Mar	SxBR 41	2 published as Tundra , supported by details on file
	1 in the Arun Valley, between Arundel & Pulborough, from 10 Dec-11 Feb 1989	SxBR 41 & 42	published as Tundra but details on file indeterminate, suggestion of wing damage implying an escape from captivity
1989	4 near Church Norton on 27 Jan	SxBR 42	details on file indeterminate
1990	2 at Pulborough Brooks from 7 Jan-18 Feb	SxBR 43	details on file indeterminate
	11N at Birling Gap on 1 Apr	SxBR 43	details on file indeterminate
1991	1 at Scotney Court GP from 27 Oct-15 Dec	SxBR 44	details on file indeterminate
1993	1 at Scotney Court GP on 7 Mar, <i>present since 10 Feb (per Kent Bird Report/RT Pepper)</i>	SxBR 46	no details on file
	1 at Weir Wood Res. on 21 Sept	SxBR 46	no details on file
	4 on Pevensey Levels on 12 Dec	SxBR 46	details on file indeterminate
1994	1 at West Wittering on 10 & 15 Jan & at Pagham Harbour North Wall during 8-16 Feb	SxBR 47	published as Tundra , supported by details on file
1996	4 at Scotney Court GP on 20 & 21 Jan	SxBR 49	no details on file
	1 at Scotney Court GP on 27 (& 28?) Dec	SxBR 49	no details on file, description from observer suggests Taiga
1997	3 on Upper Adur Levels on 13 Jan	SxBR 50	details on file indeterminate
	1 at Lewes Brooks on 31 Jan	SxBR 50	details on file relate to Tundra
	3 at Earnley on 1-3 Feb	SxBR 50	details on file indeterminate
	2, probably from Earnley, at Pagham Harbour on 13 Feb	SxBR 50	details on file indeterminate
	4 at Scotney Court GP on 1 Feb with 12 there on 7th & 16 on 14 th	SxBR 50	details on file relate to Tundra
	4 at Iford, near Lewes from 3-5 Feb	SxBR 50	details on file relate to Tundra
1998	5 in the Cuckmere Valley just north of Exceat Bridge on 19 Dec with 7 there & at nearby Chyngton Farm on 20 th	SxBR 51	published as Tundra , supported by details on file

1999	2 at Scooney Court GPs between 4 Feb and at least 7 Mar	SxBR 52	Published as Tundra , supported by details on file
	4 W over Rye Harbour were relocated on Pett Levels on 29 Dec	SxBR 52	Published as Tundra , supported by details on file

A REVIEW OF THE CURRENT STATUS AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE HOBBY *FALCO SUBBUTEO* IN SUSSEX.

by Martin Kalaher

Introduction.

Knox (1845) in his 'Ornithological Ramblings' referred to the Hobby as a species which is 'scarce', whilst Walpole-Bond (1938) stated 'Through Sussex a few birds pass at the migrations every year, and every year a sprinkling breeds with us'. Shrubbs (1979) defined the status as 'Rare breeding summer visitor and passage migrant', and his analysis showed a maximum of 12 pairs from 6 areas for the years 1947-60, increasing to 20-25 pairs from 17 areas for the years 1962-76. More recently Scott-Ham (1996) demonstrated that a further increase had occurred and suggested the county population to be in excess of 50 pairs. His views were supported by the results of the Sussex Tetrads Survey, conducted between 1988-92, where the species was found in 118 tetrads (2km x 2km square). The records, however, confirmed breeding in only 15 tetrads, 'probable' breeding in 21 tetrads with the majority, 82 tetrads, considered as 'possible' breeding.

There was a very considerable increase in the number of county records in the 1990s, suggesting an expansion of the Hobby population within Sussex. The results of a Kent survey (summer 1999) led to a revised estimate of 150 pairs (R. J. Clements, *pers. comm.*) for our county neighbour and their findings undoubtedly provided the impetus for this review. The intention of this paper is to provide an up-date assessment of the current situation in Sussex and to compare the records for the 1990's with those of the previous two decades. Without recourse to a formal survey it may be possible to produce a reasonably accurate estimate of the Hobby population, by analysing the data that is already available in the county archives.

The Hobby has been the subject of a personal study since 1983, for the three 10km squares SU91, TQ01 and TQ11 and this research has encouraged certain views on probable breeding densities in Sussex and also some ideas on spring and autumn migration.

Methods.

Given the secretive, unobtrusive nature of this species it would seem inevitable that not all pairs known to observers will be recorded annually, with even fewer records confirming breeding success. Unfortunately, this means the breeding population is habitually under-estimated; a feature clearly demonstrated in Table 1 which refers to just 2-5 pairs in Sussex and 11-22 pairs in Kent, for 1996.

In an attempt to gain a much clearer picture of the true situation within the county, a conceptual switch was made from the rather restrictive proof of breeding pairs to the simpler task of locating occupied territories. All available Hobby records since 1970 were carefully analysed in an attempt to identify all known occupied territories. By using cumulative evidence gained over each ten-year period, it was hoped that most of the known Hobby pairs had been included.

The following criteria were used as minimum requirements to demonstrate territorial occupancy.

- 1). Pair display, or clear signs of pairing e.g. two birds flying together.
- 2). Birds observed hunting Swifts, hirundines and other small birds in July and early August and especially if recorded carrying a food parcel.
- 3). The presence of family parties in late August or early September.

4). Single birds seen on several occasions in the same general area over a number of years. If this is the sole evidence, it is important that there is a 2-3 mile separation from another known pair, as birds may hunt over a very large area.

5). A bird actively defending a territory.

Results.

To compare the distribution of territorial pairs over several decades, distribution maps were thought to be the simplest method for illustration.

The decade 1970-79.

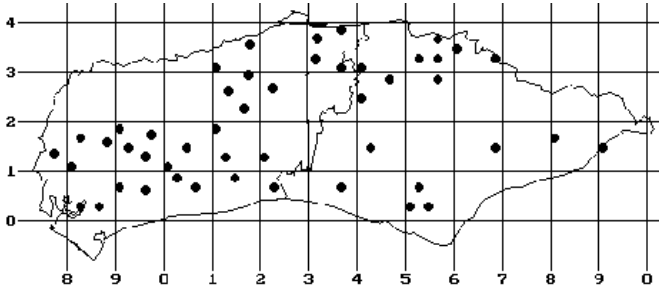


Figure 1:- Tetrad distribution of territorial pairs of Hobbies 1970-1979

The cumulative total for 1970-79 was 48 pairs, distributed as 31 pairs in the west and 17 pairs in the east of the county which suggests that the increase, as noted by Shrub (1979), from 12 pairs between 1947 and 1960 to 20-25 pairs between 1962 and 1976, was continuing. The map shows a north/south distribution. The northern population is spread fairly evenly in a 60 × 15 km corridor with Ashdown Forest as the epicentre and the southern population is biased to the west in a 115 × 20 km corridor along the length of the South Downs.

The decade 1980-89.

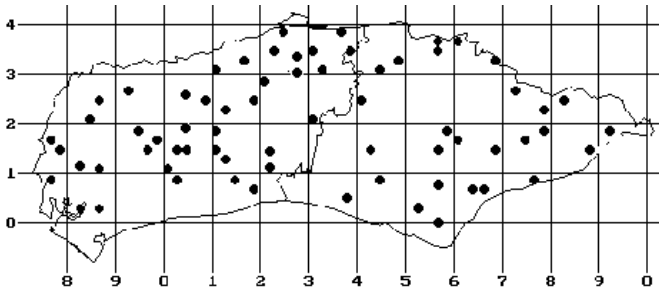


Figure 2:- Tetrad distribution of territorial pairs of Hobbies 1980-1989

In the 1980's, there were 68 occupied territories with a notable increase in density on and just north of the West Sussex downs together with a significant expansion in Wealden Sussex. The west/east bias was still present with 40 and 28 territories, respectively.

The decade 1990-99.

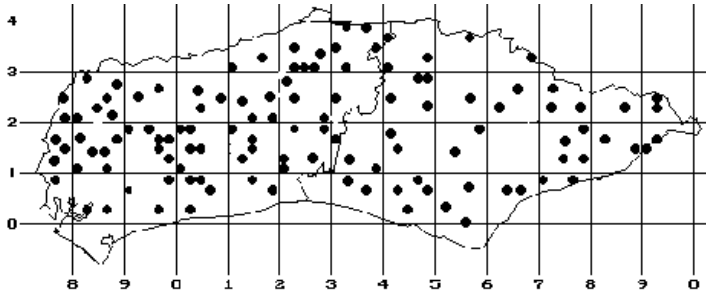


Figure 3:- Tetrad distributions of territorial pairs of Hobbies 1990 –1999

In the 1990's there was a further expansion of the breeding range of the Hobby and also higher density levels in the areas occupied in the 1970's. There are currently 119 occupied territories. Figures 1-3 demonstrate an increase in territories from 40 in the 1970's to 64 in the 1980's and to 119 in the 1990's. The Sussex Bird Report for 1998 recorded 44 pairs in the west and 22 pairs in the east as likely conservative underestimates.

All three maps show there are very few pairs associated with the coastal plain and the headlands of Selsey and Beachy Head. It is interesting to note that there are certain parts of the county that appear to hold few Hobby pairs, despite apparent suitability. The 10km square of TQ 61 (Herstmonceux) seems to offer very good habitat for this species but there are no records suggestive of territorial occupancy. The only plausible explanation is that there are few (if any) raptor observers in this part of the county. This is likely to be true for many other parts of rural Sussex, and tends to distort the overall picture. This point was previously shown for all records by James & Newnham (1996) and Pepper & Newnham (1998). A worthwhile exercise would be to compare Figure 3 with the maps of these authors.

The situation in neighbouring Counties.

The most recent published figures for breeding Hobby pairs (Ogilvie 1996, 1998 & 1999) are shown in Table 1. The wide range in each column reveals the difficulties and uncertainties for a county recorder when asked to report on the breeding population of this unobtrusive species.

	1994	1995	1996
Sussex	0-10	1-25	2-5
Hants	10-51+	28-46	17-55
Kent	1-18	5-10	11-22
Surrey	7-41	8-29	10-25
U.K Total	170-500	161-430	190-454

Table 1:- Breeding pairs of Hobbies in Sussex, neighbouring counties and the United Kingdom for the years 1994-96. (Taken from Rare Breeding Bird Reports).

In the summer of 1999 a Kent team surveyed ten randomly selected 10km squares. Observers were asked to visit several high points within each 10km square and scan the surrounding countryside for evidence of Hobbies. The visits took place in the last two weeks of July and the first two weeks of August, as this is the easiest time to observe the

adults taking prey back to the nest. Coverage was incomplete, but was satisfactory for approximately 70% of the study area. There was a total of 21 'confirmed pairs' and a further 10 'probable or possible pairs'. These results were extrapolated to a revised estimate of 150+ pairs for the county of Kent (R J Clements & J A Rowlands, *in litt.*).

In Hampshire, Parr (1985) estimated the New Forest population to be 4.9 prs/100km² showing a stability during the previous 30 years when compared to an estimated 4.8 prs/100km² from a study carried out in the 1950's. However, the Hampshire Tetrad Atlas in 1986-91 revealed numbers in other areas to be higher than previously realised and suggested a county population of 75-100 pairs (Clark & Eyre, 1993). A further increase since then indicates an on-going expansion of the population. Analysis of the available data for 1992-98, with due allowance for areas of poor coverage, suggests a county total in the range of 120-160 pairs (J M Clark, *in litt.*).

There has also been a similar increase in Surrey with 47 known breeding pairs in 1998, compared to 35 pairs for the mid-1990's (R Denyer, *pers. comm.*).

Discussion.

Hobby records have increased very considerably in the past 30 years. It is likely that the number of territorial pairs known to the Society has increased from approximately 48 pairs in the late 1970s, to 68 pairs in the 1980s, with the current position of 119 pairs in the late 1990's. These are cumulative totals and not every pair has been located annually. However, breeding *Falconidae* show considerable site fidelity and given the clear expansion in population it is unlikely that many territories have been abandoned.

Historically, this species has been linked to heathland and downland. It is certainly true that Hobby pairs may be found where heathland still remains e.g. Ashdown Forest and the western commons. Along the South Downs, the scarp slope provides excellent nesting habitat for several pairs but much of the downland itself is impoverished as a result of intensive cultivation and Hobby densities are fairly low.

Currently, the highest density of territories is associated with river valleys and well-established woodland or parkland. These habitats are likely to have high populations of small birds as well as good populations of dragonflies and other large flying insects. This prey bio-mass is presumably the single most important factor in determining nesting locations since few areas in Sussex lack suitable woodland for nesting territories.

North of Arundel, the Arun and its main tributary the Rother have a minimum of 12 occupied territories in just 35km of river valley, with all the pairs located in woodland within 1-2km of the river. The three 10 km squares in the study area referred to in the introduction have a population of 12-15 pairs in 300km² i.e. 4-5 prs/100km². Several other 10km squares in the county offer a diverse habitat of woodland and waterways and are known to have 4-5 pairs, in each.

The breeding densities in several parts of Sussex certainly compare favourably with the heathland habitat of the New Forest. Indeed, most of Sussex would now seem to provide excellent habitat for breeding Hobbies. This species does seem to shun large towns and areas of very intensive arable cultivation, but otherwise is presumably fairly evenly distributed throughout the county. An average of 3-4 pairs per 100km² would not be an unreasonable estimate and would suggest a county population of 120-160 pairs.

Spring and Autumn Passage.

Spring migration from Africa occurs on a broad-front and does not concentrate, like many other raptors, at narrow sea-crossings such as Falsterbo or Gibraltar (Cramp 1980). It is not surprising, therefore, that Hobbies can be seen arriving at any point along the

Sussex coast and have been recorded at all the various sea watching locations. In recent years, the reports are most numerous for Selsey Bill and Splash Point, Seaford, the two locations with most hours of observation. There are no known breeding pairs at these two localities and consequently these records provide excellent data regarding spring passage. Migration takes place over a 4-5 week period from the third or fourth week in April, typically 19 April to 25 May.

Loxton *et al* (1998) have shown a significant trend to earlier first arrival dates in Sussex, a trend not correlated with temperature. Table 2 demonstrates this earlier arrival by showing mean arrival dates for each of the past four decades.

	1960-69	1970-79	1980-89	1990-99
Mean first arrival date.	30 April	24 April	21 April	19 April
Mean last recorded date	25 September	8 October	16 October	21 October

Table 2:- Mean Arrival and Departure dates of Hobbies in Sussex 1960-1999.

Personal observations of several local pairs in West Sussex confirms that territories are re-occupied in late April or the first 2-3 days of May. The absence of spring feeding flocks at coastal localities in late April and very early May supports the view that established birds fly directly to their breeding territories. This supposition is supported by the findings of Loxton *et al* (1998) who showed that birds arrive about the same time in Leicestershire as Sussex, again suggesting rapid movement through the county to their breeding localities. It would seem highly probable that most inland records in late April and early May relate to a local breeding territory, but in the past many of these records have been recorded as migrants.

Since the early 1990's there have been records for spring feeding flocks from mid-May through to early June; notably at Elms Farm, Icklesham where a maximum of 12 were recorded and to a lesser extent at Pevensey Levels where there was a maximum of six birds. The data available suggests that both of these sites have two local breeding pairs and therefore these additional birds were presumably non-breeding yearlings.

Hobbies are less secretive after the young have fledged and there is a noticeable increase in the number of records from mid-August. In common with many other raptors, juvenile Hobbies practice their aerial skills within the comparative safety of family parties and not infrequently these records provide the first inkling that local breeding has taken place. The archives reveal evidence of family groups up to 20 September but very rarely beyond this date, and the clear inference is that most birds disperse, and presumably migrate, in early autumn. However, there does appear to be some evidence that Hobbies are lingering further into autumn and Table 2 shows that the mean last recorded date is becoming slightly later.

Analysing the records for 20 September or later, there were just four records for sightings of three birds or more and all of these records were at sites where there is a known breeding pair. There are comparatively few autumn records at the coast, and only one record of a Hobby flying out to sea. The apparent absence of autumn gathering would suggest that when Hobbies leave they do so quickly, and since so few are recorded it is likely that they fly at high altitude, or at night.

Conclusions.

The data presented in this paper indicates a very clear increase in the Hobby population of Sussex (along with the rest of Southern England) in part reaching densities equivalent to heathland habitat. There is a west to east bias of 2 to 1, but this is likely to

be artificial and most probably reflects greater observer activity in the west of the county. The records suggest that most coastal sightings are migrants (although there are a few known breeding pairs in coastal areas), whilst almost all inland records should be considered as probable breeding birds.

It has also been shown that Hobbies appear to arrive earlier and leave later now than they did in previous years. Earlier arrival dates may relate to the burgeoning population. As saturation levels are reached there is presumably a greater urgency to re-occupy prime sites ahead of rivals. Another possible explanation relates to the increasing number of birds recorded annually, since a larger pool will inevitably increase the likelihood of a single individual being recorded.

This analysis would have not been possible without each and every record that has been submitted over the past 30 years. A single record may have limited value but the collective whole has provided a powerful data-base which has made this paper possible.

Acknowledgements.

The SOS provided records for this review and I am grateful to John Newnham for providing the distribution maps from these. His helpful comments and suggestions are also acknowledged. I am also indebted to the Estates of Parham, West Dean and Cowdray for allowing access to their land.

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THE POPULATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE NIGHTINGALE IN SUSSEX IN 1999.

By John Newnham and Matthew Sennitt.

Summary.

A national survey of Nightingales was repeated during the spring 1999. A full census was conducted in Sussex where 692 singing Nightingales were found in 213 different tetrads within 37 of the counties 10km grid squares. The number and distribution was similar to the findings in the 1976 survey but fewer birds were heard in West Sussex than during the 1980 survey. Scrub and broad-leaved woodland were shown to be the main habitats selected.

Introduction.

During the spring of 1999 the third national survey of Nightingales was organised by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). The BTO atlas surveys suggested that this most evocative songster has been declining in Britain during the past few decades; the first Breeding Atlas (Sharrock 1976) recorded a small reduction in their British range and a decline from a peak population in the 1950's and the range contraction was noted to be continuing in the New Atlas (Henderson 1993). It was suggested, however, that most of the population reduction has occurred in the north and west of the species' range with the national population of between 5,000-6,000 pairs becoming more concentrated in the extreme south-east of England. Indeed most Nightingales in the country are found south east of a line between the Wash and Dorset with the previous national surveys showing the importance of Sussex in this context with the county holding 20.6% of the national population in 1976 (Hudson 1979) and 18.2% in 1980 (Davis 1982). In previous surveys only Kent has held more Nightingales than Sussex and a study in Kent during 1994 revealed 1,066 singing birds (Henderson 1995) suggesting that the population in south-east England remained healthy. In a European context Britain may be alone in recording falling numbers as many countries report stable populations. In France there is an estimated one million pairs (Wilson 1999) and in the Netherlands, Italy and Spain the population has increased.

Unfortunately population changes of this species at a national level are difficult to monitor. Insufficient numbers of Nightingales are recorded during annual surveys and neither the BTO's Common Bird Census (CBC) of farmland and woodland species nor the Waterways Bird Survey (WBS) for riparian habitats mention this species (Marchant et al 1998; 1999). Furthermore the Nightingale is not included in a BTO report summarising the first five years of data from the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) in which the fortunes of over 100 species are tabulated (Bashford 1999).

On a county basis the fortunes of Nightingales are also difficult to assess. Despite this being a species that most observers regularly report, the numbers heard in most years are a fraction of those recorded in survey years. Newnham (1999) demonstrated this graphically and showed the mean number of singing Nightingales recorded in non-survey years between 1967 and 1998 was 95 (range 53-163) whilst in the five survey years (1974/77 and 1980) the mean was 463 birds (range 214-858). Even in the five years of extensive fieldwork for the Sussex Tetrad Atlas between 1988/92 there was no significant change in the numbers recorded (mean 87 with range 53- 124); indeed the lowest number recorded in the county occurred during these years.

Methods.

The aim of the national survey was to locate all singing Nightingales in the country. The BTO planned two ways of achieving this objective; firstly by undertaking a 'Known Sites Survey', and secondly, to encourage supplementary recording of singing Nightingales at other locations. To undertake the 'Known Sites Survey' observers were sought to visit the locations where Nightingales were recorded in either of the two previous surveys or in subsequent years. For many counties the BTO provided pre-printed recording forms for each site but in Sussex, where Nightingales have been recorded in 50% of the counties tetrads and all of the 10km squares since 1976 (Newnham 1999), this was considered impracticable. Each 10km steward was provided with a liberal supply of recording forms and a listing of all Nightingale records subsequent to 1976 to plan appropriate fieldwork in respective 10 km squares.

The survey in Sussex was conducted as recommended by the *BTO*. Participants were asked to visit each site on at least three occasions between mid April and early June, with two of the visits occurring during the peak song period in May. The instructions encouraged the selection of warm, calm weather and to make visits between dusk and 8am, ensuring sites were not left until after darkness had fallen. In keeping with past surveys observers were asked to record the main habitat types, and the recording form provided spaces for up to four of the following categories identified by their respective code numbers:-

A11	Broadleaved woodland	B1	Scrub
A12	Coppice	B5	Young Plantation
A2	Coniferous woodland	E	Hedgerows
A3	Mixed Woodland	F	Gardens
A4	Carr	J	Others

It was assumed that the "Known Sites Survey" would only find a portion of the singing Nightingales in the county so a widespread publicity campaign was organised outside the Sussex Ornithological Society (SOS) to attract supplementary records of singing birds. Like the 1980 survey there were articles written for the local newspapers and radio interviews were given. Information and requests for help were distributed in local libraries and by all the county's local groups of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), and the Sussex Wildlife Trust published a feature about the survey (Watson 1999). Furthermore, attempts were made to contact other groups with a broad countryside interest, such as the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, National Farmers Union, Country Landowners Association, and recorders of the Sussex Amphibian, Badger, Bat, Glow-worm, Mammal and Moth groups, to enlist details of records from areas in Sussex where few bird watchers go.

To augment the national survey the BTO also organised a "Random Tetrad Survey" conducted by professional fieldworkers with the intention to gauge how many Nightingales were missed by the "Known Sites Survey" and therefore did not involve the SOS membership.

Results.

A total of 692 Nightingales were recorded from 213 different tetrads within 37 of the counties fifty nine 10km grid squares. Table 1 shows the details of these results and compares the findings in 1999 with those in both 1976 and 1980. The 10km squares SZ79, SZ89, TQ10, TQ24, TQ34, TQ44, TV69, TQ60, TQ80, TQ91, TQ92, TR01, TR02 have been excluded as Nightingales were absent in all three studies and, in most cases, only contain a small area of land in Sussex. A Chi² test was applied to the numbers of

Nightingales found in each of these squares and those in which significant changes were recorded are marked accordingly with asterisks.

10km square	Number of Nightingales			Number of tetrads			10km square	Number of Nightingales			Number of tetrads		
	1976	1980	1999	1976	1980	1999		1976	1980	1999	1976	1980	1999
SU70**	4	2	15	3	1	4	TQ30*	1	6	0	1	2	0
SU71	2	1	4	2	1	1	TQ31***	21	21	52	8	6	12
SU72	6	6	1	3	3	1	TQ32	14	11	12	6	5	7
SU80***	12	27	0	7	7	0	TQ33	4	1	4	4	1	3
SU81*	10	15	3	7	10	3	TV49	0	1	0	0	1	0
SU82**	28	29	9	9	9	3	TQ40*	6	1	0	2	1	0
SU83	0	1	0	0	1	0	TQ41	22	10	14	8	4	6
SZ99	0	1	0	0	1	0	TQ42	5	10	5	4	5	2
SU90*	8	6	0	2	3	0	TQ43	3	1	2	3	1	2
SU91**	15	14	2	3	5	2	TV59	4	6	3	1	4	1
SU92	40	55	51	11	8	8	TQ50**	36	70	53	8	9	12
SU93*	4	14	5	2	3	3	TQ51	18	22	28	9	12	8
TQ00	6	5	1	3	2	1	TQ52*	2	6	0	2	4	0
TQ01	12	23	21	7	8	7	TQ53	1	2	2	1	1	2
TQ02***	85	133	89	15	19	21	TQ61***	20	2	2	9	2	2
TQ03***	18	49	31	7	8	5	TQ62	34	41	51	15	12	13
TQ11**	13	31	35	7	11	12	TQ63	2	4	1	1	4	1
TQ12**	34	67	44	14	17	13	TQ70	3	1	0	3	1	0
TQ13	21	10	13	5	5	6	TQ71**	55	25	40	17	11	10
TQ20	2	3	3	2	1	2	TQ72**	6	17	23	5	6	10
TQ21	17	26	31	10	11	11	TQ73	0	0	1	0	0	1
TQ22	16	8	8	6	5	3	TQ81	12	23	11	4	8	6
TQ23**	2	11	2	2	6	2	TQ82*	37	40	20	9	14	6
West***	355	537	368	127	145	108	East	306	321	324	120	114	104
							Total***	661	858	692	247	259	213

Table 1. The Numbers of Nightingales recorded in each 10km square and the number of occupied tetrads in each 10km square in 1976, 1980 and 1999.

Levels of significance are shown as * = $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$ and *** $p < 0.001$

Table 1 excludes 28 Nightingales that were heard singing in suitable habitat during April but were not subsequently heard in May; several of these may have attempted to breed but no subsequent May visit was recorded. For areas where several Nightingales were heard, the maximum count heard in May has been used and grid references in excess of 300 metres apart have been recorded as different birds. Merritt (1979) reported stringent criteria of only selecting birds heard singing at the same location on two dates greater than 1 week apart; the presentation of the data in 1999 (and 1980) did not allow similar criteria to be applied.

The data from Table 1 was compiled as a distribution map to form Figure 1 and clearly shows the geographical occurrence of the species in Sussex. The scales have been selected to match, as near as possible, similar maps displayed for the previous surveys (Merritt 1979; Newnham 1981a).

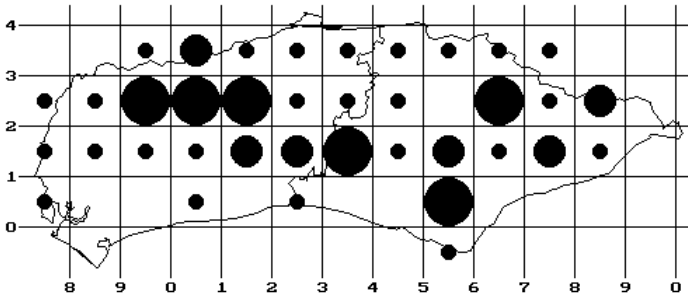


Figure 1:- The Number of singing male Nightingales in each 10km square during 1999.
Key Small dot =1-20; medium dot = 21-40; large dot =41-80.

Discussion.

1). Population

The census suggests that the county population of Nightingales remains healthy. Results from the Random Tetrad Survey however suggest that the figure of 692 Nightingale territories counted in this survey may represent an underestimate of some 33%. This is the percentage of Nightingales estimated to be missed in the "Known sites Survey" and casual records nationally (A.Wilson *pers. comm.*), though in Sussex where nine random tetrads were surveyed all in SU80, no Nightingales were found. A similar figure, an underestimate of 37%, was found in Kent when a small number of randomly selected squares were intensively monitored during a full county survey of Nightingales in 1994 (Henderson 1995). It is therefore not unreasonable to suggest that the Sussex population in 1999 could be around 1000 pairs.

Newnham (1996) summarizing the annual accounts in the Sussex Bird Reports and the findings of the Sussex Tetrad Atlas 1988/92 (Newnham 1996) found more in West Sussex. Table 1 conveniently divides into two, with 10km squares predominately in West Sussex, except TQ32 and TQ33, shown on the left, and East Sussex shown on the right. The sub-totals, however, suggest little difference between the two administrative counties and show very clearly a significant rise in the number found in West Sussex during 1980; falling back to the 1976 level during 1999. As before the largest number was found in the square TQ02 (Kirdford, Wisborough Green & Billingshurst) and only five other 10km squares held more than 40 singing birds.

With the exception of SU70 (Southbourne) all the significant changes in population from the 1980 survey in West Sussex were declines; perhaps most startling was the absence of Nightingales in SU80 (Chichester). Comparisons with the last survey in East Sussex showed a mixed picture with significant increases in TQ31(Ditchling) and TQ41 (Ringmer) with declines in TQ50 (Polegate), TQ61 (Herstmonceux) and TQ82 (Beckley).

At a finer level there were 48 tetrads which held more than five Nightingales, 27 in West Sussex and 21 in East Sussex. Over 90% of the 213 tetrads supporting Nightingales held six or less birds, there were, however, three tetrads with notable numbers of birds; TQ02K (Codmore Hill) held 16 birds and from both SU92T (Ebernoe) and TQ31M (Streat) there were 17 singing males recorded.

The largest number heard at one site was seven at Milton Hide near Arlington, six singing males were heard at Hog Wood (TQ03), Newbridge Wood (TQ62), Marline

Valley (TQ71) and Flatropers Wood (TQ82). There were just six sites with five birds and 15 sites which each held four singing males.

The National population was estimated at 6,700 territories (95% confidence limits 5,500-9,990 (A.Wilson *pers. comm.*). Increases found in the three eastern counties, Kent (+25%), Essex (+ 55%) and Suffolk (+139%) and local extinction in parts of Hampshire, Dorset and the Home Counties (Wilson 2000), resulted in 70% of the population being found in the four southeast coastal counties, Kent (1170), Suffolk (876), Sussex and Essex (408).

2). Distribution.

Although Figure 1 demonstrates the general distribution within the county, the finer details can be gleaned from Figure 2. The map, with the more familiar tetrad (2km x 2km) distribution, differs from those displayed previously (Merritt 1979; Newnham 1981a) by adding a scale to the dot sizes. The figure also differs from that shown for the 1988/92 Sussex Tetrad Atlas in which the symbols represented degrees of breeding certainty; this does, however, provide useful comparison with previously published distribution maps. In some of the previously published tetrad distribution maps the data has been gathered over several seasons and such maps tend to show a wider distribution than those collected from a single year of fieldwork. Thus Merritt's 1979 plot of 336 tetrads and Newnham's 1996 plot of 288 tetrads show a wider spread than that shown in Figure 2.

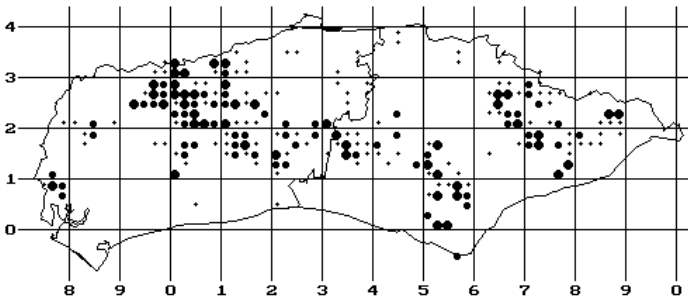


Figure 2:- The tetrad distribution of Nightingales in Sussex 1999.
Key Small dot 1-2 birds; medium dot 3-4 birds and large symbol 5+ birds.

Figure 2 clearly shows there have been no marked changes in the areas where Nightingales were found. Traditional strongholds were in the northwest of the county, an area extending roughly from Lodsworth to Shipley northward to the county border with Surrey. This area extends southeastward in a band about 10 kilometres wide just north of the South Downs. This populated area embraces Pulborough, Storrington, Ashington, and Henfield, and continuing into East Sussex, includes areas around Ditchling, Barcombe, Laughton, East Hoathly and Hailsham. A triangle, with points at Hastings, Burwash and Beckley, delineates the other well-populated area in East Sussex.

Elsewhere the Nightingale is only found in small numbers in isolated pockets, notable is its absence from the coastal plain and most of the South Downs. Like previous surveys none were found on Pevensy Levels and the species is scarce in much of wealden Sussex. Figure 2 also shows, with a few exceptions, a lack of Nightingales in the most westerly areas of West Sussex.

3). Habitat selection

In addition to the census of Nightingales the survey, like those previously, was designed to gather information on the preferred habitat of the species. Detailed work on the breeding biology has demonstrated that the Nightingale may be found in a wide range of lowland habitats provided that a dense covering of ground vegetation exists for concealment of the nest (Morgan 1982). Merritt (1979) found the presence of impenetrable scrub, be it hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) or bramble (*Rubus spp*), to be a common feature in Sussex and recorded that many sites were damp and protected from grazing animals.

Details of habitat preference in 1999 were recorded for 676 Nightingales and the findings are shown in Figure 3. The figure allows comparison with the previous county studies; in 1980 similar habitat categories were described for 690 Nightingales (Newnham 1981b) whilst in 1976 the defined habitat types were slightly different and comprised a smaller sample of 326 Nightingales.

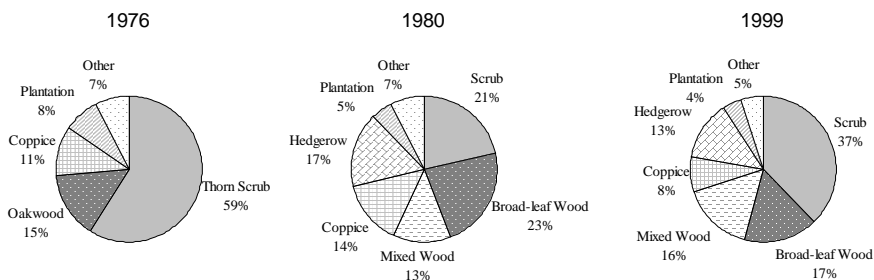


Figure 3:- Distribution of Habitat types described for Nightingales in the Surveys of 1976, 1980 and 1999.

These data need to be considered with caution as in all three surveys observer's assessment of habitat types were shown to differ, indeed one Nightingale in West Sussex during 1980 was described under four different habitats by four different observers. There were similar ambiguities noted in 1976 and 1999; such equivocal habitat information would be expected from a survey, which ideally was undertaken in the dark. Figure 3 does show, however, some interesting points and clearly emphasises the importance of scrub and broad-leafed woodland as habitats in Sussex. Hedgerow, presumably containing thorn scrub, was clearly important in the last two surveys and no doubt was included in the thorn scrub category in 1976. Coppice, with or without standards, was considered one of the traditional habitats for this species; a small portion of the county population remains in this habitat despite a marked reduction in the area of woodland actively managed by coppicing. Whitebread (1996) showed a 70% reduction in the area of coppice between 1947/80 whilst demonstrating nearly a twofold increase in the area of scrub over the same period, unfortunately no recent data exists to see whether this trend continues.

Concerns had been expressed that changes in woodland management and, in particular, an increased deer population in southern woodlands, causing destruction of the dense undergrowth, may have adversely affected Nightingales. It is unlikely that the habitat data gathered by volunteers will be sufficiently detailed to allow examination of the finer points of habitat change which may have occurred over the past two decades.

4). Survey timing.

Between April 2nd and June 30th observers made 1680 site visits for the survey recording Nightingales on each day between April 13th and June 11th. Only on 13 days in the entire 3 month period were no birds recorded. Several observers merely recorded the presence of birds in “May” or “during spring” but 1500 visits were made on specified dates. Figure 4 was compiled from these visits plotted by week and superimposing the number of Nightingales for each week, and shows the peaks occurring, as expected in May. Interestingly for visits and Nightingales the peak appeared in the last days of April and the first week in May, rather earlier than was expected. The dark line shows the number of Nightingales recorded and the figure suggests fewer birds were recorded per visit during late May.

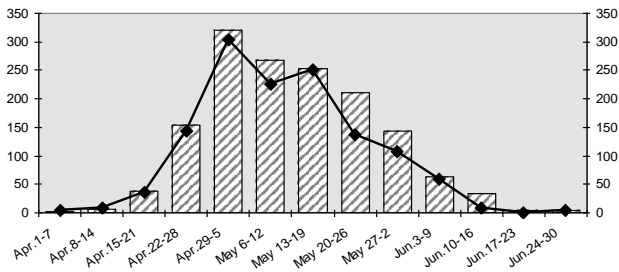


Figure 4:- The number of site visits (column) and Nightingales recorded (line) in each week period during spring 1999.

The same data, plotted by day of the week, are shown as Figure 5. The data were tested by Chi², and there was a significant difference (p<0.001) between the two weekend days and the other days of the week. No significant difference was found between the number of visits between Monday and Friday. A curious, and unexplained, feature of Figure 5 is the greater number of Nightingales heard on weekend site visits. It is unclear whether this merely reflects chance warmer nights, observers selection of more productive sites to visit at weekends or a greater number of visits in the midnight to 0600hr period. Loxton *et al* (1998) demonstrated a clear weekend bias for the recording of first arrival dates of summer migrants in Sussex and here too observations were clearly biased to weekend recording.

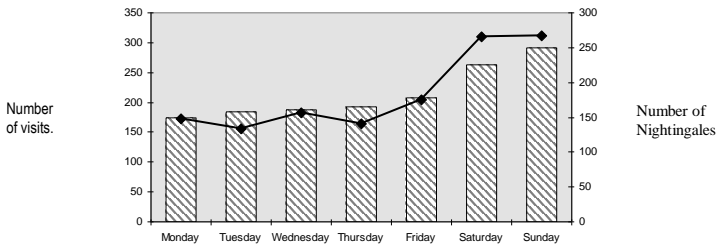


Figure 5:- The number of site visits (column) and Nightingales recorded (line) on each day of the week during spring 1999.

The survey recording forms included space to record the time of day for each site visit and this was noted on 82% of the observations. Table 2 records the number of site visits and Nightingales recorded for the four quarters of the day. Although no significant conclusions can be drawn from these data they do show some interesting information.

Time	0000–0600hrs	0600–1200hrs	1200–1800hrs	1800–2400hrs	Total
Visits	187	439	122	607	1355
Birds recorded	193	399	122	455	1169
No. of zero encounters.	70	192	27	327	616
Birds/all visits	1.03	0.91	1.00	0.75	0.86
Birds/visit (Occupied Sites only)	1.60	1.62	1.28	1.62	1.58

Table 2:- The number of visits and Nightingales recorded in six hour periods.

Nightingale song peaks just before dawn, and the survey suggested visits should be made between dusk and 0800hrs; particular emphasis was placed on the importance of not leaving a potential site until after dark; indeed earlier instructions implied the survey would be best conducted between midnight and mid-morning. Table 2, which includes timed supplementary records as well as “Known Sites Survey” returns, clearly shows only a small portion of the survey work was done between midnight and dawn with over 77% conducted either in the mornings after dawn or in the evening. The table also reveals that nearly 54% of the evening site visits produced no singing Nightingales; the two morning periods each recorded about 40% zero returns whilst only 22% of the records received for the early afternoon were blanks. A closer look at the data suggests that many of the afternoon encounters were chance “supplementary” records and most observers used other times, particularly evenings, for recording sites where Nightingales had in the past been recorded but no longer occur.

The data in Table 2 do not support the view that more Nightingales are likely to be recorded in the early hours compared with other periods of the day; indeed when looking at records from sites where Nightingales were heard then only the afternoon period produced fewer birds per visit. Despite this, there were clear messages from both the national survey organisers and several observers that the “small hours” was the best time to explore for Nightingales. There were a few sites where visits were recorded in both the evening and in the pre-dawn period; in most of these more birds were heard in the latter period. Four visits to an East Sussex wood between 0045 and 0400 hours produced three or four birds on each occasion whilst no Nightingales were heard on several visits at other times. Anecdotal evidence from two observers visiting several potential sites in TQ11 highlighted the concern that no birds were recorded between 2230 and 2400hrs yet “numerous” birds were heard singing after midnight. The overall effect of survey timing on the Sussex data is unclear but may have lead to an understatement of the current situation; several of the West Sussex areas where significant reductions from 1980 were recorded had few midnight visits.

Acknowledgements.

We would like to give thanks to all those who have contributed to this survey. Such a survey requires a large number of participants and all are listed (identified with an *) in the Contributors and Acknowledgements, 1999 on pages 167-169. Once again the network of 10km Stewards efficiently organised the fieldwork, and we thank them for their help and support. Andy Wilson and Robin Pepper kindly read and provided constructive help in the production of the draft for this report.

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Papers should be set out in sections under the following headings: **Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusions, Acknowledgements, and References**. The **Results** and **Discussion** sections can be combined if appropriate. A **Summary** of not more than 200 words can be included before the **Introduction** instead of the **Conclusions** section at the end.

Tables, Figures, Photographs and Illustrations: These should be kept to a minimum and presented separately from the text. Legends should be self explanatory without referring to the text. **Tables** should not duplicate information presented in **Figures** and vice versa. Data presented in **Tables** and **Figures** should be referred to, but not described in full detail, in text. The size and shape of **Photographs** and **Illustrations** should allow for compatibility with the Bird Report format following linear reduction.

References: These are based on the style of ornithological journals and *Birds of Sussex* (1996) should be used as the model. Examples of the reference style required by the *Sussex Ornithological Society* for the annual *Sussex Bird Report* and other publications, for journals, books and edited books, are given below:

For a **Journal:** Manns, L 1996. The Corn Bunting Survey 1993-94. *Sussex Bird Report* 47: 133-147.

For a **Book:** Newton, I 1972. *Finches*. Collins: London.

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UNUSUAL RECORDS

All the records of the unusual species in the list below are considered by the Records Committee and it may be assumed that those published have been fully authenticated. Such reports should be submitted on special forms available from the Recorder. Reports of rarities as defined by *British Birds* should be submitted on, or in the same format as, the forms available from the Secretary of the Rarities Committee.

The following list is of those unusual species in Sussex for which descriptions are required:

Great Northern Diver	Dotterel	Bluethroat
Black-necked Grebe	Temminck's Stint	Aquatic Warbler
All shearwaters (except Manx)	Pectoral Sandpiper	Marsh Warbler
All petrels (except Fulmar)	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Icterine Warbler
Purple Heron	Grey Phalarope	Melodious Warbler
White Stork	Red-necked Phalarope	Barred Warbler
Spoonbill	Pomarine Skua (except in spring)	Pallas's Leaf Warbler
Whooper Swan	Long-tailed Skua	Yellow-browed Warbler
Bean Goose	Sabine's Gull	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Pink-footed Goose	Ring-billed Gull	Golden Oriole
Green-winged Teal	Iceland Gull	Red-backed Shrike
Ring-necked Duck	Glaucous Gull	Woodchat Shrike
Surf Scoter	Roseate Tern	Raven
Honey Buzzard	Black Guillemot	Serin
Montagu's Harrier	Little Auk	Twite
Goshawk	Puffin	Mealy Redpoll
Rough-legged Buzzard	Bee-eater	Scarlet Rosefinch
Spotted Crake	Shore Lark	Lapland Bunting
Corn Crake	Richard's Pipit	Chirl Bunting
Crane	Tawny Pipit	Ortolan Bunting
Stone-curlew	Water Pipit	
Kentish Plover	Dipper	

In addition, **all** races other than the normally occurring one, except for Pale-Bellied Brent Goose, *intermedius* Lesser Black-backed Gull, *michahellis* Yellow-legged (Herring) Gull, White Wagtail and Greenland Wheatear, and any species seen on an unusual date (outside the accepted range of first and last dates for migrants [See pages 165-166]).

It should be noted, however, that the following species, or any other species seen in unusual circumstances or on an unusual date, may, at the discretion of the Recorder, require a description:

Inland divers, Red-necked Grebe, Manx Shearwater, Shag (inland records), Bittern, Red-crested Pochard, Hoopoe, Wryneck, Waxwing, Cetti's Warbler and Great Grey Shrike.

**Map of Sussex as 1998 report
(presumably with Sussex Litho?)**

GAZETTEER:

k, Hastings	TQ8010	Charleston Reedbed	TQ5100	Henfield Levels	TQ1914	Northpoint Pit, Rye	TQ9319	Sidlesham Ferry & F
Brooks	TQ0314	Chelwood Vachery	TQ4330	Hollies, Ashdown	TQ4528	Old Airstrip, Ashdown	TQ4231	Sompting Brooks
Common	SU9119	Chichester Gravel Pits	SU8703	Hollingbury Camp	TQ3207	Old Lodge Reserve	TQ4630	South Stoke
ark Estate	TQ0506	Chichester Harbour	SU7600	Horse Eye Level	TQ6208	Pagham Harbour	SZ8596	Sovereign Hbr Marina
or Farm	SU8301	Church Norton	SZ8795	Horseshoe Plantation	TV5695	Pagham Lagoon	SZ8896	Splash Point, Seaford
ervoir	TQ3229	Cissbury Ring	TQ1408	Hotham Park, Bognor	SZ9399	Pannel Sewer	TQ8715	St Leonards Forest
ervoir	TQ5307	Climping	TQ0001	Hurstpierpoint	TQ2716	Parham Estate	TQ0614	Stakes Island
	TQ1008	Cobnor Point & Farm	SU7902	Ifield Mill Pond	TQ2436	Partridge Green	TQ1919	Stansted Forest
T.	TQ0208	Combe Haven	TQ7609	Iping Common	SU8421	Pett Level Pools	TQ9014	Stedham Common
st	TQ4332	Crows Nest, Ashdown	TQ4728	Ivy Lake, Chichester	SU8703	Petworth Park	SU9721	Streele Farm Billingsh
	TQ0000	Cuckmere Haven	TV5197	Kingley Vale NNR	SU8110	Pevensey Bay	TQ6503	Swanbourne Lake
	TQ3704	Darwell Reservoir	TQ7121	Kneppmill Pond	TQ1521	Pevensey Bridge Level	TQ6504	The Goat, Ashdown
ervoir	TQ4314	East Guldeford Level	TQ9421	Lancing Clump	TQ1806	Pevensey Levels	TQ6605	The Mens
	TV5895	East Head	SZ7698	Langney Point	TQ6401	Pilsey Island & Sands	SU7600	The Severals
	TV5695	Ebernoe Common	SU9726	Lavington Common	SU9418	Pippingford Park	TQ4430	Thorney Deepes
	TQ6733	Elms Farm, Icklesham	TQ8815	Lewes Brooks	TQ4207	Portfield Gravel Pit	SU8805	Thorney Island
	TQ0825	Eridge Park	TQ5635	Littlehampton G.C.	TQ0101	Powdermill Reservoir	TQ9719	Tilgate Park
	TV5596	Fairlight	TQ8611	Long/Narrow Pits, Rye	TQ9217	Pulborough Brooks	TQ0516	Union Canal, E. Gulde
ay	TQ4023	Fishbourne Channel	SU8303	Lullington Heath	TQ5401	Rackham Woods	TQ0414	Upper Adur Levels
	TQ8417	Fore Wood, Crowhurst	TQ7513	Lurgashall Mill Pond	SU9325	Roman Road, Ashdown	TQ4729	Wakehurst Place
	SZ8798	Forest Mere	SU8129	Manxey Levels	TQ6306	Rye Bay Wood	TQ9217	Walland Marsh
	TQ3302	Four Counties, Ashdown	TQ4631	Marline Wood	TQ7812	Rye Harbour LNR	TQ9216	Waltham Brooks
a	TQ3207	Friston Forest	TV 5499	Marsh Farm, Yapton	SU9804	Scotney Court Gravel Pits	TR0119	Warnham L.N.R.& M.
ark	TQ1404	Gills Lap, Ashdown	TQ4632	Maynards Green	TQ5818	Seaford Head	TV4997	Weir Wood Reservoir
orthing	TQ1703	Glynde Levels	TQ4609	Mill Hill, Shoreham	TQ2107	Selsey Bill	SZ8592	West Beach Littleham
orthing	TQ9818	Glyne Gap, Bexhill	TQ7607	Millbrook, Ashdown	TQ4428	Selsey West Fields	SZ8394	Westdean Woods
el	TQ2434	Goring Gap	TQ1001	New Salts Farm	TQ2004	Seven Sisters Country Pk	TV5197	Whitbread Hollow
nd	SU9617	Gossops Green	TQ2535	Newhaven Harbour	TV4499	Sheepcote Valley	TQ3404	Widewater, Lancing
ndown	TQ4629	Gravetye Lakes	TQ3634	Newhaven Tide Mills	TQ4500	Shillinglee Lake	SU9631	Willington
& Farm	TQ9118	Greenwood Clump	TQ4731	Nook Meadows, Rye	TQ9217	Shooters Bottom	TV5795	Woods Mill
arm	TQ1020	Halsey's Farm	SZ8697	Normans Bay	TQ6805	Shoreham Airport	TQ2005	Woolbeding Common
non	TQ3821	Harbour Farm, Rye	TQ9317	North Wall Pagham Hbr	SZ8797	Shoreham Harbour	TQ2304	Worth Forest

The grid references given are intended as a guide only to finding the sites and are not necessarily where a species was observed.

Inside back cover

(*Birdline SE Advertisement*)

THE SUSSEX BIRD REPORT

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Editorial Team: P James, Dr JA Cocks, RJ Fairbank, Dr JA Newnham,
TW Parmenter, RT Pepper, DI Smith & Dr BJ Yates.

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