

The Sussex Bird Report

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THE SUSSEX BIRD REPORT NUMBER FIFTY-THREE, 2000

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Cover photograph by Peter Wilson

Snow Bunting, Seaford Head, 25 October 2000.

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Sussex Bird Report 1999 — Amendments & Corrections.

Very few errors in the 1999 *Report* were brought to the Editor's attention; details of the more significant of these and of any additional records for previous years can be found under the relevant species in the Systematic List.

Text Illustrations:

Adam Bowley

Spotted Crake.

John Davis

Hobby, Peregrine, Tawny Owl, Fieldfares, Dartford Warbler, Spotted Flycatchers.

John Reaney

Herring Gull, Woodpigeon, Wren, Black Redstart, Nuthatch and Jackdaw.

Photographic acknowledgements: The Photographic Editor would like to thank those photographers who submitted photographs of Sussex birds, taken in 2000, many of which appear in this *Report*. Once again, the quality of the transparencies received was outstanding.

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

Thanks must again go to the many contributors who submitted their records for inclusion in the *Sussex Bird Report*. As the following table shows, a total of 53,271 records was received:

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Number of members	1353	1400	1400	1431	1500
Number submitting records	353	381	432	542	394
Number of records received	42,000	42,100	45,000	46,562	53,271
Number of species recorded	265	265	257	259	269
Number of birds ringed	61,361	49,816	49,231	33,776	40,355
Number of species ringed	130	131	122	126	126

As in previous years, the species accounts were written by a large team of authors, namely Mrs VP Bentley, PM Brayshaw, Dr C Brooks, CB Collins, DEG Copeland, DE Crawley, J Curson, M Denny, RJ Fairbank, A House, P James, Dr ME Kalaher, AR Kitson, R Knight, L Manns, MJ Mason, Dr JA Newnham, RT Pepper, A Perry, R Prior, Dr AB Watson, and TJ Wilson. The initials at the end of the species accounts identify all the writers to whom sincere thanks are due. Thanks are again due to Tony Cocks who edited the scientific papers and to Tim Parmenter, the Photographic Editor. Richard Fairbank undertook the onerous task of writing the *Review of the Year* and John Newnham organised the computerisation of records and typeset the *Report* prior to it being delivered to the printers. The Systematic List was read by Richard Fairbank, John Hobson, Robin Pepper, Dave Smith and Barry Yates who identified a number of errors and suggested numerous improvements. Once again, some of the species accounts have been altered and edited to ensure a reasonable degree of uniformity but, more importantly, so that the records are summarised in a form accessible to the writers of the next county avifauna, whenever that might be. I hope that this will not cause offence to the authors concerned but if that is the case I can only apologise.

In this current *Report*, it is pleasing to note that some observers who did not submit their records in 1999 have reconsidered their decision. Of particular interest are the many records for Combe Haven and Filsham Reedbed, an area threatened by the proposed Hastings bypass. Inevitably no county bird report is perfect but I would appeal to all those with an interest in Sussex birds to submit their records for inclusion in the *Sussex Bird Report*. The importance of this baseline information in assisting conservation within the county cannot be overestimated, especially in these times of increasing development and dwindling populations of once common birds.

Paul James, October 2001.

REVIEW OF 2000

by Richard Fairbank

The total of 269 species recorded in 2000 was more than in recent years but, despite this, it was by no means a classic year for rarities. Highlights included the county's third **Semipalmated Sandpiper** and **Hume's Leaf Warbler**, fifth **Sardinian Warbler**, fifth, sixth and seventh **Great White Egrets** and **Green-winged Teal**, seventh **Squacco Heron**, ninth **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** and **Radde's Warbler** and ninth and tenth **Cattle Egrets**. **Egyptian Goose**, **Great Black-backed Gull** and **Savi's Warbler** were proved to breed in the county for the first time and the earliest ever **Swift** and **Sand Martin** were recorded as well as the latest ever **Redstart** and **Reed Warbler**. 2000 also provided the second highest total of **Sooty Shearwaters**, the second largest **Spoonbill** flock and the highest counts or daily passage totals for **Bitterns**, **Marsh Harriers**, **Sanderling**, **Greenshank**, **Turnstone**, **Arctic Skuas**, **Mediterranean Gulls**, **Kittiwakes** and **Linnets**. Perhaps the best unusual form was the county's second 'Siberian' **Lesser Whitethroat**. Despite all this, 2000 will be best remembered for the unprecedented movement of nearly 500 **Honey Buzzards** witnessed in the last few days of September and first few of October.

The weather in January was dry, sunny and generally mild. It was mostly rather cold and frosty for the middle two weeks, while the end of the month was very mild with severe gales (see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/features/review/index.shtml>). Unusual birds remaining from 1999 included two **Whooper Swans** on Amberley Wild Brooks (to 12 Feb), a **Glaucous Gull** in Pagham Hbr (to 23 Jan) and a **Snow Bunting** at Rye Hbr. The expected over-wintering waders included seven **Little Stints** in Chichester Hbr and up to five **Spotted Redshanks** around Pagham Hbr. A **Cattle Egret** found near Henfield on 1st was present until at least 12th, a **Long-tailed Duck** at Amberley Wild Brooks on 2nd remained in the Arun Valley for a week and 44 **Wood Larks** were counted near Coates on 4th. A **Pomarine Skua** was seen at Brighton Marina on 5th, when an **Arctic Skua** flew E at Selsey Bill and a **Great Skua** was off Pilsey Island. Four **Hen Harriers** were seen at a regular roost on Ashdown Forest and 3000 **Lapwing** at Barcombe on 8th and two **Snow Buntings** at East Head on 9th. A flock of 350 **Chaffinches** at Linchball Wood on 15th was the year's highest count while, in another poor year for the species, the peak count of **Eider** was 80 off Bexhill on 16th. At this time, a flock near Glynde contained 30 **Reed** and 100 **Corn Buntings** (with 110 of the latter there on 22nd the year's highest count). The January *WeBS*' count, also on 16th, included totals of 9267 **Brent Geese**, 1040 **Shelduck** and 341 **Black-tailed Godwits** in Chichester Hbr, 2086 **Wigeon** at Pulborough Brooks and 369 **Tufted Duck** and 1133 **Coot** at Chichester GPs, all being the highest of the year. A **Black Brant** was found at West Wittering on 17th, while **Great Crested Grebes** peaked at 266 off Pett on 20th. Eight **Short-eared Owls** roosted at Thorney Island on 21st while a **Great Grey Shrike** was found by the River Ouse, near Lewes on 22nd (remaining into February, when another was seen on Ashdown Forest). Two hundred and twenty **Carrión Crows** were counted on Pebsham Tip and a flock of 100 **Yellowhammers** was feeding in stubble at Seaford on 26th. Wintering **Avocets** in Pagham Hbr peaked at 31 towards the end of the month while there were 486 **Greylag Geese** at Scotney Court GPs and 25 **Song Thrushes** at Pevensey Bridge Level on 27th and 18 **Dartford Warblers** near Liss on 30th.

February was a mostly mild, wet and windy month, but with some sunny periods and some snow in the middle of the month. Rainfall was above average as was the temperature (by over 2 °C). The lack of cold weather made the month rather quiet for birds although 2300 **Golden Plover** were counted at West Wittering and 1100 **Guillemots** and 200 **Razorbills** flew W at Selsey Bill on 1st, followed by 125 **Guillemots** and 325 **Razorbills**

W there and 3795 **auks** E at Brighton Marina on 2nd. Twenty one **Woodcock** were seen feeding at Heathfield on the night of 3rd and a **Waxwing** flew over Blackham on 5th (with another in Crawley on 16-17th). The February *WeBS*' count (on 13th) included peak totals of 289 **Gadwall** at Chichester GPs, 400 **Pochard** at Arundel WWT, 2774 **Lapwing** in Pagham Hbr and 9854 **Dunlin** in Chichester Hbr. Two hundred and twenty three **Pied Wagtails** were counted roosting at the Shoreham Tesco's Superstore on 14th while a wintering flock of 60 **Tree Sparrows** remained near Rye from mid-February to mid-May. Six **Bitterns** seen leaving the roost at Rye Hbr at dawn on 17th was a new county record. An **Iceland Gull** was seen at Brighton Marina on 19th (with another at Combe Haven on 22nd). An estimated 1000 **Rooks** were at Lavington Common and a **Serin** at Newhaven Tide Mills on 20th while at least 200 **Siskins** were in the Burton MP area on 24th. On 26th, the adult **Gannet** returned to its Seaford rooftop (remaining to at least 18 Sept) and the first **Wheatear** of the year was seen at Pulborough Brooks (where 30 **Ruff** on 28th was the highest count for the year).

The weather in March was very dry, rather sunny and mild overall - exceptionally mild in the second week, with some overnight frost in the first and third weeks. It became unsettled later in the month with some rain or showers and the end of the month was rather cold. March produced its usual mix of early, often unfulfilled, promise of summer migrants and departing, often unnoticed, winter visitors. Up to seven **Great Northern Divers** and 60 **Slavonian Grebes** were present offshore at Selsey Bill on 3rd while a **Sand Martin** at Rye Hbr and a **House Martin** at Arundel on 4th were very early (the former the earliest county arrival by a day). Fifteen thousand **Common Gulls** roosted on the shore at Rye Hbr on 9th while a **Sandwich Tern** there on 10th was the first spring record (as was a **Common/Arctic Tern** at Pagham Hbr). On 11th, 21 **Mediterranean Gulls** roosted at Southwick (a county record) and the first **Willow Warbler** of the year was seen at Goring Gap. Counts of 213 **Red-breasted Mergansers** off Worthing Beach and 2638 **Black-headed Gulls** past Brighton Marina on 12th were notable, as were 300 **White-fronted Geese** at Scotney Court GPs on 13th and seven **Garganey** on the sea off Southwick on 16th. Three **Little Ringed Plover** arrived at Pulborough Brooks on 17th. On 18th, interesting sightings included an early **Swallow** at Pett Level (the first of only four during the month), a **Serin** at Battle (with a further ten being seen up to mid-May) and eight **Hawfinches** at Sedlescombe, while pride of place at this time must go to the **Stone-Curlew** that came in off the sea and landed on the beach at Seaford on 19th. Up to five **Red-necked Grebes** in summer plumage were displaying off Brighton Marina between 21st and 27th, with the first **Yellow Wagtail** of the year at Beachy Head on 22nd. Easterly sea passage at this time included 503 **Sanderling** at Brighton Marina on 21st (a county record), 22 **Velvet Scoters** at Bexhill on 23rd and 4500 **Brent Geese** and the first definite **Common Tern** of the year at Brighton Marina on 24th. Two **White Storks** flew N over Eridge on 25th and the first **Ring Ouzel** of the spring was seen at Littlehampton on 26th. The month finished with an exceptional estimate of 100 migrant **Water Rails** at Filsham Reedbed on 29th.

April was very wet overall (the wettest since records began in 1766), with frequent outbreaks of rain and thundery showers. A cold first half of the month, with overnight frosts, it was mostly warm during the second half. A **Bittern** was seen in flight over Lewes on 1st when 15 **Little Stints** were at East Head and the first **Tree Pipit** of the year at Hollingbury Camp. The first **Sedge Warbler** was at Rye Hbr on 2nd while a **Hobby** at Lancing and a **Dotterel** over Roedean on 3rd were effectively the earliest county records (but a **Redstart** at the latter site on the same day was a late first arrival). The first **Nightingales** of the year were at Pulborough Brooks on 5th when 90 **Wheatears** were seen

in the East Brighton area. A **Hoopoe** remained at Beachy Head from 6th to 11th. Easterly sea passage on 7th included peaks of 1283 **Common Scoter** at Seaford and 393 **Sandwich Terns** at Brighton Marina. Also on 7th, a male **Green-winged Teal** was found at West Wittering (and another at Pulborough Brooks from 19th), the first of at least 22 spring **Ospreys** came in off the sea near Hastings and the earliest ever **Swift** in the county was seen at Birdham. Two **Black-necked Grebes** were displaying off Brighton Marina and two more off Southwick Beach on 8th, when a **Kentish Plover** was found in Pagham Hbr (with another at Camber Sands on 23rd) and a **Common Crane** flew over Combe Haven. The first **Grasshopper Warbler** (at Pulborough Brooks), **Whitethroats** and **Pied Flycatcher** (at Selsey Bill) of the year were recorded on 9 April and the first **Cuckoo** (at Bawl Water) on 10th. On this date 156 **Robins** were counted along 10km of the Sussex Border path between Shillinglee and Haslemere and a very early **Spotted Flycatcher** was reported from Pulborough Brooks. The first **Garden Warbler** of the year was at Bexhill on 11th and the first **Arctic Tern** was specifically identified at Bawl Water on 13th. The first **Little Terns** were seen at Selsey Bill and Rye Hbr on 14th, when the first **Reed Warbler** and 200 **Willow Warblers** were at Pagham Hbr. On 15th, both **Night** and **Purple Heron** were found in the Pett Level area, a **Wryneck** and a pair of **Willow Tits** were seen in different Steyning gardens and the first (very late) **Whinchats** were seen at Combe Haven. On 16th, the first **Black Tern** of the year flew E at Selsey Bill, a migrant **Long-eared Owl** was flushed near Bexhill and the first **Lesser Whitethroat** was seen near Lewes. A **Glaucous Gull** was seen at Seaford (and points east) from 17th, when 67 **Arctic** and 20 **Great Skuas** flew E at Brighton Marina. The former was a county sea-watch record, as was 180 **Turnstone** E at Selsey Bill on 19th. On 20th, arrivals included the first **Turtle Dove** of the year at Earnley, the second **Hoopoe** of the spring at Heathfield, a **Sardinian Warbler** at Roedean and a **Sacred Ibis** at Horsham, the latter the 'escape of the year'. An **Iceland Gull** was seen at Brighton Marina on 21st when the last departing **Fieldfare** was recorded at Chilgrove and a **Subalpine Warbler** was found at Beachy Head (with a migrant **Cetti's Warbler** singing there on 22nd). On 23rd, interesting records included four **Goosanders** at Beachy Head, a short-staying **Marsh Sandpiper** at Pagham Hbr, the first **Wood Warbler** of the year at Footland Wood and the last **Bramblings** of a quiet winter at Beachy Head and Winchelsea. A **Cory's Shearwater** flew E off Birling Gap on 24th, while a 'blue morph' **Fulmar** flew E at Brighton Marina on 25th (with presumably the same bird past Newhaven West Pier on 30th). Late April saw a decent early up-channel movement of **Pomarine Skuas**, including 29 at Brighton Marina on 27th and 25 at Seaford on 30th. The first **Quail** of the year was heard near Lewes on 29th and two **Black-winged Stilts** were present on Sidlesham Ferry on 30th.

It was the wettest May since 1983 although temperatures and sunshine were near normal. There was a very warm first half to the month but it then became colder with frequent outbreaks of rain and thunderstorms. The first half of May is often one of the best times to be out and about in Sussex and 2000 was no exception. The nocturnal **Whimbrel** roost at Rye Hbr peaked at 330 on 1st though the peak coastal passage was a few days later on 6th with 201E at Newhaven West Pier. The 1st was the peak day for **Pomarine Skua** passage although numbers were below average (with 34E at Selsey Bill, 22E at Brighton Marina, 25E at Newhaven and 22E at Seaford), while a **Bee-eater** (the first of three seen during the spring) added to the attraction of Selsey Bill. On 2nd, 1905 **Bar-tailed Godwits** flew E at Brighton Marina while a **Quail** that flew in off the sea at Seaford on 4th was perhaps the first in the county to be recorded on a sea-watch. Also of interest on 4th was the first **Nightjar** of the year at Parham, two **Temminck's Stints** at Pett Level (with four in the Cuckmere Valley on 6th and one at Sidlesham Ferry from 7th), a record spring count of 42 **Greenshanks** at Thorney Deepes (while 35E at Brighton Marina

on 5th was a sea-watch record) and a **Richard's Pipit** at Combe Haven up to 7th (the first county record for May). On 5th, easterly passage included a **Montagu's Harrier** at Hove (the first of five to be seen in May), up to 18 **Avocets** at several sites along the coast and 116 **Little Terns** at Brighton Marina, while an **Ortolan Bunting** was found at Beachy Head. Twenty seven **Little Gulls** and 2285 **Common/Arctic Terns** E at Seaford on 6th and 27 **Black Terns** E there the following day were the highest counts of the spring, the former in what was described as a mediocre spring for the species. Also on 7th, a **Cattle Egret** flew E at Worthing and Brighton Marina, before being seen in the Cuckmere Valley, and four **Wood Sandpipers** were at Pulborough Brooks (with 14 recorded in the county in early May). A **Nightjar** flew in off the sea at Brighton Marina on 8th and a **Long-tailed Skua** flew E there and a **Woodchat Shrike** was at Combe Haven on 9th. Combe Haven remained the place to be on 10th when a female **Red-footed Falcon** was found, meanwhile 316 **Grey Plover** flew E at Brighton Marina. A **Wryneck** was seen at Rye Hbr on 11th and a first-summer **Night Heron** (the second of the year) arrived from the south at Brighton Marina on 12th. On 13th, the only spring **Roseate Tern** flew E at Seaford, a **Puffin W** at Selsey Bill was the first of only two seen during the year (the other flying E off Ovingdean on 27th) and the first of five **Golden Orioles** to be recorded in just over a week was seen at Beachy Head. What was presumably the same **Cattle Egret** was relocated at Rye Hbr from 16th but by then spring was rapidly coming to an end. A **Bee-eater** at Church Norton on 21st did not linger while a very late **Merlin** was recorded at Climping Gap on 23rd. Although good counts, 152 **Mute Swans** in Fishbourne Channel on 25th and 14 **Marsh Tits** at Kithurst Hill on 29th ended the month on a quiet note.

Some species did well during the breeding season whereas others continued to cause concern, although more good news than bad suggested that the generally wet weather did not have too adverse an effect. Disappointments included declines in **Grey Herons** (with 231 occupied nests counted, *c.f.* 249 in 1999) and the Newhaven **Kittiwake** colony, the lack of any breeding attempts from **Sandwich Terns** and the failure of **Little Terns** to breed at Rye Hbr for first time since before 1970. Fieldwork on breeding **Swifts** produced further evidence of a severe decline in many towns and villages compared to 30 years ago. Very few breeding reports of **Yellow Wagtails** suggested a continuing decline while the 61 pairs of **Redstarts** reported was well down on the 110 estimated in *Birds of Sussex*.

On a more positive note, 156 young were reported from 57 broods of **Great Crested Grebes** at Bawl Water, where 121 pairs of **Coot** produced 78 broods with a total of 190 young (a very successful breeding season compared with 1999). Nine pairs of **Kestrels** occupied 24 nest boxes in the Rother Valley and 60 pairs of **Barn Owl** were confirmed breeding in the county (with 100 young ringed from 35 nests). None of the Barn Owl sites were natural although not all were in nest boxes, with a castle and an old railway bridge being the most exotic locations used. Of 12 **Cetti's Warbler** territories, two pairs raised four young each while up to 11 pairs of **Grasshopper Warblers** were found (much as last year). Five pairs of **Bearded Tits** at Thorney Island fledged approximately 40 young with four or five pairs at Filsham and at least eight at Pett Level. An impressive brood of eight **Marsh Tits** was fledged from a nest-box at Ardingly Res while 75 singing male **Reed Buntings** were present in Combe Haven/Filsham area and 40 at Rye Hbr.

A family party of two adults and four well grown young **Egyptian Geese** at Shipley suggested the first breeding record for the county, although perhaps not a particularly welcome one. Raptors seemed to do well with a pair of **Honey Buzzards** successful for fourth successive year, two female **Goshawks** seen in areas apparently suitable for breeding, at least 76 pairs of **Buzzards** and ten pairs of **Peregrines** (which raised 15 young between them). Some 60 pairs of **Oyercatchers** bred or attempted to breed, almost

double the number in 1999 and there were records of roding **Woodcock** from 35 tetrads, a slight increase compared with last year. Four pairs of **Mediterranean Gulls** bred with fledged juveniles seen at nearby sites during July. A pair of **Great Black-backed Gulls** in Bexhill fledged one young (the first confirmed breeding record for the county, although breeding has been strongly suspected in Brighton in the last couple of years). One hundred and sixty eight **Nightjar** territories represented an increase over the 148 reported in 1999, although this was most probably due to increased observer coverage. **Woodlarks** continued to increase with 74 territories located, as did **Tree Pipits**. A minimum of 120 singing **Nightingales** was located (a figure considerably lower than that for the 1999 survey year but above the average of 95 recorded during other non-survey springs). A total of 154 pairs of **Stonechats** far exceeded the maximum figure quoted in *Birds of Sussex* (85 pairs in 1983) while **Sedge Warblers** included 80 pairs at Rye SSSI (a welcome increase), with good numbers of **Reed Warblers** also recorded there. Three singing male **Marsh Warblers** were heard in June, although there was no evidence of successful breeding, and continued mild winters benefited **Dartford Warblers** with 118 pairs on Ashdown Forest and the Wealden Heaths (*c.f.* 92 in 1999). The breeding success of **Whitethroats** was considered good and 12 singing **Wood Warblers** held territory in potential breeding locations (*c.f.* just four in 1999), as did 13 **Firecrests** (up from seven in 1999). A pair of **Pied Flycatchers** summered and there was a welcome increase in breeding records of **Spotted Flycatchers** (50 pairs *c.f.* 27 in 1999). At least 24 pairs of **Tree Sparrows** were thought to have bred in the Rye area, a welcome increase, while 25 pairs of **Siskins** and at least 35 pairs of **Crossbills** were reported, neither of which bred in the county in 1999.

The first half of June was unsettled, it then became hot in the third week and was unsettled again at the month's end. Despite the unsettled weather it was the driest June since 1995 and the warmest since 1992. A **Raven** seen north of Crowborough on 3rd was the first June record for the county for 50 years while, in a generally quiet month, a **Squacco Heron** at Pett Level on 10th was one of the year's highlights, although it did not linger. A **Red-throated Diver** off Lancing on 11th was unusual (as was one off Pilsley Island on 16th) although a **Bee-eater** over Pett Level was much more welcome, but perhaps didn't quite make up for the Squacco Heron's absence. The year's second **Woodchat Shrike** was found at Sheepecote Valley on 13th. It remained to 16th when a **Black Kite** flew over Hollingbury. A **Balearic Shearwater** W at Ovingdean on 21st was the first of only five recorded during the summer, while the highest **Manx Shearwater** count was 33W at Selsey Bill on 22nd. Thirteen **Mediterranean Gulls** seen in the entrance to Chichester Hbr on 27th brought the month to a close.

July was mostly cool and often cloudy. Thunderstorms caused local flooding in the first week. It was sunny and very warm by the third week, but finished with more unsettled weather and some thunder. The highlights during the first half of July (perhaps the quietest month of the year) were a **Roseate Tern** fishing off Pilsley Island on 7th (with one at Church Norton on 15th), a **Purple Sandpiper** at Brighton Marina on 9th (the earliest autumn record for the county) and 5000 **Swifts** at Pagham Hbr on 11th. Little of note was then seen until the *WeBS*' count (on 23rd) when totals included 1876 **Curlew** and 192 **Greenshanks** in Chichester Hbr and 31 **Green Sandpipers** at Rye Hbr. **Little Terns** at Pulborough Brooks (on 22nd) and Weir Wood Res (on 25th) were the only inland records of the year, while an **Oystercatcher** at the last site on 27th was also unusual. On 30th, a **Great White Egret** flew N over Pett Level while 29 **Mistle Thrushes** at Footland Wood was the largest gathering recorded all year.

August was changeable and warm, becoming hot at times with thundery outbreaks which alternated with warm dry spells. A **Wryneck** at Church Norton on 3rd (the first of 15 recorded during the autumn) and a count of 39 **Common Sandpipers** on the River Ouse at Piddinghoe on 4th (the highest of the year) got the month off to a good start. On 5th, 20,000 **Starlings** roosted at Thorney Island and 528 **Sedge Warblers** were trapped at Pett Level where an **Aquatic Warbler** trapped on 8th was the only bird there during the year (*c.f.* seven in 1999). Roosting **Yellow-legged Gulls** in Pagham Hbr peaked at 110 on 11th, on which date a **Semipalmated Sandpiper** was found at Rye Hbr (remaining to 28th). A **Montagu's Harrier** was seen at Beachy Head on 13th (with another at Thorney Deepes on 28th). Four **Ring-necked Parakeets** at Rye Hbr on 18th was the only record of this species during the year involving more than one bird. A total of 28 **Garden Warblers** were trapped at nearby Pett Level on this date. On 19th, the **Little Egret** roost at Thorney Deepes peaked at 246 (falling well short of the record 281 in 1999) and 11 **Green Woodpeckers** at Darwell Res was the highest count all year. Peak numbers during the August *WeBS*' count (on 20th) were 324 **Cormorants** at Rye Hbr, 1078 **Canada Geese** at Bewl Water and 852 **Ringed Plover** in Chichester Hbr. Thirty four **Grasshopper Warblers** were ringed at Pett Level on 20th while a **Bee-eater** was heard and a **Melodious Warbler** seen at Beachy Head on 21st. A **Tawny Pipit** at Steyning Round Hill from 22nd was the first of five seen during the autumn and the first of four **Spotted Crakes** in the autumn was trapped at Pett Level on 24th (when overnight roosting **Sand Martins** there reached a maximum of 10,000). At the end of the month, 40 **Long-tailed Tits** at Weir Wood Res on 27th was the highest count for the year while a **Hoopoe** was seen at Rye Hbr on 28th, a **Barred Warbler** was trapped at Pett Level on 30th, and roosting **Greenshank** at Thorney Deepes peaked at 174 on 31st.

Sketch Spotted Crake (No 1)

September was a very unsettled month with frequent outbreaks of rain, heavy and thundery at times, with a short hot and sunny spell in the second week. A **Sooty Shearwater** flew E at Seaford on 1st (with 2E at Ovingdean on 5th and 3W at Brighton Marina on 6th). Four **Ringed Plover** on the Downs at Amberley Mount on 3rd were unusual while **Little Stints** peaked with 17 at Pagham Hbr on 4th. The last **Wood Warbler** of the year was at Beachy Head on 5th and an impressive 23 **Shags** flew W at Selsey Bill on 7th. Roosts at Filsham Reedbed held 15,000 **Swallows** on 8th and 300 **Yellow Wagtails** on 9th, although an **Aquatic Warbler** there on the latter date provided much greater interest. **Curlew Sandpipers** peaked with 19 at Pagham Hbr on 9th and the second (and last) **Barred Warbler** of the year was found at Beachy Head on 10th, when 25 **Spotted Flycatchers** at Pulborough Brooks was the autumn's highest count. On 11th, a **Common Crane** was found near Ashurst and a **Temminck's Stint** at Pilsley Island, remaining for two weeks and four days respectively. The September *WeBS'* count (on 17th) included 54 **Little Grebes**, 648 **Mallard** and 230 **Moorhens** at Bewl Water and 35 **Grey Herons** in Chichester Hbr (the highest count of the year away from a heronry). A **Corncrake** at Beachy Head on 17th was the best sighting mid-month for one fortunate observer (and the first county record for three years). On the same date, the last **Nightingale** of the year was seen at Cissbury, the first returning **Fieldfares** (a flock of 16) at Coates Common and an estimated 400 **Chiffchaffs** in Whitbread Hollow. A **Roseate Tern** at Brighton Marina on 18th was the fourth and final record of the year while the last **Little Ringed Plovers** of the year were seen on 19th (at Pagham and Rye Hbrs). The only inland **Sandwich Tern** of the year was at Bewl Water on 20th, when the last departing **Little Tern** was seen at Widewater. A **Grey Phalarope** was seen at Newhaven and 279 **Blackcaps** were trapped at Pett Level on 21st. It was an excellent month for the latter species at Beachy Head with totals of 350-600 estimated there on five dates during the month. On 23rd, it was apparent that the national influx of **Honey Buzzards** had reached Sussex, with 23 being seen in the county (a day total record that was to be short lived); 24 **Hobbies** were also seen and a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** was found at Bracklesham Bay (remaining to 4 October). **Honey Buzzard** records continued to be broken with 27 seen in the county on 26th and 35 on 27th when further linear counts along 9 km of the Sussex Border Path between Black Fox and Haslemere produced a total of 161 **Robins**. One hundred and five **Honey Buzzards** were recorded in the county on 29th including 19 at both Combe Haven and Beachy Head and 20 at Selsey (where a flock of ten was the largest to be seen in the county). Southerly raptor passage peaked on 30th with an amazing 156 **Honey Buzzards** seen departing the county (including a very impressive 63 at Beachy Head and 31 at Hollingbury Camp). Other raptors on this date included 29 **Marsh Harriers** (12 at Beachy Head), 25 **Buzzards** (including five at Selsey), six **Ospreys** and 19 **Hobbies**. Raptors did not have a complete monopoly at this time with a **Penduline Tit** trapped at Pett Level on 29th and 50 **Bearded Tits** seen at Thorney Island on 30th, the latter presumably involving more than the five pairs and 40 young present there in the summer.

October was very wet and unsettled with severe flooding in the second week. It was very stormy during the last week when flooding became more widespread. October provided the usual mix of departing summer visitors, occasional scarce migrants and the first vanguards of winter making it the most exciting month of the year for many observers. The unprecedented raptor passage continued on 1st with 66 **Honey Buzzards** (27 at Beachy Head), 20 **Marsh Harriers** (13 at Beachy Head), 8 **Ospreys** and 24 **Hobbies** seen in the county. Also on 1st, two **Turtle Doves** at Beachy Head, **Cuckoo** at Hollingbury, **Nightjar** at Pett Level and **Pied Flycatcher** near Lewes were all the last records of the year while 40 migrant **Stonechats** were seen on the west side of Pagham Hbr. Only 13 **Honey Buzzards** were seen on 2nd (with just eight thereafter) and 8000

House Martins flew E over Combe Haven. On 4th a ‘Siberian’ **Lesser Whitethroat** was at Beachy Head and a flock of 300 **House Sparrows** near Seaford. Westerly finch passage at Selsey Bill included 800 **Goldfinches** on 5th, 2000 **Linnets** on 8th and a county record 5000 **Linnets** (in just two hours) on 13th, while a flock of 2000 **Linnets** was present at Rye during the first half of the month. The 8th produced the last records of the year of **Black Terns** (at Arlington Res and Beachy Head), **Wryneck** (at Bracklesham Bay) and **Lesser Whitethroat** (six at Climping Gap). The first **Redwing** of the winter was not seen until 9th (at Vinehall Street) while a remarkable 20 **Black Redstarts** were at Selsey Bill on 10th. A **Sabine’s Gull** E at Brighton Marina on 9th was then seen in the Newhaven/Seaford area to 12th, when another was seen off Bexhill (and a third at Pagham Hbr on 14th). The last **Grasshopper Warbler** of the year was at Newhaven Tide Mills on 12th while a **Snow Bunting** flew over Combe Haven on 13th (and a further ten were seen up to mid-November). On 14th, ten **Spoonbills** flew SW over Church Norton (and one remained at Pagham Hbr into 2001), the last **Sand Martins** were seen at Rye Hbr and Beachy Head, a very popular **Radde’s Warbler** was found at Combe Haven (remaining to 19th), while four **Long-tailed Tits** flew off high E at Shoreham Fort. The 15th produced 12 **Spotted Redshanks** at Sidlesham Ferry, the last **Tree Pipit** of the year at nearby Church Norton and a **Yellow-browed Warbler** and 110 **Goldcrests** at Beachy Head. The last **Sedge Warbler** of the year was at Pett Level on 17th and the last **Ospreys** were seen there and at Patching on 18th (when 800 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were in Pagham Hbr). On 19th, 46 **Mandarin** were counted at Darwell Res and last records for the year were an **Arctic Tern** at Pilsley Island (the last **Common Tern** having been seen at Brighton Marina on 11th), **Whitethroat** at Sidlesham and **Spotted Flycatcher** at Sheepcote Valley. A **Rose-coloured Starling** remained in a Southwater garden for a week from 20th and, on 21st, a **Great White Egret** was found in the lower Cuckmere Valley, the last **Swift** of the year was seen at Pulborough and 800 **Jackdaws** flew to roost at South Stoke. The October *WeBS*’ count (on 22nd) included totals of 1468 **Oystercatchers** and 2607 **Redshanks** in Chichester Hbr (the latter the highest count for at least a decade). Also on 22nd, 22 **Firecrests** were seen along the coast while **Hobbies** at Birling Gap and Pagham Hbr and **Garden Warbler** at Combe Haven were the last records of the year. These were soon followed by the last **Sandwich Terns** (at Selsey Bill) and **Willow Warbler** (at Sidlesham) on 25th. The year’s second **Yellow-browed Warbler** was at Walberton from 26th while ten **Bullfinches** at Seaford on that date were possibly migrants. Strong SW gales in late October heralded the end of the autumn and produced a number of unusual seabirds, mainly relocating W. These included 12 **Sooty Shearwaters** at Selsey Bill (with one at Portslade and three at Worthing), two **Leach’s Petrels** off Brighton, 618 **Gannets** at Selsey Bill (and 545 at Brighton Marina) and the only **Little Auk** of the year off Worthing, all on 28th. Another **Leach’s Petrel** flew E along the shoreline at Pilsley Island on 30th when a **Storm Petrel** was seen at Bewl Water (the first inland record since 1906 and the first of eight recorded in the county at this time). Four **Storm Petrels** and a single **Leach’s Petrel** flew W off Brighton on 31st, with another **Storm Petrel** W off Selsey Bill the same day. A **Great Grey Shrike** was seen infrequently on Ashdown Forest to the year’s end while two **Twite** at Thorney Island on 30th remained throughout November.

The very wet and unsettled weather continued throughout November, with widespread flooding at first. Stormy at times, temperatures were mostly near normal with some overnight frost mid-month although it became very mild at the end of the month. It was the wettest November since 1970 and the wettest autumn period since records began in 1766. On 4th, 700 Redwings flew W over Crowborough in one hour and a juvenile Sabine’s Gull was seen at Selsey Bill, with an adult there on 5th taking the year’s total to five. Also on 5th an exceptional 7000 Kittiwakes flew W at Selsey Bill and 12 Bullfinches at

Pulborough Brooks was the year's largest flock. An **Iceland Gull** was seen at Selsey Bill on 7th, a **Crane** flew over Brighton Marina and Ovingdean, 611 **Dunlin** flew W at Worthing Beach, 95 **Collared Doves** were counted at Southwick and a **Lapland Bunting** flew W at Goring Beach. At Brighton Marina, W/SW passage included 12,500 **Wood Pigeons** on 8th, a **Great White Egret** (probably the third for the year) on 9th and 87 **Little Gulls** on 11th (the largest autumn movement in the county). Also on 9th, the last **House Martin** of the year was seen at Combe Haven along with 820 **Fieldfares**. The last **Ring Ouzel** was at Beachy Head on 14th when two **Pallas's Leaf Warblers** were found. No longer a major rarity, this species is nevertheless one of the highlights of any autumn and these were no exception, remaining together to delight observers to 16th. Last migrants at this time were a **Reed Warbler** at Pett Level on 14th (the latest county record), a **Whinchat** at Combe Haven (which also hosted the first) on 15th and a **Yellow Wagtail** at Selsey Bill on 16th (a very late departure). The last **Wheatear** of the year was seen at Brighton Marina on 21st when 60 **Blackbirds** were counted at Marsh Farm, Yapton. On 26th, a **Ferruginous Duck** was found at Rye Hbr (remaining into 2001) while a **Swallow** there on 30th was the last of the year.

The mildest December since 1998 started very wet during the first half to the month with frequent gales and squally showers. There was some fog and frost in the third week and it got colder with many small patches of open water freezing on the night of 29th. Two **Grey Phalaropes** were seen at Brighton Marina on 1st and the year's second **Lapland Bunting** flew W at Littlehampton on 5th. A **Redstart** at Sompting Tip from 7th to 11th was the latest county record while an estimated 15,000 **Black-headed Gulls** roosted at Bewl Water on 10th. A **Grey Phalarope** was seen at Worthing Beach on 13th with 70 **Goldeneye** off Thorney Island on 15th. A **Grey Phalarope** found at Widewater on 16th was the fourth to be seen during the month but the only one to stay, albeit only two days. The December *WeBS*' counts (also on 16th) included totals of 2765 **Teal**, 460 **Pintail** and 255 **Shoveler** at Amberley Wild Brooks and 2180 **Grey Plover** in Chichester Hbr. The highest count of **Red-throated Divers** was 189E at Brighton Marina on 17th (with 147E on 20th), while a **Sooty Shearwater** E there on 19th was only fourth December record for the county. Four hundred **Greenfinches** were feeding in a field at Pagham on 19th and a **Ring-necked Duck** found at Barcombe Res on 20th remained in the area into 2001. A **Long-tailed Skua** at Brighton Marina on 20th was the first county record for December while a **Pomarine Skua** was seen there the next day. A count of 830 **Great Black-backed Gulls** in Pagham Hbr on 21st was the highest of the year, as was 265 **Magpies** roosting in Moulsecoomb Wild Park on 22nd. An estimated 14,000 **Dunlin** used the high-tide roost at Pilsey Sands on 23rd and two **Ravens** at West Dean Woods remained from 27th into 2001. Other interesting records at this time were a **Red-breasted Merganser** at Pulborough Brooks on 28th (the only inland record of the year), ten **Little Stints** over-wintering at East Head, a **Curlew Sandpiper** in Pagham Hbr and a flock of 250 **Sky Larks** at Ovingdean. A male **Green-winged Teal** was at Pevensey Bridge Level on 29th while one of two **Whooper Swans** at Arlington Res on 30th was probably wild (and likely to have been that seen on the same day at nearby Berwick). The year was brought to a close with a notable 200 **Snipe** at Amberley Wild Brooks, another **Common Crane** over Combe Haven and a **Waxwing** at Winchelsea on 30th and 14 **Pale-bellied Brent Geese** at Brighton Marina and then Shoreham Hbr on 31st.

CLASSIFIED RECORDS FOR 2000

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	26	47	73	106	130	62	55	49	82	108	76	33
Worthing Beach	5	8	18	78	78	5	9	8	15	19	24	17
Brighton Marina	73	72	70	177	211	24	27	35	50	50	88	111
Splash Point, Seaford	15	30	42	126	93	5	0	0	1	14	6	22
Bexhill/Hastings	8	10	26	27	22	8	10	24	45	17	3	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 2000 the recommended dates were 16 Jan, 13 Feb, 12 Mar, 9 Apr, 7 May, 25 June, 23 July, 20 Aug, 17 Sept, 22 Oct, 19 Nov and 17 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 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; R. – River; 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.

The approximate monthly totals calculated using the same method as in previous years were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
580	895	127	184	17	4	-	1	1	16	112	872

Records for the principal sea-watching sites are summarised below with the monthly totals adjusted to allow for duplication:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Monthly Total</i>	502	795	119	180	16		14	112	844
Selsey Bill	60	305	32	25	1		10	41	128
Worthing Beach	2	11	3	14	2		-	6	17
Brighton Marina	494	603	88	174	9		4	90	833
Splash Point, Seaford	14	16	33	55	4		-	-	82
Bexhill/Hastings	12	41	15	5	1		1	-	-

High numbers were again recorded at both ends of the year. The totals in the table are greatly influenced by the differences in time spent sea-watching at each site.

The largest movements were on 2-3 Feb, with totals of 136W at Brighton Marina and 94W at Selsey Bill on the former date, and 26E at Brighton Marina and 108W at Selsey Bill on the latter. The largest counts of birds offshore came from Rye Bay, with a peak of 45 on 23 Jan. Numbers reduced dramatically from late February, as wintering birds departed. The only birds noted away from the open sea were two at Scotney Court GPs on 3 Jan, one of which remained until 30th, and singles off Pilsley Island on 9 Feb and from 16 to 22 Mar.

The number of June records was unusual, with 2E at Brighton Marina on 1st, and singles off Lancing on 11th and Pilsley Island on 16th.

The first returning bird was noted offshore at Bexhill on 7 Aug, with a single in Rye Bay on 6 Sept the only other record until early October when the species became more widespread. A single was offshore at Pilsley Island on 14-15 Oct. Peak counts in the latter part of the year were in December, with 189E at Brighton Marina on 17th and 147E there on 20th the most significant movements. [PMB]

0003. **BLACK-THROATED DIVER**

Gavia arctica

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
24	28	11	77	26	1	-	-	-	1	3	9

The total of 180 reflected a good spring passage and a slight increase on 1999, but it was still a poor year for this species.

Records from the main sea-watching sites are summarised below with the monthly totals adjusted to allow for duplication:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Monthly Total</i>	22	25	9	77	26	1	3	9
Selsey Bill	17	19	-	10	9	1	3	4
Worthing Beach	-	-	-	1	5	-	-	-
Brighton Marina	-	1	1	49	13	-	-	1
Splash Point, Seaford	-	3	7	37	6	-	-	7
Bexhill/Hastings	5	2	2	7	-	-	-	-

At Selsey Bill, there were 12W on both 20 Jan and 3 Feb. The peak spring movements were in April, with 8E at Seaford on 1st and 14E at Brighton Marina on 14th. A single that flew E past Selsey Bill on 21 June is the latest county record by two days.

Few birds were noted in the late winter period following the first at Selsey Bill on 23 Oct.

Records away from the open sea comprised singles at Ivy Lake, Chichester GPs from 1999 until 5 Jan, and intermittently at Scotney Court GPs between 3-11 Jan. [PMB]

0004. GREAT NORTHERN DIVER

Gavia immer

Scarce winter visitor and spring passage migrant.

Numbers returned to more normal levels following the exceptional numbers in 1999, the 24 accepted records relating to approximately 33 birds. The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
5	2	12	3	2	-	-	-	-	1	4	4

Singles were recorded flying E at Selsey Bill on three dates in January, and offshore at Church Norton on two dates in February (all AHo). At Brighton Marina, singles passed E on 5 Jan and W on 22 Jan (both IJW).

The largest numbers were recorded in March, with up to seven offshore at Selsey Bill (OMM *et al*) and one at Birling Gap on 3rd (TWP), a single offshore at Church Norton the following day (AHo), and three offshore at the latter site on 25th (AHo). In April, there were singles offshore at Church Norton on 2nd (AHo), Selsey Bill on 16th (BFF, RAI) and Brighton Marina on 18th (IJW *et al*). The last spring records were 1E at Selsey Bill on 4 May (OMM *et al*) and 1W at Brighton Marina on 18 May (IJW).

The first returning bird flew W at Selsey Bill on 31 Oct (OMM *et al*). One or possibly two individuals were noted in Chichester Hbr on 3 Nov (RFW). At Brighton Marina, a single was offshore on 21 Nov (IJW), one flew E on 28 Nov (KBG, IJW) and two were offshore on 26 Dec (KBG, IJW). A single was offshore at Church Norton on 26 Nov, with birds W and E past Selsey Bill on 19 and 26 Dec respectively (all AHo). [PMB]

DIVER Species

Gavia spp.

The specific identification of divers in flight is difficult, hence those recorded as 'diver spp' can form a significant proportion of the birds seen. The numbers of divers recorded at the main sea-watching sites in January-May and October-December are shown in the table below. The totals for each site have been calculated by adding the monthly totals of birds flying E to those flying W and including the numbers of birds seen on the sea. No attempt

should be made to add the columns, since many birds will have been seen at more than one site.

	Diver spp.		R-t Diver		B-t Diver		Total		No. per hour	
	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D
Selsey Bill	64	32	423	179	55	8	558*	222*	1.46	1.02
Worthing Beach	52	27	32	23	6	0	90	50	0.48	0.84
Brighton Marina	184	119	1368	927	64	1	1620*	1051*	2.68	4.23
Splash Point Seaford	441	156	122	82	53	7	616	245	2.01	5.87
Bexhill/Hastings	22	1	74	1	16	0	112	2	1.21	0.09

(*) includes Great Northern Divers

The rate of passage was on average down from 1999 and 1998. However, the year 2000 was another good one for divers, with large numbers recorded in the Channel at both ends of the year. Notable passages were recorded in most weather conditions, but, as expected, winds between SE and SW proved most productive. [PMB]

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
<i>County total</i>	131	154	135	49	32	31	52	116	179	232	181	171
Chichester Hbr	26	48	45	10	10	10	10	12	17	78	58	32
Pagham Hbr	5	6	9	1	-	-	2	6	12	7	9	14
Chichester GPs	27	18	5	5	2	1	2	5	24	31	18	6
Brooklands, Worthing	4	5	2	-	-	-	1	5	2	4	1	1
Glynde Levels	2	1	1	1	2	6	7	3	-	1	1	-
Cuckmere Haven	11	14	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	11	11	19	26
Eastbourne Lakes	8	10	8	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	2	7
Bowl Water	20	20	30	nc	nc	nc	nc	46	54	47	30	36
Powdermill Res	-	2	2	2	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Pett Level	-	-	-	1	4	-	-	1	3	1	1	-
Rye Hbr	16	20	21	25	10	12	30	38	47	46	25	30
Scotney Court GPs	2	1	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2

A maximum of 11 was noted in January at Seaford College, Duncton, a new site in 1999. Breeding was also reported there in 2000.

Breeding behaviour was first noted at Darwell Res on 12 March. At Rye Hbr nine pairs nested, with six pairs at Ternery Pool and single pairs at the Quarry, Narrow Pit and Castle Pit. Five pairs produced 27 young from 13 broods at Bowl Water, and five pairs were present at Thorney Deepes during the breeding season. Breeding pairs were recorded at 12 further sites, all singles with the exception of two pairs at Filsham Reedbed and Pebsham. Birds were also noted during the breeding season at Pulborough Brooks and Chichester GPs.

Returning wintering birds were reported from early August, with ten in the lower Cuckmere Valley on 12th and 11 at Wiston Pond, near Steyning on 19th. Thorney Island held high numbers in the late winter period, with a peak of 44 on 28 Dec. There were no other counts exceeding those shown in the *WeBS'* table. [PMB]

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	487	429	335	162	132	156	188	521	552	467	425	442
Chichester Hbr	6	11	15	7	11	8	5	4	8	17	24	16
Pagham Hbr	9	11	5	2	5	6	6	33	25	29	11	28
Chichester GPs	35	40	27	2	1	4	5	8	25	36	47	42
Forest Mere	-	1	4	2	9	6	5	nc	4	1	1	1
Weir Wood Res	30	34	64	53	34	44	76	88	76	nc	43	25
Barcombe Res	2	2	7	7	6	-	-	2	4	17	24	14
Arlington Res	18	12	10	14	1	20	20	52	49	52	12	12
Bewl Water	38	55	76	nc	nc	nc	nc	261	260	236	200	202
Darwell Res	17	26	29	32	32	37	47	58	57	35	16	17
Pett Level	224	204	30	6	-	2	2	2	1	3	4	49
Rye Hbr	75	12	15	18	14	11	11	6	7	6	11	19
Scotney Court GPs	1	1	7	8	4	7	5	3	7	5	7	5

The county totals were significantly higher than in recent years, primarily due to good numbers in Rye Bay during the early months, peaking at 266 offshore at Pett on 20 Jan, and at Bewl Water in the late summer. The only counts significantly in excess of the *WeBS*' totals came from Weir Wood Res, with 117, 90 and 84 recorded on 27 Aug, 16 Sept and 8 Oct respectively.

With the exception of those in Rye Bay, coastal birds appeared more thinly distributed throughout the year, with monthly totals for Jan-May of 16, 25, 44, 34 and 19 at Worthing Beach, and 30, 56, 26, 28 and 7 at Brighton Marina. The only notable movements in the latter part of the year were at Selsey Bill, with 55 recorded in November, including a peak of 29W on 6th.

Display was first noted at Darwell Res on 13 Feb, where 17 pairs bred. Breeding was confirmed at a number of sites across the county, with variable success reported. At Rye Hbr, ten pairs nested with "good success"; at Bewl Water, 156 young were reported from 57 broods (a huge increase on 1999); and at Weir Wood Res, there were 22 young from 13 broods. However, heavy rain in late May resulted in nest washout at Ardingly Res. [PMB]

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	4	9	6	1	-	-	-	1	-	2	3

A large number of records were received for the early part of the year though perhaps relating to only four birds. The bird first recorded at Carter's Pit, Rye Hbr on 16 Dec 1999 remained until 11 Mar while other singles were noted at Selsey Bill on 6 Jan and on five dates in February, off Church Norton on 22 Jan and 5 Feb, at Southwick Canal on 8 Jan, at Brighton Marina on 6 Jan and 2 Feb, and at Bexhill/Hastings on 16 Jan and 1 Feb.

Peak passage occurred in March with 2E and one offshore at Selsey Bill on 3rd and a remarkable series of records at Brighton Marina between 21st and 27th, with up to five birds offshore in summer plumage and displaying. Further spring sightings were all of single birds offshore or passing eastwards, with the exception of two offshore at Brighton Marina on 24 Apr. The last of the spring was at Brighton Marina on 11-12 May.

The first returning bird was offshore at Brighton Marina on 14 Sept, but there were no further records until November, when a single was in the lower Cuckmere Valley from 4th to 14th and another off Selsey Bill on 5th and 6th. The final records for the year were of singles at Goring, Worthing Beach, Brighton Marina and Rye Bay, all on 26 Dec. [PMB]

0011. SLAVONIAN GREBE

Podiceps auritus

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

The approximate monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	50	48	67	8	6	1	4	14
Church Norton/Selsey	44	43	60	-	-	1	4	6

Most winter records were from the vicinity of Pagham and Chichester Hbrs, with monthly maxima at Church Norton of 44 on 20 Jan and 43 on 9 Feb, and 60 offshore at Selsey Bill on 3 Mar. Wintering numbers reduced rapidly after this date. During January and February, one or two birds were occasionally noted offshore at Shoreham, Brighton Marina and Bexhill/Hastings, with a single at Rye Hbr until 12 Mar possibly moving to Scotney Court GPs, where there was one on 19 Mar and two from 30 Mar to 11 Apr. Spring passage was moderate, with a peak count of five offshore at Brighton Marina on the late date of 5 May.

The first autumn bird was seen at Selsey Bill on 26 Oct, after which small numbers were recorded from the western harbours. The maximum of six offshore at Selsey Bill on 27 Dec was the poorest late year count from this area for several years. The cold spell at the end of the year resulted in wider dispersal of this species, with sightings from Climping Beach, Worthing (3), Brighton Marina, Cuckmere Haven, Rye Hbr and Scotney Court GPs, and a single at Ivy Lake, Chichester GPs on 17 Dec. [PMB]

0012. BLACK-NECKED GREBE

Podiceps nigricollis

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

A total of at least 14 was recorded, a reduction on recent years. The only records for the first winter period came from Brighton Marina, with 2W on 21 Jan (IJW) and 1W on 2 Feb (IJW).

Spring passage commenced with a single at Arlington Res on 27 Mar (AJH). Birds were then observed offshore at Brighton Marina on 1 Apr (KBG), two displaying and calling on 8 Apr (IJW), and a further single on 10 May (IJW *et al*). Two birds noted off Southwick Beach on 8 April (ADW, IJW) were additional to those recorded at Brighton Marina the same day.

The first returning bird was at Pett Level Pools on 5 Sept (DCL, RTP), with presumably the same individual present on 10 Sept (AJH, BJH). Another was present at Darwell Res on 17 Sept (RGH). Two single birds were found inland on 22 Oct, at

Arlington Res (TJW *et al*) and Bewl Water (PCB). Presumably the latter was also observed on 19 Nov (DCL). [PMB]

0022. FULMAR

Fulmaris glacialis

Fairly common breeding species and passage migrant, resident on coastal cliffs from November to September.

A similar pattern of records to 1999. Movements at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

Direction of movement	Jan - Feb		Mar - May		June - July		Aug - Oct		Nov - Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	-	11	69	273	34	113	34	145	2	1
Worthing Beach	2	3	114	111	1	5	2	4	-	2
Brighton Marina	538	82	3007	358	50	22	95	48	369	95
Splash Point, Seaford	101	49	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	119	17
Bexhill/Hastings	1	5	129	42	12	4	7	21	-	-

In the first two months of the year, there was a steady easterly passage with a peak of 102E at Brighton Marina on 15 Jan. Counts from breeding locations included 100 at Beachy Head on 29 Jan and 59 at Peacehaven on 21 Feb.

In the spring, counts of over 100 were made on seven dates, all at Brighton Marina, the peaks being 243E and 166W on 17 Apr, 177E on 3 May and 266E, in 8hrs, on 26 May. Much smaller numbers were noted from other sites with the peak at Selsey Bill being just 6E and 37W on 23 May.

There were no significant offshore movements during the summer months and the only other records of note were of ten pairs, but no chicks, at Beachy Head on 25 June and one flying SE over Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 27 June. In August, 37E and 22W were recorded at Brighton Marina on 2nd but numbers decreased thereafter with no records at all in October.

Typically, birds returned to the cliffs in November and 110 had gathered off Beachy Head on 18th. Ten returned to Cliff End, near Pett on 3 Dec and, at Brighton Marina, the largest count was of 114E and 25W on 31 Dec.

There were two records of 'blue morph' birds possibly relating to the same individual; one flew E at Brighton Marina on 25 Apr (KBG, IJW) and one passed Newhaven West Pier on 30 Apr (EDU). [TJW]

0036. CORY'S SHEARWATER

Calonectris diomedea

Rare vagrant.

One flew E off Birling Gap on 24 Apr (DC, JFC). There have now been 15 records for the county, involving 19 individuals, although this is only the third since 1987 (when two were seen by the same observers at Beachy Head immediately after the great storm). There are also two records from Brighton Marina and Langney Point, and three records from Selsey Bill and Rye Bay. This is the fourth April record for the county, but the first in that month since 1979. The other records have been in early May (three), early June, August (four, three involving two birds), September (from the Newhaven Ferry in 1936), October (two) and November (in 1950). [RJF]

0043. **SOOTY SHEARWATER**

Puffinus griseus

Very scarce autumn visitor

1998: One flew W off Rottingdean at 06.43 BST on 10 Sept (DC) during a period of strong SW winds. This was the first of ten seen in the county during the autumn. In contrast there was only one record in 1999.

2000: At least 25 were recorded in the best autumn for the species since 1987. The first flew E at Splash Point, Seaford on 1 Sep (JC) closely followed by 2E at Ovingdean on 5th (ITB) and 3W at Brighton Marina on 6th (IJW *et al*). In October, two flew W at Worthing on 3rd (JAN) and one W at Selsey Bill on 9th (AHO), while an exceptional movement was noted on 28th with 1W at Southwick Beach (TJW), 3W at Worthing Beach (JAN) and 12W at Selsey Bill (OMM *et al*). Further singles flew W at Selsey Bill on 5 Nov (BJC *et al*) and Brighton Marina on 11 Nov (IJW), while 1E at Brighton Marina on 19 Dec (IJW *et al*) was only the 4th county record for that month. All birds were on their own apart from those at Ovingdean and four groups of two at Selsey Bill. Timings suggest that the birds seen at Worthing on 28 October could well have been amongst those at Selsey Bill (*ca.* 34km to the west) later in the day - singles at Worthing at 10.20, 10.24 and 11.24 tie in reasonably well with two at Selsey Bill at 11.30 and one at 12.30. This assumes a speed of about 30km per hour which seems reasonable considering the strong headwind. For the Southwick bird (at 15.20) to have been seen at Selsey (where the last sighting was at 16.20) would imply a speed of 45km per hour which doesn't seem likely. This analysis gives a minimum of 13 seen on 28 October, the second highest day total for the county to date, although well short of the 160W off Langney Point on 9 October 1987. The best years for this species in the county have been 1987 (164), 2000 (24+), 1998 (ten) and 1975 (seven). Fifty have been recorded in the county since 1989, one was seen in February (in 1979) and the others have been in August (one on 30th), September (11), October (29), November (five) and December (four, including three on 24th). During this period, 29 were recorded off Selsey Bill, eight at Worthing/Goring, 12 between Southwick and Rottingdean and singles at Seaford and Hastings, a noticeable westerly bias. [RJF]

0046. **MANX SHEARWATER**

Puffinus puffinus

A fairly common spring to autumn passage migrant.

Another good year for this increasingly recorded species with a minimum of 360 birds reported. The following table shows the totals at the main sea-watching localities.

	Mar		Apr		May		June		July		Aug		Sept		Oct		Nov	
Flight direction	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	-	5	10	36	-	30	23	84	-	16	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Worthing Beach	-	-	4	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	-	-	-
Brighton Marina	-	-	14	14	85	38	32	34	24	11	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Ovingdean	-	-	3	10	16	11	22	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Seaford	-	-	7	1	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Monthly total	5		61		133		101		50		2		2		4		2	

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

The first records were of a single W off Selsey Bill on 24 Mar followed by a further 4W there on 25th. Passage was noted on ten dates in April although the only double figure

counts were both on 18th when 18 flew W at Selsey Bill and 3E and 7W at Brighton Marina. In May, birds were recorded on 18 dates with the largest counts being 21E at Brighton Marina on 18th, 29W at Selsey Bill on 23rd and, on 27th, totals of 21E and 13W at Brighton Marina and 14E and 6W at Ovingdean. The only records away from the sites listed in the table were of 1E at Beachy Head on 21 Apr and 1W at Newhaven on 1 May.

In June, 11E and 10W were recorded at Selsey Bill on 11th but the peak for the month was between 21st and 23rd with totals of 34E and 34W at Brighton Marina and 22E and 23W at Ovingdean, while 33 flew W at Selsey Bill in 10hrs on 22nd. Birds were recorded on nine dates in July with a peak of 20E at Brighton Marina on 14th. Numbers decreased rapidly thereafter although birds were recorded much later than usual with five in October, including 1W at Bexhill on 12th and 1W at Worthing on 28th, and two singles in November, flying E at Brighton Marina on 12th and W there on 19th. [TJW]

0046.01 BALEARIC SHEARWATER

Puffinus mauretanicus

Very scarce spring to autumn visitor.

1997: One was seen flying W, close in, at Langley Point on 31 Aug (DC, JWK).

2000: Only five birds were seen, in stark contrast to the 23 in 1999 and 25 – 27 in 1998. On 21 June, a single flew W at Ovingdean (ITB) and on 14 July one lingered briefly off Brighton Marina (IJW). Both records were in the evening and were associated with movements of Manx Shearwaters. On 2 Aug, a single flew E at Brighton Marina (KBG) and what was probably the same bird was also seen at Ovingdean (ITB). A single flew W at Selsey Bill on 19 Aug (RWP *et al*) and the final record was of one flying W at Brighton Marina on 18 Sept (IJW). [TJW]

0052. STORM PETREL

Hydrobates pelagicus

Rare vagrant, mainly in mid-summer and after autumn gales.

Eight were seen following very strong SW gales in late autumn. The first was at Bewl Water on 30 Oct (per PCB) with 1W off Selsey Bill (OMM *et al*) and 4W off Brighton seafront on 31st (IJW *et al*), where singles also flew W on 1 and 2 Nov (IJW). These are the first autumn records since 1991 and coincided with exceptional numbers elsewhere along the south coast, for example, 90 off Portland Castle, Dorset on 30 Oct and 66W at Portland Bill, Dorset on 31st (*Portland Bird Observatory website*). They quite likely represent the highest autumn total for the county, although more were seen in July in 1996 and 1998. The bird at Bewl Water is particularly notable, being the first county record away from the coast since 1906 (when one was found at Billingshurst in November). It is not, however, the first petrel record for this site, as a Leach's, which is much more prone to inland occurrences, was recorded there in September 1982. [RJF]

0055. **LEACH'S PETREL***Oceanodroma leucorhoa***Rare vagrant.**

1997: Five off Splash Point, Seaford on 8 Oct (DC, JFC) took the year's total to eight, making it the second best year ever (although well behind the 39 in 1989, the majority seen by the same observers).

2000: Two flew W off Brighton seafront on 28 Oct (IJW), one flew E along the shoreline at Pilesey Island on 30th (CBC), another flew W off Brighton seafront on 31 Oct (IJW) and one was found recently dead on Brighton Beach on 13 Dec (KGB, IJW). Five of the last ten years have produced no records although 18 have been recorded in the other five. Records since 1990 have been in January (one), September (three, earliest 13th), October (nine), November (four) and December (one). All of those recorded in 1989 were during 24-25 December. The last inland record was of a bird found dying at Westfield, north of Hastings in October 1987. [RJF]

0071. **GANNET***Morus bassanus***Common passage migrant and non-breeding summer visitor; once scarce but now increasingly numerous in winter.**

Large numbers were again reported throughout the year with a significant autumn passage. Movements at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

Direction of movement	Jan - Feb		Mar - May		June - July		Aug - Oct		Nov - Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	21	420	290	1230	911	1704	554	3913	561	135
Worthing Beach	17	74	176	416	35	105	133	688	111	186
Brighton Marina	653	920	1589	776	769	582	1257	1674	1098	760
Splash Point, Seaford	260	248	1122	128	119	11	131	68	637	71
Bexhill/Hastings	110	21	72	35	27	5	28	423	7	1

In the first two months of the year, there were counts of over 100 on six dates with peaks of 23E and 160W at Brighton Marina on 20 Jan, 233E at the same site on 24 Jan and 172W at Selsey Bill on 9 Feb. One was found dead on the beach at Rottingdean on 9 Jan.

Spring passage was in stark contrast to 1999 when record numbers flew E. This year the only counts of over 100 were of birds flying W including 360 at Selsey Bill on 20 Apr and 161 there on 21st. In May, there were 103W at Brighton Marina on 3rd and 225W at Selsey Bill on 23rd.

Large numbers were recorded in the summer months including notable counts at Selsey Bill in June of 285W on 1st, 90E and 245W on 14th and 140E and 169W on 21st. In July, the largest count was 250E and 25W at Selsey Bill on 25th.

Autumn passage was protracted with the peak numbers recorded in October. In August, the highest counts were 300 off Lancing on 25th and 350E and 20W at Brighton Marina on 26th. Numbers in September were similar with 335 at Selsey Bill on 18th being the best count. In October, there were five counts of over 450 including 615W at Selsey Bill on 23rd and on 28th, 618W at Selsey Bill and 545W at Brighton Marina in 6hrs and 5.5hrs respectively.

In November, 310 flew W at Brighton Marina on 11th. Evidence of large numbers remaining in the Channel at the end of the year came from counts of 400E and 100

offshore at Selsey Bill on 26 Dec, 478E at Brighton Marina on the same day, and a further 243E at the latter site the following day.

Perhaps the most interesting sighting of the year was of an adult that took up residence on a Seaford rooftop for the third year running. It was present from 26 Feb until at least 18 Sept and spent the early part of its stay displaying and calling (*British Birds* 94: 203). [TJW]

0072. CORMORANT

Phalacrocorax carbo

Very 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>	504	432	576	378	181	234	489	751	703	577	592	423
Chichester Hbr	17	19	22	11	7	11	34	51	55	108	51	36
Pagham Hbr	132	99	234	178	31	80	122	244	104	108	114	71
Chichester GPs	78	66	83	-	-	-	-	1	63	46	85	67
Forest Mere	24	26	5	-	-	-	-	nc	3	10	35	38
Adur Levels	-	1	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	14	38	12	5
Weir Wood Res	34	64	52	23	2	12	18	37	13	nc	45	32
Barcombe Res	9	9	1	-	1	5	1	5	7	17	30	18
Bewl Water	20	10	10	nc	nc	nc	nc	50	100	60	20	20
Rye Hbr	89	46	122	113	120	113	302	324	235	56	34	44

Overall numbers were higher than in the previous two years, possibly approaching record levels, although the wealth of reports from all round the county are difficult to interpret with any certainty. For a species traditionally thought of as a winter visitor it was notable that the two coastal strongholds of Pagham Hbr and Rye Hbr had maximum numbers in August whilst the peak at Chichester Hbr was in October. The autumn peak at two typical inland sites, Bewl Water and Weir Wood Res, was in September with 55 at Weir Wood Res on 17th being additional to that shown in the *WeBS*' table.

There has been a further increase in breeding at Castle Water, Rye Hbr where 75 nests were successful. There were no other reports of attempted breeding though one of a group of 20 birds at Bewl Water on 23 July was seen carrying a large twig. The occasional breeding site on Fairlight Cliffs was reportedly unoccupied.

The major nocturnal roosts held fewer birds than might have been expected in a bumper year possibly because more roosts were in use both near the coast and inland. 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	216	184	107	186	70	170	145
South Stoke	105	97	75	53	103	109	85
<i>Total</i>	321	281	182	239	173	279	230

The unusually low count at Chichester GPs in October was caused by shooting, which appeared to be aimed deliberately at Cormorants. Numbers remained depressed there into the New Year. Some birds may have chosen new roosts because of disturbance or the opportunities presented by widespread floods. A nocturnal roost at Forest Mere, 20km N of Chichester, held 51 birds on 9 Dec, while on 2 Nov a bird was seen to land on Chichester Cathedral near dusk, the first possible roosting there since 1974. The only

reported coastal nocturnal roost, other than the large one at Rye Hbr, was on the cliffs at Saltdean, where there were 12 on 20 Feb. Regular inland nocturnal roosts included Wyckham Fm, Steyning, with maximum counts of 85 on 13 Feb and 106 on 13 Sept; the lower Ouse Valley, with 28 on both 21 Feb and 15 Nov; and the Knepp Estate, with 50 on 29 Jan.

Following the demise of the pier at Bognor Regis, the two largest daytime loafing roosts were in Pagham Hbr, with a maximum of 142 on 3 Sept, and at Castle Water, Rye Hbr, with 281 on 20 Aug.

The year closed with a record count of 120 at Barcombe Res on 31 Dec. This contrasts with the monthly *WeBS*' count of only 18 at the site and suggests that the total population in the county at any one time may be considerably higher than the *WeBS*' total. [RK]

0080. **SHAG**

Phalacrocorax aristotelis

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Unusually large numbers were recorded in the autumn. The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
15	4	8	10	4	-	2	30	44	14	9	11

Apart from a record of ten off Church Norton on 15 Jan, numbers were small at the start of the year with ones and twos in the Brighton and Selsey Bill areas. Spring records were of singles other than 2E at Bexhill on 13 Mar, three at Portobello, Rottingdean on 26 Mar and 2E at Splash Point, Seaford on both 30 Apr and 6 May.

The first returning bird was an early juvenile at Brighton Marina on 22-23 July followed by one at Splash Point on 30th. Numbers then built up rapidly; the totals at Brighton Marina for August and September were 21E and 31W and 56E and 41W respectively although, to allow for possible duplication, only the highest day counts and the highest number of birds moving E or W has been used in calculating the monthly totals. These counts were 1E and 16W on 28 Aug and 13E and 14W on 6 Sept. At Selsey Bill, up to six were noted in August and, in September, 23 flew W there on 7th. Elsewhere during this period, up to three were seen regularly at Splash Point and a maximum of four at Beachy Head on 25 Sept.

Numbers returned to normal in October although six were seen flying W at Brighton Marina on 11th. A very approachable immature arrived for the winter at Newhaven West Pier on 13th. A total of 34 records was received for the last two months of the year, the most notable being 4W at Selsey Bill on 1 Nov, 4E at the same site on 5 Dec, one at Pilesey Island on 15 Dec, and three confiding immatures at Brighton Marina throughout December. [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
<i>Monthly Total</i>	5	10	8	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	4	6
Pondlye	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Southease	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lewes	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Glyne Gap	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Filsham/Combe Haven	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pett Level	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-
Pett Level Pools	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Rye Hbr	3	6	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	5

As in 1999, the bulk of the records were for Castle Water, Rye Hbr where birds were present up to 20 Mar and from 12 Nov. The peak counts were six at dawn on 17 Feb (a new county record) and five at dusk on both 25 Feb and 28 Dec. Perhaps related to these were single birds at Pett Level and Pett Pools on seven dates between 11 Jan and 15 Mar and on eight dates between 6 Oct and 6 Nov. Elsewhere, there were singles at Glyne Gap Marsh on 1 Jan, Filsham Reedbed on 1 Jan, 26 Feb and regularly during the first two weeks of March, flushed from a small reedbed at Southease on 21 Feb, at Pondlye, Goddard's Green on 11 and 17 Mar (the only record for West Sussex during the year), and in flight over Lewes on 1 Apr. On 29 Dec, one flew from Combe Haven and landed near Pebsham Wood.

The records suggest an annual total of at least 16 different birds, allowing for likely duplication in the far east of the county. [PJ]

0104. NIGHT HERON

Nycticorax nycticorax

Rare vagrant.

On 15 Apr an adult or sub-adult was disturbed from a small wood at Winchelsea Beach and, after briefly alighting in a garden willow, flew off NE (PMT *et al*). A first-summer arrived from the S at Brighton Marina early on 12 May (KBG, IJW *et al*) where it remained roosting for much of the day. It departed to the N and was then seen at Sheepcote Valley, before flying E over Roedean and Ovingdean. These are the first records since 1996 and take the county total to 31. Seven have been in April and 11 in May. From 1 January 2002 records of this species will no longer be assessed by the *British Birds Rarities Committee*. Detailed descriptions will instead be considered by SOSRC. [RJF]

0108. SQUACCO HERON

Ardeola ralloides

Very rare vagrant.

One at Pett Level on 10 June (DB, SB, RSK *et al*) has been accepted by *British Birds* and is the seventh county record. It frequented the reeds around Pett Pools and the adjacent ditches but was often harassed by crows when it flew. Although present until dusk, this may have hastened its departure as it was not seen the following morning. Only four have been recorded during the last 50 years, all in the middle third of June (the previous occurrences being in 1982, 1995 and 1997). Despite being present for only one day, this was the first bird to be widely appreciated, although those not able to make it on the day will be hoping for another opportunity to see the species in the county soon. [RJF]

0111. CATTLE EGRET

*Bulbulcus ibis***Very rare vagrant.**

One in the Adur Valley, near Henfield from 1-12 Jan (ARK *et al*) was possibly the same bird as that seen along the coast on 7 May. It flew E along Worthing seafront at 07.12 BST (JAN, DIS *et al*) and high overhead with Black-headed Gulls at Brighton Marina at 07.46 (JC, PJ, IJW *et al*). Although not picked up by observers at Splash Point, Seaford, it was relocated in the lower Cuckmere Valley (PJ, ARK *et al*), but did not linger there. Presumably the same bird was seen at Castle Water, Rye Hbr from 16-25 May (PMT *et al*). All these records have been accepted by *British Birds* and assuming they involve two individuals take the county total to ten. All records have been during January to May and these bring the earliest date forward by three weeks and push the latest back by 11 days. That two observers should find the same rarity twice at different places is quite remarkable, that for one of them it happened with the same bird on the same day is even more so. The bird in the Adur Valley was the first national rarity found in Britain in the new Millennium. [RJF]

0119. LITTLE EGRET

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

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
County totals	202	177	174	119	46	47	238	384	285	353	357	325
Tournerbury Woods (roost)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	nc	223	-	-
Thorney Deeps (roost)	143	119	127	95	24	9	162	246	91	-	232	210
Thorney Deeps (daytime)	11	10	34	24	10	8	57	70	50	31	22	19
Pilsey Island	3	3	8	5	7	12	14	28	29	22	8	3
Pagham Hbr roost	39	30	30	10	6	16	44	76	56	98	103	84
Cuckmere Haven	8	5	7	6	5	3	12	21	15	12	10	14
Rye Hbr roost	8	10	10	6	2	6	6	17	16	10	9	10

The peak numbers in autumn and winter showed that a minimum of 580 birds was recorded in the county, compared to 507 in 1999.

Counts at the Thorney Deeps roost produced 143 on 11 Jan, 119 on 15 Feb, 127 on 16 Mar, 95 on 2 Apr and 24 on 18 May. Nine were still present on 6 June and three on 4 July, though a count of 18 around Thorney Island on 18 June suggested that another roost was probably present elsewhere in Chichester Hbr. A new roost was then discovered in the copse behind the churchyard at Thorney Island, with 30 there at dusk on 7 July, increasing to 90 on 17 July, with another 38 at the Thorney Deeps roost on the same night. Thereafter, all the birds moved to the latter site where numbers reached 162 on 30 July, a peak of 246 on 19-22 Aug, 157 on 28 Aug and 91 on 11 Sept, although the *WeBS*' count for Chichester Hbr on 16 Sept produced 188. The Thorney Deeps roost was then completely abandoned from 30 Sept and throughout October, and moved across the county boundary to Tournerbury Woods on Hayling Island, where 223+ roosted at dusk on 6 Oct. They then moved back to their original roost at Thorney Deeps, with counts of 232 on 3 Nov and 210 on 15 Dec.

Other records of note were 21 at Cuckmere Haven on 10 Aug, a high tide count of 70 at Thorney Deeps on 20 Aug, 17 roosting at dusk at Rye Hbr on 30 Aug, 29 at Pilsey

Island on 2 Sept, 15 at Manor Fm, Apuldram on 10 Sept, 12 at West Wittering on 5 Oct and 103 roosting at dusk at Pagham Hbr on 9 Nov.

Spring sea-watchers logged a total of 17E, with a maximum of 5E at both Selsey Bill and Glyne Gap, Bexhill on 8 May, probably relating to the same individuals. Autumn movements of note were 6N at Galley Hill, Bexhill on 28 July and 7W at Goring Beach on 6 Aug.

Inland records were of singles at Amberley Wild Brooks on 9 Jan, Coldwaltham Brooks on 18 June and Arlington Res on the 24-25 June, with three at the latter site on 6 Aug, five at Bewl Water and four at Beddingham both on 7 Aug, three at Darwell Res on 9 Sept, five at Pulborough Brooks on 16 Oct, with two there on 11 Dec, and finally two at Botolphs near Bramber on 24 Dec. [CBC]

0121. GREAT WHITE EGRET

Egretta alba

Very rare vagrant.

One flew N over Pett Level at 06.00 BST on 30 July (SJRR, TS *et al*), one was present in the lower Cuckmere Valley during 21-23 Oct (JC, IJF, GG *et al*) and one, possibly the same, flew slowly W at Brighton Marina at 09.30 GMT on 9 Nov (KBG). All three have been accepted by *British Birds* and are the first county records for the months concerned. Just four have been seen previously, in 1985 (mid-June), 1990 (early August), 1996 (four locations during January-April) and 1998 (two locations in mid-March). [RJF]

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
<i>County total</i>	102	64	90	37	61	72	112	148	182	141	122	92
Chichester Hbr	13	10	14	4	10	12	26	34	35	30	20	19
Pagham Hbr	11	8	16	4	13	7	13	24	12	5	4	7
Chichester GPs	12	6	4	4	-	3	5	2	9	4	10	7
Arundel WWT	-	-	-	2	1	-	1	1	1	-	-	-
Amberley Wild Brooks	3	-	2	-	-	6	5	4	5	7	3	5
Pulborough Brooks	4	4	-	6	4	9	10	10	7	9	9	3
Kneppmill Pond	-	2	6	7	4	2	3	nc	1	-	-	1
Henfield Levels	-	3	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	4	7	3
Weir Wood Res	3	8	12	3	8	8	22	13	16	nc	4	2
Lower Ouse Valley	2	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	2	4
Glynde Levels	5	1	1	-	4	2	5	4	4	11	6	5
Arlington Res	-	1	1	1	-	4	6	8	5	4	2	2
Cuckmere Haven	15	9	7	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	22	9	10	7
Eastbourne Lakes	7	-	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	3	2	4
Pevensy Levels	6	1	6	nc	4	7	4	2	5	5	3	4
Bewl Water	2	1	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	15	18	12	6	4
Pett Level	-	2	1	-	2	1	2	8	4	2	1	-
Rye Hbr	9	1	6	3	7	6	6	9	17	12	13	10

In the breeding season the total of nests occupied in 20 heronries, and a single nest at Pebsham, came to 231 (249 in 1999). Several heronries increased by one or two nests and the six which showed significant decreases – Pagham, Parham, Henfield, Ardingly, Firlle and Eridge – are scattered across Sussex with no obvious pattern or explanation. Counts for individual heronries, listed from west to east, were as follows:

Westbourne nc; Fishbourne 12; Pagham 8; Flansham 14; Warningcamp 6; Parham 17; Knepp 15; Warnham *ca.* 6; Henfield 19; Ardingly 8; Weir Wood Res 11; Iford 5; Firlle 15; Charleston 18; Hadlow Down 14; Eridge 6; Glynleigh 14; Wartling, Horsebridge Road 14; Burwash 7; Winchelsea 6; Leasam 15.

During the rest of the year, single birds and loosely associated small groups of 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.

One at Pett Level on 15 Apr flew off SW (PJo). It is the eighth record since 1990, half of which have been in April, its arrival coinciding with that of the Night Heron at nearby Winchelsea. There are two previous records for Pett Level (May 1987 and Oct 1992). [RJF]

0134. **WHITE STORK**

Ciconia ciconia

A rare vagrant, mainly in the spring

1993: One in a field near Sedlescombe on 1 May (FJK) was possibly that seen near Arundel on 2-3 May, the only other record of the year.

2000: Two adults flew N over Eridge, near Crowborough, at 09.45 BST on 25 Mar (WGH). They were subsequently seen near Guildford in Surrey from 28-31st and were presumably the pair seen in N Norfolk during 2-5 Apr (*Birding World* 13:93, 133 & 134). This is the earliest county record since one over-wintered near Adversane in 1974-75, although one flew N over Hastings on 6 Apr 1981. Eleven were recorded during the 1990s, six in May, two in both August and September and one in mid November (in 1998). This species is not an infrequent escape from captivity, with the highest degree of suspicion associated with unseasonal records (such as that in November), although the movements of this pair are not inconsistent with early overshooting migrants. [RJF]

0144. **SPOONBILL**

Platalea leucorodia

Very scarce visitor, most frequent in spring and autumn.

A probable adult flew W at Church Norton on 2 July (RWP) while an adult was seen in Pagham Hbr on 23 Aug (JC). Two immatures flew W off Selsey Bill at 09.15 BST on 13 Oct (BR) when a first-winter was found at Pagham Hbr which remained into 2001 (ARK, SJP *et al.*). On 14 Oct, ten flew SW over Church Norton at 10.40 BST (ALB, TJE,

AHo) and an immature flew NW then W over Thorney Island at 13.10 BST (CBC). The flock at Church Norton, which included some immatures, flew over in a long line at a height of not more than 15m. It was the second largest flock ever recorded in the county, the largest being a loose flock of 20 which flew W at Langney Point on 1 September 1964 (and is depicted on the cover of that year's *Sussex Bird Report*). Assuming that the July and August birds were different and that at least 12 individuals were involved in the October sightings, the year's total is 14. This has only been bettered by the 20 recorded in 1964 and is well above the 1990s average of just over four per year. Records since 1990 have all been during the period 4 March to 3 November and include one (of three birds) in July, four in August and three others (involving five individuals) in October, with many of the other records in May or September. [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>	769	532	464	340	530	408	321	331	839	844	781	689
Chichester Hbr	149	31	54	43	32	63	61	85	144	150	109	85
Pagham Hbr	4	2	6	10	17	18	11	17	17	9	3	40
Chichester GPs	58	46	35	2	1	15	12	7	45	56	65	62
Arundel WWT	26	23	16	23	23	19	-	24	31	29	39	33
Arun (Offham-Houghton)	20	16	25	29	9	6	nc	4	10	38	27	18
Amberley Wild Brooks	32	30	29	84	122	14	21	22	58	28	39	20
Pulborough Brooks	13	15	4	14	18	25	11	14	26	29	7	20
Brooklands, Worthing	27	17	28	23	23	12	14	12	11	7	11	7
Adur (Steyning-Henfield)	8	10	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	19	10	29	53
Henfield Levels	43	63	51	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	64	77	66	52
Lower Ouse Valley	99	64	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	40	36	39
Glynde Levels	15	12	10	10	9	22	22	16	18	37	18	6
Eastbourne Lakes	65	42	65	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	111	65	49	61
Pevensay Levels	100	30	42	53	35	25	14	14	53	30	120	23
Rye Hbr	4	77	26	9	53	55	47	51	31	47	6	32
Scotney Court GPs	4	5	6	31	171	88	67	14	9	3	9	6

Other significant counts for January – March not shown in the table included 118 on the upper Adur Levels on 2 Jan, 96 at Bines Bridge, Ashurst on 30 Jan and 64 at Ford on 13 Feb.

Nest building was first noted at Brooklands, Worthing on 21 Mar where ultimately five nests were made, but only two broods survived the high water level in June, producing two and three young. Other confirmed breeding took place at Peter Pond, Emsworth (one pair raised four cygnets); Thorney Deeps (five cygnets raised successfully); Chichester Canal (pair with eight young on 12 May); Pagham Hbr West Side; Breech Pool, Pagham Hbr; Chichester GPs, where a nest on Portfield Pit contained six eggs on 9 Apr; Rose Green, Bognor Regis; Mewsbrook, Littlehampton; Amberley Wild Brooks (three pairs); Pulborough Brooks RSPB Reserve (four pairs); Knepp Estate; Partridge Green SF; Southwater CP (six hatched with four of the brood still surviving on 16 Sept); Warnham LNR (the cob killed the pen but raised seven cygnets); Henfield Levels (two broods of five and six); Pond Lye, Goddards Green; Holtye; Blackham; Cuckmere Haven (two pairs);

Shinewater Lake, Eastbourne (three pairs); Combe Haven (two pairs); Pett Level (five pairs); and Rye Hbr SSSI (*ca.*seven pairs).

Among the larger counts in the summer months not shown in the table were 152 in Fishbourne Channel on 25 May and 111 there on 21 June, 70 and 82 on the R. Arun at Littlehampton on 18 July and 23 Aug respectively, and 86 on the R. Adur at Shoreham on 29 Aug.

Counts at Ford, in the Arun Valley, rose from 65, including 17 immatures, on 3 Nov to reach 107 on 25 Nov and 105 on 10 Dec. Seventy-five birds were near Winchelsea Station on 1 Dec and 94 at Arlington Res on 29 Dec. [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>	96	10	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4	40
Arundel WWT	24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Arun (Offham-Houghton)	48	7	4	-	-	-	nc	-	-	-	-	-
Amberley Wild Brooks	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	20
Waltham Brooks	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-
Pulborough Brooks	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Henfield Levels	13	3	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	7
Lower Ouse Valley	5	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-

Three juveniles were with nine adults on floodwater at Rye Fm, Henfield on 2 Jan, and 16 birds were recorded on Amberley Wild Brooks on the same day. A count of 18, including three juveniles, was made on the upper Adur Levels on 8 Jan, on which day 22 adults and two juveniles were at Greatham Bridge. This latter herd had grown to 37 by 10 Jan and presumably were part of the 48 counted between Offham and Houghton during the *WeBS'* survey on 16 Jan. Thirty-six birds flew in to roost at Pulborough Brooks on 27 Jan and, on 30 Jan, 26 adults and three juveniles were seen at Bines Bridge, Ashurst. The few records from the east of the county during the first winter period were of a single adult at Scotney Court GPs on 3 Jan, six adults and a juvenile on Lewes Brooks on 9 Jan, five at Iford on 24 Jan and five adults at Middle Bridge, Pevensey Levels on 24 Feb. The only records in March were of three on Henfield Levels on 4th and a single bird at Pulborough Brooks on 12th.

The first returning birds were four at Pulborough Brooks on 4 Nov. Two birds landed among Mute Swans at Castle Fm, Rye Hbr on 13 Nov. Many of the counts up to the year end came from the Adur and Arun Valleys and were in single figures; exceptions being 23 on Amberley Wild Brooks on 21 Dec, up to 27 at Greatham Bridge on 28th and 32 there on 30th. Reports from East Sussex were of two birds at Iford on Christmas Day, two at Combe Haven on 30 Dec, two adults at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr also on 30 Dec, and what were possibly the same birds flying NE over Northpoint Pit, Rye the next day. [MJM]

0154. **WHOOPER SWAN**

Cygnus cygnus

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

The two birds on Amberley Wild Brooks at the end of 1999 remained there until at least 12 Feb; they were also seen at Coldwatham Brooks on 10 Jan (BCP, RTP). A single bird flew E over Hurstpierpoint on 24 Dec (AFB, SJB) while photographs of a bird near Berwick on 30 Dec (ITB, ADW, IJW) revealed it to be different to the escaped or feral bird in the Cuckmere Valley (see page 165), as the bill patterns differed markedly. Two birds at Arlington Res on 30 Dec (LRB) were most likely the feral one and the wild bird noted at Berwick on the same day. [MJM]

0157. **TUNDRA BEAN GOOSE**

Anser fabilis rossicus

A very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

1998: Two birds of this form were seen on Pevensey Levels on 24 and 28 Dec (DC), on both occasions associating with a flock of nine White-fronted Geese. [AHo]

0159. **WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE**

Anser albifrons

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Scotney Court GPs, on the border of East Sussex and Kent, was again the source of the vast majority of records. The wintering flock there rose rapidly from six on 16 Jan to 195 on 27 Jan and a peak of 300 on 13 Mar. Elsewhere, 15 on Henfield Levels on 1 Jan, 21 on Amberley Wild Brooks on 9 Jan, 25 on Castle Water, Rye Hbr on 10 Jan and ten at Pulborough Brooks on 13 Feb were the only other notable counts. Numbers at the latter site declined to five on 14-15 Feb, two on 16th and one on 20th, this lonely individual lingering on with the resident Greylags until 13 Mar. The only other spring records were of one at Combe Haven on 17 and 22 Feb, and a presumed feral bird, paired with a Greylag, at Wiston Pond on 13 Feb.

There were just three records of presumed migration. A flock of 37 flew N over Rye Hbr on 23 Jan, 28 birds were seen flying E past Church Norton two days later, and a flock of ten flew E at Selsey Bill on 17 Apr.

Very few reports were received for the latter half of the year. The first, on 12 Nov, was of four birds present on Manxey Levels, Pevensey, the next not until 16 Dec, when two birds were seen at Scotney Court GPs. Numbers peaked at this site with 25 (including five juveniles) present on 22 Dec. The only other December record related to a solitary bird seen in the lower Cuckmere Valley on 20th. [AHo]

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
<i>County Total</i>	293	503	242	107	135	212	292	774	411	562	633	302
Amberley Wild Brooks	-	-	3	9	3	7	59	8	6	166	6	-
Pulborough Brooks	43	68	38	9	11	2	7	157	-	7	3	11
Streele Lake	nc	35	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	nc
Ardingly Res	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	80	90	100	nc
Weir Wood Res	-	-	-	-	1	4	37	14	69	nc	-	-
Glynde Levels	7	11	49	35	26	12	30	57	158	280	2	4
Bewl Water	1	1	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	43	68	1	1	-
Darwell Res	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pett Level	-	10	30	13	12	13	13	8	1	2	-	1
Rye Hbr	1	4	10	13	12	22	10	5	7	3	2	2
Scotney Court GPs	235	324	98	19	60	151	133	472	6	4	344	270

Scotney Court GPs once again hosted the biggest flock during the year, with a peak of 486 on 27 Jan. Aside from regular *WeBS*' counts, small numbers were recorded at a number of sites, with more than usual reported from the west of the county where they are normally scarce. Up to six birds were recorded regularly in the Pagham Hbr area between January and June, four were seen at Thorney Deeps up to 20 Jan, with 1-2 there until 24 Mar, and up to four were seen regularly on Ivy Lake, Chichester GPs. One at Weir Wood Res on 22 Jan was with a Canada Goose and four hybrid offspring.

Surprisingly, only two sea-watching records were received, a single bird flying E past Brighton Marina on 15 Mar, and a flock of 10E past Seaford Head on 1 Apr.

Confirmed breeding took place at Ivy Lake, Chichester GPs (one pair with two young); Pulborough Brooks (five pairs fledged a total of five young); Wiston Pond, near Steyning (three pairs and 14 young); Barcombe Res (one pair and five young); Glynde Reach (at least three pairs with 19 young); Pett Level (four broods); and Rye Hbr (five successful pairs).

The first notable post-breeding flock was of 102 birds at Weir Wood Res on 30 July, rising to 200 by 6 Aug. The highest subsequent counts were of 472 at Scotney Court GPs on 20 Aug and 200 at Pulborough Brooks on 9 Sept. Other peaks included 70 at Bewl Water from 31 Aug to 17 Sept, 19 at Barcombe Res on 24 Aug, 105 at Rye Hbr on 5 Sept and 29 at Nep Town, Henfield on 23 Sept.

There were few counts for the second winter period away from regular sites. However, 21 in Pagham Hbr on 25 Nov (the only site record for the second half of the year), 36 on Henfield Levels on 26 Nov, 33 at Partridge Green SF on 14 Dec and 50 on Henfield Levels two days later, were notable exceptions. [AHO]

0166. CANADA GOOSE

*Branta canadensis***Common introduced resident and partial migrant.**

The monthly *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County Total</i>	2736	1247	869	442	335	446	523	2241	3085	2439	2912	2392
Chichester Hbr	49	39	39	8	16	6	26	121	121	69	115	56
Chichester GPs	39	45	44	-	-	-	-	-	17	17	12	nc
Forest Mere	-	10	16	16	22	20	14	nc	12	-	-	-
Petworth Park	67	1	61	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	7	2	4	12
Swanbourne Lake	90	80	50	60	nc	nc	nc	nc	10	80	65	80
Arundel WWT	19	42	18	26	27	26	26	75	98	6	9	5
Arun (Offham-Houghton)	95	-	4	28	4	-	nc	-	-	20	-	67
Amberley Wild Brooks	37	28	30	70	51	18	7	12	381	751	409	740
Waltham Brooks	25	48	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	287	74
Pulborough Brooks	569	66	39	19	22	8	11	17	161	191	434	200
Henfield Levels	6	31	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	50	251	-	230
Weir Wood Res	41	35	41	5	2	160	-	9	9	nc	19	-
Barcombe Res	14	35	2	9	-	-	14	2	1	180	72	25
Glynde Levels	29	72	73	77	73	2	62	224	67	385	48	1
Arlington Res	8	3	25	7	4	12	56	329	283	1	13	-
Cuckmere Haven	375	54	43	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	193	36	669	183
Eastbourne Lakes	71	66	57	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	31	58	4
Pevensay Levels	124	18	27	40	6	2	24	nc	223	nc	9	40
Bewl Water	665	125	90	nc	nc	nc	nc	1078	600	200	510	490
Pett Level	72	101	73	48	33	48	31	3	72	139	63	112
Rye Hbr	86	70	60	35	53	52	154	325	281	26	91	64
Scotney Court GPs	60	46	11	4	14	49	88	45	215	4	14	4

The January *WeBS*' counts of 665 at Bewl Water and 569 at Pulborough Brooks, both on 16th, were the largest counts in the first part of the year.

There were a few more spring sea-watching records than in previous years, with totals as follows: 6E past Selsey Bill; 1E and 3W past Worthing Beach; 4E and 9W past Brighton Marina; 8E and 13 W past Seaford; and 3W past Bexhill, all between 13 Mar and 31 May.

There were records of confirmed breeding from a large number of sites corresponding to the widespread distribution shown by the Atlas map in *Birds of Sussex*.

As usual, numbers built up rapidly in August with moulting flocks at favoured haunts. The biggest of these (and the biggest count of the year) was the *WeBS*' total of 1078 at Bewl Water on 20th. Few counts exceeded the site totals in the table, but two other noteworthy records were of 960 birds in a flooded field at Greatham Bridge on 30 Nov, and 813 birds present at Bewl Water on 31 Dec. [AHO]

0167. BARNACLE GOOSE

Branta leucopsis

Very scarce winter visitor, often in severe weather, and an increasingly common feral resident.

It is difficult to be certain if any of the records pertain to truly wild birds, but certainly the vast majority relate to feral birds. Significant feral flocks are regular at Barcombe Res, where a peak of 66 was noted on 24 Aug, and at Arundel WWT, where the under-reported flock peaked at 44 on 26 Oct.

The only other double figure counts came from Scotney Court GPs, where up to 15 were noted from January to 21 Aug, and Rye Hbr LNR, where (possibly the same?) 15

were seen from 22 Aug to 17 Sept. Between one and five birds were noted at many other sites during the year, though there was no indication of breeding.

An apparent Barnacle x Canada hybrid was seen on 24 July and 21 Aug with the regular flock at Scotney Court. [AHO]

0168. **DARK-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE**

Branta bernicla bernicla

Very common winter visitor and passage migrant; a few oversummer.

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>	11371	8974	3521	32	23	15	19	21	41	2726	6897	8189
Chichester Hbr	9267	7666	2595	27	20	15	19	21	20	2377	5926	6383
Pagham Hbr	2097	1308	925	4	3	-	-	-	21	333	965	1780

There was the usual scattering of records away from the two main wintering sites in the west of the county, namely singles at Rye Hbr on 1 Jan (with two present there on 16th), Pulborough North Brooks on 3 Jan, the lower Cuckmere Valley from 6th to 25th, and Scotney Court Fm on 20 Feb. There were, however, exceptional numbers at Climping including 478 on 1 Jan, 310 on 31 Jan, 105 on 26 Feb and 130 on 5 Mar.

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

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		Oct		Nov		Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	61	1	177	2	1482	1	659	-	-	731	1	1609	-	77
Worthing Beach	23	15	85	1	1376	-	824	6	3	87	3	1527	7	37
Brighton Marina	50	-	1208	21	10002	-	1660	-	1	138	17	1892	141	222
Splash Point, Seaford	-	-	395	7	5692	6	2822	1	3	84	-	17	23	2
Bexhill/Hastings	9	-	-	-	819	-	214	-	3	178	-	-	-	-

Spring passage really got under way on 22 Feb, when 414 birds flew E past Brighton Marina, with a further 631 there the following day. The period 21-24 Mar saw large numbers of birds heading E, particularly at Brighton Marina, where daily counts of 2174, 1950, 483 and an incredible 4500 on 24th were recorded, the latter the largest passage day count ever in Sussex. The highest counts of the spring also occurred at the other main sea-watching sites on 24th, namely 800 past Selsey Bill, 633 past Worthing, and 2497 past Splash Point, Seaford. The only subsequent four-figure count was at Splash Point where 1121 flew E on 1 April. Thereafter, passage was generally light with few birds recorded in May.

Summer records were surprisingly few: singles at Pagham Hbr from 6 to 13 July, in Emsworth Channel on 15 July, at Pett Level on 18 July, and at Pilsey Island on 25 July.

The first returning birds were seen flying W at five coastal sites on 16 Sept (the same date as last year), with a maximum of 24 at Selsey Bill. Although 600 birds were back in Chichester Hbr by 29 Sept, return passage was light until 7 Nov when a big westerly movement was recorded all along the coast. There were 400 past Pett Level, 1566 past Brighton Marina, 1431 past Worthing, 2000 over Pagham Hbr and 1252 past Selsey Bill. Curiously, following a flock of 150SW over Barcombe on 16 Oct last year, another flock (this time 200) was recorded flying in the same direction over the same site, but a day earlier.

There were more records than usual for sites away from the western harbours in the latter part of the year. These included 11 at Newhaven Tide Mills and ten at Cuckmere Haven on 3 Dec, ten at Pett Level on 16 Dec, ten at Scotney Court GPs and eight feeding on winter wheat at Goring Gap on 27 Dec, and five at Rye Hbr on 29 Nov. Inland, there were up to two on Henfield Levels in December and two at Pulborough Brooks on 21 Dec.

A melanistic bird was noted at Thorney Deeps on 31 Dec. [AHO]

0168.01 PALE-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE

Branta bernicla hrota

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Singles, perhaps the same bird, were recorded at West Wittering on 13 Jan, in fields behind the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 10 Feb and 2 Mar and at Pilsey Island on 6 Mar. One flew E past Brighton Marina with Dark-bellied Brents on 2 Apr.

Single birds were seen at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 13-14 Dec, with two there (an adult and a juvenile) on 28th. An exceptional flock of 14 birds (including nine or ten juveniles) seen flying W past Brighton Marina (KBG, IJW) and then in Shoreham Hbr on 31 Dec (mo) was the largest in the county since January 1982, when 17 were recorded at Pett Level. [AHO]

0168.02 BLACK BRANT

Branta bernicla nigricans

Very rare winter visitor.

An adult with Dark-bellied Brent Geese at East Head, West Wittering from 17 to 22 Jan (BFF, DIS, EDU *et al*) had probably been present since 13th. It was reported by CBC to be a different bird to that present at Pilsey Island from 8 Oct to 4 Nov 1999; it seems likely, however, that it was the same as the bird seen at West Wittering in Jan-Feb 1999. It has been accepted by *British Birds*. [PJ]

0170. EGYPTIAN GOOSE

Alopochon aegyptiacus

A rare visitor from introduced populations elsewhere in Britain, more commonly recorded as an escape. Bred for the first time in 2000.

The flock of ten birds recorded on Steyning Levels on 31 Dec 1999 was still present on 1 Jan, eight were seen on nearby Henfield Levels the following day, and one there on 8 Jan. One on Willingdon Levels on 19 Feb was the only record for East Sussex during the year.

The most significant occurrence was of a family party of two adults and four well grown young beside the R. Adur at Shipley from 14 May to 14 June at least (BDJ, PJ *et al*). This is the first time that the species has bred in Sussex.

The only record for the latter part of the year was of two on Henfield Levels on 11 Nov. [AHO]

0171. **RUDDY SHELDUCK**

Tadorna ferruginea

Rare vagrant, the vast majority of records since 1940 are likely to be of suspect origin.

The only record during the year was of two (a male and female/juvenile) W off Bexhill on 24 Aug. While small groups on the move in autumn have a better feel to them than long staying singletons, their exact origin remains unresolved. There is evidence that some autumn records, involving small groups, may be the result of overshooting moult migrations which almost certainly do not originate from W Europe (Vinicombe & Harrop 1999) although the species is currently on Category B of the British List (recorded in an apparently wild state prior to 1950 but not since). [RJF]

0173. **SHELDUCK**

Tadorna tadorna

Scarce breeder and fairly common winter visitor.

The monthly *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1314	1276	890	461	408	300	115	65	46	68	306	620
Chichester Hbr	1040	919	563	180	110	134	9	8	10	27	163	305
Pagham Hbr	153	227	182	155	133	95	49	7		4	84	179
Chichester GPs	2	2	3	2	1	3	-	-	3	-	-	nc
Arundel WWT	42	77	46	22	54	12	26	31	5	19	12	37
Pett Level	53	-	30	22	22	-	-	-	2	9	-	24
Rye Hbr	21	8	9	20	21	43	19	13	-	11	22	29
Scotney Court GPs	-	7	32	31	59	6	8	6	18	5	4	-

There was a welcome increase in numbers in the first winter period, but the totals for November and December were even lower than the previous year's lows. Additional counts to those in the *WeBS*' table included 16 at the Cuckmere Haven in March and a further 23 at other sites in the Arun Valley in April. There were no noteworthy counts away from *WeBS*' sites, though one to five birds were seen at a wide variety of sites throughout the county, for example; three at Burton MP on 26 Jan, three at Bewl Water on 8 Mar, and four at Partridge Green SF on 25 April.

The monthly totals at the main 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	-	3	-	-	5	3	46	6	28	15	-	36	11	9
Worthing Beach	-	-	-	5	-	10	49	42	10	14	-	28	-	34
Brighton Marina	11	13	2	6	23	10	134	38	48	21	1	29	23	151
Splash Point, Seaford	1	3	-	5	20	1	102	4	68	22	-	-	16	7
Bexhill/Hastings	-	13	4	-	14	11	14	-	2	-	2	4	-	-

Breeding was confirmed at a number of sites across the county. There were at least five broods in Chichester Hbr; a similar number in Pagham Hbr (with a nursery of 48 youngsters on Sidlesham Ferry on 27 June); a brood of ten at Coldwaltham Brooks; broods of 13 and eight at nearby Pulborough Brooks on 1 June; six pairs with seven young at Cuckmere Haven on 9 June; at least three pairs at Rye Hbr, one of which fledged up to nine young; and three pairs with nine young at The Midrips on 1 July. Visits to the latter

site between April and June located a total of 25 pairs in the area. A pair was also present well inland at Kilsham Fm, near Petworth.

There were typically few late summer records. Peaks of ten at Sidlesham Ferry on 1 Aug and 13 at Rye Hbr on 20th were virtually the only records until mid-September, when there were 2W past Worthing on 16th and 5W past Selsey Bill on 18th. Numbers remained very low throughout the autumn, with the first significant counts not coming until the November *WeBS*'.

A scattering of records away from usual sites was received for December. These included five on Steyning Levels on 9th, 14 at Widewater, Lancing on 17th, 32W at Climping on 21st, 30 at Charleston Reedbed on 28th, and five at Arlington Res on 30th. [AHO]

0178. **MANDARIN**

Aix galericulata

Scarce but increasing introduced resident.

Records came from some 32 sites, two-thirds being in West Sussex. In January, there were six at North Cocking on 9th but the largest concentration was 34 at Arundel WWT on 17th. A female was seen at Sidlesham Ferry on 4 and 22 Jan, with a male there on 5 Feb. Presumably the same female was noted at Pagham Lagoon on 31 Jan.

Reports came from 25 localities in the breeding season, but breeding was proven at only eight: Weir Wood Res (ten juveniles on 10 May); Arundel Mill Stream (pair with six young on 13 May); Ardingly Res (two broods on 23 May); Holtye (two pairs with nine young on 30 May); Amberley Wild Brooks (two pairs with eight young on 1 June); Pulborough Brooks (pair with five young on 1 June and a duck with four young on 8 July); Bayham (two pairs with five young on 16 June); and Heathfield (a duck with five young on 10 July).

At Arundel WWT, there were counts of 23 on 25 June, 27 on 3 Aug, and 31 on 18 Dec. At Darwell Res, there were 12 on 17 Sept, a surprising 46 on 19 Oct, and 12, including a lot of splashing and calling from two apparent pairs, on 17 Dec. [DECG]

0179. **WIGEON**

Anas penelope

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>	8582	8450	3264	389	11	7	10	3	1379	3599	5291	10984
Chichester Hbr	1706	753	451	189	7	1	1	-	171	576	492	677
Pagham Hbr	1107	1127	366	102	2	-	2	-	279	694	1015	1968
Amberley Wild Brooks	632	2590	195	-	-	-	-	-	27	377	788	4135
Pulborough Brooks	2086	1004	421	14	-	-	1	-	117	765	1576	922
Glynde Levels	9	16	8	-	-	2	1	2	-	130	-	15
Cuckmere Haven	560	392	423	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	636	112	86	1650
Pevensey Levels	124	91	255	36	nc	nc	nc	nc	16	458	220	280
Bowl Water	486	236	117	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	60	136	260	242
Rye Hbr	673	151	370	3	-	-	-	-	33	30	262	241
Scotney Court GPs	580	968	487	26	2	4	5	-	3	135	110	139

Last year, the monthly totals for the winter periods were considered very high but in 2000 they were exceeded, particularly in March, September and October. Notable counts during the first winter period, but not included in the table above, were 200 at Arlington Res and 486 at Bewl Water, both on 16 Jan, 1600 in Pagham Hbr on 23 Jan and 500 in the lower Cuckmere Valley on 27 Jan. It is apparent that some inland sites mentioned in *Birds of Sussex*, notably Glynde Levels, Arlington Res and Bewl Water, have become less favoured as the Arun Valley has gained in importance.

Spring passage up-Channel was again fairly light but showed an improvement on last year's very low figures, as shown by the monthly totals for the main sea-watching sites:

Direction of movement	Mar		Apr		May	
	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	10	-	-	2	-	-
Brighton Marina	95	-	41	-	-	-
Splash Point, Seaford	96	-	-	-	-	-
Bexhill/Hastings	-	-	1	-	-	-

There was a single injured drake at Bewl Water on 12 May and a pair at Sidlesham Ferry on 7 and 17-18 May.

Returning birds were very early. A single on the Breech Pool, Pagham Hbr on 4 July might have been suspect but for 11 seen at Pett Level Pools on 8th, three at Weir Wood Res on 11th and nine at Pagham Hbr on 14th. Additional to the *WeBS*' counts at the end of the year were 250 at Beeding Brooks and 260 at Bewl Water, both on 19 Nov, 350 at Lewes Brooks on 1 Dec, 300 at Partridge Green SF on 3rd and 500 at Greatham Bridge on 26th. Coastal movements were light, the highest count being 229W and 13E at Brighton Marina on 20 Dec. Finally, there were 650 at Bewl Water during a cold spell on 31 Dec. [DEGC]

0182. GADWALL

Anas strepera

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

The *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	685	567	428	60	42	42	52	38	300	368	397	342
Chichester Hbr	30	23	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	1	10	8
Pagham Hbr	14	12	2	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chichester GPs	258	289	116	-	-	-	-	-	21	62	103	63
Chingford Pond	-	-	10	6	2	4	-	2	22	-	-	-
Swanbourne Lake	16	16	14	10	nc	nc	Nc	nc	116	4	16	12
Arundel WWT	22	29	151	13	11	28	15	19	19	19	48	53
Amberley Wild Brooks	5	23	7	4	5	2	22	1	-	3	-	-
Glynde Levels	4	8	13	2	2	2	9	2	1	8	6	-
Eastbourne Lakes	52	34	17	nc	nc	nc	Nc	nc	6	23	56	71
Pevensey Levels	nc	nc	76	4	4	nc	Nc	nc	-	nc	nc	nc
Bewl Water	139	95	2	nc	nc	nc	Nc	8	64	100	80	40
Darwell Res	46	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	31	21
Pett Level	16	14	12	9	10	5	-	3	-	61	9	-
Rye Hbr	57	9	1	4	4	1	6	3	44	66	26	53

Especially noteworthy were the very high monthly totals in January-March and September-October and the exceptional counts early in the year at Chichester GPs.

Significant counts not included in the table were 100 at Swanbourne Lake on 22 Jan and 79 at Castle Water, Rye Hbr on 29 Dec.

Passage up-Channel in spring was typically very light with no repeat of the exceptional numbers recorded in 1999. The monthly totals for the main sea-watching sites were as follows:

Direction of movement	Mar		Apr		May		June	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	2	-	2	2	-	-	-	-
Worthing Beach	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brighton Marina	5	-	4	-	1	-	-	-
Splash Point, Seaford	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-
Bexhill/Hastings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Although reported from 18 widely scattered sites during the breeding season (five of which were in the Arun Valley), breeding was confirmed only at Pett Level and Rye Hbr.

Small numbers were noted passing up-Channel in December. At Brighton Marina, for example, a total of 17 flew E between 17th and 26th. In Rye Bay there were 18E in 1 hr on 25th. [PJ]

0184. **TEAL**

Anas crecca

Scarce resident and common winter visitor and passage migrant.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	4264	3350	1129	543	31	10	58	154	1638	2082	4008	6584
Chichester Hbr	1444	752	314	97	3	-	6	22	224	476	705	773
Pagham Hbr	812	451	110	110	2	-	9	13	492	268	313	1010
Chichester GPs	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	12	nc
Chingford Pond	12	2	20	16	-	1	2	16	54	1	-	1
Arundel WWT	155	18	13	4	-	3	11	13	52	49	25	2
Amberley Wild Brooks	209	150	81	37	19	1	-	-	155	165	576	2765
Waltham Brooks	178	113	96	38	-	-	-	12	27	32	138	103
Pulborough Brooks	492	942	145	171	4	1	12	45	317	256	1519	1386
Pevensey Levels	147	240	136	32	nc	nc	nc	nc	10	500	403	120
Darwell Res	6	31	2	2	-	-	-	-	52	105	6	1
Pett Level	307	225	38	10	2	-	-	15	6	83	51	-
Rye Hbr	82	31	37	8	1	1	18	11	95	89	107	124

The counts for the Arun Valley again illustrate the importance of this area for Teal, with some 65% of the *WeBS*' total for December recorded between Amberley and Pulborough. Significant counts for the early part of the year not shown above included 105 at Henfield Levels on 2 Jan, 62 at Partridge Green SF on 12 Feb and a maximum winter count of 120 at Combe Haven on 15th.

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

Direction of movement	Mar		Apr		May	
	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	19	-	-	-	-	-
Worthing Beach	-	-	7	-	-	-
Brighton Marina	79	-	48	-	7	-
Splash Point, Seaford	37	-	30	-	-	-
Bexhill/Hastings	-	-	-	-	-	-

The only significant movements occurred on 24 Mar (32E at Brighton Marina and 17E at Seaford) and 8 Apr (21E at Brighton Marina and 23E at Seaford).

There were a number of records for the summer months though breeding was only confirmed at Pulborough Brooks where five pairs fledged a total of 23 young. Single pairs were recorded at Combe Haven, Pett Level and Sidlesham Ferry in mid-May and at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr in early June. Elsewhere, there was a male at Pagham Hbr North Wall on 1 May and two at Kilsham Fm, Petworth and Chichester GPs on 25 May and 12 June respectively.

Numbers did not build up until mid-August with 19 at Rye Hbr on 17th, increasing to 52 on 24th. Other counts for the latter part of the year not shown in the table included an exceptional 1000 at Lewes Brooks on 1 and 17 Dec, 200 at Pevensey Bridge Level on 29 Dec and 209 at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr on 30th. [PJ]

0184.01 GREEN-WINGED TEAL

Anas carolinensis

Very rare vagrant

An adult male was present at Snowhill Marsh, West Wittering from at least 7 to 24 Apr (BFF, ARK, DIS *et al*) while another was seen at Pulborough Brooks from 19 Apr to 4 May (JC, JFO'D, PJ *et al*). A male was found at Pevensey Bridge Level on 29 Dec (ITB, ADW, IJW) but the area had frozen by the next morning and it was not seen subsequently. These three are the first records since 1995 and take the county total to seven. Previous records have been between 26 January and 2 May. This form has recently been elevated from a race of Teal *Anas crecca* to a full species (Sangster *et al* 2001). [RJF]

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	3633	2475	1789	871	916	1364	1568	2832	4691	4041	3512	3791
Chichester Hbr	302	136	134	43	41	83	81	97	377	323	327	289
Pagham Hbr	182	136	115	102	65	170	266	237	283	230	243	252
Chichester GPs	147	178	137	2	15	32	36	40	57	126	173	102
Chingford Pond	4	3	4	4	11	21	53	190	2	2	10	12
Swanbourne Lake	180	100	100	150	nc	nc	nc	nc	80	100	80	100
Arundel WWT	496	451	418	174	373	452	326	476	582	456	297	246
Amberley Wild Brooks	62	74	52	62	51	39	29	26	251	168	201	105
Pulborough Brooks	66	138	15	37	49	23	135	76	203	155	456	456

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Brooklands, Worthing	55	57	27	21	23	46	80	126	85	70	77	61
Glynde Levels	181	107	87	34	25	87	93	190	200	222	116	150
Eastbourne Lakes	133	118	60	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	159	193	157	252
Bewl Water	574	233	150	nc	nc	nc	nc	530	648	556	300	486
Alexandra Park	176	142	117	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	182	187	133	152
Pett Level	32	27	37	30	27	30	105	124	277	95	84	18
Rye Hbr	97	48	33	42	49	69	166	305	286	199	75	188
Scotney Court GPs	27	46	27	19	39	85	51	188	108	69	85	139

Counts of breeding pairs in defined areas are shown on page 171. A slight increase was apparent at Bewl Water, where there were an estimated 100 pairs; 29 broods totalling 169 young were seen. A total of 52 pairs fledged just 27 young at Amberley Wild Brooks while 27 pairs at Pulborough Brooks fledged 161 young.

Post-breeding numbers at Bewl Water included 530 on 20 Aug, 648 on 17 Sept and 556 on 22 Oct. Elsewhere, there were 416 at Rye Hbr on 22 Aug. [PJ]

0189. PINTAIL

Anas acuta

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

The monthly *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	823	484	85	4	6	1	1	3	78	110	463	1094
Chichester Hbr	268	192	54	1	1	1	1	-	24	-	37	4
Pagham Hbr	429	222	29	3	1	-	-	-	43	27	56	340
Amberley Wild Brooks	-	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	53	460
Pulborough Brooks	114	26	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	82	313	265
Barcombe Res	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	1	-	-

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

Direction of movement	Mar		Apr		May	
	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	-	-	1	-	-	-
Worthing Beach	4	-	5	-	-	-
Brighton Marina	7	-	2	-	-	-
Splash Point, Seaford	4	-	2	-	5	-
Bexhill/Hastings	-	-	-	-	-	-

Two females were recorded at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr from 26 Apr to 12 May, one remaining until late July. Another female remained at Pett Level throughout May and an injured female summered at Thorney Deeps.

The first returning birds were a male at Pagham Hbr on 8 Aug and three at Rye Hbr from 11th. Numbers were slow to build up thereafter, with the October *WeBS*' count for Pagham Hbr well down on the 367 recorded there in Oct 1999.

A number of coastal movements in December included 19W at Worthing on 10th, 10E at Selsey Bill on 19th, and 16E at Brighton Marina on 20th. [PJ]

0191. **GARGANEY***Anas querquedula***Scarce passage migrant and rare summer visitor.**

A good year with about 67 reported. The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
16	18	18	3	1	6	7

The first for the year comprised a smart flock of six males and a female on the sea 20m offshore at Southwick Beach and 1E at Brighton Marina on 16 Mar. Thereafter in March, there were two males at Rye Hbr on 20th (one of which stayed to the end of the month) and a female there on 25th; 2W at Bexhill on 22nd; 2E at Brighton Marina on both 23rd and 24th; a male at Pevensey Bridge Level on 25th; and a male at Combe Haven on 26th, which remained until 29 May. April started with a male at Pevensey Bridge Level on 1st; then 2E off Seaford on 7th; 8E off Newhaven Hbr on 8th; and 1E off Seaford and 1NE at Rye Hbr on 9th. A male was at Pulborough Brooks on 13th and 18th. The month ended with 1E off both Brighton and Newhaven Hbr on 23rd and one at Pett Level on 25th. During May, up to two males and a female were seen on seven dates at Pett Level, with a male still there on 9 June. A single was at Pulborough Brooks on 3rd and a well-watched male at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr from 5th to 9th and presumably the same on 13th. Also in May, a pair and a male were at Rye Hbr on 5th, the latter at Castle Water. Singles (mainly males) were at Pett and Glynde Levels on 7th; Pevensey Bridge Level on 11th and 13th; Thorney Deeps on 12th; and Shinewater Marsh, Eastbourne on 13th. On the last date, a pair flew E off Worthing at 06.35 BST and, presumably the same, were seen off Seaford, 50 minutes later. A pair was present at Castle Water, Rye Hbr from 13 May through to mid-June and breeding thought likely.

Return passage commenced with one at Combe Haven on 30 July. Up to two were present at Pett Level during the period 2-27 Aug and a female was at Combe Haven on 13th. Singles were present at Rye Hbr on 7, 23 and 25 Aug with three there (at Carter's Pit) on 31st. In September, one was at Rye Hbr on 2nd, two were there on 16th, one was at Pagham Hbr on 12th, and a pair was at Pebsham Pond on 14th. An interesting record was of two that paused briefly on the shoreline at Worthing on 16th, before continuing W. The last of the year was one at Pett Level on 18 Sept. [SHL]

0194. **SHOVELER***Anas clypeata***Very scarce resident and fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.**

The monthly *WeBS*' counts, which show record totals for February and December, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	301	419	255	83	19	-	16	21	116	239	423	633
Pagham Hbr	6	2	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	2	4	7
Chichester GPs	86	112	30	1	-	-	-	-	23	12	46	31
Petworth Park	20	19	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-
Arundel WWT	10	2	12	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	24
Amberley Wild Brooks	-	28	-	3	3	-	-	-	2	5	10	255
Pulborough Brooks	49	81	56	16	-	-	-	-	15	41	150	104
Glynde Levels	17	20	33	7	-	-	-	4	3	5	-	-
Arlington Res	-	25	15	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Eastbourne Lakes	62	21	37	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	29	146	172

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pevensey Levels	nc	5	16	10	1	nc	nc	nc	-	15	3	nc
Bewl Water	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	14	2	1	-
Pett Level	29	54	31	14	5	-	4	7	2	8	-	-
Rye Hbr	11	24	20	17	2	-	12	7	51	120	42	9
Scotney Court GPs	-	-	-	3	4	-	-	3	-	-	-	2

Spring passage was much lighter than in 1999 as shown by the monthly totals for the main sea-watching localities:

Direction of movement	Feb		Mar		Apr		May	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	-	-	10	1	-	-	-	-
Worthing	-	-	3	-	6	-	-	-
Brighton Marina	-	-	74	2	26	2	-	-
Splash Point, Seaford	5	-	44	-	17	-	4	1
Bexhill/Hastings	-	-	4	-	6	-	-	-

The largest movement was on 22 Mar when there were 28E at Brighton Marina.

At least one pair bred at Pett Level. Other breeding season records included two pairs at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr on 8 June, single pairs at Pulborough Brooks on 4 May, Coldwaltham Brooks on 23 May and Glynde Levels on 6 June, two males and a female at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 28 May, two males at Sidlesham Ferry on 8-9 May, and a single male at Kilsham Fm, near Petworth on 25 May.

Returning birds were noted from early July, with 12 at Rye Hbr on 23rd increasing to 24 on 31st and 44 on 8 Aug. Significant counts for the remainder of the year not shown in the table included 29 at Pett Level on 30 Sept, 32 there on 12 Oct, and 110 at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr on 14 Dec. A number of small coastal movements were noted in December with a peak of 40E at Climping on 24th. [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 nine was recorded as follows: a male at Chichester GPs, first seen on 20 Dec 1999, on 1 Jan and 13 Feb; a female at Kneppmill Pond from 8 Jan to 26 Feb (its third consecutive winter); one at Warnham MP on 14 Jan; a male at Darwell Res on 16 Jan; three females at Bewl Water on 29 Apr and a female there on 17 Sept; and a female at Pulborough Brooks from 8-14 Dec. [PJ]

0198. POCHARD

Aythya ferina

Rare breeder and fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.

The *WeBS*' counts, which again show higher than average numbers in both winter periods, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1088	1292	298	60	18	16	50	38	164	564	969	1167
Chichester Hbr	2	8	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	4	10	-
Chichester GPs	205	256	129	-	-	2	4	3	32	108	192	229

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Swanbourne Lake	120	120	18	30	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	18	30	24
Arundel WWT	249	400	59	22	14	4	19	11	21	67	113	134
Amberley Wild Brooks	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	148
Pulborough Brooks	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22	147	106
Weir Wood Res	40	9	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	nc	3	1
Barcombe Res	39	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	94	64
Glynde Levels	3	6	7	-	-	-	-	-	12	37	24	21
Eastbourne Lakes	24	25	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	38	34	39
Bewl Water	15	33	21	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	3	12	50	50
Pett Level	2	18	7	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	2	-
Rye Hbr	143	138	7	2	1	-	5	-	38	191	90	164
Scotney Court GPs	116	169	29	5	2	9	18	19	44	26	132	116

Significant counts not in the table included 80 at Kneppmill Pond on 8 Jan and 45 at Brooklands, Worthing on 31 Dec.

Although birds were seen at Brooklands, Chichester GPs, Pett Level, Pulborough Brooks, Rye Hbr, Swanbourne Lake and Thorney Deepes during May-June, the only confirmation of breeding was again at Swanbourne Lake where two ducklings accompanied a female on 13 May. Another pair and two lone males were also present suggesting four pairs at this site.

Extensive flooding late in the year attracted record numbers to both Glynde Levels and Pulborough Brooks, as shown in the table.

A few records of coastal movements were received; a modest 6W at Brighton Marina on 28 Nov was the largest. [PJ]

0200. RING-NECKED DUCK

Aythya collaris

Very rare vagrant.

An adult male at Barcombe Res on 20 Dec (PJW) was presumably that seen at Arlington Res on 29th (IJW *et al*). It returned to Barcombe on 30th where it remained into 2001 (JSG, RTP *et al*). Although this is the fifth to be recorded in the county, the possibility remains that some or all records relate to escapes from captivity. Previous records have been in March (1996), April (1998), May-June (1997) and December (1982), the May-June bird perhaps being the most suspect. [RJF]

0202. FERRUGINOUS DUCK

Aythya nyroca

Rare vagrant.

A first-winter male present at Rye Hbr from 26 Nov into 2001 (PMT *et al*) has been accepted by *British Birds*. It was present on New Narrow Pit although when that pit froze towards the end of December it moved onto the mostly unfrozen Long Pit. It was the first county record since January 1993 and only the sixth since 1982, although at least eight were recorded during 1976-81. Occurrences in Britain appear to reflect a decline and this species was, from January 1998 and after an absence of just under 30 years, reinstated to the list of those for which all records are considered by the *British Birds Rarities Committee*. [RJF]

0203. TUFTED DUCK

Aythya fuligula

Scarce breeding species and fairly common winter visitor.

The monthly *WeBS*' counts, which show above average monthly totals for both winter periods and a record total for December, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	1121	1115	771	322	263	183	275	393	484	811	1166	1247
Chichester GPs	369	437	258	8	-	5	3	7	92	185	297	284
Forest Mere	2	-	-	23	4	4	-	nc	3	-	4	-
Chingford Pond	6	12	3	8	17	2	5	16	15	2	-	1
Swanbourne Lake	140	100	75	36	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	100	60	50
Arundel WWT	79	113	17	18	63	33	22	18	43	65	190	184
Glynde Levels	4	34	26	37	28	16	20	8	36	24	6	17
Eastbourne Lakes	68	73	89	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	18	44	50	86
Bewl Water	38	60	14	nc	nc	nc	nc	108	120	109	200	128
Powdermill Res	6	6	1	-	-	3	5	27	14	10	-	-
Pett Level	1	7	34	19	21	1	8	16	6	3	2	-
Rye Hbr	168	144	122	94	58	28	41	35	49	138	164	205
Scotney Court GPs	24	25	28	32	43	76	157	128	16	39	39	20

The usual scattering of records for the summer months was received with breeding confirmed at 11 sites. Breeding success was, however, variable. At least four broods were seen at Pett Level, where about ten pairs bred, while at Bewl Water there were three broods totalling 24 young from seven pairs. Two pairs at Earnley Grange were seen with 18 ducklings, and 12 ducklings accompanied a pair in Sheffield Forest. Broods of seven and five were noted at Wiston Pond and four and one at Pett Level Pools. Ten pairs were recorded at Shinewater Lake, Eastbourne on 7 June.

The extensive flooding late in the year attracted small numbers of birds to sites where the species is not usually recorded, for example 20 at Pulborough Brooks on 14 Nov and Coldwaltham Brooks on 2 Dec and 50 at Greatham Bridge on 26 Dec.

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

0204. SCAUP

Aythya marila

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; rare in summer.

The estimated monthly totals and counts at each site where birds were recorded were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Monthly total</i>	17	10	9	-	1	1	2	7	20
Pilsey Island	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Thorney Island	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
Selsey Bill	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4*	3*
Pagham Hbr	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Chichester GPs	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Greatham Bridge	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Pulborough Brooks	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Brighton Marina	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1*	-
Newhaven Hbr	-	-	-	-	1*	-	-	-	-
Bexhill/Hastings	5*	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 (1*)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pett Level	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1
Rye Bay	8*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6*
Rye Hbr	1	1	8	-	-	-	-	-	5
Scotney Court GPs	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Birds seen offshore are marked in the table by an asterisk. About 37 were seen during the first part of the year. The last of these was 1E at Newhaven Hbr on 13 May. The first of some 27 during the latter part of the year was a female at Thorney Deeps on the early date of 23 Sept. A total of 60 for the year is a little above the average for a year with few cold winter spells. [SHL]

0206. EIDER

Somateria mollissima

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

Continued low numbers, perhaps due to milder winters, are reflected in the *WeBS*' counts below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	40	26	25	28	21	25	24	24	13	5	8	15
Chichester Hbr	14	20	23	25	21	25	24	24	13	5	3	6
Pagham Hbr	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	9
Pett Level	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	3	1	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Significant winter flocks not shown in the *WeBS*' table included 65 in Rye Bay on 22 Jan, 80 off Bexhill on 16 Jan and totals of 66E past Worthing and 50E and 18W past Selsey Bill on 5 Nov.

Spring passage was particularly light, with no large movements up-Channel, as shown by the monthly totals for the main sea-watching localities:

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May		June		Sept		Oct		Nov		Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	2	7	-	-	6	9	24	-	-	-	4	-	6	-	4	2	64	24	9	15
Worthing Beach	-	1	-	-	-	9	14	8	8	-	4	-	30	-	5	-	66	-	-	3
Brighton Marina	46	28	20	6	45	9	35	-	8	-	-	-	-	9	1	8	6	36	19	-
Splash Point, Seaford	3	17	-	-	13	-	29	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	-
Bexhill/Hastings	1	23	-	7	1	5	5	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Summering non-breeders included a long-staying immature male at Selsey Bill from 21 Apr to 27 Oct and up to 25 in Chichester Hbr from 5 May to mid-September.

There were no inland records. [RP]

0212. LONG-TAILED DUCK

Clangula hyemalis

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

The year began with the unusual sight of one of these sea ducks on the floods at Amberley Wild Brooks on 2 Jan, Pulborough Brooks on 7 Jan and, finally, at Greatham Bridge on 8-9 Jan. Another popular inland bird was a long-staying female which frequented the Chichester GPs complex from 14 Jan to 30 Mar. Singles off Bexhill on 8

and 16 Jan and at Pagham Hbr on 1 Feb were the only coastal records in the first winter period.

Spring passage was modest, comprising seven records totalling ten birds. Singles flew W at Selsey Bill on 4 Mar and E at Splash Point, Seaford on 1 and 17 Apr and Brighton Marina on 20 Apr. There were also 3E at the latter site on 10 Mar and 2E past Worthing with Brent Geese on 22 Mar. Singles were recorded off Church Norton on 11 Mar and in Chichester Hbr on 26 Mar and 6 Apr.

There were only three records later in the year: 1W at Selsey Bill on 1 Nov, a very obliging adult male on Pagham Lagoon from 1 to 15 Nov, and a (perhaps returning) female at Chichester GPs from 15 to 29 Dec. [RP]

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
<i>County total</i>	4	59	30	-	-	-	-	1	-	22	72	140
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-
Pett Level	3	59	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	-	115
Rye Hbr	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	70	25

Records for January and February were generally of flocks of less than 20, with the exception of 80 in Rye Bay on 2 Jan, up to 81 off Bexhill in January and 59 in February, and 50E past Saltdean on 20 Feb.

Spring passage was heavier than in 1998 and 1999 though the totals recorded were still below the county averages from the past 25 years. Monthly totals for the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Total	Peak day
Selsey Bill	171	923	631	1725	30 Apr (233 in 9hrs)
Worthing Beach	49	1273	377	1699	30 Apr (260 in 10hrs)
Brighton Marina	774	5313	2159	8236	7 Apr (1200 in 12hrs)
Splash Point, Seaford	1298	4698	1610	7606	7 Apr (1283 in 3hrs)
Bexhill/Hastings	31	514	162	637	2 Apr (271 in 4.5hrs)

Some up-Channel movement continued until mid-June, but thereafter sightings were of non-breeders summering in the Channel or moving W, for example 119W and 21E past Selsey Bill on 25 July.

The autumn and second winter period saw no significant movements, the wintering flocks in Rye Bay and off Bexhill being similar to those in the first winter period. The highest count was 115 in Rye Bay off Pett on 16 Dec.

The only inland record was of a male flying up the R. Arun towards Arundel on 23 May. [RP]

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	Nov	Dec
19	8	17	68	12	5	2

With the exception of four off Southwick Beach on 30 Jan, all the records for January-February were for the east of the county, a party of 13 in Rye Bay off Pett on 20 and 23 Jan being the only flock of note.

Spring sea-watching was quieter than in recent years, producing the following monthly totals:

Direction of movement	Mar		Apr		May	
	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	-	-	19	-	-	-
Worthing	-	-	6	2	2	-
Brighton Marina	3	-	33	1	10	10
Splash Point, Seaford	-	-	20	-	-	-
Bexhill/Hastings	22	-	11	-	-	-

The best day total was 22E past Bexhill on 23 Mar, followed by 13E at Brighton Marina on 27 Apr and 10W then E there on 6 May. The last noted in spring were 2E at both Worthing and Newhaven on 7 May. There were no further records until 6 Nov when two flew W at Selsey Bill. The only other sightings during the remainder of the year were of 2W in Rye Bay on 13 Nov, 1W off Church Norton on 26 Nov and 2E at Splash Point, Seaford on 20 Dec. [RP]

0218. **GOLDENEYE***Bucephala clangula***Fairly common winter visitor; very rare in summer.**

The monthly *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	75	55	6	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	8	31
Chichester Hbr	48	38	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Pagham Hbr	8	7	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
Chichester GPs	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	2
Arundel WWT	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barcombe Res	4	7	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Eastbourne Lakes	1	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	1	nc	nc
Rye Hbr	2	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	8

Additional to the *WeBS*' data were maximum counts of eight at Barcombe Res on 6 Jan and 14 in Pagham Hbr on 18 Jan. Birds seen offshore were restricted to singles at Bexhill on 16 Jan and flying W at Splash Point, Seaford on 12 Feb. One was recorded at Burton MP on 26 Jan and 2 Apr; the only other April record was of a lingering male at the Long Pit, Rye Hbr until 17th.

Spring passage was very light, the only record being of 3E past Selsey Bill and Seaford on 22 Mar.

The first record in the second winter period was not until 22 Oct when there were singles at Shinewater Lake and Rye Hbr. Significant counts for Chichester Hbr not shown in the table above included 44 at Thorney on 14 Nov, 70 there on 15 Dec and 38 at Dell Quay on 18 Dec. Little offshore movement was detected, over 110hrs of sea-watching at Brighton Marina in December producing totals for the month of just 3E and 2W.

The flooding in November resulted in some interesting sightings such as singles at Pulborough Brooks on 11th, Henfield Levels on 25-26th, and two at Greatham Bridge on 30th. [RP]

0220. **SMEW**

Mergellus albellus

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

An unexceptional year. The estimated monthly totals and maxima at each site where birds were recorded were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Dec
<i>Monthly total</i>	16	15	12	10
Chichester GPs	2	2	2	2
Weir Wood Res	1	-	-	-
Arlington Res	-	-	-	1
Rye Hbr	2	3	3	1
Northpoint Pit, Rye	8	7	7	2
Scotney Court GPs	3	3	-	4

Although there is the possibility that some of the birds at Northpoint Pit and Rye Hbr were the same, it seems not unreasonable to sum the site counts to give the monthly totals. Approximately 18 birds were present in the county during the first part of the year with the last being three at Rye Hbr on 12 Mar. Approximately ten were present in December with the first arriving, also at Rye Hbr, on 3rd. Of the 28 recorded, the ratio of adult males to redheads was approximately 1:3. [SHL]

0221. **RED-BREASTED MERGANSER**

Mergus serrator

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

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>	85	216	239	36	4	1	-	-	-	2	89	115
Chichester Hbr	50	139	137	20	4	1	-	-	-	2	71	87
Pagham Hbr	19	77	90	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	28
Goring Gap	15	-	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-

Other than the *WeBS*' counts, the largest concentrations in the first winter period were off Worthing Beach, where numbers rose from 92 on 15 Jan to 146 on 23 Feb and then to an impressive 213 on 12 Mar. By contrast, totals in East Sussex were very low.

The monthly totals for 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
Worthing Beach	-	17	40	58	119	-	274	13	18	2	1	6	2	103	5	11
Selsey Bill	47	99	62	102	121	11	131	13	17	-	3	63	63	366	211	87
Brighton Marina	20	22	19	27	74	15	348	24	21	2	1	13	10	107	16	46
Splash Point, Seaford	-	-	-	-	38	-	432	7	32	-	-	-	-	3	3	7
Bexhill/Hastings	-	3	-	-	4	2	37	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

The largest movements were on 1 Apr with 149E past Worthing in 5.5hrs and 92E past Seaford in 6hrs and 7 Apr when 75 flew E at Brighton Marina in 12.5hrs.

One was recorded in Chichester Hbr on 25 June but there were no further records until 4 Oct, when the first returning migrant flew W at Selsey Bill.

The largest gatherings in the second winter period were offshore at Worthing and Climping. Counts at the former site included 45 on 16 Dec, 56 on 17th, 200 on 25-27th, 120 on 30th and 54 on 31st. At Climping, there were 103 on 27 Dec. Coastal movements at Selsey Bill included 62W and 50E on 23 Nov and 40W and 60E on 26 Dec.

The only inland bird was at Pulborough Brooks on 28 Dec. [RP]

0223. GOOSANDER

Mergus merganser

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

A poor year with just two drakes seen and only three records not involving singles. These reports were of three on the scrape at Cuckmere Haven on 3 Jan, two drakes flying W over Filsham Reedbed on 19 Mar and four seen from Shooters Bottom, Beachy Head on 23 Apr. The estimated monthly totals and maxima at each site where birds were recorded were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	9	3	3	5	1	4
Chichester Hbr	1	-	-	-	-	-
Pagham Hbr	1	1	-	-	-	-
Greatham Bridge	-	-	-	-	-	1
Chichester GPs	-	1	-	-	1	1
Worthing Beach	-	-	1	1	-	-
Wiston Pond, Steyning	-	1	-	-	-	-
Upper Adur Valley	1	-	-	-	-	-
Lower Ouse Valley	1	-	-	-	-	-
Barcombe Res	1	-	-	-	-	1
Cuckmere Haven	3	-	-	-	-	-
Beachy Head	-	-	-	4	-	-
Filsham Reedbed	-	-	2	-	-	-
Powdermill Res	1	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	1

Singles remained in Chichester Hbr for most of January and in Pagham Hbr for much of January and February. Rather surprisingly, one, in poor condition, was seen offshore from Worthing Beach on 30 Mar and 26 and 30 Apr. The latter sighting was the last of the spring. The next was one at Chichester GPs on 19 Nov. A total of 24 for the year means that less Goosanders than Smew were seen during the year. [SHL]

0225. *Cat. C* **RUDDY DUCK***Oxyura jamaicensis***Very scarce resident and scarce winter visitor.**

Significantly larger numbers were recorded than in 1999 with birds at six sites between January and April and at an additional nine sites between September and December. The floods in the latter part of year attracted a pair to Combe Haven on 14 Oct and up four birds to Pulborough Brooks, sites where the species is not normally recorded. The monthly site counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Monthly total</i>	22	14	5	24	40	40	28	22
Chichester GPs	6	3	2	-	10	6	5	2
Arundel WWT/Swanbourne Lake	13	8	1	10	21	16	7	15
Pulborough Brooks	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	3
Wiston Pond	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Weir Wood Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Barcombe Res	3	2	-	-	-	1	-	-
Glynde Levels	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Arlington Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Eastbourne Lakes	-	-	-	-	3	5	2	-
Combe Haven	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
Bewl Water	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-
Pett Level	-	-	-	10	2	-	-	-
Pett Level Pools	-	-	1	2	-	-	1	1
Rye Hbr	-	1	1	2	3	4	5	-
Scotney Court GPs	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-

Breeding season records were received for Chichester GPs; Swanbourne Lake; Shinewater Marsh, Eastbourne; Pett Level; Pett Pools and Rye Hbr. Two pairs accompanied a total of ten young at Shinewater Marsh on 12 Aug; breeding was also confirmed at Pett Level where two broods were noted in July. Four pairs and a single female were recorded at Swanbourne Lake on 13 May. Counts of 17 at nearby Arundel WWT on 3 Aug and 21 on 17 Sept suggest that some of these also bred successfully. [PJ]

0231. **HONEY BUZZARD***Pernis apivorus***Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant; first bred in 1976 and has done so annually since 1997.**

1996: One at Shooters Bottom, Beachy Head on 30 Aug (JFC).

1998: Single birds at Beachy Head on 3 Sept (DRC, JFC) and 6 Sept (DC, JFC) were presumed to be different.

1999: A juvenile and an un-aged bird were recorded at Belle Tout, Beachy Head on 4 Sept (DC, JFC, JWK). There was also an additional confidential record for the same general area of the breeding pair (*SxBR* 52: 56).

2000: This species successfully bred in the county for the fourth consecutive year but with the usual protection afforded to rare breeding species, no further details may be revealed.

Somewhat surprisingly, there were no records relating to spring migration. On 29 May there was a wing-clapping bird seen in area suitable for breeding but the only other

summer record, additional to the breeding pair, was of an adult over Whitehawk Hill, Brighton on 27 June (IJW).

In the autumn, there was a total of six records totalling ten birds prior to the enormous influx in late September and early October, when almost 500 birds were recorded in Sussex alone, including 105 on 29 Sept, 156 on 30 Sept and 66 on 1 Oct. An adult male was seen in the East Dean/Friston area on 25 Aug (ADW, IJW) and an un-aged bird at Beachy Head on 30 Aug (NJT). Local Herring Gulls alerted the observers of an adult bird that soared slowly NNE over Hollingdean, Brighton on 7 Sept (ADW, IJW). On 10 Sept an adult male was at Beachy Head (TJW *et al*) and there were three together at Turners Hill (TJ). A juvenile observed feeding at a wasps' nest in the bank of a private lane in Fairlight on 26-27 Sept allowed the observers (JGo, JABG) to approach, in a car, to within 120cm of the bird!

A paper detailing the unprecedented autumn passage of this species in 2000 appears on pages 187. [MEK]

0238. **BLACK KITE**

Milvus migrans

Rare vagrant

One over Hollingdean, Brighton at 17.00 BST on 16 June (ADW, IJW) soared off to the NW. It is only the sixth in Sussex to be accepted by *British Birds* in the last ten years and the 19th in total. It is the first county record for June although ten have been seen in May and two in July. The others have been in April (5) and November (1). [RJF]

0239. **RED KITE**

Milvus milvus

Scarce visitor, recorded in all months.

A total of 30 records was received, relating to a probable minimum of 21 birds, a county record. The rapidly increasing breeding population in Southern England has undoubtedly contributed to the sharp rise in the number of birds seen in Sussex. In the spring, there were two areas in the west of the county where two or more adult birds were seen together and in the early autumn there were two birds together (age not specified) at a site in the east of the county. A first-year bird was also present in the general area of one of the West Sussex sites from 7 Mar to 1 May. These sightings raise the possibility of prospective breeding pairs and as such require the usual level of protection.

The monthly minima were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	2	7	5	7	1	-	-	2	1	-	-

In the early part of the year, there were singles at Beachy Head on 12 Jan and Bignor Hill on 9 Feb.

There were a number of records suggestive of a spring passage in late April and early May, with singles at Westmeston, near Ditchling on 23 Apr, West Dean Woods on 29 Apr, Henfield and Shoreham Sanctuary on 1 May, Sidlesham Ferry on 3 May and at Alciston on 7 May. In addition to the above, there were coastal migrants at Beachy Head on 11 Mar, Pagham Hbr on 18 Mar, and Pett Level on 21 May and inland sightings at Arundel WWT on 14 Mar, Mark Cross on 29 May and finally at Cissbury Ring on 8 June. The bird

at West Dean Woods was reported to have a yellow tag on the right wing while the Sidlesham bird had yellow tags on both wings.

The sole October record was of a single at Thorney Deeps on 17th.

Removing this species from the description list may well have encouraged an increase in the number of records submitted and this in turn should help to clarify the changing status of this species in the county. [MEK]

0260. MARSH HARRIER

Circus aeruginosus

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

It was an exceptional year for this species with records relating to a probable minimum of 169 different birds. In the autumn, from 23 Sept to 1 Oct, there was an unprecedented passage during which at least 50 different individuals passed through the county, with Beachy Head the principal departure point. The monthly minima were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	2	2	6	8	21	5	3	17	72	29	2	3
Chichester & Pagham Hbrs	1	1	2	-	3	1	1	5	12	4	1	-
Beachy Head	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	21	15	-	-
Combe Haven	-	1	1	3	3	-	-	3	25	2	-	-
Rye area & Pett Level	-	-	-	3	5	3	-	1	7	4	1	3

The first records of the year were of singles at Pagham Hbr and flying E over Hurst Green on 14 Jan, with a second-year male at Thorney Deeps on 25 Feb and a female at Combe Haven on 25-26 Feb. In March, one flew S over Hurst Green on 11th followed by singles at Galley Hill on 13th, Pagham Hbr on 17th, Thorney Deeps on 20th, Combe Haven on 26th and Angmering on 28th. There was a female inland at Pulborough Brooks on 11 Apr and then a significant spring passage in the first two weeks in May, involving 15 different birds. All of these records were for coastal localities, with the exception of a one at Partridge Green on 5 May.

Mid-summer records appear to be increasing and there were reports in June of single birds at Pulborough Brooks on 1st, Pett Level up to 3rd, Rye Hbr on 8th, Chichester Hbr on 20th and Scotney Court GPs on 28th. The following month there was a single at Pagham Hbr on 30 July with two immatures at Pevensy Levels on the same date. There was a minimum of 16 different birds in August, all of which were coastal except for singles at Steyning Round Hill on 4th, Cissbury on 5th, Pulborough Brooks on 11th and Chantry Hill on 23rd. A juvenile at Rye Hbr was seen on many dates between 6 and 31 Aug.

The same weather conditions that brought the autumn invasion of Honey Buzzards may well have contributed to a larger than usual passage of Marsh Harriers in September and October. The numbers recorded were exceptional with at least 70 birds passing through the county in September and a further 29 in October, including 11 at Beachy Head on 30 Sept and 13 the following day. Even before the main passage had commenced, there were probably five different birds at Beachy Head on 10 Sept, which in any other year would have been very unusual. Although large numbers passed through Beachy Head, the passage was over a broad front with many birds recorded at other coastal sites from Thorney in the west to Scotney Court GPs in the east.

Single birds were recorded at Pagham Hbr and Scotney Court GPs on 12 and 18 Nov respectively while the December records were of two at Scotney Court GPs on 30th, with one at Pett Level the same day. [MEK]

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

As usual there were a good number of records for the Rye Hbr area, Ashdown Forest, the South Downs, and the commons in the north-west of the county. There were few records for elsewhere, and for the second consecutive year very few reports for Chichester and Pagham Hbrs, especially in the early part of the year, though there were rather more in the autumn. The probable monthly minima were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	14	12	7	5	3	1	0	1	1	4	13	7
Chichester & Pagham Hbrs	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	2	-
NW Sussex Commons	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
West Sussex Downland	2	3	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	4	1
Arun Valley	1	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
East. Sussex Downland	1	2	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	2	1
Ashdown Forest	4	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Beachy Head	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pevensey Levels	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye area & Pett Level	2	2	2	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	2	1

In the first part of the year there were approximately 29 different birds. There were very few multiple sightings, but in the west of the county there were two ringtails at West Dean Woods on 8 Jan and a male and a ringtail at Ambersham Common on 14 Feb. In the east of the county there was a regular roost on Ashdown Forest which held a maximum of four birds on 8 Jan, when two adult males and two ringtails were present. In recent years this roost has been very consistently occupied but there have been surprisingly few records of birds seen hunting over the heathland itself. Elsewhere, a male and a ringtail were seen at Scotney Court GPs on 5 Feb and at Castle Water, Rye Hbr on 4 March.

There has been a recent increase in May and June records and this year there was a ringtail at Pett Level on 2 May on 2 and at Rye Hbr on 5 May, an adult male at Chichester Hbr on 16 May, a ringtail at Ashdown Forest on 25 May and a ringtail at Heyshott Down on 5 June.

In the second part of the year there were very few records before November, but a respectable total of 23 different birds seems likely. The first was a ringtail at Rye Hbr on 12 Sept. In October there were just four records: ringtails at Combe Haven and Newmarket Bottom on 10 and 13 Oct respectively, a male heading SE at Patching on 18 Oct and a ringtail at Sidlesham Ferry on 25 Oct. In November, there was a good scattering of records throughout the county though two ringtails at West Dean Woods on 30 Nov was the only record of more than one bird. There were fewer records in December, which is slightly unusual, as numbers tend to build up towards the end of the year and then peak in January. [MEK]

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

1999: A male was watched hunting for an hour over fields opposite Shooters Bottom, Beachy Head on 22 May (DC, JFC, JWK).

2000: A total of seven different birds were recorded, five in May and two in August. On 5 May, an adult female flew E at Hove (PJ) and then at Brighton Marina (KBG, IJW *et al*), with a different adult female at Newhaven West Pier (EDU *et al*). A ringtail flew over Combe Haven the following day (KMJ, SCR) with further ringtails later in the month at West Dean Woods on 15th (OMM) and Goring Beach on 23rd (DIS).

There were no reports of any birds over-summering.

Two autumn migrants were recorded: a second-summer male at Birling Gap on 13 Aug (JFC, DC, JWK) and a juvenile at Thorney Deepes on 28 Aug (CBC). [MEK]

0267. GOSHAWK

Accipiter gentilis

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

1997: Single females were recorded at Birling Gap on 6 Apr (DC, JWK) and on 10 Aug (DC, JFC, JWK).

2000: There were only two authenticated records, both involving adult females in areas apparently suitable for breeding. The first was recorded on 6 June in the east of the county (LMO, RCO) and the second on 25 July in the west of the county (BFF *et al*). Shortly after the July bird was first sighted, a Common Buzzard joined it and there ensued a superb display as the two birds persistently mobbed each other. This sequence of events tends to suggest that the Buzzard had recently fledged young nearby. [MEK]

0269. SPARROWHAWK

Accipiter nisus

Common resident and passage migrant.

A very large number of casual records were submitted and approximately 40 pairs were identified. As usual there were minimal data regarding breeding success. Whilst all records are welcome, perhaps the most informative are those that relate to breeding pairs in well-defined areas. All field observations commenting on unusual behaviour are especially welcome

Prey items seen taken included Woodpigeon, Collared Dove, House Sparrow and more unusually Swallow and Jay. The only interesting piece of behaviour reported involved a male bird chasing and harassing a Green Woodpecker.

In the spring there was a single migrant at Worthing Beach on 22 Apr, but in the autumn there were record numbers with 74 recorded at Beachy Head alone, the majority passing through between 23 Sept and 8 Oct. At Hollingdean, Brighton, 17 birds considered to be probable migrants were recorded on four dates between 7 and 21 Sept. There were also singles at Brighton Marina on four dates between 4 Sept and 26 Oct and four singles flying E in the lower Cuckmere Valley on 10 Sept. [MEK]

0287. BUZZARD

Buteo buteo

A scarce resident and passage migrant and possible winter visitor.

This species continues to consolidate with a steady increase in the number of records of spring pairs. There are now approximately 60 pairs in the west of the county and 16-17

pairs in the east. These are conservative estimates and the true figures are likely to be rather higher. In West Sussex, the South Downs remains the stronghold but the small population in the Petworth area seems to be expanding. Breeding Buzzards are relatively tolerant of their neighbours and consequently are capable of breeding at high densities. There are already 10-12 pairs in both SU81 and SU91 and there is at least one location where adjacent nests are just 1km apart.

An isolated pair in the far north of the county probably ties in with the very small Surrey population and is very welcome as there is an abundance of suitable habitat available for further expansion on the Sussex/Surrey border.

In East Sussex there is a burgeoning population of 12-13 pairs in TQ41, TQ42 and TQ32, which encompasses the countryside to the west of Haywards Heath, with Lewes to the south and Ashdown Forest to the north-west. A few of these birds have active radio-tags, as a result of the release programme of 1994-98, and four of the nesting pairs had one radio-tagged adult in each pair.

Identifying likely passage migrants at inland sites has become somewhat difficult and members are requested to attach a comment to a submitted record if a bird is thought to be a migrant. Spring passage was typically light though, not surprisingly, autumn passage was very heavy, especially in the second half of September. Autumn passage was on a broad front with an apparent bias to the west of the county. There were many records from the western harbours, as on 30 Sept when at least five flew S with Honey Buzzards at Selsey. Good numbers were reported from Hollingbury Camp but surprisingly few from Beachy Head and very few from the far east of the county. The approximate monthly totals of passage migrants were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
-	-	5	3	1	1	1	15	58	12	3	2

[MEK]

0301. **OSPREY**

Pandion haliaetus

Scarce passage migrant.

In the spring there were 22-24 different birds and in the second half of the year 45-48, resulting in an annual total of 67-72 birds, a county record. The minimum monthly totals, together with the numbers seen at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly totals	-	-	-	9-10	13-14	1	4-6	5	25	14-15	-	-
Chichester & Pagham Hbrs	-	-	-	1	3	1	1	2	5	4	-	-
Weir Wood Res	-	-	-	3	2	-	2-3	1	1	-	-	-
Arlington Res	-	-	-	2-3	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
Beachy Head	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3-4	-	-
Bewl Water	-	-	-	-	1-2	-	-	-	1	1	-	-

The first record for the year was at Ecclesbourne Glen, Hastings on 7 Apr, when a single bird flew in off the sea. Other April records were of two at Weir Wood Res on 13th, and one there on 18th, a single at Cuckmere Haven on 14th which was seen to come in off the sea and fly up river, two at Arlington Res on 16th and one there on 18th, a single at Pagham Hbr on 21st, and 1N at Galley Hill, Bexhill on 28th. In May, there was a single at Pagham Hbr on 1st and then a more defined passage of birds between 5th and 12th, when eight different individuals passed through the county with singles at Splash Point, Seaford

on 5th, 6th and 11th, Weir Wood Res on 6th and 11-12th, N near Crowborough on 6th, at Combe Haven on 8th, and offshore at Selsey Bill on 12th. The last recorded in spring were singles in Chichester Hbr from 27 May to 1 June and at Bewl Water on 31 May.

Summer records have now become fairly regular and in July there were singles at Bells Yew Green on 1st and 8th, at Weir Wood Res on 4th, 8th and 25th and Pilsey Island on 31st.

The first autumn departure was at Seaford, flying SE on 6 Aug, but the bulk of the autumn sightings were in September, with Thorney and Pagham Hbr providing many of the records, mostly singles except on 27th and 30th, when there were two birds present at the former site. At Beachy Head, there were singles on 10th, 23rd and 30th and 3-4 on 1 Oct. The last were singles at Pett Level and over Patching on 18 Oct. [MEK]

0304. **KESTREL**

Falco tinnunculus

Fairly common resident and passage migrant.

Approximately 50-60 pairs were reported compared with an estimated county population of 800 pairs. There were comparatively few records detailing fledging success but, where recorded, it was satisfactory with most pairs raising two to four young. Perhaps the most interesting records related to a nest box scheme in the Rother Valley in East Sussex, where nine pairs occupied the 24 boxes available. Elsewhere, at Willingdon and Pevensey Levels, Barn Owl boxes were occupied by breeding pairs and both were highly successful, raising four and five young, respectively.

A total of seven probable migrants were recorded at Seaford; Brighton Marina; and Selsey Bill. The monthly totals were April (3), May (2) and November (2). [MEK]

0307. **RED-FOOTED FALCON**

Falco vespertinus

Rare vagrant.

A female at Combe Haven on 10 May (KMJ, IS *et al*) has been accepted by *British Birds*. The last record from the west of the county was in 1979 although this is the 16th to have been seen in East Sussex since then. Nineteen of the last 20 have occurred during the period 8 May-14 June (the exception being on 3 July 1987). [RJF]

0309. **MERLIN**

Falco columbarius

Scarce but regular winter visitor and passage migrant.

A very large number of records were submitted but as usual from comparatively few localities. They may be usefully summarised as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	16	12	11	13	2	-	-	2	18	24	11	13
Chichester & Pagham Hbrs	2	2	2	2	1	-	-	1	5	7	2	2
West Sussex Downland	4	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	2
Arun Valley/Pulborough Brooks	2	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1
East Sussex Downland	3	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	2
Beachy Head	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	5	5	1	-
Rye Hbr area & Pett Level	2	2	1	2	-	-	-	-	2	3	2	2

Most coastal records away from the western harbours and the Rye Hbr area are likely to be of birds on passage. Singles were recorded at Splash Point, Seaford on 19 Mar, 15 Apr, 11 Oct and 27 Dec, Worthing on 23 Apr, Brighton Marina on 23 Mar, 28 Apr, 26 Aug and 25 Dec, Selsey Bill on 1 May, with two at Hastings on 1 Oct. There were numerous records at Beachy Head between 10 Sept and 5 Nov, with a maximum of three seen on several days, but the only record of birds apparently on migration was of two that flew out to sea on 20 Sept. The last recorded in spring was a female at Climping Gap on 23 May while singles at Brighton Marina and Thorney Island on 26 and 27 Aug respectively were the first in autumn.

There were two interesting reports of birds coming in off the sea carrying prey. The first was at Rye Hbr on 17 Feb and the second at Brighton Marina on 25 Dec. These records clearly suggest that a successful strike took place out at sea, but it begs the question whether these were passage birds that have taken an opportunistic strike when almost reaching land or whether these individuals have quite deliberately flown out to sea in order to hunt. The latter explanation seems more probable and any similar records would be very welcome.

The only prey items reported were Snipe and Starling. [MEK]

0310. **HOBBY**

Falco subbuteo

Scarce breeding summer visitor and regular passage migrant.

An exceptionally early migrant at Lancing on 3 Apr (RCB) constitutes the earliest spring record for the county. The previous earliest date was 12 Apr compared with an average arrival date for the last ten years of 19 Apr. Singles were reported at Pulborough Brooks on 9 and 16 Apr followed by a more general arrival from 18th onwards. Before the end of the month, there were records from 14 inland sites in addition to a total of 18 migrants reported from various coastal sites. Passage was especially noticeable on 30 Apr when there were five singles at Brighton Marina and also singles at Combe Haven, Newhaven, Westhampnett and Worthing. In May, there were a further 23 records from the coast.

This species was the subject of a limited survey, the results of which are detailed on pages 199. In the county there are approximately 120 localities that have been identified as probable breeding territories. Not every site is reported annually but this year there was a slight increase with records for 40 suitable sites in the west and 30 in the east. As usual, there were very minimal data regarding breeding success.

In the autumn just a few migrants were noted prior to a very large passage between 23 Sept and 1 Oct, when a total of 67 was reported in just eight days. Most of the records were for the western harbours, Hollingbury Camp and Beachy Head, but there was no obvious passage in the Rye Hbr area. The last recorded were singles at Birling Gap and Pagham Hbr on 22 Oct.

The only prey items reported were Dunlin and House Martin. [MEK]

0320. PEREGRINE

Falco peregrinus

Scarce breeding resident.

Several hundred records were received, the majority from coastal localities and clearly related to known breeding pairs. The Sussex Peregrine Study Group monitored a total of ten nest sites and very kindly provided their data for this Report. Seven of the eyries were situated in coastal areas with a further three inland. Two of the three inland pairs successfully raised three young each and there was one failure at the early chick stage. The coastal pairs met with varying success with three nest failures, one pair raising just one young, another pair raising two and the other two pairs each fledging three young.

The breeding pair in the nestbox at Sussex Heights, Brighton Borough provided a great deal of interesting data. The first egg was laid on 1 Apr, by 14 May all three eggs had successfully hatched and on 24 June the first young fledged.

The only prey items reported were Oystercatcher, Stock Dove and Woodpigeon. [MEK]

0358. RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE

Alectoris rufa

Introduced resident. Population augmented annually by captive bred stock.

Records were received from 36 locations across the county, the only double figure counts being 40 at Lower Standean, where 1000s are released annually, 20 at Church Norton, 16 at West Marden and 14 at both the North Wall, Pagham Hbr and at Kithurst Hill, Storrington. Breeding was confirmed at Golding Barn, Upper Beeding where an adult was seen with seven chicks and at Sefters Fm, Rose Green where a single territory was identified on 90ha of mixed farmland. A single bird was seen in gardens and on rooftops at Selsey Bill in March. [RTP]

0367. GREY PARTRIDGE

Perdix perdix

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

Records came mostly from the coastal area and downland, as noted in 1999. Of the four inland sites, three were identified by the same person, which strengthens the suggestion that observer numbers may be involved in this distribution. In the first winter period, the only double figure counts came from Rye Hbr SSSI (29) and Goring Gap (12). A large decline in numbers, from 40 or more in 1999, was noted at the latter site.

Between April and July, records were received for 21 sites but breeding was confirmed at only six of them. At Rye Hbr SSSI at least nine pairs or territories were identified but only a 'few' young were seen. There was a minimum of seven pairs at Goring Gap where an adult and two juveniles were noted. Two coveys, totalling 17 birds, were seen at this site in October. An unspecified number bred successfully at Climping Gap where 27 were present at the end of the year. Two territories on 90ha of mixed farmland were recorded at Sefters Fm, Rose Green and one on 67ha at Marsh Fm, Yapton. Breeding was also confirmed on the west side of Pagham Hbr. In addition to the above, coveys were noted later in the year at Coombes, near Shoreham (12), Thorney Island (12) and at Sompthing Refuse Tip (14). [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 heard calling at Houndean Bottom, Lewes on 29 Apr and the next one noted flew in from the sea at Splash Point, Seaford on 4 May. Subsequently singles were recorded at a further seven sites, all in the south of the county, and two, but probably more, were calling at Blackcap Hill, Firlie on 8 Aug. The last bird of the year was flushed by a dog at Lancing Clump on 28 Sept. There was no indication of breeding. [RTP]

0394. **PHEASANT**

Phasianus colchicus

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

The few records received must relate largely to birds reared and released for sporting purposes. Breeding records involving 18 pairs were received from eight sites. None of these gave any indication of success rates. Of interest in this respect is a report of an experiment conducted on an estate near Horsted Keynes where a thousand hens and several thousand cocks were released after January in an attempt to generate a feral population. No evidence of breeding was seen through the season (JA Cocks *pers. comm.*). The largest count and most interesting report received was of 20 birds roosting in hawthorns at Shoreham Sanctuary on 18 Nov. This species is not usually recorded at this site. [RTP]

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

Chrysolophus pictus

Very scarce introduced resident.

The West Sussex population continues to decline and only one report of a male at West Dean Woods on 18 Mar was received. A single bird was heard calling and seen on four occasions between 12 Mar and 20 May at Austford Wood, near Powdermill Res and another was seen at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on 14 May. Additional information has been received from three private estates that are not accessible to birdwatchers. Near Horsted Keynes 2-3 pairs at each of three locations survived for a whole year but without evidence of breeding; near Heathfield two pairs in each of three locations and 5-6 pairs around the house and gardens were killed by foxes; while near Lewes 15-20 pairs running free-range and ten pairs by the keeper's cottage showed evidence of breeding but survival rate of the chicks was 'very poor'. The population at this last site is maintained by captive breeding. [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	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sites	24	16	14	11	3	7	6	5	6	17	19	23
Birds	140	107	129	43	59	41	7	17	39	120	120	142

The table gives a general impression of the timing of the winter influx but not all the major sites are counted every month. A rough measure of the winter population can be made by summing the maximum counts from every site during the period Oct 1999 to Mar 2000, which gives a figure of 306. During the first winter period the major concentrations in the county were at Combe Haven, Filsham Reedbed and Glyne Gap Marsh. Here the maximum counts were 70 on 9 Jan and 75 on 15 Feb. A remarkable fall of migrants was noted at Filsham Reedbed on 29 Mar where an estimated 100 or more were seen in an area of reeds where there were normally none. Elsewhere, there were eight at Thorney Deeps on 19 Jan and the same number at Chichester Hbr on 22 Jan. Twenty-one other sites recorded one to three birds during this time, the majority being within a few km of the coast.

During the breeding season, birds were recorded on three dates at Apuldram Manor Fm, Chichester; at Breech Pool, Pagham Hbr a juvenile was seen in July and August; at Pulborough Brooks RSPB Reserve, birds were present from April to July and a juvenile was seen on three dates in August; estimated pairs at Combe Haven and Filsham Reedbed were seven and 11 respectively; at Pett Level, birds were seen or heard daily with an estimate of 40 on 7 May and at Rye Hbr, there were indications of a pair at Ternery Pool.

Significant counts in the second winter period were 30 at Pett Level on 22 Oct and, at Thorney Island, 12 on 13 Nov and 18 on 15 Dec. Monthly counts at Combe Haven and Filsham Reedbed increased incrementally from 30 in September to 70 at the end of the year. Several observations came from the Pagham Hbr area, with the greatest concentration at the North Wall, the maximum there being eight on 4, 8 and 9 Nov. Inland records, apart from Pulborough Brooks and the Arun Valley, were of ones or twos from Ladywells, near Coombes on 8 Nov; Etchingham on 9 Nov; The Pells, Lewes on 1 Dec; Barcombe Res and Glynde Reach on 17 Dec; Redgate Mill Fm, Crowborough on 29 Dec; Shinewater Marsh, Eastbourne on 29 Dec and Shoreham Sanctuary on 26 Nov and 31 Dec. [RTP]

0408. SPOTTED CRAKE

Porzana porzana

Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant and rare winter visitor

One was heard at Filsham on 30 April (IS). Four were trapped at Pett Level in the autumn: females on 24 Aug and 17 Sept, and males on 26 Sept and 19 Oct (RBRG). The individual on 26 Sept was a juvenile, the others were not birds of the year. The April record is the first in that month since 1993 while the autumn records are typical in almost every respect. Records currently average between four and five a year, 47 of the 51 recorded since 1990 have been during August-October and 42 of the 50 were trapped at Pett Level (although most records have been of juveniles). [RJF]

0421. CORNCRAKE

Crex crex

Rare passage migrant, formerly bred.

One at Beachy Head on 17 Sept (RJF) was the first record since 1997 and only the sixth during the last ten years. It was seen standing on the cliff path above Cow Gap for 2-3 minutes before it walked off into the surrounding vegetation. Recent records have been in August (one on 28th), September (three) and October (two, latest 10th). [RJF]

0424. **MOORHEN**

Gallinula chloropus

Very common resident 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	931	684	699	330	186	172	420	627	913	805	600	803
Chichester Hbr	54	64	30	22	26	24	20	25	64	50	36	42
Pagham Hbr	15	16	14	20	11	11	17	29	21	15	17	24
Chichester GPs	119	128	106	8	2	2	12	6	96	108	130	100
Swanbourne Lake	140	110	55	80	nc	nc	nc	nc	60	60	50	60

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Arundel WWT	113	-	103	58	-	-	141	141	117	122	nc	71
Arun (Offham-Houghton)	36	28	20	3	7	9	nc	6	4	9	5	-
Amberley Wild Brooks	17	18	15	19	22	16	53	32	5	4	9	38
Pulborough Brooks	8	4	-	15	8	16	18	9	32	-	23	50
Gravetye Lake	6	4	4	4	3	9	nc	nc	7	nc	10	11
Glynde Levels	5	4	11	11	17	28	47	25	23	22	4	19
Bewl Water	60	50	80	nc	nc	nc	nc	200	230	130	80	110
Darwell Res	9	7	11	15	5	10	11	31	30	7	3	6
Alexandra Park	52	38	23	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	29	32	35	40
Pett Level	119	44	38	27	44	7	2	7	-	58	35	31
Rye Hbr	34	34	42	22	26	10	37	48	52	41	28	53

Apart from the *WeBS*' counts, there were few gatherings of note in the first winter period. Twenty-six, including 18 in one field, were at Ford in the Arun Valley on 1 Jan; 35 were by frozen fishing lakes at Black Ditch, near Poling on 26 Jan; 34 were feeding in one group at Middle Bridge, Pevensey the next day and 40 were on Henfield Levels on 5 Feb. A winter count at Combe Haven on 15 Feb found 20–30 birds. A single bird was again noted in Brighton Marina on 30 Mar and 18 Apr, presumably one of the pair seen in Nov 1999. This record is most unusual as Moorhens 'prefer waters sheltered by woodland or tall emergent plants' and avoid 'saline situations' (BWP).

Breeding records were received from 29 different sites. At Bewl Water, 88 pairs held territories and 35 broods produced 48 young, figures very similar to the preceding year. Twenty-one pairs were noted at Pulborough Brooks RSPB Reserve and a further 24 at Amberley Wild Brooks, an increase from 1999. At Darwell Res, 13 juveniles and 18 adults were present on 19 Aug, 11 territories were identified along a 4km stretch of Aldingbourne Rife and seven on the 67ha Marsh Fm, Yapton.

In the second winter period, in addition to those recorded in the *WeBS*' counts, 20 were found on Lewes Brooks on 5 Nov and the maximum of several counts at Climping Gap in December was 41 on 27th, including 24 at Bailiffs Court. [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
County total	3858	3137	2160	568	339	774	1194	2022	3953	4185	3670	3475
Chichester Hbr	160	101	53	26	26	24	40	64	128	138	134	71
Pagham Hbr	54	45	27	21	24	41	26	54	72	75	67	61
Chichester GPs	1133	1110	794	40	13	61	77	98	774	990	711	649
Swanbourne Lake	150	140	100	100	nc	nc	nc	nc	80	140	80	100
Arundel WWT	63	82	63	43	27	54	64	64	62	68	69	53
Brooklands, Worthing	107	71	41	42	31	45	57	164	192	64	69	58
Eastbourne Lakes	483	225	185	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	393	413	295	301
Bewl Water	289	273	200	nc	nc	nc	nc	685	917	624	544	603
Pett Level	265	218	142	62	56	43	42	36	16	117	148	190
Rye Hbr	294	258	194	77	55	89	225	325	641	914	658	558
Scotney Court GPs	652	380	206	56	36	332	590	419	471	420	503	441

Records were received for most large bodies of water across the county. The main concentrations are shown in the *WeBS*' table above with, in addition, a maximum count of 76 at Thorney Deeps on 26 Jan. The county totals for the year show a 15% rise from 1999.

Breeding was confirmed from 21 sites involving a minimum of 250 pairs. At Bewl Water, 121 pairs produced 78 broods with a total of 190 young, a very successful breeding season compared with 1999. At Rye Hbr SSSI, 28 pairs nested with 'moderate success'. Twelve pairs at Thorney Deeps had ten broods and raised 29 juveniles. At Darwell Res, only four juveniles were seen from an estimated 19 pairs, compared with 31 from 19 pairs in 1999. Six pairs were identified at Pulborough Brooks RSPB Reserve and at Brooklands, Worthing at least seven broods were produced but none with more than two young. Breeding was confirmed at Weir Wood Res but no estimates of numbers were made. Maxima at this site were 33 and 34 in August and September respectively.

There were no significant counts submitted in the second winter period away from the main sites in the *WeBS*' table. [RTP]

0433. COMMON CRANE

Grus grus

Rare visitor.

There were four records comprising singles over Combe Haven on 8 Apr and 30 Dec (KMJ), an adult present on private land at Brookwood Fm, Ashurst from 11-25 Sept (JMC, ARK) and one that flew NNW over Brighton Marina and Ovingdean on 7 Nov (IJW). These were the first county records since 1996. There were five records involving seven individuals during the 1990s, in April, October, November and December. [RJF]

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
<i>County total</i>	1637	1517	1225	704	668	475	1104	1650	1401	2318	1760	1732
Chichester Hbr	676	763	518	308	369	290	717	1078	1212	1468	1012	921
Pagham Hbr	261	251	221	186	116	118	291	310	116	276	289	421
Cuckmere Haven	2	-	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	118	-
Rye Hbr	662	444	452	192	169	56	78	262	50	545	302	350

Once again there were large concentrations at Pilsey Island in Chichester Hbr where the following maxima were recorded:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
500	304	147	80	225	184	600	950	1000	800	684	750

A total of some 60 pairs bred or attempted to breed, almost double the number for last year. Breeding activity was again concentrated at Rye Hbr where at least 36 pairs raised at least five young; although a low number this was at least an improvement on the disastrous season last year. Elsewhere, there were six pairs at both North Stakes and South Stakes Islands (Chichester Hbr), but only one pair nested (on North Stakes, failing at the egg stage); a pair at Cuckmere Haven that raised one young; and a pair at Thorney Deeps that hatched three young. There were also two pairs at Ford and a single pair at Rose Green,

Bognor Regis but there was no evidence of nesting. At least three pairs were also present at Pett Level but it is not known whether they attempted to nest.

Inland records were of two at South Stoke on 29 May and a single bird at Weir Wood Res on 27 July.

Partial albinos were recorded at Pagham Hbr on 5 Mar (presumably the same bird as last year) and at Pilsey Island on 25 Sept. [JC]

0455. BLACK-WINGED STILT

Himantopus himantopus

Rare vagrant, mainly in spring.

Two at Sidlesham Ferry during the afternoon of 30 Apr (OMM *et al*) have been accepted by *British Birds*. They had previously been seen in Hampshire. They were the first to be seen in the county since 1992 and take the county total to 23. They were the earliest county records and the first in April (just), although 13 have been seen in May. [RJF]

0456. AVOCET

Recurvirostra avosetta

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Has bred.

Allowing for some duplication of coastal spring migrants, the approximate minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
35	26	31	49	37	3	-	-	7	9	22	30

As usual, the majority of wintering birds were in Pagham Hbr, where there were up to 31 in January and 22 in December. The first spring migrant was 1E at Bexhill on 8 Feb followed by the usual small coastal passage up-Channel from March through to May. An unusual series of records on 5 May involved 14 flying E at Worthing Beach, 17 at Brighton Marina, 14 at Splash Point, Seaford and 18 at Birling Gap. These were most likely to have been the same flock of birds, perhaps with some breaking off and rejoining to account for the slight discrepancy in numbers at the four sites. There were also three past Selsey Bill on this date.

A pair was present at the breeding site of 1997 from late April into May; they were seen copulating but later deserted for unknown reasons. [JC]

0459. STONE-CURLEW

Burhinus oedicanus

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

One came in off the sea at Splash Point, Seaford on 19 Mar (SHL *et al*). It landed on the beach where it remained for an hour before being put off by the rising tide and continuing inland. Just four have been seen in the last five years. Although often back on their breeding grounds during the second half of March, this is the earliest record for many years. Most recent (pre-1980) records have been fairly evenly spread between late March and early November. [RJF]

0469. **LITTLE RINGED PLOVER**

Charadrius dubius

Scarce breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first of the year were three at Pulborough Brooks on 17 Mar, one day earlier than last year, followed by a pair displaying at Holmbush Fm, Faygate on 19 Mar. The usual light spring passage occurred with birds seen almost daily at Pett Level and a maximum of four there on 30 Apr.

Only three or four pairs were reported during the breeding season and no reports of successful nesting were received. However, the usual post-breeding influx occurred in July and August. Once again most records were from Pagham Hbr and Sidlesham Ferry, with a maximum of 11 at the Breech Pool on 27 July. There were also regular sightings at Pett Level, with a maximum of five on 23 July, and smaller numbers at a number of other locations, including one at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 20 July. Unlike last year, there were several September records, with the last of the year being singles at Pagham Hbr and Rye Hbr on 19th, two days earlier than in 1999. [JC]

0470. **RINGED PLOVER**

Charadrius hiaticula

Fairly common breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Recorded from most suitable coastal localities 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
<i>County total</i>	344	266	204	156	179	73	210	1359	607	222	303	356
Chichester Hbr	68	5	98	69	100	34	105	852	120	32	41	72
Pagham Hbr	-	60	23	38	17	10	42	368	40	28	28	1
Climping	95	40	28	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	33	75
Goring Gap	42	-	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	113	10	47	59
Widewater, Lancing	-	4	8	4	8	4	2	3	-	-	-	-
Lower Adur Estuary	103	86	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	209	61	103	112
Langney	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	16	40	10	-
Rye Hbr	32	68	40	37	43	25	60	136	86	43	36	37
Scotney Court GPs	-	-	-	8	11	-	1	-	-	-	-	-

As usual, there were large concentrations at Pilsley Island, Chichester Hbr, where the monthly maxima were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
51	52	57	79	376	32	86	850	206	107	142	70

As last year, the largest counts were in August and September and the high May count was also notable. Elsewhere, high counts included 250 at Shoreham on 6 Jan, 75 at Brighton Marina on 25 Jan, 150 at Brooklands, Worthing on 14 Aug, 210 at Rye Hbr on 19 Aug, and 180 on Worthing Beach on 31 Dec.

Approximately 59 pairs bred or attempted to breed this year, slightly fewer than last year. The main site was again Rye Hbr, where 40-45 pairs nested and several pairs were seen with young. In Chichester Hbr, a total of six pairs at three sites raised 15 young. Elsewhere, a pair on Southwick Beach hatched two young from three eggs, two pairs apparently bred at Newhaven Tide Mills and an unfortunate pair in Brighton Marina was reported to have laid five clutches throughout the season, all of which were predated.

There was the usual scattering of inland records with four at Pulborough Brooks on 27 Mar, four on the Downs at Amberley Mount on 3 Sept, and singles at Darwell Res on 9 Sept and Arlington Res on 18 Sept. [JC]

0477. **KENTISH PLOVER**

Charadrius alexandrinus

Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant, formerly bred.

Females were seen in Pagham Hbr on 8-10 Apr (AHo, NM *et al*) and at Camber Sands on 23 Apr (PMT, IJW). Records currently average between four and five each year and 1992 was the last blank year. April (16 recorded since 1990) and May (12) are the most likely months for the species to appear. The first individual is the fifth to be seen at Pagham Hbr since 1990, although this is overshadowed by Pilsey Island which has accounted for two-thirds of all recent records (including annual occurrences from 1993-99). [RJF]

0482. **DOTTEREL**

Charadrius morinellus

Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant, one winter record.

1999: The six adults and two juveniles at Harvey's Cross on 24 Aug (*SxBR* 52: 71) were actually at nearby Swanborough Hill on 23rd while there were three juveniles (not two) with the two adults at Harvey's Cross on 26-27 Aug.

2000: One flying N over Roedean on the 3 Apr (ITB) was a very early arrival. More usual were two at Swanborough Hill on 24 Aug (GAS). This is well below the recent annual average of 15 individuals. The bird at Roedean was probably the earliest county arrival for almost 150 years although a wintering bird was seen at Rye Hbr in Jan-Feb 1992. The autumn record is typical both in terms of date and location. [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
<i>County total</i>	1982	921	417	30	1	-	73	18	934	909	3347	585
Chichester Hbr	1740	650	353	-	-	-	4	2	37	602	651	354
Pagham Hbr	63	215	64	30	-	-	32	16	27	27	206	20
Glynde Levels	80	55	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
Pevensey Levels	16	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	120	nc	279	35
Pett Level	47	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	150	204	105
Rye Hbr	36	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	67
Scotney Court GPs	-	-	-	-	1	-	37	-	750	127	2000	-

Significant concentrations not shown in the table above included 120W over Hastings on 1 Jan, 400 at Scotney Court on 3rd, 150 at Ford on 22nd and 350 at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 29th. Peak concentrations in February were 2300 at West Wittering on the 1st, 500 at White's Creek, Pagham Hbr on 6th, and 250 at Scotney Court the same day. The

largest counts away from the coastal strip were 40 at Pulborough Brooks on 4 Jan and 25 at Barcombe Res on 9 Jan.

Numbers reduced rapidly during late February and March, with 100 in Chichester Hbr on 1 Apr the final notable record. A single at Sidlesham Ferry on 4 Apr was the only other record during the month. The May records comprised one at Chichester Hbr, 5E at Selsey Bill and two at Scotney Court on 6th, and a single at Pulborough Brooks on 12th.

The first returning bird was noted at Pilsey Island on 11 July, with 44 at nearby Thorney Island on 30 Aug the first double figure count. Numbers remained low until mid-October with the exception of 400 at Jury's Gap on 5 Sept. Peak counts in the second winter period included 180 at Scotney Court on 15 Oct and 300 at Pett Level on 22 Oct. Counts in Chichester Hbr increased from 800 on Thorney Airfield on 31 Oct to 1000 at West Wittering on 14 Nov and 1200 there on 24 Nov.

The cold weather in late December resulted in the species being more widespread, particularly inland. Peak inland counts were of four at Bewl Water on 22nd, 30 at Iford on 25th, 21S over Arlington Res on 27th, 22 at Pulborough Brooks on 28th and 80 at Barcombe Cross on 31st. [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
<i>County total</i>	2721	2923	2375	522	618	170	298	1420	1175	2168	1780	3009
Chichester Hbr	1777	2145	1576	198	267	62	215	490	829	1683	1078	2180
Pagham Hbr	570	395	634	318	337	108	83	930	317	471	549	633
Goring Gap	171	212	139	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	26	-	101	108

Notable counts not included in the table were of 101 at Climping on 16 Jan, 111 at Kingston Gorse on 24 Jan, 73 on the shore at Pett Level on 22 Feb, 500 at Pagham Hbr on 5 Mar, 250 there on 21 July, 400 at West Wittering on 19 Aug and 138 at Goring Beach on 13 Dec.

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

	Mar	Apr	May	June	<i>Total</i>
Selsey Bill	10	20	108	17	155
Worthing Beach	-	19	265	-	284
Brighton Marina	4	73	844	-	921
Splash Point, Seaford	-	5	215	-	220
Bexhill/Hastings	-	-	62	-	62

Spring passage was heavy, particularly in early May. Most sites recorded a peak on the 5th including 36E at Selsey Bill, 84E at Worthing Beach, 88E at Brighton Marina and 18E at Seaford. However, the largest movements were noted off Brighton Marina on 10 and 11 May, with totals of 316E and 152E respectively. These movements were not recorded at other sites, presumably as a consequence of different coverage.

An exceptional total of 450 flew W at Selsey Bill on 7 Nov (see also Dunlin). This movement is the largest ever recorded in Sussex.

Inland records comprised singles at Arlington Res on 24 Mar, Pulborough Brooks on 12 May and 22 Nov, and Greatham Bridge on 26 Dec. [PMB]

0493. LAPWING

Vanellus vanellus

Scarce breeder and very common winter visitor.

The *WeBS*' counts at principle sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	10992	13401	418	198	264	1027	1188	2534	3482	6711	11318	9208
Chichester Hbr	1724	1606	17	33	40	46	348	365	384	966	1033	1456
Pagham Hbr	2463	2774	38	15	8	28	97	72	232	41	1988	1909
Chichester GPs	-	-	-	2	-	38	75	-	-	-	3	nc
Arundel WWT	22	115	9	8	2	1	9	14	1	-	4	-
Amberley Wild Brooks	117	1753	5	15	17	15	20	56	20	51	618	185
Pulborough Brooks	83	2347	8	14	18	76	305	140	426	722	1292	1802
Lower Adur Estuary	1840	1320	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	226	140	510	444
Henfield Brooks	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	112	147	850	22
Glynde Brooks	1180	1500	122	47	80	19	5	-	-	500	80	15
Pevensay Levels	180	54	40	41	49	81	16	151	-	1050	300	nc
Bewl Water	320	220	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	130	150	130	100	180
Pett Level	1500	950	132	10	14	40	115	-	777	1180	1600	1120
Rye Hbr	867	226	22	10	34	566	118	1614	787	1245	1443	1160
Scotney Court GP	-	-	-	7	10	100	40	-	250	285	700	60

Numbers were high in January and February as a consequence of the mild weather. Notable counts not shown in the *WeBS* table included 1000 at Henfield Levels on 2 Jan, 1000 at Scotney Court on 3 Jan, 3000 at Barcombe Res on 9 Jan, 1300 at Rye Hbr SSSI on 21 Jan, and 1200 at nearby Pett Level on 6 Feb.

Displaying birds were noted from 6 Mar. Breeding or possible breeding was noted at 28 sites involving approximately 138 pairs, a decrease from 1999 but still an improvement on 1997 and 1998. However, young were only reported from nine sites. The largest concentrations were 24 pairs at Pulborough Brooks (as in 1999), 16 pairs at the Midrips, 15 pairs at Glynde Levels and 12 pairs at Rye Hbr. A poor breeding season was noted at Pett Level where only six pairs were successful. No breeding records were received from Fieldlands Fm, Henfield, where 40 occupied sites were noted in 1999.

Returning birds were noted from early June, with 100 at Rye Hbr on 12th, increasing to 566 on 25th. Numbers gradually increased in July and August with 400 at Pulborough Brooks on 16 July the only notable count not shown in the *WeBS*' table. The only other significant counts were 2500 in the Brede Valley on 16 Sept, 1600 at Rye Hbr on 13 Oct, a peak site count there of 2000 on 2 Dec, 2000 at Lewes Brooks on 17 Dec and 2500 at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 28 Dec.

The leucistic bird was again noted at Newhaven Tide Mills during November and December, and also at Lewes Brooks on 15 Nov. This, or a similar bird, has been observed in the area every winter since 1990. [PMB]

0496. **KNOT***Calidris canutus***Common winter visitor and fairly common passage migrant.**

Most records came from the Chichester and Pagham Hbrs as shown by the monthly *WeBS*' counts:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	227	88	64	151	104	-	4	2	36	56	129	27
Chichester Hbr	117	24	6	151	70	-	2	1	24	33	102	-
Pagham Hbr	110	64	56	-	24	-	2	1	12	23	27	27
Rye Hbr	-	-	2	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Numbers recorded in both winter periods were very low, although non-survey counts suggest that this reflected a lack of survey coverage. The peak count in Chichester Hbr was in April, and not as is usual in mid-winter. The largest counts in both the first and last quarter were at Pilesey Sands, with 500 on 21 Jan and 1000 on 13 Nov.

Spring passage at sea-watching sites was unremarkable. There was, however, a notable flock of 39 on Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr on 3 May.

Return passage was virtually non-existent. However, an exceptional record of 20 at Weir Wood Res on 19 Aug (DWM) is the largest flock ever recorded inland in the county. The only other inland record was of two juveniles flushed by a Peregrine from flood water at Henfield on 23 Sept (ARK). [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
<i>County total</i>	218	92	232	152	140	10	150	220	13	54	124	77
Chichester Hbr	136	45	89	152	140	10	146	220	-	-	7	8
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	-
Climping	2	3	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	17	55	35
Goring Gap	15	28	133	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	7	37	3	32
Lower Adur Estuary	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	20	-
Pett Level	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19	-
Rye Hbr	61	15	4	-	-	-	4	-	6	-	13	1

Notable records, additional to those shown above, included 42 on the beach at Brooklands, Worthing on 18 Jan, 166 at Kingston Gorse on 24 Jan and 61 at Rye Hbr on 15 Feb. Counts at Pilesey Island increased from 171 on 22 Feb to 247 on 16 Mar and peaked at 343 on 25 Mar before falling to 323 on 1 Apr, 200 on 21 Apr, 140 on 7 May and 83 on 30 May.

The eastbound spring passage totals for the main sea-watching sites were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	June	<i>Total</i>
Selsey Bill	6	64	384	23	477
Worthing Beach	6	137	317	9	449
Brighton Marina	526	17	351	-	894
Splash Point, Seaford	-	48	263	6	319
Bexhill/Hastings	-	-	10	-	10

The peak movement occurred early in spring, with 503E at Brighton Marina on 21 Mar. This is the largest movement observed in Sussex, and while being significantly earlier in spring when compared with previous years, it is consistent with the peak numbers recorded at Pilsley Island in 2000.

More typical movements occurred in early May with 71E at Selsey Bill, 75E at Worthing Beach and 21E at Seaford on 5th (when none was recorded at Brighton Marina despite coverage) and 62E at Selsey Bill, 34E at Worthing Beach, 61E at Brighton Marina and 54E at Seaford on 6th.

The low counts in the latter part of the year, particularly from Chichester Hbr, appear to have resulted from the main flocks being missed during the counts. Peaks at Pilsley Island included 66 on 9 Sept, 31 on 15 Oct, 48 on 14 Nov and 158 on 2 Dec. The highest counts in the second winter period came from Rustington with 54 on 26 Oct, 168 on 10 Nov and 119 on 17 Dec. [PMB].

0498. SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER

Calidris pusilla

Very rare vagrant.

An adult at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr from 11 to 29 Aug (SSm, PMT *et al*) has been accepted by *British Birds* and is the third county record. It spent most of its time at the back of Ternery Pool although was occasionally seen close to the main hide, as evidenced by photographs in *Birding World* (13: 301) and this *Report*. The previous records were at Rye Hbr in August (1986) and at Chichester GPs in September (1998). [RJF]

0501. LITTLE STINT

Calidris minuta

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

This was another relatively good year for this species with the September total slightly higher than last year and the totals for the winter months also generally higher. The approximate minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
7	10	13	18	9	4	5	15	60	13	13	10

In the early part of the year there were up to seven in Chichester Hbr and three at Scotney Court GPs. Spring passage was slight, as usual, and apparently started early with 13 at East Head, Chichester Hbr, on 18 Mar, increasing to 15 on 1 Apr. There were still nine there on 16 Apr but otherwise just ones and twos were reported, mostly from the Pagham Hbr and Rye areas. There were records throughout the summer, with a gap of about five weeks suggesting that the last spring migrants were two at Sidlesham Ferry on 18 June and the first returning bird was one at Rye Hbr on 25 July. The majority of autumn migrants were in the Pagham Hbr and Rye areas, with a few in the Cuckmere Valley and at Pett Level and one inland at Bewl Water on 30 July. Significant counts included 17 at Pagham Hbr on 4 Sept, 11 there on 12 Sept and 16 at Pilsley Sands, Chichester Hbr on 25 Sept. At the end of the year there were up to ten in Chichester Hbr, mainly favouring the East Head area. [JC]

0502. **TEMMINCK'S STINT***Calidris temminckii***Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant.**

Following a blank year in 1999, there were four records totalling eight birds. Two were seen at Pett Level on 4 May (RBRG, EDU), four together in the Cuckmere Valley near Exceat Bridge on 6 May (LRB, TJW *et al*) and one at Sidlesham Ferry from 7 to 9 May (DIS *et al*). A photograph of three of the Cuckmere birds appears in this *Report*.

The only autumn record was of an adult at Thorney Deeps from 11 to 14 Sept (CBC).

The total recorded since 1962 moves on to 111, of which 70 have been in May and 17 in Sept. [PJ]

0509. **CURLEW SANDPIPER***Calidris ferruginea***Passage migrant, scarce in autumn and very scarce in spring; rare in winter.**

This was another good year for this species with a good scattering of spring records in contrast to last year, although the autumn totals were lower. Allowing for some duplication, the approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
-	-	-	3	5	7	11	91	115	1	1	1

The first of the year was one at Pagham Hbr on 8 Apr. Other spring records were of singles at Chichester Hbr on 24 Apr, Pagham Hbr on 25 Apr, Pilsey Island and Sidlesham Ferry on 3 May, two at Scotney Court GPs on 4 May (with one there on 6th), one at Pett Level on 7 June, two in the Rother Valley on 11 June, two at Rye Hbr on 12 June and a single there on 25 June.

Autumn passage began on 22 July with one at Rye Hbr. Birds were then recorded from a number of coastal sites throughout the autumn period. As usual, the highest numbers were at Pagham Hbr/Sidlesham Ferry with notable counts of 11 on 2 Aug, 14 on 26 Aug, 19 on 9 Sept, 13 on 12 Sept and ten on 28 Sept. Elsewhere, there were 14 at Thorney Deeps on 2 Sept. There were only three birds recorded after September; singles at Sidlesham Ferry/Pagham Hbr from 1-5 Oct, flying over Sidlesham Tramway on 15 Nov, and at Pagham Hbr on 28 Dec. These were all from the same area and may have involved the same bird.

The sole inland record was of one at Nep Town, Henfield on 23 Sept. [JC]

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

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Shoreham/ Southwick	2	6	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	5	7
Brighton Marina	7	9	10	8	5	-	2	2	2	6	11	13
Newhaven Hbr	9	4	6	6	3	-	-	-	-	-	6	11
Bexhill/Hastings	2	1	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	2	3	4

The only birds away from the regular sites during the first winter period were singles at Pagham Hbr on several dates in January and early February and on 2 Apr, and at Splash

Point, Seaford on 6 May. A single at Brighton Marina on 24 May was the last of the spring. The first autumn bird arrived at Brighton Marina on 9 July, one day earlier than the previous earliest autumn record for the county, with two there from 26 July. Records for the end of the year not shown in the table were of singles at Pagham Hbr on 3 Sept, Scotney Court GPs on 15 Oct, Selsey Bill on 27 Oct, 1 and 9 Nov, Cuckmere Haven on 1 Nov and Rye Hbr on 10 Nov. [JC]

0512. **DUNLIN**

Calidris alpina

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

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	12106	12827	2206	971	877	24	810	2039	1070	1473	5937	8798
Chichester Hbr	7396	9854	1205	385	575	8	213	835	432	917	4885	6095
Pagham Hbr	2340	1320	891	539	210	16	523	1077	437	536	744	1373
Goring Gap	240	450	89	nc	nc	nc	nc	Nc	23	-	135	564
Lower Adur Estuary	1245	920	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	Nc	31	3	40	-
Rye Hbr	502	242	13	47	49	-	67	127	134	10	7	460

Other notable counts in the first winter period included 2500 at Pilsey Sands on 5 Jan, 370 on roost flights past Worthing Beach on 15 Jan and 2000 at White's Creek, Pagham Hbr.

Easterly spring passage was moderate with the totals at the main sea-watching localities as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Total
Selsey Bill	-	152	113	265
Worthing Beach	23	41	340	404
Brighton Marina	35	30	305	370
Splash Point, Seaford	15	32	160	207
Bexhill/Hastings	9	59	35	103

The peak movements were on 19 April, with 100E at Selsey Bill, and 6 May, with 54E at Selsey Bill, 232E at Worthing Beach, 141E at Brighton Marina and 107E at Seaford. A movement of 120W was noted at Brighton Marina on 23 May.

Small numbers were noted on autumn sea-watches except for a large movement on 7 Nov in fresh NW winds. Totals recorded that day were 141W at Brighton Marina, 611W at Worthing Beach and 70W at Selsey Bill. The movement at Worthing is the largest yet observed in Sussex in the autumn, and occurred in typical conditions for this species at this time of year.

Notable counts in the second winter period were 400 at Sidlesham Ferry on 14 July, 700 at Church Norton on 21 July and, at Pilsey Sands, 800 on 17 Aug, 12,000 on 13 Nov and 14,000 on 23 Dec. The high counts from the latter site at the end of the year suggest that the low *WeBS*' counts were not an accurate reflection of the number of birds using Chichester Hbr at the time

Small numbers were recorded at 11 inland sites, with birds recorded in all months at Pulborough Brooks bar August and September. The peak counts were 40 at Glynde Levels on 15 Jan, 34 at Iford on 25 Dec and ten at Greatham Bridge on 26 Dec. The monthly distribution of inland records is shown below:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
52	23	4	10	13	1	4	1	3	2	8	52

[PMB]

0516. **BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER**

Tryngites subruficollis

Very rare vagrant.

One at Bracklesham Bay from 23 Sept to 4 Oct (PBr *et al*) was the first record since 1993 and the ninth in total. Not only was the previous record at a nearby location (Littleham Fm, Sidlesham), it was at a similar time of year (18-23 Sept), was found by the same observer, and it also stayed long enough to enable most who wanted to see it to do so! All records have been in the autumn, the dated ones between 21 August and 14 October, including six during 5-23 September. [RJF]

0517. **RUFF**

Philomachus pugnax

Scarce 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	-	24	8	1	1	-	2	9	7	8	30	14
Chichester Hbr	-	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	1	3	-	-	-
Amberley Wild Brooks	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-
Waltham Brooks	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
Pulborough Brooks	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	1	2	7	23	12
Glynde Levels	-	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pett Level	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-
Scotney Court GPs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	-

The *WeBS*' counts do not reflect the true picture as there were regularly up to 20 at Pulborough Brooks in the first winter period and a peak count there of 30 on 28 Feb. Elsewhere, there were 18 at Amberley Wild Brooks on 13 Feb and, interestingly, 18 at Glynde Levels on the same day. There were ones and twos at other locations, including Chichester Hbr, Pett Level and Camber, and six at Scotney Court GPs on 11 Feb.

The first spring migrant was probably one at Pagham Hbr on 11 Mar and the last of the winter at Pulborough Brooks were two on 24 Mar. There was a steady trickle of birds at various coastal locations through April and May, as well as inland birds at Partridge Green SF on 8 and 29 Apr. The last spring bird was at Rye Hbr on 14 May.

The first autumn birds, traditionally early, were two at Castle Water, Rye Hbr on 28 June. Birds were then recorded almost daily at various coastal sites until mid-October, particularly in the Pagham Hbr/Sidlesham Ferry and Rye Hbr areas. Numbers were, however, generally low with the highest counts for the autumn being just seven at Sidlesham Ferry on 14 Sept and eight at Selsey West Fields on 25 Sept. There were also small numbers recorded inland at Henfield, Weir Wood Res and Bewl Water.

Numbers built up at Pulborough Brooks from mid-September, with seven there on 21st and a peak of 23 on 20 Nov. [JC]

0518. JACK SNIPE

*Lymnocyptes minimus***Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.**

The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
33	27	27	6	1	-	-	-	2	12	15	22

In the first winter period a minimum total of 46 was reported from 13 localities. As usual, Thorney Deeps held the highest numbers with monthly maxima of 23 in January, 22 in February, 19 in March and eight in April. Elsewhere, there were 3-4 at Ferring Rife in January (with at least one remaining into February), three at Glyne Gap Marsh, Bexhill on 1 Jan and three at Wishing Tree Res on 4 Mar. A variety of other sites held one or two birds. The last of the spring was a single bird at Thorney Deeps on 3 May.

The first recorded in autumn were two flushed from a ditch at Selsey West Fields on 30 Sept. A minimum total of 30 was reported from seven localities between October and December. Once again, Thorney Deeps held the highest numbers with peak counts of three in October, 12 in November and 20 in December. Other notable counts included four at Pett Level on 22 Oct and two at Crowborough Bog on 13 Nov; elsewhere only singles were reported. [JC]

0519. SNIPE

*Gallinago gallinago***Now a very scarce breeder and fairly common winter visitor.**

1999: One was heard drumming on Manxey Level on 15 June.

2000: 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>	357	357	164	123	5	-	10	19	157	286	412	327
Chichester Hbr	71	73	17	21	-	-	2	-	28	33	46	90
Pagham Hbr	68	40	7	5	-	-	-	-	2	-	38	117
Arundel WWT	12	23	12	4	-	-	3	-	1	76	36	-
Amberley Wild Brooks	37	15	25	20	4	-	5	-	65	10	12	6
Waltham Brooks	35	36	34	24	-	-	-	3	-	7	-	-
Pulborough Brooks	15	111	34	32	-	-	-	1	10	11	100	-
Lower Adur Estuary	45	20	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	5	89	-
Henfield Brooks	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	8	10	-	5
Lower Ouse Valley	3	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	5	23
Glynde Brooks	14	10	10	8	1	-	-	-	-	9	1	47
Pevensey Levels	16	1	9	7	nc	nc	nc	3	4	30	78	24
Pett Level	20	23	4	2	-	-	-	7	20	68	-	1
Rye Hbr	18	3	4	-	-	-	-	7	10	25	2	7
Scotney Court GP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-

The *WeBS*' counts were fairly similar to last year but with more consistent numbers through the winter months. Other significant counts during the first winter period included 43 at Redgate Mill Fm, Crowborough on 5 Jan, 130 at Combe Haven on 15 Feb, 77 at Thorney Deeps on 21 Feb, 60 on the R. Adur at Shoreham on 26 Jan, 42 at Weir Wood Res on 15 Feb and 54 near Bramber on 4 Mar.

Breeding season records were of four pairs at Pulborough Brooks and two males drumming at Amberley Wild Brooks. A single bird was heard drumming at Millbrook,

Ashdown Forest in late April and a bird was seen at the same site, behaving in an agitated manner, a few days later. As last year, no breeding was suspected at Rye Hbr.

In the latter half of the year, numbers started to build at Pulborough Brooks in August with ten on 3rd and 15 on 28th, 50 on 10 Sept and 150 by 9 Oct. Other notable counts during this period included 70 at Nep Town, Henfield on 23 Sept, 175 at Arundel WWT on 26 Oct, 85 on the R. Adur at Shoreham on 12 Nov, 150 at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 14 Nov, 100 at West Wittering on 24 Nov, 126 at Thorney Deeps on 14 Dec, a remarkable count of 200 at The Pells, Lewes on 28 Dec, and 200 at Amberley Wild Brooks on 30 Dec. [JC]

0529. WOODCOCK

Scolopax rusticola

Fairly common resident and winter visitor.

Numbers in the first winter period were generally low with mostly single birds at a variety of sites. Three were recorded at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on 9 Jan and at Marlpipts, Ashdown Forest on 19 Feb, four at Cripps Corner on 13 Feb, and five at Filsham Reedbed on 15 Feb. More unusually, much higher totals of 21 at Heathfield on 3 Feb and 15 at Waldron on 28 Mar were recorded feeding at night. This behaviour (quite normal of course for Woodcock) is very seldom recorded so these records are welcome indeed.

The first recorded roding were one, or possibly two, birds at Hindleap, Ashdown Forest on 11 Mar. There were records of roding birds from 15 West Sussex and 20 East Sussex tetrads, 16 of which were on Ashdown Forest. This is a slight increase compared with last year for East Sussex, but the only indication of successful breeding concerned a female apparently sitting on a nest on Ashdown Forest on 8 June.

Again, there were relatively few records for the latter winter period; singles were recorded from a total of 11 localities and there were two at Heathfield on 29 Nov and four at Camp Hill, Ashdown Forest on 15 Dec. [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.
County total	406	365	87	537	49	4	269	301	178	203	177	59
Chichester Hbr	341	158	82	401	39	-	217	296	174	151	136	6
Pagham Hbr	65	182	5	136	8	4	52	2	-	52	41	53
Climping	-	25	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-

Notable counts in the early part of the year were 234 at Prinsted, Chichester Hbr on 7 Jan, 194 at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 5 Mar and 153 at Thorney Deeps the following day. The only records away from the western harbours comprised a single at Pett Level on 3 Jan, three at Pulborough Brooks on 22 Jan and 25 at Climping on 13 Feb.

Spring passage boosted numbers in April, with 210 at Pagham Hbr on 5th, decreasing to 185 on 9th and 125 on 21st. Numbers at Thorney Deeps similarly peaked at 152 on 5th. Elsewhere, birds were occasionally noted in the Rye Hbr/Pett Level area and at Pulborough Brooks between 9 Apr and 7 May, Combe Haven (two on 11 Apr) and Glynde Levels (two on 25 Apr). Five flew E at Worthing Beach on 30 Apr.

Birds were again present intermittently at Pett Level from May until 10 Sept, with a peak of 14 on 8 May. Reports were received from only three other sites during June, with a peak of nine at Sidlesham Ferry on 27 June, increasing to 36 on 4 July, 55 on 15 July, and a peak of 81 on 28 July. The peak counts recorded in autumn at Thorney Deepes were 146 on 16 July, 210 on 29 July, 224 on 14 Aug and 320 on 30 Aug. Few were recorded from Pagham Hbr until late October, with 215 on 31 Oct and 250 on 15 Dec the peak counts.

The only other inland records came from Pulborough Brooks in November, with five present on 22nd and a single on 25th. [PMB]

0534. BAR-TAILED GODWIT

Limosa lapponica

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Most records came from the Chichester and Pagham Hbrs as shown by the monthly WeBS^o counts:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	460	478	154	200	600	6	71	253	295	362	156	925
Chichester Hbr	439	462	102	200	445	6	71	252	286	337	152	906
Pagham Hbr	21	16	52	-	42	-	-	1	5	25	4	18
Pett Level	-	-	-	-	76	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Scotney Court GPs	-	-	-	-	31	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Following the low numbers at the end of 1999, totals were very low during the first winter period. Numbers in the second winter period were much higher, albeit below the qualifying level for international importance (1000). The highest single winter count not shown in the table was of 380 at Pilsley Sands on 9 Mar.

On 22 Mar, 70 flying E at Brighton Marina heralded an early start to a strong spring passage concentrated at the end of April and beginning of May. The monthly totals recorded at the main sea-watching sites were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Total
Selsey Bill	2	225	955	1182
Worthing Beach	2	377	1722	2101
Brighton Marina	102	2936	4323	7361
Splash Point, Seaford	-	621	1554	2175
Bexhill/Hastings	2	45	161	208

The highest counts were recorded on 2 May when 302 passed Selsey Bill in 15hrs, 387E at Worthing in 4.6hrs, 1905 passed Brighton Marina in 13.1hrs, 407 at Splash Point, Seaford in 5.5hrs watching and 618 passed Newhaven West Pier. Transient flocks of less than 200 were noted at various coastal sites through this period. On 5 May there was one at Arlington Res, and the next day one at Partridge Green SF. The only other inland record was of one at Weir Wood Reservoir on 20 Aug.

Counts of less than 100 birds were recorded at the main estuaries through the summer. At Pilsley Sands 400 birds on 9 Aug constituted the autumn peak. [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	4	160	3	93	21	4	1	1	1
Chichester Hbr	1	1	1	4	106	3	91	16	3	1	1	-
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	-	14	-	1	4	-	-	-	1
Pett Level	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	-	-	-	-	35	-	1	1	-	-	-	-

Wintering birds were present in Pagham Hbr, with two on 10 Jan, and at Thorney Island. Spring passage was noted from 11 Mar when a single was recorded at Cuckmere Haven.

The eastbound spring totals at the main sea-watching locations were as follows:

	Apr	May	Total
Selsey Bill	126	78	204
Worthing Beach	192	145	338
Brighton Marina	635	674	1309
Splash Point, Seaford	263	374	637
Bexhill/Hastings	59	38	97

Peak passage occurred on 29 Apr, with 164E at Brighton Marina, and 6 May, with 169E at Brighton Marina, 201E at Newhaven West Pier and 170E at Seaford. The nocturnal roost at Rye Hbr increased from 46 on 19 Apr to 245 on 29 Apr and a peak of 330 on 1 May, with 240 on 6 May the final notable count. The only significant estuarine count was 120 at Pagham Hbr on 6 May.

There were only five inland records for the spring, four of which were for the Arun Valley. The peak count was 31 at Pulborough Brooks on 11 May. Sixteen were noted flying NE over Lewes on 8 May.

Small numbers were noted along the coast during the summer, with 8W at Brighton Marina on 22 June the largest movement. The monthly maxima for Pagham Hbr were 15 in both July and August, with peaks of 24 and 19 at Rye Hbr over the same period. The peak count in Chichester Hbr was 19 at Pilsey Island on 31 July. Twelve at Goring Beach on 20 Aug was the last double figure count, with two at Cuckmere Haven on 31 Oct the final migrants.

Inland sightings for the latter half of the year comprised singles at Coldwaltham Brooks on 19 July, and over Scobells Fm, Barcombe and at Pulborough Brooks on 24 July.

Up to four individuals remained to the end of the year, with two in both Pagham and Chichester Hbrs. [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
<i>County total</i>	2567	1852	1097	1039	183	130	2259	1987	2279	1955	1636	1289
Chichester Hbr	1389	849	519	714	97	63	1876	1281	1663	1457	1004	594
Pagham Hbr	468	502	518	324	86	59	330	523	391	315	418	333
Pett Level	247	256	40	1	-	8	32	31	177	140	188	340
Rye Hbr	349	222	9	-	-	-	18	27	-	4	-	-
Scotney Court GPs	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	125	38	-	-	-

Notable counts in addition to those in the table were 300 at Camber on 3 Jan and 200 at Scotney Court GP the same day, 500 between Itchenor and East Head on 5 Feb, and 500 at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 7 Mar. The highest April count was of 155 at the latter site on 5th.

Coastal movements are illustrated in the following table which shows the predominant movements by month at the main sea-watching sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	-	-	2E	16E	6E	11W	3E	-	-	-	-	-
Worthing Beach	-	-	3E	37E	-	-	2W	-	-	3W	8W	-
Brighton Marina	4E	11E	15E	62E	2E	39W	7W	2W	-	-	9W	-
Splash Point, Seaford	-	-	5E	110E	6E	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bexhill/Hastings	-	-	3E	-	5E	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Peak movements were 22E at Brighton Marina on 1 Apr, an exceptional 90E at Seaford on 17 April and 16W at Brighton Marina on 26 June.

In Chichester Hbr, numbers of returning migrants at South Stakes Island increased from 330 on 30 June to 581 on 4 July and 980 on 29 Aug, while at Thorney Island there were 144 on 3 July, 80 on 4 Aug, 250 on 2 Sept and 350 on 16 Sept.

Other significant counts not included in the *WeBS*' table were of 100 at Camber Sands on 8 July, 270 at Rye Hbr on 29 July, 500 at Pagham Hbr on 1 Aug, 350 at Pilsey Island on 2 Aug and 230 at Pett Level on 18 Sept.

Inland sightings came from 11 sites, with peak counts of six at Bewl Water on 19 Apr and three at Cissbury Ring on 8 Oct. The monthly distribution of inland records is shown below:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
-	1	2	7	1	1	-	-	-	5	2	1

The June record comprised a single seen flying SE over the Isle of Thorns, Ashdown Forest on 18th. [PMB]

0545. SPOTTED REDSHANK

Tringa erythropus

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

The *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	6	12	4	1	4	-	1	4	4	4	-	3
Chichester Hbr	3	5	2	1	4	-	1	1	2	2	-	1
Pagham Hbr	1	4	1	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	-	1
Pevensy Levels	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	1	nc	-	nc	nc	nc
Pett Level	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	2	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1

The approximate minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
14	17	9	11	10	-	21	28	25	21	13	14

During the first winter period, the highest counts were five at Sidlesham Ferry on 6 Jan, four in Pagham Hbr on several dates and three at Thorney Deeps on 11 Jan, with four there on 3 Feb. Elsewhere, there were up to three in the Rye Hbr area throughout the period and one at East Guldeford Level on 20 Jan (which may have been one of the Rye Hbr birds).

Spring passage was typically light with maxima of three at Pagham Hbr on 11 Apr and four at Thorney Deeps on 4 May. Most were at Thorney Deeps, Pagham Hbr/Sidlesham Ferry, Pett Level and Rye Hbr, but elsewhere there was one on the R. Ouse at Southeast on 4 May and one that flew E at Bexhill the following day. The last bird of the spring was at Sidlesham Ferry on 8 May.

Autumn passage began with a single bird at Pilsey Island on 3 July. Birds were then recorded regularly at Thorney Deeps, Pagham Hbr/Sidlesham Ferry, Pett Level and Rye Hbr, the west of the county providing most of the records with counts of six in Pagham Hbr on 11 July and at Sidlesham Ferry on both 9 Aug and 28 Sept. Away from the main sites there were singles at Pulborough Brooks on 28 Aug, Piddinghoe Pond on 2 Sept, Cuckmere Haven on 9 Sept, Combe Haven on 15 Sept and 1 Oct, East Head on 25 Sept, Selsey Bill on 26 Sept and Selsey West Fields on 30 Sept.

Sidlesham Ferry held 12 birds on 15 Oct; although a late date, some of these were probably passing through as numbers subsequently fell at this site, though there were still seven there on 13 Nov. Single birds throughout the second winter period at West Wittering, Chichester Hbr and at Combe Haven on 21-22 Dec were the only records away from the other regular wintering sites of Thorney Deeps and Rye Hbr. [JC]

0546. REDSHANK

Tringa totanus

Scarce resident and 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
<i>County total</i>	1615	2197	991	534	276	205	1984	1752	1763	2977	1639	1893
Chichester Hbr	1128	1340	694	277	96	75	1876	1396	1082	2607	915	1206
Pagham Hbr	246	610	119	82	83	62	59	189	406	219	352	332
Amberley Wild Brooks	-	-	1	8	15	10	5	1	-	-	-	-
Lower Adur Estuary	154	121	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	127	106	187	140
Glynde Levels	-	1	4	12	18	2	-	-	-	4	-	-
Pett Level	9	18	26	13	15	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	25	69	95	102	34	42	40	165	142	24	32	149

In the western harbours typical numbers were recorded in the first winter period, but much higher numbers were present in the second winter period. Indeed the October total of 2607 for Chichester Harbour was the largest count there for at least a decade (*Birds of Sussex*). To put this count in context, the mean count for October in the period 1974-93 was 1758, and the maximum 2706. High counts at other sites not listed in the table above include 60 at Cuckmere Haven on 4 Jan and 52 at the Newhaven Tide Mills on 25 Feb.

Breeding records came from the main river valleys and coastal plain. At Pulborough Brooks 26 pairs bred, with a further nine at Amberley Wild Brooks. At least 20 pairs bred around Chichester Hbr with the largest concentration being 14 pairs at Thorney Deeps. In the east at least 15 pairs bred at Rye Hbr, and a further 15 pairs were noted at the Midrips. An interesting probable breeding record came from the Tillingham Valley where breeding has not occurred for many years. There were several other regular sites with fewer than four pairs. Young were only noted at Amberley Wild Brooks, Newhaven Tide Mills and Rye Hbr.

By early July numbers were building up on the estuaries, with 350 at Thorney Deeps on 3 July, reaching a peak of 1200 by 30 July. Numbers remained high to the end of the year in the western harbours. [MD]

0547. MARSH SANDPIPER

Tringa stagnatilis

Rare vagrant

An adult found at Pagham Hbr on 23 Apr (TAG, SJP *et al*) has been accepted by *British Birds* and was the 12th county record. It was seen feeding and roosting at the western end of the harbour at high tide but did not linger. Five of the previous records were during the 1990s although the only other April records were in 1951 (on 22nd and 29th). The latter of these was found by the late CMJ who was one of the few observers fortunate enough to see the 2000 bird. There are records in all months from April to September with half having been seen in July or August. [RJF]

0548. GREENSHANK

Tringa nebularia

Fairly common passage migrant; a few winter.

The monthly *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	6	13	15	12	65	-	205	194	135	45	11	1
Chichester Hbr	6	13	15	10	43	-	192	168	113	42	11	1
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	-	7	-	2	13	10	-	-	-
Pulborough Brooks	-	-	-	2	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	-	-	-	-	3	-	10	6	10	2	-	-
Scotney Court GPs	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	2	-	-	-	-

During the first winter period, all the records were for Chichester Hbr, where up to 13 were seen at Thorney Deeps and singles regularly at East Head and in Emsworth Channel on 26 Jan.

Small numbers of migrants were recorded from various localities in April but the main spring passage was in May. Following a record spring count for Sussex of 42 at Thorney Deeps on 4th, there was an obvious arrival on the 5th, which included 26 at Sidlesham Ferry, 21 at Partridge Green SF, 11 at Rye Hbr and still 24 at Thorney Deeps. A total of 64 was recorded moving E at the principal sea-watching sites, including 35 past Brighton Marina on 5th. This is the largest spring movement recorded in the county.

There were June records at West Wittering (one on 20th) and Thorney Deeps (two on 23rd and eight on 29th), all of which were probably early returning migrants. Numbers at Thorney Deeps built up during July to a total of 159 on 30th and rose further to an autumn

peak of 174 on 31 Aug, before falling through September. Good numbers were also recorded at Pagham Hbr where the peak counts were 22 on 1 Aug and 1 Sept. Inland, there were regular sightings at Weir Wood Res and Pulborough Brooks, where the peak count was six on 25 Aug, and two were at Arlington Res on 3 Sept and 25-26 Oct.

Most records for the second winter period were again from the Chichester Hbr area where the highest count was 43 at Thorney Deeps on 1 Nov (dropping to 14 by mid-month, indicating that some of these could have been late migrants). Elsewhere, there were singles in the lower Cuckmere Valley on 4 Nov, at Pagham Hbr on 30 Nov, and at Pulborough Brooks on 22 Dec. [JC]

0553. 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
<i>County total</i>	4	5	5	6	6	10	54	36	14	3	2	3
Chichester Hbr	-	-	1	1	-	-	7	9	1	-	-	-
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chichester GPs	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	1	-	-	-	nc
Chingford Pond	-	-	1	-	-	-	3	5	2	-	-	-
Burton MP	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Arundel WWT	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	2	-	-	-
Bury Brooks	1	nc	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	nc	nc
Pulborough Brooks	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	4	-	-	-	-
Henfield Levels	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	2
Barcombe Res	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Glynde Levels	-	-	-	1	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-
Pevensay Levels	3	1	3	nc	2	nc	nc	-	-	nc	2	nc
Darwell Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Pett Level	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	4	5	2	-	-
Rye Hbr	-	-	-	1	-	3	31	11	2	1	-	-

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

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
32	22	24	34	8	24	73	124	60	17	10	8

Numbers were slightly lower than last year, particularly in August and at the year's end, although the totals for the first winter period were higher. Small numbers were recorded at many localities in the first three months of the year with peak counts of six at Henfield on 2 Jan and in the Brede Valley on 20 Mar. Most records of spring migrants were of ones and twos, mainly at coastal sites, with a peak of four at Sidlesham Ferry on 7 Apr. The May records were of single birds at Pett Level on 4th, those shown in the *WeBS*' table on 7th and at Combe Haven on several dates during the month.

With a gap of almost a month, the bird at Gatwick Airport on 2 June could have been an early returning migrant; the species was then seen regularly throughout June and July with numbers building to the usual peak in August. Small numbers at a wide scattering of coastal and inland sites was the norm, with the highest concentrations being 31 at Rye Hbr on 23 July, 12 there on 21 Aug and ten at Thorney Deeps on 9 Aug. As usual, numbers

dropped off markedly after the end of September to give a scattering of wintering birds. [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
-	-	-	-	18	2	5	28	6	1	-	-

Spring numbers were well above average, with an influx of 14 between 4 and 8 May, which included four at Pulborough Brooks on 7th. There were also two in the lower Cuckmere Valley and two at Horse Eye Level on 6th but otherwise singles were involved. One flew E at Galley Hill, Bexhill on 13 May and the last spring record was of one flying W at Selsey Bill on 1 June.

In contrast, autumn numbers were about average and considerably down on the August influx of last year. The first was at Arundel WWT on 25 June and, as usual, most occurred in August, although birds were recorded regularly until mid-September. Numbers were low at most sites, mostly involving single birds, but there were four at Rye Hbr on 21 Aug and three at Pulborough Brooks on 25 Aug. The last of the year was one at Sidlesham Ferry on the late date of 5 Oct. [JC]

0556. **COMMON SANDPIPER**

Actitis hypoleucos

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

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>	-	-	-	-	44	1	54	46	23	-	-	3
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	10	5	-	-	-
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	-	5	-	7	10	1	-	-	-
Henfield Levels	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	1
Barcombe Res	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	2	2	-	-	-
Arlington Res	-	-	-	-	1	-	4	2	-	-	-	-
Cuckmere Haven	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	-	-	1
Pevensy Levels	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	nc	nc	1
Darwell Res	-	-	-	-	3	-	2	1	1	-	-	-
Pett Level	-	-	-	-	5	-	2	1	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	-	-	-	-	24	-	13	14	10	-	-	-
Scotney Court GPs	-	-	-	-	1	-	6	1	1	-	-	-

The approximate minimum monthly totals, which show far higher numbers in May than last year but only half the 1999 total for August, were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
7	7	6	46	215	23	205	265	85	8	3	6

In the first winter period, singles were recorded along the R. Arun at Ford, Arundel and Pulborough, and also at Rodmell, Laughton Place, Combe Haven, Rye Hbr and Camber Pits. The first presumed spring migrant was at Norman's Bay on 18 Mar and birds were then recorded regularly at a variety of coastal and inland sites. Most were in

May and notable concentrations included 12 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 4th, 15 at Sidlesham Ferry on 5th, 12 at Brighton Marina on 7th and 13 in Pagham Harbour on 16th.

The June records were scattered throughout the month making it difficult to distinguish between late spring and early autumn migrants. Numbers increased steadily in July and, unlike last year when there appeared to be a notable influx in August, this year's July and August totals were fairly similar. Double figure counts were recorded at several coastal and inland sites including 30 along the Union Canal at East Guldeford on 23 July and 39 at Piddinghoe, on the R. Ouse, on 4 Aug. Numbers showed the expected decline in September and, with the exception of one or two in the Pagham Hbr area at the beginning of the month, most of the October records were probably of wintering birds. November and December records were all of single birds: in the Arun Valley at Ford; in the Adur Valley at Coombes and Lower Beeding; in the Ouse Valley at Rodmell, Lewes and Barcombe Res; and at Cuckmere Haven and Rye Hbr. [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>	519	523	608	336	223	26	173	245	465	519	563	513
Chichester Hbr	125	161	248	163	112	21	52	46	5	86	70	47
Pagham Hbr	275	237	174	86	41	4	65	150	305	184	263	257
Climping	6	-	10	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	26	60	31
Lower Adur Estuary	21	37	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	25	2	11	4
Glyne Gap	65	48	85	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	100	161	128	123
Pett Level	21	18	58	73	20	-	6	23	-	40	19	43
Rye Hbr	3	16	5	12	47	1	50	26	14	-	6	-

Other notable counts included 40 at Goring Beach on 1 Jan, and at Pagham Hbr, 500 on 20 Feb and 120 on 20 Mar.

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

	Mar	Apr	May	Total
Selsey Bill	-	260	167	427
Worthing Beach	33	28	70	131
Brighton Marina	-	3	129	132
Splash Point, Seaford	-	-	38	38
Bexhill/Hastings	-	3	5	8

The peak movement was of 180E at Selsey Bill on 19 Apr. This is the largest movement noted in Sussex and occurred slightly earlier than the typical peak. Autumn movements were small with 100W at Selsey Bill in October, and a peak of 35W on 10th.

Few significant records were received for the early autumn period. Notable counts, not included in the *WeBS'* table, were only received for three sites. These comprised peak counts of 116 on 17 Oct, 125 on 3 Nov and 200 on 15 Dec at Rustington, and 200 on 10 Nov at Church Norton. Roosting birds between Bexhill and Hastings peaked at 70, 139 and 167 on 24 Sept, 12 Oct and 26 Nov respectively.

There were no inland records. [PMB].

0565. **GREY PHALAROPE***Phalaropus fulicarius***Very scarce autumn and rare winter visitor, usually occurring after gales.**

Five were recorded in an above average year for the species in the county. A juvenile was seen at Newhaven East Pier on 21-22 Sept (JC *et al*), two first-winters at Brighton Marina on 1 Dec (KBG, IJW *et al*), a first-winter at Worthing Beach on 13 Dec (JAN) and an adult at Widewater, Lancing on 16-17 Dec (RJV *et al*). The Marina birds were not together, one being present off the base of the eastern arm and the other off the base of the western arm. The Widewater bird, which attracted a number of admirers, was unusual in that it was calling frequently. A photograph of this bird appears in this *Report*. Those in December were the first records for that month since 1989 although seven were seen in January during the 1990s (with six in September, seven in October and four in November). [RJV]

0566. **POMARINE SKUA***Stercorarius pomarinus***Passage migrant in varying numbers in spring but very scarce in autumn; a very rare visitor in winter.**

A juvenile or first-winter was at Brighton Marina on 5 Jan (IJW).

At least 175 were seen in the spring of which 62 were in April, 112 in May and one in June. This was just below the 1988 – 1999 average of 181.

The first spring record was on 23 Apr when a single flew E at Splash Point, Seaford. Favourable conditions resulted in much larger numbers than usual in April with 29E past Brighton Marina on 27th and 25E past Splash Point on 30th. Both of these counts were the spring peaks at these locations. The 112 in May were seen on 11 dates although only one was recorded after 12th. The best days were 1st (34E at Selsey Bill, 22E at Brighton Marina, 25E at Newhaven and 22E at Splash Point); 5th (10E and 8W at Selsey Bill); 6th (16E at Splash Point); and 7th (11E at Splash Point). The last bird during May was a single E at Selsey Bill on 23rd although a very late bird flew E, also at Selsey Bill, on 14 June.

At the end of the year there were three further records: on 28 Oct there was a sub-adult off Goring (CEH) and a single W at Selsey Bill (OMM), which may have been the same bird, and in December one flew E at Brighton Marina on 21st (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 approximately 604 birds was the highest yet recorded in the county. 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	315	113	16	10	13	46	67	14	7
Dates	1	-	2	24	27	9	9	10	19	13	5	6

The only record in the first winter period was of a single flying E at Selsey Bill on 5 Jan. Spring passage commenced on 25 Mar when singles (perhaps the same) flew E at Brighton Marina and Splash Point, Seaford, with another at the latter site the following

day. It was an excellent spring for this species and double figure counts were noted on 12 dates in April. The best days were 16th with 33E past Splash Point; 17th when 67 flew E at Brighton Marina (a new county record) and 40E at Splash Point; and 26th and 27th with 29E at Brighton Marina on both dates. Numbers were much smaller in May with just two double figure counts: 11E at Splash Point on 6th and 17E at Brighton Marina on 12th. Monthly totals at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

	April	May	Total	No. per hr watched
Selsey Bill	61	18	79	0.33
Worthing	43	24	67	0.43
Brighton Marina	295	93	388	1.00
Splash Point, Seaford	191	48	239	1.09
Bexhill	5	9	14	0.29

The majority of birds seen in June and July were moving E, suggesting late passage, and this included 3E at Brighton Marina and Selsey Bill on 1 and 21 June respectively. One was at Pilesey Island on 16 June. The July records were all of singles other than 2E at Selsey Bill on 11th.

Birds continued to move E in August but, by September, a westerly passage predominated. Numbers remained small with 5E and 4W at Selsey Bill on 6 Sept being the peak. A juvenile lingered at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr for three days from 12th. In October, a large movement of 29W was recorded at Selsey Bill on 7th, with a further 10W there on 28th.

Numbers diminished through November although there were 4W at Selsey Bill on 5th and 6E and 1W at Brighton Marina on 11th. All December records were of singles other than 2E at Brighton Marina on 4th. The last bird recorded was a single W past Selsey Bill on 31st. [TJW]

0568. LONG-TAILED SKUA

Stercorarius longicaudus

Rare vagrant.

1996: A juvenile W off Birling Gap on 25 Aug (DC, JFC, JWJ) was the first of two recorded that year and takes the total for the 1990s to 14.

2000: Two were recorded at Brighton Marina, an adult E at 18.55 BST on 9 May (PB, IJW) and a juvenile on the sea off the West Arm before flying E on 20 Dec (KBG, IJW). The latter is the first county record for December, although there are two old (1844 and 1872) records for November. Since 1990 records have been in May (five during 9th-14th), August (three, from 8th), September (six), October (one on 5th) and December. During this period three have been seen at both Brighton Marina and Beachy Head and four at Seaford. [RJF]

0569. GREAT SKUA

Catharacta skua

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

The annual total of approximately 157 birds was exceptional and far exceeded the average for the last four years of 92. The records are summarised in the following table that shows birds flying east, west or lingering offshore.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
E	-	-	2	73	13	2	1	3	2	4	1	2
W	1	-	1	5	1	-	-	3	5	24	2	2
O/S	1	1	-	3	1	-	3	-	1	-	-	-
Total	2	1	3	81	15	2	4	6	8	28	3	4

In January, a single on 5th lingered briefly off Pilsey Sands before flying W, and on the 6th what was probably the same bird was offshore at Selsey Bill. One was found dead at Hope Gap, Seaford on 15th. The only record for February was of one on the sea at Rottingdean on 19th.

After one flying W at Selsey Bill on 3 Mar, spring passage began with singles E at Beachy Head on 24th and 25th. Records were received for 29 dates in April and May and were typically of up to five per day at the main sea-watching localities. Larger counts were of 20E at Brighton Marina and 14E at Splash Point, Seaford on 17 Apr, 6E past Brighton Marina on 18th, 6E past Splash Point on 20th, 8E there on 21st, and 8E and 1W at Rye Hbr on 25th. In June, singles were noted flying E at Selsey Bill on two dates and, in July, four birds were seen including two at Birling Gap on 18th.

Ones and twos were noted throughout August and September but there was a notable autumn passage in October with peak totals at Selsey Bill of 9W on 7th and 8W on 9th. In November, three singles were seen at Brighton Marina including one that flew west over the city and, in December, the most notable record was of a very pale individual that flew E off Worthing on 24th. [TJW]

0575. MEDITERRANEAN GULL

Larus melanocephalus

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

This species continues to increase. The bare statistics show that a total of 505 records were submitted reporting 1076 birds on 244 different days. There were 12 records of more than ten birds. The following table shows the approximate monthly totals which include birds of unknown age:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Adults	19	28	54	34	7	19	16	9	17	11	25	23
2 nd -years	6	3	13	11	7	5	5	2	1	2	2	3
1 st -years	1	1	4	15	13	4	3	3	6	5	2	3
Juveniles	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	6	1	-	-	-
TOTAL	28	50	77	112	30	44	39	28	41	40	35	41
Inland	5	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	3	-	-	2

The pattern of occurrence is remarkably similar to recent years with the highest numbers being recorded in early spring and with adults being the most frequently recorded age group. With the plethora of records it is difficult to make a precise statement about the number of different birds seen in the county but the data suggest a figure of between 200-250 individuals.

Wintering individuals were recorded at the regular coastal sites with the largest counts being five at Saltdean on 19 Jan, seven at Paghham Hbr on 27 Feb and 11 roosting at Southwick on the same day. Twenty-one, all adults, were counted in the Southwick roost on 11 Mar (ADW), a county record, with between ten and 16 recorded there on four dates

during the following week. There were 12 at Pett Level by 25 Mar and 18 were recorded there on three different dates in April.

Observed coastal movements also increased during March and the following table shows the monthly totals of birds passing the regular sea-watching sites. Peak spring movements were 8E and 7E at Brighton Marina on 7 and 16 Apr respectively, 7E at Worthing on 7 May and 6E, all adults in a single party, at Shoreham on 8 Apr.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	3W	2W	-	6E+1W	-	-	6W	7W	1E+14W	20W	5W	4E
Worthing Beach	-	-	5E	14E+1W	7E+2W	-	2W	-	-	-	3W	-
Brighton Marina	2E	2E+2W	4E	46E	5E	7E	4E	1W	-	-	-	6E
Splash Point	-	-	-	12E	-	-	-	-	-	1W	-	-
Bexhill&Hastings	1E	-	2E+2W	3E	4E	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Birds recorded feeding or loafing offshore, excluded from the table, were noted most frequently at Selsey Bill where a maximum of seven was seen on 22 June.

Four pairs bred in East Sussex and fledged juveniles were seen at nearby sites during July. However, the highest counts during the summer, like previous years, came from Chichester Hbr where 13 were seen in the entrance channel on 27 June and 11 on Thorney Airfield on 9 Aug.

The above table shows a small westward passage only evident from Selsey Bill where peak numbers were 8W on 26 Sept and 4W on both 11 and 12 Oct. By November, records came from the usual winter sites with the largest numbers seen at roosts. At Southwick, up to six different birds were seen during the last two months of the year and up to four birds roosted in Brighton Marina, but the highest numbers were at Pagham Hbr where roost counts of 17, 15 and 12 occurred between 30 Nov and 12 Dec.

Twelve of the 14 birds recorded inland were within a few miles of the coast, the most notable being four at Chichester GPs on 5 Jan. A single bird further inland at Bewl Water on 20 Sept was joined by a second on 23rd.

A white ring, 97H, was read on an adult bird at Southwick on 1 Feb. [JAN]

0578. LITTLE GULL

Larus minutus

Scarce visitor and passage migrant, most numerous on passage in spring.

Although the total of approximately 666 birds seen during the year was slightly more than 1999, the pattern of occurrence was markedly different to that shown in recent years. There were a few records during the early months, a mediocre spring passage, very few summer birds and a large movement in late autumn and early winter; this being shown in the following table of approximate monthly totals:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Total	10	7	6	135	67	2	2	8	15	39	239	136
Inland	2	2	-	6	-	-	-	1	2	10	1	6

During the first three months between one and three were recorded from 13 different sites; most were seen at the coast but an oiled adult was on flood water near Greatham on 9-10 Jan, an immature was flying over a ploughed field with Black-headed Gulls at Springhead Hill, near Storrington on 23 Jan, an immature was at Swanbourne Lake, Arundel on 8 Feb, and two were seen at nearby Offham on 14 Feb.

The spring coastal movements were poor in comparison with several recent years with only five records exceeding ten birds and peak movements of 23E and 27E at Splash Point, Seaford on 16 Apr and 6 May respectively. The monthly totals of passing birds at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	-	-	-	13	6	-	1	2	1	9	78	22
Worthing Beach	-	-	-	2	8	-	-	-	-	2	47	5
Brighton Marina	-	-	4	66	22	-	-	-	3	15	131	67
Splash Point, Seaford	-	1	-	63	48	-	-	-	-	2	4	-
Bexhill/Hastings	1	-	1	9	9	-	-	2	5	9	-	-

Six at Barcombe Res on 21 Apr was the only spring record away from the coast. The last recorded by sea-watchers were 4E at Bexhill on 21 May; thereafter one or two immature birds were seen at either Rye Hbr or Pett Level until 4 June.

Both of the above tables demonstrate a slow start to the autumn with single birds recorded at Chichester Hbr on 27 June, Selsey Bill on 18 July and Newhaven Tide Mills on 23 July. During August and September there were sporadic sightings of one or two birds but these included one at Bewl Water on 3 Sept. Five birds at both Barcombe and Arlington Res on 22 Oct and one at Pulborough Brooks on 7 Nov were the only inland records whilst coastal movements were increasing. The offshore passage in both November and December was exceptional as the record totals for these two months reveal. The best days were 5 Nov with 53W at Selsey Bill and 38W at Worthing, 11 Nov with 83W at Brighton Marina and 27 at Southwick, 22 Nov with 22W at Brighton Marina, and 21 Dec when 23 flew E in one flock at Rye Bay. The enduring 8.5hrs sea-watch in strong onshore winds at Brighton Marina on 11 Nov produced the largest autumn movement recorded from Sussex. Inland observations during December were of three feeding over the flooded Lewes Brooks and singles at Litlington, Arlington Res and Barcombe Res. [JAN]

0579. SABINE'S GULL

Larus sabini

Rare autumn vagrant

A juvenile flew E past Brighton's Palace Pier at 17.00 BST on 9 Oct (KGB). It was then seen to the west of Newhaven Breakwater on 10th (JC *et al*), off Splash Point, Seaford on 11th (ASC *et al*) and at Newhaven Tide Mills on 12th (JC, NJT). Also on 12 Oct a juvenile or first-winter was seen off Galley Hill, Bexhill (IS) while a juvenile was found at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 14th (ARK *et al*). A juvenile seen off Selsey Bill on 4 Nov (GF) landed on the beach before being disturbed by a dog, while an adult flew W there on 5 Nov (RWP *et al*). Five in a year has only been exceeded once - following the Great Storm of October 1987 when at least 19 were recorded. The next highest annual total is three, in 1970 (with all three being found on 13 September). Just seven were recorded during the 1990s. The November records are the latest in the county since 1971 (when one was seen at Pagham Hbr in late December). [RJF]

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

The six counts during the early part of the year in excess of 1000 were 2000 at Henfield Levels on 1 Jan, 1500 at Combe Haven during January, 1350 at Bexhill on 23 Jan, 1400 at Darwell Res on 13 Feb, 2500 at Southwick Beach on 28 Feb, and 2500 roosting on the shore at Rye Hbr on 9 Mar.

Coastal passage was recorded from mid-March; the monthly eastbound totals and peak movements for the spring are shown below:

	Mar	Apr	May	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	39	433	798	187 on 6 May (9hrs)
Worthing Beach	206	1720	1213	715 on 29 Apr (6.8hrs)
Brighton Marina	8153	4176	461	2638 on 12 Mar (3.5hrs)
Bexhill/Hastings	234	62	234	151 on 6 May (1.8hrs)

The total of 12,790 recorded from Brighton Marina during the spring forms a new county record but probably represents more assiduous recording of this species during the long hours watched at this site. The other large, but less precise, movements at Brighton Marina not shown in the above table were 1100E on 19 Mar, 1500E on 24 Mar, 1000E on 8 Apr and 1200E on 29 Apr.

Only 33 pairs bred at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr. The first chicks there were noted on 4 June but predation of both eggs and chicks by fox, and later possibly by Herring Gulls, resulted again in a total failure. At Pett Level, the active colony was estimated to contain more than 700 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 in 1999, the nest failed at the egg stage. There were no records from Arundel WWT but a sighting of 42 adults at Houghton on 9 June suggests this colony was still present.

Apart from 3000 roosting at Pett Level, the counts in the summer were small until July when 700 were following the plough at Wepham Down on 12th and 1700 were at Pagham Hbr on 21st. There were 1000 at Pagham Hbr on 5 Aug, 3500 at Cuckmere Haven on 21 Oct, 780W at Brighton Marina on 7 Nov, 500 roosting at Goring Gap on 12 Nov, 1000 at Combe Haven during December, and several counts involving smaller numbers. The roost at Bewl Water held 15,000 on 10 Dec but had reduced to 4000 on 29 Dec.

The monthly maxima of regular counts at Weir Wood Res are shown below but these exclude counts of roosts which can comprise thousands of birds and occur at the generally unwatched dam end of the reservoir (Mortlock 1992).

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
250	210	58	1	1	2	30	26	28	28	56	94

Albino individuals were seen at Shoreham on 4 Mar and at Church Norton on 18 Nov.
[JAN]

0590. COMMON GULL

Larus canus

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

Regular counts in the first winter period at Southwick produced 4000 on 16 Jan and 3000 on both 18 Jan and 27 Feb. Elsewhere, there were 600 roosting at Pilsley Sands on 27 Jan, an estimated 600 at Darwell Res on 13 Feb, and 400 at Beachy Head on 14 Feb. Numbers increased slightly during March; 15,000 roosted on the shore at Rye Hbr on the 9th and the Southwick count reached 5000 on 19th.

Coastal passage of this species tends to be erratically recorded but was noted from late March; the monthly eastbound totals and peak movements for the spring are shown below:

	Mar	Apr	May	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	82	92	72	71 on 29 Mar (3.5hrs)
Worthing Beach	0	274	10	130 on 8 Apr (6.3hrs)
Brighton Marina	2000	12,000	0	5000 on 2 (10hrs) and 7 Apr (12.5hrs)
Bexhill/Hastings	14	10	16	15 on 6 May (1.8hrs)

Additionally, on both 21 Mar and 6 Apr, observers at Brighton Marina recorded 2000E and these, with the movements shown in the table, are amongst the largest recorded in the county. During the later spring and summer, numbers were small until 150 were on Thorney Airfield on 11 July and 100 were feeding behind a plough on Wepham Down on the 12th. The numbers on Thorney Airfield had increased to 400 by 25 July and 1000 on 9 Aug. The only other notable autumn record was of at least 500 on the R. Adur at Shoreham on 22 Oct.

In December, an easterly movement was noted at Brighton Marina with 500E on 6th and 550E on 18th. Winter roosts held in excess of 1000 birds at Bewl Water on 10 Dec and 2000 at Pilsley Sands on 29 Dec.

At Weir Wood Res the numbers recorded were again small (see caveat in Black-headed Gull) as shown by the monthly maxima below:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
41	47	49	3	1	1	1	6	-	1	14	18

Albino individuals were seen at Southwick Beach on 26 Feb and roosting at Pilsley Sands on 29 Dec. [JAN]

0591. LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

Larus fuscus graellsii

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

Most of the records during the early portion of the year involved just one or two birds but there were 30 at Arlington Res on 6 Feb, monthly maxima of 50 at Combe Haven in both February and March, 70 roosting at Cuckmere Haven on 30 Mar and 125 at Combe Haven on 11 Apr. This species seldom forms part of the observed spring coastal passage and this is supported by the absence of records from Selsey Bill, Brighton Marina and Splash Point, Seaford and low spring totals of 26E at Worthing and 108E at Bexhill (peak 43E on 18 Mar).

The following table, showing the results of the *Seabird 2000* census of roof nesting gulls, includes all areas surveyed and reveals a clear increase in the breeding population in the county. Further details will be published on completion of this 3-year survey.

SU80 (Chichester)	3	TQ50 (Eastbourne)	0
SU90 (Bognor)	1	TV59 (Eastbourne)	0
SZ99 (Bognor)	0	TQ60 (Eastbourne)	0
TQ00 (Littlehampton)	1	TV69 (Eastbourne)	2
TQ01 (Worthing)	29	TQ70 (Bexhill)	8
TQ20 (Shoreham/Hove)	0	TQ71 (Hastings)	0
TQ30 (Brighton)	2	TQ81 (Hastings)	0
TQ32 (Haywards Heath)	0	TQ91 (Rye)	0
TQ40 (Newhaven)	3	TQ92 (Rye)	0
TV49 (Newhaven)	2	Total	51

Although only two pairs were recorded nesting in Brighton, there were 12 adults at Brighton Marina on 5 July. Autumn counts in Pagham Hbr were 35 on 21 July and 39 on 11 Aug whilst there were 14 on Thorney Airfield on 25 July and 31 on Pilsey Sands on 25 Aug. In the lower Arun Valley, regular counts between August and November produced between 12 and 16 birds. On downland at Bury and Bignor Hills, the regular autumn flock reached a peak of 40, 38 of which were adults, on 9 Sept. The highest numbers were recorded in October when a maximum of 110 was recorded at Combe Haven, 60 were feeding on ploughed land at Beachy Head on 8th, 800 were at Pagham Hbr on 18th and counts of 250 and 350 were made at Cuckmere Haven on 21st and 23rd respectively. There were 50 roosting at Birling Gap on 8 Nov and the same number at both Combe Haven and the Glynde Levels later in the month. Of the eight December records, only 35 at Combe Haven and 11 at Pilsey Island on 21st reached double figures. There were no records from the formerly regular sites in the Horsham area. [JAN]

0591.01. **BALTIC LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus fuscus fuscus*

Very rare vagrant.

1999: An adult in Queen's Park, Brighton on 29 Sept (JC, IJW).

2000: An adult at Combe Haven on 27 Oct (KMJ).

These would appear to be the first county records of Lesser Black-backed Gulls of the Baltic form *fuscus*. Most authors have treated *Larus fuscus* as a single species, represented in western Europe by the three subspecies *fuscus*, *intermedius* and *graellsii*. However, this taxonomic arrangement has recently been challenged with some authorities 'splitting' *L. fuscus* into two separate species; Baltic Gull *L. fuscus* and Lesser Black-backed Gull *L. graellsii*, in which *graellsii* and *intermedius* are 'lumped'. The Lesser Black-backed Gulls breeding in Sussex are of the subspecies *graellsii* though the darker mantled *intermedius* is also a regular visitor to the county and an identification pitfall when confronted with a possible *fuscus*. The identification of Baltic Lesser Black-backed Gulls has been discussed in detail by Jonsson (1998). [PJ]

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

1999: During the breeding season the cliffs were surveyed revealing no pairs between Roedean and Cuckmere Haven, six pairs between Cuckmere Haven and Birling Gap, and 28 pairs on the cliffs near Hastings.

2000: Once again there were no co-ordinated winter counts of gulls in Sussex and, as usual, all the highest counts were from coastal sites. Observers at Combe Haven recorded large numbers with 2500 in January and March, 2000 in February, 1000 in April and 600 in May. Elsewhere there were 500+ at Glyne Gap on 16 Jan, 500 at Brighton Marina on 25 Feb and 650+ at Galley Hill, Bexhill on 12 Mar. There is little methodical recording of movements of this species, thus of interest were 100N at Bewl Water on 20 Feb and eastbound totals at Bexhill of 216 and 24 for March and April respectively.

During this, the second year of the *Seabird 2000* survey, the urban rooftops were surveyed and the following table gives the numbers of pairs found in each 10km square. These figures show a clear increase from the last full survey in 1983/84, which produced a county total of 851 pairs (*Birds of Sussex*). Further details will be published when this survey has been completed.

SU80 (Chichester)	59	TQ50 (Eastbourne)	10
SU90 (Bognor)	3	TV59 (Eastbourne)	27
SZ99 (Bognor)	6	TQ60 (Eastbourne)	3
TQ00 (Littlehampton)	3	TV69 (Eastbourne)	60
TQ01 (Worthing)	578	TQ70 (Bexhill)	121
TQ20 (Shoreham/Hove)	41	TQ71 (Hastings)	65
TQ30 (Brighton)	235	TQ81 (Hastings)	2
TQ32 (Haywards Heath)	1	TQ91 (Rye)	125
TQ40 (Newhaven)	152	TQ92 (Rye)	20
TV49 (Newhaven)	96	Total	1604

Additionally a pair nested on the tern raft at New Lake, Chichester GP; six pairs were located just W of the Beachy Head lighthouse and, at Rye Hbr, two pairs nested on Ternery Pool and three pairs at the Long Pit.

Insert sketch Herring Gull (no 3)

A count of 1000 at Brighton Marina on 31 May was described by the observer (KGB) as ‘excellent’ and there were 1300 on 2km of Worthing’s foreshore on 18 June. The remaining summer counts were smaller but of interest were 520 roosting at Pagham Hbr on 21 July and 350, all juveniles, at Brighton Marina on 25 July. Approximately 1000 were actively feeding by following a plough on downland near Cissbury on 20 Sept and the same number were recorded on ploughed land at Beachy Head on 8 Oct. Other counts in excess of 500 were from coastal sites with between 600 and 750 noted at Galley Hill, Bexhill from October until December, 950 on the R. Adur at Shoreham on 26 Oct, and 700 roosting at Brighton Marina on 31 Dec.

A leucistic individual was seen on the R. Adur at Shoreham on 26 Nov. [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 and highest counts at each of the main sites, reveals the usual summer peak:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Total	4	1	2	3	-	8	119	160	124	146	27	9
Pagham Hbr	1	1	-	-	-	3	95	110	100	95	20	1
Shoreham	-	2	-	-	-	-	16	37	22	3	2	-

Between 21 July and 5 Oct, the numbers in Pagham Hbr remained fairly constant with the highest count of 110 occurring on 11 Aug. On the R. Adur at Shoreham there were 37 (29 of which were adults) on 2 Aug and 36 on 29 Aug. With the exception of 40 adults roosting on Lullington Heath on 20 Oct the records from other, mainly coastal sites, involved smaller numbers. Inland, there were individuals at Weir Wood Res on 25 July and at Pulborough Brooks on 8 Dec.

The *British Birds Rarities Committee* is currently in the process of assessing the status of the race *L.a. cachinnans* (known as Caspian Gull) which is not officially recognised as having occurred in Britain. Records of birds showing the characteristics of this race in Sussex will be considered by the *SOS Records Committee* when this assessment is completed. [JAN]

0598. **ICELAND GULL** *Larus glaucooides*

Rare winter visitor and passage migrant.

1996: A first-year individual seen at Birling Gap on 17 Mar (DC, JFC) adds to the two previously published March 1996 sightings of first-year Iceland Gulls in East Sussex.

2000: One, in first-winter plumage, was seen off Brighton Marina during the morning of 19 Feb (KGB) and later from Saltdean (IJW). A third-winter individual moulting into third-summer plumage was recorded at Combe Haven on 22 Feb (KMJ) and another first-winter individual was seen at Brighton Marina and West Pier on 21 Apr (KGB, IJW *et al*). The final bird for the year was an adult seen on the beach at Selsey Bill on 7 Nov (BFF, OMM). [JAN]

0599. **GLAUCOUS GULL***Larus hyperboreus***Very scarce but regular winter visitor and passage migrant.**

1998: The three seen at Pagham Hbr on 11 Jan (*SxBR* 51:90 & 52:97) comprised an adult, a third-winter and a second-winter.

2000: The adult bird, first recorded in Pagham Hbr on 28 Dec 1999, was recorded on four dates in January until 23rd (AHO, RWP). The only other observations for the year were for mid-April and possibly refer to a single bird. At 08.14 BST on 17 Apr a first year bird flew E, in the company of Herring Gulls, at Splash Point, Seaford (BRG, NJT *et al*) and presumably the same bird, still with Herring Gulls, continued eastward at Beachy Head in the 'mid-morning' (JFC *et al*). Two days later one considered to be in first winter/summer plumage was recorded flying W offshore at Pevensy Bay (JBi). [JAN]

0600. **GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL***Larus marinus***Common winter visitor and passage migrant; small numbers summer; recent rare breeding species. Confirmed breeding for the first time in 2000.**

1998: A juvenile was present at Brighton Marina on 31 July.

1999: Two juveniles were seen begging from an adult at Brighton Marina on 2 Aug.

2000: The following table, showing the maximum count in each month from five sites where this species was regularly recorded during the year, shows this species to be most numerous in the autumn and winter. The highest count was 830 roosting on mudflats in Pagham Hbr on 21 Dec.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chichester Hbr	160	-	-	60	22	25	50	137	-	-	-	-
Pagham Hbr	250	-	8	2	-	-	135	240	-	108	-	830
Littlehampton	-	43	-	-	-	-	33	17	19	23	24	85
Cuckmere Haven	-	-	300	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	250	200
Bexhill	240	68	70	62	3	3	2	7	74	77	269	142

The only other location where a high number was recorded during the early months was Combe Haven where 100 were seen during February.

A pair nested on a factory roof in Bexhill with the single young fledging on 18 July (IS). This is the first confirmed breeding of this species in Sussex although the observations described above strongly suggest that breeding occurred in the vicinity of Brighton Marina in both 1998 and 1999. At Brighton Marina during 2000, a pair became aggressively territorial during May and was frequently seen flying inland over Kemp Town. Thereafter a pair was present throughout the summer and on 31 July and 9 Aug a pair was seen near the Marina with a begging juvenile (KGB, IJW). A single bird was also seen on a roof top in Brighton during the summer.

Autumn counts, additional to those shown in the above table, included 107 at Worthing on 7 Oct, 600, mostly adults, on a ploughed field at Beachy Head on 8 Oct, 320 there on 8 Nov, and 300 offshore at Splash Point, Seaford on 20 Oct. A small movement was noted at Climping at the end of December with 82E on 26th and 164E on 27th.

Although there were 200 at Arlington Res on 6 Feb and 400 there on 8 Dec, the numbers at locations far inland were very low with the sole records comprising between one and three birds at Bewl Water, Darwell Res and Weir Wood Res. The Jersey ringed

bird carrying an 'Orange C' ring, first seen in 1997, was again present at Brighton Marina from 8 Sept until 11 Nov. [JAN]

0602. KITTIWAKE

Rissa tridactyla

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

As usual most records of this species were of coastal movements, especially at Brighton Marina. Note that the close proximity of a breeding colony to Splash Point, Seaford makes recording movements at this site unreliable. The monthly totals for the main sea-watching sites were as follows:

	Selsey Bill		Worthing Beach		Brighton Marina		Splash Point, Seaford		Bexhill/Hastings	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Jan	19	4	13	44	1642	460	29	15	24	183
Feb	2	45	3	15	2180	3036	58	17	1	286
Mar	21	7	-	-	242	13	nc	nc	121	340
Apr	17	36	134	5	1330	46	nc	nc	80	1
May	22	35	33	1	798	5	nc	nc	3	1
June	9	25	3	-	2	-	-	-	-	3
July	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1
Aug	3	10	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	37
Sept	2	14	-	4	56	33	-	-	1	42
Oct	-	231	-	20	7	25	-	2	-	66
Nov	34	7154	1	673	69	298	7	2	-	-
Dec	38	23	48	104	1239	17	182	6	5	2

There were ten movements in excess of 300 birds in a day and, like 1999, most were at Brighton Marina where the largest counts were 575E on 24 Jan (4.5hrs), 575W on 18 Feb (2.3hrs) and 400E on 31 Dec (7.5hrs). It was, however, observers at Selsey Bill who logged a record movement for the county on 5 Nov when 7000 flew W in 9hrs during a fresh SSE wind. Notably fewer were seen at other sites on that day with totals of 654W at Worthing (2.8hrs), 220W and 23E at Brighton Marina (6hrs) and just eight, mostly flying E, at Splash Point, Seaford (1.3hrs).

On 9 July a count from the Newhaven Hbr breakwater revealed 120 nests on Newhaven cliffs with about 30 nests located further west. Although nests nearer Peacehaven may not have been visible, this suggests a further decline at this colony. Unfortunately there was no count of the colony at Splash Point, Seaford.

The summer roost at Brighton Marina was described as 'poor' with the peak count of 56 on 26 Aug but included a bird wearing a French ring. Single birds at Bewl Water on 14 Mar and 25 June were the only records away from the coast. [JAN]

0611. SANDWICH TERN

Sterna sandvicensis

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

The first spring records were singles at Rye Hbr on 10 Mar and flying E at Selsey Bill on 12th. Birds were recorded daily from 19th and the peaks for the month were 99E at Brighton Marina on 24th and 120 at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr on 25th.

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

	Mar	Apr	May	Total	No. per hr watched
Selsey Bill	43	1316	1420	2779	9.0
Worthing Beach	9	1339	835	2183	12.5
Brighton Marina	201	3498	1065	4764	10.4
Splash Point, Seaford	58	1694	649	2401	9.2
Bexhill/Hastings	-	264	65	329	4.4

The total number of birds seen increased by 25% compared with 1999. The number of birds per hour was higher at three sites, with an overall increase of 12%. As usual, the peak was in April and the best counts were 393E at Brighton Marina on 7th, 275 at Rye Hbr on 16th, 244E at Brighton Marina on 20th, and 276E at Selsey Bill on 25th. Numbers decreased in May although 210 flew E at Selsey Bill on 5th. Passage continued into June with 67E at Selsey Bill on 8th and totals for the month of 140E and 22W at Brighton Marina.

There were no breeding attempts at Rye Hbr although about 30 birds remained there throughout the summer. A juvenile, presumably from a nearby colony, was seen at Ternery Pool on 2 July.

In July, numbers at Rye Hbr increased from 220 on 20th to 318 by 30th. The only three figure count in August was of 100 at Pagham Hbr on 1st. Autumn passage peaked in September with totals of 43E and 758W recorded at Selsey Bill during the month. The highest counts were 250W on 1st and 15E and 150W on 6th. At West Wittering, 70 were counted on 2nd. Numbers decreased in October with 2W at Selsey Bill on 25th the last record of the year.

A single at Bewl Water on 20 Sept was the only inland record during the year. [TJW]

0614. ROSEATE TERN

Sterna dougallii

Very scarce passage migrant and non-breeding summer visitor.

1999: One was seen at dusk at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr on 26 Apr (BJY).

2000: There were four records during the year. The first was a single flying E at Splash Point, Seaford on 13 May (TJW *et al*). In the summer, one was fishing off Pilsey Island with other terns on 7 July (CBC) and one (perhaps the same) was at Church Norton on 15 July (AHO). Finally, a single lingered briefly off Brighton Marina on 18 Sept (KBG, ADW, IJW). [TJW]

0615. COMMON TERN

Sterna hirundo

Scarce breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant.

The first record was of a single flying E at Brighton Marina on 24 Mar followed by records from Worthing, Brighton Marina and Rye Hbr on 1 Apr. Numbers were then small until the end of the month when notable counts included 70 at Ivy Lake, Chichester GPs on 24th and 175 at Rye Hbr and 150 at Pett Level, both on 29th. In May, 250 flew E past Newhaven on 7th and 300 were at Pett Level on 24th.

Breeding information was limited; at Rye Hbr about 57 pairs nested from mid-May and the first chick was noted on 11 June. There was heavy predation, probably due to fox,

and it was thought that no young fledged. At Pett Level, an estimated 150 pairs were present during the breeding season. At Chichester GPs, 50 pairs were estimated and 44 chicks were ringed on 2 July. Two at Weir Wood Res on 17 June were showing signs of breeding.

Westerly passage in August and September was light and the only three figure counts in the period were 240 at Pilsey Sands on 30 Aug, 453W at Bexhill on 1 Sept, 42E and 172W at Brighton Marina on 6 Sept, and 113 at Camber on the same date. Of the 35 seen in October, 25 were at Newhaven Tide Mills on 4th. A single at Brighton Marina on 11 Oct was the last record for the year. [TJW]

0616. ARCTIC TERN

Sterna paradisaea

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

The first record was a single at Bawl Water on 13 Apr. A further 104 birds were seen in the spring, with over 50% recorded at Brighton Marina, where the peaks were 22E on 28 Apr and 24E on 6 May. The only other record away from the main sea-watching localities was a single in Pagham Hbr on 17 May.

In June, five flew E at Splash Point, Seaford on 8th while, in July, birds were recorded on three dates at Pagham Hbr, the best count being four on 27th.

In the autumn far fewer were seen than in 1999 with only 52 recorded on 19 dates. All records were of singles at the coast other than at Brighton Marina, where there were 3E and 14W on 6 Sept, 1E and 1W on 15 Sept and 3W on 22 Sept, and at Bexhill, where 12 flew W on 14 Aug and 4W on 1 Sept. The last records were singles W at Selsey Bill on 18 Oct and at Pilsey Island the following day. [TJW]

COMMON/ARCTIC TERN

Sterna hirundo/paradisaea

Most birds passing sea-watching localities remain unidentified as ‘Commic’ Terns. The first record was of a single in Pagham Hbr on 10 Mar (IETC, JGi), the earliest county record. Regrettably, it could not be assigned to either species and indeed Forster’s Tern, a very rare winter visitor to Britain, was not ruled out.

The next record was of 1E past Selsey Bill on 25 Mar, also an early date, but there were no others until 1 Apr when birds were noted at a number of locations along the coast. Numbers built up throughout April and the obvious peak for that month was 531E at Brighton Marina on 28th. As usual, the largest numbers were seen in May with Brighton Marina recording four figure counts on three successive days from 6th. The best counts were on that date with 1877E in 15 hours at Brighton Marina and 2285E at Splash Point, Seaford in 11.25 hours. The totals at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

	Apr	May	Total	No. per hr watched
Selsey Bill	1070	2605	3675	15.6
Worthing Beach	532	2336	2868	18.4
Brighton Marina	1549	6169	7718	19.9
Splash Point, Seaford	588	5502	6090	27.8

The summer months were uneventful and the only notable counts were at Selsey Bill where 172 flew W on 25 July and 120E and 116W on 27 July. A more pronounced westerly passage occurred in September with 630W at Selsey Bill on 6th and 268W there

on 7th. Of the 12 birds recorded in October, 2W at Worthing on 19th were the latest. [TJW]

0624. LITTLE TERN

Sterna albifrons

Scarce breeding summer visitor and fairly common summer visitor.

The first records were on 14 Apr when eight flew E at Selsey Bill and two were offshore at Rye Hbr. Birds were then noted daily throughout April with the highest counts being 39E at Selsey Bill on 25th, 31E at Worthing on both 29th and 30th and 41E at Brighton Marina, also on 30th. Numbers peaked in early May with 116E at Brighton Marina and 99E at Splash Point, Seaford on 5th and 92E at Splash Point the following day. The numbers recorded per hour watched was generally lower than in 1999. The totals at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

	Apr	May	Total	No. per hr watched
Selsey Bill	135	234	369	1.6
Worthing Beach	94	124	218	1.4
Brighton Marina	93	186	279	0.7
Splash Point, Seaford	60	221	281	1.3
Bexhill/Hastings	10	33	43	0.9

No breeding occurred at Rye Hbr despite a high level of activity until mid-May. This is the first time that this species has not attempted to breed at this site since before the LNR was established in 1970. However, 11 pairs nested at the Midrips but with no success. A total of seven pairs was present at Ellanore, Chichester Hbr but breeding success was unknown and at North Stakes Island a pair failed at the egg stage.

The highest count of the autumn was 42 at Pilsey Sands on 8 Aug and 14, including two juveniles, at Snowhill Marsh, West Wittering on 12 Aug were also noteworthy. The last record of the year was of a single at Widewater, Lancing on 20 Sept.

There were two inland records: singles at Pulborough Brooks on 22 July and at Weir Wood Res on 25 July. [TJW]

0627. BLACK TERN

Chlidonias niger

Fairly common passage migrant.

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
14	141	1	4	29	49	4

The first spring record was of a single flying E at Selsey Bill on 16 Apr, one day earlier than last year. This was followed by 3E at Splash Point, Seaford on 22nd while other notable records in the month were of three at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr on 27th, and three at Arlington Res on 30th. Typically, spring passage peaked in May with a minimum of 119 recorded between 5th and 11th. The highest counts were 19E at Selsey Bill on 6th, 27E at Splash Point on 7th and 23E there the following day.

The only June record was of a single E past Brighton Marina on 22nd and, of the July records, the most notable was of two at Weir Wood Res on 25-26th.

Birds were noted on 29 dates in August and September but were spread out over the period with no real peak. In August, five were in Pagham Hbr on 26th, two were at Arlington Res from 28th and four were at Pilsey Island on 29th. The best counts in September were of 8W at Selsey Bill on 6th and 4W at Worthing on 18th. The October records were of a single at Brooklands, Worthing until 3rd, two at Arlington Res on 2nd, with one remaining until 8th, and one off Beachy Head, also on 8th. [TJW]

AUK species

Auk spp.

The year 2000 was quite exceptional for auks in Sussex as shown by the totals (which include Guillemots and Razorbills) recorded at the main sea-watching localities:

Direction of movement	Jan - Feb		Mar - May		June - July		Aug - Oct		Nov - Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	3697	2972	47	87	19	36	33	308	140	51
Worthing Beach	212	186	12	10	-	-	3	13	151	111
Brighton Marina	22700	17977	317	149	14	4	64	52	5897	1610
Splash Point, Seaford	2031	1953	167	20	10	-	36	1	2872	96
Bexhill/Hastings	13-	290	6	8	-	1	-	-	6	-

The largest movements of unidentified auks were recorded at Brighton Marina including 1112E and 237W in 6.25hrs on 13 Jan, 295E and 1725W in 2.5hrs on 20 Jan, 40E and 1832 W in 2hrs on 21 Jan, 9E and 3276 W in 6.6hrs on 31 Jan, 3795 E in 2.5hrs on 2 Feb and 2450 E in 3.25hrs on 17 Feb. At Selsey Bill, there were 3200E in 3.25hrs on 20 Jan while the largest movement recorded at Splash Point, Seaford was of 19E and 594W in 2hrs on 6 Feb (when confusingly there were 1010E and 25W at Brighton Marina). The total recorded on 2 Feb equates to 1686 birds per hour or one almost every 2 seconds! Not surprisingly, these are the largest movements of auks observed in Sussex.

Numbers in the latter part of the year were smaller, though still exceptional, with counts at Brighton Marina of 783E in 7.25hrs on 17 Dec, 728E in 3.25hrs on 18th, 928E in 7hrs on 20th, 85E and 441W in 4hrs on 25th, 215E and 617W in 6hrs on 26th, and 1121E and 250W in 7.5hrs on 31st. At Seaford, there were 719E in 2hrs, also on 31st. [DEGC/PJ]

0634. GUILLEMOT

Uria aalge

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; formerly bred.

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
293	1874	8	9	34	39	2	2	8	26	33	429

The total for the year of 2757 is almost certainly a record. It exceeds the totals for the last six years (1994-99) added together and should be compared with the cumulative total for the 14 years (1980-93) of 3843, an average of 275 per year. The increase in numbers was most apparent in December and more especially February, as shown by the totals recorded at the main sea-watching localities:

Direction of movement	Jan - Feb		Mar - May		June - July		Aug - Oct		Nov - Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	25	1382	17	11	9	28	4	22	62	6
Worthing Beach	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	1	19	-
Splash Point, Seaford	6	2	10	-	4	-	2	-	84	-
Bexhill/Hastings	6	18	3	-	-	1	-	-	-	-

The largest movements in the early part of the year were of 172W in 0.5hrs at Beachy Head on 29 Jan and, at Selsey Bill in February, 1100W in 6hrs on 1st, 125W in 4hrs on 2nd, 50W in 5hrs on 3rd, and 100W and 15E in 3.5hrs on 9th. The most significant movement in the latter part of the year was of 52E in 6hrs at Brighton Marina on 19 Dec. Also in December, up to ten were recorded in Newhaven Hbr, a single in Pagham Hbr on 22nd and, unusually, one on the R. Arun at Ford on 23rd.

An oiled bird was rescued from the shore at Rye Hbr on 12 Jan and taken to the RSPCA at Mallydams. Six other oiled birds were seen during the year and another oiled bird was found dead.

One found dead at Rottingdean on 3 Mar was of the bridled form (IJW). [DEGC]

0636. RAZORBILL

Alca torda

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; formerly bred.

1999: On 24 Feb a total of 692 flew E at Brighton Marina (IJW) as part of a large auk passage; this constitutes the largest number recorded in the county.

2000: The approximate monthly totals, which were exceptional for February and December, were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
34	864	4	5	29	5	1	-	1	33	24	287

The total for the year of 1287 is nearly twice that of last year and more than the totals for the previous five years added together. Most records were of birds passing at sea as shown by the totals recorded at the main sea-watching localities:

	Jan - Feb		Mar - May		June - July		Aug - Oct		Nov - Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	13	658	-	8	2	2	-	32	5	12
Worthing Beach	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6
Splash Point, Seaford	4	7	4	-	2	-	1	-	16	-
Bexhill/Hastings	1	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-

As with Guillemot, the largest movements were at Selsey Bill in February, including 200W in 6hrs on 1st, 325W in 4hrs on 2nd, 80W in 5hrs on 3rd and 50W 5E in 3.5hrs on 9th. The movement on 2nd would appear to be the second largest ever recorded in Sussex. Counts of birds offshore included 100 at Brighton Marina on 5th, 18 at Lancing on 17th and 38 seen from a fishing charter six miles off Brighton on 20th. In the latter part of the year, there were 40E and 5W at Brighton Marina in 6hrs on 26th and 109E and 5W in 5.25hrs the following day.

The monthly totals include two oiled birds, one of which (found at Hove Lagoon on 10 Jan) was taken to the RSPCA. [DEGC/PJ]

0647. LITTLE AUK

Alle alle

Very scarce but now annual autumn passage migrant and winter visitor.

Only one was recorded, the same as last year. This was seen 200m off Worthing Beach flying W at 11.36 BST on 28 Oct (JAN), a typical date. There may have been another an hour earlier but the view was brief and too distant to confirm. [DEGC]

0654. **PUFFIN**

Fratercula arctica

Very scarce visitor, most frequently recorded in spring.

There were just two records, both in May. The first was at Selsey Bill, flying W at 15.37 BST on 13th (RWP *et al*), and the other at Ovingdean Beach flying E at 08.38 BST on 27th (ITB). [DEGC]

0665. **FERAL ROCK DOVE**

Columba livia

Common resident.

A total of 20 records was submitted, more than double the 1999 figure. The winter census on 67ha at Marsh Fm, Yapton recorded 87 in the last quarter but only 16 in the first two months of the year. There were about 70 birds at Phoenix Bridge, Lewes all year and a pair raised two young in a nest box at a supermarket in Burgess Hill. A large flock was present at the cement works in the Adur Valley in November but no other sizeable flocks were reported. The threatened starvation of the Trafalgar Square residents does not appear to have resulted in a mass migration to our area! [DEC]

0668. **STOCK DOVE**

Columba oenas

Common resident and possible winter visitor.

In January, flocks of 100 were seen at Linchball Wood, West Dean and 300 at West Wittering. On 15 Feb, a flock of 150 was feeding on linseed in a set-aside field at Sedlescombe, while not far away at Darwell Res a bird was heard singing on the same date. A flock of 100 was recorded at Thorney Deeps on 9 Mar and 80 at Ovingdean on 11th. The Sedlescombe flock was still present at the end of April and a flock of 70 was noted at Pett Level on 17 May.

There were about 60 records of confirmed breeding with many more 'seen' during the breeding season at likely sites or reported as possible breeders. Nest boxes, including those set up for owls, are being used more and more as indicated by about 30 reports of successful breeding. A number of schemes, mainly in East Sussex, have been set up to encourage this species to use boxes. The Rother Scheme in particular reported nine nests in 24 boxes. A further 15 pairs used boxes in an area extending from Arlington to Horam. This use of nest boxes is very encouraging; *Birds of Sussex* gave no indication that nest box schemes were being used in the county. Details of other breeding surveys can be found on pages 171.

A flock of 150 was seen at Hurst Green on 10 Oct. Groups of 56, 100 and 130 were at Beachy Head on 26 Oct, when there were also 60 at Sidlesham Ferry. Movement was recorded in early November with 78 flying SW with Woodpigeons at Pett Level on 4th and 98SW at Marline Wood, Hastings, again with Woodpigeons, on 5th. Other movements during the month were of 45E at Beachy Head on 14th, 27S with Woodpigeons at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 15th and 48S in three flocks at Steyning Levels on 25th.

The only large flock reported in December was 120 at Ovingdean on 28th. [DEC]

0670. WOODPIGEON

Columba palumbus

Abundant resident and winter visitor.

The largest flock reported in January was 500 at Racton on 8th. Flocks of 400 were noted on 13 Feb at Bewl Water and Glyndebourne. There were 320 at Combe Haven on 17 Feb, 800 at Burpham on 19 Feb and 1155 at Climping Gap on 26 Feb. Movements in March included 80W and 80S at West Beach, Littlehampton on 5th and totals of 240W and 60E in 26hrs at Bexhill/Hastings, including 209 on 16th. A flock of 700 was at Pett Level on 23 Apr.

The species was grossly under-reported in the breeding season with just 17 records of confirmed breeding received. Details of surveys in defined areas can be found on pages 171.

A flock of 1000 was noted on stubble at Cocking on 30 July. Observed movements began in October with 240S and 400W at Combe Haven on 10th and 26th respectively and 1082W at Selsey Bill, also on 26th. Early November saw numbers increase with 2000W at Combe Haven on 1st, 7500W at Church Norton and 9750W at Whitbread Hollow on 4th, 10,240SW at Marline Wood, Hastings on 5th and 12,500SW out to sea at Brighton Marina on 8th. A number of other smaller movements were noted throughout November at mainly coastal sites. In December, there were 1500 at Pagham Hbr North Wall on 6th, 1100 on 95ha of mixed farmland at Seftor Fm, Rose Green on 7th and 1200 at Forest Mere on 21st. [DEC]

Sketch of Woodpigeon (No4)

0684. COLLARED DOVE

Streptopelia decaocto

Very common resident.

In the early part of the year there were 61 at West Beach, Littlehampton on 1 Jan, increasing to 69 by 26 Feb. A flock of 69 was counted in a garden at Hassocks on 13 Jan and, also in Hassocks, 40 were feeding on beech mast on 20 Oct. The flock at Littlehampton was counted on several subsequent occasions. Numbers varied from a minimum of 16 on 21 Apr to a maximum of 84 on 17 Dec. The latter count was only exceeded by one of 95 at Southwick on 7 Nov. Most other flocks recorded throughout the year averaged closer to 20 than 50.

Not surprisingly for this under-reported species, breeding records were sporadic with just a dozen reports of confirmed breeding. A pair was nesting at West Beach, Littlehampton on 6 Feb. Details of breeding surveys can be found on pages 171.

From the records supplied, there is no evidence of any change in the species' status in the county. However, the apparent absence of sizeable flocks would suggest that food supplies associated with farmland are not available in sufficient quantities to attract larger flocks of birds. [DEC]

0687. **TURTLE DOVE**

Streptopelia turtur

Fairly common, but declining summer visitor and passage migrant. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

The earliest record was for 20 Apr at Earnley followed by singles at Barcombe, Galley Hill and Winchelsea the following day. Subsequent records through May were largely of one or two birds from areas of the county west of and including Ashdown Forest. Six were seen at Sidlesham Ferry on 17 May and four at Cobnor on 28 May.

Details of breeding surveys can be found on pages 171. Additionally there were ten pairs at Bayham, eight singing males at Bignor Down, at least six pairs at Rye Hbr SSSI, five pairs on Thorney Island, four pairs at Grange Fm, Earnley, 3-4 pairs in Stansted Forest, and two pairs on Ambersham Common. At Pett Level, where in 1996 20 pairs were thought to have bred, a maximum of eight were recorded in May and just one in September.

Despite the general lack of records from the east of the county, 20 at Winchelsea Station on 20 July suggested that return movement had begun by this date. Most of the August records were of single birds, mainly at coastal sites. Exceptions were five at Halsey's Fm, Pagham Hbr on 8 and 12 Aug, six at Selsey West Fields on 18 Aug and eight at Church Norton on 30 Aug. The last recorded were two at Beachy Head on 1 Oct. [DEC]

0712. **Cat. C RING-NECKED PARAKEET**

Psittacula krameri

Very scarce introduced breeding resident.

There were no records in the early part of the year, the first sighting being of two at Alexandra Park, Hastings on 10 Mar. A single recorded at Galley Hill, Bexhill on a number of dates between 12 Mar and 17 Sept and at Combe Haven on three dates during the spring was presumably the same individual. Also in the east of the county, four birds were seen in flight at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr on 18 Aug and a single at Pett Level on 23 July and from 1 to 15 Sept. In the west, one was at Bognor Regis on 24 Sept and one was flushed from roadside trees at Horsham on 25 Oct.

Again, and despite continued increases in the London area, there was no evidence of breeding in the county. [DEC]

0724. **CUCKOO**

Cuculus canorus

Fairly common summer visitor.

The first record was of a bird calling at Bewl Water on 10 Apr. There were subsequent reports of mainly single birds on most days in April from all parts of the county. Three were at Rye Hbr on 23 Apr.

Birds were seen throughout the breeding season with most 'probable' breeding records coming from Ashdown Forest. Breeding was confirmed at Pett Level where a fledgling was found in a Dunnock's nest. A maximum of six was recorded at this site in May. There were four territories on Thorney Island with single juveniles seen on 27 June, 3 July and 25-27 July. At Willingdon Level only one young bird apparently fledged from a total of seven Reed Warbler nests, bad weather destroying most of the nests. Details of breeding surveys can be found on pages 171.

Observers at coastal sites began reporting returning birds from the end of July; all subsequent records were of single birds, the last being at Hollingbury Camp on 1 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
33	30	23	9	24	68	78	14	16	4	7	21

During the year there were 327 sightings. Birds were seen throughout much of the county, though records were scarce in the High Weald of north-central Sussex.

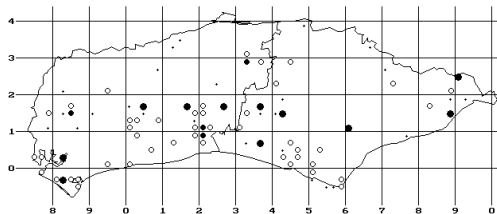
Breeding was confirmed at 60 sites (57 sites in 1999 and 62 in 1998). Nest sites included boxes in barns (41), pole boxes (9), tree boxes (6), a roof void in a barn (1), a castle (1) and an old railway bridge (1). Interestingly, there was no proof of breeding in natural sites in holes in trees though a bird was seen leaving a tree hole in March and late April. As usual, many nests were monitored under licence and 100 young were ringed from 35 nests with brood sizes ranging from one to seven.

Thirteen mortalities were reported, comprising eight road deaths, three drowned in water troughs and two found dead in late September, cause unknown. [GCMR]

0757. LITTLE OWL

Athene noctua

Fairly common resident.



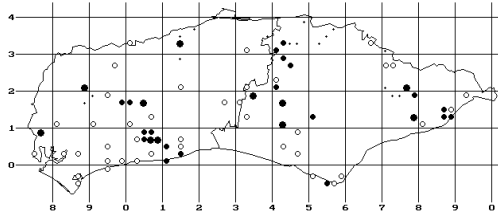
The map (in which filled circles denote degrees of breeding certainty and open circles denote records outside the breeding season and spring/summer records with no indication of breeding) shows the westerly distribution of records with approximately 59 sites in West Sussex and 40 in the east. Breeding was confirmed or probable at only 20 sites but, as this is a mainly sedentary species, there must be a strong possibility that it took place at most of the rest. Four pairs used owl boxes and two pairs occupied rabbit burrows.

Breeding success was recorded from only five pairs, of which one fledged two young, the rest only singles. A road death was recorded at Denton on 15 May. [RTP]

0761. TAWNY OWL

Strix aluco

Fairly common resident.



The map (in which filled dots denote degrees of breeding certainty and open circles denote records outside the breeding season and spring/summer records with no indication of breeding) shows the wide distribution of this species with the usual (for all species) gap in central East Sussex. This is to be expected as the fieldwork for the *Sussex Tetrads Atlas* (1988-92) recorded Tawny Owls in all the 10km squares within the county. Breeding was confirmed or considered possible at only 39 sites but this must be a gross underestimate considering the sedentary nature of this species. It is likely that nesting pairs were present at the majority of the 88 sites from which they were recorded. One nesting site was described, a nest box containing five eggs at Plumpton Green on 18 Mar. Breeding success was recorded at five sites. A pair fledged three young at Aldsworth Pond whilst the other four pairs produced only two. Details of breeding surveys in defined areas can be found on pages 171.

A road casualty was reported from the Knepp Estate in May; a bird was found dead in a copse on Thorney Island in July and one at Ebernoe Common in October possibly died of starvation. [RTP]

Insert Sketch of Tawny Owl (No 5)

0767. LONG-EARED OWL*Asio otis***Rare resident and very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Records were received from 14 sites, all but two of them in the east of the county. No multiple roosts were reported and all the records were of single birds, apart from one breeding record where an adult and juvenile were seen together. At a site on the South Downs, breeding failed for the first time in five years. A first-year female with a wood mouse in its talons was found dead on a road on 14 Feb but this incident could not relate to the failed breeding mentioned above. Another bird was found with a broken wing in the far east of the county in December but no further details were supplied. A bird flushed from conifers at Galley Hill, Bexhill on 16 Apr was probably a migrant. Other site details for this species remain confidential and it is hoped this will encourage more people to report their sightings. [RTP]

0768. SHORT-EARED OWL*Asio flammeus***Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Has bred.**

The following table gives the approximate monthly totals taking account of duplication at well-watched sites. Summing the monthly totals should not be attempted as there will be duplication between months.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
1999	12	8	10	5	3	-	4	10	17	14
2000	14	13	12	12	5	1	5	7	3	3

The first reports of the year came from Pulborough Brooks where the birds first noted the previous year continued to give good views as they hunted over the water meadows. Up to three were seen, the last one on 8 Apr. The roost on Thorney Island grew to a maximum of eight on 21 Jan. The last sighting here was on 23 Apr. Two birds were seen at Cooden Beach GC on 2 Jan and another at Beeding Brooks from 7 to 21 Jan may have moved down the valley to Shoreham Airport where two were seen on 10 and 12 Feb, one remaining until 13 Mar. Two at Grange Fm, Earnley on 10 Mar were seen hunting regularly until May. A minimum of 33 were noted in the first winter period, all at the coast except for the Pulborough birds, a single flying S high over Eridge Park on 2 Apr and one at Amberley Wild Brooks on 4 May. The last record was of a migrant coming in off the sea at Seaford Head in the evening of 7 May.

The first returning bird was at Paghham Hbr on 5 Aug followed by another in off the sea at Selsey Bill on 3 Sept. This is the 15th August record for the county since 1961 (there have also been three in July). Thereafter, a total of 12 more was seen along the coast from Bracklesham Bay to Rye Hbr. On 15 Oct a bird flew out to sea from Church Norton. [RTP]

0778. NIGHTJAR*Caprimulgus europaeus***Fairly common summer visitor rarely seen on migration. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.**

The first record, on 4 May at Parham, was the latest arrival date since 1995. The next were single birds seen flying in off the sea at Brighton Marina and roosting in a garden tree

at Nep Town, Henfield on 8 May. Widespread records were received for 14 May onwards in line with the mid-May arrival period noted in *Birds of Sussex*.

Records were received for the breeding season from 26 tetrads in East Sussex and 29 in West Sussex. These showed, as usual, that East Sussex holds the bulk of the breeding population with the vast majority coming from Ashdown Forest where territorial behaviour was noted at 69 sites (64 in 1999). A further 38 territories were reported at 12 sites in the remainder of East Sussex (16 and seven respectively in 1999) with Broadwater Forest having the largest population of a possible 12 pairs. The majority of West Sussex records came from the well-watched greensand heaths which are included in the *West Sussex Heathland Survey* area. Here 46 territories were found at 12 sites (48 and 11 respectively in 1999). The highest single count was of nine territories on Ambersham and Heyshott Commons, with 15 more territories identified at a further eight sites. The indication is that within its stronghold on the heathlands, the population remains stable and variations are because of fluctuating observer cover. There is for instance a population situated in forestry plantations on the Greensand and the South Downs and, as these areas are seldom surveyed, the West Sussex total indicated above is likely to be an underestimate. The county total of 168 territories compares with 148 in 1999. *Birds of Sussex* commented that 'Ashdown Forest typically holds 20% of the county's Nightjars', the figure currently is around 40%. Details of breeding surveys can be found on pages 171.

In the autumn, single birds were ringed at Pett Level on 7, 11 and 28 Aug, with up to two recorded there on 12 dates in September. The last churring bird was heard at Wych Cross, Ashdown Forest on 27 Sept and the last reported migrant was at Pett Level on 1 Oct. [AP]

0795. SWIFT

Apus apus

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

A very early individual with Swallows at Birdham Marina, Chichester Hbr on 7 Apr (GAC) is the earliest recorded in Sussex. The previous earliest dates were 10 Apr in both 1989 and 1997 and the 10-year average has fallen from 25 Apr in 1982 to 17 Apr in 1999. The next was one at Pulborough Brooks on 17 Apr. Small numbers were reported, mostly from coastal locations, from 22 Apr. Forty were present at Chichester GPs on 3 May. The main arrival commenced on 4 May with 128E at Selsey Bill, followed by 160N over Brighton Marina on 5th. Other large counts of presumably feeding birds were 100 at Bewl Water on 25 May and 200 at Cissbury Ring on 3 June. Several interesting early movements were observed, including 2000W over Hollingdean, Brighton on 26 June.

Fieldwork for the Society's 1999-2000 Swift survey produced further evidence of a severe decline in many towns and villages since the previous survey of 1968-70 (see pages 201 for the results of the survey). Some useful information was also obtained on nest sites. An important colony, estimated at possibly 30 pairs, was discovered at St. Anne's Church, Lewes.

Large numbers were recorded at coastal locations from early July with 2000 at Rye Hbr on 5th, 3000 at Hollingdean, Brighton on 7th, 5000 at Pagham Hbr on 11th and 1000 at Well Bottom, near Seaford on 16th. Passage continued throughout July into August when 100 flew out to sea from Cuckmere Haven on 11th. This was the last significant count of the year. There were sightings of one to two birds on 13 dates in September. Late

sightings continued in October with four at Beachy Head on 1st, singles at Pett Level on 8th and 14th and, finally, one at Pulborough Brooks on 21st. [GCMR]

0831. KINGFISHER

Alcedo atthis

Fairly common resident and probable winter visitor.

Observations during the winter months were as follows:

	Jan	Feb		Nov	Dec
Number of birds	67	31		52	36
Number of inland sites	17	9		12	7
Number of coastal sites	15	8		16	10

There were 9% more birds reported than in 1999 with a significant increase in January (32 in 1999) but a decrease in November and December (62 and 54 respectively in 1999). The additional birds favoured inland sites. The majority of sightings were of single birds, with occasionally two noted. Otherwise, three were in the lower Ouse Valley on 23 Jan and four at Halsey's Fm, Pagham Hbr on 3 Mar.

In the breeding season only 13 pairs were reported from eight sites and only one pair was known to have bred. There were no records of family parties. Later in the year, records were of ones and twos. There were, however, four at Rye Hbr on 17 Sept and, at Weir Wood Res, three on 6 Aug and four on 17 Nov. [DEGC]

0840. BEE-EATER

Merops apiaster

Rare vagrant, has bred.

Four were recorded: singles at Selsey Bill on 1 May (RWP *et al*), Church Norton on 21 May (OMM), Pett Level on 11 June (TJW) and Beachy Head on 21 Aug (JFC). Only the first individual was seen by more than the original finder and it remained around the Bill House and adjacent gardens for a least an hour. The bird at Church Norton was catching insects just north of the churchyard for a few minutes but did not linger despite appearing to be settled. The June individual flew W up Pannel Valley and that in August was only heard calling as it flew high over Whitbread Hollow. Birds were recorded annually in the county between 1985 and 1994 but these are the first since. The individual at Selsey Bill was the earliest in the county since 1949 (when one was seen at the same location on 30 Apr) while that at Whitbread Hollow was the latest since one at Lancing on 19 Sept 1958 (although one was seen at Sidlesham on 19 Aug 1984). Most records are in the last week of May or early June. [RJF]

0846. HOOPOE

Upupa epops

Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant, has bred.

Two were seen during the spring and one in autumn. One at Birling Gap on 6 Apr (JFC) was relocated at Shooters Bottom, *ca.* 2.5km east, the following day where it remained until 11th (JFC *et al*). One was reported from Heathfield on 20 Apr (per JAC) and one was at Camber Pit, Rye on 28 Aug (CSa). A slightly below average showing; more than half of all recent records have been in April and about 10% in August. [RJF]

0848. WRYNECK*Jynx torquilla***Very scarce passage migrant; has bred. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.**

Reports of probably 17 different birds were received. There were two spring records: singles in a Steyning garden on 15 Apr (IJW, TJW) and at the Narrow Pit, Rye Hbr on 11 May (SSm). The first autumn record was of a single at The Severals, Church Norton on 3-4 Aug (SJP *et al*), with further singles during the month at Pett Level on 26-27th (RBRG) and at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton (IJW) and photographed in a Selsey garden on 27th (HPh). In September, there were singles at Pett Level on 1st (RBRG); Selsey Bill on 2nd (PBe, AHo); The Severals, Church Norton from 3rd to 10th (*mo*) with presumably a different bird there on 17th and 19th; Shooters Bottom, Beachy Head on 5th (MS-h) and 9th (JFC, RJF), Combe Haven on 9th (SCR); in a Woodingdean garden on 19th (IJW); and in an Ovingdean garden (ITB) and at Holywell, Beachy Head (JFC) on 26th. There were two records in October: singles at Cow Gap, Beachy Head on 6th (JP) and Bracklesham Bay on 8th (RWP). [LM]

0856. GREEN WOODPECKER*Picus viridis***Fairly common resident.**

A total of 345 records was received for 110 sites across the county, with reports for 73 of the sites being in the breeding season. Survey work in the summer on fifteen West Sussex heathlands yielded 35 pairs in 29 1km squares (an average of 1.2 pairs per km²). Breeding was confirmed or probable at a further 45 sites. Counts from sites of regular surveys are included in the summary table on pages 171.

In the first quarter of the year, the largest counts were six at Thorney Island on 15 Feb, ten in Findon Valley, Worthing on 19 Feb, six at Pulborough Brooks on 20 Feb and eight at Darwell Res on 12 March. The largest numbers reported in the autumn/winter were six at Thorney Island on 1 Aug, Pulborough Brooks on 6 Aug and 16 Oct and Climping on 13 Aug, seven at Weavers Down, Liss on 17 Aug, and 11 at Darwell Res on 19 Aug. [LM]

0876. GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER*Dendrocopos major***Common resident.**

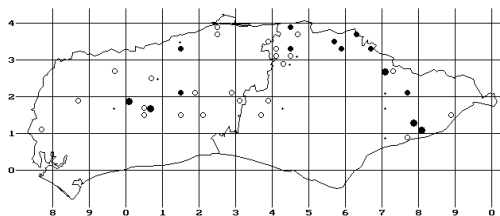
A total of 333 records was received for 102 sites across the county, with reports for 89 of the sites being in the breeding season. The earliest territorial activity reported was of drumming at Henfield Levels on 9 Jan. Survey work in summer on 15 West Sussex heathlands yielded 35 pairs in 26 1km squares (an average of 1.3 pairs per km²). Breeding was confirmed or probable at a further 42 sites. Counts from sites of regular surveys are included in the summary table on pages 171.

Reports of possible migrants were singles flying W at Galley Hill, Bexhill on 6 Aug and 16 Sept, N from the direction of the sea at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 31 Aug and 16 Sept, and over Horseshoe Plantation, Beachy Head on 15 Nov. [LM]

0887. LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER

Dendrocopos minor

Scarce resident.



Records were received for 48 tetrads across the county, with reports during the breeding season from 40 locations and from a further 16 at other times. As the map shows, most sightings were well inland though pairs bred near the coast at Alexandra Park and Marline Wood, Hastings. There were also singles at Little Common, Bexhill on 14 Apr, Filsham Reedbed on 12 Sept and Pett Level on 26 Oct and two at Chick Hill, Pett on 15 June, but none was seen on the coastal plain in West Sussex. The earliest territorial activity reported was of drumming at Ebernoe Common on 8 Jan. The unobtrusive nature of the species is illustrated by the almost complete lack of records for May and September, with just single reports in each month. There were, however, records for Pulborough Brooks RSPB Reserve in ten months of the year, often in the vicinity of the Visitors' Centre, with one seen in the tea garden on 3 Jan! A female in a garden at Littleworth, Partridge Green on 26 Aug was the first recorded there for 13 years. Another bird which frequented a garden at Hurst Green in early June was observed eating blackfly from runner bean plants (AJH).

A high total of 116 records was received, hopefully a reflection of increased interest in this species; all records, especially of territorial behaviour or confirmed breeding, would be appreciated. [PJ/LM]

0974. WOODLARK

Lullula arborea

Scarce resident and passage migrant. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

In the west of the county the song of the Wood Lark, or at least snatches, was heard in every month of the year, often during dipping circular flight over its breeding territory. Wintering flocks are becoming a feature, the maximum being 44 on 6 Jan at Broad Halfpenny, Coates where a stubble field and winter barley provided feeding opportunities. A further flock of 15 was observed on 9 Jan at North Cocking.

There were no records of birds on spring passage.

The flocks began to disperse, with the majority of the breeding birds holding territory by mid-February. All but three of the 66 breeding territories (60 in 1999) in West Sussex were within the area covered by the *West Sussex Heathland Survey* and, although this indicates thorough observer coverage, it also confirms the fidelity of the bird to the particular habitat types of heathland, forestry plantations and, where close to existing populations, set-aside. No breeding birds were reported from set-aside this year although two birds were seen in this habitat on 30 June near Weir Wood Res. The recent expansion in the east of the county continues with six territories being reported on Ashdown Forest

and a further 2-3 territories elsewhere, indicating a county total of 74. This compares with the 65-71 territories found in the 1997 *National Woodlark Survey* and is within the range estimated by Hughes (1970) of 50-100 pairs in the late 1930s, when the population was at a high point. Sussex currently holds approximately 4.7% of the UK breeding population, based on the total of 1552 pairs recorded by the national census in 1997. Further details of breeding surveys can be found on pages 171.

Heathland management and a run of mild winters continues to assist the expansion of the Wood Lark, as does the method of clear felling and replanting small blocks of woodland, thus providing a progression of breeding habitat. At Ambersham and Heyshott Commons where this style of forestry management is undertaken close to established territories, every clear felled area has held at least one breeding pair for a minimum of two seasons. Set-aside also provides similar breeding opportunities. It is evident from the large winter flocks which gather on suitable winter stubbles, that this is also an area where farm management could have a positive affect in assisting the species.

A most unusual report was that of ten arriving out of the fog at Brighton Palace Pier on 5 June (RAI). The trend of passage being more marked in autumn than in spring continued with a total of 17 migrants recorded between 1 Oct and 5 Nov. With the exception of one flying S over Blackcap Hill, Firle on 14 Oct, all were at coastal sites including two at Combe Haven on 6 Oct, three at Belle Tout, Beachy Head on 8 Oct, 3SW over Marline Wood, Hastings on 14 Oct and 2W at Church Norton on 25 Oct. An inland flock at Coates Common comprised eight birds on 12 Oct and six on 14 Nov. [AP]

0976. SKYLARK

Alauda arvensis

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

The lack of severe weather in the first winter period continued the recent trend of relatively small flocks in the county. The largest were 200 in stubble at Beeding Brooks on 5 Feb and 100 at Glynde on 16 Jan. Thereafter, only 11 flocks of 30 or more were reported, the largest being 90 at Newhaven on 23 Jan. Censuses were carried out at two mixed farms during this period. A total of 37 birds was counted at Blackcap Fm, Denton on 13 Feb but just one was noted at Marsh Fm, Yapton in January-February.

The first record of a singing bird was at Upper Beeding on 13 Feb (2 Feb in 1999). A total of some 408 records relating to confirmed or probable breeding or birds singing (holding territory) was received for 67 sites between March and July. Although breeding numbers were down on 1999 (420), they were up on the 1998 figure of 250; variable observer coverage is possibly the relevant factor with a less than 3% drop between 1999 and 2000. The breeding total is likely to be an underestimate as much of the arable farmland habitat in the county was not covered but, even so, it is unlikely to be anywhere near the estimated county population of 14,000-18,000 pairs (*Birds of Sussex*). Numbers on Ashdown Forest remained stable with 88 records (over 20% of the county's reported breeding population), as did those at Rye Hbr with 40 pairs, exactly the same number as in 1999. A total of 35 pairs bred at Pulborough Brooks RSPB Reserve. Walks from Patcham to Ditchling and Patcham to Southwick on 17 and 18 June produced totals of 25 and 52 singing males respectively (CB). Details of breeding surveys can be found on pages 171.

Small numbers were recorded at coastal sites in October and November. The largest movements were of 80 over Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 5 Oct, 70W at Church Norton

on 26 Oct and, at Brighton Marina, 40N on 7 Nov and 90W the following day. Other counts included 60 at Beachy Head on 17 Oct, 50 there on 26 Oct, and 80 at Brighton Marina on 3 Nov.

Birds of Sussex notes that the size of the 'normal' county wintering population is not known and it is seldom that flocks exceed 100. There were two such flocks in 2000, one of 250 at Ovingdean on 28 Dec and the other of 150 in stubble at Kingston Gorse on 30 Dec. The only other significant flocks recorded in December were of 60 at both Thorney Island on 30th and Bewl Water in set-aside on 31st. [AP]

0981. SAND MARTIN

Riparia riparia

Fairly common summer visitor and very common passage migrant.

A single bird at Castle Water, Rye Hbr on 4 Mar (CHD) is the earliest recorded Sussex date, beating by one day the previous record held jointly by that Reserve and Chichester GPs. In the next week, birds were seen at Pulborough Brooks, Bexhill and Pagham Hbr. It was 22 Mar, however, before numbers reached double figures with counts of 15 and 14 at Cope Lake and Ivy Lake respectively, both in the Chichester GPs complex. A total of 100 birds was seen at the latter location on 3-4 Apr, while on the following day 170 were at Bewl Water. Again, this year, no breeding took place at Rye Hbr but a number of records was received in respect of sites in the west of the county. Estimated colony sizes were: 50-75 pairs at Eartham, 50 pairs at Duncton Common, 30 pairs at Heathend; 10-20 pairs at Rock Common, Washington, and ten pairs at Stedham Common.

Counts of 130 birds at Church Norton and 150 at Rye Hbr on 13 July were the first significant evidence of the start of return migration. Thereafter numbers increased with counts of 500S over Well Bottom, near Seaford on 16 July, 600S at Church Norton and 500 at Pett Level, both on 18th, 1000 passing over Pett Level on 19th and 500 at Pagham Hbr on 21st and 25th. A similar number flew W in 4hrs at Selsey Bill on 1 Aug and 135E were recorded in 3.5hrs at the same location on 23rd. Next day 1000 flew S over Church Norton while in the last few days of August counts of 500 came from Shoreham Airport on 25th, Arlington Res on 27th, and Barcombe Res on 27th and 28th, and 1500 at Pagham Hbr on 29th. Overnight roosting was recorded at Pett Level throughout August with a maximum of 10,000 on 24th.

At Ivy Lake, Chichester GPs, 1000+ were reported on 1 Sept, 1500 flew S over The Severals on 3rd and there was a roost of 1000 at Combe Haven on 9th. Thereafter numbers declined somewhat but 500 were recorded flying NW, in off the sea, at Hastings CP on 16th and a similar number were at Ivy Lake on 19th. There were just six records in October with final sightings, on 14th, of seven at Castle Water, Rye Hbr and one at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head. [MJM]

0992. SWALLOW

Hirundo rustica

Common summer visitor and abundant passage migrant.

The first sighting was one week earlier than in 1999, a single being noted over Pett Level on 18 Mar. However, there were only three other records for the remainder of the month, all of singles, at Church Norton (2) and Bexhill. A more general arrival occurred on 3 Apr with 23N in 2.5hrs at Worthing Beach, 20N at Goring Beach and 7N at Splash

Point, Seaford. There were also counts of 80 at Ivy Lake, Chichester GPs, 42 at Pulborough North Brooks and 30 at Arlington Res that day. The only counts of 50 or more for the remainder of the month were of 150 at Bewl Water on 13th and 50 at the Trout Lakes, Chichester GPs on 15th. A large arrival occurred on 6 May with totals of 250E in 9hrs at Selsey Bill and 160N in 11.25hrs at Seaford.

The first reported breeding activity was on 18 Apr when mud collecting was noted at Pett Level. Other breeding records were of two nests from which nine young were fledged at Keymer, five nests and 20 young at Wivelsfield, two nests with six fledged young at Streat, three nests in stables at Byworth, two pairs at both Edburton and Pulborough Brooks, and a pair at Patcham. This handful of breeding records does not reflect the species' widespread distribution in the county shown by the Atlas map in *Birds of Sussex*. All breeding records are welcome.

Early large counts, as a precursor to the main autumn migration, were 1200 at Pagham Hbr on 21 July, 100 roosting at Thorney Deeps on 26 July and 1500 over Pagham Hbr on 6 Aug. It was the fourth week of August before large counts of passage birds started to be recorded. These included 5000 flying S over Church Norton and 2000 over Pagham Hbr North Wall on 24th, 5000W at Selsey Bill on 30th, and 2000S at Belle Tout, Beachy Head the next day. A flock of at least 500 birds near Belle Tout on 29 Aug contained an albino hirundine, probably Swallow (DIJ). A roost at Filsham Reedbed, which averaged 2500 to 3000 birds in September, held 15,000 on 8 Sept and counts of 10,000 were made at Pett Level on 9th, 23rd and 24th and at Beachy Head on 10th. Other significant counts recorded in September were 2000 at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 4th, the same number in 50 minutes over Harbour Fm, Rye and 5000E at Sheepcote Valley on 10th, 2000 at Pagham Hbr on 12th and 13th, 2000 at Church Norton on 17th, 3000 at Beachy Head on 23rd, and 2000E at Hollingbury Camp, Brighton on 26th. Passage had generally eased by early October though 4000 flew W in 4hrs at Selsey Bill on 5th. Other sizeable counts were 1000 at Shooters Bottom, Beachy Head on 1 Oct and at Selsey Bill and Church Norton on 4th, with 1700 at the latter location on 6th. During November about 70 were recorded and the final records for the year were single birds at Pett Level on 29 Nov and over Castle Water, Rye Hbr the following day. [MJM]

1001. HOUSE MARTIN

Delichon urbica

Common summer visitor and abundant passage migrant.

A very early arrival was a bird seen over Arundel Park on 4 Mar (RJSa), the same day as the county's earliest ever Sand Martin. The only other sightings that month were eight at Pulborough Brooks on 17th, three at Piddinghoe Pond on 27th and one at Rye Hbr on 29th. There were three counts in April of 50 or more comprising 100 at Arlington Res on 21st, 50 at Redgate Mill Fm, near Crowborough on 25th and 50 over Pulborough North Brooks on 29th. The largest counts in May were both at Barcombe Res, 500 on 21st and 1000 on 28th.

Breeding records included a pair at Chick Hill, Pett, three pairs at Wych Cross, Ashdown Forest, six pairs at Isle of Thorns, Ashdown Forest, a pair on a new house at Partridge Green and one at Patcham. There was a small population in Rye Hbr village, 13 nests in Rye, each with at least two young, and a colony in High Street, Petworth. There were 41 nests at the golf clubhouse at Ridgewood, near Uckfield and a pair raised two young at Horney Common, Maresfield. Six nests were occupied at Sheffield Park Station (down on recent years but some pairs were double brooded), a pair at Ardingly and at least

11 occupied nests at Lee Fm, Patching. From West Grinstead came a report that a school on which birds used to nest had been demolished, but breeding was confirmed on the nearby Knepp Estate.

The first sign of post-breeding movement was of 300 birds flying W over Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 29 July. There were 500 over Lewes on 22 Aug and over Pagham North Fields a week later, while 1000 flew W at Selsey Bill on 30 Aug. By now passage was well under way. Significant counts in September included 1000 at Beachy Head on 3rd and 10th, 4000NW in off the sea at Hastings CP on 16th, 5000 over Church Norton and 2000 past Cissbury Ring on 17th, 2000 at Beachy Head on 23rd, 1000E along Worthing Beach in 1.2hrs on 30th and, on the same day, 6000 over Combe Haven. A total of 4160 flew SW over Marline Wood, Hastings on 1 Oct, 8000 flew E over Combe Haven on 2 Oct, 1000 were at Church Norton on 7 Oct and 4000 at Beachy Head on 14th. The last count was the final one of any size though numbers in single figures continued to be seen until the final records of singles at Billingshurst on 10 Nov and at Combe Haven the following day. [MJM]

1002. RICHARD'S PIPIT

Anthus novaeseelandiae

Rare vagrant.

One at Combe Haven from 4 to 7 May (KMJ, SCR *et al*) was only the second spring record for the county and the first for May. A large pipit seen on the spit at Church Norton on 3 Nov (RAI, EMR *et al*) was probably this species although Blyth's Pipit *A. godlewskii* could not be eliminated. Five Richard's were recorded during the 1990s, all in October or November (and during 1993-96) while there is just one county record of Blyth's (the first British record in October 1882). [RJF]

1005. TAWNY PIPIT

Anthus campestris

Very scarce visitor, mostly in autumn.

Five were recorded in the autumn: a probable adult at Steyning Round Hill on 22-23 Aug (ARK), one at Pebsham Tip on 26 Aug (KMJ), one that flew in from the east at Rye Hbr LNR on 27 Aug and landed in a stubble field (SWG, GWJH), one at Newhaven Tide Mills on 23 Sept (LRB, NG), and one that flew E over Belle Tout, Beachy Head the same day (ADW, IJW). A photograph of the Newhaven bird appears in this *Report*. These are the first records since 1997 (when one was recorded in September), although there were nine seen in 1992 and records averaged between six and seven each year in the 1970s and 1980s. Most records have been from mid-August to late September with just over half in the Beachy Head area. Records away from the coast are unusual, although they include two at Steyning Round Hill in September 1980. [RJF]

1009. TREE PIPIT

Anthus trivialis

Fairly common but local summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first was at Hollingbury Camp on 1 Apr, two days later than the 1990-99 average. The first records for the past three years were in March. Only 15 were seen or heard on

spring passage, the last being at Hollingdean on 16 May. Birds appeared on breeding territories from 2 Apr (Newbridge, Ashdown Forest).

During the breeding season, a total of 97-98 territories was reported in West Sussex, compared with 66 in 1999. Numbers were at least maintained on the western commons with, for example, 20 pairs on Woolbeding Common (18 in 1999 and 10 in 1998), 16 pairs on Ambersham Common, 11 pairs on Iping Common, nine pairs at Chapel Common, Liphook and seven pairs on Lavington Common. There were a number of reports for the western Downs comprising two pairs at West Dean Woods, 1-2 pairs in Goodwood Park and single pairs at Monkton Wood, Heyshott Down and Bignor Hill, the latter a traditional site. North of the Downs, there were six pairs in Worth Forest and two pairs in St. Leonard's Forest. In East Sussex, there were about 60 territories on Ashdown Forest, including 13 in Pippingford Park (ten in 1999); nine pairs in Broadwater Forest (four in 1999); four singing males at both Eridge Park and Brightling; two singing males at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street; and a male (probably unpaired) at Chailey. Details of breeding surveys can be found on pages 171.

The first birds on return passage were seen at Pett Level on 21 July and then at Church Norton and Sheepcote Valley on 11 Aug and Rye Hbr the next day. Subsequent records were widely spread. A total of 52 was reported from Combe Haven during September but only seven from Sheepcote Valley, its second successive poor year. The peak counts at the former site were 12 on 29 Sept and 25 the following day while other double figure counts included 20 over Hastings CP on 26 Aug and 50 at Beachy Head on 30 Sept. The October total for Combe Haven was 56 with peaks of 26 on 1st and nine on 6th. The last of the year were two at Church Norton on 15 Oct, a typical date. [CB]

1011. MEADOW PIPIT

Anthus pratensis

Locally common resident, very common passage migrant, winter visitor.

The widespread winter distribution of this species was again apparent this year. On New Year's Day there were 28 on Climping Beach; further double figure counts for the coastal strip were of 44 at Marsh Fm, Yapton on 17 Jan, 35 at Cuckmere Haven on 22 Jan, 44 at West Beach, Littlehampton on 20 Feb and 20 at Fairlight the following day. Significant concentrations at inland sites, some of which do not often feature in this *Report*, included 31 on rough pasture at Fernhurst on 10 Jan, 16 at Coolham on 11 Jan, 50 at Crabtree Fm, Crowborough on 5 Feb, 60 at Blackham on 6 Feb and a roost of 50 at the Isles of Thorns, Ashdown Forest on 20 Feb. On the Commons in the north-west of the county, there were 50 at Iping on 16 Jan and 100 at Ambersham on 2 Feb.

On 26 Feb, a count of 49 at West Beach, Littlehampton included ten displaying males. Soon after, spring passage began with 35 flying N in 3hrs at Selsey Bill on 11 Mar. All the 300 birds counted at Selsey Bill during March were flying N; of the 362 at Bexhill, 135 flew E and 227W. The April records for these localities followed the same pattern.

Breeding was reported from across the county, primarily from the river valleys, the Commons and Ashdown Forest. There were ten pairs on Ambersham Common; Amberley and Pulborough Brooks together held some 70 pairs, an increase on previous years; and some 25 pairs were counted on Ashdown Forest. On the Downs, numbers were small and birds widely distributed but traditional sites were occupied. About eleven pairs bred within the Rye Hbr SSSI.

July and August marked the doldrums for this species with just seven and six records respectively. Autumn passage at Pett Level was first noted on 5 Sept. The first significant count during the month was of 200 at Amberley Mount on 11th. Heavy passage was evident from that date, both along the coast and inland. A large movement on 17th included totals of 630W at Brighton Marina in under 2hrs, 600N at nearby Sheepcote Valley, 400W at Church Norton, 300W at Combe Haven and 40S over Glynde Levels. In addition, 475 were in Shooters Bottom, Beachy Head; 90 at Cissbury Ring; 50 at Newhaven Tide Mills; and 11 at Weir Wood Res. Highest counts after that date were of 1394W at Bexhill on 26-27 Sept, 550W at Selsey Bill on 30 Sept, 500 at Shooters Bottom on 1 Oct and 600W at Selsey on 5 Oct. At Combe Haven, where the September and October totals of birds flying W were 1090 and 685 respectively, the largest subsequent movements were of 200 on 24 Sept and 7 Oct and 300 on 6 Oct. Coastal passage was reported to be lighter than usual at Pett Level, and certainly not heavier elsewhere. There were, however, reports of good numbers on the Downs and further inland, for example, 50 on the dam at Bewl Water on 21 Sept; 87 on the ground and in flight over Streat Hill on 24 Sept; 200 at Steyning Round Hill on 25 Sept; and 167 at Hollingbury Camp on 1 Oct. A flock of 50 was in a horse paddock at Byworth on 7 Oct and the same number fed with Pied Wagtails at the edge of floods at Barcombe on 12 Oct. In November, 40 were roosting at Poundgate, near Crowborough on 3rd and 35 were at Guildenhurst, Billingshurst on 19th. In December, the highest count was of 40 at Church Norton on 6th. [CB]

10142. **ROCK PIPIT**

Anthus petrosus

Scarce resident and scarce winter visitor. Rare away from the coast.

Reports in January came from the coast between Thorney Island and Beachy Head, with nine at Seaford Head on 15th and 16 between Birling Gap and Cow Gap on 29th. The largest counts in February were of 11 at Seaford Head on 13th and ten at Saltdean on 19th, with 12 on 3 Mar. East of Beachy Head, there were two at Bexhill on 28 Feb and two at Rye Hbr on 12 Mar, with one there on 22nd.

Breeding records for this under-recorded species were of single pairs at Brighton Marina, Portobello, Seaford Head and Cuckmere Haven, three pairs at Newhaven and eight pairs at Beachy Head between Birling Gap and Cow Gap. Two young fledged at Brighton Marina on 29 May; otherwise there were few reports of the progress of breeding.

The second half of the year brought a steady stream of records of small numbers at the regular sites from Thorney Island to Beachy Head (but not further east). The largest counts were of seven at Brighton Marina on 24 Oct, and six at Thorney Island in November and December, at Cuckmere Haven in November, and at Saltdean and Beachy Head in December. One flew N over Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 16 Nov and, on 7 Nov, two came in from the sea at Brighton Marina. [CB]

10143. **SCANDINAVIAN ROCK PIPIT**

Anthus petrosus littoralis

Probably a very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Following a single bird in advanced summer plumage at Widewater, Lancing on 27 Feb (RJF, PJ), there was a series of records from the Brighton area comprising up to three at Saltdean between 1 and 8 March (KBG, IJW), one at Rottingdean on 3 Mar (IJW) and,

at Brighton Marina, three on 6 Mar and one on 27 Mar (IJW). In April, there were singles at Goring Beach on 3rd (DIS) and at Saltdean on 10th and 14th (KBG). [CB]

10140. WATER PIPIT

Anthus spinoletta

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

As in previous years, the largest numbers were recorded at Combe Haven where there were up to five in January, nine in February, eight in March and five in April (RJF, KMJ). The last seen there were three on 13 Apr. Thorney Deeps, another traditional wintering site, but one where birds can be difficult to identify conclusively, held small numbers in the early part of the year. There were two from 11 to 24 Jan, singles on 21 Feb and (in summer plumage) on 20 Mar, three on 6 Apr and the last spring bird on 14 Apr (CBC). A single bird was present at Barcombe Res on 6 Apr (RTP).

The first recorded in autumn was a single at Combe Haven on 29 Sept, a fairly early date. Up to eight were recorded there in October and 12 in November and December (KMJ). At Pett Level, there were singles on 1 and 12 Oct and throughout November, with two there on 16 Dec (RBRG), while at Thorney Deeps, one was seen on 1 Nov, two on 14 and 21 Nov and 14 Dec, and finally a single on 20 Dec (CBC). On 4 Nov a single was feeding with Pied Wagtails on the flood margin by the R. Adur on Steyning Levels (ARK). A single bird in the lower Cuckmere Valley on 18 Nov (PJW, NJT) and 2 Dec (IJF) may have been the same.

At Combe Haven, single birds were taken by Sparrowhawks in February and March. [CB]

1017. YELLOW WAGTAIL

Motacilla flava flavissima

Scarce and localised summer visitor and common passage migrant.

First recorded on 22 Mar at Beachy Head, one day later than the average arrival date for 1990-99. The next was not until 2 Apr, after which numbers showed some improvement on 1999 with about 164 reported during the month (64 in 1999). Most were at Combe Haven, where 77 were recorded in April and a further 58 in May, and at Castle Water where there were 13 on 13 Apr and 19 on 17th. Numbers at the main sea-watching sites were low by comparison with, for example, just five recorded in 106hrs at Selsey Bill in April and two in 126hrs at Splash Point, Seaford. Ten on 23 Apr was the peak count at Brighton Marina. There was a little flurry in early May with 8E at Bexhill on 2nd and seven in over Splash Point on 6th, when eight were at Scotney Court Fm. One at Bewl Water on 13 Apr was the site's only record of this "once common migrant".

Breeding records were few indeed. These indicated that the only breeding birds in the county were as follows: Amberley Wild Brooks (1 pair); Rodmell (1 pair); Glynde Levels (3 pairs, including a male with a 'blue head'); and Rye Hbr SSSI (at least 13 pairs). At Three Oaks, Guestling, a male called from wires in late May and early June and, in mid-June, a male was in the Tillingham Valley near Rye. On 19 July, four birds were seen at Bodiam, with a male carrying food. A male seen displaying at Sheepcote Valley on 8 June did not remain and was presumably a late migrant.

Return passage began on 25 July with a single bird at the Breech Pool, Pagham Hbr. The next day it or another bird flew over the area. In contrast to earlier months, August

and September proved excellent, with respective totals of about 1000 and 2600 reported. Birds were widely distributed on the Downs, in the river valleys and along the coast. Well inland were 13 at Partridge Green SF on 10 Sept, a maximum of 50 at Pulborough Brooks on 7 Sept and a total of 17 over Ashdown Forest between 16 Aug and 30 Sept. The peak movements were during the periods 20 - 31 Aug and 6 - 16 Sept, the largest counts being of 130 among cows at Long Down, Beachy Head on 27 Aug, totals of 150 and 300 roosting at Thorney Deepes and Filsham Reedbed respectively on 9 Sept, 100 at Beachy Head on 11 Sept, 100 among cows at Chantry Hill on 14 Sept, and 120 roosting at Filsham on 24 Sept. After 28 Sept, when 60 were together at Telscombe, no double figure counts were submitted. A total of about 88 was recorded in October up to 21st when two were at Cuckmere Haven. There were two November records comprising singles at Combe Haven on 3rd and Selsey Bill on 16th. Although late, the latter is not the latest date for the county: that remains the bird seen at Hove on 21 Nov 1926.

Those interested in Yellow Wagtail sub-species are referred to an article in French with English summaries by P.Dubois in *Ornithos* 8: 44-73. This paper details the characteristics of the five sub-species breeding in France and of the 'hybrids' between them. It is clear that observers in Sussex should be on the lookout for what Dubois christens 'Channel Wagtail', a coming together of *Motacilla flava* and *Motacilla flavissima*. Male *flavissima* appear dominant. This form is expanding rapidly in cultivated areas in north-eastern France and some recent *flava* records from Pevensy Levels probably relate to this form. A male wagtail at Glynde Levels on 6 June (MJH, ARK) showed some characteristics of the western Siberian race *M.f. beema*, Syke's Wagtail, but was more likely to have been a 'Channel Wagtail' as described above. [CB]

1017.01 BLUE-HEADED WAGTAIL

Motacilla flava flava

Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant. Both mixed and pure pairs have bred.

Single males were recorded at Combe Haven on 8 May and 25 Sept (both KMJ). [PJ]

1017. GREY WAGTAIL

Motacilla cinerea

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Recorded from nineteen sites in January (13 in 1999) but only thirteen in February (12 in 1999). Several of these birds were present for two or more months. Inland sites for wintering and breeding typically included reservoirs and mill streams but, interestingly, there was also evidence of an increasing resort to urban areas outside the breeding season. Chichester, Brighton and Hastings all held birds in the first part of the year and birds returned to both Brighton and Hastings on 1 Oct. Future records from urban areas would be most welcome. There were five at Redgate Mill Fm, Crowborough on 5 Jan and seven there on 2 and 15 Feb; a pair subsequently bred at this site raising two young. The only other sites at which more than one bird was recorded in January-February were Thorney Island SF (3), Apuldram SF (3), Combe Haven (3) and Barcombe Res (2). In March, wintering birds departed (from Preston Park, Brighton on 15 Mar) and passage birds moved through in very small numbers. A female at Pett Pools on the unusual date of 13 May was presumably a late migrant. A pair was active at Steyning MP on 18 Mar and there were three pairs at Londonderry Fm, Nutley by the end of the month. Young were

active by 13 Apr, when four were seen at the now traditional site on a factory roof in Chichester. Birds returned to a garage roof in Battle on which they had bred in 1999. A pair with one young was seen in Alexandra Park, Hastings on 16 June. Other breeding locations included a restored brick kiln at Ebernoe Common, the veranda of a house near Ardingly Res and a reed swamp at Wakehurst Place. There were two pairs in Pippingford Park and four along 3km of the R. Rother at Kilsham Fm, near Petworth on 25 May.

July records included singles at Sidlesham Ferry and Newhaven Tide Mills on 2nd. What was presumably an early moving male was in a Hailsham garden on 25 July. The first autumn passage migrant at Pett Level was recorded on 24 Aug and two at Sheepcote Valley on the same day were reported to be “earlier than usual”. The largest counts in September were of 17 flying E over Combe Haven on 14th and 10E over Rye Hbr and nine over Sheepcote Valley on 11th. Although numbers at any site on any day were characteristically small, the overall numbers were reassuring, with reports of about 300 birds (not allowing for duplication though probably not too significant given that most records on the coast were of birds flying over). The monthly totals recorded at Combe Haven in August, September and October were 12, 82 and 12 respectively. Passage at Beachy Head was, however, described as “weak” and the October total of four at Sheepcote Valley was considered to be “disappointing”.

To set against these concerns were a number of reports late in the year of birds at traditional wintering sites and also at less obvious locations like Plumpton Green and Rushlake Green. There were reports from 21 sites in November and from fifteen in December, Redgate Mill Fm for the second successive year proving most attractive, with five on 29 Dec. [CB]

1020. **PIED WAGTAIL**

Motacilla alba yarelli

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

The only roosts reported for January were 130 at Thorney SF throughout the month, 85 at Redgate Mill Fm, Crowborough on 5th, 83 in Horsham town centre (in an *Acer* tree) on 15 Jan and a peak count of 52 at Partridge Green SF on 30th. In February, the main roost counts were 223 at Tesco Superstore, Shoreham on 14th, 75 at Lyons Fm, Worthing on 12th, 70 at Brighton Marina on 19th (where it was thought that “loads more” were present) and a peak count for the winter of 70 at Filsham Reedbed on 15th. The roost at Redgate Mill Fm held 25 on 2 Feb and ten on 15 Feb. In March, there were 40 at a reedbed roost on Steyning Levels on 17th. Other significant counts for the first winter period were 80 at the traditional site at Apuldram SF on 18 Jan and the same number at Southern Leisure, Chichester GPs on 7 Mar.

Birds were noted moving along the coast from 28 Feb through to May, but in very low numbers. A total of 17 flew E in 2hrs at Selsey Bill on 13 Mar. At both Worthing Beach and Seaford, the largest movements were on 5 Mar, though the numbers were low. The last date for a wintering bird in Preston Park, Brighton, was 13 Apr, about a fortnight later than in the past few years.

There were no suggestions of triumph or disaster in the breeding season (nor of eccentric nest sites), though as in 1999, no breeding took place in the Rye Hbr SSSI. The first juvenile was reported from Nuthurst on 2 June and a flurry of records of family parties followed. A pair in Sheepcote Valley fledged nine young. At Brighton Marina,

four pairs raised seven broods, the last fledging on 1 Sept. Details of breeding surveys in defined areas can be found on pages 171.

By late June, small groups (presumably of local origin) were congregating at traditional and at temporarily favoured sites including 13 at Barcombe Res on 25 June, 16 at Darwell Res on 23 July, 15 on a sports' ground at Chailey on 27 July and 19 on the cricket pitch at Glynde on 27 Aug. A total of 25, mainly juveniles, was at Redgate Mill Fm on 24 Aug. Coastal movement was negligible in August but picked up from mid-September. The maximum count at Beachy Head was 50 on 2 Oct. At Selsey Bill, 70 flew W in 4hrs on 5 Oct. From mid-October, the edges of flooded fields proved attractive with, for example, 21 sharing the pickings with Meadow Pipits at Barcombe Cross on 12 Oct and 100 at Goring Gap the following day. The latter group had decreased to 30 by 29 Nov. The *Winter Farmland Census* revealed three at Marsh Fm, Yapton and two at Sefton Fm, Rose Green in November and nine at the latter site in December. Three substantial roosts were reported at the end of the year: 80 at Castle Water, Rye Hbr on 19 Dec, 130 at Thorney Deeps on 28 Dec and 95 at Redgate Mill Fm on 29 Dec. [CB]

1020.01 **WHITE WAGTAIL**

Motacilla alba alba

Probably a scarce spring and autumn passage migrant. Both pure and mixed pairs have bred.

The first recorded was a single that flew in off the sea at Beachy Head on 26 Feb, followed by four at Combe Haven on 1 Mar, an early arrival. A strong spring passage followed with about 65 birds recorded up until 16 May, approximately double the 1999 total. Most records were of ones and twos though there were six at Thorney Island on 16 Apr and three at Galley Hill, Bexhill on 24 Apr.

The autumn total of 16 was also high, with three at West Beach, Littlehampton on 16 Aug and four at Arlington Res on 9 Sept. The last recorded was a single at Southwick on 7 Nov. [CB]

1045. **WAXWING**

Bombycilla garrulus

Rare winter visitor.

In the first winter period, three flew S over Blackham, Forest Row on 5 Feb (WGH) and one was at Crawley on 16-17 Feb (ES). The only record for the latter part of the year was of a single at Winchelsea on 30 Dec (CHD, RGH). This is the best showing since the unprecedented irruption in 1996. [PJ]

1066. **WREN**

Troglodytes troglodytes

Abundant resident.

Counts of breeding birds in defined areas, which indicate an average breeding density of 62 pairs per km², can be found on page 171. In addition, during the breeding season there were 13 singing males at the North Fields, Paghams Hbr, 32 birds recorded along 3km of the R. Rother at Kilsham Fm, Petworth, 19 pairs at Pulborough Brooks RSPB Reserve,

40 territories on North End Common, Chailey, 23 singing males at Darwell Res, 17 pairs at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street and 36 pairs at Marline Wood, Hastings.

Outside the breeding season, there were 29 at Combe Haven on 26 Jan, at Linchmere Common there were 29 on 1 Mar and 22 on 28 Aug, and at Marline Wood, Hastings there were 43 on 5 Nov. At Beachy Head, small influxes of eight birds were noted on 26 Sept, 9 Oct and 19 Oct and at Whitbread Hollow there were ten on 14 Oct. A winter census yielded 15 on 67ha of mixed farmland at Marsh Fm, Yapton on 21 Nov and 11 on 95ha of similar type land at Sefter Fm, Rose Green on 7 Dec. The ringing total for the autumn at Whitbread Hollow was 33. At Cissbury Ring, 44 new birds were ringed during the year to 4 Nov, compared with 17 in 1999. [RTP]

Insert sketch Wren (No 6)

1084. **DUNNOCK**

Prunella modularis

Abundant resident.

Counts of breeding birds in defined areas, which indicate an average breeding density of 16 pairs per km², are shown on page 171. Breeding was confirmed at many other sites including nine pairs at Pulborough Brooks RSPB Reserve, six pairs in 6.6ha at Cissbury Ring, ten pairs at Marline Wood, Hastings and six pairs at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street.

In the autumn period there were 25 at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head on 10 Sept, 75 at Paghham Hbr on 13 Oct, 12 at Sefter Fm, Rose Green on 10 Nov in a winter census of 95ha of mixed farmland, 12 in the lower Adur Valley on 12 Nov and 16 at Marsh Fm, Yapton on 21 Nov in a winter census of 67ha of mixed farmland. At Cissbury Ring, 41 new birds were ringed during the year to 4 Nov (50 in 1999). [RTP]

1099. **ROBIN**

Erithacus rubecula

Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

1999: The average breeding density should be amended to 68 pairs per km².

2000: The abundance of this species is illustrated by counts of 56 along a five mile (8km) stretch of the Sussex Border Path from Charlton to Quebec on 4 Mar and 156 along 6.5 miles (10km) of the same path from Shillinglee to Haslemere on 10 Apr (CB). Other notable concentrations during the early part of the year were 27 at Marsh Fm, Yapton on 11 Feb in a winter census of 67ha of mixed farmland, 36 at Darwell Res, including 31 singing males, and 28 at Linchmere Common.

Counts of breeding birds in defined areas, which indicate an average breeding density of 66 pairs per km², are shown on page 171. Breeding records were received from many other sites including 16 pairs at Pulborough Brooks RSPB Reserve, 23 territories on Lane End Common, Chailey, 21 pairs at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street, and 22 pairs at Marline Wood, Hastings.

In the Birling Gap area of Beachy Head, influxes of 35 and 30 were noted on 7 and 10 Sept respectively, with 30 at Whitbread Hollow on the latter date and 15 Oct. The maximum autumn count at Darwell Res was 43 on 17 Sept. Further linear counts along 5.5 miles (9km) of the Sussex Border Path between Black Fox and Haslemere on 27 Sept produced a total of 161 birds and the same distance between Shillinglee and Alford Bars on 17 Oct produced 127 (CB). At Cissbury Ring, 55 new birds were ringed during the year to 4 Nov (49 in 1999). [RTP]

1104. NIGHTINGALE

Luscinia megarhynchos

Fairly common summer visitor and infrequently seen passage migrant.

Two at Pulborough Brooks on 5 Apr were the first recorded followed by one singing at Hope Gap on 9th. Arrivals were slightly later than in 1999 but after 14 Apr there were regular records with at least 67 recorded by the end of the month. Peak April counts were five at Pulborough Brooks on 22nd and six at Marline Wood, Hastings on 30th. Singing birds were reported until 18 June by which time a minimum of 120 singing males had been located in 65 different tetrads, 34 in West Sussex and 31 in East Sussex. Although this number is considerably less than the 692 reported during the 1999 survey year (*SxBR* 52: 189-197) it is above the average of 95 recorded during other non-survey springs (1967-1998). The highest numbers were seven pairs recorded at both Pulborough Brooks and between Ebernoe and Balls Cross.

The first autumn birds were recorded on 25 July at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton, two on 28 July at Littlehampton and three on 30 July at Pett Level but, as usual, most were noted in August with the largest count of five at Sheepcote Valley on 29th. Single birds were recorded for five locations during September with the last at Cissbury Ring on 17th. [JAN]

1121. BLACK REDSTART

Phoenicurus ochruros

Rare resident, fairly common passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.

A total of 21 birds was recorded in January. Several had taken up long-term residence, at Brighton Marina, Rottingdean and Saltdean, for example. Three were present at Newhaven Tide Mills from 23 Jan to 12 Mar, with four there on 26 Feb. However, counts from other well watched sites showed that there was considerable movement. Five different birds were seen at Southwick Beach from January through to March. There were no town centre records nor any north of the Downs in the early part of the year. The Rottingdean female left on 3 Mar. The first recorded at Beachy Head was on 26 Feb and this (and the additional bird at Newhaven Tide Mills) may have been the first passage birds. It was followed by a very modest spring passage, involving about 45 birds, which lasted through until 7 May. The peak count was only five, at Ovingdean on 25 Mar. Although the numbers were small, the greatest spread of records came from 22-27 Mar (*cf.* 1999 when 24th and 25th witnessed unprecedented numbers).

There was a welcome increase in breeding records. Two immatures were singing at Fairlight CP on 23 Apr and a pair may have bred there. A pair was present in central Brighton in May. The male, present from May until the end of the year, was often heard in song. GCMR offered the interesting suggestion that it fed on maggots from spare prey dropped by the Peregrines nesting in its vicinity. Single pairs bred successfully on the cliffs at Beachy Head and in a timber warehouse at Bulverhythe, where two young were fledged.

Return passage started with a juvenile at Widewater, Lancing on 10 Aug. Only five birds were seen in September, one of which was, unusually, at Hurstpierpoint on 5th. The October total was around 70, led by a remarkable count of 20 at Selsey Bill on 10th. Most birds were along the coast, but singles were at Combe Haven on 6th and 15th and at Glyndebourne, also on 15th, and a pair was at Rye on 22nd. The 104 reports for November probably referred to about 60 different birds; the 60 reports for December to about 25. Inland records were of singles at Chantry Hill on 3 Nov, Houghton on 10 Nov, Pulborough Brooks on 13 Nov and 22 Dec and Amberley on 2 Dec, with two at the penultimate site on 27-28 Dec. The coast from Shoreham to Newhaven Tide Mills was the most favoured area in the latter part of the year with five at Southwick Beach on 22 Nov, three at Newhaven Tide Mills on 17 Dec and four different birds at Brighton Marina from November up to the end of the year. [CB]

Insert sketch of Black Redstart (No 7)

1122. REDSTART

Phoenicurus phoenicurus

Scarce summer visitor and fairly common passage migrant.

The first arrival of the spring was a male at Ovingdean on 3 Apr, ten days later than the average for the period 1990-99. The usual trend of birds being seen singly continued, there being no count of more than two in the total of 36 spring migrants. The vast majority of these were at coastal sites split almost evenly between West Sussex (19) and East Sussex (17). The last recorded was at Rye Hbr on 17 May.

The first report from a breeding area was for Ashdown Forest on 12 Apr; thereafter this stronghold of the Sussex breeding population held a total of 47 potential territories, including 27 singing males in Pippingford Park (27 in 1999). In contrast, there were few

reports for the remainder of the county, the largest population being seven territories on the north-west heaths and a further four pairs, from what appears to be a diminishing population, in the north-east (the estimate in *Birds of Sussex* was that there may be ten pairs in this area). A minimum of two pairs in Worth Forest, and two further breeding records, provided a county total of 61 pairs, compared with the 110 pairs estimated in *Birds of Sussex*. This breeding pattern is replicated in the adjoining county of Hampshire. There is a robust population in the New Forest and a smaller secondary population on the north-east heaths, which adjoin and form part of the Wealden Heaths situated in the north-west of Sussex, where our own secondary population resides.

Departure commenced with a single at Church Norton on 30 July. Numbers built up steadily from 2 Aug with almost daily reports of usually no more than five birds, until the main passage ceased in mid-October. The monthly totals for August, September and October were 84, 150 and 57 respectively. As usual, the largest counts were for the Beachy Head area with peaks of 13 on 4 Sept, ten on 10 Sept and 11 on 1 Oct. In the west of the county the maximum day count was of six at Church Norton on 31 Aug. Typically, most of the reports were from the vicinity of the coast though inland records were received for Lavington Common, Pulborough Brooks and Barcombe amongst others. A very late migrant at Sompting Tip from 7 to 11 Dec (BFF, DIS *et al*) was the first county record for December. [AP]

1137. WHINCHAT

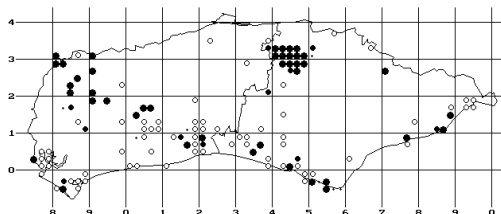
Saxicola rubetra

Rare summer visitor and fairly common passage migrant.

The first recorded in spring were two at Combe Haven on 15 Apr, 18 days later than the average arrival date of 28 Mar for 1990-99. In a poor spring, just three more were reported in April (from 24th onwards) and about 26 in May (up to 17th). The largest count was six at Combe Haven on 15th. A late straggler was recorded at Selsey West Fields on 3 June.

There were no records during the breeding season.

Numbers in autumn 2000 were similar to those in 1999. July records were of a single at Brighton Marina on 8th, two at Rodmell on 15th, an adult male trapped at Pett Level on 16th, and singles at Londonderry Fm, Nutley on 19th and, signalling the start of more sustained movement, at Cuckmere Haven on 28th. About 450 were recorded in August with fully a third of these coming from Sheepcote Valley where there were about 30 on both 23rd and 27th. Ten turned up at Beeding Cement Works on 29th. About 550 were reported in September, Sheepcote Valley again leading the way with 109 (maximum 20 on 20th). Birds were present every day at Pett Level with a maximum of 18 on 11th, when Thorney Island also recorded its peak count (of 15). At Steyning Levels, there were ten on 16th and 20 on 23rd. In a mixed flock at Birling Gap on the 16th, ten birds were outnumbered two to one by Stonechats. Few records were received from north of the Downs, occasional birds at Pulborough Brooks, Weir Wood Res and Bewl Water but none at Arlington Res. One was at Billingshurst and two at Darwell Res on 17th and three at Partridge Green SF on 24th. October proved a good month with about 90 reported up to 26th including seven at Combe Haven on 15th. None of these were north of the Downs. The last recorded was a single at Combe Haven on 15 Nov. [CB]

Fairly common resident and partial migrant.

A total of 48 records was submitted for January and 35 for February, relating to approximately 70 birds in both months. The largest counts were of 11 on Thorney Island on 5 Jan, ten there on 4 Feb and 5 Mar, and nine at Weavers Down, Liss on 30 Jan. Iping Common held a solitary female on 18 Jan; by 27 Feb, three groups were there (two males; two males and a female; and a male and two females). A number of birds were reported from less regular sites including one at Marline Wood, Hastings and two at Fletching on Valentine's Day and one at Ratford Fm, Petworth on 27 Feb. Only at Goring Gap was the species reported to be scarcer than usual.

The usual torrent of breeding season records was received. A total of approximately 79 territories was reported in West Sussex, of which 51 were in the *West Sussex Heathland Survey* area including 12 pairs on Ambersham/Heyshott Commons, ten pairs on both Iping and Woolbeding Commons, seven pairs at Weavers Down, Liss and four pairs on Chapel Common, Liphook. In East Sussex, there were some 75 territories, approximately 40 of which were on Ashdown Forest though disentangling counts from this area is particularly difficult! The other significant concentrations were ten pairs at Beachy Head, six pairs at Seaford Head and four pairs at both Cuckmere Haven and Newhaven Tide Mills. The county total of 154 pairs far exceeds the maximum figure quoted in *Birds of Sussex* (85 pairs in 1983). Reasons for this increase include the recent run of mild winters, heathland management and restoration at sites such as Ambersham Common, and censusing of the main breeding areas within the county. Information on breeding success was limited. Only two of the four pairs at Newhaven Tide Mills were successful, raising three young between them. Three pairs at Amberley Wild Brooks raised a total of nine young while at Londonderry Fm, Nutley, three pairs had five, one and one recently fledged young on 31 May. Details of breeding surveys can be found on pages 171.

The first autumn birds appeared at Pagham Hbr on 15 July and Pett Level on 9 Aug. On the last day of August, eight were at Sheepcote Valley. Small groups began to appear along the coast in September with 12 at Cuckmere Haven on 12th, 13 at Shooters Bottom, Beachy Head on 17th, and 12 in Sheepcote Valley on 20th. Two birds spent several days in mid-September at Partridge Green SF. Family parties also turned up along the Downs, three such groups, totalling nine birds, providing a pleasant distraction for an observer toiling up Steep Down, Lancing on 5 Oct. Four were still present at this site on 9 Nov. Birds also remained at Walberton, near Arundel from 5 Oct into 2001. The largest counts during the autumn were a remarkable 40 on the west side of Pagham Hbr on 1 Oct and 27 at Beachy Head, 26 at Thorney Island and 25 at Combe Haven, all on 8 Oct. There were also 20 at Thorney and ten at Combe Haven on 15 Nov (when the last migrant was noted at Pett Level) and 15 at the former site on 28 Dec. The total of 211 birds reported for November probably represented about 133 birds while the 176 noted in December

represented about 113 birds, similar figures to those of November and December 1999. As well as traditional sites, birds appeared at less usual ones including one at Barcombe Mills on 4 Nov, two at Weir Wood Res on 12 Nov, two at Patcham on 28 Nov and five at Shinewater Lake, Eastbourne on 29 Dec. [CB]

1146. WHEATEAR

Oenanthe oenanthe

Very scarce breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant.

Spring passage was protracted and involved only one good fall of birds. For the most part, numbers were low but birds turned up all along the coast. The first was recorded at Pulborough Brooks on 26 Feb, four days earlier than the average arrival date for 1990-99, followed by another single at Beachy Head on 1 Mar. The great majority of the March and April records were scattered along the coast but four males together in a ploughed field at Partridge Green SF on 4 Mar were unexpected. The next inland records were of singles on Ashdown Forest on 15 Mar and at Pulborough Brooks and Gatwick on 19th. There were only two double figure counts in March: 15 in Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 13th and 12 at Selsey Bill on 21st. The only major fall of the spring, on 5 Apr, brought 90 birds down at Sheepcote Valley and the adjacent East Brighton GC. A further eight records of between 10 and 20 birds were received for April. There were a handful of reports from north of the Downs during the month including singles on Ashdown Forest and at Bewl Water on 5 Apr, at Chailey on 20 Apr, and at Wiston on 24 Apr. Five birds at Hollingbury Camp on 24 Apr were considered to show characteristics of the Greenland race *O.o. leucorhoa*, the only such report of the spring (JC). The last migrants were two at Sheepcote Valley on 27 May.

There were a few records suggestive of breeding. A female was back on territory at Southwick Beach on 21 Apr, a pair was watched loitering with intent around rabbit burrows on Castle Hill, Falmer on 28 Apr; four were carrying caterpillars near Bishopstone on 24 May; and there was a pair at the Midrips. Breeding may have taken place at Newhaven Tide Mills, where a pair with three young was noted in mid-July. Encouragingly, the success of seven or eight pairs (the same number as in 1999) at Rye Hbr Beach Reserve was reported to be "generally high".

Return passage started on 29 July with five at West Beach, Littlehampton where the autumn was considered to be "poor". Occasional singles were noted on, and north of, the Downs, the first a juvenile at Arlington Res on 31 July, but the only substantial numbers away from the coast were 30 at Steyning Round Hill on 22 Aug. There was one double figure count in July (12 at Church Norton on 30th) and then 24 such counts in August. The maxima were 41 at Thorney Island and 35 at Pagham Hbr on 20th and at least 50 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 27th. Nine double figure counts were submitted for September, including 23 at Thorney Island on 23rd. In 1999, there were ten double figure counts in August and 11 in September. Birds continued to trickle through in small numbers through October, with a notable 60 at Beachy Head on 1st being the only substantial count for the month. Three at Cissbury Ring on 17 Sept (CEH) were considered to show characteristics of the Greenland race as were singles at Walberton on 28 Sept, 5 and 10 Oct (TKR), Ferring on 29 Sept (AJH) and Belle Tout, Beachy Head on 5 Oct (JCL). There were four singles in November, with the last at Brighton Marina on 21st. [CB]

1186. **RING OUZEL***Turdus torquatus***Passage migrant, scarce in spring, often fairly common but local in autumn.**

Following a dismal year in 1999, there was a return to normal with both numbers and dates corresponding to the long term pattern. The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
-	-	2	34	-	-	-	1	8	121	24	-

The first arrival in spring was a male at Littlehampton West Pier on 26 Mar and the last was a female at Firlie Beacon on 29 Apr. The great majority were recorded in East Sussex particularly on the Downs near Brighton. Only eight made landfall in West Sussex, all in the Church Norton area.

The first autumn record was quite early at Sheepcote Valley on 30 Aug. Of the total passage of 150-160 birds, some 80% were seen in the last two weeks of October, mainly in the Beachy Head area, including a group of nine flying N on 15 Oct. The largest single group was ten birds at Seaford Head on 23 Oct. Only five were reported in West Sussex, one at Littlehampton and the rest in the Pagham Hbr area. The last autumn record was at Beachy Head on 14 Nov. [RK]

1187. **BLACKBIRD***Turdus merula***Abundant resident and winter visitor: perhaps a passage migrant.**

The largest winter count was 46 at Darwell Res on 16 Jan.

After a period of sharp decline in long term breeding density, from about 34 pairs per km² to about 26 pairs per km², breeding surveys over the last two seasons suggest that numbers may have stabilised at this lower figure.

First nest building was reported at Scobells Fm, Barcombe on 14 Mar and the first brood at Edburton on 11 Apr. Rye Hbr SSSI held about 30 breeding pairs whilst 23 pairs bred with moderate success in Marline Wood, Hastings. Three breeding surveys within a few kilometres of each other gave an interesting comparison of breeding densities in different habitats. Hotham Park, a well wooded urban park in Bognor Regis, had six times the breeding density of a mixed farm in Yapton and four times that of deciduous open woodland in Binsted. Details of other breeding surveys can be found on pages 171.

In autumn a small influx was noted at Beachy Head on 15 Oct. Other evidence of augmentation from the continent came from regular censuses at Seftor Fm, Rose Green (43 on 10 Nov) and Marsh Fm, Binsted (60 on 21 Nov) where numbers had more than doubled between October and November. On 15 Nov, a bird with a German ring was caught at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head. The largest subsequent count was of 50 at Darwell Res on 17 Dec. [RK]

1198. **FIELDFARE***Turdus pilaris***Common to abundant passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Adding the monthly maxima in each 10km square gives a rough picture of the winter distribution; the table below shows that the centre and west of the county were more favoured than the east:

Eastings	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
SU/SZ 70-99	730	650	530	12
TQ/TV 00-49	670	2140	700	460
TQ/TV 50-99	90	570	140	2

The largest flock was 500 at West Dean on 7 Jan. In February, there were 400 at Crows Nest, Ashdown Forest on 9th, 250 at Glynde Levels on 13th, 357 roosting in conifers at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on 15th, and 250 in horse pasture near Petworth on 26th. Two hundred near Faygate on 5 Mar and 250 on Chailey Common on 5 Apr were the largest flocks in those months. The last report of the spring came from Chilgrove on 21 Apr, some two weeks earlier than average.

The first autumn arrivals were a party of 16 on Coates Common on 17 Sept, very close to the average date. However, only a handful more were then seen until November when 470 were at Pagham on 7th and 820 at Combe Haven on 11th. Thereafter, there were numerous reports of small or medium sized flocks, particularly on the river levels in the centre of the county. Four hundred were on Henfield Levels on 25 Nov, 300 at Hartfield on 14 Dec, 210 at Pett Level on 16 Dec, and 300 on Ashdown Forest on 30 Dec. [RK]

Insert sketch of Fieldfare (No 8)

1200. SONG THRUSH

Turdus philomelos

Decreasing resident and partial migrant; common passage migrant and winter visitor. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

Twenty-five at Pevensey Bridge Level on 27 Jan was the only significant count in the first winter period. Occasional singing birds were noted throughout this period.

During the breeding season the first fledged young were noted on 19 Apr at Rushlake Green. Concentrations of breeding pairs included 16 pairs at Pulborough Brooks, 12 pairs at Marline Wood, Hastings, and six pairs at Footlands Wood, Vinehall Street. Twenty adults were ringed and radio-tagged and over 40 nests found within a 10km radius of Graffham, as part of the long-term RSPB study into the species. Details of breeding surveys can be found on pages 171.

Autumn movements were not much in evidence, although small parties were noted in mid-October at Beachy Head, and at several coastal sites in mid-November with, for example, 21 at Pagham on 7 Nov. There were a number of records of both territorial birds and small wintering flocks (up to 14) at the end of the year. [MD]

1201. REDWING

Turdus iliacus

Abundant passage migrant and very common winter visitor.

Adding the monthly maxima in each 10km square gives a rough picture of the distribution across the county in the winter months. The table below suggests that overall numbers were quite moderate with the centre of the county being the most favoured area and the west the least favoured.

Eastings	Jan	Feb	Mar
SU/SZ 70-99	5	60	140
TQ/TV 00-49	540	270	310
TQ/TV 50/99	250	60	165

The largest concentrations tended to be on the river levels with 250 at Pulborough Brooks on 28 Jan, 100 at Ardingly Res on 26 Feb and 75 in the Arun Valley at South Stoke on 12 Mar.

On 23 Mar, heavy overnight passage was heard at Southwick. The spring maximum at Bewl Water was 50 on 5 Apr. The last sighting came from Goring on 25 Apr, very close to the average date.

The first autumn arrival on 9 Oct at Vinehall Street was some two weeks later than average. Sixty were reported from Ashdown Forest on 14 Oct and there was a large westerly movement of 700 in one hour over Crowborough on 4 Nov. Apart from 150 flying W over Pulborough Brooks on 26 Nov, there were no other reports of more than 100 birds up to the end of the year. This may be misleading since winter censuses at two mixed farms totalling 157ha at Rose Green and Yapton, both near Bognor Regis, on 21 Nov and 24 Nov respectively, yielded a total of 117 birds, most of which were distributed singly. If this density was replicated countywide it would suggest a total of about 300,000 in late November. This figure is some ten times greater than the wintering population for average years proposed in *Birds of Sussex!* Some additional census returns would help to indicate if Redwings are indeed more numerous in the countryside than the current random reports suggest. [RK]

1202. MISTLE THRUSH

Turdus viscivorus

Very common resident and partial migrant.

Numbers seemed very depressed, possibly the lowest since records began. It is difficult to assess the total population since none of the long term breeding surveys reported birds holding territory.

Only small numbers were noted in the first three months of the year with a maximum of six at Vinehall Street on 15 Feb. One of only four reports detailing breeding success also came from there with two pairs raising five young. There were two breeding pairs at Elms Fm; three pairs raised a total of four young in Marline Wood, Hastings; and a pair fed young at Pulborough Brooks. Details of breeding birds in defined areas can be found on pages 171.

The largest post-breeding flock was 29 at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on 30 July. This was the lowest maximum for the last ten years at least. Other gatherings of 20 or more were 21 at Barcombe Mills on 13 Aug, 25 at Weir Wood Res on 6 Sept and 20 at Crawley on 15 Oct, after which date birds dispersed as usual for the winter. [RK]

1220. CETTI'S WARBLER

Cettia cetti

Very scarce resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Between January and March, up to four birds were recorded at Filsham Reedbed, three males at Thorney Deepes, and singles at West Wittering, Swanbourne Lake, Glyne Gap and Castle Water, Rye Hbr.

During April and May, a total of 12 males held territory at six different sites including Thorney Deepes (3), West Wittering (2), Arundel WWT (2), South Stoke (2) and Pett (2). Two of the pairs at Thorney raised four young each. A migrant male was heard singing at Shooters Bottom, Beachy Head on 22 Apr while another unusual record was of a single bird at Slinfold on the morning of 29 May.

In the latter part of the year, up to five were recorded at Filsham Reedbed, four at both Thorney Deepes and Pett Level (where a total of 12 different birds was trapped during the autumn), two at Castle Water, Rye Hbr and singles at West Wittering, Pagham Hbr North Wall from 16 Oct to 24 Nov, South Stoke and Pett Pools. [VPB]

1236. GRASSHOPPER WARBLER

Locustella naevia

Very scarce and declining summer visitor and fairly common passage migrant.

The first reeling male was heard at Pulborough Brooks on 9 Apr. Males at Littlehampton West Beach on 20 Apr, The Severals, Church Norton on 21 Apr, Ditchling Common on 3 May, and at Marline Wood, Hastings on 14 May were not reported subsequently so were most likely migrants.

Breeding season records were of an exceptional five pairs at Amberley Wild Brooks, a single pair at Pulborough Brooks, two males at West Dean Woods on 29 Apr and 4 May, with one there on 23 June, two males at Etchingham heard on several occasions during the summer, one at Pebsham on 19 June, and a male reeling on the Knepp Estate on 30 July.

Return migration commenced in mid-July. Monthly maxima ringed at Pett Level were 24 on 26 July, 34 on 20 Aug and 12 on 1 Sept. Five were at Beachy Head on 19 Aug and singles were ringed at Charleston Reedbed on 3 and 9 Sept and at Cissbury on 8 Oct. Other passage birds were recorded at Beachy Head on several dates in August and September, Sheepcote Valley on 7 Aug and 1 Sept, Rye Hbr on 10 and 23 Aug, Sidlesham Tramway on 3 Sept, Ford and Ovingdean on 17th and the Isle of Thorns, Ashdown Forest on 23rd. At Filsham Reedbed and Combe Haven, singles were noted on several dates between 26 Aug and 1 Oct, with two at Combe Haven on 22 Sept. The final record was of a single bird at Newhaven Tide Mills on 12 Oct. [VPB]

1238. SAVI'S WARBLER

Locustella luscinioides

Rare vagrant.

A pair bred at an undisclosed locality in East Sussex raising two broods of four young. The male was present from 7 May and the female from 10 June. Both remained until at least 9 Aug. For security reasons, the observers' initials and site details are being withheld. This record, which constitutes the first confirmation of breeding by the species in Sussex, has been accepted by *British Birds*. [PJ]

1242. AQUATIC WARBLER

Acrocephalus paludicola

Very scarce autumn visitor to selected sites, rare elsewhere.

A juvenile was trapped at Pett Level on 8 Aug (RBRG) while another was seen at Combe Haven on 9 Sept (KMJ *et al*). A very poor showing. Ninety-eight were recorded during the 1990s. Of these one was in July (on 30th), 83 in August, 13 in September and one in October (5-6th). The majority (88) were trapped at Pett Level, varying in numbers from one in 1998 and two in 1993 to 15 in 1995 and an unprecedented 30 in 1997. [RJF]

1243. SEDGE WARBLER

Acrocephalus shoenobaenus

Fairly common summer visitor and abundant passage migrant.

The first bird of the spring was noted at Castle Water, Rye Hbr on 2 Apr, with the first West Sussex sighting at Apuldram Manor Fm on 7th.

Counts of breeding birds in defined areas can be found on page 171. Additional records for the breeding season came from 36 different sites across the county. The prime areas held the greatest concentrations with 60 pairs at Thorney Deepes, at least 33 pairs at Pulborough Brooks, 52 singing males at Combe Haven and over 80 pairs at Rye Hbr SSSI. Numbers at the latter site continued to increase (67 in 1999 and 50 in 1998), an encouraging trend after two poor years. Other interesting records were of nine singing males at Shinewater Lake, Eastbourne on 5 May, the same number along the R. Rother near Bodiam on 13 May, five pairs at Newhaven Tide Mills on 8 May and at least seven males at Climping Gap on 21 May. Monthly maxima ringed at Pett Level in the autumn were 222 on 30 July, 528 on 5 Aug, and 201 on 3 Sept, broadly similar to 1999. Autumn passage at Beachy Head was again poor, but good numbers passed through Sheepcote Valley with an August total of 114 (max. 27 on 31st) and a September total of 107 (max. 24 on 10th). Counts at Filsham Reedbed were of 100 on 6 Aug, 40 on 9 Sept and 50 on 11 Sept. An unusual sighting was of an individual feeding under a bird table in a Woodingdean garden on 7 Aug. The final record was of a single bird at Pett Level on 17 Oct. [VPB]

1250. MARSH WARBLER

Acrocephalus palustris

Very scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

A total of three singing males were recorded: singles at one site on 4 and 22 June and at another site from 6 to 9 June. Although there was no evidence of successful breeding, these sites remain confidential due to the threat posed to this species by egg-collectors. [PJ]

1251. REED WARBLER

Acrocephalus scirpaceus

Common summer visitor and very common passage migrant.

The first bird of the year was seen at the Breech Pool, Pagham Hbr on 14 Apr, the main influx arriving a week later.

Counts of breeding birds in defined areas can be found on page 171. Additional breeding season records included 164 singing males in the Combe Haven area; over 50 pairs at Pagham Hbr; 79 pairs at Thorney Deepes; 12 pairs at Shinewater Lake, Eastbourne; nine at Pondlye, Goddards Green; and 15 pairs along the R. Ouse between Southeast Bridge and Glynde Reach. At Willingdon Level, all first broods were destroyed by bad weather, but all second attempts were noted as being successful.

Monthly maxima trapped at Pett Level in the autumn were 198 on 22 Aug and 126 on 22 Sept; 40 were at the same site on 1 Oct. Passage through Sheepcote Valley commenced on 25 July, when two were seen, and reached a peak of 13 on 11 Aug. At least 100 were counted at Combe Haven on 6 Aug. In November, there were two at Pett Level on 8-9th, with one there on 14th (the latest county record), and another at Combe Haven on 10th. [VPB]

1260. MELODIOUS WARBLER

Hippolais polyglotta

Very scarce visitor, mainly in autumn.

1997: One near Belle Tout Wood, Beachy Head on 11 June (DC, JFC *et al*) was the first of two recorded during the year.

1999: One in the garden of Beachy Head Hotel on 20 Aug (DRC, JFC *et al*) was the only record of the year

2000: One in the garden of Beachy Head Hotel on 21 Aug (DRC, JFC *et al*). For the same observer to find three out of the last four records of this species is quite exceptional. Fourteen have been recorded during the last ten years, four between 19 May and 11 June and ten between 7 August and 17 September. Half these records were at Beachy Head with five at Pagham Hbr/Church Norton and one each at Littlehampton GC and near Shoreham Airport. [RJF]

1262. DARTFORD WARBLER

Sylvia undata

Scarce resident and partial migrant.

The recent absence of severe winters and continued heathland restoration/management has ensured that this species continues to prosper. The first winter period up to the end of March produced records mainly from the breeding areas, with most reports of approximately 32 birds on Ashdown Forest (21 in 1999). Reports were also received for six sites in West Sussex, the majority from the heaths of the north-west where the most notable counts were 18 at Weavers Down, Liss on 30 Jan and 14 at Ambersham Common on 18 Mar. Chailey Common; Mardens Hill, Crowborough; and Marline Wood, Hastings in East Sussex all held at least one bird during this period. Reports from the breeding areas are likely to be an underestimate of the wintering population as although some birds will “churr” or produce snatches of song, most remain skulking in their behaviour. On the coast, there were 2-3 at Pebsham on 9 Jan, two at Pagham Lagoon on 31 Jan and singles at six other sites from Thorney Island in the west to Rye Hbr in the east.

Breeding numbers continue to increase and, at the principal locations of Ashdown Forest and the north-west heaths, the only apparent restraint on numbers is the lack of suitable habitat. However, on the Wealden Heaths in the north-west of the county, for example Lavington Common, birds have over the past few years occupied habitat

comprised largely of heather with just a small amount of gorse. As usual, Ashdown Forest was the most populous site with approximately 77 pairs (60 in 1999). The Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey identified 41 pairs (32 in 1999), with the largest number being 16 pairs on Ambersham/Heyshott Commons and 12 pairs on Iping Common. Away from the main breeding areas, single pairs were reported from four other sites. There were no records of the species returning to nest on the South Downs. Further details of breeding surveys can be found on pages 171.

The first evidence of post-breeding dispersal was a single bird at Church Norton on the unusually early date of 4 July. Records of coastal birds for the autumn/second winter period were mainly for Thorney Island, Pagham Hbr, Beachy Head and Rye Hbr. The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	7	1	12	4	7

Reports continued to be received for inland sites throughout the remainder of the year with approximately 32 individuals on Ashdown Forest and maximum counts of ten at Ambersham/Heyshott on 28 Aug and 5 Nov, eight at Weavers Down, and seven at Iping Common. [AP]

Insert sketch of Dartford Warbler (No 9)

1265. SUBALPINE WARBLER

Sylvia cantillans

Rare vagrant.

A female or first-summer male at Shooters Bottom, Beachy Head on 21 Apr (PN, DIS *et al*) remained all day and was seen by a number of observers. A photograph was published in *Birding World* (13: 140). It has been accepted by *British Birds* as the 11th to be recorded in the county and the eighth at Beachy Head. Three have been in April (the earliest on 11th), six in May and one each in mid-June and October. [RJF]

1267. SARDINIAN WARBLER

Sylvia melanocephala

Very rare vagrant.

A male at Roedean, East Brighton on 20-21 Apr (ITB, IJW *et al*) has been accepted by *British Birds* and is the fifth county record. A good local patch find, and just reward for perseverance at a sensitive site. This record demonstrates that continued searching of

areas that at first glance might appear unexceptional can turn up good birds, although it helps greatly when they are on the coast. The other records were in April (1999), 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 Pett Level on 30 Aug (RBRG) while another was at Beachy Head on 10-11 Sept (TJW *et al*). The former was the sixth to be trapped at Pett Level while the latter, which was present in scrub to the east of Birling Gap, was the 30th to be recorded in the Beachy Head area. A photograph of the latter bird appears in this *Report*. The county total rises to 47, of which 31 were in September and eight in both August and October. [RJF]

1274. **LESSER WHITETHROAT**

Sylvia curruca

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first arrival was at Houndean Bottom, Lewes on 16 Apr, eight days earlier than in 1999 but still four days later than average for the last ten years. By the end of the month the species was well established across the county.

Counts of breeding birds in defined areas can be found on page 171. Additional breeding season reports came from 57 sites, an increase over the previous year's total of 44. As usual densities were low, with three pairs at Marline Wood and Darwell Res, five at Thorney Deeps and six at Rye Hbr SSSI, similar to 1999 levels.

Numbers trapped for ringing at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head showed an increase over 1999's low total of 30, with 20 on each of 5, 10 and 19 Sept, and a single on 1 Oct. The autumn maxima at Combe Haven were 25+ on 27 Aug and ten on both 13 Aug and 7 Sept but at Sheepcote Valley just ten were noted in August and three in September. Six at Climping Gap on 8 Oct were the final sightings of the year.

A bird showing characteristics of a 'Siberian' Lesser Whitethroat was seen at Cow Gap, Beachy Head on 4 Oct (JFC). The only other county record was also at Beachy Head, trapped for ringing on 28 Oct 1971. Previously described as *blythi*, Shirihai *et al* (2001) state that Siberian populations should be included within *S.[c.] curruca* because of their overall plumage resemblance to that taxon and because more than 25% are inseparable. [VPB]

1275. **WHITETHROAT**

Sylvia communis

Very common summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first arrivals of the year were at Paghham Hbr, Pulborough Brooks and Filsham on 9 Apr, a late arrival compared with the average of 3 Apr for the last ten years. A total of 30 was noted at Paghham Hbr on 13 Apr and 40 at Beachy Head on 9 May.

Counts of breeding birds in defined areas can be found on page 171. Additional records were of 60 singing males at Combe Haven, at least 45 pairs at Rye Hbr SSSI, 40 pairs at Thorney Island, 11 singing males along a 3km stretch of the R. Rother near

Petworth, ten singing males at Highdown Hill, and nine pairs at Lewes Race Course. There were also 12 pairs at Marline Wood, Hastings where very high success was noted. Breeding success generally appears to have been good this year; 20 birds, all juveniles, were seen at Sheepcote Valley on 23 June and on 10 Aug approximately 35, mostly juveniles, were encountered on a 7km walk at No Mans Land, Findon.

Good numbers of resident and passage birds were ringed, with 81 at Cissbury being comparable with 1999, while the total of 294 at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head showed a marked increase over the previous year's figure of 181. At Sheepcote Valley, totals of 294 and 150 were recorded during August and September respectively, including 60 on 7 Aug, 70 on 28 Aug and 34 on 9 Sept. Most individuals had departed by the end of the month and the last sightings were at Pett Level on 11 Oct and at Sidlesham on 19 Oct. [VPB]

1276. GARDEN WARBLER

Sylvia borin

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

After the early arrivals of 1999, this year saw a return to more usual arrival dates. The first record came from Galley Hill, Bexhill on 11 Apr, followed two days later by a male singing at Bewl Water. By the end of the month there were reports from a further 13 sites.

Counts of breeding birds in defined areas can be found on page 171. Additional breeding season records from 38 sites included six pairs in 6.6ha at Cissbury, at least five pairs at Pulborough Brooks, four at Marline Wood, and a minimum of seven on Ashdown Forest. A pair was feeding three juveniles at Scobells Fm, Barcombe on 6 June. Twenty-two new birds were ringed at Cissbury, broadly comparable to the previous year, with a maximum of seven on 12 Aug.

Daily maxima trapped at Pett Level were 28 on 18 Aug and 11 on 1 and 22 Sept. At Beachy Head, where birds were recorded on 22 dates in August, the peak counts were ten on 31 Aug and 25 on 5 Sept. Only a few birds remained into October, with the last individuals seen at Sheepcote Valley on 21st and at Combe Haven on 22nd. [VPB]

1277. BLACKCAP

Sylvia atricapilla

Very common summer visitor and passage migrant; small numbers winter.

There were five separate sightings on New Year's Day, at Hardham, Steyning, Upper Beeding, Keymer and Marline Wood, Hastings and records of at least 47 obviously wintering birds between January and March at 36 different sites scattered across the county. This total number of birds was roughly double that for the same period in 1999. A male was heard in sub-song by Chichester Library on four occasions between 17 Jan and 21 Feb, another male first noted in Keymer on 17 Dec 1999 was seen regularly to 6 Mar and one was seen feeding on a baked potato in a Hastings garden on 23 Jan. The first likely migrants appeared at Church Norton and Bognor Regis (2) on 19 Mar; all three were heard singing.

Counts of breeding birds in defined areas can be found on page 171. The species was recorded in suitable habitat throughout the county in the breeding season, though with mixed fortunes reported. There were five territories identified on Lane End Common, Chailey, 17 singing males along a 3km stretch of the R. Rother, near Petworth and the

seven territories at Marsh Fm, Yapton represented an increase compared with the 1999 total of four. However, the total of seven pairs at Cissbury was half the previous year's figure and, although there were nine at Marline Wood, this too represented a decline.

In contrast, autumn ringing totals were an improvement on 1999; 881 were trapped at Beachy Head and 341 at Cissbury, compared with only 234 the year before. Large numbers were trapped at Pett Level during September, with a maximum of 279 on 21st. There was an excellent autumn passage through Whitbread Hollow, where totals of between 350 and 600 were recorded on five dates during the month.

It is not easy to ascertain when the last migrants departed, but six seen in the Beachy Head area on 15 Nov were probably heading south especially as migrants were reported at Pett Level until 16th. Winter records were of 18 individuals at 15 sites during November and December, with a male and female seen together at Burgess Hill on 26 Nov and Broadwater, Worthing on 17 Dec. [VPB]

1298. PALLAS'S LEAF WARBLER

Phylloscopus proregulus

Very scarce visitor, mostly in late autumn.

1996: One seen briefly in the rides above Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head on 9 Nov (DC, JFC) took the year's total to a record nine.

1998: One at Hodcombe, Beachy Head on 1 Oct (DRC, JFC, RHC) was the earliest county record (by ten days) and the first of four recorded during the autumn.

2000: Two were found in Belle Tout Wood, Beachy Head on 14 Nov (DRC, JFC *et al*) where they remained delighting observers to 16th. They spent the majority of their time in close proximity to each other and were described as being a "bright individual" and a "very bright individual". A photograph of the very bright bird appears in this *Report*. Forty have been recorded in the county since 1990, with just under half of them at Beachy Head. Despite increasing occurrences in the county (1989 was the last blank year), this species remains a firm favourite and these two in particular reinforced that view. Most records are for mid-October to mid/late November. [RJF]

1300. YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER

Phylloscopus inornatus

Very scarce visitor, mostly in late autumn.

1998: One in gardens at Birling Gap on 6 Oct (DRC, JFC) was the first of two recorded during the autumn.

2000: Two were recorded in October, one at Beachy Head on 15th (NJT *et al*) and one at Walberton on 27-28th (BR, TR). The former remained in Belle Tout Wood all day, attracting much attention, while the latter was seen rather more briefly in a garden and adjoining copse. Thirty-nine have been recorded since 1990 (*cf.* 40 Pallas's), all between 26 Sept and 29 Nov. Of these, two were in September, 28 in October and nine in November. 1987 was the last blank year. [RJF]

1300.01 HUME'S LEAF WARBLER

Phylloscopus humei

Very rare vagrant.

One at Seaford from 2 to 22 Dec (JC, GG, PJW) has been accepted by *British Birds* and is only the third county record. It was seen feeding on woolly aphids in an apple tree in a private garden where it was an irregular visitor. Both previous records were in mid-November (in 1966 and 1997). This species usually occurs later in the autumn than the superficially similar Yellow-browed Warbler (for which the last December record was at Amberley in 1986). [RJF]

1301. RADDE'S WARBLER

Phylloscopus schwarzi

Very rare vagrant.

A first-winter in hedgerows at Combe Haven from 14 to 19 Oct (KMJ, SCR, IS *et al*) has been accepted by *British Birds* and is the ninth county record. Although hard to see at times, perseverance usually paid off and its stay was widely appreciated, making it one of the highlights of the year for those who saw it. All have occurred between 30 Sept and 3 Nov. Records of this species now outnumber those of the superficially similar Dusky Warbler *P. fuscatus* by a factor of three, the most recent *fuscatus*, in Oct 1992, was also at Combe Haven. [RJF]

1308. WOOD WARBLER

Phylloscopus sibilatrix

Very scarce summer resident and passage migrant.

The first record of the year was a singing male at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on 23 Apr, close to the average arrival date of 19 Apr for the last ten years. Just three migrants appeared subsequently: at Littlehampton West Beach on 26 Apr, Pett on 7 May and Belle Tout, Beachy Head on 13 May.

The declining breeding population remains a feature, not just in this county, but is noted in both recent *Hampshire* and *Surrey Bird Reports*. The species has a low site tenacity, changing its breeding areas from year to year, a characteristic which results in wide population fluctuations at a local level (*The EBCC Atlas of European Breeding Birds*). Currently such a trend is evidenced by the bird's retrenchment into the west of England and Wales; Sussex is very much on the edge of the species' eastern range in the British Isle. There was a total of 12 birds holding territory in potential breeding locations: seven in Ashdown Forest, two at both Linchmere and Stanley Commons, and one in Worth Forest.

Two were reported at Pondlye, Goddards Green on 3 July and one at Pulborough Brooks on 5 Aug. Subsequent records were of singles at Sidlesham on 6 Aug, Church Norton on 8-9 Aug, Barcombe Res on 27 Aug, and Beachy Head on 3 and 5 Sept. [AP]

1311. CHIFFCHAFF

Phylloscopus collybita

Very common summer visitor and passage migrant; small numbers winter.

Records up to the end of February came from 32 separate sites, mostly of single individuals. Again, sewage farms were particularly favoured areas, with three birds at Ford on 1 Jan, 12 at Thorney on 10 Jan and six at Coldwaltham on 28th, though numbers were lower than in the bumper year of 1999 when the maximum counts from these sites were eight, 26 and 15 respectively.

The first spring records were for Church Norton and Beachy Head on 7 Mar. The main influx of arrivals at inland sites occurred from 12 Mar. On 4 Apr one was seen at Barcombe feeding from blackthorn flowers, apparently taking nectar. This unusual feeding behaviour is described by BWP as “occasional”.

Counts of breeding birds in defined areas can be found on page 171. Additional counts during the breeding season revealed 16 pairs at Marline Wood, Hastings; seven pairs at Lane End Common, Chailey; six pairs at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street; and five pairs at Pulborough Brooks RSPB Reserve. A total of eight singing males was found on a circular walk around Batts Wood, Stonegate and five territories along a 3km stretch of the R. Rother at Kilsham Fm, Petworth.

Including autumn passage, 146 new birds were ringed during the year at Cissbury, doubling the 1999 figure of 70 which had been the lowest since a disastrous year in 1991, but still less than half the excellent 1998 total of 301. Passage at Whitbread Hollow was also a great improvement over the previous year, with 300 moving through on 13 Sept and 400 on 17th. There were 35 at Shooters Bottom, Beachy Head on 1 Oct and 33 at Church Norton and 20 at Cissbury Ring on 6th. A darker, browner individual was seen at Brooklands, Worthing on 14 Oct and 14 Nov, both times in company with a bird of normal appearance.

November and December brought sightings from 35 localities, comprising at least 95 birds, with maxima of five at Steyning SF on 30 Dec, 16 at Thorney SF on 28th and 12 at Coldwaltham SF on 12th. [VPB]

1311.01 SIBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF

Phylloscopus collybita tristis

Probably a very scarce autumn passage migrant and winter visitor.

1981: A single bird trapped at Shoreham Sanctuary on 4 Nov (JAN) showed characteristics of one of the eastern races *abietinus* or *tristis*.

1998: One at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 1 Nov (IJW) exhibited characteristics of the race *tristis* while one at Hodcombe, Beachy Head on 6 Nov (JFC *et al*) showed characteristics of one of the eastern races *abietinus* or *tristis*.

1999: One along the undercliff at Rottingdean on 16 Dec (ADW, IJW) exhibited characteristics of the race *tristis*.

2000: One at Coldwaltham SF on 12 and 17 Mar (BFF, DIS *et al*) and three there on 20-21 Dec (BFF, DIS *et al*) all exhibited characteristics of the race *tristis*. Single birds showing characteristics of one of the eastern races *abietinus* or *tristis* were recorded at Coldwaltham SF on 3 Mar (CEH), 30 Nov and 21 Dec (DIS) and at Piddinghoe on 30 Dec (MA).

Those in 1998 and 1999 were both heard giving the presumably characteristic call while the bird in Mar 2000 was heard both calling and singing. The birds in Dec 2000 remained silent so perhaps are best regarded as ‘probables’. There have now been eight birds exhibiting characteristics of Siberian Chiffchaffs in Sussex in the last three years though some previous records of ‘eastern’ Chiffchaffs would probably meet current criteria too. Of possible concern is that in Holland, where *tristis* is afforded specific status, there were only ten accepted records to the end of 1999 (*Dutch Birding* 22:266), compared with 23 of Dusky Warbler, presumably reflecting more rigorous assessment criteria. The bird at Coldwaltham in March was the first to be recorded singing in the county, the song, possibly unlike the call, is unequivocally considered to be distinctive of this race (see BWP). [RJF]

1312. WILLOW WARBLER

Phylloscopus trochilus

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

Only six birds were reported in March, the earliest of which was at Goring Gap on 11th. Apart from 200 at Pagham Hbr on 14 Apr, there were again no large falls this spring; the maximum day count at Beachy Head was 40, also on 14th.

Details of surveys in defined areas can be found on page 171. Other counts for the breeding season revealed good numbers, with up to 100 pairs on Ashdown Forest, nine territories on Lane End Common, Chailey, and eight pairs at Marline Wood, Hastings.

Return passage commenced towards the end of July; 15 were at Sheepcote Valley on the 25th, increasing to 41 on 7 Aug and 45 on 9th. A total of 98 new birds was ringed at Cissbury, a slight increase over 1999, and on 18 Aug about 40 were encountered on a 7km downland walk at No Mans Land, Findon, mostly feeding in cow parsley and willow herb. Reasonable numbers passed through Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head where an August maximum of 200 was noted on 20th. At Church Norton, 120 were seen on 8 Aug and over 100 were noted at Marline Wood, Hastings on 27th. During September, numbers steadily dwindled with 39 at Church Norton on 3rd and 35 at Beachy Head on 7th. The last East Sussex birds had departed by 6 Oct, but one was heard singing at Pulborough Brooks on 15 Oct and the final record of the year was of a single bird at Sidlesham Ferry on 25th. [VPB]

1314. GOLDCREST

Regulus regulus

Very common breeding resident, common passage migrant and winter visitor.

A total of 258 records was received from 90 sites across the county (39 of the sites in the breeding season). Of the 62 records in the first quarter, all were in single figures, except for counts in January of 23 at Marline Wood, Hastings on 1st, and 18 at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street and 15 at Linchmere Common on 30th. In February, there were 12 at Darwell Res on 13th, ten at Marline Wood on 14th, 17 at Footland Wood on 15th, and 11 at Linchmere Common on 17th. The March records were of 15 at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on both 2nd and 22nd, and 22 at Footland Wood on 16th.

Counts from sites of regular surveys are included in the summary table on pages 171. Three territories were identified at Lane End Common, Chailey and an adult with two juveniles was seen at Hassocks on 15 July.

At Cissbury Ring, 68 birds were trapped and ringed between 10 Sept and 4 Nov. In another good autumn for this species, a number of falls at Beachy Head included 70 on 2 Oct, 35 on 7 Oct and at least 110 on 15 Oct. Other significant counts for October included 25 at Church Norton on 7th, 50 there and 36 at Marline Wood on 14th, 30 at Filsham Reedbed on 15th, and 35 at West Wittering on 17th, increasing to 45 on 19th. The monthly total for Sheepcote Valley was 130, including 20 on 21st and 22nd. The largest counts for the remainder of the year were 15 at Filsham on 15 Nov, 22 at Footland Wood on 19 Nov and 16 at Darwell Res on 17 Dec. [LM]

1315. FIRECREST

Regulus ignicapillus

Rare breeder and scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

The total reported in the late winter and spring (69) was above the previous 10-year average of 52 while the autumn and winter total (76), although an increase compared with the total of 47 in 1999, was still below the 10-year average of 112. The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
13	6	26	15	12	1	1	1	6	49	16	8

In the first two months of the year, there were two at Glyne Gap Marsh, Seaford Head and Lullington Heath on 1 Jan, 22 Jan and 20 Feb respectively. All other records were of single birds at nine sites, five of them coastal. Inland wintering birds reported were singles at Coates Common, Rackham and Pulborough Brooks. In February, a single bird at Bewl Water on 13th and two at Lullington Heath on 20th may have been indicative of spring passage. The total in March was made up of six at Beachy Head, four at West Dean Woods, three in the lower Cuckmere Valley, two at Arundel WWT, and singles at nine other sites, six of them coastal. The largest counts in April were three at Hollingbury GC on 4th and two at both Rye Bay Wood and Beachy Head on 11th and 23rd respectively. The last spring migrant was a single in Rye Bay Wood on 3 May.

Reports of singing males in suitable breeding habitat came from Worth Forest (7) and West Dean Woods (4). Singles were also recorded at Scaynes Hill on 29 June (singing from a holly bush) and Vert Wood, Laughton on 30 July.

One at Hove on 27 Aug heralded the start of autumn passage. The approximate totals recorded at the main sites during the remainder of the year were as follows:

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pagham Hbr	2	6	1	-
Beachy Head	1	14	-	-
Rye Hbr	-	4	5	1
Other sites	3	25	10	8

The highest daily counts in October were over the three days 20th to 22nd, with totals of nine, 11 and 22 respectively. Most of these were recorded at Pagham Hbr; Sheepcote Valley, Brighton; the Cuckmere Valley; Beachy Head; Pett Level and Rye Hbr. The largest site count was five at Pett Level on 20th. In November, apart from a total of five at Rye Hbr, there were three in the Brighton area and two each at Charleston Reedbed and Marline Woods, Hastings. The other records were of singles, including one well inland at Nutley on 22nd. The December records were of singles, all at coastal sites except for one at Pulborough Brooks on 14-15th. [LM]

1335. SPOTTED FLYCATCHER

Muscicapa striata

Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

A very early spring migrant was reported at Pulborough Brooks on 10 Apr, equalling the second earliest county record at Climping in 1995. The next to arrive was at Beachy Head on a more usual date of 29 Apr and at Marline Wood, Hastings on 30th. Arrivals continued throughout May, with three at West Wittering on 29th the last reported, although one at Willingdon Level on 17 June could have been a late migrant. There was a welcome increase in breeding records with some 50 pairs reported (27 in 1999) of which ten were on Ashdown Forest. Two pairs at Marline Wood, Hastings were the first to breed there since 1995. A nest in a garden honeysuckle in Uckfield was found deserted with four dead youngsters but a pair that built a nest in a climber attached to a house in Bignor reared four or five young. A pair at Henfield hatched five young, three of which subsequently fledged. Details of breeding surveys in defined areas can be found on pages 171.

The first migrants were noted at Barcombe on 19 July and at Edburton the following day. Post breeding groups began to gather in August with five at Church Norton on 3rd, ten on 13th and 12 on 15th. At Wiston Pond, near Steyning, ten were flycatching in alders at dusk on 19 Aug while at Pulborough Brooks there were six on 21 Aug, 20 on 27 Aug and 25 on 10 Sept. Records for the coast continued during September with 16 at Beachy Head on 10th, seven at Church Norton on 14th and eight there on 28th. Few birds were left in October but there were eight at Beachy Head on 1st; the final bird was at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 19th. [DEGC]

Insert Sketch Spotted Flycatchers (NO 10)

1349. PIED FLYCATCHER

Ficedula hypoleuca

Scarce passage migrant, more numerous in autumn than spring. Has bred.

1992: A singing male at Rake on 21-22 May (LWO) had reportedly been present for about two weeks and was observed visiting nest-boxes.

1993: A singing male was again present at Rake on 5 and 13 May (LWO) though it could not be found on 23 May. No female was seen in either year.

1999: A male at Exceat Bridge, Cuckmere on 9 Apr pre-dates by two days the earliest for the year.

2000: The approximate monthly totals were:

Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
8	2	2	3	23	22	1

Records were similar to those of last year, month by month. The first recorded was a male at Selsey Bill on 9 Apr, with both a male and a female at Church Norton the following day. Subsequent spring records were of a male at Sidlesham Ferry on 14 Apr, singles (perhaps the same) at Pulborough Brooks on 13, 16 and 21 Apr, a male and female at Church Norton on 21 Apr, a female at Littlehampton on 23 Apr, a male at Hope Gap, Seaford Head on 6 May, and a female at Ovingdean on 8 May.

A pair was present at a site in the NE of the county from 14 June to 26 July, although there was no evidence of successful breeding.

Autumn passage commenced with an early single at Cuckmere Haven on 24 July and a further 6-7 birds in the first week of August. Subsequent sightings were mainly of single birds though there were two at Church Norton on 6 and 29 Aug and 9 and 24 Sept and at Glynde Levels on 27 Aug. A bird died after hitting a window in Crowborough on 1 Sept. The last to be seen was at Ashcombe Bottom, Lewes on 1 Oct. [DEGC]

1364. **BEARDED TIT**

Panurus biarmicus

Very scarce breeder, scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Records were received for several breeding sites. At Filsham Reedbed, where up to ten were recorded in January and 12 in February-March, four or possibly five pairs bred. At least ten juveniles were seen on 15 June and, of 11 on 30 July, most were juveniles. A male was seen carrying food to a second brood on 15 July. At least 30 were recorded there in October, 20 in November and 25-30 in December. Breeding also occurred at Pett Level where at least eight nests were successful. At Pett Pools, none was seen in spring. Five juveniles there on 5 Sept were indicative of successful breeding though they could have come from nearby Pett Level. At Thorney Island, where up to seven were recorded in January and four in February, five pairs fledged approximately 40 young. A flock of 26 juveniles was seen there on 23 June while other counts included 20 on 31 Aug, 50 on 30 Sept, 20 on 15 Oct, four on 4 Nov and six on 20 Dec.

Wanderers or migrants were also seen away from breeding sites. In the first winter period there was one at Castle Water, Rye Hbr on 14 Jan and five at Glyne Gap on 26 Jan. Records for Castle Water in the latter part of the year were of seven on 14 Oct, four on 18 Nov and two on 29 Dec while at Glyne Gap there were at least ten in October and 15 in November. Elsewhere, there was one at Bulverhythe on 22 Oct; one at the Breech Pool, Pagham Hbr from 14 to 19 Nov and up to two at The Severals, Church Norton from 15 to 21 Nov. [ARK]

1437. **LONG-TAILED TIT**

Aegithalos caudatus

Very common resident.

Records were received for 87 sites in 37 of the county's 54 10km squares, with none from areas along the western and northern borders and in central East Sussex and north-central West Sussex.

Details of breeding surveys in defined areas can be found on pages 171. An additional count was of five pairs in 6.6ha at Cissbury. At Footland Wood, Vinehall Street four pairs were present on 8 June but only four young were seen; similarly at Marline Wood, Hastings seven pairs were present on 25 June but only six young. At West Dean Woods, a pair was seen at a nest 20m above the ground in a larch on 19 Apr.

There were a number of high counts for outside the breeding season including two flocks totalling 27 at Thorney Island on 16 Jan, 21 at Linchmere Common on 17 Feb, 40 at Weir Wood Res on 27 Aug, 32 at West Chidham on 22 Oct, and four flocks totalling 30 at Chichester GPs on 27 Nov. At Darwell Res (a) and Marline Wood (b), the monthly maxima were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
(a)	40	13	17	6	8	5	10	6	11	26	7	28
(b)	36	27	-	-	-	20	-	-	-	21	27	-

In the lower Adur Valley, six were seen eating haws on 13 Oct and at Walberton three were feeding on peanuts on 13 Dec. On the coast at Shoreham Fort, four flew E on 14 Oct. [ARK]

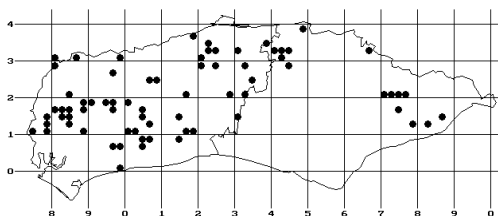
1440. MARSH TIT

Parus palustris

Fairly common resident.

1999: The statement that young fledged by 15 Apr was incorrect, as were similar statements about young Blue Tits and Great Tits.

2000: As last year, the map shows a distinctly western bias to the records.



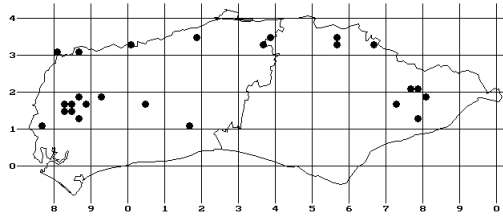
As last year, the map shows a distinctly western bias to the records. Of the 68 sites where the species was recorded, only 15 were in East Sussex, contrary to the more general distribution shown in *Birds of Sussex*. Sites where six or more were noted at one time were Marline Wood, Hastings (six on 1 Jan and eight on 25 June), Pulborough Brooks RSPB Reserve (six on 6 Jan), Darwell Res (six on 16 Jan and eight on 18 Nov) and Kithurst Hill, Storrington (14 on 29 May). A brood of eight fledged from a nest-box at Ardingly Res by 1 May. Details of breeding surveys in defined areas can be found on pages 171. An additional count was of three pairs in 12ha at Blackham, Forest Row. There were records for two sites south of the Downs, singles at Climping on both 1 Jan and 24 Dec and another at Barns Copse, Binsted on 30 June.

Birds were noted feeding on marsh thistle at Darwell Res, on beech mast at Forest Mere and coming to feeders at Haywards Heath and Weir Wood Res. [ARK]

1442. **WILLOW TIT**

Parus montanus

Now probably a scarce resident.



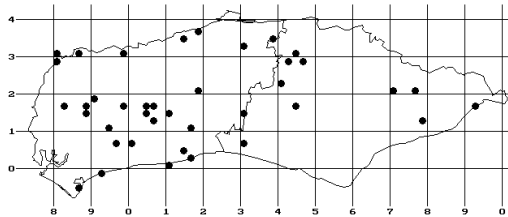
The map, when compared with that in *Birds of Sussex*, shows a significant decline in this species. It was noted at only 24 sites, a quarter of which were in one 10km square on the Downs in West Sussex at Charlton Forest, Cocking and West Dean Woods. Birds were also seen on the Downs further west at Stansted Forest and immediately north at Hoe Copse, Heyshott and Graffham Common. In the north of the county, the sites were Hog Wood, Plaistow; Langhurst Estate, Warnham; Weir Wood Res, where four were trapped; Gravetye Woods, West Hoathly; Eridge Park; Saxonbury Wood (2km SE of Eridge Park); and Bryant Fm, Bewl Water. In the far east of the county, there were records for Netherfield Place, Battle; Brede High Wood (two sites near Powdermill Res); Footlands Wood, Vinehall Street; and Marline Wood, Hastings.

That the species is not entirely sedentary was shown by the record of a pair on 15 Apr in a rural garden in Steyning where it was not seen in the previous 14 years nor since. [ARK]

1461. **COAL TIT**

Parus ater

Very common resident.



The map, with only 39 sites, when compared with that in *Birds of Sussex*, shows that this species is significantly under-recorded. This is surprising, as its voice in its preferred coniferous habitat is a sure give-away. Is it just uninspiring or merely overlooked?

The largest numbers seen were 16 pairs and 13 young at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on 8 June and double figures there throughout the year; 27 at Linchmere Common on 28 July and 17 at Weavers Down, Liss on 27 June. Some records from urban areas were of two at Broadwater, Worthing on 3 Aug and 17 Dec; two at both Withdean and Preston Grange, Brighton on 27 Feb; one at Hotham Park, Bognor on 4 Mar and one singing in holm oak at Steyning on 1 Apr. Breeding counts for defined areas are tabulated on pages 171. [ARK]

1462. **BLUE TIT***Parus caeruleus***Abundant resident.**

Significant counts were of 124 young fledged by 16 pairs from 20 nest boxes at Ardingly Res; 40 counted along a 3km stretch of the R. Rother at Kilsham Fm, near Petworth on 25 May; 15 on 90ha of mixed farmland at Sefter Fm, Rose Green on 30 June, and 34 at Kithurst Hill, Storrington on 29 May.

The monthly maxima at Hotham Park, Bognor (which were considerably lower in April, May and June than last year) were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
15	11	15	10	10	7	7	8	7	6	9	12

At Marline Wood, Hastings there were 91 on 6 Feb, 72 on 25 June, 117 on 14 Oct and 96 on 5 Nov.

A 'tit flock' at Scobells Fm, Barcombe on 13 Sept comprised 30 Blue Tits with fewer Great Tits, Long-tailed Tits, Chiffchaffs and a Lesser Whitethroat. Breeding counts for defined areas are tabulated on pages 171. [ARK]

1464. **GREAT TIT***Parus major***Abundant resident.**

Breeding counts for defined areas can be found on pages 171. Other significant counts were of 69 young fledged at Ardingly Res from 11 of 13 occupied nest boxes; 16 along a 3km stretch of the River Rother at Kilsham Fm, Petworth on 25 May; and five breeding pairs in 6.6ha at Cissbury Ring.

Monthly maxima at Hotham Park, Bognor were:

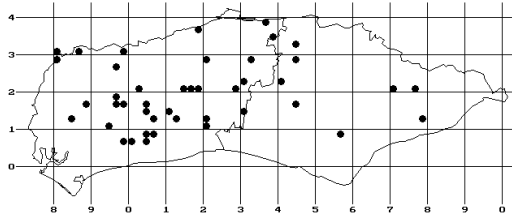
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
5	6	4	2	3	1	0	0	2	1	7	4

A pair in a box at Thorney Island fledged 11 young, the same outcome as last year. [ARK]

1479. **NUTHATCH***Sitta europaea***Very common resident.**

1999: One at Stanmer Park, Brighton on 17 Mar was the sole record this year for the Downs in East Sussex.

2000: The map, with only 43 sites (one more than last year), when compared with that in *Birds of Sussex*, shows that this species is significantly under-recorded. This is surprising as it is particularly vocal early in the year. Of these sites, 33 were in West Sussex clustered predominantly on the central Downs and in the adjacent Lower Weald. No records were received for the Downs in East Sussex but birds were seen eastwards in the Weald at Burgess Hill and Hassocks in January, Isfield in May and Milton Hide, Arlington in June.

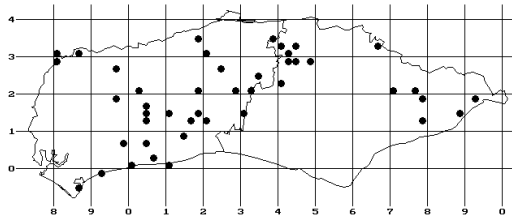


Other significant records included ten calling at Kneppmill Pond on 26 Feb and 2 Apr; eight adults and seven juveniles at Linchmere Common on 19 June; three pairs and seven juveniles at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on 8 June; and 13 young fledged from two nest boxes at Ardingly Res. At Brick Kiln Rough, Ebernoe one was seen to eat ash flowers on 21 Mar. Breeding counts for defined areas are tabulated on pages 171. [ARK]

1486. TREECREEPER

Certhia familiaris

Very common resident.



The map, when compared with that in *Birds of Sussex*, shows that once again the species is significantly under-recorded. Records were mainly from the well watched south and central parts of West Sussex and Ashdown Forest. In the extreme north-west, there were records for Weavers Down, Liss and Linchmere Common but otherwise not west of Petworth. In the east, birds were found at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street; Killingan Wood, Sedlescombe; Marline Wood, Hastings; and at Darwell Res. There was an absence of records from large areas of south and central East Sussex. A pair at The Hanger, Pulborough Brooks RSPB Reserve was feeding young on 1 June. Breeding counts for defined areas can be found on pages 171. [ARK]

1490. PENDULINE TIT

Remiz pendulinus

Rare vagrant.

A male trapped at Pett Level on 29 Sept (RBRG) has been accepted by *British Birds*. There are now 12 county records involving 15 individuals, the first were in 1987 (at Pett and Filsham) and eight of the ten records since have been at Pett Level (all the others were by the Long Pool, Pagham Hbr). All but two records have been in October and this is the earliest (by five days) while the latest was on 2 Nov. [RJF]

1508. GOLDEN ORIOLE

Oriolus oriolus

Very scarce passage migrant and summer visitor, may have bred.

1998: A female flying around Whitbread Hollow on 23 May (DC, JFC) pre-dated the only other record that year, a sub-adult male at the same site, by two days. 1999 was the first blank year since 1982, although 29 were recorded during the 1990s.

2000: Five were seen in just over a week in mid-May. A male at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head on 13 May flew off high inland (DC, DRC, JFC), another male on 14th flew W over Whitbread Hollow (DC, DRC, JFC) while a female above Whitbread Hollow on 15th (DRC, JFC) provided an amazing hat-trick for the finders. Presumed males were heard singing at Balsdean on 18th (GAS) and at Whitbread Hollow on 20 May (RDME, SM). All 12 records since 1996 have been in May and six of the last seven have been at Whitbread Hollow, which currently seems to be the best place to see the species in the county. [RJF]

1520. GREAT GREY SHRIKE

Lanius excubitor

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Records were fewer than last year involving a minimum of three and no more than six birds. A well watched bird was present beside the R. Ouse at Landport Bottom, Lewes from 22 Jan to 3 Feb (SHL, JT *et al*). On Ashdown Forest, one was in the Four Counties/Gill's Lap area on 13-14 Feb and 1 Mar (RHa). A bird seen nearby in the Old Lodge/Camp Hill area on four dates between 9 and 21 Mar (JBir, RHa) was possibly different, as was another bird not far away at Londonderry Fm, near Nutley on 10 Mar (DK).

Later in the year, on Ashdown Forest, one was present at Camp Hill on 31 Oct (JBir) and 10 Nov (CMA). Possibly the same bird was seen at Wren's Warren on 18 Nov (RHa) and 20 Nov (CMA), and in the Four Counties area on 26 Dec (DK). [DEGC]

1523. WOODCHAT SHRIKE

Lanius senator

Rare vagrant.

1999: One at Grange Fm, Earnley on 15-16 May (WR) was the first record since 1995 and the ninth to be recorded during the 1990s.

2000: Two were recorded, a probable male at Combe Haven on 9 May (KMJ *et al*) and a first-summer male at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton from 13 to 16 June (ADW, IJW *et al*). A photograph of the latter bird appears in this *Report*. Five of the last eleven records have been in May and three in June, with the others in April (22nd-24th), July and September (14th). No Red-backed Shrikes were seen in the county in 2000, only the second blank year since 1966. [RJF]

1539. JAY

Garrulus glandarius

Very common resident.

The records in the first quarter of the year were all in single figures, the highest count being eight at Darwell Res on 13 Feb, six at Weavers Down, Liss on 17 Feb and five at Warren Hill, Washington on 15 Mar. Breeding counts from sites of regular surveys are included in the summary table on pages 171. There were reports of breeding pairs from nine other sites across the county.

Autumn and winter records were from 17 sites, mainly involving one to three birds, but with counts of six at Darwell Res on 19 Oct and 17 Dec, and ten at Beachy Head on 22 Oct. There was one record of a bird flying E at Littlehampton Marina on 29 Nov. [LM]

1549. MAGPIE

Pica pica

Very common resident.

The highest counts in the first quarter were 49 at Rye Hbr SSSI on 25 Jan and 220 at Moulsecomb Wild Park, Brighton on 5 Mar.

Breeding counts from sites of regular surveys are included in the summary table on pages 171.

In the autumn and early winter the highest counts were 30 at Thorney Deeps on 9 Sept; 25 at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head on 24 Sept; 200 and 265 at a roost in Moulsecomb Wild Park, Brighton on 8 Nov and 22 Dec respectively; and 42 at Climping on 17 Dec.

A leucistic individual seen in Goring on 11 Mar and 3 and 24 Apr had also been present at intervals from 10 Oct 1999 until the end of that year while a white-headed bird was seen occasionally on the E side of the R. Adur at Shoreham. [LM]

1560. JACKDAW

Corvus monedula

Very common resident.

The highest counts recorded in the first half of the year were 241 flying to roost at Darwell Res on 1 Jan; 250 at Mountfield on 14 Jan; 110 on the rubbish tip at Pebsham on 17 Feb; and 300 at Home Park Fm, Liphook on 16 Mar.

Breeding counts for defined areas can be found on pages 171.

Insert sketch of Jackdaw (no 11)

In the second half of the year the highest counts were 230 at Chichester GPs on 16 Oct; 110 at West Wittering on 19 Oct; 107 flying high NW at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 19 Oct; 800 flying to roost at South Stoke on 21 Oct and a December monthly maximum of 600 at Pebsham Tip. Reports of movements in coastal areas were 35 flying SW at Marline Wood, Hastings on 14 Oct; 16SW and 55E at Hollingbury Camp, Brighton on 14 and 19 Oct respectively; and 7W at Littlehampton on 4 Nov. [LM]

1563. **ROOK**

Corvus frugilegus

Very common resident.

The highest counts in the first two months were 187 at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 11 Jan; 320 on the rubbish tip at Pebsham on 17 Feb; and 1000 at Lavington Common on 20 Feb.

Reports of rookery nest counts included totals of 146 at Marsh Fm, Yapton; 152 at Patching; 116 in Findon Valley, Worthing; 40 at Clayton; 202 at Plumpton; 30 at Lane End Common, Chailey; and 23 at Hotham Park, Bognor in a rookery which only started in 1998.

The highest counts in the second half of the year were 160 at Apuldram on 7 July; 220 flying to roost over Pett Level on 1 Aug; 200 at Thorney Island flying SW to Tournerbury (Hants) on 19 Oct; 360 at Marline Wood, Hastings on 5 Nov; and 150 at Winchelsea on 21 Dec. There were no reports of coastal movements. [LM]

1567. **CARRION CROW**

Corvus corone

Very common resident.

The largest concentrations reported were 220 on the rubbish tip at Pebsham on 26 Jan (decreasing to 130 on 17 Feb but up to 400 in Dec); 100 at Home Park Fm, Forest Mere on 16 Mar; 200 at Golding Barn, Upper Beeding on 16 July; 121 and 206 on the beach and green at Goring on 12 Sept and 12 Nov respectively; and 81 at Hotham Park, Bognor on 14 Dec. At this last location, where breeding was confirmed with maximum counts of 23 and 46 in April and May respectively, it was described as the most numerous bird, having ranked only 12th in 1990. In a survey of a 1km square at Storrington, a total of 16 was counted on 29 May. Counts from sites of regular surveys are included in the summary table on pages 171.

Reports of movements in coastal areas were 2E at Galley Hill, Bexhill on 16 Mar; and 8N in off the sea and 5S out to sea at Brighton Marina on 13 Jan and 23 Mar respectively. [LM]

1572. **RAVEN**

Corvus corax

Formerly a breeding resident, now a very scarce visitor.

Records continued to increase, with most sightings between Newhaven and Eastbourne. In the Beachy Head area, records were as follows: one east of Belle Tout on 26 Feb (JFC); two at Shooters Bottom on 1 Apr (STU *et al*); one at Birling Gap on 6 Apr (ASC); one at Shooters Bottom on 18-19 Apr and two there on 1 May (DC, DRC, JFC);

one in fields on 26 Sept (ASC, JFC *et al*) and one at Shooters Bottom (SL, NJT) and another E at Cow Gap on 30 Sept (JFC *et al*). Elsewhere, one was seen at Blackham (north of Crowborough) on 3 June (WGH), another at Amberley Mount from 3rd to at least 10 Sept (ARK *et al*), 2E over Hollingbury Camp on 29 Sept (ADW, IJW), two at Newhaven Tide Mills on 19 Nov (MA), one at Hope Gap, Seaford Head on 21 Dec (MA), one at nearby Cuckmere Haven on 23rd (NJT) and, finally, two at West Dean Woods from 27 Dec into 2001 (PTP, SJP). It is difficult to assess how much duplication might be involved in the above records but it does not seem unreasonable to assume at least four birds were involved in records from the east of county, one in the north and three from the west. This would take to 18 the total since 1994 (*cf.* just three during 1964-93). The June record was the first in the county in that month for 50 years, while there have been recent records in all months apart from July. [RJF]

1582. STARLING

Sturnus vulgaris

Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

A total of 4000 birds was on Henfield Levels on 1 Jan. A feeding flock of 3000 at Shoreham on 3 Jan may have formed part of the 10,000 - 20,000 nocturnal roost at Brighton's West Pier later that day.

Counts of breeding pairs in defined areas can be found on pages 171. Two early fledglings were noted at Chichester on 28 Mar.

A post breeding flock of 300 juveniles was seen at Bewl Water on 4 June. A total of 1500 birds were in the Beachy Head area on 31 July. The traditional roost at Thorney Deepes reached a maximum of 20,000 on 5 Aug.

In the autumn, there were 4000 at Sidlesham Ferry on 13 Sept, 2000 at West Wittering on 16 Sept, and 5000 flying E in 2hrs at Selsey Bill on 26 Sept. The largest flocks in the last two months of the year were 2000 feeding on Shoreham Beach on 15 Dec and 3000 at Telscombe on 28 Dec.

Generally, both breeding and wintering numbers remain depressed. One example comes from an all year round census at Hotham Park, Bognor Regis, where since 1990 the species has sunk from the third to the 14th most numerous. [RK]

1584. ROSE-COLOURED STARLING

Sturnus roseus

Rare vagrant.

A juvenile videoed in a garden in Southwater, near Horsham from 20 to 28 Oct (DJC, SRC) has been accepted by *British Birds*. It was the first county record since 1997 and only the seventh since 1970. The 1997 bird was a first-winter in December, all other recent records being adults in June-September.

From 1 January 2002 records of this species will no longer be assessed by the *British Birds Rarities Committee*. Detailed descriptions will instead be considered by *SOSRC*. [RJF]

1591. HOUSE SPARROW

Passer domesticus

Very common but declining resident.

On 25 Jan, ten were recorded during a census of 67ha of mixed farmland at Marsh Fm, Yapton, a decrease from the 28 recorded in 1999. The largest flocks during the first winter period were 30 at Cowfold on 29 Jan and the same number feeding in a chicken pen at Manor Fm, Heyshott in March-April.

Breeding records were received from across the county but with no significant concentrations, the largest count being of just five pairs at Byworth, near Petworth. Only four pairs bred at Marsh Fm, Yapton, compared to eight in 1999. Details of breeding surveys in defined areas can be found on pages 171.

There was a considerable increase in the number of post-breeding records, perhaps due to greater observer awareness. The largest flocks reported included 50 at Glyne Gap, Bexhill and 100 at Bewl Water. By far the most significant flock during this period was of up to 300 roosting in a railway siding at Galley Hill, Bexhill in late July. This is an increase on the 120 recorded at the same site in 1998. Later in the year, a flock of 300 at Chyngton Fm, Seaford on 4 Oct constituted a welcome increase in the largest wintering flock in the county. compared to the previous two years (100 in 1998 and 28 in 1999). [MD]

1598. TREE SPARROW

Passer montanus

Scarce resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

There was a welcome increase in the number of records of this species both inside and outside the breeding season. As with the previous species, this may well be due to increased observer awareness. The only breeding records came from the far east of the county. Twelve pairs nested around Castle Fm, Rye Hbr, and at least four pairs nested in nest-boxes at Float Fm, Udimore. A flock of 11 including recent fledglings at Old Place Fm, Icklesham on 26 June suggested that at least two pairs nested successfully nearby. There were two new breeding sites reported: a breeding colony involving at least ten birds at Scotney Court GPs and a pair which bred successfully at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street. Such records suggest that there may be other breeding sites that have gone unnoticed in the county in recent years.

Compared to recent years, there were a large number of non-breeding records but almost all involved less than ten individuals. Several of these were in the centre (particularly the Sompting area) and west of the county. However, the most notable wintering flocks were of 60 in a field of broccoli at Rye Foreign from mid-February to mid-May and the same number at Scotney Court GPs on 14 Apr. These are the largest flocks recorded in the county for over five years. Does this really signify an increase in the local population or were these flocks simply 'missed' previously?

The only evidence of passage was provided by singletons at Selsey Bill on three dates in the autumn and two at Beachy Head on 13 Oct.

All records of this species, especially in the breeding season, would be appreciated. [MD]

1636. **CHAFFINCH***Fringilla coelebs***Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Like the past three winters, the largest flock was found in the West Dean area with 350 at Linchball Wood on 15 Jan. Only two other flocks exceeded 3-figures, both of 150 birds, at Apuldram on 16 Feb and Coolham on 18 Feb. Between 50 and 99 birds were counted at five other sites.

The results of breeding surveys are shown on pages 171. There were several additional counts of singing males and territories including 31 at Marline Wood, Hastings; 26 at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street; 22 at both Darwell Res and Pulborough Brooks; 17 at Highdown Hill, near Worthing; seven at Lane End Common, Chailey; and six at Goring Gap. Only ten pairs were recorded at Rye Hbr SSSI, 34 were found along 3km of river at Kilsham Fm, Petworth on 25 May, and a survey of a 1km square near Kithurst Hill, Storrington revealed 40 on 29 May.

A small westward movement was noted in mid-October with 45W at Selsey Bill on 13th, 100W over Ashdown Forest on 14th and, on the same day, 220W in 20 minutes at Roedean.

A winter census of 67ha at Marsh Fm, Yapton produced 56 on 5 Nov and 125 on 11 Dec. Beech mast attracted flocks of 200 to Footland Wood on 19 Nov and 57 to Forest Mere on 28 Dec. Other notable counts were 75 at Blackpatch Hill, near Findon on 7 Nov; 70 at Forest Mere on 20 Nov; and 60 at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 23 Nov. [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
14	36	14	14	-	-	-	-	1	105	18	7

The table clearly shows small numbers in the county during the first winter period with birds reported from 20 different sites. Most were recorded at East Grinstead where up to 18 were seen between 22 Feb and 22 Apr. There were at least eight, although possibly as many as 20, with a Chaffinch flock at Five Hundred Acre Wood, Ashdown Forest on 6 Feb and a minimum of seven at Holmbush Fm, Faygate on 11 Mar. Three at Beachy Head and one at Winchelsea on 23 Apr were the last of the spring.

The first autumn bird flew over Ashdown Forest on 29 Sept; thereafter most were recorded in October. Observers at Combe Haven counted 50 during the month with a peak of 11 on 13th, while at least 18 were recorded at Beachy Head, with a peak of three, also on the 13th. The same day produced a peak of 7W from the total of 18 seen in the Pagham Hbr/Selsey area. Bramblings were recorded in small numbers on just seven dates during November with eight at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street being the most noteworthy. With the exception of four at West Dean on 15 Dec, the December records involved just singletons. [JAN]

1640. SERIN

Serinus serinus

Very scarce passage migrant, has bred.

1999: An adult male singing from gardens at Birling Gap on 3 May (DC, JFC *et al*) takes that year's total to five.

2000: An adult male at Newhaven Tide Mills on 20 Feb (MA) was presumably that seen there on 5 Mar (LRB, JSG). It may have been present since early January. A female was seen in a garden in Battle on 18 Mar (MJR), an adult male was at Selsey Bill briefly on 25 Mar before flying off NW (BJC, TJE, RWP) and an adult male was in song at Birling Gap on 8-9 Apr (SPa, TWP *et al*) but eluded most observers. At Selsey Bill one flew W on 27 Apr (OMM *et al*), a male was singing from bushes by the football field on 1 May (IC, OMM *et al*) and another singing male was seen in gardens before flying off W on 3 May (OMM *et al*). A female was found in a Goldfinch flock at Birling Gap on 5 May (JFC) while singles flew E over Newhaven West Pier on 6 May (EDU) and NW over Combe Haven on 8 May (KMJ, SCR). Finally, an adult male was seen at Pilsey Island before flying off NW on 13 May (CBC) and one was seen in flight over Pebsham Tip on 14 May (KMJ, SCR). Twelve records is the best showing since 1994, when 14 were seen. Records away from the coast are unusual, that in Battle being the first since May 1993 when one was at Weir Wood Res. The February record is the earliest since 1978 when one was found in Littlehampton in mid-January. Fifty-eight of those recorded since 1990 have been in April or May, with 12 in March, two in June (latest 16th) and five in October or November. Nearly a third of records during this period have been at Selsey Bill. [RJF]

1649. GREENFINCH

Carduelis chloris

Very common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Once again there were few flocks noted in the first winter period. Only five of the 29 records for the first three months reported numbers in double figures with 36 at Littlehampton West Beach during January and February the largest gathering.

Details of breeding surveys are shown on pages 171. Additionally, there were 14 pairs at Pulborough Brooks; nine pairs at Marline Wood, Hastings; at least six pairs at Goring Gap; three pairs at both Galley Hill, Bexhill and Footland Wood, Vinehall Street and about four territories within the Rye Hbr SSSI. Seven were seen during a survey of 3km of the R. Rother near Petworth and six were found in a breeding season survey of a 1km square near Kithurst Hill, Storrington.

By August, a few small flocks were apparent with 60 at Bewl Water on 10th, 50 at Hassocks and 55 at Storrington on 25th and 120 at Tegdown Hill, near Brighton, on 31st. At least 150 were in the vicinity of a feeding station in Angmering Park on 3 Sept. At Pagham Hbr there were 300 in the North Fields on 5 Sept, 100 at The Severals on 27 Sept, 190 feeding amongst shingle vegetation near the Lagoon on 13 Oct, 250 on the shingle spit on 4 Nov and 400 feeding in stubble at the North Fields on 19 Dec. On Thorney Island there were 100 on 16 Sept and the same number roosting at dusk near the church on 28 Nov. A blackthorn and hawthorn hedge at Marline Wood was the selected roost for 195 and 170 on 14 Oct and 5 Nov respectively. A party of 110 at Rye Hbr on 8 Oct was the only other record exceeding 100 during the autumn and early winter period.

In contrast to last year, visible autumn movements were small with the maximum of 40W at Worthing on 6 Oct. [JAN]

1653. **GOLDFINCH***Carduelis carduelis***Common summer visitor and passage migrant and fairly common winter visitor.**

About 800 birds were reported from 29 sites during the first quarter with six records of more than 50 birds. A flock of 140 feeding in linseed at Holmbush Fm, Faygate on 8 Jan had increased to more than 150 on 19 Feb; there were 120, in three flocks, at Bewl Water on 16 Jan; 68 at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on 30 Jan; 68 at Parkminster, near Cowfold on 29 Feb; 55 at Standean, Brighton on 11 Mar; and 110 at Cricketing Bottom, near Southease on 18 Mar. The regular winter census at Marsh Fm, Yapton, a 67ha mixed farm, found two birds compared with 37 in 1998 and one in 1999.

Spring coastal passage was again poor with totals for the entire season of just 12E at Selsey Bill, 72E at Worthing, 2W at Splash Point, Seaford and 224E and 18W at Bexhill; the peaks were 72E at Bexhill and 30E at Worthing on 30 Apr and 90E at Bexhill on 3 May. Other records for the period from April to late July involved small numbers.

Details of breeding surveys can be found on pages 171. Additional breeding records were of four pairs at both Pulborough Brooks and Marline Wood, Hastings, four in a 1km square breeding survey near Kithurst Hill, Storrington and six during a survey of 3km of the R. Rother, near Petworth.

A count of 72 at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on 30 July was the first notable gathering but it was not until late August and September that larger autumn flocks were noted. At Pulborough Brooks, there were 200 on 30 Aug and 270 on 16 Sept; 200 were feeding on thistles near the dam at Bewl Water on 1 Sept, 100 at Seaford Head on 30 Aug with a similar number at nearby Hope Gap on 17 Sept and 150 at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 11 Sept.

There were a number of records of large flocks from various parts of Beachy Head increasing from 250 on 30 Sept to 500, reported to be feeding on knapweed seed in uncut grass, on 14 Oct. More than 250 were recorded on at least four other dates in October but it is unclear whether these refer to the same birds. Elsewhere, there were 150 at both Church Norton and Seaford Head and a flock of 100 feeding on thistles at Chantry Hill, Storrington on 4th and 140 at Mill Hill, Shoreham on 14th.

Like last year, visible passage was recorded between September and November but mostly in October. The numbers involved were, however, considerably smaller with regular movements recorded at only three locations, shown in the following table:

	September	October	November	Max movement
Selsey Bill	160E	50E & 1400W	200W (all 3 rd)	800W on 5 Oct
Worthing Beach	15E	111W	16W	100W on 6 Oct
Bexhill and Hastings	90E & 94W	162E & 19W		126E on 22 Oct

The only additional notable movement was of 150W at Beachy Head on 24 Sept.

After the movement of 200W at Selsey on 3 Nov, numbers declined with records of 242 birds from 13 sites in November and 213 birds from 13 sites in December. The largest counts were 60 at Church Norton on 4 Nov, 62 at Mill Hill, Shoreham on 26 Dec and 50 at Bewl Water on 30 Dec. Small numbers were noted coming to feeders containing peanuts, sunflower and niger seed in both Worthing and Angmering. [JAN]

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Probably now a very scarce breeder.

The following table, which gives the approximate monthly totals, shows the pattern of occurrence and can be used for comparison with previously published tables. Comparison with 1999 clearly shows that more birds were recorded at a greater number of sites during the first winter period and that autumn passage was on a similar scale to last year.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	466	498	640	290	58	58	14	-	60	1415	282	90
No. of sites	20	21	27	24	8	10	3	-	15	32	18	8

During January, the largest flock was at Burton MP where 120 were recorded on the 20th and 100 on 23rd. However, a minimum of 200 was noted there on 24 Feb, feeding in alders, and the observer (RK) considered that the true number present may have exceeded 1000. Presumably some of these birds were also seen at Ambersham Common where small numbers were present in January, up to 50 in February, 150 on 5 Mar and 200 on 17 Mar. Smaller numbers were seen later in the spring on the West Sussex commons with 30 at Hesworth Common on 3 Apr, 50 at Stedham Common on 5 Apr and at least 20 on Iping Common on 13 Apr.

The table shows that Siskins were recorded at a number of sites in the first winter period. The largest counts away from the locations already mentioned were 50 at Church Norton and 60 at Mill Bay, Robertsbridge on 2 Jan and 57 at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on 30 Jan. Although recorded from Ashdown Forest in all months except August, most observations were in March when a total of 65 was seen in the vicinity of Old Lodge NR on 5th and 106 in seven groups near the Old Airstrip on 16th. The only record from Worth Forest was a notable 150 on 3 Apr.

Unlike last year, breeding was confirmed in several areas; 15 pairs held territories at Broadwater Forest; display was noted in at least two areas of Ashdown Forest and a pair with two juveniles were seen at Nutley from 22 Apr until late May. During June, display was seen near Brede High Wood, a pair with one young at Footland Wood and a juvenile in a garden at Hurst Green. In West Sussex, there were four territories on Linchmere Common, three on Lavington Common and one at Coates Common.

The table shows that the species became scarce in July and August with 12 in a single flock over Eridge Park on 22 July and singles on Ashdown Forest on 11 and 21 July the only records. Two flying over Rye Hbr on 5 Sept heralded the start of autumn passage, which was comparable to 1999 but more concentrated into October. Indeed, only 60 were recorded in September with 12 at Sheepcote Valley on 21st being the highest count of the month. The species became more widespread in October and, although there were 35 at Coates Common on 7th, 30 at the Ashdown Forest Centre on 16th and 70W at Bewl Water on 22nd, most were recorded from well-watched coastal sites. At Combe Haven, the total for the month was 605, with the peak of 120 on the 15th, while at Church Norton about 315 were recorded with high counts of 75 on the 6th and 125 on 22nd. About 70 were recorded at Beachy Head, with a peak of 30 on the 15th, and 40 out of the total of 60W at Selsey Bill were on 13th.

Records from coastal sites became scarce after early November. Notable inland counts during the month included 50 in alders on Sparrite Common, Parham on 9th, 60 at Weir Wood Res on 12th, 44 at Footland Wood on 19th, 30 at Burton MP on 24th and 50 at East Millbrook, Ashdown Forest on 26th. There were just eight records for December with 30 at the Millbrook feeding station on 26th being the highest count. [JAN]

1660. LINNET

*Carduelis cannabina***Decreasing resident and partial migrant. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.**

There were just ten records for January and February with a total of 227 birds recorded from seven sites; the largest flocks were of 100 feeding in a field near the egret roost at Thorney Island on 10 Jan and 50 at Poling on 26 Jan. During mid-March there were parties of 80 at Rye Hbr on 17th, 65 at Hurstpierpoint on 19th and 40 at Holmbush Fm, Faygate on 11th.

Spring coastal passage was light with the largest movements, as usual, recorded in April. The monthly totals for the sea-watching sites where this species was systematically logged were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Max movement.
Selsey Bill	43E	-	-	40E on 17 Mar
Worthing Beach	1E & 5W	165E & 7W	83E & 2W	53E on 8 Apr
Splash Point, Seaford	24N & 9W	10E	9N & 7W	24N on 26 Mar
Bexhill/Hastings	19E & 9W	141E & 123W	93E & 13W	69W on 24 Apr

A few flocks were noted during April, the largest being 200 in set-aside near Cripps Corner on 1st, 50 at Pevensey Bay on 11th and 60 at Bewl Water on 19th.

A total of 220 records was received for the breeding season from 52 different 1km squares in West Sussex and 48 in East Sussex. A particularly detailed set of records from Ashdown Forest suggested about 60 pairs in that area while the *West Sussex Heathland Survey* found 52 pairs on 13 different commons. Details of other breeding surveys can be found on pages 171. Additionally, there were ten pairs on cliff tops near Peacehaven; six pairs at Pilsey Island, Chichester Hbr; five pairs at Highdown near Worthing; and four pairs at Pulborough Brooks. As usual, nesting was reported to be common and widespread at Rye Hbr SSSI. A survey of a 1km square at Kithurst Hill revealed 18 birds while four were found along a 3km stretch of the R. Rother, near Petworth.

The first notable flock of the autumn was 70 feeding in rape stubble near Barcombe on 27 July. In August, there were flocks of 250 at Birling Gap on 21st and 22nd and at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 30th and flocks of 100 at Cradle Hill, near Seaford and at Beddingham on the 24th and 28th respectively.

Numbers greatly increased through September and October with flocks in excess of 100 birds recorded at 20 sites. In descending order of magnitude, there were 2000 at Harbour Fm, Rye Hbr on 4 and 14 Oct; 500 at Steyning Round Hill on 25 Sept and Beachy Head on 8 Oct; 450 at Bewl Water on 3 Oct and 400 at Pagham Hbr on 5 Sept, Sheepcote Valley on 11 Sept and Newmarket Hill on 2 Oct. Despite national surveys showing that this species in decline, it is gratifying to record several large flocks; the gathering at Rye Hbr being the first of this size since 2000 were recorded, also at Rye Hbr, in Sept 1990 (*Birds of Sussex*).

Coastal passage although exceptional at Selsey Bill was not recorded from other sea-watching localities as the following table clearly shows. The peak movements at Selsey, all recorded in just 2 hrs watching, were 1500E on 26 Sept, 2500W on 8 Oct and 5000W on 13 Oct; the latter being the largest recorded movement in the county (*Birds of Sussex*).

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Max movement.
Selsey Bill	2022E	9200W	100W	5000W on 13 Oct
Worthing Beach	7E	10W	-	10W on 6 Oct
Bexhill and Hastings	13E & 75W	6E & 105W	-	58W on 29 Oct

Both the number of records and birds fell dramatically in November; the most notable being 300 on the shingle at Church Norton on 4th and 110 in a field of autumn sown cereal at Mountfield on 30th. There were just three December records totalling 81 birds including 40W at Selsey Bill on 2nd and 40 at No Mans Land, near Steyning on 27th. [JAN]

1662. **TWITE**

Carduelis flavirostris

Now a very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Two at Stanbury Point, Thorney Island from 30 Oct to 28 Nov (CBC, MAC) and one at nearby Pilsley Island on 14 Dec (CBC) were the only records. Records of this species continue to decline with annual totals averaging 68 during 1990-94 but only nine during 1995-99. The three in 2000 represent possibly the worst showing to date, although the five recorded in 1995 and 1999 were not much better. Most records are from or near areas of saltmarsh between October-January and in that respect these are typical. [RJF]

1663. **LESSER REDPOLL**

Carduelis cabaret

Scarce breeder and fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor.

The following table, which shows the approximate monthly totals, illustrates a similar pattern to 1999 but with greater numbers in the first winter period and spring:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	50	47	130	167	62	60	10	12	61	717	124	60
No. of sites	10	8	12	17	21	14	4	4	5	28	15	9

The largest counts in the first winter period were 16 at Weir Wood Res on 16 Jan, 12 at Slaugham on 26 Feb and ten at Greenden Wood, Cripps Corner and Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on 13 and 15 Feb respectively.

From March until September inclusive, the majority of records (86%) were from various locations within Ashdown Forest. Records for this area during the spring and summer totalled 705 sightings in 28 different 1km squares. Larger flocks included 50 at the Old Airstrip on 13 Mar, 30 at Greenwood Gate on 23 Mar, 25 at the Isle of Thorns on 17 Apr and 60 at Old Lodge NR on 23 Apr. Apart from 20 at the airstrip on 2 May, all the other records between May and August involved singles or small parties. Despite the detail provided, it is difficult to ascertain the number of breeding pairs but the records suggest a figure of between 40 and 60 territories.

Elsewhere in East Sussex, at least five pairs bred at Bayham, three pairs in Eridge Park and two pairs at Footland Wood; Ashes Wood, near Netherfield; and Broadwater Forest. A flock of 30 was also seen at this last site on 14 Apr. In West Sussex, the species was scarcely noted, the only records comprising a pair at Ambersham Common and isolated spring sightings at Duncton and Stedham Commons.

During the autumn, a party was seen on several occasions at the Isle of Thorns, Ashdown Forest with 45 on 25 Sept and 65 on 30 Oct being the highest counts. However, in keeping with previous years, most (83%) of the records for the period October to December were away from Ashdown Forest, often involving flocks of migrants at coastal sites, though no large movements were noted. A total of 192 was recorded at Combe Haven in October while, at Pett Level, migrants were recorded on most days during the month with a peak of 56 on 26 Oct. Of 90 ringed at Whitbread

Hollow during the autumn, forty were trapped on 14 Oct. There were 30 at Church Norton on both 17 and 26 Oct and 40 at Beachy Head on 9 Nov. Some observers considered the autumn to be 'poor'; such was the comment about passage at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton where 40 were recorded in October and nine in November. The table shows that numbers fell sharply in November; the only double figure records late in the year were of ten at Crowborough on 20 Dec and 35 at Greatham Bridge on the same day. [JAN]

1663.01 MEALY REDPOLL

Carduelis flammea

Rare winter visitor.

1996: Two just north of Chelwood Gate in Ashdown Forest on 7 Jan (DC, TEC) were found at the time of an impressive influx of redpolls into western Europe (Riddington 2000). They were with a flock of about 25 Lesser Redpolls *C. cabaret* and are the most recent records for the county, and the first since 1994 when one was trapped at Pett Level in November. Just nine have been recorded since 1960, the other records being at Sidlesham, Shoreham and Washington in October/November 1964, Marley in February 1968 and March 1972 (both trapped) and Ashdown Forest in January 1991. More records might now be expected given the added interest that will undoubtedly be generated by the *BOURC*'s decision to regard this form as a species in its own right (*Brit. Birds* 93: 464 and set out in detail by Knox 2001). The name Common Redpoll has been proposed by *BOURC* (to encompass Mealy *C.f. flammea*, Greenland *C.f. rostrata* and Icelandic Redpolls *C.f. islandica*) although Northern Redpoll, as adopted by *Birding World* (13: 342) and used by Jonsson (1992), would seem both more appropriate and less confusing. The common redpoll in Sussex is now officially known as Lesser Redpoll. [RJF]

1666. COMMON CROSSBILL

Loxia curvirostra

Scarce visitor occurring in large numbers in irruption years. Breeds occasionally.

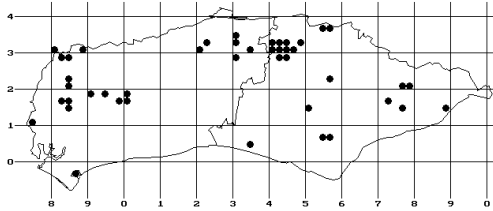
Following the irruption in the autumn of 1999, the numbers in the county remained high until the summer. This is clearly demonstrated in the following table, which shows the approximate numbers recorded in each month:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	116	110	125	73	84	24	14	4	8	5	1	-
No of sites	17	20	21	15	10	8	5	3	3	2	1	-

During January and February, most were recorded on the West Sussex commons with maxima of 40 at Ambersham Common, 15 at Coates Common, 11 at Duncton Common, nine at Lavington Common and smaller numbers at Iping, Stedham and Hesworth Commons. As the table shows, birds were seen at several other sites; double figure counts were of 12 at Balcombe Forest on 18 Jan and, at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street, 13 and 18 on 30 Jan and 15 Feb respectively. Small parties of up to six were also seen at various sites at Ashdown Forest but here larger numbers were recorded in March when 30 were seen at Old Lodge NR on 5th. A party of 23 was recorded in Broadwater Forest on 15 Mar, there were still 25 there on 11 May and the same number at Worth Forest on 12 May.

This species breeds early in the year and at several sites observers noted territorial and nesting behaviour. At Steetfield Wood, near Cripps Corner, a pair was gathering nest material on 5 Feb, by 4 Mar a female was tending to three young on Ashdown Forest and

young were seen at several locations in April and May. The precise numbers breeding is difficult to assess but the records suggest at least 35 pairs in the county with eight pairs in Broadwater Forest, a similar number on Ashdown Forest, 3-4 pairs in Worth Forest and six pairs located by the heathland survey of the West Sussex commons. The following map shows the tetrad distribution of all records during the year and clearly demonstrates the favoured areas.



The table shows that the numbers fell dramatically after June with ten at Old Lodge NR on 2 June and eight at Five Hundred Acre Wood, Ashdown Forest on 7 July being the last of the parties recorded. The only records from the coastal plain occurred in the autumn with 1SW at Pett Level on 6 Aug, 2N at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 11 Aug and 4N over Pagham Hbr on 4 Oct. All of the September birds were seen in the far NW of the county on the 21st and 27th, a single bird was noted at Footland Wood on 9 Oct and 19 Nov. [JAN]

1710. **BULLFINCH**

Pyrrhula pyrrhula

Status uncertain but formerly a very common resident. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

There were 295 records from 84 different 1km squares in West Sussex and 55 in East Sussex. The only double figure count early in the year was of ten at Stansted Forest on 12 Jan.

The results of breeding surveys can be found on pages 171. Additionally, there were seven pairs in 6.6ha at Cissbury; four pairs at both Footland Wood, Vinehall Street and Marline Wood, Hastings; three pairs at Blackham and one or two pairs at several other sites. A BTO survey of a 1km square at Kithurst Hill, Storrington produced five birds.

A total of 35 was ringed at Cissbury compared with 39 in 1999 and 28 in 1998 while, at Beachy Head, just 14 were ringed. At Pett Level, the species was recorded on 16 dates during September and October but the maximum count was only five on 12 Oct. Better counts later in the year included ten, considered possible migrants, at Seaford Head on 26 Oct and 12 at Pulborough Brooks on 5 Nov.

It is interesting, and pleasing to note, the increased level of recording as this species apparently becomes scarcer. However, 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 was an increase to 21 records from nine sites involving approximately 27 birds. The monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
13	2	12	3	-	8	3	-	-	2	1	-

The species was recorded at five sites more than once: up to five were seen at West Dean in mid-January; six were at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on 30 Jan, two pairs were present there in June and smaller numbers were seen in February, March and October; one or two were seen at Marline Wood, Hastings in five well spread months; five were at Sedlescombe on 12 Mar, eight on 18 Mar and three on 1 Apr; and two were seen regularly through the summer at Bayham. Single birds were seen at Buchan Park, Crawley on 5 Mar, Battle on 18 Mar, Bewl Water on 10 June and in the courtyard at Pulborough Brooks RSPB Reserve on 16 Oct. [JAN]

1847. **LAPLAND BUNTING***Calcarius lapponicus***Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.**

1998: One flew E over Beachy Head on 8 Oct (JFC). It was the second record of the year. None was recorded in 1999, the only other blank years during the 1990s being 1992 and 1994.

2000: Singles flew W along Goring Beach on 7 Nov (DIS) and at Littlehampton West Beach on 3 Dec (RJLK). All recent records have fallen between 18 Sept and 17 Feb. This is another scarce species for which records appear to be getting less frequent, although this is not necessarily born out by averages of over four per year during 1990-94 and just under three in 1995-99. [RJF]

1850. **SNOW BUNTING***Plectrophenax nivalis***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	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	5	1

There were probably four birds in the county during the first winter period: singles (presumably different) at Rye Hbr on 2 Jan and 11 Mar, two at East Head from 9 to 21 Jan (one of which remained until 26 Jan), and probably the same bird at Pilsey Island on 27-28 Jan and 2 Feb, when it was seen to fly back towards East Head.

In the second winter period, the first record was of one over Combe Haven on 13 Oct. The next two records both came on 22 Oct: a single at Seaford Head which remained until 25th, and four which flew E over Galley Hill, Bexhill. In November, two were at East Head on 3rd, one was at Littlehampton West Beach the next day; and one on the shore at Pett Level on 9th. An intriguing record was of a bird flying over Toad's Hole Valley, north of Hove, on 13 Nov. The last bird at Rye Hbr on 6 Dec was the only record for the month.

This represents a poor year, though not unprecedentedly so as there were only two birds in 1994 and three in 1993. [CB]

1857. YELLOWHAMMER

Emberiza citrinella

Status uncertain but once a very common resident.

There were records for 19 sites in January and 16, including several new locations, in February. It is not clear whether birds had moved from the January sites or whether those sites had not been re-visited. The maximum counts were 100 in barley stubble at Seaford on 26 Jan and 50 at Newmarket Hill in both January and February. Lower Standean, north of Brighton, normally a favoured site for finches and buntings, had a poor year, with a maximum of only 20 on 10 Jan. Appropriately, song was first noted (at Hesworth Common) on Valentine's Day. By mid-March, birds were widely reported on breeding territories, mainly on the Commons, though some flocks remained. There were, for example, 28 (including a flock of 16) at Cricketing Bottom, Southease on 18 Mar, 30 at the Devil's Dyke on 1 Apr, and eight together on a bare field treated with weed-killer near Isfield on 25 Apr.

Many breeding season records came from Ashdown Forest, where there were approximately 50 territories, and from the Commons in the north-west of the county where the *West Sussex Heathland Survey* located a total of 79 territories at 13 sites. The largest concentrations were 14 pairs at Lavington Common, 13 pairs at both Wiggonholt and Woolbeding Commons, and 11 pairs at Ambersham Common. The species is widely if thinly distributed along hedgerows north of the Downs. There were, for example, 12 pairs at Pulborough Brooks and six pairs at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street (regenerating after the 1987 hurricane). Few records were received for the eastern Downs; a total of only four singles between Alfriston and Seaford cannot be a representation of the actual picture. More reassuring were a survey around Kithurst Hill, Storrington on 29 May which found twelve birds, and a return from the ringing station at Cissbury which suggested that the species is now benefiting from the change of neighbouring fields from pasture to arable. The results of breeding surveys in defined areas can be found on pages 171. Five in song at Highdown, Worthing matched the 1999 count as did three pairs on Thorney Island. There were two territories along 3km of the R. Rother at Kilsham Fm, near Petworth (three in 1999) and four pairs at Wrens Warren, Ashdown Forest (six in 1999). The difficulties faced by Yellowhammers were well illustrated on the fringes of Brighton where vegetation was cut back too severely on Hollingbury Camp, and, nearby, above Ladies Mile Road, where pedestrians and dog walkers put great pressure on would-be breeders.

Small flocks gathered from mid-September, at a dew-pond on Chantry Hill, by Barcombe Res and at Uppertons Field, Pulborough Brooks. By early November, 50 were on Chantry Hill, benefiting from the poor germination of a field of winter wheat. Observers' interest in the species declined at the end of the year with records for 14 sites in November but only six in December, the maximum count for the latter month a modest 19 together at Seaford on 27th. [CB]

1866. ORTOLAN BUNTING

Emberiza hortulana

Very scarce, mainly autumn, visitor.

A very confiding female was found above Belle Tout Wood, Beachy Head on 5 May (JFC *et al*). It was the first record since 1996 and only the 13th in spring. Previous spring records have all been between 21 Apr and 6 May. [RJF]

1877. REED BUNTING

Emberiza schoeniclus

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Species of Conservation Concern in Sussex.

There were January records for about 25 locations. The largest group, of 30, was with Corn Buntings at Trevor Gardens, Glynde on 16th. There were only four double figure counts, against 17 of single birds. On New Year's Day, only two could be found at a traditional roost site near Darwell Res and a mere five were at the traditional Lower Standean site on 10th. Nor was February a better month. The only double figure counts were a total of 53 at four sites in the Combe Haven area on 15th, 28 at Filsham Reedbed on 17th and 15 at Faygate on 26th. A flock of 14 feeding on barley stubble behind Seaford in January had reduced to eight by 3 Feb. On the plus side, a flooded set-aside field by the river, near Steyning became more attractive, holding 15 birds on 5 Jan and 20 on 4 Mar, falling back to 15 again by 11 Mar. By early March, males were being recorded in song: at Cuckmere Haven on 4th, Pagham Hbr on 5th and Thorney Deeps on 7th. A male frequented a bird table at Upper Beeding on 9 and 24 Mar.

In the breeding season, larger counts included 74 singing males at Combe Haven/Filsham Reedbed, at least 40 pairs at Rye Hbr SSSI, 25 pairs on Pulborough Brooks with a further 11 on Amberley Wild Brooks, 15 pairs at Thorney Island, seven singing males at Pett Level, and five pairs at Redgate Manor Fm, Crowborough. In addition, reports of smaller numbers came from an encouraging number of sites, on the coast (e.g. around Pagham Hbr and at Ferring Rife), in the river valleys (e.g. three singing males in a rape field near Barcombe; two pairs at Bodiam), and near lakes and reservoirs (e.g. at Pond Lye, on Willingdon Level and near Clearwater, Chailey). Birds were well spread on Ashdown Forest, with at least 19 pairs reported. Details of breeding surveys in defined areas can be found on pages 171.

No more than four were recorded together in August. It was mid-September before birds began flocking, with ten at Pulborough Brooks on 10th, 30 at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 16th, 20 at Thorney Deeps on 24th and 15 at the Isle of Thorns, Ashdown Forest on 30th. Comparing these figures against reported breeding pairs suggests that some birds had already moved from the breeding areas or that breeding success had been very poor. Numbers trapped at Pett Level rose through October with a maximum of 19 on 13th. The largest counts at Sheepcote Valley were also at that time with 16 on both 13th and 14th. Five were at Lavington Common on 17th. A bird at Goring Gap on 13th was reported to be "very unusual" at this site. The absence of flocks in November and December suggests that those recorded in mid-October were passing through rather than moving into the county. The largest flocks at the end of the year were 30 at Coombes, near Lancing on 9 Dec, followed by 25 on Rodmell Brooks on 27 Dec. A handful wintered on Ashdown Forest and ten were at Redgate Mill Fm on 29 Dec. Was this species affected by the flooding in the valleys at the end of the year? [CB]

1882. CORN BUNTING

Miliaria calandra

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

There were records for 17 sites from the coast and Downs in an encouraging January. A flock of 100 congregated at Trevor Gardens, Glynde on 16th and there were ten other double figure counts for the month. Fourteen February records were submitted. The largest flock was 110 at Little Dene, Glynde on 22nd. A well-watched flock on Newmarket Hill totalled 50 on 9 Jan and had doubled in size by 25 Feb, that number being still present on 3 Mar, reducing to 80 by 26 Mar. Thirty-four birds crowded onto two bushes at Cissbury Ring on 24 Feb. The first males were heard singing in readiness for breeding at Rye Hbr on 17 Feb and at Newhaven and Peacehaven on 19th. Notwithstanding, flocks were reported through March and into late April, the last being 25 at New Salts Fm, Lancing on 23 Apr. One by the Royal Military Canal on Pett Level on the late date of 7 June was presumably wandering.

A total of 78 singing males was reported during the breeding season. Most were on the Downs with 43 between the River Arun and the River Adur (including 13 at Steep Down, Lancing), 15 between the River Adur and River Ouse but only three (at Heighton Hill) to the east of the Ouse. On the coastal plain, where 17 singing males were reported, there were six territories at Thorney Island and four at Rye Hbr. A CBC plot at Marsh Fm, Yapton again held one territory, as in the years 1997-99.

Records for the latter part of the year were worrying. The only birds reported in August were two at Pagham Hbr on 3rd, three on Harting Down on 9th, two at Thorney Island on 11th, and a year's maximum of 35 at Ovingdean on 23rd. There were eight records for September, six for October, six for November and nine (from six sites) for December. None was seen during a 25km cycle ride on the Downs behind Newhaven on 30 Aug. The ride was repeated on 20 Sept, with a similar result. From one observer at Beachy Head came acknowledgment that the Corn Bunting is "now almost extinct in the area". The largest flocks in the latter part of the year were only 31 at Shepcote Valley on 25 Sept and 30 at Ford on 17 Oct. [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 2000. It should be noted that the identity of these birds has not been assessed by the Records Committee. 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.

WHITE PELICAN

Pelecanus onocrotalus

Breeds in SE Europe but commoner in Africa and S Asia. Escapes from captivity often wander widely.

One at Bewl Water on 6 Nov was seen at Spithurst, near Barcombe on 8th and at nearby Knowlands Fm the following day. This bird, which was considered to have a damaged wing, was also seen in Essex on 10-13 Nov and in Hertfordshire from 13 Nov into 2001 (*Birding World* 13:438).

In addition, an unidentified pelican was reported on Piddinghoe Lake from 30 Sept to 2 Oct.

SACRED IBIS

Threskiornis aethiopicus

Common across most of sub-Saharan Africa. A small feral population originally made up of escapes from a nearby zoo, has been breeding in southern Brittany since the early 1990s.

One was seen in Horsham on 20 Apr, feeding in a field by a small ox-bow lake with three Canada Geese.

WHOOOPER SWAN

Cygnus cygnus

Breeds N Europe and Asia. Very scarce winter visitor to Sussex (all records mid-October to early May).

Single adults of captive or feral origin remained in the Adur and Cuckmere Valleys throughout the year, the latter also visiting Glynde Levels.

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 (Ogilvie *et al* 2000).

A pair were present on Benbow Pond, Cowdray Park on 19 Jan with one there on 14 Apr. Two, an adult and a fully grown cygnet, were recorded at Arlington Res from 16 Aug to 17 Oct, with one remaining to the year end, and three were seen there on 19 Nov. Elsewhere, two were seen at Pulborough Brooks on 31 Oct and at Greatham Bridge on 26 Dec and a single, perhaps from Arlington, was recorded in the lower Ouse Valley on 18 Dec.

BAR-HEADED GOOSE

Anser indicus

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 UK in 1998 (Ogilvie *et al* 2000).

Only two were recorded, at Pulborough Brooks on 10 May and Castle Water, Rye Hbr LNR on 16-17 Aug.

SNOW GOOSE

Anser caerulescens

Breeds arctic N America, winters southern USA and Mexico. Presumed vagrants in UK most winters but greatly outnumbered by escapes. Of three escaped pairs to bred in UK in 1998 two were in Hampshire (Ogilvie *et al* 2000).

Records suggest that birds were resident at Scotney Court GPs throughout much of the year with six seen there in early January, up to five then being present until 19 May, three during the summer and in October, and up to five from 12 Nov into 2001. Away from Scotney, but possibly involving the same individuals, five were seen at Bewl Water on 22 Sept. One of the birds at Scotney on 23 Jan was noted to be a blue morph; it is assumed that all the other records related to white morphs. A Snow x Barnacle hybrid at Barcombe Res on 23 Aug was joined by a second hybrid on 28th although neither was reported subsequently. Nothing about any of these records would suggest anything other than the usual escapes from captivity.

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 1999 (*SxBR* 52: 157) remained into 2000, although the individual at Thorney Deepes was not seen after 21 Jan. The other, at Scotney Court GPs, was recorded irregularly throughout the year in January, June, August, October and December. Two Emperor x Barnacle hybrids were recorded at Bewl Water on 27 Jan, with one there on 25 June. It is tempting to assume some connection between these two hybrids and the two Emperors recorded at Bewl Water in Sept-Oct 1999.

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 conceivably be.

The individual recorded in Alexandra Park, Hastings from 30 Nov 1999 (*SxBR* 52: 158) remained to at least 21 Feb. Another was seen at Barcombe Reservoir on 29 Feb (where one had been present from June to Aug 1999).

CHILOE WIGEON

Anas sibilatrix

Common resident in southern South America. Commonly kept in wildfowl collections.

One, presumably a male, was seen at Pulborough Brooks on 9 Sept.

FALCATED DUCK

Anas falcata

Widespread but local summer visitor to NE Asia, winters in E Asia. All British records are officially regarded as escapes from captivity although this might be harsh on some winter occurrences with Wigeon flocks.

A female was seen in Alexandra Park, Hastings on 14 July.

RED-TAILED HAWK

Buteo jamaicensis

Commonly breeds throughout much of N America and the Caribbean, some move south in winter as far as Central America. Perhaps the most commonly kept *Buteo* in captivity.

One at Greenden Wood, Cripps Corner on 26 Feb was presumably the same individual seen at Pett Level on 18 Mar and at Broomham, near Guestling on 13 May, although the same observer noted it as having jesses on the first occasion but not on the last.

SAKER FALCON

Falco cherrug

Mainly scarce resident from central Europe to N India, common on the Tibetan plateau. Popular with falconers.

An adult was seen in the vicinity of Longmere Point, Chichester Hbr on 9 and 15 Feb and at Pagham Hbr irregularly from 15 Apr to 18 June and again on 12 Sept. All sightings presumably relate to the individual that was at large in the western harbours during 1999 (*SxBR* 52: 159).

GUINEAFOWL sp.

Common in sub-Saharan Africa where six species occur. Helmetted Guineafowl (*Numida meleagris*) is the most widespread. It has been introduced as a domestic bird in many parts of the world and often reverts to a feral state (BWP).

A guineafowl was seen at Kilnwood, near Faygate on 5 Mar.

COMMON PEA FOWL

Pavo cristatus

Wild birds are restricted to the Indian subcontinent. A traditional (and spectacular) favourite in ornamental gardens.

One was seen at Pondlye, near Goddards Green on 6 May.

COCKATIEL

Nymphicus hollandicus

Common Australian nomad. One of the commonest aviary birds.

Single individuals were seen at Thorney Island (19 Feb), Alexandra Park, Hastings (9 Apr), New Salts Fm, Lancing (23 Apr), Newhaven West Pier (29 Apr), Paghams Hbr (6 Aug), Black Ditch, near Poling (10 Sept), Brighton Marina (17 Sept & 8 Oct) and Woodingdean, Brighton (19 Sept). A typical scatter of records, mainly during the warmer months of the year, most likely reflecting the birds' poor survival prospects in prolonged cold weather.

BUDGERIGAR

Melopsittacus undulatus

Common Australian nomad. One of the commonest of all cage birds. Wild birds are invariably green (& yellow)

Two were seen at Galley Hill, Bexhill on 20 Aug.

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. Two pairs bred in Merseyside in 1998 (*Brit Birds* 93:432).

One was seen near Lewes Castle on 31 Jan and 3 Apr. It is tempting to think it might have been the individual seen at The Pells in Mar 1999 (*SxBR* 52: 160). This species is very similar to the smaller Ring-necked Parakeet but has prominent maroon shoulder patches.

CANARY

Serinus canaria

Common resident on N Atlantic Islands. 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 yellow plumaged individual was seen at Galley Hill, Bexhill on 4 June.

WHITE-EYE sp.

Zosterops sp.

At least 63 species of Zosterops white-eyes occur across Africa, Asia and the Pacific.

Oriental White-eye *Z. palpebrosa* is perhaps the most commonly kept white-eye in captivity (and so the most likely to escape) although it is very susceptible to temperature changes and so unlikely to survive at large for long.

One was seen at Cow Gap, Beachy Head on 9 May.

ZEBRA FINCH

Poephila guttata

Common resident or nomad in E Indonesia and Australia. One of the commonest cage birds and a prolific breeder.

One was seen near the Beachy Head Hotel on 26 Aug. There were single records (in July) in both 1998 and 1999.

VILLAGE (or BLACK-HEADED) WEAVER

Ploceus cucullatus

Widespread and common near habitation across much of sub-Saharan Africa. The most frequently recorded escaped weaver.

One was seen at several places on Beachy Head on 15 Oct.

RED-BILLED QUELEA

Quelea quelea

Common to abundant resident throughout much of sub-saharan Africa. A frequent escape with single records in four of the last five years.

One was seen in a garden in St Leonards-on-Sea on 23 Feb.

BLUE JAY

Cyanocitta cristata

Common resident in eastern USA. An unlikely cagebird but an even less likely vagrant.

One was reported from Southbourne on 23 June.

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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 confirmed but no count made. 3 = present during the breeding season but no territories identified. np = confirmed as not present.

Species	AL	BC	BW	CC	DC	HC	HE	LC	LP	LS	MF	SC	SF	SP	WD	WP
Mallard	6	1	100	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	7	3	-	12	-	-
Sparrowhawk	-	3	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	1
Kestrel	-	-	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	3	1	1	-	-	nc	2
Pheasant	-	1	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	-	8	3	1
Moorhen	11	1	88	nc	-	3	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	13	-	-
Lapwing	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	2	-	-
Woodcock	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	1	-
Stock Dove	-	3	4	-	-	1	-	1	-	3	-	3	-	3	3	4
Woodpigeon	-	4	99	3	-	3	-	-	-	3	4	3	3	10	3	66
Collared Dove	-	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	np	4	-	33
Turtle Dove	-	-	14	-	-	3	-	4	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-
Cuckoo	-	-	8	-	-	3	1	-	-	3	3	1	1	1	nc	-
Tawny Owl	-	-	5	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Nightjar	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	8	5	1	-	2	-	-	1	-
Green Woodpecker	-	1	15	1	-	1	3	6	4	2	2	2	-	2	2	2
Gt Sp Woodpecker	-	1	9	3	-	2	4	7	4	4	1	2	1	-	2	1
Wood Lark	-	-	-	8	1	-	2	1	7	1	-	2	-	-	11	-
Sky Lark	-	-	22	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	6	3	10
Tree Pipit	-	-	-	9	-	-	1	7	3	5	-	2	-	-	2	-
Pied Wagtail	3	-	19	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	1	3	-
Wren	-	14	124	nc	-	11	-	-	-	3	36	19	16	31	3	87
Dunnock	-	1	78	3	-	3	-	-	-	3	18	4	5	7	3	60
Robin	-	23	154	3	-	22	-	-	-	3	25	28	6	12	3	110
Stonechat	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	7	-
Blackbird	-	6	142	3	-	12	-	-	-	3	16	7	7	19	3	123
Song Thrush	-	5	40	-	-	4	-	-	-	3	4	3	3	6	3	14
Mistle Thrush	-	3	11	-	-	1	-	-	-	3	3	3	np	3	3	5
Sedge Warbler	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	4	-	-
Reed Warbler	60	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22	-	-	64	-	-

Dartford Warbler	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	5	-
Lesser Whitethroat	1	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	3	1	-	3	
Whitethroat	4	1	14	1	-	np	-	-	2	1	10	1	1	7	1	24
Garden Warbler	-	1	43	-	-	np	-	-	-	3	-	2	2	-	-	1
Blackcap	-	5	50	-	-	3	3	3	-	3	7	4	2	4	3	14
Chiffchaff	-	1	67	-	-	7	3	3	-	3	1	4	6	5	3	14
Willow Warbler	-	3	41	-	-	3	11	1	-	3	3	7	2	3	3	4
Goldcrest	-	1	13	-	-	3	-	-	-	3	3	4	-	-	3	-
Spotted Flycatcher	-	-	2	-	2	1	1	1	-	3	-	3	np	-	-	-
Long-tailed tit	-	2	20	-	-	2	-	-	-	3	2	3	np	2	3	10
Marsh Tit	-	1	8	-	-	3	-	-	-	3	3	1	-	-	nc	-
Coal Tit	-	3	4	-	-	1	-	-	-	3	-	6	np	-	3	-
Blue Tit	-	14	75	-	-	12	-	-	-	3	11	16	4	15	3	58
Great Tit	-	9	60	-	-	10	-	-	-	nc	6	12	6	9	3	49
Species	AL	BC	BW	CC	DC	HC	HE	LC	LP	LS	MF	SC	SF	SP	WD	WP
Nuthatch	-	2	13	1	-	4	-	-	-	nc	-	1	-	3	3	-
Treecreeper	-	1	8	-	-	1	-	-	-	3	-	2	-	-	3	-
Jay	-	1	10	-	-	3	-	-	-	3	3	1	-	-	3	2
Magpie	-	1	28	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	3	2	1	3	3	46
Jackdaw	-	-	7	-	-	3	-	-	-	3	1	3	-	3	3	1
Carrion Crow	-	2	34	3	-	3	-	-	-	3	5	2	1	5	3	18
Starling	-	-	23	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	1	3	20
House Sparrow	-	-	31	3	-	3	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	2	-	12
Chaffinch	-	9	130	3	-	4	-	-	-	3	36	18	9	21	3	39
Greenfinch	-	1	24	3	-	2	-	-	-	3	7	-	2	8	3	34
Goldfinch	-	3	12	3	-	np	-	-	-	-	1	3	1	3	3	3
Linnet	-	-	14	6	-	np	-	6	1	-	2	2	3	3	3	5
Bullfinch	-	3	16	-	-	3	-	-	-	3	3	2	np	-	-	5
Yellowhammer	-	1	9	5	-	-	7	-	4	-	9	3	4	3	3	10
Reed Bunting	4	-	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	-	2	-	-

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. Waterbird Breeding Survey.
- CC Chapel Common, Liphook. Heathland Survey.
- DC Duncton Common. Heathland Survey.
- 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.
- HE Hesworth Common. Heathland Survey.
- LC Lavington Common. 28ha lowland heath surrounded by pine & deciduous woods. Heathland Territory Mapping Survey.
- LP Lords Piece, Fittleworth. Heathland Territory Mapping Survey..
- LS Linchmere & Stanley Commons. Heathland Survey.
- MF Marsh Farm, Yapton. 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.
- SP Sefter Farm, Rose Green. 90.0ha mixed farmland. Common Bird Census.
- WD Weavers Down, Liss. Heathland Survey.
- WP Moulsecomb Wild Park, Brighton including Hollingbury Camp and Golf Course and parts of nature reserve. Downland scrub, farmland and setaside. Pairs or single males.

The following sites were not surveyed during 2000:

- CF Chiddinglye Farm, West Hoathly. 61.8ha grass/maize farm. Common Bird Census.
- LW Lawrence Copse, West Dean. 4.3ha woodland. Common Bird Census.

Details of breeding bird censuses were from: J Bagley, P Bance, PR Belchamber, RG Harris, R Knight, HJA Lee, RT Pepper, A Perry, M Shaft, and PJ Whitcomb.

Arrival and departure dates of summer visitors, 2000

	First recorded date			Last recorded date		
	2000	Prior to 2000	10yr average (± SD in days)	2000	Prior to 2000	10yr average (±SD in days)
Garganey	16 Mar	02 Feb	28 Feb (± 16)	18 Sep	13 Dec	29 Sep (± 16)
Osprey	07 Apr	10 Mar	28 Mar (± 8)	18 Oct	09 Dec	20 Oct (± 21)
Hobby	03 Apr ³	12 Apr	16 Apr (±5)	22 Oct	06 Nov	22 Oct (± 10)
Quail	29 Apr	08 Feb	13 May (± 23)	28 Sep	31 Oct	08 Sep (± 38)
Little Ringed Plover	17 Mar	06 Mar	21 Mar (± 3)	19 Sep	08 Oct	20 Sep (± 8)
Wood Sandpiper	04 May	11 Feb	27 Apr (± 11)	05 Oct	16 Nov	30 Sep (± 19)
Pomarine Skua¹	23 Apr	10 Mar	18 Apr (± 7)	31 Dec ⁴	30 Dec	14 Oct (± 61)
Arctic Skua²	25 Mar	04 Feb	25 Mar (± 6)	31 Dec	31 Dec	08 Dec (± 22)
Roseate tern	13 May	17 Apr	05 May (± 14)	18 Sep	30 Sep	28 Jul (± 27)
Common Tern	24 Mar	21 Mar	31 Mar (± 7)	11 Oct	26 Nov	28 Oct (± 15)
Arctic Tern	13 Apr	05 Apr	16 Apr (± 9)	19 Oct	23 Nov	22 Oct (± 24)
Common/Arctic Tern	10 Mar ³	21 Mar	28 Mar (± 6)	19 Oct	31 Dec	25 Oct (±16)
Little Tern	14 Apr	02 Apr	09 Apr (± 5)	20 Sep	04 Nov	01 Oct (± 15)
Black Tern	16 Apr	04 Apr	16 Apr (± 6)	08 Oct	21 Nov	08 Oct (± 8)
Turtle Dove	20 Apr	22 Mar	16 Apr (± 11)	01 Oct	18 Dec	14 Oct (± 8)
Cuckoo	10 Apr	15 Mar	31 Mar (± 8)	01 Oct	11 Nov	29 Sep (± 14)
Nightjar	04 May	08 Apr	03 May (± 11)	01 Oct	05 Nov	16 Sep (± 24)
Swift	07 Apr ³	10 Apr	15 Apr (± 5)	21 Oct	25 Nov	14 Oct (± 18)
Wryneck	15 Apr	09 Mar	25 Apr (± 33)	01 Oct	02 Nov	07 Oct (± 13)
Sand Martin	04 Mar ³	05 Mar	10 Mar (± 6)	21 Oct	05 Dec	28 Oct (± 12)
Swallow	18 Mar	04 Feb	10 Mar (± 13)	30 Nov	26 Dec	26 Nov (± 9)
House Martin	04 Mar	01 Feb	19 Mar (± 11)	11 Nov	18 Dec	27 Nov (± 11)
Tree pipit	01 Apr	17 Mar	30 Mar (± 10)	15 Oct	09 Nov	20 Oct (± 10)
Yellow Wagtail	22 Mar	10 Mar	21 Mar (± 7)	16 Nov	23 Nov	03 Nov (± 15)
Nightingale	05 Apr	21 Mar	06 Apr (± 5)	17 Sep	19 Oct	12 Sep (± 8)
Redstart	03 Apr	13 Mar	24 Mar (± 9)	11 Dec ⁴	29 Nov	23 Oct (± 23)
Whinchat	24 Apr	18 Feb	29 Mar (± 20)	15 Nov	02 Dec	03 Nov (± 12)
Wheatear	26 Feb	13 Feb	01 Mar (± 7)	21 Nov	19 Dec	15 Nov (± 15)
Ring Ouzel	26 Mar	02 Feb	18 Mar (± 19)	14 Nov	26 Dec	21 Nov (± 17)
Grasshopper Warbler	09 Apr	04 Apr	14 Apr (± 5)	12 Oct	01 Nov	13 Oct (± 8)
Sedge Warbler	02 Apr	27 Mar	04 Apr (± 5)	17 Oct	29 Oct	13 Oct (± 5)
Reed Warbler	14 Apr	07 Apr	13 Apr (± 5)	9 Nov	13 Nov	02 Nov (± 10)
Lesser Whitethroat	16 Apr	04 Apr	14 Apr (± 7)	08 Oct	21 Nov	18 Oct (± 12)
Whitethroat	09 Apr	19 Mar	04 Apr (± 4)	19 Oct	17 Dec	23 Oct (± 15)
Garden Warbler	11 Apr	01 Apr	09 Apr (± 6)	22 Oct	16 Nov	23 Oct (± 12)
Wood Warbler	23 Apr	07 Apr	20 Apr (± 7)	05 Sep	01 Oct	08 Sep (± 12)
Willow Warbler	11 Mar	04 Mar	12 Mar (± 7)	25 Oct	26 Dec	29 Oct (± 15)
Spotted Flycatcher	10 Apr	08 Apr	23 Apr (± 10)	19 Oct	18 Nov	15 Oct (± 10)
Pied Flycatcher	09 Apr	03 Apr	09 Apr (± 6)	01 Oct	01 Nov	05 Oct (± 6)

Departure and arrival dates of winter visitors, 2000

	Last recorded date			First recorded date		
	2000	Prior to 2000	10 yr average (\pm SD) in days	2000	Prior to 2000	10 yr average (\pm SD) in days
Black-throated Diver	21 Jun ⁴	19 Jun	04 Jun (\pm 9)	23 Oct	03 Aug	03 Oct (\pm 24)
Great Northern Diver	18 May	21 Jun	08 May (\pm 22)	31 Oct	09 Oct	11 Nov (\pm 12)
Red-necked Grebe	12 May	19 Jun	23 Apr (\pm 37)	14 Sep	18 Aug	10 Sep (\pm 16)
Bewick's Swan	12 Mar	26 Apr	19 Mar (\pm 20)	04 Nov	15 Oct	29 Oct (\pm 9)
White-fronted Goose	17 Apr ⁴	15 Apr	22 Mar (\pm 18)	12 Nov	12 Sep	10 Oct (\pm 47)
Long-tailed Duck	06 Apr	11 Jun	26 Apr (\pm 29)	01 Nov	23 Aug	26 Oct (\pm 30)
Velvet Scoter	07 May	15 Jun	19 May (\pm 13)	06 Nov	12 Aug	17 Oct (\pm 22)
Goldeneye	17 Apr	23 May	24 Apr (\pm 21)	22 Oct	06 Aug	09 Oct (\pm 28)
Smew	12 Mar	24 Apr	03 Mar (\pm 29)	03 Dec	03 Nov	06 Dec (\pm 13)
Goosander	30 Apr	22 May	30 Mar (\pm 35)	19 Nov	12 Sep	21 Oct (\pm 22)
Hen Harrier	05 Jun	19 June	16 May (\pm 22)	12 Aug	04 Aug	28 Aug (\pm 18)
Purple Sandpiper	24 May ⁴	26 May	12 May (\pm 8)	09 Jul ³	10 Jul	24 Aug (\pm 43)
Jack Snipe	03 May	19 May	29 Apr (\pm 14)	24 Aug ⁵	29 Aug	19 Sep (\pm 16)
Water Pipit	14 Apr	28 May	09 Apr (\pm 21)	01 Nov	01 Sep	19 Oct (\pm 14)
Fieldfare	21 Apr	05 Jun	27 Apr (\pm 17)	17 Sep	13 Aug	22 Sep (\pm 18)
Redwing	25 Apr	26 May	16 Apr (\pm 16)	09 Oct	06 Aug	15 Sep (\pm 17)
Great Grey Shrike	10 Mar	14 May	25 Mar (\pm 26)	31 Oct	26 Sep	15 Oct (\pm 9)
Brambling	23 Apr	12 May	22 Apr (\pm 12)	29 Sep	13 Sep	30 Sep (\pm 10)

Arrival and Departure Dates

To make a clear cut-off between arrival and departure dates all January records have been omitted from the table of summer visitors and from the calculation of mean dates and all July dates from the table of winter visitors with the exception of Purple Sandpiper, which have returned to their winter grounds in July for the last four years. The January and July dates are to be found as footnotes. The large numbers of terns seen at seawatches to which a specific identification could not be ascribed have been included as Common/Arctic Tern. The early dates are most likely to refer to Common Tern and the later ones could be either Common or Arctic.

The ten year average is included to indicate if the date for 2000 is unusual. The standard deviation gives an indication of the reliability of the average (64% of values fall within one standard deviation). For example, a standard deviation of ± 7 means that 64% of the dates fall within 7 days of that average.

1. Pomarine Skua seen on 5 Jan.
2. Arctic Skua seen on 5 Jan.
3. Earliest county record.
4. Latest county record.
5. Jack Snipe seen on 2 July.

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J. Bagley	BJ Carter	AN Everett	N. Harris
TG Ball	R. Carter		RG Harris
PC Bance	R. Carver	IJJ Faichnie	C. Harrison
DG Barber	C. Chambers	RJ Fairbank	WG Harvey
C. Barfield	B. Chapman	G. Farwell	J. Hatton
IT Barnard	JM Chapman	JA Feest	JR Havers
M. Barnard	RH Charlwood	B. Fellows	GWJ Hay
JL Barnes	F. Clarke	BH Flack	M J Helps
R. Batchelor	PB Clarke	BF Forbes	PKW Herbert
P. Bateman	BR Clay	A. Ford	JL Herring
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JSS Beesley	JA Cocks	P. Friston	SR Hilton
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PJ Biggs	MA Collins	S. Gaites	AM Holden
D. Billings	AS Cook	JAB Gale	D. Holdstock
G. Binns	DC Cooke	SW Gale	R. Hollins
J. Bird (Jbi)	D. Cooper	J. Gay	LG Holloway
LR Bird	DR Cooper	AP Gibbs	R. Holmes
J. Birdsey (JBir)	IET Cooper	S. Gilbert	CA Holt
S. Birstingle	JF Cooper	J. Gill (JGi)	JC Holt
EA Blackwell	TE Cooper	KB Gillam	CE Hope
M. Blight	DEG Copeland	BR Gilmore	A. House (AHo)
A. Borrows	A. Cotton	J. Glover	AC Howard
JF Boulcott	HM Craig	T. Godfrey	FW Howard
J. Boulton	A. Crawford	DJ Golds	LA Howard
AL Bowley	DE Crawley	B. Goodchild	NAJ Hudson
P. Bradbeer (PBr)	S. Cross	J. Goodchild	J. Hunt
RC Bradbury	PR Cullen	J. Goodman (JGo)	AM Hutson
J. Brain	J. Curson	H. Gordon	
PM Brayshaw	SPM Curson	L. Gover	RA Ives
D. Bridges	W. Cutting	JS Gowers	
D. Broadbent		G. Gowlett	DI Jackson
C. Brooks	De Havilland	AS Grace	B. James
D. Brown	CH Dean	M. Granville	BD James
PE Brown	M. Denness	N. Greenaway	CM James
S. Brown	D. Dey	RR Greenhalf	P. James
D. Buckingham	B. Dickeson	AJ Guest	M. Jenkins
M. Buckley	S. Diserens	S. Gurney	T. Jenner
AF Burtenshaw	NA Driver	AC Gutteridge	A. Johnson
SJ Burtenshaw	G. Durey	TA Guyatt	OC Johnson
PJ Johnson	D. Mitchell	TK Rackstraw	C. Sutton

RJ Johnson	J. Mitchell	JR Rance	GA Sutton
KM Johnston	OM Mitchell	CJ Raymond	S. Sutton
M. Jones	N. Montegriffo	EM Raynor	
P. Jones (PJo)	C. Moore	PJ Raynor	HMJ Taffs
CB Joyce	R. Morris	M. Reader	CA Taylor
D. Julian	BM Mortlock	N. Redman	I. Taylor
	DC Mortlock	SC Richardson	C. Tazzyman
M. Kalaher	C. Mulcock	GCM Roberts	NJ Thomas
B. Kelley	P. Mulcock	BM Rogers	J. Tilbury
RS Kelly		L. Rolfe	PC Tinning
R. Kemp	P. Neatherway	PP Roper	R. Tofts
RJL Kemp	JA Newnham	R. Rowsnby	PM Troake
G. Kennett		SJR Rumsey	JE Trowell
P. Kenward	JF O Driscoll	CW Rusbridge	WH Truckle
D. King	J. O Riley	W. Rusbridge	JM Tucker
JW King	B. Osborne	MJ Russell	
J. Kirby	G. Osborne	Rye Bay Ringing Group	ST Underdown
AR Kitson	LS Osborne		DR Underwood
SJ Knapp	LM Owen	RF Sanderson	ED Urquhart
R. Knight	RA Owen	RJ Sandison (RJSa)	
FJ Köppscall	RC Owen	C. Saunders (CSa)	B. Walker
		G. Saunders	CA Walker
M. Lambert	J. Parish	RJ Saunders	D. Walker
M. Lanaway	BJ Parker	G. Scholey	LA Ward
D. Land	S. Parmenter (SPa)	RE Scott	C. Watkins
DC Lang	TV Parmenter	M. Scott-ham (MS-h)	P. Watkins
O. Laugharne	PT Patton	E. Sears	AB Watson
CD Law	SJ Patton	CM Seaton	AE Watson
MP Lawlor	G. Pearson	P. Selby	RF Watson
PF Le Brocq	R. Penticost	M. Shaft	D. Webb
HJA Lee	BC Pepper	C. Sharp	B. West
MP LeGrys	RT Pepper	CR Shawyer	DR West
IT Lewis	A. Perry	A. Simpson	JD Weston
SH Linington	JC Petrie	IM Simpson	AD Whitcomb
AH Lloyd	A. Phillips	AE Skinner	IJ Whitcomb
P. Lloyd	AP Phillips	D. Smith	PJ Whitcomb
S. Long	S. Phillips	DI Smith	CA Whiteman
B. Lord	P. Philpot	M. Smith	AM Whitman
C. Lowmass	H. Phizacklea	R. Smith	JH Whitman
JC Luck	A. Podmore	S. Smith (SSm)	J. Wicks
PJ Luffingham	CR Poole	JF Smitherman	BE Williams
DP Lupton	ADE Potier	A. Snelling	DC Williams
C. Lutman	A. Potter	T. Squire	P. Williams
B. Lynn Jenkins	WR Potter	I. Standivan	J. Wilsheer
	MG Prince	J. Steedman	PJ Wilson
	RW Prior	JC Steedman	TJ Wilson
L. Manns	D. Pritty	N. Steer	.. Windsor
PG Marchant	H. Pugh	MJ Stenning	M. Woodman-Smith
C. Marrable (CMA)	RN Pully	V. Stevens	G. Woollaston
R. Martin	B. Puttock	S. Stone	K. Wright
MJ Mason		PJ Strangeman	L. Wright
DW Mawford		Sussex Peregrine S.G.	BJ Yates
S. McKenzie	B. Rackstraw		

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 2000 were: M Baggs, D Buckingham, PB Clarke, CH Dean, J Hargreaves, R Henning, R Holmes, R Knight, DC Lang, PJ Luffingham, Mrs BM Mortlock, Dr JA Newnham, M Scott-ham, 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, D Carey, R Carver, Dr J Chapman, T Clements, GA Cockburn, Mrs S Cocker, D Codd, CB Collins, C Cook, I Cooper, A Cotton, R Davison, Ms A de Potier, C Dewhurst, G Durey, P Durnell, AR Eales, J Easton, RDM Edgar, P Edwards, M Emery, S Evans, Mrs AN Everett, Dr B Fellows, M Freeman, R French, S Gilbert, J Glover, DJ Golds, Miss H Gordon, J Gowen, NM Greenaway, RR Greenhalf, G Griffin, 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, AR Kitson, Ms J Knight, R Knight, DC Lang, I Lang, HJA Lee, M Love, CD Lowmass, O Mitchell, R Morris, Mrs BM Mortlock, P Morton, Dr JA Newnham, J Nunday, P Outhwaite, A Parfitt, Ms S Patton, RT Pepper, M Phillips, W Potter, B Puttock, T Quittenden, CJ Raymond, J Reaney, S Richardson, R Robinson, S Robinson, B Savage, P Selby, A and Mrs IM Simpson, Miss A Skinner, Ms C Skinner, DI Smith, M Smith, P Smith, S Smith, T Squire, Miss CA Taylor, P Troake, JE Trowell, ED Urquhart, Ms C Vince, M Welcome, J Weston, B Williams, 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, and S Younger.

WeBS Dispersed Waterbird Survey: This BTO survey was carried out during December 2000 and January 2001 and was organised by CD Lowmass, 33 Barn Close, Seaford, East Sussex. The counters were PC Bance, GA Cockburn, NM Greenaway, CJ Raymond and Mrs P Williams.

Naturalised Goose Survey 2000: Jointly organised by WWT and BTO this survey was conducted between 22 June and 21 July and organised by CD Lowmass and Dr AB Watson. Those taking part were PC Bance, K Benyon-Tinker, G Binns, GF Boniface, Dr C Brooks, M Buckley, Mrs MB Caldwell, GA Cockburn, Mrs S Cocker, C Cook, G Durey, AR Eales, Mrs AN Everett, R French, Miss H Gordon, NM Greenaway, A Guest, A Gutteridge, R Harris, JR Havers, D Heryett, DA & Mrs SR Hilton, LG Holloway, R Knight, DC Lang, CD Lowmass, R Morris, Mrs BM Mortlock, A Perry, B Potter, CJ Raymond, S Robinson, MJ Scott-ham, A & Mrs I Simpson, Miss A Skinner, G StJ Smith, Miss CA Taylor, Dr AB & Mrs AE Watson, Mrs P Williams, PJ Wilson, Dr BJ Yates

Hobby Survey 2000: Planned and organised by Dr ME Kalaher, Cherry House, Kithurst Lane, Storrington, West Sussex. Those contributing were the Ashdown Forest Bird Group, D. Barber, M. Denness, BF Forbes, W. Harvey, R. Owen, D. Robinson, R. Sandison, M. Scott-Ham and DI Smith.

Swift Breeding Survey:- This two year survey was organised by Graham Roberts, 3 Carmarthen Avenue, Drayton, Portsmouth PO6 2AG. Those assisting were:- Mrs VP Bentley, C Booty, D Bridges, D Buckingham, J Clausen, BR Clay, D Copeland, D Crespian, SPM Curson, R Downes, Dr AC Dubock, RDM Edgar, Mrs AN Everett, J Fisher, J Gooders, Mrs R Gooders, JS Gowers, Mrs J Gregory, Miss AJ Griffiths, AJ Guest, Mrs CH Hamilton, J Hamilton, R Harman, P Haskell, MJ Helps, R Henning, JA Hobson, R Humphrey, RA Ives, N James, L. Keen, R JL Kemp, R Knight, DC Lang, M Larkin, CD Law, C Lowe, PJ Luffingham, A Madgwick, L Manns, M Marr, MJ Mason, J.A. d'E Miller, Dr JA Newnham, J Nobbs, J Parker, J Patterson, RT Pepper, A Perry, R Pulley, CJ Raymond, GCM Roberts, R Robinson, M Ryder-Jones, RF Sanderson, D Shepherd, A Simpson, Mrs IM Simpson, G Smith, JF Smitherman, D Standing, Miss CA Taylor, R Tofts, Dr AB Watson, Ms J Watson,

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 September to March 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; Brighton Marina from IJ Whitcomb; 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: C Barfield, I Barnard, L Bird, PM Brayshaw, D Bridges, Dr C Brooks, T Callaway, BR Clay, Mrs S Cocker, DE Crawley, Mrs A Dale, Ms A de Potier, C Dean, J Dixon, Mrs AN Everitt, BR Gilmore, J Gowers, M Granville, AC Gutteridge, RG Harris, A Holden, D Holdstock, R Holtham, CE Hope, A House, T Howard-Jones, RA Ives, Dr ME Kalaher, D King, R Knight, C Law, S Linington, L Manns, Mrs BM Mortlock, Mrs P Mulcock, G Osborne, Mrs S Patton, RT Pepper, A Perry, A Phillips, C Raymond, GCM Roberts, P Rowberry, M Scott-ham, Mrs IM Simpson, DI Smith, I Standivan, JC Steedman, Dr AB Watson, IJ Whitcomb, J Whitman, BE Williams, J Willsher, and Dr BJ Yates.

THE SUSSEX RINGING REPORT FOR 2000

By Sarah Dawkins.

Introduction

The total number of birds ringed (40,357) was an increase of 6,579 on the 33,776 reported ringed during 1999 and accounted for approximately 6% of the national total. The Sussex ringing activity was again dominated by Rye Bay Ringing Group (RBRG) with a total of 29,265 birds ringed compared to 11,092 by all other Sussex ringers. These figures show an increase of 1,526 (6%) and 5,055 (84%) respectively compared to 1999. RBRG again trapped a wide diversity of 119 species, whilst in the rest of the county 71 species were caught, including seven species not trapped by RBRG, bringing the total number of species caught in 2000 to 126. County rarities included four Spotted Crakes and single Aquatic Warbler, Barred Warbler and Penduline Tit all ringed by RBRG. No new species were added to the County Ringing list in 2000 thus the total since 1979 remains at 192 species.

Ringling Totals

Table 1 lists the 20 most regularly trapped species during 2000 in descending order of magnitude compared with similar data from 1999 and including the totals for RBRG to demonstrate the contribution this group makes to Sussex ringing.

	1999		2000		%		1999		2000		%
	Total	Total	RBRG	Change			Total	Total	RBRG	Change	
Sedge Warbler	9906	9276	9168	-6	House Martin	122	784	730	543		
Reed Warbler	5749	5049	4649	-12	Goldcrest	584	749	470	28		
Blackcap	3627	4897	3230	35	Garden Warbler	477	637	501	34		
Chiffchaff	1623	3147	1899	94	Blackbird*	457	453	206	-1		
Willow Warbler	1722	2284	1324	33	Great Tit	776	439	177	-43		
Sand Martin*	924	1426	1425	54	Wren	360	432	184	20		
Swallow*	670	1198	1189	79	Dunnock	327	416	99	27		
Whitethroat	789	992	516	26	Grasshopper Warbler*	454	365	353	-20		
Blue Tit	1213	804	429	-34	Greenfinch	215	330	131	54		
Robin	495	789	289	59	Reed Bunting*	194	300	223	55		

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 91% of all birds ringed in Sussex during 2000, a slightly smaller proportion than during 1999. As in previous years, warbler species dominated the ringing activities in Sussex with nine species of warbler accounting for 68% of the total number of birds ringed. RBRG again ringed a significant proportion of all the species on the list, including over 90% of the county's Sedge Warblers, Reed Warblers, Swallows, House Martins and Grasshopper Warblers, and over 99% of Sand Martins. Only three species in Table 1, Robin (63%), Dunnock (76%) and Greenfinch (60%), had more than 60% of their ringing effort undertaken at sites other than RBRG.

House Martin, Greenfinch and Reed Bunting were new additions to Table 1 whilst Goldfinch, Song Thrush and Lesser Redpoll were deleted. There was a sixfold decrease in the number of House Martins ringed from 752 in 1998 to 122 in 1999, but the current total of 784 birds is comparable to the 1998 level. These fluctuations more likely reflect ringing effort rather than population change. For the second consecutive year, the number of Great Tits ringed has fallen and is probably linked to ringing effort as the population

remains stable (Thewlis *et al* 2001) and productivity for the year was good (Balmer *et al* 2001).

The data shown in Table 1 is not directly comparable with trends established through Constant Effort Site (CES) ringing in the UK as much of the Sussex ringing activity is focused on migration routes rather than breeding grounds. The data is therefore more descriptive of passage birds including that year's juveniles. However, some interesting patterns are evident.

Balmer *et al* (2001) showed significant increases in the numbers of adult Sedge Warblers, Reed Warblers and Whitethroats ringed in the CES survey between 1999 and 2000. Only Whitethroats demonstrated this trend in Sussex during 2000, whilst both Sedge Warbler and Reed Warbler ringing showed a decrease. The Sussex trend is in line with the general long-term population trend for Reed Warblers and is possibly explained by a season of poor breeding success in 2000 although may purely reflect ringing effort particularly as catches of Reed and Sedge Warblers by RBRG have been reduced deliberately to allow time to concentrate on other species (*pers. comm.*).

A decrease in the numbers of adult Garden Warblers, Blackcaps and Willow Warblers was recorded nationally through CES ringing in 1999 and 2000. (Balmer *et al* 2001) In Sussex however, this trend was not evident in any of these species, all of which showed more than a 30% increase in numbers ringed between 1999 and 2000. For Willow Warblers and Blackcaps, this trend is probably a direct result of the successful breeding season they experienced.

CES ringing showed that breeding success in 2000 was mixed. Dry, sunny weather in March helped resident breeders but another wet April reduced the success of some species. Nationally, Blue Tits generally had a successful breeding season but localised problems were encountered and probably explain much of the 34% decline in numbers ringed in Sussex. Breeding success of migrant species such as Chiffchaff are less affected by poor April weather and the CES trend of increased adult and juvenile catching between 1999 and 2000 may partly explain the 94% increase in birds ringed in Sussex in the same time period.

Nestlings

The number of nestlings ringed (2,104) was almost identical to the 2,111 ringed during 1999 and again accounted for only a very small proportion (5%) of the Sussex ringing effort. This is lower than the national average of approximately 23% (Clark *et al* 2001).

	Total Ringed	Total nestlings	% nestlings		Total ringed	Total nestlings	% nestlings
Grey Wagtail	6	6	100	Kestrel *	40	27	68
Peregrine *	3	3	100	Gadwall *	6	4	67
Barn Owl *	111	100	90	Mistle Thrush	6	4	67
Stock Dove *	20	18	90	Canada Goose	16	9	56
Lapwing *	8	7	88	Linnet **	48	25	52
Pied Wagtail	177	147	83	Great Tit	898	459	51
Black-headed Gull	25	20	80	Ruddy Duck	8	4	50
Common Tern	89	68	76	Redstart *	43	20	47
Tawny Owl	18	13	72	Blue Tit	1415	611	43

Table 2. Nestlings ringed in Sussex during 2000.

*Birds of Conservation Concern (RSPB 1996) - ** Red listed, * Amber listed.*

Eighteen species had over 40% of their total ringed as nestlings compared to 26 species in 1999. Table 2 shows seven “amber” listed species (Gadwall, Kestrel, Peregrine, Lapwing, Stock Dove, Barn Owl and Redstart) and a single “red” listed species (Linnet) for which nestling ringing contributed significantly to those species ringing totals. Two “red” listed species, Song Thrush and Tree Sparrow, had less nestlings ringed with consequent deletion from Table 2. The observed change in the proportion of Song Thrush nestlings ringed, to 23% in 2000 compared to 42% in 1999 is directly attributable to the cessation of the RSPB Song Thrush research project in the county which, during its duration, ringed a significant proportion of the Sussex total for this species. In 2000, only one adult Tree Sparrow was reported ringed in the whole county and no ringing of nestlings was reported. This is a very stark reminder of the parlous state of this species.

Recoveries

2000 was another quiet year for recoveries and controls (birds ringed previously at another site). The county highlights are summarised below.

There were limited waterfowl recoveries with the highlight being a **Mallard** found dead at Someren, The Netherlands on 15 Sep 2000 originally ringed as an adult by RBRG on 23 Nov 1997.

A female **Peregrine**, ringed as a chick on 3 June 2000 at Sussex Heights, Brighton, was found freshly dead on a road at Chilgrove, near Chichester, during very poor weather conditions on 31 December 2000.

Two **Black-headed Gulls** ringed in Sussex were sighted on the same day in the Netherlands. One of these birds was at least 17 years old and the other was at least 23 years old. Other notable seabird recoveries included a **Common Gull** ringed in Norway as a nestling and found dead at Wepham Down, near Burpham, nine months later and a **Common Tern** ringed as a nestling in 2000 and found dead at Laayoune, a coastal location in Western Sahara, three months later.

As in previous years, **Barn Owl** recoveries included a number of road casualties. In addition, three recoveries in 2000 demonstrated the danger that water troughs pose to this and other species. A female with four chicks 2-3 weeks old drowned in a trough, but three weeks later two remaining healthy chicks were ringed and presumably later fledged, fed by the male – one was a road casualty in December. A Barn owl, ringed as a nestling, was found dead 90 km from its natal site, a considerable movement for this species. Another, found dead close to the ringing site, was twelve years old, the national longevity record for a ringed Barn owl being just over thirteen years.

A **Sand Martin**, caught in Malaga, Spain on 21 Mar 2000, on its northern migration was caught by RBRG on 30 Aug 2000 presumably already on its return to wintering quarters.

The movement of birds from sites in Sussex during the autumn continues to provide interesting records. **Reed Warbler** recoveries included a bird caught in Osieczna, Poland on 31 Jul 2000 originally ringed by RBRG on 18 Aug 1996, and another bird, caught in Estremadura Portugal on 15 April 2000, had been ringed by the Steyning Ringing Group on 16 Aug 1997. A number of Reed Warblers ringed during July and August 2000 were recovered later in the autumn, and none of these had undertaken a southerly route as might have been expected. Eight birds which dispersed from Sussex included two west to Dorset, four east to Kent, one north to Hertfordshire and one northwest to Cardigan, Wales. **Sedge Warblers** also showed some unusual directions of dispersal from Sussex

during the autumn migration, however eight birds were caught in France on their way south.

One **Linnet** found at Machelen, Oost-Vlaanderen, Belgium on 9 Apr 1999 although unfortunately not reported until 2000, was originally ringed as a nestling in a brood of 5 on 25 May 1998.

Conservation Projects

Two sites in Sussex are registered as Constant Effort Sites with the BTO. CES projects use a standardised catching procedure to enable changes in abundance and productivity of commonly ringed birds to be monitored and to provide data on annual survival rates. This information is important to identify those species, which require conservation action, and to target this action to specific stages of the lifecycle.

The work of ringers undertaking Barn Owl studies has helped produce the Sussex Barn Owl Species Action Plan (SAP) and continued ringing activities will form a large part of the monitoring programme.

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LITTLE EGRET ROOST AT THORNEY DEEPS

By Barry Collins & Tony Cocks

The total European population of the Little Egret is approximately 28,000 birds (Fasola & Hafner 1997), 70% of which are found in Italy (9500), Spain (6000) and France (4000). It is a migratory and dispersive species occupying the margins of warm water in the middle and low latitudes. Juveniles after fledging disperse more or less at random from July to September. The extent of the dispersion is largely dependant on the prevailing feeding conditions (Cramp & Simmons 1997).

The majority of the west Palearctic population breeds in the Mediterranean basin, migrating south/south-east in the autumn (August to September) into north Africa. A minority of the population (10%) overwinters on the northern shore of the basin. High mortality has been observed in southern Europe during particularly severe winters, suggesting that population levels may depend on winter survival. Spring migration is in the opposite direction (north/north-west) re-occupying and colonising the basin by April. The species is prone to spring overshoot to the north/north-west, which accounts for the occurrence of the small parties seen in Britain and Ireland since the 1950s (Cramp & Simmons 1997).

Breeding distribution is determined by the availability of foraging habitats and colony sites. Either can be a limiting factor for successful breeding (Fasola & Hafner 1997).

Data collected from Thorney Deeps roost.

The first record of Little Egrets roosting at Thorney Deeps was two on 12 December 1991. The roost has increased progressively in size since that date to several hundred birds, with a maximum of 281 birds counted leaving the roost at dawn on 24 August 1999.

Since December 1991, monthly counts have been made, and the monthly minimum counts from these used to compile Table 1. Two parameters at the roost were calculated from this basic data and added to Table 1; the monthly mean minimum count for each month for the nine years from 1992 to 2000 inclusive, and, the monthly total minimum count for each year for the same period of time.

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual Total
1991	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
1992	2	2	2	2	1	0	5	12	11	7	7	11	62
1993	11	12	13	13	3	6	17	57	57	32	37	27	285
1994	32	36	33	28	8	8	24	98	94	88	82	77	608
1995	66	64	66	57	7	7	56	112	132	140	144	135	986
1996	76	46	46	55	18	10	78	135	134	124	116	71	909
1997	18	42	56	46	8	43	93	137	135	121	95	76	870
1998	67	69	76	31	2	5	85	222	235	200	152	105	1249
1999	106	106	105	71	14	10	154	281	260	174	202	146	1629
2000	143	119	127	95	24	9	162	246	91	0	232	210	1458
Mean	58	55	58	44	9	11	75	144	128	98	118	95	

Table 1. Monthly minimum counts of Little Egrets roosting at Thorney Deeps between 1991 and 2000. The table also includes the monthly mean minimum count and the annual total minimum count for the same period of time

Plotting the monthly mean minimum count for each month for the nine years from Table 1 as Figure 1, indicated an annual cycle of activity, low in May and high in August.

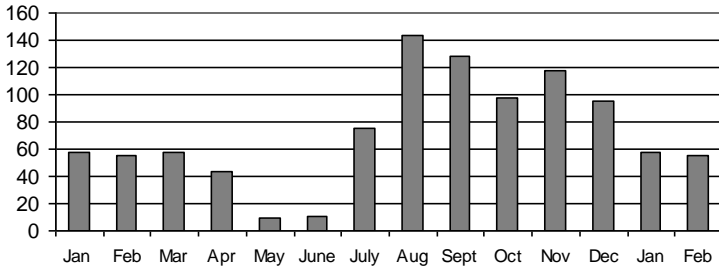


Figure 1. The monthly mean minimum count for roosting egrets for the period from 1992 to 2000.

Low numbers roosted between January and April (37% of August peak), decreasing through a trough in May and June (7% of August peak), rising through a peak in August and decreasing to January to start the cycle. The figure does also indicate a possible second but smaller peak (82% of August peak) in November. Since the roost density peaked in August, these estimates were abstracted from Table 1 and compiled as Figure 2 as a possible indicator of the roost growth from 1992 to 2000.

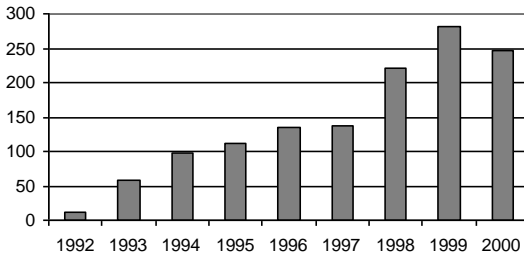


Figure 2. The monthly, mean minimum count for roosting egrets during peak activity in August, from 1992 to 2000.

From 1992 to 1996, the roost increased elevenfold from 12 to 135 birds with no growth between 1996 and 1997, suggesting the roost came into equilibrium with factors as yet undefined. From 1997 to 1998 there was a substantial increase of 85 birds (62%) to 222 birds, which increased again in 1999 by 59 birds (26%) to 281, but the increase was not sustained in 2000 when a decrease of 35 birds (12%) to 246 was recorded. Continued monitoring of the roost will provide useful data for its future growth.

The second parameter calculated from Table 1, the monthly total minimum count for each year, was abstracted from the table and used to compile Figure 3.

The profile of the plotted data in Figure 3 (annual total minimum count), essentially mimics that in Figure 2 (August peak minimum count), showing a good correlation between both sets of data. This implies that the shape of the curve shown in both figures is likely to be a reasonable representation of the growth of the roost during the nine years of recording.

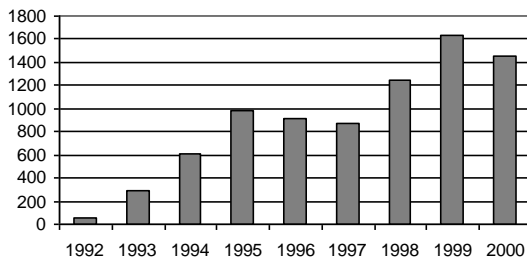


Figure 3. The annual, total monthly minimum count for roosting egrets from 1992 to 2000.

The profile of the plotted data in Figure 3 (annual total minimum count), essentially mimics that in Figure 2 (August peak minimum count), showing a good correlation between both sets of data. This implies that the shape of the curve shown in both figures is likely to be a reasonable representation of the growth of the roost during the nine years of recording.

The roost appears to have gone through two periods of growth (or expansion) from its inception in 1991 with just two birds. The first growth phase was from 1992 to 1996 with an elevenfold increase from 12 to 135 birds in the August peak, and a fifteenfold increase from 62 to 909 birds in the annual total. The second growth phase was from 1997 to 1999 with a twofold increase from 137 to 281 birds in the August peak, and a twofold increase from 870 to 1629 birds in the annual total. The second growth phase was not sustained from 1999 to 2000 when there was a decrease of 35 birds from 281 to 246 (12%) in the August peak, and a decrease of 171 birds from 1629 to 1458 (10%) in the annual total.

Very cold weather during the winters of 1995/96 and 1996/97 was probably a contributory factor for the poor growth observed between 1996 and 1997. The counts showed that there were 71 birds in the roost on 16 December 1996, then during the first half of January 1997 there were extremely cold east to north-east winds accompanied by freezing temperatures. The roost was reduced to 14 birds on 13 January and 18 on the 23rd. Then, as milder weather returned, numbers increased to 42 on 22 February.

Discussion.

The data presented above infers that the roost has grown in a linear fashion from 1991 to 1999, fed by a breeding population combined with dispersal of juvenile birds, coming into equilibrium with its capacity and reaching optimum size. The desertion of the roost during October 2000 (Table 1) suggests that the colony was possibly searching for an alternative roost capable to accommodate future expansion and to be closer to more fertile feeding grounds, or, an unknown factor at Thorney Deepes at that time caused the birds to desert the site.

The roost shows dynamic characteristics, constantly changing to accommodate the day to day requirements of the egrets. This is clearly demonstrated in the account for 2000 in the systematic list (page 26) by the reference to the roost being completely abandoned from 30 September to 3 November in favour of Tournerbury Wood on Hayling Island. With the current spread of egrets along the south coast more birds will presumably move into the area in future years increasing the Sussex population. Roost sites may increase in number and egret numbers may fluctuate in each roost as different flocks compete for roosting space and ultimately nesting sites and territories. The continued monitoring of the roost over the next few years should establish whether these speculations are correct.

In 1998 (Ogilvie 2000), Little Egrets bred in the United Kingdom in six localities involving 14 to 18 pairs. The following year (Ogilvie 2001), these figures rose to nine localities involving 30 to 36 pairs. In 1997 (Casalis de Pury 1999), in our neighbouring county of Hampshire, there were approximately 530 records for the year and the unproven suspicion of breeding. In 1998 (Ogilvie 2000), two pairs bred in one locality with one fledgling and one young seen. The following year (Ogilvie 2001), at least five pairs bred with at least two pairs rearing young. In our neighbouring county of Kent to the east, the Little Egret is seen in small numbers. The largest flock seen in 1998 was 33 birds, and the highest roost count was two birds in the first winter period and up to nine birds roosting in the second winter period (Braggs 2000). Judging by this information, the first breeding record of the Little Egret in Sussex must be imminent.

The continued population expansion in Dorset (one pair breeding 1996 to 25 pairs breeding 1999) driving the spread east and west along the south coast, as well as north into adjacent counties (Ogilvie 2001) is the most likely origin of egrets at Thorney Deepes. Five pairs have been recorded breeding in Hampshire but none in either Sussex or Kent.

In numbers, Kent has very few egrets compared to the hundreds seen in Hampshire and Sussex. Presumably the spreading population is establishing itself in Sussex and is in its early stages in Kent.

The Dorset area of the south coast is warmer due to the Gulf Stream than locations further east (Kent) influenced by the North Sea. The annual cycle seen at the roost in Thorney Deepes is likely related to the majority of birds moving slowly westwards from August onwards to overwinter by warmer waters. From April onwards, birds would possibly move eastwards from their wintering waters as temperature rises, to peak in the roost in August. The trough in May and June could be due to breeding adults moving to breeding sites west of Sussex. It is possible that Figure 1 shows the movement of adults and juveniles in that adult egrets peak at the roost in November and the earlier larger peak in August is due to adults plus dispersing juveniles recently fledged.

In very cold weather with freezing temperatures the egrets presumably also move westwards to warmer waters and return when the temperature rises.

Acknowledgement.

The authors would like to acknowledge the support and invaluable help in the field of Margaret Collins and Anne de Potier, and, the 47th Field Regiment (Thorney Island) for tolerating the suspicious behaviour of CBC conducting dawn and dusk counts.

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THE INFLUX OF HONEY BUZZARDS AND OTHER RAPTORS IN SUSSEX DURING AUTUMN 2000

by John Cooper.

In Sussex the Honey Buzzard is considered to be a very rare spring and autumn passage migrant (James 1996). Breeding was first suspected in 1971 and confirmed in 1976 when a pair fledged two young. Subsequently there have been a number of records suggestive of breeding and since 1997 breeding has occurred annually. Putting this into context a total of 52 autumn migrants was recorded between 1962 and 1994. However, there has been a slight recent increase in records since with, for example, eight autumn migrants seen in 1999 (Kalahar 2000). This slight increase presumably reflects the improving fortunes of the species in the UK and its recent colonisation of upland forests in western and northern Britain (Roberts, Lewis & Williams 1999).

During autumn 2000, by recent standards, an unprecedented influx of Honey Buzzards and, to a lesser degree, other raptors occurred in Sussex. The first wave of migrants arrived in the UK from 19 September and, for the next three days, these were concentrated on the east coast. By the 22nd good numbers were being reported from inland counties from the Midlands southwards as well as from east and south coast counties including Sussex. Only a few birds were ever seen in Wales and the far south west of England.

During the whole of the influx the majority of the birds recorded in Sussex appeared to be dark morph juveniles with just a scattering of pale morphs and only a few adults being identified. The majority were seen to arrive from the north, only lingering very briefly along the coast, before departing south out to sea.

The British breeding population is around 50-60 pairs (Roberts, Lewis & Williams 1999), but in France there are some 7,000 pairs and, in Scandinavia, the breeding population is in excess of 12,000 pairs. Even so, the bulk of the breeding population is situated further east with Russia, for example, playing host to an estimated 100,000 pairs (Snow & Perrins 1998). All are summer visitors to Europe with their main wintering areas in the west and central regions of equatorial Africa with much smaller numbers in eastern and southern Africa. Many thousands are recorded on passage in both the spring and autumn at the traditional European raptor migration sites and it is often the most abundant raptor recorded at many of these sites. At Falsterbo in Sweden *ca.*5,000 are usually seen moving south during the course of an autumn, although on 4 September 1971 an exceptional *ca.*10,000 passed through (Gantlett & Millington 2000).

The weather around 19 September in Scandinavia was anticyclonic, which would have encouraged raptors to move, but there was a strong easterly wind in the south, which was presumably responsible for causing drifting to occur across the North Sea. A cold front moved eastwards across the North Sea, and then returned westwards.

Although the first noticeable arrival of Honey Buzzards occurred on the east coast from Yorkshire southwards on 20 September, with a site maximum of 25 reported moving south at Gibraltar Point, Lincolnshire, the first ones were not seen in Sussex until the 22nd. Having heard about the influx on 20th, the 21st was spent at Beachy Head anticipating moving Honey Buzzards. It was somewhat disappointing that none were seen, although five were seen in Essex on this date. Presumably other observers were looking skywards at other sites in Sussex in hopeful anticipation at this time.

Raptor Passage in Sussex from 22 September to 8 October.

To avoid duplication, some records were removed from the totals where it was likely that the same birds were reported from sites very close to one another at virtually the same times and in the same numbers. Beachy Head records were collated on a daily basis from the local observers at the time of the influx, noting times of sightings and only adding records from this site if the times of sightings fell outside the records already held.

The daily totals for Honey Buzzards, Marsh Harriers, Ospreys and Hobbies recorded in Sussex were collated and summarised as Figure 1. It should be noted that the vertical scale showing total numbers is different for each species, with the biggest difference (twenty-fold) being between Osprey and Honey Buzzard. The weekend bias in records is evident in Figure 1 and supports similar findings (Loxton *et al* 1998) recorded in a previous Sussex Bird Report.

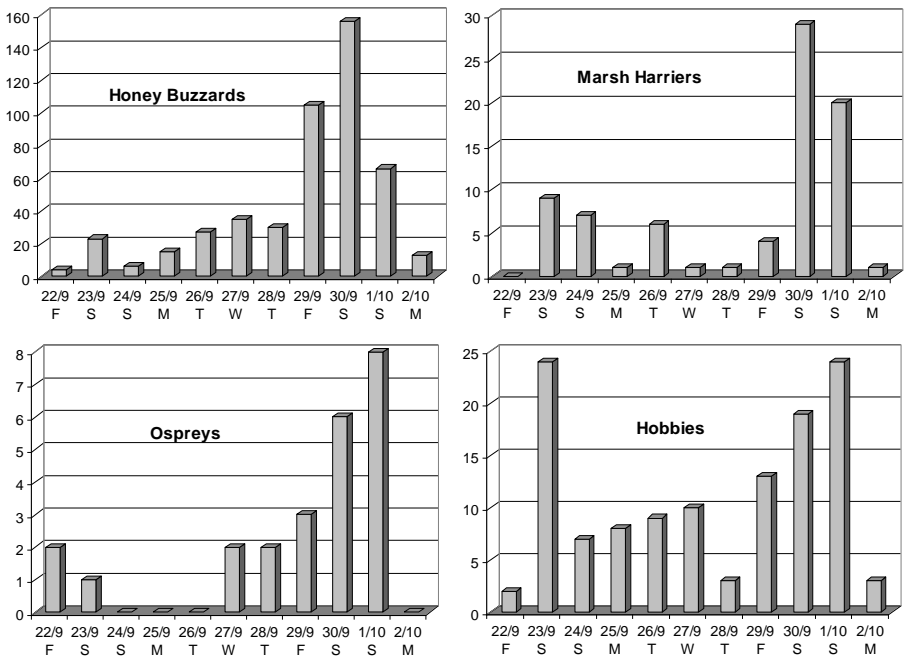


Figure 1:- The daily totals of Honey Buzzards, Marsh Harriers, Ospreys and Hobbies in Sussex between 22 September and 2 October 2000.

The first Honey Buzzards of this influx were recorded on **22 September** with four singles at the following coastal sites: Beachy Head, Combe Haven, Hollingdean and Newhaven.

A few birds were also reported in Kent, and up to 50 were reported from Essex, with at least 27 at Abberton Reservoir.

Other raptors seen in Sussex included two Hobbies, two Ospreys and three Merlins.

The true implication for Sussex of the national influx of Honey Buzzards commenced on **23 September** with a minimum of 23 individuals recorded, becoming the day record for the number of Honey Buzzards seen in Sussex. However, this record was soon to be eclipsed. Three sites achieved multiple individuals with three seen at Fairlight, six at Selsey Bill, and at least seven at Beachy Head.

Both Kent and Hampshire reported smaller numbers than Sussex, but up to 50 were again reported from Essex. Good numbers were also seen in the Midlands and eastern England south of Yorkshire, but there were virtually no reports from the western counties or Wales.

With more observers now looking skywards for Honey Buzzards other raptors came thick and fast with 24 Hobbies being seen. This included five at Combe Haven and six at East Dean, their respective peak days for Hobbies of the autumn. Only one Osprey was seen and, similarly, just one Merlin, although nine Marsh Harriers, including seven moving south at Combe Haven, and nine Common Buzzards were recorded. A Saker Falcon of unknown origin but without jesses put in a brief appearance at Combe Haven, before moving off west (Johnston 2000).

Although being a Sunday, with many observers, the **24 September** was a disappointing day by this year's standards, with just six Honey Buzzards being seen. Beachy Head was the only site in Sussex to record more than a single bird, with just three.

Similar numbers were reported in Hampshire, but more were seen in Kent. Fewer were reported in Essex and other southern counties.

Totals of seven Hobbies, seven Marsh Harriers and three Common Buzzards were seen in Sussex, but no Ospreys.

Despite being a Monday, with fewer observers, a minimum of 15 Honey Buzzards were seen on **25 September** including three from West Hill, Hastings, a group of three passing south over the A27 at Firle Place, and five at Beachy Head.

Larger numbers were again reported from Kent, but fewer were seen in Hampshire. More were seen in the Midlands with 25 reported moving south over Twycross in Leicestershire. Numbers had now declined along the east coast counties suggesting that the bulk of the individuals associated with the influx had penetrated inland and were now centred in the Midlands, south of Yorkshire. Single stragglers had reached the west, with one on the Isles of Scilly, but still none reported in Wales.

In Sussex, eight Hobbies were reported at four locations. There were three at Barcombe Reservoir where there were also three Common Buzzards, although these may relate to local breeding birds rather than passage migrants. Just a single Marsh Harrier was seen, and for the second day running, no migrant Ospreys were recorded. A Short-eared Owl moved east high over Beachy Head.

A further increase was seen on **26 September**, with 27 Honey Buzzards recorded at seven different sites in Sussex. Some individuals may be duplicated in this total as, for example, the six seen at Pagham Harbour were treated as different to the four seen at Selsey Bill. Other notable totals included four in the Hastings area, five at Beachy Head, and, seven flying over Hollingbury Camp.

Similar numbers were seen in Kent as in Sussex, but far fewer than on 25 September in the Midlands. Apart from Essex, only a few were seen along the east coast, and only singles in the west.

In Sussex, nine Hobbies were recorded, although it was difficult to know if some of these birds were lingering on the coast for a few days prior to crossing the English

Channel. Some birds were watched leaving Beachy Head flying south, straight out to sea, until lost to sight. A total of four Common Buzzards was seen, including three singles moving east over Hollingbury Camp. At least six Marsh Harriers were seen, including two at Beachy Head and three, possibly five, at Combe Haven. Other raptors seen included two Merlins, but once again no Ospreys were reported.

A new day record of 35 Honey Buzzards was achieved on **27 September** chiefly on the coast at eight sites. Three were seen from Worthing Beach heading south into a strong south-westerly wind during the early morning, six were seen moving south-east over Hollingbury Camp, seven over Beachy Head, seven moving south over Church Norton, and, nine over Combe Haven in ten hours of watching.

Fewer were reported in both Hampshire and Kent, with small numbers still being recorded in the Midlands and along the east coast.

Hobby numbers in Sussex were static at around ten. Seven Common Buzzards were seen, including four singles moving east over Hollingbury Camp, and just two Merlins. The only Marsh Harrier reported was a single adult male flying high over Combe Haven. Two feeding Ospreys were found, one at Arlington Reservoir and another at Emsworth Channel.

At least 30 Honey Buzzards were recorded on **28 September** from one inland and seven coastal sites with four at Beachy Head, four at Telscombe, eight over Hollingbury Camp, and, 13 moving south over Church Norton. Only an evening watch was made at Combe Haven, when one arrived from the north-east at 18.15 hours and roosted in Decoy Wood.

Smaller numbers were reported in Hampshire, Essex and Kent. Still reasonable numbers were seen in the Midlands, but only a few lingered along the east coast and in the west.

This was a quieter day (Figure 1) for other raptors in Sussex. Hobby numbers decreased to three, and the only Marsh Harrier seen was at Arlington Reservoir. The two feeding Ospreys were still present at Arlington Reservoir and Emsworth Channel and a third bird was found at Weir Wood Reservoir. Otherwise only two Common Buzzards and a Merlin were recorded.

Sussex day records were again broken on **29 September** when at least 105 Honey Buzzards were recorded from ten coastal sites. Notable totals were nine at Galley Hill, Bexhill, a flock of nine reported over Chichester Downs, 11 at Telscombe, 15 at Hollingbury Camp, 19 at Beachy Head, 19 at Combe Haven included a party of six birds counted in nearly twelve hours of watching, and, 20 at Selsey which included a flock of ten over Selsey West Fields at 13.20 hours, the largest flock reported in Sussex during the influx. Even allowing for some duplication, it was an incredible day.

The largest numbers were reported from Sussex. Far fewer were being seen in Hampshire, Kent, Essex and the Midlands suggesting that the birds had by now moved south, out of the Midlands, and were leaving the UK largely via the Sussex coast.

Thirteen Hobbies were recorded in Sussex which included four at Pagham Harbour and three at Hollingbury Camp. Six Common Buzzards were reported, with three from Hollingbury Camp, five Merlins and four Marsh Harriers. The three Ospreys were still present and presumably lingering in the county.

All active birdwatchers seemed to be out on Saturday **30 September** watching the skies for Honey Buzzards and many new faces appeared at sites such as Beachy Head which increased the coverage. The day was exceptional for raptor enthusiasts in Sussex

with an incredible total of 156 Honey Buzzards recorded from fifteen sites, leaving many observers wondering if this day total could ever be bettered. Many small parties of up to five were seen at a number of sites. During the day, 15 were seen moving over Telscombe, a total of at least 30 was seen in the Pagham-Selsey area (although as this represents the total of records submitted by various observers some double counting is almost certainly contained within the figure), and 31 were seen over Hollingbury Camp. However, Beachy Head stole the show with 63 being seen in ten hours of watching. One party of five which lingered just above the road even managed to stop the traffic. Records were far fewer in the far east of the county with five seen at Fairlight and eight birds seen at Combe Haven in a twelve-hour watch.

Sussex and Dorset (37 were seen at Portland Bill) reported the largest numbers, with far fewer being reported from Kent, Hampshire and Essex. Only low numbers remained in the Midlands and just single stragglers were seen on the east coast and to the west of Dorset.

Although Honey Buzzards were the main attraction, other raptors were also on the move, especially Marsh Harriers with 29 recorded, a new Sussex day record. Three were seen at Pett Level, four at Pagham Harbour, five at Combe Haven (with a party of four seen moving south there at 14.00 hours) and 12 at Beachy Head. Nineteen Hobbies were recorded along with 25 Common Buzzards, chiefly at inland sites, with for instance, at least seven seen from the Round Hill, Steyning. Five were also reported from the coast at Selsey. Ospreys were moving, a total of six being seen, including two on Thorney Island. Several Sparrowhawks were seen moving south, out to sea, during this influx. A single bird followed a Honey Buzzard out low over the sea staying approximately 20 yards behind it until both were lost to view. Combe Haven and Beachy Head both recorded eight Sparrowhawks, this being the maximum count at both these sites during the year.

Sixty-six Honey Buzzards were recorded on **1 October** from ten sites in Sussex. Eight were seen over Marline Wood, Hastings and others were seen nearby at Fairlight and Rock-a-Nore. Nine birds were recorded in ten hours of watching at Combe Haven, and, 27 were seen at Beachy Head.

Most of the birds were now situated in southern England, the majority in Sussex, with far fewer being reported from Kent and Hampshire.

Good numbers of other raptors were still moving through the county with 24 Hobbies being seen from eleven sites including up to seven in the Pagham Harbour area. Marsh Harriers were also moving through in good numbers and, although obtaining counts was difficult due to individual birds lingering, an estimated 20 were seen including 13 at Beachy Head, a record count for this site. One observer saw six in the air at one time. Up to seven Merlins were reported and at least eight Ospreys with four, possibly five, being seen at Beachy Head. Finally, nine Common Buzzards were also recorded from nine different sites.

By the **2 October** the Honey Buzzard influx was coming to an end and the weather had turned cool and windy. A total of 13 was seen in Sussex, which included a loose flock of seven birds flying out low over the sea from Cow Gap, Beachy Head at 07.57 hours. There were also a few of other raptors seen, including five Merlins, three Hobbies and a Marsh Harrier.

The final nine Honey Buzzards of the year were seen between **3 and 8 October** in Sussex. The records were four at Beachy Head on the 3rd, one over Combe Haven and two over the University of Sussex on the 4th, one flying south over the North Fields, Pagham

on the 5th and the last for the year was seen at the Isle of Thorns, Ashdown Forest on the 8th.

Very few Honey Buzzards were reported from elsewhere in the country during this period. Occasional Hobbies, Ospreys and Marsh Harriers were still being recorded, mostly at coastal sites, but not in large numbers.

With the majority of records having been received, an estimated 488 Honey Buzzards (the author having the personal good fortune to see 106 of them) were recorded in Sussex during this influx, although this may still involve some duplication especially from sites close to one another. In the southeast region, it has been estimated that 1,000 birds were involved, with Sussex receiving the largest numbers. Beachy Head proved to be the top site not only in the county, but also in the country, with 153 individuals. This site was visited daily by the author who was able to collate all the regular observers' sightings and times in order to avoid duplication. Other notable sites were Combe Haven with 51 birds, Hollingbury Camp with 69 and the Pagham - Selsey area with 100.

Although clearly autumn 2000 was exceptional by recent standards, it is interesting to note that in the 19th Century, Gatke (1895) reported that Honey Buzzards arrived during the autumn in tolerably large numbers on the east coast of England and then turned south passing via western France and Spain to their winter quarters in Africa. Remarkably he noted that very few of these birds were recorded on the western side of England.

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A COUNTY REVIEW OF THE HEN HARRIER (*Circus cyaneus*) WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ROOST SITES FOUND ON RIVER VALLEY AND DOWNLAND.

By Martin Kalaher

Introduction.

An intensive study of Hen Harriers on the Selsey Peninsular between 1978 and 1983 (Lord & Janman, 1983) significantly advanced our understanding of this scarce winter visitor in Sussex. With peak counts of ten to thirteen different birds, an unusual opportunity presented itself to observe behaviour at a large communal roost. An analysis of pellets found at the Selsey roost site revealed interesting data on prey composition and other observations provided some very useful information on Hen Harrier hunting techniques and probable winter hunting range. Since the early 1980's, only a few additional roost sites have been discovered and to date there are records for just six localities in the west of the county and three in the east. Two of these sites were found on contrasting habitats of river valley and downland and the results of a limited study at these two sites are documented in this paper.

Methods.

All the computerised records since 1976 held on the SOS database were analysed to review the annual counts. The figures produced may provide a small amount of indirect evidence regarding the buoyancy of breeding populations both in the UK and neighbouring parts of mainland Europe.

Given a reasonable view in adequate light the Hen Harrier is not a species that should present too many diagnostic difficulties. In recent years a large number of records have been submitted and for the period 1994-98 there were 776 records from 158 different observers. There is clearly a plenitude of data, but interpreting the available information and providing accurate annual totals is not quite so straightforward. The following general measures were used in the counting process:

- 1) All the records were placed in general localities (e.g. Sussex Bird Report 1999, p58).
- 2) Evidence was sought for clear-cut passage migrants in early autumn and late spring. In well-watched localities, an isolated sighting on a single day with no subsequent records for that vicinity over the following two to three weeks was highly suggestive of a migrant bird. The evidence was further strengthened if there were no other records, elsewhere in the county, to suggest that the same bird had been counted twice.
- 3) Records generally specify the sex of the bird and this simple differentiation was probably the single most important aid in the counting process. When not specified it was assumed that the record was a ringtail.
- 4) Records from the various sea-watching stations were regarded as passage birds and were counted as different individuals.
- 5) A careful assessment was made of the records from each general locality. This was easily the most contentious area because there could be some difficulty in deciding whether eight records from a given locality represented eight different birds or just one? It was perhaps self-evident that a good personal experience of the species and a sound knowledge of the various localities was extremely

helpful. In a well-watched area a cluster of single records suggested that just one bird was involved, whereas an interval of five to six weeks between sightings was more indicative of a different bird wandering through, although it could, of course, be the same bird returning after an absence. Some localities were more closely watched than others and this needs to be taken into consideration.

Results.

1. The distribution of county records from 1976 to 2000.

The tetrad distribution of Hen Harrier records since 1976 is shown in Figure 1. Although the records appear to encompass a large area of Sussex there are comparatively few localities where this species can be seen with any regularity. Analysis of the data also reveals a lack of consistency for many localities, with many sightings one year but very few the next.

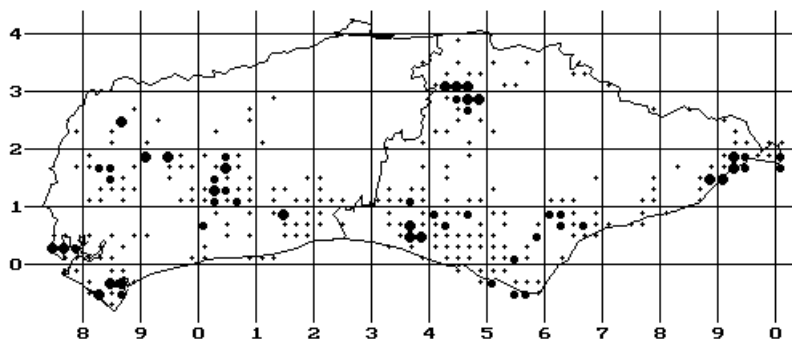


Figure 1. Tetrad distribution of records of Hen Harriers in Sussex, 1976-00.
Small symbol 1-10; medium symbol 11-30, large symbol 31+ records.

The Rye Harbour area consistently produces a large number of records, albeit reported over a very large area including the reed bed at Elms Farm, Icklesham. Beachy Head and Pevensy Levels are regular haunts, and at the other end of the county, Pagham Harbour, the Selsey Peninsular and Thorney Island can have excellent years, but also comparatively lean ones. The river valleys of the Arun and Ouse are favoured, and, birds may be located anywhere on the South Downs, with Amberley Mount, Cissbury Ring and the downs east of Brighton the most regular spots. There are always small numbers on one or more of the north-west Commons of Ambersham, Lavington, Iping and Woolbeding, or, the woods of West Dean. Finally there is a very consistent, well-watched roost on the heathland of Ashdown Forest.

Elsewhere, migrants are not uncommonly reported from the various sea-watching stations but similar reports from inland tend to be few.

2..The annual winter counts of Hen Harriers from 1976 to 1999.

The winter totals from 1976 to 1999 are shown in Figure 2. The average annual total for the 1980's and 1990's was in excess of 40, compared to the 1950's when it was ten, and in the 1960's through to the mid-1970's when it was approximately 20. This increase reflects a comparable rise in the breeding population in the Netherlands over the same period of time with cold-weather movement largely responsible for unusual peaks in this county (R. Clarke, *pers. comm.*).

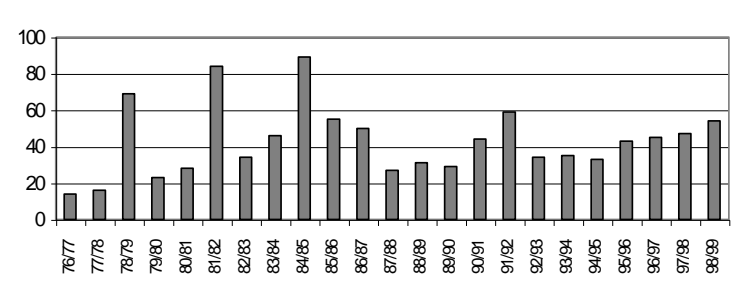


Figure 2. Winter totals for Hen Harriers, 1976-99.

In Sussex, Hen Harrier numbers usually peak in January (Kalahar, 1996), but very occasionally December. By examining peak counts a clearer picture may be gained of the number of birds that are possibly over-wintering locally, acknowledging that even in mid-winter many records clearly relate to birds on passage. For the 1990's, the average peak monthly figure was 14.

3. The annual counts of male Hen Harriers from 1976 to 1999.

The number of different male birds recorded annually since 1976 is shown in Figure 3. In the 1990's there was an average of seven different males recorded annually, representing just 17% of the annual totals for that decade. It is evident from these figures that ringtail records predominate and male Hen Harriers are somewhat scarce.

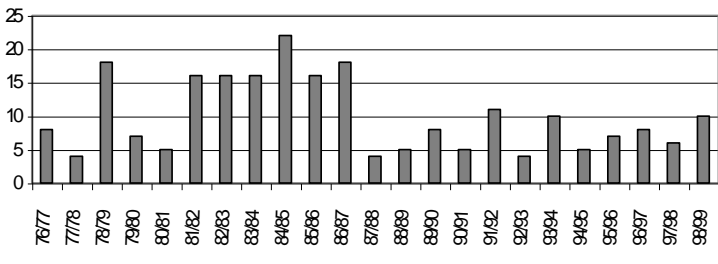


Figure 3 The number of male birds reported annually, 1976-1999.

Hen Harrier winter roosts are regularly monitored in Britain and Ireland and the results for the 1990's were made available. For the eastern counties the average peak mid-winter count was 34% 'Grey Males' and for the south and south-west the average was 59%. It would appear from this evidence, that Sussex has rather fewer visiting male Hen Harriers compared to county neighbours but the figures quoted are for roosting birds and Sussex has very few regular roosts. Examining the data for the heathland roosts of north-west Sussex and Ashdown Forest reveals a preponderance of male birds, although the absolute numbers are very small.

4. Roost sites in the Arun Valley and adjacent downland.

On 10 January 1986, a chance sighting of a ringtail, at dusk, led to the discovery of a roost site in the mid-Arun valley. A second roost site was located at Pulborough Brooks in 1988 and this was watched regularly during the winters of 1988/89 and 1989/90. Every winter since there have been records for one to two roosting birds at Pulborough Brooks,

but usually for several days only, occasionally a few weeks but none for the duration of the winter. Full winter flooding has occurred on seven occasions in the 1990's (compared to just two to three occasions in the 1980's) and the usage of roost sites in the Arun Valley appears to be strongly correlated with the extent and depth of this flooding (T. Callaway, *pers. comm.*).

In recent years a further two roost sites have been located in the Arun Valley. With a minimum of four to five different roost sites within 8-9 km of each other and further suitable sites available to the south of the main study area, it is clear that keeping track of any birds seen hunting in the Arun Valley could prove difficult.

Hen Harriers are quite commonly seen hunting over downland adjacent to the Arun Valley but a proven roost site has not previously been recorded. It has generally been assumed that birds seen in this area combine both habitats in their winter hunting range, but return to the river valley to roost. In the winter 1999/00 a downland roost was discovered above Storrington. The roosting location itself was less than 2 acres of rank grass, which extended into a much larger area of maize cover crop. The immediate area was managed for shooting purposes with released Red-legged Partridges and Pheasants. The feeding pens attracted flocks of Chaffinches, Linnets and Corn Buntings and other small passerines, which in turn attracted several species of raptor, including Hen Harriers. The study area was visited on twenty-three occasions from 16 October until 24 February. A minimum of nine different Hen Harriers were identified, which included one full-adult male, two second-winter males, one first-winter male, one or two adult females and four other ringtails that were considered to be immature females. The maximum roost count was probably three. On several evenings the downland roost was forsaken, when one or more birds that were actively hunting in the vicinity, headed in a westerly direction at dusk, presumably towards an alternative site in the Arun Valley.

It was interesting to observe so many different individuals and it certainly demonstrated the advantage of repeated visits to the same location. There was a strong impression that most of these birds were only brief visitors, perhaps staying in the area for a few days and then moving on. The only individual that showed any inclination to stay was one of the second-winter males, which appeared on 31 December and was seen on many occasions over the following weeks.

Regular field visits to the study area were resumed from mid-October, 2000 until early January, 2001 with just occasional visits thereafter until foot and mouth disease prevented any further access. It proved to be a complete contrast to the previous year with no sightings of any Hen Harriers until 18 February 2001, when a single immature ringtail was seen hunting in the vicinity of the roosting area.

There were several changes from the previous year, which might have made this area of downland less attractive to Hen Harriers. The most obvious was the absence of birds around the feeding pens which did not appear to be in use, although there was no apparent lack of released game birds in the immediate area. In addition, the remains of the previous year's rotted cover crop was still in the ground, and the maize cover crop was not replanted. Heavy rain in early October resulted in deep flooding of the Arun Valley, which lasted for most of the winter. As a consequence of these various factors there appeared to be rather fewer small passerines wintering, both in the study area and the adjacent river valley.

Discussion.

The total number of Hen Harriers visiting Sussex fluctuates considerably, with cold weather movement responsible for some of the unusual peaks. There is currently very

little hard data regarding the origin of Hen Harriers seen in southern England. Very occasionally there has been verification, either through ringing recoveries or identification of wing-tags, but overall the amount of information available is extremely small. Fifteen continental birds have been recovered in the UK, and of these, 11 were from Holland and two each from Belgium and Scandinavia supporting the view that many of the birds seen in the UK are from the Netherlands.

Between 1966 and 1997 there were 51 recoveries of Scottish-ringed birds and six recoveries of Welsh-ringed birds from English counties, including Sussex, and a few from Ireland. In 1992, an immature male was found at West Firle on 8 November, having been ringed as a nestling in the Highlands on 7 July the same year. Recoveries from Ireland are perhaps to be expected bearing in mind its mild wet winters and comparative proximity to its Celtic neighbours. Rather more surprisingly, in view of the distances involved, are the recoveries from Norway, Denmark, West Germany, Holland, France, Spain and Portugal. The majority of these records were first-year birds, with a few second-years and only one full adult. It seems clear from the ringing data that some immature individuals disperse very considerable distances, but long-distance dispersal becomes less evident with maturity. In addition to these ringing recoveries there have been several Scottish wing-tagged birds recorded in Sussex.

The evidence for the origin of Hen Harriers seen in Sussex is sparse, but since the UK breeding population is very small compared to that in Europe, it is reasonable to conclude that the majority of Hen Harriers seen in Sussex have dispersed from mainland Europe.

Small numbers of this species visit the Arun Valley and surrounding downland regularly but it does appear that the availability of roost sites is the critical factor for overwintering birds, especially for Pulborough Brooks. Winters with deep flooding have generally resulted in low numbers of records with no evidence of roosting.

The presence of sizeable flocks of small passerines, in the winter 1999/00, was almost certainly a dominant factor in the location of the downland roost. Bearing in mind the level of known persecution elsewhere (Etheridge *et al.*, 1997), it is supremely ironic that shooting interests in this county have inadvertently helped in providing both hunting and roosting habitat. It is worth mentioning that in sixty to seventy hours of observation and despite many attempts witnessed, the harriers invariably failed to take a Red-legged Partridge.

A minimum of nine different Hen Harriers seen at one location is quite exceptional for this county. It was fairly apparent that most of these birds were essentially wandering through, just staying in the area for a few days and then moving on.

The single record for the downland study area in the winter 2000/01 was a disappointment, but it was none-the-less instructive. It was very similar to the experience gained at Pulborough Brooks in the winters 1989/90 and 1990/91 when Hen Harrier records were plentiful one year with just a solitary record the next.

This is a species that, for Sussex is fickle and inconsistent, and for most localities in Sussex the number of annual records vary quite considerably. The likely reason that mostly first- or second-year birds are seen, is that on reaching maturity they are unlikely to venture far from a breeding territory. Thus every year Sussex has a different batch of young birds that presumably do not make the journey a second time. This is the most logical explanation for the lack of any site fidelity in Sussex. Ashdown Forest, with its preponderance of over-wintering adult males, is undoubtedly an exception to this general statement.

Conclusions.

The computerised data from 1976 to 2000 was analysed and the annual counts re-assessed. Overall, the numbers of Hen Harriers have increased, with an average annual total in excess of 40 for the 1980's and 1990's. The average peak monthly count for the 1990's was just 14 and probably only half of this number were over-wintering in a defined locality, with the other records relating to birds on passage.

Observing this species at several roost sites has provided some insight into the movement of Hen Harriers through Sussex. There is a strong impression that few birds stay in any given locality for very long, but it has been shown that some birds do genuinely over-winter. Only a well co-ordinated count at all known roosts would provide accurate information on winter numbers, but the experience gained in the Arun valley illustrates the practical difficulties involved in such an exercise.

Pellet analysis of Hen Harriers roosting in the Selsey Peninsula from 1979 to 1982 showed that small passerines constituted 85%, by weight, of the prey items examined (Lord & Janman, 1983). Small passerine numbers are generally high in the Arun valley (in the absence of deep flooding), and in 1999 they were also high for a very small area of Storrington downland.

Whilst security must surely be the first requirement of a roost, with fox predation the most obvious threat, it seems probable that one roost site may be preferred to another by the abundance of small passerines in the immediate locality.

The general lack of site fidelity is attributed to the high proportion of immature birds visiting Sussex. Ringing data supports the view that whilst some first-winter birds disperse widely from their breeding areas, rather fewer second-winter birds follow with even fewer adults moving far from their breeding territories, except in response to cold weather movement.

Acknowledgements.

I am most grateful to Tim Callaway for his many helpful comments and suggestions and to John Newnham who provided the ringing data, the distribution map and his usual support and encouragement, for which I am also most grateful. Roger Clarke very kindly allowed access to the national roosting data, for which I am grateful. Finally, my thanks to Phil Everitt and the Ashdown Bird Group for showing me the Ashdown Forest roost and making available all of their data. The biggest thanks of all to every SOS member who has submitted a single record, for it is the sum total of all the records that makes this paper possible.

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- Dr. Martin Kalaher. Cherry House, Kithurst Lane, Storrington, W. Sussex.*

The distribution and status of the Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*) in Sussex in 2000.

By Martin Kalaher.

Introduction.

A limited survey was undertaken in 2000 to corroborate some of the conclusions reached in a recent review of the status and distribution of the Hobby in Sussex between 1976 and 1999 (Kalaher 2000). The conclusions reached in this paper indicated that:

- Hobbies re-occupy their breeding territories much earlier than had generally been appreciated, with personal data strongly suggesting that this usually takes place in the fourth week of April or at the very latest, the first two to three days of May.
- Inland sightings during late April and early May are likely to represent a local pair and not birds on spring passage.
- Hobbies are not especially uncommon with likely breeding densities of three to four pairs per 10-km square, which extrapolated for suitable habitat in the whole county suggests a population of 120-160 pairs.
- Records collected during migration periods showed that migrants are arriving earlier and autumn birds are departing later than was the case in previous years.

The study area was not randomised due to the limited number of observers. In West Sussex the personal study area comprising SU91, TQ01 and TQ11 was extended westwards to include SU81, and in East Sussex, the Ashdown Forest Bird Group surveyed TQ43. Most of the major habitats characteristic of this county can be found in these combined survey areas. In the west of the county, the countryside comprises mixed farmland, downland, heathland, forestry and river valleys, and in the east, the Ashdown Forest area is an interesting mix of heathland in the southern half of the square with mixed farmland and woodland in the northern half.

Methods.

Each observer was allocated a quarter of one 10-km square and asked to visit at weekly intervals from the last week in April onwards. Experience suggested that two to three field trips should be sufficient to locate a territory, but not necessarily the precise nesting area, although this would be much more difficult in a locality not previously surveyed. Having found an occupying pair, observers were then encouraged to search for another pair within their allocated area. Evidence of occupation was required, rather than proof of breeding. The criteria used as minimum requirements to demonstrate territorial occupancy were the same as in Kalaher (2000).

Results.

In the West Sussex study area of 400 km² (Figure 1), a total of 16 occupied territories were found. The earliest sighting was a single bird on 21 April, at Parham near Pulborough Brooks. The 23rd was ideal for raptor watching and large numbers were recorded, but there was no sign of any Hobbies over the West Sussex Commons. By the 27th (another still, sunny day) two of the regular pairs were very much in evidence, with one pair frenetically displaying and then pursuing an intruder Hobby. A total of eight different localities were visited in April, and occupying birds found in seven of them. By mid-May, 14 of the 16 pairs had been confirmed, with the remaining two pairs not located until the end of July.

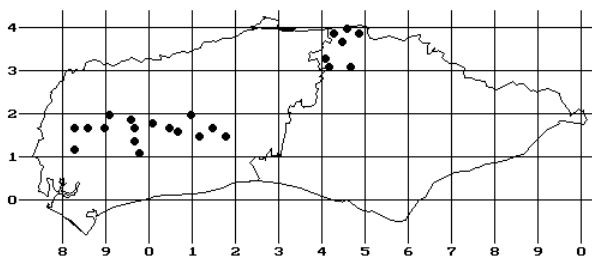


Figure 1. Territories occupied by Hobbies in the five study areas in 2000.

The Ashdown Forest bird group found seven occupied territories in TQ43, three pairs on The Forest itself and four pairs in the northern half of the square.

Discussion.

Abstracting the data from Figure 1, the number of pairs recorded in each survey square was 4, 5, 4, 3 and 7, giving a total of 23 pairs with a range of 3 to 7 pairs per square and an average of 4.6 pairs per square.

In the West Sussex study area, all the known sites were surveyed but this still left large tracts of countryside incompletely examined and it is likely that several pairs went unrecorded.

In East Sussex, TQ43 was surveyed very thoroughly and since five experienced observers were involved it is probable that all pairs were discovered, although three of the four pairs in the northern half were not found until mid-summer. The spacing between the four pairs in the northern half was interesting as they were almost exactly 3 km from each other, with almost perfect symmetry. In the south of the square, two pairs were just 2 km apart with the third pair 5 km from its nearest neighbour. A sound knowledge of spacing between nesting areas is essential when calculating probable breeding densities in habitat that is broadly similar. The northern half of TQ43 is very typical of the Weald and it seems likely that with intensive fieldwork similar numbers could be found in large areas of rural Sussex.

Conclusions.

A total of 23 pairs were found with an average of 4.6 pairs per 10-km square. Sussex occupies an area of approximately 3780 sq. km and if the results of this limited survey are extrapolated for the whole county we should expect to find a total of 174 pairs. Since this figure is rather higher than previous estimates, it would seem prudent to conduct further surveys before reaching a firm conclusion on a probable county total, but the evidence to date does suggest that this figure is not unrealistic.

Acknowledgements.

My thanks to all the volunteers who took part in this survey but especially to the members of the Ashdown Forest Bird Group for the thoroughness of their survey activity in TQ43. I am grateful to John Newnham for producing the distribution map and for his helpful advice and comments.

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 Dr. Martin Kalaher, Cherry House, Kithurst Lane, Storrington, West Sussex.

THE 1999-2000 SUSSEX BREEDING SWIFT SURVEY, COMPARISON WITH THE 1968-70 SURVEY AND CONSERVATION ISSUES.

By Graham C.M. Roberts

Summary

A partial repeat of the 1968-70 Survey of Breeding Swifts (*Apus apus*) in Sussex was undertaken in 1999-00 by re-surveying a sample of towns and villages. This revealed apparent population declines in many areas. Useful information was also obtained on nest site preferences, highlighting the importance of churches and old properties in town centres. The survey has already proved valuable in identifying conservation measures for the Swift.

Introduction

There is real concern that Swifts may be in serious decline in Britain. This may be due to modern building methods and better maintenance excluding them from their usual nesting places in roofs. They are long-lived birds which use the same nest site each year so loss of nest sites could have serious consequences. At the national level, the Concern for Swifts Partnership has done much to raise awareness of their nesting requirements, including the publication of an excellent leaflet (Anon 1996). In 1998, the SOS's Swift Conservation Project was established to promote Swift conservation measures locally. This has involved providing advice on building maintenance, provision of nest boxes and working with developers to secure nest sites in new buildings.

Swifts are notoriously difficult to survey. Thus, unlike most of our common breeding birds, very little survey data exist, at both the national and local level, to assess population trends. However, a survey in Northamptonshire in 1998 (P.W. Richardson 1999, unpubl. data) revealed a 70% decline in the Swift population since a previous survey in 1979. Sussex is one of the few other counties to have ever attempted a Swift survey. Recognising the national significance of the 1968-70 Sussex Breeding Swift Survey organised by the late Stuart Hughes (Hughes 1971), Chris Mead and Brian Martin of *The Concern for Swifts Partnership* persuaded the author to organise a partial repeat survey in 1999-00.

Methodology

The aims of the 1999-00 Sussex Survey of Breeding Swifts were twofold:

a) To census the Swift population of a sample of towns and villages across Sussex to enable direct comparison with the 1968-70 county-wide survey

No accurate method has been developed for assessing Swift populations. However, the method adopted in the 1968-70 survey, explained in detail in Hughes (1971), provided numerical baseline data on the Swift population of many towns and villages in Sussex. The same methodology was followed for the 1999-00 survey to enable meaningful comparisons.

This involved counting low flying Swifts in the vicinity of nest sites on fine evenings preferably in the first half of June, particularly around sunset. Observers were requested not to include high flying Swifts in the count since they might be migrants or feeding parties from further afield. *Low Flying Swifts Record Forms* were sent to all participants.

The rationale behind the survey technique was that the size of a colony was judged from the number of birds flying around in the vicinity. Some of these, however, may be

non-breeding immatures which often visit and even occupy nest sites (Lack & Lack 1951). There is no specific time during the breeding cycle when the total population of a colony can be expected to be visible on the wing. Some birds may already be incubating before later migrants arrive and a proportion will always be feeding away from the colony (Hughes 1971). Thus, the June counts of low flying birds do not necessarily equate to the total breeding population but do provide quantitative data to monitor population changes.

Early on in the survey, the difficulties in surveying the larger urban areas and hence obtaining meaningful comparisons with the 1968-70 survey were recognised. Thus the decision was made to concentrate on re-surveying a sample of smaller towns and villages.

b) To record information on nest sites and colonies

Any information on nest sites or colonies, collected during the evening counts or on other occasions, was also requested. Information specifically requested included location, description of building, number of breeding pairs, location of nest holes, their aspect, and height above ground. *Nest Site/Colony Record Forms* were sent to all participants.

Results and Discussion

Over 60 observers took part in this survey, covering a sample of 71 towns and villages across East and West Sussex.

Counts of low flying Swifts

A summary of the results of the 1999-00 survey, together with corresponding data from the 1968-70 survey, is presented as Table 1. The findings appear very mixed though the overall trend is one of decline. Many towns and villages showed a decline in their Swift population since 1970. A few, such as Henfield, Lewes, Littlehampton and Steyning, experienced quite marked declines. Nine villages (Cocking, Houghton, Littleworth, Mannings Heath, Newick, Ringmer, Rogate, Thakeham and Woodmancote), all of which supported small colonies in 1970, appeared to have lost their breeding Swifts altogether. However, three villages (Amberley, East Preston and Rustington) were found to have low flying Swifts where none had been recorded in 1970, and apparent increases were also observed in Chichester and Worthing.

Fifty-seven towns and villages (80%) held breeding Swifts while there were negative results for 14 locations. This compares with the 1968-70 survey when nearly 200 (77%) of the 260 towns and villages surveyed held breeding Swifts (Whitcomb 1996).

Comparison of all the towns and villages surveyed in 1970 and again in 1999-00 (excluding those for which cover was incomplete) produced total counts of low flying Swifts of 1891 and 1439 respectively, a 24% decline. If the larger towns are excluded, for which the data are considered less reliable, and only those towns and villages with counts of less than 100 birds in 1970 are compared, the totals are 1198 and 826 respectively, a 31% decline. Comparing villages with less than 50 recorded in 1970 to 1999-00, the totals are 919 and 617 respectively, a 33% decline.

The largest counts were not unexpectedly in large urban areas such as Worthing, Hove, Horsham, Chichester and Lewes. Unfortunately coverage was incomplete for Brighton and Bexhill, both of which supported large Swift populations in 1970. Several large areas of Brighton were surveyed, producing an alarmingly low count of only 33 Swifts. Given that 240 were recorded in Brighton in 1970 this may suggest the likelihood of a considerable decline, though surprisingly the count for Hove (254) was actually greater than the 235 counted in 1970.

Town or Village	Maximum June Count			Town or Village	Maximum June Count		
	1970	1999	2000		1970	1999	2000
Albourne	24	nc	8	Lodsworth	10	nc	10
Amberley	0	nc	14	Mannings Heath	25	nc	0
Arundel	14	nc	10	Midhurst/Easebourne	45	60	40
Balcombe	24	nc	22	Newick	21	nc	0
Bexhill	210	nc	15 u	Pagham	0	0	nc
Bignor	3	nc	2	Partridge Green	40	nc	12
Billingshurst	22	nc	34	Petworth	60	60	42
Bolney	35	nc	8	Pulborough	17	8 ²	8
Brighton	240	nc	33 u	Ringmer	6	0	0
Chichester	74	120	95	Rogate	20	nc	0
Cocking	25	nc	0	Rustington	0	nc	12
Cuckfield	30	nc	16	Seaford	20	nc	58
East Harting	0	0	nc	Selsey	0	nc	0
East Lavant	20	16	nc	Sharpthorne/ W.Hoathly	11	nc	32
East Preston	0	nc	9	Shoreham	30	16	18
Felpham	18	6	6	South Harting	14	14	nc
Fernhurst	36 ^{*1}	nc	6	Southwater	38 ^{*1}	nc	27
Ferring	0	nc	0	Steyning	35	16	14
Fittleworth	5	nc	2	St Leonards	32	nc	32
Hailsham	30	nc	4	Storrington	40	24	29
Haywards Heath	30 u	nc	17 u	Sutton	5	nc	2
Henfield	26	4	6	Thakeham	6	0	nc
Horsham/Roffey	318	nc	249	Tillington	9	nc	14
Houghton	16	nc	0	Uckfield	80	nc	24
Hove	235	nc	254	West Chiltington	23	10	nc
Hurstpierpoint	22	nc	22	Winchelsea	16	15	nc
Lewes	140	75	110	Wisborough Green	35	nc	12
Lindfield	65	nc	5	Woodingdean	10	nc	10
Littlehampton	135	43 u	nc	Woodmancote	16	nc	0
Littleworth	15	nc	0	Worthing	206	325	nc

nc = no count.

u = underestimated figure due to incomplete coverage.

*1. 1969

*2. 1 July 1999

Table 1. Numbers of low flying Swifts recorded on June evenings in 1970, 1999 and 2000 in a sample of towns and villages across Sussex

Over interpretation of the data is of concern especially with a survey of this nature having a number of limitations. Experience in other countries has shown that populations can be under-estimated by up to 70 % from counts of low flying birds (K.W.Perry *pers. comm.*). Surveying a small, discrete village such as South Harting was relatively straightforward and probably gave a reasonably reliable count which can be compared with the 1970 data with some confidence. However, by contrast, covering Chichester was not at all easy and raises concerns over the accuracy of the data for the larger towns. At least three main nesting colonies were found in Chichester. On warm June evenings low flying Swifts tended to be concentrated around these areas. However, at times, large numbers circled high overhead before dropping low again. It was not always apparent whether such birds belonged to the single local colony or whether they constituted a *rendezvous* of all the city's Swifts. Furthermore, the apparent increases in Chichester and Worthing may reflect better observer coverage rather than a genuine increase. Another

potential source of error, relating particularly to the larger coastal towns, is that we do not know the boundaries that were used in the 1970 survey.

In addition, a number of observers supplied useful data on towns and villages not included in the 1968-70 survey. This information is presented as Table 2.

Town or Village	Maximum June Count			Town or Village	Maximum June Count		
	1970	1999	2000		1970	1999	2000
Barcombe	nc	12	nc	Singleton	nc	nc	8u
Bognor Regis	nc	72	nc	Upperton	nc	nc	3
Byworth	nc	18	8	Westbourne	nc	nc	2
Easebourne	nc	15	nc	West Dean	nc	nc	27
East Grinstead	nc	nc	56	West Marden	nc	nc	12

nc = no count.

u = underestimated figure due to incomplete coverage.

Table 2. *Additional counts of low flying Swifts obtained during the 1999-00 survey*

Location of nest sites and colony size

Swift nests were identified in a range of building types including houses, churches, schools, shops, an office, a dental surgery, a village hall, farm buildings and a factory. Churches and old properties, often in the town centres, are clearly important nest sites. At least 17 churches were found to have breeding Swifts. Virtually all nest sites were associated with old properties with perhaps only two buildings being less than 50 years old.

Most Swifts were found to be breeding in colonies. In many instances only a single nest was proven in a property, though this may be due to the difficulty in locating nests. Furthermore, several pairs can share a common entrance. Often a group of similar buildings, such as a row of terraced houses, were found to have breeding Swifts. Other colonies were clearly based on a single building such as a church or large house. One medium-sized medieval church in Lewes was thought to support a very sizeable colony of about 30 breeding pairs.

The majority of nests in houses, churches and other buildings were located in roofs (Table 3). Access to the roof was mostly via the eaves, sometimes via the gable ends and occasionally through a hole in the tiles. Church spires held a few nests. At least one pair nested in a belfry gaining access via the louvre. A number of nests were located in holes in walls and behind hanging tiles and weatherboarding.

Despite Swift nests being difficult to locate some useful records were obtained for 241 nests and these are summarised as Table 3.

Observers were asked to note the height of entrance holes above the ground. Of the 202 recorded, heights ranged from 2-25 m. Perhaps surprisingly, over 25 % of nests were below 5 m. Fifteen nests were considered to be as low as 2 m and 26 nests were only 3 m off the ground. Over 50 % of nests were below 8 m and 75 % below 10 m.

	Roof			Wall	Spire	Other	Total number of	
	via eaves	via gable	via hole in tiles	via hole in brick	via eaves		Nests	Properties
House	81	28	6	1		2	116	80
Church	49		1	5	10	3	65	17
Shop	2			1		1	4	4
Office	1						1	1
School	6	6					12	1
Public house				1			1	1
Village hall	1						1	1
Farmhouse	6	1					7	2
Farm buildings			1			1	2	2
Dental surgery	1						1	1
Factory				1			1	1
Derelict building	1						1	1
Other	9	15					24	3
TOTAL	157	50	8	9	10	7	241	115

Table 3. Types of nest site used by Swifts in Sussex, 1999-00

The directional aspect of 223 nest holes located in 1999 and 2000 were recorded and diagrammatically summarised as Figure 1.

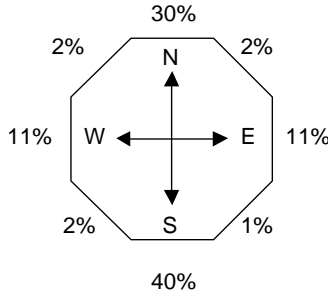


Figure 1. The orientation of 223 nest holes.

Forty per cent of nest holes faced south and 30 % faced north. Eleven per cent faced either east or west. The remaining 8 % faced intermediate directions to the above.

A number of observers mentioned the existence of colonies in the same area for many years and several referred to individual buildings as traditional nest sites where they could recall known occupancy for 20-30 years. One owner of a three-storey Victorian house in Brighton reported a single pair nesting in the same site in the roof almost annually for over 30 years. When re-roofing the property some 20 years ago the builder was instructed to retain the nest site and provide a new access hole covered in lead for weather protection. The site has continued to be occupied most years.

Conservation Issues

This survey has highlighted the fragility of many long-established Swift nest sites. For example, scaffolding was erected in June on a church supporting about 30 pairs and three

houses with breeding Swifts were undergoing roof repairs at the time of the survey. Other less obvious building works presumably go unnoticed. A disused Victorian chapel supporting about ten pairs apparently has planning permission for conversion to flats.

Further anecdotal evidence suggests the loss of some large breeding colonies, through building maintenance and change of use such as barn conversions, since the 1968-70 survey. For example, a large colony in an old dilapidated barn near Chichester was lost when the property was completely renovated for office accommodation.

During the recent survey, several participants commented that the main Swift colonies in Horsham appear to be associated with the 1930s to 1960s council housing. For example, council houses in the Riverside area are known to have supported a colony since at least 1979 which in 2000 probably exceeded 50 pairs. However, concern was raised over the future of these colonies given plans to hand the council housing over to a private management company who intend to undertake a programme of repair works, including re-roofing.

A major objective of the SOS's Swift Conservation Project is to work with planners and developers to install special Swift nesting bricks in new developments, especially where opportunities arise close to existing colonies. The data collected during this survey are already proving invaluable in identifying suitable localities. As a result Swift nesting bricks have already been incorporated in an extension to Horsham library and the new offices of Chichester District Council at East Pallant House in Chichester.

Any further information on nest sites would be most welcome. If we can identify important buildings supporting large colonies we may be able to approach the owners to offer advice on their conservation significance and Swift-friendly building maintenance.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all who participated in this survey. I am also most grateful to members of the national *Concern for Swifts Partnership*, notably Chris Mead, Brian Martin and Jake Allsop, for their help and encouragement. Finally, my special thanks to my father, Theo Roberts, and Tony Cocks for their very helpful comments on this paper.

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- Graham Roberts, 3 Carmarthen Avenue, Drayton, Portsmouth PO6 2AG.*

INDEX TO PAPERS IN SUSSEX BIRD REPORTS 1962-99

Compiled by Leonard Manns

Notes:

- 1) A Sussex Bird Report was produced by G des Forges et al for the years 1948 to 1961, but consisted primarily of a systematic list with additional brief notes.
- 2) The Sussex Ornithological Society was formed in 1962 and reports for that year onward have been produced by the Society. It is from these reports that the following list has been compiled.
- 3) The header year is that to which the Sussex Bird Report relates; the publication is normally one year later.
- 4) This list does not include references to the annual reports of ringing nor usually to short notes.
- 5) Species names are highlighted to assist in reference use.

1962

Report on breeding bird surveys 1962 (**Great Crested Grebe, Water Rail, Redshank, Stone Curlew, Wheatear & Stonechat**). M Shrubb, 23-25.
The Chichester **Sand Martin** Roost 1962. C J Mead, 27-32.

1963

Report on breeding bird surveys 1963 (**Great Crested Grebe, Water Rail, Redshank, Stone Curlew, Wheatear & Stonechat**). M Shrubb, 36-39.
Survey of Sussex woodland birds. M Hollings, 43-47.
The Sussex and Hampshire migration watch. B A E Marr & R F Porter, 47-52.
Sand Martins at Chichester 1963. C J Mead, S Boddy & A B Watson, 52-55.

1964

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Sample survey of the breeding **Rook** population in Sussex 1980. M V Sennitt, 80-84.

Changes in the inland status of the **Shelduck** in Sussex. S W M Hughes, 84-89.

The population and distribution of the **Nightingale** in Sussex during 1980. J A Newnham, 89-91.

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The birds of Brinsbury Estate, West Sussex. A J Prater, 60-64.

The breeding status and distribution of **Snipe**, **Redshank** and **Yellow Wagtail** in Sussex. O Mitchell, 65-71.

The breeding success of **Canada Geese** in Petworth Park. S W M & M A Hughes, 72-74.

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The **Little Grebe** in Sussex: Part I - breeding distribution and status 1966-86. S W M Hughes, 78-87.

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1990

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1991

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1992

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The breeding waders of the Arun valley (1991). C J Corrigan, 90-96.

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A brief study of some West Sussex **Cormorant** roosts. R Knight & A Cox, 115-122.

The South Downs in the 1940s. W R P Bourne, 123-124.

The ornithological status of the Brede Valley, East Sussex 1994. M J Denny, 125-132.

The **Corn Bunting** survey 1993-94. L Manns, 133-137.

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1995

Thirty Years at Barcombe Mills Reservoir: One Man's View. D C Lang, 154-161.

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1996

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My experience with **Woodlarks** in Sussex. L Osborne, 181-184.

The **Tree Sparrow** in Sussex. T W Parmenter, 185-186.

Survey of the breeding **Rook** population in Sussex 1996. M V Sennitt, 187-192.

Whimbrel at Rye Harbour. B J Yates, 193-197.

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Observations on the movement of young broods of heathland **Woodlarks** in 1997.

L Osborne, 197-198.

Woodlarks in Sussex in 1997: numbers, distribution and conservation issues. D Burges, 205-208.

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A survey of Sussex gamebirds during the 1998-99 season. J A Cocks, 177-186.

1999

A review of the status of Taiga and Tundra **Bean Geese** in Sussex. R J Fairbank, 176-182.

A review of the current status and distribution of the **Hobby** *Falco subbuteo* in Sussex.

M E Kalaher, 183-188.

The population and distribution of the **Nightingale** in Sussex in 1999. J A Newnham & M V Sennitt, 189-197.

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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.

For an **Edited Book:** Corrigan, C. 1996. The Coast. In: *Birds of Sussex*, pp 33-39. Ed P. James. Sussex Ornithological Society.

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UNUSUAL RECORDS

All 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, or in the same format as, special forms available from the Recorder. Reports of national rarities as defined by *British Birds Rarities Committee* should be submitted to the Recorder (not direct to BBRC) either in the same format as above, or should be submitted on forms available from the Secretary of the BBRC.

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	Chough
Honey Buzzard	Black Guillemot	Hooded Crow
White-tailed Eagle	Little Auk	Raven
Montagu's Harrier	Puffin	Serin
Goshawk	Bee-eater	Twite
Rough-legged Buzzard	Greater Short-toed Lark	Common (ex-Mealy) Redpoll
Spotted Crake	Shore Lark	Scarlet Rosefinch
Corn Crake	Richard's Pipit	Lapland Bunting
Crane	Tawny Pipit	Girl Bunting
Stone-curlew	Water Pipit	Ortolan Bunting
Kentish Plover	Dipper	Little Bunting

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 173 - 174].

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:

Alexandra Park, Hastings	TQ8010	Charleston Reedbed	TQ5100	Henfield Levels	TQ1914	Northpoint Pit, Rye	TQ9319	Sidlesham Ferry & Fields	SZ8596
Amberley Wild Brooks	TQ0314	Chelwood Vachery	TQ4330	Hollies, Ashdown	TQ4528	Old Airstrip, Ashdown	TQ4231	Sompting Brooks	TQ1604
Ambersham Common	SU9119	Chichester Gravel Pits	SU8703	Hollingbury Camp	TQ3207	Old Lodge Reserve	TQ4630	South Stoke	TQ0210
Angmering Park Estate	TQ0506	Chichester Harbour	SU7600	Horse Eye Level	TQ6208	Pagham Harbour	SZ8596	Sovereign Hbr Marina	TQ6403
Apuldram Manor Farm	SU8301	Church Norton	SZ8795	Horseshoe Plantation	TV5695	Pagham Lagoon	SZ8896	Splash Point, Seaford	TV4898
Ardingly Reservoir	TQ3229	Cissbury Ring	TQ1408	Hotham Park, Bognor	SZ9399	Pannel Sewer	TQ8715	St Leonards Forest	TQ2231
Arlington Reservoir	TQ5307	Climping	TQ0001	Hurstpierpoint	TQ2716	Parham Estate	TQ0614	Stakes Island	SU7801
Arundel Park	TQ0108	Cobnor Point & Farm	SU7902	Ifield Mill Pond	TQ0243	Partridge Green	TQ01919	Stansted Forest	SU7511
Arundel W.W.T.	TQ0208	Combe Haven	TQ7609	Iping Common	SU8421	Pett Level Pools	TQ9014	Stedham Common	SU8521
Ashdown Forest	TQ4332	Crows Nest, Ashdown	TQ4728	Ivy Lake, Chichester	SU8703	Petworth Park	SU9721	Streele Farm Billingshurst	TQ0624
Atherington	TQ0000	Cuckmere Haven	TV5197	Kingley Vale NNR	SU8110	Pevensey Bay	TQ6503	Swanbourne Lake	TQ0107
Balsdean	TQ3704	Darwell Reservoir	TQ7121	Kneppmill Pond	TQ1521	Pevensey Bridge Level	TQ6504	The Goat, Ashdown	TQ4032
Barcombe Reservoir	TQ4314	East Guldeford Level	TQ9421	Lancing Clump	TQ1806	Pevensey Levels	TQ6605	The Mens	TQ0223
Beachy Head	TV5895	East Head	SZ7698	Langney Point	TQ6401	Pilsey Island & Sands	SU7600	The Severals	SZ8794
Belle Tout	TV5695	Ebernoe Common	SU9726	Lavington Common	SU9418	Pippingford Park	TQ4430	Thorney Deeps	SU7503
Bewl Water	TQ6733	Elms Farm, Icklesham	TQ8815	Lewes Brooks	TQ4207	Portfield Gravel Pit	SU8805	Thorney Island	SU7602
Billingshurst	TQ0825	Eridge Park	TQ5635	Littlehampton G.C.	TQ0101	Powdermill Reservoir	TQ7919	Tilgate Park	TQ2734
Birling Gap	TV5596	Fairlight	TQ8611	Long/Narrow Pits, Rye	TQ9217	Pulborough Brooks	TQ0516	Union Canal, E.Guldeford	TQ9322
Bluebell Railway	TQ4023	Fishbourne Channel	SU8303	Lullington Heath	TQ5401	Rackham Woods	TQ0414	Upper Adur Levels	TQ1914
Brede Levels	TQ8417	Fore Wood, Crowhurst	TQ7513	Lurgashall Mill Pond	SU9325	Roman Road, Ashdown	TQ4729	Wakehurst Place	TQ3331
Bremere Rife	SZ8798	Forest Mere	SU8129	Manxey Levels	TQ6306	Rye Bay Wood	TQ9217	Walland Marsh	TQ92
Brighton Marina	TQ3302	Four Counties, Ashdown	TQ4631	Marline Wood	TQ7812	Rye Harbour LNR	TQ9216	Waltham Brooks	TQ0215
Brighton Wild Park	TQ3207	Friston Forest	TV 5499	Marsh Farm, Yapton	SU9804	Scotney Court Gravel Pits	TR0119	Warnham L.N.R.& M.P.	TQ1732
Broadwater, Worthing	TQ1404	Gills Lap, Ashdown	TQ4632	Maynards Green	TQ5818	Seaford Head	TV4997	Weir Wood Reservoir	TQ3834
Brooklands, Worthing	TQ1703	Glynde Levels	TQ4609	Mill Hill, Shoreham	TQ2107	Selsey Bill	SZ8592	West Beach Littleh'mpton	TQ0201
Broomhill Level	TQ9818	Glyne Gap, Bexhill	TQ7607	Millbrook, Ashdown	TQ4428	Selsey West Fields	SZ8394	Westdean Woods	SU8515
Buchan Park	TQ2434	Goring Gap	TQ1001	New Salts Farm	TQ2004	Seven Sisters Country Pk	TV5197	Whitbread Hollow	TV5996
Burton Mill Pond	SU9617	Gossops Green	TQ2535	Newhaven Harbour	TV4499	Sheepcote Valley	TQ3404	Widewater, Lancing	TQ2004
Camp Hill, Ashdown	TQ4629	Gravetye Lakes	TQ3634	Newhaven Tide Mills	TQ4500	Shillinglee Lake	SU9631	Willingdon	TQ5802
Castle Water & Farm	TQ9118	Greenwood Clump	TQ4731	Nook Meadows, Rye	TQ9217	Shooters Bottom	TV5795	Woods Mill	TQ2113
Cattlestone Farm	TQ1020	Halsey's Farm	SZ8697	Normans Bay	TQ6805	Shoreham Airport	TQ2005	Woolbeding Common	SU8625
Chailey Common	TQ3821	Harbour Farm, Rye	TQ9317	North Wall Pagham Hbr	SZ8797	Shoreham Harbour	TQ2304	Worth Forest	TQ3034

The grid references given are intended as a guide only to finding the sites and are not necessarily where a species was observed.

