

# The Sussex Bird Report

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# THE SUSSEX BIRD REPORT

## NUMBER FIFTY-FIVE, 2002

*Recorder: JA Hobson*

*Editorial Team: P James, Dr C Brooks, Dr JA Cocks, RJ Fairbank,  
Dr JA Newnham, TW Parmenter, RT Pepper, & Dr BJ Yates.*

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**The publication of the 2002 Sussex Bird Report was supported by a generous legacy from the late E.G. Robus and contributions from both East and West Sussex County Councils.**

*Cover photograph by Peter Wilson.*

*Bonaparte's Gull at Pagham Lagoon, March 2002.*

Published in December 2003.

by

**THE SUSSEX ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

([www.susos.org.uk](http://www.susos.org.uk))



Best Annual Bird Report

*3<sup>rd</sup> place in the 2000 and 2001 competition.*

## Sussex Bird Report 2001 — Amendments & Corrections.

Very few errors in the 2001 *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 Reaney*

Cormorant, Grey Heron, Rough-legged Buzzard, Pheasant, Mediterranean Gull, Rock Pipit and Common Crossbill.

**Photographic acknowledgements:** The Photographic Editor would like to thank those photographers who submitted photographs of Sussex birds, taken in 2002, 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 are again due to the many contributors who submitted their records for inclusion in this 55<sup>th</sup> *Sussex Bird Report*. A full list of acknowledgements appears on pages 183-187. As the following table shows, a total of 60,031 records was received:

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Number submitting records	432	542	394	383	472
Number of records received	45,000	46,562	53,271	49,553	60,031
Number of species recorded	257	259	269	257	261
Number of birds ringed	4,231	33,776	40,355	32,833	45,650
Number of species ringed	122	126	126	123	104

As in previous years, the species accounts were written by a large team of authors, namely Mrs VP Bentley, PM Brayshaw, Dr C Brooks, JA Cocks, DEG Copeland, AP Cotton, DE Crawley, J Curson, RJ Fairbank, D Green, JA Hobson, A House, P James, Dr ME Kalaher, R Knight, L Manns, MJ Mason, Dr JA Newnham, RT Pepper, A Perry, R Prior, GCM Roberts, Dr AB Watson, Mrs AJ Wende and TJ Wilson. The initials at the end of the species accounts identify the writers to whom sincere thanks are due. Thanks are also due to Colin Brooks, Richard Fairbank, John Hobson, John Newnham, Robin Pepper and Barry Yates who read through the Systematic List and suggested numerous improvements. As in previous years some of the species accounts have been altered and edited to reflect the suggestions made and to summarise the records in a more accessible form for future researchers. It is my sincere hope that this action will not have offended anyone but, if so, I offer my sincere apologies.

In this age of increasingly sophisticated county bird reports, this production is very much a team effort. In addition to those already mentioned, special thanks must go to Tony Cocks for editing the scientific papers, Richard Fairbank for writing the Review of the Year, Tim Parmenter for selecting the photographs for inclusion in the Report, Robin Pepper for coordinating the writing of the Systematic List and, lastly, John Newnham for typesetting the text and organising the computerisation of records. That the last two Sussex Bird Reports have been placed third in the BTO's Best Annual Bird Report competition is a testament to the superb efforts of all those named above.

*Paul James, November 2003*

## REVIEW OF 2002

by Richard Fairbank

The review of 2002 is a chronological summary of the year's highest counts, first and last arrival dates and other interesting or unusual records. The total of 261 species recorded in the county in 2002 was similar to that of recent years, the totals for 1996-2001 being 266, 266, 257, 259, 270 and 258 respectively. The highlight of the year, at least for those fortunate enough to see it, was undoubtedly a male **Collared Flycatcher**, the 386<sup>th</sup> species to be recorded in the county. Other rarities included the county's third **Bonaparte's Gull** (the first for over 50 years), fourth **Rustic Bunting** (the first in spring), seventh **Surf Scoter**, eighth **Black Stork** and ninth **Green-winged Teal**. A non-feral pair of **Wigeon** bred in the county for the first time. There were record counts of **Black-necked Grebe**, **Teal**, **Pintail** and **Mediterranean** and **Great Black-backed Gulls**, the last three exceeding records set in 2001. The county's earliest ever **Crane**, **Wood Sandpiper**, **Grasshopper Warbler** and **Reed Warbler** were recorded, along with the county's latest **Swift** and first wintering **Lesser Whitethroat**. Unusual races included the county's first **Greenland White-fronted Goose** since 1956 and, subject to acceptance by the relevant committees, a **Cetti's Warbler** showing characteristics of the eastern race *albiventris*. Also notable was the occurrence of two colour ringed **Kentish Plovers**, confusingly K5 and 5K.

*After a cold and frosty start, January became milder and stayed mainly dry until mid month. It remained mild throughout, but was wetter during the third week and very stormy in the fourth week. It was exceptionally mild towards the end of month, and finished the mildest January since 1993 and the dullest, weather wise, since 1996 (see [www.bbc.co.uk/weather/features/review](http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/features/review) for further details).* Scarce and unusual birds remaining from 2001 included one or two **Great Grey Shrikes** (present on Ashdown Forest until mid March) and six **Snow Buntings** (which graced the seawall at Pett Level until the 16<sup>th</sup>) but fewer than ten **Black Redstarts** (*cf.* 27 in January 2001). The record numbers of **auks** present along the coast at the end of December 2001 continued into early January with peak counts of nearly 5000 east/offshore at Brighton Marina on the 1<sup>st</sup> and nearly 7000 **auks** and 2500 **Gannets** east/offshore there on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Also on the 1<sup>st</sup> an estimated 500 **Great Crested Grebes** were offshore at Pett, 388 **Cormorants** and 11 **Shags** flew west at Brighton Marina, a **Greenland White-fronted Goose** was reported at Pagham Harbour and seven **Jays** in Marline Wood was the highest number recorded in the county all year. An impressive flock of 600 **Chaffinches** was present at Coates Common on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 15 **Little Gulls** flew east at Brighton Marina and 15 **Little Stints** were seen at East Head on the 3<sup>rd</sup> while a **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** at Rye Harbour on the 4<sup>th</sup> was unusual. Two hundred and fifty **Red Buntings** roosted at Wren's Warren on the 5<sup>th</sup>, while 69 **Bewick's Swans** left their roost at Arundel WWT, 336 **Pochard** were counted on Scotney Court GP and an adult **Glaucous Gull** was in Pagham Harbour on the 6<sup>th</sup>. A count of 738 **Knot** at Thorney Island on the 7<sup>th</sup> was the highest of the year. A **Grey Phalarope** was reported from Pagham Harbour on the 9<sup>th</sup> while on the 10<sup>th</sup> 566 **Curlew** roosted at Rye Harbour and a first-winter **Iceland Gull** was present in the gull roost in Pagham Harbour.

The January *WeBS*' count, on the 13<sup>th</sup>, included peak counts for the year of 7870 **Brent Geese**, 885 **Shelduck**, 2436 **Golden Plover** and 3586 **Lapwing** in Chichester Harbour, 3374 **Wigeon** at Pulborough Brooks and 569 **Gadwall**, 269 **Shoveler**, 476 **Tufted Duck** and 2533 **Coot** on Chichester GP. A movement of **Red-throated Divers** was noted on the 14<sup>th</sup> when 835 flew west off Pett and 869 west and 190 east off Bexhill. On the 15<sup>th</sup> **Mistle Thrushes** had increased dramatically to 54 at Southease and the largest flock of **Yellowhammers** seen all year was 170 in stubble at Chingley Wood. Twenty-five

**Bullfinches** at Wren's Warren on 16<sup>th</sup> was the highest count of the year while dusk counts on the 17<sup>th</sup> included 141 **Mute Swans** at Castle Water and a record 3000 **Great Black-backed Gulls** roosting in Pagham Harbour. A short-staying **Green-winged Teal** was seen at Arlington Reservoir on the 19<sup>th</sup> when counts of 4000 **Herring Gulls** at Worthing and a roost of 5000 **Starlings** on Eastbourne Pier were the highest of the year. Thirty-six **Ruff** were seen at Pulborough Brooks and a single **Pomarine Skua** off Worthing on the 20<sup>th</sup> while westerly seabird movements continued with 6000 **auks** at Selsey Bill on the 23<sup>rd</sup> (considered to be made up of 60% **Razorbills** and 40% **Guillemots**), 5000 **Kittiwakes** there (the second highest county total) and a **Sooty Shearwater** at Brighton Marina on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 400 **Cormorants** past Worthing on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Two **Little Auks** flew east at Brighton Marina on the 28<sup>th</sup> and an estimate of 4000 **Teal** on Pulborough Brooks on the 29<sup>th</sup> was a county record, as were 1025 **Pintail** there on the 31<sup>st</sup>, when the evening gull roost at Bewl Water included 33,000 **Black-headed Gulls**.

*February* was very mild, wet and windy although there were sunny periods mid month and the temperature in Folkestone, Kent reached 15.1 °C on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. A residual trough on the 27<sup>th</sup> moved slowly southwards perpetuating the showery regime with scattered hail and thunder. It was the wettest February since 1990 and the dullest since 1997. February was generally a very quiet month, a female **Kestrel** feeding on a **Woodpigeon** at Patching Hill on the 6<sup>th</sup> being one of the more unusual records while a party of 62 **Red-legged Partridges** there on that date was the highest count received all year. On the 9<sup>th</sup> a **Leach's Petrel** flew east off Selsey Bill, the first to be recorded in the county in February, and 500 **Fieldfares** were present on Henfield Levels. On the 10<sup>th</sup> a **Pink-footed Goose** was seen at Glynde Levels, **Smew** peaked at 16 at Castle Water and **Avocets** at 30 in Pagham Harbour. The February *WeBS'* count, also on the 10<sup>th</sup>, included peak counts for the year of 51 **Goldeneye**, 3180 **Grey Plover** and 360 **Sanderling** in Chichester Harbour and 320 **Turnstone** at Pagham Harbour. A flock of 17 **Pink-footed Geese** flew east past Brighton Marina on the 14<sup>th</sup>, a **Goshawk** was seen at Pevensey Levels on the 15<sup>th</sup> and three **Whooper Swans** were present on Amberley Wild Brooks on the 16<sup>th</sup>. A count of 270 **Carrion Crows** at Chingley Wood on the 18<sup>th</sup> and two, possibly four, Balearic Shearwaters off Selsey Bill on the 27<sup>th</sup> were the most interesting records later in the month.

*March* was mostly mild & mainly dry. It was changeable at first with a notable gale on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Low pressure brought mild southerly winds on the 16-17<sup>th</sup> but heavy rain spread in later with thunder reported along the coast. Temperatures reached 18°C in the London area on the 29<sup>th</sup>, making it the capital's warmest March Good Friday. Five **Hawfinches** were seen at West Dean Woods on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and a **White Wagtail** at West Wittering on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. On the 5<sup>th</sup> five **Great Northern Divers** were present offshore at Selsey Bill and first signs of migration were evident when single **Black Redstarts** arrived at Brighton Marina and Saltdean, the latter joining the wintering individual there. A total of 63,000 **Common Gulls** roosted at Bewl Water on the 6<sup>th</sup> while on the 8<sup>th</sup> the **White-fronted Goose** flock at Scotney Court GP peaked at 336 and the first **Wheatear** of the year was seen at Beachy Head. Two **Spoonbills** flew over Pett Pools on the 9<sup>th</sup> while the first, single, **Sandwich Terns** flying east past Selsey Bill and Brighton Marina and the first, single, **Sand Martins** at Pulborough Brooks and Sidlesham Ferry were further evidence of spring migration. Notable counts on the 12<sup>th</sup> were of 54 **Slavonian Grebes** off Church Norton and 1000 **Common Gulls** flying east at Brighton Marina. The first of just 15 Ring Ouzels seen during the spring was at Hollingbury Camp on the 15<sup>th</sup> when 1879 **Brent Geese** flew east past Brighton Marina (with a total of 6416 east recorded there during the month). Eighteen **Black-necked Grebes** off Newhaven on the 16<sup>th</sup> was a county record and included a flock of twelve, while at nearby Seaford seven flew east, as did a flock of twelve **Slavonian Grebes**!

An early highlight for avid county listers was an adult **Bonaparte's Gull** on Pagham Lagoon on 16 March; it was the first to be recorded in the county for over 50 years and remained to the 25<sup>th</sup>. Other notable records on the 16<sup>th</sup> included the first two **House Martins** of the year and up to 12 **Black Redstarts** at Pagham Harbour and seven **Firecrests** at Beachy Head. Two **Little Ringed Plovers** at Faygate and single **Swallows** at Selsey Bill and Sidlesham Ferry on the 17<sup>th</sup> were also firsts for the year. The first roding **Woodcock** were recorded at Iping Common, also on the 17<sup>th</sup>, while on the 20<sup>th</sup> an adult **Kittiwake** at Bewl Water was an unusual inland record. An estimated 4000 **Redwings** passed over Bexhill at night and 1200 **Black-headed Gulls** flew east at Brighton Marina on the 21<sup>st</sup> and the first **Willow Warbler** of the year was at Thorney Deepes on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. The first **Garganey** was seen on the 24<sup>th</sup>, at Sidlesham Ferry, and large numbers of **Black-necked Grebes** were again noted with eight drifting east at Brighton Marina and three offshore and eight flying east at Seaford. On the 26<sup>th</sup> an early **Whitethroat** was seen at Pulborough Brooks while on the 28<sup>th</sup> the county's earliest ever **Crane** flew northeast over Rottingdean and a **Wryneck** at Pagham Harbour was the first of two seen in spring, and the earliest record since 1990. Summer visitors continued to arrive during the unseasonably warm weather at the month's end with the first two **Tree Pipits**, at Birling Gap, and 36 **Wheatears**, at and around Selsey Bill, on the 29<sup>th</sup> and the first **Osprey**, at Seaford, and two **Sedge Warblers**, at Pett Level, on the 30<sup>th</sup>. On the latter date, 14 **Scaup** flew east at Selsey Bill and 44 **Velvet Scoter** east at Seaford. The first **Redstart** of the year was at Cow Gap on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

*After a very warm dry start April became more changeable, but remained mostly dry. It was very warm again later with some sunny periods. Sunny weather prevailed with London reaching 23.7°C on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, the warmest April day in the capital since 1987. Towards the end of the month it became unsettled, wet and windy, with some thunder.* Spring passage of **Arctic Skuas** began in earnest on the 1<sup>st</sup> when twelve were recorded flying east at both Brighton Marina and Seaford. A reeling **Grasshopper Warbler** at Beachy Head on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and a **Reed Warbler** at Combe Haven on the 4<sup>th</sup> were the earliest county records. Other early migrants at this time were the first **Garden Warblers**, at Pulborough Brooks and Marstake Common, on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, and a **Cuckoo**, at Pippingford Park, and a **Pied Flycatcher**, in Brighton, on the 4<sup>th</sup>; the latter was particularly early and the first of 18 recorded in spring. New arrivals continued on the 7<sup>th</sup> with the first **Nightingale**, at Ditchling Common, and an early **Lesser Whitethroat**, at Pett Level. A **Goshawk** was seen displaying in the northwest of the county on the 8<sup>th</sup> with two **Spoonbills** and a **Hawfinch** over Selsey Bill and an early **Hobby** at Brighton Racecourse on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Eighty **Corn Buntings** were seen at Little Dene on the 10<sup>th</sup>, eleven **Jack Snipe** on Pevensey Levels on the 13<sup>th</sup> and the first **Whinchats** (2), at Seaford Head, and last departing **Redwings**, at both Moulescoomb Wild Park and St. Leonard's Forest, on the 14<sup>th</sup>. A **Wood Sandpiper** at Chingford Pond on the latter date was the earliest spring record for the county. On the 16<sup>th</sup> the first **Little Terns** of the year were recorded at Rye Harbour (3) and Pilsey Island where a **Kentish Plover** was present for two days. Also noteworthy on the 16<sup>th</sup> was a total of 15 **Sparrowhawks** that moved west or northwest over Hollingdean and a **Sandwich Tern** calling there at night. At Brighton Marina 1600 **Common Scoter**, 470 **Sandwich Terns** and the first **Arctic Tern** of the year flew east and two early **Swifts** flew north on the 17<sup>th</sup> while on the 18<sup>th</sup> six **Redstarts** were found in the Sidlesham area and the last **Brambling** of a poor winter was recorded at Ambersham Common.

On 21 April eight **Black-throated Divers** flying east at Brighton Marina turned out to be the highest count in a poor spring for the species (equalled only by another eight east there on 6 May), the first spring **Pomarine Skuas** flew east at Brighton Marina and



Seaford (2) and **Little Gull** passage peaked with 134 east at Brighton Marina, 66 at Seaford and 42 at Birling Gap. Also on the 21<sup>st</sup> the first **Wood Warbler** was at Glynde Levels and the last two **Fieldfares** at Barcombe; a **Serin** flying west over Hastings Country Park the same day was presumably that later seen arriving at Combe Haven. On the 24<sup>th</sup> 219 singing **Sedge Warblers** were counted at Rye Harbour, very many more than the number later estimated to be breeding there. Three **Spoonbills** flew west over Selsey Bill on the 25<sup>th</sup>, when 15 **Common Buzzards** were seen at Ambersham Common and another **Kentish Plover**, this one colour-ringed, arrived for a two day stay at Pilsey Island. A **Roseate Tern** reported at Rye Harbour on the 26<sup>th</sup> was the first of the year while a **Puffin** flying east at Brighton Marina was the first of two seen there in spring. Both **Arctic** and **Great Skua** passage peaked on the 28<sup>th</sup>, when 27 and eight respectively flew east at Brighton Marina, while 15 **Mediterranean Gulls** east there that day presumably contributed to a dusk count of 44 at Rye Harbour, a new county record. Thirty-seven **Manx Shearwaters** flew west at Selsey Bill on the 30<sup>th</sup> but, not to be outdone, observers at Brighton Marina recorded 38 and also the first **Common Tern** of the year.

*What was to prove to be the coolest May since 1997 started chilly at first, with some overnight frost and scattered showers. There was some patchy light rain or drizzle from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> with a heatwave mid month when an anticyclone over Europe brought a short-lived spell of hot weather, especially on the 16<sup>th</sup>. The next day it turned wet and windy with thundery rain, sometimes heavy, with more thundery showers later in the month. Near Haywards Heath a farmer reported a tornado which killed one of his cows with flying debris on the 26<sup>th</sup>. On the 31<sup>st</sup> a ridge extended from the continent bringing some warmer, sunnier and drier weather.* The first of nine spring **Curlew Sandpipers** was at Pilsey Island on the 1<sup>st</sup> while on the 3<sup>rd</sup> a **Black Stork** drifted over two fortunate observers at Lodge Copse, a **Montagu's Harrier** headed north over Hollingdean (the first of four seen in spring) and the first **Nightjar** returned to Ashdown Forest. Also on 3<sup>rd</sup> a fall of **Whinchats** included eleven at Beachy Head and eight at Sheepcote Valley, where an impressive 70 **Wheatears** included many Greenland birds. The first **Spotted Flycatchers** appeared on this date at Ambersham Common, Beachy Head and Church Norton (3). The roost of **Whimbrel** at Rye Harbour peaked at 285 on the 4<sup>th</sup> while, in a poor spring, peak numbers of **Pomarine Skuas** included 32 flying east at Brighton Marina, 30 at Newhaven and 19 at both Seaford and Birling Gap on the 6<sup>th</sup>. A **Hoopoe** was seen near Long Furlong Barn on about 6<sup>th</sup>, a **Crane** flew north over the A27 near Firle on the 9<sup>th</sup> and, on the 10<sup>th</sup>, a **Kentish Plover** was recorded at Newhaven Tide Mills and a **Temminck's Stint** at Horse Eye Level. The star bird of the spring however was a singing male **Rustic Bunting** adjacent to West Hove Golf Course on the 10-11<sup>th</sup>. On the 11<sup>th</sup> an unseasonal **Scaup** arrived at Pett Pools, where it stayed until mid June, the first of three spring **Honey Buzzards** was seen, at Sidlesham, and the first **Quail** was heard, at nearby Pagham Harbour.

The busy period continued with a **Temminck's Stint** at Sidlesham Ferry and a **Purple Heron** briefly on Hooe Level on 12 May and a **Spoonbill** at Pagham Harbour on the 13<sup>th</sup>. Sea-watching at Brighton Marina produced a **Puffin** and 46 **Little Terns** flying east and a **Nightjar** in off the sea on the 12<sup>th</sup> and three **Roseate Terns** east the following day, when there were also two **Roseate Terns** and 1372 'Commic' **Terns** past Seaford and the only inland **Little Tern** of the year at Arlington Reservoir. On the 14<sup>th</sup> a **Spoonbill** was seen at Pulborough Brooks, a **Storm Petrel** flew west off Selsey Bill and a **Sanderling** at Arlington Reservoir was the only inland sighting of the year. A **Serin** was found at Birling Gap on the 17<sup>th</sup>, a **Short-eared Owl** flew in off the sea at Brighton Marina and a **Hawfinch** appeared in a Woodingdean garden for a three day stay on the 18<sup>th</sup> while a **Bee-eater** flew around Belle Tout Lighthouse on the 19<sup>th</sup> before departing south. On the 21<sup>st</sup> a

**Red-crested Pochard** flew east at Birling Gap while a **Bluethroat** sang at Combe Haven, with a singing male **Melodious Warbler** there the next day! Two **Storm Petrels** flew west off Selsey Bill on the 26<sup>th</sup>, on which date, and twice subsequently during the summer, a **Fulmar** was seen circling over houses in Hollingdean. A singing **Savi's Warbler** found at Pagham Harbour on the 29<sup>th</sup> delighted observers later in its six day stay while another **Spoonbill** was there on the 30<sup>th</sup>. The month finished with at least three **Storm Petrels** west off Selsey Bill, a **White Stork** at Pulborough Brooks (to 2 June) and an **Osprey** flying out to sea at West Worthing just before dusk.

As usual mixed fortunes were experienced by species in the county during the breeding season, despite generally poor weather. There were eleven broods of **Shelduck** at Arundel WWT while a female **Mandarin** was seen with nine ducklings at Weir Wood Reservoir, where a total of four broods raised 17 young. An adult female **Wigeon** with young on Glynde Reach was the first instance of successful breeding by a pair of non-feral origin in the county while a pair of **Pintail** bred at Arundel WWT. A female **Garganey** was seen at Pulborough Brooks with seven young, and at least one pair bred successfully at Rye Harbour. A pair of **Honey Buzzards** bred successfully in the county, the sixth consecutive year this species has done so, while records were submitted for approximately 80 territorial pairs of **Common Buzzards**, although it seems likely that the county total is now in excess of 100 pairs. Five pairs of **Peregrines** failed in their breeding attempt but the eleven pairs that were successful fledged 29 young. At Rye Harbour 18 pairs of **Oystercatchers** nested but hatching success was rather low while breeding was attempted by **Avocets** at three sites and, at one of these, three chicks were seen. About twelve pairs of **Mediterranean Gulls** bred at Rye Harbour producing just five fledged young while five pairs of **Great Black-backed Gulls** in Brighton and Newhaven raised ten young. There were 883 occupied **Kittiwake** nests at Seaford and 102 at Newhaven while 150 pairs of **Sandwich Terns** at Rye Harbour was a good total, as was the 150 young that fledged. **Barn Owl** breeding was confirmed at 73 sites, up on 2001, and the 52 pairs in nest boxes fledged 185 young. Ashdown Forest remains the county's **Nightjar** stronghold with approximately 50 pairs, down on recent years, as were **Woodlarks** on some western commons, although numbers on Ashdown Forest increased to eleven pairs and the overall number in the county remained relatively constant. A **Tree Pipit** survey of the western commons found 70 pairs, including 18 at Ambersham and twelve on Woolbeding, while an estimate of 15 pairs of **Yellow Wagtails** at Rye Harbour, the county's breeding stronghold for this species, represented the first, slight, improvement for many years. Chichester Cathedral was an unusual breeding site for a successful pair of **Grey Wagtails** and comprehensive counts in Moulsecoomb Wild Park suggested the presence of 113 pairs of **Wrens**, 46 pairs of **Dunnocks**, 148 pairs of **Robins** and 15 pairs of **Song Thrushes**, all up on 2001. A maximum of eleven pairs of **Nightingales** held territory on Pulborough Brooks; although not perhaps the species one might originally have associated with this RSPB reserve, they are now one of its main attractions. There were only five **Redstart** territories on the western commons but up to 32 pairs in Ashdown Forest, including 19 at Pippingford Park, indicated a total county breeding population of 39 pairs (well down on the maximum 110 pairs noted in *Birds of Sussex*). There were four **Wheatear** territories at the Midrips and seven at Rye Harbour where the success rate was considered good. In Moulsecoomb Wild Park 132 pairs of **Blackbirds** were estimated, but only two pairs of **Mistle Thrushes**, a site which historically used to muster 10-20 pairs.

2002 was a successful year for **Cetti's Warbler**, with 19-20 territorial males at breeding sites, twice the previous year's total. These included six at Thorney Deeps where another good season saw at least 20 young fledged from five broods. Eleven reeling male **Grasshopper Warblers** were heard in potential breeding habitat, including five at

Amberley Wild Brooks, similar to recent years but a far cry from the 1970 peak of approximately 150 breeding pairs. There was a minimum of 347 pairs of **Sedge Warblers**, including over 70 at Rye Harbour, while two pairs and two male **Marsh Warblers** were present at an undisclosed locality. Breeding season records of **Reed Warblers** included concentrations of 30 or more pairs at seven sites though several of these counts were slightly lower than in 2001. **Dartford Warblers**, at 115 pairs, were marginally down on 2000 (the last comparable year) but included a pair at Thorney Island with three fledged young, the first evidence of successful breeding at this site. In Ashdown Forest four **Wood Warbler** territories were found and at least 100 singing **Willow Warblers**, though breeding densities of the latter was low elsewhere and there was none in Moulsecoomb Wild Park, where *Birds of Sussex* estimated a figure of 9.4 pairs per km<sup>2</sup>. Of 17 singing **Firecrests** recorded in suitable breeding habitat 14, were in West Dean Woods. **Bearded Tits** bred at three sites with four pairs at Thorney Deepes fledging 40 young. **Willow Tits** continued their alarming decline towards extinction in the county with just four pairs reported during the breeding season. **Marsh Tits**, on the other hand, fared considerably better with a number of significant concentrations reported from the Downs in the west of the county. Two pairs of **Ravens** each successfully raised two young. All breeding season records of **Tree Sparrows** came from the Pevensey area, where breeding was confirmed, but the species was considered as possibly absent from Rye Harbour during the summer, formerly a breeding stronghold of this species. At least three pairs of **Crossbills** bred on Ambersham Common and two pairs at each of Lavington Common, Ashdown Forest and Footland Wood.

*The first half of June was rather unsettled with some thundery rain at times (Hook, in Surrey received 42 mm of rain in overnight thunderstorms on the 4-5<sup>th</sup>). The next few days saw variable winds, patchy mist and fog and scattered outbreaks of sometimes thundery rain. It remained changeable and cool at times although was mainly dry during the second half of the month, with further thunderstorms on the 18<sup>th</sup> and plenty of sunshine under the influence of a ridge of high pressure stretching from the Azores during the period from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup>. The first week of June was very quiet but on the 8<sup>th</sup> a Black Kite flew northeast over Glynde Levels, an unseasonal Hen Harrier was at Pett Level, a Serin flew west over Selsey Bill and a Red-backed Shrike was recorded at Beachy Head. A Spoonbill spent two days at Cuckmere Haven from the 9<sup>th</sup> while a Crane was seen near Henfield on the 10<sup>th</sup>. Not to be outdone by the summer Scaup in the east of the county, a Long-tailed Duck appeared in the west, at Thorney Deepes on the 12<sup>th</sup>, both remaining to the 14<sup>th</sup>. On the 13<sup>th</sup> a Storm Petrel flying west off Selsey Bill was overshadowed by a Rose-coloured Starling that appeared briefly on the beach there while a Serin was singing at Beachy Head on the 15<sup>th</sup>. A national influx of Rose-coloured Starlings continued to largely pass Sussex by although one roosting on Brighton West Pier on the evening of the 18<sup>th</sup> was a good find while another in gardens at Southwater on the 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> was more widely appreciated. The highlight of the year however was a male Collared Flycatcher found at Church Norton on the 20<sup>th</sup>; regrettably it did not linger though those able to make it before it disappeared were suitably impressed by this addition to the county list. It was an impossible act to follow with a Roseate Tern at Pilsey Island on the 24<sup>th</sup>, the first Wood Sandpiper of the autumn at Pulborough Brooks on the 26<sup>th</sup>, 600 Rooks at Sidlesham on the 27<sup>th</sup>, and two pairs of Golden Pheasants at Cocking Down on the 30<sup>th</sup> the best the rest of the month could muster.*

*July started unsettled and chilly with frequent outbreaks of rain, some heavy and accompanied by thunder, as low-pressure systems and their associated fronts traversed the region. By the 13<sup>th</sup> a ridge of high pressure extended from the Azores, bringing a period of mainly dry weather, sunshine and very warm conditions at times. It remained warm and*

mainly dry, with the odd outbreak of light rain or drizzle later in the month. Temperatures exceeded 30°C on the 28-29<sup>th</sup> (32°C in central London on the latter making it the hottest July day in the capital since 1989) with widespread heavy thunderstorms breaking out on the 30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> making it the wettest July since 1988. A sea-watch at Beachy Head on the 2<sup>nd</sup> logged 62 **Manx Shearwaters** flying west and a **Pomarine Skua** over the car park at Birling Gap while on the 4<sup>th</sup> a **Balearic Shearwater** flew west at Ovingdean. A **Roseate Tern** at Rye Harbour on the 5<sup>th</sup> was one of at least five recorded in the county during the month. A **Spoonbill** was on Down Level and four **Common Scoters** at Pond Lye on the 6<sup>th</sup> and six **Arctic skuas** lingered offshore at Selsey Bill on the 7<sup>th</sup>. A **Bee-eater** was present in Whitbread Hollow from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> and the **Spoonbill** appeared at Pett Level on the 13-14<sup>th</sup>, before flying up the River Rother at Rye Harbour on the 15<sup>th</sup>. **Bee-eaters** were recorded at either end of the county on the 14<sup>th</sup>, with one heard calling over Church Norton and presumably another flying northeast over Rye Harbour (where 650 **Sandwich Terns** were counted). A **Nuthatch** trapped at Shoreham Sanctuary on this date was the first recorded there in almost 50 years of continuous observations. The first of twelve autumn **Wood Warblers** was also seen on the 14<sup>th</sup>, at Pulborough Brooks. The first returning **Purple Sandpipers** were three at Brighton Marina on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, when 240 **Yellow-legged Gulls** roosted in Pagham Harbour. A **Pectoral Sandpiper** was at Pulborough Brooks on the 25<sup>th</sup> and a **White Stork** on Glynde Levels and 2000 **Sand Martins** over Selsey West Fields on the 27<sup>th</sup>. The stork remained to the 28<sup>th</sup> when another **Bee-eater** was heard over Seaford and 18 **Green Sandpipers** were present at the Midrips.

*August was generally warm but very unsettled with frequent thunderstorms. It started with weak low pressure systems dominated by frequent outbreaks of heavy thundery rain. Low pressure moved away by the 12<sup>th</sup> allowing a weak ridge to extend from the Azores although there were thundery outbreaks on the 15<sup>th</sup>. It then became very warm in places with early mist and fog patches in some areas. It remained mostly very warm but unsettled as more thundery rain, heavy in places, fell in some parts with more thundery showers on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. The month finished with sunny periods in most parts after early mist and fog patches cleared, although it was the dullest August since 1987.* A long staying, abnormally plumaged and so presumed escape **White Stork** was seen in the west of the county, mainly at Goodwood Golf Course from the 2<sup>nd</sup> while an **Aquatic Warbler** at Pett Level on the 3<sup>rd</sup> was the first of three trapped there during the month. A **Montagu's Harrier** and 30 **Stonechats** were seen at Selsey West Fields on the 6<sup>th</sup>, the former remaining for at least a week, while a colour-ringed **Kentish Plover** was a popular visitor to Goring Beach from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup>. The *WeBS'* counts on the 11<sup>th</sup> included 66 **Common Sandpipers** at Rye Harbour and 191 **Greenshank** in Chichester Harbour, where 183 of the latter had roosted on Thorney Deep the previous day. Seven **Wood Sandpipers** were seen on Pevensey Levels on the 11<sup>th</sup> while a flock of 25 **Crossbills** at Partridge Green the same day was the first indication of what was to be the largest influx of the species into the county since 1997. Higher counts in the following week were of 32 flying north over Moulsecoomb Wild Park and 23 in Hoth Woods on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 51 north over Brighton on 18<sup>th</sup>. A roost of 280 **House Sparrows** was counted at Ravenside Retail Park, Bexhill on the 13<sup>th</sup>, a **Green Woodpecker** was seen attacking a **Peregrine** at Pagham Harbour on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 600 **Ringed Plovers** were at Pilsley Island on the 16<sup>th</sup>. A **Montagu's Harrier** at Beachy Head on the 17<sup>th</sup> was the last of the year, on which date five **Marsh Harriers** flew west over Brighton (where 24 different birds were recorded between 11 August and 19 September). Back at Beachy Head an estimated 50 **Garden Warblers** were present on the 18<sup>th</sup>, a juvenile **Melodious Warbler** was trapped on the 19<sup>th</sup>, a **Honey Buzzard** flew out to sea (the first of 13 recorded in the county during the autumn) and two **Wood Warblers** were seen on the 20<sup>th</sup>, daily passage of **Willow Warblers** peaked at an unspectacular 250 on the 21<sup>st</sup> and **Whitethroat** passage also peaked

at 250, on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Elsewhere at this time, 330 **Yellow Wagtails** were present at Rye Harbour on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 52 **Grasshopper Warblers** were trapped at Pett Level on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

The first of 29 **Wrynecks** recorded during an excellent autumn for the species was seen at Sheepcote Valley on 24 August while observers at Beachy Head noted a continuation of the worrying run of poor years for **Lesser Whitethroat**, although 100 were recorded there on 25<sup>th</sup>. The first of four autumn **Red-backed Shrikes** was at Church Norton on the 26<sup>th</sup>, an **Ortolan Bunting** at Stump Bottom dew pond briefly on the 26-27<sup>th</sup> and the last **Quail** of the year, at Balsdean, on the 28<sup>th</sup> when 13 **Whinchats** near Partridge Green was a good inland gathering. An **Arctic Skua** circled high over Sheepcote Valley on the 29<sup>th</sup> with a **Great Spotted Woodpecker** flying north the first of eleven recorded there up to 9 October in an excellent autumn for the species. A **Red-necked Phalarope** was found at Sidlesham Ferry on the 30<sup>th</sup>, remaining intermittently for several days, while on the 31<sup>st</sup> a **Bee-eater** was seen at Birling Gap before twice heading northeast over Whitbread Hollow where a **Booted/Sykes's Warbler** was taxing observers. At the time of writing it seems likely that this bird will remain indeterminate, at least for the time being, with the British Birds Rarities Committee, who are assessing the record being reluctant at this stage to accept identifications of Syke's Warblers that have not been trapped. Those observers who saw it, and many who did not, remain convinced that it was a Syke's Warbler and a full account, under that name and with supporting photographs was published in *Birding World* (15: 378-389). A photograph of this bird also appears in this Report.

*The sunniest September since 1991 started dry, warm and sunny as high pressure drifted east to Russia, with a low forming over the North Sea by the 4<sup>th</sup>. It then became changeable with heavy thundery rain overnight on the 6-7<sup>th</sup> and a depression from Biscay passed over the region during the 9<sup>th</sup>, bringing squally winds and heavy rain (parts of the Isle of Wight were deluged with up to 75 mm of rain in 24 hours). A period of dry settled weather then ensued under the influence of a ridge of high-pressure stretching from an anticyclone over Scandinavia. A southeast airflow became established from the 28<sup>th</sup> with warm days and the chillier night time spots having patchy mist and fog in the morning.* What was presumably the same **Bee-eater** flew south over Beachy Head on the 1<sup>st</sup> before being seen briefly at Seaford Head an hour or so later. In a generally poor autumn for the species the peak **Whinchat** count was only 35, at Sheepcote Valley on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, while a **Pectoral Sandpiper** was seen at Pulborough Brooks from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup>. The September *WeBS*' count on the 8<sup>th</sup> included 553 **Mallard** and 254 **Moorhens** at Bewl Water with six **Kingfishers** being seen there too. Also on the 8<sup>th</sup> the last **Little Ringed Plover** of the year was at Chichester GP, four **Little Stints** at Pagham Harbour was the highest count in another poor autumn for the species, and eleven **Grasshopper Warblers** and 40 **Spotted Flycatchers** were seen at Beachy Head. The last record of **Wood Warbler** was from Church Norton on the 9<sup>th</sup> while three **Dotterel** and 70 **Wheatears** were seen near Balsdean on the 10<sup>th</sup> with four **Dotterel** there, two **Pied Flycatchers** at Ovingdean (no counts were higher in a poor autumn for the species) and 124 **Crossbills** in Stansted Forest on the 11<sup>th</sup>. Twenty-two **Curlew Sandpipers** were present on Sidlesham Ferry on the 12<sup>th</sup> with a **Tawny Pipit** near there on the 13<sup>th</sup> and another at Beachy Head on the 14-15<sup>th</sup>. Also on the 15<sup>th</sup> a **White Stork** drifted east over Cuckmere Haven and three **Sandwich Terns** were at Weir Wood Reservoir. A **Red-breasted Flycatcher** was seen briefly near Roedean School on the 16<sup>th</sup>.

Eastward hirundine passage in the Brighton area included 15,000 **House Martins** and 40,000 **Swallows** on 19 September, and 50,000 **Swallows** on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 15,000 **House Martins** on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Twenty-three **Tree Pipits** moved east over Filsham on the 21<sup>st</sup> on a day when a big movement of **Meadow Pipits** was evident throughout the county and

included 3000 flying east over Pagham Harbour, hundreds streaming northeast over Pett Level, hundreds along the crest of the Downs between the Ouse and the A23, parties on Worthing Beach and 200 feeding on short grass at Stump Bottom. Also on the 21<sup>st</sup> an estimated 200 **Blackcaps** were present at Beachy Head while a **Corncrake** was flushed at Combe Haven and the first **Fieldfare** of autumn was seen at nearby Fairlight on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. A **Nightjar** flushed from a dead tree at Arundel on the 23<sup>rd</sup> was the last record of the year, as was a **Pied Flycatcher** at Sheepcote Valley on that date, while 142 **Pintail** flying west past Selsey Bill on the 24<sup>th</sup> were noteworthy. On the 25<sup>th</sup> a **White Stork** of unknown origin circled over Worthing while the only inland **Rock Pipit** of the year was at Arlington Reservoir. The year's maximum **Grey Wagtail** count was 16 at Pett Level on 28<sup>th</sup>, while an autumn total of 237 recorded at Sheepcote Valley was considered 'incredible'. On 29<sup>th</sup> two **Great White Egrets** on Coldwaltham Brooks was the first record for the county involving more than one individual, while a **Barred Warbler** was found skulking at Beachy Head. Six **White Wagtails** were present at Greatham Bridge, the first **Redwing** of the autumn at Arundel, and the last **Little Tern** of the year at Bexhill on the 30<sup>th</sup>.

*October was mostly cold, wet and windy after a warm dry start with some overnight frost later in the month. A passing low on the 10<sup>th</sup> brought chilly east winds to many areas with other lows on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> depositing copious amounts of rain, the latter giving some places their wettest October day on record. Mid month was quieter, mainly rather cold and dry with a few showers on the 17-18<sup>th</sup>. There were further gales and squally showers on the 25<sup>th</sup>, some with thunder as a vigorous low passed to the north (and a tornado did much damage to roofs, garages, walls and fences in Portchester, Hampshire). The month finished with occasional rain and patchy mist and coastal fog. October was the first month since December 2001 to be colder than average.* The last **Osprey** of the year was at Weir Wood Reservoir on the 1<sup>st</sup>, along with the last **Wryneck** in the Cuckmere Valley and the last, late, **Nightingale** at Pulborough Brooks. A **Barred Warbler** was seen briefly at Littlehampton Golf Course and two **Twite** were in the lower Cuckmere Valley on the 2<sup>nd</sup> while the last **Turtle Dove**, at Sheepcote Valley, and last **Spotted Flycatchers**, singles at Pagham and Pulborough Brooks, were seen on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. On the 4<sup>th</sup> three **Merlins** and a **Red-breasted Flycatcher** were seen at Beachy Head, 100 **Dunnocks** in Sheepcote Valley and the last migrant **Lesser Whitethroat** and a **Red-backed Shrike** at Pagham Harbour, the latter being present for three days. The number of **Little Egrets** using the roost at Thorney Island reached a maximum of 218 on the 5<sup>th</sup> and six **White-fronted Geese** flew east over Sheepcote Valley on the 6<sup>th</sup>. *WeBS'* counts on the latter date included 136 **Little Grebes** at Bewl Water and 1737 **Curlew** and 1911 **Redshank** in Chichester Harbour. The county **Greylag Goose** total topped 1000 for the first time, helped by *WeBS'* counts of 500 at Scotney Court GP, 170 at Bewl Water and 146 on Glynde Levels. Five **Hobbies** at Sheepcote Valley on the 7<sup>th</sup> were notable as was a maximum autumn count of 60 **Robins** there the same day. Also on 7<sup>th</sup> the last **Tree Pipit** of the year was seen at Beachy Head, an early departure, and easterly passage of **Goldfinches** was particularly marked with 830 over Church Norton, 315 along Worthing Beach and 350 at Beachy Head. Twelve **Firecrests** at Sheepcote Valley on the 10<sup>th</sup> was a notable peak count in a generally quiet autumn for the species while a **Spoonbill** was at Rye Harbour on the 11<sup>th</sup>. There were high counts of **Pied Wagtails** moving east at this time with 220 over Pagham Harbour and 65 over Beachy Head on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 250 over Sheepcote Valley (where the autumn total was an impressive 1763) on the 12<sup>th</sup>. There were 40 **Ring Ouzels** at Sheepcote Valley on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 33 at Beachy Head on the 12<sup>th</sup>, when the last **Curlew Sandpiper** of the autumn was at Pagham Harbour and six **Short-eared Owls** were seen in the air together at Selsey West Fields. On the 13<sup>th</sup> a **Sooty Shearwater** flew east at Brighton Marina, 13 **Shags** flew east at Selsey Bill and 56 **Goldcrests** were seen at Beachy Head.

Strong onshore winds on 15 October produced more seabirds with three **Sooty Shearwaters** flying west off Brighton Marina, up to 21 **Great Skuas** off Selsey Bill and numbers of **Little Gulls** including 48 at Selsey Bill, ten at Worthing, 36 at Brighton Marina, ten at Seaford Head and five at Rye Harbour, the last two species moving in both directions along the coast. A **Grey Phalarope** was seen off Church Norton on the 16<sup>th</sup> when a maximum count of 100 **Blackbirds** was recorded in Sheepcote Valley and **Greenfinch** numbers at Thorney Island had increased to 160. A flock of 13 **Grey Partridges** at Steyning Round Hill on 17<sup>th</sup> was considered by the observer to be the largest seen on the Downs for a long time, a sorry reflection of the species' decline, while the last **Whitethroats** of the year were seen at Beachy Head and Brooklands. Also on the 17<sup>th</sup> and perhaps the ornithological sight of the year was a very impressive westerly land bird movement over Sheepcote Valley which included three **Woodlarks**, 395 **Skylarks**, 620 **Jackdaws**, 1050 **Starlings**, 1500 **Chaffinches**, 75 **Bramblings**, 150 **Greenfinches**, a flock of 90 **Siskins**, at least 1000 **Linnets** and a **Hawfinch**, with many other finches remaining unidentified. A **Great Grey Shrike** was seen on Pevensey Levels, also on 17<sup>th</sup>, with one at various sites on Ashdown Forest from the 19<sup>th</sup> into 2003. The last **Sand Martin** and **Garden Warbler** were at Pett Level on the 18<sup>th</sup> and a **Spoonbill** at Thorney Deepes on the 19<sup>th</sup> (and from 5 November into 2003). Last migrants on the 19<sup>th</sup> were **Hobby** at Earnley, **Grasshopper Warbler** at Pett Level and **Willow Warbler** at Sheepcote Valley, where 1100 **Jackdaws** flew west. A **Cetti's Warbler** ringed at Combe Haven on the 19<sup>th</sup> was considered to show characteristics of the eastern race *alviventris* (this race has not been recorded in Britain before and the record is currently being assessed by the relevant national committees). A **Pallas's Leaf Warbler** at Beachy Head on the 20<sup>th</sup> was a popular find, despite its increasing regularity in late autumn, while 200 **Snipe** were at Pulborough Brooks on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, the last **Cuckoo** lingered at Whitehawk until the 23<sup>rd</sup>, and 160 **Siskins** flew east at Church Norton on the 24<sup>th</sup>. A **Little Stint** at Pulborough Brooks on the 27<sup>th</sup> was the only inland record of the year while on 28<sup>th</sup> eleven **Short-eared Owls** were seen on Pevensey Levels and the last **Sedge Warbler** of the year was at Pett Level. The last **Whinchats** were two singles on Pevensey Levels on the 29<sup>th</sup> when the last **Reed Warbler** of the autumn was at Pett Level, a **Balearic Shearwater** lingered off Brighton Marina and 150 **Siskins** were seen at Henley. On the 30<sup>th</sup> a **Sooty Shearwater** was seen at sea south of Shoreham and 20 **Woodcock** were counted at Markly Wood, while a **Spoonbill** was present at Pett Level and at least 2400 **Redwings** flew over Sheepcote Valley on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

*November was dominated by a succession of Atlantic depressions making it generally very unsettled, wet and mild. Some thundery showers developed during the second half of the month interspersed with overnight fog in some areas.* The inside of a marquee at Shoreham Airport was an unusual locality for the **Black Redstart** seen there on the 1<sup>st</sup> while a **Cetti's Warbler** and 150 **Redpolls** were at Beachy Head on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the former being the first to be trapped there since 1996. Also at Beachy Head, 500 **Stock Doves** flew west with 2000 **Woodpigeons** on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, when a **Wheatear** at Pett Level was a very early date for the last record of the year. Also on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 800 **Fieldfares** roosted on Ashdown Forest (with 750 on Amberley Wild Brooks on the 10<sup>th</sup>) and at Hollingdean there were successive daily westerly movements of 3000, 5000 and 4000 **Starlings**. On the 4<sup>th</sup> 11,000 **Woodpigeons** flew west over Brighton, four **Twite** were seen at Thorney Island (with two there on the 15<sup>th</sup>), 45 **Eider** were present on the sea off Lancing and the last **Common Tern** of the year was at Newhaven Harbour. A **Great Grey Shrike** found near Arundel on the 5<sup>th</sup> remained into 2003 while 120 **Magpies** roosted in Moulsecobm Wild Park and the last **Redstart** was at Ferring on the 6<sup>th</sup>, a **Spoonbill** was at Rye Harbour on the 7<sup>th</sup> (and 15<sup>th</sup>) and a very late, so perhaps suspect, **White Stork** was seen on Pett Level on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

The largest westward movement of **Little Gulls** occurred on 10 November during light southwesterly winds when 183 were seen at Selsey Bill, 74 at Worthing and 49 at Brighton Marina, where 44 also flew east on the 12<sup>th</sup>. The maximum day count of **Red-breasted Mergansers** was an impressive 254 at Worthing Beach on the 11<sup>th</sup> while two **Little Auks** flying east at Brighton Marina on the 12<sup>th</sup> were the first of 13 seen, mainly at this site, up to mid December. A **Yellow-browed Warbler** visited a Goring garden irregularly on the 13-14<sup>th</sup> and a **Ring Ouzel** at Arundel on the 13<sup>th</sup> and a **House Martin** at Pulborough Brooks on the 14<sup>th</sup> proved to be the last sightings of the year. The November *WeBS*' count on the 17<sup>th</sup> included 908 **Canada Geese** at Amberley Wild Brooks and a further 848 at nearby Pulborough Brooks, 715 **Black-tailed** and 872 **Bar-tailed Godwits** in Chichester Harbour and 17 **Spotted Redshanks** in Pagham Harbour. Also on the 17<sup>th</sup> a **Great Northern Diver** took up residence on Southwick Canal (remaining until the 29<sup>th</sup>), a **Lesser Whitethroat** arrived in a Worthing garden (remaining until 14 April 2003, the first instance of wintering in the county), 62 **Goldcrests** were counted in Footland Wood and a **Tree Sparrow** at Brighton Marina was the first to be recorded there. The last **Sandwich Tern** of the year was off Church Norton on the 21<sup>st</sup>, a striking maximum of 175 **Red Buntings** was recorded in Ashdown Forest on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and a **Grey Phalarope** and 35 **Mediterranean Gulls** were seen near the entrance to Pagham Harbour on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. On the 24<sup>th</sup> a **Swift** at Seaford was the latest county record and a **Snow Bunting** on Bignor Hill was unusual while 25 **Water Pipits** at Combe Haven on the 25<sup>th</sup> was the year's highest count. A **Rough-legged Buzzard** on the Lewes Levels on the 27<sup>th</sup> remained there or on the Downs in the vicinity of nearby Mount Caburn into 2003 while a count of 27 **Pheasants** at Beachy Head on the 30<sup>th</sup> was the highest received all year. Also on the 30<sup>th</sup> the last **Swallow** of the year was seen at Rottingdean and up to six **Black Redstarts** were present at Shoreham Harbour, although only one remained into December.

*The mild, unsettled and wet weather continued into December as low pressure and weather fronts moved southeast. High pressure developed over Scandinavia from the 5<sup>th</sup> bringing cold easterly winds, sunny periods and some patchy rain or drizzle. A low moving slowly north from Biscay reached Sussex by the 15<sup>th</sup> bringing outbreaks of rain, with sleet over high ground. It remained cold with patchy coastal fog affecting some areas until the 20<sup>th</sup> when Atlantic lows swept very mild, moist air across the region. This continued over the Christmas period, which was one of the mildest for at least a decade. Flooding became an increasing problem in some areas as heavy rain continued. On the 30<sup>th</sup>, following not particularly stormy weather, a section of Brighton's West Pier fell into the sea.* Inland **Red-throated Divers** were seen at Slaugham Furnace Pond on the 7<sup>th</sup> and at Weir Wood Reservoir on the 9<sup>th</sup> while **Purple Sandpipers** wintering at Brighton Marina peaked at twelve on the 7<sup>th</sup>. The December *WeBS*' count on the 8<sup>th</sup> included peak counts of 1398 **Oystercatchers** and 15,661 **Dunlin** in Chichester Harbour while nine **Goosanders** were seen at Amberley Wild Brooks on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Two hundred and fifty **Pied Wagtails** roosted in glasshouses at Walberton on the 10<sup>th</sup>, a **Whooper Swan** was seen on Glynde Levels on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 800 **Fieldfares** on Henfield Levels on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Up to 100 **Corn Buntings** were present around Rodmell in mid month while two **Lapland Buntings** on Pevensey Levels on the 18<sup>th</sup> was an increasingly unusual occurrence in the county. Six to eight **Hen Harriers** roosted on Ashdown Forest on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, as did six **Bitterns** at Rye Harbour on the 24<sup>th</sup>, on which date 220 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** at Arlington Reservoir was the only three figure count of the year. A **Surf Scoter** found off Pett Level on the 28<sup>th</sup> apparently remained into 2003. A total of 63,000 **Black-headed Gulls** roosted at Bewl Water and a flock of **Tree Sparrows** at Pett Level peaked at least 60 on the 29<sup>th</sup> while 150 **Siskins** were seen at Burton Mill Pond on the 30<sup>th</sup>. The year finished with a **Jay** in a Shoreham garden on the 31<sup>st</sup>, the first recorded there in 15 years.



## CLASSIFIED RECORDS FOR 2002

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

Sea-watching records were received from several sites. The following table lists the hours watched in each month at the five locations for which this information was available:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	66	60	76	164	239	87	98	16	26	47	57	29
Worthing Beach	10	3	14	17	61	4	6	8	22	20	25	27
Brighton Marina	57	35	85	86	142	11	22	2	2	32	41	44
Splash Point, Seaford	29	18	54	67	127	0	0	0	1	0	3	14
Bexhill/Hastings	16	12	39	26	16	5	23	11	30	22	16	15

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 2002 the recommended dates were 13 Jan, 10 Feb, 3 Mar, 14 Apr, 12 May, 9 Jun, 14 Jul, 11 Aug, 8 Sep, 6 Oct, 17 Nov and 8 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; FMD – Foot and Mouth Disease; GP – 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; km<sup>2</sup> – square kilometre; m – metres; nc – no count.

0002. **RED-THROATED DIVER**

**Gavia stellata**

**Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

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

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
3317	215	357	118	52	-	-	-	-	14	191	455

Records of birds moving offshore at the principal sea-watching sites are summarised below, with estimated monthly totals for all sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	444	76	24	25	13	6	67	74
Worthing Beach	23	0	4	4	5	5	18	35
Brighton Marina	509	161	319	105	32	2	152	377
Splash Point, Seaford	117	10	89	13	10	-	-	5
Bexhill/Hastings	1152	9	18	-	-	-	2	15
Totals (*)	3133	193	341	116	52	12	185	415

(\*) adjusted to compensate for duplication.

The differences between the site counts partly reflect the number of hours spent sea-watching at each site.

Very high numbers were recorded in January with the largest movements noted in East Sussex including 125 E at Brighton Marina on 1 Jan, 522 W in Rye Bay on 10 Jan, and 700 W and 140 E at the latter site on 12 Jan. The peak movement occurred on 14 Jan with 835 W off Pett Level and 869 W and 190 E at Bexhill/Hastings, many of these birds dispersing from a flock located in Rye Bay. These movements were rarely observed from other sites suggesting that they were relatively short distance and feeding related.

Numbers then reduced dramatically with the only notable spring movements being 61 and 92 flying east at Brighton Marina on 16 and 17 Mar respectively. The daily totals on 16 Mar, including divers not specifically identified, were 121 E at Brighton and 174 E at Seaford.

Records of birds away from the open sea came from Scotney Court GP and Rye Hbr. At Scotney two were noted on 5-13 Jan, with further singles on 15 Feb and 4-5 Mar. At Rye there were singles on 13 and 23 Jan.

The first returning birds were noted at Worthing Beach and Selsey Bill on 13 Oct. Small numbers were then recorded, with peaks at Brighton Marina of 16 W on 8 Nov, 32 E on 20 Nov and 45 E on 15 Dec.

Singles were noted on the River Ouse at Southease on 29 Nov and in a flooded ditch in the lower Cuckmere Valley on 2 Dec. Up to three were noted around Thorney Island on 5-7 Dec, with two birds on Thorney Deeps. Singles were also recorded at Slaugham Furnace Pond on 7 Dec and at Scotney Court GP and Weir Wood Res on 9 Dec. [PMB]

0003. **BLACK-THROATED DIVER****Gavia arctica****Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

As with Red-throated Diver, estimates of monthly totals have been made by making allowance for duplication. The larger of the counts of birds flying east and west at each site was added to the largest number of birds reported as 'on sea' or 'offshore'. The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Oct	Nov	Dec
37	8	15	30	31	-	28	6

The total of 155 represents a poor year for this species.

Records from the main sea-watching sites are summarised below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	18	7	4	5	7	-	10	1
Worthing Beach	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Brighton Marina	2	-	4	19	20	-	23	2
Splash Point, Seaford	5	-	6	7	14	-	-	-
Bexhill/Hastings	4	-	2	-	-	-	-	1
Totals (*)	29	7	15	30	31	-	28	4

(\*) adjusted to compensate for duplication.

Spring passage was poor with peak movements of only 5 E at Seaford on 11 Mar, 8 E at Brighton Marina on 21 Apr and 6 May, and in autumn 6 W at the latter site on 20 Nov.

The only sightings away from the main sea-watching sites came from offshore at Church Norton in January (up to two) and December, Ferring (maximum of two on 12 Jan), Pilsey Sands on 31 Jan and in Chichester Hbr on 18 Dec.

There were no inland records. [PMB]

0004. **GREAT NORTHERN DIVER****Gavia immer****Scarce winter visitor and spring passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Oct	Nov	Dec
County Total*	4	3	5	4	5	-	3	4
Max off Selsey Bill	4	3	5	4	5	-	2	1
Number of days noted off Selsey Bill	13	10	15	15	20	-	6	2

\* allowing for duplication.

Birds were regularly noted lingering off Selsey Bill during the winter months. As in previous years it is assumed that birds flying past were on local feeding movements due to the frequency of such sightings and because the movements were not observed at other sea-watching sites. The peak monthly counts were four offshore on 29 Jan, 3 W on 23 Feb, five offshore on 5 Mar, up to four offshore between 13-17 Apr and three offshore and 2 E on 11 May. The last spring record was of 4 E there on 29 May.

At Brighton Marina an immature bird was seen flying west on 29 Jan. It was then noted off Southwick before returning later in the day. The same or a similar bird was also

seen the following day. Further records there were of 1 E on 1 Mar, an adult in breeding plumage east on 7 May and 1 E on 12 May.

The only other authenticated records for the first half of the year comprised singles at Scotney Court GP on 23 Feb and flying east past Beachy Head on 18 Mar.

The first returning bird flew east at Selsey Bill on 3 Nov, with 1 E and 1 W on 26 Nov the peak late year count. At Brighton Marina there were singles east on 24 and 27 Nov and on 6 Dec an immature bird flew west and returned an hour later. The only other accepted records were of a single located on Southwick Canal on 17 Nov, which remained until the 29<sup>th</sup>, one at Scotney Court GP from 13 Dec into the New Year and four sightings of up to two individuals off Pilsley Island between 14 and 31 Dec. [PMB]

### DIVER Species

*Gavia spp.*

The specific identification of divers in flight is difficult, particularly when they are in winter plumage. Those recorded as 'diver *spp.*' can form a significant proportion of those seen. The numbers of divers recorded at the main sea-watching locations 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 east to those going west and including the numbers of birds seen on the sea. Duplication is likely both between sites and with divers specifically identified. These totals are as follows:

	Diver spp.		R-t Diver		B-t Diver		Total*		Number per hr	
	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D
Selsey Bill	151	8	582	147	44	11	798	169	1.32	1.27
Worthing Beach	41	42	36	58	1	-	78	100	0.77	1.37
Brighton Marina	234	27	1126	531	45	25	1405	583	3.47	5.01
Splash Point, Seaford	753	80	239	5	32	-	1024	85	3.48	5.00
Bexhill/Hastings	8	2	1179	17	6	1	1193	20	11.02	0.38

(\*) includes Great Northern Divers

The consistency of rates of passage between Brighton Marina and Seaford is remarkable. [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	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	242	169	163	60	46	11	75	87	241	349	327	234
Chichester Hbr	81	33	39	8	8	nc	10	14	32	64	111	76
Pagham Hbr	31	14	7	9	-	2	3	7	36	28	31	12
Chichester GP	-	4	3	3	5	-	2	1	-	3	10	10
Pulborough Brooks	-	-	4	-	-	nc	3	5	1	1	1	-
Brooklands, Worthing	2	1	2	4	1	-	2	2	8	9	2	2
Cuckmere Haven	27	16	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	14	32	46	36
Bewl Water	72	65	74	nc	nc	nc	36	37	99	136	64	33
Pett Level	-	4	1	12	4	-	2	4	5	3	1	-
Rye Hbr	15	17	11	17	21	9	15	11	39	59	38	37
Scotney Court GP	5	2	-	-	-	nc	-	nc	2	5	14	18

Breeding behaviour was first noted on 22 Mar at Pagham. Approximately 61 breeding pairs were recorded at 22 sites, with 14 pairs at Chichester GP, ten pairs at Rye Hbr and five pairs at Thorney Island. Breeding was confirmed at Bewl Water but no count was received. Six pairs bred on three private lakes at Selsey West Fields and two pairs bred at Brooklands, Worthing.

Post breeding dispersal was noted from 23 Jun. The only notable counts in addition to those in the *WeBS*' table were 47 at Pagham Lagoon on 2 Oct and 45 at Thorney Island on 9 Nov. [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	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	340	236	455	201	131	72	337	559	604	536	426	343
Chichester Hbr	4	37	58	16	6	nc	8	8	15	20	51	29
Pagham Hbr	2	6	11	4	4	12	7	22	23	21	21	19
Chichester GP	1	25	39	12	16	10	14	2	10	24	37	36
Petworth Park	-	8	6	9	7	7	nc	7	10	9	4	7
Kneppmill Pond	-	1	-	2	-	8	4	3	1	4	-	-
Weir Wood Res	8	22	24	57	28	nc	41	105	97	121	32	43
Barcombe Res	1	6	7	9	2	-	-	1	nc	4	9	20
Arlington Res	24	7	7	5	2	4	9	14	12	19	4	2
Bewl Water	122	68	136	nc	nc	nc	193	342	356	215	154	104
Darwell Res	3	7	27	35	27	22	29	35	32	39	34	28
Pett Level	103	14	69	5	2	1	-	1	1	-	2	2
Rye Hbr	57	15	36	23	18	5	9	11	11	25	40	16
Scotney Court GP	1	3	8	16	19	nc	18	nc	17	15	19	15

The only notable inland counts, additional to the *WeBS*' totals, came from Weir Wood Res with 60 on 31 Mar, 65 on 21 Apr, 163 on 8 Sep, 98 on 3 Nov and 60 on 22 Dec. Observers at Bewl Water recorded 145 on 15 Jun.

Notably high numbers were observed offshore in January, continuing the influx noted at the end of 2001. The peak counts were again from Rye Bay, with 500 offshore at Pett on 1 Jan, Worthing, peaking at 214 offshore on 21 Jan, and Church Norton, with 44 offshore on 5 Jan. Dispersal was rapid in the last ten days of January, with a westerly movement noted along the coast peaking at 55 W at Selsey Bill on 29 Jan (*cf.* Red-necked Grebe). Coastal movements were recorded until mid June but generally comprised single figures.

Breeding was confirmed at 14 sites, including 16 pairs at Darwell Res. Fourteen broods were noted at Weir Wood Res and 19 broods at Bewl Water. Breeding numbers may have been under-reported at the latter site as the August and September *WeBS*' counts, usually swelled by juveniles, were unprecedented; the previous highest *WeBS*' counts at Bewl Water being 292 in July 2001 and 261 in August 2000.

Small numbers were noted offshore until December, with peak counts for the early part of that month of 22 W at Selsey Bill on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 27 E at Brighton Marina on the 10<sup>th</sup> preceding a larger influx which resulted in birds being widespread along the coast. The

largest counts were on the 21<sup>st</sup> with 200 offshore at Pett Level and 69 offshore at Worthing. [PMB]

0010. **RED-NECKED GREBE**

*Podiceps grisegena*

**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
13	3	1	2	3	2	5	3	7

The year started with two birds noted occasionally offshore at Church Norton in January, with a single recorded twice in February and three times in March. Elsewhere birds were noted occasionally at Selsey Bill, Brighton Marina, Seaford and Rye Bay, with a noticeable westbound movement of nine birds between 19-30 Jan. Spring passage comprised singles flying east at Selsey on 17 Apr, Seaford and Birling Gap on 21 Apr, Seaford on 6 May, with a single west there on 11 May, and at Brighton Marina on 12 May.

The first returning bird was at Scotney Court GP from 8 Sep, with further sightings of presumably the same individual there or at nearby Rye Hbr and Pett Level until 6 Oct. Possibly the same bird reappeared at Rye between 20-29 Oct before returning to Scotney Court GP until the end of the year. Singles noted on eight occasions in the Pagham Hbr/Selsey Bill area were the only other records for September-November. Birds were more widespread in December with individuals noted offshore at Shoreham Beach (2), Brighton Marina, Bexhill/Hastings and Pett Level.

There were no inland records. [PMB]

0011. **SLAVONIAN GREBE**

*Podiceps auritus*

**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	38	23	72	5	1	1	10	14
Max. Church Norton area	32	19	54	-	-	1	8	11

Most winter records were from the western harbours, with peak counts off Church Norton of 32 on 13 Jan and 54 on 12 Mar. Dispersal was rapid after this date. Other coastal sightings came from Worthing, Seaford and Bexhill/Hastings (a peak of three on 1 Jan). Inland records during this period were of singles at Bewl Water on 21 Jan and at Chichester GP from 27 Jan to 10 Feb and on 3 Mar.

Spring passage was poor with totals of 6 E at Brighton Marina, 12 E at Seaford (all on 16 Mar), and singles offshore at Goring, Lancing, Bexhill/Hastings and Rye Hbr. The last was a single east past Brighton Marina on 6 May.

The first returning birds were noted offshore at Church Norton on 19 Oct. Small numbers were noted in the area to the end of the year with a peak count of 11 W at Selsey Bill on 4 Dec. Elsewhere singles were noted offshore at Worthing, Brighton Marina and Bexhill/Hastings. There were two at Scotney Court GP on 13 Dec. [PMB]

**In most years a very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Recorded in exceptional numbers in 2002. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

A total of approximately 50 was recorded, with an exceptional passage in March as shown by the monthly totals below:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	2	36	2	2	-	1	1	2	3

The records for the first winter period came from Rye Hbr on 4 Jan, East Head on 10 Feb and Church Norton on 21 Feb.

March began with two off Widewater on the 1<sup>st</sup> and a single offshore at Winchelsea the following day. The 16<sup>th</sup> saw exceptional numbers off the Sussex coastline with 2 E and one offshore at Brighton Marina, the latter remaining until the next day, 4 E and 3 W at Splash Point, Seaford, and a total of 18 offshore at Newhaven. The latter comprised a group of 12 (the largest party recorded in Sussex) and three pairs drifting east. Large numbers were again noted on the 24<sup>th</sup> with a single and a group of seven drifting east at Brighton Marina and 8 E and three offshore at Seaford. It seems very likely that there was some degree of duplication between sites at this time, but the times of observation are not available. Birds were also noted at Arlington Res and Rye Hbr (two) on the 25<sup>th</sup> and offshore at Seaford (three) and Bexhill/Hastings on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Spring passage continued with further singles at Arlington Res on 3 Apr, Long Pit, Rye Hbr from 23-28 Apr, offshore at Seaford on 4 May and finally at Scotney Court GP between 9-12 May.

The first returning bird was at Castle Water, Rye Hbr on 31 Jul, but the next record was not until 17-19 Oct when one was recorded off Church Norton. There were five records for November-December comprising singles at Bewl Water on 3 Nov, Brighton Marina on 19 Nov and 11 Dec and Selsey Bill on 15 and 24 Dec. [PMB]

**Fairly common breeding species and passage migrant, resident on coastal cliffs from November to September. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

**2001:** A most unusual record was that of a single bird resting on the water at the western end of Weir Wood Res for over 2 hrs on 23 Sep (RNS).

**2002:** Movements at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

Direction:	Jan-Feb		Mar-May		Jun-Jul		Aug-Oct		Nov-Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	3	48	94	821	30	133	3	24	2	6
Worthing	1	1	72	79	1	2	2	6	-	-
Brighton Marina	407	87	3748	895	44	45	2	13	397	72
Splash Point, Seaford	84	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	169	22
Bexhill/Hastings	9	26	52	47	-	-	2	9	4	2

The only significant counts at the start of the year were from Brighton Marina where 133 flew east on 2 Jan and 58 E on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. The blue morph individual remained on the cliffs at Saltdean from the start of the year until at least 26 May and was often seen at Brighton Marina.

In the spring, counts of over 100 were made on 13 dates, all at Brighton Marina apart from 151 W at Newhaven on 28 Apr and 285 W at Selsey Bill on 30 Apr. At the Marina the peak counts were 197 E and 22 W on 7 Apr, 50 E and 320 W on 30 Apr and 382 E on 13 May. On 26 May, and on two subsequent dates in the summer, an individual was seen circling over houses in Hollingdean, Brighton.

Counts from breeding locations in June and July included 12 sitting birds between Splash Point, Seaford and Cuckmere Haven, 56 on Hastings Cliffs and 17 sitting birds in the Newhaven Fort area. There were no other significant counts in the summer although an unusual record concerned one chasing a Shelduck at the Midrips on 7 Aug.

Numbers rapidly diminished throughout September and typically the species was absent in October. Birds returned to the cliffs in November and December and the blue morph bird flew past Brighton Marina on 12 Dec. A different blue morph bird was seen at Brighton Marina on the 19<sup>th</sup> (IJW). The highest count towards the end of the year was 130 E at Brighton Marina on 19 Dec. [TJW]

0043. **SOOTY SHEARWATER**

*Puffinus griseus*

**Very scarce autumn visitor.**

**2001:** Two flew west at Galley Hill, Bexhill, on 7 Oct (KMJ) taking that year's total to ten, well above average.

**2002:** One flew west off Brighton Marina on 24 Jan with 1E on 13 Oct and three singles west there on the 15<sup>th</sup> (all IJW), while another was seen at sea ten miles south of Shoreham on 30 Oct (BFF). Six in a year is fewer than were recorded in three of the previous four years, but more than in any of the ten prior to that. Most records are in autumn, the only previous January record being in 2001. [RJF]

0046. **MANX SHEARWATER**

*Puffinus puffinus*

**A fairly common spring to autumn passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The minimum total of 371 was similar to last year and again the highest numbers were recorded in July. The totals at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

	Mar		Apr		May		Jun		Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct		Nov		
<i>Direction:</i>	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	
Selsey Bill		6	3	40	9	43	5	16	8	67			1						
Worthing				2	1	1													
Brighton Marina			1	89		45	6	108	51										
Splash Point, Seaford			10	1	23	9									1		1		
Beachy Head				1					62	18									
Bexhill/Hastings				2		3				3									
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>96</b>		<b>85</b>		<b>22</b>		<b>159</b>		<b>-</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>		

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



The first records were from Selsey Bill where two flew west on 9 Mar and 4 W the following day. Spring passage was noted on eight days in April and 12 days in May and, apart from singles off Shoreham Hbr on 30 Apr and Lancing on 14 May, all records were from the main sea-watching localities. At Brighton Marina a total of 89 flew west between the 26<sup>th</sup> and 30 Apr, including 38 on the 30<sup>th</sup> when 37 were recorded flying west at Selsey Bill. In May, there were double figure counts on six dates with the highest count being 1 E and 14 W at Selsey Bill on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

The only notable count in June was 2 E and 8 W at Selsey Bill on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Some larger counts were made in July with the best being on the 2<sup>nd</sup> when 62 E were seen at Beachy Head and 42 E and 15 W at Brighton Marina and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> when 25 E and 13 W passed Brighton Marina. Only three singles were recorded in the autumn; 1 E at Selsey Bill on 6 Sep, 1 E at Splash Point, Seaford on 18 Oct and a late bird east there on 22 Nov. [TJW]

0046.01     **BALEARIC SHEARWATER**

*Puffinus mauretanicus*

**Very scarce spring to autumn visitor.**

There was no repeat of the record numbers seen in 2001, the only records being of two, or possibly four, seen off Selsey Bill on 27 Feb (OM), a single west at Ovingdean on 4 Jul (ITB) and a late bird that lingered around a trawler off Brighton Marina on 29 Oct (IJW). [TJW]

0052.     **STORM PETREL**

*Hydrobates pelagicus*

**Rare vagrant, mainly in mid summer and after autumn gales. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

Many were reported off Selsey Bill between mid May and mid June, the prime site for the species in the county in summer, but few were documented. Those that were involved one on 14 May (OM *et al*), two singles on the 26<sup>th</sup> (RAI, DIS *et al*), at least three on the 31<sup>st</sup> (OM *et al*), and one on 13 Jun (OM *et al*) - all were moving west. This movement was somewhat earlier than has been witnessed in recent years. Prior to these, the most recent May record in the county was in 1996 and the most recent June record in 1958! [RJF]

0055.     **LEACH'S PETREL**

*Oceandroma leucorhoa*

**Rare vagrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

One flying west off Selsey Bill on 9 Feb (RWP) was the only record. Seventeen have been recorded in the county in the last ten years although there were no records at all during 1993-96 or in 1998. Most records are during October to December and although there are a few in January this is the first county record for February. [RJF]

**Common passage migrant and non-breeding summer visitor; once scarce but now increasingly numerous in winter. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The large numbers recorded at the end of 2001 continued to be a feature at the start of the year. Movements at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

Direction:	Jan-Feb		Mar-May		Jun-Jul		Aug-Oct		Nov-Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	52	3357	321	970	910	1286	109	1326	1	715
Worthing	277	868	119	227	13	22	23	143	59	167
Brighton Marina	3169	1630	1681	549	364	959	391	174	610	234
Splash Point, Seaford	298	174	1300	159	-	-	-	-	292	38
Bexhill/Hastings	17	87	43	-	84	-	13	86	9	31

Some very large counts were made in January reflecting the significant influx at the end of 2001. In the first week the highest numbers were off Brighton Marina with counts of 770 E and 450 offshore on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 885 E and 1500 offshore on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 660 E and 600 offshore on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Thereafter the highest numbers were seen further west peaking at 800 off Selsey Bill on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 1455 W there on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Numbers reduced dramatically in February with observers at Selsey Bill recording just 19 E and 62 W all month.

The regular rooftop bird returned for its fifth year and was seen carrying nesting material to a rooftop in Cricketfield Road, Seaford on 8 Feb. It was present until September often visiting other buildings in Rottingdean and Brighton.

In the spring there were only seven dates when counts of over 100 were made. The best of these were on 13 May, when 168 passed east at Seaford and 232 flew east at Brighton Marina, and on 18 May, when there were 29 E and 108 W at Selsey Bill.

June was uneventful with 110 W at Brighton Marina on the 30<sup>th</sup> being the only 3-figure count. Numbers increased in July with counts of over 200 made regularly and at the end of the month there were up to 800 lingering offshore at Selsey Bill. Low numbers were recorded throughout the autumn; a count of 1025 W at Selsey Bill on 13 Oct was exceptional, as there were no other counts of over 180 between August and October. This theme continued to the end of the year with 164 E and 25 W at Splash Point, Seaford on 24 Dec and 155 W at Selsey Bill on the 29<sup>th</sup> being the best counts.

The rooftop bird reappeared in Seaford on 8 Nov. Two dead birds were found at Pagham Hbr during the year, including one on 30 Nov that had been ringed in Jersey. [TJW]

## 0072. CORMORANT

*Phalacrocorax carbo*

**Scarce breeding species and common winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

**2001:** Two, possibly three, pairs bred on a pond island on the Lewes Brooks near Ifold (SxBR 54:179).

**2002:** The monthly *WeBS*' counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

<i>County total</i>	515	402	459	314	287	215	545	565	363	644	522	429
Chichester Hbr	12	17	29	16	17	nc	41	56	77	97	78	49
Pagham Hbr	247	45	151	190	72	31	141	76	91	174	49	16
Chichester GP	23	47	19	1	-	2	12	1	24	38	54	46
Burton MP	-	15	11	-	-	-	nc	-	-	4	15	32
Amberley Wild Brooks	44	2	2	-	4	nc	-	3	1	1	1	1
Adur (Steyning-Henfield)	-	22	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Weir Wood Res	21	23	14	5	5	nc	11	18	20	34	34	14
Lower Ouse Valley	56	17	10	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	11	nc	11
Barcombe Res	6	25	15	5	-	2	4	9	nc	10	16	12
Arlington Res	2	17	12	4	-	2	7	8	24	17	10	12
Pevensey Levels	9	14	nc	6	1	1	3	8	9	8	16	22
Bewl Water	25	22	20	nc	nc	nc	30	30	35	40	9	20
Pett Level	1	-	2	16	8	20	1	-	2	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	26	46	88	61	173	148	279	340	1	104	154	65

Following on from December 2001, January saw unusually large numbers along the coast from Brighton westwards. This was not reflected in the *WeBS*' counts above except in the case of Pagham Hbr. On 1 Jan a single flock of 120 W at Ovingdean was probably related to a movement of 388 W at Brighton Marina and 300 seen at Shoreham. On 13 Jan 183 moved west off Southwick Beach while on 19 Jan 198 were loafing in Pagham Hbr and a single flock of 160 alighted off Worthing Beach to feed in a tight pack along with Gannets, Herring Gulls and Kittiwakes. On 21 Jan 350 flew over Arundel WWT presumably on their way to South Stoke nocturnal roost. On 25 Jan there were 300 at Shoreham Hbr probably linked to the movement of 400 W in well spread groups in 20 minutes off Worthing Beach. Numbers fell away rapidly in February and March with no major coastal movements reported but there were 160 loafing in Pagham Hbr on 1 Apr.

Breeding at Rye Hbr LNR expanded still further. About 120 nests were counted on the main wooded island at Castle Water on 15 Apr and a single nest was on an island nearby. Egg laying is thought to have begun in the second week of February with the first young hatched in the second week of March. There were also four nests in bushes on an island in Hard Pond, Lewes Brooks but no indication of breeding success was reported. With the increasing breeding activity it is not surprising that the largest numbers of birds in summer were again in the Rye Hbr area with a maximum of 375 at Castle Water at dusk on 1 Jul.

The table below shows numbers at some nocturnal roosts. Unfortunately most of these roosts were not covered every month so it is difficult to assess the full picture of distribution throughout the year. South Stoke was the major nocturnal roost in the west but there were signs towards the end of the year that the Chichester GP roost, which it had supplanted, was re-establishing in trees and bushes around New Lake after a period of serious harassment at the old sites in Ivy Lake and Trout Lake West. Electricity pylons were favoured on both Beeding and Lewes Brooks, the numbers of birds at the latter being remarkably stable through the year.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
South Stoke	266	117	122	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	65	182	133	112
Beeding Brooks	60	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	112	45	94	50
Lewes Brooks	45	38	39	30	25	35	32	33	40	45	45	50
Rye Hbr	147	71	nc	nc	nc	250	375	nc	nc	nc	154	97

On 24 Sep the 35 birds at Pett Level was an unusual site record. There were no large influxes in coastal areas in the last quarter of the year although good numbers were reported from both loafing and nocturnal roosts in the west and at Rye Hbr. [RK]

0080. *SHAG*

*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

Unusually large numbers were recorded in January in an otherwise average year. The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
74	15	6	19	12	3	4	2	5	29	17	8

Most birds in January were moving passed the main sea-watching locations as demonstrated by monthly totals for Brighton Marina of 20 E and 30 W with the highest day count there being 5 E and 11 W on the 1<sup>st</sup>. Lingered birds during the month included up to six at Shoreham Hbr, five at Brighton Marina and two at Church Norton while on the 15<sup>th</sup> an immature was on the cliffs at Splash Point, Seaford. Records in February and March were virtually all of singles at various locations along the coast. A small increase in spring may have been due to increased observer activity although a total of 12 E at Brighton Marina during the period suggested some passage was taking place. An unusual inland record concerned a single at Pulborough Brooks on 24 Apr.

An increasing tendency for birds to be recorded in the summer continued. There were two offshore at Selsey Bill on 20 Jun, a colour-ringed bird at Brighton Marina on the 20<sup>th</sup> and, in July, singles east at Brighton Marina on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> and west at Selsey Bill on the 14<sup>th</sup>. In August, one was at Widewater on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and one flew west at Brighton Marina on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Numbers slowly built up to peak in October when there were 13 E at Selsey Bill on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 4 E there on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Observers at Brighton Marina recorded a total of 17 E during the month. A fairly quiet end to the year included five lingering at Brighton Marina, two at Selsey Bill and two in Shoreham Hbr. [TJW]

**Scarce winter visitor. Rare outside the winter months. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Monthly total</i>	8	3	2	1	-	-	1	1	1	-	1	8
Thorney Deeps	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Whelpley Level	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Galley Hill	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Filsham	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Pett Level	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	3	2	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	6

As usual the majority of the records were for Castle Water, Rye Hbr where birds were present up to 4 Apr and again from 5 Nov. Up to three roosted in the first winter period and a maximum of six in the second winter period on 24 Dec. Sightings of single birds at Castle Water on 28 July, Filsham on 21 Aug and Pett Level on 16 Sep perhaps relate to the same individual.

The only other records were of two at Thorney Deeps on 14 Jan, singles there on 20-21 Feb, 12 Mar and 3-13 Dec and at Pett Level on 2 Jan, Whelpley Level, Pevensey on 13 Jan and flying east along the beach at Galley Hill on 18 Jan. The records suggest a minimum total of 15 birds allowing for likely duplication. [PJ]

**Formerly rare, but now a fairly common autumn and winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

**2001:** There were two roost sites at Thorney, one at the Deeps and the other in a copse behind the church. The maximum monthly counts at these roosts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Thorney Deeps	156	128	121	92	1	8	3	-	-	7	10	158
Thorney Island	nc	nc	nc	-	nc	81	117	133	166	186	64	30

Although 17 were seen feeding on the mudflats at low tide on the southern shore of Thorney Island on 25 May, only one bird was seen going into roost at Thorney Deeps.

During the summer it was reported that at least 15 birds were present at one site in East Sussex where at least three nests were occupied. In July a chick was seen in one of the nests and a recently fledged juvenile was also seen nearby. No later visits were made so subsequent success is not known.

**2002:** Analysis of more than 700 records from at least 69 sites indicated that the majority of birds were recorded at four main locations. Monthly maxima at these sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chichester Hbr	23	53	47	37	14	58	118	189	213	218	90	57
Pagham Hbr	11	35	14	10	9	12	40	50	76	53	61	41
Cuckmere Valley	11	5	14	14	9	5	10	19	31	33	21	10

Rye Hbr	23	29	28	11	7	8	21	50	33	15	32	25
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The highest counts within Chichester Hbr were 132 on 7 Sep and 218 on 5 Oct. Again there were two roost sites at Thorney; the maximum monthly counts of birds entering these roosts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Thorney Deepes	15	43	0	0	nc	nc	nc	nc	0	9	65	30
Thorney Island	nc	Nc	47	37	14	58	118	189	0	32	Nc	nc

The high count in August was made on the 13<sup>th</sup>. Double figure counts were also received for a roost at Halseys Fm, Pagham Hbr of 11 on 28 Jan, 35 on 16 Feb, 35 on 7 Sep, 52 on 7 Oct, 61 on 3 Nov and 41 on 27 Dec.

The number of birds recorded moving offshore between 28 Jan and 9 Jun was 11 E and 7 W, mostly in ones and twos with a maximum of 3 E at Beachy Head on 6 May and, between 13 Aug and 12 Dec, 12 W and 30 E with a maximum of 5 E at Worthing on 14 Sep.

No records were received of breeding birds in 2002. [JAC]

## 0121. GREAT WHITE EGRET

*Egretta alba*

### Rare vagrant.

Two present on Coldwaltham Brooks on 29 Sep (ARK *et al*) have been accepted by BBRC. Despite the county total being just 11, there are now records in five of the last seven years, and the species has been seen in every month except May and December. [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	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	99	88	99	78	61	30	91	83	142	146	115	105
Chichester Hbr	28	9	22	11	6	nc	25	25	36	35	24	16
Pagham Hbr	5	8	3	11	14	10	6	12	7	9	8	5
Chichester GP	1	2	4	1	3	6	11	-	5	4	5	8
Amberley Wild Brooks	4	1	5	6	2	nc	8	3	8	6	5	3
Waltham Brooks	-	-	-	4	1	nc	1	-	-	2	2	1
Pulborough Brooks	7	-	8	7	2	nc	7	4	8	6	5	4
Kneppmill Pond	1	3	7	18	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	1
Warnham MP	-	8	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	2	6	3
Lower Adur Estuary	6	1	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	7	-	4
Henfield Levels	2	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	nc	2	3
Weir Wood Res	1	15	11	6	15	nc	5	2	9	8	2	2
Glynde Levels	4	6	4	1	4	5	7	8	6	2	6	3
Cuckmere Haven	13	8	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	7	6	6	13
Pevensey Levels	2	2	2	4	4	3	4	2	8	3	4	2
Bewl Water	3	1	1	nc	nc	nc	6	5	7	6	3	3
Darwell Res	-	-	-	1	2	1	1	7	4	5	4	4
Rye Hbr	7	6	2	2	3	2	4	8	7	16	18	15

During the breeding season 249 nests were counted at 22 heronries, including a single nest at Danny Lake, near Hurstpierpoint, a new site. Church Norton is a new site this year, 2 km south of the Pagham (Sidlesham) heronry. A nest was strongly suspected at Powdermill Res. The total number of breeding pairs in the county remains steady. Counts for individual heronries, listed from west to east, were as follows:

Fishbourne 14; Pagham 6; Church Norton 2; Flansham 16; Warningcamp 6; Parham 24; Knepp 11; Warnham 5; Henfield 26; Ardingly 14; Weir Wood Res 13; Iford 2; Firle 14; Charleston 24; Hadlow Down 12; Eridge 8; Glynleigh 13; Wartling, Horsebridge Road 11; Burwash 7; Pebsham 3; Winchelsea 7; Leasam 10.

During the rest of the year single birds and small groups of herons were seen feeding or loafing in suitable habitat throughout the county. Thirty-one were seen standing in a group on the shore of Chichester Channel on 13 Feb, and 21 at Halseys's Farm, Sidlesham on 28 Jan. At Thorney Deeps 28 roosted at high tide on 19 Oct and 15 lined up on a bank in the lower Cuckmere Valley on 2 Dec. [ABW]

#### 0124. **PURPLE HERON**

*Ardea purpurea*

##### **Rare vagrant.**

**2001:** A presumed adult female was present at Filsham LNR from 21-25 May (KMJ *et al*) while an immature flew south there on 12 Oct (KMJ). The previous record was in April 2000.

**2002:** One was present on Hooe Level, Pevensey on 12 May (JR, MKR). Twenty-two have been recorded in the last 20 years, all but five being east of Eastbourne. [RJF]

#### 0131. **BLACK STORK**

*Ciconia nigra*

##### **Very rare vagrant.**

One drifted northwest over Lodge Copse, Barlavington near Petworth on 3 May (AP, GCMR). It has been accepted by *BBRC*. It is the eighth county record and the first since 1988. There are two previous May records with the others in August or September. [RJF]

#### 0134. **WHITE STORK**

*Ciconia ciconia*

##### **A rare vagrant, mainly in the spring.**

Six adults were recorded from late spring onwards: at Pulborough Brooks from 31 May to 2 Jun (ASC, DM *et al*), Glynde Levels on 27-28 Jul (IJW), on Goodwood GC between 2 Aug and 23 Dec (MAC, BFF, AS, TL *et al*), drifting east over Cuckmere Haven on 15 Sep (AT, AJW *et al*), circling over Tarring and central Worthing at ca.12:20-12.25 BST on 25 Sep (CWM, JAN) and at Pett Level on 8 Nov (AJS). The Goodwood individual, which probably accounted for reports over Sidlesham Ferry on 5 Aug and at Pagham Hbr on 4-5 Oct, but appeared not to venture any further during its stay, was unringed but had abnormal white greater coverts and had been seen near Chelmsford in Essex from 21-26 Jul (N Green *pers. comm.*). The bird at Glynde was different, despite no apparent overlap of dates, as was the Tarring/Worthing individual. The latter, which

drifted off high north-east and was seen at the same time as the Goodwood bird, had several primaries and secondaries missing from its right wing.

A number of presumed escaped White Storks were at large in Britain throughout the year (see relevant issues of *Birding World*). This makes it increasingly difficult to determine the origin of any particular individual of this species. Any records not fitting established patterns of occurrence, with excessively tame behaviour (although they do breed on houses!), uneven feather damage or plumage anomalies are best treated with a degree of suspicion, while there is no guarantee that individuals exhibiting none of these traits are genuine either. On this basis the record most likely to have involved a wild bird is that at Pulborough, with nothing against it and occurring at the best time of year (late April to early June), while the Goodwood individual was almost certainly an escape due to its abnormal plumage, excessive tameness and prolonged stay. The other records are less clear cut, but with no apparent feather abnormalities or damage, and at a time of year when previous records have occurred, those at Glynde and Cuckmere Haven should be regarded as probably being of wild origin. The feather damage might be considered as counting against the Tarring/Worthing individual, which was also a week or so later than previous autumn records, while the Pett bird was seen a good month after most have left Europe for their wintering quarters, although both were possibly of wild origin.

Including three of the above takes the total number of individuals in the county assumed most likely to have been of wild origin since 1960 to 50. Of these, two were in March (together on the 25<sup>th</sup>), 11 in April (one on the 6<sup>th</sup>, the rest, including a flock of five, from the 18<sup>th</sup>), 15 in May, nine during the first half of June, four in July (from the 9<sup>th</sup>), four in August (from the 21<sup>st</sup>) and five in September (up to the 19<sup>th</sup>). Previous records in November (1998), December (1978) and from September 1974 to February 1975 are not included in the above summary as, on date alone, they would seem to be of somewhat questionable origin too. [RJF]

#### 0144. SPOONBILL

*Platalea leucorodia*

#### **Very scarce visitor, most frequent in spring and autumn. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

Two immatures circled north-east over Pett Pools on 9 Mar while two that flew east-south-east over Selsey Bill on 9 Apr and 3 W there on 25 Apr were not aged. In May an adult was at Pagham Hbr on the 13-14<sup>th</sup>, an unaged individual was at Pulborough Brooks on the 14<sup>th</sup> and a first-summer was at Pagham Hbr on the 30<sup>th</sup>. A first-summer was present at Cuckmere Haven on 9-10 Jun while it, or perhaps another, was seen in July at Down Level, Pevensey on the 6<sup>th</sup>, at Pett Level on the 13-15<sup>th</sup> and flying up the R Rother at Rye Hbr on the 15<sup>th</sup>. An adult at Rye Hbr on 11 Oct may have been the unaged individual seen at Pett Level on the 31<sup>st</sup> and at Rye Hbr on 7 and 15 Nov. Finally a first-winter roosting at high tide at Thorney Deepes on 19 Oct and from 5 Nov into 2003 was sometimes seen in Chichester Hbr during this period. The level of duplication involved in the above records is hard to determine, not helped by descriptions no longer being required for this species and several reports not including the age of the individuals concerned. It is likely a minimum of 13 individuals was involved in these records, an average showing this century, although just one was seen in the county as recently as 1998 and only two in 1997. [RJF]



**Fairly common resident. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	681	545	495	391	331	138	492	269	743	571	614	767
Chichester Hbr	85	60	29	37	49	nc	131	99	139	98	94	105
Pagham Hbr	8	14	14	13	29	15	11	15	35	7	8	9
Chichester GP	132	50	41	2	2	2	7	4	82	87	60	105
Petworth Park	-	-	-	2	2	8	nc	1	2	-	-	-
Climping	49	44	34	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	114	106	105	104
Arundel WWT	32	36	nc	24	16	nc	27	nc	41	34	34	48
Amberley Wild Brooks	40	36	50	66	29	nc	14	9	24	30	33	23
Pulborough Brooks	8	6	12	8	40	nc	18	16	22	17	36	6
Adur (Steining-Henfield)	18	17	65	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Henfield Levels	57	63	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	19	nc	30	39
Lower Ouse Valley	50	16	27	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	13	nc	59
Barcombe Res	-	2	5	-	-	20	9	8	nc	3	2	-
Glynde Levels	9	16	19	21	22	38	26	31	27	27	37	21
Eastbourne Lakes	39	47	30	35	nc	nc	nc	nc	29	3	5	3
Langney	-	22	16	27	nc	nc	nc	nc	25	nc	nc	20
Pevensey Levels	26	33	38	73	46	11	41	40	34	8	44	43
Rye Hbr	5	8	11	18	19	28	59	39	17	10	74	85
Scotney Court GP	26	3	7	107	76	nc	127	nc	17	18	1	2

In the months January to March significant counts not included in the table above included 141 at dusk at Castle Water, Rye Hbr on 17 Jan, 103 at Rye Hbr on 29 Mar, 71 on the upper Adur Levels on New Year's Day, 70 at South Fm, Southeast on 14 Feb, and 65 at Ford in the Arun Valley on 13 Jan, with 51 at nearby North Stoke the same day.

Nesting was first noted on 7 Mar from Upper Beeding, where a pair was reported together on a nest at a fish farm. Confirmed breeding records were received during the year from Thorney Deepes where two of four pairs present nested (one was predated by a fox and the other fledged six out of seven); The Severals, Church Norton (where eight young were seen); Pagham Lagoon (three fledged from a clutch of seven); New Lake and Ivy Lake, both in the Chichester GP complex; Sefter Fm, Pagham; Marsh Fm, Yapton (four young); Amberley Wild Brooks (two pairs fledged nine young); Brooklands, Worthing where there was just one nest compared with the five started in 2001; Widewater, Lancing (ten small cygnets on 29 May); Partridge Green (two cygnets raised); Tilgate Park Lake; Lewes (where six cygnets were noted); Glynde Reach (two pairs with broods of four and five); Bayham Lake, near Frant; Pevensey Bridge Level (two nests); Wallers Haven, Pevensey (three young); Egerton Park, Bexhill (eight cygnets); Mill Bay, Robertsbridge; Pebsham Marsh; Filsham LNR (two pairs, one of which had nine young); and Rye Hbr SSSI (where there were probably six pairs).

On 7 Jul 84 birds, all adults, were counted in the lower Ouse Valley between Lewes and Newhaven, whilst on the R Adur 46 birds were present in the short distance between the railway bridge and the Toll Bridge on 27 Jul. Twenty-nine adults and 12 juveniles were noted at Arundel WWT on 8 Sep; ten days later 127 birds had gathered on the R Arun at Littlehampton, being fed by passers-by. From then to the end of the year the only counts of 60 or more not in the *WeBS*' table above were 70 at Southeast on 15 Oct, 67 on Walland Marsh on 17 Nov, and 60 at Ford on 26 Nov, rising to 70 by 1 Dec. Counts in the second half of the year were generally lower than in 2001. [MJM]

0153. **BEWICK'S SWAN***Cygnus columbianus*

**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	9	42	56	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	7
Bury Brooks	4	-	26	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-
Amberley Wild Brooks	2	32	27	-	-	nc	-	-	-	-	1	7
Adur (Steyning-Henfield)	-	-	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Henfield Levels	3	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	nc	4	-
Lower Ouse Valley	-	7	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	nc	-

In the west of the County, records for the first winter period indicated that the majority of birds were concentrated in the Arun Valley, and to a lesser degree in the Adur Valley, while in East Sussex a small number of records came from the Ouse Valley.

On 1 Jan, 47 birds including 14 juveniles of the Arun Valley population were seen to leave the roost at Arundel WWT; next day a feeding herd of 56, again with 14 juveniles, was noted in the Offham-Burpham area. Daily numbers fluctuated with 63 birds (19 juveniles) leaving the Arundel roost on 5 Jan and 69 (18 juveniles) 24 hours later. The latter was the largest count reported. Roosting also took place higher up the valley at Pulborough Brooks, where 53 were counted on 14 Jan. Nine birds on Steyning Levels on 9 Feb was the largest count in the Adur Valley. Four adults and two juveniles were recorded on Lewes Brooks on 9 and 17 Feb. Numbers then started to decline and the last sighting was of a minimum of 16 birds coming in to roost at Pulborough Brooks on 8 Mar.

The first four returning birds were seen on Henfield Levels on 7 Nov. The maximum count for November was of 30, mixed with Mute Swans, at Pulborough Brooks on the 10<sup>th</sup> but, during the remainder of the month, the largest count reported from any one location was just four. In East Sussex, two adults flew east at Glyne Gap on 11 Nov and two were at Litlington on 29 Nov. Most records for December again came from the Arun Valley with a maximum of 33 at Bury on 20 Dec; 17 had flown east high over Thorney Island the previous day. Observers in the Adur Valley recorded 26-27 (including three juveniles) on Henfield Levels on 31 Dec. [MJM]

0154. **WHOOPEE SWAN***Cygnus cygnus*

**Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

There were only two records of presumed wild birds. At Amberley Wild Brooks two adults and an immature were seen on 16 Feb (IJW) and at Glynde Levels a single adult was recorded on 13 Dec (IJW). See also 'Escapes and Ferals' on page 173. [MJM]

0157. **BEAN GOOSE***Anser fabilis*

**A very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

**1995:** Two birds were recorded at Scotney Court GP on 16 Dec (ASG) at the same time as two Pink-Footed Geese (see below). They could not be racially assigned.

**2001:** The sentence under Tundra Bean Goose in the 2001 Sussex Bird Report should be amended to read 'One was recorded with two White-fronted Geese on Lewes Brooks on 23-24 Dec'. [AH]

0158. **PINK-FOOTED GOOSE**

*Anser brachyrhynchus*

**Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Also recorded as a feral bird. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

**1995:** Two were present at Scotney Court GP on 16 Dec (ASG).

**2001:** At Combe Haven, a flock of five birds was seen arriving from the south on 17 Feb, though they did not linger (KMJ).

**2002:** A single was on Glynde Levels on 10 Feb (ARK) and a flock of 17 birds was noted passing east at Brighton Marina on 14 Feb (IJW). [AH]

0159. **WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE**

*Anser albifrons*

**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

At the start of the year there was a wider than usual scattering of reports from across the county. The Pulborough/Amberley area held three on 11 Jan, rising to a peak of 16 between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> before declining to nine on 5 Mar and finally five on the 13<sup>th</sup>. In the Cuckmere Valley two adults with two juveniles were present on 1-2 Jan, whilst 24 were noted there on the 7<sup>th</sup> and possibly the same group was seen departing east on the 14<sup>th</sup>. Surprisingly, at Scotney Court GP, where the biggest flocks have been seen in recent winters, no reports were received until 15 Feb when 12 birds were noted. Thereafter, the flock rose rapidly to 270 on 17 Feb and 336 (the peak count for the year) on 8 March before dispersing, the last record being of 40 on 17 Mar. Elsewhere, records comprised a single present on Pett Level from 1-15 Jan, nine seen flying off east from Rye Hbr on 3 Jan, three in Pagham Hbr on 16 Jan, and three reported flying east over Vinehall Street on 30 Jan.

As usual there were fewer reports for the second winter period and only one of birds on the move, the first autumn record being of six birds heading east over Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 6 Oct. At Scotney Court GP, 29 birds were noted on 30 Nov rising to 165 by 29 Dec. Other records comprised a flock of 18 at Hurstpierpoint on 24 Nov, a pair behind the North Wall at Pagham Hbr on 7-8 Dec, and a solitary bird seen flying east at Pett Level on 31 Dec.

A bird showing characteristics of the Greenland race *flavirostris* was seen behind the North Wall at Pagham Hbr on 1 Jan (TJE, AH). This is only the second record for Sussex, the previous being at Wiggonholt on 27 Jan 1956 (*Birds of Sussex*). [AH]

0161. **GREYLAG GOOSE**

*Anser anser*

**Increasingly common introduced resident and winter visitor, scarce passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

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

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
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<i>County total</i>	73	292	314	227	191	41	378	130	820	1299	556	329
Petworth Park	-	-	-	1	2	4	nc	6	-	-	-	-
Amberley Wild Brooks	-	31	9	5	12	nc	76	-	138	9	304	183
Pulborough Brooks	2	9	8	3	-	nc	8	-	220	224	49	2
Warnham MP	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	60	3	-	-
Henfield Levels	33	42	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	nc	-	7
Ardingly Res	1	1	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	30	85	85	8
Weir Wood Res	2	1	-	2	-	nc	9	119	160	70	-	-
Glynde Levels	6	26	55	63	60	7	23	1	32	146	93	3
Bewl Water	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	14	3	1	170	8	-
Pett Level	9	7	23	43	26	9	14	-	-	-	1	-
Rye Hbr	-	-	38	41	31	21	14	-	169	87	1	-
Scotney Court GP	19	170	168	68	55	nc	219	nc	8	500	13	104

Numbers of this species continue to rise in the county, despite the relatively low counts early in the year. The peak was only 170 birds noted at Scotney Court GP during the *WeBS'* count on 10 Feb. Other first winter peak counts included 80 at Rye Hbr on 5 Jan, 60 at Weir Wood Res on 12 Jan, 32 near Henfield on 10 Feb, 37 at Pett Level from 16-24 Feb and 63 at Glyne Gap on 14 April.

Sea-watching records were typically few. The only records received were of 8 E and 6 W past Brighton Marina between 24 Mar and 5 May, and 2 E and 4 W past Splash Point, Seaford between 5 and 14 Apr.

There were more reports of breeding this year than previously, from a typically wide scattering of sites. The most productive locations were Pett Level with five broods and Wellhouse Farm, Ditchling with four broods, which produced 22 young. Elsewhere, six pairs at Rye Hbr produced only two broods, two pairs on the Wiston Estate reared six young, a pair was seen with three young at Ivy Lake, Chichester and another with two young on Barcombe Res, whilst three unaccompanied juveniles were seen on the upper Adur Levels on 25 May.

The first signs of the traditional post-breeding build up were the *WeBS'* count figures for 14 Jul, notably 219 at Scotney Court GP and 76 on Pulborough Brooks. By 23 Aug, 400 birds were at Weir Wood Res. Numbers at Rye Hbr peaked at 169 on 8 Sep and at Pulborough Brooks 252 on 10 Sep. The *WeBS'* count of 6 Oct produced yearly maxima of 500 at Scotney Court GP, 170 at Bewl Water and 146 at Glynde Brooks while the county total topped 1000 for the first time. Thereafter numbers fell away although some big counts, for example 300 on Amberley Wildbrooks on 29 Nov, were still being noted.

As usual this species has a strong bias towards the centre and east of the county, and only one count of more than two birds was made in the west, that of eight present at Pagham Hbr on 21 Jan. [AH]

## 0166. CANADA GOOSE

*Branta canadensis*

### Common introduced resident and partial migrant.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	2099	1694	951	488	397	328	1299	1765	1945	1756	3177	2084
Chichester Hbr	44	65	25	14	12	nc	17	157	152	50	71	114
Petworth Park	32	6	45	47	75	253	nc	55	64	94	-	18
Amberley Wild Brooks	15	277	122	19	28	nc	-	-	36	-	908	434

Waltham Brooks	151	10	6	9	4	nc	-	-	-	-	-	142
Pulborough Brooks	579	49	70	133	32	nc	46	101	61	31	846	221
Kneppmill Pond	-	2	10	1	5	-	-	-	-	93	-	-
Warnham MP	-	-	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	80	163	-	-
Weir Wood Res	1	120	20	4	19	nc	26	71	5	-	-	3
Barcombe Res	67	7	36	-	-	1	18	-	nc	175	18	16
Glynde Levels	70	83	120	88	124	6	58	1	9	100	420	-
Arlington Res	-	3	5	3	-	-	-	523	15	88	4	-
Cuckmere Haven	156	165	127	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	540	3	42	320
Eastbourne Lakes	1	100	8	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	48	nc	102
Pevensey Levels	220	77	20	10	37	nc	-	-	2	13	38	155
Bewl Water	321	381	90	nc	nc	nc	885	732	400	510	587	285
Darwell Res	3	2	2	-	2	22	18	-	13	7	-	-
Pett Level	180	59	61	55	28	21	64	21	-	26	26	60
Rye Hbr	4	85	48	35	21	12	36	81	521	98	129	34
Scotney Court GP	1	17	15	40	14	nc	120	nc	4	76	40	94

The combined *WeBS*' count for the Pulborough/Amberley area on 13 Jan totalled almost 750 birds, the highest count of the first winter period. Elsewhere notable counts, excluding those above, included 222 birds on Barcombe Res on 4 Jan and 153 at Weir Wood Res on 3 Mar.

As usual there were few reported movements from sea-watching sites. Records for the period 1 Mar to 31 May came from Selsey Bill (9E, 4W), Brighton Marina (8E, 9W) and Splash Point, Seaford (8E, 9W) though not necessarily on the same days.

Breeding records were received for over 30 sites throughout the county. However, there was no evidence of more than one or two pairs anywhere except at Rye Hbr (15 pairs) and Glynde Reach, where a crèche of 44 youngsters was noted on 8 Jun. The proof of the robustness of this species though is derived from the variety of breeding locations used. These varied from coastal sites like Thorney Island and the Cuckmere Valley, to large reservoirs such as Weir Wood and Bewl Water, and to smaller waters such as the ponds at Wiston, Bignor, Forest Mere and Ebernoe.

The *WeBS*' count of 885 on Bewl Water on 14 Jul signified the beginning of the post-breeding assemblage at favoured sites. Other big counts in August, not included in the *WeBS*' table, included 150 on Thorney Island on the 12<sup>th</sup>, 184 in the Cuckmere Valley on the 13<sup>th</sup>, 560 at Pulborough Brooks on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 380 at Rye Hbr on the 30<sup>th</sup>. A flock of 150 birds seen around the Pagham Hbr area from 22–30 Sep was unusually large for this area. Autumn numbers remained high in many places, including 354 on Barcombe Res on 9 Oct and 360 on Henfield Levels on 2 Nov. The November *WeBS*' count was the highest county total recorded with the largest concentration recorded in the Arun Valley where 1754 birds were present between Amberley and Pulborough. [AH]

## 0167. BARNACLE GOOSE

*Branta leucopsis*

**Very scarce winter visitor, often in severe weather, and an increasingly common feral resident. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

There was a wide scattering of records in 2002, but all would seem to be of feral birds. The only substantial flock recorded was the one at Barcombe Res, which peaked at 83 birds on 13 Jan and 69 on 28 Oct. This flock also contained two hybrid birds. The only other resident flock was of 12-13 birds at Scotney Court GP though these may have wandered to Rye Hbr where there were 13 between 3-16 Jan and 6-7 in August-September.

Other records were of one to four birds at Thorney Island, Pulborough Brooks, Weir Wood Res, Bewl Water and Pett Level.

There was one sea-watching record of 3 E past Selsey Bill on 27 April, though the late date suggests that they, too, were feral birds. [AH]

**0168. DARK-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE**

*Branta bernicla bernicla*

**Very common winter visitor and passage migrant; a few oversummer. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	10323	8008	7597	81	5	-	5	6	6	1300	5093	6153
Chichester Hbr	7470	6111	5288	20	5	nc	5	6	6	1093	3960	5886
Pagham Hbr	2848	1891	2308	15	-	-	-	-	-	134	1108	263
Pett Level	-	4	-	46	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	3

Numbers were typical in the main wintering haunts of Pagham and Chichester Hbrs, but this species is being recorded increasingly in small numbers right along the coast and inland too. However, only the 4-5 birds recorded at Rye Hbr from 1 Jan to 17 Feb remained at one site for long. Singles or small flocks were noted at Arundel WWT, Pulborough Brooks, Steyning, and Barcombe Res but furthest from the coast were four and six at Bewl Water on 2 Feb and 10 Mar respectively.

The first indication of spring passage was on 1 Feb when 350 birds headed east past both Brighton Marina and Splash Point, Seaford. Passage continued steadily throughout February and March but on only one day were 4-figure counts made. On 15 Mar there were 1879 E at Brighton Marina, 860 E at Seaford and 1500 NE over Rye Hbr. The next biggest day was 31 Mar when 966 flew east past Brighton Marina. The last stragglers, a flock of five, were seen passing both Selsey Bill and Worthing Beach on 18 May.

The monthly totals at 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	75	10	131	12	2308	21	397	1	103	69	157	1510		6
Worthing Beach	2	6	4	1	818	3	15		176	540	24	2660	25	6
Brighton Marina	61	12	564		6416		1240	1	10	7	45	599	29	83
Splash Point, Seaford	49	4	484	1	3695		774	1					146	6
Bexhill/Hastings	10	2	53		1082		209	5	10			111		

Up to five birds over-summered in Chichester Hbr, and another two in Pagham Hbr, but none were noted elsewhere until seven were seen flying east past Selsey Bill on 29 Aug. Whether these had summered elsewhere on the south coast or were early returnees is impossible to tell, but 19 W at the same site on 15 Sep heralded the start of autumn migration. The peak day was 10 Nov when 2477 flew west past Worthing and 1480 W passed west at Selsey Bill.

The highest autumn count, apart from *WeBS*' totals, was of 1800 birds in Pagham Hbr on 7 Dec. Once again small numbers were seen at a variety of coastal locations, including Shoreham Airfield, Cuckmere Haven, Rye Hbr, Camber Sands and Scotney Court GP but 11 were inland at Bewl Water on 17 Nov. The only sizeable flocks seen away from the western harbours were at Climping, where 130 birds were seen on the beach on 26 Nov and 260 in fields nearby on 23 Dec. [AH]

## 0168.01 PALE-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE

*Branta bernicla hrota***Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.**

There were many reports again this year, but most referred to the two to three birds present in Pagham Hbr and (presumably the same ones) in the West Wittering area from the start of the year until 20 Mar. One of these birds, or possibly a migrant, was reported from West Wittering on 4 Apr. It may well have been the same birds returning that generated another flurry of reports of up to two birds in the same areas from 9 Nov to the year's end.

The only other reports were of singles with flocks of Dark-bellied Brent Geese flying east past Newhaven on 16 Mar and west past Brighton Marina on 8 Nov. There was also a record of three at Shoreham Airfield on 20 Dec. [AH]

## 0168.02 BLACK BRANT

*Branta bernicla nigricans***Rare but now annual winter visitor.**

The adult accompanied by four apparently hybrid juveniles first seen in December 2001 at West Wittering remained until at least 17 Mar. (ARK *et al*). In the latter part of the year there was an adult at Thorney Airfield from 11 Dec until the end of the year with a second adult at Pilsey Island on 31 Dec (CBC). These records have been accepted by BBRC. [PJ]

## 0170. EGYPTIAN GOOSE

*Alopochon aegyptiacus***A rare visitor from introduced populations elsewhere in Britain, though possibly more commonly recorded as a presumed escape. Bred for the first time in 2000.**

There was the usual scattering of records from across the county, though there was no evidence of breeding. Long-stayers included the solitary bird, first recorded on Ivy Lake, Chichester GP in June 2001 which remained throughout the year, one (of two seen between 3 and 30 May) at Bewl Water which remained until 11 Oct at least, and another on Amberley Wild Brooks from 18 May until 6 Dec.

Spring records of birds on the move were received from Pett Pools, where three flew west on 24 Mar, and Newhaven Tide Mills, with two flying southwest on 9 Apr. The only other records for the year were all in November, namely two on the R Adur at Shoreham on the 7<sup>th</sup>, a single on Swanbourne Lake, Arundel on the 9<sup>th</sup> and another at Pond Lye, Goddard's Green on the 18<sup>th</sup>. [AH]

## 0173. SHELDUCK

*Tadorna tadorna***Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; a scarce but regular breeding species. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1240	1012	846	577	383	140	144	61	66	117	332	551
Chichester Hbr	885	574	493	298	96	nc	54	46	39	62	218	366
Pagham Hbr	234	220	226	139	117	115	45	6	4	13	79	82
Arundel WWT	60	60	nc	34	40	nc	34	nc	15	19	16	27

Pulborough Brooks	6	-	6	30	25	nc	1	-	-	-	2	8
Rye Hbr	6	15	37	25	83	17	10	7	7	9	1	21
Scotney Court GP	3	33	3	14	-	n	-	nc	-	12	13	19

Numbers were just about average through the first winter months with the western harbours, as is usual, holding the majority of birds. Away from those locations tabled above, a few scattered records were received from a wide range of sites, particularly in early January. These included two at Lancing on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, three on Bewl Water on the 5<sup>th</sup>, two on Brooklands Lake, Worthing on the 6<sup>th</sup> and one on Hove Lagoon on the 11<sup>th</sup>. Every year the January *WeBS*' counts are substantially higher than the proceeding December suggesting evidence of inward migration from the Continent.

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	15	1	-	4	8	3	24	18	29	23	-	29	-	-
Worthing Beach	7	1	-	-	8	2	-	-	11	13	-	43	5	44
Brighton Marina	4	-	-	-	39	8	47	2	24	2	2	-	51	70
Splash Point, Seaford	1	9	-	5	17	-	58	5	38	3	-	-	5	3
Bexhill/Hastings	-	-	-	-	3	-	8	1	14	4	-	-	12	-

Records during the breeding season were received from a wide range of sites, both inland and coastal. The most productive location was Arundel WWT, where 11 broods were noted. At Pagham Hbr two broods comprising 15 young were seen several times in June and in Chichester Hbr a crèche of 14 birds was noted on 13 Jul. Other reports of young came from Rye Hbr LNR which held up to eight pairs though only three broods were seen, the Arun Valley between Amberley and Pulborough where up to five broods were noted, and the Cuckmere Valley where a pair with four young was seen on 22 Jul.

As usual, numbers were very low throughout August and September. The only double figure counts for these months were of 17 on Thorney Island on 27 Aug and 29 at Rye Hbr on 1 Sep. Numbers at the former site rose to 37 by mid October and 69 on 5 Nov. Generally the *WeBS*' data were a fair reflection of this species' distribution, though observers at Pagham Hbr recorded several counts well above those in the table, peaking at 300 birds on 27 Dec. Away from the west of the county, two birds were seen at Arlington Res on 7 Oct and 11 Dec, and singletons at Lancing from October until early December, Bewl Water on 10 Nov and Brooklands, Worthing on 27 Nov. [AH]

## 0178. MANDARIN

*Aix galericulata*

### Scarce but increasing introduced resident.

There were records from 42 sites of which 26 were in West Sussex. In January at Weir Wood Res there were nine birds on the 5<sup>th</sup> rising to 45 on the 16<sup>th</sup> and reducing to 16 by 22 Feb. There were six at Swanbourne Lake on 6 Jan and ten at Darwell Res on 10 Feb.

In the breeding season there were reports from 14 sites but confirmation came from only nine. A female with nine ducklings was seen at Weir Wood Res on 6 May where a total of four broods raised 17 young. A female with six young was at Ifield Mill Pond on 20 May and at Swanbourne Lake there was a female with three young on 7 Jun and another with four on the 15<sup>th</sup>. There were three broods at Arundel WWT and, at Pulborough Brooks, a female with six young was reported on 5 Jul and a pair with two young on the 28<sup>th</sup>. An adult with three young was at Amberley Wild Brooks on 1 Jun and three three-quarter



grown young were at Darwell Res on 14 Jul. A female with five young was reported from Powdermill Res on 9 Jul and another with seven young on 10 Aug.

During the autumn and winter the highest counts were at Arundel WWT with 23 on 8 Sep, 21 on 7 Oct, 31 on 17 Nov and 41 on 8 Dec. At Darwell Res there were 25 on 5 Sep and 24 on 7 Oct; at Rackham Woods there were 24 on 24 Nov; at Swanbourne Lake, 13 on 7 Oct and 11 on 17 Nov; and at Weir Wood Res, 16 on 3 Nov and 26 on 22 Dec. [DEGC]

## 0179. WIGEON

*Anas penelope*

**Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	10292	4522	5907	45	5	2	-	28	437	4754	4843	8585
Chichester Hbr	1462	831	637	6	1	nc	-	1	173	1978	897	1434
Pagham Hbr	1397	668	929	14	-	-	-	26	104	1305	805	624
Amberley Wild Brooks	410	551	868	-	-	nc	-	-	12	21	1307	1668
Pulborough Brooks	3374	1174	1703	14	3	nc	-	-	99	660	780	2474
Glynde Levels	73	16	31	-	-	2	-	-	-	35	110	-
Cuckmere Haven	780	460	660	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	11	360	290	375
Pevensey Levels	1095	100	180	2	-	nc	-	-	-	59	35	200
Bewl Water	82	249	152	nc	nc	nc	-	-	9	93	116	286
Pett Level	270	121	205	-	1	-	-	-	7	14	94	120
Rye Hbr	345	103	299	3	-	-	-	1	2	122	112	324
Scotney Court GP	50	105	197	5	-	nc	-	nc	8	63	113	800

Notable counts in January not included in the table above were 950 at Castle Water, Rye Hbr on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 300 at Scotney Court GP on the 4<sup>th</sup>, 398 at Bewl Water on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 200 at Henfield Levels on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

Movements up-channel in the spring were, as last year, light. The monthly totals for the main sea-watching sites were as follows:

Direction of movement	Mar		Apr		May	
	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	5	-	-	-	-	-
Brighton Marina	25	-	24	-	-	-
Splash Point, Seaford	16	-	-	-	-	-
Bexhill/Hastings	21	-	-	-	-	-

At Pulborough North Brooks there were four on 11 May and three on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Elsewhere, there was an injured male at Thorney Deeps on 3 May, a female at Pett Level and two at Lewes Brooks on the 12<sup>th</sup>, and two at Down Level, Pevensey on the 28<sup>th</sup>. A female was reported from Rye Hbr on 6 May, a pair on the 20<sup>th</sup> and single females on 11 and 18 Jun.

A female with young was seen at Glynde Reach on 8 Jun (ARK). The only previous record of successful breeding in the county was in 1984 when a pair, probably of feral origin, raised two young at Swanbourne Lake (*Birds of Sussex*).

The first returning bird was a female at Waltham Brooks on 20 Jul. Next came two at Pulborough Brooks on 5 Aug followed by singles at Thorney Deeps on the 8<sup>th</sup>, Rye Hbr on the 11<sup>th</sup> and Pett Level on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Twenty-one were reported from Thorney Deeps on the 21<sup>st</sup>. There were five at Pagham Hbr on the 24<sup>th</sup>, 15 on the 25<sup>th</sup> and by the end of the

month there were 45 at Pulborough Brooks on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 40 at Thorney Deeps on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

In addition to the *WeBS*' counts there were 1472 at Pulborough Brooks on 2 Nov and 1000 at Pagham on 21 Dec. The largest coastal movements in the latter part of the year were 60 W at Brighton on 10 Nov and 150 W at Worthing on 8 Dec. Finally, it was perhaps unusual for 700 to be seen near Brighthams Fm, Partridge Green on 22 Dec. [DEGC]

0182.

*GADWALL*

*Anas strepera*

**Scarce breeder and fairly common winter visitor; passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	888	443	349	82	62	6	72	31	208	349	459	719
Chichester GP	569	118	103	-	-	-	-	-	26	80	178	318
Chingford Pond	6	1	-	1	-	-	nc	-	28	34	-	24
Swanbourne Lake	30	18	20	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	27	45	34	28
Arundel WWT	32	86	nc	18	18	nc	42	nc	41	47	17	46
Amberley Wild Brooks	-	16	74	8	4	nc	-	-	2	-	4	26
Waltham Brooks	3	-	4	5	8	nc	-	1	3	2	6	5
Pulborough Brooks	5	-	9	2	3	nc	6	-	1	-	10	5
Glynde Levels	-	-	6	9	9	-	5	4	4	-	21	14
Arlington Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	5	-	-
Bewl Water	108	75	12	nc	nc	nc	2	2	53	66	90	81
Powdermill Res	-	-	28	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pett Level	25	34	30	24	5	6	16	14	6	2	-	33
Rye Hbr	32	58	43	14	15	-	1	7	9	61	49	32

Apart from the *WeBS*' counts above, evidence of the high numbers wintering in the county in December 2001 that remained into January 2002, was provided by some exceptionally high counts, peaking at 203 at Rye Hbr on the 4<sup>th</sup>, 205 at Bewl Water on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 370 at Chichester GP on the 10<sup>th</sup>. By contrast, the second winter period saw much lower concentrations, the maximum gathering recorded being 150 at Chichester GP on 3 Dec. Spring passage up-Channel was negligible, 6 E at Selsey Bill on 28 Mar being the highest count

Breeding was successful at at least seven separate locations, 14 broods recorded including five at Arundel WWT. Several other sightings of pairs around the county during the breeding season suggest that this species had a productive year. [RP]

0184.

*TEAL*

*Anas crecca*

**Scarce resident and common winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

<i>County total</i>	6792	3696	3909	734	6	3	60	308	1565	2712	3294	4888
Chichester Hbr	2426	956	587	68	2	nc	9	28	263	756	801	1013
Pagham Hbr	1197	560	665	62	2	2	7	27	661	317	1094	298
Chingford Pond	196	3	10	6	-	-	nc	14	64	179	-	7
Arundel WWT	266	56	nc	1	-	nc	12	nc	44	143	21	-
Amberley Wild Brooks	171	399	903	41	-	nc	2	29	32	257	956	1382
Waltham Brooks	218	41	109	50	1	nc	-	2	10	60	44	77
Pulborough Brooks	1108	483	960	377	1	nc	10	136	239	463	133	1290
Glynde Levels	215	160	175	18	-	1	14	13	-	93	55	92
Pevensey Levels	390	406	40	92	-	nc	-	-	-	7	19	129
Pett Level	66	254	170	17	-	-	4	25	91	52	-	181
Rye Hbr	34	53	27	2	-	-	1	31	82	125	50	252

Excluding the *WeBS*' counts, the early part of the year was notable for a record count of 4000 at Pulborough Brooks on 29 Jan, a vindication of all the work done by the RSPB there in recent years. Other significant gatherings included 250 at Burton Mill Pond on 2 Jan and 715 at Thorney Deeps on 7 Jan.

Spring passage was unremarkable. The monthly totals for the main sea-watching sites were as follows:

	Mar		Apr		May	
	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	7	-	5	1	-	-
Brighton Marina	104	-	38	-	-	-
Splash Point, Seaford	70	-	15	-	3	2
Bexhill/Hastings	-	-	11	-	-	-

The peak day was 29 Mar with 75 E past Brighton and 43 E past Seaford.

Breeding was suspected at several sites but, once again, not confirmed. Pairs were seen at Thorney Deeps, Sidlesham Ferry, Waltham Brooks, Lewes Brooks and Glyne Gap Marsh throughout late spring, and earlier a pair were seen attempting to divert a dog from an area near Pagham with 'broken wing' behaviour. As in 2001, a single male was on Tilgate Park Lake in May. Numbers built up from late June and by the end of August observers at Sidlesham Ferry, Pulborough Brooks and Pett Level had all recorded 3-figure counts. The Arun Valley once again held the largest concentrations into the winter, the highest count being 1050 on 2 Nov.

A murky day on 8 Dec produced a significant coastal movement with 136 W past Bexhill and 208 W off Worthing Beach. [RP]

## 0184.01. GREEN-WINGED TEAL

*Anas carolinensis*

### Very rare vagrant.

An adult male was present at Arlington Res on 19 Jan (ITB, IJW). Although only the ninth to be recorded in the county, five have been in the last three years. Might this be the bird seen in the lower Cuckmere Valley from mid February to early April 2001 (*SxBR* 54:38)? All records fall between 29 December and 2 May. [RJF]

**Common resident and winter visitor.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	3893	3069	1942	1232	956	486	1312	2173	3227	3538	3856	3443
Chichester Hbr	380	366	194	218	26	nc	87	114	206	250	356	533
Pagham Hbr	368	240	177	175	226	135	118	320	193	226	294	242
Chichester GP	388	161	137	4	27	22	2	15	148	233	257	352
Petworth Park	76	56	45	52	48	36	nc	74	80	55	72	76
Swanbourne Lake	120	120	100	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	46	77	57	49
Arundel WWT	277	305	nc	316	265	nc	421	nc	455	386	359	376
Amberley Wild Brooks	40	126	101	95	46	nc	45	93	37	51	44	121
Pulborough Brooks	101	92	106	53	40	nc	34	103	186	67	319	79
Ardingly Res	200	60	70	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	49	300	450	125
Barcombe Res	45	45	9	12	20	66	105	75	nc	71	61	62
Glynde Levels	120	40	64	43	35	38	52	151	95	175	175	40
Pevensy Levels	57	79	11	15	48	26	12	38	92	42	52	7
Bewl Water	332	273	230	nc	nc	nc	210	460	553	504	450	300
Alexandra Park	181	169	101	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	145	160	nc	196
Rye Hbr	199	96	90	49	54	43	77	355	157	109	176	205

At Bewl Water there were an estimated 100 pairs in early spring, 19 broods totalling 77 young were later noted. Elsewhere, there were 60 broods at Arundel WWT, at least 15 pairs at Rye Hbr, nine pairs that fledged 51 young at Amberley Wild Brooks and five broods totalling 27 young at Weir Wood Res. One clutch of 18 eggs at Earls Down, Dallington was lost to badgers. There was a late breeding report of six just hatched ducklings at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 18 Aug.

The customary post-breeding gathering at Bewl Water produced counts of 144 on 14 Jul, 460 on 11 Aug and 553 on 8 Sep. [RP]

**Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant, occasionally summers and breeds. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	876	640	685	16	6	-	-	1	6	394	886	615
Chichester Hbr	114	10	33	3	1	nc	-	-	2	69	41	64
Pagham Hbr	587	198	290	2	-	-	-	-	3	304	68	40
Amberley Wild Brooks	-	115	66	-	-	nc	-	-	-	-	496	99
Waltham Brooks	6	-	-	2	2	nc	-	1	-	3	-	-
Pulborough Brooks	168	298	267	6	1	nc	-	-	-	4	267	407
Glynde Levels	-	9	26	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pevensy Levels	-	-	1	-	2	nc	-	-	-	-	-	-
Scotney Court GP	-	-	-	2	-	nc	-	nc	1	-	-	5

For the second year in succession, there was a record count at Pulborough Brooks of 1025 on 31 Jan though the only other significant count in the first winter period was of 400

in Pagham Hbr on 3 Mar. Coastal movement early in the year was particularly light as can be seen from the table below:

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	-	24	5	16	18	-	15	-	1	-
Worthing Beach	-	-	-	-	54	-	-	-	-	-
Brighton Marina	-	6	-	-	97	-	-	-	-	-
Splash Point, Seaford	-	-	-	-	62	-	-	-	-	-
Bexhill/Hastings	-	-	-	3	12	-	-	-	-	-

In the breeding season there was a pair at Waltham Brooks and another at the Breech Pool, Pagham Hbr throughout May and June but breeding was not proven. A pair bred within Arundel WWT reserve and singles were recorded at Fishbourne on 8 May, Pevensey Levels on 12 May and Filsham on 9 Jun. A male stayed the summer at Pulborough Brooks and an injured female remained at Thorney Deeps for a second year.

A single at Sidlesham Ferry on 13 Aug was the first returning bird of the autumn, followed by sightings at Chichester GP, Pagham Hbr, and Rye Hbr on 24 Aug.

Coastal movements thereafter were unexceptional, apart from a noteworthy 142 W at Selsey Bill on 24 Sep. [RP]

## 0191. GARGANEY

*Anas querquedula*

**Scarce passage migrant and rare summer visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

A very good year with about 81 individuals reported and two cases of confirmed breeding. The estimated monthly totals allowing for duplication, and counts at each site where birds were recorded, were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
<i>Monthly Totals</i>	14	13	16	6	18	34	10
Thorney	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Selsey Bill	-	1*	-	-	-	-	-
Pagham Hbr	1	-	1	1	2	4	1
Pulborough Brooks	7	3	2	1	8	1	-
Waltham Brooks	1	-	-	-	-	1	1
Brighton Marina	3*	2*	-	-	-	-	-
Weir Wood Res	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Piddinghoe	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Drove Marsh, Newhaven	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
Splash Point, Seaford	-	-	4*	-	-	-	-
Arlington Res	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
Beachy Head	-	2*	-	-	-	-	-
Hoe Level, Pevensey	-	-	-	-	-	12	-
Filsham LNR	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Bexhill/Hastings	1*	-	-	-	-	-	1*
Pett Level	1	-	2	1	-	-	3
Rye Hbr	-	5	5	3	7	9	3
Scotney Court GP	-	-	-	-	-	1	-

Birds seen offshore are marked in the table by an asterisk. The first authenticated record for the year and the precursor of a fairly good spring passage was a drake at

Sidlesham Ferry on 24 Mar. This was followed by another at Pett Level and three past Brighton Marina on the 25<sup>th</sup> and five at Pulborough Brooks on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Thirteen birds were recorded passing along the coast during the spring with the last record being of two pairs east at Splash Point, Seaford on 18 May.

There were two cases of confirmed breeding during the year. Pulborough Brooks hosted five drakes and two ducks at the end of March, but the number present fell to three during April. A pair was present on the North Brooks during May, and in July a female was seen with seven young on the 21<sup>st</sup>. At Rye Hbr LNR, at least three drakes and two ducks were present on 24 Apr, and four drakes and a duck were still present in mid May. At least one pair bred successfully within the reserve at Castle Water. A pair was observed mating there in the spring and the remains of a predated small duck nest, presumed to be this species, were discovered on 4 Jun. On 28 Jul a female with four advanced young was seen and at least two young probably fledged.

There were a number of sightings from other sites during the summer as can be seen from the table above, but breeding was not suspected at any of these.

Birds were on the move from the beginning of August, with one at Scotney Court GP on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the largest flock of the year being 11 at Hooe Level, Pevensey on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. There were nine birds present at Rye Hbr on the 14<sup>th</sup> and six still there on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Presumably moulting birds made extended stays at Sidlesham Ferry and Waltham Brooks during the autumn.

The last records of the year were of singles at Filsham LNR on 22 Sep, and at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr on 27 Sep, a fairly average last date. [DG]

0194. **SHOVELER**

*Anas clypeata*

**Very scarce resident and fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The monthly *WeBS*<sup>9</sup> counts from the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	518	524	561	170	24	3	55	36	42	262	319	643
Pagham Hbr	8	30	21	16	-	2	2	-	-	-	8	2
Chichester GP	269	157	77	-	-	-	-	-	4	18	86	238
Arundel WWT	-	-	-	-	-	-	nc	-	-	15	-	-
Amberley Wild Brooks	2	-	nc	-	-	nc	10	nc	1	11	3	3
Waltham Brooks	-	21	126	-	-	nc	-	-	4	-	68	33
Pulborough Brooks	2	20	11	2	-	nc	-	1	-	19	6	4
Glynde Levels	54	45	90	24	1	nc	-	10	4	30	56	92
Eastbourne Lakes	14	25	36	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	13
Pevensey Levels	1	55	7	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	8
Pett Level	20	15	20	12	1	nc	-	-	-	-	-	6
Rye Hbr	18	51	92	72	-	1	1	5	8	-	2	92
Scotney Court GP	65	97	62	17	5	-	-	20	10	156	59	48

Three sites held 78% of the county's annual total: Chichester GP (27%), the Arun Valley (23%) and the Rye Bay area (28%).

There were a number of other significant records additional to those in the above table including 245 at Rye Hbr on 4 Jan and 105 at Pulborough Brooks on the 31<sup>st</sup>, 125 in the Rye Bay area on 30 Aug and 78 there on 28 Dec, 80 at Amberley Wild Brooks on both 9

Nov and 28 Dec and 62 at Arundel WWT on 31 Dec. Otherwise Shovelers were recorded, generally in small numbers, at not less than 25 other, mainly inland, sites through the year.

Birds were noted moving offshore from 10 Feb to 17 May and then from 10 Nov to 31 Dec, with a peak movement on 29-30 Mar. The monthly totals at the main sea-watching sites were as follows:

	Feb		Mar		Apr		May		Nov		Dec		Peak movement
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	
Selsey Bill	-	37	31	-	13	1	-	-	-	3	-	-	35 on 10 Feb
Worthing Beach	-	-	32	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	19 on 29 Mar
Brighton Marina	-	-	100	-	40	-	11	-	-	-	1	5	73 on 29 Mar
Seaford	-	-	102	-	26	-	11	-	-	-	-	-	62 on 29 Mar
Beachy Head	-	-	61	-	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	61 on 30 Mar
Bexhill/Hastings	-	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21	21 on 8 Dec
Rye Bay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	36	-	36 on 3 Dec

Reports of confirmed breeding were received from only three sites comprising a female with six ducklings on 15 Jun at Pulborough Brooks, a female with four ducklings on 4 Jul at Castle Water, Rye Hbr and a pair with two ducklings on 24 Jul at Horse Eye Level, Pevensey. Additionally, two pairs were reported in June as probably breeding, one Waltham Brooks and the other pair at Glynde Reach. [JAC]

#### 0196. RED-CRESTED POCHARD

*Netta rufina*

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

The only records were of a pair at Chichester GP, usually on Ivy Lake, from 8-14 Jan and again on 22 Feb (AH *et al*) and, unusually, one east with five Common Scoters at Birling Gap on 21 May (JFC). [PJ]

#### 0198. POCHARD

*Aythya ferina*

**Very scarce breeder and fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The monthly *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	1375	1001	388	21	13	3	16	5	138	308	881	1170
Chichester GP	483	218	70	-	-	-	-	-	18	54	190	258
Swanbourne Lake	80	75	50	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	7	19	27	59
Arundel WWT	211	181	nc	12	12	nc	11	nc	9	58	140	147
Pulborough Brooks	2	26	32	-	-	nc	-	-	-	-	34	39
Barcombe Res	2	10	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	3	-
Glynde Levels	94	74	6	-	-	-	-	-	nc	3	41	27
Bewl Water	-	1	12	-	-	-	2	-	2	12	43	-
Pett Level	21	13	19	nc	nc	nc	1	-	7	14	70	56
Rye Hbr	32	17	13	4	-	-	-	-	-	2	8	4
Scotney Court GP	185	204	110	-	-	2	2	5	53	16	117	200

Three areas held 74% of the county's annual total: Chichester GP (24%), the Arun Valley (17%), and Rye Bay (33%).

There were a number of other significant records additional to those in the above table. There were 334 at Scotney Court GP on 6 Jan, 219 at Rye Hbr SSSI on 4 Jan, 100 at Barcombe Res on 13 Jan and 81 there on 3 Feb, while numbers at Pulborough Brooks in January and February exceeded those on the *WeBS*' counting days. In the second winter period there were 116 at Barcombe Res on 11 Nov. Otherwise Pochards were recorded, generally in numbers under 30, at not less than 24 other, mainly inland, sites through the year.

The only confirmed breeding record was from Arundel WWT where nine adults produced four broods with an unspecified number of ducklings. Birds were also present in suitable habitat at three other sites.

There were only five records of birds flying offshore. Between 3 Jan and 21 May three counts totalled only 5 E. Later in the year 1 E at Brighton Marina on 11 Dec and 7 E at Selsey Bill in 3 hrs the following day were the only records. [JAC]

**0203. TUFTED DUCK**

*Aythya fuligula*

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

The monthly *WeBS*' counts for 12 locations were as follows,

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	1191	1002	842	355	291	122	538	189	728	834	978	1313
Pagham Hbr	27	13	-	-	2	7	1	-	7	2	8	8
Chichester GP	476	327	224	4	4	10	15	15	62	159	302	513
Burton MP	10	4	6	21	-	-	nc	11	10	10	12	18
Petworth Park	8	17	17	15	10	9	nc	10	15	5	16	21
Swanbourne Lake	80	80	80	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	17	43	32	87
Arundel WWT	156	60	nc	26	82	nc	41	nc	37	108	44	76
Barcombe Res	41	42	2	7	6	11	13	-	nc	2	8	10
Bewl Water	64	45	87	nc	nc	nc	156	-	184	150	126	108
Powdermill Res	1	4	-	2	-	-	5	20	16	8	-	22
Pett Level	13	36	57	52	40	29	4	2	2	2	5	12
Rye Hbr	164	189	204	149	99	52	86	110	63	72	172	174
Scotney Court GP	34	6	11	26	20	nc	183	nc	250	188	69	64

Three sites held 60% of the county's annual total: Chichester GP (39%), Rye Hbr (13%) and Bewl Water (8%).

There were a number of other significant records involving 50 or more birds additional to those in the above table. There were 127 at Bewl Water on 5 Jan and 179 there on 11 Aug and at Chichester GP 50 on 19 Jul and 55 on 15 Aug. Otherwise Tufted Ducks were recorded, generally in numbers under 30, at not less than 40 other, mainly inland, sites through the year.

Records of confirmed breeding were received for 12 locations involving minima of 36 broods (17 at Rye Hbr SSSI, seven at Bewl Water and four at Arundel WWT and eight at eight other sites) and 91 ducklings. The latter figure is an underestimate as not all broods were qualified by numbers of ducklings. The first broods seen at Bewl Water were two on 1 Jul comprising nine small young but also eight of medium size, which had obviously hatched about two weeks earlier. Mid June is considered very early for this species. The latest brood of four ducklings was seen on 13 Aug at Burton Mill Pond. [JAC]



**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; rare in summer. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The estimated monthly totals after allowing for duplication, and counts at each site where birds were recorded, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Nov	Dec
<i>Monthly Totals</i>	5	3	18	-	2	1	2	15
Thorney Island	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Selsey Bill	-	-	14*	-	-	-	-	7*
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Brighton Marina	-	-	7*	-	-	-	-	-
Barcombe Res	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Seaford	-	-	-	-	1*	-	-	-
Beachy Head	-	-	7*	-	-	-	-	-
Bexhill/Hastings	-	-	-	-	-	-	2*	-
Pett Level	1	2	2	-	1	1	-	-
Rye Hbr	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Scotney Court GP	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3

Birds seen offshore are marked in the table by an asterisk. Approximately 23 were seen during the first part of the year. The main coastal movement in this period was observed at the end of March, with 1E at Brighton Marina and Birling Gap on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 14 E at Selsey Bill on the 30<sup>th</sup> in flocks of eight and six. The only other coastal bird in the spring was 1 W at Splash Point, Seaford, on 14 May. The final bird of the spring was a male, which arrived at Pett Pools on 11 May and stayed till the late date of 14 Jun.

There were no records in the second half of the year until the very late date of 26 Nov when two were offshore at Bexhill/Hastings. The only other coastal record in this period was 7 E at Selsey Bill on 12 Dec. The remaining records for the month, including three drakes at Scotney Court GP on the 29<sup>th</sup>, bring the total for the latter half of the year to 17 and the annual total to about 40, slightly below the average for recent years. [DG]

**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, non-breeding birds summer annually. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	8	-	8	2	7	3	3	3	1	-	2	2
Chichester Hbr	4	-	3	2	2	nc	3	3	1	-	1	-
Pagham Hbr	4	-	5	-	5	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Shoreham Hbr	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	1	1
Rye Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

Wintering numbers were up on 2001, but still lower than average; the largest gatherings were 24 off Church Norton on 17 Feb and 45 off Lancing on 4 Nov.

Spring migration in 2002 was more typical than in 2001 as shown by the monthly totals for the main sea-watching sites:

	Mar		Apr		May	
	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	38	1	20	17	8	8
Worthing Beach	26	-	-	-	-	-
Brighton Marina	68	-	44	-	-	2
Splash Point, Seaford	87	-	16	-	7	-
Bexhill/Hastings	12	-	7	-	-	-

Possibly as few as 15 birds summered, including three females which remained at Pilsley Island from 30 May through to August, and a maximum of seven offshore at Pagham Hbr on 20 Jun.

There were no inland records. [RP]

## 0212. LONG-TAILED DUCK

*Clangula hyemalis*

**Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

Early in the year, singles were seen at Bexhill on 14 Jan, Scotney Court GP on 14 Feb and on four dates in January and February in the Church Norton/Selsey Bill area.

A good total of 16 birds was recorded moving up Channel in the spring, including a single past Selsey Bill on the particularly late date of 5 Jun. There was also a single on Scotney Court GP on 12 May and a tardy female at Thorney Deeps from 12-14 Jun.

There were 15 records in the second winter period, involving 25 individuals. This included a flock of 6 W past Selsey Bill on 16 Oct. Also of note was a fine adult male on Northpoint Pit on 17 Nov. [RP]

## 0213. COMMON SCOTER

*Melanitta nigra*

**Common spring passage migrant and fairly common winter visitor; usually scarcer in summer and autumn. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	219	236	133	194	-	20	60	30	-	-	75	421
Pagham Hbr	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pett Level	150	235	125	54	-	20	20	-	-	-	-	420
Rye Hbr	47	-	8	140	-	-	40	30	-	-	75	-

Maximum gatherings in the first winter period were 250 in Rye Bay on 5 Jan and 133 off Hastings on 14 Jan. Away from these two locations the largest recorded flock was just 35 off Church Norton on 6 Jan.

Numbers observed at the main sea-watching sites were higher than 2001 as shown by the monthly totals below:

	Mar	Apr	May	Totals	Peak days
Selsey Bill	414	2183	1757	4354	1112 on 17 Apr
Worthing Beach	238	211	579	1028	149 on 28 Apr
Brighton Marina	4302	3918	2398	10618	1600 on 17 Apr
Splash Point, Seaford	3364	3060	1740	8164	1213 on 30 Mar
Bexhill/Hastings	216	112	127	455	82 on 1 Apr

Passage continued well into June, with observers at Selsey Bill logging a further 645 E, including 112 on the 13<sup>th</sup>. However the same site's total of 729 in July was probably evidence of non-breeding flocks remaining in the Channel, as the breakdown of direction showed 454 W against 275 E.

Autumn passage was particularly light with only eight records of just 34 individuals received. Numbers did not build up significantly until December, the largest concentration not featured in the *WeBS*' counts being 344 off Bexhill/Hastings on 8 Dec.

There were just two inland records, a male on Bewl Water on 10 Feb, and more unusually, three males and a female at Pond Lye, Goddards Green on the equally unusual date of 6 Jul (JWK). [RP]

0214. **SURF SCOTER**

*Melanitta perspicillata*

**Very rare vagrant.**

A female or immature found with Common Scoter off Pett Level on 28 Dec (CAH) was reported into 2003. The seventh to be documented in the county it is the fourth to be seen off Pett and the fourth in December. [RJF]

0215. **VELVET SCOTER**

*Melanitta fusca*

**Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor along the coast; rare inland. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
10	4	107	136	11	1	7	45	44

As can be seen from the above table, the species was once again commoner at the end than the beginning of the year. Spring passage was well above average, as confirmed by the monthly totals for the main sea-watching localities below:

	Mar		Apr	
	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	25	-	28	-
Worthing Beach	5	-	-	-
Brighton Marina	77	-	75	-
Splash Point, Seaford	77	-	94	-
Bexhill/Hastings	2	-	-	-

The peak days were 29 Mar, with 38 past Brighton Marina, and 30 Mar and 17 Apr, when there were totals at Seaford of 44 and 38 respectively.

In the Rye Bay area, where this species can often be seen on the sea with Common Scoter, there were three on 24 Jan, two on both 10 and 28 Feb and a singleton on 3 Mar. Later in the year, five were present on 16 Nov and 6 W were noted on the 21<sup>st</sup>. In December 20 off Pett Level on the 28<sup>th</sup> had increased to at least 25 by the 31<sup>st</sup>.

There were no inland records. [RP]

0218. **GOLDENEYE****Bucephala clangula**

**Scarce winter visitor; rare in summer. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	54	77	46	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	56	56
Chichester Hbr	27	51	28	-	-	nc	-	-	-	-	38	48
Pagham Hbr	9	10	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	4
Chichester GP	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1
Arundel WWT	4	-	nc	-	-	nc	-	nc	-	-	-	-
Bewl Water	1	3	5	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-	1	1
Rye Hbr	8	9	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1

As the *WeBS*' counts indicate, Chichester Hbr is the favoured wintering site for the species, elsewhere only Pagham Hbr with ten on 10 Feb and Rye Hbr with ten on 12 Mar reached double figure counts in the first winter period. Two at Brooklands, Worthing on 6 Jan was an unusual record for that site.

The only spring migrants were two past Brighton Marina on 25 Mar and two at Newhaven Tide Mills on 28 Mar.

The species' true status as a winter visitor was reinforced by the absence of any records for the period between 28 Mar and 3 Oct, when the first returning birds were noted at Rye Hbr. Thereafter, numbers built up to a similar level as in the early in the year though no counts for Chichester and Pagham Hbrs exceeded those shown in the table. [RP]

0220. **SMEW*****Mergellus albellus***

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

The approximate monthly totals and the monthly maximum count at each site were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Nov	Dec
<i>Monthly total</i>	15	20	17	1	18
Chichester GP	1	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr LNR	14	16	13	1	15
Northpoint Pit, Rye	4	4	4	-	5
Scotney Court GP	-	-	-	-	3

In the west, the only records for the whole year were of a redhead seen on several of the Chichester GP from 4-14 Jan. In the east, during the first winter period all records were from various pits in the Rye Bay area. From one to six birds were seen between 1 and 15 Jan rising into double figures between 22 Jan and 3 Mar with a maximum of 16 at Castle Water, Rye Hbr on 10 Feb. Numbers decreased to no more than four after 3 Mar with the last sighting, a redhead, at Castle Water on 17 Mar.

The first sighting in the second winter period was on 30 Nov at Castle Pit, Rye Hbr. Smew were then seen throughout December in small numbers with a maximum of 15 recorded at Castle Water on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

The only offshore record, and the only sighting in the second winter period away from the Rye area, was a redhead at Glyne Gap on 24 Dec. [JAC]

0221. **RED-BREASTED MERGANSER***Mergus serrator***Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant to the coast; a few summer.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	153	178	181	42	2	-	-	-	-	3	135	222
Chichester Hbr	144	156	159	23	1	nc	-	-	-	3	134	180
Pagham Hbr	7	17	19	19	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	9
Goring Gap	2	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	30

Apart from Chichester Hbr, where about 150 wintered, the only other significant counts for the first winter period were of 121 at Selsey Bill on 27 Jan and a pre-migratory gathering of 158 off Worthing on 3 Mar.

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

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	240	82	177	160	6	-	-	2	61	82
	W	273	111	20	31	-	-	3	24	251	28
Worthing Beach	E	38	10	35	10	-	-	16	1	74	233
	W	5	2	-	16	2	-	1	42	223	48
Brighton Marina	E	5	2	51	151	5	2	-	-	10	2
	W	14	10	1	2	2	-	-	-	103	28
Splash Point, Seaford	E	8	3	63	147	14	-	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Bexhill / Hastings	E	-	-	9	8	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

There were no discernible peak days of spring passage, 37 E past Selsey Bill on 7 Apr being the highest day total recorded.

There were no records of over-summering birds; two off Worthing Beach on 15 Sep constituted the first autumn record. Numbers off Worthing then built up gradually to a peak of 254 on 11 Nov. The species appeared to be virtually absent from the eastern end of the county in the second winter period, a single off Pett on 5 Nov being the sole record received.

The only inland record was of a female that frequented the Chichester GP complex between 8 Feb and 11 Mar. [RP]

0223. **GOOSANDER***Mergus merganser***Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.**

Only seen in ones and twos during the year apart from three at Darwell Res on 19 Jan, nine at Amberley Wild Brooks on 9 Dec, and 4 E in Rye Bay on 31 Dec. The monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Monthly totals</i>	12	-	3	2	1	2	3	24
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Chichester GP	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-

Pulborough/Amberley Brooks	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	9
Upper Adur Levels	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barcombe Res	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Arlington Res	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
West Langney Lake, Eastbourne	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sovereign Hbr Marina	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Bewl Water	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
Darwell Res	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pett Level	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Offshore	3	-	-	2	1	-	-	8

In the first winter period, there were no records for February. Offshore birds were noted at Church Norton on 1 Jan and at Brighton Marina on the 4<sup>th</sup>, where there was also a drake in the harbour. The only records in April and May were 2 W at Selsey Bill on 23 Apr and 1 E at Brighton Marina on 12 May, the last of the spring.

The first sighting in the second winter period was of two at Pulborough Brooks on 24 Oct. There were only two records for November, two at Bewl Water on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and one at Pagham Hbr on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, and only a handful in December. Offshore, there were 2 W at Galley Hill on 9 Dec, two on the sea at Glyne Gap on 27 Dec, and 4 W at Rye Bay on the last day of the year. [RTP]

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

*Oxyura jamaicensis*

#### **Scarce resident and winter visitor.**

The monthly maxima at all the sites where the species was recorded were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chichester GP	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Arundel WWT/Swanbourne Lake	14	10	2	8	19	30	9	3
Pulborough Brooks	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ardingly Res	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lewes Brooks	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Glynde Levels	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
Arlington Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Eastbourne Lakes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Bewl Water	4	-	1	-	-	-	2	5
Pett Level	3	4	3	2	5	2	7	2
Rye Hbr	5	6	3	9	2	8	3	1
Northpoint GP	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-
Scotney Court GP	-	-	-	1	-	2	2	1

Breeding records were received for Swanbourne Lake, two sites at Pett Level, and Rye Hbr. A brood of eight young was seen at Pett Level on 28 May while at Rye Hbr, where 3-4 pairs nested at Ternery Pool, breeding success was reported to be 'fair'. [PJ]

#### 0231. **HONEY BUZZARD**

*Pernis apivorus*

**A very scarce breeding summer visitor and spring and autumn passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

**1997:** An adult male was recorded at Fairlight on 31 Aug 1997 (ASG).

**2001:** There were two late records of juveniles at Combe Haven in October. The first was a pale phase bird seen on the 13<sup>th</sup> and the second, a dark phase, was seen a few days later on the 17<sup>th</sup> (KMJ).

**2002:** This species successfully bred in the county for the sixth consecutive year though details have not yet been supplied to the Recorder by the group monitoring this species.

There were three passage migrants in the spring and early summer. The first was seen at Sidlesham on 11 May (*OM et al*); the second, on 16 May, was a female seen to arrive over the beach at Cuckmere Haven (ARK); the third, on 1 Jun, was another female which flew over Exceat Bridge (MJH, ARK). In late May and early June there were two birds at an inland site, but in view of the sensitivity of the records it would seem prudent not to reveal the localities or the observers involved. A single bird was recorded at Southwater on 23 Jun (CF).

There was an excellent autumn passage, beginning with an early record at Beachy Head where a bird flew out to sea on 20 Aug (DC, JFC). There were two at Icklesham, heading east towards Rye, on 1 Sep (JC) with other coastal sightings of single birds at Pagham Hbr on 3 Sep (BFF, DIS) and Sidlesham Ferry on 8 Sep (RAI *et al*). Further records from Beachy Head followed with an adult on 13 Sep (DC, JFC) and another unaged bird, which flew out to sea on 17 Sep (DC, JFC). On 19 Sep there was a bird thermalling over Cissbury (MAS), a juvenile headed out to sea at Seaford Head on 22 Sep (JC) and two immature birds were noted at Combe Haven on the 30<sup>th</sup> (KMJ). Finally, there was a late record of a single bird at Southease on 7 Oct (MJHa)

A juvenile was reported on 15 Sep at an inland site but again restrictive reporting must apply to this record. [MEK]

**0238. BLACK KITE**

*Milvus migrans*

**Rare vagrant.**

One flew northeast over Glynde Levels on 8 Jun (MJH, ARK). It has been accepted by *BBRC* and is the eighth record since 1990 and the 21<sup>st</sup> in total. Just over half of all the county records have been in May although this is only the second to be seen in June. [RJF]

**0239. RED KITE**

*Milvus milvus*

**Scarce visitor, recorded in all months. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

An interesting year with records for as many as 34 different birds, a new county record. The monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
-	1	11	7	2	2	3	-	-	-	2	6

There was no evidence of any residency for the whole of 2002, but with two juveniles establishing winter territories in November and December there is clearly some hope that this species may begin to breed in the county in the not too distant future.

In the spring there were few records of inland birds and no suggestion of any pairing. However, there were many coastal sightings with ten migrants recorded between 23 Mar and 16 Apr, with three different birds seen on 26 Mar at Sidlesham Ferry; Brighton

Marina; and Galley Hill, Bexhill. Of the five spring migrants recorded at Brighton Marina, three were untagged adults, one a tagged 2<sup>nd</sup> calendar year bird and the fifth bird was unspecified. [MEK]

0260. **MARSH HARRIER**

*Circus aeruginosus*

**Scarce spring and autumn passage migrant and very scarce winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

There were approximately 29 different birds in the first half of the year and 107 in the second half, making it another excellent year for this species. The numbers seen at the main localities and the approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	3	-	8	12	3	3	4	47	38	9	6	5
Chichester & Pagham Hbrs	-	-	1	7	-	-	2	16	7	2	-	-
Beachy Head	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	4	4	-	-	-
Filsham LNR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Rye Bay	-	-	5	1	3	1	-	8	6	6	3	2
Other sites	3	-	2	3	-	2	2	19	21	1	3	1

In the early part of the year there was a single at Pevensy Levels on 3 Jan with two birds present at Pulborough Brooks on 13 Jan. There were no reports for February but a number of migrants the following month in the Rye area including single birds at Pett Level on 17 and 29 Mar. Other records for the month included singles over Galley Hill, Bexhill on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, in the Arun Valley at Waltham Brooks on the 29<sup>th</sup>, and over Pagham Hbr on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Although three different birds were seen on 11 Apr, including one at Arlington Res, the bulk of the passage took place between 18 Apr and 10 May including singles in off the sea at Pilsey Sands, Birling Gap, and Fairlight Glen on 18, 20 and 21 Apr respectively.

There were a number of summer records and, away from the sites listed in the table, singles were recorded at Earls Down, Dallington on 2 Jun, Pulborough Brooks on 15 Jun, over Brighton on 14 Jul and at Pevensy Levels on 20 Jul.

There was a large autumn passage with most of the birds moving through the county between 3 Aug and 21 Sep. In the far west of the county they were very regular at Pagham Hbr with three present on 4, 13, 20 and 21 Aug while in the Rye area there were four singles recorded at Pett Level during the month. In late August and early September a number were recorded on downland with 4-5 different birds hunting over a linseed crop in the Chantry Hill area, including two juveniles on 30 Aug. At Brighton, a remarkable 24 different birds were recorded between 11 Aug and 19 Sep, including 5 W on 17 Aug, while at nearby Castle Hill there were 4 E on 11 Sep.

Single migrants were seen through October but the number of birds recorded in the last two months was noteworthy. The record numbers can be placed in context by considering that the cumulative totals (1962-94) for November and December records were just six for each month (*Birds of Sussex*). The records comprised single birds seen on at least 11 days and, with the exception of one at Amberley Wild Brooks on 30 Nov, were from East Sussex. [MEK]



**Scarce, but regular, winter visitor and passage migrant. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

It was an excellent year for this species with over 200 records submitted. Most were for the traditional downland, river valley and coastal localities, with Ashdown Forest and the commons of northwest Sussex serving as important roosting areas. The numbers seen at the main localities and the approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Jun	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County Total</i>	16	11	12	3	1	3	11	24	24-26
Chichester & Pagham Hbrs	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	2	2
NW Sussex Commons	1	-	2	-	-	-	1	3	1
Arun Valley	2	3	2	1	-	-	-	2	5
W Sussex Downland	4	2	3	1	-	1	1	6	-
E Sussex Downland	1	2	-	-	-	1	2	1	2
Ashdown Forest	4	3	2	-	-	-	2	3	6-8
Beachy Head	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-
Pevensey Levels	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
Rye Bay	2	-	2	-	1	-	1	5	6
Other sites	1	1	-	1	-	-	1	1	-

In the early part of the year there were two males and a ringtail at Amberley Wild Brooks. At the Ashdown Forest roost, a maximum of three roosted on any one evening, involving a minimum of three different adult males and a ringtail. Downland birds may be seen anywhere and the records tend to reflect observer bias. The most favoured localities, however, from west to east were West Dean Woods; Amberley Mount; Lee Fm, near Patching; Cissbury; Steep Down; and the Balsdean area. Perhaps surprisingly, there were no records for Chichester or Pagham Hbrs during the first winter period. The last sighting was of an adult female that flew west over Hollingdean, Brighton on 21 Apr though there was an unusual record of an adult male at Pett Level on 8 Jun, a date more usually associated with Montagu's Harrier.

In the second part of the year the earliest record was on 22 Sep when a ringtail was seen to come in off the sea at Pagham Hbr. The only other records for that month were of an adult male at Bunkershill Wood, near Lewes and a ringtail at Steyning Round Hill, both on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Numbers began to increase in mid October, followed by a record influx in November and December. Although not quite in the same league as the influx in the early months of 1979, the numbers recorded were unprecedented for late autumn/early winter.

There were three different ringtails on the Downs near Storrington on 7 Nov and three ringtails at Lavington Common on 23 Nov. In the far east of the county at Scotney Court GP there were four birds present on 30 Nov, comprising two second or third year males, an immature male and a ringtail, whilst on the following day a male and five ringtails were seen to go into a roost, nearby. Also on 1 Dec there were three ringtails at Amberley Wild Brooks with two adult males at the same locality on 3 Dec. Numbers at the Ashdown Forest roost began to increase with three males on 1 Dec and over the course of the month the composition of the roost varied, with three to four different males involved and a similar number of ringtails. By 22 Dec there was a minimum of six and quite possibly eight birds present. Otherwise, there were a few other isolated reports as indicated in the table above. [MEK]

0263. **MONTAGU'S HARRIER**

*Circus pygargus*

**Very scarce spring and autumn visitor; last bred successfully in 1962. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

**2001:** An adult female at Filsham LNR on 31 Aug (KMJ) brought the total for 2001 to eight. The bird recorded at Brighton Marina on 7 May was an adult male and not an adult female as stated in the previous report.

**2002:** An average year with three records in May, one in June and two in August. The first, a female, headed north over Hollingdean, Brighton on 3 May (IJW) and this was followed by another female at West Hove GC on 11 May, heading southeast (ASC). There was an un-aged ringtail on Ashdown Forest on 12 May, which was seen by many observers (RCO *et al*). For the third consecutive year there was a record for the northwest of the county with a male seen at Ambersham Common on 2 Jun (RJF).

There was a very obliging juvenile at Selsey West Fields, which was first recorded on 6 Aug (BFF, DIS) and, since it stayed for at least a week, many observers were able to watch it at close quarters. Finally, a third year male was seen at Beachy Head on 17 August (JB, RJF, JWK). [MEK]

0267. **GOSHAWK**

*Accipiter gentilis*

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

There was a displaying male in the northwest of the county on 8 Apr (ASC) but with no other records submitted there was no evidence to support possible breeding. Since there is an established breeding population in Hampshire, the number of immature birds seen in this county should increase and, as there is plenty of good woodland habitat available, it is only a matter of time before breeding attempts are made.

There was an unusual sighting of a third year male at Pevensey Levels on 15 Feb (IJW). When first sighted it was perched on a bale of hay. Thereafter, it flew off and perched on a fence post and eventually headed north and was lost from view. [MEK]

0269. **SPARROWHAWK**

*Accipiter nisus*

**Common resident and passage migrant.**

With several hundred records received from a large number of localities all over the county it is clear that this species is widespread and comparatively common. Quite how common could only be properly determined by a spring breeding survey of territorial pairs.

Prey species seen taken included Dunlin, Collared Dove, Blackbird, Blue Tit, Magpie, Starling, Greenfinch and Goldfinch.

There were a number of spring migrants with singles seen coming off the sea at Brighton Marina on 10 and 17 Apr and 2 and 16 May. At Hollingdean, Brighton there were 15 records on 16 Apr of birds either heading west or northwest on a day when there was a good passage of other raptors. At the same locality there were three singles heading northeast on 2 May, which were also likely to be migrants.

Passage migrants in the autumn included six singles heading west on 8 Sep at Hollingbury Camp, Brighton, five singles flying east on 11 Sep at Balsdean and six singles, also flying east, on 23 Sep at Sheepecote Valley, Brighton. [MEK]

## 0287. COMMON BUZZARD

*Buteo buteo*

### **A fairly common but localised resident and passage migrant and possible winter visitor.**

Records were submitted for approximately 80 territorial pairs but with many well-established pairs not reported annually it seems likely that the county total is closer to 100-130 breeding pairs. There was very little data received on fledging success. The main breeding areas remain the same. There are good numbers present over most parts of West Sussex downland and, away from downland, there is a sizeable population in the Petworth area. In the east of the county there are 20-30 pairs in the area encompassing Worth Forest to the northwest, Ashdown Forest to the northeast with Plumpton, Lewes and Glynde forming the southern boundary.

Multiple sightings have become common. There were 12 up together at Chilgrove on 7 Mar, five pairs seen at Houghton Forest on 28 Mar, six pairs viewed from Bignor Hill also on 28 Mar, 15 at Ambersham Common on 25 Apr and finally an estimated 12 different birds in the Chantry Hill area on 12 Jun. These congregations are largely due to neighbouring pairs temporarily coming together with passage birds augmenting their numbers.

There are clearly a large number of migrants, as at Brighton where 34 were recorded in the spring with maximum counts of 9 NW on 16 Apr and 8 NE on 25 Apr. Even larger numbers were recorded at the same locality in the autumn with 50 individuals seen between 16 Aug and 23 Sep, with a maximum of 10 W on 1 Sept. Also on 1 Sep there were eight birds at Pagham Hbr with a further nine in the air together there on 8 Sep.

This species is clearly doing very well and in parts of West Sussex appears to be breeding in higher densities than any other raptor species. [MEK]

## 0290. ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD

*Buteo lagopus*

### **Rare winter visitor.**

A first-year at Mt Caburn on 20 Dec was first reported on the Lewes Brooks north of Rodmell on 27 Nov and remained in the general area into 2003 (JC *et al*). It is the first to be recorded in the county since 1997 and only the third since 1987. [RJF]

0301. **OSPREY***Pandion haliaetus***Scarce passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

There were just 12 different birds recorded in the first half of the year but there was a good autumn passage with a probable total of 35 birds. The minimum monthly totals, together with the numbers seen at the principal sites are summarised as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	-	-	1	7	3	1	1	13	19	1	-	-
Chichester & Pagham Hbrs	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	5	6	-	-	-
Weir Wood Res	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	4	1	-	-
Arlington Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Beachy Head	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Bowl Water	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Other sites	-	-	1	3	2	1	1	7	8	-	-	-

The earliest spring migrant was reported from Splash Point, Seaford on 30 Mar followed by other singles at Galley Hill, Bexhill on 9 Apr, at Hollingdean, Brighton and Pilsley Island on 17 Apr, with two at the latter site on 19 and 20 Apr. There were other singles at Mill Hill, Shoreham; Bowl Water; and Weir Wood Res on 22, 29 and 30 Apr. Perhaps the most unusual record to be submitted was a bird flying purposefully out to sea at West Worthing at 20:55 hrs on 31 May. In midsummer there was a single in the Rye area on 11 Jun and another which flew north at Galley Hill, Bexhill on 17 Jul.

Autumn passage began on 7 Aug with a single at Pagham Hbr, followed by other singles at Hollingbury GC; Pett Level and Dial Post on 11, 13 and 16 Aug, respectively, with another flying out to sea at Beachy Head on 17 Aug. There were nine other records for this month, including two juveniles at Thorney Deepes on 27 Aug. In September, Pilsley Island was the favoured locality with both adults and juveniles seen on many dates with two present from 18-20 Sep. A single at Weir Wood Res on 1 Oct was the final record for the year. [MEK]

0304. **KESTREL***Falco tinnunculus***Fairly common resident and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

Approximately 100 territories were identified with incomplete breeding records for just 22 pairs. A number of nest boxes were occupied, including seven owl boxes. At one location the dates of egg laying were recorded with the first egg laid on 23 Apr and the clutch of three eggs completed five days later on 28 Apr. Whilst there was very little quantitative data on fledging success, the records submitted suggested a productive season with most pairs raising two to three young, with one pair in an owl nest box successfully fledging five.

One observer witnessed a Goldfinch being taken and there was a curious record of a female feeding on a Woodpigeon at Patching Hill on 6 Feb. It was unclear as to whether the falcon killed the pigeon or whether it was opportunistic scavenging. Either explanation is possible (and has been recorded elsewhere) but as a county record it is highly unusual and interesting. Similar reports would be very welcome.

Migrants were recorded from Selsey Bill; Worthing Beach; Brighton Marina; Splash Point, Seaford; and Bexhill/Hastings with ten recorded in the period February-May, three in September and two in November. [MEK]

0309. **MERLIN***Falco columbarius***Scarce but regular winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

Over 200 records were received with Pagham Hbr and Thorney Island, the most reliable localities to see this species. The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	10	9	9	11	3	-	-	6	18	19	19	12
Chichester & Pagham Hbrs	3	3	3	4	-	-	-	3	3	3	3	2
Arun Valley	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	2	2
W. Sussex Downland	2	2	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	3	3	-
E. Sussex Downland	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	1
Beachy Head	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	6	5	2	-
Rye Bay	2	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	1	2	-
Other Sites	1	3	2	3	1	-	-	-	3	6	7	7

In the early part of the year there were singles only, except for two at Thorney Island on 3 Jan (where there was an adult female and an immature male) and two at Ovingdean on 2 Apr. Otherwise there were the usual regular sightings for the Arun Valley, Rye Bay and a number of downland localities.

In the second part of the year there were two early records: at Pulborough Brooks on 5 Aug and Selsey West Fields on 9 Aug. Numbers started to increase from 20 Aug onwards with singles at Selsey West Fields and Beachy Head. There were several multiple records with two at Beachy Head on 13, 28 and 29 Sep and three on 4 Oct, two at Pagham Hbr on 3 Nov and two at Lewes Brooks on 28 Nov, the latter present in that area for the rest of the year.

There were a number of coastal records of probable migrants with singles at Selsey Bill on 9 and 14 Feb, 9 Mar, 27 Apr and 26 Oct; one in off the sea at Newhaven on 20 Apr; and a single flying west at Worthing Beach on 9 Sep.

Several chases were recorded with a good variety of potential prey identified, including Dunlin, Cuckoo, Kingfisher and Linnets. In September there was a fairly regular sighting of one hunting the hirundine roost at Pett Level. [MEK]

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

The first record for the year was an early coastal migrant at Brighton Racecourse on 9 Apr followed by other singles at Pagham Hbr and Selsey Bill on 19 Apr. The earliest date for an inland sighting was 22 Apr at Pulborough Brooks. A total of 11 birds was seen to come in off the sea, with seven logged at Brighton Marina between 21 Apr and 17 May, and singles at Selsey Bill on 28 Apr and 1 May and Splash Point, Seaford on 18 and 21 May.

Of the large number of records submitted approximately 50 appeared to relate to territorial pairs, but as usual very little breeding data were submitted.

At a number of localities in the spring there were multiple sightings, with eight birds present on 4 May between North Stoke and Amberley Wild Brooks, eight at Pevensey Levels on 10 May and a maximum of ten at Pulborough Brooks on 14 May.

In the autumn a pair on downland near Storrington provided some unusual and interesting records. On 5 Sep they were observed hunting as a team, flying low over a crop of linseed, scattering several flocks of small birds before disturbing an isolated passerine which they duly pursued, the victim managing to evade one falcon but not the other. It took just 10-12 seconds to secure this 'kill'. On 7 Sept, what was presumably the same pair was observed for an extended period when one of them hovered just a few feet above the linseed crop. Hovering has previously been described in the literature but it is highly unusual. Finally, on 19 Sep a Hobby was seen to take a Sand Martin and then proceeded to spiral up very high before consuming its prey 'on the wing'.

In late summer and early autumn a total of 26 birds were logged in the Brighton area between 9 Aug and 7 Oct and on this latter date there was a notable record of five at Sheepcote Valley. The last two records for the year were singles at Pett Level and Easton Fm, Earnley on 18 and 19 Oct respectively. [MEK]

### 0320. **PEREGRINE**

*Falco peregrinus*

#### **Scarce breeding resident. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

Records for the 16 sites monitored by the Sussex Peregrine Group showed that five pairs failed in their breeding attempt but the 11 pairs that were successful fledged 29 young. Breaking the figures down, two pairs fledged four young, five pairs fledged three young, two pairs fledged two young and the remaining two pairs, just one fledgling each. Chalk headland is historically favoured in this county and half of the breeding population is still associated with coastal cliffs. Three pairs have taken to nest boxes on tall buildings and the remaining five pairs are located at inland chalk quarries. Although in general it is probably imprudent to release the precise breeding localities, the Sussex Heights pair in Brighton and the pair on Chichester Cathedral are both well known and can be watched quite easily without fear of disturbance.

Although there was a total of five hundred records submitted, there was nothing new or different to add to the reports of the past few years. It is clearly a species which is doing very well and the increase in the fledging rates is likely to reflect the experience and maturity of the adults. [MEK]

### 0358. **RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE**

*Alectoris rufa*

#### **Introduced resident. Population augmented annually by captive bred stock.**

**2001:** A pair near Upper Beeding nested in chalk scree at the base of quarry cliffs, a type of habitat more usually associated with other *Alectoris* partridges.

**2002:** Records were received from 30 sites, mainly from the Downs and the coastal plain. The only sites north of the Downs were Barcombe, Isfield, Vinehall Street, Freshfield, Ashdown Forest and Balls Green, Withyham. The last, the most northerly, was the first record in the area for many years. The highest count was of a single party of 62 in stubble at Lee Fm, Patching on 6 Feb after a game cover crop had been cleared. Elsewhere, there were 37 at Clayton on 13 Sep and 30 at Sidlesham Ferry on 15 and 20 Sep. During the breeding season, pairs were noted at eight sites. [RTP]

## 0367. GREY PARTRIDGE

*Perdix perdix*

**Fairly common but decreasing resident. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

Records were received from 50 sites, only three of them north of the Downs. In the first winter period, double figure counts were 14 at Pagham and 12 at Scotney Court Fm, both in January, and 14 at Marsh Fm, Yapton in February. Lower counts came from 16 other sites. None were found at Goring Gap, normally a regular site for this species.

Between the end of April and the end of July reports indicative of breeding came from 15 sites, all but two in the south of the county. Low numbers were again reported for Rye Hbr SSSI – perhaps two or three pairs in the Harbour Fm/Beach Reserve area, where one brood was seen, and a pair at Castle Fm/Castle Water. It was conjectured that the increasing feral population of Pheasants might be a factor in their decline. There were four breeding pairs at Southease where a covey of 15 was subsequently seen on 15 Oct. At Sefter Fm, Pagham two territories were identified and 11 were counted on 3 Nov. At Halseys Fm, Sidlesham two pairs, each with young, were seen on 1 Jun and at Perryfields, Tillington an adult was seen with five young on 6 Jul.

During the second winter period double figure counts were submitted for eight different sites, not including 65 seen at Glyndebourne, near Ringmer on 19 Oct, which were possibly captive bred. A flock of 13 at Steyning Round Hill on 17 Oct was considered to be “the largest seen on the downs for a long time”. Thirty on Lewes Brooks, including displaying males, on 29 Nov were probably the same as the 21 at Iford the following day, which were described by the observer as the “largest covey I have seen for a long time”. In spite of these observations, the total numbers seen each month during this period show a small decrease from the previous year.

Monthly totals of Grey Partridges from August to December, adjusted for possible duplication, were as follows:

	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2001	37	10	91	93	72
2002	26	32	74	78	32

[RTP]

## 0370. QUAIL

*Coturnix coturnix*

**Scarce summer visitor, recorded in variable numbers from year to year. Formerly occasional in winter. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

Fourteen records were received from 12 different sites. The first records of a calling male came on 11 May from the North Wall, Pagham Hbr. No further records were received until one was reported from Newmarket Hill on 6 Jun and calling males were heard on 9 Jun at Combe Haven and Filsham LNR. One was calling from a wheatfield at North Stoke in the Arun Valley on 24 Jul. The other nine records were all from the Downs, mostly in the west of the county. The last record of the year was a singleton on 28 Aug at Balsdean. [RTP]

0394. **PHEASANT**

*Phasianus colchicus*

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

Scattered reports were received from 25 different sites during the first winter period, all of low numbers. There were a number of breeding records, the earliest being on 16 May at Rewell Wood, Arundel where a female had five small chicks. At Filsham LNR eight pairs bred including three in the reedbeds and, at Thorney Deeps on 23 Jun, a very aggressive female had 16 chicks. Reports during the breeding season came from 25 other sites. The only notable counts during the second winter period were 27 at Beachy Head on 30 Nov and 21 on 95 ha at Sefter Fm, Pagham on 30 Nov with 20 there on 22 Dec. A few reports of dark green or melanistic birds continue to be received. These are likely to be *P. colchicus tenebrosus*, which arise probably partly as a result of interbreeding with *P. versicolor*, the Green Pheasant from Japan (*BWP*). [RTP]

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

*Chrysolophus pictus*

**Very scarce introduced resident.**

A single bird was observed roosting in Blackthorn at Powdermill Res on 27 Jan and was heard calling and seen again on 30 Mar. Also in the east, a pair was reported from Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on 6 Feb. In the west, two pairs were found during a *CBC* survey at Cocking Down on 30 Jun. [RTP]

0407. **WATER RAIL**

*Rallus aquaticus*

**Scarce resident, winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

**2001:** An obvious migrant was flushed from the shingle beach under the cliffs at Birling Gap on 25 Mar. It flew up to a cliff ledge and paused before continuing on its way inland.

**2002:** The approximate monthly totals for all sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sites	24	15	14	6	3	4	1	8	10	19	29	27
Birds	93	61	33	15	5	25	1	17	29	68	125	109

Summing the maximum counts for each site from October 2001 to March 2002 inclusive, to give a rough estimate of the winter population, gives a figure of 232 compared with 269 for 2000/2001 and 306 for 1999/2000, a drop over the three year period of 24%. During the first winter period there were regular reports from Filsham LNR with 25 there on 17 Feb. Counts of 14 were received from Rye Hbr SSSI on 1 Jan, Thorney Deeps on 12 Jan and Chichester Hbr on 13 Jan. At Pett Level, ten wintered in the reedbeds and there were eight reports from Arundel WWT where a minimum of eight was calling on 9 Jan.

During the breeding season, there were two pairs at the Amberley Wild Brooks SWT reserve, five pairs at Glyne Gap Marsh, Bexhill, four pairs at Filsham (three in the reedbed and one at Combe Haven), and a pair at Rye Hbr that was seen feeding young on two dates in August. Two birds were noted at Pett Level on 12 May and singles at The



Severals, Church Norton on 17 and 20 Jul. The number at Filsham should be compared with previous totals of 11 and ten pairs in 2000 and 2001 respectively.

The first returning bird of the autumn was noted at Thorney Deeps on 6 Aug. At this site numbers increased as the year progressed with five on 27 Sep, eight on 7 Oct, 11 on 15 Nov and 12 on 3 Dec. The main wintering site in the county must be Arundel WWT where maximum monthly counts were two in September, 15 in October, 40 in November and 20 in December. The only other sites with double figure counts were Chichester Hbr with a maximum of 16 on 7 Dec, Rye Hbr with ten on 18 Nov and Filsham with ten on 9 Dec. At Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head a single was seen on three dates in November and clearly wintered as it was recorded in January and February 2003. Autumn migrants have been ringed four times at this site, the last occasion being in 1997. [RTP]

0408. **SPOTTED CRAKE**

*Porzana porzana*

**Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant and rare winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

**2001:** One was flushed at Combe Haven on 10 and 14 Oct (KMJ) and takes that year's total to four. This is a slightly below average showing although none were recorded in 2002, the first blank year since 1991. [RJF]

0421. **CORN CRAKE**

*Crex crex*

**Rare passage migrant, formerly bred. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

One was flushed at Combe Haven on 22 Sep (EJC, KMJ). Nine have been recorded in the last ten years, all but one between late August and 10 Oct. [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	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	689	713	627	238	171	97	361	366	872	855	682	718
Chichester Hbr	59	52	39	12	6	nc	12	16	29	29	62	58
Pagham Hbr	28	38	49	13	11	18	16	22	54	35	41	38
Chichester GP	154	127	86	8	7	10	7	2	87	93	97	121
Petworth Park	9	4	12	12	6	3	nc	5	6	4	6	16
Swanbourne Lake	60	50	40	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	26	32	17	21
Arundel WWT	89	64	nc	40	35	nc	131	nc	79	112	96	88
Amberley Wild Brooks	8	2	17	21	7	nc	1	4	15	5	20	14
Pulborough Brooks	17	70	41	16	7	nc	16	20	48	29	20	8
Gravetye Lake	8	8	5	6	4	6	5	nc	12	9	-	-
Glynde Levels	5	-	16	7	16	17	32	27	32	24	15	6
Bewl Water	43	64	92	nc	nc	nc	67	165	254	205	120	105
Darwell Res	3	5	3	2	6	8	13	5	34	28	9	4
Alexandra Park	33	30	24	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	14	29	nc	36
Pett Level	11	36	19	29	24	8	14	18	43	44	12	24
Rye Hbr	38	38	36	28	22	20	26	29	22	17	57	29

A total of 823 records of this species was received from 135 sites ranging from Chichester in the west to Rye in the east, the majority of them being *WeBS*' counts, the main ones shown in the table above. During the first winter period notable counts also came from Thorney Deeps where there were 29 on 12 Jan, Pett Level where there were 31 on 10 Feb and Filsham LNR where 15 were recorded on 17 Feb.

The earliest indication of breeding was five young and two adults on a farm pond at Wilbees Fm, Arlington on 22 Apr. Thereafter, breeding records came from a further 31 well distributed sites, including 74 pairs at Bewl Water where 18 broods had 43 young and 43 birds at Arundel WWT which produced 'many broods'. The average productivity of 42 pairs was 3.3 young. The last breeding record came from Pagham Hbr where two adults and two juveniles were seen on 22 Sep.

During the second winter period numbers are swelled by immigrants, the highest counts coming from Bewl Water, the largest body of fresh water in the county (see *WeBS*' table above). Other notable gatherings were 33 at Sefter Fm, Pagham on 20 Dec, 20 at Thorney Deeps on 6 Dec and 14 at Barcombe Res on 2 Nov. [RTP]

0429. COOT

*Fulica atra*

**Common resident with numbers much increased by visitors outside the breeding season.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	5094	2944	2172	619	452	361	1295	1556	3139	3683	4508	4535
Chichester Hbr	151	60	106	25	12	nc	66	52	80	109	115	149
Pagham Hbr	94	100	97	58	65	12	13	65	136	124	107	98
Chichester GP	2533	958	468	39	44	76	190	188	625	894	2212	2058
Arundel WWT	66	57	nc	44	23	nc	67	nc	58	62	61	51
Brooklands, Worthing	63	58	24	29	30	45	63	76	90	91	32	34
Eastbourne Lakes	38	22	15	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	13	7	15	261
Bewl Water	447	431	400	nc	nc	nc	405	646	1105	1002	710	694
Pett Level	165	125	70	44	30	32	39	86	178	211	80	155
Rye Hbr	663	359	305	103	87	130	249	331	278	335	538	436
Scotney Court GP	545	346	240	130	51	nc	146	nc	300	570	373	272

Unusually, a single bird was on the rocks at Brighton Marina with Purple Sandpipers on 12 Jan.

The first evidence of breeding was on 3 Mar when two nests were discovered at Bewl Water. Breeding records came from a further 21 sites. At Bewl Water, 144 pairs produced 77 broods and 153 chicks, at Rye Hbr SSSI there was a minimum of 25 pairs and at Arundel WWT 37 pairs produced 17 broods. The average productivity of 85 pairs which produced broods was two chicks.

There were few high counts during the latter part of the year apart from the *WeBS*' counts. The winter maximum at Thorney Deeps was 76 on 6 Dec, at Barcombe Res the peak count was 38 on 24 Dec and at Pebsham there were 24 on 24 Nov. [RTP]

**Rare visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

**1996:** The individual present in late December was seen at Glynde on the 30<sup>th</sup>, not 31<sup>st</sup> as stated in *SxBR* 49:66-67.

**2002:** The earliest ever county record was an adult, which flew northeast over Rottingdean on 28 Mar (IJW). This was followed by one flying north over the A27 near Firle on 9 May (TEJ) and one at Rye Fm, Henfield on 10 Jun (VPB). Four were seen in 2000 but these are the only other county records since 1996. Since 1990 sightings have been in March-June and September-December although these are the first county records for March and June, and the first in May since 1984! [RJF]

## 0450. OYSTERCATCHER

**Haematopus ostralegus****Scarce breeder, fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1407	1168	1462	942	581	122	634	1280	1308	1308	1551	1701
Chichester Hbr	718	464	788	527	287	nc	519	1106	1199	1140	950	1398
Pagham Hbr	217	229	226	149	105	83	60	104	70	151	140	76
Rye Hbr	460	447	437	250	178	33	50	10	26	4	390	198

Recorded throughout the year along the coast with the main concentration at Pilsley Island within Chichester Hbr. The monthly maxima at Pilsley Island were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
600	500	450	250	200	250	450	1000	1100	1000	802	910

Away from the coast and the coastal plain records came from three sites: at Arundel WWT one to three pairs were seen between February and August; at Pulborough Brooks one to four were recorded in March and April; and at Southease there were 20 on 14 Feb and 15 on 15 Mar.

Breeding records came from six sites involving 35 pairs. This compares with 40 pairs in 2001 and 60 in 2000. Within Chichester Hbr, a pair was at Ella Nore but produced no young, at South Stakes Island four pairs were present of which only one attempted to breed and that was unsuccessful, and at North Stakes Island three pairs were present but breeding did not take place. At Pagham Hbr, three pairs bred on the shingle spit and five birds were seen sitting on nests at Tern Island. At Halseys Fm, Sidlesham a pair was present with young. At Arundel WWT two pairs bred but only two chicks were found. At Cuckmere Haven a pair on the scrape had at least two chicks and at Rye Hbr SSSI 18 pairs nested but hatching success was 'rather low'.

Oystercatchers were recorded at the main sea-watching sites, mainly from January to May and again in December. No general pattern of movement was discernable. The maximum recorded were 70 E in 2½ hrs at Splash Point, Seaford on 28 Mar. [RTP]

**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Rare breeder. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The approximate monthly totals allowing for duplication were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
41	36	58	28	22	17	10	7	6	27	84	42

Numbers were lower than in 2001 in every month except November.

The main wintering area continues to be in Pagham Hbr, with a maximum count in the first winter period of 30 on 10 Feb and, in the second winter period, of 24 on 24 Dec. Chichester Hbr was also favoured with maxima of 19 in Thorney Channel on 13 Jan and 18 on 30 Nov. However, the largest gathering of the year was recorded at Amberley Wild Brooks where 45 were feeding on flooded land on 20 Nov (PH). A group of 15 was roosting on the sea at high tide off Thorney Island on 24 Dec and one off Worthing on 30 Mar spent long periods on the sea and flying short distances.

Spring migration up Channel was first noted at Bexhill/Hastings where one flew east on 13 Mar. Migration was typically light with a total of 24 being recorded at the main sea-watching sites in March, eight in April and only three in May.

Breeding was attempted at three sites and, at one of these, three chicks were seen. At another site two pairs nested but the eggs disappeared, possibly being taken by a fox and, at the third, two pairs were present and were observed mating but young were not seen. [RTP]

#### 0469. LITTLE RINGED PLOVER

*Charadrius dubius*

**Scarce breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.**

The first of the year were two at Holmbush Tip, Faygate on 17 Mar with one at Thorney Deeps on 23 Mar. Thereafter birds were recorded regularly and at least 21 individuals were noted in March with notable counts of four birds at Faygate on the 30<sup>th</sup> and seven at Pulborough Brooks on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Up to four birds were seen at 14 freshwater sites during April and 3 E at Brighton Marina on 12 May were considered unusual.

About 12 pairs were reported from eight localities during the breeding season with four pairs recorded at Pett Level and regular sightings at both Pulborough Brooks and Sidlesham Ferry. Successful breeding however, was only confirmed at three sites. Six birds were recorded at Pett Level on 1 Jun and many singles recorded throughout the month.

Records indicative of post breeding dispersal included five at Weir Wood Res on 7 Jul, seven at Pett Level on 14 July and eight there on 11 Aug. Records came from six sites across the county in September, the last of the year being a single at Chichester GP on the 8<sup>th</sup>. [AJW]

#### 0470.

#### RINGED PLOVER

*Charadrius hiaticula*

**Fairly common breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	393	126	211	116	113	54	96	499	661	263	414	286
Chichester Hbr	261	44	79	40	40	nc	14	364	415	71	128	147
Pagham Hbr	41	14	32	24	13	10	38	25	-	20	31	4
Climping	8	2	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	90	-	55	48
Goring Gap	5	29	25	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	9	1	3	-
Widewater, Lancing	15	8	6	4	4	3	6	2	38	-	-	-
Lower Adur Estuary	14	-	14	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	68	62	114	36
Newhaven	-	14	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	31	32	34	-
Langney	-	8	3	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	nc	nc	1
Pett Level	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	2	2	2	-	-
Rye Hbr	40	-	47	36	46	41	38	104	-	70	49	50
Scotney Court GP	-	4	-	10	1	nc	-	nc	-	-	-	-

The 1% level of the current BTO estimate of the wintering population (330) was exceeded in two months at Chichester Hbr. A wetland in Britain is considered nationally important if it regularly holds 1% or more of the estimated British population of a species or subspecies of waterbird.

Recorded along the coast with the main concentrations in the western harbours and the main river estuaries. High numbers were consistently present at Pilsey Island, where the monthly maximum counts were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
89	60	94	48	112	14	42	600	288	318	250	72

Other high counts included 73 at Camber Sands on 6 Feb, 100 on Worthing Beach, a regular roost, on 24 Aug and a high tide count of 116 at Rye Hbr on 28 Jul. In the second half of the year there were high counts during low tides on the Adur estuary with monthly maxima as follows: 120 on 14 Aug; 145 on 17 Sep; 131 on 4 Oct; and 124 on 14 Nov, including 60 on Shoreham airfield.

At least 55 pairs attempted to breed compared with 67 in 2001. Rye Hbr LNR was again the main stronghold for breeding, where 40 to 45 pairs nested along the Beach Reserve. Fine weather in early April prompted an early start to the breeding season with many chicks hatching out from the end of April, the first on the 27<sup>th</sup>. On 2 Jun, seven recently fledged chicks and eight mature juveniles were seen. However, survival of chicks was lower thereafter. Around Chichester Hbr there were ten nesting attempts but only two young reported. There were three pairs at Newhaven Tide Mills where at least one clutch failed and the maximum number of chicks seen was five. A minimum of three breeding pairs were at Lydd Ranges and, at Brighton Marina, a breeding pair were seen with three juveniles on 21 Jul, having escaped the attention of marauding gulls.

Away from the coast, there were regular reports of up to seven at Pulborough Brooks between 17 Apr and 23 Jun. There were two reports from Barcombe Res and four from Arlington Res but the only inland flock was of 26 at Horse Eye Level, Pevensey on 12 May.

Small offshore movements were reported in most months, the most notable being on 12 May when 60 E were recorded in 8.4 hrs at Worthing, and Selsey Bill (5 E), Brighton Marina (4 E) and Splash Point, Seaford (11 E) all noted their maximum counts of the month. [RTP]

0477. **KENTISH PLOVER**

Charadrius alexandrinus

**Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant, formerly bred.**

Four were recorded, an adult male at Pilsey Island on 16-17 Apr (CBC), an adult female there on 25-26 Apr (CBC), an adult male at Newhaven Tidemills on 10 May (LRB *et al*) and a juvenile at Goring Beach from 9-11 Aug (CEH, MCU *et al*). Two of these individuals had been ringed with white colour rings when chicks in the Netherlands, the Pilsey female (black K5) in Zuid-Holland on 28 May 2001 and the Goring juvenile (coincidentally black 5K) in Zeeland on 30 May 2002. A fairly typical set of records in terms of number, date and location. Of the 38 recorded in the last ten years 26 have been in April or May while 23 were at Pilsey. [RJF]

0482. **DOTTEREL**

Charadrius morinellus

**Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant, one winter record. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

Three juveniles were present on the Downs above Balsdean on 10 Sep and four on the 11<sup>th</sup> (IJW). A below average showing at the most regular site for the species in the county. [RJF]

0485. **GOLDEN PLOVER***Pluvialis apricaria***Common winter visitor and passage migrant, rare in summer.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	3989	1524	1438	1	11	58	264	1470	1247
Chichester Hbr	2436	1390	1284	1	11	56	242	1048	958
Pagham Hbr	255	134	151	-	-	2	2	31	120
Pett Level	1000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	32
Rye Hbr	273	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	39
Scotney Court GP	-	-	-	-	nc	-	20	300	-

Notable counts in addition to those in the table were 500 at Norman's Bay on 5 Jan, 2500 at West Wittering during early February and 350 at Pagham Hbr on 6 Mar. The last 3-figure count of the early year was 119 at Rye Hbr on 11 Mar. The largest inland counts were 46 flying west over Darwell Res on 4 Jan, part of a small but widespread movement in response to cold weather, and 30 at Pulborough Brooks on 14-15 Mar.

Spring passage was light with eight records in April and a peak of 64 at West Wittering on the 5<sup>th</sup>. The last seen was at Thorney Island on 6 May.

The first returning bird was noted at Thorney Island on 26 Jul. A count of 550 at Lydd Ranges on 28 Sep was the only significant gathering until an influx in mid October when 140 were at Pagham Hbr on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 252 at Thorney Island the following day. Peak counts in the second winter period included 1000 at Rye on 30 Nov, 1600 at West Wittering on 12 Dec, 700 at Pagham Hbr on 12 Dec, 1200 in Thorney Channel on 22 Dec and 450 at Rye Hbr on 31 Dec.

The peak inland counts were 53 at Rackham Hill on 18 Oct, 55 at Pulborough Brooks on 30 Oct and 28 at Glynde Levels on 13 Dec. [PMB]

0486. **GREY PLOVER***Pluvialis squatarola*

**Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total:</i>	3173	3983	2282	359	105	70	79	760	1732	981	2406	2057
Chichester Hbr	2477	3180	1576	43	25	Nc	69	570	1408	603	1618	1700
Pagham Hbr	426	584	585	304	68	70	10	178	308	374	699	254
Rye Hbr	3	-	41	2	12	-	-	-	-	3	31	18

The 1% level of the current BTO estimate of the wintering population for this species of 530 was exceeded by all the winter counts at Chichester Hbr and five of those at Pagham Hbr.

Other notable counts were 105 at Goring Gap on 5 Jan, 70 on Worthing Beach on 31 Jan and 82 at Rye Hbr on 2 Feb. Movements of 169 W and 300 W at Selsey Bill on 29 Jan and 5 Feb are presumed to refer to local feeding movements. High counts at Pilsey Sands included 550 on 7 Sep and 700 on 8 Oct while 118 were at Worthing Beach on 23 Nov. Singles on the scrape at Pett Level on 31 Jul and 22 Sep were unusual.

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

	Mar	Apr	May	Total
Selsey Bill	19	53	65	137
Worthing Beach	-	-	58	58
Brighton Marina	5	64	171	240
Splash Point, Seaford	-	8	37	45
Bexhill / Hastings	18	5	13	36

Spring passage was poor with peak movements at Brighton Marina of 40 E on 7 Apr, 52 E on 8 May and 53 E on 12 May.

Notable movements in autumn included 57 W at Bexhill/Hastings on 2 Sep and, at Selsey Bill, 20 W on 12 Jul and 200 W on 3 Dec.

Inland records comprised singles at Pulborough Brooks from 28-31 Mar, with two reported on the 30<sup>th</sup> and on 9 May, and at Arlington Reservoir from 25-27 Sep. [PMB]

0493. **LAPWING***Vanellus vanellus*

**Scarce breeder and very common winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	15441	8624	1553	361	234	567	1679	1953	3144	1953	11851	8129
Chichester Hbr	3586	2397	549	83	29	nc	168	397	486	805	1040	1882
Pagham Hbr	1715	910	267	22	22	24	71	162	339	95	907	800
Amberley Wild Brooks	173	438	43	32	24	nc	106	4	29	11	917	842
Pulborough Brooks	1273	499	42	54	16	nc	180	135	234	4	1193	452
Lower Adur Estuary	925	622	52	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	232	215	520	421
Henfield Levels	500	600	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	nc	93	-
Newhaven	15	16	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	108	650
Glynde Levels	76	195	153	116	67	84	1	-	-	16	400	9

Cuckmere Haven	450	250	65	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	120	450	450
Pevensay Levels	2100	298	240	46	128	24	234	140	18	124	1000	612
Bewl Water	316	230	3	nc	nc	nc	90	162	120	140	257	30
Pett Level	600	249	2	-	12	1	281	432	457	300	320	570
Rye Hbr	2779	1840	104	18	24	432	562	539	1047	37	3140	1096
Scotney Court GP	-	-	30	6	5	nc	50	nc	50	2	1500	200

Notable counts in addition to those in the *WeBS*' table included 174 west over Darwell Res on 4 Jan, part of a small movement in response to cold weather, 2000 at Amberley Wild Brooks on 2 Feb with 1000 at Henfield Levels the same day, and 500 at Pevensay Level on 3 Mar.

Breeding activity was first noted on 9 Mar. Breeding or possible breeding was noted at 52 sites and involved approximately 220 pairs, the highest total for several years. The largest concentrations were 42 pairs on Pevensay Levels, 20 pairs at Glynde Reach and 17 pairs at Rye Hbr. Seven young fledged from ten pairs on Flat Beach Level at the latter site, this being a typical breeding success.

Returning birds were noted from 8 Jun, when a flock of 22 was at Thorney Deepes. Numbers gradually built up during June, with peak counts of 400 at Icklesham on 18 Jun and 600 at Rye Hbr the same day, these being the maxima recorded other than the *WeBS*' counts until early October when birds became more widespread. Other significant counts in the latter part of the year included 982 at Rye Hbr on 1 Oct, 1185 at Pulborough Brooks on 31 Oct, 950 at Newhaven on 24 Nov, 2000 at Pagham Hbr on 30 Nov with 3000 there on 21 Dec, 2000 at Glynde Levels on 13 Dec and 1400 at Pulborough Brooks on 24 Dec. [PMB]

#### 0496. *KNOT*

#### *Calidris canutus*

**Common winter visitor and fairly common passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	710	256	219	-	50	46	1	49	425
Chichester Hbr	505	162	101	-	5	36	-	31	411
Pagham Hbr	205	94	118	-	30	8	-	17	-
Rye Hbr	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	11

As the table shows, Knot were typically almost entirely restricted to Chichester and Pagham Hbrs in the winter months.

There were a number of significant counts in addition to those in the table above. At Thorney Island there were 738 on 7 Jan, 330 on 24 Feb and, at Pagham Hbr, 248 on 5 Mar. Numbers fell rapidly thereafter with the departure of birds to their breeding grounds in northeast Canada and Greenland. Few records were received for April and most of these were of easterly movements offshore. A few birds lingered in May but again, most records were of coastal movements believed to be of birds returning to their breeding grounds in Siberia from West Africa. Thereafter numbers nowhere exceeded 40 before October. In the second winter period maxima were 60 at Pilsey Sands on 8 Oct, 427 in Thorney Channel on 30 Nov and 310 in Pagham Hbr on 14 Dec.

Birds passing offshore were recorded at the five main sea-watching sites between 29 Jan and 17 May with no records for the second winter period. A summary of these records



is tabulated below, showing that most movement was during May, when a minimum, allowing for duplication, of 254 birds was counted.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	47 W	12 W	-	13 E	3 E	47 W on 29 Jan
Worthing Beach	-	-	-	-	145 E	104 E on 17 May
Brighton Marina	-	-	-	16 E	171 E	61 E on 17 May
Splash Point, Seaford	-	-	50 E	-	70 E	50 E on 30 Mar
Bexhill / Hastings	-	-	-	-	16 E	16 E on 31 May

An unusual record was that of six birds which spent two days in May on a scrape at Pett Level. [JAC]

## 0497. SANDERLING

*Calidris alba*

### Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	69	574	143	119	112	-	5	167	11	22	14	82
Chichester Hbr	12	360	86	119	49	nc	3	160	9	4	1	62
Climping	2	35	16	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	1	-	4
Goring Gap	33	148	26	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	13	-	-
Lower Adur Estuary	3	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	11	-
Glyne Gap	-	-	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	1	1	-
Rye Hbr	19	31	14	-	63	-	2	7	-	3	1	16

Other notable counts included 152 on 31 Jan and 166 on 3 Mar at Pilsley Sands, 120 at Camber Sands on 27 Feb and 84 at Goring on 22 Mar. The spring peak at Pilsley Sands was 279 on 21 Mar, with numbers falling to 120 on 1 Apr and 60 on 19 Apr. A single was an unusual visitor to the scrape at Pett Level on 13 May.

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

	Mar	Apr	May	Total
Selsey Bill	-	15	214	229
Worthing Beach	50	-	124	174
Brighton Marina	5	49	167	221
Splash Point, Seaford	17	-	143	160
Bexhill / Hastings	2	-	2	4

Passage was poor, with early movements of only 37 E at Worthing Beach on 29 Mar and 43 E at Brighton Marina on 6 Apr. Passage in May peaked on the 12<sup>th</sup> with 42 E at Selsey Bill, 50 E at Worthing Beach, 94 E at Brighton Marina, and 101 E at Seaford.

The recent trend of very low autumn and early winter numbers continued with the only 3-figure counts being from Pilsley Island, where there were peaks of 236 on 18 Aug and 120 on 17 Nov, and Camber Sands, with 120 on 24 Nov. There were only three records received for September, eight for October and ten for November, emphasising the apparent scarcity of this species. The only other notable counts came from Worthing/Goring with 50 on 27 Oct, 80 on 30 Nov and 30 on 21 Dec.

The only inland record was of a single at Arlington Res on 14 May. [PMB].

0501.

**LITTLE STINT*****Calidris minuta***

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

The approximate minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
15	11	15	2	7	1	1	11	12	6	8	7

The numbers in the first three months of the year were a follow on from the large influx in September 2001. All, except for two at Scotney Court GP in March, were recorded in Chichester Hbr where the peak counts were 15 and 11 at East Head on 3 Jan and 17 Feb respectively and 11 at West Wittering on 9 Feb.

Evidence of spring passage was virtually non-existent, the only record being 1 E at Galley Hill, Bexhill on 13 May. A summer plumaged bird was at Pilsey Sands on 21 May and the June and July birds were at opposite ends of the county and, presumably, different. They were at Pett Level on 16 Jun and Sidlesham Ferry on 20 Jul.

Reports for the rest of the year were mainly of ones and twos apart from four at Pagham Hbr on 8 Sep and a build up to only eight in November at East Head, representing the lowest numbers in the county since 1997. The only inland record was of a single at Pulborough Brooks on 27 Oct. [RTP]

0502. **TEMMINCK'S STINT*****Calidris temminckii***

**Scarce spring and autumn passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

**1995:** The individual at Pett Pools from 1-3 and 7-10 Sep (see *SxBR* 48:63 and 49:75) was also seen on the 5<sup>th</sup> (ASG) and is best treated as being present between 1<sup>st</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>.

**1998:** One at Pett Pools on 5 Sep (ASG) takes that year's total to three.

**1999:** One at Rye Hbr on 6 May (ASG) was the only record in a previously blank year.

**2002:** Adults were seen at Horse Eye Level on 10 May (IJW) and Sidlesham Ferry on 12 May (AH *et al*). Forty have been recorded in the county since 1990 of which 29 were in May. The others were in April (on the 28<sup>th</sup>, 2001), July (2 in 2001), August (3 in 1993) and September (5). [RJF]

0507. **PECTORAL SANDPIPER*****Calidris melanotos***

**Rare vagrant, mainly in autumn.**

**2001:** One at Rye Hbr LNR intermittently between 16-29 Sep (CB, PMT, BJY *et al*) takes the year's total to three.

**2002:** An adult was present at Pulborough Brooks on 25 Jul (ASC, DCF *et al*) and a juvenile there from 3-5 Sep (BFF, PNP *et al*). Nineteen have been recorded since 1990, all between 23 Jul and 30 Oct. [RJF]

0509. **CURLEW SANDPIPER**

*Calidris ferruginea*

**Passage migrant, scarce in autumn and very scarce in spring; rare in winter.**

Compared with last year, there were only about half the number of spring records, notably fewer in July, and a similar number in September; the August figures however were very much higher (105 this year as opposed to 23 last year). Allowing for some duplication, the approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
-	-	-	-	7	3	4	105	90	2	-	-

Unlike last year, there were no birds seen during the first winter period. The first spring migrant was one at Pilsley Island on 1 May. The total number of May records was seven, fewer than last year's total of 15 and more similar to the five seen in May 2000. These were at Pilsley Island (two, including the bird on the 1<sup>st</sup>), Pagham Hbr (one), Pett Level (two) and Rye Hbr (two). There were two records for early June including what was probably the last spring passage bird, a single seen at Shoreham Airport on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

A single at Sidlesham Ferry on 27 Jun fell right between the last spring and first autumn records and could have been a late spring migrant. It was, however, perhaps more likely to have been an early returning failed breeder. The first definite autumn migrant was at Rye Hbr on 13 Jul. Three more were recorded in the remainder of July, followed by a steady increase in numbers during the latter part of August. As usual, these were mostly in the Rye Bay and Pagham/Chichester Hbr areas and included high counts of ten in Pagham Hbr on 18 Aug, increasing to 14 there on 22 Aug, then 20 on 24 Aug (at Sidlesham Ferry, though 17 were also seen in Pagham Hbr and were most likely the same birds). These then appeared to depart, but 12 presumably different birds arrived at Sidlesham Ferry on 27 Aug, increasing to 16 on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 20 on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Numbers there dropped to ten birds in early September, but then increased during the second week of the month to a peak of 22 on the 12<sup>th</sup>. After this date numbers rapidly dropped off with only ones and twos recorded there during the rest of the autumn.

Elsewhere there were several in the Chichester Hbr complex, mostly at Pilsley Island, with a high count there of ten on 5 Sep and regular reports from the Rye Bay area, including five at the Midrips on 26 Aug, ten along the Royal Military Canal at Pett Level on 29 Aug and six at Rye Hbr on 1 Sep. There were singles on the R Adur at Shoreham on 26 Aug and 16-17 Sep, and at Cuckmere Haven from 27 Aug to 4 Sep. Inland there were nine at Pulborough Brooks on 24 Aug and one there on 8 Sep. The last bird of the autumn was at Pagham Hbr on 12 Oct. [JC]

0510. **PURPLE SANDPIPER**

*Calidris maritima*

**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; very rare in summer. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The species was present at the four regular winter areas as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Shoreham/ Southwick	6	6	-	1	-	-	-	-	4	4	5	5
Brighton Marina	11	10	10	1	8	-	3	3	3	4	9	12
Newhaven	7	5	6	9	2	-	-	1	-	1	11	7
Bexhill	3	4	2	2	-	-	-	1	1	-	5	3

Away from the regular sites, singles were again recorded during the first winter period at Pagham Hbr (where it is now more or less regular) on 2-3 Jan and on 17 and 19 Mar.

Three which flew east at Splash Point, Seaford on 13 Mar may have been part of the Newhaven flock rather than true migrants. On 13 May, the day after the last wintering birds (two at Newhaven East Pier) were recorded, 15 flew E past Splash Point; this species is infrequently recorded on spring sea-watches.

The first of the autumn were three at Brighton Marina on 22 Jul. Singles had also returned to Bexhill by 6 Aug and to Newhaven by 18 Aug, but birds were not recorded at Shoreham until 22 Sep, when four were seen there. There was a single bird again at Pagham Hbr on 19 Dec, but far more unusual was one at Rye Hbr from 15-19 Sep. The largest flock recorded in 2002 was 12 at Brighton Marina on 17 Dec. [JC]

0512. **DUNLIN**

*Calidris alpina*

**Abundant winter visitor and common passage migrant. Small numbers summer. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	13704	7225	12893	187	389	2	61	1977	2531	934	4281	17691
Chichester Hbr	12084	5202	11370	165	160	nc	29	1705	2228	557	2704	15661
Pagham Hbr	955	1031	836	22	104	-	20	118	94	250	931	1381
Rye Hbr	149	530	387	-	107	2	12	126	47	76	399	197

Other notable counts in the first winter period included 2200 at Ella Nore on 1 Jan, 8000 at Pilsley Island on 12 Jan and 625 at Rye Hbr on 2 Feb. Easterly spring passage was moderate. The totals at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Total
Selsey Bill	21	10	74	105
Worthing Beach	37	-	181	218
Brighton Marina	273	75	275	623
Splash Point, Seaford	47	13	155	215
Bexhill / Hastings	5	-	19	24

Peak movements occurred in both mid March, with observers at Brighton Marina recording 71 E on the 13<sup>th</sup>, 104 E on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 87 E on the 24<sup>th</sup>, and also on 12 May, with 152 E at Worthing Beach, 236 E at Brighton Marina and 119 E at Seaford.

The only notable autumn movements were during the period 8-10 Nov. At Brighton Marina there were 180 W on the 8<sup>th</sup>, 100 were at Worthing Beach on the 9<sup>th</sup>, and totals of 323 and 180 were recorded flying west the following day at Worthing Beach and Selsey Bill respectively.

Peak counts in the second winter period included 2500 at Pilsley Island on 16 Aug, increasing to 4000 by mid November, 530 on the R Adur, Shoreham on 13 Dec, and 820 at Rye Hbr on 27 Dec.

Inland records were received from ten sites, with birds noted at Pulborough Brooks in all months except June. The maximum counts were 70 at Lewes Brooks on 9 Feb, 17 at Pulborough Brooks on 13 Aug, six at Arlington Res on 1-2 Sep, ten at Coldwaltham on 23 Nov and eight at Amberley Wild Brooks on 22 Dec. The approximate monthly distribution of inland records was as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
4	71	16	2	3	-	5	24	1	6	6	6

[PMB]

**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	29	4	24	-	-	-	-	2	13	9	13	7
Chichester Hbr	-	3	5	-	-	nc	-	-	-	-	-	1
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Amberley Wild Brooks	-	-	-	-	-	nc	-	-	2	-	6	6
Waltham Brooks	6	-	-	-	-	nc	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pulborough Brooks	23	1	19	-	-	nc	-	-	2	8	7	-
Pevensy Levels	-	-	nc	13	-	nc	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pett Level	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Scotney Court GP	-	-	-	-	-	nc	-	nc	8	-	-	-

As usual, and as indicated by the *WeBS*' counts, Pulborough Brooks and the associated wetlands held the bulk of the wintering population. This year the *WeBS*' counts gave a fairly accurate indication of the wintering population; there was, however, a high count of 36 at Pulborough Brooks on 20 Jan which is not reflected in the monthly counts. Away from the main wintering site, numbers were very much lower, but included ten at Pett Level on 31 Jan, a maximum of seven at West Wittering, Chichester Hbr on 6 Feb, and singles at Glyne Gap and Rodmell during January. A single at Pagham Hbr on 15 Mar may have been an early migrant rather than a wintering bird. This was followed by up to three birds on Sidlesham Ferry during the last week of March, with other records for the month relating to migrants including 22 on Horse Eye Level, Pevensy and eight at Scotney Court GP, both on the 28<sup>th</sup>. There were still 13 at Horse Eye Level on 1 Apr, but after this numbers dropped off markedly in April, following the typical spring migration pattern, with a maximum of three at West Wittering on the 5<sup>th</sup>. At Pulborough Brooks, numbers had dropped to 15 by 29 Mar and only singles were recorded there in April. Only three were reported in May with the last of the spring being singles at Chichester GP and Pulborough Brooks on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

The first returning autumn bird was one at Pulborough Brooks on 27 Jun, closely followed by a single at Sidlesham Ferry the following day. The next was one at Horse Eye Level on 14 Jul with eight at Sidlesham Ferry the next day. Small numbers were then recorded throughout the autumn, mostly involving ones, twos and threes at the usual coastal and river valley sites. Numbers at Pulborough Brooks built up from three during early September to six by mid-month and nine on the 27<sup>th</sup>. With birds recorded here regularly from August to the year's end it is difficult to distinguish migrants from returning winter birds. Numbers were lower at Pulborough Brooks in the latter winter period than in the early part of the year, with a high count of 11 on 17 Nov. There were no inland records away from the main sites in the Arun Valley. Away from the principal sites, autumn/late winter period records included two at Arlington Res on 5 Sep (with a single there from 23-27 Sep), one at Beachy Head on 24 Sep, and singles in the lower Cuckmere Valley on 12 Oct and 8 Dec. [JC]

## 0518. JACK SNIPE

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

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	13	-	16	18	-	-	-	12	-	2	17	21
Chichester Hbr	13	-	16	18	-	nc	-	-	-	1	16	19
Arundel WWT	-	-	nc	-	-	nc	-	nc	-	-	1	-
Pulborough Brooks	-	-	-	-	-	nc	-	-	-	-	-	2
Pett Level	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-

The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
33	28	22	34	-	-	-	-	-	10	22	39

The highest numbers in the first winter period were recorded at Thorney Deeps where the counts included 13 on 14 Jan, 17 on 12 Feb, 16 on 1 Mar and 19 on 2 Apr with the last six being recorded on 23 Apr. At Glyne Gap Marsh there were 5 on 1 Jan and 7 on 17 Feb and at Pevensey Levels 11 were recorded in an area of 25 m<sup>2</sup> on 13 Apr. Elsewhere there were records of less than four birds from 19 localities; the last single bird seen at Climping on 24 Apr.

The first birds of the autumn were at Chichester Hbr and Pett Level on 6 Oct. At Saltdean a migrant landed on a road and stayed for 5 minutes despite traffic on 13 Oct. Thereafter, one or two birds were recorded at 15 sites in the latter part of the year, three were recorded in the upper Cuckmere Valley on 18 Dec and on flooded land at Holbush Refuse Tip, Faygate on 25 and 28 Dec, and the maximum winter count of six on Pevensey Levels was on 18 Dec. The largest numbers, however, were again recorded at Thorney Deeps where the first bird arrived on 8 Oct and subsequent counts included four on 17 Oct, 15 on 7 Nov and 18 on 3 Dec. [AJW]

## 0519. SNIPE

*Gallinago gallinago***Now a very scarce breeder and fairly common winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	237	178	184	100	4	-	6	34	86	183	229	470
Chichester Hbr	64	9	70	30	-	nc	-	4	5	26	48	127
Pagham Hbr	-	4	4	2	-	-	1	-	-	2	5	-
Amberley Wild Brooks	21	1	8	16	-	nc	3	12	30	27	25	86
Waltham Brooks	36	2	-	7	-	nc	-	-	5	2	-	55
Pulborough Brooks	31	-	9	11	1	nc	2	6	45	83	2	101
Lower Adur Estuary	35	4	54	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	11	54	23
Henfield Levels	5	24	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	nc	1	28
Glynde Levels	2	2	1	9	-	-	-	-	-	5	19	2
Pevensey Levels	33	105	nc	19	3	nc	-	12	-	3	20	7
Pett Level	3	22	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Rye Hbr	1	2	32	-	-	-	-	-	1	7	52	-

The *WeBS*' counts for the first winter period were considerably lower than those for 2001, with particularly reduced numbers at Chichester Hbr, Amberley Wild Brooks,

Pulborough Brooks and the lower Adur Estuary (though note that there was no March *WeBS*' count in 2001 due to the FMD outbreak). Other notable counts during the first winter period included 57 at Glyne Gap, Bexhill on 1 Jan, 60 at Veal's Wood, near Ripe on 23 Jan, 94 at Thorney Deeps on 12 Feb and 65 at Pevensey Levels on 8 Mar. A total of 80 birds at Horse Eye Level on 13 Apr probably involved migrants as well as wintering birds. At Thorney Deeps the last two birds of the spring were seen on 3 May.

Six territorial pairs were recorded on the reserves at both Amberley Wild Brooks and Pulborough Brooks in early June, but breeding was not confirmed. A pair at Southease on 15 Jun was thought to be possibly breeding and an agitated adult was seen at Stonehill, Ashdown Forest on 4 Jul. Birds were once again seen during the breeding season at Rye Hbr, but with no direct evidence of nesting.

The first autumn birds started returning from early July, mainly being seen in the Pagham Hbr area, though none were seen at Thorney Deeps until 6 Aug. Only at Pulborough Brooks were significant numbers recorded during the autumn, with 30 or more on several dates, 45 on 9 Sep and a high count of 140 on 27 Sep. Numbers were generally low during the second winter period, as in the previous year; notable counts included 200 at Pulborough Brooks on 22 Oct, 170 there on 5 Nov, 80 at Pett Level on 1 Dec, 100 on the upper Adur Levels on 11 Dec and 60 at East Head, Chichester Hbr on 19 Dec. [JC]

## 0529. WOODCOCK

*Scolopax rusticola*

**Fairly common resident and winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

Numbers in the first winter period were again generally low with mostly single birds at a variety of sites. However, there were several double-figure counts during January, including 13 at St Dunstons, Warbleton on the 7<sup>th</sup>, ten near Parham on the 14<sup>th</sup>, 12 at Horsted Keynes on the 15<sup>th</sup>, and 12 in Veals Wood, near Ripe on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The first recorded roding birds were two at Iping Common on 17 March. There were records of roding birds from 17 West Sussex and 15 East Sussex tetrads (including 13 from Ashdown Forest) and breeding season records (April to July) were received from 17 West Sussex tetrads and from 19 tetrads in East Sussex.

As usual, there were generally small numbers recorded in the latter winter period, mostly singles, but there were several more notable counts, including 20 at Markly Wood, Heathfield and five at Splaynes Green, Fletchling on 30 Oct, seven at St Dunstons, Warbleton on 25 Nov and four at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street, on 15 Dec. [JC]

## 0532. BLACK-TAILED GODWIT

*Limosa limosa*

**Common passage migrant; a very scarce summering and wintering species. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	587	417	600	195	22	28	156	518	527	755	837	405
Chichester Hbr	500	197	347	181	6	nc	131	503	477	688	715	260
Pagham Hbr	85	219	252	14	8	18	22	13	24	64	122	145
Pulborough Brooks	-	1	1	-	2	nc	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pett Level	2	-	-	-	6	10	-	2	15	-	-	-

Other notable counts in the early winter period were 260 at Thorney Deeps on 13 Feb and, at the Pagham North Wall, 530 on 6 Feb and 350 on 19 Mar.

Spring passage included 70 E at Selsey Bill on 6 Apr and 400 at Fishbourne Channel the following day. Small numbers were also noted at other coastal sites including Cuckmere Haven, Rye Hbr and Scotney Court GP.

The summering flock at Sidlesham Ferry peaked at 77 on 3 Jun, 57 on 30 Jun and 60 on 25 Jul. The peak count from Pett Level was 25 on 25 May, with up to ten present throughout June. Numbers at Thorney Island increased from 16 on 11 Jun to 86 on 15 Jul and 381 on 10 Aug before peaking at 514 on 5 Nov. A huge count of 710 was recorded at Pagham North Wall on 13 Dec.

Inland records were received from five sites; all bar two records were from the Arun Valley where birds were noted in all months except June. The peak counts were 19 at Arundel WWT on 27 May and 14 at Pulborough Brooks on 3 Jul. The monthly distribution of inland records was as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	5	3	5	24	-	15	9	13	10	5	3

[PMB]

#### 0534. *BAR-TAILED GODWIT*

#### *Limosa lapponica*

**Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The monthly *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	840	708	912	49	392	6	27	47	367	105	872	556
Chichester Hbr	840	708	910	45	132	nc	27	47	364	105	872	556
Pagham Hbr	-	-	2	-	26	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	-	-	-	4	172	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Scotney Court GP	-	-	-	-	59	nc	-	nc	-	-	-	-

The only other counts of significant numbers were of 50 in Pagham Hbr on 13 May and, in Chichester Hbr, 49 on 17 Jul, 250 on 18 Aug and 540 on 21 Oct.

Spring passage involving birds moving east offshore started with 250 on 24 Mar at Splash Point, Seaford and is summarised below:

	Mar	Apr	May	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	-	29	482	146 on 6 May
Worthing Beach	-	16	387	124 on 8 May
Brighton Marina	1	437	2141	610 on 8 May
Splash Point, Seaford	264	8	605	293 on 7 May
Beachy Head	-	-	410	200 on 7 May
Bexhill/Hastings	-	-	21	13 on 13 May

Examination of the above two tables demonstrates the departure of the wintering population in March and the passage up-Channel in April and May of birds returning from their wintering quarters in Mauritania and Morocco to their breeding grounds in northern Scandinavia and Siberia (*Birds of Sussex*).

Autumn passage was typically poor by comparison with 8 W at Selsey Bill on 10 Nov the only movement recorded. [JAC]



**Common passage migrant; a very scarce summering and wintering species. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1	2	2	18	133	4	24	116	23	9	1	4
Chichester Hbr	1	-	-	16	92	nc	15	106	18	7	1	3
Pagham Hbr	-	2	2	2	10	4	2	7	5	2	-	1
Rye Hbr	-	-	-	-	29	-	7	3	-	-	-	-

Wintering birds comprised two at Thorney Island and a single in Pagham Hbr.

Spring passage was moderate and noted from 8 Mar when a single was at Scotney Court GP. The eastbound spring totals at the main sea-watching locations were as follows:

	Apr	May	Total
Selsey Bill	48	156	204
Worthing Beach	1	97	98
Brighton Marina	204	660	864
Splash Point, Seaford	20	290	310
Bexhill/Hastings	3	80	83

With the exception of 2 W at Bexhill on the 19<sup>th</sup> there were none recorded from sea-watching point in March. Peak passage occurred during late April and the first half of May. The highest daily totals were noted at Brighton Marina with 101 E on 7 May, 99 E the following day and 158 E on the 12<sup>th</sup>. A flock of 80 was noted on Cooden Beach GC on the latter date while 100 moved northeast over Rye Hbr on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

Numbers at the nocturnal roost at Rye Hbr increased from 230 on 26 Apr to 285 on 4 May. During the day these birds spread out, feeding on the grasslands of Rye Hbr LNR, Rye Bay and the Brede Valley. The peak estuarine count was 30 at Pagham Hbr on 7 May.

Seventeen inland records were received, 15 of which were from the Arun Valley. Numbers were generally low with a peak of 13 at Amberley Wild Brooks on 12 May.

Return coastal passage was noted from 7 Jun when 13 flew west at Brighton Marina. Estuarine peaks included 32 at South Stakes Island, Chichester Hbr on 24 Jun, 20 at Pagham Hbr on 4 Aug, 38 at Thorney Island on 11 Aug and 55 at West Itchenor on 25 Aug. The last double figure count was 16 at Rye Hbr on 29 Aug, with the last migrant passing west at Brighton Marina on 14 Oct.

Inland, birds were heard calling over Wakehurst Place on 22 Jul, Crowborough on 29 Jul and 1 Sep, and Barcombe Cross on 3 Sep.

Up to six individuals remained to the end of the year, with two in Pagham Hbr and four in Chichester Hbr. [PMB]

**Formerly a very scarce breeder; common passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1290	1885	1568	631	189	34	1944	2193	2072	2344	2026	1377
Chichester Hbr	808	760	996	433	142	nc	1650	1764	1654	1737	1414	770
Pagham Hbr	235	574	333	196	39	33	275	367	380	468	304	165
Pett Level	79	250	87	-	-	-	19	56	21	50	205	30
Rye Hbr	111	275	79	-	8	-	-	2	2	57	102	392

Other notable concentrations included a maximum of 566 at Rye Hbr at dusk on 10 Jan, 39 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 27 Jan and 200 at Pagham Hbr on 13 Apr.

Coastal movements at the main sea-watching sites are shown in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	-	-	9E	127E	9E	25W	25W	-	-	-	5W	-
Worthing Beach	-	-	4E	-	-	12W	3W	-	-	-	7W	-
Brighton Marina	-	-	2E	6E	-	37W	13W	-	-	-	4W	3E
Splash Point, Seaford	4W	3E	12E	28E	-	-	-	4E	-	-	-	-
Bexhill/Hastings	2W	-	2E+4W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

The peak movement occurred on 14 Apr with 123 E at Selsey Bill and 20 E at Seaford, while 120 departed northeast from Pilsey Island on 16 Apr. Return passage was noted from 10 Jun when 21 flew west at Brighton Marina. The only other significant movement was 22 W at Selsey Bill on 6 Jul.

A male singing on Ashdown Forest on 13 Jun was not noted subsequently.

The return of migrants is best illustrated by the counts from South Stakes Island, Chichester Hbr, where 28 on 27 May increased to 431 on 24 Jun and 1198 on 14 Aug.

The only notable counts not included in the *WeBS*' table came from the evening roost at Rye Hbr, where a peak of 210 was noted on 28 Aug, and from Pagham Hbr where 279 were noted on 28 Dec.

Inland sightings came from four sites. All records were of singles except for four at Glynde Reach on 14 Apr and, at Pulborough Brooks, 12 on 20 Nov and eight on 26-28 Dec. The monthly distribution of inland records is shown below:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
-	2	1	4	1	1	-	-	-	-	12	8

[PMB]

#### 0545. SPOTTED REDSHANK

*Tringa erythropus*

**Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	8	5	6	3	3	-	2	1	2	4	5	2
Chichester Hbr	1	1	1	-	-	nc	1	-	-	3	3	1
Pagham Hbr	6	4	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1
Pett Level	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Scotney Court GP	-	-	-	1	3	nc	-	nc	-	-	-	-

The approximate minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
9	10	12	16	5	2	9	24	12	15	10	8

During the first winter period there were up to six at Pagham Hbr. Elsewhere there were at least two in the Rye Hbr area and one at Thorney Deepes seen regularly, and also singles at Newhaven Tide Mills and West Wittering on 17 Feb.

The presence of wintering birds makes the start of spring passage difficult to ascertain, but three birds at Rye Hbr from 3-5 Mar were probably the first spring migrants. Small numbers (mostly single birds) were then recorded at the usual coastal localities on many dates in March and April, with most being seen in the Pagham Hbr area; four at Pulborough Brooks on 25 Apr was the highest count of the spring and quite an unusual inland record. The only May records were three at Scotney Court GP on the 12<sup>th</sup>, one at Selsey West Fields on the 16<sup>th</sup> and one at Pulborough Brooks on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

Typically for this species, there was just a couple of weeks between the end of spring passage and the start of autumn passage, with singles at Thorney Deepes on 12 Jun and at Pett Level on 18 Jun being the first returning birds noted. The next was at Pulborough Brooks on 4 July followed by a steady trickle of birds, mostly singles, from mid July at the main coastal sites. More notable autumn counts included three at Pagham Hbr on 7, 24 and 31 Aug, and four there on 11 Sep. Away from the main sites, singles were seen at Newhaven Tide Mills and Partridge Green on 26 Aug, the latter being an unusual inland record. Autumn migration probably finished at the end of September; a single at Rye Hbr on 1 Oct could have been a wintering bird as one was then present regularly in the Rye Bay area until the year's end.

The wintering birds at Pagham Hbr seemed to start arriving on 1 Oct when two were present; numbers increased to four by the 8<sup>th</sup> and four were then present for the rest of the year, with five being recorded on 21 Dec. Elsewhere, there were three at Thorney Deepes on 20 Oct and 5 Nov, with one bird remaining until the end of the year, two in the Rother Valley, near Rye on 25 Nov, one at Arundel WWT on 9 Dec, and singles seen regularly at Emsworth, West Wittering and Rye Hbr. [JC]

0546.

*Tringa totanus*

### REDSHANK

**Scarce resident and fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

**2001:** The counts for Pilsley of 220 in Jun, 550 in Jul, 824 in Aug and 859 in Sep should have been for Thorney Deepes.

**2002:** The monthly *WeBS*' counts for the principal locations were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1763	1295	2513	687	225	66	1000	1996	2041	2514	2400	1723
Chichester Hbr	1274	736	1675	333	36	nc	853	1827	1633	1911	1829	1332
Pagham Hbr	260	271	460	136	54	20	81	121	200	258	199	104
Pulborough Brooks	-	-	3	17	14	nc	2	-	-	-	-	-
Lower Adur Estuary	79	86	116	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	69	105	176	116
Glynde Brooks	-	-	3	17	10	11	1	-	-	-	-	-
Pett Level	3	26	11	18	-	6	2	-	-	11	14	2
Rye Hbr	65	139	179	138	75	29	53	48	132	210	141	85

The table shows that 83% of the county total were in Chichester Hbr, the highest counts coming from Thorney Deepes with maxima there of 550 in January, 650 in February and 497 in March. The January count in Chichester Hbr is of national importance as it equates to more than 1% of the current BTO estimate of the total UK winter population.

In the first winter period, in addition to the *WeBS*' counts above, records of small numbers were received from sites along the coast and in the main river valleys. Away from the coast, at Southease, there were 40 on 15 Jan and 44 on 14 Feb and, at Pulborough Brooks, there were regular reports of small numbers with a maximum of 13 on 8 Apr. In the summer months there were maximum counts at Thorney Deeps of 200 in June, 800 in July and 1200 in August.

The breeding records were difficult to quantify because some of them were ambiguous. Confirmation of breeding was received for only six sites namely Rye Hbr SSSI (10), Glynde Reach (5), Lydd Ranges (4), Coldwaltham Brooks (3), Arundel WWT and Sidlesham Ferry. A few chicks were seen, the first recorded were on 21 May at Rye Hbr SSSI where small numbers were thought to have fledged.

In the second winter period the maximum monthly counts from Thorney Island were 1000 in September, 800 in October, 720 in November and 550 in December and at Sidlesham Ferry, 184, 210 and 130 respectively. The maximum count at Southease at this time was 35 on 15 Oct and at Pulborough Brooks there was but one record of a single bird.

Records of birds flying offshore on passage were few. During the spring ten birds flew east and 18 W between 29 Mar and 11 May. There were no records for the second winter period. [JAC]

0548. **GREENSHANK**

*Tringa nebularia*

**Fairly common passage migrant; a few winter.**

The monthly *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	12	5	17	15	25	-	99	203	181	100	34	15
Chichester Hbr	11	1	17	15	13	nc	78	191	142	90	34	15
Pagham Hbr	1	3	-	-	-	-	8	2	29	6	-	-
Amberley Wild Brooks	-	1	-	-	-	nc	-	-	-	1	-	-
Pevensey Levels	-	-	nc	1	-	nc	-	1	1	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	-	-	-	-	8	-	10	8	3	1	-	-

During the first winter period most records were again from Chichester Hbr, where up to 14 were at Thorney Deeps, two were at West Wittering on 6 Feb and a single bird in the West Wittering/East Head area throughout. Elsewhere a single bird was seen regularly at Pulborough Brooks. The Pulborough wintering bird was last seen on 25 Mar and the East Head one on 17 Mar, while at Thorney Deeps the 14 wintering birds were still present on 2 Apr. It is unclear, however, whether the 12 seen on 15 Apr were lingerers from this flock or migrants.

The first definite migrant of the spring was one in the lower Cuckmere Valley on 9 Apr, with one at Sidlesham Ferry on the following day. However, the spring passage past the main sea watching sites was again light, with just 18 recorded and a day maximum of 4 E past Brighton Marina on 31 May (and 3 E past Splash Point, Seaford, on the same day). The highest numbers were recorded at Thorney Deeps (as usual) with double figures noted on several dates in April and May and a high count of 17 on 3 May. Away from this area, observers at Pulborough Brooks recorded small numbers regularly, and five from 6-9 May. There were also six on the Union Canal at East Guldeford on 12 May, four at Rye Hbr on 8 May and three at Henfield Levels on 17 May.

Once again, there were numerous June records, spread throughout the month, which makes it difficult to determine when spring passage ended and return autumn passage

began. These included four at Thorney Deeps on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. The typical build up of numbers at this site occurred during July and August, reaching a peak of 191 during the month's *WeBS*' count. Numbers then slowly declined during September and October to leave just the regular wintering flock there by November. This again eclipsed any other counts, but observers at Pagham Hbr recorded a high count of 16 on 15 Aug, and other notable counts included 14 at Pagham Hbr on 30 Jul, 14 at Apuldram Manor Fm, Chichester Hbr on 24 Sep and 12 at West Wittering on 5 Oct.

Most latter winter period records were again for the Chichester Hbr area, in particular Thorney Deeps where the high count was 35 on 5 Nov, dropping to 14 by the end of the month and to ten by mid December. Elsewhere, there were up to five at Emsworth in Chichester Hbr, a single bird at Pagham Hbr on 7 Nov and one at East Head on several dates. [JC]

## 0553. GREEN SANDPIPER

*Tringa ochropus*

**Scarce spring and fairly common autumn passage migrant. Small numbers winter. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The monthly *WeBS*' counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	1	3	3	7	-	-	22	32	9	4	5	9
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	nc	3	7	2	-	1	-
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Chichester GP	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-
Chingford Pond	-	-	-	-	-	-	nc	-	-	2	-	-
Arundel WWT	-	-	nc	-	-	nc	2	nc	1	1	-	-
Bury Brooks	1	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	1
Amberley Wild Brooks	-	-	-	1	-	nc	-	3	-	-	-	2
Pulborough Brooks	-	-	-	-	-	nc	-	2	-	-	-	-
Barcombe Res	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	nc	-	-	1
Glynde Levels	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Pevensey Levels	-	-	2	-	-	nc	-	-	-	-	2	4
Darwell Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	-
Pett Level	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	3	4	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	-	2	1	3	-	-	12	14	-	-	1	-

- The approximate monthly minimum totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
16	23	30	34	9	45	99	138	50	17	16	27

The pattern of records was similar to previous years, but March numbers were significantly higher than last year, and autumn numbers slightly lower. Records were widely scattered in the first winter period with notable counts of five at the Union Canal, East Guldeford on 5 Mar and four at Sefter Fm, Pagham on 4 Feb. Spring migration mostly involved ones and twos at the well-watched coastal localities, with inland records mainly from Pulborough Brooks, but also Burton MP, the upper Adur Levels and Barcombe Res. The last ones of the spring were three at Henfield Levels on 17 May.

The first autumn bird, typically early, was one at Filsham LNR on 9 Jun. Numbers then built steadily, with noteworthy counts including 12 at Castle Water, Rye Hbr on 18 Jul, 18 at the Midrips on 28 Jul and 15 at Castle Pit, Rye Hbr on 19 Aug. Numbers typically dropped markedly in September, with the highest counts being five at Arundel WWT on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. Numbers in the second winter period were about average and

involved ones and twos at the usual scattered inland and coastal localities, with four at Down Level, Pevensey on 8 Dec and three at Pett Level on 6 Nov, at Bury on 9 Dec and at Shopam Bridge on 20 Dec. [JC]

0554.

*Tringa glareola*

**WOOD SANDPIPER**

**Scarce spring and autumn passage migrant; recorded once in winter. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The monthly totals in an average year for this species were as follows:

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
1	4	1	15	30	1

One at Chingford Pond, Duncton on 14 Apr (KB-T) was the earliest county spring record. It was followed by singles at Filsham LNR on 4 May, Sidlesham Ferry and Pett Level on 9 May (the former staying till the following day) and at Rye Hbr on 10-11 May.

Autumn numbers were about average and very similar to those reported last year, with the usual peak in August. The first was at Pulborough Brooks on 26 Jun. Singles were reported there regularly in July and August, with two on 24 and 26 Aug. Ones and twos were also regularly recorded at Sidlesham Ferry and in the Rye Bay area, with high counts of three at Pett Level on 3 Aug and at Sidlesham on 6 Aug. Elsewhere there was an impressive count of seven on Pevensey Levels on 11 Aug and a single at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 10 Aug; this is the second year running that this species has been recorded in Sheepcote Valley in August. The last bird of the autumn was a single at Pulborough Brooks on 5 Sep. [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	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	1	-	-	1	25	-	39	117	26	2	2	-
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	2	nc	11	32	2	1	-	-	-
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	1	4	-	6	4	3	-	-	-
Upper Adur Levels	1	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Barcombe Res	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	1	nc	-	-	-
Arlington Res	-	-	-	-	8	-	2	4	-	-	-	-
Bewl Water	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	5	2	2	-	-	-
Pett Level	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	3	2	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	-	-	-	-	5	-	11	66	13	1	2	-

In the first winter period two were seen in the lower Adur Valley at Upper Beeding on 1 Jan and 7 Feb, and singles at Beeding Brooks on 3 Jan, and in the lower Cuckmere Valley on 4 Feb and 8 Mar. The first apparent spring migrant was one at Pulborough Brooks on 14 Mar, followed by one at Splash Point, Seaford the following day.

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

	March	April	May	Total
Selsey Bill	-	-	3	3

Worthing Beach	-	1	-	1
Brighton Marina	-	1	36	37
Splash Point, Seaford	1	-	14	15
Bexhill/Hastings	-	1	1	2

The total of 36 at Brighton Marina included a maximum count of eight on 8 May. There were no other notable concentrations this spring, with small numbers being seen at various coastal and inland locations.

As usual, birds occurred throughout the summer making it difficult to distinguish between late spring and early autumn migrants. Autumn numbers built steadily through July and August with notable counts of 16 at Thorney Deeps on 24 Jul, 13 at Rye Hbr on 29 Jul, 23 in the lower Cuckmere Valley on 31 Jul, and 26 at Thorney Deeps on 10 Aug. The high August *WeBS*' count at Rye Hbr included 40 at the Union Canal, East Guldeford. Numbers tailed off markedly in September, although there were still eight along the Union Canal at East Guldeford on the 9<sup>th</sup>. By October most or all records probably involved wintering birds, although four Southease on the 9<sup>th</sup> were probably late migrants as the same number were seen there on 27 Sep.

In the latter winter period, singles were seen at Lewes on 10 Nov; Rye Saltings on 17 Nov; in the lower Cuckmere Valley on 18 Nov and 17 and 27 Dec; at Southease and the Union Canal, East Guldeford on 18 Nov; and at Henfield on 21 Dec. [JC]

## 0561. TURNSTONE

*Arenaria interpres*

**Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Scarce in summer. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	357	659	695	417	33	9	27	263	350	632	553	378
Chichester Hbr	52	82	173	137	5	nc	14	52	40	164	75	110
Pagham Hbr	130	320	273	234	8	1	-	169	134	112	253	79
Climping	4	71	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	115	11	26
Goring Gap	-	3	14	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	42	44	-	-
Lower Adur Estuary	6	5	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	63	4
Glyne Gap	150	168	194	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	106	138	111	143
Pett Level	5	-	25	24	4	-	1	12	14	37	29	8
Rye Hbr	10	10	8	22	16	8	12	29	12	21	11	3

Other notable counts included 120 at Pilsley Island on 31 Jan and 106 at Bexhill/Hastings on 4 Feb. A count of 60 W at Selsey Bill on 5 Feb probably related to a feeding movement (*cf.* Grey Plover).

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

	Mar	Apr	May	Total
Selsey Bill	40	136	97	273
Worthing Beach	-	-	18	18
Brighton Marina	-	7	123	130
Splash Point, Seaford	-	-	60	60
Bexhill & Hastings	-	-	10	10

The peak passage occurred on 12 May with 11 E at Selsey Bill, 5 E at Worthing Beach, 63 E at Brighton Marina and 44 E at Seaford. No significant autumn movements were observed.

Return passage commenced on 28 Jun with a single at Pilsey Island. Significant counts, not included in the *W&BS'* table above, included 60 at Pagham Hbr on 21 Jul, 40 at Goring on 12 Aug, 42 at Bexhill/Hastings the following day, 117 at West Wittering on 5 Oct, and 216 at Bexhill on 24 Nov.

A single inland record comprised two at Arlington Res on 12 May, a day of heavy coastal passage. For details of a colour-ringed bird see page 191. [PMB]

0564. **RED-NECKED PHALAROPE** Phalaropus lobatus

**Rare spring and autumn passage migrant. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

A juvenile at Sidlesham Ferry on 30-31 Aug and then intermittently to 6 Sep (OM *et al*) was the tenth to have been recorded since 1990. Three were in August (from the 26<sup>th</sup>) and seven in September (up to the 24<sup>th</sup>). [RJF]

0565. **GREY PHALAROPE** Phalaropus fulicarius

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

**1999:** One on the sea off Glyne Gap on 5 Jan (ASG) takes that year's total to two.

**2001:** An adult on Combe Haven marshes from 9-14 Jan (KMJ *et al*) takes that year's total to three.

**2002:** Three were seen in the Pagham area during the year, one swimming in a ditch by the North Wall on 9 Jan (DRS), a first-winter on the sea off Church Norton on 16 Oct (OM *et al*) and an adult on the sea there on 23 Nov (RJF *et al*). Records are currently averaging just over three per year and most fall between September and January. [RJF]

0566. **POMARINE SKUA** Stercorarius pomarinus

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

A single was seen off Worthing on 20 Jan (DIS).

A very poor spring with only 73 seen of which seven were in April, 64 in May and two in June. This was well below the 1988 – 2001 average of 183. Site totals were as follows:

	Apr	May	Total
Selsey Bill	-	13	13
Worthing	-	8	8
Brighton Marina	3	48	51
Splash Point, Seaford	2	38	40
Bexhill/Hastings	-	2	2

The first spring records were on the typical date of 21 Apr when a single flew east at Brighton Marina and two others passed east at Splash Point, Seaford. No more than one a



day was noted until 6 May when the peak movement occurred including 32 E at Brighton Marina, 30 E at Newhaven, 19 E at Seaford and 19 E at Birling Gap. Elsewhere that day there were 6 E at Southwick but at Selsey Bill only 4 E were seen in a 12 hr sea-watch. Although birds were seen on 16 dates in May, the only other noteworthy counts were on the 12<sup>th</sup> when 5 E were seen at Worthing and 6 E at Seaford and on the 17<sup>th</sup> when six flew east at Splash Point. The last records in May were 2 E and 1 W at Selsey Bill on the 28<sup>th</sup>. There were two June records: a single west at Selsey on the 8<sup>th</sup> and presumably a different bird east on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

In the second part of the year the only record was of an adult that flew over the car park at Birling Gap on 2 Jul (JFC, RHC). [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 450 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	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly totals	3	1	1	160	159	26	25	33	16	16	10	-
No. of days	3	1	1	24	31	10	14	14	9	7	7	-

The three singles in January were offshore at Bexhill on the 14<sup>th</sup>, west past Selsey Bill on the 19<sup>th</sup> and east past Brighton Marina on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Presumed early spring migrants flew east past Bexhill on 27 Feb and 13 Mar. Spring passage began in earnest on 1 Apr when 12 E were recorded at Brighton Marina with the same number counted at Splash Point, Seaford. One observer commented that these early birds were all typically dark phase individuals. The peak numbers in April were spread out over the second half of the month and included counts of 24 E on the 17<sup>th</sup>, 21 E on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 27 E on the 28<sup>th</sup>, all from Brighton Marina. Although birds were recorded every day in May there were no large movements, the best being on the 12<sup>th</sup>, in southeasterly winds, when 18 flew east at Brighton Marina and 17 E were logged at Splash Point. Monthly totals at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

	Apr	May	Total	No. per hr watched
Selsey Bill	38	88	126	0.31
Worthing	5	17	22	0.28
Brighton Marina	136	111	247	1.08
Splash Point, Seaford	52	89	141	0.73
Bexhill/Hastings	13	1	14	0.33

Passage continued into June, as evidenced by the monthly totals from Brighton Marina where 21 flew east but only one west. There were many sightings along the coast in July including several lingering offshore with six at Selsey Bill on the 7<sup>th</sup> being particularly notable.

Although the species was present offshore throughout the autumn period, there were no significant movements and there were no counts of over five apart from 2 E and 5 W at Selsey Bill on 15 Oct. The majority of records came from Rye Bay where up to five lingered until late September. An unusual record concerned a single circling high over Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 29 Aug.

The November records were all singles other than 2 E at Brighton Marina on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 3 E at the same site on the 21<sup>st</sup>. [TJW]

0569. **GREAT SKUA**

*Catharacta skua*

**Scarce spring and autumn passage migrant; very scarce but increasing in winter. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

Another good year for this species with an approximate total for the year of 147, though numbers were down on last year's record count of 227. The records during the year are summarised in the following table that shows birds flying east, west or lingering offshore:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly totals	5	8	5	44	20	5	5	1	4	32	11	7
East	2	5	5	42	17	3	1	-	-	8	5	3
West	3	1	-	2	1	2	2	-	3	21	6	3
Offshore	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	1	1	3	-	1

Birds were seen on five dates in January and five dates in February – all were singles along the coast other than one at Chidmere Pond, Chidham on 2 Feb (which is not included in the above table) and 2 E at Selsey Bill on 26 Feb. A further five birds passed east in March including 2 E at Brighton Marina on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

Records were received for 13 dates in April, mostly in the second half of the month, with peaks of 6 E at Brighton Marina on the 26<sup>th</sup> and 8 E at the same location on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Typically, numbers dropped off in May with just ones and twos seen on 14 dates at the main sea-watching locations. Additionally one (not shown in the above table) was seen at Pilsley Island, Chichester Hbr on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. The spring totals at the main sea-watching sites were as follows:

	Apr	May	Total
Selsey Bill	3	8	11
Worthing	1	0	1
Brighton Marina	36	6	42
Splash Point, Seaford	12	9	21
Bexhill/Hastings	2	2	4

Most of the summer records were from Selsey Bill with totals there of 3 E and 2 W in June and 1 E and 2 W in July. Elsewhere, one was off Beachy Head on 19 Jul and another was in Rye Bay on 26 Jul.

Autumn passage began with one in Rye Bay on 29 Aug and built up slowly to peak in mid October. The only record of over five was a notable count of 6 E and 15 W from Selsey Bill on 15 Oct. Records of singles continued to the end of the year with the last birds being seen on 31 Dec when one flew east at Pett Level and another was harassing gulls off Lancing and Shoreham. [TJW]

0575. **MEDITERRANEAN GULL**

*Larus melanocephalus*

**Scarce but regular visitor throughout the year. A few pairs have attempted to breed in recent years. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

This year produced a further increase in the number of records for this species with approximately 600 records for 260 different days. There were 35 records involving more than ten individual birds and the dusk count of 44 at Rye Hbr on 28 Apr (PMT) creates a new county record. The plethora of records, especially from several sites near Pagham and Chichester Hbrs, makes it impossible to evaluate the number of different individuals in the county and renders the following table of monthly totals to more approximation than in past years:

	Adult	2 <sup>nd</sup> Yr.	1 <sup>st</sup> Yr.	Juv.	Total**	Inland	Highest number recorded
Jan	18	3	3	-	45	3	12 at Pagham Hbr on the 31 <sup>st</sup> .
Feb	31	7	-	-	71	3	20 (15 adults) at Pagham Hbr on the 10 <sup>th</sup> .
Mar	49	4	3	-	115	13	16 at Rye Hbr on the 28 <sup>th</sup> .
Apr	39	3	17	-	137	5	44 (13 first years) at Rye Hbr on the 28 <sup>th</sup> .
May	31	-	16	-	69	3	36 (11 first years) at Rye Hbr on the 1 <sup>st</sup> .
Jun	39	5	8	-	75	4	17 at Rye Hbr on the 7 <sup>th</sup> .
Jul	38	4	4	9	61	1	7 (5 juveniles) at Rye Hbr on the 13 <sup>th</sup> .
Aug	18	2	1	6	28	-	13 at Selsey West Fields on the 22 <sup>nd</sup> .
Sep	15	-	2	5	24	-	12 (all adults) at Pagham Hbr on the 8 <sup>th</sup> .
Oct	13	8	6	-	44	1	20 at Pagham Lagoon on the 20 <sup>th</sup> .
Nov	27	7	8	-	49	2	35 (including 20 adults) Pagham Hbr on the 23 <sup>rd</sup> .
Dec	39	5	6	-	71	7	31 (including 28 adults) Pagham Lagoon on the 7 <sup>th</sup> .

\*\* Total includes individuals with no precise age assigned.

The table shows that the highest numbers during the spring and early summer are recorded at Rye Hbr whilst during the autumn and winter months most are seen on the Selsey Peninsula. Although the numbers are greater, the pattern of occurrence is similar to most years with the highest number being recorded in spring, adults being the most frequently recorded age group with a notable increase in the number of first year birds seen in late spring.

Although wintering individuals were recorded from several coastal sites, the largest numbers were seen in the vicinity of Selsey and Pagham Hbr where up to six were noted regularly in early January with a peak of 20 on 10 Feb. Numbers declined in West Sussex thereafter although there were eight offshore at Selsey Bill on 5 Mar and 14 adults in summer plumage in Chichester Hbr on 12 Mar. Elsewhere numbers were smaller but seven were at Saltdean, also on 10 Feb, and there were six at Southwick on 27 Feb.

Coastal movements were most evident at Selsey Bill and Brighton Marina and were observed throughout the year with a notable increase during the spring. The following table shows the monthly totals of birds passing the regular sea-watching sites and demonstrates the predominant eastward movement. The peak spring movements at Brighton Marina were 11 E and 2 W on 21 Apr and 15 E on 28 Apr.

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	18	17	17	17	7	9	-	-	-	8	1	8
	W	5	2	-	4	1	-	3	-	-	1	4	-
Worthing Beach	E	-	-	-	-	1	3	8	-	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Brighton Marina	E	8	4	30	50	14	2	-	-	2	7	4	3
	W	-	-	-	6	4	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Splash Point	E	-	3	6	9	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bexhill / Hastings	E	-	-	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	-	-

About 12 pairs bred at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr producing five fledged young but predation of chicks by Lesser Black-backed Gulls may have been a significant cause of failure. Another pair probably nested amongst the Black-headed Gull colony at Castle Pit but no young were seen at this site. At Pett Level, birds were present throughout the spring with a maximum count of ten in early April but there were no records suggesting successful breeding. A pair was regularly seen at Arundel WWT between early April and June and was observed showing interest in one of the breeding rafts on 28 May.

In keeping with the pattern observed in previous years, the highest numbers seen after July were in the western harbours with most, this year, at Pagham Hbr. Here the number grew to a maximum count of 35, comprising 20 adults, seven second years and eight first years, on 23 Nov.

Records away from coastal locations occurred in all months with the exception of August and September and usually involved just one or two individuals, however, there were three at Amberley Wild Brooks on 2 Mar and, at Arlington Res, three on 10 Mar and five on 7 Dec.

This species has been the subject of several international colour-ringing projects and during the year at least six marked birds were noted: a first year with a red ring at Rye Hbr on 1 Jun (originating from Hungary), a second year at Rye Hbr from late April to 3 Jun and an adult at Church Norton on 31 Dec wearing green rings (from Belgium or France); a first-summer at Selsey Bill on 6 Jun bearing a yellow ring (possibly from Italy), an adult with a white ring at Newhaven on 26 Oct (from the Netherlands) and a first year at Pagham Hbr on 31 Oct with a blue ring (from Italy). These projects help piece together the movements of this species and help understand the expansion of the population in northwest Europe. Observers of colour-ringed birds are requested to record, where possible, not only the ring colour but the three characters on these rings.

Single birds considered to be hybrid Mediterranean x Black-headed Gulls were recorded at Brighton Marina on 4 Jan (IJW) and at Chichester GP on 6 Apr (ARK). [JAN]

**0578. LITTLE GULL**

*Larus minutus*

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

This was another remarkable year with approximately 1094 birds observed. The total was the second highest recorded and was remarkably similar to the total of 1024 seen in 2001. The following table of approximate monthly totals shows, as usual, that most were seen at coastal locations during the spring and autumn passage with more than usual occurring during the winter months:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	48	21	133	238	22	1	2	3	25	128	429	44
Inland	2	1	6	4	2	-	-	-	1	3	4	-

During January and February there were observations from coastal sites in both East and West Sussex on 20 and nine dates respectively; the highest counts were at Brighton Marina with 15 E on 3 Jan and 9 W on 4 Feb. More unusually there were singles at Chichester GP on 12 Jan, on floodwater near Litlington on 30 Jan and at Arlington Res on 23 Feb. An adult and a first year bird were first recorded at Chichester GP on 7 Mar and thereafter up to four were noted on different lakes there until 2 May. With the exception of three at Bewl Water on 30 Mar and one at Arlington Res on 13 May, the spring birds were seen on the coast with most records coming from the regular sea-watching sites.

Coastal passage was most evident in March and April and was almost completely missed by observers at both Worthing and Bexhill as demonstrated in the following table of monthly totals at the main sea-watching localities:

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	2	1	3	34	3	-	-	-	-	29	21	8
	W	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	44	207	-
Worthing Beach	E	-	-	3	-	2	-	1	-	-	10	-	-
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	78	-
Brighton Marina	E	21	2	90	211	4	-	-	-	-	39	156	3
	W	9	12	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	50	80	-
Splash Point	E	-	-	20	84	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bexhill / Hastings	E	-	-	3	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	-

The largest movements were recorded from Brighton Marina with 42 E on 17 Mar, 53 E on 17 Apr and 134 E on 21 Apr. The last date produced peak counts of 66 E and 42 E at Splash Point, Seaford and Birling Gap respectively whilst only five were seen during a prolonged watch at Selsey Bill. The largest count at Selsey Bill was 25 E on 17 Apr.

The table shows that few were seen during the summer; an immature bird was fishing off Pilsey Sands on 19 Jun, one was offshore at Selsey Bill on 11 Jul and an adult flew E at Worthing on 18 Jul. The only August records were of singles, involving probably three different birds, at Rye Hbr on four dates.

Autumn passage started lightly in September with the highest count of 8 W from Bexhill/Hastings on the 18<sup>th</sup>. Numbers increased during October with eight double figure counts, the largest, during strong onshore winds, on the 15<sup>th</sup> being 48 (35 W and 13 E) at Selsey Bill, 10 E at Worthing, 36 (17 W and 19E) at Brighton Marina, ten at Seaford Head and five at Rye Hbr. The table shows that during late autumn, coastal movements were in both directions. The largest westward movement occurred on 10 Nov during light southwesterly winds when 183 were seen in 6 hrs watching at Selsey Bill, 74 in 5.3 hrs at Worthing and 49 in 2.5 hrs at Brighton Marina. The other large movements in November were recorded at Brighton Marina with 23 W on the 9<sup>th</sup>, 44 E on the 12<sup>th</sup>, 18 E on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 25 E on the 27<sup>th</sup>. The species was recorded on ten dates in December with 11 W at Bexhill/Hastings on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 20 flying south at Rye Bay on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

During the autumn birds were recorded inland at Chichester GP (2), Barcombe Res, Arlington Res and Bewl Water (3) [JAN]

## 0581. BONAPARTE'S GULL

*Larus philadelphia*

### Very rare vagrant.

An adult still in winter plumage was found on Pagham Lagoon on 16 Mar where it remained until the 25<sup>th</sup> (ARK *et al*). It has been accepted by *BBRC* and is considered to have been the individual that wintered at Millbrook Lake, Cornwall until 9 Mar. It was the first county record for over 50 years and only the fourth in total. Considered to be long overdue in the county, it provided an early highlight in what was to become an excellent year. Although sometimes elusive, it generally gave very good views, being particularly partial to bread thrown out for the ducks. A photograph appeared in *Birding World* (15:96) and two further photographs appear in this Report, including one on the front cover. The previous county records were of a juvenile shot at St Leonards in early

November 1870, an adult at Newhaven Hbr on 14 Nov 1948 and a first-summer at Langney Point on 24 Jun 1951. [RJF]

0582. **BLACK-HEADED GULL**

*Larus ridibundus*

**Common breeding species and abundant winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The highest counts in the early part of the year were at evening roosts, particularly at Bewl Water where large numbers were counted in stormy conditions. Details of this roost can be found on pages 199-203 but noteworthy records there included 33,000 on 31 Jan, 30,000 on 26 Feb, 25,000 on 6 Mar and 6000 on 18 Mar. Elsewhere there were 20,000 in Pagham Hbr on Jan 31, 3000 roosting in Thorney Channel, Chichester Hbr on 9 Feb and 1000 roosting at Brighton Marina on both 31 Jan and 31 Mar. The only other counts during the early part of the year in excess of 1000 were 1500 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 12 Jan and 3000 near Heathfield on 21 Jan.

Coastal passage, although noted from mid-February, was poor and was inconsistently recorded. The monthly eastbound totals and peak movements for the spring are shown below:

	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	-	87	39	151	55 on 8 May (8.5 hrs)
Worthing Beach	-	165	23	294	69 on 8 May (7.8 hrs)
Brighton Marina	-	2900	-	-	1200 on 21 Mar (0.5 hrs)
Bexhill/Hastings	59	255	19	44	204 on 17 Mar (6 hrs)

The breeding season was successful with approximately 1615 pairs recorded. At Rye Hbr about 700 pairs bred with approximately 500 pairs at Ternery Pool and 200 pairs at Castle Water. Although Lesser Black-backed Gulls predated some chicks, particularly at Ternery Pool, the success was good with perhaps 700 young fledged. At Pett Level there were 800 pairs but breeding success was poor due to predation by foxes. In West Sussex a pair nested on North Stakes Island in Chichester Hbr but was unsuccessful. At Arundel WWT the floating rafts supported 114 pairs, which raised in excess of 200 young.

Away from the breeding colonies, numbers recorded during the summer were small. The first notable counts of the autumn were 200 catching flying ants over Worthing on 13 Jul, 400 offshore at Hastings on the 17<sup>th</sup>, 500 at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on the 19<sup>th</sup>, 3500 fishing off Pilsley Sands on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 3000, also hawking for flying ants, at Thorney Deepes on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Between August and late October the species was recorded from several sites but the numbers were small with the largest being 300 at Barcombe Res on 9 Oct.

The roost counts at the end of the year at Bewl Water were exceptional with totals of 2000 on 27 Oct, 8000 on 21 Nov, 12,000 on 10 Dec, 50,000 on 26 Dec and 63,000 on 29 Dec. By comparison, records from other sites pale into insignificance but between Bexhill and Hastings there were 1100 on 2 Dec, 2100 on 5 Dec and 700 on 18 Dec. The winter census of Marsh Fm, Yapton revealed 440 on 27 Nov and at Hassocks there were 800 on 24 Dec.

Individuals described as leucistic were seen in the Cuckmere Valley on 10 Jun and at Arlington Res on both 7 and 24 Dec. [JAN]

## 0590. COMMON GULL

*Larus canus*

**Common winter visitor and passage migrant; small numbers summer; bred until 1963. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

Roost counts at Bewl Water, particularly during stormy weather, were very impressive with 35,000 on 2 Jan, 45,000 on 26 Feb, 51,000 on 27 Feb, 63,000 on 6 Mar (a new county record) and 47,000 on 18 Mar. A full account of the gull roost at Bewl Water can be read on pages 199-203. Elsewhere counts were considerably smaller but there were 1000 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 12 Jan, 2500 roosting in Thorney Channel, Chichester Hbr on 9 Feb, 4000 roosting at nearby Pilsey Sands and 3000 roosting at Rye Hbr on 16 Feb and 1100 in a field at Mill Hill, Shoreham-by-Sea on 17 Feb. During March, the month often producing the highest counts, the largest numbers were 5000 roosting at Southwick Beach on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1100 on the R Adur at Shoreham-by-Sea on the 11<sup>th</sup> and approximately 5000 feeding on pastures between Blackpatch Hill and Wepham Down on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Few were recorded after late March.

As usual coastal passage of this species was erratically recorded but, in keeping with several species in 2002, the numbers seen were very small as shown in the following table of the monthly eastbound totals and peak movements for the spring:

	Mar	Apr	May	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	37	63	-	37 on 23 Mar (4 hrs)
Worthing Beach	30	14	-	20 on 23 Mar (1.2 hrs)
Brighton Marina	1000	-	-	1000 on 12 Mar (2 hrs)
Bexhill/Hastings	38	3	2	29 on 29 Mar (2.3 hrs)

During May just five birds were recorded, the last on the 12<sup>th</sup>, and thereafter none until the first returning adult was recorded at Thorney Island on 16 Jun. The following counts at Thorney Island, which were the largest during the early autumn, demonstrate this species arrival back in the county: 23 Jun – 2, 6 Jul – 46, 17 Jul – 130, 29 Jul – 200, and 10 Oct – 150.

After mid-October there were ten records involving more than 100 birds, the most remarkable counts again coming from the roost at Bewl Water where there were 1000 on 21 Nov, 3000 on 10 Dec, 9000 on 26 Dec and 10,000 on 29 Dec. At other sites there were 600 roosting on Pilsey Sands on 25 Nov, 350 E in a 2 hr watch at Brighton Marina on 10 Dec and 700 on the new diggings at Newhaven Tide Mills on 21 Dec.

An albino individual was seen at Shoreham-by-Sea on 11 and 19 Mar. [JAN]

## 0591. LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

*Larus fuscus*

**Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor; small numbers (mainly immatures) summer and a few pairs breed. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The largest counts in the early part of the year were 60 at Pagham Hbr on 17 Jan and 65 at Rye Hbr in early February. Counts for the remainder of the year were small; the following table, which shows the monthly maxima at locations where the species was regular, illustrates the paucity of birds recorded:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chichester & Emsworth Hbr	-	-	1	5	-	-	8	6	-	3	26	22
Pagham Hbr	60	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	3	-	-	10
Barcombe Res	3	-	-	6	-	-	6	2	7	50	6	5
Bexhill/Hastings	-	3	2	1	-	6	24	8	1	11	-	3
Bewl Water	7	18	9	-	-	1	-	-	-	10	23	-
Rye Hbr	-	65	-	-	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	20

Once again there was no spring coastal passage recorded at Selsey Bill, Brighton Marina or Splash Point, Seaford and the spring totals at Worthing and Bexhill were only 10 E and 26 E respectively with 16 E at Bexhill/Hastings on 8 Mar being the largest movement seen. In a season with few records a count of 20 at Southease on 15 Mar becomes noteworthy.

There was no coordinated breeding survey but the recent results of the *Seabird 2000* study (*Sussex Bird Report* 54: 181-182) demonstrated the spread of this species in the county. At Rye Hbr single pairs nested at both Castle Pit and Ternery Pool and, although both clutches failed, this was the first confirmed breeding at this site. A pair at Pett Level was, likewise, the first for that site. Elsewhere breeding was noted in Worthing, Shoreham, Hove, Brighton and Newhaven.

During the autumn and second winter period most records involved small numbers of birds and many are shown in the above table. The high count at Barcombe Res occurred on 9 Oct and additionally there were 12 on the R Adur at Shoreham-by-Sea on 17 Sep, 15 at Southease on 15 Oct, 15 on the Henfield Levels on 11 Nov and 25 on water-meadows near Bury on 29 Nov. The largest, and only 3-figure count of the year was 220 at Arlington Res on 24 Dec (IJW). [JAN]

## 0592. HERRING GULL

*Larus argentatus*

**Common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The highest counts in the first winter period were, as expected, from coastal sites with 1000 at Bexhill on 1 Jan, 800 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 13 Jan, 2000 in Pagham Hbr on 17 Jan, approximately 4000 at Worthing on 19 Jan and 3500 at Rye Hbr on 2 Feb. The large numbers offshore at Worthing were feeding, in association with Gannets, Kittiwakes and auks, over shoals of small fish. The following table shows the monthly maxima at sites (mainly coastal) where the species was recorded regularly:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	200	-	-	120	42	-	20	60	-
Brighton Marina	-	-	40	750	-	900	-	260	-	850	-	-
Barcombe Res	6	3	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	50	-	3
Weir Wood Res	3	-	1	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Bexhill	1000	300	250	350	320	450	450	1000	560	550	220	150
Combe Haven	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2000	-	-	-	440
Bewl Water	20	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	20	24	58

During the spring a small eastward passage was recorded at Bexhill with a peak of 54 E on 15 Mar. Additional noteworthy counts in the spring included 500 at Beachy Head on 19 and 21 Mar; 300 immatures, bathing before flying to a coastal roost, at Rock Common, Washington on 6 Apr; 600 at the West Pier, Brighton on 9 Apr; 861 roosting at Castle Pit, Rye Hbr on 30 Apr and 120 flying S at Gatwick on 12 May.



A breeding survey was completed in 2001 (*Sussex Bird Report* 54: 182-185) therefore few systematic counts were received for this year. Breeding was, however, noted in Chichester, Bognor Regis, Worthing, Shoreham-by-Sea, Newhaven (31 nests containing 40 young), Fairlight and Hastings Cliffs (29 pairs), Rye Hbr LNR (two pairs at Ternery Pool, a pair at Castle Pit), Rye Hbr village, and at Northpoint Pit, Rye where there were 55 unfledged young on the islands on 29 Jun.

During June there were 300 at Southwick on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 600 at Bulverhythe on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Most of the notable counts in the autumn and second winter period are shown in the above table with the high count at Combe Haven on 14 Aug. Low tide counts on the R Adur at Shoreham-by-Sea revealed 180 on 2 Sep, 228 on 17 Sep, 302 on 4 Oct and 570 on 27 Nov. Inland there were 60 at Rye Fm, Henfield Levels on 11 Nov, 70 at Warnham MP on 7 Dec and 50 at Coolham on 24 Dec. [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	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Total</i>	6	3	1	1	1	13	256	24	19	27	27	11
Selsey Peninsula	4	3	1	-	-	12	240	8*	-*	4*	21	6
Shoreham	2	-	-	1	-	-	5	10	18	12	-	-

\* no roost count in Pagham Hbr

The table shows the usual pattern of occurrence with a scattering of records from a small number of coastal sites until the mid summer influx to the Selsey Peninsula. Twelve were recorded at Pagham Hbr on 26 Jun and 240 roosted in the harbour on 22 Jul but there were then no roost counts from the North Wall area of the harbour until 21 were recorded there on 3 Nov. It was thought, however, that the usual numbers were in the area throughout the summer (TJE). In the Adur Valley the highest count was 18 seen near the Toll Bridge at Shoreham-by-Sea on 7 Sep. Elsewhere records involved just one or two birds except for six at Thorney Island on 4 Jul, five in the Cuckmere Valley on 18 Jul, four at Arlington Res on 1 Oct and four roosting at Brighton Marina on 14 Nov. [JAN]

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

**Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.**

**1998:** One in first winter plumage on the beach at Bulverhythe, St Leonards-on-Sea on 30 Jan (ASG) brings the total to at least three, possibly four, individuals present in the county during the early part of the year.

**2002:** One in first-winter plumage roosted in Pagham Hbr on 10 Jan (AH). This was the only record for the year and the poorest showing since one was seen in 1990. [JAN]

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

**2001:** One in first winter plumage at Combe Haven on 11 Jan (KMJ) was the only record apart from the regular individual seen at Pagham Hbr.

**2002:** The only substantiated records were of an adult at Pagham Hbr on 6, 12 and 27 Jan (DCF, AH, *et al*) and on 3 and 17 Feb (ARK). Two adults were seen in the area on 27 Jan (DIS). One was considered to be the bird which has returned regularly between Christmas and the New Year in each of the past few winters; it was reported as regularly coming into the gull roost in the harbour until 12 Mar. One, in third calendar year plumage, was at Brighton Marina on 8 and 9 Mar (IJW). [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.**

The following table shows the maximum count in each month from five sites where this species was recorded in at least four months. The roost count of 3000 at Pagham Hbr on 17 Jan (TJE) breaks the previous county record of 2300 seen at the same site on 11 Jan 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	4	40	60	60	40	-	58	-	-
Pagham Hbr	3000	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	6	-	-	400
Barcombe Res	24	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	3
Bexhill	146	168	163	37	3	1	9	6	12	59	96	260
Rye & Camber	229	-	-	-	-	-	55	-	-	-	152	124

Additional 3-figure counts were 170 and 131 on the R Adur at Shoreham-by-Sea on 28 Sep and 27 Nov respectively and 220 at Brighton Marina on 11 Nov. There were no large counts from previously favoured sites in the Cuckmere Haven and at Combe Haven.

Four pairs raised eight young in Brighton, a pair on a Newhaven rooftop had two young close to fledging on 21 Jun and a pair probably nested again on the roof of a building at Rye Wharf.

Throughout the year recorded coastal movements were generally very small but during December totals of 213 E and 5 W were noted at Splash Point, Seaford with a maximum of 45 E on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

Small numbers were recorded away from the coast as shown in the counts for Barcombe Res. At the other reservoirs there was just one record from Darwell, two records of singletons at Weir Wood Res, six records from Bewl Water with a maximum of five on 27 Jan, and 12 at Arlington Res on 8 Aug. Counts of 77 at Southease and ten on the Henfield Levels on 11 Nov were unusual. A leucistic bird, in its fourth calendar year and believed to be the same individual seen in 2001, was at Brighton Marina between 4-8 Jul. [JAN]

**Common but localised breeding species; common winter visitor and passage migrant.  
Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

In keeping with the pattern of recent year nearly all the records of this species were of coastal movements. The following table, showing the monthly totals for the main sea-watching sites, demonstrates that most were recorded from Selsey Bill and Brighton Marina and that June, August and September were the quietest months in 2002. The close proximity of a breeding colony to Splash Point, Seaford makes recording movements at this site unreliable during the spring and summer.

	Selsey Bill		Worthing Beach		Brighton Marina		Splash Point, Seaford		Bexhill/Hastings	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Jan	280	7656	73	1470	5080	7283	256	31	8	61
Feb	442	48	6	1	438	323	10	1	20	-
Mar	3	32	-	-	905	-	nc	nc	46	-
Apr	2	60	2	2	1149	75	nc	nc	21	-
May	79	194	16	5	1726	-	nc	nc	4	4
Jun	38	64	-	-	4	7	nc	nc	-	-
Jul	85	193	2	4	108	219	nc	nc	-	181
Aug	10	1	6	-	-	4	nc	nc	-	-
Sep	-	-	1	1	-	3	nc	nc	-	81
Oct	20	101	1	1	64	15	-	-	-	2
Nov	26	670	1	22	590	213	4	-	-	1
Dec	-	1161	17	-	464	44	132	21	37	18

There were 51 movements in excess of 100 birds in a day, on 27 occasions more than 300 birds were logged and there were five records of 1000 or more birds. Prior to this year there were only four previous records reaching four figures and the count of 5000 W at Selsey Bill on 24 Jan has only been bettered by 7000 W at the same site on 5 Nov 2000. The winter numbers, like the past few years, were remarkable and represent a notable change in this species status. Less than three decades ago Shrubbs in *The Birds of Sussex* (1979) noted that "winter numbers are comparatively small, rarely exceeding 20 to 40 birds on any date".

The most significant movements for each month are shown in the following table.

Jan	1000 W at Worthing in 2 hrs on the 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2200 W at Brighton Marina in 1.5 hrs on the 21 <sup>st</sup> and 5000 W at Selsey Bill in 5 hrs on the 24 <sup>th</sup> .
Feb	350 E at Selsey Bill in 5 hrs on the 26 <sup>th</sup> .
Mar	200 E at Brighton Marina in 1.5 hrs on the 10 <sup>th</sup> and 500 E at Beachy Head on the 24 <sup>th</sup> .
Apr	130 E in 5 hrs and 228 E in 6.3 hrs at Brighton Marina on the 1 <sup>st</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> respectively.
May	305 E in 11.3 hrs and 256 E in 15 hrs at Brighton Marina on the 7 <sup>th</sup> and 12 <sup>th</sup> respectively
Jun	21 E at Selsey Bill in 3.8 hrs on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> .
Jul	200 E at Beachy Head on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 129W in 9 hrs at Selsey Bill and 179 W in 1.5 hrs at Bexhill on the 7 <sup>th</sup> and 200 W in 1 hr at Brighton Marina on the 25 <sup>th</sup> .
Aug	No significant movements recorded.
Sep	79 W at Bexhill in 1 hr on the 18 <sup>th</sup> .
Oct	45 W at Selsey Bill in 3.5 hrs on the 20 <sup>th</sup> and 60 E at Brighton Marina in 1 hr on the 29 <sup>th</sup> .
Nov	260 W in 6 hrs and 400 W in 5.5 hrs at Selsey Bill on the 10 <sup>th</sup> and 12 <sup>th</sup> respectively and 154 E at Brighton Marina in 4 hrs on the 27 <sup>th</sup> .
Dec	1100 W at Selsey Bill in 2.5 hrs on the 24 <sup>th</sup> , 84 E at Brighton Marina in 2.3 hrs on the 6 <sup>th</sup> and 93 E at Splash Point, Seaford in 2 hrs on the 26 <sup>th</sup> .

During the breeding season there were 883 occupied nests at Splash Point, Seaford on 19 Jun and 102 at Newhaven on 4 Jul.

Despite large numbers recorded offshore and a healthy breeding population, the number of records away from the shoreline were few, even on the coastal plain just one or two were recorded from only five sites, thus 15 in the eastern Rother Valley on 1 Jan was noteworthy. Further inland the only records were from Bewl Water where one was found freshly dead on 6 Feb and an adult was seen on 20 Mar. [JAN]

0611. **SANDWICH TERN**

*Sterna sandvicensis*

**Scarce breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant; rarely recorded in winter. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The first spring migrants were singles east past Selsey Bill and Brighton Marina on 9 Mar but there was then a 6-day gap to the next past Brighton Marina on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Thereafter birds were seen daily although 178 E at Brighton Marina and 173 E at Splash Point, Seaford on the 30<sup>th</sup> were the only 3-figure counts for the month. The easterly spring passage totals at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Total	No. per hr watched
Selsey Bill	126	1448	2312	3886	8.1
Worthing	69	211	1011	1291	14.0
Brighton Marina	444	2334	2084	4862	15.5
Splash Point, Seaford	265	881	1377	2523	10.2
Bexhill/Hastings	6	36	49	91	1.1

Passage totals were lower than 2001 at all sites although the number per hour watched was similar at those sites where a comparison could be made. There was no particular peak during the spring – of ten dates when over 200 were recorded, five were in April and five in May. The best of these were 470 E, 400 E and 295 E past Brighton Marina on 17 Apr, 21 Apr and 12 May respectively, 311 E at Selsey Bill on 13 May and 284 E there on 17 May. In addition up to 300 were recorded at Rye Hbr LNR. In June 125 flew east at Selsey Bill on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 325 roosted at Rye Hbr on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

In the breeding season a high total of at least 150 pairs nested at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr LNR. The success rate was also high with approximately 150 young fledging from 18 Jun.

In July, Rye Hbr continued to attract good numbers with 500 on the 12<sup>th</sup>, 650 on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 585 on the 16<sup>th</sup>. In addition 250 were recorded off Church Norton on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Although there were still 417 at Rye Hbr on 16 Aug, numbers elsewhere throughout August and September were low and there was little evidence of offshore passage. In October 38 at Camber and 23 at Climping, both on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, were the only double figure counts. Eight birds were seen in November with the latest being a single west at Selsey Bill on the 17<sup>th</sup> and one off Church Norton on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

Inland records consisted of three at Weir Wood Res on 15 Sep and one at Bewl Water on 23 Oct. An unusual record concerned one heard calling at night over Hollingdean, Brighton on 16 Apr. [TJW]

0614. **ROSEATE TERN**

*Sterna dougallii*

**Very scarce passage migrant and non-breeding summer visitor. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

In the spring an adult was reported at Rye Hbr on 26 Apr and three flew east at Brighton Marina on 13 May (IJW), of which two were also seen passing Splash Point, Seaford (JPS, TJW).

There were several summer records. Pilsey Island hosted an adult on 24 Jun (CBC). At Rye Hbr an adult was reported on 5 Jul and was followed by another on the 13<sup>th</sup> and two on the 14<sup>th</sup> (DC *et al*). Two adults were in Pagham Hbr on 25 Jul (BFF, DIS *et al*) and on the same date one was reported off Selsey Bill. On the 28<sup>th</sup> one was reported at Rye Hbr at high tide and another, or possibly the same one, the next day also at high tide. On 31 Jul one was fishing with other terns off Pilsey Island (CBC). [TJW]

0615.

*Sterna hirundo*

**COMMON TERN**

**Scarce breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant.**

The first record was on 30 Mar when three flew east at Brighton Marina. Most spring passage birds at the main sea-watching localities were recorded as ‘Commic’ Terns although observers at Brighton Marina logged 1005 Common Terns flying east on 17 Apr and 934 E on 12 May. The pre-breeding gathering at Rye Hbr peaked at 240 on 5 May.

In the breeding season about 34 pairs nested at Rye Hbr – 30 on Ternery Pool and four at Castle Water. Breeding success there was described as moderate with about 50 young fledged from 12 Jul. Approximately 160 pairs nested at Pannel Valley, Pett Level but success was poor due to predation by foxes. At New Lake, Chichester GP 109 eggs were laid but on 30 Jun, 59 chicks were found dead and by 13 Jul the rafts had been completely deserted. At Arundel WWT three pairs only raised a single chick and at Weir Wood Res one pair raised one chick although two juveniles were seen there on 28 Jul. At North Stakes Island, Chichester Hbr there were five juveniles on 26 Aug but it is not known whether they were raised there. Other notable summer sightings included gatherings of up to 250 at both Pagham Hbr and Pilsey Sands.

Very few were noted in the autumn with the highest count after the end of August being just 16 at Pilsey Sands on 7 Sep. The last records were singles at Bewl Water on 27 Oct and Newhaven Hbr on 4 Nov. [TJW]

0616.

*Sterna paradisaea*

**ARCTIC TERN**

**Uncertain, but probably a fairly common spring and autumn passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The first record was of a single east at Brighton Marina on 17 Apr. The only other April records were two more past Brighton Marina on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 1 E at Bexhill on the 25<sup>th</sup>. In May, a further 572 were recorded although all records were in single figures apart from flocks totalling 150 heading NE over Rye Hbr on the 10<sup>th</sup>, 88 E at Brighton Marina and 350 E at Splash Point, Seaford on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 28 E at Brighton Marina on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

The majority of Arctic Terns undoubtedly remain unidentified and are recorded under 'Commic' Tern.

The only June record was a single at Arundel WWT on the 25<sup>th</sup> while, in July, two were at Church Norton on the 6<sup>th</sup> and a single flew east at Worthing on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

It was an extremely poor autumn with only 14 birds recorded on nine dates. The first record was of three offshore at Rye Hbr on 11 Aug but there were only two further singles between then and 2 Oct when one was at Pilsey Island and two were in Brighton Marina. The only subsequent records were of singles past Selsey Bill on 8 and 13 Oct and the last over Brighton Marina on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. [TJW]

*Sterna hirundo/paradisaea*

### COMMON/ARCTIC TERN

Most birds passing sea-watching localities remain unidentified as 'Commic' Terns.

Spring passage commenced on 1 Apr and generally was well down on last year. The only 3-figure count in April was on the 21<sup>st</sup> when 485 flew east at Brighton Marina. Peak numbers were recorded in the middle of May with the best counts being 851 E on the 12<sup>th</sup>, 1372 E on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 587 E on the 16<sup>th</sup> – all at Splash Point, Seaford. The totals at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

	Apr	May	Total	No per hour watched
Selsey Bill	926	2362	3288	8.2
Worthing	29	619	648	8.3
Brighton Marina	532	1422	1954	8.6
Splash Point, Seaford	473	3601	4074	21.0
Bexhill/Hastings	7	27	34	0.8

Birds were recorded frequently throughout June and July at Selsey Bill and included counts of 104 E on 2 Jun, 130 W on 7 Jul and 200 offshore on 25<sup>th</sup>. Very few records were received for August and September, the last being 1 E at Worthing on 28 Sep. [TJW]

0624.

*Sterna albifrons*

### LITTLE TERN

**Scarce breeding summer visitor and fairly common passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The first records were on 16 Apr when a single was at Pilsey Island and three were at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr. Birds were seen daily thereafter and the peak counts in April were 62 E at Brighton Marina on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 33 roosting at Rye Hbr on the 26<sup>th</sup>. As usual, numbers peaked in the first half of May and several counts of over 30 were made including 37 E at Selsey Bill on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 50 at Rye Hbr on the 9<sup>th</sup>, 46 E at Brighton Marina on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 37 E at Splash Point, Seaford also on the 12<sup>th</sup>. The totals at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

	Apr	May	Total	No per hour watched
Selsey Bill	120	197	317	0.8
Worthing	0	20	20	0.3
Brighton Marina	88	66	154	0.7
Splash Point Seaford	24	62	86	0.4
Bexhill/Hastings	1	2	3	0.1

At Rye Hbr 19 pairs produced a total of 24 clutches between 16 May and mid June. Heavy predation by Kestrels and foxes resulted in just seven birds fledging and possibly only one actually leaving the colony. Elsewhere, two pairs fledged two young at North Stakes Island, Chichester Hbr but the species did not breed at Ella Nore, Chichester Hbr.

The peak post-breeding counts in July were 12 at Rye Hbr on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 21 at Pilsey Sands on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Thereafter, only single figure counts were reported other than at Pilsey Sands where numbers peaked at 42 on 12 Aug. The counts from Rye Hbr and Pilsey Island were considerably lower than last year when numbers reached 40 and 200 respectively. Approximately 14 birds were seen in September with the last being a single west at Bexhill on 30<sup>th</sup>.

The only inland record was of a single at Arlington Res on 13 May. [TJW]

0627.

*Chlidonias niger*

### BLACK TERN

#### Fairly common passage migrant.

A poor year for this species. The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
6	40	-	4	15	9

The first spring record were singles east at Brighton Marina and Beachy Head on 21 Apr – slightly later than usual. This was followed by two at Arlington Res on the 26<sup>th</sup>. The main passage in May was particularly poor with no sites recording double figure counts. The best period was between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> when at least 30 were recorded including seven at Northpoint Pit on the 12<sup>th</sup>, 9 E at Selsey Bill on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 5 E at Brighton Marina on the 16<sup>th</sup>.

Singles were recorded in July at Rye Hbr on the 16<sup>th</sup>, Pilsey Island on the 24<sup>th</sup>, Pagham Hbr on the 25<sup>th</sup> and Rye Hbr again on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

Birds were recorded on 23 dates in August and September with a small peak in mid-August. Up to three were in the Pagham Hbr area between 1-11 Aug and up to nine were at Pilsey Island between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. The only other birds in August were singles at Sidlesham Ferry on the 14<sup>th</sup> and juvenile at Rye Hbr on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. The most notable records in September were singles at Pagham Hbr from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> and at Arlington Res from the 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>, two at Pagham Hbr on the 10<sup>th</sup> and two at Bexhill on the 15<sup>th</sup>. The last record was a single at Pilsey Island on the 20<sup>th</sup>. [TJW]

### AUK species

*Auk spp.*

Although total numbers for the year were down by 31% on the previous year's record figures, they still exceeded those for 2000, which were quite exceptional at the time. In 2002 the largest numbers were recorded in January with a continual westerly movement just offshore at Worthing and a more distant easterly movement, suggesting that birds were doing a circuit to find shoals of fish on which to feed, making accurate counting difficult.

The following are approximate monthly totals (including positively identified Guillemots and Razorbills) recorded at the main sea-watching localities;

Direction	Jan-Feb			Mar-May			Jun-Jul		Aug-Oct		Nov-Dec		
	E	o/s	W	E	o/s	W	E	W	E	W	E	o/s	W
Selsey Bill	437	-	18076	36	-	34	10	14	14	21	8	-	70
Worthing Beach	1206	2100	1877	9	-	1	-	-	2	3	214	-	56
Brighton Marina	17783	3750	11878	446	-	34	11	1	56	32	3549	-	887
Splash Point, Seaford	2226	60	819	253	-	7	-	-	-	-	309	5	27
Bexhill/Hastings	7	-	203	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9

At Brighton Marina the record large numbers at the end of December 2001 continued into the first week of January 2002. There were 4190 E and 750 offshore on the 1<sup>st</sup>; 5930 E and 1000 offshore on the 2<sup>nd</sup>; 1420 E and 500 offshore on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 1575 E and 1500 offshore on the 4<sup>th</sup>. Numbers were less until the 8<sup>th</sup> when there were 71 E and 35 W at Selsey Bill; 1000 E at each of Goring, Worthing and Shoreham; 850 E at Brighton Marina; and 676 E and 6 W at Seaford. On the 13<sup>th</sup> there were 130 E and 1765 W at Brighton Marina. Numbers were less then until the 19<sup>th</sup> when there were 1700 W at Worthing and 1860 W at Brighton Marina. On the 20<sup>th</sup> there were 2000 offshore at Worthing whilst at Brighton Marina there were 250 E and 2130 W. From the 22<sup>nd</sup> numbers are perhaps best appreciated from the following table:

Date	Hours	Selsey Bill		Brighton Marina		
		W	Ratio Razorbills:Guillemots	Hours	E	W
22 Jan	4.8	3000	60:40	1.0	-	380
23 Jan	5.5	6000	60:40	0.3	-	100
24 Jan	5.0	5000	90:10	1.0	65	1220
26 Jan	4.0	1200	20:80	2.0	-	1100
27 Jan	6.0	2062	20:80	1.0	-	285
29 Jan	4.5	800	20:80	4.5	-	540
30 Jan	3.5	220		3.3	435	550

It is interesting to note the greater proportion of Razorbills on 22-24 Jan compared to the more normal 20%.

Numbers were low in November with monthly totals at Brighton Marina of 254 E and 67 W but increased in December with 3295 E and 820 W in 44 hrs on 22 dates from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup>. The most notable movements were 344 E and 11 W on the 11<sup>th</sup>, 615 E on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 180 E and 310 W on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Oil was reported to have affected several auks amongst the 2000 seen offshore from Worthing Beach on 20 Jan. [DEGC]

## 0634. GUILLEMOT

*Uria aalge*

**Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; formerly bred. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
799	49	4	3	44	15	8	-	2	6	9	119

Although the total for the year was seemingly lower than those for the previous two years, the monthly totals above should be treated with caution given that observers at Brighton Marina did not report numbers of specifically identified auks at this site. The totals recorded at the main sea-watching localities were as follows:

Jan-Feb	Mar-May	Jun-Jul	Aug-Oct	Nov-Dec



Direction	E	o/s	W	E	o/s	W	E	o/s	W	E	o/s	W	E	o/s	W
Selsey Bill	25	5	30	10	-	12	2	4	17	1	1	1	1	-	7
Worthing beach	5	50	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	24	-	4
Brighton Marina	see auk species														
Splash Point, Seaford	32	19	1	21	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	5	-
Bexhill/Hastings	5	-	49	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	18	49

There were noticeably less than usual seen in both February and December. The large numbers in January included 50 offshore at Shoreham on the 8<sup>th</sup>, 46 W at Bexhill/Hastings on the 21<sup>st</sup>, 50 offshore at Worthing Beach on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, when there were also 370 W at Lancing, mainly in flocks of 10 – 20. At Selsey East Beach there were 50 W on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

In December the best counts were 2 W and 19 E at Worthing on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 49 W and 13 offshore at Bexhill/Hastings on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

Thirteen oiled birds were recorded: one at Brighton Marina on 8 Jan and 12 picked up dead at Rye Bay on 1 Feb. Four other birds found dead during the year were not oiled. [DEGC]

## 0636. RAZORBILL

*Alca torda*

**Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; formerly bred. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The approximate monthly totals were as follows though, as with Guillemot, these should be treated with caution as observers at Brighton Marina did not report numbers of specifically identified auks:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
816	35	2	5	27	16	4	-	1	14	13	207

The total for the year of 1140 was considerably less than the record figure for the previous year and more in keeping with that for 2000.

The following are the totals recorded at the main sea-watching localities, which were overshadowed by counts at Shoreham of 300 offshore on 8 Jan and a further 300 on the 18<sup>th</sup>:

Direction	Jan-Feb			Mar-May			Jun-Jul			Aug-Oct			Nov-Dec		
	E	o/s	W	E	o/s	W	E	W	E	o/s	W	E	o/s	W	
Selsey Bill	84	2	24	3	-	6	8	10	4	1	3	48	1	142	
Worthing Beach	2	-	-	4	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	6	1	
Brighton Marina	see auk species														
Splash Point, Seaford	102	4	7	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	
Bexhill/Hastings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	7	

On 8 Jan there were 28 E and two offshore at Seaford and 23 E at Selsey Bill. A further 42 flew E at Seaford the following day and on the 13<sup>th</sup> at Brighton Marina there were five amongst the boats in the harbour. In February there were 11 E at Seaford on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

In December at Selsey Bill there were 35 E on the 15<sup>th</sup>, 12 E on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 125 W on the 29<sup>th</sup>. One was found dead at Pagham Hbr on 30 Nov and a juvenile with an oiled breast was found dead at East Wittering on 29 Dec. [DEGC]

0647. **LITTLE AUK**

*Alle alle*

**Scarce autumn passage migrant and winter visitor.**

There were less than half the number seen last year, but there was still a good total of 15 live birds and one dead. The only record for the early part of the year was of 2 E at Brighton Marina on 28 Jan (IJW). In the latter part of the year most were seen at Brighton Marina, the first were 2 E there on 12 Nov and 1 E on the 13<sup>th</sup> (IJW) followed on the 19<sup>th</sup> by singles (perhaps the same) passing east at 08:45 GMT at Selsey Bill (TJE, AH *et al*) and at 09:37 GMT at Goring Gap (CEH). The next to appear was again at Brighton Marina on the 20<sup>th</sup> (IJW) with another at Ovingdean Beach on the 23<sup>rd</sup> (ITB). A further six birds were recorded at Brighton Marina comprising singles flying east on 24 Nov and 14 Dec, 1 E and 2 W on 27 Nov and one actually inside the Marina on 26 Nov that was found at dusk and photographed hugging the west arm before swimming out of the harbour entrance (all IJW). The dead bird was found at Pagham on 19 Dec. [DEGC]

0654. **PUFFIN**

*Fratercula arctica*

**Very scarce visitor, most frequently recorded in spring. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

Almost a repeat performance of last year for both time and place. Two single birds flew east at Brighton Marina, one on 26 Apr and the other on 12 May (both IJW). This brings the total since 1962 to 75. [DEGC]

0665. **FERAL ROCK DOVE**

*Columba livia*

**Common Resident.**

Thirty-five records were submitted. In the first half of the year the largest flock reported was to be found under Phoenix Bridge in Lewes where a maximum of 70 birds was seen regularly between January and June. A similar number was recorded at this site in December. In the latter part of the year there was a flock of 130 birds at Crawley in early November. Regular reports were received from Marsh Fm, Yapton, Sefton Fm, Pagham and Hotham Park, Bognor. Flock sizes were modest and diminished during the main breeding season. Confirmed breeding was reported from two sites only. In Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath adults with juveniles were seen in March and June respectively. [DEC]

0668. **STOCK DOVE**

*Columba oenas*

**Common resident and possible winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

January records included monthly maximum counts of 30 at Barcombe Res and 26 at Pett Level. By far the largest group seen in the early part of the year was 120 at Pagham North Fields in February. Other flocks of 20-30 birds were located early in the year feeding in cultivated fields or stubbles. Generally, numbers were lower than in 2001.

Males were recorded calling by the end of March at the Old Lodge Estate, Ashdown Forest and Mill Bay, Robertsbridge. The number of confirmed breeding records at about

40 was down from 60 in 2001. Nest boxes continue to attract this species and 25 records of successful breeding in boxes were received although this figure was slightly down on last year. There were of course many more recorded as 'seen' or 'probable' during the breeding season. However apart from the drop in numbers recorded, noted above, there does not appear to be any obvious change in the breeding status in the County.

Autumn movements were observed in October and November with 86 moving west past Galley Hill, Bexhill on 28 Oct and 500 with 2000 Woodpigeons at Beachy Head on 3 Nov. The largest winter flock was 300 at Thorney Island on 14 Dec. No other count exceeded the 45 at Pulborough Brooks on 16 Dec. [DEC]

#### 0670. **WOODPIGEON**

*Columba palumbus*

##### **Abundant resident and winter visitor.**

Several flocks of between 200-300 birds were noted mainly in West Sussex in January. Further to the east there were 400 at Bewl Water on 21 Jan. The monthly maximum at Southease in February was 4000. A large flock of *ca.* 3000 birds was seen in flight at Ladies Mile Reserve, Brighton on 5 Mar. Five hundred flew north at Pett Level on 14 Apr.

Confirmed breeding was first reported in April at Hotham Park, Bognor; and Hassocks. There were 30 confirmed breeding reports, which involved perhaps 50-60 pairs. Records came from all over the county but are, without doubt, a massive understatement of the true breeding status of this species.

Movement in the second half of 2002 began in mid-October with 500 birds noted moving out to sea from over Beachy Head on the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup>. There was a southwesterly movement of 1500 from the same site on 28 Oct and on the same day over 9000 were counted in 2.5 hrs watching at Bexhill/Hastings. The movement continued into November with a westerly movement of substantial flocks recorded from Rye Hbr to Brighton. Between 28 Oct and 9 Nov over 28,000 were observed with a maximum of just over 11,000 moving west on 4 Nov at the latter site. By the middle of November the flocks had fallen to, for example, a modest 2500, counted on the 16<sup>th</sup> at Selsey Bill. [DEC]

#### 0684. **COLLARED DOVE**

*Streptopelia decaocto*

##### **Very common resident.**

A group of at least 50 was noted in a Hassocks garden on 21 Jan but the only other large count reported in the first three months of the year was a monthly maximum of 60 in March at Southease, a site which is regularly watched. There were no confirmed breeding records during this period although copulation was noted on 2 Feb at Haywards Heath.

Between April and August 12 breeding pairs were observed at Southease. However, the number of breeding records submitted was, as usual, somewhat haphazard and scattered and more commonly from areas near human habitation. There appears to be no change of status for this species.

Later in the year the largest monthly counts came from Southease with 80 in October. A group of 40 flying east at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton was the largest movement seen. A garden feeding station attracted a maximum of 54 birds in December at Icklesham. A

final confirmed breeding report came from Littleworth, Partridge Green where a pair was found nesting in a conifer on 27 Dec. [DEC]

0687. **TURTLE DOVE**

*Streptopelia turtur*

**Fairly common, but declining summer visitor and passage migrant. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

The first spring record came on 18 Apr at Horn's Cross near Northiam followed by singles at Shopham Bridge, Byworth; and Pett Level on the 20<sup>th</sup>. The main arrival period was in May with coastal records for most days in the early part of the month and more inland records, as would be expected, as the month progressed. During the arrival period most reports were of only one or two birds, although four were recorded at Beachy Head on 12 May.

There were nearly 40 reports of singing males but only a handful of confirmed breeding records. Six singing males were noted at Bewl Water between May and August and between five and ten pairs were present at Rye Hbr SSSI. The number of birds seen during the likely breeding period on Ashdown Forest was about half of the 22 noted in 2001.

The largest gatherings at the end of the summer were 11 at Rye Hbr on 31 Jul; all the other groups reaching double figures were recorded in the extreme west at Thorney Island with counts of between 12 and 20 in August. Numbers dwindled through September with the last record at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 3 Oct.

A summary of the five years research into the decline of the Turtle Dove in Britain by Stephen Browne and Nicholas Aebischer of *The Game Conservancy* can be found in *BTO News* 245. [DEC]

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

*Psittacula krameri*

**Very scarce introduced breeding resident.**

This species was reported from just five sites and all, except one at Galley Hill, Bexhill on 12 Mar and 17 Dec, were recorded on just one date. A bird possibly roosted at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on 26 Jan; two at Ifield Wood, near Crawley, on 20 Apr; one flew north over Birling Gap on 31 Aug and one was seen at Maidenbower, Three Bridges on 12 Oct. [DEC]

0724. **CUCKOO**

*Cuculus canorus*

**Fairly common summer visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

Overall the number of records for this species during 2002 belies some reports of a decline in numbers. There were approximately 300 records submitted, with some likely duplication, for a species whose voice can be heard over deceptively great distances. Observers at Beachy Head noted it was "an excellent year" for the species.

The first record was of a singing male at Pippingford Park, Ashdown Forest on 4 Apr while on the next day a record came from the University of Sussex. From 9 Apr there were reports of one or two birds on most days for the rest of the month. These records

came from widely scattered localities within the county with the notable exception of Pevensey Levels, where a single on Hooe Level on 16 May was the only report from this area.

Confirmed breeding records were few but a newly fledged bird was seen being fed by Meadow Pipits at the Old Lodge Reserve, Ashdown Forest on 26 Jun and pipits were again the host to another recently fledged juvenile at the Garden of Eden, Ashdown Forest on 20 Jul. There was confirmed breeding of four pairs at Filsham LNR. Over 50 reports of singing/calling males were received.

Birds were leaving through August and September with the last record for the year of a juvenile at Whitehawk, Brighton on 23 Oct. This bird had lingered here for several days before finally leaving. [DEC]

0735. **BARN OWL**

*Tyto alba*

**Scarce breeding resident. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The monthly totals, excluding visits for ringing, were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
12	17	7	8	12	33	5	11	12	11	13	18

During the year 159 sightings were reported.

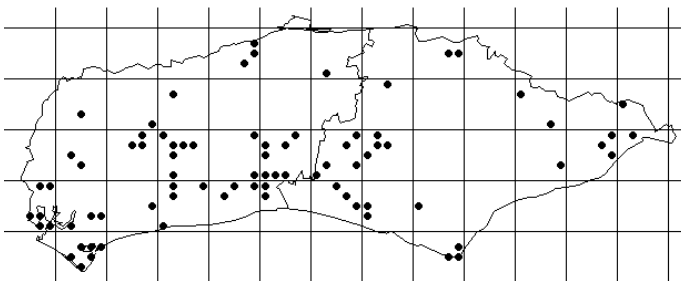
Breeding was confirmed at 73 sites (61 in 2001) of which 50 were in West Sussex and 23 in East Sussex. Fifty-two nests were in boxes in barns and five in various spaces in other buildings. Nine nests were in boxes on trees, five in pole boxes and two in natural tree holes. Not all known potential sites were visited. Young likely and known to have fledged totalled 130 in West Sussex and 55 in East Sussex. A pair near Greatham Bridge fledged three young from one nest box and then had a second brood in another nearby, fledging three more. Seven more nests were reported as successful, without the number of young recorded.

Two road deaths were reported. [ABW]

0757. **LITTLE OWL**

*Athene noctua*

**Fairly common resident.**



The West Sussex bias remains, as usual, with records from 50 sites compared to 29 from the east of the county, a total of 74, which is more than the 63 from 2001 during the FMD outbreak but short of the 99 in 2000. Although breeding was probable at most of these sites, evidence was obtained from only 29 of them, involving 33 pairs. Information on

productivity was very limited, two pairs reared three young apiece and another reared two. Where nest site was recorded, nest boxes were used in six cases, one was in a barn and two in tree holes, one Sweet Chestnut and the other unspecified. [RTP]

0761. **TAWNY OWL**

*Strix aluco*

**Fairly common resident.**

Records were received from 87 sites, compared to 67 in 2001, the FMD year, and 88 in 2000. Most records were of calling birds but breeding was confirmed or probable from only 16 sites, involving a possible 23 pairs. At Weir Wood Res a pair lost two eggs laid on or about 28 Mar but had a replacement clutch of a further two eggs on 25 Apr. At Ashdown Ridge a nest with two one-week-old chicks was found on 11 May and at Bognor Regis GC a pair fledged two young on 17 May. Pairs at Footland Wood and Barne's Wood, Vinehall Street each had three young. Only one road casualty was reported, at Fairlight on 11 Aug. A rufous phase and a grey phase bird were seen at Belle Tout, Beachy Head on 5 Nov. At Scobells Fm, Barcombe one was heard apparently answering a police type siren on 19 Oct at 15:00 BST. At the same site a bird roosted in a Norway Spruce from 1 Dec, joined by another, presumably a mate, from 26 Dec. [RTP]

0767. **LONG-EARED OWL**

*Asio otus*

**Rare resident and very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Twenty-six records were received from 15 sites with an almost equal split between east and west, 17 of them in the breeding season. Unusually, only six sites were on downland. Breeding was confirmed at three sites, all on the downs and two of them in West Sussex. At two of the sites, two downy young were seen but at the third the nest was deserted in mid June. Site details for this species are strictly confidential because of the species sensitivity to disturbance. An early autumn migrant was seen at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 11 Sep and, more typically, singles were at Mill Hill, Shoreham on 9 Nov and at Pagham Hbr on 11 Nov. [RTP]

0768. **SHORT-EARED OWL**

*Asio flammeus*

**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Has bred. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The following table gives approximate monthly totals taking account of possible 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	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2001	2	2	2	4	5	2	2	15	13	14
2002	15	9	14	9	2	-	6	30	29	18

During the first part of the year, birds were resident at Thorney Island until 24 May, with a maximum of eight on 14 Jan. At Amberley Brooks a maximum of three were present until 18 May. All other observations were made in coastal areas apart from one at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on 1 Mar and one at Arlington Res on 12 Mar. One flew in off the sea at Brighton Marina on 18 May.

The first autumn bird was seen at Pagham Hbr on 5 Sep followed by one at Thorney Island on 10 Sep, where the maximum to the end of the year was seven. Six birds were in the air at once at Selsey West Fields on 12 Oct and 11 were found over an area of 8 km<sup>2</sup> at Pevensey Levels on 20 Oct. Four were still there on 13 Nov and three on 21 Dec. Apart from five at Scotney Court GP on 17 Nov, three on various dates on Beeding Brooks and one at Barcombe Res on 19 Oct, all the other autumn records were of ones and twos from coastal areas. [RTP]

## 0778. NIGHTJAR

*Caprimulgus europaeus*

**Fairly common summer visitor but rarely seen on migration. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

The first record of the year was of a single on Ashdown Forest on 3 May followed by one at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street and three on the Downs at East Dean on 8 May. The unusual sight of actually seeing the species migrate was enjoyed by a lucky observer at Brighton Marina when one flew inland off the sea on 12 May (IJW).

Reports were received from 42 tetrads of which 22 were in West Sussex and 20 in East Sussex. Ashdown Forest remains the county's stronghold with approximately 50 pairs down from an estimated 69 pairs in 2001 and 2000. The *Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey* located 34 churring males on 11 heaths (see page 182 for details), the largest single count being of ten at Ambersham and Heyshott Commons, even though the survey was of limited extent. Next was Lavington Common which, despite its small size, held six pairs. Away from the main areas, 38 birds were reported from 15 sites, the largest count being of up to eight birds at Angmering Park Estate on the southern slopes of the Downs and five at Vert Wood, Hailsham.

Although recording was not hindered by FMD considerations, this year the county breeding population remained at an estimated 122 pairs, as in 2001 and well down on the 168 of 2000. The main reason for the drop was the lower numbers reported from the Ashdown Forest area perhaps as a result of variable observer cover due to poor weather (D King *pers comm.*) The population in the west of the county appears stable and continues to utilise areas of new plantation, the result of recent clear-felling. This is likely to explain the increase in records from the Downs. The species, due to its nocturnal habits, is likely to remain under-recorded away from popular "Nightjar watching venues" but the apparent decline in the east should be carefully monitored to ascertain whether there is a genuine fall in numbers or merely variable observer cover.

On 6 Jul, a warm day, a bird was heard churring heartily between 10.00 and 11.00 BST on the edge of Lavington Common.

From the end of July records fell away dramatically with the last sighting on the breeding grounds of a probable juvenile at East Dean on 31 Aug. Single migrants were ringed at Pett Level on 1 and 10 Sep and there was a final sighting of an individual flushed from a dead tree at Arundel WWT on 23 Sep. [AP]

**Common summer visitor and passage migrant.**

The first were two seen arriving from over the sea at Brighton Marina on 17 Apr. Sightings became daily from 24 Apr when there were four at Chichester GP. Swifts were reported from seven localities on 25 Apr including six at Rye Hbr and ten in off the sea at Brighton Marina. Other April records included at least 50 at Ivy Lake, Chichester GP on the 26<sup>th</sup>, 25 at Barcombe Res on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 50 at Pagham Hbr on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

Several observers noted the return of local birds on 1 May. As usual, very little information was received on nest sites. Three were seen prospecting the louvres of Chichester Cathedral bell tower on 21 May, a nest with two young was located in a house in Storrington and a nest in Hassocks.

As usual, some large movements were recorded during the breeding season, such as 1000 NW over Hollingdean, Brighton on 27 Jun, 1000 E at Hollingdean on 13 Jul and 600 NW at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 14 Jul. One thousand at Pagham Hbr on 21 Jul may have been departing birds on passage. The largest count in August was 500 at Sidlesham Ferry on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

There were 18 sightings in September including two at Seaford Head and three at Sidlesham Ferry on the 11<sup>th</sup>, and singles at Bexhill and Selsey Bill on the 30<sup>th</sup>. A late Swift was seen at Seaford on 22 Oct and an exceptionally late Swift, the latest record for Sussex, also at Seaford on 24 Nov (PJW). [GCMR]

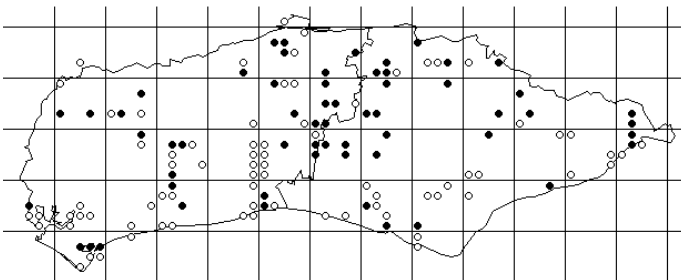
## 0831. KINGFISHER

**Fairly common resident and occasional winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

Observations during the winter months were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Nov	Dec
Number of birds	52	51	77	55
Number of inland sites	13	10	21	21
Number of coastal sites	12	10	9	8

In these four months there were 28% more birds in total than last year with a marked increase of 93% in January whilst the number in November was virtually the same. The number of inland sites at which birds were recorded was up by 30% though there was a decrease of 15% in the number of coastal sites.



\* filled circles – records Apr - Jul; open circles – records Jan – Mar and Aug – Dec.



The difficulties of surveying breeding birds were investigated in five 10-km squares (SU82, TQ02, TQ22, TQ31 and TQ61), where, despite intense effort, Kingfishers were only encountered on 14 occasions at 10 different sites. Furthermore surveying in both TQ02 and TQ61 produced no Kingfishers and breeding was only confirmed at one site near Plumpton. Elsewhere breeding was confirmed at seven sites and probable at a further seven. Little breeding detail was reported but a pair fledged four young at Glottenham, Mountfield. Kingfishers, however, were reported more widely during the breeding season with April to July records from 32 tetrads in West Sussex and 27 in East Sussex.

Later in the year, in addition to the usual ones and twos, there were a number of larger concentrations including six at Bewl Water on 8 Sep and four at Pulborough Brooks on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Two adults and two juveniles were observed in a territorial fight at Cuckoo's Corner, Coombes on 1 Oct and five were at Bewl Water on the 6<sup>th</sup>. There were four on the R Ouse at Southease on 15 Nov, four at Cuckmere Haven on 7 Dec and three still at Southease on 15 Dec. Single birds were still to be seen at a number of sites right up to the end of the year. [DEGC]

0840. **BEE-EATER**

*Merops apiaster*

**Rare vagrant, has bred.**

In May one was seen flying around Belle Tout Lighthouse, Beachy Head on the 19<sup>th</sup> before departing to the south (DC, JFC). In July one was present in Whitbread Hollow from 11-13<sup>th</sup> (DC, JFC *et al*), while on the 14<sup>th</sup> one was heard over Church Norton at 10.30 BST (BFF *et al*) and one flew northeast over Castle Fm. Rye Hbr at 15.35 BST (PMT). One was heard calling over Seaford on the 28<sup>th</sup> (JC). Finally one was seen at Birling Gap and then headed northeast over Whitbread Hollow (twice) on 31 Aug (DRC *et al*). Presumably the same flew south over Horseshoe Plantation, Beachy Head at 07:30 BST on 1 Sep (DC, JFC), and, perhaps having second thoughts about departing, was that seen briefly in Hope Gap, Seaford Head an hour or so later (CJRB). It seems likely that at least five were recorded, one in May, at least three in July (the Beachy bird probably being then seen at either Church Norton or Rye) and one in August/September. This series of records is the most in the county in one year since 1955, when breeding occurred, although more individuals were recorded in 1989 and 1991 (due to the occurrence of flocks of seven and five respectively). [RJF]

0846. **HOOPOE**

*Upupa epops*

**Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant, has bred.**

One was seen near Long Furlong Barn, Findon on about 6 May (CC). Only in 1982 and 1997 have as few been recorded. Fifty-three have been seen since 1990 but only three of these were found in May, although 25 were in April. [RJF]

0848. **WRYNECK**

*Jynx torquilla*

**Very scarce passage migrant; has bred. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

The records received indicated a minimum of 31 different birds in the year of which two were in spring and the remainder in autumn. The spring records, which fit the

established pattern over the last 35 years, were of singles reported at Pagham Hbr on 28 Mar and at Pulborough Brooks on 4 Apr. The former is the earliest arrival date since 1990.

The autumn total of 29 individuals was the largest since 1976 (when 57 were reported) and notable for the large number of inland sightings. At Beachy Head, there were at least six different birds in the period 27 Aug to 28 Sep and at Pagham Hbr two between 2-10 Sep. At Pett Level, singles were ringed on 30 Aug and seen on 12 and 21 Sep. The other reports were of singles at Shepcote Valley, Brighton on 24 Aug; Ambersham Common on 25<sup>th</sup>; Knepp Estate and Newhaven Tide Mills on the 27<sup>th</sup>; Pulborough and Hangleton, Hove on the 28<sup>th</sup>; Three Corner Copse, Hove on the 28-29<sup>th</sup>; and Weir Wood Res on the 29<sup>th</sup>. In September there were singles at Amberley Wild Brooks on the 7<sup>th</sup>; Partridge Green and Three Corner Copse, Hove on the 8<sup>th</sup>; Rye Hbr on the 9<sup>th</sup>; Pulborough Brooks on the 14<sup>th</sup>; Wyckham Fm, Steyning and Charleston Reedbed on the 15<sup>th</sup>; Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on the 17<sup>th</sup>; and Ashdown Forest on the 27<sup>th</sup> (trapped and ringed) and the 28<sup>th</sup>. The last record was from the lower Cuckmere Valley on 1 Oct. [LM]

#### 0856. GREEN WOODPECKER

*Picus viridis*

**Fairly common resident. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

A total of 365 records was received from 190 sites across the county. Reports relating to the breeding season came from 24 1-km squares on Ashdown Forest and 98 other sites. Breeding was confirmed or probable at 78 locations. Heathland surveys in West Sussex yielded 39 pairs in 27 1-km squares (see page 182 for details).

One was attacked by a pair of Magpies at Hurstpierpoint on 19 Mar and one was seen 'attacking' a Peregrine at Pagham Hbr on 14 Aug. [LM]

#### 0876. GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER

*Dendrocopos major*

**Common resident.**

A total of 373 records was received from 198 sites across the county, with reports for 146 of the sites being in the breeding season. The earliest territorial activity reported in the year was of drumming at Barcombe on 5 Jan, but in December there were birds displaying at Crowborough on the 28-29<sup>th</sup> and on Ashdown Forest on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

Breeding was confirmed or probable at 85 locations. Heathland surveys in West Sussex yielded 43 pairs in 26 1-km squares (see page 182 for details) and 16 were counted in a survey at Paddock Wood, Cocking on 31 May.

Coastal movements, in what was described as an excellent autumn for the species, included a total of 11 flying north at Shepcote Valley, Brighton between 29 Aug and 9 Oct. Single birds were seen flying east in a large hirundine movement at Worthing Beach on 14 Sep; north from over the sea at Brighton Marina on 16 Oct; west across Chichester Hbr on 21 Oct; in from the sea at Pagham Hbr on 23 Oct; and north at Norman's Bay on 30 Oct. [LM]

**0887. LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER***Dendrocopos minor***Scarce resident. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

Records were received from 46 tetrads across the county, with reports during the breeding season from 37 locations and from a further 22 at other times. Most sightings were well inland, the only coastal records being from Rye Hbr on 4 Jan and the Pett area on 15 and 29 Jun.

Confirmed or probable breeding was reported from: Paddock Wood, Cocking; Ebernoe Common; Hardham, Pulborough; Footland Wood, Vinehall Street; Marline Wood, Hastings; Powdermill Res; and four sites on Ashdown Forest. There were reports of territorial activity from ten other locations during the breeding season.

A total of 102 records was received, continuing an upward trend, but reports of all records, especially of territorial behaviour or confirmed breeding, would still be appreciated as this species is now on the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern. [LM]

**0974. WOODLARK***Lullula arborea***Scarce resident and passage migrant. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

All but two records for the first winter period, including early spring were, as usual, from the Wealden Heaths in the northwest of the county. There was, however, a report of a single at Petley Wood, Battle on 1 Jan. A small flock inhabited the traditional weedy stubble field adjoining Lords Piece, Coates Common and numbered four on 1 Jan, six on 5 Jan and five on 14 Feb. These numbers were well down on previous years and it may be that larger flocks remained undetected within the area. It was accordingly encouraging that a count of 12 was made at Ambersham Common on 16 Jan.

There were no records indicative of spring passage.

The species can be heard singing on its breeding grounds throughout the year but it is usually mid January when the first birds can be found holding territory. Two males were singing on 15 Jan at Lavington Common and subsequently were proved to have bred. There were constant reports thereafter from the western heaths with the first Ashdown Forest record of a displaying male on 9 Mar. Breeding was suspected on the Downs at West Harting where a pair was seen regularly; two birds were recorded for the second consecutive year on the Downs in the Marden area in the west of the county. The first confirmation of breeding success was of a pair feeding nestlings on 8 Apr at Hesworth Common, indicating a mid-March commencement of breeding. The *Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey* located 40 territories (see details on page 182), much lower than the previous comprehensive survey year of 2000 when 61 were found. This is partly explained by lack of observer coverage in the plantations close to the Hampshire borders. Even so, counts from some heaths, such as Chapel Common, Weavers Down and Woolbeding, were substantially down on the 2000 numbers, whereas numbers on Ambersham and Heyshott Common increased from nine to ten pairs. Management style and effort together with visitor pressures may prove to be the decisive factors in explaining these fluctuations. Numbers on Ashdown Forest increased to an estimated 11 pairs from five to seven in 2001. Away from the main areas, the Broadwater Forest population increased to four pairs but that in Worth Forest halved to a single pair. In all, 61 territories were identified compared with 66 in 2000 and 61 in 1999. Consequently it would appear that the Sussex population, although fluid in particular localities remains relatively

constant over the whole county. The last note of breeding activity was on 25 Jul at Buchan Park, Crawley where young were being fed.

Autumn passage was recorded from eight coastal sites between 21 Sep and 18 Nov where a total of 29 individuals was seen with a maximum count of four at Galley Hill, Bexhill on 28 Oct. Inland, birds were reported mainly from the northwest heaths though there was one at Uppark, South Harting on 31 Dec. The Coates Common flock built up to 12 on 31 Dec. [AP]

0976. **SKYLARK**

*Alauda arvensis*

**Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

Apart from a flock of *ca.*100 which was disturbed from a stubble field near Coombes on 1 Jan small numbers were again reported throughout the first winter period. Twelve other flocks of over 30 were reported, mainly from Southease where the largest concentrations of 75 were seen on 14 Feb and 24 Feb. Other notable flocks were recorded at Steep Down, Lancing; Chantry Hill; Saltdean and Holmbush Tip, Faygate. Where noted, stubbles were the favoured wintering habitat, with birds at Southease also being recorded in pasture.

The first singing birds were two at Lewes Race Course on 16 Jan (ten days later than 2001). As expected, breeding reports were widespread throughout the county, with numbers of confirmed or probable breeding birds or birds singing (holding territory) estimated at between 344 - 354 pairs from 90 sites (267 from 58 in 2001). The large increase in sites is mainly due to increased observer access compared with the much restricted 2001, rather than an expansion in range. Ashdown Forest again came top with 60-70 pairs (51 in 2001); Pulborough Brooks RSPB Reserve held 42 pairs, with a further nine pairs at the nearby Amberley Wild Brooks SWT Reserve; and the top farm was at Southease with 25 pairs. There were 15 pairs at Rye Hbr on the beach reserve; numbers at Moulsecomb Wild Park, Brighton increased to 12 pairs; and Sefton Fm, Pagham held eight pairs. Declines were noted at Thorney Airfield and Goring Gap. A broad range of breeding habitats were noted, including barley fields, set-aside, chalk grasslands, sheep fields and horse paddocks. The greatest densities on Ashdown Forest were found in mown bracken, well grazed areas and rides; the latter two habitats were, however, particularly subject to disturbance. One territorial bird was seen chasing off a Woodlark at Stonehill, Ashdown Forest on 2 Apr. The last singing bird was recorded at Beeding Hill on 6 Oct.

Spring passage was very poor, with just two birds each being logged at Selsey Bill and Worthing Beach. Autumn passage had started by mid-August when five birds were recorded on the shingle at Church Norton on the 14<sup>th</sup>. The main passage period came in October and early November. Flocks of 250 were seen on stubble at Beachy Head on 17 and 31 Oct, 40 were seen at Pagham and Thorney Island on 5 Oct and 45 at Moulsecomb Wild Park on 11 Oct. A number of movements included 395 W at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 17 Oct, 95 W over Hollingdean, Brighton on 4 Nov and 58 W in 2 hrs at Bexhill/Hastings on 5 Nov.

In the second winter period the biggest flocks were again at Southease with 60 on 15 Oct, 83 on 15 Nov and 100 on 15 Dec. Worthy of note was a count of 82 in barley stubbles at Hardham on 9 Nov. Again, stubbles held the biggest numbers of birds. These results are reflected in the RSPB's South Downs Winter Bird Survey (2003/04), which showed much higher densities in stubbles (1.5 birds per ha) than set-aside (0.80 birds per ha) or winter cereal (0.15 birds per ha). [APC]

**Fairly common summer visitor and very common passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The first records came from Pulborough Brooks and Sidlesham Ferry on 9 Mar. Two records each on 15 and 18 Mar heralded the start of the main influx, but it was the 30<sup>th</sup> before a double-figure count was reported, when ten birds were seen at Arlington Res.

Breeding was reported from a number of sand pits in the west of the county; 300 pairs were estimated at Duncton (ARK), whilst the same observer found 30 pairs at both Pendean and Stedham, 150 pairs at West Heath and 160 pairs at Sullington Pit, Storrington. No breeding was noted at traditional sites at Eartham Pit; Rock Common, Washington; or Coates. Neither was there any breeding, again, at Rye Hbr. The number of pairs reported was down on 2001.

A count of 250 birds over Ivy Lake, Chichester GP on 4 Jul, was perhaps indicative of the start of flocking prior to migration; however, on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 50 birds were noted at Brighton Marina coming in off the sea. On 13 Jul, 400 birds were reported in both the Selsey and Rye Hbr areas, whilst a fortnight later 2000 were estimated over Selsey West Fields. On many days in August counts of up to 1000 birds were made in the Pagham Hbr area; 560 were counted coming to roost at Filsham LNR on 18 Aug. A total of 762 birds flew east in 3.5 hrs at Bexhill/Hastings on 11 Sep, on which day 1500 were seen at Church Norton. Other movements reported included 330 E in 4 hrs at Bexhill/Hastings and 200 E at Filsham LNR on 14 Sep, 4000 E over Brighton on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 120 E at Bexhill/Hastings on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

Two October records were of singles at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 6<sup>th</sup> and at Pett Level on the 18<sup>th</sup>. [MJM]

**Common summer visitor and abundant passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The first records of the year were of singletons at Selsey Bill and at Sidlesham Ferry Field on 17 Mar; thereafter almost daily sightings up to 6 Apr were reported from all along the coast and at various inland sites but in no case were more than three birds at any one time involved. Seventeen birds seen at Church Norton on 7 Apr was the first significant count recorded and this trend for small numbers continued, with some exceptions, well into April. Thirty were noted over Pulborough Brooks on 13 Apr, and a similar number came in off the sea at Brighton Marina on 18 Apr; 50 were at Rye Hbr on 26 Apr and the next day an observer at Bewl Water counted 340.

A pair at Lunces Common, Wivelsfield, which had started nesting by 22 Apr, was the earliest reported. Other records were of two pairs in Benfield Valley, Hangleton; seven nests at Rushlake Green; three nests at Byworth which produced a minimum of 20 young; three pairs at Sefter Fm, Pagham and two pairs at both Marsh Fm, Yapton and Newhaven Tide Mills. Records of young birds with their parents came from Pevensey Bridge Level; Worsham Fm, Bexhill; Henfield; and at Dial Post where fledging took place on 6 Jul. Many of these locations are different to those recorded in 2001.

Flocking was first reported on 18 Jul when 400 roosted in a reed bed at Thorney Deeps at dusk, whilst on 29 Jul 150 roosted at Pett Level. Three hundred birds were at Charleston Reedbed on 4 Aug and 450 roosted at Filsham LNR on 18 Aug. An estimated

5000 birds, seen at Church Norton on 4 Sep, was the start of a major movement in that month; 18,950 passed east in 3.5 hrs at Bexhill/Hastings on the 11<sup>th</sup>, when also an estimated 6000-10,000 birds an hour moved in the same direction at Widewater, Lancing between 15:00 and 16:30 BST. Next day 15,000 birds flew east over Brighton but these numbers paled into insignificance later in the month with 30,000 over Brighton on the 13<sup>th</sup>, 40,000 there on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 50,000 on the 20<sup>th</sup>. A total of 20,000 flying east at Church Norton on 21 Sep was the last five-figure count. Passage continued to be reported along the coast well into October including 4000 at Church Norton on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 350 E in 1.6 hrs at Worthing on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 280 E in 1.5 hrs at Bexhill/Hastings on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 400 at Church Norton on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Inland, 1000 were over Henfield Levels on 5 Oct.

During November there were records on most days until the 17<sup>th</sup> including 30 at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 36 at Selsey Bill on the 10<sup>th</sup>. After the 17<sup>th</sup> there were singles at Winchelsea Beach on the 25<sup>th</sup>, at Princess Park, Eastbourne on the 28<sup>th</sup> and finally, flying east at Rottingdean on the 30<sup>th</sup>; the last being two weeks earlier than in 2001 but only one day adrift from the 10-year average. [MJM]

0995. **RED-RUMPED SWALLOW**

*Hirundo daurica*

**Rare vagrant.**

**1999:** One at Fairlight Cliffs on 16 May (AB, ASG, JP) has been accepted by *BBRC*. It was the second of the year, coming just a day after one at Birling Gap. There have been none seen since. Seventeen have been recorded in the county in total, all but one between 17 Apr and 29 May and the other in early September. [RJF]

1001. **HOUSE MARTIN**

*Delichon urbica*

**Common summer visitor and abundant passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

Two birds at Sidlesham Ferry on 16 Mar provided the first records for the year. Other sightings for the month were of singletons at Church Norton on the 26<sup>th</sup>, Brighton Marina and Selsey Bill on the 29<sup>th</sup>, and at Marline Wood, Hastings and Selsey West Fields on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Numbers into April were relatively small until the first double figure count of 15 at Arundel WWT on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, 20 at Rye Hbr on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 50 at Bewl Water the next day.

Records of breeding were received for the following locations: Earls Down, Dallington (seven nests which raised 20 young); Hove (four pairs); Mile Oak, Portslade (ten pairs); Wilbees Fm, Arlington (up to six pairs); Sheffield Park Station (ten nests with the last fledgling leaving the nest on 30 Sep); Lee Fm, Patching (at least ten nests); Myrtlegrove Fm, Clapham (probably six pairs) and Kneppmill Pond (22 nests). The chalk cliff face at Birling Gap was, again, an unusual site with at least three nests being constructed from mud collected from the shore. A small population was reported to have bred in Rye Hbr village, mostly on the new estate. All breeding records are welcomed.

An observer at Apuldram SF, Chichester counted a minimum of 1000 birds there on 9 Jun. Passage became noticeable on 5 Sep with 100 moving slowly east in one flock at Shoreham Sanctuary. Seven thousand birds passed Beachy Head and 6000 were at Church Norton on 11 Sep. At Seaford Head a steady passage involving about 1000 birds along with Swallows was noted on 13 Sep. On the next day 5800 passed east in 1.4 hrs at Worthing Beach in which time several flocks were seen flying north off the sea before

joining the coastal movement. Later in September, 3000 were at Church Norton on the 17<sup>th</sup>, 15,000 at Balsdean and 10,000 over Brighton on the 19<sup>th</sup>, whilst 15,000 passed east over Hollingdean, Brighton on the 21<sup>st</sup>. On 26 Sep 12,000 flew east over Brighton, 13,000 were at Church Norton and 5000 moved east in 1 hr at Rye Hbr and on the 27<sup>th</sup> a total of 4320 passed east at Bexhill/Hastings in 1.8 hrs.

Once into October, numbers started to decline quite rapidly after 1500 at Beachy Head and 1000 at Waltham Brooks on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 1000 at Church Norton on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Three hundred flying east at the latter site on 6 Oct was followed by counts of 120 W in 30 minutes at Bexhill/Hastings on 12 Oct and 250 E at Rye Hbr the following day. Fifteen birds were recorded from eight sites during the first part of November and the final record was of a single bird at Pulborough Brooks on the 14<sup>th</sup>. [MJM]

#### 1005. **TAWNY PIPIT**

*Anthus campestris*

**Very scarce visitor, mostly in autumn.**

Two first-winters were recorded in mid September, one near the Long Pool at Pagham Hbr on the 13<sup>th</sup> (MHD) and the other at Cornish Fm, Beachy Head on the 14-15<sup>th</sup> (JPS *et al*). Records are currently averaging just under three per year, less than half the number seen in the 1970s and 1980s. Most occur between mid August and late September. [RJF]

#### 1009.

#### **TREE PIPIT**

*Anthus trivialis*

**Fairly common but local summer visitor and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

**2001:-** The number of breeding territories recorded on Ashdown Forest was 60.

**2002:** During spring passage, even fewer were noted at the coast than in previous years. The first record was of two at Birling Gap on 29 Mar, a day earlier than the average arrival over the past decade. In April, there was a single at Ovingdean on the 24<sup>th</sup>, two at Brighton and one at Selsey Bill on the 25<sup>th</sup>, with another at Selsey on the 30<sup>th</sup>. In May, there were further singles at Selsey Bill on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> and two flew over Beachy Head on the 12<sup>th</sup>. By contrast, birds were on territory in the interior of the county from 4 Apr, when two were singing at Millbrook, Ashdown Forest. This was a comparatively late date. Within a week, birds had been heard in song on the western commons and at further sites on Ashdown Forest. On 22 Apr, there were eight birds at Millbrook and by early May, six pairs were around The Ridge. The number of territories recorded on Ashdown Forest was 56, very slightly lower than the number recorded in 2001, and observations came from 32 different 1 km squares. The *Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey* located a total of 69 pairs (see page 182 for details) including 18 pairs on Ambersham Common, 12 on Woolbeding Common, nine on Lavington Common, seven on Iping Common and six on Linchmere Common. The habitat on much of the western Downs suits Tree Pipits. Pairs were found on Bignor Hill (two), Cocking Down, Barlavington Down, in Stubbs Copse, West Dean Woods (five), and in Selhurst Park, East Dean. In the north, singing birds were found in Tilgate Forest, Holmbush Forest, Broadwater Forest, where there were four on 11 Jun, and a remarkable ten pairs in Eridge Park. There were several records from the east: from Chailey Common, Brightling, Barnes and Footland Woods, Vinehall Street, and Brede High Wood (where one was still in song on 8 Jul).

Very few records were received for July and the first half of August. From mid August, rather later than in many previous years, passage birds were reported with increasing frequency and almost daily until the end of September. The first were at Lancing and Rye Hbr on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Passage was characteristically low key, with birds found in small numbers around the county. Three sites had maximum counts on 15 Sept, when 11 were at Beachy Head, ten at Icklesham and 11 flew over Pett Level. Sheepcote Valley held 12 on 19 Sept and 23 moved east over Filsham on 21 Sep. The last records from Ashdown Forest were on 27 and 29 Sep. The final bird for the year was at Beachy Head on 7 Oct, an early date: the average for the 1990s was 18 Oct. [CB]

1011

## MEADOW PIPIT

*Anthus pratensis*

**Locally common resident, very common passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

There were five double figure counts in January and nine in February. The maximum was 50, a typical number, at Crows Nest, Ashdown Forest on 22 Feb. On the January and February census counts, a single bird was at Marsh Fm, Yapton, with two at Sefter Fm, Pagham. The Yapton bird was probably that recorded as present but not holding territory on 11 Mar. Records of single birds are occasionally submitted (as they were this year from Barcombe Res, Ferring, Iping Common, and Footland Wood, Vinehall Street) suggesting that there are probably far more such individuals wintering in the county. The first song was heard on Ashdown Forest on 26 Feb; the first display, also on Ashdown Forest, on the early date of 28 Feb (11 Mar in 2001). Passage commenced in mid March with 42 flying in at Splash Point, Seaford on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Two hundred and eighty were grounded by heavy rain at Beachy Head on the 15<sup>th</sup> (with 25 remaining the following day) when 130 were counted over Bexhill and 100 were at Hollingbury Camp, Brighton. Subsequently, few such numbers were found with only one double figure count in April, at Holmbush Tip, Faygate, where 35 paused on 15 Apr. The spring flocks of a thousand or more, recorded up to 1990, seem a thing of the past now. The last 'winter' birds at Pett Level left on 2 Apr.

Breeding was widely reported, from the coast and the Levels, the Downs and the valleys through them, the Commons, and Ashdown Forest. Display flight was noted until the last week of July. Most reports were of single pairs; only at Millbrook, Four Counties and Wrens Warren, Ashdown Forest were males found disputing territory. Breeding was confirmed at 15 sites by at least 90 pairs. Of particular note were six singing males on set-aside near Pagham; eight breeding pairs around Rodmell on an 800 acre farm; up to 14 pairs at Amberley Wild Brooks SWT reserve; a further 41 pairs at nearby Pulborough Brooks; and 12 territories at Rye Hbr. Breeding was probable at, in particular, Newhaven Tide Mills, which held up to five birds from March to June, and Pilsey Island, where there were seven pairs. By comparison, numbers on Brede, Glynde and Pevensy Levels were meagre indeed. Despite this, the overall total of breeding birds reported probably exceeded that for the past few years. There was one report of a young cuckoo being fed by a Meadow Pipit, from Old Lodge, Ashdown Forest on 26 Jun.

Returning birds were seen at Pett Level from 10 Aug, but it was mid September before passage was observed across the county. One hundred were on Steyning Round Hill on 11 Sep (65 there on 5 Sep 2001) and the next day a single was judged to be very early near Robertsbridge. On the 14<sup>th</sup>, seven were at Filsham and the first birds flew over Worthing. From then until the middle of October, passage was heavy and widespread. There were 42



counts in excess of 100 between 16 Sept and 19 Oct. Eight thousand was judged to be the grand total for the season at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton with high counts of 750 on 28 Sep and 550 on 6 Oct. On 21 Sept, 3000 flew east over Pagham Hbr; at the other end of the county on the same day 'just hundreds' were streaming northeast over Pett Level. This was not merely a coastal movement. Hundreds were also seen from the crest of the Downs between the A23 and the Ouse. Some birds were also observed resting with, for example, 200 feeding on short grass at Stump Bottom, near Steyning. On 30 Sep, 200 were feeding on newly emerged crane flies at Firlie Beacon and 200 were at Cissbury Ring the next day. There was one further substantial count, on 28 Oct, when over 400 flew over Bexhill.

A number of the wintering groups and roosting flocks at the end of the year were more substantial than usual. The Old Airstrip on Ashdown Forest held 300 on 4 Nov, only 40 on the 17<sup>th</sup> but 100 again on 2 Dec. Many flocks of 40-50 birds were noted in November and December, at, for example, Bewl Water, Coates Common, Darwell Res, Partridge Green, Roedean and Thorney Island, but on only one day so it is not clear whether they were resident or moving around the county. A consequence was that the total number recorded in December was only 155, apparently worryingly low. [CB]

10140

### **WATER PIPIT**

*Anthus spinoletta*

#### **Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.**

All records were from regular sites. In the first part of the year there were records up to 1 Mar. Two were at Apuldram on 1 and 9 Jan (AH) and at Thorney Deepes there were two on 12 and 14 Jan and one on 1 Mar (CBC). At Combe Haven/Filsham LNR there were three on 1 Jan and ten on 17 Feb (KMJ, IS). Later in the year the latter site held four from 19 Oct to 4 Dec with a maximum count of 25 on 25 Nov only (IS). There was a singleton at Selsey SF on 12 Dec (OM) and another at Coldwaltham SF throughout December (BFF, DIS). [CB]

10142.

### **ROCK PIPIT**

*Anthus petrosus*

#### **Scarce resident and scarce winter visitor. Rare away from the coast.**

There were reports from only ten locations in January (cf. 17 in 2001). As in 2001, eight were at Apuldram on New Year's Day. Winter numbers between Brighton and Newhaven were, however, reduced and there were no reports for the Cuckmere Valley. Only a single bird was found at Shoreham Hbr. The last report from Pilsey Island was on 5 Mar (30 Mar in 2001) and from Thorney generally, 15 Mar. No movements could be detected from the records submitted. Late in March a survey revealed nine pairs between Cow Gap and Birling Gap (cf. ten in 2001). Further breeding was noted between Brighton (where a pair bred successfully at the Marina, raising three young) and the Cuckmere, involving probably similar numbers to those for recent years. A county survey in 1965 revealed 42 territorial males; the current total must be considerably less than that. There were no reports from west of Brighton between 25 Mar and 27 Aug, when one appeared at Selsey Bill. Some interesting movements were noted in September. One flew east over Hastings CP on the 14<sup>th</sup> and another east over Pett Level the next day. Birds were observed flying north over Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 24 Sep and 1 Oct. There was one inland record, from Arlington Res on 25 Sep. Birds were reported along the coast in

November and December but with only small numbers at any one site and a maximum of seven at Apuldram on 7 Dec. In both months, the total reported was around 40 - 45. [CB]

10143. **SCANDINAVIAN ROCK PIPIT** *Anthus petrosus littoralis*

**Probably a very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.**

Single birds were recorded at Worthing Beach on 3, 12 and 28 Feb (AR, DIS) and at Saltdean on 7 Apr (DRW). [PJ]

1017. **YELLOW WAGTAIL** *Motacilla flava*

**Scarce and localised summer visitor and fairly common autumn passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

Passage began on 30 Mar, an average date, when birds were at both Selsey Bill and Rye Hbr. There were but two double figure counts during the spring, with ten at Horse Eye Level on 2 May and 14 at Combe Haven on 4 May.

Rye Hbr remains the Sussex breeding stronghold of this bird. An estimate of 15 pairs there represents the first, albeit slight, improvement in its fortunes for many years. There may have been ten pairs on Pevensey Levels, an area from which few records have been received in recent years. A handful of pairs were found on searches of the Brede and Rother valleys in the east of the county, but only one pair on Glynde Levels on 9 Jun. One pair found the Old Airstrip on Ashdown Forest to their liking through May, though breeding was not confirmed. At Hardham, where birds nested in a celery field in 2001, a grass bank in a lettuce crop was used and two broods were reared. A single was found on the May *WBBS*' count at Kilsham Fm, near Petworth and two juveniles were reared at North Cocking.

Movement was noticed from the end of June, earlier than in most years. One flew north over Beachy Head on the 30<sup>th</sup> and another was there on 14 Jul. In mid July other birds appeared at Camber in the east and at Church Norton in the west. Few were involved, though, until 155 were found around Saunders Pit, Rye Hbr at dawn on 12 Aug. That site clearly proved attractive to passing birds as 330 were there early on 20 Aug. Late August brought good numbers to favoured coastal locations, from Pagham to Rye, though there were no further counts from Saunders Pit. Filsham Reed Bed, where numbers were considered to have been low in 2001, barely featured this year (with a maximum of only 12 on 21 Aug and 4 Sep). There were 34 double figure counts in September (31 in 2001) though only two in three figures comprising 110 flying east over Sheepcote Valley on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 220 going to a reed bed at Thorney Deepes at dusk on the 4<sup>th</sup>. The inland reports were mainly of ones and twos, though seven were at Plumpton Green on 8 Sep, six at Cissbury Ring on 13 Sep, 16 at Strettham Manor on Henfield Levels on 15 Sep and five at Dallington on the 19<sup>th</sup>. It seems likely that a substantial number of small groups like these, stopping off particularly in horse paddocks, go unreported each autumn. The last double figure count was of 15 at Goring Gap on 24 Sep. There were only nine October records through to the 17<sup>th</sup> when nine were at Halsey's Fm, Sidlesham. The October total of a mere 18 birds contrasts with the 106 in 2001 and 88 in 2000. The last date was considerably earlier than the average for the last ten years, 3 Nov. [CB]

**Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The early months followed the pattern of 2001 quite closely with records from 26 locations in January and from 22 (including several new sites) in February. There were approximately 60 birds recorded in January and 35 in February. The January total was greater than that for 2001, largely because of gatherings of up to eight birds at Apuldram, six at Sidlesham SF and four at Thorney SF. There were no comparable records from the east of the county, though there were a number of reports from urban areas including Brighton and Hove, Eastbourne and Hastings. Observers at some regular inland haunts such as Burgess Hill, Lewes, Lindfield, and Easebourne, near Midhurst provided records, mostly of singles, and some less predictable sites proved productive, for example, Footland Wood, Vinehall Street where there was a single in early February.

Little in the way of spring passage was observed. An early bird flew over Beachy Head on 2 Mar but at both Bexhill and Selsey Bill only a single bird was recorded in March (*cf.* 22 at Selsey in 2001). By way of compensation, breeding records were plentiful, showing just how widespread the Grey Wagtail is in the interior of the county. In East Sussex there were records from the reservoirs (two young at the Bewl Water dam on 12 May), Ashdown Forest, the High Weald (four pairs around Groombridge and a pair at Holtye) and in the east (from Ashburnham, Battle, Burwash, Dallington, Darwell Res, Powdermill Res and the outskirts of Hastings). From the west of the county came reports of two territories along 3 km of the western Rother near Petworth, and single pairs near Arundel, Bignor, Cocking Down, Ebernoe, Fernhurst and Midhurst. Several birds were found in May around Chichester Hbr and a pair bred at Thorney SF. Remarkably, a pair bred successfully on Chichester Cathedral. Late spring also saw some birds in unusual locations. On 1 Jun singles were found at both Shoreham Sanctuary and Newhaven Tide Mills. Were these late migrants or wandering birds, which had not been able to find a breeding site?

Post-breeding groups assembled later than in 2001, being noted from late July, when five were at Weir Wood Res and seven at Barcombe Res, increasing to 20 by 4 Aug. Mid August saw small numbers of birds on the move, particularly in the east of the county. By early September, there were records from all along the coast and also from expected and unexpected sites in the interior. The maximum counts were ten at both Beachy Head and Pett Level on 21 Sep, 16 at the latter site on 28 Sep, and 11 at Pagham Hbr on 29 Sep. Although records for individual days were modest, the overall passage was substantial. Indeed, the total of 237 recorded at Sheepcote Valley was considered 'incredible'. Grey Wagtails seem increasingly to be happy in urban areas. One was back in central Brighton on 3 Sep; nine flew to roost at the station on 3 Oct; and there were five at the Old Steine on 4 Oct. Birds were regular in Hastings from 21 Sep. One was at an industrial estate in Crawley on 1 Nov and another at Gatwick Airport on 17 Nov. The number of records submitted for October and November represented a considerable increase over 2001 (70 and 41 respectively compared with 50 and 18). Although there were fewer December records (14 compared with 28 in 2001), there is no doubt that the Grey Wagtail is currently doing well in Sussex both in and out of the breeding season. [CB]

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

There were three January records in excess of one hundred birds: *ca.* 100 were at Apuldram SF on 1 Jan and 17 Feb, 120 were feeding on filter beds at Thorney SF on 4 Jan and 170 roosted in Eastbourne town centre on the 20<sup>th</sup>. One hundred were reported from Horam on 15 Feb. The century mark was almost reached by a new, or previously unreported, gathering of 90 at Ringmer SF on 6 Jan and by a reedbed roost at Carter's Pit, Rye Hbr which reached 95 on 14 Jan. Winter censuses in January revealed two in 67 ha at Marsh Fm, Yapton and 19 in 95 ha at Sefter Fm, Pagham, with 45 there in February. Forty-five were found in a farmyard and kale field at Southease, in January. That flock increased to 85 in mid February, before declining to 30 in mid March. Four pairs bred there. Reports from sites of unusually large groups came from Scobells Fm, Barcombe, where there were up to eight in mid February, and from Hove Park, where 27 gathered on 2 Mar.

Spring passage, which began in early March, was light. Ten at Beachy Head on 5 Mar was the highest count. That day also brought the maximum (but only three) to Bexhill/Hastings.

Breeding was widely but unexceptionally noted. Single pairs were reported from the *CBC* counts at Marsh Fm and Sefter Fm, and from a *WBBS*' count along the western Rother near Petworth.

Post-breeding gatherings were seen at both Weir Wood Res (20 on 16 Jul) and Barcombe Res (25 on 10 Aug) and the first autumn birds at Filsham were five on 11 Aug. Southease again proved a magnet in the later months of the year, with mid month counts of 65 in September, 55 in October, 45 in November and 65 in December. Passage, which was substantially heavier than in 2001, was noted from 20 Sep. Observers at Beachy Head reported a total of 467 between then and the end of November; the majority of birds (359) were moving east. The autumn total at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton was 1763, with a maximum of 250 E on 12 Oct. Birds began to move through the Pagham Hbr area in early October. Seventy flew east on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 140 on the 7<sup>th</sup>, and 220 on the 11<sup>th</sup>, when there were also 65 E at Beachy Head.

Winter gatherings were found in the Roman Road area of Ashdown Forest (45 on 17 Nov), at Ovingdean (60 with Meadow Pipits on 30 Nov; perhaps part of a pre-roost group of 120 reported earlier in the month at nearby Brighton Marina), and at Castle Water, Rye Hbr (120 on 24 Dec). One hundred and fifty were watched moving west along the shore at Nutbourne at dusk on 18 Nov. The largest flock, of 250, was roosting in glasshouses at Walberton on 10 Dec. The November and December census counts at Marsh Fm were seven and five; at Sefter Fm 22 and 14, both of which represented reductions on last year's high figures, but exceeded those for 2000. [CB]

1020.01 **WHITE WAGTAIL***Motacilla alba alba***Probably a scarce spring and autumn passage migrant. Both pure and mixed pairs have bred.**

Spring passage began on 3 Mar at West Wittering and was noted to 8 May. Singles were reported from twelve localities. Most passed quickly through, though one may have

stayed at Church Norton from 19 Mar to 9 Apr and one was at Ovingdean from 26 Mar to 18 Apr, being joined by another on one day, 4 Apr.

Very few authentic autumn records were received: one in the lower Cuckmere Valley on 22 Aug, singles in Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 18 and 26 Sep, six at Greatham Bridge on 30 Sep, and one at Belle Tout, Beachy Head on 11 Oct. [CB]

1066. **WREN**

*Troglodytes troglodytes*

**Abundant resident.**

Before the breeding season, notable counts of this common species were 26 at Marline Wood, Hastings on 15 Feb, 34 at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on 16 Feb, 27 at the University of Sussex on 15 Mar and 49 at Withdean, Brighton on 22 Mar. Breeding records were received from many sites. At Moulsecoomb Wild Park, Brighton 113 pairs nested compared with 84 pairs in 2001. Other notable counts were 56 pairs in the reed bed at Filsham LNR, 53 on Memorial Common, Chailey, 41 at Combe Haven, 35 at Footland Wood, 32 at Marline Wood and 31 singing males at Darwell Res. Breeding density could be calculated from four sites with a variation between 105 per km<sup>2</sup> (Scobells Fm, Barcombe) and 35 per km<sup>2</sup> (Sefter Fm, Pagham) with a mean of 77 per km<sup>2</sup>.

In the second winter period there were few notable counts, the highest being 37 at Footland Wood on 17 Nov. One was found on the beach at Worthing on 18 Oct in a display garden of shingle plants. At Shoreham Sanctuary 38 different birds were trapped (27 in 2001). Of these, 34 were new birds and four retraps, 27 were young and nine adults. At Cissbury Ring, 38 new birds were trapped compared to 20 in 2001. [RTP]

1084. **DUNNOCK**

*Prunella modularis*

**Abundant resident. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

Many reports of confirmed or probable breeding were received for this ubiquitous species including 63 pairs or singing males on Ashdown Forest; 46 pairs at Moulsecoomb Wild Park (43 in 2001); 27 pairs in 67.5 ha of mixed farmland at Marsh Fm, Yapton; 17 pairs at Bulverhythe (considered to be a very high count for this site); 11 pairs at Vinehall Forest; ten pairs at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street; and ten singing males at Newhaven Tide Mills between February and May.

In Britain and Ireland, birdwatchers are unlikely to see a Dunnock that is more than 1 km from where it was hatched (*The Migration Atlas*). If this is correct, 100 at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 4 Oct and 70 there three days later, represents a large local breeding population or a low mortality rate of fledglings. These were by far the largest count recorded during the year, the next highest being 28 at the University of Sussex on 25 Mar and 5 Apr. However, it could be interpreted to support the suggestion that Dunnocks undergo sporadic partial migration in late autumn (*Bird Study* 30: 39-46). [RTP]

1099. **ROBIN**

*Erithacus rubecula*

**Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Maximum counts in the first winter period showed a steady increase as the months progressed. In January, the highest count was 25 at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on the

19<sup>th</sup> with a similar number, 27, at Barne's Wood, Vinehall Street on 16 Feb. In March the numbers increased with counts of 45 at Stopham Wood on the 27<sup>th</sup>, 41 at Witdean on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 35 at Darwell Res on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

Counts during the breeding season came from a number of localities. At Moulsecoomb Wild Park 148 pairs nested, up from 129 in 2001. At Darwell Res there were 30 singing males from a total of 39 birds on 14 April. Other notable reports were 28 pairs at Barne's Wood; 22 pairs at each of Marsh Fm, Yapton; Barns Copse, Binsted; Footland Wood; and Marline Wood, Hastings; and 11 territories at Rye Hbr SSSI (an increase from virtually none during the past five years). Of six nests monitored at Three Corner Copse, Hove, three failed and three fledged a total of 15 young; ten pairs on Ashdown Forest fledged a minimum of 19 young. Where breeding densities could be calculated they varied from 137 per km<sup>2</sup> (Barns Copse) to 17 per km<sup>2</sup> (Sefton Fm, Pagham) with a mean of 61 per km<sup>2</sup>.

The first major influx of the autumn at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head was 30 on 28 Sep, with 35 there on 2 Oct and 20 on 2 Nov. At Sheepcote Valley, Brighton the maximum autumn count was 60 on 7 Oct and at Darwell Res there were 47 on the same day. At Shoreham Sanctuary 56 different birds were trapped during a total of 21 days, of which 49 were new and seven had been ringed in previous years. Forty-two of them were young birds. At Cissbury Ring a total of 85 new birds was ringed. [RTP]

#### 1103. **THRUSH NIGHTINGALE**

*Luscinia luscinia*

**Very rare vagrant.**

**2001:** A singing male at Combe Haven from 6-8 May (KMJ *et al*) has been accepted by BBRC. It is the third county record and the first in spring (autumn individuals were trapped at Whitbread Hollow in 1984 and on Pett Level in 1998). This individual lost its tail shortly after arriving, perhaps explaining its particularly skulking behaviour and at times limited vocal repertoire. [RJF]

#### 1104. **NIGHTINGALE**

*Luscinia megarhynchos*

**Fairly common summer visitor and infrequently seen passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The arrival was slightly later than usual with the first recorded at Ditchling Common on 7 Apr (*BTO Migration Watch*). Although noted at this site on both 13 and 14 Apr none were reported elsewhere until singles at Pulborough Brooks on 16 Apr and at both Waltham Brooks and Woodmancote, near Emsworth, on the 18<sup>th</sup>. Thereafter the species was recorded daily with 47 recorded by the end of April. As usual most records were received for May, with song noted until 20 Jun, by which time approximately 135 singing males had been recorded from 61 different sites. A total of 30 tetrads was occupied in West Sussex and 21 tetrads in East Sussex. There was a maximum of 11 pairs on the RSPB reserve at Pulborough Brooks; seven at Ditchling Common; six at Broadmare Common, near Henfield; and five at Dunhurst Copse, Kirdford; Plumpton Agricultural College and Marline Wood, Hastings.

About 25 were recorded during the autumn with 15 being seen in Sheepcote Valley, Brighton between 26 Jul and 20 Sep, the maximum of three being on 10 Sep. At Beachy Head the species was reported as "increasingly scarce" but six or seven individuals were

noted between 11 Aug and 12 Sep. Elsewhere there were singles at Seaford Head on 13 Aug, at Newhaven Tide Mills on 23 Aug and at Pulborough Brooks on 1 Oct. The last is the latest record since 1985 and only the sixth bird to be recorded in the county in October. [JAN]

1106. **BLUETHROAT**

*Luscinia svecica*

**Very scarce spring and autumn visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

A singing male seen at Combe Haven on 21 May (KMJ *et al*) was of the 'red-spotted' form *L.s. svecica*. In September first-year males were trapped at Charleston Reedbed on the 14<sup>th</sup> (SP, TWP) and on Pett Level on the 22<sup>nd</sup> (RBRG). These are the first records since 1998. Twenty-two were recorded during the 1970s, just six in the 1980s and fourteen in the 1990s. [RJF]

1121. **BLACK REDSTART**

*Phoenicurus ochruros*

**Rare resident, fairly common passage migrant and scarce winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

There was a very poor start to the year, with fewer than ten birds reported in January (*cf.* 27 in 2001, 21 in 2000). As in previous years, there was some indication that these birds moved between sites (for example, between Rottingdean, Saltdean and Newhaven). February was even worse with only two records. The first sign of migration came on 5 Mar with one at Brighton Marina and a second bird joining the wintering individual at Saltdean. The first record at Beachy Head was later than usual, with three there on 15 Mar. But the main cluster of passage birds came earlier than in many years, on 16 and 17 Mar. On the 16<sup>th</sup> at least 12 were present around Pagham Hbr and there were four at Beachy Head. There was no doubt some duplication in the total count of 84 birds for March. Only one was reported between 29 Mar and 12 Apr and passage tailed off rapidly. Seven birds were noted in April and only one in May. There were three inland records during the spring. One was at Holmbush Tip, Faygate, on 24 Mar, and one at Rushy Green, Ringmer, on 14 Apr. A male held territory on the town centre roofs in Horsham from late April into June. June itself brought a handful of perplexing records. A male was at Ovingdean on the 18<sup>th</sup>; on the 28<sup>th</sup> one was found in full song on Beachy Head while a juvenile watched at Bulverhythe on the 24<sup>th</sup> suggested that successful breeding had occurred nearby.

There were no records between 28 Jun and 28 Aug, when there was an immature at Bexhill. A further gap followed until single birds were found at Pagham on 21 Sep and Beachy Head on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Early autumn is usually marked by low numbers and discontinuous reports. This year there was only one record (at Church Norton on 9 Oct) between 23 Sep and 19 Oct. The last ten days of October brought a series of singles to the coast, including the only one of the autumn at Pett Level on the 20<sup>th</sup>. November was, by contrast, an excellent month, with records on 23 days. One was found inside a Craft Fair marquee at Shoreham Airport on the 1<sup>st</sup>. A feature of the month was the number of reports of birds in urban and suburban gardens for one or two days – in Worthing, Findon, Henfield and Lewes. Some birds moved quickly through. Four at Brighton Marina on the

4<sup>th</sup> had gone by the next day; four in allotments in Hastings stayed only on the 7<sup>th</sup>; and while there were possibly six at Shoreham Hbr on the 30<sup>th</sup>, only a single remained into December. Other birds were present for some time, not only along the coast but also, unusually, at Goodwood Park (from 10 Nov to 19 Dec). A few, at Shoreham Hbr, Brighton Marina (two) and Saltdean remained to winter. In all some 93 birds were reported, though there was no doubt some duplication. Although this was an excellent month, observers at both Beachy Head and Moulsecoomb Wild Park considered the autumn to have been disappointing and there were only two reports from Rye (both on 19 Nov). There were 18 reports for December, with four at Southwick on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. One was at Hardham on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and there were two garden reports, from Chichester on the 15<sup>th</sup> and Lewes on the 17<sup>th</sup>. [CB]

## 1122. REDSTART

*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

**Scarce summer visitor and fairly common passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

A male at Cow Gap, Beachy Head on 31 Mar was the first bird of the year. Daily sightings thereafter were mainly of no more than three birds although six were found in the Sidlesham area on 18 Apr. A total of 67 birds was reported on spring passage, healthily in excess of the 36 in 2000 and 42 in 2001. The bulk of the records (45) were from the vicinity of the West Sussex coast (mainly the Selsey Peninsular), a situation which was typically reversed in the autumn when by far the most birds were recorded in East Sussex. Single birds at Church Norton on 15 May and Selsey Bill on 31 May were presumably very late arrivals.

Together with the Wood Warbler, with which the Redstart has strikingly similar habitat requirements, the British population is concentrated in the west and north of the country and Sussex, despite containing apparently suitable habitat, remains on the periphery of the range. An early start was made by two males in song at their breeding grounds on Ashdown Forest on 4 Apr. Observers on Ashdown Forest provided regular reports from mid April of returning birds and identified a total of 32 possible pairs (38 in 2001) during the main survey period in May and early June; the largest population was 19 at Pippingford Park. There was a welcome record of a male holding territory at Bayham on the Kent border, an area which, up until last year, held a regular but small breeding population. The Wealden Heaths in the northwest of the county held five territories. With one other possible record this indicates a total breeding population of 39 pairs (42 in 2001), still well down on the maximum 110 pairs noted in *Birds of Sussex*. The last record from a breeding site was of a female at Nutley Windmill on Ashdown Forest on 11 Sep.

The first coastal report indicative of post-breeding dispersal was of a juvenile at Beachy Head on 14 Jul with the main movement commencing in early August. In the east of the county 245 were reported with the bulk of these at Beachy Head and Sheepcote Valley, Brighton. The peak counts at Beachy Head were 19 on 24 Aug, ten on 31 Aug, nine on 1 Sep and 18 on 8 Sep whilst ten at Seaford Head on 10 Sep and eight at Sheepcote Valley were other high counts. In West Sussex, 157 were reported, mainly from the Selsey Peninsular. Cissbury Ring was well watched and produced 20 records; the highest day count there was of seven on 1 Sep. The total of 401 (made up of 144 in August, 243 in September but only 14 in October) was the best since 1996 when 550 were recorded.

The *Migration Atlas* comments that September is the peak month for the passage of foreign-breeding birds through southeast England, while there is evidence to suggest that



British breeders use a more westerly route. This would explain the fact that many more records are received from the east than the west in the autumn period, and these birds are likely to involve Scandinavian breeders. The final reports were of two at Pulborough Brooks on 28 Oct and one at Ferring on 6 Nov (MCU). [AP]

1137.

## WHINCHAT

*Saxicola rubetra*

### **Rare summer visitor and fairly common passage migrant.**

The first spring birds arrived late – two at Seaford Head on 14 Apr followed by singles at Newmarket Hill on the 20<sup>th</sup> and at Ditchling Common on the 21<sup>st</sup> (all *BTO Migration Watch*) as against an average date of 30 Mar through the 1990s. Only 26 were noted in April, with a maximum of five in Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on the 25<sup>th</sup>. There were reports of 80 in May with over half of them arriving on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, when 11 at Beachy Head and eight at Sheepcote Valley were considered to be good spring counts. This was an improvement on 2001 and 2000 when only 38 and 26 birds were seen in May.

Presumably wandering birds are seen in many years in early July. This year, though, there were three odd June records comprising one on Glynde Levels on the 8<sup>th</sup>, one at Beachy Head on the 16<sup>th</sup> and one at Hollingbury Camp, Brighton, on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Two adults appeared agitated at Bullock Down, Beachy Head on 14 Jul but no young were seen.

On the very next day, 15 Jul, the first autumn migrants appeared with two at Pagham Hbr. There was then a gap of a fortnight before the next bird, at Church Norton, on 1 Aug, followed by the appearance of the first migrants in the next two weeks at Thorney Island on the 8<sup>th</sup>, Pett on the 11<sup>th</sup>, Beachy Head on the 12<sup>th</sup> and Rye Hbr on the 14<sup>th</sup>. The autumn total for Beachy Head was a mere 132, on 34 days up to 17 Oct; at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton it was 320 (in an unspecified period). About 250 were logged in August, with only six specified double figure counts. Most were on the coast, with a few on the Downs and at the reservoirs. Thirteen near Partridge Green on 28 Aug was exceptional for an inland locality. There were 12 double figure counts in September, but the maximum was only 35 at Sheepcote Valley on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Nevertheless, around 615 birds were noted during the month, an increase over the last couple of years. Three Corner Copse, Hove again proved attractive to Whinchats with 20 on 14 Sep. Sixteen records, amounting to 36 bird days, were submitted for October, a decrease compared with the last two years. The last birds were two singles on Pevensy Levels on the 29<sup>th</sup>. This is an early departure date. The 1990s average was 3 Nov, and the 2000 and 2001 last dates were 15 and 11 Nov respectively. [CB]

1139.

## STONECHAT

*Saxicola torquata*

### **Fairly common resident and partial migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

**2001:** Detailed plotting of territories on Ashdown Forest, excluding the MOD area, revealed 105 breeding pairs (DK).

**2002:** Reports were received for 35 localities in January, suggesting that over 80 birds were in the county. February records were fewer, from 21 localities (several of which had not been reported in January), with a total of about 55 birds. Winter censuses revealed

three at Marsh Fm, Yapton, and one at Sefter Fm, Pagham. There were eight on Thorney Island in both months, and the same number at Castle Water, Rye Hbr in January, and on Iping Common in February. Severe frost on New Year's Day brought three to riverside vegetation at both Partridge Green and Upper Beeding. A male was singing at Lavington Common on 31 Jan.

Passage birds and local breeders were prominent at Beachy Head at the start of March, with seven on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 24 on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 12 on the 5<sup>th</sup>. Perhaps surprisingly, this flurry was barely paralleled anywhere else along the coast, with just two on the beach at Selsey Bill and one at Goring. Up to eight pairs bred at Beachy Head, most of them double brooded. The breeding population seems to have reached a high, and perhaps unsustainable, level in some areas. In Broadwater Forest, a pair drove off another female on 23 Mar. Pairs were noted in close proximity on Mardens Hill on 29 Mar; by 8 Apr, only one pair remained. Unpaired males were seen throughout the spring alongside the five pairs on Iping Common. There were three singing males in Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 12 Mar, but only one pair bred there. Ashdown Forest and the western commons remain the Stonechat's breeding stronghold. At the former site 113 pairs were found in 34 different 1 km squares whilst details from the *Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey* can be found on page 182. Numbers on the coastal strip and the Downs may be increasing. Newhaven Tide Mills held two pairs throughout the year, and there were five juveniles there by 5 May. Three pairs bred at Filsham, two in Cuckmere Haven (with a further pair on the first of the Seven Sisters) and two between Newhaven and Peacehaven, with single pairs on Cradle Hill, Seaford, and West Hove GC. There was one territory on Wolstonbury Hill, Pyecombe, and three on Steep Down, Lancing. The only negative reports came from Tilgate Forest, where the habitat may now be unsuitable, and from Cissbury Ring, where a male was seen on just one day, 17 Jun.

The only substantial post-breeding concentration was of 30, including many juveniles, at Selsey West Fields on 6 Aug. Fifteen were nearby along the Broad Rife on 26 Aug. The first autumn migrant appeared at Pett Level on 14 Sep. Good numbers were reported from Beachy Head in late September, peaking at 26 on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Four other sites held ten or more birds comprising 12 at both Pagham Hbr and Thorney Island on the 26<sup>th</sup>, 14 at Pett Level on the 27<sup>th</sup>, and ten at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Are these gatherings made up of both local breeding birds and of migrants? Certainly reinforcements had reached Thorney Island by 3 Oct, when 16 were present. Further double figure counts in early October came from Peacehaven Cliffs (ten on the 1<sup>st</sup>), Climping Gap (12 on the 2<sup>nd</sup>) and Sheepcote Valley, Brighton (21 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>). Aside from the western commons (where 11 were at Iping on 9 Nov) and Ashdown Forest, few were seen inland in the autumn. Singles at Bewl Water and Faygate Tip were expected; by contrast, three at Ifield Wood on 29 Sep were the first seen there. November brought reports from 39 sites, December from 26. These may have involved about 175 and 90 birds. Most were along the coast or in the river valleys through the Downs including 16 at Thorney Island on 5 Dec. The November and December counts at Marsh Fm, Yapton, were two and one (*cf.* five in Dec 2001). [CB]

1146.

## WHEATEAR

*Oenanthe oenanthe*

### **Very scarce breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant.**

The first arrived at Beachy Head on 8 Mar, as in 2001, but several days later than the average first sighting for the 1990s. Singles were at Selsey Bill and Church Norton the

next day, and there were daily records from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup>. There was no parallel to the extraordinary passage of 2001, with few double figure counts and a maximum for March and April of only 20 at Selsey Bill on 29 Mar (with a further 16 nearby) and 20 at Seaford Head on 20 Apr. The oddest feature of the spring passage was the scarcity of birds from 2 to 14 Apr. The maximum count in May was unusually high with 70 at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on the 3<sup>rd</sup> including many showing characteristics of the Greenland race. One at Goring Beach on 8 Jun prompted the question whether it was coming or going? By that time, the few Sussex breeding pairs had already hatched their first broods. There were at least four territories at the Midrips and seven at Rye Hbr Beach Reserve. As in 2001, the success rate at Rye Hbr was considered good. None bred at the Newhaven Tide Mills this year. A pair was investigating promising habitat – a tightly grazed chalk grassland slope, riddled with rabbit holes – at Lower Standean, behind Brighton on 22 Apr, and the next day three were at Palace Lands Fm, Coolham, with one carrying food. A pair was recorded at Pickers Hill Barn, near Balsdean, until mid June, but there was no evidence of nesting and the birds had departed by 25 Jun.

Only ten records were submitted for June and five for July. Of the latter, one at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 2<sup>nd</sup> was the first autumn migrant; but the others did not arrive until after the 21<sup>st</sup>. The scale of autumn passage was patchy. This was a 'poor' autumn for Wheatears at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton (with a peak count of 11 on 8 Sep) and no migrants were seen at Pett Level until the last day of August. There were fourteen double figure counts in September though none in October (*cf.* 11 and one in 2001). A total of 474 was counted on 53 days between 3 Aug and 19 Oct at Beachy Head. Three forays onto the Downs around Balsdean and Castle Hill revealed 40 on 23 Aug, 50 on 27 Aug and 70 on 10 Sep. Although numbers at individual downland sites like West Dean Woods, Wepham Down, Chantry Hill and Cissbury Ring rarely reach double figures, in aggregate they are considerable. Few, though, other than a scattering on Ashdown Forest, are recorded north of the Downs or at the reservoirs. There seem to have been rather fewer birds in October than there had been in 2001 with perhaps 105 as against 115. The last was seen at Pett Level on 3 Nov. This is a very early departure date, the average for the 1990s having been 15 Nov and the 2000 and 2001 dates 21 and 15 Nov respectively. The *Kent Bird Report* (2000) presents a graph for 1994 - 2000 showing a considerable decline in both the spring and autumn passage of Wheatears in that county since 1996, with the spring index reducing to 80% of the 1994 level and the autumn to under 60%. [CB]

1186. **RING OUZEL***Turdus torquatus*

**Passage migrant, scarce in spring, often fairly common but local in autumn. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

The recent pattern of a small spring passage but near normal numbers in autumn was repeated as the approximate monthly totals below show:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
-	-	4	10	1	-	-	-	5	143	4	-

The first spring arrival was at Hollingbury Camp on 15 Mar, very near to the 10-year average. Except for three males in the Church Norton area on 18 Apr all the spring records were of singles, evenly divided between the coastal chalk downlands in the east and coastal plain in the west. The last bird of spring was at Kingston, near Lewes on 4 May.

The autumn passage started a few days later than average with three birds at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 19 Sep. Numbers built up strongly through October to reach maxima of 40 at Sheepcote Valley on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 33 at Beachy Head on the 12<sup>th</sup>. There were still 21 birds at Beachy Head on the 17<sup>th</sup> but thereafter numbers dwindled rapidly. Only six single birds were seen in the west of the county during the autumn but one of these at Arundel WWT on 13 Nov proved to be the last sighting of the year and came about a week earlier than the 10-year average. [RK]

1187. **BLACKBIRD***Turdus merula*

**Abundant resident and winter visitor: perhaps a passage migrant.**

Regular censuses showed no unusual numbers or movements in winter.

The table below shows results from the early years of the Breeding Bird Survey in Sussex. The percentage of 1-km squares in which birds were recorded points to a degree of decline as has been noted in long term breeding surveys of other defined plots over the same period. However, in contrast, average number of birds per square seems to show fairly stable numbers.

Year	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
% squares seen	96	100	100	100	97	96	96	94
Average no. per square	13.7	14.4	14.6	13.3	14.8	15.9	14.0	14.5

In 2002 breeding started early. A bird was seen collecting nest material at The Pells, Lewes on 7 Feb whilst three young fledged from a nest at County Hall, Chichester on 4 Mar with the female again sitting on eggs in the same nest on 2 Apr. Breeding survey results were comparable or slightly up on those of recent years, for instance, 132 pairs in Moulsecomb Wild Park, 25 territories at Marsh Fm, Binsted, 18 at Sefter Fm, Pagham, and six each at Scobells Fm, Barcombe and Cissbury Ring. There were 25 pairs in Filsham LNR including seven in reedbeds, and 26 pairs in a *CBC* plot on Cocking Down. A survey of breeding success at Three Corner Copse, Hove gave very similar results to the previous year. Of 30 nests monitored, 21 failed and the remaining nine fledged 25 young.

There was only a small augmentation by immigrants in autumn. There was a maximum count of 100 birds in Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 16 Oct and 55 at Church Norton on 30 Oct. The ringing group at Whitbread Hollow noted at least 80 birds on 2 Nov some of which were very big with unusually long wings. In December the largest counts were 50 at Finchdean on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 49 in 67 ha at Marsh Fm, Binsted on the 8<sup>th</sup>, and

50 each at Stump Bottom, Steyning on the 10<sup>th</sup> and Chingley Wood, Bewl Water on the 27<sup>th</sup>. [RK]

## 1198. **FIELDFARE**

*Turdus pilaris*

**Common to abundant passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

Adding the maximum monthly numbers in each 10-km square gives a rough picture of distribution across the county in both the winter months and the following autumn:

Eastings	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
SU/SZ70-99	440	90	325	3	1135	425
TQ/TV00-49	660	1020	317	125	4875	2085
TQ/TV50-99	890	300	361	12	115	700

During the winter there were very few reports from the east of the county but in January they included the two largest flocks, both of 400, at Pett Level on the 1<sup>st</sup> and Bewl Water on the 11<sup>th</sup>. In February the largest flock by far was 500 on the Henfield Levels on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Numbers thinned out in March with the largest flocks numbering 160 at Darwell Res on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 200 at Lidsey Canal, Bognor Regis on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 100 at Wisborough Green on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Very few passage birds were reported in March and April and a poor spring was noted at Beachy Head. The last spring sighting of two birds at Scobells Fm, Barcombe on 21 Apr came very close to the 10-year average.

The first arrival of autumn at Fairlight on 22 Sep was also near to the 10-year norm. Only small parties were seen through October and these were mainly in transit. November saw many birds settling into the centre of the county including 800 at roost in Ashdown Forest on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 750 on Amberley Wild Brooks on the 10<sup>th</sup>; the latter was one of many flocks feeding on the floodplains of the R Arun and R Adur at that time. Sizeable flocks arrived in the west of the county from mid-month with 300 at Stapleash Fm, Chilgrove and 400 at Finchdean on 17 Nov.

In December the main concentrations were again in the river valleys particularly the upper Adur with 800 on Henfield Levels on the 15<sup>th</sup>. The east of the county saw few birds until late in the year when good numbers were noted at Bewl Water including a maximum of 500 on 27 Dec, suggesting some eastward movement as berry supplies dwindled. [RK]

## 1201. **REDWING**

*Turdus iliacus*

**Abundant passage migrant and very common winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

Adding the maximum monthly numbers in each 10-km square gives a rough picture of the distribution across the county in both the winter months and the following autumn.

Eastings	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
SU/SZ70-99	140	1	45	60	385	90
TQ/TV00-49	150	75	510	95	1455	695
TQ/TV50-99	230	160	290	20	115	220

Since there were few birds in the autumn of 2001, particularly in the west of the county, it was not surprising that this trend continued into the winter months of 2002 with maximum inland flock sizes of only 100 in January and February. Regular censuses of two farms in the Bognor Regis area confirmed the unusually low numbers in the west. A

flock of 300 at Bedelands Fm, Burgess Hill on 5 Mar signalled movement and observers at Bexhill/Hastings saw increasing evidence from 8 Mar with a passage of 70 E in 1.5 hrs. Further movements there were of 318 E in 6 hrs on 17 Mar and estimated nocturnal movements of 1500 on 18 Mar and 4000 on 20 Mar.

The last birds of spring were seen at both Moulsecomb Wild Park and St. Leonard's Forest, where 20 were counted, on 14 Apr, almost exactly at the 10-year average departure date. However, the first bird of autumn at Arundel on 30 Sep was some two weeks later than average.

During October there were numerous reports of flocks of up to 200 but most were in flight and there was a large passage of at least 2400 over Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on the 31<sup>st</sup>. In November, feeding flocks settled into the centre and west of the county, particularly on the floodplains of the R Arun and R Adur with numerous reports of up to 200 birds. This pattern continued to the end of the year but with reduced numbers. [RK]

## 1202. MISTLE THRUSH

*Turdus viscivorus*

**Common resident and partial migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

Birds were widely dispersed in the winter months as usual but numbers were well up on those of the previous winter with groups of six at Bedelands Fm, Burgess Hill on 10 Jan, ten at Michelgrove, Patching on 6 Feb, and nine at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on 16 Feb. An extraordinary exception to the general winter dispersion occurred at Cricketing Bottom, Southease, a dry valley in chalk downland, where numbers increased from six on 2 Jan, to 54 on 15 Jan, then 55 on 14 Feb, before declining to 25 on 24 Feb. For comparison, in the last fifteen years there have been only a handful of reports of more than ten birds with a maximum of 20 during these winter months.

Cricketing Bottom supported two breeding pairs in spring. One of the most densely populated breeding areas was Vinehall Street where Barne's Wood and Footland Wood shared six pairs. Only two pairs nested in Moulsecomb Wild Park, which historically used to hold 10 - 20 pairs. An unusual nest site in a reedbed was reported from Filsham LNR.

Post breeding flocks were larger than those of the last two years and stayed together longer. Examples were groups of 29 at Pulborough Brooks on 27 Jun, 29 at Barcombe Res on 11 Aug, 40 at Ashdown Res on 12 Aug, 28 at Blackpatch Hill, Findon on 31 Aug, and 37 at Pulborough Brooks on 1 Sep. The last sizeable flock was 21 at Nutley Windmill, Ashdown Forest on 11 Sep; thereafter as autumn set in numbers dwindled rapidly as usual with no flocks reaching double figures in December. [RK]

## 1200. SONG THRUSH

*Turdus philomelos*

**Decreasing resident and partial migrant; common passage migrant and winter visitor. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

During the first quarter the highest concentrations were 15 at Pulborough Brooks on 2 Jan and at Benfield Valley, Hove on 25 Jan and 12 - 18 at Cricketing Bottom, Southease, throughout the period. The first singing birds were heard from late January.

Breeding counts included 15 pairs at Moulsecomb Wild Park and Pulborough Brooks, and 12 pairs at Cocking Down. An indication of the productivity of breeding pairs came from Three Corners Copse, Hove, where of ten nests, two fledged seven young, and the remaining eight failed.

The first evidence of autumn migration was on 22 Sep when a continental race bird was trapped at Whitbread Hollow and where a further 11 continental birds were ringed during the autumn. Twelve flew over the Old Airstrip on Ashdown Forest on 27 Sep marking the start of an influx, which included counts of 22 at Pagham and Rye Hbrs and 25 at Beachy Head and Fairlight in the following two weeks. Forty were seen at Cissbury Ring on 19 Oct, while in early November there were counts of 44 at Moulsecomb Wild Park and 30 at Whitbread Hollow. The last counts of more than 15 birds were in mid November when 50 were seen at both Finchdean and Selsey West Fields. During December the only double figure counts were from Pulborough Brooks and Southease. [DG]

## 1220. CETTI'S WARBLER

*Cettia cetti*

### **Very scarce resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.**

During January, single birds were noted at Apuldram; the Breech Pool, Pagham Hbr; Glyne Gap; and Filsham LNR. Two overwintered at Pett Level and at least five were at Thorney Deeps. Two were heard singing at Snowhill Marsh, West Wittering on 10 Feb.

2002 was a successful year for this species, with twice the previous year's number of territorial males at breeding sites. There were six at Thorney Deeps, at least five at Arundel WWT, two each at The Severals, Church Norton; South Stoke; and Pett Level; and singles at Apuldram; Ivy Lake, Chichester GP; Marsh Fm, Yapton; North Stoke; and Filsham LNR. A single bird was also reported at Cooden Beach GC on 12 and 17 May. The first fledged young were noted on 29 May at Arundel WWT. The following day a pair with three young was at Thorney Deeps and on 1 Jun three young were also seen at Filsham LNR where a single male appeared to have paired with two females. Estimates from Arundel WWT were of 15-20 fledged young, while another good season at Thorney Deeps saw at least 20 young fledged from five broods.

Although there were no records from Rye Hbr earlier in the year, birds were reported regularly at Castle Water and Narrow Pit from 28 Aug onwards. A single bird trapped at Whitbread Hollow on 2 Nov was the first there since 1996, two were at Hooe Level on 23 Nov and a male was in song at Pett Pools from 6 Nov. Numbers stayed relatively high at the favoured sites; there were seven at Thorney Deeps on 5 Dec and at least ten were calling at Arundel WWT on 22 Dec.

A single bird showing characteristics of the eastern race *albiventris* trapped and ringed at Combe Haven on 19 Oct (JAGD, KMJ) appears to be the first recorded in Britain. A full account appears in *Birding World* 16 (8): 338-339 and the record is being assessed by the relevant records committees. [VB]

1236. **GRASSHOPPER WARBLER***Locustella naevia*

**Very scarce and declining summer visitor and fairly common passage migrant. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

A reeling male at Belle Tout on 2 Apr (RDME) was the earliest county record by two days. The next arrival was not until the 18<sup>th</sup>, when two were reeling at Church Norton. Two were reeling at Seaford Head on 21 Apr, and singles were noted at Selsey Bill, Church Norton, Hope Gap and Cuckmere Haven on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

During May and June there were 11 reeling males in potential breeding habitat at just five sites; four at West Dean Woods, five at Amberley Wild Brooks and singles at Thorney Island, Pulborough Brooks and Filsham LNR, similar numbers at these sites as in 2000 and a slight improvement on 2001. This is a far cry from the 1970 peak figure of approx 150 breeding pairs. Whatever the adverse conditions contributing to this species' continuing very low numbers are, they are still showing no signs of improvement.

An early autumn migrant was at Beachy Head on 14 Jul. Return passage commenced on 22 Jul through Pett Level, where birds were trapped daily in August, the maximum being 52 on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Singles were noted at the Old Airstrip, Ashdown Forest on 8 and 23 Aug, and 6 and 13 Sep and at Toads Hall Valley, Hove and Moulsecomb Wild Park on 4 and 9 Sep respectively. On Sep 8 at least 11 were noted at Beachy Head and 24 were trapped at Pett Level. October sightings were of single birds at Climping on the 1<sup>st</sup>, Littlehampton GC on the 4<sup>th</sup>, Beachy Head on the 13<sup>th</sup> and, at Pett Level, singles were trapped on six dates with the last on the 19<sup>th</sup>. [VB]

1238 **SAVY'S WARBLER***Locustella luscinioides*

**Rare visitor, has bred. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

A male reeling from a small reedbed at the Breech Pool, Pagham Hbr North Wall from 29 May to 3 Jun (SJP *et al*) has been accepted by *BBRC*. Its long stay was widely appreciated and it generally gave good views to those prepared to wait for it to appear. There are now 18 published records of this species in the county. [RJF]

1242. **AQUATIC WARBLER***Acrocephalus paludicola*

**Very scarce autumn visitor to selected sites, rare elsewhere. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

Three juveniles were trapped on Pett Level in August: on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> (RBRG). Records averaged just under ten a year during the 1990s but there have only been eight since. Most records are in August and all fall between late July and early October. [RJF]

1243. **SEDGE WARBLER***Acrocephalus shoenoaenus*

**Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant.**

Two singing at Pett Level on 30 Mar were the first of the year. The first West Sussex bird was heard at Arundel WWT the following day. By mid April there were 31 at Rye Hbr, 19 at Filsham LNR and 12 at Thorney Deepes.



Breeding season records revealed a minimum of 347 pairs at at least 29 sites, mostly comparable to 2001. There were four pairs at Ferring Rife, eight at Southease, 28 at Amberley, 30 at Pulborough Brooks, 33 at Filsham LNR, more than 50 at Arundel WWT and over 70 at Rye Hbr, a return to more usual numbers at this site after a poorer year in 2001. An amazing 219 singing males were counted at Rye Hbr on 24 Apr suggesting that the number of pairs at this site may have been higher, though an unknown proportion of these would have been on passage.

Return passage was first noted at Sheepcote Valley on 26 Jul and over 90 birds were noted at Filsham LNR on 10 Aug. At Pett Level the peak numbers trapped each month were 95 on 28 Jul, 358 on 11 Aug and 135 on 12 Sep. During October 25 were trapped at Pett Level with the latest on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Elsewhere there were only four recorded in October, the latest were singles at Pagham Hbr on the 9<sup>th</sup> and at Beachy Head on the 21<sup>st</sup>. [VB]

## 1250. MARSH WARBLER

*Acrocephalus palustris*

**Very scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

**2001:** A pair was present at an undisclosed locality between 19 May and early August.

**2002:** Two pairs and two males were present at an undisclosed locality between 17 May and late June. [RJF]

## 1251. REED WARBLER

*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

**Common summer visitor and very common passage migrant.**

The first, at Combe Haven on 4 Apr (KMJ), was the earliest arrival date for the county and one at Arundel WWT on 7 Apr was also very early and equalled the previous earliest date. On 16 Apr there were 11 at Arundel WWT and by the end of the month males were singing at approximately 20 different sites. One unusual report was of an individual singing in bushes by a bus stop in Bewbush, Crawley on 15 May.

Breeding season records came from a minimum of 36 sites, with good numbers at Thorney Deeps (74), Sefter Farm, Pagham (51), Marsh Fm, Yapton (30), Arundel WWT (70+), Southease (30) and Combe Haven (144). The last site included 60 pairs at Filsham LNR. Several of these figures were slightly lower than those reported the previous year. Two males returned to Rock Common, Washington, where they were recorded for the first time in 2001, and two singing males were heard by the Teville Stream at Brooklands, East Worthing, probably another new site for the species.

Peak daily catches at Pett Level during each autumn month were 84 on 28 Jul, 126 on 11 Aug, 84 on 8 Sep and 21 on 1 Oct. Passage at Beachy Head was noted as starting early, with good numbers including 20 at Whitbread Hollow on 3 Aug, 25 on 11 Aug and 40 on 24 Aug. At Shoreham Sanctuary a total of 71 different birds was trapped during the season including five ringed at the site in previous years. Most had departed by late September except from Pett Level where 98 were trapped during October. Elsewhere only 14 were reported during October with the last bird of the autumn at Pett Level on 29 Oct. [VB]

1260. **MELODIOUS WARBLER***Hippolais polyglotta***Very scarce visitor.**

Two were recorded, one in spring and one in autumn. A singing male was present at Combe Haven on 22 May (KMJ *et al*) while a juvenile was trapped in Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head on 19 Aug (JHM). An average showing, 57 have been recorded in the county in total of which 22 have been since 1990. Of these more recent records, four have been seen during the second half of May, one in June, eight in August and nine in September. [RJF]

1262. **DARTFORD WARBLER***Sylvia undata***Fairly common but localised resident. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

Away from the breeding areas there was a single at Marline Wood, Hastings on 1 Jan; presumably the same individual was noted there during February. There were few other coastal records during the first winter period, though singles were noted at Paghham Hbr on 6 and 19 Jan and at Rye Hbr on 22 Jan. Few were reported from the breeding grounds for this period with only six records from Ashdown Forest. The highest counts received were for West Sussex where there were eight on Iping Common on 31 Jan (six were singing) and 13 on 10 Feb; the highest count for Ambersham Common was six on 18 Feb.

The total number of breeding pairs reported in the county this year (115) was marginally down on 2000 (122 pairs), the last comparable year. Although FMD limited the reporting in 2001 there does seem to be a downward trend on Ashdown Forest where approximately 62 pairs were located compared with 80 - 90 pairs in 2001 and 77 pairs in 2000. The *Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey* showed an increase from 41 pairs (on six heaths in 2000) to 51 pairs at seven heaths in 2002 (see page 182). Three other sites held at least a pair each. The largest population was of 18 pairs on Ambersham Common. Six pairs were found on Lavington Common in an area of approximately 18.2 ha. Ashdown Forest suffered from a fire, which destroyed some 170 acres of habitat and this, together with a cold spell the previous winter may explain the lower numbers rather than be a reversal in the recent expanding trend. Interestingly, expansion has stalled, and is apparently in retreat, in suitable habitat, particularly in Cornwall and possibly Devon. The adjoining county of Hampshire reported virtually static numbers in 2001 when a detailed survey was undertaken. The first evidence of successful breeding was a pair at Thorney Island feeding at the nest 10 May; subsequently this pair was seen with three fledged young. Single pairs were also noted at Chailey Common and Fairlight through the breeding season.

As usual, there were more sightings away from the breeding areas during the autumn and second winter period than during the first winter period. The first indication of post-breeding dispersal was provided by the appearance of a bird without a tail at Church Norton on 4 Jul. Thereafter, although the most frequent sightings were in the Paghham Hbr area, there were records from six other coastal sites (Littlehampton GC, Moulsecoomb Wild Park, Peacehaven Cliffs, Beachy Head, Fairlight and Pett Level). Counts were never of more than one and the dates often close together so it is difficult to assess the actual numbers of individuals involved. The approximate coastal monthly totals were as follows:

Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	-	2	10	3	2

The table confirms a trend noted in the *Migration Atlas* that 60% of records received for coastal dispersing birds are between early Oct and early Nov and comment in *BWP* considers that these are likely to be mainly juveniles.

The breeding areas remained occupied until the end of the year. The largest single counts were of 12 at Ambersham Common on 2 Nov and a similar number on Iping Common on 9 Nov and five on Ashdown Forest. A male was heard singing on Lavington Common on 25 Dec. [AP]

## 273. **BARRED WARBLER**

*Sylvia nisoria*

### **Very scarce autumn visitor.**

A juvenile showed well in the old trapping area on Beachy Head on 29 Sep (RJF *et al*) while another was seen rather more briefly on Littlehampton GC on 2 Oct (OM). The Littlehampton individual is the 50<sup>th</sup> to be recorded in the county, 18 of which have been seen since 1990. All have been between 17 August and 31 October with September the best month (accounting for 33 records). Beachy Head remains the best location in the county to see this species (with 32 records). [RJF]

## 1274. **LESSER WHITETHROAT**

*Sylvia curruca*

### **Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant.**

The first sighting was of a single bird in song at Toot Rock, Pett Level on 7 Apr, a relatively early date. The next was at Peacehaven on the 11<sup>th</sup> followed by two at Moulsecomb Wild Park on 14 Apr. The first West Sussex bird was at Pagham Hbr on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

Singing males were noted during the breeding season from suitable habitat throughout the county; there were three pairs at Moulsecomb Wild Park and Marline Wood, Hastings; four at Cissbury; five at Rye Hbr; six at Combe Haven/Filsham LNR; ten at Pulborough Brooks; and 12 at Thorney Island. These figures showed an increase over 2001 at Pulborough but a decline at Combe Haven. A pair with recently fledged young was seen at Waltham Brooks on 15 Jun and some recently fledged juveniles were at Scobells Fm, Barcombe on the 17<sup>th</sup>.

Observers at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head noted a continuation of the worrying run of poor years for this species, though 100 were recorded there on 25 Aug. During September, sightings tailed off with the last departing migrants reported at Beachy Head on the 29<sup>th</sup>, at Pett Level on the 30<sup>th</sup> and at Pagham Hbr on 4 Oct.

For every other year to date, this account has stopped at the end of the previous paragraph. However, on 17 Nov a single bird arrived in a Worthing garden (KCH), and was noticed flitting from branch to branch of shrubs, searching for food. Amazingly it was seen regularly at the same site all winter, was photographed, and remained until 14 Apr 2003. A full account of this exceptional record appears in this Report on pages 205-206. [VB]

1275. **WHITETHROAT**

*Sylvia communis*

**Common summer visitor and passage migrant.**

A fairly early arrival was of one seen at Pulborough Brooks on 26 Mar. One was at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on Apr 4 and birds were recorded daily in the county after the 9<sup>th</sup>. With the exception of 11 at Moulsecomb Wild Park on the 11<sup>th</sup> the main influx was from 16 Apr onwards.

As in the previous few years the number of birds in suitable breeding habitat was high, with eight pairs in 6.6ha at Cissbury, ten in 67 ha at Marsh Fm, Yapton, 23 at Pulborough Brooks, 25 at Moulsecomb Wild Park, at least 40 across Ashdown Forest and an estimated 55 at Rye Hbr. Interestingly, the first juveniles noted were at Pulborough Brooks on 30 May, where the first bird of the year had been seen.

Return passage commenced in mid August; 150 were at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head on the 18<sup>th</sup>, with 200 on the 21<sup>st</sup>, 250 on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 200 on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Observers noted the best autumn numbers there since 1989. During September the peak counts were 20 at Moulsecomb Wild Park on the 5<sup>th</sup>, 45 at Church Norton on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 75 at Beachy Head on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Only single birds were noted after 22 Sep and just six were recorded in October with the year's final records coming from both Beachy Head and Brooklands, Worthing on 17 Oct. [VB]

1276. **GARDEN WARBLER**

*Sylvia borin*

**Common summer visitor and passage migrant.**

The first individuals were reported at Pulborough Brooks and Marstakes Common, Chailey on 2 Apr, a day later than the county's earliest arrival recorded in 2001. Another was at Weir Wood Res on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and there were nine more records until 27 Apr, after which the main influx occurred.

During the breeding season 6.6 ha at Cissbury held two pairs, as did Lower Standean. There were five pairs at Marline Wood, Hastings where normally only three breed, and four at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street, also an increase on previous years. Three pairs bred at Pulborough Brooks and at Filsham, surprisingly one of these being in the reedbed. There were records from 49 different sites in May and June, including ten singing males on Ashdown Forest.

Numbers of passage birds reported at Beachy Head were slightly higher this year; 50 on 18, 24 and 25 Aug were the highest day totals. However, only nine were noted at Sheepcote Valley during the whole autumn. There were four records in October; the last West Sussex bird was seen at Snowhill, West Wittering on the 13<sup>th</sup> and in East Sussex the final sighting was from Pett Level on the 18<sup>th</sup>. [VB]

1277. **BLACKCAP**

*Sylvia atricapilla*

**Very common summer visitor and passage migrant; small numbers winter.**

Reports of wintering birds from January to March were broadly similar to those of the previous year, with at least 36 different individuals at 22 sites, mostly in gardens. As November and December 2001 only provided records of wintering birds at nine sites, could there have been a New Year influx following the very cold spell after Christmas? A garden in Keymer, where apples were available as a food source, was favoured with a

long-staying female from 16 Dec 2001 until 24 Mar 2002; it was joined by a male on 23 Feb which stayed until 2 Apr. A female in a West Worthing garden was noted using seed and nut feeders on 8 Feb and an early singing male was heard at Galley Hill, Bexhill on 15 Jan.

The first migrant was probably the individual at Arundel WWT on 13 Mar, and the earliest sighting at Beachy Head was on the 29<sup>th</sup>. On 4 Apr one was noted taking nectar from plum blossom at Scobells Fm, Barcombe and three days later one was seen carrying nesting material at Burton MP.

During the breeding season the species was heard or seen throughout the county, with four males holding territory at Goring Gap, six at Marsh Fm, Yapton, eight at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street, ten breeding pairs in 6.6 ha at Cissbury and at Home Fm, Barlavington, 18 at Moulsecomb Wild Park and 24 at Thorney Island.

Ringling data from Shoreham Sanctuary revealed 130 different birds passing through the site, of which four had been ringed in previous years. The total of 220 new birds ringed at Cissbury more than doubled that for previous year. Monthly maxima recorded on passage at Beachy Head during a good but not exceptional autumn were 150 on 31 Aug and 200 on 21 Sep, of which 105 were ringed. The last obvious migrants departed the coast in early to mid November with final sightings at Church Norton on the 7<sup>th</sup> and Beachy Head on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

Late November and December records came from 21 sites and comprised at least 27 different birds. Individuals at Benfield Valley, Hove and in West Worthing were seen feeding on peanuts, and a garden at Worlds End, Burgess Hill held up to three birds in December. [VB]

#### 1298. PALLAS'S LEAF WARBLER

*Phylloscopus proregulus*

##### **Very scarce visitor, mostly in late autumn.**

One was found in Horseshoe Plantation, Beachy Head on 20 Oct (DC, JFC *et al*) where it remained all day delighting many observers. At least 37 were recorded during the 1990s although there have been just three seen since (all at Beachy Head) with 2001 the first blank year since 1989. Hopefully this recent decline will not return this stunning species to its former status as an extreme vagrant (first recorded in 1968 when three were seen, there were seven during the 1970s and eleven during the 1980s). Most records are from mid October to mid/late November. [RJF]

#### 1300. YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER

*Phylloscopus inornatus*

##### **Very scarce visitor, mostly in late autumn.**

One visited a Goring garden irregularly during 13-14 Nov (DIS *et al*). This species is matching the previous one almost exactly. Thirty-seven were recorded in the 1990s, all during 26 September-29 November, and just three since. 2001 was the first blank year since 1987. [RJF]

1308. **WOOD WARBLER**

*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

**Very scarce summer resident and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

Forty records were received relating to some 34 individuals or pairs. This was a great improvement on 2001, and particularly pleasing were the reports of breeding in Ashdown Forest a former stronghold of the species.

There were 16 individuals reported for the spring period. The first record was from Glynde Level on 21 Apr and thereafter four others were recorded in April. Most birds, however, were seen in early May when seven individuals, including five at Church Norton, were recorded on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and four individuals at three sites on the 5<sup>th</sup>. A bird stayed and sang in an area with suitable breeding habitat at Woolbeding on 24 Apr but as there were no further records it is likely to have been a migrant.

Four territories were identified in Ashdown Forest where a male was seen displaying. There were no reports from the north-west heaths of Blackdown and Lynchmere this year. The current numbers remain below the eight and ten pairs for 1992 and 1993 noted in *Birds of Sussex*. Breeding numbers continue to decline in the central and eastern areas of Britain, as was also noted in the *Hampshire Bird Report 2001*, where numbers in the New Forest were 20% down on 1999 and 2000.

The autumn counts were a reversal of the spring with most records being from the east of the county (8) compared to the west (4). The first bird of the autumn was at Pulborough Brooks (RSPB) on 14 Jul with a further two seen in this month, seven in August and three in September. Most of the East Sussex records were from Beachy Head where two individuals were seen together near Belle Tout on 20 Aug. Wood Warblers are seldom encountered by ringers (*Migration Atlas, 2002*) but one was trapped and ringed at Pett Level on 7 Aug. The last record of the year was from Church Norton, Pagham Hbr on 9 Sep. [AP]

1311. **CHIFFCHAFF**

*Phylloscopus collybita*

**Very common summer visitor and passage migrant; small numbers winter.**

Reports during January and February came from 27 sites, mainly at or near the coast, with New Year's Day sightings at Apuldram (two), Arundel WWT, Chichester GP and Footland Wood, Vinehall Street. Three birds were noted at Steyning on 3 Jan and seven at Thorney SF on the 4<sup>th</sup>, though this was the maximum number seen at any one site, with no major concentrations as in 2001.

Returning migrants started to appear from 3 Mar, when a male was singing at East Head. The first East Sussex migrant was at Beachy Head on the 7<sup>th</sup>. There were four at Arundel WWT on 15 Mar and nine at Beachy Head on the 16<sup>th</sup>. A total of 15 was heard in Darwell Woods on 25 Mar, 27 were reported at Marline Wood, Hastings five days later and 37 were in Barne's Wood, Vinehall Street on 7 Apr.

Breeding season records revealed five pairs at Kilsham Fm, Petworth, nine at Home Fm, Barlavington, 11 at Thorney Island, 12 at Moulsecomb Wild Park, and 13 at both Marline Wood (compared to seven in 2001) and Footland Wood (eight in 2001). Yet again, the species did not breed at Goring Gap.

A rather mediocre autumn passage was reported at Beachy Head, with the September maximum of 100 on the 15<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, well down on 2001 numbers and very worrying when compared with those of 2000 when the September maximum was 400 on one day.

During October 60 were at Cissbury Ring on the 1<sup>st</sup>, the same number at Brooklands, Worthing on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 50 at Sheepcote Valley the next day. There were 100 at Beachy Head on 5 Oct and 20 at Climping Gap and Brooklands on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> respectively, the latter being the last reports in double figures. The last bird to be reported at Beachy Head was on 16 Nov.

Late November and December sightings comprised at least 53 wintering birds at 28 localities, approximately twice the number of the previous year, but still lower than in 2000. Five were seen at Darwell Res on 24 Nov, up to five at Arundel WWT on 24 Dec and eight at Coldwaltham SF on 20 Dec. [VB]

### 1312. **WILLOW WARBLER**

*Phylloscopus trochilus*

**Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The first was heard singing at Thorney Deeps on 22 Mar followed by singles at Sidlesham Ferry on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> and at Hollingbury Camp on the 27<sup>th</sup>. At least 20 had been recorded across the county by the end of March.

As in 2001 there were at least 100 singing males on Ashdown Forest, but elsewhere breeding density was low. Barne's and Footland Woods, Vinehall Street held nine and ten pairs respectively, four were at Amberley Wild Brooks SWT Reserve, three pairs nested in 6.6ha at Cissbury and there were two at both Woodvale Cemetery, Brighton and Paddock Wood, Cocking.

A nest at Millbrook, Ashdown Forest on 29 May fledged three young, which were seen at the same site on 20 Jun. A sad note was that no breeding took place at Moulsecoomb Wild Park, a site where *Birds of Sussex* estimated a breeding density of 9.4 pairs per km<sup>2</sup>, where four were noted in 1999, and only two in 2000. The value of regular counts at specific sites is emphasised by this obvious record of decline of this species.

On 5, 6 and 11 May an unusual song was heard from a bird seen in hawthorn bushes and on telegraph wires at Beeding Cement Works, sounding first like a Chiffchaff then switching to Willow Warbler song and vice versa. A similar sounding bird was at the same site in June 2001. Another unusual record was of one released unharmed after flying into a lounge in Littleworth on 14 Jul.

Passage through Beachy Head in August was again unspectacular, with maximum day counts of 250 on 21 and 22 Aug, similar to 2001 figures, and a total of 188 there on 8 Sep, a late influx. Only four records were received from October, the last two being at Pagham Hbr on the 7<sup>th</sup> and Sheepcote Valley on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

On 15 Sep a bird showing the characteristics of the northern race (*P. t. acredula*) was trapped at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head. [VB]

### 1314. **GOLDCREST**

*Regulus regulus*

**Very common breeding resident, common passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

A total of 300 records was received from 158 locations across the county (95 of the sites in the breeding season). There were counts in January of 12 at Marline Wood,

Hastings on the 1<sup>st</sup>, eight at Thorney SF on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 39 at Barne's Wood and 50 at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on the 19<sup>th</sup> and in February, seven at Southeast on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 28 at Barne's Wood and 34 at Footland Wood on the 16<sup>th</sup>. The highest count in March was of ten at Pagham Hbr on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

There were reports of confirmed or probable breeding from 18 locations on Ashdown Forest; at Forest Mere, Liphook (4); Footland Wood (19); Barne's Wood (22); Home Fm, Barlavington (26); Paddock Wood, Cocking (28); West Dean Woods (30); and from 13 other sites.

The autumn was regarded as a poor one for coastal records, with October maxima of 56 at Beachy Head on the 13<sup>th</sup>, ten at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 23 at Pagham Hbr on the 18<sup>th</sup>. The largest counts inland were of 62 at Footland Wood on 17 Nov and 20 at Darwell Res on 24 Nov. Seven individuals were trapped and ringed at Shoreham Sanctuary, 39 at Cissbury Ring and three at Weir Wood Res. [LM]

### 1315. FIRECREST

*Regulus ignicapillus*

**Scarce breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The total reported in the late winter and spring (85) was above the previous 10-year average of 60 but the autumn and winter total (107) was a little below the 10-year average of 114. The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
9	5	51	10	8	11	-	-	22	59	12	14

In January, there were two at Pagham Hbr and a single birds at Arundel, Steyning, Friston Forest, Bexhill, Hastings and Rye Hbr. The records for February were of single birds at Pagham Hbr, Upper Beeding, Seaford and Rye Hbr. The total in March was made up of three at West Dean Woods; seven at Pagham Hbr; two at Goring; eight at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton; three at Ovingdean; two at Bexhill; three at Filsham LNR; 13 in the Beachy Head area; and two at Rye Hbr; with singles at ten other sites – six of them coastal. In April the largest count was of two at Beachy Head on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, with singles at seven other locations, including one at Pagham Hbr on the 4<sup>th</sup>, the last coastal spring migrant reported.

Reports of singing/displaying males in suitable breeding habitat came from West Dean Woods (minimum of 14), Ambersham Common and Holmbush Forest (2). At West Dean Woods a juvenile was seen on 27 Jun.

The first record of the autumn was of one at Beachy Head on 8 Sept. The approximate totals recorded at the main sites during the autumn and early winter were as follows:

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pagham Hbr	2	10	3	-
Beachy Head	10	19	3	-
Rye Hbr	3	1	1	2
Other sites	7	29	5	12

The seven at 'other sites' in September was made up of records of two at Bexhill and singles at Midhurst Common; Cissbury Ring; Fairlight; Burnt Wood, Pett; and Pett Level.

The maximum counts of 12 at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 10 Oct and 6 at Beachy Head on the 12<sup>th</sup> were evidence of a small peak in what was regarded as a quiet autumn on the coast. In November, away from the main sites, there were two at Newhaven Tide Mills



and singles at Pulborough Brooks and Arundel WWT. The records in December included two at Hastings, three at Arundel WWT and singles at Barcombe, Filsham LNR, Winchelsea and Pett. [LM]

1335. **SPOTTED FLYCATCHER**

*Muscicapa striata*

**Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

The first spring arrivals appeared on 3 May with singles at Selsey West Fields, Ambersham Common and Beachy Head and three at Church Norton. These were followed by two at Bawl Water on the 6<sup>th</sup> and one at Burton MP and at the University of Sussex, Falmer on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Another single was at Beachy Head and two at Kneppmill Pond on the 11<sup>th</sup>. One at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 12<sup>th</sup> was followed by seven at Church Norton on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Ones and twos then appeared throughout the county from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the end of the month.

Probable breeding was reported from 31 sites but confirmed from only 17, both fewer than last year. Three fledged at Dallington and three young were seen at Watersfield. At Heathfield, a pair had four young at a site said to have had pairs breeding for the last ten years. Another pair had four young at Arundel Park but most others fledged one or two.

The usual post breeding groups began to appear at the end of August with 20 at Church Norton on the 28<sup>th</sup>, 16 on the 29<sup>th</sup> and eight on the 31<sup>st</sup>. There were 40 at Beachy Head on 8 Sep, 15 at Pulborough Brooks on the 10<sup>th</sup>, 15 at Climping and 12 at Pagham Hbr on the 11<sup>th</sup> and eight at Cissbury Ring on the 13<sup>th</sup>. There were six at both Ladies Mile LNR, Brighton and Church Norton and five at Pulborough Brooks on the 21<sup>st</sup>. The last sighting at Beachy Head, where the autumn was considered to be very poor, was of a single on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. The last birds recorded were singles at Pagham Hbr and Pulborough Brooks on 3 Oct. [DEGC]

1343. **RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER**

*Ficedula parva*

**Rare vagrant.**

One was seen briefly in a hedge near Roedean School at Ovingdean on 16 Sep (ITB) while a juvenile in the Hotel Garden at Beachy Head on 4 Oct (JFC) hardly lingered any longer. Eight have been recorded since 1990, half being in the last two years. The county total now stands at 28, of which 15 have been in October and 18 at Beachy Head. [RJF]

1348. **COLLARED FLYCATCHER**

*Ficedula albicollis*

**Very rare vagrant.**

A male Collared Flycatcher at Church Norton on 20 Jun (TJE, DF *et al*) has been accepted by *BBRC* and is the first county record (although five were purported to have been shot in the county as part of the 'Hastings Rarities'). A brief account of the bird appears in the August 2002 issue of *Birdwatch*. It was found in the small copse at the end of the track down from Church Norton car park to Pagham Hbr soon after 11.00 BST. It showed well off and on until about 15:30 (by this time the sun had moved around leaving its favoured area in shade) but not subsequently. For those who arrived at Church Norton

in time this bird was an undoubted highlight of the year (and a debt of gratitude is owed to the perseverance of the finder), for those who didn't *Birding World* 15: 233, where a photograph appears, should be avoided. Three of the Hastings Rarities reside in the Booth Museum of Natural History (BoMNH 207788-90). [RJF]

1349. **PIED FLYCATCHER**

*Ficedula hypoleuca*

**Scarce passage migrant, more numerous in autumn than spring. Has bred.**

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
11	7	-	-	32	20	-

There were more records than for several years. Those for spring showed a marked improvement and, whilst those in August were a little less than last year, September showed much higher figures.

The first for spring in Brighton on 4 Apr was the third earliest record for the county after last year's at Ferring on the 1<sup>st</sup> and that at Kidd's Hill, Ashdown Forest on 3 Apr 1994. There was then a gap until the 16<sup>th</sup> with a male at Church Norton and two males at North Common Fm, Selsey, another male at Beachy Head on the 17<sup>th</sup> and a male and a female at Church Norton from 18-20<sup>th</sup>. Singles were also at Whitehawk, Brighton on the 21<sup>st</sup>, Selsey and the University of Sussex, Falmer on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and Church Norton on the 27<sup>th</sup>. On 3 May there was a single at Brighton Marina, a male and female at Church Norton and another single at Beachy Head while on the 4<sup>th</sup> there was a male inland at Pulborough Brooks. The final records of the spring were of a male at Beachy Head on the 12<sup>th</sup> and a single at Church Norton on the 14<sup>th</sup>.

Autumn passage began at Church Norton with two on both 4 and 7 Aug, a single at Ovingdean on the 11<sup>th</sup> and singles again at Church Norton on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. At Beachy Head there were singles on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> with two on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Reports came from nine further sites by the end of the month, mostly of singles, but two were at Cissbury Ring on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Sightings continued into the first half of September. Most were of singles, but two at Worthing on 8 Sep and two at Ovingdean on the 11<sup>th</sup>. One at Petworth on 3 Sep was the only autumn records north of the downs. The last reported were singles at Church Norton on 21 Sep and at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. [DEGC]

1364. **BEARDED TIT**

*Panurus biarmicus*

**Scarce breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

The approximate totals recorded at the main sites outside the breeding season were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Thorney Deepes	1	3	2	24	50	22	14	12
Glyne Gap Marsh	3	-	1	-	-	-	4	-
Filsham LNR	3	7	20	-	12	7	-	12
Pett Level	-	2	-	2	14	2	2	-
Rye Hbr	-	-	3	-	12	4	2	-

Breeding was confirmed at Thorney Deepes, Filsham and Pett Level. At Thorney four pairs fledged 40 young while at Filsham five pairs raised at least 18 young. Three broods were raised at one site on Pett Level while at a second site a pair was seen with two young on 23 Jun. Up to two pairs were seen at Glyne Gap in June but without proof of breeding and at least one adult at Rye Hbr on 19 Apr.

Elsewhere there were singles at Arundel WWT on 9 Jan and 24 May, two at Charleston Reedbed on 13 Oct, three at The Severals, Church Norton on 17 Nov and six at both Apuldram Manor Fm, Chichester Hbr on 29 Nov and Arundel WWT on 5 Dec.

Some interesting observations were made at Thorney Deepes where a party of up to 20 juveniles was seen feeding on insects in an oak tree in late June. High flying activity was noted there on several days in September. Three flocks totalling 50 birds were observed high flying on the 27<sup>th</sup>, 17 flew high NNE on the 28<sup>th</sup> and four flew high SW on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

A female with an orange colour ring was noted collecting nesting material at Pett Level on 23 Jun. [PJ]

#### 1440. LONG-TAILED TIT

*Aegithalos caudatus*

##### **Very common resident.**

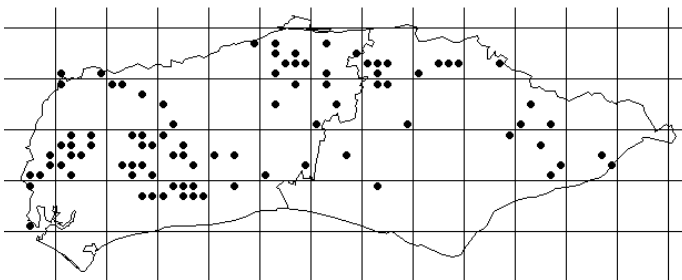
The largest counts in the first winter period were of 36 at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on 16 Feb, 28 at Marline Wood, Hastings on 15 Feb, 22 at Southease on 14 Feb and 17 at both Darwell Res and Barne's Wood, Vinehall Street on 19 Jan. The winter census at Sefter Fm, Pagham produced counts of three in February and four in March.

In the breeding season there were seven pairs at Marline Wood, Hastings; six pairs at both Moulsecomb Wild Park, Brighton and Footland Wood, Vinehall Street; and five pairs at Filsham LNR. A number of post-breeding flocks included 26 at Pett Level on 21 May, 20 at Weir Wood Res on 25 May and 25 at Bunkershill Wood, near Lewes on 2 Jun. Subsequently, there was an exceptional count of 70 at Sidlesham Ferry on 30 Jun followed by 11 counts of 25 or more from mid September onwards, indicating a very good breeding season. These comprised 27 at Pett Level on 15 Sep, 50 at Climping on 27 Sep, 22 at Thorney Island on 2 Oct, 26 at Darwell Res on 7 Oct and 17 Nov, 40 at Chanctonbury Ring on 7 Nov, 33 at Footland Wood on 17 Nov (with 28 there on 15 Dec), 30 in Stansted Forest on 18 Nov and at Hotham Park, Bognor on 8 Dec and, finally, 26 at Filsham LNR on 18 Dec. Ten were recorded during the winter census at Sefter Fm in November and four in December.

At Shoreham Sanctuary 31 birds (all new) were ringed in 22 sessions between 1 Jun and 28 Sep, compared with 46 in 2001 and 17 in 2000, while at Cissbury 17 new birds were ringed between 27 Apr and 19 Oct.

Birds were noted on peanut feeders at Edburton (12), Hailsham (4), Hangleton (3), Isfield (5) and Steyning (1). [PJ]

**Fairly common resident. Red list species of high conservation concern.**



The map shows the 90 tetrads in which the species was reported in 2002. As in 2001, most of the records were for the western Downs and adjacent wooded areas to the north, in the Horsham and Crawley area, on Ashdown Forest and in the woodlands north of Bexhill and Hastings. Given the similarity of this map with those for Nuthatch and Treecreeper and the absence of records from some 10 km squares known to hold suitable habitat for this species, it is likely that the map reflects the activities of observers rather than its true status in the county.

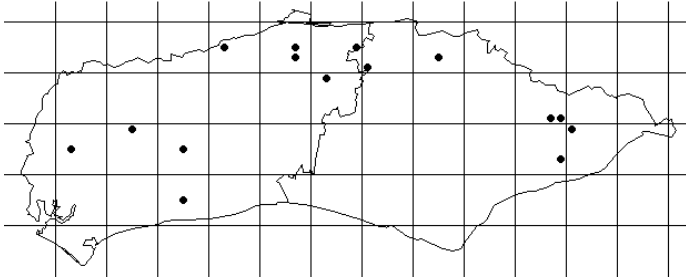
In the early part of the year the largest concentrations reported were six at Barne's Wood, Vinehall Street on 16 Feb and at Parham on 23 Mar and five at Marline Wood, Hastings on 28 Jan and 15 Feb.

A large number of breeding records was received. Some of these clearly indicated that there are parts of the county where this red list species is doing well. There were some significant concentrations on the Downs in the west of the county including seven pairs in the Stoughton area, six pairs at Home Fm, Barlavington and five pairs in Paddock Wood, Cocking. In the Hastings area, there were five pairs in Barne's Wood, two pairs at both Footland Wood and Marline Wood, and a single pair at Wishing Tree Res. Three pairs in nest boxes at the Loder Valley Reserve, Ardingly raised ten, ten and eight young but at nearby Ardingly Res none bred for the first time in eight years.

The largest numbers reported in the latter part of the year were ten at Footland Wood on 17 Nov and at Darwell Res on 24 Nov and five at the latter site on 6 Dec. [PJ]

**Scarce resident. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

This declining species was recorded at just 15 sites in 2002 compared with 22 sites in 2001. As the map shows these were on the Downs in West Sussex (at West Dean Woods and Blakehurst), on the Greensand Ridges (at Duncton Common and Rackham Woods), in the north of the county between Horsham and East Grinstead (at Rowhook, Tilgate Park, the Loder Valley reserve, Weir Wood Res and Chelwood Gate) and to the north of Hastings (in Barne's and Footland Woods, Brede High Wood and Marline Wood). The only breeding records were of single pairs at Poling Copse, near Blakehurst, Chelwood Gate and Barne's and Marline Woods and a single bird calling repeatedly in Brede High Wood on 14 Apr.



It should be remembered, however, that Sussex is very well wooded and that there are large areas of the county containing suitable habitat for this unobtrusive species which are rarely visited by birdwatchers. Although usually associated with damp scrubby woodland or carr, Willow Tits may also occur in copses and hedgerows in the under-watched areas of Wealden farmland and even in dense downland scrub.

Observers of Willow Tits are encouraged to record as much information as possible including choice of habitat and whether song or calls were heard. [PJ]

#### 1461. COAL TIT

*Parus ater*

##### **Very common resident.**

In the first three months of the years the largest concentrations reported were at Vinehall Street where there were 37 in Barne's Wood and 46 in Footland Wood on 19 Jan and 31 and 39 respectively on 16 Feb. The only other report of ten or more was of 11 at Lavington Common on 23 Mar.

The only breeding season counts were of 30 pairs in Barne's Wood and 12 pairs in Footland Wood; 18 pairs in Paddock Wood, Cocking; ten pairs in Stubbs Copse and eight pairs in Venus Wood on the West Dean Estate; two territories on the High Chimneys Estate, Battle; two pairs at Wishing Tree Res; and one territory in 16 ha of deciduous woodland at Barns Copse, Binsted. A survey of Browning's Fm, Kirdford produced counts of three on 17 Apr and 31 May. A pair in a nest box at Ardingly Res fledged ten young.

The largest concentrations later in the year were at Footland Wood where there were 18 on 23 Oct, 53 on 17 Nov and 38 on 15 Dec. Elsewhere there were 12 at Rackham Woods on 23 Nov.

The Atlas map in *Birds of Sussex* shows that Coal Tits are found more commonly away from the coast, especially along the county boundary with Surrey and in the High Weald. Records away from these areas included two in a Steyning garden up to 10 Feb and one in December, singles at Lewes and Southease in January, two at Broadwater, Worthing on 19 Jun, and one in a garden at Upper Beeding on three dates in October. At Fairlight Cove singles were recorded from January to March and again from August to the end of the year, with two there in December.

One at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 17 Sep showed characteristics of the continental race *ater* (IJW). [PJ]

1462. **BLUE TIT***Parus caeruleus***Abundant resident.**

The monthly maxima at 14 regularly counted sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sefter Fm, Pagham	11	11									13	8
Hotham Pk, Bognor	10	14	11	17	12	13	6	7	4	4	5	13
Marsh Fm, Yapton	9	13									7	5
Stopham Woods		10	24									
Parham Estate	4	7	7	9								
Warren Hill, Washington		10	36	23								12
Bedelands Fm, Burgess Hill	18	28	32	21	7	7	1	5	14	11		
Worlds End, Burgess Hill	8	6	5	6	7	15	12	11	8	8	8	10
Weir Wood Res	10	10	9	4	1		14	32	36	9	34	6
Isfield	6	5	6	4	2	4	6	6	5	6	8	7
Barne's Wood	106	99										
Footland Wood	112	108									90	85
Marline Wood	109											
Fairlight Cove	3	2	2	2	1		22				2	2

Other significant counts were of 22 at Benfield Valley, Hove on 21 Sep, 12 at Sheepcote Valley on 10 Oct, 29 at Darwell Res on 12 Nov and 34 at Rackham Woods on 24 Nov.

During the breeding season there were counts of 50 pairs at Moulsecomb Wild Park (55 in 2001), 48 pairs in Barne's Wood, 39 pairs in Marline Wood, Hastings, 32 pairs in Paddock Wood, Cocking, 19 pairs at each of Filsham LNR, Footland Wood and Wishing Tree Res, 16 pairs at Combe Haven and Home Fm, Barlavington, 15 territories at Marsh Fm, Yapton, 11 territories at the High Chimneys Estate, Battle (16 in 2001) and Sefter Fm, Pagham (11 in 2001), and seven territories at Cocking Down, Scobells Fm, Barcombe, and Southease. At Ardingly Res 143 young fledged from 15 nest boxes (123 from 16 in 2001). A pair nested in a caravan at Thorney Island and fledged ten young while at Hassocks a pair nested in a split gate post.

At Shoreham Sanctuary, 76 new birds were ringed and one retrapped from previous years in 22 sessions between 1 Jun and 8 Oct compared to 41 and six in 20 sessions in 2001. A total of 45 new birds including 16 *pulli* was ringed at Cissbury between 27 Apr and 19 Oct (43 including 27 *pulli* in 2001). [PJ]

1464. **GREAT TIT***Parus major***Abundant resident.**

The monthly maxima at 12 regularly counted sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sefter Fm, Pagham	5										7	8
Hotham Pk, Bognor	8	8	7	6	4	3	1	1	3	2	2	5
Marsh Fm, Yapton	11	10									1	5
Stopham Woods	12	14										
Parham Estate	1	5	11	3								
Warren Hill, Washington		3	14	8								6
Bedelands Fm, Burgess Hill	17	26	28	22	9	2		1	4	12		

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Weir Wood Res	5	5	5	3								
Isfield	4	5	6	4	2	2	5	3	3	3	4	3
Footland Wood	26	27									29	28
Marline Wood	33	31										
Fairlight Cove	2	1	1	1	1	3					1	2

A number of other significant counts included 15 at Pulborough Brooks on 7 Jan, 35 at Barne's Wood, Vinehall Street on 19 Jan, 21 at Darwell Res on 10 Feb, 20 at Spithurst on 30 Mar and 36 at Rackham Woods on 24 Nov.

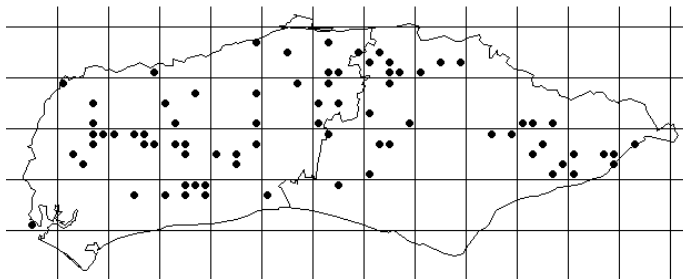
During the breeding season there were counts of 44 pairs at Moulsecomb Wild Park (the same as in 2001), 17 pairs at Paddock Wood, Cocking, 16 pairs in Barne's Wood, 14 territories at Marsh Fm, Yapton, 11 pairs in Footland and Marline Woods and on the High Chimneys Estate, Battle (nine in 2001), eight territories at Sefter Fm, Pagham (seven in 2001), seven pairs at Barns Copse, Binsted and Cocking Down and five pairs at Wishing Tree Res. At Ardingly Res 48 young fledged from eight nest boxes (three others failed).

At Shoreham Sanctuary, 27 new birds were ringed and one retrapped from previous years in 22 sessions between 1 Jun and 8 Oct compared to 11 and five in 20 sessions in 2001. A total of 24 new birds including ten *pulli* was ringed at Cissbury between 4 May and 19 Oct (15 including two *pulli* in 2001). [PJ]

## 1479. NUTHATCH

*Sitta europea*

### Common resident.



The map shows the 77 tetrads in which the species was reported in 2002. Once again, most of the records were for the western Downs and adjacent wooded areas to the north, on Ashdown Forest and in the woodlands north of Bexhill and Hastings. Given that there are large areas of suitable habitat for which there were no records, it is very likely that the map reflects the activities of observers rather than the species true status in the county.

Early in the year, there were eight at Marline Wood and six at Alexandra Park, Hastings on 1 Jan, six at both Footland Wood, Vinehall Street and Bedelands Fm, Burgess Hill on 16 and 24 Feb respectively and, in early March, nine at Darwell Res on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, six at Stopham Woods on the 4<sup>th</sup> and seven at Bedelands Fm on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

A number of breeding counts included nine pairs at Paddock Wood, Cocking; eight pairs at Pulborough Brooks RSPB Reserve; four pairs in Footland Wood; three pairs at each of Barne's Wood, Vinehall Street; Cocking Down; the High Chimneys Estate, Battle; and at Wishing Tree Res; and two pairs at Marline Wood, Hastings.

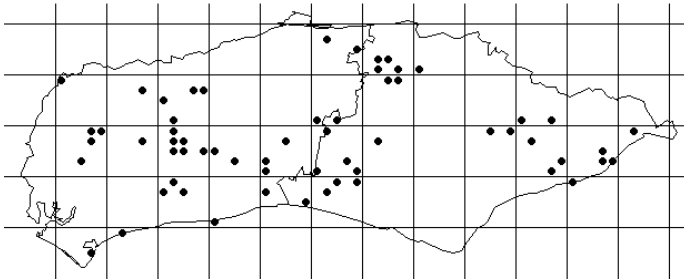
There were a number of post-breeding records of birds at unusual localities comprising singles at Cliff End, Pett on 9 Jul and 3 Aug, Pett Level on four dates in late July, at Shoreham Sanctuary on 14 Jul (trapped) and 25 Aug, and at Fairlight Cove on 24 Aug. These were the first records for Shoreham Sanctuary in almost 50 years of observations.

The largest counts in the latter part of the year were of eight in Stansted Forest on 23 Sep and ten at Footland Wood on 17 Nov. [PJ]

1486. **TREECREEPER**

*Certhia familiaris*

**Common resident.**



The map shows the 61 tetrads from which the species was reported in 2002. Although recorded in fewer tetrads than in 2001, the distribution is broadly similar with concentrations in the wooded areas north of the Downs in West Sussex, on Ashdown Forest and in the woodlands north of Bexhill and Hastings. As with Nuthatch, it is likely that the map reflects the activities of observers rather than the species true status in the county.

In the early part of the year the largest concentrations reported were of seven at both Barne's Wood and Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on 19 Jan, nine in Marline Wood Hastings on 15 Feb and ten at Pulborough Brooks on 24 Feb. In the latter part of the year there were six at Footland Wood on 17 Nov and Rackham Woods on 24 Nov.

The most significant breeding season counts were of seven pairs at Barne's Wood, Vinehall Street; five pairs at Pulborough Brooks RSPB Reserve, four pairs at Footland Wood, Home Fm, Barlavington and Paddock Wood, Cocking; three pairs at Marline Wood, Hastings; and two pairs at Wishing Tree Res.

Coastal sightings were of single birds at Church Norton on 1 Jan, 13 Feb, 8 Aug and 11 Sep, Hastings on 12 Jan, Fairlight Cove on 24 Mar, 1 Nov and 10 Dec, Pett on 7 Aug, Goring Gap on 8 Oct and at Hotham Park, Bognor on 23 Dec. On the Downs there were singles at Lewes Racecourse on 16 Feb and Moulsecoomb Wild Park, Brighton on 26 Oct and three at Chanctonbury Ring on 7 Nov.

At Shoreham Sanctuary two different birds were trapped in 22 ringing sessions between 21 Jul and 14 Sep. [PJ]



1508. **GOLDEN ORIOLE**

*Oriolus oriolus*

**Very scarce passage migrant and summer visitor, may have bred.**

**2001:** An adult male briefly at Combe Haven on 9 Jun (KH, KMJ) takes that year's total to three. None were seen in 2002, only the second blank year during the last 20. [RJF]

1515. **RED-BACKED SHRIKE**

*Lanius collurio*

**Very scarce passage migrant: formerly a breeding summer visitor.**

There were five records, one more than last year. The first was a female on 8 Jun at Cow Gap, Beachy Head (BEC, JC). The next was a juvenile on 26 Aug at Church Norton (AH *et al*). The two following birds were both trapped by the Rye Bay Ringing Group at Pett Level, the first on 6 Sep (RBRG) and the second a female on the 20<sup>th</sup> (RBRG). Finally, an adult female was found on 4 Oct at Pagham Beach, staying until the 6<sup>th</sup> (DA, ARK). [DEGC]

1520. **GREAT GREY SHRIKE**

*Lanius excubitor*

**Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.**

As in recent few years, records were few with a minimum of five birds and possibly six or seven. In Ashdown Forest, the first sighting was in the Crows Nest area on 4 Jan (MND) and again on the 8<sup>th</sup> (RHa). Perhaps a different bird was in the Garden of Eden area on the 27<sup>th</sup> (RHa) and at Old Lodge on 9 Feb (SMP) and 17 Feb (JMB). Commencing 26 Feb at Camp Hill, there were nine sightings in the Garden of Eden and Old Lodge areas over the next two weeks, the last again at Camp Hill on 12 Mar (RHa).

Later in the year on Ashdown Forest, one was reported at the Old Airstrip on 19 Oct (via CMA) with the same or another at the Isle of Thorns on 1 Dec (MS). In the Wrens Warren area, one was first seen on 21 Oct (SMG) and again on the 23<sup>rd</sup> (RHa) and 28<sup>th</sup> (MND). Presumably the same bird was there on 16 Nov (RHa), 20 Nov (REL), 26 Nov (CMA), 30 Nov (RNS) and 19 Dec (BP) and it may have been the bird that was at Greenwood Gate on 30 Nov (RNS).

A much reported bird was around Arundel from 5 Nov into 2003 (BFF *et al*). It was seen on both sides of the R Arun, ranging from near Mill Road to Arundel WWT and even at Swanbourne Lake. Elsewhere there was a single sighting at Down Level, Pevensey on 17 Oct (STU). [DEGC]

1539. **JAY**

*Garrulus glandarius*

**Very common resident.**

The records in the first quarter of the year were all in single figures, the highest counts being of seven at Marline Wood, Hastings on 1 Jan, six at Bedelands Fm, Burgess Hill on 10 Jan and 20 Mar, and five at Darwell Res on 3 Mar. Three in a garden in central Worthing from 6-20<sup>th</sup> May was an unusual spring record, as were several other reports of urban summer sightings. Six were seen in a survey of Paddock Wood, Cocking on 30 May.

Maximum counts in autumn and winter were of six at Pulborough Brooks on 17 Dec and five each at Bedelands Fm on 2 Oct, Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 31 Oct, Footland

Wood, Vinehall Street on 17 Nov and 15 Dec and Darwell Res on 6 Dec. One in a garden at Shoreham on 31 Dec was the first seen there in 15 years. [LM]

1549. **MAGPIE**

*Pica pica*

**Very common resident.**

The highest roost counts in the first quarter were of 30 at Thorney Deeps on 14 Jan and 52 at Pagham Hbr on 16 Feb. Other counts were of 20 at St Leonards-on-Sea on 27 Jan, 13 at Bedelands Fm, Burgess Hill on 7 Feb and 20 at Beachy Head on 31 Mar.

There were reports of confirmed or probable breeding from 28 sites, including a count of 44 pairs at Moulsecomb Wild Park. Autumn and winter counts included 36 at Thorney Deeps on 4 Sep, 30 at Southwick Hill on 15 Sep, 21 at Hangleton on 31 Oct, 120 at roost in Moulsecomb Wild Park on 6 Nov and 52 at Southease on 15 Nov. A leucistic individual was seen by the R Adur at Shoreham on 19 and 30 Nov. [LM]

1560. **JACKDAW**

*Corvus monedula*

**Very common resident.**

The highest counts recorded in the first quarter were 46 at Eastbourne on 20 Jan, 50 at Rosemary Fm, Bewl Water on 27 Jan, 200 roosting at Chingley Wood, Bewl Water on 12 Feb, and 84 at Weir Wood Res on 3 Mar. An individual with white wing bars was seen at Bewl Water on 8 Mar.

In the second half of the year the highest counts were 250 at Maresfield on 19 Jul, 1000 at Lavington Common on 19 Oct, 350 at Beachy Head on 20 Oct, 127 at Galley Hill, Bexhill on 28 Oct and 200 at Pulborough Brooks on 20 Nov. Counts of 620 on 17 Oct and 1100 flying west at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 19 Oct were the only coastal movements reported. [LM]

1563. **ROOK**

*Corvus frugilegus*

**Very common resident.**

The highest counts in the first quarter were 165 at Marsh Fm, Yapton on 6 Feb, 200 at Bedelands Fm, Burgess Hill on 24 Feb and 400 at Southease on 15 Mar.

Reports of rookery nest counts included totals of 81 at Houghton; 136 in the Patching area; 184 in the Clapham area; 140 in Findon Valley; 52 at Wyckham Wood, Steyning; 81 at Fulking; and 294 in and around Winchelsea.

Following a count of 600 at Sidlesham on 27 Jun, the highest counts in the second half of the year were of 400 at Southease on 15 Sep; 180 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 29 Oct; and 170 at Seftor Fm, Pagham on 3 Nov. [LM]

1567. **CARRION CROW**

*Corvus corone*

**Very common resident.**

The largest concentrations reported were 270 at Chingley Wood, Bewl Water on 18 Feb; 93 at West Worthing on 16 Mar; 55 at Hotham Park, Bognor on 25 May; and 75 in a

pre-roost gathering in Moulsecomb Wild Park on 26 Sep. One flew in off the sea at Brighton Marina in a force 8 gale and rain on 15 Oct and 60 were counted flying west high over Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 19 Oct. [LM]

1572. **RAVEN**

*Corvus corax*

**A scarce resident.**

Following the successful breeding at Beachy Head last year by an apparently wild pair, the first record since about 1895, two pairs bred in 2002. A pair raised two young at the same nest site at Beachy Head and the second pair, at a location in West Sussex, also raised two young. The first report at Beachy Head was on 4 Feb, with a further 18 records for the area during the year. The second pair was first recorded on 17 Feb and there were 24 subsequent reports from the area.

There were 92 records involving one or two birds from the following areas during the course of the year: Stansted Forest, West Dean, the Arun Valley, Shoreham, Lower Standen, Falmer, Lewes and Beachy Head. Two were seen mobbing a Marsh Harrier at Birling Gap on 12 Sep. [LM]

1582. **STARLING**

*Sturnus vulgaris*

**Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

The table below shows the percentage of 1 km squares in which Starlings were seen and the average number per square during the early years of the Breeding Bird Survey in Sussex. (The figures for 2001, the year of the FMD outbreak, when fewer squares were covered, probably excluding those with livestock, should be viewed with caution). The percentage of squares occupied hint at a declining trend but there seems to be no correlation with the large fluctuations in the average number of birds per square.

Year	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
% squares seen	87	91	90	94	79	92	84	78
Average no. per square	18.9	31.4	33.2	30.7	35.6	11.0	18.2	36.0

Numbers in 2002 remained depressed. Very few large flocks were seen in winter. Three thousand birds at New Salts Fm, Lancing on 3 Jan was probably a pre-roost gathering, whilst the largest recorded roost of 5000 birds was on Eastbourne Pier in late January. Very little migratory or diurnal movement was recorded at coastal sites. Most of the winter feeding flocks were seen on lowland pastures. They were mainly small; the only one exceeding six hundred in number was 1000 at Pevensey on 2 Mar.

A total of 32 pairs nested in Moulsecomb Wild Park and there were 17 breeding pairs at Pullborough Brooks RSPB Reserve. Five pairs nested in a farmhouse at Pebsham but a long term breeding survey at Marsh Fm, Binsted revealed only two territories in 67 ha. Small flocks of juveniles were seen from late May with one of 150 birds at Greatham Bridge on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

A flock of 3000 was on Brighton West Pier on 19 Jun and 1000 roosted in a reedbed at Ternery Pool, Rye Hbr in early July. Autumn flocks were generally small with feeding flocks concentrated on floodplains and coastal lowlands. There was appreciable coastal movement in late October and early November, including 1050 W at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 17 Oct and 1500 at Beachy Head on 31 Oct, many of which flew out to sea.

At Hollingdean, Brighton there were movements of 3000 W, 5000 W, and 4000 W on successive days from 3 Nov. The year ended as it began with a flock of 3000 at New Salts Fm, Lancing on 30 Dec. [RK]

1584. **ROSE-COLOURED STARLING** *Sturnus roseus*

**Rare vagrant.**

A record influx of some 140 occurred into Britain in June (*Birding World* 15: 232-233) but Sussex was largely passed by. An adult male was found on the beach at Selsey Bill on 13 Jun (BJC *et al*) but it soon flew inland, another adult male was seen roosting on Brighton West Pier on the evening of the 18<sup>th</sup> (IJW) while a probable female or first-summer was present in gardens in Southwater on 23-24 Jun (CF *et al*). These three take the county total to just over 30, although only eleven have been since 1980. Of these, six have occurred in June. At a time when many observers were checking starling flocks the West Pier roost might have seemed an obvious place to try, full credit must go to the only observer to do so. [RJF]

1591. **HOUSE SPARROW** *Passer domesticus*

**Very common but possibly declining resident. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

On 15 Feb two were recorded during the census of 67 ha of mixed farmland at Marsh Fm, Yapton, the previous three years having produced counts of 13, 10 and 28 respectively. The highest counts in the first winter period were of flocks of 30 at Widewater, Lancing, 58 at Worlds End, Burgess Hill, and 94 roosting at Ravenside retail park in Bexhill. Counts of at least 15 birds were received from a further ten sites, including 26 birds in the centre of Brighton.

Breeding records were received from across the county and showed an encouraging increase over 2001, though this could be due to increased observer awareness of the importance of records of this species. The largest concentration of breeding pairs was again at Moulsecomb Wild Park, Brighton, where 16 pairs were noted, an increase of three pairs over 2001. Ten pairs were noted at Southease, with further counts of five to seven pairs at Byworth, Bulverhythe, Earls Down at Dallington, and both Galley Hill and Glyne Gap Beach, Bexhill. In 2001 there were only four counts of four pairs or more.

Post breeding flocks continued to show an increase compared with recent years. Large flocks recorded from July to September included 120 in a new roost at Hailsham, 140 at Newhaven Tide Mills, 250 at Rye Hbr and 150 at Glyne Gap, Bexhill in July, rising to 280 there in August. During the second winter period numbers were above those recorded in 2001, with flocks of 20 or more birds recorded from 14 sites (nine in 2001). The largest flocks during this period were 70 at Shoreham Hbr and 90 at Glyne Gap, Bexhill. [DG]

**Scarce resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

During the first four months of the year records were concentrated around Icklesham. These included up to 20 at Elms Fm between January and March, the same number at Brook Fm on 13 Jan and at nearby Snailham on 16 Feb. The maximum of counts at Ashes Fm was 12 on 30 Mar. It is possible that the above records involve some duplication, as the maximum distance between the four sites is only 4 km. The only other records for the first winter period were three at Footland Wood, Vinehall on 1 Jan, four at Scotney Court Fm on 30 Jan, ten at Middle Bridge, Pevensey on 18 Mar and two at Barne's Wood, Vinehall on 7 Apr. Evidence of spring passage was limited to an individual present at The Severals, Church Norton on the unusual date of 1 Jun.

All breeding season records came from the Pevensey area. Breeding was considered probable at three sites there, with two at Horse Eye Level, three at New Bridge and six at Manxey Level on 30 Jun. Breeding was confirmed on 10 Jul when four were seen including juveniles. Tree Sparrows were described as possibly absent from Rye Hbr LNR, formerly a breeding stronghold of this species, during the summer.

During September, seven were trapped at Pett Level on the 1<sup>st</sup>, and singletons were at Rye Hbr on the 27<sup>th</sup> and at Barne's Wood on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Tree Sparrows were reported as present with a House Sparrow flock at Bignor on 19 Sep and at Newhaven Tide Mills on 1 Oct. Flocks were noted from the traditional areas after this. During the last three months of the year the maximum numbers seen at traditional sites were nine at Barne's Wood and three at Footlands Wood, five at Harbour Fm, Rye Hbr, four at Scotney Court GP and five at Brede Levels. At Pett Level 26 were recorded on 3 Dec and a flock of at least 60 on 29 Dec, equalling the largest gathering recorded in the county in at least the last seven years.

Probable autumn passage commenced with two birds at Selsey Bill on 31 Aug. On 13 Oct seven birds were seen to fly east at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton. Further sightings during October were of 3 E on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 1 E on the 21<sup>st</sup> at Sheepcote Valley, 2 E at Beachy Head on the 19<sup>th</sup>, with one there on the 20<sup>th</sup>, and 1 W at Galley Hill, Bexhill on the 28<sup>th</sup>. During November one was seen at Mill Hill, Shoreham, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and one at Brighton Marina on the 17<sup>th</sup> was the first to be recorded at this site.

All records of this species, especially in the breeding season, would be appreciated. Any negative records from previous breeding areas would also be gratefully received. [DG]

**Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.**

During the first winter period, flocks in three figures were recorded at six sites. At Coates Common 600 were noted on 2 Jan and 400 were seen at Lee Fm, Patching on both 9 Jan and 6 Feb (feeding in a swiped maize and millet game cover crop). A flock of 210 at Southease on 24 Feb had increased from 100 on 15 Jan, 120 on 2 Feb and 150 on 14 Feb. There were 200 at Wren's Warren, Ashdown Forest on 5 Jan, and 100 at Furner's Fm, Henfield on 13 Jan and also at Powdermill Res on 23 Mar. The regular winter census in 67 ha of mixed farmland at Marsh Fm, Yapton produced January and February counts of 12 and 21 respectively whilst those in 95 ha at Seftor Fm, Pagham were 11 and 43. In all ca. 2700 birds were reported during the first three months from 56 1 km squares.

Counts for the breeding season included 48 pairs at Moulsecomb Wild Park, 39 in 67 ha at Marsh Fm, Yapton, 36 at Darwell Res, 28 in Marline Wood, Hastings, 27 in the reedbeds at Filsham LNR, 24 in Barne's Wood and 23 in Footland Wood, Vinehall Street, and 21 in 95 ha at Sefter Fm, Pagham. In all some 500 breeding pairs were reported, just a fraction of the estimated county population of 115,000 pairs (*Birds of Sussex*).

There were no significant movements in the autumn until the middle of October. The highest numbers in the first week of October were seen at Church Norton with 35 on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 25 E on the 7<sup>th</sup> followed later by a party of ca. 50 over Ashdown Res on the 13<sup>th</sup>. However, on the 17<sup>th</sup> no less than 1500 flew west at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton during the morning, with birds still moving at midday. However, few coastal movements were recorded with the largest being 69 W at Bexhill/Hastings on the 28<sup>th</sup> and arrivals at Beachy Head of 40 on both 28 and 31 Nov and 60 on 4 Nov. There were 95 at Footland Wood on the 23 Oct and again on 17 Nov. In November the other counts above 40 were of three flocks totalling 200 at Pulborough Brooks on the 10<sup>th</sup> and at Stapleash Fm, Chilgrove flocks of 500 and 250 on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> respectively. December was equally quiet with just six records of more than 50 birds. These were of 68 at Marsh Fm, Yapton on the 8<sup>th</sup>, 55 at Sheepwash Ghyll, near Colgate on the 14<sup>th</sup>, 82 at Footland Wood on the 15<sup>th</sup>, 60 at Gaston Fm, Slindon and 90 at Millbrook, Ashdown Forest on the 17<sup>th</sup>, and 100 at Pippingford Park, Ashdown Forest on the 27<sup>th</sup>. [JAH]

1638. **BRAMBLING**

*Fringilla montifringilla*

**Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.**

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of birds	34	18	33	10	-	-	-	-	4	298	63	99
Number of sites	12	8	12	7	-	-	-	-	3	24	17	7

During the first winter period birds were generally scarce. The largest numbers reported were ten at Pond Lye, Goddards Green on 21 Jan and seven at Tegdown Hill, near Brighton, on 16 Mar. Otherwise there were reports of from one to five birds at 29 sites (1 km squares). The last record for the period was one at Ambersham Common on 18 Apr.

The first autumn record was of 1 SW at the Old Airstrip, Ashdown Forest on 20 Sep followed by three further singletons on 26<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> at Ashdown Res and at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on the 28<sup>th</sup>. The next sighting was not until 9 Oct, in the Ashdown Forest area again, and over the following week numbers in ones, twos, and threes were seen at several sites. However, on the 17<sup>th</sup> 15 N noted over Church Norton and 75 W over Sheepcote Valley, Brighton were part of the influx during the month. A party of 35 at Pippingford Park, Ashdown Forest on the 19<sup>th</sup> was followed by 20 E over Hollingdean, Brighton on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 50 in Friston Forest on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Twenty five were still in Friston Forest on 15 Nov but elsewhere numbers did not exceed eight throughout November. December was relatively quiet generally with numbers away from Ashdown Forest not exceeding four but in Pippingford Park they reached a peak of at least 65 on the 27<sup>th</sup>. [JAH]

**Very scarce passage migrant, has bred.**

At 10:00 BST on 21 Apr one was heard flying west over Hastings CP (CHD) while at 10:45 a male flew into Combe Haven from the south (KMJ), remaining in the area for just under an hour. A female was seen at Birling Gap on 17 May (JFC), one flew west over Selsey Bill on 8 Jun (OM *et al*) and a male was singing in Cow Gap, Beachy Head on 15 Jun (RJF, NJR). Assuming those in April were the same, and the coincidence of timing and direction of flight would seem too great for them not to be, then four were recorded during the year, the worst showing since 1991 when just two were recorded. Over two-thirds of recent records have been in April or May. [RJF]

**Very common resident, scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.**

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of records	20	19	23	22	34	31	9	10	12	24	22	18
Number of birds	435	267	227	79	127	184	181	176	313	990	669	260

The table above, when compared with that for 2001, shows a recovery in the number of records in February and March, months affected by FMD restrictions in 2001, and a relatively smaller influx in October.

During the first three months of the year, only 13 of the 62 records received (an increase of 38% on 2001) were of counts of 20 or more. In January 106 went to roost at Marline Wood, Hastings on the 1<sup>st</sup> with 64 doing likewise on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 53 on 15 Feb. Other notable counts were of 40 at Stedham Common on 14 Jan and at Southease on 15 Jan (with 45 there on 14 Feb and 60 on 15 Mar); and 53 at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on the 19<sup>th</sup>. A roost of 30 in the Old Steine, Brighton on 14 Feb had increased to 40 by 8 Mar.

A total of approximately 175 pairs was reported with breeding confirmed in 27 1 km squares by at least 128 pairs. This represents a fraction of the total county population which was estimated at 17,000 – 26,000 pairs (*Birds of Sussex*). The most notable count was of 29 pairs in Moulseccomb Wild Park, Brighton, a slight decline on 2001.

Birds began to congregate as early as 10 Jul when 50 were noted in Angmering Park followed by 50 roosting at Thorney Island on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Eighty at Thorney Deeps on 21 Aug was the only notable count for that month. In September there were 70 in Stansted Forest on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 60 feeding in a stubble field on Thorney Island on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 40 at the Newhaven Tide Mills on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Numbers at the latter site increased to 150 on 13 Oct and on Thorney Island to 160 by the 16<sup>th</sup>. On the 17<sup>th</sup> birds were noted moving in sizeable numbers when 150 flew west over Sheepcote Valley, Brighton. An influx of 40 at Beachy Head on the 23<sup>rd</sup> preceded counts of 50 at Pagham Hbr on the 24<sup>th</sup>, and 90 W at Beachy Head the same day. The month's total of 89 at Bexhill/Hastings included both 35 E and 28 W (on the 28<sup>th</sup>) and the month ended with 50 E at Beachy Head on the 31<sup>st</sup>. The largest counts of the autumn were made at coastal, shingle sites in November. At Pagham Hbr there were 100 on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> and 300 on the 6<sup>th</sup> while at Newhaven Tide Mills there

were 110 on the 15<sup>th</sup> followed by 140 on the 24<sup>th</sup>. The only notable count in December was of a pre-roosting flock of 50 near Lewes on the 10<sup>th</sup>. [JAH]

1653. **GOLDFINCH**

*Carduelis carduelis*

**Common summer visitor and passage migrant and fairly common winter visitor.**

During the first quarter *ca.* 1000 birds were reported from 46 sites spread across the county, an increase on 2001 and a carry-over from the previous autumn's large influx. The largest counts were from Southeast where a flock, frequently noted in kale fields, reached a maximum of 200 on both 15 Jan and 14 Feb, declining to 170 on 24 Feb but with 150 still there on 15 Mar. In March an influx of 100 was noted at Beachy Head on the 8<sup>th</sup> and a flock of 100 was at Telscombe on the 17<sup>th</sup>; the next highest count was of 60 at Pulborough Brooks on the 14<sup>th</sup>. Counts of between 20 and 35 birds were made at 12 other sites up to 12 Mar.

Spring coastal passage was, like 2001, very poor. Records came from only two sites. At Bexhill/Hastings the totals for April and May were 65, with a maximum of 39 W and 18 E on the 25<sup>th</sup>, and six respectively whilst at Seaford 3 N on 7 May was the only record. The only other significant count was of 70 on set-aside at Scobells Fm, Barcombe on 12 Apr.

A total of approximately 95 pairs was reported with breeding confirmed at 14 sites by at least 63 pairs. This represents a fraction of the total county population which was estimated at 6000 pairs (*Birds of Sussex*). There were 25 pairs at Pulborough Brooks, eight pairs at Southeast, five pairs at Marsh Fm, Yapton, four in Moulsecomb Wild Park, and single pairs at the remaining sites. There were no data on breeding productivity.

Goldfinches began to reappear in significant numbers from the end of July when 60 were noted at Thorney Deepes on the 25<sup>th</sup>. In August, 130 were counted at Pulborough Brooks on the 15<sup>th</sup> with 100 there on 25<sup>th</sup>, 60 were still at Thorney Island on the 26<sup>th</sup> and 100 were at Weir Wood Res on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Between 1-14 Sep there were 11 counts from nine sites of between 30 and 80 birds. The month's highest count was of 300 at Southeast on the 15<sup>th</sup> followed. At only two coastal sites were significant movements recorded during the month; 85 NE were noted at Rye Hbr on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 48 W and 11 E was the maximum noted at Bexhill on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Elsewhere, the highest counts during the second half of the month were 50 at Golding Barn, Upper Beeding and 30 at the Ladies Mile LNR, Brighton. The monthly total, however, exceeded 1300 birds.

October, however, was another remarkable month for this species, as in 2001. A conservative estimate suggests that over 12,800 birds were involved. Passage was particularly marked on the 7<sup>th</sup> when there were counts of 830 E at Church Norton, 315 E at Worthing Beach and 350 E at Beachy Head.

Details of movements noted during the autumn at coastal sites were as follows:

Coastal Site	Sep	Oct	Nov	Max movement
Selsey Bill		175	120	160 on 21 Oct
Church Norton		2300		830 E on 7 Oct
Worthing Beach		425	26	315 E on 7 Oct
Newhaven Tidemills		100	20	50 on 1 & 20 Oct
Beachy Head		3810	170	350 E on 7 Oct 550 on 18 Oct
Bexhill/Hastings	81	1526	70	48 W on 30 Sep 918 E on 13 Oct
Rye Hbr	85			85 NE on 27 Sep



Other high counts were of 280 at Filsham LNR on the 7<sup>th</sup> (with 120 still there on the 19<sup>th</sup>), 200 at Stansted Park on the 11<sup>th</sup>, 150 at both Rye Hbr on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> and Southease on the 15<sup>th</sup>, and 120 at both Halseys Fm, Sidlesham on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and Thorney Island on the 19<sup>th</sup>. At Erringham Fm, Shoreham a feeding flock on the 9<sup>th</sup> numbered 100. Counts of 60 came from Sullington Hill on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, Sidlesham Tramway on the 4<sup>th</sup> and Goodwood Trundle on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

November was typified by much smaller numbers generally. A good count for the month at Filsham LNR was of 158 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and there were 150 at Southease, obviously a well liked place by the species. The next highest count was of 60 at Ifield MP on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Elsewhere numbers ranged from 40 down to one at some 15 sites. December's highest counts were of 150 at Southease again on the 15<sup>th</sup> and at Cliffe Hill, Lewes on the 28<sup>th</sup>. The only other count above 17 was of 100 at Bewl Water on the 8<sup>th</sup>. [JAH]

## 1654. SISKIN

*Carduelis spinus*

### Common winter visitor and passage migrant. A very scarce breeder.

The following table, which gives the approximate monthly totals, shows the pattern of occurrence throughout the year. Sites are 1 km squares.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of birds	472	583	306	77	43	6	5	5	153	1036	805	787
Number of sites	21	31	29	20	13	3	3	3	11	25	41	21

The above figures show that, during the first winter period, numbers were comparable with the two previous years with a marked reduction in April as birds departed, presumably to their breeding grounds. The autumn influx occurred mainly in October. Numbers were markedly lower than in the exceptional year of 2001 but comparable with 2000 though they stayed rather higher through to the year's end.

The largest flocks in the first winter period were 75 at Bewl Water on 13 Jan, 60 at Burton MP on 17 Feb and 50 - 60 in Footland Wood, Vinehall Street in January and February. Elsewhere there were several counts of 40 - 50 through to March.

Breeding was confirmed at four sites. A pair bred again at Lavington Common and there were other single pairs at Ambersham Common, West Dean Woods and Paddock Wood, Cocking but with no details of numbers of young fledged. Single pairs at six other sites probably bred as did up to three pairs at Earls Down, Dallington, two pairs in Footland Wood and up to ten pairs that were seen displaying in Broadwater Forest, near Groombridge. Elsewhere single birds or pairs were seen in suitable breeding habitat at 13 other sites with two singing males at Silver Hill, Holmbush and up to ten possible pairs at Lord's Piece, Coates.

In the second winter period the largest counts reported were of 160 E at Church Norton on 24 Oct, 150 at Henley, near Midhurst on 29 Oct and another 150 at Burton MP on 30 Dec. A movement of 90 E at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 17 Oct and 90 at Ifield MP on 25 Dec were the only other records of over 60 birds up until the end of the year although there were several other counts of 40 - 50. [JAH]

**Decreasing resident and partial migrant. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

Winter records came from 12 sites with *ca.* 1100 and *ca.* 600 being recorded in January and February respectively. A flock, feeding in stubble and kale, at Southeast increased from 150 on 2 Jan to 300 by the 15<sup>th</sup> after which a similar number was recorded until late February and 250 were still there into March. At Coates Common there were 200 on 2 Jan and 60 on 6 Feb. A flock of 50 at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 4 Jan was followed by 140 in the nearby North Fields on the 30<sup>th</sup>. There were 60 on the Brede Levels on 13 Jan and a flock of 80 on ploughed land at Holmbush Tip, Faygate on the 30<sup>th</sup>. At Pulborough Brooks a flock of 40 on 1 Feb had increased to 112 by the 13<sup>th</sup> of which 60 remained on the 27<sup>th</sup>. A flock of 100 at Barlavington on Feb 14 was the only other notable record of the winter period.

Spring passage was generally light. The monthly totals for the coastal sites where Linnets were systematically logged were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Max Movement
Selsey Bill	76	90	-	60 on 28 Mar and 47 on 09 Apr
Church Norton	-	174	2	80 on 11 Apr
Worthing Beach	12	9	6	7 on 29 Mar and 8 on 13 Apr
Newhaven Tide Mills	25	40	-	40 on 12 Apr
Splash Point, Seaford	-	39	-	23 on 12 Apr
Beachy Head	45	-	-	30 on 31 Mar
Bexhill/Hastings	76	150	46	29 on 22 Mar and 66 on 08 Apr

Unfortunately, the directions of movements at the above sites were not specified. During March, the only significant numbers at the coast were in the Pagham Hbr area where there were 110 on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 230 the next day and 250 on the 28<sup>th</sup>. At Beachy Head the first spring sighting was on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Inland, at West Harting Down there were 130 on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. Flocks of up to 60 were seen during the month at Pulborough Brooks on arable, 50 were at Bawl Water on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 40 at Holmbush Tip, Faygate on the 26<sup>th</sup>, and another 40 were seen feeding on the quarry sides at Beeding Cement Works on the 5<sup>th</sup>. In all some 1750 birds were noted in 29 1 km squares during the month.

Records during April came from 54 sites, at least 14 of which were in the Ashdown Forest area, and totalled at least 730 birds. The largest numbers noted were 60 at Pett Level on the 14<sup>th</sup> (the largest flock of the spring noted there), 50 at both Mark Cross, near Laughton on the 4<sup>th</sup> and at Hollingbury Camp, Brighton on the 18<sup>th</sup>, and 46 at Moulsecomb Wild Park, Brighton on the 7<sup>th</sup>. Numbers at West Harting Down had dropped to 40 by the 4<sup>th</sup>. In May birds were well dispersed in small numbers at 54 sites.

Breeding was confirmed in 45 different 1 km squares involving at least 168 pairs. In addition, breeding was thought probable at a further 23 sites by at least 38 pairs. A further 30 pairs at 24 sites were seen in suitable breeding habitat during the season. The *Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey* located 58 pairs on 10 heaths (see page 182 for details). These figures indicate a breeding population of up 236 pairs in 92 1 km squares, an increase over 2001 (data for which was probably affected by FMD restrictions) but comparable with the total for 2000.

The ringing summary from Shoreham Sanctuary recorded that none had been trapped there since 1990 in keeping with the marked decline in finches and buntings, once caught regularly.

Autumn movements at coastal sites were relatively unremarkable as follows:

	Aug	Sep	Oct	Maximum Movements
Selsey Bill	-	240	310	80 on 10 & 26 Sep and 300 on 13 Oct
Church Norton	-	250 E	250 E	250 E on 21 Sep and 250 E on 07 Oct
Worthing Beach	-	-	9	8 on 12 Oct
Newhaven Tide Mills	100		60	100 on 24 Aug and 60 on 29 Oct
Beachy Head	-	360	1267	100 on 09 Sep and 400 on 19 Oct
Bexhill/Hastings	24	112	113	8 on 06 Aug, 67 on 30 Sep and 94 W on 28 Oct

The first sizeable gatherings were noted in early August: there were 100 at Pagham Hbr on the 5<sup>th</sup>, 400 at Selsey West Fields on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 300 still there on the 11<sup>th</sup>. Elsewhere there was a peak count of 140 at Ovingdean on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, 115 in Moulsecomb Wild Park, Brighton on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 130 at Telscombe on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Counts at inland sites did not exceed 50 in an approximate monthly total of 1940 birds from 28 sites. The monthly total for September exceeded 2200 from 25 sites and included 120 at Brockley Wood, Gatwick on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 150 at Southease on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 250 at Chantry Hill on the 22<sup>nd</sup> but only six other counts of 40 or more. October, however, was more impressive (but only half as good as in 2001) with a total of approximately 6100 birds from 33 sites. Most notable were a conservative count of 1000 W over Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 600 at Harbour Fm, Rye on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Other counts in excess of 100 were of a flock of 400 at Stump Bottom, near Steyning on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 110 on Beeding Hill on the 6<sup>th</sup>, an increase to 350 at Southease on the 15<sup>th</sup>, 150 at Climping Gap on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 100 at Steyning Round Hill on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Thereafter numbers dropped significantly to fewer than 600 in November and ca. 450 in December with the only notable flock being 350 - 400 on Lewes Brooks near Southease on 15 Nov, 1 and 15 Dec. [JAH]

## 1662. TWITE

*Carduelis flavirostris*

### Increasingly scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Two were recorded in the lower Cuckmere Valley on 2 Oct (PJW) while at Stanbury Point, Thorney Island four were seen on 4 Nov and two on the 15<sup>th</sup> (CBC). Six is the highest county total since 1998 although ten years ago records averaged nearly 70 per year. Those in the Cuckmere are the first records at what used to be a regular wintering site since 1995. Thorney Island, with records in six of the last seven years, is the nearest thing to a regular wintering site now. [RJF]

## 1663. LESSER REDPOLL

*Carduelis cabaret*

### Scarce breeder and fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.

The following table, which gives the approximate monthly totals, shows the pattern of occurrence throughout the year. Sites are 1 km squares.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of birds	229	189	193	387	158	135	47	27	73	794	1200	143
Number of sites	21	31	29	20	27	3	3	3	11	25	41	21

The table shows that, during the first three months of the year, numbers were approximately 2.5 times greater than in the two previous years. Interestingly, they were recorded from three times as many sites, which suggests a true increase in the numbers wintering in 2001/02 and a more widespread distribution. The numbers seen in April were

similarly greater but then tailed off as birds presumably returned to their distant breeding grounds. As usual, autumn passage was marked in October though it was on a smaller scale than in 2001. Numbers peaked in November, a month later than in 2001 and 2000, followed by a drop in December due, presumably, to the onwards passage of migrants.

During the first winter period up until the end of March there were eight counts of 20 or more birds from eight 1 km squares. The largest count was of 40 at Wren's Warren, Ashdown Forest on 5 Jan with 20 there on 31 Mar. Counts of 20 - 30 were also made at Ifield MP on 17 Feb, Burton MP on 14 Feb, Bedelands Fm, Burgess Hill on 24 Feb and Bewl Water on 10 Feb and 20 Mar.

During the period April to August counts in excess of 20 came from four sites and all during April. On Ashdown Forest there were 50 at the Old Airstrip, feeding on burnt pine seeds following a heath fire, on the 11<sup>th</sup> decreasing to 27 on the 16<sup>th</sup>, 40 and 25 at the Reservoir on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> respectively and 25 at Hindleap Warren also on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Away from the Forest there were 30 at Ambersham Common on 11 Apr but elsewhere numbers did not exceed five.

Breeding was confirmed in nine 1 km squares by 11 pairs, one of which appeared to have been double brooded - Ashdown Forest (5 squares), Ambersham Common (2), Lavington Common and Footland Wood, Vinehall Street. Breeding was probable in not less than a further 19 squares by at least 20 pairs with at least 15 on Ashdown Forest, two at Mardens Hill and one each at Wishing Tree Res and Beckley. An additional 23 pairs were present in suitable breeding habitat in a further 18 1 km squares. These data suggest that the number of territories in the county was approximately 53, comparable with 2001.

The first autumn migrants were noted at Shooter's Bottom, Beachy Head on 11 Oct when 40 flew over. These were followed by 80 W at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on the 19<sup>th</sup>, 80 E at Church Norton on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 60 N there on the 31<sup>st</sup>. A movement of 50 W at Hollingdean, Brighton on 3 Nov was the last for which a direction was given. The largest counts at a coastal site during this period were of 150 at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head on 2 Nov, 50 there on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 30 on the 9<sup>th</sup>. There were, however, very few other records of significant numbers at coastal sites. At inland sites observers fared better. At Powdermill Res no less than 150 were noted on 9-10 Nov, 95 were at the Old Airstrip, Ashdown Forest on 31 Oct and 40 went to roost there on 18 Nov, 66 were counted at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street on 23 Oct and 67 on 17 Nov, and 40 were at Pippingford Park, Ashdown Forest on 2 Dec. Smaller numbers involved 32 at Filsham LNR on 2 Nov, 30 at Pound Common, Chailey on 10 Nov and 30 at Duncton Common on 26 Nov. The largest counts in a quiet December were of tens only at two Ashdown Forest sites and Duncton Common. [JAH]

1666. **COMMON CROSSBILL**

*Loxia curvirostra*

**Scarce visitor occurring in large numbers in irruption years. Breeds occasionally.**

The small numbers recorded during the second half of 2001, from possibly a very small irruption, continued into this year. However, numbers increased from August, in typical fashion for this species, as the following table of approximate numbers shows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of birds	20	33	32	18	15	10	22	460	480	240	397	221
Number of sites	4	5	7	2	2	4	6	27	30	21	26	14

Similar irruptions occurred in 1997 and 1999 but this event was the largest since 1997. Birds were recorded at 75 sites (1 km squares) during the year, but unlike in previous

years, only 45% of these sites were in the more usual areas of mature conifers like Ashdown Forest or the West Sussex Commons. Similarly, of the 233 records received only 62% were from such areas, suggesting a wider spread across the county.

Unlike last year, breeding was confirmed at five sites by at least nine pairs. There were at least three pairs on Ambersham Common where nest building was first noted on 17 Feb and three young were being fed on 5 May (when ten adults were also seen flying with three juveniles). There were two pairs on Lavington Common, two pairs on Ashdown Forest, where ten recently fledged young were seen on 21 Apr and at least another three on 30 Jul, and two pairs in Footland Wood, Vinehall Street. Breeding was probable at a further four sites, involving at least five pairs.

The first signs of a further irruption were singles flying east at Pett Level on 18 Jun, over Church Norton on 16 Jul and 2 N at Moulsecomb Wild Park, Brighton on 24 Jul. As the table shows the main influx however, came in August when larger movements were noted at coastal or near coastal sites including 32 N over Moulsecomb Wild Park on 13 Aug, 51 N at Brighton on 18 Aug and 36 E there on 2 Sep, 27 in two flocks past Seaford Head on 28 Aug, 45 N at Cliff End, near Pett on 31 Aug, 28 W at Galley Hill, Bexhill on 18 Oct and 45 at Winchelsea on 8 Nov and 45 N there on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Between 8 Aug and 25 Nov small numbers of between one and 20 were noted flying past at 14 such coastal sites.

At inland sites, where the species is more usually seen, there were 23 in Hoth Woods, Rotherfield on 13 Aug and another 23 in Footland Wood on the 29<sup>th</sup>. In Stansted Forest there were 124 (comprising flocks of 24, 40 and 60) on 11 Sep, 60 on 23 Sep, 80 on 11 Oct and 50 on 18 Nov. At Heyshott Common 65 were noted on 20 Sep and then, at nearby Ambersham Common a count of 67 on 2 Nov was followed by 100 on the 10<sup>th</sup> with 80 in one flock. Numbers at Coates Common increased from 20 on 24 Oct to 50 on 12 Dec. On Ashdown Forest birds were present at several sites but numbers in excess of 20 were seen only in Pippingford Park where 20 on 13 Nov increased to 45 on 2 Dec, with 25 still present on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Away from the above more traditional sites the largest numbers seen were 25 at Partridge Green on 11 Aug, 21 S at Cissbury Ring on 31 Aug, 25 at Worthlodge Forest, Whiteley Hill on 5 Sep, and 20 at Stapleash Fm, Chilgrove on 26 Nov and 19 Dec. Smaller numbers were noted at some 18 other inland sites between 8 Aug and 28 Dec. [JAH]

## 1710. **BULLFINCH**

*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

**Fairly common resident. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

There were 283 records (a 10% increase on 2001) from 131 different 1 km squares, the same as in 2001.

During the breeding season, 37 pairs were confirmed as breeding in 18 different 1 km squares and a further 25 pairs were probably breeding in a further 20 squares. Single birds or pairs were present during the breeding season in a further 25 squares without indications of territorial behaviour. There were at least ten pairs in the Ashdown Forest area; seven pairs in 6.6 ha at Cissbury Ring; five pairs at both Footland Wood, Vinehall Street and Weir Wood Res; four pairs in Marline Wood, Hastings; and three pairs at both Arundel WWT and Earls Down, Dallington.

The only double figures counts were of at least 25 at Wren's Warren, Ashdown Forest on 16 Jan; 20 in Stansted Forest on 3 Dec; 16 at Pulborough Brooks on 14 Nov; 15 in Footland Wood on 15 Dec; ten at Bewl Water on 27 Dec; and a maximum count of ten in late September at Arundel WWT.

At Cissbury Ring a total of 31 new birds was ringed compared with 28 in 2001 and 35 in 2000.

This red list species is in decline nationally and is of high conservation concern. It is important, therefore, that all records, particularly of potential breeding, should be submitted. [JAH]

1717. **HAWFINCH**

*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

**Scarce breeding resident and very scarce passage migrant. Amber list species of medium conservation concern.**

Compared with the two previous years, 2001 and 2000, there was a reduction in the number of records to 18, from 25 and 21 respectively, but the number of sites, ten, was comparable (11 and ten respectively). Of these sites, three have featured in all three years, namely Sedlescombe Woods, Footland Wood, Vinehall Street and Marline Wood, Hastings while West Dean Woods has featured in two of these years.

Breeding was considered probable at only three sites: at Marline Wood two pairs were noted, while at both Barne's Wood and Footland Wood single pairs were recorded on the same date in June. A flock of five in West Dean Woods on 2 Mar was the largest number recorded anywhere. Apart from three at Footland Wood on 26 Jan, only single birds were seen at other sites. One flew north at Selsey Bill on the morning of 9 Apr, one stayed for three days in a garden at Woodingdean in mid June, a single bird flew west amongst other finches at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 17 Oct and one was recorded at Darwell Res on 24 Nov. [JAH]

1847. **LAPLAND BUNTING**

*Calcarius lapponicus*

**Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Two were seen on Pevensey Levels on 18 Dec (IJW). This species appears to be getting scarcer in the county with an average of just under four per year in the 1990s, but just over one per year during 2000-02. None were recorded in 2001, 1999, 1994 or 1992 with the last blank year before that as far back as 1976. [RJF]

1850. **SNOW BUNTING**

*Plectrophenax nivalis*

**Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.**

2002 was another reasonable year for this species in Sussex, although there was only one group in the county at the start of the year. The six birds, which had graced the seawall at Pett Level in Dec 2001, remained until 16 Jan. At the end of the year, records came from seven sites, from 15 Nov. In the west of the county, a first-winter bird at Selsey West Fields was present from that date to the end of the year. One was at the shingle spit, Church Norton, on 21-22 Nov; and two were at East Head on 7 Dec with one there on 18 Dec. In the east of the county, single birds were found at Scotney Court GP on 17 Nov and at Norman's Bay from 8 Dec, with two on 14 Dec. These birds then moved to disturbed railway land near Cooden Beach GC, remaining there into 2003. The most

remarkable record came from the crest of the Downs on 24 Nov, when a fortunate observer (ACG) found one with a flock of Linnets on Bignor Hill. [CB]

1857

## YELLOWHAMMER

*Emberiza citrinella*

### **Fairly common resident. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

Records for the first winter period closely paralleled those for 2001. They came from 19 sites in January (18 in 2001) and from 18 in February (16 in 2001). Forty were in game cover at Lee Fm, Patching in early January (where there had been 55 there in January 2001). The largest flock was, surprisingly, at Chingley Wood, Bewl Water where there were 170 in stubble on 15 Jan. Forty at Ifield in mid February were at a site threatened with development in the near future. Fifteen at Pett Level, joined Reed Buntings and Tree Sparrows. Three at Filsham on 17 Feb were reported to be 'very unusual' at this site. The census counts for January and February at Marsh Fm, Yapton, were five and four; at Sefter Fm, Pagham, four and one (singles only in 2001).

Song was reported from Crows Nest, Ashdown Forest, on 22 Feb and a series of counts on the Forest through the spring suggested that at least 40 males were on territory. Breeding season records came from across the county including often neglected areas such as Balls Cross, Ebernoe and Plaistow in the west; Chailey, Plumpton, Pond Lye and Spithurst in the centre; and Framfield, Mountfield, Robertsbridge and Rotherfield in the east. Nine pairs bred in Moulsecoomb Wild Park near Brighton, and perhaps five pairs on West Hove GC. On a 324 ha farm around Rodmell, including both river valley and downland, there were up to 20 pairs. The *Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey* located a total of 53 pairs on 11 heaths (see page 182 for details) including 13 on Ambersham Common, nine on Woolbeding Common and seven on Lavington Common. The most recent thorough survey of these commons, in 2000, produced 79 territories at 13 sites. Twenty-three pairs bred at Pulborough Brooks, where there were only 12 in 2000. Six pairs at Footland Wood, Vinehall Street was the same number as noted in 2000. Census counts at Marsh Fm, Yapton and Sefter Fm, Pagham in June located five and three territories respectively; four were found in a survey at Kilsham Fm, on the western Rother near Petworth in April but only one in May. Nine singing birds were recorded on a 1.5 km walk at Inholmes Wood, Stoughton on 24 Jun.

Yellowhammer records at the end of the year were generally unremarkable. There were twenty-eight November records, with double figure counts at Coates Common, Pulborough Brooks, Steyning Round Hill, Ashcombe Bottom (northwest of Lewes) and Rodmell. Three of the ten December records were of groups in excess of ten, with 32 around Rodmell the maximum and ten at Earls Down, Dallington being unusual. At Sefter Fm the November census found three birds; that in December, nine. [CB]

1866. **ORTOLAN BUNTING**

*Emberiza hortulana*

### **Very scarce, mainly autumn, visitor.**

One was seen at Stump Bottom dewpond on the Downs behind Worthing briefly on 26-27 Aug (RAI) and is the 16<sup>th</sup> to be recorded in the county since 1990. Twelve of these were in autumn, occurring between late August and mid September. [RJF]

1873. **RUSTIC BUNTING***Emberiza rustica***Very rare vagrant.**

A fine adult male in summer plumage was found at New Barn dewpond adjacent to West Hove GC on 10-11 May (TJW *et al*). It has been accepted by BBRC, is the fourth county record and the first in spring. An excellent find, it demonstrates that even the most unlikely of local patches can host good birds when watched regularly. Those putting in the time, or an early start, were rewarded with excellent views of this otherwise elusive individual, which must rank alongside many highlights the year had to offer. [RJF]

1877. **REED BUNTING***Emberiza schoeniclus***Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

Records came from only 21 localities in January (*cf.* 27 in 2001) but there were a number of significant concentrations this year, which might hint at an improvement in the fortunes of this species. Wrens Warren, Ashdown Forest, proved extremely attractive to this species: 250 were there on 5 Jan, 190 on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 140 on the 31<sup>st</sup>. By mid-February the number had reduced to a mere 40. There were a further six double figure counts in January, mostly from the coast, although 70 were at Lee Fm, Patching, on New Year's Day, and 13 was an excellent count at World's End, Burgess Hill on the 4<sup>th</sup>, with 16 there on 8 Feb and eight still on 19 Mar. On the census counts for January and February, just a single was found at Marsh Fm, Yapton, but five were at Sefter Fm, Pagham in January and 17 in February. After Ashdown Forest, the most important inland wintering area was at Bonwycks Place, Ifield, a site threatened by development where 20 birds were present on 2 Mar. In addition to these groups, birds were found at a number of less likely localities, like Ashcombe Bottom, near Lewes, and two Steyning gardens.

There was a suggestion of passage in late March. One was at Beachy Head on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and another at Roedean on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Forty were at Ashes Fm, Icklesham on the 29<sup>th</sup>, with only ten remaining the next day.

Breeding reports also suggested an upturn in numbers, although some sites, for which there were no records in 2001 due to FMD restrictions, are included this year. Seven pairs were on Steyning Levels. In the Arun Valley there were 34 pairs at Pulborough Brooks, 12 pairs at Amberley Wild Brooks SWT reserve and 15 pairs at Arundel WWT. Nineteen pairs bred at Filsham LNR. There were perhaps 20 territories on Ashdown Forest, hinting at a return from recent low numbers to the population level found in the 1970s. At least 25 were at Rye Hbr SSSI, but this represents a further reduction at that site (37, 40+, 50, and 37 in the previous four years). Twelve pairs around Thorney Island was similar to the total for 2001, as were the two pairs at Newhaven Tide Mills. Ten pairs along Glynde Reach was a slight increase. At Apuldram, there was a surplus of males throughout the breeding season. As in previous years, observers submitted reports of single birds and pairs in less obvious places including Beech MP in Ashes Wood, west of Battle; Shopham Bridge, near Byworth, where there were two males and a female; and in Midhurst where a male sang from a small wetland by the town car park on 25 Apr. Breeding surveys located a single pair along 3 km of the western Rother at Kilsham Fm, Petworth and three territories



at Sefter Fm, Pagham. Against this generally but not totally encouraging summary must be set the negative report from Shoreham Sanctuary, a reed bed site, where this species failed to appear in twenty-two ringing sessions between 1 Jun and 8 Oct, and has, indeed, not been ringed since 1991.

In 2001, post-breeding movements were evident by the end of August. This was not the case in 2002, when obvious early autumn gatherings were few and far between. The maximum for September was 20 at Horsebridge, near Wartling on the 5<sup>th</sup>. Double figure counts began to feature again from early October, particularly after the 10<sup>th</sup>, and there were twenty-four in the course of the month. Observers at Beachy Head reported a continuing increase (although the maximum there was only 15, moving west on 28 Oct) and the total of 111 at Sheepcote Valley was judged 'excellent'. Two returned to World's End, Burgess Hill by 26 Nov and 11 were there at the end of the year. There were large concentrations into December at both Wrens Warren and the Old Airstrip, Ashdown Forest (with a striking maximum of 175 at the Old Airstrip on 22 Nov), and numbers on the Forest were further boosted by 100 which stayed at the Isle of Thorns throughout December. Elsewhere in the county, numbers were rather on the low side, with a maximum of only 22 around Rodmell on 15 Nov. [CB]

1882.

## CORN BUNTING

*Miliaria calandra*

**Fairly common but decreasing resident. Red list species of high conservation concern.**

Few records were received. The species' decline seems to be continuing, even though some substantial flocks can still be found outside the breeding season. There were records from only eight sites in January (*cf.* 15 in 2001, 17 in 2000) and nine in February. Thirty-five were on Chantry Hill and 20 on Pilsey Island on New Year's Day. A single bird was recorded on the January count at Marsh Fm, Yapton. Ten were at Scotney Court Fm on 30 Jan. In February, 18 were at Ovingdean on the 18<sup>th</sup> and ten in arable at Pulborough Brooks on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Sixty were feeding in newly emerged cereal on Park Brow, Findon on 20 Feb. The highest counts early in the year came from a 324 ha farm around Rodmell, where there were up to 80. In March and April, groups were found at new locations. Eighteen were on stubble above Alfriston on the 3 Mar, 25 at Jury's Gap on 1 Apr and as many as 80 at Little Dene, Firle, on 10 Apr. Are these passage birds as, presumably, was one at Selsey Bill on 29 Mar? There were no records in the first winter period from Rye Hbr, but two pairs bred there. Reports of breeding were, it is to be hoped, far from comprehensive. These came largely from the Downs west of the Adur, with scattered observations further east. The species was absent from Thorney Island between 8 Apr and 13 Nov though there was a handful of records from the coastal plain (one holding territory at Marsh Fm, Yapton, a singing bird at Selsey West Fields in mid June, and presumed breeding at East Chidham). In contrast to this depressing situation, good numbers, perhaps 27 pairs, were found breeding around Rodmell.

Some gatherings were reported in the autumn: 12 at Keynor Fm, Sidlesham on 8 Sep and 16 in Stump Bottom, Steyning on 5 Oct. There were but nine records in November and ten in December, with a maximum of about 100 around Rodmell in mid-December. Thirty were on Steyning Round Hill in both months. Singles were watched flying over Pett Level on 3 Nov and 21 Dec.

The Corn Bunting's difficulties continue. One ray of hope is that only one negative report was received, from Thorney Island. On the Downs, too, while only small numbers

were found other than around Rodmell, no one acknowledged a complete absence of birds.  
[CB]

## ESCAPES and FERAL BIRDS

*All records of BOU Category 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 2002 (unless stated otherwise). It should be noted that the identity of these birds has not been assessed by the Records Committee. Birds that can not be ascribed to species or family are excluded. Nomenclature and taxonomy generally follows Howard & Moore (1991). Useful references (details below) are Madge & Burn (1988) (wildfowl), Juniper & Parr (1998) (parrots), Clement *et al* (1993) (finches) and Vriends (1988) (cage birds). List compiled by Richard Fairbank unless indicated otherwise.

Clement P, Harris A & Davis J 1993. *Finches & Sparrows: an identification guide*. Helm.

Howard, R & Moore, A 1991. *A Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). Academic Press.

Juniper, T & Parr, M 1998. *Parrots: A Guide to the Parrots of the World*. Pica Press.

Madge S & Burn H 1988. *Wildfowl: an identification guide to the ducks, geese and swans of the world*. Helm.

Ogilvie, M A *et al* 2002. Non-native birds breeding in the United Kingdom in 2000. *Brit. Birds* 95:631-635.

Vriends, M M 1988. *The MacDonald Encyclopaedia of Cage and Aviary Birds*. MacDonald Orbis.

### WHOOPEE SWAN

*Cygnus cygnus*

**Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.** Feral birds are recorded occasionally often making protracted stays.

A single on Steyning Levels on 5 Jan and on nearby Henfield Levels on 17 May was undoubtedly the feral bird present in the Adur Valley since 1999.

### 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 2000 (Ogilvie *et al* (2002)).

Records continue to increase and for the second year running breeding was recorded in the county. The individual present in the upper Cuckmere Valley throughout 2001 (*SxBR* 54: 163) was seen at Arlington Res intermittently up to mid May while one was seen at Thorney to mid February and four were at Scotney Court GP on 6 Jan. One on Steyning Levels on 9 Feb was presumably that seen at Henfield in mid May and early June and on the R Adur from 26 Jun to 26 Aug. Three were at Pett Pools on 1 May, two at Arlington Res on 12-13 May and one at Pulborough Brooks from 24-27 Jun. One at Partridge Green

on 7 Sep may have been the Adur bird while singles were recorded in the lower Cuckmere Valley on 19 Oct and at Lewes Brooks in late November. One was seen at Pulborough Brooks on 25 Nov with two further down the Arun Valley from 29 Nov to at least 20 Dec. The three recorded at Benbow Pond, Cowdray Park on 11 Aug were seen there with a downy cygnet on 10 Dec, the late date suggesting they had not fully acclimatised to the northern hemisphere!

## **BAR-HEADED GOOSE**

*Anser indicus*

**Breeds central Asia, migrates south to northern India for winter.** A favourite bird at wildfowl collections, individuals or even small groups can wander on occasions. Three escaped pairs bred in UK in 2000 (Ogilvie *et al* (2002)).

There were many more records than in previous years. Away from Chichester Hbr singles were seen at Ivy Lake, Chichester GP on 27 Jan, Pulborough Brooks and Arundel WWT between 17 Apr and 3 May and again in late July, Bewl Water from 1 Jul to 23 Aug, Rye Hbr on 8 Sep, Scotney Court GP during 6-16 Oct, Partridge Green on 8 Nov and at Exceat Bridge on 5 Dec. Two were on Pulborough Brooks on 9 Nov and one seen on nearby Amberley Wild Brooks on 29 Nov and 4 Dec. In Chichester Hbr two were seen on 29 May, four on 7 June, four (two adults and two immatures) on 25 Aug, seven on the 28<sup>th</sup> and nine, including two immatures, on 4-7 Sep.

## **SNOW GOOSE**

*Anser caerulescens*

**Breeds arctic North America, winters southern USA and Mexico.** Presumed vagrants in UK most winters but greatly outnumbered by escapes. Two escaped pairs bred in Hampshire again in 2000, raising four young (Ogilvie *et al* (2002)).

Three white morph individuals continued to be seen at Scotney Court GP, remaining until at least 9 Mar with possibly the same three from 16 Aug to the year's end (a remarkably consistent departure and arrival, see *SxBR* 54: 163). Two blue morph individuals were seen at Bewl Water on 1 Jul with three white morphs there on 2 Sep. Singles were seen at Thorney Deeps/Chichester Hbr between 25 Aug and 7 Sep, at Pett Pools on 1 Sep and at Amberley Wild Brooks on 26 Nov and nearby Greatham Bridge on 4 Dec. All records most likely relate to escapes from captivity.

## **CAPE BARREN GOOSE**

*Cereopsis novaehollandiae*

**Scarce resident in southern Australia.**

One on Amberley Wild Brooks on 24 Feb.

## **PARADISE SHELDUCK**

*Tadorna variegata*

**Common resident in New Zealand.**

A female was present in the lower Cuckmere Valley from 13 Aug to at least late September, while a male was seen at Pond Lye, near Goddards Green on 19 Nov (and in 2003).

## MUSCOVY DUCK

*Cairina moschata*

**Locally common resident in forest lakes of Central and South America.** Widespread in its domesticated form.

Two were present at Bewl Water in Mar.

## 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 the southwest might conceivably be.

A male was present at Hook Straight, Bewl Water from 26 Apr to 1 May.

## CHILOE WIGEON

*Anas sibilatrix*

**Common resident in southern South America.** Commonly kept in wildfowl collections.

The male seen at Pett Pools on 31 Dec 2000 (*SxBR* 54: 164) remained until 4 Jan.

## SPECKLED TEAL

*Anas flavirostris*

**Common in Andes and southern South America.**

One considered to be of the central Andean race *oxyptera*, known as Sharp-billed Teal, was seen at Barcombe Res on 4 Jan.

## RINGED TEAL

*Calonetta leucophrys*

**Restricted to forested pools and marshes in central South America.** An attractive duck, often in wildfowl collections (e.g. Arundel WWT).

A pair was seen at Weir Wood Res infrequently between 15 Feb and 8 Sep with the female there on 11 Sep and 9 Nov.

## 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 Icklesham on 20 Apr and Guestling on the 27<sup>th</sup> was probably the bird seen in the same area in Apr 2001 (*SxBR* 54:165) and on three occasions in 2000 (*SxBR* 53:167).

## SAKER

*Falco cherrug*

**Mainly scarce resident from central Europe to N India, common on the Tibetan plateau.** Popular with falconers.

One at Selsey West Fields on 17 Feb was seen to have jesses on while an adult at Paghham Hbr on 26 Mar and 24 Apr was presumably the individual seen very irregularly in western harbours since 1999 (*SxBR* 52: 159, 53: 167 & 54: 165).

**LANNER***Falco biarmicus*

**Mainly resident in southeast Europe, Africa and west Asia.**

One was recorded at Pagham Hbr on 22 Sep.

**COCKATIEL***Nymphicus hollandicus*

**Common Australian nomad.** One of the commonest aviary birds.

Single individuals were seen at Hassocks (3 Apr), Bexhill (3 May and 13 Sep), Newhaven Fort (7 Sep), Thorney Island (23 Oct) and West Worthing (3 Dec). Fewer than usual but an otherwise typical scatter of records with few in the colder months, most likely reflecting the bird's poor survival prospects in winter.

**ALEXANDRINE PARAKEET***Psittacula eupatria*

**Resident in Indian sub-continent (where generally common) and southeast Asia.**

Captive birds can survive outside in winter provided they have good shelter.

One present at The Pells, Lewes throughout the year was the bird previously reported as a Ring-necked Parakeet (*SxBR* 54: 102). Another bird flew east over Finchdean on 18 Nov. This species is very similar to the smaller Ring-necked Parakeet but has prominent maroon shoulder patches.

**RED-WHISKERED BULBUL***Pycononotus jocosus*

**Common throughout much of southern Asia. A frequently seen cagebird.**

One at Selsey Bill on 20 Jul.

**COMMON WAXBILL***Estrilda astrild*

**Common throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa.**

One at The Severals, Church Norton on 16 Aug.

**BLACK-RUMPED WAXBILL***Estrilda troglodytes*

**Locally common African resident between the Sahara and the Equator.** A popular cagebird.

One at the North Wall, Pagham Hbr on 22 Sep.

**RED-CHEEKED CORDON-BLEU***Uraeginthus bengalus*

**Common and widespread over much of West and central Africa.**

One at Walberton, near Arundel on 20 Mar.

**YELLOW-FRONTED CANARY**

*Serinus mozambicus*

**Common and widespread across much of sub-Saharan Africa.** A popular cage bird, it apparently has much to recommend it – longevity, hardiness and a pleasant song.

A male was seen at Cooden Beach GC from 2-11 Jan, on 24 Mar and 26 Aug.

**FAN-TAILED (RED-SHOULDERED) WIDOWBIRD**

*Euplectes auxillaris*

**Widespread on African grasslands.**

A male near Guestling on 8 Dec.

**LONG-TAILED WIDOWBIRD**

*Euplectes progne*

**Widespread in East and southern Africa.**

A male in a garden in Burgess Hill between 9-15 Nov.

**VILLAGE (or BLACK-HEADED) WEAVER**

*Ploceus cucullatus*

**Widespread and common near habitation across much of sub-Saharan Africa.** The most frequently recorded escaped weaver.

A male seen in an Eastbourne garden for approximately two weeks from about 22 Oct was probably the male at Shooter's Bottom, Beachy Head on 16 Nov, while two were in West Hoathly on 29 Nov.

## Arrival and departure dates of summer visitors, 2002.

	First recorded date			Last recorded date		
	2002	Prior to 2002	10yr average (± SD in days)	2002	Prior to 2002	10yr average (±SD in days)
<b>Garganey</b>	04 Feb	02 Feb	25 Feb (± 17)	27 Sep	13 Dec	30 Sep (± 16)
<b>Osprey</b>	30 Mar	07 Mar	24 Mar (± 10)	01 Oct	09 Dec	21 Oct (± 22)
<b>Hobby</b>	09 Apr	03 Apr	14 Apr (± 6)	19 Oct	06 Nov	25 Oct (± 7)
<b>Quail</b>	11 May	08 Feb	14May (± 25)	28 Aug	31 Oct	22 Sep (± 28)
<b>Little Ringed Plover</b>	17 Mar	06 Mar	20 Mar (±4)	08 Sep	08 Oct	20 Sep (± 8)
<b>Wood Sandpiper</b>	14 Apr	10 Apr	27 Apr (± 12)	05 Sep	16 Nov	03 Oct (± 21)
<b>Pomarine Skua</b>	09 Jun	10 Mar	24 Apr (±1 7)	02 Jul	31 Dec	13 Oct (± 71)
<b>Roseate Tern</b>	26 Apr	17 Apr	29 Apr (± 8)	31 Jul	30 Sep	04 Aug (± 22)
<b>Common Tern</b>	30 Mar	21 Mar	30 Mar (± 6)	04 Nov	26 Nov	31 Oct (± 14)
<b>Arctic Tern</b>	17 Apr	05 Apr	15 Apr (± 9)	22 Oct	23 Nov	26 Oct (± 21)
<b>Common/Arctic Tern</b>	30 Mar	10 Mar	28 Mar (± 8)	04 Nov	31 Dec	26 Oct (±16)
<b>Little Tern</b>	16 Apr	02 Apr	10 Apr (± 5)	30 Sep	04 Nov	26 Sep (± 11)
<b>Black Tern</b>	21 Apr	04 Apr	16 Apr (± 6)	20 Sep	21 Nov	08 Oct (± 10)
<b>Turtle Dove</b>	18 Apr	22 Mar	13 Apr (± 10)	03 Oct	18 Dec	13 Oct (± 7)
<b>Cuckoo</b>	04 Apr	15 Mar	01 Apr (± 8)	23 Oct	11 Nov	02 Oct (± 16)
<b>Nightjar</b>	03 May	08 Apr	30 Apr (± 9)	23 Sep	05 Nov	20 Sep (± 24)
<b>Swift</b>	17 Apr	07 Apr	15 Apr (± 5)	24 Nov <sup>2</sup>	22 Nov	22 Oct (± 21)
<b>Wryneck</b>	28 Mar	09 Mar	13 Apr (± 17)	01 Oct	02 Nov	05 Oct (± 10)
<b>Sand Martin</b>	09 Mar	04 Mar	11 Mar (± 6)	24 Oct	05 Dec	26 Oct (± 11)
<b>Swallow</b>	17 Mar	04 Feb	10 Mar (± 13)	30 Nov	28 Dec	29 Nov (± 10)
<b>House Martin</b>	16 Mar	01 Feb	19 Mar (± 11)	14 Nov	18 Dec	20 Nov (± 11)
<b>Tree pipit</b>	29 Mar	17 Mar	30 Mar (± 5)	07 Oct	09 Nov	21 Oct (± 10)
<b>Yellow Wagtail</b>	30 Mar	10 Mar	21 Mar (± 7)	17 Oct	03 Nov	05 Nov (± 15)
<b>Nightingale</b>	07 Apr	21 Mar	05 Apr (± 4)	01 Oct	19 Oct	14 Sep (± 9)
<b>Redstart</b>	31 Mar	13 Mar	25 Mar (± 8)	06 Nov	11 Dec	25 Oct (± 19)
<b>Whinchat</b>	14 Apr	18 Feb	31 Mar (± 21)	29 Oct	02 Dec	04 Nov (± 12)
<b>Wheatear</b>	08 Mar	13 Feb	02 Mar (± 8)	03 Nov	19 Dec	15 Nov (± 15)
<b>Ring Ouzel</b>	15 Mar	02 Feb	15 Mar (± 17)	13 Nov	26 Dec	18 Nov (± 10)
<b>Grasshopper Warbler</b>	02 Apr <sup>1</sup>	04 Apr	11 Apr (± 6)	19 Oct	01 Nov	16 Oct (± 9)
<b>Sedge Warbler</b>	30 Mar	27 Mar	02 Apr (± 5)	28 Oct	29 Oct	16 Oct (± 7)
<b>Reed Warbler</b>	04 Apr <sup>1</sup>	07 Apr	10 Apr (± 4)	29 Oct	13 Nov	03 Nov (± 8)
<b>Lesser Whitethroat</b>	07 Apr	04 Apr	14 Apr (± 7)	04 Oct	21 Nov	17 Oct (± 13)
<b>Whitethroat</b>	26 Mar	19 Mar	04 Apr (± 5)	17 Oct	17 Dec	20 Oct (± 15)
<b>Garden Warbler</b>	02 Apr	01 Apr	07 Apr (± 7)	18 Oct	16 Nov	23 Oct (± 12)
<b>Wood Warbler</b>	21 Apr	07 Apr	19 Apr (± 7)	09 Sep	01 Oct	05 Sep (± 11)
<b>Willow Warbler</b>	22 Mar	04 Mar	14 Mar (± 8)	19 Oct	26 Dec	24 Oct (± 12)
<b>Spotted Flycatcher</b>	03 May	08 Apr	23 Apr (± 10)	03 Oct	18 Nov	15 Oct (± 10)
<b>Pied Flycatcher</b>	04 Apr	01 Apr	07 Apr (± 6)	23 Sep	01 Nov	03 Oct (± 6)



## Departure and arrival dates of winter visitors, 2002.

	Last recorded date			First recorded date		
	2002	Prior to 2002	10 yr average (± SD) in days	2002	Prior to 2002	10 yr average (± SD) in days
<b>Black-throated Diver</b>	06 May	19 Jun	31 May (± 12)	20 Nov	03 Aug	12 Oct (± 28)
<b>Great Northern Diver</b>	29 May	21 Jun	08 May (± 23)	03 Nov	09 Oct	02 Nov (± 25)
<b>Red-necked Grebe</b>	12 May	19 Jun	06 May (± 13)	08 Sep	18 Aug	07 Sep (± 9)
<b>Bewick's Swan</b>	08 Mar	26 Apr	09 Mar (± 8)	07 Nov	15 Oct	01 Nov (± 9)
<b>White-fronted Goose</b>	17 Mar	17 Apr	18 Mar (± 20)	06 Oct	12 Sep	11 Oct (± 48)
<b>Long-tailed Duck</b>	14 Jun <sup>2</sup>	11 Jun	29 Apr (± 33)	13 Oct	23 Aug	21 Oct (± 26)
<b>Velvet Scoter</b>	31 May	15 Jun	19 May (± 13)	24 Sep	12 Aug	14 Oct (± 22)
<b>Goldeneye</b>	28 Mar	23 May	20 Apr (± 20)	03 Oct	06 Aug	02 Oct (± 28)
<b>Smew</b>	17 Mar	24 Apr	05 Mar (± 29)	30 Nov	03 Nov	03 Dec (± 11)
<b>Goosander</b>	12 May	22 May	04 Apr (± 36)	24 Oct	12 Sep	29 Oct (± 23)
<b>Hen Harrier</b>	21 Apr	19 Jun	15 May (± 21)	22 Sep	04 Aug	04 Sep (± 22)
<b>Purple Sandpiper</b>	13 May	26 May	11 May (± 7)	22 Jul	01 Jul	11 Aug (± 44)
<b>Jack Snipe</b>	24 Apr	19 May	30 Apr (± 15)	01 Oct	29 Aug	17 Sep (± 15)
<b>Water Pipit</b>	01 Mar	28 May	09 Apr (± 24)	19 Oct	01 Sep	25 Oct (± 11)
<b>Fieldfare</b>	21 Apr	05 Jun	25 Apr (± 13)	22 Sep	13 Aug	25 Sep (± 19)
<b>Redwing</b>	14 Apr	26 May	15 Apr (± 17)	30 Sep	06 Aug	17 Sep (± 17)
<b>Great Grey Shrike</b>	12 Mar	14 May	30 Mar (± 19)	17 Oct	26 Sep	18 Oct (± 6)
<b>Brambling</b>	18 Apr	12 May	23 Apr (± 9)	20 Sep	13 Sep	01 Oct (± 8)

### 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 five 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 2002 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. Earliest county record.
2. Latest county record

## SUMMARY OF SOME COMMON BREEDING BIRD COUNTS.

Following the hiatus caused by the FMD access restrictions in 2001, this report is again presented. It includes some new sites but some previously reported were not surveyed in 2002.

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. ® = present during the breeding season but no territories identified. np = confirmed as not present.

Species	AL	BC	CH	DR	HC	HF	MF	PW	RH	SC	SF	SP	VB	VF	WP
Mute Swan	2						1		6			3			
Mallard	8	1		10	3		13		15+	1		13	®	®	
Sparrowhawk			1		1					®				1	1
Kestrel			1	®			®		3	®		®			2
Grey Partridge							1		4?			2			
Pheasant		1	17	®			4					8	3	2	2
Moorhen	9	2		1	3		8		®			10	1	1	
Coot	®			nc			3		25+			6			
Woodcock								2		2			1	1	
Redshank									10						
Stock Dove			2	®	1	1	®		®			®	1	2	3
Woodpigeon		4	12	®	nc	5+	1	21	®	®	®	4	5	11	68
Collared Dove					1		2		®		®	2			37
Turtle Dove			1		®				5+				2	2	
Cuckoo			1	®	®	1	2		®		®	1	1	1	
Tawny Owl			2	®	®	1							1	3	
Green Woodpecker		1	1	®	1	1	2	1	1+	3		2	2	3	2
Great Spotted Woodpecker		1	1		3	2	1	8	®	2	1	®	7	5	1
Sky Lark			7				2		15+		1	8			12
Swallow			3		1		2		®			3			
Meadow Pipit							®		c12			1			
Tree Pipit			1							1			1		
Pied Wagtail	®		1	nc	®		1		®		1	1			
Wren		15	12	nc	14	20	50	22	nc	25	11	34	41	35	113
Duncock		2	6	®	2	1	20	4	nc	2	4	15	11	10	46
Robin		22	23	nc	21	12	27	13	11+	36	6	17	28	22	148
Nightingale				®									2	2	
Blackbird		6	26	14+	10	11	25	16	21+	8	6	18	22	18	132
Song Thrush		1	12	®	3	3	2	2	4	3	1	3	6	6	15
Mistle Thrush		®			®		1	1	®	1		1	2	4	2
Sedge Warbler	6						9		70+			2			
Reed Warbler	51			2			30		nc			51			
Lesser Whitethroat		®					1		5		®			2	3
Whitethroat	5	1	11	2	®		10	3	55		®	8	4	7	25
Garden Warbler				9	®								3	4	1
Blackcap		4	10	3	6	10	6	6	3	3	1	4	7	8	18
Chiffchaff		2	1	9+	7	7	1	14	1	2	7	2	12	13	
Willow Warbler				3		1	®			3			10	9	
Goldcrest		®	4	4	4	13	1	14		2	1	®	22	19	

Species	AL	BC	CH	DR	HC	HF	MF	PW	RH	SC	SF	SP	VB	VF	WP
Spotted Flycatcher				1			®						1		
Long-tailed Tit		1	®	®	2	3	1	2	1+	1	®	®	3	6	6
Marsh Tit		®	4	3	2	6		5					5	2	
Coal Tit		1		®	2	2		9		7	®		30	12	
Blue Tit		14	7	10+	11	16	15	32+	®	12	7	11	48	19	50
Great Tit		7	7	nc	11	7	14	17	®	11	6	8	16	11	44
Nuthatch		2	3	®	3	3		9		®			4	3	
Treecreeper			1	®	®	4		4+	®		®		7	4	
Jay		®	1	®	®	2	®	3		1		®	2	3	2
Magpie		1		nc	nc		4		®	®		5		2	44
Jackdaw			3	®	nc	1	2		nc			®			1
Carrion Crow		2	5	nc	nc		5	1	2	3	1	5	5	3	20
Starling				®	1		2		2			1	4		32
House Sparrow			4	®	1		3		®			3			16
Chaffinch		11	31	15+	6	14	39	14	3+	22	10	21	24	23	48
Greenfinch		1	9	®	2	1	8		5+	1	2	12	1	5	29
Goldfinch			2	®	1	1	5		®		®	2	1	1	4
Linnet			4	®			4		nc	®		2	1	3	10
Bullfinch		®	2		1	1	®				1		1	5	1
Yellowhammer		1	8			1	5			1		3	1	6	9
Reed Bunting	7			1+			3		25+			3			

#### Key to Sites:

- AL Aldingbourne & Lidsey Rife. 4 km of Waterway Bird Survey.  
 BC Barns Copse, Binsted. 16.1 ha mixed deciduous woodland, CBC.  
 CH Cocking Hill Farm.  
 DR Darwell Reservoir.  
 HC High Chimneys Estate, Battle. 24 ha of deciduous woodland with some grassland.  
 HF Home Farm, Barlavington comprising mixed woodland in Alder Copse, Limekiln Copse, Furzefield, Pond Places, Brickfield Copse, Furze Patch & Jerrymores Copse.  
 MF Marsh Farm, Binsted. 67 ha mixed farmland, CBC.  
 PW Paddock Wood, Cocking Park. 29 ha mixed woodland.  
 RH Rye Harbour recording area.  
 SC Stedham Common. 39.7 ha heathland with some woodland. CBC.  
 SF Scobell's Farm, Barcombe. 10.4 ha grass farm with some woodland.  
 SP Sefter Farm Rose Green. 95 ha mixed farm, CBC.  
 VB Barnes Wood, Vinehall Street. Mixed deciduous woodland.  
 VF Footlands Wood, Vinehall Street. Mixed deciduous woodland.  
 WP Moulsecomb Wild Park, Brighton including Hollingbury Camp and Golf Course and parts of nature reserve. Downland scrub, farmland and setaside.

The following sites, surveyed in 2000, were not surveyed during 2002:

- BW Bewl Water.  
 GF Grantley's Farm, Maynards Green.

Details of breeding bird surveys were from: PR Belchamber, G Champion, TPR Crane, RG Harris, R Knight, RT Pepper, A Perry, GCM Roberts, B Savage, I Standivan, PJ Whitcomb, and Dr. B Yates.

## SUMMARY OF HEATHLAND BREEDING BIRD COUNTS.

### Thames Basin & Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey 2002 – West Sussex.

Figures relate to pairs or territories. The small hyphen (-) indicates that no territories were identified.

Species	WD	CC	LC	B	WH	IP	SC	WC	AC	LDG	HwC	LP	MC	SW	HC	WnC
Hobby	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Woodcock	1	1	-	1	-	5	4	2	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stock Dove	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	2	-	2	-	-	-	-
Turtle Dove	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nightjar	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	6	10	6	-	2	-	-	-	-
Green Woodpecker	5	2	4	-	1	2	2	5	5	5	4	2	-	1	1	-
Great Spotted Woodpecker	5	1	6	-	1	2	2	2	10	5	-5	2	-	-	2	1
Woodlark	5	1	7	1	-	4	2	4	10	1	1	2	2	-	-	-
Skylark	3	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tree pipit	5	4	6	5	-	7	1	12	18	9	2	1	-	-	-	-
Redstart	1	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stonechat	5	5	-	2	1	8	2	9	13	4	-	2	-	-	-	-
Dartford Warbler	4	4	-	-	-	12	2	5	18	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Whitethroat	4	5	-	1	1	-	-	9	17	-	-	3	-	-	-	-
Siskin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Linnet	7	3	-	1	5	8	1	4	24	4	-	1	-	-	-	-
Redpoll	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Crossbill	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Yellowhammer	2	2	1	-	6	5	1	9	13	7	3	4	-	-	-	-
Reed Bunting	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

#### Key to Sites:

- WD Weavers Down, Liss.
- CC Chapel Common, Liphook.
- LC Linchmere & Stanley Commons.
- B Blackdown.
- WH West Heath.
- IP Iping Common.
- SC Stedham Common. 39.7 ha heathland with some woodland.
- WC Woolbeding Common.
- AC Ambersham & Heyshott Commons.
- LDG Lavington, Duncton & Graffham Commons.
- HwC Hesworth Common (no Nightjar survey).
- LP Coates Common & Lords Piece, Fittleworth.
- MC Midhurst Common.
- SW Sullington Warren.
- HC Heath Common.
- WnC Washington Common.

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AJ Allaway	CLG Brand	DEG Copeland	TJ Edwards
SD Allen	PM Brayshaw	DJ Corley	P Etheridge
SR Allen	L Briginshaw	A Cotton	RD Evans
MF Austin	G Brinkley	R Cowser	M Eveleigh
	C Brooks	BR Cox	CM Everett
JWP Bacon	P Brown	C Crag (CC)	
JTA Bagley	R Brown	AD Crawford	IJJ Faichnie
JL Baker	D Buckingham	DE Crawley	RJ Fairbank
G Balcikonis	J Bujok (JB)	D Crespin	JA Feest
PC Bance	KR Burch	EJ Cruttenden	BJ Fellows
W Banfield	AF Burtenshaw	PR Cullen	C Fentiman
S Banks	TN Buttle	J Curson (JC)	AR Fenton
DG Barber		SPM Curson	J Fitzpatrick
JD Barber	IK Callister	W Cutting	BF Forbes
CJR Barfield	A Cameron		A Ford
G Barker	A Carter	T Dalrymple	CJ Fox
GK Barker	BJ Carter	J Davies	D Francis
IT Barnard	R Carter	C Davis	MG Freeman
M Barnard	SJC Carter	MH Davis	PG Friston
MH Barnard	R Carver	R Davison	DC Fry
G Barnes	H Catchpole	A de Potier	M Funnell
C Barwood	E Catlett	CH Dean	
S Bateman	AG Chalcraft	A Deleiros	L Gallimore
A Bayliss	GL Champion	MN Denness	MA Galtry
N Bayly	A Chapman	D Dey	SM Gamble
R Beal	B Chapman	B Dickeson	N Gant
J Beale	C Chapman	S Diserens	S Gardiner
PA Beckett	RH Charlwood	J Dixon	S Gent
S Bedford	SA Charlwood	RJ Downes	S Gilbert
JSS Beesley	R Clarke	S Downs	BR Gilmore
P Bennett	BR Clay	NA Driver	DJ Goldsmith
C Bentley (CB)	N Cobb	DP Dunk	B&J Goodchild
VP Bentley	C Cockburn	M Dunk	H Gordon
K Benyon-Tinker	GA Cockburn	JAG Dunlop	RL Gould
PJ Biggs	JA Cocks	NI Dunsmore-Rouse	JS Gowers
LR Bird	P Collin	S Dunsmore-Rouse	GW Gowlett
JM Birdsey	BJ Collins	G Durey	AS Grace
C Blythe	CB Collins		MJS Granville
D Boddington	M Collins	AR Eales	D Green
RM Bond	MA Collins	B Easlea	NM Greenaway
A Borrows (AB)	AS Cook	JR Easton	RR Greenhalf
JF Boulcott	C Cook	RDM Edgar	D Grieve
J Bowen	BE Cooper	P Edmonds	AJ Guest
AL Bowley	D Cooper (DC)	PJ Edmonds	AC Gutteridge
PS Bowley	DR Cooper	C Edwards	TJ Guy

K Hackett (KH)	P James	BAE Marr	DM Perry
PRJ Hadland	R James	M Marr	CB Peverett
MP Hall	TE Jenner	C Marrable (CMA)	J Phelan
J Hamblett	PJ Johnson	JM Maskell	A Phillips
R Harman (RHa)	A Johnston	SP Maskell	AP Phillips
D Harper	KM Johnston	MJ Mason	MJ Phillips
N Harris	SC Johnstone	R Mason	S Phillips
RG Harris	PE Jones	PH Massini	SM Phillips
T Harris	CB Joyce	R Matthews	A Podmore
PR Harrison		DW Mawford	D Pomeroy
SP Hartill	ME Kalaher	SE Mckenzie	CR Poole
J Hatton	M Keane	CW Melgar	S Poole
JR Havers	LR Keen	N Merchant	NUN Pope
MJ Hawkins (MJHa)	B Kelley	B Metcalfe	J Porter
KC Hearne	G Kennett	O Mitchell	DA Potter
MJ Helps (MJH)	R Kent	D Mitchell	P Price
D Henderson	D King	A Mole	RW Prior
PKW Herbert	JW King	H Montgomery	D Pritty
K Hewitt	AR Kitson	C Moore	H Pugh
T Hicks	R Knight	P Morgan	RN Pulley
Al Hillman	KJ Koppschall	BM Mortlock	
GF Hillyer		MF Mullen	T Quittenden
RN Hobbs	MP Lanaway	B Murray	
JA Hobson	RJ Lanaway	R Musselle	B Rackstraw
AJ Holcombe	DC Lang		TK Rackstraw
BJ Holcombe	I Lang	JA Newnham	JR Rance
AM Holden	S Langford	JL Nobbs	E Randall
M Hole	O Laugharne	K Noble	CJ Raymond
LG Holloway	PF Le Brocq	R Norman	EM Raynor
RG Holmes	HJA Lee		PJ Raynor
CA Holt	B Leete	JF O Driscoll	A Ready (AR)
JC Holt	M Leggatt	M O Shea	JW Reaney
CA Holter	MP LeGrys	G Osborne	NJ Redman
S Hooper	MW Light	RA Owen	B Reeve
CE Hope	SH Linington	RC Owen	SC Richardson
MJ Horsfall	AH Lloyd		M Ringwood
A Horton	M Love	J Page (JP)	G Roberts
R Horton	RE Lowe	J Parker	GCM Roberts
A House (AH)	CD Lowmass	S Parmenter (SP)	A Robinson
AC Howard	JC Luck	TW Parmenter	R Robinson
FW Howard	T Lucocq	EG Parsons	S Robinson
DG Hughes	PJ Luffingham	R Parsons	J Rock
P Hughes	J Lynton	B Pask	BM Rogers
AM Hutson		PT Patton	G Roland
	D Maclain	SJ Patton	A Rolfe
RA Ives	D Madgin (DM)	PN Paul	J Rossor (JR)
	L Manns	D Pennington	MK Rossor
B James	JH Marchant	RT Pepper	M Rowan
BD James	S Mariner	A Perry	R Rowsby

SJR Rumsey	AE Skinner	SR Taylor	C Watkins
MG Russell	A Slade (AS)	CR Tazzyman	P Watkins
MJ Russell	AJ Smith	A Thomas	C Watkins
Rye Bay RG	AW Smith	P Thompson	AB Watson
	DI Smith	RJ Thorne	AE Watson
RF Sanderson	GSJ Smith	R Ticehurst	J Watson
RJ Sandison	PA Smith	PC Tinning	RF Watson
D Santer	SJ Smith	R Tofts	I Wells
RA Saunders	JF Smitherman	G Tomsett	AJ Wende
RJ Saunders	R Smithers	PM Troake	DR West
B Savage	MA Snelling	JE Trowell	JD Weston
S Savage	P Solly	WH Truckle	IJ Whitcomb
RE Scott	S Solly	M Turner	PJ Whitcomb
M Scott-ham	T Squire		GC White
M Scrivener (MS)	B Stacey	ST Underdown	AM Whitman
CM Seaton	I Standivan	MC Upstone	JH Whitman
M Shaft	JC Steedman	ED Urquhart	R Williamson
J Sharpe	JM Steedman		PJ Wilson (PJW)
JP Shaughnessey	D Steer	NJ Voaden	TJ Wilson
CR Shawyer	MJ Stenning		P Wood
AK Shaxson	I Stephens	JE Wakeling	S Woolley
DR Shepherd	TS Stocker	B Walker	A Wright
PJ Shopland	R Storkey	CA Walker	C Wright
MJ Silk	PJ Strangeman	D Walker	CMV Wright
J Simons	C Sutton	GN Walker	
IM Simpson	GA Sutton	M Wall	BJ Yates
RN Simpson		LA Ward	
A Simpson MBE	CA Taylor	N Ward	
M Sinden	R Taylor	M Warrington	

## 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 2002 were: M Bags, C Barfield, W Bowers, D Buckingham, S Caldwell, CH Dean, R Henning, RG Holmes, R Knight, D Lang, PJ Luffingham, Mrs BM Mortlock, Dr JA Newnham, M Scott-ham, I Standivan, S Sutton, M Turner, 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, D Ball, PC Bance, C Barfield, J Barnard, P Bennett, K Benyon-Tinker, G Binns, Dr C Brooks, T Callaway, D Carey, R Carver, Mrs E Catlett, Dr J Chapman, T Clements, GA Cockburn, Mrs S Cocker, CB Collins, C Cook, I Cooper, T Dalrymple, R Davison, Ms A de Potier, C Dewhurst, G Durey, AR Eales, RDM Edgar, P Edwards, M Emery, S Evans, Dr B Fellows, M Freeman, R French, D Fry, R Gardner, S. Gilbert, J Glover, DJ Golds, J

Gowen, NM Greenaway, RR Greenhalf, G Griffin, RG Harris, JL Herring, D Heryett, R Hill, DA & Mrs SR Hilton, J Houlden, P Huges, Mrs B James, P Jones, R Kent, A Kirkwood, R Knight, DC Lang, HJA Lee, P Lees, M Love, CD Lowmass, N Mitchell, R Morris, Mrs BM Mortlock, Dr JA Newnham, A Parfitt, Ms S Patton, RT Pepper, J Phillips, M Phillips, B Puttock, T Quittenden, Mrs P Ramsey, S Richardson, H Roberts, R Robinson, S Robinson, M Rosser, B Savage, P Selby, J Sharpe, A and Mrs IM Simpson, Ms C Skinner, DI Smith, M Smith, P Smith, S Smith, Miss CA Taylor, S Taylor, P Troake, JE Trowell, P Twine, S Underdown, ED Urquhart, Ms C Vince, D Walker, M Welcome, J Weston, B Williams, RLC Williamson, J Willsher, PJ Wilson, R Wingfield, H Wingfield-Hayes, CW and Mrs KI Woodburn, K and Mrs J Wright, Dr BJ Yates and S Younger.

**Breeding Bird Survey:** This BTO annual national breeding survey, based on selected one km squares, is organised in Sussex by Dr AB Watson.

**Thames Basin and Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey:** This continuing survey of heaths and heath woodlands is undertaken in collaboration with the RSPB and the bird clubs of Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey. The Sussex organiser is A Perry, Edgehill Barn, Byworth near Petworth West Sussex. Thanks are due to the following observers, JTA Bagley, KC Hearne, D Hollow, HJA Lee, M Marr, JL Nobbs and BM Rogers.

**Cliff-nesting birds:** The annual monitoring of these species was completed by TN Buttle, JW Reaney and DR West

**Breeding Waders of Wet Meadows:** This repeat of the 1982 survey conducted by the BTO was co-ordinated in Sussex by MV Sennitt, Dove Cottage, Climping Street, Climping, West Sussex, with major areas organised by L Manns, K Hewitt, MV Sennitt and Dr BJ Yates. The results of the survey will be published in the Sussex Bird Report for 2003. Those participating were C Barfield, Mrs S Bedford, P Bennett, L Bird, JF Boulcott, Ms J Bowen, Dr C Brooks, Mrs E Catlett, C Cook, J Curson, S Denny, G Durey, AR Eales, RDM Edgar, CJ Edwards, DC Fry, NM Greenaway, MJ Hawkins, K Hewitt, R Hobbs, M Hole, RG Holmes, P Hughes, AR Kitson, S Love, JC Luck, Mrs M Luffingham, P Luffingham, L Manns, RA Matthews, Ms S McKenzie, BE Murray, K Noble, R Parsons, RT Pepper, D Pomeroy, R Storkey, PM Troake, Mrs C Watkins, P Watkins, R Williamson, PJ Wilson and Dr BJ Yates.

**Bearded Tit breeding survey:** This national survey was co-ordinated in Sussex by MV Sennitt who thanks the following for their participation: CB Collins, CH Dean, TJ Edwards, HJA Lee, Mrs S.J. Patton, Ms. A de Poitier, T Squire, I Standivan, BE Williams, J Willsher and Dr BJ Yates.

**Kingfisher survey:** A pilot survey of this species was organised by MV Sennitt to assess the feasibility of conducting a county wide survey. Those contributing were Mrs J Barber, A Chalcraft, Mrs A Everett, JS Gowers, AM Hutson, RJ Lanaway, M Mullen, J Nobbs, TW Parmenter, R Robinson, S Robinson, K Simpson, M Wall and Dr CMV Wright.

**Mute Swan:** The sample 10 km squares for the 2002 National Mute Swan census, organised by WWT, were surveyed by Dr C Brooks, M Buckley, NM Greenaway, JR Havers, MJ Hawkins, Dr JK Irons, AR Kitson, S Love, P Luffingham, L Manns, FP Penfold, R Pulley, R Robinson, MV Sennitt, Ms A Sopp and Miss CA Taylor,

**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:*** 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 Pilsley Islands from CB and Mrs MA Collins; Selsey Bill from BJ Carter and O Mitchell; Pagham Harbour from BE Williams and Mrs S Patton; Pulborough Brooks from P Hughes; Worthing from Dr JA Newnham; Weir Wood Reservoir from Mrs BM Mortlock; Brighton Marina from IJ Whitcomb; Ashdown Forest from D King; Bewl Water from PC Bance; Beachy Head from RDM Edgar; Splash Point, Seaford, from BR Gilmore; Glyne Gap, Bexhill from I Standivan; Pett Level from P Jones and at Rye Harbour from Dr BJ Yates.

Thanks are due to RDM Edgar 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: PA Badger, Ms V Barnes, C Barfield, IT Barnard, R Bond, PM Brayshaw, T Callaway, BR Clay, C Cockburn, CB Collins, DE Crawley, J Curson, Ms A de Potier, CH Dean, RDM Edgar, RJ Fairbank, B Fellows, BR Gilmore, JS Gowers, D Green, AC Gutteridge, K Hearne, AM Holden, CE Hope, A House, T Howard-Jones, P Hughes, RA Ives, P James, A Johnstone, P Jones, D King, R Knight, S Linington, J Luck, L Manns, O Mitchell, Mrs BM Mortlock, G Osborne, Mrs S Patton, RT Pepper, A Perry, C Peverell, GCM Roberts, M Scott-ham, MV Sennitt, Mrs IM Simpson, DI Smith, I Standivan, JC Steedman, Dr AB Watson, IJ Whitcomb, PJ Whitcomb, J Whitman, BE Williams, J Willsher, and Dr BJ Yates.

# THE SUSSEX RINGING REPORT FOR 2002

By Robert Edgar and Sarah McKenzie

## Introduction

Figures from the British Trust for Ornithology (*pers. comm.*) show that 791,102 birds were ringed in Britain and Ireland in 2002 by approximately 1900 ringers. This total comprised 614,328 (78%) adults and 176,774 (22%) nestlings of 256 species.

The total number of birds ringed in Sussex was 45,650, 6% of the total for Britain and Ireland. This was an increase of 12,817 (39%) on the 32,833 ringed in 2001. This total was the highest since 1998 when 49,231 birds were ringed. Reports were received from 16 individual active ringers or groups (Table 1). The Rye Bay Ringing Group (RBRG) ringed 31,137 birds, which was 68% of the Sussex total. Only 104 species were ringed in the County in 2002 compared to 123 in 2001. The ringing activity for 2002 is summarised in Table 1.

Ringing Source	Number Ringed		
	Adults	Nestlings	Totals
<b>Individuals</b>			
A.M. Davis	516	7	523
J.A.G. Dunlop	2696	13	2709
R.D.M. Edgar	0	4	4
J.Hillman/C.Shawyer	8	36	44
D. King	992	87	1079
R. Lanaway	754	450	1204
J.A. Newnham	645	2	647
T.W. Parmenter	0	134	134
R. Sanderson	1657	14	1671
A.B. Watson	242	604	846
<b>Groups</b>			
Beachy Head Ringing Station	2239	17	2256
Cuckmere Ringing Group	1440	0	1440
Farlington Ringing Group	99	46	145
Rye Bay Ringing Group	30936	201	31137
Steyning Ringing Group	1711	100	1811
<b>County Total</b>	<b>43935</b>	<b>1715</b>	<b>45650</b>

**Table 1.** A summary of Ringing Activity in Sussex.

*Individuals named are those responsible for the rings issued and may not be those who actually ringed the birds. A Ringing Group may comprise a number of individuals.*

County rarities ringed were a Wryneck, a Bluethroat, three Aquatic Warblers and two Red-backed Shrikes at Icklesham, a second Wryneck on Ashdown Forest, a second Bluethroat at Charleston Reed Bed, Litlington, in the Cuckmere Valley and a Melodious Warbler at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head, the second year running for this species at this site. By comparison, 26 Wrynecks, 20 Bluethroats, eight Aquatic Warblers, seven Melodious Warblers and 14 Red-backed Shrikes were ringed in Britain and Ireland in 2002.

The only new species ringed in the County was Rock Pipit, a surprising omission from the County's Ringing List, bringing our species total to 196 since 1979. A Buzzard was ringed for the second year running, having been added to the species list in 2001. Other captures of particular interest were 73 Greenshanks at Thorney Island, and, 57 Bearded Tits and no less than 31 Cetti's Warblers in reed beds. One of the latter was thought by the

ringer to show features of the eastern race *albiventris*, though this has still to be accepted by the relevant authority.

## Ringling Totals

Table 2 lists the 20 most regularly trapped species during 2002 in descending order of magnitude compared with similar data from 2001 and including the totals for RBRG to demonstrate the considerable contribution this group makes to Sussex ringling.

	2001			2002			
	Total	Total	RBRG	Total	Total	RBRG	
Sedge Warbler	5944	6836	6089	Great Tit	685	968	180
House Martin*	148	5135	4992	Greenfinch	323	852	171
Reed Warbler	4218	4907	3899	Robin	773	739	248
Swallow*	2086	3917	3746	Meadow Pipit*	40	685	571
Blackcap	2908	3864	2567	Grasshopper Warbler**	323	559	546
Blue Tit	1087	2653	529	Wren	388	561	221
Chiffchaff	2169	2444	1232	Blackbird	552	544	148
Sand Martin*	1096	2126	2121	Garden Warbler	532	450	313
Willow Warbler*	2030	1843	1131	Dunnock*	419	445	128
Whitethroat	894	1298	738	Goldfinch	241	425	72

**Table 2.** *Sussex Ringling Totals for the 20 most ringed species in 2002. Birds of Conservation Concern (Gregory et al, 2002), \*\* Red listed, \* Amber listed.*

The 20 species listed in Table 2 account for 91% of all birds ringed in Sussex during 2002 comparable to a similar but not identical list of 20 species that accounted for 85% of birds ringed in 2001. Eight species of warbler and three species of hirundine accounted for 73% of all birds ringed. RBRG ringed 68% of the County total and a high proportion of nine of the species in Table 2. Their highest proportions were nearly 100% of the Sand Martins and 98% of the Grasshopper Warblers, the latter a remarkable result, considering how long it would take the ordinary observer to encounter over 500 of this species.

House Martin and Meadow Pipit were added to Table 2 this year and Lesser Redpoll and Goldcrest deleted. As mentioned in last year's report interpretation of year on year changes have to be treated with caution. Weather, opportunity and ringling effort may be as much responsible for a difference in numbers ringed, as a genuine population change.

The increase in numbers ringed shown in Table 2 clearly indicates a very successful ringling season, notably House Martins and Meadow Pipits. These species were caught almost entirely after attracting them with tape lures (under licence) indicating that comparisons of numbers ringed between years may be a reflection of effort. However it is clear that Willow Warbler numbers, which declined by 11% between 2000 and 2001 have declined further by 9% between 2001 and 2002. Last years' report speculated that this might reflect a decline in the southern British breeding population and this appears to be borne out (Raven *et al*, 2003). Similarly, the increase of 45% in Whitethroats seems genuine (Raven *et al*, 2003) while the number of Dunnocks ringed remains remarkably stable (416 in 2000, 419 in 2001, 445 in 2002). This species is not normally targeted by ringers, so these results may demonstrate how ringling can provide information on population levels.

This year, six Tree Sparrows were ringed compared to none last year. Only two Willow Tits were ringed, both at Weir Wood Reservoir, indicating that perhaps this species may soon be considered as a County rarity.

The ten most commonly ringed species nationally in descending order of magnitude compared to the ten most commonly ringed species in Sussex are shown in Table 3.

National	Sussex
1. Blue Tit	Sedge Warbler
2. Greenfinch	House Martin
3. Great Tit	Reed Warbler
4. Swallow	Swallow
5. Chaffinch	Blackcap
6. Blackbird	Blue Tit
7. Reed Warbler	Chiffchaff
8. Blackcap	Sand Martin
9. Sedge Warbler	Willow Warbler
10. Willow Warbler	Whitethroat

**Table 3.** Comparison of the ten most commonly ringed species nationally and in Sussex Nestlings

The number of nestlings ringed (1715) was similar to the 1465 ringed in 2001 and was less than 4% of the birds ringed during the year. The ringing of nestlings produces particularly valuable information on the exact origin and almost precise ageing of birds, it is therefore unfortunate that more effort is not directed at this aspect of ringing in the County.

	Total Ringed	Total nestlings	% nestlings		Total Ringed	Total nestlings	% nestlings
Tawny Owl	8	8	100	Kestrel*	15	11	73
Black-headed Gull*	7	7	100	Nuthatch	49	31	63
Peregrine*	5	5	100	Lapwing*	10	6	60
Common Tern	70	66	94	Little Owl	10	6	60
Barn Owl*	159	139	87	Marsh Tit**	57	28	49
Stock Dove*	4	3	75	Pied Wagtail	69	29	42

**Table 4.** Nestlings ringed in Sussex during 2002, where they number more than 40% of the total ringed

*Birds of Conservation Concern (Gregory et al, 2002), \*\* Red listed, \* Amber listed.*

Twelve species had over 40% of their total ringed as nestlings (Table 4) compared with 18 in 2001, and seven of these species were of Conservation Concern (Gregory *et al*, 2002). Particularly impressive was the 139 Barn Owl nestlings ringed, the increase in Peregrines up from two in 2001 to five in 2002, the 66 Common Terns and the 28 Marsh Tits. The latter number was 12% of all the Marsh Tit nestlings ringed in Britain and Ireland in 2002. The Barn Owl ringers found one nest box occupied by hornets, which could have had interesting consequences for the person up the ladder. Perhaps this is why experienced ringers often make their trainees climb ladders first!

### Recoveries

All birdwatchers can play an important part in ringing studies by observing colour ringed birds and reporting the letter/number/colour combinations. Particularly remarkable are the two reports of **Kentish Plovers** colour ringed in the Netherlands. One ringed as a chick in May 2001 was seen for two days in April 2002 at Pilsley Island, Chichester Harbour, the other chick, ringed in May 2002, was seen for three days in August 2002 at Goring (see page 70).

One of the more interesting sightings of a colour-ringed wader was that of a **Turnstone** at Pagham Harbour on 23 March 2002. The bird was somewhat 'overdressed' with six rings: upper left white, lower left black over dark green, upper right metal, lower right yellow over yellow. The bird was ringed as an adult male on 6 August 2001 at Alert,

Ellesmere Island, northeast Canada. Quite a number of Alert Turnstones have been sighted, mostly on the European seaboard, but also one in the Faroes, one in the Canary Islands and one in Namibia.

Gulls are also frequently colour-ringed. It is a sign of the times that seven colour ringed **Mediterranean Gulls** were reported in 2002, two each at Rye and Pagham Harbours with singles at Selsey Bill, Newhaven and Chichester Harbour. Detailed information is only available for the Rye birds. One was ringed as a chick in southern Hungary in July 2001. It was subsequently seen on the Cherbourg peninsular in northern France in January 2002 and finally at Rye Harbour in June 2002. Most of the Hungarian population of Mediterranean Gulls moves via the Danube and the Rhine to reach the Channel coast (Wernham *et al*, 2002).

The second bird was ringed as a chick in the Pas-de-Calais region of northern France in June 2000 and was seen at Copt Point, Folkestone, Kent in September 2000. It was seen in northern France in July 2001, but it returned to eastern England in September 2001, when it was observed at Southend Pier, Essex and then again in December 2001 at Herne Bay, Kent. It may well have remained in England over winter and was seen at Rye Bay in April 2002 and again in June 2002. Individuals of this species are known to breed at widely separated sites, in successive years (Wernham *et al*, 2002), much to the exasperation of reserve wardens.

Other fascinating gull information includes two **Herring Gulls** ringed at Small Dole, near Henfield in October and December 1981, the first was seen near Rotterdam, Netherlands, 19 years and five months later and the second at Stone Cross, Eastbourne 20 years and five months later (it died in care). The record age for Herring Gull is 28 years.

Although the **Black-headed Gull** is smaller than the Herring Gull, this species seems to live almost as long as the bigger gulls, the British record being over 26 years. The oldest Sussex Black-headed Gull reported this year still alive, and the ring number read in the field in the Netherlands in April 2002, was ringed as an adult in Worthing in November 1978, 23 years and five months earlier.

**Common Terns** are known long distance migrants. A bird from a northern colony at Lappeenranta on the Gulf of Finland, ringed in June 1999, was found injured on the beach at West Wittering on its way south in September 1999. Sadly it died in care at Brent Lodge Wildlife Hospital, but this has only just been reported. It had travelled 2132 km. Another interesting report from the Wildlife Hospital concerns a **Kestrel**, being rehabilitated, bearing a Swedish ring (exact ringing details unknown at present). Wernham *et al*, 2002 suggests that Kestrels from Scandinavia move regularly to southeast England to winter.

**Barn Owls** frequently feature in the Ringing report, all too often as road casualties. It is pleasing to report that a bird ringed near Ebernoe as a nestling in July 1993 was found breeding, with two young, in Bepton near Midhurst, nine years later. This is not exceptional (the record being over 13 years) but it is a good indication of survival.

Inland nesting **Kingfishers** often move to the coast in autumn where they establish winter territories. Kingfisher median movement in southern Britain is only 5 km (Wernham *et al*, 2002), so it is notable that one individual, ringed at Weir Wood Reservoir on 29 July 2002 and controlled (caught by another ringer) at Filsham on 17 August 2002, had travelled 46 km.

Chichester and Icklesham are the British sites where most **Sand Martins** have been ringed on migration. After crossing the channel birds move to the west coast of France, past the western end of the Pyrenees, and then move to the east coast of Spain, before

crossing the Mediterranean (Wernham *et al*, 2002). Ten Sand Martins ringed at Icklesham in August 2002 were controlled near Madrid in Spain in September 2002.

Many bird watchers consider **Wrens** and **Dunlocks** rather unexciting and only resident. Not so! A Wren ringed in July 2001 at Shoreham-by-Sea was controlled in September 2002 at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head, a distance of 39 km. This pales into insignificance when compared to the report, not recorded in the *Sussex Bird Report* before, of a Wren ringed at the Russian Baltic ringing station of Rybachy on 3 September 1996 and found, long dead, the following March near Bosham, a distance of 1524 km (Toms *et al*, 1999). This is only the second foreign-ringed Wren to have been recovered in Britain (the other was from Germany). If unaided, this must rate as one of the most extraordinary passerine ringing recoveries of all time. A Dunlock ringed at Low Hauxley, Northumberland on 10 September 2002 was controlled at Icklesham on 23 October 2002 a distance of 513 km. This is likely to be a Scandinavian bird moving to winter in southern Iberia (Wernham *et al*, 2002).

Given the number of migrating warblers ringed in Sussex (Table 2), it is pleasing to report some interesting recoveries. Very few **Cetti's Warblers** have been recovered, so a first-year bird ringed at Sandwich Bay, Kent on 21 July 2000 and caught three times at Icklesham between 14 September 2001 and 28 October 2002 is interesting. Another Cetti's Warbler, ringed at Filsham on 11 August 2002, was controlled in Suffolk on 11 September 2002.

The **Grasshopper Warbler** has probably the lowest ring-recovery rate of any British breeding bird (Wernham *et al*, 2002) so three recoveries in one year is particularly notable. One ringed on 8 September 2002 near Yougal, Cork, Eire was controlled at Icklesham eleven days later, having traveled 605 km. The second was ringed on 9 September 2002 near Bishop Monkton, North Yorkshire and controlled at Icklesham two days later, a distance of 382 km. The third was ringed at Icklesham on 13 September 2002 and found dying or freshly dead at Saint-Germain-en-Leye (south of Paris), France on 18 September, a distance of 246 km.

**Reed Warblers** are long lived birds, the oldest British ringed being over 13 years, so an Icklesham Reed Warbler retrapped in 2002 ten years and ten months later is notable. A **Sedge Warbler** ringed at Thorney Island, Chichester Harbour on 28 August 1996 was controlled at St. Abbs Head, Borders, Scotland on 19 May 2002, five years and nine months later, also a good age for a shorter lived bird (British record almost eight years). Two Sedge Warblers from Eire were reported, both ringed in Wicklow, one on 29 July 2001 and controlled at Filsham on 24 August 2002, the other ringed on 27 July 2002 and controlled at Litlington on 18 August 2002.

Sedge Warblers normally undertake 'long-haul' flights on migration and many build up fat reserves for their journey in reed beds in southern Britain. However they may need to cross to France to find sufficient food for their onward migration (Wernham *et al*, 2002). An example of this is three birds, all ringed at Litlington on 3 August 2002 and controlled on 12, 13 and 14 August 2002 near Treogat, near Quimper, Finistere, France.

A puzzling control is of a Reed Warbler, ringed on 14 September 2002 at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head and caught a week later, at Queen Mary Reservoir, Surrey, seemingly having travelled in the 'wrong' direction.

Finches are medium distance migrants, so a **Lesser Redpoll**, ringed at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head on 3 November 2001 and captured by a non-ringer in Belgium on 9 April 2002, is not surprising. A longer traveller was a **Siskin** ringed on 10 March 2000 in East Grinstead and found dead at Carsphairn, Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland on 2 May 2002.

R. Sanderson (*pers. comm.*) has provided interesting information on the frequency with which he has recaptured birds that he has previously ringed at Weir Wood Reservoir. In 2002 this rate averaged 29% but the rate varied greatly depending whether the species was a resident or a migrant. Thus his retrap rate for **Chiffchaff** was 3%. Resident species, however, included **Marsh Tit** with a retrap rate of 70%, **Great Spotted Woodpecker** (67%), **Coal Tit** (65%), **Nuthatch** (67%) and **Dunnock** (63%). He also recorded retrap ages for both Dunnock and Great Spotted Woodpecker of six and a half years and Greenfinch of five years.

### **Acknowledgements**

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- RDM Edgar and Sarah McKenzie, 32 Hartfield Road, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 4PW.*

## Observations of the Hen Harrier Roost on Ashdown Forest.

by Darrin Madgin.

The heaths and commons of Sussex are mainly small and fragmented covering an estimated total area of 7500 ha and account for approximately two percent of the 375,000 ha of the total area of the County.

Historically, Ashdown Forest was a vast afforested hunting chase during the 13<sup>th</sup> Century enclosed by a fenced bank to allow quarry (deer, boar) to enter but not escape when hunted. Later large areas were coppiced to produce charcoal for furnaces and gunpowder manufacture. In 1693 a Royal Commission awarded the Commoners 6400 acres (2590 ha) for rights to graze their sheep and cattle, cut herbage for bedding and winter fodder, and, fell timber for firewood, fencing and building. These activities are mainly responsible for the present day heathland habitat.

Ashdown Forest is located in the High Weald in East Sussex and is the largest of the remaining diminishing heathlands in southeast England, covering an area of 5500 ha and rising to 220 m above sea level. It constitutes five percent of the rapidly diminishing lowland heath in Britain and is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (ANOB). The sandy soil leaches rapidly supporting a flora of Heather *Calluna vulgaris*, rough grasses e.g. Deergass *Scirpus cespitosus*, Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, Gorse *Ulex europaeus* and scattered trees such as birches *Betula* spp and Scots Pine *Pinus sylvestris* constituting approximately 40% woodland and 60% heathland making ideal habitat for small mammals, passerines and harriers.

Harriers belong to the genus *Circus* and range through all the major continents with at least nine species recognised. In Europe the genus is represented by four species, Marsh, Hen, Pallid and Montague's. They inhabit both dry and wet areas of low vegetation ground cover feeding mainly on small mammals and passerines. Their general structure of medium size with owl-like faces, slim bodies and long legs are ideal adaptations for the location and capture of prey in dense vegetation. Their long flexible wings and long often fanned tails are ideal adaptations for sustained manoeuvrable flight either hunting close to the ground, or, engaged in greeting and food-passing acrobatics (hence the generic name of *Circus*) in the sky.

Harriers are sociable birds and congregate in communal roosts during the winter months. In the UK these winter roosts rarely exceed 20 individuals whereas in Germany they can contain over 200 individuals and in Ocklahoma (USA) in excess of 1000 individuals have been recorded.

The Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* breeds mainly on upland moorland below 500 m and in young conifer plantations in northern England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. The Hen Harrier is a scarce but regular winter visitor and passage migrant in Sussex (Kalahar 1996). Cumulative records from 1962 to 1993 show records for every month of the year with peak numbers during the winter months. The total winter population from 1976 to 1999 ranged from 20 to 60 birds, with an average of 40 birds including five to ten males. Hen Harriers were first recorded roosting in Sussex in 1977 and by 1982 seven definite roost sites were located with two more sites located by 2000 (Kalahar 2000) making a total of nine, six in West Sussex and three in East Sussex .

The study roost was discovered in 1997 covering an area of some 30 ha encompassing the south facing side of a hill which rises to approximately 175 m from a small copse of Silver Birch trees *Betula pendula* at its base. The roost flora consists of Gorse, Heather, Bracken and various rank grasses which grow to a height of one metre interspersed with



occasional pine and birch trees. The whole area is extremely wet and boggy with occasional large pools of water and generally does not suffer from human interference. The birds arrive at the roost from the middle of October and at least one Hen Harrier generally occupies the roost site until middle to late March. The site may be unusual in that at times male Hen Harriers predominate and this may be because males travel further than females from their breeding grounds. The two exceptions being on the 22 and 28 December 2002, when on both occasions three females were observed to roost at the site, outnumbering the males. Twenty-eight observations were conducted at the roost, both morning and evening and the peak numbers of Hen Harriers seen on one occasion to roost at the site during each month are compiled as Table 1.

	Male	Female	Juvenile	Ratio M : F
November 2002	2	1	0	2 : 1
December 2002	3	3	1	1 : 1
January 2003	3	1	0	3 : 1
February 2003	2	1	1	2 : 1
Overwinter total	10	6	2	1.7 : 1

*Table 1. The peak number of Hen Harriers roosting overwinter on one occasion between November 2002 and February 2003.*

Data was abstracted from the seven SxBRs from 1995 to 2001 inclusive and summarised as Table 2.

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
<b>COUNTY DATA</b>							
Total - 1 <sup>st</sup> winter period		16	25	22	19	29	22
- 2 <sup>nd</sup> winter period		14	22	18	16	23	19
Annual Total	44	30	47	40	35	52	41
all Males	3	7	7				
<b>Monthly Minima</b>							
1 <sup>st</sup> winter period,							
Males	2	1-3	2-3	1-4			
Females	2-5	3-10	3-12	1-18			
unsexed					3-19	1-14	3-11
2 <sup>nd</sup> winter period,							
Males	1	1-2	1-2	1-4			
Females	5-9	1-6	1-7	3-14			
unsexed					1-16	1-13	3-13
<b>ASHDOWN FOREST DATA</b>							
1 <sup>st</sup> winter period							
Males	1	2	0	1		2	2
Females	1	2	1	1		2	2
unsexed					1-3	1-4	3-4
2 <sup>nd</sup> winter period,							
Males	1	1	0	1	2-3		4
Females	0	1	1	1-3			4
unsexed					1-2	2	

*Table 2. The number of Hen Harriers recorded on Ashdown Forest compared to the number recorded in the County.*

Analysis of this seven-year period for Ashdown Forest indicates that for the first winter period a total of eight males and nine females were recorded, and, for the second winter period a total of ten males and nine females were recorded. Thus the total

overwintering numbers during the seven years was 18 males and 18 females, a ratio of 1:1 for males to females. As would be expected, results from single or short-term observations (Table 1) are not always substantiated by records collected over a longer period of time (Table 2).

The birds using the roost are thought to be winter migrants from northern and central Europe. No wing-tagged Harriers have ever been observed on the roost, which suggests that the birds are not from northern UK locations. Etheridge (2002) too, inferred that harriers in southeast England are of continental origin due to similar observations and recoveries of ringed continental birds. However such birds cannot be completely ruled out as a small number of birds ringed in the Forest of Bowland (Lancashire) have been recorded in the south and southeast of the U.K. Although the nature of Hen Harrier plumage makes the recognition of individuals difficult it has been possible to identify some individuals who appear to return to the roost over a number of years. Due to the fluctuations in the number of birds using the roost it is clear that some are transient and do not return to the roost on a daily basis. However, one individual female was noted to return on a number of different days.

Apart from the fact that some Hen Harriers have previously used the roost it would appear that there may be other factors operating. Birds passing through the area would see other birds using the roost and could follow them to the site. Observations over a wide range of dates of identifiable birds arriving at the roost, followed closely or shortly after by unknown birds suggests this may be the case. Males in particular seem to show this tendency and have been observed tailing each other to the site on a number of occasions and on one occasion a group of three was seen. Frequently females arrive with juveniles and only on two occasions have two females arrived together.

There is a general pattern to the harriers arriving at the roost in that females and juveniles usually arrived before the males. The time span between the first and last bird to enter the roost varies from minutes to several hours and the males generally arrived at the roost within a relatively short time period of each other. The majority of the birds arrived singly. Of the observations conducted over the period from 17 November 2002 to 26 February 2003, nine females were seen to approach the roost from the west, and 17 males were seen to arrive from the east, flying low along a ridge before dropping into the roost area. This is a general rule, and from the observations conducted three females and eight males deviated from this. With a further small number not being noted which direction they entered the roost. One male bird was seen occasionally to approach the roost from the south, a short time after sunset, in poor light and flying (unusually) at a considerable height and dropping straight into the roost, with wings swept back. On another occasion, two males arrived at the roost from the north flying over the ridge one close behind the other.

There is strong evidence to suggest that on days of poor visibility and wet weather conditions the birds arrive at the roost late in the day whereas in good weather conditions the birds tend to roost earlier, frequently two hours before sunset. This suggests that if birds have been successful hunting in good weather they conserve energy by entering the roost early with a full crop, whereas if hunting has been unsuccessful in bad weather they would stay out as long as possible to secure prey items.

The female Harriers arriving first at the site usually roost quite quickly and stay at their chosen spot. When arriving late or disturbed by a later male they inspect the roost by over-flying a longer time than usual and appear to purposefully disturb males in order to get the roosting spot they want. On one occasion a female was observed to deliberately drop prey into the roost lower down the hill then continue to fly to her usual spot at the top of the site. When males arrived they generally flew the full length of the site, inspecting the roost. During windy and blustery days the birds tended to fly longer and higher over

the roost than normal, interacting with each other. As the birds inspected the roost they disturbed Meadow Pipits *Anthus pratensis* and other passerines from the vegetation in front of, and to the side of, their flight path. This movement of passerines was very useful in signalling the arrival of the harriers.

On some occasions when harriers were inspecting the roost they were mobbed by corvids whilst at other times they are not, even when flying close to each other. Birds departing from the roost in the morning seemed to suffer more from mobbing by corvids than during their arrival in the evenings, probably the result of corvids having already settled in numbers in nearby trees in the morning before the harriers departed. Kestrels *Falco tinnunculus* frequently hovered on the roost during the harriers arrival and neither seemed to react to the other. On one occasion a male Hen Harrier flew into a gap between two birches and disturbed a female Merlin *Falco columbarius* that had been sitting on the ground. As the Merlin flew off and took refuge further along in the birches the harrier continued to inspect the roost.

During early observations it was noted that on occasions birds would upon arrival settle in particular spots, normally at the lower part of the roost, before moving to a final roosting spot. The harriers only ever seemed to move once, unless disturbed by a female. The locations where the harriers roosted were noted and the roosting spots subsequently examined after the harriers left the roost in the morning. The spots were observed to be trampled areas of grass, predominantly Deergrass, circular in shape and approximately 30 cm in diameter. The grass was trampled from the centre outwards and one of the roosting locations closely examined was found to have a number of roosting spots in close proximity to each other. The spots were predominantly on raised knolls, and hence above the wet ground and were extremely difficult to approach as they were sited amongst dense heather, gorse and pools of water. The Hen Harriers spent most of their time with their backs to the incline of the roost and thus being able to look out over the roost. This was confirmed by the location of their droppings at the roost spots and were more apparent the further up the hill the spots were sited. The females always appeared to prefer the roosting spots nearest the top of the incline and disturbed males already settled on the roost in order to obtain the spots they wanted. This suggests that there was some form of hierarchy or female dominance in the roost.

The male birds departing the roost always left in a deliberate and direct fashion unlike entering in the evening when they often flew around before finally settling. They predominantly left the roost before the females even though at times females would complete a short flight over the roost landing at a spot normally at the lower end before finally departing.

The birds leaving the roost were never observed to deliberately hunt although on one occasion a male was observed to make an attempt to take a Meadow Pipit, which had taken to the air as he lifted from the roost. However the harrier clearly failed to catch the quarry as the pipit sharply changed direction.

One of the issues arising from the observations of the roost was where the harriers hunt during the day. There is a very active bird-watching group on the Ashdown Forest who submit a vast number of records supplemented by the many other observers who visit the area from time to time, yet the number of records of harriers observed hunting over the area is very small. This suggests that they go further afield in search of prey. Birds observed hunting in the surrounding areas such as the South Downs, Ardingly, Turners Hill and the Lewes Levels may well come from the Ashdown Forest roost, although one harrier seen on the Lewes Levels was subsequently noted to roost there. A sighting of particular note was of a harrier passing over Ardingly Reservoir late one afternoon

travelling in the direction of Ashdown Forest, suggesting that it could be returning to the roost site.

Harriers have been using the Ashdown Forest roost in numbers varying from one up to a total of six, for at least five years. It is therefore clearly a site of regional importance for wintering Hen Harriers. Its significance is perhaps reinforced by the fact that the Hen Harrier is a bird of conservation concern due to the persecution it has been subjected to in its breeding sites further north over a number of years, and, the loss and degradation of suitable habitat over its range.

### **Acknowledgements**

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# The Bewl Water Gull Roost 2002.

By Phil Bance

## Introduction

A number of species of gulls currently form large winter roosts at water treatment plants, reservoirs and refuse tips creating potential health hazards from their bacteria contaminated faeces. Roost counting gives valuable data as it is an accurate assessment of a population size for a large area and is useful for monitoring population trends. The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) has organised winter roost counts of UK gulls each decade since 1953. The last survey was in 1993 and the next is planned for 2003/04. The data from these Winter Gull Roost Surveys (WinGS) shows that in the forty years between the first survey in 1953 and the fifth survey in 1993 (Armitage & Burton, 2003) the total population of Black-headed *Larus ridibundus*, Common *L. canus*, Lesser Black-backed *L. fuscus*, Herring *L. argentatus* and Great Black-backed *L. marinus* Gulls has virtually trebled to a conservative estimate of 2.59 million. This population growth is thought to be associated with an increase in food availability from scavenging on refuse tips and fishery waste paralleled by a decrease in culling and egg collection for human consumption. These increases in gull populations give rise to increases in breeding populations creating an expansion in the numbers of winter roost sites and the number of gulls using each roost.

At Bewl Water at peak times there were always between ten and twenty thousand gulls but observers were unenthusiastic to undertake counts. This was the situation in the past and roost counts were not made every year. This scenario lasted until January 2002 when events unfolded in a surprising way.

With large numbers starting to roost at Bewl Water it became important to document the changes taking place to increase the information on this currently poorly understood change in behaviour. Roost counting was accomplished by just two observers, each complimenting the other and the following text relates the evolution of events and the development of a more accurate counting technique than used previously.

## Methods

All counts prior to 6 March were substantiated in two ways. Firstly, as the birds arrived, the numbers in each group were estimated together with an estimate of the ratio of Black-headed to Common Gulls. If conditions allowed, one species was counted with accuracy leaving the balance of the total roost assigned to the second species. Secondly, both estimates were repeated when all the birds were settled and in adequate light. This was fairly straightforward but estimations by the first method were difficult to make if birds were arriving from different directions at the same time. If this was the case, the second method of estimation was used.

As the estimated numbers increased a more accurate counting method was required. This led to the development of using the field of view of the telescope as a square grid. The telescope was panned through the roost in one direction estimating and noting the number of gulls in each field of view. The number of birds in each field of view was estimated by multiplying the linear number across the field by the linear number through the depth of the field.

## Results

The English Channel and the southern North Sea suffered many strong gales with heavy rain from January through to March and although these conditions increased the number of gulls inland, certainly in East Sussex, other unusual sightings were scarce. Gale

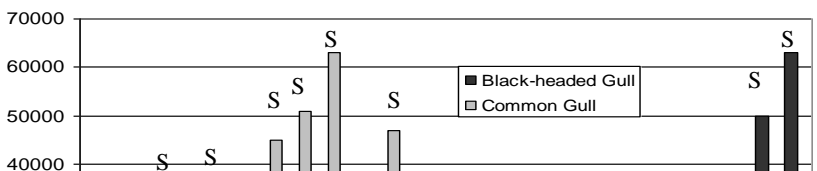
force winds with heavy rain on 20 January accounted for unusually large numbers of Black-headed Gulls seen inland in East Sussex the following day. As many as 3000 were seen in one field. A week later the inclement weather continued with the sighting of an adult Mediterranean Gull *L. melanocephalus* at the reservoir combined with a small southerly movement of Herring, Lesser Black-backed and Great Black-backed Gulls. At this stage no roost counts had been undertaken. On 30 January a large roost was seen in excess of 20,000 small gulls but heavy rain prevented an accurate estimate. The following evening an organised count was made from the clubhouse viewing the roost in favourable conditions from a first floor balcony which was sheltered from any wind or rain on either side of the building. The results were a staggering total of more than 40,000 small gulls in the roost containing an estimated 33,000 Black-headed Gulls with the balance being Common Gulls. On arrival at 16:00 hrs approximately 20,000 small gulls were present and over 20,000 more arrived within the next hour. A few of the three larger species were also present but most of these moved on before darkness prevailed. The previous maximum roost count, the only one in excess of 20,000, was 28,000 small gulls on 23 January 1993.

It was now apparent that the reason no large roosts were recorded in the past comparable to those seen now, was because calm favourable viewing conditions were chosen when counts should have been made in exactly the opposite unfavourable viewing conditions. Apparently the gulls were unable to roost at their usual sites on the coast where the large flocks would normally be found.

On 11 February there were more strong south-westerly gales with rain, prompting a decision to make a count on the following evening. This time the weather was calmer but there was an afternoon drizzle. Whilst travelling to the reservoir about 1000 adult Common Gulls were seen in a field beside the road. This was thought to be unusual as it was the Black-headed Gull which had so recently been present in such large numbers. The number of Black-headed Gulls on this occasion was normal at 22,000 but Common Gulls continuously arrived between 16:00 and 17:00 hrs including a flock of over 20,000 in 30 minutes which flew in from the north-east over the dam. A minimum of 35,000 was estimated to be present by dark fall. This was the largest number of Common Gulls ever recorded in Sussex and completely overshadowed the previous maximum seen at Bewl Water of 8000. But the best was yet to come.

To prove it was the severe weather which caused the large numbers, a roost count on a calm day was made on 18 February (Figure 1) when it was very calm with sunshine and a gentle northerly wind. The roost count was 7500 Black-headed Gulls and a mere 700 Common Gulls. The weather was so fine that a Daubenton's or Water Bat *Myotis daubentonii* was seen closely in flight on arrival. Shortly after, gulls were seen chasing the hapless bat in the middle of the reservoir when it seemed completely disorientated weaving about high up to avoid being caught. It survived for a while until a crow took up the chase, soon caught it and flew to a nearby tree and devoured it.

Inclement weather on 25 February brought in more than 43,000 small gulls with at least 30,000 Common Gulls, but the weather conditions were so bad that an accurate count was impossible with 10,000 gulls flying in all directions. The following day was less windy and accurate counts of approximately 30,000 Black-headed and 45,000 Common Gulls were possible. More immature Common Gulls were now appearing suggesting a through passage but the numbers were small at approximately 100. Eighteen Lesser Black-backed Gulls were also seen. Two days later there were 30,000 Black-headed and 51,000 Common Gulls including 200 immatures.



*Figure 1. Gull roost counts at Bewl Water from January to March and October to December during Severe (S) and Calm (C) weather.*

Weather conditions were calm on 5 March but the following day saw a fresh westerly wind inland. In the North Sea and the Channel there were very strong south-westerly gales whilst the reservoir remained relatively calm holding one adult Mediterranean Gull, 25,000 Black-headed Gulls and 63,000 Common Gulls including approximately 2000 immatures. The roost total of 88,000 was estimated using the telescope field of view method. The roost was approximately 1200 metres long and for 60 to 70% of its length the number of birds in one telescope field was approximately 5000. Only three Lesser Black-backed Gulls and one Herring Gull were present.

On 13 March different conditions prevailed when the wind was force 3 north-easterly. Four thousand Black-headed Gulls were present along with 24,000 Common Gulls including 1000 immatures and the single Mediterranean Gull. Southerly gales with rain on 18 March produced numbers of 6000 Black-headed, 47,000 Common, five Lesser Black-backed, seven Herring Gulls and one Mediterranean Gull. The following day the wind was lighter with no rain and the roost held a mere 300 Black-headed, 5000 Common, five Lesser Black-backed and six Herring Gulls.

Unusually an adult Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* was present on the morning of 20 March with two Common Gulls. Weather conditions subsequently improved with concomitant decrease in the number of gulls curtailing further estimates.

Autumn roosts have always been smaller than those in winter or spring and 2002 proved to be no exception. The first severe storms of the autumn occurred on 27 October which brought in two Little Gulls *L. minutus* and a Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* but the roost was small with 2000 Black-headed, 300 Common, ten Lesser Black-backed and 20 Herring Gulls. The weather on 21 November was showery with a force 4 south-westerly wind and a Mediterranean and Little Gull were present. The main roost held 8000 Black-headed and 1000 Common Gulls, most of them coming in over the dam. The roost had grown to 15,000 by 10 December in a north-westerly wind. Rough seas and gales occurred in the Channel on 26 December which heralded the first large count of 50,000 Black-headed and 9000 Common Gulls. There was a strong north-west wind on 29 December with heavy rain and rough seas which caused further damage to the Brighton West Pier. It also caused the peak Black-headed Gull roost of 63,000 along with 10,000 Common, four Lesser Black-backed and 29 Herring Gulls with single Mediterranean and Great Black-backed Gulls.

The roost counts recorded in Figure 1 suggest that Black-headed Gull numbers peak during the winter in late December and Common Gull numbers peak during the spring between late February and early March. Future roost counts of both species should confirm the factuality of these peak counts.

## **Discussion**

The flocks of Black-headed Gulls described here were larger than previously recorded due to estimates being made at the wrong time and to the inclement weather conditions driving the birds inland. The south-westerly gales drove these gulls to Bewl Water presumably from more exposed sites elsewhere to return to them later in calmer weather. The numbers remained fairly constant between 20,000 and 30,000 in severe conditions and between 5000 and 7000 in calmer conditions. Ringing studies from 1975 to 1985 (Newnham, 1985) demonstrated that the majority of the Black-headed Gulls occurring in Sussex between mid-July and late-March originated from the Low Countries, the Baltic States and Fennoscandinavia. To put the figures into context, previous large numbers reported in Sussex in excess of those reported here (Newnham, 1996a) were 40,000 at Rye Bay on 16 March 1986 and 80,000 in the Goring/Shoreham area on 25 December 1981. Large numbers were also reported from Kent in the Swale (Taylor, Davenport & Flegg, 1984) on 11 November 1972 and 25 January 1975 with counts of 60,000 and 50,000 respectively.

The number of Common gulls was unprecedented and much more surprising in view of the enormous spring peak. Numbers in excess of 20,000 are rarely reported, the largest being 32,500 from Rye Bay (Newnham, 1996b) on 18 March 1991. The majority of the gulls on Bewl Water came in over the dam from the north-east from the Medway and Swale catchment areas, but many also came in from the south-east from the direction of Rye and St. Mary's Bays. A ringing programme between 1975 and 1993 of Common Gulls in Sussex (Newnham & Watson, 1993) demonstrated that 90% of the gulls trapped in the eight months September to April were trapped in the three months January to March, and recoveries were from north-east and east of the UK. Most of the recoveries were from Denmark and Scandinavia and six further east from Russia. One would assume that the numbers present would be different birds as the spring passage progressed making it extremely difficult to estimate the actual numbers passing through on a total basis. The weather conditions experienced suggest that global warming was a contributory factor to this situation and it is likely that these conditions will re-occur. It is also likely that large numbers of roosting gulls may be seen in other parts of the County and indeed this may already be the case. It is not known how long these large numbers have been roosting at Bewl Water. It seems reasonable to assume that numbers as large as this could not have possibly been missed in the past, but since previous counts were made in calm weather this assumption may be incorrect. It seems more likely to be a recent innovation of our changing weather patterns. Why roosts are always larger in the winter and spring than the autumn is a matter of conjecture as there are no large counts prior to December. With our currently changeable weather conditions speculations on the reasons behind any particular seasonal movements have become more difficult to make.

The populations of gulls outside the breeding season in the UK peak at different times of the year. Lesser Black-backed Gull numbers generally peak in September or October as individuals move south on passage whilst the numbers of Black-headed, Common, Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls peak later in mid-winter or early spring (Armitage & Burton 2003).



## Conclusions

Severe weather conditions created larger than normal gull numbers inland, particularly at the Bewl Water roost. To count these large numbers a method was developed and adopted to make accurate estimates of the numbers present. At Bewl Water, counting birds as they arrived in these conditions was difficult, especially when they arrived from all directions and dropped onto the reservoir rather than planed in at a low angle. The majority of Common Gulls arrived from the Medway and Swale areas to the north-east and from Rye and St Mary's Bays to the south-east. Black-headed Gulls tended to arrive from several directions. The number of Black-headed and Common Gulls in spring normally outweigh the autumn numbers in Sussex, though there are a few exceptions. There is also proof here that immature Common Gulls become more numerous as spring passage advances. Large numbers of gulls are not normally reported from the south-east because either there are no large concentrations, or, observers generally are reluctant to count gulls during the daytime or at dusk.

In hindsight it is thought that the counts carried out in January and February were underestimated because the more accurate counting method using the telescope field of view had not been adopted. This is borne out by an estimate of 63,000 Black-headed Gulls on 29 December 2002 counts which is larger than previously recorded at this time of year. This latter observation is further indication that Black-headed Gull numbers peak in the winter as opposed to Common Gull Numbers which peak in the spring.

## Acknowledgements

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## BONAPARTE'S GULL AT PAGHAM LAGOON

*by Alan Kitson.*

At the northeast end of Pagham Lagoon, Mallards and Coots are fed bread, which attracts gulls which bide their time out on the water. Over the winter I had taken to checking the lagoon for gulls since they present themselves in a useful fashion. I arrived on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2002 at 9.00 GMT when there were no gulls, but on return at 12.10 approximately 40 gulls were afloat. I was on the east side looking west and north. There was a light southeast wind, light patchy cloud and a hint of sun. I scanned with 9x Ross 'Stepruva' binocular (still going strong after all these years) through the many Black-headed Gulls, five Common and two Herring Gulls and noticed at approximately 100 m a smaller gull that was facing away, preening. It looked small, but then so did that one and that one. So back I went and yes, surely it was smaller and a bit of the mantle that was showing was darker grey. It then turned side-on to me confirming that it was smaller than a Black-headed Gull, with darker grey upperparts, a black head mark, and a neat black bill. Then all the gulls got up and its underwing was all pale greyish, not white as in adult Mediterranean Gull and without the black underhand of Black-headed Gulls. It could only be a Bonaparte's Gull! All the gulls then settled back on the lagoon, just south of the wind-turbine house ('Laguna') on this shore, and I now 'scoped it with a 27x Kowa, watching it for ten minutes and taking notes. I then phoned it in to Birdline and to Sarah Patton, assistant warden of Pagham Hbr LNR, who came straight over. All the gulls flew up again as she arrived so her first view of the bird was in flight. However, they all settled again on the water beside the house with the Bonaparte's now the closest gull at approximately 60 m range. I left soon after 13.00 GMT having been there an hour.

### **Description**

It was small, always smaller from every angle on the water and in flight against the Black-headed Gulls, even may be as small as a Little Gull, although I know it shouldn't be so small. It was neat and compact, with grey upperparts darker than Black-headed Gull, virtually Common Gull grey. At rest it showed black primaries, at least four of which each showed a minute near-terminal white spot, a white head with a black crescent-spot behind the eye, a black eye and a neat black bill. The crown and hind neck were suffused with grey and there were two grey hoops over the crown – one from ear crescent to ear crescent, the other from eye to eye. Its breast was white in front, grey on the sides and the flanks were also grey. Once it lifted its right leg and foot clear of the water to scratch its face – both leg and foot were pale flesh pink. Its tail was all white. In flight it was neat, with a black line along the primary tips and white leading primaries in the manner of Black-headed Gull; the underwing was uniformly pale grey although with white on the leading primaries, the edge of the forewing, and the tips of the secondaries. It was aged as an adult in winter plumage since it had no brown wing or body feathers, the tail was all white and it had no black hood, which was in contrast to most of the Black-headed and Mediterranean Gulls around which were in summer plumage.

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## Wintering Lesser Whitethroat in a Worthing Garden.

By Ken Hearne.

A Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* was regularly seen in the author's Worthing garden from 17 November 2002 to 14 April 2003. These notes outline the significance of this record and describe its behaviour during its stay.

The garden, covering an area of approximately 500 square metres, is situated 1 km from the sea and is well stocked with a variety of deciduous and evergreen shrubs and small trees. A large old apple tree *Malus*, a willow hedge *Salix* pollarded annually and a cherry tree *Prunus* host numerous aphids *Aphis* and other insects. The garden is open to strong winds from the southwest but the shrubs and trees provide shelter at low levels. The back is 4 m from a large secondary school building and there is a busy road at the front. The garden attracts the occasional migrant Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* and Willow Warbler *P. trochilus* dropping in to re-fuel. Blackcap *S. atricapilla* sometimes visit the garden in winter. A Lesser Whitethroat appearing in mid-November was a very unusual event as most leave Sussex in late August and September. In most years the last are recorded in October with the mean departure date for the past ten years being 18 October (*Sussex Bird Report* 54:167). Four individuals have, however, been reported in November with the latest remaining in Burgess Hill between 12 and 21 November 1957 (Edgar 1996). Birds from the European population migrate southeast to northeast and central Africa (Baker 2002).

The new arrival was an irregular visitor and after several days absence it re-appeared on 23 November and created a new county record for late departure. In fact there was no autumn departure as it stayed in the area for nearly five months and became the first to winter in the county. It showed no sign of injury and spent the first week searching shrubs for natural food. Then it showed an increasing awareness of the Greenfinches *Carduelis chloris* on the sunflower and niger seed feeders. There is no soft fruit in the garden and no scraps were provided in the area it frequented. Ten days after first appearing in the garden it made an unsuccessful attempt to land on the niger feeder. However, its progress in possibly learning to take seed from the feeders was rudely interrupted by frequent visits to the back garden by the local Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* over the next few days, during which time it was not seen and few birds were brave enough to visit the feeders.

At the beginning of December it re-appeared in the front garden on the ground under two peanut feeders which were used by House Sparrows *Passer domesticus*, and are sited in an *Escallonia* shrub close to the house to reduce hawk predation. It readily adapted to feeding on peanut remnants but it was a week before it tried to cling on to one of the feeders. Over a period of two weeks its skill gradually improved until it pecked at the peanuts hard enough to obtain food. It was very timid and would only visit a feeder when no other birds were there. Its restless nature meant it constantly moved between feeders and when these were busy it fed on the ground venturing no more than a metre from cover. Water provided in this area was readily taken, but niger seed put on the ground was not. In all situations it was at the bottom of the pecking order, and the resident Dunnock *Prunella modularis* had the rare opportunity to dominate.

It proved its ability to survive cold weather when mild conditions in December gave way to a cold spell and the pond nearby was frozen over for several days. The lowest temperature recorded at this time at the nearest weather station 7 km away on the beach at Shoreham was minus 3°C, but the penetrating strong easterly winds were a more serious test for the bird. The winter proved to be colder than those of recent years and another

cold spell at the end of January brought a light covering of snow which did not deter it from trying to feed on the ground.

Until the end of February its visits to the garden were unpredictable and sometimes several days would pass without it being seen. It did not appear to be wholly dependent on the peanuts at that time and after feeding it could be seen flying strongly out of sight. It is not possible to say how much natural food it found or whether it visited feeders in other gardens. From March onwards it was feeding on the peanuts in the garden several times a day on most days.

There is no chemical spraying in the garden, and by early April a close examination of the new shoots of buddleia *Buddleja* revealed a rapidly expanding population of aphids. During the last few days of its stay it forsook the peanut feeders and hunted for food in the shrubs and trees. It was last seen on 14 April when a strong easterly wind decreased overnight to a slight breeze.

Records of wintering Lesser Whitethroat are few in number. The Winter Atlas (Lack 1986) lists ten but as the fieldwork was carried from mid-November to February this number may include some late migrants which did not winter. Clark & Eyre (1993) give four winter records. Of these, three were of birds seen on single days and the fourth was seen at Southampton from 29 January to 19 April 1987.

The taxonomy of the species is complex, and the possibility the bird was a sub-species was considered. However, the body shape, colouring and behaviour all appeared to conform with the nominate race. A combination of factors suggested the bird was not an adult: the late date of appearance; little white was showing on the outermost tail feathers; and some feathers were abraded as if only a partial moult had taken place. Ornithologists experienced in identifying the different races examined photographs and notes of its behaviour, and agreed it was most likely a first-winter *curruca*.

### **Acknowledgments**

My thanks go to Dr John Newnham for reviewing these notes and to John Cooper for advice on identifying the races.

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For a **Journal:** Manns, L. 1996. The Corn Bunting Survey 1993-94. *Sussex Bird Report* 47: 133-147.

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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.

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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
Whooper Swan	Pomarine Skua (except in spring)	Pallas's Leaf Warbler
Bean Goose	Long-tailed Skua	Yellow-browed Warbler
Pink-footed Goose	Sabine's Gull	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Green-winged Teal	Ring-billed Gull	Crested Tit
Ring-necked Duck	Iceland Gull	Golden Oriole
Surf Scoter	Glaucous Gull	Red-backed Shrike
Honey Buzzard	Roseate Tern	Woodchat Shrike
White-tailed Eagle	Black Guillemot	Chough
Montagu's Harrier	Little Auk	Hooded Crow
Goshawk	Puffin	Serin
Rough-legged Buzzard	Bee-eater	Twite
Lady Amhurst's Pheasant	Short-toed Lark	Common (ex-Mealy) Redpoll
Spotted Crake	Shore Lark	Common Rosefinch
Corn Crake	Richard's Pipit	Lapland Bunting
Crane	Tawny Pipit	Cirl Bunting
Stone-curlew	Water Pipit	Ortolan Bunting
Kentish Plover	Dipper	Little Bunting
Dotterel	Bluethroat	
Temminck's Stint	Aquatic Warbler	

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 178-179].

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, Great Northern Diver, Red-necked Grebe (inland records), Manx Shearwater, Shag (inland records), Bittern, Spoonbill, Egyptian Goose, Ruddy Shelduck, Red-crested Pochard, Hoopoe, Wryneck, Waxwing, Cetti's Warbler, Great Grey Shrike and Raven.

## GAZETTEER:

Hastings	TQ8010	Charleston Reedbed	TQ5100	Henfield Levels	TQ1914	Northpoint Pit, Rye	TQ9319	Sidlesham Ferry & Field
Brooks	TQ0314	Chelwood Vachery	TQ4330	Hollies, Ashdown	TQ4528	Old Airstrip, Ashdown	TQ4231	Sompting Brooks
Common	SU9119	Chichester Gravel Pits	SU8703	Hollingbury Camp	TQ3207	Old Lodge Reserve	TQ4630	South Stoke
Estate	TQ0506	Chichester Harbour	SU7600	Horse Eye Level	TQ6208	Pagham Harbour	SZ8596	Sovereign Hbr Marina
Farm	SU8301	Church Norton	SZ8795	Horseshoe Plantation	TV5695	Pagham Lagoon	SZ8896	Splash Point, Seaford
Fair	TQ3229	Cissbury Ring	TQ1408	Hotham Park, Bognor	SZ9399	Pannel Sewer	TQ8715	St Leonards Forest
Field	TQ5307	Climping	TQ0001	Hurstpierpoint	TQ2716	Parham Estate	TQ0614	Stakes Island
Forest	TQ0108	Cobnor Point & Farm	SU7902	Ifield Mill Pond	TQ2436	Partridge Green	TQ1919	Stansted Forest
Gravel	TQ0208	Combe Haven	TQ7609	Iping Common	SU8411	Pett Level Pools	TQ9014	Stedham Common
Gravel	TQ4332	Crows Nest, Ashdown	TQ4728	Ivy Lake, Chichester	SU8703	Petworth Park	SU9721	Streele Farm Billingshurst
Gravel	TQ0000	Cuckmere Haven	TV5197	Kingley Vale NNR	SU8110	Pevensay Bay	TQ6503	Swanbourne Lake
Gravel	TQ3704	Darwell Reservoir	TQ7121	Kneppmill Pond	TQ1521	Pevensay Bridge Level	TQ6504	The Goat, Ashdown
Gravel	TQ4314	East Guldeford Level	TQ9421	Lancing Clump	TQ1806	Pevensay Levels	TQ6605	The Mens
Gravel	TV5895	East Head	SZ7698	Langney Point	TQ6401	Pilsey Island & Sands	SU7600	The Severals
Gravel	TV5695	Ebemoec Common	SU9726	Lavington Common	SU9418	Pippingford Park	TQ4430	Thorney Deepes
Gravel	TQ6733	Elms Farm, Icklesham	TQ8815	Lewes Brooks	TQ4207	Portfield Gravel Pit	SU8805	Thorney Island
Gravel	TQ0825	Eridge Park	TQ5635	Littlehampton G.C.	TQ0101	Powdermill Reservoir	TQ7919	Tilgate Park
Gravel	TV5596	Fairlight	TQ8611	Long/Narrow Pits, Rye	TQ9217	Pulborough Brooks	TQ0516	Union Canal, E. Guldeford
Gravel	TQ4023	Fishbourne Channel	SU8303	Lullington Heath	TQ5401	Rackham Woods	TQ0414	Upper Adur Levels
Gravel	TQ8417	Fore Wood, Crowhurst	TQ7513	Lurgashall Mill Pond	SU9325	Roman Road, Ashdown	TQ4729	Wakehurst Place
Gravel	SZ8798	Forest Mere	SU8129	Manxey Levels	TQ6306	Rye Bay Wood	TQ9217	Walland Marsh
Gravel	TQ3302	Four Counties, Ashdown	TQ4631	Marline Wood	TQ7812	Rye Harbour LNR	TQ9216	Waltham Brooks
Gravel	TQ3207	Friston Forest	TV 5499	Marsh Farm, Yapton	SU9804	Scotney Court Gravel Pits	TR0119	Warnham L.N.R. & M.P.
Gravel	TQ1404	Gills Lap, Ashdown	TQ4632	Maynards Green	TQ5818	Seaford Head	TV4997	Weir Wood Reservoir
Gravel	TQ1703	Glynde Levels	TQ4609	Mill Hill, Shoreham	TQ2107	Selsey Bill	SZ8592	West Beach Littlehampton
Gravel	TQ9818	Glyne Gap, Bexhill	TQ7607	Millbrook, Ashdown	TQ4428	Selsey West Fields	SZ8394	Westdean Woods
Gravel	TQ2434	Goring Gap	TQ1001	New Salts Farm	TQ2004	Seven Sisters Country Park	TV5197	Whitbread Hollow
Gravel	SU9617	Gossops Green	TQ2535	Newhaven Harbour	TV4499	Sheepcote Valley	TQ3404	Widewater, Lancing
Gravel	TQ4629	Gravetye Lakes	TQ3634	Newhaven Tide Mills	TQ4500	Shillinglee Lake	SU9631	Willington
Gravel	TQ9118	Greenwood Clump	TQ4731	Nook Meadows, Rye	TQ9217	Shooters Bottom	TV5795	Woods Mill
Gravel	TQ1020	Halsey's Farm	SZ8697	Normans Bay	TQ6805	Shoreham Airport	TQ2005	Woolbeding Common
Gravel	TQ3821	Harbour Farm, Rye	TQ9317	North Wall Pagham Hbr	SZ8797	Shoreham Harbour	TQ2304	Worth Forest

*The grid references given are intended as a guide only to finding the sites and are not necessarily where a species was observed.*