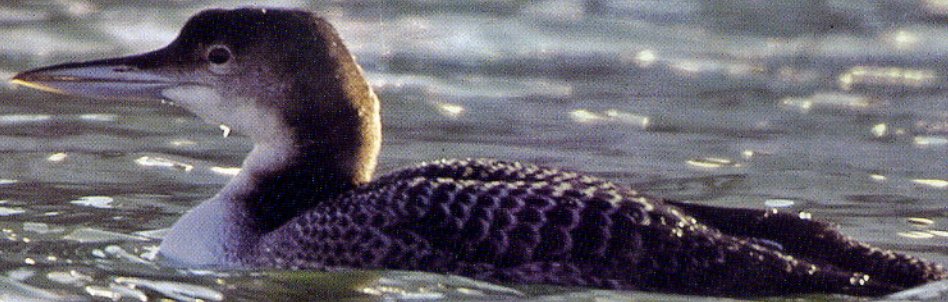


SUSSEX ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The Sussex Bird Report



No.59

2006



SUSSEX ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Number Fifty-Nine, 2006



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Sussex Bird Report 2005 amendments and corrections

Very few errors in the 2005 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.

Illustrations

John Davis: Barn Owls, Grey Herons, Honey-buzzard with Hobby, Marsh Harrier, Wigeon

John Reaney: Bar-tailed Godwit, Cattle Egret, Goldeneye, Peregrine Falcon, Sedge Warbler

Photographs

Cover photograph: *Great Northern Diver, Southwick Canal, December 2006 (Ian Barnard)*

The Photographic Editor would like to thank those photographers who submitted photographs of Sussex birds taken in 2006, 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 or the Council of the Sussex Ornithological Society.

Editorial

Nick Paul

Council has agreed that the whole of this 59th Sussex Bird Report can be printed in colour. This has enabled a number of changes to be made to the format that has been used since 1994 and I hope that readers will consider the changes to be an improvement.

There has again been an increase in the number of records received, which is now double that in 2001. Nearly half of the records have come from data recorded through the BirdTrack project, Garden BirdWatch, Birdguides, BoEE/WeBS counts, the Breeding Bird Survey in Sussex and the exchange of data with the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre.

Thanks are due to the many contributors who submitted their records for inclusion in the Report. A full list of acknowledgements to them and to the many people who took part in surveys and counts is given on pages 211-216.

The ten most commonly reported species during 2006 were (in descending order): Mallard, Moorhen, Blackbird, Wood Pigeon, Blue Tit, Carrion Crow, Robin, Chaffinch, Mute Swan and Great Cormorant.

Number/Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Submitting records	472	507	590	796	632
Records received	60,031	59,040	65,730	87,586	96,595
Species recorded	261	258	262	263	253
Birds ringed	45,650	52,449	57,538	58,739	54,655
Species ringed	104	113	119	124	108
Species on county list	386	388	389	389	388

The species accounts were written by a large team of authors, namely **CJR Barfield, IT Barnard, S Bayley, VP Bentley, C Brooks, W Coleman, JR Cowser, H Crabtree, DE Crawley, J Curson, J Evans, P Everitt, RJ Fairbank, D Green, AC Gutteridge, D Harper, JA Hobson, CA Holt, A House, DH Howey, ME Kalaher, G Kennett, R Knight, SH Linington, GA Metcalf, O Mitchell, JA Newnham, TW Parmenter, PN Paul, RT Pepper, A Perry, A Podmore, J Pryor, CJ Reay, GCM Roberts, A Thomas, AB Watson, JA Whitman, S Whittaker and TJ Wilson**. The initials at the end of each species account identify the writer to whom my sincere thanks are extended.

Thanks are also due to **David Cooper, Paul James, Phil Jones, Leonard Manns, Christian Melgar, Adrian Thomas and Barry Yates** who read through the species accounts and suggested a number of improvements. As a result, some of the draft accounts have been altered and edited to reflect the suggestions made and to summarise the records in a more accessible form for future researchers. I trust that this action will not have offended any of the authors but, if it has done so, I offer my sincere apologies.

In addition to those already mentioned, special thanks go to **Tony Cocks** for editing the scientific papers, **Jon Curson** for writing the Review of the Year, **Ian Barnard** for selecting the photographs for inclusion in the Report, **John Hobson** for organising the writing (and for the assembly) of the Systematic List, **John Newnham** for organising the computerisation of all the records, **Robert Yarham** for developing the new layout of the Report and **Helen Crabtree** for typesetting the Report.

Review of 2006

Jon Curson

As in previous years, this review of 2006 is a chronological summary, month by month, of the year's weather and significant birds, including high counts of various species, first and last arrival/ departure dates and other interesting and unusual records. A total of 253 species was recorded in the county, which is considerably less than the 263 recorded last year and reflects what many observers felt was a rather quiet autumn in particular. The totals recorded since 1996 still range between 250 and 269 (in 2000).

Considerably fewer rare and scarce species were found than in 2005. However, a **Desert Wheatear** at Cooden Beach in early November was only the 6th record for the county and a **Marsh Sandpiper** at Pagham Hbr in the early autumn was also welcome. A **Caspian Gull** at Pagham Hbr was the only record received all year but this race of Yellow-legged Gull (which some regard as a potential 'split') is almost certainly still under-recorded in the county. A flock of eight **Cattle Egrets** at Piddinghoe for several months at the beginning of the year was unprecedented in Sussex and equalled the largest flock ever recorded in Britain. A **Little Bittern** in a series of Hove and Southwick gardens during the spring was sadly only enjoyed by a few lucky observers. An adult **Laughing Gull** flew past Beachy Head in April and was later seen at Filsham; in July a first-summer bird turned up at Arlington Res and stayed for several days before moving to nearby Barcombe Res. A **Golden Oriole** at Waltham Brooks was very early and unusually visible as there were no leaves on most of the trees! Also unusually 'twitchable' was an **Alpine Swift** at Arlington Res for almost a whole afternoon in early May. However, the highlight of the year may have been the unprecedented influx of **European Storm-petrels** in May, with perhaps 400 birds involved; nothing like this has ever been recorded before and many people saw this species in the county for the first time.

Sandwich Terns and **Mediterranean Gulls** again broke breeding records and the number of breeding **Firecrests** also increased significantly. **Little Egrets** and **Ravens** continued to consolidate their breeding status in the county. **Red Kites** also continued to increase with more than 60 different birds being seen in 25 or more localities through the year, with the now traditional influx in May and June. On the other hand 137 **Pomarine Skuas** during the spring was down on last year's 186 and there were just two scarce 'Phyllose' (both **Yellow-browed Warblers**). Arrival dates were broken by the earliest ever **Little Tern** (by one day!), the earliest autumn date for a **Red-necked Grebe** for over 100 years and the latest ever **Rosate Tern**.

Photographs of some of the birds listed in this review can be found on Ian Barnard's Birds of Sussex web-site www.thebirdsofsussex.co.uk, while monthly summaries of the year's weather can be found at www.bbc.co.uk/weather/ukweather.

January

January was mostly a cold dry month with an anticyclonic air flow from the continent blocking the progression of Atlantic fronts into eastern England. The first few days were more changeable with some light rain and the period 17th to 19th was noticeably warmer and windier with a south-westerly airflow, but still mostly dry; Bognor Regis recorded a temperature of 13.7°C during this time.

Scarce and unusual birds remaining from 2005 included the **Cattle Egret** at Pagham Hbr (until at least mid-March), the **Long-tailed Duck** at Barcombe Res (until 1 May!), the wintering

Lesser Whitethroat at Burgess Hill and a **Black Redstart** at Seaford. On the 1st there was a **Red-necked Grebe** at St Leonards and three flew past Brighton Marina. The following day a flock of eight **Cattle Egrets** appeared at Piddinghoe where they remained until 1 Apr; this was the largest flock in Britain since 1992 (when there were eight in Hertfordshire). Also on the 2nd there was another **Red-necked Grebe** (at Selsey Bill), a **Sandwich Tern** past Brighton Marina and up to six **Short-eared Owls** at Rodmell. On the 5th another **Cattle Egret** joined the first at Pagham Hbr, with a third on the 9th. At least two of them remained until 6 Apr. On the 6th another **Red-necked Grebe** was seen, this time at Thorney Island, and there were at least four **Sandwich Terns** in Chichester Hbr (with birds being recorded there regularly in January and February). The next day at least five **Mealy Redpolls** were discovered among a flock of 200 **Lesser Redpolls** at Crouch Fm near Burton MP (staying until 2 Apr). Nine **Smew** at Rye Hbr was the high count at this regular wintering site.

On the 9th a flock of 25 **Wood Larks** was at North Marden and there were four **Waxwings** at Rye GC. It was quite a good winter for **Red-necked Grebes** and on the 13th another one was seen, at Glyne Gap. On the same day there was a **Bean Goose** at Weir Wood Res (probably of race *fabalis*) and two **Sandwich Terns** flew west past Selsey Bill. On the 14th a **Pink-footed Goose** was at Lewes Brooks and the following day up to 14 **Snow Buntings** were at Camber Sands, being seen regularly until at least 4 Feb. An **Arctic Skua** off Church Norton on the 17th was an unusual winter record and on the 19th four **Long-tailed Duck** were found in Chichester Hbr, staying until 28 Mar. On the 21st there were two **Snow Buntings** at Bostall Hill (Alciston) which were seen there regularly until 16 Feb. There was a high count of nine **Water Pipits** at Sidlesham SF on the 28th and a single bird at Bewl Water the following day. Also on the 29th a **Scandinavian Herring Gull** was at Pett Pools.

February

February was also a colder than average month (nationally it was the coldest February for 10 years). The anticyclonic weather from January lasted through the first part of the month but then there was a spell of wet and windy weather from the Atlantic during the middle part, with south-westerly gales on the 15th and 16th. The final third was dominated again by easterly winds from the continent, bringing occasional snow showers.

The month kicked off with further **Red-necked Grebes** at Church Norton and Scotney Court GP on the 1st. A pair of **Red-crested Pochards** arrived at Rye Hbr and stayed for several days; they were joined by a third bird on the 12th. The following day there were 49 **Hawfinches** at West Dean Woods; this was a high count in what was an exceptional year for this species and it is thought that at least some of the birds may have been of continental origin. On the 4th another **Scandinavian Herring Gull** was identified at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) while there was a **Scandinavian Rock Pipit** at Shoreham Hbr and the first **Great Skua** of the year flew west past Birling Gap. It was quite a quiet month bird-wise but on the 12th a **Water Pipit** was at Barcombe Res; it was also seen on 12 Mar and may have been the same bird that was seen in December 2005. The next day a **Red-necked Grebe** was at Darwell Res, a **Black Brant** at Pagham Hbr and a **Eurasian Bittern** at Arundel WWT, while on the 16th there was a **Mealy Redpoll** at Bewl Water. On the 17th 70 **White-fronted Geese** at Pevensy Levels was a high count of the flock that was present for much of the month and on the 26th three **Smew** east past Birling Gap provided the first record of this species at this site.

March

March was mostly cold and dry, with easterly winds and wintry showers (as February had been), but turned milder during the final week as the winds switched to the south-west.

On the 1st a further **Red-necked Grebe** flew east past Telscombe Cliffs and there were four more seen on seawatches during the month at various coastal localities. On the 4th two **Eurasian Bitterns** were seen at Burton MP, while on the following day there was a **Scandinavian Rock Pipit** at Thorney Island and the last four **Bewick's Swans** of the spring were seen in the Arun Valley. On the 7th a **Black Redstart** was on Southwick Beach and two days later another **Scandinavian Rock Pipit** was at Shoreham Hbr. On the 13th 220 **White-fronted Geese** at Scotney Court GP was the high count of the first winter period and on the same day there was a large movement of **Dark-bellied Brent Geese** with 4100 east past Birling Gap (Beachy Head) and 4600 east past Climping. Two **Garganey** east at Birling Gap were the first of the year. The following day there were 11 **Greater Scaup** at Scotney Court GP and 25 **Common Eider** flew east past Birling Gap. On the 15th there was a **Mealy Redpoll** in Lewes which was also seen the following day and the first **Northern Wheatears** arrived at Ferring, Goring and Brighton.

On the 16th two **Common Cranes** were found at Horse Eye Level. Also, 27 **Jack Snipe** at Thorney Deepes was the high count of the year and the highest number recorded at this locality for at least three years, while 22 **Hawfinches** at Burgess Hill was highly unusual, with smaller numbers being reported at this site on several other days. On the 19th the first **Arctic Skua** of the year flew past Seaford and on the 21st the first **Yellow Wagtail** was seen at Stanmer Park (Brighton). The following day there were three **Garganey** at Southease. On the 24th there was a **Black-necked** and a **Slavonian Grebe** at Rye Hbr, 28 **Common Eider** flew east past Splash Point (Seaford) and the first **Barn Swallows** of the year were at Climping Beach and Goodwood. The following day the first **Sand Martin** was at Chichester GP and on the 26th the first **Common Tern** of the year was at Selsey Bill, the first **House Martin** was at Southwater and there was another **Scandinavian Rock Pipit** at Shoreham Hbr. On the 28th there was a major surprise in the form of a **Little Bittern** which frequented garden ponds in Hove and Southwick, staying until 5 May. Also the first **Willow Warbler** arrived at Beeding Brooks. On the 29th the first **Osprey** of the year flew north over Sompting, the first **Common Cuckoos** arrived at Ardingly Res and Bewl Water and the first **Common Nightingale** arrived at Arlington. Finally, the first **Little Ringed Plover** of the year was at Sidlesham Ferry on the 30th.

April

April was a changeable, unsettled month with Atlantic depressions across northern England moving south and bringing sleet and snow as well as frequent rain to the county. This was interspersed with clearer and warmer anticyclonic weather, with Herstonceux recording a temperature of 19.7°C on the 21st.

On the 1st a **Little Tern** at Church Norton was the earliest ever in the county by a single day and the first two of 15 spring **Ring Ouzels** were at Sidlesham and Brighton Wild Park. Also the first **Sedge Warbler** arrived at Thorney Deepes. On the 2nd the first **Manx Shearwater** of the year flew past Splash Point (Seaford), the first **Common Redstarts** were seen at Beachy Head and Climping Beach and the first **Common Whitethroats** arrived at Pannel Valley NR and Angmering. The following day the first **Tree Pipit** arrived at Heyshott Common and on the 6th more new arrivals included **Reed Warbler** at Warnham LNR and **Garden Warbler** at Barcombe Res, while there was yet another **Red-necked Grebe** at Worthing. On the 7th there was a **Mealy Redpoll** at Ashdown Forest and the first **Hobby** of the year was at Nutley. On the 9th a very early **Common Swift** was at Heyshott and the following day the first **Wood Warbler** was at Old Lodge (Ashdown Forest). On the 12th the first **Arctic Tern** of the year was at Church Norton.

On the 14th the 165 **Mediterranean Gulls** at Rye Hbr set a new county record and the eighth year in a row that the record has been broken! The following day there were eight **Black-necked Grebes** at Brighton Marina (which was the high count of year), another **Mealy Redpoll** at Ashdown Forest, the first **Whinchat** at Seaford Head and the first **Grasshopper Warbler** at Waltham Brooks. On the 16th the first eight **Black Terns** flew past Selsey Bill and on the 17th an unusually showy male **Golden Oriole** began a three-day stay at Waltham Brooks. Also on the 17th the first migrant **Lesser Whitethroat** was at Pagham Hbr, the only spring **Wryneck** was at Newtimber Hill, the first of five spring **Pied Flycatchers** was at Ashdown Forest, two **Red-necked Grebes** flew east past both Splash Point and Birling Gap (Beachy Head) and there were two **Black-necked Grebes** at Arlington Res. The following day a **Cattle Egret** was found at Pett Level and on the 19th an adult summer **Laughing Gull** flew past Birling Gap, with presumably the same bird at Filsham on the 21st. On the 20th a **Serin** was singing at Hodcombe (Beachy Head). On the 21st the first two **Pomarine Skuas** flew past Telscombe Cliffs and the next day there was a **Woodchat Shrike** at Pett Level which equalled the earliest ever recorded in the county. Also on the 22nd the first **Roseate Terns** of the year were recorded at Brighton Marina. On the 26th a **Spoonbill** arrived at Pagham Hbr (staying until 2 May) and on the next day two **Golden Pheasants** at Catsfield was the only record of this species during the year. On the 28th there was a **Serin** at Selsey Bill and a **Wood Sandpiper** at Pulborough Brooks, which was joined by another the following day. Two **Little Stints** at Rye Hbr on the 29th was the only spring record of this species and the month ended with the last **Slavonian Grebe** of the spring past Brighton Marina, the last **Black-necked Grebe** at Rye Hbr and the first **Spotted Flycatcher** at Beachy Head, all on the 30th.

May

May was a very wet month with above average temperatures in the first half but turning noticeably cooler towards the end. Sunshine was below average and there were unseasonal strong gales in the Channel on the 19th.

The month began with an **Alpine Swift** at Arlington Res which showed well for most of the afternoon and evening, although it disappeared for a while in mid-afternoon. There were also **Spoonbills** at Thorney Deepes (until 7th) and one at Pulborough Brooks (until 17 Jun) was joined by two more on the 26th to 28th. On the 2nd a **Long-tailed Skua** flew east past Splash Point (Seaford) and the 18 **Black-throated Divers** east past Birling Gap (Beachy Head) was the peak daily count in a rather poor spring for this species. There was also a **Kentish Plover** on Worthing Beach. On the following day another **Serin** was singing at Hodcombe (Beachy Head), four **Roseate Terns** flew east past Selsey Bill (plus one two days later) and a late **Redwing** was at Stedham Common. On the 4th 31 **Pomarine Skuas** east past Selsey Bill was the high count of the spring; this total included a flock of 17 that was tracked along the coast at least as far as Splash Point. Also on the 4th the first **Nightjar** arrived at East Dean (West Sussex). A **Curlew Sandpiper** at Chichester Hbr on the 5th was the only one of the spring and two days later a **Black Kite** was seen at Beachy Head. On the 8th a remarkable count of 18 **Dotterel** was made at Balsdean, the largest trip in the county for a century. A **Spoonbill** over Rackham on the 9th was probably the long-staying Pulborough bird. Another **Spoonbill** was at Pannel Valley NR on the 11th.

On the 12th three more **Dotterel** arrived at Ditchling Beacon for a four-day stay where they were widely admired, and a **Roseate Tern** flew east past Brighton Marina. The following day the last **Hen Harrier** of the spring was at Lower Standean and the 13 **Hobbies** at Pulborough Brooks was the high count of the year. On the 14th a second **Long-tailed Skua** flew past Splash Point and was also seen at Birling Gap 15 minutes later. A summer-plumaged **Great Northern Diver** past Birling Gap was the last of the spring and a **Serin** was singing at Selsey Bill. On the 16th a **Spoonbill** at Rye Hbr may have been the bird that was at Pannel Valley NR a week earlier and a

very late **Merlin** at Ashdown Forest on the 18th was the last of the spring.

One of the highlights of the year began on the 20th with an unprecedented influx of **European Storm-petrels**; among others seen there were 16 at Selsey Bill and 10 at Brighton Marina, mostly moving west. This influx continued until the 30th with birds being seen as far east as Birling Gap, mostly relocating west and there were perhaps 400 birds involved. A particularly large movement occurred on the 24th with up to 105 west past Brighton Marina and eight west and four east past Birling Gap. There were good numbers of **Manx Shearwaters** at this time, including counts of 39 west past Birling Gap and 35 west past Splash Point (both on 21st). On the 21st the third **Long-tailed Skua** of the spring flew east past Brighton Marina and a **Balearic Shearwater** past Selsey Bill was the first record in a good year for this species in the county. On the following day two further **Balearic Shearwaters** flew past Brighton Marina. A **Spoonbill** was at Pett Level on the 27th (with it or other birds also seen on 29th and 31st).

June

June was mostly a very warm, dry and sunny month, in complete contrast to May, with below average rainfall and temperatures and sunshine considerably above the seasonal norm.

Two **Roseate Terns** were at Rye Hbr on the 1st and continued to be seen regularly throughout the month. Another **Roseate Tern** at Weir Wood Res the following day was only the second inland record for the county. On the 3rd two **Common Quail** were heard singing near Horseshoe Plantation (Beachy Head). A quiet period followed before three more **Common Quail** were heard singing at Ditchling Beacon on the 11th. On the 14th seven **Red Kites** flew west over Brighton and the next day two **Spoonbills** were at Paghham Hbr. On the 17th a **Marsh Warbler** was trapped at a site in the east of the county and another quiet period followed before at least four **Common Quail** were heard singing at Steyning Round Hill on the 26th and then regularly until 22 Jul.

As usual, the county's breeding birds experienced mixed fortunes. At least 17 pairs of **Little Egret** bred at four different sites with one site having ten nests. A pair of **Egyptian Geese** bred at Petworth Park raising at least one gosling, only the second time the species has bred in Sussex. A pair of **Garganey** bred at Pannel Valley NR raising two young; pairs of this duck were also present at Rye Hbr and Pulborough Brooks but breeding was not confirmed. Three pairs of **Honey-buzzards** bred successfully, each raising two young; another pair failed when the female died and a fifth pair possibly bred. The **Red Kites** bred at the same location as last year raising two young and another pair attempted breeding but failed at the egg stage. No **Goshawks** were reported breeding this year and indeed there was only one record of this species all year, although it is probably still resident in the county in small numbers. The **Common Buzzard** population continued to increase and is now approaching 250 pairs. A total of 17 pairs of **Peregrine** bred successfully, raising a total of 43 young. Another pair was unsuccessful and several others were seen holding territory; the total county population is now thought to be at least 23 pairs and appears to have stabilised, the number of successful pairs and young raised both being just one more than last year.

It appears that **Grey Partridges** continue to decline and breeding was confirmed from only four sites this year. Twenty six pairs of **Avocet** bred and 20 pairs at the main site produced 19 young, although 6 pairs at a second site produced only a single fledged youngster. **Little Ringed Plovers** bred at three sites and probably also at another two. At one site a pair raised two young while another pair was unsuccessful, but there was no information on success or otherwise at the other two sites.

Thirty six pairs of **Ringed Plover** bred successfully, just two more than last year's 25-year low. At least 30 of these were at Rye Hbr but chick survival was again poor. At least 64 pairs of **Northern Lapwing** bred in the county, including 33 at Rye Hbr, 15 in the Pannel Valley and 24 at Pevensey Levels. An unrecorded number at Pulborough Brooks raised 12 young and thus the

breeding effort was comparable to the previous year. A total of 35 pairs of **Oystercatcher** bred at six sites, including 24 pairs at Rye Hbr, although nesting success is not known. **Redshank** bred or attempted to breed at ten sites; at Rye Hbr 22 pairs on the Beach Reserve was nearly double last year's total, and there were also three pairs at Castle Water. In Chichester Hbr there were 14 pairs at Thorney Deepes and two in the Pilsey area. Elsewhere, six pairs raised at least four young at Pulborough Brooks and there were five pairs on Horseye Level (Pevensey) plus two pairs on Steyning Levels which raised at least two young. Overall breeding success was considered to have been slightly higher than last year.

An astonishing 75 pairs of **Mediterranean Gull** bred at Rye Hbr raising 45 young. This doubled last year's total of 37 pairs but the productivity was about the same due to poorer fledging success this year. At least four pairs of **Great Black-backed Gull** nested at three sites raising a total of eight young; this is down from last year but there were no reports from Brighton where five pairs were reported breeding last year. Some 175 pairs of **Common Tern** raised over 200 chicks on the flat beach at Rye Hbr, but 10 pairs at Castle Water were unsuccessful. The 167 pairs in the Pannel Valley also had a successful year, while over 20 pairs bred at Chichester GP. Inland, two pairs raised three young each at Warnham LNR and three young were raised at Weir Wood Res. More than 500 pairs of **Sandwich Tern** nesting at Rye Hbr probably raised more than 500 young. This is the highest number ever recorded breeding in Sussex and more than double the number breeding there last year. Twenty one pairs of **Little Tern** nested at Rye Hbr producing 13 young but it is thought that all were predated before they could leave the nesting area.

Barn Owls fared badly this year due to a combination of a vole crash and bad weather in May and June. There were 92 breeding attempts, little more than half last year's number, and many failed probably due to particularly inclement weather in early May as well as a lack of food due to much lower vole numbers than last year. **Long-eared Owls** bred at one site in the west of the county where two juveniles were seen and territorial behaviour was observed at another six sites. As last year, **Lesser-spotted Woodpeckers** were reported as probably breeding at six sites, with birds seen in suitable habitat at a further ten. At least it has not declined further but there is no evidence of any increase in numbers or range. Seventy four pairs of **Wren** bred at Brighton Wild Park, well down on the 89 pairs of last year and the 102 of 2004. The only records of breeding activity for **Black Redstart** were a singing male at a coastal site and two in Brighton. A total of 55 pairs of **Common Redstart** bred, which is a welcome increase on the 46-47 pairs breeding last year. Some 50-60 pairs of **Cetti's Warbler** bred in the county, including 12 pairs at Thorney Deepes which raised 48-50 young. **Grasshopper Warblers** were recorded reeling in suitable habitat at five sites. Just one pair of **Wood Warblers** bred, though two others held territory, both in the north-west of the county. This is a further decline from the eight singing males last year and no breeding or territorial behaviour was reported from the Ashdown Forest.

A total of 64 territorial **Firecrests** were recorded, including 49 at West Dean Woods, a significant increase on last year's total of 23. The increase in **Willow Tit** numbers in the west of the county last year appears to have been reversed with just one pair confirmed as breeding and another pair probably doing so. This species seems to be in dire straits in Sussex, although the precise reasons are still unclear. At least four pairs of **Raven** reared at least 12 young and this species continues to do well in the county. **Tree Sparrows** made a welcome return to Pevensey Levels, where up to 11 pairs are thought to have bred. In addition at least nine pairs nested in boxes in the Brede Valley (a similar number to last year), but none bred at Rye Hbr this year.

July

July was exceptionally warm with many areas having their warmest July ever and Wisley (in Surrey) setting a new UK record with a temperature of 36.5°C on the 19th. Sunshine was also way above average and, needless to say, rainfall was way below the July average, though there were

heavy thundery showers in some areas on the 4th.

The month started quietly with the **Common Quail** at Steyning Round Hill being the main highlight in the first few days. On the 5th another **Marsh Warbler** was trapped at a site in the east of the county, with a third trapped at the same site on the 10th. The following day a first-year **Laughing Gull** was found at Arlington Res; generally frequenting the dam end, it stayed until the 23rd, providing many observers who missed the bird at Ovingdean last autumn with their first chance to see this species in the county. It was later relocated at Barcombe Res on 29th and 30th. On the 18th a fourth **Marsh Warbler** was trapped at a site in the east of the county and on the 22nd a female **Montagu's Harrier** was seen near Falmer. On the 24th a **Balearic Shearwater** was photographed off Littlehampton. On the 26th a count of 700 **Common Scoter** in Rye Bay was the peak summer count and quite unusual for the time of year. On the 28th three **Wood Sandpipers** at Pett Level was the high count of the autumn. On the following day a **Marsh Sandpiper** was discovered at Pagham Hbr, staying until 5 Aug, and there was a **Spoonbill** nearby at Sidlesham Ferry. Also on the 29th two **Balearic Shearwaters** passed Brighton Marina.

August

August was perhaps a disappointment in that the July heatwave did not last long into the month. It was an unsettled month with some heavy, thundery downpours especially in the second and third weeks. There were reports of 10 to 20 mm of rain per hour in places during the 22nd to the 24th and Bognor Regis logged 47.3 mm of rain on the 24th.

A **Common Scoter** at Weir Wood Res on the 1st was the only inland record of the year for this species. Things were fairly quiet until the 6th when a male **Red-backed Shrike** took up residence at Waltham Brooks, staying until the 15th, and there was a juvenile **Montagu's Harrier** at Beachy Head. A ringtail **Hen Harrier** at Rye Hbr on the 10th was the first of the autumn. On the 13th a **Red-necked Grebe** at Bewl Water was not only the first of the autumn but also the earliest record since 1866. A **Balearic Shearwater** flew west past Selsey Bill on the 13th followed by a number of records of this species from Brighton Marina with a single on the 19th, two on the 20th and on the 21st and a single on the 28th. On the 15th there was a **Bittern** at Thorney Deepes and a **Wryneck** at Pannel Valley NR (which remained until the 21st). On the 18th a **Spotted Crake** was seen at Udimore, staying until the 25th, and an **Aquatic Warbler** was trapped near Pett Level. The following day there was a **Curlew Sandpiper** inland at Arlington Res. The last **Wood Warbler** of the year was at Pannel Valley NR on the 23rd and the following day a **Wryneck** was in Southwick. On the 27th the first **Black-necked Grebe** of the autumn was at Arlington Res and there was a **Spoonbill** and the only **Caspian Gull** of the year at Pagham Hbr. On the 29th a **Night Heron** arrived at Weir Wood Res for a lengthy stay, being seen last on 28 Sep. On the penultimate day of the month there was a rather elusive **Icterine Warbler** at Beachy Head, a **Red-backed Shrike** at Sheepcote Valley and two **Wrynecks** at Climping Beach (which stayed until 1 Sep).

September

September was another exceptionally warm month, again breaking September temperature records in many areas. High pressure dominated until the last week when Atlantic depressions broke through and the weather became much more unsettled.

The month began with the first **Merlin** of the autumn at Hove on the 1st and on the 2nd two **Sooty Shearwaters** flew east at Brighton Marina as well as two **Balearic Shearwaters** east and west. On the 3rd a **Balearic Shearwater** passed Birling Gap (Beachy Head). On the 9th a fifth **Marsh Warbler** was trapped at a site in the east of the county and there were 100 **Yellow-legged Gulls** at Pagham Hbr. On the 10th a **Great White Egret** at Cow Gap (Beachy Head) was also

seen the following day and an unprecedented September count of 26 **Firecrests** was made at the same site. The last **Common Nightingale** of the year was at Sidlesham Ferry. On the 12th an **Aquatic Warbler** was trapped near Pett Level and 17 **Balearic Shearwaters** passed Brighton Marina, 12 of which were in one group. On the 13th a juvenile **Red-backed Shrike** arrived at Rye Hbr (staying until the following day) and the last **Cuckoo** was at Weir Wood Res. The following day there was a **Kentish Plover** at Pagham Hbr, a **Richard's Pipit** at Selsey West Fields, a **Red-backed Shrike** at Thorney Deeps (until at least 23rd) and 11 **Curlew Sandpipers** at Pagham Hbr, which was the high count of the autumn.

On the 15th the first 16 **Dark-bellied Brent Geese** arrived back at Pagham Hbr. On the 16th a **Wryneck** arrived at Church Norton, staying for the following two days and the next day one or more further **Wrynecks** were found at Beachy Head, where it/ they were seen regularly until the 29th. On the 18th the first **Slavonian Grebe** of the autumn was at Glyne Gap, a **Red-crested Pochard** was at Rye Hbr (until the 23rd) and a **Curlew Sandpiper** was seen inland at Pulborough Brooks (until the 22nd).

On the 21st the only **Temminck's Stint** of the year was at Rye Hbr and remained until the following day. Also on the 21st two **Scandinavian Herring Gull** were on the R Adur at Shoreham and an adult **Roseate Tern** flew west past Selsey Bill. On the following day a **Pectoral Sandpiper** was found at Weir Wood Res, staying until 1 Oct and often feeding near the **Night Heron** in the evenings. On the 24th a sixth **Marsh Warbler** was trapped at a site in the east of the county and there was a **Wryneck** at Pulborough Brooks. The next day a **Spoonbill** arrived at Pett Level for a two-day stay and the last **Nightjar** was at Pannel Valley NR. On the 26th 16 **Little Stints** at Rye Hbr was the high count of the autumn in a good year for this species at this locality and there were at least 100 **Mediterranean Gulls** at Selsey West Fields. The following day there was a **Wryneck** at Rye Hbr and on the 28th five **Little Ringed Plovers** at Rye Hbr were the last of the year. On the 29th a **Sooty Shearwater** flew east past Selsey Bill (and there was one west the following day). Also on this day the last **Honey-buzzard** of the year was at Beachy Head and the first **Redwing** of the autumn was at Portslade. September closed with **Red-backed Shrikes** at Shooters Bottom (Beachy Head) and Whitehawk Hill (the latter also seen the following day) and one or more **Wrynecks** at The Severals (Church Norton) until 7 Oct.

October

October was a warm month with above average temperatures but it was also notably wet with rainfall above the average and Atlantic depressions brought gales at times.

On the 1st there was a large movement of **Sooty Shearwater** with three west at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head), 31 west at Brighton Marina and 43 west at Selsey Bill. Also on the 1st a **Balearic Shearwater** flew east past Selsey Bill and there were five at Brighton Marina. On the next day a juvenile **Sabine's Gull** flew past Selsey Bill and there was a **Wryneck** at Durrington. On the 3rd the last two **Pied Flycatchers** were seen in Hove and two days later a first-winter **Roseate Tern** at Church Norton was the latest ever recorded in the county by five days. On the 7th a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** was found at Rye Hbr, staying until the 24th and being admired by many during its stay. On the 8th a **Corn Crake** was seen by two fortunate observers at Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) and there were the last sightings of the year of **Garganey** at Bewl Water, **Little Tern** at Chichester Hbr and **Sand Martin** at Beachy Head. The next day the last **Spotted Flycatcher** was at Lavington and the first **Black-throated Diver** of the autumn past Selsey Bill. On the 10th the last **Manx Shearwater** of the year flew east past Telscombe Cliffs and a **Red-crested Pochard** was seen at Rye Hbr (also being seen on 31 Oct and 30 Nov). The next day the last **Common Whitethroat** was at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) and the day after that a **Spoonbill** was at Thorney Deeps and the first three **Fieldfares** of the autumn at East Head (Chichester Hbr).

Departures of summer migrants continued in the middle of the month with the last **Garden Warbler** at Beachy Head on the 13th, the last **Grasshopper Warblers** at Cow Gap (Beachy Head) and Pannel Valley NR, the last **Sedge Warbler** at Pannel Valley NR on the 15th and the last **Tree Pipit** at Ashdown Forest on the 17th. On the 19th a **Sooty Shearwater** flew east past Brighton Marina and the following day there was a **Red-throated Diver** inland at Barcombe Res. A **Spoonbill** at Pagham Hbr on the 22nd was the last of the year and the next day a **Yellow-browed Warbler** was at Shepcote Valley with probably the same bird being seen later at Ovingdean Churchyard. Astonishingly, after last year's bonanza, this was one of only two unusual 'Phylloscus' seen in the county all year (the other was also a Yellow-browed seen in November). A flock of 16 **Yellow Wagtails** at Sidlesham Ferry, also on the 23rd, was the last of the year. On the 25th a juvenile **Rose-coloured Starling** was at Felpham and two days later the last two **Whinchats** of the year were at Winchelsea Beach. A **Water Pipit** at Barcombe Res on the 28th stayed until 17 Dec and on the same day the last **Black Tern** was at Shoreham Hbr, remaining there until the 31st, and the last **Reed Warbler** was at Pannel Valley NR. On the 29th a rather late **Willow Warbler** at Shoreham was also the last of the year and the month closed with the last **Hobby** near Shoreham on the 30th and the last **Common Redstart** at Sidlesham Ferry on the 31st.

November

November was a very warm month, with temperatures generally well above the average, and also rather wet with above average rainfall across most areas.

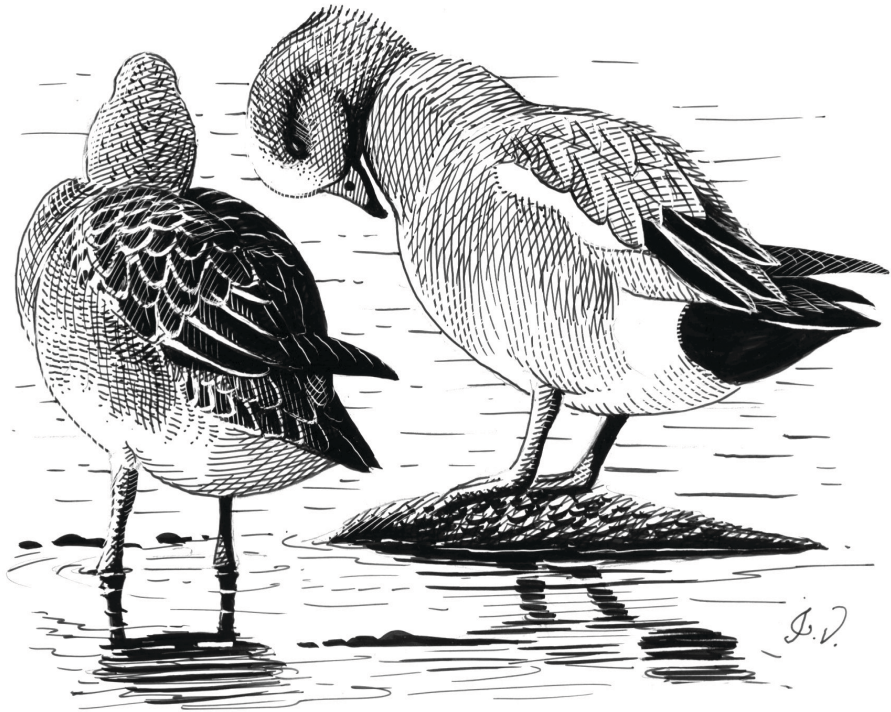
A female **Desert Wheatear** was found at Cooden Beach on the 1st; this was the sixth for Sussex and one of the star attractions of the year during its four-day stay. The following day a juvenile **Sabine's Gull** flew east past Selsey Bill and a **Hooded Crow** flew in from the sea at Beachy Head. On the same day there were six **Little Auks** off Worthing. On the 3rd further **Little Auks** were reported at Splash Point (Seaford) and Brighton Marina (where there were two or three). On the 4th a **Black Brant** returned to West Wittering with another seen at Pagham Hbr on the 5th (both birds remaining until the end of the year). **Red-necked Grebes** seen at Ferring, Goring and Worthing on the 4th were probably the same bird and there was also one in Chichester Hbr. Also on the 4th the last **Ospreys** of the year were at Udimore and Chichester Hbr and the last **House Martin** was at Brighton Wild Park; there was also a **Scandinavian Rock Pipit** at Shoreham Hbr which was seen again on the 12th. On the 6th the last **Arctic Tern** was at Brighton Marina and there was also a **Little Auk** there (remaining until the 12th). Three **Greater Scaup** at Arlington Res on the 7th was an unusual inland record and on the 8th a very late **Common Swift** at Climping was the last of the year, with the last **Lesser Whitethroat** of the year seen at Pannel Valley NR. Late departures of migrants continued through the remainder of the month with the last **Barn Swallow** at Rye Hbr on the 9th, the last **Northern Wheatear** at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 19th, the last **Common Tern** at Newhaven Tide Mills and last **Ring Ouzel** at Pulborough Brooks (both on the 25th) and the last **Arctic Skua** east past Selsey Bill on the 26th. Meanwhile, five **Great Northern Divers** off Selsey Bill on the 15th were the first of the second winter period and on the 17th three **Sooty Shearwaters** flew west past both Brighton Marina and Selsey Bill. On the 24th a **Yellow-browed Warbler** in a Worthing garden was also seen the following day and was only the second of the autumn.

December

December was generally an unsettled and mild month with some heavy, thundery downpours especially in the second and third weeks.

A **Leach's Storm-petrel** flew west at Brighton Marina on the 3rd with a further five west on

the 5th and three west on the 7th. On the 4th there were two **Water Pipits** at Thorney Deepes and the following day the first three **Bewick's Swans** of the second winter period were at Pulborough Brooks. On the 8th a **Great Northern Diver** was found at Southwick Canal; it remained there into 2007 and was joined by a second bird from the 11th to the 13th. Also on the 5th a **Grey Phalarope** was at Climping. Four days later another **Grey Phalarope** west past Selsey Bill was perhaps the Climping bird. On the 11th an adult **Iceland Gull** flew over Brighton Marina and on the 15th a **Red-throated Diver** was inland at Arlington Res. Two days later a **Slavonian Grebe** at Bewl Water was the only inland sighting of this species during the year, there was a **Red-necked Grebe** at Worthing and the last **Great Skua** of the year flew west past Tescombe. On the 19th a **Red-crested Pochard** was at Bewl Water and on the 26th there was a **Water Pipit** at Sidlesham SF. The end of December was as relatively quiet as the rest of the month had been, with end-of-year highlights being a **Greater Scaup** inland at Weir Wood Res on the 28th, 18 **Tundra Bean Geese** near Amberley on the 29th (the largest flock in the county for 20 years), a **Red-necked Grebe** at Brighton Marina on the 30th and a first-winter **Iceland Gull** in the gull roost at Arlington Res on the 31st.



Classified Records for 2006

This list covers all species in Categories A and C of the BOU checklist with records of Category D species listed separately. An index to all the Category A, C and D species included in the Systematic List is given on pages 300-303.

The Category A and C species are again listed in the new order announced by the BOU in October 2002 and include the further minor adjustments made by the BOU since that date. There have still been no corresponding changes to Euring Numbers and Council has decided that their use in the Annual Bird Report should now be discontinued.

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

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

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	20	13	37	115	203	74	80	38	66	62	44	43
Climping Beach	0	0	40	43	6	17	3	14	19	25	21	2
Worthing Beach	12	21	24	32	61	12	14	10	18	21	23	16
Telscombe Cliffs	20	38	32	31	28	15	19	16	8	15	18	14
Splash Point (Seaford)	3	13	34	67	105	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Beachy Head	4	7	31	42	68	0	0	0	0	3	0	0

Many tables which are included in the accounts for wetland species refer to the monthly WeBS counts. These are undertaken on a fixed date each month during the winter, and sometimes during the summer months as well. During 2006 the recommended dates were: 15 Jan, 12 Feb, 12 Mar, 9 Apr, 14 May, 11 Jun, 16 Jul, 13 Aug, 17 Sep, 8 Oct, 19 Nov and 17 Dec.

In the WeBS tables, "nc" signifies that the site was not visited, while "-" indicates that the site was visited but none of that species was seen. 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. Prior to 1996 the sites displayed in these tables were randomly selected, invariably choosing sites with the highest counts. Between 1996 and 2003 the tables presented sites where any of the monthly counts held 5% or more of the county total for that month. However, the tables since the 2004 Report show only sites where this figure is reached during the core (Sep – Mar) monthly counts.

In the WeBS tables the numbers of birds for the Arun Valley are the totals of the counts for Pulborough Brooks (North, Mid- and South), Widney Brooks, Waltham Brooks, Amberley Wild Brooks, Bury Brooks, Offham to Houghton, Arundel WWT and Arundel Water Meadows. Those

for Rye Bay are the totals of the counts for Pett Level, Rye Hbr, Camber Sands, Northpoint Pit and Scotney Court GP. The counts in these sub-areas are included only if they are significant.

The distribution maps for certain species include a range of symbols:

Large red circle	Confirmed breeding
Medium red circle	Probable breeding
Small red circle	Seen in suitable breeding habitat
Small green circle	All other records with a grid reference

The following abbreviations are used in the Systematic List as standard practice:

BBRC	British Birds Records Committee	RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
BBS	Breeding Bird Survey	RBRG	Rye Bay Ringing Group
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology	PH	Public House
BOU	British Ornithologists Union	R	River
CBC	Common Birds Census	SF	Sewage Farm or Works
CP	Country Park	SP	Sand Pit
Fm	Farm	SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
GP	Gravel Pit(s)	SWBS	Scarce Woodland Bird Survey
GC	Golf Course	WeBS	Wetland Bird Survey
Hbr	Harbour	WBBS	Waterways Breeding Bird Survey
IUCN	The World Conservation Union	WinGS	Winter Gull Roost Survey
MP	Mill Pond	WWT	Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust
MO	Many Observers	ha	Hectare(s)
LNR	Local Nature Reserve	hr	Hour(s)
NR	Nature Reserve	km	Kilometre(s)
NNR	National Nature Reserve	km ²	Square kilometre(s)
O/S	Offshore	m	Metre(s)
Res	Reservoir	nc	No Count
N, E, S, W	As cardinal compass points		

Mute Swan*Cygnus olor*

Fairly common resident. Amber listed 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
Monthly total	696	428	497	244	300	333	331	266	595	636	682	767
Chichester Hbr	184	48	54	30	117	135	130	87	155	123	230	202
Chichester GP	47	68	70	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	96	96	67	82
Climping	-	47	67	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	100	40	74
<i>Widney Brooks</i>	21	7	35	2	4	-	-	-	2	5	20	4
Arun Valley	97	74	89	93	74	36	42	29	53	63	87	93
Henfield Brooks	62	3	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	13	33	65
Iford Brooks	6	nc	27	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	36	35	22	24
Eastbourne Lakes	53	31	8	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	25	20	27	3
Langney	36	nc	17	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	30	nc	16	16
Pevensy Levels	54	46	54	40	55	41	13	23	56	50	69	73
Rye Bay	52	20	13	30	18	61	62	87	33	26	20	28

There were other reports of large grazing herds in the first winter period, including 124 on 13 Jan at Tortington (Arundel) which still numbered 121 on 10 Feb and 12 Mar. There were also 18 at Thorney Deeps on 12 Jan (with 19 there on 6 Apr), 65 at Partridge Green on 2 Jan and 66 at Lewes Brooks on 15 Feb.

There were several records of coastal movements from the principal seawatching sites: at Selsey Bill 2E (in 1 hr) on 27 Feb and 2E (in 1½ hr) on 2 May; at Worthing Beach 3E (in 1½ hr) on 15 Mar, 2W (in 2¾ hr) on 20 Apr and 2W (in 4½ hr) on 6 May; at Telscombe 4W (in 1¾ hr) on 22 Apr; at Splash Point (Seaford) 5E the same day and at Birling Gap a sub-adult west on 11 Apr. The only autumn coastal record was of 5E at Worthing Beach on 4 Nov.

Nesting activity was reported at Warnham LNR with the first cygnets hatched on 18 May (still recorded there until 29 Jul) and four at Partridge Green on 24 May. Pairs with cygnets recorded at Widewater (Lancing) included 29 May (8) and (3) and additionally 4 Jun (2+) and (1) and 16 Jul (3). There were six at Swanbourne Lake (Arundel) on 5 Jun and ten fledged from three pairs at Thorney Deeps on 16 Jun. A pair with three cygnets was recorded at R Ouse (Southeast) on 9 Jul. On R Adur (Shoreham) a herd of 60 was recorded on 2 Jul including one pair with eight cygnets and 50 summering birds.

Further grazing herds were recorded at Lewes Brooks with 36 on 10 May until 30 on 13 Sep with a smaller herd of up to 18 remaining for the second winter period. A herd of 17 was at Widewater from 29 May and remained through to the year end. During the summer a herd of ten was at Barcombe Res from 11 Jun until 17 on 30 Jul. Shoreham Airport also hosted a herd of 75 on 18 Aug.

Once again Hove Lagoon hosted a herd in the first winter period of 23 on 22 Jan until 16 on 7 Mar, and then again in the autumn and second winter period of 40 on 22 Oct (with a peak of 43 on 28 Nov) until 38 on 22 Dec.

In the second winter period a herd of 60 recorded at Littlehampton GC on 29 Nov increased to 90 on 9 Dec. Another herd of 112 on 25 Oct at Fishbourne Channel (Chichester Hbr) remained until 6 Dec (114) and 24 Dec (87). [WEC]

Bewick's Swan*Cygnus columbianus*

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

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Nov	Dec
Monthly total	28	49	-		-	36
<i>Arun (Offham to Houghton)</i>	-	35	-		-	19
<i>Bury Brooks</i>	-	9	-		-	-
<i>Amberley Wild Brooks</i>	-	-	-		-	8
<i>Pulborough Brooks</i>	28	5	-		-	9
Arun Valley	28	49	-		-	36

Monthly maximum counts additional to the WeBS counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Nov	Dec
Arun (Offham to Houghton)	32	43	38		-	32
Bury Brooks	23	10	4		-	2
Amberley Wild Brooks	3	-	-		-	9
Pulborough Brooks	31	18	3		-	16
Others	4	4	-		1	2

The records show once again that this species winters primarily in the Arun Valley and that birds wander up and down the valley between the different sites. It is therefore almost impossible to derive a meaningful total.

WeBS count numbers this year, although lower in January and December than in 2005, were similar to the 5-year average as shown below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Nov	Dec
County total	28	49	-		-	39
5-year average	41	37	n/a		11	32
High	77	45	n/a		29	66
Low	9	25	n/a		0	7

In the first winter period records commenced at Pulborough Brooks with 24 on 2 Jan followed by a herd of 28 on the 12th and again on the 15th including four juveniles. By 10 Feb the number had reduced to 18 and the last count of three was on 7 Mar. Similar numbers were seen at Houghton (Amberley) with 33 on 26 Feb.

At nearby Burpham Levels, the adult bird carrying a ring marked 14J (ringed in Arctic Russia in 2003) was seen on 4 Jan and again on 14 Feb, thus returning for its fourth winter in the Arun Valley. The herd peaked here at 43 on 2 Feb remaining constant until 1 Mar with the final record of 38. In the Bury/Houghton area records commenced with 30 on 2 Jan including four juveniles and numbers then held until ten on 24 Feb with the final count of four on 5 Mar.

In the second winter period birds were back at Pulborough Brooks with three on 5 Dec, increasing to 16 on the 29th including two juveniles. At Burpham Levels 11 were seen on 21 Dec increasing to 32 on the 24th with 11 juveniles. Elsewhere in the county six were recorded flying east in the morning of 4 Jan at Goring Gap and three were at Rye Bay on 17 Dec. [WEC]



Bewick's Swan, Pulborough Brooks, February 2006 (Les Bird)

Whooper Swan

Cygnus cygnus

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

Recordings of this species are becoming less frequent. There were just two records. An adult bird at Brighthams Fm (Partridge Green) on 13 Feb (DB) was confirmed as the feral bird seen in the same area for the past few years. The other record was of an adult bird at Albourne on 29 Apr (HC), a date and location (8 km east) which suggest that this could be the same bird as that seen at Partridge Green. [WEC]

Taiga Bean Goose

Anser fabilis fabilis

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

The only report of this species was of a single bird seen on 13 Jan at Weir Wood Res (NAD). It was, however, considered to be possibly the same bird seen on Thorney Island in late 2005. This bird had some damage to its bill and leg and was unassignable to a specific race, though *fabilis* was considered most likely. Also the location and its solitary nature make it hard to be certain of its origins. [AH]

Tundra Bean Goose*Anser fabilis rossicus**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.*

There was one record for the year, but a remarkable one: a flock of 18 birds was found just north of the Bury-Houghton road near Amberley on 29th Dec (RJF *et al.*). The flock, the biggest in the county for at least twenty years, was seen by many observers and photographed but, sadly, did not linger. [AH]

Pink-footed Goose*Anser brachyrhynchus**Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; also recorded as a feral bird.*

There was only one report of this scarce visitor: a single bird seen with Greylag Geese at Lewes Brooks on 14 Jan (ARK). However, as with many solitary members of the scarcer species, there must be some doubt as to its wild provenance. [AH]

White-fronted Goose*Anser albifrons**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.*

The first record was of two birds seen heading east at Brighton Marina on 2 Jan. There were two main wintering flocks, both in the east of the county. At Scotney Court GP numbers built from 70 on 31 Jan to 216 on 10 Feb, peaked at 220 on 13 Mar and was still 200 on the 21st, the last date recorded. Elsewhere in January there were 18 birds at Pett Levels from the 7th to the 22nd and 20 at Glynde Levels on the 15th. In February, numbers on Pevensy Levels rose from an initial report of 36 birds on 5 Feb to a peak of 70 on the 17th and 19th. Flocks of 12 were seen in flight over Rye Hbr on 6 Feb and the 16th, a group of 15 lingered briefly on Selsey West Fields on the 7th and two flew north over Shoreham Airport on the 27th.

As usual, there were fewer records in the second winter period. The first report was of four birds on Pevensy Levels on 1 Nov. The next was not until December, when a single bird was seen heading west past Beachy Head on the 7th and another solitary bird was on Pett Level on the 10th. On the 26th there was a small influx of seven at Lewes Brooks, five at Rye Hbr and three at Piddinghoe (Newhaven) which stayed until the 29th. The final record for the year was of four birds on Pulborough Brooks on the 30th. [AH]

Greylag Goose*Anser anser*

Increasingly common introduced resident and winter visitor; scarce passage migrant.

The monthly WeBS counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	394	371	495	105	79	107	153	791	143	524	331	578
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	43	-	-	-
Chichester GP	8	4	25	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	3	18	4	4
<i>Amberley Wild Brooks</i>	-	-	-	7	5	-	6	-	18	36	165	175
<i>Waltham Brooks</i>	49	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Pulborough Brooks</i>	39	67	68	20	8	11	18	168	24	246	53	1
Arun Valley	88	67	68	27	13	11	24	168	42	290	218	176
Ifield MP	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	28	-	-
Ardingly Res	-	20	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-
Weir Wood Res	190	-	2	2	3	-	20	nc	2	-	-	-
Iford Brooks	1	nc	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	20	22	-
Glynde Brooks	75	2	30	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	70	23	-
Bewl Water	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	18	-	43	3	5	-
<i>Pett Level</i>	-	81	70	30	25	17	36	-	-	2	45	35
<i>Rye Hbr</i>	-	-	9	30	32	32	44	2	4	37	-	10
<i>Scotney Court GP</i>	30	190	262	nc	nc	44	nc	600	nc	54	6	350
Rye Bay	30	271	341	60	57	93	80	602	4	93	51	395

In the first winter period the only notable counts additional to the above were 233 at Weir Wood Res on 8 Jan, 48 on Henfield Levels on 18 Feb and 120 on Pevensey Levels on 26 Feb.

The only evidence of coastal passage was 1 E past Splash Point (Seaford) on 26 Mar, two birds on the beach there on the 30th, a further 7 E on 20 Apr and a party of 3 N over Beachy Head on 1 Apr. The latter birds could possibly have been genuine migrants rather than from the feral population as the date coincides with previous records from Beachy Head dating from before such a large feral population existed.

As usual with this widely distributed species, breeding reports were received from across the county. These included two broods at Forest Mere (Liphook), six goslings at Warnham LNR, a pair with one youngster at Barcombe Res, two pairs on Bewl Water, six broods at Pannell Valley NR and ten pairs at Rye Hbr. A breeding survey was not carried out at Pulborough Brooks where the species has bred regularly in recent years.

The first big post-breeding gathering, and the biggest count of the year, was 600 birds at Scotney Court GP on 13 Aug. Elsewhere, notable counts included 168 at Pulborough Brooks on the same day, 250 at Weir Wood Res on 27 Aug and 138 at Brighthams Farm (Partridge Green) on 10 Sep.

Throughout the second winter period reports were received from over 20 locations throughout the county, and the WeBS table above shows the larger counts. [AH]

Canada Goose*Branta canadensis*

Common and increasing introduced resident and partial migrant.

The monthly WeBS counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	1561	966	750	341	251	358	1297	734	1450	1169	2210	3230
Chichester Hbr	70	35	30	37	15	51	31	135	52	100	63	130
Chichester GP	93	86	66	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	72	112	49	154
<i>Amberley Wild Brooks</i>	31	7	2	14	16	-	-	-	-	61	246	206
<i>Pulborough Brooks</i>	183	23	39	23	25	22	26	7	322	28	214	757
<i>Widney Brooks</i>	-	17	-	-	3	-	-	-	2	145	480	62
Arun Valley	242	61	68	49	49	32	31	9	339	253	1067	1068
Warnham LNR	-	2	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	89	-	-	-
Weir Wood Res	83	10	18	50	33	15	18	nc	25	-	-	-
Barcombe Res	27	15	14	12	-	-	2	-	340	3	27	164
Glynde Brooks	50	72	110	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	90	12	-
Arlington Res	5	3	3	8	3	11	23	50	6	61	3	3
Cuckmere Haven	238	41	15	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	6	1	39	410
Eastbourne Lakes	60	117	61	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	7	61	160
Pevensey Levels	64	64	33	28	9	24	13	-	-	101	351	198
Bowl Water	306	220	110	nc	nc	nc	1005	145	420	200	436	397
<i>Pett Level</i>	100	43	46	41	32	48	38	11	1	27	57	57
<i>Rye Hbr</i>	60	105	8	22	29	33	10	177	52	55	127	174
<i>Scotney Court GP</i>	5	15	35	nc	nc	52	nc	200	Nc	98	6	25
Rye Bay	165	163	89	63	61	133	48	388	53	180	190	256

In the first winter period notable counts additional to the above included 300 at Pulborough Brooks on 6 Jan and 121 at Pett Level on the 28th. As usual with this common and distinctive bird, records were received of birds on virtually every patch of water throughout the county.

There was minimal evidence of coastal passage. The combined totals for April and May were 4 E and 11 W in 109¼ hr at Beachy Head and 15 E and 6 W in 175¼ hr at Splash Point (Seaford). No other sites reported any movements.

Breeding was confirmed at 10 sites from Forest Mere (Liphook) and Chichester GP in the west to Bowl Water and Rye Hbr in the east. At least 40 pairs were confirmed but the largest number of nesting pairs was at Rye Hbr (12) and Bowl Water (10). Breeding was probable at a further five sites. During the BBS the species was recorded in 30 1-km squares out of the 122 surveyed.

A count of 450 birds on Bowl Water on the relatively early date of 24 Jun presaged the build up of post-breeding flocks and there were 1005 present there during the WeBS count on 16 Jul. Other noteworthy counts included 500 at Weir Wood Res on 6 Aug and an impressive 1200 (the highest figure of the year) at Arlington Res on 28 Aug.

In the second winter period there were far higher counts than at the start of the year including over 1000 birds in the Arun Valley and a peak count of 673 on Christmas Day at Bowl Water. The WeBS total for December of 3230 birds is the highest figure yet recorded in the county and proof of this introduced species' continued success. [AH]

Barnacle Goose*Brant leucopsis*

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

As usual with this species, the possibility of genuinely wild birds occurring within the county is obscured by the continual presence of feral birds. Of those with the best credentials to be wild, the bird which arrived in Nov 2005 continued consorting with the Dark-Bellied Brent Goose flock at Pagham Hbr until it departed on 14 Mar when there was a large movement of Brent Geese. Elsewhere a single bird was with White-fronted Geese at Pevensey Levels on 5 Feb and there were eight there on the 19th and 21st. Another single bird of possibly wild origin was seen with Dark-bellied Brent Geese both at Climping on 9 Mar and at Brighton Marina on the 24th.

The two largest feral flocks were, as usual, at Scotney Court GP (peaking at 70 on 8 Feb) and Barcombe Res (peaking at 55 on 7 Nov).

In the second winter period there were few records away from Barcombe Res. The only other reports were of five in Pagham Hbr on 8 Oct, up to four at Rye Hbr on several dates in November and December, and a solitary bird seen intermittently in the Pulborough Books area during December. All these birds would seem to be of dubious origin. [AH]

Dark-bellied Brent Goose*Branta bernicla bernicla*

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

The monthly WeBS counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	10395	8406	11670	97	9	12	2	8	22	450	7975	12406
Chichester Hbr	7129	7862	9018	24	8	11	1	7	6	421	6282	9605
Pagham Hbr	2819	533	2652	71	1	1	1	1	16	26	1673	2744

The year began encouragingly with the first monthly WeBS count of over 10,000 since January 2002 and ended with a total 12,406, the highest monthly count since February 1994. As ever, all but a scattering of records came from the western harbours, the only other significant flock being at Atherington (Climping) where numbers peaked at 540 on 24 Jan. The only records for the east of the county were from Pett Level, where there were up to three birds during January, 11 on 5 Feb and 25 on 12 Mar. Elsewhere there were seven at the Newhaven Ouse Estuary Project on 8 Jan and 23 at Rye Hbr on 7 Mar.

Counts at the principal seawatching 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	395	2	-	-	1292	3	746	8	4	140	24	25	9	64
Worthing Beach	-	9	116	10	4665	52	38	-	8	381	5	318	8	88
Telscombe Cliffs	-	-	89	1	2225	-	92	-	2	77	27	25	1	21
Splash Point (Seaford)	2	-	8	3	11937	1	667	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Beachy Head	-	-	22	-	7871	13	594	-	-	15	-	-	-	-

The first indication of spring migration came on 5 Feb when 13 birds were seen heading over Rye Hbr, but the first record from a seawatching site was not until 13 Feb when 22 E were noted past Birling Gap (Beachy Head). There was little further evidence of movement until 12

Mar when 180 E passed Birling Gap, the forerunners of a massive movement over the next two days. On the 13th, 4100 (including two pale biscuit-coloured birds) passed that site, followed by a further 1200 on the 14th. At Climping Beach no less than 4600 were counted in 6 hr and at Splash Point (Seaford) 2380 birds passed in less than 2 hr. Things then quietened down until the 23rd, when 2250 birds passed Climping Beach followed by 3100 past Worthing Beach the following day. At Splash Point a total of 7650 birds passed in the four days from 23 to 26 Mar. Unsurprisingly, numbers in April were much lower with only seven counts over 100 on only five dates, the highest being 160 at Birling Gap on the 25th. Migration in double-figure numbers continued until 9 May, followed by usually single stragglers, the last being 1 E at Splash Point on 9 Jun. As usual a few birds summered in Chichester Hbr (the peak being 11 on 11 Jun), and in Pagham Hbr, where a solitary bird was recorded on many dates.

The first returning birds were noted in September on the relatively early date of the 15th when a flock of 16 was seen in Pagham Hbr, followed by 1 W past Climping Beach on the 18th, four offshore at Worthing Beach on the 21st and five at Rye Hbr the following day. Small numbers heading west were recorded daily during the first week of October. The first sizeable tally was on the 8th when WeBS counters recorded 421 birds in Chichester Hbr. Numbers remained low through the month but at Climping Beach there were notable movement of 425 W on the 30th and 506 on the 31st which heralded the return of the wintering flocks to their regular haunts. There was a number of reports of birds away from the western harbours but the only double figure counts came from Goring Gap, where a flock of 21 birds were seen grazing in a field on 30 Nov, and from Rye Hbr, where small groups were seen regularly with a peak count of 24 on 16 Dec.

Surprisingly, there were no records of Pale-Bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*), the first time since 1977. [AH]

Black Brant

Branta bernicla bernicla

Very scarce winter visitor.

2005: A bird at West Wittering from 5 Nov until the year's end may have been a "pure" Black Brant based on photographs but was recorded as a possible hybrid in the 2005 Report (*SxBR* 58:24). It is almost certain that one or two hybrid individuals were also present in this area during the same period but inadequate noting of distinguishing features has meant that their identity could not be fully established.

2006: Despite a bird being present in the Pagham Hbr/Selsey West Fields area from at least 17 Nov until 20 Dec 2005, no descriptions were received for the first winter period in 2006. Single individuals were however seen in Pagham Hbr until 17 Feb and at West Wittering until 2 Mar (MO).

Three substantiated records were received for the second winter period. Singles were present at West Wittering from 4 Nov until the year's end (EU *et al.*) and in the Pagham Hbr area from 5 Nov until the year's end (BFF, DIS *et al.*). A second bird was in Pagham Hbr on at least 5 Nov (ARK). This individual has in previous years been rejected by BBRC due to it showing a broken neck collar, but was accepted by SOSRC as a pure individual as the submitted description on this occasion states that the bird had a complete neck collar.

Several birds were present in the Pagham Hbr and West Wittering areas in early 2007, which included pure individuals and presumed hybrids. These birds also tend to move between sites in both Sussex and Hampshire. It is therefore essential that observers make special note of all the features of each individual so that they can be confirmed as either pure individuals or hybrids and properly differentiated to establish the true number occurring in the county each year. Descriptions of birds during their residence and not just at the beginning and end of the winter periods would be most welcome, as would photographic documentation. [CWM]

Egyptian Goose*Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Very scarce visitor from introduced populations elsewhere in Britain; bred for the first time in 2000.

There was a considerable upsurge in both the number of records (79 in 2006, cf. 32 in 2005), and the number of sites from which they were recorded (15 in 2006, cf. six in 2005), and included the second breeding record for the county after a six year gap.

The key site in the county continued to be Petworth Park, where birds were recorded in every month of the year except August. Two were present in January and February, increasing to three in March and then four in April. A pair was then seen with one gosling on 15 May and again on 11 Jun, although on the latter date a total of five birds were seen, rising to six by 17 Sep and then nine by 19 Nov.

There were, as usual, several records from the Arun Valley between Waltham Brooks and Pulborough Brooks, but only for a few weeks from 6 Apr. Three birds were seen on several occasions, and the last record of the year from this area was one at Pulborough Brooks on 12 May.

Elsewhere in the west of the county, one (presumably the long-stayer from 2001) was at Chichester GP between 15 Jan and 12 Feb, and again from 18 Oct through into December. Another single was seen at Brooklands (Worthing) between 26 Apr and 16 Nov. One was seen on the Knepp/Dialpost walk on 9 Apr. In the autumn, a single was at the North Wall (Pagham Hbr) on 17 Oct and on 25 and 28 Dec, with one also at East Wittering on the last date.

The increase in records was also marked in the east of the county where records are usually very scarce. The first was a single bird on Pevensy Levels on 9 Apr, but there were then up to three in the Rye Hbr area from 6 May through to 25 Sep, presumably the same as the birds seen intermittently at Pett Level between 11 Jun and 28 Dec.

Records from seawatching sites are highly unusual. However, a single bird headed west at Selsey Bill on 23 Apr, two flying high east at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 30 Apr were the first ever recorded there, another single moved west at Selsey Bill on 28 Oct and one flew east at Ferring on 4 Nov. [AT]

Common Shelduck*Tadorna tadorna*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce but regular breeding species. Amber listed 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
Monthly total	914	1077	973	471	320	269	164	100	81	73	508	877
Chichester Hbr	521	793	662	198	83	54	30	34	61	54	284	453
Pagham Hbr	245	100	161	163	127	120	39	36	20	4	114	306
<i>Arundel WWT</i>	34	62	40	11	25	16	22	1	-	-	35	25
Arun Valley	51	82	50	52	70	35	30	2	-	-	45	35
<i>Scotney Court GP</i>	50	27	1	<i>nc</i>	<i>nc</i>	6	<i>nc</i>	-	<i>nc</i>	15	35	23
Rye Bay	65	59	40	49	38	59	60	15	-	15	50	46

The long-term decline in the WeBS count totals continued, with the January count dipping below 1000 for the first time since 1999. The February total (the year's highest) was not much

higher. This peak figure is considerably lower than the 1999-2004 average maximum of 1351, which already represented a 62% decline since the mid 1980s (*SxBR* 58:262-263).

The WeBS counts depend heavily on the figures from Chichester and Pagham Harbours, which typically account for 80-85% of the Sussex wintering population, so it was no surprise that the Pagham peak of 245 in January and Chichester's peak of 793 in February were considerably lower than the 1999-2004 average maxima of 293 and 949 respectively. Arundel WWT continued to show surprisingly large counts considering the size of the site, with a peak of 62 in February, while 50 at Scotney Court GP on 15 Jan was notable. Small numbers were seen at most other major waters and estuaries in the county.

Seawatching followed the usual patterns. More birds were generally seen in the east and numbers peaked in spring with a maximum of 21 on 21 Apr at Birling Gap (Beachy Head). Only small numbers were seen moving at other times of the year and, although more birds were seen moving east in spring and moving west in autumn, birds can often be seen moving in both directions whatever the season! The monthly totals at the main seawatching sites were as follows:

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May		Jun		Oct		Nov	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	0	2	-	-	7	0	36	35	24	0	3	0	0	4	3	1
Climping Beach	-	-	-	-	2	6	0	12	-	-	3	0	-	-	0	7
Worthing Beach	0	3	-	-	1	3	5	5	12	13	-	-	-	-	0	5
Telscombe Cliffs	0	10	5	0	9	0	7	2	16	0	-	-	-	-	5	0
Splash Point (Seaford)	-	-	-	-	22	3	47	6	50	5	5	0	-	-	-	-
Birling Gap	2	2	3	4	21	2	50	11	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-

Breeding was confirmed from 11 1-km squares, with probable breeding in another four. One at the Belle Tout area of Beachy Head on 11 Apr was possibly prospecting for a nest site, a similar record to 2005. However, the first proof of successful breeding was three fledged young at Pulborough Brooks on 1 May, an early date.

In the west of the county, Chichester and Pagham Harbours are key breeding sites. At the former, the exact number of broods is difficult to determine, although this year there were only five records of youngsters (all in the Thorney Island area), with a peak of 18 young in Thorney Deeps on both 14 and 24 Jun. Nine young at Pilsey Island on 21 Jun are likely to be from a separate brood. No young were seen in the Birdham area, or at Cobnor Cottage, despite a pair being present at both sites into June. Typically, there were good numbers of young at Pagham Hbr, with about 30 ducklings in July, although it is not clear from how many broods.

Elsewhere in the west of the county, there was an encouraging number of breeding locations, with one duckling at Oving GP on 31 May, six young chicks at Swanbourne Lake (Arundel) on 5 Jun, an unspecified number of young with an adult on Waltham Brooks in late June, a pair with eight downy chicks at Seftor Fm (Pagham), on 1 Jul, four juveniles at Arundel WWT on 7 Jul, and ten juveniles at RSPB Pulborough Brooks on 7 Jul. Adults were also seen during the breeding season at various other locations in the Arun Valley between Arundel and Pulborough. A fully-grown youngster was at Brooklands, Worthing, on 6 Jul, but had not been produced at the site.

In the east, eight well-grown juveniles were at Southease on 9 Jul, and the peak count of ducklings in Cuckmere Haven was nine on 14 May. There were only very small numbers anywhere on Pevensy Levels in the summer, with no breeding record. Three pairs nested at Rye Harbour producing 21 chicks, at least 12 of which fledged. Good numbers at Pett Level in April (max. 24 on 16th) fell away quickly into May, with no breeding record. Meanwhile, a pair with six young at Bewl Water on 18 Jun was only the second time the species has bred there. The brood had declined to four by 26 Jun, and the surviving three were flying by 22 Aug.

The autumn WeBS counts showed a slow start to the season, with just 73 in October. However,

numbers then rallied with the 879 in December being the highest since 2002. [AT]

Mandarin Duck

Aix galericulata

Scarce but increasing introduced resident.

Records were received from 70 1-km squares with a typical scattering of records across the county north of the Downs. Key areas remain the Arun Valley, the Ebernoe Common area, Ashdown Forest, Weir Wood Res and the East Sussex Weald reservoirs (Darwell and Powdermill), although small numbers may be seen on occasion at any sizeable woodland pool across the Weald.

The peak count in the first winter period was 24 at Swanbourne Lake (Arundel) on 8 Jan. There were also 21 nearby at Arundel WWT on 10 Apr, 13 at Weir Wood Res on 5 Mar, 12 at Darwell Res on 15 Jan, and 11 at Etchingham on 1 Jan.

Breeding was confirmed in eight 1-km squares, with breeding probable in a further six. The first sign of breeding behaviour was a pair investigating a tree at Darwell Res on 12 Mar. A female was then seen on a nest at Ebernoe Common on 16 Apr, but the first youngsters were five fledged at Pulborough Brooks on 1 May, although up to seven young were seen later in June. At High Chimneys Estate (Battle), a pair bred in a Tawny Owl nest box, while at Darwell Res at least two pairs raised five young. A female with five chicks was at Forest Mere (Liphook) on 22 Jun, and seven juveniles were at Bayham Lake on 22 Jun. A female was accompanied by five ducklings at Hoth Fm (Rotherfield), on 7 Jul, there were two juveniles at Ebernoe Common on 8 Jul and the final record of confirmed breeding was two young at Bewl Water on 16 Jul.

A good summer count where breeding was not proven was 12 at Five Hundred Acre (Ashdown Forest) on 4 Jun, but just one record for the whole year was received from the traditional location at Eridge Park, with no mention of breeding, although there was nothing to suggest that there was any problem with the population there.

The peak counts of the year came as usual during the second half of the year, with the highest being 74 at Darwell Res feeding on acorns on 18 Sep. However, numbers elsewhere were disappointing. Weir Wood Res was the only other site where counts exceeded 20, with a peak of 45 on 7 Aug. Elsewhere, double figure counts came from Powdermill Res (max. 17 on 8 Oct), the area around Ardingly Res (max. 15 on 24 Nov in the Loder Valley), and in the Arundel WWT area (max. 12).

Unusual records this year included a female with Mallards on the Brede Levels on 17 Jun, three at Chichester GP on 4 Jun and then a further two there on 19 Nov, one at Carters Flood (Pett) on 6 Apr, one at Castle Water (Rye Hbr) on 5 Nov and an adult male at Selsey East Beach on 17 Feb and again on 8 Dec. [AT]

Eurasian Wigeon*Anas penelope*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed 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
Monthly total	11098	8759	5391	49	6	5	1	108	1417	3710	6277	9299
Chichester Hbr	2481	2047	1773	4	2	2	-	2	182	1676	2017	2668
Pagham Hbr	2816	1385	962	2	-	-	-	-	711	1316	1615	1870
<i>Amberley Wild Brooks</i>	874	610	135	4	-	-	-	-	8	64	544	1685
<i>Pulborough Brooks</i>	1354	960	491	5	2	1	-	-	202	131	1041	1247
<i>Widney Brooks</i>	530	610	12	-	-	1	-	-	111	189	36	82
Arun Valley	2812	2221	724	9	2	2	-	-	321	384	1660	3082
Cuckmere Haven	382	468	290	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	18	41	43	66
Pevensy Levels	882	605	720	34	-	-	-	-	26	-	262	517
<i>Scotney Court GP</i>	690	1400	550	nc	nc	-	nc	105	nc	81	330	505
Rye Bay	1049	1845	686	-	1	-	1	106	68	190	531	811

The January WeBS count was the highest since 1997, in large part due to the very high numbers in both Pagham and Chichester Harbours, which made up 48% of the monthly total. These were augmented by the usual Arun valley flocks and good numbers from the Rye Bay area. Away from the core sites in the table, a count of 950 at BRIGHTHAMS FM (Partridge Green) on 2 Jan was impressive.

Counts dropped to more typical levels in February and March, although the flock of 1400 at Scotney Court GP in February was noteworthy. Ninety birds at Lottbridge Lake (Eastbourne) on 12 Feb was a good 'urban' count.

Numbers fell rapidly in April with 50 at Pulborough Brooks on the 7th and 30 at Down Level (Pevensy) on the 9th being the last double-figure counts, bar an exceptional record of 50 at Pulborough Brooks on 14 May.

Birds seen on the move offshore during the year are summarised in the table below. They were typically unpredictable with small numbers between February and April despite the large numbers of hours watched. The larger numbers in the second winter period are therefore of note.

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		Sep		Oct		Nov		Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	3	0	-	-	11	0	5	0	2	0	0	12	3	0	24	69
Climping Beach	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	28	0	53	0	211	-	-
Worthing Beach	1	36	-	-	2	0	-	-	-	-	0	67	0	8	6	0
Telscombe Cliffs	-	-	8	0	8	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Splash Point	-	-	4	0	15	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Birling Gap	6	0	6	0	32	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

As usual there was just a handful of summering birds with no suspicion of breeding. One or two birds were seen on occasional dates during June and July at Weir Wood Res and at Chichester and Pagham Harbours and there was a run of records in the Arun valley around Pulborough Brooks with a maximum of three on 23 Jun.

Of more interest were five birds at Pannel Valley NR on 4 Jul which were thought to be the first returning migrants, with seven there on the 6th. If so, this would be a very early date. It is not until mid August that the first small numbers usually return, so the 105 seen at Scotney Court

GP on 13 Aug was a large number for such an early date. Far more typical was the 200 seen at Thorney Deepes (Chichester Hbr) on 9 Sep, with 105 at Pagham Hbr the same day, and numbers at this latter site rose to 200 the next day, 400 by the 16th and 711 by the 17th.

Numbers on the WeBS counts in the last quarter of the year were not exceptional but were all above the average for the last decade. Away from the core sites, the 347 at Bewl Water on 25 Dec was the highest count there for the year, and there were 200 at Shermanbury on 28 Dec. [AT]

Gadwall

Anas strepera

Scarce breeder and fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed 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
Monthly total	626	404	217	99	59	40	17	26	148	233	383	404
Chichester Hbr	25	16	17	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	22	29
Chichester GP	149	72	16	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	10	38	63
Burton & Chingford Ponds	10	21	7	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	21	29	16	-
Wicks Fm Res	-	26	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	6
Arundel WWT	20	10	5	12	15	4	2	-	8	4	5	5
Arun Valley	24	18	17	26	27	8	2	2	10	13	32	22
Glynde Brooks	3	1	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	10	12	4
Eastbourne Lakes	46	36	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	6	19	16	44
Bewl Water	61	58	42	nc	nc	nc	-	-	24	15	31	68
Darwell Res	161	76	29	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	58	47
Powdermill Res	34	22	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	-	35	20
Pett Level	27	6	10	22	10	20	13	8	12	39	76	52
Rye Hbr	50	29	44	22	17	12	2	16	71	71	37	26
Rye Bay	79	37	54	44	27	32	15	24	83	110	113	78

The January and February WeBS counts were the lowest since 1999, with declines at both of the two key sites (Chichester GP and Darwell Res). The 161 at the latter site on 15 Jan was the largest count of the year and the 46 at Eastbourne Lakes was the only site where numbers were substantially up on those in 2005. However, numbers in the county held up well in March and April.

At the seawatching sites, two singles east during January at Selsey Bill were unusual winter movements. A smattering of birds moved through in spring, with the peak in March, mainly due to 16 E and then 12 E at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on the 13th and the 14th respectively. Passage was largely over by May, so records of 12 E on 9 Jun at Splash Point (Seaford), 11 E on 10 Jun at Selsey Bill, and then another 3 E on 12 Jun at Splash Point were quite unseasonal.

Proof of breeding is rarely obtained, so the record of a minimum of three pairs with broods at Pannel Valley NR on 1 Jun was welcome, although the exact number of ducklings was not recorded. A count of 57 there on 16 Jun was also unusually high for midsummer.

There were records from 14 other widely spread sites between May and July with 17 at Rye Hbr on 14 May, 15 at Arundel WWT on 14 May and 10 at Pagham Hbr on 10 May being the only double figure counts away from Pannel Valley NR. Even at sites where full breeding surveys are done (such as Rye Hbr and Pulborough Brooks), no breeding territories were recorded, perhaps indicating that Gadwall is a genuinely rare breeder in the county.

Four birds at Bewl Water on 13 Aug and four at Weir Wood Res on the 15th probably marked

the first returning birds, with numbers at Rye Hbr rising quickly to 37 by the 19th.

Numbers in the second winter period started off promisingly, with the best WeBS count in November for three years, but then did not continue to climb into December as normal, resulting in the lowest December count since 2000. The 83 at Bewl Water on 25 Dec was the highest count of the second winter period. [AT]

Eurasian Teal

Anas crecca

Scarce resident and common winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed 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
Monthly total	6217	3954	2650	483	10	18	23	377	2028	2561	3621	5480
Chichester Hbr	1239	1316	988	48	1	1	1	34	250	490	634	877
Pagham Hbr	1543	747	279	44	3	-	-	67	373	912	1530	1521
<i>Arundel WWT</i>	100	218	17	8	-	-	-	9	75	21	6	4
<i>Amberley Wild Brooks</i>	596	263	96	68	-	1	-	2	101	381	150	865
<i>Pulborough Brooks</i>	1364	559	199	168	6	9	3	43	398	223	600	1196
Arun Valley	2303	1105	348	264	6	10	3	79	719	765	870	2129
Pevensey Levels	438	276	456	95	-	1	3	1	89	36	302	751
<i>Pett Level</i>	130	75	121	8	-	6	1	88	195	44	98	93
Rye Bay	227	150	219	24	-	6	5	130	295	103	148	208

The WeBS counts for January and February were considerably up on 2005, although somewhat short of record figures. The numbers for Pagham Hbr and the Arun Valley around Pulborough were particularly impressive in January; the 1543 in Pagham Hbr being the highest single-site count in the county during the year although still lower than the 1% national threshold level of 1920. Away from the main sites, 120 were at Partridge Fm (Brighthams Green) on 1 Jan and 110 at Glynde Level on 15 Jan.

As usual, the county total fell sharply as the year progressed, although there was some shift of emphasis in favour of sites in the east. Whereas Chichester and Pagham Harbours and the Arun Valley held 82% of the county total in January and 80% in February, they supported only 61% in March. At Pevensey Levels and in the Rye Bay area, for example, numbers rallied in March back to around January levels, and numbers at Hankham Level alone on the Pevensey Levels peaked at 470 during that month.

Numbers dropped sharply in early April, the last three-figure count being 127 at Pulborough Brooks on 9 Apr, with no count in double figures following 12 at Thorney Deeps on 27 Apr, apart from an exceptional count of 30 at Pulborough Brooks on 14 May.

Small numbers were seen at seawatching locations, with the peak passage in March and 95 E at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 13 Mar was the largest day-count by far.

As usual, there were few breeding records. Birds were seen consistently at Pulborough Brooks, with 12 on 11 Jun being the highest count although no young were recorded. There were small numbers at Pagham Hbr, usually singles, but three were seen on 14 May, six on 20 Jun, and 16 on 1 Jul. One was at Warnham LNR during May, a drake was present at Thorney Deeps through May, singles were at Amberley Wild Brooks and Pevensey Bridge Level in June, and occasional birds were present at Rye Hbr although breeding was not suspected. A pair with a brood at Pannel Valley NR on 1 Jul and a female with one young at Warnham LNR on 27 Jul

were therefore excellent records.

Unusually, with so few birds in the county in the summer, there were two records of passage from Telscombe Cliffs, with 8 E there on 23 Jun and 6 E on 9 Jul. Only a week later on 16 Jul the first returning birds were seen, with six at Weir Wood Res and five at Bewl Water. There were 25 at Sidlesham Ferry on 2 Aug and 34 at Thorney Deeps on 9 Aug, and then a marked build up at Pett Level, reaching 88 on 13 Aug, but return passage did not begin in earnest until very late August.

The WeBS counts in the second winter period were close to the average for the last decade. Away from the main sites, 107 were at Weir Wood Res on 8 Oct and 104 on the Lower Adur on 17 Dec. [AT]

Mallard

Anas platyrhynchos

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
Monthly total	3161	2364	1865	707	667	1039	1485	2193	3324	3338	3112	3025
Chichester Hbr	432	327	315	19	28	64	96	140	344	291	384	435
Pagham Hbr	315	193	125	83	87	123	168	189	154	241	193	250
Chichester GP	197	173	144	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	162	175	148	204
Wicks Farm Res	109	16	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	281	185	52	62
<i>Arundel WWT</i>	61	141	141	134	122	158	149	162	167	80	209	113
<i>Amberley Wild Brooks</i>	19	50	38	47	34	24	26	12	27	312	77	60
<i>Pulborough Brooks</i>	40	6	23	27	25	81	39	148	52	152	207	34
Arun Valley	208	265	254	250	218	302	237	522	431	630	654	286
Eastbourne Lakes	121	124	26	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	43	31	19	55
Pevensey Levels	82	49	100	27	18	11	17	11	82	118	80	75
Bewl Water	251	53	215	nc	nc	nc	360	706	428	388	348	399
<i>Rye Hbr</i>	269	186	110	73	72	107	114	176	344	366	298	105
Rye Bay	380	328	147	102	94	336	256	343	491	403	332	228

WeBS data show that the 2006 peak numbers occurred in September/October, but maximum numbers were well below the average county maxima of 4139 birds for 1999-2004 (*SxBR* 58: 269).

In total, 1782 records of Mallard were received in 2006, the most for any species. They came from 233 tetrads (nearly 23% of Sussex's tetrads), emphasising how widespread this duck species is across the county. As usual records of the largest numbers came from the larger sites, particularly Chichester Hbr, Bewl Water and the various sites in the Arun Valley and Rye Bay.

Aside from the WeBS records other notable concentrations occurred at Wicks Fm (Yapton) (185 on 8 Oct), at Ardingly Res (200 on 28 Oct and 120 on 17 Dec), at Barcombe Res in the autumn (rising from 103 on 17 Sep to 182 on 12 Dec) and at Arlington Res (153 on 17 Sep). There were 658 at Bewl Water on 25 Dec.

There were only eight records of coastal passage from the principal seawatching sites in April and May. The largest numbers were 4 E and 3 N at Selsey Bill on 30 Apr while the maxima elsewhere were no more than two.

As usual there were fewer reports of breeding than undoubtedly occurred. The first report of successful breeding was from Barcombe, where seven chicks hatched in a garden on 26 Mar. On 3 Apr a pair were reported again nesting in heather on Heyshott Common, whilst at Bewl Water

the first young of the year (11 juveniles) were reported on 13 Apr. By 30 Apr 143 juveniles were recorded at this location, from 30 successful broods (from 75 pairs). On 14 May a minimum of 52 ducklings in various broods were recorded at Pulborough Brooks, and at Rye Hbr 33 nests or broods were located on 1 Jun, although breeding numbers were suspected to be greater. At Barcombe Res 55 ducklings of various broods were recorded on 18 Jun and 26 were recorded there on 30 Jun. At Thorney Deepes 81 young were recorded from 10 broods on 28 Jun. The last breeding record of the year was of two ducklings at Rye Hbr on 9 Aug. [JRC]

Pintail

Anas acuta

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; occasionally summers and breeds. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	1161	717	416	23		476	186	741	1165
Chichester Hbr	179	375	269	7		29	9	113	103
Pagham Hbr	893	205	66	7		441	163	504	478
<i>Amberley Wild Brooks</i>	-	2	4	-		-	-	2	339
<i>Pulborough Brooks</i>	48	71	32	3		5	9	106	235
Arun Valley	87	117	49	3		5	14	122	574

The WeBS data show that peak numbers occurred in January and December with the 2006 maximum of 1165 in December slightly above the average county maxima of 1061 birds for 1999-2004 (*SxBR* 58:270). The Pagham Hbr peak of 893 in January was well above the 1% threshold of 600 for sites of international importance, and both Chichester Hbr (in February) and the Arun Valley (in December) exceeded the 1% threshold level of 279 for sites of national importance.

In total 321 records were received from 43 tetrads, with the majority of birds being recorded at the three major sites in the west of the county (Chichester and Pagham Harbours, and the Arun Valley). The highest number recorded in the east of the county was 17 at Rye Hbr on 12 Oct. Aside from the Arun Valley few records were received from inland sites, with 26 at Henfield Levels on 26 Feb being much the highest record.

Spring passage was noted mostly in March chiefly on the 13th when a large passage of 275 E was recorded in 6½ hr past Birling Gap (Beachy Head). This is the second highest count ever made at a coastal site, being exceeded only by 279 counted at Worthing on 31 March 1990. The highest monthly totals elsewhere were 29 at Climping Beach, 19 at Worthing Beach and 24 at Splash Point (Seaford). Only a few passed up-channel in April. The highest monthly totals in the second winter period were noted at Selsey Bill (18 W) and Telscombe (12 E).

The last record for the first half of the year was of a single bird at Pulborough Brooks on 1 May. There were no records of summering birds. The first returning birds were recorded on 24 Aug at Pagham Hbr (four birds), with a rapid build-up there to 21 birds on 2 Sep, 100 on 9 Sep and 441 on 17 Sep. [JRC]



Garganey, Southease, March 2006 (Martin Casemore)

Garganey

Anas querquedula

Scarce passage migrant and rare summer visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The first sighting was at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 13 Mar (12 days later than the 10-year average) when two birds were seen moving east in 6½ hr, followed by a further two in 3 hr the following day. Also in March, two drakes and a female were observed on the R Ouse at Southease from the 19th to the 24th.

In April, there were two males and a female at Pevensey Bridge Level on the 2nd and a pair at Rye Hbr on the 9th. Seawatchers recorded a total of eight east in 9¼ hr past Selsey Bill on the 15th, 2 E at Birling Gap in 2½ hr the same day and another 2 E there in 4¼ hr on the 19th and five were recorded at Brighton Marina on the 21st.

Although birds were present at Pulborough Brooks during the breeding season there was no evidence of breeding. A pair was present at Rye Hbr throughout May and June but again breeding was not confirmed. The only report of successful breeding was from a site in the east of the county where a pair and two young were seen on 20 Jul.

In early August between one and three juveniles were seen at Weir Wood Res and two more were there on 5 Sep. The last record for the year was of a single drake at Bewl Water on 8 Oct, 11 days later than the 10-year average. [DEC]

Shoveler*Anas clypeata*

*Very scarce resident and fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.
Amber listed 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
Monthly total	425	594	456	195	13	37	12	31	218	150	348	604
Pagham Hbr	31	8	14	19	-	-	-	-	-	4	21	58
Chichester GP	61	137	104	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	7	15	36
Petworth Park	19	3	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	16	35	20	2
<i>Amberley Wild Brooks</i>	4	10	8	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	27	89
<i>Waltham Brooks</i>	18	7	7	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	29	9
<i>Pulborough Brooks</i>	47	39	27	37	3	10	-	-	35	16	85	118
<i>Widney Brooks</i>	16	49	12	16	-	-	-	-	4	18	1	6
Arun Valley	85	105	54	58	3	10	-	-	39	37	143	222
Iford Brooks	6	nc	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	12	-	22	14
Glynde Brooks	-	40	50	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	7	50
Eastbourne Lakes	-	15	10	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	12	18	5	38
Pevensy Levels	40	137	121	40	-	-	-	-	-	6	29	22
<i>Pett Level</i>	15	61	30	55	4	16	10	-	3	26	45	68
<i>Rye Hbr</i>	105	39	52	19	4	10	-	31	132	17	28	85
<i>Scotney Court GP</i>	47	24	-	nc	nc	1	nc	-	nc	-	12	12
Rye Bay	167	124	82	74	8	27	10	31	135	43	85	165

WeBS data show that the peak monthly totals occurred in February and December, with the years' maxima of 607 a little below the average county maxima for 1999-2004 of 665 birds (*S&BR* 58:272). The 1% threshold level for sites to be of national importance is 148. Rye Bay in January (167) and Dec (168) exceeded this threshold, as did the Arun Valley in December (222), whilst both Chichester GP and Pevensy Levels, each with 137 birds in February, were not far short of the national threshold. Indeed the Pevensy Level count was an all-time peak for this site.

During the year 602 records were received from 57 tetrads, of which the largest non-WeBS count was of 170 birds at Chichester GP on 6 Feb.

The main passage movements took place between 13 and 17 Mar and on 15 and 20 Apr. The spring passage totals at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

		Mar	Apr	June
Selsey Bill	E	13	2	-
	W	-	4	-
Climping Beach	E	56	-	-
	W	-	-	-
Worthing Beach	E	5	8	-
	W	-	-	-
Telscombe Cliffs	E	52	-	-
	W	3	-	-
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	68	38	33
	W	2	-	-
Birling Gap	E	46	42	-
	W	-	-	-

The record of 33 E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 9 Jun was an unusually large summer movement. In the autumn/second winter period there were five monthly counts of only two with a maximum of 5 W at Climping Beach.

WeBS data and other records show that Shoveler summered at Rye Bay, but that in 2006 they were absent from the Arun Valley in July and August. Only one summer record was received from its other main wintering site (Chichester GP), although this may reflect a lack of recording rather than a dearth of Shoveler. The only confirmed breeding record was from Pannel Valley NR (nine broods). Although birds were present at nearby Rye Hbr “throughout the summer, breeding was not suspected”. [JRC]

Red-crested Pochard

Netta rufina

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

A pair was seen at Rye Hbr on 1 Feb and by 12 Feb the number had increased to three, including a drake. Between 18 and 23 Sep one bird was present on the Long Pit at Rye Hbr. Two were recorded there on 10 and 31 Oct and presumably the same two were at the same site on 30 Nov. A drake was noted at Bewl Water on 19 Nov. [DEC]

Common Pochard

Aythya ferina

Very scarce breeder and fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed 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
Monthly total	828	687	360	32	13	18	26	28	76	171	342	536
Chichester GP	201	155	60	Nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	15	47	116
Forest Mere	10	17	16	Nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	10	23	9
Swanbourne Lake	17	31	23	8	4	13	3	14	-	8	17	11
<i>Arundel WWT</i>	66	18	80	21	9	4	17	5	10	4	43	40
Arun Valley	79	25	86	22	9	4	17	5	10	5	43	44
Weir Wood Res	30	61	37	-	-	-	1	nc	-	-	1	5
Eastbourne Lakes	16	21	12	Nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	10	5	12	20
Bewl Water	36	10	2	Nc	nc	nc	2	5	5	-	3	7
Darwell Res	6	32	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
<i>Pett Level</i>	8	15	1	-	-	-	1	-	4	-	5	4
<i>Rye Hbr</i>	224	144	63	-	-	-	-	4	42	65	154	228
<i>Scotney Court GP</i>	115	92	2	nc	nc	-	nc	-	nc	59	9	42
Rye Bay	347	251	66	-	-	-	1	4	46	124	168	274

The year’s maximum WeBS count of 828 birds in January was slightly higher than the 2005 maximum (785), but remained well below the 1999-2004 average county maxima of 1300 birds (*SxBR* 58:273). Peak wintering numbers this year were particularly low at Chichester GP and Arundel WWT.

Other significant records not reflected in WeBS data came from Weir Wood Res, where 70 birds were counted on 26 Jan, 82 on 5 Feb, 59 on 12 Mar and 51 on 24 Dec.

Over the year 486 records were received from 47 tetrads. The vast majority of these records related to the first three and last four months of the year, as befits a species that is mainly a winter visitor. The only site from where Pochard was reported throughout the year was Arundel WWT (with reports from nearby Swanbourne Lake for 11 months of the year). These are a resident feral population, and there were no records of breeding there.

Breeding surveys at Amberley Wild Brooks, Pulborough Brooks and Rackham Plantation on 1 May found no Pochard and the only record of confirmed breeding (of a “female with brood”) was from Pannel Valley NR on 28 Jul.

There were no records of coastal passage from the principal seawatching sites. [JRC]

Tufted Duck

Aythya fuligula

Scarce breeding species and fairly common 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
Monthly total	1060	1272	925	422	263	235	242	219	436	465	656	1088
Chichester GP	356	326	282	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	49	33	105	188
Forest Mere	1	-	24	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	31	27	2	42
Burton & Chingford Ponds	18	31	34	15	2	2	nc	nc	23	30	16	23
Swanbourne Lake	60	80	18	30	17	22	25	10	-	3	4	33
<i>Arundel WWT</i>	24	92	46	-	-	-	-	-	56	60	78	101
Arun Valley	30	101	56	5	4	7	-	-	56	61	78	114
Eastbourne Lakes	60	99	86	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	52	40	42	56
Bewl Water	43	44	66	nc	nc	nc	52	52	9	3	9	28
Powdermill Res	32	11	16	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	45	63	59	27
<i>Pett Level</i>	28	62	47	48	54	61	30	4	8	5	15	29
<i>Rye Hbr</i>	231	192	158	233	134	79	70	99	100	79	227	230
<i>Scotney Court GP</i>	50	83	1	nc	nc	11	nc	-	nc	59	4	35
Rye Bay	309	337	206	281	188	151	100	103	108	143	246	294

WeBS data show that the peak county total of 1272 birds occurred in February. This total was below the average county maxima for 1999-2004 of 1396 birds (*SxBR* 58:275), but well up on the 2005 county maximum of 1099, mainly because of increased numbers at the smaller sites in the table above.

In all, 1010 records of Tufted Duck were received from 74 tetrads. Aside from the WeBS counts, a peak for the year of 47 was recorded at Barcombe Res on 16 Jul.

Between March and May five observations from the main seawatching sites recorded a total of only nine birds east and two west. Single birds west on 12 Jul and east on 18 Jul at Selsey Bill were the only other seawatch records, in what, even for this species, was a sparse year.

Breeding was confirmed in 12 tetrads. At Chichester GP the first brood was recorded on 24 Jun (a female with nine young) and four other broods were later recorded there. At Rye Hbr seven broods were seen, but “fledging success appeared low”. At Bewl Water six pairs produced ten young, but it was a “poor season due to low water”. Breeding records also came from Thorney Deeps, Sefton Fm (Pagham), Barcombe Res, Liphook, Constantia Manor (Isfield) (only their second breeding record), Pannel Valley NR and Pett Level. The last breeding record of the year was of a female with four young at Warnham LNR on 1 Sep. [JRC]

Greater Scaup*Aythya marila*

Scarce winter and passage migrant; rare in summer. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Nov	Dec
County total	9	17	14	3	5	5
Pulborough Brooks	-	-	-	2	-	-
Warnham LNR	-	-	1	-	-	-
Weir Wood Res	-	-	-	-	-	1
Arlington Res	-	-	-	-	3	-
Glyne Gap (Bexhill)	6	3	1	-	-	-
Rye Bay	3	4	-	-	2	4
Scotney Court GP	-	10	12	-	-	-

Compared with 2005, monthly totals were more typical of the previous 5 years' averages. There were no records from any of the regular seawatching locations.

At Scotney Court GP birds were present from 10 Feb to the 25th with a maximum of ten and again, in March, there were ten to 11 birds from the 12th to the 25th with a maximum of 12 on the 15th including six drakes.

Inland sightings included one at Warnham LNR on 11 and 12 Mar, one at Pulborough Brooks from 7 Apr to the 28th which was joined by another on the 27th, three juveniles at Arlington Res on 7 Nov and a single bird at Weir Wood Res on 28 Dec. [DEC]

Common Eider*Somateria mollissima*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; non-breeding birds summer annually. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The approximate monthly totals, mainly at the principal seawatching sites, were as follows:

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
		75	37	141	108	34	4	3	-	2	7	64	25
Selsey Bill	E	9	-	10	16*	8	-	-	-	-	1	1*	6
	W	2	-	1	2	5	-	-	-	-	2	-	3
Climping Beach	E	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	14*	-
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Worthing Beach	E	-	-	12	10*	8*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	3*	-
Telscombe	E	-	-	5	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	-	-	47	31	6 ^o	1*	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Birling Gap	E	-	-	53	34	6 ^o	-	2	-	2	-	-	-
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Bay	n/a	50 ^m	30 ^m	12	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Other sites	n/a	14	7	-	-	1	2	1	-	-	2	36	13

*excludes small numbers offshore; ^o probably the same birds; ^m monthly maximum count

In January and February the largest gatherings were in Rye Bay but there were up to five offshore at Church Norton, 3 E at Saltdean on 23 Jan and eight at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 15 Jan.

The easterly movement of birds returning to breeding grounds was first noted on 13 Mar. Watchers at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) and Splash Point (Seaford) recorded no less than 90 birds from then until the 27th. The largest movements were 25 E in 3 hr on the 14th at Birling Gap and 28 E in 5 hr on the 24th at Splash Point.

Small numbers were seen at a few sites in most of the summer months. Two immature males seen on the rocks at Cow Gap (Beachy Head) on 26 Jul were possibly the same individuals seen there on 7 and 12 Sep.

In October, singletons were seen at Chichester Hbr and offshore at Church Norton but little movement was recorded. In November, the largest movement noted was 14 W on the 3rd at Climping Beach and the highest number was 34 at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on the 19th. In December, there were up to three in Chichester Hbr to the 19th, five at Glyne Gap on the 17th and three at Church Norton on the 23rd. [DEC]

Long-tailed Duck

Clangula hyemalis

Scare passage migrant and winter visitor; usually scarcer in summer and autumn. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The individual recorded at Barcombe Res on 5 Nov 2005 remained throughout the winter and was last recorded on 1 May. Three drakes and a female were recorded at Pilsey Island on 19 Jan and stayed in the area until they were last recorded at East Head (Chichester Hbr) on 28 Mar. A singleton offshore at Rye Hbr on 25 Feb was the sole record for the year in the east of the county.

In April, seawatchers were not well rewarded for their efforts. At Worthing, three offshore was the only sighting in 32 hr of watching while at Selsey Bill, despite 115 hr of watching, only three were seen offshore at any time between the 8th and 29th.

There were no records in the autumn and second winter period. [DEC]

Common Scoter

Melanitta nigra

Common spring passage migrant and winter visitor; scarcer in summer and autumn. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	207	103	49	100	250	-	-	-	16	65	125	92
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	5
Glyne Gap	117	81	29	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	16	64	52	87
<i>Pett Level</i>	90	20	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	67	-
Rye Bay	90	20	20	100	250	-	-	-	-	1	67	-

Typically the largest flocks during the early part of the year occurred in the east, with maxima

of 117 at Glyne Gap on 15 Jan and 200 off Pett Level on 22 Jan and 11 Feb. Smaller numbers elsewhere included 33 off Newhaven on 9 Feb and 30 off Goring on 13 Mar.

Easterly passage during spring from the main seawatching locations (hours watched in parentheses) is summarised below:

	Mar		Apr		May	
Selsey Bill	379	[37¼]	1586	[115½]	2559	[202½]
Worthing Beach	293	[24]	672	[34]	1047	[60¾]
Telscombe Cliffs	142	[31½]	440	[31¼]	640	[28]
Splash Point (Seaford)	3198	[33¾]	1511	[67¼]	2253	[105]
Birling Gap	550	[31¼]	1757	[42]	1758	[67¾]

The peak day of spring movement at an individual site proved to be in March, after which a protracted passage continued until late May. Peak days were 24 Mar (Selsey Bill 239, Worthing 186, Seaford 2635), 21 Apr (Selsey Bill 319, Worthing 157, Seaford 278, Birling Gap 314), 2 May (Selsey Bill 409, Seaford 567, Birling Gap 430; plus 500 in Rye Bay) and 28 May (Selsey Bill 245, Climping 110, Worthing 269, Peacehaven 200).

A number of birds continued to be seen offshore during the summer months, most notably a flock of 100 in Rye Bay on 16 Jun that increased to an impressive 700 by 26 Jul (and subsequently fell to 100 by 18 Aug). The sole inland record for the year was a singleton at Weir Wood Res on 1 Aug, two days earlier than one at the same site the previous year!

Fewer were present during the second winter period compared to earlier in the year. Maxima included 47 off Selsey Bill on 30 Nov, 87 at Glyne Gap on 17 Dec and 70 in Rye Bay on 27 Dec. [CAH]

Velvet Scoter

Melanitta fusca

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

Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
32	25	26	67	11	-	-	-	-	1	15	20

A flock off Pett/Rye Bay was responsible for the majority of records from mid January to early April, with peaks of 30 on 26 Jan and 25 on 8 Mar. Two west off Telscombe on 21 Jan and a singleton at Glyne Gap on 10 Mar were the only records from elsewhere.

A below average spring passage took place during mid April with peak counts of eight at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 19 Apr and 9 at Selsey Bill the following day. Monthly totals for the main seawatching localities in spring are shown below:

	Mar		Apr		May	
	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	6	-	26	-	7	-
Worthing Beach	-	-	9	-	2	-
Splash Point (Seaford)	-	-	13	-	3	-
Birling Gap	-	-	18	-	6	

A poor second winter period commenced with singles west at Climping on 30 Oct and 3 Nov.

Following three off Newhaven and two in Rye Bay on 11 Nov, a movement of 20 at Selsey Bill on 10 Dec was the only subsequent record in the final part of the year with none having returned to the far east of the county. There were no records away from the coast. [CAH]

Common Goldeneye

Bucephala clangula

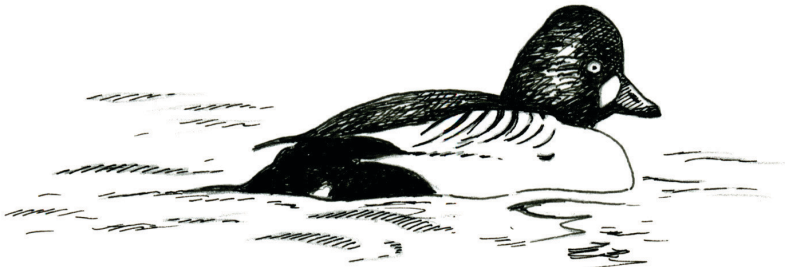
Scarce winter visitor; rare in summer. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	47	35	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	10
Chichester Hbr	27	22	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	5
Pagham Hbr	10	6	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chichester GP	1	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	3	1
Barcombe Res	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bewl Water	3	-	-	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-	-	-
Darwell Res	-	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3
<i>Rye Hbr</i>	3	3	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1
Rye Bay	5	4	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1

It was a relatively lean opening winter period with all records restricted to the main sites shown above. Maximum counts were 28 in Fishbourne Channel (Chichester Hbr) on 1 Feb and 25 at Pagham Lagoon on 30 Jan. The last sighting of the spring was 2 E past Worthing on 4 May.

Following four unusually early birds at Pagham Hbr on 2 Sep, other traditional wintering locations were occupied by mid-November with a subsequent peak count of 13 in Fishbourne Channel (Chichester Hbr) on 24 Dec. Away from the principal sites, one was noted at Brighton Marina on 17 Dec. [CAH]



J.R

Smew*Mergellus albellus*

Scarce winter visitor mainly to the east of the county.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Nov	Dec
County total	11	12	6		2	6
Pagham Hbr	2	-	-		-	-
Birling Gap	-	3	-		-	-
Glyne Gap	-	1	-		-	-
Rye Hbr	9	8	6		2	6

Continuing the trend of recent years, Rye Hbr maintained its status as one of the most regular sites for this species in the country as well as the county. Monthly peaks from the area were nine on 7 Jan, eight on 12 Feb, and six on 8 Mar prior to the final sighting of the winter on the 23rd. The only records from elsewhere were two at Pagham Hbr on 15 Jan, one at Glyne Gap on 10 Feb and 3 drakes east past Birling Gap on 26 Feb, the first ever record for Beachy Head.

In the second winter period all records were from Rye Hbr, where the first was seen on 28 Nov followed by a maximum count of six on 26 Dec. [CAH]

Red-breasted Merganser*Mergus serrator*

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

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	126	192	217	8	1	-	1	1	2	14	110	185
Chichester Hbr	122	144	212	7	-	-	1	1	2	14	101	184
Pagham Hbr	3	47	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	1

During the opening months of the year, virtually all records were from the west of the county, including a peak count of 212 in Chichester Hbr on 12 Mar. Following the last passage bird of the spring at Selsey Bill on 3 Jun, one summered at Widewater (Lancing) until 3 Jul and one (perhaps the same) was in Chichester Hbr from mid-July to the end of August.

The monthly totals at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Selsey Bill	E	0	4	71	74	5	3	20	38
	W	13	0	31	9	8	11	36	118
Worthing Beach	E	9	70	91	21	0	0	8	2
	W	9	0	16	2	0	2	33	3
Telscombe Cliffs	E	-	14	31	2	0	-	4	0
	W	-	0	0	0	0	-	6	10
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	-	4	73	46	8	-	-	-
	W	-	0	0	4	0	-	-	-
Birling Gap	E	-	2	66	30	5	-	-	-
	W	-	0	5	4	0	-	-	-

The species was again widespread from mid-October, after which numbers built up to peaks in December of 184 at Chichester Hbr on the 17th, 208 at Goring on the 23rd and 237 off Worthing on the 24th. Away from the open sea, there were regular reports from Widewater and singletons nearby at Southwick Canal and Brooklands (Worthing) in mid-December. [CAH]

Goosander

Mergus merganser

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

It was an average year with no cold weather influxes and, surprisingly, no records from Arlington or Barcombe Reservoirs. The monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	7	6	1	1	1	-	15	11
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Selsey Bill	-	1	-	-	-	-	3	5
Pagham Hbr	3	1	-	-	-	-	2	2
Chichester GP	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
Pulborough Brooks	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
Weir Wood Res	1	-	1	-	-	-	5	3
Brighton Marina	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-
Bewl Water	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Telscombe	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Birling Gap	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Powdermill Res	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Northpoint GP (Rye)	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

In January and February a singleton was at Pagham Hbr until 12 Feb with 3 present there on 8 Jan. Elsewhere, there were records of singletons at Northpoint GP on 8 Jan, Powdermill Res on 14 Jan and 12-16 Feb, Weir Wood Res on 22 to 23 Jan and 22 to 23 Mar, and Bewl Water on 29 Jan and 16 Feb. Single drakes were seen at three coastal locations: 1 W past Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 4 Feb, one feeding offshore at Selsey Bill on the 5th and 1 E at Telscombe on the 11th. A single at Pulborough Brooks on 16 Apr, and presumably the same on 1 May, was slightly atypical.

At the end of the year, there were regular reports of up to two at Pagham Hbr from 5 Nov to mid December. Five at Weir Wood Res on 8 Nov was the highest inland count of the year, equalled by 5 W at Selsey Bill on 10 Dec where three had been seen on 23 Nov. Elsewhere, three were at Brighton Marina on 12 Nov, two at Chichester GP on 19 Nov, one at Chichester Hbr on 6 Dec, and four at Pulborough Brooks on 29 Dec. [CAH]

Ruddy Duck*Oxyura jamaicensis**Scarce resident and winter visitor.*

Monthly maxima at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chichester GP	2	2	1	2	-	-	-	1
Swanbourne/Arundel WWT	10	10	10	7	-	1	-	4
West Langney (Eastbourne)	-	-	-	-	8	6	4	4
Pannel Valley NR	-	1	13	12	5	1	1	-
Pett Level	14	17	6	8	10	-	1	3
Rye Hbr	7	3	3	8	3	4	3	1
Scotney Court GP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

Birds were present at the traditional sites throughout the year, although there was just a single record from Scotney Court GP. The maximum count during the opening winter months was 17 at Pett Level on 18 Feb, with maxima elsewhere comprising ten at Swanbourne Lake/Arundel WWT, 13 at Pannel Valley NR and eight at Rye Hbr. One or two birds were also reported from Chichester GP, Brooklands (Worthing), Broadwater (Worthing) and Lottbridge & West Langney Lakes (Eastbourne).

Breeding season reports were suggestive of breeding at Chichester GP, Swanbourne Lake, Arundel WWT, Pannel Valley NR, Pett Level and Rye Hbr.

Evidence of post-breeding dispersal was provided by two at Brooklands in late July, while further autumn records included two at Weir Wood Res on 18 Sep, two at Arlington Res on 30 Sep and one at Barcombe Res on 24 Oct. Other records were generally similar in location to the first winter period, peaks comprising eight at West Langney Lake and ten at Pett Level. [CAH]

Red-legged Partridge*Alectoris rufa**Introduced resident; population augmented annually by captive-bred stock.*

Records were received from 77 sites, covering a total of 65 1-km squares, similar to the previous year's totals of 79 birds in 77 squares. The similarity in the records extends to the proportion of these sites near the coast and on the downland (77% in 2006 compared to 73% in 2005).

The highest counts in the first winter period were 11 from West Dean Woods on 2 Jan, 12 from Pagham Hbr on 26 Feb, 12 from Sefter Fm (Pagham) on 5 Feb, 11 from Offham on 27 Jan and 12 from Lee Fm (Patching) on 26 Jan, counts which were generally lower than in 2006.

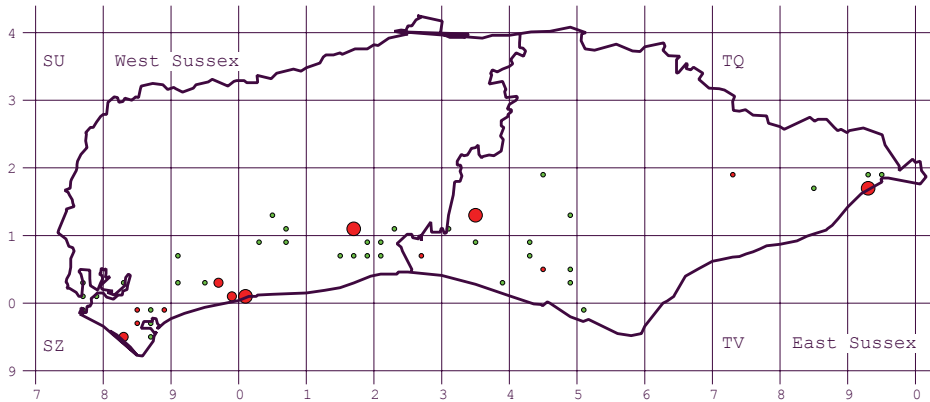
During the breeding season records were received from only 12 1-km squares but only a few of these produced positive evidence of natural breeding. At Sefter Fm two breeding territories were identified, Plumpton Agricultural College reported two pairs in 400 ha, at Constantia Manor (Isfield) a female with eight chicks was seen on 29 Jun and in the Pannel Valley NR a female with nine chicks was seen on 20 Jun. Breeding was probable at Westhampnett and at Bewl Res.

In the second winter period all the highest counts came from the Pagham Hbr area, with a maximum of 71 in the West Side Field on 9 Sep. Counts of this magnitude are strongly suggestive of released, captive-bred birds. Other high counts were 20 at Thorney Island on 21 Oct, 15 at East Wittering on 19 Oct and 13 from Clapham Wood on 18 Nov. [RTP]

Grey Partridge*Perdix perdix*

Scarce and decreasing resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Records were received from 70 sites, approximately equal to the 67 in 2005. As in previous years, the bulk of the records came from the south of the county as shown on the map below:



The only sightings north of the Downs were single records from Pulborough Brooks, Wiggonholt Common, Plumpton Agricultural College, Constantia Manor (Isfield) (two records), Laughton and Mountfield. The only double figure counts in the first winter period came from Pagham and Rye Harbours with maxima of 17 at Pagham North Fields on 7 Jan and 18 at Rye Hbr on 4 Jan.

Breeding records were sparse. Although birds were seen at 30 different sites during the breeding season, confirmation was only obtained from four; at Climping an adult with juveniles was seen on 12 Aug, at Steyning Round Hill a pair with seven young was seen on 5 Aug, at Plumpton Agricultural College a single pair bred in the 400-ha estate and at Rye Hbr a brood was seen on 18 Aug. Breeding was thought probable at Selsey West Fields and at Barnham.

During the second winter period, double figure counts came from nine sites with a maximum of 33 at Atherington (Climping) in two separate coveys on 23 Oct. At Thorney Island ten released birds were seen on 30 Dec, the other double figure counts in this period coming from Selsey West Fields, Church Norton, Atherington, Mill Hill (Shoreham), Beeding Hill, New Erringham Fm (Shoreham), Truleigh Hill and Rye Hbr. [RTP]

Common Quail*Coturnix coturnix*

Scarce summer visitor, recorded in variable numbers from year to year; formerly occasional in winter. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

Records were received from eight sites involving a possible 15 different birds, a marked reduction from the 17 sites and 28 birds in 2005. All the records were of birds singing; none were seen. The first record was in the Brede Valley on 13 May followed by a second singing male near the R Mole (Ifield) on the 29th. The 10-year average date for the first arrival is 14 May.

At Beachy Head there were two birds on 3 Jun to the north of Horseshoe Plantation. Three birds were heard at Ditchling Beacon on 11 Jun but the best downland site was Steyning Round Hill where there were ten records involving a minimum of four birds between 26 Jun and 22 Jul. Records of singles were also received from Amberley Wild Brooks on 28 Jun and Bopeep (Alciston) on 16 Jul. The last record of the year came from Bostal Hill (Berwick) on 30 Jul compared to the 10-year average of 15 Sep. [RTP]

Common Pheasant

Phasianus colchicus

Very common introduced resident; population augmented annually by captive-bred stock.

Records were received from 271 sites across the county (217 in 2005). Large counts of presumably released birds came from a number of sites. There were 50 in one field near West Dean Woods on 29 Apr, 80 juveniles in the road at Coates Common on 27 Oct and 158 in a wood used for shooting at Clapham Wood on 18 Nov.

Several reports were received of birds in gardens where they can cause considerable damage by walking round and round the feeders catching seeds dropped by wild passerines (*pers. obs.*).

Natural breeding was first reported from Heyshott Common where a female was nesting in heather on 3 Apr. Other breeding reports came from Sefton Fm (Pagham) where eight territories were identified, Barns Copse (Binstead) two territories, Climping where a female and two chicks were seen on 30 Jun, Arundel WWT where a tiny young was seen with adults on 7 Jul, five juveniles were at Amberley Mount on 13 Jul, a pair seen at Angmering with two juveniles on 1 Aug, two pairs bred at Brighton Wild Park, a family party was at Whitbread Hollow on 14 Aug and at Rye Hbr breeding was described as widespread. A male on the cliff top at Peacehaven on 19 Mar was considered unusual. [RTP]

Golden Pheasant

Chrysolophus pictus

Very scarce introduced resident.

Two birds, presumably males, were seen at Catsfield on 27 Apr (BJH). Although few records have been received for this species in recent years, they have all come from different sites: Beeding Brooks (2005), Rowland's Castle (2004) and Didling and Kingley Vale (2003). [RTP]

Red-throated Diver

Gavia stellata

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

Estimates of monthly totals for this species and the next have been made by combining the totals of birds recorded inland with the totals from coastal sites after making allowance for duplication. The largest daily count of birds recorded moving east or west at any site has been totalled and added to the largest number of birds reported as 'on the sea' or 'offshore'. In all probability, most of the birds recorded in the winter months as 'Diver *spp*' are Red-throated (an assumption that some observers already appear to make) and these accounts should be considered together.

The approximate monthly county totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Oct	Nov	Dec
203	564	328	35	29	-	6	40	74

The monthly totals of birds moving offshore at the principal seawatching sites together with estimated totals for *all* sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total (*)	178	394	282	35	29		4	40	74
Selsey Bill	25	7	27	15	15		3	16	58
Climping Beach	-	11	3	-	-		-	3	2
Worthing Beach	103	186	11	5	2		3	8	14
Telscombe Cliffs	72	166	24	1	-		-	17	13
Splash Point (Seaford)	37	25	78	2	22		-	-	-
Birling Gap	27	127	242	23	3		-	-	-

(*) adjusted to compensate for duplication

The variation in numbers reflects the time spent seawatching at each of the various sites and the extent to which there may have been localized feeding movements.

It was another rather poor year for this species with, once again, no records from Brighton Marina. Although the annual total was higher than that in 2005 (788) it was still only slightly over half of the ten-year rolling average and just over a quarter of the peak numbers recorded in 2002. In the early part of the year there were no three-figure movements with peaks of just 44 W at Worthing Beach on 21 Jan and 62 E at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 4 Feb. This latter movement may, in part at least, have been responsible for concentrations of 103 recorded off Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 10 Feb and 170 off Pett the following day. Forty-six remained off Glyne Gap on 10 Mar. The largest spring movements involved 53 E past Splash Point (Seaford) on 24 Mar and 60 E past Birling Gap the following day. The last spring records involved singles past Selsey Bill and Splash Point on 20 May.

The first returning bird was 1 E at Worthing Beach on 4 Oct. Coastal movements were generally small with a peak count of 28 W at Selsey Bill on 10 Dec. No large offshore concentrations were noted with the largest being six in Rye Bay on 11 Nov and nine there on 27 Dec.

There were six records of single birds away from the open sea: in flight over Rye Hbr on 17 Jan, Pagham Lagoon on 1 Feb, Scotney Court GP on 4 Feb, Rye Hbr on 20 Mar, Barcombe Res on 20 Oct and Arlington Res on 15 Dec. [DHH]

Black-throated Diver

Gavia arctica

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The approximate monthly county totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Oct	Nov	Dec
11	41	16	15	34		4	8	11

The annual total of 140 represents another poor year for this species although it is higher than the total of 108 in 2005. The monthly totals at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total (*)	7	33	14	14	30		1	2	9
Selsey Bill	1	1	-	9	7		1	2	9
Worthing Beach	1	-	3	4	-		-	1	1
Telscombe Cliffs	6	33	12	1	2		-	-	3
Splash Point (Seaford)	-	-	4	2	8		nc	nc	nc
Birling Gap	-	-	3	4	24		nc	nc	nc

(*) adjusted to compensate for duplication

In the first three months of the year the majority of records involved no more than two birds although there were 5 E at Telscombe Cliffs on 23 Feb. Numbers recorded offshore were similarly disappointing other than off Glynne Gap (Bexhill) where there were eight on 10 Feb and six on 27 Feb. Spring passage was extremely poor until 18 E, including a flock of nine, boosted numbers at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 2 May with the last spring sighting being 1 E at Selsey Bill on 20 May.

The first autumn records were of 1 E and 1 W (probably the same bird) at Selsey Bill on 9 Oct. Most sightings from then until the end of the year involved single birds other than 2 E at Brighton Marina on 3 Nov, three offshore at Selsey Bill on 12 Nov, and 2 E and 2 W at Selsey Bill on 10 Dec when there were also 2E at Telscombe Cliffs. [DHH]

Great Northern Diver

Gavia immer

Scarce winter visitor and spring passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total (*)	5	3	4	3	3		-	5	6
Max. off Selsey Bill	5	3	4	3	2		-	5	4

(*) adjusted to compensate for duplication

The annual total of 29 was lower than in 2005 (42) but still broadly in line with the 10-year average. Selsey Bill was once again the main site for this species during the winter months with peak monthly offshore counts of five on 7 Jan, three on 26 Feb, four on 12 Mar, three on 23 Apr and two on 2 and 9 May. Birds noted in flight at Selsey Bill are assumed to have been on local feeding flights as these movements were not noted elsewhere. It is also assumed that one or two birds noted between Chichester Hbr and Pagham were the result of feeding flights of birds from the Selsey Bill area.

During this period the only record away from the Selsey Bill area was one in breeding plumage off Beachy Head on 9 May which coincided with the last spring record at Selsey Bill where there were two offshore.

The first returning birds were five offshore at Selsey Bill on 15 Nov, the peak count for that month, followed by a December peak count of 4 on the 24th and 27th. On 8 Dec a singleton was found on Southwick Canal and remained into 2007. It was joined by a second bird from 11 to 13 Dec. During November and December, one to two birds noted between Chichester Hbr and Pagham were again assumed to be the same as birds wintering off Selsey Bill and this may also apply to one offshore at Goring on 31 Dec. [DHH]

Diver species

The specific identification of Divers in flight can be problematical, particularly when they are in winter plumage, some distance offshore or seen in poor light conditions. The number of birds recorded as 'Diver spp' can be significant, as shown by counts of 20 E at Telscombe Cliffs on 27 Feb, 28 E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 24 Mar with a further 21 E there the following day. Indeed, birds recorded as 'Diver spp' accounted for some 25% of all records received for Divers. The numbers of all Divers recorded at the main seawatching sites during the periods January-May and October-December are shown in the table below.

	Diver spp.		R-t Diver		B-t Diver		Total (*)		No. per hour	
	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D
Selsey Bill	77	17	107	82	18	13	300	154	0.8	1.1
Worthing Beach	40	7	332	31	9	2	381	40	2.6	0.7
Telscombe Cliffs	245	-	265	30	55	3	565	33	3.8	0.7
Splash Point (Seaford)	203	nc	179	nc	14	nc	396	nc	1.8	nc
Birling Gap	14	nc	422	nc	31	nc	468	nc	3.1	nc

(*) includes Great Northern Diver

The totals for each site have been calculated by adding the monthly totals of birds flying east to those going west plus the numbers of birds seen on the sea. No allowance has been made for duplication at individual sites, duplication between sites or for 'Diver spp' recorded at one site but specifically identified at other sites. No attempt should therefore be made to add the columns. [DHH]

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
Monthly total	167	169	115	49	25	26	61	62	176	180	196	183
Chichester Hbr	62	73	54	9	6	6	6	10	44	43	61	61
Pagham Hbr	13	8	8	9	-	1	5	2	8	7	24	18
Chichester GP	4	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	9	6	10	5
Brooklands Worthing	1	5	6	4	4	6	8	6	14	11	6	6
Cuckmere Haven	22	22	7	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	15	31	27	31
Bewl Water	3	3	9	nc	nc	nc	10	14	28	26	18	10
Rye Hbr	16	20	16	11	6	7	12	18	24	16	20	16
Scotney Court GP	30	21	1	nc	nc	-	nc	-	nc	10	5	5
Rye Bay	48	42	19	20	8	10	18	22	26	27	25	24

The approximate monthly county totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	246	199	185	112	70	59	97	162	201	228	245	229
No. of sites	55	42	42	42	28	24	23	30	35	43	45	51

The only significant numbers in the first winter period additional to those above were 33 at Thorney Island (Chichester Hbr) on 10 Feb and 24 at Cuckmere Haven on 23 Jan.

At least 24 confirmed breeding pairs were identified at ten sites with a further five probable

breeding sites and eight possible territories. At Isfield, successful breeding was delayed due to harassment by Coots which have colonised the site and chicks were not seen until 12 Aug. On 19 Aug three chicks were seen emerging from a nest suspended on a clump of blanket weed in a new pond where cover had not yet been created; such is perseverance!

In the second winter period, significant numbers additional to the WeBS counts included a monthly maximum of 43 at Thorney Island on 17 Dec, 18 at Pagham Hbr on 8 Nov, 12 at Brooklands (Worthing) on 3 Nov and 27 at Cuckmere Haven on 4 Nov and 2 Dec. [JAH]

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
Monthly total	326	987	429	87	74	101	376	326	491	485	476	613
Chichester Hbr	-	21	10	13	2	2	2	-	7	9	27	35
Pagham Hbr	15	7	4	9	7	6	9	4	15	28	24	12
Chichester GP	43	47	27	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	59	60	76	79
Weir Wood Res	21	22	33	nc	nc	22	21	nc	35	19	30	4
Arlington Res	15	18	10	15	12	14	26	39	43	42	45	6
Bewl Water	125	57	108	nc	nc	nc	243	188	188	182	123	110
Glyne Gap	8	115	116	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	213
Darwell Res	22	32	29	21	27	19	37	41	41	47	28	30
Pett Level	30	600	8	2	3	21	7	3	1	4	19	3
Rye Hbr	4	21	12	13	10	6	18	38	42	28	27	44
Rye Bay	43	630	22	15	13	31	25	41	43	36	49	58

The approximate monthly county totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	1193	1886	620	399	257	286	410	425	549	525	752	831
No. of sites	44	58	55	46	36	38	30	27	39	38	52	46

In the first winter period significant numbers additional to the WeBS counts included 200 at Goring Beach on 19 Jan, 310 at Brighton Marina on 21 Feb, 198 at Telscombe Cliffs on the 11 Feb and 800 the same day, following over 500 there on 22 Jan. There were 66 inland at Weir Wood Res on 26 Mar.

During the first five and last three months of the year frequent coastal movements were noted at the principal seawatching sites, generally involving small numbers, as shown below:

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	2	1	4	3	9		2	1	-
	W	3	-	3	4	19		1	10	87
Worthing Beach	E	2	3	4	3	2		-	12	3
	W	-	6	7	2	3		4	24	5
Telscombe Cliffs	E	2	5	5	4	-		-	-	-
	W	2	11	2	1	-		-	-	-
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	-	6	32	6	2		-	-	-
	W	-	-	2	-	-		-	-	-
Birling Gap	E	4	9	9	7	1		-	-	-
	W	-	-	3	2	1		-	-	-

The highest counts were 13E on 24 Mar at Splash Point (Seaford) in 5 hr and 31W at Selsey Bill on 10 Dec in 5¾ hr.

Breeding was confirmed at at least ten sites by at least 68 pairs (including 56 pairs with 11 broods at Bewl Water). There was only one breeding record from Chichester GP even though there were 'lots of juveniles around'. Breeding probably occurred at another three sites (five pairs) and another four possible territories were identified.

The peak count at Arlington Res in August was 47 on the 15th. At Weir Wood Res 52 were counted on 24 Aug and 65 on 24 Sep. A female was still sitting on two eggs at Warnham LNR on 1 Sep.

In the second winter period significant numbers additional to the WeBS counts included 50 offshore at Church Norton on 4 Nov, 65 at Goring Beach on 21 Dec, 35 at Worthing Beach on 4 Nov and 36 inland at Weir Wood Res on 12 Nov. [JAH]

Red-necked Grebe

Podiceps grisegena

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

The approximate minimum monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	10	3	4	5		1	4	1	9	5
No. of sites	8	3	3	3		2	3	1	7	3

The year began with a singleton at Bulverhythe (St Leonards) on 1 Jan. On the same day there were 3 W at Brighton Marina, followed by 1 W on the 2nd and a singleton the next day. Seawatchers at Selsey Bill recorded 1 E on both the 7th and 8th and again on the 29th. In Chichester Hbr one was noted at Thorney Island on the 6th and there was another in the Lower Channel on the 18th. A singleton was at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on the 13th. Some of these sightings may have been of the same birds flying between the various sites. One at Warnham LNR on the 29th was seen in a tree and also diving and flying around.

In February singletons were noted offshore at Church Norton and at Scotney Court GP on the 1st and at Darwell Res on the 13th. In March coastal movements involved 1 W at Telscombe Cliffs on the 1st, 1 E at Worthing Beach on the 4th, and 1 W at Selsey Bill on the 26th and 28th. A singleton was at Pilsey Sands (Chichester Hbr) on the 2nd.

A singleton at Worthing Beach on 6 Apr was followed by birds seemingly returning to breeding areas; 2 E were recorded at both Splash Point (Seaford) and Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on the 17th (almost certainly the same), the last spring records.

The first bird to return post-breeding was one seen at Bewl Water on 13 Aug, the earliest record since 1866. This was followed by two at Cuckmere Meanders on 16 Sep and singletons at Thorney Island on the 19th, Selsey Bill on the 30th and at Pagham Hbr on 8 Oct. Singletons at Goring, Ferring and Worthing Beach on the 4 Nov were probably the same bird. Similarly singletons in Chichester Hbr at West Chidham and Pilsey Island also on the 4th were probably the same bird although one more joined the latter on the 7th, two were there on the 22nd and one was still present on 2 Dec. The final records for the year were of 1 W at Worthing Beach on 17 Dec and 1 W at Brighton Marina on the 30th. [JAH]

Slavonian Grebe*Podiceps auritus*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The totals shown in the following table were computed on the assumption that the maximum number seen at any one site was the minimum at that site in the month. The approximate monthly totals and their distribution between the west and the east of the county were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	40	56	39	16		3	0	15	30
West	35	49	31	12		1	0	13	24
East	5	7	8	4		2	0	2	6
No. of sites	13	14	13	8		2	0	9	8

At least 122 individuals were recorded during the year and, as usual, most were in the west of the county. The maximum monthly counts at the various (mostly coastal) sites were as follows:

Location	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chichester Hbr	5	1	-	-		-	-	-	3
Selsey Bill / Church Norton	10	30	15	6		1	-	4	7
Climping Beach	-	-	3	2		-	-	-	-
Goring Gap to Worthing Beach	-	9	4	3		-	-	-	-
Glyne Gap (Bexhill)	2	4	4	-		2	-	-	2
Rye Hbr	1	1	1	1		-	-	1	-
Scotney Court GP	1	2	-	-		-	-	-	-

In addition, singletons were seen offshore at Shoreham Power Station on 1 Jan and at Saltdean on 7 Jan. The last spring record was of one at Brighton Marina on 30 Apr.

The first autumn sightings were two at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 18 Sep and one at Selsey Bill on the 22nd. The next one was not seen until 3 Nov at Brighton Marina. The only inland sighting of the year was of one at Bewl Water on 17 Dec. There were seven birds at Selsey Bill on 31 Dec to see the New Year in. [JAH]

Black-necked Grebe*Podiceps nigricollis*

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The totals shown in the following table were computed on the assumption that the maximum number seen at any one site was the minimum at that site in the month. The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	4	3	2	20		1	1	2	6	4
No. of sites	3	2	2	7		1	1	2	4	3

At least 37 different birds were recorded during the year, similar to 2003 and 2005. In the first winter period sightings in Chichester Hbr involved one at Thorney Island on 3 Jan, two at Nutbourne on the 18th and, at Thorney Island again, on the 31st and finally on 1 Feb. A singleton was at Rye Hbr on 22 Jan and again from 20 to 24 Mar. A long-staying bird was seen at Scotney

Court GP from 25 Jan to 16 Mar.

Peak numbers occurred in April with at least 20 individuals recorded. The highest count was of eight at Brighton Marina on the 15th. Inland, two were at Arlington Res on the 17th. An estimated eight were seen on various dates between Goring Beach in the west to Rye Hbr in the east, the last record being from the latter site on the 30th.

The first post-breeding season record was of a moulting individual at Arlington Res on 27 Aug. The next was not noted until 18 Sep when one was at Rye Hbr until the 23rd. In October a singleton was seen at Pagham Hbr from the 29th to the 31st (and again between 2 and 25 Nov) while at Rye Hbr there was one from the 18th to the 27th. Singletons were also seen at Ferring on 4 Nov and at East Head (Chichester Hbr) on the 6th. There were four records of singletons in December; at Church Norton on the 2nd and 10th, and at Selsey Bill and Ivy Lake (Chichester GP) on the 17th. [JAH]

Fulmar

Fulmarus glacialis

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

Although birds were recorded all along the coast in the early months of the year there was no evidence of any significant movements. In the case of seawatching sites located close to breeding sites it is often difficult to determine whether birds are involved in genuine movements or simply leaving the nesting cliffs on feeding flights. This may account for the sparsity of records which, in turn, makes it impossible to tabulate the movements. There was also little evidence of movements in spring with the March peak being just 40 E at Splash Point (Seaford) on the 24th. In April, 200 were feeding off Telscombe Cliffs and totals of 27 E and 173 W were recorded at Selsey Bill during the month. A blue morph bird flew west then east past Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 30 Apr and one with distinctive large white patches on its upper wings was seen there on 7 May.

On 24 May there were 32 W at Rye Bay and 40 W per hour at Brighton Marina with monthly totals of 36 E and 335 W at Selsey Bill. The last birds left the breeding sites at Telscombe Cliffs on 14 Sep and the last record for the season was at Selsey Bill on the 28th.

The only record for October was of one offshore at Rye Bay on the 30th with the first bird returning to Telscombe Cliffs on 6 Nov. The only significant movement noted during the latter part of the year was also at Telscombe Cliffs where there were 109 E and 11 W in one hour on 17 Nov. A blue morph bird was seen at Brighton Marina on 29 Dec.

Away from the open sea, singles were recorded at Lancing on 9 Mar and Southwick on 13 Jun. [DHH]

Sooty Shearwater

Puffinus griseus

Very scarce autumn visitor.

Two flew east at Brighton Marina (IJW) and one east at Selsey Bill (JA) on 2 Sep, with singles east at Selsey Bill on 29 Sep (JA) and west there on the 30th (JA). A total of 43 flew west past Selsey Bill on 1 Oct (JA, TJE, DIS *et al.*), all between 0825 hr and 1310 hr, presumably including all or most of the 31W at Brighton Marina (IJW) while three west at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) between 1245 hr and 1310 hr (ASC, GWG) would have been different. One flew east at Brighton Marina on 19 Oct (IJW) with 3 W there (IJW) and 3 W at Selsey Bill on 17 Nov (JA).

The times of the observations at Brighton Marina were not reported making it hard to determine whether any overlap is likely among the two September and 17 November records. Assuming that there was none, then 58 individuals were likely to have been recorded during the autumn and the county total since the beginning of 2000 rises to 125. The monthly totals during this period are January (2), July (1), August (2), September (14), October (76), November (29) and December (1). [RJF]

Manx Shearwater

Puffinus puffinus

Fairly common spring to autumn passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The minimum total of 226 was a welcome increase on the numbers recorded in recent years. The monthly totals at the main seawatching sites were as follows:

	Apr		May		Jun		Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
County total	11		192		11		7		1		3		1	
Selsey Bill	-	-	5	80	10	-	-	6	-	-	-	1	-	-
Worthing	-	-	1	9	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
Brighton Marina	5	-	-	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Splash Point (Seaford)	4	-	29	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Birling Gap	1	1	37	62	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Sites	-	-	4	3	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	-

The first spring record was a single flying east at Splash Point (Seaford) on 2 Apr followed by 3 E there on the 8th. In May, there were 13 E past Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on the 7th and 12 E past Splash Point on the 8th but the largest numbers were in the second half of the month and were associated with stormy weather and unprecedented numbers of Storm-petrels. On the 19th 18 flew west past Birling Gap. On the 21st there was 1 E and 29 W at Birling Gap while nearby at Splash Point there were 2 E and 35 W. The 22nd brought 20 W to Brighton Marina and smaller numbers were recorded there on other dates but no details were provided. On the 23rd Selsey Bill logged 25 W and on the 24th there were 13 E at Birling Gap.

Few were recorded during the summer months with the only notable counts being 5 E at Selsey Bill on 22 Jun and 5 W at that location on 9 Jul. In September, one flew west at Selsey Bill on the 22nd and there were 2 W at Worthing on the 30th. The last record for the year was 1 E at Telscombe Cliffs on 10 Oct. [TJW]

Balearic Shearwater

Puffinus mauretanicus

Scarce spring to autumn visitor.

It was a very good year for this species, with 41 recorded from late May to the beginning of October, all but three or four of which passed westwards.

The high total was due mainly to the 35 seen from Brighton Marina over this period (all IJW). The earliest here were two on 22 May, with another two on 29 July. During August, a single on the 19th was followed by twos on the 20th and the 21st and a single on the 28th. September began with 2E and 2W on the 2nd (possibly the same birds). The year's peak count of 17, 12 of which were in one group, was seen on the 12th. The latest Marina sightings were of five during 1st Oct, which corresponded to high counts of Sooty Shearwaters on the same date.

Elsewhere in the county, single birds were noted as follows: Selsey Bill on 21 May (RJF), from a fishing boat c.5 miles off Littlehampton on 24 Jul (MW), Selsey Bill on 13 Aug (BM), Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 3 Sep (RHC) and Selsey Bill on both 29 Sep (JA) and 1 Oct (MC *et al.*). [ASC]

European Storm-petrel

Hydrobates pelagicus

Very scarce visitor, mainly in mid-summer and after autumn gales. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

An unprecedented movement was witnessed along the coast as far east as Birling Gap (Beachy Head) during 19 to 30 May, as shown in the tables below. Perhaps up to 400 individuals were involved relocating west with varying degrees of urgency. One of those lingering off Birling Gap on 24 May should perhaps have been more purposeful as it was taken by a Peregrine (DC, JFC *et al.*). Subsequent records of 1 W off Climping Gap on 8 Jun (OM), one at sea 10 km south of Shoreham on 16 Jul (BFF) and 2 W off Selsey Bill on 23 Jul (JA) were more usual. The following tables set out in detail the records for the period 19 to 30 May (directions of flight are shown, L = birds lingering offshore):

	19 May	20 May	21 May	22 May	23 May	24 May
Total	1W:2L	24W:2L	19E:44W:2L	2E:30W:5L	6W	4E:123W:1L
Selsey Bill	1W:2L (JA, BJC, SH)	14W:2L (JA, KWM, SH <i>et al</i>)	19E:35W:2L (JA, KWM <i>et al</i>)	15W:2L (AH, SH)		8W? (SH)
Climping						
Ferring						
Goring				2L (DIS)		
Worthing			1W (CWM)			
Widewater						
Portslade						
Brighton Marina		10W (IJW)	7W (IJW)	15W (IJW)	5W (IJW)	up to 105W (IJW)
Ovingdean			1W (ITB)			2W (ITB)
Portobello						1L (DHH)
Seaford				1L (TWP)	1W (JC, NP)	
Birling Gap				2E (RHC, JFC)		4E:8W (DC, JFC <i>et al</i>)

	25 May	26 May	27 May	28 May	29 May	30 May
Total	45W:8L	1E:23W:1L	5E:59W:14L	23W:2L	1L	5L
Selsey Bill	5W (AH)	1W (JA)	2W:2L (JA <i>et al</i>)	2W (JA)	1L (JA)	5L (JA, ITB)
Climping			8W (EDU)	7W (OM)		
Ferring		6W (MGP)				
Goring						
Worthing		2W (JAN, DIS)	14W:12L (MGP <i>et al</i>)	9W:2L (MGP <i>et al</i>)		
Widewater	5W (RJF)	1W (JSG)				
Portslade		1E (RJF)				
Brighton Marina	32W (IJW)	8W (IJW)	18W (IJW)	5W (IJW)		
Ovingdean	3W (ITB)	4W (ITB)	10W (ITB)			
Portobello						
Seaford		1+W (SHL)				
Birling Gap	8L (RHC, DRC, JFC)	1L (RHC)	5E:7W (DC, JFC, JWK <i>et al</i>)			

The numbers in the above tables will inevitably involve some duplication, both within the site totals and between them, although it is impossible to determine how much. That birds at some locations were recorded only passing west and not east or lingering is a puzzle. Perhaps more pairs of eyes at the better watched sites were less likely to overlook birds that were not moving in the expected direction. Because of this, west only totals may also include some duplication and the peak movement reported at Brighton Marina on the 24th is therefore best considered as up to 105 W. During this period nearly 400 were logged at Dungeness (Kent) while peak movements at Portland Bill (Dorset) were over 500 offshore and moving west during the morning on 19 May and over 1000 moving west on the 20th at a rate of over 100 per hour (see www.portlandbirdobs.org.uk and Birding World 19:179).

Prior to this movement, 24 had been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000, eight during late October/early November gales and the rest from Selsey Bill in spring or summer. Many sites recorded the species for the first time and the movement is possibly the ornithological event of the year. [RJF]

Leach's Storm-petrel

Oceanodroma leucorhoa

Rare vagrant. Schedule 1 species.

One was reported flying west at Brighton Marina on 3 Dec with 5 W there on the 5th and 3 W on the 7th (ADW, IJW). These records may include some duplication. One was taken by a Peregrine on the 5th, the second storm-petrel seen to suffer that fate during the year. Assuming all were different then 40 have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000; in February, May, October (six, from the 7th), November (22) and early December (10). [RJF]

Gannet*Morus bassanus*

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

Movements at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

	Jan - Feb		Mar - May		Jun - Jul		Aug - Oct		Nov - Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	730	41	881	1083	373	161	305	2274	12	1090
Worthing	467	347	225	498	98	156	147	351	63	259
Telscombe Cliffs	1411	212	294	199	509	82	335	483	28	183
Splash Point (Seaford)	487	24	1400	218	55	16	-	-	-	-
Birling Gap	63	24	714	243	-	-	-	-	-	-

Good numbers were feeding off the Sussex coast in the early part of the year. Notable counts at Telscombe Cliffs included 242 E on 20 Jan, 214 E and 29 W on 14 Feb and 269 E and 7 W on 22 Feb. At least 400 were feeding offshore at Selsey Bill on 25 Feb and 577 flew east there on the 26th.

In the spring there were only ten dates when counts of 100 or more were made compared with 23 dates in the previous year. The maximum counts were also much lower with the peaks being 215 E and 4 W at Selsey Bill on 18 Mar, 270 E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 7 May and 164 W at Selsey Bill on the 27th.

June and July were quiet with the only minor highlight being 133 in Rye Bay on 26 Jun. August was similarly uneventful but at the start of September numbers picked up with 32 E and 347 W being recorded at Selsey Bill on the 2nd and later in the month 210 flew west at Selsey Bill on the 28th. Records from October were dominated by a high count of 18 E and 547 W at Selsey Bill on the 1st. There was only one count of over 100 in the last two months of the year although this was also the highest day count of the year, 994 W at Selsey Bill on 17 Nov.

There were no sightings of the regular Brighton roof-top bird that has appeared for the last eight years. [TJW]

Great Cormorant*Phalacrocorax carbo*

Fairly common but localised resident and common winter visitor. Amber listed 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
Monthly total	767	730	803	415	419	439	518	877	819	911	903	487
Chichester Hbr	35	71	36	14	7	15	23	57	33	103	112	53
Pagham Hbr	308	188	290	194	151	58	258	187	204	103	161	29
Chichester GP	134	120	120	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	59	90	106	122
Weir Wood Res	30	23	44	nc	3	-	2	nc	19	4	19	8
Barcombe Res	29	11	12	9	3	4	10	13	18	18	50	30
Bewl Water	24	110	56	nc	nc	nc	32	40	69	40	45	30
<i>Pett Level</i>	2	2	2	19	48	29	9	17	42	38	23	13
<i>Rye Hbr</i>	48	63	88	141	189	319	146	494	234	270	163	44
Rye Bay	58	79	90	160	237	348	155	511	276	315	188	67

The WeBS totals were not only the highest ever in eight months of the year, but also the second highest in February and November, and third highest in July. Unusually many birds seem to have left both coastal and inland areas in December so it proved the exception with only low average numbers.

In the first winter period the largest concentrations were in western coastal areas, particularly in Pagham Hbr where the 1% national threshold level of 230 was exceeded in January and March. The three northern reservoirs (Weir Wood, Ardingly and Bewl Water) also had their highest numbers during this period with a combined total of 199 in February. There were 110 at Bewl Water on 12 Feb and 63 at Weir Wood Res on 5 Mar. The only large offshore count of the year was on 31 Jan when 218 gathered in a fairly tight party along with Great Crested Grebes off Worthing Beach.

Following recent trends the majority of birds in the breeding season was found in the east, particularly at Rye Bay where the 1% national threshold level was exceeded in May, June, August, September and October. Here the rapid growth of the breeding colony in Castle Water has been causing ecological problems but has been checked by cutting down some of the trees. Nevertheless the colony still attracted 130 nests with chicks present from late March to late August. This heavy breeding activity led to numbers in the Rye Bay area reaching a maximum in late summer with 350 at Castle Water on the 11 Aug and 494 at Rye Hbr on 13 Aug.

The only other reported breeding colony was again at a lake in Iford Brooks (Lewes). This had 20 active nests (the most to date) which were crowded onto one small island, some in dead trees and some on the ground.

In the second winter period numbers at Rye reduced but there were again many birds at the inland reservoirs with over 200 in November. This time, however, the sites nearer the coast were more favoured with Barcombe Res having 84 on 26 Nov and Arlington Res 46 on 13 Dec. Numbers in the western harbours also increased with a peak of 112 in Chichester Hbr on 19 Nov. Seawatch records at Selsey Bill showed a modest westerly movement of birds throughout November and December but, by the end of the year, numbers were comparatively low all along the coast.

Counts for the Chichester GP nocturnal roost established around New Lake (with occasional spill over to Runcton Lake) are given below:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
161	214	158	123	78	81	54	106	131	117	156	138

Since in many months these numbers barely exceed those of birds present in the whole gravel pit complex in daytime, it would appear that this roost no longer caters for many of the large numbers using Pagham and Chichester Harbours in daylight hours. There was no indication of nocturnal roosts within either of these harbours but a sighting of 59 in a large "V" flying west over Pilsey Island at late afternoon on 12 Sep may indicate a nocturnal roost in nearby Hampshire.

There were disappointingly few returns from the other regular nocturnal roosts. The South Stoke (Arun Valley) roost was not easily accessible because of bridge repairs nearby but sizeable flocks were regularly seen commuting to and fro, the largest being 66 passing Warningcamp (Arundel) on 23 Jan. There were 80 birds on electricity transmission lines over the Steyning Levels near the R Adur on 4 Feb suggesting that this roost too was still in regular use.

Cormorants were not confined to the coast and large reservoirs. There were widespread reports from most rivers, lakes, ponds, and farm reservoirs; for example, Warnham LNR had birds every month with a maximum of 27 on 30 Dec, Forest Mere (Liphook), which was equally well frequented, had 26 on 23 Oct, whilst Petworth Park Pond had 14 on 15 Jan. [RK]

Shag

Phalacrocorax aristotelis

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

Approximately 456 birds were seen, a total very close to last year's 482 and which maintains the increase in annual numbers noted since 2003/4. The majority (82%) were seen during seawatches, most particularly at Selsey Bill as shown in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	116	12	8	23	19	1	2	14	117	63	55	26
Selsey Bill All	94	9	6	16	10	1	-	9	107	56	14	20
E	87	9	3	9	2	1	-	8	85	40	32	14
W	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	-	4	13	1	-
O/S	7	-	-	4	7	-	-	1	1	3	8	6
Other sites	22	3	5	7	9	-	2	5	10	7	14	6

Totals from 'other sites' included: seven at Brighton Marina on 7 Jan (where a few were present for much of the year except June and July); 33 recorded by seawatchers at Worthing (9), Splash Point (Seaford) (19) and Birling Gap (Beachy Head) (5) which were all usually single birds flying east; 12 going to roost at Climping on 20 Jan; 10 W at Brighton Marina on 17 Sep and, unusually, 11 inland at Pulborough Brooks on 30 Nov. [JPP]

Eurasian Bittern

Botaurus stellaris

Scarce winter visitor; rare outside winter months. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

This was a relatively poor year when compared with the average for the last five years. The following table gives the approximate monthly totals:

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	3	6	2		1	-	1	1	1
Burton MP	1	1	1		-	-	-	-	-
Pannel Valley NR*	-	1	-		-	-	1	-	-
Rye Hbr	2	2	1		-	-	-	1	1
Other sites	-	2	-		1	-	-	-	-

*includes Pett Level

Most birds were seen during the first winter period. At Burton MP a singleton was present from 2 to 29 Jan and again on 25 Feb and 4 Mar. In the Pett Level/Pannel Valley NR area single birds were seen on five dates between 1 and 16 Feb. Rye Hbr was the only site which held more than one bird on any day. In January a single bird there from the 2nd was joined by another on the 30th whence two were seen on several dates until 24 Feb and the last one on 9 Mar. Single birds were also seen at Arundel WWT on 13 and 27 Feb.

The only summer record was of one at Thorney Deeps (Chichester Hbr) on 15 Aug.

In the second winter period single birds were seen at Pannel Valley NR on 11 Oct and at Rye Hbr on several dates between 5 Nov and 28 Dec. [JPP]



Little Bittern, private garden, May 2006 (Dorian Mason)

Little Bittern

Ixobrychus minutus

Rare vagrant. Schedule 1 species.

A male was tracked through gardens in Hove and Southwick between 28 Mar and 5 May. This amazing chain of events began when it was seen in Rutland Road (Hove) on 28 Mar (DU). It then relocated 0.8 km west to Rothbury Road (Hove) where it frequented a garden pond from 30 Mar to 24 Apr (PC *et al.*) before moving a further 2 km west to Milton Drive (Southwick) on 26 Apr (per BFF) and adjacent Manor Hall Road from 27 Apr to 5 May (EM), where it again took

up residence by a small garden pond. While in Rothbury Road it lost a couple of feathers (type unknown), possibly as a result of a close encounter with a cat or fox.

It has been accepted by BBRC and was the 32nd county record, although the first since 2000 when a male was seen at Filsham Reedbed on 29 May. That its movements amongst non-birders' gardens were noted and documented so extensively is quite extraordinary, although the frustration of it choosing to reside for so long in inaccessible private gardens, not overlooked from roads, might make some wish it had never been reported! A more obliging individual, or one under more favourable circumstances, would be greatly appreciated by many as the last widely viewable individuals were at Chichester GP in May 1987 and Oreham Common (Henfield) in late March/April 1988, the latter having been picked up in a weakened state on Hove seafront and kept overnight before its release. The last 60 years account for just half of those recorded in the county. Since 1960, 12 have been in spring (28 Mar to 5 Jun), one in July (Chichester GP, 1967) and two in August (Rye Hbr, 1977) although the extreme dates for the county are 15 Mar (shot near Pett in 1947) and 31 Oct (obtained in Eastbourne in 1888). [RJF]

Night Heron

Nycticorax nycticorax

Rare vagrant.

A juvenile was present at Weir Wood Res from 29 Aug to 28 Sep (NAD, ST *et al.*). It attracted many visitors during its stay and was usually to be found at the western end of the reservoir opposite the hide, either feeding in the creeks or roosting in the trees above. It was the fourth record since the beginning of 2000 and takes the county total to 32. It was the first to have been found in August although there is an old 'autumn' record (in 1895) and one at Rye Hbr in early September 1975. Spring records are more usual, with most arrivals having been in April (7), May (12) or September (5). The only previous record at this site (in July 2002) was also the county's most recent record. [RJF]



Night Heron, Weir Wood Reservoir, September 2006 (Paul Marten)

Cattle Egret

Bulbulcus ibis

Rare vagrant.

Eight were present at Piddinghoe in the Ouse Valley from 2 Jan to 1 Apr (MO) while one was seen at Carter's Flood (Pett Level) during the evening of 18 Apr (NB). These records have been accepted by BBRC and take the county total to 21. All have been between December and May. The flock of eight, which was often to be found in fields south of the village or roosting with at least five Little Egrets by the roadside pond, matches the largest group recorded in Britain (in Hertfordshire in May 1992). In addition, the individual near Chalder Fm (Pagham Hbr) from 16 Dec 2005 (*SxBR* 58:55) was joined by a second on 5 Jan and a third from the 9th with all three remaining until at least mid-March and two still present on 6 Apr although to date none of the 2006 Pagham sightings have been submitted to BBRC and are not included in the county total. [RJF]



Cattle Egrets, Piddinghoe, January 2006 (Les Bird)

Little Egret

Egretta garzetta

Formerly rare, but now breeds and is a fairly common autumn and winter visitor. Amber listed 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
Monthly total	94	83	50	53	48	64	90	150	356	291	192	97
Chichester Hbr	31	48	22	31	28	31	61	96	192	180	124	44
Pagham Hbr	31	6	9	16	9	16	19	40	90	59	25	27
Chichester GP	11	10	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	5
Upper Adur Levels	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
Lancing Widewater	4	5	4	2		3	5	6	4	4	3	1
Cuckmere Haven	4	3	1						10	14	18	9
Pevensey Levels	1	1	2	0	2	3	0	0	1	0	2	1
<i>Rye Hbr</i>	2	2	1						30	8	6	4
Rye Bay	4	2	1	3	0	1	0	2	34	11	6	4

Most sightings were, as would be expected, from coastal areas or wetlands and water bodies within 15 km of the coast. Records from inland sites were mainly from Warnham LNR, Weir Wood Res, Bewl Water and Darwell Res. As usual, the number of monthly records peaked in September when migrants arrive before dispersing with the onset of winter. Significant counts additional to those in the WeBS table included a peak count of 93 at Halsey's Fm (Pagham) on 31 Aug with 53 still there on 24 Dec and a highest count of 79 leaving the Rye Hbr roost at dawn on

11 Aug. The only records of significant numbers roosting in the first half of the year came from Rye Hbr. There were 31 there on 7 Jan, a peak count of 32 on 9 Feb, 23 on 11 Mar and a final record of 9 on 12 May. There were only three records of roosting in Chichester Hbr involving no more than eight birds at Fishbourne on two dates in February. Presumably the Chichester Hbr birds usually roost in nearby Hampshire.

Breeding was confirmed at only four sites this year (six in 2005), comprising at least 17 nests. There was one nest at site C, three nests at site F where breeding had been only probable last year, at least three nests at site D and at least ten at site A. There were no records of breeding at sites B and E.

In the second half of the year all but two records of roosting birds were from Rye Hbr. The first record from there was of 26 on 19 Jul. Numbers then peaked at 79 on 11 Aug but there were still 51 on 17 Sep and 49 on 28 Dec. Elsewhere the only other significant records outside the WeBS counts were of 25 on the scrape at high tide at Cuckmere Haven on 3 Sep and 10 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 7 Oct. [JPP]

Great White Egret

Ardea alba

Rare vagrant.

One was seen on the beach at Cow Gap (Beachy Head) during the mornings of 10 and 11 Sep (JFC, RJF *et al.*) but flew off west on both days, possibly due to the rising tide. It was considered to be a small individual, although one that was clearly significantly bigger than nearby Little Egrets. It was the 20th to be recorded in the county and the second for Beachy Head, the first flying east along the cliff-edge on 17 Mar 1998. The species has been recorded in the county in every month except May and December. [RJF]

Grey Heron

Ardea cinerea

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
Monthly total	105	83	83	37	35	43	88	100	212	180	139	110
Chichester Hbr	12	21	18	3	6	8	8	14	22	24	18	18
Pagham Hbr	9	3	6	7	2	10	9	17	13	15	9	6
Chichester GP	14	6	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	7	7	6
Forest Mere	2	-	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	11	2	2	1
Amberley Wild Brooks	1	3	4	-	1	3	2	5	9	10	3	1
Arun Valley	3	8	11	13	12	14	19	21	15	21	7	5
Lower Adur Estuary	8	1	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	7	4	-
Ardingly Res	7	5	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	6	5	8	4
Weir Wood Res	6	8	-	nc	nc	2	8	nc	22	23	5	2
Cuckmere Haven	4	-	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	8	5	6	6
Pevensy Levels	3	2	8	6	2	3	4	2	11	11	13	15
Bowl Water	2	3	2	nc	nc	nc	12	26	56	27	16	13
Rye Hbr	5	4	3	1	3	1	4	6	7	5	14	18
Rye Bay	8	7	4	2	3	1	16	7	12	7	15	23

The September WeBS total of 56 at Bewl Water may be due to low water levels, which would attract herons to the shores and also make them more visible to observers.

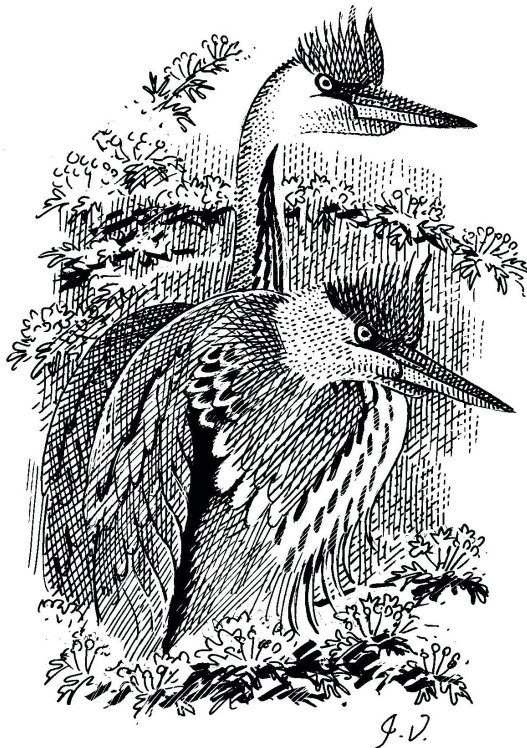
At Birling Gap (Beachy Head) there were three records suggestive of birds on passage; 1E on 15 Mar, 2E and 1W on 17 Apr and 1N on the 27th which arrived high off the sea. Up to two birds were noted nearby on the beach at Cow Gap on similar dates.

During the breeding season 253 nests were counted at 25 heronries (263 nests in 2005) with no count at Charleston and an incomplete count at Warnham LNR. Counts for individual heronries, listed from west to east, were as follows:

Westbourne 2; Forest Mere 2; Fishbourne 13; Pagham Owl copse 9; Church Norton 5; Flansham 14; Warningcamp 4; Parham 18; Knepp 14; Warnham LNR 5; Henfield 23; Ardingly Res 12; Weir Wood Res 15; Rodmell 2; Firle 11; Charleston nc; Hadlow Down 14; Eridge 15; Hampden Park (Eastbourne) 1; Glynleigh 14; Wartling 10; Bewl Water 2; Burwash 9; Pebsham 5; Winchelsea 8; Leasam 26.

Thirteen heronries have increased by from one to three nests, while those at Parham and Firle have decreased by 11 and six respectively. Two nests were found at a new site at Bewl Water. The overall picture is of a very slight increase across the county.

During the rest of the year single birds and small groups of herons were seen feeding or loafing in suitable habitat throughout the county. [ABW]



Spoonbill*Platalea leucorodia*

Very scarce visitor, most frequent in spring and autumn. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

An estimated 13, possibly 16, birds were recorded during the year with most spring records being of long stayers. Up to 1995, the number of Spoonbills recorded averaged three per year (*Birds of Sussex*) but, since then, numbers have increased so that the 5-year average for 2001-2005 is 16 per year, as shown below:

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
No. of birds	7	2	1	7	14	10	13	13	27	17

In the west of the county, one was in the Pagham Hbr area from 26 Apr to 2 May with another at Thorney Deepes (Chichester Hbr) from 1 to 7 May. At Pulborough Brooks a long staying individual present from 1 May to 17 Jun was joined on the 26 May by two more which had departed by the 28th. A single bird which flew east over Rackham on 9 May may have been the long staying Pulborough Brooks bird.

In the east, however, birds did not stay. The first record was one at Pannel Valley NR on 11 May followed by what might have been different birds at Rye Hbr on the 16th and at Pett Level/Pannel Valley NR on the 27th, 29th and 31st.

All summer and autumn records were of wanderers. There were two at Pagham Hbr on 15 Jun, a singleton at Sidlesham Ferry on 29 Jul and another at Pagham Hbr on 27 Aug. A singleton was at Pett Level on 25 and 26 Sep, another was at Thorney Island on 12 Oct and the last of the year was one at Pagham Hbr on the 22nd. [JPP]

Honey-buzzard*Pernis apivorus*

Very scarce breeding summer visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

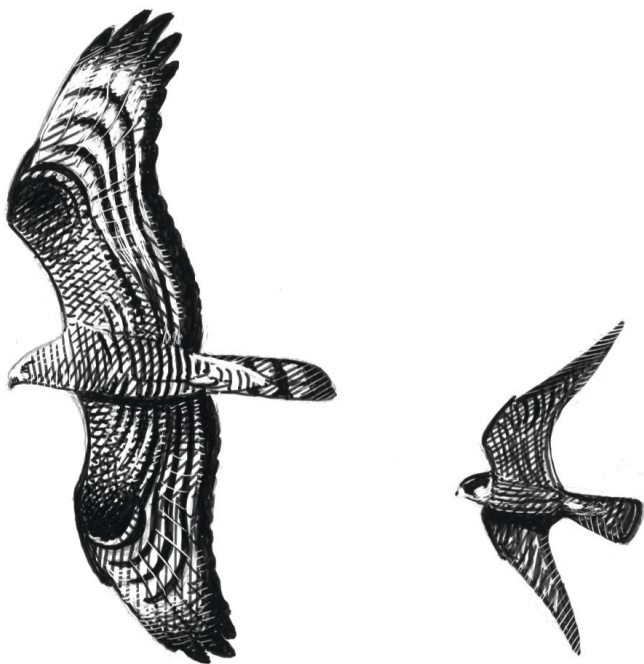
The group who monitor Honey-buzzards in the southeast provided the records of all known breeding pairs. Three pairs were successful with each pair raising two young. In late June at a fourth location a bird was incubating two eggs, but sadly the fresh corpse of a female Honey-buzzard was found at the base of the tree and, unsurprisingly, the breeding attempt failed. It is purely speculative but it seems most likely that this female died defending its nest from an avian attack, with the most likely culprit a Tawny Owl or indeed another Honey-buzzard. At a fifth location there was good behavioural evidence of an active nest in late July/early August but the nesting tree was not located. The county has plenty of suitable habitat and there is no reason why there should not be many more breeding pairs that have yet to be found.

An adult male was seen on passage at Hollingdean (Brighton) on the early date of 5 May (IJW). In the Haywards Heath area on 4 Jun, the call of a Common Buzzard alerted an observer to the presence of one and quite probably three birds on passage heading north (RSK). Understandably, the observer concentrated on correctly identifying the nearest bird and was only 95% sure of the other two, but it would seem very likely that all three were Honey-buzzards travelling together on passage. This was a very rare inland record for early summer.

At one well-watched locality there were a number of documented sightings, with a bird seen wing clapping on 28 May (RJF) and a male observed at close quarters on 8 Jun (BFF, DIS). At the same location, there was a brief, distant sighting on 27 Jul (BFF *et al.*) but with much closer

views of two adults, one of which was a displaying adult male on 8 Aug (BFF, DIS).

There was a good autumn passage, which began with an adult male at Brighton Marina on 26 Aug (IJW, ADW) and an un-aged, un-sexed bird at Beachy Head on the same date (RHC). Most records for passage birds are reported from coastal areas and so an adult female seen at Weir Wood Res on 5 Sep was unusual (ASC, NAD, ST). Scolding Herring Gulls provided the alert for a dark morph juvenile which was seen at Hollingdean on 17 Sep (IJW, ADW). At Beachy Head there was a dark phase juvenile on 23 Sep (ASC *et al.*) but on the following day there were probably four different birds on passage. One group of observers had close views of three different single dark phase juveniles, with the first departing south at 1000 hr (JFC, JWK), the second at 1240 hr (JFC *et al.*) and the third at 1300 hr (JFC *et al.*). There were two other records submitted for 24 Sep at Beachy Head, the first a dark phase un-aged bird which headed out to sea at 1156 hr and another dark phase bird which was probably a juvenile and likely to be the same bird seen to depart at 1300 hr by the other group of observers (ARK *et al.*). There were further records at Beachy Head, with a pale phase un-aged bird seen heading SE towards the channel on 26 Sep (JFC) and finally another dark phase juvenile on 29 Sep (JFC). Also on 29 Sep at Hollingbury Camp (Brighton) there was a dark phase juvenile and then a little later a pale phase juvenile (IJW, ADW). [MEK]



J.V.

Black Kite*Milvus migrans**Rare vagrant.*

An adult was seen at Shooter's Bottom (Beachy Head) on 7 May (RKH, RES). It came in over the cliff edge from the west but after soaring around for a few minutes departed back out to sea. It was the 12th to be recorded in the county since 1990, the 25th in total and the seventh to be seen at Beachy Head. After many years the observers of this record finally encountered this species for the first time in the county in 2005, although finding it two years running is somewhat fortunate. Just over half of the records have been in May with the others having arrived in April (6, one on the 12th and the rest from the 26th), June (2), July (2), August (on the 3rd) and, exceptionally, November (1). [RJF]

Red Kite*Milvus milvus*

Very scarce breeding resident and scarce visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

Last year's breeding pair had another successful season, raising two young. The juveniles were fitted with labelled wing tags (C and D) and the 2006 Chilterns' colour scheme adopted, with yellow on the left wing and green on the right. Both juveniles were fitted with radio tags. A second pair attempted breeding but failed at the embryo stage. The male of this second pair was a Sussex tagged Kite (2004, yellow/yellow, 'Y') and the female was an untagged, full adult.

There was an approximate annual total of 30 different birds within the home range of the resident pair and unsurprisingly the majority of the visitors were juvenile/2nd year birds (MEK, CBC). Several of the visiting birds were tagged, with yellow/red (Central Scotland 2004) on 19 Mar, orange/orange (Yorkshire 2005) on 27 Apr, orange/white (East Midlands 2005) on 21 Oct, green/yellow (Chilterns 2006) on 26 Oct and finally orange/yellow (Chilterns 2005) on 3 Dec. The East Midlands bird (orange 62) was tagged near King's Cliffe (Northants). Of interest, none of the other tagged birds was seen on more than one occasion but Orange 62 remained faithful to the area and was seen regularly for the rest of the year.

The radio tagged Kites were monitored whilst in the county but also by the Southern England Kite group when the birds have wandered through the Chilterns. The 2004 birds (Y and Z) and the 2005 birds (B1, B2 and B3) have spent more time away than they have in the county. One of the highlights of the year was when they all returned in the spring and roosted together on 11 and 12 Mar. The 2006 juveniles C and D were present throughout the second half of the year and showed no signs of dispersing, which is rather unusual since most juvenile Kites leave their natal area within a few weeks of fledging.

Kites may be seen anywhere in the county and, away from the breeding area in the west of the county, there were records from 25-30 different localities, involving over 60 different birds. In contrast to the previous two years, the records were less evenly split with two thirds reported from the west of the county.

The monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Home range	6-8	5-6	11-13	6	8	8	5	4	7	9	13	10
Elsewhere	3	4	5	5	18	14	3	2	3	1	0	4

During the first four months of the year there were 20 records from various localities, all of which were singletons except for two at Stedham Common on 26 Jan and two flying NNW

at Brighton on 28 Feb. In May and June there was a sizeable influx with 32 birds recorded outside the home range. These were all singletons except for three at Ditchling on 11 May, two at Pulborough Brooks on 16, 27 and 30 May and an astonishing seven flying west at Brighton on 14 Jun.

There was a marked reduction of sightings from July onwards, with only 13 records away from the study area. However, there were several noteworthy records including a singleton at Warnham LNR on 9 Sep (the third site record for the year), a juvenile at Kingston (Lewes) on 10 Sep and three birds together over Graffham Down on 9 Dec.

On 23 Dec there were at least 10 different Kites in the study area, including the successful breeding pair, Sussex 2004 'Y', an untagged adult, East Midlands Orange 62, Sussex juveniles C and D and three other untagged juveniles. [MEK]

Marsh Harrier

Circus aeruginosus

Scarce spring and autumn passage migrant and very scarce winter visitor; bred for the first time in 2004. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

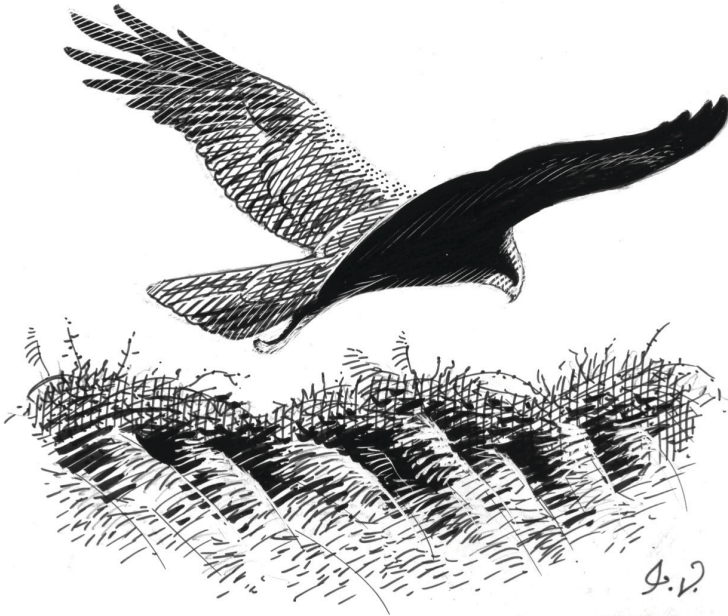
There were about 96 individuals seen during the year at about 14 broad locations. Of these, only nine definite males were reported. The monthly sightings, grouped to show the approximate number of individuals at each broad site, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	6	6	6	9	6	3	6	16	16	11	10	7
Chichester Hbr	-	1	3	3	1	-	-	-	2	2	-	-
Selsey Bill	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	2	-	-	-
Pagham Hbr	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	3	3	1	-	-
Pulborough Brooks	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	1	2	2
Beachy Head	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	3	1	2	1	-
Pannel Valley NR	1	1	1	1	-	1	-	2	1	2	2	2
Rye Hbr	1	1	-	3	-	1	3	4	3	2	3	3
Scotney GP	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Bay	4	4	1	4	-	2	3	6	4	4	5	5
Other	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	1	2	-

The usual migration peaks in April to May and again in August to October were less marked than in 2005. There were many daily records of up to two which included two roosting birds at Scotney GP in January and two females at Thorney Deeps (Chichester Hbr) on 9 Apr.

There were no reports of confirmed breeding.

At the coast in May, one came in off the sea at Selsey Bill on the 23rd and one flew north at Beachy Head on the 28th. On return passage, one flew from Selsey Bill towards the Isle of Wight on 26 Aug, another coasted west past Atherington on 30 Aug and two flew out to sea together from Selsey Bill on 14 Sep. Singletons flew out to sea from Beachy Head on 6 Sep, 13 Oct and 4 Nov. [SHL]



Hen Harrier

Circus cyaneus

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The 139 records received was down by 30% compared with the 196 for 2005 and, as usual, referred to a small number of localities. Correspondingly, in every month except August, the monthly minimum county totals were also lower, suggesting that fewer birds were present throughout the year. This can be seen by comparing the following table with that for 2005 (*SxBR* 58:62).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	14	9	8	5	2	3	3	9	9
Chichester & Pagham Hbrs	1	1	1	1	-	1	-	1	1
W Sussex Downland	3	2	1	1	-	-	1	2	1
W Sussex Commons	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
Arun Valley	2	1	1	1	-	-	1	2	2
E Sussex Downland	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
Lewes Brooks	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Ashdown Forest	2	2	2	1	-	-	-	3	2
Pevensey Levels	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Bay	3	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	1
Other sites	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-

As is often the case, the highest totals for the first half of the year occurred in January with four

of the usual areas holding the majority. There was at least one male and two 'ringtails' in the West Dean area, at least three 'ringtails' in the Rye Bay area, at least two 'ringtails' roosting in the Arun Valley and at least two males in Ashdown Forest. The usual decline in numbers as birds dispersed to breeding grounds resulted in only five single birds being seen in April. The last spring record was an adult male flying east at Lower Standean on 13 May.

The first autumn record was a 'ringtail' on 10 Aug at Castle Water (Rye Hbr) followed by another 'ringtail' flying over the top fields at Beachy Head on the 26th. There were three September records: a male at Beachy Head on the 11th and singletons at Pagham Hbr on the 17th and Brede Levels on the 23rd. Birds continued to arrive during the last three months of the year and occupied the usual winter roosts, although there were no records from Lewes Brooks or Pevensey Levels. [PJE]

Montagu's Harrier

Circus pygargus

Very scarce spring and autumn visitor; last bred successfully in 1962. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

There were four accepted records of this species. The first was an adult female seen on 22 Jul on the Downs at Falmer. It was first located more than a mile from the two observers (MJH, ARK) who watched it for 15 minutes as it gradually soared and approached them but, when it was 300 yards away, it turned, retraced its route and was eventually lost to sight.

The second bird was a juvenile at Beachy Head on 6 Aug (DC, JFC, JWK *et al.*). It was first seen flying amongst a flock of Swifts and gave excellent views to as close as 20 m over a 50-minute period. The third bird was a second calendar-year female in the Newmarket Hill area on 13 and 14 Aug (IJW, ADW) and finally a juvenile was seen over Hollingdean (Brighton) on 27 Aug (ADW, IJW).

Three other records were accepted as Harrier spp. The first was at Chilgrove on 6 Jun, the second at Selsey Fields on 24 Aug and the last was at Beachy Head on 27 Aug. In each case they may have been Montagu's Harriers but, on the evidence provided, other Harrier species could not be ruled out. [PJE]

Goshawk

Accipiter gentilis

Rare visitor, mainly in winter; has bred and now appears to be resident in the county. Schedule 1 species.

There was just one accepted record for this species; an adult female observed for six minutes, in the first week in March, at a distance of 0.5 – 1 km (RJF). She flew over a wood and displayed just once before disappearing into the trees. This was at the site in the west of the county where one or more birds have been showing for several years.

This record reinforces the plea made last year for any observers who see birds such as this to submit detailed records so that, as in this instance, more authenticated evidence can establish whether there is one, or more, single bird(s) in the area, or a pair. [PJE]

Sparrowhawk***Accipiter nisus***

Common resident and passage migrant.

As in previous years the majority of records were of single birds. In the first winter period four were observed at West Dean Woods on 20 Mar and also at Findon Valley on 24 Mar. In the spring the only record of a likely migrant involved one coming in off the sea at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 15 Mar, although three at Church Norton on 9 Apr may also have included migrants.

The first indication of probable breeding was by a pair seen displaying at Monkton (Chilgrove) on 30 Jan. Displaying was also observed at Thorney Deepes (Chichester Hbr) on 6 Mar and Guestling Wood on 18 Apr. Breeding was confirmed at only four sites by six pairs, one of which (at Thorney Deepes) fledged two males and one female. Breeding was considered probable at a further 14 sites by at least 17 pairs, three of which were seen regularly at Bewl Water from March to October. A total of 25 individuals was counted in 19 of the 122 BBS 1-km squares surveyed.

In the latter half of the year an increase in the number of coastal sightings suggested passage birds although there were no actual sightings of movements out to sea. One seen at Birling Gap on 4 Sep was described as “almost melanistic”. There were six at Beachy Head on 7 Sep and four on 7 Oct and 5 Nov and four were observed circling together over Selsey on 3 Oct. Otherwise most reports were singletons with the occasional two.

Recorded prey species were Dunlin, Wood Pigeon, Dunnock, Blackbird, Blue Tit, Starling, House Sparrow, Chaffinch, Greenfinch and Goldfinch. [GK]

Common Buzzard***Buteo buteo***

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and regular visitor.

This species continues to do well with a breeding population approaching 250 pairs. Elsewhere in the UK breeding densities can be as high as one pair per square kilometre and it is likely that a careful study in the core breeding areas within Sussex would produce a similar figure. Given suitable weather conditions it is possible to have a daily count of 40-50 different birds in the relatively small area encompassing North Marden, West Dean and Levin Down (*pers obs*). Estimating the number of pairs is made more difficult by the presence of large numbers of immature birds, which have yet to join the breeding pool.

There were more than 900 records submitted but mostly by the same pool of observers visiting the same places and as a consequence there is little information regarding large swathes of the Sussex countryside. This is especially true for the east of the county where there appear to be few SOS observers. Given the rapid increase in the Kent population over the past few years, it is highly probable that there are many more pairs in East Sussex than is currently appreciated.

Multiple sightings have become common. In January there were eight at Pulborough Brooks on the 5th, six at Patching on the 11th, ten at West Dean Arboretum on the 17th, with 14 at East Marden and eight at Laughton on the 21st. In February there were six at Pagham Hbr on the 9th, six in the Lewes area on the 11th, six at Isfield on the 18th and ten at Compton on the 24th. In March there were six at Amberley Mount on the 5th, six at Pulborough Brooks on the 9th, six at Newick on the 19th and ten at West Dean Woods on the 23rd. In April there were 14 in the Chantry area on the 3rd, eight at Graffham Down on the 5th and five at Duncton Common on the 29th.

A few records were received relating to nesting activity but there was insufficient data to draw any conclusions as regards breeding success.

In the second half of the year there were more multiple sightings with nine at Pulborough Brooks on the 15 Aug, five at Steyning on the 19th and five at Newick on the 25th. In September

there were six at Patching on the 8th, six at Weir Wood Res on the 9th, six at Southease on the 23rd, eight at Selsey on the 26th with another six at Arlington Res on the same day. In October there were six at Ebernoe on the 7th with another six at Climping on the same day, ten at Chantry Hill on the 12th, ten at West Dean Woods on the 15th, ten at Church Norton on the 29th and another eight at Chanctonbury Ring on the same date. Finally, there were eight at Barcombe Res on 9 Dec.

Commenting on migrants is difficult but the sightings at Beachy Head are of interest as some of the records may refer to cross channel migrants. In the spring there were records on 4 and 29 Mar and 14 Apr, and in the autumn there were sightings on 25 and 29 Aug and on 6, 10 and 23 Sep. [MEK]

Osprey

Pandion haliaetus

Scarce passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

Approximately 54 individuals were seen during the year at 22 locations, summarised as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Monthly total	1	12	13	2	3	7	12	4	2
Chichester Hbr	-	1	1	-	1	1	3	2	1
Pagham Hbr	-	-	3	-	-	3	-	-	-
Weir Wood Res	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	1	-
Arlington Res	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-
Bewl Water	-	3	1	-	-	1	1	-	-
Other	1	6	6	-	-	1	7	1	1

The first of the spring was one that flew north over Sompting on 29 Mar, four days later than the 10-year average. The next sightings were singles west past Brighton and at Shinewater (Eastbourne) on 3 Apr. Other noteworthy records for April were one in off the sea at Selsey Bill on the 8th and two at Bewl Water on the 10th. There were two records outside the main passage period: one at Weir Wood Res on 17 Jun and one at Arlington Res on 12 Jul.

Autumn passage commenced with singles at Weir Wood Res on 26 Jul and at Chichester Hbr on 30 Jul. Most autumn records were of single birds but there were two at Chichester Hbr on several dates with three there on 20 Sep. The only individual reported flying out to sea was one, harassed by a Carrion Crow, that flew south from Selsey Bill on 29 Oct. The last for the year were at Chichester Hbr on 4 Nov and over Udimore on 12 Nov, over three weeks later than the 10-year average of 21 Oct. [SHL]

Common Kestrel*Falco tinnunculus*

Fairly common resident and passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The minimum monthly totals and numbers of sites (1-km squares) were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	73	69	76	123	97	107	76	69	69	81	52	43
No. of sites	49	52	56	82	67	82	54	41	47	57	38	36

The species was noted in 304 1-km squares (i.e. 7.5% of the 4067 1-km squares in the county) indicating that this species is still fairly common and widespread. Birds were present in 35 of the 122 BBS 1-km squares surveyed.

The only reports of possible spring passage involved 1N over Selsey Bill on 29 Apr and 1W on 6 May flying high out to sea from Birling Gap (Beachy Head).

Breeding was confirmed for 22 pairs in 20 1-km squares, was probable by 36 pairs in 22 1-km squares and territorial activity was noted in a further 29 1-km squares suggesting an estimated total of only 87 potential pairs. These figures are a marked reduction on last year. In particular, the 29 present in suitable habitat suggests that the species is considerably under-recorded because observers are not assigning the correct code letter to their records.

For 13 of the confirmed breeding records the nest site was recorded, as follows: one tree hole, one barn, two unspecified boxes, nine owl boxes. The species appears to benefit from our President's work on behalf of Barn Owls! Examination of these 13 nests revealed that two held four eggs, one held two eggs and two chicks, two held five chicks, two held four chicks, five held three chicks and one held one chick. Prey items recorded were: a Common Lizard, an attempt to take or rob a Weasel and an unsuccessful attempt, hunting like a Sparrowhawk, to catch either a Brambling or Chaffinch. [JAH]

Merlin*Falco columbarius*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

An approximate total of 80 individuals, including only 15 definite males, was recorded from 27 broad locations during the year, as shown below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	18	14	10	4	2	-	-	-	7	18	10	11
Chichester Hbr	2	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	1
Selsey Peninsular	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	1
Arun Valley	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Rye Hbr	2	2	3	-	1	-	-	-	1	2	2	2
Other	10	8	5	3	1	-	-	-	5	12	4	6

One was seen sitting on a bird feeder at Weir Wood Res on 18 Mar and one at Brighton Marina on 30 Apr was thought to have come in off the sea. The last of the first half of the year were one at Rye Hbr on 3 May and a male at Camp Hill (Ashdown Forest) on 18 May.

Unusually, none was noted in August and the first autumn sighting was one at Hove on 1 Sep. Individuals migrating out to sea, or perhaps hunting incoming passerines, were seen at Climping

on 2 Oct and at Selsey Bill on 20 Oct. The latter may have been the individual that was perched on the 'mile basket' off Selsey Bill on 28 Oct or the one flying around offshore there on 18 Nov. One was seen sitting in a garden at Selsey Bill on 12 Dec.

Prey chased during the year included Sky Lark and Snipe. A Dunlin was caught at Rye Hbr on 27 Dec. [SHL]

Hobby

Falco subbuteo

Scarce breeding summer visitor and regular passage migrant. Schedule 1 species.

The species was seen at 91 broad sites. Monthly site totals were as follows:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
No. of sites	17	43	31	25	27	34	5

The first for the year were singles at Nutley on 7 Apr and at Pulborough Brooks and Crawley on 12 Apr, comparable with the 10-year average date of 9 Apr. The main arrival period is summarised below:

Week	15-22 Apr	23-30 Apr	1-8 May	9-15 May
Daily maximum no. of birds	4	9	11	18
No. of sites	8	11	21	18
No. of days	7	8	8	7

Between 14 Apr and 29 May, 23 individuals were seen to arrive along the coast including 13 at Selsey Bill. Meteorological data from the Channel Light Vessel (supplied daily by the UK Met Office) during this period suggests that wind direction at sea level has little influence on the crossing of the English Channel by this species:

Wind direction (nearest)	Total days 14 Apr – 29 May	Days when birds seen	Number of birds seen
No. of birds	45	20	23
N	4	1	1
NE	5	4	5
E	2	-	-
SE	4	3	3
S	5	-	-
SW	13	5	5
W	10	5	5
NW	2	2	4

The only report of a double figure count was 13 over Pulborough Brooks on 12 May. Although there were widespread reports between May and September, the species was recorded in only one 1-km square during the BBS. Overall, there was little evidence of breeding. However, reports of display in early May and of juveniles in August or September at heathland sites indicate that at least four pairs bred. Almost certainly, this grossly under-represents the true status of this falcon in the county.

There was little out of the ordinary on the autumn passage with the maximum from one site being four at Rye Hbr on 14 Aug. The last for the year was an adult near the R Adur (Shoreham) on 30 Oct, over a week later than the 10-year average date of 22 Oct. [SHL]



Peregrine Falcon

Falco peregrinus

Scarce breeding resident. Schedule 1 species.

This was again a good year for this species although the 438 records received were over a 100 down on the number received in each of the two previous years. Sussex Peregrine Study have again provided detailed data on all the known breeding pairs. There were 18 breeding attempts, of which 17 were successful, producing a total of at least 42 fledged chicks, the same number as last year. The other breeding attempt (at an inland quarry) appeared to fail at the young chick stage. One pair that had previously bred successfully for a number of years at an inland site was observed on territory throughout the year but failed to breed. Another inland pair was also observed on territory throughout the year and a coastal pair was seen occupying a cliff site during the breeding season; a further two pairs were seen at other sites in early spring but none of these appeared to breed. This makes a possible county total of 23 pairs.

At the seven successful coastal eyries three fledged one young, one pair fledged two, two pairs fledged at least three and one pair fledged four, making a total of at least 15 chicks fledged. At the six successful inland sites one pair fledged one young, three pairs fledged three and two pairs fledged four, making a total of 18.

The three nest box sites produced at least seven young. The nest camera at the Sussex Heights box was not in operation in 2006 and, as a result, the number of eggs laid was not known. However, one female and two male chicks were ringed on 26 May and their biometrics suggested hatching dates in early May. On the morning of 14 Jun one of the male fledglings was found on the ground and, after spending the night in an animal rescue centre, it was returned to the nest box. Although all three chicks appeared to have fledged, by mid-July only one was regularly being seen and it may be that the other two did not survive the post-fledging period. At Chichester Cathedral the first egg was laid on 3 Apr and the clutch was completed with a fourth on the 10th. Three eggs hatched successfully between 11 and 14 May and one female and two male chicks were ringed on 1 Jun; the fourth egg failed to hatch and appeared to be infertile. Monitoring of the box on the

chimney at Shoreham Power Station was undertaken from the ground and indicated that at least one, possibly two, young fledged. A pair also nested for the first time on the balcony of a block of flats in Brighton. Three eggs were laid and two chicks fledged successfully.

There were many reports of Peregrines attacking wader roosts, particularly in the Chichester and Pagham Hbr areas. In addition to the usual prey items (i.e. Wood and Feral Pigeons), other prey included Starling, Redshank, Collared Dove, juvenile Green Woodpecker and Moorhen. A juvenile female was seen picking a Lapwing from the water with its talons. One bird attacked a male Bar-tailed Godwit and forced it into the sea and there were also records of attacks on Kittiwake, Teal and Wigeon. Birds were also observed harassing a Marsh Harrier and a Short-eared Owl and one was seen soaring briefly with a Honey-buzzard.

Sussex Peregrine Study are acutely aware that it is becoming ever more difficult to track the increasing spread of the species in the county and they would be very grateful to know of any new sites that observers believe they may have found so that the re-colonisation can continue to be recorded accurately. They can be contacted via the County Recorder or directly by email to: info@sussexperegrines.co.uk. [PJE]

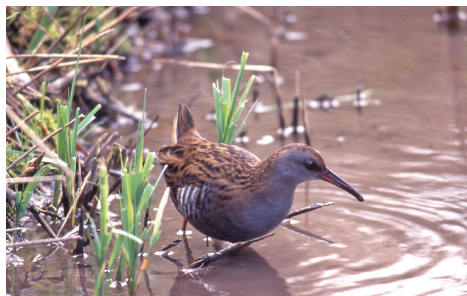
Water Rail

Rallus aquaticus

Very scarce resident and fairly common winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Birds were seen at 75 sites and the approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	86	83	55	16	5	1	5	13	25	47	84	59
Thorney Deepes	10	12	8	1				2	2	8	13	12
Chichester Hbr	11	12	8	2				1	2	6	15	14
Chichester GP	2	3	3						2	2	1	1
Arundel WWT	1	6	4	1						1		
Warnham LNR	4	2	4	2	2	1	1	4	1	10	6	3
Pannel Valley NR	6	3	5	3			1		6	4	1	1
Pett Level	6	9	3				1		2	1	1	1
Rye Hbr	8	4	4	2				3	1	3	9	2
Other sites	38	32	16	5	3		2	3	9	12	38	25
Number of sites	40	25	22	12	4	1	5	7	14	20	30	21



Water Rail, Rodmell (Peter Wilson)

Monthly totals were comparable to the 5-year average. There was no evidence of breeding. However, individuals were heard calling at Brede Levels and Guestling Wood in mid-April and birds were present (but not counted) at Amberley Wild Brooks and Pulborough Brooks on 1 May, at Rye Hbr in June and on most days in July at Pannel Valley NR. A juvenile recorded at Pulborough Brooks on 30 Jul might have been either the product of local breeding or a very early migrant since, according to *Birds of Sussex*, the first migrants start to appear in late August.

Although singletons were recorded at several sites during July, the first record of a probable migrant was a singleton at Weir Wood Res on 13 Aug. The number of records then increased through the autumn. Two birds were heard calling at the dry Downland site of Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on 3 Nov. The highest autumn counts were of ten at Warnham LNR in October and 15 at Chichester Hbr on 1 Nov, with 14 there on 1 Dec. [JPP]

Spotted Crake

Porzana porzana

Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant; rare winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

One on a small pool in the east of the county from 18 to 25 Aug (MJHD *et al.*) was considered most likely to be an adult. It was the 13th to be recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000, although there were none in 2002 or 2003. Recent records have been in April, May, August (3), September (6) and October (2). Both of those in spring were only heard while all but two in autumn were trapped at another site in the east. With the other non-trapped bird being only seen in flight (at yet another site in the east on two dates in October 2001), this was the first to be viewable for any length of time since an adult was at Pagham Hbr from 12 to 16 Aug 1997. [RJF]

Corn Crake

Crex crex

Rare passage migrant; formerly bred. Considered vulnerable by IUCN. Schedule 1 species.

One was reported from Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) on 8 Oct (ADW, IJW). Including this record seven have been seen in the county since the beginning of 2000, all between 17 Sep and 5 Nov, with another heard in late June. During this period, two have been seen well at Beachy Head and two in the Combe Haven/Filsham area. [RJF]

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
Monthly total	840	861	768	293	148	164	401	458	755	683	779	830
Chichester Hbr	96	89	127	39	16	15	17	26	30	47	95	88
Pagham Hbr	29	29	32	24	26	31	42	37	50	33	48	42
Chichester GP	225	237	151	Nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	102	93	110	129
<i>Arundel WWT</i>	93	93	96	57	27	41	77	59	80	87	123	170
Arun Valley	143	165	141	120	45	60	129	93	124	136	186	234
Brooklands Worthing	43	42	34	12	5	10	9	16	26	19	43	20
Bewl Water	30	11	45	Nc	nc	nc	100	152	100	60	30	37
<i>Pett Level</i>	46	31	29	23	16	7	34	52	32	13	34	81
<i>Rye Hbr</i>	31	51	22	33	14	15	37	46	54	69	48	16
Rye Bay	81	88	51	56	30	22	71	98	86	85	82	97

Significant counts in addition to the WeBS were 100 at Rye Hbr on 9 Feb, 95-97 in the Arun Valley between Arundel and South Stoke on 20 Jan and on 3 Feb respectively and 71 at Pett Level on 8 Jan and 18 Feb.

Breeding was confirmed at 22 sites (counting Rye Hbr as one), was probable at a further two and was possible at a further 35 territories. From the 50 breeding pairs recorded at Bewl Water there were 32 broods with 58 young. There were 48 nests at Rye Hbr and 16 territories at Sefter Fm (Pagham). During the BBS 121 birds were recorded in 56 of the 122 1-km squares surveyed. A dead chick found at Climping on 1 May was the first chick seen in the year.

In the second winter period significant non-WeBS counts included 58 at Arundel WWT on 11 Oct, 46 at Luth Pool (Wisborough Green) on 26 Nov, 44 in one damp field at Thorney Deeps on 9 Dec and 170 at Arundel WWT on 17 Dec. [JPP]

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
Monthly total	2989	2825	1857	499	334	444	1226	1777	2773	3326	3135	2667
Chichester Hbr	173	84	206	44	20	22	13	32	92	134	149	166
Chichester GP	482	615	440	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	592	601	468	531
Brooklands Worthing	132	95	69	45	44	67	100	118	145	106	101	103
Eastbourne Lakes	330	239	159	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	347	474	564	362
Bewl Water	424	340	264	nc	nc	nc	360	726	210	250	266	262
<i>Pett Level</i>	258	258	87	54	34	46	168	97	89	67	111	196
<i>Rye Hbr</i>	456	318	186	114	38	73	246	552	853	815	671	205
<i>Scotney Court GP</i>	220	450	77	nc	nc	50	nc	-	nc	481	385	445
Rye Bay	934	1026	350	168	72	169	414	649	942	1363	1167	846

Although monthly totals vary over the years, an analysis of WeBS data for the past five years indicates that this year's totals are comparable with the 5-year average.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2006	2989	2825	1857	499	334	444	1226	1777	2773	3326	3135	2667
5-yr average	4192	3167	1770	428	364	524	1641	2138	3431	3402	3677	3782
2005	3379	3138	2308	488	390	920	1164	1716	2864	2734	2930	3498
2004	3841	2964	2077	355	387	565	2135	2902	3868	4006	4089	3815
2003	4887	4024	2080	586	523	565	2292	3128	4310	4287	3886	3736
2002	5094	2944	2172	619	452	361	1295	1556	3139	3683	4508	4535
2001	3761	2767	215	90	66	191	1320	1386	2972	2302	2972	3324

Breeding was confirmed at 17 sites (counting Rye Hbr as one) and at least 167 pairs were recorded. Of these there were 75 at Bewl Water but productivity was low due to very low water levels and only 12 broods were counted with 29 young. In addition there were a further 13 probable or possible breeding territories. During the BBS 59 birds were counted in 17 1-km squares out of the 122 surveyed. The first reported nest was noted at Bewl Water on 3 Apr.

Although numbers in the second winter period increased as normal from their summer nadir, they did not reach the heights of 2002-2004. [JPP]

Common Crane*Grus grus**Rare visitor.*

Two seen on Horse Eye Level (Pevensey) on 16 Mar (NBa, DAP) were the first records since January 2003 when three were seen on nearby Hooe Level. Since the beginning of 2000 there have been nine records in the county, involving 12 individuals in eight different months, and this is the second March occurrence during this period. In the 1990s there were only seven records, involving eight individuals. There are no county records for February, July or August. [RJF]

Oystercatcher*Haematopus ostralegus*

Scarce breeder, fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed 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
Monthly total	2416	1816	1599	668	668	507	752	1147	1284	1198	1959	1899
Chichester Hbr	1377	1106	881	334	233	289	412	747	938	908	1484	1403
Pagham Hbr	329	187	274	169	206	55	146	65	178	186	158	89
Rye Bay	692	513	435	163	228	161	194	335	150	67	302	384

As usual, the roosts at Pilsey Island (Chichester Hbr) and the Ternery Pool (Rye Hbr) accounted for a large proportion of the above totals throughout the year. The only counts significantly higher than WeBS were 412 at Rye Hbr on 22 Sep (with 328 there on 10 Oct), 460 at Camber Shore on 30 Nov, and up to 220 at Pett Level throughout most of October. The highest counts at non-WeBS sites were 300 passing west offshore at Cuckmere Haven on 19 Sep (with 90 there on 22 Nov), 110 at a regular roost at Peacehaven Beach on 5 Mar, and 73 at Climping Beach on 6 Nov.

At least 35 pairs bred successfully at six sites. There were 24 pairs at Rye Hbr, three pairs at Cuckmere Haven and at the Pannel Valley NR, two pairs at Pilsey Island and Thorney Deeps, and one pair in a cultivated field at West Chidham. In the Chichester Hbr area, four pairs at Ella Nore, three pairs at South Stakes Island and two pairs at North Stakes were all unsuccessful. Up to four birds were present in the Arundel WWT area from February to August.

There were inland records of two at Pulborough Brooks on 2 Feb, one at Barcombe Res on 25 Jul and two at Bewl Water on 23 Mar (with one there on 29 Apr). Small numbers were recorded in seawatching logs in nearly all months. There was a count of 32 at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 4 Mar and 26 E and 4 W at Splash Point (Seaford) on the 24th (in 5 hr) and 18 E at Worthing the same day.

A partially albino bird was noted at Pagham Hbr in March and December, possibly the same one last recorded there in 2003. [CJRB]

Avocet*Recurvirostra avosetta*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; very scarce and localised breeder. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
44	15	52	66	63	53	62	14	26	9	42	37

In the first winter period, the highest counts in the two main wintering areas were 29 at Chichester Hbr on 15 Jan and 15 at Pagham Hbr on the 30th. This continues a trend towards the highest numbers being found at Chichester rather than Pagham, a reversal of the situation a few years ago, although the total numbers have been more or less stable. The only other record was of one at Widewater (Lancing) from 20 to 27 Feb.

Offshore passage began abruptly on 12 Mar, with 10 E past Birling Gap (Beachy Head) and Splash Point (Seaford). On the 24th another five passed Splash Point and nine stopped off at Cuckmere Haven, with two still there on the following day. On 15 Apr there was another wave of 14 E past Splash Point and 9 E at Brighton Marina (with another 12 E there on the 22nd). Single birds lingered in the Pagham Hbr area and at Pulborough Brooks for a few days during April, and there was one at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 5th, with two there on 27 May.

At least 26 pairs bred at two sites in the east of the county, more than doubling the previous year's record total. At the main site there were 20 pairs, but only 19 young were raised, a moderate success rate for this wader. Birds immediately took to newly created habitat at a second site and, although six pairs hatched eggs, only one chick fledged.

A report of 38 at the Midrips on 30 Jul probably related to dispersing local breeders, and the only autumn records were small offshore movements of 7 W at Selsey Bill on 8 Sep and 5 E at Worthing on the 9th.

In the second winter period, numbers at Pagham Hbr built up rapidly to 20 on 5 Nov, but then just as quickly declined to a maximum of only two in December. At Chichester Hbr numbers steadily built up to 30 on 20 Dec. The only other records were of four flying west inshore at Worthing on 30 Nov and one in the Lower Adur Valley on 12-13 Dec. [CJRB]

Little Ringed Plover*Charadrius dubius*

Scarce breeding summer visitor and passage migrant. Schedule 1 species.

The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
No. of birds	1	20	15	19	20	20	7
No. of sites	1	10	8	6	8	6	2

The first record was of one at Sidlesham Ferry on 30 Mar (nearly two weeks later than the 10-year average of 17 Mar), followed by many sightings of birds prospecting sites during April.

Breeding was confirmed at three sites. There were two pairs at a well-monitored inland site which had not been used previously, one of which raised two young, but the other failed. A pair also bred at another inland site and two pairs at a coastal site. Birds also probably bred at another two inland sites and were seen at three other suitable locations. However, no records

were received from several other inland sites which have been used in recent years.

Birds dispersed quickly from breeding sites, the only lingerers being two at Arlington Res from 12 to 16 Jul. The last record was of five at Rye Hbr on 28 Sep, five days later than the 10-year average. [CJRB]



Little Ringed Plover, Arlington Reservoir, July 2006 (Martin Casemore)

Ringed Plover

Charadrius hiaticula

Fairly common breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed 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
Monthly total	407	197	198	105	78	48	25	102	246	309	204	475
Chichester Hbr	252	102	50	50	47	12	4	51	39	41	38	350
Pagham Hbr	80	17	58	20	5	7	9	17	48	157	66	4
Climping	48	28	23	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	1
Lower Adur Estuary	-	1	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	42	39	8	63
Newhaven	-	3	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	43	-
Langney	23	nc	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	33	nc	10	15
Rye Hbr	-	37	52	30	24	27	12	33	82	68	38	41
Rye Bay	-	37	62	31	24	29	12	34	83	69	39	41

The only counts significantly higher than WeBS were 120 at Pagham Hbr on 1 Feb and the same number there on 10 Aug. As usual there were high counts at Pilsley Island in every month, with winter peaks of 112 on 9 Feb and 194 on 17 Dec, 38 still there on 1 Jun, and a migration peak

of 500 on 18 Aug. This last count and the December WeBS count at Chichester Hbr were the only ones to exceed the 1% national threshold level of 330.

The highest numbers elsewhere were 131 at Goring Beach on 26 Aug, 110 at East Head (Chichester Hbr) on 6 Dec, 102 at Lancing Beach on 21 Oct, 82 at Ferring Beach on 15 Aug and 75 at Brighton Marina on 22 Jan. Offshore movements from regular observation at Worthing Beach involved only single figures except for 12 E on 10 Jun.

Thirty-six pairs bred successfully, only two more than last year's 25-year low. At Rye Hbr at least 30 pairs bred, but chick survival was as usual poor. Two pairs were successful at Pilsey Island and at Newhaven Tide Mills, and single pairs at North Stakes Island (Chichester Hbr) and Cuckmere Haven fledged one each. At Brighton Marina, the regular pair lost at least two clutches, finally giving up after boat and helicopter landings were made on the nesting beach. At Rustington Beach a pair which nested close to the road also not surprisingly abandoned after only a week.

The only inland records were of two at Widney Brooks from 7 to 9 April, with four at nearby Greatham Bridge on the 30th, a juvenile at Boxgrove on 3 Aug and one at Weir Wood Res on 3 Sep. [CJRB]

Kentish Plover

Charadrius alexandrinus

Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant; formerly bred. Schedule 1 species.

An adult male was photographed on Worthing Beach on 2 May (SPS) while one was seen at Pagham Hbr on 14 Sep (TJE, BFF, DIS). Sixteen have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000. Seven of these have been at Pilsey Sands, three at Pagham Hbr, two at Rye Hbr and singles at Goring, Worthing, Newhaven Tide Mills and Camber. Since 2000 records have been in April (9), May (5), August and September. The Pagham bird was the latest in the county since 1993, when one was seen at Rye Hbr on 9 Oct. [RJF]

Dotterel

Charadrius morinellus

Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant; one winter record. Schedule 1 species.

Ten females and eight males were recorded near Balsdean on 8 May (ADW, IJW *et al.*) while two females and a male were present near Ditchling Beacon from 12 to 16 May (AT *et al.*). The latter were in a large bare field adjacent to the South Downs Way about 1 km west of Ditchling Beacon and attracted many admirers during their stay while those at Balsdean were the largest trip recorded in the county for at least a century. Twenty-one is the highest annual county total since 1997 (when 31 were seen) and follows a lean period with just seven recorded during 2002-03 and none in 2004, the first blank year since 1984. Fifty-one have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000, between 3 Apr and 28 May and between 20 Aug and 2 Oct, with slightly fewer records but slightly more individuals in spring than in autumn. [RJF]



Dotterel, Ditchling Beacon (Peter Wilson)

European 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	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	4632	1384	943	1	-	-	-	279	128	675	3650	917
Chichester Hbr	2625	1066	879	-	-	-	-	3	19	454	824	387
Pagham Hbr	1554	246	33	-	-	-	-	-	-	107	637	451
<i>Rye Hbr</i>	244	-	9	1	-	-	-	76	109	77	48	55
<i>Scotney Court GP</i>	200	5	-	<i>nc</i>	<i>nc</i>	-	<i>nc</i>	200	<i>nc</i>	10	1960	-
Rye Bay	444	65	9	1	-	-	-	276	109	87	2189	74

In the first winter period the January WeBS count at Pagham Hbr was exceptionally high, and in February the maximum number recorded at Thorney Island was 2500, equalling the 1 % national threshold level.

Notable records from other areas included one in off the sea at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) during cold weather on 28 Jan, 30 arriving from the sea at Ferring Beach on 4 Mar and 15 at West Worthing Beach on the 10th. Inland, there were two at High Salvington on 28 Jan, five near Telscombe village on 4 Mar, 90 in a ploughed field at N Marden on the following day, and small numbers at Pulborough Brooks throughout, peaking at 25 on 14 Mar. The last spring record was 100 at Pagham Hbr on 14 Apr.

A single bird at Pagham Hbr on 29 Jun would be a record date for a new arrival, but summering

has occurred in the past. There were no further records until 4 Aug when there were 87 at Rye Hbr, and the first arrivals at Thorney Island were three on 8 Aug.

In the second winter period, counts exceeding WeBS were 3000 at Thorney on 27 Nov (comfortably passing the 1% national threshold level), 1200 at West Wittering on 26 Nov, 1000 at East Head (Chichester Hbr) on 6 Dec and 775 at Pagham Hbr on 26 Nov. Regular counts at Rye Hbr showed a steady build-up to a peak of 900 on 26 Oct. There were unusual coastal counts of 30 in the Lower Adur Valley on 13 Nov and the same number at West Worthing Beach on the 28th. At Pulborough Brooks, birds were again present from October until the end of the year, peaking at 10 on 30 Dec. The only other inland records were of two at Lee Fm (Patching) on 12 Oct and single birds at Chantry Hill on the 27th and Barcombe Res on 3 Dec. There were only four records from seawatching logs, all of single birds except for 8 W at Birling Gap on 24 Sep. [CJRB]

Grey Plover

Pluvialis squatarola

Common winter visitor and passage migrant.

The WeBS counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	1652	2005	1740	211	192	32	27	101	1024	1250	1868	2037
Chichester Hbr	1207	1346	627	165	22	30	6	67	839	802	1359	1592
Pagham Hbr	408	583	1067	45	166	2	21	33	180	438	417	395

All the winter WeBS counts at Chichester Hbr were well in excess of the 1% national threshold level of 530. At Pagham Hbr, the February and March counts also exceeded the threshold, and the highest April count there was 200 on the 14th and 30th, rather more than the 45 recorded on the WeBS count day. The highest counts in the first winter period at other regular sites were 160 at Goring Beach on 19 Jan, 80 on the beach at Worthing on several dates, and 33 in the Lower Adur Valley on 15 Jan. The only inland records were from Pulborough Brooks, where there were two on 15 Apr and one on 15 May.

At Selsey Bill, a movement of 124 W in 2½ hr was noted on 18 Feb, and at Worthing Beach there were 6 W on 13 Aug and 7 W on the 31st. However, spring passage was low and the monthly totals at the main seawatching sites were as follows:

		Mar	Apr	May	Total	Hrs watched
Selsey Bill	E	-	8	-	8	355
	W	42	-	-	42	
Worthing Beach	E	-	3	33	36	117
	W	-	-	3	3	
Splash Point	E	10	-	-	10	206
	W	-	-	-	-	

In the second winter period no counts exceeded the WeBS counts. The highest numbers at other sites were 85 roosting in a field of winter wheat at Goring Beach on 25 Nov and 62 at Rye Hbr on 24 Dec. [CJRB]

Northern Lapwing

Vanellus vanellus

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

The WeBS counts for the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	20806	11044	1884	250	249	319	1012	2930	2422	4473	7838	9357
Chichester Hbr	3641	1735	551	22	29	64	241	276	318	1601	700	1883
Pagham Hbr	4660	1908	81	26	47	43	127	20	11	34	1276	1739
<i>Amberley Wild Brooks</i>	1060	49	3	14	5	9	36	-	7	126	285	940
<i>Pulborough Brooks</i>	3540	2055	180	24	32	22	100	149	143	437	574	361
<i>Widney Brooks</i>	127	1330	139	14	10	5	12	-	2	1	28	72
Arun Valley	4745	3510	334	66	48	38	148	149	152	567	887	1374
Lower Adur Estuary	1270	910	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	157	573	653
Glynde Brooks	2	20	300	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-
Pevensey Levels	558	359	180	54	47	44	13	24	57	173	276	1219
Bewl Water	45	490	126	nc	nc	nc	108	169	144	257	250	110
<i>Pett Level</i>	417	1043	212	25	19	11	101	207	220	101	970	986
<i>Rye Hbr</i>	3656	534	56	54	58	70	251	1635	1370	1068	1106	1354
<i>Scotney Court GP</i>	1000	200	30	nc	nc	45	nc	450	nc	300	1500	200
Rye Bay	5073	1777	298	79	77	126	352	2282	1590	1469	3576	2540

Out of the 331 records relating to the first winter period, 38 included counts of a thousand or more individuals. These large counts included 5000 at Pulborough Brooks on 14 Jan, 4600 at Pagham Hbr and 3641 at Chichester Hbr on 15 Jan, 4000 at Pagham Hbr on both the 5 and 27 Feb, 3656 at Rye Hbr on 15 Jan and 3000 at Pett Level on 15 Feb. There was a small cold weather influx of 14 at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 28 Jan.

Breeding was confirmed at a minimum of eight sites (taking Rye Hbr as one site) by at least 65 pairs although no data was received for the number of pairs at Pulborough Brooks where at least 12 fledglings were counted. There were 33 pairs at Rye Hbr and 15 at Pannel Valley NR. Breeding probably occurred at a further 11 sites by about 39 pairs of which 24 were at Pevensey Levels. Although birds were recorded at Weir Wood Res throughout the breeding season (with 25 there on 18 Jul), it is not known if there were any potentially breeding pairs. Birds were also present at a further 21 suitable sites during the season with 20 pairs at Glynde Level, five at Manor Fm (Poling) and three at Steyning Round Hill but there was no information on breeding success.

Returning birds were first noted in low numbers from late June with 150 roosting at Rye Hbr on 21 Jun rising to 400 on 3 Jul. A total of 346 records were submitted for the second winter period which included 23 counts of a thousand or over. The first large gathering of 1500 was noted at Castle Water (Rye Hbr) on 10 Aug. Other notable counts were 2000 at Rye Hbr on 13 Oct, 2000 at Pagham Hbr on 13 Dec and 1183 at Chichester Hbr on 17 Dec. [ITB]

Red Knot*Calidris canutus*

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

The WeBS counts for the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	711	853	631	40	3	-	2	4	14	25	110	246
Chichester Hbr	710	453	618	40	1	-	2	-	14	15	93	83
Pagham Hbr	-	400	13	-	1	-	-	2	-	10	17	161

A total of 173 records was submitted with all records this year being from coastal locations. Birds were again noted in every month of the year except in June. Good numbers were recorded during the first winter period with notable counts, not shown above, of 2500 at Chichester Hbr on 15 Feb (just below the 1% national threshold level of 2800) and 1000 still there on the 24th.

In what was an unremarkable spring passage, offshore eastwards passage was noted over the 17 days from 24 Apr to 10 May. The highest count in April was 62 E at Selsey Bill in 5¼ hr on the 24th. The highest count at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) was 30 on 4 May in 4¾ hr and the final count was 30 at Splash Point (Seaford) on 10 May in 3½ hr. The approximate monthly totals from the regularly watched sites were as follows:

	Apr	May	Total
County total	72	79	151
Selsey Bill	62	9	71
Worthing Beach	-	4	4
Portobello Telscombe Cliffs	10	-	10
Splash Point (Seaford)	-	36	36
Birling Gap	-	30	30

During the summer months a few birds were seen at various sites, with four at Rye Hbr on 23 Jun being the only notable count. Return passage was noted from 14 Jul when two were at Pilsley Sands. The only recorded passage during the autumn was of 4 E and 1 W past Worthing Beach on 13 Aug. Numbers were slow to build and the first notable count was 26 in Pagham Hbr on 9 Sep with 40 on the mud flats there on the 14th.

In the second winter period it was not until November that numbers increased with the first notable count being 500 at Pilsley Sands on 21 Nov. [ITB]

Sanderling*Calidris alba*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.

The WeBS counts for the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	298	101	106	79	78	8	1	3	26	3	153	149
Chichester Hbr	109	77	77	71	78	8	-	3	25	-	62	80
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
Climping	118	10	24	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-
Lower Adur Estuary	-	11	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-
Newhaven	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	3	-	-
Rye Bay	70	-	-	8	-	-	1	-	-	-	90	60

All records were, as usual, at or near the coast with birds being noted in every month. During the first winter period notable counts, additional to the WeBS data, involved 180 at Goring Beach on 11 Mar and 136 in Chichester Hbr on the 29th. The approximate monthly totals during eastwards spring migration at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

	Apr	May	Jun	Total
Total	133	325	114	503
Selsey Bill	9	151	22	182
Climping Beach	27	9	20	56
Worthing Beach	24	54	72	150
Splash Point (Seaford)	4	107	-	111
Birling Gap	1	4	-	5

The first offshore migrants were recorded on 5 Apr when 27 flew east past Climping Beach. Peak movement was in May with the largest movements being 42 E in 4 hr at Selsey Bill on the 15th and 58 E in 6½ hr at Splash Point (Seaford) on the 12th. Additional counts of westerly flying birds included a total of 75 at Worthing Beach (maximum 34 on the 28 May).

The best counts for the summer period came from Chichester Hbr with nine there on 7 Jun. Returning birds started to appear from early July with 70 at Pilsea Sands on the 26th rising to 250 on 24 Aug. Counts around Goring and Ferring were noted as being high with totals of 230 there on 9 Dec and 300 on the 13th. [ITB]

Little Stint*Calidris minuta*

Scarce passage migrant; a few winter in most years.

A presumed wintering individual was noted in Chichester Hbr from 15 Jan to 12 Mar and on the latter date there were two in Pagham Hbr. Two at Rye Hbr on 29 Apr was the only other spring record.

The first autumn migrant was at Pagham Hbr on 13 Aug. Birds were then noted in ones and twos from a few sites with the higher counts being six juveniles at Pagham Hbr on 17 Sep, 13 at Sidlesham Ferry on the 18th and five at Thorney Deeps on the 25th. It was a good autumn for this species at Rye Hbr with counts of seven on 19 Sep, 11 on the 21st and 22nd, 16 on the 26th, ten on the 27th and 20 on the 28th. Numbers there then declined slowly until the last bird was seen on 2 Nov.

Records for the second winter period were again mostly from Chichester Hbr and were of a

single bird from 8 Nov to 19 Dec with two there on 21 Nov. The approximate minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	1	3	2	-	-	-	6	43	18	2	1

The only inland records came from Bawl Water with one on 17 Sep and from Pulborough Brooks where there were singletons on various dates in September. [ITB]

Temminck's Stint

Calidris temminckii

Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

Just one record was received for the year, a bird photographed on the new scrape opposite Lime Kiln Cottage at Rye Hbr on 21st and 22nd Sep (S. Smith *et al.*). [CWM]

Pectoral Sandpiper

Calidris melanotos

Rare vagrant, mainly in autumn.

A juvenile was present at Weir Wood Res from 22 Sep to 1 Oct (NAD *et al.*). It is the fifth record for this site following those in 1978, 1999 (2) and 2005. It is the 69th to be recorded in the county and the 12th since 2000, the last blank year for the species. More than half of the records have been in September (37) with the others in May (4), July (7), August (7), October (13) and November (1). [RJF]

Curlew Sandpiper

Calidris ferruginea

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

Sixty records were received and the approximate monthly totals were as follows:

May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
1	-	1	4	23	7

The only spring record was of a single bird in winter plumage at Chichester Hbr on 5 May, the same date as the first record in 2005. The summering individual of the last two years did not return.

Autumn passage started with a singleton at Rye Hbr on 29 Jul, nine days later than the first autumn record of 2005. The highest counts were 11 in Pagham Hbr on 14 Sep with six there on the 17th.

Inland records came from Arlington Res with a singleton on 19 Aug, two at Chichester GP on 18 Sep and one at Pulborough Brooks from 18 to 22 Sep. The last bird of the year was one at Pagham Hbr on 29 Oct. [ITB]

Purple Sandpiper*Calidris maritima*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; very rare in summer. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The WeBS counts at the few sites where the species was recorded were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	3	5	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	4
Pagham Hbr	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lower Adur Estuary	1	2	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	1	-
Newhaven	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	10	-
Glyne Gap	2	2	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	4	4

The minimum monthly totals for the main sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jul	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Total	39	33	34	18	17	2	6	10	33	41
Shoreham	4	3	2	2	-	-	-	-	3	3
Newhaven	13	11	8	4	6	-	-	-	10	12
Brighton Marina	15	15	12	10	11	2	5	10	15	18
Bexhill	3	2	3	1	-	-	-	-	4	4
Other	4	2	9	1	-	-	1	-	1	4

The highest counts in January were from traditional sites and included 15 at Brighton Marina and 13 at Newhaven. Notable spring sightings were two at Hove Lagoon on 13 Mar and four roosting on Goring Beach on 17 Mar. The last sighting of the spring was two at Brighton Marina on 19 May.

The first returning birds of the autumn were two at Brighton Marina on 31 Jul. In September there was one at Pagham Hbr on the 2nd and three at Brighton Marina on the 13th which increased to five on the 30th while in October the maximum count there was 10 on the 31st.

The peak count in the second winter period was the 18 at Brighton Marina on 31 Dec. Records away from the traditional sites were better this year with a total of 19 submitted records involving a minimum of 11 individuals. [ITB]

Dunlin*Calidris alpina*

Very common winter visitor and common passage migrant; small numbers summer. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The WeBS counts for the principle sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	13733	8108	8624	208	254	39	89	49	555	1452	12460	13357
Chichester Hbr	12989	7437	7695	156	162	11	35	19	173	823	11474	12310
Pagham Hbr	594	557	464	1	67	25	16	12	276	567	895	652
Rye Bay	89	58	312	51	25	3	38	18	90	55	85	33

In the first winter period the highest counts were, as usual, from Chichester Hbr. These included a total of 12,989 on 15 Jan, of which 8000 were at Pilsley Island. This was just below the 1% international threshold level of 13,300 but the totals there in January to March and November

to December exceeded the 1% national threshold level of 5600. In the east, notable counts at Rye Hbr included 880 on 18 Mar and 600 on the 21st.

Easterly spring passage was unremarkable. Counts from the main seawatching sites were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May
Total	6	108	150
Selsey Bill	-	24	49
Worthing Beach	4	82	39
Telscombe Cliffs	-	-	6
Splash Point (Seaford)	2	2	36
Birling Gap	1	-	20

No significant movements were noted during the autumn.

The highest counts in the second winter period were again at Chichester Hbr with 11,474 on 19 Nov (of which 5000 were at Pilsey Island) and 12,310 on 17 Dec.

Small numbers were noted throughout the year at various non-coastal sites mainly as ones and twos but at Pulborough Brooks there were 15 on 16 May which remained to the 20th. The peak count at Pannel Valley NR was 31 on 3 Aug. [ITB]

Buff-breasted Sandpiper

Tryngites subruficollis

Very rare vagrant.

A first-winter bird was present at Rye Hbr from 7 to 24 Oct (RRD, BJY *et al.*). It was seen on the Flat Beach, albeit often distantly, to the 17th, being re-found on a new pit at Harbour Fm on the afternoon of the 22nd (per BJY) before finally being seen back on the Flat Beach on the 24th (CWM). It was the first to be seen in the county since one at Bracklesham in 2000 and the 10th in total. All records have been in the autumn, the dated ones between 21 Aug and 14 Oct. This was the third record from Rye Hbr, with two at Camber/Midrips, one from the 'coast' and four on the Selsey peninsular; perhaps a more easterly distribution than might be expected of an American wader. [RJF]

Ruff

Philomachus pugnax

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The WeBS counts for the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	6	5	7	-	-	-	1	-	1	5	10	3
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
<i>Amberley Wild Brooks</i>	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	6	-
<i>Pulborough Brooks</i>	3	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
<i>Widney Brooks</i>	-	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-
Arun Valley	6	5	7	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	10	1
Glyne Gap	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	2

Peak counts in the first winter period came from the east and included 15 at Rye Hbr on 30 Jan, 12 there on 21 Feb and 11 at Carters Flood (Pett) on 15 Mar. In the west the favoured location of Amberley Wild Brooks held ten on 31 Jan.

The first returning bird was a singleton at Pannel Valley NR on 5 Jul. Numbers remained very low for the rest of the year apart from the peak count of 21 that dropped in briefly to Rye Hbr during a rain storm on 18 Aug. There were eight at Amberley Wild Brooks on 1 Dec. [ITB]

Jack Snipe

Lymnocyptes minimus

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	17	16	20	12	-		-	4	8	12
Chichester Hbr	17	16	18	11	-		-	4	8	12
<i>Pulborough Brooks</i>	-	-	2	-	-		-	-	-	-
Arun Valley	-	-	2	1	-		-	-	-	-

The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	23	17	30	12	3		1	8	9	18
No. of sites	6	2	5	2	1		1	4	2	4

In the first winter period at Thorney Deeps there was a return to more usual numbers (after two low years) with a maximum count of 27 on 16 Mar. The only other regular site was again Ferring Rife, where there were four reports of up to two birds from January to March. All other records were of single birds from another ten sites, nearly all on one date only and all coastal except for Amberley Wild Brooks, Charleston Reedbed and Pulborough Brooks. The last record was of three at Thorney Deeps on 3 May.

The first returning bird was recorded at the Sidlesham Ferry on 22 Sep. In the second winter period the highest count at Thorney Deeps was 12 on 4 Dec. There were reports from only four other sites, with a maximum of three at Pulborough Brooks on 19 Oct, one at Pagham Hbr North Wall on 30 Nov, two at the Ternery Pool (Rye Hbr) on 7 Dec and two in the Fishbourne Channel (Chichester Hbr) on 24 Dec. [CJRB]

Common Snipe*Gallinago gallinago*

Very scarce breeder and fairly common winter visitor. Amber listed 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
Monthly total	383	258	302	69	2	-	1	19	79	306	505	585
Chichester Hbr	219	103	60	17	-	-	-	-	4	71	87	190
<i>Amberley Wild Brooks</i>	29	48	56	12	-	-	1	6	8	50	64	28
<i>Waltham Brooks</i>	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	24	1
<i>Pulborough Brooks</i>	36	27	74	5	-	-	-	10	28	80	83	4
Arun Valley	66	82	130	17	-	-	1	16	36	147	171	34
Lower Adur Estuary	34	6	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	37	93	272
Henfield Brooks	9	15	18	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	20	30
Weir Wood Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	nc	19	14	1	-
Newhaven	22	26	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	9	11
Eastbourne Lakes	7	9	11	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	26	8
Pevensey Levels	16	11	39	24	2	-	-	-	19	22	68	36
<i>Pett Level</i>	1	-	15	1	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	1
Rye Bay	5	-	16	9	-	-	-	2	5	1	14	2

In the first two months of the year Chichester Hbr held a higher than usual proportion of the county totals. The maximum at Thorney Deeps was 186 on 11 Jan. At Waltham Brooks 37 went to roost on 18 Jan, and there were consistently good numbers at Newhaven. The highest counts at non-WeBS sites were 30 at Charleston Reedbed on 2 Jan, 35 at Brede Levels on 13 Feb, 23 at Steyning Levels on 4 Mar and 20 at Beeding Levels on the 20th. There was some evidence of movement in mid-April, with one in a set-aside field at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on the 16th, another at Hollingbury Camp (Brighton) on the same date, and an influx of 70 at Pulborough Brooks on the 19th. The last spring record was of one at Thorney Deeps on 26 Apr.

Evidence of breeding was almost non-existent, even in the last remaining strongholds, making this one of the worst years on record. At Amberley Wild Brooks, a census on 1 May recorded three birds, one was drumming on the 3rd, but there were no further records until July. There were no breeding birds at Pulborough Brooks or Rye Hbr, and the only other sightings in possible breeding habitat were of one or two on single dates in April and May at Petworth, the Upper Adur Levels and two sites on Pevensey Levels. There were no records at all for June.

At the end of the year the totals were boosted by high numbers in the Lower Adur Valley; the maximum of 272 on 17 Dec was just one short of the previous February's record count there. The maximum at Thorney Deeps was 152 on 4 Dec, and there were some good counts from other areas, including an unusual 135 at the Pannel Valley NR on 14 Oct, 33 at Rye Hbr on the same date, 24 at Iford Brooks on 19 Nov and 35 at Church Norton on 15 Dec. [CJRB]

Woodcock*Scolopax rusticola*

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

In the first winter period there were reports from 20 sites, nearly all of single birds and mostly from sites away from the main breeding areas. The highest counts were four at Stump Bottom

(Steyning) on 18 Feb and three at Brede Levels on 29 Jan. There were several coastal records, with three at Beauport Park (Hastings) on 21 Jan and single birds at Brighton seafront and Waterhall on 27 Feb. In March, there were four at Southwick Hill on the 5th and single birds at Brighton Wild Park on the 25th and at Thorney Island on the 2nd.

The Heathland Bird Survey reported confirmed breeding for 18 pairs in the west of the county, including six at Iping Common and four at Liphook, plus an additional seven probable territories. The Ashdown Forest Bird Group reported at least five confirmed, eight probable and three possible breeding records. Two territories were recorded from Bewl Water and five from the Darwell Res area.

Unusually there were no records at all between 16 Jul and 3 Nov, when there were at least two in the Beachy Head area and one at Ferring Rife. In the second winter period most reports were again from inland sites, but there were single birds at Alexandra Park (Hastings) on 16 Nov, Truleigh Hill on the 28th and Beeding Hill on 17 Dec. The last record of the year was an unusual seven flushed at Pannel Valley NR on 26 Dec. [CJRB]

Black-tailed Godwit

Limosa limosa

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; very scarce summering species. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The WeBS counts from the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	686	347	655	664	44	16	60	125	61	165	1031	971
Chichester Hbr	378	337	375	323	42	13	49	120	53	162	1003	478
Pagham Hbr	306	9	279	338	1	3	4	3	8	3	27	490

The totals at Chichester Hbr surpassed the 1% national threshold level of 150 in six months (10 in 2005) and at Pagham Hbr in three months (five in 2005). The international threshold level has recently been increased from 350 to 470 but the numbers in Chichester Hbr in November and December still exceeded the higher figure.

In the first winter period, significant counts additional to the WeBS counts were 150 in Pagham Hbr on 11 Jan and on 13 and 26 Mar and 143 at Thorney Deepes (Chichester Hbr) on 3 Feb. Although numbers dipped in February (particularly in Pagham Hbr), there were still at least 300 roosting in Fishbourne Channel (Chichester Hbr) on 13 Apr and 207 there on the 21st prior to their departure, presumably northwards to breeding grounds in Iceland. At the inland site of Pulborough Brooks the highest January count was 19 on the 21st, in February six on the 28th and in March three on the 2nd and 3rd, with a final count of one on the 28th. A single bird was present from 5 Apr (sporting summer plumage on the 10th) until the month's end, being joined by two more until 4 May.

There were no records of observed spring passage from seawatching sites.

The number of sites holding birds dropped from 21 in April to 17 in May and nine in June. Numbers summering at Thorney Deepes peaked at 77 on 24 May of which 54 remained on the 29th. Numbers then dropped to 24 on 2 Jun and only six on the 22nd but then increased in July to 47 on the 11th and peaked at 80 on the 19th. The flock at Sidlesham Ferry numbered 17 on 29 Jun and peaked at 33 on 8 Jul while in Pagham Hbr 14 were counted on the 24th. Inland, at Pulborough Brooks a singleton from 20 Jun was joined by four more on the 27th but only one was seen on 3 Jul. Twelve birds which flew over Weir Wood Res on 24 Jul were the first positive sign of returning passage.

The only other reports of autumn passage were of one flying over Rye Hbr on 27 Aug, 4 W in 1 hr at Climping Beach on the 29th and 17 E flying out to sea on the 30th at Beachy Head (where they are rarely seen) and 11 E at Selsey Bill on 9 Sep.

In the autumn, the favoured site of Thorney Deepes held 104 on 17 Aug and 80 on the 25th but numbers then dropped markedly to only 10 on 26 Sep following which there was a recovery to 36 on 9 Oct, a maximum of 300 on the 23rd and 160 still on the 26th. The flock at Sidlesham Ferry varied through the period from one on 5 Aug through 20 on the 29th, 10 on 26 Sep and three on 7 and 14 Oct. There were 92 in Fishbourne Channel on 10 Sep. The only records from inland sites were from Drayton GP (Chichester) and Pulborough Brooks. At the former, numbers varied from ten on 4 Aug to peak counts of 15 on the 19th and 45 on 18 Sep; there were no records for later dates. At Pulborough Brooks there was a singleton on 18 Aug, three on 29 Sep, two on 23 Oct and one on the 30th.

In the second winter period the WeBS count of 1003 at Chichester Hbr on 19 Nov was the highest in recent years, surpassing the 995 of October 2005. Other notable counts included 256 at Thorney Deepes on 7 Nov and 280 in Fishbourne Channel on the 22nd. Out of a peak count of 860 in Pagham Hbr on 5 Dec, 500 remained on the 29th while there were 340 in Fishbourne Channel on the 6th. The only inland records during this period were again from the Arun Valley. A single bird at Pulborough Brooks on 4 Nov was joined by another on the 24th and one on 9 Dec was joined by two more on 17th and 18th. Four birds were seen in flight over Amberley Wild Brooks on 30 Nov in company with Lapwings. [JAH]

Bar-tailed Godwit

Limosa lapponica

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

The WeBS counts for the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	702	559	1203	6	9	1	3	7	49	491	392	418
Chichester Hbr	700	556	1200	5	1	1	3	5	47	489	388	408

The 1% national threshold level of 620 was exceeded twice at Chichester Hbr, in January and March. Numbers during the first winter period were, in January and February, comparable with both the 5-year and 10-year averages but the 1200 in March was not only more than three times greater than either average but has been exceeded only once in the past ten years (1250 in January 1996).

Although the species was recorded at ten to 16 sites during the period, the major concentrations were at Pilsey Island which are included in the Chichester Hbr totals. Counts outside the WeBS dates at Pilsey Island included 650 on 14 Jan, 1200 on 18 Feb and again on 4 Mar but reducing gradually during the month to only 104 on the 31st, presumably as birds dispersed on migration. Elsewhere there were only small numbers. At Pagham Hbr where some were present through to 12 Mar, the highest counts were 50 on 30 Jan and a monthly maximum of 30 on 25 Feb. At Rye Hbr one to three were recorded in January and February with a highest count of four on 21 Mar. A bird was seen in Pagham Hbr in summer plumage on the fairly unusual date of 4 Jan. There were no inland records during the period.

The first signs of spring passage were 8 W at Selsey Bill and 2 E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 25 Mar followed by 120 which took off from Pilsey Sands (Chichester Hbr) and flew NE on the 29th. The next movement noted was of 80 E at Brighton Marina on 22 April which signalled the abrupt start of the bulk of observed passage (the same date as in 2005) which then lasted until a

similarly abrupt end on 10 May; there were then a few records of small numbers to the 16th and then no more until the 29th.

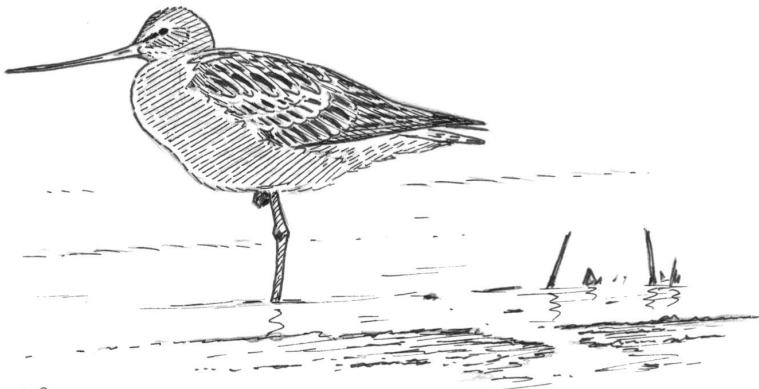
Counts at the principal seawatching sites, with the hours watched on peak days, were as follows:

		Mar	Apr	May		Sep	Peak movement		Hrs watched peak days
Selsey Bill	E	-	789	390		-	702	24 Apr	5¼
	W	8	10	-		-			
Climping Beach	E	-	52	30		-	50	24 Apr	2
	W	-	-	-		-			
Worthing Beach	E	-	41	214		-	158	2 May	5¼
	W	-	2	2		-			
Telscombe Cliffs	E	-	13	8		-			
	W	-	-	-		3			
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	2	448	613		-	350	24 Apr	4½
	W	-	2	-		-			
Birling Gap	E	-	141	197		-	110 110	30 Apr 2 May	4½ 6
	W	-	-	-		-			

There were only six records in June and a similar number in July of no more than four birds. The first returning migrant was recorded at Pilsey Sands on 14 Jun.

During August numbers built up at Pilsey Sands from 44 on the 13th to a monthly maximum of 200 on the 16th, staying in the area for the remainder of the month. Counts at ten other sites produced only one to five birds. In September numbers in the Pilsey Sands/Thorney Island area maximised at 150 on the 21st but the 27 counts from other sites (excluding WeBS counts) were generally less than five with a highest count of only six at Sidlesham Ferry on the 17th. The situation in October was similar; 12 counts away from Pilsey/Thorney Islands produced only one to three birds whereas the maximum count at the latter sites was 250 on the 20th.

In the second winter period, the Pilsey Sands/Thorney Island area again held the majority of the wintering birds with monthly maxima of 600 on 21 Nov and 450 on 24 Dec. Counts elsewhere were generally one to eight except 15 at East Head (Chichester Hbr) on 6 Nov. A bird was seen in Pagham Hbr in summer plumage on the unusual date of 13 Dec. [JAH]



J. P.

Whimbrel*Numenius phaeopus*

Common passage migrant; very scarce summering and wintering species.

Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The monthly WeBS counts at the principal locations were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	-	-	-	4	14	3	24	47	6	5	-	-
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	3	7	1	17	31	5	4	-	-
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	1	6	1	6	16	1	1	-	-

During the first winter period, a singleton was noted at Thorney Island (Chichester Hbr) on 6 Jan with two there on 3 Feb. At Fishbourne Channel (Chichester Hbr) one, (which might have been that seen at Thorney Island) was seen on 4 Jan and also on 1 and 7 Feb. In Pagham Hbr singletons were recorded on seven dates from 5 to 31 Jan, 1 Feb (at nearby Sidlesham Ferry) and again on 18 Mar.

The first spring passage birds were 1 E at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 25 Mar and 7 E at Splash Point (Seaford) the next day. Singletons were recorded in Pagham Hbr on 28 and 30 Mar and 1 Apr. Following an isolated count of 2 E at Splash Point on 7 Apr, the main passage period commenced on 14 Apr and lasted until 12 May with a peak count of 88 E at Splash Point on 22 Apr. Passage thereafter was light and continued into June; 2 E were recorded at Selsey Bill on the 4th, 1E there on the 6th, 5 SE on an unspecified date at Troutbridge (Eridge) (an unusual sighting there of this species) and, finally, 1E at Climping Beach on the 15th with one offshore there on the 17th.

Counts during the migration season at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

		Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total	Peak movement		Hrs watched peak days
Selsey Bill	E		162	121	3			316	55	22 Apr	8
	W		3	1			7	11			
Climping Beach	E		34	1	1			36			
	W		4					4			
Worthing Beach	E		132	86				186	36	15 & 22 Apr	4 & 3
	W		15	17		5		37			
Telscombe Cliffs	E		101	68				169	30	15 Apr	2
	W			1				1			
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	7	215	303				525	88	22 Apr	9
	W		1	4				5			
Birling Gap	E	1	85	63				149	38	21 Apr	3¼
	W										

The approximate monthly totals for easterly passage were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
Monthly total	8	242	344	4	598
No. of days	2	7	12	3	24

Numbers recorded during spring passage at Selsey Bill, Worthing Beach and Splash Point were the lowest this century with the exception of 2002. The only count reported from Brighton Marina was of 17 between 17 and 30 Apr including 14 E on the 22nd.

Numbers in the Rye Hbr nocturnal roost started with 17 on 17 Apr and increased to 81 on the 27th and 206 on the 30th. Only 148 were counted at dawn on 1 May but a peak count of 222

occurred next day following which numbers declined to a final 89 on the 5th. There were no records of roosting in the autumn.

During June and the first nine days of July one or two birds were seen at four coastal sites in the west of the county but four were at the Newhaven Ouse Estuary Project on 1 Jun. The first record of return passage was of 1 W at Worthing Beach on 10 Jul but there were only eight further records of ones or twos flying west to 28 Aug. However, birds were recorded in small numbers at 23 coastal sites in the west during July with high counts of 17 at Chichester Hbr on the 16th and 24 at Pilsley Island on the 25th. In August, small numbers were recorded on 23 dates from 23 sites with high counts of 31 at Chichester Hbr on the 13th and 22 at Pilsley Island the next day. Numbers inevitably dropped off during September, with an estimated 17, and October, with a count of seven.

In the second winter period, four birds were counted in November with two each in Chichester and Pagham Harbours and single birds remained in both harbours until the year's end. In addition there were three at Rye Hbr on 17 Dec. [JAH]

Eurasian Curlew

Numenius arquata

*Common passage migrant and winter visitor; formerly a very scarce breeder.
Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.*

The monthly WeBS counts at the principal locations were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	1395	1120	2422	216	201	236	1457	1186	1693	2684	2243	2197
Chichester Hbr	550	672	1889	150	77	193	1077	723	1550	2052	1311	725
Pagham Hbr	561	279	256	63	115	37	376	380	122	548	577	640
<i>Pett Level</i>	80	63	84	3	-	3	-	46	-	76	236	283
<i>Rye Hbr</i>	137	54	167	-	7	1	4	37	16	5	54	508
Rye Bay	236	118	251	3	7	6	4	83	16	81	290	791

The county total for October represents 1.8% of the estimated British wintering population of 147,100, a 0.2% increase on 2005. Chichester Hbr held numbers in excess of the 1% national threshold level of 1500 in March, September and October, an improvement on 2005 when this occurred in only one month.

Numbers in excess of 200 in the first winter period, additional to the WeBS counts, included at least 300 roosting at Rye Hbr on 14 Jan and 240 there on 7 Feb, 300 at Pett Level on 22 Jan and on 15 Feb and 270 at Pagham North Fields on 2 Mar.

There was a scattering of records from inland sites throughout the year, mainly of single birds but at Pulborough Brooks there were up to eight on various dates from 31 Jan to 19 Apr. An interesting inland sighting was of 1 N flying in formation with 12 Canada Geese over Burton MP on 29 Jan.

Counts during the migration season at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

		Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Selsey Bill	E		2	1	4						
	W			5	2	4		2			
Climping Beach	E					1					
	W		57		8	8			22	8	
Worthing Beach	E		11	2		1				2	
	W			2	3	17	7	7		1	1
Telscombe Cliffs	E	3	10		3	2					
	W		2		1	1					
Splash Point (Seaford)	E		35	15	5						
	W		1	1	1						
Birling Gap	E	4	15	6	3			2	7		
	W		2								

Coastal movements were generally light, the highest count being 22 E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 24 Mar. Migration NE over Chichester Hbr was as follows:

	24 Mar	29 Mar	13 Apr	16 Apr	18 Apr	20 Apr
Pilsey Island	15	33	14	14	77	
Thorney Deeps	10			63		15

During the BBS, seven birds were present in five 1-km squares of the 122 surveyed, presumably just passing through.

During the summer months numbers were generally low with only 24 out of 135 records exceeding 20 birds. High counts were 150 at Chichester Hbr on 9 Apr and 102 at Pilsey Island on the 12th, 115 at Pagham Hbr on 14 May, 193 at Chichester Hbr on 11 Jun and 50 at Pagham Hbr on the 17th. However, 1077 in Chichester Hbr and 376 at Pagham Hbr on 16 Jul and 350 at Thorney Island on the 27th indicated that return migration was well under way.

The first report of a returning migrant came from Pannel Valley NR where a singleton was seen on 27 Jun. Although no more movements were recorded until the second half of August, numbers had increased markedly at traditional sites by mid-July but August totals were then lower as birds moved on. Counts in excess of 100 additional to the WeBS data included a monthly maximum of 350 at Thorney Deeps (Chichester Hbr) on 27 Jul, 250 there on 27 Aug and 150 at Pagham Hbr North Fields the next day. In September there were 450 at West Itchenor (Chichester Hbr) on 10 Sep, a monthly maximum of 250 at Thorney Deeps on the 14th and 139 at Rye Hbr on the 22nd.

In the second winter period, there were 404 at Thorney Deeps on 9 Oct, 168 at Pett Level on 26 Oct, 250 at Thorney Deeps on 7 Nov, 430 roosting at Rye Hbr on 10 Dec and 170 at Pagham North Fields on 16 Dec. In the second half of December, there were still 142 in the roost at Rye Hbr on the 27th. [JAH]

Spotted Redshank

Tringa erythropus

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

The approximate minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
8	6	6	5	1	1	1	8	11	8	15	8

As usual, the majority of the wintering birds were at Pagham and Chichester Harbours, with up to three at the former and five at the latter during the first winter period. Elsewhere there was just a single bird at Langney Point on 15 Jan.

The presence of wintering birds makes the start of spring passage difficult to ascertain, although it is perhaps noteworthy that none were reported away from Pagham and Chichester Harbours during April, May and June indicating a poor spring passage. At the two main harbours, singles were seen on several dates in April but the only spring record was of a singleton at Sidlesham Ferry on 9 May.

Singletons at Sidlesham Ferry on 11 and 15 Jun could have been an early returning bird or birds. The next was at Pannel Valley on 22 Jul, followed by one at Thorney Deeps (Chichester Hbr) on 4 Aug. There was then a trickle of birds at the usual coastal localities of the Pagham, Chichester and Rye Hbr areas throughout the autumn but numbers were relatively low. The only count of more than two birds was of three in Pagham Hbr on 16 Sep. Inland there were singletons at Weir Wood Res on 6 Sep and Pulborough Brooks on 17 Sep.

The winter flock at Pagham Hbr reached a remarkably high peak of eight birds on 7 Nov but in complete contrast there was only a single bird there during December. In Chichester Hbr there were up to five at Thorney Deeps in the late winter period with ones and twos occasionally seen elsewhere. Away from the two main sites there was one at Rye Hbr and one at Pannel Valley NR in November, which could have been the same bird. [JC]

Common Redshank

Tringa totanus

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

The monthly WeBS counts at the principal locations were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	1620	1357	1684	392	129	146	891	1195	1984	3095	2414	2306
Chichester Hbr	1086	1041	1312	208	32	46	651	913	1563	2535	1823	1721
Pagham Hbr	240	120	187	104	46	47	179	164	163	327	326	357
Lower Adur Estuary	91	105	31	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	71	69	118	122
<i>Rye Hbr</i>	113	58	86	35	18	23	58	118	183	122	114	53
Rye Bay	151	67	104	46	20	24	58	118	186	135	129	87

As usual, the highest counts by far were in Chichester Hbr, where numbers exceeded the 1% national threshold level of 1200 during most of the autumn and winter months and confirm the importance of the area as a wintering site for this species.

In the first winter period, significant counts not included in the WeBS table included 402 at Thorney Deeps (Chichester Hbr) on 1 Mar, a monthly maximum of 25 at Newhaven Tide Mills in February (date unspecified), 40 at Union Canal (East Guldeford) on 12 Feb and 25 at Iford Brooks on 12 Mar, although numbers were generally lower than last year.

Spring passage was not particularly marked. Numbers at Thorney Deeps decreased from 402 on 1 Mar to 172 on 12 Apr and 16 on 27 Apr, giving an indication of the departure of wintering birds during this time.

Breeding, or attempted breeding, was recorded at ten sites, one more than last year, although they were again apparently absent from Pett and Glynde Levels. At Rye Hbr there were 22 pairs in the Beach Reserve/Harbour Fm area and a further three pairs at Castle Water, which is a welcome increase on the 12 pairs reported on the beach reserve last year (although fledging

success is not known). In Chichester Hbr there were 14 pairs at Thorney Deeps, two pairs in the Pilsley area and a territorial bird at Cobnor Point. In the Arun Valley there were at least six pairs at Pulborough Brooks, which raised at least four young, and breeding was also recorded at Amberley Wild Brooks but nesting success there is not known. A pair bred at Sidlesham Ferry but this was the only breeding record from the Pagham area. Elsewhere, there were five pairs noted on Horseye Level (Pevensy), which is three more than in the previous year and two pairs on Steyning Levels which raised at least two young. Overall, breeding success was higher than last year, which is welcome news, but the species remains at a very low ebb as a breeding bird in the county.

The first non-breeding birds started returned at the end of June with 30 at Pagham Hbr on the 27th. Numbers at Thorney Deeps built to 342 on 11 Jul and an autumn/late winter peak of 1000 on the 30th of that month (1000 were also counted there on 24 Sep and 7 Oct). Other notable autumn counts (excluding the WeBS counts above) included 140 at Bosham (Chichester Hbr) on 3 Aug and 181 at Rye Saltings on 17 Sep. Notable counts during the second winter period away from Thorney Deeps included 225 at East Head (Chichester Hbr) on 12 Oct, 420 at Pagham Hbr on 9 Nov, 55 on the Union Canal on 18 Nov, 118 on the Lower Adur on 19 Nov and 52 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 10 Dec. [JC]

Marsh Sandpiper

Tringa stagnatilis

Very rare vagrant.



Marsh Sandpiper, Sidlesham, August 2006
(Dave Sadler)

An adult at Pagham Hbr from 29 Jul to 5 Aug (DB, CWM *et al.*) has been accepted by BBRC and is the 12th to be recorded in the county. It was often to be found on the Long Pool where it proved to be a popular attraction for observers from inside and out of the county. It was the first county record since 2000 when another adult was seen at this site, at high tide on 23 Apr. The last to linger in the county was as long ago as 1990, when an adult resided on Sidlesham Ferry from 30 Jun to 9 Jul. As well as these three in the Pagham Hbr area, four have been recorded at Pett (one relocating to Rye), two together on the Wicks and singles at Waltham

Brooks, in the lower Cuckmere Valley and on Pevensy Levels. There are records for all months between April (earliest the 23rd) and September (two together on the 26th) although half have been between 30 Jun and 11 Aug. [RJF]

Greenshank*Tringa nebularia*

Fairly common passage migrant; a few winter. Schedule 1 species.

The monthly WeBS counts at the principal locations were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	15	19	19	8	10	3	34	73	144	108	29	19
Chichester Hbr	14	19	19	7	4	2	29	60	132	104	29	19
Glyne Gap	1	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-
<i>Rye Hbr</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	9	9	3	-	-
Rye Bay	-	-	-	-	-	1	5	11	9	3	-	-

During the first winter period most records were from Chichester Hbr where the greatest concentrations were at Thorney Island with a peak of 15 on 11 Feb, although there were also six at Snowhill Marsh on 18 Jan. Elsewhere there were up to 12 at Pett Level, plus singles at Pagham Hbr, Pulborough Brooks, Crawley and Glyne Gap (Bexhill).

Birds were recorded regularly in April at the usual wintering sites making it difficult to determine exactly when spring passage started. Inland birds were recorded regularly at Pulborough Brooks (with a high count there of 11 on 11 May), with scattered records from elsewhere. Other high counts for the spring were at the usual site of Thorney Deeps with 12 on 28 Apr and 14 on 2 May.

Birds were seen regularly through late May and June making it difficult to differentiate between late spring and early returning birds at this time. Numbers at Thorney Deeps built typically, reaching 29 on 11 Jul, 60 on 10 Aug, 132 on 25 Aug and 140 on 7 Sep (which was the autumn high count for the county). Elsewhere, numbers were relatively low with the only other double figures counts being 11 at Rye Hbr on 14 Sep and 17 at Emsworth Channel (Chichester Hbr) on 24 Sep. There were also nine at the Upper Chichester Channel on 7 Sep, eight at Pannel Valley NR on 4 Aug, and a similar number at the Union Canal (East Guldeford) on 20 Aug. Good numbers were recorded at Weir Wood Res this autumn, with six on 15 Aug, five on 19 Aug and eight on 5 Sep. Other inland records during the autumn included singles at Darwell Res, Warnham LNR and Bewl Water (on two different dates), and two together at Arlington Res.

During the second winter period, numbers at Thorney Deeps decreased from 120 on 22 Sep to 104 on 8 Oct, 85 on 23 Oct, 30 on 9 Nov and 19 on 17 Dec. Away from Thorney Deeps, wintering birds were recorded at various other sites in Chichester Hbr (with a high count of five at West Wittering on 21 Nov) and Pagham Hbr (single bird on three dates); a single bird at Bewl Water on 3 Nov may have been a late migrant rather than a wintering bird. [JC]

Green Sandpiper*Tringa ochropus*

Scarce spring and fairly common autumn passage migrant; small numbers winter. Schedule 1 species.

The WeBS counts for the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	2	3	7	5	-	1	18	18	14	12	1	1
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	2	1	-	-
Chichester GP	-	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-
Burton & Chingford Ponds	-	1	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	1	-	-
<i>Amberley Wild Brooks</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Arun Valley	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	-	-
Weir Wood Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	nc	1	-	-	-
Pevensey Levels	-	-	3	-	-	-	2	3	2	2	-	1
Bewl Water	1	-	-	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-	-	-
Darwell Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	3	-	-
Powdermill Res	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	3	-	-
<i>Pett Level</i>	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	-	-	-
<i>Rye Hbr</i>	-	-	3	-	-	-	10	12	5	4	1	-
Rye Bay	1	-	3	-	-	-	10	13	9	4	1	-

Counts additional to the above included three at Pannel Valley NR on 21 Jan, two each at Steyning Levels on 22 Feb and Brede Valley on the 27th, three at Drayton GP (Chichester) on 25 Mar, three at Bewl Water on 7 May and three at Pulborough Brooks on 14 Jun.

The minimum monthly totals and numbers of sites (1-km squares) were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	13	12	19	12	5	17	73	92	49	32	16	12
No. of sites	9	11	11	7	3	12	27	34	22	21	12	7

During the first winter period the estimated minimum number was 34 at 20 sites, with numbers rarely exceeding three at any site, but during the main passage period five were noted at Barcombe Res on 9 Apr. Spring passage was largely over by the 17th although stragglers continued to pass until 7 May.

There were then no further records until 11 Jun when the first returning bird was recorded at Chichester Hbr, followed by three at Rye Hbr the following day and three at Pulborough Brooks on the 14th. Numbers remained low for the rest of the month.

Sightings increased, as usual, during July and August but numbers anywhere generally did not exceed three. Notable exceptions were ten at Rye Hbr on 16 Jul, 15 at Drayton GP on the 20th and 13 at Pannel Valley NR on the 28th. A similar pattern prevailed during August when numbers in excess of six involved 15 at Pannel Valley NR on the 1st, 20 at Drayton GP on the 4th and 12 at Rye Hbr on the 13th. Numbers greater than four in September were noted at three sites; eight at Pannel Valley NR on the 4th, nine at Drayton GP on the 5th and seven at Rye Hbr on the 26th. The highest count in October was four at Rye Hbr on the 8th.

Sightings dropped during November as most birds departed to leave just 12 birds dispersed over seven sites in December. [JAH]

Wood Sandpiper*Tringa glareola*

Very scarce spring and autumn migrant; recorded once in winter. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
2	2	-	5	21	4	2

Spring passage was again recorded after a gap last year. The first bird was one at Pulborough Brooks on 28 Apr (two days earlier than the 10-year average date) which was joined by a second bird the following day. Singletons were also there on 11 and 17 May.

Return passage was first noted on 28 Jul. At Pagham Hbr a singleton stayed to at least 1 Aug (with two there on the 30 Jul) and there were three at Pannel Valley NR on 30 Jul with two staying to at least the 31st. In August, at least 21 birds (mostly singletons) were noted at 11 sites, including Drayton GP (Chichester), Weir Wood Res, Barcombe Res, Arlington Res, the Newhaven Ouse Estuary Project (2), Pannel Valley NR (2 on the 1st) and Rye Hbr (3 on the 15th). In September there were singletons at four sites (Drayton GP, Pulborough Brooks, Weir Wood Res and Pannel Valley NR). In October there were singletons at Pulborough Brooks on the 1st and at Weir Wood Res from the 1st to 12th, the latter date constituting the last record for the year which compares with the 10-year average date of 1 Oct.

There were no records of passage from seawatching sites. [JAH]

Common Sandpiper*Actitis hypoleucos*

Fairly common passage migrant; a few regularly winter; has bred at least once.

The monthly WeBS counts at principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	2	1	3	3	6	2	41	75	2	7	3	2
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	2	-	-	3	11	-	1	-	-
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	-	1	-	4	8	-	1	-	-
Chichester GP	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	1
R Adur	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	1	-
Glynde Brooks	-	1	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-
Arlington Res	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	5	-	1	-	-
Bewl Water	2	-	2	nc	nc	nc	2	10	2	4	2	1

The minimum monthly totals and numbers of sites (1-km squares) were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	8	6	9	28	33	11	144	185	32	17	9	18
No. of sites	3	4	6	21	27	9	38	57	21	12	4	9

Birds were noted in 64 1-km squares during the year. Counts during the first winter period included six in the Lower Adur Valley from 2 Jan to at least 19 Feb and two at Ketley Fm & Pond (Bewl) from 1 Jan to at least 15 Mar. Possible early migrants included two in Pagham Hbr on 26 Mar, one at Weir Wood Res on the 19th and three at Ardingly Res on the 29th.

Spring coastal migration was noted at only three sites: a singleton on the beach at Splash Point (Seaford) on 16 Apr, 1 E at Selsey Bill on both 3 and 11 May, 1 E at Splash Point on 6 May and 1 E at Worthing Beach on 3 Jun. Two birds at Southwater CP on 17 Apr were the earliest record there and one was seen and heard flying south at Charleston Reedbed on the 17th.

The only birds recorded during the BBS were two in a 1-km square at Tangmere (Chichester) on 20 Jun.

Although birds were widely reported from 1 Jul onwards the first report of returning migrants was of two at Thorney Deepes on the 9th. Significant numbers reported during the summer and autumn months were nine in Pagham Hbr on 13 Jul and six at Drayton GP (Chichester) on the 27th, ten at Thorney Deepes (Chichester Hbr) on 9 Aug, 20 at Weir Wood Res on the 8th and ten at Union Canal (East Guldeford) on the 20th.

Autumn coastal migration was noted at only four sites: at Selsey Bill 4 E on 20 Jul and 1 E on the 27th, at Climping Beach 1 W on 17 Aug and again on the 24th, 18 Sep and 6 Oct, one at Cow Gap (Beachy Head) on 26 Aug and 1 W at Durrington (Worthing) on 20 Sep. Birds seen on the shore involved one at Climping Beach on 31 Jul, five there on 2 Aug and three at Worthing Beach on 13 Aug.

In the second winter period the only record exceeding three birds was of six at Sidlesham Ferry on 12 Dec. [JAH]

Spotted Sandpiper

Actitis macularius

Very rare vagrant.

1866: Two, perhaps three, in summer plumage which were shot on the Crumbles in October are considered to be insufficiently documented by BOURC in their 35th Report (*Ibis* 149:652-654).

1908: An adult female shot at Shoreham-by-Sea on 27 Nov is considered to be insufficiently documented by BOURC in their 35th Report (*Ibis* 149:652-654).

It is the provenance rather than the identity of these records that is uncertain. The former is supported by two extant specimens (Booth Museum 208049 and Norwich Museum NWHCM 1935.15.9) but was considered unsatisfactory because it involved a multiple occurrence (which in itself was very unlikely) of birds still in full breeding plumage which, given the date of the record, seemed highly improbable. The latter record was confirmed by a photograph of the wing but due to its association with those involved in the Hastings Rarities it was not acceptable as a first for Britain. Contra *British Birds* 3:377, it was considered to be an adult, not 'immature' (Andrew Harrop, BOURC Secretary, *pers. comm.*).

With the removal of these records the summer plumaged adult at Weir Wood Res in mid-August 1974 becomes the county's first. The two subsequent records were a juvenile at Barcombe Res in November 1977 and another summer adult at Darwell Res in September/October 2004. [RJF]

Turnstone*Arenaria interpres*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce in summer. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The monthly WeBS counts at principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	1060	512	624	317	130	4	107	120	255	1147	614	533
Chichester Hbr	385	170	111	26	3	-	-	22	37	157	223	66
Pagham Hbr	367	112	395	248	83	-	107	92	80	723	158	79
Climping	110	56	39	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	60	4	31
Lower Adur Estuary	46	77	10	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	27	56	26
Langney	1	nc	13	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	18	nc	-	-
Glyne Gap	151	92	56	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	116	152	150	282
<i>Pett Level</i>	-	-	-	37	-	2	-	-	-	26	2	33
Rye Bay	-	-	-	43	44	4	-	6	-	27	20	49

No sites achieved the 1% national threshold level of 500.

Notable counts additional to those in the WeBS table at Pagham Hbr were 200 on 1 and 27 Feb, 130 on 31 Jul and 240 on 9 Nov. Counts in excess of 100 elsewhere were of 180 roosting at Littlehampton pier on 17 Feb, 187 there on 4 Mar waiting for the tide to drop, unusually high counts at Goring Beach of 115 on 26 Aug and 84 there on 23 Sep, and 130 roosting at Climping Beach on 9 Dec.

The minimum monthly totals and numbers of sites (1-km squares) were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	1256	953	939	760	260	148	268	399	507	1325	834	1037
No. of sites	22	29	26	28	19	14	13	20	24	27	29	27

Counts during the migration seasons at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

		Mar	Apr	May		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	18	19	2		32		26	1	1
	W		4	1				39		5
Worthing Beach	E			8						
	W			9			1	2		
Splash Point (Seaford)	E			12						
	W									
Birling Gap	E			5						
	W									

The numbers recorded for easterly spring migration were significantly lower than in 2005. At Pilsley Island the last spring record was of one on 12 Jun and the first report of returning birds was of three there on 20 Jul. A singleton at Pannel Valley NR on 16 Aug was unusual for that site.

Notable counts during return passage and the autumn, not included in the WeBS table, were 130 in Pagham Hbr on 31 Jul, 116 at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 17 Sep and 272 on the foreshore at Church Norton on 7 Oct. In the second winter period 260 were counted in Pagham Hbr on 10 Dec and 262 at Glyne Gap on the 17th. Several sites contained 20 or more wintering birds in the last week of December. [JAH]

Grey Phalarope*Phalaropus fulicarius*

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

2005: The birds published in SxBR 58:94 for 21 Oct off Climping and 8 Nov off Brighton Marina were erroneous and should be deleted. One off Climping and Littlehampton West Beaches on 31 Oct (OM) was therefore the first of seven recorded in late autumn.

2006: A first-winter was present on the sea just off Poole Place (Climping) on 8 Dec (DE, OM *et al.*) while it, or another first-winter, flew west past Selsey Bill on 9 Dec (JA, TJE). Assuming two individuals were involved a total of 21 have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000. All have occurred between 21 Sep and 14 Jan with most in November (10) and December (6) and two in both October and January. All but one have been at or near the coast, the exception being the individual at Pulborough and Greatham in 2005. [RJF]

Pomarine Skua*Stercorarius pomarinus*

Passage migrant in variable numbers in spring but very scarce in autumn; rare in winter.

The estimated minimum of 137 birds seen during the spring passage period April-June was down considerably on last year's total of 186 and also well below the average of 167 for 1991-2005. Totals for the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Total
Monthly minima	19	117	1	2	139
Selsey Bill	2	59	1	-	62
Worthing	-	21	-	-	21
Brighton Marina	2	115	-	-	117
Telscombe Cliffs	2	24	-	-	26
Splash Point (Seaford)	1	88	-	-	89
Birling Gap	1	41	-	-	42
Other sites	14	11	-	2	27

The first birds were 2 E at Telscombe Cliffs on 21 Apr (the same date as the 10-year average), followed by 2 E at Splash Point (Seaford) and one at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on the 23rd and 2 E at Selsey Bill on the 24th. The final record that month was a noteworthy 14 E at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on the 28th. Peak passage occurred in early May; there were 11 E at Selsey Bill on the 2nd (when the wind backed from S 2 to SE 4-5), but the largest day movement was again at Selsey on 4th with 31 E logged in 12½ hr, including a flock of 17 at 0820 hr. Such flocks are surely one of the finest sights in birding and these birds were also observed passing Worthing beach at 0855 hr, Brighton Marina and Splash Point (times unspecified) and finally Birling Gap at 0955 hr. On the 8th there were 30 E at Splash Point in 8¼ hr but only 10 at Selsey, more typical as sites further east often record greater numbers in spring. The largest flock of 23 was recorded at Brighton Marina, presumably within this period though regrettably few other details were received.

Thereafter numbers quickly declined and a few were observed at several sites until 26 May. On the 28th a tired and possibly sick individual was on the shingle at Cuckmere Haven being attacked by crows, but managed to fly out to sea with a very laboured flight. A single east at Selsey Bill on 22 Jun was presumably a very late spring migrant. Two adults offshore at Bognor Regis rocks on 3 Jul were chased away by Herring Gulls, but there were no other records for the second half of the year. [OM]

Arctic Skua*Stercorarius parasiticus*

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

The totals shown in the following two tables were computed on the assumption that the maximum number seen at any one coastal site was the minimum in the county that day and that birds seen on subsequent days were different.

The annual total of 359 was the lowest since 1997 (346) and considerably lower than both the 5-year average of 494 and the 10-year average of 485, as shown below:

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Annual totals	452	346	506	479	604	485	450	535	574	426	359

The approximate monthly totals where a flight direction was stated (i.e. ignoring those apparently loafing etc.) were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Monthly total	-	-	11	96	162	4	6	11	38	27	4	-	359
No. of days	-	-	6	19	21	4	5	12	12	6	4	-	

The first bird of the year was a rare sighting of one offshore at Church Norton on 17 Jan. The next was a single precursor of spring passage up Channel at Splash Point (Seaford) on 19 Mar. Thereafter, there was a steady flow of one to five birds noted on six dates with a highest count of 5 E on the 25th at Birling Gap (Beachy Head). In April, birds were recorded on 19 dates with a highest count of 14 E at Birling Gap on the 25th although counts were generally of fewer than ten. Peak passage occurred on 2, 3 and 4 May although birds were noted on 21 days during the month. On the 2nd, 48 E were counted at Splash Point and 39 E at Selsey Bill. On the 3rd, 31 E at Splash Point and 17 E at Selsey Bill were followed on the 4th by 31 E at Splash Point and 16 E at Selsey Bill.

Counts at the principal seawatching sites, with the hours watched on peak days, were as follows:

		Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Peak movement	Hrs watched peak days	
Selsey Bill	E	-	23	104	4	5	4	3	3	1	39	2 May	13½
	W	-	-	1	-	-	-	7	7	2			
Worthing Beach	E	-	2	18	-	-	4	2	-	-	11	2 May	5¼
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	-			
Telscombe Cliffs	E	3	3	26	-	-	2	-	-	-	12	2 May	4
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	7	67	130	-	-	-	-	-	-	48	2 May	14
	W	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Birling Gap	E	6	69	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	2 May	6
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			

During the summer there were coastal records of single birds flying east on four dates in June between the 11th and 27th and, in July, two of singletons flying east and one of 4 E on the 23rd. In August, birds flying east or west were noted on seven dates and a singleton flew north inland at Pilsey Sands on 23 Aug. In addition, one to four were seen regularly at Rye Hbr from 14 Jul to 28 Aug attracted by tern activity and two were seen mobbing terns at Winchelsea on the 17th.

Birds were noted on 12 dates in September with totals of 31 W and 7 E and a highest count

of 12 W at Birling Gap on the 2nd. In October, records were received for six dates and totals of 25 W and 2 E with a maximum count of 11 W on the 8th at Selsey Bill. Passage tailed off in November; there were four records of singletons (3W, 1E) with a final record of 1 E on the 26th at Selsey Bill. [JAH]

Long-tailed Skua

Stercorarius longicaudus

Rare vagrant.

An adult flew east past Splash Point (Seaford) at 1630 hr on 2 May (JWK, JPS, EDU) with another east there at 0700 hr on 14 May (RJF, JPS *et al.*) and at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) at 0715 hr (RHC, DC, JFC, JWK *et al.*) while one was reported flying east at Brighton Marina sometime on 21 May (IJW). On 14 May observers at Birling Gap were alerted to the bird's anticipated arrival and 15 minutes later, after what was becoming a somewhat tense wait, it was picked up as it approached. It was an immaculate individual and an undoubted highlight of the spring for those concerned, although the good fortune of the two observers who had also seen the 2 May individual will be acknowledged. The 21 May report was the latest spring record for the county by four days.

Splash Point maintains its position as the site to see this species in the county, accounting for five of the eleven records since the beginning of 2000, all between 29 Apr and 14 May. There are two other May records in addition to those above (from Brighton Marina and Birling Gap) and singles from Selsey Bill in September and Brighton Marina in October and December, the last an exceptional month for the species still to be in the Northern Hemisphere, let alone British waters (BWP Concise I:703). [RJF]

Great Skua

Stercorarius skua

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

The totals shown in the following two tables were computed on the assumption that the maximum number seen at any one coastal site was the minimum in the county that day and that birds seen on subsequent days were different.

The annual total of 135 was the lowest since 1999 (97) and considerably lower than both the 5-year average (192) and the 10-year average (158), as shown in the following table:

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Annual totals	76	78	116	97	157	227	147	211	192	185	135

The approximate monthly totals where a flight direction was stated (i.e. ignoring those apparently loafing etc.) were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	-	2	2	64	48	5	-	3	1	7	4	-
No. of days	-	2	2	16	17	4	-	4	2	9	4	-

The first bird of the year was seen flying west at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 4 Feb followed by one at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on the 10th (flight direction not stated), suggesting that they might have wintered in northern waters. No more were reported until 1 E was noted at Birling Gap on 26 Mar and 1 W at Selsey Bill on the 28th.

The usual spring passage up Channel was noted from 13 Apr when a singleton was noted (direction not stated) at Goring on 13 Apr. Peak passage occurred on 19 and 20 Apr at Birling Gap when 17 E and 21 E respectively were recorded but numbers were mainly of ones or twos during the period. The last passage birds of the spring were 3 E at Selsey Bill on 21 Jun.

In addition to the above, one was apparently loafing offshore at Selsey Bill on 2 May, five were offshore at Brighton Marina on 20 May with some reported waiting for Storm Petrels, one flew up-river at Newhaven Tide Mills on 4 Jun and one at Selsey Bill on 19 Sep was repeatedly attacking a Herring Gull before wandering up and down the coast.

Counts at the principal seawatching sites, with the hours watched on peak days, were as follows:

		Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Aug	Oct	Nov	Peak movement		Hrs watched peak days
Selsey Bill	E			30	23	4		3		12	19 Apr	4½
	W		1	2				1				
Worthing Beach	E			2	8							
	W				6				1			
Telscombe Cliffs	E			4					1			
	W						1		2			
Splash Point (Seaford)	E			36	25					14	19 Apr	3
	W											
Birling Gap	E		1	48	19		2	2		21	20 Apr	5½
	W	1		2								

Autumn passage was first noted on 2 Aug when 1 W was noted at Telscombe Cliffs. There was then a gap until the next sightings of 1 E at Birling Gap on both 19 and 20 Aug and one offshore at Rye Hbr on the 24th. In September, single birds were seen on only two dates (18th and 19th) while in October singletons were noted on ten dates. Single birds were noted on four dates in November, the last record being 1 W on the 17th at Telscombe. [JAH]

Mediterranean Gull

Larus melanocephalus

Fairly common and regular visitor throughout the year; has bred in recent years. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

This was another exceptional year for this species as it continued its expansion in the county. This was particularly marked in the first seven months of the year (as shown in the table below) when totals in January and February were approximately three times, and in March and April approximately twice, the respective 2005 totals. Records were from approximately 107 different locations (115 in 2005) and were noted on 260 days (238 in 2005). There were again a number of large counts with 117 records of more than ten individuals (116 in 2005) but the number of counts in excess of 40 increased to 59 (36



Mediterranean Gull, Rye Harbour, July 2006 (Peter Wilson)

in 2005). The county highest count record was broken for the eighth year running with 165 recorded at Rye Hbr on 14 Apr (with at least 100 present all month) and at least 100 at West Fields (Selsey) on 26 Sep. The large number of records received (625), from both regularly used sites near Pagham and Rye Harbours and coastal seawatching locations, made it difficult to evaluate the number of different individuals in the county. However, the numbers in the following table are a conservative estimate of the minimum numbers present each month, with a comparison with 2005. No attempt has been made to differentiate between the different age groups, although counts of adults were slightly more frequently recorded than others.

	No. of days recorded	Total	(Total 2005)	Inland	Highest number recorded
Jan	24	82	(28)	1	70 at Pagham Hbr on the 5 th
Feb	23	152	(42)	2	107 at Pagham Hbr on the 4 th
Mar	28	448	(250)	10	98 at Pagham Hbr on the 14 th
Apr	30	495	(220)	0	165 at Rye Hbr on the 14 th
May	22	325	(147)	40	155 (inc. 8 first year) at Rye Hbr on the 5 th
Jun	24	250	(140)	17	150 at Rye Hbr on the 22 nd
Jul	27	154	(137)	12	50 at Brighton Marina on the 5 th
Aug	12	17	(100)	0	4 at Rye Hbr on the 5 th
Sep	15	126	(81)	0	100+ at West Fields (Selsey) on the 26 th
Oct	17	73	(47)	0	30 at West Beach (Selsey) on the 1 st
Nov	19	51	(103)	4	11 at Pagham Hbr on the 8 th
Dec	19	137	(79)	6	53 at Pagham Hbr on the 10 th

The pattern of occurrence was similar to previous years with most being recorded in spring. Pagham Hbr was the most favoured location in the first winter period and at the end of the year while in the middle months most were located in the east of the county, particularly at Rye Hbr. Other noteworthy counts not shown in the above table included 57 at Pagham Hbr on 2 Jan, 40 at Northey (Chichester Hbr) on 20 Mar, 67 at Pannel Valley NR on the 31st which increased to 96 on 1 Apr, 76 at Thorney Deeps on 15 Apr and 24 on the 16th at Woodmancote (Emsworth) including two first summer birds.

Despite many hours of seawatching, relatively few were seen passing offshore and spring passage was light. Ones or twos were seen flying east or west from 1 Jan to the end of February but from 4 Mar to 14 May (the main spring passage period) only 99 E and 23 W were recorded, as shown in the following table. Peak counts occurred on 25 Mar and 2 May with 17 E (all adults in summer plumage) at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) and 18 E at Splash Point (Seaford) respectively. There were only six other counts above ten in the whole year. Thereafter small numbers were seen offshore to the end of the year with an autumn peak of 12 W at Selsey Bill on 8 Oct.

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	3	-	-	-	9	17	27	2	6	8	9	6
	W	-	2	10	-	-	6	5	-	-	38	4	4
Climping Beach	E	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
	W	-	-	3	-	-	3	-	2	3	2	-	-
Worthing Beach	E	-	-	1	-	6	2	9	-	-	-	1	-
	W	-	-	3	-	19	-	4	-	-	2	1	1
Telscombe Cliffs	E	-	3	10	7	-	1	12	-	-	-	3	-
	W	-	-	4	-	7	1	11	-	2	-	-	-
Splash Point	E	-	-	34	3	26	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Birling Gap	E	-	1	20	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Breeding occurred again at Rye Hbr where 75 pairs nested and at least 45 young fledged, an increase on 2005. At the nearby Pannel Valley NR birds were present in all months from January to August. Numbers built up through March to a peak of 96 on 1 Apr but tailed off through April; there were no reports of any breeding attempts here or elsewhere, other than at Rye Hbr.

While most birds were recorded at or near the coast, there were 22 records from inland sites. Most did not exceed three but there were eight (including three first summer birds) at Walderton (NW of Chichester) on 17 May, 24 (including six first summers) at nearby Stoughton on the 24th and eight first summer birds feeding in a field at Chilgrove on the 27th. In June there were 12 at Chilgrove again on the 20th and in July ten (including a first and a second summer) at Funtington on the 2nd. At Bewl Water one to three were present on several dates between 14 Jan and 27 Mar and again on 14 Dec. [JAH]

Laughing Gull

Larus atricilla

Very rare vagrant.

2005: BBRC have accepted a record of a first-winter bird east off Brighton Marina on 3 Nov (IJW) as being this species. This report retrospectively predates by a day the winter plumaged adult at nearby Ovingdean (*SxBR* 58:95 & plate 5).

2006: An adult in summer plumage flew east past Birling Gap (Beachy Head) at 0815 hr on 19 Apr (RHC, JFC) while a first-summer present at Arlington Res from 11 to 23 Jul (PJWi *et al.*) was re-found at Barcombe Res on at least 29 and 30 Jul (SHL *et al.*). The Arlington individual was the first to linger in the county and was particularly appreciated by those not fortunate enough to have previously connected with the species in the county. It was an excellent local patch find at Barcombe, but the limited access there meant that the length of its stay might not have been fully documented.



Laughing Gull, Arlington Reservoir, July 2006
(Peter Wilson)

These records have been accepted by BBRC and take the county total to six. Two have been in April, two in July and two in November. The Birling Gap individual was presumably that seen over Filsham reedbed and Pebsham Tip on 21 Apr (KMJ) but the observer tragically died before the record could be submitted. [RJF]

Little Gull

Larus minutus

Fairly common passage migrant, most numerous in spring; scarce in summer and winter. Schedule 1 species.

The total of approximately 283 birds was the lowest since 1986 and compares adversely with the years since 1998 when numbers exceeded 600 each year.

The following table of approximate monthly totals also shows inland records which are included in the totals. The clear passage period in April is evident but autumn passage was

unremarkable (passage in the last five Octobers has averaged 179).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	6	4	15	170	39	2	2	2	3	14	9	18
Inland	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	3	1

In January, singletons were observed at Selsey Bill on the 1st and 2nd, at Church Norton on the 10th, in Pagham Hbr on the 15th and at Brighton Marina on the 17th. Inland records involved one at Warnham LNR on the 25th and one at Weir Wood Res on the 11th and 23rd. In February, a singleton was in the Sidlesham/South Mundham area on the 11th and two were at Rye Hbr on the 17th.

On 14 Mar there was 1 W at Climping and another singleton was at Chichester GP on 28 Mar. Spring coastal passage started on 24 Mar with 2 E at Climping Beach followed by 3 E at Splash Point (Seaford) and 7 E (which may have included the former 3 E) at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) the next day. Inland there was a singleton at Bewl Water on the 27th and a singleton at Chichester GP on the 28th. Once again, the heaviest passage was recorded in the east of the county with a peak count on 19 Apr of 15 E at Splash Point in 3 hr watching and 91 E at Birling Gap in 4¾ hr. A minor peak occurred on 2 May with 17 E at Splash Point (14 hr watching) and 8 E at Birling Gap (6 hr). The only double figure day in the west was 10 E at Selsey Bill on 17 Apr.

The following table of monthly totals from the principal seawatching sites reveals the April peak and the scarcity of this species (even at well watched sites) outside the spring passage period.

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Selsey Bill	E	-	30	6	-	-	1	1	-	3	-
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	-	
Climping Beach	E	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	W	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Worthing Beach	E	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	
Telscombe Cliffs	E	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	W	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	3	40	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	W	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Birling Gap	E	7	119	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Three birds were at Rye Hbr on several dates between 20 May and 3 Jun. A possibly early returning bird was recorded flying west at Telscombe Cliffs on 8 Jul and a singleton was at Rye Hbr on the 17th.

The above table shows that the very light autumn passage was mainly observed at Selsey Bill where the peak count was a miserly 4 W on 9 Oct in 3½ hr of watching.

Inland, records at Weir Wood Res involved single first winter birds on 28 Aug, 30 Oct and 6 Nov and an adult on 3 Dec. At Barcombe Res there were two (a winter adult and a second winter bird) on 4 Nov. Observers at Brighton Marina recorded 11 W on 10 Dec. At the close of the year, 10 E were recorded at Brighton Marina on the 29th, a first year bird was at Shoreham Hbr on the 30th and finally there was 1 E past Worthing Beach and a singleton at East Head (Chichester Hbr) on the 31st. [JAH]

Sabine's Gull*Larus sabini**Rare autumn vagrant.*

A juvenile flew east close inshore at Selsey Bill on 2 Oct (JA, JD, CN). It is the tenth to be recorded in the county since the start of 2000. Four of these have been at Selsey Bill, making it the best place in the county to chance upon this delightful gull. Four of the recent records have been in October, four in early November (to the 8th), with the remaining two in September (from the 20th). [RJF]

Black-headed Gull*Larus ridibundus*

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

During the first winter period the highest counts were, as in recent years, at the evening roost at Bewl Water where 36,000 were counted on 10 Jan and 55,600 on the 16th. Subsequent counts were considerably lower with month peaks of 15,000 on 15 Feb and 7,500 on 17 Mar. In the absence of the *Winter Gull Roost Survey (WinGS)* this year there were no counts from coastal sites. The only other four figure counts during the period were a month maximum of 1500 at Pannel Valley NR on 21 Apr and at Rye Hbr where a dusk count on 14 Apr produced 4500, although numbers fluctuated during the month. Inland, 2000 were counted at Kithurst Hill (Storrington) on 5 Feb.

Spring coastal passage was again inconsistently recorded. The monthly eastbound totals and peak movements were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	67	215	71	140 on 17 Apr (6 hr)
Worthing Beach	4	221	254	107 on 3 May (2¼ hr)
Birling Gap	170	268	94	170 on 27 Apr (1½ hr)

Once again it was a good breeding season with an estimated 2780-3170 pairs recorded. At Rye Hbr the colony was estimated at over 2000 but only 1641 nests could actually be counted because of the vegetation. Most pairs were at the Ternery Pool and an overall total of 1800-2000 chicks fledged. An increase was again noted at Pannel Valley NR where 1050 nests were counted but fledging success was not high. There were 70-100 nests on rafts at New Lake (Chichester GP) and 54 chicks were ringed on 6 Jun, a significant increase on 2005 but at the expense of the Common Terns for which the rafts were originally built. At Pagham Hbr the only detail provided was a count of 21 with confirmed breeding. During the BBS a total of 215 birds was counted from 22 1-km squares of the 122 surveyed.

In the early autumn away from the breeding colonies, numbers were generally low with the highest counts being 100 at Pagham Hbr on 2 and 7 Jul, 142 at Goring Beach on the 11th, 100 at Worthing Beach on the 20th, 120 at Pannel Valley NR on the 10th and a month maximum of 100 at Rye Hbr on the 29th. However, higher numbers were recorded at favoured locations in August with 221 at Halseys Fm Field (Sidlesham) on the 11th, 120 at the inland site of Iping Common on the 20th, 2000 anting at Drayton GP (Chichester) on the 6th and 2600 at Rye Hbr on the 11th. The only significant count in September was 4000 at Pagham Hbr on the 11th.

Thereafter, there were 39 three figure counts to the end of the year but the only four figure counts in October were 1200 at Thorney Island on the 12th, 1000 at West Beach (Selsey) on the 1st and 3100 at Pagham Hbr on the 4th. A roost at Weir Wood Res included 3500 on 25 Nov but only 1500 on 4 Dec. A count at Pagham Hbr of 2500 on 10 Dec increased dramatically to 20,000 on

the 12th. However, the prize for the highest counts goes to Bewl Water where, after 20,600 on 27 Nov, numbers reached 53,000 on 14 Dec and 67,840 on the 31st, the highest count there for the year and a good number to carry forward to 2007. [JAH]

Mew/Common Gull

Larus canus

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; small numbers summer; bred until 1963 and attempted to breed in 2006. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

As in previous years, the largest numbers were recorded roosting at Bewl Water. Notable peak monthly counts were 56,000 on 19 Jan, a county roost record of 90,000 on 15 Feb (when a Force 9 gale was recorded in the English Channel), 57,850 on 27 Mar and 18,920 on 31 Dec. There were reports of other much smaller, but still notable, roosts of 4200 on 1 Apr and 5800 on 25 Nov.

As in previous years, coastal sites were strikingly less productive although there were notable counts of 1500 at Pannel Valley NR on 25 Jan (resting and washing on the scrape), 2850 at Pannel Valley NR on 13 Mar (heading down the valley at dusk) and 1600 at Southwick Beach on 15 Mar. The R Adur at Shoreham, which last year produced the largest coastal roost of 1000 on 1 Feb, only managed 600 on 3 Dec.

Some notable counts from inland farmland sites included at least 1500 roosting at Court Lodge Farm (Udimore) on 9 Mar and at least 1500 at Kithurst Hill (Storrington) on 19 Nov.

Seawatching was again rather inconsistent but counts were generally modest, the spring passage providing the highest monthly totals (derived from totalling the maximum number seen each day at any of the six sites) of 40 W and 60 E in Mar and 26 E in Apr.

Summer records were typically sparse, exceptions being 100 at Thorney Island on 18 Jul (roosting at dusk on the runway), 200 at the same location on 5 Aug, 600 at Valdoe Wood (East Lavant) on 6 Aug and a minimum of 150 at Rye Hbr shore on 11 Aug. First returning adults were noted at Thorney Island on 25 Jun and at Worthing Beach on 4 Jul.

A pair nested at Ternery Pool (Rye Hbr), though sadly the nest failed before hatching. This is the first breeding record for the county since 1963 when the species last bred at the Midrips on the Sussex/Kent border. [SW]

Lesser Black-backed Gull

Larus fuscus

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

Despite a respectable number of 252 records, most counts were small and none reached three figures. As might perhaps be expected, the popular gull roost at Bewl Water produced the highest count of 89 on 27 Mar (a day of Force 9 gales). Other notable counts came from coastal sites; Brighton Marina produced 60 on 18 Mar (roosting migrants) and Rye Hbr had a good autumn with 71 on 22 Sep, 70 roosting on 19 Oct and 52 on 13 Nov. Sea-watching detected little in the way of coastal movement, the most productive period being late winter and spring, with the highest monthly totals (derived from totalling the maximum number seen each day at any of the six sites) of 6 E in Feb, and 8 E and 4 W in May.

A number of records mentioned breeding activity of some kind. More specifically, a pair was

recorded as possibly nesting on a car park roof at Rye Hbr on 8 Apr, nine nests were recorded at Newhaven Tide Mills on 1 May (eggs cleared and no young), a rooftop nester was recorded at Alexandra Park (Hastings) on 29 May, three pairs were reported as successfully breeding on rooftops in Kemp Town (Brighton) and four pairs nested at Rye Hbr.

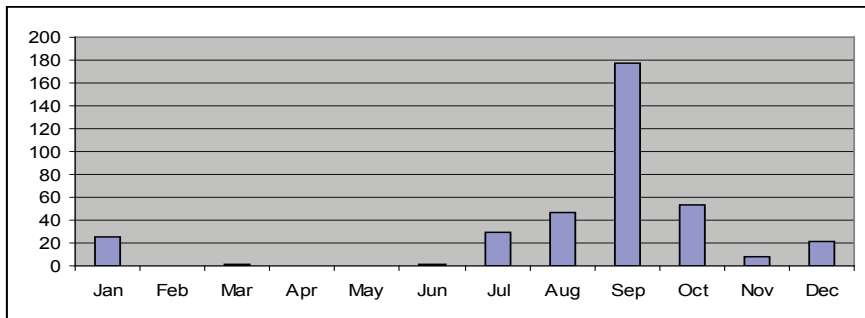
Other significant records were 40 (all *intermedius*) at Pagham Hbr on 12 Mar, 55 at Rye Hbr shore on 11 Aug and 48 at Ashdown West Chase on 12 Nov. [SW]

Yellow-legged Gull

Larus michahellis

Fairly common but localised visitor, mainly in late summer and autumn.

As usual with this species, all records came from coastal locations with a clear peak in mid- to late summer and early to mid-autumn. Few records occurred outside this period, though there were one or two double-figure counts in January and December, notably 12 different birds during January at Southwick Beach, up to 10 different birds at Brighton Marina that month, and up to 20 different birds at the same location during December. There were no records at all in February, April and May, and only a single bird in March at Scotney Court GP on the 15th. The following chart shows the aggregated monthly maximum counts from the 28 reporting locations.



During the summer/autumn peak there was just one three-figure count, of 100 birds at Pagham Hbr on 9 Sep, a record of at least 40 different individuals at Brighton Marina during July to September, a count of 20 at Pagham Hbr again on 27 Aug and counts of 15 there on 27 Sep and 29 Oct (the latter date specifically all adults). Finally there was a singleton at the Newhaven Ouse Estuary Project on 30 Dec.

All records of the Yellow-legged Gull *L.a.cachinnans* (i.e. Caspian Gull) require a description to be submitted to the Records Committee. [SW]

Herring Gull

Larus argentatus

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

As might be expected, Bewl Water produced some reasonable roosting counts, with 280 on 16 Jan, 120 on 27 Mar, 110 on 7 Apr (including 50 immatures) and 130 on 7 Dec. However, these were not the largest flocks, there being a number of four figure counts spread throughout the

year, the majority being from coastal locations. Notable examples were 2500 roosting at Brighton Marina on 28 Jan (including several *argentatus*), 1200 at Stretham Manor (Henfield) on 29 May, 5200 roosting at Bexhill on 6 Jun (about 90% adults), at least 3000 at Rye Hbr shore on 11 Aug, at least 1000 at Rye Hbr Bittern excavation on 13 Nov and 3500 roosting at Shoreham Hbr in stormy weather on 24 Nov. With regard to the count of 5200 at Bexhill on 6 Jun, it was noted that the local breeding population is declining and this figure is much greater than the entire local breeding population.

Breeding activity was specifically mentioned from numerous locations; Rye Hbr on 8 Apr (three pairs nesting on a martello tower), Alexandra Park (Hastings) on 29 May (nesting on rooftops and bathing in the Swannery), West Worthing on 3 Jun (first small chicks noted in several nests), Ryecroft Close (Goring) on 22 Jun (four pairs raised nine young) and Hotham Park (Bognor) on 30 Jun (several territories noted in 7 ha town park). A breeding summary from Rye Hbr on 1 Jun noted that pairs nested at Flat Beach Quarry, Ternery Pool, Castle Water (two pairs) and on the Bittern excavation, though none hatched as they were all controlled. Over 100 pairs nested on the rooftops of Rye Wharf and Rye Hbr Village.

In previous years this species has been increasingly recorded feeding on agricultural land, though this year only two records specifically mentioned this activity; a group of 12 on 13 Apr at Brede Levels and a much larger flock of 400 at High Cross Farm (Uckfield) on 14 Oct. Other notable or unusual sightings included a leucistic individual at Hermitage (Southbourne) on 26 Jan, a deceased bird at Rye Hbr on 20 Jul that had been ringed at Blankenberge (West Flanders) on 7 Nov 2005, an individual suffering from botulism at Barcombe Res on 5 Oct, a bird at the R Adur (Shoreham) on 26 Nov that had been ringed at Gerrards Cross landfill site on 12 Nov 2003 and another bird at the R Adur on the same date that had been ringed at Orford Ness (Suffolk) on 16 Jul 2000 and had subsequently been seen at Southwold (Suffolk) on 7 Sep 2000, Cricqueboeuf (Calvados, France) on 21 Oct 2003 and back at Wetherden (Suffolk) on 29 Jul 2005. [SW]

Scandinavian Herring Gull

Larus argentatus argentatus

Scarce winter visitor.

Records of distinctive adults showing the full suite of characters restricted to the form *argentatus* were recorded at Pett Pools on 29 Jan (DC, JFC, JWK) and Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 4 Feb (the first ever adult winter record of this race at this location) (DC, JFC, JWK), with two on the R Adur at Shoreham Airport on 21 Sep (RJF). Identifiable *argentatus* are usually restricted to the northern limits of their range where the largest and darkest mantled individuals (such as these) are to be found. Many less distinctive individuals go unnoticed, or unreported, making the form's true status in the county difficult to determine.

Members are reminded that descriptions are still required for all records of *argentatus* Herring Gulls observed in the west of the county and may be required in some instances for those recorded in the east. [RJF]

Iceland Gull

Larus glaucoides

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

An adult was reported flying over Brighton Marina on 11 Dec (IJW) while a first-winter roosted at Arlington Res on 31 Dec (IJW). Twelve have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000 although, since 2002, records have been averaging just one per year. One of the previous records during this period was also an adult. [RJF]

Great Black-backed Gull*Larus marinus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; small numbers summer; bred for the first time in 2000.

Throughout the year the species was counted regularly at Chichester, Pagham and Rye Harbours. The following table shows the maximum count in each month at these sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chichester Hbr	200	-	12	7	54	68	20	1	34	92	42	34
Pagham Hbr	450	120	47	50	40	430	100	52	121	100	170	290
Rye Hbr	160	59	7	57	4	1	10	280	35	182	300	208

Other notable counts early in the year included 260 at Camber Shore on 27 Jan, 320 in the Lower Cuckmere Valley on 3 Feb, 100 at Beachy Head the following day and 300 at Selsey Bill on 26 Feb. The highest inland count in the period was 21 at Bewl Water on 9 Mar.

There was no breeding at either Hastings or Bexhill but at Southwick two pairs raised three young each, a pair at Newhaven Tide Mills which bred on the roof over Marina Station had two nearly fledged young on 29 Jul and a pair nested again on the roof of a building at Rye Wharf, although there were no reports as to whether it was successful.

Apart from the figures shown in the table above, the highest numbers in the autumn and second winter period were 142 at Selsey Bill on 28 Aug and 101 there on 9 Sep, 115 at Camber Sands on 16 Sep, 112 at Selsey Bill on 17 Nov and 250 at Shoreham Hbr on 24 Nov. The largest inland counts in the period were 20 birds following a drilling tractor at High Cross Fm (Uckfield) on 14 Oct and 13 at Warnham LNR on 10 Dec. [PNP]

Kittiwake*Rissa tridactyla*

Common but localised breeding species; common winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Although birds were recorded along the coast in every month of year, most records were as usual of coastal movements. The following table shows the monthly totals from the principal seawatching locations but the close proximity of the breeding sites in the east of the county, particularly Splash Point (Seaford), makes the collating of movements impossible.

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	115	68	10	10	23	8	1	nc	9	-	3	7
	W	8	23	9	13	102	2	2	nc	5	13	658	66
Worthing Beach	E	16	293	15	6	19	3	18	nc	1	-	1	3
	W	8	-	3	5	20	-	-	nc	2	-	264	8
Telscombe Cliffs	E	26	142	214	147	nc	116	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	-
	W	1	80	1	7	nc	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	13	2
Birling Gap	E	4	6	369	50	35	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
	W	1	-	74	104	520	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc

In the first winter period the largest movement at Selsey Bill was 112 E in 2½ hr on 29 Jan while at Worthing it was 170 E in 2 hr on 26 Feb, at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) 126 E in 3¼ hr on 12 Mar and at Telscombe Cliffs 101 E in 3 hr the following day. In the summer months there were 98 E at Telscombe Cliffs on 2 Apr in 1¼ hr, 400 W at Birling Gap on 24 May in 7½

hr (associated with the gales that brought the Storm-petrel influx) and 94 E at Telscombe Cliffs on 28 June in 1 hr.

There were no reports of breeding at Newhaven but 300 birds were counted on the cliffs at Splash Point on 31 May and 550 on 29 Jun although there was no indication of breeding success.

There were no reports of any significant coastal movements from the end of June until the middle of November when there were 156 W at Worthing on the 17th in ¾ hr and then the largest movement of the year with 598 W at Selsey Bill on the 18th in 4¾ hr.

Again there were no inland records this year. [PNP]

Little Tern

Sternula albifrons

Scarce breeding summer visitor and fairly common passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

A single bird was recorded at Pagham Hbr on 1 Apr (RJS) with two seen at Church Norton on the 3rd. The first was the earliest arrival in the county, just one day sooner than the first spring bird in both 1996 and 1997 and well before the 10-year average arrival date of 9 Apr. However, there were no further records until one flew west at Worthing on 14 Apr. Thereafter the species was recorded daily throughout April.

Analysis of the daily counts from each of the seawatch locations suggests a minimum of 380 birds flew east during the spring comprising 198 in April and 182 in May. The totals of eastbound birds at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

	Apr	May	Total	No. per hr watched	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	127	153	280	0.8	55 E on 2 (13½ hr) & 4 May (12½ hr)
Climping Beach	-	-	0	0.0	none recorded
Worthing Beach	95	59	154	1.3	82 E on 21 Apr (4 hr)
Telscombe Cliffs	-	-	0	0.0	none recorded
Splash Point (Seaford)	16	125	141	0.7	48 E on 2 May (14 hr)
Birling Gap	11	18	29	0.2	9 E on 21 Apr (3¾ hr)

The figures in the table show the passage was mediocre with the peaks on 21 Apr and in early May. Despite detailed logs being kept at two sites, the species was not recorded. Most of the spring records were, as usual, from the shore but there were nine in Pagham Hbr on 18 Apr and at Pilesey Sands (Chichester Hbr) there were 16 on 20 Apr, 21 on 26 Apr and 25 on 2 May.

At Rye Hbr the first birds were recorded on 16 Apr and the first nest noted on 15 May. Twenty-one pairs nested on the reserve, the majority on the shore, but with three nests on Flat Beach. The first chicks were observed on 13 Jun and on 29 Jun a total of 13 chicks were present. Nine chicks were fledging up to mid-July but the remaining chicks disappeared overnight, perhaps due to predation. At Ella Nore (Chichester Hbr) three pairs were present during the summer but did not breed.

Counts at Pilesey Sands during the summer were 34 on 14 Jul, 21 on 11 Aug, 18 on 18 Aug, 12 on 24 Aug and 11 on 5 Sep. Elsewhere the numbers recorded were low and even at Rye Hbr the highest count was only 11 on 24 Jul. Seawatchers seldom see this species in the autumn as shown by the July and August totals of four and six respectively from Selsey Bill. All the September records were from Chichester or Pagham Harbours with the previously mentioned count from Pilesey Sands and seven at Church Norton on 23 Sep being the largest. Two flew west at Climping on 2 Oct and the last was seen at Chichester Canal on 8 Oct. This was a week later than the 10-

year average last date of 1 Oct and was the latest departure since one was seen on 4 Nov 1991.

There were no inland records. [JAN]

Black Tern

Chlidonias niger

Scarce passage migrant. Schedule 1 species.

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
28	42	2	1	17	43	10

The first observations were 8 E at Selsey Bill and one at Brighton Marina on 16 Apr, just two days later than the 10-year average arrival date. The species was recorded on just four more April days with 12 E at Brighton Marina on the 21st being the highest count. Coastal passage was slightly more evident in early May when small numbers were seen on ten dates between the 2nd and 15th with a clear peak of 21 E in 12½ hrs watching at Selsey Bill on the 4th. Two at Weir Wood Res on 5 May was the only spring inland record.

Between mid-May and August the only observations were from Selsey Bill where singletons were recorded flying east on 31 May, feeding offshore on 15 Jun, flying east on 17 Jun and flying west on 23 Jul. The majority of birds seen in the autumn were seen between 10 Aug and 8 Oct; records were from 30 different days and involved between one and four birds with the exception of 22 which were feeding at Pilsey Sands (Chichester Hbr) on 12 Sep. During the autumn there were more observations from inland sites with up to four noted at Chichester GP on five days and singles at Weir Wood Res (three days), at Arlington Res (two days) and at Bewl Water (two days). Finally a single bird flew over the gull roost at Bewl Water on 19 Oct and a first year bird remained near the entrance to Shoreham Hbr between 28 and 31 Oct, the latter date being three weeks later than the 10-year average departure date. [JAN]

Sandwich Tern

Sterna sandvicensis

Scarce breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant; rarely recorded in winter. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Wintering birds were recorded in Chichester Hbr on eight dates between 1 Jan and 28 Feb with a maximum of four in Emsworth Channel on 6 Jan. Additionally one flew east at Brighton Marina on 2 Jan and two flew west at Selsey Bill on 7 Jan. *Birds of Sussex* reported single birds in just nine winters until 1994 but the species has been seen regularly, particularly in Chichester Hbr, in each of the past three winters.

Two were at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 10 Mar, two at Rye Hbr on 12 Mar, one at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on the 13th and three there and one at Pilsey Island (Chichester Hbr) on the following day. No more were recorded until 20 Mar but thereafter records occurred daily with the highest March counts being 58 E at Birling Gap in ¾ hr and 40 E at Splash Point (Seaford) in ½ hr on the 25th and 52 at Rye Hbr on the 27th.

Analysis of the daily counts from each of the seawatch locations suggest a minimum of 3298 birds flew east during the spring comprising 101 in March, 1223 in April and 1974 in May. The easterly spring passage totals at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Total	No. per hr watched	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	23	918	1319	2260	6.4	759 on 2 May (13½ hr)
Climping Beach	5	111	6	122	1.4	60 on 22 Apr (2 hr)
Worthing Beach	4	554	489	1047	9.0	182 on 21 Apr (4 hr)
Telscombe Cliffs	14	319	258	591	6.5	79 on 21 Apr (2 hr)
Splash Point (Seaford)	61	675	1268	2004	9.7	343 on 2 May (14 hr)
Birling Gap	71	715	493	1279	9.1	300 on 21 Apr (3¾ hr)

The peak counts of coastal passage were marginally later than usual and it is unusual for these to occur in May. The table below shows details of the seven days when more than 100 birds were recorded at any of the seawatch locations (hours watched in brackets).

	21 Apr	22 Apr	2 May	3 May	4 May	6 May	7 May
Selsey Bill	276 (8)	124 (8)	759 (13½)	66 (10½)	108 (12½)	68 (10)	24 (8½)
Climping Beach	0 (2)	60 (2)	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Worthing Beach	182 (4)	58 (3)	133 (5¼)	13 (2½)	105 (4¾)	61 (4½)	29 (3¼)
Telscombe Cliffs	79 (2)	20 (1¼)	60 (4)	61 (2½)	18 (2¼)	11 (1)	1 (1.5)
Splash Point (Seaford)	126 (2¾)	96 (9)	343 (14)	224 (14)	200 (15)	121 (8)	152 (9½)
Birling Gap	300 (3¾)	65 (2)	130 (6)	90 (4½)	50 (4¾)	65 (4¼)	50 (5¼)

Throughout the spring and summer the highest numbers were recorded at Rye Hbr where the largest counts in each month were 680 roosting on 25 Apr, 670 at dusk on 30 May, a minimum of 1000 at dusk on both 22 Jun and 25 Jul and 240 roosting on 7 Aug. More than 500 pairs nested at Ternery Pool (Rye Hbr) and success was very high with the total number of fledglings being probably in excess of 500. These are the highest totals since breeding was first recorded at Rye Hbr in 1984. (*SxBR* 54: 186-187).

Autumn passage was very light and, as usual, movements were predominately in a westerly direction. Most were noted at Selsey Bill where the scale of passage can be judged from the highest counts of 65 W in 12½ hr on 2 Sep, 46 W in 7¼ hr on 3 Sep, 30 W in 4½ hr on 20 Sep and 37 E in 3½ hr on 21 Sep. The monthly totals from sites regularly recorded in autumn are shown in the following table:

	Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct		Total		Peak movement
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	
Selsey Bill	52	36	16	152	75	220	14	126	157	534	65 W on 2 Sep (12½ hr)
Climping Beach	-	-	-	25	27	50	-	17	27	92	24 W on 5 Sep (3 hr)
Worthing Beach	30	54	31	36	70	44	11	27	142	161	19 W on 11 Jul (1 hr)
Telscombe Cliffs	47	17	25	99	45	31	-	6	117	153	9W & 32 E on 20 Sep (1 hr)

Between mid-August and 22 Oct a small roost occurred on the fields at Goring Gap and reached a peak of 51 on 23 Sep. In early November one was in Pagham Hbr on the 4th and three in Chichester Hbr on the 9th, whilst in December two flew west at Selsey Bill on the 9th and up to two were recorded in Chichester Hbr on 9th, 19th and 22nd thus continuing the trend of winter records from this area.

There were more records from inland locations than usual: three flew over Weir Wood Res on 17 Aug and two were recorded there on 13 Sep, one flew low over a lagoon at County Oak (Crawley) on 30 Aug and two were at Chichester GP on 2 Sep. [JAN]

Common Tern*Sterna hirundo*

Fairly common breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant.

2005: At Pannel Valley NR 125 pairs attempted breeding but success was not high.

2006: The first arrival and only March record was one flying east at Selsey Bill on the 26th, just a day earlier than the 10-year average. There was one at Rye Hbr on 4 Apr, seven there on the 6th and thereafter the species was recorded on most days from several locations.

Coastal passage is better described under Common/Arctic Tern as the only three figure counts from seawatching locations were 124 E in 4 hours at Worthing on 15 Apr and 204 E in 13½ hr at Selsey Bill on 2 May. Analysis of the daily counts from each of the seawatch locations suggests a minimum of 819 birds flew east during the spring comprising one in March, 390 in April and 428 in May. Spring roost counts at Rye Hbr included 11 on 9 Apr, 16 on 14 Apr, 200 on 25 Apr, 300 on 28 Apr and a minimum of 170 on 4 May.

At Rye Hbr about 170 pairs nested on the Beach Reserve and, with over 200 chicks fledging, overall success was high. About ten pairs nested on the raft at Castle Water but none fledged. At Pannel Valley NR 167 breeding pairs had a reasonably successful season. At Chichester GP over 20 pairs bred despite competition from Black-headed Gulls, two pairs each produced three young at Warnham LNR and three young fledged from Weir Wood Res.

For the second consecutive year there was no breeding attempt at Arundel WWT. At Bewl Water displaying birds were recorded but the species has yet to breed at this site. Likewise there were spring and summer records from Forest Mere, Ardingly, Barcombe, Arlington and Darwell Reservoirs but there was no indication of breeding at any of these sites.

There were still 100 present at Rye Hbr on 24 Jul but thereafter the highest numbers were recorded at other coastal locations. Regular counts at Pilsey Island (Chichester Hbr) throughout the autumn produced 24 on 20 Jul, 50 on 8 Aug, 84 on 24 Aug, 47 on 1 Sep, 12 on 26 Sep, 12 on 10 Oct and finally three on 27 Oct. At Newhaven Tide Mills there were 70 on 27 Aug and 39 on 24 Sep. Apart from 60 E at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 21 Sep all the coastal movements were recorded from the west of the county and a summary of month totals is shown in the following table:

	Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct		Total		Peak movement
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	
Selsey Bill	18	40	15	81	276	373	22	71	331	565	123 W on 2 Sep (12½ hr)
Climping	-	-	-	13	-	19	-	15	-	47	15 W on 2 Oct (5½ hr)
Worthing Beach	5	20	40	59	61	58	5	4	111	141	58 W & 38 E on 13 Aug (3½ hr)

Clearly no large passage was recorded and movements were noted in both directions. Additionally, offshore feeding flocks were noted with the highest counts from Selsey Bill being 120 on 9 Sep and 110 on 20 Sep.

During the late autumn, inland records were two at Ardingly Res on 7 Oct and a single bird at Arlington Res on 12, 22 and 19 Oct. There were just two November records of single birds at Church Norton on the 4th and at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 25th; this last bird being over three weeks later than the 10-year average departure date. [JAN]

Roseate Tern*Sterna dougallii*

Very scarce passage migrant and non-breeding summer visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.



Roseate Tern, Rye Harbour, July 2006 (Les Bird)

Eastbound birds were recorded in the spring with the first two being at Brighton Marina on 22 Apr (IJW), eight days earlier than the 10-year average. The next sightings were four at Selsey Bill on 3 May (JA, BC), one at Selsey Bill on 6 May (KWM) and one at Brighton Marina on 12 May (IJW). Up to two adults were regularly recorded at Rye Hbr on nine dates between 1 and 27 Jun (MO) and a single adult was resting on a buoy at the dam end of Weir Wood Res on 2 Jun (NAD). The only previous observation away from the coast was at Arlington Res on 9 Sep 1974.

During the autumn, an adult flew west at Selsey Bill on 21 Sep (JA, TJE) and a first winter was at Church Norton on 5 Oct (BFF, DIS). What was presumably the same bird was reported at Selsey Bill on 7 Oct and flew west at Selsey Bill at 0945 hrs on the 8th. (DIS *et al.*). Prior to this last record, the latest recorded in Sussex was at Langney Point on 30 Sep 1965 [JAN].

Arctic Tern*Sterna paradisaea*

Uncertain, but probably a fairly common spring and autumn passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Records for this species are relatively few as the majority are counted as “Commic Terns” at the main seawatching localities. Single birds at Church Norton on 12 Apr and at Selsey Bill on 15 Apr were the first records (compared to the 10-year average of 9 Apr). Thereafter a total of about 220 birds were noted in association with other terns on 13 dates during spring. The highest counts were 30 E and 50 E at Brighton Marina on 16 and 24 Apr respectively, 43 E at Selsey Bill on 2 May and 19 E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 4 May. One flew east at Selsey Bill on 6 Jun but following this there were no more records until six at Church Norton on 15 Jul.

During the autumn, small numbers were recorded from coastal locations on 28 different days with the highest counts being five in Newhaven Hbr on 7 Oct, 6 W at Selsey Bill on 8 Oct and six in Pagham Hbr on 10 Oct. The only inland observations were all of single birds, all during the autumn and were from Weir Wood Res on 3 Aug, 26 to 28 Aug, 4 to 7 Sep and 10 Oct; at Bewl Water on 6 Oct and Arlington Res on 29 Oct. The three November records were singles at Church Norton and Newhaven Hbr on the 4th and a juvenile bird flying east at Brighton Marina on the 6th, only slightly later than the 10-year average of 3 Nov. [JAN]

Common/Arctic Tern

Sterna hirundo/paradisaea

Most birds passing seawatching sites remain unidentified as “Commic” Terns. Analysis of the daily counts from each of these locations suggests that a minimum of 14,282 birds flew east during April and May, comprising 2360 in April and 11,922 in May. The easterly spring passage totals at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Total	No. per hr watched	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	0	1673	3553	5226	14.7	1690 on 6 May (10 hr)
Climping Beach	0	64	0	64	0.7	30 on 24 Apr (2 hr)
Worthing Beach	0	234	1500	1734	14.6	486 on 6 May (4½ hr)
Telscombe Cliffs	0	52	753	805	8.9	422 on 4 May (2¼ hr)
Splash Point (Seaford)	0	1442	11792	13234	64.2	3306 on 2 May (14 hr)
Birling Gap	0	915	1220	2135	15.1	550 on 3 May (4½ hr)

The numbers recorded each spring fluctuate widely and are dependent on weather conditions during late April and early May. The county total in 2006 was over 2000 birds less than seen from Brighton Marina alone during spring 2005. In 2006 the largest passage was seen typically in early May; details of days when over 300 birds were recorded are shown below (with hours watched in *italics* below numbers recorded).

	15 Apr	16 Apr	19 Apr	21 Apr	2 May	3 May	4 May	6 May	7 May	8 May
Selsey Bill	301 <i>9¼</i>	408 <i>3¾</i>	81 <i>4½</i>	279 <i>8</i>	722 <i>13½</i>	106 <i>10½</i>	669 <i>12½</i>	1690 <i>10</i>	208 <i>8½</i>	27 <i>6½</i>
Climping Beach	26 <i>2</i>	3 <i>2</i>	0 <i>1</i>	0 <i>2</i>	0 <i>1</i>	nc <i>-</i>	nc <i>-</i>	nc <i>-</i>	nc <i>-</i>	nc <i>-</i>
Worthing Beach	66 <i>4</i>	73 <i>2</i>	0 <i>¼</i>	0 <i>4</i>	476 <i>5¼</i>	65 <i>2½</i>	189 <i>4¾</i>	486 <i>4½</i>	137 <i>¾</i>	1 <i>1</i>
Telscombe Cliffs	4 <i>2</i>	0 <i>1</i>	1 <i>1½</i>	30 <i>2</i>	209 <i>4</i>	19 <i>2½</i>	422 <i>2¼</i>	0 <i>1</i>	0 <i>1½</i>	nc <i>-</i>
Splash Point (Seaford)	0 <i>1¾</i>	430 <i>3¾</i>	323 <i>3</i>	419 <i>2¾</i>	3306 <i>14</i>	2587 <i>14</i>	2059 <i>15</i>	2572 <i>8</i>	461 <i>9½</i>	353 <i>8¼</i>
Birling Gap	7 <i>2½</i>	nc <i>-</i>	83 <i>4¾</i>	530 <i>3¾</i>	30 <i>6</i>	550 <i>4½</i>	50 <i>4¾</i>	502 <i>4¾</i>	81 <i>5¼</i>	nc <i>-</i>

The tables also show considerable variation in the numbers seen at different sites with the largest numbers seen in the east of the county. There were no noteworthy numbers recorded in the late spring.

Autumn passage was very light and is summarised in the following table:

	Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct		Total		Peak movement
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	
Selsey Bill	16	45	33	193	21	118	4	73	74	429	65 W on 24 Aug (3½ hr)
Climping	6	-	-	80	-	81	-	9	6	170	46 W on 5 Sep (3 hr)
Worthing Beach	4	1	9	113	4	6	-	-	17	120	43 W on 26 Aug (½ hr)

A single bird in Paghham Hbr on the 3rd was the only November record. [JAN]

Common Guillemot*Uria aalge*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; formerly bred. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
70	43	15	8	33	16	-	1	1	15	12	7

The totals recorded at the principal seawatching sites are shown in the table below. No attempt should be made to add the columns as some birds will have been seen at more than one location.

Direction	Jan - Feb			Mar - May			Jun - Jul			Aug - Sep			Nov - Dec		
	E	O/S	W	E	O/S	W	E	O/S	W	E	O/S	W	E	O/S	W
Selsey Bill	5	3	-	17	12	14	8	-	5	1	3	1	3	2	8
Climping Beach	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	1
Worthing Beach	-	14	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	4	3	
Telscombe Cliffs	1	6	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Splash Point (Seaford)	42	15	5	5	15	1	1	1	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	
Birling Gap	37	-	1	5	10	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	

The total of just 221 for the year was just one sixth of the figure for 2005 and the lowest annual total since 1993.

During the early part of the year there were no three-figure counts and only six double-figure counts. In January there were 11 at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on the 13th, 21 at Cuckmere Haven on the 23rd, 25 E at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on the 28th and 12 E at Splash Point (Seaford) on the 31st. In February, there were 19 E at Splash Point on the 22nd and 10 on the sea off Worthing Beach on the 25th. Spring passage was almost non-existent with peak monthly totals of just 12 E and 14 W at Selsey Bill in May.

Numbers in the latter part of the year were even lower with the only double-figure count being 12 in Rye Bay on 30 Oct.

Several birds left the open sea and entered harbours and marinas including five in Brighton Marina on 5 Mar, singles in Pagham Hbr and Chichester Hbr on 12 Sep and 6 Nov respectively and two in Sovereign Hbr Marina on 2 Dec.

The only record received of an oiled bird was of one at Newhaven Tidemills on 25 Dec. [DHH]

Razorbill*Alca torda*

Common winter visitor and fairly common passage migrant; formerly bred. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
64	352	29	6	49	3	1	-	8	52	47	25

The annual total of 636 was less than a tenth of the 2005 figure and the lowest for seven years. The totals recorded at the principal seawatching sites are shown in the table below. Some birds

will have been recorded at more than one location so no attempt should be made to summate the columns.

Direction	Jan - Feb			Mar - May			Jun - Jul			Aug - Oct			Nov - Dec		
	E	O/S	W	E	O/S	W	E	O/S	W	E	O/S	W	E	O/S	W
Selsey Bill	69	-	3	8	4	36	1	-	2	1	7	56	12	15	28
Climping Beach	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	8	1
Worthing Beach	-	52	22	9	16	4	-	-	-	-	-	2	12	25	6
Telscombe Cliffs	221	38	48	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Splash Point (Seaford)	100	20	36	18	8	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Birling Gap	22	2	5	3	-	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc

In January the only double-figure counts were of 11 offshore at Telscombe Cliffs on the 4th, ten on the sea off Newhaven on the 23rd and 15 E at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on the 28th. The most significant count in February was at Splash Point (Seaford) with 71 E and 24 W on the 22nd whilst the highest monthly total was at Telscombe Cliffs with 210 E and 39 W and there were 20 offshore at Worthing Beach on the 25th and 27th. Numbers during spring were poor with a peak of just 14 W at Selsey Bill on 27 May.

Numbers in the last three months of the year were also low with a total of 50 W at Selsey Bill in October and 21 offshore at Worthing and Goring on 4 Nov. Numbers declined even further in December with the peak being only 9 E and 2 W at Worthing Beach on the 23rd. Singles were recorded inside Pagham Hbr on 30 Oct and 7 Nov and in Chichester Hbr on 6 and 9 Nov. [DHH]

Auk species

The total of 30,676 reported was just under half of that for last year and less than a third of the record numbers in 2003. Unfortunately, these are not true comparisons as no records were received from Brighton Marina which, in the past, has provided a high proportion of Auk records. It should also be noted that, with birds involved in feeding movements and passing both east and west at the same time, duplication is inevitable so the total quoted should not be taken as an assessment of the number of birds involved.

The approximate monthly totals recorded at the principal seawatching sites, including those birds specifically identified as Common Guillemots and Razorbills, were as follows:

Direction	Jan - Feb			Mar - May			Jun - Jul			Aug - Oct			Nov - Dec		
	E	O/S	W	E	O/S	W	E	O/S	W	E	O/S	W	E	O/S	W
Selsey Bill	1183	8	25	164	61	294	23	-	8	12	19	181	44	34	106
Climping Beach	170	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	5
Worthing Beach	4747	134	1396	103	35	54	-	-	-	5	2	22	58	58	172
Telscombe Cliffs	12947	114	2436	63	3	10	3	-	2	1	-	5	30	-	158
Splash Point	1519	96	230	848	45	28	9	2	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Birling Gap	942	4	140	465	20	32	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc

In January there were five counts of over 100 birds on five separate dates with the highest being 1127 W in 1¼ hr at Worthing Beach on the 28th. Other notable counts included 423 E in 1¼ hr at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on the 22nd and 345 E in 1 hr at Telscombe Cliffs on the 31st.

During the first 20 days of February there were six counts on five days with over 100 birds, the highest of which were at Telscombe Cliffs with 816 E in 1½ hr on the 3rd, 212 E and 561 W in 1

hr on the 10th and 432 E in 1½ hr on the 19th. There was then a six-day period during which there was a total of seven four-figure counts at three sites as shown in the table below:

	Worthing			Brighton		Telscombe		
	E	W	Hrs	E	Hrs	E	W	Hrs
Feb 21	400	-	¼	300	¼	1505	154	2½
22	331	-	¾	1500	¼	4100	583	3
23	1650	78	1¾	700	-	829	91	2
24	586	-	1¼	-	-	2516	134	2
25	91	-	1	-	-	60	6	1¼
26	1473	48	1	-	-	67	1	1

In addition to the figures shown in the table for the six-day period 21 to 26 Feb, there were also counts of over 100 at the three other principal seawatching sites with peaks of 446 E and 85 W at Splash Point (Seaford) on the 22nd, 478 E at Selsey Bill on the 26th and 211 E at Birling Gap also on the 26th. Given the numbers involved in what are assumed to be feeding movements, it is surprising that no large concentrations of birds were recorded on the sea with the maximum being just 30 at Shoreham on 4 Feb.

In contrast, there was only one three-figure count in March with 114 E at Splash Point on the 24th whilst the peak count on the sea was 25 at Selsey Bill on the 4th. A similar pattern emerged in April when 111 E at Splash Point on the 22nd was the only count of over 100 birds. Unusually, numbers were higher in May than in either of the two previous months and again the largest counts came from Splash Point with 232 E on the 3rd and 142 E on the 9th. Small numbers continued to be recorded throughout the summer and into the autumn.

The two highest counts in November occurred in the first two days of the month with 40 W at Worthing Beach on the 1st and 86 W there the following day. There were no records in the second half of November and no double-figure counts in December.

Auks are notoriously difficult to identify in flight unless they are seen at quite close range. As a result, only 5% of the Auks recorded were positively identified. Where birds were specifically identified, the ratio of Common Guillemots to Razorbills was 1:3. Records from previous years appear to indicate that Razorbills do outnumber Common Guillemots in any large feeding movements. It may also be that, as Razorbills feed at much shallower depths than Common Guillemots, they are more likely to feed closer to the shore and within range of positive identification. [DHH]

Little Auk

Alle alle

Very scarce autumn passage migrant and winter visitor.

It was a good year for this species with a minimum of fourteen individuals recorded at five locations, mainly in early November at a time when thousands were recorded in the North Sea.

On 2 Nov totals of 3 E and 3 W were recorded at Worthing Beach (DIS). The following day's records involved 1 E at Selsey Bill (JA), 1 E and 2 W at Climping Beach (OM), 1 E at Ferring (CEH), 3 E and 1 W at Worthing Beach (DIS) and 5 E at Brighton Marina, where there was also one inside the Marina (IJW). On the 4th there was 1 E past Selsey Bill (JA) followed on the 5th by 2 E there (JA) and 1 E at Brighton Marina (IJW) and then, on the 6th, one offshore at Selsey Bill (OM). A first winter bird noted in Brighton Marina from 6 to 12 Nov was joined by a second bird on the 11th and 12th (IJW *et al.*). The only other records involved singles flying east at Brighton Marina on 26 Nov (IJW) and west at Selsey Bill on 6 Dec (JA). [DHH]



Little Auk, Brighton Marina, November 2006 (Ian Barnard)

Feral Rock Dove

Columba livia

Common resident.

Flocks generally averaged 30 birds with reports mainly centred on the coastal towns and their parks, notably Hotham Park (Bognor), Stanmer Park (Brighton) and Alexandra Park (Hastings). Other regular sightings were received for Hove, Arundel WWT and Pagham Hbr.

Larger counts included a monthly maximum of 104 at Offham on 27 Jan, 160 at Hove on 30 Apr and 100 at Guestling Wood on 8 Aug. The grain silos at Shoreham Hbr attracted the largest gatherings of the year with 100 on 4 Sep, increasing to 200 on 6 Nov and 300 on 11 Nov. [APo]

Stock Dove

Columba oenas

Common resident and possible winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

In the first winter period, the largest concentrations were found at three coastal locations. On Thorney Island, 60 birds were seen on 13 Jan, 150 on 3 Feb (the largest flock recorded in Sussex in 2006) and 30 on 17 Mar. At Pannel Valley NR between 30 and 100 birds were present for the whole of January, with a peak count of 134 birds on 8 Jan, and a flock of 60 was seen at this site on 15 Apr. At Rye Hbr at least 100 were seen in flight at dawn on 28 Jan, 35 on 28 Feb and 30 on 31 Mar. A flock of 40 was seen inland at Weir Wood Res on 20 Mar.

During the BBS, 79 individuals were recorded in 31 of the 122 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum count of 17 at Lidsey Lodge.

On 7 Feb a bird was seen checking a nest box at Pulborough Brooks. The first records of calling males were on 4 Mar at Guestling Wood and on 5 Mar at Alexandra Park (Hastings). During March and April there were many records of pairs widely dispersed through the county.

Breeding was confirmed in 39 1-km squares by at least 52 pairs, was probable in another 17 and birds were present in suitable habitat in another 18 squares. Twenty six of the confirmed breeding pairs were known to have used owl boxes. Out of 24 nests, 18 (75%) contained two chicks or eggs, six just one. A pair raised two broods in a Tawny Owl box at Pannel Valley NR and another owl box was found on 29 Jun to contain two Stock Dove chicks and dead Mallard chicks.

Early indications of dispersal from breeding areas were flocks of 35 at Weir Wood Res on 8 Aug and 40 on Thorney Island on 9 Aug. There were no reports of the very large autumn and winter gatherings seen in the previous year. The only indications of movement were a flock of 35 flying E at Beachy Head on 13 Oct with 31 there on 29th. The largest flocks in the second winter period were 100 at Wilbees Fm (Arlington) on 17 Oct, 100 at Alciston on 29 Oct, 70 at Beachy Head on 1 Nov with 45 there the 3rd, 100 at Thorney Island recorded on 17 and 27 Nov and 60 at Carter's Pit (Rye Hbr) on 29 Nov. [AP]

Wood Pigeon

Columba palumbus

Abundant resident and winter visitor.

West Dean Woods hosted the main concentration of birds in the first winter period with 1000 on 2 Jan, 2000 on 22 Jan and 1000 on 6 Mar.

Evidence of spring passage began with 100 flying in off the sea and heading north at Beachy Head on 15 Mar with a 1000 (including 830 W) there on 4 Apr. At Newhaven Tide Mills, 1650 were seen flying inland on 29 May while there was an estimated total count of 5500 over Brighton between March and May.

Breeding reports included 78 pairs at Brighton Wild Park, 47 pairs at Plumpton Agricultural College along with ten territories identified at Sefter Fm (Pagham) and six at Barns Copse (Binsted). During the BBS a combined total of no less than 4384 individual birds was counted from every one of the 122 1-km squares surveyed. The highest counts were 296 at West Wittering and 235 at West Worthing.

Autumn migration was in marked contrast to the huge numbers of 2005. Notable passage commenced with 2000 at Beachy Head on 27 Oct followed by 2400 there on 29 Oct and 1500 at Ashdown Forest on the same date. On 1 Nov, 7000 were at Beachy Head while 6000 flew west in one hour at Worthing. A flock of 3000 flew west in two hours at Climping Beach on the 3rd while 5300 passed Beachy Head on 4 Nov. The autumn total over Brighton was estimated at 55,000 (275,000 in 2005) with 30,000 of these moving south and west on 2 Nov. Smaller movements of 1500 heading west in thirty minutes at Bewl Water on 19 Nov and 1700 at Weir Wood Res on the 25th represented the last of a poor autumn.

The final report of any note was a roost of 1500 on 3 and 14 Dec at Bewl Water. [APo]

Collared Dove

Streptopelia decaocto

Very common resident.

This is a widespread species with records coming equally from the west and the east of the county although an analysis of records by 10-km squares appears to indicate a preference towards

the south and the coast. This may, however, be a quirk of observation bias due to both the location of observers and the well identified record “deserts” in the northern parts of the county. Flocks generally averaged a dozen birds with the only noteworthy congregation in the early part of the year being 81 at Harbour Fm (Rye Hbr) on 3 Feb.

Breeding records included 35 pairs at Brighton Wild Park, six pairs at Plumpton Agricultural College, five territories at Hotham Park (Bognor) and three territories at Sefter Fm (Pagham). During the BBS a combined total of 571 individual birds was recorded from 82 of the 122 1-km squares surveyed. The highest counts were 37 at Westergate, 28 at Old Salts Fm (Landing) and 25 at Portslade.

Interestingly, there were two reports of predation with one being taken by a Peregrine at Beachy Head on 29 May and another by a Sparrowhawk at Partridge Green on 29 Aug.

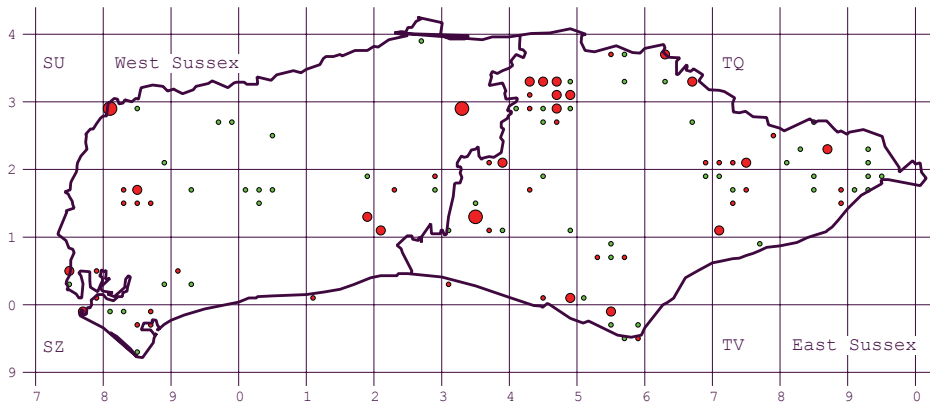
In the latter part of the year, 40 were attracted to the grain silos at Shoreham Hbr on 4 Sep with the same number at Lee Fm (Patching) on 23 Sep. A further 55 were at Shoreham Hbr on 6 Nov while the last notable count of the year was a pre-roost gathering of 51 at New Salts Fm (Lancing) on 2 Dec. [APo]

Turtle Dove

Streptopelia turtur

Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Compared to the 284 records for 2005, the 195 records received for 2006 (shown on the map below) represents a reduction of nearly a third and perhaps indicates a further reduction of the species in the county.



The first sighting of the year was of two at Ardingly Res on 29 Mar, ten days earlier than the 10-year average. After a single at Wilbees Fm (Arlington) on 11 Apr, the usual reports of one to three birds were received from 23 Apr onwards. Larger counts included six at Pagham Hbr on 27 Apr, five at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on 9 May, four singing at West Dean Woods on the 11th and six on the 13th at Sparrows Green (Wadhurst).

A dozen records of singing birds were received for Ashdown Forest, with four birds singing at Pannel Valley NR on 1 Jun. Breeding was confirmed at four locations by 13 pairs, four of which were on the Plumpton Agricultural College estate and at least seven at Rye Hbr. Breeding probably occurred at 24 additional locations by possibly 36 pairs, 11 of which were at Bewl Water

and three at Thorney Island (Chichester Hbr). Birds, many heard singing, were also on territory at a further 30 locations.

Summer records included seven at The Rookery (Oving) on 30 Jun with five birds at Thorney Deepes on 4 Aug. At Rye Hbr there were three juveniles on 8 Aug which increased to six birds by the 11th.

There were just seven September records including two immature birds seen at Darwell Res on the 6th, four birds at Mountfield on the 17th and a single at Beachy Head on the 25th which was the last sighting of the year and was over two weeks earlier than the 10-year average. [APo]

Rose-ringed Parakeet

Psittacula krameri

Very scarce introduced breeding resident.

While one estimate suggests that the population of this species may be approaching 30,000 in SE England, just a handful of records were received for Sussex, as in previous years. Of these, three were for Warnham LNR with two on 21 Mar, 18 on 30 Oct and one on 9 Nov. All the remaining records were of singletons seen in the second winter period with sightings at Rusper on 15 Oct, Westdene (Brighton) on 20 Oct, Snaylham Fm (Icklesham) on 17 Nov, Beeding Hill on 16 Dec and finally at Gatwick on 25 Dec. [APo]

Common Cuckoo

Cuculus canorus

Fairly common summer visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The first birds were recorded on 29 Mar at Ardingly Res and Bewl Water, slightly earlier than the 10-year average date of 3 Apr. The next recorded arrivals were not until 9 Apr, at Weir Wood Res and Heyshott. From the 12th, birds were reported daily until the end of April. By the end of April, 119 reports had been received relating to a total of 153 birds from all over the county, although it is highly likely that some duplication is involved in view of the distance over which the cuckoo's call can be heard. However, good numbers were reported at several sites. At Isfield on 29 Apr seven were found within 100 m of each other. At East Rother Levels the April monthly maximum count was five (on the 28th), at Pulborough Brooks the April monthly maximum was four (on the 26th) and at Barcombe Cross four were recorded on the 27th.

During the BBS a combined total of 62 birds was recorded in 47 1-km squares out of 122 surveyed. In the 2005 BBS a maximum of 53 were recorded in 34 out of the 105 1-km squares surveyed.

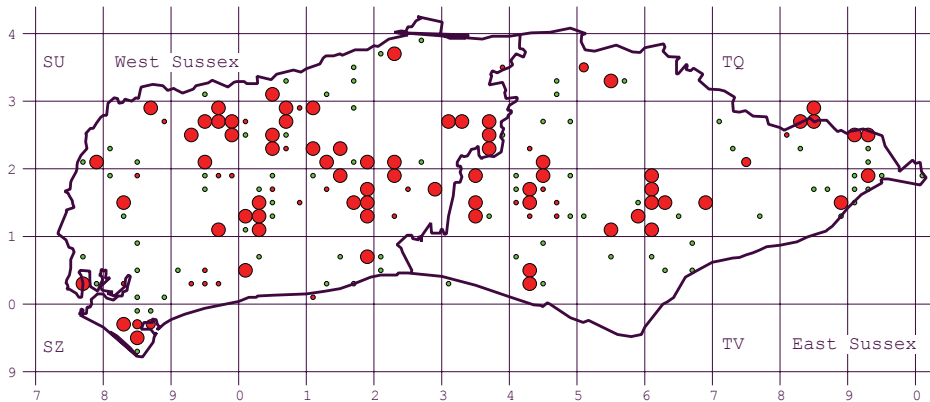
Three confirmed breeding records were reported: at Plumpton Agricultural College, Rye Hbr and at Bewl Water where a fledgling was seen in a blackbird's nest. A survey at Bewl Water during the breeding season found no less than nine adult birds. Reports were received of probable breedings at 26 other sites, many of these in the Ashdown Forest area. At Old Lodge LNR (Ashdown Forest) on 16 May two singing males were calling simultaneously from east and west corners of the reserve, two probable females were seen and there were four sightings of birds flying between pines. The estimated number of pairs at confirmed and probable breeding locations was 32. Eleven juveniles were reported between 4 Jun and 28 Aug.

Only 15 reports of birds were received for August and one for September, suggesting that cuckoos departed early this year. The last bird was seen on 13 Sep at Weir Wood Res, considerably earlier than the 10-year average date of 26 Sep. [CJR]

Barn Owl*Tyto alba*

Scarce breeding resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

Records of the distribution of this species are shown in the map below:



The monthly totals of casual sightings, excluding visits for ringing, were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
27	22	45	27	20	20	9	10	2	10	7	17

In addition, there were frequent reports throughout the year from the Amberley and Waltham Brooks, Constantia Manor (Isfield) and Pannel Valley NR.

Many nest sites usually monitored were not visited in 2006, particularly in the east of the county. Despite this, it is evident that it was a very poor year for breeding attempts, and this has been attributed to a crash in the vole populations following high numbers in 2005. In the west of the county there was no breeding in 34 nest boxes that had broods in 2005 although pairs of adults were known to be present at six of them. At a further seven sites deserted eggs were found after (and perhaps due to) rain and strong winds in early May. There were similar findings in the east. The calculated mean hatching date for a sample of sites was 30 days later than in 2005. Fifty-four breeding attempts were recorded in the west of the county and 36 in the east.

Thirteen Barn Owls were reported killed on Sussex roads during the year and 13 found dead on the ground. At one site the adult male was found dead in a nest box and at another the adult female. [ABW]



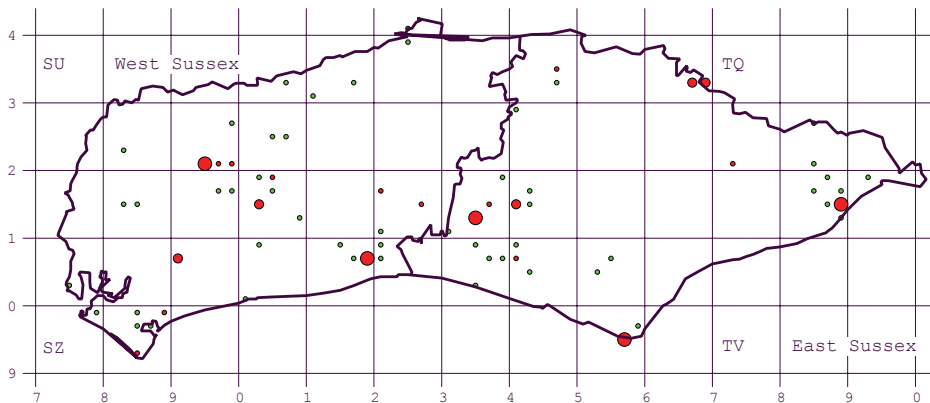
Barn Owl, Shoreham, December 2006 (Dave Sadler)

Little Owl

Athene noctua

Fairly common resident; introduced to Britain in the 19th century.

Records were received from 74 sites during the year as shown on the map below, slightly higher than the average for the last three years. A majority of the records were of birds that were heard rather than seen. Little Owls are normally more vocal in the first half of the year and this may account for the disproportionate number of records received, viz. 84 records up to June and half that number for the rest of the year.



Ten pairs were confirmed as breeding and, due to the sedentary nature of this species, it is fair to surmise that breeding attempts took place in the majority of the other locations from which this bird was recorded. In Sussex the Little Owl is a bird of downland, farmland and parkland and, in areas of favourable habitat, it can breed at reasonable densities such as the minimum of four pairs recorded breeding at Pannell Valley NR and the three pairs at Plumpton Agriculture College.

At a number of sites, e.g. Warnham LNR, Chelwood Gate (Ashdown Forest) and Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head), birds were first recorded during the autumn and this may be indicative of dispersal from breeding areas. [DG]

Tawny Owl

Strix aluco

Fairly common resident.

Records were received from approximately 105 sites during the year, compared to 137 in 2005 and 110 in 2004. The majority of these records were of birds heard rather than seen and, as in previous years, many sites were occupied throughout the year. Breeding was confirmed at only five sites, compared to 19 in 2005, and was considered probable at a further seven with birds also recorded at many other locations in suitable breeding habitat. Four pairs were present around Bewl Water in June and, towards the end of the year, four birds were recorded calling at Patching and also at Pannel Valley NR where a pair bred successfully in a nest box.

The only record of a grey bird was one at Horseshoe Plantation (Beachy Head) where it was paired with a rufous bird. This pair raised three young and was observed feeding them on a dead rabbit on 30 May. Only two probable road casualties were noted during the year. Roosting birds were recorded using a variety of tree species including spruce, oak, eucalyptus and pine. [DG]

Long-eared Owl

Asio otus

Very scarce resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

One hundred and fourteen records were received from 20 sites compared with 91 from seven sites in 2005. Roosting birds were present at Rye Hbr until 2 Mar, with a maximum of four present on 21 Jan. A winter roost at Site A in the west of the county held a minimum of eight birds on 7 Jan and was occupied until late in the spring, whilst no other Sussex roosts were recorded as holding more than three birds.

Only one record of confirmed breeding was received, from the west, where two juvenile birds were seen during early May at Site B. At Site C, where breeding had been confirmed in 2005, birds were present in late spring but no indication of breeding success was found. Site details for this species are strictly confidential because of the species' sensitivity to disturbance.

During the year the Long-Eared Owl Study Group ran a project on Sussex Downland with the aim of beginning to ascertain the species' distribution and abundance in this habitat. In the late winter/early spring wing-clapping males or calling females were observed at six sites, and birds were present with no territorial behaviour noted at a further three sites. At Site D three males were calling from, and displaying over, nest sites all within a 1-km square. All nine sites were visited twice at night later in the year around the time that juvenile birds would be expected to be calling but none was seen or heard. In addition to the above, records were received of birds from a further three sites in the county during the breeding season.

The only autumn migrant was a bird at Beachy Head on 17 Oct. Elsewhere, the first record from a known winter roost was of two birds present at Site A on 9 Oct, and this roost grew to a minimum of five birds during November. Roosting birds were present at Rye Hbr from 14 Oct

with a maximum of three present in late December. The only other records during the autumn/winter were of two birds at one roost in the west of the county, and one bird flushed accidentally from an inland site in the east.

The Study Group recovered 11 fresh pellets from the winter roost at Site A. These contained the remains of 20 field voles, three wood mice, one harvest mouse and one unidentified small bird species with an average of 2.3 prey items per pellet and a maximum of four. [DG]

Short-eared Owl

Asio flammeus

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; has bred. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Approximate monthly totals, after making allowance for possible duplication, were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
14	7	10	10		1	2	5	4	9

The high numbers recorded at the end of 2005 continued into 2006. During the first four months of the year, 71 records covered 18 sites with sightings at Rodmell Brooks (16) and Thorney Island (23) predominating. At least four, possibly six, birds were seen hunting at Rodmell Brooks on 2 Jan with two remaining there until 24 Mar. At Thorney Island (Chichester Hbr) singletons were seen on many dates from 5 Jan to 30 Apr (the last spring record for the county) with two being seen on 11 Jan, 9 Feb, 1 Mar and 4 Apr. Other multiple counts during January involved two at Woodingdean and three at The Midrips on the 2nd. On 5 Mar a bird which flew in off the sea at Pett Level was the only such record in the first half of the year. On 10 Apr two birds were present at Rye Hbr, one of which was observed displaying. There have been no records of breeding in Sussex since 1922 and the nearest breeding population is in north Kent.

The first autumn migrant was observed at Beachy Head on 27 Aug. The next records, and the only ones for September, were of one at Pagham Hbr from the 16th to 23rd (the first record from a wintering area) and another at Shooters Bottom (Beachy Head) on the 18th. Numbers were low during the autumn/second winter period and were mostly of single birds recorded at ten sites at or near the coast. A migrant was at Hastings CP on 17 Oct and one flew east along the shore at Ferring on 9 Nov. Single wintering birds returned to favoured sites in Chichester Hbr on 27 Oct and were still present on 4 Dec when three were roosting on Thorney Island. The only other multiple count was of two roosting at Rye Hbr on 23 Oct. During December, birds were also wintering at Pagham Hbr, Shoreham Airport and Rye Hbr. A late migrant was recorded coming in off the sea at Newhaven Tide Mills on 16 Dec. [DG]

European Nightjar

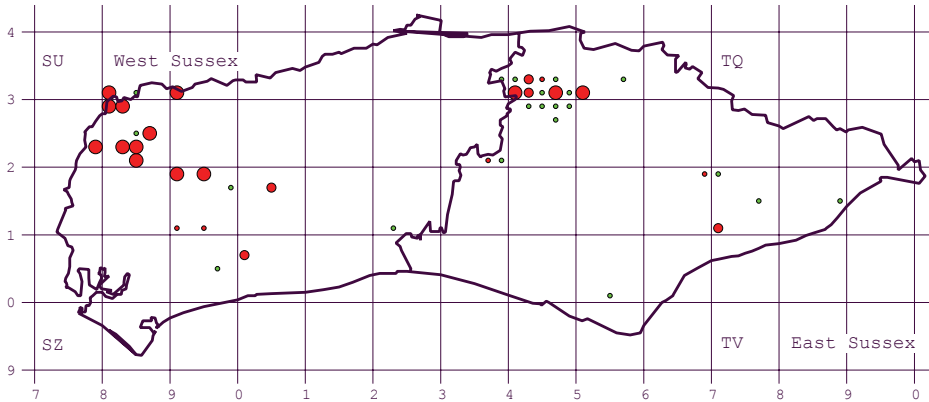
Caprimulgus europaeus

Fairly common summer visitor rarely seen on migration. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

The first briefly churring male was found at East Dean (W) on 4 May. Other than a mid April record in 2003 all reports since 2000 are of first churring occurring between 1 and 5 May, although the 10-year average arrival date is 27 Apr. The next report was of two birds on 11 May at Ashdown Forest, and, other than a single found at the same location on the 12 May, the majority of records were received after 20 May when a single churring male was found at Stanley

Common.

The county totals were 39 territories in the west of the county and 36-39 territories in the east, as shown on the map below.



Due to the nocturnal habits of the species, breeding reports tend to come from the traditional and well known sites and, although there is co-ordinated observer effort from Ashdown Forest and the *Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey (WHBBS)* areas, even these surveys are not comprehensive unless there is a specific Nightjar project. The May, June, July and August mean temperatures were the highest recorded in the UK for 50 years which augured well for the breeding season.

During the *WHBBS* (see page 210) 30 territories were located on ten heaths in the west. Comprehensive surveys carried out in the Lavington Common area and on Iping & Stedham Common (treated as one heath for this purpose) noted five and nine respectively. Away from the *WHBBS* area, nine more potential territories were identified in a further seven sites.

The records from The Ashdown Forest Bird Group and other observers provided an estimate of 30 territories. At four further sites in the east six to nine pairs were recorded. The county total was therefore of 105-108 churring males and compares with the 106 recorded in 2005.

Evidence of breeding was noted at Stedham Common where a nest with one chick was found on 27 Jul. Unfortunately by 4 Aug this nest had been predated. The last record from the breeding grounds was of a singleton in the High Weald (east of Crowborough) on 5 Sep although at a potential breeding area within the Friston Forest Project a bird was feeding at dusk on 23 Sep.

Migrating birds were noted only at Pannel Valley NR where one was found resting on a farm track on 9 Aug and five passed through between 1 and 25 Sep; the latter date being six days later than the 10-year average for the final sighting of the year. [AP]

Common Swift

Apus apus

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

2005: A Common Swift seen at Telscombe Cliffs on 18 Oct was the equal latest individual of the year specifically identified, although a lone swift sp. was observed at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 30 Oct and was the last report of the year.

2006: The first record was of a singleton at Heyshott on 9 Apr, only two days later than the county's earliest and four days earlier than the 10-year average. This was followed by 25 SE at Arundel Watermeadows on 16 Apr when singles were also at Goring and Worthing Beaches.

Singles were reported from Pagham on 17 Apr and Rye Hbr on 18 Apr. Sightings became daily from 23 Apr when there were 10 at Barcombe Res and 7 at Thorney Deeps. The only large counts in April were all from Rye Hbr with 50 on the 25th, 70 on the 28th and 50 on the 30th. Notable counts in May included 250 at Bewl Water on the 23rd, 500 at Weir Wood Res on the 24th, 350 at Beachy Head on the 29th, 500 N at Pannel Valley NR on the 30th and 500 at Rye on the 31st. The only large count in June was of 200 feeding over a field in Fontwell on the 18th.

Few breeding records were submitted and no colonies of greater than 3 pairs were identified. An interesting record was received suggesting the possible breeding by 1-2 pairs in the dam at Bewl Water. Ten birds were seen flying up to the eaves of cottages in Burpham on 21 Jul. Such behaviour, which is typical of immatures prospecting for nest sites for the following year, is often centred round existing colonies.

Return passage was presumably underway by 27 Jul when 800 were reported at Sidlesham Ferry and 100 at Chyngton Fm (Cuckmere). On 3 Aug there was a gathering of 250 at Pannel Valley NR and a movement of 232, mostly west, at Beachy Head. Singles were seen daily from 1 to 5 Sep at mostly coastal locations. There were no further sightings until 8 Nov when an exceptionally late individual was reported from Climping Beach, three weeks later than the 10-year average. [GCMR]

Alpine Swift

Apus melba

Rare vagrant.

One was seen over Arlington Res during the early afternoon and evening of 1 May (RKH *et al.*). By this species' standards this was a long stay and it attracted a number of admirers, although it disappeared for two hours during the late afternoon before returning, catching some out. It



Alpine Swift, Arlington Reservoir, May 2006 (Martin Casemore)

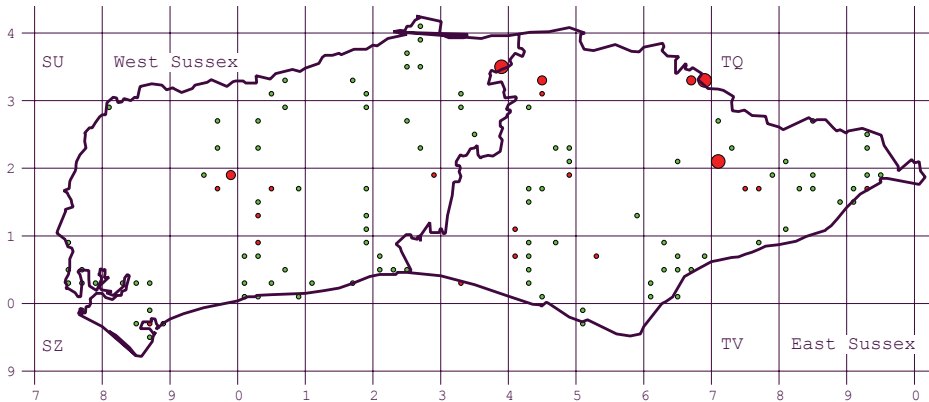
was the first county record since March 2001 when one was picked up dead in Eastbourne. Ten were recorded during the 1990s and 12 in the 1980s so the two records so far this decade represent a significant decline. It is the 37th county record and the 14th in the month of May. All have occurred between 25 Mar and 30 Oct. [RJF]

Common Kingfisher

Alcedo atthis

Fairly common resident and occasional winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

Records were received for 152 1-km squares distributed as shown on the following map:



Observations during the winter months were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	51	42	65	46
No. of inland sites	20	11	25	18
No. of coastal sites	18	13	21	15

While the number of birds was similar to 2005, there was an increase in the number of coastal sites at which Kingfishers were recorded when compared with the 5-year average, as shown below:

		Jan	Feb	Nov	Dec
No. of coastal sites	5-year average	12	10	14	9
	% change	48	33	52	60
No. of inland sites	5-year average	15	11	21	19
	% change	32	2	18	-5
No. of birds	5-year average	41	32	63	47
	% change	24	31	3	-2

However, for inland sites, it can be seen that the picture is more patchy as increases occurred in January and November but not in February and December.

There were few reports of breeding and little breeding detail was reported. However, birds were reported in 32 2-km squares during the breeding season, mostly at inland locations. In April

the monthly maximum count for Warnham LNR was five birds, and the monthly maximum at East Rother Levels was three.

Breeding was confirmed at just three sites. At one of these, only one pair bred this year whereas in past years there have been three to four breeding pairs. Breeding was probable at another four sites, three in the east of the county and one in the west. Up to three juveniles were reported on four different occasions at Weir Wood Res.

From the end of July the number of reports of birds from coastal locations started to increase. The first two returning birds at Thorney Deepes were seen on 26 Aug. In the final quarter of the year several larger concentrations were reported. The largest winter concentration was five birds at Bewl Water on 19 Nov, with four reported there on 25 Dec. Four birds were at Arundel WWT on 18 Dec, and three birds were reported at Pagham Hbr on 8 Oct, Pannel Valley NR on 1 Nov, Pagham Lagoon on 5 Nov and Rye Hbr on 13 Nov. The November monthly maximum at Warnham LNR was also three birds.

At Bewl Water on 9 Dec an observer noted a bird feeding from a bush just above the inlet supply to the reservoir. Even though the water was a muddy brown it was taking fish that had come through the large pipe network. This was just above the reservoir level and presumably the fish had not reoriented themselves to their new environment and made easy pickings for the Kingfisher. [CJR]

Wryneck

Jynx torquilla

Very scarce passage migrant; has bred. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The 42 records received suggested a minimum of 14 birds during the year, fewer than the 24 birds recorded in 2005 but similar to the 13 birds recorded in 2004. The only spring record was of a single bird at Newtimber Hill on 17 Apr, four days later than the 10-year average arrival date.

The approximate number of birds and 1-km squares in which they were recorded during the autumn migration period were as follows:

	Aug	Sep	Oct
No. of birds	4	9	3
No. of sites	4	8	4

In August, a single bird was trapped and ringed on the 15th at Pannel Valley NR, where it stayed until the 21st, and another bird was at Southwick on the 24th. Between 30 Aug and 1 Sep two birds were present at Climping Beach, and then between 16 and 18 Sep a single bird was at The Severals (Church Norton). There were sightings in the Beachy Head area, relating to possibly just two or three different individuals, on several dates between 17 Sep and 29 Sep, at Brighton on 22 Sep, at Pulborough Brooks on 24 Sep, at Rye Hbr on 27 Sep and at Durrington on 2 Oct. There were further sightings at The Severals, possibly involving more than one individual, between 30 Sep and 7 Oct. The latter date is only two days later than the 10-year average. [HC]

Green Woodpecker*Picus viridis*

Fairly common resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Records were received from 380 1-km squares. The numbers of birds and 1-km squares in which they were recorded were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	85	79	95	276	185	180	106	93	74	64	59	49
No. of sites	55	52	71	150	121	105	55	44	50	39	47	37



Green Woodpecker; Beachy Head (Roger Charlwood)

Despite this significant increase in the number of records compared with previous years, breeding was only confirmed in 35 1-km squares, with probable breeding in a further 18. Of the sites with confirmed breeding, 26 were in the West Sussex Commons and were recorded as part of the *Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey*.

A total of 165 birds was recorded in 86 of the 122 BBS squares surveyed (70%), compared with 168 birds recorded in 77 of the 105 squares surveyed in 2005 (73%). In addition, 49 birds were recorded in 29 of the 38 woods surveyed for the *Scarce Woodland Bird Survey*. [HC]

Great Spotted Woodpecker*Dendrocopos major**Common resident.*

Records were received from 399 1-km squares. The numbers of birds and 1-km squares in which they were recorded were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	116	113	102	329	239	255	75	50	73	77	72	74
No. of sites	60	51	53	140	118	116	43	34	38	47	42	45

Breeding was confirmed in 44 1-km squares and probable in a further 21. Of the sites with confirmed breeding, 26 sites were in the West Sussex Commons, recorded as part of the *Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey*. A total of 210 birds was recorded in 83 of the 122 BBS squares surveyed (68%), compared with 141 birds recorded in 62 of 105 squares surveyed in 2005 (59%). In addition, 111 birds were recorded in 34 of the 38 woods surveyed for the *Scarce Woodland Bird Survey*.

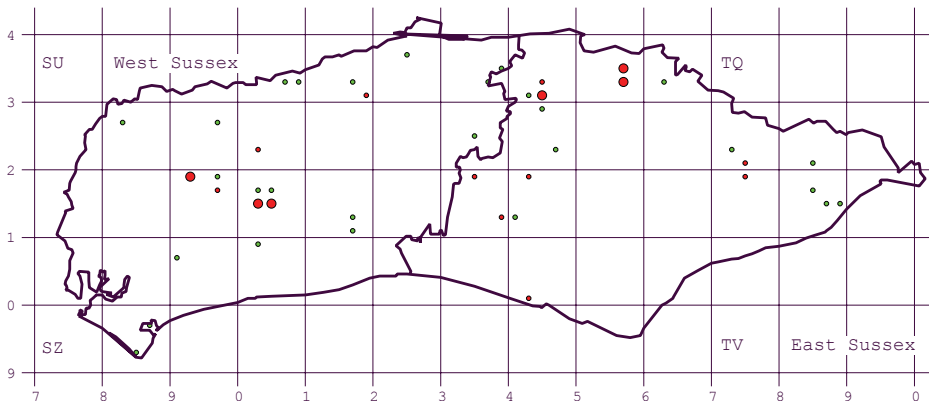
Drumming was first reported from Pulborough Brooks on 8 Jan, and further reports of drumming were received for various dates right through until June. Drumming was first reported in the autumn at Shoreham on 16 Oct, and there were further reports for several dates until the end of the year.

Although there was no positive evidence of autumn movement at coastal sites, single (and occasionally two) birds were recorded in the Beachy Head area on 17 occasions between 27 Aug and 4 Nov with the possibility that some, at least, may have been migrants. [HC]

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker*Dendrocopos minor**Scarce resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.*

Records were received from 45 1-km squares as shown on the map below. The numbers of birds and 1-km squares in which they were recorded were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	2	7	5	15	10	5	2	4	4	4	1	0
No. of Sites	2	7	4	13	8	5	2	3	4	3	1	0



Unfortunately, breeding was not confirmed at any sites, but was probable in six 1-km squares, and birds were seen in suitable habitat in the breeding season in a further ten 1-km squares. One bird was recorded in each of two of the 122 BBS squares surveyed; this species was not recorded at all in the BBS in 2005. In addition, four birds were recorded in three of the 38 woods surveyed for the *Scarce Woodland Bird Survey*.

Drumming was first reported from Burton MP on 9 Feb, and one or two birds were seen and heard at this location on several dates until the end of March. A single bird was reported regularly on feeders at the visitor centre at Pulborough Brooks between 3 Jan and 19 Feb. The only reports of birds seen in gardens came from Ifield (Crawley), where one was seen in an ash tree on 24 Jun, and Wivelsfield Green, where two were seen at peanut feeders on 10 Aug. Birds were seen displaying at Eridge Park on 14 Apr, at Pippingford Park (Ashdown Forest) on 22 Apr and at Saxonbury Wood on 28 Apr. As this is a red-listed species of high conservation concern, all sightings should be reported, especially if territorial behaviour or other evidence of breeding is observed. [HC]

Wood Lark

Lullula arborea

Scarce resident and passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

All the first winter period records were from breeding areas and the majority of these were from the Wealden Heaths in the north west of the county with the remaining reports coming from Ashdown Forest. The newly established downland population on the Sussex/Hampshire borders provided the largest counts with a flock of 25 feeding in a stubble field at North Marden on 9 Jan and subsequently 22 at the same location on 21 Jan. A small group was seen at Ambersham Common on 17 Jan comprising six individuals, one of which was singing.

This was the year of the National Wood Lark Survey jointly organised by the BTO and RSPB and co-ordinated in Sussex by the SOS. The survey commenced on 15 Feb and concluded on 31 May. The aim of the survey was to determine the number and distribution of the species nationally and within the county (see pages 229-234 for the full report on Sussex's results). As a Schedule 1 species there are very few records received of nest activity but one pair was found breeding close to Stonehill car park on Ashdown Forest on 12 Mar and four nestlings were found at Stedham Common on 12 Jun. The final breeding record of the year was from Wiggonholt Common, where a pair was seen carrying food to a nest site on 3 Jul.

During the autumn, a family party of four was seen at Coates Common on 6 Aug and a larger flock of between eight and ten was present at Old Lodge NR (Ashdown Forest) between the 6 Aug and 6 Sep.

Coastal records for the second winter period were from five locations in the east of the county. These included three records from Beachy Head of three on 3 Oct, five on the 4th and three on the 11th. At Pannel Valley NR ten were seen flying south west on 3 Oct and a flock of ten was present at the same site on 6 Dec, three of which remained until the end of the month. Inland, the only notable counts were of six at Little Bognor (Petworth) feeding in stubble with Meadow Pipits and Sky Larks on 29 Oct and ten at North Marden Down on 15 Nov. [AP]

Sky Lark*Alauda arvensis*

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Set-aside at various sites at Beachy Head attracted flocks of 80-200 in cold weather from 28 Jan to 4 Feb when 120 flew off high W in three flocks. Elsewhere the only counts over 50 were 80 at Amberley Mount on 26 Jan and 80 again on set-aside at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 4 Mar. In the Winter Atlas Pilot three-hour visits to each of five tetrads along the Downs east of the R Adur in January and early February found an average of c.20 per tetrad. The highest number seen on 95 ha at Sefter Fm (Pagham) was 69 on 21 Jan.

The first song noted was four in a flock of 18 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 21 Jan and song continued until mid-November.

Almost 500 singing males/breeding pairs were reported including c.100 on Ashdown Forest. The Heathland Survey found ten pairs in five 1-km squares all with one pair except Chapel Common (Liphook) with six. Other counts in defined areas (2005 figures in brackets if available) were eight (13) in 95 ha at Sefter Fm (Pagham), 34 (32+) at Amberley Wild Brooks, 29 (31+) at Pulborough Brooks, 23 at Pevensey Levels NR and 37 (32+) at Rye Hbr. Ten at Bewl Water represent 'a 75% drop in 20 years'.

Sky Larks were found in 63 (57%) of the 122 1-km squares of the BBS compared with 59% in 2005 and the ten year average of 61%. The average number per surveyed square was close to the 10-year average at just under three.

At Pannel Valley NR a first migrant passed overhead on 26 Sep and 11 flew east at Beachy Head the following day. Daily passage southwest at Pannel Valley NR started with 19 on 3 Oct. Other autumn movements include 50E at Beachy Head on 11 Oct, 30W in 1½ hr the following day at Goring Beach, 60 flying over in various directions at Beachy Head the day after that and 50W mainly in ones and twos at Shoreham on 29 Oct. Small numbers were observed, mainly moving west, throughout October and into November at many other sites both inland and on the coast.

Other than 50 at Brede Levels on 27 Oct, 80 at Kithurst Hill (Storrington) on 19 Nov and 63 at Rye Hbr on 3 Nov, the only large flocks reported in the late year were in the west of the county with 50 at Houghton on 16 Sep, 80 in fields west of Selsey on 26 Sep, 60 at Sefter Fm (Pagham) on 18 Nov and several flocks at Chichester Hbr with a maximum of 150 at Thorney Island on 19 Nov. [ACG]

Sand Martin*Riparia riparia*

Fairly common summer visitor and very common passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

There were 13 records in March (cf. 16 in 2005), with the first being a single bird at Chichester GP on the 25th, 15 days later than the 10-year average. This was followed by one at Henfield Levels on the 26th and 10 at Pulborough Brooks and one at Warnham LNR on the 27th. Interestingly, all the March records bar one came from the west of the county.

Most spring migration records were noted in April. There was a marked increase in both sightings and numbers compared to the previous three years with 93 records involving 1538 individuals (cf. 30 records in 2005) spread almost equally between both halves of the county. The eight records of 40 or more were of 80 at Drayton Pond (Chichester) on the 2nd, 150 at Widney

Brooks on the 7th with 40 there on the 20th, 50 at Coldwaltham SF and 250 at Barcombe Res on the 23rd, 80 at Castle Water (Rye Hbr) on the 24th and 400 there on the 30th.

The last evidence of spring migration was in May with single figures at Beachy Head, Worthing Beach, Selsey Bill and Splash Point (Seaford) and 10 at Goring Beach on the 7th while at Pulborough Brooks there were high counts of 60 on the 16th and 100 on the 21st. In June the only notable count away from breeding sites was of 200 at Long Pit (Rye Hbr).

Breeding was reported from only three sites this year with c.200 pairs at Pendean (20 in 2005) and c.50 pairs at Duncton (60 in 2005) and a colony of 60 (with juveniles) at West Heath (six in 2005). There were no breeding records from a number of the usual sites, e.g. Fitzhall, Stedham, Valdoe, Coates Common and Rock Common (Washinton). Hopefully there will be better coverage of breeding sites in 2007.

In July, observers saw the first autumn migrants with two at Pannel Valley NR on the 6th. This was followed by high counts of 300 on the 16th, 600 on the 18th and 250 on the 22nd at Selsey Bill, 350 on the 25th, 200 on the 27th and 150 on the 31st at Pagham Hbr and 500 on the 28th at The Severals (Church Norton) all moving south. In August, high counts included 100 on the 13th, 150 on the 17th and 250 on the 20th at Castle Water (Rye Hbr) and 100 on the 22nd and the 29th at Chichester GP. The Pannel Valley NR reedbed roost peaked at 1600 on the 21st and the only notable inland counts were from Arlington Res with 100 on the 23rd and 200 on the 28th.

Numbers dropped in September with only five three figure counts; 150 on the 2nd and 100 on the 7th at Pannel Valley NR, 100 at Sidlesham Ferry and 500 at Pagham North Fields both on the 11th and 150 at Beach Reserve (Rye Hbr). There were two interesting records with a leucistic bird with others at Arlington Res on the 14th and c.60 birds that unusually roosted in trees in the Friston Forest Project Area at dusk on the 23rd.

The last six records of the year were in October with a single bird at Beachy Head, 28 at Selsey Bill and 30 at Castle Water on the 3rd, seven at West Heath Common on the 4th, 30 at Pannel Valley NR on the 6th. The last record of the year was another single at Beachy Head on the 8th, 18 days earlier than the 10-year average. [SB]

Barn Swallow

Hirundo rustica

Common summer visitor and abundant passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The first records of the year were on 24 Mar (17 days later than the 10-year average) with a single bird heading north over Climping Beach and a single bird all day around the stable blocks at Goodwood Park. This was followed by two at Climping Beach on the 25th, one at Steyning Levels on the 26th and two at Pulborough Brooks on the 27th. From the 28th sightings increased with the only records from the east of the county coming from Arlington Res with three on 29th and one on the 31st and five at Nook Meadows (Rye Hbr), but the highest count of the month was ten birds at Pulborough Brooks on the 30th. Interestingly, only seven of the 20 records for March came from coastal locations.

The 272 records received for April again represented about 25% of the total for the year and were mainly of single figures in the first half then growing to the end of the month. The first three figure count came on the 9th with 100 at Pagham Hbr followed by 150 at Arlington Res on the 14th, 150 were at Barcombe Res on the 23rd, 150 at Castle Water (Rye Hbr) on the 25th, 179 N over Selsey Bill on the 28th and 200 at Castle Water (Rye Hbr) on the 30th. In early May there was a particularly high count of 500 at Weir Wood Res on the 8th.

The first report of birds back at a breeding site was, for the second year running, in Byworth on 4 Apr, 12 days earlier than in 2005. This site again had six pairs and by 13 Aug had fledged up to

50 young. Other breeding records included single pairs at Climping, Chesworth Fm (Horsham), Danehill, Greatham Bridge, North Stoke, Rose Green, Storrington and Uckfield, whilst five pairs were recorded in Worthing, ten pairs in Patching, 11 pairs at Plumpton College and 30 pairs at Bewl Water.

The first large post-breeding groups were seen mainly inland in July. These included 200 at Thorney Deeps on the 11th, 150 roosting in a reedbed at Pannel Valley NR on the 20th, c.200 going to roost in a reedbed at Warnham LNR on the 25th and 700 at Henfield on the 27th. In August the larger gatherings were noted mainly at the coast with 200E over Selsey Bill on the 5th, 300 at Thorney Deeps on the 11th, 250 at Pagham West Side on the 13th, 250 at Weir Wood Res on the 21st, 400 at High Cross Fm (Uckfield) while July's reedbed roost at Pannel Valley NR peaked at 1500 on the 26th, 350+ W over Newhaven Tide Mills on the 27th and another 250 W there on the 29th and 200 at Beachy Head on the 30th.

Even higher counts were recorded in September. There were seven three figure counts from coastal sites including 1000 at Beachy Head on the 9th, 12th and 23rd, 1000 at North Fields (Pagham Hbr) on the 11th, 1237 S over Selsey Bill and 1000+ at Pagham Hbr on the 23rd and an exceptional reedbed roost count of 10,000 at Pannel Valley NR on the 26th. In October there were high counts of 1857 S over Selsey Bill on the 1st, 1000 over Beachy Head and 500 at The Severals (Church Norton) on the 3rd, 500 at Beachy Head on the 4th and 500 at Selsey Bill on the 5th, while the monthly peak at the reedbed roost at Pannel Valley NR peaked at 600 on the 12th.

The last records of the year were of four birds at Beachy Head on 4 Nov and a single bird seen around Rye Hbr on the 9th. This was nearly three weeks earlier than the 10-year average. Combining this with the late arrival date, the species spent over a month less in Sussex this year, compared to the 10-year average. [SB]

House Martin

Delichon urbicum

Common summer visitor and abundant passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

There were only three records in March, all from inland sites. The first was a single bird flying north over Southwater CP on the 26th (ten days later than 10-year average), followed by two at Bewl Water on the 29th and c.10 at Pulborough Brooks the following day.

During the first half of April, records were mainly in single figures. The first notable counts (much higher than 2005) were 50 at Waltham Brooks on the 17th, 200 at Barcombe Res, 60 at Thorney Deeps and 90 at Coldwaltham SF on the 23rd, 230 at Bewl Water on the 29th, 400 at Barcombe Res and 200 at Castle Water (Rye Hbr) on the 30th. Again there was an inland bias to sightings.

There was a good scattering of records in May from both halves of the county but generally in single figures. However, there were high pre-breeding counts of 150 at Pulborough Brooks on the 8th and 21st, 1350 at Weir Wood Res on the 24th and 500 at Bewl Water on the 30th.

The first report of breeding was of a pair prospecting a nest site in Burgess Hill on 28 Apr. The SOS House Martin Survey in 2006 improved the information on breeding counts with 50 colonies surveyed involving as many as 381 nests (combining 1st and 2nd broods). The results for each broad district were as follows:

	Colonies surveyed	1 st brood nests	2 nd brood nests	Total nests
Total	50	263	118	381
Chichester	7	29	18	47
Arun	7	19	16	35
Worthing	0	-	-	-
Horsham	9	33	15	48
Adur	1	17	-	17
Crawley	0	-	-	-
Wealden	8	33	25	58
Brighton & Hove	5	32	-	32
Lewes	4	106	36	142
Mid-Sussex	4	22	7	29
Eastbourne	0	-	-	-
Hastings	2	8	1	9
Rother (East)	3	70	-	70

The Survey did not attempt to cover all the colonies in the county but it provides a better record of breeding presence compared to previous years (cf. 19 colonies in 2005, 20 in 2004 and 24 in 2003). The largest colonies were 78 nests at Plumpton Agricultural College, 39 spread over 13 houses in Northiam and 27 at Wapsbourne Manor (Sheffield Park).

Apart from 150 at West Dean on 20 Jun the first post-breeding flocks were seen in mid-July with 100 at Boxgrove on the 9th and 190 at Weir Wood Res on the 18th. Numbers picked up in August, mainly at inland sites, with 250 and 100 at Weir Wood Res on the 8th and 12th respectively, 100 at Barcombe Res on the 13th, 130 at Hollingbury Camp (Brighton) and 100 at High Cross Fm (Uckfield) on the 26th and 100 at Elsted Woods on the 27th. The largest counts of the year were in September and included 2000 at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on the 6th, 1000 at Telscombe Cliffs on the 10th, 800 and 2000 at Beachy Head on the 11th and 12th respectively, 500 at Pannel Valley NR on the 12th, 300 at Pagham Hbr on the 15th, 300 at Beachy Head and 1500 at Rye Hbr on the 17th. On the 21st there were 355 at Hollingbury Camp (Brighton) on the 21st followed by 1000 and 400 at Beachy Head on the 23rd and 26th respectively.

In the first half of October smaller counts along the coast included 500 at Beachy Head, 400 at Church Norton and 261 at Selsey Bill on the 3rd, 500 at Beachy Head, 898 W at Telscombe Cliffs on the 4th and 200 at Cock Marling (Udimore) on the 5th. Thereafter, records for the remainder of the month were mainly single or double figures. The last sighting of the year, and the only one for November, was a singleton at Brighton Wild Park on the 4th, ten days earlier than the 10-year average. [SB]

Richard's Pipit

Anthus richardi

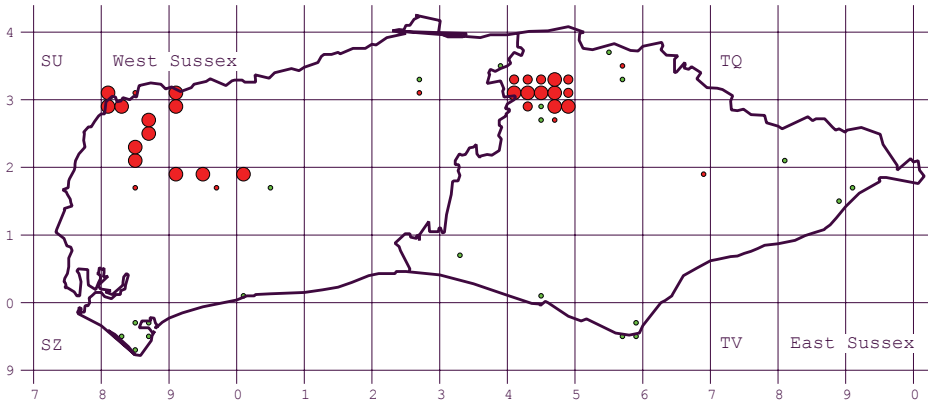
Rare vagrant.

One was seen mainly in flight at Selsey West Fields on 14 Sep (BFF, DIS, JDW). It was the earliest autumn record since one at Combe Haven on 12 Sep 1988. Five have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000, one in May and two in each of September and October, with only the spring record being seen properly on the ground. [RJF]

Tree Pipit*Anthus trivialis*

Fairly common but local summer visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The distribution of the species in the county is shown on the map below.



The first arrival was five days later than the 4-year average with a single bird at Heyshott Common on 3 April. The next was another single at Old Lodge NR (Ashdown Forest) the following day with two displaying males there on the 6th and a single bird at Hoth Fm and Woods (Rotherfield) on the 7th. Spring coastal movements started with 1 N at Selsey Bill on the 15th and 21st, one at Beachy Head on the 25th and two at Cow Gap (Beachy Head) on the 26th.

Ashdown Forest was again the major breeding area in the county with an amazing 119 territories recorded in 31 1-km squares (cf. 51 territories in 2005 and 67 in 2004), a fitting testament to the work done by the Ashdown Forest Bird Group. A total of 55 territories was located in the Wealden Heaths with a further ten elsewhere of which four were in the west of the county and six in the east. The highest count in the west was 14 territories at Ambersham Common. Altogether, there was a record total of 184 territories in the county compared to 131 in 2005 and 124 in 2004.

The first signs of autumn movement were in early August with 25 over Pannel Valley NR on the 1st and four flew over Five Ways (Ashdown Forest) on the 8th. Records of movement in the rest of the month were mainly of singles with the exception of four over Beachy Head on 19th, two W over Climping Beach and three over Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) both on 22nd, two and eight over Beachy Head on 25th and 27th respectively, and two over Climping Beach and Beachy Head on 29th.

The 16 records in September came mainly from coastal sites with the exception of three over Five Ways on the 5th, two on the visitor centre roof at Pulborough Brooks on the 14th and four over Weir Wood Res on the 19th. Of the coastal records, the high counts were of five over Beachy Head on the 4th and three singles over Selsey West Fields on the 26th. The only records in October and the last two records of the year were one over Pannel Valley NR on the 9th and Five Ways on the 17th, four days earlier than the 10-year average. [SB]

Meadow Pipit*Anthus pratensis*

*Locally abundant resident, very common passage migrant and winter visitor.
Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.*

In the first winter period, there were a number of counts in double figures. In January, the highest were 48 at Upper Adur Levels on the 2nd and 51 at Mountfield on the 7th, while in February, there were 48 at Iping Common on the 10th and 60 at the Newhaven Ouse Estuary Project on the 13th. In March, there were 61 at Misbourne (Ashdown Forest) on the 12th, 80 at Hollingbury Camp on the 19th and 80 at Beeding Brooks on the 28th.

The first spring passage migrants were 15 birds over Pannel Valley NR on 15 Mar (the same date as in 2005), followed by 75 N over Climping Beach on the 20th, 94 N over Selsey Bill on the 24th and 102 N over Selsey Bill on the 25th. The only inland passage was 9 N over Warnham LNR on the 28th. Movements continued in April with the highest counts coming from Selsey Bill with 48 N on the 1st and 192 N on the 15th.

The first song was heard at Garden of Eden (Ashdown Forest) on 9 Mar, with the first display flight recorded at Marl pits (Ashdown Forest) on the 19th. Breeding records came from 32 sites and totalled 164 pairs (compared to 34 sites and 190-200 pairs in 2005 and 58 sites and 132 pairs in 2004). Of particular note were 41 pairs at Amberley Wildbrooks, 36 in Ashdown Forest (low compared to previous years), 22 at Pulborough Brooks and at least ten at Pevensy Levels.

Autumn passage began in September with large post-breeding groups seen at Rye Hbr (100 on the 17th), Beachy Head (75 on the 18th) and Amberley Wildbrooks (120 on the 20th). Large movements were seen from the 23rd with highs of 700 (400 on the ground and 300 E) at Beachy Head and 211 at Selsey Bill, followed by 300 at Beachy Head on the 24th, 500 (300 W and 200 on the ground) at Beachy Head and 300 at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on the 25th, 2000+ at Selsey West Fields and 500 over Pannel Valley NR on the 26th. The only inland passage records were of c.20 S at Warnham LNR on the 25th and at Southwater CP on the 26th.

In October the largest movements were at coastal sites early in the month. At Selsey Bill 1021 birds were recorded during the month including high counts of 353 birds on the 2nd and 427 on the 3rd. At Climping Beach there were 430 with a high of 300 on the 3rd, 300 were seen at Climping Gap and 200 at Thorney Island on the 3rd and 310 at Brighton Wild Park on the 4th. This carried on in much lower numbers through to the month end including 134 W at Portobello (Telscombe Cliffs) on the 4th, 100 at Climping Beach on the 5th, 97 at Pannel Valley NR on the 7th, 150 W at Goring Beach on the 12th and 100 at Beachy Head on the 27th. Apart from 100 at Truleigh Hill on the 8th, the only inland site with significant records was West Chase (Ashdown Forest), where movement was seen throughout the month including 54 on the 2nd, 40 on the 3rd, 48 on the 7th, 52 on the 8th, 41 on the 12th, 22 on the 28th and 42 on the 29th. There was only one roost record of 12 birds at Lavington Common on the 22nd.

In November, the largest counts were all inland records with a roost of 25 birds at Poundgate (Crowborough) on the 19th, rising to 50 the following day, 54 at West Chase (Ashdown Forest) and 70 at Iping Common both on the 26th. In December there were highs of 40 at West Heath Sand Pit on the 14th, 50 roosting at Lavington Common and 40 at West Heath Common on the 16th, 37 at Rye Hbr on the 17th, 39 at Mountfield on the 26th, an exceptional 120 at Iping Common on the 30th and the Poundgate roost peak of 26 on the last day of the year. [SB]

Rock Pipit*Anthus petrosus**Scarce resident and scarce visitor; rare away from the coast.*

Of the 171 records received 159 came from west of Beachy Head. The remaining 12 were at Rye Bay in the second winter period.

In January there were reports from 16 locations (cf. 12 in 2003, 14 in 2004 and 11 in 2005) with highs of six at Newhaven Hbr on the 3rd, nine at Fishbourne Channel (Chichester Hbr) on the 4th and five in Shoreham Hbr on 10th. In February there was a slight increase in sightings with birds being seen at 17 locations including 14 at Fishbourne Channel on the 1st and 16th, six at Shoreham Hbr on the 4th and up to four at Sidlesham SF throughout the month. There were records from 15 locations in March, although in lower numbers. At Fishbourne Channel there were 12 on the 1st, but only two by 14th. The only other high counts were of seven at both Newhaven West Pier and Pilsey Sands (Chichester hbr) on 1st and 3rd, respectively.

In April, records from ten locations included a single bird displaying amongst four others at Saltdean on the 8th and 1 E on the beach at Goring Beach on the 16th being described as 'very late for the site'. Breeding was confirmed only at Saltdean with food being carried to a nest on the 22nd and one juvenile present on 29 Jul. Breeding was probable at Peacehaven Cliffs where a pair were displaying on 11 Jun. Elsewhere, one or two birds were seen in suitable habitat including two at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 4 May and 15 Aug, one at Hope Gap (Seaford) on 7 May and one at Crowlink on 6 Jul.

In September the few records included one at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 3rd, two at Cow Gap (Beachy Head) on the 7th and three at Birling Gap on the 8th. In October, there were almost daily sightings from 17 locations. Singletons were noted at Shoreham Hbr and Birling Gap on the 3rd, six at Peacehaven Cliffs on the 21st and 14 at Fishbourne Channel on the 25th and up to three at Rye Bay. In November and December records were of one to three birds except in Fishbourne Channel where there was a peak count of 20 on 6 and 24 Dec.

Inland, there were records of singles at Barcombe Res on 12 Feb, 12 Mar, 28 Oct and 4, 12 and 26 Nov and 3 and 17 Dec, although it is conceivable that these refer to just two birds. [SB]

Scandinavian Rock Pipit*Anthus petrosus littoralis**Probably a very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.*

During the early part of the year singles seen at Shoreham Hbr on 4 Feb (RJF), Thorney Island on 5 Mar (RAI, DRM, DIS) and Shoreham Hbr on 9 Mar (BFF, DIS) were typical records at a time of the year when some individuals of this form are starting to look quite distinctive. One at Shoreham Hbr on 4 and 12 Nov (RJF), but not subsequently, perhaps gives weight to a status of passage migrant rather than winter visitor in undetectable plumage, at least in any numbers. [RJF]

Water Pipit*Anthus spinoletta**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.*

Over-wintering birds were seen regularly at Sidlesham SF during the early part of the year with one on 4 Jan (AH), nine in freezing weather on 28 Jan (JBU, RJF), at least two on 31 Jan (BFF, DIS), four on 7 and 21 Feb (BFF, DIS), and at least two on 25 Feb (RAI, DRM, DIS). Elsewhere

one was seen near Rosemary Fm (Bewl Water) on 29 Jan (RB) while one at Barcombe Res on 12 Feb and 12 Mar (DCL, RTP) was presumably that present in Dec 2005 (*SxBR* 58:135). The last date is nearly four weeks earlier than the 10-year average departure date. At the end of the year, one returned to Barcombe Res on 28 Oct (two days later than the 10-year average) remaining until at least 17 Dec (JSG, SHL *et al.*) while two were seen at Thorney Deeps on 4 Dec (CBC) and one was at Sidlesham SF on 26 Dec (GB, ASC). [RJF]

Yellow Wagtail

Motacilla flava

Scarce and localised summer visitor and fairly common autumn passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The first bird of the year was in Stanmer Park (Brighton) on 21 Mar, the same date as the 10-year average. The next was at East Wittering on 25 Mar after which there was a gap before one at Rye Hbr on 4 Apr. There were 39 records of 146 birds in April, above the 2004 and 2005 totals of 130 and 125 respectively. The maximum was 21 on 6 Apr at Rye Hbr, the location of three other double figure counts. The maximum count at Pannel Valley NR was six on 23 Apr. A further 13 arrived in May up to the 10th, when passage seems to have ceased: this was an extremely disappointing showing, after the 49 in May 2005 and even the 21 in 2004.

Subsequent birds were reported from likely breeding territories, the first coming on 23 May. As in 2005, birds were absent from Amberley and Pulborough Brooks during a survey on 1 May, though one was at the latter site on the 3rd. During BBS surveys, a pair was found at Udimore and a single at Northiam. Against this bleak background, a minimum count of 30 at Rye Hbr on 13 Jun was remarkable. The only other June reports came from New Bridge (Pevensy) on the 6th, Pannel Valley NR on the 8th and Climping Beach on an unspecified date. Rye Hbr hosted a maximum of only four in the first half of July and there were eight on Pevensy Bridge Level on the 16th.

Return passage began on 18 Jul when there were singles at Southease and at Pannel Valley NR. Most August records, and the only substantial numbers, came from Rye Hbr: there were 80 on the 4th, 150 on the 11th, 100 on the 14th, 150 on the 18th and from 250-270 at the end of the month. The first double figure count away from Rye Hbr was of 30 moving west at Climping on the 22nd, a day which saw 14 also moving west at Telscombe and 32 at Thorney Deeps (Chichester Hbr). Inland, two were in Crawley on the 25th, with one staying until the 29th, one was at Weir Wood Res on the 26th and one was at Elsted Woods on the 27th. The last few days of the month witnessed considerable movement, mainly in a westerly direction. Over 200 moved over Climping in small groups in just one hour on the 29th, and on the same day 22 moved over Newhaven Tide Mills and 70 were among cattle at New Erringham Fm (Shoreham). The next day, a further 70 headed west over Climping. Numbers around Pagham Hbr were rather smaller, with no reports in excess of 40 birds for the area.

In September, a minimum of 100 were at Rye Hbr on the 8th and 168 were at Halsey's Fm (Sidlesham) on the 11th. Inland records during the month came from Ashdown Forest (two over on the 5th), Warnham LNR (one leaving the roost on the 5th), Waltham Brooks (40 flying in at dusk on 9th), Partridge Green (two on the 10th), and Cissbury Ring (ten on the 26th); at Hollingbury Camp, eight were counted on four days during the month. There were thirteen records totalling 48 birds in October (*cf.* 13 records of 26 birds in 2005) including 12 at Selsey West Fields on the 10th. The last record was early (as in 2005) but, remarkably, it was of a group of 16 at Sidlesham Ferry on 23 Oct, eight days earlier than the 10-year average.

In summary, spring arrival and autumn passage were reasonable but the May passage was weak. The records suggest that the bird was barely present during the breeding season and departure was again early. [CB]

Grey Wagtail*Motacilla cinerea*

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The early part of the year brought a slight improvement over 2005: there were 35 records of 34 birds in January, 27 of 27 birds in February and 25 of 32 in March. Sixty seven (72%) of these were solitary. There was one record of four at the inland site of Weir Wood Res on 26 Mar and two of three feeding together at Hermitage SF (Emsworth) on 4 Jan and 2 Mar but twos at eight other sites, all but one in the west of the county. At Constantia Manor (Isfield) a bird on 1 Feb was the first for over a year, a welcome return for a species that was more regular there at the turn of the century. Other inland records came from Singleton, Burton MP, Wisborough Green and Wakehurst Place. The first bird on Ashdown Forest was on 19 Feb and records from Balls Cross, Kirdford, Crawley and Tilgate followed before the end of the period. Whether Grey Wagtails do retreat for the winter from the Wealden ghylls and millponds, which they favour in the breeding season, remains an open question. Birds were at Ebernoe on 7 Jan 2005; in 2004 they were not reported from there until 15 Mar. Any negative reports from Wealden areas in the winter months would be helpful.

The characteristically thin spring passage was long drawn out. The first at Rye Hbr was on 6 Mar; observers at Beachy Head recorded the first there on 17 Apr and another at Birling Gap SF on the 28th, while the first at Selsey Bill flew north on 6 May.

Grey Wagtails were scarce in the BBS as only nine birds were found in just six of the 122 1-km squares surveyed. The WBBS survey of 3-km of the western Rother at Kilsham Fm (Petworth) found two. Breeding was confirmed at seven sites by at least 13 pairs, including seven pairs holding territory at Pippingford Park (Ashdown Forest) on 21 May (one pair had five young in the nest). Breeding probably occurred at a further seven sites. In mid-July, a pair was still nesting at Bignor and adults were carrying food at Darwell Res on 15 Jul and at Chichester GP on the 20th.

At Pannel Valley NR, one on 12 Jun was considered to be the first autumn migrant. One at Selsey Bill on the 17th was probably the second. Small gatherings are a feature of the autumn: there were seven at Barcombe Res and five at Rye Hbr on 29 Jul and eight at Weir Wood Res on 21 Aug. There was a little flurry of movement at the end of August with birds at Paghham Hbr (2), Climping, Hollingbury Camp (Brighton) and Beachy Head between the 26th and 29th. At Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) the first autumn bird was on 2 Sep; at Thorney Deeps on the 8th. Forty-four birds were noted passing over Pannel Valley NR during September, while October brought a total of 17 (on eleven days) and November a total of seven there. September totals elsewhere and October totals were small. From 15 Aug to 4 Nov just eight were noted on westerly passage at Beachy Head.

The last records of the year reflected the eclectic habits of the Grey Wagtail. There were records from traditional sites such as Thorney Deeps and Newhaven Tide Mills, and one overwintered at Pannel Valley NR. One spent November and December in the car park of Storrington public library, one appreciated the delights of a 'large, steaming dung heap, with mulch and liquid around the base' at Cuckfield, while another graced a property in St Leonards-on-Sea! [CB]

Pied Wagtail*Motacilla alba yarrelli*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

There was only one count in excess of 100 in January: 250 feeding on the filter beds at Hermitage SF (Emsworth) on the 4th. Thirty-two was the maximum count for the month at Pannel Valley NR, 77 were at Burton Park (Duncton) on the 10th (with 52 on the 17th) and 45 were at Burton MP on the 17th. In February, 40 were at Stapleash Fm (Chilgrove) on the 19th and a similar number were in Stanmer Park on the 23rd. However, all the counts this year were dwarfed by two from Fishbourne where 1080 roosted in the reedbed on the 7 Feb, with 650 there on the 16th. These were the highest counts since 1000 at Thakeham in early 1975.

The absence of large counts from the east of the county during the first winter period was striking, Stanmer Park and Pannel Valley NR being the only sites to record over 20 birds. There were still 18 birds at Pannel Valley NR on 1 Mar (the max for the month) and 80 at Hermitage SF on the 2nd. These were presumably wintering birds but some March sightings may have been birds on passage. However, passage in March at regularly watched coastal sites was almost non-existent with a mere four flying over Worthing Beach in 24 hrs of observation being the maximum!

During the BBS, 99 birds were counted in 54 of the 122 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of six at Kirdford and fours at four other sites. Pairs were present along the road from Rye to Rye Hbr and breeding probably took place at Winchelsea Beach SF. The 11 ha of Scobells Fm (Barcombe) held one territory. Four pairs held territory on the 400 ha of the Plumpton Agricultural College estate. Sixteen pairs and a further six singles were counted at Bewl Water on 15 Jun. The first unfledged birds were reported from King's Barn (Steyning) on 14 May.

Characteristic congregations were found from mid-July with 25 at Weir Wood Res on the 18th. Similar size groups appeared at the Isle of Thorns (Ashdown Forest) and Pett Level during August and 37 at County Oak (Crawley) on 30 Aug was an unusually high count.

Movement was evident from late September. On the 23rd, ten passed Selsey Bill, with 13 following on the 26th and 46 on 3 Oct, most of these birds flying north. Fourteen were at Guestling Wood on the 30th and on 2 Oct a flock of 35 flew through Hailsham. Thirty-one were in Stanmer Pk on the 3rd but the first autumn count in excess of 50 was of 65 at Carter's Pit (Rye Hbr) on the 14th followed by 100 E at Beachy Head on the 15th. There were only two counts of fifty or more in the second half of October: 70 E at Beachy Head on the 16th and 93 leaving a reedbed roost at Court Lodge Fm (Udimore) on the 21st. In October, 91 were logged at Worthing Beach in 21 hrs and 103 at Selsey Bill in 6¼ hrs.

It is interesting that 16 of the 80 November and 16 of the 51 December reports were negative. Wrens Warren (Ashdown Forest) provided the largest November roost, with 53 birds watched arriving from the north between 1605 and 1615 hr on the 15th. Fifty-two at Sefton Fm (Pagham) was a high count for that site and there were 47 there on 9 Dec. The reedbed roost at Pannel Valley NR peaked at 21. There was only a single three figure count in December when 100 roosted on pipes in the multi-storey car park at Brighton Marina on the 6th. [CB]

White Wagtail*Motacilla alba alba*

Probably a scarce spring and autumn passage migrant; both pure and mixed pairs have bred.

There were 20 records between 15 Mar when two arrived off the sea heading NE at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) and 23 Apr, with late spring birds on 5 and 10 May at Birling Gap. There

were four records of five birds in March and 16 records of 21 birds in April.

Return passage produced 15 records from 1 Jul to 5 Nov with a late bird on 10 Dec. Very unusually, there were seven records in July, but perhaps only one bird was involved in the five sightings at Sidlesham Ferry from the 16th to the 30th and another record there on 15 Sep. There were no records between 30 Jul and 25 Aug. In late August, two were reported from Crawley and the two September records came from Pannel Valley NR and Crawley. One was at Weir Wood Res on 2 Oct (the only record from the Ashdown Forest area) and two were at Selsey West Beach on 5 Nov.

Although better than 2005, this was another poor year for White Wagtails in the county. Most autumn birds pass well to the west of Sussex. However, studies of movements carried out at Slapton Ley (Devon) (*Devon Bird Report*) have identified at least one *alba* wagtail tracking west to east in the spring and, therefore, of possible continental origin, a fact which could be of interest in Sussex. [CB]

Waxwing

Bombycilla garrulus

Rare winter visitor.

After the rich diet of 2005, 2006 saw a return to the usual scanty pickings with just one record: four birds eating privet berries at Rye GC (Camber) on 9 Jan (CET). [CB]

Wren

Troglodytes troglodytes

Abundant resident.

The approximate minimum monthly numbers of birds and sites (1-km squares) were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	286	271	317	962	855	1007	297	126	159	218	189	160
No. of sites	56	59	70	152	132	154	54	40	38	54	56	45

A number of sites provided counts throughout the year, five of which can be compared with 2005 as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pagham Hbr	9	6	7	19	15	19	13	8	4	5	12	9
Sefter Fm (Pagham)	19	13	11	26	22	34	21	3	nc	12	12	11
Hotham Pk (Bognor)	2	3	5	7	4	9	3	5	4	2	2	5
Newhaven Tide Mills	5	5	7	8	6	5	nc	nc	2	4	3	2
Darwell Res*	11	14	10	26	21	23	14	4	9	7	11	22
Brede Levels*	9	19	nc	17	15	18	12	9	19	24	nc	nc
Guestling Wood*	nc	15	19	22	22	16	nc	12	15	17	nc	nc
Carters Fm (Pett)	3	4	5	7	nc	Nc	4	3	3	4	8	2

* = new site for 2006

Counts at Hotham Pk (Bognor) were, throughout the year, down on those for 2005 (a good year, when there were 10-13 from April to July). The same decline is evident in the reports from Pagham Hbr and at Carter's Fm (Pett). The June total at Sefter Fm (Pagham) was similar to that for 2005 but 2006 end of year counts were well down from those of 2005. Numbers at Newhaven Tide Mills are similar in 2005 and 2006.

During the BBS a combined total of 895 individual birds was recorded in 116 of the 122 1-km squares surveyed. The highest count was 23 at both Fishbourne and Scaynes Hill (Pellingbridge). At Brighton Wild Park 74 pairs bred (*cf.* 91 in 2005; 102 in 2004; 103 in 2003) and there were 82 pairs on the 400 ha of Plumpton Agricultural College. At Barns Copse (Binsted) there were 12 territories in 16 ha of deciduous woodland (*cf.* 14 in 2005). During a WBBS along 3 km of the western Rother at Kilsham Fm (Petworth) 20 birds were counted on 3 Apr and 25 on 16 May. Fifteen territories were reported at Scobells Fm (Barcombe) in 11 ha of farmland (*cf.* 10 in 2005).

The first juvenile to be reported was at Wrens Warren (Ashdown Forest) on 14 Jun. On the 30th, six fledged young were in a box at Ardingly Res and an adult was trapped while feeding young at Weir Wood Res on 17 Jul.

There were no reports suggestive of autumn movement nor any records of particular behaviour or unusual numbers at the close of the year. [CB]

Dunnock

Prunella modularis

Very common resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The approximate minimum monthly numbers of birds and sites (1-km squares) were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	211	279	212	585	403	443	100	47	80	178	124	122
No. of sites	50	59	58	159	131	134	50	26	31	47	41	47

Like all retiring (albeit not secretive) birds, Dunnocks prove frustrating to count. The difficulties of counting them are exacerbated by the complexity of their social and sexual lives (lovingly told in N.B.Davies, *Dunnock Behaviour and Social Evolution*, 1992). Where observers send in more than one count in a particular area for a month, those counts are very often disjunct; hence, where one count a month is submitted, it is necessary to emphasize the fragility of the case that is being made. The following counts come with that warning:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pagham Hbr	4	8	15	14	10	nc	nc	9	9	11	21	18
Sefter Fm	5	4	3	5	5	8	2	1	nc	4	6	5
Hotham Pk	1	5	4	4	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1
Crowborough	4	5	5	3	6	nc	5	13	5	3	3	4
Newhaven Tide Mills	4	7	18	24	10	10	7	5	13	14	9	6
(Singing birds)	-	4	12	12	4	3	4	-	-	-	-	1

The numbers at Newhaven Tide Mills indicate totals and singing birds. The counts were generally similar to those in 2005, although the peak at Crowborough in August was unusual and the apparent increase in numbers at Pagham Hbr late in the year is striking. It is equally striking that numbers are apparently so variable across the year at any one site: thus at Alexandra Pk (Hastings) five were counted on 1 Jan, 13 on 4 Feb and 22 on 5 Mar, but only three on 29 May and one on 9 Jul (unfortunately the last count there). By contrast, twenty-three counts across the year at High Cross Fm (Uckfield) varied only from one to three.

During the BBS a combined total of 416 individual birds was recorded from 107 1-km squares out of the 122 surveyed, with maximum counts in any one square of 21 at Peacehaven, 15 at Fishbourne and 12 at Thorney Island (Chichester Hbr). There were 49 pairs in the breeding season at the Brighton Wild Park (the same level as in 2005 but down from the peak of 58 in

2004), and 52 on the 400-ha Plumpton Agricultural College estate.

Autumn passage was apparent at Beachy Head on 4 Oct when 40 were present, some flying off high to the west. Such movement was not witnessed at any other site. The species account for Dunnock in the *Migration Atlas*, p.496-7 acknowledges the lack of understanding of the circumstances prompting eruptions in a species that is rarely seen “more than a kilometre from where it was hatched”. [CB]

Robin

Erithacus rubecula

Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

The approximate monthly numbers of birds and sites (1-km squares) were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	471	633	419	1243	1038	1018	194	176	385	555	264	221
No. of sites	75	72	73	168	131	153	58	45	52	74	69	62

Information on numbers throughout the year was provided for five sites and is shown in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pagham Hbr	13	16	10	13	17	12	10	21	14	28	28	21
Pulborough Brooks	20	10	10	10	9	10	0	3	8	0	5	10
Wilbees Fm	nc	nc	5	8	5	nc	1	2	2	3	3	2
Hotham Pk	7	7	9	7	7	6	2	4	11	8	4	6
NewhavenTide Mills	7	8	7	6	2	3	2	7	16	24	15	10

At Pagham Hbr, numbers were generally down on those for 2005 (when the maximum count was 56 in October) and numbers at Pulborough Brooks were also largely well below those for 2005.

A hatched egg was found at Rusper on 24 Feb. On 4 Mar a pair was watched ‘busily mating’ in a birch tree in Bognor Regis. In Brighton Wild Park 102 pairs bred indicating a stabilization of a decline evident since 2002 when there were 148 pairs. A similar stabilization has taken place at Rye Hbr. There were 101 pairs on the 400 ha of the Plumpton Agricultural College estate and 14 territories on 11 ha of farmland at Scobells Fm (Barcombe). At Barns Copse (Binsted) there were 18 territories in 16 ha of deciduous woodland. The 95 ha of mixed farmland at Sefter Fm (Pagham) held 17 territories, a number that has been remarkably constant for the past three years. Two adults were tending a second brood of three in Wivelsfield Green on 28 Jun which fledged the next day.

During the BBS a total of 1077 individual birds was recorded from 118 out of the 122 1-km squares surveyed with counts in seven squares exceeding 20 and a highest count of 32 in Tilgate Forest (Crawley).

There was no indication of the start of autumn song this year (a subsequent record, from 26 Nov, was of a bird ‘singing its heart out’ at Effingham Park). The first ‘obvious increase’ in autumn numbers at Beachy Head came on 1 Sep, when 15 were around Whitbread Hollow followed by 18 there on 13 Oct and 20 on the 28th but the weather was probably ‘too mild’ for a marked passage. Indeed, the absence of reports of significant numbers in the autumn of 2006 was striking, compared particularly to 2004.

The records suggest a mixed picture for the Robin. At two well surveyed sites, breeding numbers appear to have stabilized but, at others, 2006 appears to have been a poor year for the

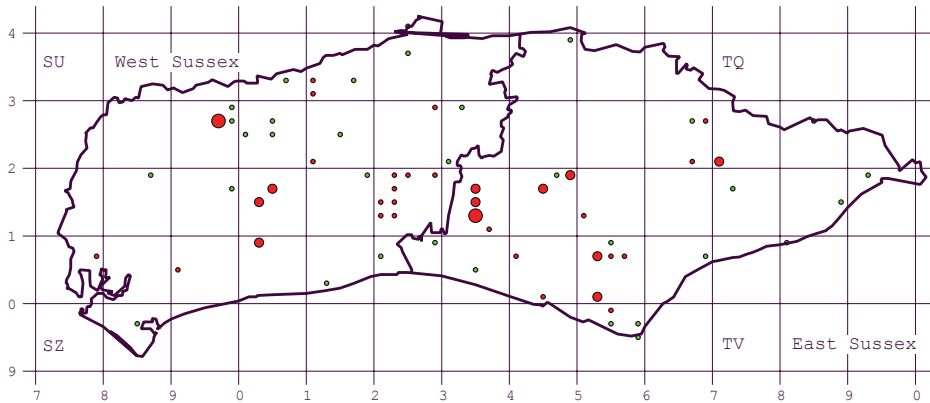
Robin. Further investigation of BBS material should give us a clearer picture in due course.
[CB]

Common Nightingale

Luscinia megarhynchos

Fairly common summer visitor and infrequently seen passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Birds were recorded in 79 tetrads as shown on the map below.



The first bird was found at Ardingly Res on 29 Mar, well ahead of the 10-year average of 4 Apr, but later than last year's first arrival at Steyning on 25 Mar. The Ardingly bird appears to have been present at the site throughout April. The next bird was at Newhaven Tide Mills on 9 Apr. Thereafter birds were noted on every day in April apart from the 13th. Birds were singing at Cow Gap (Beachy Head) on the 11th, at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 11th; in bushes around a Hastings factory on the 12th; at Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) on the 14th; and in a West Worthing garden on the 22nd. At Pannel Valley NR one was singing on the very late date of 2 Jun: was this an incoming migrant, a failed breeder or a parent of the newly fledged youngster found there on 2 July?

At traditional breeding sites, the first records were in April on the 12th at Wisborough Green, 15th at Pulborough Brooks, 16th at Hambrook and 19th at Uckfield. The singing at Pulborough Brooks on the 15th was judged to be 'rather unrehearsed': the highest count of singing birds there was four in April and seven in May. On 23 Apr, there were six at Wickstreet (Arlington), and four on a 0.5 km transect of Rounden Wood (Brightling). In Burgess Hill on the 26th five were found in a 2 km and two in a 0.5 km woodland transects. Birds arriving late in the month included one singing at Rye Hbr on the 26th (perhaps staying until 9 May) and two in a garden in Patcham on the 29th, with one remaining until the next day.

Three of the BBS records might have been from new locations: at Blackham, Hooe Level (Pevensey) and Etchingham. Further new sites included Houndean Bottom (Lewes) and Tismans Common (Rudgwick). Four birds were in Roman Woods (Slinfold) on 10 May. Birds were well distributed north of the Downs between the Adur and the Ouse, with a particular concentration in the Burgess Hill/Streat/Plumpton area and there were 8 pairs on the 400-ha Plumpton Agricultural College estate on 1 Jun. There were no records from Ditchling Common for 2006; perhaps due to an absence of observers rather than of birds. There seems to have been a reduction in numbers at Abbots Wood (Hailsham) where there were only two singing birds in 3 km on 18 May (compared

with 13 in the whole wood in 2005 and 17 in 2004). There were five territories around Darwell Res (cf. three in 2005). The last record of full song came from High Cross Fm (Uckfield) on 8 Jul while on the same date, sub-song was heard from two birds on Ebernoe Common. The apparent local reduction at Abbots Wood notwithstanding, Nightingales seem to have been more widely distributed across the county in 2006 than 2005 (or at least they were more widely reported).

The first autumn migrant was recorded at Cow Gap on 22 Jul but there were few others reports. In the Beachy Head area, three sightings on 6, 9 and 11 Aug might refer to the same bird; one was in the hotel garden on 14 Aug and one at Birling Gap on the 19th. Beachy Head observers concluded that 2006 was 'one of the worst autumns ever'. Only one bird (a young one) was ringed at Shoreham Sanctuary on 29 Jul in thirty-six sessions. Eight were trapped at Pannel Valley NR. The last birds were on 4 Sep at Pannel Valley NR and on the 10th at Sidlesham Ferry, five days earlier than the 10-year average date.

Records from coastal stations are clearly of migrants but a number of inland sites such as Warnham LNR and Southwater CP also produced just one record during the late spring. If observers did subsequently check the site, it suggests that birds are pausing in potential breeding territory before moving on. This also seems to be the message from the BBS (even allowing for birds being quieter later in the breeding season): 14 birds in ten 1-km squares in the early survey but only five birds in five squares in the later survey. It would be useful to have confirmation that birds have not stayed at particular sites after an early spring record. [CB]

Black Redstart

Phoenicurus ochruros

*Rare resident, fairly common passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.
Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.*

The minimum monthly totals and numbers of 1-km squares were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	8	8	16	8	2	3	2	1	1	11	14	10
No. of 1-km squares	8	7	14	7	2	2	2	1	1	9	10	7

Out of the 52 1-km squares in which the species was recorded during the year, all except two (Cocking Down and Isfield) were coastal sites.

During the first winter period, numbers compared with the 5-year average were higher in January and February but lower in March. Birds wintering from 2005 included a male at Ferring Rife, two (possibly three) in the Shoreham Hbr and Beach areas and a female was still present at Splash Point (Seaford) on 19 Feb and 22 Mar. Others included a male on Ferring Beach on 19 Jan, two in Sovereign Hbr Marina on the 20th and a male at Hodcombe (Beachy Head) on the 31st. The only inland record during this period was of one at Cocking Down on 25 Mar.

The only possible passage movement noted was a male east at Splash Point on 4 Feb but this might have been a bird relocating.

Summer numbers were, as usual, low. Although a singing male was seen at Goring Gap on the early date of 15 Mar, the only indications of possible breeding were of a singing male at a coastal site in the east from 2 Jun to 12 Jul and two at Brighton Borough from 30 Jun.

The first probable autumn migrants were one at Cow Gap (Beachy Head) on 22 Jul. The next was not until 28 Aug when one was at Rye Bay on 28 Aug followed two weeks later by another at Coldean (Brighton) on 10 Sep. Numbers then increased from a typical date of 14 Oct when one was seen at Hastings CP and peaked at a total of 14 in November. The only inland autumn record was of one sitting on a roof in Isfield (for the sixth year running) on 29 Oct. The year closed with

several potential wintering birds being seen, including one (possibly two) at Shoreham Hbr on 10 and 11 Dec, Portslade on the 24th, Brighton Marina on the 24th and Newhaven Tide Mills from 17th to 23rd. [JAH]

Common Redstart

Phoenicurus phoenicurus

Scarce summer visitor and fairly common passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The first arrivals of spring were in the first week of April when birds were recorded at Beachy Head and Climping Beach from the 2nd and at Chichester Hbr, Pagham Hbr and Ashdown Forest from the 4th, a week later than the 10-year average. Further records were received from Newmarket Hill, Brighton Coldean and Ladies Mile LNR on the 8th, New Salts Fm (Lancing) on the 9th and the Cuckmere Valley and Arlington Res on the 15th. Later in the month, singles were recorded at Winchelsea Beach on the 18th and Selsey Bill on the 18th and 30th. Apart from Ashdown Forest, the first inland records were from Folly Pond (Liphook) on the 21st and Pulborough Brooks and Storrington on the 22nd.

As usual, most records of migratory birds in the west of the county were from Church Norton and those in the east from Beachy Head. By the end of April coastal migration had fallen away, although a female was seen at Thorney Island on 3 May and a male and a female were seen at Pagham on the 4th and 5th respectively. Of the birds that were sexed during this period 32 were male and six female.

At Ashdown Forest, the first breeding birds arrived back on 4 Apr (Old Lodge NR) but the majority were recorded from 10 Apr onwards. The estimated breeding total for Ashdown Forest was 44 pairs (20 at Pippingford Park, 10 at Old Lodge NR and 14 elsewhere). A nest with seven young was found on 20 May and the first fledgling was seen on 25 Jun. Nine territories were identified in the Wealden Heaths area in the northeast of the county (Linchmere and Stanley Commons four, Chapel Common two and Barnetts Fm (Graffham), Blackdown and Weavers Down one each). The singing male at Folly Pond on 21 Apr was not seen again. The total county breeding population for 2006 is estimated at 55 pairs/singing males compared with 46-47 in 2005. During the BBS only three birds were recorded from the 122 1-km squares surveyed.

An early record of post-breeding dispersal was of a juvenile at Beachy Head on 26 Jul. Further records were from 1 Aug onwards. At Church Norton, birds were recorded on 15 days from 16 Aug to a last date of 3 Oct with a peak count of 6 on 22 Aug. At Beachy Head, they were noted on 21 days between 6 Aug and the last date of 12 Oct with a peak count of 11 on 27 Aug. The only other area with a significant number of records was Climping, where birds were recorded on passage between 7 and 30 Sep, and Pannel Valley NR, where fourteen birds were trapped by the Rye Bay RG during August and September. Apart from these areas, records were received from a variety of other locations including Pulborough Brooks, Cissbury Ring, Hollingbury Camp and Newhaven Tide Mills.

Monthly totals for the county were 135 in Aug, 79 in Sep and six in Oct. The estimated autumn total of 220 individuals represents an increase over the disappointingly low total of 172 estimated for 2005 and is within the annual average of 200-300 noted in *Birds of Sussex*. It is interesting to note that the main passage occurred in August compared with September in 2005, perhaps suggesting a better breeding season. A male lingered in Ashdown Forest until 25 Sep and the final record of the year was of a single at Sidlesham SF on 31 Oct, two days later than the 10-year average. [JE]

Whinchat*Saxicola rubetra**Rare summer visitor and common passage migrant.*

The minimum monthly totals and numbers of sites (1-km squares) were as follows:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
No. of birds	16	10	1	5	107	145	34
No. of sites	12	10	1	4	36	43	20

Out of the 80 1-km squares in which the species was recorded during the year, all except three (Partridge Green, Isfield and Ashdown Forest) were coastal sites.

The first arrivals were on 15 Apr at Hope Gap (Seaford) followed by another on 21 Apr at Climping Beach, somewhat later than the 10-year average arrival date of 1 Apr. A steady stream of mainly ones and twos then followed almost daily until 4 May. The final spring record was of one on 15 May at Pagham Hbr. The highest count was four at Brighton Wild Park on 22 Apr, the only spring record there.

After an isolated record of one on 13 Jun at Rye Hbr no more were seen until one at Bullock Hill (Brighton) on 21 Jul heralded the start of autumn passage. There was a steady movement throughout August, September and the first two weeks of October. The majority passed through during the three weeks from 21 Aug; minimum weekly counts were 56, 54 and a peak of 76 during the week ending 10 Sep. The highest counts recorded in August were ten at Pagham Hbr on the 24th and 12 at Beachy Head on the 25th. In September the maxima were 14 at Thorney Island on the 6th, ten at Isfield on the 10th and 14 at Beachy Head on the 6th. The month's total at Pannel Valley NR was 44. The last birds were two at Crutches Fm (Winchelsea) on 27 Oct, compared to the 10-year average date of 4 Nov. [JAH]

Stonechat*Saxicola torquata**Fairly common resident and partial migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.*

The minimum monthly totals and numbers of 1-km squares were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	115	120	102	77	88	93	84	127	171	381	2122	106
No. of 1-km squares	49	47	45	37	41	32	22	29	41	67	49	40

In the first winter period, numbers were generally comparable with recent years and rarely exceeded four anywhere. The exceptions were eight (four males, four females) wintering at Thorney Island (as in 2005 and 2003) in January and February dropping to six on 1 Mar. Elsewhere, there were six at Amberley Wild Brooks on 21 Feb, a monthly maximum of six at Rodmell on 2 Jan, five at Newhaven Ouse Estuary Project on 27 Feb and three pairs at Isfield on 15 Feb. The numbers of sites holding birds was divided fairly evenly between the western and eastern halves of the county. One bird was photographed in a garden at Stubbcroft Fm (E Wittering) on 1 Feb under a feeder. One at Stapleash Fm (Chilgrove) on 2 Feb was unusual for this site.

Territorial activity was first noted at Ashdown Forest on 14 Mar when a singing male was noted, a pair were behaving territorially on the 19th and singing was heard on the 29th. Reports of singing increased thereafter but all were from Ashdown Forest. The first sign of breeding activity was of adults carrying food at Wrens Warren (Ashdown Forest) on 23 Apr.

Signs of possible spring movement were noted only at Beachy Head with counts of 11 on 2 Apr, 14 on the 3rd and, after a brief dip, ten on the 16th. One showing characteristics of a continental race (large white rump and brighter plumage) was noted at Beachy Head on 3 Apr before it moved off northwards. The birds which had wintered on Thorney Island dispersed gradually after 1 Mar and the last spring record there was of a male on 18 May.

Breeding was confirmed for at least 55 pairs at 26 sites, was probable at a further 20 and territorial activity was noted at a further 12. Once again, birds did not breed at Thorney Island and none was found at Wiggonholt Common or Rackham Plantation. The species was poorly represented by the BBS as only one bird was found in one of the 122 1-km squares surveyed. A possible second brood was noted at Brede Levels on 17 Jun when adults were seen collecting nesting materials. A count of 25, mainly juveniles, was made at Beachy Head on 28 Jul.

During August the only counts in excess of ten were of 12 at Beachy Head on the 10th, 25 on the 15th and 20 on the 19th, and ten at Selsey West Fields on the 26th, both possible signs of post-breeding dispersal. In the autumn and second winter period at Thorney Island the first bird to return was noted on 19 Sep; by the 26th there were 11 there (five males and six females) increasing to 17 (eight + nine) by 8 Oct. Thereafter numbers dropped to ten (five + five) on 5 Nov and then eight (four + four) on 20 Dec, as at the start of the year.

Elsewhere in the autumn, counts in excess of ten came from only seven coastal and one inland site. At Truleigh Hill (Upper Beeding) an unusual count of 22 on 3 Oct increased to 32 on the 26th, the highest late count here 'for years'. Counts at Beachy Head included 20 on 4 Oct and a high of 25 on the 23rd while at Birling Gap there were 40 on the 3rd and 10th. Beachy Head was the only site where more than ten were noted in November and there were no sites holding more than eight in December when locations holding birds were divided evenly between 21 coastal and 19 inland sites. [JAH]

Northern Wheatear

Oenanthe oenanthe

Very scarce breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant.

The minimum monthly totals and numbers of sites (1-km squares) were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
No. of birds	91	337	50	15	20	261	253	141	4
No. of sites	33	59	14	9	10	43	48	37	4

The first spring migrants were singletons on 15 Mar at Ferring Rife and Goring Gap and two at Brighton Wild Park, nearly two weeks later than the 10-year average of 2 Mar. Numbers then increased steadily through the month with the highest counts being eight at Newhaven Tide Mills and Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on the 25th and at Selsey Bill on the 28th and seven at Climping Beach the same day.

In April, there were nine records of numbers in excess of ten with the highest counts being 22 at Selsey Bill on the 15th, 20 at Church Norton on the 7th and 20 at Shoreham on the 15th.

In contrast to last year's much higher counts, only two birds showing characters of the Greenland race were noted, a female at Cuckmere Lower Valley on 28 Apr and one at The Severals (Church Norton) on the 30th.

Breeding was confirmed at only three sites. At Newhaven Tide Mills two fledged juveniles were seen on 17 Jun and at Cuckmere Haven an adult was seen feeding young on 5 Jun. At Rye Hbr 11 pairs nested and overall success was high with many pairs raising second broods. During the BBS, birds were recorded in only two 1-km squares; two were at Graffham Down on 29 Apr

and one was at Earls Down (Dallington) on 7 May.

During the second half of July 15 returning birds, which may have been failed breeders, were recorded at nine coastal sites, the first being seen at Tegdown Hill (Brighton) on the 13th. Although the frequency of sightings increased from the start of August, the month's total numbers were much lower than in 2005 (670). Counts of weekly minimum numbers indicated that migration peaked during the week 21st to 27th when at least 162 birds were logged. There were only eight counts in excess of 10 which included 24 at Thorney Island on the 25th, 15 at Church Norton on the 22nd, 17 at Climping Beach on the 21st, 15 at Southwick Hill on the 22nd and 18 at Rye Hbr on the 18th. Numbers in September were similarly lower than in 2005 (634) and there were only seven counts over ten, including 14 at Thorney Island on the 26th, 21 at Pagham Hbr on the 15th, 12 at Climping Beach on the 7th, 16 at Goring Gap beach on the 7th and 18 at Beachy Head on the 4th.

It seems to have been a poor autumn for this species with numbers much lower than in 2005 when there were 206 in October and 30 in November. In October there was a minor migration peak during the week of the 2nd to the 8th with a minimum count of 80 but the only record above ten was 14 at Rye Hbr on the 10th. All records in November were of singletons. The last bird was noted on 19 Nov at Newhaven Tide Mills compared with the 10-year average date of 13 Nov. [JAH]



Desert Wheatear, Cooden, November 2006 (Ian Barnard)

Desert Wheatear

Oenanthe deserti

Very rare vagrant.

A confiding female present at Cooden Beach from 1 to 4 Nov (PB *et al.*) has been accepted by BBRC. It was perhaps the highlight of the autumn and attracted many admirers throughout its

stay as it fed along the beach. It was widely photographed, often while perching on an old fence (e.g. *Birding World* 19:449, *British Birds* 99:659 plate 369). The five previous county records are from Climping (9 to 10 Nov 2003), Beachy Head (30 Nov to 5 Dec 1997 and 17 to 21 Apr 1966) and Selsey Bill (1 to 6 Nov 1989 and 28 Oct to 8 Nov 1960). [RJF]

Ring Ouzel

Turdus torquatus

*Passage migrant, scarce in spring, often fairly common but local in autumn.
Red listed species of high conservation concern.*

An average spring count (exactly the same as the 10-year median number) was followed by an average but late autumn passage. While the total of 158 sightings is a little below the 10-year average this is confused by two exceptional years which both returned over 400 birds.

Mar	Apr	May		Sep	Oct	Nov
-	15	-		-	142	1

Spring migrants confined themselves to April, ranging from singletons at Sidlesham and Brighton Wild Park on the first day of the month to a female at Beachy Head on the 26th and a male there on the 27th. The first birds were two weeks later than the 10-year average of 16 Mar and the latest since 1994. There were two birds The Severals (Church Norton) on 7 Apr, at Littlehampton GC next day and at Beachy Head on the 20th. A first-ever sighting of a male at Warnham LNR was the most northerly record. Six birds were notified as males and one as female. No birds were reported east of Beachy Head.

Autumn migrants were recorded over just a few weeks, the earliest and most easterly being at Scotney Court GP on 12 Oct (five weeks later than the 10-year average of 6 Sep), followed next day by a singleton at Church Norton and three at Beachy Head. Less than a week later, 25 birds were counted at Hastings CP and eight at Beachy Head on the 17th, followed next day by ten on Truleigh Hill (Upper Beeding). There was a fall of 15 birds on Beachy Head on the 23rd, four at Lullington Heath the next day and six on Truleigh Hill and three at Fairlight Glen on the 27th. Two birds were at Beachy Head on the 29th and a singleton at Worthing on the 31st. The last record was of a female at Pulborough Brooks on 25 Nov, well beyond the 10-year average date of 16 Nov. [JHW]

Blackbird

Turdus merula

Abundant breeding resident and winter visitor; perhaps a passage migrant.

This year's counts were higher than last year until August. The overall count reflects perhaps 3770 birds, rather less than the 4140 estimated in 2005, despite a large contribution from two BBS counts. The following table shows the approximate number of birds and records submitted for the year:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	762	612	546	1500	1477	1551	326	167	159	268	428	353
No. of records	107	103	110	218	264	223	87	51	50	89	57	86

During the BBS, 122 1-km squares were surveyed and the sum of the maxima in each square was 1616 individuals. Seven squares held 30 or more birds, the highest being 50 at Furnace Green (Crawley).

The number of records was similar to last year making the 23% increase in bird numbers up to August significant, likewise the 17% decline afterwards. Last year they fell by 10% making the 2006 autumn numbers just 65% of those recorded in 2004. As expected, the distribution of birds is homogenous though spot counts over 40 birds early in the year were mainly in the extreme east of the county (at Hastings, Pett and Powdermill Res) with just 40 at Shoreham and 39 in the Arun Valley breaking the pattern.

There were 53 records of confirmed breeding, significant sites being Brighton Wild Park with 112 territories and Plumpton Agricultural College with 89 pairs in 400 ha, Rye Hbr with 28 territories, Sefton Fm (Pagham) 20 and Stedham Common 13. "Probable breeding" records totalled 67 while "Possible" sites included 20 territories along the R Adur, 15 at Darwell Res, 36 at Hastings, 32 at Peacehaven and 30 at Warnham. A pair at Uckfield was raising its fourth brood by 20 Jul!

High counts at the end of the year, and the only ones exceeding 20 birds, were 40 at Beachy Head on 2 Nov (most moving inland at Birling Gap), 45 at Fishbourne on 22 Nov and 49 at Darwell Res on 19 Dec. [JHW]

Fieldfare

Turdus pilaris

Common, occasionally very common, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The winter count of 8250 birds equals the 9-year average but the autumn return of 5800 birds barely exceeded last year's disappointing total and is well below the 4-year average of 9200. The number of records submitted was similar to last year. The approximate monthly totals in the three east-west bands of the county are shown in the table (only the easting grid references are given).

Eastings	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	2689	2959	2564	38		443	3871	1475
SU/SZ70-99	673	347	608	-		4	39	37
TQ/TV00-49	1251	885	1297	31		57	1099	1382
TQ/TV50+	765	1727	659	7		382	2733	56

January continued last autumn's weak performance, with 100 birds or more being recorded at only eight sites. These included 200 at West Dean Woods on the 2nd and 620 at Pannel Valley NR on the last day. February produced counts of 300 birds at each of Pett Level on the 5th, Warnham LNR on the 11th and Guestling on the 8th with a further 250 at Carters Fm (Pett) 3-km east of Guestling on the same day and probably the same flock. March was similar to January with peaks of 160 at Swains Fm (Littleworth) on the 5th, 240 at North Fields (Pagham) on the 20th and 180 at Pannel Valley NR on the 24th. Spring movement ended with 30 at Drungewick Manor (Loxwood) on Apr 9 and finally seven at Five Ashes (Butchers Cross) on 17 Apr, a week earlier than the 10-year average last date of 25 Apr.

Returning birds appeared on a broad front, the first three being at East Head (Chichester Hbr) on 12 Oct, much later than the 10-year average of 22 Sep, and a flock of 380 passed south over Crowborough on the morning of the 26th. On 1 Nov, 70 at Beachy Head was the only double figure count there of the autumn. On the same day 170 birds at Mountfield rose to over 300 on the 2nd when a cold north wind encouraged 1640 birds to pass W over Crowborough. At Bewl Water there were 300 birds on the 3rd, with the same number at West Chase (Ashdown) a week later and Constantia Manor (Isfield) on the 22nd after which there was a lull until 18 Dec when a peak of 150 birds was reported at Amberley Wild Brooks. At the close of the year, 600 birds passed down the Arun valley to roost on 29 Dec and there were 110 at Iford Brooks and 100 at Petworth. [JHW]

Song Thrush*Turdus philomelos*

Decreasing resident and partial migrant; common passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

During the last four years the reported numbers have been proportional to the number of observers indicating that the population is, at least, stable. An adjusted total of 2771 birds from 1020 reports compares with last year's 2462 from 921 reports and 1092 birds from 412 reports in 2003.

During the BBS birds were recorded in 109 of the 122 1-km squares surveyed and the sum of the maxima in each square was 481 individuals with maximum counts of 15 at Cocking and Telham (Crowhurst) and 12 at Catsfield.

The following table shows the approximate number of normal records and birds:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	171	246	180	600	502	517	120	37	39	85	145	153
No. of records	71	72	80	204	185	183	55	24	16	29	49	52

There was little change in the distribution of birds during the year apart from a slight bias to the south during winter and autumn. Consistent reporting from the extreme east was apparent but the BBS showed an even coverage over the county.

Breeding was confirmed for 80 pairs, was probable for another 130 and possible for 950 more. Brighton Wild Park held 13 pairs, Plumpton Agricultural College held 32 in its 400 ha and Ashdown Forest held 40 territories. East Dean's nightjar site had its usual ten songsters, Beauport Park (Hastings) held six territories and Darwell Res at least four. There were just three descriptive breeding records: nest building at Rusper in the middle of April, food being carried at Stonehill (Ashdown) in mid-May and a juvenile moulting in early June at North Stoke (Arun Valley).

The only records of any migrants were at Beachy Head where the first two were noted at Birling Gap on 25 Sep and numbers in the area peaked at just ten on 16 Oct.

Early winter reports indicated four areas holding ten birds each, growing to seven areas holding fifteen by April, including 20 birds at Pulborough Brooks and 18 at Apuldram (Chichester) with the rest mainly to the east.

End of year gatherings rarely reached double figures but peaked with 24 at Pannel Valley NR in late November followed by 20 birds at Poling (Arundel) on Dec 16, Dover Woods (Angmering) on the 21st and Pagham North Fields on the 24th. [JHW]

Redwing*Turdus iliacus*

Common, occasionally very common, passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The exceptional movements last autumn faded but the winter count of 3935 was above the 10-year average of 3375. The autumn return count of 3367 seems poor and well below the 10-year average of 5300 but is close to the median. The approximate monthly totals in the three east-west bands of the county are shown below (easting grid numbers only).

Eastings	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	951	1263	1711	9	1	1	1377	1166	823
SU/SZ70-99	45	147	253	-	1	-	38	16	50
TQ/TV00-49	637	493	1040	3	-	1	337	878	691
TQ/TV50-99	269	623	418	6	-	-	1002	272	82

There were only two three-figure gatherings in January: 100 at Barcombe Res on the 2nd and 130 at Pulborough Brooks on the 16th. In February there were counts of 100 at Warnham LNR on the 11th and at Bewl Water on the 12th and 24th, 230 at Court Lodge Fm (Udimore) on the 13th, 100 at Darwell Res on the 13th, 90+ at Coates Common on the 14th and finally 80 at Chilgrove on the last day of the month.

Counts in March were biased centrally with 100 birds at Ashdown Forest and another 80 at Lords Piece (Coates) on the 23rd and 100 at Wakehurst place on the 26th. Late records were two at Powdermill Res (Brede) on the 11th and a singleton at Stedham Common on 3 May, over three weeks later than the 10-year average departure date of 10 Apr but three weeks earlier than the county record of 24 May 1959.

A lone bird appeared at Portslade-by-Sea on 29 Sep, over a week later than the 10-year average return date. This was followed by small numbers until 970 flew west over Crowborough on 26 Oct and 200 flew over Five Ways (Ashdown Forest) next day, possibly part of the same flock. On 2 Nov 840 were seen during the day including 500 at Preston Park (Brighton) and 100 at Hove in an otherwise unremarkable month. There was little cheer in the east in December but in the west there were counts of 100 at Waltham Brooks on the 10th and neighbouring Amberley Wild Brooks on the 18th and a final count of 200 birds at Little Bognor (Petworth) on the 30th. [JHW]

Mistle Thrush

Turdus viscivorus

Common resident and partial migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

An apparent increase in numbers since 2003 correlates exactly with the increase in records. About 983 birds from 427 records were observed compared to 815 from 382 records last year. The removal of repetitive sightings suggests that there were just over 600 birds.

The approximate numbers of birds and records received were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	72	52	63	103	78	116	126	64	94	115	75	45
No. of records	46	31	35	61	58	49	21	9	17	38	34	28

There were few flocks in the early part of the year but an even coverage across the county. The largest gathering in the first three months was ten at Pulborough Brooks on 29 Jan. Elsewhere there were five at Offham (Arun Valley) on 20 Jan and at Pett Level on 18 Feb and three counts of four: at Pulborough Brooks on 4 and 11 Feb, Ashdown Forest on 5 Mar and West Dean Woods on 23 Mar. Another five in Goodwood Park on 19 Apr was the highest spring count.

During the BBS birds were recorded in 44 of the 122 1-km squares surveyed and the sum of the maxima from each square was 73 individuals, with a maximum of seven at Maplehurst and five in Goodwood Park.

Ten reports of breeding included nesting at Chucks Farm (Littleworth) at the end of March, a single pair in Brighton Wild Park at the end of April and young at Pulborough Brooks on 10 May.

Single juveniles were seen at Chelwood Gate and Old Lodge (Ashdown Forest) on 4 Jun, four at Weir Wood Res on 2 Jul and three at Friday Street (Rusper) on the 7th. There were seven pairs at Plumpton Agricultural College and a disappointing eight at Bewl Water.

In July there were larger gatherings with 19 birds at Tegdown Hill (Brighton) on the 1st and 20 flying over Boxgrove (Chichester) on the 11th while ten were seen at both Carters Fm (Pett) and Bewl Water. The few records for August included 23 at Mountfield on the 34th and 19 at Thorney Island (Chichester Hbr) on the 15th. Another 20 appeared at Mountfield on 12 Aug and also at Pagham Hbr on the 28th while October heralded 17 at West Chase (Ashdown) on the 1st and a dozen at Pannel Valley NR on the 17th. November was quiet with 16 at Hare Fm (Brede) on the 10th and 14 at Wrens Warren (Ashdown Forest) on the 15th being significant. No flocks exceeded six birds in December. [JHW]



Cetti's Warbler, Arundel, April 2006 (Dave Sadler)

Cetti's Warbler

Cettia cetti

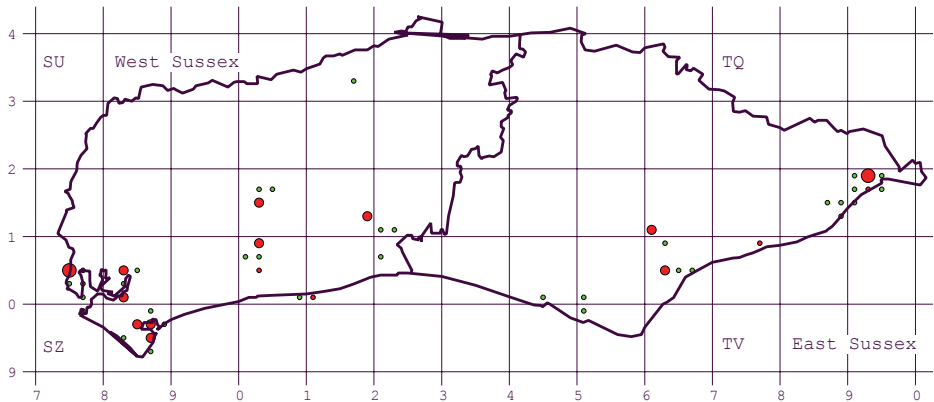
Very scarce resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Schedule 1 species.

The distribution of this species is shown in the map below and indicates that it is still rare in the northern half of the county.

In January and February a maximum of 35 individuals was recorded, 20 at nine sites in the west of the county and 15 at five sites in the east. There were seven at Thorney Deeps, the same number at Rye Hbr, five between Arundel and South Stoke and four at Pannel Valley NR. One was heard regularly at Warnham LNR and another was singing at Beeding Brooks on 28 Mar.

During April and May, nine singing males were heard at Thorney Deeps, ten at Pagham Hbr, two at Warningcamp and singles at Lyminster, South Stoke, Waltham Brooks and Steyning Levels. In the east there were four at Hankham Level, three at Pebsham, two at Filsham LNR, five at

Pannel Valley NR, one at Winchelsea Beach and eight at Rye Hbr. Breeding almost certainly occurred behind Bowmans at Rye Hbr and the first fledged young were four seen with parents on 5 Jun at Thorney Deepes, where 12 broods were located, producing 48-50 young (CBC). The probable countywide total of breeding pairs was between 50 and 60.



Autumn and winter records came mainly from the same locations, namely Thorney Island, Chichester and Pagham Harbours, Arundel and Rye Hbr. Singles were reported at Charleston Reedbed on 28 Aug and 8 Oct. On 8 Nov ten singing males were at Thorney Deepes. A singleton ringed at Shoreham Sanctuary on 29 Nov was retrapped on 27 Dec at the same site. [VPB]

Grasshopper Warbler

Locustella naevia

Very scarce and declining summer visitor and fairly common passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

The first record of the year came from Waltham Brooks on the 15 Apr, two days later than in 2005 and four days later than the 10-year average. A male was reeling near Bill House (Selsey) the following day. On 17 Apr the first bird in the east of the county was noted at Pannel Valley NR, another was at Brighton Marina on the 21st and reeling was heard at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on the 23rd.

During May and June, reeling males were heard in suitable breeding habitat at just five sites: Thorney Deepes, Waltham Brooks, Amberley Wild Brooks, Alciston and Pannel Valley NR. On 5 Jul one was heard at Ditchling Common, there was one at Ashdown Forest on the 28th and a single was at Patching on the 29th.

Monthly maxima ringed at Pannel Valley NR were 54 on 27 July, 22 on 16 August, 15 on 11 September and 16 in October, totalling 471 birds broadly comparable to the 2005 figures. However, at Beachy Head only seven individuals were ringed in a poor autumn for the ringers there, although at least 27 others were seen in the area between 22 Jul and 15 Oct. The last bird in the west was at Climping on 5 Oct and in the east the final sightings were at Cow Gap (Beachy Head) and Pannel Valley NR on the 15th, three days earlier than the 10-year average.

There was no sign of any recovery in numbers for this species. [VPB]



Grasshopper Warbler, Coldwaltham, April 2006 (Martin Casemore)

Aquatic Warbler

Acrocephalus paludicola

Very scarce autumn visitor to selected sites; rare elsewhere. Considered vulnerable by IUCN.

Two juveniles were trapped near Pett Level, one on 18 Aug and the other on 12 Sep (RBRG). Twenty-two have been recorded in the county since the start of 2000, 18 at this site and two each at Thorney Deeps and Combe Haven. Records have averaged just over three per year during this period, in contrast to an average of almost ten per year in the 1990s, helped by an amazing 30 trapped near Pett in 1997 alone. All records have been between late July and early October with 16 of the most recent ones in August and six in September. [RJF]

Sedge Warbler

Acrocephalus schoenobaenus

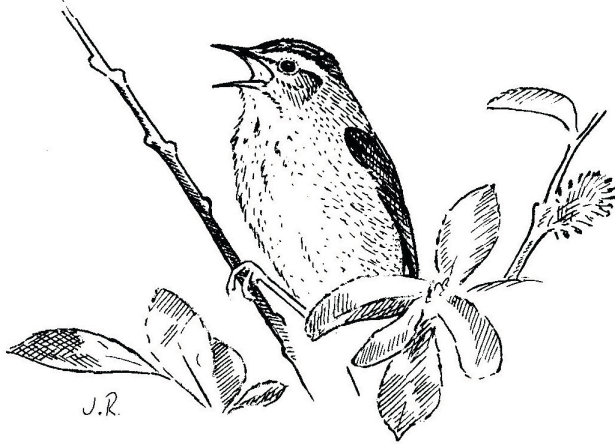
Fairly common summer visitor and abundant passage migrant.

The first record was of one at Thorney Deeps (Chichester Hbr) on 1 Apr, two days later than the 10-year average. There was then a steady trickle of records, mainly of singles in the Rye Hbr area building up to 15 there on the 16th. At the western end of the county 32 were counted at Thorney Deeps on the 26th and, at the end of the month, 12 were at the Newhaven Ouse Estuary Project.

From the beginning of May, numbers in the county rose with 35 at Amberley Wild Brooks and 23 at Pulborough Brooks on the 1st. On the 14th, 42 pairs were counted at Thorney Deeps

(Chichester Hbr). Fifty territories were mapped at Rye Hbr (a very similar figure to that in 2005), 18 singing males were recorded at Pannel Valley NR and 12 were still at the Newhaven Ouse Estuary Project.

Outward passage was first noted on 22 Jul with two at Cow Gap (Beachy Head). Also at Beachy Head, five were seen on the 24th, two on the 26th and six on the 28th. At Pannel Valley NR 95 were trapped on the 29th. This was followed by monthly peaks of 456 trapped there on 16 Aug, 237 on 4 Sep and 65 on 1 Oct. The last bird of the year was recorded there on 15 Oct, comparable with the 10-year average date of the 12th. [TWP]



Marsh Warbler

Acrocephalus palustris

Very scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

Four adults and two juveniles were trapped at a site in the east of the county; the adults on 17 Jun and on 5, 10 and 18 Jul, and the juveniles on 9 and 24 Sep (RBRG). About 36 have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000. [RJF]

Eurasian Reed Warbler

Acrocephalus scirpaceus

Common summer visitor and very common passage migrant.

The first bird of the year was at Warnham LNR on 6 Apr, two days later than the 10-year county average but the earliest at this site by six days. This was followed by singles at Pagham Hbr on the 7th, Pannel Valley NR on the 10th and at Rye Hbr on the 11th. There were no significant numbers until the 26th when 20 males were singing at Thorney Deeps (Chichester Hbr) and 24 were counted at Sefter Fm (Pagham) on the 28th.

There was a steady trickle of birds arriving during May but the only significant numbers were 46 at Pannel Valley NR on the 3rd, 38 at Rother Levels (East) on the 27th, 44 at Sefter Farm on the 28th and, with breeding now well under way, 78 pairs at Thorney Deeps (Chichester Hbr) on the 28th. In June other breeding counts were of 58 singing males at Pannel Valley NR on the 1st, 201 pairs at Rye Hbr (significantly up on the 130 pairs there in 2005), 55 pairs at Sefter Farm, at least 25 pairs at Warnham LNR, 10 singing males at the Newhaven Ouse Valley Project and eight pairs at Pevensey Levels SWT Reserve.

The first obvious returning migrants were a singleton at Beachy Head on 24 Jul with 90 trapped at Pannel Valley NR on the same date. Five were counted at Beachy Head on the 26th, three on the 28th and four on the 29th. Passage continued through August with 60 trapped at Charleston Reedbed on the 9th, 363 trapped at Pannel Valley NR on the 17th, 40 at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on the 18th, where it was the best year for this species since 1980 with 136 trapped there during the autumn. At Pannel Valley NR 145 were trapped on 6 Sep and 130 were trapped there during October including the last of the year on the 28th, four days earlier than the 10-year average. [TWP]

Icterine Warbler

Hippolais icterina

Very scarce visitor.

A juvenile found near the Beachy Head Hotel on 30 Aug (DRC, JFC *et al.*) was the rarest warbler recorded in the county during the year. It remained faithful to a patch of scrub on the cliff edge for most of the day although it was always very elusive and became harder to see as the day progressed. Thirty-six have been recorded in the county but occurrences have dropped off significantly in recent years. It was the first record since 2003 and only the second since 1999, although there were ten during both the 1990s and 1980s and 11 in the 1970s. Half of the records since 1990 have been in August with the others in May (2), July and September (3). [RJF]

Blackcap

Sylvia atricapilla

Very common summer visitor and passage migrant; small numbers winter.

In January and February there were reports of 41 wintering birds in 27 different locations, almost identical numbers to those of early and late 2005. One was feeding on a rotten apple in a Goring garden on 15 Jan, possibly the same bird seen eating holly berries on the 30th. A singing male was heard at Durrington on 18 Feb.

The first coastal records of presumed migrants were of a male and female in a Selsey garden on 24 Mar; the first eastern arrival was at Rye Hbr on the 26th. From 28 Mar the species was recorded throughout the county. There was a minimum of five singing males at Pannel Valley NR, 21 pairs at Brighton Wild Park and eight pairs at Thorney Island, which was one fewer than in 2005 and two fewer than the year before. There were 12 at Burton MP on 23 Apr, 19 at Guestling Wood on 6 May, 20 at Friston Forest on 3 Jun and 16 at Darwell Res on the 11th.

During the BBS 287 individuals were counted in 94 of the 122 1-km squares surveyed.

A total of 317 different individuals was trapped at Cissbury, 312 of which were new birds ringed, making up almost exactly one third of all birds ringed at the site in 2006. Of these, 277 were young birds. The total represents the highest percentage of this species ringed at the site in the 23 years that the Steyning RG has been operating there. Beachy Head RG also noted that an increasing proportion of birds ringed at Whitbread Hollow are Blackcaps. This may be a genuine increase or a result of decline in numbers of other species.

In September, numbers passing through Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) were 120 on the 2nd, 200 on the 9th, 150 on the 17th, 100 on the 23rd, with a maximum for the month of 250 on the 25th. A total of 300 passed through on 3 Oct, but only 75 were noted the following day; thereafter numbers were just in single figures. The last bird at Thorney Island was a male seen on 20 Oct and at Whitbread Hollow one was reported on 10 Nov.

During November and December numbers were about half the total recorded during the same period in 2005 with a minimum of 18 wintering birds at 14 different sites. Two different females were trapped at Pannel Valley NR during December and males and females were seen together at Ford on 18 Nov and at Angmering on the 24th. [VPB]

Garden Warbler

Sylvia borin

Very common summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first individual of the year was at Barcombe Res on 6 Apr, one day later than the 10-year average, with the next at Weir Wood Res on the 9th. The main arrival started from the 22nd.

Breeding season records of singing males suggested a total of at least 112 pairs at 65 sites, a slight increase over 2005. Five pairs nested at Kilsham Fm (Petworth), four at Pulborough Brooks, two each at Warnham LNR and Brighton Wild Park, four at Plumpton Agricultural College and five each at Pannel Valley NR and Darwell Res. In the BBS late count 20 were found in 13 of the 122 1-km squares surveyed. A comparison with the Blackcap late count of 204 in 81 1-km squares indicates the relative abundances of these two species, as do the ringing totals ratios of Blackcap:Garden Warbler at Cissbury and Shoreham Sanctuary of 317:15 and 165:11 respectively.

The maximum count on passage through Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) was 25 on 9 Aug. There were no notable movements this autumn, continuing a run of poor years. There were 16 records during September all at or near the coast, six were ringed at Pannel Valley NR on 1 Oct and the final bird of the year was seen at Beachy Head on the 13th, three days earlier than the 10-year average. [VPB]

Lesser Whitethroat

Sylvia curruca

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

The individual which arrived in a Burgess Hill garden in November 2005 remained in the area and was seen regularly until the end of April. It favoured sunflower hearts as a food item, although it also attempted to feed on a fat ball. An injured leg was noted on 28 Apr, but it appeared to have no difficulty flying. It was seen on seven occasions in early May, the last of which was on the 11th. A previous wintering Lesser Whitethroat in Worthing in 2002/3 preferred peanuts (SxBR 53. 205-206).

The first confirmed new arrivals were singles at Pagham West Side on 17 Apr (the same date as in 2005 and five days later than the 10-year average), Waltham Brooks and Pulborough Brooks on the 18th and Warnham LNR and Rye Hbr on the 19th. Other sites reported their first migrants from 21st.

During the BBS, 20 birds were recorded in 17 of the 122 1-km squares surveyed compared with 275 Common Whitethroats from 71 squares. There were reports of singing males from 61 different sites (similar to 2005) although the number of pairs at both Thorney Island (9) and Rye Hbr (10) were slightly lower. At Amberley Wild Brooks the total returned to the 2004 level of two

pairs after doubling to four in 2005. Nine pairs were reported in 400 ha at Plumpton Agricultural College and a singing male at Southwater CP on 6 Jun was the first site record for this species.

After reporting a good autumn passage last year, the Beachy Head RG had an extremely poor year with only 27 individuals ringed. Ringing success at Cissbury was low with just ten different birds trapped, only three of these being juveniles. However, a few kilometres away at Shoreham Sanctuary 35 different individuals were caught of which 25 were young birds.

The last record from the west of the county was a single bird at West Tarring (Worthing) on 22 Sep. There were only three reports in October, one from Rye Hbr on the 2nd and two from Beachy Head on the 4th and 13th, but the last individual was trapped and ringed at Pannel Valley NR on 8 Nov, considerably later than the 10-year average of 14 Oct. [VPB]

Common Whitethroat

Sylvia communis

Very common summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first two records of presumed migrants were of singletons at Pannel Valley NR and in an Angmering garden on 2 Apr, the same date as the 10-year average but ten days later than in 2005. The first singing male at Thorney Island was heard on the 9th and one at Warnham LNR on the 15th was the earliest site record by seven days. Later in the month there were 12 at Hollingbury Camp on the 22nd, 22 at Beachy Head on the 23rd, 20 singing at Thorney Island on the 26th and 15 at Pagham Hbr on the 27th.

During the BBS 275 birds were counted in 71 of the 122 1-km squares surveyed with maximum counts of 15 at Piper's Copse (Northchapel) on 11 Jun and 11 at Thorney Island on 27 Apr, at Lidsey Lodge (Shripney) on 30 Apr and at Ripe on 21 Jun.

During May and June there were numerous records of singing males from across the county including 14 at Pulborough Brooks, 19 at Sheepcote Valley, six at Newhaven Tide Mills, 40 in Friston Forest and 12 at Guestling Wood. There were 50 pairs at Thorney Island and 58 territories were mapped at Rye Hbr, a slight increase on 2005. However, at Bewl Water, just ten pairs was the lowest number for 20 years. An adult was seen with three young at Pulborough Brooks on 14 Jun, and ten singing males were at Highdown Hill (Worthing) on the 11th, several of which were carrying food. There were 22 at Tegdean Hill on 13 Jul, and 14 at Isle of Thorns (Ashdown Forest) on the 23rd.

Return passage started at the end of July, with 61 at Beachy Head on the 26th, 78 on the 28th, 74 on 5 Aug, 82 on the 10th and a maximum of 170 on the 15th. A count of 80 birds at the top of Cissbury Ring on 15 Aug was regarded by the observer as a low estimate. During September, 60 were seen moving through Pagham Hbr on the 1st, and at Beachy Head there were 30 on the 4th, 18 on the 10th, 15 on the 19th and 20 on the 25th.

The final sighting at Brighton Wild Park was on 23 Sep, and the last at Thorney Island was on the 26th. During October there were just ten records with single birds at High Cross Fm (Uckfield) and at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on the 11th being the final reports, eight days earlier than the 10-year average. [VPB]

Dartford Warbler*Sylvia undata*

Fairly common but localised resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The majority of the first winter period reports were from the breeding areas of the Wealden Heaths and Ashdown Forest with the maximum counts for this period being five at Iping Common on 21 Jan and six there on 15 Mar. Coastal records were all of single birds, the first being at Newhaven Tide Mills on 2 Jan which was assumed to remain until mid-February. Other coastal records were mostly from Chichester and Pagham Harbours. At Thorney Island a solitary male was singing on many dates between 12 Jan and 3 Mar. At Pagham Hbr a singleton was present from 4 Jan to 20 Mar. A singleton stayed in the Climping Beach area from 21 Jan to 25 Feb.

This was the year of the National Dartford Warbler Survey jointly organised by the BTO and RSPB and co-ordinated in Sussex by the SOS. The survey commenced on 15 Feb and concluded on 31 May. The aim of the survey was to determine the numbers and distribution of the species nationally and within the county. (see pages 235-242 for the full report on the results from Sussex.)

The highest counts of the autumn period were 13 at Iping Common on 8 Jul and nine there on the 21st. Records of post-breeding dispersal at coastal areas were poor, particularly during the usual peak months of October and November, and were well below the totals for 2005, itself a poor year. All reports were of singletons with eight in the east of the county, mainly from the Beachy Head and Rye Hbr areas, and only five in the west, mainly from the Pagham and Chichester Hbr areas. The estimated total county coastal monthly numbers were:

Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	1	0	7	3	3

The highest count from the breeding sites late in the year was of seven at Iping Common on 29 Nov. [AP]

Yellow-browed Warbler*Phylloscopus inornatus*

Very scarce visitor, mostly in late autumn.

One was reported from Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) and, possibly the same, 1.5 km east in Ovingdean churchyard on 23 Oct (ADW, IJW) while another was seen in a garden in Worthing on 24 and 25 Nov (BFF, DRM, DIS). The October sightings apparently involved identical individuals which, given the species subtle plumage variability and the closeness of the sites, suggests that they could well have been the same. Thirty-five have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000, the vast majority in October (27) and the others in January, April, November (4) and December (2). [RJF]

Dusky Warbler*Phylloscopus fuscatus*

Very rare vagrant.

2005: The individual at Climping from 7 to 10 Oct (*SxBR* 58:157) was not at Poole Place but in hedges in Mill Lane and then beside Littlehampton GC. [RJ]

Wood Warbler*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Very scarce summer resident and passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The 20 records received probably related to only 14 individuals, a marked reduction on the 33 records of 23 individuals in 2005. The first bird was at Old Lodge NR (Ashdown Forest) on 10 Apr, a rather early date compared with the 10-year average of 20 Apr. The only other April record was of one at Pulborough Brooks on 22nd which might have been the same bird noted on 1 and 14 May, the only records for the month apart from breeding records. There were no coastal sightings of migrants during the spring.

Two reports of breeding were received from the northwest of the county. At one site a bird was seen carrying food on 28 May. At another site a pair was noted holding territory between 16 May and 6 Jun. This is a significant decline in numbers, as it would now appear that this species has been lost as a breeding species in the Ashdown Forest area.

Return passage was first noted in July with singles at Hodcombe and the Horseshoe Plantation (both Beachy Head) on the 28th. There were four records in August of singles at Beachy Head on the 4th, 5th and 10th and finally one at Pannel Valley NR on the 23rd, nearly two weeks earlier than the 10-year average of 5 Sep. [TWP]

Common Chiffchaff*Phylloscopus collybita*

Very common summer visitor and passage migrant; small numbers winter.

As has become common in recent years there were many records from a variety of sites during January and February, mainly of ones or twos. In January there were eight at Coldwaltham SF on the 5th and five (probably the same birds) at Waltham Brooks on the 15th and 25th, figures similar to those in 2005. At the Hermitage SF (Emsworth) 14 on 4 Jan had increased to 22 by 2 Mar.

Spring migrants appeared in early March, the most obvious being three at Selsey Bill on the 11th and one at Hodcombe (Beachy Head) on the 13th. Passage continued throughout March but again, as in 2005, no large falls were recorded from any of the coastal sites and only a handful of records from anywhere in the county were of more than single individuals. April numbers fared little better and the only notable figures were 16 at Beachy Head on the 2nd, 15 at Church Norton on the 7th, 12 at Sheffield Forest on the 9th, 12 at Worth Worthlodge Forest also on the 9th, another count of 12 at Stoughton Inholmes Wood on the 10th, 16 at Powdermill Res on the 11th, 16 at Gravetye Woods on the 17th and finally ten at Warningore Wood (Plumpton) on the 22nd.

Breeding was confirmed in only 12 tetrads with probable breeding in a further 37 tetrads. This is obviously a big underestimate but shows how little we know of the breeding status of this, one of our most common migrants. Eleven pairs bred on Thorney Island (Chichester Hbr) and 40 pairs were counted during a survey of the Plumpton Agricultural College estate, an increase of 233% compared to the 12 recorded in 1982 (see Willow Warbler for comparison).

Autumn passage began in August and ten at Shooters Bottom (Beachy Head) on the 26th was the most significant number counted. Numbers increased in September with 75 at Whitbread Hollow on the 17th, and 100 at Beachy Head on the 18th, 170 there on the 25th and 100 at Whitbread Hollow on the 27th. In October there were 150 in Whitbread Hollow on the 3rd and on the 4th 99 were trapped at Pannel Valley NR. Numbers then started to dwindle but 50 at Whitbread Hollow on the 12th was a good figure and ten were at Cissbury Ring on the 23rd. Only single figure counts were recorded at sites in November and some 20-30 birds were noted in December at 14 sites, including six at Shoreham Sanctuary and five at Sefton Fm (Pagham). [TWP]

Willow Warbler*Phylloscopus trochilus*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The first records were of singletons at Beeding Brooks on 28 Mar, East Hoathly on the 29th, Pulborough Brooks on the 30th and three at Waltham Brooks and four at Chichester GP on the 31st, all significantly later than the 10-year average of 15 Mar.

On 2 Apr at least 20 were counted at Pagham Hbr and on the 4th 14 were at Beachy Head. Thereafter, spring passage was exceedingly poor with no falls recorded at coastal sites and few inland sites recording double figures, a sign perhaps of the diminishing numbers in the southeast. Figures for May were no better; a very poor showing.

Breeding was confirmed in only eight tetrads and was probable in a further 24. Although only 29% of the records came from Ashdown Forest, 63% of the confirmed and probable breeding records came from there indicating that Ashdown Forest is the breeding stronghold of this species in the county. Ten were heard singing at Darwell Res and a survey of the Plumpton College Agricultural Estate revealed 12 pairs, a drop of 80% from the 62 recorded in 1982.

Autumn passage got under way towards the end of July with five at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on the 22nd and 66 counted at Beachy Head on the 28th. August is the main passage month and peak counts included 160 at Beachy Head on the 4th, 150 at Whitbread Hollow on the 5th and the 9th, a low estimate of 80 at Cissbury Ring on the 15th (with 95 there on the 22nd), 156 trapped at Pannel Valley NR on the 21st and a peak autumn count at Brighton Wild Park of 30 on the 26th. There were more records in Sept than in 2005 including 20 at Beachy Head on the 4th, 30 at Brooklands (Worthing) on the 5th and lastly 40 at Climping Gap on 7th. In all over 200 birds were recorded in September.

In October, 18 birds were noted with the last bird of the year being recorded at Shoreham Sanctuary on the 29th, the same date as the 10-year average and a week earlier than in 2005. [TWP]

Goldcrest*Regulus regulus*

Very common breeding resident, common passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

A total of 697 records was received from 254 locations within the county, including 150 sites in the breeding season. During the first winter period individuals and small parties of wintering birds were recorded throughout the county particularly from areas of conifers, but also in reasonable numbers from deciduous woodlands, sewage works and gardens where birds were seen feeding on peanut and suet feeders. Only three counts were received of ten or more birds during this period, the largest being 23 at Powdermill Res.

Spring passage was very light and did not appear to start until the beginning of April when six were recorded at Beachy Head on the 2nd. No double figure counts of migrants were received during the spring.

There were only four sites where breeding was confirmed. One pair bred at Brighton Wild Park, there were six territories at Stedham Common, six pairs at Plumpton Agricultural College estate and one pair at Weir Wood Res. Breeding was probable at a further nine sites involving at least 24 territories. In addition, there were at least 31 singing males on Ashdown Forest, a poor comparison with the 59 in 2005.

The first autumn passage was noted on 25 Sep at Beachy Head but passage remained very light until the last week of October when between 20 and 30 birds were recorded from Church Norton, Beachy Head and Pannel Valley, the largest numbers for the year. After this period, passage rapidly diminished during a poor autumn for this species as commented on by a number of observers at coastal localities. Small flocks of birds continued to be recorded in suitable wintering habitat until the end of the year, including a group of up to 24 at Ashdown Chase. [DG]

Firecrest

Regulus ignicapilla

Scarce breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium concern. Schedule 1 species.

Typically the majority of the records in the first winter period were either coastal or from the coastal plain, although the largest single count was of ten (eight singing) birds at West Dean Woods on 25 Mar. Perhaps more interesting were the two males and a female found in the same location on 17 Jan suggesting a fidelity to the breeding site during the winter. A total of 53 records referred to 82 (67 in 2005) individuals during this period. The highest coastal counts were of seven at Pannel Valley NR between 29 to 31 Mar and seven at Beachy Head on 29 Mar. The only other inland records were of singletons at Goldballs Plantation (Heyshott) on 24 Mar and Haywards Heath on the 28th.

The approximate monthly totals including breeding numbers were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
17	11	54	72	91	3	1	-	88	46	22	4

West Dean Woods continues to hold the majority of Sussex's breeding population. Thirty-five individuals were found on 29 Apr, most of which were holding territory, and a further detailed inspection covering different sectors located 25 singing males on 9 May and a further 24 on 11 May. This suggests a total of 49 males holding territory, well in excess of the record number of 23 potential pairs found in the entire county last year. A further 14 potential pairs were found in the west of the county and one in the east. The estimated total population of males holding territory is therefore 64. However, the reporting of higher numbers may represent greater targeted observer effort. This species is undoubtedly very vocal at high densities but less so at low ones suggesting that further examination of areas away from the known centres may prove to be productive.

The first records of the autumn, away from the breeding areas, were of eight in the Beachy Head area on 9 Sep followed by an unprecedented total of 26 there the following day. There was a very definite easterly bias during this period with reports from Pagham Hbr totalling no more than ten individuals in the entire autumn and second winter period. The high numbers in September were in contrast to the past decade when October provided the peak autumn count (the highest October number in the last ten years was 166 in 1996 when records were more evenly split between Beachy Head and Pagham Hbr). The approximate totals recorded at the main sites during the autumn and early winter periods were as follows:

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pagham Hbr	3	1	3	3
Beachy Head	79	29	3	-
Rye Hbr	2	2	2	-
Other sites	4	14	14	1

Coastal reports continued to be received throughout the second winter period, mainly singles, although two were found at Rye Hbr on 15 Nov. Most of the inland wintering reports were from

Pulborough Brooks, where up to two were seen regularly until a single provided the final record of the year on 24 Dec.

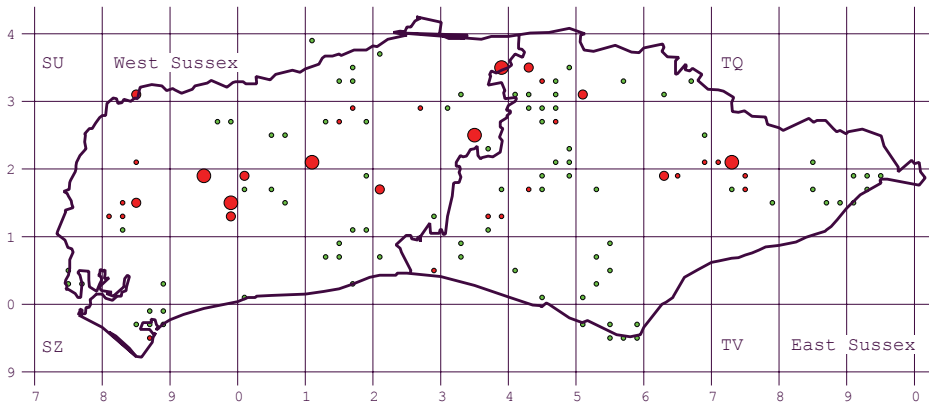
The 194 records of this species during the year came from 67 1-km squares. [AP]

Spotted Flycatcher

Muscicapa striata

Scarce summer visitor and fairly common passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

The species was recorded in 80 1-km squares across the county, as shown in the map below.



The first bird of the spring was at Horseshoe Plantation (Beachy Head) on 30 Apr (six days later than the 10-year average date) and passage continued to early June with ones and twos recorded all along the coast.

During the BBS nine birds were recorded in eight 1-km squares out of the 122 squares surveyed. Records were received from 17 breeding sites from 13 May (eight less than in 2005); breeding was confirmed at only seven of these (15 in 2005) and was probable at a further ten, with two pairs recorded at four sites. Birds were also recorded from a further 15 areas of suitable breeding habitat throughout May and June. Three juveniles fledged from a nest at Weir Wood Res but all other records related to fewer young. At Chesworth Farm (Horsham) a pair hatched four eggs but all the young were predated.

Autumn migrants were again recorded from widely scattered locations although, as in 2005, numbers appeared low and some observers commented that it was a poor autumn for this species. Small numbers appeared from 31 Jul onwards but high numbers did not commence until the 19 Aug when 15 were present at Isfield. Passage was, as usual, heaviest during the last week of August and the first two weeks of September and during this period counts of between ten and 15 birds were received from Pagham Hbr, Climping Gap, Iping Common, Pulborough Brooks, Cissbury Ring, Beachy Head and Pannel Valley NR. Numbers fell rapidly from 19 Sep with the last record from Pagham Hbr on the 24th and Beachy Head on the 26th, both typical dates.

The last two records for the year were singletons at Brooklands (Worthing) and St. Anne's Well Gardens (Hove) on the 3 Oct, eleven days earlier than the 10-year average departure date. [DG]

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
5	-	1	1	12	17	2

Passage numbers during spring were very light and autumn passage was also relatively quiet. The year's minimum total of 38 birds was less than half the average number recorded over the last four years (85).

The first spring migrants of the year were one, possibly two, males at Millbrook and Camp Hill (Ashdown Forest) on 17 Apr, eight days later than the 10-year average arrival date, and another male at Carters Fm (Pett) the following day. Another male was reported from Pulborough Brooks on the 22nd and a female was seen at Warnham LNR the same day. Another male lingered at the Horseshoe Plantation (Beachy Head) from the 22nd to the 26th. There was an interesting record of a bird recorded on 16 Jun at Slinfold during a BBS survey, well outside the time of normal passage and the third year in a row that a Pied Flycatcher has been recorded in Sussex during June.

Autumn passage commenced on 21 Jul with one at Pulborough Brooks followed by another at Beachy Head on 4 Aug. From then until 25 Sep, records were evenly spread both in time and in location across the county. At least 30 individuals were recorded with 22 at sites at or near the coast, particularly at Church Norton (5) and Beachy Head (6). There were no obvious falls or concentrations and all but two records were of singletons. Away from the coast, four birds were recorded at Levin Down on 23 Aug (the largest gathering of the year), one was at Coates Common on the 27th and singles were seen at Pulborough Brooks and Ashdown Res on 1 Sep.

For the third year running birds lingered in St. Anne's Well Gardens (Hove). Three recorded there on 20 Sep was a peak autumn count for the site and two lingered until 3 Oct, the same as the 10-year average departure date. [DG]

Bearded Tit*Panurus biarmicus*

Scarce breeder, and scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The peak counts outside the breeding season at the seven sites where the species was recorded were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Thorney Deeps	33	22	12		24	24	24	12	7
The Severals (Church Norton)	-	-	-		-	-	-	3	4
Ferry Pool (Sidlesham Ferry)	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	1
Long Pool (Sidlesham Ferry)	-	1	-		-	-	-	-	-
Pannel Valley NR	6	3	4		8	9	23	5	-
Pett Level	-	1	-		-	6	-	4	6
Rye Hbr	-	-	-		-	-	11	8	-

Numbers were higher in the first three months of the year than they have been in recent years. In the autumn there were average numbers at Pannel Valley NR and Rye Hbr although at Thorney Deeps the maximum was only 24, compared to 44 in 2005 and 60 in 2004.

Breeding was again confirmed at only two sites, but was thought probable at one other. At Thorney Deep the breeding season was disappointing with four pairs fledging 16 young, as opposed to four females fledging at least 35 young in 2005 and 50 in 2004. The first juvenile birds were seen on 4 Jul. At another site birds were present all year and several broods were seen in June. Breeding was also thought probable at a further site where birds were present throughout the breeding season, although no juveniles were seen.

Typically, 'high flying' behaviour was noted at Thorney Deep and three occurrences were recorded during the second half of the year. On 4 Oct, ten of the 20 birds counted performed some 'high flying'. On the 12th, seven of the 24 birds counted did some high flying before they flew off SW later in the morning. On 19 Nov, 12 birds were present and four of these flew off very high to the west in the morning. [DG]

Long-tailed Tit

Aegithalos caudatus

Very common resident.

Birds were reported from 254 1-km squares across the county, with a distribution broadly similar to that for Blue Tit and Great Tit. No birds showed characteristics of the 'white-headed' continental races *europaeus* or *caudatus*.

The monthly maxima for sites counted over a period of at least nine months were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sefter Fm (Pagham)	3	2	1	3	1	3	-	21	-	10	7	-
Weir Wood Res	19	3	7	1	4	15	5	12	12	20	27	8
Darwell Res	10	2	13	8	5	9	-	-	5	6	-	38
Pannel Valley NR	-	6	4	-	2	22	-	38	28	25	23	8

When not nesting, this species is highly social, with a 'clan' (a group of male relatives and their mates, together with some offspring and some immigrants) sharing a home range. Confusingly, clans often divide into sub-groups or temporarily fuse with each other, making flock sizes variable and a poor guide to population size. In the first winter period, the largest flocks were 20 feeding at Coldwaltham SF on 15 Jan and 17 at Pett Level on 18 Feb, the latter being part of a total count of 38 there that day, the largest concentration recorded.

Breeding was confirmed in 14 1-km squares and probable in a further 12. During the BBS, 122 birds were recorded in 33 of the 122 1-km squares surveyed. These included three birds in two squares on the Pevensy Levels, which were previously the largest gap in this species' distribution (*Birds of Sussex*). Successful pairs are often 'helped' by failed breeders. Even so, since they rarely raise more than 12 young, a flock of 24 at Thorney Island on 14 Jul suggests that 'family parties' had already merged.

During the second winter period, the largest flock was of 25-30 at Ashcombe Bottom (Lewes) on 8 Dec. Larger concentrations of 40 at Amberley Wild Brooks on 15 Dec and 38 at Darwell Res on 19 Dec probably involved more than one clan.

Birds fed at fat or peanut feeders at five sites in the first winter period, but none were reported in the second winter period. There were two records during the warmer months. At High Salvington (Worthing) a fat feeder was visited by a singleton on 12 Apr and by two adults and two juveniles on 14 Jun. Peanuts briefly attracted a flock of eight at Storrington Wantley on 27 Sep. [DH]

Blue Tit*Cyanistes caeruleus**Abundant resident.*

As expected, the 1304 records from 405 1-km squares of this familiar species were spread right across the county.

The monthly maxima for sites counted in at least nine months were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pagham Hbr	18	6	9	10	10	14	14	11	6	7	9	8
Sefter Fm (Pagham)	33	17	7	14	7	16	10	5	2	8	8	9
Hotham Pk (Bognor)	9	9	11	6	5	16	3	3	7	1	4	6
Ebernoe Common	4	2	2	10	6	-	2	2	-	10	6	-
Warningcamp (Arundel)	4	6	5	4	4	1	3	1	8	9	5	-
Pulborough Brooks	48	20	20	5	30	15	-	5	6	-	10	10
Warnham LNR	25	30	17	15	2	1	8	20	1	6	1	-
River Mole (Gatwick)	11	11	5	8	5	-	7	2	-	3	5	3
Burgess Hill	15	14	15	12	16	30	-	-	3	3	-	15
Cuckfield Hanlye	8	18	13	-	15	-	11	16	14	11	17	14
Weir Wood Res	10	10	-	6	14	6	8	30	17	5	13	7
Newhaven Tide Mills	5	4	3	4	2	3	1	2	7	3	2	4
High Cross Fm (Uckfield)	3	4	8	8	4	6	6	6	4	2	4	4
Crowborough	7	7	5	3	9	11	15	22	11	13	7	12
Wilbees Fm (Arlington)	-	-	12	8	4	11	2	15	9	4	5	5
Darwell Res	15	40	35	41	29	41	21	10	28	32	12	15
Brede Levels	37	43	-	28	11	35	16	14	25	46	-	-
Carters Fm (Pett)	4	4	8	7	3	-	2	3	4	3	6	9

In the first winter period, the largest concentration was of 89 in Alexandra Park (Hastings) on 5 Mar. In the second winter period, despite the substantial beech-mast crop, no count exceeded the 46 on Brede Levels on 8 Oct. This suggests that, like most common birds, this species is under-recorded. At Beachy Head, eight were seen on 21 Jan and five on the 22nd. On 4 Mar seven were seen three of which four flew off high east from Horseshoe Plantation following a party of six Great Tits and five were seen in that general area on the 11th. Birds were seen on several dates in April with a peak count of six on the 2nd.

Breeding was confirmed in just 30 1-km squares, and judged probable in only one more. This suggests that familiarity has bred recording apathy, since no fewer than 1608 birds were recorded in 119 of the 122 BBS 1-km squares surveyed. At the Bluebell Railway (Horsted Keynes) 54 nest boxes were used; eggs were laid in 53, and 39 nests fledged young. Success was similar at several other locations: at Ardingly Res (36 nest boxes occupied, with 25 fledging 179 young); Arlington Res (all six nest boxes successful fledging 34 young); Hotham Park (Bognor) (broods in 16 nest boxes with all but three or four chicks fledged). Slightly more enterprising pairs nested in the roofs of the Church and Old School at Ebernoe. A flock of 40-50 had formed in a Shoreham garden by 22 Aug.

Records of this species from Beachy Head are hard to interpret since it sometimes breeds near Belle Tout (*Birds of Sussex*) and is not reported by many observers. However, sightings included two at Belle Tout on 2, 13 and 14 May, up to three in August, one at Shooters Bottom on 10 Sep and 'present' there on the 19th, two at Birling Gap on the 24th, up to three in October and, in November, six on the 4th and nine on the 5th hinting at passage. [DH]

Great Tit*Parus major**Abundant resident.*

The 1173 records from 379 1-km squares were spread right across the county, with a distribution very similar to that of Blue Tit.

The monthly maxima for sites counted in at least nine months were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pagham Hbr	6	5	5	4	3	-	-	1	4	1	2	1
Sefter Fm (Pagham)	15	12	11	13	8	10	2	-	-	4	3	2
Hotham Pk (Bognor)	5	7	4	7	6	5	-	-	2	2	2	7
Warningcamp (Arundel)	4	5	4	3	4	2	-	-	1	2	2	-
Pulborough Brooks	20	15	15	20	30	12	1	10	2	1	15	20
Warnham LNR	15	30	20	15	4	-	6	10	3	6	-	-
River Mole (Gatwick)	3	5	9	10	3	-	3	17	-	-	3	2
Burgess Hill	9	4	2	6	5	10	-	-	2	1	-	5
Cuckfield Hanlye	2	10	7	-	6	-	5	2	1	5	2	3
Weir Wood Res	5	10	-	4	6	5	8	58	15	2	-	6
Newhaven Tide Mills	2	-	3	11	1	6	2	2	4	3	3	2
High Cross Fm (Uckfield)	5	6	3	2	4	4	4	8	7	4	4	4
Crowborough	3	2	3	3	10	7	4	5	3	2	2	2
Wilbees Fm (Arlington)	-	-	8	9	6	9	3	10	1	2	4	5
Darwell Res	15	37	21	20	20	21	3	9	7	13	5	8
Brede Levels	14	29	-	13	8	8	12	7	24	19	-	-
Carters Fm (Pett)	2	5	7	6	4	-	2	4	3	2	6	6

In the first winter period, the largest concentration was of 64 at Powdermill Res on 16 Feb. As usual, records from Beachy Head suggested spring movements. A count of 15 on 4 Mar included a party of six that flew high east, but 27 on 28 Mar included parties travelling west (of 12 through Cow Gap and of 5 and 10 through Whitbread Hollow). Between these dates, nine to 11 birds were counted on three days. On 1 Apr, a total of 50 included a flock of 45 in Cow Gap, many of which had greyish underparts. Other flocks included 20 in Cow Gap on 3 Apr that flew high west and 19 at Birling Gap on 5 Apr.

Breeding was confirmed in 25 1-km squares and judged probable in a further six. During the BBS 878 birds were recorded in 119 of the 122 1-km squares surveyed. At the Bluebell Railway (Horsted Keynes), 44 nest boxes were used with 33 nests producing fledged young; 165 nestlings were ringed from 23 nest boxes. Success was similarly high elsewhere: at Ardingly Res 17 nest boxes were occupied with 14 fledging 96 young; at Arlington Res two nest boxes were occupied successfully fledging 14 young; at Hotham Park (Bognor) there were nestlings in five nest boxes.

Counts of ten and 12 at Beachy Head on 18 Sep and 13 Oct respectively, and four in Birling Gap on 24 Sep, provided weak evidence for autumn movements. In the second winter period, despite the substantial beech-mast crop, the largest concentration was a mere 20 at Pulborough Brooks on 9 Dec. It seems that, like the Blue Tit, this species is under-recorded. [DH]

Crested Tit*Parus cristatus*

The Sussex Ornithological Society Records Committee (SOSRC) is undertaking a review of a number of historical records and, as part of this review, the records of Crested Tits in Worthing on 10 May 1997 and Fairlight on 12 Jun 1997 have been reassessed by the Committee. After considerable deliberation of the records as well as assessment of additional information such as occurrence elsewhere in the south of England, movements of birds on the Continent and the original Committee comments, it was considered that neither record was adequately documented for inclusion on the Sussex list.

The SOSRC takes the reassessment of any record with the utmost seriousness and any reversal of a previous decision is not one that is taken lightly. In this instance the Committee was unanimous in its decision. These were the only previous county records and as such the species has, regrettably, been removed from the county list. [CWM]

Coal Tit*Periparus ater**Very common resident.*

Although the 407 records from 166 1-km squares were scattered across the county (from Thorney Island east to Pett Level and from Bognor north to Blackham), they were biased towards the north and east of the county compared with records of Blue Tit and Great Tit. This probably reflects the species' well-known preference for coniferous woodland and, hence indirectly, for areas of sandy soil (*Birds of Sussex*). Coal Tits do occur, however, in deciduous woodland; e.g. two birds at Ebernoe Common on 3 Apr were in an area devoid of conifers. There were few records from the South Downs east of Falmer; that Friston Forest yielded just two records says more about us as observers than it does about Coal Tits!

In the first winter period, the largest concentration was of 35 at Wiggonholt Common on 16 Jan. In the second winter period there were 16 at each of two sites on Ashdown Forest (Isle of Thorns and West Chase) on 8 Oct.

Breeding was confirmed in six 1-km squares, and judged probable in a further nine. A total of 93 birds was recorded in 38 of the 122 BBS 1-km squares surveyed. Unlike 2005, no birds showing characteristics of the continental race *ater* were recorded. [DH]

Willow Tit*Poecile montanus**Scarce resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.*

2005: The distribution map included in the Sussex Bird Report for 2005 (*SxBR* 58:166) was incorrect. The map shown was a duplicate of the distribution map for Corn Bunting and was included in error.

2006: This species seems to be in dire straits in Sussex, with only 27 sightings from just 17 1-km squares. Two records simply noted presence; all others included counts, 21 of which were of single birds. The largest flock contained just three birds near Graffham on 6 Sep. All but one record came from two limited areas: from West Dean Woods, the western South Downs and Pulborough Brooks, and the High Weald in a swathe running southeast from Crawley to Uckfield. The exception was a site near Battle.

Breeding was confirmed at only one site, and judged probable at a second. A meagre total of four birds was counted in two of the 122 BBS 1-km squares surveyed. Worryingly, the species

was noted as absent from a site near Uckfield where it bred in 2004 and 2005.

This species can be very hard to distinguish from the Marsh Tit, even when examined in the hand. Vocalisations are a good guide, and it is striking that more than one in five records mentioned calls or song (compared with fewer than one in twenty for the commoner Marsh Tit). The need for care is emphasised by the presence of both ‘brown tits’ at seven sites (that from which Willow Tits had vanished was still occupied by Marsh Tits).

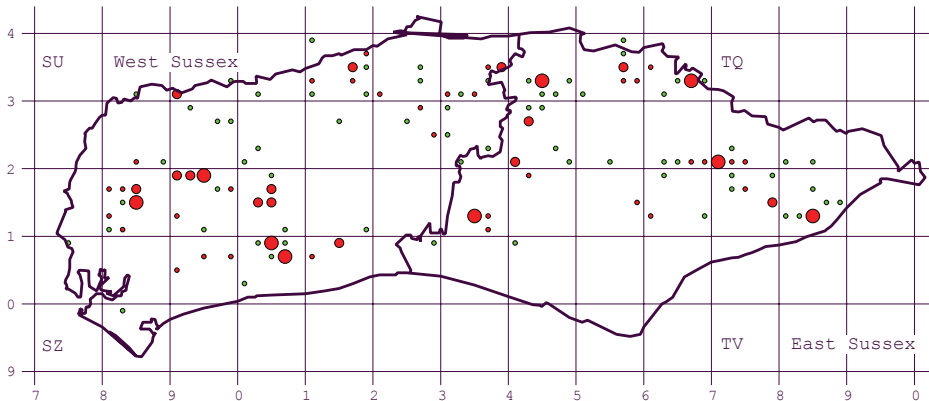
As usual, there were no records of flocking with other tits or of using feeders. Several studies have suggested that this species avoids its more boisterous relatives, including the Marsh Tit. [DH]

Marsh Tit

Poecile palustris

Scarce resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

This species was far more widespread than the Willow Tit, with 252 records from 131 1-km squares as shown in the map below.



Few records came from the South Downs east of Cissbury Ring, and none from the coastal plain. Thus their distribution was biased to the north of the county compared with records of Blue Tit and Great Tit, with no marked bias towards the east or west. Allowing for variation in observer coverage, this species seems to be sparse on the Low Weald and along the eastern Rother in the High Weald (e.g. around Heathfield).

Over two-thirds of counts were of only one or two birds. The largest concentration in the first winter period was 13 at Netherfield on 28 Jan. In the second winter period six birds were at Darwell Res on 26 Nov and Bewl Water on 25 Dec.

Breeding was confirmed at ten sites and judged probable at further 16. A total of 14 birds was recorded in 10 of the 122 BBS 1-km squares surveyed. The largest concentrations during the breeding season were seven pairs in Eridge Park on 14 Apr and nine at Bewl Water on 24 Jun. At Mallydams Wood, a Great Spotted Woodpecker preyed upon a nest in a Dormouse box.

The only records of feeder use came from Pulborough Brooks in the first three months of the year. [DH]

Nuthatch*Sitta europaea**Common resident.*

The 570 records from 221 1-km squares were widely spread, but a higher proportion came from the north of the county than for Blue Tit and Great Tit. Few records came from the coastal plain and the South Downs east of Cissbury Ring. Excluding the woods around Fairlight and Pett, there were only four records near the coast. Two birds on 8 Feb in Hampden Park (Eastbourne) were near a previous breeding site (*Birds of Sussex*). Single birds were reported from Church Norton on 9 Apr, Seaford on 1 May and Cuckmere Haven on 10 Jul.



Nuthatch, Pulborough Brooks, February 2006 (Les Bird)

In the first winter period, the largest concentration was at Stapleash Fm (Chilgrove) on 22 Jan, with at least ten in a distance of 400 metres (a count of 16 between Arundel and South Stoke on 20 Jan was from a circuit of 7 km).

Breeding was confirmed in eight 1-km squares and judged probable in a further ten. A total of 97 birds was recorded in 37 of the 122 BBS 1-km squares surveyed. The largest concentrations during the breeding season were ten birds at Ebernoe Common on 9 Apr, Powdermill Res on 11 Apr and Guestling Wood on 25 Jun. At Ardingly Res, in three occupied boxes, two failed at the egg stage and seven young fledged from the other. A pair at Tourles Fm (East Hoathly) started to use a nest box but gave up (as this species has done there before).

This is a very sedentary species. Limited post-breeding dispersal was suggested by the Cuckmere record above, singles at Brighton Wild Park on 27 Jul and in a Westdene (Brighton) garden on 16 Sep, which were the first for “many” years and 20 years respectively. In the second winter period, the largest concentrations were of six at Pulborough Brooks on 4 Nov and Wakehurst Place on 26 Dec. Birds used feeders at three sites: Pulborough Brooks (January to February), High Salvington (Worthing; 11 Apr - 14 May) and East Hoathly (no dates). [DH]

Eurasian Treecreeper*Certhia familiaris**Common resident.*

There were 329 records of this notoriously unobtrusive species from 164 1-km squares. Although widely spread, relatively more reports came from the north of the county than for Blue Tit and Great Tit. Few records came from the eastern South Downs; e.g. one in Brighton Wild Park on 1 Jan despite being “scarce here these days”. A bird by the R Ouse near Southeast on 18 Jul looked rather out of place. The usual scattering of coastal records (singletons unless stated) included: Church Norton (18 Sep), Pagham Hbr (two on 7 Jan), Climping Gap (two on 4 Apr), Beachy Head (27 June), Pett Level (two on 18 Feb) and Rye Hbr Wood (two on 28 Aug).

Despite this species’ well-known habit of roosting communally (e.g. in hollows in soft bark of redwoods *Sequoiadendron* and *Sequoia*), few large concentrations were reported in either winter period. In the first, there were five birds at Burton MP on 3 Jan and at Powdermill Res on 14 Jan, 16 Feb and 12 Mar. Four birds at Stansted Forest on 13 Dec was the maximum in the second winter period

Breeding was confirmed in three 1-km squares and judged probable in a further eight. A total of 41 birds was recorded in 15 of the 122 BBS 1-km squares surveyed. The largest breeding season counts were ten at Powdermill Res on 4 Apr and 11 at Guestling Wood on 25 Jun. Five calling males at Bewl Water on 15 Jun was the lowest count there in 20 years. [DH]

Golden Oriole*Oriolus oriolus**Very scarce passage migrant and summer visitor; may have bred. Schedule 1 species.*

A mobile adult male was present at Waltham Brooks from 17 to 19 Apr (MC, BFF, DIS *et al*) while an adult female flew west over Cow Gap (Beachy Head) on 29 May (DC, JFC, JWK). These are the first county records since 2003 although 12 have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000. Recent records have been in April (2), May (8), June and July. Half of these have been at Beachy Head making the Cow Gap individual a typical occurrence. The Waltham Brooks bird was perhaps one of the more unexpected records of the year, the only earlier county record being a somewhat unlikely pair at Battle on 12 Apr 1854. [RJF]

Red-backed Shrike*Lanius collurio**Very scarce passage migrant, formerly a breeding visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.*

An adult male was present at Waltham Brooks from 6 to 15 Aug (MO) and a female was found at Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) on 30 Aug (DB) while, in September, juveniles were seen at Rye Hbr from the 13th to 14th, at Thorney Deeps from at least the 14th to the 23rd (CBC, RJS *et al.*), at Shooter’s Bottom (Beachy Head) on the 30th (JFC *et al.*) and at Whitehawk Hill (Brighton) from 30 Sep to 1 Oct (NB *et al.*). Twenty-one have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000: in early June (4), August (3), September (12), October and November. The last time that six were recorded in the county in one year was in 1997 and this total has not been bettered since 1981 when there were seven, although these fall well short of 1977’s very impressive 25. [RJF]

Great Grey Shrike*Lanius excubitor**Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.*

It was a poor year for this species with only one bird reported in the first winter period and none in the second. The bird first located at Ashdown Forest on 23 Oct 2005 remained in the Wrens Warren/Gills Gap area and was last seen on 5 Apr, five days later than the 10-year average. [PNP]

Woodchat Shrike*Lanius senator**Rare vagrant.*

A male was seen along the Royal Military Canal (Pett Level) on 22 Apr (RGH *et al.*). It was the fifth county record since the start of 2000 and the 46th in total. Three have been recorded in April, with this one matching the earliest county arrival at Littlehampton in 1990. [RJF]



Woodchat Shrike, Pett, April 2006 (Martin Casemore)

Jay*Garrulus glandarius**Very common resident.*

Typical records during the first winter period were of one or two with high counts of eight at Brighton Cemetery on 2 Jan, nine at Powdermill Res on 14 Jan, 10 at Darwell Res on 12 Mar and seven again at Powdermill Res on the same date.

Breeding was confirmed by at least 12 pairs at five sites (including eight at Plumpton Agricultural College), was probable by a further 12 pairs at five other sites (including nine pairs at Bewl Water) and birds were present in suitable habitat at 24 further sites. During the breeding and summer periods high counts comprised 14 at Powdermill Res on 11 Apr, ten at Darwell Res on 12 Mar, eight at Southleigh Forest (Emsworth) on 2 Jul, seven at Blackham Highfields on 2 Jul and six at Dial Post on 27 Aug. A total of 101 individuals was counted in 54 of the 122 BBS 1-km squares surveyed.

During the autumn and winter periods, sightings were mainly of single birds, with some of the exceptions being five and six at Darwell Res on 18 Sep and 8 Oct respectively, six at Guestling Wood on 23 Oct, eight at Clapham Wood on 18 Nov and seven at Darwell Reservoir on 19 Dec. [GK]

Magpie

Pica pica

Very common resident.

The largest counts of more than 25 during the first winter period included 28 at Shoreham-by Sea on 7 Jan, a total of 27 on the South Downs between the Adur and the A23 on 5 Feb and a similar number at Furnace Green (Crawley) on 2 Apr. All of these, however, were surpassed by 71 at Halseys Fm (Sidlesham) on 14 Feb. In addition there were a further 14 counts of 20 or more.

Breeding was confirmed at 11 sites by at least 67 pairs, the largest number being 40 pairs at Brighton Wild Park. Breeding was probable at a further nine sites and birds were present in suitable habitat at 90 sites. A total of no less than 528 individuals was counted in 113 of the 122 BBS 1-km squares surveyed. Other high counts during this period were 20 for a 14-day period commencing 4 Apr at Lancing Clump, 27 at Furnace Green on 20 Apr, 15 at Darwell Res on 15 Jul and 20 again at Lancing Clump on 21 Aug.

High counts for the autumn and second winter period were predominantly from coastal areas with 23 at Newhaven Ouse Estuary Project on 23 Sep, 41 at Halseys Fm and 30 at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on 4 Oct and 25 at both Thorney Deeps (Chichester Hbr) on 12 Nov and at Halseys Fm on 12 Dec. In areas away from the coast double-figure counts were few and far between, exceptions being ten at Houghton Forest on 16 Sep, 20 at Pulborough Brooks on 21 Sep and 13 at Poling (Arundel) on 21 Nov. [GK]

Jackdaw

Corvus monedula

Very common resident.

In the first winter period there were some large gatherings at Chingley Wood (Bewl Water) with roost counts of 2000, 700 and 3000 on 8 Jan, 7 Feb and 23 Mar respectively, exceeding those for 2005 where the largest was 1000 at Beeding Brooks. Elsewhere high counts in January included 500 at New Erringham Fm (Shoreham) on the 1st, 500 at West Dean Woods on the 28th, 300 at Marsh Fm (Sidlesham) on the 5th and another 300 at Wisborough Green on the 13th. In addition there were six other counts of 100-250 during the period.

Breeding was confirmed at 20 sites across the county and five owl boxes were used at different sites. A total of 1070 individuals was counted in 93 of the 122 BBS 1-km squares surveyed. During the summer period high counts comprised 125 at East Ashling on 12 Jun, 102 at Balcombe on 2 Jul, 137 at Barcombe Cross on 2 Aug and 100 at Beachy Head on 26 Aug.

During the autumn and second winter periods the first sizeable gatherings involved 500 at Court Lodge Fm (Udimore) on 22 Oct closely followed by a roost of 1500 at Seaford College (Duncton) on 1 Nov. The roost at Chingley Wood contained 2500 birds on 17 Nov and 3 Dec and numbers at Lodge Fm increased to 700 on 18 Nov. Elsewhere there were 12 other counts of 100-350. [GK]

Rook

Corvus frugilegus

Very common resident.

The highest counts in the first winter period were 200 at Burpham on 1 Jan, 400 at Marsh Fm (Pagham) on 5 Jan and 300 at various locations: Pett Level on 8 Jan, Halseys Fm (Pagham) on 15 Jan, South Downs (east of the R Adur) on 22 Jan, Kithurst Hill (Storrington) on 5 Feb, Pett Level on 18 Feb and Court Lodge Fm (Udimore) on 21 Feb.

The first records of nesting were at both Buck Barn (West Grinstead) and Coolham on 11 Feb with several other records before the month's end. There were a number of rookery counts of over 40 nests with 56 at Hotham Park (Bognor), 49 at Brookfield (Lyminster), 45 at Barnham Station and 45-50 at Wyckham Wood (Henfield). There was no record of the rookery at Findon which historically has been the largest in the county but which has suffered from tree felling.

There was an interesting record of a bird which came in high off the sea at Beachy Head on 17 Apr. In the BBS the sum of the counts from 43 of the 122 1-km squares surveyed was 3109 with the highest count being an astonishing 2123 birds at East Ashling on 12 Jun. Other high summer counts included 270 at East Ashling on 26 Apr, 323 at Oldwick Fm (Chichester) on 3 Jun and 250 at Pagham North Fields on 16 Jun, increasing to 275 on 7 Jul and 400 on 31 Aug.

In the second winter period, 400 were recorded at Pagham Hbr on 4 Oct, 350 at Crutches Fm (Winchelsea) on 11 Oct and 500 at Court Lodge Fm (Udimore) on both 22 Oct and 18 Nov. [PNP]

Carrion Crow

Corvus corone

Very common resident.

In the first winter period, no counts reached the peak of 700 birds recorded at Bewl Water in 2005. However, there were 100 at the Ouse/Glynde confluence on 7 Jan and 200 were noted at three locations: Pulborough Brooks on 14 Jan, Bewl Water on 7 Feb and Arundel WWT on 26 Feb.

In April, birds were recorded coming in high off the sea at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on four occasions: one on the 3rd, three on the 15th, one on the 17th and three on the 21st. During the spring and summer the size of gatherings usually reduces but 126 at East Ashling on 26 Apr, 125 at Lidsey Lodge on 30 Apr, 116 on the beach at Goring on 22 Jun (increasing to 130 on 11 Jul), 80 at Weir Wood Res on 3 Sep and 95 at Shoreham Airport on 24 Sep were still impressive numbers. During the BBS 1482 birds were counted in 119 of the 122 1-km squares surveyed with the highest count being 344 at East Ashling on 12 Jun.

During the second winter period coastal numbers included 54 at Camber Shore on 22 Oct (increasing to 90 on 30 Oct and peaking at 101 on 30 Nov) while the Goring Beach gathering peaked at 132 on 16 Dec. Inland, there were 60 at Halseys Fm (Pagham) and at Pulborough Brooks on 3 Nov, 63 at Hotham Park (Bognor) on 14 Nov, 78 at Poling (Arundel) on 21 Nov and 80 at Amberley Wild Brooks on 23 Nov. [PNP]

Hooded Crow*Corvus cornix**Rare winter visitor and passage migrant.*

One was seen flying in off the sea at Beachy Head on 2 Nov (JC). It then circled over the observer's head and drifted off north-west. [CWM]

Raven*Corvus corax**Scarce breeding resident.*

Although the number of records received was slightly down on last year's total they showed that Ravens were found in 55 tetrads ranging right across the county. This indicates that the species is re-establishing itself ever more firmly as a breeding bird.

More records were submitted for the pair resident at Beachy Head (Site A) than for any others; they again bred successfully and fledged at least two young. The Shoreham birds (Site B), which have consistently been the most productive pair, fledged six young; this was their biggest success, surpassing the four which fledged from a clutch of five in 2004.

Successful breeding was confirmed for the first time at two new sites, one inland at Site C and the other at the coastal Site D. In 2005 two nests were found at Site C (c.250 m apart) but the breeding process did not continue any further, although it is possible they may have bred elsewhere. This year, however, the pair built nests in exactly the same places but used what appeared to be the smaller of the two. The first egg hatched on c.22 Mar and the final clutch of two chicks both fledged on 3 May. At least two chicks fledged successfully at Site D.

Breeding was also suspected at three other sites, two coastal in the east of the county and one inland in the west. This suggests that the number of breeding pairs may now have grown to seven since a pair was first recorded breeding successfully again in the county, at Beachy Head in 2001. [PJE]

Common Starling*Sturnus vulgaris**Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.*

The large numbers roosting at the Brighton piers continued into 2006 with far larger early year numbers than in recent years: 20,000 at Palace Pier on 3 Feb, 33,600 on 10 Feb, 19,000 on 24 Feb with a further 2000 at West Pier, 2500 at West Pier on 18 Mar and 16,500 at Palace Pier the following day. Other four figure flocks were 2000 in the Ouse valley south of Lewes on 2 and 7 Jan and 1000 nearby on the 29th, a pre-roost flock of 2000 at Southwick Hill on 11 Mar, and 1100 at Pannel Valley NR on 24 Mar. In the Winter Atlas Pilot survey a three hour visit in each of ten tetrads in Shoreham and on the Downs behind found an average of c.200, the largest number being 667 around Tenant Hill. Ninety flew SW at Bewl Water on 15 Feb and 100 NW on 23 Mar.

There were few breeding records but nest counts in defined areas included 41 in 400 ha at Plumpton Agricultural College, 21 at Brighton Wild Park, ten pairs on a 3 km WBBS transect on the R Rother near Petworth, three in 11 ha at Scobells Fm (Barcombe) and two at Rye Hbr, numbers which are similar to 2005. A report of 15 pairs with 20 fledglings from Bewl Water was 'the lowest ever'. Starlings were found in 90 (74%) of the 122 1-km squares in the BBS, close to

the 2005 figure of 75% but below the 10-year average of 81%. The average number per surveyed square was 16 compared with 19 the previous year and a 10-year average of c.24.

Post-breeding flocks were evident in June with 160 at Pannel Valley NR on the 5th, 110 at Pevensy Levels NR on the 8th, at least 150 at Rye Hbr on the 10th and 130 at Amberley Wild Brooks on the 28th.

From July onwards flocks increased particularly at the coast with 150 at Hope Gap (Seaford) on 8 Jul, 100 at the Palace Pier (Brighton) a week later and 150 at Selsey Bill on 29 and 31 Jul. During August there were flocks of over 400 at Chichester and Pagham Harbours, Beachy Head and Rye Hbr and 3500 roosted at the West Pier (Brighton) on the last day of the month.



Common Starling, Brighton Marina, November 2006 (Ian Barnard)

Probable long distance movement was particularly evident with the period of stormy weather at the end of October and the beginning of November with inland westerly movements of 810 on 26 Oct and 300 on 2 Nov at Crowborough and 1300 at Bewl Water on 3 Nov. Smaller numbers were observed arriving off the sea at Climping, Worthing and Beachy Head on 2 to 4 Nov.

Three roost sites were noted at Brighton. The West Pier held in excess of 7500 on 15 Sep but lower numbers into November, 2000 roosted at the Marina on 10 Nov and there was a maximum of over 35,000 at the Palace Pier on 16 Dec. The only other roost elsewhere was of 3500 at Eastbourne Pier on 29 Nov. No reedbed roosts were reported but 2500 were at Thorney Island (Chichester Hbr) on 24 Sep and c.1000 were present at Rye Hbr throughout October.

Winter numbers seem to have been maintained but the BBS indicates a further fall in the summer population. [ACG]

Rose-coloured Starling*Sturnus roseus**Rare vagrant.*

A juvenile was seen at Felpham on 25 Oct (CWM) but did not linger. It was the 33rd to be recorded in the county but the first since 2002. Seven have occurred since the beginning of 2000; three in October and four in June. [RJF]

House Sparrow*Passer domesticus*

Very common but possibly declining resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

House Sparrows were reported from almost 250 1-km squares.

In the first winter period double figure flocks were noted at c.30 sites. Throughout this period High Cross Fm (Uckfield) held a flock of over 30 with nest building noted from 12 Mar, and a flock of over 50 was reported at Rye Hbr Village with a maximum of 74 on 1 Feb. On 31 Mar 30 were counted at Tilgate Forest (Crawley). In the Winter Atlas Pilot three-hour visits to five tetrads in Shoreham and Southwick recorded an average of 45 per tetrad with 103 found on 17 Feb in the Kingston/Buckingham Park/Holmbush tetrad.

Breeding was confirmed from c.40 sites with 80 nests at the Plumpton Agricultural College, 27 pairs and at least 20 juveniles at Bewl Water, a flock of 55 on 1 Jul containing 30 juveniles at High Cross Fm (Uckfield), 39 nests in Penland Wood Estate (Bexhill) and at least 20 pairs at Rye Hbr Village. Many observers reported third broods.

The BBS recorded 1544 House Sparrows in 89 (73%) of 122 1-km squares compared with 74% in 2005. An average of 17.5 per occupied square represents a decline from 19.6 in 2005 but is still above the ten-year average of 16.5.

From the beginning of July, flocks were noted away from human habitation with 20 in two flocks on elderberries and ripe wheat at West Chidham (Chichester Hbr), and 45 in ripe barley on 15 to 16 Jul at the Newhaven Ouse Estuary Project. From July to the end of the year flocks of 20 or more were reported from c.20 sites. The largest flocks were: a pre-roost gathering of 200 on 27 Aug at Goring with a garden nearby holding 55 compared to a maximum of 25 the previous year, c.200 at Newhaven Tide Mills in July, 50 on the east side of Pagham Hbr on 16 Sep, 35 at Selsey Bill on two dates in November, 95 at Mountfield (Battle) on 13 Aug, 80 at Rye Hbr on the 11 and 24 Aug with another 50 at Rye Hbr Village on the latter date.

In most cases flocks declined in number towards the end of the year (e.g. the flock at Newhaven Tide Mills reduced to seven in December), the High Cross Fm (Uckfield) flock remained at 40 until early October but reduced to 15 by 4 Dec, and the maximum count in October at Rye Hbr was eight. There were however late year flocks of 25 and above at six sites compared with only one in 2005. [ACG]

Tree Sparrow*Passer montanus*

Scarce resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

The species was recorded in only 26 1-km squares during the year. In the first winter period flocks feeding on set-aside at Pannel Valley NR and in the surrounding area peaked at 160 on 4

Jan, just over half the highest count at that site the previous year. Numbers then declined rapidly and, after a count of 100 on 8 Jan, the only double figure count was 30 on 9 March. Away from this location there were only three records: two at Piddinghoe on 7 Jan and in March nine at Pevensey Levels NR on the 12th and one at Hastings CP on the 22nd.

In May a single bird in Chichester on the 1st, one at Birling Gap on the 10th and one at Selsey Bill on the 30th were the only indications of spring movement.

During the breeding season almost all records came from five widely spread sites on Pevensey Levels with a minimum of three pairs nesting at Pevensey Levels NR, confirmed breeding in cypresses at Manxey Levels where 14 birds were seen on 1 May, and a pair present on Whepley Level on 29 May. Elsewhere, Pannel Valley NR held four on 13 Apr and two were on the county boundary at Rother Valley (East) on the 28th. At least 9 pairs nested in boxes in the Brede Valley but none at Rye Hbr.

In September single birds were noted on the 9th at Hope Gap (Seaford) and at Pagham Slipe Field on the 30th which may indicate autumn passage.

In the second winter period the only double figure flocks were on set-aside at Pannel Valley NR, reaching a peak of 60 on 22 Nov, half the previous year's figure. Smaller numbers were noted from ten sites elsewhere with one visiting feeders at Small Dole on 22 Nov and one at Rogate in the far west of the county on 27 Dec being of note. The last two days of the year brought the only record, a singleton, at Burgess Hill where a small flock was present for several months the previous year.

Dramatic fluctuations in numbers from year to year are characteristic of this species and it appears that the substantial winter flocks at Pannel Valley NR and the surrounding areas which have built up in the last few years are again declining. Whilst it is pleasing to see the breeding records from Pevensey Levels, the overall situation seems to be very poor with only occasional birds recorded in the west of the county and many traditional sites abandoned. [ACG]

Chaffinch

Fringilla coelebs

Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

This remains one of the most commonly reported species in Sussex and in the BBS 1432 birds were recorded in 117 out of the 122 1-km squares surveyed.

In the first winter period the largest flocks were again recorded in the West Dean Woods and environs. There were 150 on 17 Jan and 2 Feb and 250 on 19 Feb. Elsewhere in the western half of the county there were 200 at Lee Fm (Patching) on 11 Jan and at Upper Barpham Fm (Burpham) on 5 Feb. At Burton Park (Duncton) there were 100 on 17 Jan while at Burton MP a flock of 50 on 7 Jan increased to 75 on 12 Feb and 100 on 5 Mar. By contrast, in the east the largest flocks in January were 100 at Isfield on the 14th and at Bopeep (Alciston) on the 21st. In February there were 100 at Bewl Water on the 7th and 105 at Powdermill Res on the 16th reducing to 85 by 12 Mar. There were no records of any spring movements.

As usual with our commoner birds there was limited evidence of breeding with confirmed breeding in just 15 tetrads and probable breeding in only another 13. However there were 110 pairs on the 110-ha Plumpton Agricultural College estate and 45 pairs bred in Brighton Wild Park. Darwell Res held 34 singing males and at Rye Hbr there were 19 singing males in the SSSI. Sefter Fm (Pagham) held 23 territories in 95 ha of mixed farm and Scobells Fm (Barcombe) nine territories in 11 ha while 27 territories were counted at Stedham Common. By contrast there was only one pair in the 7-ha town park at Hotham Park (Bognor).

There were no records of post-breeding gatherings or movements in August but in September there were 11 E at Beachy Head on the 10th and numbers increased as the month progressed to

30 on the 26th. In October there were 50 at Beachy Head on the 3rd, 50 at Rye Hbr on the 11th, 40 flew east at Beachy Head on the 16th and 100 flew west over Ashdown Forest on the 27th. At Bewl Water 150 flew west on 3 Nov and 50 at Beachy Head on 5 Nov included 23 N. The only other large gatherings in the second winter period were 150 at Kithurst Hill (Storrington) on 19 Nov, 82 at Wakehurst Place on 2 Dec and 120 at Mountfield on 26 Dec. [PNP]

Brambling

Fringilla montifringilla

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Schedule 1 species.

The approximate monthly totals were as shown below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	530	569	160	60	2		17	93	146
No. of sites	20	17	20	18	1		8	13	6
Coastal sites	2	-	2	3	-		5	5	-

In the first winter period there were 76 records of which more than half were of less than five birds. Numbers in January and February were substantially higher than those at the end of 2005 but singletons were recorded at only two coastal sites on 2 and 9 Jan and there were no reports of visible movement inland. As usual the largest numbers were in the west of the county with maxima of 100 at Lee Fm (Patching) on 11 Jan, 200 at West Dean Woods on 17 Jan and the same number at Chilgrove on 9 Feb. In the West Dean/Chilgrove area 232 were recorded in January and 355 in February and the area continues to be the favourite locality for this species in the county.

Elsewhere there were good numbers at North Marden with up to 40 in January and a peak of 80 on 9 Feb, 30 at Burton Mill Pond on 3 Jan, regular double figure numbers at Warnham LNR with a peak of 50 on 21 Feb, 20 at Barcombe Cross on 24 Jan and 40 at Isfield on 14 Jan. There were good numbers at Crowborough right through into April with a peak count of 34 on 3 Mar and the last bird of the period was seen there on 5 May, over two weeks later than the 10-year average.

The first returning bird was seen at Brighton Wild Park and then at Hollingbury Camp on 8 Oct, nine days later than the 10-year average. Small numbers were noted during the rest of the month particularly at coastal sites. On 2 Nov 35 moved west at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) and another 20 were recorded at Beachy Head the following day. Small numbers continued to be seen until the end of the month when numbers built on Ashdown Forest with 10 at Wrens Warren on 30 Nov and 110 at Millbrook on 4 Dec. No birds had reached the Chilgrove/West Dean area by the end of the year. [PNP]

Serin

Serinus serinus

Very scarce passage migrant; has bred. Schedule 1 species.

A singing male was present at Beachy Head on 20 Apr (MEC, RHC) and a female or first-summer flew northwest over Selsey Bill on 28 Apr (OM *et al.*). Other singing males were at Beachy Head on 3 May (MEC, RHC) and at Selsey Bill on 14 May (JA). These are typical records in terms both of dates and locations. Forty-seven have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000: in February (2), March (6), April (13), May (18), June (4), September, October (3) and November. Selsey Bill accounted for 23 of these and the Beachy Head area

another 11. Both sites have had just one blank year during this period: 2005 at Selsey Bill and 2004 at Beachy Head. [RJF]

Greenfinch

Carduelis chloris

Very common resident, scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

During the first winter period, only 21 of the 227 records received were for numbers of 20 or more and as usual the majority of the larger flocks were in the west of the county. However, the largest flock in the period was in the east with c.200 at Hurst Green on 8 Jan. As with other finches the West Dean/Chilgrove area supported large numbers and there were 70 at West Dean Woods on 17 Jan, 150 at Monkton (Chilgrove) on 2 Feb and 60 at Stapleash Fm (Chilgrove) on 28 Feb. Other good numbers in the west included 40 on the shingle spit at Church Norton on 17 Jan and 35 at Coldwaltham SF on 2 Feb, while in the east there were 25 at Alexandra Park (Hastings) on 1 Jan, increasing to 47 on 4 Feb with 36 still present on 5 Mar.

Breeding was not well recorded but during the BBS 617 birds were noted in 95 out of 122 1-km squares surveyed and this species remains one of the county's commoner birds. Nine singing males were noted at Pagham Hbr and ten territories were occupied at Rye Hbr. There were 26 pairs in the 400 ha estate at Plumpton Agricultural College, 19 territories in 95 ha at Sefter Fm (Pagham) and two territories in the 7 ha town park at Hotham Park (Bognor). There was no record of breeding success.

It was not until early September that any sizeable post-breeding flocks were first noted. On the 5th there were 100 at Shoreham Hbr, 50 at Thorney Island (Chichester Hbr) on the 6th, 130 at the Pagham Information Centre on the 18th, 150 at Climping and at Littlehampton on the 24th and 80 at Thorney Deeps on 25 Sep.

Records of coastal movements came from two locations. At Beachy Head, there were 38 on 13 Oct, 6 E were recorded on the 25th and 40 were moving mainly west on 1 Nov. At Worthing Beach there were 50 W on 23 Oct followed by 70 W on the 27th.

In the second winter period there were good numbers at several coastal sites with 50 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 1 Sep increasing to 200 on 1 Oct with 120 still present on 4 Nov. The only flock of any size in the east was 60 at Rye Hbr Fm on 23 Oct. In the Pagham area there were 100 at Slipe Field on 1 Nov and 200 at Church Norton on 2 Dec with 130 still present on 12 Dec. The Shoreham area also held good numbers with 250 at the coastguard station on 4 Nov, 350 on the beach on 15 Nov, 150 at the harbour on 28 Nov and 180 at the coastguard station on 2 Dec. [PNP]

Goldfinch

Carduelis carduelis

Common summer visitor and passage migrant and fairly common winter visitor.

The minimum monthly totals and numbers of sites (1-km squares) were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	569	473	514	387	210	255	317	747	984	3572	514	332
No. of sites	49	50	46	96	83	86	50	43	43	66	43	41

The species was recorded in 297 1-km squares (i.e. 7.3% of the 4067 in the county), indicating that this is still a fairly widespread and common species.

In the first winter period 22 charms larger than 20 were recorded, the largest being 100 at Pagham Hbr on 16 Feb, 50 in West Dean Woods on 17 Jan, 40 at Pulborough Brooks on 7 Mar, 40 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 1 Mar and 40 at Rosemary Fm (Bewl Water) on 22 Feb

The only record of spring migration was 70 N at Worthing Beach on 28 Apr.

Breeding was confirmed in ten 1-km squares by at least 22 pairs, was probable in at least five other 1-km squares and there were an estimated 44 possible territories. During the BBS, 259 birds were counted in 69 of the 122 1-km squares and the highest counts were 20 at Lullington Tenantry Ground on 6 May and nine at Albourne (Hurstpierpoint) on 15 Jun.

During the post-breeding period, before the onset of autumn migration in October, there were 38 counts involving more than 20 birds, the highest being 200 at Pagham Slipe Field on 25 Aug and 30 Sep, and 120 at Weir Wood Res on 26 Aug.

Counts during the autumn migration period in October were recorded at only three of the principal seawatching sites. At Selsey Bill 85 W were logged with a highest count of 43 on the 3rd. At Climping Beach there were 400 E and 80 W with a maximum count of 220 E on the 13th. At Worthing Beach there were 302 E and 33 W and a maximum count of 97 on the 15th. Occasional counts elsewhere during the month included a monthly maximum of 800 E at Beachy Head on the 16th and a monthly maximum of 400 (direction not stated) on the 9th at Pannel Valley NR during a good passage lasting from the 5th to the 21st.

During the second winter period 13 counts over 20 included 50 at Beachy Head on 2 Nov, 100 at Pagham Slipe Field on 7 Nov, 76 W at Selsey Bill on 18 Nov and 55 at Weir Wood Res on 24 Nov. [JAH]

Siskin

Carduelis spinus

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; very scarce breeder.

The following table gives approximate maximum numbers of sightings throughout the year, and the number of different 1-km squares in which these sightings were made.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	527	597	738	646	22	36	-	3	1	253	116	37
No. of sites	33	42	57	52	11	5	-	2	1	23	11	6

Numbers in the first four months of the year were very significantly higher than those recorded in the same period in the previous year. However, numbers were exceptionally low during this period of 2005, and the 2006 numbers were actually similar to those recorded in the three years before 2005. The only notable difference was that numbers were still high in April, whereas in previous years numbers fell dramatically in this month. This would indicate that birds moved to their breeding grounds rather later this year than usual. During this first winter period there were many reports of large flocks of birds, notably 150 at Burton Mill Pond on 3 Jan, 100 at Weir Wood Res on 4 Feb, and 100 at Wiggonholt Common on 23 Mar, and including many reports of groups of up to 75 birds at various locations in the Ashdown Forest area. The latest notable flock was of 60 birds at Ashdown Res on 29 Apr.

Numbers during the summer months were comparable with those recorded in recent years. Breeding was confirmed at four sites. A single pair bred at Lavington Common for the fourth consecutive year, single pairs bred at both Chapel Common (Liphook) and Hesworth Common, and three pairs bred at Ambersham Common. Breeding by a further pair was probable at Graffham Common. In the BBS, 33 birds were recorded in five of the 122 1-km squares surveyed, including 20 birds at Tilgate Forest on 18 Apr, and in the SWBS a total of 32 birds was recorded in four of the woods surveyed.

The second winter period was notable for low numbers and particularly few passage birds, especially compared with the exceptionally high autumn influx in 2005. The first autumn passage migrant was a single bird at Pannel Valley NR on 20 Aug, and during the rest of the year the most notable counts at coastal sites were of 19 birds at Selsey Bill on 3 Oct, 35 birds flying east at Climping Beach on 13 Oct, and 40 birds at Pannel Valley NR on 26 Oct. Inland, no large flocks were reported during this period, the largest being 20 birds at Wiggonholt Common on 27 Oct and 40 birds at Darwell Res on 26 Nov. [HC]

Linnet

Carduelis cannabina

Common but decreasing resident and partial migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

The minimum monthly totals and numbers of sites (1-km squares) were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	770	859	674	1256	504	474	370	743	1827	2896	328	155
No. of sites	25	24	33	91	91	86	44	40	42	54	19	10

The species was recorded in 255 1-km squares (i.e. 6.3% of the 4067 in the county), indicating that this is still a fairly widespread and common species.

Evidence of spring migration in April was noted at only two sites: at Rye Hbr minimum counts involved 20 on the 1st and 60 on the 8th; at Beachy Head 32 W were counted on both the 3rd and 9th followed by 30 on the 14th.

Breeding was confirmed in 26 1-km squares by at least 84 pairs, was probable in a further 13 1-km squares and a further 44 possible territories were identified. During the BBS, a minimum of 174 birds were counted in 22 1-km squares out of the 122 surveyed. In six squares numbers exceeded ten and the highest counts were 20 at Thorney Island on 27 Apr and 19 at Tangmere (Chichester) on 20 Jun.

Post-breeding flocking first became apparent with a count of 40 at Beachy Head on 24 Jul and at least that number at Rye Hbr on the 27th. Flocks of 50 or more were noted at six mostly coastal sites across the county during August. However, the first count over 100 and the first real indication of a sizeable gathering was not made until 9 Sep when separate counts of 150 were made at both Harbour Fm and the Beach Reserve (Rye Hbr). The largest flocks counted in the month were 200 at Pagham Hbr on the 15th, Nook Meadow on the 18th and Selsey West Fields on the 26th.

As in 2005, records of visible migration were few and far between. During October, counts at Selsey Bill totalled 292 and included 256 W with a peak count of 64 W on the 3rd, the only count at Climping Beach was 55 E on the 13th while at Worthing Beach the month's total was only 26 E. However, at Beachy Head the aggregate of day counts during October was c.3300 including a total of 1450 E with a maximum count of 750 E on the 11th. Numbers dropped off markedly after about the 17th and there were only four counts in excess of 40 during November with the highest being 60 at The Severals (Church Norton) on the 9th. A flock of 40 was noted at Thorney Island on 6 Dec and there were 50 at Nook Meadow on the 23rd. [JAH]

Mealy Redpoll*Carduelis flammea flammea**Rare winter visitor.*

At least five were present at Crouch Fm (Burton MP) from at least 7 Jan to 2 Apr (JFC, RJF, JWK *et al.*) while another was photographed in a garden in Lewes on 15 and 16 Mar (PRH) and different individuals were trapped and photographed at Five Ways (Ashdown Forest) on 7 and 15 Apr (DRK, BW). Those at Burton MP had apparently first been seen during December 2005 (TJE *et al.*) and were usually feeding on the ground in a large cattle field associating with a large, fluid, Redpoll flock often numbering over 200 individuals. When alarmed (which was often), the flock would take flight, often returning to a different part of the field or perching in the adjoining woodland. They included at least one bright adult male, three first-winters and a 'whiter' individual considered most likely to be an adult female. A duller adult male may also have been present. It is tempting to regard these birds as a family party, although only the first-winters were regularly seen together within the flock.

Their long stay was greatly appreciated allowing many the opportunity to study this distinctive species in the county for the first time. However, the flock's wariness and mobility, and an inability to see into all areas of the field made it a frustrating experience, especially as the more interesting looking whiter individual was particularly elusive and rarely showed well. These are the first to be seen in the county since January 1996, when two were in Ashdown Forest, and include the first records for the month of April. They almost double the total recorded in the county since 1960 which even now is just 17. All records have been between mid-October and mid-April. [RJF]

Lesser Redpoll*Carduelis cabaret*

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

The following table gives approximate maximum numbers of recorded sightings throughout the year, and the numbers of different sites (1-km squares) in which these sightings were made:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	275	234	279	613	77	35	38	26	10	341	156	248
No. of sites	19	12	26	34	18	11	7	4	3	23	19	10

Numbers in the first four months of the year were similar to those recorded in the same period in 2005. However, the large wintering groups reported in the Ashdown Forest area in 2005 were largely absent in 2006, and instead the largest counts were recorded at Burton MP, with a flock of up to 200 there on several dates between 7 Jan and 2 Apr. Some smaller flocks were recorded in the Ashdown Forest area, including 70 birds at Five Ways on 7 Apr and 110 at the same location on 29 Apr, and there were reports of small numbers from many other sites across the county, notably 26 at Ashes Wood (Netherfield) on 28 Jan, 23 at Carters Fm (Pett) on 4 Apr, 16 at Powdermill Res on 11 Apr, 21 at Lavington Common on 13 Apr and 20 at Tilgate Forest on 18 Apr.

Numbers in the summer months were similar to those recorded in the three previous years, and most sightings were in the Ashdown Forest area, where breeding by single pairs was confirmed at two sites. In addition, breeding by two pairs at each site was confirmed at Ambersham Common and Weavers Down (Liss), and breeding was probable at Lavington Common and Mardens Hill. In the BBS 22 individuals were counted in three of the 122 1-km squares surveyed, a total which

included a flock of 20 birds at Tilgate Forest on 18 Apr.

Numbers in the later months of the year were significantly lower than those recorded in the previous year, mainly because no large groups of coastal passage migrants were reported. The first reports of migrants were of single birds or pairs at Hollingbury Camp and Brighton Wild Park on 7 Oct and at Shoreham Sanctuary on 11 Oct. The highest count at a coastal location was of 25 at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on 27 Oct. Inland, the largest count reported during the second winter period was of 65 at Five Ways (Ashdown Forest) on 27 Oct, and there were numerous reports of smaller groups, mostly from the Ashdown Forest area. Elsewhere, 25 were seen at Dallington Forest on 4 Nov, 20 were at Little Bognor (Petworth) on 12 Nov and 28 were at Forest Mere (Liphook) on 27 Dec, with no reports during this latter part of the year from Burton MP. [HC]

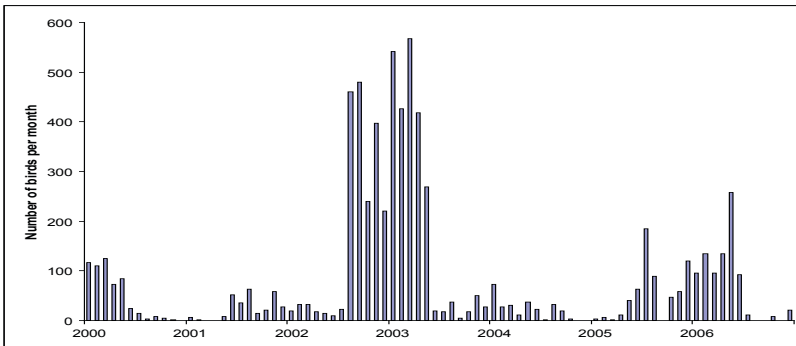
Common Crossbill

Loxia curvirostra

Scarce visitor occurring in large numbers in irruption years; breeds occasionally. Schedule 1 species.

Numbers reported during the first five months of the year were higher than in the same period in the two previous years, but even so were significantly lower than the irruption numbers recorded in 2003. However, numbers decreased significantly after May and remained very low for the rest of the year. This is shown in the following table, and the chart puts these numbers into the context of numbers in the previous five years.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	96	135	95	135	258	93	11	-	-	8	-	21
No. of sites	12	19	20	16	16	9	2	-	-	3	-	2



The majority of sightings throughout the year were reported from Ashdown Forest and the West Sussex Commons. During the first winter period, the most notable counts were of 20 birds at Heyshott Common on 7 Feb, 30 birds at Ambersham Common on 9 Apr, 25 birds at Powdermill Res on 11 Apr and 25 birds at Five Ways (Ashdown Forest) on 29 Apr.

Breeding by two pairs at each site was confirmed at Chapel Common (Liphook), Ambersham Common and Lavington Common, and breeding was also probable at Coates Common, Heyshott Common and West Dean Woods. In addition, a flock of 52 birds at Blackdown (Fernhurst) on 20 May included juveniles, although other flocks of up to 60 birds reported in the Ashdown Forest

area during May and June were made up entirely of adult birds. In the BBS a total of 13 birds was counted in two of the 122 squares surveyed.

Coastal passage during July was insignificant, with the only reports being of a single bird over Pett on 7 Jul and six birds over Brede Levels on 15 Jul. During the second winter period this species was absent from many regular sites, with the only notable records being of four birds at Owlbeech Woods (St. Leonard's Forest) on 29 Oct and a flock of 20 birds at Hindleap Warren (Ashdown Forest) on 28 Dec. [HC]

Bullfinch

Pyrrhula pyrrhula

Fairly common resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

This species continues to be significantly under-recorded. The species was recorded in 34 of the 122 1-km BBS squares surveyed in Sussex in 2005, compared with 32 of the 105 squares surveyed in 2006. This is an insufficient recording rate for any deduction about population trends to be meaningful. The species was also recorded in 18 of the 38 woods surveyed for the SWBS in 2006.

There were reports of confirmed breeding by 18 pairs at eight sites, including nine pairs recorded as part of a bird survey of land at Plumpton Agricultural College. There were also reports of probable breeding by at least a further 28 pairs at 15 additional sites, including 20 pairs recorded at Bewl Water.

Outside the breeding season, there were very few double-figure counts. A flock of ten birds was reported at Powdermill Res on 14 Jan, and other groups of ten birds were reported at Lower Standean on 15 Jan, Offham (Arun Valley) on 20 Jan and Pulborough Brooks on 20 Jan.

This red-listed species is of high conservation concern, and it is therefore important that all sightings are reported. [HC]

Hawfinch

Coccothraustes coccothraustes

Scarce breeding resident and very scarce passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

This species remains scarce and elusive. Consequently, known sites such as West Dean Woods, Eartham Woods and Pulborough Brooks tend to attract observers, and the majority of birds reported are at these sites, with a limited number of chance sightings reported at other sites.

However, 2006 was an exceptional year for this species as is evident from the large numbers recorded at West Dean Woods in particular and also, briefly, at Burgess Hill. The origin of these birds is open to speculation although the presence during the previous autumn of exceptional numbers at coastal sites beyond Sussex and the return to much lower numbers after March would suggest that they were of continental origin.

Maximum monthly counts at the main sites (treating West Dean Woods and environs as one site) were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	74	60	35	7	8		2	-	3
West Dean Woods	69	49	5	-	6		2	-	3
Pulborough Brooks	1	2	4	5	-		-	-	-
Burgess Hill	-	8	22	-	-		-	-	-
Other sites	4	1	4	2	2		-	-	-
No. of sites	5	5	6	3	3		1	-	1

In the first winter period there were several reports of large pre-roost gatherings in the area around West Dean Woods with 16 birds reported on 2 Jan, 48 on the 17th, 37 on the 22nd, 69 on the 31st and 49 on 2 Feb. This large roost appeared to disperse early in February as, although there were 20 reported on 6 Feb, there were only four on the 9th and a singleton on the 19th and again on 26 Mar, the last record at this site for the winter. There was a report of six birds at Stapleash Fm (Chilgrove) on 16 May.

At Pulborough Brooks one bird was recorded on many dates from 13 Jan to 11 Apr with two on 16 Feb, four on 25 and 31 Mar and a peak count of five on 1 Apr. At West Park NR (Burgess Hill) numbers increased from four on 27 Feb to eight the next day, peaked at 22 on 16 Mar and then fell to eight on the 28th, the last date recorded. There were no reports from Eartham Woods this year.

There were reports of single birds or pairs elsewhere, at South Harting on 2 Jan, at Hurst Green on 7 Jan, at Darwell Res on 15 Jan, at Abbot's Wood on 22 Mar, at Powdermill Res on 11 Apr, at Hayes Fm (Udimore) on 29 Apr and at Alexandra Park (Hastings) on 29 May. Three birds were reported at Buxted Park on 7 Mar. In the BBS one bird was recorded in one of the 122 1-km squares surveyed.

In the second winter period, there were reports of only two or three in the Chilgrove area between 15 Oct and 24 Dec, the only records in this period from anywhere in the county.

This species is almost certainly under-recorded so all sightings should be reported. [HC]

Snow Bunting

Plectrophenax nivalis

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Schedule 1 species.

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb		Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	20	16		1	2	4
No. of sites	4	2		1	2	2

During January and February, only small numbers were recorded but, in contrast to previous years, no birds were recorded in the west of the county. In the east, two birds remained inland at Bostal Hill (Alciston) between 21 Jan and 16 Feb. In Rye Bay, there were several reports of a flock of 12 to 14 birds on 5 Jan, 21 Jan, 28 Jan and 4 Feb but numbers then dropped to a single bird at Pett Level on 27 Feb.

The first record of the second winter period was of a single bird at Thorney Island on 23 Oct. The only other coastal records during the rest of the year were of single birds at Brighton Marina on 12 Nov and Selsey Bill on 23 Nov and three at Fairlight Glen on 1 Dec but there were no records from any of the traditional sites. A first-winter female was an unusual record at Weir Wood Res, where it was observed from 11 to 23 Dec. [HC]



Snow Bunting, Bo-peep, March 2006 (Ian Barnard)

Yellowhammer

Emberiza citrinella

Fairly common resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Yellowhammers were reported from c.250 1-km squares.

In the first winter period double figure flocks were recorded from c.16 sites. Nineteen were at Pagham Hbr on 7 Jan, up to 20 at bird feeders at Stubcroft Fm (East Wittering) throughout most of March and into April, and 30 on stubble at Poling (Angmering) on 14 Feb. Further inland 14 were at West Heath Common on 9 Apr and 30 at West Dean Woods on 5 Mar. On the Downs 50 were at Kithurst Hill (Storrington) on 5 Feb, 25 just to the east at Chantry Hill on 17 Feb and 18 on cattle feed nearby at Sullington Hill on 15 Mar while 40 were at Park Fm (Findon) on 7 Mar. A three-hour survey on 22 Jan found 36 in a tetrad on the Downs above Portslade. At Newmarket Hill (Falmer) 25 were found on 1 Jan and 40 on 6 Apr with 17 at Stanmer Park (Brighton) on 22 Mar. In the Weald there were 23 at Red House Common (Chailey) on 26 Feb and large flocks at Constantia Manor (Isfield) included one of 40 near a wild bird crop on 7 Jan and 50 in Pheasant coverts on 14 Jan. The only double figure flock in the east was one of 11 at Pannel Valley NR, a high count for this site. Overall these figures represent an increase compared to 2005's poor showing.

Four April records may indicate spring movement: one was seen to fly west at Beachy Head on the 14th, one flew in off the sea at Brighton Marina on the 17th, on the 26th a male sang at Selsey Bill before flying NW and the following day two males flew high east at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head).

Territories or singing males were reported from c.250 sites with c.100 on Ashdown Forest. Counts in defined areas include 21 pairs in 400 ha at Plumpton Agricultural College and one pair in 11 ha at Scobells Fm (Barcombe). Pulborough Brooks held six pairs compared to 8-12 the

previous year. At Bewl Water eight singing males 'confirms a large decline in eight years'. The Heathland Survey found 71 territories in 24 1-km squares, an average density of almost three per square, up from 61 territories with a density of 2.5 in 2005. Ambersham Common held 20 territories in four 1-km squares, a density of five per square. Of the 122 BBS squares surveyed, 59 (48%) held Yellowhammers against 42% in 2005 but still below the 10-year average of 53%. There is some evidence of a slight increase in breeding numbers but in most of the county the breeding density is low.

As in the previous two years, song by apparent females was noted on Ashdown Forest, on 7 Jul at West Chase and over 1 km away on 15 Jul at West Wood.

A flock of 31 was reported at Tegdown Hill (Brighton) as early as 1 Jul with smaller numbers remaining to the middle of the month but aside from this no double figure flocks were reported from the Downs to the end of the year. Only ten sites held double figure flocks in this period and by a factor of ten the largest winter numbers were at Constantia Manor (Isfield) with an impressive 250 feeding on two bird crop areas including a single flock of c.150 on 28 Nov. [ACG]

Reed Bunting

Emberiza schoeniclus

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Reed Buntings were reported from c.150 1-km squares.

Double figure flocks were noted at 17 sites in the early part of the year. The record flocks of early 2005 were not repeated but Pannel Valley NR held a flock of 100 on 4 Jan, 230 on set-aside the next day and 140 three days later. Smaller flocks of 20-30 were found in the area until mid-March. The only other major flock was 100 in a mixed flock of buntings at Lee Fm (Patching) on 11 Jan where 30 were also recorded on the 26th. In Chichester Hbr a winter roost in reeds at Fishbourne held 72 on 7 Jan and 82 on the 16th while 60 were at a regular winter site near Ellanore (West Wittering) two days later. In the Arun Valley a regular flock at Offham reached 22 on 27 Jan. At a reedbed at Steyning 29 were captured during ringing on eight days in January. Up to ten were recorded at Warnham LNR and at Rye Hbr during January.

A male at Climping on 27 Mar, two at Cuckmere Haven two days later and another at Cow Gap (Beachy Head) on 1 Apr may indicate coastal movement.

Song was first noted at Garden of Eden (Ashdown Forest) in 1 Mar. The c.360 singing males/breeding pairs from c.90 sites represent a small increase on 2005. Comparisons with 2005 at individual sites show little change (2005 figures in brackets): Thorney Island 10 (7), Sefter Fm (Pagham) 8 (10), Amberley Wild Brooks 35 (33), Pulborough Brooks 33 (40), Newhaven 11 (7) and Rye Hbr 59 (50). At Bewl Water there were three pairs compared with 58 in 1984. Successful breeding was recorded at Five Ways (Ashdown Forest) where two recently fledged juveniles were seen on 8 Aug. Reed Buntings were recorded in 14 (c.11%) of the 122 BBS squares, an almost identical percentage to 2005 but the total of 44 birds seen represents a drop from 3.0 to 2.8 per square. The last song reported was at three sites around Pagham Hbr on 12 Jul.

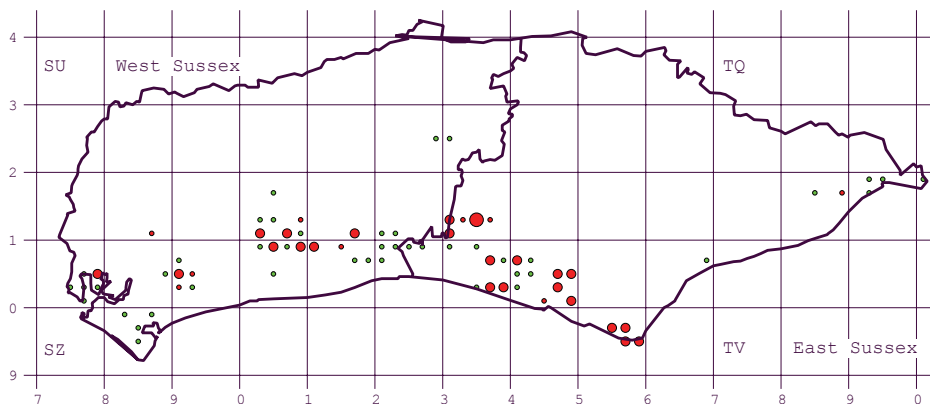
A total of 22 autumn migrants was seen at Beachy Head between 3 Oct and 2 Nov.

Winter flocks were apparent from early October with 81 at Pannel Valley NR on the 7th, 30 at Brede Levels the next day and 24 at Rye Hbr on the 14th. Double figure flocks appeared at 16 sites including 35 at Fishbourne (Chichester Hbr) on 22 Nov and 20 on a new reed bed at Constantia Manor (Isfield) on 11 Dec. The only large flocks were 150 on set-aside at Pannel Valley NR on 19 Dec and 100 at Lewes Brooks on 26 Dec. [ACG]

Corn Bunting*Emberiza calandra*

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

Although the 213 records received were 15% fewer than in 2005 (suggesting a possible reduction in the county's population), the number of 1-km squares in which birds were recorded (97) and their distribution was almost identical and is shown in the map below. The records show a sparse and discontinuous distribution along the Downs and in a few places near the coast.



In the first winter period there were double figure flocks at 13 sites, ten in the west of the county (associated mainly with the grain growing areas of the Downs), and three in the east. A small flock of up to 15 was feeding in the sand dunes at Pilsey Island (Chichester Hbr) and the neighbouring part of Thorney Island throughout the period with the last sighting being of two birds on 7 Apr. A flock of 40 was seen at Amberley Mount on 8 Jan with 60 on the 26th and it was possibly the same flock that was seen nearby on the Downs above North Stoke on the same day. Thirty birds seen c.3 km east at Lee Fm (Patching) on 25 Feb and ten at Long Acre (Findon) on 15 Mar with seven at Sullington Hill the same day possibly represented the gradual dispersal of the same flock. Eleven were feeding in stubble at Steyning Round Hill on 8 Feb and a Winter Atlas Pilot count in four tetrads along the Downs between the R Adur and the A23 found 25 in 3 hrs at Beeding Hill on 1 Feb and the same number in the adjacent tetrad to the east four days later. The only double figure flock in the Weald was 14 at Hanlye (Cuckfield) on 5 Feb. In the extreme east of the county, where most of the larger flocks were recorded, the largest was at least 120 at Crutches Fm (Winchelsea) on 13 Feb dwindling to ten on the 27th. Flocks were reported in flight from Rye Hbr with a peak count of 75 on 13 Jan and flocks of 30-40 on many dates, with 45 still present on 20 Apr. As late as 5 May, 31 were seen in flight nearby.

Three migrants were noted in scrub at Beachy Head on 16 Apr.

Song was first noted from two birds at Cissbury Ring on 7 Mar. The only confirmed breeding report was of four pairs at Plumpton Agricultural College at the foot of the Downs in the east. Breeding was probable at c.33 sites. On the coastal plain in the west there were possibly no more than four probable pairs but six possibles were noted at Oving on 21 Jun. On the Downs between the R Arun and the R Adur there were at least ten probable pairs and, as in 2005, a cluster of 12 birds in suitable habitat at Steep Down (Lancing). On the Downs from Brighton to Beachy Head there were at least 19 probable breeding pairs, including three pairs above Alceston, and a scattering of small numbers of possible breeders including two singing males at Brede Valley and Rye Hbr. During the BBS only seven birds were recorded in 122 1-km squares surveyed. An

association of singing birds with barley was mentioned in a few cases. Late song was noted at Perry Hill (Burpham) and nearby Wepham Down on 15 Nov and at Portslade four days later.

A flock of 16 birds was at Tegdown Hill (Brighton) on 1 Jul with smaller numbers remaining until the 13th, probably indicating successful breeding in the area. From 30 Aug the flock at Rye Hbr began to build again reaching 48 on 16 Sep with a maximum of 82 on 23 Dec. At the other end of the county it was not until 22 Nov that the first two birds returned to Pilsey Island but numbers increased to 46 on 17 Dec. Presumed elements of the same flock were 18 at Nutbourne on 12 Dec and 40 at Thorney Island on 29 Dec. Aside from these two areas Corn Buntings were only recorded at c.10 sites in the late year, the sole double figure flock being 12 at Truleigh Hill on the Downs east of the R Adur on 28 Dec. Both flock size and distribution were considerably reduced in comparison to 2005.

Overall the situation for this species is disappointing after a period when its fortunes seemed to be improving. [ACG]



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, but not those clearly in 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.

The following escaped or feral birds, other than those Category C species in the main list, were recorded in the county in 2006 (unless stated otherwise). It should be noted that the identity of these birds is largely unchecked. ***In order to track records, particularly those involving wildfowl which are prone to wander between sites, observers are requested to include the age, sex and where appropriate colour morph of individuals when submitting records.*** Birds that can not be ascribed to a species or group of species are excluded. Systematic order, nomenclature and taxonomy follow Dickinson (2003). Useful references are Madge & Burn (1988) (wildfowl), Juniper & Parr (1998) (parrots), Clement *et al* (1993) (finches) and Vriends (1988) (cage birds). List compiled by Richard Fairbank unless indicated otherwise.

Clement P, Harris A & Davis J 1993. *Finches & Sparrows: an Identification Guide*. Helm.

Dickinson EC (Ed) 2003. *The Howard Moore Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World* (3rd Edition). Christopher Helm.

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 MA *et al* 2004. Non-native birds breeding in the United Kingdom in 2002. *Brit. Birds* 97:633-637. *Sadly this report seems to have been discontinued.*

Vriends MM 1988. *The MacDonal Encyclopaedia of Cage and Aviary Birds*. MacDonald Orbis.

Helmeted Guineafowl

Numida meleagris

Common resident throughout much of Africa. Kept domestically elsewhere.

Five were seen near Ringmer on 29 Apr and three guineafowl sp. were at Lidsey SF on 11 Jun.

Silver Pheasant

Lophura nycthemera

Resident in montane forests of China and SE Asia. Seventeen races are currently recognised; the most stunning are understandably popular in captivity.

A male and two females were seen in Danefold Wood (West Grinstead) on 15 Oct. No records were received from Cocking Down where the species was encountered very infrequently during 2003-2005.

Indian Peafowl*Pavo cristatus*

Wild birds are restricted to the Indian subcontinent. A traditional, and spectacular, favourite in ornamental gardens.

At Uckfield Hempstead one was recorded on 29 Apr and two on 28 May.

Fulvous Whistling Duck*Dendrocygna bicolor*

Mainly restricted to the tropics in the Americas, Africa and the Indian subcontinent. Recorded as a vagrant in Spain and France.

Four were on Runcton Pit (Chichester GP) on 19 Nov.

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 wander on occasions. Up to five escaped pairs bred in UK in 2002 (Ogilvie *et al* 2004).

Three seen at Ivy Lake (Chichester GP) on 2 and 15 Jan, Thorney Deeps on 14 Jan and Birdham (Chichester Hbr) on 21 Feb were presumably those present in the same general area from late autumn 2005 (*SxBR* 58:189). One was seen at Henfield Levels on 18 Feb and on 2 and 8 Apr with presumably the same at Wiston Pond (Steyning) on 9th while on 29 Apr one was at Pett Level. One was present at Bewl Water on 17 Sep with two at Pagham Hbr on 23rd and intermittently to 11 Nov. During this period one was at Thorney Deeps during 16-22 Oct and presumably another at Chichester GP on 18 Oct. The final records of the year were at Thorney Deeps with two from 4 to 6 Dec and one on the 20th.

Snow Goose*Anser caerulescens*

Breeds arctic North America, winters southern USA and Mexico. Presumed vagrants occur in UK during most winters but are greatly outnumbered by escapes. Currently only one occurrence in Sussex is considered at all likely to have been of wild origin (Scotney Court GP Feb-Mar 1999). Three or four escaped pairs bred in the UK in 2002 (Ogilvie *et al.* 2004).

Fewer records were received than in recent years although the proportion of observers seemingly able to determine the colour morph of individuals seen, or to at least report it, remains disappointingly low. As usual most records came from Scotney Court GP with one, and two apparent hybrids, on 1 Jan, one on 10 Feb, a blue morph on 21 Feb and one on 13 Mar. Elsewhere a presumed blue morph or possible hybrid (*SxBR* 58:189) with feral Barnacle Geese was seen at Henfield on 18 Feb and two were at Castle Water (Rye Hbr) on 15 Sep.

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. Only two escaped pairs bred in UK in 2002 (Ogilvie *et al* 2004), c.f. nine in 2001.

The individual seen at Partridge Green in Dec 2005 (*SxBR* 58:190) remained in the area throughout the year, and presumably accounted for sightings from Henfield Levels on 6 Jan and

near Bines Bridge on 29 Jan. Three were reported from Arundel WWT on four dates during the year while a pair were on Benbow Pond (Cowdray) on 4 Mar with one at Bewl Water on 14 Mar and 29 Apr. Four with four young cygnets were seen at West Ashling on 1 May, the fifth year out of six that successful breeding has been recorded in the county. Four were at Pagham Hbr from 7 to 11 May with two remaining to 25 Jun. One was again at Bewl Water on 6 and 16 Jul, with singles on Amberley Wild Brooks on 17 Jul, at Darwell Res on 15 Aug, Ardingly Res on 7 Oct and Bury Watermeadows on 20 Nov. Two were again at Benbow Pond on 24 Nov with the final record of the year being a single at Castle Pit (Rye Hbr) on 14 Dec.

Ruddy Shelduck

Tadorna ferruginea

Breeds from Turkey across central Asia, generally wintering further south. There are isolated populations in North Africa. Somewhat controversially there have been no officially acceptable British records of this species since 1940. The similar South African Shelduck, which is also prone to escape from collections, should be considered when identifying this species.

A free-flying individual was seen at Arundel WWT on 2 Jan, a female was at Pagham Hbr from 19 Apr to 12 May and there were two at Pulborough Brooks on 31 May and two at Westergate on 15 Jun. Less expected were singles on the sea off Selsey Bill on 25 Jul and flying W off Beachy Head on 18 Aug, while seven were at Scotney Court GP on 20 Aug and two there on 1 Sep. The pattern of autumn records of small groups and family parties has become well established in recent years and although many are certain to be of continental origin debate continues as to how far they are coming from. Modern records of the species remain excluded from the British List, a situation that seems unlikely to change in the near future.

Muscovy Duck

Cairina moschata

Locally common resident in forest lakes of Central and South America. Widespread in its domesticated form. At least four pairs fledged 26 young in the UK in 2002, the nearest in Cambridgeshire (Ogilvie *et al.* 2004).

Six were seen at Offham (Arun Valley) on 27 Jan with four there on 3 Feb while one was at Widewater (Lancing) on at least 4 Feb.

Wood Duck

Aix sponsa

Breeds N USA, winters S USA. Common in wildfowl collections. Not recorded in the UK as a vagrant although some individuals seen in the south west of the country might conceivably be. Two escaped pairs bred in UK in 2002 (Ogilvie *et al.* 2004).

Two were seen at Burton MP on 17 Sep and a pair was at Parham House Lake on 11 Nov.

Marbled Teal

Marmaronetta angustirostris

Rare resident with a patchy distribution from NW Africa and S Europe to India. Declining across most of its range and considered Vulnerable by ICUN. Not officially on the British List despite some strong contenders.

One at Rye Hbr from 25 Sep to 29 Oct caused some initial interest as its arrival coincided with one in Dorset. Both however exhibited uncharacteristically tame behaviour and the Rye individual was considered to be the most approachable duck seen on the reserve all year.

Ferruginous Duck*Aythya nyroca*

Breeds from S Spain to central Asia, wintering mainly from NW Africa and S Europe to India. Rare vagrant to Sussex.

A male on Arundel WWT visitor centre lake on 2 and 3 Dec was considered to be part of the collection. The last presumed wild individual to be recorded in the county was at Rye Hbr in Nov 2001.

White Pelican*Pelecanus onocrotalus*

Breeds in SE Europe but commoner in Africa and S Asia. Escapes from captivity are infrequent, but often wander widely.

A fully winged adult flew over Lewes town and south down the R Ouse on 20 Sep. This was an impressive sight of another species that perhaps harshly is not considered to warrant a place on the British List.

Lanner Falcon*Falco biarmicus*

Mainly resident in Southeast Europe, Africa and west Asia. All British records are considered to relate to escapes from captivity or released falconers' birds.

A large, heavily streaked falcon seen at West Wittering on 21 Nov was considered to possibly have been this species. It appeared not to have jesses.

Saker Falcon*Falco cherrug*

Mainly scarce resident from central Europe to N India, common on the Tibetan plateau. Popular with falconers. All British records are considered to relate to escapes from captivity or released falconers' birds.

One reported from Pagham Hbr on 8 Dec was the only record.

African White-backed Vulture*Gyps africanus*

Common in open habitats across much of sub-Saharan Africa.

One at Charleston Farm (Firle) on 26 Nov had a red leg-tie and was probably the wide-ranging escape from Blackbrook Zoological Park (Staffordshire) which was seen in late October and November in various parts of the country including Devon, Oxfordshire, London, Surrey and Kent. The record of an unidentified vulture flying west over Pagham Hbr North Wall on 29 Oct probably related to the same individual (a bird seen in Hampshire at Farlington Marshes later on the same day was identified as this species).

Harris's Hawk*Parabuteo unicinctus*

Widespread but patchily distributed from the southern USA to Patagonia. Popular with falconers and often flown at public displays.

One was present at Thorney Deeps from 7 to 10 Nov.

Red-tailed Hawk*Buteo jamaicensis*

Commonly breeds throughout much of N America and the Caribbean, some move S in winter as far as Central America. Perhaps the most commonly kept *Buteo* in captivity.

The individual reported from Guestling Wood in spring 2005 (*SxBR* 58:192), and intermittently over the previous 10 years, was seen on 11 Feb and 18 Apr with another at Seaford on 4 Apr.

Cockatiel*Nymphicus hollandicus*

Common Australian nomad. One of the commonest cage birds.

One was recorded at Friday Street (Rusper) on 30 Jul. Just one was also recorded in 2005, following several years with between five and nine records.

Budgerigar*Melopsittacus undulatus*

Common Australian nomad. One of the commonest of all cage birds. Wild birds are invariably green (and yellow).

A blue morph was seen at Thorney Deepes on 26 Jul.

Great Green Macaw*Ara ambigua*

Rare resident in lowland forest from Costa Rica to Ecuador, considered Vulnerable by ICUN. Less common in captivity than smaller Military Macaw (*A. militaris*) and rarely bred.

An unidentified large parrot or macaw in Hotham Park (Bognor) on 17 Apr was tentatively identified as this species. Given that there was a large greyish parrot at the same site from April to July 2005 which was considered possibly to be a Grey Parrot (*SxBR* 58:192), both listings are probably best considered as very tentative.

Black Bulbul*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*

Found in SE Asia, India and China including Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Annam, and irruptive winter visitor to Hong Kong.

A bird was present in a Crowborough garden in early December at least.

Greater Blue-eared Glossy Starling*Lamprotornis chalybaeus*

Found across central and southeast Africa from Senegal to Angola and northeast South Africa. One of a number of Glossy Starlings popular with the cage bird industry.

One was present in gardens and allotments in Rottingdean from at least 23 to 27 July and what was probably the same bird was seen on several unspecified dates in August at Seaford Head and Beachy Head.

Golden-backed Weaver*Ploceus jacksoni*

Localised resident species in East Africa. A species apparently fond of habitats near water in its natural habitat.

A male was seen visiting a garden feeding station at Plumpton Green on 22 Sep.

Red-billed Quelea*Quelea quelea*

Resident and spasmodic migrant throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Probably the most abundant bird in the world. A fairly common and widespread cagebird.

A female was seen visiting a garden feeder in Goring on several dates in November and December.

Zebra Finch*Taeniopygia guttata*

Common resident or nomad in E Indonesia and Australia. One of the commonest cage birds and a prolific breeder.

One was seen at Selsey Bill on 6 Jul.

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.

One was seen at Beachy Head between 13 Sep and 3 Oct. This is the sixth year in succession that the species has been recorded in the county.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE DATES OF SUMMER VISITORS, 2006

	First recorded date			Last recorded date		
	2006	Prior to 2006	10-yr average (\pm SD in days)	2006	Prior to 2006	10-yr average (\pm SD in days)
Garganey	13 Mar	02 Feb	01 Mar (\pm 16)	08 Oct	13 Dec	27 Sep (\pm 11)
Quail	13 May	08 Feb	14 May (\pm 24)	30 Jul	31 Oct	19 Sep (\pm 31)
Osprey	29 Mar	07 Mar	25 Mar (\pm 10)	04 Nov	09 Dec	21 Oct (\pm 15)
Hobby	07 Apr	21 Mar	09 Apr (\pm 9)	30 Oct	09 Nov	22 Oct (\pm 15)
Little Ringed Plover	30 Mar	06 Mar	17 Mar (\pm 4)	28 Sep	08 Oct	23 Sep (\pm 10)
Wood Sandpiper	28 Apr	10 Apr	30 Apr (\pm 24)	12 Oct	16 Nov	01 Oct (\pm 23)
Pomarine Skua	21 Apr	10 Mar	21 Apr (\pm 18)	03 Jul	31 Dec	21 Sep (\pm 85)
Roseate Tern	22 Apr	17 Apr	30 Apr (\pm 9)	05 Oct ¹	30 Sep	05 Aug (\pm 29)
Common Tern	26 Mar	17 Mar	27 Mar (\pm 6)	25 Oct	26 Nov	02 Nov (\pm 13)
Arctic Tern	12 Apr	02 Apr	09 Apr (\pm 5)	06 Nov	23 Nov	03 Nov (\pm 15)
Common/Arctic Tern	01 Apr	10 Mar	30 Mar (\pm 12)	04 Nov	31 Dec	28 Oct (\pm 19)
Little Tern	01 Apr ²	02 Apr	09 Apr (\pm 5)	08 Oct	04 Nov	01 Oct (\pm 15)
Black Tern	16 Apr	02 Apr	14 Apr (\pm 7)	08 Oct	21 Nov	10 Oct (\pm 15)
Turtle Dove	29 Mar	08 Mar	08 Apr (\pm 15)	25 Sep	18 Dec	10 Oct (\pm 10)
Cuckoo	29 Mar	15 Mar	03 Apr (\pm 6)	13 Sep	11 Nov	28 Sep (\pm 14)
Nightjar	04 May	08 Apr	27 Apr (\pm 9)	25 Sep	05 Nov	19 Sep (\pm 16)
Swift	09 Apr	07 Apr	13 Apr (\pm 4)	08 Nov	24 Nov	17 Oct (\pm 20)
Wryneck	17 Apr	09 Mar	13 Apr (\pm 20)	07 Oct	02 Nov	05 Oct (\pm 11)
Sand Martin	25 Mar	04 Mar	10 Mar (\pm 5)	08 Oct	05 Dec	26 Oct (\pm 16)
Swallow	24 Mar	04 Feb	10 Mar (\pm 13)	09 Nov	28 Dec	29 Nov (\pm 9)
House Martin	26 Mar	01 Feb	16 Mar (\pm 16)	04 Nov	18 Dec	14 Nov (\pm 10)
Tree Pipit	03 Apr	17 Mar	29 Mar (\pm 5)	17 Oct	09 Nov	21 Oct (\pm 9)
Yellow Wagtail	21 Mar	10 Mar	21 Mar (\pm 8)	23 Oct	23 Nov	31 Oct (\pm 16)
Nightingale	29 Mar	21 Mar	04 Apr (\pm 6)	10 Sep	19 Oct	15 Sep (\pm 9)
Redstart	02 Apr	13 Mar	26 Mar (\pm 7)	31 Oct	11 Dec	29 Oct (\pm 18)
Whinchat	15 Apr	18 Feb	01 Apr (\pm 18)	27 Oct	02 Dec	04 Nov (\pm 7)
Wheatear	15 Mar	13 Feb	02 Mar (\pm 8)	19 Nov	19 Dec	13 Nov (\pm 15)
Ring Ouzel	01 Apr	02 Feb	16 Mar (\pm 16)	25 Nov	26 Dec	16 Nov (\pm 9)
Grasshopper Warbler	15 Apr	02 Apr	11 Apr (\pm 6)	15 Oct	01 Nov	18 Oct (\pm 10)
Sedge Warbler	01 Apr	23 Mar	29 Mar (\pm 4)	15 Oct	29 Oct	12 Oct (\pm 13)
Reed Warbler	06 Apr	04 Apr	08 Apr (\pm 3)	28 Oct	18 Nov	01 Nov (\pm 10)
Garden Warbler	06 Apr	28 Mar	05 Apr (\pm 7)	13 Oct	16 Nov	16 Oct (\pm 13)
Lesser Whitethroat	17 Apr	04 Apr	12 Apr (\pm 7)	08 Nov	21 Nov	14 Oct (\pm 13)
Whitethroat	02 Apr	19 Mar	02 Apr (\pm 6)	11 Oct	17 Dec	19 Oct (\pm 16)
Wood Warbler	10 Apr	07 Apr	20 Apr (\pm 7)	23 Aug	07 Oct	05 Sep (\pm 13)
Willow Warbler	28 Mar	04 Mar	15 Mar (\pm 6)	29 Oct	26 Dec	29 Oct (\pm 14)
Spotted Flycatcher	30 Apr	08 Apr	24 Apr (\pm 9)	09 Oct	18 Nov	14 Oct (\pm 9)
Pied Flycatcher	17 Apr	01 Apr	09 Apr (\pm 6)	03 Oct	01 Nov	03 Oct (\pm 8)

DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL DATES OF WINTER VISITORS, 2006

	Last recorded date			First recorded date		
	2006	Prior to 2006	10-yr average (\pm SD) in days	2006	Prior to 2006	10-yr average (\pm SD) in days
Bewick's Swan	05 Mar	26 Apr	12 Mar (\pm 8)	05 Dec	15 Oct	08 Nov (\pm 12)
White-fronted Goose	12 Feb	17 Apr	19 Mar (\pm 20)	01 Nov	12 Sep	08 Oct (\pm 46)
Long-tailed Duck	01 May	14 Jun	08 May (\pm 34)	NR ³	23 Aug	22 Oct (\pm 23)
Velvet Scoter	14 May	15 Jun	15 May (\pm 13)	30 Oct	12 Aug	16 Oct (\pm 20)
Goldeneye	04 May	23 May	22 Apr (\pm 19)	02 Sep	06 Aug	08 Oct (\pm 18)
Smew	23 Mar	24 Apr	16 Mar (\pm 14)	28 Nov	03 Nov	02 Dec (\pm 12)
Goosander	01 May	22 May	29 Mar (\pm 30)	05 Nov	12 Sep	03 Nov (\pm 25)
Black-throated Diver	20 May	21 Jun	29 May (\pm 12)	09 Oct	03 Aug	22 Oct (\pm 21)
Great Northern Diver	14 May	21 Jun	19 May (\pm 15)	15 Nov	16 Sep	25 Oct (\pm 25)
Red-necked Grebe	14 Apr	19 Jun	28 Apr (\pm 15)	13 Aug ²	18 Aug	08 Sep (\pm 10)
Hen Harrier	13 May	19 Jun	11 May (\pm 17)	10 Aug	04 Aug	02 Sep (\pm 18)
Purple Sandpiper	19 May	26 May	12 May (\pm 7)	31 Jul	01 Jul	17 Jul (\pm 11)
Jack Snipe	03 May	19 May	28 Apr (\pm 15)	22 Sep	24 Aug	20 Sep (\pm 16)
Water Pipit	12 Mar	28 May	04 Apr (\pm 22)	28 Oct	01 Sep	26 Oct (\pm 8)
Fieldfare	17 Apr	05 Jun	25 Apr (\pm 7)	12 Oct	13 Aug	22 Sep (\pm 18)
Redwing	03 May	26 May	10 Apr (\pm 9)	29 Sep	06 Aug	21 Sep (\pm 15)
Great Grey Shrike	05 May	14 May	31 Mar (\pm 19)	NR ³	26 Sep	18 Oct (\pm 7)
Brambling	05 May	12 May	20 Apr (\pm 6)	08 Oct	13 Sep	29 Sep (\pm 5)

1, latest county record; 2, earliest county record; 3, no late winter records.

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 Sandpipers which regularly return to their winter grounds in July. Any 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 quoted is unusual and is calculated from the 10 years prior to the current one. 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.

SUMMARY OF HEATHLAND BREEDING BIRD COUNTS.

Thames Basin and Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey 2006 – West Sussex.

	AC	BD	CC	CL	DG	HC	IC	LS	RO	SC	WC	WD	WH
Hobby	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Woodcock	1	-	4	-	3	-	6	-	-	3	-	1	-
Stock Dove	-	-	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
Turtle Dove	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nightjar	6	1	3	-	5	-	6	-	-	3	3	2	1
Green Woodpecker	3	-	6	6	6	4	3	-	-	3	4	6	1
Great Sp. Woodpecker	7	-	7	6	8	4	3	-	-	3	2	6	2
Wood Lark	7	3	3	3	5	-	5	4	1	3	3	4	-
Sky Lark	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1
Tree pipit	5	7	4	-	7	2	6	-	-	3	8	3	-
Common Redstart	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Stonechat	9	1	5	1	3	-	7	-	-	1	4	4	-
Dartford Warbler	24	7	-	-	-	-	14	-	-	4	4	7	-
Common Whitethroat	-	-	7	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	7	5	1
Siskin	3	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Linnet	5	3	11	1	2	-	7	-	-	1	4	2	2
Lesser Redpoll	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
Common Crossbill	2	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Yellowhammer	16	-	8	2	12	3	5	-	-	2	8	7	6
Reed Bunting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Figures relate to pairs or territories; the small hyphen (-) indicates that no territories were identified or no survey was made for these species.

Key to sites:

- AC Ambersham & Heyshott Commons
- BD Blackdown (Fernhurst)
- CC Chapel Common (Liphook)
- CL Coates Common & Lords Piece (Fittleworth)
- DG Duncton & Graffham Commons (Lavington)
- HC Hesworth Common
- IC Iping Common
- LS Linchmere & Stanley Commons
- RO Combe Hill (Rogate)
- SC Stedham Common
- WC Woolbeding Common
- WD Weavers Down (Liss)
- WH West Heath Common

Details of breeding bird surveys were from: JTA Bagley, D Hollow, HJA Lee, JL Nobbs, A Perry, Dr BM Rogers and P Twine.

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NB: For an explanation of the superscripts, see the footnote below the table.

B Akinola	RM Billings ^M	L Caton ^T	JR Cowser ^{B^PV^W}
SR Allen	CJ Bird ^T	A Caulkett ^D	JM Cox ^T
T Allen ^T	JM Birdsey ^D	N Chadwick ^T	HM Crabtree ^{B^MP^ST^V}
GQA Anderson ^T	J Birkett ^T	GL Champion	J Cragg ^M
AC Armitage ^M	DA Blackmore ^T	R Carver ^W	M Coote ^T
KS Arthur	D Blair ^T	M Casemore (MC)	DEG Copeland ^B
J Atkinson ^W	J Blakiston ^X	P Chandler ^X	C Corrigan ^{B^T}
K Attree	M Blencowe ^{B^X}	B Chapman	M Couldery ^P
MF Austin	D Boddington (DBo)	CB Chapman ^T	TPR Crane ^B
MI Avery ^T	H Booth ^P	J Chapman ^W	J Crix
	C Booty ^X	S Chapman	R Croger
JWP Bacon	R Borwick ^T	ME Charlwood	FE Crowe
M Baggs ^H	D Bowler ^T	RH Charlwood	PR Cullen
JTA Bagley ^{E^L}	PS Bowley	J Chattaway ^B	J Curson (JC)
GR Bagnell	R Bown (Richard) ^B	L Childs ^T	SPM Curson ^X
S Baines ^T	P Bradbeer	FC Clark ^T	
J Baker ^T	RC Bradbury	HAC Clark ^M	A Dale
R Baker ^T	H Branson ^T	RT Clark ^T	C Dale
BC Baltera ^T	PM Brayshaw	J Clarke ^{T^X}	RC Dalrymple ^{B^ST}
PC Bance ^{W^X}	C Brooks ^B	BR Clay	T Dalrymple ^W
PS Banks ^T	D Brown (DB)	PJ Clay	RM Davidson ^W
DG Barber ^{B^DL}	P Brown (PB)	J Clements ^T	P Davies
CJR Barfield ^{B^HM^PW}	RM Brown ^T	T Clements ^W	C Davis ^{B^W}
IT Barnard	D Browne ^T	GA Cockburn ^W	R Davison
N Barnes (NBa)	P Bruce ^X	S Cocker ^W	S Dawson
RG Barnett ^{T^W}	D Buckingham ^H	J Coit ^W	J Day ^T
R Barry ^W	J Bujuk (JBu)	MA Cole ^T	A de Potier ^{M^W}
GS Batho ^T	KR Burch	H Collings ^T	CH Dean ^{B^HT^W}
S Bayley ^{M^SX}	J Burchell-Collins ^X	CB Collins ^{B^DL^W}	E Degerland ^T
N Bayly ^T (NB)	H Burgess ^B	CF Collins ^W	A Deleiros ^T
R Beal ^D	N Burgum ^T	M Collins ^{B^T}	MN Denness ^{D^LV}
J Beale	M Busby ^L	MA Collins	RR Dennis
H Beauchamp ^T	RA Butler ^{B^W}	HM Colmer ^T	H Dennison ^W
G Beck	T Callaway ^W	AS Cook	MJH Denny
T Beecher ^{T^X}	P Callis ^W	DC Cooke	B Dickeson
J Bennett	G Candelin ^T	C Cooper ^T	S Diserens
I Bennison	D Carey ^W	D Cooper (Danny)	B Dix ^T
C Bentley	J Carey ^T	D Cooper (Dave) (DC)	J Dodd (JD)
VP Bentley ^{B^VW}	B Carpenter ^T	DR Cooper	K Downer
AJ Benton ^T	G Carrington	I Cooper	NA Driver
K Benyon-Tinker ^W	A Carter	JF Cooper	G Durey ^W
N Biddulph ^B	BJ Carter ^T	KA Cooper ^M	J Dyason
PJ Biggs ^{D^L}	HM Carter ^{B^ST}	P Cooper	
SM Bignold ^T	N Carter ^T	P&D Cooper	J Eade ^W

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M Eade	SM Gamble	WG Harvey ^B	S Huyshe ^T
R Eagles ^T	AH Gardiner ^T	CL Haskell ^T	
AR Eales ^W	S Gardiner	P Haskell ^B	R Iredale ^T
B Easlea	RDJ Gardner	DM Hatfield ^M	RA Ives
D Eastlake	S Gardner ^B	J Hawtree ^T	
SD Eden ^T	DT Gasson ^S	A Hearmon ^W	RA Jackson ^T
RDM Edgar	CM George ^{B^TW}	K Hewitt ^W	B James
M Edmonds ^B	A Giacomelli ^{B^PT}	J Heyes ^T	GF James ^T
K Edney	TE Gibson-Poole ^T	M Hibbard ^X	P James
R Edney	S Gilbert ^{B^W}	AP Hibberd ^{B^T}	RL James ^{B^V}
ART Edwards ^T	AG Gillham ^X	M Hill ^T	CR Janman ^M
K Edwards	JKC Gillingham ^T	S Hill (SH)	GG Jenner ^B
PE Edwards ^W	BR Gilmore	AI Hillman	J Jobling ^W
TJ Edwards	M Gladwin	M Hillman ^H	DJ Jode ^W
M Elliott ^X	J Glover ^W	DA Hilton ^W	A Johnson ^B
R Elston ^T	SM Goodsall ^T	SR Hilton ^W	RJ Johnson ^{D^LT}
M Emberson ^B	H Gordon ^B	RS Hitchen ^B	A Johnston ^{B^T}
MJ Emery ^W	JS Gowers ^{D^LS^V}	B Hobleby	KM Johnston
L English ^T	GW Gowlett	J Hobson ^W	PE Jones ^{B^TV}
C Evans ^T	M Grantham ^T	JA Hobson ^{B^M}	R Jones ^T
J Evans ^L	N Gray ^B	AJ Holcombe	RJ Jones ^T
LGR Evans	MA Grech ^T	BJ Holcombe	T Jordan ^T
M Evans ^T	D Green ^{B^PX}	AM Holden	J Julyarski ^T
RD Evans	P Green ^{P^X}	D Hollow ^{E^L}	
SJ Evans ^{S^W}	S Green ^T	LG Holloway ^X	LR Keen ^M
GD Evans (Glyn) ^B	NM Greenaway ^{S^W}	A Holmes ^T	B Kelley
P Everitt ^B	RR Greenhalf	RG Holmes ^B	RS Kelly
	G Griffin ^W	CA Holt	G Kennett
RJ Fairbank ^M	J Grover	JC Holt	D King
JA Feast	AJ Guest ^{B^SV}	M Holt ^X	DR King
BJ Fellows ^{B^W}	B Gunn ^P	CE Hope ^{B^W}	J King ^T
ML Ferrier ^P	AC Gutteridge ^{B^S}	J Houlden ^W	JW King (JWK)
A Fleming ^T	TJ Guy	A House ^B (AH)	M King ^{T^V}
G Flinn ^T		SM Howard ^T	J Kirk
S Foote ^T	PRJ Hadland ^B	DH Howey	M Kirk ^{L^T}
BF Forbes	RK Haggar	DG Hughes	RM&M Kirk
T Forbes ^{B^TW}	CP Hall ^T	P Hughes ^W	A Kirkwood ^W
A Ford	T Hall ^T	R Hughes	AR Kitson
A Fowler ^X	CH Hamilton	V Hume ^{P^T}	D Knight ^{B^V}
CJ Fox	C Hannington ^X	BJ Humphrey ^B	J Knight ^X
TP Fox ^T	A Harman	N Humphrys ^T	L Knight ^S
D Francis	R Harman ^{D^LX}	A Hunt ^T	M Knight ^X
B Fraser ^T	DGC Harper ^T	M Hunt ^T	R Knight (Ditchling)
MG Freeman ^W	RG Harris ^W	N Hunt ^B	R Knight (Rex) ^{H^MS^TV^W}
RI French ^W	D Hart ^W	I Hunter	
W Fuller ^B	H Hart ^W	NL Huston ^B	C Laing ^X
	PR Hart	NP Hutchinson ^T	M Lambert ^B
P Gamble	R Hartfree	AM Hutson ^S	DC Lang ^{H^W}

IM Lang ^{HW}	CW Melgar	TW Parmenter ^S	ET Roberts
CA Langridge ^T	R Menhenett ^W	C Parry ^T	GCM Roberts ^H
P Lawton ^T	N Merchant ^T	R Parsons ^W	H Roberts ^W
HJA Lee ^{BDELW}	M Merriman ^T	RA Pask (Bob) ^{DL}	R Robinson ^{BS}
PJ Lees ^W	B Metcalfe	K Patrick ^T	S Robinson ^W
M Leggatt	B Middleton ^{BX}	PN Paul	SJ Robinson
J Lewin	O Mitchell ^M	H Pawley ^P	D Robinson (Dorking) ^T
G Lewis ^T	N Mitchell (Neil)	R Pawley ^P	BM Rogers ^{DEL}
SH Linington ^V	NB Mitchell (Nick) ^{BTW}	P Pearson ^T	M Rogers
PL Lister ^B	D Monk ^X	CJ Pennells ^{BP}	MD Rolfe ^T
DR Livett	M Monk-Terry ^X	RF Penticost ^{BM}	C Roper ^X
AH Lloyd ^W	P Moon ^W	A Pepper ^T	PP Roper ^X
R Long ^T	RC Moore ^T	RT Pepper ^{BT}	J Rose ^X
M Love (Mark) ^B	L Moreton ^T	A Perry ^{DELMV}	R Ross ^T
RE Lowe ^D	H Morgan ^T	H Perryman ^T	R Rowsby
CD Lowmass	R Morris ^W	D Petts ^T	JR Rowsby ^T
JC Luck ^V	D Morrison ^M	MJ Phillips ^W	E Rowsell ^W
PJ Luffingham ^{HS}	R Mortimer ^X	SM Phillips ^{DLX}	MG Russell ^X
	BM Mortlock ^W	E Pilcher	CMP Ryland ^X
J Mackie ^X	DC Mortlock	PJ Plant ^B	
B Mackintosh ^T	SD Morton ^T	D Pledge ^T	D Sadler
A MacPherson ^B	MF Mullen ^B	AH Podmore	RF Sanderson ^H
J Marking ^X	K Murphy ^B	D Pomeroy ^M	RJ Sandison ^M
A Marlow ^X	D Mutters ^T	C Poole	J Scates ^M
M Marr		CR Poole ^T	RE Scott ^T
DJ Madgin ^H	T Nash ^{TX}	N Pope	M Scott-ham ^{HLS}
E Mair (EM)	A Needham ^T	DA Potter	
SE Malcolm ^T	T Nelson ^T	RA Powell ^W	J Selater
A Malone ^B	M Netherwood ^T	R Powell (Pagham) ^W	P Selby ^T
L Manns ^S	JA Newnham ^{BHPTVW}	HDV Prendergast ^L	RJ Senior
J Mansell (Jon) ^B	G Nichols ^M	MG Prince	MV Sennitt ^{BMX}
MJ Marchant ^{BH}	RC Nixon ^T	J Pullen ^W	K Sexton ^T
R Marchant	JL Nobbs ^{BDELSV}	RHA Putnam ^T	M Shaft ^H
C Marrable ^{DL}	K Noble ^{MPV}	B Puttock ^W	RJ Shanks ^B
SK Marshall ^T	RK Norman ^T		J Sharpe ^W
M Martin ^B	C Northwood	A Quinn	JP Shaughnessey
A Martin (Alan) ^B		T Quittenden ^W	CR Shawyer
JM Maskell ^{PT}	P O'Farrell ^X		AJ Shearman ^T
SP Maskell ^{PT}	W Oliver	PJ Raynor	DR Shepherd
DR Mason	G Osborne ^T	M Reader	J Shepherd ^B
MJ Mason	L Owen ^D	SG Reeds ^B	L Shirky ^T
P Maxwell	RA Owen	EL Rees ^M	R Simmons ^T
KW Maycock	RC Owen ^L	R Rees ^B	T Simon ^X
M McKeand ^W		L Richardson ^M	IM Simpson ^{MW}
PAF McKenzie Lloyd ^T	J Palmer	V Richardson ^T	K Simpson ^V
P Mears ^V	PJ Papps	G Riches ^T	SP Simpson
R Mears ^V	A Parfitt ^W	R Rickard ^T	A Simpson MBE ^{WX}
P Meiners ^{BDL}		JR Rivoire ^T	A Skerl ^W

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E Slade ^x	S Taylor (ST)	M Walker	RLC Williamson ^w
S Smart ^t	SR Taylor ^{B L W}	D Walker (D.B.O) ^w	KB Wills ^w
AW Smith	G Taylor (SxBRC) ^x	L Walther ^t	HMV Wilsdon
DI Smith	CR Tazzyman	LA Ward	PJ Wilson ^w (PJWi)
M Smith ^w	A Thomas ^{B W}	N Warne ^B	TJ Wilson ^x
M Smith (Mary) ^t	D Thurgood	B Watkins	HC Wingfield-Hayes ^w
PA Smith ^{S W}	JE Tilbury ^B	AB Watson ^{H X}	LF Winter ^t
RE Smith	R Titcomb	P Webster	A Witts ^t
S Smith (Rye LNR)	R Tofts	M Welcome ^w	N Wood
AC Smithen ^{B V}	M Tomlins	AJ Wende	V Wood ^B
MA Snelling ^{B M}	R Townsley	DR West ^B	CW Woodburn ^w
F Southgate ^x	S Trenery ^t	JD Weston ^w	I Woodburn ^w
W Spencer	CE Trollope ^t	R Westwater	AEL Woods ^t
P Spiers ^w	JE Trowell	AD Whitcomb	RJ Woollard ^B
DL Stainton ^t	WH Truckle	IJ Whitcomb	J Worrall ^B
I Standivan ^{H M W}	M Tucker (Findon)	PJ Whitcomb ^t (PJWh)	J Wretham
MJ Stenning ^B	M Turner ^{B H M W}	C White ^t	C Wright
P Stokes ^B	PC Turner ^M	P&C White	CMV Wright ^{B P}
PJ Strangeman	P Twine ^{D E L}	P White ^t	E Wright ^t
R Straughan ^t	WM Twitchett ^t	S Whitehead ^t	J Wright ^w
GA Sutton		CA Whiteman ^V	KJ Wright ^w
P Sutton ^t	ST Underdown ^w	AM Whitman	M Wright ^t
S Sutton ^H	D Uprichard	JH Whitman	
F Swift ^x	ED Urquhart ^w	S Whittaker ^t	R Yarnell ^x
		K Whittleton ^t	BJ Yates ^{V W}
WIE Tagg ^t	ATC Vile ^B	R Wilkins ^t	S Younger ^w
M Tate ^x	C Vince ^w	M Wilkinson ^{D L}	
D Taylor ^t		DC Williams	Rye Bay Ringing Group
R Taylor ^t	CA Walker ^L	R Williamson ^w	

The superscripts in the above table indicate the particular survey(s) in which contributors participated, as follows:

- B Breeding Bird Survey (BBS)
- D Dartford Warbler Survey
- E Thames Basin and Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey
- H Heronry Census
- L Wood Lark Survey
- M House Sparrow and House Martin Survey
- P Winter Atlas Pilot Survey
- S Scarce Woodland Bird Survey
- T Contributor via *BirdTrack*
- V Winter Plover Survey
- W Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS)
- X Contributor via Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre

ASSISTANCE TO RECORDER

The Recorder is especially grateful to Dr JA Newnham and the following team of helpers for coding and inputting the records onto the computer: J Atkinson, R Bown, CJR Barfield, Ms J Chattaway, BR Clay, CB Collins, D Cooper, JR Cowser, TPR Crane, DE Crawley, J Curson, Ms A de Potier, Ms J Dyason, RDM Edgar, RJ Fairbank, BR Gilmore, Ms H Gordon, JS Gowers, D Green, PR Hadland, JA Hobson, CE Hope, A House, T Howard-Jones, DH Howey, P Hughes, RA Ives, P James, P Johnson, PE Jones, G Kennett, D King, Rex Knight, Richard Knight, IM Lang, J Lewin, S Linington, L Manns, JM Maskell, O Mitchell, Mrs BM Mortlock, PJ Papps, Ms A Parfitt, N Paul, RT Pepper, A Perry, GCM Roberts, M Scott-Ham, MV Sennitt, Mrs IM Simpson, DI Smith, Dr AB Watson, Mrs AJ Wende, IJ Whitcomb, PJ Whitcomb, JH Whitman, Dr BJ Yates.

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, BN43 5UD. Counts of known heronries are given in the systematic list. Thanks are due to the 20 contributors who are indicated by ^H in the above table.

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, BN25 3EW. Counts for Chichester Hbr 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 108 counters who are indicated by ^W in the list of contributors. For 2007 the county co-ordinator is R Bown, 49 Long Beach View, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN23 5NB.

Breeding Bird Survey (BBS): This BTO annual national breeding survey, based on selected 1-km squares, was organised in Sussex for 2006 by Dr Helen Crabtree, 3 Myrtle Cottages, Ardingly Road, Cuckfield, West Sussex, RH17 5HD. Thanks are due to the 97 observers involved who are indicated by ^B in the above table.

Winter Atlas Pilot Survey: The organisation of this pilot survey which took place in TQ20 was arranged by Dr JA Cocks. The 19 participants are indicated by ^P in the above table.

Dartford Warbler Survey 2006: This national survey was organised in Sussex by Dr JA Cocks and the results presented by A Perry (see pages 235-242). Thanks are due to the 22 participants who are indicated by ^D in the above table.

Wood Lark Survey 2006: This national survey was coordinated in Sussex by Dr JA Cocks and the results analysed by A Perry (see pages 229-234). The 27 participants are indicated by ^L in the above table.

Winter Plover Survey 2006-07: This national sample survey was coordinated in Sussex by Dr JA Cocks and the 23 participants are indicated by ^V in the above table.

Scarce Woodland Bird Survey. The second (and final) year of this national survey was organised in Sussex by Dr JA Cocks and the results analysed by L Manns (see pages 225-228). Thanks are due to the 20 participants who are indicated by ^S in the list of contributors.

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, GU28 0HR. Thanks are due to the seven observers involved who are indicated by ^E in the list of contributors.

SOS House Sparrow and House Martin Survey 2006: The results of this local survey were collected by Dr JA Cocks. Thanks are due to the 32 participants who are indicated by ^M in the list of contributors.

Co-ordination of Spring Seawatching Records: The annual co-ordination of these records for the Society is carried out by Dr JA Newnham, 61 Grand Avenue, Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 5BA.

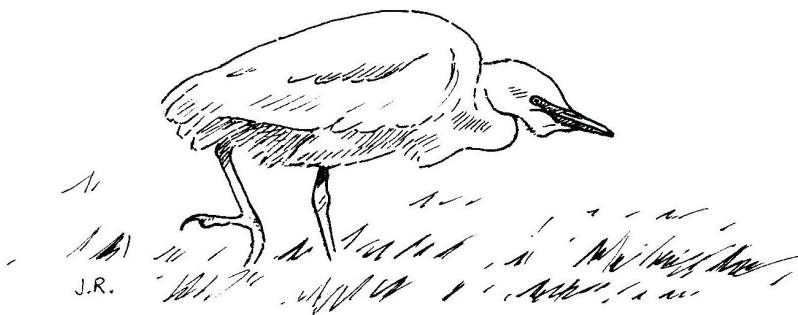
Cormorant Roost Counts: Counts were carried out monthly from September to March at Chichester GP and South Stoke, West Sussex, by R Knight for the Cormorant Research Group.

SUMMARIES OF OBSERVATIONS

We are grateful for summaries of detailed observations at Chichester Harbour from Ms A de Potier; Thorney and Pilsey Islands from CB and Mrs MA Collins; Selsey Bill from J Atkinson; Pagham Harbour from IM Lang; Climping from O Mitchell; Pulborough Brooks from P Hughes; Worthing from Dr JA Newnham; Shoreham District O.S. from CE Hope, Horsham District Council reserves from S Bayley; Weir Wood Reservoir from Mrs BM Mortlock; Ashdown Forest from P Johnson; Telscombe Cliffs from DH Howey, Barcombe Res from RT Pepper, Splash Point (Seaford) from BR Gilmore; Beachy Head from D Cooper and RDM Edgar; Bewl Water from PC Bance; Pannel Valley NR from PE Jones and Rye Harbour from Dr BJ Yates. We also thank the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre for providing ornithological records from 60 observers (marked ^x in the above table) and Birdguides for providing their Sussex records. The on-line recording of the British Trust for Ornithology surveys provided a plethora of records; the 180 Sussex contributors to *BirdTrack* are marked with a ^T in the above table and thanks are recorded for the county records from the *Breeding Bird Survey* and *Garden BirdWatch*.

RINGING

Thanks are due to RDM Edgar for maintaining detailed records of ringing in the county and to all ringers who contributed data.



The Sussex Ringing Report 2006

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Introduction

The total number of birds ringed in Sussex was 54,655. This was a decrease of 4,084 (7.5%) on the 58,739 ringed in 2005 and was the first decrease since 2001. Although the ringing of adult birds decreased by nearly 7%, that of nestlings decreased by 24%. The latter decrease was in large part due to the poor breeding success of some species (see later). The variation in annual totals of birds ringed in Sussex since 1979 is shown in Figure 1.

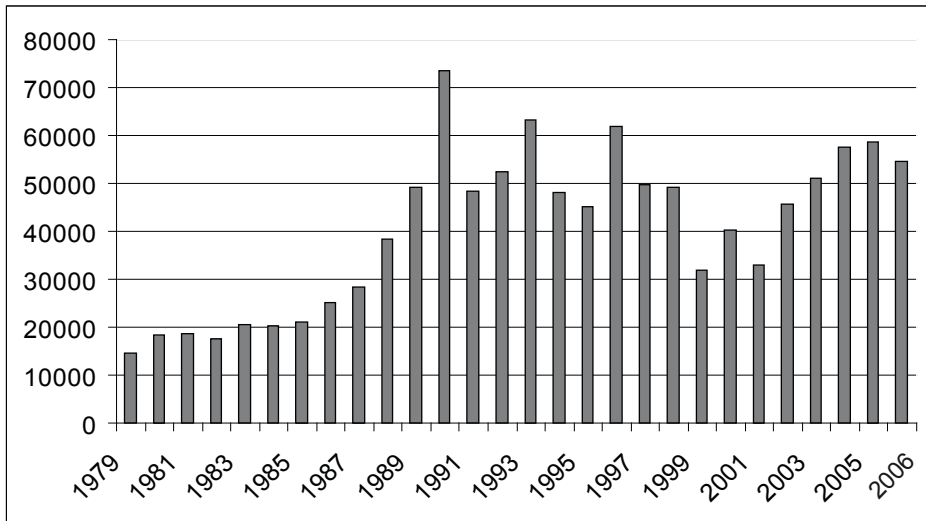


Figure 1. Annual ringing totals in Sussex, 1979 – 2006.

Reports were received from 22 individual active ringers or groups (Table 1), an increase of two on last year. The Rye Bay Ringing Group (RBRG) ringed 37,388 birds, which was 68% of the Sussex total. One hundred and eight species were ringed in the county in 2006 compared to 124 in 2005.

Unfortunately, no national figures were available this year for comparison at the time of compiling this Report. Table 2 therefore only compares national and Sussex ringing effort for the five years from 2001 to 2005.

County rarities ringed were one Wryneck, two Aquatic Warblers, six Marsh Warblers, (all at Pannel Valley NR) and two Common Redpolls at Ashdown Forest. This is an unusually short list of rare birds and reflects the particularly quiet autumn.

No new species were ringed in the county so the species total remains at 202 ringed since 1979. Unusual birds ringed include one Common Pochard (11 ringed previously), one Common Buzzard (12 ringed before), one Long-eared Owl (20 ringed before) and two Wood Lark (eight ringed before).

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.

Ringing source	Number ringed		
	Adults	Nestlings	Totals
Individuals			
K. Arthur	0	376	376
W. Attridge	495	6	501
D. Crawley	61	0	61
A.M. Davis	384	59	443
J.A.G. Dunlop	1383	20	1403
R.D.M. Edgar	0	5	5
C. Hamilton	670	0	670
J.& A. Hillman, C.Shawyer	11	67	78
D. King	1024	307	1331
R. Lanaway	1546	713	2259
D.M. Love	465	49	514
D. Madgin	286	22	308
A. Martin	301	129	430
J.A. Newnham	1019	0	1019
G.C.M. Roberts	1	14	15
R. Sanderson	1397	17	1414
A.B. Watson	268	805	1073
Groups			
Beachy Head Ringing Station	2420	36	2456
Cuckmere Ringing Group	530	0	530
Farlington Ringing Group	56	0	56
Rye Bay Ringing Group	36982	406	37388
Steyning Ringing Group	2288	37	2325
County Total	51587	3068	54655

Table 2. Comparison of national and Sussex ringing effort (national totals for 2006 not available). (The national figures differ slightly from those quoted in previous Ringing Reports following published corrections).

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
National totals						
All birds	648936	791074	848532	881920	873581	n/a
Adults	515009	614300	673889	712925	700140	n/a
Nestlings	133927	176774	174643	168995	173441	n/a
Species	254	256	268	268	262	n/a
Sussex totals						
All birds	32833	45650	52449	57538	58739	54655
Adults	31368	43935	49860	54753	54946	51587
Nestlings	1465	1715	2589	2785	3793	3068
Species	123	104	113	119	124	108

Ringing generates a great deal of information, not just on distances moved and longevity. A most valuable paper on Grasshopper Warblers has been written by Nick Bayly and Stephen Rumsey based on the large numbers ringed at Icklesham. They looked particularly at timing of autumn passage, fuel loads, stopover behaviour and potential flight ranges. They attribute the birds stopping on the south coast to the English Channel acting as a barrier to onward flights. Of

great interest was the realisation that very few birds refuelled on site and many remained only for one day (Bayly and Rumsey 2007).

Ringling totals

Table 3 lists the 20 most regularly trapped species during 2006 in descending order of magnitude compared with similar data from 2005 and including the totals for RBRG to demonstrate the considerable contribution this group makes to Sussex ringing.

Table 3. *Sussex ringing totals for the 20 most ringed species in 2006. Birds of Conservation Concern (Gregory et al. 2002): **Red listed; *Amber listed.*

	2005	2006			2005	2006	
	Total	Total	RBRG		Total	Total	RBRG
Barn Swallow*	5962	8799	8471	Common Whitethroat	1208	1258	841
Sedge Warbler	6587	6365	6192	Goldfinch	1345	1186	341
Eurasian Reed Warbler	5487	5684	5102	Reed Bunting**	1760	793	704
Blackcap	6048	4815	2788	Robin	1096	775	242
Sand Martin *	3067	3976	3976	Greenfinch	735	775	113
Blue Tit	4294	3479	590	Blackbird	999	706	244
Common Chiffchaff	3418	2641	1541	Chaffinch	652	616	119
Willow Warbler *	2028	1998	1492	Dunnock	668	559	154
Great Tit	2188	1801	240	Lesser Redpoll*	1450	503	134
House Martin*	1181	1494	1493	Grasshopper Warbler**	585	478	471

The 20 species listed in Table 3 account for 89% of all birds ringed in Sussex during 2006 compared to 87% of birds ringed in 2005. The first 19 species are much the same as last year with the order little changed but Grasshopper Warbler has reappeared in the list after one year's absence. Lesser Redpoll has moved from 11th to 19th after a considerable reduction in numbers ringed. The 'top ten' (five warblers, three hirundines and two tits) accounted for 75% of all birds ringed. RBRG ringed 68% of the county total (64% in 2005) and a high proportion of seven of the species in Table 3. Their highest proportions were 100% of the Sand Martins and House Martins (bar one bird), 99% of the Grasshopper Warblers, 97% of the Sedge Warblers, 96% of the Barn Swallows and 90% of the Eurasian Reed Warblers. Although these figures demonstrate how important the contribution of RBRG is to Sussex ringing, it in no way belittles the significance of the work of the other ringers since, for some species ringed, RBRG contribute only a small proportion (or none).

Despite the usual caveat that weather, opportunity and ringing effort may be as much responsible for a difference in numbers ringed as a genuine population change, tentative conclusions can be drawn from the ringing totals. The large increase in Barn Swallows ringed is due to good roosts that were available for catching birds. Sedge and Eurasian Reed Warbler numbers are remarkably consistent between 2006 and 2005. Blackcap numbers have fallen (with a proportionally similar decline in Garden Warblers), at least partly due to poor autumn weather, as have Common Chiffchaff numbers, whereas Willow Warbler numbers were very similar between the two years. Marsh Tit numbers ringed, which had increased markedly between 2004 and 2005 (from 37 to 61), declined greatly to just 24. As in 2005 only one Willow Tit was ringed. The most marked fall, by almost two-thirds, is shown by Lesser Redpoll with an apparently very poor autumn, at least for ringers. On the other hand the numbers of Siskins ringed rose hugely from 25 in 2005 to 888 in 2006 due to the efforts of (and large amounts of food provided by) two ringers in their gardens. The fall in Reed Buntings is marked and may be due to less flocking at feed crops. Thirty-five Sparrowhawks were ringed, the highest ever total, as was the 48 Stock Doves. Thirty-two Greenshank ringed is also particularly notable. Very welcome was 77 Yellow Wagtails

ringed, the highest ever, compared with only two last year, although this should not be interpreted as reflecting a proportional population increase.

Nestlings

The 3,068 nestlings ringed in 2006 is a slight reduction on the 3,793 ringed in 2005 but is still a very welcome increase on the 2,785 ringed in 2004. The total represented 6% of the birds ringed during the year.

Table 4. Nestlings ringed in Sussex during 2006, where they number more than 40% of the total ringed. Birds of Conservation Concern (Gregory *et al.* 2002): **Red listed; *Amber listed.

	Total ringed	Total nestlings	% nestlings		Total ringed	Total nestlings	% nestlings
Common Tern	12	12	100	Common Kestrel*	49	44	90
Mistle Thrush*	11	11	100	Wood Warbler*	7	6	86
Peregrine Falcon*	6	6	100	Barn Owl*	203	162	80
Ringed Plover*	5	5	100	Little Owl	5	4	80
Sky Lark**	4	4	100	Linnet**	19	14	74
Avocet*	2	2	100	Northern Lapwing*	21	14	67
Wood Lark**	2	2	100	Grey Wagtail*	18	10	56
Common Buzzard	1	1	100	Tawny Owl	4	2	50
Black-headed Gull*	118	117	99	Pied Wagtail	58	24	41
Stock Dove*	48	35	93				

Nineteen species had over 40% of their total ringed as nestlings (Table 4) compared with 11 in 2005 and 14 of these species were of Conservation Concern (Gregory *et al.* 2002). As noted in the Introduction there was a decrease of 24% in the number of nestlings ringed in 2006 compared with 2005 (which was a particularly successful year for ringers of nestlings). Part of the decrease is due to a poor breeding season for owls, the number of Barn Owl nestlings ringed having decreased from 427 in 2005 to 162 in 2006, despite valiant efforts in checking so many nest boxes. Perhaps significantly Tawny Owl nestlings ringed also declined. Additional marked declines occurred in Common Kestrel (from 55 to 44), Northern Lapwing (by 50%), Common Tern (from 104 to 12), Tree Pipit (26 to six), Blue Tit (by 20%) and Great Tit (by 23%). It was not all bad news, however, as Black-headed Gull nestlings ringed increased from 50 in 2005 to 117 in 2006, Barn Swallow from 227 to 288 and Song Thrush from 48 to 72. Not too much should be read into any one year's results but declines notably out-numbered increases, suggesting a poor breeding season for some species, and the figures are likely to be particularly significant for those nest box-using species where similar numbers of boxes are checked year on year.

Particularly notable individual efforts include the 14 nestling Common Redstarts ringed by D.King, 55 nestling Song Thrushes (76% of that species total) by R. Lanaway and the 92 nestling Barn Owls and 20 nestling Stock Doves ringed by Dr A.B. Watson and his helpers.

Recoveries

A wide range of recoveries was reported and a selection of the more interesting ones is presented below. Once again there have been many reports of colour marked birds, which clearly demonstrate how non-ringers can contribute to our knowledge of bird movements.

Most people in Sussex dismiss **Greylag Geese** as feral. One ringed on 30 Oct 2004 as a first-year male at Loch Eye (Highland) was shot at Petworth Park on 28 Jan 2006. The Highland Ringing Group considered this to be an Icelandic bird and this may be the farthest south record

of one from that breeding stock. It is also one of the few definite wild Greylag Geese recorded in Sussex.

A colour-ringed **Dark-bellied Brent Goose** seen at West Wittering in December 2006 had been ringed in February 1979 at Ile de Re (France) so was nearly 28 years old. Since the British record is 28 years and 2 months and the European 28 years and 8 months (Staav and Fransson 2006), it would seem that 29 years could be the maximum lifespan.

The **Common Moorhen** has a reputation for a fascinating breeding system (both a cooperative breeder and an intraspecific brood parasite) but “in its movements it is unexceptional, with British and Irish birds being highly sedentary. There is some migratorial interest, however, in that resident Moorhens are joined by immigrants from parts of northwest Europe in autumn and winter. With this one exception, there is little to enthuse the student of bird migration...” (Wernham *et al.* 2002). The foregoing suggests that one ringed, as a first-year, at Icklesham on 14 Sep 1999 and found dead at Little Wigborough (Essex) on 2 Feb 2006, was bucking this trend as the ringing date is surely too early for a continental immigrant in Sussex, as juveniles only begin to leave their natal territories at 60-100 days of age.

Two colour-ringed **Black-tailed Godwits** were seen together at Rye Hbr on 9 Dec 2006. One had been ringed on 13 Jun 2006 as an adult male at a nest in north Iceland. The second had been ringed on 23 Aug 2005 at Holbeach (Lincolnshire) as an adult female. In September and October 2006 this bird was on the Stour estuary in Essex and in November on the Colne estuary (also in Essex) before moving to Rye the following month. It is unusual for Godwits to move region between November and January which makes this observation of particular interest.

A **Woodcock** ringed on 22 Oct 2005 at Beachy Head was shot on 22 Jan 2006 in Finistere (France). This is the third foreign recovery of a Beachy Head-ringed Woodcock (and the second shot in Finistere) from only six ringed at this site.

A **Black-headed Gull** ringed at East Worthing Beach on 27 Jan 1980 was sighted in Neubrandenburg (Germany) north of Berlin on 19 Nov 2006. The ‘ringed’ age is 26.8 years but calculated age (as it would have been hatched the previous year based on plumage details) is 27.5 years. Until now the British record was approximately 26 years and nine months and the European record 30 years and seven months (Staav and Fransson 2006). As both of these birds were found dead, this Sussex ringed bird might well live on to beat the European record. A chick ringed in Limburg (Belgium) in May 1994 was found dead at Barcombe Res in February 2006. As an example of how useful colour rings can be, a Black-headed Gull ringed in Denmark in March 2001 had had its ring read in the field 23 times in Denmark, four times in Ipswich (Suffolk) and once in Lancing in five years.

The oldest British ringed **Mew Gull/Common Gull**, until now, was ringed at Worthing Beach and was 26 years and six months old when found dead. One ringed at Sompting on 23 Nov 1980 was found dead in Germany on 10 Jun 2006, 22 years and 200 days later. As it was an adult when ringed, it was at least two years old so must have lived for at least 24 years.

A **Barn Owl** ringed at Lancing in August 1997 was found dead in Sheppey (Kent) in February 2006. Eight years and six months is a respectable age and 99 km is an excellent movement. Eighty nine percent of British Barn Owls travel less than 50 km, 7% 51 to 100 km and very few

further (Wernham *et al.* 2002). This one only needed to travel two more km to have made the prestige category. This rather makes up for the 20 dead or injured birds so far reported for 2006; only one Sussex ringed bird moved more than 13 km and that moved from Bepton to Eastleigh (Hampshire), a distance of 40 km.

Only seven British ringed **Kingfishers** have ever been found abroad. A bird ringed on 22 Jun 2005 at Warnham LNR was found dead on 24 Aug 2005 at St Gaudens (France). This is near Toulouse in the foothills of the Pyrenees, a remarkable distance of 889 km. Not only is this a rapid movement but everyone also knows (don't they?) that Kingfishers only move distances as a result of cold weather. Others have been found in France and the Channel Islands (three), Belgium, Spain and The Netherlands (Clark *et al.* 2007).

Meadow Pipits are well known as diurnal autumn migrants along the Sussex coast. One ringed at Icklesham on 26 Sep 2006 was "hunted" in Cadiz (Spain) on 1 Dec 2006 and had flown a distance of 1,719 km. It is quite likely to have had a continental origin. Half of all recoveries of this species, where the cause of death is known, have been hunted.

White Wagtails are regularly seen in Sussex on spring and autumn passage. A large number of Pied and White Wagtails are ringed at Slapton (Devon) each year. A first-year bird, ringed as a "probable *alba*" on 24 Sep 2005 was found freshly dead at Lyminster on 6 Feb 2006. Apparently this is the only Slapton ringed bird (of either race) to have moved west to east. As it was probably an *alba* this suggests it was returning to its continental breeding grounds. Most Slapton *alba* are thought to originate in Iceland.

A wonderful record of a **Robin** is one ringed on 15 Oct 2004 at Icklesham which was re-caught at Rybachiy (Kalingrad, Russia); a distance of 1,428 km. This is only the second British ringed Robin to have reached Russia. Another Robin ringed in Barstadvik (western Norway) on 10 Aug 2004 was re-caught at Icklesham on 1 Nov 2005. This is an example of a Scandinavian Robin on passage through Sussex.

A **Song Thrush** ringed at Landguard (Suffolk) on 11 Dec 2002 was found dead in Horsham on 19 Jan 2006. This bird was handed in to the Warnham LNR and the ringing site and date suggest that this was a continental bird wintering here.

A **Cetti's Warbler** ringed at Upton Warren (Hereford and Worcester) on 3 Jun 2004 was re-caught at Icklesham on 8 Oct 2004, 2 Oct 2005 and 23 Jan 2006. This is a distance of 247 km and there are only ten movements recorded over 200 km in Britain and only one over 250 km (Wernham *et al.* 2002), so this missed being the second by only 3 km. It also raises the question as to why it moved south-east?

The **Grasshopper Warbler**, with probably the lowest ring-recovery rate of any British breeding bird (Wernham *et al.* 2002), was last mentioned in the Ringing Report for 2002 (Edgar and McKenzie 2002) when three recoveries were reported. In 2006 two birds were reported. The first, ringed at Icklesham on 3 Sep 2004, was re-caught at Auchnagatt (Aberdeenshire) on 8 May 2006. The second had been ringed at Titchfield Haven (Hampshire) on 5 Sep 2006 and was re-caught at Icklesham three days later, a distance of 135 km.

An interesting **Blackcap** movement is shown by a bird caught at Cissbury Ring on 26 Sep

2006. It had been ringed 20 days earlier at Dunes de Slack (Pas-de-Calais, France) 140 km due east. This suggests that it could have been moving to winter in this country. Two Blackcaps ringed at this same site in France, both ringed on 19 Sep 2005, were caught at Beachy Head: one on 12 Sep 2006 and the other on the 26 Sep 2006.

A **Garden Warbler** ringed on 11 Jun 2006 at Chew Valley Lake (Avon) was re-caught at Beachy Head on 6 Aug 2006. This is interesting as it shows an autumn movement south eastwards before a Channel crossing. Ring-recoveries suggest a convergence onto the Sussex coast of departing British birds in August and September, involving birds from points as diverse as West Wales, the Borders and East Anglia (Wernham *et al.* 2002).

Adult **Willow Warblers** appear to begin their autumn passage in early August, a week or two later than first-autumn birds. The delay is probably due to physiological demands of post-nuptial moult. The re-capture of an adult, ringed on 10 Aug 2006 at North Slob (Wexford, Eire), at Icklesham five days later might therefore not be unusual. However, the direction of flight east-south-east is unusual as a bird from Eire might be expected to either head south to Spain or south-south-east to the near Continent.

How fast do birds move? A **Common Chiffchaff** ringed at Shoreham on 29 Oct 2006 was re-caught at Sturry (Kent), 112 km north north-east, the following day. All ringers like to catch a bird that was ringed at a famous site, so a Chiffchaff caught at Beachy Head on 10 Sep 2006 that had been ringed 3 May 2005 on Heligoland (Germany) was most welcome.

A **Firecrest** ringed on 29 Oct 2005 at Beachy Head was taken by a cat at East Dean on 9 Feb 2006. There are not many recoveries of Firecrests (Wernham *et al.* 2002; Atlas only records 29) and not much of a meal for a cat either. It had presumably come here to winter but reached a sad end.

The common tit species do not usually move over long distances, so a first-year female **Great Tit** ringed at Landguard Point (Felixstowe, Suffolk) on 30 Mar 2006 and re-caught at Cissbury Ring, 167 km away, on 3 Jun 2006 (and presumably having bred nearby) is exceptional, and difficult to explain.

A juvenile **Greenfinch** ringed at Weir Wood on 13 Jan 1999 and killed by a cat at Sharpthorne on 24 Jun 2006 seems a good age, although the British record is 12 years. Rather bizarre was a Greenfinch, recovered only 2 km from the ringing site, but found freshly dead with "a bee stuck on beak"!

A female **Bullfinch** ringed at Beachy Head in November 2005 was re-caught in April 2006 in Cashmoor (Dorset), a distance of 162 km. The longest recorded movement in Britain is only 178 km and very few travel more than 100 km (Wernham *et al.* 2002).

One ringer has trapped many **Siskins** in his East Grinstead garden and these have included two from Highland and one from the Borders region in Scotland, as well as one from the Netherlands which is the third to have moved to or from that country. There have now been 14 which have moved to or from the continent and 33 to or from Scotland at this site. Another ringer in East Grinstead has caught Siskins from the Isle of Rum and Kildary (both Highland) and also had two birds controlled in the Netherlands and one in Strathclyde. What is it about East Grinstead?

Reed Buntings rarely move far; indeed a wintering movement of over 300 km is regarded as ‘extreme’ (Wernham *et al.* 2002). A female ringed in her first winter at Five Ways (Ashdown Forest) on 5 Nov 2004 and re-caught near Norton (Cleveland) 402 km north-north-west on 3 Jun 2006 is, therefore, most unusual.

Acknowledgements

As always our grateful thanks go to the Secretaries of the Groups and the individual ringers named in Table 1 for submitting information and to the observers who reported colour-ringed birds, all of which make this Report possible.

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Scarce Woodland Bird Survey 2005-2006

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Introduction

This two-year survey was organised by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and was carried out during the breeding seasons of 2005 and 2006. The aims were to gather information about the habitat use and variations in densities of a list of specialist woodland species throughout their ranges. The observers were asked to choose their own survey sites, for which large-scale outline maps were provided. As an aid to carrying out the survey, compact discs with songs and calls of the target species were also provided.

Method

The BTO proposed that the Sussex contribution to the national survey be 25 sites collectively for both years. The observers were asked to select pairs of woodlands, ideally of similar type and age growth, but which contrasted in the number of target species they contained. One of each pair was to be a 'good' example, containing good numbers of commoner woodland specialists and, ideally, with at least four of the target species and one of eight particularly scarce 'key' species. The other wood was to be either 'poor' (containing few woodland specialists) or would be a complete 'unknown'. Ideally, the two woodlands were to be no more than eight kilometres apart. The fieldwork was based on a predetermined route (Woodland Walk) in each woodland. These were to be plotted on the maps and be at least 500 metres in length, although shorter ones were acceptable in small woodlands.

The recording area consisted of a block 200m in width (ie 100m each side of the Walk line), with the start and end points at least 100m inside the woodland. Some habitat information was required, relating to the woodland growth stage, type of under-storey and mature woodland structure, using simple diagrammatic examples provided.

Following a preliminary 'familiarisation' visit, two recording visits to the plot were to be made; an early one between late March and late April and a late one in May, allowing at least three weeks between visits. An optional third visit could be made in early June to pick up late nesting species.

The fieldwork involved counting and recording all the individuals of the target species seen and/or heard within the woodland block, plotting them on the map, with an indication of any activity, eg singing/calling, carrying nesting material or food, in flight, etc.

Data

The survey was carried out in 24 woodlands in 2005 and 38 in 2006, as shown in Table 1. Thirteen of the woods were visited in both years, but not necessarily using the same Walk routes. Although this survey covered only a small sample of Sussex woodlands, the sites were widely ranged across the county – from Inholmes Wood, Stoughton (SU8012) to Marline Wood, Hastings (TQ7812) in the east, as shown in Table 1.

There were 48 visits in 2005 and 101 (including five triple-visits) in 2006. Early dates ranged from 3 April to 3 May in 2005 and 6 April to 17 May in 2006, with late dates ranging from 8 May to 29 June in 2005 and 7 May to 30 June in 2006.

In the survey, 28 species were targeted, of which eight were also classed as key species. The target species included Pied Flycatcher and Crested Tit, which do not breed in the county and Redstart which does breed but was not recorded in the survey.

Table 1. *The 51 woodlands used in the survey, listed from west to east (those used in both years marked *).*

Inholmes Wood	SU8012	Sugworth Wood	TQ3326
Wildhams Wood	SU8113	Blackbrook Wood	TQ3417
Bow Hill (Stoughton)*	SU8211	The Plantation	TQ3417
Blackbush Copse (Stoughton)*	SU8212	Ardingly North Woods*	TQ3431
Venus Wood, West Dean Woods	SU8516	Cuttinglye Wood & Down Park	TQ3438
Stedham Marsh*	SU8525	Costells Wood	TQ3623
Older Hill & Footway Copse*	SU8626	Gravetye Woods*	TQ3634
Redvins Copse and west	SU9008	Warningore Wood	TQ3813
Rook Wood (Halnaker)	SU9009	Mill Wood	TQ4120
Heyshott Common/Goldballs Plantn.	SU9019	Sheffield Forest	TQ4126
Slindon Wood	SU9507	Founthall Wood	TQ4320
Colhook Common	SU9626	Park Wood	TQ4522
Burton Mill	SU9717	Abbot's Wood	TQ5607
Ebernoe Common	SU9726	Saxonbury Wood*	TQ5733
Brickkiln Copse, etc	SU9807	Nap Wood*	TQ5833
Tortington Wood	SU9907	Park Wood	TQ6012
Flexham Park	TQ0022	Jarvis & Nobodys Woods	TQ6013
Hammonds Wood	TQ0222	High Wood	TQ6038
Roman Woods*	TQ1133	Griggs Wood	TQ6135
Horsegills Wood	TQ1937	Rounden Wood*	TQ6721
Leechpool & Owlbeech Woods	TQ2031	Brightling Park*	TQ6820
Holmbush Forest	TQ2333	Darwell Woods* (2005)	TQ7020
Cow Wood	TQ2629	Darwell Woods (2006)	TQ6919
Rowlands Wood*	TQ2828	Scaland Wood	TQ7020
New England Wood	TQ2925	Hastings Park Wood	TQ7711
Worth Lodge Forest	TQ3135	Marline Wood	TQ7812

An overall total of 25 target species was recorded, as shown in Table 2. Of the eight key species currently breeding in Sussex, seven were found in small numbers only (from one to four individuals), reflecting their current status in the county.

Twenty of the target species were recorded in both years, the exceptions being Wood Warbler (2006), Willow Tit (2005), Siskin (2006), Lesser Redpoll (2006) and Hawfinch (2005).

The totals from the surveys were: in 2005, 22 species and 756 birds; and in 2006, 23 species and 1248 birds. With few exceptions, the average numbers per wood for each of the commoner species were remarkably consistent over the two years and also compared very well with Sussex data for the two years from the annual Breeding Bird Survey, supplied by Helen Crabtree.

Notes on key species

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker: There were six records only of this species, which is inconspicuous except when engaged in territorial drumming and calling. With the survey starting in April, it is likely that most of the territorial activity would have already ended. The records were from: Ebernoe Common, Hammonds Wood (Bedham), Warningore Wood (two records), Saxonbury Wood and Marline Wood (Hastings).

Table 2. The species and, for each year, the number of birds and number of woods in which they were recorded. The key species are emboldened.

Species	No. of birds		No. of woods	
	2005	2006	2005	2006
Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	4	13	3	4
Green Woodpecker <i>Picus viridis</i>	30	49	19	29
Great Spotted Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopus major</i>	63	111	20	34
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopus minor</i>	2	4	2	3
Tree Pipit <i>Anthus trivialis</i>	3	2	2	2
Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>	30	37	14	19
Common Nightingale <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	8	19	3	7
Song Thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	91	148	22	37
Mistle Thrush <i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	3	17	3	13
Blackcap <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	76	181	21	37
Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i>	18	19	10	13
Wood Warbler <i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	-	1	-	1
Common Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	117	221	23	36
Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	40	57	11	17
Goldcrest <i>Regulus regulus</i>	73	130	17	27
Firecrest <i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>	6	1	2	1
Spotted Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i>	3	6	2	3
Marsh Tit <i>Poecile palustris</i>	44	40	19	20
Willow Tit <i>Poecile montanus</i>	2	-	2	-
Nuthatch <i>Sitta europea</i>	75	99	19	31
Eurasian Treecreeper <i>Certhia familiaris</i>	28	26	11	16
Siskin <i>Carduelis spinus</i>	-	32	-	4
Lesser Redpoll <i>Carduelis cabaret</i>	-	1	-	1
Bullfinch <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	39	43	18	18
Hawfinch <i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	1	-	1	-

Tree Pipit: This is a species of which the main populations are on the open heathlands and this probably accounts for the low number of five records - from Stedham Marsh, Heyshott Common (2) and Darwell Woods.

Wood Warbler: Now a rare breeding bird in the county, the only report of this species was of a single in Romans Wood.

Firecrest: There is now a small, but apparently increasing breeding population in the county. There were records of seven birds in the survey, from Blackbush (Stoughton), West Dean Woods (5) and Cow Wood.

Willow Tit: There were only two records of this species, from Stedham Marsh and Gravetye Woods, an indication of its decline as a breeding species in the county.

Lesser Redpoll: A single in Worth Lodge Forest was the only record of this species, which is now normally associated with heathland areas, its main stronghold being Ashdown Forest.

Hawfinch: A single bird of this elusive species was recorded from Darwell Woods.

Conclusions

With the woodland area in Sussex totalling some 64,000 hectares, this survey was a small sample (about 2.5%). Data from the annual Breeding Bird Survey gave good comparisons for the commoner species, but there still has to be considerable caution in interpreting the results. As noted above, the key species were found in small numbers only and this is probably an indication of their current status in the county. Numbers of individuals recorded of the other eighteen species varied widely, from three (Mistle Thrush) to 221 (Chiffchaff). This variation is partly due to the differences in visibility and audibility between species. For example, overall totals of 79 Green Woodpeckers, 174 Great Spotted Woodpeckers, 239 Song Thrushes and 174 Nightingales were reported, but only 54 Treecreepers and 82 Bullfinches. It is perhaps surprising that the survey produced 203 Goldcrests, a species in which the song and calls are not far-carrying. The data on pairs of warbler species gave totals of 257 Blackcaps and 37 Garden Warblers (perhaps an indication of different habitat requirements) and a comparison of 338 Chiffchaffs and 97 Willow Warblers, probably reflecting the significant decline of the latter as a breeding species in the county.

Acknowledgements

My thanks go to all those who took part in the survey in the county and especially to Tony Cocks for acting as county organiser for the BTO. It is particularly gratifying that the survey has produced a considerable number of records for the SOS database, some from woodlands not previously surveyed or recorded. The raw data generated by this survey are held in a separate file on the SOS database.

The Wood Lark Survey 2006

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Introduction

The words constantly used about the Wood Lark *Lullula arborea* in historic and current literature (both at a county level and nationally) are scarce, local and fluctuating; indeed few species have shown such marked population changes in England over the last 150 years (Brown and Grice 2005). Perhaps, if it were more widespread, its beautiful, lilting song might be appreciated as much as, if not more than, that of its higher-profile relative the Sky Lark *Alauda arvensis*. Walpole-Bond (1914) described the Wood Lark as “the *primo musico* amongst British songbirds” and undoubtedly much of the appeal of the bird is that very early in the year it can be found in song over its breeding haunts in typical circular, slow undulating flight. Walpole-Bond once again catches the mood perfectly in his words: “it is in the often-rasping days of February that the Wood Lark first becomes mindful of spring’s advent,” although with the recent run of mild winters this is more likely to happen in mid-January, certainly in West Sussex.



Wood Lark, Coates Common, April 2006
(Dave Sadler)

Sussex Wood Larks are largely sedentary (Scott-Ham 1996) and have been recorded singing on their breeding grounds, albeit on occasions very briefly, in every month of the year (A. Perry *pers. obs.*). From October to early February, family groups or larger flocks are to be found feeding in stubble fields, usually not too far from the breeding areas. Historically, the main Sussex population has occupied the greensand of the Wealden heathlands in the northwest of the county. During the 1997 survey a population was located in the Horsham/Crawley area but no records were received from this location as a result of the

2006 survey. A healthy population has subsequently developed in Ashdown Forest further to the east. A breeding population has also been established recently on the South Downs close to the Hampshire border and appears to be expanding. The Sussex Wealden Heaths represent a relatively small land area compared to the extensive adjoining heaths of Hampshire and Surrey, which have long been a stronghold of the species. A single record was received from Broadwater Forest in East Sussex close to the boundary with Kent.

Population and conservation status

The European population is estimated at 1.0-2.3 million breeding pairs, of which approximately 75% breed in Iberia where either temperate or Mediterranean, rather than boreal and arid, conditions are favoured. Fluctuations in the European population are thought to occur due to habitat destruction or degradation and severe winters. Three successive severe winters after 1985 depleted most European populations, but subsequent mild winters and a propensity to be a prolific breeder (with up to three broods a season) revitalised the population (Bijlsma and Hoblyn 1997). Although it is believed that part of the United Kingdom (UK) breeding population is migratory, the majority remain as residents and any future severe winter could have an adverse impact on the Sussex breeding population. Within Sussex, population crashes were recorded after the extreme winters of 1962/63 and 1981/82. Historical summaries of the Sussex breeding population can be

found in Walpole–Bond (1938) with later estimates provided by Hughes (1969) and Scott-Ham (1996). The last national survey in 1997 estimated the UK population at 1462–1552 pairs of which Sussex held 65–71 pairs (Burges 1997), 4% of the UK population. Burges had also monitored West Sussex Wood Larks from 1994 until the 1996 survey and reported a steady improvement in estimated territories during that period, 11+ in 1994, 28–30 in 1995 and 60–62 in 1996.

From 1998 to 2005, but excluding the Foot and Mouth year of 2001 when access was limited, the highest count was 83 territories in 1998 and the lowest 54–55 in 2004, the remaining years varying between 62 and 74 estimated territories. Despite the disparity between the high and low figures the population is likely to have remained relatively stable and such variance is partially due to variable observer coverage, although changing habitat suitability may also have played its part. Typically the Wealden Heaths of West Sussex held by far the most territories although numbers have built up gradually in Ashdown Forest where 27–29 pairs were estimated in 2005.

The county status of the species is described as “scarce resident and passage migrant”. Scarce in this instance refers to between 11 and 100 breeding pairs. Nationally, the species is red-listed as being of high conservation concern, reflecting a rapid 50% or more contraction of UK breeding range over the previous 25 years. It is a Category 2 Species of European Conservation Concern (SPEC 2) indicating that more than 50% of the global population or range is in Europe and the species has an unfavourable conservation status in Europe (Gregory *et al.* 2002). On the positive side, *The State of the UK's Birds* (RSPB *et al.* 2005) notes that, as a priority species within the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, its trend since 1995 is increasing, that the numerical target of 1500 pairs has been achieved and that there is good progress with range recovery.

Method

The National Wood Lark Survey 2006 was sponsored by English Nature (EN), the Forestry Commission (FC), and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), and organised by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

The aim of the survey was to record all occupied Wood Lark territories within 1-km squares that had been identified as either currently or historically holding breeding birds; other squares were also chosen because of their close proximity to occupied areas. Furthermore the members of the Sussex Ornithological Society (SOS) were asked to report all sightings of birds suspected of holding territory.

The survey started on 15 February and finished on 31 May. The surveyors were asked to undertake at least two visits to each 1-km square, preferably before midday on mild, windless, or mildly windy days. Birds heard singing simultaneously and those that were heard singing separately but a minimum of 200 m apart were counted as separate territories. At the end of the survey the surveyors were asked to provide an estimated minimum and maximum number of males within each 1-km square.

For England and Wales at least 3500 1-km squares were covered, recording 1741 territories (1552 in 1997). Three regions accounted for 91% of these territories; 621 in the east (707 in 1997), 752 in the southeast (609 in 1997) and 217 in the southwest (159 in 1997). Wales recorded two territories (zero in 1997), the first confirmed breeding for over 25 years (Conway *et al.* 2006).

The 752 territories in the southeast were recorded from surveying the following number of 1-km squares in the five counties listed west to east: Dorset (429), Hampshire (153), Surrey (189), Sussex (111) and Kent (9) (G.Conway *pers.comm.*).

The BTO generated 236 forms for Sussex involving 23 10-km squares designed to identify current breeding territories and potential breeding habitat for future monitoring. In practice 10 10-km squares held 63 1-km squares containing breeding territories (Figure 1), and few if any potential areas of suitable habitat were reported.

Results and discussion

From West Sussex 27 positive recording forms were returned from 10 surveyors, the majority being from the heaths covered by the Wealden Heaths Breeding Birds Survey (WHBBS). Two completed forms were returned from East Sussex by one observer. Additional records were received from the western South Downs, Iron Hill near Linchmere, and from Broadwater Forest. There were a substantial number of reported sightings sent from the Ashdown Forest Bird Group but, since these records did not use the BTO standard methods, the number of territories was estimated by plotting the six figure map references provided with each sighting on a map and using these to estimate the likely number of breeding territories.

The area regularly surveyed by the WHBBS located a minimum of 38 and maximum of 46 territories from 22 occupied 1-km squares. The remaining West Sussex results identified a minimum of four and a maximum of six territories from the northwest greensand ridge west of Milland (three occupied 1-km squares), a precise count of eight territories in six 1-km squares from the South Downs area adjoining the Hampshire boundary, two to three territories at Iron Hill south of Stanley Common, one territory at Wiggonholt Common and the remaining territories close to, but not within, the WHBBS survey area.

The start of the survey in mid-February unfortunately coincided with a period of intermittent strong winds and cold weather that continued through March and is likely to have limited the aerial flight song of breeding birds, particularly those where the population is less dense.

The total number of territories for West Sussex was a minimum of 55 and a maximum of 71 in 37 1-km squares. Other than a single report, all East Sussex territories were from Ashdown Forest, where there was a minimum of 29 and a maximum of 35 from 25 1-km squares (Figure 1). Although standard methods were not used by the Ashdown Forest Bird Group, the species did receive special attention with 101 records being received dating from 1 February to 15 July. The total number of territories for East Sussex was a minimum of 29 and a maximum of 35 in 26 1-km squares. Therefore the total number of territories for Sussex was 84-106 in 63 1-km squares (Figure 1).

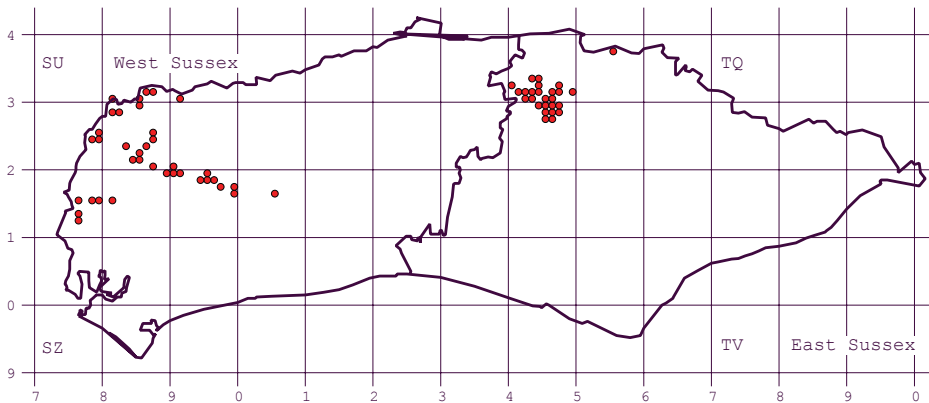


Figure 1. *The distribution of Wood Larks in Sussex in 2006 plotted by 1-km squares.*

Habitat

Participants in the survey were asked to fill out a habitat section in the reporting form but a high proportion did not. Habitat data were mainly provided from the WHBBS area in the northwest of the county. Unfortunately the completed habitat sections were not available to the author; however, as co-ordinator of the WHBBS, the sites are personally well known, and the

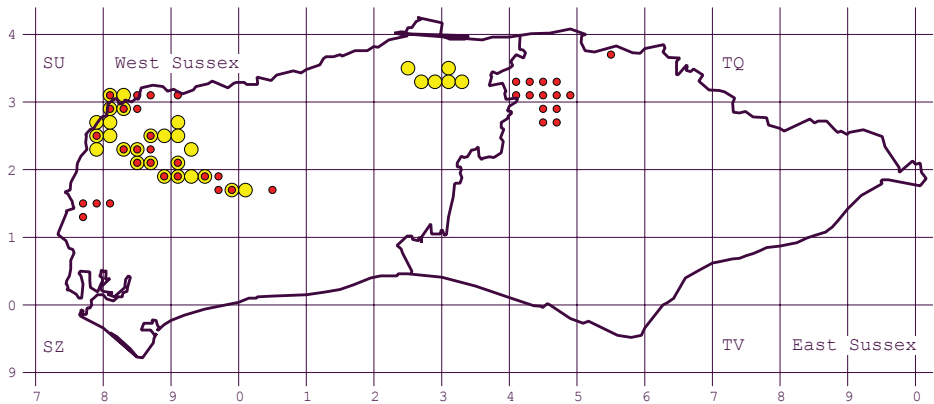


Figure 2. *The distribution of Wood Larks in Sussex plotted by tetrads. Yellow, 1997; red, 2006.*

following text is based upon knowledge of those sites or anecdotal evidence provided by the relevant surveyors.

It is only Knox (1849) that noted that the species was abundant in the Sussex Weald. Most other authors disagree (e.g. Walpole-Bond 1938). This is probably because the preferred breeding habitat, comprising a mosaic of bare ground and short vegetation, has never been common in Sussex (Burges 1997). The extensive heathland restoration initiatives (Plate 1) which started in the 1990s and the clearance and replanting of forestry, due to the storms of 1987 and 1990, have increased the area of suitable breeding habitat. Typically birds will move into a recently



Plate 1. *Lavington Plantation is an example of heathland restoration where recent clear felling followed by light grazing has produced ideal Wood Lark breeding habitat.*

felled area and an example of this is from a site adjoining Heyshott Common; here a pair took up occupation in one half of a two-hectare site, whilst the contractor felled the remaining half (A. Perry *pers. obs.*). Such sites are seldom used beyond five years after replanting. Although the majority of Sussex's population is found on forestry or heathland, they have also been recorded on set-aside fields and spring-sown crops, particularly where these are close to existing breeding grounds. Examples of such sites are a field in the centre of Duncton Common and similar fields on the edge of the Wealden Greensand ridge in the far northwest, close to the Hampshire border (Plate 2). On Ashdown Forest all of the sightings referred to birds found on cleared areas such as paths, cleared heath and cut grass (R. Harman *pers. comm.*).

In 2001 a single male was found holding territory on the South Downs and subsequently a small but expanding population has developed between East Marden and the Hampshire border. These birds are to be found in set-aside or in fields where the previous year's furrowed areas are favoured. One bird was found holding territory in grassland (C.B. Collins *pers. comm.*).



Plate 2. A stubble field near Durford Wood (West Sussex) where Wood Lark held territory in 2006. The former breeding area, now unsuitable as the conifer plantation has matured, can be seen in the background.

Conservation

The expansion of the species in Sussex has probably been due to a combination of milder winters and increased habitat availability, the latter through the felling of forestry plantations and heathland restoration. However, in order to maintain the population, sympathetic management of these areas is required. In forestry, this involves rotational felling to maintain open areas suitable for Wood Larks; otherwise when the trees mature, the birds would be forced to nest in less suitable surrounding habitat or to move elsewhere. At Durford in the far west close to the Hampshire border, for example, Wood Lark territories were recorded on asparagus fields to the south of a large area of mature conifer plantation. The whole block is of a similar age and when it was clear-felled would probably have provided a large area of suitable nesting habitat. On heathland, management might include rotational mowing and/or grazing to maintain areas of bare ground and shorter vegetation. It is essential that any habitat management specifically for Wood Larks is carried out away from footpaths to minimise disturbance during the breeding season (A. Perry *pers. obs.*). Where the species occurs on downland and farmland, opportunities for sympathetic management might arise through agri-environment schemes or simply by securing the co-operation of the farmers and owners on whose land the species occurs. The continued monitoring of Wood Lark numbers and their habitats in Sussex will be vital to ensuring that any management favouring this species is maintained or improved.

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my thanks to all those observers who have undertaken the survey work, a full list of whom appears on pages 211-216, to Dr JA Cocks for liaising with the BTO, distributing and

collecting the forms, and editing the text, to Dr John Newnham and Julianne Evans for advice, comment and guidance and to Dr John Newnham for supplying the maps.

The raw data generated by this survey are held in a separate file on the SOS database.

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The Dartford Warbler Survey 2006

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Introduction

A glimpse of a small, dark blue-black bird flitting with a jerky, longish drooped tail motion and disappearing into the heather; a pugnacious, red-eyed, long-legged sentinel glaring briefly at intruders from the top of a gorse or heather clump; a sudden lurch up into the air uttering a scratchy Common Whitethroat-like song; these are often the observer's only sightings of the skulking Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*. Called by Walpole–Bond (1914) a “furze sprite”, the Sussex population since disappearing from the eastern South Downs is more likely to be seen in tall heather growth rather than gorse, although the author has found male birds on Lavington Common singing at the very top of pine trees in excess of 10 m high.

The recorded history of the Dartford Warbler in Sussex is a story of an insectivorous resident passerine at the northern edge of its range, suffering, particularly during the 20th century, from habitat degradation. Heathlands were considered areas of low economic value and as such were vulnerable to changes in use such as housing development and forestry. The species is also extremely vulnerable to severe winters. There were no breeding records at all from the county between 1947 and 1960 (Scott-Ham 1996), but a run of mild winters in the early to mid-seventies and the bird's high reproductive rate (Brown and Grice 2005) led to a revival and, in 1973, 23 pairs were found breeding in four locations (Shrubb 1979). Further harsh winters again decimated the population until in 1982 none were recorded in the county (Scott-Ham 1996). It was not until 1989, when four pairs were found, that the county was effectively recolonised. Subsequently, an appreciation of the aesthetic and biological worth of heathland has led to the initiation of heathland restoration projects, particularly during the 1990s, and this, together with a milder run of winters, has led to a renaissance of the Dartford Warbler as a breeding species in Sussex.

Both male and female Dartford Warblers frequently occupy their breeding territories throughout the year (Bibby 1979a), but there is a dispersal of birds mainly to the coast. Numbers reported from coastal areas in spring are generally low but are much higher in autumn peaking in October (Sussex Bird Reports 2002–2005). The Sussex Bird Reports also show these coastal numbers in October fluctuating from year to year (10 in 2002, 24 in 2003, 28 in 2004 and 15 in 2005). Most of the coastal birds are assumed to be juveniles displaced from the breeding grounds by renewed territorial activity from resident adults after their autumn moult. There may be a partial southward migration, however, as birds also appear on the coast when breeding numbers are low (Bibby 1979a). Historically, the main Sussex population occupied the eastern South Downs (Plate 1). Walpole–Bond (1938) has an illustration of gorse-covered downland with text stating, “a breeding haunt of the Grasshopper and Dartford Warblers”. This situation prevailed until the late 1970s after which none were recorded, presumably because the effects of the severe winters would have been greater at these higher altitudes and habitat fragmentation would have made the area unsuitable for recolonisation. Since then, the northwest heaths and Ashdown Forest have been the main centres of the species' breeding efforts (des Forges and Harber 1963).

An interesting example of site fidelity is that despite crashes in the population and county extinctions, occupancy of Heyshott Common can be traced back to a record of a pair in 1881 (Borrer 1891). Adjoining the borders of Sussex in the northwest of the county there are extensive tracts of suitable heathland breeding habitat in Hampshire and Surrey, and it is likely that these areas have ensured continued occupancy of our own smaller and fragmented heaths on the Wealden greensands. Ashdown Forest remains a stronghold in its own right, possibly owing to its size and management practices.



Plate 1. “Jock” Walpole–Bond searching for Dartford and Grasshopper Warblers on the eastern South Downs. Date unknown. (Photograph by D. M. Turner-Ettliger).

Population and conservation status

The European population is estimated at 1.9-3.3 million breeding pairs (Birdlife International 2004). The majority of the European population and 85% of the world population is found in Spain. The species is predominantly western Mediterranean with the United Kingdom (UK) being at the northern edge of its breeding range. There has been a progressive destruction of the bird's habitat which has led both to a long-term decline and to the species being regarded as of conservation concern in both a European and a UK context (Brown and Grice 2005).

Reference has already been made to the species' historic fluctuations in the county and the last national survey was organised by the RSPB in 1994. The results of that survey were that 1600-1670 pairs were found in England with the most populous county being Hampshire (577-622 pairs). Sussex noted “more than 26 pairs” (Scott-Ham 1996). However, the species account in the Sussex Bird Report for 1994 states “There were eight breeding records from Ashdown Forest and courtship and territorial behaviour were observed at more than 30 other sites there”. The figures that were published in the 1994 survey paper (Gibbons and Wotton 1996) were, for West Sussex six territories in four 1-km squares and in East Sussex 29 territories in 16 1-km squares. There is therefore a confusion over the published 1994 Sussex figures and consequently the county total of >26 pairs, as noted in the Birds of Sussex (Scott-Ham 1996) is likely to be an under-estimate.

Figure 1 shows the estimated numbers of birds holding territory or breeding since the 1994 survey (NB In 2001, the year of the Foot and Mouth outbreak, only Ashdown Forest provided meaningful results).

The county status of the species is described as “Fairly common but localised resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern”. “Fairly common” in this instance is defined as between 101 and 1000 breeding pairs, therefore the species just scrapes into the lower end of the range. Less than 101 and it would be defined as “scarce”. Nationally, the species is Amber-listed, i.e. a species that has undergone a historical population decline during the period 1800-1995 but

whose population size has more than doubled over the previous 25 years (Gregory *et al.* 2002). On a European level it is listed as a Category 2 Species of European Conservation Concern (SPEC 2) and its status is recorded as “depleted” (large historical decline) and “vulnerable” (population in large decline and of more than 10,000 breeding pairs) (Birdlife International 2004).

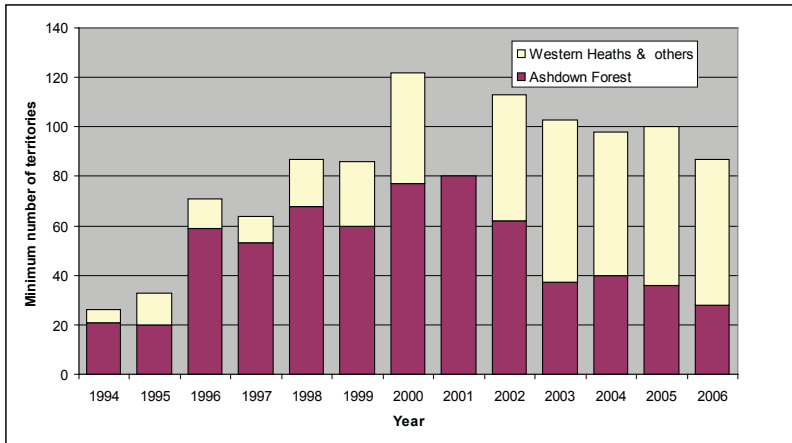


Figure 1. The number of Dartford Warbler pairs on the western heaths and Ashdown Forest, 1994 to 2006.

Method

The National Dartford Warbler Survey 2006 was sponsored by English Nature (EN), the Forestry Commission (FC) and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), and was organised by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). The aim of the survey was to record all occupied Dartford Warbler territories within 1-km squares identified by either singing males or other contacts. In order to determine expansion into new areas a number of sample 1-km squares were selected where it was considered there may be suitable habitat and which were within 10 km of a known breeding site. The survey commenced on 1 April and finished on 30 June. The surveyors were requested to visit each 1-km square at least twice, the first visit being between 1 April and 15 May and the second between 16 May and 30 June with not less than 10 days between each visit. Neighbouring birds were separated with certainty, if they were heard or seen simultaneously. It was recommended that each visit should take place between dawn and mid-morning on mild dry days with little wind. After the final visit the surveyors were asked to assess the minimum and maximum number of territories in each surveyed 1-km square.

For England and Wales at least 2500 1-km squares were covered recording 2553 territories (1600-1670 in 1994). The southeast and southwest regions accounted for 93% of these territories, and a westward expansion of the population was indicated by territories being found in Wales (zero in 1994) (Conway *et al.* 2006).

The 2553 territories in the southeast were recorded from surveying the following number of 1-km squares in the five counties listed from west to east: Dorset (450), Hampshire (878), Surrey (254), Sussex (258) and Kent (26), indicating the potential stronghold in Hampshire (G. Conway *pers. comm.*).

The BTO generated 120 forms for Sussex involving 19 10-km squares designed to identify

current breeding territories and potential breeding habitat for future monitoring. In practice only seven 10-km squares held breeding territories in a total of 32 1-km squares (Figure 2) and few, if any, potential areas of suitable habitat were reported.

Results and discussion

There were 14 positive recording forms received from West Sussex submitted by seven surveyors, all except one record being from the area covered by the Wealden Heaths Breeding Birds Survey (WHBBS), and one from East Sussex plus records from Ashdown Forest. A further 19 forms were returned with negative results due either to unsuitable habitat or no birds being present/detected. Additional records were received of five birds from two 1-km squares in the Weavers Down area, and the Ashdown Forest Bird Group produced a list of records based on six figure grid references but did not estimate the number of territories. The author therefore plotted the individual grid references onto a map of the area surveyed and estimated the breeding population of Ashdown Forest from those results.

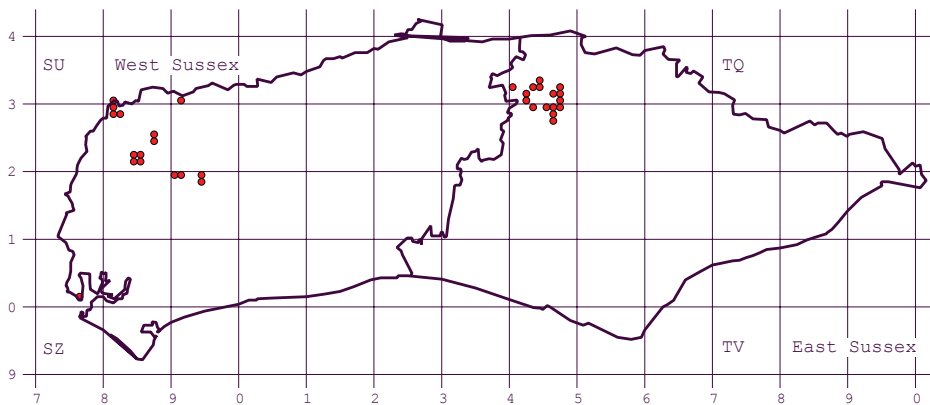


Figure 2. The distribution of Dartford Warblers in Sussex in 2006, plotted by 1-km squares.

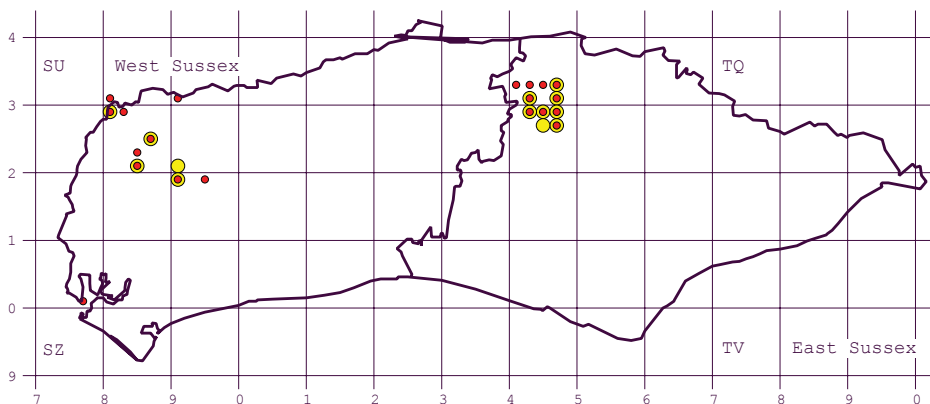


Figure 3. The distribution of Dartford Warblers in Sussex plotted by tetrads. Yellow, 1994 survey; red, 2006 survey.

The area regularly surveyed by the WHBBS identified a minimum of 58 and a maximum of 62 territories from 15 occupied 1-km squares which represented seven heathlands (Ambersham and Heyshott, and Iping and Stedham, are respectively treated as single heathlands for this exercise). The only other territory was on the coast at Thorney Island. The total number of territories for West Sussex was a minimum of 59 and a maximum of 63 in 16 1-km squares.

One completed form reporting a single territory was received from East Sussex and all other results for that county related to Ashdown Forest. Although standard methods were not used by the Ashdown Forest Bird Group the species did receive special attention with 73 records being received dating from 1 April to 29 June. The total for East Sussex is a minimum of 28 and a maximum of 38 territories in 16 1-km squares. The total number of territories for Sussex was a minimum of 87 and a maximum of 101 occupying 32 1-km squares. NB. Due to differing assessment methods there will be a small discrepancy between the numbers to be quoted in the national paper compared to conclusions reached for Sussex.

Figure 1 shows a small but clear decline in numbers in the past five years since 2001 with the largest loss from Ashdown Forest. Reasons for this apparent decline are unclear and could be due to a single factor or a combination of several factors, including weather, variation in observer effort and/or data interpretation and habitat change. This highlights the need for consistent, standardised data collection in the core areas to help identify whether such fluctuations are within the normal range or require conservation action.

Habitat

Participants in the survey were asked to fill out a habitat section in the reporting form but a high proportion did not. Habitat data were mainly provided from the WHBBS area in the northwest of the county. Most of the sites, particularly in the northwest, are well known to the author, however, and the following text is based upon personal knowledge of those sites or on anecdotal evidence provided by the relevant surveyors.

In its Mediterranean strongholds the habitat of the Dartford Warbler is maquis, with its mixture of low- to medium-height vegetation. In the UK the critical habitat is almost exclusively dry heathland with gorse (Bibby 1993), thus potential breeding areas within the county are easy to locate. In Sussex, these areas can be clearly identified as the Wealden Heaths of the northwest and Ashdown Forest (Plate 2), with occasional pairs appearing at other sites such as Chailey Common (although no records were received from this latter site in 2006).

Plate 2. *Dartford Warbler site at Ashdown Forest; taken from Roman Road and looking south towards Camp Hill Clump.*



On suitable sites, which can be described as where 1-2-m high gorse thickets or bushes are scattered across extensive stands of tall (at least 30 cm) heather (Bibby 1979b, Van den Berg *et al.* 2001) the species can reach a density of 10-15 pairs or territories per km². Heyshott and Ambersham Commons (Plate 3), which were described by Francis Rose (1991-92) as the richest heathlands in West Sussex, are two such habitats and here two 1-km squares held 11-14 and 9-12 territories, respectively.

The main food items of spiders, beetles, bugs and moth and butterfly larvae are mostly taken around gorse bushes. Gorse stands support a much larger biomass of these favoured invertebrates than does heather (Bibby 1979c), although nesting within the heather itself is commonplace (A. Perry *pers. obs.*). Recent heathland restoration work on the other western heaths has substantially improved the species' ability to develop greater breeding densities.



Plate 3. *Typical Dartford Warbler breeding habitat at Heyshott and Ambersham Commons.*

Harsh winters, which have not been part of the recent weather cycle in the southeast of the UK, can have a highly deleterious effect on populations, especially in smaller areas of heathland such as those in Sussex. The largest Wealden heath is Ambersham and Heyshott combined at approximately 140 ha (346 acres), but only a proportion of this is suitable for breeding and feeding because much of the area comprises heath woodland, grassland and generally unsuitable habitat. Despite their relatively small scale and fragmented nature the large extent of heathland in neighbouring counties, particularly the Hampshire heaths, is likely to ensure that recolonisation can occur. Ashdown Forest is more insular being away from other high population centres, but its size at approximately 2590 ha (6400 acres) may provide some protection from all but the harshest winters. Despite the generally mild weather conditions, a localised spell of harsh weather can have a major effect and, in 2005, parts of Ashdown Forest were affected by snow and sharp

overnight frosts, which led to the population falling heavily in the east and expanding in the formerly less well-populated western side (D. King *pers. comm.*).

Conservation

The future of the Dartford Warbler in Sussex can almost exclusively be said to be in the hands of two agents; a future lack of severe winters and a continuing determination (together with funding) to both manage and restore the heaths. It is the aim of the Sussex Biological Action Plan to increase the area of heathland by 10% by 2010 and double it by 2100. On a practical level, the maintenance of a dynamic mosaic of vegetation age classes together, where possible, with work that links existing heathland fragments will be especially valuable for this species (Brown and Grice 2005). Small heaths near centres of population will inevitably suffer from leisure activities such as dog walking and, in hotter drier summers, will be susceptible to the danger of fires. In such locations, the species may be absent or numbers will be lower, but these areas may prove useful as links to other, larger heaths, or being close to urban areas can provide education opportunities as well as leisure access. Now that heathlands are recognised for the benefits of their unique ecological wealth and historic relevance, and the fact that they are some of the few open wild places left in the South of England, it is to be hoped that the “furze sprite” remains a delightful feature of the Sussex avifauna.

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my thanks to all those observers who have undertaken the survey work, a full list of whom appears on pages 211-216, to Dr JA Cocks for liaising with the BTO, distributing and collecting the forms, and editing this paper, to Dr John Newnham and Julianne Evans for advice and comment and to Dr John Newnham for supplying the maps and graph.

The raw data generated by this survey are held in a separate file on the SOS database.

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Distribution maps and population trends derived from the county database: some limitations

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Introduction

The Sussex Ornithological Society (SOS) currently receives records of bird sightings from many different sources. These include casual records submitted to the Honorary Recorder by members and other individuals and groups, and data collected through annual or one-off organised surveys, particularly those run by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), such as the annual Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). Because of the careful integration of all these data into a single database, many types of analyses can be carried out. In particular, it is possible to produce distribution maps of records for individual species and to make comparisons of numbers from year to year. This paper presents some of the distribution maps and population trends that can be derived from different kinds of data, and describes some of the problems associated with their interpretation.

Distribution maps

A large proportion of the records entered into the SOS database each year is made up of so-called casual records, received from individuals and groups. These range from sightings of single birds by individuals to extremely comprehensive records of species seen over the course of the year at specific sites. All of these records are extremely valuable, particularly because of their potential use for conservation purposes. However, the recording effort is not evenly distributed across the county, as shown in Figure 1. The distribution of all records received clearly reflects areas of high human population density, particularly along the coast, as well as the obvious areas around well-recorded nature reserves such as Chichester, Pagham and Rye Harbours and other well-watched areas such as the Arun Valley and the Ashdown Forest. There are also some areas

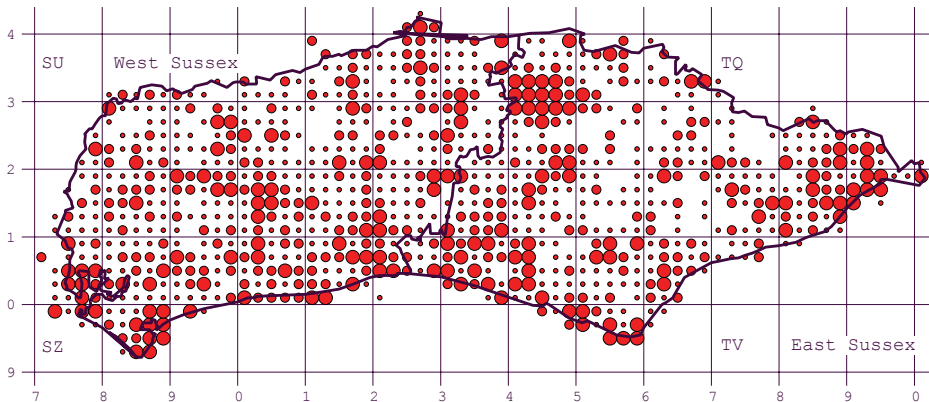


Figure 1. The distribution (plotted by tetrad) of all 2006 records received with grid references. Small circles, 1-25 records; medium circles, 26-100 records; large circles, 100+ records.

that generate very few records indeed, the most obvious being a large area of central East Sussex, but also some areas in the north-west of the county; these are rural areas with low human population densities.

There has been an enormous increase in the last 20 years in the number of records received by the SOS, as illustrated in Figure 2. There are many reasons for this, including improvements in computer software, and increased sharing of data with other local groups and nature reserves. In addition, any records of bird sightings in Sussex that are submitted through the online BTO Birdtrack scheme are forwarded to the SOS. Increasing numbers of observers are now using Birdtrack, and records received in this way have the advantage that observers often submit entire lists of species observed at a particular site, increasing the number of records of common birds.

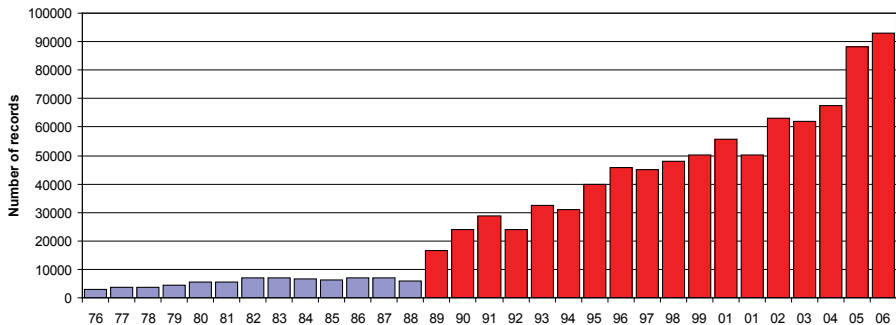


Figure 2. The number of records submitted to the SOS in each year since 1976. Blue bars, records received before database development in 1989 and retrieved from archives; red bars, records added directly to database.

Membership of the SOS has been stable at an average of around 1500 since 1981, and the average number of individuals submitting records to the database was 427 in the period 1996-1999 and 560 in the period 2000-2006. The ten-fold increase in the numbers of records added each year to the database since 1988 is therefore not due to a concomitant increase in SOS membership or the number of individuals submitting records, and this helps to explain why the distribution of these records across the county has remained largely unchanged since the collection of records began. This can be seen by comparing Figure 1, showing the distribution of records received in 2006, with Figure 3, showing the distribution of all records received during the period 1976-1993. Both maps show the same areas of high and low densities of records. Any distribution map for a particular species must clearly be viewed with these factors in mind.

Distribution maps for habitat-specific species

For some species, particularly those more confined to specific habitats, accurate distribution maps can be produced using casual records. This is partly because the relatively small and confined ranges of these species fall within the well-recorded areas, but also because these species attract observers to particular kinds of habitat. For example, the distribution of all records received in 2006 for Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*, shown in Figure 4, reflects accurately how this species is largely confined to the Ashdown Forest and the Wealden heaths. Similarly accurate maps can be produced for species confined to the upland areas of the South Downs, such as Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*, and for other heathland species such as Wood Lark *Lullula arborea* and Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*; these latter two species were subjects of BTO species-specific surveys in 2006, the results of which are published elsewhere in this volume (Perry 2006a,b).

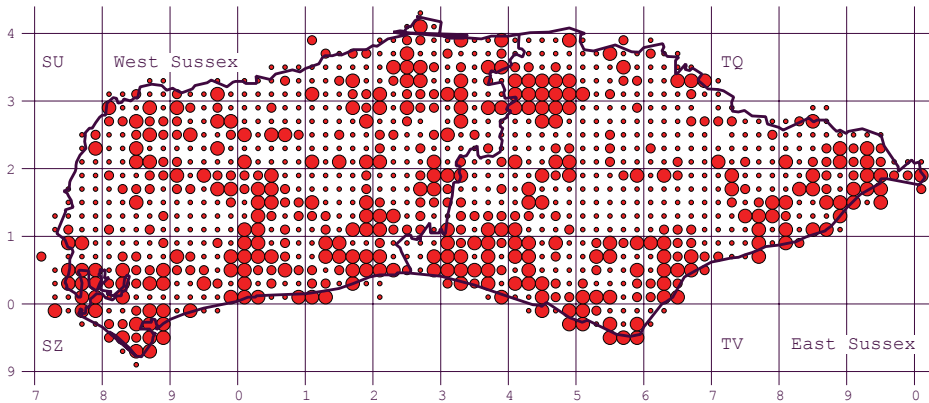


Figure 3. The distribution (plotted by tetrad) of all records received with grid references during the period 1976-1993. Small circles, 1-25 records; medium circles, 26-100 records; large circles, 100+ records.

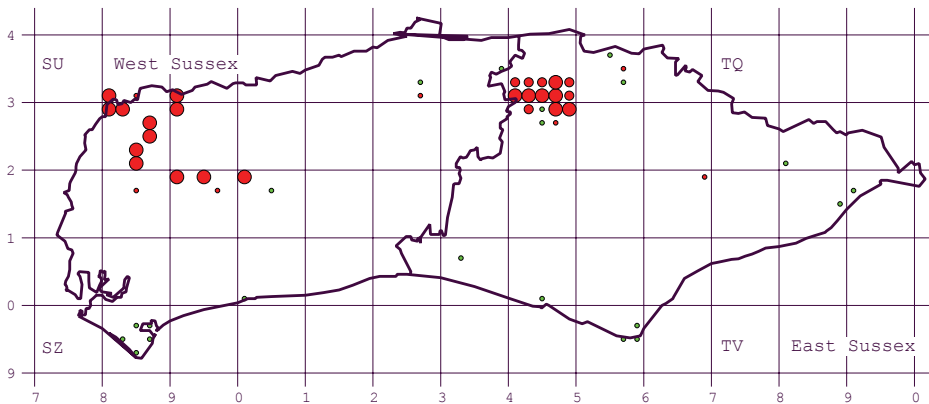


Figure 4. The distribution (plotted by tetrad) of all Tree Pipit records for 2006. Red circles, records including evidence of breeding (small, possible breeding; medium, probable breeding; large, confirmed breeding); green circles, records without evidence of breeding.

Assuming that Figure 4 does accurately reflect the distribution of Tree Pipit in Sussex in 2006, it can be compared with the distribution map produced from the survey data of the Sussex Tetrad Atlas 1988-1992 (incorporated into *Birds of Sussex* 1996), shown in Figure 5. By comparing these maps it can be seen that there has been a significant contraction in the range of this species during the last 14 years. The possible reasons for this are beyond the scope of this paper; however, there was a contraction in range in central and south-east England between the two previous BTO national breeding atlases (1968-1972 and 1988-1991), and the continuing decline has been linked anecdotally to changing forest structures as plantations mature (Baillie *et al.* 2006). It should be noted that areas where Tree Pipit was recorded in the period 1988-1992, but not in 2006, are relatively well-recorded areas. A genuine absence of Tree Pipits can fairly confidently be assumed here.

Distribution maps for widespread species

The real problem with distribution maps arises when considering more widespread and common species, and particularly those that are unobtrusive and easily overlooked. For example, Figure 6 shows the distribution of all casual records (including Birdtrack records but excluding records generated from organised surveys) received in 2006 for Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*. If this map is compared with the map shown in Figure 1, it can be seen that all areas with records of Bullfinch are those for which there are many records generally, and the map in Figure 6 therefore reflects the distribution of observer effort; it almost certainly does not reflect in any way the true distribution of Bullfinch in Sussex. One entire 10-km square (TQ52) contains no records for Bullfinch at all, and many other 10-km squares have only one or two records; given that many of these areas consist predominantly of farmland and woodland, it is extremely unlikely that they contain so few or no Bullfinches. It is also true that there are few or no records of any species in some of these areas.

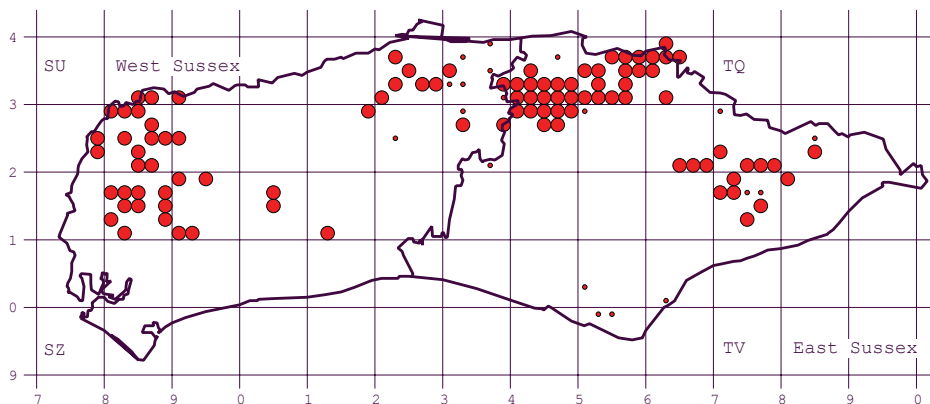


Figure 5. The distribution (plotted by tetrad) of Tree Pipit records from the 1988-1992 Sussex Tetrad Atlas survey data. Large circles, confirmed breeding; small circles, possible breeding.

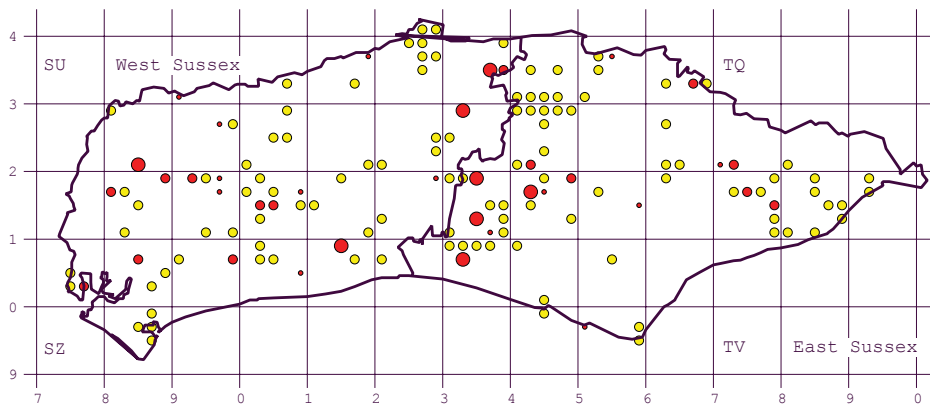


Figure 6. The distribution (plotted by tetrad) of Bullfinch records for 2006, excluding BBS and SWBS data. Red circles, records including evidence of breeding (small, possible breeding; medium, probable breeding; large, confirmed breeding); yellow circles, records without evidence of breeding.

In contrast with the uneven distribution of casual records, the sites surveyed as part of the BBS are randomly selected, and are therefore evenly scattered across the county, as shown in Figure 7. However, the number of BBS sites is too small (122 1-km squares surveyed in Sussex in 2006) for the production of meaningful distribution maps for individual species. This is especially true for those species that are only recorded in a small proportion of the BBS squares, although some population trends can be calculated for commoner species (see below). In addition to the BBS, some organised species-specific or habitat-specific surveys can dramatically increase the amount of data available for some species. For example, the BTO Scarce Woodland Bird Survey (SWBS), running in 2005 and 2006, produced counts of certain woodland species at a total of 51 sites across Sussex (Figure 7), although in contrast to the BBS these sites were not randomly selected 1-km squares but were sites of various areas chosen by the observers (Manns 2006).

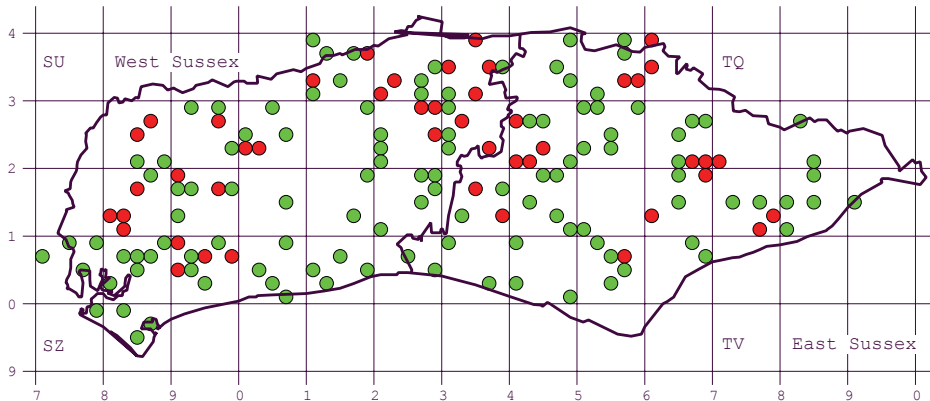


Figure 7. The distribution (plotted by tetrad) of BBS 1-km squares (green) surveyed in 2006 and SWBS sites (red) surveyed in 2005 and/or 2006. In some cases two sites are within the same tetrad.

Whilst BBS and SWBS data alone cannot be used to produce distribution maps for individual species, the data can be added to the distribution maps produced from casual records. However, because of the relatively small number of these BBS and SWBS sites at which Bullfinch was recorded in 2006 (34 BBS and 18 SWBS sites), these extra records make very little difference to the distribution map, as shown in Figure 8.

Besides casual records and data from the BBS and SWBS, the other source of records of Bullfinch and other species visiting gardens is the BTO/CJ Garden Birdwatch (GBW) scheme. Under this scheme, participants record weekly numbers of ten common garden bird species, and weekly presence or absence of 31 less common species (this latter category including Bullfinch), through all months of the year. From these records (not currently incorporated into the SOS database), it is possible to produce distribution maps for individual species in participating gardens. Figure 9 shows such a distribution map for Bullfinch in 2006 (M. Toms *pers. comm.*). This map shows a significant number of records of Bullfinch in areas for which there are few or no records in the SOS database. However, the more interesting point about this distribution map is that it includes the locations of gardens that did not record Bullfinch during 2006. Therefore, unlike the map derived from casual records, it shows where there has been recording effort but where Bullfinch was not found; the most obvious feature is that Bullfinch is largely absent from coastal areas between Chichester Harbour and Beachy Head. It is also useful to note that in TQ52, where there were no casual records of Bullfinch in 2006, Bullfinch was present in 11 of the 12 gardens participating in the GBW scheme.

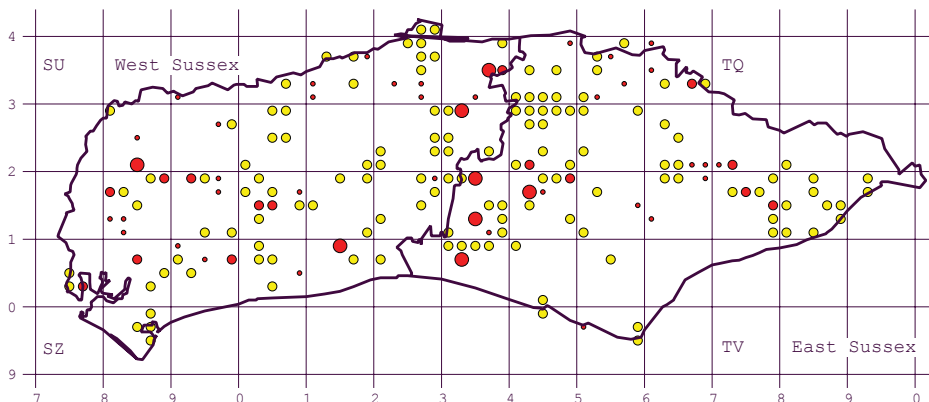


Figure 8. The distribution (plotted by tetrad) of Bullfinch records for 2006, including BBS and SWBS data. Red circles, records including evidence of breeding (small, possible breeding; medium, probable breeding; large, confirmed breeding); yellow circles, records without evidence of breeding.

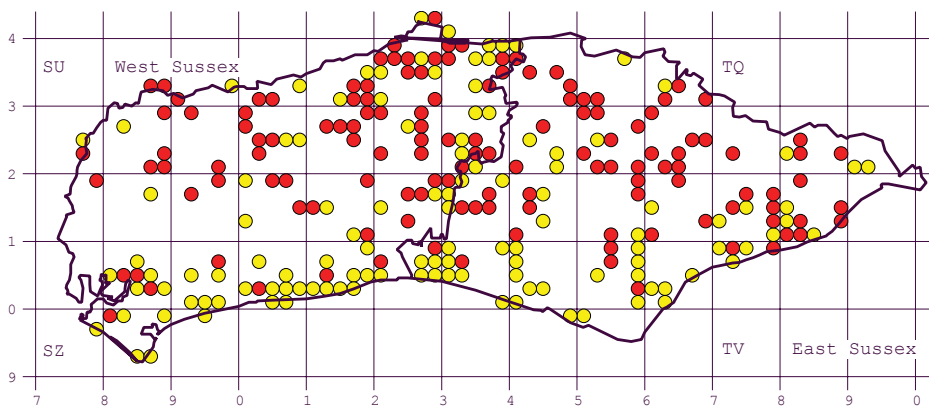


Figure 9. The distribution (plotted by tetrad) of all gardens registered in the BTO/CJ Garden Birdwatch scheme during 2006, showing gardens recording Bullfinch at any time during 2006 (red circles), and gardens not recording Bullfinch (yellow circles).

These distribution maps for Bullfinch, derived from casual records, BBS and SWBS results and GBW data, can all be compared with the distribution map produced from the survey data of the Sussex Tetrads Atlas 1988-1992, shown in Figure 10 (Bentley and Newnham 1996). For this atlas survey, almost every tetrad in the county was surveyed (approximately 1000 tetrads), meaning that the distribution map does give a meaningful indication of the true distribution. It is interesting to note that the apparent absence of Bullfinch from coastal areas between Chichester Harbour and Beachy Head, as shown by the GBW data for 2006 (Figure 9), is also apparent in this distribution map. In addition, it can be seen that many of the areas for which there were few or no records of Bullfinch in 2006 produced many Bullfinch records for the Sussex Tetrads Atlas 1988-1992. In particular, Bullfinch was recorded in 21 of the 25 tetrads in TQ52, where there were

no casual records of Bullfinch in 2006. However, this map is obviously based on data gathered many years ago (14-18 years), but until the survey work for the 2007-2011 Combined Winter and Breeding Bird Atlas is complete, we will have no better indication of the true distribution.

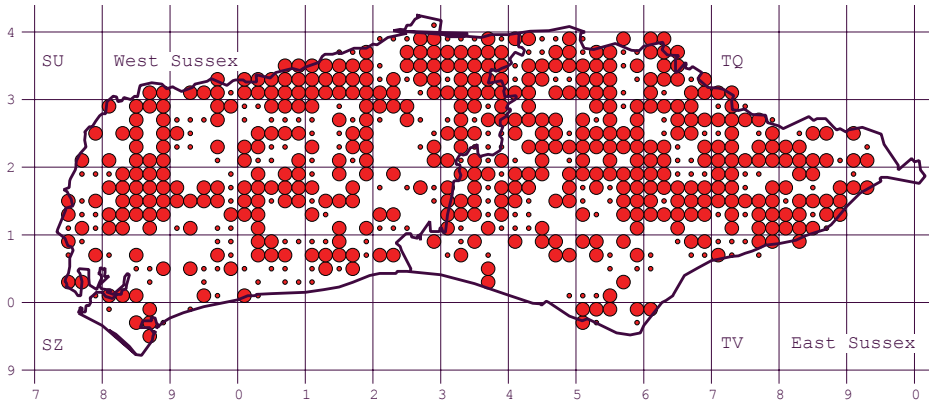


Figure 10. The distribution (plotted by tetrad) of Bullfinch records from the 1988-1992 Sussex Tetrad Atlas survey data. Large circles, confirmed breeding; small circles, possible breeding.

The distribution of Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* is reflected very poorly by casual records, considering that this is such a common and widespread species, as shown in Figure 11. This map again reflects observer effort, and there are many 10-km squares with few or no records of Song Thrush. However, this species was recorded in 109 BBS squares in 2006, as well as at 37 SWBS sites, as shown in Figure 12. The distribution map derived from BBS and SWBS data alone probably reflects more accurately the widespread distribution of Song Thrush in the county than does that derived from casual records, but again until the survey work for the 2007-2011 Combined Winter and Breeding Bird Atlas is complete, we will have no better indication of the true distribution.

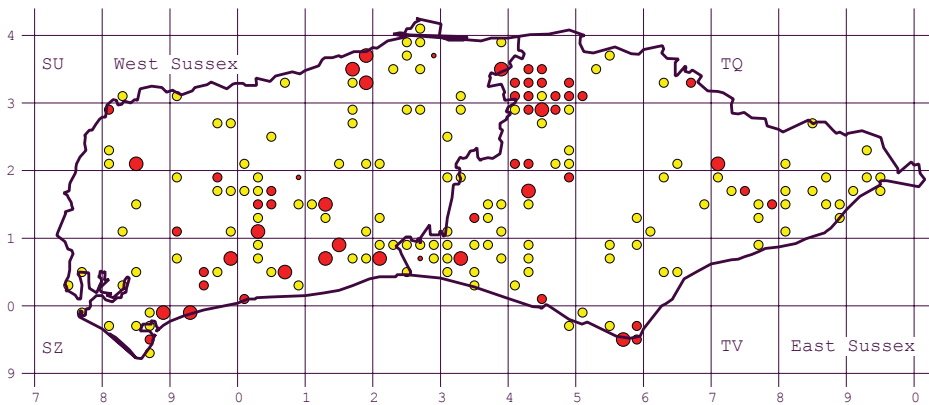


Figure 11. The distribution (plotted by tetrad) of Song Thrush records in 2006, excluding BBS and SWBS data. Red circles, records including evidence of breeding (small, possible breeding; medium, probable breeding; large, confirmed breeding); yellow circles, records without evidence of breeding.

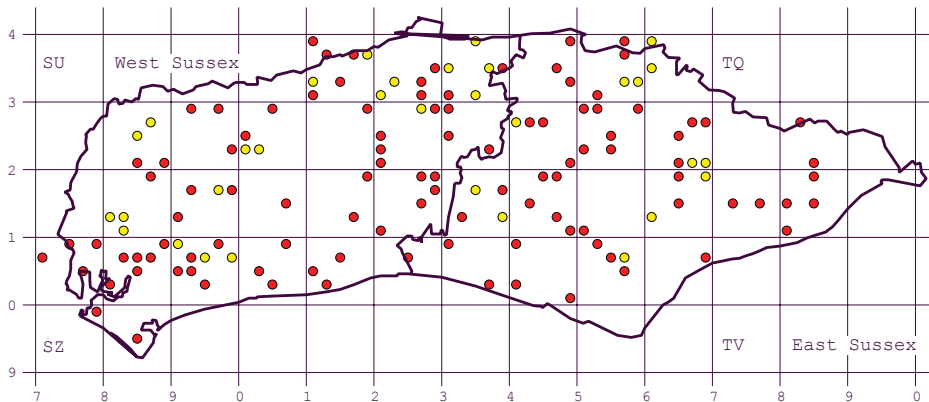


Figure 12. The distribution (plotted by tetrad) of Song Thrush records in 2006 registered during the BBS (red circles) or SWBS (yellow circles).

Further examples of inaccurate distribution maps

There are many other species for which distribution maps derived from casual records do not give good indications of true distribution, for many different reasons. For example, there are many records of Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* each year, but because individuals of this species range widely, and because non-breeding birds without territories can remain in unsuitable breeding habitat for varying periods of time, it is not appropriate to plot simple sightings on a distribution map. The true status of this species in Sussex can only be determined by monitoring numbers of occupied territories and resulting nesting success or failure. Conversely, distribution maps of scarce and elusive species such as Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus* and Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*, or species that are difficult to distinguish from other species, such as Willow Tit *Parus montanus*, are likely to be inaccurate because many individuals of these species simply go unnoticed and unrecorded.

Population trends

By comparing the numbers of records for a particular species from year to year, it is tempting to identify increases or decreases as indications of changes in the population or distribution of that species in Sussex. Although this may be sensible for some species, in general extreme care must be taken in interpreting numbers of records in this way.

Using Bullfinch as an example, Figure 13 shows how the total number of breeding season records (all records relating to May and June) for Bullfinch in Sussex has changed during the period 2001-2006. The graph also usefully shows the contributions made to the total number of records by casual records, Birdtrack records, and the SWBS and the BBS. Looking at just the casual and Birdtrack records, one could conclude that the Bullfinch population in Sussex has remained constant or declined slightly during the period 2001-2006. On the other hand, looking at just the BBS results, or the BBS results combined with the SWBS results, one could conclude that the population has increased significantly. However, the number of BBS sites surveyed increased dramatically in 2005 (Crabtree 2005), and this, combined with the addition of the SWBS sites means that this positive trend in Bullfinch numbers reflects simply an increase in survey effort, as demonstrated in Figure 14. In addition, the number of BBS sites in which Bullfinch is recorded is too small to allow statistically significant analysis (see below). Clearly, in the case of Bullfinch, no conclusions about population trends can be drawn from changes in the numbers of records from year to year.

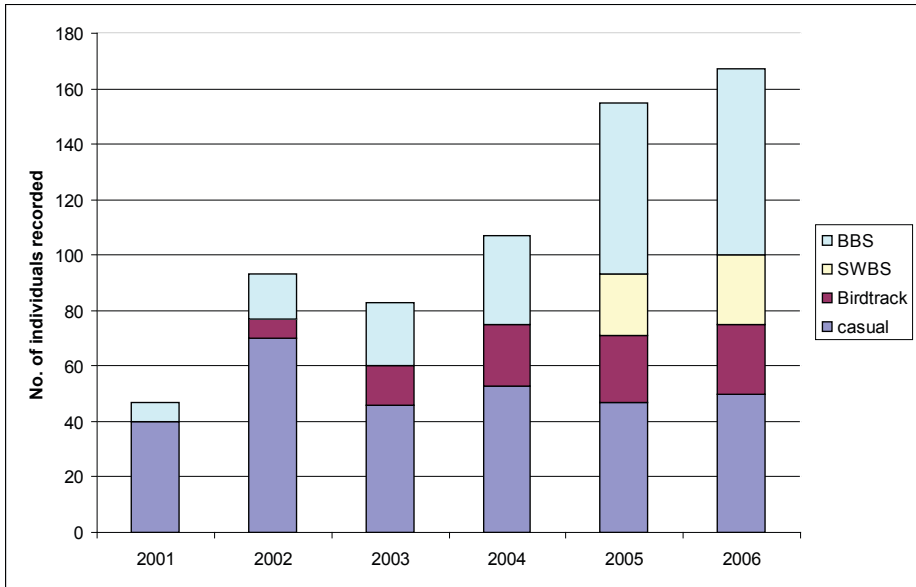


Figure 13. The total number of breeding season records for Bullfinch for each year during the period 2001-2006, showing the contributions made by records from different sources.

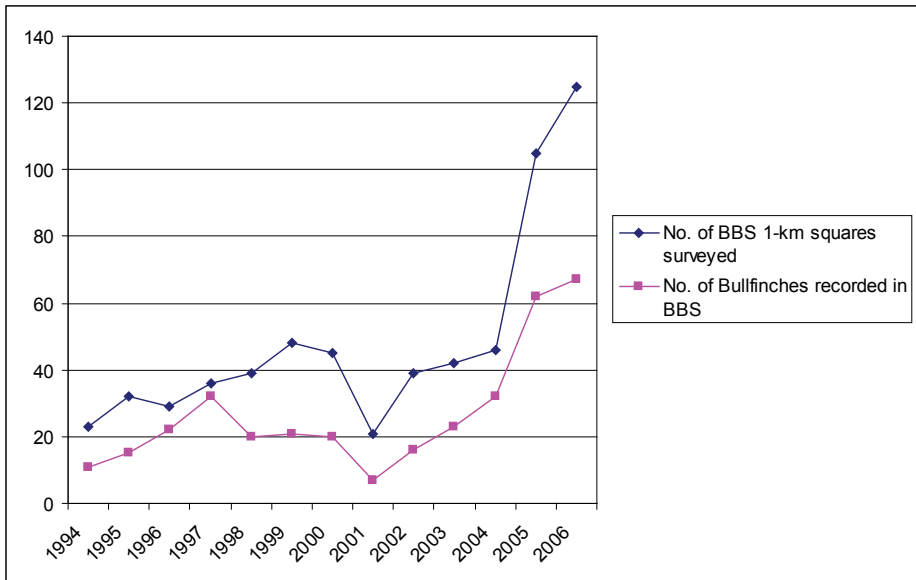


Figure 14. The variation in the number of Bullfinch records derived from the BBS, in relation to the total numbers of BBS squares surveyed, during the period 1994-2006.

Using methods developed by the BTO, population trends can be derived from BBS data for some species (Field and Gregory 1999). For a species to be monitored adequately (detecting a population decrease or increase of 25% in 25 years at a 5% significance level), it must be recorded in at least 40 BBS squares, regardless of the size of the study area, whether this is the UK as a whole, or a region or county. The total numbers of adult birds detected in each 1-km square are calculated for each year, and these data are used to calculate population changes relative to an arbitrarily unitary population at the beginning of the BBS in 1994 (Baillie *et al.* 2006). Despite the expansion of the BBS in Sussex in 2005, and the surveying of 122 BBS squares in Sussex in 2006, Bullfinch was only recorded in 34 squares in 2006, meaning that it is unlikely that an accurate BBS population trend will be possible for Bullfinch in Sussex. However, in the English Government Office Southeast Region, which includes Sussex, Bullfinch was recorded in 134 of 592 BBS squares in 2006, and has been recorded in more than 100 squares in most years since 1996. The resulting population trend for Bullfinch in this region shows a small but steady increase in population since 2002 (Raven *et al.* 2006). Fortunately, the expansion of the BBS in Sussex means that it will be possible to calculate reliable population trends in the county for about 40 more common species within about 5 years, and long-term trends in garden use by some common species will also soon be available from GBW data.

In contrast, the populations of some species that are recorded rarely or not at all in the BBS can be monitored in Sussex using casual records. For example, total numbers recorded in each month can be used to assess relative abundances each winter of species such as Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* and Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*, which are restricted to certain habitats and which attract observers.

Conclusions

Casual records of bird sightings, and particularly of evidence of breeding, are absolutely vital for conservation purposes, as they can be passed to planning authorities. However, great care must be taken in interpreting these records for other purposes. In particular, many distribution maps compiled from these records alone tend to reflect observer effort rather than true distribution. Only the complete survey coverage that will hopefully be achieved for the 2007-2011 Combined Winter and Breeding Bird Atlas will provide accurate distribution maps for Sussex, as well as some maps of relative abundance. In addition, year-to-year comparisons of numbers consider too short a time period to demonstrate increases or decreases in populations, and only longer-term runs of data such as those derived from the BBS can provide statistically significant population trends for common species within the county.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are extended to Dr John Newnham for producing the maps used in this report, and for supplying additional data from the SOS database, and to Mike Toms of the BTO for supplying BTO/CJ Garden Birdwatch data.

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A review of the results of the Wetland Bird Survey in Sussex (Part 2)

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Introduction

The Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) is the national scheme for monitoring the non-breeding waterbirds in the United Kingdom. The survey, comprising monthly synchronised counts at important wetland sites, is organised jointly by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). WeBS was officially launched in October 1993 (Cranswick *et al.* 1995) and resulted from the merger of two long-standing surveys, the National Waterfowl Counts (NWC) organised by the WWT, and the BTO's Birds of Estuaries Enquiry (BoEE).

The history of organised recording of waterbirds in Sussex was described by Newnham *et al.* (2006). These authors demonstrated a steady rise in both the number of sites and counts since 1961/62, tabulated all the sites which had been surveyed and presented the results of the WeBS for swans, geese and ducks (hereafter referred to as 'the waterfowl').

Aims and method

This second paper presents the results for the commonly occurring waders. Where possible, the authors have employed the same methods as for the previous study and have presented graphically the maximum county totals in each season (green bars) with a five-year moving mean of these maxima (black line). The data presented are exclusively from the core WeBS counts (i.e. September to March inclusive) and therefore involve birds on autumn passage as well as those wintering in the county. These patterns are compared, where possible, with the national indices for each species (red line) and tables of five-year means of maxima and peak counts for the key locations in the county are shown. James (1996) presented monthly totals for several species based on data from the period 1974/75 to 1993/94 and these tables have been reproduced with data for the ensuing ten seasons (i.e. 1994/95 to 2003/04). As before, the data have been presented from the 1964/65 winter but have been extended to include the results of 330 counts from 49 sites during the 2005/06 winter. National wader counting and the BoEE started several years after the NWC and therefore national indices for waders have only been produced since 1974/75. Furthermore, these were recently adjusted so all species indices were valued at 100 in 2004/05. It is important to emphasise that the figures used in this paper are from the monthly counts and therefore may not be the same as other published records. For each species biases and flaws in the count data have been examined and are presented and the sites of national and international importance are reviewed. Following an international review of waterbird populations (Delaney and Scott 2006) the threshold values for several species have been altered and the revised figures are used throughout this paper.

To maintain consistency with the study for swans, geese and ducks the counts were analysed in two groups. Those sites counted at least once for 90% or more of the seasons since 1964/65 (labelled _{key}) were reviewed separately from the entire collection of sites (labelled _{all}). These 16 key sites were Chichester Hbr, Pagham Hbr, Chichester GP, Climping, Swanbourne Lake, Arun Valley (Pulborough, Amberley, Bury and Waltham Brooks), Kneppmill Pond, Warnham MP,

Adur Estuary, Weir Wood Res, Barcombe Res, Glynde Level, Cuckmere Haven, Darwell Res, Pett Level and Rye Hbr. However, at several of these, mainly inland, sites many of the earlier counts did not include wading birds, therefore the counts for just three consistently counted sites, Chichester, Pagham and Rye Harbours (labelled c_{pr}) have also been examined separately.

For these three groups a regression coefficient has been calculated for the 42 season series of maxima county totals using the method of least squares. The standard errors in each series were calculated and each T-tested to estimate the significance of the regression line (Fowler and Cohen). The same three series have been matched with the English WeBS index to calculate a correlation coefficient to see how closely the counts from the three sets follow the national figures.

Results

Table 1 lists these coefficients. The regression coefficient shows the change in number of birds per year; positive numbers reveal gains whereas declines are depicted as negative values. When b_{all} , b_{key} , and b_{cpr} are similar (e.g. Red Knot) any change in county population has occurred at Chichester, Pagham and Rye Harbours whilst a large difference in these figures (e.g. Northern Lapwing) shows changes are due to an increase in the number of sites at which the species has been counted.

The correlation coefficients r_{all} , r_{key} and r_{cpr} are for most species very similar but, unlike the waterfowl, few species, with the exception of Avocet and Ruff, show a very strong correlation with the English index. The strength of the correlation increases as the value of r approaches 1 or -1 with a value near zero implying a weak or no correlation. Comparisons with similar data created for the waterbirds (Table 2, Newnham *et al.* 2006) shows far fewer wading species with significant ($p=0.01$) regression or correlation coefficients. For the regression analysis just 11 (44%) wading species compares with 88% of the waterfowl whilst nine (36%) compares with 69% of waterfowl species which correlated significantly with the English index.

Although other wader species have been recorded by WeBS the information is very patchy and therefore these species have been omitted from analysis. The values in Table 1 should be read with the figures in each of the detailed reviews of the common species which follow.

For each species the Sussex population is expressed as a percentage of the national population. For most species an approximate range is quoted derived from two sources. Firstly by comparison of the Sussex mean of maximum WeBS counts for the season 1999/00 to 2003/04 as a percentage of the equivalent national WeBS mean of maximum counts over the same period (Musgrove *et al.* 2001, Pollitt *et al.* 2003, Cranswick *et al.* 2005 and Collier *et al.* 2005). Secondly, a figure can be gleaned from published bird population estimates for Great Britain (Baker *et al.* 2006). Where the two figures are similar (e.g. Red Knot) the WeBS is an effective survey for monitoring the national wintering population whilst in species like Common Snipe the WeBS does not give sound figures. Similar difficulties were encountered and described in calculating figures for the waterfowl (Newnham *et al.* 2006).

Species accounts

Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

This species is found at coastal locations where sandy substrates support quantities of marine molluscs and worms. Prater (1987) noted that the winter numbers of this species had shown a steady increase from the late 1960s and recorded that the average county winter totals had doubled between the early 1970s and the early 1980s. He also noted that this was in line with findings in neighbouring Hampshire and in the national context. Both Prater (1987) and Yates (1996a) reported a subsequent decline, particularly in Chichester Hbr, from the mid-1980s. Figure OC

Table 1. The regression coefficient for the season maxima 1964/65 to 2005/06 and the correlation coefficient between the English index and the season maxima 1974/75 to 2004/05 for “all” sites, “key” sites and Chichester, Pagham and Rye Harbours for 25 regularly occurring wading species.

	Regression Coefficient (<i>b</i>)			Correlation Coefficient (<i>r</i>)		
	All sites (<i>b_{all}</i>)	Key sites (<i>b_{key}</i>)	Chi/Pag/Rye (<i>b_{cprr}</i>)	All sites (<i>r_{all}</i>)	Key sites (<i>r_{key}</i>)	Chi/Pag/Rye (<i>r_{cprr}</i>)
Oystercatcher (OC)	19.6	19.2	20.0	0.05	0.05	0.15
Avocet (AV)	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.91	0.91	0.91
Ringed Plover (RP)	10.4	8.4	3.5	0.61	0.61	0.64
European Golden Plover (GP)	77.3	81.9	76.5	0.28	0.45	0.45
Grey Plover (GV)	58.7	55.8	53.6	0.64	0.60	0.58
Northern Lapwing (L.)	351.0	347.0	169.7	0.25	0.51	0.50
Red Knot (KN)	21.7	21.7	21.7	0.30	0.30	0.30
Sanderling (SS)	-5.8	-5.4	-3.6	0.00	-0.16	-0.36
Little Stint (LX)	0.4	0.4	0.3	nv	nv	nv
Curlew Sandpiper (CV)	0.2	0.2	0.1	nv	nv	nv
Purple Sandpiper (PS)	-0.3	-0.2	-0.1	0.51	0.43	0.11
Dunlin (DN)	-87.9	-90.5	-103.0	0.36	0.36	0.37
Ruff (RU)	-2.0	-2.0	-2.4	0.83	0.85	0.80
Jack Snipe (JS)	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.72	0.64	0.63
Snipe (SN)	-1.0	5.8	-0.7	0.43	0.40	0.46
Black-tailed Godwit (BW)	-0.6	-0.6	-0.6	-0.16	-0.16	-0.17
Bar-tailed Godwit (BA)	1.9	1.8	1.7	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03
Whimbrel (WM)	0.0	0.0	0.0	nv	nv	nv
Eurasian Curlew (CU)	24.3	23.7	18.7	0.30	0.29	0.22
Spotted Redshank (DR)	-0.9	-0.9	-0.9	nv	nv	nv
Redshank (RK)	-9.6	-10.9	-16.0	-0.28	-0.31	-0.34
Greenshank (GK)	1.4	1.3	1.2	0.21	0.21	0.21
Green Sandpiper (GE)	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.21	0.39	0.20
Common Sandpiper (CS)	0.7	0.4	0.2	nv	nv	nv
Turnstone (TT)	17.2	10.9	8.7	0.40	0.31	0.29

Bold figures represent statistically significant coefficients at $p=0.01$ level; nv, no value

demonstrates these points and suggests that the decline lasted until the early 1990s since when the winter population, although fluctuating, has remained stable. Interestingly, the decline in Sussex occurred about a decade before that recorded nationally and, in part, accounts for the low correlation coefficients shown in Table 1.

Sussex supports an insignificant portion of the national breeding population with a maximum of 66 pairs (Yates 1996a), thus the county's wintering population is augmented from birds which have bred elsewhere, probably from the nearby continent (Wernham *et al.* 2002). Although three sites have recorded peak counts in September (Table OC2) the numbers in the county build through autumn to a mid-winter peak as shown by Yates (1996a) and in Table OC1.

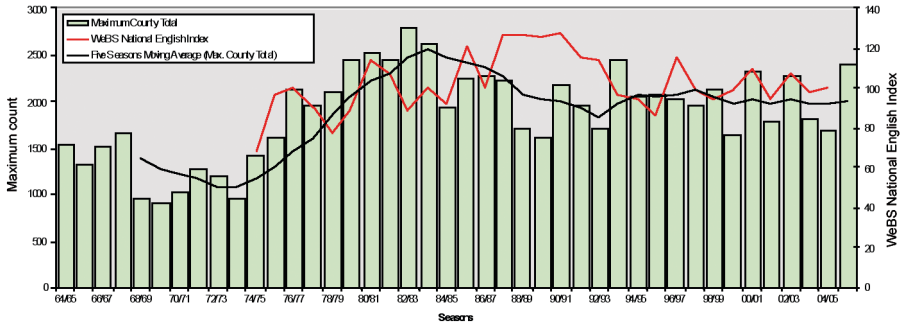


Figure OC. The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Oystercatchers recorded in Sussex compared with the WeBS English index in each season, 1964/65 to 2005/06.

Table OC1. Monthly totals of Oystercatchers, 1994/95 – 2003/04.

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	2003	2318	2104	2145	2279	2341	1532
Mean	1396	1665	1690	1701	1726	1641	1103
Minimum	603	1265	1398	1242	1002	1168	348

In keeping with the pattern shown by most wading birds this species has only been recorded at 20 (26%) of the Sussex WeBS sites; at only 14 localities have more than ten birds been recorded and the eight coastal sites at which more than 50 birds have been recorded are shown in Table OC2. This latter table shows Chichester Hbr remains the most important site in Sussex for this species with Pagham and Rye Harbours the only other sites with consistently high counts. At both Climping and Pett Level the numbers have declined notably. All the notable locations for this species in Sussex are included in the WeBS; this survey therefore reliably monitors the wintering population of Oystercatchers in Sussex.

Most of the national wintering Oystercatchers are associated with estuaries on the west coast (Prater 1981, Collier *et al.* 2005) and, apart from the Thames and Wash estuaries, those sites reaching the international threshold of 10,200 birds are in western Britain. The national threshold for designation is set at 3,200 and, as Table OC2 shows, no site in Sussex has reached this level.

Table OC2. The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Oystercatchers 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of more than 50 birds.

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	1406	1081	1851	2568	2090	1989	2060	1978	2790, Nov 1982
Chichester Hbr	1213	868	1298	1657	1308	1253	1470	1407	2002, Sep 1980
Pagham Hbr	266	262	242	304	374	414	387	335	763, Sep 1993
Climping	111*	97*	186	296	224*	175	90	28	505, Jan 1983
Goring	10*	18*	21*	10	20*	29*	48	26	71, Jan 1995
Adur Estuary	0	0*	0	0	4	28	7	5	86, Feb 1993
Cuckmere Haven	0	0	0	2	1	0	32	26	120, Sep 2004
Pett Level	0	4	119	119*	72	51	16	19	381, Jan 1976
Rye Hbr	94	136	415*	561	457	443	471	462	699, Jan 1984

*indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts

With the national wintering population estimated at 315,200 (Baker *et al.* 2006) and the national mean of maximum counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 being 248,856 birds, Sussex holds between 0.6 and 0.8% of the national wintering population.

Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*)

A few Avocets have wintered in Sussex since the 1960s with small numbers being found in Pagham or Chichester Harbours (de Potier 1996a). This species has increased markedly in Britain and northern Europe in the past 15 years and British wintering birds comprise a mixture of British and nearby continental breeding birds (Collier *et al.* 2005). Figure AV shows how the wintering population in Sussex, although still small, has increased in line with the national index since the early 1990s. Indeed this species is one of only three wading species to show both significant positive regression and correlation coefficients in Table 1.

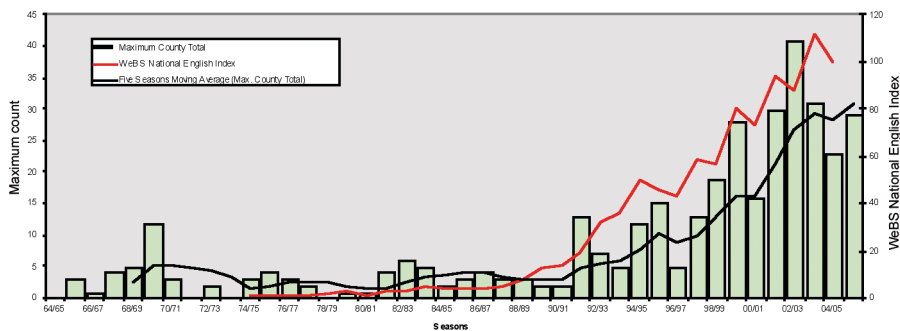


Figure AV. The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Avocets recorded in Sussex compared with the WeBS English index in each season, 1964/65 to 2005/06.

Table AV1 shows that this wintering population arrives late in the autumn and reaches a peak in mid-winter.

Table AV1. Monthly totals of Avocets, 1994/95 – 2003/04.

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	1	4	25	30	35	41	9
Mean	0	1	6	15	13	9	4
Minimum	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

This species has only been recorded at six (8%) WeBS sites and only at two, shown in Table AV2, have more than five birds been recorded. As noted by de Potier (1996a) Pagham Hbr remains the favoured location but, with international and national thresholds being 730 and 35 respectively, does not qualify as a site of importance.

Table AV2. The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Avocets 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of more than five birds.

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	3	3	2	3	3	6	13	29	41, Feb 2003
Chichester Hbr	1	0	0	2	2	4	3	12	16, Jan & Nov 2003
Pagham Hbr	2	3	2	3	1	2	13	25	36, Feb 2003

With the national wintering population estimated at 3395 (Baker *et al.* 2006) and the national mean of maximum counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 being 5037 birds Sussex holds between 0.6 and 0.9% of the national wintering population.

Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)

Shrubb (1979) concluded “surprisingly few remain in winter” and recorded the highest complete count of 761 in January 1976. Average counts had risen to 930 in the early 1980s (Prater 1987) and Yates (1996b) documented the continuing, steady, but dramatic, increase in winter numbers. This is clearly shown in Figure RP which suggests the growth in Sussex during the 1970s and 80s was greater than that seen nationally. Since the early 1990s however, the numbers have fallen dramatically and at a faster rate than the decline seen nationally. Why this should occur is unclear. Ringing studies have not clearly shown where Sussex wintering birds originate although they are thought to primarily comprise local breeders augmented by birds from the Low Countries and southern Baltic areas (Prater 1981). During the national breeding survey of Ringed Plovers in 1984 a total of 128 territorial pairs was found (Yates 1996b) whilst the average for 2001-05, albeit not in survey years, was only 53 pairs. This apparent decline in breeding pairs may, in part, account for the fall in wintering numbers.

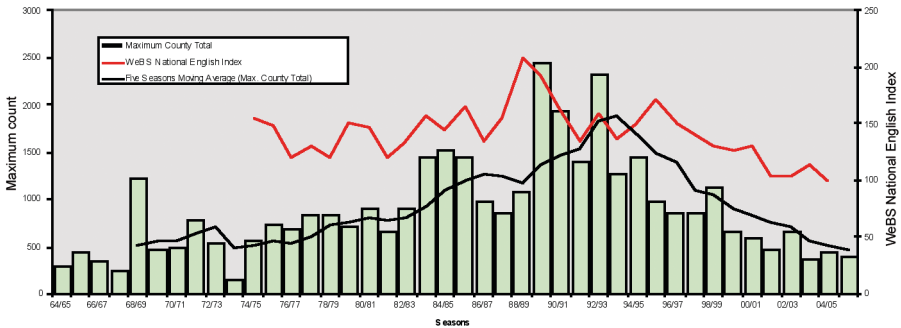


Figure RP. The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Ringed Plover recorded in Sussex compared with the WeBS English index in each season 1964/65 to 2005/06.

At all seasons this species is found at coastal sites and although small numbers are found on several beaches all the preferred locations are counted as part of the WeBS, therefore these figures accurately represent the changes in the wintering population. Yates (1996b) showed most were recorded in September, presumably including many migrants, with a small rise in numbers in mid-winter. Table RP1 shows the September high and the lower numbers recorded thereafter but no mid-winter increase. Interestingly, Table RP2 shows that different locations have a mixture of autumn and winter peak counts. In recent years at Chichester Hbr the peak counts have been in August (A. de Potier *pers. comm.*) and therefore outside the scope of this study.

Table RP1. Monthly totals of Ringed Plovers, 1994/95 – 2003/04.

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	1451	857	955	830	802	541	664
Mean	713	514	503	420	417	318	240
Minimum	341	133	293	251	185	126	38

Overall, 24 (31%) sites counted in this survey have recorded Ringed Plovers and only ten of those have recorded a maximum of greater than 50 birds; details of these are shown in Table RP2. This table also reveals the reduced counts at each of the major sites.

Table RP2. *The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Ringed Plovers 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of more than 50 birds.*

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	517	486	737	931	1186	1885	1058	554	2449, Jan 1990
Chichester Hbr	435	330	468	488	628	1246	574	243	2093, Jan 1990
Pagham Hbr	132	250	203	256	264	315	259	111	477, Sep 1993
Climping	4*	0*	24	71	41*	62	82	58	114, Dec 1993
Goring	43*	110*	143*	138	255*	148*	79	66	328, Dec 1984
Adur Estuary	6	90*	96	158	150	280	207	144	446, Sep 1992
Newhaven	nc	10*	10*	32	38	27	34	27	52, Dec 1985 & Nov 1997
Cuckmere Haven	13	2	19	39	36	37	24	9	70, Dec 1981
Pevensay Levels	nc	1*	36*	17	12*	0	0	0	54, Jan 1977
Pett Level	0	0	8	9*	10	12	27	13	52, Dec 1996
Rye Hbr	1	18	77*	59	171	79	121	82	501, Oct 1984

nc, indicates no counts in the 5-year period; *indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts

Yates (1996b) showed Sussex held 8% of the British wintering population during the early 1990s and the major concentration in Chichester Hbr was not only of international importance but also the second most important site in Britain. The decline in the county's wintering population means no site currently reaches the national 1% threshold of 330 and certainly all are far from the international 1% threshold of 730.

With the national wintering population estimated at 32,450 (Baker *et al.* 2006) and the national mean of maximum counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 being 16,569 birds, Sussex now holds between 1.7 and 3.3% of the national wintering population.

European Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)

Nobbs (1996a) felt that the wintering population in the county showed little evidence of any long term change, was between 4000 and 7000 birds and was mainly found on permanent pasture at locations on the Selsey peninsula, Pevensay Levels and on the levels in the Rye area. Figure GP, which shows only the counts from the WeBS, implies a steady increase has occurred. However, the data from the early years are incomplete for this species. Table GP2 shows there were no counts at Pevensay Levels until 1969/70 and at Scotney Court GP until the mid-1980s. Furthermore, counters for the NWC did not always include this species, thus none were counted in the Arun Valley until 1991/92 and counts in the Rye and Pett areas also suggested this species was omitted. Despite these caveats and fluctuating numbers the data in Figure GP support Nobbs' (1996a) view of little overall change in the previous 20 years. The figure does suggest, however, a small rise in the last decade in line with, but not as dramatic as, the increased numbers found nationally (Banks *et al.* 2006).

Ringling studies show those birds wintering in south-eastern England have passed through the Netherlands on passage (Wernham *et al.* 2002) but their breeding origins are unknown. This species is known to disperse in severe cold weather when higher numbers may be recorded either as flocks moving to the estuaries or birds moving westward to escape cold continental weather. Nobbs (1996a) clearly showed numbers slowly increased through autumn and early winter to reach a peak in January; precisely the same pattern is revealed in a more recent 10-year period and is shown in Table GP1.

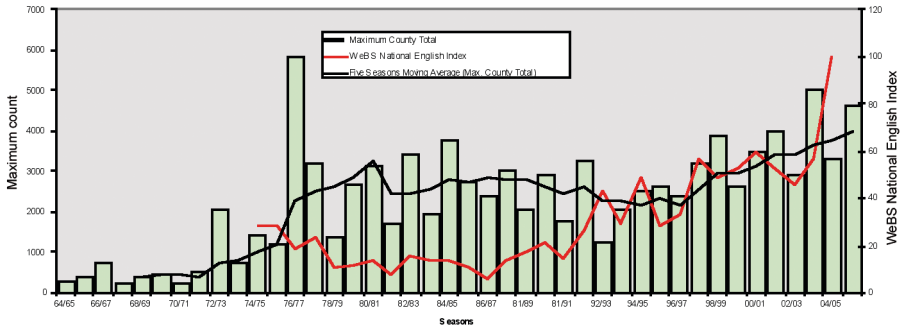


Figure GP. The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for European Golden Plover recorded in Sussex compared with the WeBS English index in each season, 1964/65 to 2005/06.

Table GP1. Monthly totals of Golden Plovers, 1994/95 – 2003/04.

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	1012	2659	3347	5054	3989	2670	2665
Mean	341	862	1984	1789	2687	1324	728
Minimum	1	127	533	334	85	484	1

Overall, 24 (31%) WeBS sites in Sussex have recorded Golden Plovers but only eight have recorded a maximum of greater than 500 birds; details of these are shown in Table GP2.

Table GP2. The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of European Golden Plovers 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of more than 500 birds.

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	426	818	2617	2593	2810	2264	2953	3624	5823, Feb 1977
Chichester Hbr	315	643	871	1087	1830	1657	1406	2335	3586, Dec 2005
Pagham Hbr	200	132	270	532	497	657	575	375	1554, Jan 2006
Bracklesham Bay	nc	nc	nc	278*	333*	nc	nc	nc	700, Dec 1987
Arun Valley*	0†	0†	0†	0†	0†	180*	173	16	515, Mar 1996
Pevensey Levels	nc	200*	1863*	1264	900*	38	231	77	5300, Feb 1977
Pett Level	3	0	420	638*	32	26	271	436	1118, Nov 2001
Rye Hbr	4	2	344*	441	510	526	155	628	2000, Dec 2003
Scotney Court GP	nc	nc	nc	nc	0*	2*	1205	1120	2500, Nov 1998

nc, indicates no counts in the 5-year period; *indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts; †indicates species not counted

Banks *et al.* (2006), by including the 2004/05 counts, cite Chichester Hbr amongst 22 sites of national importance for this species. However, based on the 1999/04 figures, even this location does not quite reach the national winter 1% threshold of 2500. With the recent purchase of an area at Bracklesham Bay by the RSPB as a reserve it will be interesting to see if numbers of wintering Golden Plovers will increase.

With the national wintering population estimated at 250,000 (Baker *et al.* 2006) and the national mean of maximum counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 being 154,832 birds, Sussex holds between 1.4 and 2.3% of the national wintering population.

Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

Successive authors noted an increase in the wintering population; Shrub (1979) recorded a steady increase in the January counts from 300 in 1972 to 2175 in 1976. Prater (1987) graphically showed the rise in both Chichester and Pagham Hbrs and suggested the upward trend was evident since the 1960s. Nobbs (1996b) showed this trend to increase and noted that Chichester Hbr held approximately 5% of the British wintering population and was a site of international importance for this species. A range of reasons for the success of this species have been cited by various authors and included a series of good breeding seasons, reduced hunting pressures and a succession of milder winters allowing birds to survive at the northern limits of their wintering range. Since the mid-1990s, however, the trend has been reversed and Figure GV shows a clear reduction in the maximum WeBS counts at both a county and national level. Despite the recent decline this species is another of only three wading species to show both significant positive regression and correlation coefficients in Table 1.

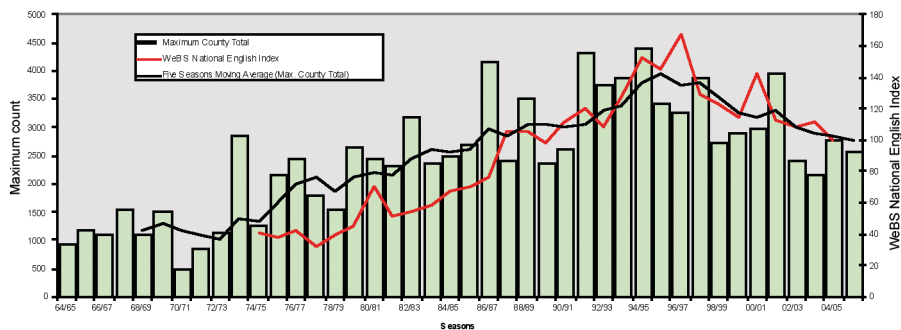


Figure GV. The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Grey Plover recorded in Sussex compared with the WeBS English index in each season, 1964/65 to 2005/06.

The recent decline shown in Figure GV is mirrored by other shore waders, notably Ringed Plover, Red Knot, Sanderling, Dunlin and Bar-tailed Godwit, and the precise reasons are not clear. It could be postulated that the converse of the reasons for earlier increases now hold but this seems unlikely. The continuing run of mild winters may have encouraged these species to remain further north and east; a theory supported by recent research (Austin and Rehfish 2005). The declines, particularly in Chichester Hbr, may be related to increasing disturbance at high tide roost sites causing birds to move to other locations including Langstone Hbr (de Potier 2000).

Nobbs (1996a) showed numbers of Grey Plovers remained fairly constant through autumn and early winter, and reduced slightly to a January trough before increasing again in later winter or early spring. Table GV1 shows a different pattern in recent years with notably lower numbers in September.

Table GV1. Monthly totals of Grey Plovers, 1994/95 – 2003/04.

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	1732	3153	3902	4418	3173	3983	3433
Mean	1316	2151	2418	2769	2485	2669	2068
Minimum	826	981	1639	2057	1978	1534	36

This species rarely occurs inland and is found predominantly in the muddy areas of estuaries. Although it has been recorded at 19 (24%) WeBS sites, at only seven have more than 50 birds

been recorded and these are shown in Table GV2. The concentration of this species in a few regularly counted locations indicates that the WeBS is an accurate tool for monitoring this species in Sussex. The recent decline in numbers has led to Chichester Hbr no longer reaching the 2500 threshold to be of international importance, but both western harbours easily exceed the 1% threshold of 330 to be of national importance.

Table GV2. *The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Grey Plovers 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of more than 50 birds.*

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	1186	1385	1857	2602	3067	3391	3553	2899	4418, Dec 1994
Chichester Hbr	1071	1311	1624	2056	2352	2581	2429	2144	3901, Mar 1992
Pagham Hbr	184	199	389	552	979	955	1459	876	2452, Nov 1997
Climping	1*	0*	61	77	66*	75	130	98	181, Jan 1995
Goring	15*	33*	79*	116	175*	141*	160	164	230, Feb 1984
Adur Estuary	0	0*	0	4	10	26	20	24	80, Dec 1991
Pett Level	2	0	36	75*	65	55	86	40	156, Feb 1999
Rye Hbr	1	10	39*	4	39	16	32	42	78, Dec 1999

nc, indicates no counts in the 5-year period; *indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts

With the national wintering population estimated at 53,300 (Baker *et al.* 2006) and the national mean of maximum counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 being 41,187 birds, Sussex holds between 5.4 and 7% of the national wintering population.

Northern Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)

This is a problematic species to assess for several reasons. Firstly the WeBS only involves wetland locations and does not take into account birds using agricultural or other habitats. This was clearly demonstrated in early 1977 when 59,900 Northern Lapwings were estimated in the county of which 24,400 were noted on the coastline wader count in January and a further 35,500 were elsewhere (Pepper 1996a). During the non-breeding season Northern Lapwings may move from one habitat to another or completely desert an area at the onset of harsh weather conditions. Furthermore, the data, as with that for other waders found away from coastal sites, are incomplete especially from the Arun Valley and Pevensy Levels, the two sites where the largest numbers have been recorded in Sussex. The extent of the absent counts can be seen in Table L2. Figure L has been drawn with the available data but the apparent increase in population is set against the background of a decline in north-western Europe (Hagemeijer and Blair 1997) and a substantial fall in breeding numbers in the United Kingdom (Gibbons *et al.* 1993). This rise is clearly an artefact related to absent counts for this species from major sites in earlier years and the regression slope from the 1976/77 season is actually a small decline of -20. The data from the most recent 15 years is more robust and suggests between 10,000 and 20,000 are found on wetland sites in Sussex.

Although some local breeding Northern Lapwings may spend the winter months near their breeding grounds the majority of wintering birds in Sussex are immigrants from continental Europe (Werner *et al.* 2002). Pepper (1996a) noted wintering flocks increased in size from October to December and Table L1 shows notably higher counts between November and February.

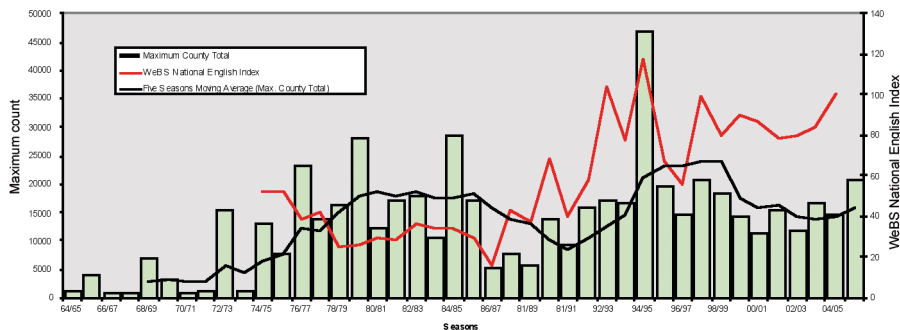


Figure L. The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Northern Lapwing recorded in Sussex compared with the WeBS English index in each season, 1964/65 to 2005/06.

Table L1. Monthly totals of Northern Lapwings, 1994/95 – 2003/04.

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	7341	12200	20841	19569	47143	24968	15032
Mean	3928	5863	13204	11994	15974	11980	2111
Minimum	1538	1953	7858	5211	353	5475	23

Despite being the most widely distributed wader it has only been recorded at 39 (50%) of the Sussex WeBS sites. Seventeen of these sites have recorded flocks in excess of 1000 birds and 12 localities, all shown in Table L2, have reached maximum counts of 2000 birds.

Table L2. The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Northern Lapwings 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of more than 2000 birds.

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	2964	4540	15036	17370	13055	14733	24225	14045	47143, Jan 1995
Chichester Hbr	992	1146	2359	2692	2749	3048	2826	3244	4071, Feb 1994
Pagham Hbr	300	282	899	1831	1407	1800	1636	2129	4660, Jan 2006
Arun Valley*	0†	0†	0†	0†	0†	9348*	10256	2709	23106, Jan 1995
Climping	50*	0†	198	974	1109*	0	19	0	2300, Nov 1984
Adur Estuary	80	0*	530	1810	2949	1286	1364	871	9000, Dec 1984
Newhaven	nc	200*	413*	1150	1150	1222	1440	394	3000, Jan 1983
Cuckmere Haven	522	30	820	1156	1070	650	1060	430	2600, Nov 1984
Eastbourne Pk Lakes	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1110*	242	2000, Jan 1998
Pevensy Levels	nc	3825*	8375*	7796	7333*	149	1933	1140	26000, Jan 1979
Pett Level	540	360	3403	1603*	1235	1400	2816	1322	10000, Dec 1978
Rye Hbr	1120	224	2800*	1877	1797	2649	3149	3192	6619, Dec 2003
Scotney Court GP	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1000*	2443*	1090	5000, Feb 1995

nc, indicates no counts in the 5-year period; * indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts;

† indicates species not counted

The 1% national and international threshold is set at 20,000 which suggests, at their peaks, Pevensy Levels and the Arun Valley may reach this but neither sustain this number over any five-year period.

Baker *et al.* (2006) estimated the national wintering population to fall between 1,600,000 and 2,100,000 and with the national mean of maximum counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 being 361,933 birds Sussex holds between 0.7 and 3.9% of the national wintering population. These figures confirm that the WeBS is not a good means of monitoring this species as the national mean of maxima for the last five-year period is between 17 and 23% of the estimated national population.

Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*)

James (1996a) noted this species to have the most restricted county distribution of the commoner waders being found only in Chichester and Pagham Hbrs. He also noted that from year to year numbers fluctuated widely and this “cyclic pattern” was demonstrated by Prater (1987) and is shown to be continuing in Figure KN. The peaks and troughs do not correlate well with the English index and it appears the numbers are currently declining in the county from the occasional high counts of up to 3000 in the early 1990s.

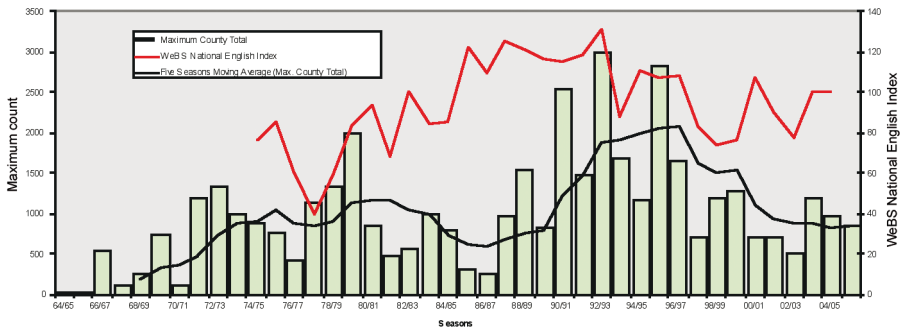


Figure KN. The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Red Knot recorded in Sussex compared with the WeBS English index in each season, 1964/65 to 2005/06.

James (1996a) recorded that the highest numbers occurred between November and February and gave the mean peak count of 744 in January; a similar scenario to that demonstrated in Table KN1.

Table KN1. Monthly totals of Red Knots, 1994/95 – 2003/04.

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	136	154	1289	1174	2848	1665	1005
Mean	57	47	515	467	726	732	237
Minimum	10	1	49	27	128	88	1

Although 16 (21%) surveyed sites have recorded this species, only at Chichester and Pagham Hbrs have more than 50 birds occurred. Table KN2 shows the figures for these sites and whilst numbers in Chichester Hbr are clearly declining the wintering population in Pagham Hbr is being maintained with the highest count being recorded as recently as February 2005. Averaged maximum counts at neither of these sites reach the 1% national threshold of 2500.

Table KN2. The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Red Knots 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of more than 50 birds.

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	203	887	923	992	784	1919	1520	897	3001, Jan 1993
Chichester Hbr	147	887	921	991	734	1911	1351	710	3000, Jan 1993
Pagham Hbr	70	9	9	5	66	59	244	205	556, Feb 2005

With the national wintering population estimated at 283,600 (Baker *et al.* 2006) and the national mean of maximum counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 being 258,834 birds, Sussex holds about 0.3% of the national wintering population.

Sanderling (*Calidris alba*)

Prater (1987) described this as the most confusing of the shore wading species in Sussex and noted that numbers vary wildly between months and sites. Even at well recorded locations it is likely that flocks are missed in some counts. This certainly occurs on the stretches of sandy shores between Middleton and Worthing where high tide WeBS counts miss roosting birds and local watchers (*pers. comm.*) have frequently suggested that this species is more easily, and perhaps more accurately, counted at low tide. Supporting this hypothesis the results of a low-tide count in mid-January 2007 for the Non-estuarine Waterbirds Survey (NEWS) produced 465 Sanderlings between Bognor and Worthing. Nobbs (1996c) noted that wintering numbers were declining; a decline which has been continuing for the past 20 years and is contrary to the English index which rose during the 1990s; these features are shown in Figure SS.

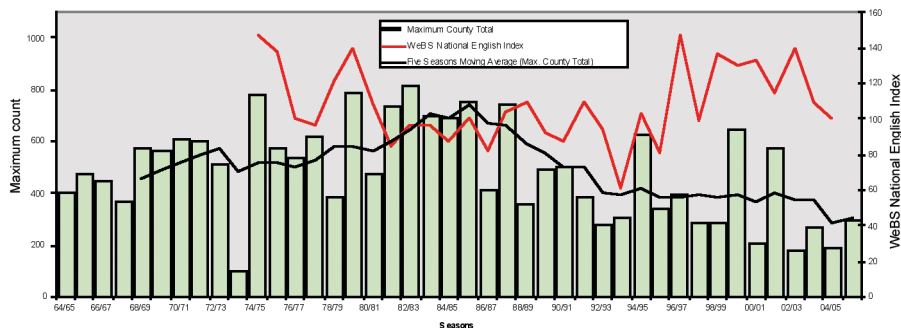


Figure SS. The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Sanderling recorded in Sussex compared with the WeBS English index in each season, 1964/65 to 2005/06.

Nobbs (1996c) also showed that Sanderling numbers were at their highest between January and March; this situation continues although Table SS1 shows lower counts in each month, particularly in September, October and March.

Table SS1. Monthly totals of Sanderlings, 1994/95 – 2003/04.

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	312	267	277	646	628	574	340
Mean	74	76	144	159	214	254	163
Minimum	10	0	14	68	43	92	2

Sanderlings have been recorded at just 14 (18%) of the WeBS sites and only at six locations, shown in Table SS2, have more than 100 birds been seen. In recent years clear declines are demonstrated at both Chichester and Pagham Hbrs whilst numbers at Climping and Goring, although notably lower than in earlier years, have shown small increases. At Rye Hbr no clear pattern emerges. Nobbs (1996c) recorded that Chichester Hbr was then of national importance for this species but with the local declines there are no sites now which reach the 1% national threshold of 210.

Table SS2. The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Sanderlings 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of more than 100 birds.

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	459	481	581	706	595	394	388	377	820, Nov 1982
Chichester Hbr	318	325	317	410	437	350	185	137	601, Nov 1987
Pagham Hbr	28	55	30	11	26	13	3	1	132, Mar 1978
Climping	306*	373*	216	260	150*	60	68	108	408, Jan 1972
Goring	105*	40*	186*	81	145*	109*	70	104	286, Dec 1974
Pett Level	0	0	22	16*	5	0	22	5	110, Jan 1999
Rye Hbr	34	18	126*	134	140	99	169	122	381, Jan 1995

*indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts

With the national wintering population estimated at 20,540 (Baker *et al.* 2006) and the national mean of maximum counts (four of which occurred in May) for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 being 13,946 birds, Sussex holds between 1.8 and 2.7% of the national wintering population.

Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*)

A few Little Stints winter in most years in Sussex but most are recorded on passage with September and October clearly being the months for peak counts (Janman 1996a). Table LX1, drawn from the WeBS only, shows the same picture. The species is therefore encountered in the WeBS core counts albeit in smaller numbers than recorded by Janman (1996a). Figure LX shows the fluctuating numbers but suggests there was a run of good autumns between 1990 and 2002. There is no English index to compare with the county data.

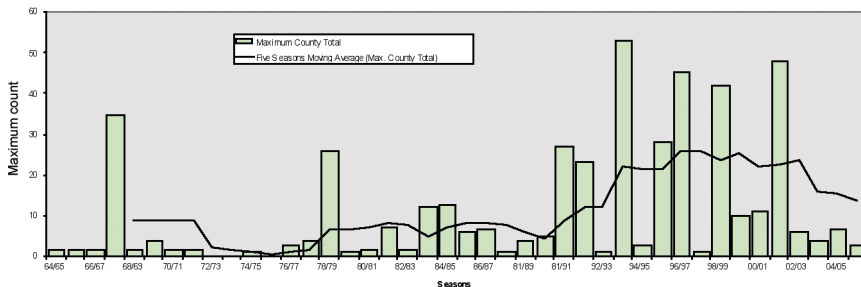


Figure LX. The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Little Stint recorded in Sussex, 1964/65 to 2005/06.

Table LX1. Monthly totals of Little Stints, 1994/95 – 2003/04.

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	42	48	13	15	9	9	13
Mean	14	12	3	4	3	3	2
Minimum	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

The species has been recorded at 13 (17%) of the WeBS sites but only at four have more than ten birds been recorded; these are shown in Table LX2.

Table LX2. The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Little Stints 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of more than ten birds.

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	9	2	7	5	6	22	24	16	53, Sep 1993
Chichester Hbr	5	1	2	1	0	14	10	14	48, Oct 2001
Pagham Hbr	4	1	3	2	2	3	2	3	15, Sep 1967
Pett Level	0	0	1	1*	1	5	6	1	15, Oct 1996
Rye Hbr	0	0	2*	1	2	1	3	0	10, Sep 1978

*indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts

With the national autumn population estimated at 450 (Baker *et al.* 2006) and the national mean of maximum counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 being 158 birds, Sussex holds between 3.6 and 10.1% of the national autumn/wintering population.

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)

Like the previous species this is recorded in Sussex mainly on autumn passage but occurring a little earlier with passage predominantly in August and September (Janman 1996b). The species is therefore found in the WeBS, and in similar numbers, in autumn, to Little Stints. Table CV1 shows this and demonstrates the scarcity of Curlew Sandpipers in the winter. Figure CV shows that numbers vary markedly and depend, like those for Little Stint, on prevailing weather conditions during the autumn passage period. There is a significant positive correlation of 0.43 ($p=0.02$) between the annual maxima for these two species.

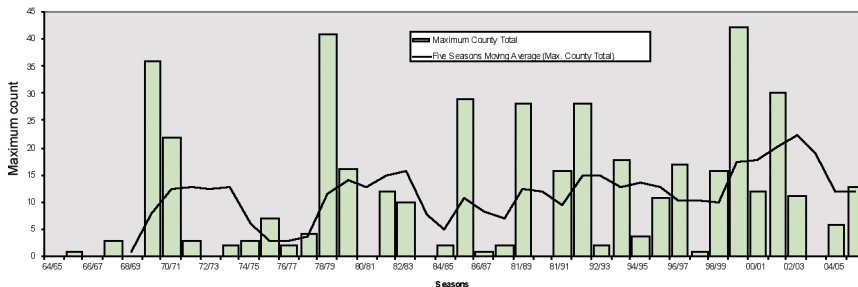
**Figure CV.** The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Curlew Sandpiper recorded in Sussex in each season, 1964/65 to 2004/05.

Table CV1. *Monthly totals of Curlew Sandpipers, 1994/95 – 2003/04.*

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	42	5	12	0	0	1	1
Mean	14	1	1	0	0	0	0
Minimum	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Curlew Sandpipers have been recorded at ten (13%) of the WeBS sites but only at five have more than ten birds been recorded and these are shown in Table CV2.

Table CV2. *The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Curlew Sandpipers 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of more than ten birds.*

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	1	13	11	8	12	13	10	19	42, Sep 1999
Chichester Hbr	0	3	0	0	2	5	1	7	12, Sep 2001
Pagham Hbr	1	11	5	0	5	4	2	6	34, Sep 1969
Pett Level	0	0	3	8*	0	1	3	1	16, Sep 1979
Rye Hbr	0	1	2*	0	3	2	4	0	12, Sep 1988
Scotney Court GP	nc	nc	nc	nc	0*	0*	0	2	12, Sep 1999

nc, indicates no counts in the 5-year period; *indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts

With the national autumn population estimated at 650 (Baker *et al.* 2006) and the national mean of maximum counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 being 381 birds, Sussex holds between 2.9 and 5.0% of the national autumn/wintering population.

Purple Sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*)

Curson (1996a) plotted the peak county totals of this species in each winter 1962/63 to 1992/93 and showed, as in Figure PS, a rise to about 90 birds. The peak derived from these non-WeBS counts, however, occurred in the early 1970s, with a smaller later peak rather than the mid-1980s peak as shown by the WeBS. Both showed a decline in recent years and Figure PS suggests this decline has continued, broadly following the national trend.

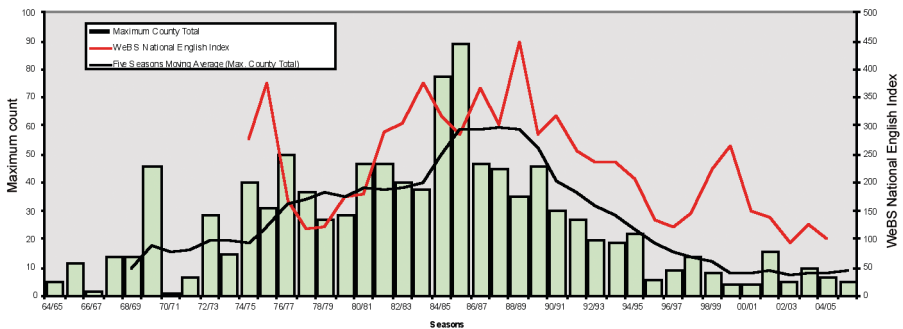


Figure PS. *The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Purple Sandpiper recorded in Sussex compared with the WeBS English index in each season, 1964/65 to 2004/05.*

This species often arrives late in the winter and Curson (1996a) noted that peaks generally occurred in January; this trend, albeit with smaller numbers, is continuing as shown in Table PS1.

Table PS1. *Monthly totals of Purple Sandpipers, 1994/95 – 2003/04.*

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	1	3	14	22	14	18	12
Mean	0	0	5	6	6	5	5
Minimum	0	0	0	1	1	0	0

This species shows a preference for a few favoured sites, particularly roosting sites on piers and jetties, but it can be fairly widespread, although in small numbers, along sections of the coast with seaweed-strewn rocks. Purple Sandpipers have been recorded at 15 (19%) sites during the WeBS but only at seven have more than ten birds been found and these are shown in Table PS2. However, they were also recorded at seven additional non-WeBS sites during the period under review of which the most significant (in descending order of significance) were Brighton (principally, but not exclusively, the marina), St. Leonards (possibly the same birds as at Glyne Gap) and Littlehampton. The numbers of birds at these sites are shown in a separate section in Table PS. Traditionally, Newhaven has always supported the largest numbers; a review of non-WeBS counts at this location suggests this survey under-records this species. This site and Brighton are now the main locations in the county. The mean of maxima county WeBS totals for the period 1999-04 is now only eight. It would be interesting to know what the international trend is with this species and whether the decline is correlated with global warming.

Table PS2. *The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Purple Sandpipers 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of more than ten birds.*

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	9	20	37	40	59	28	12	8	89, Jan 1986
Pagham Hbr	1	5	2	0	0	1	0	1	15, Feb 1974
Climping	1*	3*	0	8	6*	1	0	0	12, Jan 1982
Goring	0*	5*	9*	1	0*	0*	0	0	15, Dec 1974
Newhaven	nc	20*	21*	31	15	11	7	4	37, Feb 1982
Cuckmere Haven	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14, Dec 1967
Pevensey Levels	nc	5*	15*	5	22*	0	0	0	35, Mar 1986
Glyne Gap	0*	25*	nc	nc	36	22	7	4	39, Dec 1987
<i>Littlehampton</i>	<i>nc</i>	<i>nc</i>	<i>nc</i>	<i>2*</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3*</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>12, Jan 1982</i>
<i>Brighton Marina</i>	<i>nc</i>	<i>nc</i>	<i>nc</i>	<i>nc</i>	<i>5*</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>20, Dec 2004</i>
<i>St. Leonards</i>	<i>nc</i>	<i>nc</i>	<i>nc</i>	<i>nc</i>	<i>24*</i>	<i>12*</i>	<i>3*</i>	<i>2*</i>	<i>44, Mar 85 & Feb 87</i>

nc, indicates no counts in the 5-year period; * indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts

With the national winter population estimated at 127,530 (Baker *et al.* 2006) and the national mean of maximum WeBS counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 being 1352 birds, Sussex holds less than 0.6% of the national wintering population. Clearly the WeBS is not a good means of monitoring the population of this species at a county or national level.

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

Prater's (1987) statement that "of the estuarine waders found in Sussex the Dunlin is by far the most numerous, outnumbering all other waders added together" is still probably true. The same author noted that, "since 1971, the British wintering population has fallen by one fifth but in Sussex, however, while numbers have fluctuated they have probably remained roughly stable". Figure DN shows that, while this was generally true from 1972/73 to 1985/86 with further peaks in 1989/90 and 1994/95 the general tendency in the county since then has been for steady decline. There has, however, not been a strong correlation between this decline and the national picture as shown in Figure DN and by the correlation coefficient 'r' in Table 1. Prater also quoted Shrubbs (1979) who had postulated that the maximum number "approached 35,000" and for 1982/83-1985/86 the average peak was 32,600.

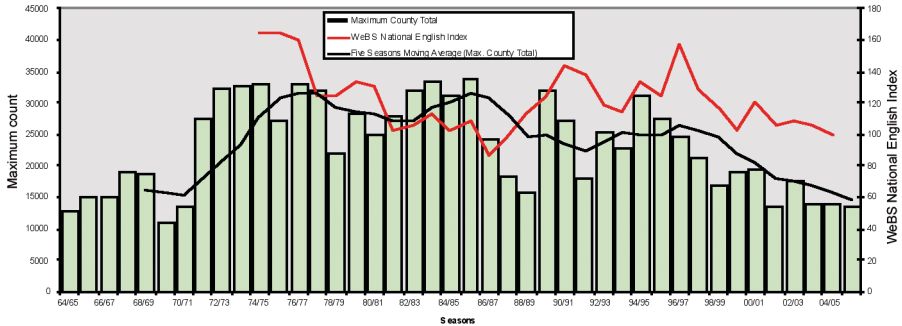


Figure DN. The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Dunlin recorded in Sussex compared with the WeBS English index in each season, 1964/65 to 2004/05.

Prater also noted that there had been a very sharp increase in numbers recorded at Chichester Hbr from the start of the BoEE which was probably due to more intensive counts locating all the smaller roosts around the harbour. This factor, plus increased coverage by a larger band of counters, could explain in part the apparent increase in numbers following the period 1964/65 to 1971/72.

Reasons advanced for the national decline in numbers affecting those in Sussex include poor breeding seasons and habitat changes that have limited the availability of food resources, so resulting in a lower winter survival rate (Nobbs 1996d) aggravated by the total loss of some habitats, e.g. Cardiff Bay, and the inability of alternative locations to absorb displaced birds. A further factor affecting numbers in the county could be related to less severe winter weather due to global warming, enabling birds to remain on continental and east coast estuaries (Austin and Rehfish 2005). As with other species, more disturbance at high-tide roost sites in Chichester Hbr may encourage birds to move into Langstone Hbr to roost (de Potier 2000).

Nobbs (1996d) demonstrated that wintering and migration numbers increase from September onwards with usually a particularly marked increase in November, presumably of wintering birds; this pattern and a mid-winter peak, continues as shown in Table DN1. Interestingly Table DN1 also shows the massive range of numbers encountered in each month.

Table DN1. *Monthly totals of Dunlin, 1994/95 – 2003/04.*

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	2531	10335	26169	31390	27588	22665	15933
Mean	1349	3238	15335	16000	15339	13478	5317
Minimum	563	934	4281	7531	5050	6406	13

Chichester and Pagham Hbrs remain both the wintering and migration stop-over strongholds of this species in Sussex. During the past 15 years these areas have held more than 86% of the county's wintering birds, and greater than 91% in 12 of those years. The 1% international threshold for Dunlin is 13,300; thus Chichester Hbr (along with 11 other British estuaries) qualifies as a site of international importance. The 1% national threshold of 5600 is met by 11 other British sites (Banks *et al.* 2006). Dunlin have been recorded at 27 (35%) of the WeBS locations in Sussex and at 12 of these, shown in Table DN2, have more than 100 birds been recorded.

Table DN2. *The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Dunlin 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of more than 100 birds.*

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	16262	23555	29462	29377	24732	25150	24403	16873	33741, Jan 1986
Chichester Hbr	12672	20667	25514	25554	22050	21447	20422	14750	30084, Nov 1982
Bracklesham Bay	nc	nc	nc	175*	3*	nc	nc	nc	350, Feb 1983
Pagham Hbr	4326	3436	4540	3460	3853	2715	3700	1626	6950, Dec 1976
Climping	1*	0*	43	34	43*	55	59	33	220, Jan 1998
Goring	53*	750*	671*	344	435*	316	540	313	1040, Feb 1978
Adur Estuary	200	900*	950	1158	1095	1252	949	465	1650, Dec 1989
Newhaven	nc	25*	95*	94	101	48	127	34	200, Jan 1996
Cuckmere Haven	64	3	67	111	60	44	40	33	127, Feb 1983
Langney	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	45	169*	96*	242, Feb 1998
Pevensey Levels	nc	9*	300*	225	63*	38	8	11	430, Feb 1978
Pett Level	0	0	119	335*	151	239	443	258	840, Feb 1980
Rye Hbr	3	38	574*	431	640	164	249	466	1500, Jan 1985

nc, indicates no counts in the 5-year period; *indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts

With the national winter population estimated at 555,800 (Baker *et al.* 2006) and the national mean of maximum counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 being 387,646 birds, Sussex holds between 3.0 and 4.4% of the national wintering population.

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

Although considered as a passage migrant, Curson (1996b) showed that wintering birds, particularly between the early 1960s and mid-1980s, outnumbered those on passage. He documented, in detail, the extraordinary numbers recorded on the Selsey peninsula and noted that since the mid-1980s the numbers had declined. Figure RU clearly shows this and reveals how the modest numbers have continued whilst the English index has risen slightly. However, the correlation between Sussex and national numbers is reasonably strong, as shown by the correlation coefficient 'r' in Table 1.

Curson (1996b) showed for the period 1962-1993 that this species was most numerous in Sussex between November and March and Table RU1 shows a similar pattern although with considerably smaller numbers. This is in contrast to the national picture where in most recent years the highest numbers have been recorded in September (Wernham *et al.* 2002).

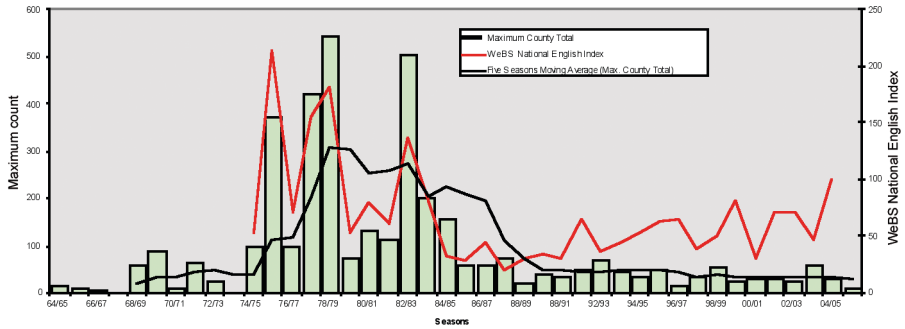


Figure RU. The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Ruff recorded in Sussex compared with the WeBS English index in each season, 1964/65 to 2004/05.

Table RU1. Monthly totals of Ruff, 1994/95 – 2003/04.

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	14	26	44	23	56	59	38
Mean	7	10	14	10	23	24	16
Minimum	0	0	0	2	0	4	1

Ruff have been recorded at 18 (23%) of Sussex WeBS sites and at eight of these more than ten birds have been recorded. Table RU2 shows these sites, records the decline at all sites, and shows the Arun valley as the most favoured current site. Although the 1% national threshold is seven, the Arun Valley is cited by Banks *et al.* (2005) amongst 35 British sites of national importance for this species.

Table RU2. The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Ruff 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of more than ten birds.

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	19	39	308	207	75	48	38	34	546, Dec 1978
Chichester Hbr	19	35	50	38	17	28	6	2	98, Oct 1974
Bracklesham Bay	nc	nc	nc	88*	28*	nc	nc	nc	158, Dec 1982
Pagham Hbr	4	7	236	166	66	13	4	3	540, Dec 1978
Arun Valley*	0†	0†	62	0†	0†	42*	35	31	280, Dec 1977
Glynde Level	0	0	0	0	0*	0	0*	4	18, Feb 2000
Pevensy Levels	nc	1*	8*	23	3*	0	0	0	42, Mar 1982
Pett Level	0	0	0	4*	1	1	1	0	14, Sep 1981
Rye Hbr	0	1	8*	2	2	1	1	4	22, Dec 1977

nc, indicates no counts in the 5-year period; * indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts;

† indicates species probably not counted

With the national winter population estimated at 700 (Baker *et al.* 2006) and the national mean of maximum counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 being 953 birds, Sussex holds between 3.6 and 4.9% of the national wintering population.

Jack Snipe (*Lymnocyrtes minimus*)

Shrubb (1979) noted annual totals of between 30 and 50 birds and Kelly (1996) felt this was a regular, but never common, species in Sussex. The inconspicuous nature of the species means most will be overlooked during WeBS counts unless favoured areas are inspected closely. It is noticeable from Figure JS that there were two peaks in numbers in the county from 1972/73 to 1980/81 and again from 1991/92 to 2002/03, the reasons for which are unclear. But the correlation between the Sussex five-year moving average and the English National index is reasonably good, as shown in Table 1, so this effect was possibly due to circumstances beyond our shores, e.g. on the breeding grounds, and is thought unlikely to be due to observer coverage.

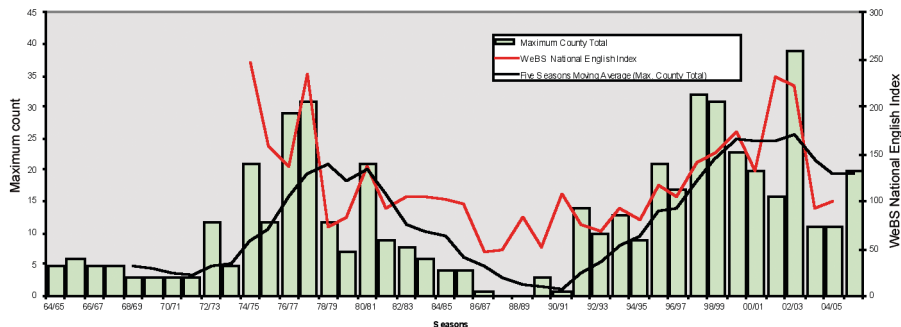


Figure JS. The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Jack Snipe recorded in Sussex compared with the WeBS English index in each season, 1964/65 to 2004/05.

Kelley (1996) tabulated the numbers in each month for the period 1970/71 to 1992/93 and therefore only included the first of the peaks shown in Figure JS. He reported some high October counts but generally most birds were recorded between December and February. Similar figures are shown from the WeBS alone in Table JS1 but numbers during this period were at their highest later in the winter.

Table JS1. Monthly totals of Jack Snipe, 1994/95 – 2003/04.

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	1	8	17	21	39	31	32
Mean	0	3	6	9	15	11	12
Minimum	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

The species has been recorded at 14 (18%) of Sussex WeBS sites but only at six of these, shown in Table JS2, have five or more birds been seen.

A complete review of all the records for this species showed, as expected, that there were many significant records outside the WeBS and, although strictly outside the remit of this study, these locations are shown in Table JS3.

The estimate for the wintering population quoted, but rated as poor, by Baker *et al.* (2006) was a range of 10,000 to 100,000 birds. The WeBS clearly does not monitor this species very well as the national mean of maximum counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 was 154 birds of which 14.2% were found in Sussex.

Table JS2. The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Jack Snipe 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of five or more birds.

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	5	5	21	10	2	8	22	22	39, Jan 2003
Chichester Hbr	5	3	13	2	1	5	20	21	39, Jan 2003
Adur Levels	nc	nc	0*	0*	0*	0*	0	0	5, Mar 2005
Cuckmere Haven	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	5, Feb 1981
Pevensey Levels	nc	2*	11*	7	2*	0	1	0	21, Jan 1978
Pannel Sewer	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	0*	5*	nc	10, Feb 1996
Rye Hbr	0	0	1*	2	0	3	0	0	14, Nov 1991

nc, indicates no counts in the 5-year period; *indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts

Table JS3. The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of ALL records of Jack Snipe 1964-69 to 1999-2004 for other sites with a maximum count of five or more birds.

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
Ferring Rife	nc	nc	nc	nc	1*	3	3	2	6, Jan 1992
Arun Valley (all sites)	nc	nc	2*	1*	2*	6	3	3	7, Nov 1989
Glyne Gap/Combe Haven	nc	nc	nc	4*	5*	4	3*	4*	10, Feb 1985
Pett Level	nc	nc	1*	2*	2*	15	4	3	30, Oct 1989

nc, indicates no counts in the 5-year period; *indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts

Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)

This is another species, like Northern Lapwing and European Golden Plover, where the data are incomplete with no early WeBS counts from important inland locations such as the Arun Valley and Pevensey Levels. This is undoubtedly the reason for the apparent rise in numbers and the marked fluctuations for the earlier seasons shown in Figure SN. Figure SN also reveals a notable reduction in Common Snipe numbers in the late 1980s and an almost steady, but reduced, number since and during the period when the counts were far more complete. Pepper (1996b) also demonstrated this six-fold decrease in winter numbers between 1976/77 and 1988/89 but noted that this species is notoriously difficult to survey at all times, warning that numbers should be treated with caution.

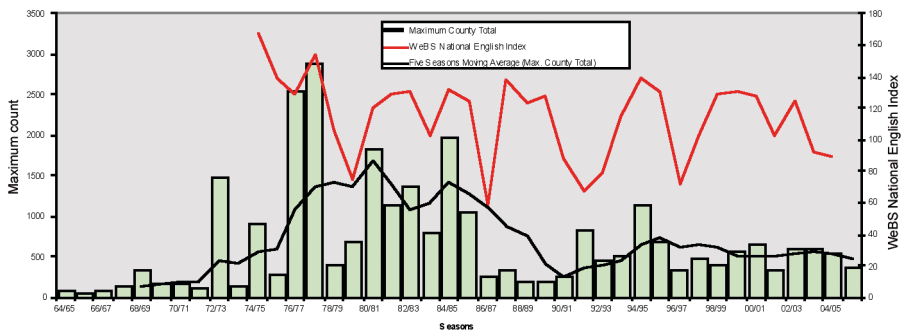


Figure SN. The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Common Snipe recorded in Sussex compared with the WeBS English index in each season, 1964/65 to 2004/05.

Although a small number of Common Snipe breed in Sussex and some may remain local in the winter months, these are dwarfed by a massive influx in the winter from continental Northern

Europe, particularly Fennoscandia and Germany (Wernham *et al.* 2002). Pepper (1996b) showed that this arrival accelerated in November and the highest numbers were recorded between December and February. Table SN1, showing the figures for the following 10-year period, demonstrates similar numbers in the early autumn, shows a reduced mid-winter population, and shows November to be the peak month. One could speculate that fewer birds are arriving into Sussex during this series of milder winters.

Table SN1. *Monthly totals of Common Snipe, 1994/95 – 2003/04.*

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	157	518	1141	719	708	446	330
Mean	82	251	444	363	429	318	237
Minimum	31	62	229	114	75	154	3

This species, behind Northern Lapwing, is the second most widely distributed of the waders having been recorded at 35 (45%) of the Sussex WeBS sites and at 12 of these, shown in Table SN2, more than 100 birds been recorded. Table SN2 illustrates that Chichester Hbr, the Arun Valley and the Adur Estuary are now the main strongholds of the species while Pevensy Levels and Pagham Hbr no longer hold their former numbers. Banks *et al.* (2006) cite the Arun Valley amongst the top 11 British sites and refer to the Adur Estuary as surpassing the qualifying level, set at 200, in the winter 2004/05. While Common Snipe can be found widely in suitable boggy habitats the numbers are generally low except in the area of Glyne Gap/Combe Haven/Filsham LNR, not included in the WeBS, where between 1991/92 and 2002/03 they were recorded in numbers from 20 to 150 in 12 seasons.

Table SN2. *The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Common Snipe 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of more than 100 birds.*

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	157	422	1413	1174	776	465	624	565	2891, Dec 1977
Chichester Hbr	142	145	261	259	144	127	140	150	541, Dec 1980
Pagham Hbr	43	9	55	199	52	30	49	47	546, Dec 1983
Climping	0*	0*	0	34	4*	0	0	0	117, Dec 1982
Arundel WWT	nc	nc	0†	0†	0†	13*	57	26	130, Nov 1994
Offham	nc	nc	0†	30*	0†	15*	3	1	120, Oct 1981
Arun Valley*	0†	0†	776*	0†	0†	488*	306	199	776, Dec 1977
Adur Estuary	0	0*	1	7	44	44	79	123	273, Feb 2005
Newhaven	nc	5*	44*	28	59	27	5	1	200, Jan 1986
Cuckmere Haven	24	0	97	138	44	10	3	1	300, Dec 1981
Pevensy Levels	nc	350*	1238*	758	600*	34	91	95	2300, Feb 1978
Pett Level	16	14	133	253*	66	18	50	29	400, Feb 1982
Rye Hbr	0	4	120*	49	154	37	55	66	265, Jan 1977

nc, indicates no counts in the 5-year period; *indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts;

†indicates species not counted

Baker *et al.* (2006) estimate the wintering population to be a minimum 100,000 birds. This, therefore, is another species that WeBS does not monitor well as the national mean of maximum counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 was 7242 birds. Given these numbers Sussex supports between 0.6 and 7.8% of the national wintering population and, by comparing similarly gathered data, is probably nearer the second figure.

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

Prater (1987) stated that the whole of the Sussex wintering population is found at Chichester and Pagham Hbrs and the farmland around and between them. He also noted fluctuating numbers with peaks and troughs in each harbour running parallel and that the average peak monthly count of ca. 1100 birds was about 20% of the national total. He alluded to lower numbers after the early 1980s; a point also shown by de Potier (1996b) who felt that by 1996 numbers were recovering. Figure BW shows these fluctuations which, with the exception of 1994/95, have not been so marked in recent years nor as dramatic as for other species. Although the English index has been showing a steady increase this has not been mirrored in Sussex.

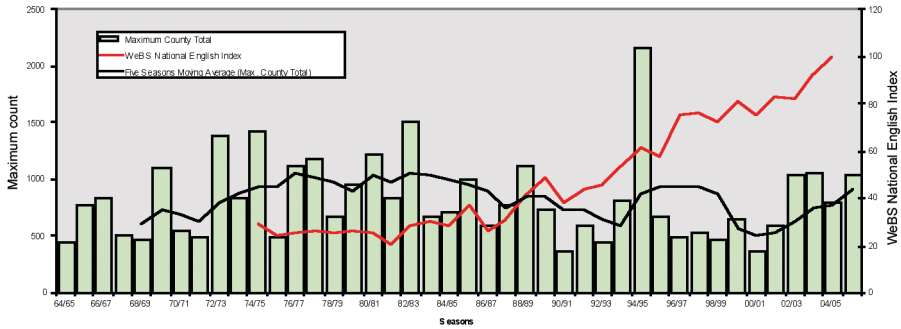


Figure BW. The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Black-tailed Godwit recorded in Sussex compared with the WeBS English index in each season, 1964/65 to 2004/05.

De Potier (1996b) considered that two races of this species occur in the county, the race breeding in Iceland (*L. l. islandica*) wintering in Sussex, whilst the nominate race (*L. l. limosa*) is recorded mainly on passage, but recent colour-ringing studies have shown the majority of passage birds are also *islandica*, and that *limosa* is very rare (P.M. Potts unpubl. data). De Potier also noted that monthly totals fluctuated widely and considered peak numbers were tending to occur earlier in the autumn during July and August thus outside the period covered by WeBS core counts. Table BW1 showing monthly numbers in a later 10-year period demonstrates no clear pattern but confirms massive variations in the counts, for example a range of 1 to 2177 in March. There is evidence that wintering birds move about the whole Sussex/Hampshire estuarine complex as an increase in numbers, at e.g. Titchfield Haven (Hants), has been linked with a corresponding reduction in Chichester and Langstone Hbrs (de Potier 1996b). Consequently, monthly counts are liable to variation for this reason alone.

Table BW1. Monthly totals of Black-tailed Godwits, 1994/95 – 2003/04.

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	876	963	1062	923	1050	438	2177
Mean	358	421	536	484	466	344	502
Minimum	156	123	177	59	46	148	1

Although the species has been recorded at 16 (21%) of Sussex WeBS locations, at only five have more than 10 birds been recorded and, as Table BW2 shows and previous authors have stated, nearly all the county birds are found in the western harbours. The international threshold has recently been increased from 350 to 470 so both Chichester and Pagham Hbrs remain of

international importance. Banks *et al.* (2006) listed these harbours as 17th and 19th respectively amongst 27 British internationally qualifying sites.

Table BW2. The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Black-tailed Godwit 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of more than ten birds.

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	614	876	984	1048	846	600	873	749	2177, Mar 1995
Chichester Hbr	591	800	908	897	750	555	824	615	2139, Mar 1995
Pagham Hbr	256	217	338	370	249	146	162	410	826, Jan 2003
Chichester GP	0	0	0*	0	0	0	0	0	32, Sep 2005
Climping	0*	0*	0	0	0*	0	0	5	25, Feb 2000
Pett Level	0	0	0	1*	1	2	6	5	26, Nov 1997

*Indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts

With the national winter population estimated at 15,390 (Baker *et al.* 2006) and the national mean of maximum counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 being 24,518 birds, Sussex holds between 3.1 and 4.9% of the national wintering population.

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)

This species shows a preference for estuaries with sandy substrates and is almost entirely restricted to Chichester Hbr (de Potier 1996c). Although in some seasons only a few hundred are recorded, in general the winter numbers have fluctuated around 1000 birds (Prater 1987) and this is shown clearly in Figure BA. In keeping with several species of shore waders there appears to be a recent decline following particularly high numbers in the mid-1990s. The five-year moving average and English index appear to follow broadly similar patterns although there is no correlation between the peak counts and the English index (Table 1).

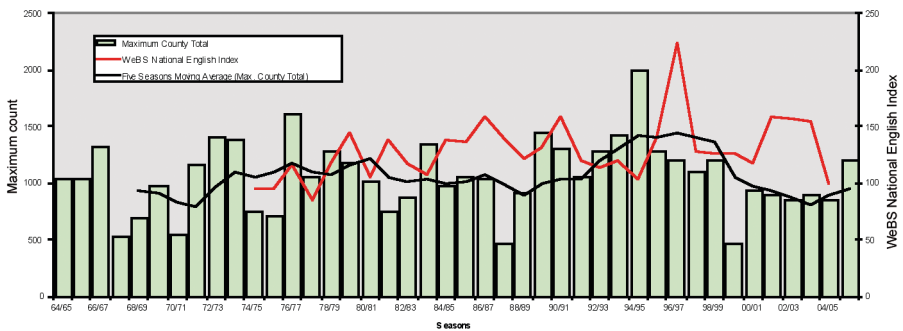


Figure BA. The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Bar-tailed Godwits recorded in Sussex compared with the WeBS English index in each season, 1964/65 to 2004/05.

The western European wintering population of ca. 125,000 birds is found mainly on the estuaries around the North Sea and is likely to originate from the European and west Siberian breeding populations. A much larger number winter in West Africa but pass through north-western Europe on passage (Wernham *et al.* 2002). Autumn numbers start to build in Sussex in July and de Potier (1996c) showed numbers reached a clear peak in December. Early autumn counts fall outside the core WeBS count period but in recent seasons, as shown in Table BA1, highest average counts have been in January.

Table BA1. *Monthly totals of Bar-tailed Godwits, 1994/95 – 2003/04.*

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	605	1281	1061	2001	1259	1208	1066
Mean	353	543	588	718	833	638	330
Minimum	44	105	156	114	203	18	1

Only at 13 (17%) Sussex WeBS sites has this species been recorded and at just seven have ten or more birds been recorded. These sites are shown in Table BA2 which also emphasises the importance of Chichester Hbr for this species. The 1% British national threshold for this species is 620 and Chichester Hbr (along with 22 other British estuaries) has qualified in all years covered by this survey except in 1967/68, 1987/88 and 1999/00. For the 1% international threshold of 1200, 16 other British estuaries qualified in 2000/01-2004/05 (Banks *et al.* 2006), but Chichester Hbr has done so in only 12 of the 41 seasons between 1964/65 and 2004/05.

Table BA2. *The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Bar-tailed Godwits 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of ten or more birds.*

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	936	1108	1087	1039	903	1312	1362	822	2001, Dec 1994
Chichester Hbr	913	1099	1076	989	867	1295	1326	816	1992, Dec 1994
Pagham Hbr	62	17	25	95	42	51	68	18	318, Oct 1980
Climping	0*	0*	1*	1	2	1*	7	1	32, Jan 1999
Goring	0*	0*	0*	0	2*	15*	3	3	57, Oct 1991
Adur Estuary	0	0*	1	0	2	1	0	1	10, Sep 1985
Newhaven	nc	0*	0*	0	3	0	0	0	11, Sep 1988
Rye Hbr	0	2	3*	2	17	1	3	0	40, Jan 1987

nc, indicates no counts in the 5-year period; *indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts

With the national winter population estimated at 65,430 (Baker *et al.* 2006) and the national mean of maximum counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 being 52,460 birds, Sussex holds between 1.3 and 1.6% of the national wintering population.

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)

Although the number of Whimbrels wintering in Sussex has increased in recent year this species is predominantly a passage migrant with the largest numbers recorded in April and May (Newnham 1996a). Furthermore the peak of autumn migration occurs before the WeBS core counts start and therefore this survey is predominantly recording the remnants of the autumn passage. The seasonal fluctuations, with no clear demonstrable trend, are shown in Figure WM and the monthly numbers are shown in Table WM1.

Table WM1. *Monthly totals of Whimbrels, 1994/95 – 2003/04.*

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	34	9	9	4	7	3	5
Mean	12	3	2	2	2	2	2
Minimum	2	1	0	1	0	0	0

Next to Avocet this species is the most restricted having only been recorded at nine (12%) Sussex WeBS sites and only at three have more than ten birds been recorded. Tables WM1 and WM2 show, for the months covered by this survey, that most are found in Chichester and Pagham Hbrs and that all the highest counts occurred in September.

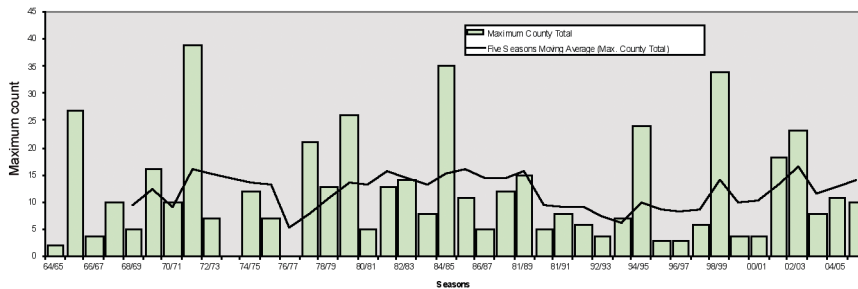


Figure WM. The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Whimbrel recorded in Sussex in each season, 1964/65 to 2004/05.

Table WM2. The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Whimbrels 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of more than ten birds.

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	10	14	11	13	16	6	14	11	39, Sep 1971
Chichester Hbr	5	9	6	10	8	5	6	7	30, Sep 1971
Pagham Hbr	5	4	4	2	4	1	8	4	23, Sep 1965
Pevensey Levels	nc	0*	0*	0	5*	0	0	0	16, Sep 1984

nc, indicates no counts in the 5-year period; *indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts

Baker *et al.* (2006) only quote breeding and spring passage population estimates. The national mean of maximum counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 of 1235 birds only includes one count in the core WeBS season and thus is not comparable with Sussex data shown in Table WM2.

Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)

The non-breeding Eurasian Curlew's preferred habitat is especially marine coastal mudflats and sands exposed at low tide, with adjoining saltmarshes, foreshores and floodlands where birds rest as their feeding grounds are covered (Snow *et al.* 1998). The bulk of the Sussex population is found in Chichester and Pagham Hbrs and Pett Level/Rye Hbr and the number of birds recorded away from these sites is (and always has been) low.

Shrubb (1979) noted that the highest Eurasian Curlew counts in Sussex occurred in the August to October period, with 1000 to 2000 birds regularly being counted at Chichester and Pagham Hbrs in the 1970s, whereas wintering numbers were lower at 800 to 1500. He also noted that substantial flocks were found between Pett Level and Rye Hbr in the autumn and particularly the winter, when flocks of up to 800 were recorded. As Figure CU shows, the five-year moving average of maximum peak counts of passage and wintering Eurasian Curlew in Sussex increased from about 1500 in the early 1970s to 2400 birds by the mid-1980s, and has remained remarkably constant at about 2400 over the past 25 years.

Most of the wintering population of British birds is a combination of those that have bred in the north of the UK, the Low Countries, Fennoscandia and Russia, the majority wintering in south-eastern England being of continental origin (Wernham *et al.* 2002).

In the western sites of Chichester and Pagham Hbrs the all-time peak counts have both occurred in September during the autumn migration, when juveniles join adults on passage (Nobbs 1996e).

In the east the all-time peak count at Pett Level occurred in January, supporting Shrubbs’s (1979) view that peak numbers there tend to be higher in mid-winter than on autumn passage. Table CU1 shows the high numbers in the autumn but suggests that, in recent years, more have been recorded in late winter.

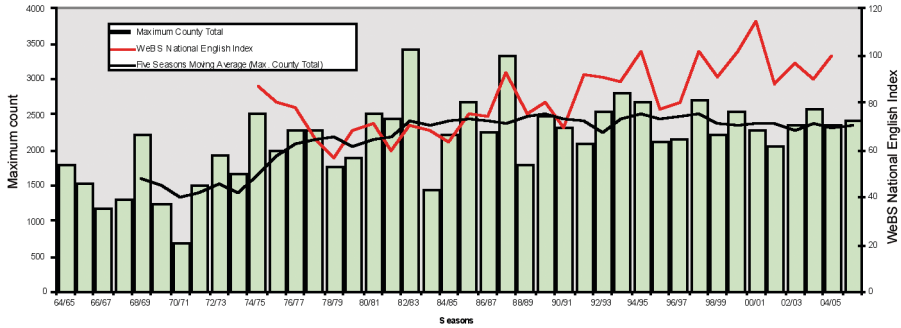


Figure CU. The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Eurasian Curlews recorded in Sussex compared with the WeBS English index in each season, 1964/65 to 2004/05.

Table CU1. Monthly totals of Eurasian Curlews, 1994/95 – 2003/04.

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	2700	2487	2026	2202	2708	2210	1747
Mean	1931	2050	1560	1522	1894	1929	1266
Minimum	1316	1505	933	1020	738	1581	69

The species has been recorded at 21 (27%) of Sussex WeBS sites but only at ten, shown in Table CU2, have more than 30 birds been recorded. Table CU2 shows that the majority of Eurasian Curlews are recorded at the four main sites. Within Sussex not only has the five-year moving average of maximum peak counts of wintering Eurasian Curlew across the county remained remarkably constant over the past 25 years, but the five-year averages across the three main sites have also remained remarkably constant, although in the east of the county some decline in numbers at Pett Level has been offset by increases at Rye Hbr.

Table CU2. The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Eurasian Curlews 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of more than 30 birds.

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	1614	1415	2170	2359	2465	2451	2387	2367	3446, Sep 1982
Chichester Hbr	1372	1194	1759	1837	1824	1752	1724	1701	2652, Sep 1982
Bracklesham Bay	nc	nc	nc	50*	65*	nc	Nc	nc	120, Mar 1985
Pagham Hbr	394	286	394	375	458	542	552	560	909, Sep 1993
Climping	0*	0*	7	1	2*	1	25	18	81, Jan 1996
Newhaven	nc	30*	7*	23	27	23	39	39	48, Jan 2000
Cuckmere Haven	24	0	1	1	8	3	18	27	44, Feb 1997
Pevensley Levels	nc	2*	16*	14	8*	0	3	1	31, Sep 1977
Pett Level	18	28	463	526*	573	454	460	383	1800, Jan 1988
Rye Hbr	3	83	195*	44	87	141	178	245	550, Oct 1974
Scotney Court GP	nc	nc	nc	nc	0*	2*	17	15	41, Sep 1994

nc, indicates no counts in the 5-year period; * indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts

The 1% international threshold for Eurasian Curlew is 4,200 (which no Sussex site approaches) but the 1% national threshold is 1500, which makes Chichester Hbr a site of national importance for this species.

The Sussex counts correlate poorly with the English index (Table 1), as WeBS data shows that wintering numbers, after a period of decline in England in the 1970s, are now on a long run of steady increase (Banks *et al.* 2006), albeit with distinct ups and downs.

With the national winter population estimated at 147,100 (Baker *et al.* 2006) and the national mean of maximum counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 being 87,297 birds, Sussex holds between 1.6 and 2.7% of the national wintering population.

Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*)

Peak numbers of Spotted Redshank are typically recorded in August when small numbers are annually recorded in Sussex on their migration from their Fennoscandinavian and Russian breeding grounds to their wintering grounds, which include the Atlantic coasts of western Europe and West Africa. Even smaller numbers over-winter in Sussex. Shrubbs (1979) noted that by the late 1970s maximum numbers of Spotted Redshank in Sussex had fallen from the peaks seen in the 1960s and Smith (1996a) noted a continued decline in passage and wintering numbers. The decline is most marked at Thorney Deepes (Chichester Hbr), a site that in the 1960s and 1970s regularly recorded 20 or more birds. This decline, notable from the early 1980s onwards and clearly demonstrated in Figure DR, coincided with the opening of a new scrape at nearby Farlington Marshes (Hants), where numbers increased, although they have since declined there too (C.B. Collins, *pers. comm.*).

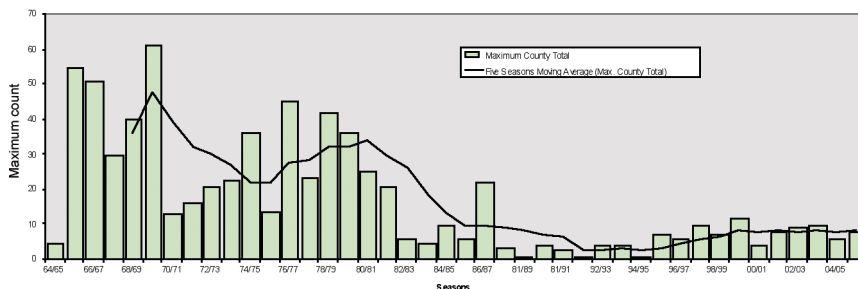


Figure DR. The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Spotted Redshank recorded in Sussex in each season, 1964/65 to 2004/05.

Numbers of Spotted Redshank recorded in Great Britain are too low for national population trends to be quoted by the BTO and little is known about overall population trends internationally (Wernham *et al.* 2002). A problem in assessing British trends is that European migration is characterised by long continuous flights between staging areas so that over large regions this species is seen only in low numbers which do not reflect the true scale of passage movement (Snow *et al.* 1998). Although numbers are very small Table DR1 suggests most are recorded in the WeBS in mid- to late winter.

Although the species has been recorded at 12 (15%) Sussex WeBS locations, only at three have more than five birds been recorded. Table DR2 shows these sites, reveals the low numbers seen and suggests in recent years Pagham Hbr has tended to hold slightly more birds than Chichester Hbr.

Table DR1. *Monthly totals of Spotted Redshanks, 1994/95 – 2003/04.*

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	6	7	8	7	10	12	6
Mean	3	4	3	3	4	6	4
Minimum	0	0	0	1	1	1	0

Table DR2. *The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Spotted Redshanks 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of more than five birds.*

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	36	27	32	19	8	3	6	9	61, Sep 1969
Chichester Hbr	36	25	27	14	5	3	3	3	60, Sep 1969
Pagham Hbr	0	2	2	3	3	1	3	5	7, Sep 1981
Pett Level	0	0	4	0*	0	0	1	0	19, Sep 1978

*Indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts

Baker *et al.* (2006) estimate 136 birds for the national wintering population and 530 birds for the autumn passage, the period when most peak counts occur in Sussex. The national mean of maximum counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 of 230 birds is derived from core counts, thus Sussex probably supports between 1.7 and 3.9% of the national population.

Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)

As with many Sussex waders there are two peaks in Redshank population numbers: long-haul passage birds in August to October en route from Scandinavia to as far south as West Africa, and wintering birds, mostly short-hop migrants from northern Britain (Cranswick *et al.* 2005). The small Sussex breeding population is largely resident (Wernham *et al.* 2002).

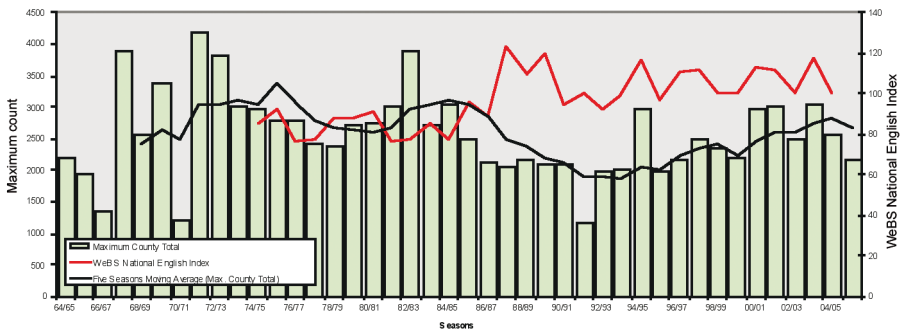


Figure RK. *The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Redshanks recorded in Sussex compared with the WeBS English index in each season, 1964/65 to 2004/05.*

Over the last 40 years there has been a change in the pattern of Redshank numbers in Sussex from a pronounced autumn passage peak, with much lower wintering numbers, to a reduced autumn peak but increased wintering numbers, such that the difference between the two peaks is much closer. Thus Shrubbs (1979) noted that Redshank were most numerous in Chichester and Pagham Hbrs during autumn migration, with the highest numbers occurring in September, when flocks of 3000 were not unusual across the two harbours (the September 1971 count of 4110 in Chichester Hbr remains the peak count at a Sussex site). By the 1990s Yates (1996c) noted that passage numbers at both sites were lower, and did not exceed 2500 (only 60% of the peak two

decades earlier). By contrast Shrub (1979) stated that the average winter population in the two harbours was 1200, and across Sussex the January total averaged 1380 between 1972 and 1976. However, during the late 1970s, 1980s and 1990s there was a substantial growth in wintering Redshank numbers in the Rye Bay area (no doubt as a result of the favourable conservation measures taken there). Thus by 1996 Yates (1996c) noted that the mean maxima of January birds over the prior 25 years (3497) was almost as high as the mean maxima of September birds (3906). Table RK1 suggests the species is now most numerous between October and December.

Table RK1. *Monthly totals of Redshanks, 1994/95 – 2003/04.*

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	2398	2977	3018	2985	3062	2346	2513
Mean	1751	2234	2019	2091	1977	1845	1413
Minimum	1104	1541	1438	1602	1460	1295	44

With the 2007 increase in the international threshold to 2800 birds (previously 1300) Chichester Hbr can no longer be recognised as a site of international importance for Redshank, but its wintering and passage populations should continue to make it recognised as a site of national importance (for which the new 1% threshold is 1200).

As Figure RK above shows, nationally the wintering population has been broadly stable since the 1980s, with a very slight rise over the last ten years (Banks *et al.* 2006). However, there is a low correlation figure between the Sussex and English trends (Table 1) as the Sussex population declined in the late 1980s and early 1990s but has since been on an upward trend, although it has not grown back to the levels seen in the 1970s. This is almost entirely down to population trends at Chichester Hbr, which have moved from a five-year mean of maxima peak counts of 2911 for the years 1969-74, down to 1338 in 1989-94 and back up to 2171 over the last five years. Redshanks have been recorded at 33 (42%) WeBS sites but only at nine, listed in Table RK2, have more than 50 birds been recorded. Wintering populations at the other sites shown in Table RK2 have been relatively stable over the last 30 years, except that at Pett Level there has seen a steady increase.

Table RK2. *The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Redshanks 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of more than 50 birds.*

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	2406	3134	2674	3036	2387	1876	2403	2754	4180, Sep 1971
Chichester Hbr	2245	2911	2373	2604	1844	1338	1656	2171	4110, Sep 1971
Pagham Hbr	230	387	392	521	395	389	486	464	716, Dec 1994
Adur Estuary	32	110*	137	171	139	153	161	155	300, Feb 1983
Newhaven	nc	20*	20*	31	56	35	40	52	75, Nov 1987
Cuckmere Haven	33	1	28	65	52	35	32	38	84, Jan 1981
Iford Brooks	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	30	12	51, Nov 1994
Pett Level	0	0	21	25*	39	28	80	89	321, Jan 2001
Rye Hbr	3	29	170*	146	194	131	171	193	304, Jan 1985
Scotney Court GP	nc	nc	nc	nc	0*	15*	27*	26	60, Dec 2003

nc, indicates no counts in the 5-year period; *indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts

With the national winter population estimated at 116,100 (Baker *et al.* 2006) and the national mean of maximum counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 being 92,641 birds, Sussex holds between 2.4 and 3.0% of the national wintering population.

Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)

Peak Greenshank numbers occur nationally and in Sussex on autumn passage, being either long-haul migrants from the far north of Europe or Russia, which touch down only briefly en route to west and south Africa, or shorter-haul migrants from northern Scotland and southern Scandinavia, which stop off in Britain to moult on our estuaries before most move on to over-winter in Iberia and north Africa (Flegg 2004). Some of this population, however, stays to over-winter in Britain (Collier *et al.* 2005).

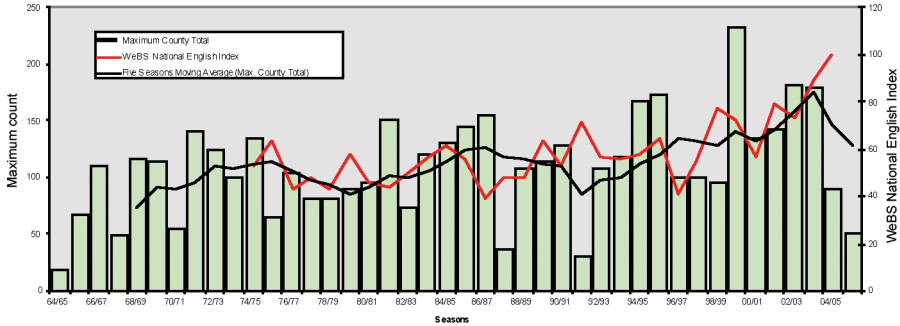


Figure GK. The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Greenshank recorded in Sussex compared with the WeBS English index in each season 1964/65 to 2004/05.

Shrubb (1979) noted that Greenshank may not over-winter every year, but that flocks of 50 to 100 birds are regularly recorded at Chichester Hbr during autumn passage. Smith (1996b) noted that since 1966 wintering birds had been recorded annually, typically with fewer than eight individuals, although 12 were recorded in 1992. Smith (1996b) also noted that by the late 1980s and early 1990s autumn passage numbers had increased as well with 146 being recorded at Chichester Hbr in September 1991.

This increase in records of passage and winter numbers has continued with 188 birds being recorded at Chichester Hbr in September 1999 and 44 there in winter 2001/02. Indeed Chichester Hbr is now one of the most important passage and over-wintering sites in Great Britain, and held the largest mid-winter numbers in the country in 2000/01 to 2003/04 (35 to 44 birds). Table GK1 shows the monthly totals from the WeBS and highlights that larger numbers are recorded in the autumn and only on one February count were Greenshank absent.

Table GK1. Monthly totals of Greenshank, 1994/95 – 2003/04.

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	233	138	45	22	16	15	17
Mean	150	91	22	13	11	9	10
Minimum	92	41	4	1	3	0	1

Small numbers of passage birds are recorded at Pagham and Rye Hbrs but at the latter site the highest numbers of Greenshank have been recorded earlier in autumn (i.e. 150 on 27 July 2005) and therefore outside the scope of the core counts. Greenshank have been recorded in small numbers at 25 (32%) WeBS sites but only at four have more than ten birds been recorded and these are shown in Table GK2. There is some evidence (Anthes 2004) that climate change is bringing forward the passage of spring migrants; whether milder winters are also influencing the numbers of autumn passage birds and the numbers of birds over-wintering in Sussex is less clear.

Table GK2. *The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Greenshank 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of more than ten birds.*

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	73	107	94	106	116	101	128	174	233 Sep 1999
Chichester Hbr	70	96	85	92	97	80	113	147	188, Sep 1999
Pagham Hbr	4	12	7	11	8	15	11	13	35, Sep 1972
Weir Wood Res	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	12, Sep 1998
Rye Hbr	0	1	1*	2	7	4	2	8	18, Sep 1987

*indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts

Baker *et al.* (2006) quote estimates of 597 for the national wintering population and 4290 birds for the autumn passage, the period when most peak counts occur in Sussex. The national mean of maximum counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 of 2065 birds is derived from predominantly core counts, thus Sussex probably supports between 4.0 and 8.4% of the national population.

Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*)

This is one of the least concentrated species that migrates through, and over-winters in, Great Britain. For example, the WeBS recorded Green Sandpipers nationally in 124 sites across the country between November 2004 and March 2005, yet only five of these sites held five or more birds (Banks *et al.* 2006)

Green Sandpipers are one of the earliest autumn passage migrants, with a majority of birds passing through Britain and Ireland from their Scandinavian breeding grounds in July and August, although numbers remain comparatively high into September and early October. A few over-winter in Britain whilst others migrate further south to France, Iberia and North Africa, as well as further east. Their preferred habitat is fresh water, with gravel pits and lagoons favoured whilst on passage, and streams and watercress beds favoured as winter quarters (Cranswick *et al.* 2005). They tend to avoid coastal and tidal areas although they will tolerate saline areas. The Arun Valley, Pevensey Levels, Pett Level and Rye Hbr are their favoured Sussex sites, but they are recorded in many other sites across the county, indeed the species has been recorded at 23 (29%) WeBS locations. However, because of their solitary nature, widespread dispersion and early autumn passage, WeBS gives a far from complete picture of the Green Sandpiper population, both nationally (Cranswick *et al.* 2005) and in Sussex. Thus the Sussex Bird Reports for the years 1999-2004 record from all sources, including WeBS, a mean maximum of 25 wintering birds (and 118 passage birds, peaking in August) versus the WeBS mean maximum of 13 winter birds and 30 September birds over the same period.

Shrubb (1979) noted that that the wintering population was usually five to ten birds annually and Smith (1996c) noted that the average number of birds recorded across all sites in the county in December and January between 1977 and 1993 had grown to 12 (versus the mean maximum from the WeBS sites of eight during the same period).

Whilst Figure GE and Table GE show a growth in Sussex winter numbers, but a decline over the last five years, the Sussex Bird Report totals for all winter records suggest that this recent decline is less marked. It also appears that over the last ten years passage numbers recorded in Sussex have increased, although because of the dispersion of this species some of this increase in records may be due to the increased numbers of observers rather than increased numbers of birds. Table GE1 shows, as expected, that most are recorded in the WeBS during the first month of the survey (September) and Table GE2 also places emphasis on this month with most peak counts occurring in September.

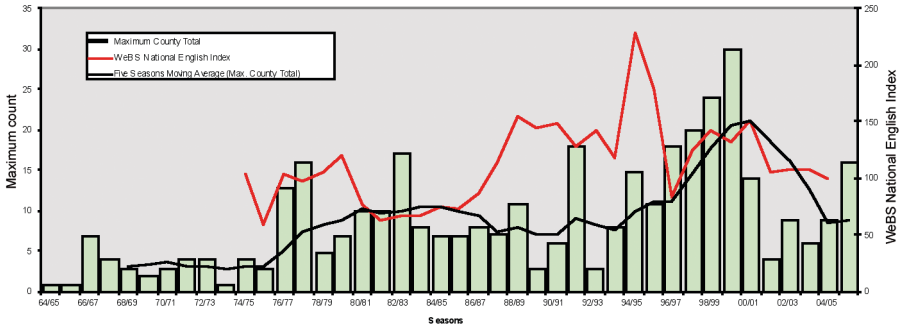


Figure GE. The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Green Sandpipers recorded in Sussex compared with the WeBS English index in each season 1964/65 to 2004/05.

Table GE1. Monthly totals of Green Sandpipers, 1994/95 – 2003/04.

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	30	18	10	14	8	10	5
Mean	14	8	5	6	4	4	3
Minimum	4	3	2	1	0	0	1

Table GE2. The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Green Sandpipers 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of more than five birds.

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	3	3	8	10	8	8	18	13	30, Sep 1999
Chichester Hbr	3	1	5	4	2	1	2	1	9, Sep 1977
Arundel WWT	nc	nc	0 [†]	0 [†]	0 [†]	0*	2	1	5, Sep 1994
Arun Valley*	0 [†]	0 [†]	0 [†]	0 [†]	0 [†]	3	1	2	12, Oct 1991
Pevensy Levels	nc	1*	4*	5	1*	2	6	3	11, Dec 1998
Darwell Res	0 [†]	0 [†]	1	3	3	1	3	2	8, Sep 1986
Pett Level	0	0	1	1*	1	1	3	3	6, Dec 1994 & Sep 1999
Rye Hbr	0	1	1*	1	2	2	5	3	10, Sep 1999

nc, indicates no counts in the 5-year period; *indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts; [†]indicates species probably not counted

The portion of the national population recorded in Sussex is difficult to calculate from WeBS data, as the national WeBS figures understate the national wintering population for the same reasons that the Sussex figures do. However, the national mean of maximum WeBS counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 of 466 birds is derived from counts exclusively outside the core count season, so from WeBS comparisons it would appear that Sussex holds perhaps 2.8% of the wintering population. Regarding passage numbers, Baker *et al.* (2006) give a minimum of 1000 for the autumn passage and using the mean maxima shown in the 1999/2004 Sussex Bird Reports rather than WeBS data, it would appear that Sussex records up to a remarkable 13.6% of the national passage population.

Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

Shrubb (1979) noted that typical spring migrations of Common Sandpiper involved 40 to 50 birds, with the peak in May, and that autumn passage involved 200 to 300 birds a year with the peak in August and a rapid tailing off of numbers in September. He also noted that a few winter in Sussex but that the numbers rarely exceed five birds, although there were 12 in 1950. Janman (1996c) stated that the wintering picture was much the same with no more than nine being recorded in any winter between 1976/77 and 1992/3, distributed across a wide range of coastal and inland sites. This situation has probably changed very little, thus the WeBS is not a good means of monitoring this species. Figure CS shows mainly September counts but interestingly follows a similar pattern to other species with a rise until the early 1990s with a subsequent fall. Table CS1 reinforces the aforementioned points.

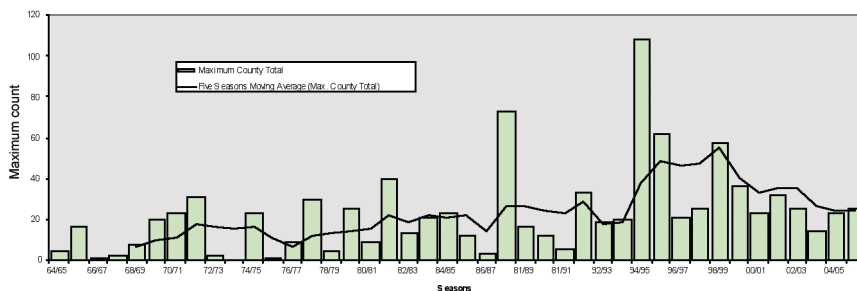


Figure CS. The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Common Sandpipers recorded in Sussex in each season, 1964/65 to 2004/05.

Table CS1. Monthly totals of Common Sandpipers, 1994/95 – 2003/04.

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	108	14	6	4	1	3	18
Mean	41	6	2	1	1	1	2
Minimum	15	0	0	0	0	0	0

The difficulties monitoring this species are compounded by its habit of frequenting small ditches and watercourses not covered by the WeBS but it has been recorded at a total of 32 (41%) survey areas. Those where more than ten birds have been seen are shown in Table CS2.

Table CS2. The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Common Sandpipers 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of more than ten birds.

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	7	15	14	22	26	18	55	27	108, Sep 1994
Chichester Hbr	2	5	6	12	10	3	16	3	60, Sep 1994
Pagham Hbr	5	6	2	5	3	1	4	3	15, Sep 1969
Langney	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	0*	4	0*	17, Mar 1996
Pevensey Levels	nc	0*	5*	7	2*	0	0	0	12, Sep 1977
Darwell Res	0†	0†	0†	0†	1	1	5	1	15, Sep 1994
Rye Hbr	0	5	3*	2	10	5	7	12	28, Sep 1987

nc, indicates no counts in the 5-year period; *indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts;

†indicates species probably not counted

The portion of the national population recorded in Sussex is difficult to calculate. Baker *et al.* (2006) give a minimum of 2600 for the autumn passage and the national mean of maximum counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 of 1103 birds is, like the previous species, derived from counts exclusively outside the core count season.

Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)

The British Turnstone population is made up of passage birds that breed in Fenno-Scandia and west Russia, and winter in Africa, and of birds that breed in eastern Canada and Greenland and winter in this country. This is a bird of rocky coasts and stone-strewn sandy shores, and nationally it is estimated that about 77% of the wintering population occurs on non-estuarine coasts (Cranswick *et al.* 2005). However, because WeBS poorly covers such habitat it is estimated that only about 20% of the national population are recorded in the WeBS (Collier *et al.* 2005). The 2006/07 Non-estuarine Coastal Waterbird Survey (NEWS), to be carried out both nationally and in Sussex, should therefore reveal a more complete picture for this species.

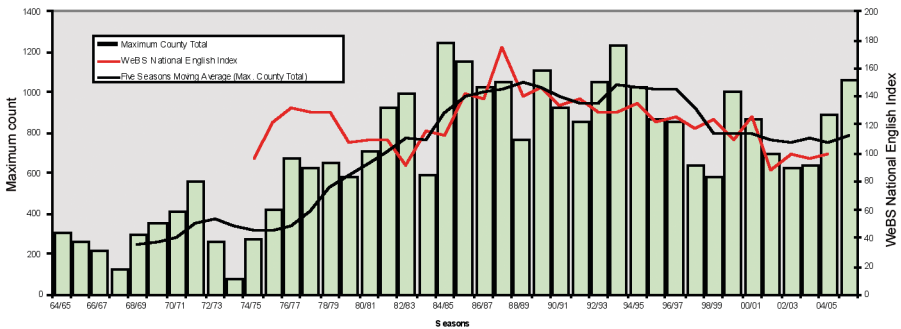


Figure TT. The maximum number and five-year moving average of the maximum for Turnstones recorded in Sussex compared with the WeBS English index in each season 1964/65 to 2004/05.

The figure above shows a considerable growth in the national population between the 1970s and mid-1980s, but it also shows that the national population has declined more recently. Cranswick *et al.* (2005) state that “the wintering distribution of Turnstone appears to be shifting in a northwest direction towards their breeding grounds, changes which may be linked to increasingly warmer winters”.

Shrubb (1975) noted that the major wintering populations were in Chichester and Pagham Harbours, around the Selsey peninsular and between Pevensy and Rye Hbr. He estimated that there were between 300 and 600 birds present each winter. Newnham (1996b) noted that there had been a distinct increase in wintering numbers in Sussex since the 1960s, as the means of maxima of peak counts for the years 1984-89 and 1989-94 (Table TT2) show. However, he also noted that whilst the county total had increased the growth had come in the west of the county and that wintering numbers in the east, particularly at Rye Hbr, had decreased.

Over the last 10 years there has been a continuing change in both the distribution and abundance of wintering Turnstone. Whilst western sites such as Climping/Rustington, Goring and the Adur Estuary have become more prominent, there has been a continuing decline in the county maxima, not only in the eastern sites, but also at Chichester and Pagham Hbrs. The climate change reasons already referred to may account for this overall decline but the growth in numbers on the pebble-strewn sandy beaches at Climping, Rustington and Goring suggests other factors may also be at work.

Newnham (1996b) showed a fairly consistent number throughout the seven-month period with a small peak in the late autumn; Table TT1 shows little change in a more recent ten-year period.

Table TT1. *Monthly totals of Turnstones, 1994/95 – 2003/04.*

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Maximum	1004	978	857	854	724	876	1028
Mean	503	653	571	492	468	590	564
Minimum	212	334	403	329	272	302	11

The species is rare away from the coast and it has only been recorded in 18 (23%) sites surveyed for WeBS; most of these are coastal and those where more than 50 birds have been recorded are shown in Table TT2. With the international and national thresholds set at 1500 and 500 respectively there are now no Sussex sites reaching these levels.

Table TT2. *The five-year means of maxima of peak counts of Turnstones 1964-69 to 1999-2004 based on sites with a maximum count of more than 50 birds.*

	64-69	69-74	74-79	79-84	84-89	89-94	94-99	99-04	Peak counts
County total	248	338	533	765	1051	1039	798	771	1246, Feb 1985
Chichester Hbr	140	165	122	193	246	253	203	173	385, Jan 2006
Pagham Hbr	198	176	305	326	362	509	380	399	714, Oct 1993
Climping	10*	10*	7	19	10*	28	59	108	192, Mar 2001
Goring	3*	0*	10*	12	5*	8*	21	31	52, Oct 2004
Adur Estuary	0	0*	0	1	3	6	31	38	101, Dec 2005
Langney	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	66*	24	6*	100, Mar 1991
Normans Bay	8*	15*	nc	nc	138	65*	nc	nc	164, Mar 1987
Pevensey Levels	nc	39*	93*	194	135*	0	0	0	280, Sep 1982
Glyne Gap	0*	90*	nc	nc	319	270	238	189	420, Sep 1987
Pett Level	0	4	117	270*	152	139	79	58	350, Dec 1987
Rye Hbr	8	29	95*	50	62	9	14	18	276, Feb 1985

nc, indicates no counts in the 5-year period; * indicates mean based on less than 5 years of counts

With the national winter population estimated at 49,550 (Baker *et al.* 2006) and the national mean of maximum counts for the seasons 1999/00 to 2003/04 being 12,325 birds, Sussex holds between 1.6 and 6.3% of the national wintering population.

Summary and conclusions

When looking at WeBS data for the core months it should be borne in mind that Sussex records involve a mix of passage migrants and wintering and resident birds. Autumn passage migrants move through Sussex primarily in August and September, returning in late March to early May. This means that September and March WeBS counts may record more passage migrants than wintering birds, so WeBS maxima for September to March may not refer to wintering maxima for these species. Seven species covered in the paper have higher passage populations than wintering populations in Sussex - Ringed Plover, Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Whimbrel, Greenshank, Green Sandpiper and Common Sandpiper - and the five-year mean average maxima in the accounts of these species refer to passage birds. Oystercatcher, Eurasian Curlew, Redshank and Turnstone have passage populations of about the same size as the Sussex wintering populations, so the five-year mean average maxima may refer to either the passage or wintering populations. The other fourteen species covered in this paper have lower numbers of passage migrants and higher numbers of wintering birds.

For the reasons stated in the species accounts WeBS gives a less than complete picture of the

wintering populations of five predominantly “inland” species - Northern Lapwing, Jack Snipe, Common Snipe, Green Sandpiper and Common Sandpiper - although WeBS does give a good picture of a sixth “inland” species, Golden Plover.

So what does this analysis of 40 years of WeBS counts reveal about waders in Sussex? It is evident that over the last 40 years the overall picture for waders in Sussex in the September to March period has been much less positive than for swans, geese and ducks (Newnham *et al.* 2006). Of the 25 species covered in this paper, and adjusting for the fact that some species were not fully counted until the mid-1970s (e.g. Ruff and Common Snipe in the Arun Valley) the overall picture is as follows:

- Six species have increased over the study period: Avocet, Golden Plover, Jack Snipe, Eurasian Curlew, Redshank and Greenshank.
- A further nine species have shown an overall growth in numbers over the study period but have also shown a decline over recent years: Oystercatcher, Grey Plover, Northern Lapwing, Red Knot, Little Stint, Black-tailed Godwit, Green Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper and Turnstone.
- Four species have shown growth during the study period but numbers have subsequently declined to about the levels of 40 years ago: Ringed Plover, Purple Sandpiper, Dunlin and Bar-tailed Godwit.
- Four species have shown declines over the study period: Sanderling, Ruff, Common Snipe and Spotted Redshank.
- No real trends are discernible for Curlew Sandpiper and Whimbrel which are primarily passage birds with peak numbers which can occur outside the September- March period and where numbers recorded by *WeBS* are very low.

Declines in Sussex population numbers over the last ten or so years are therefore apparent in no less than 17 of the 25 waders studied. Even more disappointingly 13 of these species had shown good increases over the first half of the study period.

Trends for English wader populations overall are only available for the last 30 years. Whereas Sussex population trends for a few species, notably Ringed Plover, were initially favourable in comparison to English trends for the first ten of these years (1974/5 to 1983/4), it is very noticeable that no species is faring better in Sussex than in England during the last 20 years (1984/4 to 2004/5).

- English national trends are better (less decline, or more growth) than the Sussex trends for 11 species: Ringed Plover, Golden Plover, Northern Lapwing, Red Knot, Sanderling, Dunlin, Common Snipe, Ruff, Eurasian Curlew, Black-tailed Godwit and Redshank.
- Over the same period the broad trend for another nine species is similar in Sussex and England overall: Oystercatcher, Avocet, Grey Plover, Purple Sandpiper, Jack Snipe, Bar-tailed Godwit, Greenshank, Green Sandpiper and Turnstone.

(No English trends are available for Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Whimbrel, Spotted Redshank or Common Sandpiper).

For waterfowl the overall picture in Sussex was better than the not unfavourable picture in England largely due to the improvement and expansion that had occurred in Sussex’s water bodies (many of them inland areas) over the past four decades (Newnham *et al.* 2006). The expansions and improvements at Pulborough Brooks and Rye Hbr in particular should have benefited the six primarily “inland” species of waders. Indeed, numbers of Northern Lapwing, Golden Plover, Jack Snipe, Green Sandpiper and Common Sandpiper recorded by WeBS have increased during the study period and only numbers of Common Snipe have decreased.

However, most of the waders are primarily birds of seashores and estuaries, and unlike the inland water-bodies there has been no expansion of these habitats in Sussex at all. Instead the

growth in Sussex's human population has probably resulted in increased seashore usage and disturbance by humans, including dog-walking, kite-surfing and other recreational pursuits. Indeed de Poitier (*pers. comm.*) has noted that over the years a particular sandy island near Hayling Island has suffered increasing levels of disturbance as well as shrinkage in size, resulting in smaller roosts of several wader species. In this regard the increases during the study period of sympathetic management at such major wader locations as Chichester, Pagham and Rye Hbrs is a positive factor; without this, declines might well be even more apparent!

The causes of the apparent declines in wader populations both in Sussex and in England and the reasons for the declines in Sussex being worse than for England over the past 20 years are unclear and seem worthy of investigation. It has become apparent that climate change is increasingly affecting migration patterns. Thus Eaton (2007) writes that at the national level wintering populations of "...Ringed Plover, Dunlin and Turnstone have all declined over both the long term and the last 10 years. Whilst precise reasons for decline vary, a common theme appears to be one of climate change. As winter weather ameliorates, and areas close to the breeding grounds become more habitable year round, the need for some species to migrate as far as the UK to winter decreases." Similarly, Austin and Rehfish (2005) have noted a displacement of wintering waders from the west to east coasts of the UK, and Anthes (2004) has suggested that climate change is bringing forward the spring migration dates for Redshank and Greenshank. Clearly these impacts could be affecting many species of migratory birds.

If milder winters are now causing fewer waders to migrate as far as Great Britain to over-winter, it would not be unreasonable to assume that within Great Britain it is the areas furthest away from the northern European breeding grounds that will see the biggest falls in wintering visitors. Thus Sussex could be expected to be a county that is impacted more than, say, an east-coast county of England, and this may be one reason why the trends for 11 wader populations in Sussex in the September to March period are worse than those for England as a whole. The same trend of milder winters could also be increasing human disturbance at both feeding and roost sites.

Besides milder winters, climate change is also predicted to give rise to more extreme weather (and importantly, for this paper, more frequent storms) as well as rising sea levels. Both factors affect sea defences, an area of under-investment in recent years, both nationally and in Sussex. The effects of storm defence work can already be seen in Sussex, with the placement of rocks to defend Middleton-on-Sea, and with major realignments and additions to shingle beaches being carried out repeatedly at Bracklesham Bay, Climping, Worthing, Lancing and Seaford in recent years. The writers are not aware that the impact on waders of the resulting habitat has been studied, but casual observation suggests that on such bulldozed shingle beaches it takes several years for vegetation and insect life to become re-established, which may affect species such as Turnstone, Sanderling and Ringed Plover.

In the longer term, rising sea levels will reduce the areas available to feeding waders of both tidal shores, where sea defences currently maintain high-water boundaries, and inter-tidal zones in such places as Chichester and Pagham Hbrs. This effect may possibly reduce the ability of such areas to support current numbers of passage and wintering waders, or aggravate current declines in their numbers.

On a more positive note, the above effects could be ameliorated, at least to some extent, by deciding, at least in the medium term, to engineer 'managed retreat' by permitting current sea-defences to be breached. Such a policy has been proposed for the Cuckmere estuary and could, perhaps, be applied to the Selsey peninsular and Chichester and Pagham Hbrs. The authors are of the opinion that there is little likelihood that the government will be prepared to afford the huge costs involved in defending 100% of the current UK coastline in perpetuity. Whereas some may see this as bad news, birders may not!

Acknowledgements

The preparation of this paper would have been impossible without the help of many people. The authors express thanks to J.E.S. Cooper, M.J. Mason and B.R. Gilmore who have computerised past and present WeBS counts. Thanks are extended to A. de Potier, E. Rousell and R. Bown who have kindly commented on the draft and provided constructive advice. The organisation of such an extensive and long-running survey, even at a county level, is vital and we therefore acknowledge those mentioned in the introductory section of the first part (Newnham *et al.* 2006). Finally we thank the innumerable observers for their time and effort in undertaking the 8943 counts over the past four decades which have been used in this paper.

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UNUSUAL RECORDS

All records of the unusual species listed below are required to be considered by the Records Committee and it may be assumed that those published in the Annual Bird Report have been fully authenticated. Such records should be submitted on (or in the same format as) the special forms available from the Recorder or the SOS website and should be either posted or e-mailed to the Recorder. Reports of national rarities as defined by the *British Birds Rarities Committee* should be submitted to the Recorder (not direct to *BBRC*) either in the same format as above, or on forms available from the Secretary of the *BBRC*.

Photographic submissions will be accepted only when they are accompanied by full details of the sighting (location, time, observers, etc as on page 1 of the SOS record form) and the identification can be assessed by the relevant Committee on the details supplied. All records submitted in whatever format may require additional details to be supplied by the observer to the Recorder and/or the Committee.

The following are the unusual species in Sussex for which descriptions are required:

Whooper Swan	Temminck's Stint	Marsh Warbler
Bean Goose (both races)	White-rumped Sandpiper	Icterine Warbler
Pink-footed Goose	Pectoral Sandpiper	Melodious Warbler
American Wigeon	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Barred Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Grey Phalarope	Subalpine Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Red-necked Phalarope	Greenish Warbler
Ferruginous Duck	Pomarine Skua (except in spring)	Pallas's Warbler
Surf Scoter	Long-tailed Skua	Yellow-browed Warbler
All Pheasants (except Common)	Sabine's Gull	Radde's Warbler
Great Northern Diver	Ring-billed Gull	Dusky Warbler
All shearwaters (except Manx)	Iceland Gull	Red-breasted Flycatcher
All petrels (except Fulmar)	Glaucous Gull	Crested Tit
Great White Egret	White-winged Black Tern	Golden Oriole
Purple Heron	Roseate Tern	Red-backed Shrike
White Stork	Black Guillemot	Woodchat Shrike
Honey-buzzard	Little Auk	Chough
Black Kite	Puffin	Hooded Crow
White-tailed Eagle	Alpine Swift	Rosy Starling
Montagu's Harrier	European Bee-eater	Serin
Goshawk	Short-toed Lark	Twite
Rough-legged Buzzard	Shore Lark	Common (ex-Mealy) Redpoll
Red-footed Falcon	Red-rumped Swallow	Arctic Redpoll
Spotted Crake	Richard's Pipit	Common Rosefinch
Corn Crake	Tawny Pipit	Lapland Bunting
Common Crane	Red-throated Pipit	Cirl Bunting
Stone-curlew	Water Pipit	Ortolan Bunting
Kentish Plover	Dipper	Rustic Bunting
Dotterel	Bluethroat	Little Bunting
American Golden Plover	Aquatic Warbler	

In addition, descriptions are required for **all** races other than the normally occurring one, including: Black Brant, Baltic Gull, Caspian Gull, Kumlien's Iceland Gull, Scandinavian Rock Pipit and Yellow Wagtail (except 'Blue-headed') but excluding Pale-bellied Brent Goose, *intermedius* Lesser Black-backed Gull, White Wagtail and Greenland Wheatear. Descriptions for *argentatus* Herring Gulls are only required for West Sussex records. Descriptions are also required for any species seen on a date outside the range of historic first and last dates for migrants (see pages 208-209).

It should be noted, however, that the following species, or any other species seen in unusual circumstances or on an unusual date, may, at the discretion of the Recorder, require a description: inland divers, Red-necked Grebe (inland records), Black-necked Grebe, 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.

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The Society was formed in 1962 to promote the recording, study, conservation and enjoyment of birds in Sussex.

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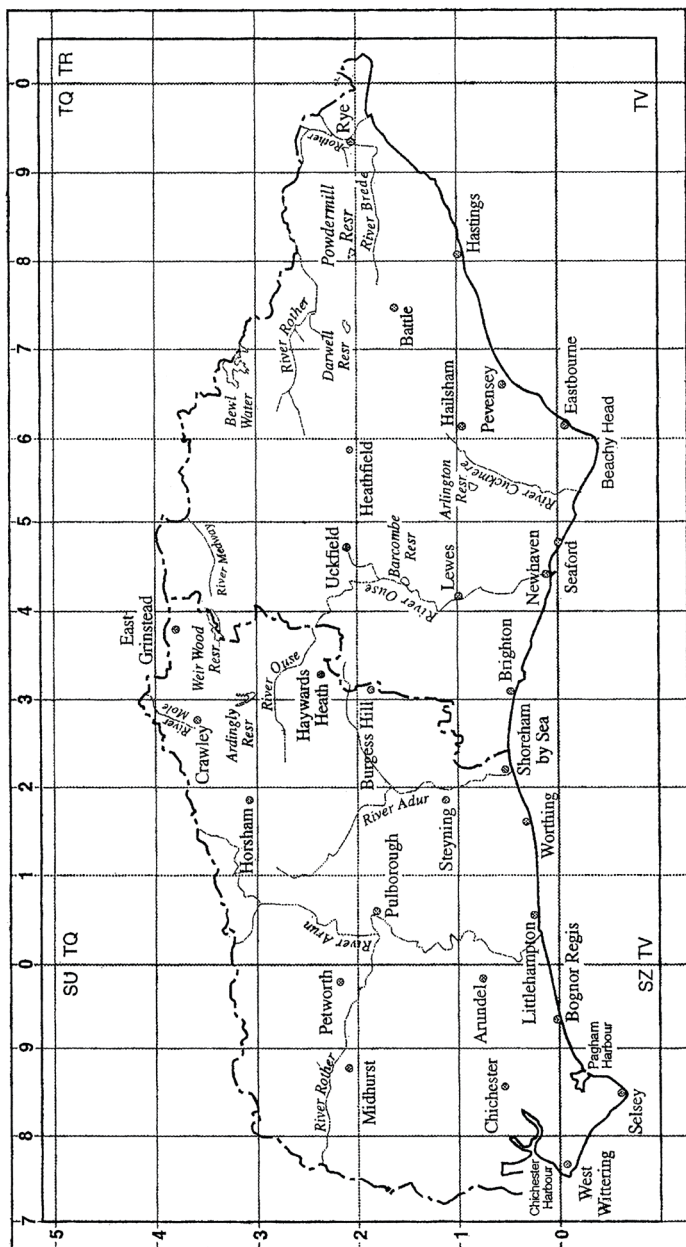
The annual Sussex Bird Report (which is free to members). This contains a number of well-researched papers and a full systematic list of birds seen in our county. These records are assessed by the Recorder and a Records Committee, to ensure that each entry portrays the true current status of the birds in Sussex.

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GAZETTEER

Alexandra Park, Hastings	TQ8010	Charleston Reedbed	TQ5100	Henfield Levels	TQ1914	Northpoint Pit, Rye	TQ9319	Sidlesham Ferry & Fields	SZ8596
Amberley Wild Brooks	TQ0314	Cheilwood Vachery	TQ4330	Hollies, Ashdown	TQ4528	Old Airstrip, Ashdown	TQ4231	Smpling Brooks	TQ1604
Ambersham Common	SU9119	Chichester Gravel Pits	SU8703	Hollingbury Camp	TQ3207	Old Lodge Reserve	TQ4630	South Stoke	TQ0210
Angmering Park Estate	TQ0506	Chichester Harbour	SU7600	Horse Eye Level	TQ6208	Pagham Harbour	SZ8596	Sovereign Hbr Marina	TQ6403
Apuldram Manor Farm	SU8301	Church Norton	SZ8795	Horseshoe Plantation	TV5695	Pagham Lagoon	SZ8896	Splash Point, Seaford	TQ4898
Ardingly Reservoir	TQ3229	Cissbury Ring	TQ1408	Hotham Park, Bognor	SZ9399	Pannal Sewer	TQ8715	St Leonards Forest	TQ2231
Arlington Reservoir	TQ5307	Climping	TQ0001	Hurstpierpoint	TQ2716	Parham Estate	TQ0614	Stakes Island	SU7801
Arundel Park	TQ0108	Cobnor Point & Farm	SU7902	ifield Mill Pond	TQ2436	Partridge Green	TQ1919	Stansted Forest	SU7511
Arundel W.W.T.	TQ0208	Combe Haven	TQ7609	Iping Common	SU8421	Pett Level Pools	TQ9014	Stedham Common	SU8521
Asdown Forest	TQ4332	Crows Nest, Ashdown	TQ4728	Ivy Lake, Chichester	SU8703	Perthorch Park	TQ9171	Streele Farm Billingshurst	TQ0624
Atherington	TQ0000	Cuckmere Haven	TV5197	Kingley Vale NNR	SU8110	Pevensey Bay	TQ6503	Swanbourne Lake	TQ0107
Balsdean	TQ3704	Darwell Reservoir	TQ7121	Kneppmill Pond	TQ1521	Pevensey Bridge Level	TQ6504	The Goat, Ashdown	TQ4032
Barcombe Reservoir	TQ4314	East Guldeford Level	TQ9421	Lancing Clump	TQ1806	Pevensey Levels	TQ8605	The Mens	TQ0223
Beachy Head	TV5895	East Head	SZ7698	Langney Point	TQ6401	Pitsey Island & Sands	SU7600	The Severals	SZ8794
Belle Tout	TV5695	Ebenose Common	SU9726	Langton Common	SU9418	Pippingford Park	TQ4430	Thorney Deepes	SU7503
Bewl Water	TQ6733	Elms Farm, Icklesham	TQ8815	Lewes Brooks	TQ4207	Porfield Gravel Pit	SU8805	Thorney Island	SU7602
Billingshurst	TQ0825	Eridge Park	TQ6635	Littlehampton G.C.	TQ0101	Powdermill Reservoir	TQ7919	Tilgate Park	TQ2734
Birling Gap	TV5596	Fairlight	TQ8611	Long/Narrow Pits, Rye	TQ9217	Pulborough Brooks	TQ0516	Union Canal, E. Guldeford	TQ9322
Bluebell Railway	TQ4023	Fishbourne Channel	SU8303	Lullington Heath	TQ5401	Rackham Woods	TQ0414	Upper Adur Levels	TQ1914
Brede Levels	TQ8417	Fore Wood, Crowhurst	TQ7513	Lurgashall Mill Pond	SU9325	Roman Road, Ashdown	TQ4729	Wakehurst Place	TQ3331
Bremere Rife	SZ8798	Forest Mere	SU8129	Manxey Levels	TQ6306	Rye Bay Wood	TQ9217	Walland Marsh	TQ92
Brighton Marina	TQ3302	Four Counties, Ashdown	TQ4631	Marine Wood	TQ7812	Rye Harbour LNR	TQ9216	Waltham Brooks	TQ0215
Brighton Wild Park	TQ3207	Friston Forest	TV 5499	Marsh Farm, Yapton	SU9804	Sotheby Court Gravel Pits	FR0119	Warnham L.N.R. & M.P.	TQ1732
Broadwater, Worthing	TQ1404	Gills Lap, Ashdown	TQ4632	Maynards Green	TQ5818	Seaford Head	TV4997	Weir Wood Reservoir	TQ3834
Brooklands, Worthing	TQ1703	Glynde Levels	TQ4609	Mill Hill, Shoreham	TQ2107	Selsey Bill	SZ8592	West Beach Littlehampton	TQ0201
Broomhill Level	TQ9818	Glyne Gap, Bexhill	TQ7607	Millbrook, Ashdown	TQ4428	Selsey West Fields	SZ8394	Westdean Hollow	SU8515
Buchan Park	TQ2434	Goring Gap	TQ1001	New Salts Farm	TQ2004	Seven Sisters Country Pk	TV5197	Whitbread Wood	TV6596
Burton Mill Pond	SU9617	Gossops Green	TQ2535	Newhaven Harbour	TV4499	Sheepcote Valley	TQ3404	Widewater, Lancing	TQ2004
Camp Hill, Ashdown	TQ4629	Graveley Lakes	TQ3634	Newhaven Tide Mills	TQ4500	Shillingee Lake	SU9631	Willington	TQ6802
Castle Water & Farm	TQ9118	Greenwood Clump	TQ4731	Nook Meadows, Rye	TQ9217	Shoalers Bottom	TV5795	Woods Mill	TQ2113
Cattlesone Farm	TQ1020	Halsey's Farm	SZ8697	Normans Bay	TQ8805	Shoreham Airport	TQ2005	Woolbeding Common	SU8625
Chailey Common	TQ3821	Harbour Farm, Rye	TQ9317	North Wall Pagham Hbr	SZ8797	Shoreham Harbour	TQ2304	Worth Forest	TQ3034

The grid references given are intended as a guide only to finding the sites and are not necessarily where a species was observed.

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Species in Systematic List

Euring numbers in bold type.

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