

SUSSEX ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The Sussex Bird Report



No.60

2007



SUSSEX ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Number Sixty, 2007



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Editorial Team: N Paul, I Barnard, Dr JA Cocks, J Curson, R Fairbank,
JA Hobson, P James, P Jones, Dr JA Newnham, A Thomas and Dr BJ Yates

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Sussex Bird Report 2006 amendments and corrections

Very few errors in the 2006 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: Little Owl

John Reaney: Manx Shearwater, Peregrine Falcon, Pomarine Skua, Raven, Red-breasted Goose, Swift, White-billed Diver

Photographs

Cover photograph: *Fulmar, Beachy Head, May 2007 (Roger Charlwood)*

Page 4: *Common Tern, Rye Harbour, May 2007 (Roger Charlwood)*

The Photographic Editor would like to thank those photographers who submitted photographs of Sussex birds taken in 2007, 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

Following the favourable reaction to the changes in format introduced into the 2006 Report, Council has agreed that this 60th Sussex Bird Report can again be printed in colour.

There has been a huge increase both in the number of records received, which is now three times that in 2001, and in the number of people submitting records, which is nearly double last year's. 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. This has resulted in a marked increase in the number of records for common birds.

Thanks are due to all the 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 216-224. However, it is disappointing that descriptions have not been submitted for a number of records of rare or unusual species that are known to have been seen in the county during the year. It is hoped that these records will be listed on the Society's website. The species for which descriptions are required are listed on pages 274-275. Observers are reminded that, unless descriptions are submitted and approved by the Society's Records Committee, the records are not entered onto the Society's database and therefore do not appear in this Report. This also reduces our knowledge of the true status of certain species in the county.

Number/Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Submitting records	507	590	796	632	1207
Records received	59,040	65,730	87,586	96,595	148,292
Species recorded	258	262	263	253	253
Birds ringed	52,455	57,544	58,746	54,661	51,372
Species ringed	114	120	125	109	116
Species on county list	388	389	389	388	388

The species accounts were written by a large team of authors, namely **CJR Barfield, IT Barnard, S Bayley, VP Bentley, C Brooks, MJ Chattaway, W Coleman, CB Collins, JR Cower, H Crabtree, DE Crawley, J Curson, PJ Everitt, RJ Fairbank, D Green, AC Gutteridge, D Harper, WG Harvey, JA Hobson, A House, DH Howey, ME Kalaher, SH Linington, O Mitchell, JA Newnham, TW Parmenter, PN Paul, RT Pepper, A Podmore, J Pryor, CJ Reay, GCM Roberts, MV Sennitt, CE Temple, A Thomas, AB Watson, JA Whitman** 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 **Sam Bayley, Dick Gilmore, Paul James, Phil Jones, Leonard Manns, Christian Melgar, Adrian Thomas** and **Barry Yates** who read through the species accounts and suggested some 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 Newnham** for organising the computerisation of all the records and **Helen Crabtree** for typesetting the Report.

November 2008



Review of 2007

Jon Curson

As in previous years, this review 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 (the same as last year) in what many considered to have been a relatively quiet year in the county. The totals recorded in the last ten years still range between 250 and 269.

As in 2006 the number of rare and scarce species recorded in the county was relatively low. There was some excitement through the year though; a **Hume's Leaf Warbler** at Horseshoe Plantation (Beachy Head) from the end of 2007 until mid-January 2008 was only the fifth county record and a **Red-breasted Goose** at West Wittering (seen at both ends of the year) was only the third. A wintering **Whinchat** was in Horsham in the early part of the year and a **Yellow-browed Warbler** seen in Southwick from February to April was only the second record of overwintering in Sussex. Autumn rarities included the county's third **Paddyfield Warbler** in October (trapped at Pett Level as were the previous two) and the fourth **White-billed Diver** (this one being in full summer plumage when it was found at the end of September and thus much appreciated during its lengthy stay). There were influxes of **Little Auks**, with at least 32 recorded in the late autumn period, and on one day in September 18 **Sooty Shearwaters** passed Selsey Bill. **Mediterranean Gull** numbers continue to break records; the 250 recorded at Rye Hbr in March broke the county record for the ninth successive year! Other notable species seen during the course of the year included two **Red-rumped Swallows** in April, a **Glossy Ibis** in two locations at either end of the county in the spring, a **Black-winged Stilt** at Pett Level in June, in August a **Night Heron** in Hastings and a **White-winged Black Tern** at Weir Wood Res, and in September two **Great White Egrets** at Thorney Island.

Photographs of some of the birds listed in this review can be found in this Report and on Ian Barnard's Birds of Sussex website 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 very mild and fairly sunny, with about average rainfall, although there was a slightly colder spell in the third week.

Scarce and unusual birds remaining from 2006 included the **Water Pipit** at Barcombe Res (until 25 Feb at least), the **Great Northern Diver** at Southwick Canal (until 27 Jan), the **Eastern/Siberian Chiffchaff** at Newick SF (until 7 Jan at least) and the **Greater Scaup** at Weir Wood Res (until 25 Feb at least). On the 1st there were 23 **Bewick's Swans** at Henfield Levels, which stayed till the 6th. On the 3rd Sussex's 11th **Ring-necked Duck** (a female) appeared at Weir Wood Res, remaining there until 31 Mar and (like so many of them) spending most of its time asleep! It was joined there by a male **Goosander** on the 4th, while on the 5th an immature **Iceland Gull** was seen at Ferring Rife. A **Whinchat** was found at Horsham early in the month and was seen regularly until 18 Feb representing a very unusual winter record of this species. On the 6th a **Red-necked Grebe** flew past Selsey Bill and on the 10th another (or the same?) was in Chichester Hbr.

Eurasian Bitterns were in short supply this year but one was seen at Pett Level on the 15th. On the 20th a **Tundra Bean Goose** was at Bines Bridge (Adur Valley), two **Pale-bellied Brent Geese** were found at Pagham Hbr, remaining there until 10 Mar, and another **Red-necked Grebe** was seen on the Southwick Canal. The following day another **Pale-bellied Brent Goose** was

seen (on Pevensey Levels) and three redhead **Smew** at Rye Hbr was the high count in a poor first winter period for this species (the same three were also seen on two dates in February). On the 27th a male **Long-tailed Duck** was in Thorney Channel (with presumably the same bird being seen at East Head on 6 Feb and 3 Mar). Also on the 27th a **Red-necked Grebe** was in Pagham Hbr (and seen again on 1 Feb). On the 28th there was a **Pink-footed Goose** at Bines Bridge (Adur Valley) until the 30th, a **Long-tailed Duck** flew west past Selsey Bill and an inland **Slavonian Grebe** was found at Bewl Water. On the 29th 31 **White-fronted Geese** were seen in the lower Cuckmere Valley (the high count of the winter there with smaller numbers being present for much of January and February) and the month closed with the peak count for the winter of 32 **Bewick's Swans** at Burpham (Arun Valley) on the 31st.

February

February began fine and dry, as January had finished, but the month was mostly unsettled, if mild, with above average rainfall and snow for some areas on the 8th-9th during a brief colder interlude.

On the 2nd the first **Arctic Skua** of the year flew east past Telscombe Cliffs and two **Eurasian Bitterns** were at Rye Hbr (the high count for the year). On the 4th there were two **Water Pipits** at their favoured winter locality of Combe Haven. On the 10th two more **Water Pipits** were found, these ones in the lower Cuckmere Valley, and the first **Great Skua** of the year went east past Seaford. On the 15th there was a very unseasonal **Curlew Sandpiper** at Church Norton, while on the 18th a first-year **Iceland Gull** was seen at Barcombe Res, five **Pale-bellied Brent Geese** were at Rye Hbr, 42 **Common Eider** were offshore at Glynne Gap and there was a **Water Pipit** at Shoreham Hbr. The following day eight **Greater Scaup** flew past Glynne Gap and there were also two **Red-necked Grebes** there. On the 24th a **Red-breasted Goose** was found in the large **Brent Goose** flock at West Wittering; this was just the third county record and the first one for 20 years; as such it was much appreciated and, staying as it did until 7 Mar and then returning in November, it was admired by many during its stay. Five **Goosander** at Pagham Hbr on the 24th was the high count for the county in a poor year for this species. On the 25th a **Yellow-browed Warbler** was found in Southwick (by an ex-editor of the Bird Report while walking his dog!). This individual stayed until 1 Apr and, like the goose, was admired by many; it is only the second record of successful overwintering by this species in Sussex.

March

March was a relatively mild month with average rainfall and a record temperature of 18.6 deg C set in Herstmonceux on the 27th. There was a colder snap from 18th to 21st but little snow compared to some other parts of eastern England.

The WeBS count at Thorney Deeps included 37 **Jack Snipe**, only one short of the county record (also at this site). Spring seemed to arrive early this year; on the 3rd the first **Barn Swallow** of the year was at Clayton Halfway, two days later the first **Willow Warblers** were seen at Brighton and Hastings, and on the 7th a more predictable first **Northern Wheatear** was seen, unusually inland, at Weir Wood Res. The high count of **Dark-bellied Brent Geese** moving up-channel occurred on the previous day (6th) although the 465 past Telscombe Cliffs was not a particularly high count in a rather poor spring passage. On the 11th a first-year **Iceland Gull** was found on the R Adur at Shoreham; it stayed until the 25th and was occasionally seen as far west as Lancing and as far east as Southwick. Also on this day there was a **Red-necked Grebe** at Chichester Hbr (also seen on the 13th). More spring arrivals were the first **House Martin** at Sidlesham Ferry (also on the 11th), the first **Garganey** at Duncton on the 13th, plus the first **Sand Martins** at Pagham Hbr and the first **Little Ringed Plover** at Pulborough Brooks on the 15th. On the 23rd a **Greater Scaup**

was offshore at Selsey Bill. On the 24th a total of 250 **Mediterranean Gulls** at Rye Hbr broke the county record for the ninth consecutive year, and the first **Osprey** was at Pulborough Brooks. On the following day a **White Stork** over Worthing equalled the earliest ever record. Also on the 25th the first migrant **Whinchat** was seen at Isfield, on the 26th the first **Tree Pipit** returned to Ashdown Forest and on the 28th the first **Spoonbill** of the year flew over Crawley. On the 31st a **Common Crane** arrived at Pulborough Brooks; it stayed on and off until 29 Apr and was joined by a second bird from 18-19 Apr.

April

April was dominated by high pressure, producing dry sunny weather with chilly nights and north to north-easterly winds. The winds switched to the south-east on the 20th as the high pressure shifted slightly and thunderstorms on the 25th and 26th brought most areas their first rain of the month.

The month started with an out of place immature **Glaucous Gull** at Firlle Place and an early **Garden Warbler** at Knepp Estate, both on the 1st; the next day the first **Yellow Wagtail** was at Cissbury. As is expected in early April, first records of returning migrants came rapidly, with the first **Common Tern** at Pilsey Sands on the 4th, first **Ring Ouzel** at Hastings and **Lesser Whitethroat** at Rye Hbr on the 5th, first **Sedge Warbler** at Pagham Hbr and **Common Whitethroat** at Hollingbury on the 6th, first **Common Nightingale** at Beachy Head on the 8th and the first **Common Redstart** at Pagham Hbr on the rather late date of the 9th. Nine **Great Northern Divers** at Selsey Bill was the high count of the year at this site and indeed the highest count since 2000. Returning migrants continued in mid-month with the first **Grasshopper Warblers** at Seaford and Church Norton, plus the first two **Turtle Doves** at St Leonards on the 10th, **Common Swift** at Hollingbury and **Little Tern** at Rye Hbr on the 11th and **Pied Flycatcher** at Beachy Head on the 13th. Also on the 13th a **Stone Curlew** was found at Pulborough Brooks and the following day a **Water Pipit** was at Climping, a **Pale-bellied Brent Goose** was at Pagham Hbr (until the following day) and the last two **Fieldfares** of the spring were seen at Pulborough Brooks. On the 15th the first **Eurasian Reed Warblers** arrived at Rye Hbr and Pagham Hbr, the first **Wood Warbler** was seen at Beachy Head and there were two **Spoonbills** at Scotney Court GP.

On the 16th the first **Arctic Terns** flew past Seaford; there were also two more **Pied Flycatchers** at Pagham Hbr and another two at Rickney (Pevensey Levels). The following day the last **Brambling** of the spring was seen at Crowborough. On the 20th the first **Pomarine Skuas** of the year were recorded, including a flock of 12 past Selsey Bill; it was however rather a poor year for this species. Also on the 20th the first two **Black Terns** flew past Seaford and the only **Montagu's Harrier** of the year (though two other records are still being assessed) was seen flying over Weir Wood Res. The next day the first **Manx Shearwater** was seen at Seaford. On the 22nd the last **Redwing** was at Doleham and there was a **Wood Warbler** at Church Norton, while on the 23rd a **Stone Curlew** was on Thorney Island. On the 26th there was a **Pied Flycatcher** in Brighton and two **Long-tailed Ducks** in Chichester Hbr. On the 27th a **Common Crane** (probably one of the Pulborough birds) flew over Horsham. On the 28th two **Red-rumped Swallows** were seen at Pett Level and on the 30th a **Glossy Ibis** was found at Pagham Hbr. April finished with the first **Spotted Flycatcher** of the year at Hurstpierpoint.

May

May began fine and settled but low pressure with frequent fronts meant it was generally cooler and wetter than April had been. There was particularly heavy rain on the 13th and the 27th-28th, with the 21st to 25th being rather more settled and dry.

On the 3rd a **Glossy Ibis** (presumably the Pagham bird) was seen briefly at Pett Level and two days later an adult **Iceland Gull** was a good find at Selsey Bill. The next day there was a **Wood Warbler** at Pagham Hbr and a **Long-tailed Duck** flew past Selsey Bill, while on the 7th a **Pied Flycatcher** was in Brighton. On the 10th two **Common Cranes** flew over Hartfield; it is possible that these were the ones seen previously at Pulborough Brooks but if so they had been hiding for 10 days; there was also the first **Common Quail** of the year at Rye Hbr. Two days later the first **European Storm Petrels** were seen at Selsey Bill, with regular subsequent sightings until early July; there was also another **Wood Warbler** at Pagham Hbr and an inland **Curlew Sandpiper** at Bewl Water. On the 13th a **Kentish Plover** graced the R Adur at Shoreham and the last five **Purple Sandpipers** of the spring were at Brighton Marina. On the 14th a **Hoopoe** appeared at Cobnor Fm (Chichester Hbr) and on the 16th there were two **Common Cranes** over Handcross (probably the Hartfield birds) and three **Curlew Sandpipers** at Pagham Hbr (which was the high count of the spring). On the 20th the second **Kentish Plover** of the spring was at Pagham Hbr and there was a **Woodchat Shrike** across the road at Sidlesham Ferry. On the 23rd a **Long-tailed Skua** flew east past Ferring and the following day a **Common Quail** was at Hastings and there were two **Spoonbills** at Pett Level. On the 26th a **Cattle Egret** was at Pulborough Brooks and three days later three appeared on Lewes Brooks. May closed with a **Balearic Shearwater** past Worthing Beach on the 29th and a **Red-necked Phalarope** at Sidlesham Ferry on the 29th-30th.

June

June was dry and warm for the first third, with light east or north-east winds, but unsettled for the remainder, with low pressure dominating, producing frequent showers and some heavy downpours.

The month began with a male **Red-backed Shrike** at Pett Level and a **Common Quail** at Laughton Place (Ringmer). Pett Level scored again with a **Black-winged Stilt** on the 4th. After a quiet 10 days two **Roseate Terns** were seen at Selsey Bill on the 14th and two days later a female **Pied Flycatcher** was found at Pulborough Brooks; it then spent much of the summer in the area. On the 19th a **Common Crane** flew over High and Over (north of Seaford) and on the 21st a high count for the year of 167 **Manx Shearwaters** west at Selsey Bill eclipsed any other counts there or anywhere else. On the 26th a male **Golden Oriole** was seen in a garden at Rusper and the only **Serin** of the year was at Selsey Bill.

The county's breeding birds had varying degrees of success this year. A pair of **Egyptian Geese** again bred at Petworth Park, raising a single youngster, but no **Garganey** were confirmed breeding (although birds summered at three sites in the east of the county). **Grey Partridges** were confirmed breeding at just three sites (down from four sites last year) with territorial birds at a fourth site. **Little Egrets** continued their consolidation as a breeding bird with 30 nests at four sites (up from 17 nests last year). Four pairs of **Honey-buzzards** raised two young each with a fifth pair probably breeding. The regular pair of **Red Kites** bred in the west of the county for the fourth successive year and a second pair probably bred nearby; with the number of birds being seen in the area increasing annually they will surely spread soon. A total of 22 pairs of **Peregrine** raised 32 young; last year 17 pairs raised 43 young so although the population continues to increase, breeding success was not as good this year. The **Common Buzzard** population continues to expand with an estimated 250 pairs.

A total of 33 pairs of **Oystercatcher** bred at five sites; 28 of these were at Rye Hbr where hatching success was good but few chicks survived to fledging, probably due at least in part to the poor weather during May. At least 100 **Avocet** were present at three main sites in the east, doubling the county population, although nesting details are not known. At least 110 pairs of **Northern Lapwing** bred at 14 sites raising at least 45 young; this is a significant increase on the 64 nests last year and included 40 pairs at Rye Hbr (where nesting success was poor), 21 pairs

at Pulborough Brooks (which raised 17 young), eight pairs at Bracklesham Bay (raising eight young) and five pairs at Lewes Brooks (raising five young). There were also 13 pairs at Pagham Hbr and 10 pairs at Pett Level but success was poor at both sites. **Little Ringed Plover** bred at four sites and probably at another four; seven pairs raised at least five young in total. At least 66 pairs of **Ringed Plover** nested this year; this is nearly double last year's total of 36 but additional pairs were found this year in the national BTO survey. These included 39 pairs at Rye Hbr, where success was poor and 14 pairs at Pagham Hbr, which raised 16 young. **Common Redshank** bred or attempted breeding at 11 sites (one more than last year) but success was generally poor except at Pulborough Brooks. No **Common Snipe** were confirmed breeding but 12 drumming males at Amberley Wild Brooks was a welcome increase on recent years and encouraging news. There were also three drumming males at Pulborough Brooks and one at Camp Hill (Ashdown Forest).

A minimum of 40 pairs of **Mediterranean Gulls** at Rye Hbr raised only 16 young in a poor year after the 75 breeding pairs recorded last year; again the poor weather was probably a factor. A pair of **Great Black-backed Gulls** nested at Rye Wharf but this was the only breeding record received. The **Kittiwakes** at Seaford Head had a disastrous breeding season with large numbers of nestlings found dead at the foot of the cliffs or in the sea. The cause was thought to be food shortage and internal parasites, possibly exacerbated by hot weather. Some 400 pairs of **Sandwich Tern** bred at Rye Hbr; although down on the exceptional 500 pairs last year, this is still a good count. About 175 pairs of **Common Tern** at Rye Hbr raised some 100 young (half the number raised by a similar number there last year); at Pett Level 50 pairs deserted after a hailstorm but at Pagham Hbr 32 pairs raised 17 young. Fifteen pairs of **Little Tern** bred at Rye Hbr but failed due to a combination of poor weather and predation by **Kestrels**; they were more successful at Pagham Hbr with a total of eight pairs nesting and 26 birds counted in the colony on 22 Jul. Elsewhere four pairs attempted to breed at two separate sites in Chichester Hbr but all failed.

Just 17 pairs of **Turtle Dove** probably bred (down from 22 pairs last year) with breeding confirmed for two of them. In contrast 191 pairs of **Barn Owl** bred (125 in the west and 46 in the east) which is nearly double last year's total of 91 pairs; presumably the voles have recovered from their population crash which is thought to have contributed to last year's low number. Territorial **Long-eared Owls** were heard at three sites, with birds present in potential breeding habitat at another three; however, no juveniles were seen or heard indicating poor success this year. **Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers** were heard drumming at a number of sites, but breeding was confirmed at just one, where a pair raised four young. Six pairs of **Yellow Wagtail** bred at Rye Hbr and six pairs were counted on Pevensy Levels; there was also a pair at Pulborough Brooks and a territorial male at Bracklesham Bay. The **Wren** population at Brighton Wild Park bounced back to normal levels after a poor year in 2006, with 91 pairs present. **Black Redstarts** were few and far between; a single bird was seen in Hastings and a recently fledged youngster was seen at St Leonards, both in June.

Some 80 pairs of **Cetti's Warbler** bred in the county (about 20 pairs more than last year), indicating that they are continuing to increase; at least 30 young were raised at Thorney Deepes. Six reeling **Grasshopper Warblers** were recorded at five sites, which is similar to last year. Another species which is increasing rapidly is **Firecrest**; this year at least 121 territorial males were recorded (nearly double last year's total); these included 70 singing males (and at least 12 pairs) at a site in the west of the county which is clearly still the stronghold for the species. In contrast, **Willow Tit** continued to give cause for concern; this year none were confirmed as breeding and there were just four pairs recorded at two sites. A total of 11 pairs of **Raven** raised at least 17 young, a marked increase on the four recorded pairs last year; this species continues to expand. There were nine pairs of **Tree Sparrow** on Brede Levels, seven of which bred successfully, but there was only a single pair recorded on Pevensy Levels, compared with 11 pairs last year.

July

July continued the wet and unsettled theme, with strong winds and rain being an almost constant feature. Rainfall was way above the norm for the time of year but thankfully Sussex escaped the serious flooding which affected some other parts of the country.

Three **Common Quail** calling at Amberley on the 3rd was the high count in an average year for this species, with at least 15 birds calling from nine different sites. Two days later a total of 15 **European Storm Petrels** (plus a **Balearic Shearwater**) at Selsey Bill was also the high count of the year; there were also two seen at Birling Gap. Also seen on the 5th were three **Spoonbills** at Chichester Hbr. On the 7th two **Wood Warblers** were seen at Sidlesham Ferry; this species is an early autumn migrant but this was still an early date. July is generally a quiet month and this year was no exception, with the next noteworthy birds being a **Balearic Shearwater** past Birling Gap on the 21st and then two **Roseate Terns** at Pilsey Sands on the 23rd. Another **Wood Warbler** at Beachy Head on the 28th closed a month that was remarkably quiet, even by July standards.

August

August was a considerable improvement over July with warm and sunny anticyclonic weather at the beginning and end, but low pressure during the middle part of the month brought strong south-westerly winds and some rain.

The month started with a **Roseate Tern** at Church Norton on the 2nd and a high count for the year of 108 **Yellow-legged Gulls** nearby at Sidlesham Ferry. On the 6th a juvenile **Spotted Crake** was trapped at Pett Level and on the 7th there was a **Kentish Plover** at Pilsey Sands. On the 14th a juvenile **Night Heron** appeared at Alexandra Park (Hastings) and remained there until 4 Sep allowing many people to catch up with it. On the 18th there were six **Sooty Shearwaters**, plus five **Balearic Shearwaters** and a **Sabine's Gull**, past Selsey Bill, and also two **Balearic Shearwaters** past Worthing. Three days later a juvenile **White-winged Black Tern** was found inland at Weir Wood Res. On the 22nd there was a large influx of inland **Black Terns** with 28 at Bawl Water and 14 at Weir Wood Res. On the 23rd an **Aquatic Warbler** was trapped at Pett Level, with another trapped there two days later. This species has declined markedly in recent years, to the extent that two in a year is not a bad showing. On the 26th a juvenile **Woodchat Shrike** was found at Church Norton and the first **Purple Sandpiper** returned to Brighton Marina. The following day a **Temminck's Stint** was found at Pulborough Brooks (staying until 1 Sep) and the last **Common Nightingale** of the year was at Beachy Head.

September

September was fine and dry for much of the month, with high pressure and easterly or north-easterly winds. The latter third was more unsettled as low pressure returned, bringing south-westerlies and rain at times.

The month started rather quietly but 11 **Curlew Sandpipers** at Sidlesham Ferry on the 7th was the high count of the autumn and there was also one inland at Arlington Res the same day. On the 9th a juvenile **Woodchat Shrike** turned up at Birling Gap and there were three **Black-necked Grebes** on Piddinghoe Pond (which were also seen on 9 Oct but not in between). The following day the first **Brambling** of the autumn was noted at Bolney. On the 17th five **Curlew Sandpipers** were seen inland at Weir Wood Res (with two still there on the 19th). On the 18th seven **Wood Sandpipers** at Pett Level was the high count of the year and they remained there until the 20th. On the 19th a **Sooty Shearwater** flew west past Selsey Bill; the following day eight more flew

west past the same locality but this was eclipsed by a remarkable total of 18W there on the 21st. On the 22nd the last **Little Tern** was at Selsey Bill and the first **Fieldfares** were at Wakehurst Place. On the 24th the last **Wood Warbler** was at West Hoathly (a late date for this species) and the last **Turtle Dove** was at Fletchling. Two days later the first **Redwings** were noted at Isfield and on the 28th two **Great White Egrets** were found on Thorney Island; they both stayed there until the 30th with one remaining until 6 Oct. Also on the 28th a very obliging **Pectoral Sandpiper** arrived at Pagham Hbr for an extended stay (until 17 Oct). On the 29th a **Yellow-browed Warbler** was trapped at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) and the next day a splendid summer-plumaged **White-billed Diver** was found off Selsey Bill. Although rather distant at times it remained there on and off until 17 Nov allowing many admirers to catch up with it; it was the fourth record for the county but for most people it was their first chance to see this species in Sussex and was thus greatly appreciated. Also on the 30th there were **Pale-bellied Brent Geese** at Pagham Hbr and West Wittering, and a **Shore Lark** near Birling Gap (which stayed until 2 Oct and was the earliest since 1946).

October

October was dominated by high pressure, with above average temperatures, little rain and an easterly airflow, though a deep low pressure system brought heavy rain on the 9th.

There were three **Spoonbills** at Pagham Hbr on the 3rd and the following day there was a **Pallas's Leaf Warbler** and a **Yellow-browed Warbler** at Hodcombe (Beachy Head), and another **Yellow-browed Warbler** trapped at Pett Level. On the 5th the last two **Lesser Whitethroats** were at Thorney Deeps, along with the last **Little Ringed Plover** at Pulborough Brooks and the first **Great Grey Shrike** of the autumn nearby at Amberley Wild Brooks. On the 7th the county's third ever **Paddyfield Warbler** was trapped at Pett Level (the previous two had also been trapped at the same site) and the last three **Black Terns** were seen at Chichester GP. The next day a **Dotterel** was found at Rye Hbr (till the 9th), the last **Common Swift** at Hailsham (a late date) and the last two **Pied Flycatchers** at Pagham Hbr. On the 10th a **Greater Scaup** was seen inland at Weir Wood Res and on the 11th the summer migrant departure continued with the last **Grasshopper Warbler** at Pett Level and the last two **Spotted Flycatchers** at Barcombe.

On the 13th a **Yellow-browed Warbler** was seen at Cow Gap (Beachy Head), the last **Sedge Warbler** was at Pett Level, the last **Eurasian Reed Warbler** was at Newhaven Tide Mills and the first **Eurasian Bittern** of the autumn was recorded at Rye Hbr. On the 14th the last **Tree Pipit** was noted at Beachy Head and there was a **Yellow-browed Warbler** nearby at Birling Gap. The following day there was another **Yellow-browed Warbler**, this time at Hastings, and a **Great Grey Shrike** at Sidlesham, with departing migrants including the last **Common Redstart** (at Chichester), **Willow Warblers** (at Balcombe and Bexhill) and **Garden Warblers** (at Staplefield and Goring). On the 17th the last **Sand Martins** were seen at Worthing and a **Great Grey Shrike** was found at Lavington Common, remaining there (and at nearby Duncton Common) until 12 Dec. On the 18th the last **Osprey** was at Chichester Hbr and the next day yet another **Yellow-browed Warbler** was at Hodcombe (where it stayed for three days) and a **Great Grey Shrike** returned to Ashdown Forest. On the 21st another **Great Grey Shrike**, plus a **Pallas's Leaf Warbler**, were found at Beachy Head and a **Eurasian Bittern** was seen at Pett Level. A **Great Grey Shrike** seen at Alfriston on the 23rd was probably the Beachy Head bird of two days earlier and also on the 23rd a **Marsh Warbler** was trapped at Pett Level, staying there until the 29th. The last **Common Whitethroat** was at Pagham Hbr on the 24th and on the 28th single **Sooty Shearwaters** flew west past Selsey Bill and Worthing, and there was a **Water Pipit** at Shoreham Hbr. The month closed with a **Red-necked Grebe** at Church Norton on the 29th.

November

November was dominated by anticyclonic, settled weather, as most of October had been, with winds from the east or north, below average temperatures and frequent frosts; the third week saw low pressure with Atlantic fronts bringing rain and strong south-westerly winds.

It was turning out to be a good autumn for **Yellow-browed Warblers** and another one was trapped at Pett Level on the 3rd; also the last **Ring Ouzel** was at Hastings on this day. On the 4th the last **Yellow Wagtail** was at Emsworth Marina and the following day the (presumed same) long-staying **Black Brant** returned to West Wittering, remaining there until well into 2008. On the 6th another **Yellow-browed Warbler** was seen at Hodcombe (Beachy Head); this was the last of ten seen this autumn and the third at this location. On the 7th a **Water Pipit** was at Thorney Deepes and two days later a late **Whinchat** at Sidlesham Ferry was the last of the year. On the 10th three **Little Auks** that flew east at Ferring were a sign of things to come and on the 11th, with the summer exodus nearly over, the last **Common Tern** was at Pagham Hbr, the last **Arctic Tern** was at Shoreham Hbr, the last **Garganey** was at Bewl Water, the last **Barn Swallows** were at Selsey Bill and the last **Northern Wheatear** was at Darwell Res. Also on this day there was a **Water Pipit** at Barcombe Res (remaining there until 23 Dec at least), a **Red-necked Grebe** at Selsey Bill, a **Slavonian Grebe** inland at Bewl Water, and 12 more **Little Auks** west past Selsey Bill (plus eight at Goring which could have included some or all of the Selsey Bill birds).

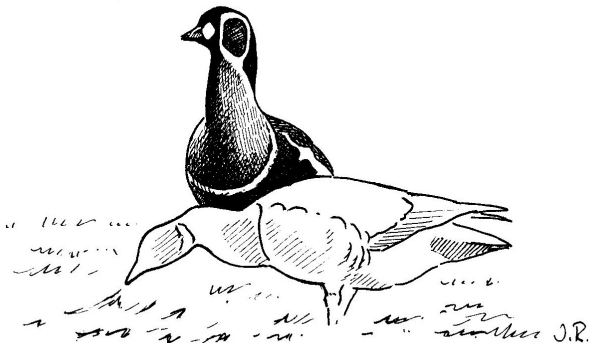
On the 12th there were a further three **Little Auks** west past Selsey Bill, plus 1E past Goring, and the following day another one flew east past Goring (along with a **Sooty Shearwater**). Also on the 13th there were **Red-necked Grebes** recorded flying past Selsey Bill, Goring and Worthing which were possibly the same bird. On the 14th a **Little Auk** flew west past Climping Beach, a **Red-necked Grebe** flew past Telscombe Cliffs and the last **House Martins** were seen at Pett Level. The next day the first four **Bewick's Swans** of the autumn were seen at Pagham Hbr, while on the 17th a juvenile **Sabine's Gull** was at Portobello SF (Saltdean) and the only **Waxwing** of the year flew over Wivelsfield Green. On the 18th the 37th and last **Sooty Shearwater** of the autumn flew east past Seaford, a **Long-tailed Duck** arrived at Widewater (later moving to Brooklands where it stayed until the 27th) and two **Snow Buntings** were found at Bo-Peep (staying until the 29th). The following day another inland **Slavonian Grebe** was at Weir Wood Res and on the 21st there was a **Greater Scaup** at Rye Hbr (until the 26th) and also two **Long-tailed Ducks** there (until the 19th). There were further **Little Auks** on the 24th, with singles east and west past Worthing, and on the 25th, with 1W past Telscombe Cliffs. Also on the 25th there were two **Snow Buntings** inland at Fulking Hill. On the 27th there was a **Red-necked Grebe** at Worthing and a **Black Brant** was found at Pagham Hbr (remaining into 2008). A **Great Northern Diver** was at Goring the following day. On the 30th the **Red-breasted Goose** that had been at West Wittering during the first winter period returned and remained there well into 2008. Also on the 30th there was a **Great Northern Diver** at Telscombe Cliffs.

December

December began very wet and windy with low pressure dominating and many areas receiving a month's worth of rain during the first week. There was a distinct cold snap in the middle of the month, with easterly winds and widespread frosts, before low pressure brought a return to milder and wetter weather in the last week.

On the 3rd there was a **Water Pipit** at Nutbourne Marshes and a **Long-tailed Duck** at Hove Lagoon, which remained throughout the month. Two days later there was a **Pale-bellied Brent Goose** at Worthing Beach and on the 7th two **Cattle Egrets** were found at East Lavant; they remained in the area into 2008, commuting between East Lavant and Chichester GP. Also on

the 7th a **Willow Tit** was reported in the unusual habitat of dry beech woodland with a ground layer of bramble. On the 8th a **Long-tailed Duck** arrived at Scotney Court GP; it was joined by a second bird after a few days with both staying at last until the end of the year. On the 11th a first-winter **Glaucous Gull** arrived for a lengthy stay (well into 2008) at Southwick Canal and on the following day a **Little Auk** was found at the same locality (and by the same observer); remaining until the 26th it was the longest-staying one ever recorded in the county and much admired during its stay. On the 16th two **Long-tailed Ducks** flew past Worthing and six **Smew** (including two 'white nuns') at Rye Hbr was the high count in a rather better second winter period for this species in its Rye Bay stronghold. Two days later another **Long-tailed Duck** was seen at Worthing and there was a **Great Grey Shrike** on Lullington Heath. On the 22nd a **Red-necked Grebe** was seen at Goring and on the 23rd a **Shore Lark** was found at Rye Hbr; confiding if elusive at times it stayed into 2008. Also on the 23rd there was a **Black-necked Grebe** at Barcombe Res, while on the 24th three **Tundra Bean Geese** were seen in the Arun Valley near Littlehampton (till the 27th). On Boxing Day a count of 25 **Bewick's Swans** at Burpham was the highest of the late winter period. On the 30th a **Hume's Leaf Warbler** was found at Horseshoe Plantation (staying until 14 Jan 2008), and the year ended with another **Cattle Egret** (the 31st for the county) at Combe Haven, which also stayed into the New Year.



Classified Records for 2007

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 278-281.

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 been no corresponding changes to Euring Numbers and, as in the 2006 Report, they are only shown against each species listed in the index.

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 five locations for which this information was available:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	25	19	40	129	176	120	106	32	72	58	86	46
Climping	3	15	13	64	59	13	14	33	28	29	24	14
Worthing Beach	24	17	15	71	60	36	31	29	21	30	44	31
Telscombe Cliffs	12	15	16	43	19	10	12	15	6	15	31	10
Splash Point (Seaford)	5	17	16	134	78	7	0	0	0	0	16	9

Many tables which are included in the accounts for wetland bird species refer to the monthly WeBS counts. Data were supplied by the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS), a joint scheme of the British Trust for Ornithology, the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (the last on behalf of the Countryside Council for Wales, the Environment and Heritage Service, English Nature and Scottish Natural Heritage). These counts are undertaken on a fixed date each month during the winter, and sometimes during the summer months as well. During 2007 the priority count dates were 21 Jan, 18 Feb, 18 Mar, 15 Apr, 13 May, 17 Jun, 15 Jul, 12 Aug, 16 Sep, 7 Oct, 11 Nov and 9 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.

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

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
County total	712	747	622	431	378	423	480	471	628	720	1000	807
Chichester Hbr	73	57	46	95	127	131	141	119	154	189	244	253
Pagham Hbr	10	47	25	16	13	11	8	24	11	9	3	10
Chichester GP	100	91	62	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	62	69	51	84
Climping	52	nc	65	94	51	76	110	135	95	90	81	51
Arun (South of Arundel)	nc	60	36	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	35	17
Arun Valley	106	112	94	69	85	73	64	24	41	64	90	113
Henfield Brooks	71	69	56	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	41	76	31
Iford Brooks	54	39	8	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	10	8	14	30
Eastbourne Lakes	2	8	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	74	71	86	52
Pevensey Levels	62	87	80	65	67	10	23	25	23	46	82	21
Rye Bay	96	122	69	30	31	78	97	105	74	57	74	47
Scotney Court GP	1	-	6	56	nc	35	17	14	14	17	107	15

Heavy winter rains produced flood waters in the first winter period and several sites hosted significant numbers not covered by the WeBS table. In the Adur valley in particular these included 87 north of Bramber on the Upper Adur Levels on 1 Jan, 20 at Bines Bridge (Ashurst) (increasing to 62 on the 31st) and 23 at Brighthams Fm (Partridge Green) and 19 at Ashurst. In the Ouse valley, there were again reports of birds grazing on Lewes Brooks with 43 on 7 Jan and 33 on 11 Apr. Elsewhere, Hove Lagoon hosted 35 on 3 Jan which reduced to 20 by 28 Mar. In the east, there were 88 at Cadborough (Rye) on 21 Jan but 123 were recorded leaving Rye Hbr at dawn on 5 Feb after roosting overnight on the reserve. The largest herds recorded in the west were 34 at Pulborough Brooks on 28 Apr and, on the arable lands near Chichester, 45 at Oving on 5 Apr.

There were reports of early nest building at Widewater on 17 Feb and nesting at Warnham LNR on the 21st, at the Breech Pool (Pagham Hbr) on 11 Mar, and at Knepp MP on 16 Mar, and birds were sitting on eggs at Weir Wood Res by 10 Apr and at Offham in the Arun valley on 18 Apr. Breeding was confirmed at 35 sites by at least 47 pairs. Broods of eight cygnets were noted at the Breech Pool on 30 Apr and at Bosham, Barcombe Mills and Spithurst (nr Robertsbridge) in early July. At Widewater (Lancing) one pair hatched seven cygnets in May but only four remained by November. Another pair there hatched four young but lost them all and a third pair failed to breed. A pair at Aldingbourne Rife only succeeded at the third nesting attempt and then hatched seven and still had six by August. Seven were also hatched by a pair at Warnham LNR. A pair with six cygnets was recorded at Thorney Deepes on 17 May but by 31 May the young had all been predated. Similarly, two pairs at Pulborough Brooks lost their broods to predation, probably by foxes.

In the second winter period the grazing herd at Fishbourne, which had peaked at 136 on 16 Jul, had reduced to 104 by 8 Dec. Elsewhere, other large herds not included in the WeBS counts involved 40 at Nutbourne on 7 Nov, 62 at Lyminster on 7 Dec, 80 at Bines Bridge on the 12th, 59 at an overnight roost at Rye Hbr on the 22nd, 36 at Offham the same day and 30 at Lewes Brooks on the 9th. Numbers at Hove Lagoon peaked at 37 on 29 Nov. [WEC]

Bewick's Swan*Cygnus columbianus*

Scarce winter visitor and very scarce 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
County total	30	31	-	-	-
Arun Valley	30	31	-	-	-

The main area for this species continues to be the Arun valley. However, widespread flooding of other valleys in the west of the county during the first two months of the year led to herds being seen on the Henfield Levels and at Ashurst (Steyning) in the Adur valley. It is likely that the latter came from the herds in the Arun valley and that the total number of birds in the county was no more than 35.

The mobility of the herds during this time is illustrated in the following table showing the monthly maximum counts other than the WeBS counts.

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Nov	Dec
Arun Valley	32	12	-		-	25
Amberley Wild Brooks	13	31	-		-	-
Pulborough Brooks	8	-	-		-	7
Adur Valley	23	10	-		-	-

At Ashurst, there were four on 1 Jan, six on 21 Jan and 14 flying NE on the same day. There were also regular reports of a herd of up to 23 (15 adults and eight juveniles) at Henfield Levels from 1-6 Jan. Although there were three at Waltham Brooks on 4 Jan, numbers in the Arun Valley did not start to increase until 8 Jan when numbers at Henfield reduced. Thereafter, birds were seen in the Arun Valley at Burpham, Offham, South Stoke and Amberley Wild Brooks with the maximum count in January being 32 (25 adults and seven juveniles) at Burpham on the 31st. In February, the last sighting on the Henfield Levels was of ten on the 17th while at Amberley Wild Brooks there were 31 on the 18th and 19th with the last first winter sighting being 17 there on the 24th.

In the second winter period the first birds were seen on 15 Nov when four adults went to roost at Pagham Hbr. The next sighting was of five flying west at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 27 Nov. The first record in the Arun Valley was of seven at Pulborough Brooks on 16 Dec and numbers increased thereafter to a maximum of 25 (18 adults and seven juveniles) at Burpham on 26 Dec. The final record of the year was of six birds on Lewes Brooks on 30 Dec. [WEC]

Tundra Bean Goose*Anser fabalis rossicus*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

There were only two reports of this species this year: a single bird seen at Bines Bridge in the Adur Valley on 20 Jan at least (ARK), and a widely watched group of three birds present between 24 and 27 Dec on roadside fields west of the R Arun, just outside Littlehampton (BA *et al.*). [AH]

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

There was just one record of this rare visitor to the county: a single bird seen and photographed at Bines Bridge in the Adur Valley which was present from 28 to 30 Jan (VPB *et al.*). [AH]

White-fronted Goose*Anser albifrons**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.*

Records were received from a wide range of locations in the first winter period but overall numbers appear well down on last year. The first records of the year were from the Lower Cuckmere Valley where four birds were present from 1 to 4 Jan, Pett Level with a flock of ten birds on the 2nd (rising to a peak of 31 on the 29th and 24 still present until 24 Feb), Piddinghoe (Newhaven) with three birds on 2 Jan, and the Arun Valley where four birds were present from 4 Jan until 27 Feb. The only other records were from Scotney Court GP where there were 40 on 13 Jan, Rye Hbr where there was a peak count of six birds on 25 Jan (plus a flock of 33 seen flying over east on the 29th) and a single bird at Pett Level on 21 Feb.

There were a number of unseasonal records, presumably relating to birds of dubious origin, including three at Glynde Levels on 18 Mar and a further four there on 16 Sep, a single bird on Iford Brooks in both July and August and two at Piddinghoe with other feral geese on 10 Sep.

The first genuine migrants of a rather better second winter period were reported on 5 Nov with 22 at Camber and five on Iford Brook. Numbers peaked at seven at the latter site on 1 Dec when there were also 19 birds on nearby Lewes Brooks. The bulk of the other records came from Rye Hbr where there were 24 on 24 Nov and a peak of 47 on 22 Dec and from Pett Level where there was a peak count of 46 birds on 27 Dec. Elsewhere the only other reports were of five birds seen flying west past Selsey Bill on 12 Nov and a flock of 32 birds flying over Pett Level on 30 Dec. [AH]

Greylag Goose*Anser anser**Increasingly common introduced resident and winter visitor; scarce passage migrant.*

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	465	366	250	151	111	99	339	698	674	742	422	309
Arun Valley	180	88	41	14	38	8	28	151	367	294	82	120
Henfield Brooks	20	100	23	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	107	168	135
Iford Brooks	1	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	25	23
Barcombe Res	-	3	5	6	-	-	-	35	47	-	-	-
Glynde Brooks	-	5	53	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	160	nc	30	3
Bewl Water	6	1	-	nc	nc	nc	3	53	59	-	6	3
Rye Bay	85	139	74	90	69	16	64	4	8	4	106	3
Scotney Court GP	170	1	33	35	nc	72	225	451	-	310	1	10

In the first winter period WeBS totals were down on last year but there were still some big counts at traditional sites and a few notable totals elsewhere. These included peaks of 85 birds at Weir Wood Res on 1 Jan, 90 on Pett Level on 28 Jan, 78 on Beeding Brooks on 7 Feb, 98 at Bines Bridge (Partridge Green) on 17 Feb and 88 at Warnham LNR two days later. Unusually, there were no reports from seawatching sites during the spring.

There were also rather fewer breeding records compared with recent years. The most successful sites were Rye Hbr, where a total of 14 nests or families were noted, and Glynde Levels, where a crèche of 40 youngsters was reported on 3 Jun. Other breeding reports from around the county were: a pair with two chicks at Weir Wood Res on 29 Apr, six goslings at Forest Mere (Liphook) on 23 May, and a pair with one gosling at Warnham LNR from 7 Jun.

The first notable post-breeding flock was on 13 Aug when 150 birds were counted on Pulborough Brooks. Numbers there peaked at 500 on 16 Sep. The only other big gatherings reported were at Glynde Levels with a peak of 160 on 16 Sep, and Weir Wood Res where numbers peaked at 350 on the same day.

As is usual with this species, reports of small flocks were received from locations across the county during the second winter period. The only large congregations were generally along the Arun Valley and on the Henfield Levels, as shown in the WeBS table above, but counts of 230 at Weir Wood Res on 18 Nov and 250 at Ardingly Res on 21 Dec were notable. [AH]

Canada Goose

Branta canadensis

Common and increasing introduced resident and partial migrant.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1932	1230	663	107	74	114	138	443	402	310	303	1020
Chichester Hbr	49	59	37	21	24	29	30	78	74	20	-	58
Pagham Hbr	-	-	2	9	-	-	-	-	73	-	-	1
Chichester GP	110	76	55	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	58	52	60	141
Forest Mere	3	29	16	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	90	1	-
Arundel WWT	68	22	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	56
Arun Valley	803	114	118	5	11	-	-	-	2	nc	18	576
Iford Brooks	12	65	17	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-
Glynde Brooks	19	69	58	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-
Cuckmere Haven	205	151	23	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-
Eastbourne Lakes	63	76	56	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-
Pevensey Levels	93	54	47	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-	-
Bewl Water	548	265	52	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Bay	9	194	83	65	39	15	63	126	100	58	194	242
Scotney Court GP	5	3	7	7	nc	70	45	239	95	90	30	2

The WeBS counts highlight most of the largest gatherings of this widespread species. Considering how common this species is, it is remarkable that the total number of birds seen from seawatching vantage points along the coast during the whole of the spring was only 11 W past Splash Point (Seaford) and 2 W past Telscombe Cliffs (Portobello).

As in last year's breeding season, the number of BBS 1-km squares with birds present (approximately 35 out of the 123 surveyed) far exceeded the confirmed reports of breeding, which

came from Weir Wood Res, Firlie Park, Cuckmere Haven, Fernhurst, Forest Mere (Liphook), Rye Hbr, Pulborough Brooks, Pippingford Park (Ashdown), Glynde Level, Thorney Deeps and Iford Brooks.

The first big post-breeding count, and the biggest tally of the year, was of 1039 birds on Bewl Water on 13 Jul. Other significant counts, suggesting that the above figures are not a true representation of the status of this species during the summer months, included peaks of 550 birds on Arlington Res on 5 Aug, 556 at Pulborough Brooks on 17 Sep and a number of other three-figure counts from around the county.

Numbers remained high during the autumn with notable totals including 750 on Piddinghoe Pond on 7 Oct, 1000 birds on Pulborough Brooks on 13 Oct and 500 on Bewl Water on 11 Nov, with counts of over 100 birds from many other locations. [AH]

Barnacle Goose

Branta leucopsis

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

It seems likely that all the records for this species during 2007 refer to feral birds, with most reports relating to long-term residents and a number of hybrids.

Between 40 and 60 birds were present throughout the year at Barcombe Res and there was a maximum of 80 at Scotney Court GP. These made up the bulk of the numbers but Forest Mere (Liphook), Pulborough Brooks, Henfield Levels, Weir Wood Res, Bewl Water, Pett Level and Rye Hbr also played host to at least one bird during the year.

The only reports that could conceivably involve wild birds were of 1 E on 17 Apr and 2 E on 27 Apr past Splash Point (Seaford) but they would seem to be very late for genuine migrants. [AH]

Dark-bellied Brent Goose

Branta bernicla bernicla

Very common winter visitor and passage migrant; a few oversummer; very scarce inland. 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
County total	11356	12469	1912	33	17	8	10	12	10	2244	9193	7036
Chichester Hbr	9213	9605	1634	28	16	8	10	12	10	2226	7657	5973
Pagham Hbr	2087	2669	275	4	-	-	-	-	-	10	1440	792

The year began with the continuation of the high numbers present in late 2006. The western harbours continued to dominate the county totals with both Chichester and Pagham Harbours exceeding the 1% international threshold level of 2000 in several months of the year. However, there was a greater than usual number of records from a wide range of locations, particularly in the east of the county. These included reports of a singleton on Lewes Brooks on 1 Jan, 12 at Cuckmere Haven on the 2nd, one on Pulborough Brooks on the 4th, 15 at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 15th, 55 at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on the 21st, 20 at Rye Hbr on the 22nd, three on Winchelsea Beach on the 25th and five on Pett Level on the 29th.

A summary of records from regular seawatching sites are shown below:

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		Oct		Nov		Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	5	14	33	5	156	4	434	2	31	341	40	437	10	8
Climping Beach		202	312	22	47	1	477			332	39	772	103	1852
Worthing Beach	8	45	718	23	481	5	698	46	10	480	22	536	11	32
Telscombe Cliffs	8		304	43	684		658		27	29	59	87	39	
Splash Point (Seaford)	92	1	720		729	7	17419	2	nc	nc	23	2	5	2

The first evidence of spring migration came on the early date of 5 Feb with 52 E past Worthing Beach and 84 E past Telscombe Cliffs (Portobello). The first significant movement was noted on 16 Feb, when 364 E passed Splash Point (Seaford). Remarkably, this figure was only topped on one day (6 Mar) when 485 E passed Telscombe Cliffs. Overall, spring migration was well down on recent years which is surprising considering the high number of birds wintering in the west of the county. Migration continued into May with monthly totals of 61 E and 1 W past Selsey Bill, 18 E past Climping Beach, 44 E past Worthing Beach and 113 E and 13 W past Splash Point, with the final two birds flying east at Selsey Bill on 10 Jun.

There were the usual summering birds in Chichester Hbr with a peak of ten on 5 Aug as well as singletons in Pagham Hbr and Rye Hbr on a number of dates.

Return migration was first noted on 27 Sep with sightings of 20 birds past Rye Hbr, 38 past Worthing Beach, three past Climping Beach and a flock of six arriving in Pagham Hbr. Thereafter, birds were seen along the coast on a daily basis as the wintering flocks began to assemble, e.g. 960 in Chichester Hbr on 13 Oct.

In the second winter period the highest numbers were again in Chichester and Pagham Harbours but there were also records from a wide range of other locations. These included regular reports from the Climping area of a flock peaking at 500 on 16 Dec, 52 on Bewl Water on 3 Oct, a maximum of 110 on Pett Level on 17 Nov, a peak of 27 at Rye Hbr on 27 Oct and up to eight present at Cuckmere Haven on 10 Nov, as well a number of widely scattered singletons. Overall numbers were down late in the year, but the numbers recorded heading west, particularly from Climping Beach, suggested that birds may just have been late arriving this year. [AH]

Pale-bellied Brent Goose

Branta bernicla hrota

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

After drawing a blank in 2006 more normal numbers were recorded this year. One or two birds were seen regularly in Pagham Hbr from 20 Jan until 10 Mar, with possibly a different bird recorded on the late dates of 14 and 15 Apr. Other records were of a single bird on Pevensy Levels on 21 Jan and five at Rye Hbr on 18 Feb.

In the second winter period one or two birds were recorded on a number of dates between 30 Sep and 22 Dec at both Pagham Hbr and West Wittering, and a single bird was noted at Worthing Beach on 5 Dec. (AH)

Black Brant

Branta bernicla nigricans

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

As in 2006 no substantiated records were received for the first winter period, although there were several birds reported in the west of the county at the end of the previous year.

In the second winter period two different birds were recorded regularly in familiar haunts, one at West Wittering/East Head, from 5 Nov through until 8 Mar 2008 (CWM *et al.*), and another at Pagham Hbr from 27 Nov until 1 Mar (DIS *et al.*). [AH]

Red-breasted Goose

Branta ruficollis

Very rare vagrant.

An adult was seen with Brent Geese at West Wittering (Chichester Hbr) from 24 Feb to 7 Mar (DIS *et al.*) and, presumably the same returning individual, between 30 Nov and 5 Mar 2008 (per CWM). It has been accepted by *BBRC* and is the third county record.



Red-breasted Goose, West Wittering, December 2007 (Les Bird)

As the first presumed wild individual in the county for 20 years it attracted widespread interest and could often be found in the fields adjacent to the café and the East Head car park where it was usually quite easy to pick out amongst the flocks of Brent Geese. Before appearing in the county this individual was present in Dorset (from 18 Nov 2006) and Hampshire (Langstone Hbr to 17 Feb). While in Chichester Hbr it was also recorded from Black Point (Hampshire) from 21-27 Feb and again from 10 Nov to 6 Mar 2008. The previous county records were at Amberley Wild Brooks from 8-17 Feb 1958 and Pagham Hbr from 30 Jan to 3 Mar 1986 and, presumably the same, during 23-27 Jan 1987. There were three records of presumed escapes in the 1990s (in the Arun Valley in Dec 1993, Church Norton in Apr 1997 and Pulborough in Sep 1998) so a wild bird was both welcome and overdue. [RJF]

Egyptian Goose*Alopochen aegyptiaca*

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

The number of records fell to 59 (cf. 79 in 2006) as did the number of sites, which were down to nine (cf. 15 in 2006).

During the first winter period, things looked encouraging at the main site in the county (Petworth Park) with a peak of eight birds on 21 Jan and four still present on 11 Feb. Elsewhere two were at Chichester GP on 18 Feb with one there on 18 Mar, two were at Pett Level to 22 Mar, and the singleton that had been at Brooklands (Worthing) for seven months in 2006 remained all year.

At Petworth Park, the site of breeding in 2006, there was once again success with a pair seen with a full-grown gosling on 29 Apr. Surprisingly, this was the last record at this site until one on 15 Nov and two on 23 Nov. There were no other suspected breeding records in the county. There was one bird at Cooksbridge on 18 Apr and one at Constantia Manor (Isfield) on 19 May, and an interesting record from Worthing Beach on 8 Apr when four flew east, landed on the beach, and then departed north inland.

A pair arrived at Bewl Water on 12 May and remained until 22 Dec. Other records in the second half of the year included a singleton which visited Barcombe Res between 15 Jul and 2 Sep, another singleton at Pulborough Brooks from 15 Sep to 11 Oct and one at Shipley on 24 Nov, making for a rather poor end to the year. It seems that an increase in numbers and an extension of range is proving to be a slow process. [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
County total	818	1134	712	396	297	267	146	32	60	170	371	593
Chichester Hbr	590	643	418	186	124	128	45	15	33	90	187	313
Pagham Hbr	100	313	158	111	92	65	74	12	13	26	98	165
Arun Valley	56	55	53	29	25	16	1	-	-	1	18	38
Rye Bay	32	52	53	58	52	52	23	5	8	28	15	31
Scotney Court GP	23	26	16	4	nc	6	3	-	2	20	46	30

Numbers in January were low compared to previous years, but rallied considerably in February, largely due to a three-fold increase in Pagham Hbr. The year's peak count of 643 in Chichester Hbr in February was particularly disappointing and well below the 1% national threshold level of 782. Numbers fell away as usual through March and April with no especially surprising lows or highs in either the east or the west of the county, apart from there being only small numbers at Scotney Court GP compared to 2006.

Birds were noted at seawatching sites in almost all months but, as usual, numbers peaked at most sites in April and May, with a single-day spring peak count of 19 E and 2 W past Splash Point (Seaford) on 21 Apr. The split of birds in terms of flight direction at the four main seawatching sites in April and May was 63% east and 37% west, showing how the pattern of movement east

is not as pronounced as for most duck species in spring.

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

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May		Oct		Nov	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	1	1	-	-	-	-	23	7	7	7	-	-	2	41
Climping	-	-	6	4	0	2	0	11	5	13	0	5	0	22
Worthing Beach	14	2	8	4	1	4	20	15	3	12	3	10	0	49
Splash Point (Seaford)	4	0	6	1	5	0	68	12	20	7	-	-	5	2

Breeding was proven in 11 1-km squares (as in 2006), with probable breeding in another six. The first confirmation of successful breeding was a pair with ten one-day old ducklings at Pulborough Brooks on 5 May, of which nine fledged. Elsewhere in the west during the breeding season, peaks of 14 young were seen at Thorney Island, 11 in Fishbourne Channel and 17 at Birdham (all Chichester Hbr); two broods, of three and seven, were reared at Bracklesham Bay; nine pairs were recorded during a breeding survey at Pagham Hbr; eleven young were raised at Nyetimber (Bognor); and there were two territories at Sefton Fm (Pagham).

In the east, four young were hatched in the Cuckmere Valley and there were broods of three, four and six at Pett Level. Four pairs hatched 20 chicks at Rye Hbr, although none survived, and five juveniles that were seen there in July were thought to have been raised elsewhere locally. Finally, two families with seven young were on the Union Channel (East Guldeford).

During the autumn, numbers were especially low in August and September, and although they inevitably built up with the return of birds from the Continent, the year ended with the December WeBS count being a third down on the numbers in December 2006. While there has been a lower December count (in December 2002), the trends for this species during winter remain of increasing concern. [AT]

Mandarin Duck

Aix galericulata

Scarce but increasing introduced resident.

Records were received from 71 1-km squares (the same as 2006) with the Weald and the Arun Valley, as usual, being the mainstay for this species. Breeding was confirmed in 11 1-km squares (cf. nine in 2006), with probable breeding in another four (cf. six in 2006).

The peak count in the first winter period was 26 at Weir Wood Res on 1 Jan. Eighteen at Etchingam on 8 Feb was the highest count of the year there, as was the 14 at Warnham LNR on 25 Feb. There were 18 at Powdermill Res on 21 Jan.

In the breeding season, a predated egg was found at Warnham LNR on the early date of 3 Mar. A pair was seen prospecting a nest site on Wiggonholt Common on 3 Apr and a pair was sitting in an owl box at Arlington on 5 Apr. The first ducklings were seven seen at Weir Wood Res on 29 Apr and there were three at Darwell Res on 12 May. At Troutbeck (Eridge) birds were again present all year with a build-up of males in May. The first brood here was seen on 16 May (12 days earlier than in 2006) with at least two broods being seen (with a maximum of nine young). The same site hosted 30 birds on 27 May which included 16 juveniles and 28 birds on 15 Jun which included 11 juveniles.

Breeding was also recorded at Warnham LNR where five young fledged, the fourth successful year in a row. Twelve young were seen at Arlington, four at Amberley Wild Brooks, five at Pulborough Brooks and seven at Wakehurst Place. The final tally for Weir Wood Res was twelve young from three nest boxes, while some youngsters may have fledged from an owl box at

Butcherland (Balls Cross) where four dead chicks were found. Four ducklings were at Darwell Res on 18 Jun, three were at Swanbourne Lake on 8 Jul, and five infertile eggs were found in an owl box at Wiston village on 14 Jul.

The highest counts of the year were in the second winter period with 34 at Weir Wood Res on 28 Nov, 33 at Darwell Res on 11 Dec and 22 at Powdermill Res on 9 Dec. None of these are particularly high counts compared with recent years, but with reports of shooting at a pond near Darwell where large numbers have gathered in previous autumns, birds at this site may have been more dispersed than usual.

Records from unusual sites included 1 W at Selsey Bill on 14 Apr, and another there on 14 Jul. One was also seen at Selsey East Beach pond and at West Wittering on a total of six dates during the year, perhaps indicating a source for these apparent ‘migrants’.

In terms of the overall status of the species, the reduced number of tetrads and low peak counts might point to a possible decline. However, the heartland for this species is across an area of the county that receives little birdwatching attention and it is likely that many sites go unvisited. However, it is also worth speculating, given the number of pairs that are forced to take to owl boxes, that its fortunes might be substantially improved with the provision of more nest boxes. [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
County total	9458	8991	3064	39	8	6	2	5	1002	4441	6491	7886
Chichester Hbr	1831	1228	667	4	5	4	2	1	608	2735	2324	1534
Pagham Hbr	2295	2804	543	18	-	-	-	-	247	331	921	1105
Arun Valley	2462	2830	929	4	nc	nc	-	-	72	795	1501	3206
Cuckmere Haven	74	175	255	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	12	71	108
Bewsey Levels	1645	983	311	7	2	nc	nc	-	-	18	120	200
Bowl Water	307	250	233	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	53	94	304
Rye Bay	306	305	135	3	1	-	-	4	50	220	784	328
Scotney Court GP	610	434	-	3	nc	2	-	-	23	205	500	540

The WeBS counts in the first winter period were relatively low in January compared to previous years, then fairly high in February, and low again in March. Counts from Chichester Hbr were relatively low throughout but were especially high in Pagham Hbr in February, which corresponds neatly with Teal records. A count of 1000 from Cuckmere Haven on 2 Jan is not included in the table.

Emigration at the end of March was typically rapid, with the 150 at Pulborough Brooks and 120 at Pagham Hbr (both on 27 Mar) being the last three-figure counts and 18 at Pagham Hbr on 15 Apr the last two-figure count.

The principle movements of birds offshore are summarised in the table below. Such figures are often dependant on the number of hours watched at each site, which can be highly variable between sites and between months. Nevertheless, some clear trends emerge, with a paucity of records during the key seawatching months of March to May, and fairly sizeable movements west in autumn at most sites. The discrepancy at Splash Point (Seaford) is interesting, with most birds

seen moving east at the end of the year.

	Jan		Apr		Aug		Sep		Oct		Nov		Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	-	-	11	0	-	-	-	-	1	25	1	49	6	0
Climping	0	9	-	-	0	5	0	10	0	26	0	41	-	-
Worthing Beach	0	9	3	0	1	41	0	67	0	41	1	32	9	63
Splash Point (Seaford)	2	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	45	0	16	0

As usual there was just a handful of summering birds with no suspicion of breeding. Records from May and June (with highest counts in brackets) came from Chichester Hbr (5), Pagham Hbr (3), Pulborough Brooks (1), Glynde Level (1, injured), Horse Eye Level (Pevensey) (2), and Rye Hbr (2).

The ten at Pagham Hbr on 21 Aug heralded the autumn return, with 25 W past Worthing Beach the next day, 50 at Thorney Island by 30 Aug, 120 at Pagham Hbr on 8 Sep and 600 at Thorney Deeps on 12 Sep, showing how the western harbours are the preferred destination in the dry early autumn. A female at Brooklands (Worthing) on 18 Sep was 'very unusual' for the site.

Numbers during the autumn WeBS counts were very typical compared to the five-year averages. A flock of 900 at West Chidham on 13 Oct was exceptional for the site. The peak number at Bewl Water was 536 after ten days of easterly winds and frosts. [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
County total	573	390	141	91	89	50	31	60	156	316	395	583
Chichester GP	148	77	9	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	53	132
Burton & Chingford Ponds	-	1	nc	-	-	nc	-	nc	9	21	6	-
Wicks Fm Res	51	28	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-
Arun Valley	30	34	49	25	21	4	5	2	30	22	33	57
Glynde Brooks	-	-	8	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	-	2	-
Eastbourne Lakes	32	18	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	8	18	18	40
Bewl Water	89	17	2	nc	nc	nc	-	3	22	31	77	114
Powdermill Res	31	23	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	25	8	94
Rye Bay	130	155	46	66	64	46	22	55	85	188	160	111

The WeBS counts in the first quarter were particularly disappointing, all being the lowest since 1999 and none exceeding the 1% national threshold level of 171. Much of the decrease can be accounted for by the low counts at Darwell Res, with a peak of just 15 birds in the first winter period compared with 161 in 2006. In contrast, the 51 at Wicks Fm (Yapton) in January was an excellent total, as was the 89 at Bewl Water.

A few birds were seen during seawatches, with the first being 2 E at Worthing on 16 Mar and a flurry of up to 11 birds past Telscombe Cliffs and Splash Point (Seaford) between 19 and 22 Apr. There were then 2 E at Climping on 26 May and 2 E at Splash Point on 28 May.

Following the poor first winter period, it was interesting that the numbers held up well through April to June, with what were probably record numbers in May. It might have been hoped that this would translate into notable breeding success, but such records remained scant. There were just three sites with confirmed breeding, a reasonable total for Sussex but clearly of little importance nationally. There were at least four broods in June at Pett Level, by far the most important and consistent breeding site for the species in the county. Nearby there were seven young chicks with a female at Rye Hbr on 15 Jul, and the count of 31 at the Bittern Excavation pools there on 23 Jun was notable. The only other proven breeding was two females, each with seven young, at Drayton Pit (Chichester GP) on 15 Jun.

It is possible that other breeding records were overlooked, but with Arundel WWT being the only site away from the main ones listed above that registered a double figure count in the period April to June (with 14 on 16 Apr), the total number of breeding pairs in the county is probably in single figures.

There were two interesting midsummer seawatching records of 14 E at Selsey Bill on 19 Jun and 6 W there on 21 Jun.

Numbers picked up well during the second winter period, achieving the highest WeBS counts for the last four years in October, November and December, with excellent figures at Chichester GP, Bewl Water and Powdermill Res. At sea, there was 1 W at Worthing on 11 Nov and 2 W at Selsey Bill on 4 Dec. [AT]

Eurasian Teal

Anas crecca

Very scarce breeder and scarce summer non-breeder; 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
County total	4227	4454	1666	268	20	22	23	259	1148	1733	2858	4075
Chichester Hbr	848	764	226	6	1	-	16	16	138	693	782	739
Pagham Hbr	886	1655	180	33	6	10	3	95	321	185	773	792
Burton & Chingford Ponds	-	-	nc	-	-	nc	-	nc	81	81	9	-
Arun Valley	1683	1032	909	74	9	12	-	42	365	253	600	1475
Pevensey Levels	531	537	184	106	nc	nc	4	-	4	57	116	346
Bewl Water	27	6	2	nc	nc	nc	-	7	59	67	52	61
Rye Bay	241	328	153	55	4	-	-	99	150	334	352	661

The WeBS counts for January were the lowest since 1998, but held up well in February before slumping again in March and April. Numbers in the Arun Valley in January were the only ones to approach the 1% national threshold level of 1920. Numbers in Chichester Hbr were especially low throughout, while nearby Pagham Hbr had a bumper February count. The variability between years at the different sites is particularly marked. For example, while Chichester Hbr numbers for February were down 42% on 2006, Pagham Hbr numbers were up 122% and Pevensey Levels numbers up 95%. There was a good count of 190 on the Glynde Levels on 18 Feb and 150 at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) on 19 Feb.

Numbers dropped away sharply through March and April, with a few birds seen passing offshore, the highest count being 9 W and 11 E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 7 Apr. Lingering flocks included 100 still at Down Level (Pevensey) on 15 Apr and 100 at Pulborough Brooks on 17 Apr, but numbers at the latter site dropped to 15 by 29 Apr.

There was no confirmed breeding this year, with possible breeding at only two sites. During May and June, there were few sites where there were regular records, and at most of these there were only between one and three birds. The only sites with larger counts were four at Thorney Deeps on 5 Jun, up to four males summering at Pulborough Brooks, four in the Doleham Valley on 10 Jun, a high count of 17 at Pett Level on 15 Jun and eight on the Widney Brooks on 18 Jun.

An unusual seawatching record was 5 W at Selsey Bill on 3 Jul, but the first returning birds were probably the 16 at Thorney on 16 Jul. The real start of the late summer build-up was most clearly shown at Sidlesham Ferry, with 12 on 2 Aug increasing to 60 on 8 Aug and 84 on 11 Aug.

During the second winter period, numbers were again considerably depressed, with the lowest December WeBS count since 1997. Small numbers were seen passing offshore in all the months from August to December with a peak of 30 W on 27 Sep at Worthing. In addition to the tabulated records, the 170 on Lewes Brooks during the WeBS count on 9 Dec was a high count and a record of three birds at Widewater (Lancing) on 21 Dec was unusual. [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
County total	3366	2257	1666	839	1016	1234	1794	1858	3180	4243	3825	3770
Chichester Hbr	424	270	202	44	43	79	46	81	320	594	389	509
Pagham Hbr	131	137	119	101	123	145	205	196	112	95	223	206
Chichester GP	258	233	185	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	148	195	186	210
Wicks Fm Res	19	9	21	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	190	413	307	148
Arun Valley	517	309	249	348	456	460	386	324	556	521	413	605
Knepp MP	4	8	4	4	nc	5	3	2	9	45	50	232
Ardingly Res	110	nc	95	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	135	200	120
Barcombe Res	192	51	10	23	27	46	127	78	112	78	113	87
Pevensay Levels	111	127	120	30	42	5	6	11	47	34	65	85
Bewl Water	364	196	127	nc	nc	nc	420	384	556	832	510	372
Rye Bay	263	255	138	145	190	319	239	336	403	437	338	347

The WeBS data show that the peak county total of 4243 occurred in October, when 832 at Bewl Water was the highest monthly total there since 1998, and 413 at Wicks Fm Res (Yapton), where birds are flying free but are bred for wildfowling, was its highest ever total. The October total was also the highest monthly count since 2000, since when the annual maxima have been in decline. The October, November and December county totals all exceeded the average county maximum of 3563 for 2002-2006.

Records were received from 443 sites right across the county, reflecting the widespread distribution of this species. Birds were also recorded in an impressive 50 out of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

Aside from the WeBS counts above, other notable records included 260 at Pett Level on 18 Aug, 224 at The Midrips on 24 Aug, 200 at North End (Hamsey) on 7 Oct, 207 at Marsh Fm

(Yapton) on 7 Nov, 237 at West Hill (Balcombe) on the 26th, 232 at Knepp MP on 20 Dec and 300 at Barcombe Res on the 21st. On 22 Jul, 375 eclipse birds were recorded at Angmering decoy ponds with another 56 at the nearby fishing ponds.

As usual, there were few records of coastal movements from the main seawatching sites. In March, six birds were recorded flying east at Selsey Bill and 2 W at Worthing Beach. In April a total of 17 birds was recorded flying east at Selsey Bill, Telscombe Cliffs and Splash Point (Seaford), with four also recorded flying west at Selsey Bill. Coastal movements of two birds each were recorded in May and August.

Confirmed, probable and possible breeding was only recorded on 86 occasions, reflecting the usual under-recording of breeding birds in the county. Sixty-five of the breeding records occurred between April and June, but represented only 9% of the 708 records collected in those months. Hopefully improved reporting of breeding will occur in the coming years as records are collected for the Atlas.

The first attempted breeding was recorded at Borde Hill on 28 Jan when a pair was observed mating. The first record of breeding success was of a female with 12 ducklings at Crawley on 27 Mar and the most successful record was a female with 14 ducklings at Barcombe Res on 15 Apr. Fifty-five ducklings were reported at Pulborough Brooks on 24 May and 35 at Pett Level on 17 Jun. One of the last records of breeding was of a very small duckling at Rye Hbr on 11 Jul. [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	May	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	901	1155	55	3		4	97	193	368	425
Chichester Hbr	157	170	8	1		-	14	169	156	57
Pagham Hbr	439	566	3	-		2	75	17	205	68
Arun Valley	300	390	37	2		-	5	4	6	296
Rye Bay	-	-	5	-		-	1	2	1	-

The WeBS data show that peak numbers occurred during the first winter period, with the maximum of 1155 being very similar to the 2006 maximum of 1165. Although the peak at Pagham Hbr of 566 was below the 1% international threshold level (600), it should still retain its designation in 2006/07 as a site of international importance as the average maxima over the previous five years will remain above 600. The Arun Valley will also retain its designation as a site of national importance as the WeBS count exceeded the 279 1% national threshold level in January, February and December.

Whilst the majority of the 293 records were, as usual, from the three major sites in the west (Chichester Hbr, Pagham Hbr and the Arun Valley), some significant records also came from sites further east. These included 282 at Henfield Levels on 2 Mar, 23 at Pevensy SWT on 18 Mar and 84 at Pett Level on 2 Oct. As always Pintail were recorded at sites not too far from the coast, but four birds were seen at Bewl Water in January and February with singles there in March, September and December, and a single bird was also recorded at Weir Wood Res on 20 Jan.

After 18 Mar only single-digit numbers were recorded to the end of April, and in May and June the only bird recorded was a single male at Pulborough Brooks. On 22 Jul, a female and three very

recently fledged young were recorded in the east of the county, indicating confirmed breeding. However, because this was a one-off record at a well-watched site the observer feels that it can only be regarded as an instance of possible breeding at the site concerned. It is, though, likely to have bred not too far away, but whether that was in Sussex or nearby Kent is unknown. The last recorded instance of confirmed breeding in the county was in 2002.

Returning birds were recorded in single-digit numbers from 12 Aug, but numbers built up during September at Pagham Hbr, with 25 present on the 3rd, 75 on the 16th and 225 on the 30th. The build-up at other sites occurred later, with low numbers in the Arun Valley until winter rains increased water levels.

In contrast to 2006, seawatching sites only recorded low numbers of passage birds. From January to April the largest passage was a mere 9 E at Telscombe Cliffs on 7 Apr, whilst from September to December the largest passage movements were past Worthing Beach, with 12 E on 2 Oct and another 12 E on 6 Nov. [JRC]

Garganey

Anas querquedula

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

The first record of the year was a male on 13 Mar at Chingford Pond (Duncton) which remained until at least 22 Mar. This was the same arrival date as the first bird in 2006 but was 11 days later than the 10-year average date. There were then two pairs at Southease on 19 Mar with three still there on the 23rd and a pair on the 24th.

The next record was of two pairs that passed Splash Point (Seaford) in the early morning of 8 Apr. These were probably the same two pairs that were seen at Arlington Res the same afternoon, of which one pair remained until the 14th. Two probably recently arrived birds were at Newhaven Tide Mills on 21 Apr with two at Worthing Beach the following day and four at Climping Gap on the 26th.

In the west, the first record at Pulborough Brooks was a singleton on 20 Apr but after the 27th there were no further reports from this area until 27 Jul. The first record at Pagham Hbr was a male on 29 Apr that remained in the area until 3 May but there were no further records there until autumn migration produced another singleton on 21 Aug. A single male was also at Thorney Island/Deepes on 20 May and one or two birds were present between 12 and 19 Jul with the latest record at these sites being 2 Aug.

In the east a male was at Rye Hbr on 18 Apr with a pair on the 24th increasing to two drakes and a female by 9 May. At Pett Level there was a singleton on 29 Apr and on 1 May, two on the 4th, two on 7 Jun and one on the 17th. Two were noted there on 23 Jul and at close-by Pett Level the last record was two on 30 Aug.

There were no confirmed reports of breeding although summering birds were seen at three sites in the east of the county.

There were four records in September with singletons at the Breech Pool (Pagham Hbr) on the 7th and 27th, at Pulborough Brooks on the 13th and at Warnham LNR on the 27th. In October the same or another singleton was at the Breech Pool on the 3rd and the 12th, and there were two on the west side of Pagham Hbr on the 22nd.

The final bird of the year was a female at Bewl Water on 11 Nov, over six weeks later than the 10-year average date of 27 Sep. There have only been two later records: a singleton at Rye Hbr on 15 Nov 1986 and another bird that remained at Bewl Water from 23 Oct to 13 Dec 1994. [DEC]

Shoveler*Anas clypeata*

Very scarce breeder and scarce summer non-breeder; 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
County total	685	549	476	125	17	23	24	16	161	280	382	532
Pagham Hbr	12	35	55	1	1	-	-	6	-	1	5	3
Chichester GP	67	47	8	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	6	-	13	78
Arun Valley	278	208	188	17	1	6	2	1	28	28	64	148
Barcombe Res	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	18	28	12
Glynde Brooks	27	20	30	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	nc	2	-
Eastbourne Lakes	7	16	36	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	48	24	38	6
Pevensey Levels	120	68	55	9	nc	nc	nc	2	-	30	2	10
Bewl Water	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	1	1	14	14	37	-
Rye Bay	174	149	112	95	15	17	20	6	47	130	161	229
Scotney Court GP	10	2	-	-	nc	-	-	-	6	23	14	33

The peak monthly WeBS total of 685 in January was broadly in line with the 5-year average county maximum of 631 for 2003-2007. The 1% national threshold level for this species is 148 and the Arun Valley and Rye Bay (i.e. Rye Hbr combined with Pett Level) are recognised as sites of national importance. Both sites had peak WeBS counts exceeding the national threshold figure, so should maintain this status. Peak numbers at Chichester GP were lower than last year, but peak numbers at Pevensey Levels (120 in January) mean that, in three out of the last four years, WeBS counts there have exceeded 100.

During the year records were received from 115 sites across the county. At 65 of these the maximum number of birds recorded was in single figures, confirming the pattern that Shoveler can be recorded in large flocks, very small numbers or even singly.

During the breeding season two males summered at Pulborough Brooks and two to four pairs were at Rye Hbr but at neither location was breeding suspected. However, breeding was confirmed at Pett Level where one brood of six fledged juveniles was recorded on 14 Jun and a less successful brood of seven unfledged ducklings was recorded on 17 Jun, which by 26 Jun had been reduced to one duckling.

Movements were recorded at the main seawatching sites in all months from March to December except for July and October. Apart from 56 E past Splash Point (Seaford) during April (max 13 on the 20th), all other movements were of single figures. Interestingly, two summer movements were recorded (four birds each east) at Splash Point on 3 Jun and Worthing Beach on 11 Aug. [JRC]

Red-crested Pochard*Netta rufina*

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

2006: Two were at Scotney Court GP on 25 Feb but were omitted from last year's Report.

2007: A single female or immature bird at Rye Hbr on 14 Jan and a probable male seen in flight at Cuckoo Corner (Shoreham) were the only records in the first winter period. In May, two

were at Pulborough Brooks on the 16th.

BTO Birdtrack included an unusual record of four birds at Pannel Sewer on 12 Aug. Two birds at Rye Hbr on the same day reduced to one by 10 Sep, which remained on the Long Pit into November. [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
County total	794	669	95	18	14	14	6	10	100	118	242	535
Chichester GP	188	218	43	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	6	30	110
Forest Mere	24	12	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	5	11	11
Petworth Park	15	8	nc	-	-	nc	-	nc	-	3	15	15
Arun Valley	91	67	31	14	14	9	5	2	23	16	32	76
Weir Wood Res	75	76	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Barcombe Res	17	12	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	9	23	15
Glynde Brooks	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	6	-	-	-
Eastbourne Lakes	28	26	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	16	14
Bewl Water	25	52	8	nc	nc	nc	-	1	-	3	8	9
Rye Bay	265	133	7	2	-	-	-	3	43	37	76	138
Scotney Court GP	38	38	-	1	nc	5	1	2	26	39	27	140

This year's maximum monthly total of 794 in January was well below the 5-year average county maximum for 2002-2006 (1050) and the peak counts for the last three winters have been the lowest for thirty years (*SxBR* 58:273). Numbers were again particularly low at Chichester GP and Arundel WWT. By contrast, numbers at Weir Wood Res and Rye Hbr do not show a decline. Indeed the most significant record outside of the WeBS counts was of 105 birds at Weir Wood Res on 21 Feb.

In all, 385 records were received for 86 sites. Wintering numbers declined rapidly during late February, with birds at Weir Wood Res being the last to depart in mid-March. Although small numbers of resident birds were reported during the breeding season from Arundel WWT, Swanbourne Lake, Rye Hbr and Pett Level, there was no evidence of attempted or confirmed breeding.

The first significant build up of returning birds was at Rye Hbr where 73 were recorded on 21 Oct. The only record of passage movement was of 14 W past Selsey Bill on 15 Nov. [JRC]

Ring-necked Duck

Aythya collaris

Very rare vagrant.

An adult female present on Weir Wood Res from 3 Jan to 31 Mar (NAD *et al.*) was usually to be found asleep at the western end of the reservoir. It was the 11th county record but the seventh since the start of 2000. All records have been between early December and late April. This was the first to be recorded at Weir Wood Res. [RJF]

Tufted Duck*Aythya fuligula*

Fairly common resident and winter visitor; scarce breeder.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1255	974	792	485	365	267	298	273	442	574	738	1128
Pagham Hbr	9	21	52	51	30	7	10	12	3	5	4	7
Chichester GP	354	239	119	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	7	86	112	250
Burton/Chingford Ponds	11	13	nc	15	18	nc	19	nc	23	17	24	38
Petworth Park	19	28	nc	8	6	nc	13	nc	43	27	33	16
Arun Valley	137	119	115	91	99	73	50	20	34	64	96	135
Barcombe Res	22	26	14	17	17	22	65	80	28	24	11	26
Eastbourne Lakes	38	45	37	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	26	18	52	64
Bewl Water	109	82	47	nc	nc	nc	46	53	28	24	20	22
Darwell Res	21	29	24	8	-	2	-	2	14	22	51	132
Powdermill Res	30	27	27	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	49	43	13	20
Rye Bay	300	225	231	286	172	136	69	95	145	154	224	254
Scotney Court GP	34	28	17	-	nc	17	18	11	11	28	46	59

The peak WeBS total was 1255 in January, slightly below the 5-year county maximum for 2002-2006, which averaged 1327 birds. The Darwell Res WeBS count of 132 in December was the highest in over 20 years, and even the 51 there in November was much above recent levels. In contrast the peak numbers at Chichester GP, Arundel WWT and nearby Swanbourne Lake were all well below those being seen in 1999-2004 (*SxBR* 58:275).

Records were received from 157 sites across the county. Significant records not reflected in the WeBS table above included 67 at Weir Wood Res on 7 Jan, 41 at Wakehurst Place on 12 Jan and 45 at Southwater CP on 17 Dec.

Numbers seen in the summer were about a quarter of the winter peak with notable records at Barcombe Res and Rye Hbr, as can be seen in the WeBS table above. Successful breeding was confirmed from June onwards at eight locations, namely Pagham Hbr (two broods), Easton Fm (Earnley) (one brood), Arundel WWT (at least four broods), Warnham LNR (one juvenile), Barcombe Res (two broods), West Langney (Eastbourne) (one brood), Pett Level (36 young) and Rye Hbr (at least three broods, plus one nest with six eggs).

Records of passage movements were typically sparse. In total, five birds were recorded between April and June (4 E, 1 W) flying past Selsey Bill, Worthing Beach and Splash Point (Seaford). In November, 2 W were recorded flying past both Climping and Worthing Beaches, whilst the largest passage of the year was 9 E past Selsey Bill on 15 Nov. [JRC]

Greater Scaup*Aythya marila*

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

2006: Three birds were at Pett Pools on 2 Mar.

2007: The following table shows the monthly maxima at each site:

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Oct	Nov	Dec
Thorney Deepes	1						
Selsey West Fields					1		
Selsey Bill			1				1
Weir Wood Res	1	1			3		
Arlington Res	1						
Glyne Gap (Bexhill)	2	8					
Rye Bay						1	
Rye Hbr	4	4				1	1

The immature male first seen at Weir Wood Res on 28 Dec 2006 remained until 25 Feb. During its stay, it progressively moulted into adult plumage. Eight birds passed Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 19 Feb and a singleton was seen offshore at Selsey Bill on 23 Mar.

Three first winter birds (one male and two females) visited Weir Wood Res on 10 Oct. A female first seen at Rye Hbr on 21 Nov was last recorded on 26 Dec.

Exceptionally, there were no records of this species from Scotney Court GP. [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 of birds moving at the main seawatching sites were as follows:

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E				48	17	1					1	
	W				3	3					2	13	1
	o/s	2			12	38	33	20	5	5		1	15
Climping Beach	E					2							
	W					1							
	o/s											2	
Worthing Beach	E		11		1	12							3
	W									2		5	
	o/s				23	4							
Splash Point	E		2	4	20								
	W					1							
	o/s												

Notable maxima in the above counts were: at Selsey Bill, 42 on 8 Apr, ten on 6 May and seven on 20 Dec; at Worthing Beach, ten on 17 Feb and 22 on 15 Apr; at Splash Point (Seaford), eight on 9 Apr.

Elsewhere during January, there was a female in the river mouth at Rye Hbr for three days from the 1st and only five singletons were noted offshore at four other coastal sites. In February, 42 were recorded at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on the 18th and four (including two drakes) were offshore in Rye Bay on the 26th. The latter were followed by a count of 20 there on 8 Mar.

In the spring and summer months, in addition to the numbers noted offshore in the above table,

there were singletons offshore at Lancing on 17 May and at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 14 Sep.

There were fewer offshore movements during the second winter period compared with earlier in the year, the most notable being 13 W past Selsey Bill during November (with a maximum daily count of four). Elsewhere, the few birds noted offshore involved only two at Selsey West Beach on 11 Oct, one at Shoreham Hbr on the 29th, 2 E past Telscombe Cliffs on 16 Dec and a male at Church Norton on the 28th. [DEC]

Long-tailed Duck

Clangula heymanis

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



Long-tailed Duck, Hove Lagoon, December 2007 (Martin Casemore)

On 27 Jan a male was in Thorney Channel while at Selsey Bill a single bird flew west on 28 Jan. Records of single males flying down-channel past East Head (Chichester Hbr) on 6 Feb and again on 3 Mar could have referred to the same bird wintering in the area. On 26 Apr a pair in transitional plumage was observed at West Itchenor (Chichester Hbr). One flying east off Selsey Bill on 6 May was the last record for the county until November.

A drab juvenile first seen at Widewater (Lancing) on 18 Nov moved to Brooklands Lagoon (Worthing) and remained there until at least 27 Nov. Two birds first seen at Rye Hbr on the 21 Nov stayed until 19 Dec. A singleton on Hove Lagoon from 3 Dec remained until the end of the year. At Scotney Court GP there was a singleton on 8 Dec and two were then recorded there until the end of the year. Records from Worthing Beach involved 2 E on 16 Dec and 1 W on 18 Dec. [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
County total	385	533	89	2	446	9	181	51	32	190	716	652
Glyne Gap	185	533	89	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	32	174	544	12
Rye Bay	200	—	—	2	446	9	180	46	—	15	169	640

With all marine wintering duck it is never easy to count or estimate flock sizes but as usual the largest totals were in the east, notably off Glyne Gap (Bexhill), and up to 300 in Rye Bay during the first winter period. Wintering numbers in the west of the county rarely exceeded 20 at any one location. The only record away from the sea was a singleton at Scotney Court GP on 21 Jan.

Easterly passage during the spring from the main seawatching locations (hours watched in parentheses) was as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May
Selsey Bill	43 (39½)	1171 (129)	739 (175½)
Climping Beach	-	76 (66¾)	193 (58½)
Worthing Beach	17 (15¼)	576 (70½)	375 (60)
Portobello	41 (15½)	612 (42½)	31 (18¾)
Splash Point (Seaford)	229 (16)	4338 (13½)	629 (78)

The main easterly spring passage began in the last days of March with a count of 143 in 3½ hr at Splash Point (Seaford) on 27 Mar. It peaked in the third week of April with a maximum of 810 past Splash Point on the 21st in 11½ hr and up to 170 at three other sites. Passage continued through to early June with maxima from any one site exceeding double figures only once (103 at Selsey Bill on 23 May). However there were 386 in Rye Bay on 13 May and a summer maximum there of 250 on 22 Jul, while there were 111 off Selsey Bill on 10 Jul.

A drake was seen at the hide and later at the Nose at Bewl Water on 15 Jul, an unusual summer inland record although reflecting the report of two ducks at the same site on 24 Jun 2006.

Generally, reported numbers were unremarkable in the autumn and second winter period except for peaks of 544 off Glyne Gap on 9 Nov and 640 in Rye Bay on 9 Dec with 300 still there on the 31st. It is not known whether this is the same flock moving up and down the coast. [WGH]

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	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
4	4	—	22	1	-	35	26

After a poor end to 2006 no more than four birds were recorded between 6 Jan and 28 Feb. Apart from three at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 22 Jan, all sightings were between Selsey Bill and Worthing. There were no records from what is usually the main wintering site in Rye Bay and none anywhere in March.

Spring passage was only observed between 9 and 22 Apr and totalled a meagre 19 birds all flying east and mostly from Splash Point (Seaford). There were no further records until a singleton was observed off Pett Level on the rather early date of 25 Sep. The next sightings were not until November and included up to 28 passage birds between 12 Nov and 13 Dec with Selsey Bill providing the bulk of the records.

Date range		Apr 9-14	Nov 12-30	Dec 1-13
Selsey Bill	E	1	4	5
	W		11	2
Worthing Beach	E	2	4	2
	W			
Telscombe Cliffs	E	2		
	W			
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	14		2
	W			

Very small numbers, some of which were probably wintering birds, were additionally observed offshore between Chichester Hbr and Rye Bay from 9 Nov until the end of the year. The maxima were three in Rye Bay on 25 Nov and between four and six off Worthing Beach from 26 Nov to 31 Dec. There were no records away from the coast. [WGH]

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
County total	31	39	5	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	11	27
Chichester Hbr	13	23	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	11
Pagham Hbr	4	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Chichester GP	2	2	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	-	2	3
Newhaven	2	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-	-
Bewl Water	3	-	-	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-	1	-
Darwell Res	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Rye Hbr	6	2	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	5

These totals were close to the monthly maxima. The only other regular site was Weir Wood Res which hosted single birds in February, October and November.

Numbers in the first winter period were very low with the bulk of birds in the western harbours of Chichester and Pagham. Numbers tailed off rapidly in March and the last bird was seen at

Rye Hbr on 9 Apr. There were no over-summering records and the first returning bird was at Chichester GP on 16 Sep, followed by a female at Pilsey Sands (Chichester Hbr) on the 28th.

In the second winter period a female flew west past Selsey Bill on 10 Oct, another female was at Weir Wood Res on the 14th and there were two birds at Rye Hbr on the 26th. The bulk of the new arrivals were in November and December. The only movement noted by seawatchers was all westwards at Selsey Bill (11 birds) and Worthing Beach (two birds) in November and a singleton off the Bill on 4 Dec. [WGH]

Smew

Mergellus albellus

Very scarce winter visitor mainly to the east of the county.

It was a poor year for this very local species with all records from the Rye area. Indeed, apart from one on Northpoint Pit on 1 Feb, all reports were from Rye Hbr, mostly on Castle Water.

In the first winter period one to two were recorded on several dates between 1 Jan and 18 Feb with three on 21 Jan and on 4 and 9 Feb. Only one drake was reported. The first birds in the second winter period were two redheads on 4 Dec with six (including two drakes) between 16 and 18 Dec and the last, a single redhead, on 27 Dec. [WGH]

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		Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	184	238	140	5	1		1	79	106
Chichester Hbr	172	217	134	2	-		-	62	92
Pagham Hbr	6	14	5	2	1		-	17	4
Widewater (Lancing)	4	6	1	-	-		nc	-	8

The monthly totals at the main seawatching sites, showing also the highest count of off-shore (or beach) birds during the first winter period, are shown in the table below. The tables demonstrate that the majority of the birds wintering in both seasons occurred from Lancing westwards. On the basis of the WeBS counts and the maximum monthly counts of off-shore birds at the main sites in the first winter period and in December, over 400 wintered. The bulk of the records came from various sites in Chichester Hbr and off Worthing (and adjoining Goring) beaches. There is considerable interchange between sites (as winter records of flying birds indicate) but, to balance this, birds on the open sea are almost certainly undercounted as they are often difficult to see in the waves. It would appear that the WeBS returns underestimate the true population by a wide margin.

Most passage was in late March and April with the bulk of birds moving east. Very few were observed in May and there were no reports of over-summering birds. Beachy Head and Splash Point (Seaford) were the best places to see passage birds.

The first autumn passage bird was a singleton off Worthing on 27 Sep, but it was not until November that the mainly westerly autumn passage really got underway. The highest numbers were recorded at Beachy Head and Worthing Beach. By December the winter population was settling down. The estimated county total exceeded 400, approximately four times the December WeBS count and considerably enhanced by a count off Worthing (and Goring) beaches of 234 on 22 Dec. [WGH]

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	4	10	2	50	5		0	14	13
	W	46	21	19	1	0		22	171	87
	o/s	20	25	22						
Climping Beach	E		0	4	13			12	57	6
	W		7	4	0			12	57	6
	o/s		30	20					2	
Worthing Beach	E	0		0	17	1		0	23	6
	W	2		2	4	2		9	135	31
	o/s	108	136	125						
Telscombe Cliffs	E	0		3	6				0	5
	W	3		0	0				4	0
	o/s	0		0	0				0	0
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	0	8		81	5			5	2
	W	2	0		4	2			1	0
	o/s	0	0		0	0			0	0

Goosander

Mergus merganser

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

2006: The first birds of the autumn were five females which flew northwest over Rye Hbr Flat Beach on 30 Oct. This record was omitted from the 2006 Report and pre-dates the previously reported first returning birds by six days.

2007: It was a very poor year for this species with no reports from several regular and well-watched sites and only one adult drake, at Weir Wood Res on 4 Jan. In the first winter period there were five reports of redheads from Pagham Hbr, Chichester GP, Petworth Park and Barcombe Res between 21 Jan and 18 Feb, mostly on single dates. Five at Pagham Hbr on 24 Feb (the last of the winter) and a singleton past Goring Gap on 9 Apr were almost certainly passage birds.

In the second winter period all reports were of redheads with the first, a passage bird, at Pagham Hbr on 8 Oct. There were two, presumably also passage birds, there and offshore at Church Norton from 29 Oct to 11 Nov. Inland there were records of one or two on single dates between 11 Nov and 11 Dec at Rodwell, Weir Wood Res and Darwell Res. Singletons offshore from Selsey Bill and Climping Gap on 14 Nov and at Goring on 25 Nov and Rye Hbr on 3 Dec were probably just passing through. Indeed the nature of the reports in both winter periods suggests that none stayed for long anywhere in the county and that very few individuals were involved. [WGH]

Ruddy Duck

Oxyura jamaicensis

Scarce resident and winter visitor; subject to culling to reduce numbers.

Monthly maxima at the principal sites are shown in the table below. Apart from ones or twos at Chichester GP, Arundel WWT (maximum of three on 19 Mar only) and Weir Wood Res, most sightings were from the Pett Level and Rye Hbr area. It would seem from the coincidence of numbers that there is some movement between the latter sites so the table may show some double counting. There has been some reduction in numbers as a result of the culling programme. The first winter population was probably fewer than 20 birds, with a spring peak of about 24 in April.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chichester GP	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	-	-	-	-
Swanbourne/Arundel WWT	-	2	3	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	1
Weir Wood Res	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	1
Pett Level	6	9	6	15	6	10	10	6	1	2	2	1
Rye Hbr	3	9	7	6	2	-	-	-	-	1	1	3
Other Sites	2	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2

The only proof of breeding came from Pett Level and Chichester GP where single females were seen with small broods. After August records tailed off substantially and did not reach double figures in the county as a whole for the rest of the year. The oddest record (and not included in the above table) was of five drifting westward on the sea off Selsey Bill on 10 Oct. [WGH]

Red-legged Partridge

Alectoris rufa

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

There was a considerable increase in the number of records received this year. More records were also received from sites away from the coast and from the Downs than in previous years (up from 23% in 2006 to 41% in 2007). This may however have been a reflection of the increased reporting from these areas and not a change in their distribution or population.

In the first winter period there was a paucity of high counts with only one reaching double figures when 11 were found in West Dean Woods on 17 Jan.

Judging by the low number of records received, it was a poor year for natural breeding. Only one record (an adult with nine chicks on Thorney Island) confirmed successful breeding. At Durfold (Warnham) a nest, which was within 10 m of a house, had ten eggs but was abandoned before hatching. During the breeding season, a total of eight pairs was seen in the general area of Pagham Hbr, three pairs were seen at Tegdown Hill (Brighton) and one pair at Cradle Hill (Seaford). Four adults were seen in a garden at Constantia Manor (Isfield) on 21 Aug with two very young and very late chicks, whose chances of survival were low.

In the second winter period the highest count was 200, which had been herded into a stubble field by shooters at Lodge Hill Fm (West Dean) on 22 Nov. Other notable counts were 45 at Pagham Hbr on 5 Sep, 45 at Nyetimber (Bognor) on 21 Oct, 25 at Amberley on 30 Sep, 30 at The Burgh (Burpham) on 1 Dec, 26 at Washington on the same date and 60 at Peacehaven on 4 Oct. The mainly westerly distribution of these counts is notable. [RTP]

Grey Partridge

Perdix perdix

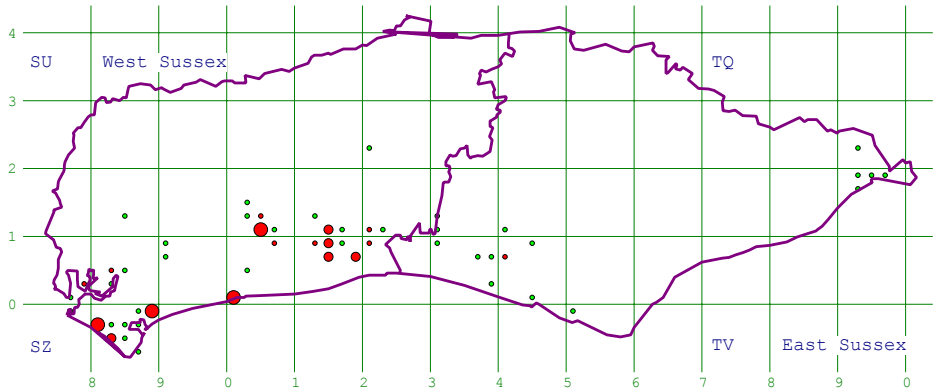
Scarce and decreasing resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Records were received from 70 sites, exactly the same number as in 2006 and as usual the majority (50) came from the west of the county as shown on the map below. The only records from north of the Downs came from Amberley, Pulborough, Upper Beeding and Cowfold.

There were very few records in the first winter period. The only double figure counts were of ten at both The Burgh (Burpham) on 23 Jan and Amberley Wild Brooks on 1 Feb and the only site that generated multiple sightings was Rye Hbr with six during this period.

In the breeding season, records came from 35 sites. There was positive evidence of breeding at Amberley Wild Brooks, where there were coveys of 11 and 12, Rye Hbr where there were four

pairs and at The Burgh where a covey included at least four young. In addition, single territories were identified in fields along the north side of Pagham Hbr and at Sefter Farm (Pagham). More coveys were recorded during the summer months. At Rye Hbr there was a covey including 14 flying young on 17 Jul, at Atherington (Climping) a covey with adults and juveniles on 21 Aug, at The Burgh a covey of eight on 29 Aug and at Climping Gap adults with juveniles on 30 Aug.



The autumn months produced several notable counts including 20 at Clayton Windmills on 7 Sep, 26 at Climping Gap on both 14 Sep and 18 Oct, 21 at Amberley on 19 Oct and 20 at Washington on 20 Oct. In the second winter period the largest numbers were recorded at Steyning Round Hill in December where there were 34 on the 10th, 29 on the 13th and 24 on the 15th. The covey on the 13th included ten juveniles suggesting breeding into September, which has been recorded before (Cramp, S. *et al.* 1980, Birds of the Western Palearctic, OUP) or were these released birds? At Pilsley Island a covey of 12 on 11 Dec was described as released birds from Thorney Island. A notable count of 24 was recorded on 15 Dec at Washington. [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 nine sites involving a minimum of 15 birds, remarkably similar to the 2006 total of 15 from eight sites. The first record of the year came from Rye Hbr where a bird was present on 10 May, an average arrival date. The only other May record also came from the east of the county when one was heard singing at Hastings CP on the 24th. This was followed by one at Laughton Place (Ringmer) on 1 Jun.

Subsequent records were mostly from the west of the county. At Amberley, two were singing from a barley field on 29 Jun and three were heard there on 3 Jul. At Steep Down (Lancing) one or two birds were heard singing on seven dates between 7 Jun and 13 Aug. There were two records from Steyning Round Hill; three were heard on 28 Jul followed by two on 13 Aug. At Mill Hill (Shoreham) a singleton was heard on 10 Jul and at The Burgh (Burpham) a field of barley was the favoured site: two were heard from there on 28 Jun and 17 Jul with a singleton on 25 Jul. Further east at Belle Tout (Beachy Head) a single bird was heard singing on 13 Jun. The last records of the year were those on 13 Aug at Steep Down and Steyning Round Hill. [RTP]

Common Pheasant*Phasianus colchicus*

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

Over 1700 records were received from 453 locations across the county (271 in 2006) and confirm that the species is present at the majority of rural sites.

In the first winter period numbers were mainly in single figures. In the breeding season 11 pairs were at Pagham Hbr with a further 12 at Sefter Fm (Pagham). At both Pulborough Brooks and Amberley breeding was confirmed but not monitored. At Rye Hbr breeding was widespread (although numbers were lower than in 2006) with broods seen at Castle Water and Harbour Fm. Single broods were also seen at Warnham LNR and at Barcombe Cross.

In the second winter period after captive bred birds had been released, larger gatherings were observed with 48 at East Marden on 10 Oct, 39 at Pagham Hbr on 6 Oct, 68 at Clapham Wood on 21 Dec, 61 at Crabtree (Cowfold) on 6 Oct and 50 at Sharpthorne on 8 Oct. [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 two have been made by combining the totals of birds recorded inland with the totals from coastal sites, after making allowance for duplication. In line with previous reports, the largest count of birds recorded moving either east or west each day has been totalled and added to the largest number of birds recorded as 'offshore' or 'on the sea'. It is probable that most of the birds recorded as 'Diver sp' are Red-throated Divers and these two species accounts should be considered together.

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
116	143	55	37	9		5	15	165	198

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total (*)	40	53	26	34	5		3	12	157	131
Selsey Bill	20	8	1	14	4		1	10	133	38
Climping Beach	-	-	-	3	-		-	-	16	4
Worthing Beach	17	15	17	3	3		3	2	85	98
Telscombe Cliffs	8	1	9	5	1		-	3	48	23
Splash Point (Seaford)	-	34	8	27	-		nc	nc	21	12

(*) adjusted to compensate for duplication

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

It was an extremely poor year for this species with an estimated total of 743 birds (cf. 1279 in 2006), which is barely a third of the 10-year rolling average and the lowest annual total since

1995. During the first winter period the only two-figure movement was of a total of 15 recorded at Worthing Beach on 15 Feb. The largest concentrations offshore at this time were all in the east of the county with 81 in the Bexhill-St Leonards area on 22 Jan, a combined total of 85 off Bexhill and in Rye Bay on 19 Feb with 28 still off Bexhill on 16 Mar. Spring passage as noted at the main seawatching sites was also noticeably lighter than in previous years. The last spring record was of a single bird off Church Norton on 26 May.

The first returning bird was 1 W past both Worthing Beach and Selsey Bill on 19 Sep. The second winter period started quietly but numbers in November and December accounted for over half of the annual total. Although there were again no large single movements, a total of 104 birds flew west past Selsey Bill during the ten-day period 9-18 Nov. Other notable movements in this period were 17 E off Newhaven on 18 Dec and 29 E past Worthing Beach on 22 Dec. The peak count of birds offshore was 41 at Bexhill on 10 Dec.

There were three records of birds away from the open sea or tidal harbours involving singletons at the Long Pit (Rye Hbr) on 21 Jan (with a Black-throated Diver present at the same time), Brighton Marina on 5 Apr and Pett Level on 9 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 totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
9	13	10	20	10	1		1	5	48	13

The annual total of 130 is slightly lower than for 2006 (140) and is only three quarters of the 10-year rolling average. The monthly totals of birds moving offshore at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total (*)	6	4	3	19	9		2	37	7
Selsey Bill	5	-	-	8	6		2	24	7
Worthing Beach	1	1	-	2	1		-	7	1
Telscombe Cliffs	-	3	3	2	-		-	3	1
Splash Point (Seaford)	-	-	-	12	3		nc	7	-

(*) adjusted to compensate for duplication

In the first winter period no more than two birds were recorded moving offshore on any one day. Glyn Gap (Bexhill) again provided the highest numbers of birds recorded on the sea with nine on 19 Feb and seven on 16 Mar but numbers elsewhere never exceeded two. Birds departing in the spring were similarly low in numbers with 3 E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 21 Apr being the peak day count. The last spring record was of a singleton offshore at Selsey Bill on 3 Jun, eight days later than the 10-year average date.

The first returning bird was a singleton off Church Norton on 30 Sep, nine days earlier than the 10-year average date. As with the previous species, the second winter period started quietly and it was not until mid-November that numbers increased significantly. During the period 12-16 Nov a total of 12 moved east past Selsey Bill followed by 7 W at Splash Point on 18 Nov and 6 E at Ferring on 27 Nov. Four off Selsey Bill on 20 Dec represented the largest count of birds on the sea.

There were two records of birds away from the open sea involving singletons at the Long Pit (Rye Hbr) on 21 Jan (where there was also a Red-throated Diver) and at Weir Wood Res on 26 Nov. [DHH]

Great Northern Diver

Gavia immer

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

2006: Several records were omitted from last year's Report. Birds were seen off Brighton Marina as follows: 1W on 1 Jan, 2 Jan and 14 Jan; one on the sea on 19 Dec, 1E on 29 Dec and 1W on the 30th.

An adult on the sea off Brighton Marina on 14 May was the latest spring record and was five days later than those included in the 2006 Report.

2007: The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun		Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total (*)	5	5	5	9	6	2		2	3	5
Max. off Selsey Bill	4	5	5	9	6	2		2	2	5

(*) adjusted to compensate for duplication

The annual total of 43 was not only higher than that in 2006 (36) but also slightly above the 10-year rolling average of 38. As in previous years, Selsey Bill was the principal site for this species. It is assumed that birds seen in flight at Selsey Bill were on feeding flights as these movements were not recorded elsewhere and it is also assumed that the one to three birds noted between Chichester Hbr and Pagham Hbr were the results of those feeding flights.

In the first winter period the Selsey birds were widely spread during January with up to three in Chichester Hbr. By March they were almost entirely confined to Selsey Bill itself, although singletons were at Goring on the 23 Mar and 9 Apr. Numbers at Selsey increased in the spring with birds being seen almost daily until the last record on 10 Jun. A count of nine on 7 Apr was the maximum for the year and the highest since March 2000.

The first returning bird was a singleton off Church Norton on 13 Oct (12 days earlier than the 10-year average date). Although seen regularly off Selsey Bill during the second winter period, numbers remained fairly low with a maximum of three on 4 Dec.

Apart from the Goring birds above, the only other records away from the Selsey area were of a juvenile which remained at Southwick Canal until 27 Jan (having first been seen in 2006) and further singletons at Goring on 28 Nov and at Telscombe Cliffs (Portobello) on 30 Nov. [DHH]

Diver species

Seawatchers are aware of the problems of specifically identifying Divers in flight, particularly when they are in winter plumage and seen at long range. The number of birds reported as 'Diver sp' can be significant and accounted for over a quarter of the total number of records received for Divers. The largest numbers of unidentified Divers reported coincided with times of other movements and included totals of 35 off Splash Point (Seaford) on 15-17 Feb and 25 past the same site on 21-22 Apr. In the second winter period, 37 E and 7 W were recorded at Selsey Bill on 15 Nov and there were 45 E off Splash Point on 13 Dec.

The numbers of Divers of all species recorded at the main seawatching sites during the periods

January-May and October-December are shown in the table below. The totals for each site have been calculated by adding the monthly totals of birds flying east to those moving west plus the numbers of birds seen on the sea. No allowance has been made for duplication at individual sites or between sites and consequently no attempt should be made to add the columns or rows. [DHH]

	Diver sp		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	34	98	58	190	23	55	188	372	0.8	2.0
Climping Beach	3	6	3	23	1	2	7	31	0.1	0.5
Worthing Beach	26	21	56	209	6	16	88	246	0.5	2.3
Telscombe Cliffs	22	5	42	69	8	4	72	79	0.7	1.4
Splash Point (Seaford)	156	114	70	33	15	7	241	154	1.0	6.2

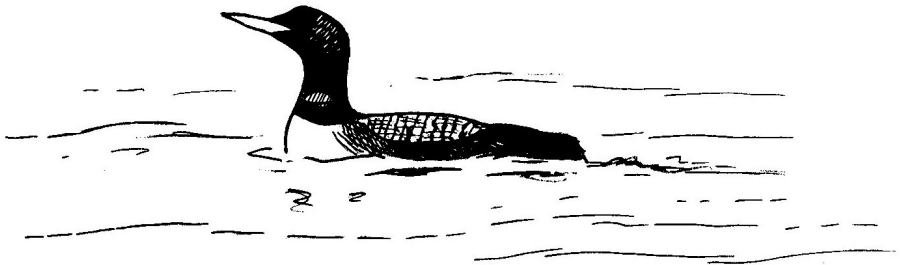
(*) includes Great Northern Diver

White-billed Diver

Gavia adamsii

Very rare vagrant.

An adult in summer plumage was seen intermittently off Selsey Bill from 30 Sep to 17 Nov (CF *et al.*). It has been accepted by BBRC and is the fourth county record. For many it was the highlight of the year and few can have imagined ever seeing the species in the county let alone having the opportunity to study a summer-plumaged individual, even if it was often rather further offshore than one might have liked. The previous records were singles flying east past Newhaven West Pier on 27 Apr 1997, Ovingdean on 3 Jun 1999 and Selsey Bill on 28 Nov 1999 with the latter seen off Church Norton on 7-8 Dec. [RJF]



Little Grebe*Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Scarce resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	140	160	62	40	22	18	43	58	173	204	227	193
Chichester Hbr	36	56	16	7	6	6	6	12	47	61	53	38
Pagham Hbr	14	17	5	5	1	-	1	4	14	25	28	10
Chichester GP	9	7	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	15	10	22	15
Arun Valley	4	6	4	4	1	2	2	-	1	3	2	8
Brooklands (Worthing)	5	4	4	5	3	3	5	2	5	nc	9	13
Cuckmere Haven	17	17	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	14	18	27	35
Eastbourne Lakes	3	2	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	3	13	4	2
Bewl Water	6	11	10	nc	nc	nc	8	16	37	25	28	11
Powdermill Res	2	3	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	3	2	3	2
Rye Bay	22	12	8	9	8	4	15	14	19	29	20	33
Scotney Court GP	8	16	1	1	nc	-	-	-	-	7	13	10

The approximate monthly county totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	207	208	130	84	55	78	81	127	181	236	275	251
No. of sites	36	25	38	31	19	25	22	25	30	32	42	40

The largest first winter period totals were generally in Chichester Hbr with peaks of 30 birds at Thorney Island on 19 Jan, 40 in the Fishbourne Channel on 4 Feb and 29 at Thorney Deepes on 17 Feb.

At least 23 confirmed breeding pairs were identified at 12 sites with a further three probable breeding sites and nine possible territories, broadly similar to 2006. At Constantia Manor (Isfield) at least five pairs bred with chicks observed on numerous dates from 23 Apr until 16 Aug suggesting that at least some of them had second broods. Three chicks hatched at Troutbeck (Eridge) on 7 Aug but only two fledged.

A total of 37 birds recorded at Bewl Water during the WeBS count of 16 Oct was the first notable tally of the autumn, and was not topped until 39 birds were seen on Thorney Deepes on 12 Dec. Other significant numbers included 21 on Pagham Lagoon on 7 Oct, 29 in the Rye Hbr/Rye Bay area on the same date, 27 on Cuckmere Haven on 10 Nov, and 18 at Brooklands (Worthing) and 16 at Widewater (Lancing), both on 21 Dec. [AH]

Great Crested Grebe*Podiceps cristatus*

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

2006: In the 2006 Report a count of 800 individuals on the sea off Pett Pools on 11 Feb (following 500 there on 22 Jan) was incorrectly included in the totals for Telscombe Cliffs.

2007: The monthly WeBS counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	396	430	308	113	83	107	287	282	347	365	403	388
Chichester Hbr	47	44	19	11	6	2	-	1	7	12	23	9
Chichester GP	76	52	27	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	46	35	46	41
Barcombe Res	8	3	4	4	3	4	4	13	18	29	25	12
Arlington Res	7	16	24	23	14	15	22	35	24	34	50	18
Bewl Water	69	84	81	nc	nc	nc	183	159	138	90	64	77
Glyne Gap	70	116	37	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	-	-	41	97
Darwell Res	21	26	25	30	25	25	28	32	47	43	41	53
Rye Bay	44	29	15	20	18	42	17	26	28	72	60	32

The approximate monthly county totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	632	558	385	271	203	175	368	349	365	548	635	1121
No. of sites	43	33	43	36	26	22	25	20	28	27	39	32

Numbers during the first winter period were a little lower than in 2006, with the only three-figure count being the 116 birds seen off Glyne Gap during the WeBS count of 16 Feb, well below the 1% national threshold level of 159.

Details from regular seawatching sites are shown below:

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	3				3			4	7
	W	13	3	2	2	7		1	12	23
Climping Beach	E									
	W							1	5	4
Worthing Beach	E				7	3			7	
	W	1			1			8	29	11
Telscombe Cliffs	E		1	2	4					6
	W	4	3	1					2	
Splash Point (Seaford)	E		10	4	3	7			5	
	W		1	3	2				3	

It is perhaps surprising how few birds are noted on passage considering the numbers recorded wintering offshore in the county and, indeed, many of the above totals probably refer to local movements rather than migration.

Breeding was recorded throughout the county, with approximately 34 reports from 19 locations, with the best successes being at Bewl Water where 37 pairs raised 18 young from 14 broods, at Weir Wood Res where at least five pairs raised young and at Rye Hbr where at least four pairs with chicks were noted.

In the latter part of the year there were few notable counts outside the WeBS survey above, with none topping 100 until 22 Dec, when 144 birds were noted offshore from the Ferring/Goring/Worthing area. This figure, however, was totally eclipsed four days later when a spectacular total of 309 birds was counted offshore between Ferring and Worthing. [AH]

Red-necked Grebe*Podiceps grisegena*

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

It was a fairly average year for this species compared with the past five years. The approximate minimum monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	4	3	2		1	6	1
No. of sites	4	2	2		1	4	1

The first record was 1 W past Selsey Bill on 6 Jan which could have been the same bird that was seen in Chichester Hbr on the 10th. It or another singleton flew west past Selsey on the 15th and there was one on the Southwick Canal on the 20th. Another individual was in Pagham Hbr on the 27th and on 1 Feb. The only record in the first winter period of more than one was of two seen at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 19 Feb. The Chichester Hbr bird, or another, was seen again on 11 and 13 Mar and the final record for the first winter period was another singleton off Pagham Hbr on the 13th.

The first returning bird was off Church Norton from the late date of 29 Oct until 4 Nov. A singleton was off Selsey Bill on 11 Nov and 1 E there on the 13th may have been the same bird that was seen on the same day off Worthing/Goring beaches. Another bird which flew east past Selsey the following day was probably the same bird that flew east past Telscombe Cliffs, also on the 14th. Another east past Selsey on the 15th could also have been the bird seen the same day in Pagham Hbr. The final records of the year were singletons off Worthing and Goring on 27 Nov and 22 Dec. [PNP]

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		Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	26	46	7	4		3	20	66
West	15	39	7	1		2	14	64
East	11	7	0	3		1	6	2
No. of sites	8	6	2	4		2	8	6

As usual, most records were from the coast in the west of the county with the maximum monthly counts being as shown in the table below. Several of these maxima were well in excess of the 1% national threshold level of seven.

In the first winter period there were additional records of singletons at Fairlight and St Leonards-on-Sea on 14 and 22 Jan respectively. Maximum numbers at Selsey Bill were 5 W on 14 Jan and a similar number on 18 Feb. The final records of the spring were a singleton at Brighton Marina on 5 Apr, 1 E at Selsey Bill on 7 Apr and two birds in summer plumage which flew west past Splash Point (Seaford) on 13 Apr.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Oct	Nov	Dec
Chichester Hbr	6	8	3	-		-	1	4
Selsey Bill	5	5	1	1		-	1	18
Church Norton	3	24	4	-		2	12	40
Goring/Worthing	1	3	-	-			1	2
Glyne Gap (Bexhill)	8	6	-	-		-	2	-

The first returning bird was at Rye Hbr on 2 Oct where it remained until the 10th. The first two birds arrived at Church Norton on 11 Oct and numbers built steadily to monthly peaks of 12 on 26 Nov and 40 on 23 Dec. On 4 Dec 18 flew west in 5½ hrs at Selsey Bill.

There were three inland records; a singleton at Weir Wood Res from 19 Nov until the end of the year, one at Bewl Water on 28 Jan (perhaps the same bird as the one seen in December 2006) and another singleton at the latter site on 11 Nov. [PNP]

Black-necked Grebe

Podiceps nigricollis

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

Numbers were much lower than in the previous two years with only about 20 individuals recorded. The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	2	4	3	2	2		3	5	3	4
No. of sites	2	3	2	1	1		1	3	2	2

In the first winter period one frequented Pagham Hbr from 14 Jan to 2 Feb. Another took up residence at Rye Hbr on 28 Jan and was joined by a second bird on 25 Mar. They were last seen on 6 Apr by which time one was in summer plumage. One was off Worthing/Goring beaches on 8 Feb and further singletons were seen in Pagham Hbr on 17 Feb and 24 Mar. The last birds of the spring were two birds drifting east off Ferring/Worthing on 5 May.

The first post-breeding season record was of three juvenile birds on Piddinghoe Pond on 9 Sep. These were followed by a singleton at Arlington Res on 7 Oct and the three juveniles were on Piddinghoe Pond again on the 9th. A singleton was seen in Chichester Hbr on the 26th and another singleton appeared at Arlington Res on the 10 and 11 Nov. Two flew west at Selsey on the 13th with another west on 4 Dec. The year ended with two at Barcombe Res on 23 Dec and two in Chichester Hbr the same day. [PNP]

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.

In the first winter period the only significant movements were all at Telscombe Cliffs (Portobello) in January with 149 W (1 hr) on the 7th, 64 W (¾ hr) on the 9th and 168 W (½ hr) on the 18th. As similar movements were not recorded elsewhere, it suggests that these may have been localized feeding movements.

The long sea outfall off Telscombe Cliffs proved a popular feeding area for Fulmars and

After the first spring record of 2 E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 21 Apr, birds were seen almost daily until the middle of May. Peak counts during this period were 11 E at Splash Point on 29 Apr, 12 W at Selsey Bill on 9 May and 32 W at Selsey Bill on the 15th.

Unusually, June proved to be the peak month largely due to an impressive total of 167 W in 11 hours at Selsey Bill on the 21st. Other large counts from Selsey Bill during the summer months were 19 W on 27 Jun, 12 W on the 28th and 37 W on 5 Jul. The only other location where the species was recorded during this period was Climping Beach where two flew west on 1 Jul. A singleton flew west at Worthing on 14 Aug and there were four sightings between 16 and 21 Sep comprising at least five birds with the last being another singleton flying west at Worthing. [TJW]



Balearic Shearwater

Puffinus mauretanicus

Scarce spring to autumn pelagic visitor.

The number of acceptable records received this year was well down on the 41 recorded in 2006, although this excluded any collated records from Beachy Head or Brighton Marina. Singles were seen flying past Worthing Beach on 29 May (DIS), Selsey Bill on 5 July (BFF *et al.*), and west past Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 21 Jul and 14 Aug (RHC). The most productive date for this species was on 18 Aug with 2W past Worthing Beach (RAI, DIS), 5W past Selsey Bill (JA) and 2W past Worthing Beach (DIS). The last two records of the year involved a singleton past Telscombe Cliffs on 24 Aug (DHH) and 3E past Selsey Bill on 19 Sept (OM). [CWM]

European Storm-petrel

Hydrobates pelagicus

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

2006: The observers of an individual seen being taken by a Peregrine at Birling Gap on 24 May should have read JFC, RHC and not as stated in the 2006 Sussex Bird Report.

2007: Most records were from Selsey Bill where three flew west on 12 May (SH, OM *et al.*), at least 5W on 24 Jun (DIS *et al.*), 1W on 29 Jun (JA), 1W on 1 Jul (SH) and at least 4W on 5 Jul (DIS *et al.*). Also on 5 Jul two were recorded off Birling Gap (Beachy Head) (RHC). These individuals were seen at a range where a safe identification could be made and where contrasting

plumage details were documented. Additional birds off Selsey Bill considered to be this species, but not fully described or where plumage features were not noted or observed with certainty, were as follows: 1 offshore on 8 May, 1W on the 11th, 3W on the 12th, 2 on the 13th, 2 on the 20th, 2 on 1 Jun; 4 on the 2nd; 3 on the 3rd; 5 on the 17th; 6 on the 22nd; 1 on the 23rd; 4W and 1 offshore on the 24th, 3W on the 26th, 2 on the 29th; 2 on the 30th; 4 on 1 Jul; 1W on the 3rd, 15W on the 5th, 5 on the 6th and 5 on 8 Jul.

It is clear that Storm Petrels were present off Selsey Bill throughout late spring and early summer but often remained too far offshore to document with certainty. This and the amount of duplication there might be in these records, both between days and within the larger day totals, makes the keeping of running totals problematic. Had a similar treatment been applied to the unprecedented numbers seen in 2006 then many of the individuals recorded would be in the 'not documented with certainty' category too. Five were recorded in the county during the 1960s, just one in the 1970s, seven in the 1980s, 22 in the 1990s and 24 during 2000-05, an increase that shows no signs of abating however rigorously records are assessed. Since 1946 the extreme dates are 4 Apr (1988) to 23 Jul (2006) and 4 Sep (1980) to 30 Nov (1983) although there are older records during December to March. [RJF].

Gannet

Morus bassanas

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	4	37	671	522	582	2164	405	4346	159	1608
Climping Beach	-	-	134	200	27	94	20	208	18	252
Worthing	26	37	321	266	257	326	267	2535	137	2848
Telscombe Cliffs	15	17	269	62	182	138	899	940	510	1758
Splash Point (Seaford)	20	13	1794	240	65	-	-	-	344	233

Very low numbers were recorded off the coast in the first three months of the year. The only notable counts were 31 W at Selsey Bill on 28 Jan and 16 off Worthing Beach on 8 Feb.

Spring passage was also poor with only five dates on which counts of 100 or more were made compared with ten dates last year and 23 in the previous year. The maximum counts at Splash Point (Seaford) were 148 E and 4 W on 25 Apr, 144 E and 12 W on 6 May, 140 E and 9 W on 13 May and 150 E on 30 May, while at Selsey Bill they were 25 E and 120 W on 30 May.

Larger numbers were seen in June and July with many records of birds feeding or lingering offshore. The highest counts during this period were at Selsey Bill with 55 E and 230 W on 1 Jul, 320 W on the 17th and 255 W on the 21st. Numbers remained about the same in August and September apart from three much larger counts which again were all at Selsey Bill; 741 W on 18 Aug, 338 W on 19 Aug and 23 E and 976 W in 21 Sep. In October at least 500 gathered in Rye Bay on the 22nd but the largest movement of the autumn was on the 28th with 1200 W at Selsey Bill and 1026 W at Worthing.

Similar numbers remained off the coast to the end of the year with the highest counts being 152 W and 500 offshore at Worthing on 10 Nov, 46 E and 428 W at Telscombe Cliffs (Portobello) on 12 Nov, 589 W at Worthing and 19 E and 516 W at Telscombe Cliffs (both on 17 Nov) and 442

W at Worthing on 25 Dec. One was found oiled and long dead at Shoreham Beach on 24 Feb and there was as an unusual inland record of one flying over West Dean Woods on 10 Nov. [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
County total	545	616	566	302	259	448	485	517	507	573	738	539
Chichester Hbr	35	29	24	5	8	8	14	21	44	61	83	14
Pagham Hbr	18	99	118	72	23	46	76	102	162	100	126	45
Chichester GP	98	74	64	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	80	112	113	93
Arun Valley	14	25	9	-	1	5	9	3	7	38	16	28
Iford Brooks	10	17	30	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	15	11	5
Barcombe Res	24	12	9	5	5	5	10	11	11	42	29	18
Arlington Res	30	29	19	10	12	8	18	14	10	14	49	33
Pevensey Levels	41	21	14	7	8	4	8	22	9	9	40	10
Bewl Water	56	20	30	nc	nc	nc	30	16	23	10	34	10
Rye Bay	70	160	158	186	193	366	302	314	116	110	94	110

The monthly WeBS totals were lower than the 2006 totals in every month except June.



Great Cormorant, Rye Harbour, April 2007 (Reg Bell)

In the first winter period the largest concentrations were at Pagham and Rye Harbours. Numbers at Pagham Hbr were lower than in 2006 but higher at Rye Hbr where the highest count was 300 on 5 Feb. Bewl Water held the highest numbers of the inland reservoirs with 56 on 21 Jan.

Continuing the recent trend, the majority of birds in the breeding season were found in the east of the county, particularly at Rye Hbr. The earliest report of nesting came from Iford Brooks where three nests on an island were reported on 13 Mar, which increased to 22 by 22 Apr. At Rye Hbr 105 nests were counted on 18 Apr; 84 at Carters Pit and 21 in trees on Weston Island. The total number later increased to 150 and is the only report of a large breeding colony. There was no further report of the Rye Hbr situation where in 2006 the rapid growth of the breeding colony caused ecological problems.

In the second winter period high counts were 197 at Pagham Hbr on 17 Oct, 300 at Rye Hbr on 31 Oct, 164 at Chichester GP on 11 Nov and 267 at Worthing East on 26 Dec. On the inland reservoirs, there were 55 at Arlington on 30 Dec, 27 at Weir Wood on 26 Nov and 29 at Barcombe on 11 Nov.

There were few reports of nocturnal roosts. The largest count was from Chichester GP with 161 in the trees and bushes on 11 Nov after 150 on 12 Oct. Seventy-seven were seen flying (probably from the South Stoke roost) on both 26 Sep and 13 Oct. Smaller numbers were reported from roosts in the Adur Valley, the Knepp Estate, Steyning Levels, Beeding Brooks and Rodmell.

Cormorants were not confined to the coast and large reservoirs. There were widespread reports from most rivers, lakes and ponds. Warnham LNR held 21 on 9 Jan and 20 Feb. There were 23 at Knepp MP on 8 Nov and 14 at Burton MP on 10 Dec. [MJC]

Shag

Phalacrocorax aristotelis

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

The total number reported was approximately 112 which is considerably fewer than in recent years and reverses the trend of increasing numbers that had been seen since 2003/4.

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total	79	151	161	194	102	251	482	456	112

The monthly distribution of birds was similar to most years and is shown in the following table:

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total		22	10	11	11	5	-	-	1	11	9	22	10
Selsey Bill	All	14	4	6	6	-	-	-	-	11	3	5	4
	E	11	1	2	5	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	2
	W	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	1	2
	o/s	3	3	3	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	4	-
Other sites		8	6	5	5	5	-	-	1	0	6	17	6

There were 33 reports of 53 birds from Selsey Bill. The 15 records from Splash Point (Seaford) were usually of single birds but on 30 Nov there were three offshore. The ten records from Brighton Marina were of three birds on 13 Jan, four on 3 Feb and singletons in March, April, August and November. This year there were no reports from further east than Glyne Gap (Bexhill) and the only inland record was of a juvenile bird at Weir Wood Res on 27 Dec. [JPP]

Eurasian Bittern*Botaurus stellaris*

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

Sussex numbers vary with the severity of the winter and it will be no surprise that, with the relatively mild winter periods, few birds were seen in 2007. The 16 records all came from the east of the county and involved at least five birds.

In the first winter period a single bird was seen twice at Pett Level on 15 Jan. Single birds were seen at Rye Hbr on seven occasions between 26 Jan and 19 Feb with two on 2 Feb. No further birds were seen until 13 and 26 Oct when single birds were seen at Rye Hbr and on 21 Oct at Pett Level. [JPP]



Night Heron, Hastings, August 2007 (Ian Barnard)

Night Heron*Nycticorax nycticorax*

Rare vagrant.

A juvenile was present in Alexandra Park (Hastings) from 14 Aug to 4 Sep (MO). It is the fifth record since the beginning of 2000 and takes the county total to 33. It is the second record for this site, the first being in Jun/Jul 1996. It is the second to have been found in August, following hot on the heels of last year's at Weir Wood Res, although there is an old 'autumn' record (in 1895). Spring records are more usual, with most arrivals having been in April (7), May (12) or September (5). [RJF]

Cattle Egret*Bulbulcus ibis**Rare but increasing vagrant.*

2006: Three present near Chalder Fm (Pagham Hbr) from 6 Jan to 6 Apr (BFF, DIS *et al.*) have been accepted by BBRC and take the total for the year to 12.

2007: An adult was found at Pulborough Brooks on 26 May (GB, ASC *et al.*) with three adults on Lewes Brooks on 29 May (AP *et al.*). At the end of the year two mobile individuals were seen either at East Lavant or Chichester GP from 7 Dec to 24 Mar 2008 (MC *et al.*) while one was at Acton's Fm (Combe Haven) from 31 Dec to 20 Jan 2008 (SJM *et al.*). These records have been accepted by BBRC and move the county total on to 31. All have been seen between December and May. [RJF]

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	119	99	156	55	59	76	123	168	397	245	146	88
Chichester Hbr	53	27	85	25	36	54	49	79	264	156	80	26
Pagham Hbr	41	21	15	6	11	14	51	53	55	36	14	3
Chichester GP	6	3	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	6	8	4	9
Arun Valley	0	3	11	6	2	0	6	0	0	0	0	0
Lewes Brooks	2	13	9	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	3	0	0
Cuckmere Haven	1	16	17	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	26	16	9	7
Pevensey Levels	1	2	5	0	4	0	3	3	0	2	3	12
Rye Bay	7	5	2	2	2	4	8	18	13	15	14	20



*Little Egret (juvenile), Pagham Harbour,
September 2007 (Dorian Mason)*

The 1155 records from 238 sites suggest that the steady expansion of the Sussex population continues as is reflected in the approximate monthly maximum totals in the table below. Notable reports in the early part of the year other than in the WeBS counts were 49 at Halsey's Fm (Pagham) on 30 Jan and 57 leaving the roost at Rye Hbr on 5 Feb.

Breeding was confirmed at four sites (the same number as in 2006). There were at least 30 nests (compared to 17 in 2006) but there was no record of the numbers fledging. At Site A, there was a minimum of 12 nests (many with young). There were 15 nests at Site B, three at Site D and three

at Site F. There was no indication of breeding at two previously used locations (Sites C and E) but birds were seen at two new sites during the late spring and summer with no confirmation that breeding took place. Late summer numbers began to increase in August with 45 in the lower

Cuckmere Valley on the 2nd, 76 at Halsey's Fm on the 10th and 44 at the Rye Hbr roost on the 24th. There was a spectacular WeBS count of 264 birds in Chichester Hbr on 16 Sep. In the last months of the year there were notable counts of 43 at the roost by Littlehampton GC and at the Rye Hbr roost where there were 45 on 12 Nov and 47 on 30 Dec.

	Total	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2006	4715	257	207	161	214	144	248	438	718	996	754	431	291
2007	5453	336	297	316	215	219	172	379	722	1103	865	439	360

Little Egrets were seen occasionally during seawatches with a maximum of 5S at Selsey Bill on 26 Apr. It is also of interest that there were 21 sightings of Little Egret from four of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme. [JPP]

Great White Egret

Ardea alba

Rare vagrant.

2006: The bird observed in the Beachy Head area in September was seen on the 11th under the Seven Sisters Cliffs feeding in shoreline pools before flying off east (MEC, AJC).

2007: Two flew north over Pilsley on 28 Sep and were quickly relocated on Thorney Deeps where one remained to 30 Sep and the other to 6 Oct (CBC *et al.*). During this time they used the Little Egret roost at Little Deep. They take the county total to 22, although only four were recorded before 2000. This is the second record for Thorney; the first was also the first county record on 15 Jun 1985, while two have been seen together once before, at Coldwaltham Brooks on 29 Sep 2002. The species has been recorded in the county in every month except for May and December. September is currently the best month with seven records. [RJF]

Grey Heron

Ardea cinerea

Fairly common resident.

The monthly WeBS counts at the principal sites were as given in the table below. The January count at Rye Hbr was of 20 birds roosting together in one small area.

During the breeding season 233 nests were counted at 26 sites (253 nests in 2006). Counts for individual heronries, listed from west to east, were as follows:

Westbourne 1; Forest Mere 2; Fishbourne 12; Paghaw Owl Copse 11; Church Norton 4; Flansham 13; Warningcamp 1; Parham 18; Angmering 1; Knepp 9; Warnham LNR 10; Henfield 15; Ardingly 12; Weir Wood Res 15-27; Rodmell 3; Firle 7; Charleston 3+; Hadlow Down 10; Eridge 14; Hampden Park, Eastbourne 2; Glynleigh 22; Wartling, Horsebridge Road 8; Bewl Water 0; Burwash 9; Pebsham 2; Winchelsea 6; Leasam 23.

The single nest at Angmering is a new site. At Weir Wood Res 27 nests were visible but only 15 were proved to be occupied. There was no full count at Charleston. The nests found at Bewl Water in 2006 were not used this year.

During the rest of the year single birds and small groups were seen feeding or loafing in suitable habitat throughout the county. There were 14 on the Deeps at Thorney Island on 12 Sept. [ABW]

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	99	111	115	51	35	50	78	86	152	117	145	90
Chichester Hbr	14	12	8	5	3	10	9	11	44	26	14	8
Pagham Hbr	8	10	12	9	7	3	8	11	15	5	14	7
Chichester GP	8	6	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	10	10	12	6
Arun Valley	12	11	16	13	10	17	24	13	14	9	6	10
Knepp MP	-	1	6	5	nc	3	-	1	3	1	6	-
Ardingly Res	4	nc	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	6	6	4
Weir Wood Res	2	14	21	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Iford Brooks	2	13	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	3	6	3
Cuckmere Haven	-	3	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	3	7	8
Pevensey Levels	12	34	33	3	4	4	7	6	9	7	4	5
Bewl Water	10	4	4	nc	nc	nc	9	23	14	8	13	9
Darwell Res	-	1	-	1	1	1	3	3	1	2	7	5
Rye Bay	22	10	4	9	11	5	10	10	15	16	14	12

White Stork

Ciconia ciconia

Rare vagrant, mainly in spring.

One flying southeast over Littlehampton Road (Worthing) at 18.10 BST on 25 Mar (PJB) matches the earliest county record. Sixteen of those recorded since the beginning of 2000 are considered to have been of wild origin while a further five were most likely to have been escapes (due to one or more reasons such as not conforming to established patterns of occurrence, excessively tame behaviour, uneven feather damage or plumage anomalies). Recent records have been in March (3), April (3), May (5), June (2), July and August (2). [RJF]

Glossy Ibis

Plegadis falcinellus

Rare vagrant.

One was seen at Pagham Hbr on 30 Apr and 1 May (IL, SR *et al.*) with presumably the same at Pett Level on 3 May (PJo *et al.*). It has been accepted by *BBRC*. At Pagham it was first seen briefly on Sidlesham Ferry before relocating to the Breech Pool where it was widely appreciated before moving on the following morning. Its stay at Pett Level was even briefer, being chased off by Avocets and Black-headed Gulls. It was part of an impressive national influx involving at least 28 individuals from 20 Apr when a flock of 17 arrived in Gloucestershire via Cornwall (*British Birds* 101:532-4). It was the first to be seen in the county since 1995, when one was present at Rye Hbr from 24-27 Oct, and the first widely available since two at Pett Pools on 25-27 Apr 1987 and one that roosted on successive evenings at Cooden Beach from 5-11 Nov 1988. Only seven have been recorded in the county since 1965, when one was last seen at Pagham Hbr, although there were a number of records during 1902-09 including a flock of 12 at Fishbourne in September 1908. [RJF]

Spoonbill*Platalea leucorodia*

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

The monthly maximum counts are shown in the table below:

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
1	3	6	-	6	1	1	4

Records in the county are normally of birds seen in wetlands between March and November but this year the first record was a singleton flying over Crawley on 28 Mar. The next sightings were of two over Scotney Court GP on 15 Apr followed by a singleton at nearby Pett Pools from the 23rd to the 29th, which was probably the bird seen at Pett Level on the 25th. In May, a singleton was at Thorney Deepes on the 8th, two were at Sidlesham Ferry on the 19th, singletons were at Pagham Hbr and Cuckmere Haven on the 22nd and there were two at Pett Level on the 24th.

In July, there were three in Chichester Hbr on the 5th and then a second summer bird, which was there on the 12th and 13th, was joined by an adult bird on the 15th before both flew off west on the 16th. Further singletons were at Thorney Island on the 13th, Cuckmere Haven on the 14th, Pagham Hbr on 22 Aug and Thorney Deepes/Island on 2 Sep. The final records of the year were of three (an adult and two immatures) in Pagham Hbr on 3 Oct, an immature bird there on the 5th (which may have been one from the 3rd) and another singleton on the 19th. [JPP]

Honey-buzzard*Pernis apivorus*

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

2006: Two juvenile birds, one dark phase and one pale phase, were seen over Hollingbury Camp on 24 Sep (ADW, IJW).

2007: The group that monitors Honey-buzzards in the southeast provided the records for all known breeding pairs. Four pairs were successful with each pair raising two young. At one of the nesting locations a second male was recorded throughout the breeding season and a second female was also occasionally seen, thus raising the possibility of a second pair in that general area. At another well-watched locality, the behaviour of two birds seen together on 3 Jun was strongly suggestive of pairing (DIS). At the same locality an adult male provided extended views on 31 Jul (BFF, DIS), although this bird was probably on passage. There is no shortage of suitable habitat in the county and doubtless there are many more pairs which have yet to be found.

The only other record of a bird on passage was on 10 May when there was an un-sexed bird at Cooksbridge, flying low and heading west (SHL).

Remarkably, there were no records for autumn passage although it should be noted that no records were received from the usually productive sites of the Beachy Head and Hollingbury/Brighton Downs areas where no doubt observations were actually made. Although this species is normally recorded regularly, especially in the autumn, the number of records submitted is disappointingly low and observers are reminded that this is a species for which descriptions are required. [MEK]

Red Kite*Milvus milvus*

Very scarce breeding resident (first bred 2004) and scarce visitor; increasing. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

In the study area in the west of the county (see pages 233-240) the regular pair bred for the fourth consecutive year, raising a single youngster. It was fitted with radio and wing tags, with yellow on the left wing and purple on the right, both labelled with the letter 'G'. There was probably a second breeding pair in the area; throughout the summer months a yellow/yellow tagged bird was often seen and this bird was most probably Sussex 2004 Y, the male of the failed 2006 breeding pair. Although a second nest was not located, the regular roosting wood for Sussex 2004 Y and its mate was found in the early autumn and for several months a juvenile (with a distinctive notch in the right outer primaries) shared this roost.

There was an approximate annual total of 48 different birds recorded within the study area (MEK, CBC). All eight Sussex tagged Red Kites were seen, ten other tagged birds, a total of fifteen adults and at least eighteen different untagged juveniles/2nd-calendar-year birds. Of the ten wing-tagged birds that visited the area, seven were from Southern England and all were either juveniles or in their 2nd calendar year. Otherwise, the tagged birds were white '62'/orange (East Midlands, 2005) on 13 Jan, blue 'R'/purple (Black Isle, Scotland, 2007) on 15 Oct and white/purple (East Midlands 2007) on 16 Dec. The Scottish juvenile kite was 778 km away from its natal area, having been tagged at Culbokie on 17 Jun. This was the first Black Isle bird to be recorded in Sussex.



Red Kite, March 2007 (Ian Barnard)

Red Kites may be seen anywhere in the county and, away from the West Sussex study area, there were records from 40 different localities, involving over 70 different birds. As in 2006 there was a west/east bias with just one third of the records away from the study area coming from the east of the county.

The monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Study area	12	10	13	15-16	12	6	3	4	6	13	18	13
Elsewhere	0	2	9	22	18	9	0	5	3	3	1	0

During the first three months of the year there were 11 records of single birds from various localities across Sussex. The exceptional weather in April presumably encouraged dispersal of young birds from the Chilterns population and some 22 birds were seen throughout the county. They were all singletons except for two at Cissbury Ring on the 16th. In May there were 17 records, which were all single birds except for two at Arlington on the 22nd. In contrast to last year, June was a quiet month with reports from just four localities but there was an unusual record of three birds circling over Denne Hill (Horsham) on the 13th.

The second half of the year was very quiet with no records at all in July and December and only 12 records between August and November.

In the study area the numbers peaked in November when a minimum of 18 different birds were recorded. They included the regular breeding pair, Sussex 'Y' and its mate, Sussex B1, B2, B3, D and G, two non-tagged adults, a Black Isle juvenile, an East Midlands juvenile, two Southern England juveniles and three other non-tagged juveniles. [MEK/CBC]

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 85 individuals seen during the year at about 21 broad locations covering 52 1-km squares. The monthly count of birds at each broad site is estimated as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	11	7	6	11	10	5	4	14	14	14	11	7
Chichester Hbr	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
Selsey Bill	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	5	-	-
Pagham Hbr	1	1	1	2	-	-	-	4	3	2	2	1
Arun Valley	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	2	-
Beachy Head	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	3	1	-	-
Pett Level	4	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	4	1
Rye Hbr	2	2	1	2	3	2	1	2	2	1	2	2
Other	3	1	-	2	4	1	1	4	-	1	1	3

The general pattern of sightings was similar to 2006 with the usual migration peaks in April-May and again in August–October. There were no confirmed breeding reports although birds were seen in suitable habitat during the spring and summer.

Four roosted in a reedbed at Pett Level on 23 Jan. On the coast in spring, singles flew north at Beachy Head on 23 Apr and at Selsey Bill on 28 Apr. In the autumn, three at Beachy Head on 9 Sep and three at fields west of Selsey on 7 Oct were of particular note. [SHL]

Hen Harrier*Circus cyaneus*

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

The number of records received (181) was up by 30% compared with the 139 for 2006 and as usual referred to a small number of localities. However, the monthly minimum county total for this year was lower, 46 over 10 months, compared with 62 over 9 months for 2006, suggesting a further decline in the number of birds present during the year. This can be seen by comparing the following table with that for 2006 (*SxBR* 59:67).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	7	4	3	3	2	3	2	6	7	9
Chichester & Pagham Hbrs	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1
W Sussex Downs	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
W Sussex Commons	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Arun Valley	2	1	1	1	-	-	1	1	2	1
E Sussex Downs	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	1
Ouse Valley	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1
Ashdown Forest	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Pevensy Levels	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Bay	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-
Other sites	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2

As usual, the highest total for the first half of the year occurred in January although it was lower than in previous years. Two 'ringtails' were seen hunting regularly in the Amberley area and on Ashdown Forest a male and female were regularly observed going in to the usual roost and leaving it just before sunrise. With the decline in numbers as birds dispersed to breeding grounds, only three birds were seen in April and the last spring records were in the east of the county at Earls Down (Dallington) on 7 May and Rye Hbr on 12 May.

The first autumn records were of a 'ringtail' at Pea Down (East Dean) on 19 Aug followed by others at fields west of Selsey on the 21st, Sidlesham Ferry on the 26th and Pett Level on the 28th. There were five September records of singletons at: Pagham Hbr on the 1st and the 30th, Chichester Hbr on the 11th and the 28th, and Amberley on the 17th. Birds continued to arrive during the last three months of the year and occupied the usual winter roosts in the Arun Valley and on Ashdown Forest.

There were no records for the West Sussex Commons or the Pevensy Levels which in years past have been important areas for both hunting birds and as roosts. [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 was just one record accepted this year. A male with first-adult plumage was seen on 20 Apr at Weir Wood Res as it flew over the dam and headed off northeast (NAD). Two other records, possibly of the same bird, in the east of the county in June, are still being assessed by the SOSRC. [PJE]

Sparrowhawk*Accipiter nisus*

Common resident and passage migrant.

As in previous years, records were received from across the whole of the county with the majority relating to single birds. High counts in the first half of the year were six at Barcombe on 5 Apr and five at Warnham LNR on 7 Apr. One was seen sparring with a Peregrine at Barcombe Cross on 8 Apr. There were no spring records of likely migrants coming in off the sea.

The earliest report of probable breeding was a male displaying at Warnham LNR on 3 Mar and another male was displaying at Southwater CP on 17 Mar. Breeding was confirmed at 11 sites by 12 pairs, a notable increase on the previous year when breeding was confirmed at only four sites. Four juveniles were seen together at Myrtle Grove Fm (Clapham) and three at Scobells Fm (Barcombe). Breeding was considered probable at a further 18 sites. A total of 17 individuals were counted in 15 of the 123 BBS 1-km squares surveyed.

In the latter half of the year no actual sightings of movements out to sea were reported but three stayed at Angmering from 5-20 Aug. Four were seen at Selsey West Fields on 28 Aug and five at Beachy Head on 9 Sep. On 19 Sep a dead male was found with head and body picked clean, probably by a Peregrine, at Constantia Manor (Isfield).

Prey species recorded were: Feral Pigeon, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Pied Wagtail, Fieldfare, Blackbird, Starling, House Sparrow, Greenfinch, Great Tit, Blue Tit and mouse. [MJC]

Common Buzzard*Buteo buteo*

Fairly common and increasing resident and passage migrant.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	129	145	240	301	176	141	112	190	214	169	141	87
No. of sites	56	56	93	141	80	78	65	74	81	76	69	49

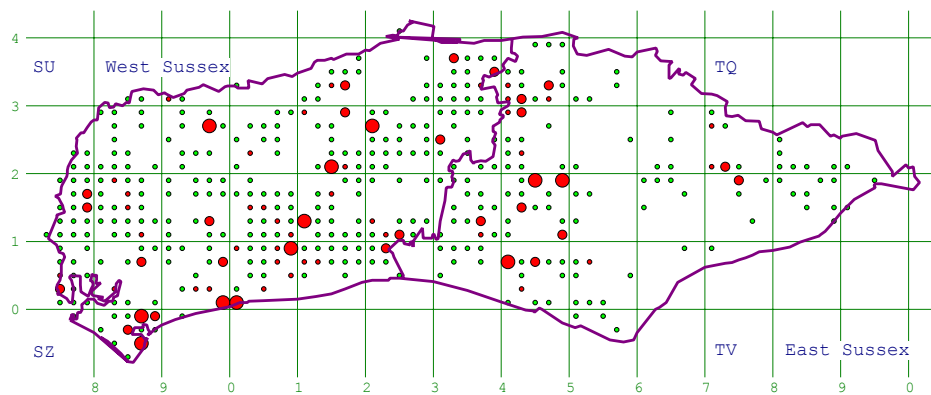
No attempt has been made to update last year's estimate of 'approaching 250 pairs' in the county. From the records received it was possible to identify only 32 confirmed or probably breeding pairs and an estimate of 50-55 pairs possibly breeding. There were virtually no details of breeding success.

So far as its distribution in the county and its continuing spread eastwards is concerned, the picture is a bit clearer. The map below (which includes migrants but excludes Atlas records) shows the distribution of Buzzards at a tetrad level across the county.

By counting the number of tetrads in which the species was recorded in West and East Sussex separately, it is apparent not only that the species is more common in the west but also that there has been an increase from 2006 to 2007 in the number of tetrads in which birds were recorded in the east. Although this might indicate that the species is spreading eastwards, it is possible that there has been less observer coverage in the east which, in the past, has failed to pick up the effect on the East Sussex population of the reported recent rapid increase in the Kent population (P. Everitt *pers. comm.*).

With the continuing spread of the species, there are more reports of multiple sightings. In 2007 these represented 44% of all records received, while counts of five or more represent almost 10% of the total. During January, the largest count was recorded at the favoured site of West

Dean where 12 were observed on 4 Jan while there were eight at Stedham on the 9th and counts of six were made at three sites, five at three and four at three more. West Dean again featured in February's highest counts with 20 on the 15th while there were nine at Pulborough Brooks on the 3rd, six at Paddock Place (Hurst) on the 4th and five at Barcombe Res and Plashett Park (Isfield) on the 25th. The highest count of the year was at West Dean where there were no fewer than 26 on 10 Mar, making the 12 at Walderton on the 9th and ten at Sidlesham Ferry Pool on the 7th seem small by comparison. Eight seen at Isfield on the 28th involved the two resident pairs which flew up to join and see off four interlopers while seven flushed from a hawthorn thicket at Truleigh Hill on the 26th were considered to be possible migrants. High counts in April did not exceed ten, presumably as migrants had moved on and most adult birds had settled into breeding territories.



During the BBS, birds were recorded in 21 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed (with a maximum of five) and birds were recorded at 23 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

In the latter half of the year there were fewer large counts than in the first half of the year. The first double-figure counts occurred in September when 14 were noted at Amberley Mount on the 13th (presumably involving those which bred in the area along the Downs escarpment), 12 at Barcombe Res on the 2nd, 11 at Sompting Downs on the 5th and ten at Truleigh Hill on the 18th. In the second winter period, the highest count at West Dean was seven on 6 Nov. On the 23rd nine were seen at Kithurst Hill (Storrington), a relatively short way eastwards along the escarpment from Amberley Mount, and the only double-figure count of the period was ten at Stansted Park on 29 Dec. [JAH]

Osprey

Pandion haliaetus

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

Approximately 62 birds were seen during the year at 27 different locations across the county. This is eight birds more than in 2006 when there were fewer records in the autumn. The sightings are summarised in the table below.

Although there was one record from Arlington Res and two from Bewl Water in the spring, there were surprisingly none at either site in the autumn. A fifth of the birds were seen at inland sites this year.

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Monthly total	3	10	11	4	2	17	18	6
Chichester Hbr	-	1	4	3	2	4	4	1
Pagham Hbr	1	3	1	-	-	1	1	2
Warnham LNR	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-
Weir Wood Res	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	1
Bewl Water	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pett Level	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1
Rye Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-
Other	1	3	5	1	-	8	8	1

The first birds of spring were singletons at Pulborough Brooks on 24 Mar, Pagham Hbr on the 27th and Bewl Water on the 29th. The average arrival date during the previous 10 years has been 25 Mar. One arrived in off the sea at Selsey Bill on 24 Apr. There were no records between 20 Jun and 28 Jul. Birds were reported at Pilsey Sands on both of these dates.

Chichester Hbr is confirmed as the best place in Sussex to see this species with almost daily sightings of up to four between 28 Jul and 18 Oct. One flew south out to sea at Selsey Bill on 16 Sep. The last of the year was at Thorney Island on 18 Oct, seven days earlier than the average for the previous ten years. [SHL]



Common Kestrel, Newhaven Tide Mills, April 2007 (Les Bird)

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	63	54	87	131	97	137	132	125	140	119	118	92
No. of sites	51	47	72	110	86	104	90	82	99	93	80	77

The species was noted in 364 1-km squares during the year (i.e. 9.0% of the 4057 1-km squares in the county) indicating that it is fairly common and widespread. Birds were also recorded at 56 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

The only reports from seawatching sites of possible spring migration were 1N at Selsey Bill on 14 Apr, 1W at Splash Point (Seaford) on the 13th and 1N there on the 22nd and 1N there on 1 May. Breeding was confirmed in 32 1-km squares by at least 36 pairs. Eighteen nests produced not less than 58 young at a rate of 3.22 per nest. There were 17 nests in owl boxes, five in other nest boxes and two in trees. Breeding was probable at 11 further sites and birds were present in suitable habitat in a further 15 sites. During the BBS, birds were recorded in 35 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed. There were no records of prey species taken. [JAH]

Merlin*Falco columbarius*

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

A very approximate total of 81 (compared to 80 in 2006) was recorded from 32 broad locations during the year covering 76 1-km squares. Only eight definite males were reported. The monthly data are summarised as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	12	9	3	6	2	-	-	3	16	18	12	8
Chichester Hbr	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	1	2	1
Selsey Peninsular	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	2	1	1
Pagham Hbr	-	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	2	1	1
Arun Valley	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1
Beachy Head	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	1	-
Rye Hbr	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Other	7	4	2	3	1	-	-	3	8	10	5	2

One which arrived off the sea at Ferring on 6 May and one seen at Selsey Bill on the same day were the penultimate sightings for the first half of the year but a bird seen by the R Adur near Shoreham Airport on 14 May was the last, four days earlier than in 2006.

The first autumn arrival was one at Cuckmere Haven on 4 Aug followed by others at The Midrips on the 28th and Pett Level on the 31st. One which killed a Collared Dove in mid-air at High Salvington (Worthing) on 19 Sep is particularly noteworthy. One flying around between Selsey Bill and the Mile Basket offshore on 1 Dec was also of note. [SHL]

Hobby*Falco subbuteo*

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

The species was recorded at 75 broad sites covering 158 1-km squares. Monthly site totals were as follows:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
No. sites	26	39	31	24	26	22	9

Interestingly, the monthly site totals between June and August were similar to those in 2006 (which were 31, 25 and 27 respectively).

The first birds of the year were singletons at Warnham LNR on 3 Apr, 10 Apr (two) and 12 Apr, followed by others at Ashdown Res and Seaford on 13 Apr. These dates are comparable with the 10-year average arrival date of 8 Apr. The main arrivals are summarised as follows:

Week	15-22 Apr	23-30 Apr	1-8 May	9-15 May
No. of sites	9	21	21	14
Daily max. number	3	6	6	1

Arrivals along the coast included two at Climping on 30 Apr and one there on 6 May. One was seen on the beach at Newhaven Tide Mills on 5 May. One came in over Splash Point (Seaford) chasing a Common Swift on 13 May. A total of 11 was logged at Selsey Bill in spring on nine dates between 22 Apr and 14 Jun with three on 28 Apr. At Worthing Beach, singles arrived on 28 Apr and 3, 6 and 19 May in the following winds (direction and force): NNE 4, NNE 4-5, WSW 3-4 and WSW 4, respectively.

At Pilsley Sands on 4 May, one was forced into the sea by a Peregrine before it was finished off by Great Black-backed Gulls. The largest day counts in the spring were six at Pulborough Brooks on both 30 Apr and 1 May.

There were more breeding reports this year than for 2006. Breeding was confirmed at four, probable at five and possible at 11 localities.

There was little out of the ordinary on the autumn passage with the maximum from one site being six at Rye Hbr on 7 Aug. After a singleton at Selham Fitzlea (Petworth) on 27 Oct, the last birds of the year were singletons at Warnham LNR on 2 and 3 Nov, the final date being 11 days later than the 10-year average departure date of 23 Oct. [SHL]

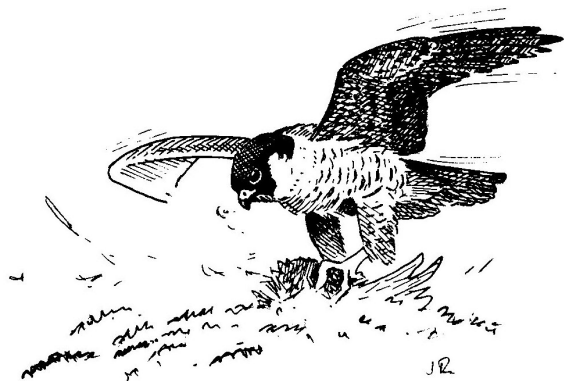
Peregrine*Falco peregrinus*

Scarce breeding resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species

The species continues to expand. This year 601 records were received, the highest number ever, and the widespread locations of these records indicate that Peregrines can be seen almost anywhere, particularly in the southern half of the county.

Sussex Peregrine Study (SPS) has again provided detailed data on all known breeding pairs. There were at least 20 breeding attempts, of which at least 15 were successful, producing a minimum of 41 fledged chicks. At two coastal sites incubation was observed but the eyries were not visited in the fledging period. At a site in the west of the county where young have successfully fledged on a regular basis in the past, eggs were laid and incubated but failed to

hatch. The pair that bred successfully in 2006 on the balcony of an apartment block in Brighton relocated to the roof of another building in the area. They laid three eggs in a gutter but these were washed out during heavy rain (CJRB). The inland pair that was observed on territory throughout 2006 was present but again did not breed; a pair was also resident all year at a new inland site but breeding was not proven. However, at a second new inland site, fledged chicks were observed late in the season suggesting that successful breeding had taken place there. This makes a possible county total of 22 pairs.



At the six successful coastal eyries where fledging was recorded, one pair fledged one young, one pair fledged two, three pairs fledged at least three and one pair fledged four, making a total of at least 16 chicks fledged. At the six successful inland sites one pair fledged one young, one pair fledged two, three pairs fledged three and one pair fledged four making a total of 16.

At the inland site where only one chick fledged, the pair has in the past been much more productive, successfully fledging 11 young between 2003 and 2006. However, this year the female had a new male and the Ravens which had bred for the first time on the same cliff as the Peregrines in 2006 took over the ledge that the Peregrines had used for the first time last year. As a result the Peregrines returned to the ledge they had used in previous years but this was only six metres from where the Ravens were breeding. Throughout the breeding periods of both pairs, the Peregrines attacked the Ravens on a daily basis whereas in 2006 when the Raven nest was 70 metres away there was virtually no interaction. One or both of these factors may have contributed to their low productivity this year.

The three nest box sites produced nine young. Webcams were operating at both Sussex Heights (Brighton) and Chichester Cathedral this year. At Sussex Heights the first egg was laid on 18 Mar and the clutch was completed with a fourth on the 25th. Two eggs hatched by 30 Apr, the chick in the third died during the hatching process and the fourth egg appeared to be infertile. When ringed on 22 May the chicks were confirmed as a male and female and the crushed remains of the egg in which the chick had died were removed for analysis. The chicks fledged on the 13th and 15th Jun. At Chichester Cathedral, the first egg was laid on 23 Mar and the clutch was completed with a fourth on the 30th. All four eggs hatched successfully between 1 and 3 May and one female and three male chicks were ringed on 23 May. Twice in one week chicks at Shoreham Power Station had to be rescued from the ground having fallen from the box prior to fledging. The first was returned to the roof by staff. The second, a female, was found on the ground early in the morning exhausted and very wet and SPS were called in to deal with her. She was removed briefly from the site, checked carefully for injuries, dried, fed, ringed and returned to the roof area later the same day. Three young fledged although it seems likely that one did not survive for long in the

post-fledging period. For the first time a total of nine chicks was also ringed at three other sites, two coastal (one male and two females at each site) and one inland (three females)

In addition to the usual prey items of Feral and Wood Pigeons, recorded prey included Moorhen, Sanderling, Dunlin, Kingfisher and Skylark. One bird attacked a Hobby and forced it into the sea where it was killed by Greater Black-backed Gulls (CBC). Two adults, probably males, were seen talon grappling on the ground; one ended up on top of the other and appeared to be pecking at it, when both were disturbed and flew off (SHL).

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 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: info@sussexperegrines.co.uk. [PJE]



Water Rail, Rye Harbour, April 2007 (Roger Charlwood)

Water Rail

Rallus aquaticus

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

The minimum monthly totals were as shown in the table below. It is highly likely that all the figures are under-recorded minima as the species is so secretive and difficult to record accurately. However, compared to previous years, the totals were a little lower in the first part of the year but similar in the last four months of the year. The only confirmed breeding was of a family party with three young that was seen in the east of the county on 10 Aug. Elsewhere during the breeding season, birds were present and calling in suitable habitat at at least six sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	40	33	27	15	8	6	14	13	20	44	50	45
Chichester Hbr	10	6	6	-	1	-	2	2	8	8	11	7
Pagham Hbr	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	12	4	5
Chichester GP	4	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
<i>Arundel WWT</i>	1	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	7
<i>Waltham Brooks</i>			1	3						1	3	
<i>Amberley Wild Brooks</i>		1									3	2
<i>Pulborough Brooks</i>	1	1	1				1			1	1	2
Arun Valley (All)	2	5	4	4			1			3	11	11
Warnham LNR	2	2	2	2	-	1	1	1	4	6	10	5
Doleham Valley	2	-	2	4	1	2	2	1	1	-	-	3
Pett Level	4	5	3	-	1	3	5	2	3	4	2	3
Rye Hbr	5	3	2	2	-	-	3	-	-	4	3	2
Other sites	10	6	8	3	5	-	-	6	-	5	9	9
No. of sites	20	18	16	5	3	5	8	7	7	20	24	23

Autumn numbers increased slowly. Three migrants were trapped at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) in the second half of October. The highest counts were eight at Thorney Island on 12 Oct, nine there on 10 Nov and ten at Warnham LNR on the 23rd. At least seven were wintering at Arundel WWT on 20 Dec. [JPP]

Spotted Crake

Porzana porzana

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

A juvenile was trapped at Pett Level on 6 Aug (RBRG). It is the 14th to be recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000, although there were none during 2002-03. Recent records have been in April, May, August (4), September (6) and October (2) with all but two in autumn trapped at Pett Level. [RJF]

Moorhen

Gallinula chloropus

Very common resident and winter visitor.

The monthly WeBS counts at the principal sites were as shown in the table below. In the first winter period aggregate numbers were lower than last year (1915 against 2469) but were similar in the later part of the year. Records came from 363 locations with notable counts of 41 at Wisborough Green on 14 Jan and 37 at Brooklands (Worthing) on 16 Jan.

Breeding was confirmed at 35 sites by at least 58 pairs, several of which bred more than once, and was probable at another two sites. The first records of breeding were a nest with young seen at Cuckfield on 31 Mar and two juveniles seen at Southwater CP on 1 Apr. During the BBS, 121 birds (maximum 12) were recorded in 50 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed compared to 118 out of 122 squares in 2006. [JPP]

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	699	681	535	256	217	170	380	375	713	771	899	873
Chichester Hbr	69	35	49	14	18	16	26	28	46	73	94	76
Pagham Hbr	23	43	23	27	19	17	27	34	28	18	27	42
Chichester GP	139	105	100	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	112	128	162	163
Arun Valley	184	161	127	98	102	68	136	89	160	195	190	160
Bewl Water	10	40	37	nc	nc	nc	70	80	100	60	80	80
Alexandra Park	34	30	22	nc	nc	nc	34	33	31	41	38	42
Rye Bay	76	101	65	72	46	42	51	82	76	101	89	146

Common Coot

Fulica atra

Fairly common resident and common winter visitor.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	3185	2254	1252	462	428	491	1212	1673	2600	2671	2701	3037
Chichester Hbr	220	122	72	15	19	14	15	22	69	79	114	102
Pagham Hbr	89	107	79	56	44	45	51	100	86	71	98	66
Chichester GP	486	418	277	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	716	826	720	1016
Arun Valley	145	129	148	130	112	38	124	161	152	146	122	106
Eastbourne Lakes	217	145	58	-	-	-	-	-	328	344	388	302
Bewl Water	233	212	150	nc	nc	nc	319	402	218	185	204	203
Pett Level	101	131	95	37	44	11	26	67	25	35	76	134
Rye Bay	733	566	260	135	148	222	401	679	654	635	550	710
Scotney Court GP	671	230	26	8	nc	56	121	106	156	241	227	286

The counts in 11 months of the year were lower than the 5-year average (see SxBR 2006: 76), the exception being May which was comparable. Records were received from 210 locations. High counts outside the WeBS counts were 115 at Brooklands (Worthing) on 7 Jan and 184 at Pett Level on 28 Jan.

Breeding was confirmed at 44 sites including for the first time Troutbeck (Eridge) where one pair hatched four young, two of which fledged. Nest building was seen at Southwater CP on 17 Mar and five chicks were seen at Falmer on 1 Apr. During the BBS, 39 birds were recorded in 16 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed compared with 59 in 17 of 122 squares in 2006. [JPP]

Common Crane

Grus grus

Rare vagrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

One was present intermittently at Pulborough Brooks from 31 Mar to 29 Apr with two there on at least 18-19 Apr (MO). One of these is likely to have been the individual that flew north over Harwood Road (Horsham) on 27 Apr (MH) while 2W over Hartfield on 10 May (AJW) and presumably the same two west (after some diversions) over Handcross on 16 May (RS) are perhaps best treated as different. Finally one flew over High & Over (Seaford) arriving from and departing to the west on 19 Jun (ARK). It seems most likely that these records involve five

individuals taking the county total since the beginning of 2000 to 17. In the 1990s there were only seven records, involving eight individuals. There are no county records for February, July or August. [RJF]



Common Crane, Pulborough, March 2007 (Ian Barnard)

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
County total	1304	2052	1279	730	741	570	736	923	609	1305	1550	1876
Chichester Hbr	680	1337	770	396	328	304	475	601	208	890	1376	1317
Pagham Hbr	25	190	160	71	159	125	126	213	138	181	18	332
Cuckmere Haven	144	2	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-
Rye Bay	434	506	313	257	252	134	129	107	254	188	129	208

Counts of the roosts at Pilsley Island and Rye Hbr were sometimes well in excess of the WeBS figures, especially in the latter part of the year. The monthly maxima there were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pilsley Island	468	nc	363	223	210	188	346	879	800	1100	1001	1023
Rye Hbr	434	506	402	257	252	134	129	155	300	360	500	208

In the first winter period, there were 150 at Pagham Hbr on 4 and 29 Jan in contrast to the low WeBS count for that month. As usual, smaller numbers wintered along the western beaches, the largest group being 52 at Climping throughout January. Elsewhere, the largest numbers outside the WeBS counts were 108 in a beach roost at Telscombe Cliffs (Portobello) on 26 Jan and 39 at Brighton Marina on the 13th. The BTO Non-Estuarine Coastal Waterbird Survey (NEWS) from 13-29 Jan found a total of 885 along 154 km of coastline not covered by WeBS. A frequent comment from counters on this survey was that there were high levels of human disturbance, including kite-surfing.

Birds were recorded in seawatching logs in most months, with the majority travelling west and a noticeable peak in late April and early May. The highest counts were 33 W at Climping on 17 May and 25 W at Splash Point (Seaford) on 24 Apr.

At least 33 pairs bred at five sites. At Rye Hbr there were 28 pairs where hatching success was good but few chicks survived to fledge. A pair was successful at Arundel WWT, much to the enjoyment of visitors, and a pair on the Lower Adur at Shoreham raised three young. At least one pair raised young at Pett Level, and two pairs had nests at Pilsey Island. Possible breeders were also reported from the Lower Cuckmere and a new site on Lewes Brooks. Reports from the Arun Valley near Warningcamp and Offham may have related to the Arundel birds. The only other inland record was of one flying south at Warnham on 25 April being attacked by a Common Buzzard. Out of the 123 BBS 1-km squares surveyed in the county, two birds were recorded in one square.

The autumn migration peak included 63 at Climping Beach on 31 Jul and a roost of 101 below the Seven Sisters on 4 Aug. In the second winter period, the maximum counts other than WeBS were 57 at Pagham Hbr on 10 Nov and 43 at Worthing Beach on 31 Oct. [CJRB]

Black-winged Stilt

Himantopus himantopus

Rare vagrant.

A presumed first-summer bird was seen at Pett Level on 4 Jun (PJo, JWi *et al.*). It has been accepted by *BBRC* and takes the county total to about 27. Six of these have been since the start of 2000 although there was only one record during the whole of the 1990s. All records have fallen between 23 Apr and 28 Sep with the exception of one which was apparently shot at Bosham in December 1855. Two have been seen previously in June although just over half the total (14) was recorded in May making mid-late spring the most likely time to encounter this species in the county. [RJF]

Avocet

Recurvirostra avosetta

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; very scarce and localised breeder. 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
41	24	72	114	84	86	29	45	28	24	34	34

In the first winter period there were the usual wintering groups in Pagham Hbr and in the sheltered Thorney Channel in Chichester Hbr. At the latter site, numbers were fairly stable,

peaking at 20 on 5 Jan. At Pagham Hbr, apart from an influx of 21 on 21 Jan the maximum was eight, continuing the decrease of the last few years at this site.

Only small numbers were noted passing east at the main seawatching sites in spring. Splash Point (Seaford) had by far the most records, with 19 E in an hour on 26 Mar and 23 E in April with a peak count of eight on 21 Apr. On the latter date 3 E were also noted at Selsey Bill and Worthing Beach and 5 E at Telscombe Cliffs (Portobello) where another 5 E were seen on 2 May. Single birds also called in at the Adur estuary on two dates in March, and at Arlington Res on 24 Apr. There were three at Newhaven Tide Mills on 13 Apr and four in the Lower Cuckmere on the 23rd.

The breeding population in the east of the county doubled for the second year running, with a total of about 100 adults present during April and May at three main sites. However, few details of the number of pairs and breeding success were received this year. A pair was present from May to August at a site in the west of the county but did not breed.

There were up to six at Pulborough Brooks through July and August, and single birds visited Scotney Court GP on 2 Sep and Newhaven Tide Mills on 23 Sep.

In the second winter period, the maximum count in Chichester Hbr was 24 on 9 Dec, and the group in Pagham Hbr peaked at 10 on 4 Dec. [CJRB]

Stone-curlew

Burhinus oediconemus

A rare passage migrant. Formerly a scarce breeding summer visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

One was seen at Pulborough Brooks on 13 Apr (JD *et al.*) while another was found in fields at the southern end of Thorney Island on 23 Apr (CBC, MAC, RJS). Eleven individuals have been recorded in the county since the start of 2000, in March (2), April (3), May, June (3), August and October. [RJF]

Little Ringed Plover

Charadrius dubius

Scarce breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
No of birds	5	48	35	24	30	13	16	1
No of sites	4	22	12	13	12	9	6	1

The first arrival was at Pulborough Brooks on 15 Mar, a typical date and locality, just three days earlier than the 10-year average date. It was followed by singletons at Rye Hbr, Weir Wood Res and Lewes Brooks during the remainder of the month. The April records suggest that birds were more numerous and widespread than usual.

This year the BTO coordinated a national breeding survey of this species. Key tetrads were surveyed from those occupied at the last survey in 1984 and subsequently, and random sample tetrads were also visited. However, the survey recorded a positive result at only one site in the county which might otherwise have been missed.

Breeding was confirmed at four sites (three coastal and one inland). There was a total of five pairs at two coastal sites in the east of the county, although fledging success was low, but a pair

raised three chicks at a new site in the west. At a fourth well-monitored site, a pair lost their first clutch but fledged two at the second attempt. Probable breeding was recorded at another four sites, and birds were seen in suitable habitat on more than one date at another eight, nearly all inland, including three not used in the recent past.

Dispersing/migrant birds called in at Cuckmere Haven, Arlington Res and Barcombe Res in June and July, and birds were still present on breeding sites throughout August and well into September. The last record of the year was of one at Pulborough Brooks on 5 Oct, 12 days later than the 10-year average date and the third October record this millennium. [CJRB]

Ringed Plover

Charadrius hiaticula

Scarce breeder and 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
County total	688	468	157	87	133	56	44	304	306	202	130	240
Chichester Hbr	365	178	49	15	28	14	11	23	91	109	33	101
Pagham Hbr	155	207	51	33	39	12	15	58	85	7	15	66
Climping	78	nc	3	11	11	8	11	148	-	-	-	-
Lower Adur Estuary	-	-	11	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	16	5
Newhaven	32	27	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	16	9	-	22	20
Langney	20	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	37	5	-	2
Rye Bay	35	46	36	24	51	19	7	58	68	80	44	46

The only site that exceeded the 1% national threshold level of 330 was Chichester Hbr in January. First winter period numbers which significantly exceeded WeBS counts included 122 at Rye Hbr on 9 Feb. Maximum counts at other sites with regular good wintering numbers included 56 at Brighton Marina on 13 Jan and 78 at Climping Beach on 21 Jan. The Non-Estuarine Coastal Waterbird Survey (NEWS) from 13-29 Jan (see pages 257-267) found 236 along 154 km of the shoreline not included in WeBS.

At seawatching sites, numbers were mostly in single figures, the highest day count being 35 W at Worthing Beach on 21 Aug, with the same number there on the 31st. Inland, there were five at Weir Wood Res on 30 Apr and up to 14 at Pulborough Brooks through April and May.

This year, the BTO undertook a national breeding survey of this species. Key tetrads where breeding had been recorded since the last survey in 1984 were surveyed and a sample of random tetrads was also visited, including inland ones. A total of 66 pairs bred in the county, and another seven pairs were regularly seen in suitable habitat. This was a return to more usual numbers after two poor years, but the BTO survey was solely responsible for a maximum of only six of these. Many of the surveyors commented that there was much suitable habitat, but human disturbance was too high for successful breeding. At least 39 pairs bred at Rye Hbr, although success was poor, and there were 14 pairs in Pagham Hbr (which raised at least 16 young) and seven pairs in the Chichester Hbr area. Shoreham and Lancing beaches both held two pairs, and there were single pairs at Bracklesham Bay, Selsey, Goring, Worthing, the Lower Adur, Brighton Marina, Newhaven Tide Mills and Cuckmere Haven. At the latter site and at Pilsley Island, pairs raised four young, and a pair at Thorney Island raised three. During the BBS three birds were recorded in only one of the 123 1-km squares surveyed.

During the migration peak in late August, there were 181 at Pilsley on the 16th and 148 at

Climping Beach on the 13th, rising to 277 on the 31st, with 158 on Worthing Beach on the same day. There were 95 on the Lower Adur on 22 Sep.

In the second winter period, monthly maxima which exceeded the WeBS count for that month were 172 at Pilsey Island on 21 Nov, 40 at Pagham Hbr on the 29th and 82 at Rye Hbr on 30 Dec. The highest counts from other areas were 164 at Worthing on 25 Nov, 133 at Camber Sands on the 29th and 80 at Widewater (Lancing) on 7 Dec. [CJRB]



Ringed Plover, Rye Harbour, April 2007 (Roger Charlwood)

Kentish Plover

Charadrius alexandrinus

Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant; formerly bred.

A dull male was seen briefly, and photographed, on the R Adur opposite Shoreham Airport on 13 May (CWM), a bright male was found in Pagham Hbr on 20 May (CWM) and an adult female roosted at Pilsey Sands on 7 Aug (CBC). Eight of the 19 recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000 have been at Pilsey and four at Pagham. Records during this period have been in April (9), May (7), August (2) and September. [RJF]

Dotterel

Charadrius morinellus

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

One was seen and photographed at Flat Beach (Rye Hbr) on 8 and 9 Oct. [CWM]

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
County total	1612	3151	407	118	-	-	2	34	154	2830	1832	3347
Chichester Hbr	824	500	289	-	-	-	-	-	90	500	1572	1490
Pagham Hbr	743	2651	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	28	70	456
Rye Bay	30	-	118	117	-	-	1	29	64	1101	152	900
Scotney Court GP	15	-	-	-	nc	-	1	5	-	1200	20	500

The year began with a high count of 2000 at Thorney Island on 1 Jan, but numbers in the Chichester Hbr area then fell steeply. Conversely at Pagham Hbr, numbers rose rapidly to 1000 on 15 Jan, with the same number there on 1 Feb. Numbers at Pagham Hbr built up further to 1800 on 17 Feb and then to a site record of 2651 on the following day (the only count to pass the 1% national threshold level of 2500 this year), before dropping back to more usual levels. At Rye Hbr, there were no counts exceeding 100 until late March, the early winter maximum being 200 on the 24th. The Non-Estuarine Coastal Waterbird Survey (NEWS) from 13-29 Jan (see pages 257-267) found a total of 58 in 154 km of the coastline not included in WeBS.

Numbers declined gradually through April but there were five (four in summer plumage) at Pagham Hbr on 1 May with the last record being a summer plumaged bird there on 8 May. Seawatchers at Worthing Beach recorded birds on only five dates in February, April and December, all in single figures except for 30 W on 28 Dec.

The first returning bird was at Rye Hbr on 15 Jul, but there were no further records until one at Pagham Hbr on the 28th, and then none until 5 Aug. In August and September, there were several sightings of single birds in more unusual locations, including Climping Beach, Brighton Wild Park, Rottingdean pitch-and-putt course, Cuckmere Haven and Beachy Head and there were two at Newhaven Tide Mills on 8 Oct. In the second winter period, there were more at Pagham Hbr than the WeBS table suggests, with monthly maxima of 500 on 5 Oct, 700 on 29 Nov and 600 on 4 Dec. At Rye Hbr, numbers built up to two distinct peaks of 1100 on 7 Oct and the same number on 3 Dec.

Inland, there were regular counts of up to six at Pulborough Brooks at both ends of the year, with influxes of 20 on 8 Jan, 73 on 24 Feb and 25 high overhead on 21 Aug. At Amberley Wild Brooks, 40 on 24 Feb probably involved the Pulborough birds and there were 30 there on 25 Nov. Up to five were seen in the Steyning Round Hill area from 11 Sep to 22 Oct. [CJRB]

Grey Plover*Pluvialis squatarola*

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

The WeBS counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1794	1812	1354	122	70	16	24	150	600	1102	2147	1783
Chichester Hbr	1162	879	1041	23	50	12	18	71	460	723	1353	750
Pagham Hbr	551	902	297	91	18	4	6	79	139	361	724	916

All the winter counts in Chichester Hbr comfortably passed the 1% national threshold level of 530, as did numbers at Pagham Hbr in the main winter months. In addition to the WeBS counts, small wintering groups were regular along the western beaches and at Rye Hbr. The BTO Non-Estuarine Coastal Waterbird Survey (NEWS) from 13-19 Jan found a total of 268 along 154 km of the coastline not covered by WeBS, the largest groups being 46 at Ferring, 130 at Worthing, 22 at the Lower Adur and 48 at Rye Hbr. In addition, regular counts at Climping Beach found a maximum of 33 on 28 Feb.

On 25 Feb, there was a large movement of 350 W off Selsey Bill in only 2 hr, but otherwise seawatching logs revealed very low numbers, as shown below:

		Apr	May	Total	Hrs watched
Selsey Bill	E	25	1	26	305
	W	-	-	-	
Climping Beach	E	8	10	18	125
	W	-	5	5	
Worthing Beach	E	36	22	58	131
	W	1	-	1	
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	12	3	15	212
	W	-	-	-	

Four called in at Newhaven Tide Mills on 1 Apr and there were five at Cuckmere Haven on 4 May. The highest counts in June were in Pagham Hbr with 35 on the 3rd and 25 on the 28th and in July there were still 27 on the 5th. Counts at Pilsey Sands showed a migration influx of 500 on 24 Aug.

In the second winter period, there was a noticeable influx in November, when in addition to those in the WeBS table, there were 50 at Kingston Gorse on the 13th and 70 at Worthing Beach on the 24th. Regular counts at Rye Hbr also showed this influx, numbers building to a peak of 117 on the 26th. In December, 120 roosted at Worthing Beach on the 26th, and at Selsey Bill, a total of 170 were logged moving west, the highest count being 90 on the 7th.

The only inland record was of one at Pulborough Brooks on 3 May. [CJRB]

Northern Lapwing

Vanellus vanellus

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

The monthly WeBS counts for the principal sites were as shown in the table below.

Records for the first winter period included 33 counts of a thousand individuals or more. Of these, the highest were 4249 at Pagham Hbr on 21 Jan (increasing to 5177 on 18 Feb), 2541 at Pulborough Brooks on 18 Feb, 1549 in Chichester Hbr on 21 Jan, 1460 at Amberley Wild Brooks on 18 Feb, 1400 at Normans Bay on 15 Feb and 1100 at Shoreham Airport on 14 Jan.

Breeding was confirmed from a minimum of 14 different sites, which included at least 110 pairs, and was probable at a further 38 different sites spread across the county. At Thorney Deep six pairs fledged four young from two broods, at Bracklesham Bay eight pairs fledged eight young, there were five pairs at Manor Fm (West Dean), six young fledged at Constantia Manor (Isfield), 16 birds were displaying in fields west of Selsey on 5 Apr, 13 pairs nested at Pagham Hbr but there was no indication of breeding success, 21 pairs fledged 17 young at Pulborough Brooks,

five pairs fledged five young at Lewes Brooks, ten pairs nested at Pett Level but success was poor and 40 pairs nested at Rye Hbr where success was again poor. At a number of other sites there were no details of the numbers of pairs involved.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	12715	15910	483	283	214	434	1062	1488	862	2717	4261	9836
Chichester Hbr	1549	1471	48	30	38	104	82	164	226	622	994	1233
Pagham Hbr	4249	5177	141	51	22	13	15	146	20	262	443	1366
Arun Valley	1604	5505	99	75	53	131	68	42	14	127	217	2203
Lower Adur Estuary	1030	554	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	64	282	36	100
Glynde Brooks	-	-	44	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-
Pevensey Levels	1004	2250	132	21	52	3	6	6	-	230	438	368
Bewl Water	7	1	3	nc	nc	nc	93	130	38	70	255	165
Rye Bay	2658	1221	72	98	57	165	720	952	422	613	1456	4101
Scotney Court GP	400	300	-	12	nc	20	72	50	50	400	80	-

The first returning birds were noted on 29 May when there was an extraordinary gathering of 1000 on the lower R Adur. This was followed by 150 at Pett Level on 3 Jun but in the second winter period there were just 16 counts of a thousand birds or more. The first large gathering of 1000 was noted at Pulborough Brooks on 3 Nov. [ITB]

Red Knot

Calidris canutus

Fairly common 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	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1461	512	14	28	5	-	-	-	91	56	65	923
Chichester Hbr	1060	72	13	6	5	-	-	-	9	24	59	807
Pagham Hbr	401	440	-	20	-	-	-	-	69	17	6	100
Lower Adur Estuary	-	-	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-
Rye Bay	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	8	15	-	16

A total of 312 records was received with all records again being from coastal locations. Birds were noted in every month of the year with good numbers being recorded from the first winter period with notable counts of 1060 in Chichester Hbr on 21 Jan, 600 at Pilesey Sands on 11 Jan and 500 in Pagham Hbr on 3 Feb. The first offshore migrant was a singleton recorded at Splash Point (Seaford) on 14 Apr in a mixed flock of Grey Plover and Bar-tailed Godwit. The approximate monthly totals from the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

	Apr	May	Total
Total	1426	398	1824
Selsey Bill	14	-	14
Worthing Beach	10	2	12
Telscombe Cliffs (Portobello)	1344	271	1615
Splash Point (Seaford)	58	125	183

All recorded movements were of birds flying east. The peak occurred in April and the largest numbers were seen at Telscombe Cliffs with 675 on 29 Apr. The numbers seen at other seawatching sites were generally poor.

During the summer months a few birds were noted at various sites. Return passage got underway with 16 at Pilsey Sands on 17 Aug. Small movements were noted at various seawatching sites but involved birds moving both east and west. The first notable count in the second winter period was 500 at Pilsey Sands on 10 Nov. [ITB]

Sanderling

Calidris alba

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	429	478	137	7	141	2	2	4	-	103	30	213
Chichester Hbr	77	324	111	4	88	1	2	4	-	102	18	10
Climping	166	nc	21	3	6	1	-	-	-	-	5	26
Lower Adur Estuary	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	13
Rye Bay	180	147	5	-	47	-	-	-	-	-	7	164



Sanderling, Rye Harbour, April 2007 (Reg Bell)

		Apr	May	Jun
Selsey Bill	E	27	62	17
	W		16	6
Climping Beach	E	122	108	
	W	28	64	
Worthing Beach	E	79	73	8
	W	35	14	9
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	35	191	
	W			

All records were again from at or near the coast with birds being noted in every month of the year. Counts of 200 on Worthing Beach on 8 Jan with 300 there on 10 Jan and 150 on Camber Shore on 1 Jan were the most notable counts from the first winter period, with the count at Worthing Beach on 10 Jan exceeding the 1% national threshold number of 210.

The first offshore migrants were recorded at Worthing Beach with 35 W on 11 Apr. Counts at the principal seawatching sites were as shown in the table on the left.

Peak movement offshore was in May with the largest movements being seen off Climping Beach and Splash Point. A few stragglers remained during the summer and the best count came from Ferring Beach with 50 there on 3 Jun. The first real sign of returning birds was two at Pilsey Sands on 12 Jul where numbers increased to 282 by the 24th. The maximum counts in the later months at this favoured site were 204 on 19 Aug and on 31 Oct after which numbers dropped off to the year's

end. Local peak counts elsewhere were 110 at Worthing Beach on 21 Oct, 108 at Camber Sands on 21 Nov and 190 at Rye Hbr on the 26th. [ITB]

Little Stint

Calidris minuta

Scarce passage migrant. A few winter in most years.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	2	4	18	1	1
Chichester Hbr	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	3	-	-
Arun Valley	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Rye Bay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	11	-	1
Scotney Court GP	-	-	-	-	nc	-	-	-	-	3	-	-

The approximate minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	1	2	1	1	-	-	10	29	27	2	3

The records indicate that just a single bird wintered in the Chichester Hbr area in the early part of the year.

Only singletons were recorded in the spring and the first multiple sighting was not until 8 Aug when two were at Sidlesham Ferry, which were also the first birds of what was a poor autumn for this species. Birds were then noted in ones and twos from several sites with the higher counts being four at Pett Level on 12 Sep, five at Church Norton on 15 Sep and four at Sidlesham Ferry on 30 Sep. The Rye Hbr complex again had a good autumn with counts of 11 on 3 Oct, ten on 4 Oct, 13 on 5 Oct and 11 on the 7 Oct. Numbers at Rye Hbr then dropped off slowly with at least two birds remaining into the winter period.

Records for the second winter period were of a single bird at Chichester Hbr through to at least 23 Dec and one in the Rye Bay area which was joined by a second one on 30 Dec.

The only inland records were three on the dam at Bewl Water on 3 and 4 Oct (with one remaining until 6 Oct) and a singleton at Pulborough Brooks on 8 and 9 Oct. [ITB]

Temminck's Stint

Calidris temminckii

Scarce passage migrant.

A juvenile was present on Pulborough Brooks from 27 Aug to 1 Sep (GB *et al.*). Nineteen have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000, in April (1 on 28th), May (13, including groups of two and four), July (2), August and September (2). Only two of these records have been in the last three years. This is the first to be recorded any distance from the coast since one was seen at Arlington Res in May 1995. [RJF]

Pectoral Sandpiper*Calidris melanotos**Rare vagrant, mainly in autumn.*

A well-watched individual was at Pulborough Brooks during 12-18 Sep where it was also photographed distantly (MO). A very confiding and photogenic juvenile was present at Pagham Hbr from 28 Sep to 17 Oct (IL *et al.*). It favoured White's Creek but was also seen on the North Wall Breach Pool. These are the 70th and 71st to be recorded in the county respectively and the 13th and 14th since the start of 2000. More than half of the records have been in September (39) with the others in May (4), July (7), August (7), October (13) and early November. [RJF]



Pectoral Sandpiper, Pagham Harbour, October 2007 (Les Bird)

Curlew Sandpiper*Calidris ferruginea**Passage migrant, scarce in autumn and very scarce in spring; rare in winter.*

The approximate monthly county totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar.	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
-	2	-	-	3	3	3	11	56	2	-	-

The first sighting of the year was on the very early date of 15 Feb and involved two individuals at Church Norton. A slightly better spring than normal followed with singletons on 12 May at Bewl Water and at Pulborough Brooks, two at Sidlesham Ferry on the 13th which stayed for a few

days and three in Pagham Hbr on the 16th. The last sighting of the spring was of another singleton at Church Norton on the 17th.

Singletons, which may have been failed breeders, were in the Pett Level area between 8 and 10 Jun when they were joined by another, and in the Lower Cuckmere Valley also on the 10th. Another singleton was noted on 30 Jun at Thorney Deepes which could have been an early migrant. Autumn passage started with a singleton at Sidlesham Ferry on 29 Jul, the same date as the first autumn record in 2006. This then rose to three present the following day. The highest count was of 11 in Pagham Hbr on 7 Sep. Other good counts were eight at Sidlesham Ferry on 12 Sep, rising to a peak of nine on 15 Sep, and seven at Pett Level on 16 Sep. The last record of the year was of two individuals in Pagham Hbr on 29 Oct.



Curlew Sandpiper, Pett Level, September 2007 (Reg Bell)

Birds were recorded at just three inland locations. Singletons were at Bewl Water on 12 May (only the third site record), at Arlington Res on 7 Sep and at Weir Wood Res where there were five on 17 Sep and two on the 19th. [ITB]

Purple Sandpiper

Calidris maritima

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

The monthly WeBS counts cover only two of the regular wintering sites for this species so do not provide a true picture of the status in the county. For the record, the counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	10	8	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	15
Pagham Hbr	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Newhaven	6	-	9	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	11	14
Glyne Gap	4	6	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	1	1
Pett Level	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Rye Bay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-

The minimum monthly totals at the main sites were as shown in the table below. The total numbers were much lower than in recent years. The highest spring counts came from the traditional sites and included five at Brighton Marina in May and 11 at Newhaven in March. Other notable sightings in the first winter period were a singleton at Church Norton on several dates from 2 to 24 Jan and another singleton which roosted at the mouth of the eastern Rother from 24 to 26 Feb. The last sighting of the spring was of five at Brighton Marina on 13 May.

The first returning bird of the autumn was a singleton at Brighton Marina on 26 Aug. The peak count in the second winter period was 14 at Newhaven on 9 Dec. [ITB]

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Total	22	18	20	-	12	-	-	1	1	6	28	30
Shoreham	3	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	10
Brighton Marina	nc	nc	3	-	5	-	-	1	nc	3	6	5
Newhaven	9	6	11	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	12	14
Bexhill	4	6	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Other	6	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	7	-



Purple Sandpiper, Newhaven, November 2007 (Martin Casemore)

Dunlin

Calidris alpina

Very common passage migrant and winter visitor; scarce non-breeder in summer. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	13994	16044	1561	211	671	35	68	287	785	8064	7185	20417
Chichester Hbr	12283	14152	1259	99	391	8	30	102	401	7757	6623	18759
Pagham Hbr	1002	1375	252	49	208	-	22	133	186	237	492	1369
Cuckmere Haven	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	44	-	-	-
Rye Bay	302	300	47	54	21	-	12	33	149	69	64	278

As usual the vast majority were to be found in the Chichester Hbr complex in both winter periods. Numbers were well in excess of the 1% national threshold level of 5600 in five months of the year. The most notable count not shown in the WeBS table was 10,000 at Pilsley Sands on 20 Jan. In the east the largest counts came from Rye Hbr with 600 on 15 Feb and 700 on the 19th.

Spring passage was very poor and the monthly counts from the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

		Mar	Apr	May
Selsey Bill	E		40	9
	W	2	2	102
Climping Beach	E		9	15
	W			120
Worthing Beach	E		38	2
	W		3	73
Telscombe Cliffs (Portobello)	E		5	58
	W			1
Splash Point (Seaford)	E		19	28
	W			

In view of the well documented transfer of wintering birds from the western side of the British Isles to the east coast, one might wonder by what route birds seen flying west in spring were going to reach their northern breeding grounds, unless these were merely local movements.

Movements noted during the autumn period were also very light and were all westerly, as one might expect from birds returning from their breeding grounds in northern continental Europe. The only monthly total in treble figures was 142 W at Selsey Bill in November. Notable counts in the second winter period not shown in the WeBS table were 8000 at Pilsley Sands on 7 and 21 Nov and again on 8 Dec. In the east, the highest count was 430 at Rye Hbr on 28 Dec.

Birds were noted at only three inland sites during the year, mainly as ones and twos. At Bewl Water the highest of three counts was five on 12 May and there was an amazing peak count of 80 at Arlington Res on 12 Sep while at Pulborough Brooks (where birds were recorded in all months except June) the peak counts were seven on 5 and 18 Feb, 12 on 12 May and 12 again on 25 Nov. [ITB]

Ruff

Philomachus pugnax

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

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

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

Birds were recorded during the year at 18 broad sites but over 60% of the 136 records came

from the Arun Valley, predominantly Pulborough Brooks. Peak counts in the first winter period included six at Rye Hbr on 12 Mar and the same number at Pulborough Brooks on 13 Mar. Amberley Wild Brooks is normally a stronghold of this species but the only record was of a singleton on 14 and 16 Jan.

A record of note in the summer was of a single female in fields west of Selsey on 9 Jun.

The first returning bird was a singleton at Sidlesham Ferry on 14 Jul but the peak autumn count was nine at Rye Hbr on 24 Aug. The highest counts in the second winter period were from the Rye Bay area with six at Castle Water on 16 Dec and five at Pett Level on 30 Dec. [ITB]



Ruff, Pett Level, September 2007 (Reg Bell)

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	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	20	2	37	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	16	21
Chichester Hbr	18	1	37	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	16	21
Arun Valley	-	1	-	-	nc	nc	-	-	nc	nc	-	-
Henfield Brooks	2	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-

The minimum monthly totals were as given in the table below. In the first winter period, Thorney Deepes, as usual, held the majority of birds and the March count was only one less than the 2003 site and county record of 38. Away from the WeBS sites, there were reports of two birds

at East Head (Chichester Hbr) on several dates in January and February, and also two at Nook Meadows (Rye Hbr). Two were also reported at the new Bracklesham Bay reserve throughout most of March. Reports of single birds on one date only came from Pagham Hbr, Amberley Wild Brooks, Cuckmere Haven, Pevensey Levels, Combe Haven and Northpoint Pit, with the last record being at Pett Level on 27 Mar, a month earlier than the 10-year average date.

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	23	9	41		8	21	26
No. of sites	4	8	4		5	5	7

The first returning bird was at Thorney Deeps on 6 Oct, 16 days later than the 10-year average date. There were again several reports of up to three at East Head and nearby Snowhill Marsh in November and December, and there were also three at Nook Meadows on two dates. Single birds were flushed at Bracklesham Bay on two dates, and at Southbourne, Ferring Rife, Amberley Wild Brooks, Lewes Brooks, Pett Level and Doleham on single dates only. The year ended with a bird frequenting the margins of Widewater (Lancing) from 21-23 Dec, giving observers a rare opportunity to watch this species out in the open. [CJRB]



Jack Snipe, Widewater, December 2007 (Dorian Mason)

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 shown in the table below. The high numbers in the Lower Adur estuary in December 2006 continued into the current year, again producing the highest single site count of the year. Numbers at this site were maintained into

February with a count of 195 on the 18th. Other early winter numbers exceeding WeBS counts were 30 at Pulborough Brooks on 8 Jan, 34 at Pagham Hbr on 23 Jan and 63 at Rye Hbr on 20 Feb. The highest numbers at non-WeBS sites were 86 at Bracklesham Bay on 19 Mar and 85 at Combe Haven on 4 Feb, with other notable counts being 32 at Doleham on 25 Mar and 30 at Pevensey Levels on 15 Apr.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	586	292	241	42	7	-	5	12	61	213	332	304
Chichester Hbr	105	10	152	3	-	-	1	1	11	81	73	114
Pagham Hbr	14	19	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	6
Arun Valley	43	89	22	6	7	nc	3	2	37	46	148	146
Lower Adur Estuary	291	86	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	37	42	3
Henfield Brooks	20	10	13	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-
Glynde Brooks	13	20	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-
Eastbourne Lakes	44	-	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	2	-
Pevensey Levels	30	26	27	31	1	nc	1	-	3	14	34	24
Rye Bay	19	28	5	2	-	-	-	8	8	34	38	9

Records indicating breeding came from only three sites. In the Arun Valley, evening counts in late May found a maximum of 12 displaying birds at Amberley Wild Brooks and three at Pulborough Brooks. At Camp Hill (Ashdown Forest), display was seen on two dates in June.



Common Snipe, Pett Level, September 2007 (Reg Bell)

A count of 50 at Pett Level on 24 Aug was notable as was the 60 there on the 30th. In the second winter period, site counts exceeding WeBS were 41 at Pagham Hbr on 4 Dec, 30 at the Lower Adur on 8 Dec and 41 at Rye Hbr on 30 Dec. Movement was indicated by single birds at

Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 19 Oct, Hollingbury Camp on the 10 Dec and Devil's Dyke on 21 Dec. There were high counts of 85 at Lewes Brooks on 22 Dec following the raising of the water levels at the new reserve, 39 at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) on the 12th, and 26 at Iford Brooks on the 26th.

Interestingly, the BTO Garden Birdwatch scheme recorded single birds in two out of the 413 gardens participating in the scheme, these being at Dallington and Staplefield, both in the latter part of the year. [CJRB]

Woodcock

Scolopax rusticola

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

In the first winter period, birds were reported from 16 locations, all as ones or twos except for three at Ashcombe Bottom (Lewes) on 21 Jan. All sites were inland except for Pett Level, where there were two in February. The BTO Garden Birdwatch scheme recorded ten sightings from three out of the 413 gardens participating in the scheme, these being in Fletching, Balcombe and Nuthurst. Interestingly, two of the gardens accounted for eight of these records, and all but two were in the January to March period. There were very few records in March, and none of roding.

A total of 44 territories was recorded in the breeding season. The Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey found 16 pairs in nine 1-km squares in the west of the county, and the Ashdown Forest Bird Group counted 21 roding birds. There were three roding birds at Rackham Woods, and one each at East Dean, Eartham, Footlands Wood (Vinehall Street) and Darwell Res. A total of three birds was recorded in three out of the 123 1-km squares surveyed in the BBS, including one in an entirely suburban square in Portslade.

There were no records for August or September. In the second winter period, one or two birds were reported from 22 locations. Most of these were again inland, but two at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on 20 Oct, one at Hollingbury on 16 Nov and one at Shoreham Fort on the 19th indicated movement. In December, 15 were counted at Pett Level on the 26th and there were single birds at Newhaven and Rye Hbr. [CJRB]

Black-tailed Godwit

Limosa limosa

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce non-breeder in summer. 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
County total	947	572	588	163	15	6	107	243	611	360	836	1364
Chichester Hbr	183	2	555	151	-	-	43	174	518	329	775	264
Pagham Hbr	764	565	2	3	3	-	52	69	24	21	56	1100
Arun Valley	-	5	31	-	-	-	9	-	32	1	3	-
Rye Bay	-	-	-	9	12	6	3	-	35	9	2	-

Numbers exceeded the 1% national threshold level of 150 in eight months at Chichester Hbr and in three months at Pagham Hbr, and at both sites the international threshold level of 470 was

surpassed in three months of the year. In the first winter period the only count exceeding WeBS was 800 at Pagham Hbr on 2 Jan. The very low WeBS counts at Chichester Hbr in February and conversely at Pagham Hbr in March were confirmed by other counts during the month, and illustrate the mobility of this species. In Chichester Hbr, the main wintering flocks were to be found in the Bosham and Fishbourne Channels, with a maximum count of 180 at the latter site on 13 Mar. The only records from the east of the county were two at Camber Sands on 14 Jan and seven at Rye Hbr on 19 Feb.

Inland, higher numbers than usual were recorded in the Arun Valley. At Pulborough Brooks (where birds were present in every month except May), there were 19 on 21 Jan, rising to 40 on the 30th. On the following day 75 flew in from the south, and there was another influx of 31 on 18-19 Mar. At Amberley Wild Brooks there were 50 on 16 Jan, rising to 69 on the 28th.

Almost no spring offshore passage was noted, and there were only single figures in Pagham Hbr from March to mid-July. Regular autumn counts at Sidlesham Ferry began with one on 4 Jul, building to 65 on the 31st and tailing off gradually from late August to a final eight on 30 Sep. Similar counts at Thorney Deeps showed an influx of 14 on 30 Jun, a peak of 153 on 15 Aug, a low in late September and another peak of 150 on 9 Nov. Pulborough Brooks hosted small groups of 14 on 18 Jul and 15 on 16 Sep. The maximum offshore passage counts were 17 W at Worthing Beach on 12 Jul and 10 W at Selsey Bill on the 5th.

In the east of the county, birds were present at Pett Level from mid-April to the end of October, with clear peaks of 13 on 16 May, 25 on 29 Aug and a maximum count of 30 on 11 Sep. There was a single bird in the Lower Cuckmere on 22 Apr and 21 Aug, up to three at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) from 26 Aug to 9 Sep, and 13 at Arundel WWT between 17 and 24 Sep.

In the second winter period, there were no counts exceeding WeBS, but 1100 at Pagham Hbr was the highest single site count this century. The highest count within the Chichester Hbr complex was 262 at East Chidham on 10 Nov, and a small group at East Head in October and November peaked at 50 on 4 Nov. The only counts away from the western harbours were two at Pett Level on 4 and 17 Nov, five at Pulborough Brooks and in the Lower Adur estuary on the 25th (with one at the latter site on 7 Dec), two at Rye Hbr on the 20th and one there on 31 Dec. [CJRB]

Bar-tailed Godwit

Limosa lapponica

Fairly common 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	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	632	612	288	18	21	-	2	-	51	89	474	626
Chichester Hbr	630	607	285	10	5	-	2	-	34	79	468	620
Pagham Hbr	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	9	6	6
Rye Bay	2	3	3	8	15	-	-	-	16	-	-	-

On the first day of the year there were 150 at Pagham Hbr, a very high winter count for this site, but numbers there had returned to single figures by the 4th. The highest counts were as usual at Pilsey Sands, where the wintering flock remained at 600 throughout the first two months of the year, declining to 28 by 17 Mar but recovering to 246 on 30 Apr and 272 on 3 May. There were no other counts exceeding WeBS, and the January total at Chichester Hbr just passed the national 1% threshold level of 620 and equalled it in December. Single birds in full summer plumage were seen at Pilsey Island on 2 and 20 Jan and at Pagham Hbr from 10 Jan to 11 Feb. Elsewhere, the only counts were maxima of six in the Rye Hbr area on 15 Jan and five on 2 Feb. The Non-Estuarine

Coastal Waterbird Survey (NEWS) from 13-29 Jan (see pages 257-267) counted only 11 birds in 154 km of the coastline not covered by WeBS, a reminder of how uncommon this species is away from the western harbours.

Spring passage was the heaviest for at least ten years, with a minimum total of 7840 passing east. The first record was of three past Splash Point (Seaford) on 26 Mar, followed by a trickle of birds until passage began in earnest on 17 Apr, peaking in the last three days of the month. The highest counts came from Splash Point and, although observer effort at Selsey Bill was very similar, the totals there were considerably lower. Large numbers were also recorded passing closer inshore, with 500 off Newhaven on 28 Apr and 127 at Cuckmere Haven on the 30th. On the peak days of 28-30 Apr, large flocks were also observed stopping off to feed and roost along the coast, including 246 at Pilsley Island on 30 Apr, 250 in Pagham Hbr on 2 May, a record 179 at Pett Level on the following day, and 500 leaving the roost at Rye Hbr at dawn on 30 Apr. At Brighton Marina, where heavy passage has been recorded in previous years, there were 156 on 30 Apr. The main passage period ended abruptly on 5 May, but stragglers included two at Cuckmere Haven on the 18th, and the last recorded were 12 past Worthing Beach on the 28th.



*Bar-tailed Godwit, Cuckmere Haven,
September 2007 (Peter Wilson)*

Counts at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

		Apr	May	Total	Peak movement		Hrs watched peak days
Selsey Bill	E	1927	481	2408	1024	28 Apr	13
	W						
Climping Beach	E	776	118	894	320	28 Apr	6.5
	W						
Worthing Beach	E	3255	621	3876	1390	28 Apr	7.5
	W						
Telscombe Cliffs	E	98	136	234	118	3 May	2.25
	W						
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	6055	1648	7703	3260	29 Apr	14
	W						

There were no records for June. The first returning birds were four at Pagham Hbr on 10 Jul, and numbers began to build up in August and September in Chichester Hbr, with maxima at Pilsley Island of 150 on 24 Aug, 125 in the Fishbourne Channel on 2 Sep and 130 at Ella Nore on the 11th. Very few passed offshore, the largest party being 11 at Climping Beach. There were a few sightings at less usual locations in September, with two at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 3rd, up to four in the Lower Cuckmere for most of the month, and up to 30 at Pett Level. One spent most of October on the Lower Adur, and one at Shoreham Beach on 13 Nov was also unusual.

In the second winter period, counts at Pilsley Island were all well in excess of WeBS, with 350 on 31 Oct, 700 on 21 Nov and 800 on 8 Dec, the last two also exceeding the national 1% threshold level. There were only single figures in Pagham Hbr, and the only other records were two at Pett Level on 3 Oct and 16 Nov, one at Camber Sands on 2 and 23 Dec and one at Rye Hbr on the 27th. [CJRB]

Whimbrel*Numenius phaeopus*

Common passage migrant; very scarce non-breeder in summer and very scarce winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium 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
County total	2	4	3	24	24	2	51	213	8	4	2	2
Chichester Hbr	2	1	3	21	14	2	36	209	5	4	2	2
Pagham Hbr	-	3	-	-	3	-	12	1	3	-	-	-

In the first winter period, a single bird remained in Pagham Hbr from 2006, and there were three there on 18 Feb. In Chichester Hbr, up to two were occasionally reported from 21 Jan, rising to three on 17 Mar, when there were also five in Pagham Hbr.

Spring passage was heavy compared to the last few years, site totals being in most cases more than double last year's numbers. The minimum total passing offshore (allowing for duplication) was 1263, the highest since 2003 and the second highest of the last ten years. The first record was one past Selsey Bill on 24 Mar, but numbers were in single figures until a small wave passed through from 12-14 Apr, followed by the main passage from 20 Apr, which built up to a peak in the first few days of May and ended abruptly on the 6th. At Brighton Marina the highest count was 15 on 30 Apr. Regular counts at the Rye Hbr night roost closely matched the offshore counts, building to a maximum of 246 on 1 May.

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	1	110	354				465	171	3 May	11.8
	W			11	2	14		27			
Climping Beach	E	5	114	115				234	42	4 May	2.0
	W			25		8	5	38			
Worthing Beach	E		261	248		6	1	516	153	3 May	2.0
	W		9	10	2	27	5	53			
Telscombe Cliffs	E		134	240				374	223	3 May	2.25
	W					6	9	15			
Splash Point (Seaford)	E		435	566	1			1001	300	1 May	2.5
	W		7	17				24			

Small numbers were seen overflying inland river valleys on passage, including 15 at Brede Levels on 29 Apr. Single birds called in at Darwell and Arlington Reservoirs on the 14 and 25 Apr, respectively, and at the latter site on 21 May. There were one or two at Pulborough Brooks from 15 Apr until 1 May, and three were logged during a BBS transect at Ringmer on 30 Apr. Thirty were at Pett Pools on 28 Apr.

There were up to four in Pagham Hbr and up to six in Chichester Hbr in late May and early June, and unusually six in the Lower Cuckmere on 12 Jun, with two still there on the 19th. Seawatchers in July recorded only single figure counts except for ten at Worthing Beach on the 7th. At Pilsley Island, the first returning birds were six on 12 Jul, building to a peak of 26 on the 30th. Thereafter only single figure counts were reported except for 30 in Pagham Hbr on 27 Aug and 25 passing west off Worthing Beach on 1 Sep.

Once again a single bird frequented Pagham Hbr from September to December, and there were two in Chichester Hbr in the last two months of the year, mostly seen at Wickor Point on Thorney Island. [CJRB]

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 sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	2204	2307	1598	257	31	268	1620	2025	1335	1153	1564	856
Chichester Hbr	1329	1332	1048	172	3	265	1205	1760	1114	912	1247	513
Pagham Hbr	388	554	470	82	21	-	394	248	112	180	251	229
Rye Bay	442	376	72	3	7	3	21	15	84	21	50	82

In the first winter period, counts of 453 at Pett Level on 28 Jan and 447 at Rye Hbr on 2 Feb were considerably larger than the WeBS totals for these months, and were the highest at any individual site. The 1% national threshold level of 1500 was exceeded only once, at Chichester Hbr during the August migration peak, although the counts for the early winter months were not far short of this level. The only significant number elsewhere was the regular flock at Newhaven Tide Mills, which built up to a peak of 70 on 21 Feb. The Non-Estuarine Coastal Waterbird Survey (NEWS) from 13-29 Jan found a total of 89 in 154 km of the coastline not covered by WeBS.

Spring passage was light. The only significant movement was 48 E past Selsey Bill in 3½ hr on 14 Apr, and during May most counts were in single figures. Counts at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E				48	2							
	W		3				13	19					
Climping Beach	E				2				17				
	W						34	21	4	11	2	4	102
Worthing Beach	E		3	5	5		36		1		2		
	W	3				2	38	106	8	5	1	4	
Telscombe Cliffs	E			2	5							2	
	W			3			2					2	
Splash Point (Seaford)	E		4	3	8								
	W		2	1	2								

In addition to the WeBS counts in June, there were 105 at Pagham Hbr on the 18th and 47 at Rye Hbr on the 14th. During the BBS in June, a total of eight birds were encountered in five 1-km squares, three of which were in coastal squares but one was near Albourne and four were at Westmeston. In addition to those noted in the BBS, single birds were also seen inland at Arlington Res on 29 Apr, Barcombe on 15 Jun and 22 Jul, Isfield on 19 Aug and at Pulborough Brooks on 17 and 26 Apr, 23 Aug and 24 Dec.

Return migration was noted between mid-June and early July, with a maximum of 43 past Worthing Beach in 2½ hr on 5 Jul. Regular counts at Thorney Deepes built up to a peak of 282 on

3 Aug, but the highest autumn count in the Chichester Hbr complex was 825 at West Chidham on the 1st, with 612 at Mid-Hayling on the same day. Numbers at Pagham Hbr peaked at 394 on 15 Jul.

In the second winter period, the low WeBS numbers at Rye Hbr were supplemented by evening counts of 515 on 27 Oct and 580 on 19 Nov. Elsewhere, a group in the Lower Cuckmere peaked at 48 on 11 Nov, and the maximum at Newhaven Tide Mills was 51 on 26 Dec. [CJRB]

Common Sandpiper

Actitis hypoleucos

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

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1	-	-	-	3	-	37	55	15	4	3	4
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	4	1	-	-	-
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	5	1	-	-	-
Lower Adur Estuary	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	-	-	-
Newhaven	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	1	-	-	-
Iford Brooks	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	1	-	-
Barcombe Res	-	-	-	-	1	-	4	2	2	2	-	-
Bewl Water	1	-	-	nc	nc	nc	3	6	3	1	-	1
Rye Bay	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	28	6	-	3	3

The approximate minimum monthly totals in the county were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
5	4	7	39	39	7	139	211	65	22	21	11

During the first winter period up to three birds were seen on the R Adur north of the A27 with a singleton on 1 Jan, three on 14 Jan and two on 3 Feb. Singletons were also at Bewl Water on 21 Jan and 14 Mar, on Lewes Brooks on 11 Feb and at Rye Hbr on 18 Feb.

During the spring, birds were seen at an estimated 19 sites in April, 21 in May and 6 in June. They were mainly singletons with the exception of three at Arlington Res on the 8 May, three at Barcombe Res on 13 May, 4 E past Splash Point (Seaford) on the same day and six at Weir Wood Res on the 18 May.

Numbers increased in July with 12 in the Rye Bay area on the 15th, ten at the Union Channel (East Guldeford) on the same day, 11 along the banks of the Ouse at Piddinghoe on the 29th and 13 at Thorney Deep the same day. In August higher numbers were seen at the first three of these sites but there were also 1 W and 14 on the beach at Climping on the 31st and 16 on the R Adur at the Cement Works. Numbers decreased significantly in September with maxima of four at Pett Level on the 2nd and five at both Normans Bay on the 9th and on the Lower Adur on the 28th. There were only a few sightings in October with the highest count being eight on the R Adur at the Cement Works on the 14th.

In the second winter period there were three at Pagham Hbr on 2 Nov, a peak count of seven on the R Adur at the Cement Works on the 3rd, three on the R Rother (East) from the 10th to the 26th and threes at Rye Hbr and the Union Channel on the 11th. The only notable counts in December were again threes at Rye Hbr and at the Union Channel on the 9th. [WEC]

Green Sandpiper*Tringa ochropus*

Scarce spring and fairly common autumn passage migrant; scarce in winter. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	-	3	3	3	-	10	12	32	11	4	11	11
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	4	2	1	1	-
Burton/Chingford Ponds	-	-	nc	-	-	nc	1	nc	-	1	-	-
Arun Valley	-	2	-	1	-	3	-	9	3	-	1	-
Henfield Brooks	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	1	-
Barcombe Res	-	1	1	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1
Glynde Brooks	-	-	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-
Arlington Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Pevensey Levels	1	1	-	nc	nc	nc	1	2	1	-	1	-
Darwell Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3
Powdermill Res	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	-	1	-
Rye Bay	-	-	1	-	-	1	8	17	4	2	3	7

Taking into account records elsewhere, the approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	13	9	15	28	5	28	66	82	60	8	25	24
No. of sites	11	8	12	14	3	12	17	23	22	5	15	15

Records of single birds were noted at ten sites throughout the county in January with a maximum of three at Chichester GP on the 1st. There were singletons at seven sites during February followed by an increase to 11 sites in March with maxima of three at Chichester GP on the 18th and Rye Hbr on the 30th.

There was a further increase in the number of birds in April (at 13 sites) with maxima of four at Pulborough Brooks on the 3rd (and two still there on the 28th), four at County Oak (Crawley) on the 12th and 13th, three at Barcombe Res on the 15th and five at Doleham Valley on the 14th with two still there on the 22nd. There were two at Pulborough Brooks on 1 May and singletons at two other sites on the 2nd. There were then no more sightings until the 29th when one was noted at Rye Hbr, possibly the first early returning non-breeder.

Numbers picked up again from 4 Jun as birds started to return. Records were generally of between one and three birds but there were five at Doleham Valley on the 20th and five at Rye Hbr on the 22nd. Birds were reported with increasing frequency in July and August. The highest counts included nine at Doleham Valley on 28 Jul, ten at Rye Hbr on the 29th, 12 at Pulborough Brooks on 3 Aug and 11 at Pett Level on 7 Aug. The September monthly maxima were five at Pulborough Brooks on the 1st and 14 at Pett Level on the 3rd.

Records continued into the second winter period with mostly one or two birds at a variety of sites across the county. The highest count in November was three at Darwell Res from the 12th to the 17th. However, six were seen at Pett Level on 9 Dec and a similar number at Rye Hbr on 10 Dec. [DEC]

Spotted Redshank*Tringa erythropus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. 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
County total	5	4	4	-	-	-	1	1	4	3	5	3
Chichester Hbr	2	1	4	-	-	-	1	-	1	3	5	3
Pagham Hbr	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Bay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-

The approximate minimum monthly totals, including WeBS and all other records, were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
8	7	5	9	1	1	1	9	24	6	6	5

As usual, the vast majority of the wintering birds were at Pagham and Chichester Harbours and, in the first winter period, numbers were very similar to last year with up to three at the former and four at the latter site. Elsewhere there was just a single bird reported at Rye Hbr on 5 Jan.

The presence of wintering birds makes the start of spring passage difficult to ascertain, although with a minimum of nine birds in April (as against five the previous year) spring passage was slightly more evident. The first probable migrant was noted on the West Beach at Littlehampton on the 5th, followed by another at Church Norton on the 9th and one at Pett Level on the 14th. The majority of spring migrants appeared as singletons on several dates from the 20th to the 30th (when there were two) at Pagham Hbr and one in Chichester Hbr on the 29th. Singletons were also seen at Pett Level on several dates from the 23rd to 4 May (the last spring sighting anywhere) and at The Midrips on the 21st when there were two at Rye Hbr.

The first returning bird was at The Midrips on 26 Jun, followed by one at Thorney Deepes on 15 Jul. The next sighting was not until 8 Aug with singletons at Church Norton and, the next day, at Pett Level. There was then a steady trickle of birds from the 17th at the usual coastal localities of Pagham and Chichester Harbours and the Rye Bay area, throughout the autumn to the end of October and especially in September. The highest counts were five at Pagham Hbr on 27 Sep, four at Pett Level on 3 Sep and three at Thorney Island from 9 Sep through to 24 Dec. Inland, singles were recorded regularly at Pulborough Brooks with two there on 5 Sep.

Numbers in the second winter period were only about half those of last year and birds were only reported from Pagham and Chichester Harbours, assuming that a single bird at Rye Hbr on 4 and 5 Oct was a late migrant. Pagham Hbr held one or two birds (well down on the seven reported in November last year) from 8 Nov to 22 Dec and there were up to four in Chichester Hbr from 1 Nov: three at Thorney Deepes to 24 Dec and a singleton at West Wittering to 10 Nov. [JC]

Greenshank*Tringa nebularia*

Fairly common passage migrant; scarce in winter.

The monthly WeBS counts at the principal locations were as shown in the table below. 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 19 Jan and 1 Feb. Elsewhere there was just a single bird seen on several occasions at Pagham Hbr.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	15	8	16	16	2	1	24	79	88	79	34	16
Chichester Hbr	15	8	16	14	1	1	20	59	77	75	34	15
Arun Valley	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	9	-	1	-	1
Rye Bay	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	8	6	-	-	-

Birds were recorded regularly at the usual wintering sites in April making it difficult to determine exactly when spring passage started. However, two at Pulborough Brooks on 14 Apr, followed by singles at Worthing, Climping and Rye Hbr were the first migrants seen away from the wintering areas. Birds were recorded widely along the coast throughout April and May with a high count of 15 at Thorney Deeps on 2 May. Inland birds were seen regularly at Pulborough Brooks, with a high count there of six on 3 May, and at scattered locations elsewhere with seven at Horse Eye Level (Pevensey) on 5 May.

Birds were seen regularly through late May and June making it difficult to differentiate between late spring and early returning birds during this period. Numbers at Thorney Deeps built typically, reaching 33 on 18 Jul, 58 on 29 Jul and 72 on 12 Aug (which was the autumn highest count for the county). However, the numbers at Thorney Deeps were considerably lower than in recent years. Elsewhere, numbers were also relatively low with double figure counts including ten at West Wittering on 12 Jul, ten at Climping on 5 Aug, ten at Pulborough Brooks on 11 Aug and 11 at Pett Level on 30 Aug. Other inland records during the autumn (away from Pulborough Brooks) included singletons at Bewl Water (on two different dates), Newick Park, Pevensey Level and Darwell Res, with three at Greatham Bridge on 6 Aug and the same number at Isfield on 12 Sep.

During the second winter period, numbers at Thorney Deeps decreased from 59 on 11 Oct to 37 on 24 Oct, 22 on 28 Nov and 16 by late December. Away from Thorney Deeps, wintering birds were recorded at various other sites in Chichester Hbr (with a high count of eight at Apuldram on 1 Nov), Pagham Hbr (up to two), Pulborough Brooks on 28 Oct, Lower Cuckmere on 2 Nov, Amberley Wild Brooks on 10 Dec and R Adur at Shoreham on 12 Dec. [JC]

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
2	1	1	9	21	10

Spring passage was minimal with single birds noted at Pett Level on 16 Apr (over two weeks earlier than the 10-year average date), Pevensey Down Level on the 26th and the Lower Cuckmere Valley on 5 May.

In contrast, it was a reasonable autumn passage with numbers in July, August and September comparable to the 10-year average. The first returning bird was at Rye Hbr on 5 Jul. Singletons were then noted on nine days in July at four sites across the county from Rye Hbr to Barcombe Res and Sidlesham Ferry, with two at Pulborough Brooks on the 27th and the 31st.

In August there were records on 22 days. Birds were present at Pett Level on most days with seven from the 18th to the 20th. Birds were also recorded at the same site on several days in

September, with the final record there being four on the 15th.

The last record of the year was of a singleton at Thorney Deeps from 16-23 Sep, the final departure date being 19 days earlier than the 10-year average date. [DEC]

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
County total	1670	1588	1260	290	70	113	955	1090	1935	2820	1859	981
Chichester Hbr	1246	1107	919	123	19	75	916	862	1633	2403	1478	607
Pagham Hbr	186	261	159	53	15	1	24	31	127	232	165	171
Lower Adur Estuary	91	90	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	40	66	81	8
Rye Bay	85	114	115	83	11	14	13	191	131	102	76	148

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

In the first winter period, significant counts not mentioned in the WeBS table included 380 at Thorney Deeps on 19 Jan, 29 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 18 Feb, and 25 at Pett Level Pools on 2 Feb, although numbers were again on the low side away from the main harbours.

Spring passage was not particularly marked. Numbers at Thorney Deeps decreased from 198 on 17 Mar to 102 on 17 Apr and 30 on 16 May, giving an indication of the departure of wintering birds during this time, although mid-May was quite late for 30 (non-breeding) birds to be present.



*Common Redshank, Rye Harbour,
August 2007 (Peter Wilson)*

Breeding, or attempted breeding, was recorded at eleven sites (one more than last year), although no breeding data was received from the Pett Level area. At Rye Hbr there were just 15 pairs (five on the Beach Reserve, seven at Harbour Fm and three at Castle Fm) but breeding success was poor. This is a significant reduction on the 25 pairs breeding in the area last year. In Chichester Hbr there were 15 pairs at Thorney Deeps and a pair on Pilsey Island. A pair bred at Sidlesham Ferry but, as last year, this was the only breeding record from the Pagham area. In the Arun Valley there were 14 pairs at Pulborough Brooks,

which raised at least seven young (a welcome increase on last year), and two pairs at Amberley Wild Brooks, but nesting success at the latter site is not known. Elsewhere, there were four pairs on Horse Eye Level (Pevensey) (one pair fewer than the previous year), three pairs on Steyning Levels (one more than last year), two pairs at Glynde Levels and a pair on Lewes Brooks. With only seven young known to have been successfully reared (all at Pulborough Brooks) the species

remains at a low ebb as a breeding bird in the county.

The first non-breeding birds started to return in mid-June with 75 at Chichester Hbr on the 16th. Numbers at Thorney Deeps built to 682 on 16 Jul and an autumn/late winter peak of 704 on 10 Nov (considerably down on the peak of 1000 recorded on several dates last year). Other notable autumn/late winter counts (excluding the WeBS counts above) included 50 on the Union Channel (East Guldeford) on 9 Oct, 44 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 30 Oct, 110 on the lower Adur on 25 Nov and 48 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 11 Dec. [JC]

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 the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	848	950	688	156	71	4	41	212	421	725	556	866
Chichester Hbr	84	130	279	11	1	-	4	-	112	242	246	153
Pagham Hbr	484	345	212	75	22	4	20	129	125	131	73	341
Climping	93	nc	94	56	11	-	9	39	44	45	45	72
Lower Adur Estuary	-	6	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	31	11	51	73
Glyne Gap	155	405	63	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	50	235	109	184
Rye Bay	32	60	38	13	36	-	8	40	49	49	18	41

The counts for the months of January to March, October and December exceeded the 5-year average for these months with other months lower but comparable. The peak count in February was almost exactly mid-way between the peak counts of the two previous years. The species seems, therefore, to be holding its own in Sussex (see SxBR 59:289). No sites achieved the 1% national threshold level of 500.

Notable three-figure counts in the first winter period not included in the WeBS were 120 at Climping Beach on 4 Jan, 159 at Littlehampton on the 13th, 350 on the shingle spit at Church Norton on the 19th, 105 at Shoreham Beach on the 21st and 100 at Pagham Hbr on the 24th. In February, 150 were in Pagham Hbr on the 23rd followed, in March, by counts of 165 at Littlehampton West Pier on the 9th and 118 at Selsey Bill on the 20th.

The few counts that were made during the migration season at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

		Mar	Apr	May		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E		13	32					
	W	13	23			5			
Climping Beach	E								
	W			17					
Worthing Beach	E		15	32					
	W		38	17					51
Splash Point (Seaford)	E		6	8					
	W		1						

Counts for the period April to August included 93 on Selsey East Beach on 11 Apr, 160 at Church Norton on the 21st and 123 at Sidlesham Ferry on 26 Aug. Of 24 sites where this species

was seen during this period, 18 were on the western beaches or estuaries where the majority were seen. A good sighting at Pulborough Brooks on 8 Jun was a bird in full breeding plumage. Birds were seen in most months during this period, particularly on Worthing Beach where a maximum of 42 occurred on 7 Aug.

In the autumn, 95 were on the foreshore at Church Norton on 3 Sep, 42 were still at Goring Beach on the 10th, 52 at Littlehampton West Pier on the 22nd, 120 at Bexhill on the 29th and 62 on Pilsey Island on 30 Oct. In the rest of the second winter period significant numbers not shown in the WeBS table included 80 at Kingston Gorse on 13 Nov (after 51 on 11 Nov), 84 on the R Adur at Shoreham on 25 Nov and 73 on the lower Adur on 9 Dec, 74 on Pilsey Island on the 11th, 200 in Pagham Hbr on the 26th and 102 on Worthing Beach on the 31st. [WEC]



Turnstone, Rye Harbour, May 2007 (Roger Charlwood)

Red-necked Phalarope

Phalaropus lobatus

Rare spring and autumn passage migrant.

One seen on Sidlesham Ferry on 29-30 May (IL *et al.*) was considered to be a summer-plumaged male. It was the fifth to be recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000, but the first since 2003 and the first in spring since a female was at the same site on 2 Jun 1989. To date 13 have been recorded since the start of 1990 with records in May, August (5 from 26th) and September (7 until 24th). [RJF]

Pomarine Skua*Stercorarius pomarinus*

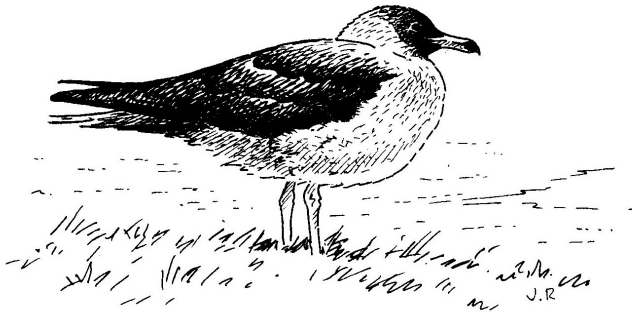
Passage migrant in variable numbers in spring but very scarce in autumn; rare in winter.

2006: Two records from Brighton Marina were omitted from the 2006 Report. The first was a 1st year bird on 14 Jan (IJW) and the second a juvenile on 2 Sep (IJW).

2007: The estimated minimum of 98 birds seen on spring passage was decidedly low and considerably down on the previous totals of 137 and 186 for 2006 and 2005 respectively; it was also well below the average of 176 for 1988-2004. Totals recorded at the principal sea-watching sites were as follows:

	Apr	May	Total
Monthly minima	80	18	98
Selsey Bill	27	10	37
Worthing (incl. Goring)	13	3	16
Telscombe Cliffs	2	5	7
Splash Point (Seaford)	60	2	62
Birling Gap (Beachy Head)	1	1	2
Other sites	13	2	15

The first birds of the spring were recorded on the fairly typical date of 20 Apr with 17 E at Selsey Bill (flocks of 12 and five), eight at Splash Point (Seaford), five at Climping and three at Worthing. These were followed by 4E at Splash Point the following day, with two at Worthing and singletons at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) and Telscombe Cliffs. On the 22nd there were 8E



at Splash Point and five at Worthing but then, after a blank day on the 23rd, the species was recorded daily until the end of the month, late April unusually seeing the bulk of the passage. Singletons were logged at Selsey Bill on the 24th and at Splash Point on the 25th and both sites then again continued to feature alternately, with 5E at Selsey Bill (and nearby Pagham Hbr) on

the 26th, four at Splash Point on the 27th and 5W into the Solent off Selsey Bill the next day. The largest movement occurred on the 29th when 34 E were logged in 14 hr at Splash Point in a light north-northeast wind. However, the west of the county fared poorly that day with just three off Worthing whilst Selsey Bill drew a complete blank, once again highlighting that sites further east typically record greater spring passage numbers. The final bird of the month was a singleton at Splash Point on the 30th.

May is always keenly anticipated by seawatchers, especially the first two weeks which usually produce the peak movements of this enigmatic species; not so this year, for it proved to be a very disappointing month. It began with a single bird at Selsey Bill on the 1st with further singletons there over the next few days, followed by singletons at Splash Point on the 6th and at Birling Gap on the 10th. Two passed Brighton Marina on the 13th, followed by further two east at Selsey Bill on the 14th and at Worthing and Telscombe Cliffs on the 16th, with a singleton at the latter site on the 19th and two more there on the 27th. Finally a singleton passed Selsey Bill on the 31st completing a May total of just 18 throughout the county! The next record was not until 3 Jul when two birds at Bognor Regis were chased away by Herring Gulls. The first bird of the autumn was 1E past Selsey Bill on 1 Sep. There was then an exceptional influx on 10 and 11 Nov; on the 10th there was a juvenile past Ferring Beach and three birds past Selsey Bill while on the 11th 19 flew past Worthing Beach (15W and 4E) and ten passed Selsey Bill. A singleton passed Goring Beach on 19 Nov and the last record of the year was a singleton off Selsey Bill on 9 Dec. It should however be noted that several other records were reported during this period but, since descriptions were not submitted, they could not be verified and included in the Report. [OM]

Arctic Skua

Stercorarius parasiticus

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

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

It was a good year for this species with the annual total of 557 being the third highest of the previous ten years and significantly higher than the 10-year average of 476.

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Annual total	346	506	479	604	485	450	535	574	426	359	557

The approximate monthly totals of passage birds, where a flight direction was stated (ignoring birds apparently loafing), were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	-	1	1	235	154	24	9	16	42	7	65	-
No. of days	-	1	1	17	26	12	4	7	12	5	12	-

The first two birds of the year flew east at Telscombe Cliffs on 2 Feb and at Pett on 1 Mar. The next, also singletons, were not seen until 8, 11 and 12 Apr followed by two on the 15th and three on the 16th, the vanguard of the bulk of eastward spring migrants. Peak passage occurred on 21 Apr but birds were then seen almost daily, but in reducing numbers, to the end of the month, as shown in the table below which gives peak April daily counts at three principal seawatching sites. Birds were seen on almost every day in May but usually in counts of less than five, the major exceptions being 11E at Selsey Bill on the 1st, 30E at Splash Point on the 6th and a final flourish of 15 there on

the 10th. The passage of mainly late singletons was effectively concluded by 4 Jun.

Date in April	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Selsey Bill	-	8	18	10	-	2	2	3	1	11	3	1
Worthing Beach	-	11	14	3	-	-	3	-	2	3	2	1
Splash Point (Seaford)	7	14	69	66	5	17	19	1	-	12	8	5

Monthly totals at the principal seawatching locations were as follows:

		Apr	May	Jun	Sep	Oct	Nov	Peak movement		Hrs watched peak days
Selsey Bill	E	60	71	7	24	2	1	18	21 Apr	11
	W	-	3	5	11	-	27			
Climping Beach	E	5	4	-	1	-	-	4	20 Apr	7½
	W	1	1	-	-	1	4			
Worthing Beach	E	39	27	-	-	1	4	14	21 Apr	6¼
	W	-	2	-	3	-	44			
Telscombe Cliffs	E	35	3	2	2	2	-	8	21 Apr	4
	W	-	-	-	-	2	8			
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	228	117	6	3	3	-	69	21 Apr	14½
	W	1	-	-	-	-	1			

For the remainder of June to about 6 Jul occasional birds, usually singletons, were noted either flying east or loafing offshore. The first bird suggestive of autumn migrants, albeit 1E, was noted on 21 Jul at Telscombe Cliffs but thereafter there was a slow but steady flow of birds through to the end of November. The only counts higher than eight were 16E at Selsey Bill on 19 Sep and 11W at both Worthing Beach and Selsey Bill on 11 Nov. The final sightings of the year were 1E at Worthing Beach on 22 Nov and one roosting on grass at Hove Lagoon on 25 Dec which allowed a close approach. [JAH]

Long-tailed Skua

Stercorarius longicaudus

Rare vagrant.

An adult flew east along Ferring Beach on 23 May (RAI). Nine of the 12 recorded since the start of 2000 have been in May although this is the latest spring record for the county by two days. [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 total numbers of 'Bonxies' shown in the following two tables were computed on the assumption that the highest number seen at any coastal site was the minimum in the county that day and that birds seen on subsequent days were different. The annual total of 229 was the highest ever recorded, as shown below:

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Annual total	78	118	97	157	227	147	211	192	185	135	229

The approximate monthly totals of passage birds, where a flight direction was stated (ignoring those apparently loafing), were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	-	2	1	117	44	14	4	2	12	7	23	3
No. of days	-	2	1	23	18	11	4	2	7	5	10	3

The first two birds of the year were 1E past Splash Point (Seaford) on 10 Feb (quite possibly wintering in northern seas) followed six weeks later by 1E past Seaford on 25 Mar. However, the next up-channel singleton, which passed Worthing Beach on 5 Apr, was the first of a steady stream of mainly singletons until, on the 20th, peak passage commenced and lasted until the 29th, as shown in the following table:

<i>Date in April</i>	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Selsey Bill							6		13	9
Climping Beach	20									
Worthing Beach									13	
Splash Point (Seaford)		5	12	10	14					

Thereafter, passage continued throughout May. Numbers were generally small, with peak counts of six at Selsey Bill on the 2nd and, at Splash Point, five on the 5th, seven on the 6th and four on the 7th.

Counts at the principal seawatching locations were as follows:

		Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Peak movement	Hrs watched peak days	
Selsey Bill	E			36	18	1	1		7	3	2	13	28 Apr	12
	W			3	3	2	-		1	-	5			
Climping Beach	E			28	5	-			2			12	20 Apr	7½
	W			3	3	3			-					
Worthing Beach	E			24	-	2						13	28 Apr	7½
	W			-	1	1								
Telscombe Cliffs	E			5								2	24 Apr	42½
	W			-										
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	1	1	71	20		1	1	1	1	1	14	24 Apr	9
	W	-	-	1	2		-	-	-	-	-			

The two sightings in July (1E at Splash Point on the 24th and one offshore at Selsey Bill on the 29th) might have been either summering or early returning failed breeders. The next sighting of 1E at Splash Point was not until 24 Aug followed by another in Rye Bay on the 27th. Autumn passage continued in a slow and stuttering fashion through to 9 Dec, with a peak count of 7W in two hours at Worthing Beach on 18 Nov. A single bird seen harassing Black-headed Gulls at Bewl Water on 9 Dec occurred following strong winds in the North Sea and is believed to be only the second record for the site, following five which were seen there on 30 Sep 1988. The final sighting of the year was a singleton past Rye Hbr on 31 Dec. [JAH]

Sabine's Gull*Xema sabini**Rare autumn vagrant.*

Juveniles were recorded off Selsey Bill on 18 Aug (JA *et al.*) and Portobello on 17 Nov (DHH). The former flew east at 13.25 BST then west 25 mins later, while the latter flew slowly west at 08.22 GMT. Twelve have been recorded in the county since the start of 2000 with these being the earliest and latest during that period. In fact the Selsey individual, the fifth there in recent years, is the earliest autumn record for the county surpassing a first-summer bird off Langney Point on 25 Aug 1951. [RJF]

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 the year, most records were as usual of coastal movements and the following table shows the monthly totals from the principal seawatching locations. However, the close proximity of the breeding sites in the east of the county to some of the seawatching sites, 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	3	-	-	23	34	2	32	-	14	-	20	2
	W	36	-	1	13	132	35	-	12	187	11	4195	215
Worthing Beach	E	12	3	-	12	4	4	4	1	-	9	10	19
	W	14	1	-	-	10	1	1	11	9	7	2260	949
Telscombe Cliffs	E	-	18	87	100	-	-	-	-	-	11	39	-
	W	16	7	18	4	-	-	-	76	-	7	258	18

There were only small movements in the first winter period with the maxima being 100E at Splash Point in 1¼ hr on 17 Feb and 56E at Telscombe Cliffs (Portobello) in ¾ hr on 12 Mar.

During the summer months there were 500 at Seaford on 13 Apr, 50 adults on the sea at Newhaven on 17 Apr, 800 at Splash Point on 28 Jul and 600 at Seaford on 2 Aug. Elsewhere, the only significant numbers were 55W past Selsey Bill in 11 ¾ hr on 15 May and 74W past Telscombe Cliffs in 1 hr on 24 Aug. There were no detailed reports of breeding or breeding success at Newhaven but it is evident that there was a disaster at Seaford Head. After reports of large numbers of occupied nests and nestlings, many nestlings were seen dead at the foot of the cliffs and in the sea. After laboratory analysis, the causes were thought to be food shortage and internal parasites, possibly exacerbated by hot weather.

At the end of September, 142 flew west past Selsey Bill in 7 hr on the 21st and there were 90 at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 8 Oct. The big westerly movements came between 9 and 13 Nov as shown in the table below (hours watched in brackets).

The only other movement of any note in November was 189W at Worthing Beach in 1 hr on the 19th. In December, there were three days at Worthing Beach when there was again a big westerly movement; 130 on the 22nd, 108 on the 23rd and 623 on the 25th but these numbers were not reflected elsewhere.

The only inland records were at Weir Wood Res where there were two on 10 Nov and a singleton the following day. These coincided with the big coastal movements. [PNP]

		9 Nov	10 Nov	11 Nov	12 Nov	13 Nov
Selsey Bill	W	155 (6)	1640 (8)	1500 (9¼)	-	770 (9)
	o/s	-	305	800	330	-
Worthing Beach	W	-	232 (4¾)	1600 (5)	-	106(4¾)
	o/s	-	-	-	-	-
Shoreham Hbr	W	-	-	-	-	-
	o/s	-	400	500	-	-

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, of the roost at Bewl Water where peak monthly counts were 43,500 in January, 17,000 in February and 17,300 in March. Other four-figure counts were of 5000 at Rusper on 1 Jan, 1500 at Weir Wood Res on 11 Jan and 1900 on 6 Mar, 1000 in fields at Pett Level on 12 and 27 Feb and 26 Mar, 1700 at Rye Hbr on 27 Mar and 1000 at Lidsey Tip on 8 Mar. Notable three-figure counts included, in January, 500 at Warnham LNR and 722 at Ringmer and, in February, 540 at Pulborough Brooks, 650 at Ringmer, 500 at Pevensey Levels and at least 900 at Rye Hbr. There were no records of similar numbers from any coastal sites.

Counts in April and May showed that the large majority of the above birds had left for the breeding grounds. There were only three peak monthly counts of over 200, all from breeding sites in the east of the county, viz. 828 at Pett Level in April and 800 in May and 957 at Rye Hbr in April.

Spring and autumn coastal passage was recorded at only two locations, as shown below:

		Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Selsey Bill	E	13	127	11			
	W				1	4	6
Worthing Beach	E	-	159	23			
	W				51	123	165

Obviously, the large numbers recorded during the winter made their ways to and from their breeding grounds without being noted at the principal seawatching locations!

Breeding was confirmed at four sites. At New Lake (Chichester GP) there were at least 200 birds on rafts on 18 May which produced at least 150 chicks, of which 120 were ringed. At Arundel WWT, although 50 birds were present on 30 May and 3 July, only one chick was reported. Pett Level hosted 800 birds on 1 May and 250 on 5 Jun but there were no details of breeding. At Rye Hbr, however, 1148 nests were counted on 30 Apr at the Ternery Pool and it was estimated that, overall, 1400 pairs fledged 1400 chicks. During the BBS, 111 birds were recorded in 14 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed. Birds were also recorded in 48 out of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

During the summer months, 32 counts in excess of 100 were made at 18 sites of which only one (Bewl Water) was inland. At Thorney Island there were 650 on 16 Jul and 1000 on 1 Aug; at Sidlesham Ferry, 1000 on 30 Jul; in Pagham Hbr, 5000 on 23 Aug; on Climping Beach, 775 on 26 Aug; at Rye Hbr, a minimum of 1500 on 3 Aug; and at Camber Sands, 2500 on 25 Aug. Many of these are likely to be post-breeding adults returning from the continent.



Black-headed Gull, Rye Harbour, June 2007 (Barry Yates)

In the autumn, there were records at some 119 sites of which 48 were inland. The highest counts were: in September, 600 at Fishbourne on the 15th and 2000 in Pagham Hbr on the 10th; in October, 1200 at Fishbourne on the 13th; 673 following ploughs at East Marden on the 10th; 641 at Nyetimber (Bognor) on the 21st; 1840 at Bewl Water on the 2nd; 500 at Rother Levels (East) on the 18th; and 570 at The Midrips on the 6th.

During the second winter period, although records came from some 152 sites (71 inland) only 38 (15 inland) of them involved counts of 100 or more. The prime inland location for roosting birds was, as usual, Bewl Water where counts rose from 19,000 on 16 Nov through 24,500 on 3 Dec to 48,400 on the 29th, slightly lower than the peak count at this time in 2006. Elsewhere, in Chichester Hbr there were 1000 at Apuldram on 1 Nov, 798 at East Chidham on the 10th and 1500 at Thorney Island on 29 Dec; 620 at Warnham LNR on 24 Dec; 800 roosting on the Lower Adur (Shoreham) on 15 Dec; and 650 at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on the 10th.

Birds were recorded in 48 of the 413 Sussex gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme. [JAH]

Little Gull

Hydrocoloeus minutus

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

The year's total of approximately 1434 birds was the third highest number on record, the two previous higher figures having been 1493 in 1990 and 1630 in 2003.

The following table of approximate monthly totals also shows inland numbers (included in the totals):

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	3	2	19	1078	7	13	3	28	29	192	51	11
No. of days	3	5	12	21	10	5	2	7	7	20	11	7
Inland total	-	2	7	5	-	-	2	9	1	4	4	5
<i>Chichester GP</i>			2	5								
<i>Pulborough Brooks</i>		2	4				2			4	3	2
<i>Steyning Levels</i>			1									
<i>Weir Wood Res</i>								7			1	
<i>Arlington Res</i>									1			
<i>Lullington Heath</i>												3
<i>Bowl Water</i>								2				

The clear passage period in April is evident but autumn passage was also notable. The October total of 192 was the third highest for the past ten years, being exceeded only by 265 in 2001 and 318 in 2004. The three January records involved 1W at Widewater (Lancing) on the 1st, 1W at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 13th and 1W at Worthing Beach on the 26th. A singleton at Pulborough Brooks on 16 Feb was followed by another on the 23rd and then by two more and the four birds stayed until the 28th.

Monthly totals at the principal seawatching locations were as follows:

		Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E		146	3		1	7	8	1	-
	W		-	-		-	1	25	3	3
Climping Beach	E		54							
	W		-							
Worthing Beach	E		268	1		-	-	-	-	
	W		-	-		1	13	29	36	
Telscombe Cliffs	E		12			-	-	-	-	
	W		-			-	-	-	3	
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	8	1026							
	W	-	14							

From 2 Apr, small numbers were recorded daily with occasional peaks, e.g. five at Chichester GP on the 5th, 6E at Selsey Bill on the 10th and 21E at Splash Point on the 12th. Peak eastward passage, involving at least 985 birds, then occurred over only the four days of 19 to 22 Apr and was, with one exception, all recorded at Splash Point, as shown below:

<i>Date in April</i>	18	19	20	21	22	23
Worthing Beach	1	-	146	103	15	-
Splash Point (Seaford)	-	88	145	477	274	3

The largest single flock reported was of 55 at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on the 21st. During the next two months, from 24 Apr to 23 Jun, birds were recorded on only 18 days and were mostly immatures in 1st summer plumage. The highest counts were of five at Rye Hbr on 11 and 15 Jun and four at The Midrips on the 23rd. In July, there were two birds at Pulborough Brooks on the 14th and a singleton at The Midrips on the 28th, presumably summering non-breeders.

Return passage during August and September was slow and patchy and mostly of singletons. Birds were noted on only 14 days during this period and the only counts which exceeded five

were of 12 at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 10 Aug and 13W at Worthing Beach on 29 Sep. October was the main month for autumn passage, birds being noted on 21 days during the month. Notable counts included 20 at Pett Level on the 13th, a group of 25 at Selsey West Beach on the 26th and a flock of 25 feeding offshore at Widewater (Lancing) on the 29th. Numbers then tailed off and birds were seen on only 18 days in the last two months of the year. The only sizeable count was of 32W at Worthing Beach on 1 Nov. The last record of the year was a singleton at Pulborough Brooks on 29 Dec. [JAH]

Mediterranean Gull

Larus melanocephalus

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce but increasing breeder. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

It was yet another exceptional year for this species as it continued its expansion in the county. Numbers were particularly high in both the first four and last five months of the year when conservatively estimated minimum monthly totals exceeded those for the two previous years, as shown below:

	No. of days recorded	Total 2007	Total 2006	Total 2005	Inland 2007	Highest number recorded
Jan	21	179	82	28	5	50 at Pagham Hbr, 24 th
Feb	22	252	152	42	2	66 at Rye Hbr, 26 th
Mar	29	554	448	250	26	250 at Rye Hbr, 24 th
Apr	29	639	485	220	12	248 at Pett Level, 6 th
May	22	183	325	147	8	77 at Pett Level, 1 st
Jun	22	67	250	140	4	30 at Rye Hbr, 9 th
Jul	26	133	154	137	-	34 at Thorney Deepes, 2 nd
Aug	21	209	17	100	-	50 at West Fields (Selsey), 19 th
Sep	22	364	126	81	-	140 at Pagham Hbr, 29 th
Oct	29	67	73	47	1	20 at West Fields (Selsey), 2 nd
Nov	26	120	51	103	-	50 at Pagham Hbr, 23 rd
Dec	21	361	137	79	1	140 at Church Norton, 24 th

During the first six weeks of the year to 17 Feb the most favoured location was Pagham Hbr, with a peak count of 50 on 24 Jan. However, from 23 Feb numbers at Rye Hbr steadily increased from 28 that day to 105 on 8 Mar and 250 on 24 Mar, a figure which set a new record county number for the ninth year running. From that date onwards, numbers declined steadily through 200 on the 27th, 178 on 4 Apr, 60 on the 21st and only 30 on 26 May. However, it would seem that many of the Rye Hbr birds moved to Pett Level on 6 Apr when no less than 248 (a number which also exceeded the previous record) were counted at the latter site, but these had reduced to only six there by 29 May.

Although, once again, the largest counts occurred in the spring, those for the late summer/autumn period were also quite remarkable and also exceeded those for the two previous years, as shown above.

Despite many hours of seawatching, relatively few birds were noted although an eastward passage was noticeable during April and there were hints of a return from September onwards, as shown in the table below. Peak eastward spring passage in April was recorded at Worthing Beach on the 8th (12E) and the 15th (11E) and then later at Splash Point (Seaford) from the 19th (9E) to the 24th (14E) with a peak of 20E on the 22nd.

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	2	1	5	14	9	2	3	2	20	1	10	4
	W	3	3	-	8	-	3	-	3	24	2	10	32
Climping Beach	E	-	-	2	35	1	3	-	1	-	-	-	1
	W	-	-	4	1	1	7	12	-	-	-	8	3
Worthing Beach	E	1	4	1	51	13	15	2	-	3	2	-	2
	W	2	-	3	29	5	10	12	3	3	6	5	2
Telscombe Cliffs	E	-	8	4	29	3	-	-	-	-	-	3	-
	W	-	1	-	4	-	2	5	-	-	-	3	-
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	-	2	5	99	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	-	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-



*Mediterranean Gull, Selsey Bill,
October 2007 (Dorian Mason)*

Breeding occurred again at Rye Hbr with a minimum of 40 pairs at the Ternery Pool. The first sitting adult was noted on 20 Apr; the first chick on 15 May; seven fledglings were noted on 8 Jul and 15 juveniles on the 16th, but overall fledgling success was poor.

As usual, the vast majority of records were from coastal or near coastal sites. However, there were 29 records from 15 inland sites (at least 5 km from the coast). Most records did not exceed two birds, but there were four at Rusper on 11 Jan, eight at Pulborough Brooks on 13 Mar, six at Chichester GP on the 27th, five at Arundel WWT on the 31st and eight at Doleham Valley on 29 May. [JAH]

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.

The largest numbers were recorded at Bewl Water between January and March with 47,800 on 21 Jan, 75,000 on 23 Feb and 43,700 on 5 Mar, all of which exceeded the 1% international threshold level of 20,000. Smaller counts were made at coastal sites with 3000 in the Thorney Channel on 10 Jan and 900 on the R Adur estuary on 14 Jan, with 1400 there on 23 Jan and 1600 on 19 Mar. There were few records of winter feeding flocks but 250 were noted on grassland at Pett Level on 23 Jan. One thousand five hundred birds seen in the Doleham Valley on 25 Mar may have indicated migration.

Seawatching records were sparse compared to some previous years and came from only two sites. Although small wandering movements in either direction were noted at Selsey Bill during the first winter period, a small passage of only 20 E and 1 W was noted in 129 hr of watching in April. Similarly, at Worthing Beach, the April passage was of only 23 E and 1 W in 70½ hr. There was a smaller autumnal movement of 17 W and 4 W at Selsey Bill and Worthing Beach respectively.

Breeding season records were predictably meagre, although notable sightings included 30 at Pett Level on 2 May, 30 on Worthing Beach on 1 May and 30 at Selsey on 4 Jun. No nesting birds were recorded, although a pair was present at Rye Hbr in mid-June and a singleton consorting with Herring Gulls in suitable habitat was seen at St Leonards on 29 Apr. During the BBS a total of 30 individuals was recorded in the 123 1-km squares surveyed.

In the second winter period larger numbers included 2000 in the Thorney Channel on 30 Oct, 2260 at East Chidham on 10 Nov and 1200 at Bewl Water on 30 Nov, rising rapidly to 2500 on 3 Dec and 4500 on 28 Dec. [MVS]

Lesser Black-backed Gull

Larus fuscus

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

Records of wintering individuals were widespread, but generally low. However, there were some notable exceptions; at Weir Wood Res, a roost of 840 was found on 1 Jan (easily exceeding the 1% national threshold level of 500) and, at Rye Hbr, 140 were present in the Bittern excavation on 1 Feb. A flock of 55 was noted on the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) on 25 Feb and there were 127 at Pett Level on 28 Feb. About half of the Ouse Estuary flock was considered to be dark mantled (*intermedius*).

Few seawatching records were obtained throughout the year, as is usual for this species, but a total from five seawatching sites of 18 W and 61 E in April indicated some coastal movement at this time.

Forty one individuals were recorded during the BBS in the 123 1-km squares surveyed, an increase of nearly 50% on 2006, suggesting a continuing rise in the breeding population. Records of actual or potential nests indicate an easterly distribution with rooftop nesting reported from Preston Park (Brighton), Brighton College, University of Sussex, Newhaven Hbr, Bexhill and St Leonards on Sea. Nests were also reported from Lottbridge Lake (Eastbourne) and Rye Hbr (four pairs). Birds in the west of the county were seen in Central and West Worthing with breeding by at least two pairs confirmed at the former and displaying birds seen regularly at the latter. The only nests recorded as being successful were three at Newhaven Hbr which produced three young.

Exceptional flocks recorded later in the year were 35 at Pagham Hbr on 24 Jul and 40 on 19 Oct, 34 at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 14 Sep and 150 at Rye Hbr on 24 Oct. [MVS]

Herring Gull

Larus argentatus

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

Records during the first winter period reflect a mainly coastal distribution with coastal sites also having the largest flocks. The largest flock was 2700 at Rye Hbr on 1 Feb, with 2000 roosting there on 24 Mar. Eight hundred and fifty were on Southwick beach on 22 Mar and 600 on floodwater at Iford Brooks on 14 Feb. Flocks were also reported inland with 125 at Bewl Water on 9 Jan and 400 at Warnham LNR on 14 Jan.

Sizeable numbers continued to be seen during the breeding season with 1184 being recorded in the 123 1-km squares surveyed during the BBS. The largest counts in this survey were 113 at Laughton Place (Ringmer) on 13 Apr, 108 at Hastings on 10 Jun, 104 at Worthing West on 13 Apr, 92 at East Preston on 3 May and 89 at Hove on 29 Apr. Notable numbers were also recorded

at Selsey with 240 on 6 Apr and 330 on 3 Jun. At Rye Hbr 140 were present on 21 Apr, while at Lewes Brooks 120 were seen on 30 May. Eighty-three were counted in the Climping Gap on 12 Jun.

Few breeding season records addressed nesting, but at Newhaven Hbr some 25 nests produced 40 young. Ten pairs nested at Rye Hbr, nine of which were controlled, and the remaining pair produced two young. Many pairs nested on the roofs of Rye Wharf and probably in excess of 40 pairs nested on rooftops in Rye Hbr Village. A fledgling was seen begging for food at Pagham Hbr on 21 Jul while at the University of Sussex many rooftop nests were noted in May and 80 adults were seen with 39 juveniles on 3 Aug. Inland, a pair was reported nest building at Pulborough Brooks on 1 May.

At coastal locations during the second winter period, 2000 were counted in the Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 9 Nov, 1000 at Rye Hbr on 8 Nov, 500 on the East Rother Levels on 18 Oct and 650 at Lewes Brooks on 31 Dec. Inland, 1000 were present at Warnham LNR on 24 Nov, while the maximum at Bewl Water during this period was 440 on 29 Dec. There were no record submissions for Scandinavian Herring Gull *L.a. argentatus* this year. [MVS]

Yellow-legged Gull

Larus michahellis

Fairly common but localised visitor; mainly in late summer and autumn.

A number of records (mostly coastal) occurred in all months of the year with a clear peak from July to October, similar to the pattern of recent years. The greatest number of records came from the Selsey Peninsula during the summer and autumn. At Sidlesham Ferry 68 adults and 40 juveniles were seen on 2 Aug, while 68 were in fields west of Selsey on 24 Aug and 42 were counted at Easton Fm (Earnley) on 7 Aug.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Total	3	2	3	1	2	2	41	232	46	30	11	4
Selsey Peninsular	1		1			2	40	226	39	15	1	1
Shoreham area	1	1	2				1		4	1		1
Glyne Gap								6	2	14	9	
Other coastal sites		1		1					1		1	1
Inland sites	1				2							1

In the east, singletons were found at Pett Level on 28 Feb, Splash Point (Seaford) on 27 Apr, Hove on 10 Sep and Brighton Marina on 1 Nov, but most records were from Glyne Gap (Bexhill) with six on 10 Aug, two on 14 Sep, 14 on 8 Oct and nine on 9 Nov.

Inland records were of an adult at Rusper on 11 Jan, two at Lindfield Pond on 1 and 7 May and a single adult at Warnham LNR on 28 Dec. [MVS]

Iceland Gull

Larus glaucoides

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

A first or second winter bird was seen flying west at Ferring beach on 5 Jan (CEH) with first winter birds found at Barcombe Res on 18 Feb (SHL *et al.*) and in the Shoreham area from 11-25 Mar (RJF *et al.*). An adult was seen at Selsey Bill on 5 May (RM, KWM). The Shoreham individual wandered to Southwick Beach and Lancing during its stay but was most often to be seen on the R Adur opposite Shoreham Airport, where it was found originally. Seventeen have

been recorded since the beginning of 2000 with all records during this time falling between 7 Nov and 20 May. Other than 2005's Kumlien's Gull the Shoreham individual was the first to be recorded in the county for more than a few days since a first winter bird that roamed between Shoreham and Brighton Marina from 7 Jan to 19 Apr 1998. [RJF]

Glaucous Gull

Larus hyperboreus

Very scarce but regular winter visitor and passage migrant.

A sub-adult was seen in Firle Park on 1 Apr (CB), an unusual location for the species. The only other documented record for the year was a widely appreciated first winter bird first seen at Southwick Canal on 11 Dec (PJA *et al.*) which remained in the vicinity until 5 Apr 2008, during which time it was seen anywhere between Hove Lagoon and Lancing Widewater, although it appeared to particularly favour the area around the fishing boats at the eastern end of the canal. [CWM]

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 maximum monthly counts at these three sites are shown in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chichester Hbr	80	5	1	46	46	71	85	55	24	45	179	187
Pagham Hbr	120	200	52	100	55	70	90	120	129	240	100	128
Rye Hbr	20	360	-	1	1	1	100	4	45	700	145	4

It is probable that, in some instances, the table does not reflect the true numbers present. With the exception of Rye Hbr in October, the numbers were substantially less than last year.

Notable counts elsewhere in the first winter period were 160 at Lewes Brooks on 7 Jan (with lower numbers in February and March) and the largest numbers in the county at the Lower Cuckmere Valley which included 550 on 19 Jan, 700 on 11 Feb and 750 on 5 Mar. Inland there were nine at both Barcombe Res and Bewl Water on 18 Jan and the only record of the year at Darwell Res was an immature on 18 Feb. Two flew over Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on 3 Mar.

There was only one report of breeding. A pair again nested on the roof of a building at Rye Wharf, although there were no reports as to whether it was successful. During the BBS, the species was recorded in seven of the 123 1-km squares surveyed and was seen in two of the 413 gardens participating in the garden BirdWatch scheme.

In the summer the maximum numbers off Selsey Bill were 73 on 4 May, 170 on 3 Jun and 50 on 29 Jul.

In September, there were 192 off Selsey Bill on the 1st, 380 in the Lower Cuckmere Valley on the 19th and ten inland at Warnham LNR on the 29th. In the second winter period, notable records away from the three main harbours included 440 at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 8 Oct (with 400 there on 9 Nov and 160 on 10 Dec), 300 at Crowlink on 20 Oct, 300 offshore Selsey Bill on 10 Nov, 170 at Arlington Res on 28 Nov, five at Barcombe Res on 9 Dec, 51 offshore and 104E at Selsey Bill and 150 at Lewes Brooks on 31 Dec. [PNP]

Little Tern*Sternula albifrons*

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

The first bird was reported by a visitor to Rye Hbr on 11 Apr. This arrival date was ten days later than that in 2006 and two days later than the 10-year average arrival date of 9 Apr. Two were at Rye Hbr and three flew east at Selsey Bill on 13 Apr and thereafter there were daily records throughout the spring.

Analysis of the daily counts from each of the seawatching locations suggests a minimum of 352 birds flew east during the spring comprising 216 in April and 136 in May. This is the lowest figure since 1985 and well below the average of 621 for the springs between 1985 and 2007. The poor spring passage, with late April peak, is shown in the following table of totals of eastbound birds at the principal seawatching sites.

	Apr	May	Total	No. per hr watched	Peak movement.
Selsey Bill	202	116	318	1.0	37 E on 26 Apr (9½ hr)
Climping Beach	10	15	25	0.2	6 E on 26 Apr (3½ hr)
Worthing Beach	15	35	50	0.4	15 E on 30 Apr (5½ hr)
Telscombe Cliffs	2	-	2	0.0	2 E on 21 Apr (4 hr)
Splash Point (Seaford)	60	16	76	0.4	25 E on 21 Apr (14½ hr)

Most of the spring records were, as usual, from the shore but there were 14 in Pagham Hbr on 26 Apr and at Rye Hbr there were 12 on 21 Apr, 24 on the 29th and 28 and 53 on 5 and 14 May respectively. One at Piddinghoe on 29 Apr was the only record during the year away from the shore or harbours.

After 14 May numbers dropped off steeply at Rye Hbr during a period of wet and windy weather and by the time the "Tern Watch" started on the 19 May only seven pairs were present in the colony. During the next week birds did drift back, giving a maximum of 15 pairs, compared to 21 pairs last year. The first chicks were noted around 20 Jun and by the 23rd at least five were present within the colony. However, a period of very cold, wet and windy weather soon after this, coupled with the predations of a Kestrel which hunted regularly over the colony, had a devastating effect and by 26 Jun the colony had been reduced to three sitting birds with no sign of any chicks. Total abandonment occurred soon after. Eight pairs nested at Pagham Hbr; at least one pair had young in mid-July and the maximum count at this location was 26 birds on 22 Jul. In Chichester Hbr two birds were apparently nesting at each of two sites. Poor weather frustrated efforts to monitor these but in mid-June the sitting birds were no longer present. However, 30 birds, presumably displaced from Langstone Hbr, were roosting in Chichester Hbr but making no apparent effort to nest.

Monthly maxima at Pilsley Sands (Chichester Hbr) during the summer were 16 on 20 Jul, 29 on 16 Aug and seven on 2 Sep. Also in Chichester Hbr, there were 50 at Stakes Island on 5 Aug. Elsewhere the numbers recorded were low except at Selsey Bill where seawatchers recorded more than usual with a total of 121 W in July and 27 W in August with peak days of 37 W in 2½ hr on 22 Jul and 24 W in 6¾ hr on 19 Aug. The latest were singles at Pilsley Island on 12 Sep, in the Adur estuary on the 16th and, finally, two flew west at Selsey Bill on 22 Sep some ten days earlier than the 10-year average last date of 2 Oct. [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
14	18	4	1	67	1	3

The first arrivals were six days later than the recent 10-year average with 2 E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 20 Apr. On the following day birds were seen at three seawatching locations; 5 E at Selsey Bill, 4 E at Worthing and 3 E at Splash Point. Thereafter very small numbers were recorded and potentially just 18 birds were recorded from all the seawatching sites with 12 in April and six in May. This is the lowest number since 12 were recorded in 1987 and falls well below the average of 91 for the spring 1985-2007. The May total was reached by a small influx later in the month when two were at Weir Wood Res on the 21st and 29th, five were in the river mouth at Rye Hbr on 29 May and two were at Arlington Res on 30 May.

During June and July the only observations were 4 E at Selsey Bill on 10 Jun and a single bird at Pilsley Sands (Chichester Hbr) on 20 and 23 Jul. As the above table shows, most were recorded in August when the highest numbers occurred at inland reservoirs during a period of strong northerly winds. At Bewl Water there were 28 on both 22 and 23 Aug and at Weir Wood Res there were 14 on the 22nd and nine on the 23rd. At both sites the numbers declined over the next few days. Elsewhere fewer were seen with the highest number being three at Chichester GP on 16 and 18 Aug. A single bird at Arlington Res on 6 Sep and three at Chichester GP on 7 Oct were the latest records, the latter being six days earlier than the 10-year average date. [JAN]

White-winged Black Tern*Chlidonias leucopterus**Rare vagrant.*

A juvenile present at the east end of Weir Wood Res during the late afternoon and evening of 21 Aug (PFM *et al.*) was the first to be seen in the county since 1998. With the county total now on 46 it is perhaps surprising that it is the first record for Weir Wood. The previous five were all at Chichester GP. The long-term decline continues rather dramatically as 11 were recorded during the 1970s, ten in the 1980s and seven in the 1990s. During this period records have been in May (6, from the 3rd), June (4), July (3), August (12), September (3) and October (1, to the 10th). [RJF]

Sandwich Tern*Sterna sandvicensis**Scarce breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant; very scarce in winter. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.*

For the fourth successive winter birds were recorded in Chichester Hbr with singles on 7 Jan, 25 and 26 Feb.

From early March the species was recorded more regularly with one at Thorney Island on 8 Mar, one at Pilsley Island (Chichester Hbr) on the 14th and four at Rye Hbr on the 16th. Numbers built steadily at Rye Hbr with 26 by the 24 Mar, 50 on 25 Mar, 70 on 1 Apr, a minimum of 100 roosting on 5 Apr and, two days later, 225 were roosting at midday.

Although many had arrived at Rye Hbr in March, few were recorded passing the coast during this month. Analysis of the daily counts from each of the seawatching locations suggests that a minimum of 3855 birds flew east during the spring comprising 16 in March, 2732 in April and 1107 in May. Details of the easterly spring passage at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Total	No. per hr in Apr/May	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	2	1342	521	1865	6.1	254 on 21 Apr (11 hr)
Climping Beach	1	506	393	900	7.2	130 on 5 May (4½ hr)
Worthing Beach	-	960	434	1394	10.7	203 on 21 Apr (6 hr)
Telscombe Cliffs	6	475	140	621	10.1	109 on 22 Apr (3 hr)
Splash Point (Seaford)	12	2356	724	3092	14.5	664 on 21 Apr (14½ hr)

The peak counts of coastal passage occurred, as usual, in April and most were seen in the east of the county. The table below shows details of the nine days when more than 100 eastbound birds were recorded at any of the seawatching locations (time to nearest hour watched in brackets).

	19 Apr	20 Apr	21 Apr	22 Apr	24 Apr	25 Apr	5 May	6 May	13 May
Selsey Bill	nc	137 (10)	254 (11)	201 (10)	34 (4)	27 (3)	117 (12)	66 (10)	52 (12)
Climping Beach	12 (2)	104 (8)	35 (2)	78 (5)	53 (5)	nc	130 (5)	2 (1)	5 (2)
Worthing Beach	10 (1)	146 (7)	203 (6)	80 (3)	105 (5)	28 (1)	44 (4)	45 (3)	22 (4)
Telscombe Cliffs	39 (2)	25 (2)	89 (4)	109 (3)	39 (2)	39 (2)	6 (1)	nc	- (1)
Splash Point (Seaford)	144 (7)	116 (6)	664 (15)	387 (12)	158 (9)	298 (7)	140 (10)	115 (9)	187 (14)

Breeding was again successful at Rye Hbr where a count on 21 May at Ternery Pool found a total of over 264 nests and, when taking into account vegetation cover, the total was probably 400 pairs. A count on 8 Jul recorded 117 fledglings and it was considered that the total number fledging was probably over 400.

Numbers at Rye Hbr decreased from mid-summer as shown by the sample counts of 640 roosting on 19 Jul, 250 on 21 Jul, 100 on 27 Jul and 89 on 1 Aug. Autumn passage may have started early as 107 flew west at Selsey Bill in 11 hr watching on 27 Jun and 350 W in just 1½ hr on 28 Jun. Thereafter the monthly totals and peak movements 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	-	607	-	221	-	413	-	32	-	1273	164 W on 21 Sep (7 hr)
Climping Beach	7	35	88	89	91	45	2	3	188	172	51 E on 9 Sep (2 hr)
Worthing Beach	37	117	109	251	52	78	25	16	223	462	37 E & 41 W on 23 Aug (3 hr)
Telscombe Cliffs	5	12	36	267	6	25	2	33	49	337	2 E & 81W on 23 Aug (1 hr)

During August a small roost occurred on the fields at Goring Gap and reached a peak of 49 on the 22nd. Other notable counts in the autumn include 75 at Camber on 7 Sep and 200 roosting at Rye Hbr on the 8th whilst in October there were 31 roosting on the lifeboat slipway in Shoreham Hbr on the 3rd, 70 at Fairlight on the 7th, 28 at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on the 8th and 37 at Brighton Marina on the 13th. Twenty-six flew west at Telscombe Cliffs on 17 Oct but thereafter there were only eight others seen in October. Finally there were 2 E at Worthing on 5 Nov, singles in Chichester Hbr on 21 Nov and 3 Dec and 1 W at Selsey Bill on 30 Dec.

Two at Arlington Res on 23 Aug was the only record from an inland location. [JAN]

Common Tern*Sterna hirundo*

Fairly common breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant.

The first arrival was 13 days later than the 10-year average date with one at Pilsey Sands (Chichester Hbr) on 7 Apr. Two were at Goring and one at Chichester GP on the 9th and after the 11th records were daily and more widespread.

Coastal passage is better described under Common/Arctic Tern as the only three-figure counts from seawatching locations were 262 E in 8½ hrs at Splash Point (Seaford) on 21 Apr and 243 E from the same site in 7½ hrs watching on 22 Apr. These records were separate from the daily log as analysis of the daily counts from each of the seawatching locations suggests that a minimum of only 360 birds flew east during the spring comprising one in March, 174 in April and 186 in May. Spring roost counts at Rye Hbr included 200 on 23 Apr and 100 on 26 Apr.

At Rye Hbr about 175 pairs nested on the Beach Reserve. On 30 May a count revealed 100 pairs at Ternery Pool while 75+ pairs were estimated on the Quarry on 6 Jun. Overall fledging success was low due to adverse weather and Kestrel predation, with perhaps only 100 chicks fledging. At Pett Level a colony of about 50 pairs deserted after a bad hail storm; all the young died. Thirty-two pairs nested on Church Norton Spit or Tern Island in Pagham Hbr, raising at least 17 young. At Chichester GP 10-20 pairs bred but the rafts were dominated by Black-headed Gulls. In Chichester Hbr five pairs sat, apparently nesting, on South Stakes but with no success and the National Trust reported that three pairs hatched chicks on East Head (Chichester Hbr), but all failed to fledge. Two pairs nested on the rafts at Warnham LNR with the first pair hatching three chicks and the other on eggs all being predated on 17 Jun (assumed by mink); only one pair tried again, hatching two chicks by 18 Jul which were again predated. At least two pairs nested on rafts at Weir Wood Res.

Although a pair was displaying on 29 Apr, there was no confirmed breeding attempt for the third year at Arundel WWT. At Bewl Water up to seven birds were regularly recorded, up to five at Forest Mere and singles at Ardingly and Darwell Reservoirs but there was no indication of breeding at any of these sites.

Throughout July and August there were regular three-figure counts from Pagham Hbr with 150 on 14 Jul, 120 on 3 Aug and 200 fishing offshore on 31 Aug being the highest numbers recorded. Counts at Pilsey Island (Chichester Hbr) produced monthly maxima of 20 on 20 Jul, 200 on 24 Aug and 42 on 4 Sep. In the east of the county there were 114 roosting at Rye Hbr on 1 Aug and 160 at Camber on 7 Aug. Perhaps the most unusual records of the autumn came during strong northerly winds and rain on 22 Aug when a minimum of 200 were recorded near the dam at Bewl Water and 31 were seen at Weir Wood Res. Although 50 were still present at Bewl Water on the following day, these birds quickly moved on.

All the autumn coastal movements were recorded from the west of the county and a summary of monthly 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	-	146	-	611	-	80	-	9	-	846	530 W on 18 Aug (1¼ hr)
Climping	-	15	-	58	3	1	-	-	3	74	40 W on 1 Aug (2 hr)
Worthing Beach	1	28	26	639	102	60	-	3	129	727	212 W on 24 Aug (1½ hr)

Peak coastal movement occurred in August when additional offshore feeding flocks included 95 at Worthing on the 19th and 200 at Climping on the 30th.

Although regularly recorded throughout September and early October the numbers, particularly

after mid-September, were considerably smaller and from coastal locations. The last observations were from Pagham and Rye Harbours on 14 Oct and the species was recorded as present (although no details were given) in Pagham Hbr on 11 Nov; this being eight days 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.

There were just five substantiated records involving nine adult birds. Two were watched feeding offshore before moving west at Selsey Bill on 14 Jun (DIS *et al.*); two were at Pilsley Sands on 23 Jul (CBC, MAC) and one was seen at Church Norton on 2 Aug (BFF, DIS). The only observations of this species at Rye Hbr were two on 18 Jun and a presumed different two birds on 9 Jul. [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. The first record was of three flying east at Splash Point (Seaford) on 16 Apr (a week later than the 10-year average date) and thereafter a total of about 278 birds was noted in association with other terns on 19 spring dates until 29 May. The highest counts were all from Splash Point with 71 E on 21 Apr (14½ hr), 28 E on 22 Apr (11½ hr), 51 E on 30 Apr (7 hr) and 33 E on 2 May (2½ hr). Small numbers appeared at inland reservoirs with two at Weir Wood Res on 30 Apr, one on 6 May and six on 7 May; two at Arlington Res on 5 May and two at Darwell Res on 12 May.

There were no records for June but one was at Rye Hbr on 8 Jul and six flew west at Selsey Bill on 28 Jul. During the autumn about 90 birds were recorded on 40 different days and, unlike the spring, the highest number was recorded inland with ten at Weir Wood Res on 22 Aug and 21 there the following day. Two were at Bawl Water also on 23 Aug. Small numbers were recorded from seawatching points with autumn totals of 18 at Selsey Bill, and just two at both Climping and Worthing.

During the autumn this species was most frequently recorded from Shoreham Hbr; the records are unclear as to how many individuals were involved but between 14 Sep and 10 Oct up to seven, mainly juveniles, were recorded and, later, two were recorded between 9 and 11 Nov. These were the last for the year, eight days later than the 10-year average date of 3 Nov and, coincidentally, the same date as the last Common Tern. [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 just 4707 birds flew east during April and May, comprising 2442 in April and 2265 in May. None was

seen during March. The first was 1 E at Selsey Bill on 6 Apr but not until 11 Apr was the species recorded regularly. The numbers recorded each spring fluctuate widely with a range from 1045 (1987) to 19,750 (2001) and an average of 7800 (1985-2007), so this was a poor year. The easterly spring passage totals at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Total	No. per hr in Apr/May	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	0	668	1574	2242	7.4	522 on 5 May (1½ hr)
Climping Beach	0	33	392	425	3.4	330 on 5 May (4½ hr)
Worthing Beach	0	398	809	1207	9.2	464 on 5 May (4 hr)
Telscombe Cliffs	0	174	75	249	4.1	96 on 30 Apr(1¾hr)
Splash Point (Seaford)	0	2334	1821	4155	19.6	696 on 5 May (10 hr)

In 2007 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 brackets).

	21 Apr	22 Apr	29 Apr	3 May	5 May	6 May
Selsey Bill	60 (11)	53 (10)	53 (12)	291(12)	522(12)	134 (10)
Climping Beach	3 (2)	4 (5)	- (3)	43 (2)	330 (5)	4 (3)
Worthing Beach	90 (6)	6 (3)	11 (7)	100(2)	464 (4)	9 (3)
Telscombe Cliffs	59 (4)	8 (3)	3 (3)	39 (2)	- (1)	nc
Splash Point (Seaford)	417(15)	470(12)	301(14)	331 (4)	696 (10)	371(9)

The tables also show considerable variation in the numbers seen at different sites with the largest numbers seen in the east of the county. The only noteworthy records in the late spring were 120 and 100 offshore at Selsey Bill on 17 and 19 May respectively and 65 E, also at Selsey Bill, on 10 Jun.

Autumn passage clearly started remarkably early as a significant westward passage was recorded at Selsey Bill in late June and early July. The highest day totals were 630E on 27 Jun (11 hr), 550 W on 28 Jun (1½ hr), 260 W on 30 Jun (10 hr), 385 W on 5 Jul (9½ hr) and 435 W on 7 Jul (9½ hr). Details of the autumn seawatching are summarised in the table below; it is remarkable that at all sites except Selsey Bill there is movement in both east and west direction. [JAN]

	Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct		Total		Peak movement
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	
Selsey Bill	-	2086	-	1147	-	56	-	-	-	3289	665 W on 19 Aug (6¾hr)
Climping	-	-	70	28	6	85	-	-	76	113	52 W on 1 Sep(1 hr)
Worthing Beach	-	25	664	754	12	32	-	-	676	811	507 E & 134 W on 23 Aug (3 hr)
Telscombe Cliffs	2	2	16	42	-	-	-	10	18	54	22 W on 17 Aug (¾ hr)

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
13	7	4	19	46	38	10	1	15	10	59	19

The totals recorded at the principal seawatching sites are shown in the table below. Some birds will have been at a site on more than one occasion or at more than one site so no attempt should be made to add the columns or rows.

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	2	-	-	9	1	32	15	4	30	1	6	9	24	9	7
Climping Beach	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-
Worthing Beach	-	1	-	-	10	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	2	3	1
Telscombe Cliffs	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Splash Point (Seaford)	3	2	-	12	11	-	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	18	2	-

The last two years have shown a dramatic drop in the numbers of Common Guillemots. The annual total of 241 for 2007 was marginally higher than for 2006 (221) but still far below the 10-year rolling average of 1012.

During the first winter period a total of just five birds was recorded moving offshore. In that same period the total of 17 birds recorded on the sea were all singletons. Spring passage was also slight with a peak of 19 W at Selsey Bill on 30 May. Small numbers continued to be recorded moving west past Selsey Bill in June and July with a peak day count of eight on 30 Jun.

An adult bird with a young chick was seen off Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 30 Jun and it is tempting to think that the species bred at the site this year. However, young Guillemots leave their nest sites with the adults before they can fly and may travel some distance to feed. It is possible that the sighting involved birds which nested on the Isle of Wight or even further afield.

Numbers remained low throughout the autumn and second winter periods with the only double-figure count being ten off Peacehaven on 11 Nov.

There were eleven records of birds away from the open sea involving singletons in Chichester Hbr (including one as far inland as Apuldram), Pagham Hbr, Brighton Marina and Langney Hbr.

During the year the RSPCA at Mallydams (Fairlight) admitted 35 Common Guillemots which had been found oiled on Sussex beaches. [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 during the year were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
29	9	11	113	69	8	5	-	26	82	341	109

The annual total of 802 showed an increase over the 2006 total (636) but was still under one third of the ten-year rolling average. The totals recorded at the main seawatching sites are shown in the table below. No attempt should be made to add the columns or rows, as some birds will have been recorded at more than one location.

Numbers in the first winter period were low with no counts of more than five birds. Spring passage was also slight with 16 E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 23 Apr and 24 W at Selsey Bill on 15 May being the only double-figure counts.

The second winter period also started with low numbers and an October peak of just 17 W at Selsey Bill on the 28th. Numbers increased in November with a total of 148 W at Selsey Bill

during the four-day period 11th-14th. Also in this period there were 30 E at Worthing Beach on 11 Nov. There were few records after that until 25 Dec when there were 53 W at Selsey Bill. The largest gatherings on the sea were 15 in Rye Bay on 8 Oct, ten off Brighton Marina on 13 Nov and 16 at Newhaven on 27 Nov.

Direction	Jan-Feb			Mar-May			Jun-Jul			Sep-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	3	1	9	21	7	49	4	-	4	7	2	29	18	12	180
Climping Beach	-	-	-	9	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	10	-
Worthing Beach	4	-	5	22	6	1	1	-	4	3	-	27	51	11	81
Telscombe Cliffs	-	3	4	3	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Splash Point (Seaford)	2	1	-	60	28	2	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	13	-	8

Birds recorded away from the open sea included single birds in Pagham Hbr in January and Chichester Hbr in March, one or two in Brighton Marina on several dates in November and one on the R Adur at Norfolk Bridge (Shoreham) in November.

The RSPCA at Mallydams (Fairlight) reported that just a single Razorbill was admitted after being found oiled on a Sussex beach. [DHH]



Little Auk, Southwick, December 2007 (Dorian Mason)

Little Auk

Alle alle

Very scarce autumn passage migrant and winter visitor.

For the second consecutive year tens of thousands entered the north sea including a record 28,803 past the Farne Islands (Northumberland) on 11 Nov (*British Birds* 101:54). This resulted in the highest total recorded in the county since 2001, with a minimum of 32 birds as follows:

5 Nov	1 over Downs north of Brighton [PC]
10 Nov	2 W Ferring Beach at 1110-1200 GMT (DIS)
11 Nov	12 W Selsey Bill at 0945-1408 GMT (RJF, OM <i>et al.</i>) 8 W Worthing Beach at 0810-1206 GMT (DIS <i>et al.</i>)
12 Nov	3 W Selsey Bill at 1045-1300 GMT (OM <i>et al.</i>) 1 E Goring Beach at 1015 GMT (BFF <i>et al.</i>)
13 Nov	1 E Goring Beach at 1015 GMT (BFF <i>et al.</i>)
14 Nov	1 W Climping Beach at 0910 GMT (OM)
24 Nov	1 E & 1W Worthing Beach at 0840 & 0910 GMT (DIS)
25 Nov	1 W Telscombe Cliffs at 0810 GMT (DHH)
12 Dec	1 Southwick Canal (PJ <i>et al.</i>)

The bird at Southwick Canal, which was first seen on 12 Dec, remained until 26 Dec and proved popular with many observers. It was the longest recorded stay by a Little Auk in the county. The most unusual record of the year was the single bird which was photographed as it flew over the Downs to the north of Brighton on 5 Nov. [DHH]

Auk Species

The total of 4712 reported shows a dramatic drop from 2006 (30,676) and is only one tenth of the 10-year rolling average. It should 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 true number of birds involved.

The approximate monthly totals recorded at the main seawatching sites (including those birds specifically identified as Common Guillemots and Razorbills) were as follows:

Direction	Jan-Feb			Mar-May			Jun-Jul			Sep-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	10	2	32	124	8	171	29	2	85	50	7	159	654	21	604
Climping Beach	-	1	-	23	1	5	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	11	4
Worthing Beach	57	-	20	40	17	9	1	2	4	10	-	90	293	24	324
Telscombe Cliffs	26	13	223	14	10	1	-	-	-	5	-	5	27	36	126
Splash Point (Seaford)	43	3	63	408	44	17	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	278	2	137

It is a disturbing fact that the total number of Auks recorded during the whole of the year was lower than the numbers seen in a single day in the years 2001 to 2005. Also, there were no four-figure peak day counts for the first time since 1995 and there were only six dates on which three-figure counts occurred. In the first winter period there was a small scale movement on 28 Jan involving 53 W at Splash Point (Seaford), 40 W at Telscombe Cliffs (Portobello) and 68 W at Shoreham. The only daily total of over 100 birds in this period was of 163 W in $\frac{3}{4}$ hr at Telscombe Cliffs on 31 Jan. Spring passage did not produce any large numbers although Splash Point did record a total of 308 E in April.

There were no other significant movements until November when the numbers recorded in the west of the county during the eight-day period from the 7th-14th accounted for over a quarter of the annual total. The numbers recorded in this movement are shown in the table below:

	Selsey Bill			Worthing Beach		
	E	W	Hrs	E	W	Hrs
Nov 7	72	-	2	nc	nc	-
8	6	71	3½	nc	nc	-
9	30	40	6	nc	nc	-
10	346	19	8	35	70	41/4
11	31	71	9¼	111	64	5
12	2	135	6½	nc	nc	-
13	110	87	9	79	31	4¼
14	21	83	7	nc	nc	-

These movements were not noted in the east of the county although observers at Splash Point did record 41 E and 30 W in 1¼ hr on 19 Nov and 66 E and 7 W in 1½ hr on 21 Nov.

Auks in flight are notoriously difficult to specifically identify unless seen at fairly close range and as a result only a quarter of the Auks reported were assigned to a specific species. Where birds were specifically identified, the ratio of Common Guillemots to Razorbills was 1:3.5 which is similar to the ratios noted in the two previous years. [DHH]

Feral Rock Dove

Columba livia

Common resident.

As usual, reports were generally received from the coastal area with flocks averaging 20 birds. More noteworthy counts were 98 at Brighton Marina on 27 Jan, 108 at Preston Park (Brighton) on 12 Apr, 190 at Hove on 29 Apr and 99 there on 3 Jun. There were also two inland records of 65 at Lewes on 13 Feb and 65 in East Grinstead on 14 Jun.

In the latter part of the year, apart from 80 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 22 Nov, the last appreciable flock of the year was 150 at Portslade-by-Sea on 16 Dec. [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 flocks were recorded at the same three coastal locations as in 2006: viz. Thorney Island where 200 birds were seen on 24 Jan, Rye Hbr where 60 birds were seen roosting on 5 Feb and Pett Level where the maximum count for March was 62.

The species was recorded in 236 1-km squares, compared with 179 1-km squares in 2006. During the BBS, 96 individuals were recorded in 38 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 13 at East Ashling. The Garden BirdWatch scheme reported sightings from 22 of the 413 gardens surveyed.

The earliest records of singing were on 5 Feb at Warren Hill (Washington) and on the 18th at Darwell Res. Pairs were seen visiting owl boxes at Warnham LNR on 12 Mar and at Barcombe Res on the 18th. Breeding was confirmed in 46 1-km squares by at least 69 pairs, and records were received of probable breeding by another 23 pairs in 18 1-km squares. This was an increase in confirmed breeding locations and pairs compared to 2006. Late breeding was recorded at Sakeham

Fm (Shermanbury) where two eggs were found in a nest on 29 Aug. Birds were present in a total of 150 1-km squares widely dispersed throughout the county during the breeding season.

Fifty-two nests (75%) in owl boxes were reported. At Weir Wood Res, at a nest sited in a duck box, a pair raised three broods, each with two chicks. Out of 28 nests, 25 (90%) contained two eggs or chicks, and three just one.

The first indication of dispersal from breeding areas was a flock of 40 seen at Thorney Deeps on 8 Aug. One sizeable movement was reported in the second winter period with 360 SW on 30 Oct at Glyne Gap (Bexhill). At Rye Hbr at least 50 were seen leaving their roost at dawn on 20 Oct, and 50 were observed there on 18 Nov. At least 100 were seen at The Burgh (Burpham) on 25 Nov with 2000 to 3000 Wood Pigeon, and a flock of 70 was recorded at The Burgh on 1 Dec. The only other significant count in December was 35 at Pett Level. [CJR]

Wood Pigeon

Columba palumbus

Abundant resident and winter visitor.

In the first winter period, high counts included 500 at Doleham Valley on 27 Jan and 1000 at Guestling on 4 Feb. However, West Dean Woods hosted the usual large winter concentration with 3000 on 17 Feb, a conservative estimate of 5000 at Lodge Hill Farm (West Dean) on 6 Mar and 2000 at West Dean Woods on 20 Mar.



Wood Pigeon, Hodcombe, June 2007 (Roger Charlwood)

A juvenile was reported in East Dean village on 9 Feb but was found dead there a week later. Other breeding reports included 80 pairs at Brighton Wild Park, along with 55 territories identified at Sefter Fm (Pagham) and 26 territories at Hotham Park (Bognor).

Autumn migration commenced on 30 Oct with 11,600 flying west at Worthing Beach in one

hour, 8550 passing southwest at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) and 5350 over Brighton Borough. A further 8500 flew west at Worthing Beach with 5000 at Beachy Head on 31 Oct. On 3 Nov, 4000 were at The Burgh (Burpham) while 6000 at Beachy Head on 4 Nov marked the end of an unremarkable passage.

The final report of any note was for 3000 at Phillis Wood (East Marden) on 31 Dec. [APo]

Collared Dove

Streptopelia decaocto

Very common resident.

Flock sizes were of generally under a dozen birds. The highest counts for the year were 29 at Harbour Fm (Rye Hbr) on 12 Jan, 28 at East Grinstead on 14 Feb and a further 29 at Portslade-by-Sea on 17 Apr.

Breeding records included 30 pairs at Brighton Wild Park (35 in 2006), four pairs in the Pagham area, two territories at Hotham Park (Bognor) (five in 2006) and two territories at Sefter Fm (Pagham) (three in 2006). The reduced breeding records and lack of any flocks over 50 birds suggest a poor year for this species.

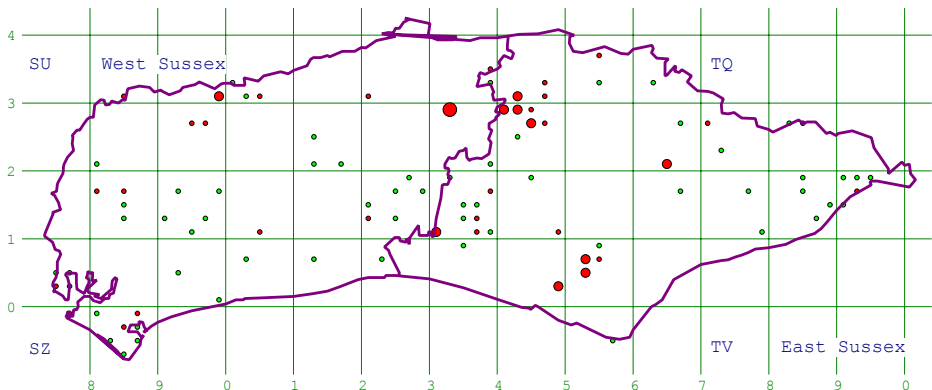
In the latter part of the year, 27 at Lower Beeding on 27 Oct provided the only notable count. [APo]

Turtle Dove

Streptopelia turtur

Scarce but declining summer visitor and passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Whilst the 231 records received (see map below) showed some improvement on the 195 records for 2006, it does not disguise the increasing concern for this species with two thirds of the observations being of just single birds.



The first sighting of the year was of two at St Leonards (Hollington) on 10 Apr, four days later than the 10-year average date. The usual ones and twos followed until four were seen on 3 May at Thorney Deeps, three at Rye Hbr on the 5th, four at Hog Wood (Plaistow) on the 12th, five at Sparrows Green (Wadhurst) on the 21st and seven at Pett Level on the 24th. Ones or twos were then seen daily throughout the summer at Rye Hbr.

Despite the increased number of records, there were only two records of confirmed breeding compared to four in 2006: one at Ardingly Res (no details) and one at Brooks Green where two juveniles were seen on 2 Jul. There were at least 17 probable breeding pairs (22 in 2006): four at Rye Hbr (seven in 2006), two at Thorney Deeps and at Chelwood Common (Danehill) and singles at 11 other sites.

Later summer records were poor with the largest numbers being just five at Thorney Deeps on 22 Jul and five at Rye Hbr on 20 Aug. There were only three September records with the last sighting of the year being a singleton at Splaynes Green (Fletching) on the 24th, one day earlier than the 10-year average date. [APo]

Rose-ringed Parakeet

Psittacula krameri

Very scarce introduced breeding resident.

Interestingly, most of the handful of sightings was of singletons at some 13 coastal or near coastal sites from Pagham Hbr in the west to Alexandra Park (Hastings) in the east. These two locations were also the only coastal sites where twos were recorded.

The only inland sites where birds were seen were near the county boundary with Surrey, where numbers continue to increase. The sighting of a singleton at Gatwick on 9 Apr might have come from the Surrey population as indeed could the six noted at Warnham LNR on 3 Nov and the 15 at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on the 29th. Perhaps these and the individual which was noted on numerous dates at High Salvington (Worthing) between 5 Mar and 17 Dec might lead to not only the first residency but also to regular breeding. [APo]

Common Cuckoo

Cuculus canorus

Fairly common summer visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The first bird was recorded on 1 Apr at Knepp Estate (West Grinstead), which is just a day earlier than the 10-year average date. The second bird was reported on 9 Apr at Horns Cross. Birds were then reported daily from 11 Apr until the end of the month, by which time 157 reports had been received from all over the county relating to a total of 184 birds (although it is likely that some duplication was involved). Peak daily counts were 16 birds on 15 and 22 Apr, and 28 birds on the 29th. The April maximum count was four birds at East Rother Levels.

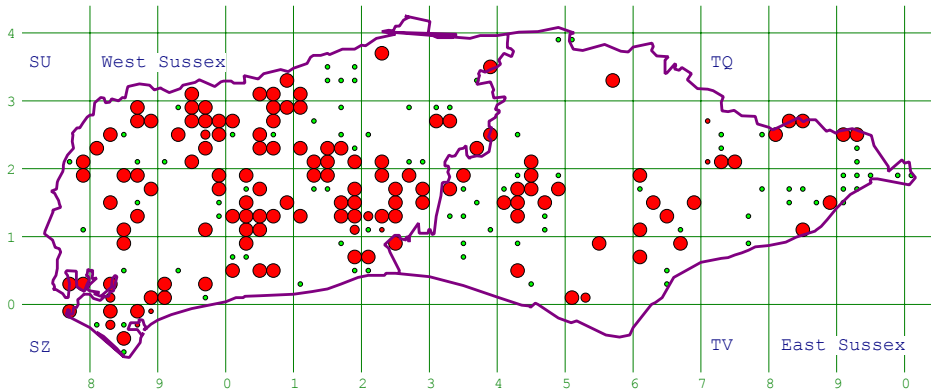
During the BBS a total of 67 birds was recorded in 43 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed. (In 2006 62 birds were recorded in 47 of 122 1-km squares surveyed). A total of 37 birds was reported in 13 gardens out of 413 participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

Breeding was confirmed at just four locations. At Pagham Hbr seven pairs were recorded. At Rye Hbr where two pairs bred, two fledglings were seen being fed by two pairs of Reed Warblers. Reed Warblers were also the hosts for the pair which bred at Arundel WWT while near Troutbeck (Eridge) a juvenile was seen being fed by Dunnocks on 6 Jun. Reports of probable breeding by an estimated 16 pairs were received for 11 1-km squares. Of the probable breeding pairs, five were in the Ashdown Forest area. Out of 125 reports received of possible breeding, 44% related to birds in the Ashdown Forest area. Eight juveniles were reported between July and September.

Only seven reports were received for August and five for September. The last bird was a juvenile seen at Iford Brooks on 23 Sep, which is four days earlier than the 10-year average date. [CJR]

Barn Owl*Tyto alba**Scarce breeding resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.*

Records of all sightings 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
46	23	7	15	22	17	9	11	13	18	31	37

In contrast to 2006, this year was a very good year for breeding Barn Owls with 171 nests reported. In the west of the county 125 breeding attempts were recorded. Fifty nests were in boxes on trees, two in owl lofts in occupied “barn conversion” dwelling houses and one in an old railway bridge. The remainder were in nest boxes in barns. Twenty two of the nests were the first uses of the site. At one site three chicks fledged but one was later found dead below the nest box.

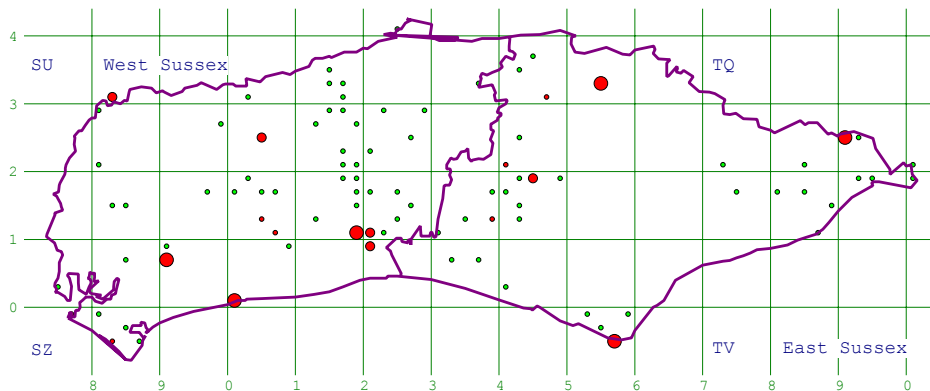
In the east 46 nests were recorded, of which 25 were in tree boxes, six in pole boxes and the remainder in barns. Ten sites in the east which have had Barn Owls in the past were not monitored.

Eight Barn Owls were reported killed on Sussex roads during the year and two were found drowned in cattle troughs. [ABW]

Little Owl*Athene noctua**Fairly common resident; introduced to Britain in the 19th century.*

Records were received from 81 sites during the year compared to an average of 64 sites over the last three years. The strongholds of the species in the county continue to be farmland on the coastal plain, in the river valleys and on the Downs. The records were distributed as shown on the map below.

Only five pairs were confirmed as breeding which is average for recent years. However, birds were noted as present in breeding habitat during the spring or suspected of breeding at a further 17 sites including three pairs calling within the Cement Works (Upper Beeding). A number of pairs were recorded utilising nest boxes and one pair nested inside a dead Ash tree.



Little Owl, Hodcombe, November 2007 (Roger Charwood)

As in 2006, a number of sites had their first records of birds during the autumn and this may be indicative of dispersal from breeding areas. In 2007, these sites included Snowhill Marsh (West Wittering), Brighton Wild Park (which the observer noted as the first record there for ten years) and Beachy Head. Two road casualties were noted during the year. [DG]

Tawny Owl*Strix aluco**Fairly common resident.*

Birds were reported from approximately 204 sites compared with an average of 117 sites over the previous three years. This increase was partly due to the Garden BirdWatch scheme, which recorded birds in 72 of the 413 gardens participating in the scheme, and also to the number of records from Birdtrack. As would be expected, the majority of records relate to birds heard rather than seen.

Breeding was confirmed by 14 pairs at 11 sites which is average compared to the last three years. At a further nine locations breeding was thought possible or probable and, considering the sedentary nature of this species, many of the other birds recorded during the year were undoubtedly resident individuals who may have attempted to breed. Nest sites included two pairs in owl boxes, a pair in a Stock Dove box and one pair which utilised a hole in a birch tree. During the BBS, birds were recorded in six of the 123 1-km squares surveyed.

The peak season for records was, as usual, the autumn when birds become more vocal and, in 2007, records peaked in October with 72 records in the month. Unfortunately five birds were found dead during the year, four of them road casualties. Birds were recorded roosting in Norway Spruce and Cypress trees. There were no records of grey birds in 2007. [DG]

Long-eared Owl*Asio otus**Very scarce resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Only 76 records were received from eight sites compared to 114 records from 20 sites in 2006. In the first winter period only two roosts were found. Roosting birds were present at Rye Hbr until 1 Mar, with a maximum of three present on 1 Jan. A winter roost at Site A, further west in the county, held a minimum of seven birds on the 1 Feb and was occupied until early March.

There were no records of confirmed breeding despite four visits to Site C during the breeding season where breeding was last confirmed in 2005.

During the year, the Long-Eared Owl Study Group continued a project on Sussex Downland with the aim of ascertaining the distribution and abundance of the species in this habitat. In the late winter/early spring, wing-clapping males or calling females were observed at three potential nest sites and birds were present with no territorial behaviour noted at a further site. At Site D, where three territorial males were recorded in 2006 within a 1-km square, three territories were again evident and birds appeared to be using nest sites in the same areas as in the previous year. All these sites were visited 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, there were birds at a further three sites in the county during the breeding season including a single bird in woodland in the north of the county and a calling bird on territory in a river valley. Site details for this species are strictly confidential because of its sensitivity to disturbance.

No autumn migrants were observed, and the first bird recorded at a known roost during the second winter period was a singleton at Rye Hbr on 9 Nov. The roost at Site A was occupied from 18 Oct through to the year end with a maximum of five birds on the 12 Dec.

The Study Group recovered nine fresh pellets from the winter roost at Site A in the first winter period. These contained the remains of 16 field voles and two wood mice, with an average of two prey items per pellet and a maximum of three. [DG]



Long-eared Owl, November 2007 (Martin Casemore)

Short-eared Owl

Asio flammeus

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

The following table gives approximate monthly totals taking account of possible duplication at well watched sites:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
6	5	5	5		4	16	14	10

The low number of birds recorded at the end of 2006 continued into 2007. During the first four months of the year 39 records were received covering ten areas with the majority coming from Thorney Island (8) and Pagham Hbr (14). At Rodmell Brooks a single bird was present on 11 Jan with four there on the 16th; the only other record for this area being of one on 3 Mar. At Thorney Island (Chichester Hbr), two birds were seen on numerous dates between 2 Feb and 14 Mar and singletons were present at Shoreham Airport between 1 Jan and 16 Apr and around Pagham Hbr between 15 Mar and 21 Apr, the last spring record for the county. Possibly one wide roaming individual was seen in the first four months of the year between Rye Hbr and Pett Level and probable migrants (or possibly the same bird) were observed at Saltdean Cliffs on 13 Apr and the following day at Brighton Marina.

The first autumn migrant was observed at Pagham Hbr on 7 Sep continuing the recent pattern for birds to arrive back during September rather than August. The only other records for September were of singles in the Lower Cuckmere Valley on the 15th, at Church Norton on the 26th

and Cissbury Ring on the 28th. Numbers were roughly average during the autumn/second winter period and were mostly of single birds including migrants flying west at Shoreham Hbr on 10 Oct, at Climping Gap on the 12th, over Brighton on the 24th, flushed from Shoreham Beach on 13 Nov and at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) on the 24th. Elsewhere, migrants were present at Beachy Head on the 18, 19 and 27 Oct and on 4 Nov and a bird was present away from the coast at Heyshott Down on 1 Oct.

Birds returned to favoured wintering areas on the coast and in river valleys during October with maxima during the last three months of the year of four at Thorney Island on 11 and 18 Dec, three at Pagham Hbr on 30 Oct and two on the Selsey peninsular on 1 Oct and 14 Dec. Elsewhere, wintering individuals were recorded from the Downs at The Burgh (Burpham), Beeding Brooks, Rodmell and Rye Hbr. [DG]

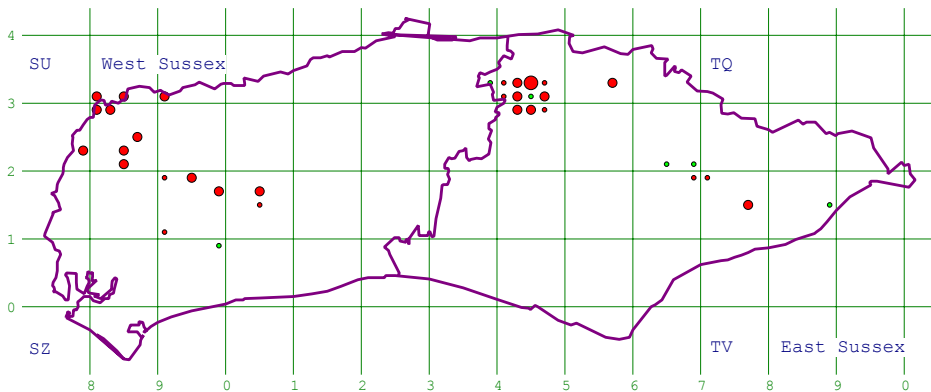
European Nightjar

Caprimulgus europaeus

Fairly common summer visitor rarely seen on migration. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

The first record of the year was of a single bird resting in a young plantation in Rewell Wood (Arundel) on 28 Apr, the same date as the 10-year average. There were no further records from this site, which suggests that the bird was still on migration to breeding grounds.

The first churring males were recorded on 5 May, a typical date, at three sites: Pulborough Brooks, Parham Estate and Hindleap Warren (Ashdown Forest). However, the next records were not until the 12th. Subsequently, there were records of confirmed or probable breeding from 22 1-km squares and birds were seen in a further 12 1-km squares within the breeding areas (see map below).



In the west of the county, 22 territories were recorded on ten sites through the Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey (WHBBS) with, as usual, the largest concentrations being at Iping and Stedham Commons, with nine pairs. Outside the WHBBS area, up to two males were at Chiseldown (East Dean), three individuals at Rackham Woods, three at Pulborough Brooks but only a single at Parham Estate and none at Angmering Park, sites which have held several churring males in former years.

In the east of the county, the bulk of the records were as usual from the Ashdown Forest. Estimating the total number of churring males is difficult, but birds were recorded in 23 1-km

squares with very few counts of more than two males. The highest tally came from the Old Airstrip on 9 Jun when seven churring birds were recorded. Elsewhere in the east, four were seen at Hoth Farm (Rotherfield) on 21 Jun, two were in Dallington Forest on 17 Jul, there was a maximum of two churring in Darwell Woods, and two were churring at Telham near Crowhurst on 19 Jul.

Although an exact county total is not possible, there is little to suggest a significant increase or decrease from the 105-106 potential territories recorded in the full survey in 2006.

The last churring male was recorded at Wrens Warren (Ashdown) on 31 Jul, and the final record of breeding activity (displaying birds) was at Ashdown Ridge on 4 Aug. Two records of migrating birds were received from Pett Level on 16 and 26 Aug, the last being nearly four weeks earlier than the 10-year average departure date of 21 Sep. [CET/AT]

Common Swift

Apus apus

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

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

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
No. of birds	230	3039	3649	2003	463	9	2
No. of sites	47	123	130	108	31	8	2

Of the 254 sites overall, c.59% were in the west of the county.

The first bird of the year was one at Hollingbury Camp (Brighton) on 11 Apr, just one day earlier than the 10-year average date. It was followed by singletons at Newmarket Hill and Sedlescombe Street on the 16th. There were then daily records to the end of the month, generally in smallish numbers. The largest counts were (in date order): 23 at Selsey Bill on the 20th, 40 at Chichester GP on the 25th, 20 at Rye Hbr and 120 at Weir Wood Res on the 27th and 20 at Climping Beach on the 29th.

There were daily records through to the end of May, with major arrivals and increasing count sizes being noted widely. There were eight counts of 100-150 during the month: at Chichester GP, Selsey Bill, Climping Beach, Pulborough Brooks, Brighton College, Arlington Res, Bewl Water and Pett Level. The largest count, however, was 1200 at Weir Wood Res on the 10th. This was followed by 200 at Barcombe Res on the 14th, 200 at Rye Hbr next day and again on the 21st; 300 at Barcombe Res on the 26th but 800 next day and, finally, 300 at Rye Hbr on the 29th. Monthly totals at some of the principal seawatching sites, where arrivals were recorded up to the 25th, included 133N at Selsey Bill, 258 at Climping Beach (131N), 67N at Worthing Beach and 80N at Splash Point (Seaford). The highest counts in June were 400E at Telscombe Cliffs on the 4th and, at Rye Hbr, 250 on the 4th, 300 on the 24th and 1000 on the 26th.

Few breeding records were received and the only colony for which the number of nests was quoted was at Binderton (West Dean). Birds were nesting in the gable ends of shops and flats at Shoreham, were entering the roof space at Wakehurst Place and were reported as having nests in East Grinstead. Breeding was probable at traditional sites at Storrington and West Chilmington, although birds were not seen entering nest locations, and at Ratton (Eastbourne). Birds were recorded during the BBS in 38 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed and in 56 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

Return passage might have started as early as 19 Jul: 80 were seen over Worthing that day and 50 at Rye Hbr on the 20th, when the month's maximum count of 100 occurred at Warnham



LNR. At Goring on the 23rd 230 flew northeast in seven minutes, which were possibly birds on feeding forays. On the 26th a monthly maximum of 200 occurred at Pett Level and there were 50 over the R Ouse near Barcombe, but on the 29th 170W at Telscombe Cliffs appeared to be positive passage.

Birds were recorded on most days in August in generally small groups and progressively decreasing numbers. The largest groups were 130 on the 1st at Shoreham (where the final sighting was four on the 8th), 50 at Rye Hbr on the 2nd and 60 at Warnham LNR on the 10th. The final sighting at Ashcombe Bottom (Lewes) was on the 13th and, at Pett Level, 20 on the 15th. Elsewhere, small numbers continued to be seen to the end of the month. There were five records of one or two birds for the first three days of September followed by single stragglers on the 16th, 17th and 18th. The last two were singles on 1 Oct at Brighton and the 8th at Hailsham, 11 days earlier than the 10-year average departure date. [JAH]

Common Kingfisher

Alcedo atthis

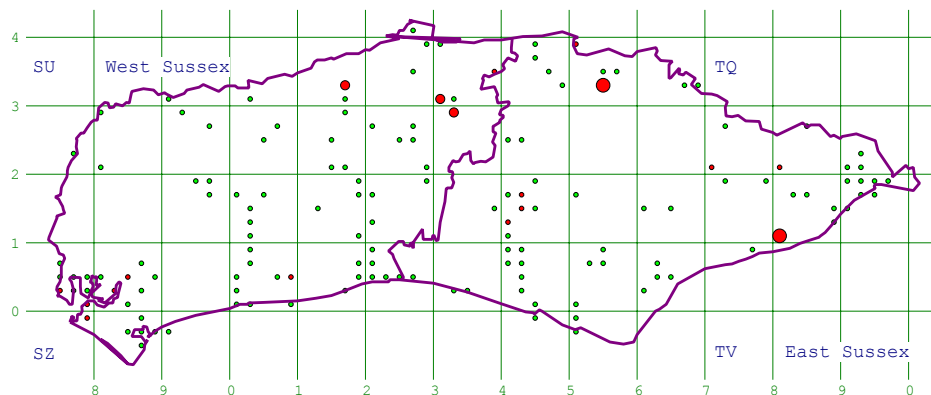
Fairly common resident and occasional winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

Records were received for 164 1-km squares as shown in the map below, and observations during the winter months were as follows:

	Jan	Feb		Nov	Dec
No. of birds	43	33		78	62
No. of inland sites	20	15		30	29
No. of coastal sites	20	11		22	16

In January and February there were fewer birds recorded than in 2006 (15% and 23%

respectively) whereas in November and December 25% more birds were reported than in 2006. In the first winter period, the number of coastal and inland sites was broadly similar but in the second winter period there were more records for inland sites in both months.



Once again there were few reports of breeding with breeding confirmed at just three sites. At a site in the east of the county where a pair raised at least two broods, two juveniles were seen being fed by both parents on 4 May, and at another site a single juvenile was first seen on 2 Jun. At a site in the west of the county a family party with three young was seen on 15 Jul. Breeding was probable at another site in the east. During the breeding season, birds were observed in suitable nesting habitat at a further two locations. Birds were reported in a total of 34 1-km squares, mostly inland.

From August an increasing number of birds were reported at coastal locations. On 6 Oct seven birds were seen at Alexandra Park (Hastings), and on the 24th six birds were found in the Lower Cuckmere Valley. Birds were reported at a site in the north of the county throughout the year with a monthly maximum count of five birds in July, August and October.

There were 66 sightings from 11 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme. [CJR]

Roller

Coracias garrulus

Very rare vagrant.

2005: One seen near Eridge on 11 Jun (IR, PR) has been accepted by *BBRC*. It is about the 17th to be recorded in the county but the first since 1977 when one graced Upwaltham Down during 19-22 Jun. Occurring away from traditional birding sites and with most observers unaware of their presence before they have departed this species remains very high on most county 'wanted lists'. The 15 dated records have fallen in May (1 on the 29th), June (6), July (4), August (2) and September (2, last on the 22nd). [RJF]

Hoopoe

Upupa epops

Very scarce spring and even scarcer autumn passage migrant; has bred.

2006: Singletons were seen in April near the miniature railway on Eastbourne GC on the 2nd

to the 4th, south of the church at Rodmell on the 20th and at Pett Level on the 25th while another was at the Long Pit (Rye Hbr) on 6 May. Later in the year singletons were reported from Church Norton on 21 Aug and 11 Sep.

2007: One was flushed from the drive at Cobnor Fm (Chidham) on 14 May. There have been 26 records since the start of 2000, an average of just over three per year. This looks set to continue the decline evident in the totals per decade from the 1960s to the 1990s, namely 104, 96, 63 and 47. [RJF]



Wryneck, Beachy Head, August 2007 (Peter Wilson)

Wryneck

Jynx torquilla

Very scarce passage migrant; last bred in 1944. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The 13 records received suggested a minimum of nine birds during the year, fewer than in recent years. The only spring record was of a single bird at Flatroper's Wood (Rye Hbr) on 22 Apr, ten days later than the 10-year average arrival date of 12 Apr.

In August, a single bird was in the Beachy Head area between the 24th and 27th, and another singleton was at Hastings on the 24th. There were further sightings of single birds at Shoreham on the 27th and Selsey West Fields on the 28th. A single bird was trapped and ringed at Pett Level on the 28th. In September, single birds were seen at Hastings on the 8th and Pett Level on the 17th. The final record of the year was at Thorney Deeps on the 22nd, two weeks earlier than the 10-year average date of 6 Oct. [HC]

Green Woodpecker*Picus viridis**Fairly common resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.*

This species is widely distributed across the county, and many sightings were reported throughout the year, as shown in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	117	113	181	304	223	258	248	219	188	185	179	164
No. of sites	92	83	123	199	160	157	147	133	129	117	121	118

Breeding was only confirmed in 17 1-km squares, in almost every case by the observation of juvenile birds. Probable breeding was recorded in a further 46 1-km squares including territories identified on the West Sussex Commons, recorded as part of the Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey.

A total of 163 birds was recorded in 81 of the 123 BBS squares surveyed (66%), compared with 165 birds recorded in 86 of the 122 squares surveyed in 2006 (70%). The species was also seen in 135 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme. [HC]

Great Spotted Woodpecker*Dendrocopos major**Common resident.*

This species is widely distributed across the county, and many sightings were reported throughout the year, as demonstrated in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	253	240	286	409	384	466	260	201	171	246	253	243
No. of sites	207	180	210	278	278	270	191	158	142	201	214	201

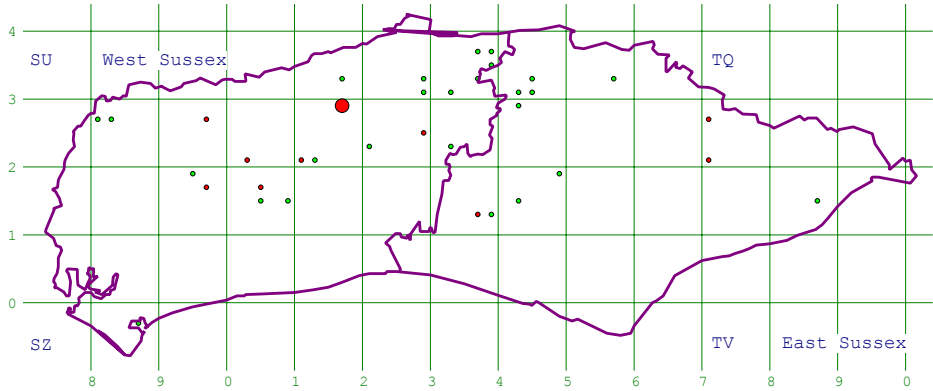
Breeding was only confirmed in 29 1-km squares. Probable breeding was recorded in a further 47 1-km squares including territories identified on the West Sussex Commons, recorded as part of the Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey. A total of 214 birds was recorded in 79 of the 123 BBS squares surveyed (64%), compared with 210 birds recorded in 83 of 122 squares surveyed in 2006 (68%). The species was also seen in 277 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

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 Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on 27 Oct, and there were further reports for several dates until the end of the year. [HC]

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker*Dendrocopos minor**Scarce and declining resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.*

There were only 76 records of this species from 32 territorial sites and a further five gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme as shown on the map below. Breeding was confirmed at only one site in the Horsham area when adult birds were seen entering and feeding young at a nest hole in an alder tree beside the R Arun between 16 Apr and 27 May and where at least four juveniles fledged. There were many other reports of birds drumming or seen in suitable

nesting habitat but the species was not recorded in any of the 123 BBS squares surveyed.



Drumming was first reported from Burton MP on 5 Feb, and one bird was seen and heard at this location on several dates until the end of April. Other sightings included a pair at Darwell Res on 18 Feb and a pair at Rackham Woods on 29 Mar. Single birds were reported at Pulborough Brooks on several dates during the second half of the year.

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]



Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Horsham, May 2007 (Ian Barnard)

Wood Lark*Lullula arborea*

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

A flock of 11 birds at Pett Level on 10 Jan had been present since December 2006. The majority of other first winter records came from the west of the county, principally from regular breeding sites such as Iping, Stedham and Lavington Commons, and the first burst of song was heard at Iping Common on 14 Jan. Smaller numbers were reported from Ashdown Forest, with regular sightings at well-watched sites such as Old Lodge. A record at Broadwater Forest on 27 Jan near the Kent border in the northeast of the county was encouraging.



Wood Lark, Old Lodge, May 2007 (Les Bird)

During the summer, breeding was confirmed from six 1-km squares, was probable in 28, and birds were seen in suitable breeding areas in a further 11. There were records of territorial birds from all the regular areas in the west of the county. These were in a cluster around the northwest greensand in the Rake to Haslemere area and a narrow band along the greensand ridge between West Heath Common and Pulborough Brooks. The Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey, which covers most of the heathland sites west of Coates Common, recorded 42 pairs from 11 sites, with an impressive count of 15 birds at Blackdown (Fernhurst) on 17 May which included six pairs, one of which already had three young. In addition, there were probably two territories at Stopham and one each at Duncton, Burton MP and Pulborough Brooks. In the small population in the western South Downs between North Marden and Stansted Forest there were, perhaps, two territories.

The 2006 survey recorded no Wood Larks in the St Leonard's Forest area in the central part of the county, so it was encouraging that Leechpool and Owlbeech Woods (Horsham) had its first

ever record, a singing male on 25 May. In addition there was one at Pease Pottage on 5 May and another at Forest Grange (St Leonard's Forest) on the 24th.

In the east of the county, birds were recorded widely throughout the breeding season in Ashdown Forest. Estimating the number of territories is difficult, but they were recorded from 24 1-km squares in the Forest between March and June, with six pairs at Old Lodge being the highest count. Elsewhere in the east, one was at Burwash on 27 May. A few records of singing males and fledged young were received from known breeding sites into July with the last record of territorial singing males on 8 Jul from two sites in Ashdown Forest.

During the autumn, small post-breeding flocks were recorded from a number of sites across the county, with notable records of nine birds feeding in an area of recently cleared bracken at Millbrook (Ashdown) on 22 Sep and a further flock of nine at Lords Piece (Coates) on 14 Oct. The majority of sightings during the latter half of the autumn period were from breeding sites around the Wealden Heaths. Away from core areas, three were at Lower Beeding on 27 Oct, one was at Pagham Hbr on the 31st, one flew northwest over Brighton Wild Park on 5 Nov and one was feeding with Yellowhammers at Ends Place (Warnham) the same day.

Small numbers continued to be recorded from sites in the west throughout the second winter period, with several records of flocks feeding on stubble fields, including a notable flock of up to 25 near Henfield in mid-December. The final record of the year was of a flock of eight birds feeding on set-aside on 30 Dec at Pett Level. [CET/AT]

Sky Lark

Alauda arvensis

Fairly common but declining resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

A flock of 40 feeding on saltmarsh at East Head (West Wittering) on 2 Jan rose to 100 on 15 Feb. Otherwise the only large flocks in the early part of the year were 40 at Steep Down (Lancing) on 4 Feb and 70 at Cissbury Ring two days later. Many records refer to feeding on setaside or wildbird crop and 22 on 7 Jan at Constantia Manor (Isfield) were specifically noted as being on triticale seed 'which is the last seed to disappear'.

Sky Larks were reported from c.300 1-km squares during the breeding season. In the Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey of the north-western heaths eight pairs were found in four 1-km squares with a maximum of four at Chapel Common (Liphook) compared with six in 2006. Other counts of breeding pairs in defined areas (with 2006 numbers in brackets where available) included: Pagham Hbr 19, Sefter Fm (Pagham) eight (8) in 95ha, Amberley Wild Brooks 31 (34), Pulborough Brooks 26 (29), Chesworth Fm (Horsham) five, Brighton Wild Park 19, Rye Hbr 41 (37). During the BBS, 277 Sky Larks were recorded in 67 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed, a reduction from the 359 in 69 of 122 squares covered the previous year. The species was recorded in only three of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

There was little indication of autumn movement but small numbers were reported to be moving in various directions in mid-October and 25 arrived from the west at Newhaven Tide Mills on 12 Dec.

In the second winter period the largest flocks in the eastern half of the county were at Rye Hbr with a maximum of 40 at Nook Meadows on 21 Dec. In the west a flock of 60 was present at Linch Fm (Bepton) on 17 Oct and 80 were at Stansted Park (Rowland's Castle) on 29 Dec. Around Chichester Hbr there were at least 80 at East Head on 8 Nov and 52 feeding in sand dunes at Pilsley Island on 27 Dec while 60 were counted in fields west of Selsey on 30 Oct. On the same date 80 were at The Burgh (Burpham) with 150 there on 23 Nov and 400 on 1 Dec. At least 350 were on stubble on 22 Nov at a site with no public access at West Dean. The farmer reported that such flocks were regular there every winter and that much higher numbers had been seen in the

past. At Round Hill (Steyning) 25 were noted on 25 Oct rising to at least 200 on 13 Dec. Eighty were on stubble at Woodmancote (Henfield) on 18 Dec.

There is no indication in these data that the fortunes of the Sky Lark in Sussex are improving. [ACG]

Shore Lark

Eremophila alpestris

Rare winter visitor.

A widely seen, and photographed, individual was on the cliff edge west of Birling Gap (Beachy Head) from 30 Sep to 2 Oct (MO) and one was present on the saltmarsh at Rye Hbr from 23 Dec to 1 Mar 2008 (MO). These are the fourth and fifth published records in the county since the beginning of 2000, well down on the 20 seen during the 1990s. All previous recent records have fallen between 16 Oct and 21 Apr and therefore the Beachy Head bird is the earliest county record since 28 Sep 1946. [RJF]



Shore Lark, Beachy Head, October 2007 (Peter Wilson)

Sand Martin

Riparia riparia

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

There were just nine records in March with the first being two at Pagham Hbr on 15th (four days later than 10-year average date). There were then singletons at Arlington Res on the 23rd and

at Sidlesham Ferry on the 27th. These were followed by two at Pulborough Brooks on the 29th, with 15 there on the 30th and 22 on the 31st, five at Weir Wood Res on the 29th, at least 50 at Ivy Lake (Chichester GP) on the 30th and three at Rye Hbr on the 31st. This was the worst March for records of this species this century.

The main influx of this year's very poor spring migration was in April with 43 records but the only high counts were of 40 at Ivy Lake on the 2nd followed by 100 at Pulborough Brooks and 35 at Waltham Brooks on the 22nd. Interestingly, although 33% of the March records came from the east of the county, only 7% of the April records (represented by just six sightings) were from the east. The last spring migrants were seen in May with singletons over Climping Beach and Worthing Beach and the highest count of 4 N over Selsey Bill on the 11th. Other sightings in May and June saw no improvement on earlier months with the only double-figure counts being 20 at Rye Hbr on 4 May, ten at West Heath Common on 24 May and 14 at Stedham Common on 5 Jun (very low compared to recent years).

Maybe unsurprisingly considering the low migration counts, there were few breeding records. Breeding was thought possible at West Heath Common, Sandgate Park (Storrington), Brooklands (Worthing) and Cuckoos Corner (Coombes), but confirmed only at Coates Castle (Fittleworth) with c.30 entering nest holes on 27 Apr. Hopefully the BTO Atlas work will provide a better understanding of the true breeding status of this species in the county and observers should ensure that all breeding records are submitted.

Apart from two on 21 Jun and six on 23 Jun over Selsey Bill, the first autumn migrants were seen in July with 22 also over Selsey Bill in 11 hr on the 3rd. These were followed by high counts of at least 200 over Pulborough Brooks on the 17th, 60 over Rye Hbr on the 20th and 40 into roost at Pett Level on the 22nd. Numbers picked up by mid-August with sightings coming from across the county with the highest counts being 500+ at Chichester GP on 18 Aug, 500 E over Climping Beach on the 24th (possibly the same 500 E over Whitbread Hollow on same day), a maximum monthly roost count of 2000 at Pett Level on the 25th and at least 400 over fields west of Selsey on the 28th. The only notable inland count was of 100 over Pulborough Brooks on the 22nd.

Migration continued in relatively good numbers into September with high counts including a maximum monthly count of 1000 roosting at Pett Level on the 5th, 150 at Rye Hbr on the 6th, 600 in fields north of Pagham Hbr on the 7th and 640 E over Climping Beach on the 9th. The highest inland count was a poor showing of 20 at Pulborough Brooks on the 19th.

There were just ten records in October including 15 at Arlington on the 2nd and the last sizeable roost of 114 at Pett Level. The last four records of the year were three over Selsey Bill and Rye Hbr on the 11th, two at Pett Level on the 13th and the last two over Worthing Beach on the 17th (eight days earlier than the 10-year average date). [SB]

Barn Swallow

Hirundo rustica

Common summer visitor and abundant passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The first sighting of the year was a singleton flying north over Clayton Halfway on 3 Mar (seven days earlier than the 10-year average). This was followed by 12 at Sompting on the 12th, one over Singleton on the 17th, 12 over Boxgrove on the 21st and singles at Ditchling and Warnham LNR on the 26th. After this, sightings of single-figure numbers were recorded daily across the county with the exception of at least 50 at Ivy Lake (Chichester GP) on the 30th. Interestingly, half of the 14 records for March came from inland locations.

Although there were 359 records for April (cf. 272 in 2006, 261 in 2005 and 208 in 2004), they were mainly in single figures and the only high counts were at Selsey Bill of 29 N on the 10th, 77 N on the 26th, 76 N on the 28th, 40 at Pulborough Brooks on the 22nd, 40 at Pagham Hbr

on the 26th and 75 over Climping Beach on the 28th. May records also followed a similar pattern with very low counts of migrants. The first three-figure count was of 100 at Climping Beach on the 3rd, followed by 163 N over Selsey Bill on the 6th, a large influx on the 10th including 200 at Ivy Lake, 250 N over Selsey Bill and 147 N over Splash Point (Seaford), and 120 over Weir Wood Res on the 14th.

Breeding records began with a pair back at their nest site at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on 10 Apr, six days later than in 2006 and just beating the first returning pair for the last two years at Byworth by two days. Breeding was confirmed at 19 other sites.

The first large post-breeding groups were seen as usual in July with 50 at Barcombe Res on the 1st, 85 at Pett Level on the 25th and 30 at Ladywells (Coombes) on the 28th. The first three figure count was not seen until August with 100 in the Lower Cuckmere Valley on the 10th and highs of 300 in fields to the north of Pagham Hbr, 338 E over Worthing Beach, 1000 E over Climping Beach on the 24th, 5000 roosting at Pett Level and 1100 E over Climping Beach on the 25th, 380 over Hollingbury Camp and 300 over Newhaven Tide Mills on the 26th and 300 roosting in reedbeds at Thorney Deeps on the 27th.



Barn Swallow, Hodcombe, June 2007 (Roger Charlwood)

The peak of autumn migration was, as usual, in September with nine four figure counts from coastal sites of 1500 over fields north of Pagham Hbr on the 7th, 1300 E over Climping Beach on the 9th, 10,000 roosting at Pett Level on the 22nd, 1900 S over Beachy Head and 1000 E over Climping Beach on the 23rd, 1500 over Beachy Head and 1000 E over Church Norton on the 30th. The only other four-figure count was at an inland site of 1000 whirling over maize in preparation for roosting at Arlington on the 10th and the only other notable inland count was of 300 at Barcombe Res on the 30th.

The last high coastal counts were in the first half of October with 1000 E and 400 at Rye Hbr on the 1st and the 2nd respectively, 400 at Pett Level on the 6th and 600 into roost at Pett Level on the 12th. The only notable inland record was of 1000 at Pulborough Brooks on the 1st. The rest of

the month included no more than double-figure records and continued into November with the last records of the year being singletons at Worthing Beach on the 3rd and the 4th, Seaford Head on the 6th, Rye Hbr on the 6th and the 9th, Bishopstone on the 9th, finishing with two at Rye Hbr on the 10th and two on the 11th at Selsey Bill (the last being 17 days earlier than the 10-year average date). [SB]

House Martin

Delichon urbica

Common summer visitor and abundant passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The first record of the year was of a singleton at Sidlesham Ferry on 11 Mar (five days earlier than the 10-year average date). This was the only record for March and the next was not until 1 Apr when there were eight at Runcton and a singleton at Bilsham. These were followed by three at Mayfield and 4 N at Singleton on the 2nd and one at Rye Hbr on the 6th. There were 14 records across the whole county of single-figure numbers to the middle of the month with the exception of ten at Pagham Hbr on the 12th. The main migration occurred in the second half of the month although the only double-figure counts were of c.50 at Arlington Res on the 17th, 15 at Pulborough Brooks on the 20th rising to 30 by the 23rd and down to 11 on the 27th, ten at Waltham Brooks on the 23rd, 11 at Northchapel on the 25th and ten at Hailsham on the 28th.

In May pre-breeding counts over 50 in number included 60 at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on the 12th, 250 at Barcombe Res on the 13th and the 26th, 150 at Weir Wood Res on the 14th and 75 at Pett Level on the 21st. The month also saw the first sign of breeding with three pairs present at a regular nest site in Durrington (Worthing) on the 1st and breeding was also reported from 12 other sites mainly of single figures with the exception of 20 at Broomham (Guestling), 15-20 pairs in Rye Hbr village and ten pairs at Marklye (Rushlake Green). The latest record of breeding was of two pairs still feeding young in the nest at Lee Fm (Patching) on 5 Sep. The only notable high counts during the breeding season were 100 at Pulborough Brooks on 16 Jun and 50 with Swifts and Barn Swallows at the R Ouse (Barcombe) on 26 Jul. The species was recorded in 58 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

The first post-breeding flocks were seen in August with 90 at Plumpton on the 5th, 200 at Pulborough Brooks on the 18th, 500 at fields west of Selsey and 300 at Pulborough Brooks on the 21st, 100 at Pulborough Brooks on the 22nd and 70 at Rye Hbr on the 24th. This continued in September but with the highest counts of the year as autumn migration set in including over 1700 W in one hour past Portobello (Telscombe Cliffs) on the 11th, 600 at Hollingbury Camp on the 12th, 1000 at Climping Gap and Climping Beach on the 14th, 2500 mainly W over Peacehaven Heights on the 15th, 1000 W past Selsey Bill and 1000 over Pulborough Brooks on the 16th, 690 W past Portobello on the 18th and 3000 S over Selsey Bill on the 25th.

Significant movements in early October included 230 at Cissbury Ring and 200 E over Rye Hbr on the 1st, 300 at Hailsham on the 2nd, 300 at the Rother Levels on the 3rd and the highest count of the month of 700 at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on the 4th. Other records were mainly single or double figures gradually reducing to the last sighting of the month of a singleton at Kings Barn (Steyning) on the 29th. The last records of the year and the only ones for November were two at Rye Hbr Village on the 8th and two at Pett Level on the 14th, the latter being one day later than the 10-year average date. [SB]

Red-rumped Swallow*Cecropis daurica**Rare vagrant.*

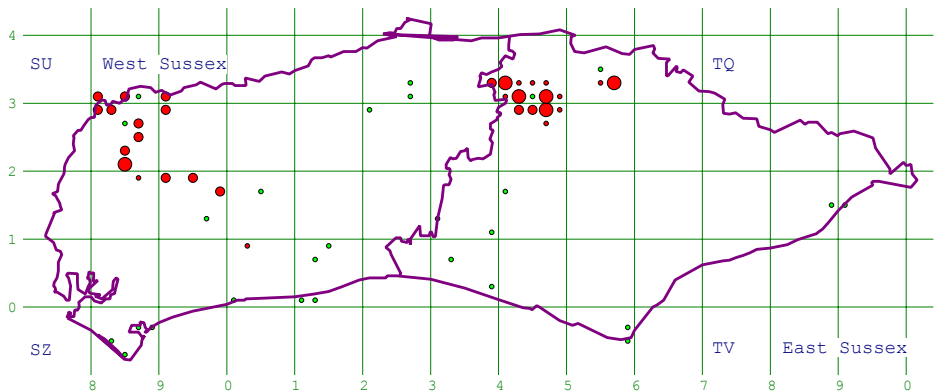
Two were watched feeding over the Royal Military Canal at Pett Level during the morning of 28 Apr (GCS). These take the county total to 24 of which seven have been since the start of 2000. There is one previous record for Pett Level, at Pett Pools on 17 Apr 1987, while two have been seen together once before in the county, at Arlington Res from 30 Apr to 5 May 2003. There is one record in early September while the rest have been seen between 17 April and 29 May. [RJF]

Tree Pipit*Anthus trivialis*

Fairly common but local summer visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The first record was of a bird at Greenwood Gate (Ashdown Forest) on the 26 Mar (three days earlier than the 10-year average date). Visible migration during April included single birds at Saltdean on the 14th, Cissbury Ring on the 16th, over Worthing Beach on the 17th, Sidlesham Ferry on the 20th and Pagham Hbr on the 23rd.

The intensive effort of the Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey and the Ashdown Forest Bird Group again gives a comprehensive distribution of this species in the county with four distinct breeding areas, as shown on the map below. These areas are Ashdown Forest with 99 territories, West Sussex Greensand with 61 territories, the Robertsbridge/Eridge area with three territories and the Horsham/Crawley area with two territories, giving a total of 165 territories in the county (cf. 184 in 2006, 131 in 2005 and 124 in 2004).



The first signs of autumn movement were seen in early July with five over Pett Level on the 2nd and one at Arundel WWT the next day. There was then nothing until one was seen at Cissbury Ring on 9 Aug. Records of movement in the rest of the month were mainly of ones and twos with the exception of 3 SE over the Old Airstrip (Ashdown Forest) on the 24th, five at Beachy Head on the 25th and another there on the 27th, 7 S over Chelwood Vachery on the 26th, three on Cissbury Ring on the 28th and five over Pett Level on the 30th.

The 19 records in September were mainly of singletons from coastal sites with the exception of two at Hollingbury Camp on the 2nd, one at Cissbury Ring on the 4th (with two on the 12th, one

on the 17th and three on the 26th), two at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on the 2nd and one at Barcombe Cross on the 30th. The four records in October were the last of the year with singletons at Hollingbury Camp and Pagham Hbr on the 4th, Goring Gap on the 6th and Beachy Head on the 14th (seven days earlier than 10-year average date). [SB]

Meadow Pipit

Anthus pratensis

Locally abundant resident, very common passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The first winter period started well with 73 records in January from 41 sites, mainly inland and including five roosts. There were four counts of 50 or more: 50 at West End (Henfield) on the 1st, 65 roosting at Iping Common and 55 roosting at Lavington both on the 14th and 58 at the Old Airstrip (Ashdown Forest) on the 31st. The 59 sightings in February were from 41 sites with roosting noted at only three. The highest counts were 40 at Vinehall (Mountfield) on the 8th, 40 at Weir Wood Res on the 15th and then, on the 18th, there were 40 at Newhaven Tide Mills and 80 roosting at Iping Common. In March flocks were of smaller numbers with highs of 29 at Poundgate (Crowborough) on the 4th, 26 at Powdermill Res on the 10th, 25 leaving roost at Iping Common on the 18th and 20 at Hollingbury Camp on the 24th.

Spring passage was very poor with the first record at Selsey Bill on 3 Mar, 12 days earlier than the previous two years. A further 29 birds were counted there on seven dates between then and the 31st (cf. 767 on seven dates in 2006). There were three over Guestling on the 17th and the only other site for March passage was Worthing Beach with 5 N on the 23rd. April was not much better with the only records being nine over Selsey Bill on four dates between the 1st and the 21st, 16 over Climping Beach on the 2nd, 2 N from the sea at Church Norton on the 6th, 9 N over Warnham LNR on the 7th (the only inland record), five in off the sea at Shoreham Beach on the 8th and three over Splash Point (Seaford) on three dates between the 13th and the 22nd.

The first sign of breeding was in February with a male displaying at Waltham Brooks on the early date of the 23rd followed by another displaying male at Friends (Ashdown Forest) on the 26th. Breeding records came from 41 sites and totalled 251 pairs, of which the largest counts were 46 in Ashdown Forest, 45 at Rye Hbr, 38 at Amberley Wild Brooks, 30 along Seven Sisters Cliffs and 19 at Pulborough Brooks.

The first coastal movement of the autumn involved a single bird over Pett Level on 10 Aug followed by 102 over Climping Beach on four dates between 19 and 21 Aug and two over Pett Level on 4 Sep. The highest counts for September were 100 over Pett Level on the 22nd, 344 W over Selsey Bill on the 23rd, 100 over fields west of Selsey on the 25th and then 100 at Pett Level, 200 at Beachy Head, 300 at The Severals (Church Norton), 250 at Rye Hbr and 116 E over Worthing Beach all on the 30th.

October continued with high counts at coastal sites of 140 E over Worthing Beach on the 1st, 120 at Pett Level on the 2nd, 150 at Thorney Island on the 3rd, 150 at Beachy Head on the 6th, 150 E over Selsey Bill on the 11th, 142 E over Goring Beach on the 13th, followed by 203 E there on the 15th and 100 at Climping Beach on the 26th. The highest counts at inland sites were 60 at Ambersham Common on the 12th, 70 at West Heath Common on the 19th and 60 at Crows Nest (Ashdown Forest) on the 21st.

Of the 79 records in November the early counts were mainly of single figures until winter flocks and roosts started appearing inland from the 18th with 50 at Great Noven Farm (Chailey), 45 at Forestside (West Marden) on the 21st, 50 roosting at Lavington Common on the 25th and 40 roosting at Crows Nest (Ashdown Forest) on the 28th. In December there were 78 records of small numbers including just two roosts of three at Poundgate (Crowborough) on the 14th and at Crows

Nest (Ashdown Forest), the latter reaching a peak of 62 on the last day of the year. The only other notable records were of 50 at Iping Common on the 16th and 40 at Woodmancote (Henfield) on the 18th.

Interestingly, the number of sightings of this species in the final two months of the year was double the number of previous years, obviously influenced by records from BTO Birdtrack and the start of the BTO Atlas recording. [SB]



Meadow Pipit, Hodcombe, July 2007 (Roger Charlwood)

Rock Pipit

Anthus petrosus

Scarce resident and winter visitor; rare away from the coast.

Continuing the trend of previous years only 21 of the 161 records came from east of Beachy Head and all of these were from the Rye Bay area with six in January/February, 14 from October to the year end and unusually a record in May.

In the first three months of the year there were very few records. Numbers were low compared to previous years with sightings at just 14 sites in January, nine sites in February and only six sites in March. All records were of ones and twos with the exception of three at Saltdean on 7 Jan. The situation improved slightly in April although the records were from just five locations including four at Hope Gap (Seaford) on the 22nd and three at Splash Point (Seaford) on the 24th. The first and only confirmation of breeding came in May with a pair carrying food at Seaford Head on the 28th and two still here on 29 Aug. However, breeding was thought possible at Saltdean and two birds seen at Rye Hbr on 20 Jul were unseasonal. Elsewhere, birds were seen in suitable habitat including a pair and a single at Seven Sisters Cliffs on 2 Jun, three at Cuckmere Haven on 12 Jun, three at Splash Point on 19 Jun (down to two on 14 Jul) and one at Hope Gap on 16 Jul.

In the latter half of the year numbers improved from September. Two of the ten records were of five birds at Cuckmere Haven on the 1st and the 18th and a singleton at Thorney Island on the 28th was the first returning bird in the far west of the county. Numbers increased dramatically in October with 41 records from 29 locations right across the county including high counts of four at Saltdean on the 21st, Selsey Bill on the 26th and Rye Hbr on the 27th, five at Chidmere Pond (Chidham) on the 24th, eight at the North Wall (Pagham Hbr) on the 31st and an unusual record of a bird at Pett Level on the 9th. This continued into November and December with another 54 records from 33 locations starting with the counts of 18 at Apuldram (Chichester), two at Peacehaven, four at Cuckmere Haven and six at Brighton Marina (all on 1 Nov) and other high counts during December of six at Shoreham Hbr on the 7th, four at Telscombe Cliffs (Portobello) on the 23rd, five at Sidlesham SF on the 26th and four at Rye Hbr on the 26th and 31st.

There were only two records from inland sites (both during November) with three at Arlington Res on the 11th and one at Southerham Fm (Lewes) on the 25th. [SB]

Scandinavian Rock Pipit

Anthus petrosus littoralis

Probably a very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Two were seen on the small area of saltmarsh just south of the Golden Galleon in Lower Cuckmere Valley on 10 Feb (RJF, JWK) with singles on the west arm of Shoreham Hbr on 18 Feb and 28 Oct (both RJF). These are typical records of what seems to be an overlooked or under-reported form which is usually more evident in late winter or early spring. [RJF]

Water Pipit

Anthus spinoletta

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

The individual wintering at Barcombe Res (SxBR 59:147) was seen when access allowed to 25 Feb (SHL *et al.*) while two were present at Combe Haven, the premier wintering site for the species in the county, on 4 Feb (ARK). A migrant found at Climping on 14 Apr (BA, ES) was a good local patch record but did not linger. One seen on Thorney Deepes on 7 Nov (CBC) may have been that on nearby Nutbourne Marshes on 3 Dec (CBC) while one returned to Barcombe Res on 11 Nov and was seen intermittently to 23 Dec (SHL *et al.*). At the end of the year three were at Sidlesham SF on 20 Dec (BFF, DIS *et al.*) with two there on 23rd (RJF, BFF, DIS *et al.*). The latter has been a reliable wintering site for the species during cold weather but extensive works there are making viewing more difficult and might also be reducing its suitability. [RJF]

Yellow Wagtail

Motacilla flava

Scarce and localized summer visitor and fairly common autumn passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The first record of the year was on 2 Apr (11 days later than the 10-year average date) when one was at Lychpole Hill (Cissbury). There were then a further 35 records in April totalling about 80 birds (cf. 130, 125 and 146 in 2004-2006). Ten were together in a field at Rye Hbr on the 10th and a group of 11 at Pulborough Brooks on the 20th included one grey-headed bird. One at Arlington Res on the same date “was quite distinctive with a grey upperbody and crown and a very pale yellow almost white supercilium and underparts”. Numbers counted during April at the

main seawatching sites were 16 at Selsey Bill in 129 hr, eight at Climping in 66¼ hr, only one at Worthing in 70½ hr and 12 at Splash Point (Seaford) in 134 hr.

There were 32 records in May; a slightly stronger showing than in recent years. At Selsey Bill, 16 flew over and one was on the ground in 175½ hr and observers at Climping recorded seven in 58½ hr. However, Worthing logged only two in 60 hr and Splash Point only a single. The first record at Warnham LNR was of a bird flying north on the 13th. There was only one at Rye Hbr (on the 25th) in a month which, unsurprisingly, was described as “very poor”.

A few pairs were present in the under-watched Levels in the east of the county (around Northiam, Bodiam and Doleham); a pair at Pulborough Brooks was collecting nesting material on 25 May; and on 27 May six pairs were counted on Horse Eye Level (Pevensy). A pair bred successfully at Pett Level and a territorial male was found at the Bracklesham Bay reserve on 1 Jun. In June, six pairs were estimated to be attempting breeding at Rye Hbr where a pair with a juvenile was found on the 28th but there seems to have been only a single pair at Pulborough Brooks, with three fledglings. Birds remained in the Doleham Valley but there was no indication of breeding.



Yellow Wagtail, Pett Level, May 2007 (Martin Casemore)

Groups of departing birds were apparent from early July. At Rye Hbr there were ten on the 8th and a remarkable total of at least 150 on the early date of 19 Jul (in 2006 the same area held in excess of 100 but only on and after 11 Aug). Subsequent July totals at Rye Hbr were lower (40 on the 28th and 60 on the 31st), but still far greater than those from other locations. Small numbers were reported from Brighton Wild Park, Southease and Pett Level in the last ten days of the month.

Rye Hbr dominated the August records: there were six days when over 100 were counted there, with at least 350 on the 17th. Elsewhere in the first half of the month, 11 were at Pulborough Brooks on the 3rd and 23 at Scotney Court GP on the 5th. Counts in the second half of the month

were higher: 63 at The Midrips on the 24th, 80 in fields west of Selsey on the same day and 114 at Climping/Atherington on the 25th. Thirty-seven flew west over Beachy Head on the 26th and 44 were there the next day, when 60 roosted in the reed bed at Thorney Deepes. There were other good numbers in the west of the county, along the coastal strip from Climping to Selsey, in the last week of August. Interestingly, there were no records from Rye Hbr after 200 on the 21st, which raises interesting questions about the changing pattern of sightings between the east and west of the county over the course of the month. The species was recorded in just two of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

There were 87 records in September. The only three figure count was at Climping with 100 on both the 4th and the 8th and the month's total there was an excellent 428 in 28 hr. At Pett Level, where 13 flying over on 30 Aug had been the maximum for that month, 75 followed the next day. Forty was the maximum count from sites in the west of the county other than Climping. In the east, there were only two counts for Beachy Head where there were 80 on the 9th and 35 on the 15th. Remarkably, Rye Hbr seems to have held only single birds on just three days of the month. The first returning bird over Warnham LNR was a single on the 2nd and the month total there was six. Very few other inland records were received, although singletons at South Harting on the 21st and Staplefield on the 24th hinted at the species' occasional stop-over presence in the county. A handful was noted flying over Cissbury and Hollingbury Camp.

There were a mere seven records of 11 birds in October compared with 13 records of 48 birds in 2006 and 13 of 26 in 2005. One flew east over Goring Beach on the 8th when another was at Staplefield and flew south over Warnham LNR on the 13th. In November singletons were at South Heighton on the 3rd and at Emsworth Marina on the 4th, the latter being four days later than the 10-year average date.

Both on spring passage and as a breeding bird, the Yellow Wagtail appears to be declining in Sussex. This year's arrival and departure dates also indicated that birds were present in the county for nearly a month less than average. [CB]

Grey Wagtail

Motacilla cinerea

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

The 45 records for January involved about fifty birds, continuing the increase apparent in the last few years. However, with the increase in the number of records received due in part to the BTO's Birdtrack, such increases should be kept in perspective. Birds were widely distributed in the month with a maximum of only three, in Alexandra Pk (Hastings). In February there were records of around 55 birds, again a continuing increase over the last two years. Alexandra Pk held five on the 17th and there were four at Waltham Brooks on the 23rd. Most of these were in typical rural habitat, although one at Constantia Fm (Isfield) (perhaps the 2006 bird returning) on 23 Jan was found in an area of "wet woodland" and one favoured the mudflats off the North Wall of Pagham Hbr during the last week of January. Singletons in urban areas were also seen at various locations in Worthing throughout the period; one was regular at St Anne's Well Gardens (Hove) in January, with one or two there until 9 Mar; and one was found on an office roof in Burgess Hill on 20 Feb. One bird favoured Newhaven Tide Mills from January until April and another was feeding under a bird table in Tilgate Forest on 25 Feb. Around Ashdown Forest, one flew over Old Lodge on 8 Jan but the next record was not until 26 Mar.

Spring passage was again slight. Two singletons passed over Climping on 3 and 17 Feb; one was at Rye Hbr on 3 Mar; and one was at East Beach (Selsey) on 11 Apr.

Pairs were apparent from the start of March at the lower pond on Ebernoe Common, at

Powdermill Res, at a newly dredged pond at Guestling and near Sedlescombe. At Burton MP, a pair was occasionally joined by a third bird in March. As in 2006, there were few records during the BBS: only nine birds were reported from six of the 123 1-km squares surveyed. However, birds were recorded in 43 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

The first evidence of breeding came from Barcombe Res, where a bird was carrying food to the nest on 29 Apr. Three young were found in a nest in the boathouse at Firlie Park on 1 May and recently fledged young were seen being fed at Troutbeck (Eridge) on 5 May and 20 Jun, although it was unclear if these were from different pairs or a second brood. Breeding was proved at only 13 sites and probable breeding was recorded at a further 11 sites (cf. seven proven and seven probable sites in 2006).

A female at the pond in Stanmer Park on 10 Jun was presumably a failed breeder as was one at Pett Level on 26 Jun. There were reports throughout July of dependent young so dispersal and migration overlapped considerably with the breeding season. A calling bird flew west over Vinehall (Mountfield) on 11 Jul. The first at Beachy Head flew east on 11 Aug. A group of eight birds was present at Barcombe Res on 29 Jul and on 12 Aug. Most reports were of one to three birds; four on the 30th was the maximum August count at Pett Level. Thirty flew over Pett Level during September and 32 during October. Although autumn passage at Beachy Head was considered to be 'very small', the totals of 68 and 79 records for September and October respectively were the highest monthly numbers for the year. Southbound birds trickled through Warnham LNR throughout September, and birds were seen on several days at sites like Mardens Hill and Mountfield. Ten were at Rye Hbr on 9 Sep. A number of birds were logged moving north: on 3 Sep three flew over Ella Nore and one over Church Norton. Six were in Alexandra Pk on the 15th and seven on 6 Oct. Late October brought a number of records from the Brighton area: on the 21st, one was with Pied Wagtails in the boatyard at Brighton Marina; on the 24th one was in a Hove garden and two were in Churchill Square.

The great majority of December records were of single birds, with twos at a number of reservoirs and sewage farms; there were four at Arundel WWT on the 3rd and around a farm slurry pit at Sreat on the 16th. [CB]

Pied Wagtail

Motacilla alba yarrellii

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were three substantial roosts in January: 290 in the car park at Brighton Marina on the 21st, 200 on the filter beds at Thorney SF on the 24th; and 120 at Sidlesham SF on the 29th. The only other counts over 50 were 69 at Nyetimber (Bognor) on the 14th and 60 at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) on the 22nd. The largest inland record was of 25 in a stubble field on Wepham Down on the 14th. The Nyetimber count fell to 37 on the 27th and 35 on 4 Feb while the Newhaven count reduced to 13 on 19 Feb and just nine on 20 Mar as birds dispersed to their breeding grounds. There were no further late winter counts in excess of a hundred, although 70 on the muddy remains of a kale field in the Doleham Valley on the 3 Feb (with only four there on the 25th) and 40 in a horse paddock at Ferring on 6 Mar were good counts.

Twenty at Shoreham Hbr on 9 Mar were presumably passage birds, although passage at Selsey Bill and Worthing Beach during March was almost non-existent (three in 39½ hr and one in 15¼ hr respectively).

The first report of confirmed breeding was of a bird carrying food at Ashdown Ridge on 19 May. During the BBS, 127 birds were recorded in 59 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of ten at Bevern Bridge (South Chailey). The first juvenile reported was at Partridge Green on 28 May, with the next at Pulborough Brooks on 1 Jun and then one at Old Lodge on Ashdown Forest on 4 Jun. As in 2006, while none bred at Rye Hbr, pairs were present along the

Rye to Rye Hbr road and breeding probably took place at Winchelsea Beach SF. At Constantia Manor (Isfield) a pair had four young out of the nest by 10 Jun. There were 15 at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on the 12th but these were not aged; the same holds true for the 12 at County Oak (Crawley) on 2 Jul. In total there were 14 reports of confirmed, and five of probable, breeding. The species was reported in 198 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

No substantial post-breeding groups were recorded until 30 at Cuckmere on 3 Aug. At Pulborough Brooks the monthly maximum was 21 on 18 Aug. Most of the 15 at Weir Wood Res on 26 Aug were juveniles. There were 60 at Pulborough Brooks on 11 Sep. Southbound birds were noted flying over Warnham LNR from 13 Sep but only single birds were over both Selsey Bill (in 72 hr) and Worthing Beach (in 20½ hr) during the month.

In October, there were interestingly variable numbers entering or leaving the roost at Chesworth Fm: there were 20 on the 2nd, four on the 5th and 8th, nine on the 14th, two on the 11th, 50 on the 16th, five on the 19th, 20 on the 20th, two on the 22nd and 30 on the 27th. On 6 Oct, easterly movement was noted at Beachy Head, at Goring Gap (where 50 had been counted on the 5th) and at Pagham Hbr, which continued to the end of the month. In Worthing, 160 roosted in town centre trees on 14 Oct and on the same day 111 flew east over Beachy Head. The Worthing roost held 150 on the 16th, falling to 80 on the 17th and then rising to 200 ('illuminated by fairy lights') on the 28th, followed by 250 on 5 Dec (the last count of the year there). November counts at Selsey Bill (four in 85¾ hr) and Worthing Beach (six in 43¾ hr) were well down on 2006 totals (103 in 62¼ hr and 91 in 21 hr respectively). On 6 Nov, 56 in a horse paddock at Thorney Deeps was the only other substantial count of the month.

Sewage works accounted for nearly all the large counts in December. There were 80 on the clinker beds at Lidsey SF on 19 Dec, the same number as the month's maximum at Thorney SF on the 20th. Elsewhere, there was an interesting record of 12 feeding opportunistically on autumn sown cereals at Warbleton. [CB]

White Wagtail

Motacilla alba alba

Probably a scarce spring and autumn passage migrant; both pure and mixed pairs have bred.

There were 16 records in the first half of the year but only three in the second and there was no evidence of any breeding. The first record was at Hankham Level (Pevensy) on 20 Feb with the next being an adult female at Old Lodge (Ashdown Forest) on 3 Mar. Other records in March were a singleton at Weir Wood Res on the 22nd and 24th and another singleton at Pulborough Brooks on the 28th.

There was a flurry of records from the Pagham area in April. One was at Pagham Hbr on the 8th with two at Sidlesham Ferry the following day and singletons at the latter site on the 22nd and 29th. Elsewhere in April, one was at Northpoint Pit (Rye) on the 10th and further singletons appeared at Pilsey Sands (Chichester Hbr) and at Darwell Res on the 14th. In May other singletons appeared at Weir Wood Res on the 11th and at Lewes Brooks on the 18th. The first half of the year finished with another singleton at Sidlesham Ferry on 26 May and probably the same bird at Orchid Field (Sidlesham) on 2 Jun.

The first autumn record was a singleton at Pulborough Brooks on 3 Sep. The two remaining records were also singletons at Pett Level on 8 Oct and at Selmeston on 21 Nov. However, juvenile *alba* wagtails are difficult to identify correctly in autumn and this sub-species is therefore probably much under-recorded. [PNP]

Waxwing*Bombycilla garrulus**Rare winter visitor.*

There was just one record: a bird flew over St George's (Wivelsfield Green) on the afternoon of 17 Nov. [CB]

Wren*Troglodytes troglodytes**Abundant resident.*

Almost 30% of the records received were for single birds. A number of sites provided counts throughout the year, as shown below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Hotham Pk (Bognor)	8	5	9	11	8	12	1	3	4	5	1	3
Nyetimber (Bognor)*	13	14	27	30	22	23	12	6	6	10	9	3
Warningcamp	3	nc	5	13	11	8	7	2	3	nc	3	4
Lewes Race Course*	4	3	6	4	5	3	8	3	4	4	6	3
Lewes Brooks	2	4	6	7	3	nc	3	nc	3	7	nc	8
Newhaven Tide Mills	3	3	3	3	3	2	6	5	2	4	2	4
Doleham Valley*	21	27	25	23	16	11	15	15	17	nc	nc	15
Darwell Res	10	20	25	27	11	11	12	6	5	21	11	23

*new site

Numbers at these sites have been broadly similar in recent years. In Hotham Pk (Bognor), numbers in the first half of the year were slightly up on 2006 while the Darwell Res counts paralleled 2006 closely, except for an increase in October. At Barns Copse (Binstead), 12 territories were found in 16 ha of deciduous woodland, the same total as in 2006. At Sefter Fm (Pagham), 45 territories were found in June compared with 34 in 2006. In Brighton Wild Park, 91 pairs bred, an increase over the 74 in 2006 and a return to 2005 levels. In contrast, there were only seven territories at Scobells Fm (Barcombe) on 10.4 ha of grassland with some woods, compared with 15 territories in 2006 and ten in 2005. Sixty pairs bred around Pagham Hbr and there were 49 territories at Rye Hbr.

During the BBS, birds were noted in 117 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed (almost identical with the 116 of 122 squares in 2006) with a maximum count of 21 at Tilgate Forest. There were 18 reports of confirmed and five of probable breeding. Birds were recorded in 342 of the 413 Sussex gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme which seems a surprisingly low proportion compared with, for example, the omnipresence of Robins and Blackbirds.

Several of the high counts in the last months of the year came from early BTO Atlas fieldwork, with 20 at Bolney on 14 Oct, 20 at Upperton on 19 Nov and 23 at Darwell Res on 11 Dec. There were no reports, as in 2006, suggestive of autumn movements. [CB]

Dunnock*Prunella modularis**Very common resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.*

Counts from some regularly surveyed sites are given in the table below. Totals in the table are similar to those in 2006, although slightly down at Newhaven Tide Mills. As in 2006, numbers there seem to have been proportionately higher in the late summer and autumn than at other sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Hotham Pk (Bognor)	2	2	2	2	1	1	nc	nc	nc	2	1	2
Nyetimber (Bognor)*	6	5	6	14	5	10	1	3	2	6	4	4
Warnham LNR*	6	6	8	5	4	5	6	2	3	1	6	6
Lewes Race Course*	5	10	10	6	2	2	2	1	1	nc	2	1
Crowborough	4	5	4	5	6	4	5	8	4	3	4	4
Newhaven Tide Mills	4	13	16	18	11	15	9	15	10	11	5	4
Doleham Valley*	6	11	7	6	11	3	2	2	1	nc	2	3

*new site

During the BBS, birds were recorded in 108 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed, with the largest counts being 15 at Hempstead (Uckfield) and 14 at Peacehaven. Counts at Peacehaven, Fishbourne and Thorney Island were considerably up in 2007 (21, 15 and 12 in 2007 compared to 14, 6 and 6 respectively in 2006). Birds were recorded in 389 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

At Brighton Wild Park, 46 pairs bred (cf. 49 in 2006 and 2005, and 58 in 2004). At Pagham Hbr there were 15 breeding pairs and 38 territories were mapped at Rye Hbr. At Barns Copse (Binstead) there was only one territory in 16 ha of deciduous woodland while there were 14 territories on the 95 ha of Sefton Fm (Pagham), representing a considerable increase over 2006. Overall, there were 17 records of confirmed, and 12 of probable, breeding. The first juvenile reported was at Crowborough on 2 May; the next at Warnham LNR on the 15th, followed by one at Framfield on the 17th.

Few reports of behaviour were received. Eight birds ringed at Weir Wood Res on 14 Jun included several with growths on their feet. A total of 19 in gorse along Cadborough Cliff west of Rye (25 Feb) was notable indicating that gorse is clearly a favoured habitat.

There were no reports suggesting autumn movements. Overall the species seems to have been present in rather reduced numbers across the county in 2007 compared with 2006. [CB]

Robin

Erithacus rubecula

Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Sites with counts throughout the year were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Hotham Pk (Bognor)*	7	9	8	6	6	3	2	9	8	11	2	4
Nyetimber (Bognor)*	20	15	16	20	8	15	2	10	25	23	5	4
Lewes Race Course*	11	8	9	10	4	4	4	2	14	11	8	4
Newhaven Tide Mills	9	5	2	2	4	3	nc	5	23	17	7	5
Crowborough*	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	1	2	1	2
Darwell Res*	24	52	38	31	17	12	16	13	24	56	30	22
Darwell (singing)		38	36	27	17				14	22		
Doleham Valley*	20	29	25	23	18	13	10	14	26	nc	1	13

*new site

In the first half of the year numbers at Newhaven Tide Mills were comparable to those for 2006 but in 2007 the autumn peak was earlier and the reduction in numbers at the end of the year was larger (2006 counts for the last five months were seven, 16, 24, 15, 10). There were 60 around

Powdermill Res on 10 Mar.

During the BBS, Robins were recorded in 119 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 38 at any one site. Eight counts in five squares exceeded 20 in 2007 (cf. seven in 2006), including the counts at Southleigh Forest (Emsworth), Tilgate Forest and Scayne's Hill. The maximum count in Tilgate Forest fell from 32 in 2006 to 24 in 2007. Only single birds were found on 17 of the BBS counts, 11 of which were in June, when Robins become appreciably more difficult to count. The species was recorded in 411 out of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

There were 21 territories in 16 acres of deciduous woodland at Barns Copse (Binstead) (up from 18 in 2006) and six territories in 10.4 ha of grassland with some woods at Scobells Fm (Barcombe) (down substantially from 14 in 2006). There were 142 breeding pairs in Brighton Wild Park, a welcome and substantial increase over the 102 of 2006 and almost returning to the previous peak of 148 in 2002. A similar increase was noted at Sefter Fm (Pagham) where there were 23 territories against 17 of 2006. There were 34 pairs around Pagham Hbr and five territories at Rye Hbr. The first juvenile was reported at Pulborough Brooks on 26 Apr. Overall, there were 37 reports of confirmed, and nine of probable, breeding. A pair at North Barnham produced five young in a flower pot at the end of May but all the young were taken a week later.

There was evidence of autumn movement at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) where 30 on 25 Aug were considered to be early. Subsequently, 20 were there on 1, 5 and 7 Sep, with 40 on 4 Oct. The species was considered to be 'noticeably numerous' around Guestling on 8 Oct, with 41 counted.

Some indication of late year distribution and numbers can be gathered from early Atlas data. At Pippingford Pk only two were found on 21 Nov but 15 were counted on 20 Dec. The well wooded area between Bolney and Lower Beeding held high numbers: two hour walks around Bolney on 14 Oct, Crosspost on 20 Oct and Warninglid on 30 Sept produced totals of 79, 86 and 87 respectively.

A few interesting behavioural notes were submitted. Young in a nest at Rusper on 21 Apr were being fed on Large Red Damselflies. Among several examples of aggressive behaviour, birds were seen attacking a Squirrel which approached too close to their nest at Framfield in June; House Sparrows and Chaffinches were forced away from a feeder in Hailsham in March; and a Dunnock was chased at Mayfield in November. [CB]

Common Nightingale

Luscinia megarhynchos

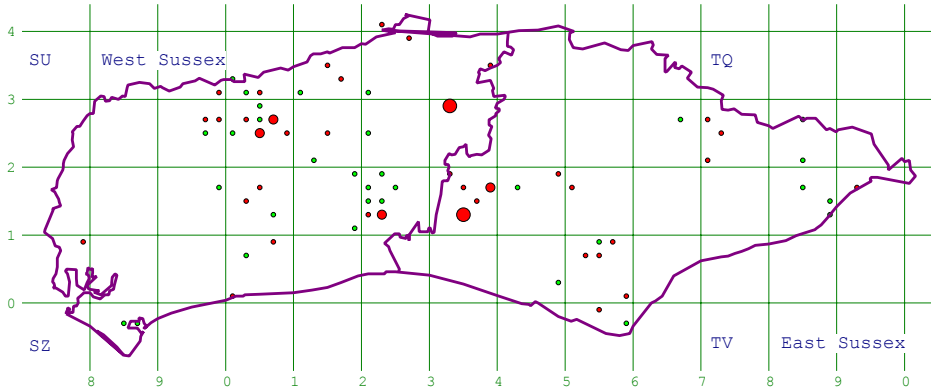
Fairly common summer visitor and infrequently seen passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Birds were present in 68 1-km squares as shown on the map below. The first bird was seen at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on 8 Apr, five days later than the 10-year average date. This was followed by a singleton at Pulborough Brooks on the 13th. From the 15th to the end of the month there were daily records of new arrivals from some 36 sites across the county.

Pulborough Brooks proved to be the most favoured site, with an April maximum of ten birds on the 22nd but only seven on the 29th and 30th and then eight on 8 May. Characteristically, few were seen along the coast, although one was singing at Rye Hbr on 22 Apr, there was one on the Eastern Rother Levels on the 26th (with two found there as late as 25 May) and one at Pagham on the 28th, and another singing at Climping on the 29th. Presence at traditional sites was well reported, although numbers were low.

There were four birds at Woods Mill on 1 May and eight in Hog Wood (Plaistow) on the 12th. The woods around Darwell Res probably held four territories but there were few other records

from likely habitat in that general area. Eight birds stayed and might have attempted breeding at Pulborough Brooks but the only confirmed breeding came from Ardingly Res. There were three reports of probable breeding. During the BBS, 12 birds were recorded in nine of the 123 1-km squares surveyed and there was just one record in the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme. There were records from a number of new sites including one at Rowner Fm (Billingshurst) on 21 May, two at Pook Corner Heath (Halland) on 31 May and a scattering of birds around Stonegate.



There were eighteen records for the first ten days of June but thereafter they were few and far between. The last song reported was heard at Harsfold (Wisborough Green) on 17 Jun. Return movement was evident from late June with one calling in Blackstone Bottom (Denton) on 23 Jun and two were by the dam at Ardingly Res on 1 Jul. At Pett Level, one or two were seen on ten days in August but the last at Pulborough Brooks was recorded on the 4th. There were seven records in August from Whitbread Hollow: all were of singletons apart from two on the 25th with the last bird of the year on the 27th, considerably earlier than the 10-year average of 15 Sep.

Observers at Beachy Head considered the return passage to have been 'very poor – again' and it seems that 2007 was a mediocre year for Nightingales in the county. [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 number of sites (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	5	8	9	7	1	3	1	3	2	11	19	8
No. of sites	5	8	7	7	1	3	1	2	2	11	11	6

The monthly total numbers compared fairly well with the 5-year averages (except in March, October and November when they were significantly lower), as shown in the following table (where numbers have been rounded):

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
5-year average	8	7	30	10	3	2	1	2	2	23	27	12

Almost all records were from coastal sites; the only ones from inland locations more than 5 km from the coast were of a pair at Weir Wood Res on 22 Mar and singles at Steyning Round Hill on 8 Oct and at Falmer on the 22nd.

Unlike last year, birds were again seen at the usual haunts during both winter periods, e.g. Telscombe Cliffs, Newhaven Tide Mills and the Shoreham coastal area, but sometimes only briefly. Singletons, presumably migrants, were recorded at Beachy Head in the spring on 11 Mar and 10 Apr and later in the year on 18 Sep, in October (three) and on 2 Nov and 20 Dec.

During the breeding season, a singing male was present at Shoreham Power Station from 19 to 27 Apr but there were no reports of breeding. One was present at East Hill (Hastings) on 6 Jun and a recently fledged bird was seen at St. Leonards-on-Sea on 12 Jun but there was no sign of any adults. The only other record for this period was one at Hodcombe (Beachy Head) on 12 and 14 Jul. There were no records from either the BBS or the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

Sightings in December suggestive of possible wintering came from Ferring on the 14th, Portobello on the 20th and of a juvenile or female in the Shoreham Hbr/Southwick/Portslade area from the 4th to the 26th. Overall, it was an unremarkable year for this species. [JAH]

Common Redstart

Phoenicurus phoenicurus

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

The first spring arrival was a male on 9 Apr at Pagham Hbr, two weeks later than the 10-year average date. One male was at Selsey Bill and three were at Beachy Head the next day. Thereafter there were records almost daily, with 34 birds being reported by the 19th. The Beachy Head record proved to be the highest migration count of the spring, and a total of up to 45 migrants were seen away from breeding areas.

The first bird in song was recorded on 18 Apr at the Old Airstrip (Ashdown Forest). During the breeding season, there were just four 1-km squares with proven breeding, five with probable breeding, and eight where birds were seen in suitable breeding areas. Ashdown Forest was, as always, the prime location with records from 16 1-km squares but, with some key areas not covered, it is not possible to determine how many pairs were involved. The area around the Old Airstrip appears to have had one of the highest densities, with four males in song there.

The Wolden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey found two pairs at Stanley Common and one at Blackdown (nr Fernhurst) and the number of singing males indicates that there were possibly up to ten pairs across the two sites. One at Woolbeding Common on 12 Jun was the only other record from this area during the breeding season. During the BBS, birds were recorded in only four of the 123 1-km squares surveyed and they were also recorded in five of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

The first bird noted on autumn migration was at Rustington on 30 Jul. Peak passage was from about 24 Aug onwards, with 11 at Beachy Head on the 25th being the highest single site count of the entire autumn. There were about 99 individuals seen in August, 68 in September and just nine in October. After better figures last year, the total of 176 in 2007 was another very disappointing tally and similar to the poor showing in 2005. The last record was at Broadbridge (Chichester) on 15 Oct, a very early final date and over two weeks earlier than the 10-year average date of 1 Nov. [AT]



Common Redstart, Old Lodge, June 2007 (Les Bird)

Whinchat

Saxicola rubetra

Rare summer visitor and common passage migrant.

2006: One was seen at Constantia Manor (Isfield) (JL) on and off from early December until at least 17 Dec.

2007: The minimum monthly totals, numbers of sites (1-km squares) and numbers of days on which they were recorded were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	1	1	1	14	11	1	1	151	101	13	3	-
No. of sites	1	1	1	12	11	1	1	60	33	13	2	-
No. of days	1	1	1	7	7	1	1	27	23	8	3	-

The first two records for the year were exceptional: a first winter male at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on 5 and 9 Jan and 16 and 18 Feb was suggestive of wintering (SB). However, BWP does state that '*wintering records north of Sahara are exceptional but widely scattered.... north to Britain*' so this record is not without some precedent nationally. The previous earliest Sussex record was from 18 to 25 Feb 1995, probably another authentic wintering bird, and there was another for 4 Dec 1999 which might have wintered.

The next record was at Isfield on 25 Mar which compares with the 10-year average arrival date of 1 Apr. The next sighting was not until 17 Apr, followed by almost daily records of ones or twos to 3 May and then a trickle of later migrants to 6 Jun.

Of the 78 sites at which birds were recorded, no less than 29 (37%) were from inland sites

(more than 5 km from the coast). Conversely, in 2006, only three of 80 sites were inland. Perhaps this year's experience reflects the greater number of records received due, in part, to BirdTrack.

Numbers this year were comparable with 2006 in the spring, higher by 41% in August but lower by 30% in September and 60% in October. This suggests that birds were undertaking autumn migration earlier, as has also been reported in *BTO News*, 277, p 9.

The first autumn migrant was at Climping Beach on 22 Jul but from 31 Jul to 7 Oct there was a steady, almost daily (55 of 68 days) stream, mainly at coastal sites, of mostly small numbers rarely exceeding five. The highest counts during this period were (in date order) six at Thorney Island on 2 Aug, 11 in fields west of Selsey on the 20th, ten at Hollingbury Camp on the 24th, nine at Beachy Head on the 25th and eight at Rye Hbr on the 27th. The last record of the year was of a singleton at Sidlesham Ferry on 9 Nov. [JAH]

Stonechat

Saxicola torquatus

Fairly common resident and partial 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	144	128	97	120	163	122	132	111	293	421	140	186
No. of sites	59	46	40	48	46	45	36	28	57	88	58	65

During the first two months of the year numbers were comparable with the two previous years. The 181 records for this period came from 80 sites almost equally divided between coastal and inland (more than 5 km from the coast) sites and also between the west and east of the county. Only 22 records were for counts of five or more birds. The highest count was at Newhaven Tide Mills, where the monthly maximum was 12 on 25 Feb. There were counts of nine at Thorney Island on 24 Jan and 2 Feb, of eight at Iping Common on 3 and 18 Feb, and six at Climping Beach on 17 Feb.

As usual there were no reports of spring movements from seawatching sites but a bird seen at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on 6 Mar was considered to be a migrant. The highest counts during the spring months were 14 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 11 Mar, 11 at the Old Airstrip (Ashdown Forest) on the 17th and 11 at Iping Common on 26 May.

The earliest reports of territorial activity came from Ashdown Forest where a male and a female were agitated on 3 Mar, a singing male was observed on the 5th and three males were holding territory on the 7th. These dates were approximately ten days earlier than last year. The first report of breeding activity came from Bo Peep (Aliciston) where two pairs were nest building on 11 Mar and adults carrying food were first noted at Ashdown Forest on 30 Apr. The first young of the year (pair + 2-3 young) were observed at Beeding Hill on 11 May, at Weir Wood Res (male + four young) on the 13th and at Steep Down (Lancing) on the 19th (pair + 2 young). Breeding was confirmed in at least 39 1-km squares, of which 18 were outside Ashdown Forest and spread right across the county, was probable in c.38 and was possible in six more. The species was again poorly represented in the BBS as only three birds were recorded in just two of the 123 1-km squares surveyed.

During the summer there were only six double-figure counts and the three highest counts were all at Beachy Head, viz. 19 on 11 Aug, 27 on the 25th and 24 on the 26th. Elsewhere, 11 were recorded at Iping Common on 2 Aug and there were two counts of ten from sites in Ashdown Forest, on 10 Jun and 3 Jul. A bird was seen carrying food as late as 1 Sep at Ashdown Forest.

During the autumn significant numbers were recorded at Climping Beach where the September total was 55 (with a maximum count of 18 on the 28th) and the October total was 121 with a maximum of 20 on the 2nd. At Beachy Head, where the species was noted throughout the period, significant counts included 14 on 7 Sep, a monthly peak of 28 (the highest single-day count anywhere) on the 30th reducing thereafter to 12 on 6 Oct and 11 on the 13th. The first autumn migrants were recorded at Pett Level on 12 Sep and then daily to the end of the month while in October there were 117 bird/days there. A singleton at Bewl Water on 3 Oct was the only record there for the whole year. The first wintering bird, a female, was noted at Thorney Island on 4 Sep but numbers steady increased to ten (4m, 6f) on the 30th and 16 on 5 Oct.

In the second winter period, there were only three counts of ten or more: ten at Thorney Island on 25 Nov and 13 at Iping Common the same day and 11 there on 30 Dec. [JAH]



Stonechat, Rye Harbour, February 2007 (Barry Yates)

Northern Wheatear

Oenanthe oenanthe

Very scarce breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant.

The minimum monthly totals, numbers of sites (1-km squares) and numbers of days in which birds were recorded were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	-	1	66	257	83	12	22	521	290	112	5	-
No. of sites	-	1	27	62	38	5	15	66	66	48	5	-
No. of days	-	1	16	27	21	7	11	29	28	29	3	-

Records were received for 151 separate sites of which 45 (30%) were inland (more than 5 km from the coast). Total numbers in the three months of spring were lower than in both the previous two years, so it appears that it was not a good year. In the three autumn months, while numbers were better than in 2006, they were significantly lower than in 2005. Unlike the two previous years, numbers in August were 1.8 times higher than in September – is this species, like some others, tending to migrate earlier? A large majority of the 660 records (84%) came from coastal or near coastal sites and only 77 (12%) came from 44 separate inland sites.

The first spring migrants were noted at the inland site of Weir Wood Res on 7 Mar (compared to the 10-year average date of 3 Mar) and on the 11th at Newhaven Tide Mills (1) and Thorney Deepes (2). Thereafter there was a steady stream, generally in small numbers, on most days through to 2 Jun. The maximum count in March was only eight at Shoreham Hbr on the 27th. In April, there were ten counts of ten or more including 15 at both Goring Gap and the Shingle Spit (Pagham Hbr) on the 10th and 25 at Climping Beach on the 17th. The only significant count in May was seven at Climping Beach on the 20th. The only record suggestive of a bird of the Greenland race was a male seen at Steep Down (Lancing) on 19 May which ‘seemed a bit larger and brighter than normal’.



Northern Wheatear, Whitbread Hollow, September 2007 (Martin Casemore)

Dates in the months on which the highest number of records occurred and the numbers of birds counted were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May		Aug	Sep	Oct
Peak date	27	10	5		3, 27	15, 23	10
No. of records	11	14	12		8, 9	9, 14	6
No. of birds	43	113	28		31, 51	65, 50	9

In August, there were 22 records involving ten or more birds with peak counts of 30 at Church

Norton on the 16th and Climping Beach (obviously a favourite migration spot) on the 24th. Peak numbers were lower in September as there were only six records of over ten birds with peak counts of 22 at Beachy Head on the 15th and 28 in the Shoreham area on the 22nd. The last record of the year was a singleton at Darwell Res on 12 Nov, consistent with the 10-year average date of 14 Nov. [JAH]

Ring Ouzel

Turdus torquatus

Passage migrant, scarce in spring, often fairly common but local in autumn. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

A reasonable spring count was followed by a very poor autumn passage. The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Mar	Apr	May		Sep	Oct	Nov
0	23	0		8	44	0

The first spring migrant was at Hastings CP on 5 Apr and was the most easterly record of the year. It was also 17 days later than the 10-year average and the latest first sighting since 1994. Singletons were then seen across the county with the most westerly at Church Norton on the 10th. On the same day two birds appeared at Beachy Head and three more, including two males, were there on the 19th. Another three birds including two males were observed at Cissbury Ring, also on the 19th, and five were at Malling Down Chalk Pit (Lewes) on the 18th. Finally, a male was noted at Applesham (Coombes) on the 30th, a slightly early date for the last spring record. The 10-year average spring count is 17, yearly counts varying from nine birds to 36.

The autumn migration lasted just a few weeks, the earliest bird being recorded at Cissbury Ring on 12 Sep and again on the 17th, followed from the 28th by ones and twos at several sites mostly along the coast between Hastings CP and Pagham Hbr. There were no exceptional counts, the largest being six birds at Beachy Head on 7 Oct and three at Cissbury Ring on the 15th. The last bird was recorded on 3 Nov at Hastings CP, two weeks earlier than the 10-year average date of 17 Nov. The total of 52 birds is the lowest since 1999 (43 birds) and pales beside the 10-year average of 170. [JHW]

Blackbird

Turdus merula

Abundant breeding resident and winter visitor; perhaps a passage migrant.

In the first half of the year the number of records increased by nearly a half over 2006 and doubled in the second half, probably as a result of the number of records from Birdtrack and the start of the Atlas surveys. However, monthly counts declined by 20% in the first winter period, increased by 20% during the breeding season and accelerated to three times last year's by December. The overall count reflects perhaps 5280 birds, considerably more than the 3770 estimated in 2006 and 4140 in 2005. 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	463	488	467	1867	1778	1828	398	197	274	661	971	1089
No. of records	153	141	163	324	369	269	166	85	90	140	159	200

The species was recorded in every one of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme but the records are not included in the above because they were not itemised.

The decline in first winter counts followed on from the end of 2006. Before May, five sites held about 30 birds, including Nyetimber (Bognor), University of Sussex, Peacehaven, Darwell Res and Doleham Valley. Distribution was widespread.

During the BBS, 1764 individuals were recorded in 122 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed (an increase over 1616 from 122 squares in 2006). Seven squares held 30 or more birds, the highest being 45 at Peacehaven. These records are included in the table.

A female was sitting on eggs at Warnham LNR on 6 Mar and a fledgling was seen at Framfield on 30 Mar. Totals of 264 territories or pairs and 161 juveniles were recorded. Included in the total were 111 pairs at Brighton Wild Park and 41 at Pagham Hbr, 24 territories at Rye Hbr, 23 at Sefter Fm (Pagham) and 16 at Goring Gap. In addition there were 130 “probably breeding” and 100 “possibly breeding” records. No report came from Plumpton Agricultural College this year which recorded 89 pairs last year.

As the year closed 50 birds appeared at Climping on 12 Oct, another 50 at Darwell Res on 12 Nov and 66 at Washington on 17 Nov, where there were 64 birds a month later. There were 47 birds at Lidsey Old Canal and Tip on 19 Nov (still there on 11 Dec) possibly shared with the sewage works where 38 birds were counted on the 24th.

During a 4 km survey at Riverside Park (Newhaven) on 18 Dec, 60 birds were recorded. Otherwise there were no signs of migration. [JHW]

Fieldfare

Turdus pilaris

Common, occasionally very common, passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The total of 3673 birds in the first winter period was barely half the 10-year average and was not leavened by the second winter period total being only 72% of the 10-year average. Despite a 50% increase in the number of records submitted (due partly to Birdtrack and to Atlas work), the latter total is only a marginal improvement on 2006. The approximate monthly totals in the three E-W bands of the county are shown in the table (only the easting grid numbers are given).

Eastings	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1434	1425	823	91	-	33	1310	3251	1882
SU/SZ70-99	331	280	163	28			285	417	800
TQ/TV00-49	820	1012	330	61		33	805	2078	571
TQ/TV50+	283	133	330	2			220	756	511

In January, numbers continued the poor autumn showing of 2006 although there were 250 birds in the Adur Upper Levels on the 1st and hundreds in West Dean Woods on the 4th and Sidlesham Ferry Fields on the 21st. February was little better with 105 at Pulborough Brooks on the 1st, swelling to 400 on the 25th, and possibly contributing to 150 at Amberley Wild Brooks on the 19th. Further east, there were 130 at Barcombe Res also on 25 Feb. In March, following 110 at Fittleworth on the 13th, there were 100 at Strudgate Fm (Balcombe) on the 14th, 130 at Michelham Priory on the 23rd and 100 at Bewl Straight on the 27th which included some birds in song. A flock of 40 at Pulborough Brooks on 3 Apr was the last sizeable gathering and numbers petered out to a final two there on 14 Apr, 11 days earlier than the 10-year average but similar to last year.

The first returning birds were eight seen at Wakehurst Place on exactly the 10-year average

date of 22 Sep. The next birds seen were 25 at Cissbury Ring on the 29th, soon followed by small numbers on a wide front, some reaching the coast at Climping and Beachy Head by 13 Oct. On the 18th, 100 were seen at Stedham Common followed by 282 at Hollingbury Camp on the 19th, another 100 at Saltdean Cliffs on the 20th and 150 and 200 at Dusters Orchards (Bewl) on 31 Oct and 28 Dec respectively. [JHW]

Song Thrush

Turdus philomelos

Common but declining resident and partial migrant; common passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

The availability of records from the Garden BirdWatch scheme, usually reporting one bird per record, has created a new baseline in the statistics of this species. Without it there was a 20% increase in records (to 1227) for the year but only a 3% increase in birds counted (2864) which is disappointing. Including the results of the Garden BirdWatch scheme, there was a 178% increase in records (to 2845) and a 62% increase in birds counted (4518). The following table shows the approximate number of records and birds for the year and the Garden BirdWatch contribution (comparison with the table for 2006 is instructive):

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds (total)	283	333	301	757	616	651	266	139	119	336	292	425
No. of records	224	238	232	422	353	342	215	116	71	147	193	292
Garden BirdWatch birds	153	161	139	175	162	156	140	84	51	84	128	185

Eliminating sedentary (repeated) sightings suggests that 2190 different birds were observed in the county, 333 of which were from Garden BirdWatch.

Spring migrants or winter flocks appeared mainly in the extreme east. Ten birds were seen at Netherfield on 4 Jan, 11 at Guestling on 4 Feb and 23 in Doleham Valley on 18 Feb. Another ten were resident at Cadborough (Rye) on 25 Feb and 23 birds were at Powdermill Res on 10 Mar. In the west there were ten at Pulborough Brooks on 23 Jan.

A pair was seen mating in Worthing on 14 Mar, nest material was being gathered in Framfield on 29 Mar and food carried by both adults on 14 Apr in Millbrook (Ashdown). Later reports identified 64 pairs or territories, and 67 juveniles (62 of the latter in ringing reports) and there were perhaps 60 more territories in Ashdown Forest. During the BBS, 437 birds (of unspecified age) were recorded in 108 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed.

Autumn migration was apparent from 20 birds reported at Cissbury Ring on 29 Sept, 30 birds over-flying Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on 8 Oct (and another 16 on the 14th and 20 on the 15th), a “fall” of 20 birds (including a party of 12) at Darwell Res on 11 Oct, 31 birds at Beachy Head on 13 Oct and 22 N over Warnham LNR on 15 Oct. Significantly, at Strivens Reed Bed (Steyning) eight birds were trapped on 16 Sep out of the year’s total of 27 and at Cissbury North Scarp 12 of its 60 trappings were on 6 Oct. (In both summaries about two-thirds of all trappings were young and about one quarter of the adults had been ringed in previous years). Beachy Head RG noted that nine of the ten birds they trapped in October were of the continental form.

Notable winter gatherings included 22 at Warnham Fm on 15 Oct and 20 birds at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on 4 Nov, another 20 at Marsh Fm (Earnley) and 29 in Riverside Park (Newhaven) on 18 Dec and 20 at Pulborough Brooks on 20 Dec. [JHW]

Redwing*Turdus iliacus*

Common, occasionally very common, passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The first and second winter period totals were similar to last year and were unexceptional. The approximate monthly totals in the three E-W bands of the county are shown below (eastings grid numbers only):

Eastings	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1196	1302	827	18	-	94	690	1480	1215
SU/SZ70-99	103	83	29	1	-	-	100	735	199
TQ/TV00-49	878	914	285	11	-	82	502	599	867
TQ/TV50-99	215	305	513	6	-	12	88	146	147

On 1 Jan, 250 birds were counted in the Upper Adur Levels and 40 at Burton MP. On the 13th, 70 were seen in Doleham Valley in the extreme east and a day later 150 in Rackham Woods, indicating a wide spread of birds. There were 300 birds at Little Bognor (Petworth) and 150 not far away in Pulborough Brooks on 25 Feb and 100 at the dam at Bewl Water on 23 Feb but records were more easterly in March with 50 at Bewl Water on the 6th, 120 at Powdermill Res on the 10th and 240 at Darwell Res on the 17th. The few April birds were well spread and the final bird was seen at Doleham Valley on the 22nd, two weeks later than the 10-year average last date.

The first returning birds were seen at Constantia Manor (Isfield) on 26 Sep (compared to the 10-year average date of 21 Sep) and were followed by several dozen in the next few days, again on a wide front. However, while flocks of 50 or so birds were often seen, November was the first month for three figure counts, 430 birds flying over West Dean Woods in 20 minutes on the 6th and 250 roosting at Compton on the 21st. There were 157 at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on 27 Nov, 100 at Bedelands Fm (Burgess Hill) on 1 Dec and 150 at Pulborough Brooks on 4 Dec. The final large count was 161 birds occupying 4 different 1-km squares in Riverside Park (Newhaven) on the 18th. [JHW]

Mistle Thrush*Turdus viscivorus*

Common resident and partial migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The number of birds reported increased to 1394, 42% higher than in 2006, while the number of records increased by 90%. Removing repetitive sightings suggests that there were 800 birds compared to last year's estimate of just over 600 and perhaps reflects the additional number of records, particularly from Birdtrack and the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

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	110	76	108	166	161	158	111	94	120	96	92	102
No. of records	77	59	79	137	100	77	38	25	36	59	57	66

This inconspicuous species remains well spread throughout the county but only occasionally gathers in flocks of ten or more individuals. In the first winter period the largest gatherings were

just ten at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on 5 Jan and nine at Washington on 2 Feb.

Two pairs were reported breeding in Brighton Wild Park in mid-April with fledged young being seen at the University of Sussex and Rye Hbr in late April. In May broods were reported from Rustington, Tegdown Hill (Brighton), Newmarket Hill, Plumpton Plain and Ashdown Ridge. Breeding was unsuccessful at St Annes Well (Hove). Three pairs bred in Pagham Hbr, one in Amberley Wild Brooks, three in Pulborough Brooks and up to four around Horsham, and there was a pair with six juveniles in Arundel Pk, all in early June. Fledglings were seen at Doleham Valley in the east on 10 Jun and a food-carrying adult at Airmans Grave (Ashdown Forest) on 8 Jul. During the BBS, birds were recorded in 48 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum count of 12 on the Parham Estate on 24 May. Birds were also recorded in 93 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

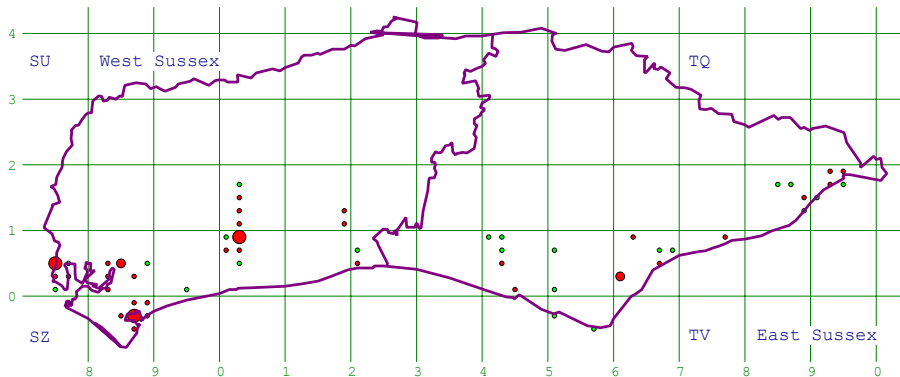
Other sizeable counts were of ten at Ashdown Res on 16 Jun and 14 at Guestling on 23 Jun. In July, 18 were seen at Pett Level (which also hosted ten in August, September and November), ten at Colworth Fm (Chilgrove) and 20 at Duddleswell (Ashdown) followed by another 20 at Lavington Plantation in mid-August and 17 at Cissbury Ring in late-August. In September there were ten at Thorney Island, 22 at Millbrook (Ashdown) and possibly the same flock a week later at Old Lodge. Finally, a flock of ten at Whatlington in early November complemented the same number at Pett Level. [JHW]

Cetti's Warbler

Cettia cetti

Scarce but increasing resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

In the first two months of the year there were reports from 19 sites, five more than the previous year, and the number of individuals involved also increased from 35 to 50. There were eight at Thorney Deepes, a maximum of seven at Pett Level, six at Rye Hbr, four at Waltham Brooks, two at Shinewater and single birds at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven), Hooe Level, and Beeding Brooks. These numbers are less than the number of singing males located later in the year, an indication of the skulking nature of this species and its reluctance to call during the winter months. The locations where birds were seen during the year are shown on the map below:



At the main sites during May there were ten singing males at Pett Level, 14 at Thorney Deepes, 17 at Pagham Hbr and 18 at Rye Hbr. Other occupied sites included Warningcamp, Waltham Brooks and Shinewater which all held two singing males, and Beeding Brooks and Shoreham Airport with one apiece.

At Thorney the first juveniles noted were three observed with their parents on 1 Jun, and at least 30 young were raised in the area; a pair with a second brood of four young was seen on 1 Aug. The favoured sites all showed an increase in numbers and additional sites were occupied, indicating an increase from the 50-60 pairs recorded in 2006 to between 70 and 80 pairs.

During the autumn and winter the same locations provided the bulk of the records, although single birds were also reported at Aldingbourne Rife on 4 Nov, Pulborough Brooks on 9 and 25 Nov and Lewes Brooks on 22 Dec. [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 arrivals were heard on 10 Apr (one day earlier than the 10-year average date) when singletons were at The Severals (Church Norton) and Seaford Head. Further reeling birds were in a Seaford garden and a rather yellow individual was in gorse at Newmarket Hill. Other April reports were of two in the Church Norton area on the 15th, one at Cissbury Ring on the 16th, two at Waltham Brooks from the 17th to the 30th (which may have been either a pair or two males) and one was at Pagham North Wall on 20 Apr.

As in the previous two years there were records of reeling males from only five sites, with two singing birds at Amberley Wild Brooks, and just one reeling male from Pagham Hbr, Waltham Brooks and Pett Level, where a male first heard on 7 May sang until the end of the month. A bird reeling at Pulborough Brooks in early May was not heard later in the month.

During return passage, the maximum daily numbers ringed at Pett Level in August and September were 29 on 28 Aug and 18 on 2 Sep. An individual ringed at Cissbury on 15 Sep was the first of this species trapped there since 2000 and, as in 2006, only seven were reported or ringed at Beachy Head. The last report of the year was a single bird at Pett Level on 11 Oct, eight days earlier than the 10-year average date of 19 Oct. [VPB]

Aquatic Warbler

Acrocephalus paludicola

Very scarce autumn visitor to selected sites, rare elsewhere. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Considered vulnerable by IUCN.

Two juveniles were trapped at Pett Level in August, one on the 23rd and the other on the 25th (both RBRG). Twenty-five have been recorded in the county since the start of 2000, well down on the 1990s when records averaged almost ten per year. Recent records have been at Pett Level (18), Combe Haven (2), Cuckmere Haven and Thorney Deepes and have fallen in August (18) and September (6) although the extreme dates are 30 Jul (1994) and 19 Oct (1853, and 2nd British record). [RJF]

Sedge Warbler

Acrocephalus schoenobaenus

Fairly common summer visitor and very common passage migrant.

The first record was at Pagham Hbr on 6 Apr, five days later than in 2006 and nine days later than the 10-year average date. The next records were from Rye Hbr and Pett Level on 9 Apr. Numbers continued to be recorded, mainly in single figures and from widely scattered localities

until the 19th when 12 were heard singing at Thorney Deeps and six were singing at Waltham Brooks. At the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) the April maximum was 12 on the 22nd.

During May, 12 were recorded at Arundel WWT on the 4th, 40 pairs were counted at Thorney Deeps (two less than in 2006) and the maximum at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) remained at 12. A total of 27 pairs was recorded at Pagham Hbr, 53 territories were mapped at Rye Hbr (three more than in 2006) and at Amberley Wild Brooks and Pulborough Brooks the breeding counts were 32 and 18 respectively.

There was an obvious movement of birds on return passage on 30 Jul when 232 were trapped at Pett Level. Elsewhere passage birds were noted with one at Beachy Head on 4 Aug, another single at Seaford Head on the 12th and 458 were trapped at Pett Level on the 16th. In September 149 were trapped at the latter site on the 2nd, three birds were at Beachy Head on the 11th and one there on the 15th. October records included a singleton at Thorney Deep on the 2nd and five at Fishbourne Channel on the 11th. At Pett Level 17 were recorded during the month, the last being on the 13th, the same date as the 10-year county average. [TWP]

Paddyfield Warbler

Acrocephalus agricola

Very rare vagrant.

A first winter bird was trapped and photographed at Pett Level on 7 Oct (PJo *et al.*). It has been accepted by *BBRC* and is the third county record. The previous two were also trapped at this site, on 13-18 Oct 1992 and 28 Sep 2003. One staying in a more accessible reedbed or patch of coastal scrub would be most welcome. [RJF]

Marsh Warbler

Acrocephalus palustris

Very scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

2006: A very worn and abraded individual was trapped and ringed at a site near Steyning on 10th Jun (PJC). [CWM]

2007: A juvenile trapped at Pett Level on 23 Oct was retrapped on the 24th, 26th and 29th (RBRG). It is the latest county record by four days but despite this it was able to find enough food to increase its weight from 11.1g to 14.1g during its stay. About 37 have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000, mostly at this site. There are just four previous October records for the county, at Seaford Head on the 5th-6th (1991) and Pett Level on the 6th (2001), 17th (2003) and 22nd-25th (1997). [RJF]

Eurasian Reed Warbler

Acrocephalus scirpaceus

Common summer visitor and very common passage migrant.

The first records were of singles at Church Norton (Pagham Hbr) and at Rye Hbr on the late date of 15 Apr, eight days later than the 10-year average. Birds then trickled in during the month with monthly maxima of 11 at Aldingbourne Rife, 16 at Lewes Brooks, 13 at Warningcamp (Arundel) and 20 at Nyetimber (Bognor).

During May the only significant numbers were 27 at Pagham North Fields on the 11th, 28 at Aldingbourne Rife on the 14th, 41 at Nyetimber on the 26th and 41 at Rother Levels East on the 25th.

Breeding summaries in May and June included 67 pairs at Thorney Deeps, 20 pairs at Warnham LNR, 78 pairs at Pagham Hbr, 227 territories mapped at Rye Hbr (another increase at this site: 201 there in 2006 and 130 in 2005), and 47 territories counted at Seftor Fm (Pagham). The first young trapped and ringed at Pett Level were on 27 Jun.

The first obvious returning migrants were three on 2 Aug at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head). However, passage had undoubtedly started earlier since 75 were ringed at Pett Level on 30 Jul although it is impossible to say how many were migrants as opposed to local breeding birds. On 17 Aug 197 were ringed at the latter site and 15 at Whitbread Hollow. At Pett Level 82 were trapped on 2 Sep and the total trapped there in October was 67 including the last record for the county on the 19th, two weeks earlier than the 10-year average date. Other October records were two on Thorney Island on the 4th, one at Pagham Hbr on the 8th, seven on Pevensy Levels on the 10th and a single at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 13th. [TWP]

Blackcap

Sylvia atricapilla

Very common summer visitor and passage migrant; small numbers winter.

The first two months of the year brought reports of at least 71 wintering individuals in 61 different locations, more than in the same period in 2006 but also considerably more than in November and December that year when there were just 18 birds at 14 sites. This probably indicates that the birds stay in the wider countryside until natural food supplies are exhausted and then come into gardens where they are more likely to be seen, rather than there being an influx of birds into the county at the turn of the year. One bird seen in a Steyning garden on 1 Jan at a nyger seed feeder was reported regularly until early April. Another was eating sunflower hearts in Crowborough on 13 and 30 Jan, and a female at Goring was feeding on peanuts on the 20th.

The first song was heard at North Heath (Horsham) on 27 Feb and an individual at Ivy Lake (Chichester) on 22 Mar may have been the first returning migrant. From then on the number of records increased countywide. There were 18 pairs at Brighton Wild Park, 13 at Pagham Hbr, 12 at Friston Forest, eight at Rye Hbr, another eight pairs at Thorney Island (the same number as in 2006) and four at Warnham LNR. During the BBS 264 individuals were recorded in 83 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed, 14% fewer than in 2006.

The Steyning RG handled 121 different birds at Steyning, of which 97 were juveniles, and 381 at Cissbury, 329 being young birds. The Cissbury total showed an increase of 20% over 2006, with this species again comprising nearly one-third of the total catch. A total of 832 was ringed at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head), where the Ringing Group reported a reasonable autumn.

Estimated numbers passing through Whitbread Hollow in September were 150 on the 1st, 250 on the 5th and 400 on the 23rd, although on the previous day only 75 had been present. The final migrants were probably the individuals seen at Church Norton on 3 Nov and Pett Level on the 15th.

A female at Bognor Regis was seen feeding on spindle berries on 12 Nov and 16 Dec, and similarly a male was seen at the same spot on 28 Nov and 20 Dec. The November and December total of wintering birds was 43 in 38 locations (mainly gardens) which was more than double the 2006 totals for the same period.

The species was also seen in 131 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme. [VPB]

Garden Warbler*Sylvia borin**Common summer visitor and passage migrant.*

The first bird of the year was seen at the Knepp Estate on 1 Apr, three days earlier than the 10-year average date. Another was at St Leonards the next day, but the main arrival did not start until the 20th. An individual at West Tarring was heard singing for three hours on the 30th.

During the BBS 34 birds were recorded in 17 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed and in the Garden BirdWatch scheme birds were seen in 15 of the 413 gardens surveyed. In May there were three around the nature trail at Pulborough Brooks on the 8th and seven were singing at Darwell Res on the 12th, but these were not recorded again. There were four at Ripe on the 6th and the same number at Black Down on the 10th.

Only 12 were trapped at Cissbury, nine of which were juveniles, although one female had originally been ringed at the site as an adult in 1999 and was therefore at least nine years old. Garden Warblers are trans-Saharan migrants, and this individual must therefore have flown an estimated 60,000 miles in her life (VPB *pers. comm.*), and currently holds the BTO national longevity record for this species.

At Pett Level a maximum of 33 was ringed on 7 Aug. Beachy Head RG caught a total of 46, noting a very poor autumn; 20 moving through on 12 Aug was the highest number recorded on passage at the site. On 1 Sep, 20 were seen at Ardingly Res when tape luring was used for ringing purposes. The final reports were of single birds at Goring and Staplefield on 15 Oct, two days later than the 10-year average date. [VPB]

Lesser Whitethroat*Sylvia curruca**Common summer visitor and passage migrant.*

The first returning migrant was seen at Rye Hbr on 5 Apr. This was one week earlier than the 10-year average date of 12 Apr, 12 days earlier than the first record in 2006 and only one day later than the earliest recorded date. Another was at Etchingam on the 9th and the first in the west of the county was at Cissbury Ring on the 12th. A maximum of six were at Pulborough Brooks on 19 Apr, nine males were singing at Thorney Island on the 21st and four were at Plumpton on the 29th.

During the breeding season there were 14 pairs nesting at Thorney Island and Thorney Deeps. An individual with a caterpillar in its beak was seen at Woods Mill on 11 Jun and a pair was at the same location on the 19th. During the BBS 17 birds were recorded in 11 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed, compared with 225 from 69 for Common Whitethroat.

It was another poor year at Cissbury with 12 different individuals trapped of which only five were juveniles, although this was a slight improvement over the 2006 adult:juvenile ratio of 10:3. Another very poor autumn was the verdict of the Beachy Head RG, who ringed only 23 birds, four fewer than in 2006, and passage numbers did not exceed ten on any single day. The last bird recorded in the east of the county was at Pett Level on 23 Sept, and in the west two were at Thorney Deeps on 5 Oct, 11 days earlier than the 10-year average date of 16 Oct. [VPB]

Common Whitethroat*Sylvia communis**Very common summer visitor and passage migrant.*

The earliest arrival was a single bird at Hollingbury Camp on 6 Apr, six days later than the 10-year average date. Pagham and Rye Harbours both had their first arrivals on the 10th and the first individual at Pulborough Brooks was seen the following day. Three were singing at Barcombe Mills on the 15th, and on the 28th there were 20 at Cadborough (Rye), 15 at Steyning Down and 14 at Sidlesham Tramway. The following day 15 were heard at Cissbury Ring and 13 at Hollingbury Camp. At Bodiam 11 were heard singing on 6 May with seven in song flight.

During the BBS 226 were counted in 69 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed (almost 18% down on 2006) and the species was present in 14 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme. At Thorney Island, 54 pairs were recorded and there were five pairs breeding at Amberley Wild Brooks, 15 at Pulborough Brooks, 26 at Brighton Wild Park, 46 at Pagham Hbr and 59 at Rye Hbr, all broadly similar numbers to 2006. A family party of five was seen at Colworth Fm (Chilgrove) on 26 Jun and a young bird was being fed by a parent at Pulborough Brooks on 7 Jul.

At Cissbury 38 different birds were trapped, 11 fewer than in 2006, with an adult:juvenile ratio of 4:34. Comparing this with the Lesser Whitethroat ratio of 7:5 gives an indication of the relative breeding success of these two species in 2007. Beachy Head RG noted an average to poor autumn passage of this species, with a maximum daily passage in August of 46 on the 25th and in September of 23 on the 15th.

In October there were reports from just seven sites with the last record in the east being of three ringed at Pett Level on the 14th. In the west a single bird was along the west side of Pagham Hbr on the 24th, five days later than the 10-year average date of 19 Oct. [VPB]



Dartford Warbler, Beachy Head, October 2007 (Martin Casemore)

Dartford Warbler*Sylvia undata*

Fairly common but localised resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

A steady number of records were received throughout the first winter period, the majority of which were from breeding sites in the Wealden Heaths and on Ashdown Forest, although singletons were seen elsewhere such as at Hastings CP on 29 Mar. Iping Common again proved to be an important wintering site with a maximum of 15 individuals on 10 Mar. Song was first recorded at Lavington Common on 1 Feb. Coastal records of singletons came from Pagham Hbr (to 1 Mar) and Hastings CP (to 28 Mar), while there were two at Littlehampton GC on 3 Feb.

Records from the Wealden Heaths, collected through the annual Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey, were remarkably consistent with recent years, producing a total of 63 pairs recorded from seven sites (Iping and Stedham Commons taken as one site) covering 15 1-km squares. This compares with a maximum of 62 pairs in 2006 and 64 pairs in 2005. Ambersham/Heyshott Commons and Iping/Stedham Commons had the highest numbers with 20 and 18 pairs, respectively. Weavers Down had a respectable 15 pairs and a further six pairs were recorded from Woolbeding Common.

Interpretation of records from the Ashdown Forest Bird Group and other observers on Ashdown Forest indicates a total of around 30 pairs in the area. The first sign of proven breeding was a female carrying food at the Old Airstrip on 9 May.

With no further breeding records received away from these core areas, an approximate county total for the year is about 93 pairs, which falls within the 2006 estimates of 87 to 101 pairs. There were seven tetrads and 11 1-km squares with confirmed breeding.

During the autumn, there were a number of records from the coast, involving a minimum of 12 birds. One was seen on several dates at Thorney Island between 18 Oct and 26 Dec, one was at Southbourne (Emsworth) on 20 Oct, at least three were at Pagham Hbr in October, up to two were at Beachy Head between 6 Oct and 4 Nov, up to three were at Hastings CP from 6 Oct to 13 Nov, one was ringed at Pett Level on 23 Oct, and one was at Rye Hbr between 21 Oct and 12 Dec. On the heaths, two were in song at Ambersham Common on 4 Oct, while 27 at Iping Common on 21 Oct was a site record. [CET/AT]

Pallas's Leaf Warbler*Phylloscopus proregulus*

Very scarce visitor, mostly in late autumn.

One was seen in a private garden at Hodcombe (Beachy Head) on 4 Oct (MEC, RHC). There is only one earlier county record, at the same site on 1 Oct 1998. One was also seen and widely photographed near the Beachy Head Hotel on 21 Oct. Seventy-six have been recorded in the county. Eighteen have been recorded since the start of 2000 reversing the almost exponential growth experienced in previous decades. Totals for the 1960s to the 1990s are three (all in 1968), seven, 11 and 37. Most records are from mid-October to mid-/late November. [RJF]

Yellow-browed Warbler*Phylloscopus inornatus*

Very scarce visitor, mostly in late autumn.

One was present in gardens off Cross Road (Southwick) from 25 Feb to 1 Apr (PJa *et al.*). A male was trapped at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on 29 Sep (RDME *et al.*) and a presumed

male, on wing length, was trapped at Pett Level on 4 Oct (RBRG) while one was seen at Hodcombe (Beachy Head) during 4-6 Oct (MEC, RHC). Also in October singletons were seen at Cow Gap (Beachy Head) on the 13th (DC, JFC, RJF *et al.*), Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on the 14th (DC, RJF, JWK *et al.*), West Hill (Hastings) on the 15th (ASG) and Hodcombe (Beachy Head) on the 19th-21st (MEC, RHC). Another was trapped at Pett Level on 3 Nov (RBRG) and the third for the autumn was seen at Hodcombe on 6 Nov (MEC, RHC).

The Southwick individual was an excellent urban find, located by call while the observer was dog walking. It remained faithful to an easily overlooked garden and was the most watched Yellow-browed Warbler in the county, being seen by more than 100 observers. It was only the second to successfully winter in the county although the previous one, at Thorney in Jan-Apr 1975, is perhaps best considered to be an indeterminate *inornatus/humei*. That being the case this individual provides the county with its first records for the months of February and March. The Whitbread Hollow record is the earliest in autumn since one was seen at Hodcombe on 26 Sep 1994 although the earliest county record to date was at Birling Gap on 18 Sep 1988. The ten records above take the total since the beginning of 2000 to 45, more than double that of the previous species and in contrast to the 1990s when 37 of each were recorded. Recent records have been in January (2), April, September, October (33), November (6) and December (2). [RJF]

Hume's Leaf Warbler

Phylloscopus humei

Very rare vagrant.

One present in Horseshoe Plantation (Beachy Head) from 30 Dec to 14 Jan 2008 (JFC, RDME, STU *et al.*) has been accepted by *BBRC*. It is the fifth county record, the others being at the same site from 13-17 Nov 1966 and 6-10 Nov 2003, Sheepcote Valley from 16-22 Nov 1997 and Seaford from 2-22 Dec 2000. Late records of this species are very much the norm although this is the first to be seen into the New Year. Photographs of this individual, which often gave very good views low down and sometimes on the ground in the denuded copse, can be found in *Birding World* (21:7) and *British Birds* (101:plate 64). [RJF]

Wood Warbler

Phylloscopus sibilatrix

Very scarce and declining summer resident and passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The number of records was up on 2006 with 25 received (20 in 2006) and possibly related to 18 individuals (14 in 2006) which show a slight recovery in numbers. The first was recorded at Beachy Head on 16 Apr, three days earlier than the 10-year average date. This was followed by one at The Severals (Church Norton) on the 22nd, while the one heard at Linchmere Common on the 25th and 29th and two in song on Stanley Common (also on the 29th) could have involved the same birds. Migrants were noted at Paghham Hbr on 6 and 12 May, and on the latter date one was singing on Wigginholt Common. In June further records included singles at Pulborough Brooks and at Chithurst on the 16th.

Despite an increase in spring records, breeding was only proved in one tetrad in the county.

Probable returning birds were noted in July with two at Sidlesham Ferry on the 7th, a singleton at Beachy Head on the 28th and one at Old Mill (Ashdown) on the 30th. In August there were singles at Balcombe on the 19th, Myrtle Grove Farm (Clapham) on the 24th and West Hoathly on the 27th, the latter also being seen on 3, 17 and 24 Sep. Finally, there was one at Wartling Wood on 22 Sep. The final record of the year on 24 Sep was 18 days later than the 10-year county average date. [TWP]



Pallas's Warbler, Beachy Head, October 2007 (Martin Casemore)
Yellow-browed Warbler, Shoreham, March 2007 (Ian Barnard)





Hume's Leaf Warbler, Belle Tout, December 2007 (Ian Barnard)
Wood Warbler, Beachy Head, July 2007 (Martin Casemore)



Common Chiffchaff*Phylloscopus collybita*

Very common summer visitor and passage migrant; small numbers winter.

The normal theme continued with a number of records in January and February although, unlike recent years, maximum counts were lower. There were only three reported at Coldwaltham SF on 26 Jan, four at Arundel WWT on 6 Feb and four at Nyetimber (Bognor) on 11 Feb, these being the largest numbers reported at any one site. In the two months there were 63 birds recorded but some duplication cannot be ruled out.

As usual the first passage birds were difficult to distinguish with certainty, but a single at Horseshoe Plantation (Beachy Head) on 8 Mar was surely a migrant. Birds were recorded widely throughout the rest of the month but not in any significant numbers and there were no records in excess of ten until the 27th when 25 were singing on Thorney Island. April was more productive with 12 at Cowfold on the 5th, 15 at Arlington Res also on the 5th, 27 at Ashcombe Bottom (Lewes) on the 7th and 18 at the Old Airstrip (Ashdown) on the 11th.

During the BBS, a total of 444 birds was counted in 99 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum of 12 in any one square. There was a total of 14 pairs at Pagham Hbr but as in previous years there were few reports of confirmed breeding. There were only nine reports of confirmed breeding with a further 11 reports of probable breeding.

Autumn passage was first noted in August with two at Seaford Head on the 5th being possibly the first. Nothing more of significance was noted however until the 25th when there were 150 at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head). September started with 40 at Ardingly Res on the 1st, 40 at Whitbread Hollow on the 5th, 60 there on the 16th, 70 at Cissbury Ring on 17th and 60 there on the 18th, and 40 at Brooklands (Worthing) also on the 18th. On the 30th there were 100 at Whitbread Hollow and 139 were trapped at Pett Level.

Passage continued throughout October starting with 55 at Church Norton on the 1st, 20 at Thorney Island on the 2nd and 70 trapped at Pett Level on the 3rd. Thereafter movement was confined to a steady trickle for the rest of the month. In November a total of 34 was recorded and 22 birds were counted in December, the maximum being six at Thorney SF on the 20th. [TWP]

Eastern/Siberian Chiffchaff*Phylloscopus collybita abietinus/tristis*

Very scarce winter visitor and autumn passage migrant.

An individual showing characteristics of one of the currently recognised ‘eastern’ races (*abietinus/tristis*) was seen at Newick SF from 31 Dec to at least 7 Jan 2008 (JSG *et al.*). The definitive work on this complex issue remains Dean and Svensson (Dean, A.R. and Svensson, L. 2005, ‘Siberian Chiffchaff’ revisited. *British Birds* 98:396:410) although they acknowledge that some fundamental questions remain unanswered. Dean and Svensson state that “the approach to identification [of *tristis*] must address the full suite of plumage and vocal characteristics, aided at a minimum by high-quality photographs and preferably by trapping (the latter also providing subsidiary if not conclusive biometric data)”. BBRC has a panel of experts examining all 2008 records considered to meet the current criteria for *tristis* with a view to establishing how scarce the form actually is in the UK. This record was not considered by SOSRC to meet the criteria for submission to BBRC and to date there are no fully documented records of *tristis* in Sussex. [RJF]

Willow Warbler*Phylloscopus trochilus*

Common but declining summer visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The first records came from Brighton and Hastings with singles on the 5 Mar, 11 days earlier than the 10-year average date and only a day after the earliest ever recorded date of 4 Mar. Another was recorded at Brighton on the 12th, with two further singletons at Ashdown on the 28th and at Warnham LNR on the 31st.

April started slowly with only single figures recorded until the 9th when 20 were at Church Norton. There were 20 at the Old Airstrip (Ashdown) on the 18th and 24 at Poundgate (Crowborough) on the 20th. As in 2006, passage in April and May was very poor and again there were no major falls recorded from any coastal sites. The largest concentration reported in May was 20 at Pulborough Brooks on the 20th.

Although birds were recorded across the county, confirmed breeding was only recorded at six sites with probable breeding in a further five tetrads. Ashdown Forest remains the breeding stronghold of this species in the county.

Autumn passage started with four birds at Pagham Hbr on 28 Jul and a single at Ladywells (nr Combes) on the same date. There were two at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 30th and, on the 31st, ten at Thorney Deeps and 52 at Pett Level. August started with 30 at Cissbury Ring on the 2nd, 150 at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on the 9th when 80 were ringed at Pett Level. The monthly maximum at Hollingbury Camp was 48 on the 25th when 17 were counted at Beachy Head with 48 there on the 27th. In September, 13 were at Hollingbury Camp on the 2nd, with 12 at Church Norton the same day and ten there on the 3rd. At Pett Level 19 were trapped on the 6th, while 12 were counted at the Old Airstrip (Ashdown) on the 15th. Some 23 birds, mostly singletons, were counted in October but there were threes at Sidlesham on the 1st, at Pulborough Brooks on the 7th and at Blackbrook (Burgess Hill) on the 11th. The last records were of singletons at Balcombe and Bexhill on the 15th, 15 days earlier than the 10-year average date. [TWP]

Goldcrest*Regulus regulus*

Very common breeding resident, common passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Records were received from 376 1-km squares within the county, including records from 196 1-km squares during the breeding season.

During the first winter period individuals and small parties of wintering birds were recorded throughout the county with many birds reported from suburban gardens, in addition to those found in more typical habitats such as coniferous and deciduous woodlands and heathland. Indeed, the species was recorded in 138 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme. There were four counts of 20 or more birds in this period including 20 at Warnham LNR, 37 at Powdermill Res and 41 at Old Lodge (Ashdown Forest). Spring passage was not recorded except for a single migrant flying north over Splash Point (Seaford) on 26 Apr. Incredibly not one bird was noted at Beachy Head in the first five months of the year.

During the BBS 150 birds were recorded from 53 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed. Breeding was confirmed at five sites on Ashdown forest and at four sites elsewhere in the county. Breeding was thought probable at a further 11 sites including ten pairs at Leechpool and Owlbeech Woods (Horsham) and 35 singing males were noted at Linchball Wood (West Dean) along a 1.5-km transect. At least 40 singing males were recorded on Ashdown Forest compared to 31 in 2006.

Autumn passage started late and it was not until 6 Oct, when 35 birds were present in Alexandra Pk (Hastings), that it appeared to be under way. From then until the end of the month passage remained light with day counts of between ten and 30 birds recorded on only five dates covering Climbing Gap, Cissbury Ring, Brooklands (Worthing), Beachy Head and Pett Level. After this period, passage rapidly diminished in what was another poor autumn for this species. Wintering groups of birds continued to be recorded to the end of the year with 45 at Leechpool and Owlbeech Woods and 20 at Upperton (Petworth) being the most significant counts. [DG]

Firecrest

Regulus ignicapilla

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

Unusually the majority of the records from the early winter period were not from the coast or coastal plain but from further inland with 73 records up to the end of March of which 46 were from inland sites. As usual most records came from the west of the county. These sightings involved mostly single birds, including the long staying one from 2006 at Pulborough Brooks, which was seen regularly until 8 Mar.

The approximate monthly totals including breeding numbers were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
8	10	130	23	45	33	2	3	12	26	13	8

The first sign of breeding was a singing male with attendant female in the Duncton area on the early date of 23 Feb (still present on 24 Mar) followed by a pair at Arundel on 27 Feb and 23 singing males plus three females at West Dean Woods on 6 Mar. Further coverage of the latter area discovered no less than 56 on 15 Mar (43 singing males of which 12 were paired) and, over the summer months, a grand total of at least 70 singing males were found, confirming this area as the stronghold for the species in the county. Family parties were first seen there on 3 Jun. Elsewhere, a further minimum of 51 singing males and 19 pairs were found, all in the west of the county. There were no records of any territories in either the far northwest or the east of the county. The estimated minimum population of males holding territory was 121, significantly more than the estimates for the previous two years, viz. 64 in 2006 and 23 in 2005.

The first records of the autumn away from the breeding areas were singles at Charleston Manor on the early date of 13 Aug and at Warnham LNR on 2 Sep which were then followed by a flood of single migrants across the county in September and October. The highest counts during this period were two at Church Norton on 28 Sep, Beachy Head on 30 Sep and 18 Oct, Pett Level on 14 Oct and Duncton Common on 19 Oct. The approximate totals recorded at the main sites during the autumn and early winter periods were as follows:

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pagham Hbr	2	4	1	2
Beachy Head	6	5	-	1
Rye Hbr	1	5	2	-
Other sites	5	17	7	7

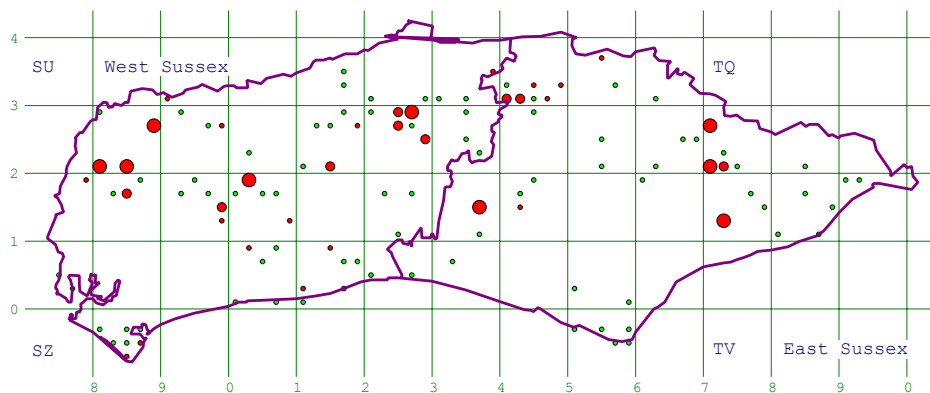
Sightings of singletons at the coast continued throughout the rest of the late winter with just a few dotted inland records. However, a singleton stayed at Pulborough Brooks from at least 10 Nov to 10 Dec. [SB]

Spotted Flycatcher*Muscicapa striata*

Scarce and declining summer visitor and fairly common passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

The first bird of the spring was seen at Hurstpierpoint on 30 Apr (six days later than the 10-year average date) and passage continued until the beginning of June with ones and twos recorded along the coast.

During the BBS six birds were recorded in five 1-km squares out of the 123 squares surveyed. Records were received from 19 breeding sites from 22 May (one more than in 2006); breeding was confirmed at eight of these compared to seven in 2006 and was thought probable at a further 11, with two pairs recorded at four sites. Birds were also recorded from a further 18 areas of suitable breeding habitat during May and June (see map below). No records were received of pairs fledging more than two young in what appears to have been another disappointing breeding season for this species.



Autumn migrants were recorded from widely scattered locations through the interior of the county and the coastal strip, although for the third year running numbers appeared low and observers again commented that it was a poor autumn for this species. Small numbers of birds appeared on migration from the beginning of August but it was not until 25 Aug that any double figure counts were received, when 11 were present at Beachy Head. The only other double figure count of the year was the following day at Church Norton when ten birds were recorded (in 2006 there were eight sites that recorded counts of ten birds or more during the autumn and as recently as 2004 groups of 35 birds were recorded). In addition to the above during the main passage period of the last week of August and the first week of September, groups of between six and eight birds were recorded from Pagham Hbr, Pulborough Brooks, West Chiltington, Cissbury Ring and Pett Level. Numbers reduced rapidly after 8 Sep and the last record from Beachy Head was on the 11th and from Cissbury Ring on the 17th, both early dates.

Although four of the six records for October were from the coast, the last birds of the year were two present inland at Scobells Farm (Barcombe) on the 11th, three days earlier than the 10-year average. [DG]



Spotted Flycatcher, Whitbread Hollow, September 2007 (Martin Casemore)

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
6	1	1	1	23	5	2

Passage numbers during spring were light and autumn passage was also quiet, with the minimum of 37 birds recorded during the year being roughly half of the average number (71) recorded over the last five years.

The first spring migrant of the year was a male at Belle Tout (Beachy Head) on 13 Apr, four days later than the 10-year average arrival date. The next arrivals, on the 15th, were a male and female around Pagham Hbr Information Centre and two birds at Rickney (Pevensy). The only other April record was a male feeding in an apple tree at Patcham (Brighton) on the 26th with the final spring migrant noted at Withdean (Brighton) on 7 May. On 16 June a female was found at Pulborough Brooks and this bird summered in the area, last being recorded on 2 Aug. This is the fourth year in a row that a bird has been present in the county during the breeding season.

Autumn passage commenced on the rather late date of 8 Aug with two birds present at Church Norton followed by singletons at Belle Tout and Climping Gap on the 11th. From then until 18 Sep at least 17 individuals were recorded from 11 sites at or near the coast particularly at Pagham Hbr (5) and Beachy Head (6), with a concentration of records in the last week of August. Away from the coast, singletons were recorded at Cissbury Ring on 25 and 27 Aug, at Blakehurst on the 26th, at West Chiltington on 4 Sep and at Pulborough Brooks on the 16 and 18 Sep. One at Scotney

Castle (near Bewl) on 24 Aug was only the second record there in over 30 years. The final birds of the year were two recorded at Pagham Hbr on 8 Oct, six days later than the 10-year average departure date of 2 Oct. [DG]



Pied Flycatcher, Belle Tout, April 2007 (Les Bird)

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 monthly counts, outside the breeding season, at the six sites where the species was recorded were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Thorney Deeps	4	3	4		43	40	40	4	3
The Severals (Ch Norton)	2	-	-		-	-	-	-	-
Sidlesham Ferry/Pagham Hbr	2	-	-		-	-	2	-	1
Glyne Gap Marsh (Bexhill)	-	5	1		-	-	-	-	-
Pett Level	3	4	8		-	7	17	16	8
Rye Hbr	4	1	2		4	3	8	1	5

Numbers were lower in the first winter period than they have been in recent years and it is quite possible that the two birds seen in January at The Severals and Sidlesham Ferry were the same two birds. In the autumn, Pannel Valley NR and Rye Hbr had average numbers of birds and Thorney Deeps had a maximum of 43 birds compared to 24 in 2006, 44 in 2005 and 60 in 2004.

Breeding was confirmed at only one site, although birds were present at two others throughout the breeding season. At Thorney Deeps, the breeding season went well with four pairs fledging

at least 35 young compared to four pairs fledging 16 young in 2006. The first juvenile birds were seen on 2 May, two months earlier than in 2006. At two other sites, birds were present throughout the summer with possibly three pairs at one site, although breeding was not proven at either of these.

Typically, 'high flying' behaviour was noted at Thorney Deepes and six occurrences were recorded between 22 Sep and 8 Oct. On 22 and 29 Sep and 2 Oct at least 40 birds were present of which approximately half performed some 'high flying'. On the morning of 3 Oct ten birds participated in some high flying before flying very high to the north east, on 5 Oct 18 birds were present of which eight flew high and went west in the morning and on the 8 Oct 12 birds performed further high flying. [DG]

Long-tailed Tit

Aegithalos caudatus

Very common resident.

Records came from 310 1-km squares distributed right across the county. The species was also recorded in 287 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

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
Nyetimber (Bognor)	8	2	-	1	-	2	-	3	3	12	13	8
Lewes Race Course	17	8	4	2	2	8	1	2	5	5	20	3
Crowborough	4	2	2	2	3	-	3	-	6	10	1	7
Darwell Res	5	9	13	10	3	-	4	3	1	10	25	11
Pett Level	20	8	-	-	20	32	30	30	30	20	12	-

In the first winter period, the largest counts were of 21 birds at Ashes Wood (Netherfield) on 4 Jan and at Alexandra Park (Hastings) on 21 Jan, and of 20 at Pannel Valley NR on 14 Jan. Only the last was stated to be a single flock. Except when nesting, Long-tailed Tits share large home ranges as 'clans' of related males and their mates, together with some offspring and some immigrants. Clans frequently split into sub-groups or temporarily fuse with neighbouring groups, making it hard to assess population numbers from flock sizes alone.

Long-tailed Tits are early nesters: two pairs were already building at Atherington (Climping) on 13 Feb. Breeding was confirmed in 16 1-km squares and was probable in a further 15. During the BBS, birds were recorded in 43 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed. Successful pairs are often 'helped' by failed breeders. Even so, since they rarely raise more than 12 young, a flock of 32 at Pett Level on 6 Jun suggests that 'family parties' had already merged. Other high counts after the breeding season were 25 birds at Pulborough Brooks on 24 May, 24 at Warnham LNR on 17 Jun and 30 at Leechpool and Owlbeech Woods (Horsham) in August and September.

During the second winter period, large counts of 50 at Glynleigh Level (Pevensey) on 4 Nov and at Chanctonbury Ring on 17 Nov probably involved more than one flock; a count of at least 30 at Southwater CP on 19 Nov involved three flocks of ten or more birds. Two 'white-headed' birds, possibly of the continental races *europaeus* or *caudatus*, were seen with a group of 'normal' birds at Crowborough on 12 Oct.

Birds fed at feeders at three sites in the first winter period, and two in the second. There were also eight on peanuts at Wivelsfield Green on 20 Sep. [DH]

Blue Tit*Cyanistes caeruleus**Abundant resident.*

Although Blue Tits are indubitably the most common tits in Sussex, the number of records received was less than that for Coal Tit! They were recorded in 481 1-km squares, distributed throughout the county, and were virtually ubiquitous in gardens: they were recorded in all but one of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

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
Runcton (Chichester)	12	10	9	8	7	10	9	8	6	2	8	10
Nyetimber (Bognor)	21	17	17	18	3	10	2	10	6	10	5	7
Hotham Park (Bognor)	6	10	10	4	2	14	2	5	4	2	3	6
Warningcamp (Arundel)	5	-	4	6	3	1	2	4	1	6	3	7
Warnham LNR	70	30	8	15	15	20	24	16	76	20	11	20
Gatwick Airport (North)	5	2	4	5	2	5	3	13	5	-	9	1
Wakehurst Place	17	5	11	-	2	1	3	6	5	9	9	11
Lewes Race Course	15	10	15	9	2		5	4	25	18	5	5
Hindleap Warren (Ashdown)	6	-	-	3	1	5	13	10	5	5	-	7
Newhaven Tide Mills	6	5	2	3	3	2	2	4	3	3	2	2
Wrens Warren (Ashdown)	8	2	2	2	-	4	3	2	7	4	6	2
Uckfield High Cross Fm	4	4	6	4	1	4	2	2	2	4	4	7
Crowborough	6	3	3	9	5	14	7	10	6	7	6	8
Arlington	12	8	11	12	-	10	-	1	3	5	8	12
Darwell Res	27	50	35	56	15	14	14	3	16	33	16	21
Doleham Valley	58	39	28	47	25	24	18	23	19	-	-	11

In the first winter period, the largest concentrations were 70 at Warnham LNR on 20 Jan and 86 at Powdermill Res on 10 Mar.

As usual for this common species, few observers recorded breeding (confirmed in just 38 1-km squares, and probable in 20 more), but they were recorded in 118 of the 123 BBS 1-km squares surveyed. About 65 males held territory at Brighton Wild Park and 51 at Pagham Hbr; at Hotham Park (Bognor) 14 nest boxes were occupied in just 7 ha. Despite the poor weather, all 19 occupied nest boxes at Weir Wood Res fledged young. Success was lower than this at two other regularly monitored locations: Ardingly Res (24 nest boxes occupied, with 18 fledging 144 young); Arlington Res (nine nest boxes occupied with three fledging 19 young). The largest post-breeding count was 76 at Warnham LNR on 27 Sep. In the second winter period (with an abysmal beech-mast crop), no count exceeded the 48 at Ladywells (nr Coombes) on 17 Nov. [DH]

Great Tit*Parus major**Abundant resident.*

Records, which came from 456 1-km squares, were spread right across the county, with a distribution very similar to that of Blue Tit. Great Tits were nearly as widespread in gardens as Blue Tits: they were recorded in all but nine of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

The monthly maxima for sites counted in at least nine months, and with a peak count exceeding four birds, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Runcton (Chichester)	5	5	5	4	5	3	4	2	2	1	5	5
Nyetimber (Bognor)	9	13	8	11	5	3	-	3	2	7	4	1
Hotham Park (Bognor)	4	6	7	3	3	3	-	-	1	-	1	3
Warningcamp (Arundel)	5	-	6	4	3	-	1	1	-	2	2	2
Warnham LNR	60	20	4	20	15	30	34	2	125	10	9	20
Gatwick Airport (North)	4	1	8	6	3	5		7	1	-	-	1
Ditchling Common	8	6	-	8	2	6	5	3	20	2	8	9
Lewes Race Course	9	6	3	6	3	2	3	3	5	4	5	4
Newhaven Tide Mills	2	4	2	2	3	8	6	6	2	5	-	2
Uckfield High Cross Fm	6	3	6	4	6	4	4	4	2	10	4	8
Crowborough	2	2	2	3	7	7	3	3	2	3	2	1
Arlington	14	4	12	9	-	7	-	2	2	4	7	9
Darwell Res	13	16	24	25	6	3	7	6	7	10	5	9
Doleham Valley	35	23	22	22	6	9	5	8	8	-	-	9

In the first winter period, the largest concentrations were of 60 at Warnham LNR on 20 Jan and 57 at Powdermill Res on 10 Mar. There was no evidence of spring movements.

Breeding was confirmed in 40 1-km squares, and probable in a further nine. A total of 755 birds was recorded in 117 of the 123 1-km BBS squares surveyed. There were 51 territories in Brighton Wild Park and 17 at Pagham Hbr; at Hotham Park (Bognor) three nest boxes were occupied in 7 ha. Despite the poor weather, the 11 nest boxes occupied at Weir Wood Res fledged young. Productivity was lower at two other regularly monitored locations: Ardingly Res (20 nest boxes occupied, with 12 fledging 93 young) and Arlington Res (six nest boxes occupied with three fledging 25 young). A pair nested in the church roof at Ebernoe Common.

After the breeding season, there were few large counts, apart from 125 at Warnham LNR on 27 Sep. There was no evidence of autumn movements. In the second winter period, when the beech-mast crop was abysmal, the only concentrations of more than 30 birds were 33 at Bolney on 14 Oct, 34 at Washington on 20 Oct and 35 there on 9 Dec [DH]

Coal Tit

Periparus ater

Very common resident.

Records came from 415 1-km squares, scattered throughout the county. The species was also recorded in 290 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

The monthly maxima for sites counted in at least nine months, and with a peak count exceeding four birds, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Warnham LNR	2	2	2	-	1	2	5	-	2	5	1	
Tilgate Forest	1	1	1	16	3	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
Wrens Warren (Ashdown)	3	2	2	2	3	2		2	1	7	2	3
Crowhurst	1	2	1	1	1	6	1	1	1	-	-	2

In the first winter period, the largest concentrations were of 30 birds at Stansted Forest on 15 Jan and of 35 at Old Lodge Reserve (Ashdown Forest) on 27 Jan. A report that the species was present at Pagham Hbr on 18 Feb was intriguing because the species is scarce on the Selsey peninsula (*Birds of Sussex*). Two at Lewes Brooks on 13 Feb were also unusual.

Breeding was confirmed in 16 1-km squares, and probable in a further nine. During the BBS, the species was recorded in 37 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed. High breeding season counts were 13 at Forest Grange (St Leonards) on 13 Apr and 16 in Tilgate Forest on 15 Apr. The largest summer concentration was just 14 birds on 24 Aug at the Old Airstrip (Ashdown Forest).

Three at Newhaven Tide Mills on 16 Sep suggested at least local movement. A bird heard calling on 11 Oct at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head), where the species is rarely recorded, was not seen well enough to confirm the suspicion that it was of the continental race *ater*. Another bird at a “very unusual” site was one singing in Findon Valley (Worthing) on 15 Oct. During the second winter period the largest count was 20 at Leechpool and Owlbeech Woods (Horsham) on 24 Nov.

Feeder use was mentioned in 11 records from seven sites. Four cases were in the first winter period and five in the second, including 11 visiting feeders at Bexhill on 27 Oct. The other cases were in May and included the sighting of juveniles at a feeder at Wivelsfield Green on the 28th. [DH]

Willow Tit

Poecile montanus

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

With a total of only 33 records, the prospects for this admittedly unobtrusive species look bleak. No groups of more than two birds were seen. Sightings came from 21 1-km squares; the most from a single site was a total of seven on five dates (July-September) at Pulborough Brooks. Most records came from two areas: a band running along the greensands and northern edge of the South Downs from West Dean Woods to Lewes and a swathe of the High Weald from Crawley to Heathfield. The exceptions were two sites near Hastings and a site south of Chichester where Willow Tit records are unexpected (*Birds of Sussex*).

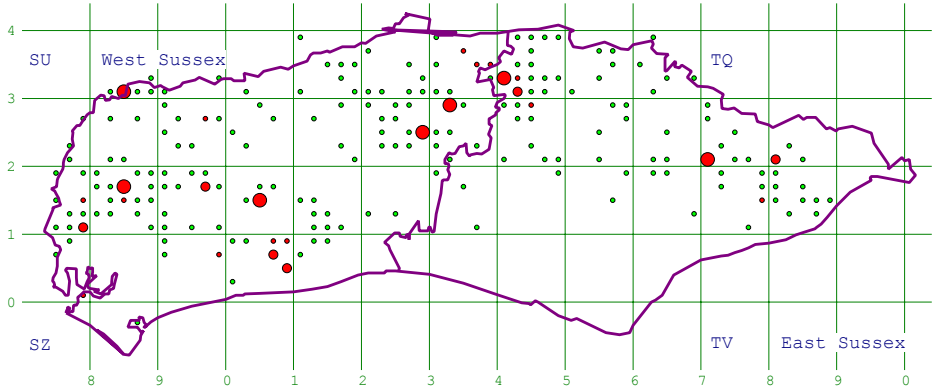
Although Garden BirdWatch participants made a mere six sightings of Willow Tits in just four of the 413 Sussex gardens surveyed, it is possible that some of the 860 sightings in 59 gardens of ‘Marsh/Willow Tits’ were of this species. That over three-quarters of these sightings of ‘brown tits’ were not identified to species, emphasizes how hard they can be to distinguish unless diagnostic calls are heard. The need for care is emphasised by the reported presence of Marsh Tits at no fewer than twelve of the 21 sites with Willow Tits.

Across most of their geographical range, Willow Tits usually live in coniferous and mixed woodland, while Marsh Tits are commoner in broad-leaved woodland. In Britain, however, this difference in habitat use is less obvious. Willow Tits at West Dean Woods are often in conifers (on 25 Mar one was seen feeding on larch cones there), but most other Sussex sites lack conifers. One habitat feature common to most Willow Tit territories regardless of woodland type, seems to be a well-developed shrub layer. A Willow Tit in dry mature beech over brambles at Stoughton on 7 Dec was therefore a surprise.

Breeding was not confirmed, but was probable at two sites: a pair at a dry downland site and three pairs in a moist Wealden valley. Only six birds were counted in three of the 123 BBS 1-km squares surveyed. No records mentioned feeder use, which is considered infrequent in this species. Willow Tits are also reputed to avoid other socially dominant tit species. The Stoughton record above was thus unusual because the bird was in the company of Great Tits, Blue Tits and two Marsh Tits; it remained when the others left, implying the association was temporary. [DH]

Marsh Tit*Poecile palustris**Scarce resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.*

Records came from 161 1-km squares. As usual, Marsh Tits were scarce on the South Downs east of Cissbury Ring, and absent from the coastal plain (see map blow).



Although Marsh Tits are usually associated with broad-leaved woodland (especially Oak and Beech), they sometimes use conifers. Two records were of birds in Larch (the seeds of which they sometimes eat): two at Marley Common on 2 Jan and one at Burton MP on 15 Jan. Marsh Tits are not uncommon in Sussex gardens as shown by their presence in 27 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme. There were sightings from another 59 gardens that were either Marsh or Willow Tits, although it is probable that the majority were the former.

The monthly maxima at sites counted in at least nine months were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
West Dean Woods	4	4	15	-	4	1	-	-	-	1	3	1
Darwell Res	1	5	4	-	2	1	3	5	2	3	3	3

Elsewhere, most counts were of only one or two birds. The largest concentration in the first winter period was 15 at West Dean Woods on 10 Mar. With their relatively heavy bills, wintering Marsh Tits usually eat hard seeds such as beech-mast. They sometimes eat fruit; at Stansted Forest on 31 Jan one was eating a rose hip (presumably by pecking at the pulp as Blue Tits do).

Breeding was confirmed at six sites, and probable at a further six. During the BBS, 31 birds were recorded in 17 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed. At Ardingly Res one nest box was occupied from which eight young fledged. There were eight birds at Venus Wood (West Dean) on 3 Jun and seven at Brick Kiln Wood (Rotherfield) on 31 May and Ninfield on 7 Jun. Although usually a regular breeding species at Troutbeck (Eridge) it was noted that there was a decline in the number of records this year and the species was not recorded there at all during June to August. No larger counts were made in the rest of the year: there were five birds at Darwell Reservoir on 12 Aug and Eartham Woods on 16 Dec. One at Pett Level on 13 Oct was an unusual record there, suggesting at least local movement.

Feeder use was mentioned in nine records, from five sites. The only case outside the two winter periods (two sites in the first and three in the second) involved two adults and a juvenile on a peanut feeder at Greatham Common on 16 Jun. [DH]

Nuthatch*Sitta europaea**Common resident.*

Records, which came from 401 1-km squares, were widely spread, but biased to the north of the county compared with those for Blue Tit and Great Tit. The species was scarce on the coastal plain and the South Downs east of Clapham Wood. Records near the coast were only common east of Hastings. Singletons at Bexhill on 17 Feb and Eastbourne Old Town on 24 Sep were both near previous breeding sites (*Birds of Sussex*). The only more westerly coastal record was a bird at Church Norton on 16 Sep.

Nuthatches were reported visiting feeders at eight sites, five of which were used in the breeding season. Birds were recorded in 207 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

The monthly maxima for sites counted in at least nine months, and with a peak count exceeding four birds, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Wakehurst Place	4	6	2	-	3	3	-	2	3	-	2	7
Darwell Res	2	1	4	6	-	1	3	2	4	4	3	5

In the first winter period, the largest concentrations were eight at Alexandra Park (Hastings) on 20 Jan and 11 at Powdermill Res on 10 Mar.

The largest concentrations during the breeding season were nine birds at Five Hundred Acre Wood (Ashdown Forest) on 23 Jun and at Pulborough Brooks on the 30th. Breeding was confirmed in 11 1-km squares, and probable in a further 12. A total of 117 birds was recorded in 56 of the 123 1-km BBS squares surveyed. At Ardingly Res, a single occupied nest box fledged seven young.

Autumn movement was suggested by the above record from Church Norton; it was over 25 km from other sites, and in an area where Nuthatches rarely if ever breed (*Birds of Sussex*). The highest count in the autumn was 12 at Colworth Park (Bolney) on 30 Sep. In the second winter period, the largest concentrations were of 12 at Upperton near Petworth Park on 19 Dec and 11 at Bolney on 14 Oct. [DH]

Eurasian Treecreeper*Certhia familiaris**Common resident.*

Although the records of this unobtrusive species came from 206 1-km squares scattered all over the county, it appeared least common near the coast (despite observer coverage tending to be highest there). On the South Downs, the only records from the east of the county came from Preston Park (Brighton) (two on 24 Oct and singletons on three subsequent dates) and Stanmer Park (two on 3 Jan). The species was recorded from 56 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

The monthly maxima for sites counted in at least nine months, and with a peak count exceeding four birds, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Warnham LNR	1	9	2	4	1	5	5	1	1	2	2	1
Doleham Valley	3	4	2	4	3	5	4	3	3		-	-

In the first winter period the largest concentrations were nine birds at Warnham LNR on 9 Feb and 12 at Powdermill Res on 10 Mar.

Breeding was confirmed in four 1-km squares, and thought to be probable in a further eight. A total of 42 birds was recorded in 23 of the 123 1-km BBS squares surveyed. At least six territories were found at Blackdown (nr Fernhurst) on 17 May. The highest breeding season count was eight birds, two carrying food, at Stanley Common (Liphook) on 24 May.

The largest post-breeding count was five at Warnham LNR on 22 Jul. During the second winter period the highest counts were six birds at Guestling on 8 Oct and at Leechpool and Owlbeech Woods (Horsham) on 5 Nov. [DH]

Golden Oriole

Oriolus oriolus

Very scarce passage migrant and summer visitor; may have bred.

An adult male was heard and seen in a large garden in Rusper (Horsham) on 26 Jun (CFC). Thirteen have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000, in April (2), May (8), June (2) and July, but only three have been in the last four years. This suggests that the slow increase in records during the past three decades is about to be reversed – 20 were recorded in the 1970s, 26 in the 1980s and 29 in the 1990s. [RJF]

Red-backed Shrike

Lanius collurio

Very scarce passage migrant, formerly a breeding visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Although Birdguides listed seven records (including an autumn bird at Pett Level and two birds at Beachy Head), a male seen at Pett Level on 1 Jun (PJo *et al.*) was the only record submitted. It is the earliest to be recorded in the county since 1998 when one was seen at Pagham Hbr on 11 May although the earliest county record is on 20 Apr 1958 at Selsey Bill. Twenty-two have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000, in early June (5), August (3), September (12), October and November. Totals by decade have been somewhat variable since the species last bred in 1964 as there were 36 recorded during the 1960s, 58 in the 1970s, 34 in the 1980s and 41 in the 1990s. [RJF]

Great Grey Shrike

Lanius excubitor

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

With no records in the second winter period last year, it was no surprise that there were no sightings in the first half of 2007. However, there were at least five different birds in the second half of the year.

The first of the autumn was a bird at Amberley Wild Books on 5 Oct which remained until 30 Oct. Another individual at Halseys Fm (Sidlesham) on 15 Oct may well have been the bird that was first seen at Lavington Common on the 17th and then by numerous observers on either Lavington or Duncton Commons until last seen on 12 Dec.

Ashdown Forest is a favourite location for this species and the third bird of the autumn duly appeared there on 19 Oct. It was seen by many observers in a variety of locations within the Forest and remained until the end of the year. The next arrival was at Belle Tout (Beachy Head)

on 21 Oct which then moved briefly to Shooters Bottom and was probably the same bird that was seen at Frog Firle (Alfriston) on the 23rd. The final individual was a bird seen at Lullington Heath on 20 Dec. [PNP]

Woodchat Shrike

Lanius senator

Rare vagrant.

An adult was seen at Sidlesham Ferry on 20 May (TJE *et al.*) and juveniles at Church Norton on 26 Aug (JA *et al.*) and Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 9 Sep (RHC, RJF *et al.*). Three in a year is the best showing since 1990 and has only been bettered by four in 1976. Those in the autumn were the first juveniles to be recorded in the county since 1987. Eight have been seen since the beginning of 2000 almost matching the nine recorded in both of the previous decades. During this period records have been in April (3), May (10), June (6), July, August (2), September (3) and October. Extreme dates in the county are 22 Apr (1990 & 2006) and 2 Nov (1976). [RJF]



Woodchat Shrike, Beachy Head, September 2007 (Les Bird)

Jay

Garrulus glandarius

Very common resident.

Records in the first winter period were mostly of one or two birds with the highest count being 11 at Darwell Res on 28 Jan, six there on 18 Feb and six at Powdermill on 10 Mar. Counts of five birds were made at four other sites during the period.

Breeding was confirmed for only four pairs at three sites and probable breeding was recorded at a further 15 sites. During the breeding and summer periods, high counts included ten at Ladywells (nr Coombes) between 15 and 22 Apr and seven at Goring Gap on the 9th. Counts of six were

recorded at Guestling on 23 Jun and at Pett Level and Warnham LNR on 6 Aug. A total of 86 individuals was counted in 53 of the 123 1-km BBS squares surveyed and the species was present in 216 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

During the autumn and second winter periods sightings were again mainly of individual birds. The largest counts were recorded in the Bolney area with 12 at Colworth Park on 30 Sep, ten in the area on the 14 Oct, 15 at Bookers Fm on 20 Oct and ten at Broxmead on 21 Oct. Elsewhere, ten were noted at Crabtree on 6 Oct and 13 at Pett Level on 24 Oct. [MJC]

Magpie

Pica pica

Very common resident.

During the first winter period there were only four counts of more than 20 birds, the highest of which was 63 at Halsey's Fm Field on 30 Jan. There were 21 at Pett Level on 5 Feb, 32 at Lewes Brooks on 13 Feb and 21 at Lewes on the 15th (which might have been some of the same birds). Other high counts were 20 at Lancing Clump from 7-21 Feb, 20 at Nyetimber (Bognor) on 8 Feb and 20 at Pagham on 11 Feb and 15 Mar.

Breeding was confirmed at only 12 sites and was probable at a further 17 locations. A total of 512 individuals was counted in 108 of the 123 1-km BBS squares surveyed and the species was seen in 390 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme. High counts during the breeding and summer periods included 41 at Brighton Wild Park on 2 May and 18 at Furnace Green (Crawley) on 25 May.

High counts for the autumn and second winter period were from both inland and coastal locations. The highest were 35 at Lewes Railway Land Res on 5 Sep and 21 there on 27 Sep, 20 at Halseys Fm Field on 4 Oct, 28 at Thorney Deeps on 5 Oct, 20 at West Wittering on 11 Dec and 30 at Warnham LNR on 16 Dec. [MJC]

Jackdaw

Corvus monedula

Very common resident.

During the first winter period flocks of 100 or more included 210 on 1 Jan at Hansfold (Wisborough Green) which increased to the largest gathering reported during the period of 550 on the 24th. Other large flocks included 300 at Cuckfield Park on 4 Jan, 400 at Bewl Water on 17 Mar, 150 at Forest Mere (Liphook) on 21 Mar, 110 at Rye Hbr on 5 Feb and 100 at both Washington on the 15th and at Doleham Valley on the 18th.

The earliest report of probable breeding came from Bolney on 16 Mar. Breeding was confirmed at 17 locations by at least 20 pairs, with 20 pairs nesting on the castle at Rye Hbr. Breeding was probable at a further nine sites. Fifteen owl boxes were reported to have been used by nesting Jackdaws. A total of 1098 individuals were counted in 97 of the 123 1-km BBS squares surveyed and the species was seen in 241 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme. During the summer period high counts were 135 at Burton Park (Dunton) on 11 Jul, 220 at Pett Level on 22 Jul, 221 at Barcombe Cross on 9 Aug, 250 at Denne Fm (Warnham) on 18 Aug and 100 at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on 25 Aug.

During the autumn and second winter period the first reported gathering in excess of 150 was 260 at Rye Hbr on 20 Oct. This was followed in November by 180 at Crowborough on the 3rd, 160 N flying over Vinehall (nr Mountfield) on the 11th, 500 at Bewl Water on the 16th, 180 feeding on a recently drilled field at High Cross Fm (Uckfield) on the 17th, and 288 at Halseys Fm Field on

the 22nd. In December, a roost at Bewl Water increased from 2000 on the 3rd to 2500 on the 28th. There were 400 over Southwater CP also on the 28th and an estimated 1000 at Beeding Brooks were seen flying east to their roost at Longmans and Tollington Woods on the 31st. During this period there were eight other counts of 100–150. [MJC]

Rook

Corvus frugilegus

Very common resident.

The highest counts for the first winter period were 229 at Nyetimber (Bognor) on 1 Jan (followed by 177 there on the 27th), 172 at Pett Level on 28 Jan, 150 at Sidlesham Ferry on 3 Feb and 300 at Lidsey Old Canal and Tip on 8 Feb.

The first record of nest building was at High Cross Fm (Uckfield) on 20 Feb. Breeding was confirmed at 28 sites and 31 rookeries were counted with a total of at least 620 nests. In addition, 467 nests were recorded in TQ00 but there are no details of the number of sites or size of rookeries. There were seven rookeries with 30 or more nests viz. 49 at Knepp MP, 48 and 33 at Lyminster, 43 at Hotham Park (Bognor), 40 at Pagham Hbr, 33 at Lewes Priory and 30 at Lewes Railway Station Car Park. The species was seen in 60 of the 123 1-km BBS squares surveyed and in 88 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme. High summer counts were 200 at Pagham MP Marsh on 1 Jun, 363 at East Ashling on 13 Jun, 180 at Streat on 12 Aug and 250 at Pett Level on 26 Aug.

In the second winter period, the first reported count in excess of 200 was of 250 at Pagham Hbr on 8 Oct. This was eclipsed by counts at Nyetimber of 344 on 21 Oct, 450 on 17 Nov and 329 on 1 Dec. Elsewhere, there were monthly maxima of 300 at Southwater CP on 28 Dec and 200 at Rodmell on the 31st. [MJC]

Carrion Crow

Corvus corone

Very common resident.

The large gatherings seen in previous years were not repeated anywhere in the county this year. In January, the largest flocks were only 100 in Cuckfield Park on the 4th, 75 on Goring Beach on the 20th and 66 on Camber Shore on the 29th. Flock sizes then reduced still further with 54 on Lewes Brooks on 13 Feb, 53 at Hotham Park (Bognor) on 20 Feb, 65 at Doleham Valley on 3 Mar and 50 at Forest Mere (Liphook) on 21 Mar being the only ones of note.

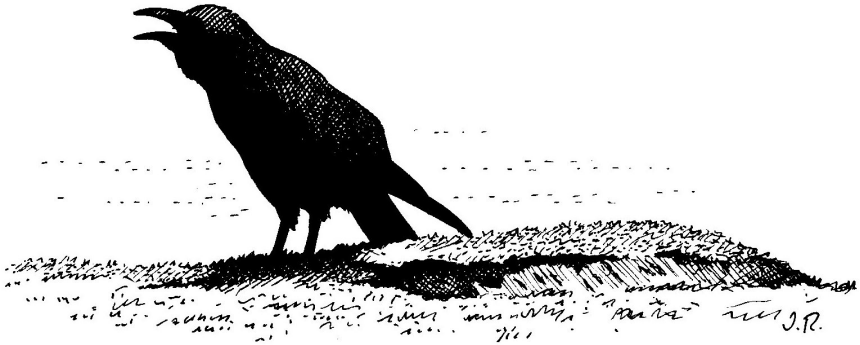
In the spring and early summer, there were 124 on Goring Beach on 28 Apr, with 54 on Lancing Beach the same day, 60 at Forest Mere (Liphook) on 23 May and 69 at Lyminster on 15 May. The only record of migration was a singleton arriving from the sea at Ferring on 4 May.

The widespread distribution of this species in the county was demonstrated in the BBS with birds being seen in 120 out of the 123 1-km squares surveyed (with a maximum count of 141 at East Ashling on 13 Jun) and in 307 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme. Despite this abundance, there were only 16 reports of confirmed breeding and 11 of probable breeding. Eighteen pairs bred at Brighton Wild Park, five pairs at Pulborough Brooks and two pairs at Barns Copse (Binstead), while a pair at Scobells Fm (Barcombe) fledged three young.

In late summer/early autumn, there were 129 at Cowfold on 21 Jun, 134 at Lyminster on 26 Jun, 100 at Pulborough Brooks on 14 Jul and on 4 Aug (with 150 there on 23 Sep), 55 on Rustington Beach on 21 Jul and 100 in fields west of Selsey on 1 Sep. In the second winter period, there were 50 at Climping Gap on 4 Oct, 150 still present at Pulborough Brooks on 13 Oct, 81 on Rustington Beach on 3 Nov and 50 at Pagham Hbr on 8 Nov. A flock of 88 at Camber Shore on 19

Nov grew to 102 on 29 Nov and 127 on 7 Dec, with 112 still present on 20 Dec. On 22 Dec, there was a group of 50 in a single tree at Brooklands (Worthing) and the year ended with 50 going to roost with Jackdaws at Beeding Brooks on the 31st.

The only interesting behavioural record was of a bird eating a grass snake at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on 19 May. [PNP]



Raven

Corvus corax

Scarce breeding resident.

There has been an increase of more than 50% in the number of records received this year: 190 from 85 tetrads compared with 121 from 55 tetrads in 2006. This suggests that the species is expanding rapidly both in terms of number and range although it is likely that the BTO Atlas work has boosted the number of sightings through wider geographical coverage and increased observation hours.

The pair resident at Beachy Head (Site A) fledged at least four young and the Shoreham birds (Site B) raised at least five although one was later lost. At the coastal Site D, two nests were constructed this year and at least one young fledged. At the inland Site C, a pair bred for the first time in 2006 when they fledged two young on the same cliff as a long established pair of Peregrines. This year they took over a ledge that the Peregrines used for the first time last year and the Peregrines returned to their usual ledge just c.6 metres from the Raven nest. Throughout the breeding periods of both pairs of birds the Peregrines attacked the Ravens frequently on a daily basis whereas in 2006 when the Raven nest was c.70 metres away there was almost no interaction.

The Ravens began incubating on 22 Feb, a week earlier than last year; hatching occurred on 21 Mar and five young fledged successfully on 5 May. However, the Peregrines, who usually produce three chicks, fledged just one.



Raven, Newhaven, December 2007 (Les Bird)

In 2006, breeding was suspected at three new sites and was confirmed this year at the two coastal ones (Sites E and F) with an adult seen feeding at least one chick at Site E and food being carried to Site F. At the latter site it is likely the resident Peregrines moved their eyrie a considerable distance because the Ravens nested near the ledge they had used for some years. Birds were observed regularly throughout the breeding season at the third site (Site G) which is an inland wooded area and what appeared to be two recently fledged young were seen in July suggesting that breeding had probably occurred.

Breeding was also suspected at two new coastal cliff sites and two inland areas where the birds are likely to be tree nesting. Obtaining proof of breeding is relatively easy with cliff nesting birds compared with tree nesters where a great deal of time and effort will probably have to be spent if confirmation is to be achieved. The evidence this year suggests that the number of breeding pairs may have increased to 11. [PJE]

Starling*Sturnus vulgaris*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

In the early part of the year the roosts on the piers at Brighton held 14,000 on 14 Feb, less than half the number counted in the early and late months of 2006. During January flocks of 100-800 were reported from 16 sites, all except those around Horsham and at Knepp MP (West Grinstead) being on the coast or in the river valleys. Higher numbers occurred in mid-February with up to 2000 at Lewes and Iford Brooks and the same number at Pevensey Bridge Level. This last flock rose to 10,000 on 7 Mar. Otherwise only four locations, all near the coast, reported flocks in excess of 100 in March.

On 7 Mar, birds were seen mating and carrying nest material at Vinehall (Mountfield). There were few records of breeding. Counts of nesting pairs in defined areas include four at Pagham Hbr, two at Amberley Wild Brooks, two at Pulborough Brooks, two at Southwater CP, 19 at Brighton Wild Park and three at Rye Hbr. The first fledgling was reported on 1 May at Forest Row. The BBS figures (2006 figures in brackets) showed a modest increase with a total of 2140 (1969) counted in 95 (90) of the 123 (122) 1-km squares surveyed. The species was recorded in 373 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

The first post-breeding flock noted was of 100 at Pagham Hbr on 14 May with 200 at Newhaven Tide Mills by the end of the month. Larger feeding flocks were 2000 at Thorney Island on 23 Sep and 1000 at Pulborough Brooks on 13 Oct. Roosting flocks in excess of 1000 were reported from early July when at least 2000 roosted at Rye Hbr caravan site on the 2nd and 4000 in reeds nearby at Carter's Pit on the 11th. The caravan site roost held 3000 on 16 Aug and 5000 a week later. A pre-roost flock of 2000 was seen at Cuckmere Haven on 2 Aug and 3000 at Thorney Deeps on 20 Aug where 5000 roosted in the reed bed on 30 Oct. On 6 Nov at West Dean north of Chichester a pre-roost flock of 3000 left northwards for an unidentified roost site. At the Brighton piers 6000 roosted on 3 Nov, 15,600 on 24 Nov, 20,800 on 24 Nov and 32,400 on 30 Dec. On 20 Nov, 9000 left westwards at dawn. No reports were received from the traditional roost site at Eastbourne.

At Selsey Bill a total of 1245 was recorded flying north on four dates in November with the largest daily count of 600 on the 15th. [ACG]

House Sparrow*Passer domesticus*

Very common but possibly declining resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

House Sparrows were reported from over 350 1-km squares.

In the early part of the year the largest flock reported was at Rye Hbr village with 92 on 6 Jan and 95 on 7 Feb and flocks of up to 30 were noted regularly elsewhere at Rye. At High Cross Fm (Uckfield) a flock of 20-30 was present throughout the period with a maximum of 30 on the first day of the year. A flock of 28 was present at Brighton Marina village on 13 Jan.

By 14 Jan one was already prospecting for a nest site at Warnham LNR and the first nest building was noted on 2 Mar at High Cross Fm. Breeding was confirmed at c.60 sites with three pairs at Sefton Fm (Pagham), four at Pagham Hbr, ten at Horsham district reserves and 14 at Brighton Wild Park. During the BBS, a total of 1343 House Sparrows were seen in 92 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed. At an average of 14.6 per occupied square (cf. 17.5 in 2006 and 19.6 in 2005) this represents a substantial decline over the past two years. Aside from the BBS records, larger flocks containing juveniles were present at 15 sites during the summer. The largest of these was at Newhaven Tide Mills where there were 100 on 30 Jun, 120 on 22 Jul and 250 on 26 Aug.

High Cross Fm maintained a flock of 30-50 throughout the period and in August there were 43 at Rye Hbr village on the 2nd, 90 at Goring Gap on the 8th, and 70 at Nook Meadows (Rye) on the 16th. It was noted that the species has been lost as a breeding species at Troutbeck (Eridge) and no birds were recorded there during the second half of the year.

In the second winter period the size of flocks generally reduced with the large flock at Newhaven Tide Mills down to 24 on 10 Oct, 12 on 24 Nov and 9 on 26 Dec. There were however flocks of 30-40 at Nyetimber (Bognor), Washington, Widewater (Lancing), High Cross Fm and Rye Hbr village. [ACG]

Tree Sparrow

Passer montanus

Scarce and declining localised resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

During the first winter period, the only flock of more than 10 birds was at Pett Level. It had numbered 60 in November 2006 but peaked in the new year at 51 on 16 Feb with 36 remaining on 26 Mar but only six were still present on 11 Apr after dispersal to the breeding area. Maximum winter counts in recent years from this area are shown in the following table:

2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	Late 2007
20	100	80	270	160	60	3

Other early year records were of a pair at Pevensey Levels on 24 Feb and a lone bird at Herstmonceux on 15 Apr.

There was confirmed breeding in the Brede Valley where there were nine occupied nest boxes with evidence of successful breeding at seven of these. The only other confirmed breeding was one in a nest box at Manxey Level (Pevensey).

In the autumn and second winter period, nine at Beachy Head on 9 Sep and two on the shingle spit at Church Norton on 2 Oct indicated passage, followed by the arrival of the first three autumn birds at Pett Level on 8 Oct and nine which flew in off the sea at Hastings CP on the 14th before flying inland. The only other record was of four at Henfield on 27 Nov which flew off southwards.

Despite the provision of nest boxes the fortunes of this species do not seem to be improving. [ACG]

Chaffinch

Fringilla coelebs

Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

This is one of the commonest birds in Sussex, occupying a wide range of habitats. In the BBS, 1459 birds were recorded in all but two of the 123 1-km squares surveyed, while the species was seen in 390 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme. The grand total of 1833 records from 460 1-km squares (scattered across the whole county) reveals that, like most common species, Chaffinches are under-recorded. For example, hardly any records mentioned the obvious diurnal passage of Chaffinches that occurred in spring and autumn 2007 (e.g. <http://rxwildlife.org.uk>).

The monthly maxima for sites counted in at least nine months were as shown in the table below. In the first winter period the largest counts were of 350 and 300 at Stapleash Fm (Chilgrove) on 4 Jan and 21 Jan respectively, numbers having built up rapidly since December 2006. The only other three-figure counts were also in West Sussex: 150 at nearby West Dean Woods on 17 Feb

and 110 farther away at Wakehurst Place on 22 Jan. At the latter site, a leucistic individual first recorded in 2006 was still present on 12 Feb.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Runcton (Chichester)	12	15	12	7	7	7	4	3	8	2	9	25
Nyetimber (Bognor)	19	15	29	24	11	15	3	3	1	10	30	10
Warningcamp (Arundel)	6	-	8	7	3	5	3	1	2	-	8	3
Wakehurst Place	110	13	17	-	1	15	2	27	5	2	11	22
Lewes Race Course	10	22	20	14	8	5	4	3	4	5	3	3
Ouse Estuary Project	5	1	3	3	3	2	2	-	4	2	25	8
Wrens Warren (Ashdown)	10	1	1	3	2	2	-	-	1	1	3	2
Highcross Fm (Uckfield)	3	3	4	2	1	7	5	-	2	35	20	9
Crowborough	33	45	19	10	5	9	20	18	13	18	16	20
Arlington	15	5	12	12	-	9		3	-	7	6	150
Darwell Res	2	9	20	30	24	1	1	1	1	9	6	24

Breeding was confirmed in just 12 1-km squares and judged probable in twenty more. An unusually precocious female was on eggs in a Framfield garden on 30 Mar; two hens nest building at Darwell Res on 14 Apr were still quite prompt. Up to a third of male Chaffinches are bigamous, while many others remain unpaired, making territory counts an unusually poor measure of breeding density. There were 60 territorial males at Pagham Hbr, 45 at Brighton Wild Park, 17 at Rye Hbr and at least 16 at Goring Gap. Sefton Fm (Pagham) held 25 males in 95 ha of mixed farm and Scobells Farm (Barcombe) ten in 10.4 ha of grazing and woods. At Barns Copse (Binsted) there were eight males in 16 ha, but there was only one at Hotham Park (Bognor) in 7 ha.

The largest post-breeding counts were 35 at West Dean Woods on 2 June, 30 at Warnham LNR on 17 Aug and 32 there on 6 Sep. The only evidence of the expected influx (*Birds of Sussex*) in late September and October was 31W at Selsey Bill on 23 Sep and 76 over Pett Level on 2 Oct.

The largest counts during the second winter period were of “hundreds” at Amberley Mount on 29 Nov and 150-250 in 0.4 ha of Wild Bird Mix at Arlington on 13 Dec. The other three-figure counts all came from the South Downs north of Chichester: 150 at Monkton (near Chilgrove) on 11 Dec, 120 at Elsted on 11 Dec and 100 at West Dean Woods on 23 Dec. [DH]

Brambling

Fringilla montifringilla

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Schedule 1 species.

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	46	21	44	15		6	44	170	133
No. of sites	11	7	6	1		3	19	33	25
Coastal sites	1	1	-	-		1	11	13	3
No. of counts	12	9	6	2		3	27	30	17

Bramblings wintering in Western Europe feed mainly on beech-mast on the ground. Their distribution is therefore sensitive to variation in beech crops and snowfall over wide areas, and the number recorded in the county varies considerably (*Birds of Sussex*). They often associate with larger numbers of Chaffinches and the observer did well to find a singleton in a flock of 350 Chaffinch at Stapleash Fm (Chilgrove) on 4 Jan. Once the beech-mast is exhausted, they occupy

a wider range of habitats, notably arable farmland and gardens. The species was reported in 24 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

In the first winter period, birds were scarcer than at the end of 2006, with a maximum count of 39 at Crowborough on 23 Mar. Records came from just 16 1-km squares, nine in a narrow band in the north of the county between Fernhurst and Crowborough. The only records from near the coast were from a Worthing garden on 8 and 15 Jan, and of a singleton in a garden at Batchelor's Bump (Hastings) on 5 Feb. As usual there was no evidence of passage in the spring, when Bramblings migrate nocturnally to a much greater extent than Chaffinches (*BTO Migration Atlas*). Small numbers remained at Crowborough in early April, with peak counts of 15 on the 3rd and the 6th, and the last birds of the winter were two seen there on the 17th, nine days earlier than the 10-year average departure date.

The first returning bird was at Bolney on 16 Sep, 16 days earlier than the 10-year average arrival date. Singletons were also there during the weeks commencing 17 and 24 Sep and four flew west at Warnham LNR on 27 Sep. As usual, a higher proportion of records came from coastal sites in October and November than in other months, indicating passage. In the second winter period, when there was an abysmal beech-mast crop over much of Western Europe, many Bramblings wintered as far south-west as Britain. Sussex, however, hosted few of them: records came from just 62 sites widely distributed across the county, seven of which had hosted birds in the first winter period. The largest count was of 100 at Walderton on 30 Nov, while 40 were flocking with 30 Chaffinches on maize stubble at Telham (near Crowhurst) on 30 Dec. [DH]

Serin

Serinus serinus

Very scarce passage migrant; has bred.

One was seen flying around Selsey Bill several times on 26 Jun (BFF, DIS *et al.*). Just one record is the worst showing in the county since 1990, the second of two consecutive blank years. Forty-eight have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000, in February (2), March (6), April (14), May (16), June (5), September, October (3) and November. Selsey Bill accounts for exactly half of them. [RJF]

Greenfinch

Carduelis chloris

Very common resident, scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Although Greenfinches need trees and shrubs for display and nesting, they range widely for food, especially outside the breeding season. It was thus no surprise that the 1314 records came from sites right across the county including 385 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme. None of the records mentioned the large communal roosts (often several hundred birds in Sussex) that are such a feature of this species' gregarious lifestyle.

The monthly maxima for sites counted in at least nine months were as shown in the table below. During the first winter period, only 22 of the 207 counts received were of 20 or more birds, a similar proportion to that for the same period in 2005 and 2006. Slipe Field (Pagham) provided the only three-figure counts with maxima of 150 on 20 Jan and 200 on 1 Feb. The site with the next highest maximum count was a garden near Pett Level where 40 birds visited feeders on 24 Jan, a good illustration of how attractive supplementary food is to this species. Feeders can, however, be dangerous: an unfortunate Greenfinch was eaten by a Sparrowhawk at a feeding station at Warnham LNR on 10 Jan.

During the BBS 694 birds were recorded in 104 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed with the highest totals being at East Beach (Selsey) with 26 on 11 Apr and 28 on 4 Jun. Outside the BBS,

there were 26 at Cadborough (Rye) on 9 Jun. Despite the protracted breeding season (eggs are laid in Sussex from late April to mid-August), breeding was confirmed in only 12 1-km squares and judged probable in 13 more. Both sexes are sometimes polygamous and individuals can move several kilometres between successive nesting attempts. The estimation of breeding densities is therefore trickier than for most songbirds. There were estimated to be 32 pairs at Pagham Hbr and 25 at Brighton Wild Park, and ten territories at Rye Hbr. Ten males were singing at Goring Gap on 26 May. There were 22 territories in 95 ha at Sefter Farm (Pagham), two in 7 ha of Hotham Park (Bognor) and one in 16 ha of Barns Copse (Binsted). Compared with previous years, these figures are consistent with a stable, or even increasing, breeding population.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Runcton (Chichester)	12	11	12	7	7	6	7	5	1	-	1	6
Nyetimber (Bognor)	26	18	18	23	13	15	14	7	7	1	4	5
Warningcamp (Arundel)	1	-	7	9	7	5	3	3	-	2	1	1
Warnham LNR	6	10	2	5	6	6	38	47	93	11	4	2
Wakehurst Place	1	4	5	-	-	2	5	1	1	5	-	8
Weir Wood Res	13	2	3	5	3	2	2	3	-	-	2	4
Ouse Estuary Project	8	10	12	8	2*	7	7	8	-	7	6	5
Newhaven Tide Mills	20	10	28	15	10	10	15	60	12	130	130	35
Crowborough	25	18	8	5	7	7	8	20	18	26	18	24
Doleham Valley	3	2	2	3	4	4	9	4	2	-	-	2

Large flocks can start to re-appear in July; in 2007 the largest count that month was 40 at Climping Beach on 22 Jul. The largest count between then and the second winter period was 93 at Warnham LNR on 6 Sep. Hints of the expected autumn passage came from two coastal sites: at Selsey Bill 16W on 22 Sep and 18W on the 23rd; at Worthing Beach a total of 35E and 15W on three dates between 11 and 31 Oct, with a maximum of 30E on 13 Oct.

During the second winter period, 40 of the 202 counts received were of over 20 birds, a higher proportion than during the first winter period. The only three-figure counts came from three coastal areas: Climping Beach with 117 on 30 Nov; Shoreham with 150 near the fort on 30 Oct and 100 at the harbour on 13 Nov; and Newhaven Tide Mills with 130 on both 15 Oct and 21 Nov. Other counts of 40 or more birds came from six more areas, four of which were again coastal: Pilsley Sands (Chichester Hbr), Rye Bay; Worthing Beach and Southwick Beach. The two inland exceptions were Boxgrove (Chichester) and Pulborough Brooks. [DH]

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	567	402	367	398	313	341	278	949	1122	4495	922	926
No. of sites	176	163	191	256	219	222	183	143	149	209	218	188

The species was recorded in 602 1-km squares, 15% of the 4067 in the county, confirming that it is fairly common and widespread. It was also seen in 324 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

In the first winter period, nine charms or counts of over 20 birds were recorded. There were

22 at Rusper on 1 Jan, 30 at Pagham Hbr on the 10th, 34 at Barcombe Mills on the 13th, 70 at the Slipe Field (Pagham) on the 20th, 30 at Bewl Water on the 27th and 46 at Bexhill on the 29th. In February, there were 22 at Southwater CP on the 9th, 25 at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 11th and 67 at Bexhill on the 19th.

The only records of spring migration were 12E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 12 Apr and 1E the following day.

Breeding was confirmed at only 11 sites by at least 13 pairs, was probable at a further seven by c.16 pairs and possible only at 15 other sites. In addition, a few pairs were assumed to have nested at both the Horsham District Reserves and Rye Hbr. The breeding performance of this species is obviously very much under-recorded. During the BBS, 272 birds were recorded in 82 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum count of 11.

During the post-breeding period there were no significant double-figure counts until August. There were then 23 counts over 20 and six over 50, including 55 at Truleigh Hill on 7 Aug, 80 at Beeding Hill on the 9th, 75 at Hollingbury Camp on the 25th, 100 at Isfield on the 26th, 55 at Pett Level on the 27th and 100 at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on the 28th.

In September, there were 14 counts of 50 or more and nine over 50 including: 60 at Pett Level feeding on set-aside for most of the month; 250 at Weir Wood Res on the 3rd; 100 at Etchingam on the 7th; 60 at Cuckmere Haven on the 18th; 62 at Washington on the 29th; 80 at Pett level on the 30th and, the first three-figure count at a coastal site, 200 at Beachy Head also on the 30th, the migration vanguards.

Migration eastwards took off from 3 Oct and was observed at a number of coastal locations right along the coastline, as is shown in the following table:

October date	3	5	6	8	10	11	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	27	29	30
Selsey Bill						30															60
Climping Beach	200	175	350							200	165	650		330	254	60	300	840	57		
Goring			180	60			92		125								168	42			
Worthing Beach		120				155	150	290				110	154		199		100				
Shoreham Hbr					40																
Newhaven Tide Mills							165														
Glyne Gap				417																	
Pett Level				132																	
Day minimum	200	175	350	417	40	155	165	290	125	200	165	650	154	330	254	60	300	840	57	63	60

NB: Counts at Goring include those at both the Beach and the Gap.

The overall total for the month (the sum of the day minima) was not less than 5050, assuming that the maximum numbers seen at any location was the minimum in the county that day and that those seen next day were different. There was only one record of westwards migration (unlike some recent years), 60 at Worthing Beach on 31 Oct. Peak days were the 10th, 18th and 24th. Although the overall total exceeded 5000, it was still less than half the October passage of 11,065 noted at Beachy Head in 2005. There were also some significant charms or counts elsewhere during October but with no indications of migration direction: 150 at Rye Hbr on the 5th and 120 on the 16th; 200 at Pett Level and 120 at Sharpthorne on the 8th; 125 at Cissbury Ring on the 25th; at Beachy Head, 255 on the 6th, 595 on the 13th, 310 on the 14th and 470 on the 27th.

The only passage records in November were 30E at Worthing Beach on the 2nd and, at Climping Beach, 54E on the 3rd (and 80W on the 11th) which effectively concluded autumn passage.

Elsewhere, there were only nine counts of 30 or more including 60 at Weir Wood Res on the 19th, 90 at Newhaven Riverside Park on the 23rd and 90 at Pagham Hbr on the 24th. In general, smaller numbers were recorded in December. There were only 11 records of 30 or more including: 50 at Pagham Hbr on the 12th; 40 at North Heath (Horsham) on the 15th; 53 at Newhaven Riverside Park on the 18th; 40 at Barcombe Cross on the 29th and 70 at Pett Level on the 30th. [JAH]

Siskin

Carduelis spinus

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; very scarce breeder.

The following table gives approximate numbers of individuals recorded throughout the year, and the numbers of different sites at which these sightings were made:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	79	211	61	18	14	17	8	7	95	781	496	408
No. of sites	13	24	22	16	14	13	6	4	15	51	42	43

Numbers in the first four months of the year were significantly lower than those recorded in the same period in 2006, but similar to those recorded in the three years before 2006. During this first winter period there were no reports of very large flocks of birds, the largest groups being 40 at Powdermill Res on 21 Jan, 40 at Southwater CP on 9 Feb and 45 at Burton MP on 18 Feb.

Numbers during the summer months were comparable with those recorded in recent years, but breeding was not confirmed at any site. Breeding was possible at Ambersham Common, Stanley Common and Blackdown (Fernhurst) where single birds were seen singing in suitable breeding habitat. The species was not recorded in any of the 123 1-km BBS squares surveyed but was seen in 46 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

During the second winter period numbers were higher than in the same period in the previous year, but there were relatively few passage birds, especially compared with the large autumn influx in 2005. Single possible passage birds were observed at Selsey Bill on 16 Jun and 30 Jun, and the first autumn passage migrants were three birds at Pett Level on 19 Sep. There were many further reports of coastal passage during the winter months, the most notable being a total of 190 birds SW over Pett Level on 1 Oct and 80 W at Climping Beach on 2 Oct.

Inland, notable sightings were of 80 birds at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on 19 Oct, 40 at Buxted Park on 18 Nov, 130 at Chesworth Fm on 27 Nov, 75 at Amberley Wild Brooks on 10 Dec and 50 at Southwater CP on 28 Dec. [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	279	201	178	623	418	458	510	999	1289	1937	285	461
No. of sites	19	18	33	101	88	94	62	46	47	50	20	25

The species was recorded in at least 245 1-km squares (6.0% of the 4067 in the county compared with 255 and 6.3% in 2006) again demonstrating the widespread nature of this common species but with a possible suggestion of a decrease in its spread.

Spring migration by birds which winter on the continent was again poorly observed. Records came from only three locations in April: at Climping Beach, the month's count was 28 (maximum 20 on the 2nd) and 4N; at Worthing Beach 24E, 12W and 5N (maximum 23 on the 21st); at Splash Point (Seaford), 21N on the 21st.

Breeding was confirmed in 13 1-km squares by at least 31 pairs (and also at Rye Hbr but with no details of numbers) and was probable in a further 47 1-km squares by at least 53 pairs. During the BBS, birds were recorded in 40 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed (with a maximum count of 40) and in only four of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

Post-breeding flocking first became apparent at Climping Beach on 22 Jul with a count of 100. In August, there were only six counts exceeding 50: on the 10th, 200 in the fields west of Selsey and 60 at Ditchling Beacon; 95 at Cissbury Ring on the 16th; 80 at Climping Beach and 90 at Rye Hbr on the 24th; 80 at Benfield Valley (Hangleton) on the 28th included a flock of 60. There was a similar picture in late September: 60 at Rye Hbr on the 20th; 80 at Selsey Bill on the 23rd; 60 at Clayton on the 27th; and, on the 30th, 350E at Church Norton and 360 at Beachy Head. The highest counts in October were 200 at Pagham Hbr and 250 feeding at Peacehaven on the 4th and, on the 13th, 500 at Pagham Hbr and 300 at Beachy Head.

Autumn migration, as in recent years, was barely evident. At Selsey Bill, a September total of 88 included a maximum count of 80 on the 23rd; at Worthing Beach, 14E on the 30th was the only September record followed by 113E in October (maximum 70 on the 13th).

The highest counts in the second winter period were 90 at East Head (Chichester Hbr) on 8 Nov, 71 at Lagness (nr Bognor) on the 28th and 150 at Park Fm (Findon) on 13 Dec. [JAH]

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 numbers recorded throughout the year, and the numbers of different sites at which these sightings were made:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	97	153	216	98	41	29	45	9	48	682	145	248
No. of sites	18	13	20	17	14	11	11	4	8	39	24	15

Numbers in the first four months of the year were significantly lower than those recorded in the same period in 2006. The large wintering groups reported in the Ashdown Forest area in 2005 and at Burton MP in 2006 were absent in 2007. Some smaller flocks were recorded in the Ashdown Forest area, the largest being of 70 birds at Pippingford Park on 13 Feb, and there were reports of small groups of birds from other sites across the county, notably 50 birds at Hoth Fm (Rotherfield) on 9 Mar, 40 at Powdermill Res on 10 Mar, and 25 at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on 12 Mar.

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 four sites, although there were many other sightings of pairs or displaying males. During the BBS three birds were seen in one of the 123 1-km squares surveyed (at Tilgate Forest on 15 Apr). The only other summer record away from the Ashdown Forest area was of two birds at Leechpool and Owlbeech Woods (Horsham) on 30 May.

Numbers in the latter months of the year were similar to those recorded in the previous year, with no large groups of coastal passage migrants being reported. The first report of coastal passage

was of two birds at Climping Beach on 19 Aug, much earlier than the first autumn passage birds in 2006 which occurred in October. The highest counts at coastal locations were of 40 birds at Worthing Beach on 3 Oct, 40 at Church Norton on 18 Oct, and 75 at Pett Level on 24 Oct.

Inland, the largest count reported during the second winter period was of 150 birds at Greenwood Gate (Ashdown Forest) on 10 Oct, and there were numerous reports of smaller groups, mostly from the Ashdown Forest area. Elsewhere, the most notable records were of 14 birds at Warnham LNR on 8 Oct, ten birds at Lavington Common on 22 Oct, and 12 birds at Hoth Fm (Rotherfield) on 26 Oct and 2 Nov.

The species was also seen in two of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme. [HC]

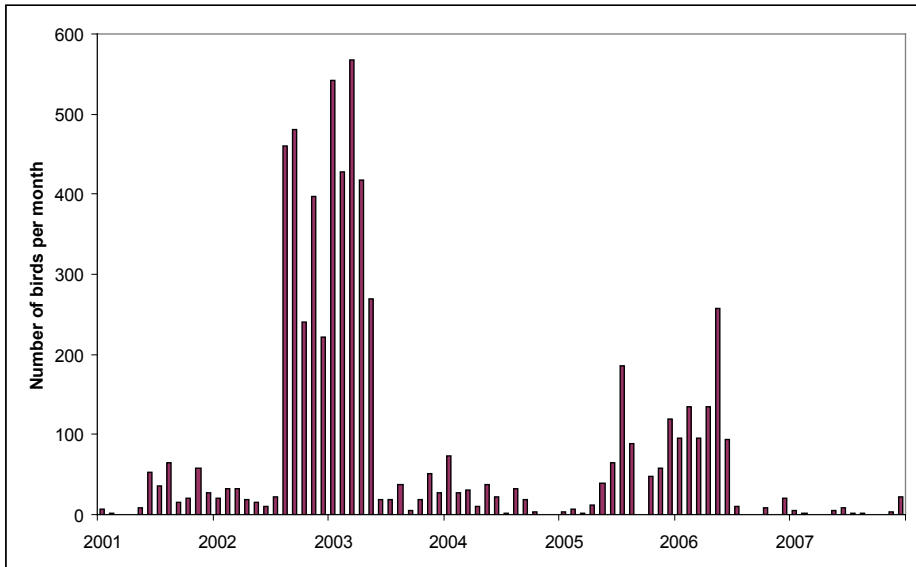
Common Crossbill

Loxia curvirostra

Scarce visitor occurring in large numbers in irruption years. Breeds occasionally.

Numbers reported during the first four months of the year were extremely low, continuing the very low numbers reported in the winter months of 2006. This is shown in the following table, and the chart puts these numbers into the context of numbers in the previous five years, including the irruption winter of late 2002 and early 2003.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	5	1	-	-	5	8	2	1	-	-	4	23
No. of sites	3	1	-	-	2	1	1	1	-	-	1	3



The only sightings during the first winter period, of just one or two birds in each case, were at Old Lodge NR on 2 Jan, Warnham LNR on 8 Jan, Powdermill Res on 21 Jan and Black Down (Fernhurst) on 1 Feb.

Breeding was confirmed at Black Down where four birds including juveniles were seen on 20 May. Birds were also seen during the summer months at Old Lodge NR (Ashdown) on 20 May, at Hoth Fm (Rotherfield) on 8 and 21 Jun, at Colgate (St Leonard's Forest) on 20 Jul, and at West Dean Woods on 10 Aug. The species was not recorded in any of the 123 1-km BBS squares surveyed.

There was no evidence of any coastal passage during the late summer or autumn. During the second winter period the species was absent from many regular sites, and there were no reports of any flocks, with the only sightings being of four birds at Leechpool and Owlbeech Woods (Horsham) on 5 Nov, a single bird at Wiggonholt Common on 13 Dec, eight birds at Singleton Forest on 19 Dec, and 14 birds at West Dean village on 19 Dec. [HC]

Bullfinch

Pyrrhula pyrrhula

Fairly common resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

The species is widespread across the county, but was only recorded in 32 of the 123 1-km BBS squares (26%) surveyed in Sussex in 2007, and was observed at some point throughout the year in 129 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme.

There were reports of confirmed breeding at only seven sites, mostly involving the observation of juveniles with adults. There were many reports of probable breeding involving the observation of pairs.

Outside the breeding season, the most notable records were of seven birds at Ashes Wood (Netherfield) on 4 Jan, seven at Eartham Woods on 5 Feb, ten at Powdermill Res on 10 Mar, eight at Darwell Res on 17 Mar, 11 at Doleham Valley on 6 Sep, eight at Colworth Park (Bolney) on 30 Sep and eight at Warnham LNR on 2 Oct.

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.

Despite the unusually high number of records received in 2006, only 13 records were received for this species for 2007, and all of these involved very small numbers of birds.

There were several sightings in the West Dean Woods area, a regular site for this species. However, the large pre-roost gatherings of up to 69 birds observed throughout January and February in 2006 were not observed again in 2007, and there were only a few sightings of small numbers of birds throughout the year, the most notable being of four birds together close to Monkton Fm (Chilgrove) on 18 Feb. The regularity of sightings in West Dean Woods would suggest breeding, but the only possible evidence for breeding this year was the sighting of a juvenile with an adult at Monkton Fm on 11 Dec.

The only other sightings reported were of a pair and another single bird at Powdermill Res on 10 Mar and a single bird flying over Lewes Brooks on 29 Nov.

This species is almost certainly under-recorded and all sightings should be reported. [HC]

Snow Bunting*Plectrophenax nivalis*

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

During the first winter period there were no reports of this species. In recent years small groups of birds have remained for several weeks during January and February at traditional sites such as Camber Sands, Rye Hbr, Pett Level and East Head (Chichester Hbr).

The first record in the second winter period was of a single bird at Pett Level on 28 Oct, and there were several more records of single birds or pairs at this site through November. Single birds were also observed at Church Norton on 30 Oct, Splash Point (Seaford) on 16 Nov and at Ferring between 16 and 22 Nov. The only other coastal record during the rest of the year was of three birds at Rye Hbr on 15 Dec, with no flocks reported from any of the other traditional sites.

As in most recent years, there were sightings inland on the Downs as well as at coastal sites: two birds were at Bopeep Fm (Alciston) between 18 and 29 Nov, and two were observed at Fulking Hill on 25 Nov. [HC]



Snow Bunting, Bopeep Farm, November 2007 (Martin Casemore)

Yellowhammer*Emberiza citrinella*

Fairly common resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

The large flock on a wild bird seed crop at Constantia Manor (Isfield) remained into the first winter period with a maximum of 250 in snow on 24 Jan. At Newick, 4 km NW further up the Ouse Valley, a regular flock on seed put out by the farmer held 60 on 5 Mar, this being the only double-figure record of that month. Otherwise only nine sites held double-figure flocks in January and two in February. On the Selsey Peninsula 14 were at Earnley on 21 Jan and 26 at Pagham

North Fields three days later. A flock of 26 was at Stopham (Pulborough) on 3 Jan and ten were at Warningcamp on 10 Jan. The only sizable flock on the Downs was at Stump Bottom (Steyning) with 45 on 27 Jan and 20 on 1 Feb. Chesworth Fm (Horsham) held 30 on 5 Jan and 20 on 13 Jan reducing to two a week later. Ten were on rough grass by the R Adur at Henfield and 15 on rough grass at Botolphs (Bramber) on 1 Jan. A flock of 22 on setaside at Pett Level was a high number for that site.

It is noticeable that all the flocks except that at Stump Bottom and an unspecified number in a large finch flock at Beeding Hill on 4 Feb were on the coastal plain or in or very near the river valleys. The only very large flocks were feeding on seed or crops deliberately provided for them but otherwise, where the habitat was mentioned in the records, it was rough grass and weedy patches.

Song was first noted on 13 Feb at Charleston reed bed.

Counts of territories/singing males in specific areas (with 2006 figures in brackets where available) were: The Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey of the western heaths 56 (71) pairs in 23 (24) 1-km squares with an average density of 2.4 (3) per square, Ashdown Forest c. 150 (c. 100), Pagham Hbr seven pairs, Sefton Fm (Pagham) two (4) in 95 ha, Amberley Wild Brooks one (1), Pulborough Brooks six (6), Horsham District reserves two, Brighton Wild Park seven (7). During the BBS, 137 Yellowhammers were counted in 51 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed, a decline from the 154 found in 57 of the 122 squares covered the previous year. The species was also recorded in 32 of the 413 gardens participating in the Garden BirdWatch scheme. Apart from the thriving population in Ashdown Forest there are clear signs of a reduction despite an increase in the number of records from across the county (350 cf. 250 in 2006).

In the second winter period 14 sites held double-figure flocks. The largest flock was at Upper Beeding and reached a maximum of 40 on 9 Nov. Thirty were at Cissbury Ring on 29 Nov and, near the coast, 22 at Nyetimber (Bognor) on 14 Dec and 25 at Marsh Fm (Earnley) on 18 Dec. Only eight sites east of the A22 recorded the species during this period.

Throughout the year there were many more scattered records particularly in the west of the county indicating perhaps a gradual revival in the fortunes of this species and yet much of the breeding evidence indicates the opposite. In the east numbers are low. [ACG]

Reed Bunting

Emberiza schoeniclus

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

In the early part of the year the only large flock recorded was 100 in the latter half of January on set-aside at Pett Level which had held 150 the previous month. This compares with a maximum of 230 the previous year and 500 in 2004/5.

Only occasional single birds were reported from Chichester Hbr where flocks in excess of 50 were regular in the previous three years. At Pagham Hbr flocks of up to 20 were recorded in January and February but a maximum of only three in March.

In the Horsham area 35 roosted at Chesworth Fm on 5 Jan and flocks of up to 20 were present on several dates until 16 Feb, while Warnham LNR held up to 20 in the same period and ten were at Southwater CP with smaller numbers on other dates. Steyning Ringing Group handled ten birds on 18 Feb at Strivens Reedbed (Steyning).

Small numbers were noted throughout Ashdown Forest with maxima of ten roosting at Ashdown Res on 20 Jan and ten at Churlwood on 9 Mar. At Lewes Brooks the 14 birds present on 7 Mar presumably indicate the return of the breeding population there. In the east of the county in addition to those at Pett Level, a flock at Doleham Valley (Brede) reached a maximum of 22

on 3 Mar. Very small numbers were recorded from heathland sites other than Iping Common and Ashdown Forest e.g. Poundgate (Crowborough).

The first song was noted on 26 Feb in Ashdown Forest and the first nest building on 6 Mar at Warnham LNR. Indications of breeding were roughly similar to 2006 with c.350 singing males/breeding pairs from c.90 sites. Breeding counts in defined areas were generally slightly lower than in 2006 (2006 figures in brackets where available): Thorney Island seven (10), Pagham Hbr 12, Sefter Fm (Pagham) six (8) in 95 ha, Amberley Wild Brooks 33 (35), Pulborough Brooks 26 (33), and Rye Hbr 49 (59). On the other hand with the creation of wetland habitat an estimated six pairs bred at Constantia Manor (Isfield) where the species was only an occasional visitor seven years ago. During the BBS as in 2006, Reed Buntings were found in 14 of the 123 1-km squares surveyed but the total of 35 shows a further decline from the last two years at 2.5 birds per occupied square.

A male with leucistic head was at Warnham LNR from early February to June.

A single bird at Seaford Head on 23 Sep and a total of nine at Beachy Head on three dates in October may indicate passage. It is difficult to assess to what extent 65 at Pagham Hbr (45 at the North Wall and 20 at the east side) on 31 Oct were local or passage birds.

In the latter part of the year double-figure flocks were reported from 17 sites. At Pett Level numbers had reached 60 by 22 Sep and 120 on 30 Dec. At Chichester Hbr flocks of 10-15 occurred throughout the period. Away from the coast there were many reports from Ashdown Forest with maxima of 30 at Camp Hill on 21 Nov and 25 at Hindleap Warren on 30 Dec. Up to 20 roosted at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) in November and a flock at Iping Common with 30 birds on 13 Dec had increased to 75 on 30 Dec. [ACG]

Corn Bunting

Emberiza calandra

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

As in the previous year over 200 records were received from almost 100 sites.

In the early winter period double-figure flocks were reported from only seven areas. In the west a small flock was present in the Thorney area throughout the period peaking at 17 on 24 Jan with the last bird seen on 10 Apr. On the Downs the largest flock was at Truleigh Hill (Beeding) with 98 on 3 Feb and 75 ten days later, and there were 25 at Kithurst Hill (Storrington) on 14 Mar, 24 at Stump Bottom (Steining) on 1 Feb and 24 at Wick Bottom (Woodingdean) on 13 Jan. At Rye Hbr flocks in excess of 40 were seen throughout with monthly maxima of 87 on 30 Jan, 75 on 1 Feb, 60 on 19 Mar and 26 on 13 Apr. A flock of 40 was at Jury's Gap (Camber) in the extreme east of the county. A count of 35 on 9 May on the Downs behind Brighton could be related to the Truleigh Hill flock. While it is good to see the large flocks at Truleigh Hill and Rye Hbr, the overall picture appears to indicate a further decline.

The first song was noted on 13 Jan at Poverty Bottom (Newhaven).

Up to 140 pairs may have bred at c.40 sites. During the BBS, 12 birds were encountered in five of the 123 1-km squares surveyed, a fall from 14 in seven of the 122 squares the previous year. On the Selsey peninsula up to seven birds were singing at five sites. West of Chichester one bird was found at Racton where possible breeding has been noted in previous years. A record of at least three singing near Lavant indicates that the tiny population in the area is surviving. There were no reports of the small breeding population around Oving.

On the Downs between the R Arun and the A29, c.20 possible breeding pairs were reported with a minimum of six singing males in a 1-km square at Amberley Mount. Between the A29 and the R Adur there were a possible c.15 pairs with four pairs reported from the Steining Downs.

In the Lower Standean area north of Brighton a remarkable 35 were found on 9 May. Otherwise between the R Adur and the R Ouse there were c.20 pairs. On the eastern Downs there were c.15 pairs. Four singing males were noted at Rye Hbr. Although there are still a few locations with reasonable numbers of breeding birds they appear generally to occur in low numbers scattered throughout the south of the county.

The last song was noted at Burpham on 23 Nov.

Post-breeding flocks began to appear in August with up to 19 birds at Rye Hbr in the middle of the month and peaking at 42 on 1 Nov although only c.20 were found at the year's end. The first birds to return to the Chichester Hbr area were 11 at Apuldram on 1 Nov with two on 18 Dec at Pilsey Sands rising to 11 on 27 Dec. A flock at The Burgh (Burpham) reached double figures at the end of October and held 60 birds on 1 Dec. A flock of 30-40 was reported at Round Down (Steyning) from 11 Sep to 24 Dec. Beeding Hill held 32 on 24 Oct and Lewes Brooks 30 on 1 Oct.

The maxima of the two coastal flocks were 50% (Rye Hbr) and 25% (Thorney Island) of the 2006 figures, a dramatic decline, whereas the Downland flocks, though small in comparison to some previous years, far exceed the maximum of 12 found in 2006.

It is encouraging that odd individuals were recorded from more sites than the previous year. The tiny population scattered in the extreme west of the county appears to be holding on. There were a few large early year flocks and more flocks recorded in the latter part of the year. It may also be thought that this species is easily missed (as one observer noted on finding eight Corn Buntings at Truleigh Hill in late January: 'there must be more' and indeed within a week 98 were seen), or not readily identified when not in song. Nevertheless the drastic falls in numbers at the well-watched coastal sites at both ends of the county confirm the overall impression that a recovery in numbers of this species is not under way. [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 2007 (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 reminded 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.

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Helmeted Guineafowl

Numida meleagris

Common resident throughout much of Africa. Kept domestically elsewhere.

Two were seen beside the A283 near Washington on 2 Aug and a feather belonging to this species was found in Southwater CP on 20 Aug. Three seen near Lidsey SF on 23-25 Sep and 12 Dec might have been the three unidentified guinea fowl recorded there in June 2006 (*SxBR* 59:202).

Indian Peafowl

Pavo cristatus

Wild birds are restricted to the Indian subcontinent. A traditional, and spectacular, favourite in ornamental gardens.

Two were recorded at Uckfield Hempstead on 7 Apr with a singleton there on 25 May. Singletons were also at Balcombe on 23 Apr, Stonegate on 3 Jun and at Warnham LNR from 9 to 11 Jun. The Uckfield Hempstead records mirror those from 2006 (*SxBR* 59:203).

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 on Ivy Lake (Chichester GP) on 1 Jan and singletons were also at Chichester GP on 24 and 28 Mar. They were presumably the same as those recorded on nearby Runcton Pit in Nov 2006 (*SxBR* 59:203).

Swan Goose*Anser cygnoides*

Rare in eastern Asia. The ancient (3000+ years) ancestor of the farmyard goose.

One was reported from Cocking on 5 Jun.

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. One to three pairs bred in UK during 2003-05 (Holling *et al.* 2007).

Most records of this attractive small goose came from Thorney Deepes in the second half of the year although one was also present there between 19 Jan-1 Feb, one to two having been seen there in Dec 2006 (*SxBR* 59:203). An adult and two juveniles were recorded from 28 Jul with two adults and two juveniles on 17 Aug and 4 Sep. Three were seen on 22-23 Sep, one on 13 Oct and two on 18 Oct. The only record away from Thorney was one on Flat Beach Level (Rye Hbr) on 4 Oct.

Emperor Goose*Anser canagicus*

Breeding mainly confined to Alaska, winters Aleutian Islands. Present in many wildfowl collections. One or two pairs bred in UK during 2003-05 (Holling *et al.* 2007).

One was reported from Scotney Court GP on 14 Feb.

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). Eight pairs bred in the UK in 2005, including two in Hampshire (Holling *et al.* 2007).

An adult and an apparent immature hybrid were recorded at Scotney Court GP during Jan-Mar and on 30 Aug, with one there on 22 Dec. Elsewhere two, including a blue morph, were seen at Etchingham on 27 Apr and one, in somewhat atypical plumage, was reported from Iford Brooks from 6 Nov to the end of the year. Nothing about any of the above records suggests them to be anything other than the usual escapes from captivity, some with uncertain parentage.

Lesser Canada Goose*Branta hutchinsii*

Breeds in Alaska and winters in California. Lesser Canada Goose *B. hutchinsii* includes the subspecies *hutchinsii*, *leucopareia*, *minima* and *taverner*. It is currently not on the British List, no vagrant 'Canada Goose' having, as yet, been assigned to subspecific level. Any recorded in the county are most likely to be escapes from captivity.

A small Canada Goose was seen at Pagham Hbr North Wall on 25 Feb and between 23 Aug and 10 Sep with it or another at Thorney Deepes on 22-23 Aug and presumably the same, considered to be a Cackling Goose *B. h. minima*, on New Lake (Chichester GP) on 11 Nov and Cope Lake (Chichester GP) on 9 Dec.

Greater Canada Goose

Branta canadensis

Breeds in Alaska and winters in California. Greater Canada Goose includes the subspecies *canadensis*, *fulva*, *interior*, *maxima*, *moffitti*, *occidentalis* and the smaller *parvipes*. Greater Canada Goose is on Category C of the British List on the basis of the established naturalised population of *B.c.canadensis* (and records of such appear in the main systematic list). Other subspecies recorded in the county are most likely to be escapes from captivity.

Three *parvipes* were present in the Cuckmere Valley during at least 27 Jan-15 Feb although they were usually difficult to locate despite being noticeably smaller. The British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) is currently undertaking a review of the species (including the Cuckmere birds) but has yet to publish any findings or information. Photographs of these birds can be found on www.thebirdsofsussex.co.uk.

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. Eight to eleven pairs bred in UK during 2003-05 (Holling *et al.* 2007).

Just four records were received. One was seen on Amberley Wild Brooks during 19-24 Feb, two were present at Benbow Pond (Cowdray) on 30 Apr, a regular site for this species, and two were recorded at Bosham on 18 Dec.

Whooper Swan

Cygnus cygnus

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant to Sussex.

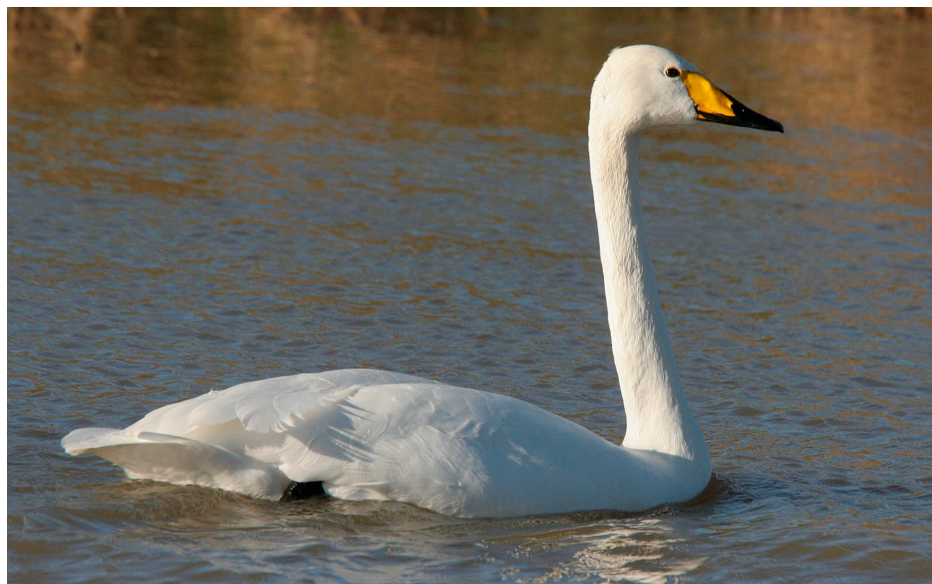
One seen at Singing Hills GC (Albourne) had been present intermittently for several years (e.g. SxBR 59:18). The presumed same bird was also at Bines Bridge on 29 Dec.

Ruddy Shelduck

Tadorna ferruginea

Breeds from Turkey across central Asia, generally wintering further south. There are isolated populations in North Africa. Three pairs bred in Norfolk in 2005 (Holling *et al.* 2007). Somewhat controversially there have been no officially acceptable British records of this species since 1940 although it seems certain that some late summer influxes originate from at least furthest Eastern Europe (*Brit. Birds* 95:398-99). The similar South African Shelduck, which is also prone to escape from collections, should be considered when identifying this species.

A feral pair was recorded at Ticehurst on 14 Feb while late summer appearances were one at Barcombe Res on 29 Jul (still present on 12 Aug) and a female or juvenile at Selsey West Fields during 4-10 Aug. The latter wandered a short way to Pagham Hbr on the 9th.



Whooper Swan, Henfield Levels, December 2007 (Martin Casemore)

Muscovy Duck

Cairina moschata

Locally common resident in forest lakes of Central and South America. Widespread in its domesticated form. Five or six pairs bred in Cambridgeshire in 2003 and 2004 but none were reported in 2005 (Holling *et al.* 2007).

One was present on Falmer Pond between 17 Apr and 6 May with two there on 23 Aug. The semi-resident bird at Widewater (Lancing) was only reported once, on 13 Dec.

Chiloe Wigeon

Anas sibilatrix

Common resident in southern South America. Commonly kept in wildfowl collections.

One was shot near Bosham at the start of the year and two were seen at Pett Level on 22 Oct.

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.

One recorded at Offham on 24 Sep was considered to have been the individual recorded in Dec 2006 (*SxBR* 59:205) at Arundel WWT. The last presumed wild (and non-hybrid) individual to be recorded in the county was at Rye Hbr in Nov 2001.

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 was reported from Flat Beach (Rye Hbr) on 14 and 17 Oct.

Harris's Hawk

Parabuteo unicinctus

Widespread but patchily distributed from the southern USA to Patagonia. Popular with falconers and often flown at public displays.

Singletons were seen at Weir Wood Res on 10 Mar and at Mannings Heath on 12 Apr. One roosting in a tree at Thorney Deeps intermittently between 6 Nov and 26 Dec may have been the individual recorded there in Nov 2006 (*SxBR* 59:205).

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.

One was present at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on 4 and 5 Apr and another was seen scrapping with a Common Buzzard over Coldean (Brighton) on 1 May.

Cockatiel

Nymphicus hollandicus

Locally common Australian nomad. One of the commonest cage birds.

Three were recorded during the year: at Hove on 2 Apr, Worthing Beach on 29 Jul and Thorney Deeps on 7 Dec..

Rosella species

Platycercus sp.

Six species of Rosella occur in Australia (with two having been introduced into New Zealand).

An unidentified Rosella was seen at St Bede's School (Eastbourne) on 26 Mar.

Budgerigar

Melopsittacus undulatus

Locally common Australian nomad. Another of the commonest cage birds. Wild birds are invariably green (and yellow).

Three were seen: at East Grinstead on 9 Jul, East Worthing on 16 Jul and Shoreham on 3 Nov. The latter, by the R Adur, was an all white individual, a plumage which would be unlikely to enhance its chances of survival even at a more benign time of year.

Macaw/Parrot species

Ara/Psittacus sp.

An unidentified green/grey macaw/large parrot was seen in Hotham Park (Bognor) on 30 Jan. It was presumably the same individual recorded at this site in Apr 2006 (*SxBR* 59:206), when tentatively identified as a Great Green Macaw *Ara ambiguus*, and during Apr-July 2005, when considered possibly a Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus* (*SxBR* 58:192)!

Burrowing Parrot (Patagonian Conure) *Cyanoliseus patagonus*

Mainly resident in southern South America where locally common, but declining. One of the more attractive of the smaller South American parrots, but expensive, very noisy and quite destructive.

One seen at West Chidham on 17 Oct had apparently been on the loose for two years.

Orange-winged Parrot *Amazonia amazonica*

Widespread and locally common in the lowlands of northern South America.

One was seen and heard in Southwick during 2-19 Mar.

Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo*

Widespread resident across Europe and Asia. One or two pairs bred in northern UK during 2003-05 (Holling *et al.* 2007). Although presumably of escaped origin all Eagle Owls are fully protected under EU law.

One in Alexandra Park (Hastings) on 13 Oct had also been reported the previous week.

Yellow-bellied Prinia *Prinia flaviventris*

Locally common in tall riverine grass from the Himalayan foothills to southern China and Borneo. An insectivorous species that would seem an unlikely choice of cagebird.

One was reported from Fen Place (Crawley Down) on 13 Aug and 10 Sep.

Glossy Starling species *Lamprotornis sp.*

Over 20 species of *Lamprotornis* Glossy Starling are recognised in sub-Saharan Africa, across a range of habitats. Black-bellied Glossy Starling (*L. corruscus*) is the smallest and least glossy of them and is a resident of the coastal forests of East Africa.

A bird seen in Southwater (Horsham) on 25 Apr was thought possibly to have been a Black-bellied Glossy Starling.

Oriental Magpie Robin *Copsychus saularis*

Common in southern Asia from Pakistan to Bali and the Philippines. Fifteen races of this pleasant songster are recognised.

One was seen in a garden in Hurstpierpoint intermittently during 12 Feb-11 Jun.

Red-faced Crimsonwing *Cryptospiza reichenovii*

A shy bird of montane forest, it occurs disjointedly in central Africa from Cameroon to Mozambique.

One was reported from Fen Place (Crawley Down) on 15 Oct and on 5 and 26 Nov. Another seemingly unlikely cage bird at this location.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE DATES OF SUMMER VISITORS, 2007

	First recorded date			Last recorded date		
	2007	Prior to 2007	10-yr average (± SD in days)	2007	Prior to 2007	10-yr average (± SD in days)
Garganey	13 Mar	02 Feb	02 Mar (± 17)	11 Nov	13 Dec	27 Sep (± 10)
Quail	10 May	08 Feb	12 May (± 22)	13 Aug	31 Oct	14 Sep (± 35)
Osprey	24 Mar	07 Mar	25 Mar (± 9)	18 Oct	09 Dec	25 Oct (± 13)
Hobby	03 Apr	21 Mar	08 Apr (± 9)	03 Nov	09 Nov	23 Oct (± 15)
Little Ringed Plover	15 Mar	06 Mar	18 Mar (± 5)	05 Oct	08 Oct	23 Sep (± 10)
Wood Sandpiper	16 Apr	10 Apr	02 May (± 23)	23 Sep	16 Nov	01 Oct (± 23)
Pomarine Skua	20 Apr	10 Mar	22 Apr (± 18)	09 Dec	31 Dec	09 Sep (± 87)
Roseate Tern	14 Jun	17 Apr	29 Apr (± 10)	02 Aug	30 Sep	14 Aug (± 34)
Common Tern	07 Apr	17 Mar	25 Mar (± 5)	11 Nov	26 Nov	03 Nov (± 14)
Arctic Tern	16 Apr	02 Apr	09 Apr (± 5)	11 Nov	23 Nov	03 Nov (± 15)
Common/Arctic Tern	06 Apr	10 Mar	31 Mar (± 11)	21 Oct	31 Dec	30 Oct (± 18)
Little Tern	11 Apr	02 Apr	09 Apr (± 5)	12 Sep	04 Nov	02 Oct (± 15)
Black Tern	20 Apr	02 Apr	14 Apr (± 7)	07 Oct	21 Nov	13 Oct (± 16)
Turtle Dove	10 Apr	08 Mar	06 Apr (± 15)	24 Sep	18 Dec	08 Oct (± 11)
Cuckoo	01 Apr	15 Mar	02 Apr (± 6)	23 Sep	11 Nov	27 Sep (± 15)
Nightjar	28 Apr	08 Apr	28 Apr (± 9)	26 Sep	05 Nov	21 Sep (± 16)
Swift	11 Apr	07 Apr	12 Apr (± 4)	08 Oct	24 Nov	19 Oct (± 21)
Wryneck	22 Apr	09 Mar	12 Apr (± 20)	22 Sep	02 Nov	06 Oct (± 11)
Sand Martin	15 Mar	04 Mar	11 Mar (± 7)	17 Oct	05 Dec	25 Oct (± 16)
Swallow	03 Mar	04 Feb	10 Mar (± 13)	11 Nov	28 Dec	28 Nov (± 11)
House Martin	11 Mar	01 Feb	16 Mar (± 16)	14 Nov	18 Dec	13 Nov (± 10)
Tree Pipit	26 Mar	17 Mar	29 Mar (± 5)	14 Oct	09 Nov	21 Oct (± 9)
Yellow Wagtail	02 Apr	10 Mar	22 Mar (± 7)	04 Nov	23 Nov	28 Oct (± 14)
Nightingale	08 Apr	21 Mar	03 Apr (± 6)	27 Aug	19 Oct	15 Sep (± 9)
Redstart	09 Apr	13 Mar	26 Mar (± 7)	15 Oct	11 Dec	29 Oct (± 18)
Whinchat ¹	25 Mar	18 Feb	01 Apr (± 18)	09 Nov	02 Dec	04 Nov (± 7)
Wheatear	07 Mar	13 Feb	03 Mar (± 9)	12 Nov	19 Dec	14 Nov (± 15)
Ring Ouzel	05 Apr	02 Feb	19 Mar (± 15)	03 Nov	26 Dec	17 Nov (± 10)
Grasshopper Warbler	10 Apr	02 Apr	11 Apr (± 6)	11 Oct	01 Nov	19 Oct (± 8)
Sedge Warbler	06 Apr	23 Mar	28 Mar (± 4)	13 Oct	29 Oct	13 Oct (± 12)
Reed Warbler	15 Apr	04 Apr	07 Apr (± 3)	19 Oct	18 Nov	02 Nov (± 9)
Garden Warbler	01 Apr	28 Mar	04 Apr (± 6)	15 Oct	16 Nov	13 Oct (± 8)
Lesser Whitethroat	05 Apr	04 Apr	12 Apr (± 7)	05 Oct	21 Nov	16 Oct (± 15)
Whitethroat	06 Apr	19 Mar	31 Mar (± 6)	19 Oct	17 Dec	19 Oct (± 16)
Wood Warbler	16 Apr	07 Apr	19 Apr (± 8)	24 Sep	07 Oct	04 Sep (± 13)
Willow Warbler	05 Mar	04 Mar	16 Mar (± 7)	15 Oct	26 Dec	30 Oct (± 14)
Spotted Flycatcher	30 Apr	08 Apr	24 Apr (± 9)	11 Oct	18 Nov	14 Oct (± 9)
Pied Flycatcher	13 Apr	01 Apr	09 Apr (± 6)	08 Oct	01 Nov	02 Oct (± 7)

1, records of a possible wintering bird were received (see the species account for details)

DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL DATES OF WINTER VISITORS, 2007

	Last recorded date			First recorded date		
	2007	Prior to 2007	10 yr average (\pm SD) in days	2007	Prior to 2007	10 yr average (\pm SD) in days
Bewick's Swan	24 Feb	26 Apr	11 Mar (\pm 8)	15 Nov	15 Oct	11 Nov (\pm 15)
White-fronted Goose	18 Mar	17 Apr	16 Mar (\pm 23)	16 Sep	12 Sep	09 Oct (\pm 46)
Long-tailed Duck	06 May	14 Jun	03 May (\pm 32)	18 Nov	23 Aug	21 Oct (\pm 25)
Velvet Scoter	22 Apr	15 Jun	15 May (\pm 13)	25 Sep	12 Aug	14 Oct (\pm 17)
Goldeneye	09 Apr	23 May	22 Apr (\pm 19)	16 Sep	06 Aug	04 Oct (\pm 22)
Smew	09 Feb	24 Apr	17 Mar (\pm 14)	04 Dec	03 Nov	30 Nov (\pm 10)
Goosander	09 Apr	22 May	30 Mar (\pm 32)	08 Oct	12 Sep	04 Nov (\pm 25)
Black-throated Diver	03 Jun	21 Jun	27 May (\pm 12)	30 Sep	03 Aug	23 Oct (\pm 20)
Great Northern Diver	10 Jun	21 Jun	17 May (\pm 14)	13 Oct	16 Sep	25 Oct (\pm 25)
Red-necked Grebe	13 Mar	19 Jun	26 Apr (\pm 16)	29 Oct	18 Aug	06 Sep (\pm 14)
Hen Harrier	12 May	19 Jun	12 May (\pm 17)	10 Aug	04 Aug	02 Sep (\pm 19)
Purple Sandpiper	13 May	26 May	13 May (\pm 7)	26 Aug	01 Jul	16 Jul (\pm 9)
Jack Snipe	27 Mar	19 May	27 Apr (\pm 15)	06 Oct	24 Aug	20 Sep (\pm 16)
Water Pipit	14 Apr	28 May	31 Mar (\pm 22)	07Nov	01 Sep	25 Oct (\pm 8)
Fieldfare	14 Apr	05 Jun	24 Apr (\pm 7)	12 Oct	22 Sep	22 Sep (\pm 18)
Redwing	22 Apr	26 May	12 Apr (\pm 11)	26 Sep	06 Aug	26 Sep (\pm 7)
Great Grey Shrike	NR ²	14 May	04 Apr (\pm 22)	05 Oct	26 Sep	18 Oct (\pm 7)
Brambling	17 Apr	12 May	21 Apr (\pm 8)	16 Sep	13 Sep	01 Oct (\pm 6)

1, no wintering 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 2007 – West Sussex.

	AC	BD	CC	CL	HC	IC	LC	LS	SC	WC	WD	WH
Hobby	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
Woodcock	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	6	1	3	4	ns	1	1
Stock Dove	-	-	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
Turtle Dove	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nightjar	ns	2	4	2	ns	7	1	2	2	4	2	2
Green Woodpecker	2	-	6	4	2	3	2	3	3	7	5	2
Great Sp. Woodpecker	1	-	5	4	2	3	8	3	3	6	4	3
Wood Lark	2	3	6	3	-	8	4	2	2	3	7	1
Sky Lark	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1
Tree Pipit	4	7	3	1	-	4	4	5	2	13	2	-
Common Redstart	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Stonechat	10	1	3	1	-	7	4	-	1	7	5	-
Dartford Warbler	20	1	4	-	-	14	-	2	4	6	12	-
Common Whitethroat	-	1	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	12	2	1
Siskin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Linnet	2	3	8	1	-	8	1	-	2	8	8	4
Lesser Redpoll	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Common Crossbill	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Yellowhammer	8	-	7	2	-	6	8	-	2	11	6	6
Reed Bunting	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

Figures relate to pairs or territories. The small hyphen (-) indicates that no territories were identified; (ns) indicates that 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)
- HC Hesworth Common
- IC Iping Common
- LC Lavington & Duncton Commons & Lavington Plantation
- LS Linchmere & Stanley Commons
- SC Stedham Common
- WC Woolbeding Common
- WD Weavers Down (Liss)
- WH West Heath Common

Duncton and Graffham Commons and Combe Hill (Rogate) were not surveyed this year. Details of breeding bird surveys were from: M Busby, D Hart, H Hart, 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.

PC Abbott ^G	JD Barber ^A	DA Blackmore ^{AT}	R. Buckler
SP Abbott ^G	CJR Barfield ^{ABHTW} (CB)	EA Blackwell ^G	T. Bujok
M. Aeberhard	GJ Barker ^G	WL Blake ^G	P. Bull ^T
B. Akinola (BA)	PS Barker ^G	T. Blaylock ^G	E. Bullen ^G
J. Alderson ^{AG}	IT Barnard ^A	M. Blencowe ^{BX}	KR Burch
C. Allen ^A	MH Barnard ^G	D. Boddington ^A	N. Burgum ^T
RJ Allen ^G	ED Barnes ^G	B. Boize ^T	M. Burke ^{AG}
SR Allen ^G	NJ Barnett ^G	MP Bond ^G	M. Burnside ^A
T. Allen ^{AT}	RG Barnett ^{GTW}	PF Bonham ^A	C. Burrell ^X
M. Allison ^A	MA Barratt ^G	EM Boniface ^G	M. Busby ^E
A. Allum ^W	SC Bartlett ^G	G. Boorman ^A	RA Butler ^{ABW}
AE Almeida ^{ABGT}	JD Batchelder ^A	RM Borwick ^T	J. Button ^G
JEF Ambler ^G	DB Batchelor ^G	JF Boulcott ^A	S. Button ^G
L. Amos ^X	S. Bayley ^{AGHT} (SB)	EC Bourne ^G	T. Buxton ^X
AC Armitage	NJ Bayly ^T	JL Bower ^G	PJ Byrnes (PJB)
SM Ash	C. Beadle ^A	L. Bower ^B	
D. Ashburn ^G	MF Beard ^{AT}	D. Bowler ^T	MB Caldwell ^G
A. Atkins ^G	H. Beauchamp ^{GT}	AL Bowley	PL Callaway ^A
G. Atkinson ^X	G Beck (GB)	PS Bowley	T. Callaway ^W
J. Atkinson ^W (JA)	T. Beecher ^{AX}	R. Bown ^{AB}	P. Callis
BK Austin ^G	S. Beer ^A	DP Bowtell ^X	DK Campbell ^T
MF Austin	AAF Bell ^G	P. Bradbeer	JE Campbell ^G
MI Avery ^T	DE Bell ^G	RC Bradbury	D. Carey ^W
KJ Awcock ^G	AJ Benham ^G	A. Bradley ^G	J. Carey ^T
JL Awty ^G	BA Bennett ^G	SG Bradley ^A	B. Carpenter ^T
	I. Bennison ^{AT}	CLG Brand ^G	G Carrington
JWP. Bacon	C. Bentley ^{ANW}	K. Brandwood ^{AT}	BJ Carter
M Baggs ^H	VP Bentley ^{ABW} (VPB)	PM Brayshaw	HM Carter ^{ABGT}
JTA Bagley ^{WX}	AJ Benton	J. Bridger ^G	LD Carter ^A
GR Bagnell	K. Benyon-Tinker ^W	D. Bridges ^A	SJC Carter ^B
J. Bailey ^A	T. Berry	A. Britt ^A	R. Carver ^W
DM Baines ^G	PC Beswick ^G	J. Broadhurst ^G	D. Cary
S Baines ^{AT}	E. Bew ^{AB}	C. Brooks ^{ABT}	GH Case ^G
AP Baker ^G	AC Beynon ^G	P. Brothwell ^G	P. Catterall ^G
CA Baker ^G	N. Biddulph ^{ABG}	C. Brown ^A	A. Caulkett ^A
J. Baker ^T	SM Bignold ^T	JDD Brown ^G	GL Champion
JA Baker ^G	J. Bills ^A	PM Browne ^G	B. Chapman
R. Baker ^A	A. Binham ^A	R. Browne ^T	CB Chapman ^{AGT}
P. Ballantine ^T	RF Bird ^A	JA Brunning ^G	J Chapman ^W
PC Bance ^W	JM Birdsey	J. Bryant ^{GW}	JS Chapman ^G
W. Banfield	J. Birkett ^T	PJ Bryant ^T	SE Chapman ^{AGT}
B. Banks ^A	DR Bishop ^G	HE Bryett ^G	T. Chapman ^G
DG Barber ^B	G. Bishop ^A	D. Buckingham ^A	R. Chapple
E. Barber ^T	LP Bishop ^G	C. Buckle ^{AB}	PI Charlesworth ^G

ME Charlwood (MEC)	DC Cooke ^A	J. Davis ^X	M. Eade ^W
RH Charlwood (RHC)	C. Cooper ^T	M. Davis ^G	R. Eade ^A
J. Chattaway ^{AB}	D Cooper (DC)	R. Davison ^W	R. Eadie ^T
PG Cheeseman ^G	I. Cooper	RM Davison ^G	R. Eagles ^T
L. Childs ^T	JF Cooper (JFC)	K. Dawson ^A	AR Eales ^W
R. Christopher ^T	KA Cooper ^G	S. Dawson	B. Easlea
A. Clark	TE Cooper	D. Day ^X	A. Eccles
C. Clark ^G	DFJ Cornell	H. Day ^X	J. Ede ^W
D. Clark ^T	B. Cornish ^G	J. Day ^{ATW}	JE Ede ^G
FC Clark ^T	C. Corrigan ^B	A. de Potier ^{NW}	RDM Edgar ^{AN} (RDME)
GA Clark ^G	SE Cottell ^G	R. de Souza ^A	M. Edmonds ^{AB}
MJ Clark ^G	S. Cottingham ^G	PA Deacon ^T	PJ Edmonds ^A
P. Clark ^A	G. Courtney-Jones ^G	CH Dean ^{ABHTW}	K. Edney
SJ Clark ^T	D. Couzens	JE Debenham ^G	R. Edney
J. Clarke ^X	JR Cowser ^{ABGHNTW}	J Dedman ^A	T. Edom
BR Clay ^{ABTX}	HM Cox ^G	E. Degerland ^T	BM Edwards ^G
PJ Clay (PJC)	JM Cox ^T	Y. Delaunay ^G	DW Edwards ^G
J. Clements ^T	JMA Cox ^G	A. Deleiros ^T	K. Edwards ^G
KM Clements ^T	MS Coxall ^G	MN Denness ^G	MEF Edwards ^G
T. Clements ^W	SA Coxall ^G	RR Dennis ^X	R. Edwards
GA Cockburn ^W	ES Crabtree ^T	H. Dennison ^{ATW}	TJ Edwards (TJE)
SR Cocker ^{GW}	HM Crabtree ^{ABNT}	MJH Denny ^A	J. Ellel
M. Cockerton ^G	NJ Crabtree ^T	Mr Denyer ^G	D. Elliott ^T
RL Cockerton ^G	FA Crawford ^G	KJ Derrett ^A	LE Ellis ^G
JA Cocks ^G	DE Crawley ^T	RM des Forges ^G	M. Ellis ^G
J. Coit ^{AW}	S. Creasey ^G	W Dexter ^G	MP Ellis ^G
G. Cole ^G	J. Crix ^A	B. Dickeson ^G	NJ Ellis ^{ABT}
J. Cole ^G	LSM Crock ^{AG}	C. Dickson ^{AG}	R. Elston ^G
MA Cole ^T	JK Cross	FA Dier ^G	M. Emberson ^{ABG}
PR Cole ^A	L. Crothall ^X	RJ Discombe ^T	MJ Emery ^W
LJ Coley	FE Crowe ^G	J. Dixon	J. Emrich ^X
DA Colgate ^A	PR Cullen	JW Dodd (JD)	L. English ^T
DE Collen ^G	S. Cumming ^G	S. Dodd	M. English ^A
TA Collett ^G	J. Curson ^A	KG Doran ^G	AD Evans ^A
H. Collings ^T	L. Curson	SJ Dove ^A	C. Evans ^T
CB Collins ^{ABW} (CBC)	SPM Curson ^A	PWL Dowling ^G	DH Evans ^T
CF Collins (CFC)	MAJ Cutts ^T	K. Downer	GD Evans ^{AB}
DO Collins ^T		V. Downer ^X	GM Evans
M. Collins ^B (MC)	M. Dalby ^G	FT Downing ^{AGT}	HW Evans ^A
MA Collins (MAC)	A. Dale ^G	A. Downs ^G	M. Evans ^T
HM Colmer ^T	DR Dallinger ^A	RA Draper ^G	MJ Evans ^A
M. Colvin	RC Dalrymple ^{AT}	NA Driver (NAD)	RD Evans
P. Comerford	B. Daniel ^G	DL Duncan ^G	SJ Evans ^W
DA Connell	JW Daniel ^G	GT Duncan ^G	
EP Connelly ^A	AM Davies ^G	G. Durey ^{BW}	RJ Fairbank ^A (RFJ)
AS Cook (ASC)	S Davies ^A	EA Durman ^G	A. Fairley ^G
DM Cook	S. Davies ^{AG}	JF Dyer ^G	IE Fallowfield-Cooper ^G
M. Cook ^A	C. Davis ^{BW}		E. Farhall ^G

JRM Farmer ^G	DA Furlonger ^G	S. Green	JN Hawtree ^T
M. Farmer		SB Green ^G	EJ Hazel ^G
LF Favret ^T	GM Gair ^G	AG Greenard ^G	A. Hearmon ^W
JA Feest	SM Gamble ^G	NM Greenaway ^{AW}	G. Heath ^G
BJ Fellows ^{ABW}	P. Gammage	C. Greenfield ^T	J. Heather
PTG Fellows ^G	AH Gardiner	RR Greenhalf ^W	M. Heather
J. Feltwell ^X	S. Gardiner	AE Greeves ^G	R. Hemming ^A
MD Fenlon ^G	RDJ Gardner	DP Grieve ^G	BD Hemsley ^G
C Fentiman (CF)	L. Gates ^G	RS Griffey ^G	M. Henderson ^A
J. Ferguson ^T	CM George ^{ABGTW}	G. Griffin ^W	K. Hewitt ^W
J. Fields ^B	P. George	DG Grindall ^G	J. Hewitt-Taylor ^G
M. Finlow ^G	A. Giacomelli ^{AT}	J. Grover	J. Heyes ^T
JM Firrell ^G	A. Gibbard ^N	AJ Guest ^{AB}	AP Hibberd ^{BT}
SL Fisher ^T	L. Gibson	SD Guiver ^G	S. Hicks ^G
JA Fishlock ^G	TE Gibson-Poole ^T	S. Gunnee ^T	M. Hill ^T
BH Flack ^G	S. Gilbert ^B	AC Gutteridge ^{ABT}	R. Hill ^W
DW Flack ^G	DJ Gil ^A	TJ Guy	RL Hill ^G
A. Fleming ^T	AG Gillham ^X		S. Hill (SH)
G. Flinn ^T	BR Gilmore	PRJ Hadland ^{ABGT}	SA Hill ^G
S. Foote ^T	A. Ginnings ^G	S. Haffenden ^T	Al Hillman
BF Forbes (BFF)	J. Glover ^W	JSW Hakeman ^A	DA Hilton ^W
T. Forbes ^{ABTW}	P. Goatly	AH Hall ^T	SR Hilton ^W
A. Ford	PD Goddard ^G	CP Hall ^T	AM Hinkley ^G
M. Ford ^{AGX}	MC Goff ^G	MP Hall ^{AG}	R. Hirst ^B
P. Ford ^X	DJ Golds ^G	P. Hall	RS Hitchen ^{AB}
WE Fordham ^T	DJ Goldsmith ^A	CH Hamilton ^{AG}	RS Hoad
PSC Forster ^G	P. Goldsmith ^G	BA Haney ^G	SL Hobden ^G
TJ Forward	MA Gomme ^G	C. Hannington ^X	JA Hobson ^{AB}
TM Forward ^A	CA Good ^{AT}	MJ Hardstone ^G	J. Hodgson ^X
MD Foskett ^G	D. Goodge ^G	A. Harman ^G	AJ Holcombe
CW Foster ^T	T. Goodge ^G	R. Harman	BJ Holcombe
RF Foulkes ^G	H. Gordon ^G	SP Harman ^G	AM Holden ^A
BJ Fowkes ^A	W. Gordon ^{WX}	DGC Harper ^{AT}	PK Holland ^{AB}
CJ Fox ^A	AN Gorsuch ^G	J. Harper ^G	D. Hollow ^E
SD Fox ^G	LE Gorsuch ^G	G. Harris ^T	LG Holloway
TP Fox ^T	DE Gour ^G	RG Harris ^{ATW}	A. Holmes ^T
D. Francis	JS Gowers ^A (JSG)	RM Harris ^G	RG Holmes ^{ABT}
K. Frankland ^{AG}	GW Gowlett	A. Harrison ^T	CA Holt
B. Fraser ^{AT}	MJ Grantham ^{AT}	A. Hart ^T	JC Holt ^A
S. Fraser ^T	OW Graves ^A	D. Hart ^{AE}	CA Holter ^G
TJ Fraser ^{AG}	N. Gray ^B	H. Hart ^E	WE Holyer ^G
T. Freed	P. Gray ^T	R. Hart ^A	LS Hooper ^G
MG Freeman ^W	MA Grech ^{AGT}	R. Hartfree	CE Hope ^{ABWX} (CEH)
RI French ^W	AE Green ^{AT}	MF Harvey ^G	H. Horne ^B
DC Fry ^A	D. Green ^{BX}	WG Harvey ^{AB}	JHM Home ^{AG}
WW Fuller ^{ABT}	HJ Green ^G	CL Haskell ^T	J. Houlden
M. Funnell	P. Green ^X	P. Haskell ^B	A. House
C. Furlpa ^A	S. Green ^T	MCR Hastie ^G	M. Howard (MH)

MJ Howard	K. Johnson ^A		PJ Luffingham ^{AH}
T. Howard-Jones	PJ Johnson	E. Lambert ^{AT}	C. Lutman ^X
DH Howey (DHH)	RJ Johnson ^{ATW}	M. Lambert ^B	
P. Howich ^G	S Johnson ^T	RJ Lanaway ^{AT}	A. Macey
JMA Howick ^G	A. Johnston ^{ABGT}	DC Lang ^{HW}	M. Macgarvin ^{AT}
C. Howse ^G	A. Jones ^A	IM Lang ^{AHWX} (IL)	E. MacGregor ^G
DG Hughes	D. Jones ^T	MA Langfield ^G	PM Mackey ^G
MA Hughes	DG Jones ^A	SA Langridge ^G	B. Mackintosh ^T
P. Hughes ^{AW}	G. Jones ^T	J. Lavender ^T	A. MacPherson ^{AB}
R. Hughes	L. Jones ^T	M. Lavender ^X	DJ Madgin ^{AH}
BJ Humphrey ^{BG}	PE Jones ^{ABGTW} (PJo)	T. Lawford ^G	M. Mallalieu ^A
NB Humphrys ^T	R. Jones ^T	PD Lawrence ^G	A. Malone ^B
NL Huston ^B	R. Jones ^G	J. Leach ^G	A. Malpass ^X
AM Hutson ^A	RI Jones ^T	J. Leathes ^G	M. Mann ^G
MW Hutton ^G	RJ Jones ^T	HJA Lee ^{ABEW}	RC Mann
DJ Hyland ^G	T. Jordan ^T	J. Lee	MV Mansson ^G
	J. Joyce ^A	J. Lee ^G	AE Mercer ^G
R. Ingram	I. Julian ^W	S. Lee ^G	MJ Marchant ^{BH}
RW Ingrams ^G	J. Julyarski ^T	PJ Lees ^W	R. Marchant ^A (RM)
T. Inskipp ^A		M. Leggatt	R. Marks
R. Iredale ^T	S. Kay ^G	J. Lewin (JL)	N. Markwick ^{AGT}
CN Isitt ^G	RS Kelly	JP Lewis ^G	C. Marrable ^X
J. Isted ^G	J. Kelsall ^A	M. Lewis ^G	J. Marshall ^G
RA Ives (RAI)	NJ Kemp ^G	SM Lewis	PC Marston ^T
	SE Kemp ^G	S. Lilley ^T	PF Marten (PFM)
AT Jackson ^G	G. Kennett	C. Lindsay ^T	AJ Martin ^{AB}
J. Jackson ^T	JJM Kilner ^G	SH Linington ^A (SHL)	AJ Martin ^G
M. Jackson ^A	RJ Kilner ^G	A. Linnell ^T	D. Martin ^W
RA Jackson ^T	J. Kinchington	PL Lister ^B	J. Martin ^{AB}
JC Jagoe ^G	AE King ^G	DR Livett	JC Martin ^A
B. James	BH King ^G	P. Livett ^G	M. Martin ^{AB}
BD James	D. King ^T	AH Lloyd ^W	DD Martin-Jenkins ^{AG}
D. James ^G	DR King ^X	J. Lloyd	JM Maskell ^{AT}
P. James ^{AX} (PJa)	J. King ^T	P. Lloyd	SP Maskell
RL James ^N	JW King (JWK)	E. Lock ^G	MJ Mason ^A
AE Janaway ^G	MN King ^{AGT}	AR Locke ^G	KW Maycock (KWM)
CR Janman	R. King ^G	RF Locke ^G	D. McCallion ^A
CM Jarman ^G	AR Kingston ^G	M. Lockwood ^G	JC McFarlane ^G
C. Jeffers ^X	S. Kinsey ^A	C. Lockyer ^T	ACO McGrath ^A
L. Jenkins ^G	M. Kirk ^{ABT}	CR Lockyer ^G	PAF McKenzie Lloyd ^T
J. Jenkins-Shaw ^T	GA Kirkwood ^{GW}	D. Loftus	DF McNair ^{ABT}
W. Jenman ^X	AR Kitson (ARK)	R. Long ^T	P. Mears ^T
NI Jennings	A. Knapp ^X	LFC Love ^G	P. Meiners ^B
GF Jewson ^G	D. Knight ^{AB}	M. Love ^{AB}	CW Melgar (CWM)
DJ Jode ^W	DC Knight ^A	M. Lovell ^T	CA Melhuish ^A
A. Johnson ^W	L. Knight ^{AGT}	AR Loweth ^A	D. Melville ^{AG}
CA Johnson ^A	R. Knight ^{AGHTW}	N. Loxley ^X	R. Menhett ^W
HS Johnson ^G	R. Knight	JC Luck ^G	LR Mercer ^{AGT}

M. Merriman ^T	SD Newman ^G	J. Penfold ^G	JA Quantrill ^G
SJ Message (SJM)	JA Newnham ^{ABHNTW}	JG Penfold ^G	G. Quin ^A
B. Metcalfe	RA Nicholson ^G	J. Penn	T. Quittenden ^W
B. Middleton ^{AB}	B. Nickolls ^G	CJ Pennells ^B	
S. Miles ^T	JL Nobbs ^{ABE}	RF Penticost ^{AB}	TK Rackstraw
RC Mill ^G	K. Noble ^N	RT Pepper ^{GT}	WS Rapley ^G
EJ Mills ^G	K. Noble ^A	C. Percival ^T	NM Ratcliffe ^T
KS Mills ^G	L. Nodes ^G	A. Perry ^{AE}	Y. Ratcliffe ^G
A. Milopoulos ^T	RK Norman ^{AT}	AD Perry ^G	S. Ray ^G
D. Minns ^A	C. Northwood	HY Perry ^A	PJ Raynor
D. Mitchell ^{AT}	A. Nottage ^A	H. Perryman ^T	P. Read ^W
MEA Mitchell ^G	JA Nundy ^T	K. Pescott ^G	M. Reader
NB Mitchell ^{BT}		S. Pescott ^G	JW Reaney
O. Mitchell ^W (OM)	M. O Shea	P. Peters ^G	C. Reay ^{AG}
D. Monk ^X	B. Oldfield ^G	J. Phillips	J. Redmond ^A
CH Moon ^G	D. Oliver ^G	MJ Phillips ^W	JE Rednall ^G
P. Moon ^W	TJ Oliver ^G	SM Phillips ^A	WJ Reed ^G
C. Moore	C. Organ ^T	M. Pierce	SG Reeds ^{AB}
FE Moore	G. Osborne ^{AT}	R. Pike	R. Rees
MM Moore ^G	G. Osborne ^A	SM Pilcher ^G	B. Reeve ^A
PJ Moore ^G	E. Outhwaite ^{AT}	R. Pitts ^A	D. Richards ^T
RC Moore ^T	L. Owen	PJ Plant ^{ABG}	E. Richards ^G
D. Moors ^A	RA Owen	PJ Platt ^G	B. Richardson ^G
L. Moreton ^T	RC Owen	D. Pledge ^T	JE Richardson ^{AGT}
H. Morgan ^A		JE Plimmer ^G	L. Richardson ^B
H. Morrey ^T	C. Pagan ^G	D. Plummer ^X	G. Riches ^T
JM Morris ^G	SD Page ^T	AH Podmore ^A	S Ricks (SR)
R. Morris ^{AW}	A. Parfitt ^{WX}	D. Pomeroy ^A	PA Riley ^G
MT Mortimore ^G	A. Parker ^W (AP)	CR Poole ^{ATX}	ET Roberts ^H
BM Mortlock	JFS Parker ^G	EJ Pope ^G	GCM Roberts ^H
DC Mortlock	C. Parkes ^G	NJN Pope	H. Roberts ^W
DB Moss ^G	SW Parkes ^G	JR Porteous ^G	MD Roberts ^T
G. Moyen	GM Parkinson ^G	M. Porter ^G	J. Robertson ^T
MF Mullen ^{AB}	L. Parkinson ^X	BC Potter ^T	V. Robertson ^G
AR Muller ^G	S. Parmenter ^A	DI Powell ^G	AB Robinson ^G
CA Mulley ^G	TW Parmenter	M. Powell ^T	D. Robinson ^T
S. Munday ^A	NM Parsons ^A	R. Powell	J. Robinson ^G
RJ Murdoch ^G	R. Parsons ^W	HDV Prendergast ^X	PA Robinson ^T
K. Murphy ^{AB}	RA Pask	C. Prince	PA Robinson ^{AG}
D. Mutters ^{AGT}	J. Patterson	MG Prince	PJ Robinson ^A
L. Myers ^G	SJ Patton ^X	MG Prince ^G	R. Robinson ^{AB}
	PN Paul	SA Prince ^G	S. Robinson ^W
R. Nash ^{AT}	R. Pawley	AD Prowse ^T	BM Rogers ^E
B. Neal ^A	D. Payne ^T	J. Pullen ^W	C. Rogers ^G
A. Needham ^T	ANH Peach ^G	LF Purchase ^G	D. Rogers
T. Nelson ^T	EM Pearse ^G	RHA Putnam ^T	DP Rogers ^A
AM Nevard ^A	ME Pendell ^G	B. Puttock ^W	MD Rolfe ^T
R. Newman ^T	RJ Pendell ^G		BA Roper ^G

PP Roper ^X	JP Shaughnessey	MJ Stenning ^B	MP Toms ^T
VC Roper ^G	R. Shave ^G	P. Stevens	HY Toole ^G
J. Rose	MD Shaw ^T	GJ Stewart ^A	R. Tovey ^G
C. Rosewarrn ^G	CR Shawyer	P. Stokes ^B	B. Toward
J. Ross ^{AT}	O. Shepard ^T	R. Stokes ^T	S. Trenerry ^T
H. Rowe	RM Shipp ^G	K. Stouse ^B	CE Trollope ^{AT}
PA Rowland ^G	D. Silk ^A	A. Stow ^T	D. Trott ^A
JR Rowsby ^T	MJ Silk	A. Strachnicki ^T	JE Trowell ^W
E. Rowse ^{AW}	A. Simmonds ^G	PJ Strangeman ^T	WH Truckle ^{AT}
SJR Rumsey	T. Simon ^{AW}	R. Street ^T	M. Tucker
L. Rusbridge ^T	IM Simpson ^{HW}	B. Summerfield ^A	M. Tuckey
I Russell (IR)	KFW Simpson ^{AN}	J. Sutton ^G	M. Turnbull ^G
MG Russell ^{AX}	RN Simpson ^A (RS)	RK Sutton ^A	M. Turner ^{ABHW}
P Russell (PR)	SP Simpson ^{AGT}	S. Sutton ^{HX}	PC Turner ^{AG}
ND Rutherford ^{ABG}	A. Simpson ^{WX}	S. Swaffield ^G	P. Turney
A. Rutland ^T	MD Sizeland ^G	H. Swyer ^X	P. Twine ^{AE}
N. Rutter ^B	A. Skeri ^T	I. Swyer ^X	WM Twitchett ^T
PJ Ryder ^T	A. Sker ^{AW}	JC Symonds ^G	
K. Rylands ^A	AJ Skinner ^A		ST Underdown ^W (STU)
	A. Slade	WIE Tagg ^T	ED Urquhart ^W
S. Samson ^G	E. Slade ^X	DR Taylor ^T	
EG Sandall ^G	KL Slay ^G	KP Taylor ^A	SM Vane ^G
RF Sanderson ^{GH}	C. Smart ^A	R. Taylor ^T	P. Varkala ^{AT}
RJ Sandison	M. Smart ^{GX}	SR Taylor ^{ABGTW}	DM Vaughan ^G
D. Saunders ^T	W. Smethurst ^G	CR Tazzyman	H. Vaughan ^{AG}
RA Saunders	AM Smith ^G	TL Teasdale ^G	LE Vaughan ^G
J. Sawtell ^A	DA Smith ^G	C. Temple ^A	JE Veness ^G
MD Schofield ^T	DI Smith (DIS)	RC Theobald ^T	KW Veness ^G
JG Schultz ^G	KW Smith ^A	A. Thomas ^{ABNW}	FB Venn ^A
RP Schwyter ^G	M. Smith ^T	A. Thomas ^A	ATC Vile ^G
AD Scott ^A	PA Smith ^{AW}	CM Thomas ^G	C. Vince ^W
M. Scott-ham ^{AH}	PA Smith ^G	T. Thomas ^T	C. Vine ^{ATW}
TJ Scragg ^G	RF Smith	DJ Thompson ^G	GJ Vine ^T
AM Seabrook ^T	S. Smith ^W	JFW Thompson ^T	AJ Vos ^G
T. Seabrook ^{ABG}	AC Smithen ^{AB}	PP Thompson	C. Voss ^T
CM Seaton	D. Sneller	PS Thompson	
LA Seekings ^G	MA Snelling ^{AB}	KJ Thornton ^A	R. Wainwright ^A
RJ Senior (RJS)	C. Spencer ^G	G. Thurstans ^G	DF Wakefield ^G
T. Senington	AG Spicer ^G	RS Ticehurst ^A	CA Walker
MV Sennitt ^{AB}	EA Spicer ^G	BH Tickner ^G	D. Walker ^W
E. Serpis ^A	P. Spiers ^W	KA Tiffin ^G	TH Walker ^A
PD Service ^G	GC Spinks (GCS)	CJ Tilbury ^G	TE Waller ^G
K. Sexton ^T	DL Stainton ^{GT}	JE Tilbury ^B	S. Walsh
M. Shaft ^{HH}	E Standing (ES)	AG Tinning ^A	L. Walther ^{AT}
RJ Shanks ^{BG}	I. Standivan ^{HNW}	PC Tinning ^X	LA Ward
C. Sharp ^G	JC Steedman ^G	R. Tofts	LJ Ward ^G
I. Sharp ^G	JM Steedman	R. Tomlin ^G	MS Ward ^G
J. Sharpe ^W	CM Steel ^G	M. Tomlins	HM Warne ^T

N. Warne ^B	C. White ^T	KB Wills ^W	SA Woolfries ^A
MWR Washington ^A	S. Whitehead ^T	J. Willsher ^A	RJ Woollard ^B
KP Watcham ^{AG}	CA Whiteman	R. Wilmshurst ^G	I. Woolsey ^A
AB Watson ^{HX}	AM Whitman	HMV Wildson	JA Worrall ^{ABG}
S. Watts ^G	JH Whitman	AR Wilson ^A	JM Worthington Wilde ^A
PJ Webster ^G	S. Whittaker ^{AB}	KD Wilson	J. Wortley ^G
SD Webster ^G	H. Whittall ^B	PJ Wilson ^W	AL Wragg ^T
DJ Wedd ^{AT}	M. Wickison ^G	IJ Wilton ^T (IJW)	BC Wright ^G
J. Wedd	ERW Wight ^G	D. Wiltshire ^{GT}	CH Wright ^A
PH Welch ^G	VJ Wilkins ^G	I. Wiltshire ^{AB}	CMV Wright ^{ABG}
M. Welcome ^W	M. Wilkinson ^X	HC Wingfield-Hayes ^W	H. Wright
U. Wells ^T	A. Williams	LF Winter ^T	J. Wright ^W
AJ Wende	AJ Williams (AJW)	EA Winward ^G	KJ Wright ^W
GA Wenden ^G	C. Williams ^T	S. Wise ^A	M. Wright ^T
B. West	DC Williams	A. Witts ^T	JE Wyatt ^G
BK West ^G	G. Williams ^T	DH Wood	N. Wyatt ^G
DR West ^{AB}	G. Williams ^G	Ms Wood ^G	
JJ West ^G	JA Williams ^T	MW Wood ^G	BJ Yates ^{AW}
AC Weston ^A (JWe)	JA Williams ^G	R. Wood ^G	A. Young
JD Weston ^{WX}	JM Williams ^G	V. Wood ^B	AM Young ^G
R. Westwater	M. Williams ^G	CW Woodburn ^W	S. Younger ^W
A. Wheatcroft ^T	RM Williams ^G	I. Woodburn ^W	
MJ Whitaker ^A	R. Williamson ^W	JP Woodfield ^G	
PJ Whitcomb ^T	RLC Williamson ^{AW}	C. Woodward ^{AT}	

The superscripts in the above table indicate the particular survey(s) in which contributors participated, as follows:

- A Bird Atlas 2007-11 (mapping Britain and Ireland's birds)
- B Breeding Bird Survey (BBS)
- E Thames Basin and Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey
- G Garden BirdWatch
- H Heronry Census
- N Non-Estuarine Coastal Waterbird Survey
- T Contributors via *BirdTrack*
- W Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS)
- X Contributors 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: SR Allen, J Atkinson, S Bayley, Mrs VP Bentley, R Bown, Dr C Bridges, Dr C Brooks, S Chapman, Ms J Chattaway, BR Clay, CB Collins,

JR Cowser, DE Crawley, Ms A de Potier, RDM Edgar, RJ Fairbank, BF Forbes, BR Gilmore, Ms H Gordon, JS Gowers, Mrs P Green, AC Gutteridge, JA Hobson, AM Holden, CE Hope, A House, T Howard-Jones, DH Howey, P Hughes, RA Ives, P James, P Johnson, PE Jones, JC Kelsall, G Kennett, Rex Knight, Richard Knight, IM Lang, J Lewin, S Linington, JM Maskell, R Milsom, O Mitchell, Mrs BM Mortlock, A Parker, PN Paul, RT Pepper, A Perry, AH Podmore, GCM Roberts, Ms H Rouse, E Rousell, C Seaton, MV Sennitt, Mrs IM Simpson, DI Smith, IM Standivan, JC Steedman, Dr AB Watson, Mrs J Wedd, Mrs AJ Wende, 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.

Bird Atlas 2007-11: This national survey to map Britain and Ireland's birds is organised in Sussex by Dr Helen Crabtree, 3 Myrtle Cottages, Ardingly Road, Cuckfield, West Sussex, RH17 5HD and Richard Cowser, Beaver's Brook, The Thatchway, Angmering, West Sussex, BN16 4HJ. The 295 contributors to this survey in 2007 are indicated by ^A in the above table.

Breeding Bird Survey (BBS): This BTO annual national breeding survey, based on selected 1-km squares, is organised in Sussex by Dr Helen Crabtree, 3 Myrtle Cottages, Ardingly Road, Cuckfield, West Sussex, RH17 5HD. Thanks are due to the 102 observers involved who are indicated by ^B in the above table.

Thames Basin and Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey: This continuing survey of heaths and heath woodlands (see table on page 215) is undertaken in collaboration with the RSPB and the bird clubs of Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey. The Sussex organiser is Alan Perry, Edgehill Barn, Byworth, near Petworth, West Sussex, GU28 0HR. Thanks are due to the nine observers involved who are indicated by ^E in the list of contributors.

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 22 contributors who are indicated by ^H in the above table.

Non-Estuarine Coastal Waterbird Survey: The organisation of this national BTO survey was arranged by Dr JA Cocks. The 13 participants are indicated by ^N in the above table.

Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS): Monthly counts were carried out for this BTO/WWT/RSPB/JNCC survey and organised by Richard Bown, 49 Long Beach View, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN23 5NB. Coordinating the counts in large areas has been undertaken by local reserve wardens as shown below. Thanks are due to these and the 110 counters who are indicated by ^W 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 Rex Knight for the Cormorant Research Group.

SUMMARIES OF OBSERVATIONS

We are grateful for summaries of detailed observations at Chichester Harbour from E.Rousell; 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 and the Arun Valley 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 RDM Edgar; Bewl Water from PC Bance; Pett Level from PE Jones and Rye Harbour from Dr BJ Yates. We also thank the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre for providing ornithological records from 57 observers (marked ^x in the above table) and Birdguides for providing their Sussex records. The online recording of the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) surveys provided a plethora of records; the 245 Sussex contributors to *BirdTrack* are marked with a ^T in the above table and the 419 recorders for the *Garden BirdWatch* are indicated with a ^G. Thanks are recorded to the BTO for the county records from these surveys and the *Breeding Bird Survey* and *Wetland Bird Survey*.



Yellow-browed Warbler, Whitbread Hollow, September 2007 (Martin Casemore)

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 for 2007

Robert Edgar and Sarah McKenzie

32 Hartfield Road, Seaford, East Sussex, BN25 4PW

Introduction

The total number of birds ringed in Sussex was 51,372. This was a decline of 6% on the 54,661 ringed in 2006 and was the second decrease running. These lower numbers seem to reflect the poor breeding seasons in both 2006 and 2007. (*N.B. All numbers, including tables, have been adjusted to reflect birds ringed in previous years, but only recently notified to the authors.*)

Reports were received from 21 individual active ringers or groups (Table 1), which was one less than last year. The Rye Bay Ringing Group (RBRG) ringed 35,224 birds, which was 69% of the Sussex total. One hundred and sixteen species were ringed in the county in 2007 compared to 109 in 2006.

Unfortunately, once again no national figures were available this year for comparison at the time of compiling this report. Table 2 compares national and Sussex ringing effort for the five years from 2002 to 2006.

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	Total
Individuals			
K. Arthur	0	310	310
W. Attridge	822	13	835
M.J. Cowlard	0	8	8
A.M. Davis	226	122	348
J.A.G. Dunlop	2119	25	2144
R.D.M. Edgar	0	11	11
C. Hamilton	1192	0	1192
R. and M. Lanaway	1734	859	2593
D.M. Love	247	110	357
D. Madgin	323	12	335
A. Martin	56	78	134
J.A. Newnham	512	5	517
G.C.M. Roberts	6	74	80
R. Sanderson	1261	23	1284
C. Shawyer	8	52	62
A.B. Watson	216	925	1141
Groups			
Beachy Head Ringing Station	2179	2	2181
Cuckmere Ringing Group	400	0	400
Farlington Ringing Group	80	0	80
Rye Bay Ringing Group	34,878	346	35,224
Steyning Ringing Group	2138	0	2138
County total	48,397	2975	51,372

Table 2. Comparison of national and Sussex ringing effort (national totals for 2007 not available).

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
National totals						
All birds	791,074	848,532	881,920	873,581	853,681	n/a
Adults	614,300	673,889	712,925	700,140	674,211	n/a
Nestlings	176,774	174,643	168,995	173,441	179,470	n/a
Species	256	268	268	262	251	n/a
Sussex totals						
All birds	45,656	52,455	57,544	58,746	54,661	51,372
Adults	43,935	49,860	54,753	54,946	51,587	48,397
Nestlings	1721	2595	2791	3800	3074	2975
Species	105	114	120	125	109	116

County rarities ringed were one Spotted Crake, one Wryneck, two Aquatic Warblers, one Paddyfield Warbler, one Marsh Warbler, two Yellow-browed Warblers (all at Pett Level) and one Yellow-browed Warbler at Beachy Head. In addition eight Honey-buzzard chicks were ringed in the county. The Paddyfield Warbler was the third to have been ringed in Sussex.

Although no new species were ringed in the county, the species total has increased to 203 ringed since 1979 with the announcement that Honey-buzzard chicks have been ringed every year since 1997 (all totals in this report have been adjusted to take account of this). Unusual birds ringed (with numbers ringed previously in brackets) include three Greylag Geese (five), one Little Egret (five), three Oystercatchers (14), six Avocets (14), two Red Knots (four), one Wood Sandpiper (15) and 16 Turnstones (12).

Ringling Totals

Table 3 lists the 20 most regularly trapped species during 2007 in descending order of magnitude compared with similar data from 2006 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 2007. Birds of Conservation Concern (Gregory et al. 2002): **red-listed, *amber-listed.

	2006 total	2007			2006 total	2007	
		Total	RBRG			Total	RBRG
Barn Swallow*	8799	6721	6427	Common Whitethroat	1258	1140	876
Sedge Warbler	6365	6566	6424	Blackbird	706	1037	363
Blackcap	4815	5052	3344	Goldfinch	1186	954	149
Eurasian Reed Warbler	5684	3912	3566	Robin	775	942	333
Sand Martin*	3976	3370	3365	Greenfinch	775	882	230
Blue Tit	3479	3201	527	Reed Bunting**	793	779	676
Common Chiffchaff	2641	2635	1423	Chaffinch	616	637	169
Great Tit	1801	2033	320	Grasshopper Warbler**	478	537	526
House Martin*	1494	1842	1841	Garden Warbler	374	531	442
Willow Warbler*	1998	1547	919	Song Thrush**	374	475	165

The 20 species listed in Table 3 account for 87% of all birds ringed in Sussex during 2007 compared to 89% of birds ringed in 2006. The first 18 species are much the same as last year with the order little changed but Willow Warbler has slipped below Great Tit and House Martin, and

Blackbird has risen by four places. Lesser Redpoll and Dunnock have been replaced by Garden Warbler and Song Thrush. The regular 'top ten' (five warblers, three hirundines and two tits) accounted for 72% of all birds ringed. RBRG ringed 69% of the county total (68% in 2006) and over three-quarters of nine of the species in Table 3. Their highest proportions were 100% of the House Martins (bar one bird) and Sand Martins (bar five birds), 98% of the Grasshopper and Sedge Warblers, 96% of the Barn Swallows and 91% of the Eurasian Reed Warblers. Once again, 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. Through the last few years it is noticeable how Willow Warbler has consistently moved down the table. This is graphically shown in Figure 1 in comparison with captures of Common Chiffchaff as shown in Figure 2.

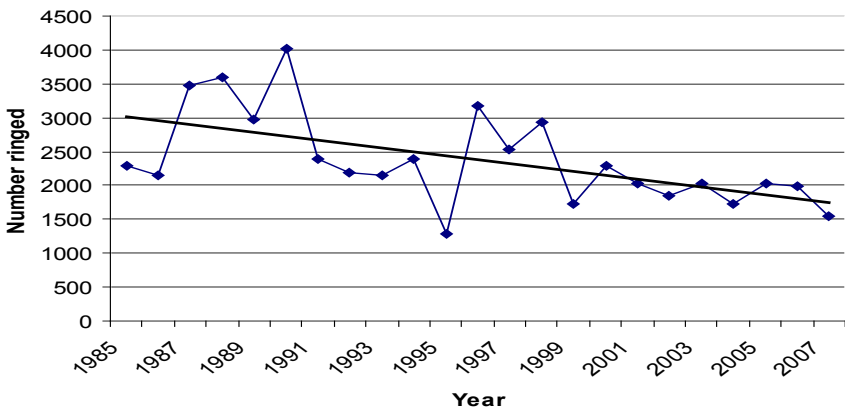


Figure 1. Numbers of Willow Warblers ringed in Sussex 1985-2007 with fitted trend line.

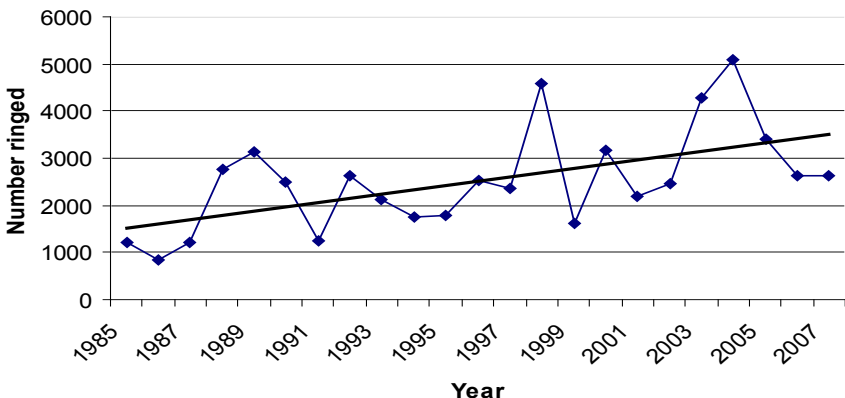


Figure 2. Numbers of Common Chiffchaffs ringed in Sussex 1985-2007 with fitted trend line.

Such graphs should be interpreted with care as there is no allowance made for changes in ringing effort, weather at the times of year of their respective passage, etc. In addition, past recoveries indicate the birds that are caught in Sussex, mainly in their first autumn, emanate from a large geographical area although it would appear that most are of British origin. What the trend lines do clearly demonstrate is that the numbers of ringed Common Chiffchaffs are increasing, while those of Willow Warblers are on a continual decline. Only in 1995 were fewer Willow Warblers ringed than in 2007.

The notable decrease in Barn Swallows ringed is due to the absence of the huge roost present at Pett level in 2006 but the number is still up on the 5962 ringed in 2005. Sedge Warbler numbers ringed are very similar to last year but there was a big drop in Eurasian Reed Warbler numbers in the reed-beds where ringing takes place. Blackbird numbers show a one-third rise and with a strong increase in Song Thrush numbers too this may suggest a rise in the fortunes of these two species. Garden Warblers showed a very welcome rise but Blackcaps, although slightly improved, were still down on the 6048 ringed in 2005. Only 15 Spotted Flycatchers were ringed in the county, half the number of last year, continuing the downward trend seen in the early few years of this century. The numbers of Marsh Tits ringed increased markedly between 2004 and 2005 (from 37 to 61) then fell back to 24 last year but are now back to 38. There were, however, no Willow Tits ringed at all, the first time this has happened and a sad reflection of this species' status. Only 171 Starlings and 137 House Sparrows were ringed, a reduction of 36% and 60% respectively, on last year's totals. Only 17 Siskins were ringed in 2007 compared with 888 in 2006, whereas Lesser Redpoll numbers were almost identical. There was clearly no influx of Siskins particularly to garden feeders where they are most easily caught. Bullfinches showed a 31% increase in captures.

Nestlings

The 2975 nestlings ringed in 2007 is a slight reduction on the 3,074 ringed in 2006 which in itself was a decrease on the 2005 total of 3,800, but is still an increase on the 2,789 ringed in 2004. Six percent of all birds ringed in Sussex in 2007 were nestlings.

Sixteen species had over 40% of their total ringed as nestlings (Table 4), compared with 19 species in 2006, and 13 of the 16 species were of conservation concern (Gregory *et al.* 2002).

Table 4. Nestlings ringed in Sussex during 2007, 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
Northern Lapwing*	15	15	100	Common Kestrel*	44	40	81
Tawny Owl	13	13	100	Sky Lark**	4	3	75
Honey-buzzard*	8	8	100	Mistle Thrush*	5	3	60
Avocet*	6	6	100	Stock Dove*	37	20	54
Common Tern	3	3	100	Yellowhammer**	23	11	48
Black-headed Gull*	155	154	99	Herring Gull*	60	28	47
Barn Owl*	471	465	98	Tree Pipit*	22	10	46
Peregrine Falcon*	16	15	94	Marsh Tit**	38	16	42

There was a great increase in Barn Owl chicks ringed with 465 this year, against the very low 162 in 2006, surpassing the 427 ringed in 2005 and indicating a much better year for Barn Owls. Black-headed Gull nestlings ringed also increased notably from 50 in 2005 and 117 in 2006 to 154 in 2007. Robin nestling numbers ringed markedly increased from 45 in 2006 to 68 this year. Robin nests are notoriously difficult to locate so great credit is due to R. Lanaway's team who

ringed 48 of them. On the other hand Barn Swallow nestlings ringed, having increased from 227 in 2005 to 288 in 2006, declined to 163 in 2007. No less than 85 nestling Willow Warblers were ringed, all by A.M. Davis.

Fifteen Peregrine Falcon chicks were ringed, which is nearly twice the previous highest annual total of eight in 2003. Eight Honey-buzzard chicks were ringed in 2007. (The six Honey-buzzard nestlings ringed in the county in 2006 were over a quarter of the national total of 22 Honey-buzzard chicks ringed in that year (Coffait *et al.* 2006)).

There is a great fluctuation in the number of nestling Blue and Great Tits ringed annually. This is a reflection of the success of nests due to weather (low success in wet and cold conditions), predation and abundance of caterpillar food for the young (Cramp and Perrins 1993), rather than the inconsistency of ringing effort. That this year was clearly less successful for both species than 2005 and 2006 can be seen from Table 5.

Table 5. Numbers of nestling Blue and Great Tits ringed in Sussex from 2002 to 2007.

Year	Blue Tit nestlings	Great Tit nestlings
2007	771	576
2006	1064	641
2005	1216	792
2004	718	539
2003	936	524
2002	566	334

Recoveries

A selection of the more interesting recoveries is presented below. As usual there have been many reports of colour-marked birds, demonstrating how non-ringers can contribute to our knowledge of bird movements.

The **Bewick's Swan** recorded in Sussex in December 2004, December 2005 and February 2006 continues its peregrinations. Originally ringed on 14 Aug 2003 on the Russkii Zavarot Peninsula (Nenetskya, Russia), it was in Germany on 22 Mar 2006, and in The Netherlands in November 2007. (It was back again in the Arun Valley on 10 Jan 2008.)

Colour-marked ducks are rarely reported, so of considerable interest is a **Tufted Duck** marked at Borough Fen Decoy (Peterborough) on 4 Mar 1996 which was sighted at Rye Hbr on 3 Jun 2007, 11 years and 91 days later. When ringed it was identified as having been hatched the previous summer, so it was approximately 12 years old when re-sighted. This species is known to live up to 22 years (Staav and Franson 2008).

Two sightings of colour-ringed **Cormorants** have been reported. One on 14 Nov 2007 on Brighton Power Station had been ringed on the Chausey Archipelago, south of Jersey (France) in 2006, and another near Henfield on 16 Aug 2007 had been ringed at Denny Island in the Bristol Channel on 18 Jun 2006.

One of our most exciting recoveries ever is of a **Honey-buzzard**. A chick ringed in the county (at an undisclosed site) and satellite-tagged in August 2003 was found freshly dead by a rail track on 21 Aug 2007 at Auffay in the Seine-Maritime region of northern France. This was one of two birds from the same nest, both fitted with transmitters. The younger chick wintered in Guinea (4500 km from Sussex) and then moved to Liberia (a further 800 km south), where the battery gave out in February 2004. The larger chick was tracked to Mauritania in October 2003 where the battery failed. This is the bird that was subsequently found dead in France. This bird may have been on its autumn migration after breeding in southern England or northern France, or perhaps from further north in Britain or Europe (M.J. Cowlard *pers. comm.*). Details of the two birds' journeys can be seen at <http://www.roydennis.org/migration%20maps%202003.htm>.

A colour-ringed **Osprey** that was roosting on the landing lights at the south end of Thorney Island on 28 Jul 2007 had been ringed from a brood of three on 13 Jul 2005 near Dornoch (Sutherland, Scotland).

A colour-ringed **Bar-tailed Godwit** that was originally ringed in the north of the Netherlands on 26 Apr 2001 has been seen so many times that there are three pages of sightings of this bird. It was seen in The Netherlands in 2002, 2003 and 2004. It was in Chichester Hbr in January 2005, back in The Netherlands by May and again in September, The Netherlands again in May and September 2006 and in Chichester Hbr in February 2007.

A **Greenshank** ringed on Thorney Island on 24 Aug 2002 had its colour-rings read in the field in Gotland (Sweden) on 28 Apr 2006. This is the first report of this species ringed in this country and encountered in Sweden (no doubt bound for its breeding site).

Many colour-marked **Mediterranean Gulls** are being reported now as this species becomes commoner. The most travelled was ringed in June 2002 near Antwerp (Belgium), moved to the Isle of Wight that July where it stayed until October, and in November was recorded in Bognor Regis. It was next encountered in July 2004 back on the Isle of Wight and the following April back in Belgium. In August 2005 it was on the north French coast where it was also recorded that December and in March 2006. The following month it was in Zeeland (The Netherlands), and also in Belgium. By December 2006 it was on the north French coast where it stayed until February 2007. There were no reports in that summer but in December 2007 it was in Pagham Hbr. Other birds seen in Sussex in 2007 had been ringed in the Netherlands, Germany, Poland, Hungary and Italy.

A **Black-headed Gull** chick ringed on the tern rafts at Chichester GP on 13 Jun 2007 was killed at Mannings Heath Golf Club on 22 Nov 2007, most unusually, having been hit by a golf ball. (This brings to mind a House Sparrow, that was killed by a cricket ball in 1936 at Lord's Cricket Ground, and is preserved in the MCC museum with the ball that finished it off).

An excellent potential British longevity record is a **Herring Gull** which was ringed in its first year on Worthing Beach on 26 Nov 1978, and found freshly dead at Draycote Water (Rugby) on 21 Feb 2007. This makes it nearly 28 years and 3 months old (present British record 28 years and 1 month (British Trust for Ornithology 2008), European record 34 years and 9 months (Staaav and Fransson 2008)).

Stock Doves in Britain and Ireland are usually sedentary (Wernham *et al.* 2002), although increasing numbers of ringed birds have been reported abroad in recent years, particularly in France. One ringed at Icklesham on 10 Jun 2005 was found dead at Cherre (Maine-et-Loire, France) on 18 Dec 2005. Since parties of Stock Doves accompany Wood Pigeon movements on the Sussex coast in November, interchange between the two countries is not surprising, these movements usually being assumed to be continental birds arriving to over-winter. In this case, however, this bird was ringed here as a chick and was presumably wintering in France when found.

Sadly, the usual **Barn Owl** road casualties and drowned birds were reported, but a first must be one at Wick (Littlehampton) found "dead in bull pen". Whether it was gored to death was not reported. Better news was of a chick ringed on 2 Jul 1998 at Elstead and re-caught at Chilgrove on 11 Jul 2007, making it 9 years old. The British record is over 13 years old (British Trust for Ornithology 2008).

A first year **Barn Swallow** ringed on 11 Sep 2006 at Icklesham was caught and released by a ringer on 18 Mar 2007 at Mpumalanga (Transvaal, Republic of South Africa), a distance of 8986 km away. Although many Barn Swallow ringing recoveries have been obtained from South Africa since 1912 (the first was ringed by James Masefield, the brother of the poet John) (Wernham *et al.* 2002) it is particularly interesting to have an example of a Barn Swallow that has passed through Sussex. But where did this one originate from? In northeastern South Africa birds from the former USSR, particularly the Urals, outnumber our birds (Wernham *et al.* 2002). An interesting example of survival from a very late brood of Barn Swallows is one ringed in the nest on 1 Sep 2007 and recaptured at Icklesham on 2 Oct 2007. In 32 days it had reached a weight of 20.6 g. The ringer also reported that despite ringing over a hundred nestlings a year on only two

occasions had he recaptured a bird that had been ringed as a chick the previous year. His adults are either not ringed or have been previously ringed as adults in previous years. So where do all his nestlings go?

A **Pied/White Wagtail** ringed on 8 Jul 2007 on the Isle of May (Fife) was re-caught on 8 Oct 2007 at Icklesham. It was a juvenile when ringed but since White Wagtails sometimes nest on Scottish islands it could, perhaps, have been of either subspecies.

Although British **Dunnocks** usually remain within a kilometre of their natal site, over much of the rest of their range they are migratory (Wernham *et al.* 2002). One ringed on 1 Sep 2006 at Bilkshavn (Norway) was found at Ingrams Green (Midhurst) on 30 Oct 2006, having travelled 994 km, and is the thirteenth Norwegian-ringed Dunnock to have been reported in Britain and Ireland.

An adult **Robin** ringed at Landguard Point (Felixstowe, Suffolk) on 3 Oct 2007 was re-caught at Icklesham eight days later. This is very likely to have been a Continental bird coming to winter in Britain or move on further south to winter around the Mediterranean.

When a bird is ringed in the nest its origin is known precisely. A nestling **Whinchat** was ringed on 16 Jun 2007 at The Long Mynd (Shropshire) and caught at Icklesham on its first migration south on 20 Aug 2007, 65 days later.

A **Northern Wheatear** ringed on 7 Aug 2007 at Sandgerdi (Gullbringusysla), which is in the extreme west of Iceland, was caught at Icklesham on 3 Sep 2007. The 'Greenland' race breeds from Labrador and eastern arctic Canada to Greenland and Iceland. From how far north-west did this bird originate?

A **Sedge Warbler** ringed at Icklesham on 21 Jul 2006 was caught by a ringer at Laguna de la Nava (Fuentes de Nava, Spain) and had traveled 1064 km in just eight days. Another ringed at the same site on 11 Aug 2004 was caught by a ringer on 25 Jan 2007 at Parc National du Djoudj (Senegal), a regular wintering area for Irish Sedge Warblers and those from southwest Britain, those from eastern Britain travelling to further east in West Africa (Wernham *et al.* 2002).

There are two possible examples of **Eurasian Reed Warblers** changing breeding sites: an adult ringed at Charleston Reedbed (Litlington) by the Cuckmere RG on 27 Jul 2002 and re-caught at Lancing College on 20 May 2007, and one ringed on 13 Jul 2006 at Warnham LNR and re-caught on 8 Aug 2007 at Papercourt (Surrey).

Known by Steyning Ringing Group, with good reason, as 'Granny' **Garden Warbler**, one was ringed at Cissbury on 1 May 1999 and has been re-caught 13 times, eight times showing signs of being an actively breeding female. The most recent recapture was on 31 Jul 2007. This is 8 years and 91 days from first ringing. As it was an adult when first ringed it is actually over 9 years old. It beats the existing British record by 2 months (and that too was ringed as an adult (British Trust for Ornithology 2008)). It still has a long way to go to beat the European record of 14 years and 2 months (Staab and Fransson 2008), but is an excellent record. The Ringing Group has calculated that with an annual migration round trip of 10,300 km this 'Granny' must have covered 97,000 km to date. To put this into perspective, London to Sydney is 17,000 km and the circumference of the Earth at the Equator is 40,000 km. An example of rapid movement is shown by a Garden Warbler ringed at Hollesley Heath (Suffolk) on 5 Sep 2007 which was caught at Icklesham 2 days later.

A nice example of site faithfulness is shown by a **Common Chiffchaff** ringed at Litlington on 4 Oct 2003 which was re-caught at Williamthorpe (nr Holmewood, Derbyshire) on 8 Aug 2004, 6 Aug 2006 and 22 Jul 2007. An interesting wintering record is of another Common Chiffchaff ringed on 24 Sep 2006 at Icklesham and caught by a ringer on 7 Feb 2007 at Parc National du Djoudj (Senegal). Senegal is a major wintering area for Common Chiffchaffs from all over Britain and Ireland (Wernham *et al.* 2002)

Bearded Tits are well-known for their noisy autumn 'eruptions' followed by a return to their

breeding marshes in spring. It is not clear what the following bird was doing: it was ringed on 4 Nov 2006 at Icklesham, caught on 4 Oct 2007 at Nagden Marsh (Faversham) and then was back at Icklesham 5 days later. It could, perhaps, have been breeding in Kent and wintering in Sussex.

The **Great Tit** is one of those species normally regarded as largely sedentary with few reported movements of over 100 km (Wernham *et al.* 2002). One ringed at Landguard Point (Felixstowe, Suffolk) on 30 Mar 2006 was found breeding in June of that year at Cissbury Ring having traveled 168 km, and so is exceptional.

A **Jay** ringed at Aldmondington on 3 Nov 2006 was killed near Colchester (Essex) on 16 Dec 2006, a distance of 175 km to the northeast. Jays, like most corvids, are highly sedentary and there are only three more distant recoveries within Britain and Ireland. It is possible that this Jay was a migrant as small numbers of Continental Jays are known to occur in this country, although no foreign-ringed bird has yet been recovered here (Wernham *et al.* 2002).

Two long-distance movements by **Goldfinches** have been reported. One ringed at East Grinstead on 21 Jan 2005 and re-caught there on 13 Dec 2005 was recovered, having hit a window, at Gortnagallon (Antrim, Northern Ireland) on 26 Apr 2007, 573 km away. The second was ringed on 28 Oct 2006 at Icklesham and on 22 Apr 2007 re-caught at Newburgh (Aberdeenshire), 734 km to the north.

A new longevity record for Britain and Ireland has been set by a **Lesser Redpoll** ringed at Icklesham on 20 Oct 1991 and reported, very belatedly, having been caught by a ringer on 15 Nov 1997 at Berzee (Belgium) 6 years and 26 days later. The European record for a Redpoll species is 10 years and 8 months but this is probably a Common, not Lesser, Redpoll (Staav and Fransson 2008)

A male **Siskin** ringed at Blackboys on 19 Mar 2006 was re-caught at Kildary (Highland, Scotland) on 12 Mar 2007 and had obviously not come south for that winter (note the comment on the paucity of wintering Siskins earlier).

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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The West Sussex Red Kite Study Area, 2004-2007

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Introduction

In 2004 an exciting opportunity presented itself to observe and study the first recorded breeding Red Kites *Milvus milvus* in Sussex since the early 1800s (Kalaher 2004). This beautiful, graceful raptor had a very tenuous hold on one small part of West Sussex but what were the future prospects and what was likely to happen over the next few years? At the end of that first successful breeding season there were a whole host of questions, which might only be answered with the passage of time. Would this pair of Red Kites stay in Sussex and continue to breed? Would the offspring stay in their natal area or would they disperse and seek pastures new? If they did wander away, would they return and eventually add to the breeding pool or would they locate the very substantial population in the Chilterns and decide to remain there? Would other Red Kites passing through the area find the resident pair and be enticed to stay, thus adding to the number of kites available for breeding? Many unanswered questions. The species accounts in the Sussex Bird Reports can provide a bare outline of the main events but hopefully the following text will provide a greater insight into what has been going on and begin to answer some of the questions posed at the beginning of this field study.

The study area is situated on downland in West Sussex and encompasses an area of approximately 70 square kilometres. It is an interesting mixture of arable land, permanent pasture and extensive tracts of woodland. This area has been the subject of intensive fieldwork over the past four years and this sustained effort has been amply rewarded. Much of the information gained would not have been possible without the use of radio transmitters. The radio-tagged kites can be detected relatively easily if they are present in the study area but they can also be monitored by other Red Kite groups in the south of England. The data collected has provided some fascinating insights into juvenile dispersal. A brief summary is provided for each tagged bird.

Finally, the topic of roosting behaviour is considered and discussed at some length, for the behaviour of these isolated kites has proved very interesting and somewhat surprising.

Methodology

Over the four-year period the study area was visited at least twice a month with more intensive fieldwork each spring, when an attempt was made to find all the paired kites. The aim on every field trip was to locate as many kites as possible and identify each one as an 'individual Red Kite' and not just 'a Red Kite'.

At first glance all Red Kites may look rather similar. However, with the aid of the available technology and a simple methodical approach to plumage detail it was usually possible to identify most of the kites as individual birds. Many of the kites seen in the study area were wing-tagged and thus the natal area and year of tagging could be ascertained. All tagged kites in southern England have a yellow tag on the left wing with a different colour on the right wing for each year, thus: yellow 2004, orange 2005, green 2006, and purple 2007. The Sussex-tagged kites have letters on both wing tags, thus: Z and Y 2004, B1, B2 and B3 2005, C and D 2006, and G 2007. Using a VHF radio receiver, all the recently-fitted radio-tagged kites could be readily identified.

An attempt was made to assess every Red Kite for maturity. Juvenile and second calendar year kites have a very distinctive plumage and with experience can be clearly identified, sometimes at considerable distance. In the early part of their third calendar year most Red Kites appear rather untidy or 'tatty' as they will usually be in a state of partial moult and the interesting mixture of adult and juvenile feathers can produce a rather odd plumage. However, by the autumn of their third calendar year they are usually indistinguishable from full adults.

All adults are very similar and the only way they can be distinguished is by attention to moulted feathers. A single missing feather or a slight gap in the flight feathers or tail is all that is required to distinguish two different adults. This close attention to detail is essential for many raptor field studies, especially in the breeding season. In early March, the resident pair of Red Kites has always been 'feather perfect' and if this were not so doubts would arise as to whether they were in good enough condition to attempt breeding.

Sussex radio-tagged Red Kites 2004-2007

Much of the fieldwork was focussed on trying to detect the radio-tagged kites, both within the study area and elsewhere in southern England. It was hoped that the transmitter batteries would last for 3-4 years as this would facilitate nest finding but unfortunately the signals became weaker after a couple of years and could not be detected at all much beyond two and a half years. None the less, a wealth of data was collected and this proved highly interesting.

Sussex Y (2004) yellow/yellow

Sussex Y left the study area in its first autumn and could not be located from late October until 23 Jan 2005, when it was back in Sussex. It was easily detected over the next couple of months but in March it was detected on some dates but not others. It was first detected in the Chilterns on 11 Apr 2005 and then on many occasions at Radnage throughout the summer. It moved back and forth between the Chilterns and Sussex throughout the remainder of 2005. After a failed breeding attempt in the study area in 2006 it returned to the Chilterns in mid-June, but was back in Sussex in October 2006. It over-wintered in the study area and roosted in the 2006 nesting wood or one of the copses close by. There was no radio signal from November 2006 onwards but it was present in the study area in December 2007, paired with a non-tagged adult. A yellow/yellow-tagged kite was seen foraging on many occasions during the summer of 2007 and probably did attempt breeding in 2007 having relocated several kilometres away from the 2006 nesting wood.

Sussex Z (2004) yellow/yellow

Sussex Z remained in the study area until the spring of 2005. The first record in the Chilterns was at Radnage in March 2005. Having visited the Chilterns it returned to Sussex in the same month. It was then recorded on numerous occasions in the Chilterns area until 19 Jul. There was no further contact anywhere until 12 Nov when it was once again detected in the Chilterns. In 2006 there was a visual sighting at a north Hampshire roost in February. This information was followed up and its presence confirmed. On 11 and 12 Mar it was back in the study area but after that there was no further definite contact in 2006. There was a yellow/yellow-tagged kite present in September 2006, which with hindsight was quite probably Sussex Z but with depleted batteries.

Loss of radio contact poses problems, as opportunities to identify the lettering on the tags do not occur very often. A yellow/yellow-tagged kite holding territory on 6 Apr 2007 was quite possibly Z but there was no means of confirming this. There was no evidence that this kite was paired.

Sussex B1 (2005) yellow/orange

Sussex B1 left the study area in September 2005 and was not recorded again until February 2006 when it was located in north Hampshire. It returned to Sussex in March 2006 and was

detected on and off until 17 Jun but there was no further contact for the rest of the year. In 2007 there was visual contact with a yellow/orange-tagged kite, which was probably B1 (but with no signal), on 21 Mar, 7 Jul, 23 Oct and 3 Nov but on 16 Dec there was a confirmed visual sighting. It has never been detected in the Chilterns.

Sussex B2 (2005) yellow/orange

Sussex B2 dispersed within a few weeks of fledging but returned to the study area two months later in October 2005. It over-wintered in Sussex and was last recorded on 23 May 2006. There was visual contact at one of the Welsh feeding stations (Nant-Yr-Arian) on 28 Jun. Thereafter it was not recorded anywhere for more than eight months but it was back in Sussex on 16 Mar 2007, in the company of B3.

Having observed B2 mating with B3, it was confirmed that B2 was a female. This pair chose a beech (*Fagus* sp.) as the nesting tree and on 26 Apr B2 was seen carrying wool into the nesting tree, presumably to line and complete the nest. Unfortunately, by 5 May this pair of kites were out foraging and the nesting attempt had clearly been abandoned. B2 was present until 7 June but was not detected again until 25 Sep 2007 after which it remained in the study area for the rest of the year. It was clearly paired with B3 and a further breeding attempt in 2008 seems likely.

Sussex B3 (2005) yellow/orange

Sussex B3 dispersed in July or August 2005 and was not detected anywhere for several months until 7 Jan 2006 when it was present in the Chilterns. There was further contact in the Chilterns on 15 Feb but it was back in the study area on the 25th. It was seen and detected in the study area throughout March but by late April had returned to the Chilterns and was recorded there on several dates in the following month. It was detected in the study area on 17 Jun but was back in the Chilterns on the 19th and 20th. There was no further contact anywhere until 23 Sep when it was recorded in east Wiltshire. In October it was detected in the Chilterns on the 20th and 21st. On 14 Dec it was located at the principal roost in north Hampshire.

There were no further records until 16 Mar 2007 when it was back in the study area and accompanied by B2. Having observed mating with B2 it was apparent that B3 was a male and clearly paired with B2. It seems likely that another breeding attempt will be made in 2008.

Sussex C (2006) yellow/green

There was no difficulty in detecting Sussex C in the study area throughout 2006 and the early part of 2007 with a last recorded date of 31 Mar. It was recorded just once in the Chilterns on 7 Apr 2007 but has not been recorded anywhere since.

Sussex D (2006) yellow/green

The comments made about Sussex C apply to Sussex D. For many months they were very close siblings, spending a great deal of time in each other's company. There was no evidence of any dispersal from the study area in 2006 and in the early part of the following year until 3 Mar 2007. Sussex D could not be located in the study area from 16 Mar onwards but it was detected on the Berkshire Downs and in the Chilterns on seven dates in April. It was back in the study area on 11 Aug and also on 7 and 23 Oct, 23 and 29 Nov, and finally 16 Dec.

Sussex G (2007) yellow/purple

Sussex G was easily detected in the study area until 23 Oct but on 17 Nov it was present on the Berkshire Downs and was recorded in the main north Hampshire roost on 1 Dec 2007.

Juvenile dispersal 2004-2007

The principal justification for radio-tagging a juvenile Red Kite is to monitor its movements

and in this respect the exercise has been very rewarding and worthwhile. As an aid to nest-finding it has proved to be less successful as the transmitter batteries generally fail before the kites reach sexual maturity.

The following comments can be made after analysing the data gathered:

1. All recorded Sussex juvenile kites so far have dispersed from their natal area.
2. Experience suggests that more than 50% do so within 3-4 months of fledging (with the remainder dispersing the following spring).
3. On leaving the study area, the Sussex kites tend not to return for several months and six months is not unusual. The one exception so far was Sussex Z, which made the return trip to the Chilterns twice in 10 days in March of its second calendar year.
4. To date, all the young kites have been present in the study area in the March of their second calendar year, either having returned or not yet dispersed.
5. Sussex kites show a strong fidelity to their natal area but also have a strong urge to move away, generally for months at a time.
6. Several of the Sussex kites have been detected on the Berkshire Downs, and in the Chilterns, north Hampshire and east Wiltshire, but interestingly some of the kites have never been detected in any of those areas, so where did they go to?
7. The main north Hampshire roost appears to be particularly attractive to young Sussex kites.
8. The most distant report so far was at one of the Welsh feeding stations (Nant-Yr-Arian), where Sussex B2 was sighted.
9. Some of the kites disappeared for months at a time and we have no idea where they went.

The field study 2004-2007

The numbers of Red Kites seen in the study area for the four years from 2004 to 2007 are summarised in Table 1. It is apparent that there has been a marked increase over the four-year period with annual totals of 15-18 in 2004, 22 in 2005, 30 in 2006 and 48 in 2007.

Although the overall numbers have increased considerably there has not been much of an increase in the number of breeding pairs. This has been slightly disappointing but it may be about to change, as it was apparent in December 2007 that there were three full-adult pairs holding territory in the study area.

There was always the hope and expectation that the offspring of the original breeding pair would be largely faithful to their natal area and this has proved to be the case. Sussex-tagged birds were regularly seen and made up quite a high proportion of the monthly total.

There has been quite a large number of other tagged Red Kites and that has provided a good deal of interest. Very few of the visiting tagged kites seemed to stay very long in the area and it was unusual to see the same bird on consecutive field trips. The two exceptions were white 62/orange East Midlands 2005 and blue R/purple Black Isle 2007, which both stayed in the area for approximately three months.

There has been a relative paucity of adults visiting the area. This is not surprising as most adult kites in the Chilterns will be paired and remain in the Chilterns all year round. Some of the adult Red Kites seen in the spring are likely to be continental birds which are travelling back from overwintering in the Iberian Peninsula and which then 'overshoot' the English Channel on the return journey back to their breeding grounds in mainland Europe. To date there has been only one adult kite in the spring that has stayed (the untagged adult paired with Sussex Y) and more usually the visiting adults seem to move on after just a day or so.

Table 1. Summary of the estimated numbers of Red Kites seen in the study area from 2004 to 2007 inclusive.

2004	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of pairs	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sussex tagged kites	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	1	1
Other tagged kites	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other adult kites	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1-2
Total juv/2nd-year kites	0	0	1	1	0	2	2	2	2	2	1	6
Not determined	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Approx. monthly total	0	0	5	4	2	4	4	4	4	4	3	9-10
2005												
No. of pairs	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sussex tagged kites	2	2	2	0	0	0	5	0	1	1	1	1
Other tagged kites	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other adult kites	1	0	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	1	2
Total juv/2nd-year kites	2	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Not determined	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Approx. monthly total	6	5	10	2	2	2	9	2	3	8	4	5
2006												
No. of pairs	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sussex tagged kites	1	2	5	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3
Other tagged kites	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2
Other adult kites	3	1	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
Total juv/2nd-year kites	1	3	5	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	6	5
Not determined	2	1	1-2	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Approx. monthly total	6-8	5-6	11-13	6	8	8	5	4	7	9	13	10
2007												
No. of pairs	1	1	2	2-3	1-3	1-2	1	1	1	2	2	3
Sussex tagged kites	3-4	3-4	5-6	4	3	3	1	2	4	6	5	4
Other tagged kites	1-2	0-1	0-1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	3
Other adult kites	1	2	1	4-5	3	1	0	0	0	0	2	1
Total juv/2nd-year kites	6	5	5	5	3	0	1	2	2	7	9	5
Not determined	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Approx. monthly total	12	10	13	15-16	12	6	3	4	6	13	16	13

The numbers of kites seen in each month appear to be similar between October and May, with a reduction during the summer months and early autumn. However, other raptor research is carried out during the summer months with a concomitant reduction in Red Kite fieldwork and so these figures should be interpreted with some caution. To date, the maximum number of individual kites seen in one day was 13 on 3 Nov 2007.

The increase in numbers in April 2007 was partly due to an increase in observer activity, but also the undoubted effect that displaying kites have in attracting other kites that are wandering through the general area. A 'modified' diary entry for 6 Apr 2007 illustrates this point: 'Sussex B3 was very active with lots of exaggerated wing flaps every time another kite came close by.

B2 was also very much in evidence but not engaging in territorial behaviour. Four different non-tagged adult kites were identified. The first was 'feather perfect', the second had a single primary feather missing in the right wing, the third had two adjacent primary feathers missing and the fourth two 'separated' gaps in the right primaries. There were also two tagged kites (yellow/green), one of which was 'feather perfect' whilst the other had a single feather missing in the right wing. Sussex C was also seen. To the east there was a yellow/yellow-tagged bird, very actively displaying and chasing off any kite that came close by. At one point Sussex B3 flew in its direction but there was a 'stand-off' approximately 150 metres apart with both kites engaged in repeated exaggerated wing flaps. After a few minutes of this behaviour Sussex B3 returned to its mate. There was no evidence that the yellow/yellow-tagged kite was paired?.

Roosting activity

Red Kites are well known to be highly sociable during daylight hours and to form large roosts at night. The behaviour of the kites within the Sussex area has proven to be very interesting but at times rather confusing to the fieldworkers involved in this study.

The regular breeding pair have never shown any inclination to share their nesting wood with any other kites. Whenever another kite came within a few hundred metres of the nesting wood, the intruding bird was chased away.

In 2004, there was an expectation that the numbers of Red Kites would gradually increase over the years and that during the winter months a single communal roost would form. The numbers have certainly increased year-on-year but the roosting activity has not by and large followed the expected pattern.

By August 2004, Sussex Y and Sussex Z were independent of their parents and by October (if not before) were no longer welcome to roost together with their parents in the nesting wood. Sussex Y left the natal area in October 2004. Sussex Z settled in a copse 4-5 km away from the nesting wood and was faithful to the same roost until the following March, when it began its excursions to the Chilterns.

In the modern era, the first recorded roost in Sussex was at the copse adopted by Sussex Z. On 23 Jan 2005 there was one of those unforgettable occasions when the observers watched four Red Kites and a single Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* wheeling around at dusk, before finally settling down in a clump of conifers. On 5 Feb 2005 there were probably seven different kites in the study area. The resident pair roosted in their nesting wood, Sussex Y, Sussex Z and another kite roosted together but the other two kites did not join either of these two known roosts, presumably either forming a third roost together or roosting separately.

In 2006, the highlight of the early spring was Sussex Y and Sussex Z reappearing in the study area and roosting with Sussex B1, B2 and B3 on 11 Mar in a different copse. In late autumn there were eight kites present in the area (in addition to the breeding pair) and they mostly roosted together in yet another complex of copses, favouring one locality one day and another locality the next. The maximum numbers recorded were on 6, 16 and 23 Dec when there were eight kites into roost, which consisted of Sussex Y, an untagged adult (presumably the mate of Sussex Y), Sussex C and D, white 62/orange East Midlands, and three non-tagged birds.

On 13 Jan 2007 there was the first ever double-figure count with ten birds into roost, including all the birds mentioned above but with four untagged birds and a yellow/yellow-tagged kite which was most probably Sussex Z but with no transmitter signal.

In the second half of 2007 there was no evidence of a single communal roost. On 3 Nov there were at least 13 different kites seen during the day but no suggestion of communal roosting.

In summary, the following points can be made from these observations:

1. To date, at least 13 different copses in the study area have been used as roosts.
2. The regular breeding pair have always roosted in their nesting wood and have never

shown any inclination to share their nesting wood with any other kites at any time of the year.

3. The number of different kites seen during the day was very rarely seen in a single night roost except in December 2006 and January 2007.
4. The kites in the study area were not averse to roosting by themselves but more usually they seemed to roost in twos and threes.
5. In December 2007 there were three known pairs and at dusk they remained isolated with no other kites joining them. The inference was that visitors were made unwelcome and driven away.
6. The expectation that all the 'local' kites would join each other as a social group within a single winter roost has generally not materialised.

Discussion

After four years of intensive study many of the questions posed in 2004 can now be partially answered. The 2004 breeding pair of Red Kites remained in the same nesting wood and continued to be very successful, raising a total of eight young between 2004 and 2007. An expected mortality rate of approximately 25-30% for the first calendar year did not occur, with all the offspring surviving their first winter. It seems that this pair of Red Kites were highly successful at providing their young with a healthy start to the post-independent period. The relative lack of competition for food within the Sussex study area may have contributed to these successful outcomes.

The inter-specific behaviour of the resident breeding pair has been interesting to observe. In the first season there were numerous fierce squabbles with all the neighbouring Common Buzzards and Carrion Crows *Corvus corone*. Since then an accommodation seems to have been reached and the physical attacks have become far less common. A pair of Common Buzzards (or its successors) that have nested in the centre of the wood for 14-15 years relocated approximately 400 metres away from their previous nest to the very edge of the copse. It would seem that the constant attacks by the Red Kites in 2004 encouraged the buzzards to move away from their preferred nesting location. In effect this pair of kites have established themselves as the dominant force in the immediate vicinity of the nesting wood.

The intra-specific behaviour of the resident pair has also been very interesting and rather surprising. They have been completely intolerant of any other Red Kites and have been prepared to defend a much larger territory than is usually the case with this species. The male invariably chased away any other kite that came within a few hundred metres of its copse. On one memorable occasion it flew approximately 1 km from the nesting wood, spiralled up to over 600 m, and proceeded to chase off another kite. Sometimes the male seemed content to move the intruder bird a few hundred metres but at times it was observed chasing and harassing another kite for 3 km or more, putting in 20 mins of effort to achieve this.

The question of whether the offspring would remain faithful to their natal area has largely been answered. The use of radio transmitters provided a wealth of interesting data and a considerable insight into the dispersal behaviour of juvenile kites. All the radio-tagged kites dispersed at some point in their first calendar year but all of them periodically returned to the study area. At the time of writing, Sussex C is the one exception to this statement but if alive will most probably return in the spring of 2008.

Some of the kites travelled between Sussex and the Chilterns on a regular basis and some stayed away from Sussex for many months at a time with the Berkshire Downs, the Chilterns and north Hampshire the regular destinations. Some of the kites were away from the study area for prolonged spells and we have no idea where they went.

Elsewhere in the UK most Red Kites will breed fairly close to where they themselves were fledged, with just a few moving completely away and joining other distant re-introduced

populations. However, since the West Sussex pair is a very isolated pair there was always the possibility that Sussex-fledged juveniles would disperse, discover the large Chilterns population and decide to stay there. The cumulative data confirms that natal fidelity is very strong and so far all the radio-tagged kites have been present in the study area in the spring of their second calendar year. Revisiting the natal area in the spring needs to continue if these kites are to add to the breeding pool. Some Red Kites are sexually mature and attempt breeding in their second calendar year but the majority delay breeding until their third or fourth calendar year. So far as we are aware only Sussex Y has made a serious attempt at breeding, with a nest failure in 2006 and a probable breeding success in 2007. The lack of visiting adults to the study area may prove a hindrance to the pairing process and encourage sibling pairing, as with Sussex B2 and B3.

The roosting behaviour of the Red Kites in the study area has been fascinating and has given a few surprises. At the beginning of the study it seemed likely that most, if not all of the Red Kites in the area would form a communal roost, especially in the winter months. There was always a good possibility that the regular breeding pair would remain in their nesting wood but it was thought likely that the other kites in the area would seek each other out late in the afternoon and then roost together. Such gatherings leading to a communal roost did occur in December 2006 and January 2007 but to date it has been the exception rather than the rule. Red Kites are very sociable and as the numbers increase it is likely that communal roosting will become more evident.

Red Kites as a breeding species have a very tenuous hold in West Sussex. The numbers of kites have increased year-on-year but most of the visitors were young birds with very few full adults recorded. Comparing the sightings from one field trip to the next, there was no evidence that any of the visiting adults remained in the study area for more than a few days. It seems, therefore, that for the time being any increase in the number of breeding pairs is heavily dependent on the continued success of the 2004 breeding pair and the natal fidelity of its offspring. So far only the mate of Sussex Y has been 'recruited' to the study area.

Conclusion

On 9 Mar 2004 two Red Kites were seen late one afternoon and one of the birds was carrying a stick (Kalahar 2004). It was the beginning of a fascinating journey and much has been achieved. It seems likely that a majority of the Sussex-tagged kites will go on to breed in or around the study area. The numbers of Red Kites seen in the study area increase year-on-year but it is the breeding stock that will determine whether or not this natural re-colonisation is a success. In December 2007 there were three pairs on territory and so the prospects appear good.

The next phase to this study will hopefully involve satellite telemetry, which should help to fill some of those tantalising gaps in our knowledge regarding juvenile dispersal.

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Fluctuations in the numbers of auks recorded off the Sussex coast

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Introduction

Since the publication in 1996 of *Birds of Sussex* (James 1996a) there have been significant changes in almost every aspect of the occurrence of auks off the coast of Sussex. Both the annual totals recorded and the peak day counts increased rapidly before a dramatic drop in 2007. There was also a shift in the time of year when peak movement was recorded. In addition, there was a major change in the relative abundance of the two species involved, namely Common Guillemot *Uria aalge* (hereafter simply ‘Guillemot’) and Razorbill *Alca torda*.

Neither Guillemots nor Razorbills have bred in Sussex for over a century (see footnote at the end of this paper) so the auks which are recorded in Sussex are all from breeding colonies elsewhere and are either wintering in our area, moving between their breeding colonies and their wintering grounds or returning to their breeding colonies. James (1996b, 1996c) described the status of the Guillemot in Sussex as a fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant and that of the Razorbill as a scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. These descriptions matched the results of long-term studies by Skov *et al.* (1995) who did not record any significant concentrations of auks anywhere in the English Channel with densities of Guillemots in winter generally less than 1.0 per square kilometre and less than 0.1 per square kilometre for Razorbills. Even with such low densities it can be estimated that the winter populations of Guillemots and Razorbills in the English Channel at that time were in the order of 22,000 and 6000 respectively, although it should be noted that 40% of the Razorbills recorded were off the French coast.

Increases and decreases

The annual totals of auks recorded in Sussex increased rapidly after 1999 with 53,147 in 2000 and a peak of 109,484 in 2003. Numbers then fluctuated between 21,897 and 62,243 before slumping to just 4712 in 2007 despite an increase of 12% in the number of hours spent sea-watching at the main sites compared to 2006. The annual totals are shown in Figure 1, and relate to the total numbers of auks reported. Due to undoubted duplication as birds moved up and down the Channel the figures should not be taken as an assessment of the number of birds involved.

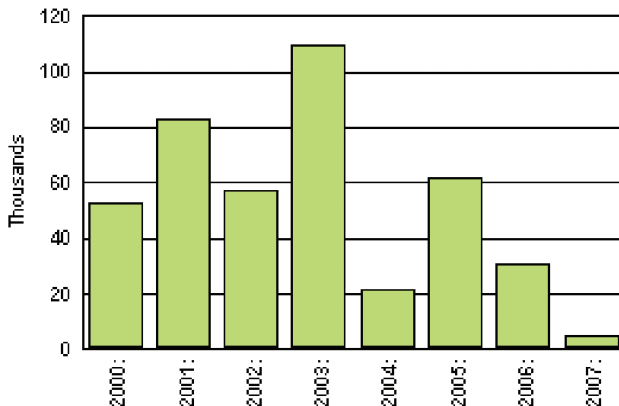


Figure 1. Annual totals of auks recorded in Sussex in the years 2000 to 2007.

Newnham (1986) and James (1996b) both cited only a single peak day count of more than one thousand auks which involved 1200 flying east at Pett on 9 Jan 1982. Despite the fact that 14,400 auks moved west past Dungeness on 3 Feb 1996 (D. Davenport *pers. comm.*) it was not until January 1997 that the peak day count in Sussex once again exceeded 1000. There was then a sequence of ten years when the peak exceeded 1000 during which time the peaks were over 10,000 in 2003, 2004 and 2005. The sequence was broken in 2007 when the peak count was just 346 which is similar to the pre-1997 figures. The peak day counts, which are the highest counts of auks flying in a single direction only, are shown in Figure 2.

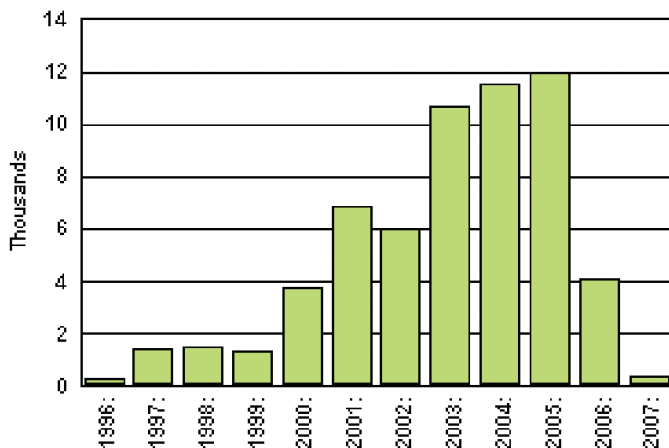


Figure 2. Peak day counts of auks recorded in Sussex in the years 1996 to 2007.

Wintering areas of Guillemots and Razorbills

Guillemots are described by Cramp (1985) as being ‘dispersive’ with first-year birds moving long distances southwards in winter. Razorbills are also described as dispersive although young birds make long displacements of a migratory nature. Analysis of the recovery of ringed birds by Mead (1974), Harris and Swann (2002) and Merne (2002) showed that the movements of both Guillemots and Razorbills are complex. Their analyses also showed that not only were there differences in the movements of the two species but also differences between birds from the various breeding areas. The main autumn and winter movements of Guillemots and Razorbills are shown in Figure 3, based on Mead (1974).

There are many similarities between the two maps but also some significant differences:

- In the case of both Guillemots and Razorbills birds from the Irish Sea colonies move further south than those from the northern colonies.
- Although some adult Guillemots from the Irish Sea colonies do move as far south as the Bay of Biscay, adults from the northern colonies rarely leave the North Sea. In contrast, adult Razorbills from both the Irish Sea and the northern colonies move south to the Bay of Biscay and beyond. This means, of course, that there is a northerly movement of adult Razorbills in the spring as they return to their breeding sites.

Movements of auks off the Sussex Coast

The movements of auks along the coast of Sussex can be divided into two broad categories: dispersal movements from breeding colonies to wintering areas (and *vice versa*), and feeding movements. Dispersal involves auks moving from their breeding areas to their wintering areas

in late autumn and early winter with the reverse movement occurring in late winter and early spring. Newnham (1986) showed that the major movements at Worthing during the period 1978-1986 took place in the late autumn rather than the spring and involved mainly birds travelling eastwards. He also noted that eastbound birds in spring were recorded more in the east of the county than in the west and that no large winter movements had been recorded at Selsey. The situation remained largely the same during the second half of the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s. In the second half of the 1990s there was a noticeable increase in the number of auks moving east past Seaford, not only in the spring but also in the early winter.

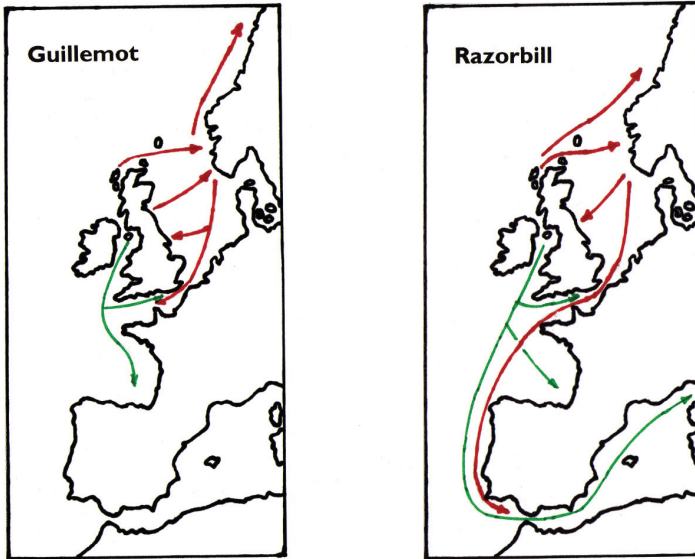


Figure 3. Autumn and winter movements of first-year and immature Guillemots (left) and first-year, immature and adult Razorbills (right). Movements from Irish Sea colonies are shown in green and those from northern colonies in red. Both maps based on Mead (1974).

Feeding movements involve parties of auks moving back and forth along the coast in search of shoals of fish. This often results in birds all moving in one direction early in the day and then later in the opposite direction. A good example of this was at Worthing on 28 Dec 2001 when 3400 flew west followed by 1022 moving east. On other occasions feeding movements may be in a certain direction one day and the opposite direction the following day. Large feeding movements typically occur between late December and mid-February. However, adult auks return to their breeding colonies in January or February so it is sometimes difficult to decide if a particular movement involves birds moving back to their colonies or feeding movements. This is also the period in which most of the peak day counts have occurred (Table 1).

Given the vast numbers of auks recorded between 2000 and 2006 it is perhaps surprising that there have not been more records of large rafts of feeding birds. This suggests that many of the birds recorded moving along the Channel were either feeding further offshore or outside our area. Some of the rafts that have been recorded involved spectacular numbers. The record count was of 3000 Razorbills off Brighton Marina on 8 and 17 Feb 2005. Equally remarkable was a record of 2500 Razorbills off Shoreham, a further 1000 Razorbills off Goring plus 1000 auks off Worthing, all on the 27 Dec 2001.

Table 1. Total numbers of auks recorded, peak day counts, peak 'on sea' counts, percentages specifically identified and ratios of Guillemots to Razorbills 2000-2007. The peak day counts and peak 'on sea' counts relate to auk sp. unless specified.

	Total number of auks	Peak day counts	Peak 'on sea' counts	% identified to species	Ratio of Guillemots to Razorbills
2000	53,147	3795 E, Brighton Marina 2 Feb	100 Razorbill Brighton Marina 5 Feb.	7.6	2.1:1
2001	83,440	6900 W, Brighton Marina 28 Dec	2500 Razorbill Shoreham, 1000 Razorbill Goring, 1000 Worthing Beach 27 Dec	9.0	1:3.5
2002	57,574	6000 W, Selsey Bill 23 Jan	1000 Brighton Marina 2 Jan 2000 Worthing Beach 20 Jan	1.8	1:1
2003	109,484	10,680 W, Worthing Beach 13 Jan	2000 Brighton Marina 13 Feb	8.6	1:11.5
2004	21,897	11,500 E, Brighton Marina 26 Jan	15 Seaford 31 Mar	8.8	1:1.6
2005	62,243	12,000 W, Brighton Marina 9 Feb	3000 Razorbill Brighton Marina 8 & 17 Feb	15.1	1:6.1
2006	30,676	4100 E, Telscombe Cliffs 22 Feb	30 Shoreham 4 Feb	2.8	1:2.8
2007	4712	346 E, Selsey Bill 10 Nov	16 Newhaven 26 Nov	22.0	1:3.3

Species involved

The only two species of auks recorded during the various movements have been Guillemots and Razorbills. Auks in flight are notoriously difficult to identify unless seen at fairly close range. As a result, on average only 11% of auks recorded in any year are specifically identified. The last complete survey of seabird populations in Britain and Ireland was carried out in 1998-2002 (Mitchell *et al.* 2004). This showed that the breeding populations of Guillemots and Razorbills were 1.56 million and 216 thousand, respectively (*i.e.* 88% Guillemots, or a ratio of Guillemots to Razorbills of 7.2:1). Shrubbs (1979) and Newnham (1986) both stated that 64% of the auks occurring in Sussex were Guillemots while James (1996b) showed that this had risen to 90% by 1993. In 2000, 68% of records related to Guillemots but since then the relative abundance of the two species has reversed. In the years 2001 to 2007, on average 82% of all auks specifically identified were Razorbills. This change in the abundance of Razorbills has resulted in an alteration of their status in Sussex as shown in the Sussex Bird Report from a 'scarce winter visitor and passage migrant' up to 2001, a 'fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant' in 2002 and a 'common winter visitor and fairly common passage migrant' in 2004.

Reasons for the changes

It is difficult to determine the reasons for either the increases in the numbers of auks recorded off the Sussex coast in the period 2000-2006 or for the dramatic drop in numbers in 2007. In all probability it was a combination of factors that led to the changes rather than a single cause.

During the fourteen-year period prior to 2000 the breeding population of Guillemots in the British Isles rose by 2.2% per annum (Harris and Wanless 2004) and that of Razorbills by 1.7% per annum (Merne and Mitchell 2004). There is no evidence of any major increases in the numbers of breeding birds of either species which would account for the increased numbers recorded off the Sussex coast in the period 2000-2006. It has been suggested (J. Newnham *pers. comm.*) that the increases might be related to the changes in fishing regulations in the 1980s and 1990s and this may certainly be an important factor. Those changes included reduced fishing quotas to conserve

fish stocks and an increase in the mesh size of fishing nets. This latter measure was intended to conserve young Cod *Gadus morhua*, Mackerel *Scomber scombrus*, Herring *Clupea harengus* and other 'food fish'. It also helped to conserve small fish species such as Sandeel *Ammodytidae* sp. and Sprat *Sprattus sprattus*, which in turn was beneficial to Guillemots and Razorbills. This was not necessarily good news for auks as both Mackerel and Herring prey on Sandeels and Sprats, both favoured food items of Guillemots and Razorbills. It has been estimated that predatory fish take up to ten times more Sandeels than are taken by seabirds (Furness 1990, 1992, 2002).

A major requirement in both breeding and wintering areas for any bird species is an adequate food supply. It would appear that both the Channel generally and the Sussex coast in particular fulfilled this requirement in the period 2000-2006. Evidence of this was particularly strong in 2001 when large shoals of Herring, Mackerel and Sprats were reported coming inshore along the Sussex coast. This gives rise to two possibilities for the record numbers of auks recorded that year. Adult Razorbills from the northern colonies winter in the southern North Sea where they feed mainly on young Herring. If such prey was in short supply then Razorbills may have been forced to move further south in search of food. It is also possible that immature Guillemots and Razorbills found adequate food supplies in the Channel and did not need to move further south to their normal wintering grounds.

There are even more possible explanations for the dramatic drop in the number of auks recorded off the Sussex coast in 2007, but again a combination of factors is most likely. The availability of food was probably a key factor. Although there is no firm evidence, it is possible that there were fewer shoals of Herring and Sprats in the Channel and that auks looked elsewhere for food. It is also known that there were widespread breeding failures on the northern coast of Scotland and in the Orkneys in 2007 which were blamed on the lack of Sandeels (*British Birds* 100:510-511). Even relatively small scale reductions in food availability can adversely affect the breeding performance of seabirds (Furness 1992). Not all colonies were affected in 2007 and on the Farne Islands the number of Guillemots rose by a further 2% in 2007 (M. Hodgson *pers. comm.*). Both natural and man-induced disasters can have devastating effects on auk numbers. Stormy weather in spring and summer can increase the risk of eggs and chicks being washed off the breeding ledges and also result in poorer-quality prey being brought for the chicks (Huebeck 1999). Auks are also prone to wrecks during winter storms which mainly affect juveniles which have difficulty in finding food in such conditions (Harris and Wanless 2004). Some man-induced disasters involving large-scale oil spills have received high-profile media coverage. Oil spills from the *Erika* (Brittany, France, December 1999) and the *Prestige* (Galicia, Spain, November 2002) are prime examples with the former spill killing possibly 120,000 Guillemots. In both cases the locations of the oil spills were such that a high percentage of the auks killed were immatures, so the breeding numbers would not have been affected until five or six years after the event when the birds would have reached breeding age. More recently, in January 2007, oil from the *Napoli* resulted in an estimated 10,000 seabirds dying off the coast of Devon (*BTO News* 272: 18-19). In this instance it was mainly adult auks that were affected (immatures would have been much further south at that time of year) and this may have had an immediate impact on breeding numbers. Many, perhaps even more, auks die each year due to chronic oiling resulting from minor, often unreported, spillages and the illegal discharges of fuel oil residues from shipping (Harris and Wanless 2004; Ratcliffe 2004).

It is extremely doubtful that a single cause has resulted in the wide fluctuations in the numbers of Guillemots and Razorbills recorded off the Sussex coast. It is much more likely to have been a combination of factors which is not yet fully understood.

Footnote

In the past ten years there have been three occasions when it has been suspected that Guillemots may have bred in Sussex. The most recent record involved two adults with a tiny youngster on the sea off Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 30 Jun 2007. There must be a strong possibility that

the birds bred locally but this has not been proved conclusively, so the last confirmed breeding of Guillemots in Sussex remains as being at Beachy Head in 1904 (Walpole-Bond 1938).

Acknowledgements

Thanks must go to all the observers at the various sea-watching locations for submitting their records and to the correspondents who provided me with additional information. Particular thanks must go to John Newnham who collated the Sussex records. Thanks are also due to Paul James and John Newnham for their valuable comments on the original draft of this paper.

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Changes in breeding bird populations on a Sussex estate, 1982 to 2006

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Introduction

In 1982, members of the Sussex Ornithological Society (SOS) carried out a breeding bird survey of the Plumpton College estate, the results appearing as a paper in the *Sussex Bird Report* for that year (Prater 1982). In 2006, the college once again approached the Society for help with a repeat of the survey. This paper presents the results of this, comparing them to the original data and commenting on the findings, especially with reference to changes in habitats and land management on the estate.

Plumpton College is a land-based college near Lewes in East Sussex, situated at the foot of the South Downs. It includes a large working estate (Wales Farm), which extends across the Low Weald, up the scarp slope of the Downs and beyond, an area of 400 ha in total. The geology ranges from chalk downland at 210 metres above sea level to the heavy gault clay of the Weald at 40 metres above sea level. This makes the estate suitable for a variety of farming enterprises, and allows for a wide range of habitats, including unimproved chalk downland and semi-natural woodlands, arable land, well-established hedgerows and verges, and improved and semi-improved pasture (Figure 1).

Between 1982 and 1983, extensive surveys were carried out of a range of taxa including birds, mammals, flowering plants and invertebrate groups, with the aim of producing an Ecological Survey, from which conservation policies could be developed which would inform farm management plans. In the intervening years, this report has provided invaluable information on the farm's habitats and wildlife for many thousands of students across a range of disciplines, in particular for courses on ecology and conservation and countryside management. In 2005, work began to update this survey, where possible replicating the methodology in order to be able to compare directly the biodiversity of the college estate in 1982 and in 2006. Since the original survey, the college's course prospectus has diversified considerably; agriculture now forms a much smaller part, and new courses embracing countryside management, leisure interests and rural agri-businesses now predominate.

The survey presented a valuable opportunity to compare the changes in populations of farmland, woodland and downland bird species (several of which underwent severe declines during the period) in a defined area in which changes in land use and agriculture had also been documented in detail, and where there had also been a level of environmental awareness in the management of the estate.

Survey methods

In 1982, the survey method used was the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Common Birds Census (CBC). Since 1962 the CBC had been the main national survey monitoring the UK populations of common birds, drawing attention to a number of serious declines among common and widespread species and providing the evidence by which they have become high priorities for

conservation effort. The CBC methodology involved plotting the location of each bird on a map with codes signifying a wide range of interactions and breeding evidence over six to eight visits, to produce a territory map for each species. For the 1982 survey the estate was divided into eight separate plots which were covered by six individuals and two teams of two, and each plot was visited seven or eight times during the survey period.

The CBC method is no longer used for large-scale population monitoring in the UK, having been superseded in 2000 by the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), a transect method involving only two visits per year.

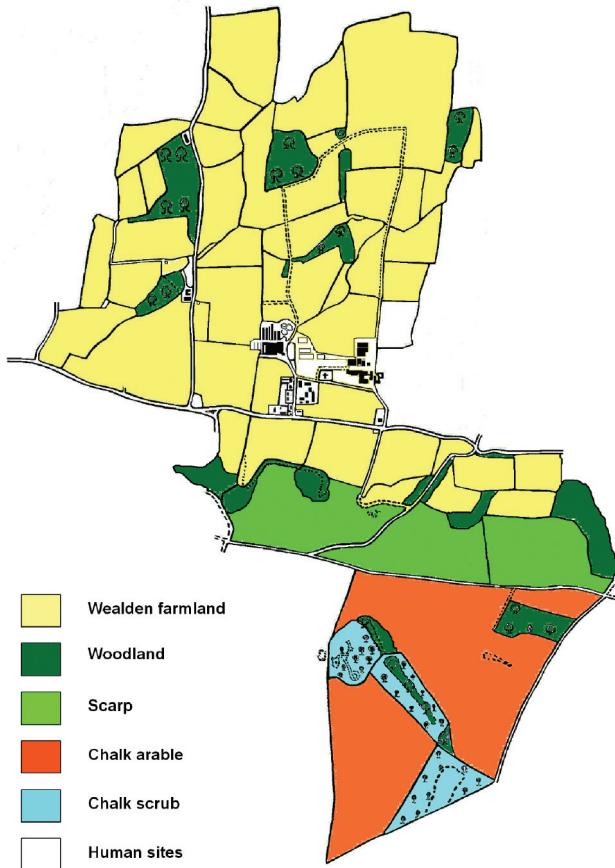


Figure 1. Map of the Plumpton College estate, showing the different habitats present.

In 2006, with only four volunteers available, the estate was divided into six sections, each covered by one volunteer (with one volunteer covering three sections). Four visits were made during the breeding season, spending as long as required and plotting the locations of all singing males and any other evidence of breeding found, as in 1982. In most cases the codes used were restricted to singing males or birds present, along the lines of the BBS, rather than the full range of evidence codes used in the CBC. BTO research (Freeman *et al.* 2003) showed that statistical

comparability between CBC and BBS was high, with no significant difference in trends between the two surveys for 66 of 73 species routinely monitored over a seven-year period in Southern Britain. CBC mapping remains, however, the most accurate practical way to determine the numbers and distribution of breeding birds within a relatively small study site, and is widely used by researchers for studies where a high level of detail is required. The volunteers were again long-standing SOS members with wide bird surveying experience; two of them had in fact taken part in the 1982 survey and were therefore able to offer advice which helped to ensure that the two surveys were comparable.

Analysis

The analysis of the results from both the 1982 and 2006 surveys was carried out according to standard CBC methodology. The field data was plotted onto territory maps for each species, and the data collated into tables.

The percentage change for each species between 1982 and 2006 (Table 1) was compared with the national BTO change figures from the CBC/BBS in England for the 25-year period 1980-2005 (BTO 2007), this being the closest match available to the period under study. The percentage change for many of the less abundant species inevitably suffers from small sample sizes.

The BTO categorises species according to vulnerability as Red, Amber or Green (BTO 2007). These categories are given in the final column in the Table 1, highlighting the results for those species most at risk.

Table 1. Numbers of breeding pairs of birds on the Plumpton College estate in 1982 and in 2006 (continued on next page).

Species	1982	2006	% change	National % change	Status
Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	3	3	0	+63	
Red-legged Partridge <i>Alectoris rufa</i>	2	2	0	-32	
Grey Partridge <i>Perdix perdix</i>	2	1	-50	-82	Red
Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter nisus</i>	2	2	0	+87	
Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	2	1	-50	-21	Amber
Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	1	5	+400	+11	
Stock Dove <i>Columba oenas</i>	7	4	-43	+18	Amber
Woodpigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>	23	47	+104	+84	
Collared Dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	11	6	-45	+58	
Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	5	4	-20	-80	Red
Common Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>	4	1	-75	-59	Amber
Barn Owl <i>Tyto alba</i>	0	1	+100	*	Amber
Little Owl <i>Athene noctua</i>	1	3	+200	-5	
Tawny Owl <i>Strix aluco</i>	2	2	0	-6	
Green Woodpecker <i>Picus viridis</i>	5	9	+80	+96	Amber
G. S. Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopus major</i>	6	12	+100	+96	
Sky Lark <i>Alauda arvensis</i>	16	10	-37.5	-59	Red
Barn Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	6	11	+83.3	+8	Amber
House Martin <i>Delichon urbica</i>	92	78	-15.2	-57	Amber
Meadow Pipit <i>Anthus pratensis</i>	3	2	-33	-44	Amber
Pied Wagtail <i>Motacilla alba</i>	3	4	+33	0	
Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	38	82	+115.8	+42	

Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>	34	52	+52.9	-16	Amber
Robin <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	43	101	+134.8	+51	
Common Nightingale <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	1	8	+700	-13	Amber
Blackbird <i>Turdus merula</i>	109	89	-18.3	-4	
Song Thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	31	32	+3.2	-21	Red
Mistle Thrush <i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	11	7	-36.4	-45	Amber
Blackcap <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	18	67	+272	+113	
Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i>	6	4	-33.3	+9	
Lesser Whitethroat <i>Sylvia curruca</i>	3	9	+166.6	-29	
Whitethroat <i>Sylvia communis</i>	30	36	+20	+29	
Common Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	12	40	+233	+118	
Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	62	12	-80	-57	Amber
Goldcrest <i>Regulus regulus</i>	8	6	-25	-16	Amber
Spotted Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i>	4	0	-100	-81	Red
Long-tailed Tit <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	7	9	+28.6	+60	
Blue Tit <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	38	64	+68.4	+21	
Great Tit <i>Parus major</i>	33	40	+21.2	+50	
Coal Tit <i>Periparus ater</i>	3	2	-33.3	-4	
Willow Tit <i>Poecile montanus</i>	2	0	-100	-81	Red
Marsh Tit <i>Poecile palustris</i>	5	4	-20	-36	Red
Nuthatch <i>Sitta europea</i>	2	6	+200	+91	
Treecreeper <i>Certhia familiaris</i>	2	2	0	-1	
Jay <i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	6	8	+33.3	-5	
Magpie <i>Pica pica</i>	20	10	-50	+37	
Jackdaw <i>Corvus monedula</i>	3	19	+533	+58	
Carrion Crow <i>Corvus corone</i>	7	10	+42.8	+48	
Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	54	41	-24	-79	Red
Tree Sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i>	2	0	-100	-94	Red
Chaffinch <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	89	110	+23.6	+29	
Greenfinch <i>Carduelis chloris</i>	10	26	+160	+51	
Goldfinch <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	5	10	+100	+13	
Linnet <i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	14	16	+14.3	-44	
Bullfinch <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	4	9	+125	-34	Red
Yellowhammer <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	51	21	-59	-56	Red
Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	4	0	-100	-9	Red
Corn Bunting <i>Emberiza calandra</i>	13	4	-70	-84	Red

*no comparable data available

Those species which underwent increases or decreases of at least 50% in numbers of breeding pairs from 1982 to 2006 are also tabulated in Table 2.

The 1982 results specified the numbers of pairs in each of six habitat types found on the estate. These numbers were calculated again for 2006, and are presented as percentages of the total in Table 3. The areas of the different habitats present on the estate were not judged to have changed significantly in the intervening years.

Table 2. *Species showing significant increases or decreases in population on the Plumpton College estate between 1982 and 2006.*

Significant increases (pairs of breeding birds)			Significant decreases (pairs of breeding birds)		
	1982	2006		1982	2006
Robin	43	101	Yellowhammer	51	21
Wren	38	82	Willow Warbler	62	12
Blackcap	18	67	Magpie	20	10
Woodpigeon	23	47	Corn Bunting	13	4
Chiffchaff	12	40	Reed Bunting	4	0
Greenfinch	10	26	Spotted Flycatcher	4	0
Jackdaw	3	19	Willow Tit	2	0
Greater Spotted Woodpecker	6	12	Tree Sparrow	2	0
Goldfinch	5	10			
Bullfinch	4	9			
Lesser Whitethroat	3	9			
Nightingale	1	8			

Table 3. *Percentages of the total number of breeding birds on the Plumpton College estate by habitat, 1982 and 2006.*

	Chalk arable		Chalk scrub		Scarp		Woodland		Buildings		Weald farmland	
	1982	2006	1982	2006	1982	2006	1982	2006	1982	2006	1982	2006
Woodpigeon			17	4	43	17	30	57	4	2	4	20
Collared Dove									82	100	18	0
Skylark	25	40			25	30					50	30
House Martin									100	100		
Wren			8	10	29	24	24	35	8	7	32	23
Duncock			15	12	26	26	0	22	21	10	38	34
Robin			12	7	21	28	35	30	12	12	21	24
Blackbird			18	7	17	21	15	21	16	24	35	27
Song Thrush			16	0	13	6	16	50	29	12	26	31
Mistle Thrush					36	0	27	57	18	29	9	14
Blackcap			22	10	22	10	44	51	0	6	11	22
Whitethroat	0	6	3	25	56	22					40	47
Chiffchaff			0	10	0	15	58	57			42	17
Willow Warbler			27	25	48	75	6	0			18	0
Blue Tit			8	17	16	16	29	30	8	9	39	28
Great Tit			12	7	30	27	21	32	6	0	30	32
Magpie			15	0	35	30	35	20	0	20	15	30
Starling			2	0					98	100	2	0
Chaffinch			18	12	27	17	15	29	11	9	29	33
Greenfinch					10	0	10	0	50	81	30	19
Linnet	0	6	0	19	29	25			29	31	42	19
Yellowhammer			20	19	45	24	20	0			33	57
Corn Bunting	69	100			23	0						

Results

In 1982, a total of 990 territories were mapped and 58 species recorded, with a further three non-breeding species found (Grey Heron, Lapwing and Tree Pipit). Notable absentees included Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and Rook, though the former does occur in some years and a large rookery lies immediately adjacent to Wales Farm. House Sparrow was not recorded because of the difficulty in identifying nest sites within the main building complex, but at least 50 and possibly 100 pairs were estimated to be breeding on the estate. Pheasant was also not recorded due to captive-bred release on the estate.

In 2006, a total of 1171 territories were mapped, an increase of 15% from 1982. The number of species had declined, however, from 58 to 55, with the loss of Reed Bunting, Spotted Flycatcher, Willow Tit and Tree Sparrow, all of which suffered national declines over the period (RSPB 2007). Barn Owl was the only additional species recorded, though Buzzard was seen overhead, and is known to be breeding just outside the estate. As in 1982, House Sparrow and Pheasant were ignored.

House Martin nests on the estate have been counted regularly over the years. Numbers declined dramatically from 1971 to 1982 (from 240 to 92 nests), but there has been a much more gentle decline since then (A. Hutson *pers. comm.*), and they did significantly better here than nationally, as did Barn Swallow. The presence of horse stables here may have benefited both species. Hutson also notes that the Virginia creeper on the front of the main building excludes House Martins from some nesting sites, as do intolerant students from some nests above their bedroom windows, but that in the parish as a whole House Martin numbers seem to be increasing slowly.

Rookeries in the area have also been regularly counted over the years. Although there were no nests on the estate in either 1982 or 2006, the large rookery at Plumpton Place (just outside the boundary) consisted of 52 nests in 2006 (it was not counted in 1982).

Discussion

The results of one-off surveys of a relatively small area so far apart should be treated with caution, especially for species with only a small sample size. However, the figures reflect very clearly the dramatic changes in the populations of some farmland and woodland species since 1982, some of the reasons for which are accepted to originate in agricultural intensification and changes in woodland management. The results are discussed below in relation to the known changes which have taken place in habitats on the estate.

Woodland

The Wealden part of the estate is typical of the Low Weald with scattered small woods and copses. Prater noted that relatively low bird densities were recorded in these in 1982, probably because of high bird mortality during the severe weather in the previous winter. However, many of the copses were derelict and very dense, but woods which had been partly managed in the period prior to the survey recorded densities above the average (e.g. Plumpton Wood, Pig Wood). Fewest birds were recorded in the copses where very dense whips or degenerate coppice predominated (e.g. Oak Wood, Brocks Wood), a situation which has also affected woodland on a national level.

Since the mid-1990s, a coppice with standards regime has been restored in Brocks Wood and rides cut, resulting in much opening up of the woodland. The other copses have also been managed, either as game covert or as part of conservation and countryside management courses, with hazel products from them being used for hedgelaying, and this has continued to improve these areas for birds.

Seven species (Woodpigeon, Great Tit, Chaffinch, Wren, Dunnock, Song Thrush and Mistle Thrush) showed significant increases in their proportions in the woodland on the estate, and a

further four (Jay, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Nuthatch and Nightingale) also increased but with smaller sample sizes. Treecreeper, Marsh Tit and Bullfinch, which were not tabulated for habitat, also did well. Surprisingly, however, the proportions of Blackcap, Robin and Chiffchaff changed little in woodland despite their large overall gains. Canopy closure and poor shrub layers have been implicated in the declines of Nightingale, Dunnock, Song Thrush and Bullfinch, whereas the increases in Blackcap and Chiffchaff have been related in part to climate change, and Wren and Robin are prone to weather-related annual fluctuations (BTO 2007). No predominantly woodland species showed any significant decrease in the proportion present.

Wealden farmland

In 1982 Prater noted that the Wealden farmland, including the hedgerows, streams and small copses, was surprisingly poor for birds. The main agricultural use was winter wheat, cattle grazing and silage. Many of the hedgerows had been severely trimmed; replaced by wire fences or neglected, growing spindly with little basal cover. Farming practices have changed since then, but the staple land use of wheat, silage and pasture remains the same, though with the addition of oilseed rape, maize and setaside.

The introduction of the Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) in 1987 and then the Countryside Stewardship Schemes (CSS) in 1991 have facilitated the introduction of a number of practices to benefit wildlife, including the implementation of 6-metre field margins in arable fields, the sowing of game cover crops such as quinoa in some margins and woodland edges, the creation of a beetle bank in the arable area on the Downs, and the removal from cultivation of an archaeological site which has been sown with a wildflower mix. All of these are recommended practices for increasing the insect, bird and mammal populations. In the 1990s, hedgerows were left to grow longer and more recently new hedges have been planted, though most of these are still too thin to support much bird life. Fertiliser and pesticide usage peaked in the 1980s, and in the 1990s many products were withdrawn from the market. In the 2000s usage reduced considerably owing to new products and technology (Beard 2006). Current usage is more targeted, more threshold- and disease level-related, and more regulated to meet environmental targets for water quality. The area farmed organically has increased as shown in Figure 2.

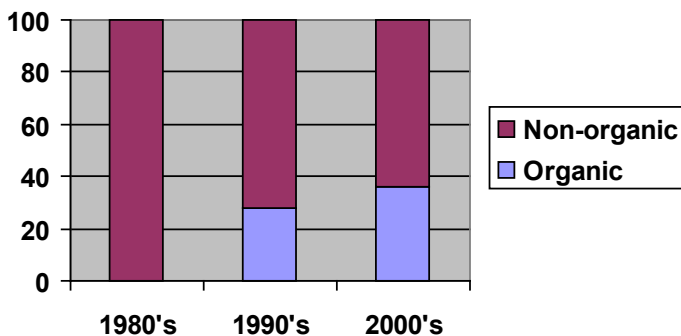


Figure 2. *Wales Farm: percentage of land under organic and non-organic enterprises.*

Possibly less beneficial has been the move towards winter- rather than spring-sown crops, the disadvantages to bird populations being the lack of winter stubble for food, and earlier harvesting which destroys nests. However, game cover crops support up to 40 Yellowhammers and several Reed Buntings in the winter.

The type of crop grown is largely influenced by the dairy herd and soil type. The change to Holstein and increase in herd size has led to an increase in maize production; a decrease in hay production, and an increase in silage production (Beard 2006). However, the maize crop is not ploughed in until March or April, leaving valuable late winter stubble.



Sky Lark (Ian Barnard)

Five species (Woodpigeon, Blackcap, Whitethroat, Magpie and Yellowhammer) showed good increases on the farmland on the estate (the latter despite a severe national decrease), with another four (Robin, Song Thrush, Mistle Thrush and Chaffinch) at less significant levels. However, a total of 10 species significantly reduced their proportions in this habitat. Prater noted that in fields used for silage production, Skylark may have been recorded as holding territories, but it was unlikely that breeding would be successful, and in 2006 the proportion of Skylarks in the lowland farmland on the estate had indeed decreased, and the same was true for Linnet.

Scarp slope

In 1982 Prater noted that the reduction in grazing intensity by rabbits following the spread of myxomatosis and the subsequent extensive scrub invasion had attracted high populations of many species such as Willow Warbler, Yellowhammer, Whitethroat and Chaffinch. At least 20 species appeared to have benefited from the increased structural diversity of the habitat. Provided that the balance of short turf, open and dense scrub was actively maintained, his report concluded that the scrub would continue to be of great value.

Since then, continuing sheep and rabbit grazing has maintained the scarp scrub in probably much the same condition as it was in 1982, though at the base of the slope there has been some succession from scrub to woodland. The estate takes part in the South Downs ESA scheme in partnership with the National Trust, with the objective of maintaining and improving botanical diversity by restricting the application of herbicide and fertilizer and reducing the stocking rate of sheep and cattle. Grazing is restricted until after flower seeds have set by rotation in the three main sections of scarp, and no stock is outwintered. This may benefit ground-nesting birds in terms of less disturbance, more invertebrate food, and a taller ground layer in the spring.

However, ten species decreased their proportions in this habitat (with three moving out altogether), and only four increased in it. Willow Warbler, the species with the sharpest decrease in the survey, appears to have retreated to this habitat, with Chiffchaff possibly benefiting from scrub developing into emergent woodland.

Chalk arable

Prater (1982) noted that this habitat was an 'ornithological desert' in the breeding season, due to the dominance of winter cereals, with only Corn Bunting regular. In 2006 the land use remained very similar, but species diversity seemed to have improved. Corn Bunting had declined further but had moved out of lowland farmland and was now only found on the chalk, and Whitethroat and Linnet were gained as breeders. Skylark also showed an increase in the proportion in this habitat, at the expense of lowland farmland.

Comparison

A similar survey was carried out by Hodge (2005) at Jeskyn's Farm (Cobham, Kent) from May to July 2005 in a study commissioned by Forest Enterprise. The geographical proximity

and similarity in land use of this site warrant comparison with our results though the site is much smaller and numbers of birds holding territory cannot be directly compared. At Jeskyn's Farm, the most abundant breeding species were Blackbird and Woodpigeon followed by Wren, Robin, Chaffinch, Skylark and Whitethroat, all of which are abundant and widespread at Plumpton College, except for Skylark which seemed to be declining. Hodge recorded seven species on the red list of Birds of Conservation Concern at Jeskyn's Farm in 2005. These were Skylark, Song Thrush, Starling, House Sparrow, Linnet, Corn Bunting and Turtle Dove, all of these breeding at Plumpton College, where Bullfinch, Grey Partridge, Marsh Tit and Yellowhammer were also recorded, probably reflecting the larger area. Hodge considered this number of red-listed species to be an average total of such species for an area (150 ha) the size of Jeskyn's Farm.

Conclusions

Although few if any scientific conclusions can be reached in a survey of this type, there were clear pointers that continued woodland management on the estate was benefiting bird populations, and this is likely to continue. Birds on farmland fared less well, but the environmental initiatives and habitat improvements which are taking place are still perhaps too recent to have had significant effects on the populations yet. These initiatives are also set to continue and may help towards reversing the decline in breeding birds in this habitat.

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Sussex results from the Non-estuarine Coastal Waterbird Survey (NEWS) 2006-2007

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Introduction

Many wintering waterbirds across the UK are monitored annually by the national Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) (Austin *et al.* 2008). However, the majority of the WeBS counts are made on estuaries and inland waterbodies, with counts not being carried out along most of the coastline. Important populations of several species occur around the non-estuarine coastline of the UK, and these species are therefore not monitored annually by WeBS counts.

During the winter of 1984-1985 the Winter Shorebird Count was organised by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), and it was found that the non-estuarine coast of the UK held particularly important numbers of Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*, Sanderling *Calidris alba*, Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima* and Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*. A repeat survey, the Non-estuarine Coastal Waterbird Survey (NEWS), was carried out during the winter of 1997-1998, and this revealed declines in the numbers of Ringed Plover, Sanderling, Purple Sandpiper, Turnstone and Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*, as well as suggesting changes in the winter distributions of some of these species. The aim of the repeat NEWS during the winter of 2006-2007 was to update estimations of wader populations within the UK, and in particular to investigate whether populations of Purple Sandpiper and Turnstone have declined further, as suggested by anecdotal reports.

This paper presents the results of the NEWS counts carried out in Sussex during the winter of 2006-2007, and discusses some of these results in relation to WeBS counts made during the same period.

Methods

The basis of the survey was single counts of waterbirds on non-estuarine sections of the coast, made on any date in December 2006 or January 2007, but ideally as close as possible to mid-January to coincide with the annual International Waterbird Census (coordinated by Wetlands International). Counts were to be made at any time within a 7-hour period commencing 3.5 hours before low water and finishing 3.5 hours after low water.

The recording of waders on the intertidal habitat was the priority for the survey, but observers were encouraged to record other species of waterbirds (wildfowl, divers, grebes, cormorants, shags, herons and egrets) within each section of coast, including birds on the sea adjacent to the coast and on inland areas visible from the coast, as well as those birds using the intertidal shore. The numbers of birds using these three different habitats were to be recorded separately.

The sections of coast to be surveyed were based on a representative sample of count sections covered in past surveys. The selected count sections were prioritised, with a number of "key" sections constituting the minimum level of survey coverage required, and with other sections to be surveyed if sufficient observers were available.

Grid references were provided for the start and end points of each of the sections to be covered. These grid references specified precise locations indicated by observers taking part in the original Winter Shorebird Count in 1985, who were asked to base the limits of their count sections on

identifiable features such as rock outcrops and piers. As a consequence of this method of section definition, the actual lengths of the count sections varied.

Observers were requested to walk each count section in good weather conditions and ideally commencing on a falling tide, and wherever possible to walk well down the intertidal area to facilitate the counting of waterbirds feeding at the water's edge. All waders and other birds using the count section were to be counted, and instructions were given to minimise the possibilities of double counting due to movements of birds. Waterbirds on the sea directly offshore from the count section were to be counted, as far offshore as the observer was confident in identifying them. Waterbirds using inland areas were to be counted if they were within 100 m of the high-water mark. Observers were also asked to record the state of the tide during each survey, and also the level of accuracy of the counts (dependent on disturbance, weather conditions and the proportion of each count section that it was possible to access).

Results and discussion

A total of 45 count sections were surveyed along the Sussex coast, which included all 20 of the "key" sections. A large proportion of these sections were consecutive, and the sections varied in length between 1 and 7 km, with an average length of 3.9 km. Most of the sections were 3-5 km in length, and the total length of coast surveyed was 175 km (nearly 100% of the entire non-estuarine coastline).

With the exception of five count sections in the extreme West of the county which were surveyed during the period 27-30 Dec 2006, all of the count sections were surveyed during the period 13-29 Jan 2007. Many observers reported low count accuracy, either because of disturbance on the beaches or because of restricted access to the beaches caused by unsafe cliffs.

The counts of intertidal waders for each count section are given in Table 1. Thirteen different species of wader were recorded.

The counts of other waterbirds for each count section are given in Table 2. These counts are of birds on the sea or using the intertidal area, and do not include birds inland. The counts for sixteen species are given here, these being the counts of all divers, grebes, shags, herons, ducks and geese that were observed on the sea or using the intertidal area. Counts of birds on inland areas are omitted here because of the incompleteness of the survey coverage and the lack of inland areas suitable for use by waterbirds.

Table 1. Numbers of intertidal waders counted in each NEWS section of the Sussex coast during the winter 2006-2007 (continued on next page).

	OC	RP	GP	GV	L.	KN	SS	PS	DN	BA	CU	RK	TT
Total	943	240	58	277	731	223	613	11	686	11	89	82	959
West Wittering	13						34						
East Wittering							1						
Bracklesham Bay	5												
Selsey Bill	1	2											
Selsey East Beach	39	2		9								9	46
Pagham Beach	60	40		10		200		1	40		10	20	100
Bognor													30
Felpham	6	50		5			60			1			

Elmer	12	81				3		1				26
Littlehampton	33	33		13		98					3	159
Rustington	44											66
Ferring	19	1		46		130		4			8	31
West Worthing	13			130		168		152				20
East Worthing						6						
Lancing											1	
Shoreham Beach							1					65
Southwick												20
Portslade												24
Brighton												
Black Rock	5											
Rottingdean	28											
Telscombe	18											
Peacehaven	6											
Newhaven												
Seaford												
Seaford Head	10									22	1	
Cuckmere Haven	4									2		
Birling Gap												
Beachy Head												
Eastbourne (W)	2									2		
Eastbourne (E)												
Sovereign Harbour												
Pevensey Bay (W)												6
Pevensey Bay (E)												44
Bexhill												26
Galley Hill	1	1		36			4	1				134
St Leonards	4											21
Hastings	1											
Hastings CP		4					3					82
Fairlight	9						2				2	44
Cliff End	1											
Pett Level beach	52		58	4	545			6		30	7	10
Winchelsea Beach	107			11		21	43		22	6		
Rye Hbr beach	104	22		48		23	2	439	4		16	
Camber beach	346	4		1			90		6		9	5

BTO two-letter codes: OC, Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*; RP, Ringed Plover; GP, Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*; GV, Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*; L., Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*; KN, Knot *Calidris canutus*; SS, Sanderling; PS, Purple Sandpiper; DN, Dunlin *Calidris alpina*; BA, Bar-tailed Godwit; CU, Curlew *Numenius arquata*; RK, Redshank *Tringa totanus*; TT, Turnstone

Table 2. Numbers of waterbirds other than intertidal waders counted in each NEWS section of the Sussex coast during the winter 2006-2007. These counts are of birds on the sea or using the intertidal area, and do not include birds inland (continued on next page).

	RH	BV	ND	GG	SZ	CA	ET	H.	SU	SP	E.	CX	VS	RM	BG	T.
Total	110	1	2	147	9	203	13	7	7	2	1	469	3	128	63	2
West Wittering																
East Wittering																
Bracklesham Bay																
Selsey Bill						11								3		
Selsey East Beach				2		10								2		
Pagham Beach						4	1	1							4	
Bognor				2		2								13		
Felpham				1		13								10		
Elmer						5								5		
Littlehampton						2										
Rustington						11										
Ferring														3		
West Worthing				8		11								54		
East Worthing						23								32		
Lancing																
Shoreham Beach																
Southwick						2										
Portslade						1								3		
Brighton				2		14										
Black Rock						1										
Rottingdean						8	4									
Telscombe						36	4	1								
Peacehaven						23	2									
Newhaven						14										
Seaford																
Seaford Head								1								
Cuckmere Haven						2		2								
Birling Gap							2									
Beachy Head																
Eastbourne (West)						2		1							1	
Eastbourne (East)																
Sovereign Harbour																
Pevensy Bay (W)																
Pevensy Bay (E)	1															
Bexhill	6		1	47								210				

Galley Hill	75	1		26	7	1				2	1	54	3		48	
St Leonards	6			44	1							131			7	
Hastings	12			5								74				
Hastings CP	2		1	4		2										
Fairlight	6			2	1											
Cliff End	2			4												
Pett Level beach																
Winchelsea Beach															3	2
Rye Hbr beach																
Camber beach						4				6						

BTO two-letter codes: RH, Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*; BV, Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*; ND, Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*; GG, Great-crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*; SZ, Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*; CA, Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*; ET, Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*; H., Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*; SU, Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*; SP, Scaup *Aythya marila*; E., Eider *Somateria mollissima*; CX, Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*; VS, Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*; RM, Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*; BG, Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*; T., Teal *Anas crecca*

There are no comparable past counts of the entire coast because neither the original 1984-1985 national Winter Shorebird Count nor the 1997-1998 NEWS were undertaken fully in Sussex. For many of these species the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) provides some comparisons and at several locations the high-tide roost counts of the WeBS will include the same birds as counted in NEWS. The WeBS, however, is not a consistent and reliable survey for birds feeding offshore. For a selection of the most significant species counted in NEWS a more detailed presentation of the results is shown below.

Common Scoter

This was the most numerous of the species recorded offshore and Table 2 and Figure 1 show a significant flock of Common Scoter recorded between Bexhill and Hastings with none recorded elsewhere. Shrubbs (1979) and Wilson (1996a) noted that the only regular wintering location for this species in Sussex was at Rye Bay and both authors noted that the numbers had declined from the 2000-5000 noted during the 1940s and 1950s. Prior to this survey the only larger winter counts since the 1980s were 1700 and 1300 in Rye Bay during December 1995. The flock recorded during NEWS increased to 533 in February and subsequently 640 have been recorded in Rye Bay in December 2007.

Red-breasted Merganser

In stark contrast this species occurs predominantly in West Sussex with all records, as shown in Table 2 and Figure 2, falling between Selsey Bill and Portslade. This is typical of the historical distribution of wintering Red-breasted Mergansers in Sussex (Wilson 1996b). Wilson (1996b) also noted that the wintering population was increasing, a feature which is continuing and reliably supported by WeBS data (Newnham *et al.* 2006). The total of 128 recorded in NEWS, however, is perhaps lower than expected as the wintering flock between Worthing and Ferring alone has been steadily increasing with regular winter counts exceeding 150 and recently rising to in excess of 300 birds (Newnham 2005).

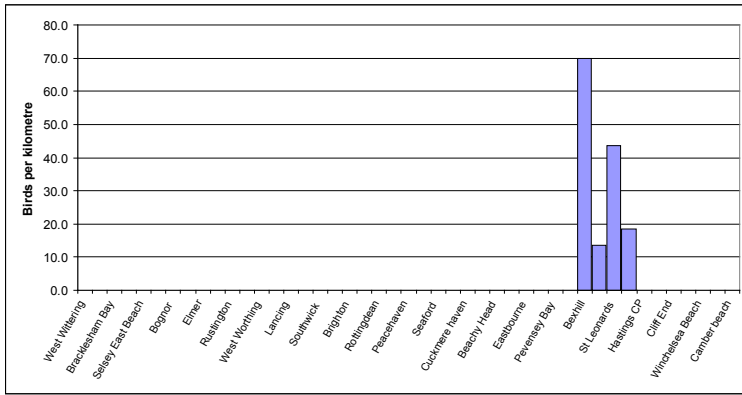


Figure 1. The numbers of Common Scoter counted in each NEWS section of the Sussex coast during the winter 2006-2007.

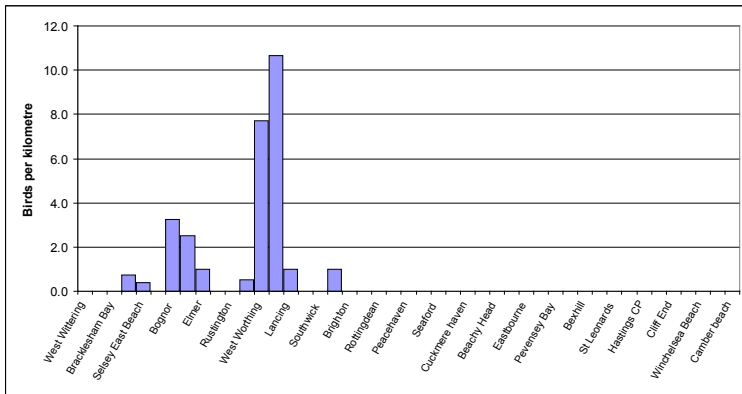


Figure 2. The numbers of Red-breasted Merganser counted in each NEWS section of the Sussex coast during the winter 2006-2007.

Red-throated Diver

Table 2 and Figure 3 show that Red-throated Divers, like Common Scoters, were only recorded offshore between Bexhill and Rye Bay. Although large numbers of Red-throated Divers have been recorded flying past watch points in both West and East Sussex, large wintering flocks have mainly been recorded in Rye Bay (Wilson 1996c). There has been no change in recent years as all flocks greater than 100 birds seen offshore during the past decade have occurred between Bexhill and Rye Bay.

Great Crested Grebe

Mason (1996) stated that numbers of this species on the coast rarely exceed 50 at any one locality and Table 2 suggests this was found in NEWS although those seen off the Bexhill to Hastings area were likely to be part of the same group. The same author cited four records exceeding 200 birds all of which were from East Sussex and three from Rye Bay. Subsequent

to Mason's writing there have been many records of coastal counts exceeding 200 birds in eight different winters with most from Rye Bay but also from Bexhill, Brighton and the Worthing/Ferring area. At the last mentioned site Newnham (2005) reported a marked increase over the past decade which is not reflected in the results from NEWS. Figure 4, however, shows the importance of the East Sussex inshore waters for this species.

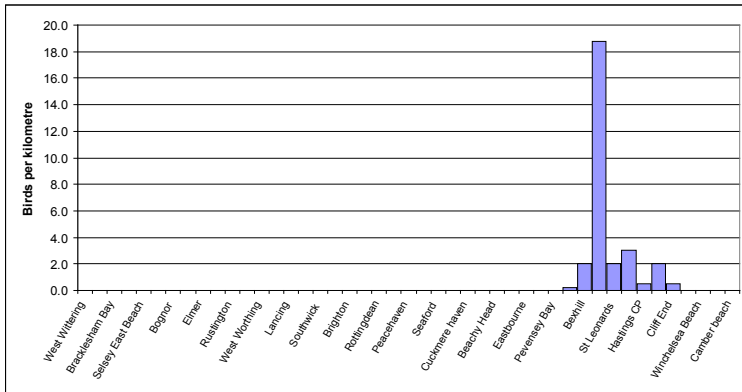


Figure 3. The numbers of Red-throated Diver counted in each NEWS section of the Sussex coast during the winter 2006-2007.

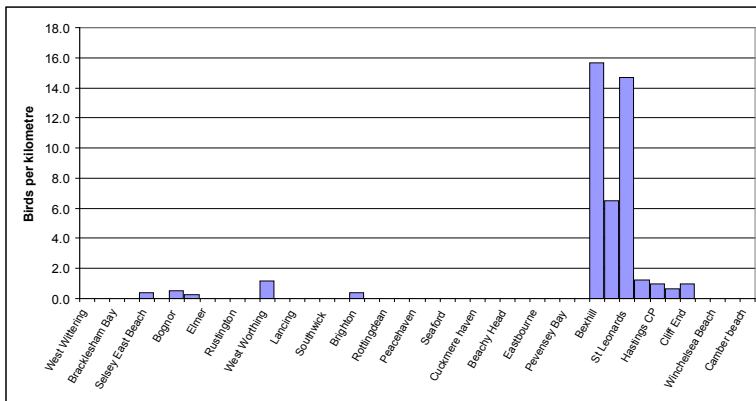


Figure 4. The numbers of Great Crested Grebe counted in each NEWS section of the Sussex coast during the winter 2006-2007.

Oystercatcher

This species, the second most recorded species during this survey, prefers sandy substrates, thus the highest numbers (nearly 60%) were recorded between Winchelsea Beach and Camber. Table 1 and Fig 5 show that smaller numbers were located on the shores west of Worthing and on the rocky shoreline but the species was absent from two sectors of the coast: Worthing to Brighton, and Eastbourne to Bexhill. The mid-winter counts for NEWS coincide with the highest numbers occurring in the county (Yates 1996a, Newnham *et al.* 2007) but the total of 943 falls

just short of the minimum WeBS count for the month of January 1995-2004 of 1002. Most of the larger counts shown in Table 1 are at locations which will be covered by the monthly high-tide WeBS but it is likely that between 100 and 150 birds may be missed by this survey.

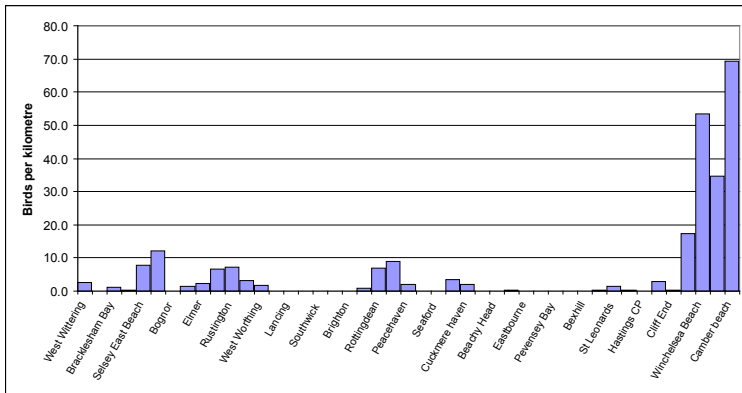


Figure 5. The numbers of *Oystercatcher* counted in each NEWS section of the Sussex coast during the winter 2006-2007.

Ringed Plover

Yates (1996b) noted that during the winter most Ringed Plovers are found in Chichester and Pagham Hbrs but small numbers are recorded along the whole coast. Table 1 and Figure 6 show that during this survey the species was absent from a long portion of coastline between West Worthing and Bexhill and that most (85% of the total) were found in a 23-kilometre section of shore between Pagham and Littlehampton. Newnham *et al.* (2007) demonstrated, from the WeBS data, a clear decline in the wintering population of this species since the early 1990s and showed a county total range of 185 to 802 (mean 417) for the January counts between 1995 and 2004. The total of 240 therefore falls within these figures and with no WeBS counts done at Elmer or Felpham (although the Climping area has been regularly counted) it is likely that perhaps half of the birds counted in NEWS would not be counted in WeBS.

Sanderling

This species, typically found on sandy shores, was described by Prater (1987) as the most confusing of the shore wading species in Sussex. He noted that numbers vary widely between months and sites and roosting flocks are frequently missed during the high-tide WeBS counts. This species is, therefore, more likely to be counted with greater accuracy by the low-tide counts of NEWS. The overall total of 630 compares well with the January WeBS counts which show a range between 43 and 628 birds with a mean of 214 (Newnham *et al.* 2007). The same authors and Nobbs (1996) showed that Sanderlings tend to reach a peak in the later winter and demonstrated a decline, based on the perhaps unreliable WeBS counts, in the numbers of Sanderlings wintering in Sussex. Table 1 and Figure 7 show that 459 (73% of the total) were found on the 33 kilometres of shore between Felpham and West Worthing, parts of which are not covered in the WeBS. The other significant area in the county was between Winchelsea Beach and Camber with none being recorded between Lancing and Pett.

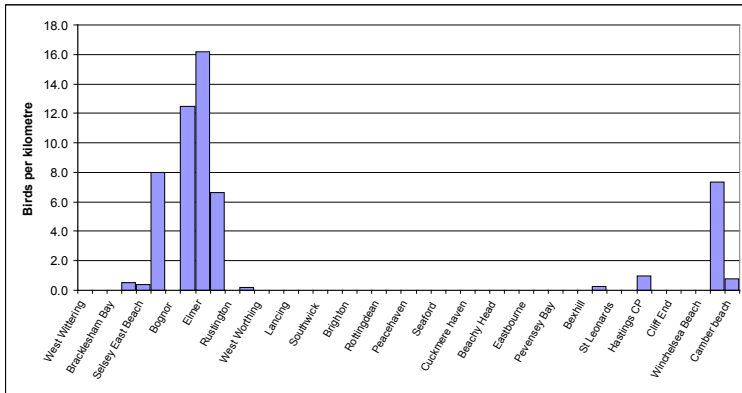


Figure 6. The numbers of Ringed Plover counted in each NEWS section of the Sussex coast during the winter 2006-2007.

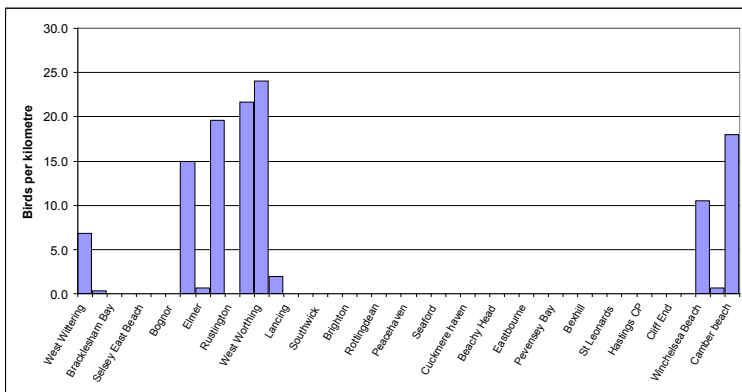


Figure 7. The numbers of Sanderling counted in each NEWS section of the Sussex coast during the winter 2006-2007.

Turnstone

This species, typical of rock-strewn shores, was the most frequently encountered in this survey and was one of the species the NEWS was specifically set up to monitor. Table 1 and Figure 8 show that the species was recorded from many coastal sites but, despite the presence of rocky pools, was surprisingly absent from the chalk-cliffed coastline between Brighton and Eastbourne. The total of 959 birds compares very favourably with the WeBS January counts for the winters 1994/95–2003/04 when a range between 272 and 724 birds was found with a mean of 468 (Newnham *et al.* 2007). The WeBS counts include large numbers of Turnstones which are regularly found in both Chichester and Pagham Hbrs and not therefore counted in the NEWS, and although other important coastal sites such as Glyn Gap and Climping are also counted in the WeBS, the figures suggest that a high number, possibly in excess of 500 birds, of the county's wintering population are missed in the regular WeBS.

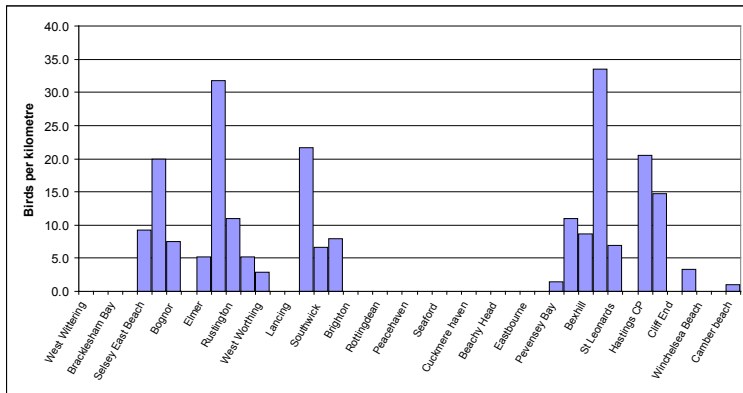


Figure 8. The numbers of Turnstone counted in each NEWS section of the Sussex coast during the winter 2006-2007.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are extended to the observers involved in this survey: Anne de Potier, Richard Cowser, Dr John Newnham, John Crix, Keith Noble, Adrian Thomas, Richard James, Bob Edgar, Ken Simpson, Alan Gibbard, Ian Standivan, Chris Bentley and Helen Crabtree. Dr Tony Cocks organised the survey and collated the results.

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The first record in the United Kingdom of a fertile mating between a wild female Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* and a hybrid male falcon of domestic origin

Phil J. Everitt and Jon Franklin

Sussex Peregrine Study: info@sussexperegrines.co.uk

Introduction

Sussex Peregrine Study (SPS) was established by two local falconers, Bart Atfield (1958-2004) and Jon Franklin, following the finding in 1990 of the first successful breeding pair of the post-pesticide recovery of Peregrine Falcons *Falco peregrinus* in Sussex. Phil Everitt, who has a particular interest in raptors, joined SPS after the death of Bart in April 2004. The re-colonisation of the county by Peregrine Falcons has been the focus of SPS research, and annual activities include locating and monitoring the breeding population and determining its productivity.

The main breeding habitat for Peregrine Falcons in Sussex is the 34 km of chalk, clay and sandstone sea cliffs which form part of the 176-km coastline, but some inland chalk pits, quarries and tall buildings are also used as nest sites.

Background

In 2005 a hybrid male falcon of domestic origin was found breeding at a coastal eyrie in Sussex with a wild female Peregrine Falcon. Although there is documented evidence of hybrids escaping and attempting to breed with wild birds in the USA, Germany and Sweden (Fox and Sherrod 2004) this was the first recorded case in the United Kingdom (UK) of a wild Peregrine Falcon breeding with an escaped hybrid.

Field observations during 2003 and 2004

In late March 2003, Bart Atfield first recorded the presence of a third falcon, interacting with the breeding pair at an ancestral coastal eyrie. He noted that it appeared to be an unusually pale immature female. As the breeding season progressed various observers saw the third falcon being fed by the resident pair of adults and it in turn was seen repeatedly feeding young alongside the adults. As a result of Bart's untimely death, the 2004 annual survey was not as comprehensive as in previous years but in the early spring there were sightings of three birds together again on the coastal territory. Later in June further limited observations found only two birds at the eyrie. They were the adult female from the previous two seasons and a bird which was described as 'a male with a pale grey back, fawn tip to its tail, a pale head with a fawn scalp and pale horizontal lines stretching back above each eye' (C. Broadbent *pers. comm.*). Four chicks fledged from this eyrie in 2004, and it is not known if the male parent was a Peregrine Falcon or a hybrid.

Field observations during 2005

The first visit to the coastal site in March 2005 found just two birds in residence, and it became clear that the adult male was not a pure Peregrine Falcon (Figure 1). The falcon's wings looked broad and its flight was unlike that of either a male or female Peregrine Falcon. It appeared to the observers to have elements of both Prairie Falcon *Falco mexicanus* and Gyrfalcon *Falco rusticolus*, and an immediate impression was that it was a hybrid, or more likely a 'tribrid', thought to be a cross between a Prairie Falcon/Gyrfalcon hybrid and a Peregrine Falcon.

Breeding domestic hybrids for falconry use has become a common practice all over the world. The development of efficient artificial insemination techniques has ensured falcons can

be produced economically and in sufficient numbers to supply the global demand for hunting falcons, thus reducing the demand for wild-taken raptors. This use of hybrids developed with the increasing popularity of falconry, and hybrids have become indispensable because of the removal of licences to harvest native Peregrine Falcons from the wild, both in the USA and the UK. Many types of hybrid are now bred in the UK, some of the most popular being crosses between Gyrfalcon x Peregrine Falcon and Peregrine Falcon x Saker.



Figure 1. *The hybrid male showing white forehead, pale supercilium and thin malar stripe.*

Using a digiscoping system, the breeding pair was observed and photographed and it was discovered that the male was wearing a brown closed ring (Figure 2) issued by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to identify certain species of raptor used for falconry.

The adult female had a British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) metal ring on her right leg and a green Darvic ring on her left leg, indicating that she was born in 1999, c.25 km away in the Brighton Peregrine Project nest box (G. Roberts *pers. comm.*). The pair was observed food-passing, and copulating twice in less than 15 minutes (Figure 3), demonstrating pair-bonding behaviour. Subsequent observations confirmed that eggs had been laid and incubation was taking place.

The immediate reaction to the discovery of the hybrid was to take preventive measures to guard against the introduction of non-indigenous genes into the Sussex population. Because of the possibility that pollution of the gene pool could occur, removal of the male bird and the eggs seemed the most appropriate strategy. English Nature (EN), the British government body



Figure 2. *The hybrid male showing the short tarsi and the brown DEFRA ring on the right tarsus.*



Figure 3. *The hybrid male and wild female Peregrine Falcon copulating.*

responsible for nature conservation and protection, were consulted and expressed concern about such a bird remaining in the wild population. They suggested that DEFRA should be asked to clarify the legal status of a free-living hybrid and the possibility of removing it from the wild and advised that BTO should also be approached about possible trapping methods.

Using methods agreed with DEFRA and the BTO, several attempts to catch the hybrid were made. Trapping attempts took place when the male was perching on the cliff and the female was in the eyrie, which minimised the chances of catching her. Initially the male showed some interest in the trap but was constantly wary. On what became the final attempt, the male showed no interest at all and the female then came out of the eyrie and was immediately trapped. She was examined and released unharmed. As a result of her easy capture it was agreed with EN and DEFRA that no further attempts to catch the hybrid male should be undertaken and after a week of discussion, authorisation was given to destroy the hybrid.

As the coastal site was on a public beach, a complex range of health and safety issues had to be addressed, so plans to destroy the hybrid were made in collaboration with Sussex Police. They appointed an appropriately qualified marksman and planned a police presence at the site for the operation; arrangements were also made for the removal of the eggs after the bird was destroyed. However, the initial date was leaked into the public domain, raising concerns for the safety of those involved and as a result the operation had to be rescheduled.

By the beginning of May, the female was seen carrying food into the eyrie, suggesting that the eggs had hatched. A further visit confirmed that there were at least two young (c.18 days old), so a new licence was issued to allow the chicks to be taken instead of the eggs. After the hybrid was shot, its body was retrieved and details of the closed ring were sent to DEFRA, who later revealed that it was registered as a third-species backcross or 'tribrid', namely a Gyrfalcon/Saker x Peregrine Falcon, and that it had been lost whilst at 'hack' when it was immature.

'Hacking is a controlled method of raising young hawks as wild with the aim of benefitting them physically and behaviourally when used for falconry' (Walker 1999). The young hawks are reared to approximately four weeks old and then are released from a man-made eyrie or 'hack house', to gain some experience of the wild. The falconer supplies their food and they return to the hack house to roost. They are then trapped and taken back when they begin to kill for themselves. This is a critical period because once they start to hunt successfully the need to return to the hack house is reduced and occasionally birds are lost.

Shortly after the destruction of the hybrid the coastal site was visited again to confirm that the chicks were in the eyrie and the plan to collect them was instigated. During high winds and rain on the night before the young were due to be taken, several cliff falls occurred along the coast. The nest area was one of those affected and the nest was destroyed with nothing remaining except tonnes of rubble at the base of the cliff. The chicks were destroyed during the cliff fall and the female has not been seen since. Within nine days of the hybrid being shot and only five days after the cliff fall, a pair of Peregrine Falcons was discovered displaying at the same coastal site, indicating they had taken over the territory. They were photographed but neither had a Darvic ring, confirming they were a new pair.

Discussion

Recognition of the male as a hybrid was made possible because of its very distinctive morphology, but a number of extremely able and highly regarded birdwatchers who were regularly seeing the bird misidentified it as a Lanner *Falco biarmicus*. It is suspected that many birdwatchers in the UK are unaware that hybrid raptors are bred for falconry and they may understandably therefore try to identify such a bird within single-species boundaries. If the hybrid had appeared morphologically similar to a Peregrine Falcon, then the problem of its identification as a hybrid would have been exacerbated, and identification may not even have been possible.

A bird seen wearing a DEFRA registration ring is immediately identifiable as being of domestic

origin, although its status, i.e. pure bred bird or hybrid, indigenous or non-indigenous, cannot be easily established.

In 2005 there were twenty pairs of Peregrine Falcons occupying territories in Sussex, and they fledged a total of 42 young. The hybridising pair produced at least three chicks which, had they survived, would have constituted c.7% of the 2005 production for Sussex. Any young produced by this hybrid breeding with a wild Peregrine Falcon would be (Gyrfalcon/Saker x Peregrine Falcon) x Peregrine Falcon, and be carrying on average 12.5% Gyrfalcon genes, 12.5% Saker genes and 75% Peregrine Falcon genes.

Peregrine Falcons exhibit philopatry and are known to return to their natal areas to breed (Mearns and Newton 1984; Newton and Mearns 1988). From the Darvic ringing that has already been undertaken in Sussex it is known that some birds reared in the county subsequently return to breed. By the end of 2004, a total of 27 chicks had been ringed at just two Sussex sites (G. Roberts *pers. comm.*). By 2005, four individuals from the 20 resident pairs had been ringed at these two sites, i.e. 10% of the adult breeding population. Surviving hybrid young may well have ended up attempting to breed in the county. If they were successful the continuing dissemination of non-indigenous genes may have meant that the Sussex population could have become irreversibly corrupted.

It has been argued that hybrid falcons, especially F2 generations and beyond, are infertile (Fox and Sherrod 2004). Clearly the hybrid documented here was fertile but even if it or similar hybrids were not it is likely that such birds would occupy breeding territories that could otherwise be used by wild Peregrine Falcons. There is also a misconception that a few genes can be ‘diluted out’ of a population; given certain conditions and the process of recombination, new genes will remain in a population at the frequency at which they were introduced (Fox and Sherrod 2004).

From the documented experience with this hybrid it would be beneficial if all birds bred for falconry wear a distinctive colour ring that would allow immediate separation of pure-bred indigenous raptors, hybrids and non-indigenous species. Once they became aware of the fertile mating of this hybrid in 2007 the British Falconers Club (BFC) implemented a new ringing scheme for its members making it compulsory for all hybrids flown at BFC field meetings to wear a unique pink split ring identifying it as hybrid should it become lost; they are also supplying, free of charge to breeders, pink closed metal rings for use with hybrid chicks (Figure 4).



Figure 4. British Falconers Club closed pink metal ring introduced in 2007, and supplied free of charge to members, for use with hybrid chicks.

Acknowledgements

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Coastline data courtesy of the Channel Coastal Observatory (CCO) and the Risk of Cliff Collapse (ROCC), Applied Geology Research Unit, University of Brighton.

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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	Temmimck's Stint	Aquatic Warbler
Bean Goose (both races)	White-rumped Sandpiper	Marsh Warbler
Pink-footed Goose	Pectoral Sandpiper	Icterine Warbler
American Wigeon	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Melodious Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Grey Phalarope	Barred Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Red-necked Phalarope	Subalpine Warbler
Ferruginous Duck	Pomarine Skua (except in spring)	Greenish Warbler
Surf Scoter	Long-tailed Skua	Pallas's Warbler
All Pheasants (except Common)	Sabine's Gull	Yellow-browed Warbler
Great Northern Diver (ex. Selsey)	Ring-billed Gull	Radde's Warbler
All shearwaters (except Manx)	Caspian Gull	Dusky Warbler
All petrels (except Fulmar)	Iceland Gull	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Great White Egret	Glaucous Gull	Crested Tit
Purple Heron	White-winged Black Tern	Golden Oriole
White Stork	Roseate Tern	Red-backed Shrike
Honey-buzzard	Black Guillemot	Woodchat Shrike
Black Kite	Little Auk	Chough
White-tailed Eagle	Puffin	Hooded Crow
Montagu's Harrier	Alpine Swift	Rosy Starling
Goshawk	European Bee-eater	Serin
Rough-legged Buzzard	Short-toed Lark	Twite
Red-footed Falcon	Shore Lark	Common (ex-Mealy) Redpoll
Spotted Crake	Red-rumped Swallow	Arctic Redpoll
Corn Crake	Richard's Pipit	Common Rosefinch
Common Crane	Tawny Pipit	Lapland Bunting
Stone-curlew	Red-throated Pipit	Cirl Bunting
Kentish Plover	Water Pipit	Ortolan Bunting
Dotterel	Dipper	Rustic Bunting
American Golden Plover	Bluethroat	Little Bunting

In addition, descriptions are required for **all** races other than the normally occurring one including: Black Brant, Baltic Gull, *argentatus* Herring Gull (West Sussex only) 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 are also required for **any** species seen on a date outside the range of historic first and last dates for migrants as published yearly in the SOS Bird Report.

It also 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.

Registered Charity 256936

THE SUSSEX ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Who are we and what do we do?

The Society was formed in 1962 to promote the recording, study, conservation and enjoyment of birds in Sussex.

We encourage our members to keep records of birds seen in Sussex, and to submit these to our County Recorder.

We carry out bird surveys, often as part of our partnerships with the BTO, RSPB and WWT. The county is divided into 10-km squares, each of which has a steward. If you are good at bird identification help is always needed with surveys.

What do members get?

A quarterly newsletter, with articles by members, and news of recent sightings and forthcoming events.

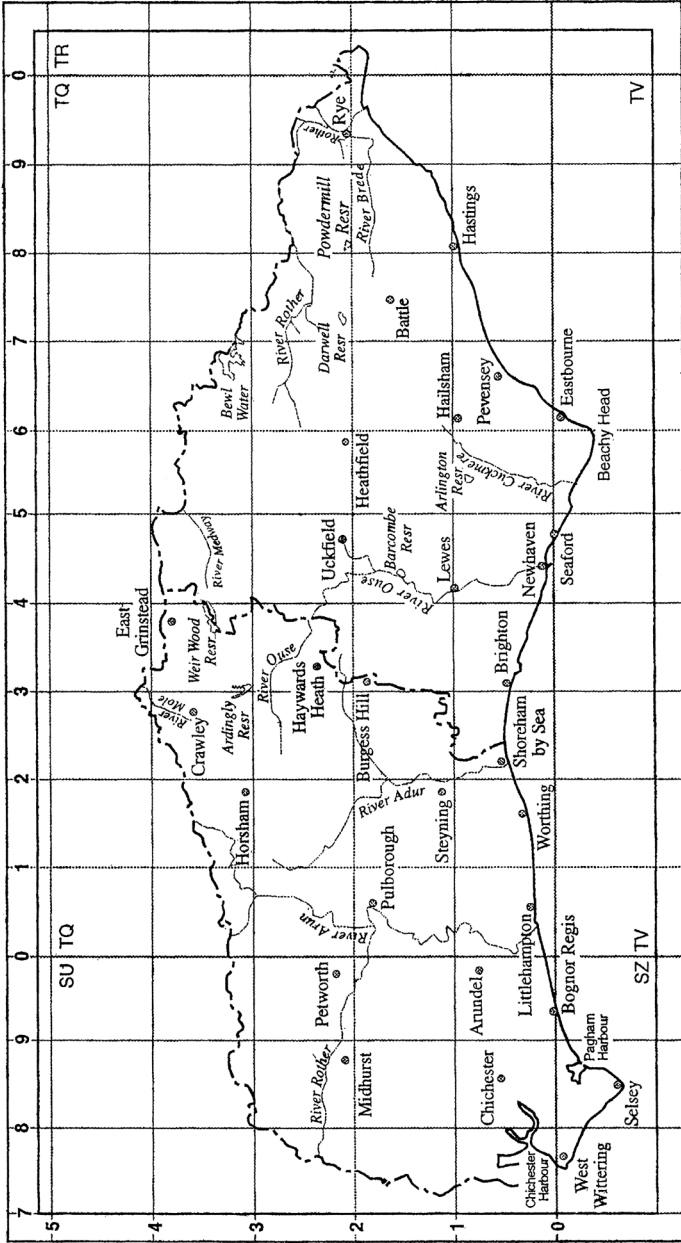
The annual Sussex Bird Report (which is free to members). This contains a number of well-researched papers and a full systematic list of birds seen in our county. These records are assessed by the Recorder and a Records Committee, to ensure that each entry portrays the true current status of the birds in Sussex.

A year round diary of field outings led by expert bird watchers, with visits to all parts of East and West 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	Chelwood Vachery	TQ4330	Hollies, Ashdown	TQ4528	Old Airstrip, Ashdown	TQ4231	Sompting Brooks	TQ1604
Ambersham Common	SU9119	Chichester Gravel Pits	SU8703	Hollingbury Camp	TQ3207	Old Lodge Reserve	TQ4630	South Stoke	TQ0210
Angmering Park Estate	TQ0506	Chichester Harbour	SU7690	Horse Eye Level	TQ6208	Pagham Harbour	SZ8596	Sovereign Hbr Marina	TQ6403
Apudram Manor Farm	SU8301	Church Norton	SZ8795	Horsehoe Plantation	TV6695	Pagham Lagoon	SZ8896	Splash Point, Seaford	TV4498
Ardingly Reservoir	TQ3229	Cissbury Ring	TQ1408	Hotham Park, Bognor	SZ9399	Pammel 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	Combs Haven	TQ7609	Iping Common	SU8421	Pett Level Pools	TQ9014	Stedham Common	SU8521
Ashdown Forest	TQ4332	Crows Nest, Ashdown	TQ4728	Ivy Lake, Chichester	SU8703	Petworth Park	SU9721	Streale Farm Billingshurst	TQ0624
Atherton	TQ0000	Cuckmere Haven	TV5197	Kingley Vale NNR	SU8110	Pevensey Bay	TQ6503	Swanbourne Lake	TQ0107
Balsdean	TQ3704	Darwell Reservoir	TQ7121	Knepmill Pond	TQ1521	Pevensey Bridge Level	TQ6504	The Goat, Ashdown	TQ4032
Barcombe Reservoir	TQ4314	East Guideford Level	TQ9421	Lancing Clump	TQ1806	Pevensey Levels	TQ6605	The Mens	TQ0223
Beachy Head	TV5895	East Head	SZ7698	Langney Point	TQ6401	Pitsey Island & Sands	SU7600	The Severals	SZ8794
Belle Tout	TQ6733	Elms Farm, Icklesham	SU9726	Lavington Common	SU9418	Pippingford Park	TQ4430	Thorney Deepes	SU7503
Bewl Water	TQ0817	Eridge Park	TQ8815	Lewes Brooks	TQ4207	Porfield Gravel Pit	SU8805	Thorney Island	SU7602
Billingshurst	TV5596	Fairlight	TQ5635	Littlehampton G. C.	TQ0101	Powdermill Reservoir	TQ7919	Tilgate Park	TQ2734
Birling Gap	TQ4023	Fishbourne Channel	SU8303	Lullingdon Heath	TQ9217	Pulborough Woods	TQ0516	Union Canal, E Guideford	TQ9322
Brede Levels	TQ8417	Fore Wood, Crowhurst	TQ7513	Lurgashall Mill Pond	SU9325	Roman Road, Ashdown	TQ0414	Upper Adur Levels	TQ1914
Bremere Rifle	SZ8798	Fore Mere	SU8129	Manxey Levels	TQ6306	Rye Bay Wood	TQ4729	Wakehurst Place	TQ3331
Brighton Marina	TQ3302	Four Counties, Ashdown	TQ4631	Marine Wood	TQ9216	Rye Harbour LNR	TQ9216	Walnam Marsh	TQ92
Brighton Wild Park	TQ3207	Friston Forest	TV5499	Marsh Farm, Yapton	SU9804	Scotney Court Gravel Pits	TR0119	Walnam Brooks	TQ0215
Broadwater, Worthing	TQ1404	Gills Lap, Ashdown	TQ4632	Maynards Green	TQ7812	Seaford Head	TV4997	Weir Wood Reservoir	TQ3834
Brooklands, Worthing	TQ1703	Glynde Levels	TQ4607	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 Woods	SU8515
Buchan Park	TQ2434	Goring Gap	TQ1001	New Salts Farm	TQ0204	Seven Sisters Country Pk	TV5197	Whitbread Hollow	TV5896
Burton Mill Pond	SU9617	Gosspes Green	TQ2535	Newhaven Harbour	TV4499	Sheepcote Valley	TQ3404	Widewater, Lancing	TQ2004
Camp Hill, Ashdown	TQ4629	Gravetye Lakes	TQ3634	Newhaven Tide Mills	TQ4500	Shillingee Lake	SU9631	Willington	TQ5802
Castle Water & Farm	TQ9118	Greenwood Clump	TQ4731	Nook Meadows, Rye	TQ9217	Shooters Bottom	TV5795	Woods Mill	TQ2113
Castlestone Farm	TQ1020	Halsey's Farm	SZ8697	Normans Bay	TQ8605	Shooters Airport	TQ2005	Woodbeding 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.

Index

Species in Systematic List

Euring numbers in bold type.

Auk, Little 0647	121	Dove, Turtle 0687	125
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		Duck, Ruddy 0225	39
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Blackbird 1187	161	Dunlin 0512	84
Blackcap 1277	168	Dunnock 1084	152
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Brant, Black 0168.02	21	Egret, Great White 0121	57
Bullfinch 1710	202	Egret, Little 0119	56
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