

SUSSEX ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The Sussex Bird Report



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2008



SUSSEX ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Number Sixty-one, 2008



Recorder: CW Melgar

Editorial Team: Prof R Self, 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 2007 amendments and corrections

Very few errors in the 2007 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: Green Woodpecker, Grey Partridge, Nightingale, Whimbrel and Turnstones

John Reaney: Common Sandpiper, Long-tailed Tit, Mandarin, Pied Flycatcher, Sandwich Tern, Starlings, Woodcock

Photographs

Cover photograph: *Stonechat, Hodcombe, November 2008 (Roger Charlwood)*

The Photographic Editor would like to thank those photographers who submitted photographs of Sussex birds taken in 2008, 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

Bob Self

Although there was a huge increase of 53% in the number of records received in 2007 compared with the previous year, this figure increased still further in 2008 by another 29%. As a result, the number of records submitted and processed is now approaching four times greater than in 2003. This remarkable increase is even more spectacular when one considers that (unlike previous years) these figures do not include the Garden BirdWatch data which, unfortunately, were not available in time for inclusion in this year's report. This omission also explains the apparent fall in the number of individuals submitting their records because many GBW observers contribute to this and no other survey and do not submit records to the SOS directly. The addition of records from the BTO/SOS Atlas surveys (2007-11) continues to have a major impact upon the quantity of records to be analysed by the species account writers, and for many of the commoner birds this has led to a tripling or even quadrupling of the quantity of data to be assessed. For example, the number of Blackbird records has increased from 5280 in 2007 to over 13,700 this year. This increase has the result that we are able to gain a much more accurate insight into the distribution and fortunes of many of the county's 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 224-231, although, needless to say, it is not possible to thank individually those who participated only in Garden BirdWatch. However, as was pointed out last year, it is disappointing to find that descriptions have not been submitted for a number of rare or unusual species that are known to have been seen in the county during the year. The species for which descriptions are required are listed on pages 275-277. Observers are reminded that, unless descriptions are submitted and approved by the Society's Records Committee, the records will not be entered on to the Society's database and therefore will not appear in this report. As this failure to submit descriptions reduces our knowledge of the true status of certain species in the county, observers are urged strongly to take the time to complete the necessary (but brief) form for those species which require a description for acceptance.

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Submitting records	507	590	796	632	1207	962
Records received	59,040	65,730	87,586	96,595	148,292	191,788
Species recorded	258	262	263	253	253	266
Birds ringed	52,455	57,544	58,746	54,661	51,372	54,330
Species ringed	114	120	125	109	116	108
Species on county list	388	389	389	388	388	389

The species accounts were written by a large team of authors, namely CJR Barfield, IT Barnard, S Bayley, VP Bentley, C Brooks, CA Brown, MJ Chattaway, W Coleman, CB Collins, JR Cowser, H Crabtree, J Curson, JJ Everitt, PJ Everitt, RJ Fairbank, D Green, AC Gutteridge, D Harper, WG Harvey, JA Hobson, A House, DH Howey, ME Kalaher, SH Linington, JA Newnham, TW Parmenter, RT Pepper, A Podmore, J Pryor, CJ Reay, GCM Roberts, N Rutter, MD Shaw, MV Sennitt, S Simpson, A Thomas, L Walther, 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, Jon Curson, Dick Gilmore, Pete Hughes, Paul James,

Phil Jones, Leonard Manns, Owen Mitchell, Christian Melgar, Adrian Thomas and Barry Yates who patiently read through an earlier draft of the species accounts and suggested various useful amendments, additions and 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 and uniform fashion 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 his tireless efforts and unfailing good humour when organising the computerisation of all the records, John Hobson for his equally indefatigable assistance to a novice editor and to Helen Crabtree for typesetting the report.

November 2009

Review of 2008

Jon Curson

As in previous years, this review of 2008 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 266 species was recorded in the county during the year, 13 more than last year and the highest number since the 269 in 2000.

Highlights of a remarkable year included the county's first **River Warbler**, second **Trumpeter Finch**, third **Terek Sandpiper** and **Crag Martin**, fifth **Dusky Warbler**, seventh **Ring-billed Gull**, eighth **Surf Scoter**, tenth **Black Stork** and **Lesser Yellowlegs**, twelfth **Short-toed Lark**, a remarkable 74 **Balearic Shearwaters** (with a maximum count of 23 at Selsey Bill on one day in July) and a very well appreciated **Alpine Swift** that lingered for three days around Lewes. Unusual races/forms included the county's second record of **Bridled Guillemot** and first fully documented **Siberian Chiffchaff**. The late May/early June period was particularly memorable, with the **River Warbler** and **Terek Sandpiper** turning up on consecutive days, and the **Trumpeter Finch** just a few days later.

January

January started with a cold snap during the first week and was mostly mild but unsettled in mid-month with a drier spell towards the end of the month.

Scarce and unusual birds remaining in the county from 2007 included the **Red-breasted Goose** at West Wittering (last seen on 5 Mar and occasionally seen at nearby Thorney Island during this period), a **Pink-footed Goose** at Amberley Wild Brooks until 3 Feb, a **Long-tailed Duck** in the Brighton area until 31 Mar, two **Cattle Egrets** in the East Lavant area until 7 Apr (with a singleton remaining at Combe Haven until 26 Jan, and another bird seen from the 21st until the 26th), a **Glaucous Gull** in the Southwick Canal area until 5 Apr, a **Shore Lark** at Rye Hbr until 1 Mar, and the **Hume's Leaf Warbler** at Beachy Head until 14 Jan.

There was the usual flurry of activity on the 1st; a **Black Brant** was seen at West Wittering, remaining there on and off until 8 Mar, with another at Pagham Hbr, staying until 12 Mar; a pair of **Greater Scaup** were at Rye Hbr (staying until 17 Feb when they were joined by a third), there was a **Great White Egret** in the lower Ouse and the county's seventh **Ring-billed Gull** at Chichester GP, a redhead **Smew** at Arundel (till the 22nd) and a **Cattle Egret** in the lower Ouse (until 15 Mar). On the 2nd a **Long-tailed Duck** joined the **Greater Scaup** at Rye Hbr (staying until 26 Apr) and two days later a pair of **Smew** took up residence at Rye Hbr (until 5 Mar). Also on the 4th a **Great Grey Shrike** was at Gill's Lap (Ashdown Forest) and the next day there was a **Red-necked Grebe** at Splash Point (Seaford) and a **Balearic Shearwater** at Selsey Bill. On the 6th two **Long-tailed Ducks** arrived at Scotney Court GP, with one staying until the 21st and the other remaining till 23 Feb, and a **Red-necked Grebe** was found at Weir Wood Res; it remained till 13 Apr by which time it had assumed full summer plumage. There was also a **Eurasian Bittern** at Rye Hbr (with single birds being seen irregularly there until March) and a **Pomarine Skua** off Selsey Bill. On the 12th a **Greater Scaup** was at Thorney Island and two days later a **Golden Pheasant** (a rarity these days!) was seen at Pulborough Brooks. On the 13th four **Whooper Swans** arrived at Chichester GP, where they stayed until 9 Mar, and on the 17th a **Red-necked Grebe** flew past Splash Point. The next day a **Eurasian Bittern** was seen at Burton Mill Pond (and then on and off until almost the month's end) and on the 22nd a male **Red-crested Pochard** was at Rye Hbr. On the 27th 10 **Tundra Bean Geese** were seen at Scotney Court and a **Great Grey Shrike** was at Amberley Wild Brooks (until 11 Feb). January closed with another **Greater Scaup**

at Pagham Hbr on the 28th, the first **Spoonbill** of the year at Pulborough Brooks on the 31st and a well-watched **Lapland Bunting** at Selsey Bill (which stayed there until 20 Feb).

February

February was a very dry month with very little rainfall; there was a cold snap in the first few days, a warm sunny spell mid-month, and a return to cooler weather with easterly winds in the last week.

On the 2nd a **Whooper Swan** was at Scotney Court GP and the next day a **Great Grey Shrike** was seen on the Ashdown Forest and a **Balearic Shearwater** was seen off Selsey Bill. A count of 37 **Bewick's Swans** at Pulborough on the 5th was the highest number seen all year, while on the 6th a **Red-necked Grebe** was at East Head. The following day a **Pale-bellied Brent Goose** arrived at Pagham Hbr (where it remained until the 27th) and on the 8th (in a good winter for this species) three **Red-necked Grebes** were seen at Glyne Gap, with another off Selsey Bill the following day. Also on the 9th a **Greater Scaup** at Thorney Island was possibly the same as the January bird, but a **Siberian Chiffchaff** at Coldwaltham SF was perhaps far more interesting; seen very well, photographed and tape-recorded it stayed until the 23rd and was the first Sussex record of this form to be accepted by BBRC. In addition to this another **Great Grey Shrike** was found at Lavington Common (staying until 27 Mar) and the sole **Sandwich Tern** of the winter was at East Head. On the 10th a **Pale-bellied Brent Goose** was at Pevensy Levels, along with a **Cattle Egret** (presumably one of the Combe Haven birds) and two days later an influx of genuine wild **Barnacle Geese** commenced with the arrival of 27 at Cuckmere Haven.

On the 13th a **Eurasian Bittern** was seen at Pevensy Levels and a **Snow Bunting** appeared at Firls Beacon (until the 16th). The following day a remarkably early **Garganey** was seen flying east at Telscombe Cliffs, there was yet another **Greater Scaup** (this one at Pett Level), and the **Barnacle Goose** influx continued with 43 seen at both Piddinghoe Pond and Thorney Deepes. On the 15th 20 **Barnacle Geese** were at Pett Level and a **Glaucous Gull** was found at Cuckmere Haven (also being seen the next day). On the 16th two **Eurasian Bitterns** were seen at Pett Level (and were also seen two days later), and a **Scandinavian Rock Pipit** was found at Cuckmere Haven. The following day a 'bridled' **Guillemot** was discovered at Brighton Marina, only the second time this form has been seen in the county, and a **Tundra Bean Goose** was observed at Scotney Court. On the 19th a somewhat out-of-place **Spotted Crake** was on a shingle-covered promenade at Shoreham Hbr and a very early **Barn Swallow** flew over Nutbourne. On the 20th yet another **Red-necked Grebe** was seen, this one at Shoreham-by-Sea, and 30 **Tree Sparrows** at Pett Level was the highest count of the winter. The next day 15 **Barnacle Geese** were at Iford Brooks and two **Smew** appeared on Pagham Lagoon. On the 23rd a **Great Grey Shrike** appeared again at Ashdown Forest, staying till 3 Apr, and the following day three more **Greater Scaup** flew past Birling Gap, with another two at Brightling. On the 26th a **Scandinavian Rock Pipit** was at Nutbourne Marshes and two days later a single **Smew** on Pagham Lagoon was considered to have been different from the two there earlier in the month. Also on the 28th a **Eurasian Bittern** was seen at Burton Park (Duncton) and the month closed with the first **Northern Wheatear** at Beachy Head on the 29th.

March

The first week was dry and bright but the remainder of the month was unsettled, with frequent rain and strong westerly winds; there was a brief cold snap over the Easter weekend with a dusting of snow in some places.

March began with a **Eurasian Bittern** at Chingford Pond (Duncton) on the 1st; perhaps the same one as the February bird seen nearby. On the 4th the first **Sand Martins** had returned to Weir

Wood Res and Arlington Res (equalling the earliest ever county record). On the 14th a **Glaucous Gull** was at Selsey Bill and the next day the first **Little Ringed Plover** appeared at Pulborough Brooks and a very distant **Surf Scoter** was discovered at Ovingdean by a very diligent observer (staying until 21 Apr). On the 16th the first **House Martin** was seen at Weir Wood Res and the first **Willow Warbler** arrived at Selsey Bill. Two days later the first **Osprey** arrived in off the sea at Splash Point and two **Cattle Egrets** were seen at Hooe Level (Pevensy Levels). On the 20th a **Scandinavian Rock Pipit** was in the lower Cuckmere and on the 24th a **Great White Egret** was seen over Arundel. The following day the first **Common Redstart** was seen at Butcherlands NR. Summer migrants continued arriving with the first **Tree Pipit** at Ashdown Forest and first **Sedge Warbler** at Rye Hbr, both on the 27th; also on this date **Glaucous Gulls** (possibly the same bird) were seen at Newhaven and Telscombe, with the one at Newhaven remaining there until the 30th. On the 28th the first **Common Terns** were seen at Selsey Bill and Splash Point and the following day a **Balearic Shearwater** flew past Selsey Bill. The first **Ring Ouzel** of the year was at Sheepcote Valley on the 30th.

April

April was generally rather cool, though warming up by the end of the month. There was widespread and very unseasonal snow on the 6th! Easterly winds dominated through most of the latter half of the month.

The month began with the first **Hobby** at Falmer on the 1st. The next day the first **Yellow Wagtails** were noted at Rye Hbr and the University of Sussex and the first **Common Whitethroat** was at Pett Level. A very early **Eurasian Reed Warbler** at Emsworth Marina on the 4th equals the earliest ever county record and the first **Pied Flycatcher** was also seen in Hove on this date. On the 7th four **Cattle Egrets** were seen at Chichester GP and the following day there was a flurry of arriving migrants, with the first **Common Cuckoos** at Duncton Common and Old Lodge (Ashdown Forest), the first **Common Nightingale** at Crowhurst and the first **Grasshopper Warbler** at Cuckmere Haven, along with the last **Great Grey Shrike** of the winter at Pulborough Brooks. Also on the 8th a high count for the year of eight **Great Northern Divers** was made at Selsey Bill. The following day saw more firsts in the way of returning migrants, with **Garden Warblers** at Warnham LNR and the University of Sussex, **Lesser Whitethroat** at Waltham Brooks and **Wood Warbler** at Warnham LNR.

On the 11th a **Golden Pheasant** was found at Arlington Res, remaining there until 2 May, and the next day a **Wryneck** was at Thorney Island. On the 13th the first **Little Terns** returned to Rye Hbr. On the 14th up to three **Cattle Egrets** arrived at Lancing, staying until the 27th, while two days later the first **Arctic Terns** were noted at Selsey Bill and Splash Point, and there was a **Wood Warbler** at Stoughton. On the 17th the first **Turtle Dove** was seen at Sidlesham Ferry and three **Greater Scaup** flew past Worthing. On the 18th Sussex's tenth **Lesser Yellowlegs** was found at Sidlesham Ferry; staying till the 22nd and admired by many during its stay as it was the first since 1998. Also on the 18th there was a **Stone-curlew** at Rye Hbr and a **Glaucous Gull** at Telscombe. On the 19th the last **Redwing** was at Pulborough and the next day the first **Common Swift** arrived at Rye Hbr. On the 21st the first **Whinchat** was noted at Ladies Mile LNR, the next day the last **Jack Snipe** of the winter was at Arundel and on the 24th the first spring **Pomarine Skuas** flew past Splash Point and there were four **Greenland Wheatears** at Beachy Head. An early **Common Quail** on the Downs on the 25th was the first April record of this species since 2000, and the next day two **Cattle Egrets** (probably the East Lavant birds) arrived for a lengthy stay at Pagham Hbr and another **Wryneck** was seen, this one at Fairlight. An adult **Night Heron** was seen at Pevensy Levels on the 29th and the last **Brambling** was noted on the 30th.

May

The first half of the month was very warm and dry with easterly winds; the second half was much more unsettled with thundery rain moving across the Channel mid-month and frequent depressions through the remainder.

On the 2nd the first **Spotted Flycatcher** was seen at Church Norton and a **Wood Warbler** was at Staplefield (Stanbridge). On the 3rd a **Long-tailed Duck** flew west past Selsey Bill, a **Serin** was seen in a Bognor garden and another **Wood Warbler** was at Pulborough Brooks. On the 4th a very impressive total of 77 **Pomarine Skuas** flew past Splash Point and a **Serin** flew over Selsey Bill. The following day another 77 **Pomarine Skuas** were recorded at Splash Point (they were different although it must have seemed like 'déjà vu') in what was the second highest count (369) of spring Poms ever recorded in the county. On the 6th three **Temminck's Stints** arrived for a three-day stay at Pulborough Brooks and on the 7th a further 66 **Pomarine Skuas** passed Splash Point. On the 8th a **Serin** was at Ladies Mile LNR and the last **Fieldfare** was seen at Pagham Hbr, while on the 10th a **Short-toed Lark** was found at Newhaven Tide Mills; it was the twelfth record for the county and showed well at times to its gathered admirers. On the 13th a **Cattle Egret** appeared at Pevensey Levels and the following day saw the first **European Nightjar** back at Ashdown Res, plus another **Cattle Egret** at South Heighton (which stayed for three days). On the 18th the next rarity appeared in what was to become a remarkable May in the county; this one was a **Black Stork** but was only seen by a few observers as it drifted over Wilmington, down the Cuckmere valley and then towards Eastbourne. The next day two **Common Quail** were singing near Cissbury Ring and on the 20th a **Black Kite** drifted over Boreham Bridge (Pevensey).

The following day, in a bit of a purple patch, Pevensey Levels produced a **Great White Egret**, which remained in the area until at least the 28th, and on the 22nd the last three **Purple Sandpipers** were seen at Newhaven Hbr and there were eight **European Storm Petrels** off Selsey Bill. On the 24th a male **Red-crested Pochard** turned up at Ardingly Res and on the 25th the last **White-fronted Goose** of the spring was seen at Warningcamp; this represents the latest county record though it may perhaps be of rather dubious origin. Also on the 25th there were three **Balearic Shearwaters** past Worthing and a **Tawny Pipit** at Rye Hbr (till the following day). On the 26th a **Temminck's Stint** put in a brief appearance at Rye Hbr, while on the 28th a **Black Stork** (presumably the one seen ten days previously) was seen, also briefly, on Willingdon Level (Eastbourne), and an **Alpine Swift** was found in the centre of Lewes; initially seen flying round County Hall it eventually went to roost there and spent the next two days in the area providing a very welcome opportunity for birders to actually catch up with this species. On the 30th a star rarity was found at Beachy Head when a keen-eared young local birder followed up a strange buzzing song and discovered the county's first **River Warbler** in a patch of scrub. It remained there for the rest of the day, singing frequently but always very elusive (to the frustration of the gathered hordes!). On the last day of the month things just got better and those who were disappointed that the **River Warbler** had disappeared overnight were soon able to dash over to Rye Hbr to see Sussex's third ever **Terek Sandpiper**; it was rapidly chased away by a territorial **Redshank** but, to the delight and relief of many, it was quickly re-located at the Midrips (see below).

June

June started unsettled, with a mixture of sunshine and heavy rain; the second half of the month was a little more settled but still on the cool side.

On the 1st the last **Hen Harrier** of the spring was seen at Ashdown Forest and the **Terek Sandpiper** was relocated at the Midrips, where it stayed until the 8th providing welcome relief to those who had missed it at Rye Hbr the previous day. On the 2nd a **Roseate Tern** was at Rye Hbr

and the next day a very late **Long-tailed Duck** was seen at Selsey Bill. On the 4th another major rarity turned up at Telscombe, in the form of the county's second **Trumpeter Finch**; readily watched as it fed on the cliff-top, it stayed in the area for three days and hopefully escaped the fate of the first (at Pagham Hbr in 1984) which was caught and eaten by a Sparrowhawk. The 4th was obviously a 'finch day' as a **Common Rosefinch** was also seen, at Pagham Hbr. On the 5th the wandering **Black Stork** was seen again, this time well inland at Weir Wood Res and on the 8th another **Common Rosefinch** was reported, being heard at Pett Level. On the 12th a very unseasonal **Great Northern Diver** was seen at Selsey Bill, on the 22nd a **Red-crested Pochard** appeared at Rye Hbr (where it remained on-and-off until 3 Aug) and on the 23rd a **Roseate Tern** was sighted again at Rye Hbr.

As is generally the case, the county's breeding birds experienced mixed fortunes. A pair of **Egyptian Goose** bred at Petworth Park again, raising at least three young; a pair was also seen in the Arun Valley but with no evidence of breeding; it would appear that its consolidation as a breeding species in the county continues. There were no breeding records of **Garganey**, though once again birds summered at three sites in East Sussex. **Grey Partridges** were confirmed as breeding at four sites (one more than last year) and they probably bred at a further 17 sites, taking the currently estimated county breeding population to about 90 pairs. **Common Quail** were not confirmed breeding (they hardly ever are) but a maximum of five birds were heard calling at both The Burgh (Burpham) on 15 Jul, and at Shooters' Bottom (Beachy Head) on 30 May and there were the usual smaller numbers scattered over the Downs. The number of nesting **Little Egrets** continues to grow slowly with a minimum of 40 nests this year compared with 36 last year. Five pairs of **Honey-buzzard** attempted to breed in the county, of which four were successful, three pairs raising two young each and the fourth a singleton. Three pairs of **Red Kite** bred or attempted to breed, all in West Sussex; the regular pair raised two young, a second pair raised a singleton and a third pair failed. It was estimated that a minimum of 56 different birds were seen in the West Sussex study area; this species continues to do well though it seemingly has yet to colonise the east. Two pairs of **Marsh Harrier** were recorded; one pair raised two young at an undisclosed site, and a second pair built a nest but did not lay eggs. This is welcome news as none were reported nesting last year.

Oystercatchers fared quite well with at least 46 pairs breeding at seven sites, a notable increase on last year's 33 confirmed pairs. Most were at Rye Hbr where 28 pairs bred, the same as last year, with fledging success reported as being better than normal. Elsewhere eight pairs bred at Pagham Hbr and four at Pett Level. The breeding population of **Avocets** in the east of the county appears to have levelled off with about 43 pairs nesting at two main sites, a small decrease from last year. At one of these sites, 13 pairs raised a total of ten young and at least 30 pairs bred at a second site while at a third location in East Sussex three fledged young were recorded. A pair also bred at a new site in the west of the county and successfully raised four young. **Lapwing** were confirmed as breeding at a minimum of 15 sites, with breeding also probably occurring at a further 32 sites. Five pairs produced eight young at Bracklesham Bay and a further eight young were raised at Lewes Brooks. A minimum of seven pairs of **Little Ringed Plover** were confirmed breeding at five sites, three coastal and two inland. A total of seven young were raised from three of these. It is estimated that single pairs probably bred at a further four sites and possibly at four others. A total of 62 pairs of **Ringed Plover** bred, comparing well with last year's BTO survey count of 66. Of these, 33 pairs were at Rye Hbr but fledging success was poor; 11 pairs bred at Pagham Hbr but success there is not known. At Pilsey Island two out of the five pairs raised six young between them.

Common Snipe were present at two sites; evening surveys found up to 20 drumming birds at Pulborough Brooks and four at Amberley Wild Brooks. This is a significant improvement over recent years and the best showing at Pulborough since 1996; maybe the fortunes of this species in the county are beginning to turn at last.

Common Redshank attempted breeding at seven sites, four fewer than last year though no

data were available from the Pett Level area. There was poor success at Rye Hbr where a total of 18 pairs only raised five or so young. Elsewhere, eight pairs nested at Bracklesham Bay (at least some successfully rearing young) and a pair bred at Cuckmere Haven for the first time in many years, successfully raising a single youngster.

At Rye Hbr, a minimum of 63 pairs of **Mediterranean Gull** bred at Ternery Pool (a significant increase on the 40 last year, but less than the 2006 record of 75), and 39 young were fledged. At Pett Level, nine pairs raised nine young. As in 2007, there was only one record of breeding for **Great Black-backed Gull**; a pair again nested on the roof of a building at Rye Hbr (for the eighth consecutive year) but there was no record as to whether they were successful. At Newhaven, 102 **Kittiwake** nests were counted on the cliffs on 23 Jun and at Splash Point 300 pairs were recorded sitting on nests. There was no indication of breeding success at either of these sites but the Newhaven count seems to indicate an increase at this locality.

At least 291 pairs of **Sandwich Tern** were counted at Rye Hbr, with the actual total probably being about 350 pairs (slightly fewer than last year). A count on 9 Jul recorded 148 fledglings although total fledging was probably in excess of 400.

Also at Rye Hbr LNR about 150 pairs of **Common Tern** nested on the Beach Reserve while 65 pairs were estimated on the Quarry. On 12 Jul there were 33 fledglings present on Ternery Pool and Harbour Fm. Overall, however, fledging success was low with perhaps only 100+ chicks fledging. At Pett Level a colony of about 70 pairs attempted to nest but failed. **Little Terns** did not attempt to breed at Rye Hbr this year, only the second time this has occurred since 1970 and the reasons are not known. However, three pairs did nest at Pagham Hbr and in Chichester Hbr there were three nests at two different locations but two were known to have failed. An adult **Guillemot** was seen with a very young chick off Beachy Head on 19 Jul; this is the second consecutive year that recently fledged young have been seen at this site, possibly indicating that the species is once again nesting on the cliffs here.

Barn Owls did not fare so well this year; there were 86 pairs in West Sussex and 36 pairs were reported in East Sussex; coverage in the east is thought to have been less than complete but this is clearly a decline from last year's total of 191 pairs. At least three pairs of **Long-eared Owl** bred in one area on the Downs; this is a similar number to last year but again no young were seen or heard. **European Nightjars** did rather better, with 28 churring males at Ashdown Forest, 27 in the north-west of the county, and the first records for Leechpool and Owlbeech Woods (Horsham); a total of 107 territories were estimated for the whole county. **Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers** were heard drumming at several sites but no breeding was confirmed at any site. **Yellow Wagtail** remains a very scarce breeding bird in the county. Seven pairs bred at Rye Hbr, plus single pairs at Amberley Wild Brooks, Winchelsea Marsh and East Guldeford Level. In the Brighton Wild Park 95 pairs of **Wren** bred, consolidating last year's increase but this still remained slightly below the level of 2003 and 2004 (103 and 102 respectively). **Cetti's Warbler** continues to do very well but the total number breeding in the county was not estimated this year. **Grasshopper Warblers** were heard reeling from ten sites, double the number of the previous two years. **Wood Warbler** was recorded over-summering at Ashdown Forest and a pair with recently fledged young was seen in the north-west of the county; this species is clearly not doing well in Sussex. The total number of male **Firecrests** recorded holding territory this year was 103; a decline on the 145 in 2007 but this ostensible fall probably reflects a reduced level of effort to locate this species compared with last year and it is still considerably higher than in previous years. As usual the majority (38 pairs) were in West Dean Woods. The situation for **Willow Tit** is looking quite bleak; sightings were reported from 14 tetrads but no breeding activity was recorded anywhere. On a more positive note, **Ravens** are continuing to expand, with at least eight and perhaps as many as 13 pairs now breeding in the county; at least 16 young were fledged this year. **Tree Sparrow** continues to hang on as a breeding bird in the Brede Valley where nest boxes are provided, but only three (possibly four) nests were successful. A further six nests were lost during the season, probably as a result of heavy machinery carrying out landscaping work nearby. On Pevensy Marsh one was seen with

food for young at Manxey Levels on 18 May and nine were seen on 2 May at Middle Bridge. At Scotney Court Fm, young were noted on 20 Jun and one was seen carrying food on Romney Marsh at Barn Fm (East Guldeford).

July

July started off unsettled, with sunshine intermixed with heavy showers. A more settled theme developed during the second half of the month with the last week being very warm; it was mostly dry and sunny but there were spectacular thunderstorms on the evening of the 28th and more showers over the following few days.

Although traditionally a quiet month, this year things were spiced up by a rare tern and good numbers of seabirds at Selsey. A single **Roseate Tern** was seen at Rye Hbr on the 1st and then intermittently until the 16th. On the 3rd there was a singing **Common Quail** at Wepham Down, with three heard there the following day. On the 6th two **Balearic Shearwaters** flew past Selsey Bill and on the 10th a good count of 18 **European Storm Petrels** were noted there (16W and 2E). On the 14th a **White-winged Black Tern** was found at Rye Hbr, remaining there until the 20th. On the 15th a **Roseate Tern** was seen off Selsey Bill and on the 18th six **Balearic Shearwaters** were seen there. This was dwarfed, however, by the 23 that were seen there the following day. On the 21st a **Red-footed Falcon** appeared at Steep Down (Lancing) and nine **Egyptian Geese** at Petworth Park (including three well-grown goslings) was the largest party yet recorded in the county. The next day a **Roseate Tern** roosted at Pilsey Sands and **Balearic Shearwaters** continued to stream past Selsey Bill with a further 19 recorded. The first **Wood Sandpiper** of the autumn was at Rye Hbr on the 23rd and the month closed with a returning **Wood Warbler** at Pulborough Brooks on the 30th.

August

August began in a very unsettled manner with low pressure systems dominating the first half of the month and spectacular thunderstorms on the evening of the 7th. Although the second half of the month was somewhat drier it remained unsettled and breezy.

August was relatively quiet; the month started with a **Pomarine Skua** past Telscombe Cliffs on the 1st. On the 7th **Wood Warblers** were noted at Sidlesham Ferry and Pett Level, and the sole **Aquatic Warbler** of the autumn was trapped at Pett Level; this species has become decidedly rare again in recent years, following record numbers (a total of 97) during the 1990s, with one or two a year (usually trapped at Pett Level) being the norm nowadays. On the 9th a **Balearic Shearwater** flew past Splash Point and another **Wood Warbler** (or perhaps the same) was at Sidlesham Ferry. **Black Terns** are quite regular inland but in small numbers, so an evening count of 40 at Bewl Water on the 17th was exceptional. **Wood Sandpipers** were present for much of the month at Pulborough Brooks, with a high count of seven on the 18th. On the 19th two **White Storks** drifted north-east over Beddingham roundabout and the next day there were three **Spoonbills** in Pagham Hbr. On the 23rd the first returning **Short-eared Owl** was at Pagham Hbr. A **Wryneck** was ringed at Pett Level on the 29th and on the 30th three **Honey-buzzards** together at Beachy Head was the highest count of the autumn. The month closed with a **Dotterel** at Balsdean (also seen the next day), a **Wryneck** at Thorney Island (until 5 Sep) and the last **Common Cuckoo** of the year at Newhaven Tide Mills.

September

September began as August had finished with low pressure dominating the first third of the month, resulting in very wet and windy conditions at times. High pressure finally arrived on the 12th and settled things down, with easterly winds and an 'Indian summer' feel to the weather. Low pressure brought a return to westerly winds and drizzle right at the end of the month.

The month began with a very early **Black-throated Diver** flying west past Selsey Bill and a **Bluethroat** trapped at Pett Level on the 1st. On the 5th a **Pomarine Skua** was off Church Norton and the following day a **Sooty Shearwater** flew west past Selsey Bill. On the 9th a **Dotterel** was at Rye Hbr and presumably the same bird was later seen on the seawall at Pett Level. On the 10th a **Wood Warbler** was at Church Norton and, in a good autumn for this species, another one was seen at Sidlesham on the 13th, with a **Blue-headed Wagtail** at Pagham Hbr on the same day. On the 14th the last **Wood Warbler** of the year was seen at Sidlesham and the following day a **Dotterel** graced Earnley (near Selsey). On the 16th a second **Bluethroat** was trapped at Pett Level, along with two **European Nightjars**, two other **European Nightjars** were seen at the same location (along with one at Patcham – these together being the last ones of the year) and the last **Little Tern** was at Littlehampton. On the 18th the first returning **Fieldfare** was seen at Pett Level, along with the last **Common Nightingale**, and two days later the first **Redwing** of the autumn was noted at Ditchling. Also on the 20th the last **Turtle Dove** was at Weir Wood Res and a **Pectoral Sandpiper** arrived at Pulborough Brooks, remaining there until 7 Oct. The following day one very lucky visiting observer saw the county's third **Crag Martin** circling with **House Martins** at Truleigh Hill. On the 26th the first returning **Hen Harrier** was at Pett Level and there were two **Red-necked Grebes** off Church Norton. On the remarkably late date of the 28th the first returning **Purple Sandpipers** were noted at Brighton Marina, the last **Common Quail** of the year was flushed at Mill Hill (Shoreham) and a **Barred Warbler** was trapped at Pett Level. The month closed with the last **Little Ringed Plover** at Rye Hbr and the first **Jack Snipe** at Pagham Hbr, both on the 29th.

October

October began with an unsettled theme with low pressure dominating and a deep depression which brought strong winds and heavy rain on the 4th-5th. High pressure settled things down in the second week producing sunny, warm days and cool, clear nights. A deep depression brought rain and gales on the 20th and the unsettled theme continued for a week or so, until northerly winds brought colder, sunnier weather during the last few days of the month.

On the 1st a **Pectoral Sandpiper** was found at Bracklesham Bay and the first three **Brambling** of the autumn flew over Pett Level. On the 3rd a **Richard's Pipit** was seen at Climping, and the following day a **Penduline Tit** was trapped at Pett Level and a **Greater Scaup** arrived for a three day stay at Weir Wood Res. On the 5th a **Balearic Shearwater** was seen off Worthing and this was followed by another, plus a **Sooty Shearwater** and 17 **Great Skuas** east past Splash Point two days later. On the 8th the first **Great Grey Shrike** of the autumn was seen at Partridge Green and four **Cattle Egrets** arrived at Sidlesham (staying until the 16th and then moving on to Rye Hbr from the 19th to the 23rd). On the 9th the last **Common Redstart** was at Beachy Head and there were five **Spoonbills** at Pagham Hbr. The next day **Yellow-browed Warblers** arrived at Beachy Head and Earnley (the first of a small influx) and departing migrants included the last **Sedge** and **Grasshopper Warblers** (at Pett Level) and **Black Tern** (at Worthing). On the 11th two more **Yellow-browed Warblers** were seen in Peacehaven, plus another one at Beachy Head and the next day there was another at Brooklands (Worthing).

On the 14th the last **Common Swift** was seen at Edburton and the exodus of late migrants

continued with the last **Hobby** at Church Norton on the 15th, the last **Whinchat** at Pagham Hbr on the 16th, and the last **Garganey** at East Head, **Sand Martin** at Pulborough Brooks and **Garden Warbler** at Pett Level, all on the 18th. Also on this date **Great Grey Shrikes** arrived at Ashdown Forest, Pett Level (staying into 2009) and Ambersham Common (until 1 Nov). On the 19th a third **Bluethroat** was trapped at Pett Level, a **Snow Bunting** was at Pagham Hbr and the last **Common Tern** was at Worthing. The next day the last **Arctic Tern** was at Selsey Bill and the 21st saw the last **Lesser Whitethroat** at Sidlesham, the last **Common Whitethroat** at Pett Level and the last **Spotted Flycatcher** at Birdham. On the 25th a single **Pale-bellied Brent Goose** and a single **Black Brant** arrived at Pagham Hbr, both staying until the end of the year, the last **Reed Warbler** was at Pagham Hbr and the last (rather late) **Pied Flycatcher** was at Hove. The following day the last **Osprey** was at Barcombe and the last **Willow Warbler** was at Selsey Bill. The 28th saw a **Scandinavian Rock Pipit** found at Pagham Hbr and the next day another **Yellow-browed Warbler** was seen, this time at Climping. On the 30th a **Great Grey Shrike** was at Chantry Hill and on the 31st the last **Tree Pipit** of the year was at Worthing.

November

The anticyclonic weather which dominated October continued into the first two weeks of November and it was cold with several frosts. During the third week low pressure and Atlantic fronts returned bringing heavy rain and strong winds at times, before a northerly wind brought a return to colder, brighter weather from the 23rd.

The month started with up to three **Snow Buntings** in the West Wittering/East Head area (until the 7th) and a **Long-tailed Duck** at Church Norton (until the 29th). Also on the 1st a **Dusky Warbler** (the fifth for Sussex) was trapped at Pett Level in what was a quite remarkable year for rare and scarce species at this site. On the 2nd a **Greater Scaup** was at Breech Pool, Pagham Hbr (with presumably the same bird on Pagham Lagoon from the 4th to the 9th) and the last **Yellow Wagtail** was at Sidlesham Sewage Farm. On the 7th a **Greater Scaup** arrived at Arundel, and on the 12th another was seen at Glyne Gap. Also on the 12th a **Great Northern Diver** was picked up on the Ashford ring road in Kent, and released at Rye Hbr; it was joined by a second bird on the 16th with both staying until the 28th. On the 13th the last **Northern Wheatear** was at Pagham Hbr and the next day the last **Ring Ouzel** was at Thorney Island. On the 14th a **Greater Scaup** was off Eastbourne (until the following day), and on the 15th another was seen, at West Chidham, and a **Snow Bunting** arrived for a three day stay at Goring Beach. On the 18th three more **Greater Scaup** were observed at Glyne Gap. A **Red-necked Grebe** was offshore at Pagham Hbr on the 21st and two days later a **Long-tailed Duck** flew west past Selsey Bill and the last **House Martin** flew over Horsham. On the 25th a **Pale-bellied Brent Goose** was at West Wittering and the next day the last **Barn Swallow** was at Broadwater (Worthing) and a **Red-crested Pochard** was seen at Rye Hbr. On the 27th a **Long-tailed Duck** and a **Red-necked Grebe** were off Worthing and the following day a different **Red-necked Grebe** was seen off Goring. The month finished with the arrival of two **Whooper Swans** at Chichester GP on the 30th, which stayed into 2009.

December

The Atlantic systems returned with a vengeance during the first week of December, with many areas seeing a month's worth of rain in little more than a week, and it was also very windy at times. There was a distinct cold snap in the middle of the month, with easterly winds and widespread frosts, but mild and frequently wet weather returned during the last week.

On the 2nd a **Great Skua** flew west past Worthing Beach and on the 3rd a **Great Northern Diver** appeared on the scrape at Cuckmere Haven, staying until the 10th and there was a **Great**

Grey Shrike at Ashdown Forest. **Eurasian Bitterns** were seen throughout the month at Rye Hbr, with a maximum of two on the 10th and the 28th. On the 4th a **Eurasian Bittern** was also seen at Burton Mill Pond, staying until at least the 6th, and a **Red-necked Grebe** appeared at Pagham Hbr, staying until the 16th. On the 5th a **Merlin** put in an appearance on a bird table at Bognor Regis and a **Great Northern Diver** flew east past Seaford. On the 12th a **Black Brant** was seen at West Wittering and on the 13th a **Little Auk** (the only one of the year) turned up in a garden at Middleton-on-Sea; it was taken into care before eventually being released back into the wild. A **Waxwing** invasion was well underway further north and one over Hove on the 14th, with another in Seaford two days later, heralded the start of an influx into Sussex which lasted well into 2009. On the 17th there were five **Smew** at Rye Hbr, with four remaining until the end of the year. On the 19th a **Golden Pheasant** was seen at Poling (Arundel) and there were three **Pale-bellied Brent Geese** in Pagham Hbr the next day. A **Whooper Swan** at Pulborough Brooks on the 21st was also seen on the following day, when another **Waxwing** flew over Firlie and five were at Hollingdean (Brighton). **Greater Scaup** were present at Rye Hbr for much of the month with a high count of four on the 24th. On the 27th three **Tundra Bean Geese** were recorded at Scotney Court and a **Great Grey Shrike** was found at Glynde, staying into the New Year. On the 28th 12 **Waxwings** were seen at Durrington and the following day a **Eurasian Bittern** was seen at Weir Wood Res. The month and year finished with a **Great White Egret** at Lewes Brooks and nine **Waxwings** at Exceat Bridge (Cuckmere) on the 31st.

Classified Records for 2008

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 280-283.

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 2007 Report, they are only shown against each species listed in the index.

Status descriptions

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

Seawatching records were received from several sites although at only four were daily logs maintained. The following table lists the hours watched in each month at the four locations for which this information was available:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	29	11	55	174	202	102	172	49	64	57	38	4
Worthing Beach	18	19	17	82	80	20	31	33	24	30	33	48
Telscombe Cliffs	22	28	23	22	32	12	13	10	10	7	10	10
Splash Point (Seaford)	26	45	57	108	145	13	12	4	0	11	2	10

Wetland Bird Survey data

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 2008 the priority core count dates were 13 Jan, 10 Feb, 9 Mar, 6 Apr, 18 May, 22 Jun, 20 Jul, 17 Aug, 14 Sep, 19 Oct, 16 Nov and 14 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.

Breeding Bird Survey data

Results from the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) are presented as the totals of the maximum counts recorded from each square surveyed during the year, and the numbers of 1-km squares in which each species was recorded at least once during the year. The maximum count is calculated for each species separately and is based on all birds seen and heard, including those in flight. These figures provide a useful indication of the relative abundance of different species although they do not take account of differences in detectability between species. They do not provide a measure of absolute abundance because BBS surveys do not detect all of the birds present in a particular square. While these figures may provide a general indication of major changes in abundance and distributions over time, they do not provide a statistically robust measure of such changes because they do not take account of the BBS sampling strategy or of temporal variation in the sample of squares surveyed. The BBS is organised by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), and jointly funded by the BTO, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC, the statutory adviser to Government on UK and international nature conservation, on behalf of the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside, the Countryside Council for Wales, Natural England and Scottish Natural Heritage) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

Database report

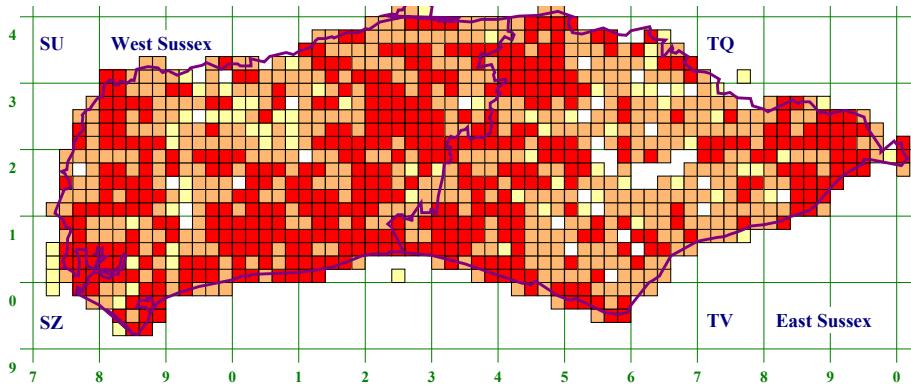
Each species account in the systematic list is written by an individual using the records abstracted from the society’s database. As these datasets form the bedrock from which the accounts are distilled it may be useful to briefly describe some aspects of the 2008 records.

A total of 191,788 records were submitted for the year; this being the highest number received and four times the numbers collected just a decade ago. Two main reasons contribute to this escalation. Firstly the success of Birdtrack, the online recording system organised by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), and secondly this was the first full year of the Bird Atlas 2007-11 and Sussex tetrad atlas survey. The following table shows the very high portion of records which derive from the BTO surveys and in 2008 the Garden BirdWatch (GBW) records were not included which, in 2007, produced about 15,500 records. Probably less than 3000 records were received on paper.

Records gathered from online surveys (Birdtrack, WeBS, BBS and Atlas)	136,208	71%
Records received directly from other databases or recording groups in Sussex	35,437	18%
Records gathered from other sources	3093	2%
Records received directly from observers	17,050	9%

The small reduction in the number of observers to 962 is entirely due to the lack of the GBW records but the number of observers remains considerably higher than in any other year. As expected the individual contributions are varied with 40 birdwatchers furnishing in excess of 1000 records and 16 with over 2000 records. The records clearly show the favoured birdwatching

locations in the county; from the 1857 sites recorded in 2008 there were 15 predictable locations with greater than 1000 records and Pulborough Brooks (4434) was the site with the most records. However, if one summed the records from subsites in locations such as Chichester, Pagham and Rye Harbours and Ashdown Forest the figures would be even greater. Perhaps more important in recording is the spread of records across the county and, again as a direct result of Birdtrack and the Atlas, the tetrad map below shows how well Sussex was covered in 2008. The map, which obviously includes only records with a suitable grid reference (91% of the entire), shows that only 5% of the county's tetrads received no records, and shows a further 7% with less than ten records and the remaining 88% equally split between the two higher recording categories. SZ89T (Pagham Hbr), with over 5000 records, was the most watched tetrad.



The number of records received for 2008 in each tetrad in Sussex. Red symbol, >100 records; orange symbol, 10-99 records; and yellow symbol, 1-9 records.

Further ramifications of Birdtrack and the Atlas recording are shown by other facets of the year's dataset. In the past the more unusual species dominated the records but in 2008 the top species recorded were Blackbird (5073 records), Robin (4622), Wood Pigeon (4489), Chaffinch (4383), Carrion Crow (4308) and Blue Tit (4121). On a slightly negative note about 14% of the records were of "presence" only with no numbers recorded. In the past the spring months have been the best recorded with a notable dip in records during July. Here again, as shown in the following table, the Atlas work has altered this pattern leaving the three autumn months without definite fieldwork as the leanest.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Records	18804	21570	12643	24860	26925	24566	10970	6457	9359	8124	13268	14263

Over 45% of the records were from the breeding season (April–July), yet under 20% of the records held one of the BTO recognised breeding status codes. Of these, most (10%) fell in the possibly breeding category, 5.8% of records carried a probable breeding code, and only 3.8% of records held a code indicating confirmed breeding. Clearly this aspect of recording will need encouragement throughout the remaining period of Atlas fieldwork. [John Newnham, Database Manager, November 2009]

Distribution maps

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

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

Abbreviations

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

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

Mute Swan*Cygnus olor**Fairly common resident.*

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	607	548	606	347	425	448	432	474	619	663	766	718
Chichester Hbr	130	100	118	61	100	145	149	164	134	219	246	269
Chichester GP	75	61	55	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	11	6	4	1
Climping	36	49	43	36	53	nc	78	58	76	nc	30	25
Arun: South of Arundel	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	19	90	29	68
Arun Valley	80	94	42	80	76	84	48	74	64	39	97	51
Widewater Lancing	21	21	27	33	36	23	16	14	39	27	12	10
Adur: Steyning-Henfield	13	-	34	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	14	-	12	23
Henfield Brooks	64	11	14	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	31	2	33	28
Ouse Levels	39	13	63	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	42	20	29	48
Eastbourne Lakes	49	60	49	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	44	52	24	17
Pevensey Levels	31	28	55	39	36	37	2	46	43	33	35	36
Rye Bay	19	21	49	19	62	97	51	53	34	113	148	84
Scotney Court GP	3	44	12	56	32	18	40	16	9	6	9	1

County totals recorded at the principal seawatching sites, with direction of flight, were as follows: figures derived from the maximum recorded at either Selsey Bill, Climping Beach, Worthing Beach, Telscombe or Splash Point (Seaford) on each day.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
E	4	-	4	8	1	1		2	7	11	5
W	2	-	1	3	-	-		-	2	2	-

During 2008, a significantly larger number of observers provided a greater number of records of sightings. The county totals show a much more even spread of numbers throughout the year compared with 2007, with smaller totals for the first and second winter periods. Chichester Hbr showed a consistently high number with totals of 130 on 22 May, 122 on 28 Jul and 130 again on 27 Oct. Chichester GP showed similar numbers in the first winter period compared with 2007, but much smaller numbers in the second winter period.

In the first winter period, several sites hosted significant grazing herds not covered in the WeBS counts. There were 44 at Ashurst on 5 Jan, 81 on the Upper Adur Levels the same day and 47 at Iford Brooks on 24 Feb.

There were no really early breeding reports but one pair was on a nest at Burton Mill Pond on 15 Mar, and there were others at Oving on 10 Apr, Sidlesham Ferry on 19 Apr, Partridge Green on 20 Apr, Offham in the Arun Valley on 7 May and Wiston Pond on 8 May. Breeding was confirmed at 48 sites by at least 60 pairs. Cygnets were reported at Chichester GP on 20 May. There were also two broods at Widewater (Lancing) on 22 Jun (with 16 cygnets on 3 Jul) and two broods at Fishbourne Channel on 4 Jul.

During the breeding season there were herds of 59 at Shoreham Airport on 21 Jun, 64 on the Lower Adur Valley on 2 Jul and 78 at Littlehampton (mouth of the Arun and harbour) on 21 Jul.

The latter herd was still present on 15 Sep, including an orange-banded B5H: a female ringed at Christchurch on 17 Jul 2004 and previously seen at Keyhaven, Hants. on 10 May 2005 and at Littlehampton on 27 Oct 2007.

In the second winter period the largest reported herd was of 150 at Tortington (Arundel). At Cock Marling, Road End there were 65 on 19 Oct and these were still present on 16 Nov before reducing in number to 28 on 15 Dec. [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		Nov	Dec
County totals	25	37		6	1
Arun Valley	19	37		6	-
Henfield Levels	6	-		-	1

The Arun Valley between Arundel and Pulborough remains the county's most important area for this wintering species, with a herd of 17 (including two juveniles) recorded at both Burpham and Warningcamp on 2 Jan. Numbers increased to 34 at Burpham on 29 Jan, including seven juveniles and an adult with a ring on its leg. This ringed individual (14J) was seen on and off at the start of the year. It was originally ringed on 14 Aug 2003 on the Yan Gutey River on the Russkii Zavorot Peninsula, Nenetskya, Russia and was then recorded in the Arun Valley in Dec 2004, Dec 2005 and Feb 2006. It was also seen in Germany on 22 Mar 2006 and the Netherlands on 12 and 15 Nov 2007.

There were also 37 birds (the maximum count for the year) at Warningcamp on 5 Feb. Smaller numbers were recorded elsewhere with six at Rodmell on 20 Jan, seven at Cobnor (Chichester Hbr) on 20 Jan, three at Weir Wood Res on 23 Jan, 13 at Henfield Levels on 24 Jan and five at Five Watering Sewer (Iden) on 16 Feb.

The disparity between the WeBS counts and ordinary records, which demonstrate the mobility of these birds in the county is shown by the monthly maximum counts which were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Nov	Dec
Chichester Hbr	7	-	-		4	-
Arun Valley	34	37	7		18	17
Henfield Levels	13	-	-		-	1
Weir Wood Res	3	-	-		-	-

Returning birds were first noted in the Arun Valley on 16 Nov when two were seen at Pulborough Brooks. This figure rose to 18 at Burpham Levels on 28 Nov while 11 birds were recorded at Amberley Wild Brooks on 15 Dec (including a ringed bird 897). The only other records away from the Arun Valley were of four (including two juveniles) at Pilsey Sands on 20 Nov and one at Henfield Levels on 17 Dec. [WEC]

Whooper Swan*Cygnus cygnus*

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

There were records of this species from three sites this year compared with two in 2006 and none last year. Two were seen at Scotney Court GP on 2 Feb at least (SG) and an adult and four juveniles roosted overnight at Chichester GP from 13 Jan until 9 Mar (MO). Where they went during the day is not known although on 11 Feb they were seen flying north over South Mundham at 17:45 to their roost on the trout lakes.

In the second winter period, two adults roosted at Chichester GP intermittently from 30 Nov and remained into 2009 (MO) and a single adult was recorded at Pulborough Brooks on 21 and 22 Dec (BFF).

The presumed feral bird was again recorded at Albourne (near Hurstpierpoint) on 3 May and 14 Jun. [WEC]



Tundra Bean Geese, Piddinghoe, February 2008 (Les Bird)

Tundra Bean Goose*Anser fabalis rossicus*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

There were four records of this rare but regular visitor to the county this year. The first was of ten birds on Scotney Court GP on 27 Jan (CFB), followed by a record of a single bird present

there on 17 Feb (ITB). Two birds were near Piddinghoe Pond from at least 17 until 22 Feb (MO), and finally there were two adults and a juvenile present on Lewes Brooks on 27 Dec (ARK). [AH]

Pink-footed Goose

Anser brachyrhynchus

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Also recorded as a feral bird.

The only record for the year was of a well-watched individual on Amberley Wild Brooks, present from late 2007 until 3 Feb at least. [AH]

White-fronted Goose

Anser albifrons

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

The largest numbers in the first three months of the year were at Scotney Court GP where, after 150 on 1 Jan, numbers fluctuated until a final count of 160 on 7 Mar. Some of these birds were probably those involved in reports of 120E flying over Rye Hbr LNR on 16 Jan and of up to 54 seen at various sites in Rye Bay during the period. Elsewhere, eight to 12 birds were seen in the Arun Valley/Pulborough Brooks area between 1 Jan and 17 Feb followed by a final count of 11 on the 25th, with a late singleton there on 13 March. Also in January, four were seen over Weir Wood Res on 16 Jan. In February, five were at Cuckmere Haven on the 14th and 15th, there were four birds in the Piddinghoe/South Heighton area on the 19th, three at Charleston Reedbed on the 12th and 17th, singles on Iford Brooks and Thorney Deeps on the 21st, two at Pett Level on the 26th and finally 2E past Splash Point (Seaford) on the 28th.

There were two late-spring records of a bird at Troutbeck (Eridge) between 17 and 21 Apr and another at Warningcamp (Arundel) on 12 and 25 May, though the origins of both these birds must be doubtful.

The first autumn sighting was of a juvenile with a damaged wing at Pett Level on 14 Oct followed, but not until 3 Nov, by a flock of 100 birds there. On the 4th, 50 flew over the same location and 37 (which may have been some of the same) flew over Rye Hbr LNR (where there were a further eight on the 13th) and 32 were seen at Pagham Shingle Spit of which 16 were seen to fly off east in the evening. Later in the month five birds were noted at Pulborough Brooks on the 15th. In December, a flock of 28 was seen over Pagham Hbr on the 22nd, five flew east past Eastbourne on the 26th, and there were five on Glynde Levels on the 28th when a count of nine on Pett Level the same day rose to 42 by the 31st. [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 shown in the table below. WeBS counts over the previous ten years have shown a generally rising trend in most months and this year was no exception with numbers in both August and November being the highest ever in those months (10-year averages 649 and 521 respectively). In the first winter period, counts

additional to the above were 143 at Warnham LNR on 14 Jan, 120 at Henfield Level on the 24th and 70 at Pulborough Brooks on 25 Feb. Elsewhere, significant counts included 130 at Bines Green (Ashurst) on 22 Jan, 101 on Ardingly Res on 21 Feb, 50 at Withyham on 11 Jan and 50 at Nutbourne (Pulborough) on 18 Feb.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	428	496	207	127	154	199	358	1623	705	202	1152	381
Arun Valley	46	28	50	32	22	-	99	479	288	77	144	46
Kneppmill Pond	68	15	8	1	-	31	23	-	-	-	-	-
Warnham MP	54	35	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	38	-	-	-
Henfield Brooks	106	-	16	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	9	-	99	170
Weir Wood Res	-	-	-	-	nc	2	4	124	198	nc	139	49
Ouse Levels	32	17	18	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	21	20	-	6
Glynde Brooks	96	14	16	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	35	-
Arlington Res	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	18	3	19	-	-
Rye Bay	11	74	62	56	90	24	63	1	68	40	35	94
Scotney Court GP	4	300	30	10	31	142	160	940	66	40	700	8

The only seawatching records came from Splash Point (Seaford) where totals of 8E and 3W were recorded between January and April.

Reports of confirmed breeding were received from no fewer than 34 sites, for 30 of which the reports were of fledged young. At Rye Hbr LNR nine pairs raised young, at Small Dole at least one nest with young was seen, at Firle Park there was a nest with eggs and at Pippingford Park (Ashdown) birds were nesting. Reports of fledged young included three family groups at Henfield Levels and two pairs with young at Upper Beeding, but all other records were of single pairs with goslings. Breeding was probable at a further 13 sites.

The first big post-breeding counts occurred in late July; a gathering of 110 at Pulborough Brooks on 21 Jul increased to 166 on the 30th while at Ardingly Res there were 117 also on the 30th. Counts additional to the WeBS in August were 250 at Weir Wood Res on the 22nd and 140 at Warnham LNR on the 27th. Significant counts additional to the WeBS in September and October involved 400 at Pulborough Brooks on 3 Sep and 300 on 4 Oct, 130 at Warnham LNR on 16 Sep and 140 on 14 Oct, 300 at Weir Wood Res on 12 Oct and, 150 at Pett Level on 27 Sep and, at Rye Hbr, 195 on 19 Sep and 155 on 14 Oct. Away from Scotney Court GP where the November WeBS count was largely responsible for the record monthly total, the peak count at Warnham LNR was 145 on the 28th. Although WeBS counts in December returned to nearer the 10-yr average (326) there were still some additional gatherings of significance: the roost at Warnham LNR peaked at 157 on the 10th, the highest Arun Valley count was of 300 at Amberley Wild Brooks on the 21st and 115 were recorded at Pett Level on the 17th. [AH]

Canada Goose

Branta canadensis

Common and increasing introduced resident and partial migrant.

The monthly WeBS counts at the principal sites were as shown in the table below. With such a widespread species it is not surprising that the WeBS counts miss some higher counts on non-WeBS dates and also that there can be some significant counts at other sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	2043	1418	741	377	271	365	503	1650	1468	1568	1857	2665
Chichester Hbr	34	57	32	64	22	35	48	100	9	17	309	101
Chichester GP	32	53	104	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-
Petworth Park	1	41	39	64	47	130	146	nc	3	4	1	1
Arun Valley	387	185	91	110	85	19	73	83	672	735	939	840
Knepp MP	-	82	28	20	64	20	52	-	-	-	-	-
Warnham MP	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	100	-	-	-
Henfield Brooks	120	-	7	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	6	-	-	83
Ifield MP	7	52	29	12	nc	nc	nc	-	12	49	107	-
Ouse Levels	116	29	48	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	1	15	130
Barcombe Res	-	9	19	5	6	-	-	51	-	208	19	-
Glynde Brooks	2	9	62	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	3	45
Arlington Res	6	2	3	5	5	6	7	302	77	346	32	16
Cuckmere Haven	37	152	26	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	28	86	243
Eastbourne Lakes	60	49	67	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	35	62	24	72
Pevensy Levels	200	80	10	11	2	2	1	102	-	52	13	256
Bewl Water	791	460	51	nc	nc	nc	nc	632	227	18	222	669
Rye Bay	140	85	78	51	34	7	41	3	117	17	70	64
Scotney Court GP	-	17	4	9	6	75	45	256	124	12	12	2

The numbers of counts of 50 or more at all sites (including non-WeBS sites not in the above table) were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. counts >50 at all sites	19	24	5		25	13	11	17
No. counts >50 at non-WeBS sites	9	10	2		8	3	6	5

In January, there were 400 at Pulborough Brooks on 1 Jan, 50 at Warnham LNR on the 6th, 81 at Barcombe Mills on the 13th and 79 in the Cuckmere Valley on the 4th. In February: 204 at Pulborough Brooks on the 11th, 104 at Weir Wood Res on the 11th and 148 in Rye Bay on the 15th. In March, only Weir Wood Res figured with 57 on the 4th.

Once again there were few reports from sea-watching sites with spring totals of only 2W past Selsey Bill and 3E and 14W past Splash Point (Seaford).

Records of confirmed breeding were received for at least 72 sites of which 14 specified occupied nests or nests with eggs or young while the remaining 58 specified only fledged young seen. In addition, breeding was probable at a further 37 sites.

The only three-figure count in the summer was 100 at Hampden Park (Eastbourne) on 10 Jun.

Post-breeding numbers built up in August, as shown in the WeBS table above. In August, the monthly maximum at Pulborough Brooks was 175 on the 20th, and at Weir Wood Res 150 on the 22nd. There were 500 at Arlington Res on the 8th and 400 were counted at Seaford Head on the 31st. Even higher numbers were recorded in September; 1100 was the highest count at Pulborough Brooks on the 3rd, 200 at Warnham LNR on the 28th, 400 at Weir Wood Res on the 21st, 1000 at Arlington on the 9th and 350 in Rye Bay on the 18th. Lower peak counts were recorded in October; 70 at Thorney Island on the 21st, 120 at Warnham LNR on the 4th, 200 at Weir Wood Res on the

2nd, 165 at Troutbridge (Eridge) on the 26th and 134 in Rye Bay on the 10th. In November, the Parham Estate hosted 100 on the 6th, presumably part of the Arun Valley flock, and there were also 100 at Weir Wood Res on the 19th, 300 at Cuckmere Haven on the 7th and 170 at Mayfield on the 25th. In December there were only three significant additional counts: 90 at Wivelsfield on the 16th, and 158 at Weir Wood Res on the 30th when 145 were counted in Rye Bay.

The now regular, presumed escaped, 'Lesser Canada Goose' *Branta canadensis minima* was recorded repeatedly around Pagham Harbour (and at times on Chichester GP) in January and again between 14 Aug and 26 Sep, and also on two dates in April and July at East Chiltington, but at no other times of the year. [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.

During January, the usual feral birds of dubious origin were recorded with peak counts of 90 birds at Scotney Court GP on 1 Jan and 55 at Barcombe Res on 10 Feb while single birds were also seen in the Henfield Levels area, Knepp MP and Pulborough Brooks (where one was noted in most months).

However, in mid-February there does seem to have been an influx of possibly genuinely wild birds into South-East England. The first record was of 27 on Cuckmere Haven on the 12th, followed by flocks of 43 on both Piddinghoe Pond and Thorney Deeps on the 14th, 20 at Pett Level on the 15th and 15 on Iford Brooks on the 21st. By the month's end they had all seemingly departed again, with a report of 18 at Thorney Deeps on the 26th being the last record.

All subsequent records suggested the usual birds of feral origin. These included one seen intermittently at Pagham Hbr from 17 Mar to 18 Apr, two over Bewl Water on 7 Apr, and one at Pipers Cope (Northchapel) on 16 Jun. In the latter half of the year, a flock of 55 re-established itself at Scotney Court GP from 22 Jun, two were seen in both Pagham and Chichester Harbours from early August until the year's end, and up to 11 were at Rye Hbr LNR similarly. A flock of 33, which returned to Barcombe Res on 17 Aug, had increased to 53 by 14 Dec, and there were ten at Bewl Water on 22 Dec. A single bird flew over Hastings CP on Christmas Day. [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	14508	14345	8398	184	12	7	6	6	162	1905	9328	9613
Chichester Hbr	12171	11828	7327	182	12	7	6	6	147	1801	8335	8033
Pagham Hbr	2336	2341	891	2	-	-	-	-	15	83	984	1358

The WeBS totals for January (14508) and February (14345) were new county records and an increase over the 2007 totals by 28% and 15%, respectively.

As usual, all but a handful of birds were in the two western harbours, the only exceptions in January being five at Pett Level from the 5th to the 21st, up to two birds at Rye Hbr LNR from the 4th to the 23rd, a flock of 30 seen at Shoreham-by-Sea on the 5th and one at Langney Point on the 24th.

The first sign of returning migration came on 3 Feb, when 123 birds were counted heading east at both Selsey Bill and Splash Point (Seaford). Then, between 8 and 11 Feb almost 3600 birds flew east, the largest batch recorded in such a short time. The largest counts on these dates were all made at Splash Point, *viz.* 292 on the 8th in 1½ hr, 1800 on the 9th in 3 hr, 1165 on the 10th in 2½ hr and 340 on the 11th in 2½ hr, i.e. at a rate of up to 600 birds/hr. Migration then continued at a steadier rate averaging 233/recording day through to the end of March with peak counts of 858 on the 9th, 328 on the 20th and 507 on the 29th. Passage was largely finished by the end of March but continued more sporadically and at a lower rate, averaging just over 100/recording day with a peak of 230 on the 8th before tailing off with a final flurry of 162 in the 23rd and 93 on the 24th. In May, passage averaged only 5/day and the last three birds passed Splash Point on the 23rd.

Monthly totals at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	65	297	359	543		-	3	3
	W	13	-	5	1		55	24	-
Worthing Beach	E	24	1250	288	325		-	66	33
	W	8	3	8	1		106	162	42
Telscombe Cliffs	E	61	1986	971	78		6	3	3
	W	6	3	-	-		1	5	10
Splash Point	E	114	4882	2920	720		-	-	7
	W	14	7	4	-		9	-	12

A few birds turned up inland in the spring, including two at Charleston Reedbed on 17 Feb, one at Nutbourne (Pulborough) the following day, three at Pulborough Brooks on 15 Mar (one was still there on the 22nd) and one at Weir Wood Res on 27 Apr.

There were up to 12 birds summering in Chichester Hbr, with another one being seen on a number of occasions in Pagham Hbr.

Apart from 12 birds seen flying west at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on 23 Jul (which were more likely to have been summering birds) the first true sign of return migration was on the early date of 13 Sep, when ten birds were seen flying west over Pett Level followed, next day, by 2W at Selsey Bill and then a daily dribble in small numbers. Numbers in Chichester Hbr increased slowly to 147 on 20 Sep, 500 on 11 Oct and 720 on the 18th and sizeable numbers were seen on passage on the 30th when 420 birds flew over Rye Hbr LNR and, inland for a change, 300 flew over Troutbridge (Eridge).

Numbers remained relatively low through early November but by the 15th numbers in Chichester Hbr had accumulated to over 5000 spread over four sites and, by the 27th, there were 1200 in Pagham Hbr. Reports from sites other than the traditional western harbours included seven roosting at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 9 Oct, up to four at Pett Level on 16 Nov (and seven there on 14 Dec), one at Scotney Court GP on 17 and 19 Nov and two at Brooklands (Worthing) on 7 Dec. The highest count away from the western harbours was 215 at Climping on 15 Dec. The only record away from the traditional coastal areas was of a single bird flying east (lost?) over Wakehurst Place on 10 Dec. [AH]

Pale-bellied Brent Goose*Branta bernicla hrota**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.*

In the first winter period one bird was recorded regularly in Pagham Hbr from 7 to 27 Feb, with five being noted there on the 17th and one was also present on Pevensey Levels on the 10th. A lone bird was seen heading east past Selsey Bill on 20 Apr and what may well have been the same individual was noted passing Worthing Beach the following morning.

In the autumn, presumably the same returning bird was seen in Pagham Hbr from 25 Oct onwards, with it or another at West Wittering on 25 Nov. Finally up to three birds were seen in Pagham Hbr on 20 Dec. [AH]



Black Brant, West Wittering, February 2008 (David Cooper)

Black Brant*Branta bernicla nigricans**Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.*

There was, again, a lack of fully substantiated records for this species although two widely reported and photographed individuals showing characteristics of this race were present from 1 Jan at West Wittering until 8 Mar, and Pagham Hbr until 12 Mar (remaining at both sites since 2007). In the second winter period, a bird was also widely reported at Pagham Hbr from 25 Oct to the year's end, but the only report from Chichester Hbr was of a bird (possibly the same one) present on Thorney Island on 12 Dec (CBC). [AH]

Red-breasted Goose*Branta ruficollis**Very rare vagrant.*

The adult present with Brent Geese at West Wittering (Chichester Hbr) from 30 Nov 2007 (*SxBR* 60:22) remained to 5 Mar 2008 (MO) and was seen on nearby Thorney Island on 12-13 Feb (CBC *et al.*). These records have been accepted by the BBRC. When at West Wittering it could often be found feeding in the fields adjacent to the café and the East Head car park, particularly at high tide, or on the saltings between Snowhill and East Head. It often flew in from and departed towards Hayling Island (e.g. as per *Birding World* 21:49). It was considered to be the individual first recorded at West Wittering during 24 Feb-7 Mar 2007 and thus the third presumed wild bird to be recorded in the county. The previous two were at Amberley in Feb 1958 and Pagham Hbr from Jan-Mar 1986 and again in Jan 1987. [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 this year increased to 72 (up from 59 in 2007) and the number of sites also rose from nine to 16, marking a return to 2006 levels.

During the first winter period, the stronghold for the species was a chain of sites between Petworth Park and Pulborough Brooks, with a peak of seven birds at the former site on 10 Feb. A key link was Burton Mill Pond, with two seen repeatedly in February and March. In addition, there was a single bird at Chichester GP on 13 Jan, the long-stayer at Brooklands (Worthing) remained until 9 Mar, one was at West Grinstead in February, two at Shermanbury on 15 Feb, one at Pett Level on 22 Mar, and two at Rye Hbr on 29 Mar.

In the breeding season, two were in the Arun Valley on 18-19 May, with one at Shopham Bridge from June and at Arundel on 7 Jun, but there was no evidence of breeding. However, breeding occurred again in Petworth Park, with fledged young seen on 16 Jun and then nine there on 21 Jul including three well-grown goslings. This is the largest group ever seen in Sussex. Elsewhere in the summer months, singletons were also recorded at Pett Level on 23 Jun, at Tilgate (Crawley) on 4 Jul, and intermittently at Weir Wood Res from 28 Jul until 21 Aug.

In the autumn, the highest counts were of seven at Pulborough Brooks on 10 Sep and nine again at Petworth Park on 19 Sep. Interestingly, four were at Bewl Water on 19 Oct, an unusual site for this species. [AT]

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

Chichester and Pagham Harbours remain the county strongholds for this species in all seasons. The monthly WeBS counts from the principal sites were as shown in the table below, which also includes the 10-year monthly averages.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	899	799	819	543	338	249	164	61	74	143	392	529
Chichester Hbr	449	357	440	264	132	95	90	20	32	56	188	265
Pagham Hbr	286	260	231	159	72	72	28	18	15	47	111	165
Arun Valley	55	53	41	46	43	19	20	10	5	2	24	39
Rye Bay	36	83	51	46	61	11	14	12	4	2	7	18
Scotney Court GP	44	27	11	13	18	44	12	-	18	31	55	39
10-year average	1147	1195	763	394	298	238	141	72	59	174	381	707

Numbers in January and February in particular were once again low compared with the 10-year average, although the count of 449 in Chichester Hbr was the highest of the year. Interestingly, numbers rallied slightly in March when there is usually quite a tailing off, with the April and May counts then being the highest for those months since 2002.

At the main seawatching sites, birds peaked in May, perhaps a little later than usual, with the expected easterly bias of movement in spring and westerly in early winter. However, true to form, there were plenty of birds that defied this rule!

The key monthly totals at the main seawatching 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	0	3	0	3	5	3	14	7	45	15	-	-	0	7
Worthing Beach	0	9	1	3	4	5	4	22	30	10	12	5	0	21
Splash Point (Seaford)	18	2	24	1	31	2	47	6	96	10	0	10	-	-

Breeding was proven from an excellent 14 1-km squares (up from 11 in 2007), with probable breeding in another seven. Prospecting for nest sites was first noted on 30 Mar at Pulborough Brooks, with the first young seen on 25 May both there and at Warningcamp.

In West Sussex, ducklings were seen at the following locations: small numbers in Chichester Hbr at Bosham Hoe, Fishbourne Channel and Thorney Deepes; six at Bracklesham Bay on 1 Jun; a crèche of 30 at Sidlesham Ferry Pool on 15 Jul; ten at Chingford Pond (Duncton) on 16 May; two at Swanbourne Lake on 20 May; ten at Arundel WWT on 28 May; and 16 fledged at Amberley Wild Brooks.

In East Sussex, two small chicks were with an adult at the confluence of the Ouse and Glynde on 15 Jun, an adult was seen with five ducklings in the Lower Cuckmere Valley on 2 Jun, and a pair with seven young held up the traffic at High and Over above the Cuckmere valley on 17 Jun. At Pett Level, there were seven ducklings on 1 Jul; two pairs nested at Rye Hbr SSSI and fledged three chicks; seven young were on Rye saltings on 20 Jul; five young were on the Union Canal at East Guldeford on 20 Jul; and fledged young were seen at Scotney Court GP. No breeding was confirmed for Pevensey Levels, where numbers were very low. Whether the single juvenile seen at Arlington Res on 23 Jul and the two at Newhaven Tide Mills on 15 Aug were locally bred was not confirmed.

During the autumn and second winter period, numbers were slow to build, with the December WeBS total the lowest for at least the last 6 years. An unusual record was of two at Bewl Water on 17 Nov. [AT]

Mandarin Duck*Aix galericulata**Scarce but increasing introduced resident.*

Atlas work has prompted the submission of more records from far more locations than in previous years, with birds seen in 91 tetrads (cf. 53 in 2007) scattered right across the Weald. Breeding was confirmed in 21 tetrads and probable in a further 20; again a sizable increase in records, but almost certainly due to the extra observer effort.

The peak count in the first winter period was 59 at Stapleash Fm on 10 Jan. Other notable counts were 43 at Arundel on 14 Jan, 23 at Bolney on 6 Jan, 16 at Powdermill Res on 6 Feb, 13 at Sedlescombe on 12 Jan and 13 at Troutbeck on 1 Jan. Unusual records were of two in Pagham Hbr on 26 Jan, eight at Birdham on 10 Feb, and two at Chichester GP on the same date.

In the breeding season, the most successful site was Weir Wood Res where 23 young hatched from eight nests. At Warnham LNR, two pairs hatched 17 chicks of which eight fledged. Birds nested in owl boxes at Byworth and at Barnes Wood (Vinehall), and fledged young were seen at several other sites.

Notable summer counts were 38 at Arundel on 18 Aug, 36 at Weir Wood Res on 23 Jul, 32 at Bells Yew Green on 29 Jun, 16 at Bewl Water on 3 Jun, and 14 at Tilgate (Crawley) on 21 May.

In the second winter period, the year's highest count was of 45 at Warnham LNR on 16 Nov, with 41 at Darwell Res on 19 Oct and 33 at Weir Wood Res on 2 Nov. Away from the Weald, a male was at Itchenor on 24 Nov, and a pair was at Rye Hbr on 29 Nov. [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	10493	10812	5976	186	15	4	4	7	1402	3306	6416	6973
Chichester Hbr	2239	2143	1038	34	1	-	2	2	790	1498	1517	954
Pagham Hbr	1515	1379	1097	18	5	2	-	-	121	642	1072	1268
Arun Valley	2958	4006	1428	55	6	-	-	5	356	683	2489	1955
Henfield Brooks	530	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	226
Cuckmere Haven	153	72	315	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	6	4	2	105
Pevensey Levels	854	552	619	68	-	-	-	-	15	-	116	385
Rye Bay	550	676	201	1	2	1	2	-	40	30	258	392
Scotney Court GP	750	1000	855	10	1	1	-	-	32	276	250	950

Numbers in the first three months of the year were somewhat higher than the 10-year averages and that for February was the highest since 1996. The highest count at a single site in the first winter period was 2121 at Amberley Wild Brooks on 14 Jan, while 1700 at Scotney Court GP was also a good tally, as were 1428 at West Chidham on 9 Feb and 1200 at Pagham North Fields on 19 Jan. On 10 Feb the 360 at Bewl Water was a notable record.

As in previous years, seawatching totals were low in spring, with only Splash Point (Seaford) recording moderate numbers with 76E in February and 40E in March.

Although there was then the usual swift exodus through March, WeBS count figures were still relatively high in that month and again in April. The last flocks of note were 20 at Sidlesham Ferry on 28 Apr, and ten at Pulborough Brooks on 7 May.

During the summer months, the usual stragglers and summering birds were seen at a range of sites, with no more than three birds seen at any one site and no suspicion of breeding noted.

Four passing west at Worthing Beach on 31 Jul was an unusual record, but the first real sign of returning birds was 20 at Thorney Deeps on 31 Aug. Then, on 13 Sep, 250 were back at Pulborough Brooks, with 150 at Pagham Hbr the next day and on 26 Sep, 2000 were at Thorney Island.

Average numbers were recorded on the WeBS counts in the second winter period, although a rather disappointing December count was the lowest since 1998. However, the 2425 at Pulborough Brooks on 16 Nov was the highest single site count of the year. [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	726	580	157	80	58	40	35	63	138	173	381	513
Chichester Hbr	33	20	11	-	2	6	-	-	6	4	15	38
Chichester GP	186	139	45	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-
Burton/Chingford Ponds	-	-	15	2	-	-	6	nc	-	-	-	7
Arun Valley	30	40	21	23	23	10	1	23	18	4	39	14
Eastbourne Lakes	41	38	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	16	51	58	60
Bewl Water	158	133	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	8	28	60	156
Powdermill Res	40	30	-	-	nc	-	nc	nc	6	2	30	32
Rye Bay	188	162	49	48	29	17	24	39	80	72	156	155

The January and February totals were the best since 2004, with especially good numbers from Bewl Water compared to previous years, including a count of 158 on 13 Jan. Numbers at Eastbourne Lakes, considering it is a small site, were respectable. The WeBS counts for Chichester GP are, unfortunately, incomplete for September to December.

During seawatches, small numbers were seen as usual in spring, starting with 5E and 5W at Splash Point (Seaford) on 24 Feb. Then, between 15 Mar and 31 May, a total of 40E was recorded at Splash Point, but only 2E and 12W at Selsey Bill.

WeBS count totals from April to August were typical. Birds were present at many locations, with Arundel WWT and Rye Hbr being favoured locations while at Pett Level there were impressive counts of 57 in May and 52 in June at the former site. However, evidence of breeding was as usual difficult to come by, with one nest at Waltham Brooks on 6 and 19 May, a pair with 10 ducklings present at Arundel WWT on 10 Jun, and about ten pairs attempting to breed at Pett Level where a recently fledged duckling was seen on 25 Jul. As in 2007, there were a couple of mid-summer

seawatching records, with 4E at Selsey Bill on 1 Jul and 10W at Worthing on 14 Jul.

Numbers on WeBS counts in the second winter period were close to average after a slow October, despite no visit being made to Chichester GP. The year's highest count came on Christmas Day, with an impressive 214 at Bewl Water, and there were high counts of 155 at Rye Hbr on 30 Dec and 150 at Ivy Lake (Chichester GP) on 31 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	6158	4264	2029	611	8	35	10	384	1370	2409	4322	4589
Chichester Hbr	1066	817	620	86	2	8	8	6	268	439	552	485
Bracklesham Bay	60	80	112	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	15	15	25
Pagham Hbr	892	785	446	119	2	-	-	32	348	646	807	1103
Arun Valley	2343	1440	455	252	-	18	2	250	353	818	1985	1324
Glynde Brooks	170	360	50	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	10	-
Pevensy Levels	534	212	106	65	1	-	-	-	3	7	250	528
Rye Bay	508	320	90	80	3	9	-	80	300	256	572	771

There were above-average numbers in the county during the first winter period, with the year's highest count of 2280 at Pulborough Brooks on 16 Jan. The highest single-site counts away from the Arun Valley were 719 at West Wittering on 9 Jan and 642 at Pagham Hbr on 10 Feb. A count of 336 at Partridge Green on 13 Jan was good for the site, as were 300 on the Brede Levels on 30 Jan and 300 at Hankham Level on the Pevensy Levels on 13 Jan. Even though numbers fell away sharply as usual into April, the WeBS count of 611 in that month was especially high, being the highest since 2002. Over 100 were logged during seawatches at Splash Point (Seaford) during the spring, with numbers peaking in April with a maximum of 22E on 17 Apr.

By May, as usual, this was a very scarce species, with just a handful of birds seen at each of Thorney Island, Pagham Hbr, Amberley Wild Brooks, Pulborough Brooks, Pevensy Levels and Rye Hbr. There was then an unusual burst of summer records from Pagham Hbr, especially at Sidlesham Ferry Pool, where 18 on 10 Jun increased to 40 on 5 Jul, presumably non-breeding birds. It was, however, gratifying to obtain evidence of proven breeding in the county, with a female seen with seven ducklings at Amberley Wild Brooks during the summer. A juvenile female was also seen at Warnham LNR on 12 Jul but it was not known if it had been raised on the site.

A count of 54 at Pett Level Pools on 17 Aug and then 166 the next day at Pulborough Brooks clearly signalled the start of the return of winter birds, although a total of 18 had flown west at Selsey Bill on three dates in July.

In the second winter period, small numbers were seen at Selsey Bill during seawatches, with peak numbers in November. The WeBS count for that month was high compared with the average, but then barely rose into December, with a thousand fewer birds than the average count for the preceding decade. The total of 630 at Rye Hbr on 30 Dec was, however, at least a good end to the year there. [AT]

Mallard*Anas platyrhynchos*

Common resident and winter visitor. 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	3020	2827	2264	903	1063	1208	1575	3081	3272	2546	3419	3194
Chichester Hbr	436	381	351	50	59	65	59	145	424	353	439	418
Pagham Hbr	230	195	168	67	128	156	290	204	238	209	222	256
Chichester GP	216	149	156	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	18	24	5
Arun Valley	549	463	279	381	450	496	396	993	724	293	853	408
Pevensey Levels	44	54	66	29	38	11	5	-	15	26	26	235
Bewl Water	-	328	234	nc	nc	nc	nc	434	440	197	256	216
Rye Bay	326	388	183	123	157	150	221	381	458	335	468	373

The peak county total of 3272 in September was below the 5-year county average maximum of 3561 for 2004-2008. Indeed, in Sussex there has been a fairly steady decline in peak WeBS numbers since 1998, with the exception of 2007 (when the maximum was 4243). There is concern that WeBS figures nationally are showing that Mallard numbers are declining, but it is also recognised that because this is such a widely distributed duck its coverage by WeBS is not particularly comprehensive.

With a full year of Atlas activity, 3398 records of Mallard were received from 830 sites in 56 10-km squares ranging across the county, reflecting the usual widespread distribution of this species. Indeed only eight other species had more records than Mallard. During the BBS, a total of 522 individuals was recorded in 72 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed. Aside from the WeBS records above, other sizeable numbers included 254 at East Guldeford Level on 10 Feb, 203 at Arundel Water Meadows on 13 Mar, 434 at Pett Level on 27 Aug and 350 at Castle Water (Rye Hbr LNR) on 30 Dec.

A total of 45 coastal movements were recorded across the year with 22 flying west and 23 east. At Selsey Bill seven were recorded moving west in May and eight east, and on 14 Jul 13 were recorded west off Worthing Beach. There were other records of one to four birds off Worthing Beach and Splash Point (Seaford) in other months of the year.

The increase in breeding records as a result of Atlas surveys resulted in 207 records of confirmed breeding and another 249 records of probable breeding. The earliest record of confirmed breeding was at Brede Bridge (Westfield) on 2 Mar and the last record was at Warnham LNR where a brood of only two hatched by 28 Jul. At Thorney Deepes 78 young were recorded from 11 broods and at Barcombe Res 23 young were recorded from five broods. Two broods of 13 ducklings were recorded – at Telham (Crowhurst) on 23 Apr and at the University of Sussex (with a Carrion Crow in attendance) on 4 Jun. The most unusual nest site was a Barn Owl box in TQ21, some eight feet above the ground, where five dead chicks and infertile eggs were found on 26 Jun. [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	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1000	691	322	9	-	-	-	4	25	301	361	480
Chichester Hbr	142	184	174	6	-	-	-	-	10	59	42	99
Pagham Hbr	464	317	101	-	-	-	-	-	15	233	159	154
Arun Valley	322	171	40	2	-	-	-	-	-	9	158	223

The peak WeBS monthly total of 1000 (in January) was below the 5-year county average maximum of 1090 for 2004-2008. The peak of 464 at Pagham Hbr was below the 1% international threshold of 600, but this site should still retain its designation in 2007/08 as a site of international importance as its average maximum over the previous five years will remain above 600. The Arun Valley will also retain its designation as a site of national importance as its WeBS count exceeded the 279 1% national threshold in January. Indeed, the peak Arun Valley count (and the highest count in the county during the year) was at Pulborough Brooks on 16 January when no fewer than 632 birds were recorded.

Other significant numbers not included in the WeBS totals above were 100 recorded at Ashurst/Bines Green on 22 Jan and 80 at nearby Henfield Levels on 7 Feb. Further east, 25 birds were recorded at Down Level (Pevensy) on 5 Mar and up to 20 birds were at Rye Bay in January and February with 15 in October. Inland, in November, three birds were recorded at Arlington Res and two at Bewl Water, whilst a single bird was seen at Weir Wood Res in both November and December.

After 19 Mar there were only single-figure records until early May, and this year there were no records of summering birds. Returning birds were first recorded in single numbers at Rye Bay on 14 Aug. The 36 birds recorded at Pagham Hbr on 3 Sept had increased to 180 by 21 Sept. Significant numbers only built up at Chichester Hbr in October, with 60 birds reported at Thorney Deeps on the 17th, and at Pulborough Brooks in November, with 204 being recorded there on the 13th.

All the seawatching sites recorded Pintail movements, but numbers were all in single figures and totalled 24 east and 55 west over the year, with records being received for all months except between May and August. [JRC]

Garganey*Anas querquedula*

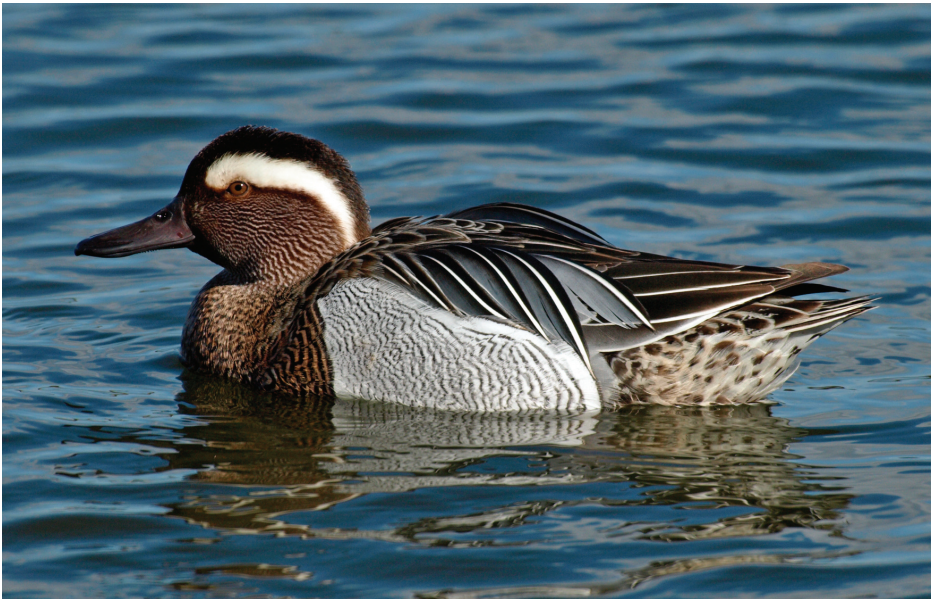
Scarce passage migrant and rare summer visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The first record of the year was of a male flying east at Portobello (Telscombe Cliffs) on 14 Feb, almost a month earlier than in 2007, and 16 days earlier than the 10-year average. The second record for the east of the county was of 12 birds passing east at Splash Point (Seaford) on 15 Mar. This site also reported singletons on 16 Mar and 23 Mar. At Lewes Brooks there was

a drake on 5 Apr, while the first record from Rye Hbr was of two drakes on 5 Apr, increasing to three on the 11th, with a maximum of five males and a female on 4 May. Other spring records were received from Pett Level on 10 Apr, 3 May and 17 May.

In the west of the county, the first record was at Pagham Hbr on 27 Feb. In March, there were two males and a female at Pagham Lagoon on the 15th while the drake, which flew in on the 19th, remained until 8 Apr. Seawatching at Shoreham Fort produced two males and two females flying east on 15 Mar, while watchers at Selsey Bill had to wait until 4 Apr when their first bird passed east. At coastal sites in the west of the county, birds were reported on 26 Apr, 5 May, and 15 May from Sidlesham Ferry, while at the Breech Pool (Pagham Hbr) two drakes arrived on 10 May and one drake was reported in the area up to the end of the month.

Inland, a pair was reported in the Rackham area on 17 Mar, and at Chichester GP a pair was present on Ivy Lake on 19 Apr, while at Pulborough Brooks a drake lingered from 30 Apr until 5 May and at Amberley Wild Brooks a bird was present on 19 May.



Garganey, Pagham Lagoon, March 2008 (David Cooper)

There were no confirmed reports of breeding although summering birds were seen at three sites in the east of the county and a female bird was observed at Weir Wood Res on 15, 17 and 24 Jul. Reports of eclipse-plumaged birds were received from Pagham Hbr during July and August.

Autumn birds in the east were represented by singletons at Rye Hbr and Pett Level on 1 Sep and a female at Weir Wood Res from 16 Sep until 24 Sep, with a final bird at Rye Hbr on 26 Sep. In the west of the county, a long-staying female/juvenile was present at the Breech Pool (Pagham Hbr) from 14 Sep to 16 Oct, while the county's last bird of the year was recorded at East Head (Wittering) on 18 Oct. This is 24 days earlier than the last record for 2007, but 21 days later than the 10-year average. [CAB]

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	522	653	417	245	37	7	14	49	151	279	607	576
Pagham Hbr	11	5	35	19	1	-	-	-	1	-	14	25
Chichester GP	68	52	14	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	35	60	69
Arun Valley	125	217	100	61	3	-	-	10	46	92	215	101
Ouse Levels	20	40	38	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	2	10
Barcombe Res	40	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	2	-
Eastbourne Lakes	28	34	10	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	20	6	12	62
Pevensey Levels	31	88	45	64	3	-	-	-	-	-	40	30
Bewl Water	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	10	12	15	7
Rye Bay	127	164	141	94	27	6	10	34	69	102	214	224
Scotney Court GP	2	4	-	2	2	-	4	-	-	18	3	3

The peak monthly WeBS count of 653 in February was higher than the 5-year average county maximum of 596 for 2004-2008. The 1% national threshold for Shoveler is 148 and Arun Valley and Rye Hbr combined with Pett Level are recognised as sites of national importance for this species.

During the year 737 records were received from 149 sites in 28 10-km squares across the county. Sizeable numbers not included in the WeBS totals above included 120 at Ivy Lake (Chichester GP) on 6 Jan and 99 at Pett Level on 22 Jan. The build-up of birds returning for the second winter period started on 17 Aug when 40 were recorded at Pagham Hbr and 32 at Rye Hbr SSSI.

About ten pairs attempted breeding at Pett Level and a pair was probably breeding at Stocks Fm (Icklesham). At Lewes Brooks a pair summered but was not believed to have bred and a non-breeding bird was present at Weir Wood Res on 9 Jun. At Pagham and Rye Harbours small numbers were present throughout the summer, but breeding was not proven. However, as 76 records were received in May, June and July from 23 sites showing no breeding status, it is not clear whether all these birds were summering non-breeders or whether other breeding attempts were made. This is a species for which completion of breeding status on summer records would be particularly useful.

Movements of 153 birds were recorded from the seawatching sites as shown in the table below, with the peak daily movement being 39E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 17 Apr. [JRC]

	Feb		Mar		Apr		May		June		July		Dec	
	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E
Selsey Bill				4		11				2		11		
Worthing Beach			2	2		14							2	
Telscombe Cliffs		6		2										
Splash Point (Seaford)				21	2	63		11						

Red-crested Pochard*Netta rufina*

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

The first record of the year was of a drake on Long Pit (Rye Hbr SSSI) on 22 Jan. In May, a drake was seen at Ardingly Res on the 24th. On Long Pit (Rye Hbr SSSI), records of a drake were received for various dates between 22 Jun and 3 Aug, and the final record of the year was again from Long Pit on 26 Nov. [CAB]

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	597	527	186	28	32	34	32	95	157	106	370	327
Chichester GP	182	104	66	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	31	33
Forest Mere	16	14	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	15	26	4
Burton/Chingford Ponds	3	10	12	1	-	2	-	nc	-	-	-	-
Petworth Park	11	9	2	-	-	-	-	nc	1	1	17	20
Arun Valley	138	118	45	20	20	15	13	15	4	-	50	32
Weirwood Res	17	30	1	-	nc	-	-	-	-	-	8	1
Eastbourne Lakes	24	22	32	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	3	6	19	29
Bowl Water	-	33	7	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	-	2	8	7
Rye Bay	138	100	12	2	-	-	1	29	56	23	96	116
Scotney Court GP	13	40	-	3	8	17	17	49	87	52	95	64

The sharp downward trend in wintering numbers in recent years continued, with a maximum WeBS total of only 597 birds (in January). This was well below the 5-year county maximum of 823 for 2004-2008, and is the lowest winter total since 1977/78. Indeed it is less than half the number recorded as recently as 2003. This decline appears to be a national trend, with the report on the Wetland Bird Survey for 2006/07 speaking of a “crash” in national Pochard numbers.

There were 520 records received for Pochard from 114 sites across 32 10-km squares, indicating that this is a duck which often occurs in small numbers on ponds across the county. Wintering numbers declined rapidly from mid-February, and the last sizeable record was of 40 birds at Arundel Water Meadows on 13 Mar.

Summering birds were mostly concentrated at Chichester GP (max. 16), Arundel WWT (max. 18), Swanbourne Lake (max. 12) and Scotney Court GP (max. 17). Successful breeding was confirmed at Arundel WWT where there were at least three broods, but no evidence of breeding success was found at nearby Swanbourne Lake.

There were only two records from seawatching sites: four birds were recorded flying east on 11 Apr off Splash Point (Seaford) and 12 birds flew west on 31 Dec off Selsey Bill.

The first record of returning winter birds was in the east of the county as the August and September WeBS figures for Scotney Court GP and Rye Bay given above show. It is noticeable, however, that the first large count of birds in the west of the county was not until 14 Dec when 80 were recorded at Drayton Pit followed on 31 Dec by 200 at Ivy Lake (both Chichester GP). [JRC]

Tufted Duck

Aythya fuligula

Fairly common resident and winter visitor; scarce breeder. 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	1233	1060	1026	469	351	331	315	367	489	503	795	873
Chichester GP	325	217	174	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	35	61	23	67
Arun Valley	162	145	91	98	106	76	32	37	68	-	106	83
Barcombe Res	33	44	43	-	23	26	52	44	28	12	25	17
Eastbourne Lakes	68	52	48	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	20	22	52	75
Bewl Water	49	83	73	nc	nc	nc	nc	93	45	23	21	38
Darwell Res	159	14	71	26	2	nc	5	7	53	134	104	138
Rye Bay	217	283	313	185	151	146	108	120	108	133	225	253
Scotney Court GP	21	40	18	33	11	12	56	50	50	14	43	21

The peak WeBS total for the county was 1233 in January, close to the 5-year county maximum for 2004-2008, which averages 1247 birds. Following last year's 20-year high in December, the Darwell Res WeBS count of 159 in January was a new 20-year high, whilst 138 in December was the second highest count there over this period.

With the increased effort due to Atlas recording, 1295 records were received from 227 sites in 44 10-km squares. Significant records not reflected in the WeBS tables above included a peak of 66 at Southwater CP during November and 53 on 25 Dec.

As usual, summering birds numbered about 25% of the wintering peak. Thirty records of confirmed breeding and another 62 records of probable breeding were received. However, 80% of the records in the period May to August showed no breeding status, so breeding of this species may still be under-reported - this is another species for which completion of breeding status on summer records would be particularly useful.

First reports of confirmed breeding were from Atlas surveys on 15 Apr in SU82E and SU83A, when young birds still dependent on adults were reported. On the same day there was a report of a nest with nine eggs at Arundel WWT and on 10 Jun two broods of 17 ducklings were recorded there plus a nest with nine eggs. At nearby Swanbourne Lake a brood of five ducklings was recorded on 15 Jul, and at Thorney Deeps two broods of nine ducklings were recorded. At Pulborough Brooks only one pair successfully bred but the chicks unfortunately were predated. Four chicks were also predated at Warnham LNR, but at nearby Horsham young birds still dependent on adults were reported on 13 Jul. Reports of successful breeding were also received from Bewl Water (two broods of nine), Darwell Res (the first record of breeding since 1997) and Pett Level, whilst at Rye Hbr SSSI 14 broods were recorded over the summer. The last record of breeding in the county was of a female with eight small young at Ternery Pool (Rye Hbr LNR) on 1 Sep.

Typically, there were few records of passage movements. A total of 18 birds were recorded between February and May (two west and 16 east), 15 being recorded off Splash Point (Seaford), two off Selsey Bill and one off Worthing Beach. The largest passage movement was five birds east on 3 May; there were no records of movements during the second half of the year. [JRC]

Greater Scaup

Aythya marila

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

The first record of the year was of a pair present on Long Pit (Rye Hbr SSSI) on 1 Jan, which remained in the vicinity until at least 17 Feb, on which date a third bird was reported. Other records for the first winter period in the east of the county included a female at Pett Level on 14 Feb, three birds past Birling Gap on 24 Feb and two birds at Brightling, also on 24 Feb.

In the west of the county, a bird was at the Breech Pool (Pagham Hbr) on 28 Jan, while on 12 Jan a bird was found at Thorney Island, and it, or a different individual, was also seen there on 9 Feb. A Scaup x Tufted Duck hybrid was present on Pagham Lagoon from 19 until 21 Mar. The final record for this period was of three birds seen flying east during five hours of seawatching from Worthing Beach on 17 Apr.

Records for the second winter period in the west of the county started with a bird at the Breech Pool (Pagham Hbr) on 2 Nov and it, or a different individual, was on Pagham Lagoon from 4 to 9 Nov; a single bird was reported at Arundel WWT on 7 Nov and a female was at West Chidham on 15 Nov.

In the east of the county a male bird was present at Weir Wood Res from 4 to 6 Oct, and three birds were at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 18 Nov. Two birds on Long Pit (Rye Hbr SSSI) on 24 Nov increased to three on 21 Dec, then four on 24 Dec. Also in December, two birds were recorded at Glyne Gap on the 12th and a singleton was observed at Eastbourne on the 14th and 15th. The final record of the year was from Long Pit (Rye Hbr SSSI) where three individuals were still present on 30 Dec. [CAB]

Common Eider

Somateria mollissima

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

Approximate monthly totals of birds at the main seawatching sites were as shown in the table below. Notable maxima at these sites were ten at Selsey Bill on 26 Jan and seven on 22 Apr, seven at Worthing Beach on 2 Apr and at Portobello (Telscombe Cliffs) on 28 Mar, and eight at Splash Point (Seaford) on both 29 Mar and 3 May.

Elsewhere during the first winter period, counts of up to five birds were noted offshore at Pagham Hbr on various dates in January, a singleton was recorded at Brighton Marina on 31 Mar and six birds flew past Birling Gap on 15 Mar. At Glyne Gap (Bexhill) 12 birds were present on 8 Mar and six birds flew east past Hastings Beach on 24 Feb.

Away from the seawatching sites reported in the table above, the only record during the summer months was of three birds at Glyne Gap on 19 Jul.

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	15	2	5	15		3					2	
	W	1										3	
	o/s	9		1	2	12	4	2	4				2
Worthing Beach	E	2	2	4	7						4		10
	W	4	3							4	12	3	1
	o/s										7	16	28
Portobello	E			9	3								4
	W												
	o/s											2	
Splash Point	E		10	16	7	15		3			6		
	W												
	o/s												

During the autumn, a maximum of four birds was present in Chichester Hbr on several dates in September and October and four birds were seen in Hastings Hbr on 16 Sep, reducing to three by the 28th. Singletons were recorded offshore from Pett Level on 21, 27 and 29 Sep.

During the second winter period, there were generally fewer movements at the main seawatching sites, with the exception of Worthing Beach where the number of birds recorded offshore during November and December peaked at seven on 30 Dec. Elsewhere, birds were present in Chichester Hbr, with a notable maximum of seven on 16 Dec, and offshore at Pagham Hbr, where six were recorded on 9 Dec. Two birds were also offshore from Rye Hbr on 11 Nov while at Glyne Gap, eight birds were present on 16 Nov and 16 were recorded on 12 Dec.

An unusual inland record was of a first year male bird at Arlington Res on 26 Dec. [CAB]

Long-tailed Duck

Clangula hyemalis

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

The bird first located at Hove Lagoon on 3 Dec 2007 was still present on 1 Jan. This mobile bird was reported from Hove Lagoon, Widewater (Lancing) and Brooklands Lagoon (Worthing) into March, the last recorded sighting being on the 31st. Records from Worthing Beach on 23 and 24 Mar may also relate to this bird.

In the east of the county, another long-staying bird was on Long Pit (Rye Hbr SSSI) from 2 Jan until 26 Apr. Two birds at Scotney Court GP on 6 Jan had reduced to one by the 22nd and this was last seen on 23 Feb.

Spring records involved 1E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 25 Apr, and 1E at Selsey Bill on 25 Apr, with another there on 3 May and 1W on 10 May, while the singleton flying west there on 3 Jun was three days earlier than the latest recorded and a full month later than the 10-year average.

The only autumn record for this species was of one flying east at Selsey Bill on 23 Sep.

In the second winter period, the only records were from the west of the county. In November a relatively long-staying bird was seen off Church Norton or within Pagham Hbr between the 1st

and the 29th, while at Selsey Bill a bird flew west on 23 Nov and at Worthing Beach there was one offshore on 27 Nov. [CAB]

Common Scoter

Melanitta nigra

Common spring passage migrant and winter visitor, scarcer in summer and autumn. Occasional inland. 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	171	535	387	32	42	23	34	42	3	58	390	780
Glyne Gap	117	530	135	32	42	23	34	42	1	58	140	480
Rye Bay	50	1	252	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	245	300

While birds can be seen off any part of the coast (and there is considerable offshore movement even outside the main passage period), as usual, the largest flocks were recorded in the east of the county. The main wintering flocks were off Glyne Gap (Bexhill) and in Rye Bay and there would seem to be some movement between these locations. The peak numbers were from January to March and from November to December. In the Chichester Hbr and Pagham areas winter counts rarely exceeded four. The rather low summer WeBS counts were all recorded off Glyne Gap but it is obvious from the seawatching data that more birds were summering offshore and were perhaps more mobile than during the winter months. There were no inland records submitted this year.

As usual the main easterly passage began in the second half of March. The main peak was in mid-April with 467 flying east off Splash Point (Seaford) on 16 Apr and 464 moving in the same direction there the following day. The passage continued strongly through most of May and there appeared to be a secondary peak late in the month with a maximum of 362 flying east at the same site on 23 May.

Sussex totals were as follows (derived from the maximum recorded at either Selsey, Climping, Worthing, Telscombe or Seaford on each day; no Beachy Head, Brighton or Hastings area data included):

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
Hrs watched	49½	54½	86 ½	192¼	227½	113¼	180	73¼	83¾	76½	60½	59½	1255½
West	89	27	18	86	38	33	240	83	31	94	44	17	802
East	56	135	902	2833	2336	418	349	93	69	139	31	63	7428

There were inevitably sightings of passage birds from other parts of the coast but usually in much smaller numbers. A maximum of 300E off Beachy Head on 17 Apr coincided with the peaks further east and presumably comprised some of the same birds. As usual the autumn passage was much less obvious and wintering birds were settling in during November and December. [WGH]

Velvet Scoter*Melanitta fusca*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor along the coast; exceptional inland. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

In the first winter period up to three offshore birds were recorded from the Pagham Spit/Church Norton area on three dates in both January and February, six flew west with 15 Common Scoters off Middleton-on-Sea on 20 Jan, and a female was with Red-breasted Mergansers at Worthing Beach on 23 and 24 Mar. Two flew past Rye Bay on 4 Feb with Common Scoters, a singleton was on a fresh water pool at Pett Level on 24 Mar, and a single female was offshore at Ovingdean on the 29th.

The first recorded spring passage was of 2E at Selsey Bill on 23 Mar followed by 5E there on the 31st and 5E on 8 Apr. Conversely, one was seen flying west at Shoreham on 30 Mar. But eastwards passage, as recorded at the principal seawatching sites, commenced seriously on 13 Apr and lasted until 8 May, as shown below:

	April								May						
	13	16	17	20	22	24	25	26	27	2	3	4	6	7	8
County total	29	29	16	2	8	20	10	6	4	5	1	14	2	4	7
Selsey Bill*	29	29	-	-	8	20	10	-	-	5	-	13	2	-	4
Worthing Beach	-	10	2	-	-	-	-	5	4	5	-	14	-	-	-
Splash Point		21	16	2	-	-	-	6	-	-	1	5	-	4	7

*the peak counts of 29E were recorded at Selsey Bill in 6 and 8¼ hr respectively

Additional records involved 1W at Shoreham on 30 Mar, 3E at Hastings on 17 Apr, 2E at Telscombe Cliffs on the 24th and 3E at Birling Gap on 4 May. Later, there were three singletons, with the last off Splash Point (Seaford) on 23 May.

During the second winter period, the first record was of 2E off Worthing on 3 Nov followed by 1E at Selsey Bill on the 23rd, 1E at Worthing again on the 27th and 4W there on the 30th. There were also one or two on the sea off Pagham Spit/Church Norton for the rest of the month. Numbers increased slightly in December: there was a single female in Chichester Hbr on two dates, one at Bexhill on the 12th and up to six off Pagham Spit/Church Norton which reduced to three by the 27th. [WGH]

Surf Scoter*Melanitta perspicillata*

Very rare vagrant.

A first-winter female was found off Ovingdean on 15 Mar and remained in the general area until 21 Apr (ITB *et al.*). It was on its own and almost always very distant, making it a very impressive identification, if a somewhat underwhelming rarity. Most visitors would have needed to use some imagination as well as a powerful telescope to identify it for themselves! It is the eighth individual recorded in the county and the first since 1999 when three were with the Scoter flock off Pett Level from 16-29 Mar. All records have been in March-April or November-December, although this one extends both the earliest and latest dates in spring by a single day. The others were at Rye Hbr on 3 Dec 1966, off Pett Level from 23 Nov-2 Dec 1977 and off Seaford from 13-20 Apr 1991 and 3-28 Dec 1998. [RJF]

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		Nov	Dec
County totals	34	40	11	3		11	31
Chichester Hbr	15	26	2	-		3	16
Pagham Hbr	6	3	-	-		1	5
Chichester GP	4	3	1	nc		-	-
Weir Wood Res	-	1	1	1		-	-
Darwell Res	4	3	2	-		2	3
Rye Bay	5	4	5	-		4	5
Scotney Court GP	-	-	-	-		1	-

These totals were close to the monthly maxima at most sites except Pagham Hbr, which had up to eight on 7 Feb and up to six in March. Weir Wood Res had a singleton in January and two on 15 Feb. Other sites included Arundel WWT with two on 20 Feb and Hastings with two on 26 Mar. Seawatching produced very few sightings with what was probably the same bird flying off Seaford on 2 Feb and 1 Mar.

There was again a marked westerly and coastal bias to the records with various sites in Chichester Hbr hosting most birds, followed by Pagham Hbr. The highest count at any one site involved 19 (including eight males) in Fishbourne Channel (Chichester) on 6 Feb. Coastal birds had moved out by 25 Mar but the wintering redhead inland at Weir Wood Res stayed until 25 Apr. There was an interesting trio of singletons on passage at Waltham Brooks on 7 Apr, Loder Valley (Ardingly) on 18 Apr and Gravetye Woods on 2 May.

The first returning bird was at Chichester Hbr on 31 Oct. During the second winter period Pagham Hbr had a maximum of eight on 26 Nov and 11 on 16 Dec while Weir Wood Res had a single bird on 22 Nov with another at Barcombe on 16 Nov. Another flew west off Worthing on 23 Nov. There were no WeBS reports from Newhaven or Bewl Water. [WGH]

Smew*Mergellus albellus*

Very scarce winter visitor, mainly to the east of the county. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Apart from what was probably a single redhead at three sites in the Arundel area between 1 and 22 Jan and probable passage birds at Pagham Lagoon on 21 (two) and 28 (one) Feb, all records were from Rye Hbr. In the first winter period a drake and a redhead were reported ten times between 4 Jan and 5 Mar, mainly from Castle Water (Rye Hbr LNR), but they were only once recorded together.

In the second winter period the first record was of five on Castle Water on 17 Dec, 17 days later than the ten-year average. The wintering population then stabilised at up to four (including a single drake) until the end of the year, almost always at the same location. [WGH]

Red-breasted Merganser*Mergus serrator*

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

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	181	220	171	32	2		8	168	100
Chichester Hbr	168	211	159	23	2		8	138	85
Pagham Hbr	10	9	11	9	-		-	29	15

The Chichester Hbr figures are reasonably typical of previous years and this was once again the most important wintering area. Most birds at Pagham Hbr were usually offshore in the Pagham Spit/Church Norton area where the peak count was 35 on 1 Jan. But while the largest offshore concentrations were generally seen in the Worthing/Goring/Kingston Gorse area where peak counts were 50 on 6 Jan, 87 on the 28th, 48 on 12 Feb, 67 on 23 and 24 Mar and 36 on 7 Apr, there was almost certainly an interchange between the sites as indicated by the seawatching totals below and some offshore birds were probably overlooked. The wintering population was probably once again over 400 birds.

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	5	17	58	69	23		1	3	1
	W	14	-	18	2	-		4	69	-
	o/s	143	12	83	31	2		-	9	20
Worthing Beach	E	30	4	12	32	5		1	27	2
	W	-	87	-	1	-		20	10	-
	o/s	97	176	222	50			2	433	276
Splash Point	E	4	5	7	69	17		-	-	2
	W	2	-	4	2	-		-	-	-
	o/s	-	-	-	-	-		-	-	4

Eastwards spring passage began with 15E at Selsey Bill on 18 Mar but was then observed only sporadically to 10 May. Birds were reported from several coastal sites between Selsey Bill and Rye Bay in the east but most records were from Selsey Bill and Splash Point (Seaford) as shown above.

There were no reports of summering birds and the first of the autumn was an early group of four at Pagham Hbr on 14 Sep. The next report was of a singleton seen at Rye Hbr LNR on 2 Oct; it stayed until the 11th but then departed and no more were reported from there.

Westerly flying birds returning to their usual winter quarters were noted from 3 Oct at Selsey Bill with a peak count of 9W at Worthing Beach on the 18th. By 21 Nov the offshore flock at Worthing Beach had peaked at 112, 138 was the WeBS total in Chichester Hbr in November and others had returned to their usual western haunts. In December, apart from the WeBS count of 85 in Chichester Hbr, the peak counts offshore were 70 at Pagham Spit on the 23rd and 60 at Worthing Beach on the 24th. Numbers elsewhere did not exceed 30 at any other site. There were no inland records during the year. [WGH]

Goosander*Mergus merganser*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Another very poor year for the species with the great majority of records from coastal sites; a fact which may signal a change in habitat preference for what has traditionally been regarded primarily as a freshwater duck. Interestingly the only adult males were singletons inland at Weir Wood Res on 5 Mar and one with three redheads at Warnham LNR on 21 Nov as well as one or two at Arlington Res on 29-30 Nov. The only other inland reports were single redheads at Weir Wood Res on 23 Nov and at Warnham LNR on 1 Dec.

In the first winter period records were particularly sparse. There were no records in January and in February there was only one report of a single bird flying west off Selsey Bill on the 5th. In March a single bird remained for at least ten days in Pagham Hbr and the last reports were of two off Goring Gap on 10 Apr and one in Pagham Hbr on 20 Apr.

The first autumn record was again at Pagham from 28-29 October. The great bulk of the year's records were in the Pagham area in the following month with up to eight seen offshore and in the harbour between 2 and 21 Nov. In the same month there were between one and three at Chichester Hbr, Selsey Bill and Newhaven as well as the inland records mentioned above. It seems likely that most of these birds were on passage through Sussex. Reports tailed off in December with two at Pagham being the only coastal report of the month. [WGH]

Ruddy Duck*Oxyura jamaicensis*

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

Monthly maxima at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	15	11	14	9	2	5	9	4	1	1	2	5
Swanbourne Lake	2	3	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Chichester GP	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Weir Wood Res	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Pannel Valley	1	4	6	7	2	3	4	3	1	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	2	1	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	1	4
Other sites	8	2	2	1	-	2	1	1	-	-	1	-

The above data indicate that there were both a notable decline in the population of this species from a maximum of 15 in January to a maximum of only five after July and a wide geographical spread in the records right across the county. Both facts indicate some degree of success in the culling programme. In addition, there was no evidence of successful breeding. Displaying pairs were seen in July at Chichester GP and Rye Hbr and the numbers present on Pett Level suggest that breeding may have been attempted on this site. The most consistently occupied sites were the Pett Level area and Rye Hbr and there may well have been movement between these nearby sites.

Singletons at Swanbourne Lake (Arundel) and Weir Wood Res appear to have been wintering individuals. The other sites included: in the first winter/spring, North Mundham, Arlington Res,

Eastbourne and Scotney Court GP, each of which had between one and three in January; in the summer, Sidlesham and Brooklands (Worthing); and in the second winter Pagham Hbr, where occasional birds were recorded. [WGH]

Red-legged Partridge

Alectoris rufa

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

In the first winter period there were three records of 20 or more birds; 27 at Upwaltham Hill on 20 Jan, 38 at Piddinghoe (Newhaven) on 25 Jan and 20 at North Fm (Findon) on 3 Feb. This represents a considerable increase from the previous year when only one count reached double figures in the same period.

During the breeding season, in spite of receiving a total of 424 records, breeding was only confirmed at three sites. At Sefter Fm (Rose Green), two territories were identified on 95 ha of mixed farm. A fledged young was seen at Thorney Island. At Rye Hbr there were three pairs but only a single brood was noted. Breeding was judged probable at a further 30 sites involving a possible 67 birds. In the summer months there were also records of an adult with three very young chicks at Thorney Island on 4 Jul and of three juveniles at Tilley's Fm (Washington) on the 7th of the same month. Evidence of late breeding was provided by a record from Stone Fm (Warnham) where a covey of seven including five immature birds was observed on 28 Sep.

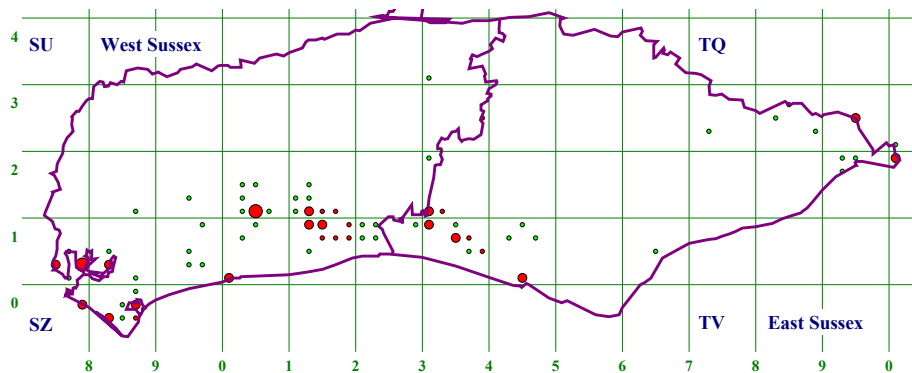
A conservative estimate of 50 at Harrow Hill (Patching) on 27 Sep most likely represents a release of captive bred birds.

During the second winter period no large gatherings were recorded, the maximum count being 35 at Pagham Hbr on 8 Oct. [RTP]

Grey Partridge

Perdix perdix

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



There were 65 records from the first winter period, the majority coming from downland and the far south-east of the county, as shown in the map above. The highest counts came from The

Burgh (Burpham) in January where there were 22 on the 13th and a possible 30 on the 20th. There was a single record from Burgess Hill.

During the breeding season confirmed records of breeding came from Cobnor Cottage (Chichester) where a hen bird was seen with a single juvenile, Wepham Down where 23 fledged young were reported, Pulborough Brooks where a brood of five were seen, and Rye Hbr SSSI where only three of five pairs present produced broods. Probable breeding was reported from a further 17 sites involving a possible 90 pairs. Further evidence of breeding came in August when a group of seven birds, both young and adult, were seen at Atherington (Climping) on the 22nd.

In the second winter period several large counts were received from The Burgh (Burpham) with a maximum of up to 40 birds on 4 Nov. The only other double-figure count was of 20 from Mount Caburn (Lewes) on 23 Dec. [RTP]

Common Quail

Coturnix coturnix

Scarce summer visitor. Recorded in variable numbers from year to year; formerly occasional in winter. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Records were received from 24 sites involving a possible 44 birds. This is a welcome increase upon previous years, which it is hoped is due to a real increase in numbers rather than simply the result of an enhanced recording effort.

The first bird was heard at an undisclosed site on the South Downs by three observers on 25 Apr. This is 18 days earlier than the 10-year average and the first April record since 2000. This was followed by two singing birds near Cissbury Ring on the more usual date of 19 May.

Breeding could not be confirmed for this elusive species but singing birds were repeatedly reported from a number of sites; only one visual record was received of a bird flushed at Mill Hill (Shoreham) on 28 Sep, this also being the last record for the year. At The Burgh (Burpham) Quail were heard on ten dates in June and July with maxima of four on 19 Jun and five on 15 Jul. A singing bird was heard during an SOS walk at Wepham Down on 3 Jul with three there the following day. At Pulborough Brooks they were heard on 19 dates in July and August but no more than two were recorded on any one day. Additional records came from Amberley Wild Brooks. At Steyning Round Hill there were one or two singing birds on five dates in June and July with an additional two records in May and July from nearby Steep Down (Lancing). At Shooters Bottom (Beachy Head) there were five birds on 30 May and a single on 1 Jun. The most easterly records came from Lydd Ranges (Midrips and Wicks) on 1 Jun and from Winchelsea Marsh of three birds between 23 and 30 Jun. [RTP]

Common Pheasant

Phasianus colchicus

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

A record number of 2242 records were received from 586 tetrads making this a truly ubiquitous species. In the first winter period there were a few counts of over 30; at Littlewood (West Dean Woods) there were 48 on 8 Feb, at Sharpthorne there were 50 on 17 Feb, at Telscombe there were 34 on 1 Jan and at Tufton Place (Northiam) there were 36 on 12 Jan.

During the breeding season, breeding was confirmed at 25 sites and was probable at a further 173. A female with five recently hatched chicks at Wilbees Fm (Arlington) on 15 May was the first evidence of successful breeding. A freshly eaten egg at Halnaker on 1 Jun was an indication of the hazards facing breeding Pheasants. Six territories were identified at Sefter Fm (Rose Green) on a 95-ha mixed farm. At Amberley Wild Brooks and Pulborough Brooks breeding was confirmed but counts were not made. Similarly, at Rye Hbr SSSI breeding was widespread but numbers were lower than in the previous year.

In the second winter period there were many released captive birds, sometimes in numbers too high to count. Michelgrove House was described by one observer as 'a Pheasant factory' and at Lee Fm and Harrow Hill (Patching) the numbers were described as uncountable. Birds were also released from the Borde Hill Estate (Haywards Heath), and at Darwell Res 58 birds were deemed to have been reared and released. Some, at least, even penetrated into urban areas. A cock bird was seen strutting about in a garden in Worthing on 27 Dec. [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 of this species and the next two have been made by combining the totals of birds recorded inland with those from coastal sites, after making allowance for duplication. In line with previous reports the estimates for birds recorded at coastal sites have been made as follows: 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 either 'offshore' or 'on the sea'. It is probable that most of the birds recorded as 'Diver sp' are Red-throated Divers and the two species accounts should be read together.

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
143	325	46	64	26		1	10	83	453

The monthly totals of birds moving offshore at the four 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 (*)	95	151	36	56	26		1	9	48	243
Selsey Bill	43	36	9	29	20				9	19
Worthing Beach	59	51	11	26	14			10	46	179
Telscombe Cliffs	36	65	12	30	7		1	1	4	40
Splash Point (Seaford)	31	65	12	30	7			2	1	40

*adjusted to compensate for duplication

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

Although the estimated annual total of 1151 for this species was higher than in 2007 (743) it was still just half of the 10-year rolling average.

During the first winter period there were eleven movements involving more than 10 birds (cf.

just one in 2007) with the largest being 30 flying west in an hour at Telscombe Cliffs on 2 Feb. During this period the largest concentrations of birds on the sea were in the east of the county with 48 at Bexhill on 14 Jan and 172 in Rye Bay on 4 Feb. Spring passage recorded at the main seawatching sites was slightly more marked than in 2007 but with no double-figure movements. The last spring record was of a single bird flying east at Splash Point (Seaford) on 29 May.

The first returning bird was one flying east past Telscombe Cliffs on 20 Sep. The second winter period started quietly and it was not until December that any significant movements were recorded. A total of 62 was recorded passing Worthing Beach on 14 Dec and there were 30W in an hour past Hastings on 30 Dec. The number of birds offshore at Bexhill doubled from 106 on 12 Dec to 210 five days later. A total of 37 offshore at Pagham on 16 Dec was the largest count in the west of the county during the year.

There were three records of birds away from the open sea or tidal harbours. The Long Pit (Rye Hbr SSSI) held single birds intermittently from 6 to 10 Feb and again from 26 Feb to 6 Mar. Three were also recorded at Pett Level on 24 Mar. [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		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
10	20	8	20	24		1	1	10	8

The annual total of 102 for this species was the lowest since 1989 and is only two-thirds of the 10-year rolling average. The monthly totals of birds recorded moving offshore at the main seawatching sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Monthly total</i> (*)	7	11	7	19	23		1	-	3	4
Selsey Bill	5	4	-	11	8		1	-	2	-
Worthing Beach	2	3	-	3	3		-	-	5	1
Telscombe Cliffs	-	4	-	-	-		-	-	-	-
Splash Point (Seaford)	-	3	7	9	16		-	-	-	3

*adjusted to compensate for duplication

In the first winter period there were only three records of more than two birds moving offshore on any one day: 3W at Selsey Bill on 3 Feb, 3E at Worthing on 8 Feb and 3E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 30 Mar. During this period the maximum number of birds recorded on the sea once again came from Glyne Gap (Bexhill) with nine on 8 Feb but elsewhere numbers never exceeded two.

Spring movements of departing birds were light although there were five days on which three birds were recorded flying east: at Hastings on 17 Apr and at Splash Point on 26 Apr and 8, 9 and 20 May. The last spring record was of one flying east at Worthing Beach on 29 May, two days later than the 10-year average date.

The first autumn bird was a singleton flying west at Selsey Bill on the early date of 1 Sep.

This was 52 days earlier than the 10-year average date with the only two earlier records being 20 Aug 1995 and 3 Aug 1969. The second winter period started very quietly with the only October records being one offshore at Selsey on the 3rd, 4th and 7th. Numbers remained low for the rest of the year although there were seven offshore at Selsey on 28 Nov and four at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 12 Dec.

There were no records of birds away from the open sea or tidal harbours during the year. [DHH]



Great Northern Diver, Cuckmere Haven, March 2008 (Les Bird)

Great Northern Diver

Gavia immer

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

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun		Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total (*)	4	2	6	8	6	1		1	7	7
Max. off Selsey Bill	4	2	6	7	5	1		1	5	4

*adjusted to compensate for duplication

The annual total of 42 was just one lower than in 2007 but this was still above the 10-year rolling average of 39. Selsey Bill remained the principal site for this species and it is assumed that birds seen there in flight were on feeding flights as these movements were not recorded elsewhere. It is also assumed that the one to three birds recorded between Chichester and Pagham Harbours

were the results of those feeding flights.

In the first winter period the Selsey birds were quite widely spread during January with only half of the records coming from Selsey Bill itself. However, in February and March the birds were almost entirely confined to Selsey and the numbers there rose to six. In the spring, birds were recorded off Selsey virtually every day. Numbers varied a great deal from day to day during that period and reached a peak of seven on 8 Apr. The last spring record was of one flying west at Selsey on 12 Jun; a date 26 days later than the 10-year average but only two days later than in 2007.

The first returning bird was recorded at Selsey on 20 Oct, five days earlier than the 10-year average. Although five were recorded off Selsey on 9-10 Nov and four were seen there on 19 Dec, numbers remained low during the second winter period.

There were five records of this species away from the Selsey area. A single bird flew east at Telscombe Cliffs on 22 May (DHH). A juvenile picked up on the Ashford ring road on 11 Nov was taken to Mallydams RSPCA Centre and released on Castle Water (Rye Hbr LNR) the following day. The bird then transferred to Long Pit (Rye Hbr SSSI) where it was joined by a second juvenile on 16 Nov. Both birds remained on the Long Pit until 28 Nov (MO). A juvenile was present on Cuckmere Haven Scrape from 3-10 Dec (MO) and one flew past Splash Point, Seaford on 5 Dec (RCS). [DHH]

Diver species

The difficulties involved in specifically identifying divers in flight are well documented. As a result, 40% of all divers seen in flight were recorded as 'Diver spp'. The numbers of such birds can be significant as shown by counts at Splash Point (Seaford) of 30E on 2 Feb, 34E on 7 Feb and a total there of 205E during February.

The numbers of all divers recorded at the main seawatching sites during the periods January-May and October-December are shown in the table below. 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 sites or between sites and neither has any allowance been made for birds remaining offshore for several days. Consequently no attempt should be made to add the columns or rows. [DHH]

	Diver spp.		R-t Diver		B-t Diver		Total (*)		No. per hour	
	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D
Selsey Bill	70	7	147	39	39	18	434	86	0.9	0.9
Worthing Beach	42	35	172	259	13	7	227	301	1.1	2.6
Telscombe Cliffs	30	7	167	46	4	-	202	53	1.6	2.0
Splash Point (Seaford)	500	64	153	48	36	3	691	115	1.8	5.0

*includes Great Northern Diver

Little Grebe*Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Scarce resident, 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	211	204	124	27	19	26	33	78	205	242	205	181
Chichester Hbr	63	56	39	6	8	6	6	6	77	74	79	42
Pagham Hbr	15	16	8	4	4	7	9	12	24	24	28	31
Brooklands (Worthing)	15	3	4	1	1	2	4	2	9	6	4	3
Widewater (Lancing)	8	15	8	1	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	14
Cuckmere Haven	26	26	16	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	15	36	26	8
Bewl Water	15	20	15	nc	nc	nc	nc	40	37	62	18	21
Rye Bay	18	24	14	4	6	7	7	10	22	12	22	26
Scotney Court GP	11	18	3	-	-	-	-	-	2	6	9	7

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	279	270	174	134	89	93	87	106	263	217	233	225
No. of sites	59	51	44	42	39	38	27	21	31	35	38	46

The largest totals for the first winter period were recorded in Chichester Hbr with a peak count of 25 at Thorney Island on 9 Feb.

There were 31 reports of breeding from 27 sites throughout the county of which 25 were confirmed with a further six probable breeding records.

A WeBS count of 40 birds at Bewl Water on 17 Aug was the first notable sighting of the autumn. The highest count at any site was of 62 birds seen at the same location on 19 Oct. There were also peak counts of 46 at Birdham on 20 Sep, 26 at Pagham Lagoon on 30 Sep, 36 at Cuckmere Haven on 18 Oct and 34 at Thorney Island on 14 Dec. [MDS]

Great Crested Grebe*Podiceps cristatus*

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

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

During the first winter period numbers were up on the previous two years with peak counts of 484 at Cliff End (nr Pett) on 28 Jan, 206 at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 8 Feb and 130 at Bewl Water on 9 Mar.

Breeding occurred across the county with 48 reports of confirmed breeding from some 22 sites. The greatest success was recorded at Weir Wood Res where 46 pairs produced 66 young. At Ardingly Res seven pairs produced 13 young.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	275	571	424	155	102	123	190	464	461	314	327	654
Chichester Hbr	14	25	21	17	6	1	1	1	9	13	41	7
Chichester GP	52	41	40	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	7	5	4	4
Pagham Hbr	9	1	10	-	10	11	10	13	25	19	22	14
Weir Wood Res	56	45	83	36	nc	46	77	75	46	nc	10	nc
Arlington Res	22	27	31	23	13	12	19	48	65	65	46	40
Eastbourne Lakes	16	15	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	4	8	7
Bewl Water	49	63	130	nc	nc	nc	nc	224	174	94	62	19
Glyne Gap	13	206	8	7	-	-	1	-	-	12	24	250
Darwell Res	21	41	35	31	34	nc	33	30	47	41	16	7
Rye Bay	8	82	31	9	13	28	35	56	47	19	59	294

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	1183	833	542	351	312	259	259	496	498	445	672	1471
No. of sites	42	59	50	55	58	51	35	21	33	35	39	40

Monthly totals from the principal seawatching sites are shown below.

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	1	-	4	11	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	4	-	9	8	2	3	-	2	-	4	53	-
Climping Beach	E	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Worthing Beach	E	10	-	4	1	4	-	-	-	-	1	1	-
	W	-	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	6	24	31
Telscombe Cliffs	E	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	13	15	28	2	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	8
	W	3	6	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

In the autumn and second winter periods there were peak counts of 224 at Bewl Water on 17 Aug, 250 at Glyne Gap on 17 Dec, and 286 off-shore at Pett Level on 14 Dec, with 574 reported at Cliff End on the same day. The year ended with counts of 125 off Hastings CP and 315 off Worthing Beach both on 24 Dec. [MDS]

Red-necked Grebe

Podiceps grisegena

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

The number of sightings shows no significant variance from recent previous years. The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	5	8	1	1		2	-	3	5
No. of sites	4	5	1	1		1	-	3	2

An obligingly very long-staying individual was recorded inland at Weir Wood Res on numerous dates from 6 Jan, through February and March until, having gained summer plumage by 25 Mar, it was last seen on 13 Apr. Elsewhere, there was one offshore at Splash Point (Seaford) on 5 Jan, 1W there on the 17th, 1W at Selsey Bill on the 20th and another singleton off East Head (Wittering) on the 29th. During February three were recorded at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on the 8th and five singletons were recorded at Selsey Bill on the 5th and 9th, East Head on the 6th and at Shoreham-by-Sea on the 20th.

The first returning birds were two off Church Norton on 26 Sep. During November singletons were seen offshore at Pagham on the 21st, Worthing on the 27th and a different juvenile at Goring on the 28th. On 17 Dec four birds roosted at Glyne Gap and a singleton was seen at Pagham Hbr on several dates between the 4th and 16th. [MDS]

Slavonian Grebe

Podiceps auritus

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

The approximate minimum monthly totals, ignoring birds seen 'on passage' as probably moving between sites, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	44	67	23	8		3	17	51
No. of sites	6	7	4	4		1	3	4

As in previous years the majority of the records came from the west of the county with all but one of the sites being coastal. In the first winter period there were records of a singleton inland at Weir Wood Res on 2 and 13 Jan. At the coastal sites, more than three-quarters of the birds were offshore in the Selsey Bill/Pagham Hbr area in all months except April when most records related to the area between Splash Point (Seaford) and Beachy Head. The last spring record was of 1E at Splash Point on 20 Apr.

The first record for the second winter period was of three birds at Church Norton on 26 Oct. In November, three birds were recorded at Pilsley on the 6th and a singleton was recorded at Worthing on the 15th. The remaining records for the month were all from Pagham Hbr. In December the records were again predominantly from offshore at Pagham Hbr although three birds were recorded at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on the 12th, six at Pilsley Island on the 14th, and the last record for the year was of 2W at Splash Point on the 26th. [MDS]

Black-necked Grebe*Podiceps nigricollis*

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

The minimum number of birds recorded was 31, comparable with both the previous year (28) and the 10-year average (32), and the minimum monthly numbers were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	3	15	2	1	1	-	1	-	3	1	1	3
10-yr average	2	2	9	9	1	-	-	1	2	2	2	2
No. of sites	1	2	2	1	1	-	1	-	2	1	1	2

The peak count occurred in February, a month earlier than the 10-year average; otherwise monthly numbers later in the year were comparable with the 10-year average.

In the first winter period, the only seawatching record for the year was 1W at Splash Point (Seaford) on 17 Jan. In March singletons were present at Pagham Hbr from the 12th to 31st and at Weir Wood Res from the 16th to 17th. Later records involved single birds at Pagham Hbr on 7 Apr, Scotney Court GP on 18 May and a summer plumaged adult at Newhaven Tide Mills on 31 Jul.

The first autumn records were of two birds at Weir Wood Res on 1 Sep and one at Pagham Hbr from the 19th to at least 2 Oct (which might not have been the same as one on the 8th and 12th) followed by another singleton there from the 18th to at least 2 Nov and possibly until the 12th. In December, two birds were at Pagham Hbr on the 1st and at least one was present at Rye Hbr between the 11th and the 25th. [MDS]

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 recorded at Telscombe Cliffs (Portobello) with 78E (1¼ hrs) on 7 Jan, 456E (1¾ hrs) on 3 Feb and 79W (1 hr) on 5 Feb. As only minor movements were noted elsewhere on these dates it is possible that these were largely localized feeding movements.

The long sea outfall off Telscombe Cliffs again proved a popular feeding area for this species and attracted concentrations of 430 on 23 Mar, 200 on 17 Apr and 420 on 20 May. The two largest figures are double the number of birds breeding in the county. Although the origin of the birds is not known, given that Fulmars forage over considerable distances, it is likely that these concentrations consist of a combination of breeding and non-breeding birds from both within the county and from further afield.

During the spring small movements (possibly feeding movements) were noted quite frequently in the west of the county. Monthly totals at Selsey Bill were 68E and 267W in April, 75E and 121W in May and 44E and 128W in June. Numbers were slightly lower at Worthing Beach where the monthly totals were 62E and 109W in April and 81E and 58W in May. In this period the only notable movement was of 96E (1 hr) at Splash Point (Seaford) on 27 May.

Counts at breeding cliffs recorded 12 birds at Ovingdean, a single nest at Newhaven and seven nests at Cliff End (near Pett). Fulmars also breed at Splash Point (Seaford), Beachy Head and Hastings CP but numbers are impossible to determine without the use of a boat. The last birds left the breeding ledges at Telscombe Cliffs on 30 Aug (13 days earlier than the 10-year average) and the first returning birds were noted on 6 Nov (equal to the 10-year average).

There were very few records for the second winter period and those that were received related to no more than ten birds on any one day. [DHH]

Sooty Shearwater

Puffinus griseus

Very scarce autumn visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

2007: One flew west past Selsey Bill on 28 Oct (SH) taking the year's total to 38.

2008: Singles flying west past Selsey Bill on 6 Sep (JA) and east past Seaford on 7 Oct (MRE, RCS) were the only records for the year. Two were also recorded in 2004 while 2003 was a blank year but despite this 165 have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000. The monthly totals during this period are January (2), July, August (8), September (42), October (80), November (31) and December. [RJF]

Manx Shearwater

Puffinus puffinus

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

Although the minimum total of 372 (111E, 261W) was 79 short of last year's figure it continues the upward trend in numbers since 2002. It should be noted, however, that this total includes birds flying both east and west. While some may be making for breeding colonies on the east and west coasts respectively, there could be some double counting of birds returning later in the opposite direction.

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

		Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Totals
County totals	E	1	1	72	22	1	10	-	-	4	111
	W	-	4	32	158	21	34	6	6	-	261
Selsey Bill	E	-	-	64	7	-	-	-	-	-	
	W	-	4	32	62	18	30	4	5	-	
Worthing Beach	E	-	-	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	
	W	-	-	-	152	2	3	1	-	-	
Splash Point	E	1	1	36	13	1	8	-	-	4	
	W	-	-	-	14	1	5	2	-	-	
Other sites	E	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	
	W	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	

The first record of the year was from Splash Point (Seaford) when an early singleton flew east on 3 Feb. No further birds were seen until March when 1E was recorded at Splash Point on the

28th. There were 3W at Selsey Bill and 1W at Ovingdean on the 29th, and 1W, again at Selsey Bill, on the 31st.

At first glance, numbers in April appear to be high compared with recent years, but while small numbers were recorded at the main sites from the 12th onwards, most of the records occurred at the end of the month, notably on 30 Apr with 25W and 63E past Selsey Bill, and 28E past Splash Point.

May proved to be the peak month largely due to an impressive passage west on the 1st when 152 were recorded at Worthing in 5½ hr. Smaller numbers were recorded during all the remaining summer months with notable counts at Selsey Bill of 12W on 18 Jun and 19W on 9 Jul.

The only records for September were of 4W past Selsey Bill on the 1st, a single individual flying west close in to Brighton Palace Pier on the 5th, and another singleton west past Selsey Bill on the 9th.

The final record of the year came from Splash Point when four birds flew east during 4½ hr seawatching on 7 Oct. [CAB]

Balearic Shearwater

Puffinus mauretanicus

Very scarce spring to autumn visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

The total of 75 birds recorded in the county in 2008 was significantly higher than in both 2006 and 2007 (17 and 41, respectively). All were either moving west or lingering offshore unless otherwise stated. The first birds of the year were unseasonal singletons off Selsey Bill on 5 Jan (JA), 3 Feb (JA, SH *et al.*) and 29 Mar (JA *et al.*). Thereafter, birds were seen between the more expected dates of 25 May and 7 Oct as follows. Three were seen moving east off Worthing Beach on 25 May (RAI, DIS *et al.*). During July observers at Selsey Bill had two on the 6th (JA *et al.*), six on the 18th (OM, MT), 23 on the 19th (JA, EDU *et al.*), six on the 20th (JA, SH), 19 (6E) on the 22nd (BFF, DIS *et al.*), two on the 24th (1E) (OM, EDU) and finally one on the 25th (BFF, DIS). Elsewhere in July a singleton was seen off Splash Point (Seaford) on the 11th (MRE, RCS) and two passed there on the 19th (MRE, BRG), whilst a single bird flew east (and then possibly the same bird back west) at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) also on the 19th (RHC). In August, singletons were off Selsey Bill on the 3rd (ITB, JWR, EDU) and the 6th (OM) and one was also seen going east at Splash Point on 9 Aug (RCS). In October, singletons were off Worthing Beach on the 5th (CEH, RAI, DIS *et al.*) while the one seen at Splash Point on 7 Oct (MRE) was the last for the year.

As in 2007, no collated records were received from Brighton Marina or Beachy Head. [CWM]

European Storm Petrel

Hydrobates pelagicus

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

2007: In addition to those already published (*SxBR* 60:51-52) the following were recorded at Selsey Bill: a single on 8 May, 1W on the 11th, 3W on the 12th; two on the 13th; two on the 20th; two on 1 Jun; four on the 2nd; three on the 3rd; five on the 17th; six on the 22nd; a single on the 23rd;

4W and another single on the 24th; 3W on the 26th, two on the 29th and two on the 30th; four on 1 Jul; 1W on the 3rd, 15W on the 5th, five on the 6th and five on 8 July (JA *et al.*). Full endorsement of these records ensures an approach consistent with recent years. The level of duplication involved in them, and those already published, is impossible to determine.

2008: Selsey Bill again provided the majority of records with 8E on 22 May (BFF, OM, DIS *et al.*), two offshore on the 23rd (JA), three on the 24th (JA), one on the 25th (JA) and two on the 29th (OM). One was recorded on 6 Jun (OM) but none were then reported until 2W at Selsey Bill on both the 28th (JA) and 29th (JA) and 1W on the 29th at Worthing Beach (DIS). At Selsey Bill in July one was offshore on the 6th (JA), two on the 8th (BFF) and 16W and 2E on the 10th (BFF, DIS). This was another impressive set of late spring and early summer records, although less so than in 2006 or 2007. [RJF]

Gannet

Morus bassanus

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

Movements at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

	Jan - Feb		Mar - May		Jun - Jul		Aug - Oct		Nov - Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	26	187	2056	625	170	3251	335	1807	25	620
Worthing	242	143	642	251	402	659	129	1183	438	471
Telscombe Cliffs	225	142	683	103	932	204	308	79	55	107
Splash Point	395	199	2701	186	593	69	138	27	267	2

Recorded movements offshore during the first two months of the year were generally higher than last year. Notable counts from the table above were of 106E in one hour on 2 Jan and 111E in two hours on 3 Jan at Worthing. Seawatches of similar duration on those days at Splash Point (Seaford) recorded 56E and 60E respectively.

In the spring there were 16 dates on which counts of 100 or more were made compared with five dates last year, and ten in the previous year. Maxima during this period occurred on 30 Apr with 615E and 78W at Selsey Bill and 315E at Splash Point. At the latter site 337E and 3W were also recorded on 23 May.

Away from the main seawatching sites, an interesting record on 17 May was of 100 birds following a fishing boat into Shoreham Hbr and resting on the sea before gradually dispersing.

During June and July at Splash Point there were 210E on 22 Jun and 106E and 11W on 18 Jul, but the highest counts were recorded at Selsey Bill where 600 birds lingered offshore on 28 Jun and there were 400W and 300 offshore on 19 Jul.

Numbers decreased slightly during late summer and autumn, but notable day counts were 187W on 3 Aug and 384W on 19 Oct at Worthing Beach, and 350W on 12 Aug and 540W on 15 Oct at Selsey Bill. These two sites recorded the highest passage to the end of the year with high day counts of 24E and 273W at Selsey Bill on 8 Nov, and 56E and 168W at Worthing on 25 Dec. There continued to be records of birds lingering offshore during the later months of the year, notably 200 at Worthing on 7 Nov and 350 feeding close inshore at Church Norton on 2 Dec. A

single bird was picked up in a Middleton-on-Sea garden in December and taken into care and was later released successfully. [CAB]

Great Cormorant

Phalacrocorax carbo

Fairly common but localised 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	615	561	597	337	341	513	516	424	570	430	530	454
Chichester Hbr	25	32	24	10	5	9	16	25	34	59	69	31
Pagham Hbr	114	137	111	131	51	60	68	105	174	136	188	107
Chichester GP	120	138	99	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	5	2
Burton/Chingford Ponds	13	-	1	2	-	-	-	nc	12	-	1	26
Ouse Levels	5	11	30	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	5	7	12
Arlington Res	43	35	31	11	2	7	14	15	18	32	32	16
Eastbourne Lakes	33	25	28	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	8	4	9
Bewl Water	17	33	20	nc	nc	nc	nc	23	5	-	18	9
Rye Bay	75	44	102	95	248	408	368	127	175	69	53	79

In the period up to the end of July, the monthly WeBS totals were higher than those recorded for 2007 in every month except February; thereafter, numbers were lower than 2007 in every month except September. Only the June and July totals exceeded the 2006 counts.

In the first winter period, the major concentrations were at Chichester GP and Pagham Hbr, with maxima of 124 on 13 Jan and 11 Feb, respectively. However, the largest single count was of 200 at East Beach (Worthing) on 8 Jan, when approximately 200 were seen in a tight group feeding offshore. Inland, 64 were counted at a nocturnal roost in South Stoke on 11 Feb and 50 were at Arlington Res from 7 to 10 Jan.

In the breeding season, 14 nests were recorded at Iford Brooks on 25 Mar but the largest number was at Rye Hbr LNR in mid-April where a total of 146 nests were counted in two separate colonies in willows on islands in Castle Water. The species was reported as breeding for the first time at Chichester GP with up to 18 nests recorded on 21 May while a nocturnal roost count on 30 Jun reported a high proportion of young among the 48 birds recorded.

In the second winter period, high counts were 161 at Pagham Hbr on 17 Nov, 103 at Chichester GP on 10 Nov and 80 at Brooklands (Worthing) on 30 Dec. On the inland reservoirs, 57 were seen at Arlington Res on 6 Oct and 63 at Bewl Water on 20 Dec. Other than Chichester GP, an inland roost was also recorded at Burton Mill Pond, with a maximum of 27 on 1 Dec. [NR]

Shag*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

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

The 89 reports of this species were mainly of single birds from coastal sites in the west of the county and mostly from the Selsey Bill area (51 in 956 hrs of seawatching). Reports from Selsey Bill and the other major seawatching sites (Worthing Beach, Telscombe Cliffs and Splash Point) are summarised below.

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total		10	2	10	17	2	1	2	4	38	32	6	13
Selsey Bill	E	4	-	-	8	-	1	-	2	7	11	5	-
	W	1	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-
	o/s	1	-	-	4	1	-	2	1	11	8	-	1
Other sites	E	-	-	4	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
	W	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
	o/s	3	2	5	2	-	-	-	1	17	10	1	12

In the first eight months of the year most of the reports were of singletons except for 3E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 16 Mar and occasional twos at Selsey Bill in April. The only birds reported from the eastern coastline beyond Splash Point were singletons from Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 8 Feb and Beachy Head on 24 Apr.

Very few birds were noted during the summer but numbers increased in September and October with four birds offshore at Selsey Bill on 2 Sep and three at Brighton Marina on 5 Sep. Further east, singletons were seen at Hastings on 7 Sep, Glyne Gap on 17 Oct and Rye Bay on 6 Dec. No flocks were seen in the county this year. [JPP]

Eurasian Bittern*Botaurus stellaris*

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

Of the 47 records for this species, all but five related to single birds seen in the Rye Hbr/Pett Level area (27 records) or at Burton Mill Pond (15 records).

In the first winter period a single bird was seen at Rye Hbr LNR on five occasions between 6 Jan and 20 Mar. There were ten reports of the singleton at Burton Mill Pond between 18 and 29 Jan and one was reported to be at Burton Park (Duncton) between 28 and 30 Jan with perhaps the same bird at the nearby Chingford Pond (Duncton) on 1 Mar. A single Bittern was seen flying west over Pevensy Level on 13 Feb and two birds were seen at Pett Level on 16 and 18 Feb with a single bird there on 20 Feb.

There were no reports between 20 Mar and 10 Oct when a single Bittern was first seen at Rye Hbr. This bird was reported on 11 more days until 30 Dec and two birds were seen at this location on 3 and 28 Dec. There were four reports of a singleton at Burton Mill Pond between 4 and 6 Dec while a single bird was seen at Weir Wood Res on 29 Dec. [JPP]

Night Heron*Nycticorax nycticorax**Rare vagrant.*

An adult was flushed from a tree beside Waller's Haven north of Horse Bridge on Waterlot Level (Pevensey) on 29 Apr (PJ) but could not be relocated. It is the sixth record since the beginning of 2000 and takes the county total to 34, having been overtaken this year by Cattle Egret in the rarity stakes. Dated arrivals have been in April (8), May (12), June, July, August (2), September (5), November and December (2) with one in autumn and one unknown. [RJF].

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

Two seen at East Lavant and occasionally Chichester GP from 7 Dec 2007 (*SxBR* 60:56) remained until 7 Apr when four were seen at the former site (MC). The individual at Acton's Fm (Combe Haven) from 31 Dec 2007 until 20 Jan (*SxBR* 60:56) was joined by a second between 23 and 26 Jan (per CWM) while another was seen on Lewes Brooks, Rodmell and Piddinghoe between 1 Jan and 15 Mar (per CWM). The singleton on Pevensey Levels on 10 Feb (CAH) was presumably one of the Combe Haven birds while two adults on Hooe Level (Pevensey) on 18 Mar (PJ) may have been new arrivals. At Coombes (Lancing) up to three were seen between 14 and 27 Apr (MP *et al.*) and a single bird was on Lewes Brooks on 22 Apr (HG), while two at Pagham Hbr North Wall intermittently between 26 Apr and 25 Jul (IL *et al.*) were presumed to be the same as those seen at the start of the year at East Lavant. In May, one was seen at Pevensey Bridge Level on the 13th (ASG) and at Piddinghoe, Rodmell and South Heighton on the 14th -16th (LB, AP *et al.*). Finally, in October, four adults were seen at Chalder Fm (Sidlesham) from the 8th-16th (NP *et al.*) before moving to Castle Water (Rye Hbr LNR) from the 19th to 23rd (CB *et al.*).

Allowing for duplication, a minimum of 16 were recorded during the year, easily the highest total to date, and taking the county total to 47. These include the first occurrences in June, July and October leaving August, September and November as the only months with no records. From 1 January 2009 this species is no longer considered by the BBRC although that sometimes seems to be a catalyst for a species to become rarer again. [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 shown in the table below. Unsurprisingly, significant counts of 30 or more not included in the WeBS table below, or in the roost numbers given below, were made most frequently at the main wetland sites of Chichester, Pagham and, in the east, Rye Harbours; the only other site to be included here was Cuckmere Haven (one count).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	63	70	127	76	78	75	156	162	257	337	141	71
Chichester Hbr	13	27	43	51	43	37	74	86	157	267	78	31
Pagham Hbr	4	9	26	15	13	25	67	55	42	26	24	9
Chichester GP	12	5	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	1	-
Henfield Levels	4	2	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	1
Ouse Valley	8	3	16	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	8	10	6
Cuckmere Haven	6	8	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	21	10	8	7
Pevensey Level	5	2	16	-	7	6	-	2	-	-	2	3
Rye Bay	2	5	-	-	1	1	2	4	15	13	11	7

Fluctuations in the monthly maximum numbers of Little Egrets entering (Thorney Island) or leaving (Rye Hbr LNR) roosts are shown below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Thorney Is	20	-	-	-	-	-	98	151	190	170	72	12
Rye Hbr	-	48	29	-	20	22	36	91	42	44	38	35

The following table shows that the number of nesting Little Egrets, particularly in West Sussex (Sites A-D), continues to grow at a slow rate.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Minimum total	3	1	4	18	19	25	36	40
Site A				12	8	10	12	15
Site B				1	3	7	15	17
Site C			3	3	3	2	3-4	4+
Site D				3-4	4-6	3	3	0
Site E					1 prob	0	0	4
Site F					1	3	3	0
Site G	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0

The total of monthly counts was 21% greater than in 2007 suggesting a further increase in the county population. The peak count occurred in October (later than in the previous two years) and was followed by a marked reduction in numbers suggestive of a significant dispersal, as shown in the table below. [JPP]

	Total	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2008	6634	272	401	300	329	316	256	669	1025	1021	1180	543	322
2007	5453	336	297	316	215	219	172	379	722	1103	865	439	360
2006	4715	257	207	161	214	144	248	438	718	996	754	431	291

Great White Egret

Ardea alba

Rare vagrant.

Four were recorded during the year, beginning with one south of Southease Bridge on 1 Jan (SM). Other records were of birds flying south down the Arun valley at Arundel on 24 Mar (CFB), on Horse-eye Level (Pevensey) from 21 to 22 May (CFB *et al.*) with presumably the same

bird at Hooe Level on the 28th (TH), and finally on Lewes Brooks on 31 Dec (JASP). The good fortune, and careful observation, of the observer finding two of these individuals will be widely recognised. These records take the county total to 26, all but four since 2000. Thanks to the last two this species has now been recorded in the county in every month of the year. September remains the best month with seven records. [RJF]

Grey Heron

Ardea cinerea

Fairly common resident.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	100	95	121	76	31	72	76	76	130	121	151	94
Chichester Hbr	15	9	13	15	6	12	7	14	17	24	29	13
Pagham Hbr	16	13	9	9	8	11	8	9	14	7	17	8
Chichester GP	6	6	7	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	2	1	-
Arun Valley	6	12	5	11	9	23	18	9	11	4	20	2
Adur: Steyning-Henfield	1	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	-	-	5
Henfield Brooks	2	6	11	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	3	4
Weir Wood Res	2	14	26	20	nc	12	14	8	7	4	8	2
Ouse Levels	5	6	8	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	8	9	8	3
Cuckmere Haven	2	1	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	3	1	6	10
Pevensey Levels	4	5	9	6	2	3	1	8	10	5	5	6
Bewl Water	2	4	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	7	23	13	5	4
Rye Bay	13	4	8	3	3	5	9	4	8	18	18	14

During the breeding season 290 nests were counted at 26 sites (233 nests in 2007). Counts for individual heronries, listed from west to east, were as follows (where it was difficult to make an exact count, the “Best Estimate” for the annual BTO census was used): Westbourne 1; Forest Mere 2; Fishbourne 10; Pagham Owl Copse 11; Church Norton 4; Flansham 16; Warningcamp 1; Parham 24; Angmering 2; Knepp 10; Warnham LNR 12; Henfield 14; Ardingly 15; Weir Wood Res 25; Rodmell 3; Firle 10; Charleston 23; Hadlow Down 14; Eridge 20; Hampden Park, Eastbourne 5; Glynleigh 21; Wartling, Horsebridge Road 7; Bewl Water 0; Burwash 10; Pebsham 2; Winchelsea 6; Leasam 22.

Much of the apparent increase in the number of nests is a result of better counts at Weir Wood Res (15-27 in 2007) and at Charleston (3+ in 2007), with more minor increases than minor decreases elsewhere.

During the rest of the year single birds and small groups were seen feeding or loafing in suitable habitat throughout the county. A flock of nine was seen flying over the coast at Beachy Head on 14 Sep. [ABW]

White Stork*Ciconia ciconia**Rare vagrant, mainly in spring.*

Two flew over the A27 at Beddingham roundabout heading NE towards Glynde on 19 Aug (PW). Eighteen individuals recorded since the beginning of 2000 are considered to have been of wild origin and a further five were most likely to have been escapes. Recent individuals have arrived in March (3), April (3), May (5), June (2), July and August (4). This is the first record to involve more than one bird since two flew over Crowborough in March 2000. Prior to that two have been recorded together four times, three thrice and five once (at Polegate in Apr 1972). [RJF].

Black Stork*Ciconia nigra**Very rare vagrant.*

At 09:30 BST on 18 May an adult was watched for 10 minutes circling over Wilmington and then heading south towards the Cuckmere Valley (CD, NMG). At 10:20 BST it was seen circling to the west of the River Cuckmere, north of Alfriston, for 15 minutes before heading south-east towards Eastbourne (DB). Both these observations were made from Arlington Res while other sightings came from Willingdon Levels on 28 May (PMG) (possibly the same as the Cuckmere bird) and Weir Wood Res on 5 Jun (NAD). These records have been accepted by the BBRC. These are the tenth and eleventh county records, assuming the records on 18 and 28 May were the same birds, and the first since 2003; they are equally split between May and August-September. [RJF]

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

There were 108 reports from five sites (excluding those where only fly-bys were recorded) between January and October representing approximately 27 birds.

The maximum monthly counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	1	4	-	6	1	1	1	4	6	5	-	-

The first sighting of the year was of a singleton at Pulborough Brooks on 31 Jan. This was followed in February by a single bird flying east at Widewater (Lancing) on the 11th which might have been the one seen at Cuckmere Haven from 13 to 16 Feb. A single bird flew east into Rye Hbr LNR at dusk on 27 Feb. Next day, a single bird which flew west past Worthing Beach at 08:30 GMT may have been the same one seen later the same day in the Pagham Hbr area.

During April, a singleton seen flying west at Hastings Hbr at 07:20 BST on the 12th might have been the same as one seen at Church Norton the same day. This was followed by one at Pagham Hbr on the 23rd, two there on the 25th and four on the 27th and a single bird at Pulborough Brooks

on 30 Apr. Another single bird was seen at Pulborough Brooks between 29 May and 8 Jun.

On 8 Jul a single adult was seen at Sidlesham Ferry. In Pagham Hbr an adult was seen on 17 Aug and in the same area there were up to three birds between 31 Aug and 1 Sep followed by a singleton from the 13th to 16th and three on the 20th. Finally, there were five birds there on 9 October. [JPP]

Honey-buzzard

Pernis paporus

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

The group which monitors Honey-buzzards in South East England provided the numbers of all known breeding pairs. There were four successful pairs, with three of the pairs raising two young and the fourth raising a singleton. A fifth pair was unsuccessful.

In the spring and early summer there were no reports from coastal localities but there were several records from inland. In West Sussex an adult male was seen at close quarters on the relatively early date of 11 May (DM, BFF, DIS). An unsexed bird was seen over woodland in East Sussex on 18 May, the observer having been alerted to the bird's presence by mobbing gulls and Carrion Crows (BH, KH). On 20 May in the west of the county there was a brief view of a displaying male (BFF, OM, DIS). At one well-watched locality a male was present on 1 Jun and at the same location on 15 Jun there were two males, one female and a fourth bird which was most probably a female (MC, RJF). At this same location there was a displaying male on 22 Jul (BFF, DIS). In early June a female was present for several days in the east of the county and was observed feeding on the ground in a young plantation (DM *et al.*). Elsewhere in the west of the county a male was seen on 13 Jul (CAG).

There were a good number of autumn migrants beginning with three adults flying together at Beachy Head on 30 Aug (GG, RK, SHL). One was clearly an adult male, with the other two unsexed but one of these split off, flying east over Whitbread Hollow and this one was considered to be an adult female (RJF *et al.*). At Old Durfold (Warnham) on 1 Sep an adult male flying south went directly over the observer's head affording an excellent close view (PNP). An unsexed adult was seen circling over the R Adur at Shoreham, drifting upwards to the north and disappearing behind Mill Hill on 8 Sep (BFF). Another two unsexed adults were seen at Seaford on 14 Sep (BE, MRE). There were several more sightings in the Beachy Head area in September with a dark-phase juvenile heading east towards Belle Tout flying out to sea on 20th (RJF *et al.*) and another dark-phase juvenile the following day (SHL). Also on the 21st there was a single unsexed, unaged bird, which was seen by several observers (RJF, SHL *et al.*). Further single unsexed, unaged singles were seen on the 26th (GFJ, SJ) and 27th (ARK, MH) and finally a dark-phase juvenile was seen drifting east on the 28th (ASC, GG). [MEK]

Black Kite*Milvus migrans**Rare vagrant.*

An adult was seen at Boreham Bridge (Pevensey) on 20 May (PJ). It was picked up at 09:15 BST flying in from the west before briefly settling in a field where it was harassed by crows. It then circled around for 4-5 minutes before heading off north and was lost to view at 09:24 BST. Eight have been recorded in East Sussex since 2000, two from this site. The most recent West Sussex record is from 1998. Twenty-six have been recorded in total, in April (6), May (14), June (2), July (2), August and, exceptionally, November (1). [RJF]

Red Kite*Milvus milvus*

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

In the West Sussex study area the regular pair bred for the fifth consecutive year, raising two young (for details of this 70-square-kilometre Downland study area see *SxBR* 60:233-40). The juveniles were fitted with radio tags and also wing tags, with yellow on the left wing and black on the right and labelled with the letters 'K' and 'L'. Sussex B2 and Sussex B3 continued as a pair and in 2008 successfully raised one young, which was also fitted with a radio tag and a wing tag, labelled 'M'. A third pair failed. There was a minimum annual total of 56 different birds recorded within the study area (MEK, CBC). Ten Sussex-tagged Red Kites were seen, and five other tagged birds, with a total of 20 adults and at least 21 different untagged juveniles/2nd-calendar-year birds. The five wing-tagged birds that visited the area were yellow '5'/green (Southern England, 2006), yellow/purple (Southern England, 2007), yellow/missing tag (Southern England adult), white '58'/purple (East Midlands 2007) and blue 'R'/purple (Black Isle, Scotland, 2007) which remained in the area from October 2007 until January 2008.

Red Kites may be seen anywhere in the county and away from the West Sussex study area there were records from 51 different localities, involving 101 different birds with a more or less even split between East and West Sussex. The monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Study area	16	12	14	15	7	7	13	9	9	15	23	19
Elsewhere	0	3	13	10	38	19	6	2	2	5	1	1

During the first three months of the year there were 13 records of singletons from various localities but on 14 Mar there were three flying high WNW at Chichester Hbr. Between April and June there was a probable total of 67 different birds of which 59 were singletons. At six localities two kites were seen: at Henfield on 9 May, at Ashdown Forest on 10 May, at Pulborough Brooks on 19 May, at Brighton Wild Park on 6 Jun, at Blackham Highfields on 6 Jun and at Pett Level on 7 Jun.

The second half of the year was very quiet with just 17 singletons recorded. In the study area the numbers peaked in November with a minimum of 23 different birds. They included the regular breeding pair, Sussex 'Y' and its mate, Sussex B2 and B3, Sussex D, G, K and M, three non-tagged adults, one tagged Southern England adult, East Midlands '58', two non-tagged 2nd-calendar-year birds and six 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 136 individuals seen during the year at about 28 broad locations covering 54 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	8	13	8	24	7	8	12	21	27	17	14	14
Chichester Hbr	1	1	-	3	-	-	-	2	2	1	1	-
Selsey Bill	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-
Pagham Hbr	-	1	-	2	1	-	-	1	4	3	-	2
Arun Valley	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	2	1	-	1	-
Beachy Head	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-
Pevensey Levels	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	2	2	-	-	-
Pett Level	1	4	3	3	2	2	6	2	3	5	6	9
Brede Levels	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1
Rye Hbr	3	3	2	5	2	3	3	2	2	4	3	2
Scotney GP area	1	1	-	2	-	-	1	2	1	1	-	-
Other	-	2	1	5	1	2	-	7	6	1	2	-

The general pattern of sightings was similar to the previous two years but with more pronounced migration peaks in April and August–September. At Selsey Bill, one flew in off the sea on 4 Apr and one was seen flying east on 22 Apr. This latter bird may have been one of the two (a male and, one hour later, a female) seen at Worthing the same day. Breeding was confirmed at one site, where two young were recorded on 1 Jul, and attempted at another where both display and nest building occurred.

A number of individuals were seen along the coast in autumn. On 30 Aug, one flew SW at Beachy Head. A juvenile flew NW over Selsey on 9 Sep. A male flew south over Shoreham Hbr on 14 Sep and one flew south at Selsey Bill on 23 Sep. On 22 Nov, one flew west well out to sea past Worthing. The only roost of note was one of five in the reedbed at Pett Level on 31 Oct. [SHL]

Hen Harrier*Circus cyaneus*

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

For the second consecutive year the number of records received (243) was up, by 30% compared with the 181 for 2007, and as usual these records referred to a small number of localities. The monthly minimum county total for this year was higher too, 64 over 10 months compared with 46 over 10 months for 2007. As usual, the highest monthly total for the first half of the year occurred in January with 12 birds, an increase on the total of seven last year. The vast majority of records concerned three areas: Chichester and Pagham Harbours where at least one ‘ringtail’

was regularly observed hunting and roosting; the Arun valley where two ‘ringtails’ were regularly seen and there was a sighting of a male on 1 Feb; and Ashdown Forest where a male and two ‘ringtails’ were regularly observed going into the usual roost and leaving it just before sunrise. In 2007 there were no records for two previously important areas, the West Sussex Commons and Pevensey Levels. However, this year there were two sightings in the Ambersham area and at least one ‘ringtail’ was observed regularly on Pevensey Levels.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	12	11	8	5	3	1		3	5	7	9
Chichester & Pagham Hbrs	1	1	1	1						2	1
W. Sussex Downs	2	2		1						1	2
W. Sussex Commons		1		1							
Arun Valley	2	3	2	1	1			1	2	2	2
E. Sussex Downs	1	1	1								
Ouse Valley				1						1	1
Ashdown Forest	3	2	2			1			2		2
Pevensey Levels	2	1	1		1						
Rye Bay	1		1					1		1	1
Other sites	-	-	-	-	1			1	1	-	-

With the decline in numbers as birds dispersed to breeding grounds there were 28 records for April which is unusually high, but this total probably involved only five birds. There were three records in May: two birds were seen near Wepham on the 2nd, a bird came in off the sea in the Beachy Head area on the 4th and there was a ‘ringtail’ at Pevensey Levels on the 21st. The last spring record was a female seen on 1 Jun near Long car park (Ashdown Forest).

The first autumn records were of singletons at Pett Level Pools on 26 Sep and Pulbrough Brooks on 27 Sep; these were the only records for the month. Birds returned to the Arun valley and Ashdown Forest in the second half of October and a juvenile came in off the sea on the 31st at Telscombe Cliffs. As usual birds continued to arrive in other areas during the last two months of the year. [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.

2007: Records of a ringtail bird seen in East Sussex at High and Over on 13 Jun and Bo Peep on 17 Jun (ARK, MDMH) have been accepted by the SOSRC and are considered to relate to the same individual.

2008: Just one record for this species was accepted this year, of two females at the Midrips on 8 Jun (DG, PG). [PJE]

Goshawk*Accipiter gentilis*

Rare visitor; mainly in winter; has bred and may be resident in the county. Schedule 1 species.

Records from two observers were accepted: a single sighting of a male on 17 Feb (GB) and a series of sightings of a male, with the first on 26 Jan and the last on 3 May (MM). [PJE]

Sparrowhawk*Accipiter nisus*

Common resident and passage migrant.

As in previous years, records (1327) were received from across the entire county with the majority of the records relating to single birds. High counts in the first half of the year were five at Strivens Reedbeds (Steining) in February, and four in February and five in April at Warnham LNR, and four were reported at West Dean Woods between 11 and 15 Mar. One was seen sitting on a garden feeder at Wivelsfield Green on 3 Jan. There were no spring records of likely migrants coming in off the sea.

The earliest report of probable breeding was a pair displaying at Wiggonholt Common on 9 Jan. On the same date two males were reported chasing at Worthing. Confirmed breeding was recorded at 20 sites, the first being at Blackham Highfields on 20 May. Probable breeding was recorded at a further 36 sites. During the BBS, a total of 33 individuals was counted in 28 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed.



*Sparrowhawk, Bishopstone, September 2008
(Peter Wilson)*

In the latter half of the year, three birds were seen together in the fields west of Selsey on 12 Sep and six birds were reported flying south, possibly out to sea, from North Fields (Pagham) on 14 Sep. On 27 Sep six were at Crowlink (East Dean), on 29 Sep three were seen together over the cliffs east of Cuckmere Haven and on 8 Oct three were at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head). An immature male was seen to mob a Short-eared Owl at Thorney Deeps on 6 Dec.

Prey species recorded were: Collared Dove, Wood Pigeon, Pied Wagtail, House Martin, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Starling, House Sparrow, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Chaffinch, rather more remarkably an immature Carrion Crow caught by a female, and a toad. [MJC]

Common Buzzard*Buteo buteo*

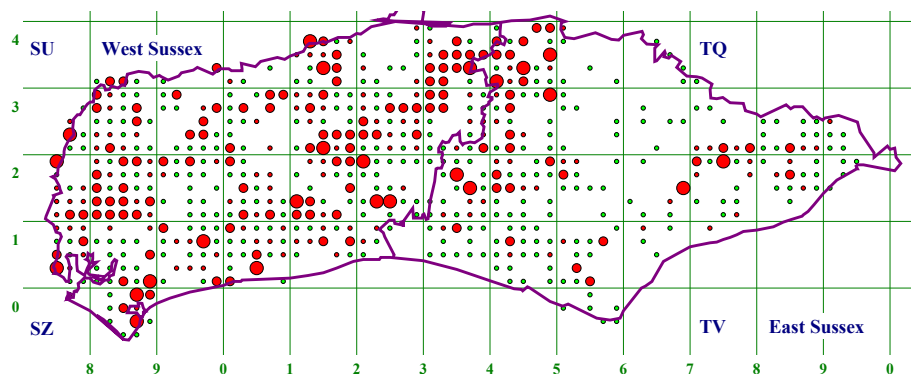
Fairly common and increasing resident and passage migrant.

This year saw a substantial increase in the number of records (2121) submitted. Almost half (46%) of all reports related to sightings of more than one bird and sightings of five or more represented 7% of all records received.

The minimum monthly totals and numbers of tetrads (2-km squares) where birds were recorded were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	375	482	301	484	309	412	163	157	335	175	91	80
No. of tetrads	173	203	128	248	190	211	97	64	107	73	59	54

During the first winter period there were eight records of ten or more birds. In January these included 20 at West Dean Woods on the 22nd and 20 at Battines Hill (Up Marden) on the 25th. The highest counts in February were of 24 at West Dean Woods on the 9th with ten there again on the 12th and 12 reported at Knights Hill (Charlton) on 21 Feb. The highest count for March was of 20 also at Knights Hill on the 15th while ten were seen at Lodge Hill Fm (West Dean) on the 20th.



There was a correspondingly large increase in evidence of breeding activity compared with last year with 26 confirmed breeding records (12 pairs in 2007) and 124 probable (18 in 2007) with a further 133 possible breeding records. There was, however, very little reporting of breeding success although among the records for June were reports of three downy young in a nest on the 5th at Thorney Island, while at Ashdown Forest, two young were reported in their nest on the 25th.

In the spring and early summer period, two flying east and one west at Lancing on 9 Apr were probable migrants. The highest count in April was 12 at Weir Wood Res on the 1st. On the 3rd there were ten over Blackcap (Plumpton) and on the same day there were nine in Washington, with five birds seen resting on the ground while four circled above them mewing loudly. On 1 May five over the University of Sussex attracted the attention of a Hobby and Sparrowhawk. The area around East Marden and the Trundle had six throughout June while on the 5th 12 were seen over Red House Common (Chailey) and 11 were over Strood Green (Slinfold) on the 15th.

During the late summer and autumn, Thorney Island had five on 4 Jul and eight were reported over Colworth Fm (Chilgrove) on the 25th. In August eight birds were reported from two locations, Steyning Round Hill on the 23rd and Arundel WWT on the 29th. Indications of probable migration in September included 17 over Pulborough Brooks on the morning of the 8th before they drifted south and on the 20th at least 40 were seen moving mainly east over Brighton.

As usual, in the late winter period there were only two counts of ten or more and both of these occurred in October. Ten at Pagham Harbour on the 8th were followed by 15 seen in one scan from the Burgh (Burpham) on the 16th. Numbers dropped in November with four reported from both

Amberley Wild Brooks and West Dean Woods on the 7th and four again at Pulborough Brooks on the 27th. December had a high count of nine at Colworth Fm with four over Buck Barn (West Grinstead) on the 20th.

Records of birds mobbing Buzzards included Jackdaw, Raven, Hobby, Carrion Crow and Common Tern. [LW]

Osprey

Pandion haliaetus

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

Approximately 74 were seen during the year at 32 locations across the county. This compares with the 62 recorded in 2007. The sightings are summarised as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Monthly total	5	18	7	3	3	7	30	7
Chichester Hbr	-	4	2	2	1	1	5	2
Pagham Hbr	1	2	2	-	-	3	3	1
Warnham LNR	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	1
Weir Wood Res	-	1	-	-	-	-	3	-
Brighton	1	1	-	-	-	1	1	-
Arlington Res	-	1	-	-	-	-	3	-
Cuckmere Haven	-	1	1	-	-	1	2	-
Rye Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-
Other	3	7	1	1	2	-	11	3

The first arrivals (all single birds) in March were at Splash Point (Seaford) on the 18th, Peacehaven on the 25th, Brighton and Burgess Hill on the 26th (possibly the same bird) and Pagham Hbr on the 27th. The average first arrival date during the previous 10 years has been 25 Mar. There were a number of records from the coast in April including one seen to fly in off the sea at Selsey Bill on the 27th. On 12 Apr 'Logie', a female bird being satellite-tracked from Africa left Ardingly Res sometime after 09:00 BST and the next day was near the M25 by 10:00 BST. She roosted near Virginia Water overnight. Singles were also seen over Hodcombe (Beachy Head) on 13 and 15 May.

There were reports from Chichester Hbr from 6 Jun through to 16 Jul. One, presumably an early autumn migrant, flew south over Worthing on 1 Jul. From late July, there were many reports from favoured haunts of which one record of five sitting on fence posts on the east side of Thorney Island on 17 Sep was the most remarkable. On 18 Sep, one was over Worthing Beach for about 40 minutes before it caught a fish. Interestingly, during this time, two were seen heading east offshore at Church Norton. The last for the year was one seen at Barcombe on 26 Oct. It was presumably the bird seen the day before over Lewes. [SHL]

Common Kestrel*Falco tinnunculus*

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

The species was noted in 368 1-km squares (9.1% of the 4057 1-km squares in the county) suggesting that this species is still fairly common and widespread.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	257	353	173	404	361	389	159	89	192	134	107	97

The first suggestion of spring migration observed at the usual seawatching sites was a report of 1W at Worthing beach on 2 Apr. However, most such reports came from Splash Point (Seaford), the first being 1W on 17 Apr and 1E and 1W on the 27th. These were followed by further reports of possible movement in May with 1W on the 3rd and then sightings on consecutive days between the 5th and 7th of individuals moving eastwards from the same site. The only other reports came from Selsey Bill with 1N on the 20 Apr and, much later, of 1E from Worthing Beach on the 15 Aug.

During the BBS, a total of 64 birds (maximum four) was recorded in 49 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed. Breeding was confirmed for 23 pairs in 21 1-km squares and was probable in a further 13 1-km squares. Examination of eleven of the nests produced no fewer than 26 young at a rate of 2.36 per nest. There were ten in owl boxes sited in trees, two in barn boxes and two in other nest boxes. Records for confirmed and probable breeding and the average number of young per nest represented a significant decrease on the figures for 2007 and this appears to continue a worrying trend over the past few years.

Prey items recorded included: a slow-worm/snake sp., several vole sp. and earthworms. Unsuccessful attempts to take a mole and a Robin were recorded together with several successful attempts at robbing Barn Owls of their catch and most interestingly a female catching dragonflies on 27 Oct. [JJE]

Red-footed Falcon*Falco vespertinus*

Rare vagrant.

An adult male flew SE over Steep Down (Lancing) at 20:21 BST on 21 July (CWM, CM). It is the third county record since the start of 2000 and the 34th in total. The second highest influx ever, after 1992, occurred in Britain in May with at least 58 recorded, mostly in Eastern England (*Birding World* 21:184). Only 20 remained into June and of the three seen in July this was the last by over two weeks (*Birding World* 21:226 and 21:270). While recent records are set to be well down on the 11 seen in the 1990s, helped by four in early June 1992, they are likely to be consistent with the previous decade totals of 3, 4 and 4 from the 1960s to 1980s, respectively. The 24 recorded in the last 50 years have appeared in May (12), June (9), July (2) and September. This is the second latest in that period, the other July record being an adult female on the 3rd (1989), while the September report was of an immature on the 8th (at Sidlesham in 1968). [RJF]

Merlin*Falco columbarius*

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

A very approximate total of 103 were recorded from 36 broad locations during the year covering 72 1-km squares. A total of 81 were seen in the previous year. Of those recorded in 2008, only 19 were seen more than 10 km inland. Only ten definite males were reported. The monthly data are summarised as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Monthly total</i>	18	12	8	6	1	-	-	-	19	20	13	11
<i>Chichester Hbr</i>	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	2	1
<i>Pagham Hbr</i>	2	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	2	2	2	2
<i>Arun Valley</i>	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-		1	2	1
<i>Adur Valley</i>	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-
<i>Rye Hbr</i>	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	1	-
<i>Other</i>	12	6	4	5	1	-	-	-	12	11	5	7

The last record for the first winter period was of one at Selsey Bill on 2 May. None were then recorded until 1 Sep when one was seen at Rye Hbr. Another bird flew in off the sea at Hastings on 1 Nov. At Bognor Regis on 5 Dec, one was seen to settle on a bird table. [SHL]

Hobby*Falco subbuteo*

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

This species was observed at 99 broad sites covering 182 1-km squares. This compares with 75 sites and 158 1-km squares in 2007. Monthly site totals were as follows:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
No. of sites	24	52	49	39	34	32	7

The first arrivals in April were individuals at Falmer on the 1st, Pagham Hbr on the 3rd, Warnham LNR on the 4th and both Plumpton and Selsey Bill on the 8th. The previous 10-year average arrival date has been 8 Apr. The main arrival is summarised below:

Week	15-22 Apr	23-30 Apr	1-8 May	9-15 May
Sites	8	15	25	25
Daily max.	7	7	20	22

Daily maxima in the first half of May were significantly higher than last year. Birds seen at the coast during the spring totalled seven in April, five in May and two in June at Selsey Bill; three in April at Worthing Beach (two on a WSW wind on the 25th and one on a SSW wind on the 29th); and eight in May at Splash Point (Seaford). At the latter site, two exhausted birds landed on the beach at about 07:30 BST on 18 May and then flew off some 30 minutes later. The largest gathering in spring was of 16 at Horse Eye Level (Pevensey) on 25 May.

Breeding was confirmed at six locations (five broad sites). At four of these sites, juveniles were

seen and two of them remained at one site until 8 Oct. At one of these locations, an adult was seen carrying a Collared Dove; another adult and a juvenile were also present. Such a large item of prey for this species is highly unusual but not unprecedented. Breeding was considered probable at a further 14 broad sites (including two pairs at two sites) and possible at yet another 26. The total of 45 sites above is considerably more than in 2007 (20 sites) and probably reflects the extra bird surveying effort this year. Unfortunately, one juvenile was found dead, having been hit by a car, near one of the possible breeding sites in West Sussex on 3 Sep.

On autumn passage, birds were recorded widely, though no more than three were seen on any one day at any site. Interestingly, three were recorded at Pett Level on 11 Oct, a comparatively late date for such a multiple sighting. The last record for the year was of one at Church Norton (Pagham Hbr) on 15 Oct. The average last date during the previous 10 years was 23 Oct. [SHL]

Peregrine Falcon

Falco peregrinus

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

Yet again there was an increase in the number of records received (692) over the previous highest ever total of 601 for 2007. The proportion of birds recorded in the northern half of the county also appears to be increasing. There were several records of birds clashing with each other with three seen talon grappling at Newick (JSG) and ‘two males noisily tussling’ at Henfield (JAN *et al.*). Interesting interactions with other species included a first-year female mobbing a ringtail Hen Harrier at Pulborough Brooks (PH) and an adult harassing an Osprey that was eating a fish on a post at South Stakes Island, Chichester (CBC). In addition to the usual prey items of Feral and Wood Pigeons, recorded prey included Moorhen, Starling, Turnstone and Whimbrel.

Sussex Peregrine Study (SPS) has again provided detailed data on all known breeding pairs. At least 22 pairs held territories in the county and there were 21 breeding attempts of which 15 were successful, producing a minimum of 39 fledged young. The inland pair that was observed holding territory for the two previous years was present again but still did not breed.

Successful fledging was recorded at nine coastal cliff eyries including a site which had not been used for more than 100 years. This was an increase of three eyries compared with 2007 (and two more than in 2006) but productivity was lower: 17 fledged compared with 16 in 2007 and 18 in 2006. Five pairs fledged one young, one pair fledged two, two pairs fledged three and one pair fledged four.

There were ten breeding attempts made at nine inland sites. One pair fledged four young, one pair fledged three, one pair fledged two and two pairs fledged one, making a total of 11 chicks fledged. A pair at an isolated site failed at the late egg/young chick stage and four geographically linked and previously successful pairs all failed at this stage too, although one of these pairs later recycled and fledged a single male very late in the season. Interestingly a pair at a fifth, far less well-known site in the same area successfully fledged young. The pair that first bred successfully in 2006 on an apartment block balcony in Brighton, but failed in 2007 when they relocated to the roof of a different building, this year fledged a single chick on a nearby roof in the same area. Three young, two males and a female, fledged at the new inland site where successful breeding was suspected in 2007. At the inland eyrie which is very close to a Raven nest, the Peregrines attacked the Ravens with the same frequency and intensity as last year, but they fledged two young compared with one in 2007 and the Ravens fledged four compared with five in 2007.

Seven chicks were ringed at three sites, two coastal (three males at one site and a male and a female at the other) and one inland (two males).

The three nest box sites produced 11 young. Webcams were operating at both Chichester Cathedral and Sussex Heights (Brighton) this year. At Chichester Cathedral, the first egg was laid on 19 Mar and the clutch was completed with a fourth on the 26th. Hatching started on 27 Apr and all four chicks had emerged by midday on the 28th. Three males and a female were ringed on 20 May.

At Sussex Heights the first egg was laid on 18 Mar and the clutch was completed with a fourth on the 25th. The first chick hatched on 28 Apr, and the rest emerged by 11:00 BST the next day. When ringed on 19 May the chicks were confirmed as being three males and a female. On the evening of 9 Jun the female was rescued from a 'back yard' near Sussex Heights and returned to the nest box. On the morning of the 11th she 'crash landed' onto a balcony on the 16th floor of a nearby block of flats and then later flew back to Sussex Heights. It seems almost certain that one of the young males perished during the post-fledging period as no more than five birds, i.e. two adults and three young, were being seen after 13 Jun and on checking through the daily webcam coverage it was colour ring "Black 24" which was missing (<http://www.regencybrighton.com/birds/2008/>).

At Shoreham Power Station three chicks, two males and a female, were ringed on 21 May and an addled egg was also found in the nest box (GCMR). The problem of the chicks fledging before they are strong enough to fly properly occurred yet again. On 15 Jun the female chick and one of the males were found on the ground and were unable to fly up to the lowest roof. SPS were called in to deal with them and as there was a major social event taking place at the power station the next day the birds were removed from the site, checked carefully for injuries and fed, and returned to the roof area on 17 Jun. On 22 Jun SPS received a call from RSPCA Mallydams Wildlife Centre, Hastings, who had just received the female chick. She had been found on the ground in the Patcham area by members of the public and was in poor condition. SPS were asked to take on the rehabilitation of the bird and they collected her later that day. She was released again at the power station on 13 Jul and flew strongly towards the nest box, but both parents reacted very aggressively to her and the female ended up chasing her away. Subsequent observations indicated that neither of the other two young were present suggesting that they may have perished. At other sites adults were still interacting with their young; this usually continues through into September and often beyond that, with some adults only driving the young away at the onset of the new breeding season. The female youngster was picked up again on 25 Jul at Happy Valley near the A27, but she was totally emaciated and could not be saved. During a shutdown of the power station, in the winter, the inside of the chimney was inspected and at the bottom, which is the hottest point, the burnt remains of one of the 2008 males were found: it must have fallen down from the top of the stack. Its BTO metal ring and the plastic colour ring were recovered; both were in surprisingly good condition, with the colour ring being just slightly discoloured and distorted, which is remarkable given the colossal temperatures to which they had been exposed!

There was concern that the four unexplained nest failures which occurred in the same area (see above) might have been the result of persecution or disturbance, e.g. by birdwatchers, falconers, gamekeepers, photographers or pigeon fanciers. Egg collectors are unlikely to have been responsible because all of the nests failed at the late egg/early chick stage. Other more direct persecution had also taken place during the year: a Peregrine that had been shot was taken to RSPCA Mallydams Wildlife Centre, Hastings, and had to be euthanased because of the extent of its injuries, and a number of Common Buzzard poisonings and shootings occurred. As a result, in January 2009 Sussex Police in partnership with SPS launched Operation Eyrie, an initiative to

protect our wild birds of prey and bring offenders to justice.

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

Water Rail

Rallus aquaticus

Very scarce resident; winter visitor and passage migrant.

2007: Although three birds were present in the second half of October the report of three birds being trapped and ringed at Beachy Head during this period (*SxBR* 60) was erroneous.

2008: There were 377 records received for this species covering at least 70 sites (a mix of 1-km squares and tetrads) covering a wide range of suitable habitats right across the county. The minimum numbers of birds seen were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	47	55	30	18	6	5	3	4	30	46	66	65
Thorney Deeps	11	10	2	2	-	1	-	2	4	4	6	8
Arundel WWT	3	5	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	2	4	4
Warnham LNR	2	3	5	2	-	-	-	-	3	4	3	4
Pett Level	4	5	3	4	3	-	-	-	4	6	3	5
Rye Hbr	1	3	4	3	1	1	1	-	2	6	2	3
Other sites	26	29	15	7	2	3	2	2	16	24	48	41

More than ten records were received both from the five main sites above (the only ones with records for eight or more months (the 'wintering visiting' period)) and also from Pagham Hbr, Halseys Fm (Sidlesham), Pulborough Brooks, Widewater (Lancing) and Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head). The above data confirms the status of this species as very much a winter visitor to Sussex but its actual status as a passage migrant would require sophisticated studies to quantify.

During the first three months of the year, with the exception of the main sites, 97% of 84 records were of either single birds (77%) or twos (20%).

During the breeding season, one pair was reported nesting at Sandgate Park (Storrington), at least six pairs probably bred at Pett Level and up to four birds were heard calling at Rye Hbr between March and May. Elsewhere breeding was thought probable at five other sites at two of which birds were reported as breeding but were not monitored. Also, six birds were recorded in suitable habitat.

During the last four months of the year there was an increase in the monthly recording rate. With the exception of the five main sites and also the north side of the Pagham Hbr area, 93% of 109 records were of either single birds (72%) or twos (21%). In the area of Halsey's Fm and the adjacent Breech Pool (Pagham Hbr) which borders it, six birds were recorded on 14 Sep and on several dates in early mid-October. The peak count was 12 on 4 Nov but with six still there on 9 Dec (but only two reported for the 27th). [JPP]

Spotted Crane*Porzana porzana*

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

An adult male was seen, and photographed, at Shoreham Hbr on 19 Feb (SM). One of the most surprising records ever in the county, it was seen completely out of normal habitat feeding along the shingle-covered promenade leading to the eastern arm of the harbour before being disturbed by two fishermen and flying off north over the timber yard. It is the fifteenth to be recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000 and the earliest since one was found freshly dead on Amberley Wild Brooks on 16 Feb 1975. The other recent records have been in April, May, August (4), September (6) and October (2). [RJF]

Moorhen*Gallinula chloropus*

Very 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	769	715	709	272	203	154	304	385	642	509	605	579
Chichester Hbr	77	67	108	25	14	11	28	29	32	44	66	68
Pagham Hbr	44	52	30	22	21	15	31	28	32	22	54	51
Chichester GP	174	138	128	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	5	3	3
Arun Valley	138	166	136	109	90	73	89	90	150	35	148	118
Brooklands Worthing	25	18	19	12	7	2	8	10	26	28	23	30
Weirwood Res	1	6	6	4	nc	1	8	14	16	31	19	3
Bewl Water	44	35	42	nc	nc	nc	nc	101	93	121	53	25
Alexandra Park	31	27	27	23	21	nc	27	26	24	28	20	27
Rye Bay	98	73	80	30	22	30	66	45	109	54	88	119

The total number recorded in the first winter period was 14.5% higher than last year but in contrast totals were 2% lower in spring, 8.6% lower in summer and 33% lower in the second winter period.

There were 2869 records of Moorhen from 501 tetrads. Breeding was confirmed in 179 tetrads and probable in a further 54. A Moorhen was reported to be sitting on eggs at Lewes on 29 Jan but the first young were not reported until 21 Apr at Southwater quarry. During the BBS, a total of 124 birds was counted in 57 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed. The last report of breeding was of a brood of three at Brooklands (Worthing) on 17 Jul. Forty-two nests and broods were located at Rye Hbr LNR.

A Peregrine was reported to have caught and killed a Moorhen at Thorney Deeps on 6 Feb. [JPP]

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	3341	2605	1862	558	382	653	937	1143	2158	2277	2981	2927
Chichester Hbr	175	182	119	32	12	17	14	16	77	104	139	84
Pagham Hbr	98	68	48	43	48	54	145	83	110	79	88	108
Chichester GP	724	621	501	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	226	477	606	624
Arun Valley	97	127	138	120	94	113	112	162	128	2	184	40
Eastbourne Lakes	391	198	122	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	348	514	505	484
Bewl Water	286	210	169	nc	nc	nc	nc	205	212	184	185	214
Rye Bay	940	662	393	223	119	311	435	430	551	405	641	754
Scotney Court GP	320	260	143	26	33	37	57	150	299	292	412	390

Reports of this species during the first winter period were 17% higher than in 2007 and 15% higher in spring. In contrast, while the summer figures were 23% lower, in the second winter period numbers were similar (-3%).

Overall, there were 1829 reports of Coot at 338 sites in 209 tetrads with breeding confirmed in 79 and probable breeding recorded in a further 31. A bird was seen prospecting a nest site at Chantry Pond (Storrington) on 24 Jan and a nest with five eggs was seen at Sefter Fm (Rose Green) on 8 Mar. The first chicks were reported from Southwater CP on 4 Apr. During the BBS, a total of 65 birds was counted (maximum 5/sq in the early count and 25/sq in the late count) in 17 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed. Rye Hbr LNR reported that at least 40 pairs had bred. [JPP]

Common Crane*Grus grus**Rare visitor.*

There were a number of spring records of adults from Pulborough Brooks with three on 18-19 Mar, two on 3-4 Apr, three on 18 May and at least two on 22 May (all PHH *et al.*). Elsewhere, an adult was seen at Poling on 3 Jun (TAJ) with presumably the same in fields at Black Ditch (Angmering) on 4 Jun before flying off high to the west (CWM), an adult flew east over Thornham Point (Thorney) on 27 Jun (CBC, ER), one circled Pett Level several times before heading south on 25 Sep (PEJ *et al.*) and finally an adult flew over the Little Deeps at Thorney at dusk on 24 Oct (CBC, PMP *et al.*). The records from Pulborough, which recall those there in 2007, were all on the North Brooks where they roosted overnight on at least the first two occasions. When calling they could be heard from the car park at Upperton's Barn! It seems likely that the two May records involved the same individuals and while there may be more duplication amongst the others, a total of 12 for the year does not seem unreasonable. Twenty-nine have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000. Decade totals from the 1960s to 1990s have been 220-340, 6, 16 and 8, respectively, the high total for the 1960s all being during 30 October to 4 November 1963. [RJF]

Oystercatcher*Haematopus ostralegus*

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

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	2226	1840	1627	814	482	533	699	1188	1646	1290	1578	1731
Chichester Hbr	1516	1337	1019	404	217	400	367	925	1486	1237	1359	1189
Pagham Hbr	182	322	265	202	116	55	126	173	121	26	161	210
Rye Bay	427	170	325	198	143	73	195	87	32	26	38	313

In the first winter period no counts exceeded the WeBS totals. Away from the main harbours, the largest groups were 93 at Climping Beach on 13 Jan, 90 at Cuckmere Haven on 3 Mar, and 88 at Rustington Beach on 22 Jan.

Small groups were noted passing seawatching sites in all months; most of these probably related to local movements, although a small peak in April and May can be detected.

A minimum of 46 pairs bred, with another eight pairs holding territory. In the Rye Hbr area, 28 nests were found, and hatching and fledging were reported to be better than usual. Eight pairs bred at Pagham Hbr, along with four pairs at Pett Level, two at North Stakes Island, two at East Guldeford Level, and single pairs at Cobnor and Arundel WWT. During the BBS, seven birds were found in three out of the 136 1-km squares surveyed.

Single birds in more unusual locations were reported from Henfield Levels on 18 Mar, Arlington Res on 12 Apr, Lewes Brooks on 18 May and Bewl Water on 14 Aug, while one remained at Pulborough Brooks from 16 Mar until 6 May. The albino bird first recorded at Pagham Hbr in 1999 was noted there again on 17 May.

In the second winter period, the 161 at Pagham Hbr on 25 Oct supplemented the low WeBS count for that month, with 200 there on 2 Nov. There were also 1500 at West Wittering on 20 Sep. At Rye Hbr, low WeBS counts were supplemented by 200 on 7 Sep, 96 on 10 Oct, 280 on 30 Nov and 520 on 29 Dec. The largest groups elsewhere were 150 at Cuckmere Haven on 10 Sep, 110 at Portobello Beach on 31 Oct (with 121 there on 14 Dec) and 51 at Littlehampton on 22 Dec. [CJRB]

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
28	18	51	79	91	44	52	58	23	6	29	32

Wintering numbers in January and February were the lowest since 1999. At Thorney Island, 16 were present from 1 to 12 Jan, but the only report after that was of one on 1 Feb. At Pagham Hbr,

there were ten on 1 Jan and 12 on the 21st, but numbers then steadily dwindled to a maximum of two during February, until the arrival of nine on 15 Mar marked the start of spring passage. At Sidlesham Ferry Pool, one or two birds were present continuously from the end of March until mid-November. In the east of the county, birds were arriving at breeding sites from the end of February, with 11 already present on the 28th at one site.

Spring passage was noted from seawatching sites from 15 Mar but it was very light compared with recent years, the minimum total being 25. The highest day count was seven at Splash Point (Seaford) on 16 Apr, and six passed Brighton Marina on the 26th. As usual, almost all the passage was recorded at Splash Point, and none at all at Selsey Bill. Sightings at less usual locations during this period included one at Pulborough Brooks from 26 to 28 Mar, and three called in at Weir Wood Res on 27 May.

The breeding population in the east of the county seems to have levelled off, with about 43 pairs nesting at two main sites, a small decrease from 2007. At one site, 13 pairs fledged at least ten young, and at least 30 pairs bred at the second site. At a third East Sussex location two birds were recorded on 4 Jul and an adult was seen with three fledged young on 23 Jul. A pair also bred at a new site in the west of the county, and with no competition from any other pairs, successfully raised a brood of four.

Autumn dispersal produced counts of 38 at the Midrips on 30 Jul, with 25 still there on 28 Aug, and birds also congregated at Pett Level Pools, where there were 18 on 21 Aug and 13 on 6 Sep. At Sidlesham Ferry Pool, six arrived on 26 Jul and remained until the end of September; this was almost certainly the family group from the successful breeding site described above. Two called in at Weir Wood Res on 6 Sep.

In the second winter period, numbers were again low, this time the lowest since 2000. Birds were first noted on 19 Nov, when there were ten at Thorney Island, rising to 23 on 13 Dec, though there were no further reports. At Pagham Hbr, there were 15 on 25 Nov and 11 on 9 Dec. The only birds elsewhere were four at Camber Shore on 23 Nov and one at Pett Level on 28 Dec, with presumably the same bird at the Midrips on the following day. [CJRB]

Stone-curlew

Burhinus oedichnemus

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

One was seen on the Flat Beach at Rye Hbr LNR on 18 Apr (CB). Twelve individuals have been recorded in the county since the start of 2000, in March (2), April (4), May, June (3), August and October. [RJF]

Little Ringed Plover

Charadrius dubius

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

The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
No. of sites	5	15	11	17	13	6	2
No. of birds	5	26	31	22	34	20	4

The first birds to arrive were two at Pulborough Brooks on 15 Mar, an identical date and site to last year and three days earlier than the 10-year average. Birds continued to arrive until late April, and over the following two months there were reports of six or more birds from three sites, including eight at one site on 15 May. The only reports away from the breeding areas were of single birds at Westfield on 26 Mar, Hastings Beach on 20 Apr, and Widewater (Lancing) on the following day.

A minimum of seven pairs were confirmed breeding at five sites, three coastal and two inland, and two broods of two and one of three young were seen at three of these sites. Records suggest that single pairs probably bred at a further four sites, and possibly also at four others. All these sites have been used regularly in recent years.

Nearly all records between July and September came from the breeding sites, and included six at the Midrips on 28 Jul and seven at two other sites. Very few lingered into September this year, and the last record was of one at Castle Water (Rye Hbr LNR) on the 29th, six days later than the 10-year average. [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	443	234	201	195	118	43	34	231	195	184	460	171
Chichester Hbr	233	154	34	38	24	7	4	61	12	132	395	86
Pagham Hbr	126	21	107	94	43	32	-	63	111	-	28	42
Climping	9	4	15	17	3	nc	20	26	5	nc	-	3
Lower Adur Estuary	25	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Langney	-	-	10	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	37	15	-	nc
Rye Bay	50	51	35	43	34	4	5	80	30	37	33	40

In the first winter period there were no counts in excess of those in the WeBS table, and none exceeded the 1% national threshold (330). The largest groups elsewhere were 46 at Widewater (Lancing) on 12 Jan, 30 at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 15th and the same number at Goring Gap on the 16th. In the spring, very few were recorded from seawatching points, the maximum being 10E at Worthing Beach on 17 Apr, but numbers at Pilsey Island showed a distinct passage peak of 246 on 16 May.

A total of 62 pairs bred, only four fewer than those counted for last year's full BTO national breeding survey. There were 33 pairs at Rye Hbr, though hatching success was poor and few birds fledged, and 11 pairs nested at Pagham Hbr. At Pilsey Island, two out of five pairs did well to raise six young between them, and pairs were also successful at North Stakes Island, East Head (Wittering), Climping, East Worthing, Southwick Beach, Newhaven Tide Mills and The Crumbles. A pair at Cuckmere Haven made two failed attempts on a beach with heavy public use, and no birds bred this year at Brighton Marina. The only inland records were of one at Weir Wood Res on 5 May, two at Arlington Res on the 18th, and one at Houghton on 21 Sep.

The autumn migration peak is shown well by counts at Pilsey Island of 300 on 12 Aug, rising

to 400 on the 18th and then 600 on the 28th. In the second winter period, 209 at Pilsley Island was the only count exceeding the WeBS total, and only the November count at Chichester exceeded the 1% threshold. The highest counts elsewhere were of 72 at Brooklands (Worthing) on 2 Nov, 52 at Brighton Marina on the 22nd, and 44 on the Lower Adur on 6 Dec. [CJRB]

Kentish Plover

Charadrius alexandrinus

Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant; formerly bred.

A female was photographed on Church Norton mudflats on 27 Apr (CWM *et al.*). Twenty have been recorded in the county since the start of 2000. Records during this period have been in April (10), May (7), August (2) and September, five of which have been at Pagham Hbr and eight at Pilsley. Decade totals from the 1960s to 1990s are 16, 19, 24 and 44, respectively, an upward trend that is very unlikely to be continued. [RJF]

Dotterel

Charadrius morinellus

Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant, formerly bred and one has wintered. Schedule 1 species.

In autumn an adult was seen at Balsdean on 31 Aug-1 Sep (ITB), one was photographed on the Flat Beach (Rye Hbr LNR) on 9 Sep and presumably the same bird was observed on the seawall at nearby Pett Pools on the 13th (MO). A juvenile was watched flying round the fields west of Selsey at Earnley on 15 Sep before heading off north (AB, OM). The Balsdean individual is probably the first scarcity in the county to have been photographed with a mobile telephone through a pair of binoculars, an impressive feat. Fifty-five have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000, being first seen in April (2), May (28), August (15), September (5) and October (2). [RJF]

Golden Plover

Pluvialis apricaria

Common winter visitor and passage migrant, 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	1002	1478	965	121	2	-	1	66	657	1730	4286	3546
Chichester Hbr	450	208	260	40	-	-	-	7	107	610	319	1090
Bracklesham Bay	-	1	125	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-
Pagham Hbr	390	1168	30	-	2	-	-	-	-	335	767	400
Pevensey Levels	90	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	70
Rye Bay	72	100	550	81	-	-	-	21	-	700	1500	486
Scotney Court GP	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	38	550	85	1700	1500

The WeBS figures this year give an inaccurate picture of the true numbers present in many cases. In the first winter period, the monthly maxima at Pagham Hbr were 1700 on 21 Jan and

221 on 8 Mar. At Thorney Island the highest count was of 4000 on 11 Jan (the only one to exceed the 1% national threshold of 2500), declining to 600 on 22 Feb and 300 by 10 Mar. In the east of the county, counts remained high throughout, with 1700 on 1 Jan, and 1300 on 15 Mar at the Flat Beach (Rye Hbr LNR) and 1600 at East Guldeford Levels on 21 Feb. The only reports away from these main concentrations were of up to 30 in the Arun valley in January and February and two at Lewes Brooks on 12 Feb. The highest counts in April were of 85 at Rye Hbr on the 8th and 70 at Pagham Hbr on the 10th. There were still two at Pagham on 18 May; the only other record that month was of one at Fishbourne on the 22nd. None were detected at seawatching sites and there were no records for June.

The first sighting in July was of one at Scotney Court GP on the 20th, and the first returning bird at Thorney Island arrived on 1 Aug. There were no counts exceeding 100 in the western harbours in August and September, but in the east the picture was different, with 270 arriving at the Flat Beach (Rye Hbr LNR) on 14 Aug, and 600 at Scotney Court GP on 12 Sep, although both these groups appeared to move on quickly.

In the second winter period, the monthly maxima at Pagham Hbr were 510 on 23 Oct and 800 on 14 Nov rising to 1250 on 23 Dec. There were also 2000 at Thorney Island on 19 Dec. At Rye Hbr, there was a consistent 2500-3000 from mid-November until the end of the year, all exceeding the 1% threshold. At Pulborough Brooks there were single figures throughout, except for 34 on 4 Nov. Other inland records included 24 at Weir Wood Res on 16 Sep, nine on the Downs at The Burgh (Burpham) on 16 Oct and 35 at Glynde Levels on 28 Dec. [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	2512	2785	2404	322	80	129	49	265	944	1468	2268	1656
Chichester Hbr	1489	1427	1604	170	46	23	49	205	766	1073	1416	562
Pagham Hbr	905	1269	739	133	28	106	-	59	178	389	783	1059

In the first winter period, the WeBS county totals were consistently very high, the January count at Chichester Hbr being the highest since 2003, and the February one at Pagham Hbr the highest since 1998. There were no counts exceeding these, but within the Chichester Hbr complex, West Chidham and Pilsey Island consistently held totals of 400 or more, and counts of between 500 and 600 at Mid-Hayling were also included in the totals. The 1% national threshold of 530 was passed in all the winter months at Chichester Hbr, and all months except October at Pagham Hbr. Outside the western harbours, only small groups could be found along the coast, the largest of these being 40 at Goring on 30 Jan, 35 at Climping on the 13th, and the same number on the Lower Adur on 1 Jan. At Rye Hbr, totals in January and March were between 22 and 31, but an influx in February produced a peak of 112 on the 25th, a high number for this site.

During the migration period, only small numbers were picked up at seawatching sites, as shown below. The highest easterly movement was 50 at Selsey Bill on 8 May and westerly movement could be detected from 29 Jun when 100 passed the same site.

		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total	Hrs watched
Selsey Bill	E	27	113	11	6		157	597
	W			100	10	37	147	
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	33	27				60	278
	W							
Worthing Beach	E	33	40				73	246
	W					4	4	

Maximum monthly counts at Pagham Hbr in the summer and autumn significantly exceeded WeBS, as shown below.

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
420	200	150	19	70	300

In the second winter period, numbers returned to more usual levels, and again there were no counts exceeding the WeBS total. The largest groups outside the harbours were 85 at Ferring on 24 Dec and 46 at Climping on the 5th. [CJRB]

Northern Lapwing

Vanellus vanellus

Scarce breeder and very common winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

The monthly WeBS counts for the principal sites were as shown in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	15602	14884	622	254	202	1135	693	1645	2533	5197	7772	11514
Chichester Hbr	1872	1663	19	27	32	28	93	123	323	671	1024	1074
Bracklesham Bay	20	40	62	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	120	30
Pagham Hbr	3581	4733	39	11	6	7	55	15	341	698	1144	2055
Arun Valley	2251	2701	61	88	66	122	77	257	418	509	1343	1069
Lower Adur Estuary	817	580	7	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Ouse Levels	157	350	25	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	300	180	6
Pevensey Levels	3575	1414	137	64	40	30	-	-	21	107	996	1629
Bewl Water	220	90	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	86	127	127	76	229
Rye Bay	1878	2532	268	64	54	868	339	801	1069	2221	1535	3364
Scotney Court GP	400	500	-	-	4	80	110	350	200	450	1000	1000

Records for the first winter period included 40 counts of a thousand individuals or more. Most of these higher counts were obtained from the Pagham Hbr area where the 2600 recorded on 3 Jan increased to 5064 by the 30th. Elsewhere in the county, counts of 3000 were recorded at Hankham Level (Pevensey) on 13 Jan, at Scotney Court GP on 26 Jan and at Pett Level on 9 Feb while 2011 were noted at Amberley Wild Brooks on 11 Feb.

Breeding was confirmed from a minimum of 15 different sites and was possible at a further 32 locations. Five pairs produced eight young at Bracklesham Bay and another eight young were successfully raised at Lewes Brooks.

The first gathering of returning birds was recorded on 17 Jun with a flock of 300 at Rye Hbr LNR. During the second winter period there were 23 counts of a thousand birds or more. Again, most of these large counts were from either Pagham or Rye Harbours. The first large gathering of 2000 was noted at Pagham Hbr on 2 Sept rising to 5500 on 24 Dec, this being the largest count for the second winter period. [ITB]

Red Knot

Calidris canutus

Fairly common 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	1967	3217	2014	344	84	14	-	8	97	66	1340	823
Chichester Hbr	1547	2709	1831	288	5	-	-	2	78	49	1036	358
Pagham Hbr	419	450	54	52	75	14	-	1	18	17	290	400
Rye Bay	-	58	110	4	4	-	-	4	1	-	13	65

As usual birds were noted throughout the year. During the first winter period there were notable counts of 1500 at Pilsey Sands on 21 Jan and 800 at Whites Creek (Pagham Hbr) on 2 Feb. The first offshore migrants were recorded from Portobello (Telscombe Cliffs) on 26 Mar when two flew east. The approximate monthly totals from the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

	Apr.	May	Total
Total	203	252	455
Selsey Bill	41	64	105
Worthing Beach	10	10	20
Splash Point (Seaford)	105	132	237
Portobello (Telscombe Cliffs)	47	46	93

During the early spring there was a steady movement of birds which was fairly uniformly spread throughout April and May. Offshore passage was again generally poor and the large numbers recorded passing Portobello last year were not repeated.

During the summer months birds were occasionally noted at various sites. Return passage got underway with two at Pilsey Sands on 3 Aug. As usual, a small amount of movement was noted from various seawatching sites during the autumn and these involved birds moving both east and west. Numbers began to build from early September with the first notable count for the second winter period being 600 at Pilsey Sands on 3 Nov.

An interesting record concerned a single bird going north at Southwater CP on 18 Sep. [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	505	373	219	126	49	-	8	130	6	160	329	108
Chichester Hbr	245	67	85	76	26	-	-	112	-	160	242	6
Pagham Hbr	10	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
Climping	184	6	2	6	-	nc	8	16	1	nc	6	-
Rye Bay	66	300	130	43	-	-	-	2	4	-	80	102

Birds were noted throughout the year but typically all of these records were at or near the coast. The most notable counts during the first winter period were of 300 at Rye Hbr LNR on 11 Feb, 211 at West Beach (Littlehampton) on 18 Jan and 184 on Climping Beach on 13 Jan. The first offshore migrants were recorded at Splash Point (Seaford) with 20E on 17 Apr. As the table below illustrates, the peak movement offshore was in May with the largest numbers that month passing Selsey Bill.

	Apr.	May	Jun	Total
Total	326	529	40	895
Selsey Bill	33	329	11	129
Worthing Beach	170	124	45	218
Splash Point (Seaford)	27	145	2	226

A few individuals were noted during the summer but the only reasonable count for that period came from Worthing Beach with 20 there on 5 Jun. Returning birds started to appear from early July with 36 at Pilsley Sands on 17 Jul peaking there at 160 on 18 Oct. Other notable counts were of 150 at Ferring on 24 Dec, 140 at Rye Hbr LNR on 18 Dec, 127 at Goring Beach on 20 Nov and 144 at Climping Beach on 12 Nov, all of these being traditional wintering sites. [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:

	Feb	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
County total	1	1	5	-	1
Chichester Hbr	1	-	-	-	-
Arun Valley	-	-	1	-	1
Rye Bay	-	1	4	-	-

During the first two months of the year, all of the reports for this species came from Chichester Hbr, suggesting that these records possibly related to a single bird wintering in the area. The only sighting of more than one individual in the first half of the year was of three birds at Pulborough Brooks on 7 May, with two birds subsequently at The Midrips between 2 and 15 Aug.

The first autumn migrant was a singleton at Weir Wood Res on 30 Jul. Birds were then noted in ones and twos from a few sites with the highest counts being 11 at Rye Hbr LNR on 31 Aug, four at Pett Level on 14 Sep and six at Pulborough Brooks present from 30 Sep until 2 Oct. Most records for the second period were received from Pulborough Brooks with the last bird recorded there on 10 Dec. Other second winter records included singletons on Pilsey Island on 4 Dec, in Fishbourne Channel on 9 Dec, in the fields west of Selsey on 18 Dec and at The Midrips on 29 Dec.

The approximate minimum monthly totals at the main sites were as follows:

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun	Jul	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1	1	2	-	4	-	1	19	15	14	1	5

Inland records this year were confined to the Pulborough area and Weir Wood Res. [ITB]

Temminck's Stint

Calidris temminckii

Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Six adults were recorded in spring. One was photographed on Pett Pools on 25 Apr (KH), three were present at Pulborough Brooks from 6 to 8 May (ASC *et al.*) and two were on the Wader Pool at Rye Hbr LNR on 26 May (SS). The April record is the county's earliest in spring by three days although one wintered at Thorney in 1975 and 1975/76. Twenty-five have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000, in April (2), May (18, including four groups of 2-4 individuals), July (2), August and September (2). [RJF]

Pectoral Sandpiper

Calidris melanotos

Rare vagrant, mainly in autumn.

One was present at Pulborough Brooks from 20 Sep to 7 Oct (GB *et al.*) and another was photographed at Bracklesham Bay on 1 Oct (AP). Sixteen have been recorded since the start of 2000 of which five were at Pulborough and three at Drayton (Chichester GP). More than half of the county total have been found in September (40 out of 73) with the others in May (4), July (7), August (7), October (14) and early November. [RJF]

Curlew Sandpiper

Calidris ferruginea

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

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

	Sep	Oct
County total	7	4
Chichester Hbr	5	4
Scotney Court GP	2	-

In striking contrast with the relatively impressive showing last spring, only two individuals were recorded this spring. A moulting adult was first seen in Pagham Hbr on 28 Apr and again on 1 May. What was likely to have been the same bird was then recorded at Bracklesham Bay between 2 and 6 May. Another individual was noted at Rye Hbr on 6 May. No summering birds were noted this year.

Autumn passage began with a singleton at The Midrips on 20 Jul with numbers increasing to eight by the 28th. The highest count of the autumn was of 14 in Pagham Hbr on 10 Sep but there were few other good counts, the highest being four at Pett Level Pools on 3 Sep and five at East Head (Wittering) on 20 Sep. The last record of the year was of four individuals at East Head on 18 Oct.

The approximate monthly county totals were as follows:

Apr.	May		Jul	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.
1	2	-	11	19	28	6

There were no inland records this year. [ITB]

Purple Sandpiper

Calidris maritima

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

As the monthly WeBS counts only cover two of the regular wintering sites for this species they do not provide a true picture of its status in the county. Nevertheless, the following counts were recorded:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	14	3	12	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Lower Adur Estuary	4	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Newhaven	6	-	9	-	3	nc	-	-	-	-	-	-
Glyne Gap	4	3	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Total	28	26	22	24	7		2	4	14	16
Shoreham	8	4	4	1	-		-	-	-	7
Brighton Marina	-	8	7	7	-		2	1	-	7
Newhaven	14	11	10	15	7		-	3	9	1
Bexhill	4	3	1	1	-		-	-	1	-
Other	2	-	-	-	-		-	-	4	1

Most sightings came from the traditional sites and included between ten and 15 at Newhaven during the first four months of the year and eight at Shoreham Hbr in January and eight at Brighton Marina in February. Other notable spring sightings were of singletons on a groyne at Hove Lagoon on 3 Jan and roosting by the Black Hut at Rye Hbr LNR on 12 Mar. The last sighting of the spring was of three at Newhaven on 22 May, nine days later than the 10-year average.

The first returning birds of the autumn were exceptionally late this year with the first sighting being of two at Brighton Marina on 28 Sep, some 75 days later than the 10-year average (16 Jul). The peak count of the second winter period was of 11 at Newhaven on 15 Dec. [ITB]

Dunlin

Calidris alpina

Very common passage migrant and winter visitor; scarce non-breeder in summer. Red listed species of high 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	17263	17405	8281	410	173	18	128	204	1117	1879	25372	14553
Chichester Hbr	15934	16316	7565	273	79	1	1	121	783	1613	24811	12688
Pagham Hbr	1031	824	479	83	68	16	92	22	320	252	518	1580

All of the most notable counts in the first winter period came from the Chichester Hbr complex. At Pilsley Sands there were 10,000 on 12 Jan and 6000 on 9 Feb. At Pagham Hbr the peak count was of 1200 on 20 Jan. In the east of the county the most notable counts came from Rye Hbr with 550 on 26 Jan and 500 on 11 Feb. Easterly spring passage was again very poor and the monthly counts from the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

	Mar.	Apr.	May
Total	6	112	138
Selsey Bill	-	54	49
Worthing Beach	-	23	28
Splash Point (Seaford)	6	35	53
Portobello (Telscombe Cliffs)	-	-	8

No significant movements were noted during the autumn period again this year. The high counts noted in the second winter period were again concentrated in the Chichester Hbr area and particularly at Pilsley Sands where 15,000 were recorded on 15 Nov. The peak count for Pagham Hbr was 1468 on 14 Dec.

Small numbers were noted throughout the year at various inland sites but these were mainly ones and twos, although there was a notable high count of four at Houghton on 21 Sep and these birds remained into October. [ITB]

Ruff

Philomachus pugnax

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

The monthly WeBS counts for the principal sites were as shown in the table below. Birds were again noted in small numbers in all months of the year except May. Peak counts in the first winter period included 29 at Rye Hbr on 19 Feb and these were still present on the 21 Feb. At Pett Level there were 14 on 1 Jan with a singleton remaining until 27 Jan and there were also 10 at Pulborough Brooks on 14 Jan.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	10	3	13	2		8	1	4	15
Arun Valley	10	-	1	-		3	-	1	-
Rye Bay	-	3	12	2		2	1	3	13
Scotney Court GP	-	-	-	-		3	-	-	2

The first returning bird was an early singleton in the form of a male at Rye Hbr LNR on 26 Jun closely followed by another singleton at Sidlesham Ferry on 28 Jun. All of the peak counts for the second winter period came from Rye Hbr LNR and these included nine on 7 Dec and 12 on the 18th. Rye Hbr has now become by far the best place in the county to see this scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. [ITB]

Jack Snipe

Lymnocyptes minimus

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

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	17	15	11	4	-	-	-	-	-	2	8	9
Chichester Hbr	17	14	10	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	8
Bracklesham Bay	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	-	-
Arun Valley	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Henfield Brooks	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	2	-
Ouse Levels	-	1	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	2	1

The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	19	28	15	7		1	6	18	13
No. of sites	4	12	6	3		1	6	8	7

In the first winter period, counts at Thorney Island were average for recent years and fairly consistent, with monthly maxima of 14, 11 and 10. Elsewhere, single birds appeared to be resident at Lavington Common, Pagham Hbr and Waltham Brooks, with three also regular at East Head (Wittering). Birds were reported more widely and in larger numbers in February and through into March, with five at Bracklesham RSPB on 28 Feb, two at Rye Hbr on the 22nd, and single birds at the Lower Adur, Weir Wood Res, Southease, Lewes Brooks, Boreham Street and Bewl Water. The last record was of one at Arundel WWT on 23 Apr, four days earlier than the 10-year average.

The first returning bird was one at Sidlesham Long Pool on 29 Sept, nine days later than the 10-year average. Numbers at Thorney Island were very low, with only one found in the October and November counts and five in December. Elsewhere, most birds appeared to have remained at the same sites being found regularly at East Head (where there were up to three), Pagham Hbr, Lewes Brooks and Rye Hbr. There seemed to be a small influx in November, with five at the North Wall (Pagham Hbr), four at Rye Hbr, and two at both Henfield Levels and Lewes Brooks. In December, single birds were flushed at two locations in Ashdown Forest. [CJRB]

Common Snipe*Gallinago gallinago*

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

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	654	713	338	59	1	-	3	6	87	259	437	431
Chichester Hbr	140	98	29	12	-	-	-	-	-	54	79	42
Bracklesham Bay	13	30	32	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	9	3	16
Arun Valley	163	197	75	37	-	-	3	6	52	94	210	12
Lower Adur Estuary	198	141	82	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Henfield Brooks	3	25	8	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	8	-	17	-
Ouse Levels	37	116	16	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	54	91	208
Glynde Brooks	14	2	18	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-
Pevensey Levels	4	39	48	8	-	-	-	-	3	15	6	31
Rye Bay	60	28	11	1	-	-	-	-	23	18	13	102

The WeBS totals in the first two months of the year were the highest since 2001, largely due to good numbers at the regular sites and the addition of newly-monitored ones, in particular the new RSPB reserves at Bracklesham Bay and Lewes Brooks. The only counts in excess of those in the above table were 52 at Bracklesham Bay on 28 Feb and 47 at Rye Hbr on 10 Feb. There were consistently high numbers in the Arun valley, with maxima of 62 at Pulborough Brooks on 16 Feb and 86 at Amberley Wild Brooks on the 11th, part of an influx in mid-February which also brought 115 to Lewes Brooks on the 13th. Monthly maxima at Thorney Deeps, the main site in Chichester Hbr, declined from 122 on 9 Jan to 36 on 6 Feb and 20 on 7 Mar. The highest counts at other sites were 38 near Mayfield on 24 Feb, 32 at Sidlesham Ferry on 21 Mar, 31 at Pagham Hbr on 10 Feb, and 30 at Arundel WWT on 22 Jan. A survey at Riverside Park (Newhaven), a site not otherwise regularly monitored, revealed a remarkably consistent wintering population of 63 on 14 Jan, 58 on 11 Feb and 65 on 3 Mar.

The only firm evidence of breeding came from the Arun valley, where evening surveys found up to 20 drumming birds at Pulborough Brooks and four at Amberley Wild Brooks. This is a significant improvement from the low of 2006, especially at Pulborough Brooks, where it is the best result since 1996. During the BBS, one bird was recorded in one of the 136 1-km squares surveyed.

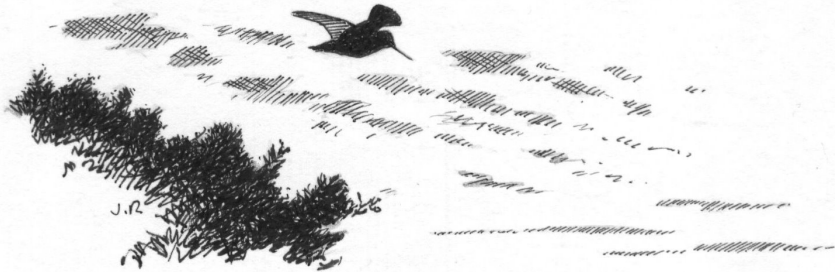
In July and August there were only single-figure counts apart from at Pulborough Brooks and Rye Hbr. The first returning bird at Thorney Deeps was on 14 Aug, but the first real influx began with 32 at Amberley Wild Brooks on 15 Sep, followed by 60 at Pulborough Brooks on the 21st.

In the second winter period, numbers returned to more usual levels. Counts at Thorney Island declined from 50 on 17 Oct to 44 on 24 Nov and 37 on 10 Dec while the maximum at Pulborough Brooks was 120 on 17 Nov and 80 at Amberley Wild Brooks on 4 Nov. Significant counts in addition to WeBS totals were 172 on the Lower Adur on 15 Nov, 55 at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) on the 13th, and 50 at Pagham Hbr on the same date. The importance of the new Lewes Brooks RSPB reserve was again highlighted by counts of 88 there on 14 Nov and 181 on 10 Dec, the second highest single site count this year. [CJRB]

Woodcock*Scolopax rusticola*

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

In the first winter period there were reports from 36 widely scattered sites, nearly all in the interior of the county and all of one or two birds, except for three at Pett Level on 21 Jan and the same number at Mill Hill (Shoreham) on 13 Feb. The number of sites was about twice as many as usual, but many of the records were the result of Atlas fieldwork.



Roding was first recorded at Lavington Common on 15 Mar, and a minimum total of 42 breeding territories were found in the county, compared with 44 in 2007 and 48 in 2006. The Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey counted 12 pairs in nine 1-km squares, 20 roding birds were found on Ashdown Forest while Ambersham Common and Pulborough Brooks both held up to three. However, no records of territorial birds were received from the Darwell Res area. There were still reports of roding from Ashdown Forest well into July with the last being on the 24th. During the BBS, one bird was recorded in one of the 136 1-km squares surveyed.

There were no records for August, only one for September, and none for October. In the second winter period there were reports from 23 sites, all of one or two birds except for six at Pett Level on 3 Dec. About a third of the records were from coastal areas, and included two reports from the Worthing area of single birds apparently arriving from the sea on 5 and 23 Nov. [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 shown in the table below. Numbers exceeded the 1% national threshold of 150 in seven months (eight in 2007) at Chichester Hbr, four months (three in 2007) at Pagham Hbr and interestingly one month in the Arun valley which is a marked increase on previous years.

The international threshold of 470 was surpassed in three months at Pagham Hbr this year (as

in 2007) but not at all in Chichester Hbr (three in 2007), a feature which is, perhaps, an illustration of the mobility of this species.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1080	580	343	155	17	40	65	195	233	588	923	1115
Chichester Hbr	184	205	191	140	17	6	25	103	157	444	336	143
Pagham Hbr	879	213	149	15	-	-	30	31	39	139	585	960
Arun Valley	17	162	2	-	-	-	9	49	24	1	2	12
Rye Bay	-	-	-	-	-	34	-	12	13	4	-	-

In the first winter period, significant counts additional to the WeBS figures were 1200 at Pagham Hbr on 24 Jan, 235 at Pulborough Brooks on 4 Feb and 103 at Fishbourne on 4 Apr. Once again records from inland sites continued to increase with the Arun valley once again playing host to birds throughout the first winter period. Elsewhere, interesting records included a single bird at Stretham Manor (Henfield) on 7 Feb and there were 13 present at Arundel WWT on 22 Apr.

Spring passage was again poor with a single record of 37 birds flying east past Worthing Beach on 19 Apr. In the east of the county, the first bird noted was a singleton at Pett Level on 15 Feb. Peak counts in the east of the county were of 25 at Cuckmere Haven on 19 May, 40 at Pett Level on the 20 Jun and 20 there on the 14 Sep. The first bird in summer plumage was noted at Church Norton (Pagham Hbr) on 25 Feb.

Autumn passage was more evident with the first record on 19 Jul of three flying west past Worthing Beach. Observers at the same location recorded a single bird flying west on 6 Aug and five two days later passing in the same direction. Meanwhile, the only other autumn migration recorded was of ten flying west past Selsey Bill on 2 Sept. Other records from seawatching sites were of three passing east at Portobello (Telscombe Cliffs) on 3 Dec and three at Worthing Beach on 26 Dec also heading east.

In the second winter period, the only count that exceeded the WeBS count was of 214 at Pulborough Brooks on 27 Dec. Other particularly high counts in the same period were 223 at Fishbourne Creek on 18 Oct, 150 at Thorney Island on the same date and 830 at Pagham Harbour on 14 Dec. [JJE]

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 site for this species were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	915	1244	502	165	40	5	-	26	310	409	602	272
Chichester Hbr	914	1228	501	165	1	-	-	26	308	407	602	272

The 1% national threshold level of 620 was exceeded twice at Chichester Hbr, in January and February, and the 1% international threshold of 1200 was also surpassed in February for only the thirteenth time in 44 seasons. High counts of the first winter period were focused, as usual, around Pilsey Island with 800 on 12 Jan, increasing to 1000 on 9 Feb. The first sighting of birds in breeding plumage was of two in the wintering flock at Pilsey Island on 12 Jan. There

was an unusual record of 17 flying east past Splash Point (Seaford) on the 16 Feb, presumably commuting between feeding areas.

Spring passage began on 17 Apr when 65 flew east past Splash Point. The number of birds seen on spring passage was markedly down on 2007 with a total of 1999 passing east compared to 7840 the previous year. The highest count of the spring was 280 past Selsey Bill on 20 Apr.

Counts at principal seawatching sites were as follows:

		Apr	May	Total	Peak movement		Hrs watched peak days
Selsey Bill	E	542	38	580	280	20 Apr	10½
	W		2	2			
Worthing Beach	E	367	72	439	237	20 Apr	4½
	W	1		1			
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	667	294	961	257	19 Apr	6
	W						

A further fourteen birds were seen passing east in June with six on the 1st and eight on the 6th. The first returning bird was a singleton at Pilsley Sands on 2 Jul, eight days earlier than the previous year. Two birds were also seen moving west past Selsey Bill on 3 and 17 Jul. Numbers started to build towards the end of September, but the larger numbers arrived in October with 268 at Pilsley Sands on 24 Oct. More unusual sites for September birds included a singleton in the Cuckmere valley on 8 Sept and two birds at Pett Level on 26 Sept.

In the second winter period, Pilsley Island again hosted the largest number with 500 birds present on 15 Nov increasing to 600 by 14 Dec. The only other notable count away from Chichester Hbr was of 20 at Pagham Hbr on 21 Dec. [JJE]

Whimbrel

Numenius phaeopus

Common passage migrant; very scarce summering and wintering species. 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	4	4	3	9	45	17	28	89	12	9	1	2
Chichester Hbr	3	3	3	8	39	3	21	83	10	7	1	1
Pagham Hbr	1	1	-	-	5	14	3	1	1	2	-	1
Rye Bay	-	-	-	1	1	-	3	2	1	-	-	-

The wintering bird from 2007 remained in Pagham Hbr until at least 14 Apr, and three were regularly seen in Chichester Hbr, usually at Thorney Island, until at least the 4th. The only other sightings in the first winter period were of one flying east past Splash Point (Seaford) on 24 Feb, and one in the Lower Adur on 9 Mar.

A group of eight at Pagham Hbr on 15 Mar were the first likely migrants, but offshore passage began with one past Selsey Bill on 5 Apr and was again heavy this year with a minimum total of 1548 passing seawatching points. The peak came in the second half of April and the bulk of it had passed by the end of the month, with only single figure counts after 12 May. The peak roost

count at the Flat Beach (Rye Hbr LNR) was 28 on 1 May and at Pilsey Island it was 23 on 20 Apr. Overland migration was indicated by small groups at Pulborough Brooks, with four on 16 Apr, eight on the 27th and three on 4 May. Counts from the main seawatching sites were as follows:

		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total	Peak movement		Hrs watched peak days
Selsey Bill	E	408	60	2	-	8	478	148	24 Apr	10½
	W	32	-	-	28	14	74			
Worthing Beach	E	544	67	-	-	1	612	217	17 Apr	4¾
	W	26	4	-	21	2	53			
Telscombe Cliffs	E	50	22	-	-	-	72	26	17 Apr	1½
	W	1	-	-	1	-	2			
Splash Point	E	974	212	-	-	-	1186	321	16 Apr	8
	W	-	-	3	4	-	7			
Hastings Beach	E	84	3	-	-	-	87	52	20 Apr	2½
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-			

In June and July, 62% of records were of ones or twos, but there was some evidence of return passage on 22 June when 14 were recorded at Pagham Hbr and the first of a very light westerly movement (3W) was noted at Splash Point. In July several double-figure counts were noted with 15 at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) on 12 Jul, 11 at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 13th, 14 inland over Ashurst on the 18th, and 20 at Bosham on the 22nd and at Birdham on the 25th. In August, nearly 60% of records were again of ones or twos but multiple counts included 27 at Pilsey Island on the 1st (but only 15 there on the 7th), 17 at Pagham Hbr on the 2nd and 11 flying SW over Shoreham on the 5th, having presumably just crossed the Downs. There were frequent reports of up to four at Rye Hbr SSSI through to 22 Sep.

In the second winter period, the only birds apart from one or two in the western harbours were a group of seven at the Ouse Estuary Project on 11 Oct and one in the Lower Cuckmere Valley on 5 Nov. In December, there was a singleton in Pagham Hbr to the 24th and another seen at several sites in Chichester Hbr from the 11th with three there on the 23rd and 31st. [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	1708	2256	1218	867	124	301	1069	1744	1657	1707	2165	972
Chichester Hbr	1157	1450	720	631	103	168	865	1481	1210	1337	1456	664
Pagham Hbr	86	676	375	229	20	85	189	216	251	311	564	155
Newhaven	53	-	23	-	-	nc	-	-	25	13	20	55
Rye Bay	389	109	63	7	-	41	12	23	148	23	110	66

No counts exceeded the 1% national threshold of 1500, although those for February, August and November at Chichester Hbr were only just below that figure. In the first winter period, the

only counts exceeding the WeBS counts were 251 at Pett Level on 1 Mar and 133 at Pagham Hbr on 30 Jan, and the maximum at Newhaven Tide Mills was 98 on 14 Feb, a notably high count for this regular wintering site. Elsewhere, there were regular groups at Middleton-on-Sea, with 80 on 7 Feb, the Lower Cuckmere, with a maximum of 21 on 12 Jan, the Lower Adur, where the most recorded was five on 9 Mar, and Scotney Court GP, with nine on 7 Mar. The February counts within the Chichester Hbr complex included 400 at Mid-Hayling, 272 at Birdham and 274 at West Chidham. There were inland records of single birds at Amberley on 18 Feb, East Dean on 15 Mar and Bewl Water on 20 Mar.

Seawatching logs recorded presumably local movements in the first part of the year, especially at Splash Point (Seaford), but spring passage was very light. Return westerly movements were detected as early as 29 Jun, with a maximum day count of 23 at Selsey Bill. Counts at the principal sites were as follows:

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E				1	3		1					
	W				1		5	27	2				
Worthing Beach	E		10		3	2					1	1	
	W				1		71	32	2		1	4	
Telscombe Cliffs	E	1	6										
	W	1	1										
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	4	27	13	4	3							
	W	8	18	7			3						

Between 18 May and 5 Jun, only single figures were reported. During the BBS, one was recorded in a coastal area in only one of the 136 1-km squares surveyed. Inland, single birds were seen at two locations on Ashdown Forest, on 15 Apr and 22 Jun, while at Pulborough Brooks there were occasional sightings between 10 Apr and 21 Aug, the maximum being five on 14 Apr. The former sightings are particularly interesting because this is where Curlew last bred in Sussex in the 1980s before it ceased to be a breeding species.

During the autumn migration peak, the highest counts within Chichester Hbr were at Mid-Hayling, where 487 on 4 Jul built up to 700 on 20 Sep, and there were 488 at West Chidham on 1 Aug and 450 at Thorney Island on the 20th.

In the second winter period, there were still 700 at Mid-Hayling on 18 Oct. At Rye Hbr there were considerably more than the WeBS data suggest, with maxima of 165 on 28 Oct, 280 on 27 Nov and 420 on 5 Dec. The only other counts to exceed the WeBS counts were 219 at Pagham Hbr on 16 Nov and 33 at Newhaven Tide Mills on both 28 Sep and 15 Oct. The only other regular sites were Cuckmere Haven, with a maximum 11 on 18 Oct and 14 Dec and Scotney Court GP, where the largest number recorded was 21 on 14 Dec. [CJRB]

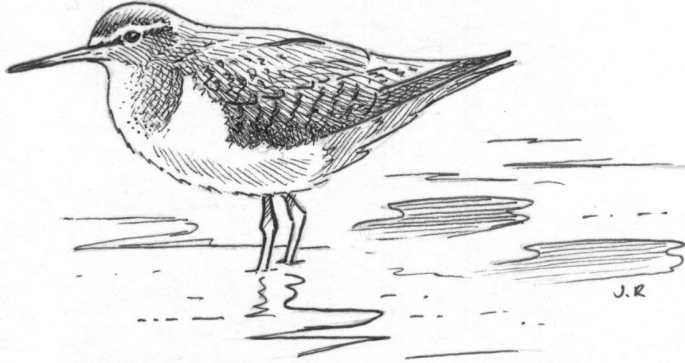
Terek Sandpiper

Xenus cinereus

Very rare vagrant.

An adult was seen on the Wader Pool at Rye Hbr LNR on 31 May (KL, OJL *et al.*) and was then present at The Midrips between 1 and 8 Jun (CT, DW *et al.*). It is the third county record and has been accepted by the BBRC. It was only at Rye for a few hours before flying off east, after appearing to suffer too much attention from a breeding Redshank, making its reappearance and

stay at The Midrips particularly welcome to many. Both the previous county records were in June, at The Midrips on 30 May 1951 (the first British record) and at Pagham Hbr for 20 minutes on 10 May 1969 (the sixth British record). Interestingly this species features amongst the 'Hastings Rarities' with three shot at Rye Hbr in May 1915, a male on the 26th and a pair on the 28th. The dates and location are spot on although the number of birds obtained would, as always, be a major concern had the Hastings records not been comprehensively discredited. [RJF]



Common Sandpiper

Actitis hypoleucos

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

The monthly WeBS counts at principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1	1	1	2	33	-	71	100	29	2	5	3
Pagham Hbr	-	1	-	-	-	-	14	6	2	-	-	-
Arun: South of Arundel	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	7	-	1	-
Adur: Steyning-Henfield	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	1
Weir Wood Res	-	-	-	-	nc	-	5	5	3	-	-	-
Ouse Levels	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	1	1
Bowl Water	1	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	8	2	-	1	-
Darwell Res	-	-	1	-	-	nc	2	6	3	-	-	-
Rye Bay	-	-	-	2	11	-	34	48	8	2	2	1

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

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
7	4	7	48	102	13	154	151	75	15	6	9

This was in the top 40 species for records in 2008. Birds were noted in 82 1-km squares during the year. Counts during the first winter period included up to four on the R Adur north of the A27 from 5 Jan until at least 18 Feb and singletons at Bewl Water on 13 Jan, The Severals (Church Norton) on 10 Feb, Darwell Res on 9 Mar and Pulborough Brooks on 18 Mar.

During the spring, birds were recorded at approximately 26 sites. These were mainly singletons in April but there were five at Coombes (near Shoreham), four at Lewes Brooks and 12 at Weir Wood Res. Numbers increased further in May at many sites with notable totals of up to eight at Thorney Island on the 18th, 21 at Weir Wood Res on the 4th, 15 at Splash Point (Seaford) on the 31st, 12 at Arlington Res on the 8th and six at East Guldeford on 17 May.

On return passage, numbers increased as in previous years with 12 at Sidlesham Ferry on 20 Jul and seven still there on 1 Aug. Small numbers were widely recorded elsewhere with larger counts to the east. A total of 30 at Weir Wood Res on 23 Jul declined to 20 by 21 Aug. There were 25 at the Lower Ouse Valley on 3 Aug with 12 still there on 20 Aug and 14 at Bewl Water on 30 Jul. Rye Hbr LNR had 20 on 20 Jul and at East Guldeford Level there were 25 on 20 Jul rising to 35 by 17 Aug.

In the autumn, numbers declined with reports in September confined to seven in the Arun valley, four at Barcombe Res and six at East Guldeford Level all on 14 Sep and four in the Lower Adur Valley on 19 Oct. The only notable counts in December were three at Upper Beeding on 7 Dec, and twos at Pulborough Brooks on 1 Dec and at the Cement Works (nr Shoreham) on 21 Dec and again on 28 Dec. [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	5	2	5	-	7	12	56	12	11	7	7
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	5	-	1	2	-
Chichester GP	-	1	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-
Burton/Chingford Ponds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	nc	1	-	-	-
Arun Valley	-	1	-	-	-	1	3	24	2	1	1	1
Henfield Brooks	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	1	1	-
Weir Wood Res	-	-	-	-	nc	-	-	5	2	-	1	-
Barcombe Res	-	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-
Glynde Brooks	-	-	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-
Cuckmere Haven	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	-	-	-
Pevensey Levels	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	5
Darwell Res	2	-	-	-	-	nc	-	6	-	1	1	-
Rye Bay	-	2	-	4	-	5	3	8	2	7	1	1

Taking into account records elsewhere, the approximate monthly totals were as shown in the table below. Birds were recorded in every month except March at Pulborough Brooks, and in every month except May at Rye Hbr.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	22	23	8	21	6	15	73	108	54	27	25	19
No. of sites	16	17	8	16	5	8	14	24	20	14	15	13

During the first winter period there was a maximum of three birds at Henfield Levels on 6 Jan and a maximum of three at Pevensey Levels on 10 Feb. Numbers declined in March, with only singletons recorded at a total of eight sites.

April sightings increased slightly, though numbers remained low (either one or two birds) before passage tailed off, with the last sighting for May being a single bird at Pulborough Brooks on the 19th.

Returning birds brought an increase in numbers in June, with four at Northiam on the 4th and three recorded at Rye Hbr on the 22nd and 23rd. Numbers increased significantly in July with six birds at Rye Hbr on the 7th, six at Thorney Deeps on the 13th and nine at Pett Level on the 14th, while at Pulborough Brooks the nine birds recorded on the 26th increased to 16 by the 31st. Passage peaked in August, with up to 17 at Pulborough Brooks on the 5th, rising to a maximum there of 20 on the 8th. Elsewhere, a count of 11 was recorded at Amberley Wild Brooks on the 18th.

Numbers tailed off in September, with a maximum of nine recorded at Rye Hbr on the 27th, while numbers at Pulborough Brooks declined to a maximum of seven on 5 Sep.

Thereafter, numbers declined slowly over the second winter period, with the majority of records being of one or two birds. The only larger counts were of four at Rye Hbr on 20 Oct, four at Pulborough Brooks on 13 Nov and five at Pevensey Levels on 15 Dec. [NR]

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	3	3	4	-	-	-	-	2	1	3	5	3
Chichester Hbr	3	3	3	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	4	3
Pagham Hbr	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-

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
7	7	4	12	0	1	1	8	5	14	8	10

In the first winter period all the wintering birds were at Pagham and Chichester Harbours and numbers were very similar to last year, with up to three at the former and two at the latter site. No birds were recorded away from these two sites, a contrast with past years when at least one was usually found somewhere else along the coast.

The presence of wintering birds makes the start of spring passage difficult to ascertain, though with 12 birds in April (as against nine the previous year) spring passage was again fairly evident.

The majority of spring migrants were ones and twos on several dates at Pagham and Chichester Harbours, though singles were seen at Pulborough Brooks and Pett Level, two were at Offham (Arun valley) on 15 Apr and the four at Horse Eye Level (Pevensy) two days later was the highest count of the spring accounting for about a third of all the spring migration. The last record of the spring was one at Pulborough Brooks on 27 Apr. May was the first blank month for this species since 2000 (when June failed to yield any records).

The first returning bird was at Five Watering Sewer (Iden) on 17 Jun but the next was not recorded for over a month when one appeared at Weir Wood Res on 23 Jul. This was followed by a steady trickle of birds at the usual coastal localities around Pagham, Chichester and Rye throughout the autumn, though numbers were very low with the highest counts being just two birds at Gatehurst Fm (Pett) on 23 Aug and two at Pagham Hbr on three dates in September. Just one bird was recorded inland, at Bewl Water on 17 Aug.

Although autumn numbers were disappointingly low, during the second winter period they were roughly double those of last year. October was a particularly good month yielding a count of six in Pagham Hbr on the 21st (the highest count for the year), plus several dotted around Chichester Hbr. Later in the period, up to three were at Thorney Deeps in December, while numbers at Pagham Hbr at this time dropped to two. Away from the regular wintering sites of Chichester and Pagham Harbours, singles were recorded at Shoreham on 10 Oct (which could have been a late migrant) and at Rye Hbr on 30 Dec. [JC]

Greenshank

Tringa nebularia

Fairly common passage migrant; scarce in winter.

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	14	21	22	17	11	1	10	105	35	54	25	22
Chichester Hbr	14	21	22	17	9	1	5	82	25	54	25	22
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	7	-	-	-
Arun Valley	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	4	2	-	-	-

During the first winter period most records were from Chichester Hbr, where the greatest concentrations were at Thorney Island, with a peak of 20 on 24 Feb. Elsewhere in Chichester Hbr just ones and twos were recorded and away from this main area there was just a single bird seen in January at Pagham Hbr.

Four birds seen at East Chidham on 8 Mar may have been wandering birds from the Thorney Deeps site or perhaps early migrants. Birds were recorded at the usual wintering sites in Chichester Hbr regularly in April making it difficult to determine exactly when spring passage started. However, two on Pevensy Levels on 11 Apr were the first migrants seen away from the wintering areas. Birds were recorded widely along the coast throughout April and May but with double figures recorded only at Thorney Deeps where there was a high count (following the departure of the wintering birds by early April) of 13 on both 21 and 25 Apr. Inland birds were seen regularly at Pulborough Brooks, with a high count there of four on 8 May, with small numbers at scattered locations elsewhere – including five at Horse Eye Level (Pevensy) on 4 May.

There was a two-week gap between the last spring migrant on 6 Jun and the apparent first returning bird (at Pagham Hbr) on 21 Jun. Numbers at Thorney Deeps increased typically,

reaching 20 on 14 Jul and remaining steady at 18 or so until 19 Jul, before jumping to the highest autumn count for the county of 76 on 31 Jul and 1 Aug. This is similar to the peak count of 72 recorded last year but lower than in several recent years. Elsewhere in Chichester Hbr, numbers were also relatively low with double-figure counts including 21 at Old Park Wood (Bosham) on 22 Jul, 18 at Birdham on 25 Jul, 32 at Emsworth Marina on 2 Sep and 20 at Southbourne on 12 Sep. Away from Chichester Hbr, the only double figure counts were of 11 at Pagham Hbr on 26 Aug, though small numbers were seen all along the coast and at scattered locations inland, where the high count was four at Pulborough Brooks on 12 Sep.

During the second winter period, numbers at Thorney Deepes decreased from 46 on 1 Oct to 38 on 12 Oct, 28 on 25 Oct, 24 on 15 Nov and 22 by mid-December. Away from Thorney Deepes, wintering birds were recorded at various other sites in Chichester Hbr (with high counts of 30 at Emsworth Marina on 16 Oct and 16 at Fishbourne on 16 Oct, though some of these at least would have been late migrants). The only birds reported away from Chichester Hbr were singletons at The Midrips on 11 Oct and in Pagham Hbr from 2 Oct to 12 Nov (although there were three there for one day on 12 Oct). [JC]

Lesser Yellowlegs

Tringa flavipes

Very rare vagrant.

An adult was present on Sidlesham Ferry Pool from 18 to 22 Apr (OM, JS *et al.*). It is the tenth county record and has been accepted by the BBRC. It is the first to be seen in the county since 1998 when one was in the Lower Cuckmere Valley and then at Pett Level in September and October. It is the second to be found in April, the first being at the same location in 1985, although one was present on Willingdon Levels from February to April 1983. All other records have been in autumn, in August (3), September (3) and October, the latter remaining to early November. [RJF]



*Lesser Yellowlegs, Sidlesham Ferry,
April 2008 (Dorian Mason)*

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:

May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
5	-	10	24	7	1

Spring passage was confined to May. The first bird of the year was seen at Rye Hbr on the 5th (10-year average date 2 May) followed by singletons at Weir Wood Res on 7 and 19 May. Two were also seen at Lewes Brooks on 10 May.

In contrast, it was a reasonable autumn passage with numbers comparable to the 10-year average. The first returning bird was at Rye Hbr on 23 Jul. Two were seen at Sidlesham Ferry from 26 to 29 Jul, with singletons at Pagham Hbr, Weir Wood Res and Pett Level. In August, at least 24 were noted. Birds were present on most days at Pulborough Brooks, with a maximum of seven on the 18th. Other regular sightings were a singleton at Weir Wood Res from the 3rd to the 28th, up to three at Rye Hbr LNR and singletons on odd dates at Bracklesham Bay, Sidlesham Ferry and Pagham Hbr, Arlington Res, Pett Level and Bewl Water.

In September, two lingered at Pulborough Brooks, the last being seen there on the 10th. Singletons also remained at Thorney Island, Pagham Hbr and Pett Level. The last record for the year was a singleton at Pagham Hbr on 9 Oct. Like the arrival date, this was much closer to the 10-year average than last year's exceptionally early dates. [NR]

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	1873	1973	2006	709	146	119	656	1086	1331	1804	2208	1425
Chichester Hbr	1567	1272	1384	328	34	45	422	798	970	1467	1810	1008
Pagham Hbr	168	406	345	267	48	22	161	135	252	234	262	237
Lower Adur Estuary	58	99	46	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Rye Bay	44	139	161	78	32	22	70	148	106	76	80	97

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

In the first winter period, significant counts not included in the WeBS table were 444 at Thorney Deeps on 9 Feb, 140 on the R Adur at Shoreham and 117 at East Guldeford Level, both on 10 Feb, 41 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 15 Feb, and 37 at Pett Level Pools on 1 Mar, though numbers were generally relatively low away from the main harbours.

Spring passage was not particularly marked. Numbers at Thorney Deeps decreased from 384 on 7 Mar to 263 on 4 Apr before falling to just 20 on 9 May, an indication of the departure of wintering birds during this time.

Breeding, or attempted breeding, was recorded at a minimum of seven sites this year, four fewer than last year, though no breeding data was received from the Pett Level area. At Rye Hbr a total of 18 pairs (eight on the Beach Reserve, seven at Harbour Fm and three at Castle Fm) raised a total of just five or so young. Although this was three more than last year it is still down on the 25 pairs of two years ago and breeding success was again rather poor. In the Arun valley, three pairs raised at least seven young at Amberley Wild Brooks, five young were raised at Pulborough Brooks and a pair was displaying at Coldwaltham. Elsewhere eight pairs nested

at Bracklesham Bay, some successfully raising young; a pair raised at least one young at both Cuckmere Haven and Scotney Court GP (the former providing the first confirmed breeding at Cuckmere for many years), and there were single pairs at Thorney Island, Cobnor Cottage and West Chidham (Chichester Hbr). Although recorded at fewer sites this year, a total of at least 19 young was raised, which is a very welcome increase on the seven or so fledged young recorded last year.

The first non-breeding birds started returning in late June with 200 at Thorney Deepes by the 30th. Numbers at this site built to 500 on 21 Jul and an autumn/late winter peak of 1000 on 29 Aug. Other notable autumn/late winter counts (excluding the WeBS counts above) included 45 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 26 Oct, 90 on the R Adur at Shoreham on 15 Nov, 32 on the Newhaven Ouse Estuary Project on 16 Nov and 78 at East Guldeford on 14 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	917	780	1341	423	107	17	22	304	386	166	679	577
Chichester Hbr	354	157	325	127	1	-	1	22	155	58	330	198
Pagham Hbr	222	311	374	52	24	17	1	239	120	50	208	309
Climping	96	26	415	156	4	nc	-	35	61	nc	97	5
Lower Adur Estuary	97	30	28	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Glyne Gap	80	246	172	63	67	-	18	4	34	45	42	56
Rye Bay	63	10	27	21	11	-	2	4	4	5	2	9

Notable counts in addition to those in the WeBS table included large numbers in the Littlehampton area. On 24 Jan 220 were seen on groynes waiting for the ebb tide at the mouth of the R Arun and then, 15 minutes later, were seen feeding on the beach. On 7 Apr 117 were seen at West Beach but more remarkable were 415 recorded at the West Pier on 9 Mar, possibly the largest number ever recorded at this site (JMM), and 150 were at the West Pier on 13 Apr. At Pilsley Island on 20 May one was observed being caught and killed by an adult female Peregrine.

Birds were recorded in 56 1-km squares. 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	Total
69	56	43	62	43	15	26	42	41	39	46	54	536

The few counts that were made at the principal seawatching sites, showing the occurrence of eastwards migration in April and May, but otherwise local movements, are as follows (totals are an aggregate of records from Selsey Bill, Worthing Beach, Brighton Marina and Splash Point):

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
E	7	-	-	143	94	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
W	4	-	-	10	-	30	-	56	1	-	15	-

During the summer, there were 110 on the beach at Selsey Bill on 3 Aug, 47 roosting in a field at Goring Gap on 20 Aug, but 80 there in three groups on the 30th, and, in Pagham Hbr, 201 on the 17th.

In the autumn and second winter period, 200 were at Pagham Hbr on 11 Oct. Elsewhere, at Rye Hbr there were smaller numbers with 26 between 7 and 26 Sep and then 13 on 26 Oct rising to 24 on 8 Nov and 19 still there on 27 Dec. Wintering birds were also seen at Thorney Deepes with 46 on 29 Dec, 85 at Ferring on 24 Dec, 20 at Worthing Beach on 31 Dec, 60 at Widewater (Lancing) on 16 Dec and 32 at Hove Lagoon on 20 Dec. [WEC]



Grey Phalarope, Cuckmere Haven, September 2008 (Roger Charlwood)

Grey Phalarope

Phalaropus fulicarius

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

2007: One found in Shoreham Hbr on 19 Nov (MCC *et al.*) was the only record of the year.

2008: An exceptionally early first-winter bird was seen feeding along the tide-line at Thorney Island on 21 Aug (KB-T). This was followed by an impressive influx in early September. One at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 3rd was sadly picked up dead on the 4th (MO), a first-winter delighted admirers and was widely photographed on Sidlesham Ferry from the 5-10th (IML *et al.*), another first-winter flew west at Selsey Bill on the 5th (BFF, DIS), a first-winter was seen briefly on the R Adur at Shoreham Hbr on the 6th (RJF) with presumably the same at Widewater later that day (ADW), and another was at Weir Wood Res from the 6-8th (MO). One was seen at Rye Hbr on the 7th (DW), another was at Cuckmere Haven from the 7-11th (CD *et al.*), an adult was at Drayton GP (Chichester) on the 8th (JRC *et al.*) and one was at Church Norton on the 9th (BFF). The year

finished with more usual records, at least in terms of date, at Rye Hbr with singles behind Ternery Pool on 5 Oct (CB) and on the Beach Reserve on 6 Oct and 8 Nov (both SS). The Thorney record is only the third for August, the others being on the 17th in 1844 and at The Midrips on 26 Aug 1948, while that at Chichester is only the second away from the coast this decade. Those in the main influx were earlier than any autumn county records since 1997. The thirteen recorded make this the best year for the species since 1987 when 16 were recorded. The highest totals in living memory are 60 in 1960 and 23 in 1981 although these pale into insignificance compared with the c.250 after heavy gales in 1866. Thirty-five have been recorded since the start of 2000, in January (2, to the 14th), August, September (10), October (4), November (12) and December (6). Decade totals from the 1960s to 1990s are 72, 31, 84 and 25, respectively. [RJF]

Pomarine Skua

Stercorarius pomarinus

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

This proved to be a record year for this species. The estimated minimum of 369 birds seen on spring passage between 24 Apr and 1 Jun was the second highest count during the past 20 years, exceeded only by 390 in 1989. It compares well with the totals over the past ten years but also the 10-year and 20-year averages of 154 and 171, respectively (range 73 (2002) to 390 (1989)) as shown below:

Year	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97
Total	94	390	165	178	119	236	223	196	104	175

Year	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07
Total	180	117	175	194	73	138	240	186	137	98

The total number of birds shown in the following tables was computed on the assumption that the highest number seen at any coastal site on any day was the minimum in the county that day and that birds seen on subsequent days were different. Only those birds for which a flight direction was recorded were included.

The monthly totals for eastwards passage recorded at the principal seawatching sites, including records from Birdguides, were as follows:

	Apr	May	Jun	Total
Monthly minima	37	331	1	369
Selsey Bill	18	68	-	86
Worthing	19	19	-	38
Brighton Marina	-	23	-	23
Telscombe Cliffs	3	45	1	49
Splash Point	50	326	-	376
Birling Gap	19	23	-	42
Other sites	-	33	-	33

The first bird of the year was an immature seen at Selsey Bill on 6 Jan (JA). The heralds of spring passage, however, were two seen at Splash Point (Seaford) on 24 Apr. Then, over the 14 days from 26 Apr to 9 May, at least 361 birds passed up-channel with peaks at Splash Point of 77 on 4-5 May and 66 on the 7th, as shown below:

	April					May								
	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Daily minima	2	22	5	5	10	2	-	11	77	77	9	66	41	34
Selsey Bill	1	7	-	-	10	2	-	3	9	-	2	39	7	4
Worthing Beach	1	4	5	5	4	-	-	-	11	-	-	-	8	-
Telscombe Cliffs	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	1	9	30	1	2	-	-
Splash Point	2	22	-	3	4	-	-	11	77	77	9	66	41	34
Other sites	-	19	-	-	-	-	-	11	14	9	3	19	-	-

NB: Other sites includes Brighton Marina, Newhaven Tide Mills, Cuckmere Haven, Birling Gap (Beachy Head), Hastings Beach

After all that excitement, there were only four more spring records: 3E past Splash Point on 11 May, 2E past Selsey Bill on the 21st, 7E past Splash Point on the 23rd, and finally one bird past Telscombe Cliffs on 1 Jun which was the last record for spring.

Return passage was, by comparison, a non-event. A single bird was seen passing Telscombe Cliffs on 1 Aug (DHH), a first year bird was seen at Church Norton on 5 Sep (BFF, DIS) and the final record for the year was one seen off Worthing Beach on 23 Nov (DIS). [SS]

Arctic Skua

Stercorarius parasiticus

Fairly common spring and scarce autumn passage migrant; very scarce in summer and rare in winter. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

The total number of birds shown in the following two tables were computed on the assumption that the highest number seen at any coastal site on any day was the minimum in the county that day and that birds seen on subsequent days were different. Only those birds for which a flight direction was recorded were included.

It was not a particularly good year for the passage of this species; the annual total of 466 was somewhat lower than the 10-year average of 544, as shown below:

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Annual total	506	479	604	485	450	535	574	426	359	557	466

The approximate monthly totals of passage birds for which a flight direction E or W was recorded (ignoring apparently loafing birds) were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	1	1	8	165	116	15	19	57	28	49	6	1
No. of days	1	1	4	20	26	12	10	13	9	6	6	1

The first record for the year was of one flying west at Splash Point (Seaford) on 21 Jan, followed the next month by one moving east there on 13 Feb, both probably birds wintering in northern seas although the February bird might have been a very early returning migrant. Interestingly, over the past 20 years there have been 35 records of sightings in January (17E and 5W where flight direction was quoted) and 12 in February (8E, 1W).

Eastwards migration was first noted on 26 Mar with small numbers (fewer than six) being

observed on five of the next nine days to 4 Apr. There was then a gap until the 11th from which date there was a regular flow until 10 May with maximum counts of 13E and 14E recorded at Selsey Bill and Splash Point respectively on 20 Apr. The peak migration period was from 26 Apr to 8 May as shown below:

	April					May							
	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Selsey Bill	7	22	3	12	14	5	8	5	7	3	1	5	7
Worthing Beach	4	12	1	13	6	3	1	-	3	-	1	4	3
Splash Point	26	26	15	4	15	8	5	15	16	4	-	7	14

From 16 May to 3 Jun there were almost daily sightings of small numbers eastwards (fewer than five), with a maximum of 9E at Splash Point on 23 May, followed by a straggling singleton flying east there on 11 Jun.

Monthly totals at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

		Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Peak movement		Hrs watched peak days
		Selsey Bill	E	2	96	63	2	4	7	7	6	1	22
	W	-	-	-	1	9	38	10	8	1			
	o/s	-	-	3	8	-	1	3	-	-			
Worthing Beach	E	-	48	24	-	-	-	-	7	-	13	29 Apr	7
	W	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	23	-			
Telscombe Cliffs	E	5	10	4			3	-	3	-	6	24 Apr	1¼
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	5	131	94		2	2	2	6	-	26	26 Apr	14½
	W	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	1	-			

The first returning migrant was noted at Selsey Bill on 27 Jun with odd ones loafing offshore later. During July, passage was light with mainly ones and twos on 14 dates from the 5th. Passage in August was similar, being noted on 15 dates, but with maxima of 19W at Selsey Bill on the 5th and 20 (17W, 3E) there on the 24th. Numbers dropped off in September with only ten records, one of which was an unusual record at Pett Level, of 7S over on the 7th. There were only six records for October, but one of these involved a count of 27 (23W but also, interestingly, 4E) at Worthing Beach on the 4th. Singletons only were seen on six dates in November and the final record of the year was of one flying west at Worthing Beach on 12 Dec. [JAH]

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 number of 'Bonxies' shown in the following two tables were computed on the assumption that the highest number seen at any coastal site on any day was the minimum in the county that day and that birds seen on subsequent days were different. Only those birds for which a flight direction was recorded were included. In stark contrast with Arctic Skua, the annual total of 295 for this species was the highest ever recorded and higher than the total for 2007 (the previous highest) by almost 29%, as shown below:

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Annual total	78	118	97	157	227	147	211	192	185	135	229	295

The approximate monthly totals of passage birds for which a flight direction was recorded (ignoring those apparently loafing) were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	3	-	10	185	34	1	6	3	1	47	4	1
No. of days	1	-	7	21	16	1	5	2	1	10	3	1

The first birds of the year were three singletons west past Worthing Beach during the morning and another west past Splash Point (Seaford) on the afternoon of 11 Jan, all presumably wintering in northern seas. Further birds were not then noted until 26 Mar from when until 8 Apr mainly singletons migrating east were seen on eight days. Up-channel migration proper started on 11 Apr and birds were then noted in small numbers (fewer than eight) almost daily until a small peak occurred from the 22nd to the 28th as shown below:

Dates in April	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Selsey Bill	9	4	-	-	1	1	3
Worthing Beach	-	10	19	-	1	12	-
Splash Point (Seaford)	-	-	-	4	11	6	9

After 29 Apr, birds were seen on 18 of the next 34 days in progressively smaller numbers (up to six) until the last singleton flew west at Selsey Bill on 1 Jun where two were observed loafing offshore on the 3rd.

Counts at the principal seawatching locations were as follows:

		Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Peak movement		Hrs watched peak days
Selsey Bill	E	-	44	12	1	2	-	-	7	1	10	22 Apr	10
	W	-	2	-	-	4	2	-	5	1			
	o/s	-	21	4	2	-	1	-	-	1			
Worthing Beach	E	1	50	11	-	-	-	-	5	2	21	24 Apr	6¼
	W		15	2	-	-	-	1	-	-			
	o/s	1	14	10	-	-	-	-	1	-			
Telscombe Cliffs	E		5		-	-	-	-	6	-	2	24 Apr	1¾
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
	o/s	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	4	50	5	-	-	-	-	24	-	11	26 Apr	14½
	W	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
	o/s	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			

The first suggestion of return migration was 1E at Selsey Bill on 5 Jul, presumably either a failed or non-breeder or an early returning bird wandering both up and down channel while, presumably, feeding. This was followed by four further sightings of singletons (3W, 1E) there to the end of the month. These were followed by mainly singletons on five dates in August and one in

September. Numbers increased significantly from 3 Oct and birds were noted on 11 dates during the month. Rather surprisingly, the first nine records to the 7th involved birds flying eastwards, including no fewer than 17E recorded at Splash Point between 10:30 and 12:30 BST mainly as singletons but also including two groups of three and one flock of four. How many might the day's total have been if recorders had been present before 10:30 and after 12:30? The reason for so many to be flying eastwards is not clear but the winds on most days were in the westerly sector, sometimes up to Force 7 and with rain. The final record for the year was of one flying east at Worthing Beach on 2 Dec. [JAH]

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, as usual most records were 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	15	-	11	44	92	28	5	7	-	5	-	-
	W	69	183	53	47	37	52	97	78	5	26	428	-
Worthing Beach	E	66	1	-	7	24	2	4	-	-	15	-	35
	W	120	34	-	15	8		24	8	-	63	114	414
Telscombe Cliffs	E	11	69	132	-	-	-	66	-	-	11	-	-
	W	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2

The highest counts of the first winter period were 70W in 1½ hr at Worthing on 5 Jan. In February, Selsey Bill had 164W in 5¼ hr on the 3rd and on the same day 100 were reported moving both ways off Hastings Beach. On the 8th, 233 were reported from a WeBS count off Glyne Gap (Bexhill). In March the highest count was at Telscombe Cliffs with 82E in 1¾ hours on the 29th.

During the spring and summer birds were reported in low numbers along the entire coast with the highest counts being from the main breeding areas and Telscombe Cliffs. At Newhaven, 102 nests were counted on the cliffs on 23 Jun and at Splash Point 300 pairs were recorded sitting on nests. There was no report of breeding success at either of these sites. The only other high count was 200-300 offshore at Telscombe Cliffs on 6-7 May with many seen plunge diving. The August high count was 42W in 7¼ hr at Selsey Bill on the 2nd, while 42 were recorded off Glyne Gap on 12 Sep.

During the second winter period, 56 flew west and four east in 4 hr on 4 October at Worthing. The highest counts in November were made at Selsey Bill with 110 flying west on the 8th, 62W on the 9th and 250W next day. At Worthing 56 flew west on 23 Nov, 94W on 2 Dec with 155W and nine east on the 12th and 112E on the 14th. The only other significant count was 78 off Glyne Gap on 12 Dec.

Like last year, the only inland record of the year was at Weir Wood Res where there were two on 11 Mar. [LW]

Black-headed Gull*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

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

Counts were received from a number of winter roosts, and the maximum monthly numbers are shown below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Oct	Nov	Dec
Ardingly Res	2000	600					
Weir Wood Res	3100		3400			1100	2700
Bewl Water	48,000	21,100	9100			16,300	21,670
Glyne Gap			1200		3500	4000	1200

In the first winter period, the only five-figure counts were as usual from Bewl Water where a peak count of 48,000 on 5 Jan swiftly declined to 38,000 by the 15th and 29,000 by the 21st. There were 14 four-figure counts, the largest being 2044 at East Chidham on 12 Jan, with 1200 at Southwick Beach on 20 Feb and the same number on the Lower Adur on 8 Mar. Maximum numbers at other sites regularly holding over 500 were 1000 at Rye Hbr LNR throughout March, 872 at Pett Level on the 2nd, 800 at Lidsey Tip on 11 Feb, and 600 at Henfield Levels on the 25th. Other notable counts were 1000 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 24 Feb (considerably more than the usual 200-300), 600 at Warnham LNR on 8 Feb, and 600 at Pagham Hbr on 26 Jan.

As usual, spring passage was patchily recorded. The monthly totals from the principal seawatching sites are shown below:

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E			135	10	185				1			20
	W	267		37			2	6		3	3	47	
Worthing Beach	E			18	395	193							
	W			6	2	30		14		30	20	42	
Splash Point (Seaford)	E					149							
	W												

The May total at Splash Point (Seaford) includes a count of 123 in 13 hr watching by a single observer on the 4th, perhaps some indication of the true picture. During April to June, there were only a handful of three-figure counts away from the breeding sites, the highest of these being 506 at Pagham Hbr on 26 Apr and 300 at Thorney Island on the 4th.

In the breeding season, a total of about 1621 pairs were recorded breeding at five locations, although no counts were received for several large sites. At Rye Hbr an estimated 1600 pairs bred at the Ternery Pool, fledging c. 2000-2400 chicks. Single pairs nested at Pagham Hbr and North Hayling, four pairs were on nests at Bracklesham Bay, and at Chichester GP 15-20 pairs raised 30 young at Runciton Pit. At New Lake (Chichester GP) 250 birds were counted on 5 Apr, at Pett Level there were 1300 on 17 Apr and at Arundel WWT there were 111 on the 7th, but no breeding details were received for these sites. During the BBS, a total of 467 was recorded in 18 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed.

In the late summer the only four-figure counts were on 15 Jul when there were 2500 at Pilsley Island and 4000 at Pagham Hbr, and the same number were there on 26 Sep. At Thorney Island, numbers increased from 140 on 4 Jul to 400 on 1 Aug before reaching 700 on 21 Sep.

In the second winter period, the only five-figure counts were from roosts as in the table above. The only four-figure counts were 1500 at Henfield Levels on 16 Nov (with 1000 there on 17 Dec) and 1451 at East Chidham on 15 Nov. The only 3-figure counts over 500 were 820 at Amberley Wild Brooks on 17 Nov, 767 at Climping Beach on 15 Dec, 700 at Rye Hbr on 26 Oct, the same number at Lidsey Tip on the 22nd, 600 at Warnham LNR on 17 Dec and the same at Fishbourne on 15 Nov. [CJRB]

Little Gull

Hydrocoloeus minutus

Fairly common passage migrant, most numerous in spring. Scarce in summer and winter. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The overall total of approximately 557 this year is considerably lower than in recent years, when apart from a low of 283 in 2006, numbers have averaged around 1000. The monthly totals are shown below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	8	2	56	405	25	1	1	0	14	12	26	7
No. of days	4	2	15	25	9	1	1	0	6	4	5	2
Inland total	4	1	2	7	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

In the first winter period there were single birds at Langney Point on 4 Jan, Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 8 Feb, Tilgate on 23 Feb and Arundel WWT on 5 Mar. Two were at Pulborough Brooks from 1 to 6 Jan, and the same number at Henfield Levels on 5 Jan and Ivy Lake (Chichester GP) on 9 Mar, and there were three at Sidlesham Ferry on 26 Jan. One past Hastings Beach on 10 Mar heralded a small peak on the 15th, involving 28 at Birling Gap and ten at Splash Point (Seaford), with 19 at the latter site on the 28th. The main bulk of spring passage began on 16 Apr, with 111 off Splash Point and 90 the following day with 24 roosting at Rye Hbr on the 19th. There was another peak on the 24th when 38 passed Birling Gap, before numbers tailed off into single figures. Most birds were as usual seen from the east of the county, the maximum at Selsey Bill was only 13 on 16 Apr. Counts at the principal seawatching sites were as follows.

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E				58	8					8	2	
	W							1		3		2	6
Worthing Beach	E			3	36	2					4	3	
	W												
Telscombe Cliffs	E				3								
	W									5		2	
Splash Point (Seaford)	E			30	273	12					7		
	W												

One lingered at Pagham Lagoon from 16 to 27 Mar, and at Ivy Lake (Chichester GP) up to four were regularly seen from 29 Mar until 24 Apr, including an adult and birds in first summer and first winter plumages. Further inland, there was one at Arlington Res on 28 Mar, two at Pulborough Brooks on 23 Apr (both adults in summer plumage) and five at Weir Wood Res on the 20th. The only records in the summer were single birds at Rye Hbr on 2 Jun and Bodiam on 5 Jul.

Autumn passage was very light, and was mostly observed from Selsey Bill rather than further east. Only single-figure numbers were recorded, but 15 passed offshore at Rye Hbr on 2 Nov. All the reports from September onwards were offshore except for one at Arlington Res on 9 Sep, two in the Arun Valley on the 14th, two in Pagham Hbr on the 18th and one at Rye Hbr on the 21st. [CJRB]

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.

The pattern of occurrence was similar to recent years, with nearly all the records from the Pagham and Rye Harbour areas, and distinct spring and autumn peaks. The estimated overall total shows only a slight increase on last year (3225 against 3128) after a long run of significant year-on-year increases. However, the county record was once again well and truly broken for the tenth year running by a count of 379 at Pagham Hbr on 19 Sep, almost the entire county total for that month. The estimated monthly totals are shown below.

	No. of days recorded	Total 2008	Total 2007	Inland 2008	Highest number recorded
Jan	20	160	179	5	119 at Pagham Hbr, 27 th
Feb	25	300	252	5	204 at Pagham Hbr, 10 th
Mar	31	576	554	13	201 at Pagham Hbr, 25 th
Apr	29	693	639		143 at Rye Hbr, 10 th
May	24	122	183	8	32 at Thorney Deepes, 23 rd
Jun	22	181	67	10	47 at Funtington, 23 rd
Jul	27	136	133	1	32 at Rye Hbr, 12 th
Aug	20	95	209		60 at West Fields (Selsey), 14 th
Sep	16	409	364		379 at Pagham Hbr, 19 th
Oct	24	386	67		337 at Pagham Hbr, 1 st
Nov	18	54	120	2	33 at Pagham Hbr, 9 th
Dec	17	113	361	3	96 at Pagham Hbr, 16 th

In the first winter period, numbers were very similar to last year, although Pagham Hbr accounted for around 70% of these birds rather than the usual 30-40%. The highest eleven counts of the year were all from this site, birds being most easily counted when roosting at high tide on Pagham Lagoon. There were still 92 there on 8 Apr, dwindling to a maximum of six in May, June and July, although up to 32 at Thorney Deepes remained throughout the summer. At Rye Hbr the opposite was the case, with none recorded in January and a February maximum of 26 on the 29th but then increasing to 138 on 29 Mar and 143 on 10 Apr.

Despite large numbers being found in the harbours during the spring, relatively few were noted passing offshore. The totals from the main seawatching sites were as shown in the table below.

Breeding was confirmed at two sites. At Rye Hbr, a minimum of 63 pairs bred at Ternery Pool (a significant increase on the 40 last year, but less than the 2006 record of 75), and 39 young were fledged. At Pett Level nine pairs raised nine young and on rafts at Chichester GP up to five pairs held territory in the early spring but did not stay to breed. During the BBS, 13 were recorded in seven of the 136 1-km squares surveyed.

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	1		3	29	8	2			1		1	4
	W	15	2	14	8	3	2	4		7	18	7	1
Worthing Beach	E		3	10	96	9	1	2		1	1	1	
	W			3	18	1	8	5	2	6	6	3	1
Telscombe Cliffs	E		5	5	8	5	3	9		3			
	W	1						1					
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	1	5	30	73	26	6						
	W		1					1					

Autumn numbers showed a considerable increase on recent years, the five highest counts of the year falling between 17 Sep and 3 Oct, all at Pagham Hbr. However, in November and December numbers showed a significant decrease on last year, but as in the early part of the year, a high proportion were at Pagham Hbr.

Inland, the largest group reported was ten at West Dean Woods on 8 Jun. Six were found in the Bewl Water roost on 11 Mar (with two there on the 29th) and at Weir Wood Res one remained throughout January to March with four there on 29 Jan and two on 29 Dec. In addition, there were three at Lindfield on 17 Feb and at East Marden on 25 May (with also a single bird on 7 Jul). In March, two birds were recorded at Arundel WWT on the 24th and at Arlington Res from the 7th to the 12th. Single birds were seen at Edburton on 23 Feb, Warnham LNR on 2 and 21 Feb and Waltham Brooks on 6 May. [CJRB]

Common Gull

Larus canus

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; small numbers summer. Bred until 1963 and attempted to breed in 2006. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

As in preceding years the nocturnal roost at Bewl Water during the first winter period produced the highest numbers, with 9870 on 5 Jan rising to 27,600 on 21 Jan. The peak figure of 59,650 on 11 Mar coincided with extremely strong winds on the south coast. Notable counts from other inland sites include 500 at Canada Bottom (Findon) on 28 Jan, 600 at Lodge Hill Fm (West Dean) on 16 Feb, 817 foraging on Downland grass at Gypsy Bottom on 9 Mar and a roost of 460 at Weir Wood Res on 11 Mar. Significant counts from coastal sites include 1122 at East Chidham on 12 Jan, 400 at Pett Level on 23 Jan and 500 on the Brede Levels on 30 Jan. Noteworthy Adur Estuary counts include 625 on the mudflats on 28 Jan, 1000 at Southwick beach on 20 Mar and 1669 on the Adur (Shoreham) on 1 Mar.

Evidence of passage was scant, though 1000 were feeding on pasture at Mill Hill (Shoreham) on 3 Apr. Seawatching records from five key sites showed the highest numbers were recorded in spring with 57 W and 230 E in Mar, 313 E in Apr and 251 W in Nov.

Breeding season numbers were typically small, though 150 mainly immature birds were found at a Ladywells (Coombes) on 16 Apr, 155 at Pett Level on 21 Apr, 250 at Thundersbarrow Hill on 3 May and 110 at Brighton Marina on 3 May. No breeding was recorded, and although a pair was present at Rye Hbr LNR, with copulation recorded on 8 Jun, no nest was located.

Two hundred and twenty were recorded at Iping Common on the 27 Jul, but higher counts were made elsewhere with the return to winter. At Bewl Water 1900 were counted on 9 Nov and

7600 on 21 Dec; 1281 were at East Chidham (Chichester Hbr) on 15 Nov, 900 at Castle Water (Rye Hbr LNR) on 16 Nov, 1500 at the River Adur on the 20 Dec and 1000 feeding in grassland at Cock Marling (Udimore) on 25 Dec. [MVS]

Ring-billed Gull

Larus delawarensis

Very rare vagrant.

2007: An adult was seen at Ivy Lake (Chichester GP) on 1 Jan (CF, PHe *et al.*) but all too soon flew off. It is the seventh county record and the first since an equally brief occurrence at this site on 24 Dec 2001. Only one has ever lingered in the county, a second-winter at the Crumbles GPs, now the site of the Sovereign Marina (Eastbourne), from December 1985 to February 1986. Another is well overdue. [RJF]

Lesser Black-backed Gull

Larus fuscus

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

Few large flocks were encountered during the first winter period, the largest during a mild January being 35 at Bignor on 20 Jan, 33 at Rye Hbr LNR on 29 Jan and 30 at Weir Wood Res on 29 Jan. Flocks larger than this were found later, of which the most notable was a count of 150 at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 8 Feb, with 320 there on 27 Mar and 140 still present on 8 Apr. There were also 49 at Scotney Court GP on 7 Mar, 45 at Weir Wood Res and 46 at Bewl Water on 11 Mar.

Little evidence of coastal passage was noted in seawatching records although totals from five key sites of 3 W and 22 E in March, 5 W and 35 E in April and 2 W and 15 E in May suggests a small easterly movement in spring.

During the breeding season, records were mainly from coastal areas though small numbers were reported inland, the exception being 23 at Lodge Hill Fm (West Dean) on 6 May. Coastal counts included 39 at Telscombe Cliffs on 30 Apr, 21 in Shoreham Hbr on 17 May, with 20 at both Rye Hbr LNR and Scotney Court GP on 18 May, 18 at Worthing East on 1 Jun and 50 at Pagham Hbr LNR on 21 Jun. Two adults on rooftops in an industrial estate were reported from Brighton Wild Park on 31 Mar and a nest was noted there on 4 Jun. Nesting activity was reported from 16 coastal locations, though few nests were located at each. Thirteen nests were attempted at Rye Hbr LNR.

Few significant counts were made during the rest of the year; these being 80 at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 2 Jul, where 120 were counted on 13 Sep, with 210 on 9 Oct and 220 on 18 Nov. At Rye Hbr LNR 180 were present on 26 Sep, with 120 on 26 Oct and 141 on 12 Dec. Elsewhere, 120 were counted at Pagham Hbr on 12 Dec and 67 were in the Goring Gap on 14 Dec. [MVS]

Herring Gull*Larus argentatus*

Common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

There were 65 three-figure counts of this wide-ranging gull during the first winter period, most of these being coastal, with the largest numbers being recorded at nocturnal roosts. At Glyne Gap (Bexhill) 5800 were counted on 24 Jan with 6800 on 8 Feb and 3500 on 7 Mar. At Rye Hbr LNR 2200 were recorded on 13 Jan with 2800 on 1 Feb and 100 on 11 Mar. One thousand were recorded at Southwick Beach at dusk on 22 Feb. Bewl Water was the only site away from the coast where such large numbers were found, with 1250 counted on 21 Jan and 1150 on 5 Mar.

During the breeding season large gatherings could still be found. At Scotney Court GP there were 450 on 6 Apr and 500 on 18 May, while the nocturnal roost at Glyne Gap held 2400 on 8 Apr and 750 on 12 Jun. In East Worthing 490 were counted on 4 May with 434 in West Worthing on 7 May. Cliff End (Pett) held 544 on 4 Jul and 1000 were recorded at Warnham LNR on 20 Jun.

One hundred and thirteen breeding records were submitted, almost exclusively coastal, with the first nest being recorded in Brighton on 20 Apr. A further 65 records of nests or young were noted, the last being an adult with two chicks on a roof in Hastings on 16 Aug. Breeding activity was noted in all coastal conurbations, and although most records came from Worthing and eastward, nests were also recorded in Ferring, Littlehampton and Bognor Regis. Four pairs with ten young were recorded in Goring on 4 Jun. Breeding also occurred in more natural coastal circumstances with nests being located on the cliffs at Telscombe, Seaford Head, the Seven Sisters and Beachy Head and in gravel pits at Scotney Court. Fourteen nests were attempted in gravel pits at Rye Hbr LNR. There were no records of successful breeding inland, though individuals in the Crawley area were present for sufficient time to suggest occupancy of nest sites.

During the remainder of the year four-figure counts were reported from four locations. The nocturnal roost count at Glyne Gap had 2400 present on 13 Sep, with 6500 on 9 Oct, 9000 on 18 Nov and 9500 on 17 Dec. Three thousand were counted on the shore at Rye Hbr LNR on 26 Oct, with 2500 in meadows at Castle Water on 13 Dec. Six thousand were recorded on mudflats in Pagham Hbr on 13 Dec, while inland 1815 were counted at Bewl Water on 21 Dec. [MVS]

Yellow-legged Gull*Larus michahellis*

Fairly common but localised visitor, mainly in late summer and autumn. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Records, mainly coastal, came in all months of the year with a small peak in early spring, but the bulk were in the autumn. A number of records from Glyne Gap (Bexhill) occurred in late winter and early spring, eight being present on 8 Feb and 13 on 8 Mar.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Total	6	17	25	5	1	5	57	81	141	84	16	43
Selsey Peninsular	3	6	11	-	-	4	54	67	136	73	15	36
Shoreham area	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-
Glyne Gap	3	8	13	5	-	-	-	11	-	1	-	6
Other coastal sites	-	2	-	-	1	-	2	3	2	-	1	1
Inland sites	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-

An early juvenile was recorded at West Beach (Selsey) on 15 Jul. During the summer and autumn, the mass of records came from the Selsey Peninsular with 34 being counted at Pagham Hbr on 25 Jul, 46 on 28 Aug, 40 on 14 Sep and 46 on 11 Oct, while in fields west of Selsey 47 were counted on 9 Sep. A small autumn peak also occurred in the Glyne Gap with 11 there on 17 Aug.

There were two inland records from Warnham LNR with one on 4 Feb and another on 27 Jun. One was also seen at Ifield Mill Pond on 27 Jul and a juvenile was recorded at Arlington Res on 12 Mar. [MVS]

Caspian Gull

Larus cachinnans

Very scarce winter visitor and possible passage migrant.

Although a number of birds were reported during the year and several descriptions were submitted no records were considered by the Records Committee to fulfil all the criteria for acceptance as this species. During committee discussions it was agreed that for a record to be accepted it would require a full and detailed description covering all the relevant plumage details and preferably accompanied by photographs showing the required characteristics and plumage detail. Records submitted are to be held on a separate file, whether accepted or not, so that they can be reviewed as the position of the species within the county becomes clearer and so that records can be revisited as and when further identification criteria become available. [CWM]

Iceland Gull

Larus glaucoides

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

The early part of the year produced a number of records of this species with a first-winter at Selsey Bill on 29 Jan (RB), an adult at Splash Point (Seaford) on 21 Feb (BRG) and first-winters roosting at Arlington Res on 1, 6 and 8 Mar (CFB, ITB, CWM), at Portobello on 6 and 13 Mar (DHH), Newhaven Hbr on 9 Mar (ARK), flying east at Ovingdean Beach on 15 Mar (ITB, PFM) and at Telscombe Cliffs from 21-25 Apr (SM). In contrast only one was recorded during the second half of the year, a second-winter at Warnham on 27 Dec (SB). Although these eight records may include some duplication some were considered to be different, e.g. Arlington and Ovingdean, while others went unreported or were considered to be inadequately documented. Assuming eight were recorded then the county total since the start of 2000 becomes 25 which compares reasonably favourably with decade totals from the 1960s to 1990s of 7, 2, 23 and 34, respectively. Occurrences since 2000 have fallen between 7 Nov and 20 May, a situation unchanged by these records. [RJF]

Glaucous Gull

Larus hyperboreus

Very scarce but regular winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The bird in the Southwick Canal/Shoreham Hbr area first seen in 2007 (*SxBR* 60:113) remained until 5 Apr. Further first-winter birds were seen in Cuckmere Haven and on the adjacent beach on

15 and 16 Feb (JC *et al.*), at Selsey Bill on 14 Mar (OM), at Newhaven Hbr on at least 27-30 Mar (ITB, ARK *et al.*) and off Portobello (Telscombe Cliffs) on 27 Feb with a second summer bird off there on 18 and 29 Apr and 2 and 3 May (DHH). A bird seen distantly off Worthing Beach on 23 Apr (RAI, DIS) was either this species or an Iceland Gull. [CWM]



Glaucous Gull, Southwick, January 2008 (Dorian Mason)

Great Black-backed Gull

Larus marinus

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; small numbers summer. Bred for the first time in 2000. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Throughout the year the species was counted regularly at Chichester, Pagham and Rye Harbours as well as Selsey Bill. The maximum monthly counts at these four sites are shown in the following table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chichester Hbr	3	14	24	24	74	63	20	12	4	23	12	80
Selsey Bill	149	1	151	83	183	200	200	10	280	16	30	16
Pagham Hbr	275	141	40	42	30	130	80	54	570	100	610	2000
Rye Hbr	84	105	8	100	30	27	30	68	8	260	94	308

In the first winter period the significant counts not included in the above table are as follows. In January, 300 were seen on the 21st in the Lower Cuckmere Valley while 800 were counted at a nocturnal roost at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on the 24th. In February, 323 were counted at Glyne Gap

on the 3rd and 800 were at Exceat Bridge (Lower Cuckmere) on the 23rd. In March, the Lower Cuckmere Valley had a high count of 400 on the 21st. Inland there were seven at Warnham LNR on 3 Feb, three at Weir Wood Res on 24 Feb and two were recorded at The Burgh (Burpham) on 10 Apr.

As in 2007, there was only one record of breeding. A pair again nested on the roof of a building at Rye Hbr (for the eighth consecutive year) but there was no record as to whether they were successful.

In May, ten were seen on a couple of dates along the coast at Worthing and on 24 Jun 54 were counted on the beach at Goring, of which two-thirds were in first summer plumage. At Glyne Gap there were counts of 37 on 19 Jul and 38 on 17 Aug. Also in August, there were 56 in Hastings Hbr on the 31st. Inland, a singleton was seen at Washington Common on the 3rd while on the same day two attracted by the rubbish at Preston Park (Brighton) were reported by the observer to be an unusual occurrence. In September, 165 were at Hasting Hbr on the 9th and 220 were at Glyne Gap on the 13th.

During the second winter period, away from the main recording areas above there were notable counts from Glyne Gap of 550 on 9 Oct, 146 on 17 Oct and 750 during a WeBS count on 18 Nov, while in December 900 were counted there on the 17th. In addition, 125 were reported from Hastings on 12 Oct. The highest count of the year was of 2000 roosting at Pagham Hbr on 13 Dec. Inland, seven were counted at Warnham LNR on the 16 Nov and two at Weir Wood Res on 12 Nov. In December, there were four at Barcombe Res on the 18th and 62 at Bewl Water on the 20th.

A colour-ringed bird seen at Selsey on 3 May had hatched on 2 Jun 2007 on a rooftop at Fécamp, Normandie and was ringed on 2 July. It has a blue ring with an orange code (51C). It is the twelfth Great Black-backed Gull from the programme to be recorded in Great Britain: previously there have been six at Dungeness, three at Portland, one at Gloucester, and one at Ramsgate. [LW]

Little Tern

Sternula albifrons

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

Once again the first bird was reported at Rye Hbr on 13 Apr; two days later than last year but, as in 2007, the arrival was later than the 10-year average arrival date of 9 Apr. Single birds flew east at Worthing on 15 Apr and at Selsey Bill on the 16th. On the 17th there were seven noted at Rye Hbr. Thereafter the species was recorded on all except three days for the remainder of April and May.

Analysis of the daily counts from each of the seawatching locations suggests a minimum of 992 birds flew east during the spring comprising 315 in April and 677 in May; a notable increase over that for spring 2007. Indeed, it represents the third highest total since 1985 well above the average of 621 for the springs between 1985 and 2007. This passage, however, was mostly recorded at Selsey Bill as 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	306	638	944	2.5	151 E on 4 May (14¼ hr)
Worthing Beach	48	115	163	1.0	32 E on 4 May (8¾ hr)
Telscombe Cliffs	7	8	15	0.3	8 E on 6 May (2¼ hr)
Splash Point (Seaford)	52	151	203	0.8	44 E on 26 Apr (14½ hr)

Other notable counts at Selsey Bill not shown in the table were 115E on 29 Apr (11¼ hr), 73E on 2 May (12¼ hr) and 96E on 3 May (12½ hr).

Most of the April records were, as usual, from the shore but there were ten at Rye Hbr on the 25th; this, incidentally, being the highest count recorded throughout the year from this location. There was, however, no breeding attempted at Rye Hbr; only the second time this has occurred since 1970. Higher numbers were recorded in Pagham Hbr with peak counts of 43 on 8 May, 71 on 18 May, 20 on 13 and 21 Jun and 70 on 3 Jul but here only three pairs nested. Likewise in Chichester Hbr there were three nests at two different locations but two were known to have failed.



*Little Tern, Rye Harbour,
May 2008 (Roger Charlwood)*

Monthly maxima at Pilsley Sands (Chichester Hbr) during the summer were 32 on 26 Jul and 52 on 8 Aug. Selsey Bill was the only other location where double-figure counts were made during the late summer and autumn, these being 14W on 9 Jul and 24W on 2 Aug. The number of observations rapidly declined in September, the only records being 6W at Selsey Bill on the 1st, one in Pagham Hbr on the 7th and two close to the pier at Littlehampton on the 16th. Although four were reported from Chichester Hbr on 20 Sep these were on the Hampshire side near Hayling Island. There were no records away from the coast, estuaries or harbours. [JAN]

Black Tern

Chlidonias niger

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

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
33	217	4	-	57	54	1

The first arrivals were just two days later than the 10-year average with two at Chichester GP on 18 Apr. By the following day there were four at this location and thereafter the species was recorded on a further 29 spring dates until 5 Jun. During the spring, most birds were seen at seawatching sites where the spring total of 218 was far greater than the average of 91 for the springs between 1985 and 2007 and only bettered, in this period, in 1990 (295) and 1993 (286). The table contains the monthly totals recorded at each seawatching site and shows clearly that the peak passage occurred on 4 May.

	Apr	May	Jun	Aug	Sep	Oct	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	19	173	3	2	17	-	74 E on 4 May (14¼ hr)
Worthing Beach	8	38	-	6	1	1	24E on 4 May (8¾ hr)
Telscombe Cliffs	2	8	-	-	-	-	6 E on 5 May (2 hr)
Splash Point (Seaford)	3	109	-	-	nc	-	52 E on 4 May (14 hr)

Small numbers were seen at three inland sites with the highest counts being four at Pulborough Brooks on 4 May and at Weir Wood Res on 16 May.

None was recorded in July and singles at Scotney Court GP and Selsey Bill on 3 Aug were the first in the autumn. In contrast to the spring, the highest autumn numbers were recorded from inland sites. An evening count of 40 at Bewl Water on 17 Aug was notable for being not only the highest autumn count but also the only date the species was recorded at Bewl Water. At Arlington Res up to six were seen between 5 and 8 Sep and at Chichester GP the species was recorded on 13 dates with a maximum of 14 on 11 Sep. Ones and twos were also recorded inland from Pulborough Brooks, Weir Wood Res and Darwell Res. At the coast the only significant autumn movement was 13 W at Selsey Bill on 11 Sep. The last record was of one flying west at Worthing on 10 Oct. [JAN]

White-winged Black Tern

Chlidonias leucopterus

Rare vagrant.

Between 14 and 20 Jul an adult was seen, and photographed, at Rye Hbr LNR where it commuted between Ternery Pool and the Long Pit (MO). It is the fifth record for Rye Hbr but the first since 1987. Of the 47 recorded in the county 28 were during 1970-99 but only two have been seen subsequently, an alarming decline. Records since 1970 have been in May (6, from 3rd), June (4), July (4), August (12), September (3) and October (1, to the 10th). [RJF]

Common Tern

Sterna hirundo

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

The first arrivals, marginally later than the 10-year average arrival date of 25 Mar, were 1E at Selsey Bill and 2E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 28 Mar. Just three more were seen in March and thereafter the species was recorded on all except five days during the spring.

The records suggest a minimum of 3465 flew east during the spring comprising five in March, 1347 in April and 2113 in May. The largest movements were 650 at Brighton Marina on 29 Apr and 775E at Splash Point in 14 hrs watching on 4 May. The coastal passage, however, is better described under Common/Arctic Tern. Apart from 40 at Chichester GP on 1 May there were only small numbers recorded from several inland sites during the spring. Other high spring counts away from the East Sussex breeding colonies were 60 in Pagham Hbr on 8 May and the same number in Chichester Hbr on 17 May.

At Rye Hbr LNR about 150 pairs nested at Ternery Pool while 65 pairs were estimated on the Quarry. On 12 Jul there were 33 fledglings present on Ternery Pool and Harbour Fm. Overall,

however, fledging success was low with perhaps only 100+ chicks fledging. At Pett Level a colony of about 70 pairs tried to nest but failed. Four pairs nested on rafts at Weir Wood Res, three chicks were recorded on 7 Jun and four fledged young were noted on 15 Jul. Although present at more sites, fewer nested in West Sussex with just one pair on Tern Island in Pagham Hbr. At New Lake, (Chichester GP) an estimated 5-10 pairs bred but the rafts, as in previous years, were dominated by Black-headed Gulls. In Chichester Hbr seven nests on South Stakes and one on North Stakes Island all failed. Two pairs nested on rafts at Arundel WWT, each nest containing two eggs on 3 Jun, but only one juvenile was still present on 24 Jul. Finally, two pairs attempted breeding at Warnham LNR, but only one pair successfully reared three chicks of which two fledged.

Although there were no very large autumn counts, throughout July and August there were several groups recorded. At Bracklesham Bay 130 were feeding and resting on the beach on 20 Jul, 70 were at Rye Hbr on 1 Aug, 52 were resting on the beach at Norman's Bay on 26 Aug and 80 were at Church Norton on 5 Sep. Regular counts at Pilsley Island (Chichester Hbr) produced maxima of 60 on 15 Jul, 84 on 22 Jul, 250 on 8 Aug and 70 on 28 Aug. Although Common Terns were recorded at several inland locations in the autumn only at Weir Wood Res and Chichester GP were large numbers noted. At the former site there were 18 on 31 Jul, 12 on 21 Aug and 120 on 7 Sep whilst at Chichester GP the peak counts were 15 on 26 Aug, 20 on 1 Sep, 15 on 10 Sep and 40 on 11 Sep.

Most of the autumn coastal movements were recorded from West Sussex and involved small numbers as shown in the following table.

	Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct		Total		Peak movement
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	
Selsey Bill	-	83	4	200	12	47	-	-	16	330	153 W on 3 Aug (10½ hrs)
Worthing Beach	16	23	-	60	1	2	5		22	85	51 W on 22 Aug (2 hrs)

The only significant coastal movement noted in East Sussex was 48W in 1¼ hrs observed from Hastings on 24 Aug.

Apart from 40 offshore at Pagham Hbr on 17 Sep and 11 in Rye Bay on 20 Sep the records after mid-September involved just single-figure counts and only 15 were recorded in October with the last recorded at Worthing on the 19th; this being 11 days earlier 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.

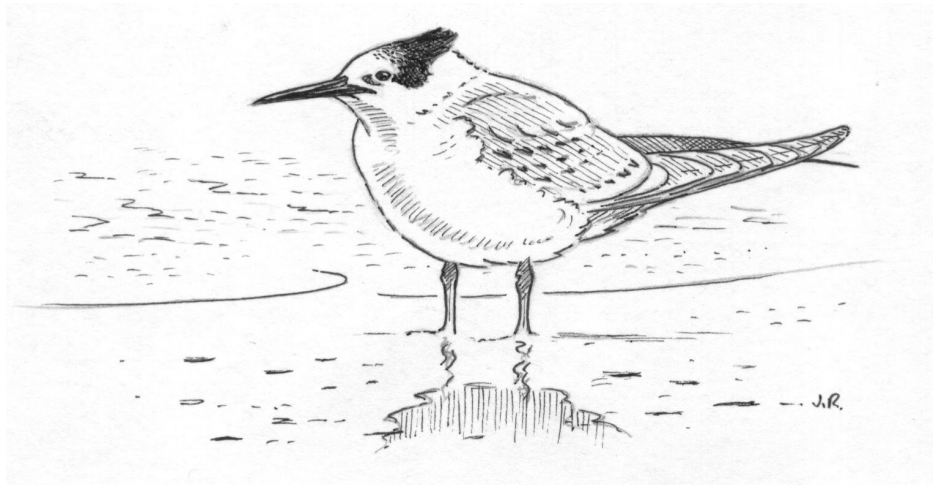
Single birds were recorded at Rye Hbr on 2 and 23 Jun and on six dates between 1 and 16 Jul. One was roosting with other terns on Pilsley Sands (Chichester Hbr) on 22 Jul. [JAN]

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 fifth successive winter birds were recorded in Chichester Hbr, although this year the only sighting was of one at East Head (Wittering) on 9 Feb.

Two were at Rye Hbr on 2 and 3 Mar and after 6 Mar the species was recorded at this location, in increasing numbers, on most dates of the month. A selection of counts from Rye Hbr indicates a steady increase in numbers rising from ten on the 15th to 52 on the 19th, 85 on the 21st, 110 on the 29th and 180 on the 31st. Elsewhere it was not until mid-March that Sandwich Terns were recorded more regularly with one at Pilsey Island (Chichester Hbr) on the 14th and, on the same day, the first was recorded passing the shore at Telscombe Cliffs.



Analysis of the daily counts from each of the seawatching locations tabulated below suggest that a minimum of 3389 birds flew east during the spring comprising 220 in March, 1858 in April and 1311 in May. This is marginally below the average of 4345 for the same period between 1985 and 2007. Details of 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	40	1557	1087	2684	7.1	350 on 4 May (1¼ hr)
Worthing Beach	18	859	584	1461	8.9	191 on 4 May (8¾ hr)
Telscombe Cliffs	11	121	137	269	4.8	26 on 29 Apr (1¼ hr)
Splash Point (Seaford)	219	1067	802	2088	7.4	203 on 4 May (14 hr)

Although the peak counts of coastal passage occurred in early May most birds were seen in April. The table below shows details of the nine days when more than 120 eastbound birds were recorded at any site (time to nearest hour watched in brackets).

	17 Apr	20 Apr	22 Apr	26 Apr	27 Apr	29 Apr	30 Apr	3 May	4 May
Selsey Bill	106 (6)	297 (11)	127 (10)	113 (13)	107 (13)	97 (12)	167 (12)	232 (13)	350 (14)
Worthing Beach	63 (5)	141 (5)	46 (4)	49 (3)	72 (6)	80 (7)	66 (6)	46 (6)	191 (9)
Brighton Marina	30 (?)	nc	nc	72 (?)	nc	380 (?)	nc	127 (?)	nc
Telscombe Cliffs	12 (2)	nc	nc	14 (1.5)	39 (2)	27 (2)	1 (2)	14 (2)	24 (2)
Splash Point (Seaford)	143 (11)	101 (6)	26 (3)	140 (15)	148 (5)	73 (3)	42 (6)	107 (15)	203 (14)
Beachy Head	44 (?)	nc	nc	49 (?)	108 (?)	nc	nc	nc	96 (?)
Hastings	27 (2)	53 (3)	nc	91 (2)	100 (2)	nc	161 (3)	nc	nc

Breeding was again successful at Rye Hbr LNR where a count at Ternery Pool on 2 Jun found a total of 291 nests, all on a single island, and taking into account the amount of vegetation cover, the total was probably around 350 pairs. A count on 9 Jul recorded 148 fledglings although total fledging was probably in excess of 400.

At least 1000 roosted at Rye Hbr on 20 and 26 Jul but thereafter notable counts in East Sussex were 138 at the Wicks and 193 at the Midrips on 30 Jul and 65 at Rye Hbr on 30 Aug. In West Sussex the only three figure counts were 140 resting on the beach in Bracklesham Bay on 20 Jul, 110 in Pagham Hbr on 17 Aug and 100 on the mudflats at Church Norton on 5 Sep. During August a small roost occurred on the fields at Goring Gap and reached a peak of 28 on the 20th.

Like 2007 the autumn passage may have started early as 414 flew west at Selsey Bill on 28 Jun and 105W on 12 Jul. The monthly totals and peak movements from sites regularly recorded in autumn are shown in the following table:

	Jun		Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct		Peak movement
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	
Selsey Bill	78	434	15	473	15	182	12	176	5	7	414 W on 28 Jun (11¼ hr)
Worthing Beach	40	64	56	220	44	298	31	26	7	34	69 W on 3 Aug (6½ hr)
Telscombe Cliffs	11	3	92	2	34	8	13	21	1	-	51 E on 29 Jul (¾hr)

During the last two months of the year there was one at Rye Hbr on 3 Nov, seven at Thorney Island on 15 Nov, one in Pagham Hbr on 13 Dec and two in Emsworth Channel (Chichester Hbr) on the following day.

Single birds at Chichester GP on 20 May and 8 Sep were the only records from an inland location. [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. First recorded on 16 Apr when four flew east at Selsey Bill and 23 went east at Splash Point (Seaford), this was six days later than the 10-year average arrival date but an identical date and site to the first record for 2007. Thereafter the species was recorded on 26 different days during April and May. The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
162	461	-	2	42	13	13

Most were recorded during spring seawatches when there were 11 days with double-figure counts and the highest counts, all from Splash Point, were of 111E on 4 May (14 hrs), 100E on 8 May (14¾ hrs) and 58E on 21 May (6¼ hrs). Inland, just five birds were recorded on five dates either at Chichester GP, Pulborough Brooks or Weir Wood Res.

There were no records during June and single birds were seen at Rye Hbr on 1 Jul and at Church Norton on 29 Jul. Arctic Terns were recorded more frequently, on 26 dates, between mid-August and mid-October and, with the exception of 20 at Worthing on 25 Aug and seven at Rye Hbr on 30 Aug, these involved few birds. As in the spring most were seen at the coast but between 21 Aug and 9 Sep there were records on six dates from Chichester GP, or Weir Wood or Arlington Reservoirs. The last record was of a single bird flying east at Selsey Bill on 20 Oct, thirteen days earlier than the 10-year average departure date of 2 Nov. [JAN]

Common/Arctic Tern

Sterna hirundo/paradisaea

Most birds passing seawatching sites remain unidentified as “Commic” Terns. This summary does not include birds specifically identified as Common or Arctic Terns and thus it needs to be read in conjunction with the counts for these species.

Analysis of the daily counts from each of these locations suggests that a minimum of 14,229 birds flew east during the spring comprising none in March, 4319 in April, 9564 in May and 346 in June. This was clearly a good spring and nearly twice the average of 7800 recorded for the springs between 1985 and 2007. All the early arriving birds were identified as Common Terns and the first “commics” were 8E at Telscombe Cliffs on 8 Apr but it was not until mid-month that larger numbers were seen. 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	3762	6034	9796	26.0	1459 on 4 May (14¼ hrs)
Worthing Beach	0	1644	2665	4309	26.6	898 on 4 May (8¾hrs)
Telscombe Cliffs	0	376	1100	1476	27.1	391 on 7 May (2 hrs)
Splash Point (Seaford)	0	1941	6587	8528	33.8	1440 on 7 May (12 hrs)

The largest passage was seen typically in late April and early May; details of days when over 700 birds were recorded are shown below (with hours watched in brackets).

	23 Apr	29 Apr	30 Apr	3 May	4 May	7 May	9 May
Selsey Bill	1061 (5¼)	583 (11¼)	773 (12)	976 (13½)	1459 (14¼)	432 (9)	179 (9¼)
Worthing Beach	387 (5¼)	709 (7)	85 (6)	61 (6)	898 (8¾)	129 (3½)	323 (7)
Telscombe Cliffs	0 (¼)	117 (1¼)	41 (2)	46 (2)	42 (2)	391 (2)	29 (1¼)
Splash Point (Seaford)	nc	644 (2½)	276 (5½)	413 (14½)	424 (14)	1440 (12½)	862 (14¼)
Beachy Head	nc	25 (?)	nc	nc	370 (?)	34 (?)	12(?)

Although there is remarkable consistency in the overall numbers of birds seen in each hour the tables show considerable variation in the daily counts. There were some notable movements later in May with 658E at Splash Point on 21 May (6¼ hrs), 349E at Selsey Bill on the 22nd (12¾hrs) and 580E at Splash Point on the 23rd (7 hrs).

Autumn passage, like 2007, started remarkably early as a westward passage was recorded at

Selsey Bill in late June and early July. The highest day totals, not shown in the table, were 155W on 28 Jun (11¼ hrs), 130W on 2 Jul (9½ hrs), 160W on both 12 (7¼ hrs) and 17 Jul (12¼ hrs) and 250W on the 19th (13½ hrs). Details of the autumn seawatching are summarised in the following table.

	Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct		Total		Peak movement
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	
Selsey Bill	70	1890	80	855	-	343	-	-	150	3088	700 W on 22 Jul (11¼hr)
Worthing Beach	4	22	113	877	127	33	5	3	249	935	731 W on 3 Aug (6½ hrs)
Telscombe Cliffs	50	1	10	5	7	15	1	-	68	21	39 E on 29 Jul (¼ hr)

The only records from inland sites were on 7 Sep when about 60 were at Weir Wood Res (see Common Tern) and 40 at Arlington Res; both included flocks which were seen departing the site. On the same day there were 47W at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) and 103W at Selsey Bill. Just 11 were recorded at coastal sites in October with the last seen flying east at Worthing on the 19th. [JAN]

Common Guillemot

Uria aalge

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

The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
78	59	4	12	30	14	18	1	11	9	9	21

The totals recorded at the principal seawatching sites are shown in the table below. Some birds will have been recorded at more than one site or offshore at a single site on more than one occasion 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	1	1	15	4	3	5	8	12	14	-	3	7	-	-	8
Worthing Beach	2	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	2	1	1
Telscombe Cliffs	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Splash Point (Seaford)	44	11	12	15	8	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	14	-	2

The annual total of 266 showed a slight increase over the figures for 2006 (221) and 2007 (241) but it was still only just over a quarter of the 10-year rolling average.

In the first winter period small numbers were recorded moving offshore on a total of 23 days in January and February. The only double-figure movement was of 13E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 4 Jan. At this time the majority of records of birds on the sea came from the east of the county with 15 at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 14 Jan and nine there on 8 Feb. Also in February three oiled birds were noted at Newhaven and one at Southwick Beach.

There were no records in March. Spring passage was extremely light with no more than three birds recorded on any one day. Small numbers continued to be seen at Selsey during July with a peak of 7W on the 22nd. On 19 July an adult with a very young bird was seen off Beachy Head.

This is the second consecutive year that this has occurred at this site, possibly indicating that the species is once again nesting on the cliffs here. The only record for August was of a singleton off Shoreham on the 14th.

Numbers remained low throughout the autumn and second winter periods with no double-figure counts of birds either moving offshore or on the sea.

The six records of birds away from the open sea involved singletons in Chichester Hbr, Pagham Hbr and Brighton Marina.

A bird of the bridled morph (known as ‘Bridled Guillemot’) was at Brighton Marina on 17 Feb (SM). The bridled morph is rare in the southern part of its range and is generally associated with more northerly colonies with up to 25% being of this form in the Northern Isles and up to 50% at the extreme north of the species’ breeding range (*BWP Vol. IV*). The only previous county record of the bridled morph of Common Guillemot was of one at Splash Point on 1 May 1997. [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
358	184	9	16	60	14	11	1	5	42	35	94

The annual total of 829 showed a slight increase over the 2007 total of 802 but was still barely a third of the 10-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.

	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	1	-	36	25	1	22	9	8	7	3	2	23	2	-	7
Worthing Beach	28	3	86	12	3	-	-	-	-	2	2	11	51	5	17
Telscombe Cliffs	-	19	42	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Splash Point (Seaford)	178	61	14	22	8	-	1	-	1	4	-	-	35	-	-

In the first winter period the numbers in January and February were fifteen times those of 2007. In this period the largest numbers were recorded in the east of the county with 140 moving past Beachy Head on 4 Jan and 85E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 14 Feb. Numbers were then low in March and throughout the spring period with the only double-figure movement being 11W at Selsey Bill on 4 May. As might be expected, numbers during the summer period were also low although a single bird in Pagham Harbour on 10 Aug is worthy of note.

The second winter period was again quiet with just two double-figure movements recorded: 39E at Worthing Beach on 25 Dec and 18E at Splash Point on 27 Dec.

The only records of Razorbills away from the open sea were singletons in Pagham Hbr in August and Brighton Marina in October. [DHH]

Little Auk*Alle alle**Very scarce autumn migrant and winter visitor.*

After two years with good numbers of Little Auks (14 in 2006 and 32 in 2007) there was just a single record during 2008. This relates to a bird collected from a garden in Middleton-on-Sea by Worthing Animal Rescue on 13 Dec and taken into care at Brent Lodge Wildlife Hospital. After a period of recuperation the bird was successfully released back into the wild. [DHH]

Puffin*Fratercula arctica**Rare spring and winter migrant.*

1981: A sick juvenile/first-winter bird which was found on the R Rother at Hardham on 27 Nov 1981 was caught and taken to a sanctuary at Slindon. This record has not previously been published in the Sussex Bird Report.

Auk species

The total of 11,739 was a welcome increase from the worryingly low total of 4712 in 2007 although it is still barely a quarter of the 10-year rolling average. The total quoted should not be taken as an accurate assessment of the true number of auks involved as duplication in sightings is inevitable with birds passing back and forth in feeding movements.

The approximate monthly totals (including those specifically identified as Common Guillemots and Razorbills) recorded at the main seawatching sites 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	13	1	132	55	4	112	40	20	53	4	5	46	7	-	148
Worthing Beach	1696	4	361	43	3	11	2	-	1	18	3	34	414	6	594
Telscombe Cliffs	418	69	970	8	12	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	17
Splash Point (Seaford)	3521	72	1384	349	17	18	6	2	1	4	5	5	310	-	18

In the first winter period there was one day with a four-figure peak count and a further nine days with three-figure peak counts. The period from 3 to 5 Jan produced the largest numbers and these are shown in the table below.

	Worthing Beach			Telscombe Cliffs			Splash Point (Seaford)		
	E	W	Hrs	E	W	Hrs	E	W	Hrs
3 Jan	1515	-	2¼	n/c	n/c	-	397	30	1
4 Jan	-	10	1¼	32	-	1	735	22	2
5 Jan	5	220	1½	-	624	1½	35	270	1½

Other three-figure counts in January were 150W at Rye on 6th, 151E and 48W (in 2 hrs) at Splash Point (Seaford) on 13th and 28 E and 274 W (2¼ hrs) at the same location on 17th. In the east of the county three-figure totals occurred on four dates in February with the largest on 14th

when there were 253E (2hrs) at Telscombe Cliffs and 854E (1 hr) at Splash Point.

Numbers declined rapidly after the middle of February and remained low until December. During December the only three-figure counts were all at Worthing Beach where there were 62E and 119W in 2¼ hrs on 12th, 2E and 175W (3 hrs) on 14th and 32E and 123W (1¾ hrs) on 25th. In each of the cases mentioned above no significant numbers were recorded at the other main seawatching sites, which suggests that these birds were involved in localized feeding movements.

Auks in flight can be extremely difficult to identify specifically unless seen at fairly close range and consequently only 10% of all the auks reported were assigned to a specific species. Where birds were specifically identified the ratio of Common Guillemots to Razorbills was 1:3.1 which is similar to the ratios recorded in the past three years. [DHH]

Feral Rock Dove

Columba livia

Common resident.

While flocks generally averaged around a dozen birds, there were seven records of counts of 50 or more in the early part of the year including 60 at Hastings Beach on 1 Jan, 87 at Brighton Borough on 20 Feb, 66 at St Leonards-on-Sea on the 25th, 58 at Hove on 28 Jan and at Climping on 30 Jan, and 50 at Partridge Green (Littleworth) on 25 Jan and at Forest Row on 9 Feb.

During the BBS, a total of 617 individuals was recorded in 29 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, with highest counts of 165 at Hove on 4 May and 125 there on 8 Jun, and 81 at West Worthing on 27 Apr. Noteworthy counts during Atlas surveys during the summer included 116 in central Brighton on 20 Jul, 75 at Portslade on 27 Jun and 72 at Newhaven on 2 Apr plus seven other counts of 50 or more.

In the latter part of the year, another Atlas count recorded 130 at South Heighton on 1 Nov, while single counts included 80 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 15 Nov, 80 at Seaford on 23 Nov, 200 (150 on a refuse tip) at Steep Down (Lancing) on 1 Dec and 240 at Mile Oak (Portslade) 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 concentrations were found at inland locations in the west of the county. This is in contrast to the same period in 2007, when the largest concentrations were recorded at coastal locations. At The Burgh (Burpham) 120 were seen in three groups on 10 Jan, at Lychpole Hill (Cissbury) a flock of 64 was recorded on 2 Feb, at Coombes (Shoreham) 63 were present on 3 Feb, and at Edburton 130 were seen on 9 Feb. Large concentrations were also noted in March and into the breeding season. At Pett Level the monthly maximum for March was 95, at Denne Fm (Warnham) a feeding flock of 60 was recorded on 15 Mar, at The Burgh, a site which is attracting greater numbers every year, two flocks containing a total of 130 birds were present on 10 Apr, at Weir Wood Res 150 were seen on 17 Apr, and at Edburton 85 were recorded on 23 May.

The species was recorded at 434 sites in the county. During the BBS, 96 individuals were recorded in 35 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of nine at Blackham Highfields.

The first records of calling males were on 22 Jan at Salehurst and 8 Feb at Stansted Park. Display behaviour was noted at Warnham LNR on 14 Feb. Birds were present at a total of 342 sites widely dispersed throughout the county during the breeding season. Breeding was confirmed in 43 tetrads by at least 70 pairs. Records of probable breeding by at least another 190 pairs in 102 tetrads were also received. The number of probable breeding records has increased ninefold since last year. Of the 50 nests reported, forty nine were in owl boxes (98%). One nest contained three eggs, 44 (88%) contained two eggs or chicks, and five just one.

Several small flocks were seen at both inland and coastal locations after the end of the breeding season. The only sizeable movement reported during the second winter period was of at least 120 in flight at Castle Fm (Rye Hbr LNR) on 4 Nov. The largest counts during the second winter period were 70 at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on 13 Nov and 70 at Castle Water (Rye Hbr LNR) on 20 Nov. Numbers started to build up at Pett Level in December with a maximum count of 65 on the 3rd. [CJR]

Wood Pigeon

Columba palumbus

Abundant resident and winter visitor.

In the first winter period, there were several noteworthy counts including 2000 birds at Stump Bottom (Steyning) on 5 Jan with 1000 at Phillis Wood (East Marden) and 1200 at Marsh Fm (Sidlesham) both on the 27 Jan. A further 5000 were at Phillis Wood on 30 Jan with the same number at West Dean Woods on 9 Feb and 2000 were seen at Sompting Downs on the 27 Feb with 1000 at Newick Park on 21 Mar.

During the BBS, a total of 4945 birds was counted from every one of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, with a highest count of 188 at Heyshott on 6 Apr. There were 11 other counts of 100 or more of which several were from urban rather than farming habitats. Breeding reports included a juvenile at Forest Row on 1 Jan along with at least 83 pairs at Brighton Wild Park, 17 pairs at Pagham Harbour, 29 territories at Sefter Fm (Rose Green) and 24 territories at Hotham Park (Bognor).

The first report of autumn passage was of 3500 at The Burgh (Burpham) on 16 Oct but numbers were generally less remarkable than in 2007. On 18 Oct 1100 flew west at Halsey's Fm and 3500 were counted at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head), where observers reported that there were no large scale movements this autumn, followed by 2000 at Stump Bottom (Steyning) on the 19th. On the 22nd 1000 flew west at Pett Level on the 22nd, 2500 flew west at Whitbread Hollow on the 27th and 2500 flew west and northwest at Worthing on the 30th.

The only other appreciable counts for the year were of 2000 on stubble at Tegdown Hill (Brighton) on 16 Nov and 1800 on kale at East Marden on 28 Dec. [APo]

Collared Dove*Streptopelia decaocto*

Very common resident.

As usual, flocks rarely exceeded a dozen birds although in the early part of the year 47 were counted at Littlehampton on 27 Jan, 53 were recorded in two hours at Sidlesham Common on the 15th and there were nine other counts of 20 or more.

During the BBS, a total of 533 birds was recorded in 88 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed with highest counts of 30 at Westergate on 13 Jun and 27 at West Worthing on 27 Apr. Breeding records included a squab seen at Climping on 30 Apr while 38 pairs bred at Brighton Wild Park (30 in 2007) with two pairs in the Pagham area, three territories at Hotham Park (Bognor) (two in 2007) and one territory at Sefter Fm (Rose Green) (two in 2007). A fledged bird was seen at Durfold (Warnham) on 30 Jun.

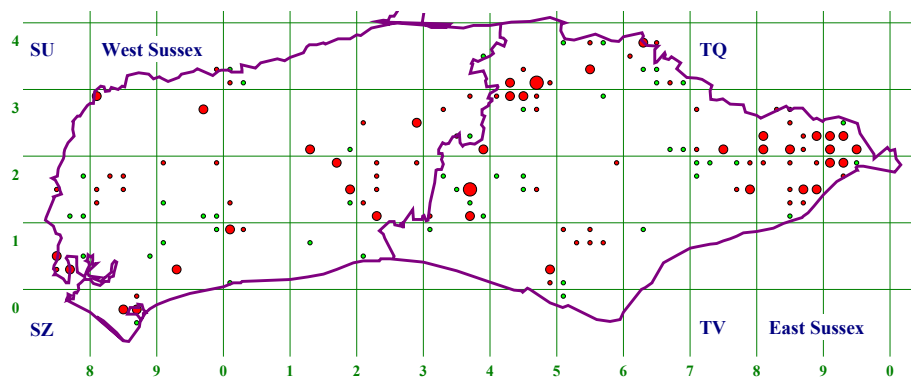
A leucistic bird was noted at Northlands Cottage (Warnham) on 6 Jun.

In the latter part of the year, 40 were seen roosting in pines at Shoreham on 11 Sep, 37 were at Hoath Fm (Mountfield) on 5 Oct, 80 were counted at Mile Oak (Portslade) in two hours on 16 Nov with 48 at the same site on 16 Dec and there were seven other counts of between 21 birds and 37. [APo]

Turtle Dove*Streptopelia turtur*

Scarce but declining summer visitor and passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Of the 304 records received 55 were obtained during survey work for the BTO/SOS Atlas resulting in an improvement on the 231 for 2007. Nevertheless, the concern for this species continues.



The first sighting of the year was of two at Sidlesham Ferry on 17 Apr, 11 days later than the 10-year average. After six more April records relating to eight birds, the usual ones and twos were seen on a nearly daily basis from May to July. Higher counts in May included three at Hog

Wood (Plaistow) on the 4th, three at Ashdown West Chase on the 5th, four at Thorney Deeps on the 9th, three at Bayham on the 10th, three newly arrived migrants at Climping on the 19th and, on 27 May, four at Shortland Copse (Plaistow) and the same number at Monkton (Chilgrove). Encouragingly, there was a maximum count of ten at Pett Level on 31 May.

Other summer records of note included four at Winchelsea Marsh on 1 Jun, five in a two hour count at Brickhurst Wood (Beckley) on 24 Jun and, on the 29th, four at Wilbees Fm (Arlington) and four at Ashdown Marl pits. Eight were also seen in the Brede Valley on 2 Jul.

During the BBS, a total of nine birds was recorded in six of the 136 1-km squares surveyed. There was only one record of confirmed breeding involving a nest with eggs. Probable breeding was recorded at at least 22 sites (17 in 2007 but 22 in 2006) through observed display, nest building or copulation (at Troutbeck (Eridge) on 24 Jun). There were two pairs in the Pagham Hbr area and five pairs at Rye Hbr LNR (at least four in 2007). A juvenile was seen at Wrens Warren (Ashdown) on 10 Aug.

There were only nine August records with just ones and twos and only four September records with the last sighting being a single bird at Weir Wood Res on the 20th, two weeks earlier than the 10-year average. [APo]

Rose-ringed Parakeet

Psittacula krameri

Very scarce introduced breeding resident.

Unlike the 30 records for 2007, the nine records received for 2008 were much more in keeping with previous years. Eight of these were for single birds notably at Robertsbridge on 24 Feb, the University of Sussex on 25 Mar, Earnley on 27 Apr, Preston Park (Brighton) on 28 May, Hove on 27 Sep, Warnham LNR on 18 Nov and at Crawley on 12 and 14 Dec. The only other record was of two at Weir Wood Res on 16 Nov. The long expected expansion from Surrey into Sussex has still evidently yet to materialise. [APo]

Common Cuckoo

Cuculus canorus

Fairly common summer visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

The first recorded arrivals were on 8 Apr at Duncton Common and at Old Lodge LNR (Ashdown Forest), where a bird was seen flying around for most of the day and calling at times. This is six days later than the 10-year average date. The next bird was reported on 9 Apr at Pippingford Park (Ashdown Forest) and birds were then reported arriving daily from the 12th until the end of the month. By the end of April, 176 reports had been received from all over the county relating to a total of 233 birds (although it is likely that some duplication was involved). Peak counts were 50 birds on 26 Apr, and 31 birds on the 27th. The April maximum daily count was six birds at Pippingford Park (Ashdown Forest). During the BBS a total of 73 birds was recorded in 41 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed.

Only one report of confirmed breeding was received this year. At Rye Hbr SSSI, where around five singing males were present throughout the breeding season, a chick was photographed in a Reed Warbler's nest on 24 June and it fledged on about 10 Jul. Reports of probable breeding by an estimated 39 pairs were received from 30 sites, 40% of which were in the Ashdown Forest area.

On 11 May, in the Friends car park area of Ashdown Forest, a male and female were seen flying around together, and then three birds flew out of a copse near Nutley Windmill, the female making a bubbling call, until the female flew back while her mate pursued a second male in the direction of the car park. Possible breeding was also recorded at a further 200 sites with pairs in suitable habitat at another 29 sites. There were also singing males at 190 different sites, although it is likely that some of these 246 reports relate to the same bird. Just three juveniles were reported: one at Climping, one at Pulborough Brooks and one at Rye Hbr SSSI.

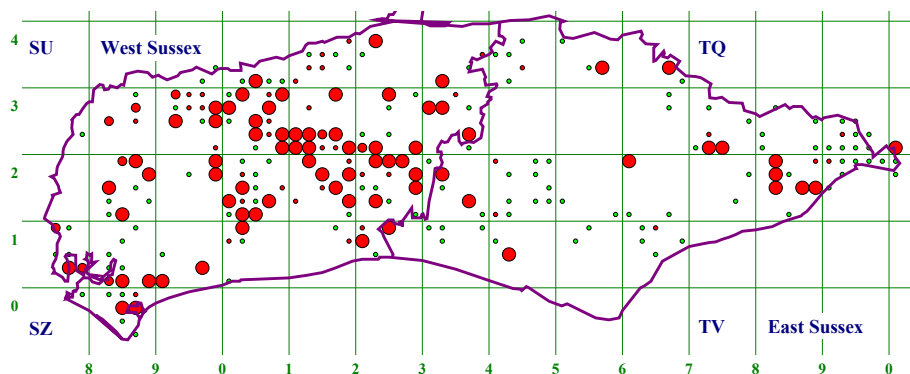
The records suggest that this species departed very early this year. By the middle of June, the number of reports was dwindling. Only ten reports were received for July and three for August. The last bird was seen on 31 Aug at Newhaven Tide Mills, which is almost a month earlier than the 10-year average date of 27 Sep. [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
58	76	57	53	37	41	17	12	9	13	15	36

The unusually high number of sightings during the early part of the year may be a reflection of food shortage and the need to hunt during daylight.

This year was not a good one for breeding Barn Owls in Sussex or in the UK as a whole. In West Sussex 86 active nests were reported, with 44 in boxes in barns, 28 in boxes on trees, a box in a quarry and one in a workshop, one in a cavity in an old railway bridge, and a nest in a purpose built owl loft in an occupied "barn conversion". Twenty-six nest boxes had adult birds roosting but not breeding. Monitoring in East Sussex was again less complete than in some recent years, with 36 breeding attempts reported. Where details are known, these included 21 nest boxes on trees, six on poles and four in barns. One nest was in a hollow tree. Clearly Barn Owls rely very heavily on nest boxes in Sussex.

A nest box containing two young fell off a tree and the young were taken into care. When after two days they were returned to the box back on the tree the adults resumed feeding and the young fledged.

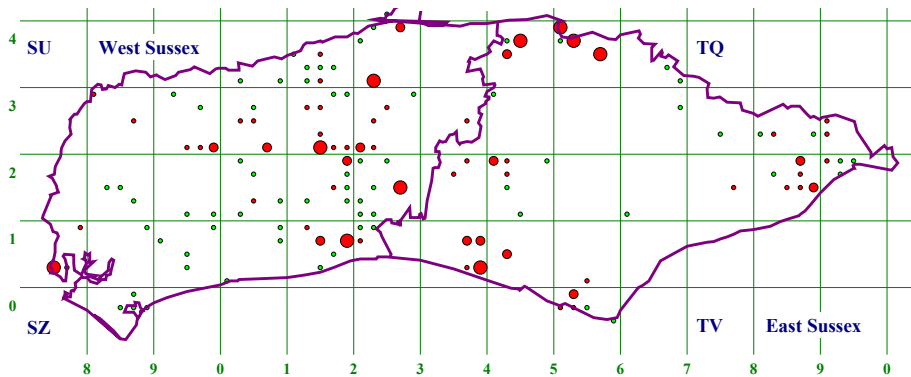
Five Barn Owls were reported killed on Sussex roads during the year. [ABW]

Little Owl

Athene noctua

Fairly common resident. Introduced to Britain in the nineteenth century.

Records of this introduced and sedentary resident were received from 143 sites during the year compared to an average of 68 sites over the last four years. Its strongholds in the county continue to be open farmland in the river valleys and on the Downs but during the first winter period records were widely scattered throughout the county with a concentration near the coast.



Ten pairs were confirmed as breeding which is above the average for recent years; birds were also noted as present in suitable breeding habitat, or suspected of breeding, at a further 58 sites. The only records of nesting sites were of three pairs utilising barns and a single pair using an owl box on a tree.

As in recent years, a number of sites had their first records of birds during the autumn, which may be indicative of dispersal from breeding areas. The first bird recorded at Beachy Head in 2008 was in the hotel garden on 11 Oct and this, or possibly a separate bird, was recorded at Belle Tout wood on the 18th and in the Old Trapping Area on 8 Nov. Finally, a possibly dispersive bird was observed being harassed by corvids in the unlikely surroundings of Beach House Park (Worthing) on 4 Nov. [DG]

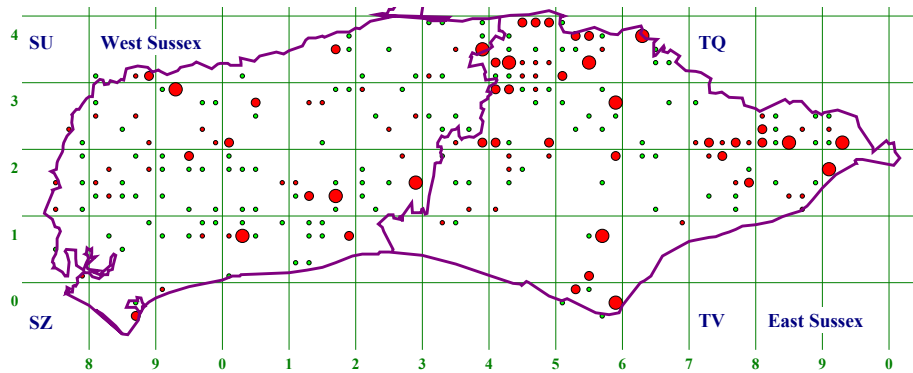
Tawny Owl

Strix aluco

Fairly common resident.

There was a significant increase in the number of records in 2008 with birds reported from roughly 252 separate sites during the year, compared with an average of 139 sites over the previous four years. As would be expected, the majority of records relate to birds heard rather

than seen, but a number of observers watched birds hunting including one at a Blackbird roost at the University of Sussex in February. A more unusual record was of one seen feeding on a dead Pheasant at Spithurst (near Barcombe).



Breeding was confirmed at 21 sites which is roughly 50% more than the average over the last four years. At a further 32 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. Recorded nest sites included purpose-built owl boxes and a tree cavity and unfortunately at Weir Wood Res two eggs were ousted from a nest by Mandarin Ducks. During the BBS, a total of five birds was recorded in five of the 136 1-km squares surveyed.

During the autumn this species becomes more vocal and therefore more easily recorded. The majority of records in the second half of the year typically related to birds seen and heard in woodland and gardens, but this species was also recorded from small areas of woodland on heathland, in river valleys and on the Downs. A bird was recorded re-occupying its daytime winter roost in a Norway Spruce on 25 Oct and another bird was found roosting in a Silver Birch. Although there were many reports of birds perched beside roads and along central reservations there was only one report of a casualty during the year. [DG]

Long-eared Owl

Asio otus

Scarce resident and very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Seventy-seven records were received from 16 sites compared to 76 records from only eight sites in 2007. In the first winter period three communal roosts were found. Roosting birds were present at Rye Hbr LNR until the 28 Feb, with a maximum of five present at the beginning of February utilising two separate roosting areas. A winter roost at Site A in the west of the county held a minimum of five birds in early January and was occupied until 14 Feb. An additional roost was discovered at Site E in a river valley in the east of the county where up to eight birds were seen in early February roosting in scrub. Individuals were recorded roosting at five further sites during the first winter period and unfortunately one road casualty, with a tumour on its wing, was discovered at a site where birds had not previously been recorded.

During the year the Long-eared Owl Study Group continued a project concentrating on Sussex Downland with the aim of ascertaining 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. For the third consecutive year Site D held three territorial pairs within a 1-km square and at another site two males were heard calling against each other in mid-February. Birds were also observed hunting from fence posts beside Downland roads in three further areas during the breeding season. At one additional site, where birds have long been suspected of summering, a bird was seen in early May to confirm these suspicions.

All the above 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, records were received of birds from two further sites in the county during the breeding season including a territorial male calling from woodland in a river valley. Site details for this species are strictly confidential because of this species' sensitivity to disturbance.

No autumn migrants were observed, and the first bird recorded at a known roost during the second winter period was a single bird at Rye Hbr LNR on the early date of 3 Oct. By early December there were again at least five birds present at this site using two separate roosting areas. The only other records in the second winter period were of one bird seen at a coastal location which had historically held a winter roost and one bird found on a road and taken into care. The long-standing roost at Site A did not appear to be occupied in the second winter period, but this site has unfortunately suffered increased disturbance from observers in recent years and it is likely that the roost has relocated to a less accessible location. [DG]

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	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
14	15	11	5	1	6	8	6	6

The high number of birds recorded at the end of 2007 continued into 2008. During the first four months of the year roughly 21 separate birds were recorded from 11 areas of the county. Concentrations of birds included up to six hunting over Downland at The Burgh (nr Burpham), three seen at Thorney and Pilsey Islands and a further three birds present at various sites around Pagham Hbr where one bird was observed to catch a Linnets. The last individuals seen at The Burgh in the first winter period were on the 17 Mar and at Thorney and Pilsey Islands the last date was 14 Mar. Elsewhere in the county birds were seen at a variety of low-lying sites including Pulborough Brooks, Beeding Brooks, Henfield Levels, Lewes Brooks, Pevensey Levels and Rye Hbr. A probable migrant was seen hunting over Camber Dunes on 3 Mar and a definite migrant flew north over Splash Point (Seaford) in the morning of the 20th. On this date a single bird was also present at Pagham Hbr and this was the last record of the spring.

The first autumn migrant was observed on the fairly typical date of 23 Aug at Pagham Hbr. Records in September of migrant or returning birds were of singles at Pagham Hbr on the 3rd, at Rye Hbr on the 10th and 20th, at Beachy Head on the 14th and 21st, in fields west of Selsey on the 16th and at Thorney Island on the 26th. A probable migrant was seen at Hastings CP on 14 Oct.

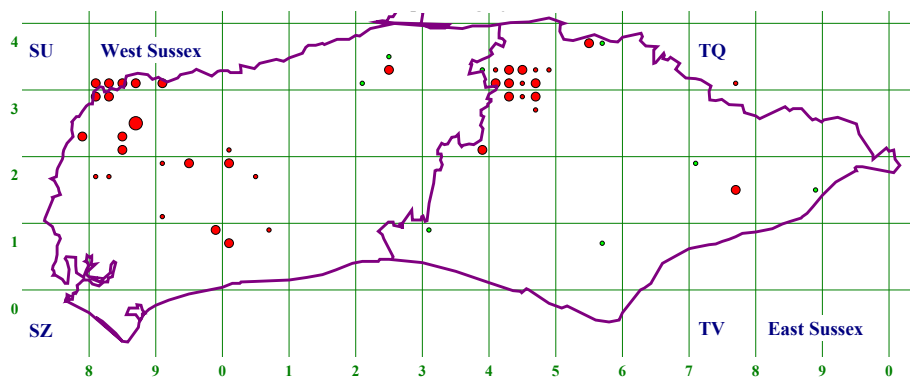
Numbers were below average during the autumn/second winter period and most records related to birds seen at Thorney and Pilsey Islands and Pagham Hbr with two birds present at each site throughout the second winter period. Single birds were recorded irregularly at Rye Hbr and in fields west of Selsey from September until the end of the year while all other sites held birds only briefly. Only one record was received from The Burgh (Burpham) with an individual present on 29 Oct and elsewhere records were of singletons at Shoreham Airport on 20 Nov and at Beeding Brooks on 19 Dec when one was observed catching a vole. [DG]

European Nightjar

Caprimulgus europaeus

Fairly common summer visitor rarely seen on migration. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

The first sighting of the year was on 14 May of a male at Ashdown Res. This was followed two days later by sightings at Hindleap Warren (Ashdown Forest) and Woolbeding Common.



The Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey in the west of the county identified 27 territories on ten sites; results comparable with 2007. The highest number was six pairs at Chapel Common (Liphook) although Iping and Stedham Commons together held eight territories. Elsewhere in the west there were sightings at approximately 16 sites. The BBS produced one record from Angmering Park on 6 Jun, a previously established site but at which there were no sightings in 2007. Five birds were recorded at Ambersham Common on 10 Jun. The first bird at Wigginholt Common (Pulborough Brooks) was on 18 May. Two birds were also recorded there on 20 May and again on 24 Jul with singletons on several days between. Breeding was recorded for the first time at Owlbeech Woods (Horsham).

In the east of the county, as usual, most records were from the Ashdown Forest where 28 sites were reported, many of them by the Ashdown Forest Bird Group. Elsewhere, in the east of the county, there were records from around seven sites including at least two churring males at Chailey Common at the end of May. Single churring males were also at Abbots Wood (Hailsham) on 29 May and at Darwell Woods on 30 May. A pair and a churring male were identified at Battle Great Wood on 30 Jun.

The highest number of birds in a single sighting was seven at Old Lodge LNR (Ashdown Forest) on 30 Jun and seven at Rewell Wood (Arundel) on 23 Jul of which three were churring

males. The only confirmed evidence of breeding in the county was at Woolbeding Common where a bird with a nest containing two eggs was found on 13 Jun. Over the county as a whole there was one tetrad with confirmed breeding, 25 with probable breeding and 14 with possible breeding. However, examination of the records indicates a total number of possible breeding territories of 107, which although an approximate number is almost the same as in previous years.

The final reported churring male was at Wrens Warren (Ashdown Forest) on 24 Aug. The last records for the year were both on 16 Sep at two sites. A male was seen on migration at Sweet Hill (Patcham) and four birds were recorded at Pett Level where two were trapped and ringed by the Rye Bay RG. These records were five days earlier than the 10-year average. [SS]

Common Swift

Apus apus

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

The first bird of the year was recorded at Rye Hbr on 20 Apr (10-year average 12 Apr). Thereafter, the first count in double figures was of 15 at Seven Sisters on 25 Apr. On 29 Apr there was an influx, with 30 at North Mundham, 50 at Rackham Plantation and 100 at Rye Hbr with 100 at Pulborough Brooks next day.

Eight counts of over 100 were recorded in May: at Sidlesham SF, Selsey Bill, Chichester GP, Cissbury Ring, Weir Wood Res, Newhaven and Plashett Park. The largest count, of 200 birds, fell well below the maximum of 1200 seen in 2007 (at Weir Wood Res).

The highest count in June was of 400 at Rye Hbr on 15 Jun, while 160 were seen on the same date at Owlbeech Woods (Horsham). Other three-figure counts were recorded at Selsey Bill on 1 Jun (339), Rye Hbr on 3 Jun (100), Pulborough Brooks on 13 Jun (100), Cissbury Ring on 18 Jun (130) and Twineham Place on 29 Jun (125).

During the BBS, a total of 244 individuals was recorded in 36 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed. Breeding was confirmed in at least 29 locations (1-km squares/tetrads) by a minimum of 38 pairs (which must be a gross under-estimate). Four pairs were recorded nesting in a roof space in Haywards Heath; there were at least seven nesting pairs in Chichester (four in houses, one above shops and two at the Cathedral tea rooms); and nesting was also confirmed in houses at Binderton (West Dean), Storrington, Findon, Preston Park (Brighton) and Lewes (in the eaves of a garage).

In July, the first reports of probable migration was of 300E in 2 hr at Worthing Beach on the 5th, followed by 14W at Streat on the 6th, a flight of at least 500, mainly fledglings, over Rye Hbr LNR on the 9th, 62W at Yapton on the 19th, 250W at Southwick Hill on the 20th (when 200 were counted at Pulborough Brooks) and 300S in 6½ hr at Selsey Bill on the 26th. Other three-figure counts in July for which no flight direction was recorded, included 500 at Worthing Beach on the 6th and 400 at Sidlesham on the 31st.

Following further counts on 3 Aug of 500 at Truleigh Hill and 150 at Rye Hbr, there were counts in September of at least 150 at Rye Hbr on 9 Sep followed by 200 on the 10th and 100 at Brighton Wild Park on the 17th but other sightings in September were of smaller numbers. The latest dates recorded at various sites were 16 Jul at Hailsham, 23 Jul from a nesting site near Preston Pk (Brighton), 23 Aug at Thorney Deepes, 25 Aug at Weir Wood Res, 1S on 11 Sep at Selsey Bill, 20 Sep at Beachy Head and, finally, 1E at Edburton on 14 Oct, five days earlier than the 10-year average date. [NR]

Alpine Swift*Apus melba**Rare vagrant.*

One was present in Lewes from 28-30 May (JASP *et al.*). It was first seen from an office window flying around County Hall between 13:15 and 13:45 BST before being found, in worsening weather, roosting high on the building from 14:00 BST. It left the roost early the next morning but returned that evening and was last seen flying off south the following morning. It and its admirers attracted much interest from those working in the building and passers-by while many observers relished the opportunity to study a species that normally does not linger. In fact this is the first to do so for more than one night, and also the first time this species has been seen perched in the county. It is only the third record this decade, a significant decline compared to the seven in the 1970s, 12 in the 1980s and ten during the 1990s. Thirty-eight have been recorded in the county in total and this is the 15th in the month of May. The others have been in March (3, from 25th), April (5), June (3), July, August (6), September (3) and October (2, last 30th). [RJF]

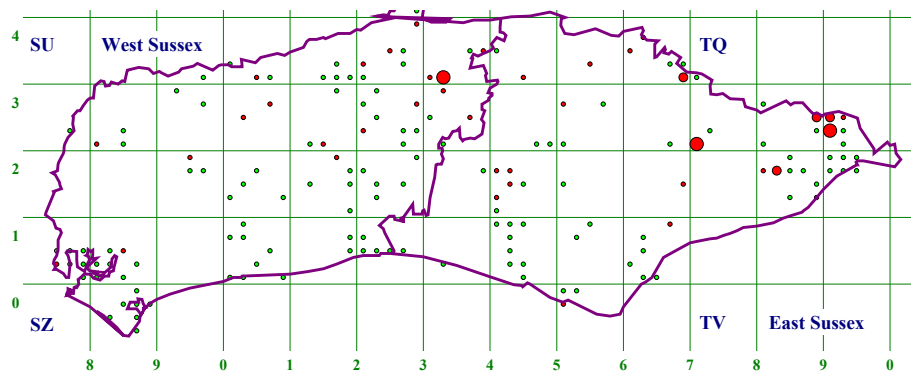
Common Kingfisher*Alcedo atthis*

Fairly common resident and occasional winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

Observations during the winter months were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	72	68	70	65
No. of inland sites	36	28	25	25
No. of coastal sites	20	22	25	27

In January and February, nearly twice as many birds were recorded in 2008 as in the previous year (43 and 33, respectively). There were records for a greater number of inland sites (80% more in January and 87% more in February) and coastal sites (100% more in February). At Henfield three separate birds were seen on garden ponds within a mile or so of each other during very cold weather on 6 Jan. The largest concentration recorded during this period was of six birds at Nutbourne (Chichester) on 3 Feb.



Breeding was confirmed at four inland locations. One pair was reported to have used nesting holes in an artificial bank. Another pair had at least two broods. Pairs were found in suitable habitat at a further three sites and birds held territory for at least a week at two other locations. Forty-seven reports were received of possible breeding at another 32 (mostly inland) sites throughout the county and birds were seen at 76 different sites during the breeding season. However, no records were received of juveniles.

From August onwards, reports showed increasing numbers at coastal locations. Birds were also reported from at least five sites in the north of the county throughout the year with a monthly maximum count of five birds at one site in April and July. Other notable concentrations were four birds at Bewl Water on 17 Aug and five there on 14 Sep. Records for November and December showed a similar number of birds to 2007, but with an increase in the number of coastal sites and a slight decrease in reports from inland sites. [CJR]

European Bee-eater

Merops apiaster

Rare vagrant, has bred.

Single adults were seen above Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on 30 May (MO), at Selsey Bill on 6 Jun (PC, TJE, DF), over Hodcombe (Beachy Head) on 14 Jul (RHC) and at Pett Level on 13 Sep (PEJ, SJR). These are the first records for the county since 2005. The former provided a welcome distraction for those hoping to get views of the far less obliging River Warbler while the latter, which flew off SW after ten minutes, is the latest for the county since one was seen in Lancing on 19 Sep 1958. The latest record of all was on 24 Sep 1955 when the three pairs that bred at Street and their seven young departed to the east in a tight flock. Twenty-two have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000, making this the best decade for the species to date despite the two blank years. These individuals arrived in May (5, from the 1st), June (7), July (6), August (3) and September. Decade totals from the 1960s to 1990s are 1, 0, 19 and 12, respectively. [RJF]

Hoopoe

Upupa epops

Very scarce spring and even scarcer autumn passage migrant, has bred.

Records obtained were from Crowborough on 4 Apr, Wych Cross (Ashdown Forest) on 11 Apr, Selsey Bill on 20 Apr, Guestling (Hastings) on 2 May, Rye Harbour on 29 Aug, Warnham on 13 Sep and Thakeham on 20 Oct. Those at Wych Cross and Thakeham were seen in gardens while that at Selsey came in off the sea at 08:47 BST and landed briefly in one. The Guestling individual was seen near the pond just north of the church and that at Rye was present near Castle Fm during the morning. There have been 34 records since the start of 2000 and the decline, evident in decade totals from the 1960s to 1990s of 104, 96, 63 and 47, respectively, looks set to continue. Records since 2000 have been in March (3, earliest the 19th), April (13), May (10, latest the 30th), August (5), September (2) and October. The last is the latest county record since 1998 when one was seen in Willingdon on 21 November. [RJF]

Wryneck*Jynx torquilla*

Very scarce passage migrant; last bred in 1944. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

The records received suggested a minimum of seven birds during the year, fewer than in recent years. The only spring records were of a single bird at Thorney Island on 12 Apr, coinciding exactly with the 10-year average arrival date, and a single bird at Fairlight on 26 Apr.

Later in the year, a single bird was trapped and ringed at Pett Level on 29 Aug, and another single bird was at Thorney Island between 31 Aug and 5 Sep. A single bird was present at Cuckmere Haven between 5 and 13 Sep, and possibly the same individual was later recorded at Seven Sisters CP and Birling Gap between 18 and 20 Sep. There were several sightings of probably a single bird at Shepcote Valley and Brighton Wild Park on 13 and 14 Sep and a bird recorded by many observers was present in the area around Church Norton and The Severals between 10 and 20 Sep. A single bird was seen at Thorney Island on 27 Sep and 4 Oct and the final record of the year, possibly of the individual observed in the Church Norton area through much of September, was at Church Norton on 8 Oct, two days later than the 10-year average date. [HC]

Green Woodpecker*Picus viridis*

Fairly common resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

This species is widely distributed across the county and there were many sightings reported throughout the year. Breeding was confirmed at 58 sites, in 72% of these cases by the observation of juvenile birds. Probable breeding was recorded at a further 79 sites, including territories identified on the West Sussex Commons recorded during the Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey. During the BBS a total of 186 birds was recorded in 102 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed (75%), compared with 163 birds recorded in 81 of the 123 squares surveyed in 2007 (66%). [HC]

Great Spotted Woodpecker*Dendrocopus major*

Common resident.

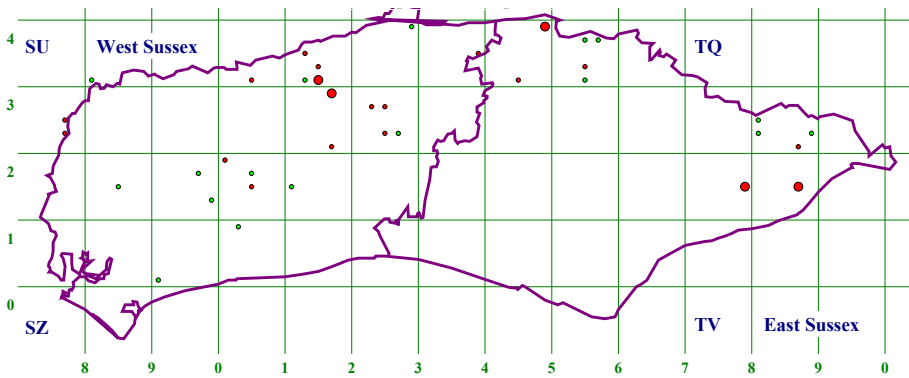
This species is widely distributed across the county, and many sightings were reported throughout the year. Breeding was confirmed at 141 sites. Probable breeding was recorded at a further 146 sites, including territories identified on the West Sussex Commons, recorded as part of the Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey. During the BBS, a total of 221 birds was recorded in 95 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed (70%), compared with 214 birds recorded in 79 of 123 squares surveyed in 2007 (64%). [HC]

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker*Dendrocopus minor*

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

There were only 72 records for this species from approximately 43 sites spread widely across the county. Breeding was not confirmed at any site but at a site in the north of the county birds

which had been heard calling and drumming on 7 Feb attempted to breed. A nest hole was excavated and the male was seen removing material in early April but unfortunately, by 1 May, the pair had been evicted by a pair of Great Tits. A female, which might have been one of the pair, was ringed at a nearby site in early October.



Elsewhere, birds were heard drumming at two other sites, one in the west and one in the east, and one or two birds were seen at c.39 other sites during the year. During the BBS, the species was not recorded in any of the 136 1-km squares surveyed.

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]



Short-toed Lark, Newhaven Tide Mills, May 2008 (Les Bird)

Short-toed Lark*Calandrella brachydactyla**Rare vagrant.*

An adult was seen and photographed at Newhaven Tide Mills on 10 May (MFA *et al.*). It was a popular bird being the first to be recorded in the county since 1994, when one was present at Birling Gap on 7-8 May. Although 12 have now been seen in the county they comprise a disparate set of records, having occurred in April (two together in 1951), May (the two detailed above), June (1991), July (1888), September (the second British record in 1854), October (four together in 1972) and November (1909). [RJF]

Wood Lark*Lullula arborea*

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

In the first winter period the largest flock was of ten recorded on 26 Jan and 1 Feb at Pett Level. The only other sightings of five or more were of six at Old Lodge LNR (Ashdown Forest) on 29 Feb and five at Stopham (Fittleworth) on 1 Feb. The first birds in song were observed at Lavington and Linchmere Commons on 16 Jan.

Breeding was confirmed in seven tetrads by the observation of recently fledged young at Weavers Down (Liss), Lavington Plantation and Common, Marl pits (Ashdown Forest) and Pippingford Park (Ashdown Forest), Danehill Chelwood Common, St Leonards Forest Grange and Lord's Piece (Coates Common), which also had the highest total for the year of 14 birds. Breeding was also reported at Owlbeech Woods where a pair bred for the first time raising three young (this is the same tetrad as St Leonards Forest Grange). A later record of a family of five birds was reported from Heath End (Burton) on 5 Jul. Probable breeding was recorded at a further 23 tetrads and there was possible breeding at a further 25 tetrads.

The Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey recorded 37 pairs from 11 sites in the west of the county including six territories at Iping Common and five territories at Ambersham Common. During the BBS, only three birds were recorded in two of the 136 1-km squares surveyed.

There were far fewer records in the second half of the year. During the summer ten birds were seen at Hollies (Ashdown Forest) on 25 Aug and in the autumn nine were recorded at Lord's Piece on 25 Sep. Singletons flew over Pulborough Brooks on 26 Sep and 11 Nov.

In the second winter period a flock of 13 was observed feeding in stubble at Bolney on 17 Nov and 13 were also seen at Compton on 18 Nov. The final sightings of the year were of six seen feeding on the ground at Pett Level on 26 Dec and five were at Burton Mill Pond on 30 Dec. [SS]

Sky Lark*Alauda arvensis*

Fairly common but declining resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

A flock of 200 at Lychpole Hill (Cissbury) on 2 Feb and over 150 at Manor Fm (West Dean) on 6 Feb were the largest flocks of the first winter period. Double-figure flocks were reported from

12 sites around the western harbours, including 70 at the shingle spit at Pagham Hbr on 10 Jan and 78 at East Head (Wittering) on 24 Jan, and at the other end of the county from Rye Hbr LNR including 65 on the saltmarsh on 3 Jan and 60 the following day. In the Weald 55 were at Trotton on 24 Jan and 50 at Fittleworth on the following day but as expected the majority of records were from the Downs with a particular concentration between the A24 and the R Adur where, besides the Lychpole Hill flock, there were 72 at No Man's Land (Findon) on 2 Jan, 90 at Findon on 20 Feb, and 70 at Steyning on 4 Feb with 60 there on 25 Feb. Of 391 2-hr TTV surveys conducted, only one-third (133) recorded Sky Larks totalling 1269 or 9.5 per occupied tetrad.

The first mention of song was of two on 6 Feb amongst a flock of 32 at Chantry Hill (Storrington). One north at Selsey Bill on 31 March was the only evidence of spring movement.

In the breeding season, breeding was confirmed in 20 tetrads and probable in a further 111. Counts of breeding pairs from defined areas include three from the Norfolk Estate with estimates of 149 pairs on Peppering Fm and 67 at Home Fm (both at Burpham), and 87 on North Stoke Fm. Comparisons with the previous year (2007 figures in brackets) include Rye Hbr SSSI with at least 40 (41), Brighton Wild Park 19 (19), Sefton Fm (Rose Green) 11(8) in 95 ha and Chesworth Fm (Horsham) 6 (5). No counts were received from Pagham Hbr, Pulborough Brooks or Amberley Wild Brooks.

During the BBS, a total of 351 was counted in 69 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, a result which represents an increase in numbers if not distribution over 2007. The highest count was 30 at Cobbarn (Eridge) on 14 Jun. The highest counts during the BTO/SOS Atlas surveys were 57 at Thundersbarrow Hill on 26 Apr (and 36 on 9 Jun) and 43 at Manor Fm (West Dean) on 6 May and 73 on 11 Jun.

Movement was noted in September with a maximum of 23 flying over Pett Level during the month. The highest number recorded at Selsey Bill was 15 flying west on 8 Oct. The first migrants at Warnham LNR were five flying south on 13 Oct. At Halsey's Fm (Sidlesham) 50 flew west on 17 Oct, 40 the following day and 130 on 25 Oct while 25 flew north-east there on 1 Nov. At Brighton Wild Park the peak daily number was 119 flying west on 28 Oct.

Most of the larger flocks during the second winter period were in the western harbours with 70 on the mudflats at Pagham Hbr on 2 Nov, 80 at East Head (Wittering) on 25 Nov, 59 at Thorney Island on 8 Dec, about 80 on Pilsey Island on 11 Dec and 80 in fields west of Selsey on 18 Dec. Elsewhere 80 were at The Burgh (Burpham) on 4 Nov, about 60 at Chantry Hill (Storrington) on 16 Nov, 45 at Highden Hill (Washington) on 6 Dec, 40 at Rodmell Brooks on 30 Nov rising to 100 on 24 Dec, 50 at Patcham on 27 Dec, 45 at Bostal Hill (Berwick) on 12 Nov and 50 at Bishopstone GC on 13 Dec. The largest flocks recorded at Rye Hbr LNR during the period were 34 on the saltmarsh on 7 Dec and 33 at Flat Beach on 20 Dec. Of 280 2-hr TTVs conducted during this period 97 held Sky Larks with a total of 747 or 7.7 per occupied tetrad. [ACG]

Shore Lark

Eremophila alpestris

Rare winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The individual present on the saltmarsh at Rye Hbr LNR from 23 Dec (*SxBR* 60:140) remained until 1 Mar (MO) and was the only record of the year. The county total since the start of 2000 remains at five. [RJF]

Sand Martin*Riparia riparia*

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

The start of the spring migration began very early this year with the first sightings of two at Weir Wood Res and Arlington Res on 4 Mar: the joint earliest date on record (the 10-year average date is 11 Mar) and part of a huge 59 records for the month. Migration continued with two at Pulborough Brooks and four at Weir Wood Res on the 8th, a single at Burton Mill Pond on the 9th and two at Pagham Hbr on the 15th. The main influx began on the 16th with records from nine sites including the month's highest count of 51 at Chichester GP. The rest of the records were mainly of single figures with highs of 25 at Weir Wood Res and 27 at Pulborough Brooks on the 19th and 24 at Chichester GP on the 20th. In contrast with 2007 which was the worst March this century, 2008 was one of the best.

The influx continued with daily sightings in April coming from both ends of the county with the first three-figure counts of the year seen mainly at Chichester GP with 150 on the 7th, 200 on the 8th, 120 on the 14th and 125 on the 19th. There were also 120 at Weir Wood Res on the 12th and 100 at Pulborough Brooks on the 24th. Smaller numbers of migrants were noted through May and June with unusually high non-breeding counts of 25 at Pulborough Brooks on 17 May and 30 at Rye Hbr on 13 Jun.

Breeding was confirmed at seven locations: Sandgate Park (Storrington) with at least eight pairs; Heath End (Burton) with at least ten pairs; Iping Common, Duncton and Sandhall Fm (Hooe) each with one pair. Other sightings in suitable habitat during the season were at Bosham, Cowdray Park (Midhurst), Pulborough Brooks and Scotney Court Fm. At Sandgate Park (Storrington) birds were still feeding young in the nest on 3 Aug. This is still one of the rarest recorded breeding species in the county and any records would be gratefully received.

The number of coastal sightings during June made it difficult to differentiate between birds arriving and those departing, but the first confirmed records of autumn migrants were of one at Pagham Hbr on 24 Jun, one flying south over Warnham LNR on 27 Jun and one moving SW over Northlands Cottages (Warnham) the following day. Apart from these three, the first autumn migrants were seen in July with high counts of 150 at Rye Hbr on the 4th decreasing to 140 on the 7th, 112E and 51W over Selsey Bill on the 13th, 1000 over Pagham Hbr on the 14th, 200 over fields west of Selsey on the 20th and 400 over Pagham Hbr on the 25th. The trend continued in August, with the first autumn roost at Pett Level of 200 on the 4th, 250 at both Chichester GP and Weir Wood Res on the 21st, 500 at Arlington Res on the 25th diminishing to 200 the following day, 200 at Rye Hbr on the 26th, and 300 at Pagham Hbr on the 28th. The highest counts of the month were 500 over the R Cuckmere at Exceat Bridge and 5000 flying in to roost at Pett Level on the 29th.

Migration continued in relatively good numbers into September with high counts including 300 at Weir Wood Res on the 1st, 250 at Rye Hbr on the 3rd (rising to 300 on the 12th), 250 at Chichester GP on the 7th, 200 at Birling Gap on the 8th and monthly maxima of 600 in to roost at Pett Level on the 9th and 300 at Pagham Hbr on the 16th.

As in 2007, there were just ten records in October, all from coastal sites with counts at Pagham Hbr of seven on the 3rd, 12 on the 4th, six on the 8th, present on the 11th and two on the 16th. There were also two at Rye GC on the 4th, and three at Belle Tout (Beachy Head) and two at Shooters' Bottom (Beachy Head) on the 9th. The last sighting of the year was inland, with a singleton at Pulborough Brooks on the 18th. This was seven days earlier than the 10-year average. [SB]

Crag Martin*Ptyonoprogne rupestris**Very rare vagrant.*

One was seen at Truleigh Hill on 21 Sep (PC). It was first seen at about 11:00 BST heading slowly east with House Martins. After circling the observer once it continued on its way, never to be seen again. It has been accepted by the BBRC and is the third county record. The others were both at Beachy Head, on 9 July 1988 and 8 October 1995. That this one was seen by a very experienced and once frequent visitor in the county (in the 1960s) will do little to lessen the envy at their good fortune during an occasional visit. With only four observers involved in the above records many will be hoping that the next appearance of this species in the county performs for all to see. [RJF]

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 almost a month earlier than the 10-year average date (10 Mar) when a single bird was observed flying north over the A27 at Nutbourne at 07:20 GMT on 19 Feb. The next record was on the more normal date of 4 Mar with a single bird at Sidlesham Ferry, followed by singletons on 15 Mar at Ladies Mile LNR (Brighton), on the 16th at Eastbourne and Pulborough Brooks (with six there on the 18th) and on the 17th at Rye Hbr (increasing to four). These were followed by two at Weir Wood Res and one at Ford Prison (Arun Valley) on the 19th. There was then a gap in the records until the next sightings of singletons at Rye Hbr on the 27th, at Pett Level the next day, then at Warnham LNR, Weir Wood Res and Plumpton College on the 29th. There were then another nine records before the end of the month with a high of three at Weir Wood Res on the 31st.

April saw the most records with 489 reported from across the county (cf. 359 in 2007, 272 in 2006 and 261 in 2005), although much of this can be attributed to BTO/SOS Atlas recording which accounted for just over a third of these records. The highest counts were 80 at Arlington Res on the 7th, 80 at Coldwaltham SF on the 13th, 60 at North Mundham on the 18th, 250 at Chichester GP and 80 at Arlington Res on the 19th. Seventy flew north over Worthing Beach and 53 also moved north over Selsey Bill on the 23rd while there were 150 at Weir Wood Res on the 30th. Although there were a similar number of records in May, there were very few large counts as birds settled into breeding sites with the highest counts being around 70 at Warnham LNR on the 1st (involving about 50 out of their roost at dawn and approximately 20 into roost at dusk), 180 on the 5th and 50N on the 17th at Selsey Bill and 40 at Weir Wood Res on the 20th.

Breeding records began with pairs back at nest sites at Byworth, Streat and Punnetts Town on 3 Apr, seven days earlier than in 2007, followed by a pair at the University of Sussex the next day. Elsewhere, breeding was recorded at a total of 119 sites this year compared with 21 in 2007, 13 in 2006 and 18 in 2005.

An unusual date for a three-figure count was 21 Jun with 120 reported at Boxgrove (Chichester), but the first large post-breeding groups were seen as usual in July with 50 at East Dean (East Sussex) on the 16th, 110 at Pagham Hbr on the 23rd, 400 roosting in reedbeds at Pett Level on the 27th and 60 roosting at Thorney Deeps on the 30th. August continued with three-figure counts

at Weir Wood Res of 250 on the 3rd, 130 on the 17th and 600 on the 21st, followed by 100 at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on the 25th and at Henfield on the 26th, 150 at Goring Gap and 200 roosting at Thorney Deeps on the 27th, 400 at Rye Hbr, 7500 roosting at Pett Level and 1500 at Hastings CP on the 29th, 117E over Newhaven Tide Mills on the 30th and 300E over Goring Gap, 250 at Pilsley Island, 200 at Newick, 1000 at Pagham Hbr and 106E over Worthing Beach on the 31st. September as usual witnessed the peak of autumn migration with nine four-figure counts starting with 3000 at the inland site of Tilleys Fm (Washington) on the 12th and then at coastal sites with 3000 at Pagham Hbr and 5000 into roost at Pett Level on the 13th, 1000 at Rye Hbr and 1200 at Brighton Wild Park on the 15th, 6000 at Pagham Hbr on the 16th, 1500E over Goring Gap on the 18th, 2000E over Beachy Head and 3500E over Newhaven Cliffs on the 20th.

There were no four-figure counts in October and the only three-figure counts were very low with 200S over Selsey Bill, 300 into roost at Pett Level and 180 at Pagham Hbr on the 8th, 300 at Pagham Hbr and 200 over Beachy Head on the 9th. The rest of the month saw no more than double-figure flocks and this trend continued into November with the last records of the year being seven at Pagham Hbr, three at Rye Hbr and three at Selsey GC on the 15th, five at Pagham Hbr and two at Cuckmere Haven on the 16th, then singles at Pagham Hbr on the 18th, Prinsted (Chichester) on the 22nd and Broadwater (Worthing) on the 26th, a date two days earlier than the 10-year average. [SB]

House Martin

Delichon urbica

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

The first records of the year were of two birds at Weir Wood Res on 16 Mar (equal to the 10-year average), then three at both Rackham Woods and Rye Hbr on the 17th, followed by 16 at Pulborough Brooks on the 23rd and another at Weir Wood Res on the 29th.

The migration continued with a good number of wide-ranging records during April, but these involved a very small number of birds with the largest counts being about 50 at Arundel WWT on five dates between the 5th and 21st, 20 at Barcombe on the 19th, 20 at Pulborough Brooks on the 21st and 29th, and 20 at Hickstead and Weir Wood Res on the 28th. The highest single count was of 150 at the latter site on the 30th. May continued in the same manner with the only significant pre-breeding counts being recorded from the middle to the end of the month from inland sites, with 50 at Pulborough Brooks on the 18th, 80 at Weir Wood Res on the 20th and 40 at Peasmarsh on the 23rd.

The first sign of breeding involved eight birds at nest sites in Broadbridge (Chichester) on the early date of 13 Apr with the next being eight nests in use at Hickstead on 28 Apr. In total, 104 nesting sites were recorded this year compared with 13 in 2007, 50 in 2006 (SOS House Martin Survey year) and 19 in 2005, a higher figure which is no doubt due to the extra surveying effort for the BTO/SOS Atlas. The only notable high counts during June were of 50 at Streat Hill on the 9th and at Rye Hbr on the 13th and 21st, 60 at Weir Wood Res on the 28th and 80 at Ardingly Res on 1 Jul. During the BBS, a total of 224 birds was recorded in 27 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, with a highest count of 40 at Slinfold on 24 Jun.

The first post-breeding flocks were seen in July with 100 at Weir Wood Res on the 13th, 200 at Pulborough Brooks on the 20th and 100 at Warnham on the 26th. Large numbers continued during August with 200 at Weir Wood Res on the 3rd, 120 at Rowhook on the 17th, 250 at Weir Wood

Res on the 21st, 100 at Warnham LNR on the 25th, 300E over Goring Gap on the 27th and 100 at Ladywells (Coombes) on the 29th. Migration continued strongly during September with 1000 in the Lower Cuckmere Valley and Pagham Hbr and 2500 over Beachy Head on the 13th (with 1000 there next day), 1300 over Brighton Wild Park on the 15th, 4000 at Pagham Hbr on the 16th, 2300E over Peacehaven Heights, 5000E past Newhaven Cliffs on the 20th, 2700E past Beachy Head on the 21st, 1000 over fields west of Selsey on the 23rd, 1000 past Bullock Down (Beachy Head) on the 28th and 1400 over Pett Level on the 30th.

Migration slowed dramatically during October with no four-figure counts at all. Indeed, the largest counts were of 180 at Pett Level on the 4th, 220 at Pulborough Brooks on the 6th, 500 SW over Barcombe on the 7th, 200 at Pagham Hbr and Pett Level on the 8th and 150 over Pagham Hbr on the 9th. Other records were mainly single or double figures dwindling to the last sightings of the year. The only reports for November were three at Pagham Hbr and one at Telscombe Cliffs (Portobello) on the 1st and one at Rye Hbr on the 3rd and the last record of the year was of one over Horsham at 14:00 GMT on the 23rd, which was ten days later than the 10-year average. [SB]

Richard's Pipit

Anthus richardi

Rare vagrant.

One was seen at Climping Gap on 3 Oct (OM). It was flushed calling several times before being seen well in a horse paddock. It remained restless, however, and flew off a short distance to the west but it could not be relocated. Six have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000, in May, September (2) and October (3). This is consistent with the records in the last two decades as totals from the 1960s to 1990s have been 12, 10, 7 and 5, respectively. [RJF]



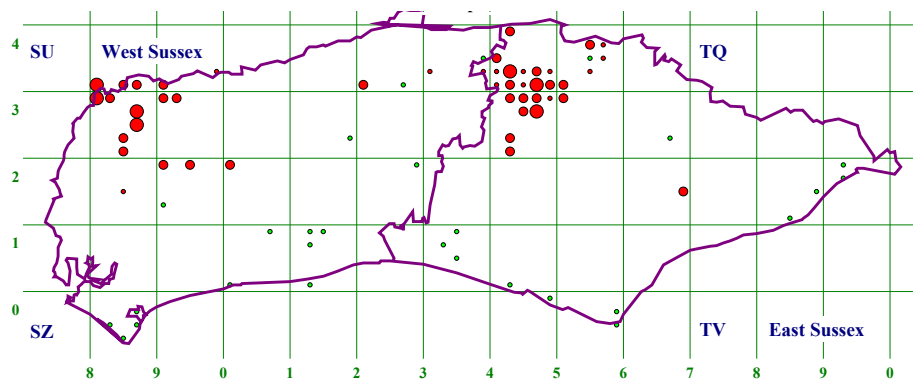
Tawny Pipit, Rye Harbour, May 2008 (Ian Barnard)

Tawny Pipit*Anthus campestris**Very scarce visitor, mostly in autumn.*

An adult was present on the Flat Beach and nearby saltings at Rye Hbr LNR on 25-26 May (per CWM *et al.*). It is the tenth to be recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000 but the first since 2002. The last to be seen in spring were in 1994, at Birling Gap on 23 and 29 May. All records since then have been between 22 Aug and 8 Oct. Decade totals from the 1960s until the 1990s have been 36, 63, 68 and 23, a worrying recent decline, while one has to go back to 1933-38 for a longer run of blank years than the five from 2003-07. [RJF]

Tree Pipit*Anthus trivialis**Fairly common but local summer visitor and passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.*

The first record this year was of a male at Ashdown Res on 27 Mar, two days earlier than the 10-year average and the only record for the month. Migration in April saw single birds at Pagham Hbr on the 2nd (and the 22nd), Weir Wood Res and the University of Sussex on the 12th and Burgess Hill on the 23rd with two at Smallham Fm (Maplehurst) on the 8th and East Dean (West Sussex) on the 26th. In May, single birds flew north over Selsey Bill on the 3rd and the 31st and Splash Point (Seaford) on the 8th and 31st.



The intensive effort of the Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey and the Ashdown Forest Bird Group (with added help from the BTO/SOS Atlas recording) shows a comprehensive distribution of this species across the county with four distinct breeding areas as shown in the map above. These areas are Ashdown Forest with 128 territories, the West Sussex Greensand with 62 territories, the Robertsbridge/Eridge area with eight territories and the Horsham/Crawley area with six territories. This total of 204 compared favourably with 165 in 2007, 184 in 2006 and 131 in 2005. It is the highest level of breeding ever recorded in the county.

The first signs of autumn movement appeared in early July with one at Pulborough Brooks on the 8th and then nothing until a count of 42 over Pett Level during August followed by two flying south over fields west of Selsey on the 14th, three at Brighton Wild Park on the 15th and one west

over Selsey Bill on the 16th. Records of movement during the rest of the month were mainly of ones and twos except for three over Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on the 30th and Hastings CP next day.

The peak of migration occurred in September with 42 sightings, over double the number of records compared with 2007. These were mainly from coastal sites with a highest count of 57S over Pett Level during the month. Counts of five or more were also reported at Brighton Wild Park (9) and at Beachy Head (5) on the 13th; Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) (6) and Hastings CP (5) on the 14th and five at the latter on the 20th and 27th.

As in 2007, the four records in October were the last sightings of the year when there were two at Pett Level on the 1st and one on the 8th and singles at Worthing Beach on the 3rd and on the late date of the 31st, ten days later than 10-year average. [SB]

Meadow Pipit

Anthus pratensis

Locally abundant resident, very common passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

BTO Atlas recording this year has had a huge impact on the number of records for this species with 332 records over the first two months (160 in January and 172 in February) compared with 132 records over the same period in 2007. High counts in January included 40 at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on the 10th, at Moulsecomb (Brighton) on the 21st and at Crows Nest (Ashdown Forest) on the 23rd, 31 at Vinehall (Mountfield) on the 24th and 33 at The Trundle (Goodwood) on the 25th. February saw flock sizes increase with 50 at Coombes (Shoreham) on the 3rd, 40 at Harrow Hill (Patcham) on the 6th and at Truleigh Hill on the 10th and Linch Down (Bepton) on the 12th, 63 at Rye Hbr on the 10th and 65 on the 21st, 45 at Lavington Common on the 16th, 41 at East Chiltington on the 23rd and 55 roosting at Lavington Common on the 28th. March still continued to see flocks (although of smaller numbers) with high counts of 30 at Pippingford Park (Ashdown Forest) on the 6th and at Warnham on the 15th and Rye Hbr on the 24th, while 50 were recorded at Brighton Marina on the 26th.

Spring passage started early with the first singleton flying north over Warnham LNR on the 11 Feb, followed by five high over Ladies Mile LNR (Brighton) on the 14th and one at Pett Level on the 22nd. This continued in March with the first being one over Bedelands LNR on the 2nd, followed by seven in off the sea at Palace Pier (Brighton) and five over Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) on the 9th. As the month progressed migrants increased with highs of 15 over Pett Level on the 13th and Brighton Marina on the 18th, 19 over Pulborough Brooks on the 15th, 52 N over Selsey Bill on the 18th, 42 over the University of Sussex on the 20th, and 24N over Selsey Bill on the 26th, and the following day 150 flew north there. The only other notable record came in April with 146N over Selsey Bill on the 2nd.

The first sign of breeding was on the very early date of 15 Feb with birds in song at Cuckmere Haven followed by singing birds at Old Lodge LNR (Ashdown Forest) on the 25th. Breeding records came from 110 sites (41 in 2007) but the only sizable territory counts were 75 in Ashdown Forest and 14 at Rye Hbr, but unfortunately there were no counts from Amberley Wild Brooks or Pulborough Brooks, both of which usually host good numbers. The first post-breeding groups were noted at the end of August with 40 on the scrape in fields west of Selsey on the 28th and 30 at Seaford Head on the 31st.

September saw the first coastal movements starting with five birds over Pett Level on the 8th,

followed by a number of high counts including 400 on fields west of Selsey on the 12th, 230W over Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) on the 14th, 350E over Hastings CP on the 17th, 550 flying over Rye Hbr on the 19th (with 450 there next day), 300E over Hastings CP on the 20th (and 250 there next day), 200 at Beachy Head and Rye Hbr on the 21st, 200 at Thorney Island, 300E over Pagham Hbr and 183 over Pett Level on the 25th, 400E over Pagham Hbr on the 26th and 300E over Hastings CP the next day.

The largest inland counts during September were 200 at Bewl Water on the 22nd and 70 at Cissbury Ring and 80 at Stone's Fm (Warnham) on the 28th.

The beginning of October began with three notable counts at coastal sites of 200 at Thorney Island on the 2nd and 80W over Selsey Bill and 60 at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 8th. The only notable inland counts were 45 flying in to roost at Iping Common on the 19th and 55 at Crows Nest (Ashdown Forest) on the 27th. Overall, this was a very poor month for this species.

During the second winter period, notwithstanding the large number of records in November, the early counts were mainly of single figures until winter flocks and roosts started appearing inland from the 11th with 34 roosting at the Roman Road Area (Ashdown Forest), 25 at Byworth on the 14th, 24 gathering to roost at Poundgate, 27 at Long Furlong (Findon) and 30 at Crows Nest (Ashdown Forest) on the 15th and 40 at Ashdown Res on the 20th. December continued with a similar number of small counts, the only highs being 40 at Stoughton on the 8th, 60 on fields west of Selsey on the 18th, 33 flying into roost at Iping Common on the 21st and 50 at Cissbury Ring on the 28th. [SB]

Rock Pipit

Anthus petrosus

Scarce resident and scarce winter visitor; rare away from the coast.

Continuing the trend of previous years only 21 of the 227 records came from east of Beachy Head and all of these came from the Rye Bay area with the exception of a couple at Hastings and Bexhill. These eastern records were spread throughout the year with one in January, four in February, three in March, one in September, five in October, six in November and two in December.

The first three months of the year saw a significant improvement compared with 2007 with records from 21 sites in January, 24 sites in February and 15 sites in March. The numbers were also a lot better with the highest counts being six at Pagham Hbr on 29 Jan and Ovingdean on 18 Mar, seven at Pagham Hbr on 23 Feb and 11 Mar, 11 at Pagham Hbr on 20 Feb, 13 at Cuckmere Haven on 16 Feb and 15 at Pagham Hbr on 8 Mar. April saw just eight records from six sites which included four birds at Newhaven Hbr on the 2nd and three birds at Telscombe Cliffs on the 5th.

Breeding was recorded at 11 sites compared with just three in 2007. These were Roedean, Rottingdean, Saltdean Cliffs, Telscombe Cliffs, Peacehaven and Peacehaven Heights, Newhaven Hbr and Cliffs, Seaford Head, Birling Gap and the Seven Sisters Cliffs.

Records in the autumn started with just one record in August of a single bird at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 10th before presumed migrants arrived with singletons at Rye Hbr on 12 Sep and at Black Rock (Brighton) on the 20th, six together at Cuckmere Haven on the 28th and seven at Pagham Hbr on the 30th.

Almost half of all sightings were reported in the last three months with 29 in October, 30 in November and 32 in December covering a total of 36 sites. The highest counts were recorded

in October and early November from Pagham Hbr with six between 9 and 16 Oct with eight on 2 Nov, 12 on the 4th and nine between the 5th and 12th with ten at Cuckmere Haven on 28 Oct. Interestingly, there were no records this year of inland birds. [SB]

Scandinavian Rock Pipit

Anthus petrosus littoralis

Probably a very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Singletons were seen at Cuckmere Haven on 16 Feb (RJF), Nutbourne Marshes on 26 Feb (BFF, DM, DIS), Ovingdean Beach on 16 Mar (ITB, RJF *et al.*), and south of the Golden Galleon in the lower Cuckmere Valley on at least 20 Mar (MRE *et al.*). There were also two at Pagham North Wall on 28 Oct (RJF). These are typical records of 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.

2007: One was seen at Bewl Water on 29 Dec (MGF).

2008: The individual seen at Bewl Water on 29 Dec 2007 (see above) was also present on 2 and 13 Jan (MGF) while one at Constantia Manor (Isfield) on 8 Jan (JL) was the only other record during a very poor first winter period. In late autumn, one was trapped at Pett Level on 28 Oct (RBRG) with one seen at Thorney Deeps on 14 Nov and 10 Dec (CBC) sandwiching one recorded at Sidlesham SF on 30 Nov (RJF). The last two are fairly regular sites for this species although no records were received from Combe Haven, the premier wintering site for the species in the county. [RJF]

Yellow Wagtail

Motacilla flava

Scarce and localised summer visitor and fairly common autumn passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

There were 288 records for this species during 2008. As in 2007, birds were late in arriving with the first records, both of three birds, at Rye Hbr SSSI and the University of Sussex on 2 Apr, 11 days later than the 10-year average date. There were a further 39 records in April, totalling around 90 birds. These figures are slightly above those for 2007, but include a remarkable flock of 27 seen on Broomhill Level on the 21st and 12 at Harbour Fm on the 25th. Few were seen on seawatches with just six at Selsey Bill in over 175 hrs, three at Splash Point (Seaford) in 108 hrs, and a mere singleton at Worthing in 81.9 hrs. There were, however, some interesting inland reports in April with single birds at Bewl Water on the 7th, Roffey Park (during an Atlas count) on the 10th and at Weir Wood Res on the 12th. Two at Thorney Island on the 16th were the only birds recorded there during the spring.

May proved an extremely poor month with only 18 records (of 38 birds) and none were recorded after the 18th. The maximum count was of five at Scotney Court on the 4th. The only consolation from an extremely poor spring was that Atlas fieldwork revealed a few birds in unexpected or rarely-watched places: Iden on 28 Apr, Beckley on 3 May and Ramsfold on 10

May. Over 200 hrs of seawatching at Selsey Bill produced a mere three birds while 144.5 hrs at Splash Point yielded only two.

There were only a handful of confirmed breeding records. Around Rye, there were four pairs at Harbour Fm and three at Castle Water. In addition, there were successful pairs at Pulborough Brooks, Winchelsea Marsh and East Guldeford Level. The ten June records included nine males around Scotney Court and an agitated bird at Iden. There were also two at Burgess Hill on 5 Jun, one at Duncton on the 8th and one at Ashfold Crossways on 4 Jul.

The first birds identified as on return passage were two at Pett Level on 17 July, after which five flew south over Warnham on the 30th. But the late July congregations that had been a feature of 2007 did not recur in 2008; nor was the scale of passage in August as considerable as it had been in 2007. There was one count of 200 at Rye Hbr LNR on 25 Aug followed by 90 at Halsey's Fm (Sidlesham) on the 28th (around 40 were still there on the 30th) and 70 at Climping on the 26th. There were very few inland records with single birds recorded over Warnham on 5 Aug, at Bewl Water on the 21st, and Weir Wood on the 22nd, with two at Henfield on the 26th and then ten at Pulborough Brooks on the 27th.

September 2008 proved to be a better month for Yellow Wagtails than the previous year with over 110 records (as against 87 in 2007) and there were seven three-figure counts (as against two in 2007). These substantial counts were of at least 100 around cattle at Botolphs (Bramber) on the 1st and 3rd, 150 at Pett Level on the 7th, 108 at Cuckmere Haven on the 8th, 180 entering a roost at Pagham Hbr on the 10th, 100 at the North Wall (Pagham Hbr) on the 15th and 120 at Halsey's Fm (Sidlesham) on the 16th. Numbers fell away after the 17th, the maximum thereafter being 45 at East Head (Wittering) on the 20th. The last double-figure count of the year was of 15 flying east over Hastings CP on the 21st. Only three were noted at Beachy Head after the 14th and there was only a single bird at Rye after the 16th, perhaps reinforcing the suggestion that Yellow Wagtails continued to pass through the west of the county later than through the east.

There was also one record, of a single bird, probably a female, showing the features of the 'blue-headed' form of Yellow Wagtail *m. f. flava* and this was at the North Wall (Pagham Hbr) on 13 and 14 Sep (ALB, AH, OM).

There were 21 records of 39 birds in October; an improvement on last year's showing of seven records of 11 birds. Most were from typical coastal locations, but one on a ploughed field at Vinehall (Mountfield) from 29 Sep to 2 Oct was unusual, as was one with Pied Wagtails at Scayne's Hill on the 4th. Three were at Pulborough Brooks on 18 Oct and the last bird of the year was a singleton at Sidlesham SF on 2 Nov, four days later than the ten-year average last date of 28 Oct.

When the evidence is considered as a whole, one can only repeat the conclusion drawn from the 2007 records to the effect that, both on spring passage and as a breeding species, the Yellow Wagtail in Sussex is not prospering. [CB]

Grey Wagtail

Motacilla cinerea

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

During the first winter period, there were 61 records in January and 62 (93 birds) in February, an increase from 2007 (45 records in January and 55 birds in February) probably partly due to Atlas fieldwork which contributed sightings from a number of coastal and inland sites not

previously featured in recent reports. These included Staplefield, East Lavant, Adversane, Little Bognor, West Ashling, (three on 26 Jan) and Holtye (2). The majority of records were of singletons but there was a remarkable count of 15 on Glynleigh Level on both 26 and 29 Jan and there were four in Alexandra Park (Hastings) on 12 Jan (with six there on 7 Feb and seven on 9 Mar). Interestingly, alongside garden records, in both January and February there were several from town centres including Western Road (Brighton) on 6 Feb (possibly the same bird as that seen in St Ann's Well Gardens (Hove) on the 3rd and 18th and, in turn, a returning bird from Feb 2007) and on the High St at Bognor Regis on the 25th. On 29 Feb, one was found in a Patcham garden feeding on an ornamental pond sporting a tiny waterfall. Vinehall (Mountfield) was a new wintering site with two from 17 Jan until 25 Feb and there were also records of a single bird flying over on 15 Mar, an immature or female on 10 June and one or two were noted from 2 Oct until 12 Nov.



Grey Wagtail, Hodcombe, June 2008 (Roger Charlwood)

Spring passage was barely discernible, though many of the singletons seen around the county in February may have been passage birds returning to their breeding grounds rather than residents. Two passing over Selsey Bill on 14 and 26 Mar were the only birds noted during seawatches. One at Winchelsea on 27 Mar was judged to be a migrant. By that time, breeding was underway with the collection of nest material being reported from East Lavant on 20 Mar. The first record from Ashdown Forest came on 2 Feb, at Five Hundred Acre. Fledged young were seen there on 25 June, but there were no later records. Birds had returned to Pippingford Park by 6 Mar. Here fledged birds were noted on 22 June and a single bird was seen on 23 Dec. It would be interesting to know if birds are resident here throughout the year.

In total, there were 25 records of confirmed breeding from Atlas TTVs and Roving Records. The first of these was at Sheffield Green on 28 Apr, followed by at Easons Green (Blackboys)

on 7 May. The majority of records of confirmed breeding came from the Ashdown Forest area but one pair bred at Rowner Fm (Billingshurst) and an adult was collecting food on the bowling greens at Preston Park (Brighton) on 15 May. Fledged young at Malling Down (Lewes) on 7 June were unusual.

One at Pett Level on 6 July heralded autumn passage; the next there was on 26 Aug, and totals of 34 and 29 were logged flying over during Sept and Oct. On 15 July, 12 were at the west end of Weir Wood Res and the next day 14 were at the dam end, with four immature birds remaining on the 17th and two present until the 24th but birds seemed to have passed through fairly rapidly. Of the 13 at the west end on the evening of 16 Aug only a singleton remained there the next day. On 19 Jul, three were recorded in Alexandra Park (Hastings). September produced a number of widely scattered reports from across the county with birds flying over from Sidlesham Ferry in the west to Castle Water (Rye Hbr LNR) and The Midrips in the east; from Old Lodge Reserve in Ashdown Forest (which held ten on 8 Sep) in the north to Cissbury Ring in the south (four flying west also on 8 Sep). There was a distinct period of passage in mid-month. This was noted at the Brighton Wild Park between 15 and 22 Sep. Similarly, ten appeared in Alexandra Park (Hastings) on the 14th while at Hastings CP six flew over on both the 14th and 15th, three on the 16th and nine on the 17th; this series of records was concluded by five on the 21st and two on the 28th. All of these birds were moving east. Sheepcote Valley (Brighton), Worthing Beach and Goring, together with inland locations such as Rudgwick, Southwater and Owlbeech Woods (Horsham), also featured in the records for this period. Interestingly, only three birds were noted at Selsey Bill during 63.75 hrs of observation during September. After 21 Sep, nearly all records were of one or two birds until six were found in Alexandra Pk (Hastings) on 15 Nov.

During the second winter period, records indicate a minimum of 78 birds in the county in November and 100 in December. Most of these were lone birds, but four were around Westham on 29 Dec while three were at Ifield Wood on 30 Dec. Atlas counts in November and December, like those at the start of the year, found birds present at a number of previously unreported sites; for example, Amiesmill Fm (Horsham), Shortbridge Mill (near Piltdown) and Buckholt (Crowhurst). Four birds were recorded at Alexandra Park (Hastings) on 14 Dec and the Thorney SF on the 30th while three birds passed through Preston Park (Brighton) on 3 Nov. St Ann's Well Gardens (Hove) almost counts as a traditional site and a bird was present there on at least four dates during November. There was only one record from Pett Level during December.

Although traditional sites such as filter beds, cattle feeding stations and flooded fields were favoured, as usual, birds turned up at some unusual locations at the end of the year. Two were on the roof of the Cricketers PH (Southwick) on 5 Nov; singles were on a conservatory roof in Ditchling on 24 Nov; in the centre of Bexhill on 26 Nov; in the Science Car Park at Sussex University on 12 Dec; in a Hove garden on 13 Dec; and on the side of the road in the middle of Worthing on Christmas Eve. Finally, one observer reported that while walkers have suffered at the hands of an angry farmer near Cuckfield who has ploughed up a couple of fields and left footpaths 'continually wet and puddled whenever it is damp', Grey Wagtails appear to have taken to the improved habitat! [CB]

Pied Wagtail

Motacilla alba yarrellii

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were 2090 records (many of them compound) submitted for 2008; 1391 for the first half of the year and 699 for the second. Only 28 days did not produce a report, eight in the first half

of the year, twenty in the second. During the first winter period, four gatherings in excess of 100 were reported: 200 were in a roughly ploughed field (previously used for courgettes and maize) at Lagness (near Bognor) on 14 Jan; 200 were roosting on a roof at the University of Sussex on 8 Feb; 300 were in trees in the centre of Haywards Heath at dusk on 26 Feb (perhaps the 60 reported from nearby Heaselands on 7 Feb joined this roost); and between 200 and 350 roosted on buildings at the junction of the A23 and the A2300 at Hickstead from mid-February until the end of March (with birds being tracked there from Burgess Hill). The latter was one of two unusually long-lasting roosts to be reported. The other was at Balneath SF (South Chailey) where 40 were observed on 6 Jan, rising to 56 on 20 Jan, before numbers fell back to 28 on 2 Feb after which they stabilised at 27 on 24 Feb and 25 on 23 Mar. Twelve were still present on 6 Apr but only two remained on 4 May. More typical were counts from Lidsey SF where 90 on 1 Jan fell to 43 on the 19th and 25 on the 31st; numbers then showed a sharp increase from 16 on 15 Feb to 80 on 23 Feb. This last total surely included passage birds and only a handful remained thereafter. There were no counts from Brighton Marina or Thorney SF for the early months of 2008; the only count from Sidlesham NR was of 30 on 11 Feb. A couple of other considerable gatherings noted at locations which do not feature regularly in reports of this species were of 70 at Downs Fm (Amberley) on 13 Jan and 50 at Strood Green (Slinfold) on 30 Jan. Very few were reported from seawatching points during spring passage.

During the BBS, 60 birds were recorded in 37 of the 133 1-km squares surveyed in the early counts and 81 in 42 of the 134 squares in the late counts. These figures stand in quite sharp contrast to those for 2007, when 95 birds were found in 39 of 123 1-km squares in the early counts but 69 in 44 of the 120 squares in the later counts. Nest building was first reported from Stansted Forest on 3 Apr while the first adults carrying food were recorded at Findon Valley on the 15th (a full month earlier than in 2007). The first fledglings were seen at Ferring on the 27th (again, a full month earlier than in 2007). There were 28 reports of adults carrying food or faecal sacks (including one of a bird unperturbed by the cricket match going on around it at the University of Sussex on 6 Jun) and 79 records of recently fledged young. These came from 90 localities, split almost equally between areas west and east of the TQ20/30 line. In addition, there were eight reports of nests with young and five others of confirmed breeding. Overall, the Atlas has produced a massive increase in records of confirmed breeding for this species.

The first double figure counts in July was of ten at Pett Level on the 2nd, ten at Ebernoe Common on the 5th; 20 at Pulborough Brooks on the 13th; 12 at King's Field (Henfield) on the 31st and also on 5 Aug. These groups probably consisted of local families, but these gatherings can quickly attract birds from a wider area or those on passage. Thus, a group of 12 at Weir Wood Res on 20 Jul had increased to 60 by the 31st, falling to 20 on 23 Aug, with 70 there on 22 Sep. Larger groups in August included 30 in fields west of Selsey on the 14th; 18 (of which 15 were juvenile birds) at the Darwell Res on the 17th and 50 at Exceat Bridge over the R Cuckmere on the 29th.

No birds were specifically noted as flying south until one over Warnham on 11 Sept., followed by singletons there on the 17th and 18th and six on the 21st before 15 flew east through Hastings CP on 20 Sep. There were also 31 roosting in a reedbed at Pett Level on 14 Sep. By the end of September, more birds were apparent along the coast with 15 flying east along Worthing Beach on 29 Sep, 17 were also seen flying east on 6 Oct and in three hrs on 8 Oct 60 flew west over Selsey Bill. Only three reports came from the Beachy Head area (38 on 27 Sep and 17 on 11 and 18 Oct). The fact that 20 were watched flying SE at moderate height over Vinehall (Mountfield) just before dusk on 7 Nov suggests that there is an undiscovered roost somewhere in the Battle-Hastings area. Repeated counts from particular locations revealed interesting variations in numbers, presumably as birds passed through (or temporarily found more congenial habitat?). In October, at Ladywell (Coombes) there were 42 on the 1st, six on the 11th, 50 on both the 16th and the 25th; and two on



*Pied Wagtail, Bishopstone,
December 2008 (Peter Wilson)*

the 28th. Counts at the same site in November varied between one and six with two birds present throughout December.

There were three large counts in December when 100 were on the filter beds of Thorney SF on the 3rd (with 90 there on the 30th), 125 at Lagness (near Bognor) on the 13th (cf. the large count there in Jan) and 120 at Abbots Leigh (Haywards Heath) on the 22nd.

There were 219 TTV counts in Jan and Feb and 196 in Nov and Dec. The following table shows the proportion of counts revealing certain numbers of birds: the number of TTVs which turned up no Pied Wagtails is not known.

	Total	1	2-4	5-9	>10
Jan-Feb	219	32.8%	43.4%	14.6%	9.1%
Nov-Dec	196	25.5%	53.8%	13.8%	7.1%

Interesting behavioural notes included three joining forces to mob a Sparrowhawk at Warnham on 18 Oct and one was sliding around on the frozen surface of the pond in Stanmer village on 12 Dec. [CB]

White Wagtail

Motacilla alba alba

Probably a scarce spring and autumn passage migrant; both pure and mixed pairs have bred.

There were nineteen spring records, all except one of single birds. The first was at Streat on 27 Feb, when one accompanied six Pied and one Grey Wagtail on a slurry pit. The next was at Pett Level on 18 Mar, followed by two at Cliff End (Pett) on the 20th. Interestingly there were records from the west end of Weir Wood Res on 26 Mar, 1, 3, 8-9, 12-13, and 17 April, with another at the dam on 3 Apr. There were also reports from Sidlesham Ferry on 21 and 26 Apr. It is not clear whether these repeated sightings refer to the same birds; there was no suggestion of breeding. The last spring record was of one at Pagham on 1 May.

Subsequently and unusually, there were two late summer (rather than autumn) reports: two birds at Sidlesham Ferry on 28 Jun and the last, a singleton, at Telham (near Crowhurst) on 10 July. There were no autumn records. Although juveniles are difficult to identify in that season, Sussex does not appear to be on the main migration routes. [CB]

Waxwing

Bombycilla garrulous

Rare winter visitor.

Waxwings were present in the county from 14 Dec (when one was heard flying over Hove) into 2009. One was in gardens in Seaford early on the 16th and the same or another was heard

flying over Firlie on the 22nd. Five were in the Hollingdean area of Brighton on the 22nd and 23rd, twelve in Durrington on the 28th, and nine at Exceat Bridge on the Cuckmere on New Year's Eve. [CB]

Wren

Troglodytes troglodytes

Abundant resident.

A number of sites provided counts throughout the year and these results are shown below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lagness (Bognor)	1	2	12	10	11	6	11	nc	5	7	10	6
Nyetimber (Bognor)	5	3	11	10	12	14	10	nc	4	4	7	11
Hotham Park (Bognor)	5	5	4	13	12	6	6	1	2	1	3	3
Lidsey SF	3	4	nc	2	8	7	nc	1	3	5	4	4
Lewes Race Course	2	1	5	10	10	10	5	4	4	5	nc	2
Newhaven Tide Mills	1	2	nc	1	1	2	1	2	4	9	1	nc
Kings Standing (Ashdown)	nc	nc	nc	4	8	13	7	2	4	4	3	4
Darwell Res	11	16	18	19	22	nc	11	20	5	12	21	15

These summaries produce a mixed picture. Numbers at Nyetimber and Newhaven Tide Mills were generally down on 2007 (though the October count from Tide Mills is curiously high); breeding season numbers increased at Lewes Race Course while counts at the Darwell Res were not dissimilar to those in 2007.

Atlas fieldwork involving 353 counts in January and February found 28 Wrens in two tetrads at Darwell on 24 Feb and Haslemere on 25 Feb, with 21-25 in a further three, and 1-10 in a further 28. Only one Wren was found in 84 of the counts (23.8%) but it is not possible to deduce the number of counts that produced no Wrens.

During the BBS, a total of 1065 birds was recorded in 125 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed. The highest count was 23 at Five Hundred Acre (Ashdown Forest) (cf. 21 at Tilgate Forest in 2007). The maximum count during an Atlas survey was 62 at Copthorne (Crawley) on 4 Apr.

Breeding was confirmed in at least 107 sites (1-km squares or tetrads) of which records 77% were obtained during Atlas surveys. The first young were seen at Rogate on 4 Apr, and the next at Rake and Milland on the 15th. There was then a gap of several weeks before the next records from Holtye and St Leonard's Forest on 13 May. There were 33 territories in 95 ha at Sefter Fm (Rose Green) (a decline to near the 2006 total of 34 after the substantial increase to 45 in 2007). In the Brighton Wild Park 95 pairs bred, consolidating last year's increase but still slightly below the levels of 2003 and 2004 (103 and 102). At Scobells Fm (Barcombe), there were 12 territories in 10.4 ha of woodland and pasture while 47 territories were mapped at Rye Hbr SSSI (close to the 49 in 2007).

There were no striking records for the period between July and the end of the year. During Atlas fieldwork in November and December, the highest count was 22 at both Fairwarp on 27 Nov and at Creep Wood (near Battle) on 29 Nov while singletons were discovered in 39 of the 260 Atlas tetrads surveyed (15%).

Few comments on behaviour were recorded but pride of place must go to the Wren which 'appeared to fly in from the sea' at Splash Point (Seaford) on 8 Apr. [CB]

Dunnock*Prunella modularis*

Very common resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Of the 3104 records submitted, the great majority (2351) were for the first half of the year, with only 723 from the second half. Maximum counts for each month from regularly surveyed areas are given in the table below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lagness (Bognor)	4	nc	2	1	4	2	4	nc	1	2	5	5
Nyetimber (Bognor)	3	4	2	4	6	5	2	nc	nc	4	5	7
Hotham Pk (Bognor)	nc	1	nc	2	1	2	nc	1	1	2	1	nc
Pulborough Brooks	6	9	12	14	11	4	6	3	4	5	3	4
Warnham LNR	9	9	10	8	3	5	2	3	5	3	4	5
Ifield Mill Pond	3	3	4	5	2	nc	nc	1	nc	1	nc	1
Lewes Race Course	3	3	9	8	2	3	2	nc	1	2	nc	4
Newhaven Tide Mills	7	12	16	23	18	11	5	7	12	13	7	4

Variation in the numbers recorded in these counts over the year has always been a feature of these tables; by contrast a series of counts for Summersdale (Chichester) was almost disconcertingly uniform, with two recorded in each month except for December when there were three.

During the BBS, a total of 473 birds was recorded in 115 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed. The maximum count was of 18 at Peacehaven on 16 Apr (14 there in 2007) with 16 at Hickstead on 1 Jul.

In total, there were 86 records of successful breeding. The first fledgling was seen at Kings Standing (Ashdown Forest) on the early date on 23 Apr (cf. 2 May in 2007). Records followed from Maynards Green and Peacehaven Heights on the 30th. At Climping, a juvenile was still being fed on 8 Aug. The forty-four pairs breeding in the Brighton Wild Park continued the downward trend since the peak of 59 in 2003. At the Rye Hbr SSSI, 37 territories were found and there were 14 on the 95 ha of Sefter Fm (Rose Green) as in 2007 (11 territories in 2005).

Dunnocks were netted during 26 of 29 ringing sessions over the year at Ladywells (near Coombes) where 44 different birds were handled on 84 occasions. Thirteen of these had been ringed in previous years; 21 were young birds and 23 were adults. At Strivens reedbed (Steyning), Dunnocks were trapped in 24 of 28 sessions: 73 handlings involved 42 different birds. Eighteen of these had been ringed in previous years; 18 were young birds and 22 were adults. At the ringing station on the north slope of Cissbury Ring (operated between 8 Mar and 21 Oct), Dunnocks were trapped in 19 of 23 sessions: 48 handlings involved 35 different birds. Of these, 12 had been ringed in previous years; 18 were young birds and 17 adults. The proportion of previously ringed birds and the ratio of young to adult birds is very similar at these three sites.

The highest count during Atlas surveys was 31 at Firehills (Fairlight) on 16 Feb and 24 were recorded there on 8 May.

There were no reports of autumn movements or unusual behaviour during the year. [CB]

Robin*Erithacus rubecula*

Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Of the 4828 records submitted (many of them compound), 3330 were for the first half of the year and 1498 for the second. Counts from regularly surveyed areas are listed in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lagness (Bognor)	5	4	7	5	6	1	nc	nc	7	6	4	3
Nyetimber (Bognor)	12	11	9	10	9	2	1	nc	9	10	8	7
Hotham Park (Bognor)	7	10	3	6	8	6	1	4	8	7	4	2
Ditchling Common TQ3319	20	12	14	13	13	9	6	11	13	13	nc	4
Lewes Race Course	9	5	7	12	4	3	2	3	11	12	nc	4
Newhaven Tide Mills	15	12	9	7	5	3	2	16	38	37	34	15
Kings Standing (Ashdown)	nc	nc	nc	9	16	9	6	10	14	12	12	10
Darwell Res TQ7121	24	49	38	30	25	nc	19	16	25	21	18	18

The substantial increase in numbers at Newhaven Tide Mills from late September through to November might suggest migration; there were similar increases at Darwell Res and Lewes Race Course, but not at the Bognor sites, Kings Standing (Ashdown Forest) or Ditchling Common.

During the BBS, a total of 1308 birds was recorded in 130 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, virtually the same proportion of squares (97%) as in 2007. The highest counts were 47 at Southleigh Forest (Emsworth) on 20 Apr, followed by 36 at Scayne's Hill on 3 May and 31 in Tilgate Forest on 3 Apr. Interestingly, those squares also produced the largest figures in 2007. In 21 counts (8.5%) only a single bird was found, nine of them in April or May, the others subsequently.

During the fieldwork for the Atlas more than 20 Robins were recorded in 23% of the tetrads covered by TTVs. The highest counts came from well-wooded areas in mid-Sussex, between Crawley, Bolney and Haywards Heath (with 86 in a tetrad near Warninglid on 9 May), and from the far west of the county, with 60 at Old Idsworth Fm on 15 Apr and 52 at Ramsfold (Northchapel) on 5 Feb. Unsurprisingly the Levels in the far east of the county produced few records. At the end of the year, a number of the higher counts came from urban areas and fringes including Battle and Midhurst, as well as Hangleton and Mile Oak (nr Brighton) and Bewbush and Gossops Green in Crawley.

Breeding season counts for regularly surveyed areas included 143 pairs in the Brighton Wild Park (142 in 2007), 21 territories at Sefter Fm (Rose Green) (23 in 2007), three territories at Rye Hbr SSSI (five in 2007), and 12 territories in 25 acres of pasture and woodland at Scobells Fm (Barcombe) (6 in 2007). In total, 319 records of confirmed breeding came from Atlas fieldwork and BirdTrack submissions. In 2008, after a female was detected carrying nest material in Bognor Regis on 24 Jan, young were found on 25 Feb, and this pair fledged a second brood on 20 Apr. Fledged birds were also recorded at Park Fm (Wivelsfield) on 29 Mar and then Ladies Mile LNR (Brighton) on 5 Apr. (In 2007, the first juvenile had been seen on 26 Apr).

An interesting series of autumn records came from Beachy Head where the 20 there on 29 Aug were considered to be 'early'. Nine counts of between 20 and 60 birds were also made between 29 Aug and 19 Oct but observers thought the maximum of 60 to be low. On the other hand, 129 birds were ringed there, the highest total for a decade. There was a 'reasonable fall' of 43 birds at Pett Level on 27 Sep. This was followed by two 'small falls': 33 were ringed on 9 Oct and 34

were ringed during the morning of 4 Nov.

A few interesting observations of behaviour were submitted. Interaction among four birds at Vinehall (Mountfield) on 8 Sept suggested to the observer that the birds might have recently arrived in the area. Particularly aggressive behaviour was noted as territories were established at Hurst Green on 17 Oct; at Hastings, different vocalizations were strikingly deployed in a 'song duel' on 29 and 30 Oct. At Twyford Fm (Ashdown Forest) one was attacked by a Kestrel on 29 Dec. [CB]

Common Nightingale

Luscinia megarhynchos

Fairly common summer visitor and infrequently seen passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The first bird was at Crowhurst on 8 Apr, the same date as in 2007 and later than the 10-year average of 3 Apr. The next incoming migrants were noted on the 13th at High Cross Fm (Uckfield), Pulborough Brooks (2) and Pett Level. Thereafter, birds were recorded every day except two until 24 May.

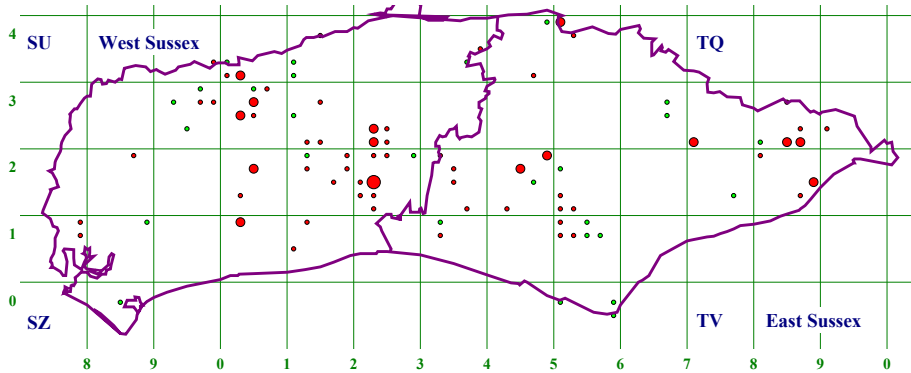


Common Nightingale, Pulborough Brooks, May 2008 (Dorian Mason)

There were some encouraging counts from several locations. At Pulborough Brooks, four birds on 21 Apr increased to six by 6 May before rising to seven by the month's end with another count of seven at Shortland Copse (Plaiستow) on the 7th. Counts of four were noted at Balls Cross on 22 Apr, at Roman Wood (Slinfold) on 3 May and Harsfold (Wisborough Green) on the 10th, on which date five were noted at Hambrook (Chichester). In June, four birds were recorded at Beckley Woods and seven pairs were breeding in Amberley Wild Brooks.

Less encouragingly, only four records (three apparently of the same bird and one of a bird passing through on 3 May) were received from the Streat-Plumpton area. Some reports also came from the Rother Levels in the east and other areas that do not feature regularly such as Okehurst and Goodwood Park in the west and Gate Court Fm (Northiam).

During the BBS, a total of 13 birds was recorded in nine of the 136 1-km squares surveyed with a highest count of three at Slinfold on 8 May. The only records of successful breeding were of adults carrying food to five nests at Pulborough Brooks on 25 May and a nest with young was found at Woodmancote on 8 Jun. A pair possibly bred at Pett Level.



During fieldwork for the Atlas, singing or territorial birds were reported from 109 tetrads; of these 67 lay west of the TQ20/30 line and 42 to the east. The two breeding season visits for Atlas fieldwork provide some idea of those areas where Nightingales are heard early in the season but do not appear to stay to breed. These records were supplemented by other reports in 2008. A bird sang for three days at West End (Burgess Hill) from 29 Apr before disappearing; three birds were singing in one location at Wineham on 5 May but two were not apparent on the 14th; and a singing bird hung around Brighton Wild Park from 27 Apr to 14 May. At Hambrook (near Chichester), there were two singing birds on 26 April, three on 1 May and five on the 10th, but there were no subsequent reports. It may be that coverage is not as frequent or intensive as it needs to be, and/or that these birds do stay and breed but do so quietly. It is not immediately apparent whether these birds relocate to breed at other locations in Sussex.

The last song was heard on 21 June at High Cross Fm (Uckfield). Seven reports were submitted for July but only two after the 5th. Two near Ashington on 10 Jul and two at Pulborough Brooks on 9 Aug were the last to be noted away from the coast. There were nine records in August and then a gap until two stragglers were seen in mid-September, at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on the 14th. There were fewer than ten August records from Beachy Head: observers there again remarked that, as in 2007, this species was 'scarce as usual'. The last bird was recorded at Pett Level on the 18 Sep (the 10-year average date is 15 Sep). [CB]

Bluethroat*Luscinia svecica*

Very scarce spring and autumn visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Three were trapped at Pett Level in autumn: a juvenile on 1 Sep, an adult female on 16 Sep and a juvenile female on 19 Oct (RBRG). These are the first records since 2004, when a female was present at Church Norton on 4 Apr, and take to seven the total recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000. Previous decade totals, from the 1960s to the 1990s, are 47, 22, 6 and 13, respectively, although if one excludes birds trapped these become 39, 18, 5 and 4, and the two so far this decade look set to continue a very significant decline since the 1970s. The 20 recorded since 1990 have been in March (2, from the 23rd), April, May (1 on the 21st), August (1 on the 31st), September (11) and October (4, to the 30th). [RJF]

Black Redstart*Phoenicurus ochruros*

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

The minimum monthly totals and 5-year monthly averages were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	9	13	12	8	4	2	2	-	3	19	24	10
5-yr average	7	8	33	11	3	2	1	2	2	31	21	12

Monthly totals for 2008 compared reasonably favourably with the 5-year averages in most months with the exception of March and October which were significantly lower than the average.

Of the 153 records received, 142 (93%) came from 36 (83%) locations which were either coastal or not more than 10 km from the coast. Inland records in the first half of the year were of single birds at Arlington on 24 Feb, Hurstpierpoint on 8 Apr and Gatwick Airport (North) on 23 May. Later in the year singletons were noted at Goodwood Park on 29 Oct, Weir Wood Res on 3 Nov and Arundel on the 21st.

Records for January and February suggested that 16 birds wintered at 13 coastal and one inland site, mostly as singletons. At Shoreham Hbr singletons were present from 1 Jan to 29 Feb with two there on 28 Jan and 4 Feb and two were seen at Peacehaven Heights on 6 Feb. The eighteen records in March included some from new sites suggesting migration or dispersal to breeding grounds but the number of monthly records then reduced (April 10, May 6) until the autumn. A male *paradoxus* morph was seen at Seaford Head on 6 Apr.

There were no confirmed or even probable breeding records. The only possible breeding records were of singing males at Cliff End (Pett) on 5 Apr, at Beachy Head on 26 Apr, at Hastings CP on 4 and 11 May and 15 Jun, at Gatwick Airport (North) on 23 May, at Malling Down (Lewes) on 7 Jun and an unsexed bird was seen in suitable nesting habitat at Portslade on 23 May. During the BBS, only one bird was recorded, at Hurstpierpoint on 8 Apr.

The usual upsurge in records of autumn migrants was noted from 13 Oct. Most records were of singletons at coastal sites but there were also four at Birling Gap on 31 Oct and 2 Nov and twos

at six other sites on various dates to the end of the year. Records for December suggested possible wintering by ten singletons at seven coastal sites, most particularly at Widewater (Lancing), Shoreham Hbr, Brighton Marina and Newhaven Tide Mills. [JAH]

Common Redstart

Phoenicurus phoenicurus

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

The first record of the year was a female at Butcherlands NR West on 25 Mar in the northwest of the county, the only record from this site, one day earlier than the 10-year average. However, the next sighting was not until nine days later on 3 Apr when another female was seen at Climping. The most birds seen at one site in April were five at Church Norton (Pagham Hbr) on 14 Apr. A total of c.31 birds had been seen at coastal or near coastal sites by 21 Apr. After this, singletons were recorded at Selsey Bill on 15 May and 31 May.

The first bird observed back at a breeding site was a male at Old Lodge LNR (Ashdown Forest) on 8 Apr with the first bird in song in the county seen there the following day.

Breeding was confirmed at three sites: Woolbeding Common and at both the Isle of Thorns and West Chase (both the latter in the same tetrad in Ashdown Forest). Breeding was probable in seven other tetrads which were also either at sites in Ashdown Forest or in the west of the county. Two of the latter were identified by the Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey with two territories at Chapel Common (Liphook) and one at Black Down (Fernhurst). Possible breeding was indicated in eight other tetrads.

The highest number of birds recorded at any one site was 18 at Pippingford Park (Ashdown Forest) on 17 May. During the BBS, only two birds were recorded in one of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, at Five Hundred Acre (Ashdown Forest) on 26 Apr. The last birds seen at breeding sites were five at Ashdown Forest on 19 Sep (including two at Kings Standing and two at West Chase).

September was the month with the most sightings and migrating birds were seen on most days at coastal sites with the last on Worthing Beach on 30 Sep. During the entire month, 28 were recorded at Pett Level and the highest single totals were of 12 birds on two separate days at Cissbury Ring on the 8th and 12th.

The only sightings in October were of one bird at Newhaven Tide Mills on 8 Oct and three birds at Birling Gap on 9 Oct, 20 days earlier than the 10-year average. [SS]

Whinchat

Saxicola rubetra

Rare summer visitor and fairly common passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The minimum monthly totals and numbers of days on which birds were recorded were as shown in the table below. Numbers in spring were significantly lower than the 3-year averages (and for August they were only 50% of the 3-year average), a fact which suggests a possible problem for yet another summer visiting trans-Saharan migrant. On the other hand, numbers in September were paradoxically the highest since 2005.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
No. of birds	6	1	-	4	100	336	24
3-yr average	24	14	1	2	205	289	29
No. of days	6	1	-	2	16	29	8

The first arriving migrant was noted at Ladies Mile LNR (Brighton) on the rather late date of 20 Apr (19 days later than the 10-year average). This was followed by singletons on five other dates in the month and then, after a significant gap, there was one at Lewes Brooks on 27 May.

The next sighting and, presumably, the first returning migrant occurred on 20 Jul at Cuckmere Haven. This was followed by one at Pett Level on the 27th, two at Falmer on 2 Aug, a singleton at Pett Level on the 9th, one at Crowlink (East Dean) on the 14th, two at Beachy Head on the 16th and another there on the 17th. Migration began in earnest on the 21st with virtually daily sightings to 29 Sep. The highest count in August was 11 at Beachy Head on the 30th (the only double-figure record) while there were six birds at three sites in September. October's highest count was four at Rye Hbr SSSI on the 2nd. The last sighting was at Pagham Hbr on 16 Oct, rather earlier than the 10-year average date of 4 Nov. [JAH]

Stonechat

Saxicola torquatus

Fairly common resident and partial migrant.

The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	205	295	98	125	173	178	125	94	255	397	166	148
3-yr average	135	113	147	128	179	154	119	138	253	436	857	137

Birds were recorded on 322 of 366 days in the year, indicating how relatively common this species is in suitable habitat such as heaths, commons and coastal sites. In most months the monthly totals were comparable with the 3-year averages. The January total, however, was 50% up while February's was 160% larger, numbers which, taken also with those for the last two months of the year, suggest that there is a significant population in the winter months which could be regarded as resident. Numbers in November, however, while comparable with 2007 (140) were much below a 3-year average distorted by the presence of over 2100 birds in 2006.

Double-figure counts in the first quarter were of ten at Ambersham Common on 22 Jan, ten at Steyning Bowl on 21 Feb and a monthly maximum of 12 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 23 Mar, the latter possibly due to the arrival of spring migrants previously indicated by a count of nine there on the 15th. Records of five or more birds from coastal sites (less than 6 km from the coast) outnumbered those from inland sites by 3:2.

Breeding was confirmed in 38 tetrads (of which no fewer than 21 were in Ashdown Forest) by at least 47 pairs. Breeding was probable in a further 26 tetrads by at least 72 pairs and birds were seen in suitable habitat in 14 other tetrads. During the BBS, this species was again very poorly represented. It was recorded only during the early survey and then confined to a single bird in only one 1-km square of the 136 surveyed. There are no BBS squares in the Ashdown Forest area.

Suggestions of a possible migration in July involved counts of 11 at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 15th and ten at the Seven Sisters on the 20th. The first significant count from Beachy Head,

presumably of migrants, involved 15 on 16 Aug and 11 on the 30th while at Tide Mills there were 12 on both the 15th and 31st. During September, the total monthly count of migrants at Pett Level was 32, while maxima elsewhere were 26 at Beachy Head on the 21st (with 15 on the 20th and 27th), 13 at Tide Mills on the 14th, 11 at Peacehaven Cliffs on the 20th and ten at Cuckmere Haven on the 28th and 29th, all coastal sites. Peak migration occurred during October: 78 was the monthly total at Pett Level, 28 were noted at Steyning Round Hill on the 11th, 21 at Beachy Head on the 12th and 14 at Thorney Island on the 16th. Both the numbers of records and birds tailed off during November with a total of 16 trickling through Pett Level to the 17th while 12 were recorded at Thorney Island on the 3rd. The highest count in December was of 11, also at Thorney Island on the 1st. [JAH]

Northern Wheatear

Oenanthe oenanthe

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

The minimum monthly totals, numbers of days on which birds were recorded and the numbers of records were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	-	1	182	157	49	38	25	381	447	39	6	-
No. of days	-	1	21	24	15	7	10	27	30	18	4	-
No. of records	-	1	97	98	32	14	13	126	216	34	7	-

The numbers of birds recorded was generally in keeping with the average for the past three years with the exception of April (down by 51%) and October (down by around 75%). Reasons for these reductions are not clear but might indicate that yet another Palaearctic-African migrant is declining in numbers and may be responding to global warming by returning to its wintering grounds earlier.

The first report for the year was of a male on the cliff edge behind Belle Tout wood (Beachy Head) on 29 February, an early but not unprecedented date. The next arrival noted was one at Birling Gap on 6 Mar followed by singletons on the 9th at Patcham and 11th at Newhaven Tide Mills. There was then a steady trickle of generally singletons daily from the 13th but, on the 16th seven (six males) were counted at Tide Mills, five on the 17th at Thorney Island and eight there next day when there were six at Rye Hbr LNR. Double-figure counts occurred on the 30th with ten at Selsey Bill in 3½ hrs, ten at Goring Gap and 14 at Worthing Beach. During April the average day count was 7.4 with peak counts of 11 at Cuckmere Haven on the 8th, 8 in the Lower Valley there on the 25th and sevens at both Thorney Island and Thorney Deepes on the 28th. Birds were recorded daily until 6 May after which they became more irregular; the average count being only 1.8 per day with a peak of 12 at Rye GC on the 11th.

During the breeding season, recently fledged young were seen at four locations, all in the east of the county suggesting either breeding locally (a party of 14 birds on Rye GC on 24 Jun included fledglings) or the very early return of migrants which had bred elsewhere. Breeding was thought probable at two further eastern sites (at one of which two pairs appeared to be nesting) while birds were seen in suitable habitat at four additional sites of which only one was in the west. During the BBS, birds were recorded during only the early survey in five of the 136 1-km squares surveyed (of which only one was in the west) with a maximum count of seven.

Return passage of both adult and juvenile birds was recorded from 20 Jul and was then noted on 27 of the 31 days in August, daily in September and 17 of 21 days to 21 Oct. In August there were 15 double-figure counts, almost entirely at coastal sites, with peaks of 48 at Thorney Island on the 22nd, 30 at Tide Mills the same day and 21 at Clayton Windmills on the Downs on the 29th. There were also 15 double-figure counts in September but the peaks were lower with at least 25 at Rye Hbr LNR on the 27th, 22 at Balsdean (Rottingdean) on the 14th and similarly at Worthing Beach on the 30th. The two highest counts in October were of only four birds. There were seven records over four days in November with the final sighting being at the North Wall mudflats (Pagham Hbr) on the 13th. [JAH]

Greenland Wheatear

Oenanthe o. leucorhoa

Wheatears showing characteristics of the larger and brighter Greenland form were represented by a single record of four seen at Belle Tout (Beachy Head) on 24 Apr, a typical date.

A search through the records database indicates that the data might be incomplete because this sub-species was most often recorded by observers simply as Northern Wheatears, with only a 'note' mentioning this form. Nevertheless, research has revealed that, over the past 20 years, there have been 35 spring and 15 autumn records, as shown below:

	Mar	Apr	May		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
No. of records	1	15	19		2	4	7	2

The earliest records were 28 Mar 1998 and 1 Apr 1989 but the majority were recorded between 21 Apr and 7 May. The latest spring record was 30 May 1991. The earliest autumn record was 2 Aug 1999 and the latest was 11 Nov 1989.

Numbers are usually small; of the 35 spring records, 19 were of singletons and 11 were of from two to five. 'Falls' of larger numbers have been recorded on only five occasions and have included a flock of 17 on 30 Apr 2005 at Beachy Head. In the autumn, nine records were of singletons and the remaining six were of twos or threes. Some years are notable for the absence of any records, as shown in the following table for the past 20 years. [JAH]

Year	89	90	91	92	93	94	98	99	00	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
No. of records	3	2	3	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	7	2	2	1

Ring Ouzel

Turdus torquatus

Passage migrant, scarce in spring, often fairly common but local in autumn. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

A below-average spring count was followed by a very poor autumn passage. The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Mar	Apr	May		Sep	Oct	Nov
1	11	2		11	7	18

The first spring migrant appeared at Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) on 30 Mar, some five days later than the 10-year average. Singletons were then seen at, or to the east of, Brighton with just

one at Lychpole Hill (Cissbury) and two further west. Remarkably, the only records for May were of two or three birds seen at Beachy Head on the 30th, a surprising 25 days later than the 10-year average. The total of 14 sightings for spring is disappointing compared to the 10-year average of 19.

The autumn migration lasted exactly two months, commencing with a male at Chanctonbury Ring on 14 Sep followed by singletons and occasional pairs across the county's coastal strip. The beginning of November was the most productive period with five birds at Shooters' Bottom (Beachy Head) on the 2nd but the trickle of sightings ended on the 14th with a lone bird at Thorney Deep, this date being a few days earlier than the 10-year average.

The autumn total of 36 birds is barely 20% of the 10-year average count and only rivalled by the 30 seen in 1995. The year's total of 50 birds was the lowest since at least 1993. [JHW]

Blackbird

Turdus merula

Abundant breeding resident and winter visitor; perhaps a passage migrant.

With the exception of the first three months, when records and sightings almost doubled, this year's pattern was a repeat of 2007.

The normal first winter counts during the Atlas surveys were slightly lower than the high counts at the end of 2007 but the ratio of birds to records was similar to the beginning of that year.

During the BBS, a total of 1871 birds was recorded in all of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, compared with the 1764 recorded in 2007 in 122 squares. Once again, seven squares held 30 or more birds, the highest being 42 at Peacehaven on May 18. For comparison, the highest count for the BTO/SOS Atlas was 76 birds at Stanfield (Staplefield,) on 1 Jan and 32 tetrads out of 613 surveyed (a similar fraction to the seven in the BBS) yielded 44 or more birds.

A nest was reported from Wivelsfield on 24 Feb (with a fledgling there on 5Apr) and another nest was built at Partridge Green on 3 Mar. Food-collecting was noted in Angmering and the University of Sussex on 9 Apr and three half-tailed juveniles were seen in Brighton on the 14th. In Brighton Wild Park 121 pairs bred, ten more than last year, and there were at least 29 territories at Rye Hbr SSSI but Sefton Fm (Rose Green) held only 17 territories in its 95 ha, a decline of six compared with the previous year. Hotham Park (Bognor) supported ten pairs in its 7 ha but counts from other large sites were absent. Nearly 470 territories were reported and additional records from 210 sites (mostly for the BTO/SOS Atlas) suggest that there were approximately 2100 pairs in the county. Most of the high counts came from the BTO/SOS Atlas records and were well distributed throughout the county all year.

There were some indications of migration in November from gatherings of 80 birds at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on the 2nd, 92 on Lychpole Hill (Cissbury) on the 26th and 60 moving around Pagham Hbr on the 29th. In December there were just over 50 at Pett Level on the 2nd and at Darwell Res on the 16th, 58 at Brighton Wild Park on the 13th and 50 at Hove on the 14th.

Out of 67 birds ringed at three sites, 40 were juveniles and six of the adults had been ringed previously. [JHW]

Fieldfare*Turdus pilaris*

Common, occasionally very common, passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

An apparent doubling in numbers during the first-winter period (compared with last year's autumn counts), reflected an increase in the number of records received. However, the second winter period produced barely half the 6-year average of sightings, despite several sizeable flocks. 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	5001	5037	1798	199	1	2	393	1812	2174
SU/SZ70-99	861	763	566	93	1		15	691	531
TQ/TV00-49	2239	2899	570	105			332	701	814
TQ/TV50+	1901	1375	662	1		2	46	420	829
No. of records	200	186	74	14	1	1	33	61	72

There were a dozen reports of 200 or more birds during the first winter period and flocks of 50 were common. Highlights were 300 birds at Pett Level on 14 Jan, 260 at Ripe on 20 Jan, 450 at Weir Wood Res on 15 Feb and 300 at Pevensey on the 24th. Another 175 birds were counted at Weir Wood Res on 20 Mar with numbers reducing thereafter, and 80 were seen at Heyshott on 6 Apr. The only bird seen in May was at Pagham on the 8th (TJE), well beyond the 10-year average of 24 Apr and the latest record since at least 1993.

Two returning birds were noted at Pett Level on 18 Sep, close to the 10-year average of 22 Sep, eventually joined by a few others from 4 Oct. At Brighton Wild Park 122 were counted on 29 Oct and 80 at Pulborough Brooks on the 31st. In November there were 200 birds at Lewes Brooks on the 1st, at Cuckmere on the 25th and Halsey's Fm (Sidlesham) on the 26th with 300 at Stock's Fm (Icklesham) on the 20th and 420 at Pagham North Fields on the 29th. Another 200 roosted at Pett Level on Dec 16 while 239 were counted at Stanmer Pk (Brighton) on the 17th. Late counts in December included 582 at Bewl Water on the 25th. [JHW]

Song Thrush*Turdus philomelos*

Decreasing resident and partial migrant; common passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

The elimination of sedentary (repeat) sightings suggests that without the BTO/SOS Atlas records some 2200 different birds were observed in the county, identical to 2007, but with those additional records 4930 were seen.

Almost all reports of twenty or more birds were from tetrad counts, for the Atlas or otherwise. In January these included 24 birds around Riverside Park (Newhaven) on the 14th and 25 at Bolney on the 24th, while in February there were 20 at Ramsfold (Northchapel) on the 5th (the only large first winter count from the west), 21 at Forest Row on the 9th, 28 at Lye Greene (Crowborough) on the 13th, and another 28 at Riverside Park on the 11th. Twenty six were found at Chelwood Common (Danehill) on 20 Apr and another 20 were at nearby Chelwood Beacon (Ashdown) on 4 May, with 25 close by at Forest Row on 30 May, and 20 at Bolney on 9 May.

There were 150 or so records with evidence of breeding. Six fledglings were reported from Ladies Mile LNR (Brighton) on 11 Apr and five from Crowborough on 26 Jun, presumed to be a second brood, but only two territories were found at Sefter Fm (Pagham) in their 95 hectares, down from three in 2007. During the BBS, a total of 533 birds was recorded in 120 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, with a highest count of 18 at Cocking on 7 May.

Ten “nervous migrants” were reported at Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) on 20 Sep while on the 25th there were a staggering 130 birds on Cissbury Ring, and 40 were still there three days later. On the 25th the first continental race bird was trapped at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head). Brighton Wild Park held 76 birds on 18 Oct and there were 20 at Waterhall (Brighton) on 2 Nov while a flock of 70 were in the Pagham area in late November.

Fourteen new birds were ringed at Ladywells (Coombes), of which four were juveniles. The Steyning Group ringed 27 birds at Cissbury North Scarp, of which 24 were new this year and 14 were juveniles and the same group ringed another 26 at Strivens Reedbed, 23 being new birds and 22 juveniles. [JHW]

Redwing

Turdus iliacus

Common, occasionally very common, passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

An exceptionally large number of first-winter submissions and sightings was received while the autumn count was also higher than average. 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		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	4117	3559	1151	16		8	920	2168	1742
SU/SZ70-99	301	638	63	2		-	17	246	140
TQ/TV00-49	2594	2507	616	12		2	672	1756	1384
TQ/TV50-99	1222	414	472	2		6	231	166	218

Despite the first-winter count being the highest since 1996 there were few reports of large gatherings. An early count of 175 at East Chilmington on 6 Jan was followed by others of 130 at Cowfold on 9 Jan, at Arundel on the 12th and at both Hastings and Ripe on the 20th. On 26 Feb, 175 birds were seen at Woolbeding Common and 150 at both Pulborough Brooks and nearby Fittleworth Woods. A similar number were seen at Duncton on the 28th.

A roost of 200 birds below the Bewl Water dam on 22 Mar interrupted the expected decline in numbers through March and April and, surprisingly, flocks totalling over 40 birds were seen moving south at Millbrook (Ashdown) on the 30th. A final bird at Bewl Water on 18 Apr was followed by only two at Pulborough Brooks on the 19th and just one on the 21st; a date which was not significantly later than the 10-year average last date of 12 Apr.

A returning bird was reported from Ditchling on 20 Sep, a week earlier than the 10-year average first date, followed by one at Goring on the 22nd and others much further east. On 19 Oct there were 170 at Warnham LNR and on 31 Oct another 125 at Brighton Wild Park. In November, Henfield Levels hosted 200 on the 15th and Lewes Brooks boasted 800 on the 16th, the year’s highest total. Further counts of 200 were made at Cissbury on 4 Dec, Henfield again on 7 Dec, Barcombe Res on the 18th, Rowhook on the 21st and Westham (nr Pevensey) on the 29th. In contrast, there were few birds in the west during this second winter period. In the last ten years

this second-winter total of 4840 was only exceeded by the exceptional years of 2004 and 2005. [JHW]

Mistle Thrush

Turdus viscivorus

Common resident and partial migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The number of birds reported increased to 2244, 61% higher than in 2007 and double the figure reported in 2006, while the number of records increased by 50% over 2007 and nearly trebled the totals from 2006, due, no doubt, to Atlas surveying. The removal of repetitive sightings suggests there were 1425 birds compared with the previous year's estimate of just over 800, an ostensible increase which undoubtedly reflects the greater scale of reporting.

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	352	322	118	297	350	297	94	23	117	110	94	70
No. of records	184	180	82	197	221	161	30	9	21	37	48	49

Sociable gatherings in the first winter period included 13 at Cliff End (Pett) on 8 Jan, 12 at Poynings on 16 Feb and 15 at Lindfield on 28 Feb. Over 1000 reports were received for the first half of the year but fewer than 200 for the second half.

Agitated adults were noted in eastern territories from 24 Mar and there were fledged young at Peasmarsh Place Church on 3 Apr, but similar activity was two or three weeks later in the west of the county. There were 87 reports of confirmed breeding (although juvenile numbers are unclear), and breeding behaviour was noted in 250 other reports up to the end of July. During the BBS, a total of 92 birds was recorded in 47 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed with a highest count of six at South Chailey on 28 Apr.

The few reports from July included 13 birds gathering at Hazelhurst (Bewl) on the 10th and 15 at Corkwood Fm (Rother) on the 23rd while September's submissions included 17 birds at Troutbeck (Eridge) on the 8th, 21 at Brighton Wild Park on the 17th, 14 at Cissbury Ring and 16 at Pett Level both on the 20th and 18 at Swanbourne Lake (Arundel) on the 21st. There were another 15 at Sidlesham Mill Pond on 1 Oct close to the 12 seen at Church Norton on the 30th. There were also 11 at Millbrook (Ashdown) on 11 Oct. [JHW]

Cetti's Warbler

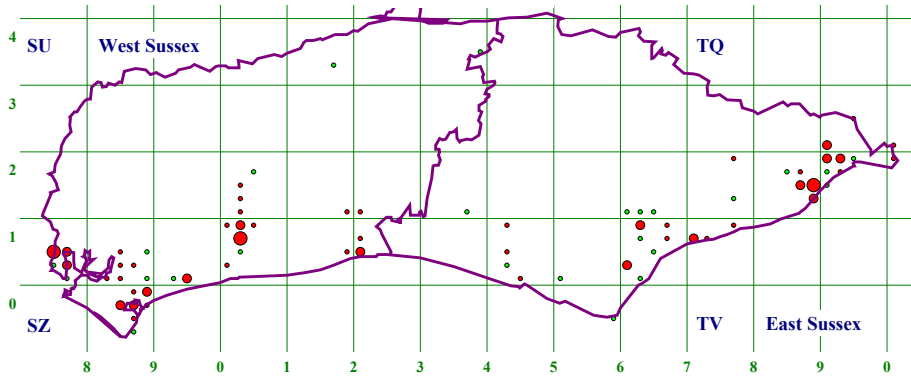
Cettia cetti

Scarce but increasing resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

During January and February there were reports from 17 locations and totals were similar to 2007 with 40 at sites other than Pett Level where 33 were found in a comprehensive survey on 29 Jan. There were seven singing at Thorney Deeps on 11 Feb, 13 at Rye Hbr, five at Pagham and two at Marsh Fm (Sidlesham).

In May there were 14 males holding territory at Thorney Deeps, 13 at Rye Hbr, 12 at Pett Level, eight at Arundel WWT, six at Church Norton and at Offham in the Arun Valley and five at Halsey's Fm (Sidlesham). Three were singing at Woodmans Green (Sedlescombe) on 14 May

and the maximum count for the month at Pett Level was 15 on the 23rd. Juveniles were seen at Arundel WWT on 10 Jun, a pair with four juveniles were at Thorney Deeps the following day and on 16 Jun three further broods were located at the same site. A pair with a second brood was also recorded there on 26 Aug.



The species is continuing to spread into suitable habitat, with two birds reported at Piddinghoe Pond on 21 Sep, two at Nyetimber on the 26th and a single at Charleston Manor on the 28th. Autumn and winter records were from the regular sites, mainly of single birds, but there were nine at Little Deep (Thorney) on 12 Nov, four at the North Wall (Pagham Hbr) on the 18th, five at Thorney Deeps the following day, four at Pett Level on 10 Dec and six at Castle Water (Rye Hbr LNR) on the 21st. [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 arrival was at Cuckmere Haven on 8 Apr, two days earlier than the 10-year average. Another was at Pulborough Brooks on the 16th and one was reeling at Ridge Fm (University of Sussex) the following day. During May and early June there were reports of single birds from ten sites, including Church Norton, Littlehampton GC and Lavant Down in the west and Pett Level and Rye Hbr in the east. A pair and another singing male were reported at Amberley Wild Brooks on 15 May. This may give rise to some cautious optimism about the prospects for this species as only five sites held reeling birds in both 2006 and 2007.

The first autumn migrants at Pett Level were two on 12 Jul, where a reasonable passage was observed and the maximum daily ringing totals were 24 in July, 41 in August, 12 in September and six in October. One was also trapped at Warnham LNR on 20 Jul. A single bird at Pett Level on 10 Oct was the last of the year, a day earlier than in 2007 and nine days earlier than the 10-year average date. [VPB]

River Warbler*Locustella fluviatilis**Very rare vagrant.*

One at Beachy Head on 30 May (SD, MRE, GWG *et al.*) has been accepted by the BBRC and is the first record for the county. It was found in the isolated patches of bushes by the rides above Whitbread Hollow where it was heard singing and seen, usually only fleetingly, by a gathering crowd until dusk. It sang rather half-heartedly and from deep cover, perhaps as the location didn't appear to be particularly suitable breeding habitat. It was no great surprise, though a considerable disappointment, that it was not present the next morning. [RJF]

Aquatic Warbler*Acrocephalus paludicola**Very scarce autumn visitor to selected sites, rare elsewhere. Considered vulnerable by IUCN.*

A juvenile was trapped at Pett Level on 7 Aug (RBRG). Twenty-six have been recorded in the county since the start of 2000, all in August (19 from the 3rd) or September (6 to the 18th). Twenty-one of these have been at Pett Level (all trapped) with the others at Combe Haven (2), Cuckmere Haven and Thorney (2). Decade totals from the 1960s to the 1990s are 9, 23, 17 and 97, respectively, with just six prior to that. All 183 records have been in autumn, the extreme dates being 30 July (1994) and 19 October (1853, and the second British record). [RJF]

Sedge Warbler*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus**Fairly common summer visitor and very common passage migrant.*

The first record was at Rye Hbr LNR on 27 Mar, one day earlier than the 10-year average and 10 days earlier than in 2007. This was followed by further records in March. In April small numbers of birds were seen in many suitable habitats increasing to ten at Waltham Brooks on the 13th, eight singing males at Thorney Deeps on the 14th, 15 at Rye Hbr LNR on the 23rd, 14 at Iden on the 28th and ten at Southease on the same date.

During May 15 were counted at Middle Bridge (Pevensey) on the 2nd, and 31 pairs were at Thorney Deeps with a further seven pairs at Thorney Island on the 9th. The monthly maximum at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) was 24. During the BBS, a total of 33 birds was recorded from 13 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 13 at Bridge Level (Pevensey) on 3 May. Although recorded in 111 tetrads, breeding was confirmed in only 11 with a further 25 in which breeding probably took place. Fledged young were first observed at Thorney Island on 10 June.

The first recognisable autumn migrant was at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on 23 Jul; monthly maxima at Pett Level were of 270 trapped on 28 Jul, 439 there on 22 Aug and a further 256 on 8 Sep. There were few October records with 14 at Pett Level on the 1st, a singleton at Thorney Deeps on the 6th and the last, another singleton at Pett Level on the 10th, three days earlier than the 10-year average date. [TWP]

Marsh Warbler*Acrocephalus palustris*

Very scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

A singing male was seen and photographed at a site in East Sussex on 24-26 May (SJM, CET) and a juvenile was trapped at Pett Level on 31 Aug (RBRG). The first individual had a metal ring on its leg. About 39 have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000, mostly trapped at the latter site. This is consistent with recent decade totals for the 1980s and 1990s of 23 and 54, respectively, although being a sensitive species it is doubtless under-recorded. Recent records fall between 17 May (2002) and 29 October (2007). The latter is the latest county record while the earliest was on 8 May 1923. [RJF]

Eurasian Reed Warbler*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Common summer visitor and very common passage migrant.

The first record was of a single bird at Emsworth Marina on 4 Apr, equalling the earliest ever county date and three days earlier than the 10-year average date. This was followed by singles at Rye Hbr LNR on the 8th and 9th with two at Pett Level on the 11th. There was a steady trickle of birds during the rest of the month from widely scattered localities with the maximum counts being five at Bognor Regis GC on the 18th, nine at Marsh Fm (Yapton) on the 21st, nine singing at Aldingbourne Rife on the 25th (with 12 there on the 28th), 17 at Pagham North Fields on the 26th and 15 at Southease on the 28th.

During May there were 16 singing males on the 1st at Lewes Brooks, ten at Warnham LNR with 18 at Rother Levels and 15 at Pevensey Bridge Level on the 3rd; 14 at Nyetimber (Bognor) on the 4th, 24 at Pagham Hbr and 30 at Offham (Arun Valley) on the 5th, 40 at Rye Hbr LNR on the 8th and 20 at Alfriston on the 14th.

Breeding summaries in May and June included 57 pairs at Thorney Deeps; 173 territories mapped at Rye Hbr LNR (sadly a decrease from the 227 in 2007 although the true total was thought to be in excess 250); 15 pairs at Warnham LNR; 14 singing birds at Hampden Park (Eastbourne) on 10 Jun; and 41 territories at Sefton Fm (Rose Green) on the 30th. The first fledged young were reported at Arundel WWT on 28 May. Although recorded in 159 tetrads, breeding was only confirmed in 32, with a further 34 with evidence of probable breeding. During the BBS, a total of 69 birds was recorded from 11 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum of 13 at Pevensey Bridge Level on 3 May.

The first obvious returning migrants were two at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on 23 Jul. Thirty were trapped at Charleston Reedbed on the 27th and 124 were trapped at Pett Level on the 28th but these were certainly not all residents at those sites. The maximum daily counts in August from Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) and Pett Level were 30 and 367, respectively, on the 22nd. In September, 135 on the 9th was the maximum at Pett Level and a total of 87 was trapped there during October. Other October records included singletons at the North Wall (Pagham Hbr) on the 4th and 12th, Thorney Deeps on the 6th, Sidlesham Ferry Long Pool and Newhaven Tide Mills on the 8th, Rye Hbr LNR on the 9th, and Crowlink on the 12th, and two were at Pett Level on the 24th. The last recorded bird was at North Wall Fields (Honer) on the 25th, nine days earlier than the 10-year average date. [TWP]

Blackcap*Sylvia atricapilla**Very common summer visitor and passage migrant; small numbers winter.*

After a bumper year in 2007 (at least 71 wintering individuals at 61 locations), reports for the first two months of 2008 returned to more usual levels, with a minimum of 36 individuals in 29 different locations. Most records came from gardens, with two birds seen together in Stansted, West Marden, Henfield, Crawley and Hove. In a garden at Patcham two males were seen feeding together on a bird table on 25 Jan, and on 5 Feb two males and a female were eating ivy berries. A bird at Offington on 7 Feb was singing a quiet, almost continuous song, with occasional short bursts at full summer volume. Though some males were heard singing earlier in the month, the first likely returning migrant was one at Pett Level on 17 Mar, and the main arrival commenced on the 30th.

During the BBS, a total of 294 birds was recorded in 93 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, with a highest count of ten at Southleigh Forest (Emsworth) on 20 Apr. During early Atlas counts, seven were at Salehurst on 22 Apr, and 11 were at Warnham on the 15th and at Seaford on the 24th and at East Chiltington on the 26th, while there were 13 at Steephill Wood (Brede) on the 26th, 14 at Chelwood Common on the 20th, and 16 at Friston Forest on 4 May. Nineteen pairs bred at Brighton Wild Park, one more than the previous year, and there were ten pairs at Thorney Island and Thorney Deepes, two more than in 2007.

Once again, one-third of all birds ringed at Cissbury were of this species, while one retrapped individual was in its eighth year having been originally ringed as a second-year bird in 2002. Monthly maxima trapped at Pett Level were 27 on 20 Jul, 92 on 30 Aug, 227 on 20 Sep and 129 on 6 Oct. Passage numbers during September at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) were again good, with 200 on the 8th, 250 on the 11th, 300 the following day and 250 on the 13th, reducing to around 100 towards the end of the month and into early October. After 6 Oct the number of birds declined dramatically, and a single bird at Pett Level on 12 Nov was possibly the last autumn migrant, though another was seen there on 9 Dec. During November and December records across the county suggest a minimum number of 38 individuals in 31 different locations, including a male seen taking spindle berries in Bognor Regis between 9 and 15 Dec and a female eating honeysuckle berries on Christmas Day in Bramber. [VPB]

Garden Warbler*Sylvia borin**Very common summer visitor and passage migrant.*

The first reports of the year were of singing males at Warnham LNR and the University of Sussex on 9 Apr, nine days later than in 2007 and five days later than the 10-year average date. Another was at Weir Wood Res on the 12th and two were seen at Pulborough Brooks on the 14th. Three days later a surprisingly approachable individual was observed drinking at a pond and clumsily flycatching at Patcham.

During the BBS, a total of 39 birds was recorded in 25 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of three in a single 1-km square. In Atlas surveys during May three were found at Hawkhurst Common Wood on the 13th, five in the second hour of a survey at Weir Wood Res on the 11th, seven at Arlington on the 13th, and four at both Coldwaltham on the 19th and at Jarvis Brook on the 24th. Other records included five at Woolbeding Common on 30 May, four at

Vinehall on 1 June and five in late Atlas surveys at Ticehurst on the 3rd, Ashurst (Tunbridge Wells) on the 7th, Holtye on the 8th and Partridge Green on the 14th. Eight were recorded in a single tetrad at Cousley Wood (Wadhurst) on the 17th. Four pairs nested at Pulborough Brooks, and another four were on the nearby Norfolk Estate. Four fledged young were seen at Pulborough Brooks on 11 Jul and an adult was feeding a recently fledged juvenile at Warnham LNR on the 22nd.

Only eight different individuals were trapped at Cissbury, though five, including four juveniles, were found on 5 Aug. However, 18 were ringed at Strivens Reedbed (Steining) of which 12 were young birds. Monthly maxima trapped at Pett Level were 16 on 28 Jul, 54 on 15 Aug and 20 on 8 Sep. The Beachy Head Ringing Group reported another very poor autumn, only marginally better than in 2007.

The last record in the west of the county was of three at Pulborough Brooks on 29 Sep. Nine were ringed at Pett Level in October, with the last bird of the year seen at this site on the 18th, five days later than the 10-year average date. [VPB]

Barred Warbler

Sylvia nisoria

Very scarce autumn visitor.

A juvenile was trapped at Pett Level on 28 Sep (RBRG). It is the first record in the county since 2005, the eighth since the start of 2000 and the 53rd in total. All records have been in autumn, in August (8, from the 17th), September (35) and October (10). After two earlier records in 1959, decade totals from the 1960s to the 1990s are 8, 9, 13 and 13, respectively. [RJF]

Lesser Whitethroat

Sylvia curruca

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first returning migrant was heard at Waltham Brooks on 9 Apr, four days later than in 2007 but still three days earlier than the 10-year average date. Another was at Sidlesham on the 10th. The first arrival in the east of the county was at Barcombe on the 19th, but the main influx commenced on the 20th. On 23 Apr five were found in the first hour of an Atlas survey at Nutbourne and next day three were recorded at both Peasmarsh and Upper Beeding (in a BBS visit). The April maximum at Pulborough Brooks was four on the 26th and four were also at Hastings CP on the same day.

During the BBS, a total of 26 birds was recorded in 18 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, compared with 247 birds from 77 squares for Common Whitethroat. Breeding season Atlas surveys on 2 May located four at Bullock Down (Beachy Head), three on the Downs near Plumpton the same day and five at Thorney Island on 6 Jun, where a total of 14 pairs nested (the same number as in 2007).

Thirteen different individuals were trapped at Cissbury (five young and eight adult birds), almost the same number and ratio as the previous year. Two had been ringed at the same site in previous years, one as a second year bird in 2006, while another had initially been ringed at Pett Level in 2007. The monthly maxima trapped at Pett Level were 16 on 28 Jul, 19 on 22 Aug and seven on 12 Sep. The Beachy Head Ringing Group reported that the numbers of this species continued at the same low level as in the last few years.

During September eight were reported from Shooters' Bottom (Beachy Head) on the 8th, 12 at North Wall (Pagham) on the 13th, and eight at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 28th. There were four sightings in October, from Birling Gap and Pett Level (two), while the final bird of the year was seen at Halsey's Fm (Sidlesham) on the 21st, five days later than the 10-year average. [VPB]

Common Whitethroat

Sylvia communis

Very common summer visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The first report from the east of the county was at Pett Level on 2 Apr, four days earlier than in 2007 and two days later than the 10-year average date. In the west a single bird at Church Norton on 8 Apr was the earliest noted. From 13 Apr the species was widely recorded across the county, including eight at Sidlesham Ferry on the 24th. On the same day, eight were found in an early BBS count at Upper Beeding and two days later there were 12 in another BBS square at Laughton Place (Ringmer). During the BBS, a total of 247 birds was found in 77 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, with a highest count of 19 at Pipers Wood (Northchapel) on 16 Jun. At regularly surveyed sites, there were 53 pairs breeding at Thorney Island (just one fewer than in 2007), 22 pairs at Brighton Wild Park (26 in 2007) and 14 at Amberley Wild Brooks, while the maximum number recorded at Pulborough Brooks was 16 on 7 May. At Rye Hbr SSSI 37 pairs were also mapped. In early Atlas surveys on 25 Apr seven were found at Beachy Head, eight at Litlington and five at Parkminster (Cowfold), while an excellent 28 were recorded at Thundersbarrow Hill on the 26th. On the same day there were at least 43 recorded in the Pagham Hbr area. On 8 May more Atlas returns included 23 at Fairlight, 19 at Rye Hbr and 11 at Rottingdean. The next day there were 12 at Ripe and on the 10th 16 were at Applesham Fm (Coombes) and another ten in the Wyckham Fm area (Steyning). Thirteen were located at Steep Down on the 11th. On 16 Jun, 19 were counted in a late BBS survey at Pipers Wood (Northchapel) and the same number were recorded in a late breeding season Atlas walk at Peacehaven on the 30th. There were 17 at Canada Bottom (Findon) on 1 Jul, 30 at Sheepcote Valley on the 11th and 18 at Cuckmere Haven on the 22nd. A young bird in a garden at Vinehall (Mountfield) had to be rescued on no fewer than seven occasions after becoming trapped in netting.

Monthly maxima trapped at Pett Level were 17 on 27 Jul, 125 on 22 Aug and 40 on 8 Sep. Thirty-one different birds were caught at Cissbury, seven fewer than in 2007, with an adult:juvenile ratio of 6:25. On return passage there were 70 at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on both 15 and 16 Aug and 200 on the 22nd, and the ringing group reported a moderate autumn for the species.

The last records from West Sussex were at Thorney Island and Pagham Hbr on 8 Oct, while the final report from the east was of a single bird at Pett Level on the 21st, two days later than the previous year. [VPB]

Dartford Warbler

Sylvia undata

Fairly common but localised resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

There were records for this species in every month, mostly from its strongholds in the Wealden Heaths of West Sussex and the Ashdown Forest area but also from the coast in the winter periods.

In the first winter period, the highest numbers were from Ambersham Common including seven on 16 Feb (of which five were singing), six on 17 Feb and five on 26 Jan. There were also four at Weavers Down (Liss) on 1 Jan and three at Crows Nest (Ashdown Forest) on 9 Jan, Lavington Common on 22 Jan, Marl pits (Ashdown Forest) on 13 Feb and Heyshott Common on 10 Feb. On the coast, there were singletons at Beachy Head on 11 Jan and at Rye Hbr LNR on 21 Jan and 30 Jan.

Breeding was confirmed in six tetrads between 16 May and 27 Jul. Three of these tetrads covered seven sites in Ashdown Forest while the other three were in the west of the county at Iping, Lavington and Woolbeding Commons. Probable breeding occurred in 12 tetrads and possible breeding in another five. There was a BBS record from Stedham Common. The highest single count was of 30 birds at Woolbeding Common on 16 May.

The Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey identified 61 pairs in territories on the Wealden Heaths. Of these, 24 were on Ambersham/Heyshott Commons and 20 on Iping/Stedham Commons. This compares favourably with 20 and 18, respectively, for 2007. Overall the 61 pairs recorded by WHBBS in 2008 was very similar to the 63 pairs in 2007 and 62 pairs in 2006.

An approximate maximum total of up to 27 other territories can be estimated for the Ashdown Forest from the records of the Ashdown Forest Bird Group and other observers suggesting a potential county total of about 98 pairs; a figure in the same region as the 2007 estimate of 93 pairs and within the range of between 87 and 101 territories established in the 2006 survey.

Dartford Warblers have been previously recorded at Hastings CP and there were interesting records of single birds there on five occasions between 10 Feb and 12 Oct, including two records of singing birds in the Firehills area on 10 May and 1 Jun.

Inland records continued throughout the year and there were a number of autumn and winter records from coastal areas. These included single birds at Beachy Head on several dates between 4 Oct and 18 Oct. Singletons were seen on five dates between 17 Oct and 18 Nov at Newhaven Tide Mills. Single birds were also recorded on eight dates between 27 Oct and 31 Dec at Rye Hbr LNR. [SS]

Yellow-browed Warbler

Phylloscopus inornatus

Very scarce visitor, mostly in late autumn.

A small influx was noted during 10-13 Oct with singles at Beachy Head (RDME) and Earnley (KWS, LS) on the 10th, two in Peacehaven (PB, SWM, AT) and one at Beachy Head (CFB *et al.*) on the 11th and one at Brooklands (Worthing) on the 13th (JAN *et al.*). One was also seen at Climping on 29 Oct (OM *et al.*). The first individual was a juvenile female trapped in Whitbread Hollow while the next was also trapped, at Batchmere's Fm. Those in Peacehaven were seen together in a garden in Woodlands Close from 10:00-14:00 BST, with at least one of them presumably moving to the Oval from 14:00 BST. The second Beachy Head bird favoured the eastern edge of Belle Tout Wood and nearby bushes while that at Brooklands was an excellent find for a WeBS counter at a usually unrewarding location. These seven individuals take the total since the beginning of 2000 to 52, having arrived in January (2), April, September, October (40), November (6) and December (2). Decade totals since the 1960s, when the first individuals were recorded in the county, to the 1990s are 6, 9, 33 and 37, with the upward trend continuing. [RJF]

Hume's Leaf Warbler*Phylloscopus humei**Very rare vagrant.*

One present in Belle Tout Wood (Beachy Head) from 30 Dec 2007 (*SxBR* 60:170) remained until 14 Jan 2008 (MO) when it is feared that severe weather contributed to its demise. It was the fifth county record and although late records of this species are very much the norm it was the first to be seen into the New Year. The other records were at the same site from 13-17 Nov 1966 and 6-10 Nov 2003, Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) from 16-22 Nov 1997 and Seaford between 2 and 22 Dec 2000. [RJF]

Dusky Warbler*Phylloscopus fuscatus**Very rare vagrant.*

A juvenile trapped at Pett Level on 1 Nov (RBRG) was sexed as male based on its wing length. It is only the fifth county record and the first in November. The previous records fall between 7 and 30 Oct, at Beachy Head in 1974 and 1991, Combe Haven in 1992 and Climping in 2005. [RJF]

Wood Warbler*Phylloscopus sibilatrix**Very scarce and declining summer resident and passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.*

Although the 24 records received this year were one fewer than in 2007, these possibly related to 22 individuals, a figure which represents a slight increase over the 18 reported last year. The first record was at Warnham LNR on 9 Apr, just 2 days later than the earliest record and 10 days earlier than the 10-year average. This was followed by two at Stoughton on the 16th, one at Staplefield (Stanbridge) on 2 May and another at Pulborough Brooks on the 3rd. Singletons were also recorded at Stanley Common on the 5th, Wivelsfield on the 18th and Laughton Park Fm on the 22nd. There were six records from Ashdown Forest, probably involving three birds, one of which stayed until at least 8 June.

In the north-west of the county, an adult with two recently fledged young seen on 13 Jun was the only proven breeding record for the year. A probable returning bird was at Pulborough Brooks on 30 Jul whilst definite migrants were at Sidlesham Ferry and Pett Level on 7 Aug, with possibly another bird at the former site on the 9th (or was it lingering?). In September there were singletons at Church Norton on the 10th and Halseys Fm (Sidlesham) on the 13th. The last record of the year was one at Sidlesham Tramway on the 14 Sep, ten days later than the 10-year average. [TWP]

Common Chiffchaff*Phylloscopus collybita**Very common summer visitor and passage migrant; small numbers winter.*

As usual, birds were recorded from 1 Jan but again, as in 2007, there were no significant numbers at any one site. There were four at Swanbourne Lake (Arundel) on the 1st and there were

also four at East Lavant SF on the 4th and a minimum of ten at Leythorne Meadow on the 30th. In February, the seven at Fishbourne on the 18th may have been migrating birds but seven at Beachy Head on the 24th almost certainly were on passage. Birds continued to arrive during March and April but there were no counts over ten until 12 were heard singing at Thorney Deeps and 20 at Pagham Hbr on 2 Apr when there were also 14 at Lewes Race Course and 17 at Barnham House (East Hoathly).

After mid-April numbers increased in many areas with 20 at Warnham LNR on the 20th and 24 at Sharpthorne on the 22nd, 18 at Cousley Wood (Wadhurst) on the 25th, 22 at Steephill Wood (Brede) and 22 at Spithurst (near Barcombe) on the 26th. Although recorded in 635 tetrads, breeding was only confirmed in 46 with a further 146 providing evidence of probable breeding. During the BBS, a total of 554 birds was recorded in 116 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, with a highest count of 20 at Five Hundred Acre (Ashdown Forest) on 14 Jun. At Brighton Wild Park 20 pairs bred, 18 singing males were at Ashdown Ridge and Thorney Island while Thorney Deeps held eight pairs.

Autumn passage was first noted with any degree of certainty at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) with 20 on 23 Jul. Very few other notable movements were discernable until 8 Sep when 40 were recorded at Cissbury Ring and 50 on the 12th along with 250 at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head). A hundred were noted at Hastings CP on the 17th (declining to 50 by the 28th). On the 20th, 250 were recorded at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) and 285 were trapped at Pett Level. Significant numbers in October included 131 trapped at Pett Level on the 4th and 75 at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on the 6th. Nothing noteworthy occurred during November although 137 were recorded (though undoubtedly some duplication occurred). Similarly in December, of the 93 recorded the largest numbers were at Thorney SF with 18 on the 3rd and 30 on the 30th. [TWP]

Siberian Chiffchaff

Phylloscopus collybita tristis/fulvescens

Very rare vagrant.

One present at Coldwaltham Sewage Farm from 9-23 Feb (DC, BK *et al.*) was photographed and sound-recorded (see <http://www.thebirdsofsussex.co.uk/articles.htm>). The recording was examined by the BBRC's 'Tristis panel' and considered by them to meet their criteria for 'tristis' or 'fulvescens' making it the first fully documented occurrence of this form in the county. [RJF]

Willow Warbler

Phylloscopus trochilus

Common but declining summer visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The first bird arrived at Selsey Bill on 16 Mar, exactly on the 10-year average date. A further fourteen were recorded in the rest of the month with six at Sidlesham Ferry on the 31st.

April got off to a better start than last year with ten at Warnham LNR on the 3rd, a minimum of 100 at Pagham Hbr on the 5th and 40 at Pagham Lagoon on the 8th. Away from the Pagham area the only sites achieving double figures were Cuckmere Haven with 18 on the 6th and Brooklands (Worthing) with ten and Ashdown Marl pits with 11 both on the 13th. On the 23rd 14 were counted at a breeding site at Kings Standing (Ashdown).



Siberian Chiffchaff (tristis), Coldwaltham, February 2008 (David Cooper)

As usual in the breeding season, birds were recorded across the county in a total of 287 tetrads but confirmed breeding was recorded in only 14 with probable breeding in a further 45. As ever, Ashdown Forest is the stronghold for this species but 25 singing birds recorded at Stanley Common (nr Liphook) on 10 May were also notable. During the BBS, a total of 76 birds was recorded from 27 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, with a highest count of 13 at Mill Place (Weir Wood) on 7 Jun.

Autumn passage probably commenced on 22 Jul with seven at Cuckmere Haven followed by four at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) next day. Passage continued with 39 trapped at Pett Level on the 28th and in August the maximum number trapped there was 165 on the 5th. There were 45 at Cissbury and 50 at Charleston Reedbed on the 14th, whilst the maximum count for the autumn at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) was 120 on the 15th, with 50 on the 16th, 100 on the 22nd and another 50 on the 28th. This was the worst passage for this species since recording began at this site. Cissbury Ring had 30 on the 29th.

Inevitably numbers decreased in September, the only notable records being 20 at Ashdown West Chase on the 2nd, 50 at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on the 12th, 20 at Hastings CP on the 14th and 16th and 14 at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 28th. In October, 16 were recorded of which seven were at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) with singletons at Arundel, Pulborough Brooks and Beachy Head. The only other records were in the Pagham area with the last recorded at Selsey Bill on the 26th, only four days earlier than the 10-year average. [TWP]

Goldcrest*Regulus regulus*

Very common breeding resident, common passage migrant and winter visitor.

A total of 1,853 records were received from 306 1-km squares within the county, including records from 406 sites during the breeding season.

During the first winter period individuals and small parties of wintering birds were recorded throughout the county with most birds reported from typical inland habitat such as coniferous and deciduous woodland and heathland. Smaller numbers of birds were recorded on Downland and in suburban gardens where they were often in coniferous trees and there were a scattering of records from the coast. Records of 20 or more birds were received from eight inland sites with 30 birds or more recorded from Venus and Linchball Woods (West Dean) and Broadwater Forest. The only definite spring passage record was of a migrant flying north over Splash Point (Seaford) on 10 May.

During the BBS, a total of 163 birds was recorded from 55 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, with a highest count of 11 at Tilgate Forest on 14 May. Breeding was confirmed in 37 tetrads in the county and it was thought probable in a further 102 tetrads. A minimum of eight singing males were found on Stanley Common (nr Liphook) and during the breeding season BTO/SOS Atlas survey visits found 20 tetrads in which ten or more birds were recorded.

Autumn passage commenced in earnest on 27 Sep when 20 birds were recorded at Crowlink, 28 at Beachy Head and 50 at Hastings CP, the highest count of the year. Passage numbers peaked on 9 Oct when counts of 40 were made at Pagham Hbr, Pett Level and Belle Tout (Beachy Head) with a further 25 at Birling Gap. Significant numbers of migrants continued to be recorded along the coast until mid-November when 12 at Brighton Wild Park were noted as a high count for this time of year, in what proved to be a heavier passage period than had been experienced in recent years. Passage numbers then fell rapidly as winter flocks built up inland with the most significant counts being 34 at Rogate Common, 31 at Bewl Ketley Fm, 30 at Owlbeech Woods (Horsham) and 20 at Colgate and Bewl Water. [DG]

Firecrest*Regulus ignicapilla*

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

As usual, the majority of sightings from the early winter period came from the coast or coastal plain with 117 records up to the end of March. These came mainly from the west of the county and involved ones and twos with the exception of four at West Dean Woods on 15 Mar. Nine at Beachy Head on 28 Mar was the first of four large counts of migrants here including ten on 29 Mar, six on the 1st and seven on the 2nd Apr, while visible migration was noted with a singleton flying north over Splash Point (Seaford) on 26 Mar.

The approximate monthly totals including breeding numbers were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	14	20	59	37	86	15	7	1	5	20	31	20
No. of sites	13	16	39	22	27	9	5	1	5	17	24	18

The first sign of breeding was a singing male at West Dean Woods on the early date of 4 Feb followed by a singing male at Venus Wood (West Dean) on 20 Feb. The total number of males recorded holding territory this year was 90, a decline on the 145 in 2007 but still an increase on previous years (cf. 67 in 2006, 23 in 2005), and reflecting reduced recording effort this year. West



*Firecrest, West Dean,
April 2008 (Martin Casemore)*

Dean Woods again held the largest count with 38 (almost half the total population) while there were 13 at Stanley Common (Liphook) and five at Burton Mill Pond, Black Down (Fernhurst) and Brantridge Forest. All of the breeding records came from the west of the county with the exception of pairs at Hastings CP and in the dam car park at Weir Wood Res. There was also a possible pair at Horse Eye Level (Pevensey), one of which was observed pulling the long tail of a standing lamb, presumably gathering nest material.

The first records of the autumn, away from the breeding areas, were singles at Wiggonholt Common on the very early date of 28 Jul, Atherington (Climping) on 22 Aug, Birling Gap on 8 Sep, Hastings CP on 16 Sep and Rye Hbr on 22 Sep. During the last three months of the year there was a large increase in migrants, mainly singles, across the county. The approximate totals recorded at the main sites during the autumn and early winter periods were as follows:

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly totals	5	20	31	20
Pagham Hbr	-	6	4	-
Beachy Head	2	3	1	-
Pett Level	-	2	6	1
Rye Hbr	2	-	3	3
Other sites	1	9	17	16

Coastal sightings of singletons continued throughout the late winter while a few were dotted inland. The highest counts were two at Pagham Hbr on 15 Oct, Rye Hbr on 2 Nov, Climping on 3 and 4 Nov, Brighton Cemetery on 7 Nov and Burton Mill Pond on 23 Dec, while four were seen at Pagham Hbr on 31 Oct. [SB]

Spotted Flycatcher

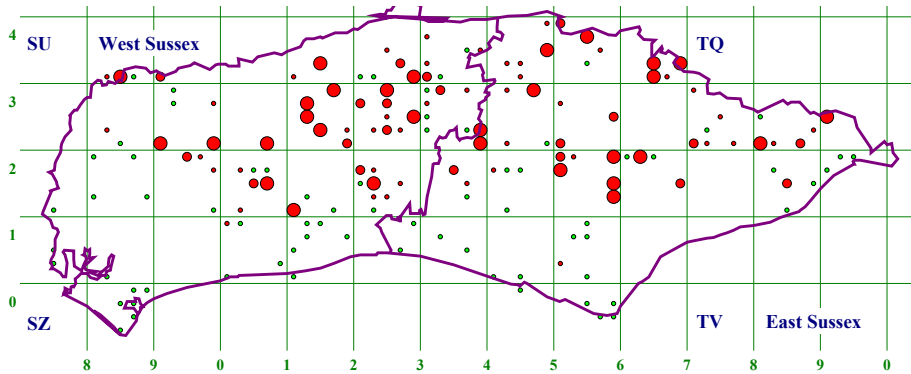
Muscicapa striata

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 Church Norton (Pagham Hbr) on 2 May (eight days later than the 10-year average date) and passage continued until the end of May with ones and twos recorded along the coast. Spring passage was very light and it was notable that no groups of more than three birds were encountered.

During the BBS, only two birds were recorded as singletons in two of the 136 1-km squares

surveyed (compared with seven birds in six 1-km squares out of 128 in 2007). Records of confirmed breeding were received from 30 sites from mid-May compared with only eight sites in 2007. Breeding was thought probable at a further 21 sites (11 in 2007) and birds were also recorded from another 42 areas of suitable breeding habitat during the summer (18 in 2007).



From mid-August onwards, migrants were seen not only at widely scattered locations throughout the interior of the county but also in small numbers along the coastal strip. In the last few days of the month counts of five or more were seen at Church Norton, Pulborough Brooks, Cissbury Ring, Wakehurst Place and Beachy Head. On 1 Sep, ten birds were reported from Church Norton but elsewhere in the county records were of ones and twos scattered throughout. Birds continued to be recorded in small numbers until mid-September when six were seen at Pulborough Brooks on the 15th. A further ten were reported from Pagham Hbr on the 17th with five at Washington on the 20th and eight at Cissbury Ring on the 22nd in what was a late peak to the autumn migration. After this date numbers fell sharply, although four were still present at Beachy Head on the 28th, the last record from this site for the year. For the fifth consecutive year numbers appeared low and the ringing groups at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) and Pett Level both commented on this species' scarcity in 2008.

The only October records were of singletons at Church Norton on the 11th and the last bird of the year was at Birdham on the 21st, seven days later than the 10-year average. [DG]

Pied Flycatcher

Ficedula hypoleuca

Scarce passage migrant, more numerous in autumn than spring; has bred. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

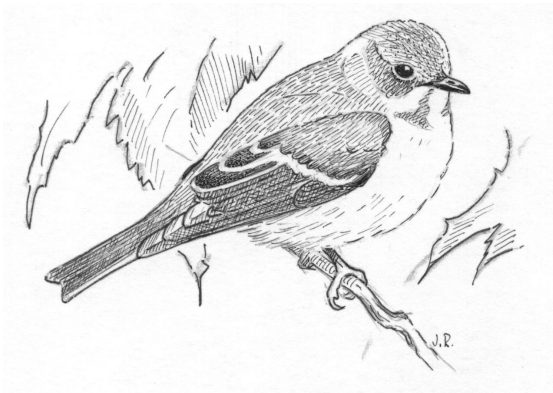
The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
7	2	-	1	8	14

Passage numbers during spring were again light and autumn passage was also quiet, with the minimum of 32 birds recorded during the year being half of the average number (64) recorded over the last five years. This is the fifth consecutive year in which numbers have declined compared with the previous year.

The first spring migrant was located in Brunswick Place Gardens (Hove) on 4 Apr, five days earlier than the 10-year average date. The next day a bird was present inland at Park Fm (Wivelsfield) followed by a male at Ashcombe Bottom (Lewes) on the 8th. A further five birds were recorded in the spring from Church Norton, Pulborough Brooks, Findon Valley, Brighton Wild Park and Rye Hbr LNR, with the last spring migrant seen at Beachy Head in the company of a Spotted Flycatcher on 17 May. On 13 Jul one bird was recorded at Robertsbridge and this is the fifth consecutive year in which a bird has been present in the county during the breeding season.

Autumn passage commenced on 7 Aug with a male at Cissbury Ring followed by a single bird in St Ann's Well Gardens (Hove) on the 9th. From 16 Aug until 17 Sep at least 17 further individuals were recorded from nine sites at or near the coast with a concentration of records in the first week of September. Pagham Hbr, where seven of the autumn birds were recorded, was the only site in the county to record multiple birds on the same day, with two present on 6 and 17 Sep. At Beachy Head, the ringing group reported that this species has become a rarity and there were no birds recorded during the autumn period. The final birds of the year were all in October with singletons at Cissbury Ring on the 20th and 21st, at Climping on the 24th and in St Ann's Well Gardens (Hove) on the 25th and 26th, six days earlier than 2007 and 23 days later than the 10-year average departure date. [DG]



Bearded Tit

Panurus biarmicus

Scarce breeding resident, and very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The peak counts outside the breeding season, at the 11 sites where the species was recorded, were as shown in the table below. Numbers at Thorney Deeps were low in both winter periods although elsewhere in the county overall numbers were average. The maximum of 20 birds recorded at Thorney Deeps during the year was the lowest count there for at least ten years, the average maximum over the last five years being 44 birds.

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Thorney Deepes	4	4	4		20	20	19	3	4
The Severals (Church Norton)	-	-	-		-	-	2	-	-
Ferry Pool (Sidlesham Ferry)	-	-	-		-	-	2	-	-
Breech Pool (Pagham Hbr)	2	-	-		-	-	3	4	4
Pagham Lagoon	-	-	-		-	-	2	4	-
Lewes Brooks	-	-	-		-	-	-	1	-
Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven)	-	-	-		-	-	-	3	4
Brede Valley	-	-	-		-	-	-	2	-
Pett Level	-	-	2		10	5	19	-	-
Rye Hbr	3	6	13		5	6	9	5	1



Bearded Tit, Ouse Estuary Project, January 2008 (Les Bird)

Breeding was confirmed at three sites. At Thorney Deepes the breeding season was the least successful for more than a decade with three pairs fledging only 14 young; the first juvenile birds were seen on 4 Jun, a month later than in 2007. At Pett Level five pairs bred and at Rye Hbr birds were concentrated in four separate areas during the breeding season and a pair with three fledged young was seen on 1 Jul. Additionally birds were recorded at Pagham Hbr on 20 Apr and at Pevensy Levels on 3 May.

Typical 'high flying' behaviour was noted at Thorney Deepes on only one occasion in the autumn when, from a group of 19 birds, six flew high and then headed east on the morning of 8 Oct. It is quite possible that some of these birds reached Pagham Hbr as two birds were seen there for the first time in the autumn four days later with up to four birds recorded from various sites

around the harbour until the year end. At Pett Level 17 birds were noted high flying on 11 Oct before dropping back into the reeds and three birds appeared at the Ouse Estuary Project from 14 Nov and remained well into 2009, providing a welcome opportunity for observers to view this species at close range. [DG]

Long-tailed Tit

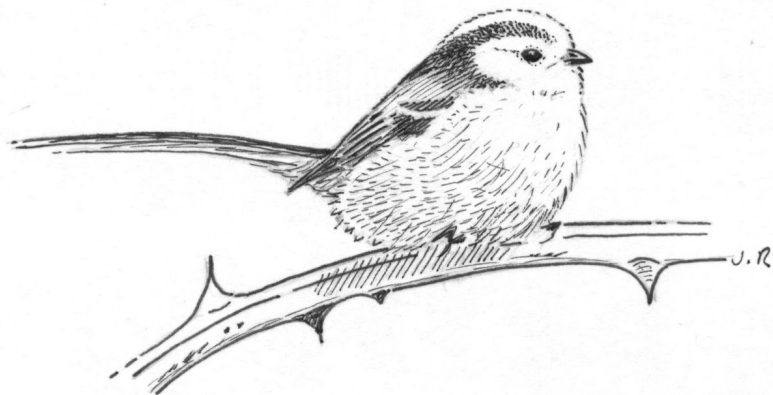
Aegithalos caudatus

Very common resident.

Records were received from 571 tetrads distributed across the entire county.

Outside the breeding season, Long-tailed Tits live in 'clans' of 5–20 individuals including one or more pairs, their offspring and immigrants that have dispersed between clans. Monitoring population size is made difficult by the tendency of clans to temporarily divide into smaller flocks or briefly fuse with each other without aggression. In the first winter period, the largest counts were of 27 birds at Pickham Fm & Mill (Pett) on 16 Jan, 25 at Bookers Fm (Bolney) on 4 Jan and 24 at Twineham Green (nr Bolney) on 27 Feb.

Although flocks disband and attempt to breed in early spring, nest-building was first recorded at Ruser Nunnery on 27 Jan. A pair with at least seven recently fledged young, seen at Patcham (Brighton) on 19 Apr, must have begun egg-laying by mid-March. The last record of nest-building was on 5 May at Capon Fm (Cowfold). Breeding was confirmed in 138 tetrads, and probable in a further 91. On the Norfolk Estate around Arundel, there were three pairs at both North Stoke Fm and Home Fm, and two pairs at Peppering Fm. Only one pair was found at Sefter Fm (Rose Green) in 95 ha and Scobells Fm (Barcombe) in 10 ha.



An unusually large flock of 29 birds at Weir Wood Res on 20 May consisted mainly of newly fledged juveniles, suggesting that 'family parties' were already merging into clans since pairs and their helpers rarely fledge more than 12 young. Other high breeding season counts of 34 at Hurston Warren (nr Parham) on 28 Jun, 30 at Pulborough Brooks during May and 25 at St Leonards Forest Grange on 24 Jun all involved more than one flock.

The highest post-breeding count was 50 at Pett Level on 27 Sep when several flocks were present. Other counts of over 30 birds were 35 at Pagham Information Centre on 16 Jul and Okehurst (Billingshurst) on 25 Jul, and 40 at Warnham LNR on 18 Aug. Only the Pagham count was of a single flock.

During the second winter period, the largest count of about 100 at Bewl Water on 25 Dec involved ten flocks. Other large counts were 56 at Findon Church on 15 Nov, 50 at Warnham on 12 Nov, 40 at Ladywells (nr Coombes) on 13 Nov (36 of these captured in mist nets) and 34 at Ketley Fm (Bewl) on 10 Dec (three flocks).

Birds fed on peanuts or sunflower kernels in feeders at three sites. Ten fed on a sewage filter bed at Waltham Brooks on 13 Jan. [DH]

Northern Long-tailed Tit

Aegithalos caudatus caudatus

Very rare vagrant.

2004: Up to four birds seen in the Cockshut Road area of Lewes from 24 Jan to 17 Feb and presumably including a bird seen there on 19 Dec 2003 were published in the Sussex Bird Report (*SxBR* 57:156) and have now also been published in the British Birds Rarities Committee 51st Report on Rare Birds in Great Britain in 2008 (*British Birds* 102:586-587). This is the first time that this form has appeared in the BBRC report. The report states that “although the occurrence of this race in Britain has not been closely monitored, it appears to be genuinely rare and best treated as a national rarity, even though it appears subject to occasional small influxes associated with continental irruptions”. Previous records of this form in Sussex appear to have not completely ruled out the possibility of *europaeus/caudatus* intergrades. All records of this form should be fully described and preferably photographed and details forwarded to the Recorder as descriptions of this form are required by both the Sussex Ornithological Society Records Committee and BBRC. [CWM]

Blue Tit

Cyanistes caeruleus

Abundant resident.

In the first winter period, the five largest counts during Atlas surveys were 82 at Copthorne (nr Crawley) on 6 Jan, 74 at Tinsley Green (Crawley) on 12 Jan, 73 at Wivelsden Farm (Wivelsfield) on 25 Feb, 70 at Parkminster (Cowfold) on 29 Jan, and 66 at Dragons Green on 10 Feb.

Breeding was confirmed in 295 tetrads and probable in 93. Nest-building was mentioned in 28 records between 30 Mar and 5 May, nests with eggs in nine records between 27 Apr and 28 May and nestlings in 31 records between 27 May and 5 Jul. As expected, seeing fledged young was by far the most common way of confirming breeding for this hole-nesting species with 295 records between 3 Apr and 27 Jul. Since few Blue Tits fledge in Sussex before early June, some of the earlier dates may have been observations of males feeding their mates, or of parents feeding chicks in a nest. A Blue Tit at Boxgrove (nr Chichester) on 2 Jun was very agitated by the presence of a female Cuckoo; it had presumably been alarmed by other species (e.g. a similarly upset Robin) since tits are not usually hosts of this brood parasite.

During the breeding season, the five largest Atlas survey counts were 72 at Wivelsden Farm (Wivelsfield) on 28 Apr, 71 at Warnham LNR on 15 Apr, 61 at Barns Green on 26 Apr, and 58 at

Pett Village on 6 Jun and at Rowhook on 10 June. At Brighton Wild Park, 72 pairs bred. On the Norfolk Estate around Arundel, there were 16 pairs at Peppering Fm, seven at Home Fm, five at North Stoke Fm and two at Rackham Fm. Elsewhere there were 13 pairs at Sefter Fm (Rose Green) in 95 ha and five pairs at Scobells Fm (Barcombe) in 10 ha. No reports were received from some long-running nest box studies but at Ardingly Res, 23 nest boxes were occupied, with 16 fledging 104 young; in 7 ha of Hotham Park (Bognor) 26 nest boxes were used (six had dead nestlings and two had unhatched eggs).

The largest post-breeding counts were 50 at Shortland Copse (Plaistow) on 1 Jul, at Dragon's Green on 5 Jul and at Warnham LNR on 25 Aug. In the second winter period (with a poor beech-mast crop), no count exceeded 48 at St Leonards Forest (Colgate) on 27 Dec. [DH]

Great Tit

Parus major

Abundant resident.

In the first winter period, the five largest Atlas survey counts were 54 at Barns Green on 10 Feb, 50 at Copthorne (nr Crawley) on 6 Jan, 47 at both Woodmancote (nr Henfield) on 10 Feb and Washington on 16 Feb, and 46 at Warnham LNR on 16 Jan. There was no evidence of spring movements.

Breeding was confirmed in 263 tetrads, and probable in a further 110. Nest-building was mentioned in 12 records between 3 Apr and 25 May, nests with eggs in five records between 15 Apr and 20 May and nestlings in 20 records between 4 and 28 May. As expected, seeing fledged young was by far the most common way of confirming breeding for this hole-nesting species with 280 records between 3 Apr and 19 July. Since few Great Tits fledge in Sussex before early June, some of the earlier dates may have been observations of males feeding their mates, or of parents feeding chicks in a nest.

Large breeding season counts included 65 at Barns Green on 26 Apr and 58 territories in Brighton Wild Park. By contrast, in 7 ha of Hotham Park (Bognor) one pair bred. On the Norfolk Estate around Arundel, there were seven territories at Peppering Fm, four at North Stoke Fm, three at Home Fm, and two at Rackham Fm. There were eight pairs at Sefter Fm (Rose Green) in 95 ha and four pairs at Scobells Fm (Barcombe) in 10 ha. As with Blue Tit, several long-term nest box studies did not submit records. All 11 nest boxes at Weir Wood Res were successful, but at Ardingly Res only seven out of 13 occupied nest boxes fledged any young (total 56). Pairs nested in the church roof at Ebernoe Common and a church wall at Southwater. Rather boldly, a female in Friston Forest used a chimney-style nest box intended for Tawny Owls.

After breeding, there were few high counts, with the largest of 32 at Shortland Copse (Plaistow) on 1 Jul. There was no clear evidence of autumn movements.

In the second winter period, when the beech-mast crop was again poor, the five largest counts were 44 at Brighton Wild Park on 13 Dec, 26 at Warninglid on 7 Dec, 24 at Lower Beeding on 6 Nov, and 22 at Bookers Fm (Bolney) on 26 Nov and at nearby Wykehurst Park on 30 Nov. A female with partially leucistic plumage on its cap, nape, bib and chest was observed at Warnham LNR on 1 and 24 Nov. [DH]

Coal Tit*Periparus ater*

Very common resident.

In the first winter period, the largest count was 31 at Broadwater Forest on 28 Jan. On 20 Feb in West Dean Woods at least 25 were singing in Venus Wood and at least 20 in Linchball Wood. More intriguing records, because Coal Tits are scarce on the Selsey peninsula (*Birds of Sussex*), were the singleton at Pagham Harbour Information Centre on 15 Feb and a recorded presence at nearby Church Norton on 12 Apr. The closest other sighting in 2008 was a singleton chased by a Great Tit at Bognor Regis on 21 Feb.

Breeding was confirmed in 63 tetrads, and probable in a further 42. The highest breeding season counts were 23 at Lavington Common on 17 Jun and 21 at Broadwater Forest on 30 Jun. Both included recently fledged young, as did the largest summer count of 28 birds at Shortland Copse (Plaistow) on 1 Jul. Egg laying in Sussex does not usually begin until early April, suggesting that reports of fledged young before mid-May may have been mistaken, possibly resulting from misinterpretation of 'courtship' feeding. Around Horsham, there were six pairs at Leechpool and Owlbeech Woods on 30 Mar, and at least three broods fledged, while up to two pairs bred at Warnham LNR and Sandgate.

The largest concentration in the second winter period was 30 at Owlbeech Woods (Horsham) on 22 Dec.

Coal Tits may, however, be spreading near the coast. For example, one at Southwick (Shoreham) on 30 Jun was the first seen there in a decade, and one at Ladywells (nr Coombes) on 11 Oct with a mixed tit flock was the first record there. Singletons at Pett Level on 23 Jan and 4 Apr, and two there on 17 Jun, were also considered unusual (although singletons on 21 Feb and 7 Nov were reported without comment).

Birds showing characteristics of the continental race *ater* were recorded at Cuckmere Haven on 29 Sept (ME *et al.*), at Beachy Head on 12 Oct (four birds) (ARK, RJJ *et al.*) and in a Bognor Garden on 10 Nov (TEGP). A number of birds were reported from other locations but these reports were not substantiated by descriptions. Observers are reminded that this race is included on the list of species for which descriptions are required by the Recorder. Most Sussex sightings of *ater* since the first at the Crumbles (Eastbourne) in 1952 have been made at coastal sites in October. Some records, however, were as far inland as Crowborough (4 Mar 1979) and as late as 13 Apr (Bewl Water 1979). [DH]



Continental Coal Tit, Beachy Head, October 2008
(Martin Casemore)

Willow Tit*Poecile montana**Scarce and declining resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.*

With only 23 records, and no evidence of breeding, things look bleak for the county's scarcest 'brown tit'. The only counts of more than two birds were three at Etchingam Court Lodge Fm on 13 Jan and seven at Northchapel (Ramsfold) on 5 Feb. About half of the records were from the first two months of the year, when this otherwise unobtrusive species comes into song.

Sightings came from at least 14 tetrads but all records were confined to just two areas: one from West Dean Woods east to Rackham Hill and Pulborough Brooks; the other in the High Weald from Maresfield east to Hurst Green and north to Bayham.

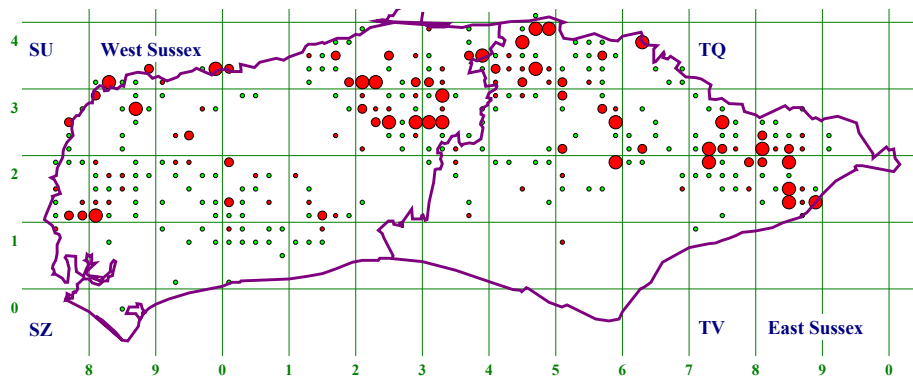
Although only one record was made during the breeding season, this is such a sedentary species that most sightings throughout the year were probably from potential breeding sites. Habitats included dry downland scrub, a birch thicket among young Douglas fir and a larch plantation. Unexpectedly, no records were received from the scrubby margins of reservoirs or gravel pits. Since Willow Tits excavate their own nest-holes and often use very thin stems within a metre of the ground, they frequently breed in scrub or hedgerows away from mature trees. Any 'brown tit' in a small wood or scrub is therefore well worth investigating.

One used a feeder at Warnham LNR on 29 Oct.

Observers are reminded that this species has recently been added to the list of species for which a description is required by the SOSRC (with an accurate OS map reference to six figures if possible) due to its scarcity, red-listed status and the difficulties of separating it from Marsh Tit. [DH]

Marsh Tit*Poecile palustris**Scarce resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.*

As usual, Marsh Tits were scarce on the South Downs east of Cissbury Ring (although a male was singing at Ashcombe Bottom on 8 Apr), and largely absent from the coastal plain (although one was at South Bersted (Bognor) on 14 Apr).



Elsewhere, most counts were of only one or two birds. The largest concentrations in the first winter period were nine during an Atlas survey at Steephill Wood (Brede) on 6 Feb, eight at Beech Mill (Battle) on 23 Jan and at West Dean Woods on 12 Mar.

There were records from 141 sites during the breeding season, but this is such a sedentary species that most sightings were probably from potential breeding sites regardless of date. Breeding was confirmed in 27 tetrads, and probable in 30 more. There were five birds at Ebernoe Common on 1 Apr and four at Plashett Park on 13 Apr, Maplehurst Wood (Hastings) on 19 May and Steephill Wood on 28 Jun; up to two pairs bred at Leechpool & Owlbeech Woods (Horsham). During the summer, the only larger count was of seven at Chanctonbury Ring on 14 Sep.

The largest concentration in the second winter period was ten at Warnham LNR on 7 Nov. Singletons near the coast, at Pagham Information Centre on 22 Oct and Baliffscourt Hotel (Climping) on 24 Oct, may indicate dispersal from breeding areas (*Birds of Sussex*).

During the year, the use of feeders was recorded at seven sites; one at a garden feeder at South Harting on 30 Dec was the first record there. [DH]

Nuthatch

Sitta europaea

Common resident.

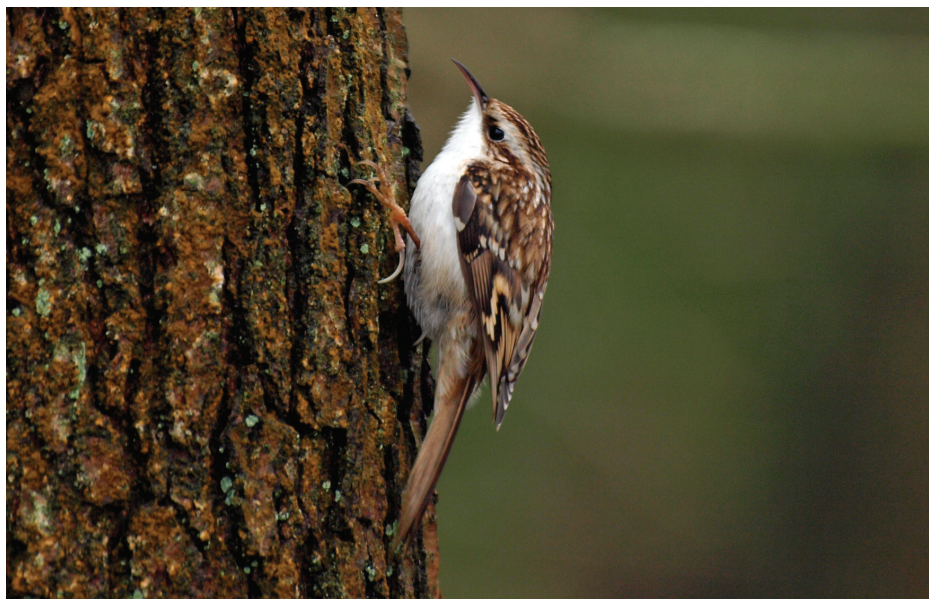
Records for this species were biased to the north of the county compared with those for Blue Tit and Great Tit. As expected, this inhabitant of deciduous woodland was scarce on the coastal plain and the eastern South Downs. Records near the coast were only common east of Hastings and around Friston Forest and Eastbourne. The only more westerly coastal record was a bird at Climping on 6 June, where it was considered unusual.

In the first winter period, the largest concentrations were 20 at Colworth Park (Bolney) on 12 Jan and 13 at both Lower Beeding on 22 Jan and Wykehurst Park (Bolney) on 27 Jan.

Breeding was confirmed in 82 tetrads, and probable in a further 60. Holes were being prospected at Warnham LNR by 24 Mar and nest-building was recorded at Up Chancton Fm (Ashington) on 4 Apr and at five more sites later during the month. Fledged young were first noted at Jarvis Brook (nr Crowborough) on 24 May. The largest concentrations during the breeding season (19 birds at Northchapel (Ramsfold) on 10 May and 17 at Chantlers Fm (Holtye) on 15 Jun), might well have included fledged juveniles. Breeding pairs were recorded at Southwater CP and Chesworth Fm, one or two pairs at Sandgate, and three pairs at Warnham LNR and Leechpool and Owlbeech Woods. This impression of low density is reinforced by the single pair found at Scobells Fm (Barcombe) in 10 ha. At Ardingly Res, a pair using a nest box fledged six young.

The highest post-breeding counts were 15 at Furnace Pond (Leonardslee) on 1 Jul, and 12 at Dragons Green on 5 Jul and at Warnham LNR on 8 Aug. One bird at Warnham LNR on 10 Sep was observed hiding acorns in crevices in Mill Cottages and then covering them with pieces of moss from the roof tiles.

In the second winter period, the largest concentrations were of ten birds at Bedelands LNR (Burgess Hill) on 7 Dec and 11 at Lower Beeding on 12 Dec. A bird was feeding under guttering at Vinehall (nr Mountfield) on 17 Nov. [DH]



Eurasian Treecreeper, March 2008 (David Cooper)

Eurasian Treecreeper

Certhia familiaris

Common resident.

Treecreepers are easily overlooked, being both cryptically-coloured and quiet, and the total of 767 records from 380 sites undoubtedly understates their true status in Sussex. They glean in extensive stands of mature trees. Excluding the areas between Hastings and Rye Hbr and around Friston Forest, the only records from near the coast were at Climping (where considered resident) and at Norton Priory Woods (singleton on 17 Jun).

Treecreepers have large territories for such a small species and so most counts were low. In the first winter period the largest concentration was seven birds at Perryhill (Hartfield) on 15 Feb.

Although Treecreepers were recorded in 321 tetrads, breeding was confirmed in just 34 and probable in another 37. Treecreepers usually nest in narrow gaps behind tree bark or ivy. A more enterprising pair at Southwater nested in garage boarding, while at Weir Wood Res, two broods of six were reared in tit nest boxes. In Sussex eggs are laid from early April to mid-June, with young fledging from early May up to the end of July. Thus the highest breeding season count of 15 birds at Leechpool Woods (Horsham) on 16 May probably included fledged young, but the next largest concentration (nine birds at Eridge Park on 12 Apr) probably did not. Breeding counts included up to four pairs at Leechpool and Owlbeech Woods, two to three pairs at Warnham LNR and single pairs at Southwater CP and at Sandgate.

The largest post-breeding count was seven at Dragons Green on 5 Jul and this probably included fledged young. There was no evidence of dispersal. This species was not seen all autumn at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy) where it was considered exceptionally scarce.

During the second winter period, the highest counts were of five birds at West Dean Woods on 7 Dec and four at Stanbridge (Staplefield) on 29 Nov and at Owlbeech Woods on 29 Dec. This species is well known for its association in winter with mixed tit flocks; surprisingly, the only record received this year was of a singleton with a small party of unidentified tits at South Stoke (Arun Valley) on 17 Dec. There were no reports of communal roosts, such as those in the redwoods at Wakehurst Place. [DH]

Penduline Tit

Remiz pendulinus

Rare vagrant.

A juvenile trapped at Pett Level on 4 Oct (RBRG) has been accepted by the BBRC. It is the first to be recorded in the county since 2005, the tenth since the beginning of 2000 and the 25th in total. They have all arrived in April (3, together on the 9th), September (3, from the 23rd), October (16) and November (3, to the 14th) with most at Pett (13) and Filsham (7), Pagham (4) and Beachy Head. This species probably has the lowest observer to records ratio of any seen in the county in recent years. A long stayer, as has occurred several times in adjoining parts of Kent and Hampshire, would be most welcome. [RJF]



*Penduline Tit, Pett Level,
October 2008 (Sam Bayley)*

Golden Oriole

Oriolus oriolus

Rare scarce passage migrant and summer visitor; may have bred.

A singing male was at Hodcombe (Beachy Head) on 8 Jun (RHC, MEC), the observers first hearing the bird from their bed at 7am! The bird departed after half an hour. This is the fourteenth record in the county since 2000 and is the third during July in that period. [CWM]

Red-backed Shrike*Lanius collurio*

Very scarce passage migrant, formerly a breeding visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

An adult male at Shopham Bridge from 29 May-19 Jun (RAI *et al.*) had been present from the 24th (KW) while in autumn juveniles were seen at Homer Fm (Pagham) on 11 Sep (JDW), Thorney Island from 13-22 Sep (AG) with presumably the same from 24 Sep-9 Oct (CBC, AH, GH *et al.*) and at Devil's Dyke on 27-28 Sep (PJWi *et al.*). These four records take the total recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000 to 26 which, like many scarce species, appears to be relatively low when compared with decade totals from the 1960s to 1990s of 36, 58, 34 and 41, respectively. Records since 2000 have been in May, June (5, to the 19th), August (3, from the 6th), September (15), October and November (to the 9th). [RJF]

Great Grey Shrike*Lanius excubitor*

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

The 11 (possibly 12) birds recorded this year was the highest total since 1998 when there were not fewer than 14 (and possibly 16) recorded in the county. During the first winter period, there were two (possibly three) birds at Ashdown Forest, including one adult seen in the area of Gills Lap Car Park from 4 until 8 Jan. The next Ashdown Forest record was of a first year bird reported on 3 Feb before an adult (possibly the bird from earlier in the year) appeared at Old Lodge NR on 23 Feb and remained until 3 Apr.



Great Grey Shrike, Glynde, December 2008 (Les Bird)

In West Sussex, a bird was reported at Amberley Wild Brooks on 27 Jan and it remained in the area until at least the 4 Feb, being viewed mainly from the Sportsman PH. Presumably the same bird was seen by an observer conducting an Atlas survey in the area on the 11th. The next individual to be reported was one which appeared at Lavington Common on 9 Feb and was also seen by many observers until 27 Mar. This obliging and fairly sedentary bird was reported taking a variety of prey items including a vole (staked on a birch) and a Long-tailed Field Mouse. The final bird of the first winter period was one seen at Pulborough Brooks on 8 Apr.

The first returning bird of the second winter period was reported at Partridge Green on 8 Oct before a small influx on 18 Oct brought three different singletons to Pett Level, Ambersham Common and Ashdown Forest. The Ambersham Common bird appeared to be very mobile as it ranged between there, Iping and Heyshott Commons until the 1 Nov. A singleton, recorded at Chantry Hill on 30 Oct, was not reported subsequently so was presumably either moving through or it had wandered from the Ambersham area (where the bird was still present next day). The Pett Level individual stayed well into 2009 and was watched by many observers. It is interesting that this bird appeared to prey exclusively on birds and was seen to catch a Chaffinch and a Reed Bunting plus a number of other unidentified birds. The one-day sighting at Ashdown Forest was followed by another record at Old Lodge NR on 3 Dec. The final bird of the year was one seen at Glynde from 27 Dec and which was observed into the New Year. [LW]

Jay

Garrulus glandarius

Very common resident.

Records in the first winter period were mostly of one or two birds with the highest counts being 11 at Chelwood Gate (Ashdown Forest) on 20 Jan, at Lower Beeding on 22 Jan and at Lye Green (Crowborough) on 13 Feb. There were also reports of ten at Bookers Fm (Bolney) on 4 Jan, at Pulborough Brooks on 6 Jan and at Colworth Park (Bolney) on 12 Jan. Counts of five or more birds were made at a further 32 sites.

Breeding was confirmed at 25 sites and probable breeding was recorded at a further 78 sites. During the breeding and summer periods, high counts included 18 at Lewes Racecourse between 8 and 14 Jun and 12 at Firle Beacon on 26 Apr, dwarfing all other high counts (of seven) at eight other locations. During the BBS, a total of 137 birds was recorded in 72 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, with a highest count of 12 at Firle Beacon on 26 Apr.

During the autumn and second winter periods sightings were again mainly of individual birds although there were more of the larger groups than in the first winter period. The largest single counts were of 15 at Mott's Mill (Groombridge) on 13 Nov and 13 at Tyes Cross (Sharphorne) on 30 Dec. Counts of 12 were recorded at Weir Wood Res on 22 Sep and Colgate (St Leonards Forest) on 12 Dec. One was seen hanging on a peanut feeder at Wivelsfield Green on 22 Oct. [MJC]

Magpie

Pica pica

Very common resident.

During the first winter period there were 28 counts of more than 20 birds, the highest of which was 43 at Coldean (Brighton) on 27 Jan. There were 40 at Eastbourne on 8 Feb, 39 at Southwick

Hill on 21 Feb and 37 at Sheepcote Hill (Brighton) on 3 Feb. Other high counts included 35 at Sheep Down (Lancing) on 19 Feb and 34 at Applesham (near Coombes) on 3 Feb.

Breeding was confirmed at 118 sites, a large increase on 2007 (when only 12 sites had confirmed breeding), and there was probable breeding at a further 159 sites. During the BBS, a total of 602 birds was recorded in 127 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, with the highest counts during the breeding and summer periods including 40 at Brighton Wild Park on 1 May, 36 at Fire Hills (Fairlight) on 20 Jun, 35 at Water Hill (Brighton) on 8 Jul and 28 at Ashplats Wood (East Grinstead) on 12 Jul.

There were high counts during the autumn and second winter period from both inland and coastal locations. The highest were 41 at Manor Royal (Crawley) on 3 Nov, 37 at Washington on 28 Dec, 36 at Halseys Fm (Sidlesham) on 27 Dec, 35 at Mile Oak ((Portslade) on 26 Nov and 32 each at Camber Dunes SSSI on 11 Oct and Old Salts Fm (Lancing) on 22 Dec. [MJC]

Jackdaw

Corvus monedula

Very common resident.

During the first winter period there were 133 counts of 100 or more individuals reported throughout the county. The highest counts were of 500 at the University of Sussex on 1 Jan, 700 at Warnham LNR and Goose Green (Warnham) on 5 Jan, and 1500 at Bewl Water on 7 Jan increasing to a gathering of 2600 on 17 Jan (the highest number reported at any one location during this period). There were also 500 at Lavington Common on 16 Feb.

The earliest report of probable breeding came from Cowfold as early as 9 Jan. Breeding was confirmed at 166 locations and probable at a further 154 sites. Ten owl boxes were reported to have been used by nesting Jackdaws. During the BBS, a total of 1027 birds was recorded in 104 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, with a highest count of 41 at Pipers Wood (Northchapel) on 16 Jun. During the summer period, high counts were 500 at Warnham LNR on 16-17 Jul, 450 at Weir Wood Res on 28 Jul and 600 at Pett Level on 27 Aug. There were six other counts of over 100 during this period.

During the autumn and second winter period the first large gathering (of over 150) was 300 at Warnham LNR on 10 Sep, followed by 300 at Pett Level on 17 Sep and 300 at Pulborough Brooks between 13 and 15 Nov. Five hundred flew in to roost at Seaford College (Lavington Common) on 16 Nov, 1000 at Warnham LNR flew west at dawn on 3 Dec, 1200 flew to roost at Beeding Brooks on 19 Dec and there were 1100 at Lodge Hill Fm (West Dean) also flying to roost on 28 Dec. There were 18 other reports of between 100 and 300 individuals during this period. [MJC]

Rook

Corvus frugilegus

Very common resident.

The highest counts for the first winter period were 250 at the University of Sussex on 1 Jan, 500 seen flying from a roost at Partridge Green (Littleworth) on 11 Jan, 270 at the Old Canal and Tip (Lidsey) on 12 Jan, 271 at Lodge Hill Fm (West Dean) on 6 Feb, 300 at Laughton on 9 Feb, 253 at Bineham Bridge (Henfield) on 12 Feb and 280 at Aldsworth on 25 Feb.

The first records of nest building were at Goodwood Park on 26 Jan and Halnaker on 29

Jan. Breeding was confirmed at 130 sites throughout the county with a total of at least 1056 nests. There were seven rookeries with 30 or more nests including records of 36 at Hotham Park (Bognor), 48 at Lyminster, 50 at Steyning, 50 at Amberley, 52 at Thorney Island, 60 at Offham (nr Lewes) and 77 at Thorney Island. In addition there were 325 nests reported at Winchelsea but no details of the numbers of sites or sizes of the rookeries were recorded. During the BBS, a total of 1948 birds was recorded from 72 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, with a highest count of 334 at Racton on 5 Jun. On 12 Aug 150 were seen feeding in wheat stubble at High Cross Fm (Uckfield).

In the second winter period the only reports of counts in excess of 200 were of 260 at West Broyle (Chichester) on 7 Dec and 360 at Halsey's Fm (Sidlesham) on 29 Sep, while over 1000 were seen daily flying to and from a roost at Partridge Green throughout December. [MJC]

Carrion Crow

Corvus corone

Very common resident.

There were only 11 counts of 100 or more in the first winter period with the highest being 179 at Coates Broad Halfpenny on 23 Jan and 132 were at Goring Beach on the same day. In February, 163 at Rye GC on the 4th and 122 at Goring Beach on the 13th were the highest counts. In March, 70 were counted at Lewes Brooks on the 9th and the next highest counts were of 37 at Pett Level Pools on the 1st and Brede Bridge (Westfield) the next day.

During the spring and early summer, there were 100 at The Burgh (Burpham) on 10 Apr and 82 near Hurstpierpoint on the 25th. In May the highest count was of 81 in Thakeham on the 4th.

The widespread distribution of this species was again demonstrated by the BBS during which a total of 1556 birds was recorded in 132 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, with the highest counts being 60 at Lyminster on 4 Jun, 59 at East Ashling on 26 Apr and 56 at Pevensey Bridge Level on 7 Jun. Atlas fieldwork during the year produced a large increase in breeding records with 226 confirmed (16 in 2007) and 271 probable (11 in 2007) breeding records. At Brighton Wild Park 18 pairs were again counted. There were eight territories on the 95 hectare mixed farm at Sefter Fm (Rose Green). Three young were seen in a nest at Steep Down (Lancing) on 22 May. On 2 Jul an adult was seen carrying a baby bird at Poundgate (Crowborough) while three newly-fledged juveniles were reported outside Pulborough Brooks visitor centre on the 21st.

During the late summer and autumn period the highest counts were of 218 recorded at Southease on 28 Jun, 110 at Bines Green (Ashurst) on the 30th, 100 at Rake Langley on 2 Jul, and 44 at Pulborough Brooks on 9 Aug. There were also well in excess of 200 reported from Goring Beach on 17 Sep.

In the second winter period there were just five reports of counts in excess of 100. These were 200 at Pulborough Brooks on 1 Dec, 147 at Botolphs (Bramber) on the 21st, 106 at Lancing Beach on the 22nd, 104 at Pulborough Brooks on 18 Oct and 100 on 25 Oct at Weir Wood Res. The highest counts in November were 94 at Pulborough Brooks on the 27th and 55 in Worthing on the 4th.

The most interesting behavioural record was of a Carrion Crow catching a lizard at Patcham (Brighton) on 12 Mar. [LW]

Raven*Corvus corax**Scarce breeding resident.*

For the second successive year there has been a 50% increase in the number of records received (286 from 104 tetrads, compared with 190 from 85 tetrads in 2007), suggesting that the species may still be expanding rapidly both in terms of number and range, although the BTO/SOS Atlas work may have boosted the number of sightings through wider geographical coverage and increased observation hours. There were only two references made to diet in the records received and both were of a single bird feeding on a sheep carcass, the first at Pett Level on 7 Feb and the second at Warnham Goose Green on 17 Sep; it would be useful if observers see birds with food items/prey that they include the details in their record submission so that gradually a better understanding might be gained of the diet of the birds in our county.

The pair resident at Beachy Head (Site A) successfully fledged young and the Shoreham birds (Site B) raised four. At the other coastal sites birds bred at Site D, at least two young were seen at Site E and at Site F at least two young fledged.

A pair was found on 16 Mar nesting at a new coastal site, Site H, in a large cliff hole which had been used by Fulmars in 2007. The female, who was perched on the nest rim, had clearly been 'oiled' by Fulmars as the feathers over her head and chest were discoloured and matted together and she was constantly and very vigorously preening and trying to rid herself of the oil. After a short while a pair of Fulmars appeared and started diving repeatedly at the female who tried to continue preening. The male Raven who had been perched on a ledge a short distance above the nest hole made a number of attempts to drive the Fulmars away. However, they were extremely persistent, taking little notice of him, and eventually first one and then the other landed and settled on the ledge at the foot of the nest and kept stretching up and peering into it. As a result the female Raven had to retreat and huddled down low in the nest bowl fearing perhaps that she might be spat at again. The Ravens were still at the nest on 18 Mar. However on 2 Apr both Fulmars were sitting in the Raven nest and incubation appeared to be underway. The ousted Ravens were seen in the area, regularly, for the rest of the year but seemingly were unable to find an alternative nest site. Breeding was also suspected at another new coastal site, Site I.

Nest building began on 1 Feb at the inland Site C where the pair bred for the first time in 2006, sharing the cliff with a long-established pair of Peregrines and where last year they nested just 6 m from the Peregrine eyrie. The birds were lining the nest with wool on 4 Feb and incubation began on 12 Feb, 11 days earlier than in 2007 and 20 days earlier than in 2006; hatching occurred on 1 Mar, 14 days earlier than in 2007 and 19 days earlier than in 2006. Four young fledged successfully on 27 Apr but only three survived the post-fledging period. The Peregrines attacked the Ravens with the same frequency and intensity as last year, but while they only fledged one young in 2007 this year they fledged two. Interestingly, despite the incubation and hatching dates steadily getting earlier over the last 3 years, the fledging dates have not followed the same pattern and are all within a week of each other, i.e. 27 Apr this year, 4 May in 2007 and 5 May in 2006.

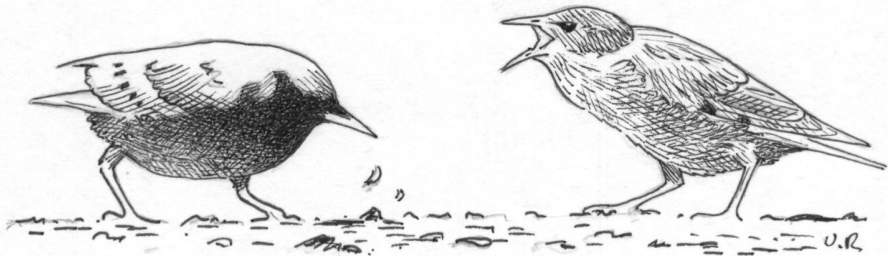
At a new inland site, Site J, a pair successfully fledged two young on a cliff where Peregrines have been breeding for many years. Pairs of birds were again observed regularly throughout the breeding season in a number of inland wooded areas including Site G where breeding was suspected in 2007 but again this year breeding was not proven.

The evidence this year suggests that there are at least eight active breeding pairs and possibly 13 or more. [PJE]

Starling*Sturnus vulgaris*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Numbers appear to have returned to normal after the sharp decline reported in the early and late months of 2007. On 19 Jan 37,300 were counted at Palace Pier (Brighton) and 5500 at the West Pier. Palace Pier still held 22,400 on 16 Feb. The only four-figure Downland flock in the early year was at Steep Down (Lancing) where 3100 were recorded on 5 Jan. A flock of 500 was at Pagham Hbr on 12 Mar and 400 at Findon on 20 Feb. On 13 Jan 1000 were by the R Ouse at Beddingham and at least 500 at Rodmell Brooks on 12 Feb while 800 were at Arlington on the same day. At Pevensey, 1000 were reported at Hankham Level on 13 Jan while 1000 were at Horse Eye Level on 1 Mar and 1500 were there on 5 Mar. At Nook Meadows (Rye Hbr Fm) a flock of 700 on 14 Mar increased to 2000 by 17 Mar. Away from the coast, there were 30 flocks of between 100 and 500 birds. Of 391 2-hr Atlas surveys conducted in this period, 285 held Starlings with a total of 12,184 birds, an average of 42.75 per occupied tetrad. Indications of movement were 120 flying over Weir Wood Res on 24 Feb, 25 flying north at Selsey Bill on 2 Mar and 500 flying south over Pett Level on 17 Mar.



Breeding was confirmed in 210 tetrads and was probable in another 57. During the BBS, a total of 1753 birds was recorded in 99 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed. The highest BBS count was 156 at Peacehaven on 18 May. Breeding was confirmed at 219 sites in the county. Although Starlings evicted House Sparrows from their nest site at Lancing on 6 Feb, the first mention of a nest with eggs was on 12 Apr at Pett. Adults were also seen carrying food for young at Robertsbridge on 22 Apr and the earliest juveniles noted out of the nest were three at Pulborough Brooks on 9 May, although a flock of 50 at Pagham Hbr on 28 Apr may well have contained juveniles. Thereafter there were flocks of 72 at Patcham on 23 May, and in June there were 220 at Rye Hbr LNR on the 7th and 100 at Blackcap (Plumpton) on the 17th.

Throughout the summer flocks of 100 or over were reported from 20 sites with the most notable gatherings being 350 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 3 Aug, 500 at Thorney Island on 12 Aug, 190 feeding with free range pigs at Fittleworth on 26 Aug and 400 at Rye Hbr LNR on 26 Feb and 31 Aug. The first mention of movement to roost was of 500 and “probably more” at Bewl Water on 7 Aug and 600 at Thorney Deeps on 28 Sep.

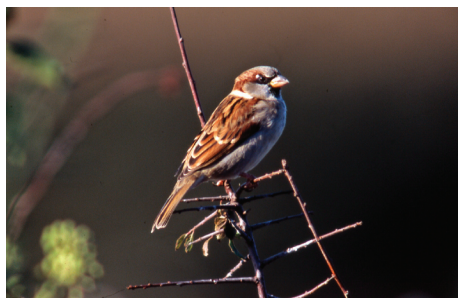
In the second winter period, large roosting flocks included 2000 at Carter's Pit on 25 Oct and 1600 there on 16 Nov, 3300 flying west at dawn at Hove on 8 Dec and 140 flying north to roost at Byworth (Petworth). At Brighton Palace Pier, 23,000 were counted on 6 Dec and 17,500 on 20 Dec when 7000 were also present on the West Pier. No counts were received from Eastbourne. Other significant second winter counts were 2900 at Shoreham Airport on 7 Oct with "more arriving", 2500 at Beachy Head on 8 Nov, 1520 at Funtington on 16 Dec, 1000 feeding on undersown stubble and cattle pasture at Steep Down (Lancing) on 1 Dec, two flocks of 1000 each at Tegdown Hill (Brighton) on 11 Dec, over 1500 at Funtington on 16 Dec and several thousand perched on trees and power cables at Rodmell Brooks on 24 Dec. Of 280 2-hr TTVs conducted, 205 contained Starlings with a total of 8485 representing an average of 41.4 per occupied tetrad. [ACG]

House Sparrow

Passer domesticus

Very common but possibly declining resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

There were c. 2700 reports of House Sparrows from across the entire county but due to a mix of 1-km squares and tetrads (arising mainly from the Atlas surveys) it is not possible to estimate the number of 1-km squares occupied.



*House Sparrow, Bishopstone,
October 2008 (Peter Wilson)*

During the first winter period, the largest flocks were of 61 at Rye Village on 3 Jan with 80 there on the 24th. At Nyetimber, 56 were recorded feeding on a wagon load of maize and squash trimmings on 16 Jan. The tetrads with the highest numbers in January and February during the winter part of the BTO/SOS Atlas survey were at Littlehampton with 83 on 27 Jan and Ashington with 91.

The first indication of nest building was at Up Marden on 1 Feb while nesting House Sparrows at Lancing were evicted by Starlings on 6 Feb. Breeding was confirmed in 183 tetrads and probable in 129 more. Counts of breeding pairs in defined areas include five in 95 ha at Sefter Fm (Rose Green), six at Peppering Fm and six at Home Fm (both at Burpham), 16 at Brighton Wild Park and at least 20 at Rye Village.

During the BBS, a total of 1294 birds was recorded in 98 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed. The highest counts were 48 at Burwash on 5 May, 51 at Portslade-on-Sea on 17 May and 55 at Lancing on 15 Jun.

During the summer and autumn, ten sites held 30 or more with the largest flocks of 68 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 13 Jul and 150 on 15 Aug, while at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) 80 were noted on 20 Jul and 82 on 14 Sep.

In the second winter period the largest number recorded was 115 on 16 Dec in a tetrad at Mile Oak (Portslade). [ACG]

Tree Sparrow*Passer montanus*

Scarce and declining localised resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

A total of 55 records was received during the year from 28 tetrads.

Throughout the first winter period, Pett Level held a small flock with a maximum of 30 seen on 20 Feb. Ten still remained on 1 Apr and the last one departed on the 24th. This represents a sadly continuing decline in this flock from its peak of 260 in March 2005. Also in the far east of the county six were at Scotney Court Fm on 22 Jan and 18 on 15 Apr, while between mid-February and 1 Mar one or two birds were seen at Rye Hbr and on the Kent border at Iden Five Watering Sewer (near Rye). Elsewhere in the county, up to five were seen at four sites in the Henfield area between 28 Feb and 5 Mar, one was at Paghham Hbr on 29 Jan and 12 were recorded in an Atlas survey at Haslemere on 25 Feb. Small numbers have been reported in some previous years from this part of the Sussex/Hampshire border.

Breeding was confirmed in five tetrads and was probable in two more. In the Brede Valley, where nest boxes are provided, only three (possibly) four nests were successful. A further six nests were lost during the season, probably as a result of heavy machinery carrying out landscaping work nearby. On Pevensey Marsh one was seen with food for young at Manxey Levels on 18 May and nine were seen on 2 May at Middle Bridge. At Scotney Court Fm, young were noted on 20 Jun and one was seen carrying food on Romney Marsh at Barn Fm (East Guldeford). Away from the usual sites, two were reported from Bepton on 17 Jun and one from Eastbourne on 18 May.

During the summer eight were found feeding on the sand dunes at Pilsey Island on 27 Aug and two were on Winchelsea Beach on 8 Sep. At Pett Level, nine were found on 19 Sep but the maximum number seen there to the end of the year was seven on 24 Dec. On the Eastern Rother two were at Four Oaks (Beckley) on 9 Nov, five at Offens Fm (East Guldeford) on 18 Nov, two on two dates in December at Wet Level (Wittersham) and the species' presence was noted at Corkwood Fm (Iden) on 5 Dec. Small numbers of Tree Sparrows were reported from six other sites in the second winter period: one at Thorney Island on 26 Dec, three at Patcham on 27 Dec, one at Henfield on 24 Oct, four at Manxey Levels (Pevensey) on 14 Dec, one at Hastings on 30 Oct and three at Castle Water (Rye Hbr LNR) on 16 Nov.

Overall, a poor year for winter flocks and breeding but it is encouraging that a few new sites for this species may have been located. [ACG]

Chaffinch*Fringilla coelebs*

Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Although the total of 4389 records from c.941 sites in c.722 tetrads, scattered across the whole county, reflects this species' abundance only about half of the counts were of more than five birds. As usual, spring and autumn passages were barely reported.

In the first winter period there were 15 counts of 100 or more, particularly during Atlas surveys. The largest concentrations were 317 at Milland Place on 16 Feb, and 200 at Houghton (Amberley) on 22 Jan and West Dean Woods on the 27th. Other such counts showed a strong western bias: 151 at No-Mans Land (Findon) on 2 Jan, 150 at Monkton (nr Chilgrove) on 4 Jan and Nursted

(Harting) on 1 Mar, 145 at East Marden on 27 Jan, 140 at Upwaltham Hill on 20 Jan, 130 at West End (Henfield) on 28 Feb, 126 at Binderton (West Dean) on 17 Feb, 120 at Lodge Hill Fm (West Dean) on 6 Feb, and 111 at Amberley on 11 Feb.

During the BBS, a total of 1485 birds was recorded in 132 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed with highest counts of 31 at both Kingsfold on 12 Apr and Balcombe on the 17th. Breeding was confirmed in 109 tetrads and was probable in 197 more. Most female Chaffinches, which are single-brooded, lay their first clutches between mid-April and late May. The first nest-building was seen at Southleigh Forest (Emsworth) on 3 Apr, producing a burst of newly fledged young in early June. The largest breeding season counts were of 60 at Wivelsden Fm (Wivelsfield) on 28 Apr, and of 53 at East Marden on 28 Apr and at Coates Broad Halfpenny on 30 Jun. On the Norfolk Estate around Arundel, there were about 42 adults at Peppering Fm, 35 at Rackham Fm, 32 at North Stoke Fm and 31 at Home Fm. There were 23 territories in 95 ha at Sefter Fm (Rose Green), 18 at Rye Hbr and nine at Chesworth Fm (Horsham). There was a single territory at Hotham Park (Bognor) in 7 ha. The breeding season can be dangerous: a male was being plucked by a male Sparrowhawk at Ladies Mile LNR (Brighton) on 11 Apr, while a male and female mobbed a Tawny Owl at the University of Sussex on 21 Apr.

Few large counts were made during the post-breeding period. The only ones of over 20 birds were 34 at Wepham Down on 4 Jul, 27 at Yapton on the 26th, 26 at Ashplats Wood (East Grinstead) on the 12th and 25 at Warnham LNR on the 28th. There was little sign of the expected influx (*Birds of Sussex*) in late September and October, although there were 4E at Worthing Beach on 17 Sep, and a count of 11 on 10 Oct at Brighton Wild Park were mostly migrants going NE.

In the second winter period, the beech-mast crop was poor for a second successive year. The largest counts were of 120 at Burton Mill Pond on 11 Dec and at Chantry Hill (Storrington) on the 27th, and 100 at The Lydds (Henfield) on 20 Nov and Blackcap (Plumpton) on 28 Dec.

On 16 Nov at Woodmancote (nr Henfield) three Chaffinches had diseased feet. Swellings on the legs and feet of many bird species can be caused by bacterial infection of wounds or by mites of the genus *Knemidocoptes* causing a condition known as 'scaly leg'. A third potential cause of warty growths is the *Fringilla* papillomavirus which affects Chaffinches (and Bramblings), and although infected individuals often appear healthy, some become lame or lose toes. [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		Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	274	575	240	43		35	79	26
No. of sites	51	40	29	14		16	19	16
No. of records	64	49	36	19		21	22	17

In the first winter period, Bramblings were recorded from c.95 sites spread across the entire county, but with the usual concentration in West Sussex, especially the West Dean/Chilgrove area. About half the records were of singletons. The largest counts were of 200 at Milland Place on 16 Feb and 150 on maize stubble at Southwater on 24 Feb with 150 there on 8 Mar and 100 in three loose flocks on the 24th. No other sites held more than 30 birds. The majority of Bramblings were associating with Chaffinches (825 Bramblings in 19 counts at 15 sites).

When male Bramblings arrive in the autumn most of their black breeding plumage is obscured by greyish-buff fringes, which are gradually lost by abrasion. The rate of abrasion varies tremendously between males: one at Wakehurst Place on 6 Feb already had a very black head, but one at Chantry Hill (Storrington) on 15 Apr was still in non-breeding plumage.

As usual there was little evidence of passage in the spring, although five flew east in 1 hr at Hastings CP on 18 Mar. The last birds were two at Summersdale (Chichester) on 30 Apr, six days later than the 10-year average departure date.

The first returning birds were three singletons flying over Pett Level on 1 Oct, the same as the 10-year average arrival date. Diurnal passage seemed to continue until 6 Nov when five were seen by Pagham Lagoon. When observers noted the direction of flight it was, as expected, usually westwards (11 birds in seven counts at six sites during 12-31 Oct were headed west), but a singleton flew east over Whitbread Hollow on 18 Oct.

In the second winter period, the beech-mast crop was poor for a second successive year. The first bird seen at a feeder in the second winter period was at Warnham LNR on 24 Nov. Bramblings were seen at just 35 sites, 15 of which had also hosted birds in the first winter period. Over half of the counts were of singletons. The largest counts were ten flying over Rye Hbr LNR on 31 Oct and concentrations of 30 and 15 at West Dean Woods on 13 and 16 Nov. No records mentioned association with Chaffinches. [DH]

Serin

Serinus serinus

Very scarce passage migrant; has bred.

2006: A male was seen at Pebsham Tip on 26 Apr (ASG).

2008: Three adults were seen in early May, a female photographed in a Bognor garden on the 3rd (TEG-P), a male over Selsey Bill on the 4th (OM *et al.*) and a singing male at Ladies Mile LNR (Brighton) on the 8th (DGCH). The Selsey bird came in from the sea, circled over the assembled seawatchers a couple of times and then disappeared off to the north. Fifty-two have been recorded in the county since the beginning of 2000, in February (2), March (6), April (15), May (19), June (5), September, October (3) and November. Selsey Bill accounts for almost exactly half of them. [RJF]

Greenfinch

Carduelis chloris

Very common resident, scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

The 3029 records from c.791 sites in c.636 tetrads were scattered across the whole county, but thinly on the eastern Downs. Since Greenfinches range widely for food, and can move several kilometres between nesting attempts in the same year, it can be difficult to estimate population size from the distribution of records. For such a common and gregarious species, it is striking that during the year as a whole over half of the counts were of fewer than five birds.

In the first winter period, the largest concentrations were of 100 at Wepham Down on 12 Jan and 52 at Boxgrove (nr Chichester) on 6 Mar. A count of 16 at Vinehall (nr Mountfield) on 20 Feb was a high count for the site.

During the BBS, a total of 625 birds was recorded from 102 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed,

with a highest count of 25 at West Worthing on 27 Apr. Breeding was confirmed in 98 tetrads and was probable in 151 more. Many females in Sussex make several nesting attempts, laying between early April and early July. Nest building was first recorded at Preston Park (Brighton) on 27 Mar. The first recently fledged young were two at Antyre Fm (Burgess Hill) on the very early date of 22 Apr; the last seen being fed were three at Wivelsfield Green on 20 Aug. The largest breeding season counts were 45 at Fire Hills (Fairlight) on 8 May and 40 in east Worthing on 4 May. It is hard to apply CBC methods to this loosely colonial, dispersive species. On the Norfolk Estate around Arundel, there were about eight adults at Peppering Fm, four at North Stoke Fm, and three at both Rackham Fm and Home Fm. There were 11 territories in 95 ha at Sefter Fm (Rose Green) and 10 at Rye Hbr, while they were widespread on Horsham District Reserves. Two males sang at Hotham Park (Bognor) in 7 ha.

Surprisingly few substantial post-breeding flocks were reported, with over two-thirds of July-September counts being of fewer than five birds. There was little sign of the expected autumn passage (*Birds of Sussex*). The largest group was 200 at Slipe Field (Pagham) on 28 Aug; 100 were still there on 3 and 8 Sep. A total of 44 was counted in 110 minutes at Tegdown Hill (Brighton) on 9 Aug.

During the second winter period, the largest counts were a flock of 150 feeding on the beach at Shoreham Hbr on 5 Nov and 110 at Pagham Hbr on 26 Nov. Numbers peaked at 100 at both Newhaven Tide Mills (on 15 Dec) and Shoreham Fort (30 Dec). A big decline was noted in the number of Greenfinches wintering in an Angmering garden this year. The average maximum per week for Jan, Feb, Nov and Dec was 4.5 birds compared with 11.5 for the same weeks in 2007 (23.5 in 2006 and 15 in 2005).

Some records suggested possible causes of mortality. Two males interrupted their bat-like song flights to mob a male Kestrel flying over a cottage at Falmer on 20 Apr. A Greenfinch was seized from a feeder by a Sparrowhawk at Warnham LNR on 31 Jul. At Hailsham on 17 Sep a male was suffering from trichomoniasis; this is a contagious and potentially lethal protozoan disease, typically most common in Collared Doves (*SxBR* 58:229), but also frequent among finches and sparrows. [DH]

Goldfinch

Carduelis carduelis

Common summer visitor and passage migrant and fairly common winter visitor.

The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	1123	1035	342	1109	927	1371	751	745	1807	3255	1652	486

The species was recorded in 449 tetrads, 43 % of the county total of 1039, confirming its fairly widespread status. The number of birds recorded in the autumn also confirms its status as a fairly common passage migrant.

In the first quarter there were 14 counts of 30 or more birds at eight sites with a maximum of 74 at Warnham on 27 Jan (not unprecedented: there have been nine records of counts of over 60 during the past 20 years) and 46 at Woods Place (Whatlington) on 10 Jan.

Breeding was confirmed at 74 sites (an aggregate of tetrads, 1-km and 100-m sites) and probable at 160 sites while birds were seen in suitable habitat at a further 177 sites. These figures are significantly higher than in previous years, probably due to the extra effort being made to

record breeding evidence, prompted by the requirements of the BTO/SOS Atlas surveys. During the BBS, a total of 356 birds was recorded in 80 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, with the highest count of no fewer than 64 at Heyshott during an early survey, compared with the next highest counts of twelve at Bosham, Rustington and West Worthing.

The first post-breeding season flock of significance was one of 100 at Weir Wood Res on 17 Aug. Monthly maxima included 80 at Pett Level on the 24th and 60 at both Slipe Field (Pagham Hbr) the same day and at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on the 25th. There were seven other records of counts of 30 or more. In September, there were ten records (excluding migration counts shown below) from across the county of 50 or more including a monthly maximum of 250 at Pett Level on the 25th, 120 at Weir Wood Res on the 22nd and 150 at Thorney Island on the 28th. There were even more records (22) in October of counts of 50 or more, including 200 at Weir Wood Res on the 2nd, 250 feeding on setaside on the 7th, 150 at Rye Hbr LNR on the 3rd, 160 on the fields west of Selsey on the 14th, a good flock of 120 at Beachy Head on the 8th and 120 at Whitehawk (Brighton) next day. There were also counts of 100 at Shooter's Bottom (Beachy Head) on the 9th and 14th and at Rodmell Brooks also on the 14th. The only significant non-migratory count in November was of 100 at Pagham Hbr on the 11th.

Eastwards migration in the autumn was first noted at seawatching sites on 21 Sep and continued spasmodically until 5 Nov, as shown below:

Date	September					October						November			
	21	25	27	28	29	8	9	12	14	16	24	1	3	4	5
Selsey Bill	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	80	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pagham Hbr area	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	80	100*
Climping Atherington	-	-	-	-	-	150	-	125		380	75	-	-	-	-
Worthing Beach	-	20	-	-	65	-	46	30	-	-	-	45	127	-	-
Newhaven Tide Mills	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	167	72	-
Hastings CP	20		150	100	-	-	-	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Hbr area	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	200*	100*	-

*Records of birds 'flying over' for which unfortunately no indication of direction was stated but assumed to be eastwards. In addition, 53W were noted at Selsey Bill on 5 Nov.

By December, counts were very much reduced with only six records of 20 or more with a maximum of 30 at Warnham on the 3rd and Summersdale (Chichester) on the 31st. [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 1-km squares in which these sightings were made.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	670	984	365	145	74	40	10	41	8561	1282	479	716
No. of sites	56	78	52	34	19	17	3	2	50	43	25	29

Numbers in the first four months of the year were very significantly higher than those recorded in the same period in the three previous years, continuing the high numbers recorded

in second winter period of 2007. During this first winter period of 2008 there were many reports of moderately large flocks of birds, and there was one much larger count of 200 birds at Bewl Water on 6 Feb.

Numbers during the summer months were comparable with those recorded in recent years, and breeding was confirmed at four sites; recently-fledged juvenile birds were observed at Brantridge Forest on 14 Jun, at Worth Forest on 15 Jun, and at Warnham on 28 Jun while a female was seen carrying food at Leechpool Woods (Horsham) on 13 Jul. Breeding was probable at Woolbeding Common, Black Down (Fernhurst), St Leonard's Forest, Owlbeech Woods (Horsham), Highbeeches Forest, Tilgate Forest, Broadwater Forest and Beauport Park (Hastings) where pairs or territorial single birds were seen in suitable breeding habitat.

During the second winter period, numbers were significantly higher than in the same period in the previous two years, largely due to a large influx of passage birds. The first autumn passage migrants were single birds at Pett Level on 17 Jul and 3 Aug, but coastal passage was most significant during the second half of September. There were several large counts of birds flying east past Hastings CP, notably 400 on 14 Sep, 520 on 15 Sep, 450 on 20 Sep, 450 on 21 Sep, 580 on 27 Sep and 250 on 28 Sep. Other significant counts during September, all of birds flying east, were made on various dates at Worthing Beach, Peacehaven, Newhaven and Rye Hbr LNR. Coastal passage continued during October, the most significant count being of 300 birds flying west at Pett Level on 1 Oct. Inland, there were many reports of small numbers of birds at various locations across the county, including in the Ashdown Forest area. One of the more unusual reports was of 300 birds at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on 4 Dec. [HC]

Linnet

Carduelis cannabina

Common but decreasing resident and partial migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	2493	1644	579	1892	1182	1384	769	802	2342	1900	475	1032

Numbers in January were unusually high and indicate a significant influx during the month following the count of only 461 for December 2007.

During the first quarter, the highest day counts were all in the west of the county. A group of 250 was noted at Chilgrove on 4 Jan, up to 250 were recorded at Paghham Hbr (at either the North Wall mudflats or Slipe Field) on the 5th (with 100 at the former site next day and 110 at the latter on the 29th), and there was a flock of 120 on Thorney Island on the 7th. Further east and later, two close flocks totalling 120 at The Burgh (Burpham) were present on the 22nd and counts of 100 were recorded on the 25th at both Stansted Forest and West Marden. The highest count in the east was of 200 at Snap Hill (Friston) on the 29th. The highest counts in February came again from the west where 220 were noted at the Slipe Field on 23 and 26 Feb. There was also a single flock of 160 at Steyning Round Hill on the 25th and 130 at Henfield on the 28th with 150 there on 1 Mar. At Tinkers Marsh (Bewl) in the east at least 100 were recorded on both 1 Feb and 8 Mar.

Breeding was confirmed in no fewer than 38 tetrads (of which six were in Ashdown Forest) by at least 56 pairs (but there were, unfortunately, no data from at least one significant eastern reserve). Breeding was probable in a further 26 tetrads by at least 182 pairs and birds were seen

in suitable habitat in an additional 14 tetrads. During the BBS, a total of 242 birds was recorded in 45 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 22.

The only sizeable post-breeding counts were of 170 in the Brede Valley on 2 Jul, 130 at Tegdown Hill on 9 Aug and 150 in the Slipe Field on the 30th.

As in previous years, eastwards autumn migration was barely noticeable. During September, at Selsey Bill 40E were counted in 7½ hr on the 23rd while at Hastings CP 50E were noted on the 28th. The only record for October was of 22W at Selsey Bill on the 27th, presumably relocating rather than migrating. In November, the only records were from Selsey Bill of 9N (relocating?) on the 1st and 27E at Worthing Beach the same day.

During the autumn, of the 20 counts of 100 birds or more, 17 came, again, from the west of the county and mostly from coastal sites. In September, 350 were counted at the Slipe Field on the 3rd, a monthly maximum for the Pagham Hbr area of 250 at Church Norton on the 17th, 250 at Wepham Down on the 26th and 130 at Henfield on the 14th. In the east the highest count for the month was 150 at Rye Hbr LNR on the 13th. The situation was much the same in October but with a couple of inland sites featuring. The autumn's highest count of 500 occurred at Steyning Round Hill on 11 Oct. There were counts of 100 in the Lower Adur Valley on the 1st, Church Norton on the 9th and Warnham on the 22nd. In the east, there were counts of 100 at Bewl Water on the 3rd and at Rodmell Brooks on the 14th. The only significant count in November was 150 at Henfield on the 11th. The four 100+ counts in December all came from the west with a monthly maximum of 250 at the Slipe Field on the 16th, 120 at Burton Mill Pond on the 11th and 100 at Colworth Fm (Chilgrove) on the 7th. [JAH]

Lesser Redpoll

Carduelis cabaret

Scarce breeder and fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

The following table gives approximate numbers of individuals recorded throughout the year and the number of 1-km squares in which these sightings were made.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	118	223	87	166	100	86	35	8	183	1700	161	413
No. of sites	32	34	12	20	23	17	9	3	18	49	24	27

Numbers in the first four months of the year were similar to those recorded in the same period in the previous year. The large wintering groups reported in the Ashdown Forest area in 2005 and at Burton Mill Pond in 2006 were absent in both 2007 and 2008. Some smaller flocks were recorded in the Ashdown Forest area, the largest being of 35 birds at Camp Hill on 6 Feb, 35 birds at Wren's Warren on 8 Feb, 45 birds at the Old Airstrip on 10 Apr and 60 birds at Ashdown Isle of Thorns on 10 Apr. Away from the Ashdown Forest area, there were many records from other sites, but these were all of much smaller numbers of birds, and often of just single birds.

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 three sites, although there were many other sightings of pairs or displaying males. Away from the Ashdown Forest area, other summer records were of single birds or pairs at Lords Piece (Coates), Tilgate Forest, Brantridge Forest, Cowdray Forest (Worth), High Cross Fm (Uckfield), Broadwater Forest and Brede High Woods.

Numbers in the second winter period were higher than those recorded in the previous year, with relatively large numbers of coastal passage migrants being reported. The first report of coastal passage was of 20 birds trapped and ringed at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on 14 Sep. Notable passage counts during October were of 250 birds at Pett Level on the 8th and 100 birds at Whitbread Hollow on the 18th. Inland, the largest count reported during the second winter period was of 120 birds at Millbrook (Ashdown Forest) on 11 Oct, and there were numerous reports of smaller groups, again mostly from the Ashdown Forest area. Elsewhere, the most notable records were of 70 birds at Poundgate (nr Crowborough) while 60 birds were reported at Burton Mill Pond on 11 Dec, St Leonard's Forest on 17 Dec and Owlbeech Woods (Horsham) on 22 Dec.

This species has been upgraded from an Amber-listed to a Red-listed species of high conservation concern this year, and it is therefore important that all sightings are reported. [HC]

Common Redpoll

Carduelis flammea

Rare winter visitor.

One was trapped at Owlbeech Woods (Horsham) on 22 Dec (WA, SB). It is the first county record since 2006 and only the ninth since the start of 2000. Decade totals for the 1960s to 1990s are 4, 1, 0 and 4, respectively. The increase in the numbers recorded, with as many since 2000 as during the previous four decades, is more likely to be due to greater observer familiarity following it being recognised as a full species than a significant change in wintering habits. Despite this increase it remains very scarce, easily overlooked and tricky to identify in the field. The latter is due to it often being difficult to obtain close views of redpolls and them not being well covered in current literature. All records have been between mid-October and mid-April. [RJF]

Common Crossbill

Loxia curvirostra

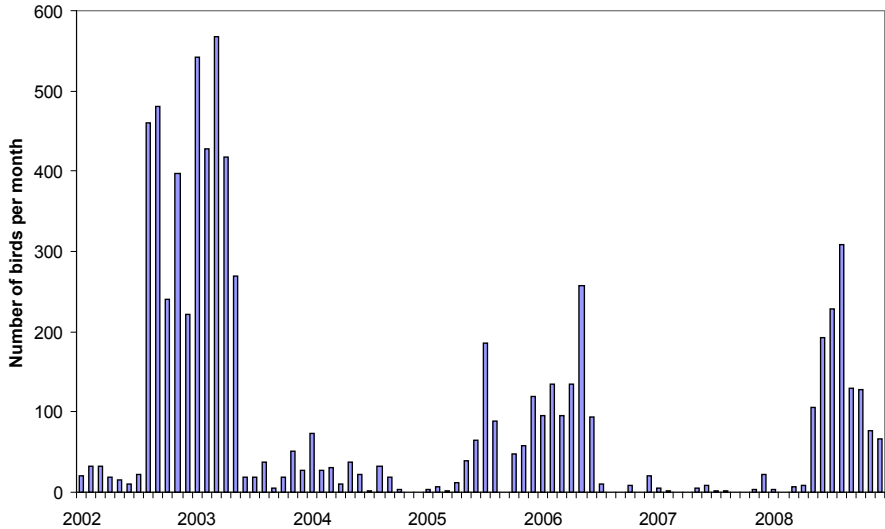
Scarce visitor occurring in large numbers in irruption years. Breeds occasionally.

Numbers reported during the first four months of the year were extremely low, continuing the very low numbers reported through 2007. This is shown in the chart below, which puts these numbers into the context of records for the previous five years, including the irruption winter of late 2002 and early 2003.

Breeding was not confirmed at any site, although numbers increased from April onwards (after breeding is completed in this species), and birds were seen during the summer months in suitable breeding habitat at many sites in the Ashdown Forest area and on the West Sussex Commons. Some of the more notable sightings were of 20 birds at Black Down (Fernhurst) on 16 May, 18 birds at Weir Wood Res on 23 May, 22 birds at Lavington Plantation on 25 May and 15 birds at Owlbeech Woods (Horsham) on 13 Jun.

There was some evidence of coastal passage of this early-breeding species during the late summer, beginning with two birds over Hastings CP on 18 May. Other coastal sightings included 16 birds over Pett Level on 8 Jun and 12 birds at Selsey Bill on 19 Jun. Numbers reported during the second half of the year were significantly higher than in the same period in 2007 and 2006, although similar to those reported in the same period in 2005, and there were records from many sites across the county. The more notable sightings were of 30 birds at Lavington Common on

21 Jul, 20 birds at Wakehurst Place on 21 Aug, 20 birds at Old Lodge NR on 20 Oct, 20 birds at Wiggonholt Common on 21 Oct, and 20 birds at Abbots Wood (Hailsham) on 14 Nov. [HC]



Trumpeter Finch

Bucanetes githagineus

Very rare vagrant.

An adult male frequented the cliff edge at Portobello (Telscombe) during 4-6 Jun (SM *et al.*). It has been accepted by the BBRC and is the second county record. It attracted many admirers and was particularly welcome amongst those who had not seen the previous individual which was present at Church Norton from 19-23 May 1984. It is the 14th record for Britain and followed others on North Rona and in Norfolk in late May/early June. [RJF]



*Trumpeter Finch, Portobello,
June 2008 (Les Bird)*

Common Rosefinch

Carpodacus erythrinus

Rare vagrant.

Two were recorded in early June, a singing first-summer male seen briefly at Pagham North Wall on the 4th (PC, OM) and another somewhat frustratingly only heard at Pett Level on the 8th

(IH). These are the first records since 2005 when there was a similar occurrence at Goring Gap on 11 June. Only three have been seen since the beginning of 2000, a far cry from the early 1990s when records were averaging almost three a year. Twenty-nine have been recorded in total, in May (5), June (12), July, August, September (5) and October (5). Decade totals from the 1970s to the 1990s have been 2, 6 and 17, with the only previous record in 1869 being the first for Britain. [RJF]

Bullfinch

Pyrrhula pyrrhula

Fairly common resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

This species is widespread across the county, but during the BBS it was only recorded in 33 (24%) of the 136 1-km squares surveyed. There were reports of confirmed breeding at 17 sites, mostly involving the observation of juveniles with adults. There were many reports of probable breeding involving the observation of pairs.

This species has been downgraded from a Red-listed to an Amber-listed species this year. [HC]

Hawfinch

Coccothraustes coccothraustes

Scarce breeding resident and very scarce passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

There were reports of this species throughout the year from the West Dean Woods area. This is a regular site for this species and the most notable sightings were of pre-roost gatherings at Monkton Fm (Chilgrove); nine birds were counted there on 11 Jan, 10 birds on 25 Nov and four birds on 7 Dec. The regularity of sightings in West Dean Woods would suggest breeding, but there was no evidence of breeding reported this year at all.

There were also several reports of this species throughout the year from the Burgess Hill area. Three birds were seen at Ditchling Common on 12 Jan, two birds were at Wivelsden Fm (Wivelsfield) on 30 Jun, and then a single bird was reported regularly at West Park NR (Burgess Hill) between 31 Oct and 31 Dec.

There were isolated records from several other sites across the county, most notably of four birds at Sedlescombe (East Sussex) on 1 Apr, but this species is almost certainly under-recorded. The species has been upgraded from an Amber-listed to a Red-listed species of high conservation concern, and it is therefore important that all sightings are reported. [HC]

Lapland Bunting

Calcarius lapponicus

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

One was present at Selsey during 29 Jan-20 Feb; the latest departure date by three days (JA, AB, JD *et al.*). It favoured the edges of the promenade near the lifeboat station but as a consequence was very prone to disturbance from dogs and walkers. It is the first county record since 2005 and

only the sixth since the beginning of 2000, a dramatic decline from the 38 recorded in the 1990s. During this period arrivals have been in September (3, from the 18th), October (12), November (5), December (10), January (9) and February (5). [RJF]



Lapland Bunting, Selsey Bill, February 2008 (Roger Charlwood)

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 at any coastal sites; in recent years small groups of birds have remained for several weeks during January and February at traditional sites such as East Head (Wittering), Pett Level, Rye Hbr LNR and Camber Sands SSSI. However, there were several reports of a single bird inland at Firle Beacon between 12 and 16 Feb; in recent years there have been other reports of this species at the same site and at other inland sites on the Downs.

The first record during the second winter period was of a single bird in fields west of Selsey on 19 Oct and there were several more records of possibly the same bird at this site and nearby Selsey Bill and Pagham Spit between 22 and 29 Oct. A different bird was at West Wittering on 29 Oct, and there were further reports of up to three birds at West Wittering and East Head until 7 Nov. A single bird was at Goring Beach between 15 and 18 Nov, and the only other coastal record during the rest of the year (and the only record at all from the east of the county) was of one bird flying over Rye Hbr LNR on 30 Nov. [HC]

Yellowhammer*Emberiza citrinella*

Fairly common resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

In the first winter period the largest flocks were of 60 at Stump Bottom (Steyning) on 8 Jan. This was reported by the observer to be 'the highest count here for years' and possibly the same flock was less than 2 km south at Lychpole Hill (Cissbury) the same day. Otherwise there were double-figure flocks at 15 sites in January and 20 in February; a great improvement on 2007 when the corresponding figures were nine and two. Aside from 20 at Hastings CP, none of these flocks was near the coast and all those of 25 and more were on the Downs in the western half of the county. Repeated counts at Falmer Hill recorded a flock of 45 on 7 Jan and double-figure flocks remaining on many dates until 17 were counted on 14 Mar. Only single birds were reported from the Isfield/Newick area which held the largest flocks in early 2007. Of 391 2-hr Atlas surveys conducted 78 (20%) held Yellowhammers with a total of 491 birds, representing an average of 6.3 per occupied tetrad.

The first song was noted on 18 Feb at Vinehall (Mountfield). Breeding was confirmed in 24 tetrads and it was probable in a further 112. In fields north of Pagham Hbr, ten pairs were counted. Estimated breeding pairs on the Norfolk Estate on the eastern side of the R Arun were 20 at Peppering Fm and 15 at Home Fm (both at Burpham) with 10 pairs at North Stoke Fm. An estimated seven pairs bred at Amberley Wild Brooks while eight pairs bred at Brighton Wild Park and two in 25 acres of pasture and woodland at Scobells Fm (Barcombe). The Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey of the western heaths found at total of 53 pairs in 24 1-km squares out of a total of 108 surveyed, the highest number being five on West Heath Common (West Harting). During the BBS, a total of 139 birds was recorded in 52 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed, with highest counts being 11 at Bosham on 4 Jun and 10 at Wick Fm (Westmeston) on 10 May. In the breeding season Atlas surveys, nine tetrads on the Downs in the west of the county held over 20 Yellowhammers with Blackcap (Plumpton) holding 30 birds. Yellowhammers were widely reported mainly in small numbers from many sites in Ashdown Forest, the highest number being in the south-east of the Forest where a tetrad at Camp Hill held nine or ten on three dates and eight were found on 30 May and 11 Jul in 24.5 hectares at King's Standing.

In the autumn, flocks began to build up with 20 at The Burgh (Burpham) on 12 Oct, 40 at Wick Fm (Westmeston) on 24 Nov, 42 at Colworth Fm (Chilgrove) on 15 Dec and 60 at Blackcap (Plumpton) on 28 Dec. During the late winter period only 11 Yellowhammers were reported from six sites east of the A22. Of the 280 2-hr Atlas surveys conducted, just over one third (77) held Yellowhammers with a total of 361, representing an average of 4.7 per occupied tetrad.

This species appears to remain much less common in the east of the county. [ACG]

Reed Bunting*Emberiza schoeniclus*

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

During the first winter period, there were small flocks at East Head (Wittering) and Pagham Hbr, the latter reaching 30 on 29 Jan. The Steyning Ringing Group's highest daily total of Reed Buntings handled at Strivens Reedbed (Steyning) was 29 on 23 Feb while at West End (Henfield) 50, mainly males, were present on 28 Feb. Double-figure flocks were noted at ten sites in Ashdown

Forest, the largest being 40 on 24 Jan at the reservoir. The highest number recorded at Lewes Brooks was 21 on 17 Feb and in the lower Cuckmere Valley there was a maximum count during this period of 25, also in mid-February. The largest flock of the early year, however, was 85 on setaside at Pett Level on 29 Jan but this had declined in size to only 12 by 13 Mar. At Rye Hbr LNR the largest flock was 29 on 9 Feb. From these numbers it would appear that as the winter flocks dispersed many smaller flocks were on the move in the county during mid-February.

The first song reported was on 17 Feb at Hampden Park (Eastbourne). Breeding was confirmed in 19 tetrads and was probable in a further 58. During the BBS, a total of 33 birds was counted in 12 of the 136 1-km squares surveyed. A total of 19 pairs was recorded around Pagham Hbr, ten of which were on the northern side of the harbour. The BBS recorded a maximum of eight at Pett Level and seven at Gate Court (Northiam). During the breeding season, Atlas surveys recorded a maximum of 36 Reed Buntings in a tetrad at Amberley Wild Brooks on 7 Apr and 19 in a tetrad in the northern part of Rye Hbr LNR on 7 Jun. Thirteen were found in tetrads at Southease on 28 Apr and at Doleham Valley (Brede) on 2 Jun. The annual Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey on the western heaths recorded that only one of the 108 1-km squares surveyed held breeding pairs and this was at Iping Common where four pairs were recorded.

The highest number reported in the summer was 14 at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) on 26 Jul.

In the autumn, the ten seen flying east at Hastings CP on 21 Sep coincided with the start of the build up of the Pett Level flock which reached 20 on 27 Sep before rising eventually to reach 200 feeding on setaside on 17 Dec. Small numbers of migrants flew over Warnham LNR on several dates in October; two flew west at Selsey Bill on 8 Oct and one west at Birling Gap on 12 Oct. Of the 40 seen at Halsey's Fm (Sidlesham) on 20 Oct, 20 were observed flying west that day with 35 moving in the same direction on the following day. The northern side of Pagham Hbr remained the main focus for the species in the west with 30 at Halsey's Fm on 5 Nov and double-figure flocks in the area on several dates in November and December. Although Chichester Hbr has held large flocks in the past, this year there were only seven records during those months with the largest flock amounting to only four birds. Elsewhere near the coast, 25 were at Ferring Rife on 24 Dec. At inland sites, Ashdown Forest held good numbers of Reed Buntings in the second winter period with 25 at the reservoir on 20 Nov, 20 at Wren's Warren on 7 Dec (with 50 there three days later) and 50 at the Old Airstrip on 30 Dec. Elsewhere inland, 15 were at Iping Common on 13 Nov and 20 at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on 7 Nov. [ACG]

Corn Bunting

Emberiza calandra

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

Corn Buntings were recorded in 90 tetrads during the year. In the first winter period double-figure flocks were recorded from over 20 sites. The highest count in this period was of 70 on 18 Feb in a tetrad at Corkwood Fm (Iden) on the Eastern Rother. At Thorney and Pilsey Islands a small flock of up to 14 was present throughout the period with the last sighting of a single male singing on 6 Apr. A flock of 12 at East Lavant on 2 Mar is evidence that a small population is still present in that area. On 9 Feb 40 were recorded at North Stoke in the Arun valley, 60 at Patching and 25 at Storrington. At Lychpole Hill (Sompting) there were 30 on 2 Feb, at Steyning Round Hill there were 25 on 4 Feb rising to 40 on 25 Feb, while at Steep Down (Lancing) there were 45

on 5 Mar. On the Downs behind Shoreham, 22 were at Southwick Hill on 1 Feb, 50 at Beeding Hill on 9 Feb and 45 at Truleigh Hill on 11 Apr. An RSPB survey monitoring Corn Buntings at provided food at Falmer Hill found over 60 on 21 Jan and smaller numbers on five other dates with a final count of nine on 7 Mar. Thirty were at Piddinghoe (Newhaven) on 16 Jan. In the east, 30 were at Brede Levels (Icklesham) on 4 Jan and at Rye Hbr 20 were recorded in the village on 17 Feb rising to 34 on 28 Mar, while 18 on 24 Mar was the highest count at Harbour Fm (Rye Hbr SSSI). While the peak counts were not quite as high as in previous years there is a pleasing increase in the number of sites with sizeable flocks.

The first song was noted at The Burgh (Burpham) on 10 Jan. Breeding was confirmed in two tetrads and probable in 14 more. In the Arun valley at Burpham there were an estimated 28 pairs at Peppering Fm and 11 pairs at Home Fm while at North Stoke Fm there were 13 pairs and another two pairs at Rackham Fm. At least eight were singing on Beeding Hill on 4 Jun. At Rye Hbr SSSI three singing males were reported. The first evidence of successful breeding was of two families at Steyning Round Hill on 19 Jul. During the BBS, a total of eight birds was recorded in four of the 136 1-km squares surveyed.

The distribution of sightings in the second winter period was markedly different from previous years. The first large flock of the autumn contained 53 at Hastings CP on 9 Sep, an unusual site. On 24 Sep there were 25 at Cissbury Ring and this proved to be the highest count of the period for the Downs between the Arun and the Adur where large flocks have been found in recent years. However, during this period there were several large flocks in the Ouse valley and the Downs nearby where only one flock of 30 was noted in 2007. These included 42 at South Heighton (Newhaven) on 1 Nov, 50 on 30 Nov and over 40 'in one bush' on 24 Dec at Rodmell Brooks, 30 at Bishopstone GC (Newhaven) on 13 Dec, 90 at Southease on 26 Dec and 40 further north at Glynde the following day. The largest flock at Rye Hbr was 24 at Harbour Fm on 16 Nov. The last mention of song was on 24 Dec. [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 2008 (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 cannot be ascribed to a species or group of species are excluded. Systematic order, nomenclature and taxonomy follow Dickinson (2003). Useful references are Madge & Burn (1988) (wildfowl), Juniper & Parr (1998) (parrots), Clement *et al* (1993) (finches) and Vriends (1988) (cage birds). List compiled by Richard Fairbank unless indicated otherwise.

Clement P, Harris A & Davis J 1993. *Finches & Sparrows: an Identification Guide*. Helm.

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Holling M *et al*. 2007. Non-native birds breeding in the United Kingdom in 2003, 2004 and 2005. *British Birds* 100:638-649.

Juniper T & Parr M 1998. *Parrots: A Guide to the Parrots of the World*. Pica Press.

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Vriends MM 1988. *The MacDonald Encyclopaedia of Cage and Aviary Birds*. MacDonald Orbis.

Helmeted Guineafowl

Numida meleagris

Common resident throughout much of Africa. Kept domestically elsewhere.

Six were seen at Sharpsbridge (Newick) on 20 Jan with two at St Mary's Fm (Stanmer) on 2 Apr and two at nearby Streat Hill on the 3rd. Five were seen in the Doleham Valley on 28 Apr with one at St Mary's Fm on the 29th and three at Balcombe on 24 May. The two highest counts were made on Atlas Surveys. None were recorded during the second half of the year.

Chukar

Alectoris chukar

Common resident from SE Europe to the Himalayas. Introduced in UK under license until early 1990s but banned from 1992/93.

One was reported at Shooters' Bottom (Beachy Head) on 15 Apr. Mistaken identification (e.g. *SxBR* 54:165), a genuine escape or evidence of an illegal release?

Golden Pheasant*Chrysolophus pictus**Very scarce introduced resident.*

Four records were received from three sites; at Pulborough Brooks a single bird was seen on 14 Jan, at Arlington Res single birds were seen on 11 Apr and 2 May and at Poling (Arundel) five were reported on 19 Dec.

In recent years records have been received from a number of scattered sites as follows: Sedlescombe and Vinehall Street (2001), Powdermill Res and Vinehall Street (2002), Didling and Kingley Vale NNR (2003), Rowland's Castle (2004) and Catsfield (2006). This distribution suggests that there is not a naturalised breeding population and the records relate to escapes from captivity.

Indian Peafowl*Pavo cristatus**Wild birds are restricted to the Indian subcontinent. A traditional, and spectacular, favourite in ornamental gardens.*

Singles were recorded at Balcombe on 17 Apr and Hurstpierpoint on the 27th with two at Herstmonceux Castle on 9 May and one at Uckfield Hempstead, a regular site for this species, on 19 May. At the end of the year one was recorded at Balls Cross on 12 Nov while a male was seen at Shulbrede Priory (Fernhurst) on 17 Dec.

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.*

One was recorded at North Mundham on 23 Jan. Recent records have been in this general area with one, possibly the same, seen on Chichester GP in Mar 2007 (*SxBR* 60:208) and four there on two dates during winter 2006/07 (*SxBR* 59:203).

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 the UK during 2003-05 (Holling et al. 2007).*

In January two were recorded at Stapleash Farm (Chilgrove) on the 10th, with two seen at Pulborough Brooks from the 16th to the 27th, six in Prince's Park (Eastbourne) on the 24th, three at West Ashling on the 26th and four at St Anthony's Hill (Eastbourne) on the 30th, the latter perhaps wandering from Prince's Park. Two at Arundel WWT on 7 Feb were most likely the Pulborough birds while two were at Benbow Pond (Midhurst) on 20 Feb. One was present at Arlington Res between 8 May and 16 Aug, one was on the R Adur at Shoreham on 17-18 May while one on the sea at Selsey Bill on 22 May was most unusual. One was seen at Arundel WWT on 26 May and 9 Jul with one at Birdham on 1 Aug. None were then recorded until November when one was at Warnham on the 20th while at Pulborough Brooks there were two on the 11th, three from 12 to 17 Nov and then one to at least 28 Dec.

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 the UK during 2003-05 (Holling et al. 2007).

One was present at Pulborough Brooks from 30 Jun to 4 Sep with this bird, or more likely another, around Pagham Hbr on 7 to 8 Sep.

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. Eight pairs bred in the UK in 2005, including two in Hampshire (Holling et al. 2007).

One was seen at Scotney Court GP on 26 Jan with six recorded there, as well as nine Barnacle x Snow Goose hybrids, on 22 Jun. Whether these were white or blue morphs was regrettably not reported. Barnacle x Snow Goose hybrids were also seen at Scotney on 11 Feb (2) and 7 Mar.

Hawaiian Goose*Branta sandvicensis*

Rare resident on Hawaii. The healthy population kept in wildfowl collections (e.g. Arundel WWT) provides a conservation safeguard for this species.

An adult was present at Castle Water (Rye Hbr LNR) on 17 Feb.

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.

One was seen at Chichester GP or Pagham Hbr between 6 and 21 Jan and again at the latter site from 14 Aug to 26 Sep. This is presumably the individual seen during 2007 (SxBR 60:209) and considered to be a Cackling Goose *B. h. minima*.

Upland or Magellan Goose*Chloephaga picta*

Occurs in southern South America and the Falklands. The most southerly population moves north in winter.

A female was seen at Charleston Reedbed on 6 Sep and at Cuckmere Haven on 11 Oct.

Ruddy Shelduck*Tadorna ferruginea*

Breeds from Turkey across central Asia, generally wintering further south. Isolated populations in North Africa. Three pairs bred in Norfolk in 2005 (Holling et al. 2007). Controversially no officially acceptable British records since 1940 but seems certain that some late summer influxes originate from E. Europe (British Birds 95:398-99).

Two were recorded from Amberley Wild Brooks on 17 Nov, but see the Paradise Shelduck records from Pulborough Brooks.

South African Shelduck*Tadorna cana*

Common resident in South Africa and Namibia.

One was recorded at Pulborough Brooks on 4 Sept and 16 Nov, but see the Paradise and Australian Shelduck records from this site.

Paradise Shelduck*Tadorna variegata*

Very common resident in New Zealand.

Two recorded at Pulborough Brooks on 21 Aug, 10 Sep and 24 Nov and one on 30 Oct were tentatively identified as this species, or one or both South African or Australian Shelduck.

Australian Shelduck*Tadorna tadornoides*

Common in southwestern and southeastern Australia and Tasmania.

One was recorded at Pulborough Brooks on 10 Sept, but see the South African and Paradise Shelduck records from this site.

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, or more usually two, were present on Falmer Pond from 16 Jan to 4 Jun with three there on 4 and 15 Apr. Three were recorded in Pett Village on 2 May, two at Dragon's Green on 27 May, one at Shoreham Airport on 21 Jun, one at Emsworth Marina on 21 Jul and one at Falmer Pond on 17 Dec.

Wood Duck*Aix sponsa*

Breeds northern USA, winters in the southern USA. Common in wildfowl collections. Not recorded in the UK as a vagrant although some individuals seen in the south-west might conceivably be genuine wild birds and a likely candidate for consideration appeared in Shetland in April 2008. Two escaped pairs bred in the UK in 2002 (Ogilvie et al. 2004).

One was recorded at Swanbourne Lake (Arundel) on 7 Jun, another at Crowhurst Wood (Mountfield) on the 22nd, a female with four young at Pulborough Brooks on 24 Jun and one at Burton Mill Pond on 14 Sep. Those at Pulborough would appear to represent the first breeding record in the county since 1992.

White-cheeked Pintail

Anas bahamensis

From West Indies and South America, where mainly coastal. Commonly kept in wildfowl collections, where the white variant (unknown in the wild) is regular.

One, presumably a male, was seen on Pulborough Brooks on 16 Nov.

Ferruginous Duck

Aythya nyroca

Breeds from S Spain to central Asia, wintering mainly from NW Africa and S Europe to India. Rare vagrant to Sussex.

A Pochard x Ferruginous Duck hybrid resembling this species was seen on the Long and Narrow Pits (Rye Hbr SSSI) on at least 25 Nov and 14 Dec.

Vulture sp.

A possible vulture was seen between Hassocks and Burgess Hill on 17 Mar.

Harris's Hawk

Parabuteo unicinctus

Widespread but patchily distributed from the southern USA to Patagonia. Popular with falconers and often flown at public displays.

The individual seen at Thorney Deepes from 6 Nov 2007 (SxBR 60:211) remained until 27 Jan and may have been that recorded at East Marden on 30 Mar before being seen at Thorney again on 28 Sep. Another was seen intermittently at Tilley's Farm (Washington) between 1 Jun and the end of the year. This species has been recorded at large in the county in every year since 2002.

Red-tailed Hawk

Buteo jamaicensis

Commonly breeds throughout much of N America and the Caribbean, some move south in winter as far as Central America. Perhaps the most commonly kept Buteo in captivity but be aware of the occasional pale, rufous-tailed Common Buzzard.

One seen at North Cocking on 7 May and 15 Jun maintains the run of annual records from the 1990s.

Golden Eagle

Aquila chrysaetos

Mainly resident in Europe, North Africa, northern and central Asia and Northern North America. Breeds in Scotland and the Lake District.

An adult was seen over Bexhill on 3 and 14 Apr. Presumably the same individual was seen at

Ponts Green (Ashburnham) on 26 Jun where it was also reported to have been present in 2007.

Cockatiel *Nymphicus hollandicus*

Common Australian nomad. One of the commonest aviary birds.

One was seen at the University of Sussex on 27 Mar. 2005 is the only year this century in which this species has not been recorded in the county.

Budgerigar *Melopsittacus undulatus*

Locally common Australian nomad. One of the commonest of all cage birds. Wild birds are invariable green (and yellow).

A yellow morph seen at Selsey Bill on 10 May was given to some aviculturalists nearby. This species has been recorded at large in the county in six of the last nine years.

Peach-faced Lovebird *Agapornis roseicollis*

Common resident in SW Africa.

Two were seen in Crawley on 19 Jun.

Tucuman Parrot *Amazonia tucumana*

Uncommon resident in montane forests of NW Argentina.

One was seen in the Angmering Park Estate on 26 Nov and 12 Dec.

Streaked Spiderhunter *Arachnothera magna*

Fairly common in forests and gardens from the central Himalayas to S China and Vietnam.

One was photographed in a garden in Arundel on 27 Apr.

Black-winged Bishop *Euplectes hordeacea*

Widespread in sub-Saharan Africa from Senegal to N Mozambique.

One, presumably a male, was seen in a garden in Shoreham Beach on 8 Jun.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE DATES OF SUMMER VISITORS, 2008

	First recorded date			Last recorded date		
	2008	Prior to 2008	10-yr average (\pm SD in days)	2008	Prior to 2008	10-yr average (\pm SD in days)
Garganey	14 Feb	02 Feb	06 Mar (\pm 14)	18 Oct	13 Dec	02 Oct (\pm 17)
Quail	25 Apr	08 Feb	17 May (\pm 12)	28 Sep	31 Oct	12 Sep (\pm 37)
Osprey	18 Mar	07 Mar	25 Mar (\pm 9)	26 Oct	09 Dec	25 Oct (\pm 13)
Hobby	01 Apr	21 Mar	07 Apr (\pm 8)	15 Oct	09 Nov	24 Oct (\pm 15)
Little Ringed Plover	15 Mar	06 Mar	18 Mar (\pm 5)	29 Sep	08 Oct	23 Sep (\pm 10)
Wood Sandpiper	05 May	10 Apr	03 May (\pm 23)	09 Oct	16 Nov	26 Sep (\pm 17)
Pomarine Skua	24 Apr	10 Mar	23 Apr (\pm 17)	23 Nov	31 Dec	14 Sep (\pm 91)
Roseate Tern	29 Apr	17 Apr	05 May (\pm 16)	22 July	30 Sep	16 Aug (\pm 33)
Common Tern	28 Mar	17 Mar	27 Mar (\pm 6)	19 Oct	26 Nov	30 Oct (\pm 11)
Arctic Tern	16 Apr	02 Apr	10 Apr (\pm 5)	20 Oct	23 Nov	02 Nov (\pm 14)
Common/Arctic Tern	08 Apr	10 Mar	31 Mar (\pm 11)	19 Oct	31 Dec	27 Oct (\pm 15)
Little Tern	13 Apr	02 Apr	10 Apr (\pm 5)	16 Sep	04 Nov	28 Sep (\pm 15)
Black Tern	18 Apr	02 Apr	16 Apr (\pm 6)	10 Oct	21 Nov	10 Oct (\pm 15)
Turtle Dove	17 Apr	08 Mar	08 Apr (\pm 14)	20 Sep	18 Dec	06 Oct (\pm 11)
Cuckoo	08 Apr	15 Mar	03 Apr (\pm 4)	31 Aug	11 Nov	29 Sep (\pm 14)
Nightjar	14 May	08 Apr	30 Apr (\pm 6)	16 Sep	05 Nov	24 Sep (\pm 11)
Swift	20 Apr	07 Apr	13 Apr (\pm 4)	11 Oct	24 Nov	17 Oct (\pm 20)
Wryneck	12 Apr	09 Mar	17 Apr (\pm 15)	08 Oct	02 Nov	02 Oct (\pm 8)
Sand Martin	04 Mar ¹	04 Mar	12 Mar (\pm 6)	18 Oct	05 Dec	23 Oct (\pm 15)
Swallow	19 Feb	04 Feb	10 Mar (\pm 13)	26 Nov	28 Dec	25 Nov (\pm 11)
House Martin	16 Mar	01 Feb	16 Mar (\pm 16)	23 Nov	18 Dec	11 Nov (\pm 9)
Tree Pipit	27 Mar	17 Mar	30 Mar (\pm 3)	31 Oct	09 Nov	14 Oct (\pm 9)
Yellow Wagtail	02 Apr	10 Mar	24 Mar (\pm 7)	02 Nov	23 Nov	30 Oct (\pm 13)
Nightingale	08 Apr	21 Mar	03 Apr (\pm 6)	18 Sep	19 Oct	12 Sep (\pm 11)
Redstart	25 Mar	13 Mar	28 Mar (\pm 7)	09 Oct	11 Dec	31 Oct (\pm 17)
Whinchat	20 Apr	18 Feb	01 Apr (\pm 18)	16 Oct	02 Dec	05 Nov (\pm 7)
Wheatear	29 Feb	13 Feb	03 Mar (\pm 9)	13 Nov	19 Dec	10 Nov (\pm 9)
Ring Ouzel	30 Mar	02 Feb	25 Mar (\pm 6)	14 Nov	26 Dec	13 Nov (\pm 6)
Grasshopper Warbler	08 Apr	02 Apr	11 Apr (\pm 6)	10 Oct	01 Nov	17 Oct (\pm 8)
Sedge Warbler	27 Mar	23 Mar	29 Mar (\pm 4)	10 Oct	29 Oct	13 Oct (\pm 12)
Reed Warbler	04 Apr ¹	04 Apr	08 Apr (\pm 3)	25 Oct	18 Nov	31 Oct (\pm 9)
Garden Warbler	09 Apr	28 Mar	04 Apr (\pm 6)	29 Sep	16 Nov	13 Oct (\pm 8)
Lesser Whitethroat	09 Apr	04 Apr	12 Apr (\pm 6)	21 Oct	21 Nov	15 Oct (\pm 16)
Whitethroat	02 Apr	19 Mar	31 Mar (\pm 6)	21 Oct	17 Dec	20 Oct (\pm 15)
Wood Warbler	09 Apr	07 Apr	20 Apr (\pm 7)	14 Sep	07 Oct	06 Sep (\pm 14)
Willow Warbler	16 Mar	04 Mar	16 Mar (\pm 7)	26 Oct	26 Dec	29 Oct (\pm 14)
Spotted Flycatcher	02 May	08 Apr	26 Apr (\pm 7)	21 Oct	18 Nov	12 Oct (\pm 6)
Pied Flycatcher	04 Apr	01 Apr	10 Apr (\pm 6)	25 Oct	01 Nov	01 Oct (\pm 7)

¹earliest county record

DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL DATES OF WINTER VISITORS, 2008

	Last recorded date			First recorded date		
	2008	Prior to 2008	10-yr average (\pm SD in days)	2008	Prior to 2008	10-yr average (\pm SD in days)
Bewick's Swan	16 Feb	26 Apr	07 Mar (\pm 7)	17 Nov	15 Oct	14 Nov (\pm 13)
White-fronted Goose	28 Feb	17 Apr	19 Mar (\pm 20)	14 Oct	12 Sep	06 Oct (\pm 47)
Long-tailed Duck	11 Jun	14 Jun	04 May (\pm 32)	01 Nov	23 Aug	20 Oct (\pm 22)
Velvet Scoter	23 May	15 Jun	09 May (\pm 10)	03 Nov	12 Aug	12 Oct (\pm 18)
Goldeneye	02 May	23 May	22 Apr (\pm 19)	31 Oct	06 Aug	01 Oct (\pm 22)
Smew	05 Mar	24 Apr	14 Mar (\pm 18)	17 Dec	03 Nov	30 Nov (\pm 9)
Goosander	20 Apr	22 May	30 Mar (\pm 32)	28 Oct	12 Sep	07 Nov (\pm 20)
Black-throated Diver	29 May	21 Jun	26 May (\pm 12)	01 Sep	03 Aug	25 Oct (\pm 16)
Great Northern Diver	12 Jun	21 Jun	20 May (\pm 15)	20 Oct	16 Sep	21 Oct (\pm 24)
Red-necked Grebe	13 Apr	19 Jun	22 Apr (\pm 21)	26 Sep	18 Aug	12 Sep (\pm 21)
Hen Harrier	01 Jun	19 Jun	13 May (\pm 17)	26 Sep	04 Aug	01 Sep (\pm 12)
Purple Sandpiper	22 May	26 May	14 May (\pm 6)	28 Sep	01 Jul	21 Jul (\pm 15)
Jack Snipe	23 Apr	19 May	25 Apr (\pm 18)	29 Sep	24 Aug	20 Sep (\pm 15)
Water Pipit	13 Jan	28 May	01 Apr (\pm 23)	28 Oct	01 Sep	27 Oct (\pm 8)
Fieldfare	08 May	05 Jun	22 Apr (\pm 8)	18 Sep ¹	22 Sep	28 Sep (\pm 12)
Redwing	19 Apr	26 May	13 Apr (\pm 12)	20 Sep	06 Aug	26 Sep (\pm 7)
Great Grey Shrike	08 Apr	14 May	07 Apr (\pm 22)	08 Oct	26 Sep	17 Oct (\pm 8)
Brambling	30 Apr	12 May	22 Apr (\pm 7)	01 Oct	13 Sep	29 Sep (\pm 9)

¹earliest county record

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 2008, West Sussex

	AC	BD	CC	CL	HC	IC	LC	LS	SC	WC	WD	WH
Hobby	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Woodcock	-	-	1	-	-	2	2	4	1	1	1	-
Stock Dove	2	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
Turtle Dove	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Nightjar	-	2	6	-	1	5	3	3	3	1	2	1
Green Woodpecker	4	-	6	2	2	2	2	1	3	5	6	2
Great Sp. Woodpecker	5	-	4	2	3	3	7	3	3	3	6	3
Wood Lark	5	3	4	4	-	6	3	4	1	2	4	1
Sky Lark	-	-	5	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	1
Tree Pipit	5	8	3	-	2	6	4	3	2	6	3	-
Meadow Pipit	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Common Redstart	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stonechat	8	2	2	-	-	10	4	-	2	2	4	1
Dartford Warbler	24	2	3	-	-	16	2	1	4	2	7	-
Common Whitethroat	1	-	4	-	-	1	-	-	1	8	4	1
Siskin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Linnet	6	2	6	-	-	10	-	-	2	3	3	4
Lesser Redpoll	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Common Crossbill	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Yellowhammer	6	-	7	2	1	7	6	-	3	11	5	5
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

The above heathland sites were the only ones surveyed this year.

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NB: For an explanation of the superscripts, see the footnote below the table.

M Aeberhard	C Beadle ^A	NJG Bowie ^A	J Calverley ^B
J Alderson ^A	G Beale ^A	K Bowker ^A	DK Campbell ^{AT}
DJ Allcock ^T	J Beale	D Bowler ^T	S Card
C Allen ^A	MF Beard ^{AT}	AL Bowley	J Carey ^T
SR Allen	H Beauchamp ^{AT}	PS Bowley	T Carpenter
M Allison ^A	G Beck (GB)	R Bown ^{ABT}	J Carr
A Allum ^W	G Beckett ^{AT}	DP Bowtell ^X	G Carrington
AE Almeida ^{AB}	T Beecher ^A	RC Bradbury	HM Carter ^{ABT}
J Andrews	B Benatt ^X	SG Bradley ^A	LD Carter ^A
R Appleyard ^A	J Bennett	SM Bradley ^T	PM Carter ^A
D Asher	I Bennison ^A	K Brandwood ^{AT}	PM Carter ^T
J Atkinson ^W (JA)	C Bentley ^{AW} (CB)	D Bridges ^A	SJC Carter ^B
K Attree	VP Bentley ^{ABW}	J Brinkley ^X	R Carver ^W
W Attridge	K Benyon-Tinker ^W (KBT)	A Britt ^A	MC Casemore
BP Austin ^T	M Berry ^X	A Brockless ^A	A Caulkett ^A
MF Austin	E Bew ^{AB}	C Brooks ^{ABT}	M Caulkett
	N Biddulph ^{AB}	C Brown ^A	M Causer ^W
JWP Bacon	PJ Biggs ^B	SA Brown ^A	B Champion ^B
M Baggs ^H	SM Bignold ^{AT}	P Brown (PBr)	GL Champion
JTA Bagley	J Bills ^{AB}	PM Brown ^T (PMB)	R Champion ^A
GR Bagnell	A Binham ^A	JJ Bryant ^{AWT}	P Chandler
J Bailey ^A	LR Bird	P Bryant ^A	B Chapman
J Baker ^T	RF Bird ^A	PJ Bryant ^T	CB Chapman ^{ABT}
R Baker ^A	J Birkett ^{AT}	HE Bryett ^A	J Chapman ^W
CF Ball	G Bishop ^A	D Buckingham ^{AT}	JM Chapman
P Ballantine ^{AT}	WM Black ^A	T Buckland ^T	SE Chapman ^A
PC Bance ^W	DA Blackmore ^A	C Buckle ^{AB}	J Chattaway ^{AB}
B Banks ^A	M Blencowe ^{BX}	J Bujok	MS Cherry ^{AT}
JR Bannon ^T	A Bluett ^A	P Bull ^{AT}	B Childs
L Banse	T Blythe ^{AT}	S Bullen ^A	M Chris ^A
DG Barber ^{AB}	D Boddington ^A	NJ Burchett ^A	M Chris ^T
E Barber ^{AT}	B Boize ^{AT}	J Burgess ^A	A Clark
JD Barber ^A	RM Bond	M Burgess ^{AT}	D Clark ^{AT}
LJ Barber ^{AT}	SK Bone ^{AT}	N Burgum ^{AT}	FC Clark ^{AT}
CJR Barfield ^{ABWT}	PF Bonham ^A	M Burke ^A	P Clark ^A
GK Barker	O Bonmat	B Burns	RT Clark ^T
IT Barnard ^A	G Boorman ^{AB}	M Burnside ^A	BR Clay ^{AB}
RG Barnett ^{AWT}	J Boorman	N Burnside ^X	PJ Clay
P Barrow ^T	C Booty ^X	M Busby ^E	P Clement (PCI)
A Bashford	R Borwick (RB)	RA Butler ^{AW}	J Clements ^{AT}
JD Batchelder ^A	RM Borwick ^{AT}		T Clements ^W
K Bates ^A	JF Boulcott ^A	PL Callaway ^A	M Coath ^T
S Bayley ^{AHT} (SB)	S Boulton ^X	T Callaway ^W	C Cockburn ^W
NJ Bayly ^T	L Bower ^B	P Callis (PC)	GA Cockburn ^W

S Cocker ^W	D Day	L English ^{AT}	J Gallop
TD Codlin ^A	J Day ^{AWT}	M English ^A	A Galloway ^A
B Coin	J de Courcy	AD Evans ^A	P Gamble
J Coit ^{AW}	AF de Potier ^{AWT}	C Evans ^T	EFJ Garcia ^A
MA Cole ^T	R de Souza ^A	GC Evans ^A	AH Gardiner ^T
PR Cole ^A	CH Dean ^{ABHWT}	HW Evans ^A	S Gardiner ^A (SG)
LJ Coley	J Dedman ^A	MJ Evans ^A	RDJ Gardner
DA Colgate ^A	MN Denness	SJ Evans ^W	S Gardner ^B
H Collings ^T	RR Dennis	GD Evans ^{AB}	R Gasson
CB Collins ^{ABW} (CBC)	H Dennison ^{AW}	J Everitt	CM George ^{ABWT}
CF Collins ^A	MJH Denny ^A		A Giacomelli ^{AT}
DO Collins ^{AT}	A&P Denyer ^A	RJ Fairbank ^A	A Gibb ^T (AG)
M Collins ^B (MC)	KJ Derrett ^A	M Farmer ^A	L Gibson
HM Colmer	C Dickson ^A	LF Favret ^A	TE Gibson-Poole ^{AT}
EP Connelly ^A	B Dines ^T	JA Feest	DL Gifford ^A
AS Cook (ASC)	S Diserens ^A	BJ Fellows ^{ABWT}	KR Gilbert ^{AT}
GM Cook ^A	J Dodd (JDo)	C Fentiman (CF)	LA Gilbert ^A
M Cook ^A	JW Dodd	D Fernleigh ^T	S Gilbert ^W
DC Cooke ^A	SP Dodd ^T	A Field ^{AT}	AG Gillham ^X
C Cooper ^T	SJ Dove ^A	JE Fields ^{AB}	BR Gilmore
JF Cooper	FT Downing ^A	Y Filby ^A	CW Glanfield
KA Cooper	H Doyle ^X	R Flesher ^T	M Glanville ^{AT}
C Corrigan ^{AB}	RA Draper	G Flinn ^{AT}	J Glen ^{AT}
JR Cowser ^{ABHW} (JRC)	E Drewett ^A	T Flower	J Glover ^W
AFJ Cox ^A	NA Driver (NAD)	PC Follett ^{AT}	T Goble
JM Cox ^{AT}	KP Duncan ^A	B Foote ^{AT}	MC Goff
ES Crabtree ^{AT}	G Durey ^W	BF Forbes	DJ Golds
HM Crabtree ^{ABET}		T Forbes ^{ABWT}	DJ Goldsmith ^A
DE Crawley ^{AT}	MR Eade ^W	A Ford	CA Good ^A
J Crix ^{AT}	R Eade ^A	K Ford ^A	P Goodman ^A
LSM Crook ^A	R Eadie ^{AT}	M Ford ^A	J Goodridge
FE Crowe	R Eagles ^{AT}	WE Fordham ^T	JR Goodspeed ^A
PR Cullen	AR Eales ^W	JM Forshaw ^A	H Gordon (HG)
MJ Cumming ^A	B Easlea	TJ Forward	W Gordon ^W
J Curson ^A	J Ede ^{AWT}	TM Forward ^{AT}	C Goss ^{AT}
SPM Curson ^X	RDM Edgar ^A	BJ Fowkes ^A	JS Gowers ^A
	M Edmonds ^A	CJ Fox ^A	GW Gowlett
C Dale ^{AT}	PJ Edmonds ^A	TP Fox ^{AT}	AS Grace ^A
DR Dallinger ^A	K Edney	D Francis	MJ Grantham ^T
RC Dalrymple ^{AT}	K Edwards	K Frankland ^A	OW Graves ^A
S Davies ^A	R Edwards	TJ Fraser ^{AT}	P Gray ^T
SJ Davies ^A	TJ Edwards	MG Freeman ^W	MA Grech ^{AT}
C Davis ^{BW} (CD)	K Eels	RI French ^W	AE Green ^A
P Davis	J Eldridge ^{AT}	PJ Frost ^A	D Green ^B
P Davis	T Ellery	DC Fry ^A	P Green ^X
R Davison ^W	NJ Ellis ^A	TP Fuller ^{AT}	S Green ^T
K Dawson ^A	M Emberson ^{AB}	WW Fuller ^{ABT}	P Green ^T
S Dawson (SDa)	MJ Emery ^W	C Furlapa ^A	NM Greenaway ^{AW}

T Greenaway ^x	TJ Hicks ^A	K Irvine ^A	G King
C Greenfield ^T	J High ^W	RA Ives	J King ^T
RR Greenhalf ^W	M Hill ^T		JW King
G Griffin ^W	R Hill ^W	J Jackson ^{AT}	MN King ^{AT}
K Griggs	S Hill (SH)	M Jackson ^A	R King ^{AT}
J Grover	AI Hillman	RA Jackson ^T	R Kinnaird
AJ Guest ^{AB}	DA Hilton ^W	RJB Jackson	W Kirby
AC Gutteridge ^{ABT}	SR Hilton ^W	B James	A Kirk ^x
TJ Guy	R Hirst ^B	BD James	M Kirk ^{ABT}
	RS Hitchen ^{AB}	GF James	A Kirkwood ^W
K Hackett (KH)	RS Hoad	P James ^A (PJa)	AR Kitson
PRJ Hadland ^{ABT}	D Hoare ^x	S James ^{AT}	D Knight ^{AB}
JSW Hakeman ^A	JA Hobson ^{AB}	CR Janman	DC Knight ^A
CP Hall ^T	TN Hodge ^{AT}	G Jarvis ^x	J Knight ^x
MP Hall ^A	D Hodges ^A	L Jarvis ^x	L Knight ^A
CH Hamilton ^A	CTA Hodgkins ^A	M Jeeves ^{AT}	RW Knight
CP Hanson ^{AT}	J Hodgson ^x	TA Jefferies	R Knight
C Harlow ^A	C Hoff	C Jeffers ^x	R Knight ^{AHWT}
A Harman	AJ Holcombe	J Jenkins-Shaw ^{AT}	G Kruckow ^A
R Harman	BJ Holcombe	GG Jenner	
DGC Harper ^{AT}	AM Holden ^A	DJ Jode ^W	E Lambert ^{AT}
NG Harris ^{AT}	J Holland ^A	A Johnson ^B	M Lambert ^B
RG Harris ^{AWT}	PK Holland ^{AB}	A Johnson ^W	RJ Lanaway ^{AT}
SM Harris ^{AT}	D Hollow ^E	CA Johnson ^A	DC Lang ^{HW}
D Hart ^{AE}	LG Holloway	J Johnson	IM Lang ^{AHW}
H Hart ^E	R Holm ^{AT}	K Johnson ^A	J Lavender ^{AT}
R Hart ^A	RG Holmes ^{ABT}	PJ Johnson	MR Lawn ^T
R Hartfree	CA Holt	RJ Johnson ^{AHWT}	HJA Lee ^{ABEW}
WG Harvey ^{AB}	JC Holt ^A	S Johnson	PJ Lees ^W
P Haskell ^{AB}	CE Hope ^{AW}	A Johnston ^{ABT}	M Leggatt
JN Hawtree ^{AT}	JHM Horne ^{AB}	J Joiner	MP LeGrys
ME Hayter ^{AT}	J Houlden	J Jones ^A	A Lester ^A
K Hazelden	A House	MGM Jones ^{AT}	J Lewin (JL)
J Headdon ^T	DH Howey	PE Jones ^{ABWT}	K Leyshon (KL)
A Hearmon ^W	R Howorth ^x	R Jones ^{AT}	OJ Leyshon
P Heath (PHe)	G Hughes	RI Jones ^{AT}	TJ Lincoln
J Heather	PH Hughes ^{AWT}	RJ Jones ^T	SH Linington ^A
M Heather	R Hughes	A Jones ^{AW}	PL Lister ^B
M Helps	R Hughes	J Joyce ^A	AH Lloyd ^W
M Henderson ^A	BJ Humphrey ^B	I Julian ^W	J Lloyd
R Henning ^A	NB Humphrys ^{AT}		S Loetz ^{AT}
JL Herring ^A	ID Hunter	ME Kalaher	R Long ^T
K Hewitt ^W	NP Hutchinson ^{AT}	B Kelley	LFC Love ^B
PJ Hewitt ^A	AM Hutson ^A	F Kelly ^A	M Love ^{AB}
J Heyes ^{AT}		J Kelsall ^A	AR Loweth ^A
M Hibbard ^x	MP Ingram	P Kidd ^T	S Lucas ^A
AP Hibberd ^{ABT}	T Inskipp ^A	J Kinchington ^A	JC Luck
G Hibberd (GH)	R Iredale ^{AT}	D King ^{AT}	R Ludman

PJ Luffingham ^{AH}	D Melville ^A	JL Nobbs ^{ABE}	L Percival ^T
G Lyons ^X	R Menhenett ^W	K Noble ^A	A Perrett ^W
	F Mercer ^{AT}	A Norbury ^{AT}	A Perry ^{AE}
B Mackintosh ^{AT}	M Merriman ^{AT}	RK Norman ^{AT}	HY Perry ^A
A MacPherson ^{AB}	SJ Message	S North ^T	M Perryman (MP)
DJ Madgin ^A	B Metcalfe	C Northwood	O Pescott ^A
M Mallalieu ^A	B Middleton ^{ABX}	A Nottage ^{AT}	NR Peters
A Malone ^B	S Miles ^T	JA Nundy ^T	CB Peverett
A Malpass ^X	A Millar ^{AT}		MJ Phillips ^{AW}
RC Mann	D Minns ^A	N Olsen ^X	SM Phillips ^A
SJ Mansfield ^A	D Mitchell ^{AT}	G Osborne ^A	R Pidgeon ^X
Many Observers (mo)	D Mitchell ^X	G Osborne ^{AT}	A Piggot ^W
H Maplesden ^{AT}	NB Mitchell ^{ABT}	RA Oswald ^A	PJ Plant ^{AB}
MJ Marchant ^{BH}	O Mitchell ^W (OM)	E Outhwaite ^{AT}	D Pledge ^T
J Marchant ^B	D Monk ^X	MK Overy ^T	AH Podmore ^A
E Margrave ^A	M Monk-Terry ^X	HJ Owen ^A	MJ Pollard ^T
N Markwick ^A	P Moon ^W	L Owen	D Pomeroy ^A
C Marrable ^X	FE Moore	M Owen ^B	CR Poole ^{AT}
N Marriner ^{AT}	D Moors ^A	RC Owen	NJN Pope
PC Marston ^A	D Morgan		BC Potter ^T
PF Marten	H Morgan ^A	S Pagett ^W	DA Potter
D Martin ^W	G Morley ^W	G Pain ^A	PM Potts
JC Martin ^A	R Morris ^{AW}	PJ Papps	GR Potts
M Martin ^{AB}	BM Mortlock	A Parfitt ^W	B Poulter ^{AT}
AJ Martin ^{AB}	SD Morton ^T	JC Parish ^A	R Price ^X
J Martin ^A	MF Mullen ^{AB}	NM Parish ^A	C Prince
J Martin ^{AB}	S Munday ^A (SM)	A Parker ^W (AP)	J Pullen ^{AW}
DD Martin-Jenkins ^A	G Murphy ^{AT}	J Parker ^T	RHA Putnam ^{AT}
JM Maskell ^{AT}	K Murphy ^{AB}	M Parker ^X	B Puttock ^{AWT}
SP Maskell	M Murphy ^B	DA Parmenter	RJ Pyrah ^T
D Mason (DM)	D Mutters ^A	S Parmenter ^A	
MJ Mason ^A	PG Muzzall	TW Parmenter	G Quin ^A
C Maxwell ^A		NM Parsons ^A	A Quinn ^A
K May	R Nash ^{AT}	R Parsons ^W	T Quittenden ^W
KW Maycock	B Neal ^A	RA Pask	
JJ McCaig ^A	M Neatherway ^A	J Patterson (JP)	TK Rackstraw ^A
D McCallion ^A	E Neil ^T	JAS Patterson	B Rainbow ^X
SFH McCullagh ^A	R Nelson ^{AT}	PN Paul	I Ralphs ^A
ACO McGrath ^A	S Nelson ^A	D Payne ^{AT}	NM Ratcliffe ^{AT}
PAF McKenzie Lloyd ^T	AM Nevard ^A	A Pearce ^W	P Raynes ^A
V Mclean ^{AT}	K New ^{AT}	K Pearce ^A	EM Raynor
M McManus ^A	P Newell	R Peck ^{AT}	GM Raynor
DF McNair ^{ABT}	D Newman ^{AT}	J Pegram	PJ Raynor
JR McSweeney ^T	DK Newnham	CJ Pennells ^B	M Reader
P Meiners ^B	JA Newnham ^{ABHWT}	RF Penticost ^{AB}	C Reay ^A
CW Melgar	P Newton	A Pepper ^T	J Redmond ^A
Mrs C Melgar (CMe)	RC Nixon ^T	C Pepper ^A	SG Reeds ^{AB}
CA Melhuish ^A	BT Nobbs ^T	RT Pepper	R Rees ^B

B Reeve ^A	MV Sennitt ^{AB}	CJ Strudwick ^A	WM Twitchett ^{AT}
R Reeves	E Serpis ^A	S Strugnelli ^{AT}	
S Reiverson ^T	M Shaft ^{AH}	F Sugg ^X	ST Underdown ^W
GD Rhodda ^A	RJ Shanks ^B	AP Sullivan ^A	J Underwood
JE Richardson ^{AT}	J Sharpe ^W	M Sullivan ^A	ED Urquhart ^W
L Richardson ^{BH}	D Shaw	W Sully ^A	
G Riches ^T	MD Shaw ^{AT}	B Summerfield ^A	J Vale ^A
JR Rivoire ^T	DR Shepherd	P Sutton ^T	H Vaughan ^A
ET Roberts ^H	J Shillito (JS)	RK Sutton ^A	T Vaughan ^A
GCM Roberts ^H	M Shotter ^B	S Sutton ^H	FB Venn ^A
H Roberts ^W	D Silk ^A (DSi)	T Sweetland ^A	C Vince ^W
M Roberts ^A	T Simon ^A		S Vincent ^A
MD Roberts ^T	IM Simpson ^{HW}	WIE Tagg ^{AT}	C Vine ^{AW}
PA Robinson ^A	KFW Simpson ^A	JE Tate ^{AT}	
R Robinson ^{AB}	RN Simpson ^A	J Tavener ^A	CA Walker
S Robinson ^W	SP Simpson ^{AT}	CJ Taylor	S Walker ^{AT}
BM Rogers ^E	A Simpson MBE ^{WX}	KP Taylor ^A	TH Walker ^A
DP Rogers ^{ABT}	C Sims ^A	SR Taylor ^{ABW}	D Walker ^W (DW)
MD Rolfe ^{AT}	A Skerl ^{AW}	CR Tazzyman	S Walsh ^A
R Rolfe ^{AT}	A Skerl ^T	C Temple ^A	S Walters ^A
C Roper ^X	AJ Skinner ^{AB}	A Thomas ^{ABW}	L Walther ^{AT}
PP Roper ^X	A Slade	A Thomas ^A (ATH)	LA Ward
J Ross ^A	D Smith (DS)	T Thomas ^{AT}	M Ward ^A
S Rowe ^A	DI Smith (DIS)	PS Thompson	HM Warne ^{AT}
E Rowsell ^{AW} (ER)	KW Smith ^A	RP Thompson ^{AT}	N Warne ^B
K Roy ^A	L Smith (LSm)	P Ticehurst	RF Warren ^A
DW Rugg ^{AT}	P Smith ^A	RS Ticehurst ^A	RF Warren ^T
SJR Rumsey	PA Smith ^{AW}	A Tilbrook ^X	D Washington
MG Russell ^{AX}	M Smith ^T	JE Tilbury ^B	MWR Washington ^A
ND Rutherford ^{AB}	S Smith ^W (SSm)	AG Tinning ^A	KP Watcham ^A
N Rutter ^B	AC Smithen ^{ABT}	GA Tocher	AB Watson ^H
PJ Ryder ^{AT}	D Sneller	R Tofts	K Watson
Rye Bay RG	MA Snelling ^{AB}	D Tomalin	M Watson
	TG Snow ^{AB}	M Tomlins ^W	RF Watson ^A
RF Sanderson ^H	E Soden ^A	R Tovey ^T	JAL Watt ^A
RJ Sandison	P Spiers ^W	PR Tregenza ^A	D Webb
JC Saunders ^{AT}	I Standivan ^{HW}	S Trenery ^{AT}	P Webster ^A
MD Schofield ^{AT}	TJ Staton ^A	R Trigg-Knight	DJ Wedd ^{AB}
RE Scott ^T	MJ Stenning ^B	CE Trollope ^{AT}	M Welcome ^W
M Scott-ham ^{AH}	P Stevens ^W	D Trott ^A	CD Welland ^X
T Seabrook ^{ABWT}	RA Stevens	JE Trowell ^W	R Wells ^X
J Searle ^B	H Stokes ^B	WH Truckle ^{AHT}	PJ Wells ^A
CM Seaton	P Stokes ^B	S Tucker ^{AT}	AJ Wende ^{AT}
P Selby ^{AT}	R Stokes ^T	M Tucker	DR West ^{AB}
R Self (RCS)	A Stow ^A	C Turley (CT)	JD Weston ^W
Mrs C Self (CSe)	A Strachnicki ^T	M Turner ^{ABHW}	M Weston
RJ Senior	PJ Strangeman ^{AB}	PC Turner ^A	R Weston
T Senington	R Street ^{AT}	P Twine ^{AE}	RJ Westrop ^{AT}

R Westwater	M Wilkinson ^X	I Wiltshire ^{AB}	JA Worrall ^{AB}
EJ Whalley ^A	G Williams ^T	J Winder	JM Worthington Wilde ^A
MJ Whitaker ^{AB}	JA Williams ^T	HC Wingfield-Hayes ^W	CH Wright ^A
AD Whitcomb	M Williams ^T	BJ Winter ^A	CMV Wright ^{AB}
IJ Whitcomb	R Williamson ^W	LF Winter ^{AT}	J Wright ^W
PJ Whitcomb ^{AT} (PJWh)	RLC Williamson ^{AW}	P Winter (PW)	KJ Wright ^W
C White ^{AT}	KB Wills ^W	A Witts ^{AT}	M Wright ^{AT}
KG White ^A	J Willsher ^A	S Wood ^{AT}	W Wye
AM Whitman	HMV Wilsdon	V Wood ^B	
JH Whitman	AR Wilson ^A	CW Woodburn ^W	BJ Yates ^{AW}
S Whittaker ^A	IJ Wilson ^A	I Woodburn ^W	M Yates ^X
H Whittall ^B	PJ Wilson ^W	E Woodhouse	S Young ^X
JA Wichall ^A	TJ Wilson	C Woodward ^{ABT}	S Younger ^W
J Wilkes	IJ Wilton ^{AT}	SA Woolfries ^A	
EM Wilkinson ^A	D Wiltshire ^{AT} (DW)	I Woolsey ^A	

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
- H Heronry Census
- 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 records: J Atkinson, CJR Barfield, S Bayley, C Bentley, Mrs VP Bentley, Dr C Bridges, Dr C Brooks, S Chapman, Ms J Chattaway, BR Clay, CB Collins, JR Cowser, DE Crawley, J Curson, RDM Edgar, RJ Fairbank, BF Forbes, B Fowkes, MG Freeman, BR Gilmore, Ms H Gordon, JS Gowers, Mrs P Green, AC Gutteridge, RS Hoad, JA Hobson, AM Holden, CE Hope, A House, T Howard-Jones, DH Howey, P Hughes, AM Hutson, RA Ives, P James, P Johnson, PE Jones, JC Kelsall, D King, Rex Knight, Richard Knight, IM Lang, S Linington, M Mallalieu, O Mitchell, Mrs BM Mortlock, A Nottage, PJ Papps, A Parker, N Paul, RT Pepper, A Perry, GCM Roberts, Ms H Rouse, E Rowsell, MV Sennitt, Mrs IM Simpson, R Simpson, DI Smith, P Stevens, S Sutton, Dr AB Watson, Mrs AJ Wende, PJ Whitcomb and JH Whitman.

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 BTO 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 505 contributors to this survey in 2008 are indicated by ^A in the above table.

Breeding Bird Survey (BBS): This national BTO annual 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 114 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 223) is undertaken in collaboration with the RSPB and the bird clubs of Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey. The Sussex organiser is A Perry, Edgell Barn, Byworth near Petworth, West Sussex, GU28 0HR. Thanks are due to the 10 observers involved who are indicated by ^E in the above table.

Heronry Census: This long-standing BTO 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 23 contributors who are indicated by ^H in the above table.

Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS): Monthly counts were carried out for this BTO/WWT/RSPB/JNCC survey, organised in Sussex by R 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 120 counters who are indicated by ^W in the above table.

Co-ordination of Spring Seawatching Records: The annual co-ordination of these records for the Society is carried out by Dr JA Newnham, 61 Grand Avenue, Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 5BA.

Cormorant Roost Counts: Counts were carried out monthly from September to March at Chichester GP and South Stoke, West Sussex, by R Knight for the Cormorant Research Group.

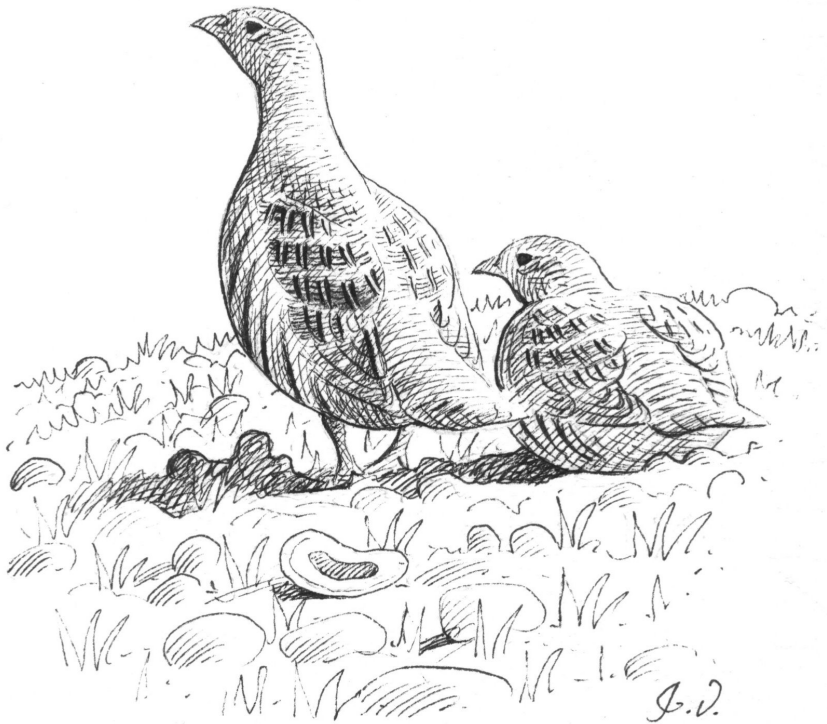
SUMMARIES OF OBSERVATIONS

We are grateful for summaries of detailed observations at Chichester Harbour from E Rowsell; at Thorney and Pilsley Islands from CB and Mrs MA Collins; at Bracklesham Bay and Lewes Brooks RSPB reserves from A Parker; at Selsey Bill from J Atkinson; at Pagham Harbour from IM Lang; at Arundel WWT from P Stevens; at the Norfolk Estate from GR Potts; at Pulborough Brooks and the Arun Valley from P Hughes; at Worthing from Dr JA Newnham; by Shoreham District O.S. from CE Hope; at the Horsham District Council reserves from S Bayley; at Weir Wood Reservoir from Mrs BM Mortlock; at Ashdown Forest from P Johnson; at Telscombe Cliffs from DH Howey; at Barcombe Res from RT Pepper; at Splash Point (Seaford) from BR Gilmore; at Beachy Head from RDM Edgar; at Bewl Water from MG Freeman; at Pannel Valley NR from PE Jones and at Rye Harbour from Dr BJ Yates. We also thank the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre for providing ornithological records from 45 observers (marked ^X in the above table) and Birdguides for providing their Sussex records. The BirdTrack online recording scheme

of the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) provided a plethora of records and the 242 Sussex contributors to BirdTrack are marked with a [†] in the above table. Thanks are due to the BTO for the county BirdTrack records, as well as county records from Bird Atlas 2007-11, the Breeding Bird Survey and the Wetland Bird Survey.

RINGING

Thanks are due to RDM Edgar and SE McKenzie for maintaining detailed records of ringing in the county and to all of the ringers who contributed data.





The Sussex Ringing Report for 2008

Robert Edgar and Sarah McKenzie

32 Hartfield Road, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 4PW

Introduction

The total number of birds ringed in Sussex was 54,330. This was an increase of 6% on the 51,372 ringed in 2007 and was very similar to the figure for 2006. (*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 24 individual active ringers or groups (Table 1), which was three more than last year. The Rye Bay Ringing Group (RBRG) ringed 37,566 birds, which was 69% of the Sussex total, the same percentage as in 2007. One hundred and eight species were ringed in the county in 2008 compared to 116 in 2007.

Provisional national figures for 2008 have very kindly been made available by the British Trust for Ornithology. Table 2 compares national and Sussex ringing effort for the six years from 2003 to 2008.

County rarities ringed were one Wryneck, one Water Pipit, three Bluethroats, one Aquatic Warbler, one Marsh Warbler, one Barred Warbler, one Dusky Warbler and one Penduline Tit (all at Pett Level), two Yellow-browed Warblers, one being at Beachy Head and the other at Almodington, and one Common Redpoll at Horsham. In addition five Honey-buzzard chicks were ringed in the county. The Dusky Warbler was the second to have been ringed in Sussex and the only one ringed in Britain and Ireland in 2008. By comparison 23 Wrynecks, nine Water Pipits, 16 Bluethroats, five Aquatic, 18 Marsh, 17 Barred and 112 Yellow-browed Warblers, two Penduline Tits, 74 Common Redpolls and 15 Honey-buzzards were ringed in Britain and Ireland in 2008. Although no new species were ringed in the county the total has increased to 204 ringed since 1979 as the only other Dusky Warbler was ringed in 1974. Unusual birds ringed include one Spotted Redshank (four ringed previously). The Common Redpoll was the eighth ringed in the county, the Penduline Tit the twelfth, the Barred Warbler the thirteenth, the Water Pipit the fourteenth and the three Bluethroats the thirteenth to fifteenth.

Ringing totals

Table 3 lists the 20 most regularly trapped species during 2008 in descending order of magnitude compared with similar data from 2007 and including the totals for RBRG to demonstrate the considerable contribution this group makes to Sussex ringing.

The 20 species listed in Table 3 account for 87% of all birds ringed in Sussex during 2008 compared to 88% of birds ringed in 2007. (The figure for 2007 was incorrectly given in Edgar and McKenzie 2007 as 87%, as Meadow Pipit was omitted in error from Table 3 of last year's report). The first 12 species are the same as last year with the order somewhat changed. Robin has replaced Blackbird in thirteenth place. Additions to the list include Lesser Redpoll, Goldcrest and Siskin which have replaced Reed Bunting, Chaffinch, Grasshopper Warbler and Song Thrush. Goldfinch has just replaced House Martin in the first ten, these ten accounting for 69% of all birds ringed. RBRG ringed 69% of the county total, the same as last year and three-quarters or more of ten species in Table 3. Their highest proportions were 100% of the Sand Martins (bar 11 birds), 99% of the Sedge Warblers and Meadow Pipits, 97% of the Willow Warblers and 93% of the Reed Warblers and House Martins.

Table 1. A summary of ringing activity in Sussex. Individuals named are those responsible for the rings issued and may not be those who actually ringed the birds. A Ringing Group may comprise a number of individuals.

Ringing source	Number ringed		
	Adults	Nestlings	Totals
Individuals			
K. Arthur	0	14	14
W. Attridge	1072	185	1257
M.J.Cowlard	0	5	5
A.M. Davis	25	33	58
J.A.G. Dunlop	1836	18	1854
R.D.M. Edgar	0	3	3
C. Hamilton	540	0	540
D.King	534	284	818
M. Lanaway	1521	149	1670
R. Lanaway	931	704	1635
D.M. Love	459	52	511
D. Madgin	94	13	107
A. Martin	1	68	69
J.A. Newnham	577	28	605
G.C.M. Roberts	3	33	36
R. Sanderson	1291	36	1327
C. Shawyer	9	46	55
K.S. Smith	125	0	125
A.B. Watson	103	451	554
Groups			
Beachy Head Ringing Station	2750	32	2782
Cuckmere Ringing Group	655	0	655
Farlington Ringing Group	251	0	251
Rye Bay Ringing Group	37,175	391	37,566
Steyning Ringing Group	1829	4	1833
County total	51,781	2549	54,330

Table 2. Comparison of national and Sussex ringing effort.

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
National totals						
All birds	848,532	881,920	873,581	853,681	786,070	835,326
Adults	673,889	712,925	700,140	674,211	617,682	673,480
Nestlings	174,643	168,995	173,441	179,470	168,388	161,846
Species	268	268	262	251	250	258
Sussex totals						
All birds	52,455	57,544	58,746	54,661	51,372	54,330
Adults	49,860	54,753	54,946	51,587	48,397	51,781
Nestlings	2595	2791	3800	3074	2975	2549
Species	114	120	125	109	116	108

Table 3. *Sussex ringing totals for the 20 most ringed species in 2008. Birds of Conservation Concern 3 (Eaton et al. 2008): **red-listed, *amber-listed.*

	2007 total	2008			2007 total	2008	
		Total	RBRG			Total	RBRG
Blackcap	5052	6468	4834	House Martin*	1842	1452	1344
Sedge Warbler	6566	6004	5957	Common Whitethroat*	1140	1323	994
Eurasian Reed Warbler	3912	4659	4323	Robin	942	998	416
Common Chiffchaff	2635	4409	2987	Meadow Pipit	817	976	968
Barn Swallow*	6721	4151	3529	Blackbird	1037	930	399
Sand Martin*	3370	3336	3325	Lesser Redpoll**	514	921	608
Blue Tit	3201	3160	533	Goldcrest	316	897	480
Willow Warbler*	1547	1960	1576	Greenfinch	882	896	297
Great Tit	2033	1624	301	Garden Warbler	531	662	564
Goldfinch	954	1558	285	Siskin	21	652	12

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 Blackcap numbers have progressively increased. This is graphically shown in Figure 1 in comparison with captures of the closely related Garden Warbler (Figure 2), which despite much annual variation seems to show some population stability. The year 2008 was the best year for Blackcaps since the county ringing records have been kept and the best for Garden Warbler since 1996.

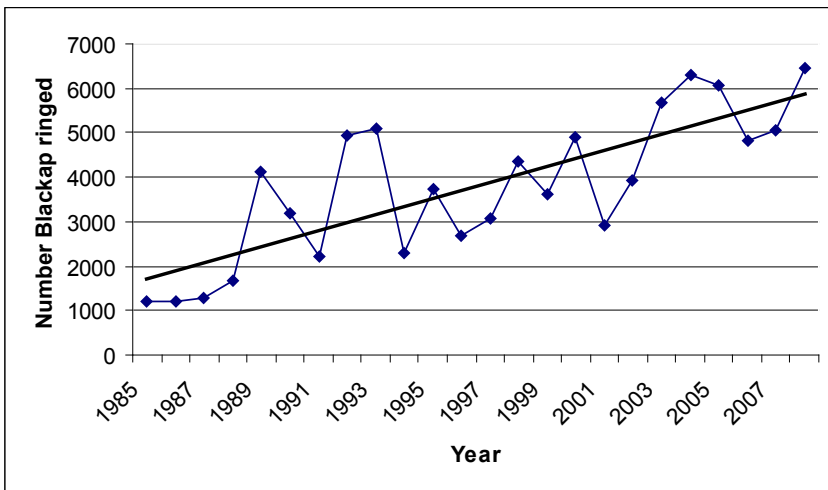


Figure 1. *Numbers of Blackcaps ringed in Sussex 1985-2008 with trend line.*

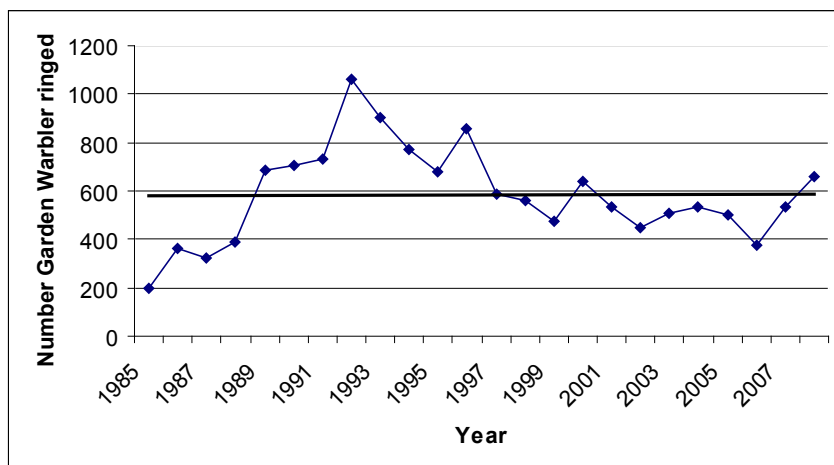


Figure 2. Numbers of Garden Warblers ringed in Sussex 1985-2008 with trend line.

The further decrease in Barn Swallows ringed is again due to the absence of the huge roost present at Pett level in 2006 and the number ringed is less than 50% of that year's total. Many of the other more commonly ringed species seem to have done well this year with a notable increase in Common Chiffchaff numbers, as well as those finches that winter in the county. The 652 Siskins compare very favourably with the 21 ringed in 2007 and the 79% and 63% increase in Lesser Redpoll and Goldfinch numbers ringed, respectively. Goldcrests clearly had an excellent year and with 132 ringed it was the best year ever for Cetti's Warblers. Although Common Redstart numbers are still low this was the best year since 2000. Common Redshank numbers ringed were very high due to successful catches at Thorney Island with 210 ringed whereas only 340 had been ringed previously in the county. Even more remarkable was the 536 Yellow Wagtails ringed due to the presence of a large roost. Only 631 had been previously ringed in the county.

On the debit side Spotted Flycatchers are down again with 12 ringed compared to 15 in 2007 and 30 in 2006. As with last year no Willow Tits were ringed in the county. Worryingly Common Nightingale totals were the lowest since 1995. For the third year in a row no Ring Ouzels have been ringed, and the three years before that only yielded one each.

Nestlings

The 2,549 nestlings ringed in 2008 is a slight reduction on the 2,975 ringed in 2007. This appears to be part of a recent trend, following high numbers in 2005, which is shown in Figure 3. Five percent of all birds ringed in Sussex in 2008 were nestlings.

Sixteen species had 40% or more of their total ringed as nestlings (Table 4), the same number as in 2007, and ten of the 16 species were of Conservation Concern (Eaton *et al.* 2009).

The 19 Peregrine chicks ringed by G.C.M. Roberts is the highest number ever ringed in the county, as is the 32 Marsh Tit nestlings ringed by Dr A.B.Watson and his team. There was a great decrease in Barn Owl chicks ringed with 210 this year, against 465 in 2007, indicating a poor year for Barn Owls. In the last report the fluctuation in the nesting success of Blue and Great Tits was emphasised, reflecting the breeding season weather. This year both species had variable success as demonstrated by the former with 892 nestlings ringed (771 in 2007, so an increase this year)

and the latter (399 ringed with 576 in 2007, therefore a decrease). The 68 nestling Chiffchaffs ringed is the second highest (79 in 2003), all by R. Lanaway. On the debit side no Mistle Thrush nestlings were ringed nor were any Spotted Flycatchers for the second year running. Considering that the nests of the latter are often relatively accessible and not too difficult to find this sadly demonstrates their increasing scarcity in Sussex as breeding birds.

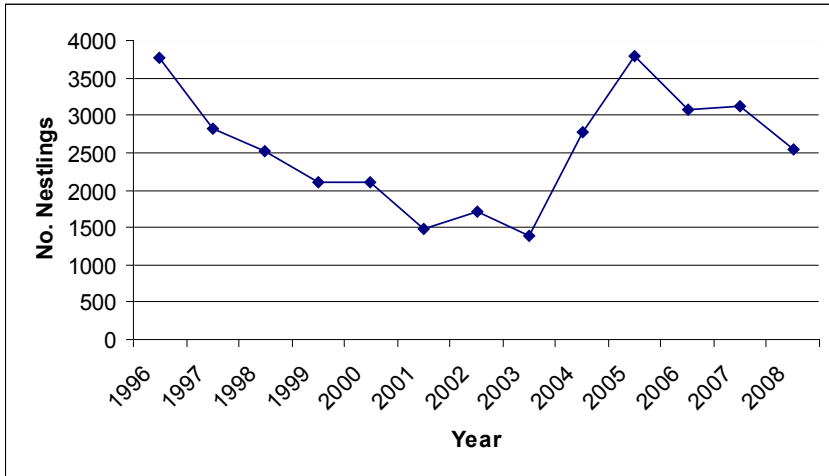


Figure 3. Numbers of nestlings ringed in Sussex 1996–2008.

Table 4. Nestlings ringed in Sussex during 2008, where they number more than 40% of the total ringed. Birds of Conservation Concern 3 (Eaton et al. 2009): **red-listed, *amber-listed.

	Total ringed	Total nestlings	% nestlings		Total ringed	Total nestlings	% nestlings
Peregrine Falcon	19	19	100	Herring Gull**	21	18	86
Honey-buzzard*	5	5	100	Barn Owl*	246	210	85
Common Tern*	5	5	100	Grey Wagtail*	15	12	80
Sky Lark**	3	3	100	Marsh Tit**	52	32	62
Common Buzzard	1	1	100	Little Owl	5	3	60
Black-headed Gull*	46	44	96	Nuthatch	94	43	46
Common Kestrel*	54	49	91	Stock Dove*	48	21	44
Tawny Owl	9	8	89	Pied Wagtail	94	43	40

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.

A long-term study of **Mute Swans** being carried out on the Hampshire Avon has involved a first-year female being colour-ringed near Christchurch on 17 July 2004. It has been sighted at Keyhaven (Hampshire) on 10 May 2005 and Littlehampton on 27 Oct 2007. Apparently many

swans from the Avon show coastal movements east and west but most move inland along the Avon and Stour valleys. A few have crossed to France, but this is one of the few that has moved so far east (D. Stone via R. Fairbank, *pers. comm.*).

A first-year male **Gadwall** ringed at Icklesham on 8 Sep 2007 was shot at Les Moeres (Nord, France) on 15 Oct 2008. Only 52 Gadwall have been previously ringed in the county.

Not particularly surprising, but of interest, is an adult male **Tufted Duck** colour-marked on the 25 Oct 2005 at Saint-Philbert-de-Grand-Lieu (Loire-Atlantique, France) and seen at Arundel on 25 Nov 2007. This is only the seventh ringed Tufted Duck from France found in this country. Most Tufted Ducks seen in Britain and Ireland in winter are from more northerly latitudes in Fennoscandia, European Russia and Iceland rather than from continental Europe (Wernham *et al.* 2002).

A colour-ringed **Cormorant** at Weir Wood Reservoir on four dates between 28 Oct and 21 Dec 2008 had been ringed as a chick in the colony at the famous Oostvarderplassen (Flevoland, Netherlands) on 4 Jun 1997. It had previously been recorded at Weir Wood on 29 Aug 1998 and 2 Jan 1999, at Bough Beech (Kent) on 10 Jan 2000 and again at Weir Wood on 20 Aug 2000. Presumably this bird would have been of the *sinensis* race.

A first-year male **Sparrowhawk** ringed at Icklesham on 25 Sep 2003 was found dead on 7 Feb 2007 at Docking (Norfolk), a distance of 221 km. British and Irish Sparrowhawks are sedentary (Wernham *et al.* 2002) and a movement of over 200 km is most unusual (Coffait *et al.* 2008).

A male **Peregrine** colour-ringed as a chick on Chichester Cathedral on 23 May 2007 changed denomination and was recorded on a Roman Catholic church in central Cambridge on 19 and 27 Nov 2008.

A rare report is of a ringed **Northern Lapwing** found dead at Winchelsea Beach on 4 Oct 2008, which is 16 years and five months after having been ringed at Elmley (Kent) on 29 May 1992. The oldest ringed bird in Britain was 21 years and 1 month (BTO 2009) and the oldest European bird was 23 years and 7 months (Staav and Franson 2008).

One of the most reported of colour-ringed species is the **Black-tailed Godwit**. One ringed on 12 Sep 2008 at Levington (Suffolk) was seen on 10 Oct at Fishbourne and on 18 Nov 2008 in the North Fields at Pagham Harbour. Another ringed on 26 Oct 2001 at La Duer (Sarzeau, Morbihan, France) and seen at Icklesham on 31 Aug 2005 is the fourth report of a French-ringed bird in Britain and Ireland (Coffait *et al.* 2008).

Reports of colour-ringed **Mediterranean Gulls** are becoming ever more common. Of particular interest is a bird hatched in Eastern Europe and now nesting in Sussex. Ringed as a chick on 29 Jun 2002 at Szeged (Csongrad, Hungary) it was seen twice near Calais (France) in Oct 2002; then followed sightings at Hayling Island (Hampshire) in April 2004 and it wintered on the Hampshire and Isle of Wight coast. It was back in Hampshire in March 2007 and at Pett Level that April. On 8 Jul 2008 it was at Rye Harbour attending a fledged chick. At Icklesham birds sighted, that had been ringed abroad, were nine from Belgium, two from France, two from the Netherlands, and one from Germany. A chick ringed on 5 Jun 2000 at Icklesham was controlled on 19 Feb 2006 on the River Tagus (Seixal, Estremadura, Portugal). This is the first report of a BTO-ringed bird in that country (Coffait *et al.* 2008).

A **Herring Gull** nestling which was ringed on a Bristol rooftop on 23 Jun 2005, and recorded many times in 2005 and 2006 at Gloucester Landfill, then in January 2008 was seen at Pucklechurch near Bristol and had moved to the River Adur at Shoreham on 9 Apr 2008 (colour-ring read). Apparently few urban Herring Gulls move more than 100 km but this has moved 177 km. More significantly as a third summer male it should have been back breeding in Bristol in 2008 (P. Rock

via R. Fairbank *pers. comm.*). The Herring Gull mentioned in the last Ringing Report (Edgar and McKenzie 2008) that was ringed in Worthing in 1978 has been confirmed as a British and Irish longevity record of 28 years, 2 months and 26 days (Coffait *et al* 2008).

A colour-ringed **Great Black-backed Gull** seen at Shoreham Harbour on 29 Mar 2008 had been ringed at Ryvingen (Karmøy, Rogaland, Norway) on 30 Jun 2007, 1000 km away. Another seen at Selsey on 3 May 2008 had hatched on 2 Jun 2007 (it was ringed on 2 Jul that year) on a rooftop at Fécamp (Normandy, France). It is the 12th Great Black-backed Gull from that programme seen in Great Britain, the others having been six at Dungeness (Kent), three at Portland (Dorset), one at Gloucester (Gloucestershire) and one at Ramsgate (Kent).

A **Common Tern** ringed as a chick at Rye Harbour on 23 Jun 2005 was caught on 2 Apr 2008 at La Somone (Senegal), a distance of 4360 km. One ringed at Icklesham on 22 Jun 2001 was found dead there on 28 Jul 2008, 7 years and 1 month later.

The **Barn Owl** is one of our most commonly reported ringed birds (sadly usually dead). One ringed as a chick at Lurgashall on 9 Jul 2007 was found starved at Reading (Berkshire) on 15 Mar 2008, a distance of 45 km. The median distance of natal dispersal is 12 km (Wernham *et al.* 2002). More happily a chick ringed at Kirdford on 28 Jun 1997 was re-caught as a breeding female at Broadford Bridge on 21 Jun 2008, being just short of 11 years old.

A first-year male **Kingfisher** ringed at Icklesham on 24 Sep 2006 was found dead on 9 Jan 2008 at Winchester (Hampshire) 139 km to the west. Although most Kingfishers do not move very far, movements of 250 km are not unknown and a small number have reached the Continent (Wernham *et al.* 2002).

Despite 72 recoveries in 2008 of **Sand Martins** ringed at Icklesham, the furthest movement was to Valencia (Spain), a distance of 1286 km, and the oldest was just under 4 years. However, one ringed there on 20 Aug 2002 was caught by ringers on 2 Apr 2003 at Canton Magistris (Verbania, Novara Vercelli, Italy). Apparently Sand Martins breeding in Western Europe mainly move south through France and Spain but when wintering, they may spread east along the Sahel zone and may return via a more easterly route. This is an example of 'loop migration' (Wernham *et al.* 2002).

Two **Barn Swallows** from Icklesham were found dead at just short of 5 years. Although the maximum recorded life span is over 11 years (BTO 2009) five years can be considered a very good age for a long-distance migrant of this size.

At the time of the Migration Atlas (Wernham *et al.* 2002) only 66 recoveries of **Common Nightingale** were recorded. So one ringed as a first-year at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head on 12 Aug 2007 and caught by ringers (and sexed as a male), on 8 May 2008 at Nazeing Mead (Essex) is of interest.

A nestling **Whinchat** ringed on 16 Jun 2007 at The Long Mynd (Shropshire) was re-caught (and sexed as a female) at Icklesham on 20 Aug 2007 on its first migration. When a bird has been originally ringed in the nest its exact origin, of course, is known.

An exceptional recovery is of a **Grasshopper Warbler** (they probably have the lowest ring-recovery rate of any British and Irish breeding bird (Wernham *et al.* 2002)) ringed at Icklesham as a juvenile (so presumably quite local, although this species moves early) on 25 Jul 2007 and found dead at Kilfian (Mayo, in the west of Eire) on 15 May 2008, perhaps on or near breeding territory.

A **Sedge Warbler** ringed as a juvenile on 17 Jul 2004 at Powgavie (Inchture, Perth and Kinross, Scotland) was over 4 years old when re-caught at Icklesham on 20 Aug 2008. This age is of considerable note, although up to nearly 12 years has exceptionally been recorded (BTO 2009).

Two birds ringed at Icklesham on 2 Aug and 6 Aug 2007 were both re-caught in West Africa, the first on 19 Jan 2008 at Parc National de Diawling (Mauritania) and the second on 6 Mar 2008 at Parc National du Djoudj (Senegal). As British and Irish Sedge Warblers winter south of 17° North (and west of 2° East) the bird in Mauritania at 20° North was rather far north to be wintering.

Five very quick recaptures are worth recording. All were ringed at Icklesham, the first on 5 Aug 2008 and controlled the next day at Sandwich Bay Estate (Kent); the second ringed on 13 Aug 2008 and controlled at Noyant (Soulair-et-Bourg, Maine-et-Loire, France) two days later; the third ringed on 21 Aug 2008 and controlled at Sandouville (Seine-Maritime, France) also two days later; the fourth ringed on 8 Sep 2008 and controlled at Cleve Marshes (Seasalter, Kent) again two days later; and the fifth ringed on 29 Sep 2008 and controlled one day later at Vallon Ecologique (La Courneuve, Seine-et-Oise & Seine, France). The first had traveled 427 km in two days and the last 253 km in one day.

Although not particularly old, for this long-lived species, a first-year **Eurasian Reed Warbler** ringed at Litlington on 20 Aug 2003 was controlled at Icklesham on 5 Sep 2008 and an adult ringed at Icklesham on 28 Aug 2002 was re-caught at Levington (nr River Orwell, Suffolk) on 4 May 2008. One ringed at Icklesham on 31 Aug 2008 was found dead at Nouakchott (Mauretania) on 8 Oct 2008, presumably on the way to its wintering area somewhat further south.

British breeding **Blackcaps** typically winter around the Mediterranean. This is shown by one ringed at Shoreham Sanctuary on 13 Jun 2004 and killed at Montoro (Cordoba, Andalusia, Spain) and reported on 4 Dec 2008. It is interesting to note that two first-year males moved in opposite directions in September 2008. One ringed at Cissbury on 9 Sep 2008 was re-caught at Litlington on 14 Sep, and one ringed at Icklesham on 8 Sep 2008 was re-caught at Cissbury on 13 Sep.

There were many **Common Chiffchaffs** ringed at various sites in Sussex and re-caught at Icklesham. Of interest is the spread of ringing dates but closeness of recapture dates (Table 5). A very rapid recovery was one ringed at Cissbury Ring on 2 Oct 2008 and re-caught at Icklesham the following day. Somewhat puzzling are two Chiffchaffs ringed at Icklesham on 26 Sep 2008 and 13 Nov 2008 and re-caught at Landguard Point, Felixstowe, Suffolk on 29 Sep 2008 and Wraysbury Gravel Pits, Windsor and Maidenhead on 29 Nov 2008, respectively, the first having traveled NNE and the second NW.

Table 5. *Common Chiffchaffs ringed in Sussex and re-caught at Icklesham.*

Date, no. of birds ringed and location	Date of recapture at Icklesham
31/07/08 (1) Litlington	21/08/08
21/07/08 (2) Weir Wood	14/09/08 and 17/09/08
08/09/08 (1) Weir Wood	19/09/08
12/09/08 (1) Beachy Head	20/09/08

Chaffinches from Fennoscandia commonly winter in this country and this is typified by a first-year male ringed at Myrvang (Karmoy, Norway) on 3 Sep 2007 which was found dead at Icklesham on 22 Nov 2007. British and Irish Chaffinches are sedentary, 90% moving no more than 5 km from their natal site and the rest moving less than 50 km (Newton 1972)

Evidence of **Goldfinches** wintering in the south and then moving north for breeding is shown by an adult female ringed at East Grinstead 28 Sep 2006 and re-caught at Kilnsea Clays (Humberside) on 22 Apr 2008 and a second also ringed at East Grinstead on 16 Jan 2008, this time as a first-winter female, and re-caught at Upton Magna (Shrewsbury, Shropshire) on 25 Apr 2008.

Siskins moving eastwards in spring are demonstrated by one ringed on 16 Mar 2008 at East Grinstead and re-caught on 28 Mar 2008 at Burgstrasse (Wassenburg, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany), a distance of 431 km, and another also ringed at East Grinstead on 12 Mar 2006 and re-caught at Zachodniopomorskie (Szczecin, Poland) on 9 Apr 2008, a distance of 1,026 km. This is only the fourth British and Irish ringed Siskin in Poland.

A **Lesser Redpoll** which was ringed on 31 Oct 2007 at Icklesham was re-caught four days later on 4 Nov 2007 at Sommethonne, Luxemburg. This is a most unusual recovery location and quite possibly the first Sussex bird in that country. A good age was reached by a Lesser Redpoll ringed on 12 Oct 2003 at Five Ways, Ashdown Forest and found dead on 5 Jan 2008 at Sclayn (Namar, Belgium) 4 years and 85 days later. The British and Irish record is coincidentally also a Sussex ringed bird, at 6 years and 26 days, and also found in Belgium, but that one was caught alive and released. Migrant Lesser Redpolls commonly come to Sussex from northern England and Scotland but also from Wales as shown by one ringed on 2 Aug 2008 at Ty Rhyg (Rosebush, Pembrokeshire) and re-caught at Icklesham on 8 Oct 2008. An adult female ringed at Beachy Head on 20 Oct 2007 was found freshly dead or dying on 11 Nov 2007 at Boisset-les-Prevanches (Eure, France). This is only the third British and Irish ringed Lesser Redpoll to have been found in France.

An adult female **Reed Bunting** ringed at Icklesham on 1 Jun 2002 was re-caught there three times, the latest being 28 Jun 2003, and then was found alive on 15 Mar 2007 at Summer Leys LNR (Earls Barton, Northamptonshire) 178 km to the north, thus both an interesting movement, in distance and timing, and a reasonable age (though the British and Irish record is nearly ten years old).



Robin and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Warnham LNR, October 2008 (Sam Bayley)

Acknowledgements

As always our grateful thanks 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. We are most grateful to John Marchant for his assistance with national ringing figures.

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Population trends of the Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* in Sussex, 1904 – 2006

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This paper is dedicated to our fellow ornithologist and falconer, Bart Atfield 1958-2004 without whose rigorous observations and field notes it could not have been produced.

Introduction

This paper presents nest records encompassing 102 years (1904-2006) of almost uninterrupted monitoring of a small topographically isolated and historically important population of Peregrine Falcons breeding on the Sussex coast. The first 50 years are recorded in the unpublished diaries of John Walpole-Bond (1904-54) which document a period of intense egg collecting. During the 32 years from 1957 to 1989 no breeding was recorded in the county and initially there were very few sightings, although numbers gradually increased over the period, particularly in the 1980s. The 32-year absence of breeding has been attributed to the direct effects of organochlorine pesticides on adult mortality. Sussex Peregrine Study (SPS) was established by two falconers, Bart Atfield (1958-2004) and Jon Franklin, following their discovery in 1990 of the first productive eyrie of the post-pesticide recovery. Since then SPS has documented the complete re-population of the county and collected data on territory occupation and reproductive statistics covering the whole period. In the 13 years from 1990 to 2003 all the available ancestral territories documented by Walpole-Bond became reoccupied, and as the population in the area continues to grow, SPS has recorded unprecedented expansion into inland sites that was never achieved in the previous 100 years. Other sources of historical data used in this paper are the Sussex Bird Reports 1948-2006 and the Sussex Ornithological Society archives, all of which are based on bird watchers' records.

Historical records

Walpole-Bond primarily concentrated his efforts on breeding Peregrines inhabiting the c26 km of coastal chalk cliffs between Brighton and Eastbourne (Figure 1). A separate c7.9 km of relatively low sandstone and clay cliffs were less regularly visited including a rarely used territory at Cliff End near Pett (Figure 1). This cliff was only documented as having a productive eyrie once during the period 1904-1954. Thus, a total of 14 coastal territories can be identified in Figure 1. Peregrines were seen and no doubt bred inland, but the birds were apparently heavily persecuted and records of success are scarce. Before the period of intensive egg collecting (1922-1948) Walpole-Bond records as many as 12 eyries on the coastal cliffs in any one year (1912 and 1915) and 'we never boast less than seven or eight annually' (Walpole-Bond 1914).

A total of 219 Peregrine clutches (669 eggs) were taken by Walpole-Bond between 1904 and 1954 (Figure 2); 156 of these were first clutches and 63 second clutches. Although the full extent of their activities is not known there were also a number of other egg collectors active on a regular basis during the same period. Nevertheless, Walpole-Bond documents that most of the accessible Peregrine eyries were relentlessly plundered each year. Walpole-Bond's highest recorded take in a year (1926) was 11 clutches from seven eyries. In five other exceptional years he took nine clutches and in two years he took eight clutches.

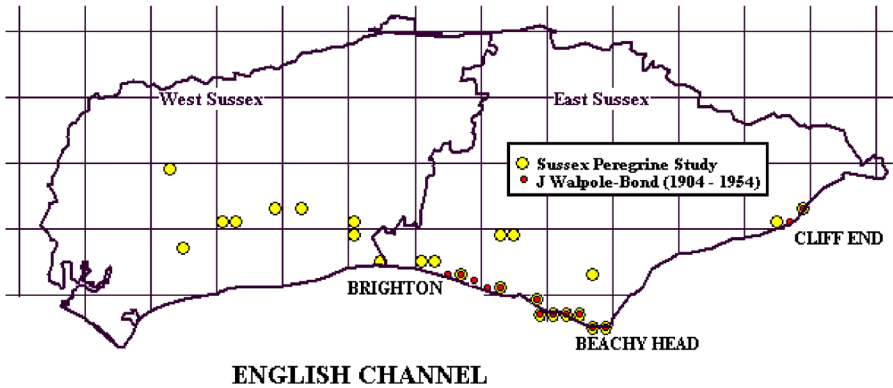


Figure 1. Occupied territories located by Walpole-Bond and Sussex Peregrine Study. All dots have been moved by up to 2km from the actual locations of the nesting sites.

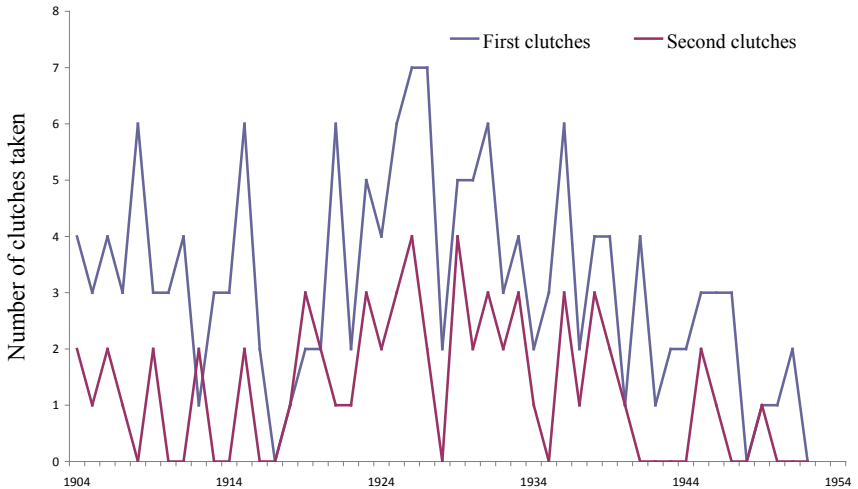


Figure 2. Comparison of the number of Peregrine eggs taken by John Walpole-Bond between 1904 and 1954 from first and second clutches.

As a result of this persistent egg collecting, the number of young left to fledge was inevitably very low (Figure 3). During the whole 50-year period only 114 young actually fledged. Further fledged young were seen but not counted at a further six eyries, making the possible fecundity within the range 120-138 fledged young. From 1949 onwards Walpole-Bond did not collect from several of the regularly used eyries and as a consequence between 1948 and 1954 a further 12 young Peregrines are said to have fledged (SOS archives). This gives some indication of the potential productivity of the population early in the century in the absence of persecution by egg removal.

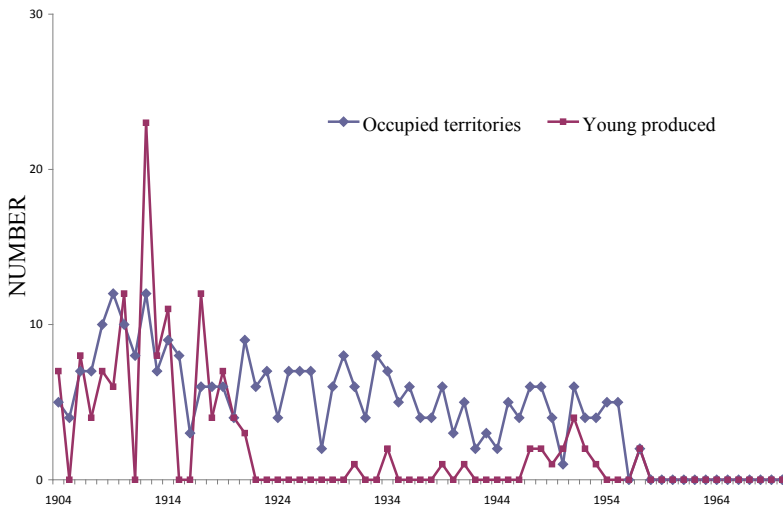


Figure 3. *The number of occupied territories and young produced between 1904 and 1970 (Walpole-Bond diaries and SOS archives).*

Despite this annual harvest between 1904 and 1954 of both first and second clutches, the limited production of young apparently had little effect on the status of the breeding population (Figure 3), which remained remarkably stable. It appears that the county's total population remained very healthy until after the Second World War (1939-45). In fact the pre-war population seems to have been so buoyant that Walpole-Bond mentions that on several occasions he observed a new pair or an individual bird moving into an established territory within days or sometimes even hours of the disappearance of one or both resident birds. In an early recollection he writes 'For example, in less than a month (March) I have known a female Peregrine get three husbands, one after the other just as they came to grief' (Walpole-Bond 1914). This is a clear indication that there were abundant adult non-breeders on the periphery to rapidly provide infill to the breeding population when vacancies occurred.

Despite failing health, in his last record in 1954 when he was 76 years old, Walpole-Bond recalls visiting four pairs of Peregrines on their territories. The Sussex Bird Report for 1954 records five or six pairs for the same year. In 1955, six pairs of Peregrines were noted by local birdwatchers (SOS archives), but the following year there were only sightings of nine individual Peregrines (SOS archives) and no breeding pairs were reported (Sussex Bird Report 1956). The last pair to breed in the county was found just west of Beachy Head (Figure 1) in 1957, and they produced two young. One fledged successfully but the other was found dead on the beach (SOS archives).

Before 1939, Sussex undoubtedly had the densest breeding population of the species in any part of the British Isles (Ratcliffe 1961, letter to D. Harber in SOS archives), and having survived 50 years of what Walpole-Bond described in his own words as 'unsurpassed looting', the Peregrine did not finally cease to exist as a breeding bird in the county until the introduction of organochlorine pesticides (Ratcliffe 1980). Although a reduction in Peregrine numbers was first recognised in southern England (Ratcliffe 1980, Cade and Burnham 2003), it became clear that

Peregrines were declining all over Great Britain (Ratcliffe 1980). Despite 50 years of continual removal of eggs in Sussex, the size of the breeding population was largely unaffected. It follows therefore that egg shell thinning induced by the organochlorine pesticide DDT could not have caused the sudden disappearance of Peregrines in Sussex; the crash was likely to be primarily due to adult mortality caused by the direct effect of pesticide poisoning. It has been suggested that the slow population decline of raptors in North America resulted from reduced breeding rates associated with DDT, whereas declines in Western Europe were accentuated into crashes by extra mortality of adults associated with the use of cyclodienes (Newton 1979, Ratcliffe 2003).

There were just a few scattered sightings of Peregrines throughout the 1960s and 1970s (Sussex Bird Report 1960-1979). In 1984 there was a total of 12 sightings but all were in the winter months, indicating that birds from elsewhere may merely have been passing through. Sightings increased to 27 in 1985, one of which was in the breeding season, although nowhere close to the cliffs. This steady increase continued into the late 1980s (SOS archives).

Recovery

Occasionally during the winter of 1989/90 when Bart Atfield was hunting with his falconry-trained male Peregrine near Beachy Head a wild female would fly over and hang around near them, sometimes on consecutive days. No wild male was present that winter but in April 1990 one was observed on the same territory (B. Atfield 1990 *pers. comm.*), and this male successfully paired with the female and fledged one young. This was the first time Peregrines had bred in Sussex for 32 years, and Sussex was in fact the last county in the UK to be reoccupied following the 1955 pesticide-induced crash.

The extensive entries in the Walpole-Bond diaries were a valuable record of the number of available ancestral territories and the way in which they had been used. Only 11 of the original 14 territories still existed by 1990, the other three having been destroyed in the course of coastal protection work during the construction of an under-cliff public walkway. From 1990 onwards there was a steady increase in Peregrines returning to these coastal locations; two territories were occupied in 1991 followed by a third in 1992. Between 1993 and 1995 a fourth was used and this expansion continued until by 2003, with the exception of Cliff End near Pett, all the available territories documented by Walpole-Bond had been used by pairs at some stage (Figure 4). From 1994, additional pairs also began to breed at inland quarries and chalk pits (SOS archives).

In 1998, a nest box was erected in the city of Brighton (G. Roberts, Brighton Peregrine Project *pers. comm.*) to provide an alternative site to a former one on the derelict West Pier (Figure 1). The Peregrines used the pier in 1997, but as renovation work was due to start it was decided to place a nest box on a nearby multi-storey housing block. Two further boxes were erected on buildings regularly used by Peregrines, one on the Shoreham Power Station chimney and the other on the cathedral spire at Chichester. By 2006, a total of 25 territories had been identified; 11 pairs were using coastal cliffs, 10 were in quarries, three were using nest boxes and one was using a self-selected city location (the pair chose to nest on a balcony of a housing block). In spring 2006, 24 of the 25 territories were occupied, a substantial increase on the 14 originally recorded by Walpole-Bond.

Since the species' return to the county, the production of young has risen to an unprecedented level. In the 16-year period between 1990 and 2006, a minimum of 319 young are known to have fledged, compared with the 32-year period from 1922-1954 when only c19 young survived to fledge. The population continues to expand and sightings of Peregrines in the county have increased from 106 in 1990 to 541 in 2005 (SOS archives, Sussex Bird Report 2005). It is no surprise that with Peregrines in the UK at such unprecedented levels, 1402 pairs in 2002 (Banks

et al. 2003), there are many birds peripheral to the breeding pairs. New adults, both pairs and individuals, are abundant and ready to move into any vacant territory. In recent years, more immature birds have been observed in the spring and additional adults are increasingly being seen around the established pairs during the breeding season. In 2005 a new pair was observed moving in and starting to scrape within five days of the area becoming vacant.

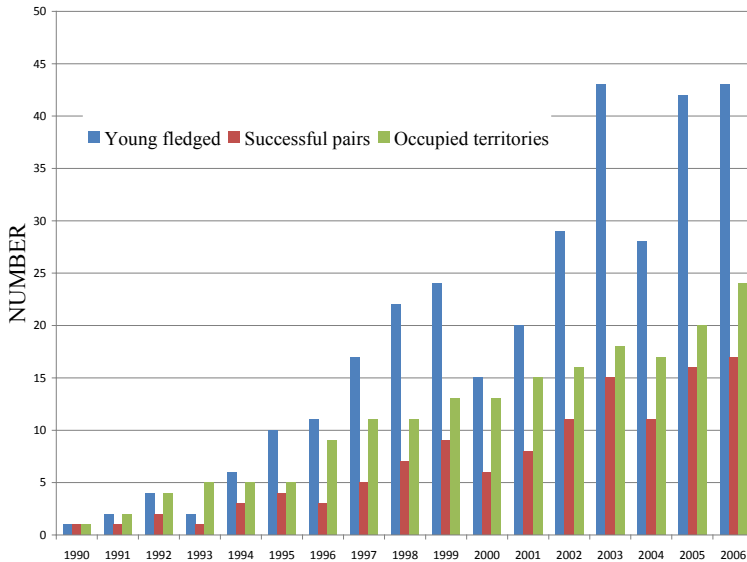


Figure 4. *The number of young Peregrines fledged, successful pairs and occupied territories from 1990 to 2006.*

Further expansion

By 2006 it appeared that all the obvious available nesting sites in the county had been taken up. Beachy Head (Figure 1), the first site to be reoccupied, perhaps typifies a prime territory. It has 152 m-high cliffs with an abundance of good-quality ledges for nesting, and open country over which to hunt (Ratcliffe 1980). As the breeding population has increased, birds have gradually been forced to take up residence on lower-quality rock faces, with a poorer choice of nesting ledges, or use less conventional structures, e.g. the balcony of an occupied apartment in a multi-storey housing block. If expansion continues, it will be interesting to see whether further adaptation takes place, and what new types of nest site are chosen.

Acknowledgements

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Office. Coastline data courtesy of the Channel Coastal Observatory and the Risk of Cliff Collapse Applied Geology Research Unit, University of Brighton.

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Ebernoe Common National Nature Reserve: a managed wilderness in West Sussex

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Introduction

Since the acquisition of the Ebernoe Common reserve by the Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT) in 1980, the author has been the voluntary reserve manager. This paper gives an overview of the changes, the work carried out for management of the site, its location and access, and the flora and fauna present. Ebernoe Common extends to approximately 156 hectares and is situated 3 miles north of Petworth east of the A283. Access is from the A283 down a narrow track off Streels Lane signposted to Ebernoe hamlet. The entrance to the track is 100 metres past a red telephone box. The area is covered by Landranger Sheets 186 and 197 located by the National Grid reference SU976271. The reserve has an open access regime but visitors are requested to keep to the public footpaths and tracks and keep dogs under control. The SWT has produced two leaflets, one about the National Nature Reserve, the other a heritage trail which guides the visitor through some of the Butcherland fields and reserve. The leaflets may be obtained from the Trust's headquarters, Woods Mill, Henfield, West Sussex BN5 9SD. Tel. 01273 492630.

The reserve is a prime example of Low Weald woodland historically grazed by commoners with cattle and pigs the foundation of its current importance as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a National Nature Reserve (NNR) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

History

The initial area acquired in 1980 by the SWT was 75.9 ha of ancient woodland. The previous owner had decided that some tree thinning of the old trees would be beneficial; this caused outrage amongst the local people and environmental organisations and a tree preservation order was hastily implemented. This prevented the tree felling but compensation became a problem. This was resolved by the purchase of the area by the Sussex Trust for Nature Conservation (STNC), now the SWT. In 1994, with the aid of money from Timotei, Plantlife purchased Furnace Meadow, 4.2 ha of meadow contiguous with the northern boundary of the Ebernoe woodland. With the same financial backing, in 1996 Plantlife purchased Brick Kiln Rough, 2.4 ha of hazel coppice with oak standards and some scrub, and again this was adjoining the eastern boundary of the Ebernoe woodland. Both of these parcels of land were then leased to the SWT for 30 years. A much larger addition took place in 2001 when some arable fields and woodland at Butcherland Farm became available to the Trust. This resulted in a further 81.6 ha being added to the initial reserve. Because some of this area was not of high ecological value, it was treated as a separate part of the reserve as far as conservation was concerned. The whole area is mapped in Figure 1.

Designations

In 1972 the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC) contracted Dave Flumm, an SOS member at that time, to carry out a survey of an area that included Ebernoe Common. As a result of this, an enlarged area was designated (under the 1949 Act) a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This was renotified by English Nature (EN) in 1987 (under the 1981 Act). Baroness Young, the then chairman of EN, visited the reserve in the summer of 1999 and declared the reserve a National Nature Reserve (NNR) in pursuance of Section 19(1) of the National Parks

Site description

Ebernoe Common is of national importance as an ancient woodland. It is a complex of woodland blocks created by wood pasture regimes up to 1950. The northern section is predominantly large oak trees with some beech and ash together with hazel, holly, hawthorn and blackthorn as understorey and bordering the open areas or glades. The southern section is largely beech forest with dense holly understorey, with a small meadow on the southern boundary. Wild daffodils are also present in the southern half. The old trees support a rich lichen community and new species are found quite regularly. The fallen wood supports a large fungal community with nearly a thousand species recorded. Ebernoe Common has a diverse woodland breeding bird community, with Mandarin Duck and Woodcock together with Nightingale being the most elusive, but the area is nationally important for its 13 species of bats, and is one of the most important sites in Europe.

Within Ebernoe Common are several ponds with Fish Pond and Furnace Pond holding water all the year. While the birds prefer the deeper and larger Furnace Pond the amphibians use both Fish Pond and other small ponds. Close to Fish Pond is the 18th century brick kiln complex which was operative up to 1930. Furnace Meadow is a separately fenced meadow to the north of the main woodland. It has steep slopes at either end which are floristically rich and in the centre there is a large area of gorse frequented by Adders and Linnets. A small stream flows through the lower section and is favoured by wetland plants as the area is often flooded.

Brick Kiln Rough is a small triangular area with derelict hazel coppice on the north and eastern boundary, with some large oak standards, a central area of scrub, and a small plateau under the power lines that is managed for the rare Wood White butterfly.

The additional areas added to the reserve by the purchase of the Butcherland fields are listed below.

- The Hoe (5.3 ha) is ancient woodland, comparable in quality to the main reserve.
- Common Barn Field (1.6 ha) and Hookcroft (2.5 ha) are both meadows with large hedges and interesting and varied flora, and are accessed off Black Lane.
- Pass Green is an open area of common on the southern side of Black Lane with several very large oak trees.
- Sparkes Field (8.1 ha), Highbuildings Field (6.3 ha) and Lime Kiln Field (9.4 ha) are recently arable fields that have been left to go wild and eventually in 150 years time they will be woodland. These fields are very close to the main reserve.
- Hilland Furze (2.2 ha) is a small area of woodland, with some old chestnut and scrub on the edges. A public footpath passes right through it.
- Church Field (5.6 ha), Nine Acre Field (4.5 ha) and Hilland Field (18.5 ha), together with Hilland Furze, are on the eastern side of Pipers Lane and like the other three fields are ex-arable and are being left to convert to woodland.
- Brick Kiln Field (6.5 ha), contiguous with Brick Kiln Rough, is a field with rank grass which is used for alternative grazing for the Trust's animals.

Management and conservation

Soon after the purchase of Ebernoe Common the late Dr F. Rose was engaged to manage a survey of the reserve to determine the ecological richness of the site. The first stage was to gather a group of stalwarts to help with work on the site, laying out a 100-metre grid based on the Ordnance Survey coordinates, and fitting posts, wood latterly replaced by metal, with tags

affixed which had the grid references engraved on them (fortunately the author was involved in engineering at this time). Help was enlisted from the Horsham Natural History Society (HNHS) to cover the recording of the flora and fauna; learned colleagues of Dr Rose would visit and this would result in a new batch of records in a particular field.



Figure 2. *Sussex Red cattle belonging to the Sussex Wildlife Trust grazing the glades in the Ebernoe Common reserve as part of the management plan. Photograph ©Mark Monk-Terry, Sussex Wildlife Trust.*

From all this data it was obvious that the reserve was a gem. Dr Rose compared it with Bramshaw Woods in Hampshire and these two were the best in Southern England. A management plan was formulated, most of which was the appendices with all the data. To maintain this quality of woodland, the Trust decided that it should aim for woodland pasture by grazing with cattle. It was agreed that the northern section should be grazed. The author had recently completed a term as Conservation Officer for the SOS, so when those involved actually started to carry out physical work, some of the SOS team joined the group and are still there today. The first task was to remove the bracken and restore grassy glades. Cutting, raking and burning were the tasks for two winters and soon there was grass in the glades with flowers, and with that butterflies, White Admirals and Silver Washed Fritillaries being conspicuous along with many other insects. The boundaries for the grazed area were now in the Trust's next management plan, and every effort was made to get permission to erect the fencing. This permission took 2 years to come to fruition. The fences, gates and cattle grids were installed and in the autumn of 2002 Shetland cattle were grazing in the reserve; this has continued to date with the Trust's own Sussex Red cattle (Figure 2)

being used for the past 2 years. The Sussex Red cattle are ideally suited to the task of grazing the grass and nibbling the encroaching scrub. The grazing is restricted to spring and summer periods and is governed by the ground conditions. When not working in the glades the team were keeping all the access paths open for the visitors. The ponds, like the glades, were derelict and one was becoming a wet woodland. This was remedied by winching out the trees to provide open water for dragonflies. Volunteers do like mucking about in mud. With open water the reeds grow at a fast rate and pond clearance is an annual task.

Soon after Furnace Meadow was acquired it was surveyed by the botanists and that autumn much of the grass was mowed and taken away, and the fences were brought up to standard. That winter sheep were grazed, and then after a break in spring for the flowers, cattle were grazed during the summer. The northern boundary of the meadow was just a wire fence so it was decided that it should be planted up with the usual mixture of hawthorn, blackthorn, dog rose and a few specimen trees; this took 3 years to complete. The flora banks at each end have had some of the blackberry removed to improve the botanical interest, and to make a flat area much wetter the field drains have been removed over the last 2 years.

Brick Kiln Rough has a power line running through it, requiring scrub and trees to be kept tightly trimmed. This is also the area where the rare Wood White butterfly was last seen, so annually an area under the lines is mowed and the site is monitored regularly in the hope that the right conditions for the return of this butterfly might be achieved.

The acquisition of the Butcherland fields was a major addition to the reserve and the Ebernoe volunteers have had very little involvement as any work is carried out under the direction of SWT staff and volunteers from the Trust's headquarters at Woods Mill. There was much committee discussion on whether to plant trees and coppice or to let things happen by natural processes. There was no doubt that it was to revert to ancient woodland, although it will take many years to achieve the same situation as in Ebernoe. In the end the natural processes won the day. To achieve this situation all the fields are cattle fenced with the fence line 2-3 metres from the hedge; the hedges were allowed to grow and not cut and the fields were lightly grazed. The changes that have taken place since 2001 are amazing: willow thickets are growing and blackberry patches are protecting young trees from grazing. In Nine Acre Field a large very deep drainage ditch was modified by a skilled contractor and made into four ponds; no material was moved off-site and the ponds have become an asset for both dragonflies and birds.

In these field hedges are some very large oak trees. Since Barn Owls were present it was agreed to fit Barn Owl boxes to these trees. The boxes were made by a volunteer and then erected by SOS President Barrie Watson with the help of volunteers and a cherry picker (courtesy of EDF). The ten boxes erected to date have had variable success.

Since the purchase of the reserve *ad hoc* recording has taken place followed by various dedicated surveys, which has resulted in an enormous amount of data being generated and held at the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) at Woods Mill. The following data refers to Ebernoe Common, Furnace Meadow and Brick Kiln Rough; the data is referenced to the recording squares initiated by Dr Rose. The following notes indicate the number of species within the main different ecological groups and where appropriate a comment on rare or unusual species.

- **Fungi** 934 species recorded with 81 species designated. Three have BAP (2007) status. These are *Podoscypha multizonata*, *Hericium coralloides* (Coral Tooth) and *Hericium erinaceus* (Hedgehog fungus).
- **Lichens** 177 species recorded with 31 species designated. Six have BAP (2007) status.
- **Liverworts** 30 species recorded with one species designated, *Diplophyllum obtusifolium*.

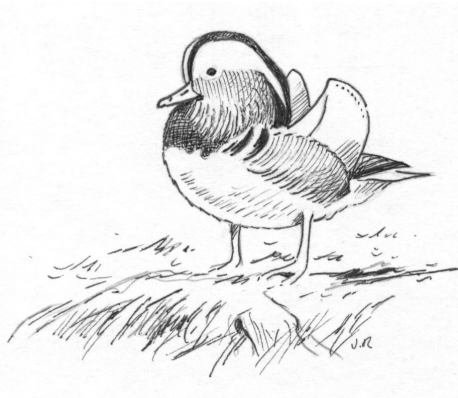
- **Mosses** 98 species recorded with two species designated, the Slender Bristle Moss and the Woolly Fringe Moss.
- **Flowering plants and ferns** 554 species recorded with 16 species designated and 78 species listed as ancient woodland indicators. Small Fleabane, Lesser Butterfly Orchid, Chamomile and Broad-Leaved Spurge are listed as being of conservation concern.
- **Molluscs** 48 species recorded with one species designated, the Ash-Grey Slug.
- **Spiders** 27 species recorded with two species designated.
- **Crustaceans** 10 species recorded with one species designated, the Water Hog Louse.
- **Dragonflies** 22 species recorded with seven species designated. Of note are the White-legged Damselfly, Downy Emerald and Brilliant Emerald.
- **Beetles** 300 species recorded with 36 species designated of which the more often seen is the UK Biodiversity priority species Stag Beetle; also the Sawyer Beetle, Pear Weevil and *Piemostoma fastuosa*.
- **Butterflies** 46 species recorded with 11 species designated, the most elusive of which is the Purple Emperor. Also of note are Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary, Pearl Bordered Fritillary, Brown Hairstreak and the Wood White, not seen for 2 years. Both Purple Emperor and Wood White are listed as species of conservation concern.
- **Moths** 513 species recorded with 53 species designated. Orange Footman and Small Black Arches are species of conservation concern.
- **True flies** 122 species recorded with seven species designated.
- **Other insects** 132 species recorded with seven species designated. Of note are *Eucera longicornis*, Long-Winged Conehead, and Roesel's Bush Cricket.
- **Bony fishes** Eight species recorded with one species designated, the Eel.
- **Amphibians** Six species recorded, with two species designated, the Great Crested Newt and Common Toad, the latter having declined dramatically during the last few years.
- **Reptiles** Five species recorded with four species designated, the Adder, Grass Snake, Slow Worm and Viviparous Lizard.
- **Mammals** 37 species recorded with 19 species designated. These include the European Water Vole, Harvest Mouse, Common Dormouse and Brown Hare. In the United Kingdom there are 16 species of bats present. At Ebernoe 13 species have been recorded: Serotine, Brandt's, Daubenton's, Whiskered, Natterers, Noctule, Nathusius Pipistrelle, Pipistrelle, 55Khz Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared, Grey Long-eared, Barbastelle and Bechstein's. The latter two species have over the last 10 years been the subject of detailed research and the Special Area of Conservation designation cites these two species. Brandt's, Whiskered and Nathusius Pipistrelle are on the UK Biodiversity list of species of conservation concern.
- **Birds** 105 species recorded with 24 species designated.

Soon after the reserve was acquired and the grid squares laid out, *ad hoc* recording took place by dedicated volunteers and groups with natural history interest. Detailed ecological surveys started in 1982 and 1983. A bird survey was organised and the Trust is grateful to all the volunteers who spent many hours in the reserve recording the species and in the season determining breeding where possible, with particular mention of the late Gerry Tomalin. Further surveys were carried out in 1988–90 and 1994. These were organised by Dr P.J. Fuller and Leonard Manns, and recorded in the *Sussex Bird Report* 1995 48:162-175.

Further recording has taken place throughout the years and the dataset held by the SxBRC at Woods Mill is in the opinion of the author one of the most detailed for a nature reserve in Sussex, perhaps only exceeded by those for Rye Harbour and Pagham Harbour. A detailed breeding survey will be carried out in 2009 by Graeme Lyons, the Scientific Officer for the SWT. The following list of birds is as comprehensive as possible. In total 105 species have been recorded in the reserve and 24 (emboldened) have BAP (2007) status.

Mute Swan	Present on Furnace Pond
Canada Goose	One pair breeds on Furnace Pond
Mandarin Duck	Evidence of breeding on Furnace and Fish Ponds
Eurasian Teal	Recorded on both ponds
Mallard	Breeds annually
Pochard	Occasional visitor on Furnace Pond
Tufted Duck	Occasional visitor seen on both ponds
Red-legged Partridge	Very occasionally seen
Grey Partridge	Not seen recently
Common Pheasant	Breeds, often seen in meadows
Golden Pheasant	Seen in car park area
Little Grebe	Has bred on Furnace Pond
Great Cormorant	Visitor to Furnace Pond
Grey Heron	Present most years at Furnace Pond
Red Kite	Seen over the reserve
Sparrowhawk	Breeds
Common Buzzard	Seen regularly
Common Kestrel	Often seen
Hobby	Seen occasionally
Peregrine	Seen very occasionally
Moorhen	Breeds on Furnace Pond
Common Coot	Breeds on Furnace Pond
Northern Lapwing	Seen occasionally
Eurasian Woodcock	Breeds, often disturbed from the wet areas
Green Sandpiper	Occasional
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Flying over reserve
Herring Gull	Overhead
Stock Dove	Heard regularly during spring
Wood Pigeon	Possibly breeds
Eurasian Collared Dove	Possibly breeds
Turtle Dove	At least two calling in Furnace Meadow annually
Common Cuckoo	Heard from the reserve
Barn Owl	Uses barns adjacent to reserve
Little Owl	Recorded
Tawny Owl	Breeds, juveniles seen
Common Swift	Seen around church
Kingfisher	Seen regularly
Green Woodpecker	Breeds, feeds in the fields
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Several pairs breed
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Breeds most years
Woodlark	Occasional
Skylark	Occasional
Sand Martin	Flies over ponds
Barn Swallow	Feeding over reserve

House Martin	Feeding over meadows
Tree Pipit	Occasional
Meadow Pipit	Occasional in Furnace Meadow
Grey Wagtail	Nested in the Brick Kiln one year
Pied Wagtail	Often seen around grazing animals
Pied Wagtail subspecies <i>yarrellii</i>	
Wren	Seen and heard throughout reserve all year
Duncock	Occasional
European Robin	Several pairs breeding in reserve
Common Nightingale	Between three and six singing males annually
Black Redstart	Migrant
Common Redstart	Migrant
Stonechat	Recorded near meadow hedgerow
Northern Wheatear	Autumn migrant
Blackbird	Common
Fieldfare	Winter visitor
Song Thrush	Breeds
Redwing	Winter visitor
Mistle Thrush	Early breeder
Grasshopper Warbler	Occasional
Reed Warbler	Occasional
Blackcap	Song heard in many parts of reserve
Garden Warbler	Breeds in Furnace Meadow
Lesser Whitethroat	Breeds in Furnace Meadow
Common Whitethroat	Breeds in reserve
Wood Warbler	Not heard for many years
Common Chiffchaff	Numerous
Willow Warbler	Not present in recent years
Goldcrest	Common throughout reserve
Firecrest	Seen occasionally
Spotted Flycatcher	Seen most years near church
Pied Flycatcher	Seen once on passage
Long-tailed Tit	Nests annually
Blue Tit	Nests throughout reserve
Great Tit	Nests often by church
Coal Tit	Nests throughout reserve



Willow Tit	No longer present
Marsh Tit	Breeding confirmed, often seen
Nuthatch	Very vocal, breeds
Eurasian Treecreeper	Present but not often seen
Jay	Breeds and seen regularly
Magpie	Seen often in meadows
Jackdaw	Regularly breeds in beech in northern part of reserve
Rook	Since grazing commenced seen feeding in fields
Carrion Crow	Feeds in fields
Carrion Crow subspecies <i>corone</i>	
Raven	Often seen overhead
Common Starling	Seen infrequently
House Sparrow	Occasional
Chaffinch	Common
Brambling	Winter visitor with Chaffinch flocks in woods
Greenfinch	Regularly seen
Goldfinch	Often seen in autumn feeding in fields
Siskin	Feeds in alders
Linnnet	Pairs seen in gorse thicket in Furnace Meadow
Lesser Redpoll	Winter visitor
Redpoll	Winter visitor
Bullfinch	Probably breeds, regularly seen
Hawfinch	Not seen for many years
Yellowhammer	Singing males in Furnace Meadow hedge
Reed Bunting	Has bred but not in recent years

A number of surveys are being repeated or commissioned at Ebernoe Common as part of a process to focus and rationalise management at the site. A deadwood-feeding (saproxyllic) beetle survey (conducted by Dr Mark Telfer) is showing how important this site is for this component of the woodland ecosystem. This large and diverse collection of beetles (nearly 600 species) require as larvae a huge range of different types of deadwood and many then need nectar sources to feed on as adults. It is therefore not surprising that parks and wood-pasture sites tend to have the highest Saproxylic Quality Index (SQI), and before the survey Ebernoe ranked around 120th in the country. Half-way through the survey this value reached 57th best in the country, and 35th best in Southern England. Another entomological survey focuses on timed counts/searches in six distinct areas within Ebernoe. Mike Edwards looks at bees, wasps and ants (Aculeate Hymenoptera), two-winged true flies and mosquitoes (Diptera), grasshoppers and crickets (Orthoptera), while Graeme Lyons looks at butterflies and moths (Lepidoptera), dragonflies and damselflies (Odonata) and wood-feeding beetles (Cerambycida). Neil Sanderson is looking at the rare lichens of Ebernoe, commenting on their quality, as well as setting up a dozen plots where surveys can be repeated in future years. In 2009 Graeme Lyons will complete a repeat of the 40 point counts that were set up at Ebernoe by the BTO in 1988 and which were repeated in 1989 and 1990 (as well as a partial repeat in 1994). Initial results unsurprisingly show a decline in birds that require more open conditions than are currently available. A full report based on all the findings will be produced in the winter of 2009/10.

Soon after the Butcherland fields were purchased, fences and gates were installed. A bird survey was set up initially by Clive Hope and Leonard Manns and in the last 4 years Clive teamed up with Brian Clay. Table 1 shows the maximum species counts recorded in the six fields walked during the 2008 survey while in Table 2 the changes in maximum species counts over a 5-year

period are shown. In general there is a decline in numbers but on the positive side the breeding of Reed Bunting, Stonechat and Skylark are welcome signs.

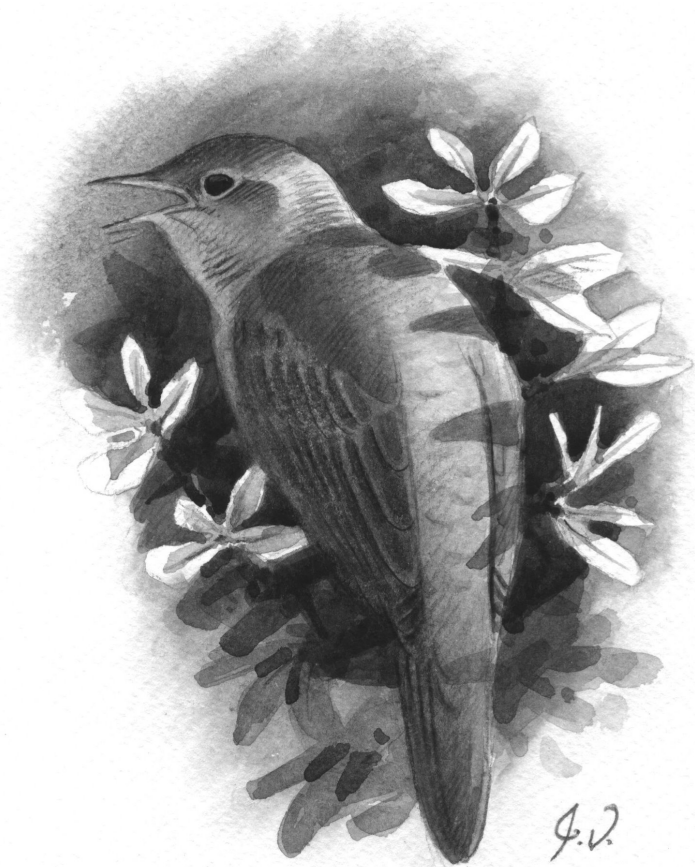
Table 1. *The maximum species counts recorded in the six Butcherland fields surveyed in 2008.*

	Church Field	High Buildings Field	Hilland Field	Lime Kiln Field	Nine Acre Field	Sparkes Field	Highest Max.
Barn Owl			1	1			1
Blackbird			4	2	2	1	4
Blackcap		1	2	1			2
Blue Tit	1	3	5	2	2	2	5
Bullfinch			4		1	3	4
Buzzard			1	1		2	2
Chaffinch		1	3	2	2	1	6
Chiffchaff	2	2	2	5	1	2	5
Crow		1	3	1		1	3
Dunnock		2			4	1	4
Goldfinch			1		1		1
Great Spotted Woodpecker			1			1	1
Great Tit			3		2	2	3
Green Woodpecker	1			1			2
Heron			1				1
Jackdaw		4	12				12
Jay				1		1	1
Kestrel				1	1	1	1
Lapwing			1		1		1
Lesser Whitethroat					1		1
Linnet					1		14
Magpie			2	1			2
Mallard			3		2		4
Mandarin Duck					3		4
Meadow Pipit			34		12		34
Mistle Thrush						2	2
Moorhen				1			1
Nightingale		2			1	1	2
Nuthatch	1	1					1
Peacock			1				1
Pheasant			4	4	1	2	4
Pied Wagtail					1		1
Reed Bunting		1			3		3
Robin	2	4	5	2	1	2	5
Rook				10	1		72
Siskin			4				4
Skylark	2		10		1	2	10
Snipe					2		2
Song Thrush	1		2		2		3

Sparrowhawk			1			1
Stonechat		2	2		1	2
Swallow					1	1
Tawny Owl				1		1
Whitethroat			1	1	1	1
Willow Warbler		1				1
Woodpigeon		1	20	10	1	8
Wren	1	1	3	1	1	3
Yellowhammer	1		1	1	1	1

Table 2. The maximum species counts in the 5 years 2004-2008 inclusive from the Butcherland field surveys.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Max.		2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Max.
Barn Owl				1	1	1	Mallard	3			3	3	3
Blackbird	3	2		5	4	5	Mandarin Duck				1	3	3
Blackcap	2	2		3	2	3	Marsh Tit		1	2	1		2
Blue Tit	2	2		5	5	5	Meadow Pipit	2	2		35	34	35
Bullfinch				2	4	4	Mistle Thrush		1		1	2	2
Buzzard	1	1	1	2	2	2	Moorhen	1				1	1
Carrion Crow	1	2		2	3	3	Nightingale	3	3		2	2	3
Chaffinch	2		10	6	3	10	Nuthatch	2	4		1	1	4
Coal Tit				2		2	Pheasant	5	6		8	4	8
Collared Dove				2		2	Pied Wagtail	2	1		3	1	3
Dunnock	1			3	4	4	Reed Bunting				3	3	3
Fieldfare			2	18		18	Robin	2	1		2	5	5
Garden Warbler	1	1		1		1	Rook	21			100	10	100
Goldcrest		1		1		1	Siskin					4	4
Goldfinch	10	12	25	8	1	25	Skylark	6	6	8	12	10	12
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1			3	1	3	Snipe			1		2	2
Great Tit	1			2	3	3	Song Thrush	1	1	2	2	2	2
Green Sandpiper				1		1	Sparrowhawk					1	1
Green Woodpecker		1		2	1	2	Starling	2	4		60		60
Greenfinch	2		2	1		2	Stock Dove				6		6
Heron			1	1	1	1	Stonechat			2	3	2	3
House Martin	2	1		1		2	Swallow	2	2		3	1	3
Jackdaw	20			30	12	30	Swift				1		1
Jay	1			2	1	2	Tawny Owl					1	1
Kestrel	1	1		2	1	2	Turtle Dove	1					1
Lapwing	8	4	130		1	130	Whitethroat	1	3		3	1	3
Lesser Black-backed Gull				1		1	Willow Warbler				1	1	1
Lesser Whitethroat					1	1	Woodlark	1					1
Linnet	15	3	10	5	1	15	Woodpigeon	8			30	20	30
Long-tailed Tit				1		1	Wren	2	1		4	3	4
Magpie		1		2	2	2	Yellowhammer	2	1		6	1	6



Acknowledgements

Thanks must go to all the volunteers over the years who have sent many records of the birds they have seen, and particular thanks are due to Leonard and June Manns who have contributed a vast amount of data to the records, and also to Brian Clay and Clive Hope for records from the Butcherland part of the reserve. Henri Brocklebank and staff at the SxBRC are thanked for providing data for this paper, with special thanks to Alan Gillham who takes the author's barely legible record sheets and turns them into meaningful data for the Woods Mill computer. Thanks are due also to the staff of the Reserves Department at the Trust headquarters who deleted the major errors, and particular thanks go to Graeme Lyons for his up-to-date data from his latest survey. Finally, thanks are extended to the author's wife Iris, one of the SOS vice presidents, who corrected and typed the manuscript.

Thirty years at Charleston Reedbed: a personal view

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In 1927 or 1928, E.C. Arnold, the then headmaster of Eastbourne College purchased 90 acres of the Cuckmere Valley, known then as the West Dean Brooklands. It was at the northern end of the marsh that he created “the Reserve” (E.C. Arnold – Bird Reserves 1940). This is now known as Charleston Reedbed and covers about 8-9 acres. This parcel of land is part of the Seaford to Beachy Head Site of Special Scientific Interest, and it is now owned by the Arnold Land Trust c/o the Bursar, Eastbourne College. In 1980 a formal agreement was made between the college and the Sussex Ornithological Society (SOS) allowing the latter to manage the site for conservation purposes, although some work had already been carried out on an informal basis.

Reedbed is a misnomer: it is really what is known as Reed Fen, because although the dominant plant is Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) the water table is, at best, at the surface, and for the most part of the year below the surface. The site is bounded on all sides by dykes. The vegetation principally comprises a mixture of mature trees, mainly Common Osier (*Salix viminalis*) and Goat Willow (*S. caprea*), and thickets of Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Tussock Grass (*Alra caespitosa*) and Common Reed. The area is bisected by numerous ditches and there are also a number of small ponds, all these created since the start of SOS management.

Conservation work over the years has primarily concentrated on cutting areas of reeds and then raking to prevent build-up of debris, which would have otherwise contributed to the drying out of the reedbed. This was carried out in four main areas on a rotational basis so that only one area a year was cleared, leaving the other three available to nesting Reed Warblers. It was back-breaking work which is now, with a dwindling (and ageing) work force, no longer viable. Instead, in recent times, efforts have been concentrated on coppicing willows and, more importantly, the removal of Blackthorn. This is proving to be the biggest problem in the site as the water levels in the valley overall are now kept lower than previously and this resultant ‘drying out’ has meant the shrub is proliferating all over the site. Whilst Blackthorn provides autumn and winter thrushes with fruit (sloes) this isn’t the purpose of the site: it is its conservation value as a valuable stop-over site for migrating warblers in the autumn as well as a breeding site.

Although the site is small, there is a scarcity of reedbeds in Sussex and this is the only one of any size in the Cuckmere Valley. Migrants, especially Reed and Sedge Warblers, are attracted to the site because the Mealy Plum Aphid (*Hyalopterus pruni*), a rich food source, lives on the reeds in the autumn and enables the birds to put on the necessary fat for migration.

In both 1994 and 2000 the Cuckmere Valley underwent serious flooding and the reedbed was barely visible above the waters. This was disastrous for both Dormice (*Gliridae*) and Harvest Mice (*Micromys minutus*), which bred on the site but have not been recorded since. Likewise the healthy population of Grass Snakes (*Natrix natrix*) was also wiped out, but happily these have now re-established.

Breeding birds on the site include c. 12 pairs of Reed Warblers, whilst Sedge Warblers are sadly now down to only two pairs, and there are two pairs of Reed Buntings. Other regulars include Moorhen, Wood Pigeon, Wren, Robin, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Long-tailed Tit, Whitethroat, Blackcap, Chiffchaff, Dunnock, Goldfinch and Linnet. Grasshopper Warblers and Turtle Doves used to breed as did Spotted Flycatchers, but no longer. Water Rails, however, have almost certainly bred in recent years.

In past years the reedbed had a significant Swallow roost in the autumns: some 6-7000 were recorded there on 2 October 1971 and 10,000 on 4 October 1973, although these were exceptionally large numbers. Nowadays we are lucky to get double figures although the habitat has hardly changed.

Arnold recorded 137 species in the Cuckmere Valley although this would have included sightings right down to the river mouth. It can be calculated from his notes and present records that 206 species have been seen in or from the reedbed.

Bird ringing at the site started in the autumn of 1969 when Peter Wilson saw its potential, and in this first year he caught 997 birds of 43 species, which somehow proved the point. In these early years Sedge Warblers predominated as did Willow Warblers, whilst nowadays it is Reed Warblers and Chiffchaffs, reflecting the change in populations, particularly in the southeast. Between 1969 and 1977 when Peter stopped ringing he had trapped 11,765 birds of 68 species at the site. The author started the year he finished (1977), together with the late Brian Whitby (who had also ringed occasionally with Peter) and to date the total now stands at 40,384 (of which some 28,000 have been warblers), with a species total of 77. Ringing has been carried out in the autumn every year (with the exception of 1979), mainly only at weekends and during the odd week off work. Other ringers at the site include John Willsher before he moved to Icklesham, the author's wife Susan, and for the last few years Tony Hutson.

Rarities are not a feature of the reedbed although it has produced some good birds over the years with the following trapped: Wryneck (3), Red-backed Shrike (1), Cetti's Warbler (18), Aquatic Warbler (4), Icterine Warbler (1), Dartford Warbler (1), Bluethroat (2), and Little Bunting (1).

In 30 years 28,619 birds have been ringed, of which 183 have been re-trapped or found elsewhere (recoveries), and a further 97 birds which were trapped in the reedbed had been ringed elsewhere (controls). Some of these results are as follows: of the 12 Blackcap recoveries there were singles from Spain, Portugal and Morocco; of 11 Chiffchaff recoveries there were singles from France, Sweden and Senegal, together with one ringed in Senegal and controlled by us; of 13 Willow Warbler recoveries there were singles from Portugal, Morocco and Scotland, with four Scottish and one Irish ringed birds controlled by us, the Scottish birds reflecting the northward trend of this species; of 31 Sedge Warbler recoveries, there were six from France and singles from Morocco, Belgium and Spain, with six Scottish and three Irish ringed birds controlled by us; of 70 Reed Warbler recoveries there were seven from France, two from Senegal, Spain and Portugal, and singles from Morocco and Belgium plus a bird ringed in the Netherlands controlled by us. Other records of note include a Blackbird and a Song Thrush from the Netherlands and a Redpoll controlled in Belgium. All other recoveries/controls not specified are from England.

Comprehensive data for all 77 species ringed at Charleston Reedbed in the 40 years from 1969 to 2007, and in 2008, are listed in Table 1. Similar data for warblers for the 31-year period 1969-1999 and the nine-year period 2000-8 inclusive are listed in Table 2.

The main point is that through the hard work of volunteers from the SOS together with, more recently, work parties from the South Downs Conservation Board and the present support of the author's wife Susan and fellow ringer Tony Hutson the reedbed is still there and still attracting the birds. Long may it continue to do so, because it is a very special place.

Table 1. Ringing records for all species ringed at Charleston Reedbed from 1969 to 2007 and in 2008. The total number of birds ringed in 40 years was 40,384 of 77 species, including 655 ringed of 28 species in 2008.

	1969-2007	2008	Total		1969-2007	2008	Total
Mute Swan	1		1	Chiffchaff	3352	144	3496
Sparrowhawk	15		15	Wood Warbler	12		12
Kestrel	2		2	Goldcrest	900	5	905
Snipe	1		1	Firecrest	25		25
Common Sandpiper	4		4	Pied Flycatcher	18		18
Wood Pigeon	12		12	Spotted Flycatcher	159		159
Turtle Dove	3		3	Whinchat	37		37
Cuckoo	2		2	Stonechat	33	1	34
Kingfisher	112		112	Redstart	82	1	83
Wryneck	3		3	Robin	1071	34	1105
Green Woodpecker	22		22	Nightingale	19		19
Gt Spotted Woodpecker	28	3	31	Bluethroat	2		2
Lr Spotted Woodpecker	1		1	Ring Ouzel	1		1
Sand Martin	8		8	Blackbird	612	7	619
Swallow	183		183	Redwing	10	2	12
House Martin	148		148	Song Thrush	425	10	435
Tree Pipit	18		18	Mistle Thrush	6		6
Meadow Pipit	6		6	Bearded Tit	7		7
Pied Wagtail	30		30	Long-tailed Tit	585	9	594
Red-backed Shrike	1		1	Marsh Tit	7		7
Starling	2		2	Willow Tit	9		9
Jay	17		17	Coal Tit	28		28
Magpie	3		3	Blue Tit	1730	25	1755
Carrion Crow	5		5	Great Tit	587	17	604
Wren	1448	37	1485	Treecreeper	82		82
Duncock	963	18	981	House Sparrow	18		18
Cetti's Warbler	16	2	18	Tree Sparrow	19		19
Grasshopper Warbler	78	1	79	House x Tree Sparrow	1		1
Aquatic Warbler	4		4	Chaffinch	331	2	333
Sedge Warbler	5373	27	5400	Greenfinch	286	8	294
Marsh Warbler	1		1	Siskin	16		16
Reed Warbler	7108	133	7241	Goldfinch	562	3	565
Icterine Warbler	1		1	Linnet	114	2	116
Dartford Warbler	1		1	Redpoll	354		354
Garden Warbler	266	1	267	Bullfinch	209		209
Blackcap	1931	83	2014	Yellowhammer	72		72
Whitethroat	1175	8	1183	Cirl Bunting	4		4
Lesser Whitethroat	491	3	494	Little Bunting	1		1
Willow Warbler	7496	63	7559	Reed Bunting	964	6	970

Table 2. Ringing records for warblers at Charleston Reedbed for the 31 years from 1969 to 1999 and the nine years from 2000 to 2008 inclusive.

	1969-99	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Cetti's Warbler	9				2	3		2		2
Grasshopper Warbler	65	2		2	1	4	4			1
Aquatic Warbler	4									
Sedge Warbler	4804	65	45	267	56	77	20	30	9	27
Marsh Warbler	1									
Reed Warbler	5403	201	129	429	260	304	182	151	49	133
Icterine Warbler	1									
Dartford Warbler	1									
Garden Warbler	233	6	3	5	5	5	4	2	3	1
Blackcap	1318	120	7	85	91	59	119	63	69	83
Whitethroat	919	34	19	55	46	48	21	24	9	8
Lesser Whitethroat	447	3	2	19	9	2	3	2	4	3
Willow Warbler	6426	195	160	173	226	106	114	50	46	63
Chiffchaff	2591	189	24	94	125	90	128	38	73	144
Wood Warbler	12									
Totals	22234	815	389	1129	821	698	595	362	262	465

The River Warbler at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head, 30 May 2008: a first record for Sussex

Matthew Eade

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From the moment I arrived at Beachy Head, I had a feeling that 30 May 2008 was going to be a good birding day. The weather seemed rather promising. It was a bright, warm, sunny day with very little wind and only a few cumulus clouds. Sussex had also hosted a number of good birds during May including a Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* at Newhaven Tide Mills, a Great White Egret *Ardea alba* on the Pevensy Levels and an extraordinarily obliging Alpine Swift *Apus melba* on the 28-29th. Even more encouraging was the prospect that this trend might continue after news came in that John Cooper had located a Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus* at Whitbread Hollow earlier in the morning. With this in mind, Steve Dawson and myself decided to go in search of this bird.

Unfortunately, after walking around Whitbread Hollow for some time it appeared that there was very little evidence of migration taking place beyond the occasional hirundine flying north and there was absolutely no sign of the Rose-coloured Starling whatsoever. Having decided that it had probably flown straight through the area, we walked up the west side of the Hollow where a calling Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla* flew overhead allowing Steve Dawson, Geoff Gowlett and myself to obtain some excellent flight views of the bird, including its white rump. Encouraged by this sighting, which happened to be 18 days later than the 10-year average for this migrating species (and 43 days later than the previous year), Steve Dawson and I reached the top edge of the Hollow by 12:15 BST. At this point our attention was suddenly arrested by an unfamiliar bird song. We both immediately recognized it to be a *Locustella* but we equally quickly recognized that it was neither the familiar reeling of a Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia* nor the less familiar but still very distinctive ‘sewing machine’ sound of a Savi’s Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*. Having arrived at this joint conclusion, we were suddenly struck by the awesome realisation that this was more than likely to be a River Warbler *Locustella fluviatilis*!

We briskly jogged over to the bushes where the bird had been singing and obtained the briefest of views. This enabled us to observe enough to tentatively confirm our initial suspicion that this was a River Warbler given the size of the bird, its dark brown colour on the head and darkish front, but frustratingly no other markings were seen. The bird was now singing continuously but it proved to be extremely elusive and was seen only briefly in flight on a few more occasions.

The news was then circulated, but in the absence of better views it was decided at that time not to put it out on Birdline until the identification was absolutely confirmed. When more birders arrived it was agreed to play a recording of River Warbler in the hope of enticing it out of the dense vegetation. After a long wait and with around 30 birders present, at 15:07 BST the bird finally flew from a low bush to nearby scrub and showed the white tips to its undertail coverts.

The news was then put out on Birdline. In the end, after more protracted waiting (made the more bearable by the arrival of a very obliging Bee Eater *Merops apiaster*), everyone had brief but satisfactory views of this first for Sussex. The warbler remained very elusive, but as the afternoon and evening progressed it did become rather more active and sang for longer periods allowing sound recordings to be made. Unfortunately, that night proved very clear and calm and not surprisingly the River Warbler had moved on by the following morning to the great disappointment of many hopeful birders.

Identification features of the bird

The warbler was a large, bulky *Locustella*, with *no* distinct markings on crown, nape or mantle; plumage features which effectively excluded Grasshopper Warbler. Plumage was dark brown on the crown, nape and mantle with a light brown on the throat which extended down to the belly of the bird. Unfortunately, limited views precluded the possibility of seeing any throat markings which would have been a useful feature to separate River Warbler from Savi's Warbler. The uniform dark brown colour of the bird was, however, a good feature in excluding this possibility. All flight feathers were dark brown but views were not obtained of the leg colour, flanks, mandible or any (faint) eye-stripe.

The flight appeared rather erratic, but the tendency of the bird to often bob its tail up and down allowed views of the white tips to the undertail coverts. These appeared in the form of horizontal barring across the undertail. The tail was long and rounded when seen in flight. During its brief stay the bird occasionally engaged in short flights, always flying low over the vegetation before 'diving' straight into dense vegetation out of sight.

The song was an obvious *Locustella* but was not a continuous reeling sound like Grasshopper or Savi's Warblers. Instead, it was more like a continuous *sche sche sche sche* or *sze sze sze sze...* very distinctive and clearly different from the other two *Locustella* species mentioned above. Sometimes the song went on for over a minute without a break. The song apparently often mimics the sound of local invertebrates.

Thanks go to Roger Charlwood for playing the recording of River Warbler, to David Cooper for his efforts in obtaining some superb sound recordings of the bird and to Geoff Gowlett for contacting a great many very grateful people.

The record has been accepted by the BBRC and is the first River Warbler record for Sussex.

This species has a range covering much of Eastern and Central Europe north to southern Finland. Since the first occurrence on Fair Isle in 1961, a total of 32 River Warblers had been recorded in Britain by 2007. This remains a 'mega' rarity and the Sussex bird was the first mainland record for ten years (the last three having been in Shetland) and the first twitchable mainland bird since one in Staffordshire 12 years earlier. On 9 June another bird appeared on Orkney. [Bob Self]

Sussex gardens: good for birds or birdwatchers?

Mike Toms

British Trust for Ornithology, Thetford, Norfolk, IP24 2PU

Sussex gardens in a wider environment

Sussex is a predominantly rural county and is blessed with some prime bird habitats. Even though it has seen a rapid increase in the size of its human population over the last 150 years, most of this increase has, so far, been contained within defined urban areas; for example, more than 85% of the population in East Sussex resides in towns of at least 5,000 inhabitants. Apart from some notable inland urban areas, such as Crawley, Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill, most of the urbanised land within Sussex is contained within the coastal strip that lies southwest of the South Downs escarpment. This part of the Sussex coastline is one of the most heavily urbanised coastlines within Europe. Most of the interior, however, is rural in nature; a mix of farmland, heathland and woodland, dotted with small villages and hamlets.

The nature of private gardens within Sussex can, therefore, be broadly divided into those that sit within the rural hinterland, and which are generally well connected to surrounding 'natural' habitats, and those that fall within the highly urbanised landscape of the coastal strip and a very few inland urban centres. These urban gardens tend to be smaller in scale and more isolated from 'natural' habitats than their rural counterparts. The isolation of urban and suburban gardens from 'natural' habitats, surrounded as they are by other gardens, high density housing and non-residential buildings, is something that may ultimately diminish their value for wildlife, although little work has been done to quantify this (Gaston 2004). One consequence of this is that private gardens tend to be quickly dismissed as a potential habitat for birds and other wildlife, with conservation and research interest instead focussed elsewhere. However, private gardens make a significant contribution to the amount of urban green space (for example, there are some 9,000 hectares of gardens in East Sussex) and they are arguably the main contributors to urban biodiversity within developed countries (Cannon 1999, Toms 2007). With an estimated 90% of the UK population living within urbanised landscapes, gardens may also be the main means by which people can engage with wildlife, something which may offer health benefits to a component of society increasingly isolated from the wider natural world (Bhatti and Church 2004).

Increasing pressures on land for housing, leading to the erosion of greenbelt land and the loss of urban green space, are likely to alter the balance between 'natural' habitats, the amount of urban green space and the contribution that private gardens make to biodiversity, with unknown consequences for the wildlife that these habitats currently support. With such changes likely to provide the backdrop to the next 50 years of the UK's changing landscape, it would seem essential to improve our understanding of the value of the garden habitat to wildlife, including birds.

Breeding birds in gardens

While individual gardens may seem rather insignificant when viewed in isolation, private gardens, taken as a whole, cover a significant amount of the UK land area. The suitability or otherwise of these gardens, together with other urbanised land-use types (such as brownfield sites, urban parks and cemeteries), may ultimately have a significant influence on the nature of avian communities within the UK's growing area of urbanised landscape. Urban avifaunas are usually dominated by 'generalist' species, seed-eaters and medium-sized omnivores, at the expense of ground-nesters, migrants and foliage-gleaning invertebrate feeders. However, such habitats also

support important populations of a number of bird species of conservation importance. Figures derived from the BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) reveal that 62% of the House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* population, 54% of the Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* population and 33% of the Blackbird *Turdus merula* population, is located within urbanised landscapes during the breeding season (Newson *et al.* 2005). Such figures are supported by other work; Bland *et al.* (2004) highlighted the importance of gardens for breeding birds through the BTO's Garden Nesting Survey, while Mason (2000) determined the significance of private gardens for Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* in the east of England.

Of course, the value of gardens for breeding birds should not be quantified purely on the basis of the number of breeding birds that occur within them. While many birds attempt to breed in gardens, they may not be as successful or productive as their rural cousins. Indeed, a recent review of avian productivity within urbanised landscapes (Chamberlain *et al.* 2009) highlighted a number of consistent patterns which, taken together, support the view that urban nesting birds are less productive than their rural counterparts. The patterns found by Chamberlain *et al.* (2009) were that urban populations show (i) earlier laying dates, (ii) lower clutch sizes, (iii) lower nestling weights, and (iv) lower productivity per nesting attempt. Cowie and Hinsley (1987), working on Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* and Great Tit *Parus major*, found nestling mortality through chick starvation to be very high in suburban habitats, suggesting that a general lack of suitable invertebrate prey items was a limiting factor in successful garden breeding. Work on House Sparrow populations has also highlighted a potential problem, with a diminished availability of invertebrate prey during the breeding season (Peach *et al.* 2008). While food availability may be limiting, rates of nest predation within gardens are likely to be lower than those seen in the wider countryside. This is, however, an area that requires further study.

Garden use in other seasons

Sussex gardens may be used at other seasons by birds, with food provided at garden feeding stations likely to be a big draw for many species. Although the berry and seed crops provided by ornamental trees and shrubs may be a valuable food source during the difficult winter months (Toms *et al.* 2008), the major food resource during this season is that provided in hanging feeders and on bird tables. A market-research study carried out for the RSPB (A. Evans *pers. comm.*) suggests that roughly two-thirds of households provide food for birds during the winter. There is no doubt that such food attracts birds into gardens, with Chamberlain *et al.* (2004) finding that the probability of occurrence for 24 bird species within gardens was significantly higher at sites where food was provided than it was at sites with no such provision. Garden use by particular bird species has also been shown to vary from one winter to another in relation to the availability of natural foods; McKenzie *et al.* (2007) used BTO Garden BirdWatch data to show that garden use by Siskin *Carduelis spinus* and Coal Tit *Periparus ater* was correlated with the size of the Sitka Spruce *Picea sitchensis* crop, a pattern repeated for seven common garden bird species (Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*, Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*, Great Tit, Coal tit, Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*, Nuthatch *Sitta europaea* and Jay *Garrulus glandarius*), in association to the size of the mast crop produced by Beech *Fagus sylvatica* (Chamberlain *et al.* 2007). These species showed significantly lower occurrence in gardens in those years where the tree seed crops were most abundant.

The use that birds make of gardens, both within and across years, is something that is being studied through the regular weekly recording of the 15,000 or so BTO Garden BirdWatchers. Some 532 currently participate in the project within Sussex (but more would be welcomed). Each participant collects simple information on the bird species using their garden each week throughout the year. Observers are instructed to make their count or counts at more or less the same time or

times each week (some may record for a single hour every Sunday, while others make a count each day). The important thing is that observers should be consistent in their recording effort from one week to the next. Each observer is asked to note the maximum number of individuals of a given species seen together during the course of their recording. Hence, seeing two Blackbirds together on a Monday, but three together on the Thursday, would produce a count for the week of 'three'. Records can either be submitted on paper recording forms, sent in on a quarterly basis, or by using Garden BirdWatch Online; the latter is a bit like having an online diary, the participant logging in to their 'diary' to record what they have seen, to call up previous records (whether submitted online or via the paper count forms) or to produce simple summary outputs. Garden BirdWatch is unique among BTO surveys in that it is funded through participants' contributions, in return for which participants also receive a quarterly magazine.

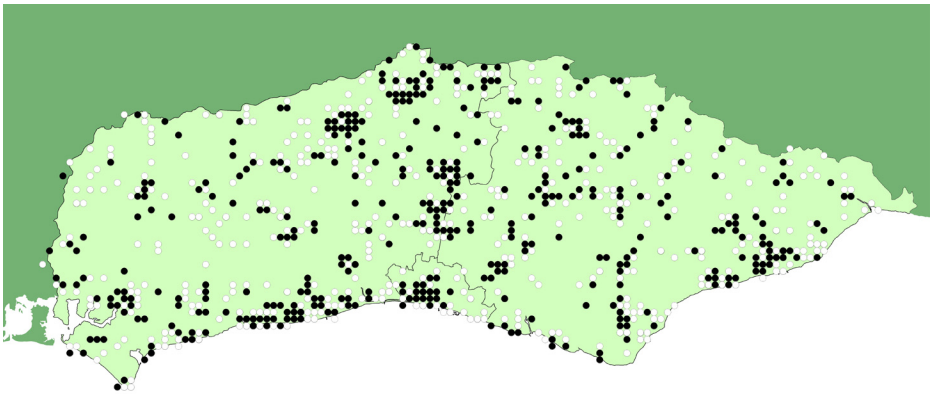


Figure 1. *Distribution of BTO Garden BirdWatch sites within Sussex. Currently active sites are shown as black dots; sites that are not currently active are shown as white dots.*

Records received by the BTO from Garden BirdWatch participants are checked and validated (by looking for unusually high counts, species seen out of season or out of range) and then loaded into an online database. Each night, a series of computer programs process the data to produce summary outputs as tables, graphs and maps, all of which are available to view on the Internet (www.bto.org/gbw). These data are also increasingly being made available to County Bird Recorders, providing much needed information on trends in common and widespread species within the garden habitat. With some 300 or so submissions made each week from Sussex gardens (Figure 1), it is possible to look at the way in which birds make use of gardens within Sussex and to view these alongside broader scale national patterns.

Charting the increase in garden use

At the simplest level, BTO Garden BirdWatch records can be expressed as a reporting rate (the number of sites from which the species was recorded, divided by the number of sites submitting counts), allowing the production of graphs which show the change in garden use over time. That for Goldfinch in Sussex (Figure 2) shows a general increase in garden use over the winter months, with a seasonal peak in garden occurrence towards the start of the breeding season, a pattern that is more pronounced when the larger national dataset is examined. The increase in garden use over a longer period of time can also be seen, with Goldfinches increasingly exploiting the high energy

seed mixes (and nyjer seed) on offer at garden feeding stations. A similar long-term increase in garden use can be seen for Wood Pigeon, a species for which changes in agricultural practices have prompted rapid population increase. Alongside the increase in numbers has also come greater movement into other habitats, with gardens increasingly favoured for the bird table fare on offer. Of course, not all species are increasing their use of gardens. House Sparrow numbers have decreased from 12 million pairs nationally to roughly 6 million today, with Garden BirdWatch figures charting the decline over the period since the project started in 1995. Long-term datasets of this kind are extremely useful for highlighting such changes in abundance and also habitat use, the former requiring the additional incorporation of data from other BTO surveys, carried out in other habitats (Cannon *et al.* 2005).

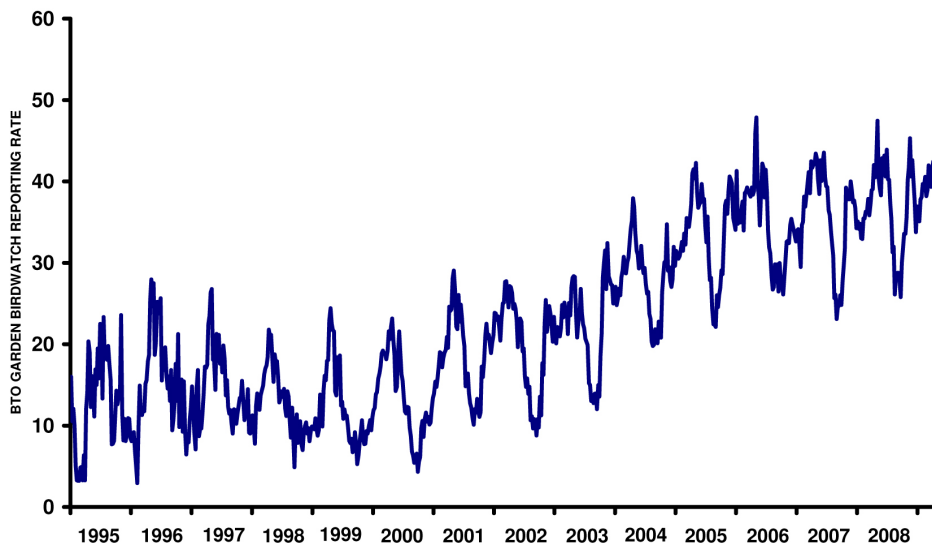


Figure 2. Use of Sussex gardens by Goldfinch, 1995-2009, derived from BTO Garden BirdWatch data. Reporting rate is the number of sites at which the species was recorded in any given week, divided by the number of sites participating that week.

Seasonal patterns

Differences in seasonality of garden use between species, and changes in seasonal patterns within a species over longer periods of time, can also be seen from the simple reporting rate graphs. By superimposing individual years on top of one another within the same graph, it has been possible to highlight the effects of the recent disease outbreak in Greenfinches on garden reporting rate. The disease, which is caused by a single-celled parasite called *Trichomonas gallinae*, was first reported in Greenfinches in 2005. However, the first large-scale outbreak was not seen until late summer 2006, when it hit Greenfinches, and to a lesser extent Chaffinches, across a large part of Central England. The knock-on effect of this outbreak can be seen from the graph (Figure 3), with the reporting rate for 2006 failing to increase as expected during the last quarter of the year (a period when reporting rates generally increase as birds move into gardens during the first months of winter). The impact continued into 2007, with garden use down throughout the year, with

another late summer outbreak (this time in southeast England) again halting the usual early winter increase. Examination of the Garden BirdWatch dataset, alongside *post mortem* information collected through the Garden Bird Health initiative (GBHi), has confirmed the dramatic impact of this emerging infectious disease on the Greenfinch population. Those populations within outbreak areas have lost roughly one in five individuals to the disease. Garden BirdWatch data will be very valuable in helping to chart the longer-term impacts of the disease on the Greenfinch population and to warn us of emerging infectious diseases in other garden-visiting species.

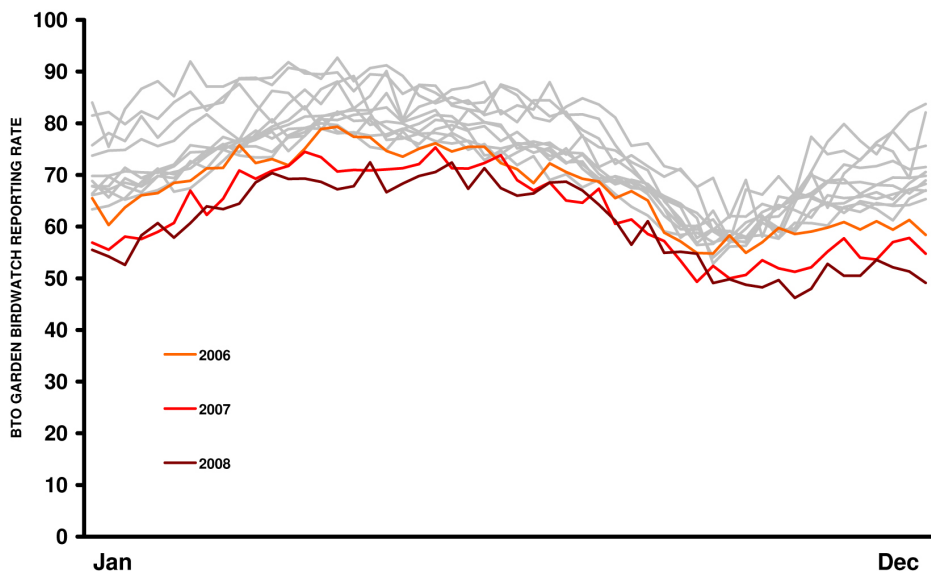


Figure 3. Use of Sussex gardens by Greenfinch, split by year, 1995-2008, derived from BTO Garden BirdWatch data. Reporting rate is the number of sites at which the species was recorded in any given week, divided by the number of sites participating that week.

Garden BirdWatch records have also been used to examine the pattern of wintering Blackcaps *Sylvia atricapilla* in the UK, the Blackcap being a species first recorded overwintering in Sussex during the 1947/48 winter (James 1996). While most of our summer breeding Blackcaps migrate south during the autumn, wintering in southern Iberia and North Africa, increasing numbers of birds have been reported wintering here over the last few decades. Most of these birds appear to be from the Central European breeding population, arriving here during September and October to feed in woodland and scrub before moving into gardens from late December. Examination of the Garden BirdWatch dataset reveals the presence of these birds in Sussex gardens (Figure 4) during the winter period, with the proportion of gardens hosting them varying between years. Interestingly, an examination of the national Blackcap dataset suggests that gardens in the southwest of Britain are the most heavily used, something likely to be related to the milder climate experienced here during the winter months. Additionally, it appears that urban and suburban gardens are preferred to rural ones. This may also be a consequence of winter temperatures, with heat lost from buildings known to increase the temperature in urban centres by as much as 8°C above that in the surrounding countryside (a pattern known as the ‘urban heat island effect’). If

Blackcaps are limited by winter temperature then gardens in southern England are a good place to overwinter.

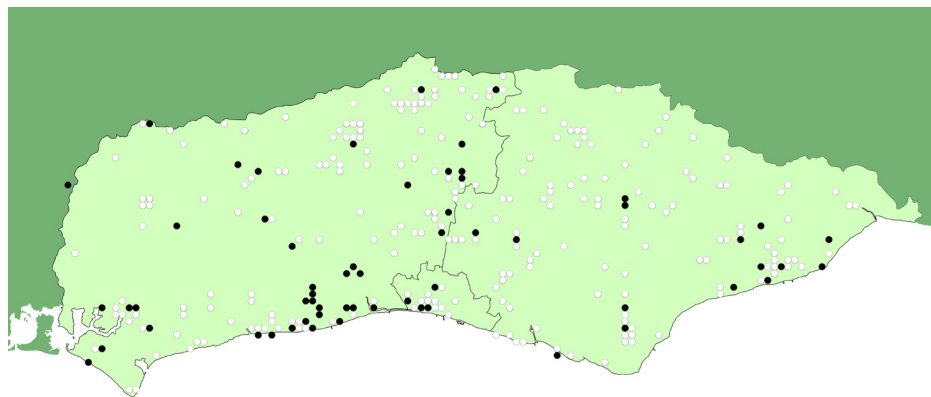


Figure 4. Distribution of Blackcaps in Sussex BTO Garden BirdWatch gardens during the 2007/2008 winter. Sites at which Blackcap was recorded are shown as black dots; sites at which the species was not recorded are shown as white dots.

What next for garden birds in Sussex?

The occurrence of ‘common’ birds in Sussex gardens is not too different from the national average (Table 1) but there are some notable differences among some of the less common species. Some of these differences may reflect the more rural nature of gardens contributing within Sussex than is seen nationally. For example, Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* and, to a lesser extent, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor* may appear more frequently for this reason. Other differences, such as the greater number of Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* records, may reflect the coastal nature of much of the urbanised component.

Table 1. The 10 most frequently recorded garden birds nationally in each quarter of 2008. The figures shown are the reporting rates, which are the numbers of sites at which the species was recorded in any given week, divided by the numbers of sites participating that week.

Species	BTO Garden BirdWatch quarter in 2008			
	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec
Blackbird	97.5	96.5	84.5	89.7
Blue Tit	91.9	88.7	82.9	89.8
Robin	91.7	84.2	79.1	89.6
Dunnock	81.6	79.8	69.4	75.1
Chaffinch	80.2	72.9	60.4	70.7
Wood Pigeon	77.9	84.5	78.4	71.1
Great Tit	77.3	76.2	71.7	79.3
Collared Dove	70.8	73.7	68.8	64.0
Greenfinch	64.4	70.9	62.0	56.6
House Sparrow	64.2	71.0	64.5	60.0

Collecting information on garden birds within Sussex provides a valuable insight into how birds utilise gardens in relation to other habitats. We know, for example, that rural garden feeding stations are particularly important for farmland species, like Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*, Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* and Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*, providing much-needed food during the difficult final days of winter when there is little seed to be found within farmland itself. It is likely that we will see further expansion in the size of urban areas within Sussex and ongoing infilling of urban green space with high density housing. We need to be able to determine what impact this will have on our bird populations, not just on those that already utilise the urban habitat, like our struggling House Sparrows, but also those species that use more ‘natural’ habitats soon to be built on with new urban developments. With most previous research and monitoring efforts targeted at habitats other than gardens, we lacked a complete picture of what was happening to our bird populations. Being able to get information on birds in gardens is largely dependent upon engaging homeowners and getting them to participate as ‘citizen scientists’ in recording what is using their gardens. Only by doing so, can we collate the information that we need to properly understand what is happening to those birds using Sussex gardens.

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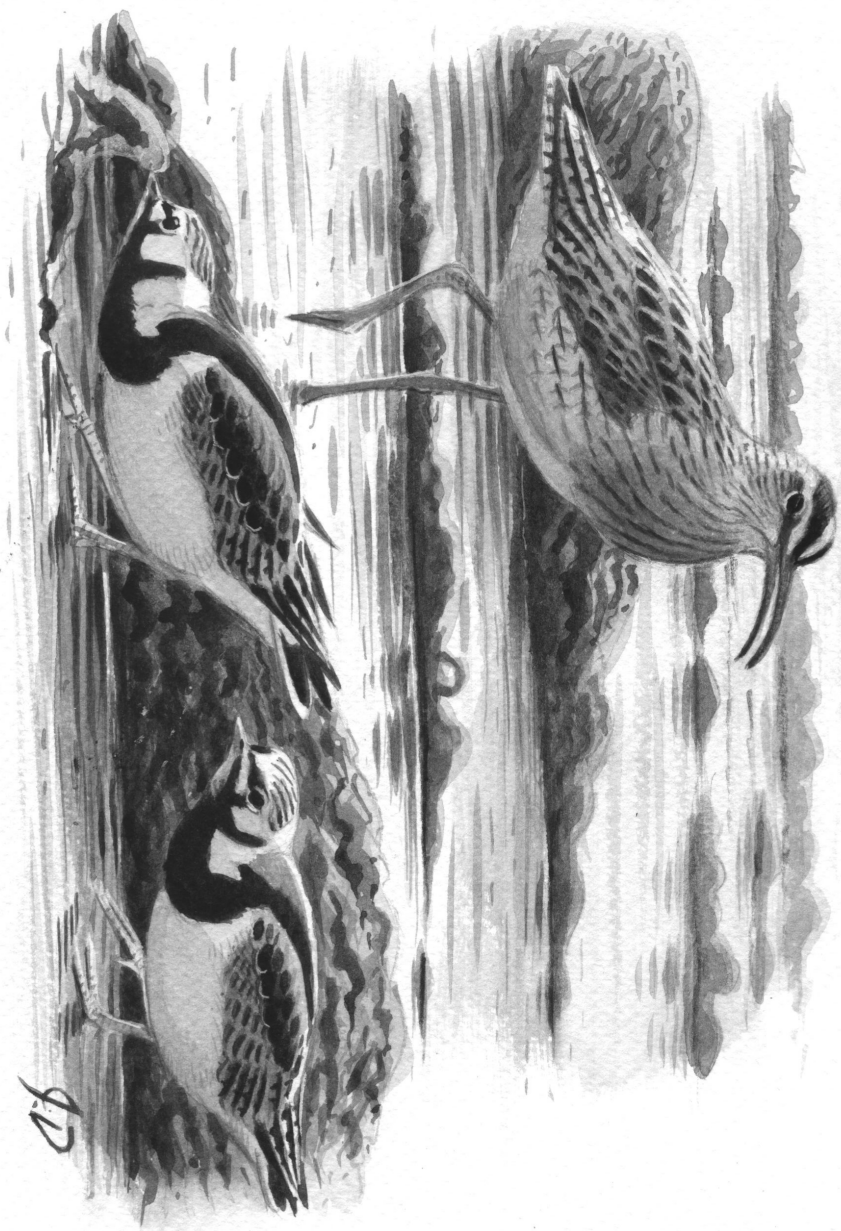
UNUSUAL RECORDS

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 e-mailed to the Recorder (postal submissions are also accepted). 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 the first page 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 (as at 1st January 2010) for which descriptions are required:

Whooper Swan	Temminck's Stint	Icterine Warbler
Bean Goose (both races)	White-rumped Sandpiper	Melodious Warbler
Pink-footed Goose	Pectoral Sandpiper	Barred Warbler
American Wigeon	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Subalpine Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Grey Phalarope	Greenish Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Red-necked Phalarope	Pallas's Warbler
Ferruginous Duck	Pomarine Skua (except in spring)	Yellow-browed Warbler
Surf Scoter	Long-tailed Skua	Radde's Warbler
All pheasants (except Common)	Sabine's Gull	Dusky Warbler
White-billed Diver	Ring-billed Gull	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Great Northern Diver (ex. Selsey)	Caspian Gull	Willow Tit
All shearwaters (except Manx)	Iceland Gull	Crested Tit
All petrels (except Fulmar)	Glaucous Gull	Golden Oriole
Cattle Egret	White-winged Black Tern	Red-backed Shrike
Great White Egret	Roseate Tern	Woodchat Shrike
Purple Heron	Black Guillemot	Chough
White Stork	Little Auk	Hooded Crow
Honey-buzzard	Puffin	Rosy Starling
Black Kite	Alpine Swift	Serin
White-tailed Eagle	European Bee-eater	Twite
Montagu's Harrier	Short-toed Lark	Common (ex-Mealy) Redpoll
Goshawk	Shore Lark	Arctic Redpoll
Rough-legged Buzzard	Red-rumped Swallow	Parrot Crossbill
Red-footed Falcon	Richard's Pipit	Common Rosefinch
Spotted Crake	Tawny Pipit	Lapland Bunting
Corn Crake	Red-throated Pipit	Cirl Bunting
Common Crane	Water Pipit	Ortolan Bunting
Stone-curlew	Dipper	Rustic Bunting
Kentish Plover	Bluethroat	Little Bunting
Dotterel	Aquatic Warbler	
American Golden Plover	Marsh Warbler	



In addition, descriptions are required for **all** races other than the normally occurring one including: Black Brant, Baltic Gull, *argentatus* Herring Gull (exc. Rye Bay area) Kumlien's Iceland Gull, Scandinavian Rock Pipit, Yellow Wagtail (except 'Blue-headed') and 'Continental' *ater* Coal Tit 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 and on the SOS website.

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.

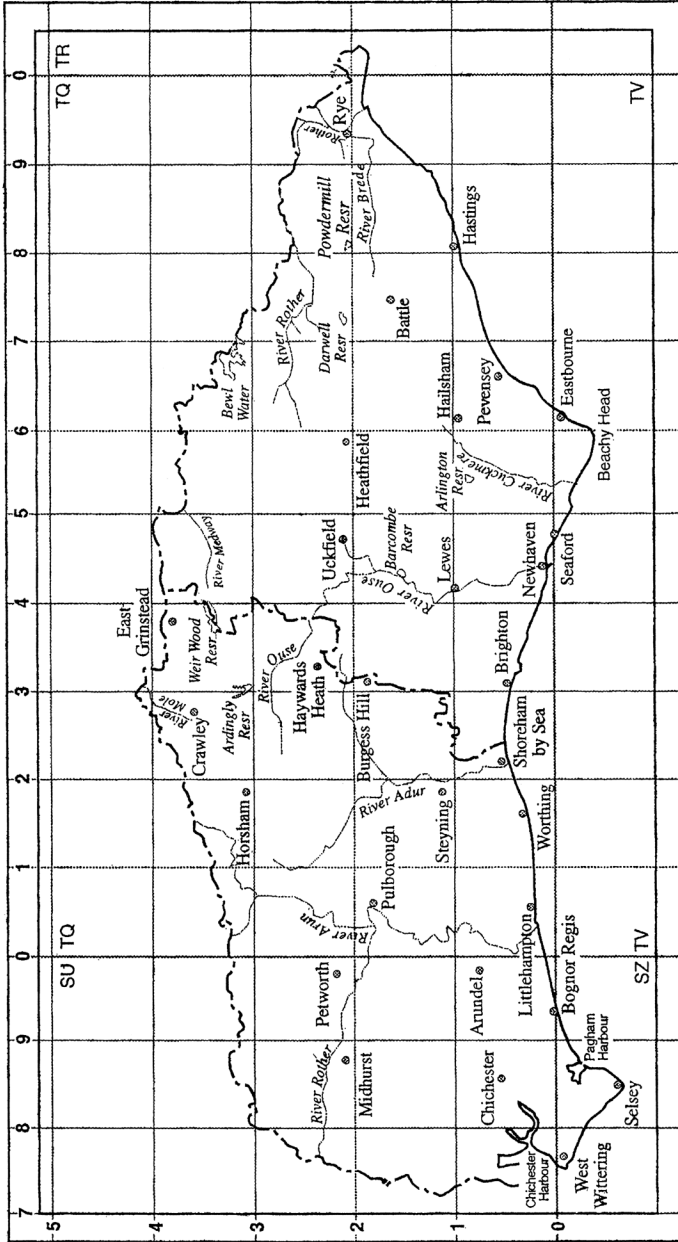
The annual Sussex Bird Report (which is free to members). This contains a number of well-researched papers and a full systematic list of birds seen in our county. These records are assessed by the Recorder and a Records Committee, to ensure that each entry portrays the true current status of the birds in Sussex.

A year round diary of field outings led by expert birdwatchers, with visits to all parts of East and West Sussex.

An annual conference, which gives members an opportunity to get together, hear details of the Society's current work, and enjoy talks by local and national experts.

Visit our website for the very latest details of bird sightings in Sussex, and to find out lots more about the Society.

www.sos.org.uk



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Shoreham by Sea

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Newhaven

Seaford

Eastbourne

Beachy Head

Hastings

Battle

Powdermill Reservoir

River Rother

Darwell Reservoir

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GAZETTEER

Alexandra Park, Hastings	TQ8010	Charleston Reebbed	TQ5100	Henfield Levels	TQ1914	Northpoint Pit, Rye	TQ9319	Sidlesham Ferry & Fields	SZ8596
Amberley Wild Brooks	TQ0314	Chelwood Vachery	TQ4330	Holles, Ashdown	TQ4528	Old Airstrip, Ashdown	TQ4231	Sumpting Brooks	TQ1804
Ambersham Common	SU9119	Chichester Gravel Pits	SU8703	Hollingbury Camp	TQ2027	Old Lodge Reseave	TQ4630	South Stoke	TQ0210
Angmering Park Estate	TQ0906	Chichester Harbour	SU7600	Horse Eye Level	TQ6208	Pagham Harbour	SZ8596	Sovereign Hbr Marina	TQ6403
Apuldram Manor Farm	SU8301	Church Norton	SZ8795	Horsehoe Plantation	TV5695	Pagham Lagoon	SZ8896	Splash Point, Seaford	TV4898
Arding Reservoir	TQ3229	Cissbury Ring	TQ1408	Hotham Park, Bognor	SZ9399	Panuel Sewer	TQ8715	St Leonards Forest	TQ2231
Arlington Reservoir	TQ5307	Climping	TQ0001	Hurstpierpoint	TQ2716	Parham Estate	TQ0614	Stakes Island	SU7801
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Belle Tout	TV5695	Ebnoes Common	SU9726	Lavington Common	SU9418	Pippingford Park	TQ4430	Thorney Deepes	SU7603
Billinghurst	TQ6733	Elms Farm, Icklesham	TQ8815	Lewes Brooks	TQ4207	Portfield Gravel Pit	SU8805	Thorney Island	SU7602
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The grid references given are intended as a guide only to finding the sites and are not necessarily where a species was observed.

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