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SUSSEX ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The Sussex Bird Report

Number Sixty-four, 2011



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Editorial Team: MJ Chattaway, NL Bond, Dr HM Crabtree,
JA Hobson, P James, Dr JA Newnham

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Sussex Bird Report 2010 amendments and corrections

Very few errors in the 2010 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.

Photographs

Cover photograph: *Tree Sparrow, Hodcombe, May 2011 (Roger and Liz Charlwood)*

The Photographic Editor would like to thank those photographers who submitted photographs of Sussex birds taken in 2011, 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

Joanne Chattaway

It has been an honour to edit this report, the 64th Sussex Bird Report. Records for 2011 were again high, with nearly 184,000 records submitted, the second highest number ever, of 260 species. Thanks are due to all the contributors who submitted records in 2011 and to all those who participated in the BBS, Atlas and other surveys. There were 34 individuals who each submitted over 1000 records. A full acknowledgment of contributors appears on pages 246-252.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Submitting records	632	1207	962	952	986	948
Records received	96,595	148,292	191,788	176,388	170,113	183,732
Species recorded	253	253	266	257	269	260
Birds ringed	54,661	51,372	54,330	73,191	82,660	101,766
Species ringed	109	116	108	112	115	120
Species on county list	388	388	389	390	391	397

Observers are reminded that unless records are submitted, they will not appear in the society's database, and for those species for which descriptions are required, unless submitted and approved by the society's Records Committee, the records will not appear in this and future reports. Observers are therefore urged to complete the brief but necessary form for those species requiring descriptions. Observers are also reminded of the importance of recording breeding status and detailed grid references with their records.

2011 has been a remarkable year for species new to Sussex with six species added to the county list. The excitement of the finding, tracking down and identifying of some these species is described on pages 253-262 by some of the fortunate birders concerned. Thank you to Roger Charlwood, Bernie Forbes, Ian and Sally Hunter and Neil Morris.

A Rook survey was undertaken in 2011 and details of this are on pages 272-276. A new annual survey, the Sussex Winter Bird Survey (SWBS) began in November 2011. The SWBS is a local initiative, organised by Dr Helen Crabtree and it is hoped that, after a period of several years, it will provide information about annual fluctuations of common wintering birds.

The species accounts were written by a large team of writers, namely CF Ball, CJR Barfield, VP Bentley, R Black, D Boddington, C Brooks, DA Burt, P Carter, MJ Chattaway, WE Coleman, JR Cowser, J Curson, P Denyer, RJ Eastwood, GD Evans, D Green, AC Gutteridge, WG Harvey, JA Hobson, A House, DH Howey, P James, ME Kalaher, SH Linnington, JA Newnham, G Osborne, TW Parmenter, RT Pepper, PJ Plant, AH Podmore, CJ Reay, TJ Seabrook, MV Sennit, MD Shaw, SP Simpson, A Thomas, LA Walther, AB Watson and JH Whitman. The initials at the end of each account identify the writer. Thank you all and a special thanks to Dave Boddington for stepping in and so willingly writing more accounts at a late stage.

Thanks are also due to the team of proofreaders: Jacob Everitt, Dick Gilmore, John Hobson, David Howey, Peter Hughes, Paul James, Phil Jones, Owen Mitchell, John Newnham, Adrian Thomas and Barry Yates, who have patiently read through versions of the species accounts and made recommendations for improvements, additions and amendments. As a result, some of the draft species accounts have been edited to reflect the suggestions made, to include late records and to present the records in a uniform fashion for future researchers. I hope that this action has not offended any of the authors, but if it has done so, I offer my sincere apologies.

In addition, I would like to thank Tony Cocks for editing the scientific papers for the past 14 years; he is succeeded by Helen Crabtree. Thanks also go to the writers of the scientific papers: Barry Yates, Richard Cowser, Helen Crabtree, John Newnham, Dave and Penny Green and Richard Thompson; to Sam Bayley for his ringing report; to Jon Curson for writing the Review of the Year; to Nick Bond for selecting and processing the photographs; to Helen Crabtree for typesetting; to Robert Yarham for designing the cover; to John Newnham for his Database Report and his meticulous attention to detail with the computerised records; and to John Hobson for his primary proofreading and numbers verification.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used as standard practice:

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

Review of 2011

Jon Curson

As with previous years, this review of 2011 is a chronological summary of the year's weather and significant birds, including first and last arrival/departure dates, high counts of various species, a summary of the more notable breeding species, and other interesting and unusual records, including of course all rare and scarce species. A total 260 species was recorded in the county in 2011, which is nine fewer than in 2010. Since 1997 the annual totals have varied between 250 and 269.

The highlight of the year for most people was probably the county's first **Pallid Harrier** at The Burgh; first seen on 15 Sep it remained in the area until 7 Oct and was seen well by many birders. A close contender for this title though was the **Isabelline Wheatear** found at Crowlink on 15 Oct, which gave excellent views to those who could get there during its short stay. Other notable highlights included three other 'firsts' for the county, as follows: a **Blyth's Reed Warbler** was trapped at Pett Level on 10 Jun; a **Citrine Wagtail** was found in the lower Cuckmere Valley on 25 Sep but was also only present for one day and seen by only a few observers; and finally a **Buff-bellied Pipit** (of the American race *rubescens*) was seen and photographed at Newhaven West Beach on 9 Oct, although its identity was not confirmed (from the photographs) until afterwards. Much more widely appreciated was a **Little Crake** at Arundel WWT for four days in April, the first in the county since the famous Cuckmere bird in 1985 and the 14th in total. Other highlights included over 100 **Waxwings** (during the first winter period and remaining from the invasion the previous autumn), **Red-breasted Goose** (in early January), a mobile **Black Brant** (which seemed to wander widely during the first winter period), a **Purple Heron** (at Southeast in April), a **Gull-billed Tern** at Pulborough Brooks in May, the county's fourth **Spotted Sandpiper** at Swanbourne Lake in June, a long-staying **Cattle Egret** in the Pagham/Chichester Harbour from July to November, a **Black-crowned Night Heron** (at Weir Wood in late August and into September), a **Black Stork** (at Beachy Head in August), three **Barred Warblers** (two in September and a third in October), the county's sixth **Dusky Warbler** (trapped at Pett level) in October, a **Little Bunting** (trapped at Steyning), a **Penduline Tit** (trapped at Pett Level), plus a **Green-winged Teal** in November, and another **Black Brant** (in December). In addition, there was a quite astonishing influx of **Short-eared Owls** (involving at least 88 birds!) in late autumn, a significant total of seven **Sabine's Gulls** in September, plus seven **Red-rumped Swallows**, six **Pallas' Warblers** and four accepted records of **Caspian Gulls** during the year; with regard to the latter species it is suspected that this gull (which presents challenging identification problems) may be more numerous than these records suggest.

January

In complete contrast to the biting cold of December 2010, January was mild and dry and the month was largely dominated by Atlantic weather systems bringing frequent heavy rain, strong winds and often double-figure temperatures, thus providing a real contrast to December.

The **Red-breasted Goose** at Pett Level (among 130 or so **White-fronted Geese**) on the 1st was joined by eight **Tundra Bean Geese**, seven **Pink-footed Geese**, at least two **Pale-bellied Brent Geese** and a **Black Brant**, resulting in surely one of the most impressive goose flocks seen in the county in recent years. Other lingering geese included the 115 or so **White-fronts**

in the Arun Valley, the 74 **White-fronts** and 70 or so **Barnacle Geese** in the Cuckmere Valley, and further significant flocks of 150 **Barnacle Geese** at Pett Level, and another 100 at Scotney Court. The **Red-breasted Goose** was not seen after the 1st but the other geese remained well into January, gradually disappearing as the milder weather took hold (those in the Cuckmere remained till at least the end of January, though the number of **Barnacles** had declined to about 20 by mid-month). Also on the 1st there was a record-breaking movement of **Red-throated Divers**; they were reported all along the coast, especially in East Sussex, but the highest count by far was 1500 past Hastings in just two and a half hours, eclipsing the previous record. A **Rough-legged Buzzard** (one of two reported this year) graced Pett Level from the 1st to the 5th, and a pair of **Snow Buntings** at Prinsted were also lingerers from last year, staying until at least the 13th. Six **Great Northern Divers** off Selsey Bill on the 2nd was the joint highest count of the year at this regular site for this species. Also of significance on the 2nd were ten **Red-necked Grebes**, among a very large flock of **Great Crested Grebes**, at West Kingston. The regular **Great Grey Shrike** at Ashdown Forest was seen at various locations from the 3rd up till at least 21 Mar. A **Common Sandpiper** at Coombes on the 3rd was one of nine seen during the month (including three on the Adur and two at Piddinghoe). Five **Whooper Swans** at Barnham on the 5th (which stayed into February) was also a high count for the year, and a single at Northiam from the 15th to the 30th was the only other one recorded in the first winter period. On the 2nd a **Lapland Bunting** was at East Guldeford; after the major influx last autumn, numbers returned to normal this year. Continuing the finch theme, a **Snow Bunting** at Ashdown Forest on the 4th was an unusual inland record, and there was an exceptional count of 350 **Bramblings** at Petworth on the 6th.

The **Waxwing** invasion of 2010 continued into 2011, although numbers dropped, presumably with the milder weather of January. In the early part of the month there were still 30 or so in Worthing and a similar number in Eastbourne, in mid-month there were 22 at Pett Level, and altogether they were seen at 31 locations during the month. **Velvet Scoters** were also around in good numbers in January with about 30 reported at various coastal sites, the maximum at any one site being 18 in Rye bay on the 2nd. Three **Long-tailed Ducks** flew west past Worthing on the 6th, a high count for the year for this increasingly scarce species, and also on the 6th six **Yellow-legged Gulls** at Pagham Harbour was the highest count for the first winter period. In contrast, **Smew** were very scarce with only eight reported in the first winter period, including a male and up to two females in the Rye area on a few dates during January. A first-year **Caspian Gull** was found in the lower Cuckmere Valley on the 8th and the first **Little Gull** of the year was off Selsey Bill on the same day. A very unseasonal **Northern Wheatear** at Newmarket Hill on the 10th was only the fifth January record for this species. Buntings featured again mid-month, with a **Lapland Bunting** at Goring Gap on the 12th-13th and a **Snow Bunting** at Rye Bay on the 16th. A **Red-crested Pochard** turned up briefly at Loxwood on the 21st, but it was a quiet month overall, which ended with a **Water Pipit** at Coldwaltham on the 27th, the regular **Slavonian Grebe** flock off Church Norton/Selsey Bill peaking at 35 birds, and four **Sandwich Terns** off Selsey Bill on the 30th; this species is now regular in winter, especially in West Sussex, but this was the highest count for the first winter period.

February

February began as mild as January, with some very strong winds during the first week. It continued unsettled mid-month with frequent Atlantic depressions, but also some welcome sunshine. The end of the month saw a noticeable rise in temperature, though it remained unsettled.

February kicked off with a **Snow Bunting** at Rye Bay on the 1st, but probably more exciting was a **Common Crane** at Warnham the next day. Also on the 1st the wintering flock of **Red-**

throated Divers in Rye Bay peaked at 80. A total of 42 **Bewick's Swans** at Burpham on the 2nd was the highest count for the regular Arun Valley herd in the first winter period. The two **Greater Scaup** that had been found at Widewater in early January stayed until at least the 27th. Six **Eurasian Bitterns** at Rye Harbour on the 3rd was a high count for this species and reflects its recent good fortune which is (at least partly) down to good habitat management. Also on the 3rd a **Common Sandpiper** was at Pett Level, with further individuals being seen at Lewes Brooks and Newhaven (possibly the same bird), and at Warnham on scattered dates through the rest of the month. **Common Eiders** have decreased as wintering birds in Sussex in recent decades (a sign of global warming surely?) and a total of 56 in Chichester Harbour on the 8th was a high count for the first winter period. **Greater Scaup** were reported fairly regularly at Pagham Harbour and three on the 8th (and also on the 20th) was the highest count for the year at this locality. A **Great Skua** flew past Seaford on the 10th and a few days later two **Red-crested Pochards** were at Weir Wood Reservoir on the 12th, while three **Greater Scaup** at Pett Level on the 21st equalled the number seen at Pagham Harbour earlier in the month. In a warm and very quiet month, the next significant sighting was of eight **Velvet Scoters** flying past Rye Bay on the 25th, and a **Common Redpoll** at Burnham Mill Pond (also on the 25th) seems likely to have been a 'left-over' from the influx the previous autumn. Another **Great Skua** (the second of the month) flew past Telscombe Cliffs on the 26th, while nine **Pale-bellied Brent Geese** at East Head on the 27th was an unusually high count for this subspecies.

March

The first half of the month remained unsettled, with frequent rain and some night-time frosts. High pressure then settled in and the latter half of the month was dry, sunny and often unseasonably warm. Atlantic fronts brought rain for the last few days.

The mild weather obviously prompted some early migration, with the first **Osprey** at Weir Wood Reservoir on the 1st, and the first **Sand Martins** at Saltdean and **Common Redstart** on Ashdown Forest, both on the 5th. In between this, two **Common Cranes** appeared near Steyning on the 3rd, remaining there until the 7th. Early March was certainly a mix of winter and spring birds; a **Lapland Bunting** was at Beachy Head on the 6th and another one appeared at Thorney Island from the 8th, staying till the 15th. A **Common Sandpiper** at Pagham Harbour on the 6th was perhaps the first migrant as none had been seen there during the winter period. Also on the 6th, two **Great skuas** at Selsey Bill and another one past Worthing (with another past Worthing on the 10th) could have been either birds wintering in the Channel or early migrants. On the 8th further migrants showed up, with the first **Little Ringed Plover** at Pulborough Brooks and the first migrant **Northern Wheatear** at Piddinghoe, both on the 9th, with the first returning **Garganey** at The Midrips and **Barn Swallows** at Bracklesham Bay on the 13th. Also on the 13th three **Greater Scaup** were noted at Rye Harbour, and two **Black-necked Grebes** (moulting into summer plumage) were offshore at Birling Gap. Relatively long-staying **Spoonbills** occurred at Rye Harbour (from the 10th to the 19th) and in the Bracklesham Bay/Pagham Harbour area (from the 14th to the 22nd). Early migrants really were arriving thick and fast during the month, with the first **Common Tern** past Brighton Marina on the 14th being the earliest county record by three days. The first **Willow Warbler** and **Whinchat** (both at Pagham Harbour) on the 19th were also quite early; also on the 19th was another **Common Redpoll**, at Warnham, which stayed until the 25th. A total of six **Great Northern Divers** off Selsey Bill on the 20th equalled the January high count there, while at Seaford on the 20th seven **Black-necked Grebes** were noted flying east. Following hot on the heels of the Pagham arrivals was the first **Yellow Wagtail** at Climping, followed by the first **House Martins** (at Selsey Bill and Sidlesham Ferry), and the first **Tree Pipit**

(at Beachy Head), all on the 24th. Winter made a brief return with a **Lapland Bunting** at Beachy Head on the 27th and the first **Sedge Warbler** arrived back at Rye Harbour on the rather more typical date of the 28th.

April

The first 10 days of April were unseasonably warm with temperatures above 20 degrees Celsius on some days and very little rainfall. Although temperatures returned to normal for a few days mid-month, warm weather returned from the 16th and temperatures rose to the high 20s, falling back slightly in the last few days as a north-east wind developed, but still with no significant rainfall, except for some localised heavy thunderstorms on the night of the 29th.

March had been pretty well lacking in rarities but this was made up for in early April with a **Great White Egret** at Lewes Brooks on the 1st and **Hoopoes** at Newhaven and at Hove the next day. Also on the 1st was a very early **Little Tern** which flew past Worthing, and an unseasonably early **Hobby** was at Goodwood on the 2nd. Further migrants arriving back on the 2nd were a **Common Cuckoo** at Wych Cross, a **Common Nightingale** at Ebernoe and a **Eurasian Reed Warbler**, followed by a **Garden Warbler** at Stanstead Forest, and **Common Whitethroats** at Pulborough Brooks and Weir Wood Reservoir, all on the 3rd. Following on close behind these were the first **Ring Ouzel** at East Grinstead on the 5th and the first **Grasshopper Warbler** at Weir Wood Reservoir the following day. **Spoonbills** had been seen in ones and twos earlier in the year, but three at Rye Harbour on the 7th was the highest count for the year. Also on the 7th were the first **Pied Flycatcher**, at Church Norton, and the first **Common Swift** (remarkably early) at Ovingdean. Two days later, on the 11th, there was some real excitement with the discovery of a female **Little Crake** at Arundel WWT. To the relief of many (especially those who had not seen the previous Cuckmere bird in 1985) it stayed for four days and generally showed well. On the 10th a second-year **Caspian Gull** was at West Rise Marsh (Eastbourne) and the first **Lesser Whitethroat** was seen at Hastings Country Park on the same day. **Common Scoter** had an excellent spring passage and particularly notable counts included 1695 past Beachy Head on the 2nd and 1538 past Seaford on the 19th.

The first **Turtle Dove** (at Tinker's Marsh) and **Wood Warbler** (at Buchan Country Park) arrived on the 13th and the first of only two **Puffins** recorded this year flew past Selsey Bill on the 16th. The 17th was another rarity day, in the Ouse Valley and elsewhere; there was a **Purple Heron** at Southease, which stayed till the next day. Not to be outdone, Pulborough Brooks scored a **Common Crane**, also staying for two days. **Red-rumped Swallows** hardly seem to qualify as rarities in some years and this year, the first two of seven seen were found at Arlington Reservoir, also on the 17th-18th. Not exactly a rarity but unusual inland was a **Long-tailed Duck** which appeared at Barcombe Reservoir on the 17th, and finally for this day a northern **Willow Warbler** was at Birling Gap and the first **European Nightjar** was at Ashdown Forest. The next spring rarity was a **European Bee-eater** at Pett Level on the 22nd, and the first **Spotted Flycatcher** was at Blackboys on the same day. The following day an **Ortolan Bunting** was at Birling Gap, an **Iceland Gull** was at Seaford, and the first **Wood Sandpiper** of the spring was at Weir Wood Reservoir (an early date for this species). On the 24th a **Puffin** (the second of only two seen this year) flew past Selsey Bill, as had the previous one eight days earlier. **Balearic Shearwater** is a critically endangered species these days (due mainly to predation on its Mediterranean breeding grounds) but still turns up on the Sussex coast fairly regularly – this year 20 were seen altogether and the first of these flew past Seaford on the 25th. A **Purple Heron** at Rye Harbour on the 27th was probably the Southease bird, and the first **Common Quail** (in a remarkable year with more than 70 reported) was at Foredown on the 29th. Another **Red-rumped Swallow** was at Hodcombe

(Beachy Head) on the 30th and on the same day a total of 63 **Pomarine Skuas** past Seaford was the highest count for any single location this spring, in a good year for this species, and the last **Brambling** of the spring was at Storrington.

May

The virtual drought conditions continued through early May, with some very warm weather at times, but also some welcome heavy downpours on the weekend of the 7th-8th. The second half of May saw a series of weather fronts moving across Sussex from the north-west; however, they generally weakened as they crossed the country and produced cloud and mist, but generally very little rain, by the time they reached us. The 26th saw very strong winds and some heavy showers across the county producing a day more reminiscent of October, but overall it was another very dry month, though not actually as warm as late April had been.

A **White-winged Black Tern** at Chichester GP on the 2nd-3rd was the only one of the year and a **Roseate Tern** past Selsey Bill on the 4th was one of only five seen (with the second past the same locality just three days later). The last **Jack Snipe** of the spring was at Rye Harbour on the 5th, a **European Bee-eater** was at Selsey Bill on the 6th and a total of 35 **Pomarine Skuas** past Seaford on the 7th was the highest count for May. Continuing the tern theme, a **Gull-billed Tern** was at Pulborough Brooks on the 8th. Continuing the rare heron theme, a **Great White Egret** flew east past Worthing, also on the 8th, and two **Temminck's Stints** were at Rye Harbour on the same day. Another **Temminck's Stint** was seen on the 12th, this time at Pulborough Brooks, and two more **Red-rumped Swallows** were at Hodcombe (Beachy Head) on the 13th. The first **Honey-buzzard** of the year was at Rye Harbour on the 14th and Beachy Head scored again the next day when a **Black Kite** flew over. A **Hoopoe** showed up at nearby Cuckmere Haven on the 16th and a male **Golden Oriole** was heard singing at Wiggonholt Common on the 17th-18th. Another **Hoopoe** was seen on the 25th at East Lavington, staying till the 29th. A **Savi's Warbler** singing at Pett Level from the 27th to 24 Jun was the only one of the year and the sixth **Red-rumped Swallow** of the spring was at Cuckmere Haven on the 28th. A **European Storm Petrel** which flew east past Selsey on the 29th was also the only one of the year, perhaps surprisingly, and another **Hoopoe** was seen, at Upwaltham, on the 29th. A **Blue-headed Wagtail** was at Church Norton on the same day and the last **Pomarine Skua** of the spring flew past Seaford on the 30th. A total of 102 'Poms' were recorded past Seaford during the month and 169 altogether, making it the top spot for this species; Selsey Bill recorded 76 during May and the county total for the spring was an impressive 211 birds. May closed with another **Golden Oriole** on the 31st, this one singing at Lullington Heath.

June

Well, summer started with a break in the drought! The first week brought only a few light showers, at least to Seaford, but the remainder of the month saw the return of the unsettled weather that we have become accustomed to in June, with warm sunny spells but also frequent frontal depressions bringing some heavy rain at times, along with strong winds.

The month kicked off with a **Temminck's Stint** at Pulborough Brooks on the 1st. Things were then quiet for a week or so until two **European Bee-eaters** were found at Hodcombe (Beachy Head) on the 7th. Also on the 7th, a flock of 11 **Common Eiders** flew past Selsey Bill, the highest number recorded in June; elsewhere, four birds spent much of the month around Pilsey Island. On the 10th, at Pett Level, a first for Sussex was trapped and ringed in the form of a **Blyth's Reed Warbler**. Also on the 10th a **Spotted Sandpiper** at Swanbourne Lake was the fourth county record. A **Montagu's Harrier** at The Burgh from the 11th to the 13th was the only one reported

this year. Also seen on the 11th was a male **European Serin** at Hodcombe (Beachy Head) and either it or another was at the same location on the 19th. Also on the 19th was a **Roseate Tern** at Rye Harbour, which remained in the area till 2 Jul. The wet weather must have dampened bird and/or observer activity, as things were quiet again until the 28th when two **Common Cranes** flew over East Guldeford, and the first **Wood Sandpipers** of the autumn were at Pulborough Brooks (three) and Rye Harbour.

There were the typical 'ups and downs' with our breeding birds; this year raptors and some waders did quite well but the terns in particular fared poorly. A pair of **Egyptian Geese** bred again at Benbow Pond and raised at least one gosling, having relocated there from Petworth Park last year. Another pair at Petworth Park was in suitable habitat but there was no other evidence of breeding. Two pairs of **Garganey** summered at Rye Harbour, as did single pairs at Pett Level and Pevensy Levels, but there was no evidence of breeding by any of them. Six pairs of **Common Pochard** nested at Arundel WWT, but suffered a heavy loss of ducklings to large gulls, while a female was seen at Drayton GP in mid-July with two ducklings. **Grey Partridges** were reported breeding at six locations this year (one more than last year) and at the main site (the Norfolk Estate) numbers increased from 262 pairs last year to 342 pairs this year, demonstrating what intensive management and grant-aid from the DEFRA Higher Level Stewardship scheme can achieve. **Common Quails** were reported from 40 sites in what was a very good year for this species; the high count was of three birds at The Burgh, but as usual no evidence of breeding could be obtained. A **Eurasian Bittern** was again heard booming regularly at Rye Harbour, as last year, and what was assumed to be the same bird was recorded several times at Pett Level during the summer. Although no other evidence of breeding was noted, this is a welcome sign of things to come (hopefully!). At least 29 (and possibly 32) pairs of **Little Egret** nested at seven sites; although the numbers showed a continuing decline, nesting was recorded from three more sites than last year. Five pairs of **Honey-buzzards** reared nine young, a slight reduction on last year, and three pairs of **Red Kites** bred, rearing a total of five young. Two pairs of **Marsh Harriers** reared five young between them, and a pair was seen in potential breeding habitat at a third site. A pair of **Goshawks** raised two young at the same locality as in the two previous years. There was just one record of a summering **Osprey** (from Pagham Harbour in mid-July) but surely this species will nest in Sussex before too long. There was no evidence of breeding behaviour by **Common Crane** this year, but two individuals (possibly a pair?) were noted at different locations in late June and early July.

Moving on to the waders, **Oystercatchers** had a good season with 64 nests and another four territorial pairs, which was the highest in the county for many years. Most were at Rye Harbour, where there were 31 pairs (two less than last year). **Avocets** also did well with 53 pairs at three sites - the highest total since the peak of 59 pairs in 2007. Two pairs of **Stone-curlews** nested again, raising three young. At least nine pairs of **Little Ringed Plovers** bred (and another seven may have done) but only four young were raised. In a similar vein, 44 pairs of **Ringed Plovers** bred, four fewer than last year and continuing the decline; success was again poor with few young fledged. **Kittiwakes** continue the slow but sure move from Newhaven to Seaford - there were 30 occupied nests at Newhaven (15 fewer than last year) but about 1130 occupied nests at Splash Point (Seaford), a welcome increase on the 830 last year. As last year, a single pair of **Common Gulls** nested at Rye Harbour, and again the single chick did not survive. Some 1700 pairs of **Black-headed Gulls** bred at Rye Harbour but unlike last year success was low, while about 100 pairs of **Mediterranean Gulls** bred at the main colony at Rye Harbour, significantly fewer than last year. Moving to the terns, a total of 21 pairs of **Little Terns** nested (10 at Rye Harbour, seven at Pagham Harbour and four at East Chidham (Chichester Harbour)) but success was low at all three sites with only a few fledging from Rye Harbour. Some 850 pairs of **Sandwich Terns** nested

at Rye Harbour (100 more than last year), but unlike last year success was rather poor; and about 235 pairs of **Common Terns** nested at Rye Harbour (over 100 less than last year) and success was very low.

The decline in the **Turtle Dove** breeding population seems to continue unabated; this year breeding was confirmed in just two tetrads (compared with six last year) but, perhaps encouragingly, was probable in a further 24 tetrads (compared with 16 last year). A total of 79 pairs of **Barn Owls** attempted to breed in West Sussex and 36 in East Sussex (compared with 69 and 35 respectively last year). **Long-eared Owls** had another dismal season after a series of hard winters, with one heard calling in likely breeding habitat the only record relating to probable breeding this year. In contrast, **European Nightjar** had a good year with 129 pairs on Ashdown Forest (up from 86 last year) and 52 pairs on the Wealden Heaths (up from 18 last year). Perhaps also encouragingly, **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** was confirmed breeding in four tetrads (up from none last year) and probably bred in a further seven. **Firecrest** was confirmed breeding in four tetrads and probably did so in a further 14. **Willow Tits** are really not doing at all well in Sussex: there were none recorded as breeding this year (compared with two heard singing last year); in fact there were no accepted records at all of Willow Tit this year, for the first time ever, raising fears that this species may now be extinct in the county. **Bearded Tits** bred at three sites (the same number as last year) with 26 juveniles noted at Thorney Deepes and 18 at Pett Level. A total of 28 pairs of **Wood Lark** were recorded on the Wealden heaths (which is two more than last year), while the annual breeding count of **Sky Larks** on the Norfolk Estate found 470 pairs (up from 427 last year and very welcome news). Not such good news for **Wood Warbler** – breeding was not confirmed anywhere and was probable in only two tetrads (this species is on the way out as a breeding species it seems). **Dartford Warbler** is another species which has been hit very hard by a series of harsh winters - two territories on the West Sussex heaths (up from none last year) and six on Ashdown Forest (same as last year) is not much of an increase but at least the species is hanging on. Five singing **Marsh Warblers** were recorded from four sites, but there was no other evidence of breeding this year. **Spotted Flycatchers** were confirmed breeding in 41 tetrads, a large and welcome increase from the rather dismal 17 last year. For **Tree Sparrow** however, the situation remains perilous with breeding confirmed in just two tetrads and probable in another one. Similarly for **Yellow Wagtail**, with just one or two pairs at Rye Harbour and five pairs at Horse Eye Level the future for this species as a breeding bird in the county also looks bleak. The number of breeding pairs of **Corn Bunting** on the Norfolk Estate dropped down to 46 pairs from the 64 recorded last year.

July

The unsettled weather of June continued through July as well, with a mixture of warm sunshine and low pressure systems bringing frontal rain. The weekend of the 16th-17th was particularly autumnal, with heavy rain and gales no less! However, the last third of the month saw a return to true summer, with high pressure dominating and temperatures in the high 20s Celsius by the month's end.

A **European Serin** was found in Seaford on the 2nd, and there were two **European Bee-eaters** at Pett Level on the 3rd. The following day two **Common Cranes** appeared near Hailsham, and single **Wood Sandpipers** were seen at Pett Level and Rye Harbour in the early part of the month. There were five **Spotted Redshanks** seen during the month, all singles at the usual coastal sites, with the first of these at Sidlesham Ferry on the 6th. A total of 250 **Mediterranean Gulls** at Stoughton on the 9th was a very impressive count for an inland location, and four juvenile **Yellow-legged Gulls** at Beachy Head on the same day was an unusual record. Eight **Sanderlings**

at Pilsey Island on the 13th were the first of the autumn. On the 14th, 23 **Yellow-legged Gulls** at Pagham Harbour was a high count for this locality which regularly hosts a late summer influx of this species. On the 15th a male **Golden Oriole** was found at Runcton, and an early returning **Pied Flycatcher** was at Beachy Head. Two days later a **Cattle Egret** arrived at Pagham Harbour and proceeded to stay in the Pagham/Chichester Harbour area till at least 30 November. Also on the 17th a **Red-rumped Swallow** graced Weir Wood Reservoir and five days later a **Melodious Warbler** was seen near Lewes on the 22nd. Another **Melodious Warbler** trapped at Pett Level the next day was apparently not the Lewes bird. Waders often start returning in July and by the 9th there were already 80 **Grey Plovers** at Pilsey Island, rising to 420 on the 15th. The first **Golden Plover** was seen at Jury's Gap on the 20th, with 18 at Rye Harbour two days later. The first **Little Stint** was at Rye Harbour on the 22nd and the first **Curlew Sandpiper** was at Chichester Harbour on the 26th, with the only other July records of this species being one at Sidlesham Ferry on the 30th. A traditionally quiet month closed with the first autumn **Wood Warbler** at Hodcombe (Beachy Head) and a **Pied Flycatcher** at Chilgrove, both on the 30th.

August

August continued the unsettled theme of our 'typical' British summer, with some very autumnal fronts interspersed with drier, brighter weather. There was a short spell of high pressure and more settled weather during the 17th-22nd.

Things were quiet at the start of the month, with the first real birds of note occurring on the 6th, when a juvenile **Black Stork** flew over Beachy Head, a **Melodious Warbler** lurked in the bushes at the same location, and a **Kentish Plover** was seen at Pilsey Sands, which was the only record of this species, which used to be more regular, all year. A **Black Kite** drifted over Pett Level on the 7th and the same locality hosted an **Icterine Warbler** (trapped and ringed) a week later on the 15th. Nearby at East Guldeford, 25 **Common Sandpipers** on the 14th was the highest count for the month and a good autumn count for this species. Two **Roseate Terns** were at Pilsey Sands on the 18th and a **Temminck's Stint** graced Pulborough Brooks from the 19th to the 27th. August is a good month for small parties of returning **Dotterel** and there were four at Balsdean on the 21st with one still there on the 23rd. The first of at least 16 **Wrynecks** this autumn was at Pulborough Brooks from 22nd-24th and there were another two **Dotterel** near Arlington Reservoir on the 27th. A **Yellow-legged Gull** was noted at Arlington Reservoir on the 28th and, continuing the gull theme, on the 29th the **Mediterranean Gull** flock in the Fishbourne Channel reached a very impressive autumn high count of 453 birds; this species is certainly not a scarce bird in the county anymore! A relatively quiet August closed with another good rarity in the form of a **Black-crowned Night Heron** at Weir Wood Reservoir from the 30th into September.

September

The first half of the month was unsettled with some very deep Atlantic depressions bringing gales and torrential winds at times (especially on the 6th); there was a brief interlude of sunny and warm weather from the 12th-16th. A period of typically unsettled weather till about the 26th was replaced by high pressure which built to give a late dose of summer till the month's end, with temperatures well into the 20s Celsius.

September got off to a good start with three **Dotterels** near Chantry Hill on the 3rd and the next notable bird was also a wader, in the form of a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** found at Rye Harbour on the 8th and staying there till the 12th. Two **Common Cranes** were at Horse Eye Level on the 9th and also later on from the 25th to 2 Oct. Also on the 9th the seventh and final **Red-rumped**

Swallow of the year was at Hodcombe (Beachy Head); it was an excellent year for this species and Hodcombe seemed to get more than its fair share! The next day a **Bluethroat** was trapped at Pett Level and a **Sooty Shearwater** flew west past Selsey Bill, while a **Common Cuckoo** at Pagham Harbour was the last one for the year and a **Hoopoe** turned up at Glynde, staying there till the 13th. Once the storms abated it became obvious that several **Sabine's Gulls** had been casualties; there were singles at Birling Gap on the 12th, Brighton Marina on the 16th-17th, and at Newhaven and Thorney Deeps on the 17th, with the Newhaven bird staying until the 22nd and then moving along to Cuckmere Haven on the 23rd. The last **Honey-buzzard** was at Beachy Head on the 13th and there were two **Grey Phalaropes** at Brighton Marina from the 14th to the 17th (and one at Seaford on the 17th which may have been one of these two birds). The 15th was a real red-letter day for Sussex birders, being the day that the county's first **Pallid Harrier** (a juvenile) was discovered at The Burgh: to the delight of everyone it remained in the area till 7 Oct, giving good views to many observers. Also on the 15th a **Grey Phalarope** was at Pagham Harbour. The first of six **Yellow-browed Warblers** was trapped at Pett Level on the 16th and was followed closely by a second bird at the same locality the following day.

The last six **Garganey** flew past Worthing and Climping on the 16th and a **Grey Phalarope** at Chichester Harbour on the 16th-17th may have been the Pagham Harbour bird, and also on the 17th two **Sooty Shearwaters** flew west past Seaford (with one later seen at Birling Gap), and the last **Turtle Dove** was at Rye. On the 18th a **Barred Warbler** was trapped at Pett Level, and the last **European Nightjar** was at Uckfield the next day. The first of seven autumn **Lapland Buntings** were at Cuckmere Haven on the 21st and another **Grey Phalarope** was at Chichester Harbour from the 22nd to the 25th. The first **Brambling** was noted at Arlington Reservoir on the 23rd and yet another **Grey Phalarope** (they were also presumably victims of the earlier storms) was at Prince's Park (Eastbourne) from the 24th to the 27th. The last **Little Tern** was at Pilsey Sands on the 24th and on the 25th another county first was recorded, in the form of a **Citrine Wagtail** at Cuckmere Haven – unfortunately it did not hang around for long and was only seen by a few lucky folk. On the same day a second **Barred Warbler** was trapped at Pett Level and the last **Common Nightingale** was at Owlbeech Woods on the 26th. Weir Wood Reservoir turned up a **Pectoral Sandpiper** on the 28th which stayed for three days and on the same day the last two **Little Ringed Plovers** were at Rye Bay and the first returning **Jack Snipe** was seen at Thorney. An eventful month (especially for storm-blown seabirds) closed on the 30th with a **Hoopoe** at Eastbourne and the third **Yellow-browed Warbler** of the autumn trapped at Pett Level.

October

Continuing from the end of September, the first three days were gloriously sunny with record breaking temperatures (in the high 20s Celsius). Autumn returned with a bump from the 4th, with typically windy and rather unsettled weather for the following week. There was a brief warm interlude mid-month, though this high pressure also brought the first frost, and the final week saw a return to westerlies and an unsettled theme, with some very heavy downpours on the 26th.

The third **Great White Egret** of the year, at Arundel on the 1st, got October off to a good start, and the last **Wood Warbler** at Cripps Corner on 2nd was a remarkably late date for this species. As previously mentioned, **Common Quail** had a good year in 2011 so the last one (at Pevensey Levels on the 7th) was perhaps not too surprising, though also remarkably late. A **Yellow-browed Warbler** was found in Seaford Head on the 8th, and a major rarity was found nearby on Newhaven West Beach the next day. A suspected **Buff-bellied Pipit** was photographed there on the 9th, but the identity of this tricky species was only confirmed later from the photographs. By this time of course it had disappeared, though the author did spend some time looking over the subsequent

few days. Also on the 9th the last **Sand Martins** were seen at Beachy Head and Climping. A **Sabine's Gull** flew past Selsey Bill, and later past Worthing, on the 11th and on the same day the last **Lesser Whitethroat** was at Weir Wood Reservoir on the 11th. Mid-October sees the last of our summer migrants leaving our shores and the last **Pied Flycatcher** of the year was at Church Norton on the 12th, with the last **Hobby** at Ashdown Forest on the 14th, plus the last **Grasshopper Warbler** at Pett Level, and the last **Tree Pipit** at Ashdown Forest on the 15th. Also on the 14th was the last of 16 **Wrynecks** (at Littlehampton). The 15th was notable for another major rarity, with the discovery of the first **Isabelline Wheatear** for Sussex, at Crowlink (near Beachy Head). Unfortunately it did not linger for more than a day. Also on the 15th, a **Common Redpoll** trapped at Pett Level was the first of 11 trapped there over the late autumn period, and there was another one along the coast at Beachy Head the next day, when there was also a **Great Grey Shrike** at Pett Level (staying till the 17th) and the last **Osprey** at Burton Mill Pond. The last **Sedge Warblers** were at Pett Level on the 17th, and a **Barred Warbler** was trapped at Cissbury on the same day.

A **Glossy Ibis** at West Rise Marsh (Eastbourne) on the 18th was seen later the same day at Pett Level, with what was probably the same bird being seen again at Horse Eye Level on the 29th and the 30th and over Beachy Head on the 31st. A **Red-crested Pochard** was seen at Wadhurst Park on the 19th and the next day the last **Barn Swallow** was at Beachy Head, and the regular Ashdown Forest **Great Grey Shrike** returned, being then seen regularly to the year's end. A **Snow Bunting** at Crawley on the 21st was an unusual inland record and a **Dusky Warbler** trapped at Pett Level on the 22nd was the sixth record for the county. A **Sooty Shearwater** flew west past Worthing on the 23rd, on which day the first **Pallas' Leaf Warblers** of the autumn were found at Holywell (Eastbourne) and Sheepcote Valley. Also on the 23rd two **Common Cranes** flew over Udimore, and later over Rye and then at Horse Eye Level (where they remained on and off till the 31st, with one till 1 Nov). Another **Grey Phalarope** appeared on the 24th, this time at Birling Gap, and the following day another **Pallas' Leaf Warbler** was trapped at Pett Level, **Yellow-browed Warblers** appeared at Birling Gap and Church Norton, and the last **Yellow Wagtail** was seen at Barcombe. A fourth **Pallas' Leaf Warbler** was at Beachy Head on the 26th-27th, and two more of these Asian gems were seen at Seaford and Climping on the 27th. The last **Common Swifts** flew over Ferring and Worthing on the 28th, and the following day two **Great White Egrets** graced Thorney Island, four more **Common Redpolls** were at Sheepcote Valley and the last **Garden Warbler** was at Pett Level. An eventful month closed with a **Snow Bunting** at Worthing on the 30th.

November

November started mild but dreary with low cloud and drizzle dominating for the first week. High pressure settled things down in the second week with some fine warm sunny days but also low mist at times in some places. The mild, relatively settled weather continued almost to the end of the month, with the last two days seeing a sharp return of the wild, windy and wet conditions we have come to expect in November.

November was not quite as eventful as October had been and was perhaps more notable for late departing migrants than for rarities. The last **Willow Warbler** at Beachy Head on the 1st was a very late departure date for this species, while the last **Common Redstart** at Selsey Bill on the same day was more expected. Also on the 1st a **Great Grey Shrike** was found at Rodmell, and then seen later at Southease on the 6th. A late **Hoopoe** was at Climping from the 4th-11th, and also on the 4th the last of seven autumn **Pallas's Leaf Warblers** was at Church Norton. The following day saw the last **House Martins** at Beachy Head and the last **Whinchat** at Climping, while on the 6th a **Great Grey Shrike** was seen briefly at Birling Gap, and two **Lapland Buntings** plus three

Snow Buntings were close by at Beachy Head. The latter were the first of a small influx at several coastal sites, with a high count of five at East Head from the 7th. A few lingered to the year's end. A **Rough-legged Buzzard** was found at The Burgh from the 7th; it stayed to the year's end and into 2012, providing many with a good opportunity to see another exciting raptor at this superb site. The last two **Common Terns** were at Bewl Water on the 9th and the following day a male **Green-winged Teal** showed up at Thorney Deep (staying till the next day) and a **Penduline Tit** was trapped and ringed at Pett Level. On the 12th 18 **Whooper Swans** flew west past Brighton. A **Water Pipit** was at West Rise Marsh (Eastbourne) on the 15th-16th, and also on the 16th the last **Reed Warblers** were at Pett Level and the last **Ring Ouzel** was seen at Beachy Head. Two **Long-tailed Ducks** were seen off Shoreham on the 17th. There was some rarity excitement on the 19th when a **Little Bunting** was trapped at Steyning (and re-trapped there on the 26th), and the last **Northern Wheatear** was at Selsey on the 20th, when there were also three **Tundra Bean Geese** at Broadwater Lake. The minor influx of **Lapland Buntings** continued with three at East Guldeford on the 22nd and the last notable bird of the month was a very late **Common Whitethroat** at Thorney Island on the 25th.

December

December started where November left off, being relatively mild with some heavy rain during the first few days (in complete contrast to last year!). It turned a little colder mid-month, with a few sharp frosts, but mild weather then continued, with some heavy rain at times, through to the New Year.

A **Tundra Bean Goose** was at Amberley Wild Brooks on the 2nd and another was at Lewes Brooks on the 3rd. Two **Taiga Bean Geese** at Henfield Levels on the 4th were the only ones (of this race) of the year and on the same day a third-year **Caspian Gull** was at West Rise Marsh (Eastbourne), and a **Short-eared Owl** was seen mobbing a **Hen Harrier** at Rodmell Brooks. This was the only record of a **Hen Harrier** in the Ouse Valley (which used to be a traditional site for them) this year. A **Little Auk** flew past Worthing on the 11th, and a total of four **Hen Harriers** at Ashdown Forest (two males and two ringtails) on the 17th was the highest number seen together anywhere this year, in what was a good year for this species. The middle of the month was very quiet and a **Water Pipit** at Crowhurst, plus two **Red-crested Pochards** at Rye Harbour on the 22nd, were the next birds of note. A third-year **Caspian Gull** was identified in the lower Cuckmere Valley on the 23rd and a **Great White Egret** (the sixth one of the year) flew east past Birling Gap on the 30th. The **Bewick's Swan** herd in the Arun Valley contained 26 adults and four juveniles on the 31st. Also on the 31st a herd of 70-100 **Bewick's Swans** flew east across the county, being noted at Ferring Rife in the morning and then Pett Level and Rye Harbour in the afternoon.



Cattle Egret, Thorney Island, August 2011 (Nick Bond)

Classified Records for 2011

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 and C species included in the Systematic List is given on pages 310-313.

The Category A and C species are again listed in the order announced by the BOU in October 2002 and include the further minor adjustments made by the BOU since that date.

Status descriptions

Preceding each species account, there is a brief description of its status in the county. These are regularly reviewed and amended to account for 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 and at six sites daily logs were maintained. The following table lists the hours watched in each month at the six locations for which this information was available:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Selsey Bill	23	21	45	174	124	47	14	17	55	29	14	13	575
Climping	32	32	51	5	2	4	4	9	18	42	13	9	218
Worthing Beach	31	16	34	58	55	14	24	25	26	31	14	24	352
Telscombe Cliffs	35	22	13	17	9	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	99
Splash Point (Seaford)	14	21	44	121	80	1	0	0	7	12	1	4	302
Beachy Head	21	12	24	61	29	14	0	0	4	12	1	4	181

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 2011 the priority core count dates were: 13 Jan, 13 Feb, 13 Mar, 17 Apr, 15 May, 12 Jun, 17 Jul, 14 Aug, 18 Sep, 16 Oct, 20 Nov and 18 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

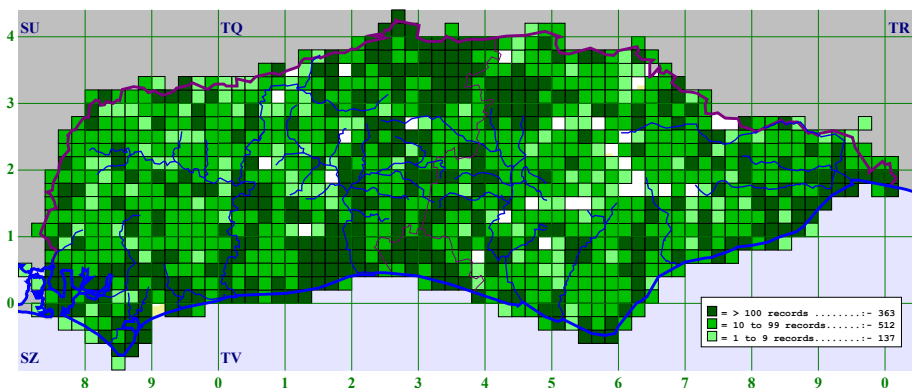
Each species account in the systematic list is written by an individual using the records abstracted from the society’s CoBRA (County Bird Recording Application) database. As usual the dataset is a complex mixture of records received from the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), from a miscellany of recording systems used by various groups and nature reserves and from individual observers.

The total of nearly 184,000 records for 2011 is the third highest attained and is only marginally fewer than the totals for both 2008 and 2009. Like the past few years this does not include any records from Garden BirdWatch which, in 2007, provided over 15,000 records. During the year the fieldwork for Bird Atlas 2007-11 and the Sussex tetrad atlas survey was finalised and the following table reflects this, as a reduced proportion of the records came from this survey with the majority of these being “roving” records as gaps in distribution maps were plugged. During November and December the new Sussex Winter Bird Survey was launched and the observations from this survey were entered into BirdTrack. This online recording system, sponsored by the BTO, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Birdwatch Ireland and the Scottish Ornithologists’ Club, continued to develop and users of this excellent recording resource have provided over a third of the year’s dataset. Just as last year the records abstracted from all online recording sources contributed nearly two thirds of the dataset and the remainder, with the exception of about 1000 paper records, were submitted in a suitable electronic format for importing into CoBRA.

Atlas project (Timed Tetrad Visits and roving records)	32095	17.5%
BirdTrack records	66024	35.9%
Other BTO online surveys (Wetland Bird Survey and Breeding Bird Survey)	17651	9.7%
Reserve databases and seawatch datasets	41455	22.6%
Records captured from other recording groups	3112	1.6%
Individual observer record submissions	23395	12.7%

In keeping with previous years the figures shown in the above table may have been considerably higher. Several of the large batches of records, particularly those from BirdTrack and Atlas roving records, contained considerable duplication thus steps have been taken to reduce this where possible. Likewise some of the datasets from well watched locations contained daily counts of common species which have been summarised before importing into the database. Furthermore, small numbers of common species from the seawatch logs and zero counts from both these logs and the WeBS were not uploaded into CoBRA. This has been the practice for several years. Great care has been used to ensure vital information is not lost and the original details, including all the zero counts, are kept outside CoBRA.

Although the number of people contributing to these data remained high the total of 946 observers was 4% lower than in 2010; presumably this reduction related to the slowing of the Atlas project. As usual contributions varied considerably but 34 birdwatchers provided over 1000 records whilst 150 observers were ascribed just a single record. Once again there were records from nearly 2000 sites but it is clear that locations such as Pulborough Brooks, Ashdown Forest and Pagham and Rye Harbours remain attractive to birdwatchers as nearly a quarter of the records in 2011 come from these four sites alone. These recording hotspots, along with the coastal strip, West Sussex commons and river valleys are shown clearly in the following map which has been drawn with the same scale as in previous years. It is encouraging that over 97% of the tetrads in Sussex received some recording attention albeit, in many instances, on a small scale.



The number of records received for 2011 in each tetrad in Sussex. Dark green, >100 records; mid-green, 10-99 records; pale green, 1-9 records.

In keeping with the past few years common and widespread species have been the most recorded; in 2011 Blackbird (4419 records), Wood Pigeon (4248), Blue Tit (4090), Chaffinch

(4065) and Carrion Crow (4021) were the leading five recorded species. Four of these were the same in 2010 with Carrion Crow replacing Robin in 2011. Clearly the Atlas work in January and February and April until July has markedly influenced the monthly pattern of recording which is demonstrated in the following table. It will be interesting to see whether this pattern returns to the pre-Atlas picture in 2012.

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2006	7876	7127	8554	13,675	11,554	9924	5824	6117	7228	7562	6511	5800	97,752
2007	9402	8444	10,159	17,415	13,789	12,029	8780	8478	9709	10,875	21,016	20,583	150,679
2008	19,756	22,753	12,871	28,121	30,519	29,683	11,818	6580	9384	8134	13,514	14,637	207,770
2009	16,846	17,132	12,301	27,696	25,316	26,790	10,357	8305	9910	9495	10,496	12,717	187,361
2010	15,667	13,087	12,085	25,367	21,987	22,219	9697	7597	9441	9937	11,623	11,404	170,111
2011	19,285	17,152	13,573	24,911	23,135	20,469	13,104	9757	11,098	10,967	10,754	9527	183,732

For many years the society has requested observers to provide details of breeding evidence using one of the recognised international breeding status codes and, during the period of Atlas fieldwork, reminders have been regularly published. The following table shows the numbers of each of the breeding status codes for 2011 and the total figures for 2010 for comparison. It is interesting that this aspect of recording remains remarkably constant.

Confirmed		Probable		Possible		Non-breeding	
FL Fledged young	4897	P Pair	3958	S Singing male	9581	X Unknown	122,095
FF Carrying food	1403	T Territory	7002	H In habitat	8805	No code	1197
ON Occupied nest	1106	D Display	889			F Flying over	6007
NY Nest with young	595	N Nest site	895			M Migrant	1833
NE Nest with eggs	148	B Nest building	497			W Wintering	859
UN Used nest	119	A Agitation	603			U Summering	374
DD Distraction display	71	I Brood patch	18				
Total 2011	8340	Total 2011	13,862	Total 2011	18,389	Total 2011	132,365
Percentage 2011	5	Percentage 2011	8	Percentage 2011	11	Percentage 2011	76
Total 2010	6840	Total 2010	14,050	Total 2010	20,323	Total 2010	128,898
Percentage 2010	4	Percentage 2010	8	Percentage 2010	12	Percentage 2010	76

Although the Atlas survey has now finished it is hoped that observers will continue recording breeding status and detailed grid references with their records as these are of great importance for conservation purposes. [John Newnham, Database Manager, June 2012]

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 open circle	All other records with a grid reference

Mute Swan

Cygnus olor

Fairly common resident.

Mute Swans were recorded from 208 tetrads, 20% of the county total. 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	558	567	494	507	565	566	560	564	648	689	699	706
Chichester Hbr	103	107	90	138	135	162	165	119	228	213	231	137
Chichester GP	39	21	55	44	38	56	53	47	67	79	84	79
Arun - South of Arundel	99	90	39	53	46	64	63	88	62	48	37	36
Arun Valley	43	42	49	57	63	64	57	45	56	51	51	53
Climping	25	nc	27	52	45	46	nc	66	nc	35	28	31
Wicks Farm Res	-	6	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	47	29	18
Upper Adur Levels	52	47	49	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	22	38
Ouse Valley	10	5	23	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	16	30	21	37
Eastbourne Lakes	31	25	22	4	6	2	18	13	57	34	68	55
Pevensey Levels	60	70	56	27	51	4	1	20	36	44	46	75
Rye Bay	43	94	26	89	140	145	164	121	48	61	37	94

During the first winter period there were 17 counts greater than 20 additional to the WeBS counts including 71 on 2 Jan on the Upper Adur Levels (Betley to Bramber), 82 at Tortington (Arundel) on the 23rd, 76 at Ford (Arun Valley) on 2 Feb and 70 in the Brede Valley on the 12th.

During the BBS a total of 52 was recorded from 19 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 14 at Rye Hbr on 7 Jun. Breeding was confirmed from 47 tetrads and was probable at a further 38. Nesting activity was first noted at Warnham LNR where a bird was on a nest on 18 Mar and at Arundel on 1 Apr. The first cygnets (eight) were noted at Widewater (Lancing) on 12 May, in the Crawley area on the 13th and at Brookfield Park (Rustington) (five) on the 15th. Non-breeding, non-WeBS counted, numbers in Chichester Hbr during spring and summer peaked at 167 at Apuldram on 26 Jul but had reduced to 102 by 27 Nov.

Despite the relatively large numbers in the county, typically few were recorded at the principal seawatching sites as birds presumably moved between breeding and feeding sites. The county totals of eastwards and westwards flights (as recorded at the principal seawatching sites) were as follows:

	Jan	Mar	Apr	May	Aug	Sep	Oct	Dec	Total
E	3	3	2	8	2	-	3	-	21
W	4	2	7	-	13	1	2	4	33

In the second winter period significant non-WeBS counted flocks recorded at Chichester GP included 78 on 16 Oct, 68 on 20 Nov and 58 on 18 Dec. During the SWBS a total of 50 was recorded from 16 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of ten at Bosham on 5 Dec. [WEC]

Bewick's Swan

Cygnus columbianus

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

Bewick's Swans were recorded from 32 tetrads, 70% being in West Sussex. The monthly WeBS count at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	27	15	-		-	2	24
Chichester GP	-	-	-		-	2	-
Arun Valley	8	11	-		-	-	24
Upper Adur Levels	19	4	-		nc	-	-

During the first winter period the highest count was of 150 at Scotney Court Fm on 1 Jan, presumably including the flocks seen flying eastwards at various coastal sites on 31 Dec 2010. A herd of 35 at South Stoke on 1 Jan remained in the Arun Valley into February with fluctuating numbers but peaking at 42 at Burpham on 2 Feb and reducing to 16 on the 24th; the last (adult) was seen at Warningcamp on 27 Feb. The only record of any juveniles here was of a single bird, presumably the result of a poor breeding season in 2010. Elsewhere, there was a herd of only adults in the Adur Valley between Partridge Green and Upper Beeding from one on 2 Jan to a peak count of 22 on the 24th at Nep Town (Henfield) but reducing to three on 16 Feb. The next record was of 14 which appeared to arrive and depart on 5 Mar which included one immature bird and were probably from the Arun Valley. The only other records were of eight in the Hailsham/Pevensey area in early January and single birds in the Barnham area in January, consorting with other swans, and at Woodmancote on 22 Mar, the last record for the first winter period. The numbers in the Arun Valley show that this is still the most important area for this wintering species in West Sussex.

Birds were first noted back in the county in the second winter period on 23 Oct with a report of two at Lagness (Bognor) followed by reports of two (probably the same) at Sefter Fm (Rose Green) on 6 Nov which were driven off by resident Mute Swans after jousting for 20 mins. One bird stayed for 1 hr at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) on the 10th and was later seen at Rodmell and two, after roosting overnight at Chichester GP, departed west at 07.30 on the 20th. The largest herd in November was 29 adults with four juveniles at Burpham on the 28th. The herd at Burpham remained in the Arun Valley through to the year's end when it comprised only 26 adults but still four juveniles at Bury Watermeadows on the 31st. In the Upper Adur Valley six adults with one juvenile were noted on 22 Dec. A herd of 70 E seen at Ferring Rife at 10.30 (the largest herd in the west in this period) on 31 Dec was presumably the same as 100 E at Pett Level at noon, 80 at Rye Hbr at 12.30 and Northpoint GP at 13.30. [WEC]

Whooper Swan

Cygnus Cygnus

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

There were only two accepted records for this species in the first winter period. Five adults, first seen on 11 Jan at Lidsey Rife (Barnham) consorting with other swans, stayed in the general area until 27 Feb. A single adult was seen at Northiam (Rother Levels) from 15 to 30 Jan. In

November 18 adults were seen flying west past Brighton seafront on the 12th and two adults were also seen at Sheepcote Valley (Brighton).



Whooper Swans and Mute Swan, Barnham, February 2011 (Dave Sadler)

The long-lived feral bird, first recorded in 1999 in the Adur Valley, was noted this year at Singing Hills GC (Albourne) on 22 Mar but was probably seen on other dates and at other locations but not recorded by those who are familiar with its presence. [WEC]

Bean Goose

Anser fabalis

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

There were four records involving 13 birds of the Tundra race *A. f. rossicus*. The only record in the first winter period was of eight at Pett Level on 1 Jan (CFB). The remaining three records referred to the second winter period. In November there were three at Broadwater Lake (Eastbourne) on 20 Nov (STU). In December there were single birds at Amberley Wild Brooks on the 2nd (PNP) and on Lewes Brooks on the 3rd (ADW, IJW).

The only record of the Taiga race *A. f. fabalis* was of two on Henfield Levels on 4 Dec (ARK). [JAH]

Pink-footed Goose*Anser brachyrhynchus*

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

There were only three records: seven at Pett Level Pools on 1 Jan (JJ-S), a single bird at Thorney Deepes on 2-17 Jan (CBC *et al.*) and, in the second winter period, four at Pett Level on 14 Dec (CHD, AP). [JAH]

White-fronted Goose*Anser albifrons*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. European race (A. a. albifrons) is a red listed species of high conservation concern.

This species was recorded from just 28 tetrads with suitable habitat. The year started where 2010 left off, with significant counts across the county. The highest total was 130 on Pett Level on 1 Jan (and 115 at Rye Hbr the following day might have been some of the same birds) but numbers in Rye Bay dropped rapidly to 22 on the 9th and 23rd and 11 on the 30th, although 85 on the 31st were seen in flight. The next highest count was 115 in the Arun Valley on the 3rd which similarly had dropped to 38 by the 23rd and only ten on the 30th. Other noteworthy numbers came from Cuckmere Haven, where 74 birds were present from the start of the year until 15 Feb, and the Upper Adur Valley, where a flock of 44 seen flying northwards at dusk on 2 Jan was probably the same group of 43 at Beeding Brooks the same day. At Thorney Deepes up to 30 birds were present until 17 Jan and Pevensey Levels hosted a peak of 11 birds on the 9th.



White-fronted Geese, Cuckmere Haven, January 2011 (Peter Wilson)

By the middle of February all these flocks had dispersed, robably eastwards; the last double figure count was 30 at Cuckmere Haven on the 17th. Thereafter the only reports were of a party of six birds at Pett Level on 13 Mar, a single bird with Canada Geese in fields adjacent to Chichester Marina on 23 Mar, and a lingering bird at Pulborough Brooks, seen regularly until 20 Apr.

With the autumn the more usual fare returned. The first reports were of six birds on 13 Nov at Pett Level, where a count of 30 was recorded on the 27th, rising to a peak of 65 the following day which remained until the 21st. A flock of five birds was seen at Charleston Reedbeds on 17 Nov, and the following day a flock of 12 returned to Pulborough Brooks and remained in the Arun valley until the year's end. Other records included reports of between six and seven at Cuckmere Haven from 19 to 25 Nov, the same date that seven birds were seen going west over Bishopstone (Seaford) and single birds were recorded from Henfield Levels on 3 and 29 Dec. [AH]

Greylag Goose

Anser anser

Increasingly common introduced resident and winter visitor; scarce passage migrant. (Native population in UK is an amber listed species of medium conservation concern.)

This species was recorded from 138 tetrads in suitable habitat across the county. The monthly WeBS counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	545	358	401	193	347	522	592	1944	1238	654	1061	802
Chichester GP	26	48	24	7	28	35	37	24	70	-	18	14
Arun Valley	39	18	52	20	28	4	16	150	246	98	221	168
Warnham MP	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	104	-	-	46
Upper Adur Levels	111	5	56	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-
St Georges Retreat	4	-	30	10	15	26	42	24	51	34	23	nc
Weir Wood Res	2	nc	3	10	nc	40	26	158	271	200	140	-
Ouse Valley	39	38	9	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	40	60	35
Barcombe Res	-	2	15	-	1	-	4	32	81	-	-	5
Pevensey Levels	40	2	22	11	-	-	-	-	-	6	3	16
Bewl Water	2	-	7	5	nc	nc	6	1	100	14	5	-
Rye Bay	256	219	150	72	156	196	393	1518	280	240	567	511

This species continues to prosper in the county, as the above counts suggest. High counts additional to the WeBS data included 250 at Warnham LNR on 19 Jan, 200 at Scotney Court GP on the 3rd, 145 at Henfield Levels on the 9th and 108 at Amberley Wild Brooks on the 17th, 100 on 3 and 24 Jan at Pett Level and 260 at Warnham LNR on 1 Feb. The only coastal movement recorded in the first four months of the year was a total of 9 E at Splash Point (Seaford) on three dates between 9 Feb and 9 Apr.

Breeding was confirmed from 21 tetrads and was probable at a further 16. Most sites held one or two pairs but there were five pairs at Pett Level, four pairs at Chichester GPs and at Rye Hbr at least 15 families were counted. The first report of an occupied nest was on 3 Apr from High Cross (Albourne). Goslings were first noted at Arundel WWT on 20 Apr and at Coleman's Hatch (Ashdown Forest) on the 25th. Reports of gosling broods included three of seven, two of six and five and several smaller ones. Birds were recorded from a large number of sites throughout the

spring and early summer, suggesting that many more pairs than were formally noted may have bred in the county.

There was an early build-up of moulting birds at Knepp MP, where 126 were counted on 13 Jun, though the next three-digit count was not until 22 Jul, when 130 were noted at Pulborough Brooks. Peak counts from the largest post-breeding flocks included 246 on the Henfield Levels on 16 Aug and in September, counts of 304 at Weir Wood Res on the 4th, 315 at Rye Hbr on the 13th, 248 at Pulborough Brooks on the 19th and 200 at Warnham LNR on the 27th. Counts additional to the WeBS counts included 200 on Henfield Levels on 4 Dec and 320 at Ardingly Res and 226 on Pett Level on the 12th. [AH]

Canada Goose

Branta canadensis

Common and increasing introduced resident and partial migrant.

This species was recorded from 262 tetrads, 25% of the county total. 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	2532	1021	823	387	315	501	910	2057	1053	2731	2362	2498
Chichester Hbr	88	108	41	15	35	8	26	107	-	78	159	168
Pagham Hbr	-	28	-	5	5	-	3	-	112	nc	-	35
Chichester GP	24	96	23	31	27	65	79	23	21	44	28	9
Petworth Park	45	77	53	22	25	nc	103	22	82	28	12	-
Arun Valley	627	159	86	50	39	7	23	188	275	782	754	590
St Georges Retreat	75	25	67	46	19	106	95	26	20	40	57	nc
Weir Wood Res	10	nc	13	14	nc	40	46	290	139	89	31	278
Ouse Valley	45	29	10	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	100	50	130
Arlington Res	7	10	3	4	2	3	9	409	12	223	23	4
Cuckmere Haven	259	-	40	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	56	-	10
Eastbourne Lakes	30	14	69	40	37	165	68	11	10	82	52	90
Pevensey Levels	202	63	77	27	29	7	18	8	54	212	385	320
Bewl Water	696	170	55	17	nc	nc	342	350	24	587	439	450
Wadhurst Park	nc	nc	100	17	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	66	100	51
Rye Bay	238	67	62	27	24	52	37	245	249	184	163	282

Numbers for the first-winter period were fairly similar to last year, though the peak WeBS counts, 696 at Bewl Water and 627 in the Arun Valley, were both down a third on the same period last year. This species is remarkably rarely recorded from sea-watching sites. Sum totals for the year were 2 E past Selsey Bill and Climping Beach, 7 E and 2 W past Birling Gap and 5 E and 1 W past Splash Point, Seaford, all in April.

During the BBS a total of 246 was recorded from 42 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 50 at Petworth Park on 26 Jun. Breeding was confirmed in 72 tetrads, from Liphook Forest Mere in the west to Winchelsea in the east, and was probable in a further 37. Most breeding sites held only one or two pairs, but there were five pairs at both Pett level and Rye Hbr. Given the species' tendency to nest on small ponds, and often away from popular birding sites, it is possible that the breeding activity was higher than reported above.

Bowl Water again had the first big post-breeding count of moulting birds, with 342 there on 17 Jul. There were similar numbers at other regular sites through August, with peaks of 350 on Weir Wood Res on the 14th, 1000 at Arlington Res on the 21st and in September, a peak of 1120 at Pulborough Brooks on the 12th which was eclipsed on 14 Nov by the county's highest count of the year of 1127 at the same site. Surprisingly though, during the SWBS a total of only 19 was recorded from just three of the 120 1-km squares surveyed. [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.

This species was recorded from 32 tetrads across the county. The New Year began where the old one had ended, with flocks of the presumed wild birds scattered across the county but with the largest flocks in East Sussex. However, as the weather improved they mostly departed quickly. Peak counts in early January included 150 at Pett Level, 100 at Scotney Court GP and 70 at Cuckmere Haven all on the 3rd. However, after 120 were seen flying eastwards past Rye Hbr on the 4th, the last sizeable flock was 75 at Pett Level seen on the 9th but not recorded later. The only notable count thereafter was 54 at Barcombe Res on 11 Jan of which only 20 remained on 13 Feb but these could well have been part of the feral flock often seen there. The highest count then to the end of April was eight at Thorney Deeps from 15 to 19 Mar which could have been late migrants or even part of the county's feral population. Small numbers not exceeding seven were noted at several sites in West Sussex on various dates to mid-March.

The only eastwards movements recorded at the principal seawatching sites, apart from the 120 at Rye Hbr above, were two birds that dropped in on the beach at Church Norton with five Dark-bellied Brent Geese before continuing east on 19 Feb, 5 E at Selsey Bill on 12 Mar, 1 E at Hove on 10 Apr and finally 2 E tracked passing Worthing Beach and Splash Point (Seaford) on 30 Apr.

During the summer, presumably feral birds were noted at some five sites. There were up to two at Arundel WWT in May, four at Scotney Court GP in July and August, a single bird at Pulborough Brooks that remained into September and another at Weir Wood Res during August and a maximum of 31 at Plashett Park Lake which were probably the relocated Barcombe Res feral birds.

In the autumn, four birds which flew into Rye Hbr from the south were probably residents but the 390 noted at Pett Level on 13 Oct were undoubtedly the first arriving migrants. Other birds which may have been genuinely wild included two at Pagham Hbr on 16 Nov, seven on Pett Level from 23 to 29 Nov, two adults and a juvenile on Lewes Brooks from 24 Nov until the year's end and a single bird seen heading west past Selsey Bill in the company of Dark-bellied Brent Geese, also on 17 Dec. The feral flock at Scotney Court GP increased from 58 on 16 Oct to 75 on 18 Dec and 53 obviously feral birds returned to Barcombe Res on 16 Oct into December. [AH]

Dark-bellied Brent Goose

Branta bernicla bernicla

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

This species was recorded from 77 tetrads in the county, mainly in and around the western harbours and along the coast but occasionally inland at suitable sites. The monthly WeBS counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	11826	12302	5791	26	8	15	11	2	12	5344	12256	8457
Chichester Hbr	11434	9960	3321	20	6	15	11	2	10	5322	10309	8188
Pagham Hbr	354	2342	2453	5	-	-	-	-	2	nc	1583	258

Numbers recorded in the WeBS counts were slightly up, in both winter periods on the last two years and again, the vast majority of birds were in the two western harbours. The only large counts away from these sites (apart from obvious migrants) were at Climping Beach, where 700 were seen grazing on 1 Jan and 300 offshore on 14 Feb. Other reports away from the core areas included: up to 18 birds in Rye Bay where, in recent winters, a small but regular presence has become established. There were six at Brighthams Fm (Partridge Green) on 13 Jan, one on Weir Wood Res on 16 Jan, one on Bewl Water on the same date (and it, or another, on 12 and 13 Mar), singles at Drove Marsh (Newhaven) on 19 Jan, two at Cuckmere Haven on 30 Jan, one on Pevensey Levels on 13 Mar and another at Newhaven Tide Mills on 21 Mar.

Spring migration started early, with 300 birds seen heading east past Goring Beach on 28 Jan and, from 6 Feb, there followed a steady eastward passage recorded on most days. The monthly totals derived from the maximum recorded at any one of the principal seawatching sites (excluding Brighton Marina) with the monthly maximum on any one day were as follows:

	Total	Highest number recorded
Total	8440	
Jan	601	300, Goring Beach, 28 th
Feb	3490	837, Splash Point, 9 th
Mar	3505	709, Splash Point, 26 th
Apr	1269	731, Splash point, 1 st

The count of 837 past Splash Point (Seaford) on 9 Feb was the highest of the year. There were over twenty days when the daily maximum at any site was at least a hundred birds recorded passing along the Sussex coast.

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

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		Sep		Oct		Nov		Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	47	55	199	11	1013	6	455	6	-	39	4	204	9	132	-	29
Climping Beach	205	46	629	7	1077	8	-	-	-	54	-	914	5	73	-	43
Worthing Beach	304	17	541	34	1126	16	335	3	-	39	12	532	2	233	21	92
Telscombe Cliffs	166	1	1042	2	592	2	156	-	-	-	-	-	-	95	-	-
Splash Point	75	-	1983	7	2099	2	1202	-	17	-	48	100	-	-	-	-
Birling Gap	127	-	760	7	1423	-	274	-	-	27-	-	500	-	2	6	-

As usual, Chichester Hbr held a small summering flock of approximately a dozen birds, seen at various locations, peaking at 16 on 17 May and 13 on 12 Aug. A flock of five seen in Pagham Hbr on 16 Sep may have been the first inward migrants, but reports from Chichester Hbr of 57 on 23 Sep and 300 on 4 Oct undoubtedly referred to returning birds. There was a big arrival on 13 Oct, when 477 were recorded heading west past Climping Beach, and 450 came into Pagham Hbr, as well as an inland record of 56 birds moving west over Chichester GPs; by 16 Oct 2000 birds were safely back in Chichester Hbr for the winter.

Away from the western harbours, reports other than of westerly coastal movements were typically few. From mid-October to the year's end, the Rye Bay area held a small flock of birds, which fluctuated from one to 16 but was augmented by an influx between 7 and 20 Nov which peaked at 62 on the 11th of probably resting migrants. At Cuckmere Haven numbers from occasional reports also fluctuated to a maximum of 16 on 17 Dec. The only inland records were for single birds at Weir Wood Res on 5 Nov and Lewes Brooks on 11 Dec. [AH]

Pale-bellied Brent Goose

Branta bernicla hrota

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

There were only a few records of this distinctive subspecies. In the first winter period, there were two on 1 Jan increasing to seven on the 5th at Pett Level followed later by two on the 31st. Up to three were present in Pagham Hbr from 8 to 16 Jan, nine were seen at East Head (Chichester Hbr) on 27 Feb and one on Pilsey Sands (Chichester Hbr) on 1 Mar. There was also an unusual summer record from this latter site, with a single bird present on 13 Jun. The sole second winter period record was of a solitary bird amongst a flock of Dark-bellied Brent Geese at Rye Hbr on 9 Nov. [AH]

Black Brant

Brant bernicla nigricans

Very scarce winter visitor.

In the first winter period there were five records which presumably applied to just one mobile individual from the previous year: at Atherington (Climping) on 1 Jan (OM), at Pagham Hbr from the 3rd to the 9th (BFF, CRJ, DIS) and, in Chichester Hbr, at Prinsted on 20 Jan (DIS), West Wittering on the 22nd (EDU) and in Fishbourne Channel from 3 Feb to 1 Mar (AH, DIS). In the second winter period there was just one record, at East Head (West Wittering) on 22 Dec (BFF). [JAH]

Red-breasted Goose

Branta ruficollis

Very rare vagrant.

The adult first seen at Pett Level on 26 Dec 2010 remained until 1 Jan 2011 (NR, GS *et al.*). The record has been accepted by BBRC and must have been a good way to start the year for those who saw it. It is probably the fifth wild bird to be recorded in the county since the first in 1958 (see SxBR 63:28 for details of others). [DHH]

Egyptian Goose

Alopochen aegyptiaca

Very scarce introduced resident; bred for first time in 2000.

In the first winter period the maximum count was seven at Litlington beside the Cuckmere, an area with relatively few records previously. There were six at its most favoured location, Petworth Park, on both 16 and 26 Jan and four at Brighthams Fm (Partridge Green) and Bewl Water on 22 Jan and 19 Mar respectively. There were ones, twos and threes in several other locations,

including two at Wallers Haven (Pevensey Levels) on 15 Apr, another atypical location. Most unusual was one flying out to sea at Beachy Head on 3 Jan.

During the BBS, a total of three was recorded from just two of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of two at Northchapel on 24 Apr. In the breeding season, the only gosling recorded was a single at Benbow Pond (Cowdray Park) on 28 Apr, although a pair was thought to be in suitable territory at Moor Fm (Petworth) on 1 Jun, as were five at Tilgate Park Lake (Crawley) on 24 Jun and two resident at Firle Park from 21 Apr until the end of June at least.

However, the astonishing numbers that built up in the early autumn suggest that there was either more breeding success than these records show, or an influx from elsewhere. The count of 15 at Petworth Park on 10 Aug, itself a county record, rose to 18 by 13 Aug and then 21 on 18 Sep. Six at Pulborough Brooks the next day were presumably part of the Petworth group. Nevertheless, with five still at Bewl Water in July and August, six at Charleston Reedbed on 1 Sep, and smaller numbers scattered quite widely around the county, it would appear that the county population by the autumn was probably close to 40 birds.

There were, however, no more two-figure counts for the rest of the year, with a peak of seven at Arlington Res on 20 Nov and two at Forest Mere (Liphook) on 23 Nov, again out of their normal range. [AT]

Common Shelduck

Tadorna tadorna

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

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1058	1024	774	452	344	240	48	65	22	20	316	557
Chichester Hbr	612	505	358	167	124	85	17	14	17	4	107	330
Bracklesham Bay	55	nc	nc	12	9	11	nc	2	-	-	-	-
Pagham Hbr	193	362	193	116	100	51	7	5	4	nc	158	103
Arun Valley	36	52	53	61	41	18	10	-	-	2	23	24
Rye Bay	149	84	123	84	63	73	14	44	-	13	18	95

The WeBS counts in the first winter period were all around the 10-year average, although it was the first four-figure count in February since 2007. A count of 50 at Amberley Wild Brooks on 24 Jan was notable. The key monthly totals at the main sea-watching sites were as follows, with a typical April peak, and a bias towards spring birds moving east:

	Feb		Mar		Apr		May	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	2	2	9	1	30	9	14	4
Worthing Beach	3	9	3	1	29	10	11	-
Splash Point	6	5	39	-	86	9	13	-

During the BBS, a total of 19 was recorded in four of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of seven at Thorney Island on 1 Jun. Breeding was confirmed in 13 tetrads and

probable in a further 12, very similar to 2010. The earliest proven breeding record was from Pulborough Brooks, where there were nine ducklings on 19 May.

In West Sussex, there were three newly hatched young at Thorney Deepes on 15 Jun, seven juveniles at Birdham on 15 Jul, six young at Sidlesham Ferry Pool on 26 May, and two young at Swanbourne Lake (Arundel) on 10 Jun. Pairs were at both Amberley Wild Brooks and on the Norfolk Estate in the breeding season. In East Sussex, there were two pairs in suitable habitat on Lewes Brooks on 8 May and two at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) in June and early July, but there were no breeding records from the Cuckmere Valley. Six ducklings were at Horse Eye Level (Pevensey Levels) on 26 Jun. At Pett Level, there were two broods totalling 15 young; at Rye Hbr there were at least two pairs with up to four young fledging; there were 24 birds still at East Guldeford Level on 12 Jun; and at The Midrips 16 pairs on 17 Apr went on to produce three broods totalling 17 ducklings, of which nine fledged.

In the summer and autumn, the July, September and October WeBS counts were exceptionally lower than the 10-year averages and the October count of 20 was the lowest count in any month since September 2003 (40 and ignoring the lows of 2001 affected by FMD). Numbers increased in November and December although they were still short of the 10-year averages. A few birds were seen passing offshore in the second winter period, with a peak of 21 W past Worthing on 17 Dec. [AT]

Mandarin

Aix galericulata

Scarce introduced resident.

Birds were recorded in 91 tetrads, slightly higher than in 2010. The highest count of the first winter period was of 19 at Weir Wood Res on 15 Mar. A drake at Bracklesham Bay on 21 Mar was at an unusual location.

During the BBS, a total of 20 was recorded from five of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of five at Scaynes Hill on 28 Apr. In the breeding season, two birds in low level flight were thought to be prospecting in Tabell Ghyll (Ashdown Forest) on 22 Apr. There was a nest with eggs at Northlands (Warnham) on 6 May, and the first fledged young were seen at Robertsbridge on 12 May. Breeding was confirmed in 16 tetrads and probable in a further 21, showing the wide distribution of this species although at generally low levels. Fledged young were seen at: Ebernoe Common, Arundel WWT, Idehurst, Pulborough Brooks, Crawley Down, Weir Wood Res, Ashurst (Tunbridge Wells), Ashplats Wood (East Grinstead), Five Ashes Village, Bells Yew Green, Stonegate and the Doleham Valley. The Bells Yew Green youngsters were part of a group of 44. Other notable counts included 24 at Ardingly on 13 Jul and 15 at Angmering Decoy Ponds on 17 May. The highest count of the year was predictably at Weir Wood Res, where there were 48 on 17 Jul.

In the autumn and second winter period, notable counts included 21 at Gravetye Lakes on 16 Sep and 18 at Wadhurst Park Estate on 28 Nov, these being yet more locations which rarely feature in other wildfowl reports showing what an unusual duck this is. It is tempting to speculate that the species might do even better if more nest boxes were provided. [AT]

Wigeon*Anas penelope*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Very scarce in summer; but does not breed. 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	14709	7341	2662	51	16	8	4	6	295	3798	5765	8218
Chichester Hbr	2603	758	320	7	-	-	-	-	82	2729	1486	1195
Pagham Hbr	1752	1492	563	15	3	-	1	-	53	nc	1612	1451
Arun Valley	4112	2352	530	12	8	5	2	2	87	415	1441	3241
Upper Adur Levels	885	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-
Ouse Valley	1002	990	285	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	120	350
Arlington Res	167	134	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	134	765
Eastbourne Lakes	72	39	4	-	-	-	-	-	18	52	231	182
Pevensey Levels	1700	610	119	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bowl Water	246	119	174	-	nc	nc	-	-	4	27	115	122
Darwell Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	-	-	-
Rye Bay	1710	826	513	16	5	1	-	4	36	449	437	738

The numbers in January were exceptional; it was the highest count for that month since 1985 (14664) and probably an all-time record and over a third higher than the 10-year average (10262). There is no obvious cause for such high January numbers. Further evidence, aside from the WeBS counts, of the sheer numbers of the species in the county in the first three weeks of January include an estimate of 5000 at Pett Level on 3 Jan, by far the biggest single site count of the year. In addition, Pevensey Levels hosted 2000 on 2 Jan, 2000 were on Pagham Hbr on 9 Jan, and 1200 were at Partridge Green on 19 Jan. It was also the peak month for birds seen past seawatching locations, with the highest tally at Worthing of 84 E and 19 W.

However, by February, the January WeBS totals had halved to less than the 10-year average, and by March had slumped again to the lowest count for that month since 1999. The last three-figure flock was 300 at Pulborough Brooks on 1 Apr.

During the BBS, a total of five was recorded from just one of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, at Thorney Island on 26 Apr. In June and July, small numbers were seen at Bracklesham Bay, Pagham Hbr, Chichester GP, Arundel WWT, Pulborough Brooks and Rye Hbr, with a maximum of eight at Pulborough Brooks. Three west at Worthing on 12 Jun was unusual.

With non-breeders roaming the county in summer, it was difficult to detect with certainty the first returning birds, but two at Rye Hbr on 14 Aug were the first there since 8 Jun, and six at Thorney Deeps on 16 Aug were also probably newly in. However 23 at Pulborough Brooks on 21 Aug were almost certainly returning birds, and the first three figure count was 106 there on 19 Sep, with 800 at Thorney Deeps on 28 Sep.

There was a small autumn passage at seawatching sites, with 22 E and 29 W at Worthing in September the peak counts. By November and December, movement was predominantly westwards, with 3 E and 62 W at Worthing in December.

The WeBS counts for the second winter period were then consistent with the 10-year averages with no repeat of 2010's bumper December totals. [AT]

Gadwall*Anas strepera*

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	697	456	179	126	109	80	32	128	205	282	367	714
Chichester Hbr	126	25	-	-	8	-	-	-	1	-	20	26
Pagham Hbr	-	36	4	-	2	-	-	-	-	nc	-	2
Chichester GP	65	58	16	6	11	9	5	9	20	28	99	125
Burton & Chingford Ponds	14	-	4	7	-	nc	6	15	30	10	7	3
Wicks Farm Res	-	40	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	9	4
Arun Valley	58	45	18	29	20	7	2	5	10	77	36	60
Barcombe Res	52	32	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22
Arlington Res	4	13	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1
Eastbourne Lakes	4	30	11	10	-	-	-	1	16	2	139	149
Pevensey Levels	-	5	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bowl Water	150	44	11	-	nc	nc	-	-	8	7	18	60
Rye Bay	164	84	80	68	64	55	13	92	108	153	27	227

Numbers were slightly under the 10-year average throughout the first winter period, although 100 at Arlington Res on 6 Feb was considerably higher than the WeBS count. A few were seen during seawatches between February and April, with a maximum of 6 E past Worthing on 19 Feb.

Good numbers remained into spring, with the highest WeBS counts for April, May and June since at least 1997, but it was difficult to convert these numbers into proven breeding records. During the BBS, a total of five was recorded from three of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of two at Tangmere on 19 Apr. An unspecified number of young fledged at Arundel WWT, and at least one pair bred at Rye Hbr, rearing seven ducklings. The largest numbers during the summer were at Pett Level, with 33 counted there on 12 Jun but no ducklings were noted. Arundel WWT hosted 16 on 5 Jun, there were eight at Chichester GP on 12 Jun, and seven at Bracklesham Bay on 11 Jun, with smaller numbers at several other sites.

Signs of birds returning for the winter included 64 at Rye Hbr on 14 Aug. Numbers in the second winter period were at or just above the 10-year average. Away from the main sites, there was an excellent count of 73 at Wicks Fm (Yapton) on 7 Dec. [AT]

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 given in the table below. The January WeBS count was the highest since 2003 (7323). In addition to the counts above, 300 in the Dolcham Valley on 4 Jan, 216 nearby on the Brede Levels on 16 Jan and 163 at Partridge Green on the 1st were of note. By February and March, however, the numbers had dropped to less

than the 10-year average, although it is encouraging to see three-figure counts in the Ouse Valley, with the majority at Lewes Brooks.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	6319	3737	1860	271	3	14	46	235	1311	1272	2607	5735
Chichester Hbr	1410	859	348	14	-	-	2	24	194	432	636	1409
Pagham Hbr	966	879	318	67	-	3	8	3	410	nc	615	632
Arun Valley	1831	922	577	143	1	5	5	65	400	282	856	2096
Ouse Valley	55	280	125	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	10	50
Pevensey Levels	610	180	140	-	-	-	-	-	-	60	-	67
Bewl Water	76	11	-	-	nc	nc	5	8	19	79	8	161
Rye Bay	864	363	188	17	-	6	14	79	145	218	181	587

The key monthly totals at the main sea-watching sites were as follows, with a typical March and early April peak and all birds at that time moving east:

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May		Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	16	3	4	1	20	-	20	-	nc	nc	-	36
Worthing Beach	-	18	10	3	50	-	21	-	nc	nc	16	4
Splash Point	0	0	28	-	92	-	79	-	4	-	0	0

Few birds were left in the county by April, with the last three-figure count of 132 birds at Pulborough Brooks on 18 Apr, although 50 there on 3 May was exceptional. There were then only single figure counts during the breeding season and during the BBS, a total of only five was recorded in only one of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, at Thorney Island on 26 Apr. Pairs were recorded as being in suitable habitat at five sites, but there is no guarantee that this means there was any actual nesting. No young was seen at any site, and although this is a secretive bird in the breeding season it is quite possible that no pairs actually bred in the county. Highest counts during June and July were 13 at Rye Hbr on 17 Jul, 12 at Sidlesham Ferry Pool on 2 Aug, ten at Pulborough Brooks on 29 Jun and 7 Jul, and ten at Darwell Res on 17 Jul.

Return passage was apparently underway on 8 Aug when 21 were at Sidlesham Ferry Pool, with 40 at Pulborough Brooks by 13 Aug, 79 at Rye Hbr on 14 Aug, and 100 at Pagham Hbr on 27 Aug. In the second winter period, the WeBS counts in October and November were the lowest since at least 1996, but numbers rallied to above average in December. A count of 185 at Shinewater Lake (Eastbourne) was good for that site. [AT]

Green-winged Teal

Anas carolinensis

Very rare vagrant

The only record was an adult male at Thorney Deepes on 10-11 Nov (CBC). The county total moves on to 15 since the first record at The Midrips on 19 Mar 1961 with seven this century. All, unsurprisingly, considering the problems of identifying females of this species, have been adult males. All but one have been in the first winter/spring period: January (2), February (3), March (6), April (3) and November (1). [JAH]

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	3776	2606	1970	1361	1351	1824	2498	3435	3027	3460	3520	4636
Chichester Hbr	338	331	173	52	67	41	47	154	191	236	313	285
Pagham Hbr	187	127	156	72	117	116	128	116	127	nc	317	272
Arun Valley	650	454	511	486	571	663	493	831	699	538	682	846
Angmering Decoy Ponds	93	nc	43	23	-	32	340	440	nc	308	150	191
Balcombe Lake	42	13	nc	12	nc	nc	nc	150	nc	300	150	16
Eastbourne Lakes	226	88	67	24	13	72	59	66	74	13	87	164
Bewl Water	270	217	118	96	nc	nc	380	424	214	149	205	446
Alexandra Park	nc	124	80	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	167	157	-	192
Rye Bay	618	320	194	175	169	458	306	708	445	592	176	656

The peak county total of 4636 occurred in December, which coincided with a cold spell (2011 was the third end of year in a row with particularly cold weather, which often causes an influx of this dabbling duck escaping frozen continental lakes and ponds). Residential numbers were highest in the Arun Valley, Bewl Water and Rye Bay. The Arun Valley, Arundel WWT and Swanbourne Lake had a steady population of 200 to 300 birds, and Waltham Brooks a December peak of 240. At Rye Bay the highest numbers were at Rye Hbr. Other significant numbers, not reflected in the WeBS counts above, included 206 at East Guildford Level on 12 Jun, 160 at Bracklesham Bay on 16 Nov, and 200 at Wardley (Milland) on 25 Nov.

The WeBS numbers reflect concentrations of eclipse birds in the Arun Valley at Pulborough Brooks (520 in September) and at Waltham Brooks (235 and 207 in August and September), at Angmering Decoy Ponds (340 and 440 in July and August, with an additional 63 and 30 at nearby Poling Fishing Ponds), and at Bewl Water (390 and 440 in July and August), whilst the Rye Bay numbers were boosted by 313 birds at Scotney GP in August.

With almost another full year of Atlas activity, Mallard was recorded in 484 tetrads, reflecting the usual widespread distribution of this species. During the BBS, a total of 466 was recorded from 56 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 56 at Northchapel on 6 Jul. There were 234 records of confirmed breeding from 155 tetrads and breeding was probable in a further 116. The earliest record of confirmed breeding was a pair with three young at Weir Wood Res on 7 Mar and the last was at Arlington Res when a brood of four was amongst 80 birds recorded on 22 Aug. On Lidsey Rife a female and 13 one-week old ducklings were recorded on 20 Apr and on 23 May a female and a remarkable 14 ducklings, all about to fledge, were also recorded there – perhaps a crèche? At Mewsbrook Park (Littlehampton) 25 ducklings were recorded on 16 May when 15 adult birds were also present. Also during the breeding season 21 pairs were recorded at Pulborough Brooks, 26 nests/broods at Rye Hbr and 55 pairs at Pett Level. The most unusual breeding record was of a nest in an owl box at Isfield on 7 Jul containing six dead young.

Seawatching records were typically sparse. A total of 84 birds was recorded on coastal passage during the year with 71 E - concentrated in March (40), April (16) and May (11) - and 13 W. The highest daily passage was 8 E past Splash Point (Seaford) on 5 May. [JRC]

Pintail*Anas acuta*

Fairly common winter visitor and scarce on observed passage; occasionally summers and has bred. 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	583	759	138	7	1	2	-	-	16	54	123	426
Chichester Hbr	36	149	35	-	-	-	-	-	-	53	30	143
Pagham Hbr	227	552	82	6	-	-	-	-	12	nc	88	119
Arun Valley	302	53	14	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	2	163

Wintering numbers of Pintail were low for the second year running, with the February maximum of 759 being well below 967, the 5-year county average of yearly maxima for 2006-2010. This peak was only two-thirds of the average maximum for 2005-7 so the decline in wintering numbers over the last four years is pronounced.

February's peak of 552 at Pagham Hbr was below the 1% international threshold of 600. Despite two dry winters and the absence of flooding in the Arun Valley, where wintering Pintail numbers held up well at Amberley and Pulborough Brooks in January, this site qualified as of national importance, as did Pagham Hbr for February, with numbers exceeding the 1% threshold of 290. The only other sites holding significant numbers of Pintail additional to the WeBS counts were Brightmans Fm (Partridge Green), where a peak of 60 were present on 19 Jan and Henfield Levels, where a peak of 150 was recorded on 24 Feb.

Although Pintail were recorded in 55 tetrads across the county during the year the peak number recorded at any site in East Sussex was only ten birds. In the first winter period the majority of birds had left the county by mid-March although small and declining numbers were recorded up to the end of the first week of May. Thereafter single birds were recorded on single days in June and July at Chichester GP, Pett Level and The Midrips, but no birds summered and there were no records of attempted breeding. Single birds were recorded in the last week of August at Pagham Hbr and Pulborough Brooks, but the build-up of returning birds was slow with the peak September count being only 39 at Pagham Hbr on the 16th and it was not until 13 Oct that a count of 100 was recorded there. The first returning individual in East Sussex was recorded at Pett Level on 2 Oct.

During the year coastal passages recorded at the principal sea-watching sites totalled 38 E and 2 W between January and May, with a maximum of 9 E past Splash Point (Seaford) on 9 Feb. During November and December the counts were 2 E and 22 W with a maximum of 10 W past Selsey Bill on 6 Nov. [JRC]

Garganey*Anas querquedula*

Scarce passage migrant; very scarce summer non-breeder and rare breeder. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The spring passage of Garganey through the county was late in 2011. The first record of the year was a single bird at The Midrips on 13 Mar, nine days later than the 10-year average, and the only other March record was a pair at Bracklesham Bay on the 21st. During April, at least a

further 16 birds were recorded at coastal locations – up to three at Lewes Brooks between 3 and 6 Apr, three at Pett Level where a pair summered, a pair at Horse Eye Level (Pevensey) which also summered, as did at least two pairs at Rye Hbr. There were singles at Littlehampton on 20 Apr and Pagham Hbr between 24 Apr and 2 May. Eighteen were recorded during April on passage at seawatching sites with a peak of six past both Beachy Head and Splash Point (Seaford) on the 17th.

On 1 May six were present at Pulborough Brooks, where a pair stayed into June. There was a drake at Arlington Res on 1 May but it is unlikely to have been the same one that was seen there in eclipse plumage on 29 Jul. On 8 May 2 E were observed at Selsey Bill. It seems probable that a minimum of 49 birds were in the county during spring passage, of which ten or 11 appeared to have stayed into June and some later. In addition, a female was seen at Weir Wood Res, but only on 13 July, so probably had not summered. There was no evidence of breeding by any of the summering birds.

Ten autumn passage birds were recorded: at Worthing Beach, 3 W on 16 Aug, one at Pagham Hbr on 15 Sep and 6 W past both Worthing and Climping Beaches on the 16th were probably the same and the last for the year, 15 days earlier than the 10-year average departure date. [JRC]

Shoveler

Anas clypeata

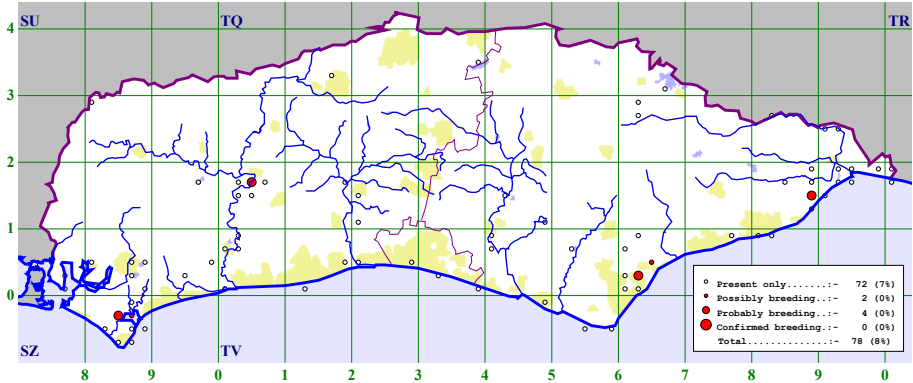
Very scarce breeder and scarce summer non-breeder; common winter visitor; scarce on observed passage. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

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	670	791	348	60	14	22	1	27	140	208	275	638
Bracklesham Bay	25	nc	nc	18	3	-	nc	2	9	28	36	17
Pagham Hbr	41	49	6	2	-	2	-	-	5	nc	5	1
Chichester GP	107	65	30	-	-	-	-	2	4	32	21	73
Arun Valley	133	208	73	4	1	-	1	4	30	31	48	124
Ouse Valley	27	14	39	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	1	2
Barcombe Res	27	9	5	-	-	-	-	-	14	13	-	1
Eastbourne Lakes	22	186	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	1	115	190
Pevensey Levels	35	41	31	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Bay	193	205	158	35	10	20	-	19	55	84	25	220

The peak monthly WeBS count of 791 was above the 5-year average of county maxima of 666 for 2006-10. The February and December totals at Eastbourne Lakes (mostly at Shinewater Lake) both exceeded the previous highest count at this site (172 in December 2000). Other notable numbers additional to the WeBS counts included 60 at Lidsey SF on 12 Jan and 60 at West Rise Marsh (Eastbourne) on 18 Jan. Departure of first winter visitors was well underway by mid-March and during April more birds were recorded on passage than were resident in the county.

About 47 birds summered, most notably at Pett Level where up to 19 pairs were recorded but without any evidence of confirmed breeding. Elsewhere there was one pair at Arundel WWT, up to six at Pulborough Brooks and up to two at Pagham Hbr all in June, all without evidence of confirmed breeding. There were single records of two at Weir Wood Res on 5 Jun, an immature male at Thorney Deepes on 1 Jul and three at Roselands (Eastbourne) on the 4th.



Assuming that the small numbers recorded at Pett Level and Rye Hbr in late July to early August were remaining summering birds, then the first sign of returning winter visitors was four at Pilsley Sands on 29 Jul followed by 16 at Rye Hbr on 9 Aug; thereafter numbers built up steadily across the county from September onwards.

The most notable feature of the year was the high numbers of birds recorded on spring passage. During the year, the county total recorded offshore, derived from the maximum recorded at the six regularly reporting sites on each day, was 336 (307 E and 29 W), the fourth highest total since seawatching records were first collated in 1985. Eastwards spring passage involved the following minimum numbers: in March, 86 with a peak count of 34 at Splash Point (Seaford) on 29th; in April, 156 (peak at 91 Splash Point on the 2nd); and in May, 41 (peak at 19 Splash Point on the 1st). It is interesting that the flight path of these migrants was such that the peak counts were not recorded at sites further west. [JRC]

Red-crested Pochard

Netta rufina

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

Only six birds were recorded in the county during the year. There was one at Loxwood on 21 Jan and two at Weir Wood Res on 12 Feb. In the second winter period there was one at Wadhurst Park Estate on 19 Oct and two at Rye Hbr on 22 Dec. All were recorded on one day only. [JRC]

Common Pochard

Aythya farina

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

The monthly WeBS counts from the principal sites were as given in the table below. The peak monthly WeBS count of 704 in January was slightly below the 5-year average of county maxima of 745 for 2006-10 and Chichester GP and Rye Bay (particularly Long Pit and Scotney GP) were the strongholds of wintering Pochard. In the Arun Valley the majority of birds were recorded at Arundel WWT. Additional to the WeBS counts, there was a wintering population at Forest Mere (Liphook) which peaked at 27 on 3 Feb in the first winter period and 56 on 29 Dec in the second.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	704	283	195	24	16	26	23	48	56	88	359	442
Chichester GP	274	91	61	2	1	12	1	-	7	28	118	132
Burton & Chingford Ponds	38	13	5	-	-	nc	1	-	-	-	4	11
Petworth Park	8	4	4	-	-	nc	-	-	-	5	12	4
Arun Valley	86	85	49	15	9	6	4	3	-	-	8	38
Warnham MP	12	6	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	8	9	12
Weir Wood Res	10	nc	12	-	nc	-	-	-	-	-	26	-
Barcombe Res	39	4	-	-	-	-	4	1	-	8	9	20
Eastbourne Lakes	40	26	26	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	17	20
Rye Bay	99	28	16	7	6	8	13	44	48	31	138	163

Pochard was recorded in 58 tetrads across the county. Numbers declined sharply in February and after 17 Mar there were few records with double figure numbers until 44 were recorded at Rye Bay during the August WeBS count, heralding the return of wintering visitors. However, numbers did not really start to build up until November, as the WeBS table above shows.

During the summer the highest numbers recorded were 11 at Chichester GP, seven at Swanbourne Lake (Arundel), up to 12 at Arundel WWT and eight at Pett Level. At Rye Hbr there were ten on 17 Jul but only a single female in May and June. Breeding was confirmed at Drayton Pit (Chichester GP), where a female and two ducklings were recorded on 18 Jul and at Arundel WWT where “six pairs suffered heavy loss of ducklings to large gulls”.

There were very few records from seawatching sites. Probably the same 2 E were recorded at Selsey Bill, Splash Point (Seaford) and Beachy Head on 2 Apr and there were 3 W at Selsey Bill the same day. The only other seawatch record was at Worthing of 1 W on 11 Dec [JRC]

Tufted Duck

Aythya fuligula

Fairly common resident although scarce breeder; fairly common winter visitor and scarce on observed passage. 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	1031	1027	875	580	415	311	349	393	352	574	721	1001
Chichester Hbr	93	70	32	-	6	6	6	12	15	18	22	68
Pagham Hbr	21	44	10	16	22	35	17	12	23	nc	16	35
Chichester GP	169	222	167	37	72	20	38	54	35	73	212	233
Burton & Chingford Ponds	30	24	18	21	-	nc	17	16	6	40	60	20
Petworth Park	19	16	17	12	11	nc	17	14	11	18	60	22
Arun Valley	156	101	82	106	100	59	29	13	15	50	45	77
Barcombe Res	69	44	41	41	27	32	48	37	14	46	32	24
Eastbourne Lakes	56	123	61	-	-	-	-	-	23	18	58	69
Bewl Water	15	67	44	90	nc	nc	57	26	9	16	20	10
Darwell Res	50	15	19	-	5	4	-	-	30	48	-	100
Rye Bay	233	180	275	207	146	136	113	162	104	174	112	208

The peak monthly WeBS count of 1031 in January was well below the 5-year average of county maxima of 1213 for 2006-10, despite the inclusion of a full year of WeBS counts for Darwell Res. Other notable counts, additional to the WeBS, were 104 at Darwell Res on 20 January and the wintering population at Southwater Quarry, which peaked at 54 on 1 Feb in the first winter period and 74 on 18 Dec in the second winter period. The main strongholds in the Arun Valley were Swanbourne Lake (Arundel) and Arundel WWT. At Eastbourne Lakes they were at Shinewater and West Rise Lakes. At the other two prime WeBS sites, Chichester GP and Rye Bay, numbers were spread across the constituent locations.

During the year Tufted Duck were recorded in 122 tetrads across the county. WeBS counts indicate that about 30% of the winter peak population summered especially in the Rye Bay area, but also at many suitable large and small locations.

During the BBS, a total of 30 was recorded from eight of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 14 at Wiston Estate (Steyning) on 23 Apr. There were 14 records of confirmed breeding, involving at least 23 broods. The first was of a bird with nine juveniles at Arundel WWT on 30 May. Breeding was then confirmed at Thorney Deeps, Forest Mere (Liphook) (two broods), Chingford Pond, Poling, Billingshurst, Sharpthorne, West Rise Marsh (Eastbourne), Etchingham and Bewl Water. At Pett Level there were 40 pairs during the summer and breeding was confirmed. At Rye Hbr at least 11 nests/broods were noted during the season. However, records from Swanbourne Lake (Arundel) and Amberley Wild Brooks stated that no sign of breeding had occurred despite the presence of birds through the summer, and there were no records of probable or confirmed breeding from Chichester GP or Barcombe Res.

Tufted Ducks observed on passage totalled 27 E, 17 of them in April with a maximum of four at Splash Point (Seaford) on the 9th. [JRC]

Greater Scaup

Aythya marila

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

There were records of Scaup from 24 tetrads, all of them coastal except for one record from Weir Wood Res. The minimum numbers recorded were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	16	16	12	1		5	-	1	1

On New Year's Day, a single female was recorded at Pagham Hbr and another bird at Rye Hbr, twos were noted at both Widewater (Lancing), females, which remained into March, and in the east, at Glyne Gap (Bexhill). On 4 Jan four were recorded at Langney Point (Eastbourne). On the 5th there were two in Pagham Hbr which increased to three on the 22nd (all females) of which only two remained on the 29th. In Chichester Hbr, a female was noted at Thorney Deeps on the 15th which was joined by a drake on the 22nd, both remaining to at least the 29th. One at Rye Hbr on the 16th remained to at least the 30th and one was present at East Worthing on the 28th. In February, the two at Widewater remained in the general area until at least the 27th and the birds in Pagham Hbr in January also remained, to at least the 22nd, three having been noted on the 8th and 20th. Elsewhere, singles were recorded at Chichester GP and at Thorney Island on the 12th and three at Pett Level on the 21st. On the 24th an eclipse drake was recorded in Chichester Hbr. The pattern continued in March: the eclipse drake at Thorney Island was seen on the 1st moulting into breeding plumage; the two females at Widewater were last recorded on the 14th; and the two

females at Pagham Hbr were last recorded on the 27th, four birds having been noted on only the 22nd. Three birds were recorded at Rye Hbr from the 13th to 19th. In April, one was noted at Rye Hbr on the 11th.

The first autumn record was of five at Weir Wood Res on 2 Sep. No further birds were noted until singles at Rye Hbr on 13 and 20 Nov (probably the same individual) and on 23 Dec at Glyne Gap. [DAB]

Common Eider

Somateria mollissima

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

The approximate monthly totals of birds, and the hours watched, at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	E	46	21	22	65	7	29 E on 23 Apr
	W	15	10	5	27	-	
	o/s	11	3	-	-	1	
	Hr	23	21½	45	173½	-	
Worthing Beach	E	3	-	-	41	2	34 E on 2 Apr
	W	2	-	-	1	8	
	o/s	1	-	-	-	-	
	Hr	31	-	-	57½	-	
Splash Point	E	1	12	21	46	2	14 E on 2 Apr
	W	-	-	-	1	-	
	Hr	14	20½	44	120½	79½	
Birling Gap	E	-	-	4	20	-	14 E on 2 Apr
	W	-	-	-	-	-	
	o/s	-	-	-	8	-	
	Hr	-	-	24	60½	-	

In the first winter period, numbers recorded at several locations in the west, away from the principal seawatching sites, did not exceed three birds, the exception being 11 offshore at Ferring on 3 Jan. In the east, apart from 3 W noted at Brighton Marina on 2 Jan the only other significant count was of 20 at Pett Level on the 3rd. Double figure counts were recorded at several sites in the west: 16 at East Head (Chichester Hbr) on the 22nd, 40 offshore at Church Norton on the 2nd which had reduced to 20 on the 20th and four on the 31st while the 30 in Pagham Hbr on the 1st was probably part of the same flock as were smaller numbers up to 11 on the 22nd there later in the month. In February, 42 in Chichester Hbr mouth included three adult drakes, increasing to 56 on the 8th (all first year males and females). At Pilsey Island a male and five females were recorded on 20th Feb. In the east the only records were of four off Hastings on the 19th and 14 in Rye Bay on the 24th. Otherwise the pattern of small groups mainly in the west continued through March. In April, eastwards passage was recorded at the principal seawatching sites with peak days on the 2nd and 29th as shown above. In the Pagham Hbr/Church Norton area ten birds on the 7th had reduced to four on the 17th. The only other records were from the east: one at Pett Level on the 1st, 11 at Hove on the 2nd (including four breeding plumage drakes) and 15 in Rye Bay on the 24th.

Numbers in May were very small: 3 E at Hastings on the 3rd and three at Selsey Bill on the 6th. A small number of birds stayed around in June: up to four were noted at Pilsey Island during the month, two moulting females were off Lancing Beach on the 1st and 11 flew E at Selsey Bill on the 7th, the highest count for the month.

The total for July was just eight birds: four at Fairlight Cove on the 3rd and four at Pilsey Island (Chichester Hbr) from the 13th to 29th. Numbers and locations were very similar in August and September with a peak count of 8 W at Worthing on 28 Sep, probably indicating the first arrivals. Apart from ten at East Head on 14 Oct and eight at Glyne Gap on the 16th things were quiet until December when the month's total of c.25 included 10 E at Worthing on Christmas Day. [DAB]

Long-tailed Duck

Clangula hyemalis

Very scarce to scarce passage migrant and winter visitor; rare non-breeder in summer. Schedule 1 species.

In yet another poor year for this species the total of only five for the first four months of the year consisted of 3 W at Worthing Beach on 6 Jan, one at Thorney Island on the 23rd and one at Barcombe Res on 17 Apr. The only other record for the year was of two seen offshore at Shoreham on 17 Nov before flying west. [DAB]

Common Scoter

Melanitta nigra

Common spring passage migrant and fairly common winter visitor to the coast; usually scarce in summer and autumn. Very scarce inland. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	250	49	82	-	-	-	-	-	45	250	-	6
Pagham Hbr	-	31	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Glyne Gap	250	-	80	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	45	250	nc	-
Rye Bay	-	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6

The largest wintering flocks were recorded off Glyne Gap in both January and October during WeBS surveys. This species can be found loafing or feeding offshore right along the coast from Selsey Bill to Rye Bay in parties of various sizes. For instance, the total from elsewhere (i.e. excluding Glyne Gap) in January was at least 270 including 100 in Rye Bay on 3 Jan (assuming they were different). These feeding flocks are mobile and it can be difficult to see or even count swimming birds in rough winter seas and some may get missed or some counts duplicated. Records suggest a total of at least 400 for the first winter period.

Totals from the principal seawatch sites (Selsey Bill, Worthing Beach, Telscombe Cliffs and Splash Point (Seaford)), computed on the assumption that the highest number seen at a single site was the maximum in the county that day and that birds recorded on subsequent days were different, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
East	67	40	2168	5774	1842	267	43	17	98	75	28	44	10463
West	71	6	8	15	10	40	17	27	62	101	95	60	512

Eastbound passage began in mid-March with 266 E past Splash Point on the 12th and a high count of 559 E from there on the 25th followed by 340 E on the 29th, one of the peak days as shown below. The total of 9804 for the months March-May was over 2500 more than the average for the last 25 years. The highest daily count of 1695 at Beachy Head on 2 Apr was c.29% of the total for that month. Totals for eastbound passage on the six days when the maximum passage was observed from at least one of the principal sites, with hours watched in brackets, were as follows:

	29 Mar	2 Apr	19 Apr	22 Apr	2 May	5 May
Selsey Bill	61 (4½)	425 (6¼)	375 (9¼)	300 (12)	358 (13)	213 (13½)
Worthing Beach	31(?)	365 (1½)	440 (3¼)	nc	264 (4¼)	166 (6½)
Telscombe Cliffs	20 (?)	650 (2)	99 (1¼)	nc	nc	181 (1¼)
Splash Point	340 (4)	1286 (4¼)	1538 (5½)	443 (11)	206 (4½)	488 (13½)
Beachy Head	nc	1695 (?)	1515 (?)	nc	133 (3¼)	82 (2½)

A more comprehensive summary of the spring eastbound passage, recorded at four of the principal seawatching sites plus Beachy Head is as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Total	No. per hr Mar-May	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	182	1844	1173	3199	9.3	425 on 2 Apr (6¼ hrs)
Worthing Beach	111	1157	814	2082	14.2	440 on 19 Apr (3¼ hrs)
Telscombe Cliffs	56	754	213	1023	26.4	650 on 2 Apr (2 hrs)
Splash Point	1987	5078	1272	8337	34.2	1286 on 2 Apr (4¼ hrs)
Beachy Head	1517	4325	733	6575	57.7	1695 on 2 Apr (? hrs)

Spring passage continued throughout May and into June but in much smaller numbers with maxima of 51 E from Worthing Beach on 25 May, 44 E off Selsey Bill on 7 Jun, 50 there on the 12th and 32 on the 22nd. From then it seems likely that most flying birds were over summering as unusually high numbers featured this year. There were reports of up to 20 from several sites from late June to mid-September with 60 in Rye Bay on 21 Jul and a remarkable raft of 400 close inshore off the nearby Midrips on the same date and 140 there on 2 Aug. Inland there was a female on Weir Wood Res on 27 Jun.

In the autumn 45 off Glyne Gap on 18 Sep and 38 W off Climping Beach on 21 Sep presaged a rather light westerly passage. Apart from 250 off Glyne Gap on 16 Oct (though none were reported from there later), the maxima recorded in the second winter period were 30 off Pett Level on 18 Dec and 28 off Medmerry Cliffs (Bracklesham Bay) on 27 Dec. [WGH]

Velvet Scoter

Melanitta fusca

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

In January a total of up to about 30 was seen offshore at over ten sites between Selsey Bill and Rye Bay, continuing the high numbers recorded at the end of 2010. Groups were seen on the

sea and flying past and there was certainly considerable interchange between sites. Maxima were 18 in Rye Bay on 2 Jan, 14 off Climping Gap on 3 Jan and 11 off Lancing on 11 Jan. Most of these birds seem to have left by February as the only report that month was of 8 E at Rye Bay on 24 Feb. In March, up to 9 E off several sites may have signalled the start of the spring passage. This began in earnest on 2 Apr with 27 E off Beachy Head on 2 Apr (20 E off Splash Point were probably the same). The other peak days in April were in the period 19-22 Apr when at least 46 flew east. Passage was also recorded on 1 and 5 May (max 10 E off Splash Point on the 5th). The last eastwards spring bird was off Worthing on 25 May.

The seawatching totals for the main passage months from the principal watch sites of Selsey Bill, Climping, Worthing, Telscombe Cliffs, Splash Point (Seaford) and Birling Gap, computed on the assumption that the highest number seen at a single site was the maximum in the county that day and that birds seen on subsequent days were different were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May		Nov	Dec	Totals
East	12	85	20		1	-	117
West	-	-	4		1	2	7

The first autumn bird was off Selsey Bill on 10 Oct with one off Worthing and Brighton on 12-13 Nov. The only other records from a disappointing second winter period were from Worthing of 1 W on 21 Nov and 2 W on 27 Dec. There were no reports from inland sites this year. [WGH]

Common Goldeneye

Bucephala clangula

Scarce winter visitor, rare non-breeder in summer. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

This species was recorded in 34 tetrads, almost twice as frequently in West Sussex than in East Sussex. The monthly WeBS counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	34	33	10		-	9	10
Chichester Hbr	14	25	-		-	1	1
Pagham Hbr	10	3	3		nc	2	4
Chichester GP	-	-	2		-	3	-
Barcombe Res	-	-	-		-	1	-
Arlington Res	1	-	1		-	-	-
Rye Bay	9	5	4		-	2	5

The good numbers in December 2010, particularly at the coastal sites of Chichester and Pagham Hbrs and Rye Bay, continued into January and February. Peak counts were 20 at Pagham Hbr on 8 Jan and 22 at Apuldram (Chichester Hbr) on 20 Feb. In contrast there were only single birds at two inland sites (more than 5 km from the coast): at Amberley on 9 Jan and Arlington Res on 16 Jan, 6-26 Feb and 13 Mar. There were several offshore sightings of one to three, mainly between Climping Gap and Worthing. Numbers dropped off in March with peak counts of six in Rye Bay on 7 Mar and three at Pagham Hbr on 22 Mar. Four W off Selsey Bill on 6 Mar and three east off Beachy Head on 13 Mar may have been on passage. The last spring bird was at Rye Bay on 29 Mar, rather earlier than the 10-year average date of 20 Apr. There were no reports of summering birds.

The first returning bird was a brownhead at Chichester Hbr on the comparatively late date of 10 Nov, compared with the 10-year average date of 1 Oct. The highest count of drakes was of four in Chichester Hbr on 27 Nov. There were three (one drake and two redheads) at Pagham Hbr on 15 Nov and also at Chichester GP on the 20th when there was also a pair at Rye Bay. Numbers at Pagham Hbr increased to six on the 26th (including one adult male). Inland there were singles at Bewl Water on 12 Nov and Barcombe Res on the 20th.

There were rather few reports in December in marked contrast to the previous winter. Apart from a lone bird at Chichester Hbr on 10 Dec and 1 W at Selsey Bill on the 17th, all other records were from either Pagham Hbr, with a peak count of four on 11 and 27 Dec, or Rye Hbr, with a peak count of five on the 18th. [WGH]

Smew

Mergellus albellus

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

In a poor year for the species there were probably no more than eight birds in the county during the first winter period, including just one male, briefly. Single redheads on New Year's Day were noted at Chichester GP, Pagham Hbr, on the R Arun at Ford and West Rise Marsh (Eastbourne) with two unsexed birds on Northpoint GP (Rye). The latter were not reported again but it is possible they were the male and female at Rye Hbr later. Here, for what has hitherto been the most reliable site in the county, was a male on three dates between 10 and 16 Jan and a redhead on 15 and 16 Jan and again on 19 Mar. This, the latest record in the first winter period, was matched by a redhead in Chichester Hbr where at least one individual was recorded on many dates from various sites there from 9 Jan to 19 March. The possibility cannot be discounted that this bird was the same as the one at Pagham Hbr and even the one at Chichester GP where a redhead was recorded on three dates to 29 Jan. There was a redhead on Piddinghoe Pond on 5 and 7 Jan and others at Warnham LNR on 7 Jan and Langney on 13 Feb. More unusual was a male flying east off Worthing Beach in the company of two Red-breasted Mergansers on 3 Jan.

The only reports for the second winter period concerned a redhead on Bewl Water on 12 Nov followed by two at Rye Hbr on 6 Dec. [WGH]

Red-breasted Merganser

Mergus serrator

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant along the coast; rare non-breeder in summer. Rare inland.

This species was recorded from 42 coastal tetrads between Chichester and Rye Harbours. The monthly WeBS counts at the two principal onshore sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Jul		Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	181	154	160	5	1		17	162	135
Chichester Hbr	160	138	153	5	-		17	156	124
Pagham Hbr	13	16	7	-	1		nc	3	6

Chichester Hbr remains the preeminent wintering site with parties regularly recorded at several locations there. Pagham Hbr is very much of secondary importance. However, the WeBS counts do not include those birds wintering on the sea off Selsey Bill/Church Norton which are included in the table below of monthly totals and hours watched which illustrates that the most important offshore wintering area is between Selsey Bill and Worthing.

There is probably considerable interchange between the three principal wintering sites as demonstrated by the numbers recorded passing east or west. A wintering population of several hundreds seems likely. Further east, records were much scarcer and always in single figures. There were six off Brighton Marina on 12 and 20 Mar and four there on 19 Apr. Further east the only records were singles off Peacehaven on 23 Jan, Langney Point on 3 Jan and Bexhill on 1 Jan with four off Hastings on 21 Mar.

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	84	54	91	82		3	2	3
	W	39	72	26	37		18	32	14
	o/s	69	47	142	12		1	20	42
	Hr	23	21½	45	173¾		29	14½	12½
Climping Beach	E	-	-	30	-		-	-	12
	W	10	-	-	-		7	3	15
	o/s	406	184	341	21		-	-	9
	Hr	31½	31½	51	5		41½	13	9
Worthing Beach	E	2	8	23	22		-	2	19
	W	-	4	-	5		4	23	59
	o/s	599	138	101	49		-	38	91
	Hr	31	16½	33¾	57¾		30¾	14¾	24
Splash Point	E	-	7	40	68		2	-	-
	W	-	1	-	-		1	-	-
Birling Gap	E	3	3	19	67		11	-	2

The seawatching totals of passage birds for the main passage months observed at the four principal seawatching sites (Selsey Bill, Worthing Beach, Telscombe Cliffs and Splash Point (Seaford)), computed on the assumption that the highest number seen at a single site was the maximum in the county that day and that birds seen on subsequent days were different, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
East	84	78	153	130	14		5	4	34	503
West	50	78	26	42	1		39	57	89	382

With movements in the first two months of the year being local feeding movements, easterly spring passage began in mid-March with 23 E past Goring Gap on the 12th followed by a peak count of 40 on the 27th. There were two further counts of 20 or more to 9 Apr and then only very small numbers until the final record of 2 E at Birling Gap on 8 May. An unexpected summering individual was first reported from Pagham Hbr on 7 Jun and then on many dates up to 25 Sep. There were singles reported flying east off Worthing on 3 Jul and from Chichester Hbr from 19 Jul to 8 Aug which may have been locally summering birds.

The first westwards autumn passage birds were 11 W seen at Birling Gap on 9 Oct and there were 6 W at Selsey Bill on the 23rd and 8 W there on 4 Nov. By late November the main wintering flocks were established in Chichester Hbr and offshore between Selsey Bill and Worthing as shown in the tables above. Thirty offshore at Church Norton on 22 and 23 Nov was a high count as the largest group counted there later in the year was 16 on 10 Dec.

Four pairs in (early) full display off Lancing on 4 Dec must have been an enjoyable sight and presumably part of the Worthing flock. Two unusual records in the second winter period were four on Flat Beach Quarry (Rye Hbr) on 7 Nov and two on the lower R Adur (Shoreham) on 25 Nov. [WGH]



Red-breasted Mergansers, Widewater Lagoon, December 2011 (Les Bird)

Goosander

Mergus merganser

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

The usual wide scatter of records were mostly short staying or passing birds. In the first winter period there were three redheads off Beachy Head on New Year's Day and a single there on 8 Feb. However, the longest stayers were a pair found at Arlington Res on 1 Jan that were joined by another redhead on 8 Jan; all three remained until at least 13 Feb and may have been the same three seen at Barcombe Res from 11–16 Jan. A single at Kitchenham, near Peasmarsh on 2 Jan was outshone by six at nearby Beckley three days later but neither site produced any more records.

Otherwise there were mostly sightings of single redheads at the following sites: Chichester GP (1 Jan and 17 Feb), Rye Hbr (2 and 16 Jan), Weir Wood Res (2-9 Jan with two on 3 Jan),

Pulborough Brooks (4 Jan and 16 Feb), Piddinghoe Pond (7 Jan), Newhaven (8 Jan, 16 Feb and 9 Mar) and one on 20 Jan at Furnace Wood (Felbridge). There was a redhead off Worthing on 29 Jan and five passage birds flew east there on 17 Mar. The last for the spring was one east off Selsey Bill on 6 Apr.

The first returning bird was a redhead west past Beachy Head on 10 Oct followed by singles in Chichester and Pagham Harbours on 29 Oct. In November there were up to two in Chichester Hbr on the 1st with a single on the R Ouse at Southease the same day.

One in the Lower Cuckmere Valley on 17 Nov and two at Rye Hbr on 26 Nov presaged a rather quiet second winter period which included a male at Arlington Res on 17-18 Dec and two redheads at Amberley Wild Brooks on 19 Dec while a redhead on the R Ouse at Lewes on 26 Dec concluded the year. [WGH]

Ruddy Duck

Oxyura jamaicensis

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

The three most regular sites continued to be those shown below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	20	1	2	3	2	9	5	10	12	9	14	17
Chichester GP	9	-	-	3	-	7	3	4	7	3	3	9
Rye Bay	3	1	1	-	1	1	2	6	4	6	9	7
Other sites	8	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	2	1

Within January's high total was a group of seven at Petworth Park Lake on 2 Jan (a new site in recent years). Since there were no later reports from there, they may have moved to Chichester GP where the first reports were of one on 5 Jan; numbers there fluctuated up to a maximum of nine on 18 Dec. Although there were no reports from Chichester GP in February, March and May, this was the second most frequently reported site in the county, the most frequently reported being Rye Bay where a maximum of eight was noted on 23 Nov. As well as Petworth, other less regularly frequented sites were Pagham Hbr (one in September), two sites near Arundel (singles in March and December), Ditchling (singles in January, May and June), and Bewl Water (two in November).

Single pairs bred successfully in both East and West Sussex. [WGH]

Red-legged Partridge*Alectoris rufa*

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

There were 79 records in the first winter period from 58 sites, an almost identical number to that found in 2010. Of these, 47 were from West Sussex compared with 32 from East Sussex, a reversal of the situation in 2010. The highest counts were 53 at Lodge Hill Fm (West Dean) on 27 Feb, 17 at Sidlesham Ferry Field on 4 Jan, 20 at Singleton on 12 Feb and 18 at Lower Standean on 19 Jan.

During the BBS, a total of 45 was recorded from 17 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum of 13 at Ferry Fm (Sidlesham) on 23 Apr. Between April and June 143 records were received from 91 sites. Breeding was confirmed at seven of these plus a further two in July and one in August. Breeding was probable at 38 sites and birds were observed in suitable breeding habitat at a further 22. Fledged young were reported from Grevitt's Cross (Up Marden), Boxgrove (Chichester), Oving and Stonegate. An adult and five young were seen at New Down (Burpham). At Pagham Hbr three pairs were reported and 25 fledged young were seen there in August. The Norfolk Estate reported 180 pairs and the Rye Bay Ringing Group two broods. A nest with 15 eggs was found at Three Leg Cross (Ticehurst) and distraction display was observed at Singleton.

Two birds were observed feeding on spilt food under garden bird feeders at Bishopstone (Seaford) on 14 Apr.

There were 110 records from 51 sites in the second half of the year. There were 60 birds at Up Marden on 9 Sep, 60 at Pagham Hbr on 29 Aug and 80 on 16 Sep, 51 at Burpham on 21 Sep and 95 at Lower Standean on 14 Sep. These higher counts almost certainly represent captive bred birds. [RTP]

Grey Partridge*Perdix perdix*

Scarce resident; much declined but benefiting locally through conservation effort. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Forty-two records were received in the first winter period from 22 sites in the west of the county and eight in the east. No large counts were recorded during this period, the highest being 14 at Oving on 9 Jan, 15 at The Burgh (Norfolk Estate) on 20 Jan and 13 from Peppering Fm (Norfolk Estate) on 21 Mar.

During the BBS a total of 18 was recorded from seven of the 147 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum of four at East Dean (WS) on 29 May. During the breeding season records were received from 82 sites but breeding was confirmed from only six; at Boxgrove two fledged young were seen, at Ford three adults were seen with 15 to 20 fledged young, at Courtwick (Littlehampton) two adults were accompanied by a single chick, at Applesham (Coombes) a pair was more successful with six chicks and at Rye Hbr an adult was sitting on 16 eggs. In addition 342 pairs were counted on the 1240-ha Norfolk Estate during the breeding season and a count of 1873 birds was made early in September. These results follow several years of the enthusiastic application of grant money from the DEFRA Higher Level Stewardship scheme and must be one of the most outstanding conservation success stories in the county.

Other significant counts during the autumn and second winter periods included 26 at Climping, 25 at Hutchinson Fm (Wick), 20 at Chanctonbury Ring and 45 at Steyning Round Hill. [RTP]

Common Quail*Coturnix coturnix*

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

There was a remarkable increase in the number of records compared with 2010. There were possibly 73 birds (21 in 2010) from 40 sites (14 in 2010). Comparison of the returns for the two years suggests that this increase is real: in 2010 there were only two sites with multiple counts, one of four birds and one of two; in 2011 at least two birds were recorded at 19 sites. The Norfolk Estate recorded none in 2010 but 'more than seven males' in 2011 from the 1240-ha estate.

The first returning bird was reported on 29 Apr at Foredown (Portslade), 21 days earlier than in 2010 and 16 days before the 10-year average. The next two records were on the more usual dates of 14 and 17 May at Cissbury North Scarp and Steyning Round Hill, respectively.

Records ranged from Bignor in the west to Rye in the east and from Beachy Head in the south to Hadlow Down in the north with 27 of the 40 sites being downland locations. The highest counts came from The Burgh (Burpham) with 3 on 11 Jun, Wepham Down with 3 on 15 Jul, Coombes with six the same day, Cissbury Ring with four on 13 Jun and Lancing with three on 21 Jul. The most popular area seemed to be Cissbury Ring and North Scarp with birds recorded on 17 occasions but this may have been due to observer preference. Once again, breeding could not be confirmed.

The last bird of the season was flushed on Horse Eye Level (Pevensey) on 7 Oct, rather later than the 10-year average of 13 Sep but far short of the late date of 15 Nov 2001. [RTP]

Common Pheasant*Phasianus colchicus*

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

There were very few large counts during the first winter period, the highest numbers being recorded at Weir Wood Res (100) on 2 Jan and at Bignor Hill (75) on 11 Jan.

During the BBS a total of 757 was recorded from 123 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum of 68 at Heyshott on 17 Apr. This gives some indication of the widespread distribution of this species. Despite that, there were only 43 records of confirmed breeding but not all will have been successful. Used nests or eggshell were noted on 13 occasions, a single nest with eggs was found and two nests with young, one adult was seen entering a nest and distraction display was also recorded in one case. Confirmation in the other 24 cases involved the observation of fledged young. Nine of these were in July which could have involved commercially reared birds. A record of 50 juveniles on 30 Jul would certainly fall into this category.

It is during the second half of the year that the release of captive bred birds should be more noticeable. Surprisingly, of the 417 records received (many of them duplicated) during this period only 44 were in double figures. Maximum counts were 117 at West Dean Woods on 29 Aug and 77 at Cocking on 9 Dec. There were five counts of 40 or more. One swimming in Pagham Hbr on 30 Nov was unusual. Only three records from gardens were reported: from Angmering on 23 May and 29 Jul, from Ditchling on 17 Nov and from Wivelsfield Green on 26 Feb. It is doubtful if this represents a true picture. During the author's Garden BirdWatch in Barcombe one or more Pheasants were recorded in 32 weeks during the year. [RTP]

Red-throated Diver*Gavia stellata*

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

The estimates of monthly totals for this species (and the next two) have been made using the same methods as in previous reports. For coastal records the largest daily counts of birds moving either east or west have been totalled and added to the largest numbers recorded as 'offshore' plus inland records. It is probable that the majority of 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	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
3361	151	175	130	43	-	-	-	1	8	34	137

The monthly totals of birds moving offshore at the 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*	744	77	122	113	41		1	4	7	99
Selsey Bill	243	36	5	73-	41		-	1	6	14
Climping Beach	155	42	5	-	-		1	1	1	8
Worthing Beach	400	70	22	27	9		-	1	6	81
Telscombe Cliffs	372	72	3	2	-		-	-	-	-
Splash Point	30	24	98	75	14		-	2	-	9

*adjusted to compensate for duplication

The estimated annual total of 4040 was the largest since 2002 (4417) and considerably above the 10-year rolling average of 2197.

The year started in record-breaking fashion on 1 Jan when 1500 moved west past Rock-a-Nore (Hastings) in just 2½ hours which eclipsed the previous daily record for the county of 869 W off Bexhill/Hastings on 14 Jan 2002. This movement was recorded all along the Sussex coast although numbers were much lower in the west of the county. No large concentrations were recorded on the sea, which suggests that the birds moved further offshore as they continued westwards and passed to the south of the Isle of Wight. Large numbers continued to be recorded moving both east and west over the next two days as shown in the table below which includes birds recorded as 'Diver sp'.

Numbers throughout the remainder of the first winter period were low with the largest counts in January being 78 E off Worthing Beach on the 7th and 82 E at Rock-a-Nore on the 28th. The only noteworthy counts in February and March were recorded at Birling Gap with 23 E and 24 W on 9 Feb and 38 E on 13 Mar. Numbers in Rye Bay peaked at 80 on 1 Feb.

Spring passage was light with double-figure counts being recorded on just five days, the highest of which were 25 E at Selsey Bill and 30 E at Birling Gap on 2 Apr. The last spring record was of 1 E past Worthing Beach on 8 May, sixteen days earlier than the 10-year average date.

The first returning bird was 1 W at Climping Beach on 21 Sep, two days earlier than the 10-year average date but numbers remained low for the rest of the year with the only double-figure

count being 37 W at Worthing on 26 Dec. Offshore numbers during this period were also low with a peak count in Rye Bay of just 30 on 26 Dec.

	Selsey Bill	Climping Beach	Worthing Beach	Telscombe Cliffs	Splash Point	Birling Gap	Rock-a-Nore	Pett	Rye
1 Jan	33W	75W	2W 9E	274W 1E	75W 2E	416W 9E	1500W	- -	- -
2 Jan	65W	- -	- -	1W 17E	60W 3E	412W 177E	- -	800E -	300E -
3 Jan	3W 79E	- 15E	20W 140E	20W 30E	15W 51E	138W 110E	- -	- -	- 565E

There were just three records of birds away from the open sea or tidal estuaries all of which were singletons at Pett Pools on 3 Feb, 20 Nov and 18 Dec. [DHH]

Black-throated Diver

Gavia arctica

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

The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
28	5	8	38	57		2	-	3	10

The estimated annual total of 151 was not only a welcome increase on the 2010 total (92) but also the highest total since 2003 and above the 10-year rolling average of 134. 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
Monthly total*	22	5	10	36	49		2	-	2	5
Selsey Bill	16	2	-	17	16		1	-	1	-
Worthing Beach	1	2	2	2	14		1	-	1	3
Telscombe Cliffs	7	-	-	1	-		-	-	-	-
Splash Point	1	1	9	27	40		-	-	-	3

*adjusted to compensate for duplication

In the first three days of the year small numbers were recorded in association with a large movement of Red-throated Divers including 5 W at Telscombe Cliffs on 1 Jan, 4 E at Selsey Bill on 2 Jan and 6 E at Rye Bay on 3 Jan. The only other movements during the first winter period involving more than two birds were 4 W at Selsey Bill on 15 Jan and 3 E at Splash Point on 12 and 26 Mar. The largest number recorded on the sea during this period was just three in Rye Bay on 1 Jan.

Spring passage was recorded on 21 dates in April with a peak of 7 E at Splash Point on the 19th. Passage continued until 8 May and included 8 E at Worthing Beach on 1st, 6 E at Birling Gap on

3rd, 7 E at Splash Point on 4th peaking on 5th with 25 E at Splash Point and 13 E at Birling Gap. The last spring record was of 1 E at Worthing Beach on 25 May, one day later than the 10-year average.

The first returning bird was recorded on 7 Sep as 1 W at Selsey Bill, over a month earlier than the 10-year average of 19 Oct. A second record in September involved 1 E off Worthing Beach on 16th but there were no records in October. Numbers remained low until the year's end but were boosted by a total of five on the sea off Selsey Bill on 13 Dec. [DHH]

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		Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total*	10	4	7	11	5		1	2	6
Max. off Selsey Bill	6	4	6	11	5		1	2	3

*adjusted to compensate for duplication

The estimated total of 46 for the year was down on the 2010 figure of 51 but still above the 10-year rolling average of 41.

Selsey Bill remained the principal site for this species and it is assumed that birds recorded there moving offshore were on feeding flights as these movements were not recorded elsewhere. It is also assumed that birds recorded between Pagham and Chichester Harbours were the result of such feeding movements.

During the first winter period numbers off Selsey Bill varied from day to day with peak monthly counts of six on 2 Jan, four on several dates in February and six on 20 Mar. Away from Selsey there were records of single birds offshore at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 1 Jan and 19 Mar, Worthing on 22 Jan, Peacehaven on 23 Jan and Bracklesham Bay on 27 Jan.

In spring the numbers at Selsey Bill peaked at 11 on 15 and 17 Apr with the last bird being recorded on 26 May (one day later than the 10-year average).

The first returning bird was one off Selsey Bill on 30 Oct, 15 days later than the 10-year average. Numbers in the second winter period remained low with a maximum of three off Selsey on 24 Dec. During this period there were three records of birds in flight elsewhere: 1 W at Worthing Beach on 3 Dec, 1 W at Rock-a-Nore (Hastings) on 7 Dec and 1 E at Splash Point on 30 Dec.

There were no records of this species away from the open sea or tidal estuaries during the year. [DHH]

Diver species

The specific identification of distant divers in flight is often impossible even for the most experienced observer; consequently one in six of all divers seen in flight were reported as 'Diver spp'. The numbers of these unidentified divers can be significant as shown by a total of 445 E past Birling Gap during February.

The numbers of all divers recorded at the main seawatching sites during the periods January to May and October to December are shown in the table below:

	Diver spp.		R-t Diver		B-t Diver		Total		No. per hour	
	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D	J-M	O-D
Selsey Bill	130	13	439	26	65	6	634	45	1.6	0.8
Climping Beach	97	-	208	11	6	-	311	11	2.5	0.2
Worthing Beach	26	-	585	103	27	6	638	109	3.3	1.6
Telscombe Cliffs	170	2	504	-	9	-	683	2	7.1	0.7
Splash Point	516	12	252	11	78	3	846	26	3.0	1.5
Birling Gap	504	2	1760	28	30	-	2294	30	15.6	1.8

The totals for each site have been calculated by adding the monthly totals of birds moving both east and west to the number of birds seen on the sea. No allowance has been made for duplication at or between sites or for birds which lingered offshore for several days. For these reasons the columns should not be totalled. The figures do not include records of Great Northern Divers but details are contained in the relevant species account. [DHH]

Fulmar

Fulmaris glacialis

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

During the first winter period birds were noted at the breeding cliffs at Roedean, Rottingdean, Telscombe Cliffs and Pett. The only large-scale movement in this period was of 216 E (1 hr) at Telscombe Cliffs on 5 Jan.

In the spring what were probably feeding movements involved 60 W at Telscombe Cliffs on 2 Apr and monthly totals of 202 W at Selsey Bill and 50 W at Worthing in April with a further 98 W at Selsey Bill during May. The long sea outfall at Telscombe Cliffs once again proved a major feeding area for this species with a maximum of 180 present on 26 Apr.

No detailed survey of nesting birds was undertaken but the maximum numbers of birds present at the sea cliffs during the breeding season were: Brighton Marina to Rottingdean: 23; Newhaven: 17; Seaford Head: 4; and Pett: 10. It should be noted that these were the number of birds present and not apparently occupied nests. The last birds left the breeding ledges at Telscombe Cliffs on 21 Sep, 11 days later than the 10-year rolling average.

The only records during October were of three off Pett on the 7th and a singleton off Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on the 16th. The first bird returned to the ledges at Telscombe Cliffs on 9 Nov, a day later than the 10-year average. Numbers were low for the remainder of the year with the largest movement being 22 W at Telscombe Cliffs on 25 Dec. There were two records of single birds away from the open sea: Pannel Valley on 23 Mar and Brighton Wild Park on 12 Apr. [DHH]

Sooty Shearwater

Puffinus griseus

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

The four records for the year brought the total to 181 since 2000. In September, a single bird flew west past Selsey Bill on the 10th (CRJ) and there were 2 W at Splash Point (Seaford) on the 17th (RCS), one of which was also recorded at Birling Gap (DC). The final record was of 1 W at Worthing Beach on 23 Oct (DIS). [DHH]

Manx Shearwater*Puffinus puffinus*

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

There was a welcome increase in numbers over the 2010 figure of 63 although the minimum total of 209 was still below the 10-year rolling average of 257. With birds flying both east and west (often on the same day) it is difficult to calculate an accurate total; for example, it has been assumed that 58 W at Birling Gap on 18 Jul accounted for 16 E off Worthing that same day. The monthly totals at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
County totals		12	36	66	80	1	13	1
Selsey Bill	E	7	8	2	-	-	-	-
	W	1	7	46	17	1	2	-
Worthing Beach	E	3	-	-	16	-	-	-
	W	-	5	-	7	-	1	-
Telscombe Cliffs	E	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Splash Point	E	1	16	-	-	-	12	-
	W	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Birling Gap	E	2	3	13	-	-	-	-
	W	-	3	12	58	-	1	-
Other sites	E	-	-	-	-	-	2 *	-
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

*two offshore in Rye Bay

There were no records during the first three months of the year with the first sighting being 1 W at Telscombe Cliffs on 4 Apr. Numbers were low throughout April and May with maximum counts of 6 E at Selsey Bill on 28 Apr, 5 W at Worthing Beach and Birling Gap on 23 and 25 May respectively and 7 W at Selsey Bill on 26 May.

Larger numbers were recorded in June and July including two significant movements of 43 W at Selsey Bill on 22 Jun and 58 W at Birling Gap on 18 July. The only record in August was of 1 W at Selsey Bill on the 11th. Maximum counts in September were both at Splash Point where there were 5 E on the 5th and 6 E on the 17th. The last record of the year was 1 W at Rock-a-Nore (Hastings) on 23 Oct. [DHH]

Balearic Shearwater*Puffinus mauretanicus*

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

A much better year for this species with 20 records compared with just six in 2010. The first of the year was 1 W past Splash Point on 25 May (RCS) followed by 1 W at Worthing Beach three days later (JAN, DIS). In June the only record was of a single bird at Splash Point on the 14th (RCS). Records of singletons continued throughout July and August at Birling Gap on 16 Jul (DC), Selsey Bill on 17 Jul (JA), Worthing Beach on 28 Jul (DIS), Birling Gap on 7 Aug (DC),

Birling Gap (DC) and Selsey Bill (CRJ) on 13 Aug, one photographed 8 miles SE of Brighton Marina on 19 Aug (NJT) and off Worthing Beach on 21 Aug (DIS). September records involved two off Selsey Bill on the 4th (RAI, DIS, JA) followed by a total of four passing Birling Gap: two on the 5th (RHC) and singletons on the 6th (RHC) and the 17th (DC). The final record for the year was 1 E past Worthing Beach on 29 Oct (RAI). [DHH]

European Storm Petrel

Hydrobates pelagicus

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

After a blank year in 2010 there was just one record involving a single bird moving east at Selsey Bill on 29 May (JA, RAI), a typical date. [DHH]

Leach’s Storm-petrel

Oceanodroma leucorhoa

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

2009: Three were recorded off Ovingdean on 29 Nov (MRE *et al.*). These are presumed to be some of the six off Lancing and 19 at Brighton Marina that same day.

2011: There were no records for 2011. [DHH]

Gannet

Morus bassanus

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

The movements recorded at the principal seawatching sites are shown in the table below. Numbers recorded in the first two months of the year were the highest since 2002 and included fifteen dates with three-figure counts (ten in January and five in February). The largest counts were: 869 W at Selsey Bill on 1 Jan; 338 E and 36 W at Worthing Beach and 330 E and 66 W at Telscombe Cliffs on 3 Jan; 552 W at Selsey Bill; 400 E at Climping Beach and 400 W at Littlehampton all on 15 Jan and 323 W at Selsey Bill on 16 Jan. These figures show little real pattern and were probably largely feeding movements. During this period 250 were fishing off Climping on 24 Jan, 300 off Worthing on 27 Jan, 300 off Bognor Regis and 305 off Church Norton on 1 Feb plus parties of 100 off Selsey Bill and Rock-a-Nore (Hastings).

	Jan-Feb		Mar-May		Jun-Jul		Aug-Oct		Nov-Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	297	2556	1467	841	1056	517	428	997	32	105
Climping Beach	618	655	26	9	-	40	54	319	-	17
Worthing Beach	906	1144	471	351	339	425	323	1504	193	1105
Telscombe Cliffs	1489	1359	294	65	-	-	-	-	94	218
Splash Point	476	353	876	44	-	-	630	17	-	57
Birling Gap	187	402	983	162	30	-	477	15	164	42

Numbers fell dramatically after mid-February although there were five days with three-figure counts in May all involving birds moving east. Numbers in June were high in the west of the county with Selsey Bill recording totals of 1001 E and 340 W during the month. In contrast, the largest fishing parties during the summer were in the east of the county at Rye Bay where there were 250 on 21 Jul and 600 on 4 Aug.

Autumn passage was relatively light with the exception of 520 W off Worthing Beach on 21 October where there was also a total of 898 W between 23 Dec and the end of the year.

There were two records of single birds away from the open sea: one fishing off Pilsey Island, Chichester Hbr on 26 Jul and an immature flying east over Lidsey on 11 Oct. [DHH]

Great Cormorant

Phalacrocorax carbo

Fairly common but localised resident and common winter visitor.

Cormorants were recorded from 229 tetrads. 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	890	469	453	382	445	603	726	838	646	560	647	591
Chichester Hbr	14	20	9	7	9	16	14	28	23	51	61	47
Pagham Hbr	291	92	105	94	45	26	57	104	35	nc	239	52
Chichester GP	26	51	47	1	170	237	131	54	18	17	30	30
Climping	6	nc	1	1	2	7	nc	5	nc	-	44	14
Upper Adur Levels	11	4	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	62	15
Weir Wood Res	15	nc	17	25	nc	12	24	23	28	20	3	70
Ouse Valley	25	23	39	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	3	11	27	16
Arlington Res	11	23	30	1	2	6	15	16	1	9	-	6
Pevensey Levels	6	18	17	5	10	8	7	20	11	35	16	7
Wadhurst Park	nc	nc	18	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	70	5	13
Rye Bay	368	141	120	222	169	252	380	471	370	199	34	162

During the first winter period there were 26 counts of 100 or more. The largest single count was 500 at Pagham Hbr on 1 Feb. Other large concentrations additional to the WeBS counts were 279 at Selsey Bill on 15 Jan, 420 at Pagham Hbr on 1 Feb, 270 at Climping Beach on 8 Feb and 180 at Worthing Beach on 6 Feb. An observer of the Climping flock describes them “all busily feeding offshore at low tide, before taking off and heading off E spectacularly in diver-like fashion.” Roosts recorded during this period were 91 at Chichester GPs on 9 Jan and 113 on 6 Feb, 112 on pylons at Steyning Levels on 3 Jan and 300 at Rye Hbr on 23 Jan. In addition, 144 were recorded at Brooklands (Worthing) roosting on an outflow pipe at low tide on 27 Jan.

Counts which equalled or exceeded the 1% national level of 350 for sites of national importance were the WeBS counts above in Rye Bay in January and July, August and September, 590 at Rye Hbr on 16 Oct and 500 at Pagham Hbr on 1 Feb.

Monthly totals at two of the major seawatching sites were as given in the table below.

During the BBS a total of 40 was recorded from 12 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 18 at Rye Hbr on 7 Jun. Breeding was confirmed in three tetrads and was

probable in a further one. In the breeding season at least ten nests were recorded as early as 2 Mar at Iford Brooks (Lewes) which had increased to 27 by 7 Apr. At Rye Hbr on 17 Mar 113 nests were counted in two separate colonies in willows on islands at Castle Water. At Chichester GP, 66 nests were counted on 5 May. An unsuccessful nesting attempt was made at Weir Wood Res in June. Apart from the foregoing, small numbers were seen widely across Sussex. At least 25 young birds in at least 20 nests were counted at Iford Brooks on 17 May and, at Chichester GP, several of c.56 nests held three chicks on the 18th. During the summer a flock including at least ten juveniles was seen flying over Iford Brooks on 17 Aug.

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	31
	W	358	28	19	-	18	-	-	-	31	-	-	23
	o/s	301	30	22	-	10	-	21	27	37	35	-	-
Worthing	E	140	-	11	29	10	-	12		12	15	51	-
	W	105	180	6	7	2	-	1	2	46	8	-	11
	o/s	-	8	-	-	1	-	5	1	14	63	-	-

In the autumn, there were ten records of counts of 100 or more of which eight were from the Rye Bay area and only two from Pagham Hbr. The largest flock of the year, 590, was counted at Rye Hbr on 16 Oct. Notably groups of 83 and 84 were seen at Barcombe Reservoir on 11 Sep and at Weir Wood Res on 12 Oct, respectively. Over the second winter period 215 birds were recorded at a nocturnal roost count at Chichester GP on 4 Dec. A flock of 80 was seen at Ardingly Res on 12 Dec and 80 birds were recorded at Steyning Levels on 30 Dec. [RJE]

Shag

Phalacrocorax aristotelis

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; rare away from coast. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The first records for the first winter period were of three on 1 Jan at Brighton Marina and two offshore at Widewater (Lancing) on the 7th. Throughout the rest of the first winter period only ones or twos were seen along the coast, particularly at Selsey Bill in April, as shown below. In spring, the species was recorded as present in Pagham Hbr, at the harbour entrance, on 7 May.

Sightings at Selsey Bill and the other major seawatching sites of Worthing Beach, Telscombe Cliffs, Splash Point (Seaford) and Beachy Head throughout the year were as follows:

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	2	-	1	9	-	-	-	-	-	49	1	-
	W	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-
	o/s	-	-	-	11	2	1	-	-	6	30	-	3
Other sites	E	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	8	3	-	-	-
	o/s	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	4	-

During the rest of the year sightings were of the usual small numbers, mainly at coastal sites. The first juvenile birds noted were three sitting on the rocks by Beachy Head lighthouse on 31 Jul.

The only large numbers recorded were at Selsey Bill where there were an exceptional 12 offshore and 23 E on 12 Oct and 37 E on the 23rd. Additionally, nine immature birds (8 W and 1 o/s) were recorded at Beachy Head on 7 Aug. An individual was seen inland at Weir Wood Res on 13 Dec. The last sighting of the year came from Shoreham Beach where one bird was seen flying west on 30 Dec. [RJE]

Eurasian Bittern

Botaurus stellaris

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

During the first three months of the year, birds were recorded at some 19 sites (tetrads). The estimated minimum monthly totals were as given in the table below. Critical examination of the records suggests, from the dates of their sightings at nearby sites, e.g. at Pett Level and Rye Hbr and also at Eastbourne and Pevensey Levels, that some of them wander between sites, particularly as they fly into and out of the country. Accordingly, a realistic minimum of 12 birds in January and February does not include another three single birds recorded only once at a site, all in January, at Arundel WWT on the 14th, on Amberley Wild Brooks on the 19th and at Herstmonceux on the 26th and, in March, at Warnham LNR from 6 to 8 Mar. Rye Hbr held the highest count of six reported on 3 Feb (the same as the December peak count), though thereafter numbers decreased.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	12	12	5	1	1	2	1	2	5	1	1	4
Chichester GP	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pagham Hbr	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Burton MP	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Ardingly Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-
Danehill	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Eastbourne	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Rye Hbr/Pett Level	4	6	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	3

There were regular reports of a booming male at Rye Hbr during late spring, but no other evidence of breeding, and another bird was recorded several times at Pett Level during the summer and early autumn, which was probably the same bird. Occasional reports from both these sites continued through October and November, again possibly relating to the same individual.

With the autumn weather being mild, there were no reports of any new birds until 6 Dec, when three birds were seen at Rye Hbr, and three days later the first report was received from Burton MP. The last report of a new bird was on 18 Dec from Shinewater Lake (Eastbourne), another regular wintering site. [AH]

Black-crowned Night Heron

Nycticorax nycticorax

Rare vagrant.

After a gap of three years since 2008, a juvenile bird was found at Weir Wood Res on 30 Aug which was recorded on several dates to 9 Sep (NAD, DW *et al.*). This brings the total for this century to seven. [JAH]

Cattle Egret*Bulbulcus ibis**Rare vagrant.*

An un-aged bird, first seen at the North Wall (Pagham Hbr) on 17 Jul (AH), subsequently moved via Marsh Fm (Sidlesham) to Thorney Deep, from where it roamed around adjacent parts of Chichester Hbr, often roosting with Little Egrets; it was last seen there on 30 Nov. During its stay at Thorney Island it was observed catching a Yellow Wagtail on 17 Sep (AH). [JAH]

Little Egret*Egretta garzetta*

Formerly rare but has bred since 2001 and is a scarce and increasing resident and probably scarce autumn visitor; status as winter visitor uncertain. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Little Egrets were recorded from 156 tetrads (four more than in 2010). 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	46	49	60	31	29	41	108	158	235	253	174	84
Chichester Hbr	15	18	41	15	17	27	40	56	127	205	121	41
Pagham Hbr	3	2	1	2	3	5	23	49	45	nc	32	13
Burton & Chingford Ponds	2	-	-	-	-	nc	-	-	-	-	1	-
Arun Valley	-	2	4	7	3	-	3	1	-	2	3	-
Upper Adur Levels	3	1	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	1
Warnham MP	2			nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-
Ouse Valley	1	4	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	2	3	5
Cuckmere Haven	6	-	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	10	-	-
Pevensey Levels	9	13	1	1	3	-	-	1	1	1	1	13
Rye Bay	-	9	2	1	1	-	7	21	26	21	3	2

However, a more realistic estimate of minimum numbers may be derived from a combination of the WeBS counts and the highest single monthly count at each site where birds were regularly recorded, as given in the first table below.

During the BBS a total of ten was recorded from seven of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of two at Thorney Island on 1 Jun. Breeding was confirmed at seven sites by a total of at least 29 pairs, possibly 32, continuing the reduction from the peak of 40 in 2008/9, as given in the second table below. Following a failure to nest at Wyckham Wood last year, the Adur Valley nesting site appears to have moved to Applesham (Coombes) where five nests were recorded. At the site at Glynleigh the nesting birds apparently moved from Decoy Wood to the nearby rookery. There were no records from Pebsham Wood so it appears this site may have been abandoned. However, at a new site at Winchelsea, a pair were seen apparently occupying a nest high in a tree with another nest containing three noisy young at a lower level and an adult at a similar level which may have been guarding a third nest. In addition to the above, at Charleston Manor, where the heronry was not counted, a bird was seen to fly into the trees on two occasions, and at Birdham (Chichester) an apparently occupied nest was recorded on 11 May but without any additional details.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	103	84	123	75	71	102	255	302	362	393	209	114
Chichester Hbr	15	18	41	15	17	27	40	56	144	205	121	41
Bracklesham Bay	1	-	1	2	-	2	-	2	-	-	1	1
Pagham Hbr	3	2	3	3	5	16	23	49	45	45	32	13
Burton & Chingford Ponds	2	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Arun Valley	2	7	7	7	5	3	7	3	1	4	4	3
Warnham LNR & MP	2	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Upper Adur Levels	3	1	2	1	-	6	-	1	-	-	-	1
Widewater (Lancing)	12	-	4	3	1	4	7	7	8	4	6	5
Lower Adur Valley	2	3	2	5	10	10	17	16	14	3	3	4
Weir Wood Res	-	-	-	-	-	2	21	20	12	-	1	1
Ouse Valley	2	4	5	8	5	1	3	1	1	2	3	5
Cuckmere Haven	6	-	3	4	5	-	6	36	-	25	-	9
Pevensley Levels	9	13	2	2	3	1	-	1	1	1	3	13
Bewl Water Res	1	-	-	-	-	-	19	8	6	2	-	-
Rye Bay	21	20	37	4	4	9	88	85	63	45	17	3
Other sites	22	11	12	21	16	21	24	17	67	56	16	13

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<i>Minimum total</i>	3	1	4	18	19	25	36	40	40-43	36	29-32
Old Park Wood (Bosham)	-	-	-	12	8	10	12	15	c.14	6	8
North Wall (Pagham Hbr)	-	-	-	1	3	7	15	17	13-14	16	5
Hoe Fm (Flensham)	-	-	3	3	3	2	3-4	4+	c.6	4	3
Applesham (Coombes)*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Wyckham Wood (Henfield)	-	-	-	3-4	4-6	3	3	0	3+	0	*
Southease (R Ouse)	-	-	-	-	1	3	3	4	4-6	10	5-6
Glynleigh (Decoy Wood)	3	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	nc	**
Glynleigh (rookery)**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Pebsham Wood	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	nc	nc
Winchelsea	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1-3

*nesting site apparently relocated to Applesham (Coombes); **nesting site relocated to nearby rookery

The main roosting sites were at Thorney Little Deep (Chichester Hbr) in the west and Castle Pit (Rye Hbr) in the east as shown below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Thorney Little Deep	-	-	-		-	123	144	139
Rye Hbr	20	20	37		88	85	49	45

Only small numbers occasionally roosted elsewhere, e.g. 26 at Church Norton and 20 at Ferring in September. [JAH]

Great White Egret*Ardea alba**Rare vagrant.*

There were five records this year, involving six individuals. The first was an adult seen at Lewes Brooks on 1 Apr (IJW, ADW) and the next was one flying east off Worthing Beach on 8 May (CEH, DIS, RT). In the autumn, one was recorded at Poling (Arundel) on 1 Oct (TAJ), two adults were noted at Thorney Island on 29 Oct (PS, JDS) and the sixth for the year was seen flying east at Birling Gap on 30 Dec (DC). The first for the county was recorded on 15 Jun 1985 at Thorney Great Deepes and was followed by a further three in the 20th century. The county total is now 41, having grown at an average annual rate of three per year, probably reflecting the increasing populations on the near continent, as shown below. [JAH, LAW]

	20 th century	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
No. of birds	4	3	2	2	3	4	1	1	2	4	3	6	6
Totals	4	7	9	11	14	18	19	20	22	26	29	35	41

Grey Heron*Ardea cineria**Fairly common resident.*

This species was recorded from 322 tetrads spread across the county. 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	73	55	70	92	38	69	84	113	157	128	120	89
Chichester Hbr	7	6	5	4	5	4	6	6	14	27	12	24
Pagham Hbr	5	4	3	4	2	3	6	14	13	nc	4	4
Arun Valley	5	7	-	12	7	5	7	12	21	6	9	3
Knepp MP	-	5	1	10	3	2	4	2	5	3	3	-
Warnham LNR	4	4	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	2	3	-
Upper Adur Levels	6	1	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	3
Ardingly Res	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	6	5	18	nc
Weir Wood Res	7	nc	21	32	nc	19	8	18	11	7	6	7
Ouse Valley	2	12	10	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	5	6	5
Cuckmere Haven	5	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	6	-	-
Pevensey Levels	9	6	10	1	2	-	1	8	4	8	8	8
Bowl Water	-	-	-	2	nc	nc	28	24	20	6	3	2
Rye Bay	7	3	5	9	7	8	6	10	15	13	10	10

During the BBS a total of 50 was recorded from 30 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of seven at Weir Wood Res on 12 Jun. During the breeding season breeding was confirmed from 17 tetrads and was probable at a further nine involving 240 nests counted at 32 sites (241 nests in 2010). Counts for individual heronries, listed from west to east, were as follows:

Westbourne 1; Forest Mere 5; Fishbourne 5; Pagham Owl Copse 1; Church Norton 4; New Pond (Midhurst) 1; Flansham 13; Warningcamp 1; Parham 18; Angmering 0; Knepp 5; Warnham

LNR 10; Henfield 2; Coombes 3; Burgess Hill 1; Ansty 1; Ardingly 15; Weir Wood Res 24; Rodmell 6; Firlie 9; Hempstead Wood (Uckfield) 2; Charleston 2+; Hadlow Down 10; Eridge 14; Hampden Park (Eastbourne) 4; Glynleigh 22; Wadhurst Park 3; Horsebridge Road (Wartling) 5; Burwash 11; Winchelsea 17; Leasam 25.



Grey Heron, Weir Wood Reservoir, January 2011 (Derek Washington)

Surveys for the BTO Atlas have found some single nests and a site with two nests. The new heronry at Coombes may be related to the decline in numbers at Henfield, further up the R Adur. The Charleston heronry was not counted during the breeding season.

Most records during the rest of the year, away from the heronries, large reservoirs and harbours, are of single birds, twos or threes at ponds, streams and marshy areas. During the SWBS a total of 21 was recorded from 16 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with maxima of two at three sites: Pagham Hbr, Loves Fm (Billingshurst) and Hooe Level (Pevensey). [ABW]

Purple Heron

Ardea purpurea

Rare vagrant. Schedule 1 species.

An adult bird was first seen at Southease (R Ouse) on 14 Apr (STM) and again on the 15th, 16th and 18th. It, or another, was later recorded at Rye Hbr on the 27th (KG). This is the sixth record this century. [JAH]

Black Stork

Ciconia nigra

Rare vagrant.

A juvenile photographed in flight at Beachy Head on 6 Aug (ED, RG) was only the twelfth county record, half of which have been in August and September. The record has been accepted by BBRC. [DHH]

Glossy Ibis

Plegadis falcinellus

Rare vagrant.

An adult seen at West Rise Marsh (Eastbourne) on 18 Oct (JG) flew off northwards and was recorded at Pett Pools later that day (SMP, SFW). What is presumed to be the same bird was present at Horse Eye Level (Pevensey) on 29 and 30 Oct (RB *et al.*) and then seen in flight at Beachy Head on 31 Oct (DC, JFC, RDME *et al.*). All four records have been accepted by BBRC. This brings the total recorded in Sussex since 1962 to 14 of which half have been in October. [DHH]

Spoonbill

Platylea leucorodia

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

The estimated minimum monthly totals were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May		Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
County total	3	7	8		2	6	4	3	2
Chichester Hbr	-	1	2		-	1	1	-	-
Bracklesham Bay/Pagham Hbr	1	5	-		-	3	2	-	-
Climping to Shoreham	1	-	2		-	-	-	-	2
Pulborough Brooks	-	-	2		-	-	-	3	2
Weir Wood Res	-	1	-		-	-	-	-	-
Eastbourne	-	-	-		-	1	-	-	-
Rye Hbr	1	-	2		1	1	1	-	-
Other site	-	-	-		1	-	-	-	-

This year was better than last year, with sightings of potentially 36 individuals, although the figures above might include some duplication as some reports were of one-day birds during migration periods. The only birds that stayed for more than a day or two were one that was present at Rye Hbr between 10 and 19 Mar and another that was around the Bracklesham Bay/Pagham Hbr area between 14 and 22 Mar. The highest count of the spring was of three together in Pagham Hbr on 7 Apr. In May there were three reports of twos: at Pulborough Brooks on the 6th two arrived at 11:15 but flew off 30 min later, and at Thorney Deepes and Rye Hbr on the 8th which were all presumably birds travelling in pairs, though none lingered. On 27 Aug a juvenile was watched for a short while at West Rise Marsh (Eastbourne) before it flew off eastwards.

All the autumn birds were seen on only one day at any location, reinforcing this species' reputation as very much a passage migrant in the county. Singles were sighted in Pagham Hbr on 14 and 28 Sep, at Rye Hbr on the 18th and on Thorney Island on the 19th, three were at Pulborough Brooks on 1 Oct, and two flying east at Climping Beach on 14 Nov were probably the same two that appeared at Pulborough Brooks the following day. [AH]

Little Grebe

Tachybaptus ruficollis

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

Little Grebes were recorded from 113 tetrads. 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	107	112	95	53	28	34	58	106	132	195	180	186
Chichester Hbr	52	63	43	6	4	6	4	8	11	76	49	63
Pagham Hbr	13	9	11	7	4	3	3	14	10	nc	34	34
Chichester GP	2	7	8	4	12	9	11	25	18	16	11	6
Brooklands Worthing	2	-	-	1	-	2	3	2	15	2	5	2
Widewater Lancing	5	9	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	26	16
Ouse Valley	-	-	5	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	5	1	2
Cuckmere Haven	7	-	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	10	-	-
Bewl Water	2	2	2	12	nc	nc	20	27	30	8	3	-
Rye Bay	11	12	2	14	6	10	8	29	39	40	31	35

Peak counts in the first winter period were of 28 on 2 Jan and 33 on 19 Jan at Chichester Hbr. The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	201	195	147	114	75	78	113	149	184	375	248	289
No. of sites	50	50	44	39	33	35	34	22	27	45	37	47

During the BBS a total of only two was recorded from two of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with single birds recorded at Wiston Pond (Steyning) on 21 May and at Albourne (Hurstpierpoint) on 7 Jun. Breeding was confirmed in ten tetrads and was probable in a further eight involving an increase from 18 sites by 19 pairs in 2010 to 21 sites by at least 23 pairs. Nest building was first recorded on 20 Feb at Arundel WWT, a pair was occupying a nest on 31 Mar at Wakehurst Place and the first two chicks were noted on 14 May at Arundel WWT and three at Willbees Fm (Arlington) on the 16th. Fledged young were seen at 17 sites. At Arundel WWT the annual breeding report recorded two pairs but only two chicks were fledged. The annual breeding summary at Rye Hbr reported that there was very little evidence of the species during the breeding season. However, four very small chicks were being fed by adults on 14 Aug and seven birds seen on 18 Sep represented at least four separate broods.

The largest counts at the autumn were 30 at Bewl Water on 18 Sep, 47 at Chichester Hbr on 15 Oct, 39 at Cuckmere Haven on 22 Oct and 60 at Pagham Hbr on 30 Oct. Also 22 were recorded at Pett Level on 14 Oct and the same number at Rye Hbr on 16 Oct.

During the second winter period the highest count was of 40 from Pagham Hbr on 26 Nov. A flock that was at Widewater (Lancing) during November and December peaked at 29 on 1 Dec. The highest count at Chichester Hbr was 27 on 11 Dec. The number at Rye Hbr peaked at 25 on 20 Nov and that at Cuckmere Haven at 22 on 27 Dec.

During the SWBS a total of ten was recorded from just three of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of six at Old Salts Fm (Lancing) on 22 Dec. [RAB]

Great Crested Grebe

Podiceps cristatus

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

This species was recorded from 114 tetrads across the county. The monthly counts, including the 10-year averages, at the principal sites, were as shown in the table below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
10-year average	363	473	341	129	101	94	316	397	450	399	364	422
County total	993	171	282	306	92	171	399	394	409	329	285	294
Chichester Hbr	11	19	21	13	3	6	4	1	2	23	50	25
Pagham Hbr	14	3	7	25	8	11	5	11	26	nc	8	24
Chichester GP	11	23	32	40	13	21	25	28	40	29	29	25
Weir Wood Res	-	nc	50	47	nc	83	80	92	80	49	68	49
Arlington Res	-	6	7	12	12	12	27	43	30	18	1	4
Eastbourne Lakes	5	17	11	3	5	5	6	6	15	7	36	17
Bewl Water	21	52	98	121	nc	nc	199	150	135	47	50	70
Glyne Gap	294	12	9	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	1	nc	32
Rye Bay	632	15	9	18	18	22	29	42	42	123	22	33

During the first winter period, counts in January were substantially higher than the 10-year average and the monthly total was the second highest recorded during the past ten years, exceeded only by 1007 in February 2009. Conversely, in February and the second winter period they were much lower. However, as last year, large numbers were recorded offshore which were not included in the WeBS counts.

During the first two months of the year, there were 25 counts of 100 or more including five counts in excess of 600 in Rye Bay with a peak of 1286 on 2 Jan; the next highest count was 525 offshore at Worthing on 21 Jan. Favoured areas (or perhaps those well watched) appeared to be off Climping and Worthing Beaches, Telscombe Cliffs and Rye Bay.

Monthly totals from the principal seawatching sites were shown as follows:

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	-	3	6	21	5	-		-	1	-	10
	W	2	3	-	4	4	-		-	4	15	58
	o/s	5	8	11	3	3	-		-	1	1	1
Climping Beach	E	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-		1	7	-	5
	o/s	301	135	150	15	-	-		7	47	32	14
Worthing Beach	E	-	-	15	5	-	-		-	1	2	1
	W	-	1	1	7	3	-		-	8	2	93
	o/s	1307	588	216	39	-	3		-	16	66	61
Telscombe Cliffs	E	-	2	2	-	-	-		-	-	-	-
	W	2	1	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-
	o/s	261	167	205	5	-	-		-	-	-	-
Splash Point	E	2	15	16	14	8	-		-	-	-	4
	W	5	3	3	-	1	-		-	-	-	2
	o/s	4	29	7	3	-	-		-	-	-	-
Birling Gap	E	1	10	4	3	-	-		-	-	-	1
	W	3	2	1	1	-	-		-	-	-	-
	o/s	24	26	17	-	-	-		-	-	-	1

During the BBS a total of 27 was recorded from only three of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 24 at Weir Wood Res on 12 Jun. Breeding was confirmed from 21 tetrads by at least 22 pairs and was probable at a further eight. The first records of nest building were at Warnham LNR on 18 Mar and Birchetts Green (Bewl) on 10 Apr. Occupied nests were recorded at Patching Pond on 6 Apr and Pagham Lagoon on the 12th. The first two juveniles were recorded on 11 May at Patching. Large numbers of birds were present during the breeding season, with a peak non-WeBS count of 93 at Weir Wood Res on 26 Jun.

During the second winter period, counts in November and December were somewhat lower than the 10-year averages, as shown above. Although counts were lower than in previous years, the sea areas off Climping and Worthing Beaches were again the most favoured area in West Sussex with a peak count of birds on the sea at the latter site of 27 on 29 Nov. In East Sussex the highest non-WeBS counts were 108 at Weir Wood Res on 5 Dec and 150 at Rye Hbr on the 24th. During the SWBS a total of only ten was recorded at Arlington Res on 22 Dec. [RAB]

Red-necked Grebe

Podiceps grisegena

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

There were records for the year from 11 coastal localities. The monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	24	6	6	1	2		1	1	1	6
No. of sites	6	3	3	1	1		1	1	1	3

On 1 Jan one was seen flying west at Selsey Bill, one was offshore at Worthing and two were recorded at Glynne Gap (Bexhill). An exceptional record occurred the next day, 2 Jan, at West Kingston when ten birds were counted (JRC) among a very large flock of Great Crested Grebes. This was the highest count for the species in Sussex since 14 were seen at Pagham Hbr in Nov 1991. A single seen at Ferring the same day was probably part of the same flock, but another individual at Ovingdean may not have been. There was one off Selsey until 8 Jan and singles were seen there on 15, 16 and 23 Jan, then two juveniles were seen together on the 27th. There were three at Pagham Hbr on 22 Jan and further individuals were seen from Worthing Beach on the 29th and 31st. There were three sightings of individuals from the Selsey Peninsula, four from Worthing Beach and one at Climping in February. There was one at Littlehampton on 1 Mar and another at Pagham Hbr among a raft of Slavonian Grebes. In March, another was offshore at Selsey Bill on the 5th, four birds were seen from Worthing Beach during the month, notably a juvenile on the 13th, one in partial and one in full spring plumage on the 26th and one in full winter plumage on the 29th. Single birds were seen flying east from Birling Gap on 19 Apr and from Selsey Bill on 2 and 3 May.

In the autumn, one was recorded offshore at Selsey Bill on 17 Sep and another was seen there flying west on 23 Oct. In the second winter period there was one bird at Chichester Hbr on 17 Nov; further sightings there between 4 and 24 Dec possibly represented two individuals. One flying east at Worthing on 1 Dec was probably a juvenile and so may have been the same bird as the juvenile that was seen along the high tide line there on 11 Dec. Singles seen at Pagham Hbr on 9 and 10 Dec were probably the same individual. [RAB]

Slavonian Grebe

Podiceps auritus

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

The peak monthly counts along various coastal stretches were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Nov	Dec
Chichester Hbr	8	2	-	-		-	1
Selsey Bill – Church Norton	35	15	9	-		11	9
Climping Beach	3	3	3	1		-	-
Littlehampton – Worthing	2	2	3	-		-	1
Lancing – Beachy Head	2	2	3	6		-	2
Bexhill - Hastings	9	1	4	-		-	3
Rye Bay	3	1	-	1		-	2

The majority of records were in the west of the county. During the first four months of the year, at Chichester Hbr the peak of eight was on 17 Jan and the last sighting was on 19 Feb. Sightings in the main area from Church Norton to Selsey Bill, where birds can be highly mobile, increased from 14 on 1 Jan to 35 by the end of the month. Birds were present there throughout February and for most of March with the last sighting on the 25th. Birds were also seen regularly at Climping during the last ten days of January, peaking at three on the 24th. They were also seen there in February on the 1st, 24th and 28th and in March on the 1st, 6th and 9th with three on the 16th. Singles or pairs, either offshore or flying west, were seen between Littlehampton and Worthing

on five occasions during January, twice in February and twice in March. Two birds were seen at Splash Point (Seaford) on 8 Feb and a group of three flew east on 25 Mar. Between Bexhill and Hastings nine birds were seen at Glyne Gap on 1 Jan and the bird seen at St Leonard's that day may have been part of that group. Four were present at Rock-a-Nore (Hastings) on 20 Mar. There were sightings offshore at Rye Bay of two and three birds on 3 and 22 Jan respectively and a single individual on 10 Feb. Sightings between Lancing and Birling Gap during the period included three at Splash Point (Seaford) on 25 Mar, 6 E there on 2 Apr and 2 E on the 8th. A summer plumaged bird was seen in Rye Bay on 17 and 18 Apr.

In the second winter period, birds were seen between Church Norton and Selsey Bill from 22 Nov peaking at 11 on 23 Nov and nine on 9-10 Dec. Three flew west past Selsey Bill on 29 Nov. Single birds were seen at Chichester Hbr on three occasions between 4 and 22 Dec and at Worthing on 11 Dec and there were three at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 23 Dec. The final records for the year were two at Rye Hbr and 2 W past Splash Point on 31 Dec. [RAB]



Black-necked Grebe, Arlington Reservoir, April 2011 (Les Bird)

Black-necked Grebe

Podiceps nigricollis

Very 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', were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	9	1	3	9		1	1	1	-	2
No. of sites	7	1	2	3		1	1	1	-	1

In January, a bird was seen at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 1st and there was another sighting at Chichester Hbr a day later. Up to two were present at Pagham Hbr from 5 to 10 Jan. During this period two were seen offshore at Worthing on the 6th, one at Widewater (Lancing) the next day and one at Hydneye Lake (Eastbourne) on the 10th. Another single was recorded at Rye Hbr from 15 to 18 Jan. A bird showing much summer plumage was recorded off Worthing Beach on 28 Feb. On 13 Mar two in partial summer plumage were recorded at Birling Gap, a single was seen at Cuckmere Haven on the 18th and observers at Splash Point (Seaford) recorded 7 E on the 20th.

The highest count of the year was nine offshore at Birling Gap on 2 Apr, seven of which were in summer and two still in winter plumage. Five seen flying east at Splash Point the same day may have been part of that group. The only inland record during this period was of one individual at Arlington Res on 2 Apr.

Summer and autumn records were of one at Weir Wood Res on 8 Aug, a probable adult at Pagham between 3 and 9 Sep and a further bird at Arlington Res on 2 Oct. The final sightings of the year were of two at Barcombe Res on 15 and 18 Dec. [RAB]

Honey-buzzard

Pernis apivorus

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

The group who monitor the breeding pairs in the county located five nests and ringed nine juveniles. Another pair built a nest but did not breed and in a further 3-4 different areas Honey-buzzards were present but unfortunately time constraints precluded a more thorough assessment for possible nesting activity. This species quite often uses the same nest in consecutive years before re-locating but when the seven 2010 nests were checked none of them were re-occupied. Given these circumstances the total of five 'active' nests was a reasonable tally. The nesting trees used were: Oak (2), Douglas Fir, Alder and Silver Birch. As far as the group is aware the use of Alder had not previously been recorded in the UK.

There were two birds on spring passage at Rye Harbour on 14 May (SHL). It seems that they had probably arrived off the sea, together. The birds then proceeded to spiral to a great height before heading north. On 24 May there was an adult male at an undisclosed location (RCS). It was subsequently seen by several observers in late May and early June but there were no records of pair activity and no records for the latter part of the summer.

At a different inland location on 25 May an adult male gave fairly brief but spectacular views down to 40 m (BFF, OM). At another undisclosed location 1-2 birds were seen on four occasions between 11 Jun and 3 Jul and on the latter date synchronised flying was observed (SHL, JG). It seems likely that this was another non-breeding 'summering' pair. In the latter part of the summer there was a brief but fairly close view of an adult female on 22 Jul (ND) and in yet another area a single was seen on 10 Aug (CP). At this latter site there were many sightings but breeding was not confirmed.

Migrating birds in late August and September are often seen at very close range and so it was for the following four reports. On 27 Aug there was a single male heading east at Balsdean (IJW).

On the same date an adult male and an adult female were photographed at close range at Beachy Head (MRE). On 29 Aug two birds were photographed as they flew between the churchyard trees at Fairlight Church (CHD). Only seen in silhouette it was not possible to age or sex these two but given the date it is likely that they were adult birds. On 2 Sep the observer was walking towards Ferring Rife from East Kingston when he spotted a Honey-buzzard accompanied by a collection of hirundines (JAN). Looking south into the sun plumage details proved difficult but although not formally aged or sexed the description of uniform grey/brown upper-parts suggests an adult male. Finally, there was a very close view of an adult male at Beachy Head on 13 Sep (RCS). There were no reports of any juveniles on autumn passage. [MEK]

Black Kite

Milvus migrans

Rare vagrant.

There were two birds in 2011. The first was a typical spring overshoot seen at Hodcombe (Beachy Head) on 15 May (RHC). The next was seen at Pett Level on 7 Aug (IDH). These bring the county total this century up to 14. For the c.36 birds recorded since 1970, monthly totals move forward to: March (one), April (seven), May (20) (52%), June (three), two each in July and August and November (one). [JAH]

Red Kite

Milvus milvus

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

Given the number of Red Kites recorded throughout the year it is surprising that there appear to be so few breeding pairs. In the West Sussex study area the regular pair deserted their nesting wood having failed last year when the nest was blown out of the tree. After six consecutive successful breeding seasons (2004-2009) one might have expected a new nest in the same wood but this didn't happen and they were not re-located. However, Sussex B3 and Sussex G re-occupied the same nest and were again successful, rearing two young.

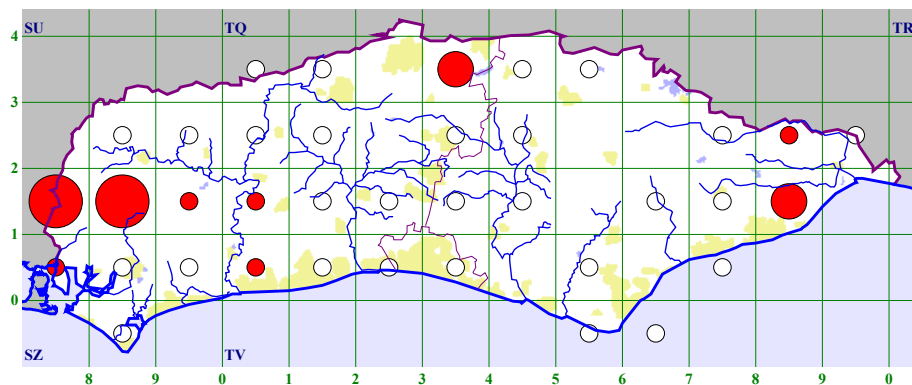
Just one other pair was found, approximately four miles away from Sussex B3/G, which successfully fledged three young. There were no confirmed reports of breeding anywhere else in the county.

Roost counts were undertaken in the study area. In the early part of the year there was a maximum of 15 in January and, later, a record-breaking 27 birds in December. Another sizeable roost was located on downland in the Storrington/Amberley area with at least ten on 5 Nov. A high percentage of the kites recorded in these roosts were juveniles but there were also many full adults and so at some point a few must surely pair off and settle in Sussex!

Outside the study area there were records for approximately 275 birds, with a 60:40 split between West and East Sussex. Although it is difficult with such a mobile, free-ranging species to be precise about numbers, there is clearly a year-on-year increase with comparative figures for 2008, 2009 and 2010 of 101, 150+ and 235.

Early in the year, multiple sightings of note were six at West Dean Woods on 16 Feb and four at Pulborough Brooks on 19 Mar. Warm sunny conditions in April prompted much fine-weather movement and an exceptional 93 birds were recorded. At Beachy Head a total of 24 birds was recorded between the 5th and the 24th, including 12 on the 7th and four on the 24th when seven were

also counted at Eastbourne. At other coastal sites a further 25 birds were seen. Many of these records related to 'coasting', whereby wandering birds heading south reach the Channel and then randomly follow the coastline either east or west. The larger parties were probably cross-channel spring migrants and in numbers never previously recorded.



Red Kite, The Burgh, November 2011 (Dave Sadler)

Later in the year, most records came from The Burgh (Burpham). Up until May just one or two kites were reported from that downland area with no suggestion of breeding pairs. On 24 May there were three birds, on 11 Jun there were six and a similar number on 28 Jul. By 22 Oct there

were 12 and quite possibly 20 in the immediate area. When the study team first located a roost on 5 Nov there was a minimum of 10 birds present but numbers then decreased until by the end of the year it proved difficult to find any. It will be interesting to see what happens in 2012. Perhaps, by degrees, a breeding population will become established in this new area, some 20 km from the main study area in the west. The estimated minimum monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	29	11	37	93	27	27	19	8	10	31	25	39
Study area	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	12	31
Elsewhere	14	11	37	93	27	27	19	8	10	18	13	8

Records for December give an indication of how widespread this species has become: one at Borde Hill (Haywards Heath) and three at West Dean Woods on the 2nd, singles at Compton and Warnham LNR on the 4th and 5th, two at Weir Wood Res on the 7th and Balcombe on the 15th, one at Houghton on the 19th, one at Balcombe and two at Cuckfield on the 20th, a 'new garden tick' for an observer in Framfield on Christmas Day and finally a single at The Burgh on the 31st. [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 156 individuals seen during the year at 24 broad sites. Most were seen in mid- to late autumn and mid-winter; sightings are summarised as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	29	13	17	19	17	14	12	19	26	29	18	23
Chichester Hbr	3	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	1	2	1	-
Pagham Hbr	2	-	2	2	2	-	1	2	4	4	2	-
Arun Valley	1	2	-	1	1	2	1	3	4	5	1	1
Pevensy Levels	3	2	2	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	-
Pett Level	5	2	5	7	5	5	5	3	7	11	9	14
Rye Hbr	3	4	4	3	3	5	4	2	3	3	3	4
Scotney GP area	6	3	-	3	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	4
Other	6	-	4	1	4	1	1	7	6	3	1	-

Spring migrants included singles over Brighton on 12 Mar, in off the sea at Selsey Bill on 24 Mar, over Portslade on 3 Apr, in off the sea at Worthing and at Cuckmere Haven on 1 May, flying east at Worthing on 4 May, and at Beachy Head on 12 May. There was a single bird over Arlington Res on 5 Jun.

Three young were reared at one regular site and two young at another. At a third site, where nesting has previously occurred, a pair was reported in February but there was no evidence of breeding. At a further site, a pair was reported in the breeding season but no other details were given.

There was an interesting record of one heading out to sea at Selsey Bill on 5 Jul. In the autumn, there were widespread reports mainly from the south of the county though singles were present on Ashdown Forest on 17 Aug and 13 Sep. On the coast, singles were reported from Brighton (one date), Bognor Regis (two dates), Beachy Head (three dates) and Hastings (five dates). By far the largest numbers were recorded at Pett Level where there were monthly maxima of seven on 16 Sep, 11 on 15 Oct, nine on 20 Nov and 14 on 18 Dec. [SHL]

Hen Harrier

Circus cyaneus

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

Two hundred and eighty seven records were received for this species from a smallish number of sites, a notable increase on the 190 recorded in 2010. The monthly total over 10 months was 88, which is the highest number in recent years. The highest monthly total was of 16 in November and December. The minimum monthly totals are shown in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	14	10	6	6	1		1	3	15	16	16
Chichester/Pagham Hbrs	3	1	1	2	-		-	-	1	1	-
W Sussex Downs	1	1	1	-	-		1	2	7	4	3
W Sussex Commons	2	2	1	-	-		-	-	1	1	3
Arun Valley	2	1	1	-	-		-	1	1	1	1
E Sussex Downs	-	-	-	-	1		-	-	1	1	1
Ouse Valley	-	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	1	1
Ashdown Forest	2	1	1	1	-		-	-	1	2	4
Pevensey Levels	1	1	-	1	-		-	-	-	1	-
Rye Bay	1	-	-	1	-		-	-	1	1	1
Scotney Court GP/Camber	-	1	-	1	-		-	-	1	1	1
Other sites	2	2	1	-	-		-	-	1	2	1

Hen Harriers were seen at all of the usual sites during the first winter period except the East Sussex Downs and Ouse Valley. A ringtail and an adult male were regularly seen at Pulborough Brooks throughout January but only the male in February and March. Likewise, there were two on Ashdown Forest, a male and a ringtail in January but only the male was recorded in February and March. On 8 Jan a ringtail was described as “coming in from way out at sea” at Church Norton increasing numbers to a minimum of three in the Chichester/Pagham Harbour areas. A ringtail and an adult male were at Iping Common on 30 Jan. One was seen harassing Skylarks on 6 Feb at Thorney Deepes. A male was seen regularly at Thorney Island throughout April. A likely migrant was seen at Hodcombe (Beachy Head), an adult male, on 24 May. No birds were recorded in June or July.

The first returning autumn bird, an adult male, was seen at Chantry Hill on the relatively early date of 20 Aug. (The earliest recorded date is 4 Aug and the 10-year average date is 1 Sep.) Throughout September, two birds were seen ranging in the Wepham, Burpham and The Burgh areas with one sighting reported from Amberley, which is possibly one of the same birds. October saw an increase in numbers, up to three ringtails were regularly seen in the area of The Burgh

and Burpham, including three on 29 Oct. Also on the 29th four ringtails were seen at Round Hill (Steyning) and two there on the 31st. Three continued to be seen at The Burgh into December. The first autumn Ashdown Forest bird, a male, was seen on 13 Oct; a second bird was seen from 1 Nov and on 1 Dec three were seen. On 17 Dec one lucky observer, at sunrise, at an Ashdown Forest roost reported, “....four Hen Harriers seen simultaneously.....up rose two males and a second female.....they all joined in aerial greeting display, jinking about and feinting around each other over the heath.” On 4 Dec a Short-eared Owl was seen to swoop on a Hen Harrier at Rodmell Brooks and on the 22nd three were at Heyshott Common. The last sighting of the year was one on 31 Dec at The Burgh. [MJC]

Pallid Harrier

Circus macrourus

Very rare vagrant.

A juvenile first seen at The Burgh on 15 Sep (BFF, DM, DS, DIS) remained in the area until 7 Oct and was seen by many observers. This was the first record of the species in Sussex, which breeds from the Ukraine east through Russia and winters throughout much of east and central Africa, and has been accepted by BBRC. 2011 was an unprecedented year for this species in Britain with 29 records which was two more than the total recorded in the previous 60 years. An account of the finding of the bird appears on page 254 of this report. [DHH]

Montagu's Harrier

Circus pygargus

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

There was just one accepted record of this species: at The Burgh (Burpham) on 11-13 Jun (AH). The last year without a sighting of this species was 1983. It is now 50 years since it was last proved to breed in Sussex; perhaps, before too long, it might do so again. [JAH]

Goshawk

Accipiter gentilis

Very scarce resident. Schedule 1 species.

2010: A single bird moved west over Broadwater, Worthing on 7 Aug (MAG).

2011: Two records were accepted: an individual near Uckfield on 25 Mar (MJC) and a pair near Seaford on 25 May (JC). Elsewhere, the pair recorded as successfully breeding in 2009 and 2010 at an undisclosed site again bred and produced at least two young (MEK). [JAH]

Sparrowhawk

Accipiter nisus

Common resident and passage migrant.

As in previous years, records were received from across the entire county with the majority relating to single birds. High counts in the first half of the year were four over High Cross Fm (Uckfield) on 30 Jan, four over Pulborough Brooks on 27 Feb and three each at Ladywells (Coombes) on 9 Jan, Whitehawk (Brighton) on 2 Feb, Warnham LNR on 9 Mar, Compton on 7

Apr, Pulborough Brooks on 9 Apr and Pett Level on 1 Jun. There were no spring records of likely migrants coming in off the sea.

The earliest report of probable breeding was a pair displaying at High Cross Fm on 30 Jan and again on 2 Mar. A pair was seen soaring together at Whitehawk on 2 Feb and territorial behaviour was recorded at Salehurst on 24 Feb and Caldbeck Hill (Battle) on 7 Mar. The earliest reports of confirmed breeding were on 15 May at Cuckfield and on 27 May at West Worthing. The first fledglings were seen on 20 Jul at Whitehawk and at Kingscote Old Station (East Grinstead) the next day. There were 25 tetrads in which breeding was confirmed and a further 40 where it was probable. During the BBS a total of 17 was recorded from 16 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum of two on 9 Apr at Toads Hole Valley (Hove).

In the latter half of the year, recorders at Pett Level had a monthly maximum of five birds in August, September and October and four in November. Four were at Church Norton on 7 Sep and Pulborough Brooks and Warnham LNR had a monthly maximum of four each in September. One was seen to mob a Marsh Harrier at Rye Hbr on 28 Sep. Three Sparrowhawks were seen at 15 sites between August and December.

Four birds were recorded during the migration watch at Hastings between 29 Aug and 7 Oct but none reported flying out to sea at this location. One was seen to fly out to sea at Selsey Bill on 6 Oct. During the second winter period Sparrowhawks were recorded at 142 locations.

Prey species recorded were Wood Pigeon, Feral Pigeon, Blackbird, Starling, Blue Tit, Greenfinch, Linnet and sadly a Kentish Plover at Pilsey Island. [MJC]

Common Buzzard

Buteo buteo

Fairly common and increasing resident and probably scarce passage migrant.

Buzzards were recorded from 606 tetrads, 58% of the county total, a 6.3% increase on last year's 570, illustrating not only how widespread they have now become in Sussex but that this increase seems to be continuing. The minimum monthly totals of birds recorded, taking account of obvious duplications and generally counting only the monthly maximum at any one site, were as follows.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2011	274	506	381	512	303	327	263	263	315	199	178	139

The above numbers should, however, be treated with caution; they reflect both observer effort and also the inevitable duplication of birds which wander widely between sites.

During the first winter period there were six records of counts of ten or more: the highest were 14 at Harrow Hill (Patching) on 24 Feb, 12 at West Dean Woods on 9 Mar and 11 at Offham Hanger (Arundel) on 9 and 21 Feb. In addition there were 31 records of counts from six to nine.

During the BBS a total of 87 was recorded from 61 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of four at Isfield on 25 Apr. Breeding was confirmed from 47 tetrads and was probable in a further 174. Nest building was first recorded on 18 Feb at Stonegate and on 2 Apr at Southbourne (Emsworth). Apparently occupied nests were noted on 6 Apr at Thorney Deepes and on the 10th at Lidsey SF while the first fledged young were recorded on 1 Jun at Pett Village. Details of successful breeding were, unfortunately, scarce; at least 11 young fledged from five nests, with three young from one nest on Thorney Island.



Common Buzzard, Weir Wood Reservoir, February 2011 (Derek Washington)

In the autumn, there were nine counts of over ten birds (and 23 of six to nine) including the highest counts of 25 at The Burgh (Burpham) on 18 Sep and 15 flying over Offham Hanger on

22 Oct. During the second winter period the highest counts were of 30 in the West Dean Woods area on 17 Nov, eight at The Burgh on the 27th and sixes at Offham Hanger on the 19th and Drungewick Manor (Rudgwick) on 15 Dec. During the SWBS a total of 61 was recorded from 40 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of four at Hadlow Down on 15 Nov and Highfields (Blackham) on the 18th. [LAW]

Rough-legged Buzzard

Buteo lagopus

Rare winter visitor.

There having been no records of this species since 2004, two birds were welcomed by the newer Sussex listers. The first was at Pett Level from 1 to 5 Jan (CHD, PEJ *et al.*). The second was a juvenile at The Burgh (Burpham) first located on 7 Nov (BRG, AH *et al.*) where it remained into 2012 attracting many admirers during its protracted stay. These were the seventh and eighth birds respectively this century, there having been one in 2002, three in 2003 (excluding one which stayed from 2002) and two in 2004. [JAH]



Rough-legged Buzzard (Juv.), Burpham, November 2011 (Keith Maycock)

Osprey

Pandion haliaetus

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

There were about 54 seen during the year at 25 broad sites. This compares remarkably closely with 58 individuals in 2009 and 56 in 2010. The sightings are summarised as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Monthly total	6	9	3	1	2	13	19	6
Chichester Hbr	1	1	-	-	-	2	4	2
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	-	2	2	1	-
Weir Wood Res	3	2	1	1	-	2	3	1
Beachy Head	-	1	-	-	-	-	3	-
Other	2	5	2	-	-	7	8	3

The first arrival on 4 Mar at Weir Wood Res was the earliest ever county record, beating the earliest (7 Mar 2001) by three days. This was followed by one at Westergate on 19 Mar and a further bird at Weir Wood Res on 21 Mar and one at Michelham Priory on 14 Apr. Coastal migrants included singles north over Brighton on 26 Mar, Seaford on 4 May and Lancing on 11 May. The last spring migrant was also at Weir Wood Res on 1 Jun.



Osprey, Michelham Priory, April 2011 (Jake Everitt)

There was a summer record of one at Pagham Hbr on 11 Jul before the autumn passage got underway with further singles there on 31 Jul, Cuckmere Haven on 5 Aug, Weir Wood Res on 10 Aug and Chichester Hbr on 12 Aug. As usual, there were a large number of records from the latter site from then through to 6 Oct with two seen on several dates. Autumn reports from less usual locations included singles at Wivelsfield on 17 Aug, Findon on 21 Aug, Uckfield between 22 and

24 Aug, Barnham on 29 Aug and Crowhurst on 10 Sep. One flew out to sea at Beachy Head on 8 Sep as did two on 10 Sep. The last ones of the year were in October with one over Ashdown Res on the 9th and one at Burton MP on the 16th, a relatively early last departure date compared with the 10-year average date of 24 Oct. [SHL]

Kestrel

Falco tinnunculus

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

Kestrels were recorded from 467 tetrads, 45% of the county total. During the first winter period 88% of records were of either single birds or 'present' only, with highest counts of four at Sidlesham on 18 Feb and by the roadside at Tarring Neville (Newhaven) on 20 Mar. During the breeding season a total of 53 was recorded from 43 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of three at Thorney Island on 1 Jun. Breeding was confirmed in 46 tetrads and was probable in a further 51. The first occupied nest was recorded on 26 Mar at Pilsey Island (where two pairs nested); the first nest with young was noted at Rookwood (West Wittering) on 16 Apr; adults were seen carrying food on 28 Apr at Ticehurst and the first three fledged young were recorded at Etchingham on 1 May. Four pairs were identified breeding on The Norfolk Estate, two pairs at Thorney Island and single pairs at Pagham Hbr, Amberley Wild Brooks, Pett Level and on the industrial estate at Rye Hbr. At Dymock Fm (Seaford), a nest box held six young on 18 Jun and at Wilbees Fm (Arlington), five fledged chicks out of their nest box were noted in a tree on 29 Jun. There were four other records of birds successfully nesting in Barn Owl boxes.

The wide range of food utilized by Kestrels included Blue Tit, Meadow Pipit, Field Mouse, Rat, Slowworm, Grasshoppers and flying insects. One bird was recorded stealing three kills from a Short-eared Owl at The Severals (Church Norton) on 2 Dec. Kestrels were also seen interacting with various raptor species including Buzzard, Red Kite, Peregrine, Sparrowhawk and also one buzzed an Osprey over Pagham Harbour on 29 Aug. Conversely, one was seen at Splash Point (Seaford) being downed by an Arctic Skua on 23 Oct.

The highest count of the year was 15 seen in 'small groups everywhere' at The Burgh (Burpham) on 15 Sep but there were counts of six from two other sites, at Wepham Down on 29 Aug and Chantry Hill on 3 Sep. During the SWBS a total of 31 was recorded from 27 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of two at four sites, three in West and one in East Sussex. [LAW]

Merlin

Falco columbarius

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

About 94 were recorded from 34 broad sites during the year. This compares with about 87 seen in 2010 and 92 in 2009. Eight definite males were noted. The monthly data are summarised in the table below.

Birds in spring at coastal migration watch sites included 1 N at Selsey Bill on 4 May, with perhaps the same bird along the beach on 7 May and one arriving at Seaford on the latter date. The last for the first part of the year was one at Pagham Hbr on the late date of 30 May.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Monthly total</i>	10	9	8	4	4	-	-	3	14	23	10	14
Chilgrove & West Dean	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
Pagham Hbr	1	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	2	1	-	2
Arun Valley	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	4	4	2
Worthing area	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Pett Level	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	3	1	1	1
Rye Hbr	1	1	3	1	-	-	-	-	1	2	2	1
Other	4	4	2	2	3	-	-	2	4	13	2	7

In the second part of the year, the first returning bird was recorded on the typical date of 21 Aug at Pett Level. A number of birds were noted on the coast in autumn including one in off the sea at Selsey Bill on 6 Oct, and singles there that flew south on 9 Oct, and west on 11 Oct, which were either separate birds or perhaps the same bird flying out to intercept migrants over the sea. Single birds flew west past Hastings on 8 Oct, east past Ferring Rife on 3 Nov and along the beach at Widewater (Lancing) on 4 Dec. There were five records more than 15 km from the coast: at Warnham LNR on 28 Jan, Milland (Liphook) on 3 Feb, Box (Ashdown Forest) on 13 Nov and 14 Dec and near Five Ashes (Heathfield) on 15 Dec. Nearly all sightings during the year were of single birds with just a handful of records involving two birds. [SHL]

Hobby

Falco subbuteo

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

2010: Two were seen at Wakehurst flying S on the late date of 2 Nov.

2011: This species was seen from 57 broad sites during the year. Monthly site totals were as follows and are remarkably similar in pattern to those in 2010:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
No. of sites in 2010	17	37	33	23	29	24	12
No. of sites in 2011	20	31	31	27	27	23	15

The first sightings in April were singles at Goodwood on the 2nd (two days earlier than the 10-year average) and Ladywells (Coombes) on the 4th. The main arrival is summarised below:

Week	15-22 Apr	23-30 Apr	1-8 May	9-15 May
Sites	8	15	15	10
Daily maximum	4	16	8	11

A total of ten individuals was logged arriving at Selsey Bill on nine dates between 21 Apr and 21 May. At Splash Point (Seaford), the total was four on four dates between 18 Apr and 2 May. One flew south-west over Ferring on 27 Apr and one flew north over Worthing Beach on 5 May. The largest spring gathering by far was one of eight over Horse Eye Level (Pevensey) on 19 May.

Six pairs were confirmed as breeding. At one location, a sitting bird was seen on 21 Jun with two fledged young recorded there on 17 Aug. At a further four locations, fledged young were

reported. At the sixth, food was seen being carried during early June. Breeding was considered probable at a further 11 locations and possible (mainly birds seen in suitable habitat) at an additional 19. The 36 specific locations represent 31 of the 57 broad sites from which the species was recorded during the year. The number of breeding locations is slightly less than in 2010 but only one fewer than in 2009. A 'very young-looking' bird at Pagham Hbr on 10 Jun was presumably a first year bird.

Birds were reported widely on autumn passage though the only gathering of note was one of five at Wallers Haven (Pevensey) on 9 Sep. One catching insects out over Rye Bay on 28 Sep was an interesting record. Similarly, one was seen flying offshore at Selsey Bill on 11 and 13 Sep and one was present there on 12 Oct. These were presumably hunting migrant insects or birds. The last recorded for the year was one at West Chase (Ashdown Forest) on 14 Oct, 12 days earlier than the 10-year average. [SHL]

Peregrine Falcon

Falco peregrinus

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

This species was recorded from 149 tetrads (c.14% of the county total), distributed right across the county from west to east but generally in the southern half.

During the BBS, a total of only three was recorded from three of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with single birds at Hove on 9 Apr, Crapham Down (Beachy Head) on the 23rd and at Thorney Island on 1 Jun. An analysis of records where breeding activity was recorded indicates that at least nine pairs bred successfully and a further ten pairs probably bred giving a minimum total of 19 pairs/occupied territories. These numbers, however, are only a proportion of the likely county population which is most probably closer to the 22 confirmed breeding pairs and 27 occupied territories recorded in 2009 (SxBR 62:76 and British Birds 104:507). This discrepancy is due to the Sussex Peregrine Study (SPS) not sharing their data with the SOS. However, an examination of records for their frequency and associated notes, but where breeding activity was not recorded, suggests a possible additional 11 pairs/occupied territories which would bring the county total up to roughly 30 pairs.

The popular pair at Chichester Cathedral again fledged four young, two males and two females. The first egg was laid on 21 Mar and the fourth on the 26th; the first hatched on 7 Jun and the fourth on the 13th; the first two (males) fledged on 7 and 8 Jun and the next two (females) on the 9th and 13th. The well known pair at Shoreham Power Station had three well feathered young in the nest box on 14 Jun. A pair which nested on a roof in Hove had an uncounted number of young on 14 Jun. In Brighton, the popular webcam pair fledged four, two of each gender; the eggs were laid between 29 Mar and 6 Apr and the fourth egg hatched on 10 May. At Beachy Head, one pair fledged two young. Elsewhere, at three other sites one, four and two young were fledged. From the seven breeding sites where numbers of young were recorded, 20 young probably fledged giving a potential minimum of 26 for the county.

Prey items recorded included teal, ducklings (unspecified), pigeons, green woodpecker (2) and starling, and the harrying of waders and hirundines was also reported. Two juveniles were recorded chasing and almost catching a sparrowhawk before it dived into cover. [JAH]



Little Crane, Arundel, April 2011 (Nick Bond)

Little Crane

Porzana parva

Rare vagrant.

A female at Arundel WWT on 9-12 Apr (JB, OM *et al.*) was the only one recorded in Britain in 2011. Many observers were able to see the bird with WWT staff extending the opening hours to allow more people to admire it. This was the 14th record of Little Crane in Sussex although eleven of those records were before 1962. Since then the only records were of one at Hodcombe (Beachy Head) in April 1968 and one in the Lower Cuckmere Valley in March 1985. The record has been accepted by BBRC. [DHH]

Water Rail

Rallus aquaticus

Probably very scarce resident, scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

This species was recorded from 37 tetrads, rather fewer than the 61 of 2010. The approximate monthly totals, excluding duplications where possible, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	47	46	34	6	14	4	5	7	22	31	50	41

Birds were heard calling across the county from January to March. During this period 68% of records were of single birds with maxima of six on 26 Jan and 18 Feb at Thorney Deepes and 13 Feb at Pett Level. Breeding was confirmed from two areas. Young were recorded at Pett Level

(where 23 male territories were located on 14 May) and at Arundel WWT where young were heard in June. The majority of records during the summer months were again of singles.

During the autumn the frequency of records increased with the arrival of migrants and an increase in the number and proportion of multiple records. The proportion of singles dropped to 42% but records still came from the few favoured wetland sites. The highest counts were of fours at Pett Level on 18 Sep and Thorney Deeps on the 30 Sep and 29 Oct. In the second winter period the proportion of single birds returned to a more normal 70%; the maximum numbers were eight at Thorney Island and nine at Pett Level, both on 12 Nov. A single bird was noted on 22 Dec at Crowhurst (presumably the marsh there), a previously unrecorded site. The single bird seen regularly at Pulborough Brooks visitor centre gave close views aided by a daily feeding of mealworms. During the year, RBRG at Pett Level ringed 12 adults and 14 first-year birds, and recorded three retraps, and the Steyning RG ringed one new bird. [DAB]

Moorhen

Gallinula chloropus

Very common resident; possibly fairly common winter visitor but status uncertain.

Moorhens were recorded from 423 tetrads, an increase from the 382 tetrads in 2010 but well below the 501 of 2008.

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	515	572	466	222	135	151	311	348	641	621	563	695
Chichester Hbr	62	55	44	8	9	3	6	9	19	35	43	40
Chichester Canal	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	45	64	107	107	77	103
Pagham Hbr	30	41	26	22	3	14	9	12	21	nc	36	41
Chichester GP	29	28	21	16	14	15	16	35	37	21	17	18
Arun Valley	157	136	105	61	42	39	85	86	133	132	134	130
Brooklands Worthing	35	44	30	13	4	7	5	6	21	21	28	35
Eastbourne Lakes	37	1	9	2	1	2	2	6	19	5	25	26
Alexandra Park	nc	70	56	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	49	44	-	66
Rye Bay	33	35	25	40	21	24	43	41	70	79	31	65

Counts in excess of ten were recorded at 39 sites in January and February (*cf.* 67 in 2010). The highest count at non-WeBS sites was an exceptional 40 on Ditchling Common on 8 Jan. Garden visits were noted in Wivelsfield Green in February and Steyning in March.

During the BBS a total of 104 was recorded from 57 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of five at Rustington on 31 May. Breeding was confirmed in 151 tetrads and was probable in a further 41. This equates closely to those for 2010 but represents a decline from 2009 of 170 and 50 respectively. The first nest with eggs was found at Troutbeck (Eridge) on 9 Mar and young were first seen in a nest with a parent at Wakehurst Place on the 31st. The first report of young off the nest was of an adult with 11 chicks at Mewsbrook (Littlehampton) on 11 Apr. There were two reports of birds with young chicks as late as September: at Pulborough Brooks on the 8th and East Chiltington on the 9th. The only sites to report breeding survey results were Pagham Hbr with five pairs or territories and Rye Hbr where 43 nests and broods were found (*cf.* 32 in 2010; 29 in 2009; 42 in 2008).

In the second winter period, there were 38 double figure counts, excluding WeBS counts. The highest were 22 at Singleton on 6 Dec, 21 at Warnham LNR on the 7th and 20 at Brooklands (Worthing) on 2 Nov. During the SWBS a total of 111 was recorded from 35 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 18 at Rustington on 6 Nov. RBRG ringed some 34 birds during the year. [CB]

Common Coot

Fulica atra

Fairly common resident and common winter visitor.

Coots were recorded from 200 tetrads across the county, an increase of 10% on the 181 recorded in 2010. 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	4940	3652	2266	712	681	1278	2361	3035	3722	3941	4127	5019
Chichester Hbr	275	222	133	56	57	16	32	53	147	138	182	182
Pagham Hbr	56	206	140	53	57	54	91	102	128	nc	156	112
Chichester GP	2177	1095	409	136	161	470	948	985	1452	1803	2183	2002
Arun Valley	138	132	126	62	55	76	98	80	113	113	110	133
Eastbourne Lakes	295	199	112	5	5	36	36	63	349	308	511	489
Bewl Water	240	200	199	74	nc	nc	324	343	278	78	77	134
Rye Bay	1334	1172	836	232	264	552	593	1151	841	1033	456	1437

A comparison of the totals recorded in the four winter months between 2010 and 2011 indicates an increase in numbers of roughly 20%. High counts during the first winter period, additional to the WeBS counts, were recorded chiefly at Pett Level, where 1000 were noted on 24 Jan and numbers in excess of 400 were frequent. At Chichester GP 500 were noted on 15 Jan. A count of 19 in the Cuckmere meanders on 26 Jan was stated to be unusual there. Similarly, a record of 47 in Fishbourne Channel (Chichester Hbr) on 14 Apr included the comment that the species was unusual there; nevertheless, non-breeding flocks of 56 on 26 Apr and 63 on 17 May were also noted.

During the BBS a total of 42 was recorded from 16 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of seven at Thorney Island on 1 Jun. Breeding was confirmed in 63 tetrads and was probable in a further 20.

Nest building was first recorded on 27 Feb at Mewsbrook Park (Littlehampton). The first record of an occupied nest was on 28 Mar at Wepham Pond (Burpham), of a nest with eggs on 8 Apr at Lagness (Bognor) and of the first chicks on 17 Apr at Rye Hbr. Ten pairs or territories were identified at Pagham Hbr, ten pairs at Pett Level and 52 pairs at Rye Hbr. Several nests were noted in suitable habitats close to residential areas.

Numbers increased from June onwards and the proportions of treble and double figure counts also increased, rising from 11% and 34% respectively in the summer months to 20% and 41% respectively in the second winter period. In the second winter period, the highest counts additional to the WeBS counts came from the same sites as earlier in the year; the highest were 1373 at Chichester GP on 18 Oct and at Pett Level, 459 on 24 Dec. During the SWBS a total of 18 was recorded from seven of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of four at Rotherfield on 20 Dec. [DAB]

Common Crane*Grus grus*

Rare vagrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Following the probable ten birds recorded in 2010, a possible ten were recorded this year. The first of the year was an adult seen on 22 Feb at Warnham LNR (PJJ) where it circled the lake at 08.15; it may have been seen again briefly two hours later before finally disappearing. On 3 Mar two adults were found on the Wiston Estate (Steyning) (AA *et al.*) where they stayed until the 7th, being seen on the 3rd feeding on maize stubble.



Common Cranes, Wiston, March 2011 (Dorian Mason)

The next record was of an adult at Pulborough Brooks on 17 Apr (GB, OM, MDS *et al.*) which, after roosting overnight, flew off northwards at 10.00 on the 18th. Two more individuals were noted flying west at East Guldeford on 28 Jun (AP). On 4 Jul yet another two adults were present at Magham Down (Hailsham) (TPF *et al.*).

In the autumn, two more adults were seen at Horse Eye Level (Pevensey) on 9 Sep (JF) and, assuming they were the same birds, again from 25 Sep to 2 Oct (JC *et al.*). On 23 Oct two birds were seen flying east at Udimore during the morning and, presumably the same birds, flying southwest over Rye Town during the afternoon (DPB, WR). What were assumed to be the same two adults arrived at Horse Eye Level on 23 Oct (CFB) and were noted again on the 28th and 31st but only one remained on 2 Nov. Assuming all the above records were of different birds the year's total was a possible ten bringing the century total up to 53. It could, of course, be argued that all the birds since 28 Jun were the same two wandering widely, in which case the year's total would be only six. Nevertheless, it appears that Sussex is benefiting from the increase in numbers nationally. [JAH]

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:

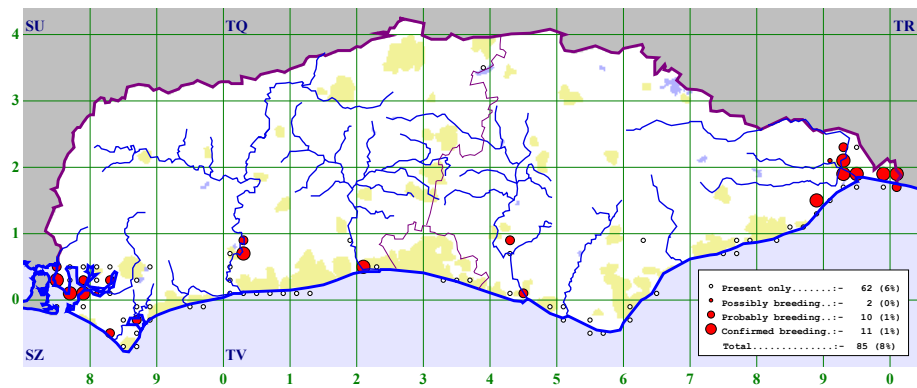
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	2160	2085	1126	820	677	593	755	598	2299	1900	2210	1080
Chichester Hbr	1560	1597	387	319	393	362	502	225	1707	1594	1371	731
Pagham Hbr	341	245	382	127	32	47	48	170	124	nc	272	125
Rye Bay	160	203	301	367	246	180	189	203	466	297	514	215

In addition to the WeBS counts, there were the usual large high tide roosts at Rye Hbr and Pilsey Island; the monthly maxima were as shown below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pilsey Island	1025	1071	87	200	280	272	358	1000	2000	1000	850	750
Rye Hbr	195	260	300	335	227	151	172	200	436	290	460	158

There were no counts higher than WeBS and the only significant numbers from elsewhere were 103 at Climping Beach on 22 Feb. Small groups passed offshore in spring; the highest day count was 48 W at Splash Point (Seaford) on 29 Mar. A single bird at Pulborough Brooks on 26 Apr was the only inland record for the whole year.

For the second year running it was a very successful breeding season, with a minimum of 64 nests and another four territorial pairs, the highest for many years. Thirteen pairs bred at Pagham Hbr and at least eight at Chichester Hbr. In the east there were 31 territories at Rye Hbr, where hatching and fledging success were high, two pairs in Rye town, two at The Midrips and five at Pett Level. The only reports of failure were at Thorney Island where a pair was washed out, and three chicks on the R Adur were also probably lost to bad weather. The only specific report of success was at Arundel WWT, where two pairs raised four young.



Numbers increased during the autumn; the peak count at Pilsey Island of 2000 on 28 Sep equals last year’s maximum, suggesting a good year generally for the species. The largest autumn flock elsewhere was 120 at Cuckmere Haven on 11 Sep. During the remainder of the year there were no totals higher than tabled above and the largest groups elsewhere along the coast were 200 at Pett Level on 20 Nov, 103 at Climping on 30 Nov and 60 at Littlehampton from 21-30 Dec. [CJRB]

Avocet

Recurvirostra avosetta

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

The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
44	32	62	152	114	126	60	3	4	8	45	46

In January there were up to 24 in Chichester Hbr, dwindling to four during February. At Pagham Hbr the January maximum was 18, reducing to two at the end of February. The only other records were of single birds on the R Adur from 1-6 Jan and at Pett Level on the 19th.

Birds were gathering at breeding sites from as early as 26 Feb, though offshore passage was not noted until 15 Mar. A minimum total of 46 was logged at seawatching points, 29 at Splash Point (Seaford), where the highest day total was 11 on 30 Apr. The last passage record was of four which passed Worthing and Splash Point on 5 May. Up to two lingered at Pulborough Brooks from 2-16 May.

About 53 pairs bred at three sites in the east of the county, the highest since the peak of 59 in 2007. At one site 11 pairs attempted to breed but many failed, probably due to badger predation. Six of these pairs relocated to another nearby site, where only one pair was successful. At a second site, 27 pairs did much better, raising 39 young, and at a third site about 15 pairs were present and 12 fledged young were seen. Up to five birds were present at Sidlesham Ferry from late March to the end of July, but no breeding attempts were noted.

Records in August and September involved only ones or twos until eight were noted on 28 Oct at Sidlesham Ferry and Pagham Hbr. Thereafter, a consistent group of 10-14 were in Pagham Hbr

from 1 Nov until the end of the year, and at Chichester Hbr numbers built up to 31 on 10 Dec. The only records of birds elsewhere were six at Rustington on 16 Nov and one at Rye Hbr on 17 Dec. [CJRB]

Stone-curlew

Burhinus oedicnemus

A rare passage migrant. Formerly a scarce breeding summer visitor; which since 2006 has tentatively started to recolonise the county. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

2010: The record of a bird heard above Brighton Hospital on 28 Sep has now been reviewed by the SOSRC and is now considered not proven.

2011: During 2011 the RSPB Sussex Stone-curlew Project continued to work with a small team of licensed volunteers to survey as much suitable habitat as possible, and to work intensively with local landowners, farmers and gamekeepers to create the conditions needed to assist returning and passage birds to stay and breed.

The RSPB Sussex Stone-curlew Project team again located two pairs in areas where habitat management and regular monitoring were possible. Through working closely with landowners, management of the breeding sites and surrounding area was adjusted to best suit the species' needs. Both pairs nested relatively early in the year. However, a detailed programme of monitoring established that the first nesting attempts of both pairs failed. After the failed attempts both pairs relocated and one pair successfully fledged one young, although it was not possible to confirm that their second chick reached the fledging stage. The second pair successfully fledged two young. At an additional site with suitable nesting habitat two birds were heard and seen on a number of occasions but no nesting attempt could be confirmed. With the support of the Wessex Stone-curlew team, at nest sites where access is possible, the project attempts to colour-ring the chicks to help monitor future populations.

At one of the above sites a third, un-paired adult, was present early in the breeding season in the vicinity of the breeding pair. At the same site a fourth, colour-ringed bird, was seen on one occasion and although its ring combination could not be definitively seen it is likely that this was a chick fledged from the site in 2010.

The decision in 2009 to publish the details of this species' return to Sussex was prompted by the fact that the birds at one site suffered significant disturbance from a small number of birdwatchers, including trespass on private land. Such activity directly jeopardises breeding success and the project's relationship with farmers and gamekeepers. Unfortunately, this disturbance continued in 2011 with individuals wilfully trespassing in order to watch the birds from a close perspective; this may have been a contributory factor in one pair's first nesting attempt failing, causing them to move to a more secluded nesting site.

The RSPB Sussex Stone-curlew Project, actively supported by the Sussex Ornithological Society, remains indebted to the support of the landowners, farmers and gamekeepers whose efforts have allowed the breeding success we have seen so far.

There is a long way to go before the re-colonisation of Sussex is assured, and the RSPB and SOS urge everyone to place the welfare of the birds first. Stone-curlews are specially protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and the EU Birds Directive, making it an offence to disturb or tape-lure them without a licence. At this stage it is recommended that birdwatchers do not go out purposely attempting to find Stone-

curls in Sussex. However, if birds are stumbled upon by accident it would be greatly appreciated if records could be passed onto the project team at RSPB Brighton so that efforts can be made to ensure the maximum success of any breeding attempt.

Records of migrant birds at sites elsewhere than at the breeding sites included one on 16 Apr at a site near Eastbourne (ADW, IJW), another at Belle Tout (Beachy Head) on the 25th (DC), a third spring bird at Clayton on the 30th (CB) and, in the autumn, one at Rodmell on 30 Oct (ARK). [DG]

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	7	10	10	6	9	9	5
No. of birds	13	32	40	26	41	36	18

The first arrival was seen at Pulborough Brooks on 9 Mar followed by one at Sidlesham Ferry Pool the next day and up to four around Pagham Hbr almost daily during the rest of the month. The only birds seen away from breeding areas in the spring were two at Littlehampton on 23 Mar and two at Thorney Deepes on 8 Apr. Passage at seawatching sites involved 1 E past Worthing Beach on 15 Mar and three past Splash Point (Seaford) on 5 May.

Proof of breeding was only reported from a few well-monitored sites. Eight pairs bred at two traditional coastal locations, though only four young were seen, and a pair nested at an inland site also regularly used in the past. At another four regular sites (three coastal), single pairs were seen frequently and probably bred, and at a further three inland sites birds were seen often enough to suggest that they might have attempted to breed.

During July and August, groups of 11, 13 and 16 were noted at two of the breeding sites, probably including birds which had not bred there. The odd bird turned up in less usual locations, with one in the lower Cuckmere Valley on 9 and 29 Aug and one at Hove on 12 Sep. The last birds reported were two at Rye Bay on 28 Sep. [CJRB]

Ringed Plover

Charadrius hiaticula

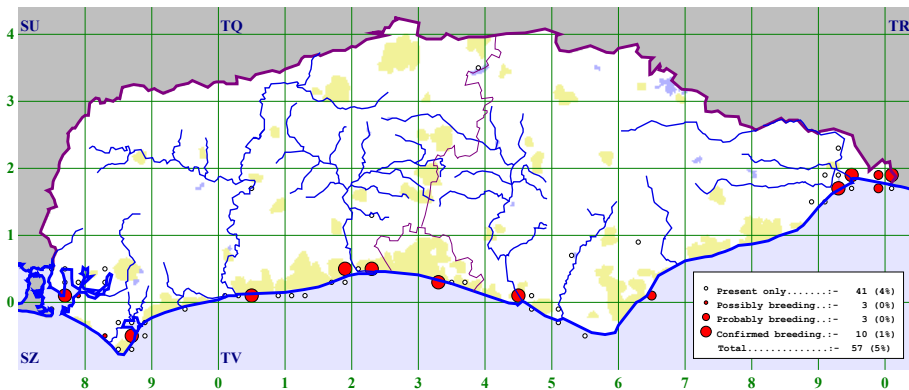
Fairly common breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	132	119	73	32	273	113	36	171	520	89	265	100
Chichester Hbr	94	56	34	9	221	51	9	31	424	1	165	84
Pagham Hbr	4	39	8	5	10	24	16	20	9	nc	93	12
Goring Gap	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	6	15	7	nc
Lower Adur Estuary	5	22	9	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	24	-	-
Newhaven	26	-	-	-	1	2	nc	nc	-	-	nc	2
Rye Bay	3	1	20	10	23	26	11	19	66	46	nc	-

There were many cases of WeBS counts being exceeded by other high counts. In the first winter period, the January maximum at Pagham Hbr was 30 and the maxima at Rye Hbr were 42 on 6 Jan, 41 on 21 Feb and 32 on 23 Mar. Other notable counts were 140 on the beach at Brooklands (Worthing) on 21 Jan and 54 at West Wittering on 19 Feb. Small numbers passed offshore during the spring; the highest day count was 4 E at Beachy Head on 2 May. The spring migration peak included 60 at Pagham Hbr on 25 May and 38 at Pilsey Island on the 5th, building up to a maximum of 338 there on the 14th.

A minimum of 44 pairs bred, continuing the gradual decrease of recent years. At Rye Hbr there were at least 25 pairs, though hatching success was low and few fledged. Nine pairs nested at Pagham Hbr, two at Pilsey Island, and single pairs bred at Thorney Island, Littlehampton, Widewater (Lancing), Shoreham Beach, Brighton Marina, Newhaven Tide Mills, Rye GC and The Midrips.



During the autumn, counts higher than the WeBS in Pagham Hbr were 30 on 10 Aug, 11 on 16 Sep and 100 on 25 Oct and there were 65 at Rye Hbr on 19 Aug. High counts at non-WeBS sites included 105 at Climping Beach on 31 Aug and 51 at Goring Beach on the 12th.

In the second winter period, counts higher than the WeBS were 60 at Pilsey Island on 6 Oct, 100 at Pagham Hbr on the 11th, 73 at Rye Hbr on 14 Nov with 23 there on 14 Dec, and 30 on the R Adur at Shoreham on 19 Dec. There were regularly high numbers at Worthing Beach, with 60 on 13 Oct rising to 120 on 20 Nov, with 80 there on 15 Dec. The highest counts elsewhere were 114 at Camber Sands on 4 Oct and 50 at Brighton Marina on 5 Nov.

Inland, there were two at Pulborough Brooks on 20-22 Feb and birds were present there regularly from April to September, with a maximum of eight on 13 May. At Weir Wood Res there were birds between July and September with a maximum of 14 on 19 Sep and at Arlington Res September was the only month they were recorded there, with a maximum of six on the 12th. [CJRB]

Kentish Plover

Charadrius alexandrinus

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

Following a blank year, one was seen on Pilsey Island on 5 Aug from 13.30–15.15 when it was killed by a Sparrowhawk (CBC). Decade totals from the 1960s to 2000s are respectively 16,

19, 24, 44 and 23, averaging just over two per year. Eleven of the 24 birds this century have been found by one observer at Pilsey Sands. Records this century have been in April and May (ten each), August (three) and September (one). [JAH]

Dotterel

Charadrius morinellus

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

Four records involving a probable ten individuals provided the highest tally since the 21 of 2006. Four birds were recorded at Balsdean (Rottingdean) on 21 Aug, a single juvenile was seen there on the 23rd and two (an adult and a juvenile) were near Arlington Res on the 27th (all ADW, IJW). Three were seen flying SW over the Downs near Chantry Hill on 3 Sep (ARK). The county total for the 21st century now stands at 77 with annual numbers as follows:

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Annual number	3	21	7	1	2	-	21	-	3	5	4	10

The annual average for this period is just over six per year. [JAH]

Golden Plover

Pluvialis apricaria

Common winter visitor and passage migrant, rare non-breeder 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	974	798	331	25	1	-	-	44	287	1316	1031	2028
Chichester Hbr	509	752	134	-	-	-	-	4	-	322	462	855
Pagham Hbr	212	40	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	nc	23	516
Rye Bay	220	nc	188	25	1	-	nc	40	287	992	541	656

The maximum monthly counts were often much higher than the WeBS counts. In the first winter period, counts which exceeded the monthly WeBS counts in January were 1000 at Thorney Island on the 5th, 380 at Pagham Hbr on the 9th and 350 at Rye Hbr on the 25th. Birds were also present at Pulborough Brooks, with a maximum of 55 on 26 Jan. There was an interesting record of 720 in fields on Walland Marsh on 2 Feb, an area not regularly counted which straddles the county border.

Numbers in the west decreased through March but at Rye Hbr increased to 700 on the 22nd. Elsewhere, there were 24 at Lewes Brooks on the 13th and eight at Pevensy Levels on the same day (the highest total for the year at this former key site). During April the maximum was 126 at Rye Hbr on the 10th. The county total for May was just three, the last being one at Rye Hbr on the 15th.

The first returning bird was at Jury's Gap on 20 Jul, followed by 18 at Rye Hbr on the 22nd, building up to 71 there on 2 Aug. In August the only count of over 100 was 150 at Rye Hbr on

the 30th. In September all of the birds were in the east, except for 42 at Thorney Island, with a maximum of 300 at Rye Hbr on the 22nd.

In the last quarter of the year some counts again exceeded the WeBS counts. In October numbers built up at both ends of the county; there were 828 at Rye Hbr on the 16th and 1000 at Thorney Island on the 28th. The highest numbers of the year came in November and December, with 3000 at Rye Hbr on 12 Nov and 26 Dec, 2500 at Thorney Island on 9 Nov, and 1000 at Pagham Hbr on 26 Nov. Again, there were a few at Pulborough Brooks throughout with a maximum of 16 on 13 Feb.

Birds were occasionally noted during seawatches at Selsey Bill and Climping, mostly passing west in small numbers during the winter months. The highest day totals were 8 W at Selsey Bill and 7 N at Beachy Head, both on 28 Feb. [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	2285	1212	1324	229	132	136	425	237	445	1043	786	1298
Chichester Hbr	862	608	743	13	119	105	425	193	394	1029	420	954
Pagham Hbr	1215	596	557	212	12	31	-	44	51	nc	335	310

Chichester and Pagham Harbours continue to qualify as nationally important sites, with regularly over 430 birds, the recently revised 1% threshold. In the first winter period there were no counts exceeding those in the WeBS table. The highest numbers at other regular sites were 125 at Rye Hbr on 17 Feb, 100 at Pett Level on 3 Jan (both high counts for the east of the county), 90 roosting at Climping on 2 Jan and 70 at Worthing Beach on the 22nd. The maximum on the R Adur was a very low five on 21 Jan. One by Piddinghoe Pond on 9 Jan and two at Langney on the 25th were unusual. Birds were regularly noted passing offshore; the monthly totals at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Total
Selsey Bill	E	-	-	-	202	118	320
	W	50	55	7	-	-	112
Worthing Beach	E	-	-	-	12	33	45
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-
Splash Point	E	-	-	6	41	72	97
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-
Beachy Head	E	-	-	2	2	20	24
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-

In April Pagham Hbr held a high proportion of the county total, though the maximum in Chichester Hbr was 54, rather than the 13 recorded during the WeBS and the maximum at Pagham was 40 in both May and June. One was at Pulborough Brooks on 1 Apr, four visited Pevensey Levels on the 30th and there were three at Cuckmere Haven on 1 May.

On 9 July there were already 80 returning birds at Pilsey Island, rising to 420 on the 15th, but the monthly maximum at Pagham Hbr was just ten. Counts exceeding those in the WeBS table in August were 243 at Chichester Hbr and 100 at Pagham Hbr, and maxima of 114 and 92 at Pagham Hbr in September and October.

In the second winter period no counts exceeded the WeBS and the highest numbers at other sites were 63 at Climping on 22 Dec, 48 at Pett Level on the 7th, 30 at Rye Hbr on the 10th and 10 on the R Adur at Shoreham on the 18th. One was at Pulborough Brooks on 7 Dec and there was again one at Newhaven on the 18th. A leucistic bird was noted at Worthing Beach from 9-30 Dec. [CJRB]

Northern Lapwing

Vanellus vanellus

Scarce or fairly common, but declining, resident and very common winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Lapwings were recorded from 162 tetrads, only c.15% of the county total. 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	10011	7946	911	284	257	468	1120	1528	1872	2750	8357	8686
Chichester Hbr	1421	485	59	32	41	70	19	132	190	516	1304	1791
Pagham Hbr	1438	451	110	28	17	26	19	4	192	nc	1262	2067
Arun Valley	1102	2810	166	73	71	85	40	92	109	394	2841	1580
Lower Adur Estuary	515	345	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	12	53	571	830
Ouse Valley	457	140	122	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	73	2	210	350
Pevensey Levels	2569	2164	307	33	39	5	-	-	-	35	661	94
Bewl Water	62	155	-	-	nc	nc	88	107	157	203	174	68
Rye Bay	1781	1389	132	80	48	263	860	1124	1029	1412	972	1691

There were 15 counts additional to the WeBS counts of a thousand or more individuals during the first winter period. These included 4000 at Pagham Hbr on 15 Jan, 3000 there on 12 Feb, 3000 at Pett Level on 24 Jan, 2250 at Pulborough Brooks on 14 Feb and 1800 at Rye Hbr on the 21st.

Breeding activity was first noted on 8 Feb with a pair displaying at Rye Hbr and again on 10 Mar with nest building confirmed on 14 Mar at Rye Hbr. During the BBS, breeding was confirmed from 23 tetrads and consisted of around 37 pairs. Breeding was probable in a further 38 tetrads, the largest concentration being at Rye Hbr with about 38 pairs. Breeding was well under way in early May with many reports of chicks from across the county, and reports of fledglings throughout June. Fifteen young were reported on 21 Jun from five broods at Chichester Hbr (Thorney Island).

Returning birds were first noted in lowish numbers from mid-June when 300 were noted on the 16th and 400 on the 28th, both at Rye Hbr. In July numbers increased fairly slowly in the Rye Bay area until they reached 2000 at Rye Hbr on the 20th. Numbers at Rye Bay remained in the range 400–800 throughout the autumn but had reached 300 at Pulborough Brooks by 26 Sep while numbers at Pagham Hbr did not exceed 250. Notable non-WeBS counts in the second winter period were a monthly maximum of 2788 at Pagham Hbr on 14 Dec and 1500 at Rye Hbr on 26 Dec. During the SWBS a total of 860 was recorded from only seven of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 400 at Sidlesham on 5 Dec. [WEC]

Red Knot*Calidris canutus*

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

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	3273	5557	1325	-	2	-	10	3	104	102	934	1072
Chichester Hbr	2803	5249	881	-	2	-	10	-	90	47	933	776
Pagham Hbr	470	306	361	-	-	-	-	1	1	nc	-	200
Rye Bay	-	2	80	nc	nc	-	nc	2	13	55	1	95

All records were coastal apart from single adults noted at Horse Eye Level (Pevensey) on 30 Apr, Pulborough Brooks from 28 Aug to 7 Sep and again on 6 Nov, at Weir Wood Res on 18 Aug, at Lewes Brooks on 1 Jan and 14 birds at Arlington Res on 8 Sep. The WeBS counts show that, once again, the highest numbers were to be found in the west of the county.

Birds were noted in every month of the year with good numbers being recorded from January to March. Notable counts additional to the WeBS counts included roosts at Pilsey Sands (the main site for the species within Chichester Hbr) of 4000 on 15 Jan and 3250 on 14 Feb. At Pagham Hbr, an estimated count of 600 on 8 Jan was also notable. Numbers then reduced in March and the last record was of 850 at Pilsey Sands on 19 Mar. With a 1% national threshold level of 3200, Chichester Hbr qualified in both January and February as a site of national importance for Red Knot

The first offshore movements were recorded on 9 Apr at Selsey Bill with 28 E in 5½ hr of observation and, on 28 Apr, with 36 E at Telscombe Cliffs in 1 hr. However, peak movements were recorded over the three days 30 Apr to 2 May: at Splash Point (Seaford) 214 E were logged on 30 Apr and 303 E on 1 May while at Telscombe Cliffs 104 E on 2 May were logged. Counts from the principal seawatching sites, derived from the maximum counts at either Selsey Bill, Climping Beach, Worthing Beach, Telscombe Cliffs, Splash Point or Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on any one day, were as follows:

	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
E	-	-	305	493	-	-	14	-	812
W	6	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	11

Reports of birds in summer plumage were one at Horse Eye Level on 30 Apr and 20 at Pagham Hbr on 1 May. Numbers remained typically low during the summer period with a maximum of ten at Pilsey Sands on 15 Jul. A count of 14 E at Worthing on 18 Aug were likely returning migrants but the first significant count of returning birds was of 40 at Pagham Hbr on 24 Aug, noted as being in varying degrees of moult, and 70 at Pilsey Sands on the 25th which increased to 100 on 11 Sep. In Rye Bay, 214 recorded on 3 Oct was the highest count in the east of the county during the whole year. But nowhere did numbers exceed the 800 recorded at Pilsey Sands on 12 Nov and on 22 Dec and 500 in Pagham Hbr on 23 Dec was the only other non-WeBS three-figure count during the second winter period. [WEC]

Sanderling*Calidris alba*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Very rare away from coast.

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	116	81	41	1	152	37	6	7	2	7	228	202
Chichester Hbr	90	80	25	1	130	37	4	-	-	1	212	102
Climping	26	nc	14	-	22	-	nc	7	nc	-	1	30
Goring Gap	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	13	nc
Rye Bay	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	nc	nc	2	6	2	70

There were records for every month of the year and all records were on or near the coast apart from single birds on 29 May and 17 Jul at Arlington Res and two on 30 May at Weir Wood Res. During the first winter and spring period there were 20 records of 100 or more non-WeBS counts with a maximum of 350 at Pilsey Sands (the species' main wintering and roosting site) on 18 Jan and, elsewhere, 150 on Climping Beach on 3 Jan and 102 on the beach at Brooklands (Worthing) on 15 Apr. With a 1% national threshold level of 160, Chichester Hbr qualified as a site of national importance for this species with seven counts at Pilsey Sands in excess of this level between 18 Jan and 26 Jul.

The first spring movement was recorded at Splash Point (Seaford) on 23 Mar with 62 E in 4 hr followed by 30 E in 1¼ hr on 25 Apr and 26 E in 8½ hr on 1 May at Worthing Beach. Further significant movements continued predominately easterly until 11 Jun. A count of 68 at Climping Beach on 13 Jun was presumed to be late migrants as all but one were in summer plumage. Counts from the principal seawatching sites, derived from maximums recorded at either Selsey Bill, Climping Beach, Worthing Beach, Telscombe Cliffs, Splash Point or Birling Gap on any one day were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
E	50	-	69	80	298	22	-	4	1	-	80	-	725
W	-	-	-	10	83	2	5	3	4	14	-	-	121

Numbers were typically low during the summer period. The first returning birds were noted with eight at Pilsey Sand on 13 Jul followed by counts of 24 on the 17th, 220 on the 26th and 300 on 25 Aug. During the second winter period the only site which ever held three-figure numbers was, again, Pilsey Sands where numbers increased to monthly maxima of 450 on 4 Sep, 300 on 7 Oct and 300 again on 6 Nov. Elsewhere, 70 were roosting at Brooklands on 15 Dec followed by 80 there on the 28th. The highest count in East Sussex was 40 at Rye Hbr on 18 Dec. [WEC]

Little Stint*Calidris minuta*

Scarce passage migrant; very scarce in winter.

The monthly WeBS counts from the principal sites were as given in the table below. All the records for the first three months were from Fishbourne Channel (Chichester Hbr) where a single

wintering bird from Nov 2010 was noted up to 16 Mar. Following a report of one at Pagham Hbr on 29 May the next to be recorded was one at Rye Hbr on 22 Jul, the harbinger of the usual autumn influx, followed by other individuals in Chichester Hbr on the 28th. One was at Sidlesham Ferry Pool on the 30th and was recorded there until 30 Aug, but more than one bird could have been involved.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-
Chichester Hbr	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Arun Valley	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Arlington Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-

During August, one was recorded at Weir Wood Res from the 1st to the 30th with three there on the 28th; two were at Rye Hbr on the 12th and one at Pulborough Brooks from the 16th to the 30th with two there on the 27th; three were noted at Church Norton on the 25th and another in Pagham Hbr on the 29th.



Little Stint, Arlington Reservoir, September 2011 (John Cooper)

The approximate monthly totals, derived from the maximum site counts, and 5-year and 10-year averages were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1	1	1	-	1	-	3	11	19	8	1	-
5-year average	1	1	2	1	3	-	1	13	17	12	2	2
10-year average	4	3	3	1	2	1	1	10	17	9	3	3

In September a further small influx occurred: two were noted at Pilsey Island from the 10th to 12th; ones at Sidlesham and in Pagham Hbr and up to four at Rye Hbr. Inland, one at Pulborough Brooks from the 18th to the 27th was joined by two more on the 21st; two were at Arlington Res on the 18th and at Weir Wood Res there were six on the 11th. Numbers then diminished through October and November and the last bird of the year was noted at Chichester Hbr on 27 Nov. [WEC]

Temminck's Stint

Calidris temminckii

Very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

Records for six birds were accepted. The first were two adults on 8 May at Rye Hbr (PJ, AK *et al.*) followed by one at Pulborough Brooks on the 12th (PHH *et al.*). Back in the east, an adult was at Pett Level on 25 May followed by another there on 1 Jun (both IDH). In the autumn, a juvenile was at Pulborough Brooks from 19 to 27 Aug (JSW *et al.*). These bring the total for this century to 37 with monthly totals predominantly in May (27) (73% of the total), with others in April (two), June (one), July (two), August (three) and September (two). [JAH]

Pectoral Sandpiper

Calidris melanotos

Rare vagrant, mainly in autumn.

The only record was of a single adult at Weir Wood Res on 28-30 Sep (NAD) which brings the county total up to 87 since the first record of 1 Sep 1870. This species has been annual since the last blank year in 1996. Unsurprisingly for a trans-Atlantic vagrant, all but six records have been in the autumn. [JAH]

Curlew Sandpiper

Calidris ferruginea

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

There were six spring records (ignoring duplicates) with an unusually early bird at Pett Level on 25 Mar, but all other spring sightings were in May. One was recorded at Rye Hbr from the 1st and then it or another was there on the 8th and possibly the same on the 9th, whilst another individual was at Pagham Hbr from the 3rd to the 5th. Also on the 3rd three were at Jury's Gap and one was at Cuckmere Haven. Finally, two were at Pilsey Island (Chichester Hbr) on the 14th, one of which was in summer plumage. Assuming the Rye Hbr birds in May were one and the same the minimum total for spring was nine birds.

The first returning bird appeared at Chichester Hbr on 26 Jul followed by individuals at Sidlesham Ferry on 30 Jul and Jury's Gap on 2 Aug. The next was not seen until 27 Aug at

Pagham Hbr, after which records were received on an almost daily basis to the end of September. Sightings of note included eight at Rye Hbr on 13 Sep, while heavy showers at Pulborough Brooks resulted in 14 juveniles (in groups of nine and five, the latter with some Dunlins) dropping in on 17 Sep but departing as soon as the showers ceased. A monthly maximum of six were seen at Pagham Hbr on the 23rd and the 24th. There were 12 records (ignoring duplicates) for October including five at Cuckmere Haven on the 10th. With parties present for extended periods in September and with the probability that birds were both mobile between sites (particularly in the Pagham Hbr area) and also arriving and departing during the period, estimating precise numbers is difficult. The minimum monthly totals were as shown below:

Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
2	5	50	15

The last bird of the autumn was recorded at Pagham Hbr on 14 Oct. [AHP]

Purple Sandpiper

Calidris maritima

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

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	16	14	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1
Lower Adur Estuary	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	3	1
Newhaven	16	14	-	-	-	-	nc	nc	-	-	nc	-
Glyne Gap	-	-	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	nc	-

Unfortunately, the WeBS counts are not truly representative of the county's population. The highest monthly counts where the species was recorded were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	35	43	28	7		1	1	24	25
Pilsey Island	1	-	1	-		-	-	-	-
Worthing & Goring Beaches	-	-	-	-		1	-	-	1
Lancing Widewater	4	-	-	-		-	-	-	-
Shoreham Hbr	4	7	1	-		-	-	3	2
Southwick	3	-	-	-		-	-	-	-
Brighton Marina	6	21	20	7		-	-	18	14
Newhaven	16	14	5	-		-	-	3	7
Bexhill/St Leonards/Hastings	1	1	1	-		-	-	-	1
Rye Hbr	-	-	-	-		-	1	-	-

It should be borne in mind, however, that there could be some duplication in the above numbers with a species which can be somewhat mobile between sites. Thus the three at Southwick could easily be from either the Shoreham or Brighton populations. The four at Lancing, however, which

is not far from Shoreham, were recorded on the same date as the four at Shoreham – were they the same? Similarly, it is possible that birds move between Brighton and Newhaven at times.

For the first part of the year, the highest count in January was at the traditional site of Newhaven, where 16 were recorded on 16 Jan. Numbers were smaller at the other two traditional sites: there were six at Brighton Marina on the 3rd and four at Shoreham Hbr on the 12th. In February, there was a small influx which increased the county total; while numbers at Shoreham Hbr remained low at seven on the 15th, there were 14 at Newhaven on the 13th, whilst there was an increase at Brighton Marina to 21 on the 22nd. The last birds seen before their departure were seven at Brighton Marina on 21 Apr, 19 days earlier than the 10-year average date.



Purple Sandpipers, Brighton Marina, January 2011 (Gareth Hughes)

The first returning bird was an individual at Worthing Beach on 9 Sep, slightly later than the 10-year average date of 26 Aug. The next arrival was of one recorded at Rye Hbr on 8 and 9 Sep. The next record was of four at Brighton Marina on 5 Nov. Birds appeared to favour this site as there were 17 there on 14 Nov and 18 on the 20th. The last record of the year came from Shoreham Fort with two on 29 Dec. [AHP]

Dunlin

Calidris alpina

Very common passage migrant and winter visitor; scarce away from estuaries; 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	18467	8894	4402	148	1272	70	135	146	614	6078	15775	11145
Chichester Hbr	16658	7755	3576	13	1202	37	104	64	430	5995	15474	10282
Pagham Hbr	1706	1098	773	116	25	23	3	35	123	nc	270	781
Rye Bay	38	3	30	12	28	5	28	19	53	80	13	78

All the notable counts in the first winter period came from the Chichester Hbr complex. The 1% national threshold level of 3500 was exceeded at Chichester Hbr in the six months January to March and October to December.

Counts on dates other than those on which the WeBS was conducted included, at Pilsey Sands, 14,000, 15,000 and 12,000 on 15 Jan, 20 Feb and 1 Mar respectively and in December, 8000 on the 22nd. At Pagham Hbr the year's peak count was 1706 on 23 Jan. In the east, the highest count was 347 at Pett Level on 8 Jan. A Merlin was observed chasing and failing to catch an individual at Pagham Hbr on 2 Jan.

The monthly totals and peak movements of eastbound birds from the main seawatching sites, with the hours of observation, were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	-	24	55	21 E on 19 May (124 hr)
Worthing Beach	-	28	39	16 E on 2 May (55 hr)
Telscombe Cliffs	-	31	23	24 E on 27 Apr (17 hr); 18 E on 2 May (9 hr)
Splash Point	42	17	51	32 E on 23 Mar (44 hr); 25 E on 2 May (79½ hr)

High counts in the second winter period were again concentrated in the Chichester Hbr area with a WeBS count of 10,000 at Pilsey Sands on 12 Nov and 8000 (non-WeBS) there on 22 Dec. Elsewhere, at Pagham Hbr the period peak count was 800 (non-WeBS) on 17 Dec, 600 were noted on the beach at Brooklands (Worthing) on 28 Dec and 400 roosted there on the 30th.

Three records came from the inland site of Arlington Res, including two birds of the *schinzii* race on 15 May, and from Weir Wood Res on 27 Jun and all months from August to October with a peak count of 16 on 20 Sep and a final record of a juvenile on 13 Oct. [RJE]

Buff-breasted Sandpiper

Tryngites subruficollis

Rare autumn vagrant.

Just one this year: at Rye Hbr from 8-12 Sep (BJY, mo), bringing the county total up to 17 since the first record of 1 Oct 1843. Records are less than annual, it having occurred in only five of the 12 years this century. Records have occurred between 21 Aug (1934) and 14 Oct (1989) with 11 in September. [JAH]



Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Rye Harbour, September 2011 (Mark Tomlins)

Ruff

Philomachus pugnax

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

The monthly WeBS counts for the principal sites were as given in the table below. The 1% national threshold level for Ruff is eight birds. The Arun Valley in September and Rye Bay in November and December therefore qualify as sites of national importance for the species.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	3	8	1	-	-	-	-	3	14	10	11	10
Pagham Hbr	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	nc	-	-
Arun Valley	3	5	-	-	-	-	-	2	8	4	3	2
Rye Bay	-	nc	1	nc	nc	-	nc	1	5	6	8	8

However, the WeBS counts are not totally representative of the numbers in the county and there were several counts of eight or more recorded on non-WeBS dates. Qualifying counts during the year, not included in the WeBS counts above, are as shown below:

Month	Site	No.	Dates
Jan	Pagham Hbr	8	9 th and 25 th
Feb	Pagham Hbr	8	14 th
Feb	Northiam Gate Court	13	28 th
Mar	Horse Eye Level (Pevensey)	9	27 th
Mar	Bracklesham Bay	8	21 st
Jul	Rye Hbr (Rye Bay)	16	5 th
Aug	Pulborough Brooks (Arun Valley)	14	28 th
Aug	Rye Hbr (Rye Bay)	13	26 th
Sep	Pulborough Brooks (Arun Valley)	13	26 th
Sep	Rye Hbr (Rye Bay)	11	7 th

The minimum monthly totals, including non-WeBS counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	23	38	29	8	2	-	19	38	34	17	15	21

Spring observations were recorded from eleven sites. Eight birds were consistently recorded at Pagham Hbr from 9 Jan to 21 Mar. Notably 13 individuals were seen at Northiam Gate Court on 28 Feb. The last bird of the spring season was recorded on 5 May at Pagham Hbr.

The commencement of return passage was indicated by the arrival of 16 birds recorded at Rye Hbr on 5 Jul. During the autumn the site holding the highest numbers was Pulborough Brooks with a peak of 14 on 28 Aug and the last record of the year was of three there on 24 Dec. [RJE]

Jack Snipe

Lymanocryptes 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	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	-
Chichester Hbr	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
Arun Valley	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Bay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-

The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No of birds	12	11	5	0	1	1	5	6	6
No of sites	10	3	5	0	1	1	3	5	4

This was the worst year for Jack Snipe for at least 18 years presumably due to the hard weather which resulted in birds departing the county. Birds were fairly widespread in January, though the

most at any one site was two in the Fishbourne Channel that stayed for only four days. Single birds at East Head (West Wittering), Arundel WWT and Rye Hbr were reported regularly during the first three months of the year. Single birds were also recorded on one day only from Lavington Common, Amberley Wild Brooks, Partridge Green, Newhaven Tide Mills, Pevensey Levels and Pett Level. Numbers at Thorney Island were again low this year with two in January and nine in February. The last recorded spring bird was at Rye Hbr on 5 May, a late date.

One at Thorney Island on 28 Sep was the first to return and a maximum of two were seen there during September and October. Up to three at Pett Level, up to two at Rye Hbr and one at Ferring were all recorded several times, and single birds were seen on one occasion only at East Head, Fishbourne, Arundel WWT, Pulborough Brooks, Durrington, Lewes Brooks and Newhaven Tide Mills. [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	225	327	122	22	-	-	1	14	12	53	257	319
Chichester Hbr	23	109	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	30	52
Bracklesham Bay	22	nc	nc	5	-	-	nc	-	-	5	17	9
Pagham Hbr	34	22	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	nc	5	2
Arun Valley	7	22	48	2	-	-	1	14	5	25	120	53
Lower Adur Estuary	62	93	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	-	45	101
Upper Adur Levels	-	4	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	9	7
Weir Wood Res	-	nc	-	-	nc	-	-	-	2	3	1	-
Ouse Valley	59	15	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	3	1	42
Barcombe Res	-	-	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Pevensey Levels	3	41	2	2	-	-	-	-	1	7	15	3
Rye Bay	7	5	20	11	-	-	-	-	-	7	7	49

Numbers were much lower than usual in the early part of the year, and the Lower Adur was the only site to produce consistently good numbers. In addition to the WeBS counts there were 30 at Thorney Island on 2 Jan, 19 at Weir Wood Res and 25 at Rye Hbr on the 11th, 50 at Pett Level on the 18th, and 56 at Pagham Hbr on 2 Feb (with 50 flushed by a Hen Harrier there on the 22nd). The highest numbers elsewhere were 25 at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) on 18 Jan and 22 at Bracklesham Bay on the 16th.

In April there were no counts of more than eight with only single birds after the 18th. The last bird at Thorney Deepes was on the 30th and there were only seven birds in the county during May. The only reports of possible breeding were from the Arun Valley, where there were four displaying birds at Amberley Wild Brooks and one at Pulborough Brooks. During Atlas fieldwork, single birds were recorded in suitable habitat in four locations on Pevensey Levels and at Guestling during April and May, but the only birds reported in June were those in the Arun Valley. For most of July the only birds in the county were one or two at Pulborough Brooks, but five at Rye Hbr

on the 28th was the first indication of passage, though there were no reports outside Pulborough Brooks and Rye Bay until 5 Sep. From October to December numbers were once again low, and there were very few birds outside the main sites, the Lower Adur and Arun Valley holding the highest numbers. In addition to the WeBS there were 30 at Amberley Wild Brooks on 18 Oct, 23 at Pagham Hbr on 27 Dec and 30 at Weir Wood Res on the 31st. [CJRB]

Woodcock

Scolopax rusticola

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

After two good years, numbers were back down to average this year. From January to March a minimum of 75 was recorded from 52 sites, mostly in ones or twos, and the highest count (and the only one of more than four) was a maximum of 12 at Pett Level. Most were in the interior, but birds were also reported from Thorney Deepes, Fishbourne, Church Norton, Climping, Worthing, Rottingdean and Rye Hbr, mostly in January.

It was a good breeding year, with a minimum of 62 territorial birds located. The first record of roding came from Ashdown Forest on 2 Apr, where 44 territories were found (see summary for Ashdown Forest on page 245 for details). There were 13 territories on the West Sussex Heathlands (detailed in the summary on page 244), and two near Arundel. Three birds were seen in suitable habitat at Broadwater Warren, with single birds at Herstmonceux and Houghton Forest. Unusually, fledged young were seen on Ashdown Forest on 4 May.

There was only one sighting in August and September and three in October. In November and December a minimum of 33 was reported from 25 sites, including one at Beachy Head on 8 Nov and one ringed at Cissbury Ring on the 26th. There was a maximum of three at Pett Level, and the largest group was five at Houghton Forest on 13 Dec. [CJRB]

Black-tailed Godwit

Limosa limosa

Fairly common but localised winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce non-breeder in summer. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

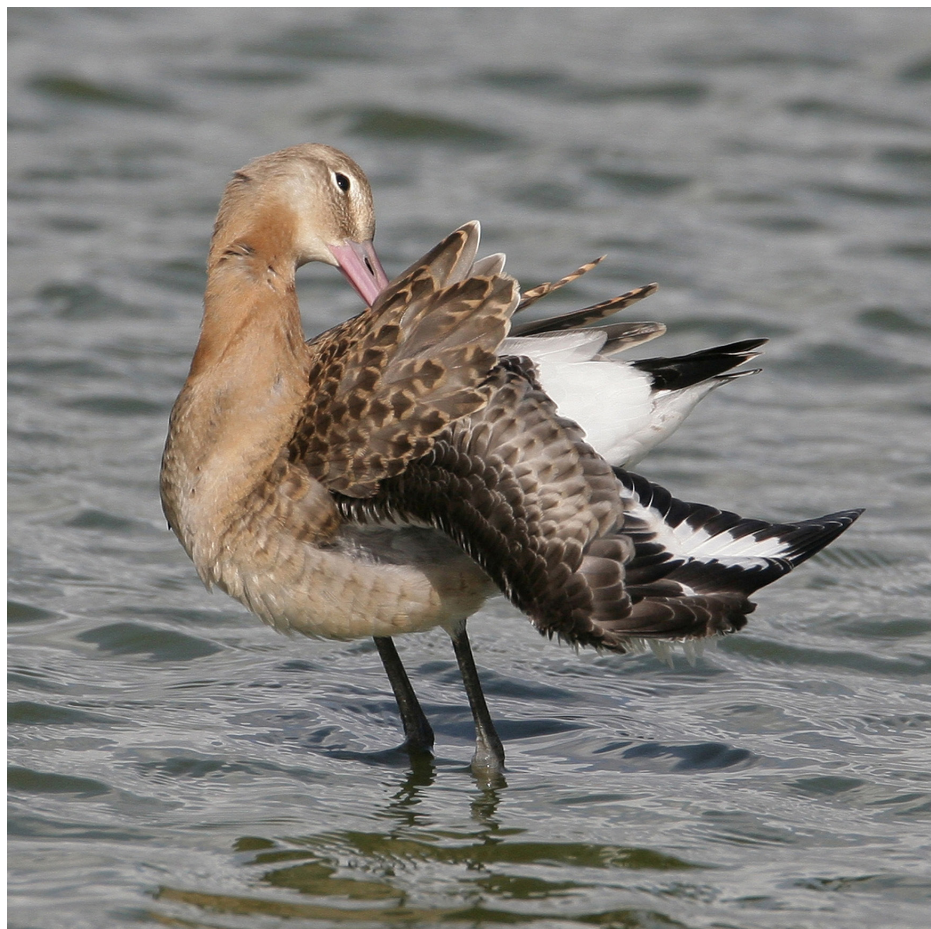
The monthly WeBS counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1572	831	373	136	48	120	118	190	231	757	911	695
Chichester Hbr	832	336	213	72	15	-	58	142	206	754	821	531
Pagham Hbr	700	454	155	61	30	7	55	43	16	nc	75	137

The above table indicates clearly that the two western harbour complexes comprised the majority of records for the species during this survey. The most significant counts in the first winter period for the two harbours additional to the WeBS counts were mostly from Pagham Hbr, with 900 on 15 Jan, 800 on the 30th, 700 on the 23rd decreasing to 420 on 14 Feb and 370 on the 20th. In Chichester Hbr, however, the highest count for the period was 967 on 25 Jan. With a 1% national threshold level of 430, both Chichester and Pagham Harbours were sites of national importance for this species, the latter in both first winter months and the former in January and also in October to December.

During the first winter period, away from the two western harbours, several sites held small numbers; one at Widewater (Lancing) on 21 Mar, two at Henfield Levels on 27 Feb, two at Rye Hbr on 13 Mar and a maximum of five at Pett Level on 26 Mar. Not insignificantly, however, Amberley Wild Brooks held a maximum of 75 on 20 Feb, whilst at Pulborough Brooks there were counts of 200 on 30 Jan and 120 on 12 Feb.

Perhaps surprisingly, during the BBS a total of 70 was recorded at one of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, at Thorney Island on 26 Apr. Through the spring into summer counts were typically of one to three birds, although at Pulborough Brooks 12 were recorded on 29 Jun and a maximum of 20 on 12 Jul. The exceptions were the two principal harbour sites of Chichester and Pagham, where peak counts were 121 on 14 Apr and 64 on 21 May respectively, and Pett Level and Rye Hbr where 112 were present on 12 Jun and 41 on the 8th respectively. Observers at Weir Wood Res provided two of only three inland records for this period, with two on 22 Jul and three on 23 Aug while at Arlington Res there was one on 30 Jun.



Black-tailed Godwit, Pagham Harbour, September 2011 (Dorian Mason)

Observers at seawatching sites recorded a total of 12 birds throughout the whole year, with 1 E at Selsey Bill on 28 Apr as the only spring movement (suggesting that this species is primarily a night time or overland migrant, or both) and 11 through July to September.

In the autumn and second winter period the largest counts all came from Chichester Hbr. The first significant record was of 106 at Bosham on 3 Sep followed by 258 at Chidham on 15 Oct. Thereafter numbers increased significantly to 300 at Thorney Deepes by the last day of the month. By 12 Nov numbers had reached 472 before falling back to 264 by 10 Dec. At Pagham Hbr the two highest counts of this period were 58 on 27 Nov and 56 on 11 Dec. The eight at Pulborough Brooks on 31 Oct had increased to 20 by the end of November, reaching 63 on 5 Dec and peaking at 176 by the 27th. [DB]

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 locations were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	899	865	244	47	4	20	117	82	74	67	590	463
Chichester Hbr	890	864	230	46	1	20	116	80	74	67	590	463

As in previous years, Chichester Hbr was the preferred site for Bar-tailed Godwit, accounting for all except a very few birds during the monthly WeBS counts, as shown in the table above, with the highest numbers being found at Pilsey Sands. Counts there, additional to the WeBS counts, peaked at 1100 on 15 Jan, decreasing to 854 by 19 Feb and 650 on 1 Mar, and dropping further to 220 on 19 Mar; there were still 160 present on 16 Apr. With a 1% national threshold level of 380, Pilsey Sands/Chichester Hbr is a site of national importance for this species in all four winter months. Elsewhere, a maximum of 20 was recorded at Pagham Hbr on 5 Feb, with smaller numbers observed throughout the first winter period. Away from the western harbours, up to five were recorded at Rye Hbr on 21 Feb and a single was recorded at Pett Level on two dates.

During the eastwards spring migration, counts from the three principal seawatching sites were as follows:

		Apr	May	Total	Peak movement		Hrs watched peak days
Selsey Bill	E	1123	1678	2801	794	1 May	13
	Max	347	794				
	Hr	13	124				
Worthing Beach	E	1222	2224	3446	760	2 May	4%
	Max	459	760				
	Hr	58	55				
Splash Point	E	1787	4107	5894	2124	1 May	13½
	Max	1191	2124				
	Hr	121	80				

The first notable spring passage count was 91 E past Selsey Bill on 10 Apr, whilst the main migration was concentrated into eight days, from 27 Apr to 4 May. The highest counts were recorded at Splash Point (Seaford) with 2124 E on 1 May and 1191 E on 30 Apr when 459 were also recorded at Worthing. Observers at Worthing also recorded 735 E on 3 May. Elsewhere, during this peak migration period, 160 were observed at Rye Hbr, whilst observers at Hastings recorded 524 E on 28 Apr. Apart from two further counts from Splash Point of 90 E on 5 May and 110 E on the 7th, at no other site were more than 25 birds recorded on passage after the main migration period. The totals from all seawatching sites were 2389 E and 3 W during April, whilst in May 4170 E and 5 W were recorded.

Sixty birds in Chichester Hbr on 5 Jun were considered to be “summering” and there were 20 recorded on the 19th. The first returning birds to Pilsey Sands, however, were 23 noted on 8 Jul. One week later this had risen to 80 and increased further to 108 by the 22nd.



Bar-tailed Godwit, Cuckmere Haven, April 2011 (Peter Wilson)

Through the autumn and into the second winter period, Pilsey Sands was again the dominant site for this species; the highest counts there were 100 on 11 Sep, 180 on 15 Oct and 450 on both 12 Nov and 10 Dec. Elsewhere, the next highest counts were 17 on 17 Nov from Pagham Hbr and 12 on the 21st from Pulborough Brooks. The only other inland record came from Weir Wood Res, where four were observed on 13 Sep. In East Sussex four were observed at Rye Hbr on 20 Oct and again on 29 Dec, whilst at Pett Level six birds were noted on 7 Oct and five on the 14th. [DB]

Whimbrel

Numenius phaeopus

Common passage migrant, very scarce non-breeding summering and wintering species. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	-	2	1	120	25	9	56	77	18	-	1	1
Chichester Hbr	-	2	-	113	11	5	53	70	18	-	1	1
Pevensey Levels	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Birds still present from 2010 were two at Thorney Island (until 14 Feb) and one in the Fishbourne Channel (to 20 Feb). There was one at Sidlesham Ferry on 11 Jan only, and a single bird flew east off Portobello (Telscombe Cliffs) on 10 Jan. Offshore passage is unusual before mid-March, but one flew east past Selsey Bill on 20 Feb and another on 6 Mar, with six past Splash Point (Seaford) on the 12th and another 15 there during the rest of the month. Passage was very heavy this year, the minimum total passing east during the spring was 2040 and was more or less evenly spread from mid-April until the first week in May. On the peak day of 22 Apr nearly four times as many were seen from Splash Point than were seen from Selsey Bill in a similar period of watching. The totals recorded at the principal seawatching sites are shown below:

		Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Total	Peak movement		Hrs watched peak days
Selsey Bill	E	1	390	309	-	-	-	-	-	700	109	22 Apr	12.0
	W	-	9	2	4	1	5	5	1	27			
Worthing Beach	E	2	307	499	-	-	1	-	-	809	109	19 Apr	3.8
	W	-	8	2	-	4	3	-	-	17			
Brighton Marina	E	-	40	56	-	-	-	-	-	96	40	30 Apr	-
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Telscombe Cliffs	E	-	9	73	-	-	-	-	-	82	49	3 May	1.75
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Splash Point	E	21	1150	507	-	-	-	-	-	1678	395	22 Apr	11.0
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Beachy Head	E	1	519	141	-	-	-	-	-	661	110	14 Apr	-
	W	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	4			

There were a number of other high casual counts of birds passing east close inshore, including 100 at Lancing on 4 May, 93 at Rustington on the 3rd and 90 at Peacehaven Cliffs on 30 Apr. There were up to six both on Pevensey Levels and at Pulborough Brooks during April and May, three at Henfield Brooks on the 5th, two at Weir Wood Res on 24 Apr and single birds at Arlington Res on 4 and 15 May. The maximum at Rye Hbr was 60 on 2 May, continuing the decrease of recent years.

There were up to six in Pagham Hbr throughout June and July, but five at Pilsey Island on 13 Jul were reported as the first returning birds. Numbers in Chichester Hbr built up to an autumn peak of 25 at West Chidham on 12 Aug and there were 10 at Pagham Hbr on 20 Sep, but only single figures elsewhere. The only birds away from the western harbours and the Rye Bay area were singles at Arlington Res on 14 Aug, Weir Wood Res on the 25th and up to four in the Lower Cuckmere Valley during the month.

During the last three months of the year only single birds were recorded, with one lingering in Pagham Hbr until 16 Oct, one in the Lower Cuckmere on the 30th, one at Apuldram on 27 Nov and one at West Wittering on 10 Dec. [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 given in the table below. The January county total was the highest since 1998, with good numbers reported from all the regular areas. From January to March other counts, in addition to the WeBS, were 330 at Rye Hbr on 14 Feb and 250 there on 2 Mar, 101 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 13 Feb (a record for this site), and 28 at Climping on 4 Jan. Single birds were at Pulborough Brooks on 28 Jan, 1 Mar and 10 Mar, three were at Amberley Wild Brooks from 3-17 Jan with one there on 13 Feb, and single birds were seen at Beckley on 19 Feb and East Dean (W Sussex) on the 24th.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	2625	2035	1663	238	108	416	1189	1719	2219	1726	1606	1557
Chichester Hbr	1449	901	1149	141	72	364	1062	1283	1857	1488	1070	1084
Pagham Hbr	420	799	402	74	10	13	117	238	244	nc	453	227
Rye Bay	700	234	85	15	26	39	10	197	92	197	74	141

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

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	-	-	14	36	17	1	-	-	-	-	2	-
	W	-	-	-	12	1	15	-	2	-	-	5	-
Climping Beach	E	-	-	-	20	3	-	-	-	-	-	6	-
	W	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	8	21	12	-	-
Worthing Beach	E	-	-	19	46	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	W	-	-	1	-	1	15	7	2	3	2	-	3
Telscombe Cliffs	E	-	2	8	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	7	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Splash Point	E	-	-	15	62	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Beachy Head	E	19	5	22	24	3	-	-	-	-	-	6	-
	W	6	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	-

During the spring and summer counts exceeding the WeBS were 193 at Pagham Hbr on 7 Apr, 20 there on 10 May and 46 at Rye Hbr on 1 Apr. Inland there were single birds at Pulborough Brooks on 23 Apr, over Wisborough Green on 5 May and an unusual six at Waltham Brooks on 21 Jun. During the BBS a total of 19 was recorded from two of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 16 at Thorney Island on 26 Apr. The first signs of return passage were 127 at Pilsley Island on 16 Jun.

In the autumn numbers were generally high, with a maximum at Thorney Island of 450 on 17 Aug. Several counts exceeded the WeBS, with 150 at Pagham Hbr on 31 Jul and 88 there on 29 Oct, 215 at Rye Hbr on 19 Jul rising to 280 on 23 Sep and 350 on 17 Oct, and 150 at Pett Level on the 3rd. There were up to 45 at Cuckmere Haven throughout the autumn. Inland, there were single birds at Amberley Wild Brooks on 12 Jul, Pulborough Brooks on 15 Aug, Arlington Res on

the 20th and Bewl Water on the 29th and two at Weir Wood Res on 10 Oct. The albino bird seen in Pagham Hbr for the past three years was seen intermittently from 10 Aug until the end of the year.

In the last two months of the year numbers exceeding the WeBS were 100 at Pett Level on 27 Nov, 105 at Rye Harbour on the 20th and 160 there on 3 Dec. The maximum at Newhaven Tide Mills was 56 on 18 Dec and at Cuckmere Haven it was 31 on the 10th. [CJRB]

Common Sandpiper

Actitis hypoleucos

Fairly common passage migrant; very scarce in winter. Has bred at least once. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The WeBS counts for the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1	1	2	1	8	1	46	71	20	5	8	2
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	4	2	-	-	-
Bracklesham Bay	-	nc	nc	-	1	-	nc	-	3	-	-	-
Pagham Hbr	-	-	1	-	1	1	2	1	2	nc	-	-
Arun - South of Arundel	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	3	1	-	-	2
Arun Valley	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
Brooklands Worthing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Ardingly Res	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	2	nc
Newhaven	-	1	-	-	-	-	nc	nc	-	-	nc	-
Ouse Valley	--	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	1	1	-
Barcombe Res	-	-	-	-	2	-	3	-	1	1	-	-
Arlington Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	10	3	-	1	-
Bewl Water	-	-	-	-	nc	nc	2	9	1	1	-	-
Darwell Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	4	-
Rye Bay	-	-	1	-	2	-	22	37	6	1	-	-

Birds were recorded in every month. The approximate minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
7	5	6	42	67	11	117	116	55	16	6	4

During the first winter period single birds were noted across the county: on 6 and 25 Mar at Pagham Hbr, 25 Jan at Littlehampton, 3 Jan at Coombes, 17 and 30 Jan at Pulborough Brooks, 22 Feb at Lewes Brooks, 13 Feb at Newhaven Hbr, 3 Feb at Pett Level, and 13 Mar at Rye Hbr. At Piddinghoe, a pair was noted on 16 and 30 Jan and at Warnham LNR, a single bird on 25 Feb, and again from 12 to 21 Mar. The highest count in the period was three on the R Adur by the cement works at Upper Beeding in January (undated).

Numbers increased with the spring migration but counts remained low; the highest were six at Arlington Res on 1 May, five at Thorney Island on 30 Apr and four at Weir Wood Res and Pett Level on 2 May; 63% of records were of single birds, with records of up to three birds from 25

coastal and inland sites. However, from mid-July there was an obvious build-up of numbers with the arrival of post-breeding migrants and eight at Rye Hbr on 14 Jul and ten on the 17th were the harbingers of more to come.

The highest counts in August were no less than 25 at East Guldeford Level on the 14th, a monthly maximum (undated) of 15 at the cement works and 12 at Arlington Res. Again, over 40% of records were of single birds. There were fewer records in the autumn and second winter periods; 68% consisted of single birds. The highest counts were nine at Arlington Res on 9 Sep, four at Pulborough Brooks the same day, four at Darwell Res on 20 Nov and a monthly maximum of five in September at the cement works. There were only three records in December: two birds for the month at the cement works, two in the Lower Arun Valley on 18 Dec and two on Lewes Brooks on 27 Dec. [WEC]

Spotted Sandpiper

Actitis macularius

Very rare vagrant.

An adult at Swanbourne Lake (Arundel) on 10 Jun (RJC) was only the fourth record for the county, the previous records being at Weir Wood Res in August 1974, Barcombe Res in November 1977 and Darwell Res in September 2004. The record has been accepted by BBRC. [DHH]

Green Sandpiper

Tringa ochropus

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

This species was recorded from 57 tetrads embracing mainly the wetland habitats in the southern parts of the county and major reservoirs elsewhere. 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	-	-	6	10	-	5	19	30	8	12	9	7
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	-	-	-
Bracklesham Bay	-	nc	nc	-	-	-	nc	-	-	1	-	-
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	nc	-	1
Chichester GP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Arun Valley	-	-	-	2	-	2	7	14	-	1	-	1
Weir Wood Res	-	nc	-	1	nc	-	6	7	3	3	3	4
Ouse Valley	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	1
Barcombe Res	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-
Wadhurst Park	nc	nc	3	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	-	-
Rye Bay	-	-	1	5	-	3	5	4	3	4	4	-

The 1% threshold level for a site of national importance for this species is nine birds. While only one of the WeBS sites – Arun Valley in August - qualifies on the basis of the dated WeBS counts, there were three sites in the county which did qualify on the basis of counts on other dates, as shown below:

	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Pulborough Brooks	-	11 on 4 th	12 on 18 th	-
Weir Wood Res	9 on 28 th	10 on 23 rd	10 on 24 th	16 on 9 th
Rye Hbr	12 on 27 th	15 on 1 st	11 on 25 th	-

Pulborough Brooks is part of the Arun Valley and Rye Hbr of the Rye Bay WeBS sites.

Unfortunately, the WeBS counts are not truly representative of numbers in the county. 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
No. of birds	17	3	14	34	6	37	71	64	35	24	16	21
10-yr average	18	14	16	23	4	23	70	95	44	21	17	18

Birds were recorded in every month at Rye Hbr. Until June the majority of sightings were of one or two birds except for five on 17 Apr. But monthly peak counts later were as shown in the above table. Elsewhere, the species was recorded at Pett Level in all months except February and May and at Pulborough Brooks but not in February, March nor May.

The start of the return passage was marked by a count of eight at Pulborough Brooks on 26 Jun, 12 at Rye Hbr on the 27th and nine at Weir Wood Res on the 28th. The largest number seen was 16 at Weir Wood Res on 9 Sep. The majority of sightings in the second winter period were of one or two birds but six were seen at both Weir Wood Res on 5 Dec and East Guldeford Level on 9 Dec. [RJE]

Spotted Redshank

Tringa erythropus

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

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	5	6	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	2	3	3
Chichester Hbr	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	2
Pagham Hbr	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	nc	-	1
Newhaven	-	-	-	-	-	-	nc	nc	1	-	nc	-

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
10	6	6	5	10	1	5	6	11	8	9	6

In the first winter period, there were up to eight in Chichester Hbr, including three at Chidham, at least one in Pagham Hbr and a single bird at Rye Hbr. Many of these wintering birds were

present through February, but numbers in Chichester Hbr dwindled to three by early March and all had departed by the 20th. It seems reasonable to assume that singles at Pagham Hbr on 12 Apr and at Fishbourne Channel (Chichester Hbr) two days later were spring migrants, not lingering winter birds. Spring passage was more marked than last year, with a further three birds in April (at Sidlesham Ferry, Horse Eye Level (Pevensey) and Lydd Ranges) and up to ten in May including the ones at Sidlesham and Pevensey lingering from late April and five at Pulborough Brooks on the 2nd. The last spring bird was one past Splash Point (Seaford) on the 5th.



Spotted Redshank, Pagham Harbour, August 2011 (Dorian Mason)

A typically early returning bird was seen at Pett Level on 21 Jun, marking the start of autumn passage but no more were seen until early July when there were single birds at Sidlesham Ferry on the 6th and 10th, one at Rye Hbr on the 13th, another at Sidlesham Ferry on the 24th, another at Pett Level on the 29th and one at Pagham Hbr on the 30th. Only six were recorded in August, at the usual coastal sites; all were singles apart from two at Pagham Hbr from the 28th into early September. Either one of these, or a different bird, remained at Pagham Hbr through most of

September being joined by a second bird on the 24th, and then three others (making a total of five) on the 27th. Six others were seen during September, all singles, at Thorney Deepes, Fishbourne Channel, Pulborough Brooks, Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven), Eastbourne and The Midrips. Up to nine were noted during October, four of which were at Pagham Hbr on the 30th, with up to three birds being seen there through much of the month.

In the second winter period, eight birds were seen in November at the main wintering sites (three at Thorney Deepes, two elsewhere in Chichester Hbr and two at Pagham Hbr) and another single at Rye Hbr. Numbers fell to a maximum of six in December (up to four in Chichester Hbr and singles at Pagham and Rye Hbr, and two at Thorney Deepes), much the same as last year. Apart from the brief May influx at Pulborough Brooks it was rather a disappointing year for this elegant wader. [JC]

Greenshank

Tringa nebularia

Fairly common passage migrant; very 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	24	22	14	19	5	3	40	107	107	69	43	25
Chichester Hbr	24	22	14	16	2	3	39	86	99	68	43	25

During the first winter period the largest numbers were, as usual, at Thorney Deepes (Chichester Hbr), with peak counts of 19 on 21 Jan and 19 Feb. Elsewhere in Chichester Hbr three were at East Chidham on 22 Jan, five were at Emsworth Marina on 12 Feb, and there were singles at Fishbourne Channel and Nutbourne throughout the period. Away from the Chichester Hbr area the only other record was a single bird at Pagham Hbr.

Numbers at Thorney Deepes remained in double figures through to early May, peaking at 17 on 23 Apr and 21 on 2 May, making it difficult to determine when spring passage started here. Elsewhere, one at Barcombe on 12 Mar and two at Pagham Hbr three days later were probably the first spring migrants followed by two at Horse Eye Level (Pevensy) on 27 Mar. The next birds were not seen until 9 Apr, when one was at Pulborough Brooks. Birds were then seen regularly through the remainder of April and May, mostly at coastal sites but also inland, especially at Pulborough Brooks. The highest count during spring was 21 at Thorney Deepes on 2 May. Other notable counts during April and May included six at Weir Wood Res on 30 Apr, 3 E at Worthing during April, and 8 E at Splash Point (Seaford) in 14 hr on 30 Apr, five at Horse Eye Level (Pevensy) on 1 May (increasing to seven the following day), and six at Rye Hbr plus four at Pulborough Brooks on 2 May. Thus the main passage period was during the end of April and the first few days of May. Small numbers were seen on scattered dates throughout June, making it difficult to determine when the last spring birds departed; three at Thorney Island on 17 Jun were probably these.

A single bird at Pulborough Brooks on 27 Jun was probably the first returning autumn bird, followed by 18 at Thorney Deepes three days later. During the autumn, birds were recorded at a wide variety of coastal and inland sites, particularly in the western harbours where the highest concentrations were found at Thorney Deepes where they increased to 39 by 14 Jul, 63 by 28 Jul, 86 by 15 Aug and a county high count of 102 by 15 Sep. Elsewhere during the autumn, double figure counts were recorded at Rye Hbr (11 on 29 Jul), East Head (Chichester Hbr) (11 on 3 Sep),

Pagham Hbr (30 on 18 Sep) and Emsworth Hbr (21 on 29 Sep). Significant inland counts included seven at East Guldeford Level on 14 Aug, eight at Weir Wood Res on 21 Aug and six there on 6 Sep.

During the second winter period, numbers at Thorney Deepes dropped from 62 on 15 Oct to 41 on 12 Nov and 24 on 12 Dec. Smaller numbers were seen at various other locations in Chichester Hbr, including three at Emsworth Marina and six at Chidham in early December, but the only bird seen away from Chichester Hbr was a single bird at Pagham Hbr on 5 Nov. [JC]

Wood Sandpiper

Tringa glareola

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

The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept
4	4	4	4	9	2

The first sighting was on 23 Apr at Weir Wood Res, nine days earlier than the 10-year average date of 2 May, followed by another there the next day, whilst single birds were also recorded in April at Pulborough Brooks and Bracklesham Bay. During May there were up to two at Pulborough Brooks and two at Horse Eye Level (Pevensy) where the last spring bird was seen on 13 May

Autumn passage apparently started on the 28 Jun when three birds were recorded at Pulborough Brooks and another at Rye Hbr. During July singles were seen at Rye Hbr and Pett Level early in the month and a juvenile was seen on the 30th at Pagham Hbr. In August, a single bird was noted at Pagham Hbr on the 3rd and it or another was present until the 20th. Elsewhere, up to two were recorded at Pulborough Brooks, Weir Wood Res, Pett Level and Rye Hbr. The last bird of the year was recorded at Weir Wood Res on 2 Sep, 27 days earlier than the 10-year average date of 29 Sep. [RJE]

Redshank

Tringa tetanus

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce non-breeder in summer. Rare away from coast. 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	1814	2091	1177	213	76	132	532	1777	1311	2444	2242	1730
Chichester Hbr	1395	1514	780	79	26	53	450	1581	988	2137	1714	1392
Pagham Hbr	132	386	211	46	5	32	53	189	144	nc	349	57
Lower Adur Estuary	91	77	13	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	57	78	69	97
Rye Bay	120	53	100	46	13	35	27	7	120	138	87	112

As usual, the highest counts were recorded in Chichester Hbr, where numbers exceeded the 1% national threshold of 1200 in the autumn and winter months (except March and September)

and also in August. Why numbers should then drop in September is not clear, but these numbers demonstrate that this site continues to hold nationally significant numbers of this species. There were few significant counts away from these sites during the first winter period but, at Newhaven Tide Mills 60 on 16 Jan and 53 on 13 Feb and 52 at East Guldeford Level on 16 Jan were all notable.

Spring passage was unremarkable. Very few were seen at the seawatching sites, 5 E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 21 Apr being the only notable count.

Breeding or attempted breeding was recorded from at least 13 sites this year, with an 'anxious pair' at The Midrips indicating a possible 14th. This is a notable increase over the nine sites last year and shows encouraging signs of a slow recovery as a breeding species in the county. At Chichester Hbr there were eight pairs at Thorney Deepes (nine last year), plus single pairs at Pilsey Island, North Stakes Island (which raised one young) and West Chidham. About 19 pairs bred at Rye Hbr (six more than last year and similar to 2009) but success, in terms of chicks fledged, was not noted. Nearby at Pett Level, a single pair failed. In the Arun Valley, there were five pairs at Pulborough Brooks, four pairs at Amberley Wild Brooks and two pairs at Waltham Brooks, but there was no breeding attempt at Arundel WWT. At Sidlesham Ferry there were three pairs (one pair raised two young) and on the new scrapes at Medmerry there were one or two pairs. Elsewhere there were two pairs at Lewes Brooks and a single pair on Horse Eye Level (Pevensy).

Non-breeding birds started returning in late June, with numbers at Thorney Deepes building to 140 on the 30th, 380 by 14 Jul and the traditional autumn peak of 1097 by 15 Aug before numbers reduced as birds moved on elsewhere. Other notable autumn/winter counts, additional to the WeBS counts above, included 65 at Rye Saltings on 18 Sep, 117 on East Guldeford Level on 18 Sep, 57 on the lower Adur on 30 Sep, 43 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 23 Oct, 78 on the lower Adur on 26 Oct, 69 at the same site on 25 Nov and 53 at Rye Hbr on 18 Dec. [JC]

Turnstone

Arenaria interpres

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce non-breeder in summer. Rare away from coast. 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	949	454	336	159	47	97	54	152	159	251	385	412
Chichester Hbr	227	160	70	11	17	60	32	25	12	172	121	230
Pagham Hbr	140	220	130	65	15	-	16	86	83	nc	155	69
Climping	460	nc	47	57	10	37	nc	41	nc	32	40	85
Arun - South of Arundel	90	50	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	36	-
Lower Adur Estuary	25	-	47	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	18	12	21	22
Glyne Gap	-	9	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	8	-	nc	-
Rye Bay	7	15	23	26	5	-	6	-	38	31	10	6

The WeBS counts in both winter periods show a slight recovery in numbers from the fall in 2010.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total	4809	4883	3572	2737	2945
Jan-Apr	2642	3461	2437	1755	1897
Oct-Dec	2167	1422	937	982	1048

There were reports for every month from coastal sites. Once again, the larger concentrations were at the western harbours. During the first winter period notable counts, additional to the WeBS counts, included 220 at Climping Gap on 6 Feb, 220 at nearby Littlehampton on the 19th, 224 at Glyne Gap on 16 Feb and 251 there on 16 Mar. The WeBS count of 460 at Climping on 18 Jan was the highest such count ever at this site. During the spring there were 47 double-figure counts with maxima of 81 at Pagham Hbr on 22 Mar and 54 at Goring on the 21st. Although observers at the principal seawatching sites spent many hours recording they did not detect any significant numbers migrating in spring, the highest monthly totals in May were 36 E at Worthing and 29 E at Splash Point with maxima at both sites occurring on 2 May of 20 E and 16 E respectively.

During the summer months numbers were typically low with a peak count of 88 at Pagham Hbr on 14 Aug. In the autumn, high non-WeBS counts included 120 at Pagham Hbr on 11 Oct, 77 at Selsey Bill on the 20th, 65 at Worthing on the 13th and 50 at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on the 19th.

During the second winter period numbers increased slightly with counts from 34 coastal sites. There was a count of 50 E in ¾ hr at Worthing Beach on 10 Nov and 40 at Glyne Gap on 15 Oct. The only inland record was of a single bird at Pulborough Brooks in the early morning on 3 Oct. [WEC]

Grey Phalarope

Phalaropus fulicarius

Very scarce autumn and rare winter visitor; usually occurs after gales.

At least six birds were recorded in the autumn, most between 14 and 24 Sep, presumably as the result of western storms. Two were seen in Brighton Marina from 14-17 Sep (ADW, IJW *et al.*) on which date two reduced to one and one, seen further along the coast at Splash Point (Seaford) the same day, was quite possibly the other. On the 15th one flew west in Pagham Hbr (OM) while one at Prinsted (Chichester Hbr) on 16-17th (SJN, SP *et al.*) was possibly the same bird. Another was noted at Chichester GPs from 22-25 Sep (AH, CWM *et al.*) when it disappeared below the surface having probably been taken by a pike and one was at Prince's Park Lake (Eastbourne) from 24-27 Sep (ADW, IJW *et al.*). Finally, one was noted on 24 Oct from Birling Gap (JFC). These bring the total this century to at least 47, with monthly arrival dates as follows:

	Jan	Feb		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly arrivals	2	1		1	15	7	15	6

Of the 350 records since 1948, all have been at or adjacent to the coast except for 14 which have been inland (further than 5 km from the coast), usually on suitably sized water bodies but including Amberley Wild Brooks (2009) and Colemans Hatch (Ashdown Forest) (1999). [JAH]



Grey Phalarope, Eastbourne, September 2011 (Les Bird)

Pomarine Skua

Stercorarius pomarinus

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

After two lean years (with average spring numbers of just 49) the 2011 minimum spring total of 211 was well above the 10-year rolling average of 155.

The monthly totals for eastward passage recorded at the main seawatching sites were as follows:

	Apr	May	Total	Peak
Monthly minima	75	136	211	
Selsey Bill	32	76	108	32 on 1 st May
Worthing Beach	30	67	97	43 on 1 st May
Splash Point	67	102	169	63 on 30 th Apr
Birling Gap	9	51	60	15 on 3 rd May

The first record of the spring was of 2 E at Birling Gap on 17 Apr. The main spring movement occurred on 30 Apr and 1 May. On the first of those dates the numbers recorded were: Selsey Bill 28; Worthing Beach 28; Peacehaven 45; Splash Point (Seaford) 63 and Birling Gap 9. The following day the figures were: Selsey Bill 32; Worthing Beach 43; Splash Point 18 and Rock-a-Nore (Hastings) 4. Birds were then recorded daily until 9 May with the largest count being 35 off Splash Point on the 7th. The last spring migrant was one at Splash Point on 29 May.

There were no more records until two sightings in September and a further three in October (involving six birds) as follows: in September 1 W at Splash Point on the 5th and 1 E at Climping on the 26th, in October 3 E at Splash Point on the 10th, 1 E at Birling Gap and 1 E at Worthing Beach on the 24th and 1 W also at Worthing Beach on the 28th. [DHH]

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 numbers of birds shown in the following tables were compiled on the assumption that the highest number of birds recorded at any costal site on any day was the minimum in the county on that date and that birds seen on subsequent days were different. Only those birds for which a flight direction was recorded are included in the tables.

The spring total of 261 showed an increase over the 2010 figure of 200. The overall total of 356 for the year was also an increase over that in 2010 (259) but still resulted in reducing the 10-year rolling average from 447 to 434.

The approximate monthly totals for which a flight direction E or W was recorded were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	3	-	7	150	107	10	1	18	33	30	-	-
No. of days	3	-	4	19	14	7	1	6	11	9	-	-
Peak no.	-	-	4 E	24 E	41 E	3 E	-	6 W	9 W	8 E	-	-
Peak date	-	-	29 th	21 st	5 th	15 th		6 th	18 th	9 th	-	-

Monthly totals during the period of spring passage were again low although it was encouraging that the total for May was 107 against just 52 in 2010.

There were four records during January involving 1 E at Worthing Beach on both the 5th and 11th, one offshore at Telscombe Cliffs on the 7th and 1 E at both Telscombe Cliffs and Splash Point on the 27th. There were no records in February and only three in March including 4 E at Splash Point on the 29th. Spring passage was sporadic and occurred largely between the third week of April and the first week of May. During this period there were eleven days on which double-figure counts (all of birds moving east) were recorded as shown below:

	April							May			
	17	18	19	21	22	23	30	1	4	5	7
Selsey Bill	1	4	11	1	11	2	12	10	11	20	6
Worthing Beach	-	1	4	-	-	-	2	8	3	9	4
Splash Point	13	16	13	24	13	10	20	6	12	41	11
Birling Gap	-	16	20	-	-	5	-	-	5	-	2

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

		Mar	Apr	May		Aug	Sep	Oct
Selsey Bill	E	1	58	72		3	2	3
	W	-	-	-		1	21	6
Worthing Beach	E	1	10	39		1	-	3
	W	-	-	-		-	8	4
Splash Point	E	5	133	92		-	1	7
	W	-	-	-		-	-	
Birling Gap	E	-	76	29		1	-	24
	W	-	-	-		6	-	4

From mid-April through towards the end of September breeding Black-headed Gulls and Sandwich and Common Terns bringing food back to their colonies at Rye Hbr attracted the attention of Arctic Skuas with up to four birds lingering offshore on many occasions.

There were no records during November and the last for the year was of a single bird offshore at Rustington on 11 Dec.

There were four records of single birds away from the open sea during the year: Chichester Hbr on 26 Jul, Pett Level Pools on 9 Oct; Pagham Hbr on 23 Oct and well inland at Weir Wood Res on 6 Sep. [DHH]

Great Skua

Stercorarius skua

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

In common with both Pomarine and Arctic Skuas the numbers of Great Skuas recorded on spring passage were below average. However, the estimated minimum annual total of 228 was not only almost double that of 2010 (116) but also above the 10-year rolling average of 187. This annual total is, however, somewhat misleading as half of the records occurred in a two day period in October.

The minimum monthly totals of passage birds are shown below. The figures do not include records of birds lingering offshore or those for which no direction was recorded.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	7	2	2	31	28	13	4	2	3	132	3	1
No. of days	7	2	2	18	10	5	4	2	3	9	3	1
Peak no.	-	-	-	4	11	6	-	-	-	61	-	-
Date	-	-	-	17 th	2 nd	18 th	-	-	-	10 th	-	-

The first record of the year was of 1 W at Lancing on 1 Jan with further single birds during the month at Selsey Bill, Climping and Birling Gap with two offshore at Worthing Beach on the 27th. In February the only records were of singletons at Splash Point on the 10th and Telscombe Cliffs on the 26th. Numbers in March were similar with 1 E and one offshore at Selsey Bill on the 6th and 1 E at Worthing Beach on the 6th and the 10th. Spring passage was light and although this species was recorded on 18 days in April and 10 days in May, the monthly totals were only 31 and 28 respectively with the latter figure being boosted by 11 E at Selsey Bill on 2 May. Unlike 2010, the species was recorded in both June and July including 6 E at Birling Gap on 18 June.

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Peak
Selsey Bill	E	2	-	1	13	18	2	-	1	1	21	-	-	15 E on 9 Oct
	W	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	9	1	-	
Climping Beach	E	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	4 E on 10 Oct
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	
Worthing Beach	E	2	-	2	1	14	-	2	1	-	2	-	-	3 W on 21 Sep
	W	-	-	-	1	-	4	-	1	-	2	1	-	
Splash Point	E	-	1	-	25	3	1	-	1	1	36	-	1	25 E on 10 Oct
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	
Birling Gap	E	-	-	-	18	2	6	1	-	1	122	-	-	61 E on 10 Oct
	W	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	

Numbers in both August and September were low with a total of just five records of single birds. October started in similar fashion until the 9th when there were 52 E at Birling Gap followed by a county one-day record of 61 E at the same site the next day. The figures for that period are given in the table below and show that the movements were very largely in the east of the county suggesting that the birds had passed to the south of the Isle of Wight on their eastward passage.

	Selsey Bill	Climping	Worthing	Splash Point	Birling Gap	Rock-a-Nore	Rye
9 Oct	15 E, 2 W			6 E	52 E	4 E	14 W
10 Oct	1 E	4 E, 1 W	1 E	25 E, 1 W	61 E	2 E	
11 Oct	4 E, 2 W			4 E	6 E		

Numbers were again low for the remainder of October with a peak count of 6 W at Rye on the 24th. There were just three records of single birds in November: 1 E at Rock-a-Nore (Hastings) on the 11th; 1 E at Worthing Beach on the 21st and 1 W at Selsey Bill on the 29th. The last record of the year (the only one for December) was 1 E at Splash Point on 31 Dec. [DHH]

Sabine’s Gull

Xema sabini

Rare autumn vagrant.

Following a gap of four years, there were seven records of birds wandering along the coast; all were juvenile/first winter birds making this the best showing since the great storm of October 1987 when at least 19 were recorded. The first sighting was of one at Birling Gap on 12 Sep (RHC) which flew west. What was possibly the same bird was then seen at Brighton Marina on the 15th and 16th (JE, IJW, DRW *et al.*). One was then present in the Newhaven/Seaford area from 17 to 22 Sep (LRB, ARK *et al.*) and at Cuckmere Haven on the 23rd (MRE, RLI *et al.*) which from photographs was considered to be different to the Brighton Marina bird. Meanwhile, one, probably different, was seen at Thorney Deepes (Chichester Hbr) on the 17th (CBC, AH, SP). Finally, one was seen flying east past Selsey Bill (SRF) and Worthing Beach (CEH) on 11 Oct. Assuming that four birds were involved, the total since 1990 moves on to 23 of which 16 have been this century. Monthly sightings during this period have been as follows:

	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Monthly arrivals since 1990	1	2	6	9	5

The unusual spring sighting above was on 30 Apr 1995 at Worthing Beach. Prior to that, one was recorded on 3 Jan 1979 and another on 11 May 1980, also at Worthing Beach. [JAH]



Sabine's Gull (Juv.), Brighton Marina, September 2011 (Nick Bond)

Kittiwake

Rissa tridactyla

Common but very localised breeding species; fairly common or common winter visitor and passage migrant. Rare away from coast. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Birds were recorded during every month of the year with 68% of all records being either relating to movement with direction or seawatching observations and monthly summaries. Monthly totals from three of the principal seawatching sites, with hours watched (rounded) were as follows:

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	94	11	5	12	40	1	-	-	-	29	4	-
	W	1117	308	6	7	16	13	-	10	17	181	62	58
	Hr	23	21	45	174	124	47	-	17	55	29	14	13
Worthing Beach	E	513	45	19	11	16	2	4	-	-	29	9	11
	W	957	348	10	-	9	-	25	47	3	703	26	144
	Hr	31	16	34	57	55	14	24	25	26	31	14	24
Birling Gap	E	29	30	288	1070	-	-	-	-	-	120	-	22
	W	107	35	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Hr	21	12	24	61	29	-	-	-	-	12	-	4

Although counts were also recorded at Climping Beach, Telscombe Cliffs and Splash Point they involved only relatively smaller numbers and were shorter and discontinuous periods in the year. This species is not countable at Splash Point once breeding pairs have settled on the cliffs, as birds are constantly flying to and fro, or are on the cliffs, sea or perches. During the first winter period there were 18 day counts of 100 or more, the highest of which were an exceptional 3000 on 24 Jan offshore between Shoreham Hbr and Widewater (Lancing), 754 W past Selsey Bill on 1 Jan in 2¼ hr, 736 on 17 Jan at Rock-a-Nore (Hastings) in 2 hr either feeding or moving west and 500 W on 27 Jan past Worthing Beach while also fishing.

Breeding was confirmed at the two traditional sites of Newhaven and Seaford Head cliffs. At the former site 30 apparently occupied nests (AONs) were recorded on 21 May but were apparently abandoned later in the season. A coordinated count from opposite ends of the cliffs at the latter site recorded 1128/1134 AONs on 16 Jun which compares favourably with the 830 recorded in 2010. However, there was no record of productivity or breeding success.

In the autumn and second winter periods, movements and numbers were much lower than in the first winter period: there were only three day counts in excess of 100, all in mid October; 614 W past Worthing Beach in 1½ hr on 21 Oct, 190 W through Rye Bay on the 24th and at Selsey Bill, 90 W and 21 E in 4 hr on the 23rd. The only inland record for the year was of one at Weir Wood Res on 16 Jan. [JAH]

Black-headed Gull

Chroicocephalus ridibundus

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

Maximum monthly counts at Weir Wood Res and Bewl Water are shown below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	May	Oct	Nov	Dec
Weir Wood Res	2200	3500	1800	-	300	164	1200
Bewl Water	25,350	15,500	5600	14,500	-	-	24,450

The only 5-figure counts during the year were those shown above. The only 4-figure counts during the first winter period were 1800 at Pevensy Levels on 12 Feb and the same number at Henfield Levels on the 16th, 1421 at E Chidham on 22 Feb and 1200 at Partridge Green. There were 850 at Thorney Island on 24 Feb, the year's highest count there. During March, apart from 1000 at Funtington in the west on the 6th, most records came from the east as birds gathered at breeding sites, with a high count of 750 at Pett Level on the 31st.

On 15 Jan 3000 moving west off Hastings in 2 hr was an interesting record, otherwise the monthly totals at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

		Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Peak counts
Selsey Bill	E	44	288	35	-	-	-	48 E on 10 Apr
	W	-	6	64	-	7	-	
Climping	E	309	-	-	-	-	-	85 E on 18 Mar
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Worthing	E	553	340	195	4	7	35	85 E on 18 Mar
	W	17	43	41	1	29	-	

Between April and June the highest counts, other than at breeding colonies, were 250 at Thorney Island on 22 Apr and 200 at Ladywells (Combes) on the 4th.

An estimated minimum total of 1700 pairs bred at Rye Hbr but in contrast to last year, success was low and few young fledged. At Pett Level 175 pairs nested, there were 30 at New Lake (Chichester GP), ten at North Stakes Island and seven nests at Arundel WWT. Breeding was also recorded at South Stakes Island, Dell Quay, Sidlesham Ferry Pool and Jury's Gap.

During July to September the highest count was 1750 at Arlington Res on 22 Aug with just three other counts over 500. In the last three months of the year the only 4-figure count was of 1000 at Warnham LNR on 5 Dec and the only one over 500 was 740 at Pagham Hbr on 3 Nov, the maximum for the year there. [CJRB]

Little Gull

Hydrocoloeus minutus

Fairly common passage migrant, most numerous in spring. Very scarce non-breeder in summer and scarce in winter. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The minimum total for the year was 773, an average figure; a high proportion of these (63%) passed offshore in just three days in April. The monthly totals are shown below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	1	1	31	596	114	1	-	1	8	14	7	-
No. of days	1	1	14	14	8	1	-	1	13	3	4	-
Inland total	-	1	4	1	5	-	-	-	5	-	1	-

One at Selsey Bill on 8 Jan, the first record of the year, was followed by one at Weir Wood Res on 21 Feb. In March, single birds called in at Weir Wood on the 15th, at Pulborough Brooks on the 27th, and three (an adult and two first winters) were at Ivy Lake (Chichester GP) from the 9th through to 1 Apr. Passage began on 20 Mar with two past Splash Point (Seaford). The busiest days were 17-19 Apr, when a minimum of 490 went through. The peak day was the 19th when 303 passed Beachy Head, 239 of them during the evening. There was a much smaller wave from 3-5 May, with a maximum of 52 off Worthing on the 5th and a final two past Splash Point on the 8th. The monthly totals at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

		Mar	Apr	May
Selsey Bill	E	8	23	28
	W	-	-	-
Worthing	E	-	15	69
	W	-	-	-
Splash Point	E	23	363	75
	W	-	-	-
Beachy Head	E	-	458	3
	W	-	-	-

Elsewhere, three were at Ivy Lake on 3-4 May (an adult and two first summers), one at Weir Wood on the 7th, but none from 8 May until 11 June, when there was one at Pett Level. The next

record was a single bird at Rye Bay on 28 Aug. During September single birds called in briefly at Ivy Lake, Pagham Hbr, Weir Wood Res, Bewl Water and Pett Level and at least two lingered at Arlington Res from the 6-12th. Autumn passage was barely noticeable; the only records were 1 W at Selsey Bill on 21 Oct and 12 W at Rye Hbr on the 24th. In November there were single birds at Warnham LNR on the 3rd, Worthing on the 9th, 4 W off Rottingdean on the 11th and the final record of the year was a first winter at Shoreham on the 14th. [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 approximate minimum monthly totals are given below:

	Total	Inland	Highest number recorded
Jan	205	5	125, Pagham Hbr, 25 th
Feb	353	9	240, Pagham Hbr, 19 th
Mar	779	62	280, Rye Hbr, 25 th
Apr	1020	9	348, Rye Hbr, 11 th
May	311	23	170, Rye Hbr, 1 st
Jun	408	7	234, Rye Hbr, 1 st
Jul	461	2	250, Stoughton, 9 th
Aug	473	2	453, Fishbourne, 28 th
Sep	583	0	150, Pagham Hbr, 28 th
Oct	254	0	130, Pagham Hbr, 27 th
Nov	80	2	45, Pagham Hbr, 6 th
Dec	224	3	120, Pagham Hbr, 27 th

In the first winter period numbers at Pagham Hbr built up to 240 on 19 Feb, but the largest groups elsewhere were 35 at Pett Level on 25 Jan and 16 at Rye Hbr on the 25th. Birds were regularly seen on the Downs north of Chichester, particularly in March, with 19 at Compton on the 9th and 20 at West Dean Woods on the 19th, though in Chichester Hbr the maximum was four. A few turned up at inland reservoirs, with two at Bewl Water on 15 Jan and 10 Mar, two at Weir Wood Res on 17 Jan (with one there on 26 Feb and 7 Mar), and two at Arlington Res on 11 Mar. There were three at Arundel WWT and one at Warnham LNR on 3 Mar and more unusual sightings of up to five at Hastings during January and one in Brighton on the 19th.

By late March the focus shifted as usual to the east of the county as birds gathered at breeding sites, with counts of 280 at Rye Hbr on the 25th and 227 at Pett Level the next day, though there were still 110 at Pagham Hbr on the 7th. Birds were regularly recorded in seawatching logs, the monthly totals at the principal sites were as given in the table below.

About 100 pairs bred at Rye Hbr, compared with the record of 185 in 2010, but at Pett Level 26 pairs built nests but all of them deserted. In Chichester Hbr two fledged young seen on 5 Jun were thought too small to have been raised anywhere but locally. At Thorney Island birds were present from April through to July with a peak of 210 on 15 Apr. Birds were regularly seen on the western downs during the spring, with eight at Stansted Park on 8 May and the same number at West Marden on the 15th, possibly the same birds. Two called in at Pulborough Brooks on 4 Jun, Barcombe Res on the 12th and Arundel WWT on the 19th.

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	5	2	9	14	4	-	-	3	3	4	3	5
	W	10	1	6	16	5	-	-	9	15	23	1	-
Worthing Beach	E	7	-	12	100	7	3	10	-	-	4	-	5
	W	1	-	4	40	3	-	95	3	12	5	3	3
Telscombe Cliffs	E	-	1	2	31	-	3	2	-	-	2	-	-
	W	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	1	3	-	1
Splash Point	E	-	-3	21	140	27	8-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-



Mediterranean Gull (Juv.), Rye Harbour, July 2011 (Peter Wilson)

As usual, the highest counts during the autumn came from the Chichester Hbr area. The maximum at Thorney Island was 54 on 9 Jul, and 250 at Stoughton on the same date was a high count that far inland. In August an influx in the Fishbourne Channel began with 104 on the 9th and built up to a county record total of 453 on the 28th, with 95 still there on 8 Sep. Other large gatherings in the same area at this time may have involved some of these birds, with 90 at West Chidham on 12 Aug and 70 at East Chidham on 3 Sep. Two lingered at Arlington Res from 7-28 Aug, and 75 on the beach at Climping on 16 Sep was a high count for this site. At Selsey Bill birds were lingering offshore for most of September and October with a peak of 41 on 28 Sep. The only significant counts in the east were three at Newhaven on 20 Sep, 14 at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 16 Oct and six at Hastings on the 6th.

In November and December nearly all birds were in Pagham Hbr, with smaller numbers along the West Sussex coast, including 34 at Climping on 19 Dec, 11 at Goring on the 30th, one at

Widewater (Lancing) for most of December and up to two at Shoreham on the 8th and 20th. The largest groups anywhere else were eight at Glyne Gap on 23 Dec and three at Pett Level on the 20th. Inland, single birds were at Pulborough Brooks on 15 Nov, Weir Wood Res on the 20th and Warnham LNR on 24 Dec, with two at Arlington Res on the 27th. [CJRB]

Common Gull

Larus canus

Very common winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce in summer; bred until 1963 and breeding attempted again since 2006. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

This species was recorded from 195 tetrads, c.18% of the county total. The massive nocturnal gull roost at Bewl Water once again dominated the records during the first winter period with 76,020 counted there on 15 Jan, 52,560 on 7 Feb and 36,250 on 10 Mar. Elsewhere numbers were considerably smaller with 801 at Chichester Hbr on 22 Jan and 2500 on 20 Feb, 450 on Goring Beach on 18 Feb, 453 offshore at Worthing on 28 Feb, 700 at the Adur Estuary (Shoreham) between 1 and 20 Mar with 1500 there on 26 Mar. Four hundred and fifty were present on Weir Wood Res on 25 Feb and 800 were on the sea at Beachy Head on 19 Jan.

A small easterly movement was detected during spring seawatching at Selsey Bill, Worthing and Splash Point (Seaford), as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Selsey Bill	-	-	6 E	45 E	21 E
Worthing Beach	-	-	39 E	36 E & 3 W	63 E
Splash Point	3 E	41 E	26 E	2 E	5 E

Numbers decreased progressively during spring; the highest count was 1500 at the R Adur (Shoreham) on 26 Mar, 350 at Patching Hill on the 28th, 227 at Pett Level on the 31st, 200 at Ladywells (Coombes) on 14 Apr and 148 on Pett Level on 3 May, though the latter had dwindled to three by 9 May. During the BBS a total of only two was recorded from two of the 147 1-km squares surveyed. The only record of breeding came from Rye Hbr where a pair produced young that failed to survive.

Records increased during the summer and autumn months with 230 seen in the sandpit at Minsted (Midhurst) on 24 Sep, with 300 there on 2 Oct and 200 on 29 Oct, while 245 were found at West Dean (W Sussex) on 21 Sep. One hundred and fifty were roosting on the airfield at Thorney Island (Chichester Hbr) on 26 Jul and 380 were at Waterhall (Brighton) on 31 Oct.

With the return of winter, numbers climbed further with 329 at Goring Beach on 18 Dec, 500 at Cuckmere Haven on 27 Dec, 450 at Pett Level on 22 Nov and 950 on 20 Dec. The largest counts were, however, once again made at the Bewl Water nocturnal gull roost with 6500 on 15 Dec. During the SWBS a total of 650 was recorded from 13 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 390 feeding in a sheep pasture at Hayes Fm (Udimore) on 10 Nov. [MVS]

Lesser Black-backed Gull*Larus fuscus*

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor; scarce (mainly immature) in summer and scarce breeder. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

2010: Breeding was confirmed with a nest with young at an inland location in TQ23U on 27 Jun 2010.

2011: This species was recorded from 164 tetrads, c.15% of the county total. Roost counts produced the largest numbers during the first winter period with 410 recorded at Glyne Level on 19 Mar and 75 at Rye Hbr on 29 Mar. Other records included 50 at Pagham Hbr on 3 Jan, 27 at Weir Wood Res on 12 Mar, 20 on Pevensey Level on 16 Jan and 25 on Pett Level on 16 Feb. No records indicating passage migration were received and only very small numbers were noted passing Selsey Bill in the first winter period (maximum 7 W on 6 Feb) and in August (2 W on the 14th).

During the BBS a total of 33 was recorded from 12 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of ten at Rustington on 18 Apr. Small groups were found during the breeding season with 11 at Fishbourne (Chichester) on 26 Apr, seven at Warnham LNR on 26 Apr and ten there on 29 Jun, five at Barns Green (Horsham) on 1 May, eight at Bewl Water on 7 May and six at Hove on 1 Jun. Seven were counted on Pevensey Levels on 12 Jun, six on Pett Level on 15 Apr, ten at Scotney Court GP on 15 May and six at Camber on 21 May.

Breeding was confirmed in ten tetrads and was probable in a further eight, all at coastal sites. Three pairs were noted on the roof of Hove Town Hall on 1 Jun, several pairs were reported breeding in the centre of Eastbourne, two chimney pot nests were seen in Seaford (on dates from 13 May to 14 Jun) and fourteen pairs nested at Rye Hbr. Fledged young were seen at Bognor Regis on 1 Jul, four with adults on factory roofs at Littlehampton on 10 Jul and three fledged young at Bexhill on 13 Jul.

Summer and autumn found 20 in Shoreham Hbr on 11 Oct, 12 at Weir Wood Res on 4 Aug with 24 there on 3 Oct, 15 at Bewl Water on 24 Oct, 35 at Rye Hbr on 18 Sep with 12 there on 29 Oct. Fifteen were at Pett Level on 21 Sep, 60 in Arlington Res on 26 Aug, 210 at the nocturnal gull roost at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 18 Sep and 21 on West Langney Lake (Eastbourne) on 19 Sep. Twelve were at Scotney Court GP on 17 Jul with 50 there on 14 Aug.

During the second winter period small gatherings were found with 34 on the beach at Climping on 5 Nov, 19 at Worthing on 18 Nov, 20 at Shoreham Hbr on 20 Dec, 70 at Weir Wood Res on 13 Dec and 300 at Cuckmere Haven on 27 Dec. During the SWBS a total of 22 was recorded from three of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 19 at East Worthing on 18 Nov.

Three records of the sooty-black mantled *intermedius* race were received. Three out of eleven Lesser Black-backed Gulls seen at Chichester Hbr on 26 Apr were considered to be of this race, one was reported from Pagham Hbr on 30 Jul and there was a further record from Hastings on 8 Oct. [MVS]

Herring Gull*Larus argentatus*

Very common resident; status uncertain as passage migrant; winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

2010: Breeding was confirmed from only three inland sites: a nest with young recorded at Crawley Manor Royal on 27 Jun and six apparently occupied nests were recorded on 11 Apr at

another site in Crawley where a nest with young was recorded on 21 Jul. At Burgess Hill two apparently occupied nests were recorded on 7 May and a nest with young on 7 Jun.

2011: This species was recorded from 451 tetrads, c.43% of the county total. At coastal sites fewer large counts were recorded than in recent years during the first winter period, although 400 were seen at Scotney Court GP on 14 Feb, 1000 drifted west past Beachy Head on 27 Feb, 5500 were at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 19 Mar and 1100 were at Rye Hbr on 24 Jan with 1500 there on 29 Mar. Inland, 3590 were recorded at Bewl Water on 15 Jan, with 3290 on 4 Feb and 1560 on 10 Mar. At Warnham LNR 450 were counted on 4 Jan and 2000 there on 30 Mar.

During the BBS a total of 1491 was recorded from 77 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 117 at Laughton Place (Ringmer) on 19 Apr. Large flocks were recorded in a number of locations, 400 at Scotney Court GP on 15 May, 524 roosting on Bewl Water on 7 May, 459 in Bexhill on 8 Apr with 326 there on 30 Jun, 800 at Warnham LNR on 9 Apr with 750 there on 18 May and 2300 on 7 Jun. Offshore, 550 were observed around a fishing boat from Worthing on 24 Apr.

Breeding was confirmed in 59 tetrads and was probable in a further 27. Breeding behaviour was first noted at Hastings and Mile Oak (Portslade) on 4 Apr and birds seen on nests were first noted at Hove on 6 Apr. The great majority of nest sites were located in urban areas along the coast, as is usual for this species. Adults were recorded on nests on house roofs at Felpham (Bognor Regis) on 14 May and three nests were noted on a warehouse in East Preston on 22 Apr. Adults on nests were also reported from Littlehampton, Worthing, Lancing, Brighton, Eastbourne, Ore (Hastings), Pett Level, Rye, Rye Hbr and Camber. A nest with young was noted in Worthing on 4 Jun and other reports of nests with young were from Old Salts Fm (Lancing), Portslade, Hove, Eastbourne and Bexhill. Fledged young were recorded from conurbations all along the coast from 1 Jun when two were seen on a house roof in Angmering until 17 Aug when three were at Malling Down (Lewes).

Inland, adults were recorded on nests in Crawley on 11 May with young on nests there on 30 Jun. Adults on nests were at Hailsham on 29 Apr with young on nests there on 7 Jun. Nests with young were recorded at Uckfield on 15 Jun. Breeding records included a nest on a raft in Chichester GP with three large chicks noted on 23 Jun and 41 pairs that nested at Rye Hbr.

Large gatherings built up during the summer and autumn months. At Park Fm (Findon) 1000 were counted on 29 Sep, 1200 were offshore at Worthing on 19 Aug, 400 were present at Warnham LNR on 1 Aug with 1000 present on 22 Aug, 1000 on 26 Sep and 600 on 25 Oct. At the nocturnal roost at Glyne Gap (Bexhill), 8000 were recorded on 18 Sep and 1800 at Rye Hbr on 18 Sep, with 3000 roosting there at dusk on 5 Oct. Large congregations were retained with the return of winter, though this year most such records were from inland waters. At Bewl Water 1650 were counted on 8 Dec and 2480 on 29 Dec, while at Warnham LNR 1000 were present on 9 Nov and 2000 on 5 Dec. At the coast 340 were recorded at Roedean (Brighton) on 3 Dec, 300 were at Cuckmere Haven on 27 Dec, 300 at Pett Level on 27 Dec, 300 at Rye Hbr on 18 Nov and 300 on Scotney Court GP on 18 Dec. At Glyne Gap the importance of nocturnal roost counts was emphasised by the record of only 300 during a daytime count on 23 Dec, but 10,000 at a nocturnal roost count on 20 Dec. During the SWBS a total of 1101 was recorded from 59 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 108 at Bexhill on 22 Dec.

There were four accepted records of *Larus argentatus argentatus*, two from the Cuckmere Valley on 26 Nov and 28 Dec (DC), one from Belle Tout (Beachy Head) on 5 Dec (DC) and one from West Rise Marsh (Eastbourne) on 18 Dec (DC). [MVS]

Yellow-legged Gull*Larus michahellis*

Scarce to fairly common but localised visitor; mainly in late summer and autumn. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The highest counts and minimum monthly totals from the 15 almost entirely coastal sites, demonstrating seasonal variation in numbers, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	7	-	4		28	7	22	9	3	5
Chichester Hbr	-	-	1		1	-	3	-	-	-
Pagham Hbr	6		1		23	5	12	2	2	-
Glyne Gap	-	-	-		-	-	5	6	-	-
Beachy Head	-	-	-		4	1	1	-	1	-
Other sites	1	-	2		-	1	1	1	-	5

Six were recorded in Pagham Harbour on 15 Jan, with two there on 22 Jan, one in Chichester Hbr on 8 Mar and one at Sidlesham Ferry on 12 Mar. One was found at Fishbourne (Chichester) on 22 Mar and one on the R Adur (Shoreham) on 29 Mar. In the east, the only record for the first winter period was of one at Scotney Court GP on 16 Jan.

As is usual for this species most records for the summer came from the area of the Chichester and Pagham Harbours. In the Fishbourne Channel (Chichester Hbr) an adult was seen on 19 Jul and one was recorded on 30 Aug. At Bracklesham Bay four were counted on 6 Aug. At Pagham Hbr 21 adults with two juveniles were present on 14 Jul, with 20 there on 30 Jul, five on 19 Aug and four on 29 Aug. In East Sussex, one was recorded at Arlington Res on 28 Aug, while at Beachy Head four juveniles were seen on 9 Jul and single juveniles recorded on various dates between on 13 Jul and 13 Aug.

During the autumn period, most were again found around the western harbours but numbers decreased after September. Three adults were present in the Fishbourne Channel on 8 Sep, 12 birds were in Pagham Hbr on 18 Sep with two there between 12 and 20 Oct and one at Sidlesham Ferry on 31 Oct. Away from this area, an individual was found at Brooklands (Worthing) on 7 Sep and an adult at Arlington Res on 7 Sep, while further east a juvenile was recorded out to sea at Beachy Head on 1 Sep. Five were counted at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 18 Sep, with six there on 16 Oct.

During the second winter period one was at Pagham Hbr on 1 Nov, a second winter bird was identified well inland at Warnham LNR on 9 Dec, four were counted at Arlington Res on 27 Dec and a first winter bird was seen at Beachy Head on 6 Nov. [MVS]

Caspian Gull*Larus cachinnans*

Very rare winter visitor.

The four accepted records this year came from two locations and bring the county total to 13. In the Cuckmere Valley there was a first winter bird on 8 Jan and a third winter bird on 23 Dec (DC). At West Rise Marsh (Eastbourne) a second year bird was present on 10 Apr and a third winter bird on 4 Dec (DC).

Although separation from the closely related Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* and Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis* can be challenging, these four records suggest that the species may be more numerous in Sussex than was previously thought and that the careful study of gull flocks can be rewarding. [DHH]

Iceland Gull

Larus glaucoides

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

The only record for the year was a bird seen sitting on the rocks below Seaford Head at 07.15 for a while before flying off eastwards on 23 Apr (LC, MRE, RCS et al.). The total for this century moves on to 29, an average of 2.4 per year, although there were none in either 2004 or 2010, so it was a relatively poor year for this species. [JAH]

Great Black-backed Gull

Larus marinus

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce in summer; mostly non-breeder but very scarce breeder since 2000. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

This species was recorded from 109 tetrads right along the coast with only very occasional records from inland sites. Throughout the year, it was most regularly recorded at the four sites of Chichester Hbr, Selsey Bill, Pagham Hbr and Rye Hbr and the monthly maximum counts at these sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chichester Hbr	7*	7*	14	11	16*	20	14*	30*	1*	5	9*	5
Selsey Bill	92**	3	41**	5	7	-	-	-	3	3	-	-
Pagham Hbr	300	40	100	100	69	73	156	100	100	100	53	200
Rye Hbr	139	-*	4	-*	4	-*	150	1*	184	105	38	33

*additional records were present only with no count; **counted offshore

During the first winter period the largest totals were in January of 300 at Pagham Hbr on the 9th and 141 there on the 23rd and at Rye Hbr there were 139 on the 13th. At Hastings, 135 at Rock-a-Nore on 18 Mar was the highest there this year. Numbers at Pagham Hbr held up right through the year with at least 100 being frequently recorded. Unfortunately, at two sites, Chichester and Rye Harbours, a number of records were for 'present only', with no count. A nocturnal roost at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) held 210 on 19 Mar.

During the BBS a total of only seven was recorded from five of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of five at the inland site of Westergate (7 km from the coast) on 11 Apr. Breeding was confirmed in six tetrads and was probable in a further three, suggesting that there is a small but sustainable breeding population in the county. The first record of nest building was on 6 May at Rye Hbr and an occupied nest was recorded at Newhaven on the 16th. A nest with young was recorded at Bexhill on 30 Jun and on 1 Jul three chicks were recorded from a nest at St Mary Magdalene School in Brighton while fledged young were recorded at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 3rd. The only other record with breeding details was of a pair which nested again at the

Martello Tower (Rye Hbr) producing two chicks. Other nesting pairs were reported at Shoreham, Newhaven, Bexhill, Rye GC and possibly on a warehouse roof near Brooklands (Worthing).

During the spring and summer there were only two counts of 150 or more in July: 150 at Rye Hbr on the 13th and 156 at Pagham Hbr on the 26th. Numbers increased in September with 450 seen on the 18th at the nocturnal roost at Glyne Gap. During the second winter period the highest numbers were recorded at Cuckmere Haven with 400 on 31 Oct and 500 on 17 and 31 Dec. A count of 60 at Roedean (Brighton) on 3 Dec was described as a much larger number than usual.

Inland, Great Black-backed Gulls were restricted mainly to the larger water bodies at least 5 km from the coast such as Chichester GP, Weir Wood, Barcombe, Arlington, Bewl Water and Darwell Reservoirs. Here the highest counts were of 86 at Arlington Res on Feb 26 and 35 there on 28 Aug while 37 were noted at Chichester GP on 18 Dec. During the SWBS a total of only 14 was recorded from six of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of five at Oving on 15 Nov, 7 km from the coast but adjacent to Chichester GP. [LAW]

Little Tern

Sternula albifrons

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

One flew east at Worthing on 1 Apr; this, with one at Pagham Hbr on the same date in 2006, was the earliest recorded in the county and nine days earlier than the 10-year average arrival date. One was seen at Climping on 3 Apr, two at Pilsey Island (Chichester Hbr) on the 6th and birds were then recorded daily after the 9th.

Analysis of the daily counts from each of the seawatch locations suggests a minimum of 642 birds flew east during the spring comprising 207 in April and 435 in May. The total and May figures are slightly higher than those recorded for the past two years although the total is remarkably close to the average of 632 recorded for the springs 1985-2010. As usual this passage was mostly recorded at Selsey Bill, as shown in the following table of totals of eastbound birds at three of the principal seawatching sites.

	Apr	May	Total	No. per hr watched	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	197	341	538	1.8	102 E on 4 May (13¼ hr)
Worthing Beach	18	169	187	1.7	35 E on 3 May (5¾ hr)
Splash Point	80	241	321	1.6	157 E on 5 May (13½ hr)

Other notable counts from Selsey Bill were 72 E on 3 May (13 hr) and 91 E on 5 May (13½ hr). Smaller numbers were seen from other coastal sites and despite regular watching from Telscombe Cliffs this species was not recorded passing during these months. Likewise smaller numbers were seen away from the regular seawatch locations with maxima of eight in Pagham Hbr on 19 Apr, six in Chichester Hbr on 2 May, 16 fishing at Cuckmere Haven on 2 May and 19 at Rye Hbr on 9 May. Two at Weir Wood Res on 7 May were the only inland records for the year.

On 17 Jun there were four apparently occupied nests at West Chidham but no breeding attempts were seen at other sites in Chichester Hbr. In Pagham Hbr seven pairs nested but there was no evidence of successful fledging. For the third year running decoys and sound recordings were used at Rye Hbr in an attempt to encourage nesting of this species. As a result at least seven pairs nested on Flat Beach ridges and hatching success was high. However, a combination of Kestrel

predation and perhaps poor weather meant that survival of chicks here was very low; by late June all activity at this site had ceased. In addition, a further three pairs attempted to nest on Flat Beach Level. Although vegetation cover made observation difficult, activity at this location did last into mid-July and it is possible that some chicks survived to fledging.

During the summer high counts included 30 at Pagham Hbr on 25 Jun and 34 at Rye Hbr on 26 Jul. Regular observation at Pilsey Sands produced monthly maxima of 52 on 15 Jul, 16 on 2 Aug and five on 3 Sep. As usual autumn coastal passage was insignificant; the last was at Pilsey Sands on 24 Sep, one day earlier than the 10-year average departure date of 25 Sep. [JAN]

Gull-billed Tern

Gelochelidon nilotica

Rare vagrant.

An adult at Pulborough Brooks on 8 May (GB, JSW) was one of only five recorded in Britain during 2011. This was the first in Sussex since 2005 and the record has been accepted by BBRC. [DHH]

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
22	99	2	1	12	26	1

The first were 7 E at Splash Point (Seaford) and 3 E at Beachy Head on 19 Apr. This was the same first date as 2010 and just two days later than the 10-year average arrival date. Analysis of the daily counts from each of the seawatching locations suggests a minimum of 118 birds flew east during the spring comprising 21 in April and 97 in May; this was better than the average of 91 recorded for the springs 1985-2010. The other three spring sightings were single birds at Pett Level on 27 Apr, at Chichester GP between 1 and 5 May and at Weir Wood Res on 1 May. As the following table shows the main passage occurred between 2 and 5 May with additional high counts, not shown in the table, of 15 E and 17 E at Selsey Bill on 3 May (11 hr) and 5 May (13½ hr) respectively, and 17 E at Splash Point on 4 May (12 hr).

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	4	82	2	-	2	-	-	28 E on 2 May (11½ hr)
Worthing Beach	-	15	-	-	-	2	-	9 E on 5 May (6½ hr)
Splash Point	19	48	-	nc	nc	4	1	25 E on 5 May (13½ hr)

Single birds were feeding offshore at Selsey on 21 and 28 Jun and one was seen at Thorney Island (Chichester Hbr) on 24 Jul. Thereafter the species was recorded on 19 dates during a mediocre autumn passage. Most records involved one or two birds but in September there were four at Pagham Hbr on the 8th, up to four at Chichester GP between the 19th and 24th and six at Winchelsea Beach on the 29th. The last, 1 E at Splash Point on 9 Oct, equalled the 10-year average departure date. [JAN]

White-winged Black Tern*Chlidonias leucopterus*

Rare vagrant.

There was only one sighting: an adult bird at Chichester GPs on 2-3 May (TEG-P *et al.*). This brings the county total since 1873 to a conservative 48, including ten pre-1960. Decade totals from 1960-2009 have been seven, twelve, ten, seven and two with only one since the end of 2009. Monthly arrivals of the 45 dated records since 1873 have been as follows:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Monthly arrivals	2	11	5	4	15	7	1

The earliest date was 18 Apr 1959 and the latest 3 Oct 1984. [JAH]

Sandwich Tern*Sterna sandvicensis*

Scarce breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant; rarely recorded in winter. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Small numbers were recorded on eight dates during January and February from coastal and harbour locations in West Sussex, the highest number being four at Selsey Bill on 30 Jan. Two flew east at Splash Point (Seaford) on 9 Feb and early eastbound birds at Selsey Bill were four on 2 Mar and eight on the 6th. The first birds arrived at Rye Hbr on 10 Mar but numbers rapidly increased to 25 on the 12th, 40 on the 13th, 70 on the 14th, 150 on the 21st, 200 on the 24th and 250 on the 29th. Extraordinary numbers were recorded there in April with the peak counts being 800 on both the 9th and 14th, 1200 on the 21st and 1800 on the 25th.

Analysis of the daily counts from the principal seawatching locations suggests a minimum of 3103 birds flew east during the spring comprising 156 in March, 1925 in April and 1022 in May. Although more were recorded than in 2009 this total was lower than the average of 4231 for the springs 1985-2010 and continued the trend of smaller numbers recorded in the past few years. Details of the easterly spring passage totals were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Total	No. per hr in Apr/May	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	59	1495	1015	2569	8.4	356 E on 2 Apr (6¼ hr)
Worthing Beach	60	724	383	1167	9.8	210 E on 2 Apr (1½ hr)
Telscombe Cliffs	3	191	101	295	11.2	38 E on 2 May (1½ hr)
Splash Point	80	1372	469	1921	9.2	328 E on 2 Apr (4¾ hr)
Beachy Head	25	921	168	1114	12.1	379 E on 2 Apr (5 hr)

There were five days when more than 200 eastbound birds were recorded at any site; details of these are shown in the table below (time to nearest hour watched in brackets). The variation in counts is interesting and notably the highest number seen at Hastings occurred on days when other sites recorded very little passage.

Despite an increase to 850 nests at Ternery Pool (Rye Hbr) the number of successful fledglings was very low. One island, with 500 nests, was completely predated by Mediterranean Gulls, rats or stoats. On 6 Jun ten were apparently sitting on nests on South Stakes Island (Chichester Hbr) but no chicks were later recorded.

	2 Apr	19 Apr	25 Apr	1 May	5 May
Selsey Bill	356 (6)	97 (10)	52 (6)	57 (13)	244 (14)
Worthing Beach	210 (2)	108 (4)	4 (1)	37 (8)	134 (7)
Brighton Marina	100 (?)	165 (?)	nc	28 (?)	nc
Telscombe Cliffs	31 (2)	29 (1)	3 (1)	5 (1)	12 (2)
Splash Point	328 (5)	220 (6)	nc	16 (14)	174 (14)
Beachy Head	379 (5)	161 (7)	0 (1)	nc	18 (4)
Hastings	nc	nc	284 (2)	272 (2)	nc

With a large colony at Rye Hbr it is not surprising that the highest summer counts were also from this area; at least 1500 were noted on 27 Jun and 1000 on 26 Jul. Although breeding success there was low other sites were clearly more successful as the flock of c.1000 resting on the grass near Pett Pools on 31 Jul comprised about 50% juveniles. Thereafter counts were considerably lower with the highest being 83 at The Midrips on 2 Aug, 100 at West Chidham (Chichester Hbr) on 15 Aug and 75 at Pagham Hbr on 20 Sept. The regular small roost on the fields at Goring Gap reached a peak of 20 on 16 Sep.

With the exception of 222 W at Hastings (in just over 1 hr watching) on 24 Aug the late summer or autumn coastal passage was light. The monthly totals and peak movements from sites regularly recorded in autumn revealed no obvious patterns and 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	28	105	6	19	4	93	6	143	2	2	46 W on 11 Sep (5¾ hr)
Climping	-	10	-	4	3	17	10	21	4	3	10 W on 24 Sep (½ hr)
Worthing Beach	19	39	88	115	75	187	44	97	7	23	41 W on 26 Aug (2 hr)

Most records for November and December came from sites in Chichester Hbr where the species was seen on 14 dates with high counts of 17 on 3 Dec, seven on 12 Nov and five on 4 Dec. Elsewhere there were late records of two in Rye Bay on 3 Nov, 1 W at Climping on 9 Nov, 1W at Worthing on 27 Dec and 1 E at Beachy Head on 28 Dec.

There were an unusual number of records from inland locations; one at Arlington Res on 2 May and the rest in September comprising two at Ardingly Res on the 9th, one at Arlington Res on the 12th and at Weir Wood Res there were seven on the 17th and three on the 27th. [JAN]

Common Tern

Sterna hirundo

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

One flew east at Brighton Marina on 14 Mar, three days earlier than the previous county record (in 2005) and 12 days earlier than the 10-year average arrival date of 26 Mar. A further four birds were recorded passing eastward during March. After 1 Apr the species was recorded on most days throughout the spring and summer. The seawatching logs suggest a minimum of 767 flew east during spring comprising five in March, 380 in April and 382 in May. The largest movements were in early May and comprised 108 E at Selsey Bill on the 2nd (11½ hr) and 346 on the 3rd (11 hr), 201 E at Worthing also on the 3rd (5¾ hr) and 118 E at Splash Point (Seaford) on the 5th (2 hr).



Common Tern, Rye Harbour, July 2011 (Roger and Liz Charlwood)

Coastal passage, however, is better described under Common/Arctic Tern. Eighty flew NE over Pevensey Levels on 23 Apr and the same number at Ivy Lake (Chichester GP) on 3 May were the largest groups away from the coast. Counts at Rye Hbr included 270 on 21 Apr, 250 on the 25th and 160 on the 29th.

At Rye Hbr about 235 pairs nested from the second week in May. A count on 4 Jun found 105 pairs at Ternery Pool and at least 130 pairs on the Quarry. Fledging success, however, was very low; only small numbers reached this stage late in the season. At Pett Level two pairs bred and the rafts at Weir Wood Res supported four pairs but the evidence suggests that no young fledged. Elsewhere in East Sussex there were no recorded nesting attempts. In West Sussex there were 11 apparently occupied nests (AON) on North Stakes Island (Chichester Hbr) and 35 on South Stakes Island on 5 Jun but on the 17th there were only eight AONs on South Stakes Island but a further eight AONs at West Chidham. Just four fledged young were reported from Chichester Hbr on 29 Jul. The annual breeding survey in Pagham Hbr counted eight pairs but again none nested at New Lake (Chichester GP). At Arundel WWT a pair raised a chick which was predated and at Warnham LNR two pairs nested and four chicks were present on 28 Jun.

The highest counts at Rye Hbr during the summer and autumn were 500 at dawn on 27 Jun and 230 on 30 Jul. Regular counts at Pilsey Island (Chichester Hbr) produced monthly maxima of 12

on 30 Jun, 40 on 29 Jul, 220 on 18 Aug and 35 on 7 Sep. Most of the autumn records were from coastal sites and the details from the regularly recorded locations in West Sussex were as follows:

	Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct		Total		Peak movement
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	
Selsey Bill	-	41	1	233	7	128	-	-	8	402	83 W on 4 Aug (3 hr)
Worthing Beach	17	16	11	157	5	23	2	-	37	196	145 W on 13 Aug (1½ hr)

Additional counts were 157 W at Hastings on 24 Aug (1¼ hr) and 81 W at Selsey Bill on 11 Sep (5¾ hr). About 50 birds were recorded during October with 12 at Pett Level on the 2nd and 10 W at Beachy Head on the 9th being the highest counts. The last autumn birds were singles at East Head (Chichester Hbr) on 23 Oct and two at Bewl Water on 9 Nov; these were notably later than the 10-year average departure date of 25 Oct. [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. Six flying east at Splash Point (Seaford) on 10 Apr were the first and two days earlier than the 10-year average arrival date. Thereafter the species was recorded on 14 different days between 19 Apr and 8 May with the highest counts being 16 E at Hastings on 2 May, 20 E at both Rustington and Splash Point (Seaford) on 3 May and 25 E at Selsey Bill on 7 May. The only inland spring record was three at Weir Wood Res on 2 May.

After one at Weir Wood Res on 31 Jul small numbers were seen on 37 different days throughout the autumn. The only count greater than four was of 15, mainly juveniles, at Brighton Marina on 18 Sep. In November one was feeding close inshore at Beachy Head on the 2nd and two were at Shoreham on the 9th, this being a fortnight later than the 10-year average departure date of 26 Oct. [JAN]

Roseate Tern

Sterna dougallii

Very scarce passage migrant and non-breeding summer visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

With just five adult birds recorded this was another poor year for this species. Singles flew east at Selsey Bill on both 4 and 7 May (JA), one was initially photographed at Rye Hbr on 19 Jun (SM) and noted subsequently on three other dates until 2 Jul (SS) and, finally, two were seen fishing at Pilsey Sands (Chichester Hbr) on 18 Aug (CBC). [JAN]

Common/Arctic Tern

Sterna hirundo/paradisaea

Most Common or Arctic Terns passing seawatching sites remain unidentified as “Commic” Terns. This summary does not include birds specifically identified as either of these species and therefore this needs to be read in conjunction with the counts for these species.

Analysis of the counts from each of six locations where detailed daily logs were maintained suggests that a minimum of 7153 birds flew east during spring comprising none in March, 1401 in April, 5725 in May and 27 in June. This total is marginally better than the previous two years and close to the average of 7960 for the springs 1985-2010. In keeping with recent years, the early arriving birds were specifically identified as Common Terns and the first “commics” were 1 E at Telscombe Cliffs and 2 E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 2 Apr. The easterly spring passage totals at five of the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total	No. per hr in Apr/May	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	-	757	4589	-	5346	17.9	1168 on 3 May (11 hr)
Worthing Beach	-	60	1642	2	1704	15.1	740 on 4 May (5¼ hr)
Telscombe Cliffs	-	121	277	nc	398	15.3	230 on 3 May (1¼ hr)
Splash Point	-	904	4831	-	5735	28.5	1330 on 5 May (13½ hr)
Beachy Head	-	755	1593	25	2373	26.4	1009 on 3 May (3¾ hr)

The peak passage was clearly in early May and this is also demonstrated in the following table showing details of the seven days when more than 300 eastbound birds were recorded (time watched, to the nearest hour, in brackets).

	19 Apr	2 May	3 May	4 May	5 May	7 May	8 May
Selsey Bill	104 (10)	732 (12)	1168 (11)	1013 (13)	964 (14)	457 (11)	60 (7)
Worthing Beach	15 (4)	99 (5)	164 (6)	740 (6)	384 (7)	17 (3)	87 (3)
Telscombe Cliffs	22 (1)	26 (2)	230 (2)	0 (1)	16 (2)	nc	2 (1)
Splash Point	206 (6)	273 (5)	801 (7)	1155 (12)	1330 (14)	671 (14)	320 (4)
Beachy Head	317 (7)	234 (4)	1009 (4)	238 (5)	99 (3)	1 (3)	0 (2)

After 8 May very few were recorded and the autumn passage between late July and 11 Oct was again very poor and summarised in the following table. The other seawatch locations recorded very few.

	Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct		Total		Peak movement
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	
Selsey Bill	-	-	2	109	1	15	1	1	3-	125	97 W on 14 Aug (3¾ hr)
Worthing Beach	9	44	12	280	24	222	-	-	45	546	67 W on 17 Sep (2½ hr)

The last were singles passing west at Climping and east at Selsey Bill on 11 Oct; these being two weeks earlier than the 10-year average departure date. [JAN]

Common Guillemot

Uria aalge

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

The minimum total for the year of 1370 was the highest since 2001 and well above the 10-year rolling average of 800. This annual minimum total is rather misleading as the table below shows that almost three quarters of that total were recorded in just three days.

The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	937	226	8	12	14	6	-	1	2	139	7	18
Peak no.	765	105	2	5	3	1	-	1	1	118	3	5
Peak date	31 st	9 th	15 th	28 th	1 st	-	-	-	-	29 th	29 th	31 st

The totals recorded at the main seawatching sites are given in the table below. Some duplication will have occurred due to birds being seen at more than one site or recorded offshore at a site for more than one day so no attempt should be made to total the rows or columns.

	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	31	5	161	4	1	6	-	-	2	-	2	4	3	-	7
Worthing Beach	773	6	53	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	1	3
Splash Point	121	9	4	13	10	-	1	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	5
Birling Gap	54	10	16	3	-	-	1	1	-	5	-	-	2	-	1

The first winter quarter numbers were dominated by 765 E at Worthing on 31 Jan which accounted for over half of the annual total for the county. Other important movements during this period included 70 W at Selsey Bill on 6 Feb and 105 E at Splash Point on 9 Feb. The largest concentration of birds offshore was 60 in Rye Bay on 22 Jan. In the period March to June numbers were low with no double-figure counts. There were no records in July and the only one in August was a singleton in Pagham Hbr on the 30th. Single birds offshore at Selsey Bill on 11 and 17 Sep and another off Winchelsea Beach on 29 Sep were the only records for that month. October figures were again dominated by a single movement this time involving 118 W off Rye on the 29th. Numbers remained low for the remainder of the year with no double-figure counts.

There were a number of records of birds away from the open sea. In Pagham Hbr there were single birds in January and August while two were seen in Shoreham Hbr on several dates in November and December. Further inland there was a singleton on the R Ouse between Piddingham and Newhaven on 21 Nov. [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
Monthly total	2099	3024	19	49	2	2	-	1	1	57	37	40
Peak no.	714 W	1652 E	5 E	34 E	7 E	-	-	-	-	36 W	6 E	10 W
Peak date	6 th	9 th	29 th	28 th	5 th	-	-	-	-	24 th	12 th	23 rd

The minimum total for the year of 5351 was the highest since 2005 and well above the 10-year average of 2835. The annual total was a welcome increase over those for the last five years but numbers do continue to fluctuate from year to year.

The totals recorded at the main seawatching points are shown below but no attempt should be made to add the rows or columns due to probable duplication of sightings between locations.

	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	25	7	815	15	-	15	-	-	-	1	7	2	4	1	10
Climping Beach	33	-	66	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	2
Worthing Beach	292	57	836	4	-	1	1	-	-	7	3	9	12	5	15
Telscombe Cliffs	59	9	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Splash Point	1921	305	362	56	5	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Birling Gap	1723	358	1139	12	3	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	-

During the first winter period the single most significant movement was of 1652 E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 9 Feb on which date there were also 850 E at Birling Gap. There were a further six three-figure counts during this period the largest of which was 714 W at Worthing Beach on 6 Jan, 296 E and 210 W at Birling Gap on 22 Jan, 442 E and 40 W also at Birling Gap on 23 Jan, 600 W again at Birling Gap on 1 Feb and a total of 486 W at Selsey Bill on 5 and 6 Feb. The largest concentrations offshore at this time were 400 off Lancing on 24 and 26 Jan and 200 off Birling Gap and in Rye Bay, also in January. Numbers fell dramatically after 10 Feb and remained low for the remainder of the first winter period. Spring passage was extremely light with just one double figure count of 34 E at Splash Point on 28 April.

There were only two records of single birds in June, none in July and just singles in August and September. Numbers remained low throughout the rest of the year with a peak count of 36 W at Rye Bay on 24 Oct and a peak offshore gathering of 22 in there on 23 Nov.

The only records of this species away from the open sea were single birds in Pagham Hbr on 2 Jan and Brighton Marina on 7 Mar with two in Chichester Hbr on 10 Dec. [DHH]

Little Auk

Alle alle

Very scarce autumn passage migrant and winter visitor.

A single bird flying west past Worthing Beach on 11 Dec was the only record for the year (DIS). This is the first record of Little Auk in Sussex since 2008. [DHH]

Puffin

Fratercula arctica

Rare spring and winter migrant.

There were two records of single birds during the year: 1E at Selsey Bill on 16 Apr (JA, PB, SH) and 1W also at Selsey Bill on 24 Apr (JA, SH *et al.*). Puffins are becoming increasing scarce in Sussex with just 13 this century and none in five of the past 12 years. [DHH]

Auk species

The total of 63,138 reported during the year was over three times that of 2010 and significantly above the 10-year average of 41,022. The table below shows the total numbers which include those for Common Guillemots and Razorbills together with those auks not specifically identified. The figures should not be taken as an accurate assessment of the numbers due to the inevitable duplication of sightings.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	36,934	24,010	281	355	325	30	-	4	13	644	163	379
Peak no.	2406 E	4180 E	73 W	55 E	37 W	4 W	-	-	3 W	118 W	26 W	129 W
Peak date	28 th	9 th	3 rd	4 th	2 nd	22 nd	-	-	28 th	29 th	7 th	21 st

The approximate totals recorded at the main seawatching sites during the year are shown in the table below:

	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	2195	12	5730	110	-	151	2	-	10	14	9	25	22	1	36
Climping Beach	256	2	1776	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Worthing Beach	6031	63	4896	45	-	129	3	-	4	80	4	58	50	6	136
Telscombe Cliffs	4804	11	4109	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Splash Point	6871	314	4152	298	12	30	2	-	-	91	1	-	10	-	13
Birling Gap	5453	789	3927	132	13	-	6	1	-	184	-	-	12	-	1

During the first winter period feeding movements involving birds moving both east and west were recorded from the beginning of January to early February. In this period there were eight dates on which four-figure counts were recorded as shown below:

		Jan					Feb		
		1	2	23	27	28	1	6	9
Selsey Bill	E	2154	73	1230	-	-	-	7	-
	W	-	126	-	-	-	-	2113	-
Climping Beach	E	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	40
	W	-	-	1500	-	-	59	-	-
Worthing Beach	E	213	1950	-	160	713	60	19	6
	W	37	190	-	20	401	420	886	49
Telscombe Cliffs	E	-	292	141	11	2406	33	-	-
	W	17	8	10	69	21	2450	-	-
Splash Point	E	25	113	151	213	34	223	21	4180
	W	55	19	38	1403	208	1098	106	
Birling Gap	E	-	405	-	-	-	-	-	3170
	W	-	135	-	300	-	600	-	150
Rock-a-Nore (Hastings)	E	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	-	1645	-	647	-	-

Numbers dropped significantly after 9 Feb with no three-figure counts during the remainder of the first winter period or during the spring. There were no sightings in July but an intriguing record on 7 Aug involved an adult and a young bird on the sea off Beachy Head which were frustratingly too distant for specific identification.

The only three-figure counts in the second winter period were both in the east of the county: 118 W at Rye on 29 Oct and 129 W at Rock-a-Nore (Hastings) on 21 Dec.

The difficulties of identifying distant auks in flight are well documented and as a result only 17% of all the auks recorded were identified to species. Where specific identification was possible the ratio of Common Guillemots to Razorbills was 1:6. [DHH]

Feral Rock Dove

Columba livia

Common resident.

This species was recorded from 248 tetrads, c.24% of the county total number. In the first winter period there were 22 records of counts exceeding 20 birds with maxima of 80 at Arundel WWT on 2 Feb and 66 at Eastbourne on the 8th. In the spring, there were 21 counts above 100.

During the BBS a total of 556 was recorded from 35 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 113 at Hove on 18 Jun. Breeding was confirmed in 18 tetrads and was probable in a further 44. The first record of birds with an apparently occupied nest was on 17 Apr at Wappingthorn (Steyning) and a nest with young was recorded at Hailsham the same day. Fledged young were recorded at Groombridge on 18 Apr.

The highest count of the year was recorded in the summer, on 28 Aug, when 250 were noted at Newhaven Tide Mills but there were only 16 counts above 20 and there were only 12 such counts in the autumn. Large numbers were similarly scarce in the second winter period; the only significant counts were of 90 at Clayton Windmills on 10 Nov and 95 at Roedean on the 14th and the only record of over 100 birds was of 110 at Arundel WWT on the 15th. During the SWBS a total of 266 was recorded from 24 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 38 at Hastings on 18 Dec. [AHP]

Stock Dove

Columba oenas

Common resident and possible winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Records were received from 454 tetrads throughout the county (c.44% of the county total) nearly 100 more than last year.

In the first winter period, the highest count was 352 during an Atlas visit to a Sussex/Kent border tetrad at Walland Marsh on 2 Feb. As in previous years, good numbers were present at Pett Level throughout the period, peaking at 100 on 16 and 20 Jan, 120 on 15 and 18 Jan, 150 on 27 Jan, 80 on 7 Feb, 120 on 4 Mar and 80 on 9 Mar. Other notable flocks were 70 at Rye Hbr on 4 Jan (possibly from Pett level), 100 at Thorney Deeps on 21 Jan, 80 at Findon on 23 Mar and 150 at Mill Hill (Shoreham) on 27 Apr where the flock was observed feeding in a field sown with linseed.

During the BBS, a total of 164 was recorded from 56 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 12 at Lidsey Lodge (Bognor) on 1 May. Birds were present in a minimum

of at least 342 sites during the breeding season. The first record of a calling male was on 2 Jan at Poundgate (Ashdown Forest) and the first record of pair was on 18 Feb at Ditchling Common. Breeding was confirmed in 49 tetrads by at least 82 pairs. Records of probable breeding were received for 140 tetrads (but some duplication is possible). Forty nests in owl boxes were reported and one nest was discovered in a kestrel box. Out of 31 nests for which breeding details were given, one box contained three chicks or eggs, 25 contained two and five contained just one. In addition, there were three pairs or territories at Pagham Hbr, 12 on the West Sussex Heathlands and two on Ashdown Forest (see pages 244-245).

The first indication of the build up of flocks after the breeding season was of 26 birds at Weir Wood Res on 18 Aug. In September, a flock of 40 was feeding in stubble fields at Thorney Deeps on the 27th. In October a flock of 250 were feeding at Lodge Hill Farm (West Dean) on the 10th. The highest day count at Beachy Head (where in earlier years movements in excess of 500 birds had been seen) was 206 S on 13 Nov, but no other sizeable movements were noted at any site in the autumn or second winter period. Other large concentrations in the second winter period were 100 at High Cross Fm (Uckfield) on 12 Nov, 117 at Birling Gap on 13 Nov, 117 at Pett Level on 1 Dec and 60 at Thorney Deeps on 10 Dec. [CJR]

Wood Pigeon

Columba palumbus

Abundant resident and winter visitor.

This species was recorded from 691 tetrads, c.67% of the county total number. In the first winter period, amongst 41 counts exceeding 100 the highest were 600 at Warnham LNR on 3 Feb, and 500 at Lychpole Hill (Cissbury) on 18 Jan and West Dean Woods on 3 Feb. In spring, there were only ten counts above 100, presumably as birds dispersed to breeding sites, and the only record of note was 1000 at Warnham LNR again on 21 Mar.

During the BBS a total of 4537 was recorded from 146 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 142 at Chichester on 14 May. Breeding was confirmed in 94 tetrads and was probable in a further 231. The first record of courtship was on 3 Mar at Chichester; of nest building on the 12th at Combe Haven; of a nest in use on the 16th at Ladywells (Coombes); and of fledged young on 14 May at Wappingthorn (Steyning). Other records of interest were birds seen nesting on Ashdown Forest on 12 Sep and at Climping on 14 Sep while nine young were seen in a garden in Angmering on 9 Oct and a fresh Wood Pigeon egg was found in the same garden on 13 Oct.

Although 300 were recorded at Weir Wood Res on 11 Oct the first sign of autumn migration was not until the 24th when 120 NW were noted at Rottingdean followed by 850 SW on the 29th. In November, however, larger numbers were recorded: 750 SW at Barcombe Cross on the 2nd were followed by a monthly maximum of 2631 at Pett level on the 6th. Between the 6th and 15th a total of 2436 was recorded during an extended migration watch at Hastings with a peak of 1230 E on the 6th. After a lull, 4100 NW were noted at Barcombe Cross on 12 Nov followed the next day (a peak movement day), by the largest flock of the passage period comprising 6300 moving mostly south at Birling Gap (Beachy Head), 5360 E at North Chase (Ashdown Forest) and 1400 E/NE at Scaynes Hill. Subsequently, after the 15th, apart from a count of 2000 at Pett Level on the 23rd numbers generally did not exceed 450. During the SWBS a total of 7763 was recorded from 117 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with maximum counts of 1485 (of which c.1450 were flying NE) at Scaynes Hill on 13 Nov and 530 at Nutley on the 12th. The highest count in December was 900 at Warnham LNR on the 24th. [AHP]

Collared Dove

Streptopelia decaocto

Very common resident.

This species was recorded from 525 tetrads, c.50% of the county total number. The majority of records (96.5%) were for fewer than ten birds. In the first part of the year, the highest counts were of 31 at Camber on 1 Feb and 29 at Bexhill on the 3rd, both during Atlas TTVs. One sighting of interest was a bird in off the sea at Brighton Marina on 1 May. The highest count of the year and the only record of over 50, came from Boxgrove (Chichester) with 56 on 9 Jun.

During the BBS a total of 431 was recorded from 89 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 23 at West Worthing on 10 Apr. Breeding was confirmed in 57 tetrads and was probable in a further 187. The earliest evidence of breeding activities were of nest building on 25 Jan at Cross-in-Hand, display on 1 Feb at Framfield and an occupied nest on 5 Apr at South Malling. The first record of fledged young was dated 25 Apr at Iford (Lewes). Records of breeding pairs or territories were few: one pair bred at Pett Level and five at Pagham Hbr. Predation by Sparrowhawk was seen at Littleworth on 15 Jul and at Burgess Hill on 1 Aug.

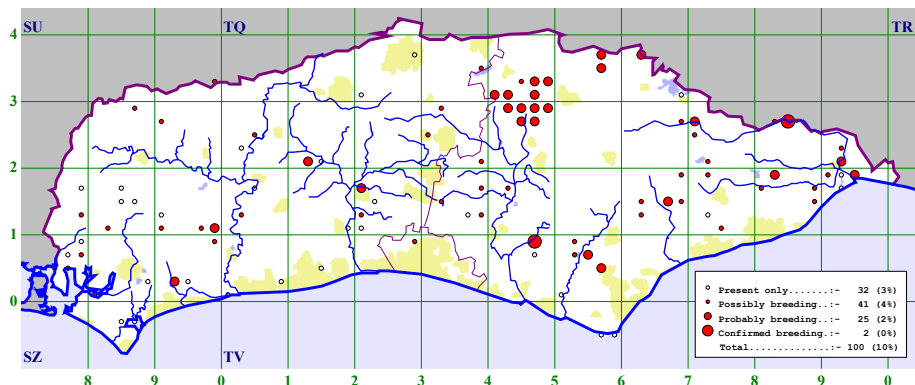
Numbers for the last part of the year were unremarkable: in the autumn the highest count was 22 at Shoreham on the 9 Sep and, in the second winter period, 26 at Portslade on 12 Nov and 24 at Old Salts Fm (Lancing) on 22 Dec. During the SWBS a total of 231 was recorded from 41 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with the maximum being the 26 at Portslade. [AHP]

Turtle Dove

Streptopelia turtur

Scarce but declining summer visitor and passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

This species was recorded from 96 tetrads, c.9% of the county total number. The first arrival of the year was a bird at Tinkers Marsh (Bewl) on 13 Apr, five days later than the 10-year average date. This was one of 19 records for April, mostly of single individuals and only three of two birds. Thereafter, sightings were recorded on an almost daily basis for May (25/31 days) and June (29/30) with highest counts of four on Ashdown Forest on 7 May and six at Pett Level on 16 May.



During the BBS a total of only nine was recorded from seven of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of three at Bayham on 12 Jun. Males were heard purring in 17 tetrads (27

1-km squares) but breeding was confirmed in only two tetrads (six in 2010) and was probable in a further 24 (at least 16 in 2010). There were at least two pairs at Rye Hbr LNR (at least four pairs in 2010), an encouraging eight pairs at Pett Level (three in 2010) and one pair at Chelwood Gate (Ashdown Forest). A pair was recorded at Woodmancote (Emsworth) on 28 Apr and a possible nest was noted at Spring Garden (Ashdown Forest) on 11 Jul.

The highest counts in the summer were only six at Pett Level on 14 Jul and seven there on the 31st. Of the 12 records for September (four in 2010), all were for single birds except for three twos. These included the only sighting for the year at Thorney Deepes (Chichester Hbr) on the 11th, a juvenile at Climping on the 13th and the last sighting of the year of a bird at Cadborough (Rye) on 17 Sep, 12 days earlier than the 10-year average of 29 Sep. As this is a species of high conservation concern, all sightings should be reported with 4-fig or preferably 6-fig grid references, especially if territorial behaviour or other evidence of breeding is observed. [AHP]

Rose-ringed Parakeet

Psittacula krameri

Very scarce introduced resident.

This species was recorded from only eight tetrads and with only 13 records. Most records (7/14) were from the Gatwick area with four near the airport (five on 19 Jan, four on 16 Apr, singles on 25 May and 28 Jul) and three singles at Hookwood (19 Jan, 1 Apr, 28 Jul). During the BBS a total of only two was recorded from just one of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, which was at Hurstpierpoint on 30 Jun. Breeding was not confirmed in any tetrads and was probable in only two.

Single birds were then seen at Salehurst on 25 Aug, Pulborough Brooks on 31 Aug and Ifield on 25 Oct, with several sighted at Crawley on 10 Dec. The last record for the year was an individual seen on three days from 20 Dec at Summersdale (Chichester). [AHP]

Common Cuckoo

Cuculus canorus

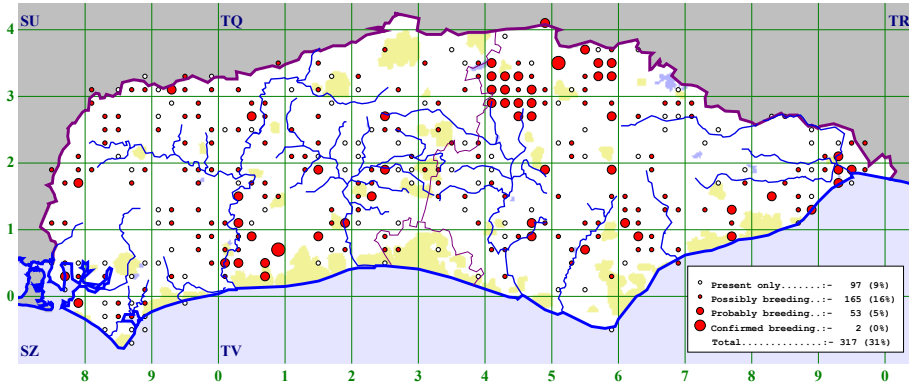
Fairly common but declining summer visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Compared with 2010, there was a slight increase in both the number of sites and the number of birds. The first arrival was recorded on 2 Apr, at Wych Cross (Ashdown Forest), one day earlier than the 10-year average date. On 3 Apr, two were seen in flight at Salehurst (Robertsbridge) and thereafter birds were reported arriving daily from the 6th until the end of the month. By the end of April, 240 reports had been received relating to a total of 284 birds at 173 sites throughout the county (although some duplication is possible). The peak count was 26 on 22 Apr, and on 26 Apr five were recorded at a single location in Chailey.

A large majority of the 677 reports of this species related to the months of April, May and June. At Pett Level, there were 19 bird days in April with one pair on the 25th; in May, 25 bird days with two males and one female on the 20th; in June, at least 20 bird days with a maximum of two on the 10th and 11th. Only 14 reports were received for July, nine for August and three for September.

During the BBS a total of 94 was recorded from 55 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of four at Harting Down on 18 May. Breeding was confirmed at just three sites. One young was fledged in June at Pett Level. On 14 Jul a juvenile, still with downy feathers, was seen looking lost in a Patching garden. However, records were received of probable breeding

by an estimated 65 birds in 54 tetrads, 25% of which were on Ashdown Forest. There were approximately 295 reports of singing males at sites throughout the county, and birds were present in suitable breeding habitat in 161 tetrads. At Pagham Hbr, the annual breeding survey produced records of nine pairs or territories. At Rye Hbr, an estimated seven singing males were present throughout the spring and early summer. At Thorney Island four males held territories with a monthly maximum count for May of three males and two females.



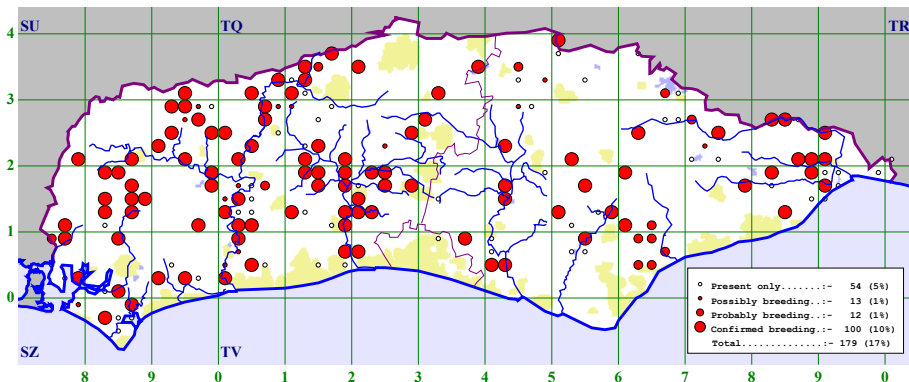
Juveniles were reported at eleven mostly coastal sites. On 8 Aug a juvenile was observed eating cinnabar moth caterpillars at Pulborough Brooks. The last bird was a juvenile seen at Pagham Spit flying across the harbour towards Church Norton (Pagham Hbr) on 10 Sep, 11 days earlier than the 10-year average date of 21 Sep. [CJR]

Barn Owl

Tyto alba

Fairly common resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

Barn Owls were recorded from 176 tetrads and were distributed across the county as shown in the map below.



The monthly totals of casual sightings, excluding visits for ringing and from reserves monitored daily, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	66	47	22	14	16	47	18	7	11	10	25	13

Breeding was confirmed from 97 tetrads and was probable in a further 12. Records of breeding came almost entirely from ringers but many sites known to have been used in the past were not visited. In West Sussex, 79 breeding attempts were recorded, of which 34 were in nest boxes on trees, 42 in nest boxes in barns, one pair nested in a pigeon loft and two in purpose built accommodation in ‘barn conversions’. In East Sussex 36 breeding attempts were recorded, of which one failed, 20 were in boxes on trees, three in boxes on poles and seven in boxes in barns.

Movements reported as a result of ringing were mostly short, as is normal, but a Barn Owl ringed as a chick near Henfield was found alive in a building on Hayling Island. A quite exceptional movement was of a bird ringed as a chick near Loxwood and found freshly dead on a road at Bude (Cornwall).

Four owls were reported dead on roads and one drowned in a cattle trough. A Buzzard was disturbed from a Barn Owl which it had killed and another owl was considered probably killed by a Buzzard. [ABW]

Little Owl

Athene noctua

Fairly common resident.

This introduced and sedentary resident was recorded from 104 tetrads during the year, including many heard rather than seen.

During the first winter period records came from a wide variety of sites throughout the county including many birds continuing to occupy their breeding territories in favoured river valleys and on the Downs. No birds were recorded at Beachy Head during the year and observers noted that this was in contrast to the 1970s when up to five pairs may have been present.

During the BBS a total of four single birds was recorded from four of the 147 1-km squares surveyed. Breeding was confirmed by single pairs in 14 tetrads, a slightly higher number than the recent average of ten, and was probable in a further eight. The first records of confirmed breeding involved nests with young on 14 May at Herstmonceux and the next day at Rodmell. Family parties of up to four, including fledged young, were recorded on 6 Jun at Rottingdean and 8 Aug at Climping. Nesting sites included farm buildings, a Barn Owl nest box, a hole in an oak tree and three birds were seen emerging from a rabbit hole at Udimore on 15 Jul.

During the autumn, post breeding dispersal was evident with two river valleys, two Downland and three other areas having their first records of this species for the year from September onwards. Small numbers of birds continued to be reported to the end of the year including from 16 sites in November falling to three in December. During the SWBS a total of only two was recorded from two of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with single birds recorded at Albourne (Hurstpierpoint) on 21 Nov and another at another site at Hurstpierpoint on 14 Dec. During the year, 83% of records involved just one bird; the highest counts were of five at Willets Fm (Blackham) on 30 Mar and five at Thorney Island on 1 Jul where they were hunting at dusk. [DG]

Tawny Owl*Strix aluco*

Fairly common or common resident.

Tawny Owls were recorded from 228 tetrads during the year. The majority of encounters related to birds being heard, rather than seen, and this sedentary species appears to be present throughout the county wherever suitable nesting habitat is available. During January, one bird was rescued and released after falling down a chimney in Henfield and at Ladywells (Coombes), a bird roosting in an ivy clad tree was regularly scolded by smaller birds, in particular Blackbirds and Long-tailed Tits.

Breeding was confirmed in 24 tetrads, double the average for the last five years, and was probable in a further 31 and birds were present during the breeding season in a further 69 tetrads. During the BBS a total of six was recorded from five of the 147 1-km squares surveyed. The first records of fledged young were dated 6 May at West Wittering and 8 May at Eartham Woods where three were noted, 11 Jun at Heyshott Common where one chick was seen and 3 Jul at Arundel WWT where three chicks were seen. The only nest sites recorded were a man-made barrel nest box on a post and a Barn Owl nest box in a barn. The highest counts of the year were of ten pairs recorded on the 1240-ha Norfolk Estate and five individuals at Abbots Wood on 24 Apr.

After the breeding season this species was noted from 70 locations with many birds being recorded as they became more territorial in the autumn, including high counts of four at Pett Level on 25 Oct and 7 Nov and Elmer (Middleton) where the observer recorded that four were 'feeding outside my bedroom window' on 9 Nov. During the SWBS only one was recorded from the 120 1-km squares surveyed, at Nutley on 12 Nov. Unfortunately, three birds were found dead during the year; two road casualties and one found on farmland at Henfield. [DG]

Long-eared Owl*Asio otus*

Scarce resident and very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Only 12 records were received during the year from just seven broad sites, which continues a dramatic reduction in this species' fortunes over recent years; five years ago, in 2006, 114 records were received from 20 sites. Just four individuals were recorded in the first winter period, the first records for the year being of a bird seen on 2 Feb at an East Sussex site and another seen hunting on a roadside near Lewes on 9 Mar. Two birds were present in a winter roost at site A in the west of the county where they were last observed on 11 May.

During the BBS one bird was recorded on 2 Jun calling from thick woodland in open farmland in the west of the county. The only other breeding season record related to one accidentally flushed from a hedge in the east of the county. Site details for this species are strictly confidential because of this species' sensitivity to disturbance.

No autumn migrants were observed and the first report of the second winter period was of a bird ringed on 11 Nov at Pett Level. Elsewhere, a single grey morph bird was seen on 29 Nov at the winter roost at site A and a single bird was present at Rye Hbr on 6 Dec, where no birds had been recorded in the previous winter. Only eight individuals were seen in 2011 and although observer effort undoubtedly affects the number of records received, this species does appear to have suffered a dramatic decline in numbers and distribution in recent years possibly due to the extreme cold weather and lying snow experienced in recent winters.

All sightings should be reported with 4-figure or preferably 6-figure grid references especially if territorial or other evidence of breeding is observed. [DG]

Short-eared Owl

Asio flammeus

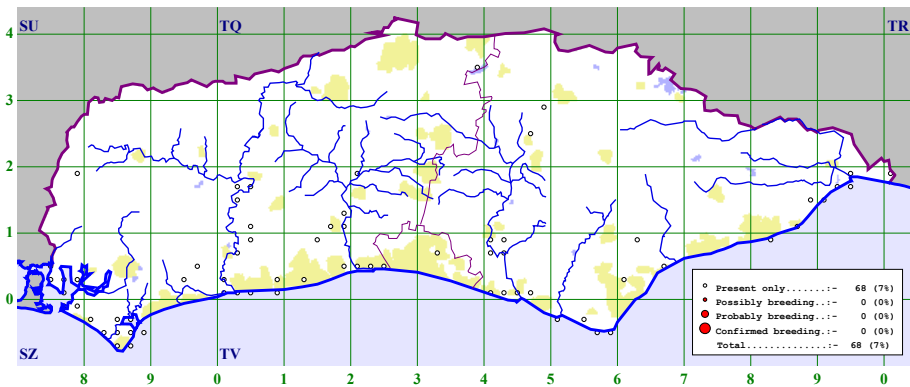
Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; has bred. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The approximate minimum monthly totals, taking account of possible duplication at well watched sites, were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
5	7	3	9	5	5	33	63	31

During the first five months of the year roughly 21 individuals were noted in the county which is slightly higher than the 3-year average of 17 birds. During January only two areas held any birds with two at Beeding Brooks on the 16th and the same number at Thorney Deepes from the 8th which were joined by a third from the 23rd. The birds at Thorney Deepes were seen roosting in a low thicket and the numbers there grew to a maximum of five on 24 Feb. Away from Thorney Deepes, birds were present in a number of coastal sites and river valleys but the only ones reported on multiple dates were at Pagham Hbr, with one present during from 6-20 April, and Bracklesham Bay, with up to two present from 24 Apr to 10 May; this was the last sighting of this species in the spring. The only record of a bird flying in off the sea was from Beachy Head on 5 May.

The first autumn migrant was observed on 1 Sep at Beachy Head and four more birds were seen during this month with individuals also at Beachy Head on the 15th and 20th, in off the sea at Peacehaven on the 18th and at Pagham Hbr on the 28th. These five birds were the vanguard of an exceptional influx into the county which consisted of a minimum of 88 individuals.



During the second winter period records were received from 31 sites with 14 of these holding wintering birds for at least a week. From 7 to 8 Oct birds were recorded at five coastal sites from Rye Hbr in the east to Pagham Hbr in the west and the first inland records were received on the 18th when possibly the same bird was seen at Pulborough Brooks and The Burgh (Burpham). Coastal migrants were recorded regularly throughout the month ahead of a significant influx between 30 Oct and 4 Nov with birds appearing at wintering sites that had previously been unoccupied. On 30 Oct four were present at Thorney Island and 1 Nov records included four at The Burgh, five at Rodmell Brooks and eight at Lidsey Rife (Barnham), the highest count of the year. On 5 Nov

Pevensy Levels hosted five birds and numbers throughout the county continued to rise during November with birds dispersing to favoured river valleys and downland sites.

The nine wintering locations that held multiple birds, including the maximum number of birds present, were Harting Down (two from 14 to 21 Dec), Thorney Deepes (seven on 13 Nov), Lidsey Rife (eight on 1 Nov), Waltham Brooks (seven on 10 Dec), The Burgh (four on 1 Nov), Beeding Brooks (six on 3 Dec), Lewes Brooks (five from 1 to 19 Nov), Beachy Head (two from 16 to 29 Oct) and Pevensy Levels (five on 4 Nov). One bird was seen coming in off the sea at Rye Hbr on 27 Nov but thereafter numbers in the county started to fall as birds presumably left to seek new wintering areas. Birds were noted as calling at Beeding Brooks and Waltham Brooks, and at Church Norton one bird made seven rodent kills over a two hour period, three of which were stolen by a Kestrel. [DG]

European Nightjar

Caprimulgus europaeus

Fairly common but localised summer visitor rarely seen on migration. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Nightjars were recorded from 45 tetrads grouped largely on the Wealden Heathlands and Ashdown Forest. The first sighting of the year of two birds on 17 Apr at South Chase (Ashdown Forest) was 16 days earlier than the 10-year average date of 3 May. Following this there were records at other sites on Ashdown Forest on 5, 6 and 8 May. The earliest records elsewhere in the county were of two at Heyshott Common on 6 May and two at Wiggonholt Common (Pulborough Brooks) on the 11th.

Breeding was confirmed in five tetrads and was probable in a further 26. The annual Wealden Heaths Breeding Birds Survey identified 52 pairs or territories, an increase over the 18 identified in 2010 and 30 in 2009, although half of these (26) were at Ambersham and Heyshott Commons which were not surveyed for this species in 2010 (see page 244 for details). On Ashdown Forest, a minimum of 129 pairs or territories was found which also represents an increase over 2010 when the BTO Nightjar survey found 86 churring males or territories (see page 245 for details).

Away from these main areas, other breeding season and summer records included at least ten other pairs or territories. Combining these figures with those from Ashdown Forest and the Wealden Heaths gives a possible total for the county of 191 pairs or territories. For comparison purposes, deducting the 26 from Ambersham and Heyshott Commons gives 164 which represents a significant increase over the comparable 124 territories in 2010. Birds were first heard churring at Wiggonholt Common (Pulborough Brooks) on 11 May, at Chailey Commons on the 13th, at Owlbeech Woods (Horsham) on the 16th, at Darwell Woods on the 19th, at Rewell Wood (Arundel) on 3 Jun, and at Broadwater Forest on the 4th. Fledged young were seen at Iping Common on 1 Jul, Red House Common (Chailey) on 25 Jun and Stonehill (Ashdown Forest) on 19 Jul. Breeding was possible in a further three tetrads.

The final sighting from Ashdown Forest was a female on 25 Aug. Migrating birds were recorded at Pett Level on 15 and 16 Aug. The final bird of the year was heard calling at High Cross Fm (Uckfield) on 19 Sep, equalling the 10-year average departure date. [SPS]

Common Swift*Apus apus*

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

Swifts were recorded from 372 tetrads, c.36% of the county total, across the county. An earlier than usual first record was of a single bird at Ovingdean on 7 Apr, six days earlier than the 10-year average. Further records followed, all of singletons, from Pulborough Brooks on 9 Apr, then Beachy Head on the 10th and 12th, before a gap of eight days when another single was observed at Eastbourne. To the end of April small numbers were recorded, with eight from Chichester GP on the 26th and 43 N in 13 hrs at Selsey Bill on the 30th.

Throughout May birds continued to be recorded in double figures (50 counts, max 75 at Pett Level on 27th). There were also six counts of 100 or more, all from mid-month onwards: Rye Hbr, Chichester GP, Barcombe Res and Arlington Res (100 each), Thorney Deeps (200 on 31st) and Weir Wood Res (610 on 25th). Four three-figure counts in June involved 200 at Rye Hbr (7th), 100 at Arlington Res (19th), 300 at Weir Wood Res (20th) and 100 at Steyning Round Hill (29th).

During the BBS a total of 255 was recorded from 43 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 46 at Oving on 19 Jun. Confirmed breeding records came from 115 sites across 83 tetrads, with a further 303 probable records across 115 tetrads; these statistics represent a considerable increase on 2010 but are more likely to reflect observer reporting than a real change in breeding status in the county. By the beginning of May birds were observed returning to nest sites at Etchingham on the 1st, in Chichester on the 4th and 6th and Burgess Hill on the 8th. Screaming parties and nest locations were recorded across the county at the beginning of June, whilst young were noted in nests from 14 Jun at Gossops Green (Crawley) and 27 Jun at Chichester. The first fully fledged bird out of the nest was recorded from Crowborough on 5 Jul.

Post-breeding flocks began to form from mid-July onwards, and there were 44 double-figure counts through the month, with the majority under 50 birds; the exceptions were 60 recorded at Pett Level on the 20th and Pagham Hbr on the 25th. In addition, five counts of 100 or over were received, 200 at Rye Hbr on the 16th and Chichester GP on the 18th being the highest.

During August there were only two counts over 100: 110 at Worthing on the 2nd and 120 at Climbing Beach on the 19th. Only twelve double figure counts were received during the month, of which 90 at Rottingdean on the 2nd and 54 at Worthing on the same day were the highest. Nineteen records for September were mostly of single birds, and the highest count was of six at Beachy Head on the 3rd.

The only records from October also represented the last records for the year; these were of singles at Ferring and Worthing Beach, both on the 28th, being 12 days later than the 10-year average date, and over a month later than the final bird recorded for 2010. [DB]

Alpine Swift*Apus melba*

Rare vagrant.

There were no records of this species in 2011 but there is one previously unpublished record:

2010: A single bird at Rodmell on 20 Mar (ADW, IJW).

There have now been 40 records of this species in Sussex but only six this century. The Rodmell bird was on the earliest date on which the species has been recorded. Records have been

in each month from March to October: March (five, from the 20th), April (six), May (14), June (three), July (one), August (six), September (three) and October (two, last on the 30th). [DHH]

Common Kingfisher

Alcedo atthis

Scarce to fairly common resident and possibly very scarce winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

Kingfishers were recorded in 109 tetrads across the county, similar to 2010. Observations during the winter months, with the maximum number of birds recorded, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb		Nov	Dec
No. of birds	33	23		39	39
No. of inland sites	16	9		19	20
No. of coastal sites	14	11		18	13

The January records show decreases in the numbers of both birds and sites from the previous year, but the February records are comparable to those for 2010 except that more birds were recorded at coastal sites and fewer at inland sites.

No birds were recorded during the BBS but were seen at 44 different sites throughout the county during the breeding season. Breeding was confirmed at five inland locations and probable at a further three. Birds were observed in suitable habitat for breeding at 29 additional sites. Only one report of juveniles was received in June: two adults and two juveniles were reported at a coarse fishing pond near Poling. At Arundel WWT four birds were seen in flight on 30 Jul. At Ladywells (Coombes), five young birds were ringed in 40 sessions between 1 Aug and 20 Oct. At Warnham LNR, the July monthly maximum figure was five birds on the 5th.

From July, reports showed birds returning to Rye Hbr, from 15 Aug to Thorney Island and other coastal locations. Slightly fewer birds were recorded in November than in 2010, but the December records show a small increase both in numbers of birds and numbers of sites compared with the previous year. [CJR]

European Bee-eater

Merops apiaster

Rare vagrant; bred once in 1955. Schedule 1 species.

Continuing the annual occurrence of this species (2007 this century excepted), there were four records of six birds. An adult flew north on 22 Apr at Pett Level (IDH); another adult also flew north at Selsey Bill on 6 May (OM); two at Hodcombe (Beachy Head) on 7 Jun (RHC) were first heard at 13.15 but flew off west at 13.30; finally, two were noted at Pett Level on 3 Jul (IDH, PEJ). These bring the county total this century to 37 at an average of three/year. This compares with a total of 32 for the 38 years 1962–1999, an average of under one per year. Perhaps global warming is increasing the frequency of this species in Sussex. [JAH]

Hoopoe*Upupa epops*

Very scarce spring and even scarcer autumn passage migrant, has bred. Schedule 1 species.

There were probably six spring birds: the first two records were on 2 Apr at Castle Hill (Newhaven) and in Hove Park Road (Hove) and one was at Ringmer on the 23th. One was seen in a Warninglid garden on the 24th and one flew north over Horsham on the 25th, which could have been the same bird. On 16 May one was photographed along the west side of the Cuckmere Valley north of the Coastguard Cottages and another was seen from 25-29 May at Littleton Down (East Lavington), in mixed farmland with mature hedges and an overgrown orchard and was seen nearby on the 29th at Upwaltham in a lucky observer's garden.

In the autumn, one was at Glynde from 10-13 Sep on a grassy bank near the church which was seen by many observers. On 30 Sep one was seen in an Eastbourne garden. Also a well-watched bird was seen by many observers from 4-11 Nov at Atherington (Climping). It was often seen feeding on large grubs during its stay and was widely reported from the edges of various gardens, in the car parking area and even the roof of the local pub!

This brings the total for the year to nine birds; nine were seen in 2010. [MJC]

Wryneck*Jynx torquilla*

Very scarce passage migrant, most in autumn; last bred in 1944. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

In the autumn there were records of birds on 24 separate dates in 14 tetrads. The first records in the autumn were at Pulborough Brooks from 22 to 24 Aug and The Severals (Church Norton) from 27 to 28 Aug. Two single birds at Beachy Head, one from 28 to 31 Aug and another on 3 Sep, were separated from photographic evidence on plumage differences and bill colour. Three birds were ringed at Pett Level, two on the 2 Sep and another on the 3rd. Single birds were recorded at Arlington Res on the 4th, Thorney Island on the 10th and it or another on the 16th, Rye Hbr on the 20th, in a private garden at Littlehampton on the 22nd, near Cissbury Ring from the 22nd to the 27th. In October, further singles were reported from South Chailey on the 1st and, finally, Littlehampton West Beach on the 14th. A minimum of 16 birds was recorded, compared with nine in 2009 and 21 in 2010. [PJP]

Green Woodpecker*Picus viridis*

Fairly common or common resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Birds were recorded in 585 tetrads (56% of the county total) compared with 489 the previous year. The first record of potential breeding activity was of a pair 'yaaffling' at Poundgate (Ashdown Forest) on 1 Jan. During the first winter period the highest counts were of seven, at Pulborough Brooks on 17 Jan and Cox Green (Rudgwick) on the 25th followed by six at Saddlescombe (Poynings) on 17 Mar. There were several records of from three to five birds across the county.

Breeding was confirmed in 88 tetrads and was probable in a further 119, compared with 44 and 26 respectively from last year. The reasons for this apparent increase are unclear but might be

due to efforts during the Atlas period to confirm the presence of the species in additional tetrads. During the BBS, a total of 219 was recorded from 98 on the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of nine at Langley (Rake) on 9 Jul.

During the Heathland Breeding Bird Survey a total of 28 pairs or territories were identified (for details see page 244) but in Ashdown Forest there were only two pairs or territories (see page 245 for details), which is thought to be an underestimate. Breeding surveys identified nine pairs/territories at Pagham Hbr and others at Amberley Wild Brooks (2), Rackham Plantation, (1), Wiggonholt Common (1) and Pulborough Brooks (3). At Pett Level, breeding was confirmed and the maximum count there was four on 22 Jun. The first record of an apparently occupied nest was at Albourne (Hurstpierpoint) on 15 Apr followed by another at Ladywells (Coombes) on 19 May. The first record of fledged young was on 26 May at Bolney followed by one at Hellingly on the 28th. At Thorney Island four males were holding territories by 6 Apr.

The species was regularly recorded at several regularly monitored sites across the county: at Pulborough Brooks (max. 7 on 17 Jan, 14 Mar and 11 Apr), Warnham LNR (max. 3 on 15 Mar), Pett Level (max. 3 on 2 May and 20 Dec). During the summer the highest counts were of nine at Ditchling on 31 Jul and Pulborough Brooks on 1 Aug. In the autumn, seven was the highest count at Doleham Valley and Clayton Windmills on 13 Oct while the highest winter period count was only five at Rye Bay on 15 Nov; otherwise counts were generally in the range one to three in all post-breeding periods. During the first SWBS the species was recorded in 45 tetrads with a maximum count of four at Nutley on 13 Nov and Lidsey Lodge on 10 Dec. Observers at Beachy Head commented that, although the species was noted (but generally under-recorded) throughout the year with no more than three per day, it was felt that numbers had decreased by c.50%; in 2006 up to six birds were regularly logged with three breeding pairs in the area. It was opined that the recent severe winter weather may have taken its toll.

During the year, ringers at Ladywells (Coombes) trapped ten different birds (nine new of which two were adults and six young); at Strivens Reedbed, the Steyning Ringing Group trapped eight different birds (three adults, five first year birds); at Cissbury North Scarp two new first year birds were trapped. [PJP]

Great Spotted Woodpecker

Dendrocopos major

Common resident.

The species was recorded from 386 tetrads, c.37% of the county total. The first reports of drumming were from Pulborough Brooks on 1 and 2 Jan, Warnham LNR on the 4th and Henfield Levels on the 9th. The highest counts during the first winter period were of seven at Pulborough Brooks on 3 Jan then sixes at Loxwood on the 21st, Scaynes Hill on 27 Feb and Warnham LNR on 5 Mar.

During the BBS a total of 257 was recorded from 95 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 11 at Sutton End on 10 Apr. Breeding was confirmed from 148 tetrads and was probable from a further 119, numbers which are a considerable increase on last year's. The reasons for this are unclear, but might be due to efforts during the Atlas period to confirm the presence of the species in additional tetrads. The earliest report of nesting activity came from Stedham Common where there were three active nests and two occupied territories on 1 May. Adults with faecal sacs or food were first noted at Robertsbridge on 12 May when the earliest fledged young were noted at Parrock (Hartfield). There were few reports of breeding productivity, the highest count of young reported were several twos. The West Sussex Heathland Breeding

Bird Surveys identified 44 pairs or territories (see page 244 for details) and 22 were found on Ashdown Forest (see page 245 for details). Elsewhere, five pairs were identified at Pagham Hbr, Norton Priory (2), Norfolk Estate (2), Amberley Wild Brooks (4) and Pulborough Brooks (6). There was no evidence of breeding at Rye Hbr.

During the summer the highest count was of seven at Press Ridge Warren (Ashdown Forest) on 10 Aug but there were numerous counts of between three and five birds. Numbers in the autumn months were very similar and also peaked at seven, at Pett Level on 30 Oct. During an autumn migration watch at Hastings the species was recorded on 15 days between 10 Sep and 25 Oct with a maximum of three. During the SWBS the species was recorded from 58 1-km squares of the 120 surveyed (48%) with a maximum of six at Beckley on 10 Nov.

During the year, ringers at Ladywells (Coombes) handled ten different birds (seven new, three from previous years, six adults and three young). The Steyning Ringing Group (SRG) at Strivens Reedbed handled four different birds (three new, one previously ringed, two adults, two young) but at Cissbury North Scarp handled only two young birds. The BHRG had a poor year, handling only one new adult bird. [PJP]

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

Dendrocopos minor

Scarce, possibly now very scarce, and declining, resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

The species was recorded in 49 tetrads, 26 in West Sussex and 23 in East Sussex. This appears, at first sight, to be an increase on last year's figures but one which should be regarded with caution with a declining species. The cause may, of course, be due to more birders seeking the species in response to requests for more records. Again there were no reports from Burton MP, hitherto a fairly reliable site. Some 30% of records came from three areas: Pulborough Brooks/Wiggonholt/Rackham Woods, Owlbeech Woods (Horsham) and Henfield.

Breeding was confirmed in four tetrads and was probable in seven. During the BBS a total of two was recorded from two of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with one at Tilgate Forest on 16 May and another at Catsfield on 27 Jun. Drumming was first heard on 20 Feb at Broadmare Common (Henfield). It was also heard on 28 Feb at Ticehurst, on 1 Mar three different birds were heard calling at High Salvington (Worthing), on 12 Mar at Spithurst (Barcombe), on 14 Mar at Etchingham, on 18 Mar at Wiggonholt Common and on 23 Mar at Diding. The first nest with young was recorded at Etchingham on 21 May; a pair was seen feeding young at the nest between Dial Post and Ashington on 28 May which subsequently fledged successfully. A new nest, found in an elderly silver poplar from which ivy had been recently removed, contained young on 1 Jun at Highleigh (Sidlesham). Pairs were recorded during breeding surveys at Rackham Plantation (Amberley Wild Brooks) and Wiggonholt Common (Pulborough Brooks). Territorial birds were recorded at nine further sites.

Birds were recorded on 14 dates during the autumn and second winter periods, notably including seven sightings at Owlbeech Woods (Horsham). One bird was caught in a mist net at Beauport Park (Hastings) on 26 Nov. As this is a species of high conservation concern, all sightings should be reported with 4-fig or preferably 6-fig grid references, especially if territorial behaviour or other evidence of breeding is observed. [PJP]

Golden Oriole*Oriolus oriolus*

Very scarce passage migrant and rare summer visitor; may have bred in 1965. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

2009: A female or first summer male was recorded at Pett Level (CHD) on 6 Jul.

2011: Three birds this year is a marked improvement on recent years; the last time there were three was in 2001. A singing male was recorded on 17 and 18 May at Wiggonholt Common (PHH, RT); another male was heard singing on Lullington Heath on the 31st (MJE); a third male was at Runcton (Chichester) on 15 Jul (CN). These bring the total this century up to 17; the earliest was on 17 Apr 2006 and the latest 23 Jul 2001. [JAH]

Great Grey Shrike*Lanius excubitor*

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

There were probably no more than six individuals recorded during the year. The monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar		Oct	Nov	Dec
1	2	1		2	3	1

During the first winter period presumably the same individual was sighted many times from 3 Jan as it roved around Ashdown Forest. Another was recorded in the extreme west of the county at Rogate on 20 Feb. The Ashdown Forest bird was last noted on 21 Mar, 13 days earlier than the 10-year average date.

During the second winter period, the first arrival was a single bird recorded at Pett Level on 16 and 17 Oct, compared with the 10-year average arrival date of the 15th. Another was recorded at Poundgate (Ashdown Forest) on the 20th, which might have been the bird from the first winter period returning to Ashdown Forest, and was then widely reported until 22 Dec. One was seen at Rodmell on 1 Nov and at nearby Southease on the 6th. Also on the 6th one spent only two minutes near the cliff edge at Birling Gap before departing inland. [LAW]

Magpie*Pica pica*

Very common resident.

Magpies were recorded from 640 tetrads, c.60% of the county total. During the first winter period there were 22 counts of 20 or more birds, the highest being 47 at Warnham LNR on 4 Mar, where 41 had been sighted on 3 Feb. A group of 31 was seen at Whitehawk (Brighton) on 5 Jan, where 35 were seen on 2 Feb. At Hangleton (Hove) 32 were seen on 15 Jan.

During the BBS, a total of 697 was recorded from 132 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 22 at Stone Cross (Pevensey) on 12 Jun. Breeding was confirmed in 159 tetrads and probable in 128. The earliest signs of nesting activity recorded were of adults with apparently occupied nests at Tortington (Arundel) on 24 Mar and Bailiff's Court (Climping) on the 27th. The earliest report of fledged young came from Arlington Res on 15 Apr. During the breeding season there were counts of 20 or more on eight occasions, the highest being 32 at Ore (Hastings) on 25

May. At Durfold (Warnham) there were 31 on 25 Jun, 30 were sighted at Ditchling on 4 Jun, 26 at Applesham (Coombes) on 21 May and 24 at Idehurst (Wisborough Green) on 5 Jun. There were 22 at Mile Oak (Portslade) on 26 Jun and the same number at Waterhall (Brighton) on 29 Jun. A group of 20 was Warnham LNR on 31 May.

In the summer, there were only four sightings of flocks of over 20 including 24 at Westfield on 1 Jul, 22 at Waterhall on 26 Jul and 21 at both Southwater CP on 20 Aug and Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on the 21st. In the autumn, there were only five sightings of flocks of over 20: 24 were seen at both Waterhall on 19 Sep and Southwater CP on the 20th, 26 at Warnham LNR on the 30th, 27 were there on 7 Oct and 21 at Southwater CP on 8 Oct.

In the winter period a flock of 41 was seen at Warnham LNR on 24 Dec, 31 were noted on Bishopstone GC on 22 Dec, 25 were at Warnham on 26 Nov and 24 at both Broadwater (Worthing) on 11 Nov and Scaynes Hill on 13 Nov. Flocks of 21 were seen at Blatchington (West Hove) on 5 Dec, Harting Down on 14 Dec and Earnley on 26 Dec. [TS]

Jay

Garrulus glanderous

Very common resident.

Jays were recorded from 475 tetrads, c.45% of the county total. During the first winter period counts were lower than last year, the highest being 13 at Idehurst (Wisborough Green) on 23 Jan. The only other sighting in double figures was 11 at Great Noven Fm (Chailey) on 3 Feb. A count of nine was recorded at Wisborough Green on 25 Feb and eight at both Ditchling on 21 Jan and Whitehawk (Brighton) on 2 Feb.

During the BBS, a total of 130 was recorded from 70 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of six at Langley (Rake) on 9 Jul. Breeding was confirmed in 21 tetrads and was probable in 23. The earliest report of breeding activity was of an apparently occupied nest at Bexleyhill (Lodsworth) on 11 Apr followed by adults carrying food or faecal sacs at Maynards Green on 17 May and fledged young at Eastbourne GC on the 25th.

In the spring and summer period there were no double-figure sightings, most being ones or twos with occasional sightings of four or five. The highest counts were nine at Pulborough Brooks on 1 Aug and the same number at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on the 7th.

In the autumn and second winter period sightings there were only two sightings in double figures. A group of ten was seen at Brighton Wild Park 4 Sep and a similar group was seen at Pulborough Brooks on 19 Dec. Groups of eight were seen at Pett Level on 4 Sep, Braberry Hatch and Lakes (Ashdown Forest) on 3 Oct, Weir Wood Res on 12 Oct, Pulborough Brooks on 17 Oct and 17 Nov and Whitehawk on 28 Oct. [TS]

Jackdaw

Corvus monedula

Very common resident.

Jackdaws were recorded from 620 tetrads across the county, 60% of the county total. During the first winter period there were 31 counts of 100 or more individuals. The highest counts were 2000 at Bewl Water on 15 Jan and 1400 at Lavington Common on 17 Jan going to roost with Rooks at Seaford College. Other high counts were 500 at Pett Level on 18 Jan, 500 at Singleton on 12 Feb, 400 at Warnham LNR on 4 Mar, 310 at Waltham Brooks on 22 Mar and 300 at Weir Wood Res on 15 Mar.

The earliest report of nest building was from Hookwood (Gatwick) on 20 Feb where two pairs were building in the tops of old beech trees, followed by a similar activity at Birchetts Green (Bewl) on the 21st. During the BBS a total of 1712 was recorded from 123 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 89 at Crapham Down (Beachy Head) on 23 Apr. Breeding was confirmed in 189 tetrads and was probable in a further 105. Although there were several reports of occupied nests from 2 Apr onwards, the first report of fledged young was on 19 Apr from Goddards Green. Twenty-six owl boxes and four Kestrel boxes were reported to have been used for nesting, with fledglings observed at eighteen of these. The highest count of the summer period was 1200 observed roosting in a copse at Storrington. There were two counts of 200 birds, at Rye Hbr on 12 Aug and Arlington Res on 17 Aug. There were only three other records of 100 or more during this period.

During the autumn and second winter period the first large gathering was 250 recorded at Weir Wood Res on 4 Sept. During the SWBS a total of 1755 was recorded from 83 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 138 at Highfields (Blackham) on 18 Nov. The only count of 1000 or more came from Edburton on 29 Nov when 2500 were seen flying to roost with rooks at Tottington Wood. The other high counts of the period were 300 at Barcombe Cross on 15 Oct, 300 at Pulborough Brooks on 24 Oct, 250 at Rye Hbr, two further counts of 250 there on 17 Oct and 1 Dec and 240 flying east over Waltham Brooks on 4 Dec. [GNO]

Rook

Corvus frugilegus

Very common resident.

Rooks were recorded from 436 tetrads, c.42% of the county total. A Rook survey was undertaken in 2011 and details of this can be found on pages 272-276. The highest count of the first winter period was 1000 seen at Littleworth (Partridge Green) flying to roost on 26 Jan. There were two counts of 500, at Singleton on 12 Feb and at Bostal Hill (Berwick) on 27 Feb and two records of 300 birds at Lidsey Sewage Works on 7 Jan and at Town Littleworth (Chailey) on 22 Jan.

Recorded evidence of nest building during January was limited. However, birds were reported as being very active at an established site at Newtimber Hill (Poynings) on 16 Jan and at a rookery at High Cross Fm (Uckfield) birds were seen rearranging sticks on 30 Jan. Breeding was confirmed from 123 tetrads and was probable in a further 24.

During the BBS a total of 2320 was recorded from 81 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 484 at East Ashling on 5 Jun. Adults carrying food or faecal sacs were first recorded on 25 Mar at Bodiam Green and Robertsbridge but the first nest with young was noted on 10 Apr at Birdham. The Rook survey results show that across the county there were four rookeries with over 100 nests and 33 with between 51 and 100 nests. During the summer period the largest counts were 1500 at Littleworth on 6 Aug, 200 at Sefter Fm (Rose Green) on 4 Jul, 120 at Clayton Windmills on 31 Aug and 100 at Lagness (Bognor) on 28 Aug.

In the autumn and second winter period there were just five records of 200 or more birds. On 29 Nov 500 were seen at Edburton flying to roost with Jackdaws at Tottington Wood. The next largest gathering was 240 at Pulborough Brooks on 31 Oct. There were 211 birds at Sefter Fm (Rose Green) on 4 Dec and two counts of 200 were recorded, at Pagham Hbr on 26 Oct and Rye Hbr on 1 Dec. During the SWBS a total of 1695 was recorded from 53 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 198 at Pett Level on 20 Dec. [GNO]

Carrion Crow*Corvus Corone**Very common resident.*

Carrion Crows were recorded from 676 tetrads, 65% of the county total. Numbers were down on last year. No three figure counts were recorded in the first winter period. The highest count was 96 sighted at Roundstreet Common (Loxwood) on 21 Jan, 93 were recorded on 19 Jan just over the border at Charlwood and a group of 87 was recorded at Climping Gap on 15 Mar. There were 75 seen at Sidlesham Ferry on 30 Jan and 74 were at Ashplants Wood (East Grinstead) on Jan 15. The same number was seen at Parrock (Hartfield) on 22 Feb, 69 were recorded at Durfold (Warnham) on 27 Feb and 61 were sighted at Billingshurst on 12 Feb.

During the BBS, a total of 1685 was recorded from 141 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 77 at East Ashling on 22 Apr. Breeding was confirmed in 150 tetrads and probable in 135. Apparently occupied nests were first noted at Hotham Park (Bognor) on 5 Mar but not again until 3 Apr at Woodmancote although a nest with young was recorded in a house roof at Bulverhythe (St. Leonards) on 11 Apr. The first record of fledged young was dated 1 May at West Dean Woods. In the breeding season a flock of 122 was recorded at Bexhill on 12 Jun, by far the highest for the period, while 69 were counted at Pulborough Brooks on 26 Apr and 55 were at Uppark (South Harting) on 1 May and there were 16 other counts in excess of 30.

In the summer period there were three counts of three figures: 122 were recorded during an Atlas survey at Worsham Fm (Bexhill) on 12 Jun, 100 at Sidlesham Ferry on 24 Jul and 105 at Weir Wood Reservoir on 18 Aug. There were a further six records of counts of 30 or more including 89 at Westfield on 1 Jul.

In the autumn-winter period there were 12 counts of over 50 including 100 at Sidlesham Ferry on 10 Sep, 94 at Pulborough Brooks on the 26th, Sep, 100 at Pagham Harbour on 23 Oct, 100 at St Leonards Forest on 7 Nov and 100 at Camber Sands on 31 Dec. [TS]

Raven*Corvus corax**Scarce and increasing breeding resident; first bred in modern era in 2001.*

Ravens were recorded from 161 tetrads right across the county, slightly more from East than from West Sussex (90:71) and almost twice as many records from inland sites than from coastal sites.

The data suggest that there are at least 18 pairs in the county, with 11 inland and seven coastal. This compares with 14 or 15 pairs in 2010. Breeding was confirmed in only two tetrads and was probable in a further 23; the apparent anomaly with 18 pairs can be explained by display behaviour crossing tetrad boundaries. During the BBS a total of seven was recorded from four of the 147 1-km squares with three at Goodwood Park on 19 May, two at Firle Beacon on 29 Jun and single birds at Seaford on 1 May and Westmeston on 13 Jun.

Ravens begin their breeding season early and were recorded displaying on 11 Jan in the Arun Valley. The first record of nest building came from a site near Lewes on 29 Jan. In late winter they can be very noisy and their spectacular tumbling display and the upside-down flying by the male can be eye-catching but as the breeding season progresses they can be unobtrusive, especially in woodland habitats. The first records of confirmed breeding were of four fledged young at a site near Shoreham on 15 Apr, although one was dead on 6 May, and from Beachy Head where a family group of five were recorded on 1 Jul. Three further records involved four young with one

adult on 16 Jun at The Burgh, a likely family group of seven at Iping Common on the 30th and a family of five at Petworth Park on 30 Jul and similarly at Chantry Hill on 2 Aug. At Beachy Head, two pairs were present throughout the year, and six birds were noted soaring in the sky with rooks on 3 Sep. On the Norfolk Estate four pairs were recorded.



Raven, Beachy Head, April 2011 (Roger and Liz Charlwood)

There were no large gatherings or winter roosts reported. Tussles were reported with Sparrowhawk, Peregrine and Red Kite and there were no reports of food items or prey. It is clear that the population of Ravens is expanding in the county and that the reported breeding evidence is probably lower than the numbers actually breeding and with the presence of suitable nesting habitat, the trend is probably set to continue. It is therefore important that observers report all breeding evidence. [MJC]

Goldcrest

Regulus regulus

Very common breeding resident, common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Goldcrests were recorded from 501 tetrads across the county. The minimum monthly totals of bird days, i.e. the sum of all sightings over all days (excluding obvious duplicate sightings but including a count of one for every record showing ‘present’ only) were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Min. no. bird days	313	262	261	322	318	327	218	141	302	833	716	346
No. of days	29	26	31	30	31	30	26	22	26	31	30	28

During the period January to March, the maximum count was 16 at Darwell Hole on 19 Jan with other double figure counts of ten at Wiggonholt Common on the 26th and 12 on the Old Airstrip (Ashdown Forest) on 6 Mar. Of note during this period was a single arriving in off the sea at Climping Beach on 30 Mar.

Breeding was confirmed in 50 tetrads and was probable in a further 121, an increase over 2010 of 29% and 47% respectively. During the BBS a total of 156 was recorded from 59 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 13 at Rake on 6 Jun. The first confirmed breeding concerned a bird carrying food or a faecal sac on Ashdown Forest on 26 Apr. A family party of at least three was observed in Wepham Woods (Angmering Park) on 25 May. The latest breeding record concerned three young being fed at Ferring on 12 Aug.

As with Firecrest, numbers are usually enhanced by the arrival of migrants in both spring and autumn. Observers at Beachy Head reported that, in spring following recent severe winters, Goldcrests were recorded on only five dates with a maximum of 13 on 27 Mar, but in the autumn they were recorded on 47 dates between 30 Aug and 10 Dec with daily maxima of 13 (27 Sep), 12 (16 Oct), 16 (23 Oct), 20 (28 Oct) and 14 (1 Nov). During an extended migration watch at Hastings a total of 189 birds was recorded between 15 Aug and 15 Nov with a maximum of 28 on 16 Oct. During the autumn migration a minimum total of 1149 bird days was recorded at coastal sites during the three months September to November compared with 123 for the period March to May, as shown below:

	Spring	Autumn
Total	123	1149
Pagham Hbr	11	49
Climping	1	36
Beachy Head	16	103
Hastings	-	189*
Pett Level	40	649
Other	55	123

*an extended period from 15 Aug

The number of bird days recorded at Pett Level in October was 358 and in November 197; the highest count there was 37 on 4 Oct. During the SWBS Goldcrests were recorded from 46 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 18 at Rake on 18 Dec (and counts of 12 at three other sites). Further evidence of autumn migration was provided by various ringing groups. The numbers of new birds ringed were: 19 at Ladywells (Coombes); 23 at Cissbury; 24 at Beachy Head; 301 at Pett Level. [CFB]

Firecrest

Regulus ignicapilla

Scarce or possibly fairly common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

During the year Firecrests were recorded from 115 tetrads. During spring observers at Beachy Head recorded 15 bird days (eight dates) involving probably ten different individuals with maxima of four on 12 and 13 Mar. The minimum monthly totals of bird days, i.e. the sum of all sightings over all days (excluding obvious duplicate sightings) were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Min. no. bird days	43	34	68	44	48	43	21	22	27	117	112	57
No. of days	27	19	20	15	18	22	19	21	18	27	30	28

During the BBS a total of five was recorded from three of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of three in Angmering Park on 28 May. Breeding was confirmed in four tetrads, all in the species' stronghold within the 10-km square SU81, and was probable in a further 14, the latter figure representing a significant increase from the two in 2011. Possibly the earliest sign of breeding hopes was of a male singing and displaying to a Goldcrest at Burton MP on 27 Feb. A male was singing in Horseshoe Plantation (Beachy Head) on 11 Mar. There were at least ten singing males in West Dean Woods on 10 Apr and seven pairs at West Marsden on the 15th. A pair was noted at a new peripheral site, Staple Ash Fm (Chilgrove) on the fringes of the species' stronghold in West Dean Woods, on 17 May and the first fledged young were reported from Goodwood RC on 14 Jun.



Firecrest, Swanbourne Lake, February 2011 (Sandra Palme)

Numbers are usually swollen during spring and autumn by migrants at coastal sites and an influx of migrants was noted at Climping Gap with a peak of at least six on 27 Oct. Observers at Beachy Head reported another good year and recorded 72 bird days (21 dates) between 24 Sep and 10 Nov involving probably 45 different individuals. During a migration watch at Hastings from 16 Sep to 25 Oct single birds were noted on only three dates. During 2011, autumn migration was more noticeable than in spring. A minimum total of 100 bird days was recorded at coastal

sites during the three months September to November compared to the 22 for the period March to May as shown below:

	Spring	Autumn
Total	22	100
Pagham Hbr	2	18
Climping	2	14
Beachy Head	7	37
Pett Level		12
Rye Hbr	6	4
Other	5	15

Ringling records indicated that at least 36 new birds were ringed during the year. These included six young by the Steyning RG at Cissbury and two at Strivens Reedbed; one by ringers at Ladywells (Coombes); two by BHRG at Whitbread Hollow and 25 at Pett Level. [CFB]

Penduline Tit

Remiz pendulinus

Rare vagrant.

A juvenile/first-winter bird was trapped at Pett Level on 10 Nov (RBRG). This was the 21st to be recorded in Sussex this century bringing the total to 3631. The record has been accepted by BBRC. [DHH]

Blue Tit

Cyanistes caeruleus

Abundant resident.

Blue Tits were recorded from 655 tetrads, 63% of the county total, a slight reduction on 2010's 684, most probably due to observer effort, rather than any reduction in abundance. During the first winter period there were 18 counts of 50 or more; the highest were of 70 at Durfold (Warnham) on 27 Feb, 69 at Ashburnham Place (Battle) on 8 Feb and 65 at both Loxwood and Ditchling on 21 Jan, all during Atlas surveys. A pair was inspecting a nest box at Littleworth (Partridge Green) on 14 Feb.

During the BBS a total of 2051 was recorded from 144 (98%) of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 85 at Hartfield on 4 Jun. Breeding was confirmed from 290 tetrads and was probable in 67. At Pagham Hbr 39 pairs or territories were identified. The earliest reports of breeding were of a pair with an apparently occupied nest at Findon Park on 3 Apr and an occupied nest at Scobell's Fm (Barcombe) on the 8th. Food or faecal sacs were being carried on 15 Apr at Broadbridge Heath and Udimore. The first fledglings were seen at Ashburnham Place (Battle) on 27 Apr. There were few reports of breeding success. A nest with six eggs was noted at Byworth on 22 Apr, 11 young were hatched in a box with a 'nest cam' on 1 May of which five definitely fledged; eight fledged from a nest at Thorney Deeps on 12 May. The only report of nest box predation involved a Great Spotted Woodpecker at West Tarring in May with possible loss of some young but two fledged successfully on the 22nd. High counts during this period were of 49 at Gatwick on 16 Apr, 43 at Pulborough Brooks on 29 Mar and 48 at Three Oaks (Guestling) on 13 Apr. There were 314 reports of fledged young between 27 Apr and 22 Aug.

Post-breeding counts were high with 30 at Blackboys on 2 Jul, 35 at Broadbridge Heath on 30 Aug and 40 at Frith Wood (Northchapel) on the 30th. Autumn numbers were lower, the largest count was of 60 at Broadbridge Heath on 16 Oct and there were only ten other counts in excess of 50.

During the second winter period, the three counts in excess of 50 were 94 at Warnham LNR on 26 Nov, 65 at Broadbridge Heath on 30 Nov and 60 at Warnham LNR on 5 Dec. In addition there were 33 counts in excess of 20 from across the county. During the SWBS a total of 1332 was recorded from 112 (93%) of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 94 at Warnham LNR on 26 Nov.

Ringers at Ladywells (Coombes) ringed 322 different birds (239 new) with a maximum of 68 on 19 May. At Strivens Reedbed (Steyning) 418 different birds (343 new) were ringed with a maximum of 58 on 12 Feb. At Cissbury North Scarp, 65 different birds (54 new) were ringed, maximum 14 on 25 Jun. BHRG ringed 68 different birds (63 new) with a maximum of 14 on 18 May. At Pett Level, 55 new birds were ringed, maximum 14 on 7 Jun. [PD]

Great Tit

Parus major

Abundant resident.

Great tits were recorded from 641 tetrads, 62% of the county total, slightly down on 2010's 676. During the first winter period there were 11 counts of 30 or more; the highest were of 42 at Bowley Crosspost on 18 Feb, 40 at Roundhurst (Northchapel) on 24 Feb during an Atlas survey and 37 at Ditchling on 21 Feb and Gatwick Airport on 10 Jan.

During the BBS a total of 1132 was recorded from 141 (96%) of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 34 at Kirdford on 1 Jun. Breeding was confirmed from 262 tetrads and was probable in 83. At Pagham Hbr 34 pairs or territories were identified. The earliest report of breeding was of adults carrying food or faecal sacs at Broadbridge Heath on 27 Mar. At Kingley Vale on 10 Apr an occupied nest was being regularly attended by a pair. There were few reports of breeding success. The first reports of fledged young were at Ardingly Res on 15 Apr. A female was seen feeding two young at Wivelsfield Green on 13 May, adults were seen feeding young in a nest box at Arundel WWT on 14 May and ten young were seen in the nest at Bayham Abbey on 21 May. At Pett Level, 29 nest record cards were completed.

Post breeding counts were average, with only 16 records of ten or more; the highest were 20 at Broadbridge Heath on 30 Aug and 18 at Lower Beeding on 6 Jul. Autumn counts were slightly higher with 25 at Newtimber Hill (Poynings) on Sep and 24 at Whitehawk (Brighton) on 28 Oct. There were only three other records in excess of 20 during this period.

During the second winter period there were 17 records of 15 or more, with the highest being 36 at Warnham on 26 Nov, 28 at Broadbridge Heath on 18 Dec and 22 at West Blatchington (Hove) on 1 Nov. During the SWBS a total of 621 was recorded from 102 (85%) of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 36 at Warnham on 16 Nov.

Ringers at Ladywells (Coombes) ringed 142 different birds (113 new) with a maximum of 16 on 12 May. At Strivens Reedbed (Steyning) 150 different birds (113 new) were ringed with a maximum of 17 on 22 Dec. At Cissbury North Scarp, 45 different birds (39 new) were ringed, maximum eight on 20 Apr. BHRG ringed 35 different birds (33 new) with a maximum of 15 on 15 May. [PD]

Coal Tit*Periparus ater**Very common resident.*

Coal Tits were recorded in 376 tetrads, 36% of the county total. During the first winter period there were 19 records of five or more; the highest being 17 at Darwell Hole on 19 Jan, 14 at Ambersham Common on 14 Mar and nine on Ashdown Forest on 17 Feb.

Breeding was confirmed from 75 tetrads with probable breeding recorded in a further 64. The earliest confirmation of breeding was noted at Lidsey Old Canal on 16 Apr where adults were carrying food or faecal sacs. On 1 May birds were noted actively nesting under the eaves of East Chiltington's church and the first fledged young were recorded at Wivelsfield Green on 20 May where a juvenile was being fed by its parent. During the BBS a total of 115 was recorded from 44 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 14 at Tilgate Forest on 16 May. There were few records of breeding success. One fledgling was seen at West Tarring (Worthing) on 3 Jun and three were seen at Wiggonholt Common (Pulborough Brooks) on the 9th.

Post breeding counts during the summer months were lower than in previous years, with nine at Millbrook (Ashdown Forest) on 3 Jul, the period's highest count of 14 at Darwell Hole on the 5th and 12 at Pressridge Warren (Ashdown Forest) on 10 Aug. The highest autumn count was 26 on 9 Oct at Warnham LNR followed by 14 at Wiggonholt Common on the 31st; there were only four other counts of five or more. During the SWBS a total of 52 was recorded from 22 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of nine in Tilgate Forest on 10 Nov. There were 100 records of just one or two birds; the highest counts were nine at Tilgate Forest on 10 Nov, 11 at Pulborough Brooks on 12 Dec and the month's highest of 15 at Wiggonholt Common on the 21st, feeding on beech mast on the ground. An unusual record was of a bird of the British race (*P. a. britannicus*) at a coastal site Climping Gap on 20 Oct. There were no reports of the nominate continental form. [PD]

Willow Tit*Poecile montanus**Very scarce and declining resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.*

In January 2010 Willow Tit was added to the list of species for which a description is required for consideration by the SOSRC for acceptance and publication in the Sussex Bird Report. None of the four records of Willow Tit, considered by the SOSRC, was accepted so there were no confirmed records of this species in Sussex in 2011. The last accepted record for the county was of two singing at West Dean Woods on 21 March 2010.

This raises the very real possibility that Willow Tit is now extinct or very close to extinction in Sussex though there remains much suitable habitat in the interior of the county where the species could still occur. Observers who encounter Willow Tits in Sussex are encouraged to report all sightings with 4-fig or preferably 6-fig grid references and to carefully describe any calls or song, voice being the most reliable distinguishing feature in the field (*British Birds* 102:604-616). A description of the bill would also be appropriate for acceptance by SOSRC.

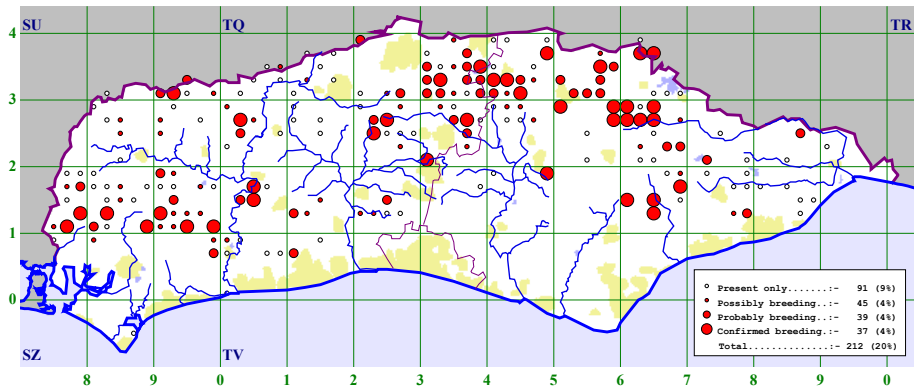
The last regular breeding species to be lost to Sussex was Cirl Bunting in 1982. [PJ]

Marsh Tit*Poecile palustris*

Scarce resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Much the more common of our two “brown tits”, Marsh Tits were recorded in 199 tetrads from across the county where suitable damp woods occur. Most records were of only one or two birds but high counts from the first winter period were ten at Uppark (Harting) on 15 Jan, seven at Darwell Hole on 19 Jan and eight on 16 Mar at West Dean Woods.

During the breeding season records were received from 141 sites but as Marsh Tit is a sedentary species, most sightings are probably from potential breeders regardless of the date. Breeding was confirmed in 36 tetrads with probable breeding in a further 39, an increase on 2010. The earliest date of confirmed breeding was 23 Apr at Stansted Park, and then on 25 Apr at Palehouse Common (Uckfield). The earliest fledged young were seen at Pippingford Park (Ashdown Forest) on 15 May. The highest breeding season counts were 12 at Uppark during an Atlas TTV on 1 May, 10 at Jews Wood (Bells Yew Green) on 12 Jun and nine at Uppark on 18 Jul, again during an Atlas TTV and five at Warninglid on 16 Jun. During the BBS a total of 27 was recorded from 19 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum of four on 12 Jun at Bayham.



During the second winter period the species was seen at only 45 locations (101 in 2010). There was only one two-figure count and that was ten at Brede High Wood on 25 Nov. There were five each at Ashburnham Place (Battle) on 2 Dec and Graffham Down on 20 Dec. [MJC]

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.

Most records came from two coastal areas at opposite ends of the county; between Chichester and Pagham Harbours in the west and between Pett Level and Rye Hbr in the east. During the first winter period there were only six records outside of these areas; a pair seen at Piddinghoe Pond on 4 Jan and again on the 9th, a pair seen on 25 Jan at Langney (Eastbourne), a pair at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) on 22-24 Feb and two at Arundel WWT on 13 Mar.

Counts outside of the breeding seasons for the 11 sites where the species was recorded were as shown in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	21	10	9		43	59	72	25	25
Thorney Deeps	8	2	1		30	30	20	8	8
Thorney Island	1					10	10		
Emsworth Hbr							2		
East Head							2		
Pagham Hbr	2	2						2	
Arundel WWT			2						
Newhaven/Piddinghoe	2	2							
Eastbourne	2								6
Filsham LNR								1	
Pett Level	4	2	2		1	8	24	10	5
Rye Hbr	2	2	4		12	11	14	4	6

During the BBS only one was recorded from one of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, on 1 Jun at Thorney Island. Breeding was confirmed at Thorney Deeps, Pett Level and Rye Hbr. Breeding success is difficult to evaluate but at Thorney Deeps 26 juveniles were recorded and at Pett Level 18 juveniles were recorded. At Rye Hbr at least five pairs were present during the breeding season and breeding undoubtedly occurred. Distinctive 'high flying' behaviour, which is associated with dispersal, was noted at Thorney Deeps on 29 Sep and 30 Oct. [MJC]



Bearded Tit, Thorney Island, October 2011 (Dave Sadler)

Wood Lark*Lullula arborea*

Scarce resident and possibly very scarce passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

Woodlarks were recorded from 52 tetrads, principally on the Wealden Heaths and on Ashdown Forest. There was no repeat of the exceptional number of coastal sightings in 2010. The only records in the first two weeks of the year were of a single bird which flew over the Fishbourne Channel (Chichester Hbr) on 2 Jan and two at Lord's Piece (Coates Common) on 16 Jan with an individual in song at nearby Lavington Plantation the same day. The highest count from the first winter period was of seven birds at Lord's Piece on 27 Feb. Four were seen at Iping Common on 3 and 17 Feb including birds in song on both occasions. There were two pairs at Lavington Plantation on the 25th and four birds at Blackdown (Fernhurst) on the 27th.

During the BBS a total of only three was recorded from three of the 147 1-km squares surveyed. The annual Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey identified 28 pairs or territories which compares with 26 in 2010 and 30 in 2009 (see page 244 for details). A minimum of 31 pairs or territories was identified on Ashdown Forest which was significantly higher than the 17 recorded in 2010 (see page 245 for details). Elsewhere in the breeding season there were records from around seven other sites where birds were recorded as either probable or possible breeders. These included (from west to east) Bepton on 10 May, Plaistow and Wiggonholt Common (one singing) on 7 Jun, Billingshurst on 10 Apr, St. Leonards Forest on 3 Jul, High Beeches Forest on 19 Jun and Weir Wood Res on 12 Jun

Breeding was confirmed in nine tetrads and was probable in a further 18. Fledged young were first recorded at Spring Garden (Ashdown Forest) on 12 Apr and at Blackdown on 30 May. Adults were seen carrying food or faecal sacs at four sites on Ashdown Forest between 6 May and 16 Jun and at Weavers Down (Liss) on 7 Jun.

Flocks recorded after the breeding season included a family party of seven birds at Millbrook (Ashdown Forest) on 25 Aug with six there on 22 Sep. There were seven at Marl pits (Ashdown Forest) on 14 Sep, five at Stedham on 18 Sep and at Broxmead (Bolney) on 12 Oct and five at Lavington Plantation on 20 Oct including singing birds. There were a number of autumn coastal records including one bird which flew over Pagham Hbr on 16 Oct and single birds at Atherington (Climping) on 14 Oct, Beachy Head on the 16th and Rye Hbr on the 29th. At the end of the year six birds were at Stopham Woods on 28 Dec and there was a bird in song at Old Lodge NR (Ashdown Forest) on the 30th. [SPS]

Sky Lark*Alauda arvensis*

Very common but declining resident, and probably common passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Skylark is a widespread species in Sussex and was recorded from 419 tetrads, 40% of the county total. The large flocks seen at the beginning of the year in 2010 were not repeated in 2011. A flock of 200 was at Ferring on 1 Jan and 100 were feeding in a field at Nutbourne (Chichester) the same day. At Lagness (Bognor) there were 102 on 3 Jan with 98 there later on the 15th and 90 on 5 Feb. At Thorney Island (Chichester Hbr) there was a flock of 100 feeding in a stubble field on 19 Jan which was recorded again on 19 Feb. Singing was first recorded on 18 Jan at Emsworth Marina (Chichester Hbr). Other early singers were at Itchingfield on 3 Feb and Gay Street (Pulborough) on 6 Feb.

During the BBS a total of 334 was recorded from 76 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 18 at Crapham Down (Beachy Head) on 23 Apr. Breeding was confirmed in 25 tetrads, was probable in 145 and possible in a further 123. Courtship display was first noted on 24 Feb at two sites on Ashdown Forest. Occupied nests were first recorded at Arundel and Ford Station on 4 Apr. Adults carrying food or faecal sacs were noted on 21 Apr on Ashdown Forest. Fledged young were seen at South Chase (Ashdown Forest) on 11 May, Wartling on 30 May, Hooe Level (Pevensey) on 2 Jun, Collyers Fm (East Guldeford) on 6 Jun, Chantry Hill on 14 and 17 Jun, Michelgrove (Patching) on 29 Jun, Hellingly on 2 Jul, Thundersbarrow Hill on 10 Jul, Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) on 21 Jul, West Broyle (Chichester) on 23 Jul and Round Hill (Devils Dyke) on 29 Jul.

A minimum of 40 pairs or territories was identified on Ashdown Forest which was fewer than the 62 in 2010 (see page 245 for details). During the annual Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey six pairs or territories were recorded (see page 244 for details), while there were 16 at sites around Pagham Hbr. There were 470 pairs on the Norfolk Estate (Arundel), up from 427 pairs in 2010 and 397 in 2009.

In autumn, sightings included 30 at Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) on 15 Sep, a tight flock of 180 at West Chidham on 26 Sep, 40 at Climping Gap on 2 Oct, 32 W at Hastings on 8 Oct, 30 at Lagness (Bognor) the same day, 65 at Brighton Wild Park on the 13th, 40 E at Climping Beach on the 16th, 120 E at the same site on the 28th and 39 at Amberley Mount on the 22nd.

In the second winter period, there were 80 at Pagham Hbr on 5 Nov, 60 at Thorney Island on the 9th, 100 at Rodmell Brooks on the 13th, 180 on stubble at Compton on 4 Dec, 50 also in at Ashurst (Steyning) on the 10th, 45 at Round Hill (Devils Dyke) on the 19th and a flock of 38 feeding on a salt marsh at Pilsey Island (Chichester Hbr) on 22 Dec. During the SWBS a total of 166 was recorded from 25 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 24 at Woodingdean on 6 Nov. [SPS]

Sand Martin

Riparia riparia

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

Sand Martins were recorded from 87 tetrads, more particularly in the southern half of the county. Two flying west at Saltdean on 5 Mar were the first of the year, slightly earlier than the 10-year average date of 9 Mar, but the next record was not until the 16th, with two birds at Warnham LNR. With the exception of 21 at Chichester GP on 17 Mar, almost all other records in March were in single figures until the very end of the month; 60 were recorded from Pulborough Brooks on 30 Mar and 70 the following day.

Throughout April there was a steady influx of birds, with 20 double figure counts mostly below fifty, but with 75 at Pulborough Brooks on the 14th. Five three figure counts were received during the month, the first being 200 at Chichester GP on the 2nd, 180 at Warnham LNR on the 5th, 100 at Rye Harbour on the 14th, and 100 from Chichester GP on the 25th, with a further 250 there on the 28th. There was a single three figure count on 2 May of 200 birds at Chichester GP and just eight double figure counts with a maximum of 60 at Pulborough Brooks on 11 May.

During the BBS a total of only 16 was recorded from just one of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, at Stedham Common on 28 Apr. Breeding was confirmed from just six locations (down from 11 in 2010) in four tetrads, with a further five probable breeding sites in a single tetrad. At West Heath Common, 21 nests were counted on 20 Apr and 40 individuals there on 4 May. Apparently

occupied nests were recorded on 7 May at Houghton Green (Playden), and on the 19th in the Brede Valley (q.v.), Winchelsea and Stedham Common. At the artificial nest bank at Arundel WWT one pair built a nest but no eggs were laid. No nesting was recorded at Rye Hbr for the second year running; however, a new small colony was found at Greyfriars on the banks of the R Brede. At Minsted SP, where 15 individuals were recorded on 22 May, the colony had re-located from the traditional north side, which collapsed during the winter of 2010/11, to the south side, and by 7 Jun there were 20 occupied nests. Unfortunately this was abandoned by 22 Jun, perhaps due to the intimidating presence of Carrion Crows.



Sand Martin (Juv.), Hodcombe, July 2011 (Roger and Liz Charlwood)

Return passage was observed to begin on 26 Jun with six birds passing over Bracklesham Bay, followed the next day by 19 S at Selsey Bill. On 3 Jul a minimum of 100 birds were noted heading out to sea at Bracklesham Bay again and by the 11th at least 1000 were logged there. Twenty five double-figure counts were received during July, and three further three figure counts of 200 from Pulborough Brooks on the 22nd, 710 from Pett Level on the 25th and 100 at Pagham Hbr on the 26th. In August the largest numbers migrating included 1807 at Pett Level on the 17th, 1500 at Arlington Res on the 22nd and c.1000 there on the 28th. There were 21 three figure counts during the month, notably 700 at Pett Level on the 5th; other counts were up to 400 birds maximum. Migration continued through September with 14 three figure counts, of which the highest of which, by some margin, was of 500 from the Rye Bay area on the 13th.

Forty-one birds at Pett Level on 4 Oct was the only other significant count of the month, with a few other records during the first week of October all in single figures. The final sightings for 2011 were two birds at Beachy Head and four at Climping Beach, both on 9 Oct, considerably earlier than the 10-year average date of 20 Oct. [DB]

Barn Swallow*Hirundo rustica*

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

Barn Swallows were recorded from 558 tetrads, c.54% of the county total, spread right across the county. The first record of the year was of two birds on 13 Mar from Bracklesham Bay, a few days later than the 10-year average date of 9 Mar. Subsequent records involved three at Rye Hbr on the 19th and one at Pagham Hbr on the 22nd and after singles from Selsey Bill and Seaford and two at Portslade on the 24th, new birds were recorded on each successive day. The first observations of double figure counts came from Pulborough Brooks, with 12 on the 29th, 20 on the 30th and ten on the 31st.

Observers at Weir Wood Res returned the first sizeable count of the year of 105 on 5 Apr; whilst small numbers continued to arrive, most were of fewer than ten birds. Seventy at Rye Hbr on 12 Apr and 60 at Warnham LNR on the 13th were the only counts of over 40 until the end of the month. At Selsey Bill 271 N on 30 Apr and 158 N on 1 May were much higher counts than at any other site, apart from 180 at Weir Wood Res on 2 May and 150 at The Midrips on the 9th.

During the BBS a total of 568 was recorded from 108 (73%) of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 42 at Kingsfold on 25 Jun. Breeding was confirmed from 158 tetrads and was probable in a further 159. Nest building was recorded from as early as 2 Apr at Ferring, where birds were collecting mud from a pond. A pair returned to nest at Keymer on the 12th and another were occupying a nest at Ticehurst on the 28th, a nest with young was recorded at Wadhurst on 11 May and fledging observed from 4 Jun at Ditchling.



Barn Swallow, Arlington Reservoir, August 2011 (Peter Wilson)

The only sizeable flocks of 100 or more birds through the breeding season were recorded from Weir Wood Res, with 150 on 20 Jun and 100 on 17 Jul; 200 at Ferring on 1 Jul, 100 at Pagham and 250 at Pett Level, on the 14th. In late July numbers increased again with the highest count being 300 at Washington on the 30th; all other records for this period were of single or double figure counts.

Autumn migration gained pace through August, with 18 three figure and four four figure counts, the latter as follows: Arlington Res 1000 on the 22nd, Climping Beach 1000 E on the 31st, Worthing 1080 E and Beachy Head 1000 on the 31st. During the Hastings migration watch, 8993 birds were recorded from 47 dates between 15 Aug and 5 Nov, with a maximum count of 2000 W on 23 Sep.

September provided the year's most impressive sightings, however, with 13 four figure counts, including 10,000 S at Selsey Bill, 5525 at Pett Level and 3160 at Worthing, all on the 16th. When taking into account the lower counts through the month, this results in more than 47,000 Barn Swallows passing through Sussex during September!

Of sixteen records during November all were of seven or fewer birds. The final sighting was at Beachy Head on 20 Nov, exactly a week earlier than the 10-year average date. [DB]

House Martin

Delichon urbicum

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

House Martins were recorded from 351 tetrads, c.34% of the county total, spread across the county. The first sightings were eleven days later than the 10-year average, with a single bird moving north at Selsey Bill and two at Sidlesham Ferry, both on 24 Mar. Three more records involving five birds were received by the end of the month. The first double figure count was of 12 birds on 2 Apr at Frant; a further eight records to the month's end involved ten or more birds, with a maximum of 24 at Arundel WWT on 27 Apr.

Spring migration continued with a steady number of records through May but with only a single three-figure count, 100 at Sidlesham Ferry on the 23rd. Most other counts for the month were of 40 or less, the exceptions being 50 at Chichester GP on the 2nd, 80 at Pett Level on the 17th, 50 at Weir Wood Res on the 25th and 80 at Rye GC on the 27th. Only three notable counts were received for June and July: 100 from Boxgrove (Chichester) on 3 Jun and 150 from Weir Wood Res on the 20th with another 250 there on 17 Jul.

During the BBS a total of 240 was recorded from 36 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 40 at Northchapel on 6 Jul. Breeding was confirmed from 82 tetrads, constituting 92 breeding records; a further 100 probable breeding records across 72 tetrads showed an increase over 2010. Birds were noted at 18 new or refurbished nests from 21 Apr in Northchapel, whilst a single nest was occupied on 27 Apr at Burpham. A charming record was of a pair 'canoodling on a nest in the High Street' in Henfield on 8 May. Evidence of young birds being fed was recorded from Henfield on 2 Jun and fledged young were recorded at Mayfield on the 10th. The last recorded occupied nest was on 3 Sep at Chantry Hill.

Although there were some 35 double figure counts through August, it was towards the end of the month that numbers started to increase significantly. The most notable were 130 at Weir Wood Res on the 18th, 500 at Arlington Res on the 22nd, 100 at Uckfield on the 28th, 100 at Climping Beach on the 30th, followed by another 200 there the following day, a total of 700 from Beachy

Head and 250 at Ladywells (Coombes) on the 31st. On 25 dates between 15 Aug and 15 Nov at Hastings, 5396 birds were recorded in an extended migration watch with a maximum count of 1500 on 15 Sep; this compares with 21,059 in approximately the same time period last year.

Autumn migration peaked in the period between mid- to late September, with eight counts of 1000 or more. These involved 1000 W in an hour past Climping Beach on the 14th, at least 1000 in 1½ hr at Cissbury Ring on the 15th, 1500 W at Hastings on the 15th, 1000 at Washington on the 18th, 2000 W past Beachy Head on the 19th, 1095 W at Hastings on the 25th, 1599 at Pett Level on the 26th and 1000 at Warnham LNR on the 28th. There were also 32 three-figure counts during September, including several of around 500.

Migration quickly tailed off during the first half of October, the most significant counts coming mainly from Pett Level where 5638 bird days were recorded over six days between the 3rd and 11th with a peak count of 1940 on the 11th. The last records of the year were slightly earlier than the 10-year average date of 13 Nov, with a single bird at Rye Hbr on 3 Nov and finally two at Beachy Head on the 5th. [DB]



Red-rumped Swallow, Arlington Reservoir, April 2011 (Jake Everitt)

Red-rumped Swallow

Cecropis daurica

Rare vagrant.

There were records for seven birds. The first was an adult at Arlington Res on 17-18 Apr (mo). This was followed by 1 E at Hodcombe (Beachy Head) on 30 Apr and, on 13 May, by two adults there which spent an hour flying round local fields before departing eastwards (both RHC). On

28 May an adult was seen at Cuckmere Haven (MJA, BRG) followed by one at Weir Wood Res on 17 Jul (NAD). The final bird for the year was one flying north at Hodcombe on 9 Sep (RHC). These bring the county total since the first record in 1967 to 36. The 19 birds for the 12 years of the 21st century represents an average of 1.6/yr, an increase on the 17 for the 23 years 1967–1999 averaging 0.73/yr. Could this be due to an effect of global warming? [JAH]

Cetti's Warbler

Cettia cetti

Scarce but increasing resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

This species was recorded in 69 tetrads through the year. During January and February there were reports from 13 different sites, slightly more than the previous year. Main concentrations were at Rye Hbr, where four were reported on 11 Feb, Pagham Hbr and Thorney Deeps (Chichester Hbr), which held six singing birds on the 24th. Other sites where single birds were located included Fishbourne, Swanbourne Lake (Arundel), Coldwaltham SF, the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) and Filsham LNR. Six were reported again from Thorney Deeps on 11 Mar and the same number was at Shinewater Lake (Eastbourne) on the 18th. In April, 11 males were holding territory at Thorney Deeps, there were probably seven at Arundel WWT and six at Chichester GP.

During the BBS, a total of 17 was recorded from six of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of seven at Hooe Level (Pevensey) on 18 Apr. Breeding records included 11 singing males at Arundel WWT, 14 at Rye Hbr and five confirmed pairs at Pett Level. The first fledged young were four seen with their parents at Thorney Deeps on 24 May; in early June two more pairs were noted feeding fledglings there and two second broods were located in July. Away from the coast, singing males were found at Rose Green (Bognor), Waltham Brooks, Ladywells (Coombes) where four individuals were trapped and ringed, Shoreham Airport, Beeding Brooks, Charleston Reedbed, Polegate and Hailsham.

During the last three months of the year, reports came from 16 different sites, including 11 singing birds at Thorney Deeps on 13 Oct and an October maximum of six at Pett Level on the same day. [VPB]

Long-tailed Tit

Aegithalos caudatus

Very common resident.

Long-tailed tits were recorded in 542 tetrads this year, 52% of the county total. During this period the highest count was 40 at Singleton Forest on 15 Jan, with 30 at Bewl Water on 1 Jan and 25 at Frith Wood (Northchapel) on 2 Feb. There were 47 counts of over ten in this period.

During the BBS a total of 173 was recorded from 63 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of ten at Pipers Copse (Northchapel) on 6 Jul. Breeding was confirmed in 161 tetrads with probable breeding occurring in a further 101. At Pagham Hbr five pairs or territories were identified. The earliest confirmed breeding was of occupied nests at Pulborough Brooks on 14 Mar (the same date as in 2010) and later at Ditchling, Wivelsfield and Woods Mill (Henfield), all on 28 Mar. An adult carrying food or faecal sacs was noted on 19 Apr at Ferring. The first fledglings were noted at Warnham on 2 May. Of note were a family of nine fledglings being fed by two adults at North Barnham on 7 Jun. There were further reports of fledged juveniles, with five at Cissbury North Scarp on 14 Jun and at least four amongst a flock of 18 at West Tarring on 11 Jun.

The highest post breeding count was of 27 at Ashburnham Place (Battle) on 15 Oct, 20 each at Sidlesham Ferry on 20 Sep and Willingdon (Eastbourne) on 31 Oct. During the second winter

period the highest counts were of 23 at Kirdford on 10 Dec and 21 at West Blatchington (Hove) on 1 Nov and 16 at Hastings noted during the Migration Watch the same day. There were 27 counts of 15 or more during this period. During the SWBS a total of 387 was recorded from 52 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 23 at Rustington on 6 Nov.



Long-tailed Tit, Arlington Reservoir, October 2011 (Jake Everitt)

Ringers at Ladywells (Coombes) ringed 76 different birds (57 new) with a maximum of 16 on 9 Jun. At Strivens Reedbed (Steyping) 43 different birds (43 new) were ringed with a maximum of ten on 5 Nov. At Cissbury North Scarp, 57 different birds (57 new) were ringed, maximum 16 on 9 Jul. BHRG ringed eight different birds (eight new) with a maximum of four on 27 Sep. At Pett Level, 124 new birds were ringed. [PD]

Pallas's Leaf Warbler

Phylloscopus proregulus

Very scarce visitor; mostly in late autumn.

With seven birds recorded, this was the best year for this species since the nine of 1996. All were on typical dates from late October. The first two were on the 23rd, one at Holywell (Eastbourne) (CFB) and another at Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) (ADW, IJW). The third one was trapped at Pett Level on the 25th (RBRG). The fourth bird was recorded at Horseshoe Plantation (Beachy Head) on the 26th (AJH) and 27th (DC) on which day two more were recorded, one at

Seaford Head (ADW) and another at Climping (OM, RNP). The final bird for the year was at Church Norton on 4 Nov (CRJ). These bring the decade total up to 28. This century, arrival dates have fallen between 4 Oct and 3 Dec but the majority (73%) are between 20 Oct and 4 Nov. [JAH]

Yellow-browed Warbler

Phylloscopus inornatus

Very scarce visitor; mostly in late autumn.

2008: Single birds were recorded at Shooters Bottom, Beachy Head on 6 Oct and at Birling Gap, Beachy Head on 6 Nov (both JFC). These are previously unpublished records.

2011: After a poor showing last year, six individuals was a welcome improvement. The first bird arrived on 16 Sep at Pett Level and was almost immediately trapped and ringed. A second bird was recorded there on the 17th and another on the 30th which was also trapped and ringed (all RBRG). Eight days later one was recorded on 8 Oct at Seaford Head (ADW) but there was then a pause to the 25th before the fifth bird was found at Birling Gap (NTT *et al.*) where it was last recorded in poor health on the 28th. Meanwhile, also on the 25th, the sixth bird for the year was found at Church Norton (CRJ, DJS). These bring the total for this century up to 63 at an average of five per year. The earliest arrival this century was on 16 Sep 2011 and the latest 5 Dec 2003 and 6 Jan 2004. Almost 70% of arrivals have been in October. [JAH]

Dusky Warbler

Phylloscopus fuscatus

Very rare vagrant.

One trapped and ringed at Pett Level on 22 Oct (RBRG) constituted the only record, bringing the county total to six since the first on 18 Oct 1974. Previous records have fallen between 7 Oct and 1 Nov (median date 22 October) at Climping (1), Beachy Head (2), Combe Haven (1) and Pett Level (1). [JAH]

Wood Warbler

Phylloscopus sibilatrix

Very scarce and declining summer resident and passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

There were 33 records received relating to some 17 individuals. The earliest record was from Buchan Park on 13 Apr, five days earlier than the 10-year county average. This was followed by single birds on Ashdown Forest on the 24th and 27th respectively.

In May records were received from Stedham and Iping Commons, Haslemere (possibly the same bird) and Ashdown Forest. The species was recorded in 15 tetrads but breeding was never confirmed and was probable in only two tetrads, so it looks as if Wood Warblers may have been lost to the county as a breeding species, at least temporarily.

A bird, almost certainly on return migration, was at Hodcombe (Beachy Head) on 30 Jul. This was followed by single birds in August at Pett Level on the 3rd and 12th, Rye Hbr on the 18th and Pagham Hbr on the 22nd. In September, one was recorded at Weir Wood Res on the 9th and lastly, one was at Cripps Corner on 2 Oct, only 5 days earlier than the latest ever county record. [TWP]

Common Chiffchaff*Phylloscopus collybita*

Very common summer visitor and passage migrant; small numbers winter.

In January, maximum counts were 11 each at Warnham LNR and at Norton (Westergate) both on the 23rd. There was a scattering of records in February; the maximum being six at Lidsey SW on the 17th. In March the more significant counts were five newly arrived migrants on the cliff edge at Telscombe Cliffs on the 17th, ten at Shinewater Lake (Eastbourne) on the 18th, 12 was the monthly maximum at Pulborough Brooks on the 21st, 23 at Beachy Head and 14 at Barcombe Res on the 26th and 16 at Redhouse Common (Chailey) on the 29th.

As in 2010, there were many counts into double figures in April; the maximum at any single site was 26 at Warnham LNR. Birds were recorded from a total of 588 tetrads (49 more than in 2010) with breeding confirmed in 146 (90 more than in 2010) and probable in a further 195 showing a possible increase in the population. Breeding summaries included 13 pairs on Thorney Island and 10 pairs at Amberley Wild Brooks. During the BBS, a total of 679 was recorded from 125 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum count of 13 on 18 Jun at Ripe.

Return passage in the autumn got off to an early start on 25 Jul when there were 15 at Whitbread Hollow and 29 were recorded at Pett Level on the 26th. In August the monthly maxima were 60 at Pulborough Brooks on the 15th and 55 at Pett Level on the 30th. In September 60 were recorded at Climping Gap on the 14th. A large movement occurred on the 15th when Whitbread Hollow held 300, a minimum of 80 were at Cissbury Ring, 200 plus were recorded at Pett Level and 90 from several sites at Hastings. There were 125 at Whitbread Hollow on the 18th, a huge number of 630 were at Pett Level on the 19th, 150 at Whitbread Hollow on the 22nd and 300 there on the 23rd when the Beachy Head total reached 550 for the day. Later at Beachy Head, 125 were at Whitbread Hollow and 80 at Belle Tout on the 27th. October began with 203 ringed at Pett Level on the 1st and the monthly maximum figures included 70 at Belle Tout (Beachy Head) on the 2nd, 39 at Cissbury Ring on the 8th and 40 at Climping on the 9th while the last double figure count for the month was 12 at Cissbury Ring on the 15th. Birds were also recorded during November and December with noteworthy numbers at Coldwaltham SW including at least 20 on 29 Nov and ten there on 4 Dec.

Four birds showing the characteristics of one of the eastern races have been accepted, one at Hodcombe (Beachy Head) on 16 Oct (RHC), one at Birling Gap on 12 Nov (DC) and two *tristis* trapped at Pett Level on 18 and 24 Nov (RBRG). [TWP]

Willow Warbler*Phylloscopus trochilus*

Common but declining summer visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The first record was of a single bird at Pagham Hbr on 19 Mar, one day earlier than 2010 and two days later than the 10-year county average date. Single figure counts were recorded at various sites until the end of the month involving some 11 individuals. April started with widespread records in single figures until the 4th when there was a minimum of ten at Church Norton, followed by 11 at Poundgate (Ashdown Forest) the next day, 10 at Thorney Island and 50 at Beachy Head on the 7th and 20 at Church Norton on the 8th. There were no significant coastal falls after this, birds apparently going straight inland to breeding areas.

In the breeding season birds were recorded from 292 tetrads (19 more than in 2010). Breeding was confirmed from only 19 tetrads (one more than in 2010) and breeding was probable in a

further 61. As in previous years most of the breeding records came from Ashdown Forest. During the BBS a total of 90 was recorded from 35 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum count of nine on 24 Apr at Weir Wood Res.

Presumed return passage was noted on 15 Jul with a single bird at Seaford Head, but four at Church Norton on the 21st, two at Thorney Deeps and ten at Cissbury Ring on the 22nd were definite migrants. Falls of 30 at Atherington, 38 at Pett Level, 26 at Climping Gap (perhaps the same as the Atherington birds) on the 27th and 40 at Steyning Round Hill on the 28th were noteworthy as were the 100 at Pett Level on the 31st. August started quite slowly but there was a fall on the 6th with 75 at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) and 217 at Pett Level. On the 10th, 142 were recorded at Whitbread Hollow, on the 14th 200 were noted at Pett Level and on the 17th 75 at Whitbread Hollow; the last significant total for the month was 40 at Cissbury Ring on the 22nd. September began with 20 at Cissbury Ring and 33 trapped at Pett Level on the 1st, a minimum of 20 at Church Norton on the 2nd followed by widely scattered single figures until the 9th when 55 were at Pett Level. Birds were still being recorded at Ashdown Forest right through the month until 4 and 16 Oct. The last record was of one at Belle Tout (Beachy Head) on 1 Nov.

A northern Willow Warbler was seen at Birling Gap on 17 Apr (DC). [TWP]

Blackcap

Sylvia atricapilla

Very common summer visitor and passage migrant; small numbers winter.

This widespread species was recorded from 555 tetrads, just over 50% of the total across the county. The first two months of the year brought reports from 42 different sites, mostly of single birds but two were seen together at eleven locations, giving a minimum number of 54 individuals. Records for the same period from ten and 20 years ago reflect the known increase in wintering Blackcaps; in 1991 there were 16 birds at 11 sites and in 2001 30 birds at 24 sites. Food items taken in gardens included mealworms, seeds, and apples. On 17 Jan a male and a female took turns to feed on a fat cake in a garden near Preston Park (Brighton). The first singing male was reported from Steyning on 6 Mar, and before the end of the month others were heard at Pagham Hbr, Burton MP, Arundel WWT, Waltham Brooks, Pulborough Brooks, Henfield, Barcombe and Rye Hbr. During the breeding season there were six pairs at Amberley Wild Brooks, 11 at Pulborough Brooks and 13 at Thorney Island (Chichester Hbr). Newly fledged young were seen at The Burgh (Burpham) on 11 Jun and a partial albino was reported from Pagham Hbr on 25 Aug. During the BBS, a total of 669 was recorded from 125 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 13 at Nutley on 20 May.

Excellent numbers passed through during autumn migration with peak numbers during September and on just one day, the 23rd, 1032 new birds were ringed at Pett Level. On the same day 143 was the maximum for the year for Beachy Head RG, while the highest catch of new birds at Cissbury was 84 on the 3rd, the vast majority of these being first-year birds. At this latter site Blackcaps comprised 35% of the annual total of birds ringed, and two birds retrapped there had originally been ringed at the site as juveniles in 2006 (Steyning RG data). Large numbers passed through Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head): 400 on 29 Aug, 200 on the 31st, 400 on 15 Sep and the maximum of 550 on the 23rd. Comments in the Beachy Head log suggest that "higher August totals appear to show how climate change is changing Blackcap movements. During the 1970s the elderberries were ripening in mid-September and Blackcap numbers were mainly concentrated in mid-September; but now with elderberries ripening in late August onwards far more are present from mid-August onwards, although mid-September is still the peak time". The last notable total

at Whitbread Hollow was 75 on 3 Oct, with the final sighting there being on 13 Nov, while at Thorney Island the last bird was seen on the 9th.

As usual there were fewer reports during the last two months of the year than in the first two. Birds obviously wintering were recorded at 21 locations and some were ringed late into November: at Cissbury until the 19th, at Pett Level until the 26th and at Ladywells (Coombes) until the 28th. [VPB]

Garden Warbler

Sylvia borin

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

This species was recorded in 238 tetrads, 23% of the county total number. The first report was of two birds at Stansted Forest on 3 Apr, a day earlier than the 10-year average date and another at Sidlesham Tramway (Pagham Hbr) the following day. Observers at Beachy Head saw only one spring bird, on 16 Apr, but on the 25th seven were reported at Snap Hill (Friston Forest) and six at Broadbridge Heath the next day. Five males were singing at Pulborough Brooks on 9 May and at least four at both Linchmere Common and Chelwood Gate on the 19th.

None nested at Rye Hbr; there was a single pair at Pagham Hbr and four pairs bred at Pulborough Brooks, where an adult and a fledgling were seen together on 6 Jun. During the BBS, a total of 48 was recorded from 33 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of three at Graffham Down on 7 Jun.



Garden Warbler, Pulborough Brooks, April 2011 (Sandra Palme)

An individual retrapped at Steyning in August had been caught on similar dates in the previous two years, and a total of 33 new birds trapped at the site was encouraging after the 2010 figure of just 12. Numbers ringed at Cissbury were very similar to 2010, but three different females had brood patches, and two juveniles were found on 25 Jun and 9 Jul (Steyning RG data). In July the maximum ringed at Pett Level was 19 on the 26th, 29th and 31st while in August 43 new birds on the 14th was the highest total. Another poor autumn was reported by ringers at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head), where only 80 new birds were ringed. A comment in the Beachy Head log lamented the decline which started in the 1980s, recalling day totals of 120 and 130 on 14 and 18 Aug 1970 in comparison with the 2011 maximum of just 12.

Most birds had departed by the end of September. There were records from four sites in October: four were ringed at Pett Level between the 1st and 15th, a single bird was seen at Owlbeech Woods (Horsham) on the 2nd and the 9th, one was at Beachy Head on the 1st and another at Combe Haven on the 25th. The final individual was one ringed at Pett Level on the 29th, over a fortnight later than the 10-year average date. [VPB]

Barred Warbler

Sylvia nisoria

Very scarce autumn visitor.

Following a blank year in 2010 there were three records this year. All three records were of first year birds and all were trapped: Pett Level on 18 Sep and 25 Sep (RBRG) and at Cissbury on 17 Oct (Steyning RG). These three records bring the county total to 59 of which 14 have been this century. All records have been in the autumn, in August (nine from the 17th), September (38) and October (12 to the 31st). [DHH]

Lesser Whitethroat

Sylvia curruca

Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant.

This species was recorded from 198 tetrads, just under 20% of the county total number. The first arrival was noted in East Sussex at Hastings CP on 10 Apr, two days earlier than the 10-year average date and in West Sussex also on the 10 Apr at Pulborough Brooks and Broadwater (Worthing). Three males were heard singing at Thorney Island on the 15th and five were recorded at Pett Level on the 22nd.

Though two were recorded at Brighton Wild Park on 23 Apr, none bred at the site, but there were 13 pairs at Thorney Island. Four pairs were present at Pulborough Brooks, the same as 2010, and two at Amberley Wild Brooks. Nine pairs at Rye Hbr was a decrease from 12 in 2010, though there had only been eight the previous year. At Pagham Hbr this trend was reversed, with a total of 17 pairs, five more than in 2010, but there had been 20 reported in 2009. A pair was seen feeding fledglings near Steyning on 9 Jul. During the BBS, a total of 29 was recorded from 18 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of three at Dallington on 9 Jun. Two females with brood patches were trapped at Cissbury, but no juvenile birds were found there and the total of only seven individuals ringed included only three first year birds. Numbers were more encouraging at Steyning where all nine birds ringed were first years and three were still in juvenile plumage (Steyning RG data).

The monthly maximum moving through Beachy Head in August was 17 on the 17th, 12 were recorded at Cissbury Ring on the 22nd, and a maximum of 18 were at Pett Level on the 31st. In

September the maximum at Pett Level was 15 on the 2nd. There was a slight increase in the number of this species ringed by Beachy Head RG with 45 different individuals trapped, compared with only 36 the previous year. The only October sightings of the year were single birds at Pett Level on the 1st and 2nd and at Weir Wood Res on the 11th, equalling the 10-year average date. [VPB]

Common Whitethroat

Sylvia communis

Very common summer visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

This species was recorded from 520 tetrads, 50% of the county total number. The first birds were reported on 3 Apr when singles were seen at both Pulborough Brooks and Weir Wood Res, two days earlier than the first sighting of 2010 and three days later than the 10-year average date. By the 7th, reports had come from another 12 sites and the species was widespread by the middle of the month, with at least four singing males along Sidlesham Tramway (Pagham Hbr) on the 16th, 15 at Newhaven, 20 at No-Man's Land (Findon) on the 17th and 24 at Climping Gap two days later. Sixteen birds were recorded at Newhaven Tide Mills and 12 on the Eastern Rother Levels on the 23rd.

In a 2-hr Atlas survey at Little Common (Tillington) on 20 Apr, six birds were found in the first hour and eight in the second, while at Fore Hill (Southease) on the 30th 15 were found in the first hour and 13 in the second. Several other Atlas surveyors located numbers in double figures, at sites such as Bosham Hoe, Oving, Colworth (Bognor), Bignor Hill, Chantry Hill, Broomer's Corner (Shipley), Truleigh Sands (Small Dole), Crowham Manor (Westfield) and Guestling. A male singing at Witdean Park (Brighton) was the first noted by the observer since a pair bred there in 1988.

During the BBS, a total of 489 was recorded from 102 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 21 at Partridge Green on 24 Apr. Breeding season reports were of four pairs at Arundel WWT and Amberley Wild Brooks, 173 pairs on the Norfolk Estate, a decrease of 19 over 2010 but still higher than the previous year, 16 pairs at Pulborough Brooks and an estimated 14 pairs along Ferring Rife, where an adult was seen feeding five young in an adjoining garden on 7 Jun. A total of 46 territories at Rye Hbr was seven less than in 2010, but Thorney Island held 71 pairs compared with just 37 pairs in 2010.

At Cissbury 105 different individuals were trapped, of which 84 were first year birds, while at Steyning the totals were 104 and 95 respectively. The Beachy Head RG handled 598 different birds at Whitbread Hollow, more than twice the total in 2010, with 561 being first years, indicating a good breeding season for this widespread species. Autumn passage at the site was noted as being exceptional, with 300 recorded on 14 Aug and 350 on the 17th.

During September most sightings came from near the coast. A total of 109 on the 10th was the monthly maximum at Pett Level, while 30 were seen at Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) the same day. In October records came from 11 sites between the 1st and 15th. There were then no more reports until an individual was trapped and ringed at Pett Level on 13 Nov and a very late bird was at Thorney Island on the 25th, just over a month later than the 10-year average date of 23 Oct. [VPB]

Dartford Warbler*Sylvia undata*

Scarce to fairly common but localised resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The localised range of this species meant that it was recorded in only 18 tetrads, half of them being on the breeding grounds of either the Wealden Heathlands or Ashdown Forest. Coastal records in the first winter period were from two sites: Thorney Island (Chichester Hbr), where a single bird was seen on 2 Jan, 8 and 14 Feb with two there on 12 Feb, and Rye Hbr on 22 and 25 Feb. Elsewhere an individual was seen at Iping Common on 30 Jan with a probable pair there on 3 Feb. There were four records of single birds at sites on Ashdown Forest between 8 Jan and 22 Mar.

During the annual Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey only one pair was recorded, at Iping Common, but two pairs were seen there on 30 Jun and there were four other sightings there during the breeding season. The only other breeding season record from the west of the county was of two birds found during an Atlas survey at Weavers Down (Liss) on 15 May. While these numbers are very low, there were no territories identified in this area in 2010. On Ashdown Forest, breeding was confirmed in two tetrads. Adults were seen carrying food at Camp Hill on 4 Jun and elsewhere on 15 Jul. There was probable breeding in three tetrads and possible breeding in a further four. As in 2010, a minimum of six pairs or territories was identified (see page 245 for details). Elsewhere in the breeding season there was a record of a bird singing at the Fire Hills (Hastings CP) on 19 May and later at Fairlight Glen on 14 Jul.

These breeding figures show how the county population of this species, which numbered a possible 67 pairs in 2009 and 98 in 2008, has been so adversely affected by recent hard winters, as described in the June 2012 issue of *British Birds* (*British Birds* 105:308-317).

From autumn onwards there were numerous sightings around the county, mostly at coastal sites although a single bird was seen at Cissbury Ring on five occasions between 23 Sep and 21 Oct. At Hastings CP, there was one on 26 Sep, two on 28 Sep, three on 30 Sep, two on 8 Oct and finally one at the Fire Hills on 15 Oct. At Pagham Hbr a single birds was recorded on nine dates between 2 Oct and 11 Nov and there was a single birds at Thorney Island (Chichester Hbr) on four dates between 28 Oct and 25 Nov.

In addition, there was a male was at Beachy Head on 23 Oct and a single bird was recorded at Roman Road (Ashdown Forest) on 27 Nov and 3 Dec. One was at Hastings CP on 30 Nov. At Iping Common there was one bird on 29 Sep, three on 12 Nov, one on 27 Nov and four on 10 Dec. The final record of the year was from Rye Hbr on 22 Dec. [SPS]

Grasshopper Warbler*Locustella naevia*

Very scarce and declining summer visitor and fairly common passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

This species was recorded from only 27 tetrads. The first report was of a single bird at Weir Wood Res on 6 Apr, three days earlier than the 10-year average date. The next sighting was exactly a week later when a reeling male was heard by a working party at Greenlease Fm (Pagham Hbr), and on the 15th one was singing at Shooters' Bottom (Beachy Head). Other April records came from Thorney Deepes, Amberley Wild Brooks, Pulborough Brooks, Ripe and Rye Hbr.

During May and June, sites where males seem to have established territories were Thorney Deepes, Amberley Wild Brooks, where there were possibly four territories, Pulborough Brooks, Filsham LNR and Rye Hbr, though breeding was not confirmed at any of these sites.

Two birds were ringed at Cissbury this year, where the only other records this century were singles in 2000 and 2007 (Steyning RG data), three were trapped at Ladywells (Coombes) and 23 at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head). At Pett Level birds were ringed on most days between 10 Jul and 8 Oct, with monthly maxima of 57 on 27 Jul, 51 on 29 Aug and 44 on 16 Sep. The final record of the year at Beachy Head was of two on 27 Sep; 13 individuals were ringed at Pett Level in October, the last being on the 15th, two days earlier than the 10-year average date. [VPB]

Savi's Warbler

Locustella luscinioides

Rare visitor, has bred. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The only record was of a male in song at Pett Level between 27 May and 24 Jun (IDH *et al.*). The record has been accepted by BBRC. [DHH]

Icterine Warbler

Hippolais icterina

Rare vagrant.

A juvenile bird, trapped and ringed at Pett Level on 15 Aug (RBRG), a typical date, was the only record, bringing the county total to 42, including seven this century. Records have been for May (5), June (1), July (1), August (24) and September (11). [JAH]

Melodious Warbler

Hippolais polyglotta

Very scarce visitor.

After a blank year in 2010 there were three records for 2011, one at Southerham Fm (Lewes) on 22 Jul (DP), one trapped at Pett Level on 23 Jul (RBRG) and another at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on 6 Aug (RDME, PF). Although the Southerham and Pett Level birds were on consecutive days, one was an adult and the other a first year bird. There have now been a maximum of 29 in the county since 1990, of which 50% have been at Beachy Head, and 65 in total since 1957. [VPB]

Blyth's Reed Warbler

Acrocephalus dumetorum

Very rare vagrant.

An adult was trapped and photographed at Pett Level on 10 Jun but was not seen subsequently (IDH, SH *et al.*). This is the first record of the species in Sussex, which breeds in southern Finland and the Baltic countries eastwards to northwest China and winters in the Indian subcontinent, and has been accepted by BBRC. An account of the finding of this bird appears on page 253 of this report. [DHH]

Marsh Warbler

Acrocephalus palustris

Rare summer visitor and very scarce passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

During late May and June five singing males were recorded from four sites in East Sussex and, at two of these, birds have been present in several recent summers. At one of these locations at least three different individuals were recorded on four dates between 10 Jul and 15 Aug. There were no records of breeding activity or success apart from birds being present in suitable habitat. [JAH]

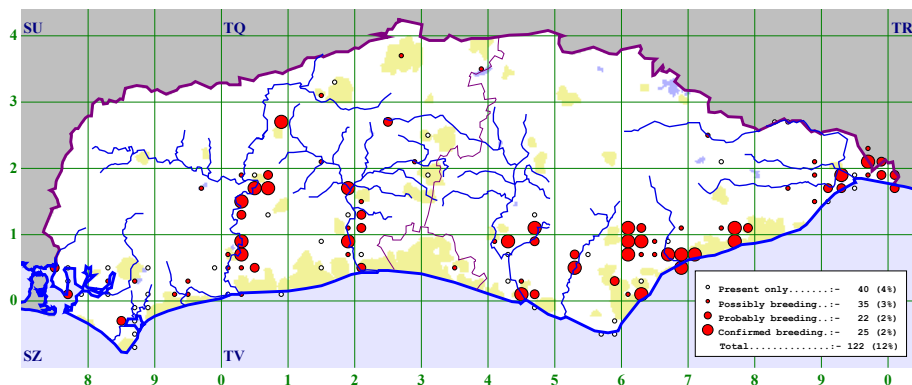
Sedge Warbler

Acrocephalus schoenobaenus

Fairly common summer visitor and common passage migrant.

The first bird was recorded at Rye Hbr on 28 Mar, the same date as in 2010 and one day earlier than the 10-year average date. This was followed by two at Arundel on 2 Apr and then five at Rye Hbr on the 3rd. There were many single figure reports from a wide selection of sites until the 19th when 11 were recorded at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven). The maximum count at Pett Level for this month was 23 on the 22nd. In May 33 pairs were counted on Thorney Deeps and a further 14 pairs elsewhere on Thorney Island. Elsewhere about 10 pairs were on Horse Eye Level (Pevensy), a minimum of 22 pairs at Amberley Wild Brooks, 42 territories were mapped at Rye Hbr and an estimated 30 pairs at Pett Level.

The species was recorded from 119 tetrads (11 more than in 2010). Breeding was confirmed in 24 (a welcome 16 more than in 2010) and was probable in a further 22. During the BBS a total of 22 was recorded from nine of the 147 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum count of four on 28 May at Gate Court (Northiam).



The first obvious returning migrants were a first year bird trapped at Cissbury Ring and a single bird at Belle Tout (Beachy Head) on 28 Jul. These were followed by another single bird at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on the 30th and then 325 at Pett Level on the 31st. In August the monthly maximum at Pett Level was 603 on the 6th followed by 350 on the 14th. During September the monthly maximum at this site was 243 on the 10th whereas elsewhere only single

figures were recorded. There were records in October from Pett Level where the last two birds were noted on the 17th, four days later than the 10-year county average. [TWP]

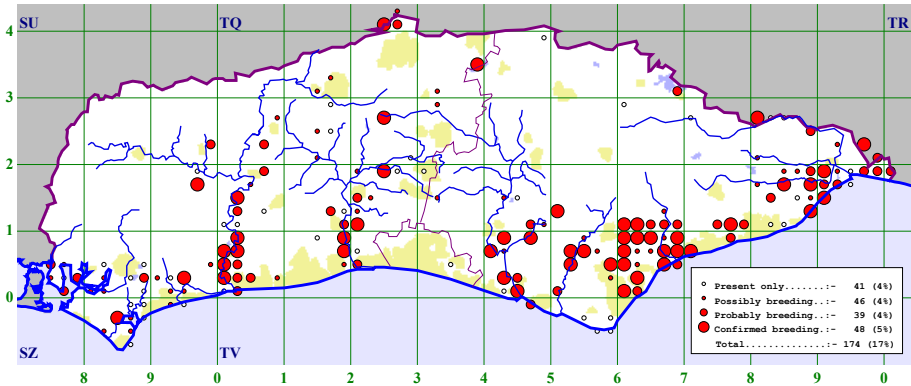
Eurasian Reed Warbler

Acrocephalus scirpaceus

Common summer visitor and very common passage migrant.

For the third year running the first returning bird was recorded at Pagham Hbr, on 2 Apr, five days earlier compared with both 2010 and the 10-year average date and two days earlier than the earliest for the period 1960-2009. This was followed by singles at several widely scattered sites in the county until the 11th when ten were counted at Langney (Eastbourne). Amongst the larger counts for this month were another of ten at Langness (Bognor) on the 18th, 12 at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) on the 19th, 16 at Lewes Brooks on the 20th, 21 at Sefter Farm (Rose Green), 42 at Pagham Hbr on the 24th and finally 30 at Southerham Fm (Lewes) on the 24th.

May did not provide any further significant figures at any one site but the species was certainly numerous throughout the county and some of the larger counts during the breeding season included at least 30 pairs at Brook Barn Fm (Wick), a total of 76 pairs on Thorney Island and 17 pairs at Arundel WWT. Although 169 pairs were counted at Rye Hbr, as in some previous years not of all the area could be covered and the full total was thought to be in excess of 250 pairs. The species was recorded in 172 tetrads (49 more than in 2010) and breeding was confirmed in 47 of these, continuing the upward trend, and was possible in a further 38, again a welcome increase. During the BBS, a total of 75 was recorded from 14 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum count of 24 on 1 Jun at Thorney Island.



Presumed autumn passage seemed to start early with one at Beachy Head on 13 Jul, another at Cissbury Ring on the 19th and another one at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on the 25th. Migration continued into August with 106 trapped at Pett Level on the 1st and a single at Belle Tout (Beachy Head) on the 3rd, 30 at Whitbread Hollow on the 6th and 40 at various Beachy Head sites on the 14th. As usual many hundreds of birds were ringed on several days throughout the autumn at Pett Level. In October birds were recorded from eight sites and four birds lingered on until 16 Nov at Pett Level. [TWP]

Waxwing***Bombycilla garrulus****Rare winter visitor.*

The second winter period of 2010 was an irruption year for Waxwings which extended into 2011. In Dec 2010 the peak number in the county was at least 337 birds and although numbers fell, the first winter period of 2011 continued to be good for this species in Sussex. They were recorded at 56 sites across the county but with more birds seen in East Sussex than West.

In the west, 30 were seen at East Worthing on New Year's Day, and 35 at West Tarring (Worthing) the next day probably involved the same flock. Other high counts in January came from East Sussex where 20 were noted at Eastbourne on New Year's Day and 25 at East Dean on the 2nd. There were 30 at Winchelsea on the 4th, 30 in Eastbourne on the 11th (probably the same flock as on the 1st) and 22 at Pett Level on the 19th. Altogether, they were seen at 31 locations during January. There were fewer records in February: 28 at Bexhill on the 15th and 27 at Angmering on the 20th were the highest counts and others were seen at six other locations during the month. In March 30 were at Crawley on the 3rd, another 30 at Hove on the 29th when there were also 48 at Horsham; smaller numbers were also seen at twelve other locations during the month. On 1 Apr 51 were noted at South Harting while 50 at Cocking two days later were probably the same roving birds. Whether the 48 seen at Horsham on 29 Mar were the same flock is debatable as is the possibility that the increased numbers noted during week 13 (28 Mar-3 Apr) were birds moving through from other areas. The last birds seen during this period were three at Pulborough Brooks on 18 Apr.

The following table gives approximate weekly totals by area during the first winter period:

	January				February				March				April			
Week number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Dates	1-9	10-16	17-23	24-30	31-6	7-13	14-20	21-27	28-6	7-13	14-20	21-27	28-3	4-10	11-17	18-24
County total	145	50	38	13	51	0	81	42	30	46	42	44	172	32	20	3
Chichester area		1								2			13			
Pagham/Bognor	15	7					16									
Billingshurst area	12				5								51			
Littlehampton area	12		16	3	8		27			1						
Worthing/Shoreham	35	1		10												
Pulborough Brooks													30			3
Brighton/Hove	4										13	28	30			
Ouse Valley	25	9														
Cuckfield/Burgess Hill	11										23					
Crawley/Horsham area					20			19	30	20		16	48	32	20	
East Grinstead area		2														
Eastbourne/Pevensy	1	30					2				2					
Heathfield							8									
Bexhill/Hastings					18		28	23		23	4					
Pett/Winchelsea	30		22													

From this analysis it would appear that the peak number in the county could have been 172 between 28 Mar and 3 Apr but as birds were moving around it is impossible to rule out some double counting.

In contrast to the first winter period, the only records in the second winter period were of one bird at Warnham LNR on 4 Dec and three at East Grinstead on the 6th.

To compare with another irruption year, during the first winter period of 2005 numbers in February peaked at 2000 birds, the largest number of Waxwings ever recorded in the county. [MJC]



Waxwing, Crawley, March 2011 (Sandra Palme)

Nuthatch

Sitta europaea

Common resident.

Nuthatches were recorded from 461 tetrads, 44% of the county total, spread across the county. Over half (63%) of the records received were of either single birds (37%) or of presence only (26%). The majority of records came from the first winter period and through the breeding season, whilst fewer records were received for the second winter period. This may, in part, reflect the higher observer coverage during the completion of the Atlas work in the first part of the year.

During the first winter period there were four double-figure counts received during January: ten on the 3rd at Pulborough Brooks, eleven at Skippers Hill (Five Ashes) on the 19th, ten at Roundstreet Common (Loxwood) on the 21st and 11 at Idehurst (Wisborough Green) on the 23rd. A further three double figure counts in February were received: ten at Bolney on the 15th and 18th, whilst the year's highest count of 18 came from Roundhurst (Northchapel) on the 24th; ten were at Pulborough Brooks on 21 Mar. Thirty three records of between five and nine birds were received during this period.



Nuthatch, Warnham LNR, November 2011 (Sandra Palme)

During the BBS a total of 187 was recorded from 68 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of eight at the Parham Estate on 7 Apr. Breeding was confirmed from 125 locations in 109 tetrads, with probable breeding providing another 156 records from 83 tetrads.

At Chelwood Gate (Ashdown Forest) on 1 Mar a nest box in a garden was being visited, whilst later that month, on the 25th, a bird was observed nest building at Wiggonholt Common and another was using or inspecting a hole at Leechpool Woods (Horsham). An adult was seen carrying food or a faecal sac on 10 Apr at Wickham (Hurstpierpoint). Further records of nest building were received throughout April, with a nest box in use by the 24 Apr at Angmering Park. By 27 Apr a nest at Parham Estate contained young. From early May evidence was received of successful breeding from various locations. The first fledglings were recorded on 25 May at West Chiltington and Brede and throughout June into early July. From then onwards evidence of successful breeding was more sporadic until the last record of fledged young on 6 Aug at Hammerwood (East Grinstead).

A bird observed displaying at Goring Gap on 3 Apr was the first record there for the observer in 40 years and another observer commented that one (or the same) seen there on the 8th was considered rare; with further records of three on 18 Aug and two on the 22nd breeding here was thought to be possible. As the observer commented, it is as close to the sea as a Nuthatch can get! An individual observed at Brighton Wild Park on 7 Apr was also thought very unusual.

During the autumn higher counts of birds began to be received, notably seven at Poynings on 3 Sep, eight at Pulborough Brooks on the 26th and six at Broadbridge Heath on the 28th. In the second winter period, the highest counts came from Pulborough Brooks with ten on 17 Oct, nine

on 12 Dec and eight on 14 Nov. At only 11 locations were counts of five or six birds recorded and most sites held only single birds and only a few had between two and four. During the SWBS a total of 115 was recorded from 45 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of eight at Warnham LNR on 26 Nov. [DB]

Eurasian Treecreeper

Certhia familiaris

Common resident.

Treecreepers were recorded from 383 tetrads, 37% of the county total, generally concentrated north of the Downs in the centre section of the county. Almost 40% of the tetrads wholly within Sussex recorded Treecreeper at some time during the year. Most records from the first winter period involved low numbers of this often elusive species, one or two being the norm. In January four birds were at Weir Wood Res on the 1st, Ifold on the 7th, Wheatsheaf Common (Milland) on the 9th, Staple Ash Fm (Chilgrove) on the 23rd and five at Pulborough Brooks on the 31st. Pulborough Brooks also held five on 7 Feb, whilst six were recorded at Bolney on the 15th and at Rackham on the 27th. The latter site still held five on 6 Mar. Also during March fours were recorded at Jarvis Brook on the 7th, Pett Level on the 11th, Warnham LNR on the 19th, Pulborough Brooks on the 21st and Guestling Wood on the 22nd.

A bird was heard singing from as early as 9 Jan at Pickering Fm (Ardingly), although February proved more popular with a dozen birds singing from various locations and singing birds continued to be recorded into April. During the BBS a total of 71 was recorded from 36 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of seven at the Butchers Cross on 17 Jun. Breeding was confirmed from 88 locations in 79 tetrads, with a further 75 sites in 48 tetrads constituting probable breeding. During the breeding season numbers recorded were low as might be expected, except for the nine seen at Mayfield on 3 Apr and again on 12 Jun. Evidence of successful breeding was first obtained at Parrock (Hartfield) on 22 Apr, where an adult was seen carrying either food or a faecal sac, and at Ticehurst on 28 Apr by the same method, whilst at Warnham LNR successful fledging was observed on 3 May with young being fed in a willow. Fledged young were first recorded on 13 May at Charlwood (Ashdown Forest). Confirmed breeding continued to be recorded throughout May and June and into early July; the latest breeding records for the year involved records of fledged young at Winchelsea on 24 Jul, Catsfield on the 26th and lastly at Great Noven Fm (Chailey) on the 30th, indicating that Treecreeper has a quite extended breeding season.

Apart from several records from gardens (in Henfield, Angmering and Barcombe Cross), there was also an unusual sighting from Hove Park on 21 Oct, where the species was considered to be rare for this site. An individual bathing in a stream at Roffey (Horsham) on 14 Nov must have been an unexpected sighting for the observer.

In the second winter period numbers recorded returned to single figures in the main with a few sites holding two or three; the exceptions were the seven at Pett Level on 12 Oct and five there on 6 Nov, seven at Burwash Weald on the 13th, four at Ladywells (Coombes) on the 4th and 28th and four at Ashburnham Place (Battle) on 2 Dec. During the SWBS a total of 34 was recorded from 19 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of seven at Burwash Weald on 13 Nov.

Of 19 different birds ringed at Ladywells (Coombes) more than 75% were young birds, whilst of the ten ringed at Strivens Reedbed (Steyning), seven were birds of the year. All four of the birds ringed at Cissbury North Scarp were juveniles, and three of the four at Beachy Head were also first calendar year birds. At Pett Level, RBRG ringed 67 birds. [DB]

Wren*Troglodytes troglodytes*

Abundant resident.

Wrens were recorded from 651 tetrads, c.62% of the county total. In the first two months of the year, there were only five double figure counts (*cf.* seven in 2010, 19 in 2009) with a highest count of 14 on an Atlas TTV count on the Surrey border south of Charlwood. There were 11 at Broadbridge Heath on 30 Jan and Withdean (Brighton) on 3 Feb. A bird with dark, almost black, undertail coverts was noted at West Tarring (Worthing) on 7 Feb. In March the highest counts were of 29 at Guestling Wood on the 30th and 21 at West Blatchington (Hove) on the 2nd.

Counts from regularly surveyed sites across the year were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lagness (Bognor)	3	6	9	9	15	11	7	6	4	3	7	5
Sefter Fm (Rose Green)*	4	8	9	16	8	15	3	1	-	3	9	6
Lidsey Old Canal and Tip	1	-	7	8	19	8	1	4	1	2	7	4
Broadbridge Heath*	11	9	-	8	14	16	17	6	9	7	8	10
Chesworth Fm (Horsham)*	4	1	2	10	6	9	5	2	2	1	1	1
Brighton/Hove*	10	4	21	43	23	28	16	13	12	22	20	11
Poynings-Newtimber*	-	1	12	17	16	19	19	8	5	12	15	9
Lewes Race Course*	2	3	4	8	6	11	4	4	4	6	5	4

*the site appeared in a similar table in the 2010 report

During the BBS a total of 1232 was recorded from 140 (95%) of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 35 at Five Hundred Acre Wood (Ashdown Forest) on 30 May. Breeding was confirmed in 163 tetrads and was probable in a further 190 (*cf.* 111 and 229 respectively in 2010). The first bird recorded gathering nesting material, of dried hornbeam leaves and moss, was at Burgess Hill on 19 Jan, the next was on 15 Mar when a pair was nest building in a rose arbour at West Tarring and young were being fed there from 23 May. Young were being fed at Iford (Lewes) on 25 Apr and the first record of fledged young came from Rotherfield on 19 May, a late date. A young bird entered a Partridge Green kitchen on 24 Aug and the last dependent juvenile was noted in Withdean Woods on 1 Sep. At Pagham Hbr 87 pairs or territories were identified, at Rye Hbr 34 and 31 on The Norfolk Estate. A survey of The Severals and Priory Fields (Church Norton) found 19 pairs. During a CBC at Stedham Common 25 territories were identified.

During the Atlas survey period, 222 records were received; 12 counts exceeded 20 and the maximum was 31 at Three Oaks (Guestling) on 13 Apr (where only 21 were found on 3 Jul).

Records from the regular ringing stations were as follows:

	Total handled	New	Retrapped	First year	Adult	Maximum
Cissbury North Scarp	40	37	23	34	5	6 on 27 Aug
Strivens Reedbed (Steyning)	71	62	57	58	13	13 on 27 Jul
Ladywell (Coombes)	50	45	48	25	12	8 on 28 Sep
Beachy Head	43	29	0	19	2	6 on 29 Oct
Pett Level	418	371	47	343	75	15 on 15 Jul

Retrapped totals include birds first ringed this year and birds ringed in previous years.

During the SWBS a total of 315 was recorded in 85 of the 120 squares surveyed. There were two counts of ten, one of 11 and a maximum of 12 at Rake on 27 Dec; it was the ninth most commonly recorded species during the survey. During the second winter period, the highest counts were 20 in tetrad TQ20Y around Dyke Road (Brighton) on 1 Nov and 21 at the Garden of Eden (Ashdown Forest) on the 3rd. Full song was heard at Wick (Littlehampton) on 22 Dec. [CB]

Common Starling

Sturnus vulgaris

Common but declining resident, and very common to abundant winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Starlings were recorded from 551 tetrads across the county, c.53% of the county total. During the first winter period, 16,600 roosted on Brighton Palace Pier on 9 Jan and c.1200 also roosted at Chichester Railway Stn. Other four-figure flocks were not apparent until an influx from 17 Feb when 3000 were noted at Eastbourne Old Town followed, on 24 Feb, by 2000 inland at Upper Beeding, 1800 at Beachy Head and 2500 at Pett Level. The next day 1700 were counted at Eastbourne Redoubt and the following day 800 at Rye Hbr. Further evidence of this influx was 3000 at East Guldeford Level on 12 Mar and 1000 at Rye Hbr two days later. Three-figure flocks were reported from c.40 other sites, including a flock of 600 with 200 Fieldfares at Partridge Green on 24 Jan.



Common Starlings (Juvs.), Bishopstone, May 2011 (Peter Wilson)

During the BBS a total of 1402 was recorded from 93 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 79 at Westergate on 3 Jul. Breeding was confirmed in 206 tetrads and was probable in a further 43. The first evidence of breeding behaviour was of nest building on the toll bridge at Shoreham-by-Sea on 19 Mar. On 5 Apr nestlings were being fed at two nests in Findon

Park and on 4 May juveniles were out of the nest at Chichester. An estimated 77 pairs bred on the Norfolk Estate. In the breeding season Atlas TTV surveys 38 tetrads held ten or more Starlings with maxima of 115 at Camber and 110 at Hailsham.

Post-breeding flocks were evident from mid-May with 300 at Thorney Deeps on 20 May and a minimum count of 500 at Bewl Water on the 30th. Three-figure flocks were reported between May and August from 30 sites including 510 at Thundersbarrow Hill (Southwick) on 8 Jul and 500 at Steep Down (Lancing) on the 22nd. On 3 Aug 130 were counted at Selsey Bill. Numbers at Thorney Deeps rose to 2500 on 23 Aug and there were 2400 at Birling Gap on 3 Aug, 1500 at Sidlesham Ferry Field on 26 Aug and 1000 at Littlehampton three days later. During September five flocks in excess of 500 were reported.

A total of 4018 Starlings were recorded during the SWBS from 73 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum of 325 at Pett Level on 20 Dec. In the second winter period movements of 420 W on 6 Nov and 120 W on 12 Nov were observed at Beachy Head. The roost at the Brighton Palace Pier grew from 4000 on 4 Nov to 12,500 on the 27th when 2000 also roosted on the West Pier; there were 13,800 at Palace Pier on the last day of the year with a further 2000 at the West Pier. Flocks of 1000 were reported at Sidlesham Ferry on 11 Oct, Thorney Deeps on 29 Oct and Pett Level on 7 Nov. A large flock roosted at Arundel WWT throughout December with a maximum of 4000 on 19 Dec. [ACG]

Rose-coloured Starling

Sturnus roseus

Rare vagrant.

There were no records during 2011 but there is one previously unpublished record:

2008: An adult male at Whitbread Hollow, Beachy Head on 30 May (JFC).

This brings the total for the county to 35 of which ten have been recorded this century. [DHH]

Ring Ouzel

Turdus torquatus

Passage migrant; very scarce in spring; scarce in autumn. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Ring Ouzels were recorded from 37 tetrads mostly at or near coastal sites and downland prominences. A fine spring count was followed by a modest autumn passage. The estimated minimum monthly totals, after allowing for possible duplication, were as follows:

Apr	May		Sep	Oct	Nov
18	2		7	77	8

The first bird of the year was recorded on 5 Apr at East Grinstead, eight days later than the 10-year average date of 28 Mar. The next was noted on the 6th at Cissbury Ring; spring migration was therefore late again. It is interesting to note, in this context, that the 10-year average date (2011) is now 12 days later than in 2006 and ten days later than in 2001. Reports during April included single birds at Pett Level on the 9th, Steyning Round Hill from the 10th to the 15th, Shooters Bottom (Beachy Head) on the 11th, Hastings on the 15th, Brighton on the 20th, Ashdown Forest on the 21st and 28th and Pevensey on the 30th. Pagham Hbr held three birds on 17 Apr while in May singles

were observed at Shoreham on the 1st and lastly Chichester on the 10th, the latter bird being three days later than the 10-year average date of 7 May. The estimated total of 20 exceeds the 10-year average of 16.

Beachy Head observers encountered the first three or four returning birds on 16 Sep, two days later than the 10-year average of 14 Sep. The next day there was one at Truleigh Hill followed by one at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on the 27th and another at Church Norton on the 30th which may have been the one there on 2 Oct. In October, two birds at Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on the 2nd heralded an influx and on the same day the first two birds were seen at Hastings where 15 were recorded between the 2nd and 21st, peaking at seven flying together on the 6th. At Church Norton a male and female were noted on the 4th. One appeared at Weir Wood Res on the 7th while Truleigh Hill was popular with three birds on the 7th and eight on the 15th. Three were seen at Newhaven on the 13th followed by twos at Cissbury Ring (14th), Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) (15th), Steyning (19th) and Beddingham Hill and Firle (19th). Single birds were also recorded at several sites to the end of October. In November an exodus was centred on Beachy Head where birds were noted on five dates, the last being seen on the 16th, a few days later than the 10-year average of 12 Nov. The autumn total of 92 was disappointing compared to the 10-year average of 111, even allowing for 2005's excessive count of 406. [JHW]

Blackbird

Turdus merula

Abundant breeding resident; very common or abundant winter visitor; status uncertain as passage migrant.

Blackbirds were recorded from 550 tetrads (53% of the county total). Despite the number of records received being just 5% lower than the previous year the number of birds recorded fell by almost 40%, led by a drop of 45% in the first half of the year. This may, of course, be due to a reduction in the number of Atlas tetrads required to be surveyed if the species had been adequately recorded in the previous years (see below).

The Atlas breeding season survey covered 157 tetrads with a highest count of 41 at Marley Common on 17 May; this contrasts with a high count of 68 in 2010 from 601 tetrads. Two other tetrads yielded thirty birds: 37 at Roundtree Common (Loxwood) on 8 May and 33 at Blackboys on 2 Jul.

During the BBS a total of 1856 was recorded from 146 (99%) of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 34 at Southleigh Forest (Emsworth) on 22 Apr. Breeding was confirmed in 63 tetrads and was probable in a further 44. These figures are surprisingly low for such a common and widespread species when compared with 130 and 139 respectively for Song Thrush. Nest building was reported from Framfield on 11 Feb and West Worthing on the 23rd. A nest with eggs was noted on 26 Mar at Troutbridge (Eridge) and adults were noted carrying food on 5 Apr at West Worthing and Findon Park. A nest with young was recorded on 14 Apr at Ladywells (Coombes) and the first fledglings were noted on 22 Apr at Nap Wood (Frant). Most breeding activity appeared to be a few weeks later but active nests or juveniles were seen until early August. Individual records cited 46 juvenile birds while 160 records claimed recently fledged young. This year there were just 108 pairs in the 1240 ha Norfolk Estate, compared to 155 pairs in 2010. Numbers at Pagham Hbr declined again to 37 pairs from 41 (and 65 in 2009) and Rye Hbr held 27 pairs, reducing from 32 pairs in 2010 but similar to 2009's count.

During the autumn and second winter period there were 29 counts of over 20 birds, the highest were 56 at Beachy Head on 8 Nov, 51 at Pett Level on the 5th and 47 at Rye Bay on the 15th, which

probably include influxes of passage birds. During the SWBS a total of 1022 was recorded from 115 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 28 at Peacehaven on 7 Nov.

Ringling returns from the principal ringing groups are summarised as follows:

	No.	New	Prev.	Adults	Young
Steining RG, Strivens Reedbed	146	93	12	25	80
Steining RG, Cissbury North Scarp	68	39	15	23	31
Ladywells (Coombes)	119	68	24	50	40
Beachy Head RG	75	61	4	24	41
Rye Bay RG	551	477	74	261	290

No. = No. handled; Prev. = No. ringed previously and controls

The number handled by the RBRG constituted a record. [JHW]

Fieldfare

Turdus pilaris

Common, occasionally very common, passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

Fieldfares were recorded from 288 tetrads. A fine January count, though less than half that of 2010, maintained the first winter period total at the recent average. An exceptional November count raised the late year total to 40% above normal. The approximate monthly totals in the E-W halves of the county were as given in the table below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	5588	3245	1035	129		1	659	6150	3392
West of TQ30	2794	1743	391	119		1	86	2695	1613
East of TQ30	2794	1502	644	10		-	573	3455	1779

The largest counts for January included three records of 300 birds or more and another dozen of at least 100, the highlights being 500 at Three Leg Cross (Ticehurst) and 400 at Hunston (Chichester) on the 9th while, in February, 250 or more were found at Pulborough Brooks and Climping in the west and at Pett Level and Rye Hbr in the east. During the March decline 250 were found at Barcombe and another c.200 at Pulborough Brooks. Most of April's birds were in the west, including 100 at the Cowdray Park GC on the 2nd, with the final sightings at Northlands (Warnham) on the 16th and Amberley and Pulborough Brooks on the 18th, ten days earlier than the 10-year average. The sightings during this first period totalled 10,000 which is average.

A returning bird was seen on Truleigh Hill on 26 Sep, the only bird that month and three days earlier than the 10-year average. The next was at Hastings on 9 Oct followed by 14 flying over Rye Hbr on the 11th, 32 at Beachy Head on the 13th and a total of 80 in a number of flocks in Ashdown Forest the next day when individual birds also reached Pagham Hbr and Climping. It was another month before numbers reached the hundreds, when perhaps 700 birds passed through Ashdown Forest on 13 Nov and later up to 400 were found between Burpham and Pulborough followed by 270 at Beeding Brooks, 500 or so at Pevensey Levels and 250 at Rodmell. In late November there were 320 at Weir Wood Res and 358 at Pett Level and eight or nine records of

100-200 birds. There were another 13 records of counts greater than 100 in December but none exceeding 200, the highlights being 200 at each of Pulborough Brooks, Billingshurst, Henfield Levels and Bewl Water, 120 at The Burgh (Burpham) and 154 at Pett Level. The second period total of 10,200 birds was 40% above average, boosted by the exceptional November counts. During the SWBS a total of 1036 was recorded from 48 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 150 at Hooe Level (Pevensey) on 22 Nov. Thirty two were ringed during the year but none was re-trapped. [JHW]

Song Thrush

Turdus philomelos

Very common but decreasing resident and partial migrant; common passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Song Thrushes were recorded from 595 tetrads, 57% of the county total, distributed evenly across the county. Records received fell by 20% and validated sightings by 40% compared to 2010. The unduplicated count from 2132 records was c.4200 birds and there seemed to be just 2000 different birds in the county, a serious decline, although the breeding records were favourable. The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	295	489	303	590	582	769	268	51	108	232	255	272

Few sightings before June even approached ten birds although 15 at Battle on 8 Feb and 20 at Pett Level on 11 Mar stood out.

During the BBS a total of 517 was recorded from 124 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 15 at Northchapel on 6 Jul. Breeding was confirmed from 130 tetrads and was probable in a further 139 compared with 89 and 150 respectively in 2010. The first records of nest building were dated 8 Mar at Mewsbrook (Littlehampton) and the 21st at Findon Park. A record of fledged young came from Filsham LNR on 23 Mar where there were three territories and two broods. A nest with young was recorded at Northlands (Warnham) on 6 Apr, adults carrying food were seen at Jevington on the 7th and the second record of fledged young was from Nap Wood (Frant) on the 22nd. There were 32 pairs on The Norfolk Estate (down from 44) and 27 at Pagham Hbr. Another ten pairs were noted at Amberley Wild Brooks, eight at Pulborough Brooks, six at Rackham Plantation and eight singing males at Goodwood. Only nine juveniles were reported explicitly from just four sites although fledged young were declared in 44 records and food/faecal sac carrying in another 88.

Post-breeding or migration gatherings became apparent in September when 30 birds were seen at Cissbury Ring on the 15th followed, in October, by 17 at Brighton Wild Park and 25 at Sheepcote Valley (Brighton). There were 28 birds at Pett Level growing to 33 in November but diminishing to 19 in December although it was still the highest count that month. During an extended migration watch at Hastings a total of only 41 birds was recorded, compared to 443 in 2010, over 13 dates between 28 Sep and 15 Nov with a maximum day count of seven. During the SWBS a total of 139 was recorded from 59 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of ten at Warnham LNR on 26 Nov. Observers at Beachy Head commented that this species was recorded on only 28 days during the year in very low numbers with a daily maximum of only eight. Numbers there have been in steep decline over the past two decades; in the 1960s 30

breeding pairs were estimated. Autumn daily maxima during the 1970s were around the 100 mark but since the 1980s a significant decline in numbers has been noted.

Ringling returns from the principal ringing groups are summarised as follows:

	No.	New	Prev.	Adults	Young
Steyning RG, Strivens Reedbed	24	23	1	6	18
Steyning RG, Cissbury North Scarp	29	23	6	9	20
Ladywells (Coombes)	45	42	3	4	33
Beachy Head RG	17	15	2	6	11
Rye Bay RG	275	262	13	47	228

No. = No. handled; Prev = No. ringed previously and controls

At Whitbread Hollow, BHRG trapped seven birds of the greyer continental form: three on 13 Oct and twos on 28 Oct and 8 Nov. [JHW]

Redwing

Turdus iliacus

Common, occasionally very common, passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

Redwings were recorded from 308 tetrads, spread fairly uniformly across the county. In the first winter period sightings returned to normal compared to last year's inundation but the second period counts were the lowest for at least ten years despite an earliest ever first sighting. The approximate monthly totals in the W-E halves of the county were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	2954	2452	1017		1	9	401	757	916
West of TQ30	1687	1447	523				128	466	596
East of TQ30	1267	1005	494		1	9	273	291	320

The high December counts of 2010 continued into 2011 and the first winter period total was above the 10-year average, though still less than half of last year's high count. Gatherings exceeding 100 birds were infrequent, peaking at 167 at Pulborough Brooks on 10 Jan, 150 at Brinsbury Estate on the 17th, 200 at Bells Yew Green (Tunbridge Wells) on 12 Feb, 175 at Bolney on the 15th and 150 at Duncton on the 10th. One hundred birds at Barcombe and 150 at Parham Estate in early March were the prelude to the decline in numbers, though up to 20 were to be seen as late as the 23rd. The final birds were one at Pulborough Brooks on 29 Mar and two at Guestling Wood (Hastings) on the 30th, rather earlier than the 10-year average of 18 Apr.

A returning adult female set a new county record when it was trapped and ringed at Whitbread Hollow on 6 Aug (RDME *et al.*), the previous record being 14 Aug and the 10-year average 26 Sep. (The county's earliest date for Fieldfare is also 6 Aug, at this site in 1983). Seven weeks later, on 26 Sep, a flock of eight birds was observed flying low over Chelwood Gate (Ashdown Forest) and next day a single bird was seen at Weir Wood Res. A further pause ensued until 70 birds were counted at Beachy Head on 9 Oct and a few were noted at Pett Level and Hastings heralding flocks of a dozen or two birds right across the county. Peaks of 100 birds occurred at Knepp MP on 18 Nov and Weir Wood Res on the 26th while the December counts peaked with 50

at Pulborough Brooks on the 5th, 80 on Harting Down on the 15th and 64 at The Midrips on the 26th. The period total of 2084 birds is the lowest for over ten years and only 35% of the 10-year average, dragging the whole year total down to 73% of the 10-year average. During the SWBS a total of 226 was recorded from 33 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 28 at Ashurst on 22 Dec. [JHW]

Mistle Thrush

Turdus viscivorus

Common resident and partial migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Mistle Thrushes were recorded from 396 tetrads (38% of the county total) spread across the county. For the fourth year running the number of records fell from the previous year, especially during the first six months when bird numbers were down by a quarter. The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	145	155	91	157	186	144	80	73	81	83	66	61

Again there were no large gatherings during the first five months of the year though the distribution appeared even across the county. The highest counts during this period were of seven feeding with Fieldfares at Atherington (Climping) on 20 Jan and seven at Pett Level on 16 May. There were three records of six birds and 13 of five; otherwise 85% of 425 records for the period were of ones or twos.

During the BBS a total of 73 was recorded from 46 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of three at Southleigh Forest (Emsworth) on 29 May. Breeding was confirmed in 49 tetrads and was probable in a further 76. Nest building was recorded at Rowlands Castle on 5 Apr and at West Wittering two days later while food carrying was recorded from Ticehurst on the 8th. Fledged young were not noted until 29 Apr at Crowborough and at Stapleton (Standbridge) a week later, soon followed by others but only 32 records in total indicated juveniles. Single pairs were recorded breeding at Pagham Hbr, Amberley Wild Brooks, Pulborough Brooks, Wiggonholt Common and Pett Level while on the 1240 ha Norfolk Estate four breeding pairs were identified.

A summer flock of 16 birds flew over Wakehurst Place on 8 Aug while 27 were counted at South Chase (Ashdown Forest) on 27 Sep and records of 12s were received from Ladywells (Coombes) on 23 Sep and Sidlesham on 5 Oct. In the second winter period there were only two double figure counts of 11, at South Chase and Ladywells, both on 22 Dec. During the SWBS a total of 40 was recorded from 22 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of five at Isfield on 6 Dec. The Steyning RG ringed three new adult birds during the season and the RBRG ringed three adults and three young at Pett Level. [JHW]

Spotted Flycatcher

Muscicapa striata

Fairly common but declining summer visitor; scarce passage migrant in spring and fairly common in autumn. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

This species was recorded from 175 tetrads, c.16% of the county total. The first spring arrival was on 22 Apr at Blackboys, 13 days earlier than the previous year and five days earlier than

the 10-year average of 27 Apr. The following day one was recorded at Pulborough Brooks. Four birds were recorded during April, the other two being at Barcombe on the 24th and Mid Lavant on the 26th.

In May there was a steady influx of birds across the county with c.92 bird days recorded over 26 days. At Church Norton four were seen on the 7th and at Linchmere Common on the 19th three separate pairs were seen within 0.5 km of each other.

During the BBS, ten birds were recorded from seven of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a highest count of three at St. Leonard's Forest on 24 May, slightly up on 2010. Breeding was confirmed in 41 tetrads and was probable in a further 19. This is a large rise in breeding numbers from last year (17 sites). Adults carrying food or faecal sacs were first noted at Pulborough Brooks on the 29th and at Fernhurst on the 30th. A nest with eggs was found in a stable at Byworth (Petworth) on the 31st. In June an adult was seen feeding three juveniles at Wivelsfield Green. In July, on the 18th at Firlie there were five juveniles by the cricket pitch. Two separate nests were found in the same tetrad at Wivelsfield on the 22nd. A family group was seen at Troutbeck (Eridge) and a pair with five juveniles was seen at the Old lodge NR (Ashdown Forest) on the 27th. A nest was in a decorative pot next to the curate of Isfield's doorbell and the young fledged on 3 Aug. There were reports of fledglings being fed as late as 30 Aug at Hindleap Warren (Ashdown Forest).

Autumn migration numbers were slightly lower than the previous years; a total of 236 bird days was recorded in September and 11 in October. During an extended migration watch at Hastings from 10 to 27 Sep a total of 42 was recorded with a maximum of no less than 34 on the 15th. At Poynings 13 birds were counted on 3 Sep and at Cissbury Ring at least 15 were noted on the 15th and ten the next day. At Rackham five birds were seen catching flies around a thatched cottage on 16 Sep. At Beachy Head, where there were no spring records, 14 birds were recorded on just seven dates between 10 Aug and 23 Sep with a maximum of four on 30 Aug with the comment that it was a bleak year for this species there.

Ringed groups also reported a bad year for the species. BHRG at Whitbread Hollow recorded only one bird. At Ladywells (Coombes) only three new birds were ringed in 40 sessions, singles on 7 Jun, 19 Aug and 3 Sep, when the only new bird of the year was ringed at Strivens Reedbed. [PC]

Robin

Erithacus rubecula

Abundant resident; probably common passage migrant, mainly in autumn; status uncertain as winter visitor.

Robins were recorded in 673 tetrads (*cf.* 597 in 2010). Jan and Feb brought 31 counts in excess of 20 (*cf.* 39 in 2010). The maximum count was of 50 on a two hour walk at Bolney on 15 Feb (*cf.* 51 in 2010 and 59 in 2009), 43 were found on an Atlas TTV at Hove (including Three Cornered Copse) on 3 Jan and 22 were noted in a one hour TTV at Hookwood on 20 Feb.

Maximum counts at regularly surveyed sites were as given in the table below. During the BBS a total of 1093 was recorded from 144 (98%) of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 39 at Five Hundred Acre Wood (Ashdown Forest) on 30 May. Breeding was confirmed in 234 tetrads and was probable in a further 118 (*cf.* 207 and 137 respectively in 2010).

During breeding surveys, 36 pairs or territories were identified at Pagham Hbr and 14 pairs on the Norfolk Estate. Courtship feeding was noted at West Tarring on 12 Feb and at Bognor and

Ferring on 24 Mar. Nest building activities were recorded on 16 Feb at Uckfield, at Littleworth (Partridge Green) on 23 Mar and on the 27th at Henfield in a box on a garden fence. An apparently occupied nest was noted on 2 Apr at Iford (Lewes), adults carrying food were seen on the 5th at Findon Park, the first nest with young was recorded at Chailey on the 9th and fledged young were seen on 11 Apr at Littlehampton. At Lavender Platt (Ashdown Forest) on 9 May, one of a pair was fetching caterpillars and feeding them to the other with ritual head lowering and tail cocking. All five young had fledged from a nest in Wivelsfield Green by 13 May. The last dependent young were reported from Nursted (Harting) on 30 Jul.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sefter Farm (Rose Green)	5	4	4	5	4	2	1	5	13	4	5	3
Hotham Park (Bognor)*	5	3	4	-	-	1	-	1	11	8	3	2
Broadbridge Heath*	14	8	-	4	7	6	3	9	24	19	17	8
Chesworth Fm (Horsham)*	7	5	10	15	10	5	1	10	5	7	5	4
Warnham LNR*	15	11	13	10	11	6	6	7	9	8	12	13
Ditchling – Westmeston*	39	14	37	20	24	11	16	30	-	48	24	-
Lewes Race Course*	5	4	7	8	6	1	2	6	7	15	8	7
Newhaven Tide Mills*	4	2	1	2	1	1	-	9	24	24	-	-
Newhaven OEP	-	4	5	-	2	2	-	2	26	7	14	3
Pett Level	2	2	3	3	6	9	8	15	10	21	15	8

*the site appeared in a similar table in the 2010 report

Autumn song was noted from Bodiam on 31 Jul. During an extended migration watch at Hastings a total of 630 was recorded over 38 dates with a maximum of 43 on 28 Sep. Observers at Beachy Head thought it was a poor autumn for Robins; 44 bird days were recorded between 27 Jul and 15 Nov with a peak of nine on 27 Sep while at nearby Whitbread Hollow 55 bird days were recorded between 17 Aug and 12 Nov. Daily maxima in the past at Beachy Head have been from 50 to 100 on a day, with 200 in Whitbread Hollow on 9 Oct 1998. In 2011, there were 25 on 17 Aug (as in 2010, an early date for a comparatively high count) and 29 Oct and 26 on 12 Nov.

Records from the regular ringing stations were as follows:

	Total handled	New	Retrapped	First years	Adults	Maximum
Cissbury North Scarp	105	68	7	56	16	7 on 28 May, 14 Jun, 15 Nov
Strivens Reedbed (Steyning)	159	74	10	66	16	11 on 11 Jun
Ladywell (Coombes)	110	57	9	49	19	9 on 1 Aug
Beachy Head	109	85	3	78	8	9 on 3 Aug
Pett Level	648	602	46	511	137	21 on 14 Oct

Retrapped totals include birds first ringed this year and birds ringed in previous years.

During the SWBS a total of 761 was recorded from 108 of the 120 squares surveyed, with maximum counts of 22 at Nutley on 13 Nov and Warnham on the 26th. Robins were the sixth most widely recorded species in the county during this survey. Ten squares produced only single birds and 11 just two. Monthly two hour surveys at West Blatchington (Hove) totalled 423 for the year with a maximum count of 66 on 2 Oct. [CB]

Common Nightingale

Luscinia megarhynchos

Fairly common summer visitor and infrequently seen passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Nightingales were recorded in 130 tetrads. The first to be found were two at Furnace Meadow (Ebernoe) on 2 Apr, three days earlier than the 10-year average arrival date, followed by another at Pulborough Brooks the next day. There were then only three days in April (6th, 8th and 18th) which were without records, suggesting either a more consistent arrival than in 2010 or some duplication. At Pulborough Brooks new birds arrived on the 9th, 10th, 11th (three), 15th and 19th (two), to total nine birds for most of the second half of the month, and finally another one on 2 May for a monthly maximum of ten. Meanwhile, in the Plaistow area ten singing males were noted on 11 Apr and seven on the 25th, showing a recovery from a low in 2010. The reduction to seven here may indicate that some males give up singing as soon as they are paired with a female; some records from other areas show a similar reduction. Elsewhere, fours were noted at Hailsham on 14 Apr and Wineham on the 18th. Four birds were singing near Etchingham on 22 Apr and two at Mill House (Steypning) on 14 May showed a welcome return after a two year absence. Otherwise numbers at other sites were usually singles and did not exceed three. As usual, few birds were recorded at the coast, e.g. singles at Beachy Head on 11 Apr, Thorney Island on the 14th, Southwick on the 15th, Pagham Hbr on the 21st and, in May, at Cooden on the 10th, as most passed swiftly inland. Two hour night time surveys of TQ21 (Henfield/Wineham/Twineham/Fulking/Edburton/Small Dole) found 14 on 11 Apr with 41 a week later and 45 on 9 May (the highest total in the thirteen years of recording in that area). The maximum counts each year for this area since 2004 have been as follows:

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
20	'good'	14	15	22	29	25	45

It was noted that most of these maxima were between 1 and 8 May. Most of the additional sites occupied in 2011 were adjacent to traditional sites. The observers conjectured that there was either a good breeding year in 2010 or good survival in Africa, or both, and returning birds were having to move out from their favorite spots. A bird singing from sallows at Ladywells (Coombes) on 5 Jun was the first record for that locality.

During the BBS a total of 21 was recorded from 12 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of three at Northchapel on 24 Apr. Breeding was confirmed in three and was probable in a further fifty (*cf.* eight and 22 respectively in 2010) squares. Birds were first recorded carrying food or faecal sacs at Pulborough Brooks on 30 May and the first fledged bird was noted there on 30 Jun. The last song was heard at Pulborough Brooks on 18 Jun, a characteristic date. Birds were noted still near their breeding sites at Shortland Copse (Plaistow), on 7 Jul and at Shermanbury on the 10th.

At Owlbeech Woods (Horsham), single birds were noted on 31 Jul and on 12 Aug. At Beachy Head, only three birds were noted in the autumn: on 27 and 31 Jul and 12 Aug; such scarcity prompted memories of three pairs breeding in Whitbread Hollow during the 1960s and into the 70s.

At Pett Level, 20 new birds were ringed and one retrapped during late summer, the best season there since 1993. A young bird ringed there on 25 Aug 2010 was found dead at Hayling Island on 11 Apr 2011. At Strivens Reedbed (Steypning), a young bird was trapped while completing its

post-juvenile moult on 7 Aug and retrapped on 17 Aug and an adult was trapped in September, the latest record from ringing activities here. The last, and very late, bird was at Owlbeech Woods on 26 Sep, 12 days later than the 10-year average date. [CB]



Common Nightingale, Pulborough Brooks, May 2011 (Dorian Mason)

Bluethroat

Luscinia svecica

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

A juvenile bird, trapped and ringed at Pett Level on 10 Sep (RBRG) was the only record. This takes the total recorded since 1 Jan 2000 to ten and 17 since 1 Jan 1995 which have occurred in March (2), April (1), May (1), September (10) and October (3). [JAH]

Black Redstart*Phoenicurus ochruros*

Rare resident, scarce passage migrant and very scarce winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

Black Redstarts were recorded from 64 tetrads. The minimum monthly totals and 5-yr monthly averages for 2006 to 2010 were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	9	5	27	7	3	-	2	-	2	25	35	6
5-yr average	10	11	14	8	3	2	1	2	3	19	22	11

Monthly totals in January and February were comparable with 2010. A female was noted at Sompting (Worthing) on 2 Jan, then further individuals at Applesham (Coombes) on the 9th, on the beach at Brooklands (Worthing) on three occasions between 21 and 28 Jan, Widewater (Lancing) on the 19th, two at Newhaven on the 21st, Lewes Racecourse on 23 Jan, Langney Point on the 25th and finally at Goring Gap on the 31st. A male was at Beachy Head on 9 Feb and another was on Chichester Cathedral on 18 Feb and 5 Mar. Two were at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) on 13 Feb.

There was an increase in migrating birds in March compared to the previous 5-yr average. The month began with a male on Chichester Cathedral on the 5th, another at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 9th and a female in gardens at Chichester on the 11th. There were then 12 more records of single birds but twos at Rye Hbr on 15 Mar and at Church Norton on the 26th. Observers at Beachy Head recorded birds on eight dates between 12 Mar and 8 Apr with maxima of eight on 26 Mar and four on 4 Apr. A male was seen at Pagham Hbr on 17 Apr and an individual was at Hastings on 8 May.

There were no records of confirmed breeding although a pair was seen at Crumbles GP (Pevensey) on 11 May following a sighting of a single bird on 28 Apr.

An individual which was noted at Shoreham Power Station on 6 Jul may have escaped earlier notice in the harbour area. Autumn migration was much in evidence in October, particularly at Pagham Hbr with records of single birds on dates from 30 Sep to 13 Oct although on 10 Oct two were seen. There were also records from Crawley on 2 Oct, Crowborough on the 8th, Lavington Plantation and Seaford on the 15th and Lewes on the 27th. Four were at Beachy Head on 29 Oct with two at Brighton Marina the same day followed by four at Newhaven Tide Mills on 31 Oct. Observers at Beachy Head recorded birds on 13 dates between 17 Oct and 22 Nov; after allowing for duplication probably ten different birds were involved with a daily maximum of four on 29 Oct.

In November sightings included a lone female at East Dean (W Sussex) on 5 Nov, a single bird at Climping on the 8th, a male at West Worthing on the 16th, 17th and 22nd and one at Selsey Bill also on the 22nd. Further east, there were three at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 1st with one there on the 27th, an immature at Holywell (Eastbourne) on the 5th with two there on the 12th and one the next day and two birds at Brighton Marina on the 20th and 21st.

December sightings were few: three at Brighton on 2 Dec, single birds at Telscombe Cliffs on the 3rd and 7th, at Southwick on the 13th, at Selsey Bill on the 18th, and at South Heighton on 28 Dec. [SPS]



Black Redstart, Hodcombe, April 2011 (Roger and Liz Charlwood)

Common Redstart*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

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

This species was recorded from 76 tetrads distributed patchily across the county. The first sighting of the year on 5 Mar at Gills Lap (Ashdown Forest) was the earliest record since at least 1960. The next records were on 2 Apr, inland on Ashdown Forest and on the coast at Pagham Hbr, with further records at Pagham Hbr until 14 Apr with three being seen on the 7th. Elsewhere coastal records included a male at Wild Park (Brighton) on 7 Apr and individuals at Ferring on 11 Apr and Beachy Head on 18 Apr. Inland the first returning bird in the west of the county was at Fernhurst on 9 Apr. Most spring records were from Ashdown Forest although a female was at Henfield on 13 Apr and a bird was seen at Pulborough Brooks on 22 Apr.



Common Redstart, Ashdown Forest, June 2011 (Mark Tomlins)

During the BBS only one bird was recorded, at Five Hundred Acre (Ashdown Forest) on 24 Apr. During the annual Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey ten pairs or territories were identified (see page 244 for details) compared with only four pairs or territories in 2010. On Ashdown Forest five pairs or territories were identified, compared to eight in 2010 (see page 245 for details).

Breeding was confirmed in eight tetrads. A male was seen carrying food or a faecal sac at Blackdown (Fernhurst) on 30 May and a pair was carrying food into a nest hole at the same site on 5 Jun. Fledged young were seen on Ashdown Forest on 4 Jun and in July. There was probable

breeding in nine tetrads and possible breeding in a further four. Later breeding season sightings away from Ashdown Forest and the Wealden Heaths were of single birds at Uckfield on 18 Jun and Harrow Hill (Patching) on 29 Jun.

Following the breeding season, birds were recorded at several sites. Inland, they were seen at Pulborough Brooks frequently from 11 Jun to 19 Sep, with a maximum of six on 15 Aug, and at Arlington Res on six dates between 27 Aug and 23 Sep with three there on 29 Aug. At Cissbury Ring the species was recorded on 12 dates between 1 Aug and 29 Sep with a maximum of nine on 2 Sep and two new birds were ringed at the North Scarp.

From more coastal sites there were sightings at Chichester Hbr from 19 Aug to 11 Sep, Pagham Hbr from 10 Aug to 5 Oct, Climping between 28 Jul and 29 Sep, Beachy Head from 25 Jul to 23 Sep, Hastings between 17 Aug and 29 Sep and records at Pett Level between 8 Aug and 15 Oct. A male was seen in a garden at Henfield on 11 Oct. The final record from Ashdown Forest was on 19 Oct and the final sightings of the year were at Beachy Head on 29 Oct and Selsey Bill on 1 Nov, two days later than the 10-year average departure date. [SPS]

Whinchat

Saxicola rubetra

Fairly common passage migrant. Rare summer visitor, last bred in 1999. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Whinchats were recorded in 78 tetrads across the county, mainly at coastal or near coastal sites. The monthly minimum numbers of birds (excluding obvious duplicate records) compared with the 5-year average 2006-2010 and the number of days on which they were recorded are shown in the following table:

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
No. of birds	2	8	8	1	14	199	300	18	1
5-yr average		12	13	1	4	160	299	27	
No. of days	1	6	6	1	6	23	26	10	1

The first arrival was an unusually early bird in March, seen at Pagham Hbr on the 19th, compared with the 10-year average date of 8 Apr. All the records for April were of single birds at coastal sites between Thorney Deepes and Newhaven, as were all but two of the records for May. The numbers seen in April, while double those in 2010, were lower than the 5-year average, as were the May numbers.

There was only one record for June, at Pett Level on the 10th. During the BBS, only one bird was recorded in one of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, at Thorney Island on 26 Apr. There were no records of any breeding activity.

The earliest returning bird was one seen on 11 Jul at Halsey's Fm (Sidlesham). The numbers recorded in August were significantly higher than the 5-year average with nearly 90% recorded after the 14th. Daily totals were generally low with eight at Pett Level on the 15th and Pagham Hbr on the 27th, the highest number recorded.

Numbers in September were much lower than last year (342) and equalled the 5-year average. Unlike last year, numbers were uniformly spread throughout the month. The highest daily totals were 11 at Thorney Deepes on the 10th, ten at Pagham Hbr on the 9th and Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) on the 15th, and nine at Pett Level on the 19th. In addition, observers at Beachy Head

recorded 64 bird-days from 14 Aug to 16 Oct, at Brighton Wild Park 11 from 25 Aug to 18 Sep and at Hastings, eight from 15 Aug to 28 Sep (these counts are additional to the above table).

The highest count for October was four at Pagham Hbr on the 10th. The final record for the year was of one at Atherington (Climping) on 5 Nov, the first for that month since 2007 and five days later than the 10-year average date. [GDE]

Stonechat

Saxicola torquatus

Fairly common resident and partial migrant.

Stonechats were recorded in 118 tetrads across the county and 67% of the records received were from the Ashdown Forest area, the species' stronghold. The approximate minimum monthly totals, excluding obvious duplicate records, and 5-year averages 2006-2010 were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	20	14	158	225	278	297	268	229	456	345	106	57
5-yr average	185	158	152	172	242	242	187	204	324	438	200	137

Birds were recorded on 279 days of the year, 14 more than last year. However, while numbers recorded in each month from April to September were all higher than the 5-year average, those for the two winter periods were significantly below the average, except for March when birds returned to the county having been displaced by the hard weather in December 2010.

The highest count in the first winter period was ten on Ashdown Forest on 11 Mar. During the spring months the highest counts were ten (five breeding pairs) at Beachy Head on 23 Apr, nine on Ashdown Forest on 22 May and eight on 28 Apr.

During the BBS, a total of only five was recorded in only one of the 147 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum of five at Fernhurst on 15 Jun. The estimated number of pairs or territories in Ashdown Forest was 214, details of which can be seen in the table on page 245. On the West Sussex Heathlands the estimated total was 21, as detailed on page 244. Elsewhere, the number of additional pairs confirmed, probable or possibly breeding (i.e. seen in suitable habitat) was as follows:

	Confirmed	Probable	Possible
No. of sites	12	10	8
No. of pairs	17	13	8

During the summer the highest daily counts were 14 on Ashdown Forest and nine at Beachy Head on 15 Jul and Newhaven Tide Mills on 14 Aug. In the autumn, indications of dispersal or small-scale migration included influxes of 14 at Beachy Head on 2 Sep, 17 on the 24th, 11 on 6 Nov and also 11 at Hastings on 28 Sep. At Pett Level 25 bird days were recorded from 14–30 Sep which included 14 new birds ringed. Notable counts elsewhere were of 20 at Pagham Hbr on 10 Oct and on Ashdown Forest on the 19th.

A pair identified as being of the continental race, *S.t. rubicola*, were seen and photographed in a small gully running along the cliff edge above Horseshoe Plantation (Beachy Head) where they raised three young (DC, JFC). This may be the first proven breeding record of this race in the UK. A male showing some characteristics of the same race was recorded at Atherington (Climping) on 9 May. [GDE]

Isabelline Wheatear*Oenanthe isabellina*

Very rare vagrant.

A first-winter bird seen and photographed at Crowlink on 15 Oct was the first to be recorded in Sussex (MEC, RHC *et al.*). A number of other observers saw it during the day but it was not seen subsequently. Isabelline Wheatear breeds from the Black Sea through south west Russia to northern Pakistan and central Asia to northern China and winters in north and east Africa, the Middle East and northwest India. The record has been accepted by BBRC. An account of the finding of the bird appears on pages 260-262 of this report. [DHH]

Northern Wheatear*Oenanthe oenanthe*

Very scarce breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant, very rare in mid-winter. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

One at Newmarket Hill on 10 Jan (DB) was only the fifth January record and the first since one spent the winter of 1982/83 at Shoreham Fort.

Wheatears were recorded from 178 tetrads (17% of the county total), mostly coastal or near coastal although there was an interesting group of records from inland on Ashdown Forest. The minimum monthly totals, and numbers of days on which birds were recorded were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
No. of birds	298	396	68	24	62	1149	1484	393	24
No. of days	17	29	17	7	14	28	29	26	14

Spring arrival commenced on 9 Mar with a single bird at Piddinghoe. This was followed by other lone birds at Southease on 12 Mar and at Climping Beach on 13 Mar. Thereafter numbers built up gradually, with 12 at Climping Beach on 24 Mar and ten at Kingston Gorse (Ferring) the same day followed by 11 on the beach between Ferring and Goring Gap on the 26th and a maximum spring daily total of 16 at Beachy Head on the 27th. During the rest of the spring period there were only four instances of ten or more. In April, 16 at Climping Beach on the 3rd were followed on the 7th by 12 at Pagham Hbr. The monthly totals recorded at the principal seawatching sites and the total number of hours watched during spring migration period were as follows:

	March		April		May	
Selsey Bill	20	45 hr	19	173¾ hr	2	124 hr
Climping Beach	51	51 hr	34	5 hr	-	-
Worthing Beach	14	33¾ hr	6	57¾ hr	1	55 hr
Telscombe Cliffs	6	12¾ hr	-	-	-	-
Splash Point	10	44 hr	2	120½ hr	-	-

Breeding was confirmed from four tetrads and probable at a further two. Fledged young were seen at four locations from 12 Jun. At Rye Hbr there were only three pairs, a significant decline on recent years from 12 pairs in 2009 and six in 2010. At The Midrips four independent juveniles were seen on 2 Jul and nine at Newhaven Tide Mills on the 11th, and all probably bred locally. The other successful site was at Jury's Gap where an adult was seen carrying food on 12 Jun.



Northern Wheatear, Weir Wood Reservoir, September 2011 (Derek Washington)

Autumn migration commenced in mid-July. Two birds at Rye Hbr on the 13th may have been locally bred but 12 there on the 19th were most probably migrants as was a single at Climping Beach on the 22nd. During the remainder of July single birds were recorded at six coastal and one inland (Ashdown Forest) locations, two were noted at Clayton Windmills and four at Church Norton. Birds were then recorded on most days in August with 16 double figure counts (including seven at Climping Beach) on seven dates, particularly from the 15th onwards. The month's total included 174 recorded at Climping Beach during 8½ hr watching over ten dates with a maximum of 60 on the 24th. During September there were 34 double figure counts with the highest daily counts of 30 at Thorney Island on the 11th and c.100 at Beachy Head and 45 at Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) on the 15th. The month's total included 107 at Climping Beach recorded in 18 hr of watching over 11 dates. Peak counts and dates during August and September were as follows:

Date	24/08	28/08	29/08	09/09	10/09	15/09	18/09
No. of birds	105	169	106	116	135	220	93

Numbers fell away markedly in October; there were only four double figure counts (highest 14 at Hastings on the 4th) and the total at Climping Beach was only 58 from eight dates and 41½ hr watching. During an extended migration watch at Hastings from 15 Aug to 21 Oct 199 bird days were recorded with a daily maximum of 16. The last record of the year was of a single bird at the fields west of Selsey on 20 Nov. [GNO]

Greenland Wheatear

Oenanthe oenanthe leucorrhoa

Passage migrant; true status unclear.

This was a good year for this subspecies. In April there were six records of seven birds involving two at Beachy Head on the 11th, single birds at Steyning Round Hill (male) and again at Beachy Head on the 15th, males at Horse Eye Level (Pevensy) on the 16th and it or another on the 19th and at Seaford Head on the 24th. A single bird was noted at Church Norton on 26 May. In the autumn a lone bird was noted at Chelwood Gate (Ashdown Forest) on 27 Sep and one seen at Belle Tout (Beachy Head) on 13 Nov was probably of this form.

There have now been 53 spring records for this sub-species since 1949 (29 this century) but only 21 autumn records (nine this century). This apparent disparity may merely reflect the fact that separating Greenland Wheatear from Northern Wheatear is much more difficult in autumn than in spring. [GNO]

Pied Flycatcher

Ficedula hypoleuca

Scarce passage migrant, more numerous in autumn than spring; has bred. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Pied Flycatchers were recorded from only 14 tetrads. The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Total
8	1	-	2	15	5	1	32

Numbers were very low in 2011 with only 32 recorded across the county. This was lower than last year’s total of 43 and considerably lower than the 10-year and 5-year averages of 57 and 38 respectively. The trend continues to be falling numbers of this species.

Spring migration numbers were again light; the first arrival on 7 Apr was a male seen in the churchyard at Church Norton, 13 days earlier than the previous year and two days earlier than the 10-year average. A second bird, a female, was also seen at Church Norton the following day. Other reported sightings were from Halseys Fm (Sidlesham) on the 9th, a female at Pulborough Brooks on the 10th and a first summer male at Beachy Head on the 11th. One was seen at Church Norton on the 16th and another at St Ann’s Well Gardens (Hove) on the 22nd. The last reported sighting in April was from Shooters Bottom (Beachy Head) on the 23rd.

There was only one bird reported in May, a male at Pulborough Brooks on the 9th. There were no records in June and only two, presumably returning migrants, in July at Belle Tout (Beachy Head) on the 15th and Monkton Fm (Chilgrove) on the 30th.

Autumn migration numbers were, as usual, higher than those in spring but much lower than previous years. Only 15 birds were recorded in August. Of these, two were seen at Forest Row on the 15th and two at Beachy Head on the 27th. September sightings were few and observers at Hodcombe (Beachy Head) recorded their worst year ever, with only one bird. The last bird of the year was seen on 12 Oct at Church Norton, 11 days later than the 10-year average. [PC]



Pied Flycatcher, Beachy Head, April 2011 (John Cooper)

Dunnock

Prunella modularis

Very common resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Dunnocks were recorded in 600 tetrads (*cf.* 520 in 2010) and 75% of the records were for the first half of the year. During the first winter period (to 20 Mar) there were 26 records of ten or more birds; the highest were 21 at Patcham (Brighton) on 4 Jan and 20 at Roedean (Brighton) on 20 Feb.

During the BBS a total of 379 was recorded from 112 (76%) of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 14 at Peacehaven on 15 Apr. Breeding was confirmed from 119 tetrads and was probable in a further 148 (*cf.* 59 and 185 in 2010). A pair was chasing and flicking tails in Bexhill on 9 Jan. An apparently occupied nest was first recorded on 6 Apr at Canada Bottom (Findon). The first nests with young were recorded on 10 Apr at Billingshurst, on the 19th at East Ashling and at Guestling Thorn on the 20th. The first record of fledged young was on the 30th at Heath Common (Storrington). An adult was still on a nest at Ashurst on 25 Jul. There were 37 pairs or territories at Pagham Hbr, 38 pairs on the 1240 ha Norfolk Estate (*cf.* 36 in 2010) and 34 territories at Rye Hbr SSSI (*cf.* 37 in 2010).

During the summer months there were only three counts greater than 12, demonstrating perhaps how difficult it can be to find Dunnocks following the breeding season. Counts of 12

were recorded at Blackboys on 2 Jul, at Pagham Hbr on the 26th and Newhaven Tide Mills on the 28th. In the autumn, one was singing at Poundgate (Ashdown Forest) on 20 Oct; the highest counts were 19 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 2 Oct and 20 at Devil's Dyke on the 29th. During an extended migration watch at Hastings 19 birds were recorded on five dates between 14 and 28 Sep (*cf.* 81 birds between 17 Sep and 31 Oct in 2010).

Records from the regular ringing stations were as follows:

	Total handled	New	Retrapped	First year	Adult	Maximum
Cissbury North Scarp	70	43	6	36	12	6 on 19 & 28 Jul
Strivens Reedbed (Steyning)	158	67	17	53	26	14 on 2 Jun & 3 Jul
Ladywell (Coombes)	140	47	16	39	24	11 on 15 & 31 Aug
Beachy Head	44	26	4	21	8	5 on 3 Aug
Pett Level	426	356	70	337	89	11 on 22 & 23 Sep

Retrapped totals include birds first ringed this year and birds ringed in previous years.

A young bird ringed at Pett Level on 15 Nov 2010 was recovered in the Netherlands, 374 km NE, on 9 Apr 2011. During the SWBS a total of 163 was recorded from 67 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 13 at Peacehaven on 7 Nov. Dunnocks were the 11th most widely recorded species in the county during this survey. [CB]

House Sparrow

Passer domesticus

Very common but possibly declining resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

House Sparrows were recorded from 610 tetrads. In the first winter period during 2-hr TTV surveys 50 or more House Sparrows were recorded in five tetrads, the highest numbers being 194 at Camber on 1 Feb and 102 at Bexhill on 22 Feb. In addition to these surveys 60 were noted at Rye Hbr village and 45 at the allotments there on 13 Feb. The earliest sign of nesting activity was noted on 9 Jan when one was exploring a nest box at Burgess Hill; it was 'singing' from its roof. The following day and also on 27 Jan he was taking material into the box. By the end of March evidence of nest building was reported from a further six sites, including one in a Swift nest box at West Tarring (Worthing). The first nest with eggs was noted on 10 Apr at Northiam and the first fledged young at Broadwater (Worthing) on the 11th.

During the BBS a total of 1661 was recorded from 107 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 57 at Ridgewood (Uckfield) on 4 Jun. Breeding was confirmed in 258 tetrads and was probable in a further 100. On the Norfolk Estate an estimated 60 pairs bred. In 2-hr breeding season Atlas TTV surveys eight tetrads held over 50 birds with 169 in a tetrad in Bexhill on 30 Jun. In addition there were three-figure flocks including juveniles at Nursted (Harting), Brook Barn Fm (Littlehampton), Portslade, Newhaven Tide Mills and Glynleigh Level (Pevensey). During August further three-figure post-breeding flocks were reported from Southbourne, Beeding Brooks and Henfield.

In the second winter period the only large gathering noted was at Eames Fm (Thorney Island) with a peak of 120 on 5 Nov. During the SWBS a total of 880 House Sparrows was recorded from 62 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 70 at Burgess Hill West End on 14 Dec. At Burgess Hill one continued to line a nest box until December.

Although declines were noted from some sites, there were other sites where House Sparrows were appearing after many years' absence. If anything, flock sizes seemed larger so perhaps the species is recovering some of its losses. [ACG]

Tree Sparrow

Passer montanus

Much declined and now very scarce resident and scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Reports were received from 15 tetrads, all but two were in East Sussex. In the first winter period Tree Sparrows were recorded on three dates at Pett Level, with a highest count of five on 25 Feb, and on three occasions on the levels north and east of Rye with a maximum of four at Scotney Court Fm on 1 Jan. Otherwise one was noted at Sidlesham on 7 Jan, near where there used to be a breeding population.

Breeding was confirmed in only two tetrads and was probable in only one. Evidence of nesting was received from two sites east of the eastern R Rother (East Sussex) on 16 Apr and 6 Jun and fledged young were reported from a site on Pevensey Levels on 29 Jun. A single bird was at Beachy Head for three days from 28 Apr and other coastal reports from this period were of three at Norman's Bay on 30 Apr and one on the cliff top at Fairlight on 27 May.

In the autumn, at least one was at Pulborough Brooks on 16 Sep and two days later five were at Pett Level where small numbers were seen on several occasions until the end of November with a highest count of eight on 16 Oct. An interesting record is of one visiting bird feeders for ten minutes at Salehurst (Robertsbridge) on 12 Nov. Elsewhere one was at Sidlesham on 4 Nov and three were at East Guldeford, east of Rye, on 22 Nov with the last report of the year being one there on 9 Dec.

It is unlikely that more than a very few pairs bred in the county and the winter flocks of recent years have vanished. Even in the few areas where breeding has been regular, numbers seem to have declined and the future of this bird as a Sussex breeding species looks bleak. [ACG]

Yellow Wagtail

Motacilla flava

Scarce and localised summer visitor; scarce passage migrant in spring and fairly common in autumn. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Yellow Wagtails were recorded from 85 tetrads (cf. 87 in 2010). The first record was of two on Climbing Beach on 20 Mar, three days earlier than the 10-year average date followed by one over Selsey Bill on the 27th and a substantial group of 18 in fields at Rye Hbr on 4 Apr. Observers at Beachy Head did not record the first bird until 22 Apr and one was seen there on just one further date in spring. Most spring birds were seen or heard along the coast although one was at Bolney on 20 Apr and another at Church Hill (Ashdown Forest) on the 23rd. Monthly totals of migrants recorded at three of the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

	April		May	
	No.	Hrs watched	No.	Hrs watched
Selsey Bill	21	174	25	124
Worthing Beach	4	58	3	55
Splash Point	5	121	-	-

During the BBS a total of only three was recorded from two of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of two at Northiam on 30 Apr. Breeding was confirmed in six tetrads and was probable in a further seven (*cf.* five and ten respectively in 2010). There were probably five pairs on Horse Eye Level (Pevensey) but only one or two pairs at Rye Hbr and only one pair (but no confirmed breeding) at Pulborough Brooks. However, considerable numbers were recorded during Atlas TTV surveys in the east of the county. There were 35 recorded in two hours near East Guldeford on 16 Apr, ten at White Dyke (Hailsham) on 15 Jun and 28 at Jury's Gap on 30 Jun.



Yellow Wagtail, Cissbury Ring, September 2011 (Dorian Mason)

Return passage started in mid July (*cf.* early August in 2010): three were noted at Church Norton on 11 Jul, observers at Pett Level recorded their first autumn bird on the 13th, ten were noted at Coombes on the 15th and there was a juvenile at Beachy Head on the 23rd. The only substantial August counts came from Rye Hbr where there were 150 on the 6th and the 20th. At Cuckmere Haven, 80 was considered a 'conservative estimate' of the numbers feeding around sheep on the 28th. Also on the 28th, there were 100 W over Selsey Bill, 63 at Arlington Res and 62 at Beachy Head while the next day, 103 were recorded at Rustington. There was obviously a considerable movement along the Sussex coast at the end of the month. However, few passage

birds were reported from the interior of the county; there were two at both Bewl Water and Barcombe Cross on the 24th and one over Truleigh Hill on the 29th. During September, numbers peaked in mid-month. There were 37 counts of over 20: 48 at Climping Beach on the 2nd, 60 at Pulborough Brooks on the 3rd, 80 at Arlington Res on the 4th, 100 at Pulborough Brooks again on the 10th and 106 at Thorney Deepes, also on the 10th. On 17 Sep one of the 100 at Thorney Deepes was devoured by a Cattle Egret! (AH). All told, there were 45 counts in excess of 20 during September. Numbers then dropped off rapidly. From 26 Sep to 7 Oct the species was recorded on only seven days with a maximum of eight at West Tarring (Worthing) on 30 Sep. The final record was of one at Scobell's Fm (Barcombe) on 25 Oct, three days earlier than the 10-year average date.

A Blue-headed Wagtail was seen at Church Norton on 29 May (DIS) [CB]

Citrine Wagtail

Motacilla citreola

Very rare vagrant.

A first winter bird was seen at Cuckmere Haven on 25 Sep (ADW, IJW *et al.*). A few other observers managed to see the bird before the end of the day but it was not seen subsequently. This is the first time that the species, which breeds in the Baltic countries eastwards to central Siberia and northern China and winters in the Indian subcontinent and southern China, has been recorded in Sussex and the record has been accepted by BBRC. [DHH]

Grey Wagtail

Motacilla cinerea

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

Grey Wagtails were recorded from 176 tetrads (*cf.* 185 in 2010), spread almost equally between West and East Sussex. During the first winter period there were just over 100 records of which all except three were of ones or twos. The only evidence of possible spring migration was of a pair flying over Ferring on 27 Apr and 1 E at Selsey Bill on 7 May.

During the BBS a total of only five was recorded from four of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of two at Wardley (Milland) on 10 Jun. Breeding was confirmed in 27 tetrads and was probable in a further 23 (*cf.* 22 and 31 respectively in 2010). A pair was displaying at Pippingford Park (Ashdown Forest) on 5 Apr; adults were carrying food to the nest at Dane Gate (Mark Cross) on 22 Apr and the first fledgling was recorded on 4 May at Beckley. At least two young fledged from a nest inside the courtyard of Firle Place. A bird was still carrying food to young at Nursted (Harting) on 30 Jul. In all there were 28 records of confirmed breeding.

Records of possible dispersal or early migration were scarce. One was recorded flying SE on 31 Jul at Barcombe Cross and the first autumn bird at Mountfield was noted on 14 Aug. The first autumn record from Pett Level was dated 19 Aug and the August total there was only four. During an extended migration watch at Hastings 89 were logged over 27 dates between 15 Aug and 15 Nov. At least 48 were recorded at Pett Level during September and 16 in October; interestingly those birds for which a flight direction was recorded were heading west, as were one at Worthing on 9 Sep, five at Beachy Head the next day and two at Climping on the 14th. Of the 53 records for November and December, 44 were typically of single birds. Four at Barcombe Res on 18 Dec and six in Alexandra Park (Hastings) on Christmas Day were the largest counts.

At Weir Wood Res and Warnham MP the species was present in every month except December and was recorded in Alexandra Park (Hastings) for all months except April to August; the count of 14 there on 18 Sep was the largest and the only double figure count during the year. During the SWBS a total of only four was recorded from three of the 120 1-km squares surveyed. [CB]

White Wagtail

Motacilla alba alba

Probably a scarce spring and autumn passage migrant; both pure and mixed pairs have bred.

White Wagtails were recorded from 13 tetrads, eight coastal and five inland. The first migrant to arrive was noted at Weir Wood Res from 12-14 Mar, followed by one with Pied Wagtails at Telscombe Cliffs on the 17 Mar, ten among Pied Wagtails at Mill Pond Marsh (Pagham Hbr) on the 19th and one at Selsey West Fields on 3 Apr. At Beachy Head, where observers noted 2011 as a good spring for this species, there were 18 bird days on five dates from 22 Mar to 10 Apr, with a maximum of seven on 26 Mar and four on 9 Apr. The last spring bird was at Southwater CP on 14 Apr.

There was one record of confirmed breeding: a bird was seen carrying food and flying into a bush at Arlington Res on 1 Jun. It is not known whether its mate was pied or white. One at Bullock Down, Beachy Head on the 8 Jun was unusual.

In the second half of the year, numbers were few as only 20 birds were reported from 16 Jul to 29 Oct. The first probably returning migrant, one at Weir Wood Res on 16 Jul and another (or the same) was noted there on 4 Aug. During an extended migration watch at Hastings from 15 Aug to 15 Nov only five were recorded, all on 19 Sep. An adult and a juvenile were recorded arriving in off the sea at Worthing on 1 Oct. The last two birds were noted at Pulborough Brooks on 21 Nov and Weir Wood Res on 13 Dec. [CB]

Pied Wagtail

Motacilla alba yarrellii

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Pied Wagtails were seen in 520 tetrads (*cf.* 429 in 2010), 50% of the county total. During the first winter period, there were only 29 counts of ten or more, fewer than in 2010. Most of the high counts came from sewage works: the highest and the year's maximum of 400 was recorded at Sidlesham SF on 24 Jan, 60 were at Lidsey SF on 1 Jan (but only 20 on the 7th and 14 on the 23rd), 40 at Billingshurst SF on 31 Jan and 80 at Steyning SF on 3 Mar. A roost at Hickstead Service Station held over 50 birds on 29 Jan. An interesting series of inland records from Broadbridge Heath included 20 on 24 Jan, with subsequent maxima of 35 on 10 Nov and 22 on 16 Dec (*cf.* 20 there in early Mar 2010), and an unusual sighting was of 36 on the Downs behind Brighton on 12 Feb.

During the BBS a total of 87 was recorded from 55 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of three at Sutton End on 19 Jun. Breeding was confirmed in 96 tetrads and was probable in a further 66 (*cf.* 90 and 55 in 2010). The majority of reports were from rural or village areas with very few urban reports. Nest building activities were first recorded on 9 Apr at Barns Green and at Arlington Res on the 11th and an apparently occupied nest was noted on the 30th at Wivelsfield. Fledged young were recorded at Weir Wood Res on 1 May. At Pett Level two pairs were double brooded. A nest with two young was found at Bulverhythe on 15 Jul.

During the summer, the only double figure count in July was of 30 at Weir Wood Res, however in August there were 18 double figure counts as birds formed post-breeding or pre-migration groups of which the largest were 85 at Weir Wood Res on the 4th, a congregation of 42 on power lines before roosting in pond-side alders at Butchers Cross (Five Ashes) on the 7th and 38 at Barcombe Cross on the 28th.

In the autumn, significant migration was first noted on 24 Sep and continued through to 30 Oct by which date at least 1200 birds had flown eastwards (and 110 westwards) along the coast. During this period counts at several seawatching sites on peak dates were as follows:

	29 Sep	30 Sep	1 Oct	2 Oct	14 Oct	15 Oct	16 Oct	28 Oct
Selsey Bill	-	-	-	-	21 (%)	33 (1)	-	-
Climping Beach	74 (1)	-	85 (1)	50 (1)	61 (2½)	85 (2½)	60 (1)	180 (1)
Worthing Beach	80 (%)	110 (1)	121 (1)	-	92 (3)	70 (1)	-	-
Hastings	217 (-)	-	120 (-)	-	-	140 (-)	-	-

Hours watched in brackets.

In addition to the above, 100 were counted in the Rye Bay area on 28 Sep. During an extended migration watch at Hastings a total of 1072 was recorded over 33 dates between 15 Aug and 15 Nov.

Counts of birds roosting in significant numbers during the autumn and first winter period included 128 on 1 Oct in a small Reedbed at Beeding Brooks, c.100 at Gills Lap (Ashdown Forest) on the 22 Oct, 50 at Duddleswell (Ashdown Forest) on 27 Oct, 110 in Brighton Church St on the 28 Oct, 100 at Weir Wood Res on 4 Nov, 120 in trees in Brighton London Road on 28 Nov and 112 at Beeding Brooks on 18 Dec. During the SWBS a total of 113 was recorded from 51 of the 120 squares (42.5%) surveyed, with a maximum count of eight at Oving on 25 Nov.

An analysis of the society's database for roosts recorded during the past five years from 15 Aug to 1 Apr produced a list of some 26 sites, covering a range of habitats, including man-made sites, ten of them on Ashdown Forest. It is known that Pied Wagtail roost sites change from year to year and it is believed that some large roosts have not been reported in recent years. Observers are therefore asked to submit records for all winter roosts with numbers and habitat type. [CB]

Tree Pipit

Anthus trivialis

Fairly common but local summer visitor and passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Tree Pipits were recorded from 59 tetrads, grouped broadly during the breeding season on the West Sussex Heaths and Ashdown Forest and occupying the same number of tetrads, 13, in each area although records from Ashdown Forest accounted for 65% of breeding season records compared with 27% from the Wealden Heaths.

The earliest migrants were one heading north at Beachy Head on 24 Mar, seven days earlier than the 10-year average, followed by one at Greenwood Gate (Ashdown Forest) on the 27th and another at Misbourne (Ashdown Forest) on the 29th. In April there were almost daily records from the 2nd, including the only other coastal spring migration record from Beachy Head on the 24th.

During the BBS a total of only six was recorded from just four of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of two at Stedham Common on 7 Jun. Breeding was confirmed

from five tetrads and was probable from a further 28. During the breeding season, 34 pairs or territories were identified on Ashdown Forest (see page 245 for details) and 29 were identified during the Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey (see page 244 for details).

Autumn migration appears to have started in early August. Observers at two sites at Pett Level recorded four birds on the 3rd and, during the month, a total of 191 bird days over 23 dates with a maximum of 20 on the 19th. At the same sites in September 39 bird days were recorded, with a maximum of ten on the 13th, over ten days between the 2nd and 19th. Observers at Beachy Head recorded 33 bird days on 12 dates between 14 Aug and 3 Oct, with a maximum of 12 on 10 Sep. The highest count elsewhere during this period was of 12 at Cissbury Ring on 22 Aug. Other records from a wide spread of mainly coastal sites were usually of ones or twos.

The final record of the year was from Wren’s Warren (Ashdown Forest) on 16 Oct, two days later than the 10-year average date. [MDS]

Meadow Pipit

Anthus pratensis

Common but declining resident; very common passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Meadow Pipits were recorded from 225 tetrads, 21% of the county total. The approximate minimum number of bird days were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	399	329	573	328	138	124	174	286	7762	4497	1277	706
No. of days	23	22	26	28	24	22	20	20	27	29	27	20

During the first winter period large counts included 100 at Sidlesham SF on 24 Jan, 49 at Iping Common going to roost on the 30th, 47 similarly on 8 Feb, 40 at Bodle Street Green on 12 Feb and, on 24 Mar, 70 N at Selsey Bill. The number of birds seen in January was significantly lower than in 2010 when large numbers of birds were displaced by the severe snow and ice.

During the spring and summer months there were five counts of 20 or more: 20 at Edburton on 12 Apr, 24 at Crowlink on 28 Jul, 22 at The Midrips on 2 Aug and, on 6 Aug, 35 at Rye Hbr.

During the BBS a total of 32 was recorded from 11 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 16 at Thorney Island on 1 Jun. Breeding was confirmed at 18 sites and probable at a further 31. The first record of a singing male was at Ditchling Beacon on 8 Mar. The first evidence of probable breeding was by a displaying male at Pagham Hbr on 12 Mar. Fledged young were first recorded on 30 Apr at Horse Eye Level (Pevensy). Seven territories were recorded at both Rye and Pagham Harbours. No pairs or territories were recorded during the Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey but 11 pairs or territories were identified on the Ashdown Forest (see page 245 for details). At Beachy Head, ten breeding pairs were counted in Cow Gap on 4 Apr and 50 were recorded in the area on 10 Jul.

During the autumn there were 31 counts of 100 or more as birds migrated. After a quiet August, numbers recorded in September, although significant, were not as high as in 2010. Autumn migration was first noted on 10 Sep when 50 E passed Climping Gap. Observations at three of the principal seawatching sites were as follows:



Meadow Pipit, Weir Wood Reservoir, September 2011 (Derek Washington)

		Sep	Peak count & date	Oct	Peak count & date
Selsey Bill	E	4	300 on 13 th	19	75 on 30 th
	W	393		63	
	S	127		53	
Climping	E	80	250 on 13 th	385	120 on 1 st
	W	450		-	
	S	-		-	
Worthing Beach	E	198	108 on 29 th	300	129 on 1 st
	W	41		172	
	N	10		44	

Elsewhere, during an extended migration watch at Hastings, 2817 birds were recorded on 43 dates between 15 Aug and 15 Nov with maxima of 360 W on 13 Sep and 406 W on the 14th. Other significant counts included 400 at Beachy Head on 14 Sep, 400 at Crowlink on 25 Sep, 300 at Rye Bay on the 28th, and 200 each at No Man's Land (Findon) on the 22nd, Thorney Island on the 24th and Cissbury Ring on the 27th. In October, 320 were counted at Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) on the 15th, 200 were at Pagham Hbr on the 9th and 150 went to roost at The Old Airstrip (Ashdown Forest) on the 27th.

During the second winter period there were seven counts of 45 or higher: at Weir Wood Res, 180 on 3 Nov and 48 on 31 Dec; at Lavington Common, 90 on 4 Nov and 46 on 18 Dec; 45 at

Clayton Windmills on 10 Nov; 80 at The Old Airstrip on 17 Nov and 70 at Broadbridge Heath, also on the 17th. During the SWBS, a total of 74 Meadow Pipits were counted in 22 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 12 at Kirdford on 10 Dec. [MDS]

Rock Pipit

Anthus petrosus

Scarce resident and scarce winter visitor; very rare away from the coast.

Rock Pipits were recorded from 42 coastal tetrads from Chichester Hbr to Rye Bay. There were 154 records, a 25% decrease from last year but similar to the 147 received in 2009. The approximate minimum number of birds recorded was as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	75	41	15	12	4	2	9	3	17	72	61	27

The higher numbers recorded during both winter periods are indicative of a significant wintering population in the county. During the first winter period, the highest numbers were in Fishbourne Channel with 12 on 2 Jan and 15 on 3 Feb (one observer commented that 'Rock Pipits really like this stretch') and six under the cliffs at Newhaven on 21 Jan. The stretch of beach beneath Roedean also seemed to be a favoured area; there were four there on 1 Jan, five on 6 Feb and four again on the 24th.

Breeding was confirmed in two tetrads and was probable in a further three. Birds were seen carrying food at Southwick Beach on 27 May and at the bottom of the cliffs at Cuckmere Haven on 30 Jun, the former constituting the first confirmed breeding record for West Sussex. At Beachy Head, single birds were noted on odd dates at Birling Gap and also beneath the cliffs at Cow Gap on 31 Jul. Two pairs were recorded on the cliffs at Peacehaven on 20 Mar and two were noted at Roedean on 1 May and 5 Jun. That there has been a reduction in numbers in the Beachy Head area is exemplified by the results of a survey in 1965 which identified 23 singing males holding territory between Birling Gap and Holywell (Eastbourne).

In the autumn, a bird at Shoreham Hbr on 7 Sep was noted as the 'earliest ever returning bird', one day earlier than last year. The first bird at Thorney Island (Chichester Hbr) was noted on 3 Oct. The highest counts during this period were of ten at Newhaven West Pier on 21 Sep, eight under the cliffs there on 13 Oct and a monthly maximum of ten at Pagham Hbr on 25 Oct. Seven birds (maximum three) were recorded at Hastings on four dates between 15 Aug and 15 Nov during an extended migration watch.

During the second winter period the highest counts were of six in Pagham Hbr on 26 Nov, ten at Fishbourne Channel on the 27th and six at Rottingdean on 10 Dec. On 17 Dec three were present in the car park at Birling Gap. [MDS]

Water Pipit

Anthus spinolett

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

There were four accepted records for the year: one was sighted at Coldwaltham SF on 27 Jan (DIS), three birds were seen at Summer Lane SF (Pagham Village) on 5 Mar (DC, BK), one was at West Rise Marsh (Eastbourne) from 12 to 13 Nov and, finally, one was at Crowhurst on 22 Dec (CHD). This was a slightly better year than some of recent memory. [MDS]

Buff-bellied Pipit*Anthus rubescens**Very rare vagrant.*

One seen at Newhaven West Beach on 9 Oct (NGM) was identified retrospectively from photographs taken at the time. The bird showed the characteristics of the American race *A.r. rubescens*, which breeds in Greenland, northern Canada and Alaska and winters in southern USA and Central America, rather than the Asian race *A.r. japonicus*, which breeds from northeast Siberia to the Baikal region and winters on the Indian subcontinent, China and Japan. This is the first record of the species in Sussex and was the only one recorded on the British mainland in 2011. The record has been accepted by BBRC and an account of the finding and identification of the bird appears on pages 257-260 of this report. [DHH]

Chaffinch*Fringilla coelebs**Abundant resident, and probably very common passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Chaffinches were recorded from 690 tetrads (67% of the county total) spread right across the county, though regretfully, c.20% of the 3896 records received stated "present only", i.e. no count. During the first winter period there were 35 counts of 30 or more birds, with a further three counts of 100 or more. The highest of these were 250 at Staple Ash Fm (Chilgrove) on 23 Jan, 250 at Barcombe on 18 Mar (both regarded as minimum counts) and 100 at Blackbrook Fm (Petworth) on 6 Jan. The next highest counts during this period all came from the west of the county: 70 at East Dean on 29 Jan and five further records of between 50 and 52 birds.

During the BBS a total of 1586 was recorded from 144 (98%) of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 35 at Heyshott on 25 Jun. Breeding was confirmed from 144 tetrads and was probable in a further 183. Nest building was first observed on 27 Mar at Broadbridge Heath and at Warnham on 6 Apr but there were few subsequent records indicating more than singing or pair bonding until May. Confirmed breeding came from Gills Lap (Ashdown Forest) and Cootham (Storrington) on 15 Apr, when adults were recorded carrying food or faecal sacs, but then only seven further records were received to the month's end. The first evidence of fledging was from Apuldrum on 10 May; records of fledging continued until late July, with one outstanding record from Singleton on 20 Sep. At Pagham Hbr, 71 pairs of territories were identified. Throughout the summer counts remained low with just 21 double-figure returns; the highest were 40 at Pett Level on 23 Aug, 37 at Poynings on the 6th and 24 at Chilgrove on the 29th. During the autumn and into the second winter period 804 birds were recorded from an extended migration watch at Hastings from 28 dates between 10 Sep to 6 Nov, with a maxima of 124 E on 28 Sep and 78 E on 5 Nov. Very few other records were received indicating migration, the exceptions being 60 considered to have just arrived at Pagham Hbr on 30 Sep, 20 E from both Worthing on 14 Oct and Selsey Bill on the 15th and 150 E at Climbing Beach on 5 Nov.

During the second winter period there were 37 double-figure counts, although only five of these were of more than 40 birds. The most notable were 90 at Pett Level on 10 Dec, 70 at Pulborough Brooks on 29 Nov and 54 at Cocking on 9 Dec. Four three-figure counts were received during this period, the highest being 200 at Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) on 15 Oct, 150 at both Chilgrove on 15 Dec and Friston Forest on 5 Nov, and 100 at Pulborough Brooks on 8 Nov. During the SWBS a total of 735 was recorded from 106 (88%) of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 30 at Hayes Fm (Udimore) on 10 Nov.

At Pett level, RBRG ringed 589 new birds (a record) including 578 adults. At Strivens Reedbed (Steyning), SRG ringed 106 new birds (63 adults). At Cissbury North scarp SRG ringed eight new birds (five adults). At Ladywells (Coombes) eight new birds were ringed (five adults) and at Beachy Head, BHRG ringed 22 new birds (ten adults). [DB]

Brambling

Fringilla montifringilla

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Schedule 1 species.

Bramblings were recorded in just 53 tetrads, distributed 25:28 west: east. The approximate minimum numbers of birds and sites (tetrads or 1-km squares) were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	464	36	39	40		1	19	23	14
No. of sites	19	11	12	7		1	11	9	3

The January records were inflated by an exceptional sighting of 350 at Blackbrook Fm (Petworth) on 6 Jan. There was a count of 50 on 17 Jan at Lavington Common and of 20 at Old Lodge NR (Ashdown Forest) on 15 Apr. These were the highest counts in the first winter period apart from ten at Monkton (Chilgrove) on 31 Jan, Wiggonholt Common on 23 Mar and at Pulborough Brooks on 1 Apr. The remaining sightings were in single figures. The final sighting of the season was on 30 Apr at Sandgate Park (Storrington).

The first autumn bird was logged on 23 Sep at Arlington Res. Numbers recorded during the latter part of the year were noticeably sparse. All counts during the second winter period were in single figures. The highest count in November was of six at Rye Hbr on the 18th and in December, seven at Buxted on the 19th. Observers at Beachy Head commented that the species was unusually scarce with just four records. At Hastings they were equally scarce as only 11 were recorded on six dates from 7–27 Oct with a maximum of three. Perhaps the availability of food or clement weather on the continent were such that large numbers did not migrate this year. [TS]

European Serin

Serinus serinus

Very scarce passage migrant; has bred. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

Three birds were recorded during the year. A male was seen on 11 Jun at Hodcombe (Beachy Head) and a singing male was there on the 19th (both RHC). The third record was another male at Seaford on 2 Jul (RCS). Assuming the two at Hodcombe were different birds, this brings the total for the century up to 57. Birds have been recorded this century arriving in all months except August and December, as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly arrivals	1	1	6	15	21	6	2	-	1	3	1	-

The earliest arrival was 16 Jan 2003 and the latest was 16 Nov 2003. [JAH]

Greenfinch*Chloris chloris*

Very common resident and possibly fairly common passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.

Greenfinches were recorded from 624 tetrads, 60% of the county total, spread widely across the county and from the coast into the hinterland. Regretfully, 25% of the 2500 records received stated 'present' only, i.e. no count was recorded. In the first winter period 12 counts recorded 20 or more birds, of which the highest was 50 at Blackbrook Fm (Petworth) on 6 Jan. Other high counts came from Pett Level, with 40 on 18 Feb and 34 on 4 Mar; the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) with 35 on 13 Mar; Goring Beach held 35 on 30 Jan in a pre-roost flock and there were 33 at Patcham (Brighton) on 3 Mar. There were also 49 counts of between ten and 19 birds during this period.

During the BBS a total of 583 was recorded from 113 (77%) of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 17 at Northbrook Fm (Worthing) on 5 Jun. Breeding was confirmed from 108 tetrads and was probable in a further 174. Nest building was observed at Findon on 5 Mar, Portslade on the 14th and Chichester on the 17th. The first record of young in a nest came from Guestling Thom on 20 Apr. Food or faecal sac carrying was observed on 3 May at Danehill and the first fledged young of the year were noted three days later at West Tarring (Worthing). At Pagham Hbr, 39 pairs or territories were identified. Breeding was confirmed from a number of other sites throughout May and June, decreasing through July; the latest record of fledglings was from Beachy Head on 10 Aug. One exceptional count during the breeding season came from Felpham (Bognor Regis) of 63 birds on 24 Jun. The next highest count during this period was of 25 at Patcham on 4 Apr but most records were of birds in single figures. Twenty in a Woodmancote garden on 1 Apr was perhaps reminiscent of pre-trichomonosis days.

Only a few post-breeding flocks of notable size were recorded with 37 at Warnham LNR on 24 Aug and 30 at Pett Level on 13 Aug being the largest. In the autumn, only two flocks exceeded 100: one of 220 E over Pagham Hbr on 8 Oct and another of 150 there on the 25th. There were 18 counts of 20 or more birds through the autumn: observers at Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) recorded 75 on 15 Oct, there were 65 at Dell Quay (Chichester Hbr) on 2 Sep, 60 at Ferring Rife on 1 Sep and 50 at both Pagham Hbr on 16 Sep and east past Worthing on 14 Oct.

Only 12 flocks of 20 or more were recorded during the second winter period, with two flocks of 40 on 6 Nov and 45 on 5 Dec all at Rye Hbr and 40 at Pagham Hbr on 1 Dec being the most significant. During the SWBS a total of 166 was recorded from 40 (33%) of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 15 at Burgess Hill on 14 Dec.

At Pett level, RBRG ringed 617 new birds (a record), including 352 adults. At Strivens Reedbed (Steynning), SRG ringed 64 new birds (51 adults). At Cissbury North Scarp SRG ringed two new birds (one adult). At Ladywells (Coombes) 55 new birds were ringed (26 adults). At Beachy Head, BHRG ringed ten new birds (three adults). [DB]

Goldfinch*Carduelis carduelis*

Probably fairly common resident, common summer visitor and passage migrant and fairly common winter visitor.

Goldfinches were recorded from 654 tetrads (63% of the county total) across the county, though regretfully, c.25% of the 2652 records received stated 'present' only, i.e. no count was

recorded. During the first winter period, records were generally of low counts, with few flocks of over 40 birds. Notable exceptions came from Pagham Hbr and Horsham with 60 each on 11 Jan and 27 Jan respectively, whilst the next highest count was of 41 at Pulborough Brooks on 23 Mar.

Breeding was confirmed in 109 tetrads, with probable breeding in a further 176. Nest building was first observed on 8 Mar at Southbourne (Emsworth) and at Boxgrove on 14 Apr. The first record of fledglings was about a month later at Littleworth (Partridge Green) on 14 May. Evidence of successful breeding continued to be recorded until mid- to late August. At Pagham Hbr, 16 pairs or territories were identified. The only notable count through the early summer was of 45 on 27 Jun at Weir Wood Res. There were also a few counts of c.20 birds in late June/early July. By late summer, notable counts were of 53 at Pulborough Brooks on 25 Jul and 55 at Weir Wood Res and 33 at Wepham on 26 Jul. Post-breeding flocks increased to 127 at Pulborough Brooks by 29 Aug and 130 at Weir Wood Res by 9 Sep.

Autumn migration began in late September; 33 W on the 23rd were recorded at Selsey Bill followed by 45 in flight on the 27th at Rye Hbr, 25 E at Climping Beach on the 29th and 42 E at Worthing on the 30th. An interesting record was of 250 counted on 22 Oct in Stansted Forest. Numbers increased and were concentrated through October and into early November. The monthly totals, and hours watched, at three of the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

		Sep	Oct	Nov	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	E	-	20	224	224 E 13 Nov
	W	33	251	-	-
	S	-	40	-	-
	Hr	55	29	14½	-
Climping Beach	E	25	8910	2350	3700 E 28 Oct
	W	-	300	-	-
	Hr	-	41½	13	-
Worthing Beach	E	18	1596	-	799 E 14 Oct
	W	42	56	-	-
	Hr	26½	30½	-	-

In October, high counts at Climping Gap included 1120 E on the 14th, 2050 E on the 15th, 1000 E on the 25th and a peak count of 3700 E on the 28th; at Hastings high counts included 1020 E on the 15th, 1720 E on the 23rd and a peak count of 1965 also on the 28th. At least 20,000 birds passed through the county during October. In November, high counts on the 5th included 1000 E at Climping Gap, 1440 over Holywell (Eastbourne) and at Hastings on the 11th the peak count was 1562 E; a minimum of another 7000 passed through in November. During an extended migration watch at Hastings, 12,704 birds were recorded over 39 dates between 15 Sep and 15 Nov. Autumn migration appears to have ended in mid-November; the last significant count was of 600 E at Climping Gap on the 13th. Thereafter, numbers decreased so that by the latter part of the second winter period, only two counts were received of 100, at Weir Wood Res on 20 Nov and at Nutbourne on 7 Dec. The next highest counts came from Chilgrove of 70 on 17 Nov, Wick Bottom (Woodingdean) of 60 on 4 Dec, and 50 at Bexhill on 13 Nov. During the SWBS a total of 339 was recorded from 59 (49%) of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 50 at Denne Park (Horsham) on 26 Dec.

At Pett level, RBRG ringed 1435 new birds (a record) including 503 adults. At Strivens Reedbed (Steyning), SRG ringed 223 new birds (170 adults). At Ladywells (Coombes) 42 new birds were ringed. [DB]

Siskin*Carduelis spinus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; very scarce breeder.

Siskins were recorded from 230 tetrads, distributed roughly equally across the West and East Sussex. The first winter period started with a bang with a sighting of 225 on 1 Jan at Weir Wood Res. On 22 Jan there were 100 at Chesworth Fm (Horhsam), flocks of 50 were at Town Littleworth (Chailey) on the same date and at Wadhurst Park on 24 Jan, 60 were at Burton MP on 10 Feb, the same number at the Amberley East Reserve on 20 Feb and 50 at Burton MP on the 26th. In addition flocks of 20 or more were recorded on 34 occasions in this period.

During the BBS, a total of only five was recorded from three of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of three at Chichester on 9 Apr. Breeding was confirmed in three tetrads and probable in nine. There were four pairs or territories recorded during the Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey (see page 244 for details) and four similarly on Ashdown Forest (see page 245). The first reports of fledged young came from Blackdown (Fernhurst) on 19 May followed by one from the Old Airstrip (Ashdown Forest) on 11 Jun. In the breeding season a flock of 20 was recorded at Blackdown on 21 Apr and again on the 30th and one of ten at Stedham Common on 5 Apr. Most other records were in single figures.

The first indication of autumn migration was of 20 W calling loudly at Sheepcote Valley on 20 Aug. Observers at Climping Beach recorded a total of 72 on three dates between 5 and 29 Aug with a peak count of 60 on the 29th. Migration continued sporadically into September until the 15th when 10 E were noted at Cissbury Ring followed by 6 W and 13 S at Selsey Bill in 3½ hr on the 18th. However, numbers increased significantly from the 28th. The month's total at Climping Beach was 175 E and 18 W with a peak count of 125 E on the 28th when 255 E were also recorded at Hastings while later at Worthing Beach a peak count of 230 was recorded on the 30th. However, movements during October were more pronounced, particularly at Climping Gap, as follows:

		Oct	Nov	Peak movement		Hrs watched peak days
Selsey Bill	E	46	-			
	W	402	-	341	12 Oct	2½
Climping	E	1767	170	325	1 Oct	1
	W	100	-			
Worthing Beach	E	308	-	159	14 Oct	3
	W	-	-			

Further east, during a migration watch at Hastings from 10 Sep to 13 Nov, involving 43 dates, a total of 4039 was recorded including peak counts of 297 W on 11 Oct, 340 W on the 12th and 253 E on 5 Nov.

In the second winter period there were eight records elsewhere of 100 or more. At Beachy Head, where none were recorded in the spring, there were 779 bird days between 9 Sep and 13 Nov with a peak count of 217 on 5 Nov. Elsewhere there were 200 at Bewl water on 2 Nov, 176 at Weir Wood Res on the 3rd and 142 at Holywell (Eastbourne) on the 5th again. Thereafter numbers declined although there were 17 records of counts from 50 to 100. [TS]

Linnet*Carduelis cannabina*

Common but decreasing resident and partial migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Linnets were recorded from 401 tetrads, c.38% of the county total. In the first winter period there were 61 reports in double figures including seven of 100 or more. The largest sighting was of 250 at Hastings CP on 4 Jan. Other high counts included 150 at Pagham Hbr on 5 Jan and 200 at Singleton on the 15th, a flock of 128 at Pett Level on the 16th, 140 at Climping Beach on the 31st and the same number at Thorney Island on 19 Feb where there were 150 on 14 Mar.

During spring, in contrast to last year, there was only one triple figure count, of 205 at the Norfolk Estate on 1 Jun but there were 82 counts in double figures, the highest being 70 at Worthing Beach on 30 Apr. During the BBS, a total of 203 was recorded from 46 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 22 at Westmeston on 30 Jun. Breeding was confirmed in 61 tetrads and was probable in 158. The earliest record of fledged young was at the Reservoir (Ashdown Forest) on 23 Apr. Two nests with eggs (one and three respectively) were found at Lavington Plantation on 28 Apr and adults either feeding young or disposing of faecal sacs were noted at Bexleyhill (Lodsworth) on the 29th.

During the summer triple figure counts were recorded six times: 140 were seen at the Beeding Cement Works on 15 Jul, 200 were at Upper Beeding on 2 Aug, 120 at Bewl Water on 15 Aug and 160 were at Ditchling Beacon the same day. On 21 Aug 120 were sighted at Beeding Hill and on the 29th 150 were recorded at Rye Hbr.

In the autumn numbers increased significantly, particularly from mid-September. Regular observers at sites at Pett Level recorded over 620 bird days, with peak counts of 40 on the 15th and 53 on the 16th, and at Rye Hbr 1360 bird days, with maxima of 300 on the 13th and 400 on the 28th. High numbers recorded elsewhere included 120 at Dell Quay (Chichester Hbr) on 2 Sep, 162 at Pagham Hbr on the 16th, 200 at Bewl Water on the 20th and Findon on the 22nd (feeding in stubble) and 100 at Steep Down (Lancing) on the 27th. Visible migration was sporadic until October when significant movements eastwards or westwards were recorded. A total of c.3400 were recorded during the month moving westwards with maxima of 200 at Hastings CP on the 6th, 1100 at Beachy Head on the 8th and no less than 1779 at Hastings on the 12th when 1000, probably the same, flew west at Pett Level in several dense flocks. Conversely, c.1185 moved eastwards with maxima of 250 at Pagham Spit on the 8th and 200 at Rye Hbr on the 11th. Significant counts elsewhere included 600 at West Dean (W Sussex) on 9 Oct, 400 at Thorney Island on the 21st (feeding in a lucerne field) and 200 at both Bewl Water on the 25th and Belle Tout (Beachy Head) on the 31st. During November numbers recorded dropped off following the end of mass migration and there were only six records in treble figures to the end of the year, all in November: 200 at Bewl Water on 2 Nov, 176 at Weir Wood Res on the 3rd, 150 at Burpham on the 15th, 120 at Emsworth Marina (Chichester Hbr) on the 1st and 100 at The Burgh (Burpham) on the 24th. [TS]

Lesser Redpoll*Carduelis cabaret*

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

This species was recorded from 146 tetrads during the year, divided roughly 59:87 west: east. Sightings were made throughout the year but with a significant reduction between May and

August, probably reflecting observer effort, during which period there were only 11 sightings away from Ashdown Forest. Minimum monthly totals, excluding obvious duplicate records and period counts covering more than one month, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	380	755	796	490	112	131	139	69	429	4675	3879	1123

In the first winter period there were 65 counts in double figures including the highest counts of 120 at Burton MP on 25 Feb, 80 at Duncton (Burton Park) on the 20th and 80 on Ashdown Forest on 25 Mar.

During the BBS, a total of only three was recorded from three of the 147 1-km squares surveyed. During spring and summer, almost 90% of records came from Ashdown Forest; the highest count away from there was 40 at Bewl Water on 1 Apr and 10 at Pulborough Brooks on the 7th. On Ashdown Forest the species was recorded on 95 days between 1 Apr and 31 Aug during which period there were at least 26 double figure counts; the highest being 50 on 4 Apr, 42 on the 5th and 40 on the 15th.

Rather surprisingly, during the BBS single birds were recorded in only three of the 147 1-km squares surveyed with only one of these on Ashdown Forest. Counts of Lesser Redpolls breeding in Ashdown Forest, where the minimum number of pairs or territories recorded was 28, down from 41 in 2010, are shown on page 245. Breeding was not confirmed at any other site and was possible at only six.

Numbers during the autumn into the second winter period increased noticeably from mid-September as migration occurred. There were 22 treble figure counts and 131 in double figures during the period. In October high counts away from Ashdown Forest included 986 on the 15th and 470 on the 19th at Pett Level and counts at Hastings of 279 W on the 11th, 346 W on the 12th and 379 E on the 16th. The highest count on Ashdown Forest was 134 on the 14th. In November there were maximum counts of 369 at Pett Level on the 12th and 300 on Ashdown Forest on the 17th. The highest counts in December were 150 on Ashdown Forest on the 26th, 50 at Warnham LNR on the 10th, 40 at Bewl Water on the 14th and 30 at Stoughton Down on the 4th and Broxmead (Bolney) on the 11th. A total of 1909 birds was recorded by Hastings Migration Watch on 26 days between 15 Aug and 13 Nov.

In addition to the numbers above: ringers at Pett Level trapped 4875 birds in October and a further 1814 in November. At Whitbread Hollow 265 birds were ringed between 16 Oct and 12 Nov with a peak of 78 on 12 Nov. At Beachy Head 900 bird days were recorded between 3 Oct and 22 Nov while at Cissbury North Scarp 50 were ringed between 4 Oct and 22 Nov with a peak of 27 on 29 Oct.

As a species elevated to the red list of high conservation concern it is important that all sightings are recorded and submitted, particularly if there is evidence of territorial or breeding activity, with at least a 4-figure and preferably a 6-figure reference. [GDE]

Common Redpoll

Carduelis flammea

Rare vagrant.

Records were accepted for 20 birds, two of which appear to have remained from the previous year's influx. Single birds were recorded at Burton MP on 25 Feb (DIS) and at Warnham LNR between 19 and 25 Mar (SP). In the autumn a small influx occurred. The first to be recorded was

one at Pett Level where RBRG trapped and ringed it. This was the first of a total of 11 new birds ringed there between 15 Oct and 21 Nov which included four on 1 Nov and two on the 19th (all RBRG). In addition, one first year bird was controlled, having been previously ringed in Yorkshire. Elsewhere, one was recorded at Beachy Head on 16 Oct (DC, JFC), another at Warnham on the 22nd (SB) and four at Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) on the 29th (ADW, IJW). [JAH]

Common Crossbill

Loxia curvirostra

Irruptive species; usually scarce visitor but fairly common in some years. Very scarce breeder in some years. Schedule 1 species.

Crossbills were recorded from 92 tetrads. Numbers reported for this early breeding species in the first four months of the year were more modest than the previous year. Sightings of 20 or more birds involved 20 at West Dean Woods on 23 Jan, 24 at Brede High Woods on 12 Apr and 30 at Blackdown (Fernhurst) on the 30th.

During the BBS, a total of only four was recorded from three of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of two at Rake on 30 Apr. Breeding was confirmed in four tetrads and was probable in two more. No pairs or territories were recorded either during the Heathlands Breeding Birds Survey or on Ashdown Forest. Recently fledged young were first noted at Blackdown on 25 Apr and in a family party at Lavington Plantation on 5 May. Fledged young were also seen at Linch Down (Bepton) on 1 Aug.

During the summer, there were eight counts above 20 including 32 E at Bignor Hill on 10 Jul, 30 each at Lullington Heath and Pett Level on the 21st and 50 at West Dean Woods on the 24th. Numbers held up during the autumn with 13 counts in excess of 20 including 54 at Pett Level on 19 Oct and 50 at Lavington Plantation on 8 and 15 Oct. A total of 301 birds was recorded on 20 dates between 25 Sep and 15 Nov during a Migration Watch at Hastings, with the maximum daily count of 93 on 12 Nov. Observers at Beachy Head commented that this had been the best autumn there since 1997. The species was recorded, usually flying over, on nine dates between 4 Jun and 5 Nov; a total of 40 bird days was recorded with a maximum of 12 on 13 Oct. The species was not recorded during the SWBS but, included in the ten counts in excess of 20, were 30 noted at Warnham LNR on 2 and 30 Nov and 4 Dec, at least 30 at Monkton (Chilgrove) on 17 Nov and also at Wiggonholt Common on the 18 and 19 Dec while 25 flew over Poundgate (Ashdown Forest) on 4 Dec. [PJP]

Common Rosefinch

Carpodacus erythrinus

Rare vagrant.

There were no records in 2011 but there is one previously unpublished record:

2007: An immature bird was recorded in the garden of the Beachy Head Hotel on 27 Sep (JFC).

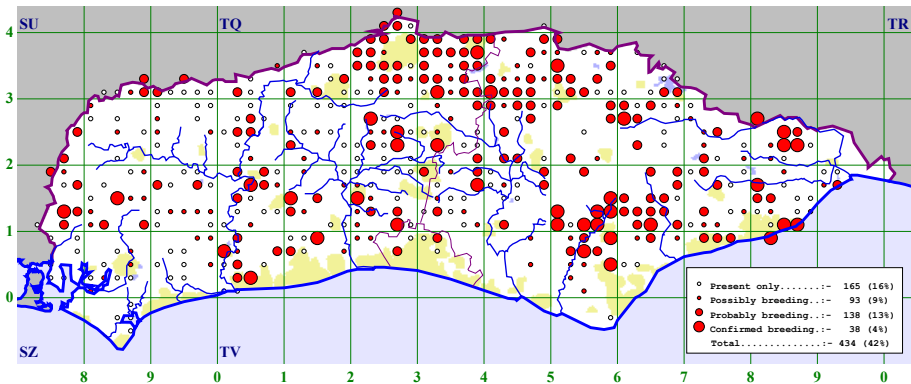
This brings the county total to 30 of which four have been this century. [DHH]

Bullfinch*Prhrhula pyrrhula*

Fairly common or common resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The species was recorded in 423 tetrads across the county, a similar figure to the previous year (414). During the first winter period the highest counts were nine at Pulborough Brooks on 28 Feb and eight at Roundhurst Common (Northchapel) on 26 Jan and Pett Level on the 27th but there were also some 60 records of three to seven.

During the BBS, a total of 73 was recorded from 39 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of six at Rake on 6 Jun. Breeding was confirmed in 38 tetrads and was probable in a further 137, compared with 25 and 104 respectively in the previous year. It is possible that this increase resulted from extra observer effort as Atlas surveying approached a close. Confirmed breeding was first noted at Lower Horsebridge (Hailsham) on 10 May where an adult was seen carrying food or a faecal sac. The first fledged young were noted at Hoath Wood (Beckley) on 23 May and East Grinstead on the 27th. Five pairs bred at Pulborough Brooks, two at Rackham Plantation and one at Rye Hbr.



The highest counts during the spring and summer were of seven recorded during Atlas surveys at Haslemere on 3 May and Marley Common on the 17th, and also at Pett Level on 15 Jul and there were over 70 records of three or more. In the autumn and second winter period the first double figure counts were recorded: 12 at Pett Level on 30 Oct followed by 20 there on 9 Nov; 11 at Pallingham (Pulborough) on 17 Nov; tens at Ashburnham Place (Battle) on 2 Dec, at Bewl Water on the 25th and Arundel WWT on the 30th. During the SWBS a total of 94 was recorded from 36 1-km squares of the 120 surveyed.

The Steyning RG at Strivens Reedbed (Steyning) trapped 26 birds (25 new and one ringed in previous years, 15 young and 11 adults); at Cissbury North Scarp 49 birds were trapped (42 new and seven ringed in previous years, 35 young and 14 adults). At Pett Level, the RBRG recorded c.180 bird days during November, with a maximum of 20 on 9 Nov, and ringed 26 new birds during the month. [PJP]

Hawfinch***Coccothraustes coccothraustes***

Scarce or possibly very scarce breeding resident and very scarce passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Hawfinches were recorded in only nine tetrads, principally in the Chilgrove/West Dean area of West Sussex. The number of day-sightings this year (16) was a further reduction on 2010 and 2009 (24, 44) and involved a further reduction in numbers recorded from 77 to 50 (excluding duplicates).

During the first winter period a minimum of 31 birds was recorded of which 26 (84%) were from the West Dean Woods/Chilgrove area where the highest counts were of nine on 31 Jan and six on the 20th. Sightings of single birds came also from Buchan Park, West Chase (Ashdown Forest) and Staplecross.

During the summer the only record was of one bird at Kingley Vale on 1 Jun.

Nineteen birds were recorded in the second winter period, all but two were from the West Dean Woods/Chilgrove area where there were eight on 17 Nov (including seven juveniles) and five on the 27th (three juveniles). Single birds were also recorded at Wadhurst Park on 17 Oct and Pett Level on 28 Nov during this period.

The continuing paucity of records for the summer months and the overall reduction in numbers suggests that this species is under recorded, particularly during the breeding season. The concentration of records in the two winter periods suggests numbers may be being boosted by migration. Also, with juveniles being recorded in autumn it is crucial that further attempts are made to ascertain whether the species is still breeding in the county. All sightings should be reported with at least 4-figure grid references especially if territorial behaviour or breeding evidence is observed. [GDE]

Snow Bunting***Plectrophenax nivalis***

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

Snow Buntings were recorded from 24 tetrads. A pair along the sea wall at Prinsted from 29 Dec 2011 to 13 Jan was seen by many observers. Elsewhere one flew up from a patch of cleared heath at West Chase (Ashdown Forest) on 4 Jan, an unusual but not an unprecedented inland location, and single birds were seen in the Rye Bay area on 16 Jan and 1 Feb.

The only October records were of another inland sighting of one at Crawley on 21 Oct and one at Worthing on the 30th. Three flying west at Beachy Head early on 6 Nov heralded a small influx at several coastal sites across the county with small numbers remaining until the end of the year at East Head and Lancing. At the former, five were present from 7 Nov, falling to a single bird by mid-month, rising again to three on many dates in December, while two were present on the beach at Lancing from 15 Nov into 2012. Elsewhere two were at Littlehampton from 7 to 9 Nov and two at Rustington on 4 Dec. At Rye Hbr a single bird was present on 12 and 21 Nov and one was at Pett Level on 13 Nov. The only other inland sighting was of a male at Wolstonbury Hill (Pyecombe) on 24 Nov. It is difficult to judge how many birds were involved but it is probable that numbers in the county never exceeded ten at any one time. [ACG]

Lapland Bunting*Calcarius lapponicus*

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

Following last year's exceptional autumn influx of at least 69 birds, five were recorded in the first winter period. One was recorded at East Guldeford Level on 2 Jan (AP), an adult male was seen at Goring Gap on the 12th and 13th (CWM, RNS) and another individual was at Beachy Head on 6 Mar (DC, BK). At Thorney Island an adult male was present from 8-19 Mar (CBC *et al.*) and the final record was of one at Beachy Head on 27 Mar (DC, JFC, BK), which was the second latest (one on 15 Apr 1968).

In the second winter period, numbers returned to more normal levels, with an estimated seven birds. The first to arrive was an adult male seen on 21 Sep at Cuckmere Haven, and presumably a different one was there on 1 Oct (both ARK). Two birds were recorded at Beachy Head on 6 Nov (JFC) and the final record was of three at East Guldeford Level on the 22nd (AP). [JAH]

Yellowhammer*Emberiza citrinella*

Fairly common resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

As in the previous year Yellowhammers were recorded from c.420 tetrads during the year. The largest flocks during the first winter period were of 100 at Bevendean (Brighton) on 8 Feb, 60 at Plumpton Green on 19 Jan, 50 at Wappingthorn (Steyning) three days later, 45 at Devil's Dyke on 30 Jan and 57 there on 20 Mar, and a roost at Iping Common from late January to early March which held 38 on 2 Mar. The first song was noted at Uckfield on 27 Jan.

During the BBS a total of 177 was recorded from 62 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 19 at Heyshott on 25 Jun. Breeding was confirmed in 41 tetrads and was probable in a further 167. The first nesting activity was reported from Chuck Hatch (Ashdown Forest) on 22 Mar. One singing at Thorney Island on 29 Apr was the first breeding evidence there since 2002. The earliest report of adults carrying food for young was from Guestling on 15 May. Breeding was confirmed in over 40 tetrads and probable in a further 167. An estimated 44 breeding pairs or territories were recorded during the annual Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey (see page 244 for details). Twenty-two pairs or territories were recorded on Ashdown Forest (see page 245 for details). Other counts in defined areas include five pairs at Pagham Hbr, 24 pairs on the Norfolk Estate, down from 31 the previous year and three pairs at Pulborough Brooks. In the breeding season Atlas TTV surveys six tetrads held ten or more Yellowhammers.

In the second winter period, although there were no flocks to match those of the previous winter, double figure counts were received from c.24 sites. The earliest of these was a flock of 24 on 24 Sep at High Cross Fm (Uckfield). A minimum count of 30 near Ticehurst was welcome given the paucity of winter records from the east of the county. The largest flocks were 40 on the riverbank at Pulborough Brooks on 24 Oct, 50 at Steyning Round Hill two days later with 52 there on 30 Dec, 60 in a hedgerow at Ditchling on 17 Nov and 60 at Devil's Dyke on 19 Dec. During the SWBS a total of 116 Yellowhammers was recorded from 20 of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 30 at Findon Park on 15 Dec. While there is some evidence of small numbers spreading into their former haunts in the breeding season there are still many areas of the county where the species is rarely seen. [ACG]

Ortolan Bunting*Emberiza hortulana**Scarce, mainly autumn, visitor.*

The only record was of a female seen and photographed at Birling Gap, Beachy Head on 23 Apr (DC, BK *et al.*). This was the eighth county record this century with sightings in April (one), May (two), August (two) and September (three). [DHH]

Little Bunting*Emberiza pusilla**Rare vagrant.*

One was trapped and ringed at Strivens Reedbed (Steyning) on 19 Nov (PJC, TF), the latest autumn Sussex arrival date on record, where it remained until at least the 26th (when it was re-trapped). This is the 15th county record since the first for Britain and Sussex on 2 Nov 1864. [JAH]

Reed Bunting*Emberiza schoeniclus**Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.*

Reed Buntings were recorded in 204 tetrads. In the first winter period there was a flock of 80 at Pett Level on 28 Jan with 90 there on 17 Feb, gradually dwindling throughout March. There were 70 at Pagham Hbr on 5 Jan and 50 at the Eastern Rother Levels on 11 Feb. The first song was noted at Ferring on 23 Feb.

During the BBS a total of 36 was recorded from 15 of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of eight at Pett Level on 23 Jun. Breeding was confirmed in 39 tetrads and was probable in a further 46. Nine pairs fledged young on Thorney Island, 22 territories were identified at Pagham Hbr, 11 pairs or territories on Ashdown Forest (see page 245 for details), 15 pairs at Pett Level and 55 pairs mapped at Rye Hbr.

Migration and winter numbers seem to be substantially lower than previously. During migration watches at Hastings on 20 dates between 10 Sep and 5 Nov, c.120 bird days were recorded with a maximum of 25 on 8 Oct. Observers at Beachy Head recorded their highest number of the autumn (21) on the same day. During the SWBS a total of 17 Reed Buntings was recorded from seven of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of six at Lidsey Lodge on 10 Dec. Small numbers were seen at Iping Common on several dates between 12 Nov and 10 Dec when ten were noted. A flock of 60 was at Rye Hbr on 19 Sep. The only other significant flock of the second winter period, at Pett Level, had reached 40 on 27 Sep and held 70 on 12 Dec. During the year 136 were trapped at Steyning including 33 controls with a maximum of 21 on 20 Feb. [ACG]

Corn Bunting*Emberiza calandra**Fairly common but decreasing resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.*

Corn Buntings were recorded from 73 tetrads, all from south of the county and mainly from downland areas as in previous years. The only significant flocks of the first two months of the

year were of 18 on 2 Jan at The Burgh (Burpham), 20 at Bevendean (Falmer) on 8 Jan and five at Newhaven Fort the same day rising to nine the next day. On 20 Mar a flock of 20 was at Devil's Dyke and the largest flock of the first winter period was at Steep Down (Lancing) where a minimum of 65 was seen with 30 four days later. Smaller numbers were present at many sites along the Downs between Lancing and Beachy Head. Away from the Downs, a single bird was feeding in the dunes at Pilsey Sands on two dates in January while more unusual sightings were of single birds on two dates in February at sites on the Kent border. Two north of Chichester on 24 Feb may be connected with two at Mid Lavant on 31 Mar. The first report of song occurred at Southease on 12 Feb but even to mid-April some birds still seemed not to be settled in their breeding areas with observers at opposite ends of the county commenting on 10 Apr that a single bird 'did not sing and did not stay' at The Midrips, while a small flock in fields west of Selsey was possibly newly arrived.



Corn Bunting, Cissbury Ring, July 2011 (Gareth Hughes)

During the BBS a total of 18 was recorded from seven of the 147 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of nine at Oving on 19 Jun. Breeding was confirmed in 12 tetrads not only on the Downs between the Rivers Arun and Ouse but also on the coastal plain in the west at Bracklesham Bay, where eight males were thought to have had up to 12 nests, and at Oving and Yapton and in the east, at Winchelsea and at Barn Fm (Camber). Breeding was probable in a further 14 tetrads. On the Norfolk Estate an estimated 46 pairs nested compared with 64 singing males the previous year.

Corn Buntings were recorded at Beachy Head on 18 dates from early August to 17 Oct with a daily maxima of 18 on 10 Sep, ten on the 14th and ten on 15 Oct. Autumn movement was indicated by 10 W on 8 Oct and 2 W the following day. Observers there commented: 'Although this year has been our best autumn this century, in past years very good numbers were recorded with daily counts of 200 not unusual and our daily maximum was on 17/9/1967 when 350 were logged.' and 'On the 23/3/1970 25 singing males were located ...(which) compares to just 2-3 pairs now present'.

Winter flocks began to form in October with numbers on the Norfolk Estate rising from 40 on 6 Oct to 80 on 1 Nov and 2 Dec. Thirty were on recently harvested stubble at Ashington on 7 Oct and the only other large flock was of 75 at Devil's Dyke on 19 Dec. During the SWBS a total of nine Corn Buntings was recorded from three of the 120 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of four at Oving on 25 Nov. Although the large flocks of previous years are reduced there is some cause for optimism with evidence of consolidation or expansion of breeding amongst the small populations away from the Downs. [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 2011. It should be noted however 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.* A list of useful references can be found in SxBR 62:210 (2009). This list is compiled by Paul James unless indicated otherwise. Species names and order follow IOC World Bird Names (v 3.1) available online at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>.

Helmeted Guineafowl

Numida meleagris

Common resident throughout much of Africa. Kept domestically elsewhere.

This species was recorded at five sites with the highest counts being 14 at Great Noven Fm (Chailey) on 3 Feb and five at Cocking on 8 May. Up to three were seen at Ladywells (Coombes) throughout much of the year whilst elsewhere there was one at Freshfield (Scaynes Hill) on 28 Apr and one at Hooe on 10 May.

California Quail

Callipepla californica

Originally found mainly in the southwestern United States but has been introduced into other areas including British Columbia, Hawaii, Chile and New Zealand. It is the state bird of California.

One was at Northiam on 5 May.

Reeve's Pheasant

Syrnaticus reevesii

Endemic to evergreen forests of central and eastern China. This spectacular pheasant is mentioned in the Guinness Book of World Records 2008 for having the longest natural tail feather of any bird species!

One (presumably a male) was on the Parham Estate on 15 May.

Indian Peafowl

Pavo cristatus

Wild birds are restricted to the Indian subcontinent. A traditional favourite in ornamental gardens.

This species was recorded at six sites with the highest count being five at Norfolk House (Angmering Park Estate) on 26 Jan. Elsewhere there were three at Flexham Park (Fittleworth) on

27 Feb and singles at Hurstpierpoint on 21 Apr, Hempstead (Uckfield) on 4 Jun, Balcombe on 26 Jun and Chilver Bridge (Arlington) on 20 Dec.

Swan Goose

Anser cygnoides

Breeds in southern Siberia from the R Ob eastwards to Kamchatka including northern Mongolia and Sakhalin. Migratory within the Asiatic continent but not in the extreme north. Winters in north-east China and, in Japan, on Hokkaido and Honshu. Often found in wildfowl collections.

One was recorded at Lewes Brooks on 16 Jan, 12 Feb and 2 Mar. It was first seen here in Oct 2009.

Bar-headed Goose

Anser indicus

Breeds in central Asia; migrates south to northern India for winter. Commonly kept in wildfowl collections. Free flying individuals are liable to wander.

A single bird was recorded at Pulborough Brooks on four dates between 1 Jan and 2 Mar and from 21 Oct to 12 Dec. Elsewhere, one with Canada Geese in the lower Cuckmere Valley from 17 May to 14 Jun was presumably the bird seen at Shinewater Lake (Eastbourne) on 17 Jul and at Arlington Res from 25 Aug to 30 Sep before returning to Cuckmere Haven on 31 Oct. The only other records were of single birds at Bewl Water on 24 Jun, Weir Wood Res on 18 Dec and Pett Level on 24 Dec. Despite the wide geographic spread of sightings, the dates suggest that only one bird may have been involved.

Snow Goose

Anser caerulescens

Breeds in arctic North America, winters in southern USA and Mexico. Presumed vagrants may occur in the UK in winter, usually in association with other arctic breeding geese, but are greatly outnumbered by escapes and feral birds. There have been no accepted records of wild birds in Sussex.

Two white morph birds at Pulborough Brooks from 14 Apr to 1 May may have been the same as those recorded at Pett Level on 31 Aug and 18 Dec. The only other record was of a single bird at Bewl Water on 29 Jul.

Cackling Goose

Branta hutchinsii

Breeds in Alaska and winters in California. Cackling Goose B. hutchinsii includes the subspecies hutchinsii, leucopareia, minima and taverneri. It is currently not on the British List, no vagrant 'Canada Goose' having, as yet, been assigned to subspecific level. Any recorded in Sussex are very likely to be escapes from captivity.

One at Pulborough Brooks on 5 May was presumably the one reported regularly in West Sussex in recent years (though not since Feb 2009).

Red-breasted Goose*Branta ruficollis*

Breeds Siberia; winters Romania and northern Bulgaria. Wild birds do occur rarely in Britain but it is also kept in many of the larger wildfowl collections.

BBRC accepted the identification of an adult flying past Goring Beach on 21 May (RAI) but placed it in Category E due to the date. [DHH]

Black Swan*Cygnus atratus*

Common resident throughout much of Australia and New Zealand (where it was introduced). Commonly kept in wildfowl collections and on ornamental lakes. Full winged birds are liable to wander. Has bred.

Single birds were recorded at Winchelsea Station on 9 Jan and 15 Mar, with Mute Swans in the Arun Valley between Arundel and Littlehampton intermittently from 10 Jan to 6 May, at Benbow Pond (Cowdray Park) on 11 Jan, at Thorney Deepes on 23 Jan, at Rye Hbr intermittently from 26 Apr to 17 Jul, at Birdham on 2 May and at Pagham Harbour on 14-15 Sep. One at Lidsey Rife with from 27-30 Jan was probably the Arun Valley bird and was noteworthy in that it shared a field with Mute, five Whooper and a single Bewick's Swan, probably the first time that four species of swans have been seen together in Sussex! The only records of more than one bird were twos at West Ashling on 21 Jun and at Pashleigh Manor (Etchingham) on 29 Sep but there was no indication of breeding anywhere in the county this year.

Ruddy Shelduck*Tadorna ferruginea*

Breeds from Turkey across central Asia, generally wintering further south. There are isolated populations in North Africa. Controversially, no officially acceptable British records since 1940 but it seems certain that some late summer influxes originate from E Europe (British Birds 95:398-399).

The bird seen with Brent Geese in the West Wittering area in late 2010 stayed until 21 Mar. One bird was then present on Pevensey Levels from 27 Mar to 9 May. It is tempting to think it was the West Wittering bird, which followed the Brent Geese as they migrated but soon gave up! A female seen at Magham Down from 22-26 Jun might have been the Pevensey bird, as there was no record of the Pevensey bird's gender.

One, presumably that from the previous winter, was at Pagham Hbr on 14 Oct, again with Brent Geese, and it is likely that this was the bird then seen at West Wittering on 12 Nov and still present on 10 Dec.

These records apparently all relate to pure Ruddy Shelducks. However, one seen at Pulborough Brooks on 11 Aug was possibly a hybrid, maybe with Paradise Shelduck. [AT]

South African Shelduck*Tadorna cana*

Breeds in southern Africa, mainly in Namibia and South Africa. In the southern winter, many birds move north-east from the breeding range to favoured moulting grounds, where sizable concentrations occur.

A female was at Pulborough Brooks on 7-8 Aug and presumably the same bird was at Arundel WWT on 7 Oct.

Australian Shelduck

Tadorna tadornoides

Breeds in fairly open country in southern Australia and Tasmania. In winter, many birds move further north than the breeding range.

Two were at Petworth Park Lake on 2 Jan and then a single bird on five dates between 16 Jan and 16 Oct. Presumably the same individual was at Pulborough Brooks on 9 Aug.

Paradise Shelduck

Tadorna variegata

Very common resident in New Zealand.

A single bird was recorded at Petworth Park Lake on five dates between 2 Jan and 16 Oct and at Pulborough Brooks on 4 Aug.

Muscovy Duck

Cairina moschata

Locally common resident in forest lakes of Central and South America. Widespread in its domesticated form.

Recorded throughout the year at Swanbourne Lake (Arundel) where the highest counts were 19 on 8 Sep and 14 on 2 Nov. The only other records were of singles at Widewater (Lancing) on three dates, a maximum of two at Hampden Park (Eastbourne) on 18 Dec and an unspecified number at Maplehurst Wood (Hastings) on 16 Jun.

Wood Duck

Aix sponsa

Breeds northern USA, winters southern USA. Commonly kept in wildfowl collections. Not recorded in the UK as a vagrant although some individuals might conceivably be of wild origin.

Three were recorded at Shepherds Fm (Crawley Down) on 8 Jan, singles (perhaps the same) at Amberley Wild Brooks on 17 Jan and Swanbourne Lake (Arundel) on 18 Jan, two during a BBS survey at Hickstead on 6 May, a female at Crowhurst on 3 Jun (where it had been present for the previous four weeks), singles at Amberley Wild Brooks on 13 Jun and Burton MP on 13 Aug and two pinioned birds at Crowhurst Park on 12 Nov.

Chiloe Wigeon

Anas sibilatrix

Common resident in southern South America. Commonly kept in wildfowl collections.

A male in Pagham Hbr (where it vied for attention with a Black-necked Grebe) on 3 Sep was the only record.

Laysan Duck*Anas laysanensis*

Endemic to the Hawaiian Islands where it is considered Critically Endangered by IUCN because its population exhibits extreme fluctuations within its extremely small range. Conservation action is seeking to remove existing threats or increase the species' resilience to them, and the population is currently increasing.

A female was with Teal at Sidlesham Ferry on 20 and 24 Nov and then at Pagham Lagoon on 28 Nov.

Yellow-billed Teal*Anas flavirostris*

Common resident in southern South America.

One at Weir Wood Res on 23 Sep.

Marbled Duck*Marmaronetta angustirostris*

Breeds northern Morocco, southern Spain and northern Turkey to Kazakhstan; winters mainly North Africa and Iran. Kept in captivity in many wildfowl collections.

The identity of a drake at Arlington Res from 3-9 Jul (DC, JFC, ARK *et al.*) was accepted by BBRC but placed in Category D. [DHH]

Harris's Hawk*Parabuteo unicintus*

Widespread but patchily distributed throughout much of North America and the Caribbean, some move S to winter as far as Central America. Probably the most commonly kept Buteo in captivity.

One with jesses on both legs was at Drayton House Pit (Chichester) on 17 Sep, 29 Sep, 15 Nov and into 2012.

Red-tailed Hawk*Buteo jamaicensis*

Breeds commonly throughout much of North America and the Caribbean; some move south to winter in Central America.

The bird first recorded in the Cocking area in 2008 was seen again on 8 May, 11 Jun and 9 Dec.

Golden Eagle*Aquila chrysaetos*

Mainly resident in Europe, North Africa, northern and central Asia and northern North America.

The long staying adult first recorded in East Sussex in 2008 (SxBR 61:219) was seen again rising out of Hammer Wood, Ashburnham on 18 Jan and over Eatenden Wood, Mountfield on

7 Apr. It seems surprising in a well watched county like Sussex that such a large bird can go 'missing' for months at a time with only a handful of reported sightings during its extended stay.

Cockatiel

Nymphicus hollandicus

Common Australian nomad. One of the commonest aviary birds.

Singles were recorded in gardens at Selsey Bill from 20 Apr to 20 May, at Cuckmere Haven on 28 Aug and Climping Gap on 24 Sep.

Crimson Rosella

Platycercus elegans

A parrot native to eastern and south eastern Australia which has been introduced to New Zealand and Norfolk Island. Commonly found in mountain forests and gardens. Its blue tail feathers are one of the favourite decorations of the Satin Bowerbird.

One showing characteristics of the race *P. e. elegans* was near Horseshoe Plantation (Beachy Head) on 21 Apr.

Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) population trends 1994-2011

Sussex population trends for 33 common species for the period 1994-2011, calculated from the results of the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), are presented in the table below. Also presented are population trends for the period 2010-2011. Those trends that are considered statistically significant are indicated by asterisks. The size of the difference between the upper 95% confidence limit (UCL) and the lower 95% confidence limit (LCL) for each 1994-2011 trend gives an indication of the accuracy of the population trend. The sample size is the mean number of squares per year in which each species was recorded during 1994-2011.

Species	Change 1994-2011 (%)	UCL	LCL	Change 2010-2011 (%)	Sample size
Mallard	148*	315	48	-31	41
Pheasant	6	28	-12	-30	60
Moorhen	3	78	-40	-1	30
Woodpigeon	8	23	-5	-15	75
Collared Dove	39*	69	14	19	48
Green Woodpecker	-35*	-11	-53	-40	52
Great Spotted Woodpecker	272*	470	143	-29	48
Skylark	-20	7	-40	8	42
Swallow	82*	143	37	77	50
Pied Wagtail	-35*	-8	-54	-8	33
Wren	-12	0	-23	38*	71
Duncock	-48*	-36	-58	-15	64
Robin	-22*	-7	-34	-1	73
Blackbird	35*	51	21	29*	75
Song Thrush	-1	19	-17	-13	68
Blackcap	88*	142	46	38	58
Whitethroat	351*	564	207	-1	45
Chiffchaff	33*	72	2	7	63
Long-tailed Tit	70*	137	22	193*	35
Blue Tit	75*	107	48	23	73
Great Tit	73*	104	47	59*	71
Nuthatch	6	59	-29	18	35
Jay	-44*	-20	-60	-16	35
Magpie	44*	87	11	50	67
Jackdaw	88*	143	45	31	58
Rook	44*	78	17	-22	41
Carriion Crow	76*	131	34	-25	73
Starling	-70*	-55	-79	-19	57
House Sparrow	26*	47	7	1	56
Chaffinch	-27*	-17	-35	11	74
Greenfinch	-35*	-18	-48	-3	61
Goldfinch	130*	202	76	29	46
Yellowhammer	-49*	-30	-63	-23	36

For further information about how these trends are calculated and used see Crabtree, H. (2009). Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) population trends in Sussex 1994-2009. *Sussex Bird Report* 62:251.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE DATES OF SUMMER VISITORS, 2011

	First recorded date			Last recorded date		
	2011	1960 to 2010	10-yr average (\pm SD in days)	2011	1960 to 2010	10-yr average (\pm SD in days)
Garganey	13 Mar	2 Feb	3 Mar (\pm 14)	16 Sep	13 Dec	1 Oct (\pm 20)
Quail	29 Apr	6 Feb	17 May (\pm 13)	7 Oct	15 Nov ²	8 Sep (\pm 33)
Osprey	4 Mar ¹	7 Mar	20 Mar (\pm 8)	16 Oct	9 Dec	26 Oct (\pm 11)
Hobby	2 Apr	21 Mar	5 Apr (\pm 6)	14 Oct	9 Nov	24 Oct (\pm 15)
Little Ringed Plover	9 Mar	6 Mar	16 Mar (\pm 5)	28 Sep	8 Oct	23 Sep (\pm 12)
Wood Sandpiper	23 Apr	11 Feb	2 May (\pm 23)	2 Sep	16 Nov	29 Sep (\pm 16)
Pomarine Skua	17 Apr	10 Mar	23 Apr (\pm 17)	28 Oct	31 Dec	15 Sep (\pm 77)
Little Tern	1 Apr	1 Apr	9 Apr (\pm 4)	24 Sep	4 Nov	26 Sep (\pm 15)
Black Tern	19 Apr	2 Apr	17 Apr (\pm 6)	9 Oct	16 Nov ³	9 Oct (\pm 16)
Common Tern	14 Mar ⁴	17 Mar	26 Mar (\pm 6)	9 Nov	26 Nov	26 Oct (\pm 12)
Roseate Tern	4 May	17 Apr	3 May (\pm 17)	18 Aug	5 Oct	3 Aug (\pm 33)
Arctic Tern	10 Apr	2 Apr	11 Apr (\pm 5)	9 Nov	31 Dec	24 Oct (\pm 14)
Common/Arctic Tern	2 Apr	10 Mar	4 Apr (\pm 8)	11 Oct	31 Dec	25 Oct (\pm 15)
Turtle Dove	13 Apr	5 Feb	8 Apr (\pm 13)	17 Sep	18 Dec	29 Sep (\pm 11)
Cuckoo	2 Apr	21 Mar ⁴	2 Apr (\pm 3)	10 Sep	23 Oct ⁵	19 Sep (\pm 14)
Nightjar	17 Apr	8 Apr	3 May (\pm 8)	19 Sep	5 Nov	16 Sep (\pm 11)
Swift	7 Apr	7 Apr	13 Apr (\pm 3)	28 Sep	24 Nov	13 Oct (\pm 22)
Wryneck	8 Apr	9 Mar	20 Apr (\pm 16)	14 Oct	2 Nov ⁶	2 Oct (\pm 8)
Sand Martin	5 Mar	27 Feb	11 Mar (\pm 8)	12 Oct	1 Dec ⁷	21 Oct (\pm 16)
Swallow	13 Mar	4 Feb	9 Mar (\pm 13)	20 Nov	28 Dec	27 Nov (\pm 12)
House Martin	24 Mar	1 Feb	14 Mar (\pm 13)	5 Nov	18 Dec ⁸	12 Nov (\pm 10)
Wood Warbler	13 Apr	7 Apr	18 Apr (\pm 7)	2 Oct	7 Oct	11 Sep (\pm 15)
Willow Warbler	19 Mar	4 Mar	18 Mar (\pm 6)	1 Nov	27 Nov ⁹	28 Oct (\pm 13)
Garden Warbler	3 Apr	28 Mar	3 Apr (\pm 4)	29 Oct	16 Nov	10 Oct (\pm 8)
Lesser Whitethroat	10 Apr	4 Apr	11 Apr (\pm 5)	11 Oct	18 Nov ¹⁰	11 Oct (\pm 11)
Whitethroat	3 Apr	19 Mar	31 Mar (\pm 5)	25 Nov	17 Dec	23 Oct (\pm 14)
Grasshopper Warbler	6 Apr	2 Apr	9 Apr (\pm 6)	15 Oct	1 Nov	18 Oct (\pm 7)
Sedge Warbler	28 Mar	23 Mar	28 Mar (\pm 4)	17 Oct	29 Oct	13 Oct (\pm 13)
Reed Warbler	2 Apr ¹	4 Apr	7 Apr (\pm 3)	16 Nov	1 Dec	3 Nov (\pm 14)
Ring Ouzel	5 Apr	9 Feb ¹¹	28 Mar (\pm 8)	16 Nov	26 Dec	13 Nov (\pm 6)
Spotted Flycatcher	22 Apr	8 Apr	28 Apr (\pm 6)	12 Oct	18 Nov	14 Oct (\pm 9)
Nightingale	2 Apr	21 Mar	5 Apr (\pm 6)	24 Sep	1 Oct ¹²	15 Sep (\pm 11)
Redstart	5 Mar ¹	13 Mar	29 Mar (\pm 7)	1 Nov	11 Dec	24 Oct (\pm 10)
Whinchat	19 Mar	18 Feb	7 Apr (\pm 15)	5 Nov	2 Dec	29 Oct (\pm 9)
Wheatear	9 Mar ¹⁴	13 Feb	4 Mar (\pm 9)	20 Nov	31 Dec	11 Nov (\pm 8)
Pied Flycatcher	7 Apr	1 Apr	10 Apr (\pm 6)	12 Oct	1 Nov	30 Sep (\pm 8)
Yellow Wagtail	20 Mar	12 Feb	26 Mar (\pm 8)	25 Oct	23 Nov ¹³	24 Oct (\pm 8)
Tree Pipit	24 Mar	17 Mar	30 Mar (\pm 3)	16 Oct	9 Nov	16 Oct (\pm 11)

Notes: ¹county record date; ²excludes historic December records; ³excludes one in Cuckmere Valley 13-21 Nov 1954; ⁴excludes one at Fairlight Cove on 15 Mar 1936; ⁵excludes one at Goodwood on 11 Nov 1928; ⁶excludes one at the Crumbles on 5 Nov 1947; ⁷excludes record from unknown location on 5 Dec 1911;

⁸excludes three at Fishbourne on 22 Dec 1894; ⁹excludes two historic records on 26 Dec 1892 and 1949; ¹⁰excludes one at Burgess Hill on 21 Nov 1957 and known wintering birds; ¹¹excludes one at Mannings Heath on 2 Feb 1905; ¹²excludes one at North Bersted on 19 Oct 1943; ¹³excludes one at Sidlesham between 11 Dec 1960 and 14 Jan 1961; ¹⁴excludes one at Newmarket Hill on 10 Jan 2011.

DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL DATES OF WINTER VISITORS, 2011

	Last recorded date			First recorded date		
	2011	1960 to 2010	10-yr average (\pm SD in days)	2011	1960 to 2010	10-yr average (\pm SD in days)
Bewick's Swan	5 Mar	26 Apr	6 Mar (\pm 10)	23 Oct	6 Oct	14 Nov (\pm 17)
White-fronted Goose	20 Apr	25 May	17 Mar (\pm 29)	10 Nov	12 Sep	23 Oct (\pm 24)
Long-tailed Duck	17 Apr	14 Jun	14 May (\pm 22)	17 Nov	12 Aug	30 Oct (\pm 14)
Velvet Scoter	25 May	15 Jun	15 May (\pm 15)	10 Oct	2 Aug	21 Oct (\pm 19)
Goldeneye	29 Mar	31 May	20 Apr (\pm 17)	10 Nov	6 Aug	1 Oct (\pm 25)
Smew	19 Mar	24 Apr	06 Mar (\pm 12)	12 Nov	22 Oct	29 Nov (\pm 17)
Goosander	6 Apr	22 May	6 Apr (\pm 25)	10 Oct	12 Sep	4 Nov (\pm 20)
Black-throated Diver	25 May	21 Jun	22 May (\pm 8)	7 Sep	3 Aug	19 Oct (\pm 22)
Great Northern Diver	29 May	21 Jun	25 May (\pm 11)	30 Oct	16 Sep	16 Oct (\pm 20)
Red-necked Grebe	3 May	19 Jun	15 Apr (\pm 20)	17 Sep	13 Aug ²	21 Sep (\pm 23)
Hen Harrier	24 May	19 Jun	13 May (\pm 17)	20 Aug	4 Aug	3 Sep (\pm 19)
Purple Sandpiper	21 Apr	4 Jun	10 May (\pm 7)	9 Sep	1 Jul	1 Aug (\pm 27)
Jack Snipe	5 May	19 May	19 Apr (\pm 15)	28 Sep	24 Aug	20 Sep (\pm 14)
Great Grey Shrike	21 Mar	5 May ⁴	3 Apr (\pm 18)	16 Oct	26 Sep ³	15 Oct (\pm 7)
Fieldfare	18 Apr	5 Jun	28 Apr (\pm 10)	26 Sep	6 Aug	1 Oct (\pm 12)
Redwing	30 Mar	26 May ⁵	16 Apr (\pm 9)	6 Aug ¹	14 Aug	25 Sep (\pm 4)
Water Pipit	5 Mar	28 May	27 Mar (\pm 22)	12 Nov	1 Sep	28 Oct (\pm 8)
Brambling	30 Apr	12 May	21 Apr (\pm 7)	23 Sep	3 Sep	28 Sep (\pm 9)
Snow Bunting	1 Feb	6 May	2 Feb (\pm 34)	21 Oct	17 Sep	26 Oct (\pm 12)

Notes: ¹earliest county record; ²excludes one off Brighton on 3 Aug 1872; ³excludes one at The Crumbles on 7 Sep 1899; ⁴excludes one at Rye Hbr on 14 May 1950; ⁵excludes two undated historic records of birds found dead in June.

Arrival and Departure Dates

The tables include information from 1960 with earlier notable records in notes. 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 2011, West Sussex

	AC	BD	CC	CL	IC	LC	LS	SC	WC	WD	WH
Hobby	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Woodcock	7	-	1	-	-	-	3	-	1	1	-
Stock Dove	-	-	2	2	-	2	-	1	-	4	1
Turtle Dove	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nightjar	26	1	5	1	6	5	2	1	2	2	1
Green Woodpecker	3	-	-	2	3	2	2	1	4	9	2
Great Sp. Woodpecker	6	-	-	-	3	7	3	5	5	13	2
Wood Lark	4	4	3	4	5	3	-	2	-	3	-
Sky Lark	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-
Tree Pipit	5	5	-	-	7	3	5	2	1	1	-
Meadow Pipit	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Common Redstart	-	2	2	-	-	-	3	-	-	3	-
Stonechat	4	1	1	-	4	5	-	-	3	3	-
Dartford Warbler	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Common Whitethroat	5	4	5	-	3	2	-	1	7	5	2
Siskin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Linnet	6	2	5	-	12	4	-	2	4	2	3
Lesser Redpoll	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Common Crossbill	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Yellowhammer	12	-	3	-	7	7	2	2	5	2	4
Reed Bunting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Figures relate to pairs or territories. The small hyphen (-) indicates that no territories were identified.

Key to sites:

AC: Ambersham and Heyshott Commons

BD: Blackdown (Fernhurst)

CC: Chapel Common (Liphook)

CL: Coates Common and Lords Piece (Fittleworth)

IC: Iping Common

LC: Lavington and Duncton Commons and Lavington Plantation

LS: Linchmere and 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.

SUMMARY OF ASHDOWN FOREST BREEDING BIRDS 2011

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Total
Hobby	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	4
Woodcock	13	-	1	3	4	2	17	2	2	44
Stock Dove	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
Turtle Dove	1	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	4
Nightjar	12	17	9	15	12	5	33	24	2	129
Green Woodpecker	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Great Sp. Woodpecker	5	3	-	2	2	1	8	-	1	22
Wood Lark	18	-	1	-	-	-	1	4	7	31
Sky Lark	15	7	3	1	-	-	-	1	13	40
Tree Pipit	11	-	-	5	3	3	7	4	1	34
Meadow Pipit	3	3	1	2	-	-	-	1	1	11
Common Redstart	-	-	-	1	1	2	-	1	-	5
Stonechat	30	49	16	35	6	5	16	35	22	214
Dartford Warbler	-	3	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	6
Common Whitethroat	12	8	1	4	1	1	2	7	4	40
Siskin	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	4
Linnet	22	32	13	14	3	-	4	13	7	108
Lesser Redpoll	4	4	1	2	1	-	-	5	11	28
Common Crossbill	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Yellowhammer	4	9	1	-	-	1	1	2	4	22
Reed Bunting	1	2	-	-	-	-	1	5	2	11

Figures relate to the minimum numbers of pairs or territories. The (-) indicates no pairs or territories identified. Old Lodge NR is excluded due to absence of data. Data provided by the Ashdown Bird Group, analysis by PJ Johnson and SM Phillips.

Key to sites:

A: Airmans Grave, Cackle Street, Duddleswell area, Misbourne, Hollies, Barnsden

B: Box, Camp Hill, Ellisons Pond, Friends, Millbrook East, Nutley Windmill

C: Kingstanding area, Poundgate area, Pylons, Crow & Gate, St Johns Common area

D: Black Hill, Church Hill, Greenwood Gate, Wrens Warren, Five Hundred Acre

E: Gills Lap area, Chuck Hatch, Piglets, Jumpers Town

F: Forest Centre to Colmans Hatch (Ridge Road area)

G: Beeches, Goat, Hindleap, Lavender Platt, Kidbrook Park, Lumbston Stone, Cherry Orchard

H: Airstrip, Chelwood Vachery and Gate, Isle of Thorns, Millbrook West, Trees

I: Beggars Bush Clump, Bushy Willows, Four Counties, Lodge, Pines, Roman Road, Smugglers

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NB: For an explanation of the superscripts, see the footnote below the table.

M Aeberhard	JD Barber ^A	A Borlase ^{AT}	HM Carter ^{ABCTW}
D Agombar ^T	J Barbour ^X	RM Borwick ^{AT}	K Carter ^S
J Aidley ^A	CJR Barfield ^{ABCSTW}	S Boulton ^X	PD Carter ^{AST}
P Akers ^X	JR Barker ^T	LD Bower ^{BT}	PM Carter ^T
B Akinola	RG Barnett ^{ATW}	NJG Bowie ^{AT}	SJC Carter ^B
C Allen ^T	B Barratt ^T	AL Bowley	R Carver ^W
T Allen ^A	J Barrett ^X	PS Bowley	MC Casemore
A Allum ^W	A Bashford	R Bown ^{ABCT}	A Cashford ^{AT}
AE Almeida ^{ABCTW}	RJ Bassett ^{AX}	L Boyd ^X	A Caulkett
LEF Ambler ^{BCT}	S Bayley ^{AHT}	BR Boyland ^T	M Causer ^W
MJ Amphlett	VR Beaney ^T	RC Bradbury	K Cavalier ^{AT}
D Andrews ^W	G Beck	I Bradshaw ^A	GL Champion
A Apps	I Beeton	MN Brayshaw	R Champion ^B
AC Armitage	J Beirne ^T	PM Brayshaw	P Chandler ^X
G Armstrong ^{AT}	P Bennett	C Brooks ^{ABCT}	B Chapman
J Arnott ^W	C Bentley ^W	M Brown ^A	CB Chapman ^{AST}
P Arnott ^W	DP Bentley	R Brown ^T	SE Chapman ^{ACT}
C Ash ^{AT}	VP Bentley ^{ABCSTW}	SA Brown ^A	ME Charlwood
T Ash	K Benyon-Tinker ^W	SJ Brown	RH Charlwood
D Asher ^{BC}	KF Betton ^A	WR Brown ^T	J-P Charteris ^A
P Ashley	E Bew ^B	JJ Bryant ^{ABTW}	MJ Chattaway ^{ABHS}
J Atkinson ^W	T Bickerton ^A	P Bryant ^T	G Cheetham
K Attree	M Biddulph ^B	HE Bryett ^T	C Chown ^W
M Attwood	N Biddulph ^{ABST}	D Buckingham ^{ACST}	J Christlieb
BP Austin ^T	SA Bigg ^A	C Buckle ^{ABCS}	D Clark ^X
J Austin ^A	SM Bignold ^{AT}	A Budd ^{AT}	FC Clark ^{AT}
M Ayling	R Billingsley ^A	J Bujok	JM Clark ^A
Azure Ecology ^X	J Bills ^B	KR Burch	J Clarke ^{BC}
JWP Bacon	C Bindon ^X	DJ Burges ^E	G Clarkson ^T
M Baggs ^H	M Bird ^T	M Burgess ^S	BR Clay ^{ABCT}
JTA Bagley	Birdguides ^{AT}	N Burgum ^{AT}	PJ Clay
A Baker ^{AT}	J Birkett ^{AT}	D Burt	J Clements ^{AT}
E Baker	G Bishop ^A	J Burt	RJ Clements ^A
M Baker ^T	RA Black ^{ABETW}	NA Burt	M Coath ^{AT}
R Baker ^A	WM Black ^A	AK Butler ^T	C Cockburn ^W
MS Baldwin ^{AT}	EA Blackwell ^A	RA Butler ^{BW}	S Cocker ^W
CF Ball	WG Blumsom ^T	P Calladine ^W	J Coit ^W
H Ball ^T	L Blundell ^A	S Calladine ^T	A Cole ^X
P Ballantine ^T	D Boddington ^{ABCSTW}	PL Callaway ^A	MA Cole ^{AT}
DE Balmer ^A	N Bond	T Callaway ^{SW}	LJ Coley
PC Bance ^W	PF Bonham ^A	P Callis	CB Collins ^{BSW}
B Banks ^A	D Booker	J Carey ^T	M Collins ^B
DG Barber ^{BH}	J Boon	G Carrington	P Collins ^T
E Barber ^{AT}	G Boorman ^{AB}	A Carrington-Cotton ^T	M Colvin

R Comerford ^T	S Delahunt	PC Fenn ^T	A Giacomelli ^{ABC}
M Comley ^{ABT}	MN Denness ^S	GD Fennemore ^T	I Gibb
EP Connelly ^A	H Dennis	C Fentiman	P Gibson ^T
AS Cook	RR Dennis	J Ferguson ^T	TE Gibson-Poole ^{AT}
GM Cook ^A	A Denyer ^T	A Field ^A	DL Gifford ^A
MR Cooke ^A	R Devine	JE Fields ^{AB}	S Gilbert ^W
A Cooper ^T	FF Devon ^T	L Filtness ^{AT}	BR Gilmore
C Cooper ^T	S Dewey ^T	J Fischer	SP Ginnaw ^A
D Cooper	B Dines ^T	S Flaw ^W	J Glen ^{AT}
DR Cooper	T Dingwall ^T	A Flegg	A Glossop
J Cooper ^{AT}	JW Dodd	K Fleming ^A	J Glossop
JF Cooper	T Dodd ^T	G Flinn ^T	C Glover ^T
C Corrigan ^{ABT}	NJ Donnithorne ^A	T Flower	J Glover ^W
RW Coursey ^{AT}	L Dray ^T	L Flowers ^T	DJ Goldsmith ^A
D Couzens	NA Driver	R Floyd ^T	CA Good ^A
JR Cowser ^{ABCHSTW}	FJ Dummigan ^T	SR Foote ^{AT}	JR Goodspeed ^A
JM Cox ^{AT}	KP Duncan ^A	BF Forbes	H Gordon
HM Crabtree ^{ABCHSTW}	G Durey ^W	T Forbes ^{ABST}	W Gordon ^W
D Craddock	B Dye ^T	A Ford	J Gough ^T
TPR Crane	MR Eade	WE Fordham ^T	JS Gowers ^{AST}
DE Crawley ^{AT}	M Eagles ^T	P Forsdick ^{AS}	AS Grace ^A
NC Crighton ^{AT}	R Eagles ^{AT}	TJ Forward ^A	MR Grace
J Crix ^{AT}	AR Eales ^W	P Fosterjohn ^T	J Grant ^{AT}
C Crook	C Eames	R Fowling	MJ Grantham ^T
LSM Crook ^T	B Easlea	CJ Fox ^S	M Gray
G Crooks	J Ede ^W	TP Fox ^{ABC}	K Greaves ^X
FE Crowe	RDM Edgar ^{AS}	D Francis	R Greaves ^X
Horsham DC	M Edmonds ^A	K Frankland ^A	MA Grech ^{AT}
JP Cullen ^A	K Edney	B Fraser ^A	D Green ^{BX}
J Curson ^S	K Eels	TJ Fraser ^{ACT}	M Green ^T
L Curson ^{TX}	NJ Ellis ^A	MG Freeman ^W	P Green ^X
SPM Curson	M Emberson ^{ABC}	R Freeman	NM Greenaway ^{SW}
A Dale ^B	MJ Emery ^W	CD French ^{ATW}	M Greene ^T
RC Dalrymple ^{AT}	J English ^X	RI French ^W	C Greenfield ^T
C Damon ^{AT}	M English ^A	NF Fuller ^{ABC}	RR Greenhalf ^S
C Darling ^T	AD Evans ^A	TP Fuller ^{AT}	G Griffin ^W
E Darwent	MJ Evans ^{CW}	WW Fuller ^{ABCTW}	D Griffiths ^T
M Davidson ^T	SJ Evans ^W	E Funnell ^{AT}	R Grimmett
S Davies ^A	GD Evans ^{ABS}	C Furlepa ^A	RD Gross ^A
SJ Davies ^A	GM Evans ^T	K Gabriel	AJ Guest ^{ABCT}
AM Davis ^A	J Everitt ^T	J Gallop	J Guiver ^{AT}
C Davis ^{BCTW}	RJ Fairbank ^{AT}	MA Galtry ^T	AC Gutteridge ^{ABCT}
M Davis	MW Fairley ^T	EFJ Garcia ^A	PRJ Hadland ^{ABCT}
PI Davison	JA Faithfull	RDJ Gardner	CJ Haffenden ^T
J Day ^{ATW}	S Farey ^W	S Gardner ^B	JSW Hakeman ^A
AF de Potier ^{AW}	M Farmer	C Gent ^A	MP Hall ^{AT}
CH Dean ^{ABCHSTW}	JA Feest	CM George ^{ABCTW}	R Hall ^X
J Dedman ^A	BJ Fellows ^{ABW}	M George ^T	T Hall ^A

RJ Hallett ^T	CE Hope ^{AW}	PJ Johnson	RR Langley ^A
M Hampton ^A	JHM Home ^{ABCT}	RJ Johnson ^{HW}	P Lawrance
D Hanan ^T	C Horsley ^T	S Johnson ^{AT}	MJ Lawson ^A
R Harman	A House	S Johnson	AR Layfield ^T
F Harmer ^{AT}	T Howard-Jones	A Johnston ^{ABCT}	HJA Lee ^{ABESW}
K Harper ^X	DH Howey	J Joiner	PJ Lees ^W
NG Harris ^{AT}	R Howorth ^X	B Jones ^{AT}	MP LeGrys
RG Harris ^{ASTW}	A Hudson ^T	C Jones ^T	M Leighton ^T
A Harrison ^T	DG Hughes	GW Jones ^{AT}	S Levett
E Harriss	PH Hughes ^{ASW}	MGM Jones ^{AT}	SM Lewes ^H
P Harriss	J Hull	PE Jones ^{ABCT}	AP Lewis ^T
D Hart ^{AE}	L Hull ^X	RJ Jones ^T	T Lifton ^{CT}
H Hart ^E	DJ Humphries ^A	SEI Jones ^T	TJ Lincoln
R Hart ^A	L Hunt	T Jones ^T	SH Linington
R Hartfree	B Hunter ^A	K Jupp ^{AT}	DR Livett
WG Harvey ^{ABCW}	ID Hunter ^{AT}	ME Kalaher	AH Lloyd ^{TW}
P Haskell ^{AB}	S Hunter	B Kay	J Lloyd
JN Hawtree ^{AT}	NP Hutchinson ^{ABSTW}	B Kelley	P Lomas ^T
RM Haydon ^T	AM Hutson ^{ASW}	JJ Kelsall ^A	LFC Love ^B
IM Hayward ^{AT}	C Hyde Wear	R Kemp	M Love ^{AB}
K Hazelden	J Hyder ^T	MR Kenefick	AR Loweth ^A
PJ Hazelwood ^T	DJ Hyland ^T	R Kennedy ^X	PJ Luffingham ^{AHS}
J Hemingway ^{AT}	F Ingall ^{AT}	JO Kenney ^{AT}	G Lyons ^X
M Henderson ^{ABC}	R Iredale ^{AT}	JA Kett ^{AT}	DJ Madgin ^A
N Henry	RA Ives	DE Killick	MC Mallett ^A
EA Henwood ^{AT}	RL Izzard	J Kinchington	AP Malone ^B
JL Herring ^A	R Jackson ^T	D King ^T	DC Manger ^A
J Herrtage ^T	RJB Jackson ^A	JE King ^T	RC Mann
AP Hibberd ^{ABT}	L Jaggard ^{AT}	JW King	SJ Mansfield ^A
R Hill ^W	B James	MN King ^{ACT}	JH Marchant ^{ACT}
S Hill	BD James	P King ^X	M Marchant [†]
AI Hillman ^X	CM James	W Kirby	J Marchant ^B
RM Hirst ^T	P James ^{ASX}	GR Kirk ^A	N Marriner ^T
RS Hitchen ^B	S James ^T	M Kirk ^{AT}	SK Marshall ^{AT}
RS Hoad ^{BT}	CR Janman ^C	A Kirkwood ^W	PF Marten
DJ Hoare ^A	G Jarvis ^X	AR Kitson	AK Martin ^{AT}
JA Hobson ^{ABST}	KM Jarvis ^{AT}	AR Knight ^T	M Martin ^{AB}
TN Hodge ^{AS}	L Jarvis ^X	D Knight ^S	AJ Martin ^A
V Hodge ^X	TA Jefferies	DC Knight ^{AT}	J Martin ^B
D Hodgkin ^X	M Jeffree	J Knight ^T	DD Martin-Jenkins ^A
AJ Holcombe	J Jenkins-Shaw ^A	L Knight ^{BS}	JM Maskell ^{AT}
BJ Holcombe	GG Jenner	R Knight	SP Maskell
PK Holland ^{ABS}	S Jennings ^{AT}	R Knight ^{ACSTW}	C Mason ^A
D Hollow ^E	DJ Jode ^W	DR Knowles ^T	D Mason
RG Holmes ^{ABT}	A Johnson ^W	E Lambert ^A	MJ Mason ^A
JC Holt ^W	CA Johnson ^B	RJ Lanaway ^{AS}	W Masters ^{AT}
J Holter ^{AT}	JM Johnson	DC Lang ^{HW}	PD Matson
S Hooper	K Johnson ^A	IM Lang ^{HW}	M McAigran

J Mccaffrey ^{AT}	MJ Netherwood ^T	MJ Phillips ^W	B Reeve ^H
JJ McCaig ^T	DK Newnham	SM Phillips	R Reeves
SFH McCullagh ^{ABSTW}	JA Newnham ^{ABCHSTW}	M Pickard ^X	S Reiverson ^{AT}
D Mcdermott ^T	C Newton	D Pickering	Rye Bay RG
E McGregor ^W	SJ Newton ^{AT}	R Pidgeon ^S	GD Rhodda ^{AH}
PAF McKenzie Lloyd ^{AT}	JL Nobbs ^{ABCES}	B Pierce ^{AT}	G Ribas ^T
S McKinlay	K Noble ^A	A Piggot ^W	JP Richards ^T
M McManus ^{ASTW}	J Norman ^T	T Pitt	JE Richardson ^{AST}
DF McNair ^{ABT}	RK Norman ^{AT}	I Pitts	L Richardson ^{BH}
D Meagher	D Norris ^A	J Pitty	JR Rivoire ^T
P Meiners ^B	C Northwood	PJ Plant ^{ABS}	GCM Roberts ^{AH}
CW Melgar	A Nottage ^{AT}	D Pledge ^T	H Roberts ^W
CA Melhuish ^{BC}	SJ Oates ^A	AH Podmore ^A	M Roberts ^{AT}
D Melville ^{AT}	G Osborne ^{ABCT}	I Pollington ^T	MD Roberts
R Menhenett ^W	F Osis ^T	MV Pont ^T	R Robinson ^B
SD Menzie ^T	J Owen ^X	CR Poole ^{ABCT}	S Robinson ^W
M Merriman ^T	MP Owen ^{BC}	NJN Pope	BM Rogers ^E
SJ Message ^T	RC Owen	CR Pople ^T	DP Rogers ^{ABCT}
G Messingbird	S Pagett ^W	J Porter ^X	MD Rolfe ^T
B Metcalfe	S Pain	DA Potter ^T	PP Roper ^X
G Michelmores ^{ACST}	S Palme	WR Potter	J Ross ^{AT}
B Middleton ^B	E Palmer ^X	PM Potts ^A	H Rouse
A Millar ^T	R Palmer ^A	GR Potts	P Rouse ^T
S Mills ^X	N Papas ^A	HDV Prendergast	D Rowland
A Milopoulos ^T	PJ Papps	SG Preston ^A	W Rowles
D Mitchell ^A	A Parfitt ^{TW}	J Price ^X	E Rowsell ^{AW}
O Mitchell ^W	NM Parish ^A	R Price ^{ABTWX}	RSPB ^T
P Moon ^W	A Parker ^A	C Prince ^W	ND Rutherford ^{ABCW}
CH Moore	D Parker ^{AT}	J Pryor	GP Rutt ^A
J Moore	S Parmenter ^A	H Pude ^{AT}	NJ Rutter ^{BE}
NJ Moran ^T	TW Parmenter	J Pullen ^W	CMP Ryland ^X
G Morley ^W	C Parry ^T	RN Pulley	K Rylands ^T
NG Morris	J Parsons ^B	RHA Putnam ^T	B Sadler ^A
R Morris ^{AW}	R Parsons ^W	B Puttock ^{ATW}	MJ Salmon ^T
D Mortimer ^X	RA Pask	A Quinn ^A	JF Sanderson ^{BC}
BM Mortlock	JAS Patterson	P Quinn ^X	RF Sanderson ^T
T Morton ^T	PN Paul	B Rainbow ^X	P Sawyer ^X
P Mulcahy ^T	A Pearce ^W	I Ralphs ^A	J Scarfebeck
MF Mullen ^{BC}	R Peck ^T	NM Ratcliffe ^{AT}	M Scott-ham ^{ABHS}
MJ Mullis ^A	CJ Pennells ^{AC}	J Rawles ^{AT}	TJ Scragg ^{AT}
ST Munday	RF Penticost ^{ABCW}	W Rawles	T Seabrook ^{ABCW}
K Murphy ^{ABC}	RT Pepper ^S	ND Rawlings ^T	J Searle ^B
D Murray ^A	A Perrett ^W	S Rayburn ^A	CM Seaton
R Musselle	A Perry ^{ES}	EM Raynor	RC Self
D Mutters ^T	AS Perry ^A	PJ Raynor	RJ Senior ^W
R Nash ^T	R Perry	M Read	MV Sennitt ^B
M Neatherway ^{AT}	JN Peters ^T	C Reay ^{ACT}	M Shaft ^{AH}
S Needham	CB Peverett ^T	N Redman	RJ Shanks ^{ABCT}

A Sharp ^x	J Stean ^{AT}	D Tutt ^A	AD Whitcomb
P Sharp ^T	JC Steedman ^x	P Twine ^E	IJ Whitcomb
JP Shaughnessey	JM Steedman ^x	WM Twitchett ^{AT}	PJ Whitcomb ^{AT}
C Shaw ^T	MJ Stenning ^B	D Tyler ^T	C White ^{AT}
M Shaw	C Stevens ^T	R Tyrrell ^A	J Whitfield ^T
RJW Shaw	L Stevens	ST Underdown ^W	AM Whitman
S Shaw ^T	PC Stevens ^W	J Underwood	JH Whitman
MD Shaw ^{ABCTW}	RJ Stevens ^{AHT}	ED Urquhart ^W	K Whitton
CR Shawyer	JD Stokes	A Utting	JA Wichall ^A
DR Shepherd	P Stokes ^B	H Vaughan ^{AC}	M Wiggins ^T
J Shilitoe ^W	K Stouse ^A	T Vaughan ^T	Wildcall ^X
K Shilitoe ^W	PJ Strangeman ^{ABT}	FB Venn ^T	J Wilks
G Siddle ^W	TH Stuart	A Verrall	R Williamson ^W
D Silk ^A	P Sutton ^T	C Vince ^W	RLC Williamson ^W
MJ Silk	O Sweeney ^A	A Vine ^{AT}	J Willsher ^A
J Simmonds	F Swift ^T	C Vine ^W	G Wilson ^T
T Simon ^x	S Szary ^A	B Wadge ^x	PJ Wilson
IM Simpson ^{HSW}	DW Taylor ^A	D Walker ^W	D Wiltshire ^{AT}
KFW Simpson ^{CS}	KP Taylor ^A	M Walker	I Wiltshire ^{AB}
RN Simpson	L Taylor ^x	T Walker ^A	JS Winder ^T
SP Simpson ^{ABCTW}	M Taylor	J Walkley-Cox ^T	LF Winter ^{AT}
T Simpson	MC Taylor	L Wallace	J Wood ^x
A Simpson MBE ^{WX}	NTW Taylor	S Walsh ^T	TJ Wood ^A
A Skeates ^x	SR Taylor ^{BW}	LA Walther ^{ACT}	V Wood ^{BC}
A Skerl ^W	CR Tazzyman	LA Ward	CW Woodburn ^W
A Skerl ^{AT}	A Thomas ^{BS}	R Ward ^{AT}	I Woodburn ^W
AJ Skinner ^{ABCSW}	NJ Thomas	HM Warne ^T	C Woodward ^{AW}
L Slattery	S Thomas	N Warne ^B	ID Woodward ^A
T Slattery	T Thomas	RF Warren ^A	J Woolcock
J Smallwood ^T	A Thomas ^A	D Washington	SA Woolfries ^A
DI Smith	PS Thompson	MWR Washington	I Woolsey ^{ASX}
DJ Smith	N Tigg ^T	T Waters ^A	S Wootton
KW Smith ^A	JE Tilbury ^B	AB Watson ^H	JA Worrall ^{AB}
PA Smith ST	I Tingley	RF Watson	JM Worthington Wilde ^B
S Smith	PA Tinning ^x	GJ Watt ^A	B Wright ^A
AC Smithen ^{ABCSW}	PC Tinning ^x	P Watts ^T	CH Wright
D Sneller	GA Tocher	R Webb ^{AT}	CMV Wright ^{ABC}
MA Snelling ^{ABT}	R Tofts	PJ Webster ^T	E Wright ^T
TG Snow ^{AB}	M Tomlins ^W	P Webster ^{AT}	J Wright ^W
T Snyman ^T	MP Toms ^A	DJ Wedd ^{ABCT}	K Wright ^W
J Sorensen	C Tong ^T	J Wedd ^B	M Wright ^{AST}
R Spano ^x	S Trenerry ^{AT}	M Welcome ^W	P Wyld
P Spiers ^W	C Trew	P Welton	L Wyness
G Spinks	G Trew ^W	AJ Wende ^{AT}	BJ Yates ^{SW}
T Stachnicki ^T	CE Trollope ^{AT}	T Wenham	WF Young ^T
P Stanbury	JE Trowell ^W	DR West ^{ABCS}	S Younger ^W
E Standing	WH Truckle ^H	JD Weston ^W	
I Standivan ^{HW}	M Turner ^{BCHSW}	JJ Wheatley ^A	
TJ Staton ^A	PC Turner ^A	MJ Whitaker ^B	

The superscripts in the above table indicate the particular survey(s) in which contributors participated, as follows:

- A Bird Atlas 2007-11
- B Breeding Bird Survey (BBS)
- C Sussex Winter Bird Survey (SWBS)
- E Thames Basin and Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey
- H Heronries Census
- S Sussex Ornithological Society species surveys
- T Contributors via *BirdTrack*
- W Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS)
- X Contributors via Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre

ASSISTANCE TO RECORDER

The society thanks all who enter their observations through the various BTO online recording systems. The Recorder is especially grateful to Dr JA Newnham and the following team of helpers for coding and inputting the other records onto the computer: J Atkinson, CF Ball, Mrs VP Bentley, CJR Barfield, Ms P Carter, Ms MJ Chattaway, BR Clay, CB Collins, JR Cowser, RDM Edgar, J Everitt, BF Forbes, MG Freeman, BR Gilmore, Ms H Gordon, Mrs P Green, JA Hobson, AM Holden, CE Hope, A House, DH Howey, P Hughes, RA Ives, P James, P Johnson, JC Kelsall, R Kemp, R Knight, IM Lang, S Linington, O Mitchell, Mrs BM Mortlock, Ms A. Parfitt, A Parker, PN Paul, RT Pepper, A Perry, H Prendergast, RN Pulley, GCM Roberts, Ms H Rouse, E Rowsell, Rye Bay Ringing Group, RJ Shaw, Mrs IM Simpson, R Simpson, DI Smith, A Smithen, P Stevens, D Walker, Dr AB Watson, RF Watson, Mrs AJ Wende, PJ Whitcomb, JH Whitman and BJ Yates.

SURVEYS

Society members again gave a great deal of their time during the year to a wide range of national, county and local surveys. Their invaluable support and contributions are acknowledged with grateful thanks. Details of the surveys and the Sussex organisers follow.

Bird Atlas 2007-11: This national 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 333 contributors to this survey in 2011 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 122 observers involved in 2011 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 244) is undertaken in collaboration with the RSPB and the bird clubs of Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey. The Sussex organiser is A Perry, Edgehill Barn, Byworth near Petworth, West Sussex, GU28 0HR. Thanks are due to the 11 observers involved who are indicated by ^E in the above table.

Heronries 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 26 contributors who are indicated by ^u 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 130 counters who are indicated by ^w in the above table.

Sussex Ornithological Society Surveys: A breeding season survey of Rooks was undertaken during the early spring and this was organised by Richard Cowser, Beaver's Brook, The Thatchway, Angmering, West Sussex, BN16 4HJ. The 65 participants are indicated by ^s in the list of contributors.

Sussex Winter Bird Survey (SWBS): This new county survey based, like the BBS, on selected 1-km squares, was organised in 2011 by Dr Helen Crabtree, 3 Myrtle Cottages, Ardingly Road, Cuckfield, West Sussex, RH17 5HD. Thanks are due to the 65 observers involved who are indicated by ^c in the above table.

Co-ordination of 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.

SUMMARIES OF OBSERVATIONS

We are grateful for summaries of detailed observations at: Chichester Harbour from E Rowsell; Thorney and Pilsey Islands from CB and Mrs MA Collins; Selsey Bill from J Atkinson; Pagham Harbour from IM Lang; Climping Gap from O Mitchell; Arundel WWT from P Stevens; Norfolk Estate from GR Potts; Pulborough Brooks and the Arun Valley from P Hughes; Worthing from Dr JA Newnham; Shoreham District O.S. from CE Hope; Horsham District Council reserves from J Everitt; Weir Wood Reservoir from Mrs BM Mortlock; Ashdown Forest from P Johnson; Telscombe Cliffs from DH Howey; Splash Point (Seaford) from BR Gilmore; Beachy Head from RDM Edgar and JF Cooper; Bewl Water from MG Freeman; Hastings Migration Watch from A Parker; Pannel Valley NR from Rye Bay Ringing Group and Rye Harbour from Dr BJ Yates. We also thank the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre for providing ornithological records from 57 observers (marked ^x in the above table). The online recording of the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) surveys provided a plethora of records; the 318 Sussex contributors to BirdTrack are marked with a ^t in the above table. The records from Birdguides for 2011 were channelled through BirdTrack. Thanks are due to the BTO for the county BirdTrack records, as well as county records for the Atlas 2007-11, the Breeding Bird Survey and the Wetland Bird Survey.

RINGING

Thanks are due to S Bayley for maintaining detailed records of ringing in the county and to all ringers who contributed data.

NEW SPECIES for SUSSEX

Finding a rare bird is a red-letter day for any birder. However, finding a bird that is not only rare but has never previously been recorded in Sussex is something that few birders will achieve in their lifetime. It is rather appropriate that, in this the society's 50th anniversary year, there are six species which have been added to the Sussex list which is more than in any of the previous fifty years. The details surrounding the finding and identifying of four of those birds, in chronological order, are described in the following pages by the fortunate birders concerned. Citrine Wagtail is also an addition to the Sussex list but unfortunately no account of the finding is available. The sixth addition to the list came as a result of a 'split' and this is explained below. (David H. Howey, Recorder).

Siberian Stonechat

Saxicola maurus

An Addition to the Sussex List

David H. Howey (Recorder)

In the 40th report of the British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (published in *Ibis* in January 2012) it was confirmed that Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus* was recognised as a separate species from Eurasian Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*.

Siberian Stonechats were recorded in Sussex on four occasions (all in October) when they were still considered a sub-species but this can now be added to the county list as a species in its own right. The four records were:

1994 Selsey Bill on 8 and 9 Oct (MJW Hay, KW Maycock, O Mitchell, *et al.*);

1998 Rye Harbour LNR on 29 Oct (PM Troake *et al.*);

2001 Sheepcote Valley 16 and 17 Oct (AD and IJ Whitcomb);

2004 Hastings Country Park on 22 Oct (AS Grace).

Blyth's Reed Warbler

Acrocephalus dumetorum

A New Species for Sussex at Pett Level

Ian and Sally Hunter (Rye Bay Ringing Group)

In terms of ringing, June is a quiet month in the area at the north of Pett Level; birds are busy breeding and are mostly left to get on with it. However, we do the occasional short session to see which birds have returned and how productive a season they are having.

Friday 10 Jun 2011 was calm and overcast making for good ringing conditions. The nets were set up at 5 am and there was a gentle trickle of resident birds and migrants. Young Chiffchaffs and Whitethroats were around, as were two new Sedge Warblers and three new Reed Warblers, including a juvenile. I was finishing a round of the nets in the willow net rides when the last bird immediately caught my attention. It was clearly an *acrocephalus* but was greyer-olive with no rufous-brown tints. Compared to the Reed Warblers the head seemed a little flatter and the bill a bit longer. I quickly put it in a bag and returned to the ringing laboratory. There I handed it to Sally, asking her to check it carefully as it was probably a Marsh Warbler – my brain had not considered anything further. First she checked the wing length – only 65 mm and the notch on the second primary was long (17 mm). So clearly it was not a Marsh Warbler. The next task was to check the

emarginations. It was emarginated on the 4th primary. A full wing formula and description were taken. These clinched Blyth's Reed Warbler. Just before it was released photographs were taken to show the salient features. As the bird was released it gave two clear 'tac tac' calls followed by a short burst of its distinctive song including the melodic 'lu, lu' bit. The bird was not seen again after it was released.

Pallid Harrier

Circus macrourus

A New Species for Sussex at The Burgh

Bernie Forbes

My birding day on 15 Sep started at Cissbury Ring with Dave Smith (DIS) and Dorian Mason (DM), not at the crack of dawn, but for us at the more refined time of 8 am, with the weather set fair on a beautiful day with brilliant sunshine and no wind. Completing a couple of leisurely circuits around Cissbury Ring we found many migrants, with the highlights being 80 Chiffchaffs, 40 Yellow Wagtails, 12 Common and two Lesser Whitethroats, two Tree Pipits, five Spotted Flycatchers, four Northern Wheatears, two Common Redstarts, 12 Siskins, 70 Meadow Pipits and an estimated flock of 1000 House Martins. Extremely pleased with our morning's migrant tally, we decided that we would visit another downland area to the west, and cover the area known as The Burgh.

Taking the road east from North Stoke we arrived late morning, parking near Canada Barn, where we found Dave Sadler's car already parked. Our plan was to complete our normal circular route around The Burgh, an area of high downland with mixed arable and sheep grazing, and part of the Norfolk Estate, comprising three farms east of the river Arun. It is an area that in the past has frequently attracted migrants, particularly passerines and raptors. Taking the track north east we walked towards the top of the hill, which is directly south of Amberley Mount. DM and I were 20 metres in front of DIS at this time, when at 11.20 am DM shouted "raptor in front". Looking forward we noticed a harrier flying low along the game crop towards our position at some 60 m distance, but before I could get my binoculars up and focused, it immediately veered up and flew north out of our sight, but not before showing its underside; the belly and secondaries of which were a bright orange rufous. DIS who was still some way behind us at this time only glimpsed the raptor, although he did also notice the rich orange rufous underbelly. Our initial reaction was to identify the bird as a juvenile Montagu's Harrier, mainly based on the colour of the underparts. The raptor had flown north down into a deep valley, so we raced along the track just managing to glimpse it in the valley as it flew west away from our position, allowing us to note the upper wing, tail and white rump, but only for a second or two - all very frustrating! DIS and I both agreed that it looked like a juvenile Montagu's Harrier and knowing that Dave Sadler (DS) was in the area I phoned him, informing him that we had seen a possible juvenile Monty's. DS informed me that he had seen a harrier at some distance quartering the game strip, only a minute or two before I had phoned him! He was approximately 500 m to the east of our position and thought that the bird he'd seen was a Hen Harrier based on its size (there was a nearby hunting Marsh Harrier for comparison) and the prominent white rump patch, although he was not fully convinced. This left us all very confused and annoyed as we had not nailed the true identity of the bird, but at the time I was not aware that DS had taken a couple of photos of it. DM, DIS and I spent the rest of the day searching for the mystery harrier without any further sightings, although we found a juvenile Hen Harrier (which looked very different to 'our' bird) and noted nine species of raptor in the area, so we thought we had done really well. DIS contacted Bird Line South East advising of a juvenile Montagu's, whilst I posted our birding report on the SOS website to alert any visiting birders.



Pallid Harrier (Juv.), Burpham, September 2011 (Dave Sadler)

The following day, Friday 16 Sep, I was leading a local bird walk around Cissbury and did not visit The Burgh. However, that evening I received an animated telephone call from DS (who had no internet service at his home and was in the local pub); he had just downloaded the harrier pictures he'd taken from his camera onto his laptop, and asked me to turn on my PC and look at the two photographs that he had sent me. The photos were underexposed and showed a small image but, on enlarging them, DS was very excited and asked me for my comments. Upon looking at the two images, although they were both taken at long range and showed little plumage detail, I was shocked to find that in one of the photos I could just make out a faint collar and on the other photograph the underwing pattern and structure looked very interesting indeed! I immediately phoned DS back and we both agreed that the bird may well be a juvenile Pallid Harrier and that we may well have missed the opportunity of identifying the bird, so the record might be lost. With permission from DS I uploaded the two photographs onto the SOS website saying that we thought the bird was a juvenile Pallid and asking for comments from observers with experience of this species (I had only seen a juvenile once before in Lesvos). The response was very positive with two observers stating that in their opinion the photos indicated it was indeed a juvenile Pallid Harrier. I also contacted DIS and DM, informing them that having viewed the photos DS and I were both now convinced that the bird was a Pallid Harrier. The twin problems now facing us were these: had the bird drifted through the area never to be seen again, and was there enough detail in the photos for an identification to be 100% accurate? I guess on these original photographs we might have had more than a little problem in persuading any records committee of the latter point!

Next morning, Saturday 17 Sep, DIS, DS and I spent several hours anxiously searching the Downs around The Burgh, with only sightings of the juvenile Hen and female Marsh Harrier. We

had seen the juvenile Hen Harrier hunting and feeding on the ground and although it was a long way off we could just make out a dull orange wash on its belly and underwing when viewed in the scope. I actually began to doubt our original sighting and the thought went through my head that we might have made a very big mistake; self doubt can affect most observers at some time! The weather was very poor, being unseasonably cold with heavy squalls, and by lunch time we all decided to give up the search due to other commitments. Unfortunately I was not able to visit the site until the following Monday morning.



Pallid Harrier (Juv.), Burpham, September 2011 (Dorian Mason)

On Sunday 18 Sep many local birders including DIS and DM were searching the area around The Burgh. There were a few sightings of the juvenile harrier, although all of them were at long range with a nasty heat haze prevailing, which made viewing conditions far from ideal. Opinions varied with several prominent observers stating that the bird was certainly a juvenile Montagu's Harrier. I was stuck at home and very frustrated, checking my PC on Sunday late afternoon when I was extremely disappointed to note that no-one had seen the bird really well and that the news was still negative, with some postings on the SOS website indicating that some experienced

birders still thought that it was a Monty's. Then a late evening PC check revealed that other observers had at last seen the bird much closer just before dusk and a few pictures had been posted clearly showing a boa and collar! I was elated and phoned all the observers involved with the positive news.

On the morning of Monday 19 Sep I set out from Burpham which proved to be a long frustrating walk without me connecting with the bird, but then I received a telephone call from an excited Owen Mitchell. He told me he was watching the bird from the Peppering Triangle (ironically where I had parked my car!). However, being the cautious observer he is he only stated that it was a possible Pallid Harrier! The two mile hike back seemed to take only a few minutes; then with Owen, Chris Janman and a few others present we gradually eliminated the possibility that it was a hybrid and we confidently (or was it tentatively!) put the news out to the Bird Information Services that there was a juvenile Pallid Harrier regularly being seen in the area just north of Burpham Village.

The harrier was seen frequently thereafter during its long stay by a large crowd of contented birders and during the weekend of 24-25 Sep it was estimated that several hundred observers were present to watch the bird hunting the game strips in the area. With the car parks full on both days, the length of Peppering Lane and the surrounding footpaths were overflowing with birders, but luckily the bird was not difficult to find and regularly worked the same game strip near Coombe Lane, affording close views and plenty of photographic opportunities. I informed the Norfolk Estate that the bird would attract a large crowd and we would try via instructions on the SOS website to direct the main body of visitors to use the large car park in Burpham village. Fortunately the farm manager, Peter Knight, and his staff were all very complimentary regarding the behaviour of the large crowds that gathered. Many of the birders visiting the area for the first time were astounded at the high density of the raptors, plus the numbers of traditional farmland birds such as Grey Partridge, Corn Bunting and Skylark, surely a direct result of the conservation farming methods employed on the estate farms here, that are also so beneficial to wildlife in general. This was the first confirmed Sussex record of this enigmatic species, being one of several which occurred nationally during the autumn. The last definite sighting was on 7 Oct by Jim Weston.

Acknowledgements: a big thank you is due to Dave Sadler whose initial photographs of the harrier alerted us to the possibility of its true identity, for without them all might have been lost. Dave also commented on an earlier draft of this article. I also thank all of those who provided information which enabled us to satisfactorily clinch the identification in the end. Thanks also to Owen Mitchell for his comments and advice on compiling this article. My grateful thanks also go to the Norfolk Estate, Peter Knight and his staff for their understanding and patience.

Buff-bellied Pipit

Anthus rubescens

A New Species for Sussex at Newhaven

Neil Morris

I grew up and spent my formative birdwatching years in Sussex in the 1970s and early 1980s. As all kids do, I dreamt of finding rarities on my home patch. I still have vivid childhood memories of birds and birding in Sussex; of Bill Merritt, my chemistry teacher and erstwhile SOS stalwart, sprinting across our school sports field in pursuit of a Hoopoe! And of my very first ever 'rarity', a Pectoral Sandpiper at Weir Wood Reservoir in 1976. I left my Sussex home for university and then to pursue my career. Although I frequently return to visit family in West Sussex, I've rarely

found the time to rework some of those old birding haunts. Business commitments and a young family have all contrived to limit the opportunities.

As with so many rarity ‘finds’, the story starts mundanely. Our Czech au pair had never been to, let alone swum at, the seaside, so I seized the excuse to bundle the family into the car for a day’s outing to the coast. Birling Gap was my choice of location – a combination of stunning scenery, 99 Flakes guaranteed for my kids and a perfectly timed high tide for an afternoon swim. Oh yes, and the small matter that it was autumn and there would surely be birds to be had while the family was occupied on the beach!

It’s amazing how you take such places for granted when you consider them ‘home’, only to truly appreciate their beauty once older and city-worn. Alas, whilst the au pair got her swim, there were very few birds to be had. But as the ensuing week at work progressed, it became evident there would be strong winds along the south coast the next weekend. So, with Birling Gap fresh in my mind, I hastily negotiated a Sunday’s birding in return for copious promises to complete outstanding domestic chores.

It proved to be a good trade! In gale force south westerlies, on 9 Oct, I was rewarded with more than fifty Great Skuas, twenty Arctic and two probable Pomarine Skuas, as well as a handful of Manx Shearwaters passing by. As the afternoon progressed, I decided the strong winds merited a search along the coast for windblown waifs and strays – perhaps a Grey Phalarope or maybe even a Sabine’s Gull if I was really lucky.

I worked my way westwards along the shingle and strand from Seaford to Newhaven – without any notable success save for two Arctic Skuas sky dancing over foaming breakers, giving handsomely close views. On arriving at Newhaven, I ambled along the path overlooking the sheltered area inside the breakwater, noting just a few gulls, then across the grassy area running west under the cliffs. This was an area I knew well from my youth, when it was possible to walk out all the way along the concrete breakwater searching for winter auks and occasional Purple Sandpipers.

As 4.30 pm approached, and with the light starting to dim, my attention was drawn to a pipit dropping in about 30 yards away. It started to feed behind the shelter of some concrete posts and oil drums. A quick squint through my binoculars with eyes watering from the wind confirmed my initial instinct that it was too large and dark for a Meadow Pipit and yet it was too pale and contrasty for a typical Rock Pipit. The facial pattern was pale and open – the significance of which I did not immediately grasp.

The blustery wind caused the bird to crouch low to the ground and to compact its feathers, reinforcing a big-billed appearance. Yet it was well-marked, with heavily and extensively streaked upper and underparts, with warm off-white and brown plumage. Reaching for my camera, I pondered that it might be a well-marked Water Pipit or possibly a Scandinavian-type Rock Pipit. I recalled a bird in Cornwall that had shown not dissimilar, anomalous plumage.

I rattled off a burst of photographs; but before I could review these on the camera’s LCD viewer, the bird flitted nearer to me. I shot another burst. My EXIF file data shows the first photograph was taken at 16:29:09 and the last at 16:30:42, a duration of barely a minute-and-a-half. Then, without calling, the bird flew up and headed west out of view around the cliffs.

Looking at the LCD images, I considered Buff-bellied Pipit but, in all honesty, dismissed this as unlikely on account of:

- Extreme rarity: the only previous mainland record I could recall was the Lincolnshire bird.
- The apparently large and brightly bi-coloured bill: I had expected Buff-bellied Pipit to

have a smaller, fine black bill as shown in photographs of birds that had graced the Isles of Scilly and Shetland.

- The very extensively and heavily marked underparts: again, based on previous photographs, I had expected finer, neat and restricted streaking.
- Dark legs: erroneously, I recalled Buff-bellied Pipit as being pale-legged (though I was later reminded that this is a feature of the Asian subspecies *japonicus*, not *rubescens*).



Buff-bellied Pipit, Newhaven, October 2011 (Neil Morris)

Despite extensive searching in the fading light, I could not relocate the bird. On arriving home, I circulated photographs to several contacts. Mike Langman thought it was probably Buff-bellied; others dismissed the bird, with conviction, as an odd *spinoletta/littoralis*. Late night travel commitments meant it was not until later the next day that I was able to post photos on Bird Forum, the SOS website etc. Initial feedback was mixed with some respondents in the odd *spinoletta/littoralis* camp, but slowly the responses turned consistently towards Buff-bellied Pipit.

On getting to grips with the the available literature, it became clear that certain key features did indeed point firmly to Buff-bellied Pipit. The pale lores, complete white eye-ring and the buffy underparts (especially sides of lower breast and vent) along with the size and structure fitted perfectly for this species. As with all pipits, Buff-bellied Pipit shows great variation in plumage across its range. Those familiar with this species in America commented that it was indisputably a Buff-bellied Pipit. Brian Small also kindly emailed to confirm its identity.

Reports circulated of the bird being relocated by a single observer on Tuesday 11 October, though I know of no substantiation of this report. For my part, I returned to the site on the following two Sundays (16 and 23 Oct). Despite searching above and below the cliffs, I did not relocate the bird on either occasion (nor did I realistically expect to).

The British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) has confirmed its acceptance of the record. Moreover, this individual was clearly of the American sub-species *A. r. rubescens*.

As you might infer from my tale, I've mixed feelings about this episode: delight in finding not just a rarity on my old home turf, but a first for Sussex, and my disappointment at not immediately nailing the identification in the field. Most of all, it has reignited my enthusiasm for birding in Sussex, and spurred my desire to make the time to rediscover its rich haunts and habitats.

Isabelline Wheatear

Oenanthe isabellina

A New Species for Sussex at Crowlink

Roger Charlwood

October is a month that always gives hope to any serious birder looking for something rare. Last October, my wife Liz and I had our friends Andy and Gill Swash from Devon staying with us for a long weekend. On Friday 14 Oct we decided to take a walk from Friston (East Sussex) to Crowlink, and then the Cuckmere by way of the Seven Sisters. Crowlink Hamlet, with some interesting habitat, looked good for some bird watching so the next day, the 15th, with lovely October sunny weather, it was decided we would take our friends to the area again. Little did we guess what a good decision this would be!

Having looked through the area of sycamore trees and bushes and the area in the valley at Crowlink, and not having found anything of particular interest, we decided to split up with Liz and Gill walking back by way of some higher ground and Andy and I walking back by way of the bridle path. Liz spotted a bird on the downland grass just above and called out Wheatear, which seemed a little different to other Wheatears that had been viewed previously. It looked largish and pale and had an upright stance and she called out that it could be a Greenland Wheatear. Andy and I climbed up to have a look at the bird and straight away were taken by the general upright stance, rather pot belly, and pale appearance. It also seemed a trifle larger than juvenile Northern Wheatears that were nearby for comparison.

Fortunately cameras were to hand and quickly a number of photos were taken before the bird took off and flew east over the brow of a nearby hill and disappeared. Looking at the images that we had taken it certainly looked very interesting and Isabelline Wheatear was a distinct possibility! Knowing the identification difficulty of a record of this species, we knew we had to try to re-locate the bird and this we managed to do after some anxious minutes. It did not allow a close approach, however, but with some more record shots we were by now almost certain this was indeed an Isabelline. There were a number of walkers around the area that the bird seemed to like, some with dogs, and this did cause some disturbance. However, having again taken off, it very fortunately made its way back to the original spot where it was first found. This consisted of some short grass on a ridge, with broken ground near some rabbit burrows.

Claiming an Isabelline Wheatear is not to be taken lightly as although it is readily identifiable the features are somewhat subtle. None of us wanted to make a blunder! A reference book seemed now a good idea, so Liz and Gill made their way back to the car and drove back home to Hodcombe to get a Collins Bird Guide. On their return and checking the literature, as expected, the wheatear was indeed an Isabelline!

Unfortunately by then the wheatear had made off again over the brow of the hill and disappeared. Telephone calls were now the order of the day and the two mobile phones were busy contacting our friends, and Rare Bird Alert was duly informed of the find. The problem was we

had to relocate the bird again, so Andy and I set off in search of it. Fortunately it was again found, with Liz and Gill positioning themselves so as to direct birders as they arrived on the scene. Most that arrived had telescopes, and good, though rather distant views were obtained. The wheatear then made off again over the hill back to the original spot. It was not long before quite a number more birders arrived, and the bird was watched for some hours and gave very good views, and some fine photos were taken. Eventually late in the day the bird disappeared and could not be re-located either then or the next day. This was a very exciting find, and it is interesting to think that the previous day the four of us walked just below the mound which the bird preferred - was the bird there then?



Isabelline Wheatear; Crowlink, October 2011 (Roger and Liz Charlwood)

A general description: It was slightly larger than the juvenile Northern Wheatears that were present in the general vicinity. It had a rather more upright stance, was rather pot-bellied, and had a proportionally shorter tail. The upper parts were a dull uniform, pale, creamy, sandy-brown, the back showing some faint dull brown speckling, it had a white rump, upper tail coverts and tail, with a broad black tail band. In the wing, the primaries were quite dark with pale fringes, the secondaries and tertials were broadly edged sandy brown, the alula was black, but this was not always obvious. The under parts were pale whitish with a warm pale orange wash to the upper breast. The undertail coverts were white. The head had a broad, pale, buffish-white supercilium, and a dark line from the eye to the bill. The bill was dark, a little longer and stouter than that of Northern Wheatear, with slightly longer black legs. The bird was never heard to call. In flight it was confirmed that the rump and tail were white, with the tail having a broad band at the tip with no obvious "T" unlike the common species. In flight the underwing was very pale whitish, much paler than the common species. When settled the bird was active, feeding on insects and flying

only short distances. Every one of the birders present kept a respectable distance; hence the bird remained in its preferred area for long periods.

In conclusion, the bird looked altogether like a pale washed out rather plump wheatear. If you want to find an Isabelline look for an anaemic wheatear with middle age spread!

Isabelline is the rarest of the four rare wheatears that occur in the British Isles. A full and detailed description was submitted to the SOSRC and BBRC and the record has been accepted as the 29th record for the UK but the first for Sussex.



Isabelline Wheatear; Crowlink, October 2011 (Roger and Liz Charlwood)

The Sussex Ringing Report for 2011

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Although 2010 saw a huge leap in the number of birds ringed in the county in a year (82,660, up 12.5% on the previous high), 2011 saw an even bigger increase with the number reaching six figures for the first time, the total being 101,766 which was a 23% increase. In 2011 Sussex was once again the county with the most ringed birds in Britain and Ireland, and as a comparison with neighbouring counties Table 1 shows the totals for the last five years. It is interesting to note that there was an increase in all counties during 2011 by about the same percentage over figures for 2010. (N.B. *All numbers, including those in tables, have been adjusted to reflect birds ringed in previous years, but only recently notified to the author.*) Nineteen active individual ringers and five groups sent in reports (Table 2 and 3).

Table 1. *A summary of ringing totals in the counties of south-east England for 2007-2011.*

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Sussex	51,373	54,331	73,326	82,660	101,766
Surrey	12,200	15,342	17,241	18,406	22,676
Kent	23,936	26,691	25,747	29,324	34,048
Hampshire	8,888	11,788	12,875	18,824	25,384

Table 2. *A summary of ringing activity by individuals in Sussex in 2011. Individuals named are those responsible for the rings issued and may not be those who actually ringed the birds.*

Ringing source	Number ringed		
	Full grown	Nestlings	Totals
W. Attridge and S. Bayley	1051	381	1432
S. Bayley	310	18	328
A.M. Davis	10	30	40
G. Dunlop	1567	0	1567
R.D.M. Edgar	24	5	29
J. Forss	1	46	47
C. Hamilton	242	0	242
D. King	661	286	947
R. Lanaway	2574	437	3011
D. Madgin	300	40	340
A. Martin	0	23	23
J.A. Newnham	1874	128	2002
J. Pritchard	82	13	95
G.C.M. Roberts	87	74	161
R. Sanderson	1260	57	1317
C. Shawyer	4	50	54
K.S. Smith	128	19	147
I. Standivan	1034	23	1057
A.B. Watson	190	339	529

Table 3. *A summary of ringing activity by groups in Sussex in 2011.*

Ringing source	Number ringed		
	Full grown	Nestlings	Totals
Beachy Head Ringing Station	3433	53	3486
Cuckmere Ringing Group	937	2	939
RSPB	0	4	4
Rye Bay Ringing Group	79104	766	79870
Steyping Ringing Group	4089	12	4101

A major acknowledgement goes to Rye Bay Ringing Group (RBRG) which ringed 78.5% of the annual total which equated to 79,870 birds of 102 species. A record total of 120 species were ringed in Sussex during 2011, compared to 115 in 2010 and 112 in 2009.

Table 4. *Sussex totals from 1979 to 2011 for notable species ringed in 2011, set against the 2011 Britain and Ireland totals for these species.*

Species	Sussex 2011	Sussex 1979-2011	Britain & Ireland 2011
Little Grebe	1	18	9
Pochard	1	14	21
Common Quail	2	15	7
Stone-curlew	4	11	248
Turtle Dove	4	101	37
Long-eared Owl	2	23	84
Wryneck	4	48	22
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	2	35	11
Bluethroat	1	18	7
Aquatic Warbler	1	113	5
Blyth's Reed Warbler	1	1	10
Marsh Warbler	4	76	17
Icterine Warbler	1	8	9
Melodious Warbler	2	9	8
Dartford Warbler	1	52	88
Barred Warbler	3	17	36
Pallas's Warbler	1	4	10
Yellow-browed Warbler	2	22	106
Dusky Warbler	1	2	8
Pied Flycatcher	2	246	11,181
Common Redpoll	12	48	1876
Common Crossbill	1	9	279

The highlight of the county rarities ringed this year was a Blyth's Reed Warbler which was ringed by RBRG; this was the first time this species had been recorded in the county. The breeding Stone-curlews continue to do well with four nestlings ringed this year, this being the highest total for this species with singles ringed in 2007 and 2008, three in 2009 and two in 2010. Other county rarities ringed this year were singles of Bluethroat, Aquatic Warbler, Icterine Warbler, Pallas's Warbler, Dusky Warbler and Little Bunting, two of Melodious Warbler and Yellow-browed

Warbler, three Barred Warblers, four Marsh Warblers and 12 Common Redpolls. Infrequently ringed species included two Common Quails, two Long-eared Owls, two Pied Flycatchers, four Turtle Doves and four Wrynecks. Most of these birds were caught by RBRG, with the exception of the Aquatic Warbler, the Little Bunting, a Long-eared Owl, a Melodious Warbler, a Barred Warbler (see Figure 1) and a Common Redpoll. Other notable Sussex captures included singles of Little Grebe and Pochard, two Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers, and a nestling Dartford Warbler. To put these all into context, the comparison with the county tally and the 2010 totals for Britain and Ireland are shown in Table 4.



Figure 1. *Barred Warbler at Cissbury Ring (Val Bentley)*

The most notable ringing totals for species in Sussex compared to the national totals were for House Martin (22%), Yellow Wagtail (25%), Eurasian Reed Warbler (26%), Blackcap (26%), Common Quail (29%), Sedge Warbler (33%), Water Rail (37%) and Grasshopper Warbler (45%). These species are all caught in high numbers by the RBRG.

The total number of species ringed in Sussex since 1979 has now risen to 209.

Ringing totals

Table 5 lists the 20 most ringed species during 2011, including the totals for RBRG to demonstrate the considerable contribution this group makes to Sussex ringing. The 20 species listed account for 92% of all birds ringed in Sussex during 2011, compared to 89% in 2010. The first two species, Blackcap and Sedge Warbler, are in the same position as in the last three years

(since 2008), with Blackcap reaching a new record with nearly 5000 more birds ringed in 2011, but the order of species in the rest of the table seems to have altered dramatically, especially compared with 2010. Common Chiffchaff has returned to third place with a record total of nearly 4000 more than in any previous year, reaching five figures for the first time, with Eurasian Reed Warbler moving down to its more regular fourth place. Fifth place was a big surprise with Lesser Redpoll increasing from ninth place. Barn Swallow remained in sixth place with an increase of over 1000 over figures for the last three years. Blue Tit dropped from fourth to seventh place after a drop of nearly 2000 compared to 2010, while Sand Martin remained in eighth place with its highest total since 1994. With double the previous record total, Common Whitethroat reached the top ten for the first time, with Willow Warbler moving to its lowest position at tenth place. These could be signs of a good recovery of one species and the continued decline of the other.

Table 5. *Sussex ringing totals for the 20 most ringed species in 2011. Birds of conservation concern: **red-listed; *amber-listed.*

No.	Species (with position in 2010)	2011		2010
		Total	RBRG	
1.	Blackcap (1)	15919	12952	11019
2.	Sedge Warbler (2)	11648	11439	9879
3.	Common Chiffchaff (5)	10673	8780	5899
4.	Eurasian Reed Warbler (3)	8613	8056	8739
5.	Lesser Redpoll (9)*	7415	6681	2678
6.	Barn Swallow (6)*	5671	5447	4603
7.	Blue Tit (4)	5557	1806	7381
8.	Sand Martin (8)*	4684	4684	3035
9.	Common Whitethroat (11)	4642	3510	2282
10.	Willow Warbler (7)*	4094	3280	4100
11.	Goldfinch (12)	2881	1388	2061
12.	Great Tit (10)	2545	849	2625
13.	Grasshopper Warbler (15)**	1635	1586	1238
14.	Greenfinch (19)	1253	590	1054
15.	Robin (16)	1171	598	1165
16.	Chaffinch (18)	1115	559	1069
17.	Garden Warbler (21)	984	832	902
18.	Blackbird (17)	952	470	1154
19.	House Martin (14)*	941	732	1257
20.	Reed Bunting (13)**	811	670	1472

Sixteen species reached new record totals for the county during 2011. These included seven resident breeders, six summer visitors, one winter visitor and two vagrants. There were also two species that matched previous records; these were a resident breeder and a vagrant. The biggest increases were seen for Lesser Redpoll (177%), Common Whitethroat (103%), Common Chiffchaff (58%) and Tree Pipit (55%). In addition, 15 species reached second or third highest totals which involved eight resident breeders, six summer visitors, a winter visitor and a vagrant, of which many record totals have not been seen since the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Although 2011 was a record year, a number of species fared rather badly, with some of the lowest totals ever recorded for these species. Although very common in the county, the total for

Collared Dove was the third lowest, with just six birds ringed. Little Owl continued its decrease with its second lowest total of just two ringed. Others species dropped to their lowest totals in a number of years: Stonechat since 1996, House Martin since 2001, Cetti's Warbler since 2002 and Fieldfare since 2003. For the fifth year in a row, no Willow Tits were ringed. Just three Tree Sparrows were ringed and it was yet another blank year for Corn Bunting (only one has been ringed this century).

Nestlings

The 2806 nestlings ringed in 2011 was a small decrease on the 2941 ringed in 2010 and represented 3.6% of the birds ringed in Sussex. A total of 47 species had nestlings ringed, and of those 16 had 40% or more of their total ringed as nestlings (Table 6), compared with 17 in 2010, 14 in 2009 and 16 in 2008; 11 of these species were of conservation concern.

Table 6. *Nestlings ringed in Sussex during 2011, where they number more than 40% of the total ringed. Birds of conservation concern: **red-listed; *amber-listed.*

Species	Total ringed	Total nestlings	% nestlings
Peregrine Falcon*	19	19	100
Common Tern*	11	11	100
Black-headed Gull*	7	7	100
Common Buzzard	6	6	100
Stone-curlew*	4	4	100
Lesser Black-backed Gull*	2	2	100
Little Owl	2	2	100
Oystercatcher*	1	1	100
Dartford Warbler*	1	1	100
Herring Gull**	16	15	94
Barn Owl*	331	307	93
Common Kestrel*	23	21	91
Grey Heron	18	16	89
Stock Dove*	63	42	67
Tawny Owl	7	4	57
Pied Wagtail	57	30	53

Nine species were solely ringed as nestlings, and these included Stone-curlew with a record total, Common Buzzard for which the six ringed represent 21% of the county total since 1979, and Peregrine Falcon for which 19 matches the record total for 2008. Particular mention should be made of concentrated efforts by certain groups or individuals which include:

- RBRG: 766 nestlings of 32 species; six Common Buzzards, one Common Kestrel, one Oystercatcher, seven Black-headed Gulls, two Lesser Black-backed Gulls, 15 Herring Gulls, three Common Terns, 14 Barn Owls, three Mistle Thrushes, four Sedge Warblers, 15 Eurasian Reed Warblers, 50 Common Starlings, six Linnets and three Bullfinches.
- R. Lanaway: 437 nestlings of 11 species; one Common Kestrel, four Barn Owls, 138 Barn Swallows, ten Pied Wagtails, two Common Whitethroats and five Blackcaps.
- W. Attridge and S. Bayley: 399 nestlings of 14 species; 16 Grey Herons, one Moorhen, five Common Terns, 60 Barn Swallows, ten Pied Wagtails and three Spotted Flycatchers.

- Dr. A.B. Watson: 339 nestlings of eight species; ten Common Kestrels, three Common Terns, 186 Barn Owls, two Little Owls and 17 Marsh Tits.

Notable absentees this year where Northern Lapwing for the second year, Grey Wagtail and Tree Pipit, and there were low totals for Black-headed Gull, Little Owl, Marsh Tit and Yellowhammer.

Recoveries

Listed below are a selection of the more interesting recoveries that were reported during 2011, which do also include a few late reports from previous years. As usual there have been many reports of colour-marked birds, which have mainly been reported by non-ringers who are thanked for their important contributions.

Probably the most interesting recovery of the year was an amazing record of an adult female **Common Quail** that was ringed at Pett Level on 20 May 2011 and which was killed by a cat four days later in Hedmark (Norway), 1237 km to the north-east straight across the North Sea.

After the first recovery of **Egyptian Goose** in the county in 2010, two further recoveries were reported in 2011. The first of these was the same bird that was originally ringed in its first year at Laleham (Surrey) on 9 Jul 2009 and then seen during 2010 at Lower Pennington (Hampshire) in February, Littlehampton in March and Worthing in August, and then at Petworth on 5 Jul 2011. The second bird was ringed as a first-year bird at Lower Basildon (Berkshire) on 23 Jun 2010 and seen at Petworth with the first bird on 5 Jul 2011.

There were three recoveries for **Teal** in 2011 of which two were notable. The first, an adult male ringed in Seaton Marshes (Devon) on 4 Dec 2010, was shot dead at Knepp Castle less than two months later on 25 Jan 2011. The other recovery was a female ringed and fitted with a nasal shield at Reserve du Duer, Sarzeau (France) on 15 Jan 2010, which was subsequently seen at Martin Mere WWT (Lancashire) on 19 Oct 2010, then back at its original ringing site in France on 24 Jan 2011. This bird then returned to Britain, first to Lewes Brooks on 8 Apr 2011 before being seen at Slimbridge WWT on 10 and 12 Sep 2011.

There was a single recovery of a **Tufted Duck** which was ringed as a juvenile at Pett Level on 22 Aug 2001 and which was shot dead at Loch Kinale, Westmeath (Ireland) just over ten years later on 22 Dec 2011.

There were seven notable recoveries of seabirds reported during 2011. A **Gannet** found dead on Climping Beach on 6 Oct 2011 was originally ringed as a nestling at Les Etacs, Alderney (Channel Islands) 14 years earlier on 14 June 1997.

A **Great Cormorant** ringed as a nestling at Rommerholm, Nakskov Fjord (Denmark) on 28 May 2010 was found dead at Weir Wood Reservoir on 12 Jan 2011.

A **Shag** ringed as a nestling on 19 Jul 1982 on the Farne Islands (Northumberland) was seen at Eastbourne on 16 Sep 2011; this was 29 years, 1 month and 28 days later, which is just 9 months short of the national longevity record.

A **Guillemot** ringed as a nestling at Castle Craig (Highlands) on 15 Jun 2010 was found dead on Elmer Beach, Middleton-on-Sea on 13 Feb 2011.

The highlights of the bird of prey recoveries included four **Red Kites** with wing tags seen in the county, which were all hatched in different counties. A bird tagged as a nestling at Midhurst in 2005 was seen at West Dean, one tagged at Stokenchurch (Buckinghamshire) in 2007 was seen at Burpham, one tagged at Wellingborough (Northamptonshire) in 2010 was seen at West Dean, and one tagged at Kingsclere (Hampshire) in 2010 was seen at Beachy Head.

A **Merlin** that was ringed as a nestling in 2002 on Orkney was found dead in Peacehaven in Dec 2011, 9 years, 4 months and 2 days later.

An **Osprey** ringed as a nestling at Killin (central Scotland) on 28 Jun 2008 was recognised due to colour rings at Upper Dicker, Hailsham on 14 Apr 2011, having visited Balgavies Loch, Tayside on 25 May 2010.

A first-year **Water Rail** ringed at Keerbergen (Belgium) on 26 Sep 2011 was found dead at Selsey Bill on 30 Oct 2011, being only the eighth Belgian-ringed bird to be recovered in Britain.

A first-year **Woodcock** ringed in Sentelie, Somme (France) on 29 Nov 2007 was shot in Angmering on 3 Jan 2011. This was possibly a bird regularly wintering in northern France or southern Britain, and was possibly of Scandinavian or Russian origin.

All the notable gull recoveries reported in 2011 involved birds of foreign origin with the exception of a **Black-headed Gull** ringed as an adult at Washington on 27 Nov 1993 and seen at Radipole Lake, Portland on 15 Jan 2011. During this 17 year period this bird was recorded on 47 different dates in every year except 2010, at various sites in Denmark, two sites in The Netherlands, and one site in Germany.

There were 41 **Mediterranean Gull** recoveries reported in 2011, only just short of the 47 re-sightings in 2010, with all but two being of foreign origin. Of these 39 foreign-ringed birds, 18 were from Belgium, nine from France, four from Germany, four from Hungary and four from The Netherlands. A Dutch-ringed bird was the oldest at nearly 11 years, having been ringed in 2000. One of the Hungarian-ringed birds had travelled the greatest distance, just over 1400 km.

The only other notable gull sighting was a **Great Black-backed Gull** ringed as a nestling in Norway in 2010 and seen in Denmark twice that year and then at Shoreham on 12 Mar 2011.

Barn Owl is a species that does not usually move further than about 30 km, but two birds were recovered as road casualties having moved longer distances. The first was a male ringed as a nestling at Colworth in 2007 and recovered 114 km away in Dunton Wayletts (Essex) on 8 Feb 2011, and the other was a bird also ringed as a nestling in Loxwood on 14 Jun 2011 and found exactly four months later at Widemouth Bay (Cornwall), 286 km away.

There was a report of a **European Nightjar** that was ringed in its first year at Pett Level on 15 Sep 1999 and then caught at Warren Wood (Suffolk) in 2008 and again at Santon Ho (Norfolk) on 29 Jun 2011. This becomes not only the British but the European longevity record for this species.

There are not usually many recoveries of **Carrion Crow**, but a bird ringed at Pett Level on 16 Mar 1994 as a first-year female was shot dead also at Pett Level on 25 Apr 2011, which is just 6 months short of the longevity record of 17 years 6 months and 14 days.

Of the four **Goldcrest** recoveries in 2011, three were of note. The first record was of a quick movement with a first-year male ringed at Hardham on 16 Oct 2011 and caught exactly 24 hours later, 27 km away at Duke's Warren, Leith Hill (Surrey). The other two were possible Scandinavian migrants wintering in or passing through Sussex, with one ringed at Warnham on 13 Nov 2010 caught at Landguard Point (Suffolk) on 27 Mar 2011, whilst the other was ringed at Kessingland (Suffolk) on 15 Oct 2011 and caught at Pett Level on 10 Nov 2011.

To add to this a first-year **Firecrest** ringed at Pett Level on 5 Nov 2011 was killed by a cat just 24 days later in Heathfield, 30 km to the west, which was a rare recovery for this species.

Recoveries of **Penduline Tit** are becoming almost an annual occurrence. A female ringed at Sadouville, Seine-Maritime (France) on 17 Oct 2011 was caught at Pett Level on 10 Nov 2011, 158 km to the north. This is the first French-ringed bird of this species to have been caught in Britain.

An amazing long-distance recovery was reported of a first-year male **Blue Tit** travelling 493 km SSE from Acomb (Northumberland) on 11 Dec 2010 to Fairlight on 19 Nov 2011, a huge movement for a species that does not usually move further than about 5 km in a lifetime.

A female **Bearded Tit** ringed at Pett Level on 6 Nov 2010 moved 152 km north to Hazelwood (Suffolk) where it was caught on 10 Jul 2011.

There were two interesting late reports of **Sand Martin** recoveries received in 2011, both involving birds in Italy. The first bird was ringed in Canton Magistris, Verbania (Italy) on 2 Apr 2004 and caught at Pett Level on 25 Aug 2004, and is only the second Italian-ringed bird to be caught in Britain. The second bird was ringed at Pett Level on 7 Aug 2009 and caught at the same site in Italy on 21 Apr 2010.

Similarly, the two most notable **Barn Swallow** records involved birds in Italy. The first bird was ringed at Padule Bottagone, Piombino (Italy) on 28 Apr 2005 and caught at Pett Level on 6 Oct 2005, and this was followed by a bird ringed at Pett Level on 5 Sep 2010 and caught at Canton Magistris on 6 May 2011.

Although 15 Sussex-ringed **Common Chiffchaffs** have subsequently been recovered in Iberia, one ringed at Pett Level on 23 Sep 2011 and caught at Jews Gate (Gibraltar) on 8 Nov 2011 was the first from Sussex, and only the fourth from Britain, to be recovered in Gibraltar.

The only **Lesser Whitethroat** recoveries were late records which involved the second British-ringed bird to get recovered in Norway which had been ringed at Pett Level on 17 Sep 1991 and caught at Revtangen, Klepp (Norway) on 13 May 1992.

Another late report provided the first record of a British-ringed **Grasshopper Warbler** in Mauritania: a bird ringed at Pett Level on 22 Aug 2010 was caught in Mauritania on 24 Dec 2010.

One hundred Sussex-ringed **Sedge Warblers** were recovered in other countries, with the vast majority in France (82), six in Belgium, four in Senegal and Mauritania, and singles in Spain, Portugal, Morocco and Luxembourg. By comparison, 19 were recovered in Sussex having been ringed abroad, with 15 from France, two from Belgium and singles from The Netherlands and Senegal. The most notable of these was the bird recovered in Luxembourg which was a late report from 2005 and represents only the eighth British-ringed Sedge Warbler to be recovered in this country. All of these reports were obviously in addition to the normal multitude from across this country. A further interesting recovery was of a first-year bird which was ringed at Pett Level on 16 Aug 2011 and controlled 329 km away at Lac de Bairon, Sauvillie (France) the following day.

The 34 **Reed Warbler** recoveries in 2011 involved six other countries; 21 having travelled to and four from France, two to and one from Spain, three from The Netherlands, one from Portugal and singles to Norway and Germany. The latter two were the fifth and fourth British-ringed birds respectively to be recovered in these countries. The oldest Reed Warbler reported in 2011 was over ten years old, having been ringed as an adult female at Pett Level on 13 Jul 2001 and subsequently controlled at Wilstone Res, Tring (Hertfordshire) during the breeding seasons of 2006, 2010 and 2011.

Two colour-ringed **Waxwings** were reported in Sussex during 2011 and as a co-incidence were both first-year males and both seen in the same garden in Hove. The first was ringed at Kincorth, Aberdeen on 2 Nov 2010 and the colour rings were read exactly five months later, and the second was also ringed in Aberdeen at Rosemount just 26 days later and was found dead due to injury on 26 April 2011. It is interesting to note that two birds ringed in the same area four weeks apart were present four weeks apart in the same place over 700 km away.

There were four notable **Blackbird** recoveries during 2011 with three records involving other countries. An adult male ringed at Malmon, Koping (Sweden) on 15 May 2005 was controlled in

East Grinstead on 7 Mar 2011, a male ringed in its first year at Hastings Country Park on 6 Nov 2010 was killed by a cat at Panningen (The Netherlands) on 27 May 2011, and a female ringed in its first year at Pett Level on 10 Nov 2010 was found dead at Minsener Oog (Germany) on 2 Apr 2011. The fourth recovery was of a male found dead on 27 May 2011 at the original ringing site in East Grinstead, at an age of just over 7 and a half years.

A first-year bird ringed in Belgium on 13 Oct 2010 and killed by cat at Fairlight on 8 Feb 2011, and a late recovery of a first-year bird ringed at Pett Level on 11 Oct 2008 which was shot in Portugal on 30 Nov 2010, were the only notable **Song Thrush** recoveries in 2011.

There were only six recoveries of **Common Nightingale** in Britain in 2011, of which the most notable involved Sussex with a bird ringed in its first year at Pett Level on 25 Aug 2010 subsequently found freshly dead at Hayling Island (Hampshire) on 25 Apr 2011, a distance of 117 km away.

The only continental **Dunnock** recoveries in Britain during 2011 involved Sussex. Both birds were ringed in 2010 as first-years birds at Pett Level on 13 Oct and 15 Nov and controlled at Zele Heikant (Belgium) on 13 Oct 2011 and Wieringerwerf (The Netherlands) on 9 Apr 2011.

Another species for which there are few recoveries is **Yellow Wagtail** of which a single recovery was reported of a first-year male ringed on 22 Apr 2010 at Isla Grossa, P Nat Islas Columbretes, Valencia (Spain) and controlled at Pett Level on 17 Sep 2010, a distance of 1224 km away.

A first-year male **Chaffinch** that was found dead at Viuruniemi, Outokumpu (Finland) on 18 Apr 2011 was ringed 1 month and 6 days earlier at Steyning on 12 Mar, 2193 km away.

The two most notable **Goldfinch** recoveries were both long-distance recoveries within Britain, with a female ringed at Plumpton on 23 Sep 2009 having been found dead at Inverness on 17 Jan 2011, 776 km away, and a bird ringed at Horsham on 15 Mar 2010 caught at Strahack, Inch Island (Eire) on 24 Apr 2010 and then again on 30 Jun 2011, a distance of 654 km away.

The huge invasion of redpolls into Britain in the last three months of 2011 resulted in 105 recoveries of **Lesser Redpoll** involving Sussex, of which the majority involved distances of over 100 km, including a number of birds that moved to or from northern England and Scotland, but also five that involved other countries. These were three travelling to Belgium, two to France and one to The Netherlands. This year also saw the second **Common Redpoll** recovery in Sussex with an adult female that was ringed at Kilnsea (Humberside) on 15 Oct 2011 and which was controlled just 14 days later on 29 Oct 2011 at Pett Level, 304 km away.

Breeding Rook survey 2011

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Introduction

Comprehensive surveys of breeding Rook *Corvus frugilegus*, hereafter referred to as Rook, were carried out in Sussex in 1975 (after 3 years of preliminary fieldwork in 1972-4) (Merritt 1977) and in 1996 (Sennitt 1996). Both were part of national surveys organised by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and, in Sussex, both sought to count all the rookeries in the county. In addition a sample survey was carried out in 1980 (Sennitt 1980) as part of a wider national sample survey.

The results of the 1975 survey indicated that the number of nests in the county had declined by 42% since a national survey in 1944-46 that was organised by James Fisher and sponsored by the Agricultural Research Council (Merritt *op. cit.*). The results of the sample survey in 1980 indicated that the population had stabilised but those of the 1996 survey showed that the population had declined further.

In 2011 a full survey was carried out to update these results and establish how many nests of breeding Rooks were in the county.

Methodology

The method of counting Rook nests and rookeries was the same as that used in the 1975, 1980 and 1996 surveys. A rookery was defined as any group of nests situated 100 yards or more away from the nearest group of nests, and surveyors were asked to record the number of nests. Searches for rookeries were carried out from mid-March until early May. Coverage utilised the SOS 10-km square stewards, who were sent details of the 1996 survey results and records of confirmed breeding from the SOS 2005 to 2009 records, which included the first two breeding seasons of the Bird Atlas 2007-11 fieldwork. Surveyors were asked to check out each site but also to fully search their 10-km squares for other rookeries. Rookeries were recorded with 6-figure grid references.

Unlike the 1975, 1980 and 1996 surveys, surveyors were not asked to record the species of trees that rookeries were found in. In part this was to simplify the fieldwork, which overlapped with the last year of Atlas fieldwork, and in part because there was no longer a requirement to assess the impact of Dutch Elm disease, which had been an objective of earlier surveys.

All 10-km squares were surveyed during 2011 except for TQ91 which was surveyed in 2012. Unfortunately, TQ43 was not surveyed in either year, due to an oversight. Atlas results identified only three tetrads where confirmed breeding was recorded in TQ43, and in 1996 seven rookeries were recorded there with 109 nests. In Tables 1 and 2 it has been assumed that there were three rookeries in TQ43 with a total of 50 nests.

Results

A total of 644 rookeries containing 12,367 nests were recorded in the county. The numbers of nests in rookeries varied between 1 and 152, with the average being 19.2. Figure 1 shows the 356 tetrads where these 644 rookeries were distributed (some tetrads having more than one rookery).

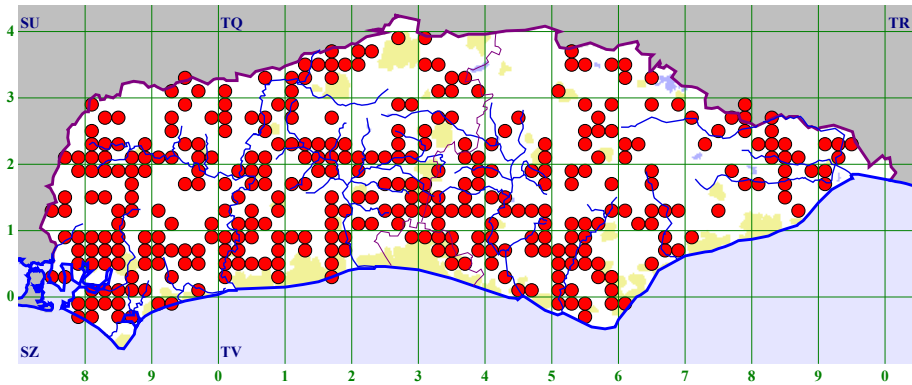


Figure 1. Tetrads where rookeries were recorded in the 2011 survey.

It can be seen that rookeries are densest along the coastal plain in the south-west of the county, the Downs and lower-lying areas of the Low Weald. They are less dense on the high areas of the Low Weald (north of Petworth and Midhurst), and in the hilly and more wooded High Weald to the east, whilst rookeries are largely absent from urban areas. This pattern of distribution was also noted in the 1975 and 1996 surveys.

Figure 1 shows fewer tetrads with confirmed breeding than are shown in the Bird Atlas 2007-11 breeding distribution map for Sussex. Surveyors had the 2008 and 2009 Atlas breeding results so knew to look for rookeries in tetrads where they were confirmed as breeding in the first two years of the Atlas fieldwork. Comparison of the 2011 survey records with all 2011 SOS records of breeding Rook (including 2011 Atlas records) added nine rookeries that had not been recorded during the survey. In addition there were an extra 14 tetrads with confirmed breeding evidence codes UN (a July record of a used nest), FF (adult carrying faecal sac or food for young) and FL (recently fledged young) where no nests were recorded, and it is assumed that these were records of breeding birds outside their breeding tetrads. In another 25 tetrads there were similar breeding codes where rookeries were also recorded.

The conclusion therefore is that the survey was fairly complete and that probably 95% or more of the rookeries were counted in the county.

Comparison of 1996 and 2011 survey results

Table 1 compares the results of the 1975 and 1996 surveys with those of the 2011 survey.

Table 1. Comparison of 1975 and 1996 survey results with 2011 actual survey results.

	1975 survey	1996 survey	2011 survey	Decline	
				1975-2011	1996-2011
No. of nests	18,180	16,512	12,367	32%	25%
No. of rookeries	736	680	644	13%	5%
No. of rookeries >100 nests	21	13	4	17	9
No. of rookeries with 51-100 nests	73	59	33	40	26
Average number of nests per rookery	24.7	24.3	19.2	22%	21%

It can be seen in Table 1 that there is a 32% decline in the number of nests since 1975 and 25% since 1996. Whereas the average size of rookeries remained little changed between 1975 and 1996 the decline in the total number of nests since 1996 is accompanied by a 21% decline in the average size of rookeries from 24.3 nests to 19.2 nests. This is emphasised by the long-term trend of fewer large rookeries; rookeries with over 100 nests declined from 21 in 1975 to 13 in 1996 to only four in 2011. These four were at:

Hambrook House, SU793071 (116 nests in 1976, 154 in 1996 and 152 in 2011);

Densworth House, East Ashling, SU827073 (205 nests in 1976, six in 1996 and 114 in 2011);

Myrtle Grove Farm, TQ093089 (1975 number unclear but not high, 31 in 1996 and 103 in 2011);

Scots Float, Playden, TQ932227 (no nests in 1975, 55 in 1996 and 138 in 2011).

(These four examples also demonstrate how much fortunes can change in individual rookeries over time).

Over the same period the number of rookeries with between 51 and 100 nests fell by 14 between 1975 and 1996 and by 26 between 1996 and 2011.

The impact of the weather on the 2011 counts

A factor that needs to be taken into account is the untypical pattern of weather in late 2010 and the first quarter of 2011. There was heavy snow in late November/early December, December was the coldest December in a century and January and February were cold as well. Several surveyors commented on the fact that Rooks were unusually late in starting nest building, and that several rookeries initially counted in the second half of March had more nests when they were again counted in mid-April. As 340 of the 644 rookeries were counted in the second half of March 2011, this is a significant factor, and could have perhaps resulted in an undercount of about 5% in the number of nests in the county. (By contrast only 57 of 680 rookeries were counted in March in the 1996 survey). Applying this 5% potential undercount to the figures in Table 1 the number of nests in the county may have been in the range 12,367 to 12,985, which would mean that the average number of nests per rookery was between 19.2 and 20.2, and that the decline in numbers of nests since 1996 was between 25% and 21%. Table 2 below shows these adjustments.

Table 2. Comparison of 1975 and 1996 survey results with adjusted 2011 survey results.

	1975 survey	1996 survey	2011 survey adjusted	Decline	
				1975-2011	1996-2011
No. of nests	18,180	16,512	12,985	32%	21%
No. of rookeries	736	680	644	13%	5%
No. of rookeries >100 nests	21	13	4	17	9
No. of rookeries with 51-100 nests	73	59	33	40	26
Average number of nests per rookery	24.7	24.3	20.2	18%	17%

A further potential weather factor is that the winter of 2009/10 was also unusually cold, and included periods of snow, which is very unusual for Sussex. However, breeding Rook surveys in TQ00 in 2009 and 2010 as well as 2011 showed negligible differences in the number of nesting Rooks (on a like-for-like basis) (R. Cowser *pers. obs.*), so whilst the cold winters may have had an impact on the timing of nest building in 2011 it may not have been a significant factor in the decline of the breeding population.

Comparison with national trends

The 1996 national survey showed a 40% increase in nests nationally since the 1975 survey, whereas the Sussex 1996 results showed a 9.2% decline. Since then, the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) results indicate an 8% decline in the English population between 1995 and 2010 (Risely *et al.* 2012). However, English regional BBS trends indicate that this decline is concentrated in northern and western England, whereas Rook populations in the East Midlands, Eastern England and the South East have all increased, with the SE region showing a 15% increase between 1995 and 2010 (Risely *et al.* 2012). John Marchant (who organised the 1996 BTO national survey) has commented (*pers. comm.*) that there are some questions about how well the BBS monitors Rook populations at English region levels, and that as there is a national reduction he is not surprised to also see a reduction in Sussex.

As in 1996, the breeding Rook population in Sussex, therefore, continues to decline. The reasons for the continuing decline are not immediately apparent. The succession of dry springs and summers in 2008, 2009 and 2010 will have reduced soil invertebrates and may have affected survival rates, particularly of young. It was also evident during the 2011 survey that some 1996 rookeries had disappeared because of recent urban development. In the last 50 years the human population of West Sussex has doubled (West Sussex County Council website 2012) and it is planned to increase by a further 7.8% between 2011 and 2021. Population growth in East Sussex is less easy to determine because of the separation of Brighton & Hove from East Sussex during the last 50 years, but between 2011 and 2021 its human population is expected to grow by 7.2% (East Sussex County Council website 2012). This future planned urban expansion will be outside the South Downs National Park, and could especially affect the Rook's strongholds of the coastal plain and the middle of the county. It suggests that urban growth may continue to put pressure on the county's Rook population in the future.

Conclusions

The 2011 survey indicates that breeding Rook numbers continue to decline across the county as they do across England as a whole. The scale of the decline in Sussex since 1996, at between 21% and 25% is, however, surprisingly high and because of this:

1. It is recommended that the survey is repeated in the next 5 to 10 years.
2. Because rookeries can be surprisingly difficult to find, and because the locations of rookeries often change (for reasons that are not always apparent) it is recommended that the next survey be spread over two years, with year one being used to identify rookeries and year two being used to repeat count them and also to search for more rookeries in 10-km squares where it is felt that some may not have been identified in the first year.
3. Also, because 2011 had an untypical weather pattern which could have affected the survey results, it is recommended that in future Rook surveys are primarily carried out during the month of April, and that counts in March are not started before the 27th of the month.
4. It is recommended that all rookeries identified in the 2011 survey be visited and if they have disappeared the surveyor be asked to provide some comments on possible reasons for this, including identifying any recent nearby urban or road developments.

Acknowledgements

The author expresses sincere thanks to the many people who carried out this survey. They are identified on pages 246-250. Thanks also go to Dr Barrie Watson for his helpful comments on an early draft of this paper, and to Dr John Newnham for providing records and preparing the map.

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Mediterranean Gulls of Rye Bay

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Introduction

Rye Bay in Sussex is one of three main breeding sites in the United Kingdom for the recent colonisation by the Mediterranean Gull. At Rye Bay in 2010 there were at least 176 nests, 17% of the nationally estimated 1016 nests at 34 sites. The other two main sites are in the neighbouring counties of Hampshire (400 nests in 2010) and Kent (225 nests in 2010), so these three sites held 79% of the national total (Holling 2012).

Location

Rye Bay is a large area of low lying land and shallow sea between the headlands of Fairlight and Dungeness, 22 km apart. The bay straddles the Kent/East Sussex border and along its coast there are several discrete sites that offer nesting opportunities for terns and gulls. All of the nesting sites are contained within the 9137 ha of the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SSSI and includes Dungeness RSPB, Rye Harbour Nature Reserve and Pett Level (which are all within the Dungeness to Pett Level SPA). Rye Bay has a long history of breeding terns and gulls (Yates 2010). Inland there is an extensive network of sheep grazing marsh with ditches and gravel pits that provide the majority of foraging options for Mediterranean Gulls.

History of Mediterranean Gulls in Sussex

In des Forges and Harber (1963) this species is referred to as the Mediterranean Black-headed Gull and its status was "Occasional, non-breeding, summer visitor. Passage migrant. Occasional winter visitor." Also "...between 1955 and 1961 from one to at least seven were recorded annually, numbers tending to increase each year and some birds apparently staying for months in the same locality." In Shrubb (1979) the species status had become "Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, which has increased steadily since 1950." There is a table that summarises all the records from 1948 to 1976 but the grand total for that period is only 179 birds.

By the 1980s the colonisation of Britain had started and James (1996) summarised it "During the past few decades the world population ... has increased dramatically ... Most marked in regions bordering the Black Sea... into the eastern Mediterranean and northwest Europe. The first breeding record in Britain was in 1968, when a pair nested in ...Hampshire. It was another eight years before the species nested successfully again, but since 1979 breeding has been annual, with a maximum of 11 confirmed pairs in 1990..." Then for Sussex "between 1982 and 1986 pairs were recorded either at Rye Harbour or Stakes Island in Chichester Harbour. In 1987 two pairs were present at Rye Harbour with one pair incubating to late April... In the first decade of colonisation of the county no young Mediterranean Gulls have fledged in Sussex." Since then there has been a rapid colonisation of Britain and Sussex, where the main centre is Rye Bay.

The first nesting in the Rye Bay area, in 1977, was in Kent, at Dungeness RSPB. Until 1997 up to six pairs nested there annually. The first incubating pairs in the Sussex part of Rye Bay were at Rye Harbour in 1987. For breeding numbers and productivity see Figures 1, 2 and 3.

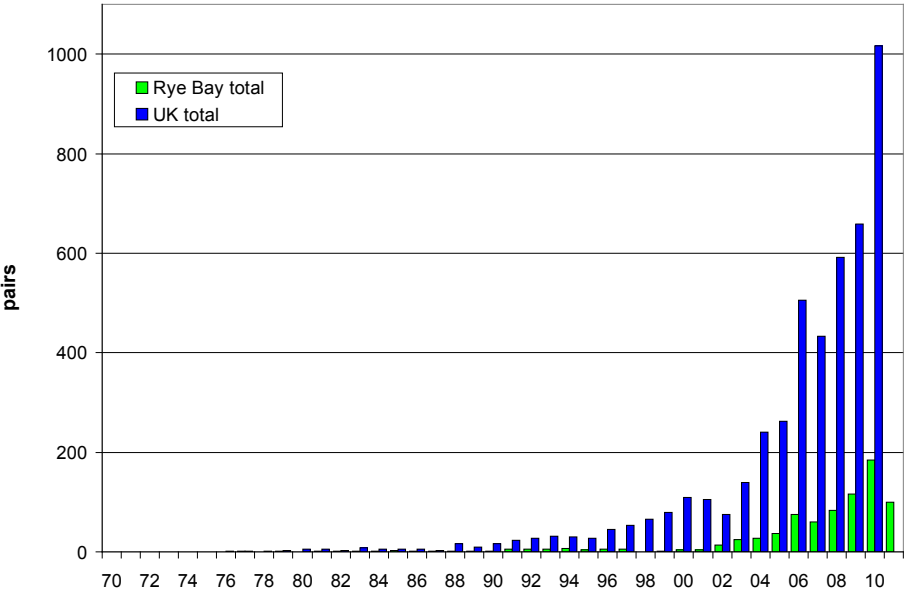


Figure 1. Mediterranean Gull breeding numbers in Rye Bay and the UK (Holling, 2012).

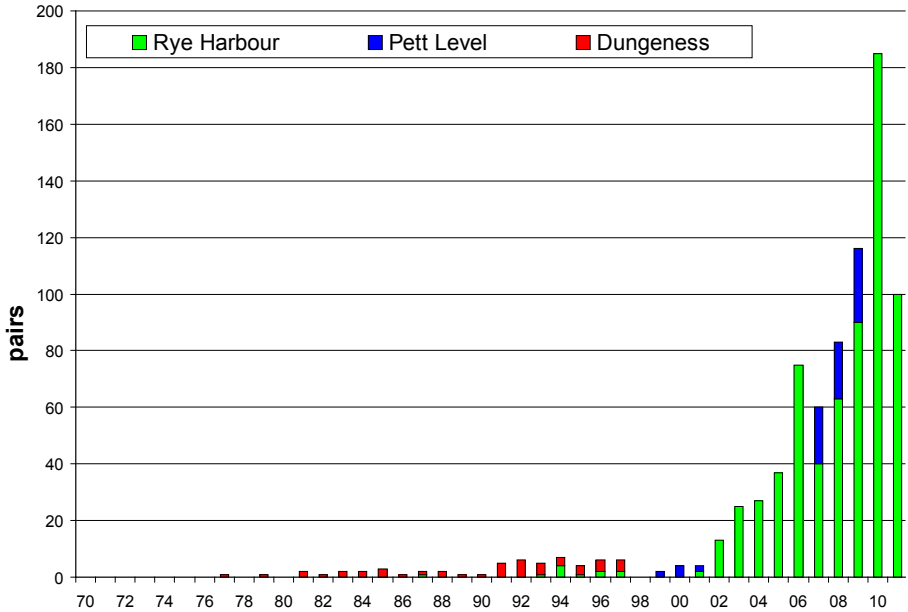


Figure 2. Mediterranean Gull Breeding Numbers in Rye Bay.

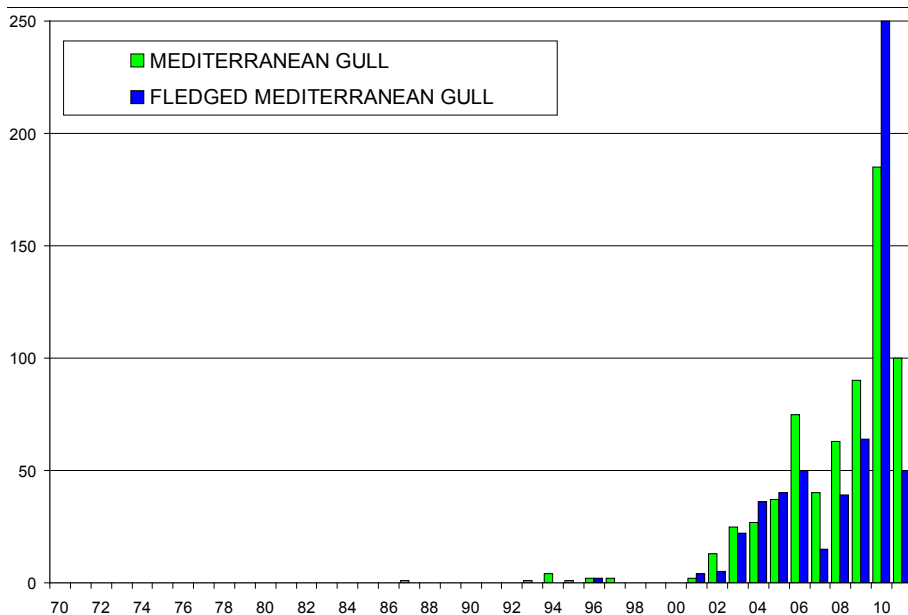


Figure 3. *Mediterranean Gull breeding numbers and fledging success at Rye Harbour.*

At Stakes Island in Chichester Harbour, 1-2 pairs nested in some years between 1988 and 1992, but raised no young and they nested again in 2010 and 2011 and did manage to fledge 2-3 young each year (Barry Collins and Ed Rowsell *pers. comm.*). In recent years at Ivy Lake, Chichester GP there were several pairs prospecting on rafts used by Black-headed Gulls, but the latter have now ceased to nest (Barrie Watson *pers. comm.*). Pairs are also prospecting among the Black-headed Gulls at Arundel Wetland Centre (Paul Stevens *pers. comm.*).

Other “local” breeding colonies

In addition to the breeding sites in the neighbouring counties of Kent and Hampshire there have been significant numbers nesting along the neighbouring coast of France. In the Baie de Somme pairs were noted from 1988, but successful breeding was rare (Patrick Triplet *pers. comm.*). In the two closest French Departments the following populations (pairs) were recorded (Cadiou 2011):

	2001	2009	2010
Pas-de-Calais	53	320	603
Somme	0	792	2

Seasonal occurrence in Rye Bay

In Rye Bay Mediterranean Gulls can be seen in all months, but regular sightings start in early February. Numbers increase rapidly to a pre-breeding season peak in early April, with smaller numbers remaining to nest. See Figure 4 for detail of the 2011 counts at Rye Harbour. Note that on the 11 April 2011 the maximum count of the year was 404, but there were another 40 counted at the same time (9 a.m.) at Pett Level and no doubt there were others elsewhere. As soon as the breeding season is over the birds depart, so by late July most have left and few are seen

until the following February. This pattern is in contrast to the west of Sussex, especially in and around Pagham Hbr where in 2010 large numbers were noted in January, February and August to September (SxBR 2011).

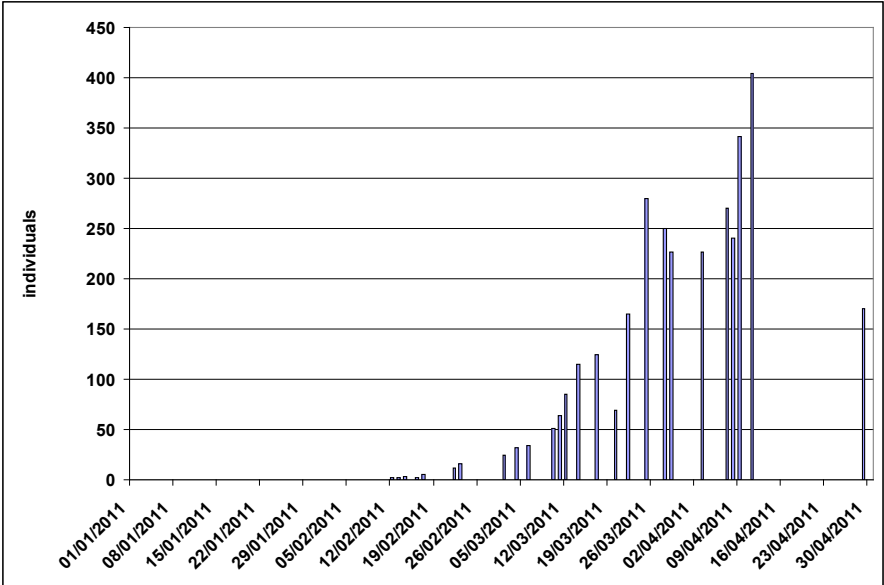


Figure 4. Mediterranean Gull peak counts at Rye Harbour NR during January to April 2011.

Colour-ringed birds

A large number of individuals have been ringed as chicks with individually numbered colour rings that can be read with a telescope. We have knowledge of 258 individuals and at the very least this tells us where they were ringed as chicks. Some individuals have very many sightings that create a long and detailed life history. Many of these show a wandering lifestyle.

Countries of origin

Belgium	106	UK	6
France	94	Poland	5
Netherlands	20	Italy	1
Germany	18	Serbia	1
Hungary	7	Ukraine	1

Although many of these colour-ringed birds have been seen prospecting on nesting islands in Rye Bay and involved in courtship very few have been confirmed as breeding in Rye Bay.

Birds seen in Rye Bay in May or June were considered likely to be breeding and include birds ringed as chicks in Belgium (14), France (9), Netherlands (4), Germany (2) and Hungary (1). The authors cannot think of many British breeding birds that will nest so far from their birthplace, perhaps Swallow and Quail.

Where do they spend their time throughout the year?

A typical example of the wandering nature of this species is shown by one marked as “3N92 White”, ringed as a chick at Antwerpen, Belgium (June 2004), then seen in Lancashire (March 2005), Merseyside (June 2005), Calais, France (April 2006), Zeeland, Netherlands (April 2008), Lancashire (February 2009), Norfolk (April 2009), Merseyside (January 2010), Suffolk (March 2010), Lancashire (February 2011), Hampshire (March and April 2011), North Wales (January 2012) and Rye Bay (March 2012).

Other birds are more conservative, such as “35HO White”, also ringed as a chick at Antwerpen, Belgium (May 2007), then seen at Pas-de-Calais, France (July to October 2007, February, July, August, September 2008), Rye Bay (March, April 2009), Pas-de-Calais, France (July to October 2009, 12 February 2010), Rye Bay (26 February 2010), Pas-de-Calais, France (July, August 2010, February 2011), Rye Bay (March 2011), Pas-de-Calais, France (July 2011) and Rye Bay (February and March 2012).

Onward migration

A small proportion of birds have been reported at breeding colonies within weeks of being seen in Rye Bay:

AJCY Green: 7 Apr 2012 Rye Bay, 16 Apr 2012 Schackerloopolder, Tholen, Netherlands.

R34K Green: 13 Apr 2012 Rye Bay, 22 Apr 2012 Goudswaard, Zuid Holland, Netherlands.

R54C Green: 26 Apr 2012 Rye Bay, 4 May 2012 Montreuil-sur-Loir, Maine-et-Loire, France.

3L22 White: 15 March 2012 Rye Bay, 23 March 2012 Antwerpen, Belgium.

Where are they wintering?

The majority have wintered to the west of Rye Bay. Regular sites holding winter birds (and people reading and reporting the rings) include Cork and Dublin in Eire, the Camel Estuary in Cornwall, St Helens Millpond on the Isle of Wight, Radipole Lake in Dorset and Badminton GP in Hampshire. However, other regular sites include Lowestoft to the north, and Folkestone and Le Portel, Outreau and Oye-Plage (all in Pas de Calais, France) to the east.

A small number were birds heading north before presumably turning eastwards with birds from SW France and Spain.

674 Green: wintered 2009, 2010 and 2011 in Coruna, Spain, seen at Rye Bay in April 2012

R33E Green: wintered 2011 Alentejo, Portugal and seen at Rye Bay 12 April 2012.

R57A Green: wintered 2011 Western Sahara, Morocco and seen Rye Bay April 2012. This bird is the furthest sighting south of any bird known to have visited the Rye Bay area.

Rye Bay chicks

Of six birds colour ringed in Rye Bay three are known to have fledged there and then been seen again. The following two are the most interesting:

75P: ringed Rye Bay (5 Jun 2000). Later seen Ericeira, Portugal (10 Dec 2000), Niedersachsen, Germany (22 Apr 2003, part of a failed breeding pair), Gelderland, Netherlands (9 Apr 2004), Tagus, Portugal (19 Feb 2006).

78P: ringed Rye Bay (26 June 2000). Seen in Rye Bay in spring of 2002, 2003, 2004, 2008 and 2010. During the last visit the ring was noted to be broken and has probably subsequently fallen off.



Mediterranean Gulls, Rye Harbour

Factors that influence the breeding of Mediterranean Gulls

Nest site All nesting attempts in Rye Bay have been on islands of gravel pits or pools. These are small islands specifically created and managed for breeding seabirds and protected from disturbance by people and predators and usually with fencing. Most nesting is within 500 m of the coast, but some have nested on islands up to 1900 m inland. They are usually associated with breeding colonies of Black-headed Gulls and/or Sandwich Terns. Although Mediterranean Gulls will nest in loose colonies, they often nest away from other pairs of their species. Most breeding attempts are by full adults in at least their third calendar year, but many second year birds also nest successfully and some first years do attempt to breed, often in mixed-age pairs (*pers. obs.*).

Predation Island nesting seabirds reduce their chances of predation by fox, badger stoat and brown rat compared with other ground nesting species and much effort has been put into island management. Extensive electric fencing keeps most foxes and badgers away from some gravel pit margins and rat poison stations are maintained on some larger islands. Nesting Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gulls can take significant numbers of eggs and chicks of other island nesting seabirds, so the two larger species are discouraged from nesting on these islands.

Food availability Most Mediterranean Gull feeding in Rye Bay is away from the coast, with birds walking over the short, sheep grazed grassland catching invertebrates, especially earthworms. In dry springs the availability of this source of food may be much reduced and this may influence the number of birds nesting. When there are many aerial insects they switch to hawking and they are surprisingly manoeuvrable. When hundreds of Black-headed Gulls are following tractors ploughing in spring there will often be a few Mediterranean Gulls. They frequently prey on the eggs and chicks of Black-headed Gulls, Common Terns and Sandwich Terns. This behaviour has also been observed at Langstone Hbr, Hants (Chris Cockburn *pers. comm.*). Just after fledging the young Mediterranean Gull families are often located in and around the Black-headed Gull/Sandwich Tern colonies and nurseries. Here the adult Mediterranean Gulls ambush the other returning adults for fish and this may be a significant part of their diet when

feeding chicks. In years when terns have low success (thought to be linked to low availability of their food) there is a consequent reduction in Mediterranean Gull breeding success. In addition to these conventional sources of food a few individuals have been seen feeding on chips from visitors in Rye and bread at Greatstone, Kent (*pers. obs.*).

Summary

Mediterranean Gulls have colonised Rye Bay because:

- There is a choice of sites that offer safe, island nesting space alongside large colonies of Black-headed Gulls and terns.
- There is a good and varied source of food, especially on the extensive sheep grazed pasture of Rye Harbour, but it also includes the young and eggs of other seabirds.
- The species has an unusual strategy by which a proportion of the population nests at a considerable distance from their natal site.

The future

We have only touched the surface of this new Sussex breeding bird. It is an enigmatic bird that has only recently become common and widespread in Britain. It appears to have the potential for further population increase and perhaps it will have a significant impact on the nesting success of Common and Sandwich Terns. As an ideal subject for academic study the authors would welcome any student to study it and discover just what is going on in the busy and noisy and aromatic seabird nesting colonies of Rye Bay. It is surprising how few visiting birdwatchers record and report colour ring details, so whenever you get a close view of a Mediterranean Gull do check for rings and you may be rewarded with details of a long and interesting life history.

Acknowledgements

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Bird Atlas 2007-11: mapping the birds of Sussex

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Introduction

On 1st November 2007 an ambitious project to map the distribution and relative abundance of all birds, both in the breeding season and in winter across the whole of Britain and Ireland got underway. This four-year survey was organised by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), partnered by Birdwatch Ireland and the Scottish Ornithologists' Club. After careful consideration the Sussex Ornithological Society (SOS), along with over 40 other county and local recording areas, decided to take the opportunity offered by this national survey to conduct a county tetrad atlas during the same period and aimed for 100% coverage of tetrads in both the breeding season and winter months. This was the fourth major national atlas survey preceded by a breeding atlas between 1968 and 1972 (Sharrock 1976), a winter atlas during the three winters 1981/82 to 1983/4 (Lack 1986) and the "new" breeding atlas during the years 1988 to 1991 (Gibbons *et al.* 1993). During the last of these, and extending into 1992, the SOS undertook a county tetrad atlas of breeding birds, the results from which were published in James (1996). This paper briefly documents the methodology and outlines some of the results from the 2007-2011 survey. The entire collection of maps and figures has been produced in digital format (Newnham and Crabtree 2012) and interpretation of the findings will constitute a major part of a new county avifauna (in prep.).

Method

To reach the objectives of the study there were two ways for observers to become involved; in simple terms, and using the BTO descriptions, these were:

- Timed Tetrad Visits (TTV): record all the birds seen or heard in a tetrad during a visit for an hour or more in the winter and breeding season. For the local atlas observers were asked to complete two hours for each visit.
- Roving records: Any bird! Anytime! Anywhere! If seen and recorded it would be mapped.

The fieldwork in the winter ran from November through to February, and was repeated each winter until 2010-11, whilst the breeding season was considered to be from April until July, and lasted for four years, running until summer 2011. Records from March, August, September and October were incorporated if they included breeding evidence.

The TTVs were principally concerned with discovering the broad patterns of relative abundance, and the SOS aimed to survey each of the 1039 tetrads in Sussex containing more than 50% land, and to ask observers to ensure that each visit was of two hours duration. To complete the TTV surveys two visits were needed in a season, one early and one late. In winter the first visit was in November or December and the second in January or February. In the breeding season the first surveys were conducted in April or May with the second in June or July. Ideally both season surveys should have been carried out in the same year and once the two visits in both the winter

and the breeding season were completed then that tetrad was completed with regards to the TTVs. The counts from the first hour and second hour were kept separate but observers were allowed to briefly ‘stop the clock’ if large flocks or dense concentrations of birds were encountered.

Although a good portion of the species occurring in a tetrad would be found during the four hours of TTV fieldwork this alone would not provide a full list of the species using each tetrad. Furthermore in just four hours it would be very difficult to find evidence to confirm breeding for even the commonly occurring species. Observers were therefore encouraged, as in previous atlases, to return to tetrads on other trips and in other years to look for additional species and increase the evidence for breeding. The BTO and the SOS looked to gather as many “roving” records as possible and encouraged observers to submit their observations through the designated Bird Atlas 2007-11 website, through BirdTrack or through county ornithological societies. Additionally, the BTO used records from other BTO surveys.

Whether undertaking TTVs or gathering roving records, field workers were encouraged to record breeding status codes with their records. There were three codes for non-breeding (F, M and U), two for possible breeding (H and S), seven for probable breeding (P, T, D, N, A, I, and B) and seven two-letter codes for confirmed breeding (DD, UN, FL, ON, FF, NE and NY). Observers were repeatedly reminded, however, that all codes for possible, probable and confirmed breeding must relate to individuals in potentially suitable nesting habitat during the breeding season.

Before observations were accepted into the national atlas dataset all were viewed and validated by a team of local birdwatchers. More details about the survey methods, codes and validation used in the atlas can be found in Newnham and Crabtree (2012).

Results

On 8th August 2012 the final validated set of atlas records was received from the BTO; this a slightly later date than initially planned and just over a year after the completion of the formal fieldwork. The completed dataset contained a grand total of 642,118 records for Sussex, comprising 274,996 records for the winter months and 367,122 for the breeding season. The latter contained all observations between March and October which had a breeding status assigned although the core survey months were April until July. This enormous dataset was generated by over 1000 contributors and included observations from 1037 tetrads in the winter and 1033 tetrads during the breeding season.

Table 1 shows that during the breeding season (red) April was the most active month for recording with a decline in the number of records as the season progressed. Conversely, during the winter (blue) the number of records increased as the season advanced. The contribution from the other months (grey) was comparatively small. The table shows a large portion (21.8%) of records were provided from the SOS database but most records emanated from the BTO online recording system, BirdTrack, and the results of the TTVs.

Although most tetrads were surveyed for four hours during each season, and although this produced a magnificent set of uniformly gathered records across the county, this alone was insufficient to build a full list of species for every tetrad. During the breeding season an average of 39 species was found in each of the 1012 tetrads in which TTVs were undertaken with a huge range from just five to 75 species. With the addition of “roving” records to these tetrads the average increased to 55 species with a range of species encountered between 19 and 163. The addition of species from “roving” records was not uniform across the county and Figure 1 shows where most species were added. The pattern shown broadly reflects the areas with most birdwatching activity. It appears that in 29 tetrads little or no fieldwork additional to the TTVs was done.

Table 1. *The number of Sussex records received in each month from the main atlas sources.*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
TTV records	18,041	24,298	0	26,087	22,605	40,064	6941	0	0	0	20,347	21,908	180,291
Roving records	10,364	10,367	1178	15,649	18,229	14,721	6492	463	95	41	9105	10,230	96,934
BirdTrack records	26,245	23,715	2386	38,740	32,262	19,489	18,795	748	500	118	18,181	18,427	199,606
SOS data	16,476	13,780	2489	24,644	23,085	17,679	13,363	1022	548	336	13,173	13,123	139,718
BTO data	600	527	4	4216	4375	5010	505	90	11	3	936	760	17,037
Population estimates	1315	1581	0	276	639	2430	410	0	0	0	582	915	8148
Colony counts	0	0	0	154	122	94	14	0	0	0	0	0	384
Total	73,041	74,268	6057	109,766	101,317	99,487	46,520	2323	1154	498	62,324	65,363	642,118

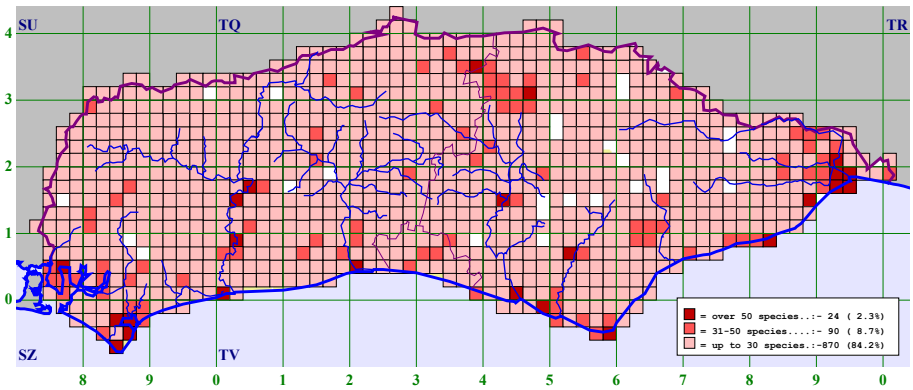


Figure 1. *The number of additional species found in each tetrad during the breeding season from “roving” records.*

Figure 2 shows a similar situation in the winter and in this season the additions from “roving” records were most numerous around Pagham and Chichester Harbours, the coastal strip, the river valleys and Rye Bay. The average number of species recorded from the TTVs in the 1013 tetrads surveyed in the winter was 36 species (range 11 to 75 species) but with additional fieldwork the average rose to 50 species per tetrad (range 21 to 162 species).

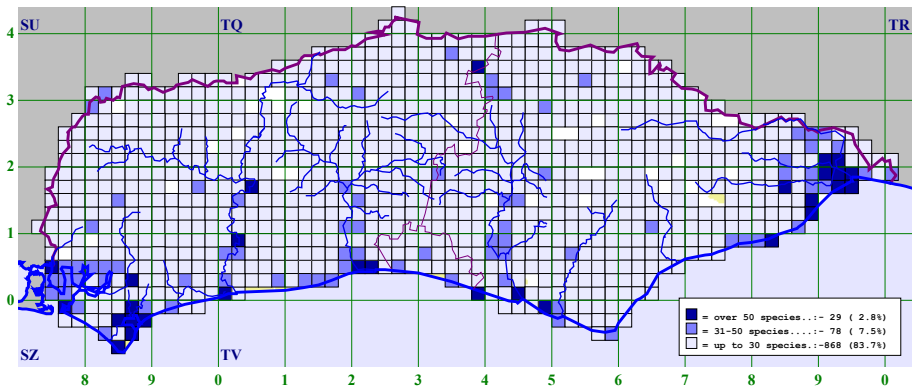


Figure 2. *The number of additional species found during winter from “roving” records.*

The first of the principal aims of this study was to map the distribution of the species occurring in the county in both the breeding season and winter. The huge volume of records has allowed this to be completed but, clearly, the scope of this paper does not permit publishing these distribution maps here. However, Figures 3 and 4 show examples for one species, Linnet, and demonstrate the quality of information received from this survey.

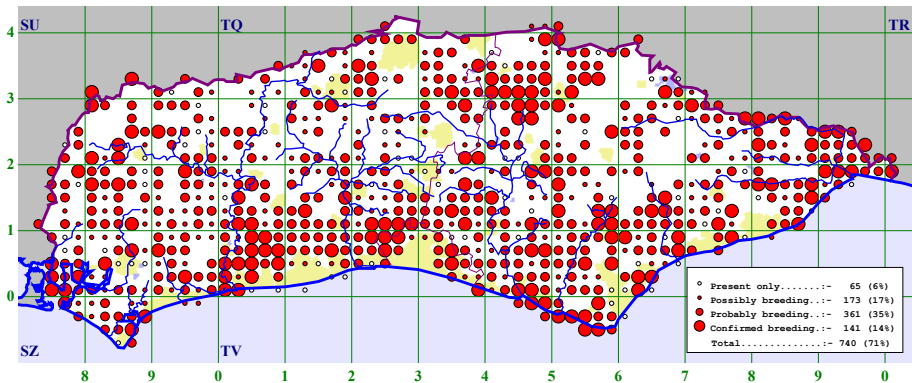


Figure 3. *The breeding season distribution of Linnet in Sussex, 2008-11.*

Figure 3 shows that Linnets are fairly widespread during the breeding season, having been found in 71% of the county's tetrads, but in the winter (Figure 4) these birds were only found in 32% of tetrads with clearer geographical areas of occurrence. This is a picture perhaps expected for a partially migratory species associated with farmland.

A clearer picture of the favoured areas and relative abundance for this species comes from the TTV surveys and the breeding season relative abundance map (Figure 5) clearly shows the South Downs as the largest area of higher density.

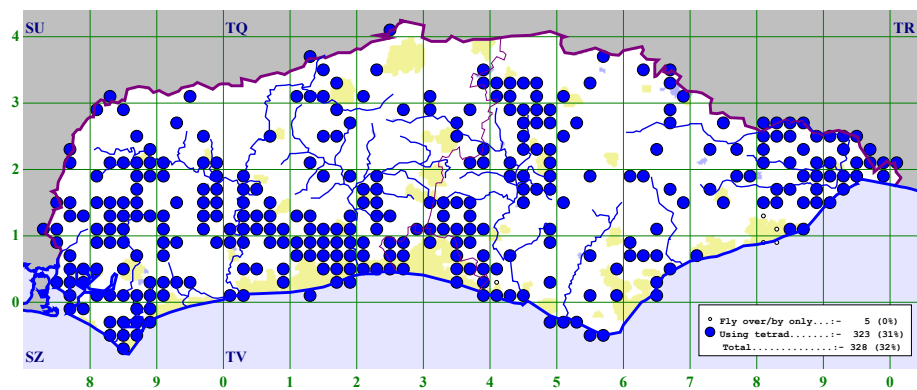


Figure 4. The winter distribution of Linnet in Sussex, 2007/8-2010/11.

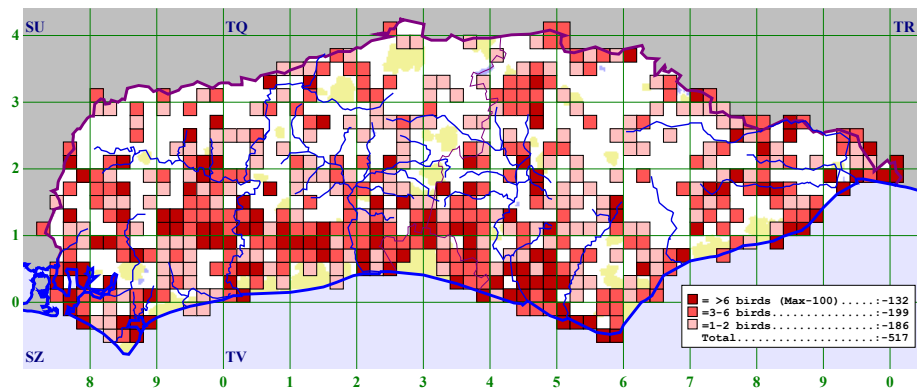


Figure 5. The breeding season relative abundance of Linnet in Sussex, 2008-2011.

A similar plot (Figure 6), with the same scales, from the winter records confirms the winter contraction in range and suggests that fewer birds may be present although the higher maximum count may reflect the tendency of this species to flock outside the breeding season. Similar sets of maps have been drawn for all the species found during the study period although for many of the scarcer species the number of “dots” is very small.

With information from previous atlas surveys it is possible to plot change. Of the historic surveys only the 1988-92 breeding season atlas was conducted at tetrad level. Creating maps depicting change proved challenging with no one method creating the smooth changes shown in national maps. Differences in survey methodology and variable observer cover posed difficult problems to address. Undoubtedly plotting difference at a tetrad scale not only shows alteration in distribution but will show variation in observer effort and the chance sightings of species to a greater extent than maps plotted at larger scales. However, several portfolios of maps showing change were produced, and an example, comparing the records of confirmed and probable breeding for Common Buzzard, is shown in Figure 7. This clearly shows how this species has spread since the 1988-92 atlas; for many other species the changes are far less clear.

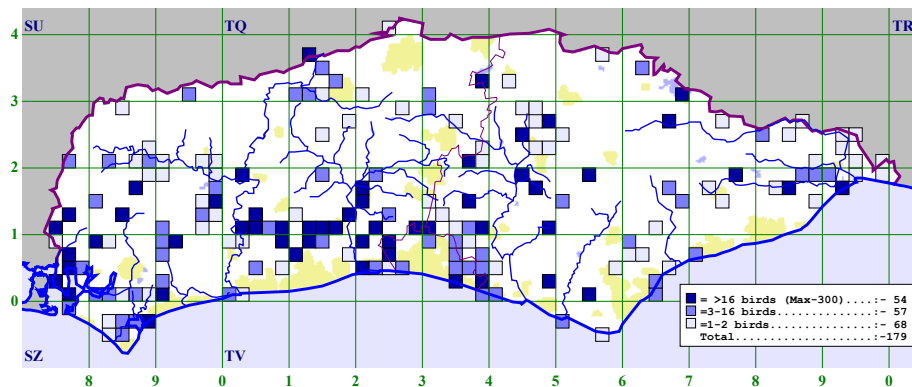


Figure 6. The winter relative abundance of Linnet in Sussex, 2007/8-2010/11.

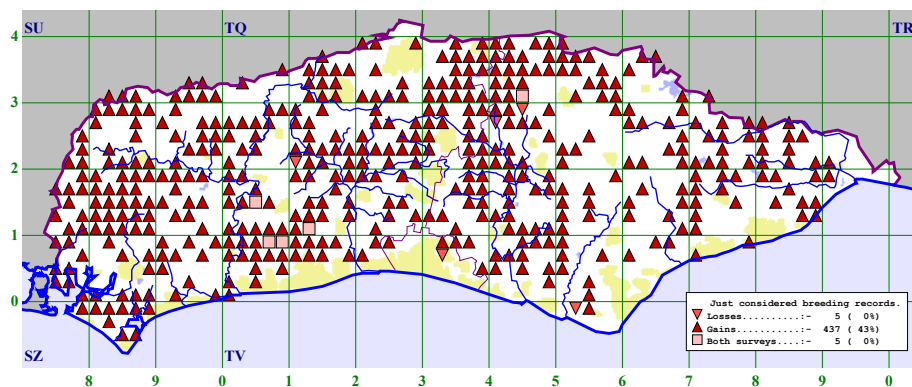


Figure 7. Change in breeding distribution of Common Buzzard in Sussex 1988-92 to 2008-11 (comparing probable and confirmed breeding records only).

The detail and completeness of the fieldwork also allowed comparisons to be drawn between TTVs conducted early and late in the season and those from one season to the next. The collection of records has also allowed maps to be drawn showing the distribution of various assemblages of species, such as those in the red or amber category of the Birds of Conservation Concern or indicator species for various habitats. These, along with the wealth of data generated from this study, are explored in more detail by Newnham and Crabtree (2012) and in the pending county avifauna.

Summary and conclusions

The commitment to the national Bird Atlas 2007-11 project and to generating a full winter and breeding county tetrad atlas for Sussex was completed fully by an army of over a thousand observers; about a third of these undertook the more detailed TTVs. The methods employed are described and a few examples from the achieved results are shown here.

Acknowledgements

Any major project requires considerable planning and efforts to guide the survey to a successful conclusion. Inevitably a number of key people have undertaken various roles throughout the atlas period, with the authors, particularly Helen Crabtree and Richard Cowser, working tirelessly to promote and organise the project. The authors thank Paul James for assisting them in the validation process. The SOS 10-km stewards have encouraged fieldworkers and undertaken regular reviews of the results of their local patches which proved very helpful to the validating team. Finally, such a large survey would not have been possible without the help of a large number of observers and surveyors who have been individually acknowledged in this and previous Sussex Bird Reports.

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Long-eared Owls on the Sussex Downs: notes on recording methods, habitat requirements and population size

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Introduction

The Long-eared Owl *Asio otus* is an infrequently encountered resident species in and winter visitor to Sussex, and its stronghold in the county appears to be the South Downs. It is the most nocturnal of Britain's resident owls and most encounters with the species by birdwatchers are either at well-known winter roost sites or of individuals flushed from perches beside roads in suitable habitat.

The interest of the authors in the Sussex population of Long-eared Owls (for brevity the abbreviation LEO will be used) was sparked by a chance encounter with two juveniles and an attendant adult in 2005 during a glow-worm survey on the Sussex Downs above Shoreham-by-Sea. At the time this was a species that the authors had never 'bumped into' before during nocturnal ramblings and cycle rides on the Downs, but this encounter sparked an interest and led to a concentrated effort over a number of years to discover more about the distribution of this species on the South Downs.

Initially, efforts were concentrated on targeting likely looking sites to attempt to record this species whilst working towards a better understanding of the distribution and habitat requirements of the species at various times of year. In later years, less targeted work for this species was carried out, but more time was spent on the Downs at night as work on other nocturnal species became a priority. During this later period, vehicular access was gained to parts of the Downs which were normally off-limits with no public access at all, and by covering these areas, further insights into the pattern of distribution of the species were gained.

Recording methods

At the start of the project in 2006, the best methods to use to attempt to record LEOs were discussed. The initial method decided upon was to arrive in likely looking habitat roughly half an hour before dusk in the hope of seeing birds which were leaving their roosts on their first hunt of the evening. This proved to be a very successful method for locating birds at new sites, but by its very nature it restricted survey work to one site per night and the period when birds could clearly be observed usually lasted for no longer than an hour as the light faded. On many occasions sightings were restricted to no more than 10 seconds or so, as birds flew overhead from their roosts in scrub towards feeding areas.

Despite its limitations this method proved to be very fruitful over the course of this project, and with two people looking for the birds in different directions from the same point the success rate was close to 70% on each visit in 2006 and 2007.

In normal circumstances LEOs have two hunting periods each night; from shortly after sunset for around three hours, with hunting activity then halting for a period before restarting for up to three hours leading up to sunrise (Mikkola 1983). During both the hunting phases and the roosting phase birds could often be seen sitting on fence posts beside roads and downland tracks; in some springs driving along a 3-km stretch of downland road at around 11 pm offered a near 50% chance of encountering at least one LEO perched on the fence posts.

On one occasion the authors spent two hours on the Downs searching for birds without success, only to return to the car and startle a bird which was perched just next to it on a fence post. On another occasion three birds were flushed from perches along a 2-km section of downland road.

Birds at winter roosts are notoriously hard to spot and during all the field work that the authors have carried out during the day, only once has a new roost been found by simply spotting the bird. After a week or two without precipitation, however, roosts can give themselves away due to the extensive whitewash beneath the perched birds which is particularly obvious if significant numbers of birds are roosting together. This whitewash takes the form of normal bird lime mixed in with the soft remnants of the prey which leaves a white papery substance covering the vegetation and ground beneath the roost. By hunting for this residue, and any associated pellets, it is possible to pick out a roost that would otherwise have gone unnoticed if one were simply hoping to spot the birds through binoculars.

Although playback was never used during survey work, the authors did intentionally go out to listen for LEOs as they called during the breeding season. The male bird's song is a soft cooing, akin to the noise created by blowing over the top of a bottle, which although fairly quiet can be audible from up to 1 km away in good conditions (Scott 1997). The female's main call is a reedy 1-2-second note which is usually very quiet and which can rarely be heard from more than 200 m away, and sometimes from no more than 25 m away. The exception to this is under still and humid conditions when the female calls are audible from up to 500 m away when hands are cupped to the listener's ears.

Birds often duet together with the females apparently calling from a suitable nest site and the male from nearby, and this behaviour often starts just prior to dusk. Around half an hour after dusk the males sometimes fly around their territory singing from the tops of various prominent trees and occasionally wing-clapping. The authors heard birds from January through to May, with the main period of activity during February and March, and on one memorable night three separate females were heard calling within earshot of each other.

Although calling birds alerted the authors to previously unknown territories, this is by no means a reliable method for recording this species on a single visit. Birds were recorded singing in all weathers from still warm nights to wet, windy and cold evenings, but on some other occasions pairs would not call at all. On seemingly perfect evenings three pairs would sometimes remain silent until at least midnight (at which point the authors headed away from the site), but on an apparently identical evening a couple of nights later all three pairs would be very vocal calling continuously for more than an hour after dusk.

Ironically, the call that first attracted the authors to this species, the "creaking gate" call of the young, is something that has never been heard again during the project despite targeted efforts to hear young in areas where birds attempted breeding.

Sussex Downland habitat usage and requirements

The habitat requirements for LEOs elsewhere in the UK have been listed as "areas of heath, rough grassland, pasture, including some agriculture, trees and woodland, hedges and water" (Scott 1997). Of the 13 downland and river valley roost/breeding sites surveyed in detail, all contained areas of scrub containing corvid nests, with eight possessing extensive scrub cover. The areas of scrub varied in size from thin shaws no more than 3 m wide and only 3.5 m high to large impenetrable areas covering a number of acres.

Table 1 provides summarised data on the 13 sites used by LEOs as winter roosts or where individuals were present and apparently holding territory during the breeding season.

Table 1. *Habitat information for 13 sites used by Long-eared Owls.*

General Site Description	Habitats Within 250m of Roost					Nearest Right of Way	Nearest Road	Tawny within 1km	Tawny within 0.5km	Tawny within 250m	Human disturbance during day	Number of known LEO sites within 2km
	Extensive Woodland	Chalk Grassland	Rough Grassland	Grazed Land	Arable Land							
Extensive scrub on chalk grassland surrounded by grazed land	×	✓	✓	✓	×	10m	100m	✓	×	×	Very High	2
Extensive scrub on chalk grassland surrounded by grazed land	×	✓	✓	✓	×	25m	200m	×	×	×	Very High	2
Extensive scrub on grazed rough grassland with some chalk grassland	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	250m	100m	✓	×	×	Very Low	0
Extensive area of woodland on downs surrounded by crops and	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	50m	2000m	✓	?	?	Low	0
Extensive area of scrub surrounded by grazing land	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	100m	500m	?	?	?	Low	0
Scrubby shaw surrounded by grazed land and arable	×	×	✓	✓	✓	5m	1200m	✓	✓	×	High	2
Scrubby shaw surrounded by grazed land and arable	×	×	✓	✓	✓	20m	1100m	✓	×	×	Moderate	2
Scrubland in grazed rough grassland surrounded by arable land	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	20m	400m	×	×	×	Very Low	0
Woodland shaw surrounded by arable land with some rough	×	×	✓	✓	✓	15m	1100m	×	×	×	Moderate	1
Chalk Downland with extensive scrub surrounded by arable land	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	10m	400m	×	×	×	High	1
Extensive scrub on substantial chalk grassland	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	50m	150m	✓	×	×	High	0
River valley lane lined with scrub and	×	×	✓	✓	×	15m	200m	✓	✓	×	Very High	2
Extensive scrub surrounded by arable	×	×	✓	✓	✓	100m	1300m	×	×	×	Very Low	3

All the sites had significant areas of rough grassland and grazing land within 250 m of the roost/breeding site, and additionally all sites had areas of grazed land close by including chalk grassland in seven cases. Although a good proportion of the Downs is close to these habitats, there are also large areas which are purely arable, and LEOs were never discovered in any of these areas. On numerous occasions over the course of the study LEOs were witnessed hunting over the rough grassland either by quartering the area or post-hunting within it. The areas of rough grassland included tussocky chalk grassland and improved grassland used for grazing, and many of these areas were on the steep scarp slope of the Downs. One site which was largely surrounded by arable land had a 6-m wide strip of rough grass along a bridleway and this was a very popular site for up to three hunting owls each night. At one suburban site a bird was watched pole-hunting along a thin 2-m wide strip of rank grass beside a road and it returned to this area on many nights over the course of a couple of months (Figure 1).

Pellet analysis has shown that LEOs in Sussex have a wide range of vertebrate prey, and the results of recent work (Wallace 2012) examining the prey items from two downland sites are given in Tables 2 and 3.



Figure 1. Long-eared Owl pole-hunting in suburban habitat (lit by streetlights).

Table 2. Overall proportions by number (n = 98) and mean proportions of prey items at Site A.

Vertebrate species	Overall proportions	Mean ± s.d.
Field Vole (<i>Microtus agrestis</i>)	0.679	0.697 ± 0.436
Wood Mouse (<i>Apodemus sylvaticus</i>)	0.158	0.150 ± 0.323
Bird (<i>Aves</i>)	0.112	0.099 ± 0.258
Bank Vole (<i>Myodes glareolus</i>)	0.020	0.025 ± 0.143
Brown Rat (<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>)	0.020	0.025 ± 0.143
House Mouse (<i>Mus musculus</i>)	0.010	0.004 ± 0.032

Table 3. Overall proportions by number (n = 479) and mean proportions of prey items at Site B.

Vertebrate species	Overall proportions	Mean ± s.d.
Field Vole (<i>Microtus agrestis</i>)	0.425	0.425 ± 0.227
Common Shrew (<i>Sorex araneus</i>)	0.252	0.240 ± 0.193
Wood Mouse (<i>Apodemus sylvaticus</i>)	0.209	0.212 ± 0.194
Common Frog (<i>Rana temporaria</i>)	0.042	0.040 ± 0.104
House Mouse (<i>Mus musculus</i>)	0.026	0.018 ± 0.062
Harvest Mouse (<i>Micromys minutus</i>)	0.021	0.023 ± 0.082
Bird (<i>Aves</i>)	0.013	0.022 ± 0.098
Pygmy Shrew (<i>Sorex minutus</i>)	0.013	0.010 ± 0.046
Bank Vole (<i>Myodes glareolus</i>)	0.009	0.007 ± 0.032
Grey Squirrel (<i>Siurus carolinensis</i>)	0.004	0.005 ± 0.037

The most common prey item found was the Field Vole (*Microtus agrestis*) and the regular appearance of this species in rough grassland matches with the usage of this habitat by the owls.

At three sites birds were seen to hunt above large banks of scrubland, quartering back and forth in an apparent attempt to flush roosting passerines; in Britain bird species have been recorded as comprising up to 23% of the diet of LEOs in the non-breeding season (Mikkola 1983).

At dusk, birds would often be seen hunting close to their daytime roost sites, but as the night wore on they could sometimes be encountered hunting a significant distance from their daytime roosts. Because LEOs are so difficult to record, some roost sites and populations will undoubtedly have been missed, so when hunting birds were encountered a significant distance from their presumed roosting site it was always possible that their actual origin was a closer, unrecorded site.

With due consideration to this caveat, the positions where hunting birds were encountered during the course of this study have been mapped out, and the greatest distance from a known roost site at which birds have been encountered is 2 km.

One significant but expected result of this work is that no LEOs have been encountered either breeding or roosting within 250 m of known Tawny Owl territories, and only at two sites were birds within 500 m of Tawny Owl sites. Although this may not at first seem surprising considering that these are mainly downland sites, Tawny Owls are reasonably well represented on the Downs and there are many copses and more extensive woods which offer them suitable breeding sites. Put simply, during this project, no LEOs were discovered nesting or roosting close to occupied Tawny Owl territories.

Although records of Tawny Owls preying on LEOs are very rare (Mikkola 1983), Tawny Owls are known to drive LEOs out of their territories and will also compete with the smaller and lighter LEOs for food (Mikkola 1983). In areas where Tawny Owls are absent (such as Ireland and the Isle Of Man), LEOs take full advantage of deciduous woodlands for nesting sites so it appears that their habitat 'preferences' on Sussex downland may largely relate to a requirement to avoid Tawny Owls, and therefore they may be nesting and roosting in what is actually sub-optimal habitat for them.

A final requirement of LEOs is the presence of old magpie and corvid nests which account for 78% of the nests used by LEOs in Britain (Cramp 1985). LEOs are reliant on a supply of old nests in order to allow them to breed and although some Sussex estates heavily control magpie and corvid numbers, no evidence has been seen to suggest that a lack of nesting sites is limiting the population on Sussex downland.

Distribution on Sussex Downs and site fidelity

Although this species was described 75 years ago as "moderately common" but "somewhat local" in Sussex (Walpole-Bond 1938), it is likely that it has always been under-recorded due to its nocturnal and crepuscular habits and Walpole-Bond alluded to this in his species account. In more recent times, Brown and Grice (2005) estimated that the number of pairs of LEOs in England was 600–2000, but James (1996) described the status of this species in Sussex as "rare resident and very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor".

During survey work the authors visited a large number of sites where LEOs had been encountered over previous decades and at every one of these sites birds were found to be still present at some point during the project, although sometimes a number of visits were required to confirm this.

In addition to confirming site fidelity, the authors managed to find birds resident in the breeding season at every site where this species was encountered during the autumn and winter. In short,

every site where birds roosted during the winter also contained potential breeding pairs during the following spring/summer.

At the start of the survey work, LEOs were encountered on the first nine evenings that they were searched for, and this inspired further earnest work on the project; there was, however, a certain amount of beginners luck and this success rate was never repeated. During the early years of the project, any area on the Downs that appeared to be likely-looking habitat was staked out; generally an area of scrub with rough grassland close by and an apparent absence of habitat suitable for Tawny Owls. In the first two years of the project there were no areas meeting these criteria where LEOs were not found in up to three visits.

Over the successive winters of 2008/9, 2009/10 and 2010/11, Sussex experienced prolonged cold weather with significant periods of lying snow which would have made hunting very difficult for LEOs. Their major quarry on the Sussex Downs are Field Vole (*Microtus agrestis*), Common Shrew (*Sorex araneus*) and Wood Mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*) (Wallace 2012), and although LEOs can hunt by sound alone (Scott 1997), this prey would have been particularly hard to catch beneath the lying snow. It is felt likely that the tough conditions repeated over three winters significantly reduced the numbers of LEOs in Sussex due to a lack of available food.

Although less targeted survey work was carried out during and after these winters, seven sites that had been used by breeding pairs in years prior to 2008 were visited, and no individuals were encountered. Whilst carrying out nocturnal survey work for other species on the Downs in 2011 and 2012, the authors spent over 80 hours in suitable habitat but failed to encounter a single LEO during this period, although three Short-eared Owls, two Barn Owls and numerous Little Owls were seen. It is believed that this failure to encounter any LEOs during this period is evidence of a true depletion in the numbers present.

Discussion

LEOs are likely to be one of the most under-recorded resident bird species in Sussex, but with targeted survey work it is possible to build up a good picture of their distribution. By surveying at dusk and later in the evening at apparently suitable sites, birds can be encountered with reasonable frequency, particularly during the period February to May when this species is most vocal. Although comparatively warm and still nights appear to offer the best chance of encountering this species (particularly calling birds), birds also call on windy, wet nights in some circumstances, whilst sometimes staying silent in apparently perfect benign conditions. It is therefore possible to visit a site regularly in apparently perfect conditions without the birds revealing themselves, only for breeding success to be confirmed later in the year.

The Sussex Downs undoubtedly contain a significant number of breeding pairs at times when the population is buoyant following a number of years of good weather during the breeding season and a lack of cold winters with lying snow. In retrospect, the authors now realise that when they started this project, numbers were probably at a peak and that they have since fallen significantly. Population densities of up to three pairs in one square kilometre have been found, and birds will nest within ear-shot of another territory without any observed issues; perhaps the communal roosting behaviour of this species during the winter predisposes LEOs to tolerate other individuals hunting and holding territory close by during the breeding season.

Based on the number of pairs that have been encountered in suitable breeding habitat, it is estimated that the total number of potential pairs breeding on the downland and in the river valleys which form the Sussex section of the South Downs National Park is between 90 and 210 pairs. These figures are calculated by extrapolating the minimum numbers present in the main study area over the South Downs as a whole, taking into account the amount of suitable habitat.

Undoubtedly the number of breeding pairs would drop significantly after winters with prolonged cold periods and lying snow, and it appears that this is what has happened in 2011 and 2012 following three winters with prolonged periods of adverse weather conditions.

This species shows high site fidelity and during periods of high population it is reasonable to assume that nearly all previously occupied areas will contain birds during the breeding season as long as the habitat is still suitable and there are available nesting sites. In addition, every winter roost site encountered (including those off the downland) contained birds during the breeding season at some point during the survey, and it is felt likely that winter roost sites are invariably situated close to breeding sites if they are not actually the same sites.

Although there is evidence from costal sites of migration in to the county during some winters, it is possible that the numbers involved are low. The largest communal roost of LEOs in Sussex recorded in recent times is of 12 birds. This roost had at least three active nest sites within 1 km, therefore with reasonable breeding success the individuals making up the roost could be accounted for by local stock without needing to rely on continental immigrants to make up numbers.

Although LEOs are considered very susceptible to disturbance by most authorities, the authors feel that this statement deserves some qualification based around their observations. LEOs are incredibly confident in their camouflage and many of the breeding and roosting sites are next to rights of way, some of which are regularly used by walkers, mountain bikers, farm vehicles and motorcross bikes. Roosting birds seem to be aware of any person within perhaps 20 m of their position, but will not change their behaviour if the intrusion follows 'normal' and expected behaviour. For example, if someone is walking or cycling along a well-used right of way close to the roost, the birds do not appear to react in a significant way, but if the individual stops in the vicinity of the roosting bird it will usually perform its alert drawn-up-straight posture. The birds will, however, usually flush if someone starts to approach their roost by stepping from the route pedestrians normally follow. In some cases birds will flush instantly once someone steps a metre from the expected route, even if this is 10 m or so from the roost, but in other circumstances birds may not flush until someone approaches to within 5 m or less of the roost site. The authors have unintentionally flushed birds from a roost they were unaware of, twice during the project, but they have witnessed birdwatchers and bird photographers flush birds on numerous occasions through approaching roosts too closely, on some occasions apparently with the intention of flushing the birds. Disturbance from birdwatchers is undoubtedly an issue for this species and two separate downland roosts have relocated to less disturbed sites after significant attention from birdwatchers.

During all of the work that the authors have carried out in hunting for this species in the evenings and at night, they have never bumped into another birdwatcher on the Downs. As this species is so hard to discover while roosting during the day, and very few people are out at night on the Downs, LEOs are likely to remain severely under-recorded unless more targeted survey work is carried out. Perhaps the best chance of encountering a Long-eared Owl away from a known roost site is catching one in the headlights perched on a fence post beside a downland road at night.

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Long-eared Owl, East Sussex, February 2011 (Mark Tomlins)

Mallydams Wood: monitoring the success rates of wildlife rehabilitation

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Introduction and history

In 1961 the RSPCA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) was given 26 hectares of woodland situated in Fairlight, East Sussex. The site was a gift to the RSPCA from the late Horace Quick, a local artist and animal lover. A small residential property was placed adjacent to the Peter James Lane entrance in 1962. The site was subsequently developed as a field study centre in 1974 with the building of a large classroom with residential opportunities for school children to visit the woodland and learn about animal welfare issues and natural history.

During the first 12 years of the site history, a small wildlife unit was constructed. With little or no direct funding, the wildlife unit was gaining importance locally as a resource for the treatment of injured animals. The first resident warden, John Goodman, developed methods of rearing wildlife casualties and returning them to their natural environment between 1962 and 1990. From 1990 to 1996 the number of wildlife casualties admitted to the centre increased by 50% necessitating a major redevelopment to improve the facility and comply with health and safety regulations. In 1998, the existing wildlife unit was demolished and a new functional centre was re-built, opening in July 1999. The extended building, pools and aviaries were designed to accommodate the key species annually admitted to the centre. In 2003 additional accommodation and a new classroom were added to the education centre enabling visits to be extended to young people and adult groups, including university and college students.

The woodland is almost entirely north-facing, featuring mixed deciduous woodland with small numbers of Scots Pines and extensive swathes of rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) that are constantly managed mainly by volunteers. Since 1962 the woodland has also been planted with many exotic conifer trees, which include Western Hemlock, Japanese Redwood, Coastal Redwood and a single Wellingtonia. The woodland site has changed dramatically over the years with many species of birds declining or no longer breeding in the woodland. The ringing records for Mallydams over a 30-year period reveal that the decline of our woodland birds had already started in the late 1970s. Species regularly recorded in those early days were Spotted Flycatcher, Tree Sparrow, Starling, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and Lesser Redpoll. Sadly, those species have long gone, but the wood still retains a good population of Marsh Tits. One woodland species that has shown a steady increase is the Hazel Dormouse, whose presence has been monitored since 1993 as part of the species recovery programme officiated by the PTES (Peoples Trust for Endangered Species).

Since the beginning it was clear that Mallydams would be a centre deeply involved with wildlife issues and rehabilitation. With a location only 1 km from the sea it was not surprising that the first admission was a seabird: an oiled Razorbill. In the last ten years the average number of animals admitted into the wildlife centre each year is approximately 2800 individuals. The centre has specialist facilities for cleaning oiled seabirds and rehabilitating marine mammals, but increasingly demand for more secluded aviaries has been driven by an increase in raptor and owl admissions. The centre has a visiting veterinary surgeon and a resident veterinary nurse. Other staff members include life science graduates and BTO (British Trust for Ornithology) ringers.

General overview of admissions in 2011

The total number of admissions for 2011 was 3064 (compared with a total of 2806 in 2010), of which 80% were birds. This total comprised 134 species of which 97 were bird species. Table 1 shows the 20 species most frequently admitted.

Table 1. *The 20 species most frequently admitted to the rehabilitation centre in 2011.*

Species	Total	Species	Total
Herring Gull	1024	Blue Tit	47
Wood Pigeon	206	Starling	46
Feral Pigeon	173	Mute Swan	45
Collared Dove	151	House Sparrow	39
Mallard	144	Magpie	37
Blackbird	142	Red Fox	37
Hedgehog	83	Grey Squirrel	34
Goldfinch	78	Carriion Crow	32
Rabbit	61	Tawny Owl	29
Robin	47	House Martin	23

The year commenced with a few cold weather admissions with the onset of snow, such as Grey Herons, small passerine birds and Tawny Owls. Most of these animals were just finding it difficult to locate food and were returned back to the wild after a short period of time. The seasonal lack of oiled bird admissions continued in 2011 with only a few Guillemots, Gannets and Razorbills being rehabilitated. During the cold weather the most unusual casualty was an adult Grass Snake. It was found out in the open on a path on 11 Jan, but unfortunately it died within 48 hours of admission. Eight baby Tawny Owls were admitted into the centre during the spring season, the first on 20 May, actually a little later than in previous years. These went to release sites in June and were released in late July/August. Two fledgling Barn Owls, both from different sites, were admitted in June and July. The birds were held in the centre for two weeks to ensure they were feeding independently (Figure 1), and then they were moved into a large nest box in a barn at Three Oaks, East Sussex. They were fed in the box for several weeks with day-old chicks and mice. Once they were able to fly, they were fed outside the box in the barn, but the food items were reduced to encourage independence. In December 2011 both birds were still roosting in the barn.

Five Little Owl chicks from Kent and Sussex were also admitted and these birds were subsequently placed into an ongoing radio-tracking project. Jackdaw, Carrion Crow and Jay numbers were high this year, but Mallard duckling numbers exceeded those in all previous years. A small odd duckling, admitted as a hybrid, grew into a Mandarin Duck (Figure 2). As a species designated under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it was not possible to release this bird back into the wild. It was therefore placed into a private waterfowl collection.

A large female Peregrine Falcon was admitted from London on 21 Jun. It had a nasty wound in the crop, probably after a dispute with another Peregrine. These birds are now more common in urban environments and the number of admissions at Mallydams has increased proportionally with their urban nesting success. The bird was successfully released at the Isle of Grain in Kent. It had previously been ringed as a second-year bird in 2010 at a nest site in Vauxhall, London.



Figure 1. *Young barn owl at the rehabilitation centre.*



Figure 2. *Mandarin Duck with young Mallards at the rehabilitation centre.*

The centre continues to admit large numbers of illegally taken passerines. A significant seizure of 78 wild-caught Goldfinches admitted in March 2011 indicated that the inspectors are actively pursuing the perpetrators of wildlife crime. Fortunately, all the birds were successfully ringed and released. Further seizures continued throughout the year and included more unusual species such as Red-backed Shrike, Skylark and Whitethroat.

The Common Seal pup season was announced by the admission of a small pup from Deal beach on 24 Jul. This pup thrived well, but unfortunately developed neurological problems and subsequently died after 7 days. The next four pups, however, were successfully reared and released in October and early November. In December the first Grey Seal pup was received, from Pegwell Bay in Kent, after a series of storms hit the south coast. This was a young animal of about three weeks old. On 31 Dec another two Grey Seals were admitted from Kent. An individual from Broadstairs had very large wounds around the flippers and along the body. The cause of the injuries is not known, but could have been another seal or a boat propeller.

With only two Badger cub admissions this year, and only one surviving, it was better to use another wildlife centre that already had cubs to continue with the rehabilitation.

Gull rehabilitation

The adult gull admission season started in March with an increase in the number of birds being shot during nest site establishment. Only 5% of the 28 admissions were released due to the severity of injuries. In April 2011, intelligence given to the inspectors prompted investigation into a gull rescue organisation based in East Sussex. Two premises were visited with over 70 birds removed under the Animal Welfare Act. The actions and contributions in this case from inspectors and staff at Mallydams should be highly commended.

The first gull chick was admitted on 19 May. This was a week earlier than in previous years. The numbers admitted during the summer escalated to over 400 in July. Fortunately by 14 Jul many of these birds were ready for release, as this is the time that juvenile gulls are seen flying around town centres. Although a high percentage were orphaned birds, 2011 totals included over 300 adults in various categories (Table 2). Due to a short period of hot weather in early summer the number of adult gulls admitted suffering from botulism increased to 72 cases, the highest annual total ever. With many suffering from an acute form, there was no option but to euthanase them to alleviate further suffering. The annual number of gull admissions does not normally exceed 700 individuals (Table 3) but the 2011 total; including the rescue birds, was 1019, with a release rate of 54%.

Table 2. *Gull admission totals for 2011.*

Admission reason	Total	Admission reason	Total
Attacked by other animal	13	Caught/entangled	63
Collision	32	Dead on arrival	3
Disease	3	Fishing litter	16
Inexperienced juvenile	71	Grounded	15
Legal case animal	136	Injury (cause uncertain)	141
Other	57	Orphan	336
Poisoning (botulism)	72	Parasitism	1
Weakness	32	Shot	28

Table 3. *Gull admission totals for 2006-2010 inclusive.*

Admission reason	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Attacked by other animal	11	11	5	12	2
Caught/entangled	21	12	29	34	41
Collision	32	23	21	20	35
Dead on arrival	0	0	0	2	4
Disease	1	2	2	1	2
Fishing litter	6	5	10	11	6
Inexperienced juvenile	55	32	35	66	71
Injury (cause uncertain)	157	113	120	144	89
Legal case animal	4	1	1	8	2
Oiled	3	1	2	6	3
Orphan	231	166	222	290	335
Other	1	1	1	2	12
Poisoning (botulism)	30	49	45	36	30
Shot	3	14	18	17	16
Weakness	11	5	8	8	7
<i>Total</i>	<i>566</i>	<i>435</i>	<i>519</i>	<i>657</i>	<i>655</i>

Ringling, radio-tracking and significant recoveries

The centre prides itself in having a team of people who are willing to investigate the survival of wild animals after rehabilitation. The need for accountability and transparency of income and outcome is a prerequisite for all organisations, especially charities. However, providing information on the numbers of animals released back to the wild is not evidence of survival. Over the 50 years of the existence of this centre, bird ringing has always been an essential and possibly the cheapest method of measuring the survival of rehabilitated birds. All rehabilitated birds are ringed using BTO appropriately sized metal rings. In order to ring rehabilitated birds there is an additional premium on the cost and all ringing and recovery details are not included in the central wild bird database as they could be a confounding variable in population analysis. The ringing of rehabilitated birds has always been generously supported by the vast knowledge and experience of Stephen Rumsey and the staff of the Wetland Trust in Icklesham, East Sussex. Although ringing totals from the early days are not available, the number of ringed birds to date exceeds 10,000 individuals. In recent years the use of additional colour rings has enhanced the recovery data, and these have almost exclusively been placed on large white-headed gulls. Over the past 15 years the introduction of radio-telemetry has provided an additional technique to monitor the survival of released wildlife and recent projects include the monitoring of post-release survival of Little Owls, Common Buzzards and Hedgehogs.

The number of birds ringed in 2011 exceeded numbers in all previous years with a total of 835 birds comprising 53 different species. The ringing of birds is only permitted by registered ringers, but this year saw two members of staff gaining their full ringing permits after only two years of intensive training. This will ensure that the majority of birds are ringed before release. In January 2011 there was good news about a Bittern that had been released the previous year at the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) Dungeness reserve. A bird with a ring was sighted by the RSPB warden close to the original spot where a bird was found in December 2009. Bitterns are long-lived birds which are generally faithful to wintering sites, so both parties agreed that this bird was "Fred" as he was named by the reserve volunteers.

There have been 285 sightings in 2011 of ringed gulls released into the wild. The locations of these birds ranged from Hastings to Morocco and from France to Finland (Figure 3). Although some of the birds had only been out in the wild for about a year, a high proportion had survived for 6-7 years. A ringed gull that now breeds on the Mallydams centre roof was released in 2000. In 2011 the pair only raised one chick from two eggs. Although very sad, a ringed Herring Gull brought into the centre collapsed on admission and had to be euthanized by the vet. Checking the ring number, the bird was found to have been ringed and released in October 1997. It was originally admitted as a one-year-old bird with mild botulism. This does mean that the bird had survived nearly 15 years. A ringed Wood Pigeon was also admitted to the centre, that may have hit a window in the centre. On inspection, the ring showed that the bird was ringed in 2000 after being reared at Mallydams, making that a reasonably old bird at 11 years old. After a few days of recovering it was re-released.



Figure 3. Ringed Herring Gull (centre) in Finland, March 2011 (Markku Kangasniemi).

An adult Mute Swan that was brought into the centre in September 2003, after being badly oiled during an incident in Arundel, has been re-sighted alive in the same area in April 2011. This was 2777 days after being washed and rehabilitated. Another excellent recovery was of a Guillemot which had been involved in the oil spill which occurred after the MSC Napoli grounded in Branscombe Bay, Devon in 2007. The bird was released in April 2007 and re-sighted on Skomer Island, West Wales in May 2011, 1483 days later. Information about this and other recovered and re-sighted birds is summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. *A selection of recoveries and re-sighted rehabilitated birds from 2011.*

Ringing date	Recovery date	Ring number	Species	Days out
21/01/2010	01/04/2011	GC80997	Barn Owl	435
21/01/2010	01/04/2011	GC94511	Barn Owl	435
02/03/2010	14/01/2011	1281464	Bittern	318
31/08/2010	18/02/2011	LB68946	Blackbird	171
11/01/2011	04/03/2011	L562708	Bullfinch	52
09/05/2011	01/06/2011	GR14232	Common Buzzard	23
14/08/2011	29/08/2011	1431716	Gannet	15
18/12/2008	01/03/2011	V504662	Goldfinch	803
18/03/2010	08/03/2011	X758074	Goldfinch	355
17/04/2007	09/05/2011	R58995	Guillemot	1483
17/11/2010	04/02/2011	EW56864	Kestrel	79
12/09/2011	02/10/2011	FP50629	Moorhen	20
12/09/2011	19/10/2011	FP50628	Moorhen	37
03/09/2003	11/04/2011	Z16581	Mute Swan	2777
04/02/2008	28/02/2011	W23824	Mute Swan	1120
30/04/2010	25/01/2011	W27913	Mute Swan	270
25/05/2011	09/09/2011	L664291	Robin	107
25/03/2010	03/05/2011	GC94521	Tawny Owl	404
20/05/2011	26/09/2011	GR14245	Tawny Owl	129

Conclusion

The RSPCA Mallydams Wood centre has been an important resource aimed at animal welfare and education for the past 50 years and it is funded exclusively through donations and legacies. The work of the centre is constantly expanding into new areas of wildlife rehabilitation and education supported by a dedicated team of staff and volunteers. More information on the work is available on the website: <http://www.rspca.org.uk/allaboutanimals/wildlife/centres/mallydams>.

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 Sussex Bird Report have been fully authenticated.

Whooper Swan	Temminck's Stint	Greenish Warbler
Bean Goose (both races)	White-rumped Sandpiper	Pallas's Leaf Warbler
Pink-footed Goose	Pectoral Sandpiper	Yellow-browed Warbler
American Wigeon	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Radde's Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Red-necked Phalarope	Dusky Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Grey Phalarope	Barred Warbler
Ferruginous Duck	Pomarine Skua (except spring)	Subalpine Warbler
All pheasants (except Common)	Long-tailed Skua	Icterine Warbler
White-billed Diver	Sabine's Gull	Melodious Warbler
All shearwaters (except Manx)	Ring-billed Gull	Aquatic Warbler
All petrels (except Fulmar)	Caspian Gull	Marsh Warbler
Cattle Egret	Iceland Gull	Rose-coloured Starling
Great White Egret	Glaucous Gull	Dipper
Purple Heron	White-winged Black Tern	Bluthroat
White Stork	Roseate Tern	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Honey-buzzard	Black Guillemot	Richard's Pipit
Black Kite	Little Auk	Tawny Pipit
White-tailed Eagle	Puffin	Red-throated Pipit
Montagu's Harrier	Alpine Swift	Serin
Goshawk	European Bee-eater	Twite
Rough-legged Buzzard	Golden Oriole	Common (Mealy) Redpoll
Red-footed Falcon	Red-backed Shrike	Arctic Redpoll
Spotted Crake	Woodchat Shrike	Parrot Crossbill
Corn Crake	Chough	Common Rosefinch
Common Crane	Hooded Crow	Lapland Bunting
Stone-curlew	Willow Tit	Girl Bunting
Kentish Plover	Short-toed Lark	Ortolan Bunting
Dotterel	Shore Lark	Rustic Bunting
American Golden Plover	Red-rumped Swallow	Little Bunting

In addition, descriptions are required for all races other than the normally occurring one including: Black Brant, 'Baltic' *fuscus* Lesser Black-backed Gull, 'Northern' *argentatus* Herring Gull (except Rye Bay), Kumlien's Gull, 'Scandinavian' *littoralis* Rock Pipit, Yellow Wagtail and 'Continental' *ater* Coal Tit. However, descriptions are not required for the following sub-species/races: Pale-bellied Brent Goose, *intermedius* Lesser Black-backed Gull, White Wagtail and Greenland Wheatear.

It should also be noted that descriptions may be required for any species seen in unusual circumstances or on an unusual date.

Records of unusual species should be submitted on, or in the same format as, the forms available from the Recorder or from the SOS website. Completed forms should be sent to the Recorder, preferably by email although postal submissions will also be accepted.

Where clear photographs are available for assessment by the Records Committee only the first page of the Scarce Records Form need be completed.

Reports of national rarities as defined by the *British Birds Rarities Committee* should be submitted to the Recorder either in the same format as above or on forms available from the secretary of the *BBRC*.

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.

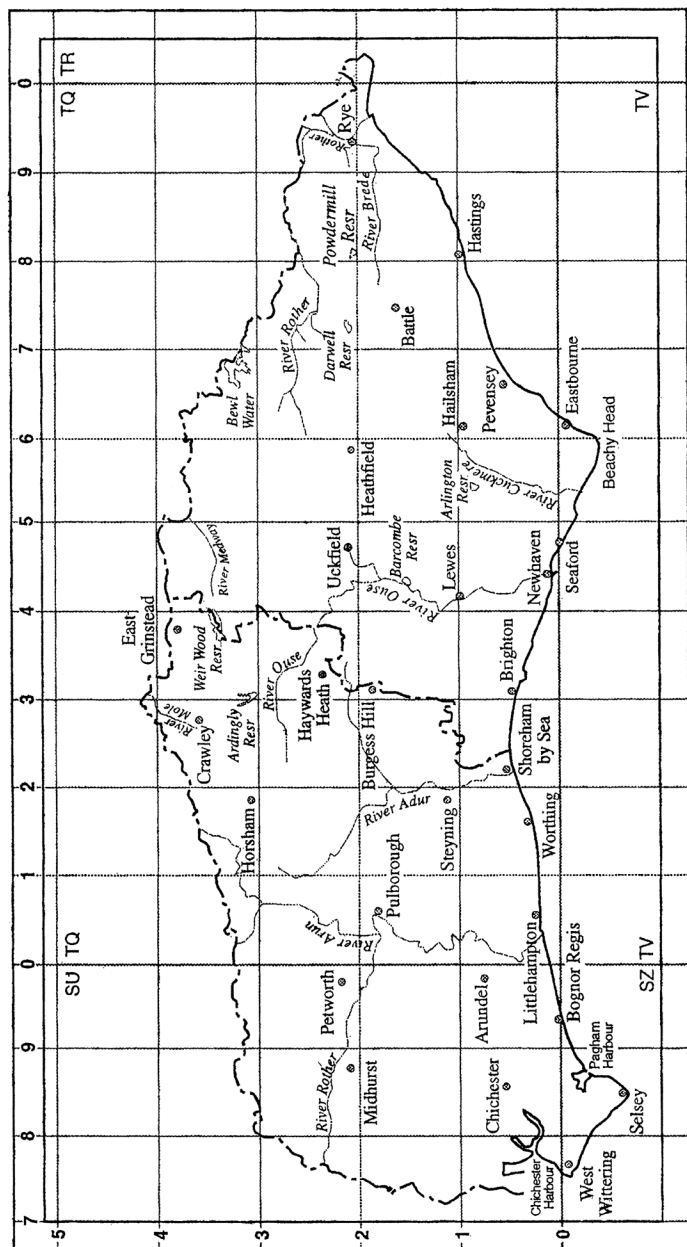
The annual Sussex Bird Report (which is free to members). This contains a number of well-researched papers and a full systematic list of birds seen in our county. These records are assessed by the Recorder and a Records Committee, to ensure that each entry portrays the true current status of the birds in Sussex.

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GAZETTEER

Alexandra Park, Hastings	TQ8010	Charleston Reedbed	TO5100	Henfield Levels	TQ1914	Northpoint Pit, Rye	TQ9319	Sidlesham Ferry & Fields	SZ8596
Amberley Wild Brooks	TQ0314	Chelwood Vachery	TQ4330	Hollies, Ashdown	TQ4528	Old Airstrip, Ashdown	TQ4631	Sompting Brooks	TQ1604
Ambersham Common	SU9119	Chichester Gravel Pits	SU8703	Hollingbury Camp	TQ3207	Old Lodge Reserve	TQ4230	South Stoke	TQ0210
Angmering Park Estate	TQ0506	Chichester Harbour	SU7600	Horse Eye Level	TQ6208	Pagham Harbour	SZ8596	Sovereign Hbr Marina	TQ6403
Aquidram Manor Farm	SU8301	Church Norton	SZ8795	Horseshoe Plantation	TV5695	Pagham Lagoon	SZ8896	Splash Point, Seaford	TV4898
Ardingly Reservoir	TQ3229	Cissbury Ring	TQ1408	Hotham Park, Bognor	SZ9399	Pannel Sewer	TQ8715	St Leonards Forest	TQ2231
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Atherington	TQ0000	Cuckmere Haven	TV5197	Kingley Vale NNR	SU8110	Pevensey Bay	TQ6503	Swanbourne Lake	TQ0107
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Barcombe Reservoir	TQ4314	East Guldeford Level	TQ9421	Lancing Clump	TQ1806	Pevensey Levels	TQ6605	The Mens	TQ0223
Beachy Head	TV5895	East Head	SZ7698	Langney Point	TQ6401	Pilesey Island & Sands	SU7600	The Severals	SZ8794
Belle Tout	TV5695	Ebernoe Common	SU9726	Lavington Common	SU9418	Pippingford Park	TQ4430	Thorney Deepes	SU7503
Bewl Water	TQ6733	Elm's Farm, Icklesham	TQ8815	Lewes Brooks	TQ4207	Portfield Gravel Pit	SU8805	Thorney Island	SU7602
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Birling Gap	TV5596	Fairlight	TQ8611	Long/Narrow Pits, Rye	TQ9217	Pulborough Brooks	TQ0516	Union Canal, E.Guldeford	TQ9322
Bluebell Railway	TQ4023	Fishbourne Channel	SU8303	Lullington Heath	TQ5401	Rackham Woods	TQ0414	Upper Adur Levels	TQ1914
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Bremere Rife	SZ8798	Forest Mere	SU8129	Manxey Levels	TQ6306	Rye Bay Wood	TQ9217	Walland Marsh	TO92
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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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