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SUSSEX ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The Sussex Bird Report

Number Sixty-five, 2012



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

Contents

Editorial	3
Review of 2012	5
Classified Records: Introduction	11
Systematic List	15
Escapes and Feral Birds	206
Breeding Bird Survey Results for 2012	210
First and Last Migrant Dates	213
Heathland Breeding Bird Table	215
Contributors, Acknowledgements and Surveys	216
New Species for Sussex in 2012	223
The Sussex Ringing Report for 2012, S Walsh	229
Nest recording in Sussex in 2012, D Madgin	242
Birds using Sussex offshore waters: results of studies related to a proposed offshore wind farm, DH Howey	244
Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) population trends in Sussex 1994-2012 Dr HM Crabtree	251
Leucistic Grey Heron at Bewl Water, SOS Records Committee	264
Index to Species in Systematic List	267

Sussex Bird Report 2011 amendments and corrections

Very few errors in the 2011 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: *Osprey, Warnham LNR, October 2012 (Jake Everitt)*

I would like to thank all the photographers who took the time to submit their photographs of birds taken in Sussex for inclusion in the 2012 Sussex Bird Report. Again the quality is outstanding. We are very fortunate to have so many talented photographers in our county and it is encouraging to have several new photographers this year.

The 2011 report was a tough act to follow, featuring photos of many rare and scarce birds that we were lucky to observe and photograph, but the variety of species photographed in 2012 has enabled me to submit a flexible choice of species to the Editor for inclusion this year. We did have our 'little stars' with Worthing's Desert Wheatear proving a popular subject, attracting local and national photographers, whilst the Siberian Stonechat at Birling Gap was also well photographed.

I look forward to receiving more outstanding photos for the 2013 report. [Nick Bond]



Desert Wheatear, Worthing, October 2012 (David Williams)

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

Records for 2012 were fewer than for the past four years which has not come as a surprise, due to the ending of the national Bird Atlas 2007-11. Diminished observer effort has resulted in, not only fewer records, but fewer records containing breeding codes, with 148,727 records of 271 species as shown in the table below. Numbers of tetrads that species have been recorded in are included in the species accounts but any comparisons with previous years could be misleading and not only the result of the poor summer. Observers are, as usual, encouraged to include breeding codes with their submissions. There were 26 individuals who each supplied over 1000 records; a full list of acknowledgments appears on pages 216-222.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Submitting records	1207	962	952	986	948	894
Records received	148,292	191,788	176,388	170,113	183,732	148,727
Species recorded	253	266	257	269	260	271

Observers are reminded that unless records are submitted, they will neither be entered in the society's database nor appear in this and future reports. Likewise records for those species requiring descriptions will only be included after approval by the society's Records Committee. The recent proliferation of birding blogs, interesting as they are to peruse, has resulted in some records not being 'captured'; it is very time-consuming and near impossible for the Sussex Bird Report team to go through all of the blogs, extracting all relevant records, and still produce the report in a timely manner. The society prides itself on an early publication date of the Sussex Bird Report and I would encourage all bloggers to also report their observations via BirdTrack. I would also ask that local bird groups, reserves, societies and individuals submit their annual records early (by the end of March) as late submissions delay the publication of this report.

There is one species new to Sussex in 2012, Hooded Merganser, bringing the county list to 398; readers can read an account of the finding and identification on page 223. There is also a finder's account of the Parrot Crossbill at Blackdown on page 226. Although not a new species for Sussex, this is only the second record; the first individual was shot in 1870. Thanks to Owen Mitchell and Dave Burges for these insightful articles.

Breeding Bird Survey data are not included in the species accounts this year. The survey is the subject of a scientific article by Dr Helen Crabtree on page 251, and a table of results for Sussex appears on pages 210-212. As Bracklesham Bay and the fields west of Selsey are now part of the Medmerry Managed Realignment Scheme, these sites are now known as Medmerry and are referred to as such in this report.

The species accounts were written by a large team of writers; thanks go to SP Baines, CJR Barfield, VP Bentley, RA Black, D Boddington, C Brooks, DA Burt, P Carter, MJ Chattaway, WE Coleman, JR Cowser, J Curson, C Davis, P Denyer, RJ Eastwood, D Green, AC Gutteridge, PRJ Hadland, WG Harvey, JA Hobson, A House, DH Howey, ME Kalaher, SJ Lambert, G Osborne, TW Parmenter, RT Pepper, PJ Plant, AH Podmore, CJ Reay, T Seabrook, MD Shaw, SP Simpson, LA Walther, AB Watson and JH Whitman. The initials at the end of each account identify the writer.

Thanks are also due to the team of proof readers: Val Bentley, Jake Everitt, Dick Gilmore, John Hobson, David Howey, Peter Hughes, Paul James, Phil Jones, Owen Mitchell, John Newnham, Peter Plant and Barry Yates who have conscientiously read through versions of the species accounts and made recommendations for improvements, additions and amendments. As a result some of the draft accounts have been edited to reflect the suggestions made, to include late records and to present the accounts 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 apologies.

In addition I would like to thank Helen Crabtree for editing the scientific articles and for writing one of them, David Howey and Darrin Madgin for writing the other articles, Sue Walsh for the ringing report, David Howey for the Review of the Year, Nick Bond for selecting and processing the photographs, Helen Crabtree for typesetting, Robert Yarham for designing the cover, John Newnham for the maps and database report and John Hobson and Peter Plant for the primary proofreading.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used as standard practice:

BBRC	British Birds Records Committee	RSPB	Royal Society for the
BBS	Breeding Bird Survey		Protection of Birds
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	SWBS	Sussex Winter Bird Survey
Hbr	Harbour	WeBS	Wetland Bird Survey
IUCN	The World Conservation Union	WBBS	Waterways Breeding Bird Survey
MP	Mill pond	WWT	Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust
mo	Many observers	nc	No count
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	N,E,S,W	As cardinal compass points

Review of 2012

David H. Howey

Although in a different format, this review of 2012 is a chronological summary of the year's weather and the birding highlights including all interesting and unusual records. A total of 271 species was seen in the county during 2012 which is 11 more than in 2011.

The county's first **Hooded Merganser**, which remained in Pagham Harbour for over two weeks from late October, was probably the highlight of the year for many observers and attracted visitors from many parts of the country. Another bird to attract many visitors was the **Parrot Crossbill** at Blackdown for almost a month in January and February. Details of the finding of these birds can be found in this report.

Other scarce birds which stayed around long enough to be seen by many observers were the **Paddyfield Warbler** at Pagham Hbr for just over a month from the end of January, a **Kentish Plover** at Rye Hbr for four days in May, five **Bee-eaters** in the east of the county for two days in May, a **Red-footed Falcon** at Ivy Lake for over two weeks in August/September, a **Sabine's Gull** at Hove for two days in October, a **Hume's Warbler** at Beachy Head for six days in October/November and a **Desert Wheatear** at Worthing for three days in October. Some other scarce birds were less obliging and were just one-day wonders seen by a few lucky individuals. These included a **Grey Phalarope** at Splash Point in January, a **Pallas's Leaf Warbler** at Pyecombe in January, a **Cory's Shearwater** off Selsey Bill in April, a **Serin** at Beachy Head in May, a **Tawny Pipit** at Worthing in May, a **Night Heron** at Pulborough Brooks in May, two **Black-winged Stilts** at Medmerry in June, a **Squacco Heron** at Seaford also in June, a **Black Stork** over West Burton Hill in July, a **Terek Sandpiper** in the Adur Estuary also in July, a **Melodious Warbler** at Beachy Head in August, a **Long-tailed Skua** off Worthing in August, a **Red-backed Shrike** at Telscombe Tye in September, a **Dotterel** at Balsdean in September, a **Pectoral Sandpiper** at Pulborough Brooks in September, a **Red-breasted Flycatcher** at Atherington in October and a **Leach's Petrel** off Selsey Bill in December.

Less scarce, but no less welcome, were the numbers of **Eurasian Bitterns**, **Great White Egrets** and **Glossy Ibises** seen throughout the county, **White Storks** which toured around in May and June, the unprecedented movements of **Great** and **Arctic Skuas** in May and the number of singing **Wood Warblers** recorded in the spring. Details of these and all other sightings can be found in the Systematic List section of this report.

First winter period

January was mostly mild but often wet with very strong westerly winds. By the end of the month the wind was coming from the northeast and brought with it a cold snap which lasted well into February with bitterly cold winds and freezing temperatures accompanied by snow, particularly in the east of the county. By mid-February the temperatures had recovered to the seasonal norm and by the end of the month it was warm and dry. This warm spring-like weather continued into the early part of March before frost and then rain returned. The second half of March saw rising temperatures with virtually no rain.

A number of birds first seen in 2011 remained into 2012 including the **Pink-footed Geese** at Pett Level, the **Black Brant** at West Wittering, the **Rough-legged Buzzard** at Burpham (which

was present until April), a **Spotted Redshank**, a **Little Stint** and **Sandwich Terns** in Chichester Hbr, **Short-eared Owls** in several river valleys, a **Great Grey Shrike** on Ashdown Forest (with another at Glynde Reach) and **Snow Buntings** at Widewater (Lancing) and East Head. A **Hen Harrier** was also still present at Burpham and there were further records from ten other broad locations during this period. Other birds which had presumably over-wintered (although not necessarily in Sussex) but not seen until February were a **Common Sandpiper** at Arlington Res and a **Yellow-browed Warbler** in Worthing. One of the finds of this period (and another bird which had presumably over-wintered somewhere) was a **Paddyfield Warbler** at Pagham Hbr on 30 Jan, remaining into March. **Eurasian Bitterns** were also well reported during this period with sightings at seven sites between Rye Hbr and Pagham Hbr including three at Shinewater, Eastbourne. Other over-wintering birds included **Greenshanks** and **Spotted Redshanks** plus some 40 **Blackcaps** and at least 50 **Chiffchaffs**.

Another good find was a **Parrot Crossbill** at Blackdown from 22 Jan to 18 Feb. Other birds of note in this period included four **Tundra Bean Geese** at Beeding Levels, 27 **White-fronted Geese** (and 17 **Ruff**) at Pulborough Brooks, a **Cattle Egret** at Newhaven Tidemills, a **Glossy Ibis** (the first of at least seven) at Barnham, a **Grey Phalarope** at Splash Point, two **Iceland Gulls** at Newhaven, a total of eight **Waxwings**, two wintering **Great Grey Shrikes** and **Hawfinches** at both West Dean Woods and Petworth Park. There were also some impressive numbers of some commoner species including 2000 **Lapwings** at Rye Bay and 3000 **Golden Plovers** and 800 **Bar-tailed Godwits** in Chichester Hbr.

The cold snap in early February saw the arrival of **Goosanders** at Arlington Res, at Piddinghoe Pond and on the rivers Ouse, Adur and Rother. As usual, **Smews** were less common but were recorded at Pagham Lagoon, Cuckmere Haven and Scotney GP. Severe weather conditions in continental Europe resulted in an influx of over 100 **Woodcocks**. Despite the cold weather, an unusually early **Stone-curlew** was at Angmering on 12 Feb.

The mild weather in early March saw the arrival of the first summer migrants including **Barn Swallow** (on the 1st), **Garganey** (10th), **Yellow Wagtail** (11th), **Whinchat** (12th) and **Northern Wheatears** (14th). The second half of March saw the arrival of the first **Turtle Dove** and **Willow Warbler** (both on the 21st), and the first **Common Cuckoo** was heard on the 26th followed by a **Ring Ouzel** the next day. The first **Little Ringed Plover** and **Sedge Warbler** were recorded on the 27th with **Common Tern** and **Tree Pipit** following on the 29th and **Common Redstart** on the 30th. With summer migrants starting to arrive it was time for **Brent Geese** to depart in large numbers with 1851 passing Splash Point on the 15th and 2500 passing Birling Gap the following day. **Spoonbills** were seen at five locations (with up to three birds) during the second half of March and a gathering of 17 **Ravens** at Beachy Head on the 11th was certainly a notable count. Commoner species were again present in good numbers with 6373 and 4057 **Eurasian Wigeon** in Rye Bay and Pagham Hbr respectively and 12,000 **Herring Gulls** at Glyne Gap.

Spring

The warm, dry weather of the latter part of March continued through the first week of April. There then followed a week of typical April weather with a mixture of sunshine and showers before an Atlantic depression brought strong winds and heavy rain which continued until the middle of May. Dry, anticyclonic weather produced high temperatures during the second half of May. The beginning of June was very different with torrential downpours leading to some localised flooding. Although the second half of June was drier it remained unsettled with more rain and some strong winds.

Some long-staying wintering birds proved to be just that with the Burpham **Rough-legged Buzzard** and one of the Newhaven **Iceland Gulls** remaining until mid-April. **Short-eared Owls** also remained at five sites with at least one bird being present until May.

The arrival of summer visitors first noted in March continued into April with **Common Whitethroat** on the 1st. An **Osprey** seen on the 4th was the first of nine recorded in April with some 30 sightings in May. The first **Common Nightingale** and **Lesser Whitethroat** arrived on the 6th with the first **Hobby**, **Grasshopper Warbler** and **Reed Warbler** all being seen the following day. **Arctic** and **Little Terns** were first recorded on the 9th and 10th respectively and the first **Common Swift** arrived on the 14th. **Sand** and **House Martins** were first recorded on the 16th and 17th respectively followed by **Black Tern** (23rd), **Wood Warbler** (27th) and **Spotted Flycatcher** (30th). Scarcer species included the only spring record of **Wryneck** (at Bodiam) on the 9th, a **Cattle Egret** at Horse Eye Level (24th) and the first of five spring records of **Hoopoes** also on the 24th.

Sea-watching came to the fore in the second half of April. During the period 18th-30th, record numbers of both **Arctic** and **Great Skuas** were recorded all along the coast. In total 533 **Great Skuas** were recorded during the month including a new county record of 155 passing Splash Point on the 25th and another record count of 153 **Arctic Skuas** moving east past Birling Gap the same day. Other species involved in offshore movements at that time were **Cory's Shearwater** (Selsey Bill) on the 21st, **Little Gull** (157 passing Splash Point on the 25th) and a total of over 1000 **Common/Arctic Terns** counted at several locations on the 23rd and 25th.

For some species migration picked up in early May with over 1100 **House Martins** arriving at Selsey Bill on the 1st and 1500 **Common Swifts** plus 1000 **House Martins** at Pulborough Brooks on the 7th. The first **Nightjar** arrived back on Ashdown Forest on 4 May and the first calling **Quail** was heard on the 12th. May also brought a scattering of scarcer species including five **White Storks** which toured West Sussex on the 2nd and 3rd, a **Kentish Plover** (3rd-6th) and a **Temminck's Stint** (5th) both at Rye Hbr, a **Rose-coloured Starling** at Selsey Bill on the 6th (the first of three in the county during the month) and a **Golden Oriole** at Church Norton on the 7th with a further four seen during the month at various sites. Later in the month there was a **Serin** at Birling Gap on the 18th, **European Bee-eaters** at Beachy Head (19th) and Trotton Marsh (26th), a **Honey-buzzard** at Beachy Head (also 19th), a **Tawny Pipit** at Worthing (20th) and a **Night Heron** at Pulborough Brooks on the 23rd. By mid-May there were two **Ospreys** at Arlington Res where they stayed until mid-June but with no sign of attempted breeding.

June was relatively quiet in terms of birds although it started well with two **Black-winged Stilts** at Medmerry on the 1st and a **Purple Heron** at Church Norton three days later. On the 17th five **Bee-eaters** were seen over Ninfield with presumably the same five over Blackham the following day. Following the five **White Storks** seen in May, a further three were at Lidsey and Fontwell from 20-24 Jun. A **Squacco Heron** at Seaford on the 21st was seen and photographed by just two observers. The only **Storm Petrels** of the year involved singles off Splash Point (8th) and Selsey (9th and 10th). Sea-watching also produced good numbers of **Manx Shearwaters** with 50 E off Selsey Bill on the 3rd and 70 W off Worthing on 24th.

By the end of the month it was already evident that the cold, wet weather conditions experienced from mid-April to mid-May and again in early June had resulted in a disastrous breeding season for many species. Ground-nesting species such as **Oystercatchers**, **Avocets**, **Ringed Plovers**, **Lapwings**, **Common Snipes**, **Common Redshanks**, **Mediterranean Gulls**, **Sandwich Terns**, **Little Terns** and **Common Terns** were most severely affected with some nests being flooded. The poor weather reduced the food supply of other species including **Honey-buzzards**, **Cetti's Warblers** and **Blue Tits** resulting in poor breeding success.

Summer

The theme of unsettled weather experienced in the second half of June continued into the first half of July. In mid-month there was a week with settled high pressure, sun and high temperatures but it was a little more unsettled in the last week of July. August was fairly mild and warm throughout the month with below average rainfall. The warm weather continued for the first half of September before temperatures dropped and it became noticeably cooler.

July was a quiet month for birds with the highlights being a **Black Stork** at West Burton Hill on the 17th and a **Terek Sandpiper** on the Adur Estuary on the 24th but neither lingered being seen by only two or three observers. Other records of interest were 57 **Manx Shearwaters** passing Selsey Bill on the 2nd and an early departing **Honey-buzzard** on the 24th.

August served up some more scarce birds starting with a **Sabine's Gull** at Rye Hbr on the 5th followed by a **Temminck's Stint** at Medmerry (17th), a **Melodious Warbler** at Beachy Head (19th), a **Red-footed Falcon** at Chichester GP (from 20 Aug-8 Sep), a **Wryneck** on the 25th (the first of 11 seen in August and September) and a **Long-tailed Skua** off Worthing on the 29th. The first sign of summer migrants gathering before departing were 9000 **Sand Martins** at Pett Level on the 16th and 300 **Willow Warblers** at Beachy Head on the 19th.

The theme of large numbers of summer visitors gathering before migrating southwards continued in September with 300 **Common Chiffchaffs** at Beachy Head on the 16th, 460 at Pett Level on the 28th and a further 500 at Beachy Head on the 30th. Seven summer visitors put in their final appearance of the year during September: **Common Nightingale** (6th), **Common Cuckoo** and **Wood Warbler** (11th), **Nightjar** (13th), **Common Swift** (19th), **Turtle Dove** (26th) and **Little Ringed Plover** (27th). In contrast the first winter visitors arrived in the shape of **Redwing** on the 28th, **Great Grey Shrike** on the 29th and **Brambling** on the 30th.

Other birds of note during September included a **Red-backed Shrike** at Telscombe Tye (5th), a **Barred Warbler** at Pett Level (6th), a **Dotterel** at Balsdean (17th), five **Balearic Shearwaters** off Worthing (23rd) and a **Pectoral Sandpiper** at Pulborough Brooks on the 30th.

Second winter period

An anticyclone resulted in October being the wettest for seven years and the coolest for nine years. Things did not improve in November when a deep depression over the Atlantic brought south-westerly gales. There was then some respite for two weeks in mid-November before another low pressure system brought northerly winds accompanied by rain producing some local flooding. December started very cold with overnight frosts until unsettled weather returned in mid-month with strong winds and yet more localised flooding.

The highlight of October – and indeed of the year for many – was the county's first **Hooded Merganser** which remained in Pagham Harbour from 30 Oct until 17 Nov. The month also turned up its usual mix of scarce birds including a **Red-breasted Flycatcher** at Climping (6th), a **Common Rosefinch** at Pett (6th), a total of eight **Yellow-browed Warblers** (from the 10th), a **Lapland Bunting** at Thorney Island (14th), a **Siberian Stonechat** at Birling Gap (20th-23rd), an obliging **Sabine's Gull** in Brighton (20th-21st), an equally obliging **Desert Wheatear** at Worthing (24th-26th), a **Waxwing** at Hailsham (27th) and a **Hume's Warbler** at Belle Tout (30 Oct until 4 Nov) plus two more **Wrynecks** and a **Great White Egret**.

Winter visitors continued to arrive with a **Fieldfare** on the 3rd, and a **Black-necked Grebe** on the 10th followed two days later by the first **Slavonian Grebe**. In comparison, November was relatively quiet although it did produce a **Common Crane** at Blackdown (10th) which was

then at Amberley Brooks until the 17th, a **Pallas's Leaf Warbler** at Pyecombe (15th), a **Black Brant** at Pagham Hbr (17th and again on 10 Dec), a **Little Auk** at Selsey Bill (22nd) and a **Great Grey Shrike** at Gossops Green (27th). **Waxwings** (which were to be a feature in December) were recorded on Ashdown Forest and at Rye, a total of eight **Snow Buntings** was recorded at various locations, the first **Bewick's Swans** arrived back on the 14th and Chichester Hbr held 1450 **Grey Plovers**.

December was another quiet month but one that was enlivened by an influx of **Waxwings** recorded at many locations throughout the county and with a peak total of 112 birds in the period 4th-10th. Other records of note were a **Little Auk** off Worthing (9th), a **Leach's Petrel** off Selsey Bill (27th) and an impressive count of 1070 **Black-tailed Godwits** in Pagham Hbr also on the 27th.



Paddyfield Warbler, Pagham Harbour, February 2012 (Dorian Mason)



Wood Warbler, Buchan Country Park, May 2012 (Malcolm Freeman)

Classified Records for 2012

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 267-270.

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 five sites daily logs were maintained. The following table lists the hours watched in each month at the five locations for which this information was available:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Selsey Bill	18	18	61	181	134	75	58	37	48	20	29	40	719
Worthing	22	33	35	55	40	31	24	25	31	30	24	30	380
Telscombe Cliffs	18	28	28	29	14	9	1	3	9	14	12	18	181
Splash Point (Seaford)	27	4	46	110	44	21	0	4	12	5	9	9	290
Birling Gap	25	12	23	54	34	10	1	0	2	0	0	1	160

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 2012 the priority core count dates were: 15 Jan, 12 Feb, 11 Mar, 8 Apr, 20 May, 24 Jun, 22 Jul, 19 Aug, 16 Sep, 14 Oct, 18 Nov and 16 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 on pages 210-212 as the numbers of 1-km squares in which each species was recorded at least once during the year. 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. The BBS is organised by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), and jointly funded by the BTO, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

Database report

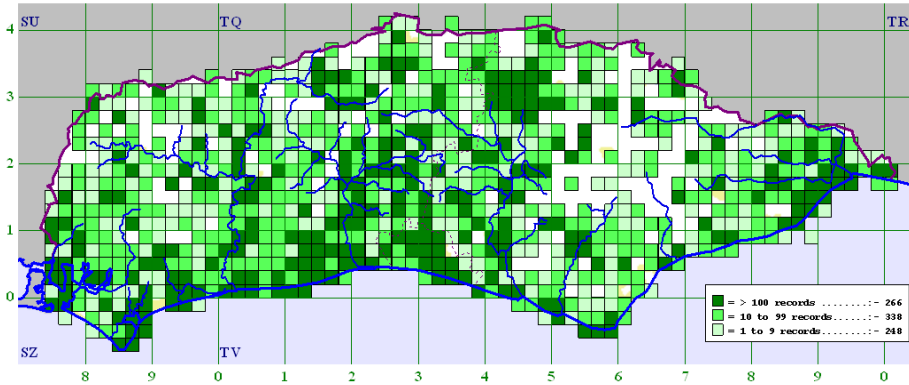
Each species account in the systematic list is written by an individual using the records abstracted from the society's CoBRA (County Bird Recording Application) database. As usual the dataset is a complex mixture of records received from the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), from a miscellany of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

The total of nearly 150,000 records for 2012 shows a drop compared with the past few years. This reduction clearly relates to the finish of the national Bird Atlas 2007-11 and county tetrad atlas survey which, in 2011, provided 17.5% of the annual records. However, the 2012 dataset was the sixth highest in the number of records. The following table, showing the numbers and percentages of record sources in 2011 and 2012, reveals that over half of the records in 2012 originated from BirdTrack, an excellent online recording system which the society encourages members to use. BirdTrack is organised by the BTO in partnership with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Birdwatch Ireland, the Scottish Ornithologists' Club and the Welsh Ornithological Society and continued to develop during the year. The combination of observations from BirdTrack and records abstracted from all online recording sources contributed over two thirds of the dataset and the remainder, with the exception of a small number of paper records, were submitted in a suitable electronic format for importing into CoBRA.

	2011		2012	
BirdTrack records	66,024	35.9%	79,658	53.6%
Other BTO online surveys (Wetland Bird Survey and Breeding Bird Survey)	17,651	9.7%	19,773	13.3%
Reserve databases and seawatch datasets	41,455	22.6%	35,128	23.6%
Records captured from other recording groups	3112	1.6%	6615	4.4%
Individual observer record submissions	23,395	12.7%	7553	5.1%

Nearly 900 observers contributed to the 2012 dataset but this is 6% lower than in 2011 and continues the downward trend since the peak of the atlas fieldwork. As usual, contributions varied

considerably with 26 birders providing over 1000 records whilst 156 observers were ascribed just a single record. The widespread recording which the atlas survey encouraged also contracted with a 25% reduction in the number of locations from which the society received records. This is clearly shown in the following map which has been drawn using the same scale as in previous years. During 2011 over 97% of the Sussex tetrads received some recording attention but in 2012 this figure fell to 82%. The traditional “holes” in East and north-west Sussex are once again showing but, as usual, the recording hotspots, such as the coastal strip, West Sussex commons and river valleys are shown clearly and locations such as Pulborough Brooks, Ashdown Forest, and Pagham, Chichester and Rye Harbours remain attractive to birdwatchers.



The number of records received for 2012 in each tetrad in Sussex. Dark green, >100 records; mid-green, 10-99 records; pale green, 1-9 records.

With records from county-wide studies such as the Sussex Winter Bird Survey and the Breeding Bird Survey coupled with the encouragement to record full lists in BirdTrack it is not surprising that the common and widespread species have again been the most recorded; in 2012 Blackbird (3532 records), Woodpigeon (3349) and Blue Tit (3319) kept their top three spots. The monthly distribution of records has, as expected, returned to a similar pattern to that prior to the atlas with July producing the fewest records and with April and May the most; this pattern is clearly seen in the following table.

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
2012	12,713	13,321	13,506	17,682	19,265	12,953	8375	8705	10,363	10,524	10,614	10,706	148,727

Although the county bird database remains in a strong and healthy state there are some areas of increasing concern, some of which are voiced on a regular basis in the society's newsletter.

Observations of rare and scarce species or unusual “out of season” sightings are always interesting. However, in order to maintain the integrity of the database these records require supporting evidence to be assessed by the society’s records committee. Sadly, records are lost each year as additional notes are not forthcoming. Records including evidence of breeding frequently carry a “value-added” factor when providing evidence for planners investigating land use change. It was thought this aspect of recording would decline after the atlas was finished and sadly these fears have been realised as less than 10% of the 2012 records were accompanied with a breeding status code. The change from the past two years is shown in the following table:

Year	Possible (%)	Probable (%)	Confirmed (%)
2010	4	8	12
2011	5	8	11
2012	1	3	5

The proliferation of birding websites and personal blogs has revolutionised the dissemination of news, sightings, photographs and opinions. However, it is evident that many sightings are not translated into records in the county database and therefore will not be published in the Sussex Bird Report. In turn, such records may not be immediately available to researchers and conservationists making enquiries either to the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre or to this society. Since the inception of the society’s website, efforts have been made to capture information into the database but for several reasons this has not been possible. This will remain an issue in the future.

Several sets of 2012 records were captured into CoBRA considerably later than usual. Although this makes little difference to the final database it means the authors of the annual Sussex Bird Report not only receive the necessary information to draft species accounts later than ideal, but also spend time analysing incomplete sets of records. Correcting and inserting records is a time-consuming exercise which can easily introduce errors; all problems which could be avoided by the more timely submission of records.

The society’s database is now approaching 25 years of age and runs on an out-dated operating system which is unlikely to be supported by Microsoft for much longer. CoBRA now holds over 2 million bird records and has proven to be a very flexible and reliable tool but the time is approaching for change. Plans are well developed to create a replacement but the challenge remains over the coming year for the transfer of the current large collection of records to a new database and to operate a different system enabling the incorporation of future records without asking for any changes in the recording habits of our members. [John Newnham, Database Manager, July 2013]

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 151 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	696	548	527	497	602	580	536	605	732	632	891	774
Chichester Hbr	189	97	81	110	121	149	164	121	205	137	218	254
Pagham Hbr	8	65	35	35	15	20	22	26	27	21	13	5
Chichester GP	67	85	54	48	42	36	nc	63	52	59	79	57
Climping	35	15	47	56	45	56	56	68	52	24	18	19
Arun (S of Arundel)	38	22	45	88	67	66	62	77	61	21	117	31
Arun Valley	40	31	34	68	127	72	50	49	74	94	74	75
Upper Adur Levels	49	51	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	36	61	54
Ouse Valley	41	44	37	5	5	2	3	nc	22	26	28	29
Eastbourne Lakes	50	45	23	9	15	26	44	52	36	42	50	45
Pevensey Levels	74	26	28	8	37	nc	nc	nc	30	32	57	67
Rye Bay	36	22	115	39	106	130	114	125	94	86	123	77

In the first winter period, significant counts additional to the WeBS counts included 50 at Iden (Rye) on 3 Feb and 164 at Apuldrum (Chichester Hbr) on 19 Jun. In the second winter period, there were 75 at Partridge Green on 5 Nov. During the early SWBS, 42 birds were recorded from 11 1-km squares of the 131 surveyed with a maximum count of 12 at Pett Level on 27 Jan.



Mute Swan, Rye Harbour, May 2012 (Barry Yates)

Breeding was confirmed from 31 sites and was probable in at least another three. The first reports of nest building were at Shermanbury on 24 Mar and at Brooklands (Worthing) on the 30th. The first nest with an egg was noted at Rose Green on 1 Apr, but the nest also contained a white electrical fitting about egg size! The first adults with cygnets (four) were noted at Wiston Pond (Steyning) and at Filsham LNR (six cygnets) on 9 May. The numbers of cygnets varied from two to eight at Runcton GP (Chichester) and at East Beach Pond (Selsey).

Despite the large numbers recorded across the county just 13 birds were recorded passing the principal seawatching sites.

During the second winter period there were still consistent numbers at many sites with over 200 at Chichester Hbr and over 50 at Scotney GP. [WEC]

Bewick's Swan

Cygnus columbianus

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

Bewick's Swans were recorded in 18 tetrads, a reduction on last year's 32. The monthly WeBS counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	31	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	34
Arun Valley	31	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14
Upper Adur Levels	-	-		nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	20
Ouse Valley	-	5	-	-	-	nc			-	-	-	-
Rye Bay	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

The Arun Valley between Arundel and Pulborough remains the county's most important area for this wintering species although the Adur Valley is a secondary site of importance. During the first winter period numbers remained constant in the Arun Valley; following 31 on 1 Jan at Pulborough Brooks the lowest count was 16 on 5 and 6 Jan but there were 30 to 33 on nine dates in the period. Following a peak of 33 on 11 Feb numbers dropped off markedly as birds returned eastwards, there being only eight on the final day, 26 Feb. There were smaller numbers, usually no more than five, elsewhere between Steyning and Pett Level, but including 16 at Partridge Green in the Adur Valley on 20 Feb.

The Arun Valley flock appeared to include no more than four juveniles, suggesting that the preceding breeding season had not been good.

In the second winter period, the first two Arun Valley birds were noted at Arundel WWT on 14 Nov. The first sizeable number in the Arun Valley was 23 on 9 Dec but the highest count thereafter was only c. 14 on the 17th. However, there were double-figure numbers elsewhere from ten (including two youngsters) in Pagham Hbr on 29 Nov to 13 at Steyning Levels on 17 Dec and 17 on the Beeding Brooks in the Adur Valley on 24 Dec; so there seemed to be c. 31 again in the county by the end of December. [WEC]

Whooper Swan

Cygnus cygnus

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

In the first winter period the first probably wild bird was noted at the East Rother Levels on 18 Jan which appeared to remain in the general area until 2 Feb. An adult bird, generally regarded as feral and seen in previous years, was seen on several dates from 2 Jan to 22 Apr and again on 23 Dec in the general area of the Upper Adur Levels and what may have been the same bird was seen at Albourne on 5 Jul.

In the second winter period there were just two records. A single bird which arrived at Newenden Marsh (Northiam) on 8 Nov was joined by another there on 11 Dec. In the west, two birds were seen at Pagham Hbr on 19 Dec. [WEC]

Bean Goose

Anser fabalis

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

The only record was of a widely admired flock of four birds, of the Tundra form, *A.f.rossicus*, present in the Beeding Brooks/Henfield Levels area from 11 to 25 Feb (ARK). [AH]

Pink-footed Goose

Anser brachyrhynchus

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

There were, in effect, only three records. Four birds at Pett Level on 1 Jan were considered to be the same as those recorded there at the end of 2011 (mo); they were present until 15 Mar but were also seen at Scotney GP on 4 Feb and Rye Hbr on the 14th. Two were recorded, and photographed, at Amberley Wild Brooks on 14 Jan (ARK). In June, a lone bird seen at Cuckmere Haven on the 12th was presumably injured or had escaped from a wildfowl collection. [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.

Though not up to the previous year's numbers, 2012 was another good year for this increasingly scarce winter visitor. The first records of the year on New Year's Day, were of birds present at Pett Level, 6 W past Widewater (Lancing) and one at Pulborough Brooks. During January, wintering flock numbers varied widely in both Rye Bay and the Arun Valley. Numbers at Pett Level varied from eight on the 2nd through 12 on the 6th and 8th, 14 on the 12th and 22nd culminating in 42 on the 30th and 31st. This flock was obviously mobile as numbers fluctuated and there were three at Scotney GP on the 8th and five on the 15th. Numbers in the Arun Valley also fluctuated; from four on 5 Jan they rose to 26 on the 22nd and finished the month with 28 on the 31st. It appears that there were at least 60 in the county at the month's end. Elsewhere, Cuckmere Haven held two between 29 Jan and 23 Feb.

There was an influx of birds in February as numbers in Rye Bay had risen to at least 94 on the 12th. From seven at Rye Hbr on the 4th numbers rose to 34 on the 12th while at Pett Level 60 were counted the same day. Meanwhile, the flock in the Arun Valley remained at Pulborough Brooks and, although numbers fluctuated, there were still 27 there on the 21st. Elsewhere, a single bird was seen at Barcombe Res on the 5th, a flock of seven birds was present in fields behind the North Wall (Pagham Hbr) between the 14th and 25th and there were two in the Lower Cuckmere Valley until the 23rd; presumably all these were wanderers from the two main areas. Peak numbers in February were probably at least 95.

None of the wintering birds remained beyond 29 Feb; the only record for March was of 6 E past Birling Gap on the 14th.

Autumn records were typically sparse; the only records were of single birds at Barcombe Res on 16 Sep, at Pulborough Brooks on 18 and 30 Nov and 10 and 29 Dec. A flock of 17 on Lewes Brooks on 18 Nov increased to 18 by 15 Dec and there were three at Scotney GP on 30 Dec. [AH]

Greylag Goose

Anser anser

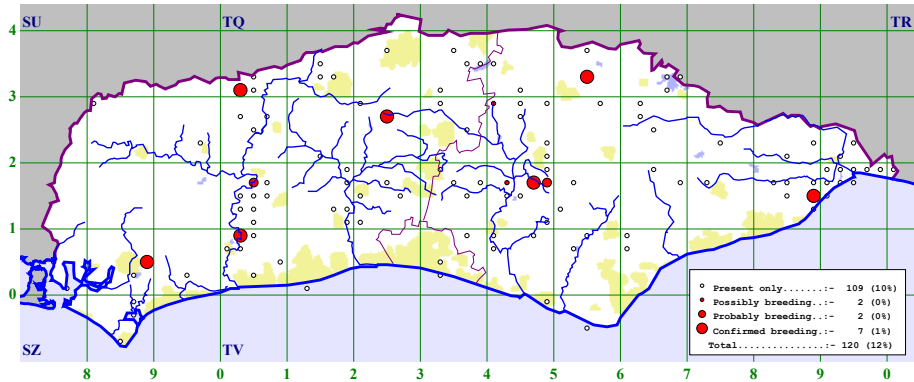
Increasingly common introduced resident and winter visitor; scarce passage migrant. (Native population in UK is amber listed species of medium conservation concern).

This species was recorded from 120 tetrads with the highest numbers being recorded at Pulborough Brooks, Warnham LNR, Weir Wood Res and the Rye Bay area. 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	962	1177	249	144	254	460	618	539	1050	673	1126	845
Chichester GP	2	10	15	3	19	34	nc	4	1	10	14	24
Petworth Park	-	nc	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	53	117	-	-	-
Arun Valley	57	5	18	7	28	5	21	113	14	275	16	39
Warnham LNR	46	74	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	12	-	3	-
Upper Adur Levels	-	96	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	55	-	11
Ardingly Res	nc	120	-	9	21	nc	19	nc	-	-	90	342
Slaugham MP	-	-	12	7	10	43	17	nc	177	2	-	-
Ouse Valley	70	50	61	6	-	nc	-	-	61	130	50	-
Barcombe Res	5	6	15	2	-	-	-	141	188	-	-	-
Eastbourne Lakes	4	-	-	1	5	15	6	-	-	-	57	1
Rye Bay	708	726	111	64	137	329	506	147	444	191	828	396

Rye Bay held about two-thirds of all the birds noted in the county in the early part of the year, with the February WeBS count of 726 being the biggest. Although there were reports from eight locations of counts of over 100 birds in the first winter period, the only significant count additional to the WeBS counts were 150 at Weir Wood Res on 15 Jan and 234 at Warnham LNR on the 16th. During the early SWBS a total of 94 birds was recorded from only six of the 131 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 70 at Ardingly Res on 27 Jan.

Confirmed breeding records were only received from around seven sites, but this surely does not reflect on the continued success of this species within the county.



Post-breeding flocks began to assemble at traditional sites in August and September. Notable counts were 355 birds on Weir Wood Res on 11 Aug, 375 at Pulborough Brooks on the 28th, 298 at Partridge Green on the 29th and 250 at Warnham LNR on 21 Sep. During the second winter period, high counts additional to the WeBS counts were 400 at Partridge Green on 18 Dec, 270 at Weir Wood Res on 2 Dec, 126 at Beeding Brooks on 27 Dec and 100 at Warnham LNR on 16 Nov and 15 Dec. During the late SWBS only four were recorded. [AH]

Canada Goose

Branta canadensis

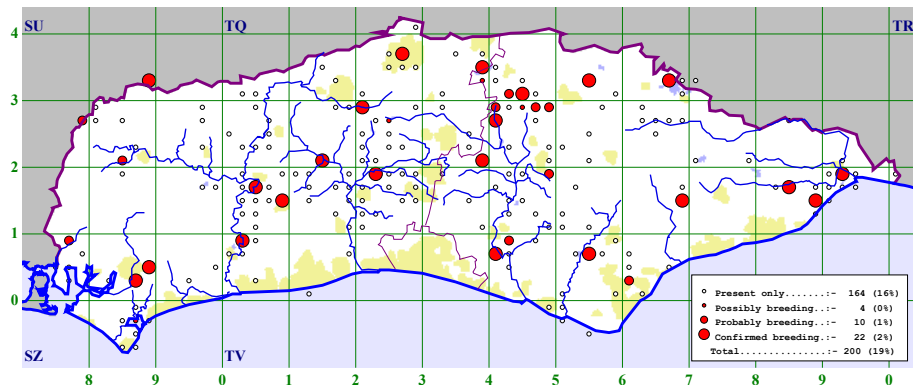
Common and increasing introduced resident and partial migrant.

This species was recorded from 200 tetrads 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	2141	2560	733	389	318	348	519	1064	1967	1819	2190	3240
Medmerry	-	-	-	-	3	-	nc	17	11	22	192	265
Chichester GP	26	124	51	35	36	13	nc	6	-	2	27	18
Petworth Park	38	17	21	nc	nc	nc	nc	169	325	-	91	-
Arun Valley	750	794	55	53	91	16	11	35	3	1123	816	831
Knepp MP	-	27	75	53	9	14	-	3	32	-	-	-
Weir Wood Res	150	65	32	14	8	35	36	251	44	-	118	9
Ouse Valley	62	131	31	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	48	42	17	1
Barcombe Res	44	66	16	2	-	-	13	140	310	5	3	6
Arlington Res	5	32	19	8	6	5	39	12	467	7	-	2
Cuckmere Haven	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	30	280	433
Eastbourne Lakes	135	1	71	34	21	59	91	19	33	4	14	21
Pevensey Levels	102	99	30	8	10	nc	nc	nc	2	40	42	225
Bewl Water	300	841	32	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	396	221	235	461
Wadhurst Park	22	40	50	10	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	216
Rye Bay	288	89	93	28	45	48	178	93	214	205	210	407

The Arun Valley and Bewl Water held between a half and two thirds of the winter population of this ubiquitous species, though almost any area of fresh water and grass was liable to hold one or more pairs. Notable counts additional to the WeBS during the first winter period were: 300 at Rye Hbr on 2 Jan, 200 at Arlington Res on the 7th and 150 there on 12 Feb, 100 at Cuckmere Haven on 7 Jan followed by 200 there on 29 Jan and on 12 Feb, 150 at Thorney Deepes (Chichester Hbr) on 2 Feb and 120 at Pett Level on 12 Feb. In April, the count at Pulborough Brooks was of 750 on the 23rd and 218 were noted at Bewl Water on 29 May.

Breeding records were received from over 20 sites in the county, but aside from Rye Hbr (with five pairs) and Pett Level (three pairs) they were all of one or two pairs.



A count of 672 birds on Bewl Water on 2 Jul was early for the first big post-breeding flock and may have reflected the poor weather during the breeding season. The flock there peaked at 932 on 16 Aug, and this total was only surpassed by the autumn flock at Pulborough Brooks, which reached 1430 birds on 15 Oct and 1345 on 11 Nov. Other notable counts were 260 at Pett Level on 7 Oct, 500 at Litlington (Cuckmere Valley) on 28 Oct, 250 at Partridge Green on 5 Nov and 210 at Weir Wood Res on 2 Dec. [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.

2011: Given the unusual date, the unprecedented numbers involved, the apparent lack of any other records in the English Channel area at that time, and the fact that the flock was very high in the sky, the record of 390 Barnacle Geese on 13 Oct is now not accepted.

2012: This species was recorded from only 25 tetrads, biased towards the extreme ends of the county. Unlike last year the majority of reports this year were of definitely feral birds and the remainder were tainted with that possibility. In January and February small numbers noted at several sites: 22 at The Midrips on 6 Jan and one on Pett Level the following day (but five there on 29 Feb), seven on Glynde Level on the 13th and four at Weir Wood Res on 2 Feb which may have all had reasonable wild credentials. A pair seen on Thorney Island on 21 and 22 Mar and at Chichester GP three days later, may have been the same birds and also may have been wild. Obviously feral flocks included a period maximum of 53 at Barcombe Res on 15 Jan and, in the Rye Bay area, a maximum of 60 at Jury's Gap on 25 Feb.

A female in the Pagham Harbour area which paired with a Canada Goose produced four hybrid young. The only second winter period records that might refer to wild birds were a single bird seen several times amongst the Dark-bellied Brent Goose flock around the Pagham Hbr/ Medmerry area between 11 and 16 Dec, and a flock of 13 at Cuckmere Haven on 18 Dec. The resident feral flock at Barcombe Res started and finished the year at 53 birds, one down from last year, and the Rye Bay flock peaked at 80 at Scotney GP on 16 Dec. [AH]

Brent Goose

Branta bernicla

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

Most of this account relates to the dark-bellied Brent Goose, *B.b.bernicla*, which is the common form in Sussex. 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	11,214	13,519	8043	14	13	15	13	-	470	5157	10,686	12,325
Chichester Hbr	8350	10,052	7776	13	13	14	13	-	469	5086	8687	8904
Medmerry	914	820	-	-	-	-	nc	-	-	-	54	910
Pagham Hbr	1816	2500	246	-	-	-	-	-	-	58	1910	2270

Numbers recorded in the WeBS counts were similar to the last two years and, again, the vast majority of birds were in and around the two western harbours. The only other area where more than an occasional bird was recorded was Rye Bay, where up to 200 birds were recorded through January and February; but passage birds were briefly recorded at many other coastal sites. The only inland sightings in January were of one at Amberley Wild Brooks on the 1st, five on Bewl Water on the 22nd and one at Crowhurst on the 29th. There were two late records: one on Arlington Res on 4 Apr and one which flew over Barcombe Res on the very late date of 25 May.

		Highest number recorded
Jan	2270	904, Birling Gap, 16 th
Feb	322	150, Worthing, 28 th
Mar	7712	2500, Birling Gap, 16 th 1953, Splash point, 15 th
Apr	776	174, Splash Point, 9 th
May	98	42, Telscombe Cliffs, 14 th
Total	11,178	

Eastwards passage seemed to start very early: the first sign of movement was 175 E past Splash Point (Seaford) on 14 Jan followed by 588 E birds past Birling Gap on the 15th and a further 904 E past the following day. Strangely, at the same time at Selsey Bill, 246 were recorded heading west, and only one east! However, after that early start, counts in February were very low; the best was 150 E at Worthing on the 28th. It was not until 15 Mar, when observers at Splash Point recorded 1953 E that migration started in earnest. These were followed by 2500 E at Birling Gap the following day. These two days were the peak days as recorded numbers thereafter were much

reduced and did not exceed 579 E at Splash Point on the 23rd. It was a better spring (January-May) than the previous year for eastwards passage (8142) and over 30% better than the average of 8420 for the previous 27 years. The monthly totals derived from the maximum recorded at any one principal seawatching site on any one day are given in the table above.

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

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May		Sep		Oct		Nov		Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	103	265	14	5	2308	4	299	12	14	-	-	51	12	219	42	49	141	38
Climping Gap	908	21	46	1	2252	-	65	-	-	-	17	-	45	162	517	-	350	
Worthing	210	42	214	90	1280	1	141	-	3	-	4	17	21	230	17	82	264	77
Telscombe Cliffs	269	9	58	25	3200	7	216	-	47	-	-	-	26	15	21	4	94	6
Birling Gap	1631	13	47	6	4341	-	242	-	47	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Splash Point	525	17	30	-	6078	-	563	1	17	-	1	14	15	1	15	4	179	3

There was the usual scattering of summering birds, mostly at Chichester Hbr, peaking at 13 on both 6 Jul and 13 Aug. Elsewhere, a single bird was at Rye Hbr between 16 and 24 May, and just one at Pagham Hbr on 25 Jul. The first autumn records were of single birds at Scotney GP and west past Selsey Bill on 16 Sep; small numbers were then recorded at a number of seawatching sites until the month's end. Numbers increased steadily thereafter and by 10 Oct, 3000 were recorded at Thorney Island. There were rather fewer autumn reports away from the usual sites than in previous years. There were only three inland records: on 24 Oct a flock of 200 was seen at Troutbeck (Eridge) heading high SW; the following day an unseen and uncounted nocturnal flock was heard at the same location and 120 birds were seen heading SW over Bewl Water.

There was a scattering of records of the distinctive pale-bellied form, *B.b.hrota*, during the early part of the year: one passed Birling Gap on 12 Jan in the company of the birds of the nominate form; one was seen in Pagham Hbr from 29 Jan to 6 Feb, two were in Cuckmere Haven from 6 to 16 Feb, two were at Scotney GP also on the 16th, three birds were at Pett Level from 11 to 20 Feb and a flock of seven birds was at Rye Hbr on the 26th. A single bird was recorded at Pett Level on 20 May.

The first autumn record was of two at Pett Level on 30 Sep, but there were no more sightings until a series of records between 8 Nov and 13 Dec, of possibly the same bird, in both Pagham and Chichester Harbours. It, or another, was seen at Climping on 10 Dec and at West Wittering on the 13th with dark-bellied Brents.

A bird showing characteristics of the form Black Brant *B.b.nigricans* was recorded in Chichester Hbr from 12 to 22 Jan (DIS *et al.*) and was thought to be the bird seen at West Wittering in 2011. In the second winter period one was recorded in Pagham Hbr from 10 to 18 Nov (SMB, AH) and again on 10 Dec (DC, BK) with another, or probably the same, at West Wittering on 13 Dec (BFF). [AH]

Egyptian Goose

Alopochen aegyptiaca

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

In the first winter period the maximum count was eleven at Petworth Park on 14 Jan. A pair was also present at Benbow Pond (Midhurst), up to four birds were in the Arun Valley area and

three were at Cuckmere Haven. There were also records of birds at Brighthams Fm (Partridge Green) and Wadhurst Park and of short-stay birds at Chichester GP, Burton MP and Ifield MP.

Breeding was confirmed at Benbow Pond on 27 Apr (an early brood of four fledged juveniles with an adult pair) and at Exceat Bridge on 22 Jun (a pair with four juveniles). There were records of birds at Pulborough Brooks during April and of four juveniles on 22 May, but these did not breed on the reserve. However, there were no records from Petworth Park between 11 Mar and 17 Aug, when twenty-six birds (a new county record) reappeared there, indicating either locally unrecorded breeding success or the disappearance of the flock to breed elsewhere before returning to Petworth Park. During the summer period there were also records of single birds at Arlington Res and birds were present for one day only at Henfield, Weir Wood Res and Bewl Water.

By 20 Sep the Petworth Park flock had reduced to eight, but on 13 Sep 13 birds were at Pulborough Brooks (apparently for only a day) and on 19 Sep seven were at Arlington Res. During the second winter period the flock at Petworth Park peaked at ten on 17 Dec, but the last bird recorded at Pulborough Brooks was on 1 Oct and, aside from Petworth Park, the only records of “winter residents” were two at Burton Black Pond and up to six at Bewl Water. Emphasising the mobile nature of non-breeding birds, five (perhaps the same) were recorded in Chichester Hbr (at Thorney Deeps on 6 Oct and Fishbourne Channel on 1 and 2 Dec) and at Arundel WWT on 11 Nov. The only other second winter record was two at Ifield MP on 16 Dec. [JRC]

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	795	873	757	377	347	251	37	35	59	56	203	643
Chichester Hbr	355	563	422	117	86	76	5	5	45	42	91	454
Medmerry	-	-	-	22	19	30	nc	17	3	5	11	3
Pagham Hbr	270	246	115	132	99	63	-	3	1	5	65	99
Arun Valley	70	12	88	56	37	22	10	-	-	2	19	48
Rye Bay	92	38	122	48	103	60	22	10	10	2	16	33

The maximum monthly WeBS count of 873 was well below the 10-year average, and no site exceeded the 610 threshold for sites of national importance. A significant count not reflected in the WeBS table above was of 50 at Pulborough Brooks on 3 Jun.

The majority of movements past the main sea-watching sites occurred in the first five months of the year and in December, as shown in the table below. Notably there were high westerly movements during January and February, probably of birds displaced by cold weather.

A nest with young on 8 May at Pagham Hbr was the first breeding record of the year. Breeding was also recorded at Medmerry, Yapton, Arundel WWT (probably two broods), Pulborough Brooks (three broods) and Pevensy Levels. Single broods were recorded at Pett Level, Rye Hbr and East Guldeford, and five broods of 36 juveniles were at The Midrips on 26 June. Although there were no confirmed reports of breeding at Chichester Hbr juveniles were recorded there between 16 Aug and 16 Sept.

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May		Dec	
	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E
Selsey Bill	22		6	1	2	23	10	29	10	14	24	
Climping Gap	22	10				2	8				6	
Worthing	34		35	4	5	13	6	2	10	4	10	
Telscombe Cliffs	3							2			4	
Splash Point	30	7	4		3	41			4	35		4
Birling Gap	44		3	3	1	23	5	5	2	25		

As usual the numbers of birds in the county were low between July through October, because of the annual exodus of most adults to moulting sites outside the county, but they built up again during November and December as wintering birds returned. [JRC]

Mandarin Duck

Aix galericulata

Scarce introduced resident.

Mandarin was recorded in 57 tetrads, well below the levels of recent years. Peak numbers in the winter and breeding seasons were also below recent levels. Records were mainly from the Arun Valley and across the High Weald.

In the first winter period the highest count was 22 at Flattenden Lake (Wadhurst) on 16 Jan, and the next highest counts were ten each at Arundel WWT on 13 Jan, Weir Wood Res on 15 Jan and Eridge Park on 29 Mar.

Breeding was confirmed at seven locations with the first ducklings recorded at Weir Wood Res (where there were five adults and ten juveniles on 6 May). Broods were also recorded at Ebernoe Common (a pair and six ducklings), The Mens (Wisborough Green) (two pairs with eight downy ducklings), Amberley Wild Brooks (where a pair produced at least four fledged young which were possibly those seen on 9 Jun at South Stoke), Northlands (Warnham) (female with four ducklings), Weir Wood Res (eight ducklings) and Troutbeck (Eridge), where there were two broods. High counts from other sites included 12 at Warnham LNR on 18 May and 26 at Bewl Water on 2 Jul.

In the second winter period the peak count was 16 at Weir Wood Res on 20 Nov and there were also 16 at Ardingly Res on 18 Oct and 12 at the Knepp Estate on 25 Oct. On 17 Dec 13 were noted at Arundel WWT. [JRC]

Eurasian 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 given in the table below. For the second year running the annual WeBS maxima for the county hit record levels, with February's 16,628 being the highest monthly count ever recorded. Rye Bay's 6373 in February was also a record for that site with 5000 of these birds at Scotney GP. Notable counts additional to those in the WeBS table were 1500 at Arlington Res on 7 Jan, and 1075 at Pulborough Brooks on 13 Feb.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	8324	16,628	3212	80	9	1	3	8	908	5026	5342	9179
Chichester Hbr	1570	1572	691	11	1	-	-	7	636	2002	1440	1674
Pagham Hbr	1080	4057	222	9	-	1	-	-	194	1720	1173	1446
Arun Valley	2679	2578	1167	30	3	-	-	-	23	878	1222	2254
Ouse Valley	350	700	240	-	-	nc	-	-	1	4	305	400
Arlington Res	694	400	13	-	-	-	-	-	1	22	268	236
Rye Bay	1256	6373	640	23	5	-	3	1	19	309	715	2280

In the first winter period the last count of 1000 was at Pagham Hbr on 7 Mar and 914 were still at Pulborough Brooks on 12 Mar, but thereafter numbers rapidly fell across the county. Four birds summered: a male at Pagham Hbr, and two males and a female at Pulborough Brooks, but there was no sign of any breeding. In addition a male was at Thorney Deepes (Chichester Hbr) on 4 Jul.

August saw the first returning birds with seven at Chichester Hbr on the 17th, six at Pagham Hbr on 23rd and five at Pulborough Brooks on the 25th. In September 40 were at Pagham Hbr on the 1st and 19 were at Rye Hbr on the 15th. The following day 200 were recorded at Pagham Hbr and on the 29th 635 were recorded at Chichester Hbr. Thereafter numbers built up steadily in October and again in December.

It was also a notable year for seawatch numbers (although not quite as good as 2010) with a total of 726 W and 199 E recorded across the year, and June and July were the only months when no passage birds were observed. In January and February 65 W and 115 E were recorded (peak count was 32 E past Telscombe Cliffs on 4 Feb), whilst the spring passage was limited to 31 E between March and May. The year, however, ended on a high with large movements occurring on several dates in December when a total of 511 W and 12 E were recorded; the peak being 256 W past Worthing on the 8th, and 100 W past Climping on the 18th and 72 W and 10 E past Selsey Bill on the 28th were other significant passage movements. [JRC]

Gadwall

Anas strepera

Very scarce breeder and scarce summer non-breeder: fairly 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	890	1419	217	143	94	37	70	100	235	224	433	1089
Chichester Hbr	52	80	24	-	2	-	-	-	1	1	16	35
Pagham Hbr	-	16	6	11	5	-	-	-	12	-	-	-
Chichester GP	199	379	15	10	7	-	nc	5	38	17	85	267
Arun Valley	49	106	28	45	32	3	12	11	30	19	49	97
Eastbourne Lakes	129	50	15	7	-	-	-	-	6	6	44	123
Bewl Water	44	108	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	14	25	120	116
Rye Bay	329	561	90	60	45	28	41	78	130	143	109	393

A very cold spell at the end of January through mid-February brought large numbers of birds into the county, and the February WeBS count produced a highest ever monthly total of 1419 birds, a substantial 23% more than the previous peak of 1149 in Dec 2010. The peak at Rye Bay of 561 in the same month was just one below its Dec 2010 all-time high of 562. A notable count not included in the WeBS table was a combined count of 590 at Chichester GP on 10 Feb (450 at Ivy Lake plus 140 at Westhampnett GP) which is slightly above the maximum WeBS count of 569 for all of Chichester GPs.

After the middle of February numbers rapidly decreased with the last three-figure count in the first winter period being 120 at Rye Hbr on 26 Feb. By March the WeBS numbers were only 15% of the February peak at a more typical 217 for this month.

The number of birds summering was also typical. However, confirmed breeding was recorded for only five to seven pairs: one at Medmerry where four juveniles fledged; one at Chichester GP where a female and eight ducklings were recorded on 23 Jun; one at Arundel WWT where there was a brood of five ducklings on 28 May; and at Pett Level where four pairs and two broods were recorded. At both Pulborough Brooks and Amberley Wild Brooks there were pairs of birds over the summer but no breeding was noted, whilst at Rye Hbr there were up to 21 birds but no evidence of breeding. Other notable summer counts were 13 at Lidsey SF on 17 Jun and 15 at Sefter Fm (Rose Green) on 20 Jul.

Numbers started to increase slowly from mid-August and by 27 Sep 100 were at Rye Hbr. However it was not until mid-December, when it was mild but there was widespread flooding, that numbers substantially increased, and the county WeBS total of 1089 in December was the third highest ever. This meant that both winter periods saw very high peaks of birds.

Observed passage movements past sea-watch sites totalled 8 W and 19 E across the whole year, a typically low number. The main movements were 10 E in March and 7 E in May with the highest daily total being 6 E past Selsey Bill on 24 Mar. [JRC]

Eurasian Teal

Anas crecca

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

Teal were recorded in 107 tetrads throughout the year. 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	4649	5785	1922	352	17	30	14	486	558	1936	3169	6649
Chichester Hbr	1564	2387	813	45	-	-	-	24	26	116	695	1689
Pagham Hbr	373	681	223	49	4	10	7	116	257	700	853	1823
Arun Valley	1300	433	379	104	7	10	5	214	111	726	744	873
Bewl Water	44	359	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	14	61	46	87
Rye Bay	556	763	230	53	2	6	2	92	114	226	514	1348

The peak WeBS count of 6649 in December was higher than in recent years and coincided with a period of widespread flooding in the county. In Rye Bay 1348 was the highest ever count for this site. However, in what was otherwise a good year for numbers of wintering Teal the peak in the Arun Valley was only 1300. This is the county's only nationally important site for this species,

where numbers have averaged over 1920 birds (the criterion to be of national importance) over the last five years. Other notable counts additional to those shown in the WeBS table were 1200 at Pulborough Brooks on 24 Dec and 832 on 29 Oct, 160 at Lewes Brooks and 106 at Shinewater (Eastbourne), both on 15 Jan; 190 at Medmerry, 277 at Barcombe Res and 100 at Cuckmere Haven, all on 12 Feb; 200 at Partridge Green on 30 Nov and again on 16 Dec, 120 at Crowhurst on 1 Dec; 103 at Pevensey Level and 150 at Lidsley Rife on 21 Dec. Wintering visitors started to depart after the middle of February and the last three-figure count was 164 at Pulborough Brooks on 16 Apr.

During the summer there were up to seven birds at Pett Level where the only record in the county of confirmed breeding occurred on 7 Aug, when a female and six young were recorded. At Medmerry two males and a female were present most of the summer, at Pagham Hbr up to 11 birds summered with regular reports of at least seven throughout July, at Arundel WWT one or two birds summered and at Pulborough, Amberley and Waltham Brooks up to eight birds summered. However, no breeding was suspected at any of these sites. Birds were also present for single days at Chichester GP, Darwell Res and Rye Hbr, but none summered at these sites.

The first signs of returning birds were in August, when 35 were at Pulborough Brooks on the 7th increasing to 200 by the 18th, and at Pagham Hbr where there were 38 on the 11th and 84 on the 14th. However, there was a very slow build-up of returning birds, with the September county WeBS total of 558 being the lowest for this month since 1988. Numbers were back to more typical levels in October and November before the sharp increase in December.

It was a busy year for seawatching sites with a total of 490 birds recorded (315 W and 175 E). Movements of 34 W and 26 E were recorded during Jan, with a peak of 26 E past Birling Gap on the 30th. There was a modest spring passage of 90 E and 6 W during March, April and May, with a peak of 17 E past Worthing on 26 May, a late date for so many. The bulk of passage movements were recorded in the second winter period with 61 W and 28 E between August and November, mostly in small numbers, but including 14 W and 4 E past Selsey Bill on 28 Oct. However, in December no less than 209 W and 29 E were recorded, including 175 W past Worthing on the 8th. This mirrored the influx of birds into the county during this month. [JRC]

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	3657	4498	2058	1297	1135	1634	1714	3119	3431	3883	3631	4312
Chichester Hbr	503	421	299	38	32	31	44	60	138	259	390	425
Medmerry	11	102	14	23	22	30	nc	47	187	285	230	219
Pagham Hbr	144	145	99	57	77	111	81	242	138	360	92	166
Arun Valley	466	503	545	438	430	603	535	964	488	598	526	524
Angmering Decoy Ponds	44	24	27	41	13	88	378	722	312	245	150	180
Bowl Water	353	655	80	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	264	175	293	390
Rye Bay	506	792	293	130	135	224	187	296	492	596	625	884

The peak county total of 4498 birds occurred in February during a cold spell, maintaining the upturn in winter maxima since the low point of 1999-2009. Chichester Hbr, Bewl Water and Rye Bay were the strongholds for wintering visitors, whilst the Arun Valley held a resident population of 450 to 600 birds throughout the year, spread along the valley.

In August, concentrations of eclipse birds increased the population in the Arun Valley to 964 and that at the Angmering Decoy Ponds to 722 (when disturbance by dogs forced all the population off the banks and into the water, making the WeBS counter's task much easier!). Other significant counts additional to the WeBS counts were 390 at Bewl Water on 3 Sep and 210 at Wardley (Milland) on 16 Nov.

As usual Mallard were found across the county. During the early SWBS a total of 422 was recorded from 47 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum count of 108 at Wardley on 27 Jan.

Breeding was confirmed in 28 tetrads across the county. The first breeding record was of ducklings on 11 Mar at Arundel WWT and the last was of a new brood at Lindfield on 28 Aug. At Rye Hbr there were 27 nests or broods and at Pett Level there were seven broods. The largest brood was of c.12 ducklings in a nest at Broadbridge Heath on 20 Apr.

During the late SWBS a total of 459 was recorded in 21 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum count of 210 on 16 Nov, at Wardley again. There were fewer seawatching records than usual; only 37 birds were recorded on passage over the whole year, of which 16 E in March was the highest monthly total, ten of these being past Splash Point. [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	421	390	118	8	-	-	-	-	21	167	471	490
Chichester Hbr	283	181	80	2	-	-	-	-	-	39	91	193
Pagham Hbr	81	187	24	2	-	-	-	-	21	108	335	84
Arun Valley	48	16	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	19	43	203

The peak county WeBS total of 490 birds in December was the lowest since 1989/90. WeBS numbers at Pagham Hbr were well short of the 600 threshold for sites of international importance and numbers at Chichester Hbr and the Arun Valley were below the 290 threshold for sites of national importance. However, significant counts, not reflected in the WeBS table above, were 320 at Pulborough Brooks (Arun Valley) on 6 Jan and 252 at the same location on 31 Dec, plus 60 at Henfield Levels on 30 Dec, so it appears that more than 490 birds were briefly in the county at either end of the year, albeit not on WeBS count days.

As always the largest numbers were at the three western sites in the WeBS table above. However in the east of the county 12 birds were recorded at Pett Level on 5 Feb and another 12 at The Midrips on 16 Feb. Seventeen were recorded in the Lower Cuckmere Valley on 17 Feb and 28 at Pevensey Levels on 11 Mar, an unusually high number for the latter location. No birds summered in the county. Although the first record of a returning bird was at Pulborough Brooks

on 31 Aug, eight were at Pagham Hbr the next day building up to 21 by 17 Sep. Twenty one were also at Pulborough Brooks on 24 Sep and thereafter numbers steadily built up.

During the year 34 birds were recorded west past seawatch sites. The peak months were March, when 22 passed east, and October and December when 17 and 10 passed west. The highest daily passage was seven west past Beachy Head on 8 Dec. [JRC]

Garganey

Anas querquedula

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

The first record of the year was 7 E past Worthing on 10 Mar, seven days later than the 10-year average arrival date. During March, seven birds were noted at Hove on the 14th and a further eight were observed moving east past regular seawatching sites: two at Selsey Bill on the 23rd, four at Splash Point (Seaford) on the 24th and another two there on the 28th. At Pett Level there were three on 11 Mar but none stayed beyond the 27th. Singles were at Pevensey Levels on the 18th and Pagham Hbr on the 24th. Two birds were at Rye Hbr, the first on the 11th and the second on the 28th and one was at The Wicks (Camber) on the 31st, making a total of 31 recorded during March.

In April, another bird was at Pevensey Levels on the 22nd, up to five were present at Rye Hbr and 6 E past Selsey Bill on the 25th made a total of 12 during April.

In May there were records of up to another 25, making this a strong spring passage of possibly 67 birds. These consisted of one at Amberley Brooks on the 6th, four at Arundel WWT on the 7th, plus a male there on the 27th and a female on the 28th; two at Pulborough Brooks between the 16th and 24th, included at least one drake and may have included the one seen at Waltham Brooks on the 19th. Four were at Darwell Res, also on the 19th, one at Medmerry on the 20th, 2 E past Beachy Head on the 26th and one drake at Pagham Hbr from the 25th to the 28th. At Pevensey there was a male on the 16th and a female from the 24th to the 26th and there were up to five at Pett Level during the month with one drake going into eclipse plumage on the 27th.

During the summer birds were regularly present at only two sites: Pett Level, where two pairs remained from May through July, one of which successfully bred, and Rye Hbr, where “small numbers were present at Castle Water from April to July, with a displaying pair seen on 29 Apr... but breeding was not proven”.

Thirty one birds were recorded on autumn migration, one of the higher autumn passages. The first sign of return migration was seven birds at Pulborough Brooks on 23 Jul. In August, a female or juvenile was at Pagham Hbr on the 4th and 5th, one was at Pulborough Brooks on the 10th and two eclipse females were there on the 13th. Two were recorded at Pett Level, the last on 26 Aug and six at Rye Hbr, the last on 18 Sep. Also in September there were records of single birds at West Rise Marsh (Eastbourne) on the 8th, Arlington Res on the 14th and singles past Selsey Bill on the 23rd and Splash Point (Seaford) on the 24th. Surprisingly both sea-watch birds were flying E.

The last bird of the year was at West Langney Lake (Eastbourne) on 12 Oct, eleven days later than the 10-year average. [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	552	693	476	171	22	11	10	29	142	235	676	798
Medmerry	5	49	41	11	4	3	nc	1	8	5	18	35
Chichester GP	70	224	40	5	-	-	nc	3	13	9	11	82
Arun Valley	138	26	106	21	6	3	1	3	12	52	186	189
Ouse Valley	33	30	31	-	-	nc	-	-	-	-	-	6
Barcombe Res	9	-	-	5	-	-	-	1	9	1	91	19
Eastbourne Lakes	149	46	80	19	-	-	-	-	19	1	133	109
Bewl Water	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	9	6	2	-
Rye Bay	121	270	154	102	9	3	9	19	61	151	224	341

The recent upward trend in wintering numbers was maintained with a peak monthly WeBS total of 798 in Dec. The November count at Barcombe Res and the December count at Rye Bay were the highest ever WeBS counts for these sites. Significant counts not included in the WeBS table were 354 at Chichester GP on 15 Jan, increasing to 420 on 10 Feb, both numbers being greater than the highest ever WeBS count at this site. There were also 50 at Beeding Brooks (Henfield) on 30 Dec. Aside from the WeBS sites above there were regular records during the winter periods from Chichester Hbr, Arlington Res and Iford Brooks, but only occasional records from a few other sites.

As the WeBS counts show wintering visitors had departed by May leaving only a small number of birds to summer. One to four birds were present at Pagham Hbr, and there were two pairs each at Medmerry and Pulborough Brooks and up to seven birds at Pett Level, but there was no breeding at any of these sites. Small numbers were also present at Rye Hbr during the summer but breeding “was not proven”. The only record of successful breeding was at Arundel WWT where a female and four ducklings were first recorded on 31 Jul.

Recorded movements past seawatch sites were 167 across the year (a typical number), with the major movements occurring between February and May when 112 were recorded flying east and six west; the peak being 20 east past Beachy Head on 26 May (a late date). In December 32 were recorded west, with a peak of 12 past Selsey Bill on the 27th. [JRC]

Red-crested Pochard*Netta rufina*

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

A total of six birds was recorded during the year. The first were three at Rye Hbr on 12 Jan, two of which were males, whilst on 19 Feb a female was at Drayton GP (Chichester GP). In September a first winter drake was at Warnham LNR from the 21st to the 24th and the last bird of the year was a female at Ivy Lake (Chichester GP) on 1 Dec. [JRC]

Common Pochard*Aythya ferina*

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 follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	402	702	96	26	32	56	46	72	124	161	210	411
Chichester GP	97	187	20	8	7	4	nc	-	14	29	37	60
Burton & Chingford Ponds	20	16	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	8	12	5
Petworth Park	8	3	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	2	11	9
Arun Valley	32	58	31	9	17	9	-	2	2	2	8	9
Weir Wood Res	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	31
Barcombe Res	29	47	3	-	-	1	4	4	1	2	5	11
Eastbourne Lakes	16	17	12	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Rye Bay	157	323	16	7	8	42	39	66	107	116	116	232

The highest monthly WeBS count of 702, in February, was close to the 5-year average of county maxima for 2007-11 of 721, with Chichester GP and Rye Bay (particularly the Long Pit and to a lesser extent, Scotney GP) being the wintering strongholds. As usual, the Arun Valley stronghold was Arundel (Swanbourne Lake and WWT) and there were only two records from Pulborough Brooks, two on 28 May and 12 on 2 Nov. A significant count additional to the WeBS table above was 30 at Bewl Water on 12 Feb.

It was a relatively good year for breeding, with breeding confirmed at four sites and a total of five broods. At Chichester GP a female and two ducklings were recorded between 23 and 26 June, which is only the fourth record of breeding at this site since 1994. At Arundel WWT a female with five ducklings was recorded on 5 May and at Pett Level two broods were recorded in June. Rye Hbr had its first confirmed breeding since 1981 when a female with two ducklings were seen on 4 Jul. Regrettably, these were known not to have survived to fledge and unfortunately, there were no indications that any of the other four broods in the county fledged either. In addition, there was a single record of a juvenile at Pagham Hbr on 25 May, but no indication that it had bred there.

2012 was also a good year for observing birds on passage, with nine recorded on six days between March and August, all moving east. [JRC]

A Paget's Pochard, a hybrid between Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* and the Common Pochard *Aythya farina*, was at Rye Hbr on 5 and 18 Nov. [JAH]

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 given in the table below. The maximum monthly WeBS count of 1318 in February was slightly higher than the maxima for recent years. The main wintering strongholds were at Ivy Lake (Chichester GP) and in the Rye

Bay area, particularly Long Pit SSSI (Rye Hbr) and Scotney GP while, in the Arun Valley, Swanbourne Lake held the majority of wintering birds. Numbers were particularly high at Bewl Water in the second half of the year. Other notable counts additional to the WeBS table above were at Chichester GP, with a very high 500 on 10 Feb, and at Southwater CP, with 92 on 12 Feb (a highest ever WeBS count for this site) and 96 on 31 Dec.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1142	1318	782	492	430	261	217	331	533	731	782	1057
Chichester Hbr	65	34	30	5	6	6	4	9	19	-	6	38
Pagham Hbr	23	44	36	25	24	10	4	2	70	46	15	-
Chichester GP	285	334	184	110	40	29	nc	18	20	71	166	210
Petworth Park	31	32	22	nc	nc	nc	nc	9	30	13	12	22
Arun Valley	122	133	42	72	104	66	26	18	23	40	65	94
Barcombe Res	55	32	33	43	12	14	15	58	45	102	57	47
Eastbourne Lakes	66	121	64	3	-	-	-	-	10	14	16	41
Bewl Water	24	18	34	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	73	74	144	201
Darwell Res	50	20	nc	nc	-	-	-	nc	50	30	nc	nc
Rye Bay	279	380	238	200	196	110	149	211	146	263	183	270

In contrast to the winter trend, fewer birds summered than in recent years. During June, July and August breeding was recorded at Medmerry (four pairs, nine fledged young), Easton Fm (Earnley) (one brood), Chichester GP (two broods), Arundel WWT (two broods, one of 14 ducklings being recorded on 19 Jun), Pett Level (two broods) and Rye Hbr (nine broods). The last breeding record was from Rye Hbr on 19 Aug when a female was recorded “with six very young chicks”.

Movements at the regular seawatching sites were typically low, totalling 5 W and 25 E across the whole year, with 9 E in March and 13 E in May. The peak daily movement was 8 E past Splash Point (Seaford) on 15 Mar. [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.

The minimum numbers recorded were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Total	1	1	-	-	-	3	3	1

During the first winter period to 10 Mar, there were just two records, both from Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 11 Jan and 6 Feb. Two females and one male in first year plumage were seen at Ivy Lake (Chichester GP) on 27 Oct. Further sightings were two at Glyne Gap and one at Scotney GP, both on 19 Nov and one flew west off Selsey Bill on 28 Dec. [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 following table, based on an analysis of the counts from the main sea watch sites, shows the low numbers of this species seen passing the county. The only double figure counts of passing birds from these sites were 28 W and 4 E at Selsey Bill on 8 Jan, 10 E at Birling Gap on 9 Mar and 12 E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 2 Apr.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
West	31	1	7	8	6	-	-	-	-	6	1	4
East	6	3	23	15	3	-	-	-	2	-	2	4

Away from the main sea-watching sites there were mainly singles recorded in the first winter period. The exceptions were 27 at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 11 Jan, 11 W in Rye Bay on 13 Feb and a flock of 13 on the sea off Normans Bay on 18 Mar. During the summer a moulting male was seen in Rye Bay on 10 Jun, an immature drake was seen at Selsey Bill on ten dates between 16 Jun and 29 Aug, and perhaps the same bird was seen in Chichester Hbr on five days between 5 Jul and 17 Aug.

More were recorded in October with 6 W at Telscombe Cliffs on the 8th, eight from Pagham shingle spit on the 18th and counts of birds offshore at Selsey Bill of nine on the 21st, ten on the 28th and 11 on the 30th. This group soon dispersed and singles were mainly the trend in November and December but with a maximum of four at Telscombe Cliffs on 1 Dec and two from Worthing on 26 Dec. [DAB]

Long-tailed Duck

Clangula hyemalis

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

This was another poor year for this species. Four were seen moving west from Worthing on 12 Jan. In November one was recorded offshore at Selsey Bill on the 3rd and a male was off East Head (Chichester) on the 30th. [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 relevant sites were as given in the table below. Once again, the sea between Bexhill and Camber held the majority of birds during both winter periods. In particular, birds were mainly offshore at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) predominantly in the first winter period but mostly in Rye Bay in the later period. Perhaps, for such a widespread marine species these counts may not do justice to the numbers actually wintering offshore. The wide ranging

habits of feeding flocks, often on rough seas, creates problems estimating numbers, but 50 off Brighton Marina on 5 Jan, a flock of 200 off Pett Level on 15 Jan, and 50 there on 19 Feb, all additional to the WeBS counts, and smaller numbers at other coastal sites west to Selsey Bill suggest a wintering population of between 400 and 600.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	170	218	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	-	606	28
Pagham Hbr	-	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16
Glyne Gap	170	190	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	70	nc
Rye Bay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	-	535	12

Totals from the principal seawatching sites, 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	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
East	61	99	606	2223	2247	416	452	47	87	92	67	260
West	52	2	14	64	40	107	153	25	64	55	95	212

Eastwards spring passage effectively began on 15 Mar and continued into the first week of June. The peak was in the last five days of April and the first week of May, at least two weeks later than 2011. The total of only 5076 between March and May was almost half of last year's total and over a third less than the 28-year average of 7330. On the peak passage day, 7 May, the highest count of the season was 470 E past Splash Point compared with 1695 off Birling Gap (Beachy Head) on 2 Apr last year. Totals of eastbound passage on the seven days when maximum passage was observed from at least one of the principal sites (with hours watched, in brackets) were as follows:

	15 Mar	9 Apr	26 Apr	30 Apr	1 May	7 May	17 May
Selsey Bill	0 (5)	144 (6)	6 (?)	138 (15)	181 (10)	112 (11)	251 (11)
Worthing	0 (2)	4 (2)	64 (2)	12 (4)	282 (5)	37 (3)	67 (3)
Splash Point	127 (5)	222 (4)	336 (8)	183 (14)	220 (4)	470 (14)	66 (4)
Birling Gap	125 (3)	nc	357 (6)	251 (8)	8 (2)	305 (8)	60 (2)

A more comprehensive summary of the spring eastbound passage, recorded at the principal seawatching sites was as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Total	No. per hr Mar-May	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	89	972	1326	2387	6.4	251 on 17 May (11 hr)
Worthing	12	387	648	1047	8.0	282 on 1 May (5 hr)
Telescombe Cliffs	67	109	240	416	6.9	150 on 8 May (2 hr)
Splash Point	531	1768	1008	3307	16.6	470 on 7 May (14 hr)
Birling Gap	257	1110	1140	2507	22.8	357 on 26 Apr (6 hr)

The number per hour, when compared with the 2011 figures, indicates that passage in 2012 was poor for reasons which are unclear. Passage continued fairly strongly until early June with a peak of 177 E off Selsey Bill and 75 E past Worthing on the 3rd. However, it was apparent that there was still a sizeable population in the Channel during the remainder of June to the end of July. While many birds flew east, others flew west as shown in the above table, and many were apparently loafing offshore. In addition, the maximum count at Pett Level was 100 on 17 Jun but with no indication of activity. There were only two records for August.

Autumn movements were unremarkable as also shown in the above table with the highest count of 35 W at Selsey Bill on 20 Oct. Also at Selsey Bill, c.75 were loafing offshore on 28-30 Oct while the highest count of the month was 150 at Pett but without any indication of activity.

The flock off Selsey Bill remained into the second winter period with 12 counts exceeding 50, the highest being 142 on 18 Nov. The highest offshore count elsewhere was 100 at Widewater (Lancing) on 17 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.

Eight off Pett Level on 9 Jan was the largest group reported on the sea in the year and may have been associated with the 18 W past Worthing on the same day which was the largest flying group reported in the year. Rye Bay was the most regular area for this species in the first quarter of the year, with a pair there on 20 Feb. Other sightings were five on the 26th and 27th, two at The Wicks on 14 Mar and two on the 30th.

Spring migration recorded at the principal seawatching sites (Selsey Bill, Worthing, Telscombe Cliffs, Splash Point and Birling Gap), computed on the assumption that the highest number seen at a single site was the maximum in the county on that day and that birds seen on subsequent days were different are shown in the table below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Oct	Nov	Dec
East	3	2	3	36	22		-	-	1
West	18	-	-	5	1		12	1	3
Offshore	-	-	-	-	-		1	8	6

Spring migration was noticeable mainly between 12 Apr and 1 May. Most were seen at Selsey Bill with 9 E of 12 Apr, 11 E there on 14 Apr and ten on the 17th. The only records away from the regular seawatching sites were 1 W at Hastings on 8 Mar and one on the sea off Rustington on 23 Apr, probably a resting migrant. Following 11 E at Splash Point on 1 May the final spring record was of 1 E at Birling Gap on the 19th.

The first birds of the return autumn passage were 12 W off Selsey Bill on 28 Oct followed by 1 W there on 11 Nov and 3 W on 22 Nov. There were no passage observations from other sites. In addition, birds were noted loafing offshore at Selsey Bill on several dates during the last quarter of the year. Surprisingly, there were no reports from the Rye Bay area for this period as it is often the most favoured site. [WGH]

Goldeneye*Bucephala clangula*

Scarce winter visitor: rare non-breeder 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	17	52	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	28
Chichester Hbr	6	20	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	16
Pagham Hbr	5	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Barcombe Res	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Bay	5	17	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	11

In January there were higher counts at Chichester Hbr of 12 on 11 Jan and 15 on the 22nd. The last birds of the first winter period were singles at Rye Hbr on 28 Mar, at Bewl Water on 21 Apr and in Pagham Hbr on 11 May. Although three weeks later than the 10-year average date this is the fourth year this century with a May last date. The WeBS data is a good reflection of a reasonably good year for the species in the first winter with the cold weather in February clearly highlighted.

The first three returning birds were recorded at Pagham Hbr on 27 Oct, followed by ones or twos at ten suitable sites. In November the peak count was six at Pagham Hbr on the 29th and in December, the peak count at any individual site was 13 at Fishbourne Channel (Chichester Hbr).

Records from sites not shown in the WeBS table included: two at Chichester GP on 7 Jan, one on the Adur at Shoreham on 9 and 16 Feb, one at Weir Wood Res on 28 Oct, one at Arlington Res on 11 Jan, one at Shinewater Lake (Eastbourne) on 16 Dec and at Bewl Water singles on 7 Jan, 12 Mar and 21 Apr with two there on 13 Feb.

There were rather few records offshore with one at Worthing on 1 Jan, two there on 4 Feb, and four at Winchelsea Beach on 6 Feb. The only offshore movements were singles past Birling Gap on 25 Mar and west past Selsey Bill on 6 Nov. [WGH]

Hooded Merganser*Lophodytes cucullatus*

Very rare vagrant.

A first winter bird which frequented the North Wall area of Pagham Hbr from 30 Oct to 17 Nov was the first record for the county (R & S Coyne, OM, DRS *et al.*). The species breeds from southern Alaska, across southern Canada and northern USA as far south as Oregon and Virginia and winters across the southern USA. The record has been accepted by BBRC as only the seventh record for Britain which resulted in observers from many parts of the country visiting the area to see the bird. An account of the finding of the bird appears on page 223 of this report. [DHH]



Hooded Merganser; Pagham Harbour, November 2012 (Dorian Mason)

Smew

Mergellus albellus

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

2012 was an average year for this species. The only regular site was again Rye Hbr where the first bird of the year was on 31 Jan. During a brief cold weather period in mid-February up to 17 birds were recorded at nine sites, although only three were adult males. The highest counts were seven at Rye Hbr on the 12th and 13th and five redheads that flew east at Birling Gap on the 17th.

Other sightings included single redheads in Pagham Hbr between 5 and 26 Feb, Prince's Park (Eastbourne) on 6 Feb, Burton MP on 9 and 14 Feb, Bewl Water on 12 Feb, and at Cuckmere Haven from 11 to 17 Feb. One at Scotney GP on 11 Feb and four there on the 12th may have come from nearby Rye Hbr. The last bird of the first winter period was an adult female at Thorney Island between 23 Feb and 3 Mar.

Two redheads arrived at Rye Bay on 11 Dec and increased to three plus an adult male on 29 Dec were the only records at the end of the year. [WGH]

Red-breasted Merganser

Mergus serrator

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

The monthly WeBS counts at three principal sites were as given in the table below. Chichester Hbr remains by far the most important onshore wintering site with birds dispersed widely at

various locations within the harbour complex. While the WeBS count at Pagham Hbr includes birds offshore these are not always readily visible on the set WeBS dates. The regular offshore flocks at Church Norton which peaked at 44 on 20 Feb and 30 on 30 Nov, are almost certainly included in the offshore counts at Selsey Bill. As shown in the table below, the Selsey Bill/Church Norton, Climping and Worthing areas hold the bulk of the offshore wintering birds in the county. The total for this general wintering area is likely to be around 300, with, as usual, a considerable amount of interchange between favoured sites, as evidenced by the numbers of passing birds recorded.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	138	102	221	6	1	-	-	-	-	5	109	180
Chichester Hbr	136	66	217	6	1	-	-	-	-	1	104	154
Pagham Hbr	2	25	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	5	22
Goring Gap	nc	10	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	4

Further east the species is much scarcer; apart from those recorded moving past Birling Gap, they were recorded at only two wide sites: Widewater (Lancing)/Shoreham Hbr and Rye Bay. At the former site there were up to two on 6 to 8 Jan and, between 23 Nov and 28 Dec, a peak count of 12. At Rye Bay there were single birds on 8 Jan and, later, 28 Oct and three on 3 Nov.

The approximate monthly totals of birds, flight directions and peak count offshore at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	7	57	126	49	3		1	11	40
	W	14	103	87	27	5		28	82	85
	o/s	25	20	30	5	-		-	20	20
	Hr	18	18	61	181	134		20	29	37
Climping	E	-	-	-	-	-		-	12	-
	W	20	-	-	-	-		-	6	-
	o/s	5	32	31	-	-		-	14	-
	Hr	16	9	25	-	-		-	?	-
Worthing	E	10	1	3	9	-		3	5	12
	W	7	-	-	7	-		3	21	5
	o/s	60	119	60	2	-		1	1	20
	Hr	22	33	35	55	-		30	24	30
Splash Point	E	8	4	40	32	5		-	-	-
	W	4	1	7	-	-		-	-	-
	Hr	27	4	46	110	44		-	-	-
Birling Gap	E	-	10	17	14	5		-	-	-
	W	-	-	1	-	-		-	-	-
	Hr	-	12	23	54	34		-	-	-

During the first winter period the highest day count was 119 offshore at Worthing on 9 Feb and in Chichester Hbr, 49 at West Chidham on 10 Mar. Eastwards spring passage was largely over by 15 Apr with the last four stragglers seen in Chichester Hbr on 16 May and 1 E past Birling Gap on 19 May.

The first returning birds were 1 W at Worthing on 28 Sep, 1 E at Splash Point on 8 Oct, one offshore at Worthing on the 11th, 1 W at Climping and another at Pilsey Island on the 13th and three offshore at Church Norton on the 14th. The peak counts for the month were 14 at Pilsey Island on the 26th and 28W at Selsey Bill on the 28th.

During the second winter period the highest day counts were 39 W at Selsey Bill on 6 Nov and, in Chichester Hbr, 30 at Pilsey Island on the 29th and at East Head on the 30th. The only records from East Sussex during the second winter period were one in Rye Bay on 28 Oct and three there on 8 Nov. There were no inland or over summering records this year. [WGH]

Goosander

Mergus merganser

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

The approximate monthly totals were as given in the table below. The species was recorded on 21 dates between 1 Jan and 27 Feb from 20 well distributed sites. The table shows there was evidence of a short-lived cold weather influx in February and all the highest, and only double figure, counts were from East Sussex and may have involved some of the same birds. These included 12 seen flying downstream at Wet Level (E Rother) on the Sussex/Kent county border on 13 Jan, 12 (including six adult males) on the Royal Military Canal north of Rye on 9 Feb, 14 (six males) at Rye Hbr on the 11th and 18 in Rye Bay on the 13th. Three, including two males, on 12 Feb was the only record from Barcombe Res. In the Lower Ouse Valley there were two males at Piddinghoe on 8 and 10 Feb, five males there on 12 Feb, and a redhead at Newhaven on 17 Feb. Arlington Res hosted five on 7 and 10 Feb with a single male on 12 Feb and at Shinewater (Eastbourne) there were two redheads on 5 and 16 Feb. In West Sussex single redheads was seen at Chichester GP on 5 Feb and at Petworth Park on 2 and 20 Feb. On the Adur there were two males and a redhead on the Steyning Levels on 9 Feb and possibly the same two males further north at Shermanbury the day before. On the Lower Adur at Shoreham there were four, including a male, on 11 Feb. Offshore, the only records were a redhead west off Splash Point (Seaford) on 10 Jan and one off Goring on 12 Feb. The last bird of the first winter period was a redhead in Rye Bay on 27 Feb although a redhead flew east off Selsey Bill on 14 Jun. This is the latest spring record in the county and only the second June record after a redhead spent much of the summer at Bewl Water in 1987.

Jan	Feb		Jun		Nov	Dec
20	51		1		2	4

The only summer record was, most unusually, a single redhead east off Selsey Bill on 14 Jun. In the second winter period the first birds were recorded at both Arlington Res and Weir Wood Res on 18 Nov, unlikely to have been the same individual. There was a male at Petworth Park on 3 Dec with a pair there from the 8th to the 15th and a male again on the 17th. The Lower Cuckmere hosted one on 4 Dec followed by one at Ardingly Res on 13 Dec. [WGH]

Ruddy Duck

Oxyura jamaicensis

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

Ruddy Duck were only recorded regularly at two sites. At the West Sussex location, from a count of eight on 1 Jan numbers increased to a peak of 16 on 22 Jan but then dropped to four on

9 Feb and only two for most months until September; there were five on 2 Nov and three on 8 Dec. At the East Sussex location the highest count was of seven on 2 and 15 Jan which dropped to three on 26 Feb and then no more than two in most months until August when there were ten on the 14th involving a male, two females and seven young, which was the only record of successful breeding this year. The next highest counts there were of five on 9 and 30 Sep and three on 5 Oct which may have been remnants of this group. No more than one or two were recorded on other dates until the end of the year.

Elsewhere there was one at Arundel WWT on five dates from 2 Mar to 9 Apr, one at Pagham Hbr on 23 Jul and one at Arlington Res on 30 Sep. [WGH]

Red-legged Partridge

Alectoris rufa

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

This species was recorded from 88 tetrads, rather more than for its congener, the Grey Partridge. During the first winter period, the highest counts were 18 at Lower Standean on 12 Jan and 15 at Compton on 8 Feb.

Between April and June, the highest count was a minimum of 40 at West Dean on 16 Apr. Breeding was confirmed at only two locations: The Burgh (Burpham) and Barcombe. In the latter case, a nest containing pheasant and partridge eggs was located but, sadly, this unusual nest was later found to have been predated. Breeding was probable in only seven tetrads. Only one chick was recorded, with its parents on 23 Jun at The Burgh.

In the second half of the year, the largest count, of almost certainly captive-bred birds, was 130 at Lower Standean on 17 Sep. The next highest count was 25 at Sidlesham Ferry Pool on 30 Sep. Elsewhere, double figures were only recorded at Clayton Windmills (17 on 9 Sep), Pagham Hbr (20 on 30 Sep and 15 Oct), The Burgh (10 on 21 Oct), Highdown (Worthing) (12 on 27 Oct) and Rodmell (15 on 23 Nov). [PRJH]

Grey Partridge

Perdix perdix

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

This species was recorded from only 57 tetrads, mainly in the west of the county. During the first winter period, the highest count was 50 at The Burgh (Burpham) on 2 Jan, a site which held the highest numbers during January. Elsewhere, the only sites where ten or more birds were recorded were: Lidsey Rife (Barnham), 15 on 6 Jan; Atherington (Climping), 14 on the 23rd; Patcham, 12 on 21 Feb; Stocks Fm (Pett Level), ten on 9 Mar; Peppering Fm (Norfolk Estate), 16 on 2 Mar; and Stocks Fm, where 10 were noted on 9 Mar, with the comment that they had not been seen there before and may have been set down by the local landowner.

Breeding was confirmed only at Pulborough Brooks and Amberley Wild Brooks, with one pair each, Rye Hbr, where at least six pairs bred, and the Norfolk Estate (which includes The Burgh and Peppering Fm), where 377 pairs were recorded as breeding but where chick survival rates declined from 60% the previous year to only 17%, due to the poor weather impacting on the availability of insect food in May and June. During the autumn and second winter periods, the highest count was 150 at The Burgh on 11 Nov. [PRJH]

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.

After last year's bumper crop of records and sites, things returned to "normal" in 2012. There were possibly a minimum of 15 birds from eight sites. The first returning bird was recorded on 12 May near Cissbury Ring, 13 days later than in 2012, and just five days earlier than the ten-year average date.



Quail, Cissbury Ring, July 2012 (Dave Sadler)

Most sites were on downland, with Cissbury Ring and The Burgh (Burpham) holding the majority of birds. The highest count was three at three different sites: The Burgh (Burpham) where males were heard singing; near Cissbury Ring on 27 Jul and 4 Aug where three birds were heard singing from one of the fields NE of the escarpment; Rodmell on 29 May where three were heard singing from a crop field, a typical habitat. Single birds were recorded at Findon on 23 and 27 May, at Alfriston on 15 Jul, Rushlake Green on 3 Jun and Pevensy Levels on 8 Jul. Once again, breeding could not be confirmed, but was probable in one tetrad.

Two birds were trapped at Pett Level, the first on 24 Jul and the last bird of the year on 15 Sep, a week later than the ten-year average date but three weeks earlier than last year's date of 7 Oct. [PRJH]

Common Pheasant

Phasianus colchicus

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

This widespread species was recorded in 382 tetrads across the county. The highest counts in the first winter period were 33 at Graffham Down on 17 Feb and 25 at Pipers Copse (Northchapel) on 28 Feb. During the early SWBS a total of 266 was recorded from 54 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed.

Breeding was confirmed in only seven tetrads and was probable in a further 16. The only notable breeding reports involved predated egg shells noted at West Dean on 16 Apr, at Goddards Green on 1 May and Cowfold on the 7th and a hen with at least eight very young chicks was seen at Sefter Fm (Rose Green) on 7 May.

The highest count in the autumn was 32 at Pagham Hbr on 3 Sep and in the second winter period, 40 at Rodmell on 11 Nov and 57 at Cocking on 18 Nov. During the late SWBS a total of 312 was recorded from 56 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed. [PRJH]

Red-throated Diver

Gavia stellata

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

The estimated annual total of 1909 was under half of last year's figure of 4040 and also below the 10-year rolling average of 1921.

The estimates of monthly totals are shown in the table below. In line with previous reports, the estimates for this species (and the next two) have been made as follows: the largest daily counts of birds moving either west or east at coastal sites have been totalled and added to the largest 'offshore' records together with inland records.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
591	554	189	78	18	1	-	-	6	13	52	407

The monthly totals for coastal passage recorded at five seawatching sites together with the estimated totals for all seawatching records were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Monthly total*</i>	471	326	162	58	17	1		4	8	44	265
Selsey Bill	107	24	20	29	12	-		3	3	7	164
Worthing	98	103	37	4	9	1		-	4	25	126
Telscombe Cliffs	46	129	43	2	-	-		-	1	25	76
Splash Point	136	33	89	18	4	-		-	-	3	26
Birling Gap	345	274	90	26	9	-		1	-	-	19

*adjusted to compensate for duplication

Although the year started well with 91 W off Birling Gap on 1 Jan, numbers were generally low throughout the first winter period. During this time the only three-figure count was of 140

E past Birling Gap on 13 Feb with the highest March count being just 27 E off Splash Point on the 3rd. The overall figures were boosted by 114 off Bexhill on 11 Jan and 200 in Rye Bay on 19 Feb although this latter figure had reduced to 34 by 18 Mar. In contrast, the largest offshore concentration in the west of the county was of only 11 off Selsey Bill on 12 Feb.

Spring passage was extremely light with the only double-figure count being of 10 E off Birling Gap on 26 Apr. In addition, 20 remained in Rye Bay until 8 Apr. An unusual record involved 1 E past Worthing Beach on 9 Jun.

The first record of a returning bird was of one at Scotney Court GP on 16 Sep. Numbers remained uncharacteristically low with no double-figure counts until after the first week of December following which the maxima were 32 W off Worthing Beach on the 8th, 26 W past Telscombe Cliffs on the 12th and a total of 67 W off Selsey Bill during the period 27th – 29th. The totals were again boosted by the numbers of birds offshore in Rye Bay where eight on 18 Nov rose in December from 34 on the 4th to 140 on the 10th.

There were just six birds recorded away from the open sea or tidal harbours: one at Scotney Court GP on 16 Sep, one at Pett Level on 30 Sep with three at that site on 28 Oct and one at Cuckmere Haven on 30 Oct. [DHH]

Black-throated Diver

Gavia arctica

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

The estimated total of 166 was the highest since 2003 and also above the 10-year rolling average of 132. The estimates of monthly totals are shown in the table below:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Oct	Nov	Dec
17	9	8	66	49		2	6	9

The monthly totals for coastal passage recorded at five seawatching sites together with the estimated totals of all seawatching records were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total*	15	4	7	62	45		1	5	7
Selsey Bill	4	3	2	29	9		-	1	3
Worthing	7	1	-	4	5		1	3	3
Telscombe Cliffs	1	1	1	1	-		-	-	1
Splash Point	6	-	6	55	42		-	1	1
Birling Gap	1	-	-	29	9		-	-	-

*adjusted to compensate for duplication

Numbers during the first winter period were slightly down on those for the corresponding period last year. The largest coastal movement was of 4 W past Worthing on 7 Jan and the largest offshore count was of four in Rye Bay on 16 Feb.

Spring passage was light apart from significant counts on two dates; on 25 Apr there were 32 E off Splash Point and 27 E off Birling Gap. The next significant movement was on 7 May when

38 E were counted passing Splash Point. There were four records of four birds offshore: at Selsey Bill on 10 Apr and at both Rustington and Rottingdean on 7 May. The last spring record was of 1 E off Selsey Bill on 26 May.

The first returning bird was one offshore at Seaford Head on 3 Oct. Figures for the remainder of the year were low with most records involving only single birds. The exceptions were two in Rye Bay on 3 Dec and 2 E past Selsey Bill the following day. [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	Jun		Nov	Dec
Monthly total	4	4	8	11	5	1		8	4
Max. off Selsey Bill	4	4	7	9	5	1		5	3

Selsey Bill was again the major site for this species. It is assumed that birds seen moving off Selsey Bill were on feeding flights which in turn resulted in birds being recorded between Pagham and Chichester Harbours.

As in previous years, the numbers recorded off Selsey Bill during the first winter period varied from day to day with peak monthly counts of four on two dates in January, four on 12 Feb and seven during the last week of March. The only records away from Selsey were of one on the sea at Splash Point (Seaford) on 14 Mar and one offshore at Telscombe Cliffs the next day which may have been the same bird.

During the spring period the numbers at Selsey Bill peaked at nine on 6 Apr with five still present in the first week of May and a late bird offshore on 5 Jun. Single birds moving east past Telscombe Cliffs on 23 and 30 Apr were the only sightings away from the Selsey area.

The first returning bird was one off Church Norton on 6 Nov some 20 days later than the 10-year average. Five birds were present off Selsey Bill on 25 Nov but the December maximum was of only three on the 23rd and on the 27th. At Climbing Beach there were 2 W on 25 Nov and one offshore on 30 Nov. The only other record of this species away from the Selsey area during the second winter period was of 1 E at Splash Point on 15 Dec.

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

Diver species

The difficulties of identifying distant divers in flight have been mentioned in previous Sussex Bird Reports. In 2012 these difficulties resulted in one in six of all divers seen in flight being reported as ‘Diver spp’.

The numbers of divers recorded at five 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	63	24	233	176	59	5	365	205	0.9	2.3
Worthing	36	18	273	158	18	7	327	183	1.8	2.2
Telscombe Cliffs	12	10	220	103	4	1	236	114	2.0	2.6
Splash Point	212	28	280	29	109	3	601	60	2.6	2.6
Birling Gap	19	-	690	19	39	-	748	19	5.0	-

The totals for each site have been calculated by adding the monthly totals of birds recorded moving both east and west to the numbers seen on the sea. No allowance has been made for duplication at or between sites so the columns should not be totalled. [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.

The long sea outfall at Telscombe Cliffs again proved a major feeding area for this species with monthly maxima of 100 in January, 150 in April, 180 in May and 300 in June. The majority of the significant movements (all considered to be feeding movements) were also centred around this site. In the first winter period the largest such movement was of 162 W on 7 Mar.

No detailed survey of nesting birds was carried out but the overall numbers of birds present at the sea cliffs during the breeding season were broadly similar to those in 2011 with 23 between Brighton Marina and Rottingdean, two at Newhaven and 24 sitting birds at Cliff End (Pett Level). The largest movement recorded during the spring period in April was again at Telscombe Cliffs where there were 137 E on the 23rd with smaller movements of 42 W at Selsey Bill on the 28th and 55 E at Worthing on the 29th. This pattern was repeated in June with 269 W on the 8th and 119 E on the 16th past Telscombe Cliffs.

Numbers were low during the summer months with the maximum being 20 W at Selsey Bill on 27 Aug. The last bird left the breeding ledges at Telscombe Cliffs on 10 Sep and the only other records during September were of one off Hastings CP on the 14th and 1 E off Birling Gap on the 26th.

The first bird returned to the breeding ledges at Telscombe Cliffs on 30 Oct, eight days earlier than the 10-year average. Numbers remained low until the end of the year with 12 E off Birling Gap on 1 Dec and 24 at Cliff End on 9 Dec being the highest counts.

The only record of this species away from the open sea was of one flying over The Downs at Beeding Hill on 5 Jun. [DHH]

Cory's Shearwater

Calonectris diomedea

Rare vagrant.

One recorded flying east past Selsey Bill on 21 Apr (JA, SH) was the first county record since 2000. This record brings the county total to 21. [DHH]

Sooty Shearwater*Puffinus griseus**Very scarce autumn visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.*

A rather poor year for this species with just two records. In August one flew west past Selsey Bill on the 29th (CRJ, OM). The second record was also of a single bird, this time off Splash Point on 4 Nov (MRE, RCS). These records bring the total for this century up to 183. [DHH]

Manx Shearwater*Puffinus puffinus**Fairly common spring to autumn passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.*

2012 was an excellent year for sightings of this species with an estimated total of 487 birds recorded which is the highest annual total since 1999 and well above the 10-year average of 256. The monthly totals at five seawatching sites are shown below:

	Apr		May		Jun		Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct	
County totals*	128		2		228		107		11		10		1	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	32	78	-	2	58	35	7	84	3	5	2	3	-	-
Worthing	6	2	-	-	86	88	25	34	2	3	-	4	-	1
Telscombe Cliffs	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Splash Point	31	5	-	-	9	4	1	-	-	1	6	-	-	-
Birling Gap	21	-	-	-	4	5	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Other sites	-	-	-	-	-	2 [#]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

*adjusted to compensate for duplication using the same method as for Red-throated Diver; [#]2 W off Rottingdean

The first records of the year were on 8 Apr with 1 W and 5 E past Selsey Bill with 59 W at the same site the following day. The species was then recorded on a further 13 days in April with a peak on 25th when there were 20 E off Splash Point and 18 E past Birling Gap. Numbers were unusually low in May with only two single birds recorded. Maximum daily counts in June were 50 E and 1 W at Selsey Bill on the 3rd, 42 E and 4 W off Worthing Beach on the 11th and 7 E and 70 W at the latter location on the 24th. Significant counts in July included 5 E and 57 W off Selsey Bill and 4 E and 28 W past Worthing Beach on the 2nd and 20 E off Worthing Beach on the 8th. Up to four birds were recorded on six dates in August and five dates in September. The last record of the year was of 1 W off Worthing Beach on 18 Oct. [DHH]

Balearic Shearwater*Puffinus mauretanicus**Very scarce spring to autumn visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.*

A moderate year for records of this species with six sightings totalling 12 birds compared with 20 in 2011 but only six in 2010. The first of the year was 1 W off Worthing on 1 Jun (DIS). The next records all came from Splash Point and all involved birds moving westwards: two on 9 Jun,

one on 17 Jun and two on 13 Jul (RCS). The only September record involved a total of five (three plus two) moving east past Worthing on the 23rd (RAI, DIS). The final record of the year was of 1 W past Telscombe Cliffs on 20 Nov (DHH). [DHH]

Storm Petrel

Hydrobates pelagicus

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

With no records in 2010 and only one in 2011, three in three days this year was a welcome if modest increase. All three records came in June with one off Splash Point on the 8th (MRE), 1 W past Selsey Bill on the 9th (JA, PB *et al.*) and one photographed from a fishing boat off Selsey on the 10th (CW). [DHH]

Leach's Petrel

Oceanodroma leucorhoa

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

A single bird off Selsey Bill on 27 Dec (JA, SH) was the first record since 2009. [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 pattern of movements recorded differed from 2011 with numbers lower in the period Jan-Feb, higher in the periods Mar-May and Jun-Jul and broadly similar to last year's figures during Aug-Oct and Nov-Dec. The movements recorded at five seawatching sites are shown in the table below:

	Jan-Feb		Mar-May		Jun-Jul		Aug-Oct		Nov-Dec	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	146	469	4552	2145	2628	1411	799	711	93	549
Worthing	80	988	1699	458	594	500	725	1347	170	958
Telscombe Cliffs	554	612	834	142	182	51	390	315	62	172
Splash Point	107	241	2812	105	884	11	700	65	127	45
Birling Gap	751	555	2954	116	462	58	75	-	4	-

In the first two months of the year there were six dates with three-figure counts with the largest movements being 442 W at Birling Gap on 1 Jan and 375 W off Worthing on 18 Feb. The largest feeding party recorded in these two months was of 70 birds in Rye Bay on 25 Feb. Spring passage was light in March with a peak count of 180 E off Rock-a-Nore (Hastings) on the 4th. Significant numbers occurred during the last week of April with 650 E at Birling Gap on the 25th while Selsey Bill observers recorded 516 E on the 25th, 552 W on the 28th and 719 E on the 30th. Numbers continued to be high during May with ten dates with three-figure counts of which nine involved birds moving east. The highest count was of 294 birds feeding off Selsey Bill before moving off eastwards on 20 May.

During the first half of June the movements recorded at Selsey Bill, Splash Point (Seaford) and Birling Gap were predominantly eastwards with a peak count of 501 E at Selsey Bill on the 3rd. This pattern continued in July with 475E past Selsey Bill on the 7th. An interesting record involved 20 following trawlers off Ferring on 20 Jun. Also at Ferring, an adult bird was picked up on the beach and taken into care on 28 Jun.

In the Aug-Oct period what were assumed to be a combination of feeding movements and dispersal of birds from their breeding colonies included 350 E at Splash Point on 16 Aug, a total of 786 W past Worthing during September and 150 feeding off Selsey Bill on 24 Sep. Passage was light throughout November and it was not until the last week of the year that any significant westward movements took place with a peak count of 419 W at Worthing on 24 Dec.

The only record of a bird away from the open sea was of one feeding in Chichester Hbr on 6 Jun. [DHH]

Cormorant

Phalacrocorax carbo

Fairly common but localised resident and common winter visitor.

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	524	526	533	671	711	637	428	710	670	910	667	654
Chichester Hbr	30	10	23	8	6	11	21	37	49	88	54	46
Pagham Hbr	159	239	87	69	56	59	99	106	49	115	75	103
Chichester GP	23	18	78	262	209	139	nc	7	48	76	14	57
Climping	32	24	2	4	1	2	1	-	6	20	63	11
Arun (S of Arundel)	5	14	7	13	12	17	12	11	6	13	46	8
Arun Valley	11	33	-	1	-	3	6	9	2	10	10	11
Weir Wood Res	34	18	33	12	10	15	34	40	38	43	43	33
Ouse Valley	20	10	36	2	2	nc	6	12	16	12	13	31
Barcombe Res	12	3	1	1	-	6	2	10	77	9	11	5
Pevensey Levels	27	8	22	4	16	nc	nc	nc	17	13	49	31
Wadhurst Park	3	10	5	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	57	8	4
Bewl Water	15	12	11	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	32	41	12	40
Rye Bay	90	18	193	263	368	349	198	431	239	306	186	142

Counts at Rye Hbr in May and August, and almost in June bar one bird, exceeded the 1% threshold of 350 for a site of national importance for this species.

Monthly totals at two of the major seawatching sites were as follows:

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	-	31	-	-	-	-	53	6	-	-	27	-
	W	36	-	-	-	-	-	79	20	-	-	14	38
Worthing	E	8	7	16	7	7	3	33	-	3	55	3	-
	W	-	11	1	14	9	19	71	-	25	35	77	26

Although this species is not recorded meticulously the above numbers are a significant reduction on those for 2011 for reasons which are unclear. During the first winter period Chichester, Pagham and Rye Harbours, Selsey Bill and Weir Wood Res harboured flocks larger than fifty. The largest counts were 208 at Pagham Hbr on 12 Feb, 172 at Chichester GPs on the 17th and 171 at Rye Hbr on 11 Mar. Smaller groups were seen across the county all through the year. During the early SWBS a total of 57 was recorded from 20 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed.



Cormorant, Weir Wood Reservoir, August 2012 (Derek Washington)

Breeding was confirmed from five tetrads and was probable in a further one. Two large colonies were recorded: at New Lake (Chichester GPs) c. 130 nests were counted and 161 nests were counted at Rye Hbr. At least 21 nests were noted at Iford Brooks. Juveniles were recorded at Arundel WWT, Weir Wood Res, Arlington Res and Iden.

Throughout the rest of the year large concentrations remained at Chichester and Pagham Harbours, Pett Level and Rye Hbr. Notable groups during the summer months were of 97 and 98 seen at Worthing on 14 Jul and Pagham Hbr on 19 Aug, respectively. The largest flock of the year, 415 birds, was seen at Rye Hbr on 19 Aug. The only reports of roosting were of 12 at Weir Wood Res on 23 Aug, ten at Arlington Res on the 27th, 42 on pylons at Rodmell on 8 Nov and 27 at Barcombe Res on 2 Dec. During the autumn, the highest count at Rye Hbr was 204 on 6 Sep and at Pagham Hbr 129 on 23 Oct. During the second winter period large numbers continued to be seen at Pagham and Rye Harbours; the highest count was 200 at Pagham Hbr on 2 Dec.

Elsewhere, 67 birds were recorded offshore at Brooklands (Worthing) on 6 Dec, a flock of 63 was seen at Climping Gap on 16 Nov and a group of 59 at Steyning Levels on 21 Nov. During the late SWBS a total of only 16 was recorded from ten of the 107 1-km squares surveyed. [RJE]

Shag

Phalacrocorax aristotelis

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

Some 66% of records for the year came from Selsey Bill. Monthly sightings there and at all other coastal sites were as follows:

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total		17	22	21	33	17	1	-	4	5	4	5	6
Selsey Bill	E	7	18	12	10	10	-	-	-	2	1	1	1
	W	2	1	1	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	o/s	6	1	6	5	4	1	-	-	1	1	1	2
Other sites	E	-	-	1	2	2	-	-	2	-	-	1	-
	W	1	-	1	2	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-
	o/s	1	2	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	3	3

The county totals shown in the above table may be greater than the true number of different individuals as the numbers noted offshore may relate to the same bird seen on different days. Furthermore it is likely that birds seen passing Selsey Bill, particularly in the early months, may be feeding nearby as movements are not observed further along the coast. Most observations at Selsey Bill involve up to four birds but six (4 E and two o/s) were seen on 1 Jan, 19 (18 E and one o/s) on 5 Feb and five on both 11 and 18 Mar. In May five were also seen on two occasions, on the 4th and 19th. During the remainder of the year all sightings were of single birds from six different coastal sites.

An immature bird observed on 9 Oct at Brighton Marina wearing a red lettered ring had been ringed as a chick on the Farne Islands (Northumberland) on 8 Aug 2012. Since most Shags from that area stay to winter in the northeast a sighting at Brighton was of interest to the organisers of the colour ringing project. [RJE]



Eurasian Bittern, Rye Harbour, February 2012 (Dave Sadler)

Eurasian Bittern

Botaurus stellaris

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

A poorer year than 2011, with only eight in January and a maximum of 13 birds seen in February and lower numbers in the second half of the year. The only locations with sightings for more than one month during the year were Chichester GPs, Arundel WWT, Burton MP, Warnham LNR, Shinewater Lake (Eastbourne), Pett Level and Rye Hbr, though this may reflect greater observer coverage of these sites. Monthly counts at these and other sites were as given in the table below.

A bird seen in a 30-m square patch of reeds at Edburton between 3 and 5 March was an unusually late sighting at a new site. A booming bird was heard intermittently at Rye Hbr from early March to 13 Apr, but it was not heard subsequently and breeding was not suspected.

The first bird of the autumn turned up at Rye Hbr on 11 Oct and was seen through November. No further reports were received until 8 Dec when two were seen at Arlington Res and one at Combe Haven. Perhaps two of these went to Rye Hbr and joined the solitary one from November because on 12 Dec there were three there, but only one from the 15th to the 21st. Other new arrivals on the 30th were single birds at Arundel WWT and Burton MP. [AH]

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	8	13	5	1			1	1	1	2	2	8
Chichester GP	1	1	1									
Arundel WWT		1										1
Burton MP	1	1										1
Warnham LNR	1	1										
Shinewater Lake (Eastbourne)		3	2									
Pett Level	1	2	1				1	1	1	1	1	
Rye Hbr	3	3	2	1						1	1	3
Other sites	1	5	1									3
Pagham Hbr		1										
Beeding Brooks												1
Edburton			1									
Danehill Furners Green		2										
Cuckmere Haven		2										
Arlington Res												2
Pevensey Levels	1											
Combe Haven												1

Night Heron

Nycticorax nycticorax

Rare vagrant.

Following last year's single bird, a solitary adult was recorded, at Pulborough Brooks on 23 May (mo), but for only the one day. The arrival date was typical for this species; of all dated records, 65% of arrivals have been in the three months, April, May and June, with May arrivals being the most frequent. [JAH]

Squacco Heron

Ardeola ralloides

Very rare vagrant.

One photographed at Seaford on 21 Jun (JA, PA) could not be relocated despite some extensive searching. The record has been accepted by BBRC and is the eighth county record with the last being at Pett Level on 10 Jun 2000. Previous records have been in Apr (1), Jun (4), Jul (1) and Sep (1). [DHH]

Cattle Egret

Bubulcus ibis

Very rare vagrant.

The first for the year was one watched in a field at Bishopstone (Seaford) on 7 Feb (RCS) before it flew off towards Newhaven, not to be seen again apparently. The second record was of one watched at Down Level (Pevensey) on 24 Apr (CFB) for several minutes before it flew towards Rickney. This was a typical spring arrival as 45% of the dated records are for April to May. These two bring the total since 2000 (inclusive) to 51 and a county total of a minimum of 58 since 1962. [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.

Birds were recorded from 127 tetrads this year. 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	61	44	101	56	91	78	128	157	300	155	136	82
Chichester Hbr	44	20	65	29	37	17	36	46	132	71	61	36
Medmerry	3	2	1	2	-	3	nc	2	4	1	2	1
Pagham Harbour	-	5	8	11	15	15	28	47	91	33	16	3
Arun Valley	-	-	5	5	9	25	35	11	2	-	4	4
Lancing Widewater	5	4	4	1	3	3	3	6	6	4	4	1
Ouse Valley	1	3	-	1	4	5	4	9	9	10	5	4
Cuckmere Haven	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	24	3	7	8
Pevensy Levels	-	-	-	-	3	nc	nc	nc	1	1	13	2
Bowl Water	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	1	1	5
Rye Bay	5	4	14	3	14	4	9	14	20	29	18	15

In addition to these totals, the January maximum count at Rye Hbr was 18, and a flock of ten was seen on Pevensy Levels on 13 Jan, an unusually high number for this site.

This was the best year to date for this species breeding in Sussex. During the breeding season 44-45 nests were counted at eight sites as follows: Old Park Wood (Bosham) 14, North Wall (Pagham Hbr) 7, Applesham (Coombes) 8, Henfield 0, Southease (R Ouse) 5, Charleston 7, Lusteds (Glynleigh) 1, Winchelsea 2-3. Breeding was confirmed at Hoe Farm (Flansham) but no count was made. There was no count at Glynleigh Decoy Wood or at Pebsham Wood.

There was the usual autumn influx of birds passing through. Counts significantly higher than the WeBS were 15 in the Lower Adur Valley on 13 Aug, 13 at Goring Gap on 21 Sep and the same number at Ferring on 25 Oct, 12 roosting at Coombes on 16 Jul and 11 at Beeding Brooks also on the 16th. Maximum counts at Cuckmere Haven were 25 in Aug, 28 in Sep and 27 in Oct. The Worthing seawatching log recorded 14 on the beach on 16 Sep, rising to 17 on the 20th, with nine still there on 24 Oct.

Counts of roosts were also much less complete than usual this year, the only ones received are shown below, and are well below the numbers of recent years.

	Aug	Oct	Dec
Thorney Deepes	-	75	-
Rye Hbr	49	24	22

Inland, observers at Warnham LNR recorded up to three in every month except May, June and August, with two also regularly seen at nearby Broadbridge Heath from Jan to Apr. A group of five at Bowl Water on 24 Dec was more unusual, as was one on Ashdown Forest on 27 Nov. At

Pulborough Brooks numbers built up from three in January to a spring peak of 11 on 28 May, fell again to five in June and then rapidly increased again to an autumn peak of 30 on 2 July, and back again to no more than two from September onwards. [CJRB]



Little Egret, Bewl Water, November 2012 (Malcolm Freeman)

Great White Egret

Ardea alba

Rare vagrant.

The first record for the year was of one at Thorney Island from 2 to 11 Feb (CBC). A second individual, an adult, was at Lewes Brooks on 29 Apr to 1 May (DC, JFC) which prompted the comment that the observer 'could not recall summer plumaged GWE in the county'. An adult, possibly the same bird, was seen roosting with two Little Egrets at Pulborough Brooks on 12 Jun (RA, PHH).

In October, one was seen and photographed at Church Norton (AH) and it, or another non-breeding adult or immature bird was seen flying east at Telscombe Cliffs on the 15th (DHH). The next sighting was of one at Rye Hbr on 8 Dec (BJY) and Pett Level the next day (PR). Presumably the same bird was then seen at Telscombe Cliffs flying east on the 10th (DHH) and then back at Rye Hbr where there were two on the 12th (SS). Both were seen there on the 13th but by the 23rd only one remained which was seen again at Pett Level on the 23rd, 27th and 29th. Assuming there were five different birds (Feb (1), Apr and Jun (1), Oct (1), Dec (2)) the county total for this century moves to 42 and the county total since the first record in 1985 to 46. [JAH]

Grey Heron

Ardea cinerea

Fairly common resident.

Grey Herons were recorded from 229 tetrads 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	84	70	108	65	83	69	105	107	105	136	114	79
Chichester Hbr	14	6	12	3	10	2	9	5	15	13	17	8
Pagham Hbr	2	6	6	4	5	7	6	9	3	9	6	3
Chichester GP	8	-	2	2	-	2	nc	2	2	1	1	-
Arun Valley	9	7	10	8	9	26	30	21	15	25	7	7
Ardingly Res	nc	1	-	1	-	nc	4	nc	3	1	3	5
Weir Wood Res	5	8	35	24	32	5	16	16	7	6	4	5
Ouse Valley	8	-	3	1	4	4	nc	nc	3	7	7	4
Cuckmere Haven	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	4	3	7
Pevensey Levels	1	9	7	nc	3	nc	nc	nc	7	7	15	6
Bowl Water	2	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	10	15	9	5
Darwell Res	-	-	nc	nc	1	-	1	nc	7	3	nc	nc
Rye Bay	11	16	8	4	6	5	12	15	10	17	16	11

Significant counts additional to the WeBS counts came from two sites: 28 at Weir Wood Res on 1 Apr, 35 there on 12 May and 44 there on 23 Aug and 33 at Warnham LNR on 8 Feb.

During the breeding season 235 nests were counted at 31 sites (cf. 240 nests in 2011). Counts for individual heronries, listed from west to east, were as follows: Westbourne nc, Forest Mere 4, Fishbourne 5, Owl Copse (Pagham) 6, Church Norton 3, New Pond (Midhurst) 1, Flansham 10, Warningcamp 1, Parham 9, Angmering 1, Knepp 3, Warnham 13, Henfield 3, Coombes 4, Cophall Wood (Ifield) 1, Burgess Hill 2, Ardingly nc, Weir Wood Res 27, Rodmell 7, Firle 9, Hempstead Wood (Uckfield) 2, Charleston 8, Hadlow Down 10, Eridge 14, Hampden Park (Eastbourne) 3, Glynleigh 20, Wadhurst Park 3, Horsebridge Road (Wartling) 9, Burwash 14, near Icklesham 2, Winchelsea 16, Leasam 25.

The sites at Ifield and near Icklesham are new, with the latter nest in a rookery. Some of the counts are estimates, where access was either difficult or denied. Away from the heronries, large reservoirs and harbours, most reports during the rest of the year are of single birds or two or three birds at ponds, streams and marshy areas.

A leucistic Grey Heron was observed at Bowl Water and is the subject of a separate article on page 264. [ABW]

Purple Heron*Ardea purpurea**Rare vagrant. Schedule 1 species.*

The only record was of one seen and photographed at The Severals (Church Norton) on 4 Jun (MD, IMcK). This record raises the total for 2000-2012 inclusive to eight and the county total to 56. [JAH]

Black Stork*Ciconia nigra**Rare vagrant.*

One in flight over West Burton Hill on 17 Jul was seen by two visiting observers (HJC, WJC). This is the thirteenth record for the county and has been accepted by BBRC. [DHH]



White Storks, Fontwell, May 2012 (Dorian Mason)

White Stork*Ciconia ciconia**Rare vagrant; mainly in the spring.*

The year 2012 was exceptional for White Storks with at least 13 recorded in the county during the year. Individuals and parties of up to five birds toured around Sussex and visited other counties too. The first was one which was seen at Pett Level, The Burgh and Warnham on 19, 20 and 21 Apr respectively (SC *et al.*). This was followed by another single bird at Broadford Bridge (West Chiltington) on 1 May (BM).

On 2 May five birds, previously recorded in Oxfordshire, were seen flying west over Littlehampton (CWM) and then at Church Norton and West Wittering where they turned back and circled over Pagham Hbr for two hours (IML *et al.*). The following day they were relocated, feeding near Fontwell, where they remained until departing north-eastwards in the early afternoon before veering southeast over Eartham Wood (JS). These birds then visited Dorset and four of them made a circuitous journey to Derbyshire. Also on 3 May, two were seen at Rye Hbr LNR (MRE, RCS) with probably the same two birds recorded over Telscombe Tye the following day (STM) before they moved on to Kent.

A further single was recorded at Pulborough Brooks on 11 May (AA) with possibly the same bird over Ashdown Forest two days later (MS-H). Two were then seen in the Pulborough Brooks and Arundel area from 13–16 May (JD, JW *et al.*). It is possible that these two were the same birds as those seen earlier in the month at Rye and which left Kent on 13 May. On 20 Jun three were located at Lidsey where they remained until the 24th (ARK, AS *et al.*). The following day they were recorded over Worthing (NLB) and Cissbury Ring. Three days later they were seen again, this time over Angmering and Pulborough Brooks (AA). Finally, on the last day of June they were seen over Pulborough Brooks, Pagham Harbour and Stoughton (RW *et al.*). The total number of records this century jumps to 35. [JAH, DHH]



Glossy Ibis, Pagham North Wall, May 2012 (Dorian Mason)

Glossy Ibis

Plegadis falcinellus

Rare vagrant.

There were numerous reports of this species during 2012, in a year when over 130 were recorded in Britain from as far afield as the Isle of Eigg and the Isles of Scilly. It is difficult to

establish precisely how many birds were involved in the Sussex sightings but it is probable that the minimum was six and the maximum eight bringing the county total to approximately 59.

The first record was of one at Barnham on 11 Feb (AL) followed by another single bird at Cuckmere Haven two days later (MRE). Two were at Pagham Hbr North Wall on 6 May (MDS, JSW *et al.*) with at least one seen regularly throughout May and then intermittently until 26 Aug. Also in May there were single birds at Rodmell on the 21st and 24th (STM) with possibly the same bird at Horse Eye Level on the 23rd (TPF). One at Pett Level on 23 and 24 May (IDH, DO) increased to two on the 25th and 26th (RCS *et al.*) with the second bird possibly being that from Horse Eye Level. All the records have been accepted by BBRC. [DHH]

Spoonbill

Platelia leucorodia

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

Slightly fewer birds were recorded than last year, with sightings relating to a minimum of 26 individuals, though more lingered than last year at favoured sites. It was difficult to assess exactly how many individuals were present, particularly in March, when birds appeared to be wandering along the coast.

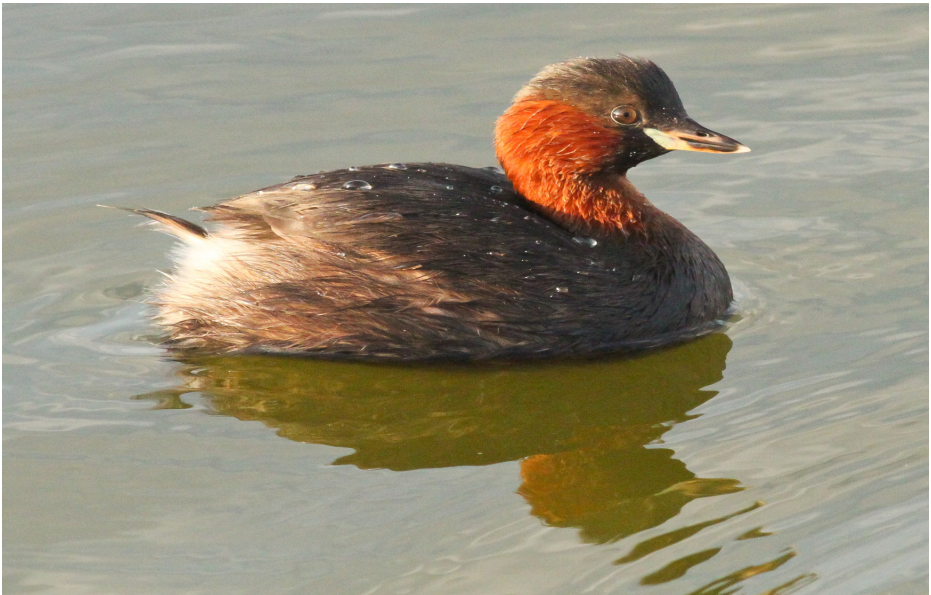
The estimated minimum numbers at the principal sites were as follows (Western Hbrs: Chichester and Pagham Hbrs and Selsey Bill; other coastal sites: Climping, Ferring, Worthing, Shoreham and St. Leonards; Rye Bay: Pett Level and Rye Hbr):

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun		Sep	Oct	Nov
County total	13	1	1	1		2	10	7
Western Hbrs	3	1	-	-		1	4	1
Pulborough Brooks	-	-	-	1		-	-	-
Cuckmere Haven	2	-	-	-		-	-	-
Rye Bay	2	-	1	-		1	1	-
Other coastal sites	6	-	-	-		-	5	6

The first bird of the year was seen at Pagham Hbr on 3 Mar. The next were two at Cuckmere Haven on the 19th, another two immature birds flying west at Rye Hbr on the 20th and regular sightings of two at the North Wall area of Pagham Hbr from 20 to 22 Mar. The possibility that these were the same birds cannot be dismissed. Following the sighting at Pagham Hbr, a group of three was seen flying east past Climping Gap, Ferring and Worthing also on the 22nd with the possibility that these included the two from Pagham Hbr and, possibly, the one seen on 3 Mar which had, meanwhile, gone missing. The next sightings were of a single bird flying east at St. Leonards on the 24th, possibly one of the former, 1 E at Selsey Bill on the same day followed on the 28th by 2 E at Climping Gap; the origins of these are uncertain. Paradoxically, one turned up at Pagham Hbr also on the 28th and stayed to the 31st. The last April sighting was of one at Pagham Hbr on 12 Apr. In May, one visited Rye Hbr from the 26th to the 27th and in June another individual stayed at Pulborough Brooks from the 5th to the 8th.

In the autumn, a single bird at Pett Level from 20 to 25 Sep was presumably the same bird seen at Rye Hbr from 27 to 29 Sep and again on 9 Oct. Another single bird was at Pagham Hbr from 30 Sep till 5 Oct but then disappeared; perhaps it was the one which turned up at Rye Hbr on the 9th. There then followed a group of four birds which took up residence at Pagham Hbr from 10 to 14

Oct. Whether these were part of a group of birds seen on the R Adur at Shoreham on three spaced dates, six on 9 Oct, five on 24 Oct and six on 4 Nov, is debatable, but these were the biggest counts of the year. The final sighting was of another single bird on Thorney Island on 19 Nov. [AH]



Little Grebe, Rye Harbour, August 2012 (Barry Yates)

Little Grebe

Tachybaptus ruficollis

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

Little Grebes were recorded from 86 tetrads across the county in suitable habitats. The monthly WeBS counts at the principal sites were as follows:

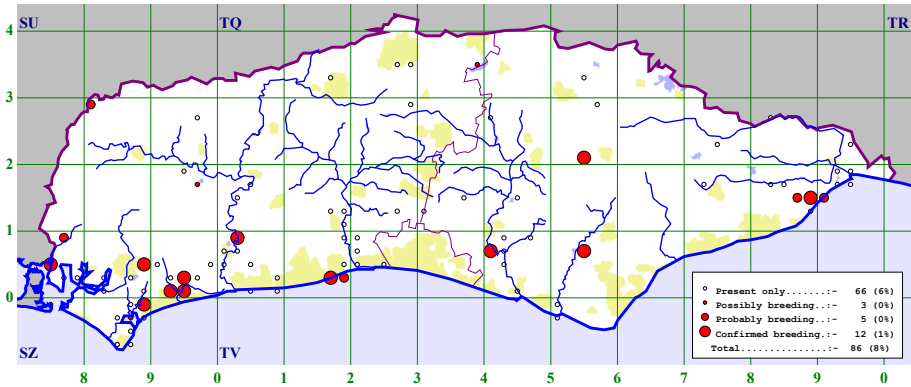
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	182	149	133	33	32	34	28	58	125	165	193	163
Chichester Hbr	75	24	69	6	6	6	6	6	15	21	54	31
Pagham Hbr	35	32	13	6	4	8	2	13	22	34	37	25
Chichester GP	5	3	9	5	5	8	nc	9	4	9	6	3
Brooklands Worthing	3	2	5	-	5	3	-	5	18	9	4	5
Widewater Lancing	26	19	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	24
Novington Sand Pit	1	5	2	4	4	1	1	3	8	6	2	2
Cuckmere Haven	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	8	6	6	7
Bewl Water	5	4	2	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	15	10	11	8
Rye Bay	11	46	13	5	4	2	12	13	31	55	50	39

Significant counts additional to the WeBS counts were, in the Lower Cuckmere Valley, 32 on 17 Feb, 27 on 2 Mar and 22 on 28 Oct and, at Widewater (Lancing), 24 on 6 Feb. During the early SWBS 12 were counted but from only two 1-km squares of the 131 surveyed with ten at Widewater (Lancing) on 19 Feb.

The approximate monthly minimum numbers, taking the largest count at a site as the minimum, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	133	224	102	61	46	47	35	56	88	141	160	153
No. of sites	22	28	21	18	19	11	13	28	17	22	21	27

Breeding was confirmed in 12 tetrads and was probable in a further five. The earliest report of attempted breeding was of a pair at Arundel WWT building a nest on 16 Jan. The first report of successful breeding was of two newly fledged young at Wilbees Fm (Arlington) on 8 Apr followed by a pair with one young, and possibly more eggs, at Possingworth Park on the 25th. There were four pairs at Thorney Deepes (Chichester Hbr) throughout the breeding season, six pairs at Pagham Hbr, two at Pulborough Brooks, four pairs at Pett Level and a minimum of four pairs at Rye Hbr where three tiny chicks were seen on 6 Aug but otherwise breeding success overall was unknown.



One unfortunate bird was taken and eaten by a Grey Heron at Pett Level on 23 Aug. The only counts in excess of 30 birds during the second winter period were at Rye Hbr with 43 on 18 Nov, 36 on 17 Dec and 33 on 15 Dec. [JAH]

Great Crested Grebe

Podiceps cristatus

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

This species was recorded from 80 tetrads across the county. The monthly WeBS counts at the principal sites were as given in the table below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	321	999	312	167	162	131	133	202	579	472	396	284
Chichester Hbr	27	12	13	20	22	3	1	-	12	-	13	17
Pagham Hbr	1	1	14	6	6	8	13	15	25	19	23	15
Chichester GP	19	6	25	13	26	23	nc	23	50	36	27	11
Goring Gap	nc	4	18	-	-	nc	nc	nc	-	-	2	1
Weir Wood Res	5	6	32	39	38	43	47	99	72	80	68	55
Arlington Res	4	-	4	6	6	6	14	30	37	12	37	44
Bewl Water	23	35	86	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	319	247	128	100
Glyne Gap	210	525	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	1	nc
Rye Bay	9	399	82	37	27	20	21	22	30	20	66	26

The total of 162 in May was the highest recorded in the past ten years whilst those for February, April, June and September were the second highest during that period. During the first winter period there were some 31 counts of 100 or more. These were not only significantly higher than the WeBS counts in several cases but also were essentially of flocks offshore. These included 416 off Pett Level on 24 Jan, 600 there on 20 Feb and 200 on 11 Mar, whilst at Worthing peak counts were 224 on 9 Feb and 245 on 6 Mar.

Despite large flocks being recorded on the sea few birds are seen moving as shown in the following table of monthly totals from the principal seawatching sites:

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	11	4	5	11	7	1		2	1	2	4
	W	36	5	1	14	6	2		1	2	16	27
Climping Beach	E	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-
	W	1	-	1	-	-	-		-	-	5	-
Worthing	E	4	-	-	4	-	-		-	-	2	4
	W	3	-	-	1	-	2		-	5	3	85
Telscombe Cliffs	E	-	-	3	-	-	-		-	-	2	6
	W	1	-	-	2	-	-		-	-	4	6
Splash Point	E	14	-	20	4	8	-		-	2	-	1
	W	15	-	2	4	-	-		-	-	-	-
Birling Gap	E	15	-	5	4	3	-		-	-	-	-
	W	13	-	-	1	-	-		-	-	-	8

Breeding was confirmed from 17 tetrads and was probable in a further three. The first recorded signs of probable breeding were of a pair displaying at Goddards Green on 1 Feb and a pair performing the courtship weed dance at Eastbourne on the 25th. A bird was seen on a nest at Patching Pond on 20 Mar while another, presumably its mate, was fishing nearby and the first young of the year were three less than a week old seen there on 15 Apr. The annual breeding count at Pagham Hbr recorded four pairs and that at Rye Hbr was of four pairs, but breeding success was not recorded for either site.

During the second winter period counts were largely unremarkable. There were only seven counts exceeding 50 birds and those not included in the WeBS table include 134 and 65 in Rye Bay on 2 and 10 Dec respectively and 61 W at Worthing on 1 Dec. [JAH]

Red-necked Grebe

Podiceps grisegena

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

The numbers of bird-days, minimum numbers of birds and numbers of sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Nov	Dec
No. of bird-days	2	12	17	1		4	7
No. of birds	2	7	4	1		4	7
No. of sites	2	3	2	1		2	5

The majority of sightings were from sites between Selsey Bill and Worthing and only occasionally further east. Apart from the occasional bird seen flying east at Selsey Bill or at Climping Gap most were recorded offshore between Ferring and Worthing. This stretch of coastline has been regarded, in the above table, as one site since birds were recorded variously along this stretch with different observers using different site names for, in effect, the same location and, most probably, the same birds present for several days.

The first sighting of the year was of a bird seen flying west on 7 Jan off Splash Point (Seaford). The only other sighting in January was on the last day of the month when a bird was in the harbour mouth at West Wittering (Chichester). There were two records in February of birds showing some summer plumage: 1 E at Selsey Bill on the 21st and another at Climping Gap on the 27th, which could have been the same bird. However, three were recorded at Worthing on the 21st (which might have included the Selsey bird) and from then until 20 Mar one or two remained between Ferring and Worthing with three seen on 19 Mar. One at Rustington on 18 and 24 Mar could have been part of this group. The last spring record was of 1 E at Selsey Bill on 7 Apr.

No birds were reported in the autumn and the first sighting of the second winter period was on 18 Nov with 1 E at Selsey Bill which was probably the same seen at Church Norton the same day. This was followed by two offshore at Church Norton on the 20th and one at East Head (West Wittering) on the 29th. All sightings in December were of single birds: offshore at Selsey Bill on the 1st; at Pebsham Marsh on the 2nd; 1 E at Selsey Bill on the 11th; at Pagham Hbr on the 13th; 1 E at Worthing on the 16th; offshore at Telscombe Cliffs on the 24th and, finally, 1 W at Selsey Bill on the 27th. [RAB]

Slavonian Grebe

Podiceps auritus

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

The numbers of bird-days, the numbers of days and numbers of sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of bird-days	72	218	85	2		8	71	109
No. of days	13	18	16	1		6	16	18
No. of sites	5	7	7	1		5	3	9

Peak monthly counts at various coastal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Oct	Nov	Dec
Chichester Hbr	4	1	-	-		-	-	4
Selsey Bill – Church Norton	30	65	21	-		2	10	19
Climping Gap	-	6	4	-		-	-	-
Littlehampton – Worthing	6	5	10	2		1	-	-
Lancing – Beachy Head	-	1	1	-		-	-	1
Bexhill – Hastings	2	7	-	-		-	-	1
Rye Bay	-	-	1	-		1	1	2

The majority of records were, as usual, in the west of the county and, in the first winter period, particularly offshore between Selsey Bill and Church Norton. The peak count there in January occurred on the 8th when 23 W and 7 E were recorded at Selsey Bill but numbers offshore normally varied from one to six. In February, an amazing count of 65, on a flat calm sea at Church Norton was recorded on the 20th; this the second highest number recorded this century only bettered by 68 at the same site at the end of December 2005. Twenty seven remained on the 23rd and 39 on the 26th; otherwise offshore numbers were anything up to eight. The peak count in March was 21 on the 11th but the maximum otherwise was only seven. Numbers elsewhere along the coast were generally unremarkable and the last two were recorded at Worthing on 27 Apr.

In the autumn and second winter period the first record was of one at Pett Level on 12 Oct and a further seven birds appeared elsewhere by the 28th, but numbers at any site never exceeded two. In November, at the favoured western site, numbers varied through the month from one to ten. In December there, small numbers were recorded flying west on five dates but the usual offshore counts rarely exceeded seven birds. The only inland records were of single birds at Arlington Res on 19 and 29 Oct and 23 to 31 Dec and at Wicks Fm (Yapton) on 18 Dec. [JAH]

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 were as follows:

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

The first sighting of the year was on 2 Jan when two birds were seen at Barcombe Res. Later in the month birds were seen at either end of the county, one at Scotney GP on the 15th, one at Pagham Hbr on the 18th and two at Church Norton on the 30th.

A bird was in the Rye Hbr area on 1 and 2 Feb and a single bird was also seen at Arlington Res on the 5th and 6th. Another single bird was off Rustington on the 13th and was joined by another on the 20th; one of these may have been responsible for sightings of one on the 29th off Goring Gap. Another long staying individual was present in Eastbourne from 3 Feb until at least 20 Mar and

was seen at both Shinewater Lake and West Langney Lake on different dates. The highest count of the year was of three drifting east on the sea off Splash Point (Seaford) on 10 Mar. One at Pett Level on 20 May was the last of the spring.

In the autumn a bird was at Pett Level on 7 Oct and another at Chichester GPs on 29 Oct. The last sighting of the year was on Southwick Canal on 17 Nov. [RAB]

Honey-buzzard

Pernis ptilorhynchus

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

The group who monitor breeding Honey-buzzards in Sussex observed birds at seven different sites. Unfortunately, it proved to be a disastrous breeding season with just one known successful pair, which raised two young. There were only four known successful nests in the whole of the UK in 2012. The cold, wet weather of April, May and June had a dramatic effect on the wasp population and it was, presumably, lack of their staple food that was the cause of this widespread breeding failure.

There was a coastal migrant at Beachy Head heading north on 19 May (SHL *et al.*). A pair was seen at one inland site in West Sussex on 26 May (BFF *et al.*) with a single seen inland in East Sussex on 27 May (CHD). At another inland site there was a single bird on 26 Jun (SJN) and elsewhere, an observer saw a female on 1 Jul, another single on the 9th and a wing-clapping male on the 15th (all PDM). On 24 Jul a Honey-buzzard was seen soaring low over woodland in East Sussex (JC). Despite the early date it seems likely that this was an 'autumn' migrant. At Beachy Head there was a female on 18 Aug (JFC, MRE) with another migrant at Berwick on 22 Aug (CH, RCS). [MEK]

Red Kite

Milvus milvus

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

A survey by the Red Kite study team of winter roosts in the West Sussex study area found a maximum of 17 birds on 22 January with surprisingly low counts of just four in November and three in December. By contrast, in the Storrington/Amerley downland area there was a minimum of 25 on 21 Dec.

Taking advantage of the warm sunny March weather, the Red Kite study team undertook a survey to try and locate as many Red Kite pairs as possible which, together with casual records from other observers, suggested a total of eight pairs in the West Sussex study area, four elsewhere in West Sussex and three pairs in East Sussex, many of which were considered to be new pairings for 2012. The county total of 15 pairs is a marked increase compared to previous years but even this figure is likely to be an underestimate as it is inevitable that some pairs will go unreported. Only three pairs were known to have bred successfully but that probably understates the true position. The high proportion of new pairings and the incessant rain of April/May/June were probably the two main reasons for the low success rate.

Away from the West Sussex study area there were records for approximately 283 birds, with a 67/33 split between West and East Sussex. This is a similar figure to last year and the very rapid increase of the past few years seems to have levelled off.

The estimated minimum monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	28	22	51	29	76	15	14	13	15	16	21	32
Study area	17	3	20	7	8	2	4	-	2	5	13	3
Elsewhere	11	19	31	22	68	13	10	13	13	11	8	29

Early in the year, multiple sightings of note were five at The Burgh (Burpham) on 26 Feb, four at Arundel WWT on 20 Mar, five at West Dean Arboretum on 25 Mar, seven at Brighton on 26 Mar, seven at North Bersted (Bognor) on 30 Mar, at least nine at Brighton on 22 May and eight at The Burgh on 31 May. Later in the year the only record of note was a multiple sighting of 11 at The Burgh on 2 Aug. The maximum daily count in December at The Burgh and its environs was five when the true figure at the roost was a minimum of 25 birds. This is a species for which the numbers can be grossly under-estimated.

A radio-tagged/wing-tagged kite was seen at The Burgh on 19 Jan: yellow tag on the left wing (southern England), blue on the right wing (year 2010), labelled 3. This bird was one of a brood of three, ringed on 18 Jun 2010 at a well-established nest approximately 10 km NE of Basingstoke. On 26 Nov 2010 its radio signal was detected somewhere near Newbury, Berks. On 29 Jan 2011 it roosted near Berghers Hill, Bucks and the next day was somewhere between Great Missenden and Winchmore Hill. On 21 Mar 2011 it was seen at Doddington, Kent. It then appeared at The Burgh on 19 Jan 2012 and in March was paired with a non-tagged adult. Judging from their behaviour this pair had a nest in a copse quite close to The Burgh. However, there were no kites present on follow-up visits and so either they moved elsewhere or more likely this was a failed breeding attempt.

Red Kites returned to Sussex as a breeding species when a pair bred at West Dean in 2004. There are now at least eight pairs in that general area. Over the past couple of years a second sizeable population has now become established on downland in and around The Burgh. Also, there are now several isolated pairs in the east of the county. It has perhaps taken longer than expected but it seems likely that the breeding population is set to expand quite rapidly from here on now. Thanks to Hampshire Ornithological Society for providing the nesting and radio signal details in this account. [MEK, CBC]

Marsh Harrier

Circus aeruginosus

Scarce spring and autumn passage migrant and very scarce winter visitor; very scarce breeder since 2004. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

Records were received for every month. The estimated minimum monthly numbers, allowing for possible duplication with this wide ranging species, were as given in the table below.

Winter numbers at Pett Level were taken at a night time roost, which will likely have drawn birds from a wide area. The total number for the year is about 169 from 25 broad sites, similar to the number seen in 2011.

Possible spring migration was observed on 7 Apr when one flew north from Sidlesham Ferry and on 7 May when one flew in off the sea at Selsey Bill. In the summer period a juvenile headed south from Pett Level on 6 Aug.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County totals	23	26	17	12	9	10	15	15	16	12	20	18
Chichester Hbr	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-
Pagham Hbr	1	2	2	2	2	1	-	1	2	1	1	1
Arun Valley	-	2	-	2	1	1	1	3	2	2	1	-
Pevensey Level	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	4	-
Pett Level	13	13	7	5	2	2	7	4	4	6	11	12
Rye Hbr	5	3	4	3	2	6	6	1	2	2	2	3
Other	3	4	3	-	2	-	-	6	5	2	-	2

Breeding was confirmed at two locations; at one site two females produced one and four fledglings respectively. At a second site a pair also bred and fledged three young. [RTP]



Marsh Harrier, Rye Harbour, January 2012 (Roger and Liz Charlwood)

Hen Harrier

Circus cyaneus

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

Records for Hen Harrier were received from 42 tetrads. Ashdown Forest was the location of 26% of the records. The monthly total over ten months was 56 which is lower than the 10 month total in 2011 of 88. The highest monthly total was 11 in January. The minimum monthly totals are shown as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>County total</i>	11	10	5	5	3		2	-	4	11	7
Chichester/Pagham Hbrs	-	-	-	1	1			-	-	1	1
West Sussex Downs	2	1	1	1	-			-	-	1	2
West Sussex Commons	-	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-
Arun Valley	1	1	1	1	-			-	-	1	1
East Sussex Downs	1	-	-	1	-		1	-	-	-	-
Ouse Valley	1	2	-	-	-			-	-	1	-
Ashdown Forest	3	1	2	-	-			-	1	2	3
Pevensey Levels	-	1	1	1	1			-		2	-
Rye Bay	-	-	-	-	-			-	1	1	-
Scotney GP/Camber	-	2	-	-	-			-	-	1	-
Other sites	3	2	-	-	1		1	-	2	1	-

Hen Harriers were seen at all of the usual sites during the first winter period except the West Sussex Commons and Rye Bay. On Ashdown Forest detailed descriptions indicated that more than three birds, including an adult male, were present during the period from 2 Jan, when three were seen rising from a traditional roost, until 26 Mar.

Elsewhere, the Burpham area held two during January. A ringtail was at Barcombe Cross on 7 Jan, a male was seen at Chailey Common on the 15th and two ringtails were described as fighting above Rodmell Brooks on 4 Feb. Two each were at The Midrips on 24 Feb, Waltham Brooks on 13 Mar, Ashdown Forest on the 20th and Horse Eye Level (Pevensey) on the 27th. There were four records for April and three for May and the last of the spring birds were at Horse Eye Level on 4 May, at Wittersham Levels (Iden) on the 21st and North Wall (Pagham Hbr) on the 28th, which is 15 days later than the 10-year average departure date.

The first returning birds were seen in August with a ringtail at Weir Wood Res on the 11th and one was recorded flying east and then out to sea at Beachy Head on the 28th (the 10-year average arrival date is 30 Aug). In October a ringtail was at Cliff End (Pett Level) on the 8th, one was at Gills Lap (Ashdown Forest) on the 12th, one was at East Preston on the 16th and one flew west over the promenade at Hastings on the 28th.

Throughout November and December birds were recorded on Ashdown Forest with a maximum of three, two ringtails and a male, in December. A male was at Pagham Hbr on 2-3 Nov, two each at Pevensey Levels on 19 Nov and The Burgh on 2 Dec and a ringtail was at Pulborough Brooks from 25 Nov to 12 Dec. The last record of the year was of two rising before sunrise on Ashdown Forest on 30 Dec. [MJC]

Goshawk

Accipiter gentilis

Very scarce resident. Schedule 1 species.

The pair recorded as successfully breeding in 2009, 2010 and 2011 at an undisclosed site once again had young in the nest but at the time of the nest visit it was not possible to determine the number of youngsters. [MEK]

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 from 251 tetrads. High counts in the first half of the year were five at Peasmarsh on 25 Jan, four at Cliff End (Pett Level) on 9 Feb and again during April. There were three each at Chichester on 22 Mar, Worth Forest on 24 Mar and Woods Mill (Henfield) on 13 May. One was found dead at Chick Hill (Pett Level) on 28 Feb, possibly killed by a Peregrine. There were no spring records of likely migrants coming in off the sea.

The earliest record of display was at Hoath Hill (Mountfield) on 4 Jan, then on 19 Feb at High Cross Fm (Uckfield) and at Pett Level on the 28th. The earliest records of confirmed breeding were of a male with food at Leap Cross (Hailsham) on 3 May and another at Stedham Common on 23 Jun. The first fledglings were two each at Cliff End Lane (Pett Level) on 18 Jul and Foredown (Portslade) on 21 Jul. There were only seven tetrads with confirmed breeding and a further five with probable.

In the latter half of the year there were four at Pett Level during September and four were seen in the Beachy Head/Cuckmere area on the 30th. On 15 Oct there were six at Pett Level and three were seen at the following sites between July and December: Ladywell (Coombes), Pulborough Brooks, Warnham LNR, Newhaven Hbr, Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) and Pett Level. Prey species recorded were: juvenile Moorhen, Wood Pigeon, Collared Dove, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Starling, Blackbird, Fieldfare, House Sparrow, Pied Wagtail, Greenfinch, Goldfinch and probably a Snipe. [MJC]

Common Buzzard*Buteo buteo**Fairly common and increasing resident and probably scarce passage migrant.*

Buzzards were recorded from 451 tetrads spread out through Sussex, a substantial decrease from 2011 (606) and 2010 (570) which is most likely to be due to reduced observer effort in recording this species on completion of the BTO atlas fieldwork. During the early SWBS a total of 95 was recorded from 53 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of five near Findon.

An indication of how numerous this species has become is shown by there being some 38 records of ten or more birds during the year. There were consistently high numbers at downland sites, quite often from the Burpham area. The highest during the first winter period was of 20 at The Burgh (Burpham) on 18 Mar but 17 were noted at Arundel WWT on the 20th and 16 had been counted at Duncton on the 2nd. Sizeable counts were also often recorded during spring and summer, e.g. 20 at Pulborough Brooks on 22 Apr and 18 at Weir Wood Res on 19 Aug and even 15 at Pagham Hbr on the 21st.

Breeding was confirmed in 12 tetrads and was probable in a further 35 but the true size of the county's breeding population is uncertain. There were few breeding details. Nest building was first recorded at Arundel WWT on 26 Feb but the first occupied nests were noted at Pett Level on 23 Apr and Troutbridge (Eridge) on the 25th. A pair which was present at a nest site on Thorney Island through April had abandoned it by 11 May but two fledged young were noted there by 23 Jun, presumably from a different pair. The first record of young being fed came from Lavington Common when, on 25 May, one was being fed with an unidentified reptile. During the late SWBS

a total of 52 birds was recorded from 36 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of just three birds seen at Billingshurst, Warnham and Polegate.

During the autumn the high numbers continued with an astonishing 35 seen in one sweep over Perry Hill (Burpham) on 4 Sep with 23 over Wepham Down on the 20th, both no doubt including some of the same birds. Into the second winter 30 were seen on 15 Oct at The Burgh and 12 at Burpham on 8 Nov. Were these high numbers evidence of migration, movement or local breeding success?

Buzzards were reported being mobbed by Magpies, Jackdaws, Carrion Crows, Rooks, Ravens, Kestrel, Hobby and House Martins. The prey items recorded included an unidentified rodent and a rabbit being eaten by two birds in the snow at High Cross Fm (Uckfield) in February. [LAW]

Rough-legged Buzzard

Buteo lagopus

Rare winter visitor.

The juvenile bird first seen on the Downs at The Burgh (Burpham) on 7 Nov 2011 was seen again from 2 Jan until, finally, 22 Apr (mo). The scarcity of this species is exemplified by the small number of new birds seen each year in the county during the past 30 years, i.e. 15 as follows:

	1983	1985	1987	1996	1997	2002	2003	2004	2011	2012	Total
No. new birds	1	2	1	2	1	1*	3	2	2*	-	15

*indicates that a bird over-wintered into the following year

Almost 50% of new arrivals are seen in October; the earliest, however, was on 11 Sep 1970; the latest record prior to this year was 16 Apr 1970. [JAH]

Osprey

Pandion haliaetus

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

There were approximately 47 seen during the year from 29 broad sites, compared to 54 in 2011 and 58 in 2010. Duplication is possible but the approximate monthly numbers were:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
<i>County total</i>	9	30	9	5	18	15	3
Chichester Hbr	2	5	-	1	3	2	-
Pagham Hbr	2	3	-	-	1	2	-
Arun Valley	2	2	3	-	1	1	
Lower Adur Valley	-	2-	-	-	4	3	1
Weir Wood Res	1	4	4	1	1	-	-
Arlington Res	-	2	2	2	2	2	-
Beachy Head	-	-	-	-	1		
Other	2	12	-	1	5	5	2

The first arrival was observed at Sidlesham SF on 4 Apr, some 15 days later than the 10-year average date. This was followed by one at North Stoke (Arun Valley) on the 8th, another at Church Norton on the 10th, one over Pulborough Brooks on the 13th, one on Ashdown Forest on the 14th, and one (possibly the same) at Weir Wood Res the same day which stayed until the 17th. On the 16th one lucky observer at St Leonards watched one for 10 minutes perched in a tree at the bottom of their garden. The month finished with two at Pilsey Sands (Chichester Hbr) on the 30th.

There was a record number of sightings in May, mainly along the coast and at the major reservoirs. A small number of birds summered in the county being observed mainly at the large reservoirs (Weir Wood and Arlington) and the Chichester Hbr area. At Arlington Res Ospreys were seen consistently throughout the summer months beginning with the first record on 4 May. It, or another, was seen almost daily throughout the month with two birds seen on the 17th. They were recorded into the middle of June, often seen catching fish. There were no sightings at Arlington Res between 11 Jun and 15 Jul but one was seen at Horam Manor Fisheries on 17 Jun, perhaps one of these, or perhaps they travelled to Weir Wood Res where up to two were seen during this period. By mid-July they seemed to have returned to Arlington Res where one observer remarked that he thought they were a male and a female, when seen together on 17 Jul, but no display behaviour was reported. Two were seen into August with the last sighting at Arlington Res on 9 Aug.

Activity increased in August around the Chichester Hbr area and the Lower Adur Valley as far upstream as Henfield where a long-staying bird was present from 10 Aug until 7 Oct. The presence of a damaged primary on the Adur bird enabled observers to know that the bird seen in various places in the Lower Adur Valley, at Woods Mill (Henfield) and Warnham LNR was likely to be the same individual. At Woods Mill another was observed with a radio tag on 22 Aug. Only single birds were sighted apart from an adult and juvenile on six occasions at Thorney Island. At Beachy Head one flew out to sea on 25 Aug. The last records of the year were from the Lower Adur Valley on 6 and 7 Oct and from Warnham LNR, where two were seen on the 12th and the last bird of the year on the 14th. [RTP, MJC]

Kestrel

Falco tinnunculus

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

Kestrels were recorded from 337 tetrads, down on last year's 467, evenly spread throughout the county. During the early SWBS a total of 46 was counted in 40 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed. During the late SWBS, 30 were counted from 25 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed.

During the first winter period, 80% of records were of single birds. There were, however, eight at The Burgh (Burpham) on 2 Jan and five at Pulborough Brooks on 20 Feb, four at Pagham Hbr the same day and several counts of three.

Breeding was confirmed in 20 tetrads and was probable in a further 19. However, few detailed breeding reports were received. Courtship was first noted on Ashdown Forest on the early date of 6 Jan and on the 16th a pair was at their usual nestbox at Troutbeck (Eridge). An adult carrying food was first noted on Ashdown Forest on 28 Mar and a regular pair was nesting in the church at Salehurst on 6 Apr. The first nest with young was recorded at Cowfold on the 22nd. At least one pair nested on the industrial estate at Rye Hbr. Six chicks and one adult were in a nest box at Woods Mill (Henfield) on 5 Jun, young fledged from a box at Applesham (Coombes) on the 13th and four nestlings were ringed at Troutbeck on the 14th. In total, at least 16 nests were reported.

During the second winter period, numbers were very similar to the first winter: 80% were of single birds and the maximum count was at least eight, again at The Burgh, and there were four counts of fours.

The remains, wings and feet only, of a dead juvenile were found beneath a tree at Clayton on 16 Jun possibly having been blown down and then eaten by a fox. An unringed dead bird was found by the A259 at Chichester on 15 Feb. Prey items reported included unidentified prey which was still alive and squeaking, voles and lizard species, probably common. [LEW]

Red-footed Falcon

Falco vespertinus

Rare vagrant.

One, a second year male was seen and photographed at Nunnery Pit (Chichester GPs) on 20 Aug to 8 Sep (RH, RJK *et al.*) was the only record. There have been only five this century. There have now been 36 accepted and published records since the first in the county in 1851, when one was shot in Rottingdean with a walking stick gun! The majority arrive in either May or June, the earliest having been on 1 May 1900; the latest was 11 Oct 1884. [JAH]

Merlin

Falco columbarius

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

About 84 were recorded from 31 broad sites, slightly down on the 94 in 2011 and 87 in 2010. Estimated minimum monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	11	10	4	6	-	-	-	3	11	11	11	17
Chichester Hbr	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Pagham Hbr	2	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	2	1	2	2
Arun Valley	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	3	1	2
Worthing area	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
Pett Level	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1
Rye Hbr	2	3	1	3	-	-	-	1	2	1	1	3
Other	2	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	4	3	6	8

The only record of spring migration was of one in off the sea at Selsey Bill on 12 Apr. Most records were coastal or near coastal but birds were recorded at inland locations on several dates during January to March at The Burgh and Pulborough Brooks on 6 Feb, Poundgate (Ashdown Forest) on 14 Jan and the Bluebell Railway (Sheffield Park) also on 14 Jan. The last birds in the first period were at Horse Eye Level (Pevensey) on 16 Apr and at Rye Hbr on 26 and 27 Apr.

The first birds in the second part of the year were recorded in August at Rye Hbr on the 20th and 21st and at Climping Beach on the 28th. The majority of sightings were along the coast and in nearby areas. Inland locations were Burpham on 30 Aug, 9 Sep and 2 Oct and Pulborough Brooks on 12-15 Oct, Balmer Down (Lewes) on 5 Nov, Boarzell Wood (Flimwell) on 30 Nov and Clayton and Hassocks on 8 and 9 Dec. At Ferring, a female took a small bird from the beach and

then flew out to sea with it. Prey items identified included a Dunlin and Wheatears and other birds were seen hunting Skylarks and Meadow Pipits. [RTP].

Hobby

Falco subbuteo

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

This species was recorded from 116 tetrads during the year. Monthly site totals were as follows:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
No. of sites in 2011	20	31	31	27	27	23	15
No. of sites in 2012	13	55	35	19	31	31	14

The first arrival noted flew in off the sea at Selsey Bill on 7 Apr, just two days later than the 10-year average date, followed by one at Holedean Fm (Henfield) on the 11th and two at Herstmonceux on the 16th. The main arrivals are summarised in the table below:

Week	7-13 Apr	14-20 Apr	21-27 Apr	28-4 May
Sites	2	3	7	14
Daily maximum	1	2	1	11



Hobby, Rye Harbour, June 2012 (Barry Yates)

As in 2011, the highest number of spring migrants was observed at Selsey Bill where a total of 12 was recorded on seven dates between 2 and 18 May. At this location one was observed

offshore on 7 May heading out to sea until lost to view. At Splash Point (Seaford) five were seen on three dates between 6 and 13 May and one of a pair there on 7 May landed on the beach, presumably exhausted by its cross-Channel flight.

There were only a few gatherings of note during the year. At Pulborough Brooks five were seen on 19 May and four on 23 Jul; at Birling Gap there were five on 6 May; six were at Rye Hbr and five were in the Brede Valley on 1 May.

Breeding was confirmed at only two sites, both from the same broad area. At one of these, two fledged young were seen perched in a tree and at another a food pass to a juvenile was observed. Breeding was considered probable at a further 14 sites and possible at 12 more.

Autumn migration was recorded from a number of sites with the last record from the main breeding area on 2 Oct. All the other records during this month were from coastal areas. There was a juvenile at Church Norton on 18 Oct and the last records of the year were at Pett Level on the 24th, at Rye Hbr on the 25th and at Beachy Head on the 27th, just one day later than the 10-year average departure date. [RTP]

Peregrine

Falco peregrinus

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

Most of the 606 records received were from coastal localities and the main river valleys with very few from anywhere else. Last year it was estimated that there were roughly 30 pairs in the county. There is no reason to suppose that there were fewer pairs in 2012 compared to recent years but precise information was received for just six pairs with very limited data for another 11 pairs. The appalling weather of April/May/June had a very detrimental effect on other breeding raptors and this may have been the case with this species?

In Brighton, the Sussex Heights pair fledged three young, all of which were thought to be male. The four eggs were laid between 22 and 29 Mar, three hatched between 29 Apr and 3 May with the fourth egg failing to hatch. The first young fledged on 15 June.

In the Chichester Cathedral nest there were four eggs by 25 Mar, four hatched by 25 Apr and all four young had fledged by 7 June. There were two males and two females.

At an inland site one pair failed and another pair had just one young. At The Burgh near Burpham two adults and two juveniles were recorded. At Eastbourne a juvenile accompanied an adult. Reports were received for two nest failures. At one site in a sand pit in West Sussex a fox predated a nest, which was situated just one metre from the top edge of the pit. At a downland site a pair nested on a pylon but the nest was blown down in high winds and the adults deserted the location.

Prey items recorded included Black-headed Gull, Dunlin, Moorhen, duck (unspecified), Feral Pigeon and Starling. [MEK]

Water Rail*Rallus aquaticus*

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

Birds were recorded from 41 tetrads which interestingly included records at Pett Level in every month of the year. The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	49	44	30	10	11	3	5	4	17	24	50	56

Birds were heard calling across the county from January to March. During this period these were mainly singles but there were six at Thorney Deeps, four each at Arundel WWT and Warnham LNR, eight at Pett Level, all in January, and six at North Wall (Pagham Hbr) on 6 Feb. A larger total of 16 at Pett Level was recorded in February. Breeding was confirmed at Pett Level and was considered possible at Arundel WWT, Waltham Brooks and Combe Haven. As usual, the majority of records in the summer months were of single birds.

Autumn brought the usual increase in records as the migrants arrived. Records were mainly from a limited number of favoured sites. During November the highest counts were eight at Pett Level and 11 at Thorney Deeps on the 23rd, whilst in December six were at Thorney Deeps on the 13th, ten were recorded at Rye Hbr on the 16th and four at Pett Level on the 17th.

One bird was ringed at The Mumbles (Steining) on 27 Aug. Thirty were ringed at Pett Level during the year. [DAB]

Moorhen*Gallinula chloropus*

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

Moorhens were recorded from 256 tetrads, the lowest number for several years. Monthly WeBS counts from the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	563	655	506	251	196	199	206	338	557	597	630	663
Chichester Hbr	65	48	57	14	13	10	6	5	26	26	86	63
Pagham Hbr	15	33	17	7	12	19	4	9	28	13	14	34
Chichester Canal	65	81	61	56	42	34	50	52	74	55	55	52
Mewsbrough Park	11	33	nc	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	5	9	11	19
Arun Valley	118	161	104	70	54	61	70	108	106	118	102	124
Brooklands Worthing	39	45	42	15	9	12	10	12	28	45	51	68
Bowl Water	3	-	6	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	68	46	50	24
Alexandra Park	61	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	12	nc	nc	nc
Rye Bay	21	78	58	27	22	22	16	41	48	43	37	68

Significant counts additional to the WeBS counts were 96 at Southwater CP on 27 Nov and 25 at Pett Level (Rye Bay) on 2 Jan. During the first winter period, some 47 counts in double figures, additional to the WeBS counts, were made and many birds were noted on smaller water bodies not covered by the WeBS. Some birds survived the freezing weather in February by feeding away

from their usual ponds, e.g. in a field near Bolney MP on 12 Feb and by a feeder stream at Poling Fishing Lakes on the 13th. Five birds were also noted feeding on the fairways of Bognor GC on 30 Jan. During the early SWBS, a total of 80 Moorhens was recorded in 29 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed

Breeding was confirmed in 30 tetrads, involving at least 34 sites, many of them small, local and distinct from the larger water bodies in the county. A nest had been completed at Dallington by 9 Mar and six recently hatched young were first seen at Troutbeck (Eridge) on the 30th and similarly at Washington on 1 Apr. Five young birds survived for much of June in an Angmering garden, only for one to be taken by a Sparrowhawk on the 26th. Young seen as late as 9 Sep at Small Dole and 13 Sep at Brooklands (Worthing) were probably from a third brood. There were at least nine pairs or territories at Pagham Hbr and 20 nests and broods were located at Rye Hbr, a reduction on the previous four years.

Count sizes increased somewhat during the autumn: excluding the WeBS counts above, there were 28 double figure counts with maxima of 52 at Arundel WWT on 17 Sep and 15 Oct and 27 at Southwater CP on similar dates. In the second winter months such counts increased to 34 with maxima of 96 at Southwater CP on 27 Nov, 58 at Arundel WWT on 19 Nov and 53 at Brooklands on 17 Dec. A group of 14 involving 2-3 families at the Lewes Railwayland reserve on 11 Dec was considered an 'unusual concentration'. During the late SWBS a total of 51 was recorded from 24 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed. [CB]

Coot

Fulica atra

Fairly common resident and common winter visitor.

Coots were recorded in 140 tetrads with confirmed breeding in 29 and probable breeding in eight. 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	4200	4683	2116	886	674	1194	800	1535	2915	3380	3856	4363
Chichester Hbr	200	243	169	27	26	16	30	39	98	91	271	185
Chichester GP	1738	1932	491	283	189	626	nc	753	1447	1549	1486	1964
Eastbourne Lakes	460	254	123	14	11	28	32	50	108	196	227	212
Bewl Water	95	145	121	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	278	243	458	409
Rye Bay	958	1324	678	230	143	238	503	438	448	663	809	978

A comparison of the county total for the four winter months between 2011 and 2012 showed a slight decline of 3.5% but this could be due to observer effort. High counts during the first winter period, in addition to the WeBS count, were 518 at Pett Level, between 5 and 11 Feb and 592 at Rye Hbr on the 12th. Chichester Gravel Pits were popular where 1374 were counted on 15 Jan, 1000 on 9 Feb and 1550 between 12 and 17 Feb.

One was recorded on a nest at Brooklands (Worthing) on 30 March and a nest with eggs was seen at Sefton Fm (Rose Green) on 1 Apr. Fledged young were first seen at Rye Hbr on 13 Apr.

Summer numbers declined as usual but by August three figure counts were being recorded at both Chichester GP and Rye Hbr. In the second winter period the highest counts were again from the same sites as earlier in the year, the highest being 1499 at Chichester GP on 16 Dec and 430 at Rye Hbr on the same day. [DAB]

Crane

Grus grus

Rare vagrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

After two good years when a possible ten were seen in both 2011 and 2010, only one bird was recorded: one seen originally at Blackdown (Fernhurst) on 11 Nov (DJB) approached from the north at moderate height and flew onwards southwards; it was probably the bird seen at Amberley Wild Brooks from the 11th to the 17th (DC, BK *et al.*) where it was photographed. The total since the start of 2000 is now a possible 55; only possible due to problems of duplication of wandering birds. [JAH]



Oystercatchers, Rye Harbour, July 2012 (Barry Yates)

Oystercatcher

Haematopus ostralegus

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

Oystercatchers were recorded from 79 mainly coastal 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	1845	1946	1282	973	560	648	807	1847	872	1588	2242	1650
Chichester Hbr	877	1054	703	447	172	357	514	1299	520	1204	1408	754
Pagham Hbr	194	311	167	150	123	41	111	137	266	148	169	210
Rye Bay	770	548	407	370	260	243	178	411	68	236	556	613

The only monthly count higher than the WeBS in the first winter period was 200 at Pagham Hbr on 3 Mar, and numbers at Pilsey Island were frequently quoted as being low due to disturbance. The largest flocks at other sites were 100 at Telscombe Cliffs on 23 Jan, 42 at Ovingdean on 25 Feb and 40 at Climping on 8 Mar. During the early SWBS only ten birds were recorded in two 1-km squares of the 131 surveyed.

During the breeding season, breeding was confirmed in eight tetrads and was probable in a further four. Nesting was first observed on 8 May at Arundel WWT and the first fledged chick noted there on 5 Jun. But it was generally a poor breeding season, with only 35 breeding pairs reported, the lowest since 2007, and productivity was generally low. There were 23 nests at Rye Hbr and nine pairs at Pagham Hbr, and single pairs all raised one young each at The Midrips, Arundel WWT and for the third year running on a warehouse roof in Shoreham. Additional pairs were holding territory at The Midrips (two), Medmerry, Thorney Island and Cuckmere Haven.

In the autumn and second winter period, totals exceeding the WeBS were 1200 at Pilsey Island on 18 Sep and 1000 there on 16 Dec and 430 at Rye Hbr on 25 Sep, and the highest numbers at other sites were 160 at Cuckmere Haven on 13 Nov, 97 at Telscombe Cliffs on the 7th and 72 at Climping on 21 Dec. During the late SWBS only ten birds were recorded in two 1-km squares of the 101 surveyed.

There were five inland records, all of single birds, from Pulborough Brooks on 24 Mar, 22 Apr and 15 Jul, and from Bewl Water on 28 Apr and Weir Wood Res on 21 Jun. [CJRB]

Black-winged Stilt

Himantopus himantopus

Rare vagrant.

Two, presumed to be a pair, were at Medmerry on 1 Jun (GAH). It is assumed that these were the same two birds that spent the period 27 May to 9 Jun at Pennington Marsh in Hampshire. The record has been accepted by BBRC and is the first county record since 2007. These two birds bring the total up to about 29. [DHH]

Avocet

Recurvirostra avosetta

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

The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
48	72	112	94	117	72	37	13	0	18	37	66

In January and February the regular wintering flocks in Chichester and Pagham Hbrs were still present from 2011. The Chichester flock peaked at 35 on 11 Feb but was not recorded after that. The Pagham group reached 19 on 12 Feb and was last recorded on the 17th. Elsewhere, in February there was a single bird at Rye Hbr on the 15th, four there on the 31st, up to two in the Newhaven area between 9 and 19 Feb, one at Cuckmere Haven from 16-18th and 11 at Pett Level on the 26th. Offshore passage was poor, with a total of only 25 during the spring. The only inland sightings were two at both Arlington Res on 22 Apr and Pulborough Brooks on 19-20 May.

The main breeding site in East Sussex held 30 pairs, though many suffered predation by badgers, and at a second site in the same area 20 pairs attempted to breed, though 14 pairs abandoned and the remaining six pairs raised a minimum of six young and at a third site up to seven birds were present in June with a fledged young, perhaps from another location, being noted on the 25th. In West Sussex, two pairs at one site were flooded out and at a second site there were up to nine birds recorded during the summer but there was no successful breeding.



Avocet, Newhaven Tidemills, February 2012 (Les Bird)

As usual, birds dispersed out of the county to moult during July with a maximum August count of seven at Rye Hbr on the 13th and no records for September. Numbers built up again from late October and the regular wintering flocks peaked at 40 in Chichester Hbr on 1 Dec (a record for this site) and 21 in Pagham Hbr on 31 Dec. This combined total equals the 2003 record, continuing a gradual rise over the last few years. The only reports from other sites were of seven at Glyne Gap on 19 Nov, six at Rye Hbr on the 27th (with one or two occasionally until the end of the year) and 4 W off Worthing on 8 Dec. [CJRB]

Stone-curlew

Burhinus oedichnemus

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.

One watched for 15 minutes between Angmering and Poling on 12 Feb (TAJ, RNS) was over three weeks earlier than the one at West Chiltington on 8 Mar 1969 which, hitherto, was the earliest since the inception of the SOS in 1962.

During 2012 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.

During the year this team located one pair in an area where habitat management and regular monitoring were possible. Through working closely with landowners, management of the breeding site and surrounding area was adjusted to best suit the needs of the species. A detailed programme of monitoring established that the pair attempted to nest in early May, although unfortunately this failed following a night of very heavy rain. The pair put down another nest in mid-June but this again failed after another night with similar conditions.

At a second site, where habitat management and regular monitoring were possible, a single bird returned early in the season and was joined by two further birds in late June. No nesting attempts were witnessed, but it is possible that the birds that appeared in late June had attempted to nest in the locality and, on the nest failing, moved into the area where they were observed. This year is the first since the project's inception when no young have fledged in Sussex.

The decision in 2009 to publish the details of the return of this species 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 occurred again in 2012 with individuals wilfully trespassing in order to watch the birds from a close perspective.

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-curlews in Sussex, but if birds are stumbled upon by accident it would be greatly appreciated if records are submitted both to the SOS and the project team at RSPB Brighton so that efforts can be made to ensure the maximum success of any breeding attempt. [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	6	8	5	5	5	9	6
No. of birds	9	23	12	11	17	24	16

This was a poor year for this species, with lower than usual numbers throughout the year. Almost all records came from just six regular sites, nearly all of them on reserves, an indication

of how restricted it is becoming. The first sighting was at Rye Hbr on 27 Mar, and six there on 13 Apr was the largest group on spring passage.

Confirmed breeding was reported at only one site in East Sussex where four pairs bred, though fledging success was not known. Birds were seen regularly enough at another five sites to suggest that they may have at least attempted to breed.

The largest group on autumn migration was six at Pagham Hbr on 7 Aug, and the last sighting was at Sidlesham Ferry Pool on 27 Sept. [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	63	106	190	30	199	34	146	1059	107	102	154	121
Chichester Hbr	41	81	106	2	102	16	18	750	1	49	118	93
Pagham Hbr	22	6	64	12	41	4	96	213	-	19	18	18
Climping	-	1	2	4	5	3	24	32	6	-	-	8
Goring Gap	nc	-	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	69	32	-	-
Rye Bay	-	12	18	11	48	5	8	50	29	2	18	-

Maximum non-WeBS counts significantly higher than in the above table were 300 at Pagham Hbr on 19 Feb, 70 at Pilsey Island on 25 Jan and 38 at Rye Hbr on the 28th. The highest counts at other sites were 59 at Roedean on 13 Jan and 30 at Worthing on the 5th, and there were also 30 at Brooklands on the 10th and Kingston Gorse on the 15th.

During the spring, the largest day count from seawatching logs was 17 E at Beachy Head on 26 May, and the only inland sightings were two at Pulborough Brooks on 31 Mar with one there on 19 May, and one at Weir Wood Res on 2 Apr.

A minimum of 35 breeding pairs were reported, possibly the lowest total ever and an alarming continuation of the recent decline. At Rye Hbr there were 19 pairs but success was low, and seven pairs were counted at Pagham Hbr, one of which was seen with four chicks. There were four pairs at Pilsey Island, three pairs at Medmerry raised five young between them, and single pairs were reported at The Midrips and Newhaven Tidemills. The records suggest that pairs may also have attempted to breed at Brighton Marina, Littlehampton West Beach, Lancing and Ovingdean.

In the autumn, 60 at Pilsey Island on 16 Sep and 78 at Rye Hbr on 18 Aug and 70 there on 2 Sep were the only counts higher than the WeBS, and the only inland records were from Pulborough Brooks, with a maximum of seven on 27 Aug.

In the second winter period numbers higher than WeBS were 23 at Climping on 17 Oct and 34 there on 2 Dec, 37 at Goring on 26 Nov, and at Rye Hbr 34 on 15 Nov and 33 on 1 Dec. There were up to 50 at Worthing throughout, a maximum of 95 at Brooklands (Worthing) on 5 Nov and 40 at Rottingdean on 10 Oct. [CJRB]

Kentish Plover

Charadrius alexandrinus

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

One was seen and photographed at Rye Hbr from 3 to 6 May (SS *et al.*). The total since the start of 2000 is now 24, an average of 1.8 per year. This represents a notable drop in the frequency of sightings: the averages for the last three decades of the 20th century were, respectively, 2.8, 8.2 and 3.2 in which the 1990s were rather exceptional. Some 60% of all dated records occur almost equally in the spring months, April and May. [JAH]

Dotterel

Charadrius morinellus

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

With only one bird recorded, following last year's 11, 2012 was below average. One was seen at Harvey's Cross (Balsdean), a regular site, on 17 Sep (PB, STM). The county total for the 21st century, following a review of records, is now 79, with annual numbers as follows:

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
No. of birds	3	21	7	1	2	-	21	-	3	5	5	10	1

The annual average this century of six per year contrasts unfavourably with the average for the previous 52 years, 1948-1999, of 9.5 per year, suggesting that, despite the increase in the number of birders during that period, there has been a real decline in the numbers of birds passing through Sussex and, perhaps, in the overall population. This year's single bird was on a typical date for a returning migrant as 56% of all records have been in August and September. [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	1247	826	481	144	9	-	-	198	111	1552	3521	1304
Chichester Hbr	513	495	394	-	9	-	-	28	3	629	683	401
Pagham Hbr	650	2	34	-	-	-	-	-	35	120	836	500
Newhaven	nc	250	nc	nc	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye Bay	50	17	53	144	-	-	-	170	73	803	2000	401

Counts made in between WeBS dates were often much higher than those shown above, as is often the case with this highly mobile species. The maximum at the most regularly monitored sites for the two winter periods are shown below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Oct	Nov	Dec
Thorney Island	3000	50	84		600	250	400
Pagham Hbr	650	500	200		224	1000	1000
Rye Bay	1500	800	220		1500	2000	1000

There was an unusually high count of 250 at Newhaven Tidemills on 12 Feb, and 54 at Pulborough Brooks on 9 Jan and 50 at Amberley Wild Brooks on 19 Feb were by far the highest counts in the Arun Valley all year. The largest flocks elsewhere were 30 at Steyning Levels on 5 Feb, 30 at Lewes Brooks on the 12th, and 20 at Pevensey Levels on 15 Jan. Numbers tailed off sharply after mid-April, only 12 were recorded in May, and one at Rye Hbr on 16 Jun was the only record that month.

There was a gap of over five weeks until the first returning migrants, with ten at Rye Hbr on 23 July. Numbers increased sharply in October, but again the WeBS totals are not a reliable guide, and the true maxima are shown above. Away from the regular sites there were 30 at Barnham on 18 Dec, a maximum of 15 at Pulborough Brooks on the 3 Dec and nine at Steep Down, Lancing on 4 Oct. Numbers at Rye Hbr were low in December, but there were 1000 at Jury's Gap on the 27th and 400 at Scotney GP on the 16th, both sites which are included within Rye Bay. [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	1177	1185	1992	407	114	18	91	943	561	362	20,011	15,988
Chichester Hbr	671	746	1463	62	74	18	89	841	484	177	1450	1121
Pagham Hbr	495	380	528	343	37	-	2	102	77	184	526	414

In the first winter period there were no counts exceeding the WeBS for the two main sites, but elsewhere there were peaks of 100 on Worthing Beach on 23 Feb, 75 at Littlehampton West Beach on 21 Jan and 53 at Climping on 28 Feb, and seven at Newhaven Tidemills on 26 Feb was a high number for this site. The only inland records were from Pulborough Brooks with three there on 2 Feb and one remaining until the 14th. There was the usual light offshore passage during the spring, and the totals from the main seawatching points are shown below.

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Total
Selsey Bill	E	-	-	-	62	24	86
	W	-	-	-	46	-	46
Worthing	E	-	-	-	-	8	8
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-
Splash Point	E	-	-	-	3	2	5
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-
Beachy Head	E	-	10	-	14	10	34

Numbers at Pilsey Island during the spring were much higher than the WeBS suggests, with 120 on 6 May and 93 on 15 Jun, and at Rye Hbr there was a high count of 73 on 3 May, the same day as an unusual inland record of six at Arlington Res.

The only second winter total to exceed the shown WeBS counts was 100 at Pagham Hbr on 30 Dec. However, there were 57 at Climping on 17 Dec and 40 on Worthing Beach on 28 Nov. [CJRB]

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 163 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	7709	3003	438	249	201	377	639	1080	624	1728	6880	11,754
Chichester Hbr	1315	611	33	26	25	12	68	127	138	198	927	1150
Medmerry	275	104	26	26	23	35	nc	43	25	120	85	325
Pagham Hbr	1217	192	33	10	11	25	49	171	80	315	1204	1908
Arun Valley	1853	625	119	64	54	54	107	80	17	240	1064	968
Lower Adur Estuary	1140	91	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	27	108	180	210
Newhaven	nc	259	nc	nc	-	-	-	-	-	-	72	450
Ouse Valley	265	572	47	8	4	nc	-	-	-	60	69	211
Pevensey Levels	713	48	76	28	30	nc	nc	nc	2	-	794	1178
Bewl Water	14	68	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	32	61	79	58
Rye Bay	731	145	78	69	48	250	415	565	238	554	2331	5068

There were some significant additional counts to the WeBS; 1000 in Rye Bay on 1 Jan and 2000 in the same area on the 2nd and 800 on the 6th, 1500 at Pagham Hbr on 7 and 28 Jan, 500 at Lewes Brooks (Ouse Valley) on 2 Jan, 600 at Pevensey Levels on 17 Feb, 500 at Pagham Hbr on 19 Feb and 520 there on the 23rd, 2500 at Pulborough Brooks on 23 Feb.

Breeding was confirmed in nine tetrads and was probable at a further 21. The first reports of nesting were of a bird sitting on eggs at Arundel WWT on 30 Mar, another nest with three eggs at Wick on 1 Apr and a different nest at Arundel on the 9th. The first chicks were seen at Arundel on 15 Apr (four) and 17 Apr (eight) and, at Pulborough Brooks, on 3 May (three). At Pulborough Brooks, although 19 pairs were noted, breeding was disrupted by floods and probably only two birds fledged, an experience similar to that at Amberley Wild Brooks (ten pairs). At Rye Hbr, 29 pairs bred but fledging success was low. At Medmerry there was better success: 12 pairs fledged four and a further 12 pairs on the construction site fledged 12 young. There were seven pairs at Thorney Island through the season.

The first gatherings of significant numbers were reported from early July with 100 at Pulborough Brooks on the 7th, with counts in the low hundreds at several sites to 350 on the 31st at Rye Hbr followed by 400 there in early August and 500 there on the 25th. Later in the autumn there were 500 at Pagham Hbr on 1 Sep and 536 at Pulborough Brooks on 29 Oct.

The WeBS table clearly reveals large numbers in December and the total was the highest since 14,884 were recorded in February 2008; included amongst these counts were 3200 at Scotney GP on 16 Dec. Additional to the WeBS there were nine counts of a thousand or more birds, mostly from Pagham Hbr where the peak of 2000 was recorded on 23 Dec but 1000 were recorded at Jury's Gap on 27 Dec. [WEC]

Knot

Calidris canutus

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

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1411	1544	222	-	30	-	4	33	20	6	321	332
Chichester Hbr	1207	843	221	-	29	-	2	26	16	-	116	45
Pagham Hbr	204	700	1	-	1	-	-	3	2	6	205	281
Rye Bay	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	4	2	-	-	6

Significant counts additional to the WeBS included 500 at both Pilsey Sands (Chichester Hbr) on 25 Jan and Pagham Hbr on 27 Feb. As usual the highest numbers were recorded from the West Sussex harbours where birds were recorded in every month of the year. However, notable counts from East Sussex included 150 in Rye Bay on 6 Jan, 70 at Rye Hbr on 7 Jan and 168 there on 3 May. The total numbers recorded were down by two thirds compared with 2011.

Eastward coastal passage was very light; a daily analysis of the principal seawatching sites gives a total of 85 E comprising 24 in April and 61 in May with a maximum of just 13 E at Selsey Bill on 29 Apr.

Reports of birds in summer plumage were of many among the 75 at Pagham Hbr on 4 May which decreased to 21 on the 8th and 6 on 2 Jun. There were only three records of birds in June, the last one noted at Rye Hbr on the 16th.

The first returning bird was at Pilsey Sands on 4 Jul followed by ten at Pett Level on the 22nd and two at Rye Hbr on the 28th. Thereafter, there was a slow build up of numbers with the bulk arriving in late November when 400 were at Pagham Hbr on the 29th and 600 at Pilsey Sands on the 30th. The peak December counts of 600 were also at Pagham Hbr on the 8th and at Pilsey Sands on the 12th. [WEC, JAN]

Sanderling

Calidris alba

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

Birds were once again noted throughout the year with all sightings at or very near the coast. The monthly WeBS counts for the principal sites were as given in the table below.

Significant first winter period counts, in descending order of magnitude and additional to the WeBS were 250 on Worthing Beach on 17 Jan, 176 at Pilsey Sands (Chichester Hbr) on 22 Mar, 150 at Thorney Island on 23 Feb and 120 at Pilsey Sands on 14 Jan.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	14	42	121	61	254	42	220	318	4	43	75	27
Chichester Hbr	11	32	121	30	200	42	218	314	1	43	6	11
Pagham Hbr	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-
Climping	-	6	-	31	54	-	2	-	-	-	69	12
Arun (S of Arundel)	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Goring Gap	nc	-	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	2	-	-	4
Lower Adur Estuary	1	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-	-
Rye Bay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-



Sanderling, Selsey, February 2012 (Mick Davis)

The table below, showing the monthly totals passing each of the principal seawatching sites, demonstrates that coastal movements were unremarkable, except for a westerly movement at Worthing in March and a reasonable number eastwards at Selsey Bill in May where the peak was just 36 E on the 18th.

The first returning birds were six recorded at Pilsey Sands on 12 Jul increasing to 300 on 1 Aug and a monthly maximum of 350 on the 19th. In the autumn period there was a monthly maximum of 136 on the beach at Brooklands (Worthing) on 12 Oct. Thereafter maxima were: 150 at Pilsey Sands on 25 Oct, 116 at East Head (Chichester Hbr) on 16 Nov, 120 at Rye Hbr on the 27th and 100 at Climping on 21 Dec. [WEC, JAN]

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	-	1	-	20	137	1		2	-	8	-	-
	W	-	-	1	6	-	-		-	-	6	-	-
Climping	E	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-
	W	11	-	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-
Worthing	E	-	-	5	9	73	-		8	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	100	5	-	3		-	-	19	7	-
Splash Point	E	-	-	-	31	91	-		-	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-
Birling Gap	E	-	-	-	17	9	-		-	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-

Little Stint

Calidris minuta

Scarce passage migrant; very scarce in winter.

Numbers for this species were very low as shown in the following table of monthly totals. During the WeBS counts only two birds were recorded: one at Pagham Hbr on 17 Sep and another at Rye Hbr on 14 Oct.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	1	1	-	12	-	2	5	3	2	1	1

Birds were recorded at only the three usual sites of Chichester, Pagham and Rye Harbours. In the first winter period the only record was of one still present from 2011 at Fishbourne Channel (Chichester Hbr) until 19 Mar.

In spring the first spring migrant was one seen at Rye Hbr on 3 May which was joined by two more on the 5th and by yet two more on the 6th, but the last record was of only one on the 7th. Three migrants appeared at Church Norton on the 5th to be joined by two more on the 8th associating with a Dunlin flock. The final spring record at Pagham Hbr was of two on the 26th at the North Wall fields. Further along the coast three birds were recorded at Birling Gap on 19 May.

The first early returning migrants were seen at Rye Hbr on 15 Jul, at Ferry Pool (Pagham Hbr) on the 31st and Pilsey Sands on 1 Aug only. The next records were of one at Rye Hbr on 9, 16 and 28 Aug, joined by two more on the 30th of which only one remained on 2 Sep. Another was there on 22 Sep. At Pagham Hbr there was one on 14 Sep which remained until the 20th. The last bird of the year was at Rye Hbr on 1 and 3 Dec. [WEC]

Temminck's Stint

Calidris temminckii

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

Only two records were received: a spring migrant was at Rye Hbr from 3 to 6 May (CB) and a returning bird was at Medmerry from 17 to 18 Aug (PB). The total for the 21st century moves on to 39. Most records are for spring migrants which peak in May (62% of all records), the earliest

having been on 19 Mar 1975; the latest autumn arrival was 29 Sep 1975 which departed on 1 Oct; there have been no later records. [JAH]

Pectoral Sandpiper

Calidris melanotos

Rare vagrant, mainly in autumn.

The only record was of one at Pulborough Brooks from 30 Sep to 5 Oct (JSW *et al.*). The county total moves on to 87, since the first record of 1870, with 22 having been seen this century. This is a predominantly autumn species: 91% of all records have been for the months July to November; the earliest autumn arrival was on 18 Jul 1987 and the latest 2 Nov 1963, which departed on the 3rd. There have been only seven spring records since 1870: April (3) and May (4); the earliest was one shot at Winchelsea on 14 Apr 1909. [JAH]



Curlew Sandpiper; Cuckmere Haven, September 2012 (Peter Wilson)

Curlew Sandpiper

Calidris ferruginea

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

The total number of Curlew Sandpipers recorded in 2012 was 50% fewer than the number of records in 2011. The first record in a good spring for this species was of three birds at Pilsey Island on 3 May, one of which was in summer plumage, followed by another on the 6th, moulting into breeding plumage. Between 4 and 8 May further sightings were of five at Rye Hbr, up to two birds at Pagham Hbr, also from the 4th to the 8th, five at Pevensy Levels on the 6th and a further two birds in fields west of Selsey on the 13th and, finally, one at The Midrips on the 20th.

The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
19	-	1	9	4	2	1

The first early returning migrant was one in partial summer plumage on 31 Jul at Pagham Hbr followed by an estimated minimum of nine birds in August split between Pagham Hbr (six) and Rye Hbr (three). An unusually low total was recorded in September with only four birds, comprising two at Pagham Hbr on the 9th and 22nd and one each at Cuckmere Haven on the 9th and Rye Hbr on the 18th. The only record for October was of two at Rye Hbr on the 15th. Finally, there was a very late record of one at Pagham Hbr from 8-10 Nov. [CD]



Purple Sandpiper, Newhaven Harbour, January 2012 (Jake Everitt)

Purple Sandpiper

Calidris maritima

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

This species was only recorded in three locations and the highest count at each of these is shown in the table below.

For the first part of the year numbers were lower than recent years. The highest counts in each month were eight at Newhaven Hbr on 7 Jan, 21 at Brighton Marina on 24 Feb and six also at Brighton Marina between 13 and 23 Mar. The count at Brighton in February equals the previous site record of 21 on 22 Feb 2011. There were no further sightings reported at Newhaven

in February or March. Unusually, there were no records for April and this is the first year in modern recording times without an April or May record.

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	19	26	6		1	23	19
Shoreham Hbr	7	5	-		1	3	12
Brighton Marina	4	21	6		-	8	-
Newhaven Hbr	8	-	-		-	12	1

The first returning bird was not recorded until 16 Oct, at Shoreham Hbr (the 10-year average is 9 Sep). Birds in the second winter period were again only reported at the same three sites as for the first winter period. The number of birds at Shoreham Hbr increased to three on 15 Nov, but birds were not recorded at the other two sites until 17 Nov. Numbers in December were generally low, with a maximum count of 12 birds at Shoreham Hbr, which is a site record. The only other recorded was one at Newhaven. [CD]

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.

Dunlins were recorded from 61 almost exclusively coastal 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	8188	10,086	6771	242	547	155	590	2602	808	4012	6797	10,493
Chichester Hbr	6512	8042	6072	71	429	126	468	2514	547	3741	6508	9572
Pagham Hbr	1619	1238	615	156	57	-	-	41	6	228	272	836
Rye Bay	55	583	68	12	49	29	102	45	240	42	13	60

Counts additional to the WeBS counts at the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chichester Hbr	20,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	4000	-	10,000	8000	10,000
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	-	213	10	50	70	48	502	1000	-
Rye Bay	100	525	98	14	330	32	-	120	260	62	80	-

The January count of 20,000 at Pilsey Sands (Chichester Hbr) was not only the highest in the county during 2012 but also equalled the two other highest counts since 1964, of 10 Nov 1995 and 5 Nov 2010, also at Pilsey Sands. Furthermore, the totals at Chichester Hbr in the first and the last three months exceeded the 1% threshold of 13,300, making Chichester Hbr a site of international importance for this species. Elsewhere, the highest counts of birds roosting on the beach at Brooklands (Worthing) were 500 on 10 Jan, 400 on 9 Feb and, at the end of the year, 135 on 5 Nov and 150 on 8 Dec.

In keeping with records of other wading species the spring visible passage was poor with an analysis of the details from the seawatching sites suggesting 169 flew east comprising eight in March, 39 in April and 128 in May, this being about 35% of the average number for the past 28 years. The largest coastal movements in the year included 40 W on 9 Jan and 66 E on 3 May at Worthing and 50 W at Selsey Bill on 22 Apr. The high counts in the second winter period were mostly concentrated in the Chichester Hbr area with 3600 seen at Pilsey Sands on 12 Dec. At Pagham Hbr 1000 were seen on 17 Nov and 300 at Worthing on 13 Dec.

Inland records came from Pulborough Brooks (15 dates with a maximum of six on 31 Mar), Weir Wood Res (one on 3 Apr), the Bluebell Railway (one on 14 Jan), Arlington Res (two on 6 Jan and three on 17 May) and Bewl Water (one on 2 Feb). [RJE]

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 follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	13	11	29	7	-	-	-	3	3	-	13	10
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Pagham Hbr	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Arun Valley	8	8	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	10
Rye Hbr	5	2	4	7	-	-	-	2	2	-	7	-

The minimum monthly totals, including all records, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	25	99	45	35	6	-	6	26	8	8	20	14

Ruffs were recorded in every month except June. The majority of sightings occurred in three sites: Pagham Hbr, the Arun Valley and Rye Hbr. The highest counts during the first winter period were 42 at Rye Hbr on 23 Feb and 25 at Pevensey Levels on the 26th and in the Arun Valley, 17 on 26 Jan, 27 Feb and 12 Mar. Elsewhere, the highest counts in the period were eight at Pett Level on 28 Feb and five at Pagham Hbr on 7 Mar.

Numbers in the spring months declined as birds began to migrate. The highest count in March was 12 at Pett Level on the 28th falling to eight by 3 Apr. The final three spring birds were noted at Rye Hbr on 5 May.

An early returning migrant was recorded at Winchelsea Beach on 5 Jul followed by another at Rye Hbr on the 13th and four more elsewhere by the month's end. Numbers increased significantly from 9 Aug with a slow trickle of very small numbers culminating in 11 at Pagham Hbr on the 19th and 12 at Rye Hbr on the 25th. The majority of sightings in September were of single birds with twos being the maxima at two sites. Similarly, in October while four sites held only single birds there were five at Pulborough Brooks on the 29th.

In the second winter period some larger numbers were recorded: six at Rye Hbr on 3 Nov, seven at Pett Level on 18 Nov, six at Pulborough Brooks on the 19th and six at Rye Hbr on the

27th. The next record was not until 17 Dec of five at Amberley Wild Brooks followed by four at Pagham Hbr on the 21st and 27th, the final sighting for the year of birds apparently wintering. [RJE]

Jack Snipe

Lymnocyrtes 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	25	7	19	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Chichester Hbr	24	7	18	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Lower Adur Estuary	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	1	-
Ouse Valley	1	-	1	1	-	nc	-	-	-	-	-	-

The minimum monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	30	12	20	10	3	9	12
No. of sites	6	5	4	4	2	5	3

Counts of 23 at Thorney Deeps on 12 and 14 Jan were the highest since the record total of 38 there in 2003, but numbers at this site went down to 17 in March and seven in April. No more than two were recorded at any other site in the first winter period, the most regular reports coming from the East Head area and Lewes Brooks. Birds were seen on one or two dates only at Coombes, Amberley, Pett Level, Ferring Rife, Lavington Plantation, Rye Hbr and Barnham, where two were flushed by a Short-eared Owl. The last record was of one at Eastbourne on 18 Apr.

The first returning birds were two at Pett Level on 9 Oct, followed by one at Pagham Hbr on the 15th but no reports from any other sites until 1 Nov when one was recorded at Pulborough Brooks. This time none at all were reported from Thorney Deeps, but a single bird was regularly seen in the Fishbourne Channel and there were up to nine at Rye Hbr, plus one or two at Lavington Plantation, East Head and in the Lower Adur. [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 given in the table below. In addition to the WeBS counts, in the first winter period there were 111 at Pulborough Brooks on 8 Jan, 70 at Lewes Brooks on the 19th, 39 at Rye Hbr on 4 Feb and 30 at Pett Level on the 5th. The highest counts at other sites were 52 at Alfriston on 7 Jan and 25 at Sefton Fm (Rose Green) on 11 Feb. Ten at Arlington Res on 12 Feb was a high count for this site, and one by a dew pond at Ditchling Beacon on 1 Feb was the most unusual sighting of the year.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	257	214	177	55	-	-	9	39	21	138	325	523
Chichester Hbr	122	60	84	22	-	-	-	5	-	2	38	139
Medmerry	7	19	9	1	-	-	nc	1	5	26	15	33
Pagham Hbr	2	22	8	-	-	-	-	-	2	21	55	34
Arun Valley	44	38	19	8	-	-	9	24	11	56	58	101
Lower Adur Estuary	32	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	6	75	85
Ouse Valley	17	27	15	4	-	nc	-	-	1	7	1	30
Rye Bay	18	5	33	9	-	-	-	9	-	16	56	79

Only five birds were recorded in May. One displaying male at Pulborough Brooks on 1 Jun and drumming on 18 Jul were the only indications of possible breeding in the county, and although spring flooding probably had an effect on both breeding and monitoring, this is nevertheless the worst showing since records began.



Common Snipe, Rye Harbour, January 2012 (Roger and Liz Charlwood)

There were very few reports in July, and numbers remained in single figures until mid-August, the highest count of the autumn being 40 at Pulborough Brooks on the 14th and 50 on the 18th. In the second winter period there were good numbers throughout at Arundel WWT, with a maximum of 63 on 20 Dec. At Pulborough Brooks there were 150 on 26 Nov and 200 on the 28th and also at Rye Hbr, where counts in excess of WeBS were 28 on 11 Oct, 110 on 30 Nov and a very high 260 on 11 Dec, flushed while checking the sheep grazing. The only other counts higher than WeBS were 84 at the North Wall (Pagham Hbr) on 13 Nov and 43 at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) on 17 Dec. [CJRB]

Woodcock*Scolopax rusticola*

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

The minimum numbers of birds seen and numbers of sites for the two winter periods are shown below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	16	112	8		4	14	26
No. of sites	13	35	8		4	12	22

Severe weather over northern Europe brought a large influx in February, with high counts of 29 at Pett Level, 25 at Newhaven and 11 at Bewl Water during the month, and sightings from nearly 40 other locations spread throughout the county. By the end of the month all of these had departed, leaving only eight records in March.

The Thames Basin and Wealden Heaths Survey found 12 roding males on the West Sussex commons. Unfortunately, there is no data from Ashdown Forest on the numbers of roding males there. The only other reports of territorial activity were of single birds at Rewell Wood (Arundel), Chailey Common and Broadwater Warren. All July records were from breeding sites, and there were no records for August or September.

The first autumn record was not until 24 Oct, and in November and December nearly all sightings were inland and none involved more than two birds. [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	716	381	369	74	7	6	99	127	212	142	455	889
Chichester Hbr	595	296	291	57	-	3	90	90	160	125	328	44
Pagham Hbr	33	82	78	15	6	-	8	29	47	17	52	562
Arun Valley	80	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	75	282

As in previous years the two western harbour complexes dominated the WeBS counts for this species, although the Arun valley held a high count in December when numbers at Chichester Hbr were low. The January WeBS count for Chichester Hbr and the December count from Pagham Hbr came close to reaching the 1% international threshold of 610, although both sites exceeded the 1% national threshold of 430 in those same months. Indeed, numbers at Pagham Hbr did exceed the international threshold several times in December during non-WeBS counts, reaching a maximum of 1070 on 27 Dec.

Most records during the first winter period came from the two main traditional sites of Chichester and Pagham Harbours. Away from these, however, records came from Amberley Wild

Brooks, with a maximum of 250 on 15 Jan; Pulborough Brooks, with high counts of 163 on 3 Jan and 209 on the 6th; Pett Level, where 11 were recorded on 15 Mar; and Rye Hbr, where six were present for most of the winter, reaching a maximum of eight on 20 Mar.

There were no records of spring passage. However, two counts in mid-summer were high for that time of year, with 36 at Rye Hbr on 11 Jun and 22 at Pagham Hbr on the 28th. By 15 Jul numbers at the latter site had risen to 46, with 80 at Chichester Hbr by the 23rd and 80 still there almost a month later on 17 Aug.

At both Chichester and Pagham Hbrs increasing numbers were recorded as autumn progressed, with a maximum of 135 on 1 Oct at the former site and 60 on 27 Sep at the latter.

As previously stated the highest numbers during the second winter period were at Pagham Hbr where 410 on 16 Dec increased to 600 on the 21st and reached a maximum of 1070 on the 27th. At both Chichester Hbr and Pulborough Brooks maxima of 300 were recorded on 1 and 9 Dec respectively. The only other site where a significant count was made was Amberley Wild Brooks with 46 on 17 Dec. [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	623	244	448	23	259	1	71	95	82	81	446	321
Chichester Hbr	620	242	438	20	234	1	71	95	73	80	446	304
Pagham Hbr	2	-	-	1	24	-	-	-	3	-	-	17
Rye Bay	1	2	10	2	1	-	-	-	5	1	-	-

The table shows that Chichester Hbr remained the principal site for Bar-tailed Godwits with Pagham and Rye Harbours providing the only other site records. Chichester Hbr continues to be a site of national importance for this species, with three counts exceeding the 1% national threshold of 380. Within Chichester Hbr the key location was Pilsey Island where peak numbers, additional to the WeBS, were 800 on 8 Jan and 600 on the 25th.

An analysis of the daily records from the principal seawatching sites show a total of 1501 was noted flying east in spring, comprising five in March, 688 in April and 808 in May. This was less than half of the average for the preceeding 28 years and the mediocrity of this eastward passage can be seen in the following table of monthly totals and peak movements from four sites. Counts from the four principal seawatching sites were as follows:

	Apr	May	Total	Peak movements
Selsey Bill	390	189	579	174 on 29 Apr; 126 on 3 May
Worthing	304	678	982	141 on 23 Apr; 434 on 3 May
Splash Point	189	91	280	91 on 30 Apr; 47 on 7 May
Birling Gap	336	120	456	175 on 29 Apr; 56 on 2 May

The only record of autumn visible passage came from Selsey Bill of 26 W on 1 Sep.

With the exception of June, when just a single bird was recorded at Chichester Hbr, WeBS (and other) counts began to record returning birds from July onwards, with a maximum of 150 there by the end of October. Numbers at Chichester Hbr peaked in the second winter period during November, with 500 on the 30th, having increased from 446 on the 17th, before declining again with a maximum of 350 on 21 Dec. The highest count in Pagham Hbr at the end of the year was 27 on 11 Dec. [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	3	-	5	6	204	3	88	59	10	3	1	1
Chichester Hbr	3	-	5	6	188	2	82	36	5	3	1	-
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	-	13	-	-	19	1	-	-	1
Arun Valley	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	-
Newhaven	nc	-	nc	nc	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Cuckmere Haven	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	2	-	-	-

A single bird was noted at Pagham Hbr on 1 Jan and 15 Feb and up to two were seen at Thorney Island and in the Fishbourne Channel until 10 Mar. One over Hove on 11 Mar was the first recorded migrant and the first offshore movement was of two at Splash Point (Seaford) on the 17th, but passage was the lightest for at least 20 years. The maximum at the traditional staging post at Rye Hbr was just 52 on 23 Apr and the peak count at Pilsey Island was 50 on 3 May. Inland records were of two birds at Pulborough Brooks on 21 Apr, four on 28 Apr and five at Amberley Wild Brooks on 1 May, which were probably the same birds, and one at Arlington Res on 27 Apr. The only other evidence of overland passage was one flying NW at Warnham LNR on 1 May. The totals recorded at the main seawatching sites are shown below.

		Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total	Peak movement		Hrs watched peak days
Selsey Bill	E	-	66	55	-	-	-	121	24	28 Apr	13½
	W	-	8	7	1	7	1	24			
Worthing	E	5	51	80	-	1	-	137	33	3 May	3
	W	-	4	11	1	6	1	23			
Telscombe Cliffs	E	2	7	9	-	-	-	18	3	30 Apr 7 May	1.5
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Splash Point	E	2	68	87	-	-	-	157	44	7 May	14
	W	-	2	-	-	-	-	2			
Beachy Head	E	1	33	43	-	-	-	77	20	7 May	8
	W	-	-	1	-	1	-	2			

The low numbers continued into June, with only eight birds recorded in the county that month. The first returning bird at Pilsey Island was on 4 Jul, and numbers there built up to a peak of 40 on the 31st, though there were only single figures elsewhere. In view of the low numbers, 25 flying west at Newhaven Tidemills on 2 Sep was notable, and further inland there were two at Pulborough Brooks on 20 Aug and one at Amberley Wild Brooks on 17 Sep.

Two birds in Pagham Hbr until 6 Oct and three at Bosham on the 27th were likely to be late migrants, leaving winter records of one at Fishbourne Creek from 1 to 16 Dec, on which date there were also two at Thorney Island and one at Pagham Hbr. [CJRB]

Curlew

Numenius arquata

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

The January county total was about a third of its usual level, and the only counts higher than WeBS in the first winter period were 300 at Pett Level on the 6th and 320 at Pagham Hbr on 28 Feb. From mid-February a few birds turned up at inland sites as they began moving north, with one to three at Bewl Water, Henfield Levels, Lewes Brooks and Weir Wood Res, five at Haywards Heath on 12 Apr and up to four at Pulborough Brooks. The Newhaven Tide Mills flock peaked at 66 on 12 Feb.

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	813	1115	1373	401	81	144	1445	1803	1273	1153	1834	1847
Chichester Hbr	546	712	1008	196	57	74	1209	1557	732	751	1226	936
Pagham Hbr	120	273	123	175	16	48	221	171	402	-	283	270
Newhaven	nc	66	nc	nc	-	-	-	-	-	27	-	17
Rye Bay	142	16	213	14	8	21	15	53	110	347	319	587

Offshore passage was as light as usual, with many of the movements probably local rather than migratory. Evidence of overland migration was shown by 25 moving high NE at Pilsey Island on 7 Apr and 14 feeding with Bar-tailed Godwits on the Downs near Lewes on 4 May which also departed NE.

Curlews do not usually arrive back in any numbers until late June, but there were already 94 at Pilsey Island on the 3rd. Seven flew high WSW over Mountfield on 11 Jul, and single birds were noted at Arlington Res, Ashdown Forest and Cissbury Ring during the autumn, with one or two also at Pulborough Brooks. A count of 277 at Pagham Hbr on 26 Jul was the only one exceeding the WeBS count there that month and the August count of 1557 at Chichester Hbr was the only one this year to break the 1% threshold of 1500 for a site of national importance.

The only counts higher than WeBS at the end of the year were 670 at Rye Hbr on 13 Dec and 50 at Newhaven on 28 Oct.

Presumably the same bird described as either albino or leucistic seen in Pagham Hbr over the past four years was again reported there on 25 Feb and between 26 Jul and 13 Nov. [CJRB]

Terek Sandpiper*Xenus cinereus*

Very rare vagrant.

One seen in the Adur Estuary on 24 Jul was the only one recorded in Britain in 2012 (CC, BDJ, PJ). This is the fifth county record with the last being a bird which frequented the Rye area from 31 May to 8 Jun 2008. Previous records have been in May (2) and June (2). The first Sussex record, at The Midrips on 30 May 1951, was also the first for Britain. The record has been accepted by BBRC. [DHH]

Common Sandpiper*Actitis hypoleucos*

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

Birds were recorded in 66 tetrads during the year. There were no breeding records. The WeBS counts for the principal sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	-	3	-	1	2	3	50	64	14	2	3	2
Chichester Hbr	-	2	-	1	2	-	3	7	-	1	-	-
Arun (S of Arundel)	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	5	3	-	1	-
Weir Wood Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	1	-	-	-
Ouse Valley	-	1	-	-	-	nc	-	3	2	-	-	2
Arlington Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	12	1	-	2	-
Bewl Water	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	1	-	-
Rye Bay	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	19	7	-	-	-

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

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
8	8	4	25	41	11	127	151	57	13	7	8

These figures should be treated with caution due to possible duplication and difficulty in estimating the duration of stay of earlier birds and the arrival of others. Counts during January included single birds at Lewes Brooks on the 2nd and nearby Southease on the 6th and 31st, two at the regular site along the R Adur at Upper Beeding on the 8th and 9th and again on 11 Feb and 7 Mar, and single birds at Arlington Res on the 11th and Littlehampton Marina and Pett Level on the 15th. Birds were seen at three other locations during the first winter period: near Arundel on 3 Feb, at Pagham Hbr on the 15th and Thorney Island on the 11th.

In spring, records increased significantly from 23 Mar, when one was recorded in Pagham Hbr, but mostly just ones or twos were seen at sites in West Sussex. In East Sussex one was at Arlington Res on 4 and 28 Apr, and other sightings were one at Bewl Water on the 21st and Rye Hbr on the 29th. During the period from 4 Apr to 31 May birds were recorded on an almost daily basis, mainly as ones or twos with the occasional three or four; the highest count was 15 on the Lower Adur on 4 May.

There was no clear delineation between spring and autumn birds with records of one or two birds from seven locations during June, but birds were more widely recorded from 2 Jul. Numbers were generally low into summer but with some notable exceptions at three sites: ten were recorded at Arlington Res on 22 Jul and 22 Aug, eight at Darwell Res on the 28 Jul, and 16 on the Lower Adur on the 26th. Eighteen were also at this site on 8 Aug, and ten on 2 Sep.

Numbers decreased noticeably in the autumn with just one to three birds recorded at several sites; the highest count in East Sussex was six at East Guldeford Level on 16 Sep.

In the second winter period numbers continued at typically low levels with mainly one or two individuals seen in various locations, the highest count being three on the Lower Adur on 19 Nov through to 28 Dec. [WEC]

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.

The monthly WeBS counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	5	5	6	9	-	5	15	49	15	4	5	7
Chichester Hbr	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-
Medmerry	1	1	-	1	-	-	nc	7	5	-	3	2
Pagham Hbr	1	-	-	-	-	-	4	4	-	-	-	-
Arun Valley	-	-	1	1	-	2	9	13	4	-	-	1
Weir Wood Res	1	2	3	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Barcombe Res	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Pevensey Levels	-	-	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	-	-	1	-
Wadhurst Park	-	-	1	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	-	-	-
Rye Bay	-	-	-	2	-	2	2	21	4	1	-	-

The 1% national threshold for this species is nine birds; this limit was equalled in the Arun Valley in July and exceeded there and at Rye Bay in August making these sites of national importance for Green Sandpipers.

The approximate minimum monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	22	16	18	18	2	14	52	90	37	24	13	18
10-year average	18	13	15	21	3	20	65	90	43	21	17	17

From the first winter period until June the majority of sightings were of one to three birds. Notably a bird was recorded from the newly created meanders at Woods Mill on 2 Jan.

The start of return passage was marked by an early individual seen at Arlington on 1 Jun and another at Rye Hbr on the 2nd. The pattern for sightings in autumn and the second winter period followed the norm for small groups but these were generally larger than those seen earlier in the

year. Six were recorded at Pulborough Brooks on 12 Jul and five at Pett Level on the 26th. In August, eight were at Partridge Green on the 11th and at Northiam on the 17th, 11 were at Rye Hbr on the 18th, and nine were at Pulborough Brooks on the 19th but the largest number was 14 at Pett Level on the 16th. The highest count in September was nine at Pett Level on the 5th, five were seen at two other sites in the month and another five at Lidsey on 26 Oct; otherwise numbers in the autumn were unremarkable and usually one to three. [RJE]

Spotted Redshank

Tringa erythropus

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

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
11	8	11	7	8	1	8	12	6	4	11	12

As is usually the case, in the first winter period, most were in the Chichester Hbr areas, where there were up to three at both Thorney Island and Fishbourne Channel. Elsewhere, there were two at Pagham Hbr and one (possibly two) at Rye Hbr to 14 Mar. One at Camber on 31 Mar might have been an early migrant, the evidence for which is supported by further early spring birds in Chichester Hbr on 4 and 6 Apr where at least two birds were involved as one was moulting into breeding plumage. The next migrant, in breeding plumage, was at Fishbourne Channel on the 12th and there were at least three different birds at Pagham Hbr during the latter part of April. At least eight birds were seen in May: at Pagham Hbr where there were three on the 26th, and the last spring migrants were noted at Pevensey Levels, Pett Level and Rye Hbr, making it a good spring for this species and comparable to last year.

There was just one June record, an early returning bird at Pett Level on the 20th. Interestingly, this is just one day earlier than the first autumn bird last year which was also at this site. The next was also at Pett Level on 4 Jul, followed by one at Sidlesham Ferry the next day, and one at Rye Hbr on the 7th. Other July records involved one at Rye Hbr on the 12th; two (possibly three) at Pagham Hbr/Sidlesham Ferry; and two at Pett Level during the last week of the month.

As usual, the main autumn passage was in August involving at least 12 birds, including one which lingered from July at Sidlesham Ferry, staying until the 6th. Of these, most were at the usual coastal locations with a maximum of three at Pagham Hbr on the 19th, but there was one at Felpham on the 31st and a single bird inland at Pulborough Brooks. Just six were seen in September: two at Pagham Hbr early in the month followed by two more there and two at Chidham (Chichester Hbr) at the month's end. Numbers dropped off in October, with four in total: two at Pagham Hbr, one at Rye Hbr and one at Fishbourne Channel.

Numbers during the second winter period were significantly up on last year. In November at least 11 were reported including, remarkably, at least four at both Pagham Hbr and West Wittering (Chichester Hbr). In December similar numbers were seen, again, the majority at Chichester Hbr including maxima of three each at West Wittering and Fishbourne Channel and a single bird at Rye Hbr. Unusually, after November's showing, none were reported from Pagham Hbr during December. [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	20	30	17	15	19	-	68	110	39	42	9	11
Chichester Hbr	20	30	17	15	16	-	64	97	33	40	9	11
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-
Rye Bay	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	2	2	2	-	-

During the first winter period the largest numbers were at Thorney Deepes (Chichester Hbr) with a peak count of 20 there on 11 Feb. Also in Chichester Hbr there were six at Birdham on 11 Feb and ones and twos elsewhere but otherwise the only records during this period were of single birds at Pagham Hbr on 19 Feb and Rye Hbr on the 23rd.

Numbers at Thorney Deepes remained in double figures through to early May, making it difficult to determine when spring passage started. Elsewhere, it seems likely that one at Rye Hbr on 12 Mar was the first spring migrant. Six at Emsworth (Chichester Hbr) on 19 Mar were probably migrants, as was one at Drayton GP on 31 Mar. Birds were seen regularly during April and May at various coastal sites, with a high count of 19 at Pagham Hbr on 26 May, and 14 at Thorney Deepes on a couple of dates.

Inland, small numbers were recorded at Pulborough Brooks on several dates in April with a maximum of eight there on the 29th when there were three at Pevensey Levels. There was also one at Weir Wood Res on the 26th. In May, there were three on a flooded field at Salehurst on the 5th. It would appear that there was an influx at the end of April, and another one at the end of May, with smaller numbers trickling through in between these dates. The last spring migrant was noted on 6 Jun at Sidlesham Ferry.

The first returning bird was seen on 27 Jun at Bewl Water followed by one at Thorney Deepes the following day, and a mini-influx of eight at the same site on 4 Jul. Birds were then seen regularly through the autumn at the usual coastal and inland sites. At most locations numbers were in single figures but, as usual, numbers at Thorney Deepes built impressively through the autumn with eight noted on 4 Jul rising to no less than 61 by 20 Jul, 80 by 6 Aug and 96 by 17 Aug, before dropping sharply to 25 on 29 Sep (but with 45 there on 1 Oct). Elsewhere, the highest autumn counts were nine at Rye Hbr on 25 Aug and eight at Pagham Hbr on 10 Aug. Away from Thorney Island, autumn numbers were rather low and there were no particularly significant inland counts.

During the second winter period, numbers varied at Thorney Deepes, from 37 on 27 Oct, through 26 on 18 Nov, to 50 on 30 Nov, before dropping again to 17 on 16 Dec. Smaller numbers were seen elsewhere in Chichester Hbr and at scattered other localities, with a high count of eight at Pagham Hbr on 2 Dec. [JC]

Wood Sandpiper*Tringa glareola*

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

The minimum monthly totals were as given in the table below. The first spring migrant was seen at Pulborough Brooks on 23 May, 21 days later than the 10-year average date, followed by another at Lewes Brooks on the 27th. One was recorded at Lidsey Rife (Barnham) on 21 Jun.

May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
2	1	5	18	3

Two at Pulborough Brooks on 7 Jul were the first returning migrants; one of the latter stayed to at least the 30th. These were followed by two at Rye Hbr on the 12th and one at Bewl Water on the 24th. During August there was a surge of numbers, but mainly at Pulborough Brooks, Pett Level and Rye Hbr where the highest counts were one, four (on the 29th) and five (on the 17th, 18th and 24th) respectively; the only birds elsewhere were two at Partridge Green on the 29th. Only three birds, all singles, were recorded in September: at Rye Hbr on the 7th and the 28th and, finally, at Northiam from the 27th to the 29th, the last bird of the year. [RJE]

Common Redshank*Tringa totanus*

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

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	2091	1654	1546	483	89	68	724	1426	2202	1392	1537	1810
Chichester Hbr	1844	1255	1176	237	38	24	660	1202	1788	887	1053	1348
Pagham Hbr	75	196	138	82	5	2	46	145	208	226	167	167
Lower Adur Estuary	61	55	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	47	73	76	75
Rye Bay	79	71	188	140	30	30	14	48	117	151	149	165

As usual, the highest counts by far were in Chichester Hbr, where numbers exceeded the 1% national threshold of 1200 in January, February, August, September and December, clearly demonstrating that this site continues to hold nationally significant numbers of this species. Significant counts additional to the WeBS counts in the first quarter of the year were 100 in Pagham Hbr on 22 Jan, 200 there on 3 Mar, and 86 at Rye Hbr, also on 11 Mar.

Spring passage was again unremarkable and best indicated by the departure of wintering birds from the main sites, which can be gauged from the WeBS table above. Very few were seen at the seawatching sites, with two east past Splash Point (Seaford) on 30 Apr being the only count received.

Breeding appeared to be less successful than last year and breeding attempts were not recorded from several traditional sites this year but breeding was confirmed in four tetrads and was probable in a further five. At Rye Hbr about 12 pairs nested (compared with 19 last year) and breeding success was described as low. At Chichester Hbr there were nine pairs at Thorney Deeps (one

more than last year) and three pairs at Pilsey Island. Elsewhere there were four pairs at Medmerry, at least one of which raised two young, single pairs at Pagham Hbr and Sidlesham Ferry (raising three and one young respectively), and a single pair nested at The Midrips.

The first non-breeding birds started returning in late June, with numbers at Thorney Deepes building to 260 on 4 Jul, 470 by the 20th and the traditional autumn peak of 1100 on 16 and 17 Aug. Following this autumn peak, numbers at Thorney fell back slightly (as usual) to 888 at the end of September, but increased again to 1000 on 18 Nov. Other notable autumn/winter counts (in addition to the WeBS table above) included 60 at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) on 18 Nov, 50 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 7 Dec, and 300 at Pagham Hbr on 16 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.

Birds were recorded in 52 tetrads along the coast but predominately in the west. 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	631	598	921	153	108	3	147	233	377	328	360	723
Chichester Hbr	261	103	263	-	49	-	47	37	182	68	82	156
Pagham Hbr	163	237	325	29	22	1	65	140	43	147	105	253
Climping	96	165	308	123	32	2	20	43	51	11	130	195
Arun (S of Arundel)	-	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	85
Goring Gap	nc	3	-	-	-	nc	nc	nc	30	10	2	5
Lower Adur Valley	67	-	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	58	33	4	28
Glyne Gap	37	55	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	12	nc
Rye Bay	7	13	25	1	5	-	10	13	13	59	21	1

The highest counts in the first winter period additional to those shown in the above table were 100 at Climping Gap on 22 Jan, 140 at Bulverhythe (St Leonards) on the 26 Feb and 285 there on 11 Mar; this is thought to be a record sized flock at this location. The WeBS counts in both winter periods show an increase in numbers from 2011.

Coastal observed spring passage for all wading birds was poor in 2012 and this species was no exception; an analysis of the detailed counts from the principal seawatch locations suggest a total of 102 were seen with a clear peak of 67 E at Selsey Bill on 14 Apr.

Numbers reduced considerably during the spring and early summer period being at their lowest during June with a maximum count of 14 at Pilsey Island on 22 June. During August numbers steadily increased and the first sizeable counts were 137 at Pagham Hbr on 19 Aug and 98 at Selsey Bill on 5 Sep. At Rye Hbr, there were 41 on 25 Sep and 51 at Pett Level on 14 Oct.

In the second winter period, there were 13 counts of 50 or more and seven in three figures; those not included in the table of WeBS counts were 300 at the mouth of the R Arun at Littlehampton on 2 Dec, 134 at St. Leonards on the 11th and 198 at Climping Gap on the 21st. Elsewhere the highest count at Widewater (Lancing) was 60 on 23 Nov and 40 at Pett Level on 11 Nov. There were just two inland records: a single bird was seen at Arlington Res on 19 May and five were at Darwell Res on 28 Jul. [WEC]

Grey Phalarope*Phalaropus fulicarius*

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

There was just one record: an adult was watched for an hour just offshore at Splash Point (Seaford) on 12 Jan (MJC, SFW). This single sighting raises the total for this century to 48. This species is essentially an autumn/second winter vagrant; monthly arrivals of some 378 birds recorded since 1948 have been as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
No. of birds	24	2	-	2		1	92	142	99	16	378

Some 88% arrive in September to November, often following westerly storms. The earliest recorded arrival was 26 Aug 1948 and the latest sighting was 25 Apr 1973, both in Rye Bay. [JAH]

Pomarine Skua*Stercorarius pomarinus*

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

It was a poor year for this species with an estimated spring total of only 75 birds which is under half the 10-year average of 155 and significantly lower than the 2011 total of 211.

The monthly totals for the eastward passage recorded at five seawatching sites are shown in the table below.

	Apr	May	Jun	Total	Peak
Monthly minima	38	32	5	75	
Selsey Bill	26	17	3	47	19 on 30 Apr
Worthing	8	-	-	8	5 on 30 Apr
Telscombe Cliffs	3	5	-	8	2 on 10 May
Splash Point (Seaford)	38	13	2	53	19 on 30 Apr
Birling Gap	9	16	2	27	7 on 30 Apr

An immature bird was recorded flying east past Selsey Bill on 1 Jan with presumably the same bird seen moving east off Birling Gap later that same day. What was also assumed to be the same individual was seen moving west past Telscombe Cliffs on 11 Jan.

The first spring birds were not seen until 23 Apr when there were 5 E at Splash Point, 3 E past Worthing and single birds passing Selsey Bill and Birling Gap. The peak movements occurred on the last two days of April with 7 E past Splash Point on the 29th and 19 E at both Selsey Bill and Splash Point the following day. A second, even smaller, peak occurred on 7 May with 8 E at Selsey Bill, 12 E at Splash Point and 5 E at Birling Gap. The last spring record was of 1 E at Selsey Bill on 22 Jun.

The only autumn record was of 1 W at Worthing on 1 Oct. An unusual record, both in terms of date and location, was of an immature at Arlington Res on 17 Jul. [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.

In line with previous reports, the totals of birds shown in the tables were compiled on the assumption that the highest number of birds recorded at any coastal site on any day was the minimum in the county on that date and that birds seen on subsequent dates were different. Only those birds for which a flight direction was recorded are included in the tables.

2012 was a good year for records of this species with the annual total of 534 being the highest since 2007 and above the 10-year average of 442. Exceptional movements of Arctic Skuas along the southeast coast during April resulted in record numbers being recorded not only in Sussex but also in Hampshire and Kent (*British Birds* **105**:626-629). The spring total of 468 exceeded the previous record of 398 in 1986. Similarly, the total of 153 recorded on 25 Apr at Birling Gap exceeded the previous record one-day total of 67 in Apr 2000 (the date 25 Apr 2012 was also notable for the record numbers of Great Skuas recorded).

The approximate monthly totals for which a flight direction was recorded are shown in the table below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	1	-	4	409	45	14	7	36	12	2	3	1
No. of days	1	-	4	21	18	9	3	11	7	2	3	1
Peak no.	1	-	1	153	12	3	3	18	4	1	1	1
Peak day	15th	-	16th	25th	7th	5th	13th	27th	1st	12th	4th	14th

The only record during January was of 1 E past Selsey Bill on the 15th with what was assumed to be the same bird moving east off Telscombe Cliffs and Birling Gap later that same day. There were no records in February and the four recorded in March were all single birds seen at Telscombe Cliffs on the 16th, 17th and 19th, and at Splash Point (Seaford) and Birling Gap on the 31st. Spring passage started slowly although 29 E were recorded at Splash Point on 18 Apr. It was not until the last ten days of April that large numbers were recorded with the peak occurring on the 25th and 26th. On 25 Apr there were 32 E at Selsey Bill, 21 E at Worthing, 21 E at Telscombe Cliffs, 98 E at Splash Point and 153 E at Birling Gap. Large numbers were also recorded moving east at Splash Point (77) and Birling Gap (48) on 26 Apr. The month ended with 50 E off Selsey Bill on 30 Apr. Figures for the period 23-30 Apr are shown in the table below.

	April							
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Selsey Bill	24	7	32	6	8	7	9	50
Worthing	21	1	42	7	-	-	5	8
Telscombe Cliffs	16	-	21	5	-	1	2	1
Splash Point	81	1	98	77	13	-	8	30
Birling Gap	14	-	153	48	17	-	1	24

The number of birds recorded dropped in May with peak counts of 10 E at Selsey Bill on the 1st and 12 E at Splash Point on the 7th. From mid-May until late August only low numbers were

recorded and the only significant autumn movement was of 18 W at Selsey Bill on 27 Aug. In September, the highest counts were of 4 E at Selsey Bill on the 1st and 3 E at Splash Point on the 24th. The two records in October both referred to single birds as did the three November records. The last record for the year was of 1 W at Splash Point on 14 Dec. The monthly totals of passage birds at four sites are shown below.

	Apr		May			Aug		Sep	
	E	W	E	W		E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	162	4	39	1		8	20	6	2
Worthing	87	-	3	1		1	9	2	1
Splash Point	360	-	23	-		3	-	4	-
Birling Gap	268	1	25	-		-	-	1	-

There were fewer records than normal of birds lingering offshore during the year with four in Rye Bay on 25 Aug and three in the same area on 23 Sep being the largest numbers noted. The only record of this species away from the open sea was of two flying east over Kingley Vale on 30 Apr. [DHH]

Long-tailed Skua

Stercorarius longicaudus

Rare vagrant.

Following a blank year in 2011 the single record this year was of an immature moving east past Worthing on 29 Aug (DIS). This brings the total number of records for this century to fifteen. [DHH]

Great Skua

Stercorarius skua

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

Exceptional movements of Great Skuas along the southeast coast during April resulted in record numbers being recorded, not only in Sussex but also in Hampshire and Kent (*British Birds* 105:626-629). This led to an estimated minimum annual total of 612 which is over twice the previous record of 295 in 2008 and raised the 10-year average from 187 to 233. The minimum monthly totals of passage birds are shown below and have been compiled using the same method as for Arctic Skuas. The figures include only those records for which a direction of travel was given and do not include records of birds lingering offshore.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	9	4	8	533	30	7	2	2	3	1	5	8
No. of days	8	4	8	21	15	3	2	2	3	1	4	2
Peak no.	2	1	1	155	11	5	1	1	1	1	2	7
Date	30th	9th	16th	25th	7th	8th	13th	27th	24th	25th	4th	29th

Records during the first winter period were largely of single birds and also mainly of birds moving west suggesting that they had wintered in the Channel. The first evidence of easterly spring passage occurred on 9 Apr with 6 E at Selsey Bill and 5 E at Splash Point (Seaford) followed by 16 E at Splash Point the next day. Numbers were then low until 18 Apr when a record 119 moved east past Splash Point. This figure exceeded the previous county record of 61 E at Birling Gap on 10 Oct 2011 but it was a record that would only last for seven days and gave no indication of what was to follow. Between 19 and 24 Apr, passage was unexceptional although there was a minor peak on 23 Apr with 12 E at Worthing, 30 E at Splash Point and 17 E at Birling Gap.

The date 25 Apr was the day which will long be remembered by observers who witnessed the mass easterly movement involving 72 at Selsey Bill, 107 at Worthing, 155 at Splash Point (a new county record) and 133 at Birling Gap. The pattern of records in Hampshire, Sussex and Kent suggests that half of the birds involved in this movement passed to the south of the Isle of Wight with the others moving through the Solent. The following day a further 105 E were recorded at Splash Point. The figures for birds moving east past four seawatching points during the period 18 to 30 Apr are shown in the table below.

	April												
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Selsey Bill	18	-	1	3	4	3	4	72	8	11	5	37	14
Worthing	11	-	1	-	-	12	4	107	5	3	1	1	8
Splash Point (Seaford)	119	1	8	2	1	30	-	155	105	10	-	1	1
Birling Gap	-	-	1	1	-	17	-	133	94	15	-	2	6

The spring passage did not continue into May and with the exception of 11 E at Selsey Bill on the 7th, records were generally of just one or two birds. Numbers remained low for the rest of the year with no sign of the normal westerly movement in October. The last birds of the year were at Selsey Bill with 2 E and 7 W on 29 Dec and a single bird moving west on 31 Dec. Monthly figures for four seawatching points are shown in the table.

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	-	-	-	196	20	-	-	2	1	-	-	2
	W	2	1	-	7	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	9
Worthing	E	1	-	-	152	5	-	1	-	-	-	1	-
	W	1	1	1	7	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Splash Point (Seaford)	E	-	-	1	455	9	4	-	-	2	1	2	-
	W	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Birling Gap	E	1	-	1	273	11	5	1	-	-	-	-	-
	W	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

There were few records of this species in the east of county with only single birds seen offshore in Rye Bay in January and September and off Bexhill and Rock-a-Nore (Hastings) in April. [DHH]

Sabine's Gull

Xema sabini

Rare autumn vagrant.

There were only two records. An adult bird seen at Rye Hbr on 5 Aug (AP) was seen later at Dungeness. The second bird was a juvenile seen and photographed at Brighton and Hove seafront on 20 and 21 Oct (JM, JN *et al.*). These two raise the county total this century to 18 and the overall total to a minimum of 72. The majority (82%) of arrivals occur in August to October, as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
No. of birds	2	-	-	1	2	-	-	4	15	40*	6	2	72

*October total includes a minimum of 19 in 1987

This year's first arrival on 5 Aug is the earliest date on record for a summer arrival, the previous August records having been on 18 Aug 1997, 25 Aug 1951 and 30 Aug 1992. [JAH]



Sabine's Gull, Hove, October 2012 (Jake Gearty)

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 almost all records being either related to movement with direction or seawatching observations and monthly summaries. Kittiwakes are

not counted at Splash Point (Seaford) once breeding pairs have settled on the cliffs, as birds are ever present and continually flying to and from the cliffs.

Monthly totals from the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	55	4	16	87	35	21	2	1	2	-	108	11
	W	46	14	24	114	16	11	1	10	2	-	159	1528
Worthing	E	30	35	3	55	3	9	2	5	-	-	28	11
	W	36	226	72	-	8	2	7	8	-	974	746	224
Telscombe Cliffs	E	-	24	11	147	22	31	-	9	-	2	5	-
	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Splash Point	E	9	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	35	16
	W	27	500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	27	1
Birling Gap	E	71	30	110	350	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	61	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

During the first winter period, the largest number noted was 500 birds (in one hour) moving on and around the cliff nest sites, at Splash Point on 28 Feb. There were no other counts greater than 100 during this period from any other site.

Breeding was confirmed at Seaford Head cliffs but not at Newhaven, although data on the precise number of occupied nests and their breeding success is not available this year. An early estimate of total occupied nests was given as at least 200 at Splash Point on 20 Mar.

In the autumn period, numbers recorded were generally low except for a movement of 972 W on 31 Oct past Worthing. In the second winter period, there were three day counts in excess of 100 at Worthing (highest 464 W in 1½ hr on 3 Nov) and four at Selsey Bill (highest 1035 W in 4 hr on 29 Dec). There were no inland records this year. [CD]

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.

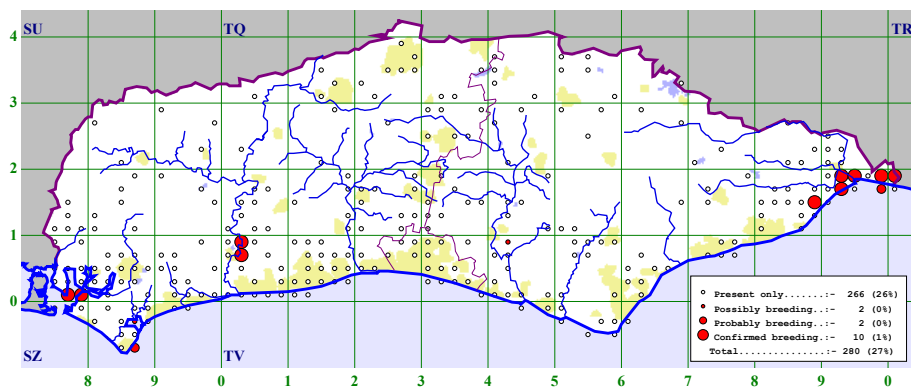
This species was recorded from 280 tetrads, slightly biased towards coastal areas in West Sussex. The widespread distribution was shown in the SWBS in which the species was recorded in 58 of the 131 squares surveyed; the total recorded was 1443 with a maximum count of 160 at Oving on 19 Feb. Maximum monthly roost counts at Bewl Water are shown below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Oct	Nov	Dec
Bewl Water	38,920	15,950	48		750	50,000	21,555

The only four figure counts during the first quarter of the year, additional to the above, were 1000 at Arlington Res on 7 Jan, 1144 at Southwater CP on 22 Jan, 2000 at Warnham LNR on 8 Feb, 3000 at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 19 Feb, 1600 at Pett Level on 13 Mar, and 1500 at Rye Hbr on 22 Mar.

In keeping with recent years the largest colonies were in East Sussex. At Rye Hbr a count on 7 May revealed at least 1628 nests at Ternery Pool with an additional 85 pairs in the quarry

and around 15 pairs on a pit at Harbour Fm. Overall the colony size was estimated to be at least 1900 pairs, taking into account vegetation cover, and fledging success, with around 1000, was considered good. At nearby Pett Level the colony held 200 pairs and at The Midrips a pair was noted as displaying whilst two birds were chasing crows away but no nest or pair counts were received. Although an estimated 15 nests were noted at North Stakes Island (Chichester Hbr) on 4 May these were tidally flooded and destroyed on 3 Jun. A similar catastrophe also occurred on South Stakes Island. There were 46 pairs at Pagham Hbr and although breeding was confirmed at Arundel WWT there was no count of the colony size. Once again Black-headed Gulls did not breed on the rafts at Chichester GP.



Between April and June the highest counts, other than at breeding colonies, were 400 at Thorney Island on 7 Apr, 205 at Pulborough Brooks on 18 Jun and 175 at Medmerry on the 24th. During July to September the highest, and only four figure, counts were 3000 at Thorney Deepes on 27 Jul and 1634 at East Chidham on 29 Sep. In the final quarter, other than at Bewl Water, there were four figure counts as follows: at Glyne Gap on 5 Nov 1000 and the same number at Arundel WWT on the 14th, 1300 at Glyne Gap and 1500 at Bosham on 19 Nov, 1200 at Warnham LNR on 6 Dec, 1100 at Partridge Green on the 16th and 1000 there on the 27th. During the November and December SWBS a total of 2199 were recorded from 43 of the 107 squares surveyed with a high count of 1500 as noted above at Bosham. [TS]

Little Gull

Hydrocoleus 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 approximately 690 as shown by the following monthly totals:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	-	7	33	285	36	11	-	4	5	2	223	2
No. of days		4	9	13	14	5	-	3	3	2	7	1
No. inland birds		-	2	15	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-

The total for April assumes that birds seen on the 25th at Worthing and Birling Gap were also recorded amongst the 187 at Splash Point that day.

The earliest record for the year was one at Lidsey SF on 2 Feb followed by 4 W at Worthing on 5 Feb and one at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on the 16th. One unfortunate bird was found dead on 23 Feb on a frozen pond in Worthing; it had been ringed as a chick at Västerbotten (Sweden) in June 2010 and was the second Swedish ringed bird to be found in the UK. The total for March included 12 E in 5 hr at Splash Point on 15 Mar. Numbers increased in April: 13 appeared at Arlington Res on 18 Apr and 30 E passed Splash Point the same day. Spring migration eastwards peaked on 25 Apr when the largest count was 187 E at Splash Point, as shown below:

		Mar	Apr	May	Peak count
Selsey Bill	E	12	20	2	7 on 23 Mar and 14 Apr
Worthing	E	-	50	-	48 on 25 Apr
Telscombe Cliffs	E	4	3	2	2 on 15 Mar and 26 Apr
Splash Point	E	13	243	3	187 on 25 Apr
Birling Gap	E	-	30	7	27 on 25 Apr

Numbers thereafter rarely exceeded three. Mainly single individuals were seen in June with a maximum of six at Pett level on the 4th.

The first returning migrants were all inland: three at Arlington Res on 20 Aug and one at Weir Wood Res on the 29th. Only ones or twos were noted in the next two months as it was not until 10 Nov that a significant return passage was recorded. Following 17 W at Church Norton on 10 Nov 57 W passed Selsey Bill on the 11th and an unusual 63 were feeding offshore at Church Norton on the 18th followed by 30 there the next day and ten on the 20th. There was good movement at this time on the French coast and these counts tally nicely with 1210 seen flying past Cap Gris-Nez on the 18th. Two flying west at Selsey Bill on 31 Dec were the only December sightings. [TS]

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.

Birds were recorded in 77 predominantly coastal tetrads. In the first quarter of the year, numbers built up to 550 at Rye Hbr on 30 Mar. Elsewhere, 78 were recorded at Climping Gap on 31 Jan, 94 at Pagham Hbr on 11 Feb, 220 at Church Norton on 23 Feb and at Pett Level 100 on 4 Mar, 84 on 6 Mar and 150 on 30 Mar. The only inland records during this period were from Bewl Water, with one on 21 Feb, and Arlington Res, with ten on 3 and 9 Mar.

The approximate minimum monthly totals, and dates of highest counts, were as follows:

	Total	Inland	Highest number recorded
Jan	246	-	59, Pagham Lagoon, 15th
Feb	711	1	220, Church Norton, 23rd
Mar	981	10	550, Rye Hbr, 30th
Apr	1180	-	433, Pett Level, 7th
May	329	-	110, Pett Level, 1st

Jun	550	5	176, Thorney Deepes, 13th
Jul	1096	-	482, Sidlesham, 19th
Aug	594	-	433, Apuldram, 14th
Sep	779	-	203, Goring Beach, 20th
Oct	138	-	42, Selsey Bill, 4th
Nov	78	4	11, Selsey Bill, 18th
Dec	268	-	119, Pagham Spit, 16th

The figures for county totals should be treated with some caution, due to problems with possible duplication, but offer a guide to numbers in the county through the year. Numbers recorded passing the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selsey Bill	E	1	6	13	26	5	-	3	-	2	6	14	2
	W	6	3	4	12	2	-	1	-	30	16	15	22
Climping Gap	E	-	-	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	34	5	2	9	-	-	-	7	55	2	-	-
Worthing	E	1	3	19	32	5	16	2	-	6	4	2	2
	W	1	3	1	14	4	22	73	2	56	13	4	14
Telscombe Cliffs	E	-	7	16	24	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-
Splash Point	E	-	-	21	83	19	47	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Birling Gap	E	-	7	26	31	11							
	W	-	-	-	-	9							

The only two sites where breeding was confirmed were Rye Hbr, where a minimum of 55 pairs nested but fledging was poor and less than ten reached this stage, and Pett Level where there were 80 pairs but no details of breeding success. The Rye Hbr figures were a reduction of almost half on last year and also for the second year running. In June, five were seen inland at Pulborough Brooks on the 17th.

During the second winter period the only birds seen inland were four at Pulborough Brooks on 2 Nov. The highest number recorded was 119 offshore at Pagham on 16 Dec. Otherwise 23 were at Pagham on 19 Oct and at Selsey 42 on 4 Oct, 24 on 31 Oct and 31 on 30 Nov. [TS]

Common Gull

Larus canus

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

This species occurred in 154 tetrads during the year. During the first winter period, numbers at Bewl Water once again dominated and although counts were well down on last year the site remains one of international importance. Peak counts there were 28,800 on 5 Jan and 30,680 on 22 Feb, but only four on 11 Mar. Elsewhere, high counts in January included 1200 in the Lower

Adur Valley on 16 Jan and at Pett Level on the 25th, 700 at Cuckmere Haven on the 7th and 400 near Cissbury on the 11th. Except at Bewl Water, numbers dropped considerably through February into March; high counts included 350 at Waterhall (Brighton) on 24 Feb, 1000 at Rye Hbr on 13 Mar, 650 at Lower Standean on the 19th and 500 near Cissbury on the 1st. There were 11 other sites where more than 100 were recorded.

The highest counts during April were 100 on downland near Cissbury on the 16th, 57 at Pulborough Brooks on the 10th and 45 at Pett Level on the 7th. The total count for May was only 94, including 60 at Pett Level on the 5th and numbers were similarly low in June. There was a very modest easterly spring passage, as follows, although it should be noted that not all Common Gulls seen are recorded systematically from most of the seawatching locations:

	Mar	Apr	May	Peak counts
Selsey Bill	6 E	7 E	-	
Worthing	16 E	6 E	5 E	12 E on 28 Mar
Splash Point	39 E	55 E	-	31 E on 22 Mar; 51 E on 9 Apr
Birling Gap	-	14 E		14 E on 25 Apr

One pair raised two young at Pett Level but breeding was not recorded elsewhere. Numbers began to increase from late July with 150 at Thorney Island on the 26th, 200 at West Dean on 10 Aug, 300 at Thorney Island on the 14th, 115 at Rye Hbr on 16 Sep and 200 there on the 25th; these were followed in October by 500 and 700 at Fishbourne on the 10th and 23rd respectively, the only site where numbers exceeded 60.

In the second winter period numbers began to increase significantly: the largest count at the nocturnal gull roost at Bewl Water rose from 2800 on 25 Nov to 46,860 on 24 Dec. Elsewhere more modest counts were 700 at Fishbourne on 23 Oct, 200 at Warnham LNR on 17 Dec, 233 at Pett Level on the 19th, 250 at Beeding Brooks on the 25th, 400 at Brede Levels on the 26th and 200 at Partridge Green on the 27th. [TS]

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.

This species was recorded in 119 tetrads during the year. In the first winter period the highest count was 100 at Cuckmere Haven on 7 Jan and on the same day 70 were at Arlington Res. The next highest counts were 50 at Newhaven Hbr on 26 Feb and 40 at Pett Level on 26 Jan.

An exceptional count, for the time of year, of 30 was recorded at Pulborough Brooks on 30 April. Other groups were recorded during the spring of 25 at Scotney GP on the 8th, 20 each at Rye Hbr on 7 May and at Medmerry on the 29th and 15 at Chailey Common on 1 Jun. Small numbers, often of only ones or twos, were widely reported during the period.

Breeding was confirmed at just two sites. There were two nests on a building at Rustington Trading Estate and a pair was present on a chimney from 3 May in Seaford, had built a nest by the 17th and was still present until 26 July. At neither of these sites was breeding success recorded.

During the summer and autumn, there were 100 at Rye Hbr on 10 Aug, 50 at Horsham on 29 Aug and 220 at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on the 15th. There were numerous records of ones or twos throughout the county. During the second winter period numbers increased; there were 15 reports

of ten or more. Numbers at Cuckmere Haven increased from 175 on 13 Nov to 310 on 18 Dec; the next highest count was of 55 at Beeding Brooks on 25 Dec.

Birds noted as showing characteristics of the form *L.f. intermedius*, with very dark mantles, were recorded on Ashdown Forest on 16 and 25 Mar and at Pett Level on 5 Oct. [TS]

Herring Gull

Larus argentatus

Very common resident; status uncertain as passage migrant; winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Herring Gulls were recorded in 361 tetrads in 2012. The first winter period sightings were dominated by a count of 12,000 at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 19 Feb. Other four figure counts in this period were 3030 at Bewl Water on 3 Jan, 8500 at Glyne Gap on 6 Jan, 1000 at Warnham LNR on 13 Jan and 2000 there on 8 Feb, 1000 at Scotney GP on 12 Feb and 3000 at Rye Hbr on 13 Mar. During the early SWBS a total of 1546 was recorded from 65 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 170 at Ovingdean on 12 Feb.

In the spring, large flocks in excess of 200 were recorded at some 28 locations including 500 at Pett Level on 22 Apr and at Warnham LNR on 20 Jun and, in the Arun Valley, a mixed flock with Lesser Black-backed Gulls of 1500 on 4 May.

Breeding was confirmed in 11 tetrads and was probable in a further five. At Rustington Trading Estate 11 pairs nested on buildings; at East Preston at least four pairs nested on the roof of an Arun DC warehouse; at Goring three pairs again nested on rooftops and raised eight young; at Durrington (Worthing) two nests contained three eggs each on 15 May; at West Tarring (Worthing) one pair raised two young on a roof and at nearby West Worthing birds also bred.

At Pett Level at least two pairs nested, one of them with one young on a chimney; at Rye Hbr 21 pairs nested and a further 14 were recorded around Rye town. Probable nesting activity was recorded at Chichester GPs, Bognor, near Worthing station, Patcham, Holywell (Eastbourne) and Firle.

The largest of 12 three figure counts during the summer months were of 500 at Warnham LNR on 12 Jul and 300 at Scotney GP on the 22nd and also at Crowhurst on 31 Aug. However, count sizes increased noticeably in the autumn with over 20 three figure counts and maxima of 5500 at Glyne Gap on 15 Sep and, in October, 1500 loafing on a recently ploughed and harrowed field at Steep Down (Lancing) on the 4th.

Larger flocks were similarly recorded during the second winter period with 1000 at Warnham LNR on 3 Nov, increasing to 1500 by 6 Dec, 8000 at Glyne Gap on 5 Nov, 1819 at Bewl Water on 19 Nov and 3620 there on 24 Dec. During the later SWBS a total of 872 was recorded from 61 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum of 200 at Chalvington on 30 Dec.

There were seven records of birds showing characters of the nominate form *L.a. argentatus*. One at Birling Gap on 14 Jan was photographed (DC, JFC, BK). Adults were noted at Splash Point on 1 Nov (LC), at Newhaven Industrial Estate on 17 Nov (LC), photographed in the harbour on 1 Dec (DC, BK), at the Ouse Estuary Project on 8 Dec (DC, JFC, BK) and three (photographed) at Pett Level on 23 Dec (DC, BK). One in fourth winter plumage was photographed at West Rise Marsh (Eastbourne) on 1 Dec (DC, BK). [TS]

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 approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	3	3	-	3	1	5	17	18	63	6	-	7
Chichester Hbr	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	1	-	-	-	-
Pagham Hbr	-	-	-	1	-	3	15	17	22	5	-	-
Warnham LNR	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Arlington Res	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	-	-	-
Other sites	1	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	6

Typically numbers during both the winter periods were unexceptional and in the post breeding period most records were concentrated on the Selsey peninsula. The most notable sightings were: 15 at Pagham Hbr on 15 Jul, 17 there on 19 Aug and 12 on 1 Sep; 12 at Medmerry on 21 Jul and 22 there on 15 Sep. An exceptional 40 were recorded at Arlington Res on 4 Sep; this by a long way the highest count from this site and very unusual to exceed counts from the Pagham Hbr area. This apart, 2012 was an unremarkable year for this species. [TS]

Caspian Gull*Larus cachinnans*

Very rare winter visitor.

One first winter bird, seen at Newhaven Hbr on 3 and 4 Nov (KG), carried a Polish ring PKPK. Three birds, two adults and one third winter, were seen in the Upper Cuckmere Valley on 16 Dec; the latter bird had also been ringed in Poland on 19 Apr 2011, with ring PEAA, and was seen subsequently at two sites in the Netherlands on 1 and 25 Aug 2011; it was seen again on 22 Dec near to Charleston. Four first winter birds were seen in Rye Bay on the 23rd (all DC, BK) amongst a large gull flock. One of them bearing Polish ring PKPK had been ringed on 25 May 2012 in a pure Caspian Gull colony, having been seen previously on 3 and 4 Dec at Newhaven.

Iceland Gull*Larus glaucoideus*

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

Probably only two birds were involved during the first winter/spring period. The first was one seen 100 m offshore at Telscombe Cliffs on 20 Jan (DHH). The next day, two were seen and both photographed at Newhaven Hbr (DC, BK). Thereafter, one or other of these two was seen frequently in the Newhaven area, but also occasionally at Telscombe Cliffs and Shoreham, until at least the end of April. The only sighting further east was at Birling Gap in the morning of 15 Mar (DC, BK) which was probably the same individual photographed later that day at Dungeness. The final sighting was of one at Shoreham on 29 Apr. Following a review of records the total for 2000-2012 rises to 30. An analysis of some 125 records indicates that this species is relatively

scarce in the last three months of the year with only 14% of records in this period; they are most frequently recorded in January (27), March (28) and April (24). [JAH]



Iceland Gull, Newhaven, March 2012 (Malcolm Freeman)

Glaucous Gull

Larus hyperboreus

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

Records for three birds (all in first winter plumage) have been accepted by SOSRC. The first was at Rock-a-Nore (Hastings) on 13 Jan (AP, SAB), another was following fishing boats at Telscombe Cliffs on 13 Feb and was seen again on the 16th (DHH), and a third was at Pett Level on 18 Mar (GCS). Assuming these were three different birds, the total recorded for this century, following a review, is 29. The annual numbers recorded this century were as follows:

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
No. of birds	3	2	4	2	2	3	-	2	6	2	1	-	3	29

It should be noted that not all these birds were new each year as some returned regularly to particular sites and some overwintered from one year to the next. Of the 26 records with a first sighting date, all but two occur in the first five months of the year with the largest number arriving in January. Most have departed by 19 Apr but two stragglers were noted on 3 and 20 May.

A hybrid Glaucous x Herring Gull (sometimes referred to as 'Viking' Gull) was photographed at Pett Level on 23 Mar (AP). [JAH]



Great Black-backed Gull, Newhaven, January 2012 (Peter Wilson)

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.

The species was recorded in 92 tetrads during the year, slightly fewer than in 2011. During the first winter period three figure counts were recorded at five sites. The two highest counts for the period were recorded at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) of 730 on 6 Jan and 850 on 19 Feb. Elsewhere, 400 were in the Lower Cuckmere Valley on 22 Feb, 300 at Pagham Hbr on 19 Feb, 120 on the Lower Adur on 16 Jan and 100 at Newhaven Hbr on 26 Feb. The majority of sightings, however, were of five or fewer.

Breeding was recorded at three locations. Three downy young were seen on a raft on Slipper Pond (Emsworth) on 6 Jun and a pair nested on a Brighton school roof again and had three chicks by 21 Jun. It was reported that none of the Herrings Gulls nesting nearby were successful as the larger gulls ate their eggs or chicks. At Bexhill two young failed to survive.

During the spring and summer, counts were unremarkable: the highest were 207 offshore at Selsey Bill on 19 May, 200 in Pagham Hbr on 25 Mar and 160 at Hastings on 31 Mar, the highest count there for the year. In the autumn, notable counts were 350 at Glyne Gap on 15 Sep, 270 at Rye Hbr on the 25th and 192 at Fishbourne on 18 Oct being a mix of adults and immature birds.

In the second winter period counts of 100 or more were recorded at only four sites: the highest were 710 at Glyne Gap on 19 Nov, 300 at Pagham Hbr on 16 Dec, 142 at Rye Hbr on the 7th and 140 at Hastings on 12 Nov. There were few records from inland waters. The highest counts were: 32 at Warnham LNR on 6 Jan, 50 at Arlington Res on 7 Jan, 26 at Barcombe Res on 15 Jan, and three at Bewl Water on 24 Dec. [TS]

Little Tern*Sternula albifrons*

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

The first record of the year, of two offshore from Selsey Bill on 10 Apr, was in line with the 10-year average arrival date. Passage remained light thereafter and mostly noted in the west of the county until 25 Apr when 23 E past Selsey Bill and 42 E past Birling Gap were recorded. As usual, observers at Selsey Bill garnered the best counts of the spring, with 71 E on 1 May being the highest day count of the spring. Numbers were down by a quarter at this location on the previous year, but more markedly so at Splash Point (Seaford) where less than a fifth of the previous year's total was seen. A daily analysis of the seawatching logs suggested a total of 482 flew east, comprising 180 in April and 302 in May, a 25% reduction on the average for the previous 27 springs of 632 birds. There were no records away from coastal sites during the spring.

	Apr	May	Total	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	154	268	422	71 E on 1 May
Worthing	13	78	91	42 E on 1 May
Splash Point	30	24	54	10 E on two dates
Birling Gap	50	33	83	42 E on 10 Apr

At Rye Hbr, the first birds were seen offshore on 17 Apr, with the first pairs taking up residence in the colony by the 28th. At least 16 pairs were present on 20 May, and the first nests were seen in late May/early June, with the first chicks seen on 17 Jun, but sadly, sometime over the period 21 to 25 Jun, all activity ceased; no chicks were seen after this date. Persistent breaching of the electric fence by predators may have accounted for the rapid disappearance of the colony, but issues with poor food availability and the cold, wet weather may also have had an impact. Up to 28 adults persisted until late June (with 17 on 8 Jul) but no further evidence of breeding behaviour was noted. At Pagham Hbr 23 pairs nested on the end of Church Norton spit, but although between 20 and 40 birds were recorded regularly feeding in the harbour mouth or close offshore, breeding success was limited to four chicks, of which only one was definitely known to have fledged. The only evidence of breeding activity in Chichester Hbr was on Pilsey Island, where seven pairs were found, but by 28 Jun they had abandoned the attempt at the egg stage.

Throughout July good numbers were recorded in the west of the county, particularly offshore from Selsey Bill, where a peak of 46 birds was present on the 17th. In August, numbers were typically sparse by comparison, indeed the only double figure day was the 27th, when 12 birds passed west at Selsey Bill, with another 11 lingering offshore, and birds were seen on only three dates in September. The final record, two weeks after the previous record, was of one at Pagham Hbr on 5 Oct, some ten days later than the 10-year average departure date. [AH]

Black Tern*Chlidonias niger*

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

The estimated minimum monthly totals were as given in the table below. The first record of the year was on 23 Apr, six days later than the 10-year average date, when presumably the same

2 E were seen at Worthing and Splash Point (Seaford). Passage was then noted almost daily until 6 May, though the only occasion a double figure count was noted was on 25 Apr, when 16 were seen heading east past Worthing. There was another small May movement, between the 17th and the 19th and the final coastal record was of a single bird past Birling Gap on the 27th.

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
34	35	2	1	17	9	1

A total of just 57 birds was recorded at seawatching sites during the spring, well below the 28-year average of 92, though the weather was far from conducive for this typically fair weather migrant. The following table emphasises the low numbers recorded passing the coast. The only inland spring record was of a single bird at Pulborough Brooks on 1 May.

	Apr	May		Aug	Sep	Total	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	6	20		2	1	29	9 E on 1 May
Worthing	22	-		1	1	24	16 E on 25 Apr
Splash Point	4	1		8		13	4 E on 16 and 26 Aug
Birling Gap	-	12		-		12	7 E on 19 May

The first report of a returning bird was of one at Pagham Hbr on 4 Jul, though the next record was not until 4 Aug at nearby Sidlesham Ferry. Thereafter there was a scattering of reports of one to four birds until the last record of the year, one at Church Norton on 2 Oct, a week earlier than the 10-year average date. [AH]

Sandwich Tern

Sterna sandvicensis

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

Up to four birds wintered in Chichester Hbr, being seen on a number of dates up to 25 Jan, whereupon sightings during January and February switched to Pagham Hbr and Selsey Bill where the maximum count for the latter month was seven on 26 Feb. With an increased presence off Selsey Bill it is difficult to be sure when the first migrant was seen; perhaps the two noted at Rye Hbr on 1 Mar were the first true migrants. Numbers at this site rose rapidly through March; 100 birds were present on the 14th, 350 on the 20th and an impressive 800 by the 24th. Elsewhere, passage birds were recorded almost daily from seawatching sites, but few big movements were noted. The biggest day totals were on the relatively late dates of 25 Apr, when 217 were seen passing east at Selsey Bill, and on the 27th when 278 were seen passing Birling Gap. Movement continued through May with the highest counts being on the 7th, when 195 birds were seen passing east from Selsey Bill and 215 birds from Splash Point (Seaford).

Eastwards passage recorded at the principal seawatching sites was as given in the table below. Assuming that the highest number moving east past any one site was the maximum for all sites that day, the totals recorded for each spring month were 260 in March, 1773 in April and 1179 in May, i.e. not too dissimilar to 2011 but well below the 25-year average of 4298.

	Mar	Apr	May	Total	No. per hr in Apr/May	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	164	1231	957	2352	5.8	217 E on 23 Apr (8 hr)
Worthing	37	309	415	761	7.6	108 E on 1 May (5 hr)
Telscombe Cliffs	43	119	34	196	3.6	39 E on 20 Apr (1 hr)
Splash Point	169	722	411	1302	7.4	215 E on 7 May (14 hr)
Birling Gap	57	603	361	1016	11.0	278 E on 25 Apr (10 hr)

This year there were only four days when more than 200 were recorded at any one of the principal seawatching sites; these were 14, 23 and 25 Apr and 7 May, i.e. the peak passage days; numbers recorded and the whole hours of observation in parentheses were as follows:

	14 Apr	23 Apr	25 Apr	7 May
Selsey Bill	205 (8)	217 (8)	85 (11)	195 (11)
Worthing	34 (2)	52 (6)	65 (8)	66 (3)
Splash Point	37 (2)	56 (14)	135 (14)	215 (14)
Birling Gap	1 (2)	16 (4)	278 (10)	98 (8)

At Rye Hbr, a count on 7 May estimated c.600 pairs present. Many of these subsequently failed, and though many pairs attempted to nest again fledging success was extremely low with perhaps just four chicks reaching maturity. This was probably due to a combination of predation, poor food supply and bad weather. At Pagham Hbr an influx of around 160 birds occurred on 13 Jun, but though there was much displaying, fish passing and mating, a colony of only about 20 pairs was established. However, possibly due to a combination of dire weather and predation, they gave up and departed before any eggs were hatched, although reasonable numbers continued to be seen offshore from Selsey Bill.

Birds continued to be seen daily through August and September, though numbers were generally small. The best August day was the 25th, when 45 E and 105 W were recorded at Selsey Bill. The best September day was also the 25th, when observers at Selsey Bill recorded 41 W and 20 offshore and at Worthing the count was 61 W and 20 E. Numbers dropped quickly in October, with a mere seven seen in Pagham Hbr on the 14th being the best count. Although birds were still present throughout November and December at Chichester Hbr and Selsey Bill, no more than two birds were reported at any one time. [AH]

Common Tern

Sterna hirundo

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

The first record was of a single bird on Chichester GPs on 29 Mar, three days later than the average 10-year arrival date. Passage continued through April with birds being recorded on some 23 days of the month and with numbers increasing as the days passed, with a peak count of 211 E at Selsey Bill on the 30th. Similarly, in May, birds were recorded on a daily basis with a peak count of 828 E on 1 May at Selsey Bill. For a more complete description of spring passage see 'Common/Arctic Tern' on page 121. The highest count away from the regular seawatching sites was of 200 roosting at Rye Hbr on 27 Apr and the same number again on 25 May and the best inland count was of 33 birds at Chichester GPs on 30 Apr.

Breeding success was poor. Nesting was first noted at Arundel WWT on 1 May but there was no confirmation of breeding success. There were two apparently occupied nests at Stakes Island (Chichester Hbr) on 4 May but, on 3 Jun, all nests there were tidally flooded and lost. At Pagham Hbr, 14 pairs nested on Tern Island but without success. At Warnham LNR, three juveniles were known to have fledged and there was some success at Weir Wood Res, where two pairs nested on rafts and three young were being fed by adults on 5 Aug. At Rye Hbr, the biggest breeding site in the county, c.149 pairs nested but sadly fledging success was nil, due to a combination of poor food supply, bad weather and predation. Finally at nearby Pett Level there were 25 active nests but no count of fledged young.

Numbers declined quickly in August; the last big count of the year was on 1 Sep when 100 offshore and 10 W were recorded at Selsey Bill. Although records from coastal sites continued until the month's end, the last record from an inland site was of two juveniles at Weir Wood Res on the 16th. There was only one record in October of 1 E at Worthing on the 16th, nine days earlier than the 10-year average departure date.

For an analysis of the records for Arctic, Common and "Commic" Terns see Arctic/Common Tern below. [AH]



Roseate Terns, Rye Harbour, June 2012 (Barry Yates)

Roseate Tern

Sterna dougallii

Very scarce passage migrant and non-breeding summer visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

There were three accepted records: 1 E with 'Commic' Terns at Birling Gap on 27 May (DC, JFC, BK); one, seen and photographed, at Rye Hbr from 5 to 7 Jun (BJY); another, also

photographed, at Rye Hbr on 12 Jun (AJK). These are typical arrival dates; some 66% of all birds on record arrive in May or June. The very earliest arrival was on 18 Feb 2000 but more typical earliest dates would be 17 and 19 Apr as in 1968. On return, most have departed by about 9 Sep and only a few later stragglers follow; the latest departure on record was 5 Oct 2006. [JAH]

Arctic Tern

Sterna paradisaea

Uncertain, but probably a fairly common spring and autumn passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Records of this species are always relatively few as the majority are recorded as “Commic” Terns at the principal seawatching localities. One flying east at Selsey Bill on 9 Apr was the first, three days earlier than the 10-year average arrival date. Thereafter there were regular reports from the seawatching sites with the biggest total being 47 recorded at Selsey Bill on 25 Apr, a day with a big movement of ‘Commic’ Terns. The approximate minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
92	74	5	-	22	4	1

Midsummer records involved 2 E at Telscombe Cliffs on 4 Jun and 3 E at Worthing on the 28th. The above table shows that few were seen in the late summer and autumn months. The first returning migrant was one at West Wittering on 10 Aug. The highest count was of ten at Brighton Marina on 20 Aug and 10 E at Selsey Bill on the 29th. Otherwise, only ones or twos were noted, including one at Weir Wood Res between 29 and 31 Aug. The final record was of a juvenile bird at Thorney Deep (Chichester Hbr) on 1 Oct, 23 days earlier than the 10-year average departure date.

For an analysis of the records for Arctic, Common and “Commic” Terns see Arctic/Common Tern below. [AH]

Common/Arctic Tern

Sterna hirundo/paradisaea

A majority of the Common and Arctic Terns passing seawatching sites are identified simply as “Commic” Terns, due to the problems in identifying and separating the two species at distance or in poor visibility. This summary, however, combines the records of Common, Arctic and “Commic” Terns to give an overview of, principally, the spring and autumn passages of these species.

The totals recorded at each of the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

	Mar		Apr		May		Jun		Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Selsey Bill	8	-	3051	20	2452	19	173	101	40	87	147	321	-	114	-	-
Worthing	-	-	2009	15	963	-	37	11	22	10	35	65	1	13	1	5
Telscombe Cliffs	-	-	245	-	6	-	30	-	1	-	-	-	8	1	1	-
Splash Point	-	-	4477	-	2072	-	43	-	-	-	71	-	16	-	-	-
Birling Gap	3	-	2052	-	1485	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-

Peak passage occurred in late April/early May as demonstrated in the following table showing details for the days when more than 300 eastbound birds were recorded (time watched to the nearest hour in parentheses):

	18 Apr	23 Apr	25 Apr	26 Apr	27 Apr	30 Apr	1 May	2 May
Selsey Bill	69 (5)	1277 (8)	778 (11)	27 (7)	51 (7)	526 (15)	1012 (10)	106 (3)
Worthing	60 (1)	835 (6)	1083 (8)	4 (2)	1 (2)	8 (4)	631 (5)	135 (3)
Splash Point	855 (6)	1930 (14)	648 (14)	353 (8)	345 (6)	207 (14)	1642 (4)	198 (1)
Telscombe Cliffs	0 (1)	226 (4)	0 (3)	4 (2)	0 (1)	0 (2)	0 (1)	0 (1)
Birling Gap	-	2 (4)	1374 (10)	179 (6)	355 (4)	119 (8)	42 (2)	878 (3)

The best day was 23 Apr, when 1277 passed Selsey Bill and 1930 passed Splash Point, though the best day for Worthing and Birling Gap was two days later, with totals of 1083 and 1374 birds respectively due, possibly, to the birds following a different track up channel influenced by local winds. The only other four figure totals were on 1 May when 1012 passed Selsey Bill and 1642 birds passed Splash Point. After 7 May, when 269 E passed Selsey Bill, few were recorded although there was a small, later surge noted at Birling Gap of 133 E on 18 May and 249 on the 19th.

An analysis of the records indicates that, during spring eastwards passage from 25 Mar to 27 May a joint total of some 10,339 Arctic, Common and “Commic” Terns were recorded, of which there were 166 Arctics, 1421 Commons and 8752 “Commics” exceeding the 25-year average of 7960 for the latter.

There were few reports until the end of August. The only significant counts, both from Selsey Bill, were of 146 W on 27 Aug and 132 E and 20 W two days later. The last record of the year was of 1 W past Telscombe Cliffs on 8 Oct, some 17 days earlier than the 10-year average departure date. [AH]

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 648 was just under half of that for 2011 (1370) and below the 10-year average of 759. The annual totals over the past ten years have shown major fluctuations ranging from 221 in 2006 to 1370 last year. The minimum monthly totals for 2012 shown below have been calculated using the same method as for Red-throated Diver.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	115	27	273	17	20	12	-	1	5	24	122	32
Peak no.	19	2	191	4	4	2	-	1	2	16	45	5
Peak date	15 th	21 st	17 th	5 th	5 th	5 th	-	27 th	26 th	21 st	20 th	27 th

The totals recorded at four seawatching sites are shown in the table below. Duplication will have occurred with birds in flight being seen at more than one location or remaining 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	2	-	2	3	6	15	1	-	6	16	3	2	4	11	93
Worthing	-	3	8	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	2	1	-	1
Splash Point	23	6	8	231	45	3	1	-	-	3	7	-	23	5	-
Birling Gap	21	3	2	17	47	3	3	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-

During the first winter period there were only four dates on which movements involved more than ten birds; twice in Jan and twice in Mar. The largest of these involved 30 W at Rock-a-Nore (Hastings) on 1 Jan and 191 E at Splash Point on 17 Mar. The largest offshore gatherings recorded during this period were of 36 off Bexhill on 11 Jan and 45 off Beachy Head on 17 Mar. There were no double-figure counts in April, May or June and no records at all in July. The only August record was of 1 W at Selsey Bill on the 27th. Numbers remained low throughout September and the only double-figure count in October was of 16 E at Selsey Bill on the 21st. This location also recorded the two largest counts in November with 45 W on the 20th and 23 W on the 22nd. The low numbers continued throughout December with Selsey Bill observers recording totals of only 3 E and 24 W during the month. The largest offshore gathering during the second half of the year was 29 off Bexhill on 19 Nov.

The only records of birds away from the open sea were singles in Southwick Canal on 30 Jan and inside Brighton Marina on 17 Nov. [DHH]

Razorbill

Alca torda

Common winter visitor and fairly common passage migrant; formerly bred. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The minimum total for the year of 1075 was only one fifth of the 2011 total (5351) and just half of the 10-year average of 2298. As with the previous species, the annual totals of Razorbills have fluctuated widely over the past ten years ranging from 638 in 2004 to 8060 in 2005. The minimum monthly totals during 2012 are shown in the table below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	289	393	149	53	29	17	-	-	3	4	89	49
Peak no.	42	83	77	8	7	4	-	-	1	3	47	6
Peak date	14 th	8 th	3 rd	22 nd	5 th	15 th	-	-	25 th	28 th	22 nd	29 th

During the first winter period the monthly maxima were 42 E at Birling Gap on 14 Jan, 83 E at Worthing on 8 Feb and 77 E at Splash Point (Seaford) on 3 Mar. The largest offshore concentrations in the period were 59 off Bexhill and 45 off Worthing on 11 Jan and 21 off Brighton Marina on 13 Mar. The only double-figure count in the months April–June was of 35 W at Selsey Bill on 28 Apr and the last spring record was of 2 W on 22 Jun also at Selsey Bill. There were no records in either July or August. The next record was not until 24 Sept with 1 E past Selsey Bill but there were no double-figure counts until the second half of November, the highest being on the 22nd with 20 W at Selsey Bill and 47 E off Splash Point. Numbers remained low until the end of the year with no double-figure counts in December. The largest offshore counts at this time were of ten off both Bexhill and Telscombe Cliffs on 19 Nov and 17 in Rye Bay on 10 Dec.

The totals recorded at four seawatching locations are shown below but, due to probable duplication of sightings between sites, 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	7	3	45	10	3	58	2	-	4	5	-	-	9	3	56
Worthing	118	83	243	3	1	14	3	-	-	1	-	-	10	-	14
Splash Point (Seaford)	64	7	66	127	72	-	11	-	-	1	-	-	51	-	-
Birling Gap	171	11	76	2	43	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

The only record of this species away from the open sea was of two in Brighton Marina on 17 Feb. [DHH]

Little Auk

Alle alle

Very scarce autumn passage migrant and winter visitor.

There have been no significant numbers of this species since 2007 and this year there were just two records of single birds. The first was 1 W off Selsey Bill on 22 Nov (JWD *et al.*) and the other was 1 W past Worthing on 9 Dec (JAN). [DHH]

Auk species

The annual total of 20,393 was only a third of the 2011 figure (63,138) and well below the 10-year average of 36,407. The table below shows the monthly totals which include those for Common Guillemots, Razorbills and auks which were not identified to species. Due to the inevitable duplication of sightings the figures should not be taken as an accurate assessment.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly total	2143	13,181	1391	517	395	90	2	4	32	190	1458	990
Peak no.	214W	1696E	292E	262W	45W	9W	1	2W	7W	43E	144E	58E
Peak date	28 th	6 th	17 th	28 th	5 th	5 th	1 st	25 th	25 th	28 th	22 nd	14 th

The approximate totals recorded at five seawatching sites 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	128	3	416	109	9	569	15	1	31	81	3	23	171	14	426
Worthing	900	86	3407	28	1	187	11	-	-	39	-	22	290	3	489
Telscombe Cliffs	4557	127	2898	30	23	25	2	-	-	9	7	11	74	25	24
Splash Point	480	15	754	638	118	20	19	-	1	31	7	-	471	5	38
Birling Gap	1007	32	300	281	93	4	7	1	4	-	-	-	20	-	27

In the first winter period, although there were 18 dates on which three-figure counts were recorded (two in January, 15 in February and one in March), there were only two dates with four-figure counts. The two largest movements in January were: 145 E and 115 W at Splash Point (Seaford) on the 14th and 19 E and 214 W at Splash Point with 15 E and 177 W at Birling Gap on the 28th.

In February there were significant movements on seven dates with five being largely confined to the Worthing–Telscombe Cliffs area and these are summarised in the table below. The two other main movements in February were 20 E and 298 W at Selsey Bill on the 19th and 523 E at Birling Gap on the 23rd. The only significant movement in March occurred on the 17th with 292 E at Splash Point and 154 E at Birling Gap.

	February									
	5		6		20		21		22	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Worthing	152	666	39	440	139	515	27	612	33	619
Telscombe Cliffs	1659	783	1696	136	nc	nc	76	376	nc	nc

A late April movement off Selsey Bill involved 9 E and 262 W on the 28th but numbers declined after that and remained disappointingly low for the remainder of the year. Few large offshore gatherings were recorded during the year with the largest being 200 off Lancing on 12 Feb, 70 off Seaford on 17 Mar, 55 off Church Norton on 17 and 18 Nov and 200 in Rye Bay on 10 Dec.

Where birds were specifically identified, Razorbills outnumbered Common Guillemots by a ratio of 1.7:1. Razorbills have outnumbered Common Guillemots every year since 2005 although there have been wide variations in the ratio of the two species ranging from 6.1:1 to 1.2:1. [DHH]

Feral Pigeon

Columba livia

Common resident.

This species was recorded from 176 tetrads across the county. Flock sizes generally were unremarkable; the largest was 102 at Preston Park (Brighton) on 13 Feb and there were only seven other records of more than 30 birds during the first winter period. During the SWBS a total of 253 was recorded in 23 of the 131 squares surveyed; the maximum of 57 in West Worthing on 13 Jan.

There were no confirmed breeding records. The only spring and summer records of note were 85 birds in Hove on 21 Apr and the same number at the cemetery at Whitehawk (Brighton) on 27 Jun.

In the autumn some larger gatherings included 160 in central Brighton on 19 Sep. In the second winter period, of five records of numbers in excess of 100, the largest were 500 at Rodmell on 23 Nov (the highest single day count since 1998), 280 in central Brighton on 3 Dec, 160 at Newhaven on 18 Nov and 150 at Bexhill on 5 Dec. During this period the SWBS total was 687 seen in 16 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed with the maximum being the previously mentioned 500 at Rodmell. [AHP]

Stock Dove*Columba oenas*

Common resident and possible winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Records were received from 266 tetrads throughout the county, just over half the number last year. In the first winter period, the highest count was 300 birds in the Brede Valley on 8 Jan. Other notable concentrations were a flock of 80 at Thorney Deeps on 11 Jan, 120 at Pett Level on 16 Feb and 100 at Hastings CP on 16 Mar. During the early SWBS 103 birds were recorded from 23 tetrads of the 131 surveyed, with a maximum count of 60 at Westbourne (Emsworth) on 1 Feb. The largest April concentration was of 120 birds at The Burgh (Burpham) on 3 Apr.

During the breeding season, breeding was confirmed in 12 tetrads (compared with 49 last year) and was probable in a further 23. On 6 Jan a bird was seen sitting outside an owl box at Nep Town (Henfield). The first record of courtship was on 2 Mar at Ferring Rife and the first record of a calling male was on 10 Mar at Ladywell (Coombes). Although a good breeding season was reported at Whitehawk (Brighton), considerably fewer breeding records were received than last year. Out of 13 nests for which detail was provided, 12 were in owl boxes and one was in a barn roof. Six nests contained two eggs or chicks, three nests contained just one, and two nests contained cold or deserted eggs. On 29 May a bird was seen at Isfield at a nest hole in an oak tree previously occupied by Little Owls. The only report of juveniles was of a few present in a flock of 25 seen at Chichester on 12 Jun.

The first indication of the build up of flocks after the breeding season was a flock of 50 at Thorney Island on 8 Jun, and the June maximum for Pett Level was 54 birds. In August the monthly maximum at Pulborough Brooks was 47 on the 27th. Thereafter no sizeable flocks were recorded until October when 60 were seen at Colworth Fm (Chilgrove) on the 7th and 100 at Pett Level on the 24th. A flock of 170 was recorded at Fairlight Glen on 3 Nov. During an extended migration watch at Hastings from 7 Aug to 18 Nov no less than 761 birds were recorded with a highest day count of 344 W on 5 Nov. The largest December concentration was 28 at Rye Hbr on the 16th. During the late SWBS, 76 birds were recorded in only 13 out of 107 tetrads surveyed, with a maximum count of 21 at Oving on 18 Dec. [CJR]

Woodpigeon*Columba palumbus*

Abundant resident and winter visitor.

The species was recorded in 516 tetrads during the year, about half of the county's tetrads and 60% of those for which records were received in 2012. In the first winter period, the only four figure counts were from Warnham LNR; the highest was of 2500 on 14 Jan. Three figure counts were recorded at a further 33 sites. During the early SWBS a total of 4594 was recorded from 125 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 582 at Northchapel on 28 Feb.

For such a widespread species breeding was only confirmed from eight tetrads and was probable in a further 31. The first nest was noted on 14 Apr at Offington (Worthing) and fledged young first recorded at West Tarring (Worthing) on 20 May.

Autumn passage commenced seriously with 500 W at Climping Gap on 14 Oct, followed by 4000 W there on 27 Oct and 4650 at the same site the next day. Perhaps perversely, 2360 were recorded flying east at Rottingdean on the 27th. Also on the 28th, observers at Selsey Bill recorded the heaviest passage with 11,834 flying south, 5500 were recorded at Bullock Down

(Beachy Head) and 3300 at Holywell (Eastbourne), both without any note of flight direction. This movement continued into early November with 2356 W at Selsey Bill on the 3rd, 8500 W at Hastings and 1000 W at Pagham Hbr on the 5th, and, on the 6th, 2500 W at Climping Gap and 4230 W at Hastings. The last record of an unremarkable passage was of 1200 W at Selsey Bill on 11 Nov. Three figure counts were also recorded at some 32 other sites during the second winter period. During the later SWBS a total of 6053 was recorded from 102 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 450 at Cobbarn (Eridge) on 6 Dec. [AHP]

Collared Dove

Streptopelia decaocto

Very common resident.

This species was recorded in 299 tetrads, just over half the number for last year. There were nine double figure counts during the first winter period with the highest being of 16 at Cowden on 10 Jan. During the early SWBS a total of 242 was recorded from 53 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 15 at Portslade on 7 Jan and Peacehaven on the 10th.

Breeding was confirmed from only four tetrads but was probable in a further 15. Evidence was very limited: a pair was seen mating on 10 Jan at West Tarring (Worthing) and there was an adult on a nest on Platform 1 at Worthing Station on 29 Jan with a dead chick on the platform beneath. Fledged young were recorded at Arlington Res and Frant. Numbers during the spring, summer and autumn periods were, again, occasionally in double figures; 21 at Battle on 23 Oct was the highest count recorded.

During the second winter period, apart from a count of approximately 50 at Crutches Fm (Winchelsea) on 13 Nov, the only other counts of note were 31 at Newhaven Tide Mills on 23 Nov and 30 at Woodingdean on the 30th. There were double figure counts from only five other sites. During the late SWBS a total of 181 was recorded from 36 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 30 at Rodmell on 23 Nov. [AHP]

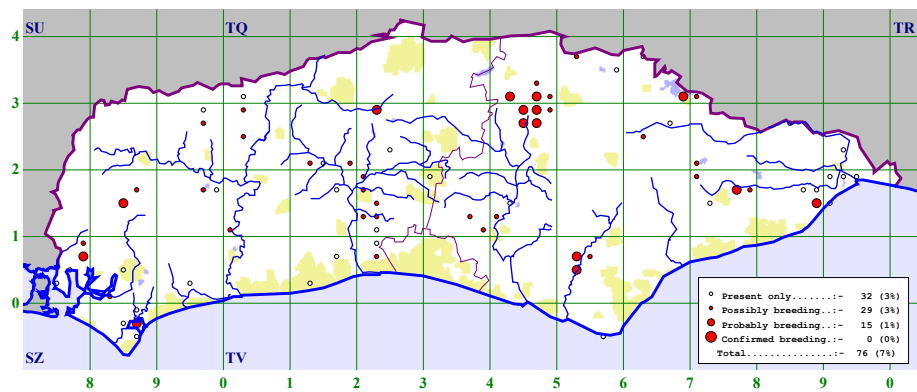
Turtle Dove

Streptopelia turtur

Scarce but declining summer visitor and passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Turtle Doves were recorded from 76 tetrads, a reduction of c.21% on last year's 96 tetrads. The first arrival of the year was a bird at Chichester on the relatively early date of 21 Mar, nearly three weeks earlier than the 10-year average date of 9 Apr, followed by another March bird at Thorney Island on the 25th. There were just three April records: three flew over Slipe Field (Pagham) on the 16th and were followed by other individuals at West Tarring (Worthing) on the 17th and Kings Standing (Ashdown Forest) on the 28th. Sightings were then received on an almost daily basis during May with highest counts of four at Southbourne (Emsworth) on 10 May, four at Arlington Res on 12 May, four at Pett Level on the 21st and four at Knepp Estate (Shipley) on the 28th; conservatively, an estimated 86 individuals arrived during the month. The highest June record was for four at Darwell Res on the 13th.

There were no confirmed breeding records but probable breeding was recorded from 15 tetrads by at least 24 pairs, five of which were at Pett Level and two each at Emsworth, Funtington and Rye Hbr. The summer period was once again poor with highest counts of four at Ticehurst on 1 Jul and four at Winchelsea on the 5th followed by thirteen records for August.



Turtle Dove, Pagham North Wall, May 2012 (Dorian Mason)

There were six records for September (14 in 2011 and four in 2010). These included two sightings each from Winchelsea and Ashdown Forest and the last record of the year was of a juvenile at Burgess Hill on 26 Sep, three days earlier than the 10-year average of 29 Sep. [AHP]

Rose-ringed Parakeet*Psittacula krameri**Very scarce introduced resident.*

There were only two submitted records for 2012; a single bird at Summersdale (Chichester) on 8 Jan and two at Ifield MP on 7 Oct. The UK population is now estimated to be 8600 pairs during the breeding season (*British Birds* **106**:91). [AHP]

Common Cuckoo*Cuculus canorus**Fairly common but declining summer visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.*

Cuckoos were recorded from 210 tetrads. Some birds arrived early with the first arrival heard on 24 Mar at Horse Eye Level (Pevensey), over a week earlier than the 10-year average date of 2 Apr, probably due to the unusually warm March. A further four records were received for March: from Littlehampton on the 27th, Arlington Res on the 28th, Rye Hbr on the 30th and Ashdown Forest on the 31st. Birds were reported arriving daily from 7 Apr and by the end of the month reports had been received of a total of 153 birds at 109 sites throughout the county (although some duplication is possible). The peak April count was 16 on the 21st. The number of reports for April was down about 40% compared with the previous year, but birds were still arriving in May and on the 4th a bird was seen flying in off the sea at Selsey Bill, a day of heavy passerine arrival there.



Common Cuckoo, Old Lodge, May 2012 (Neil Cheeseman)

A large majority of the records of this species related to the months of April, May and June following which reports reduced in number by the second week of June. At Thorney Island the

maximum count for May was five males and two females and at Pagham Hbr the annual breeding count total was seven. At Pett Level the maximum count for May and June was four birds.

During the breeding season, breeding was confirmed at three sites, at Pett Level and at Medmerry a fledgling was observed being fed by Reed Warblers and at Henfield a young Cuckoo was seen in a garden hedge being fed by a Dunnock on 17 Jul. Records were received of probable breeding from 29 sites; 59% of these sites were on Ashdown Forest but given the large territories of male Cuckoos, there is undoubtedly some duplication. There were approximately 135 reports of singing males throughout the county. At Rye Hbr approximately six singing males were present throughout the breeding season. At Thorney Island four males held territories. At Climping Gap, an adult was seen flying around close to reed beds occupied by Reed Warblers on 4 Jun.

A juvenile was seen at Woods Mill (Henfield) on 24 Jul, and another was present at Lidsey Lodge over four days in late August. The last record of an adult bird on Thorney Island was on 26 Jun. Only four reports were received for July, three for August and two for September. The last two birds were both seen on 11 Sep, at Church Norton and Lidsey Lodge, eight days earlier than the 10-year average date of 19 Sep. [CJR]

Barn Owl

Tyto alba

Fairly common resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

The minimum monthly totals of casual sightings, excluding visits for ringing and at daily monitored reserves, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No.of birds	20	12	17	10	23	23	9	12	12	13	18	30

In West Sussex 102 breeding attempts were reported, of which 34 were in nest boxes on trees and 58 in nest boxes in barns or other buildings. A pair nested in a natural tree hole and another between bales in a stack. A nest box at Knepp contained a clutch of ten eggs, which was later deserted. In East Sussex 39 breeding attempts were reported; 23 were in boxes on trees, nine in boxes on poles and seven in boxes in barns. Breeding was suspected at a few other sites throughout Sussex but not confirmed by a licence holder. Brood size was generally low and several nest failures were reported, associated with record rainfall during spring and early summer. The difference between west and east is consistent over recent years, but should be interpreted with care as the records largely depend on the provision of nest boxes and the availability of observers to monitor them.

Four owls were reported dead on roads, and three different ringed birds were found dead at Gatwick Airport, presumably hit by aircraft. [ABW]

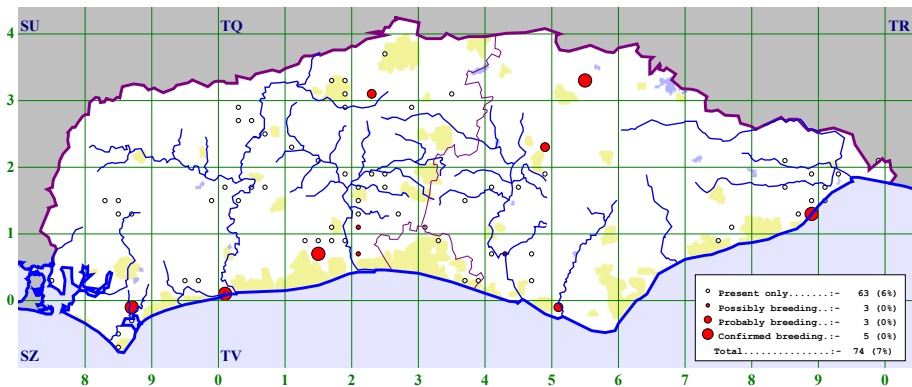
Little Owl

Athene noctua

Fairly common resident.

This introduced and sedentary resident was recorded from 74 tetrads during the year, significantly down on the 104 during 2011. During the first winter period records came from a

wide variety of sites throughout the county with the majority being of single birds in favoured breeding territories within downland, river valleys and on the coastal strip. One observer reported the unusual sighting of a Little Owl hovering like a Kestrel about 25-30 feet off the ground beside a road at Ardingly.



Only five pairs were confirmed as breeding: near Pagham Hbr, Bailiffscourt (Climping) where two adults and two young were present for some time post-breeding, Sompting, Troutbeck (Eridge) and Pett Level, a total significantly lower than the recent average of ten pairs. Breeding was probable or possible at a further five sites: Amberley Wild Brooks, St. Leonards Forest, Cuckfield, Isfield and Uckfield. Most records during the breeding season were of individuals or pairs and the only other counts of higher numbers during the year were of three at Pagham North Fields on 26 Apr and four on Thorney Island (Chichester Hbr) on 24 Jul.

With the number of records so low post-breeding dispersal was difficult to detect in the data but at 13 sites the first record of this species for the year was recorded from September onwards; the majority of these sites were in the southern half of the county. During November and December the only records received were of single birds with many of these heard calling. For the second year running no birds were recorded at Beachy Head during the year, and some observers commented that numbers were very low. [DG]

Tawny Owl

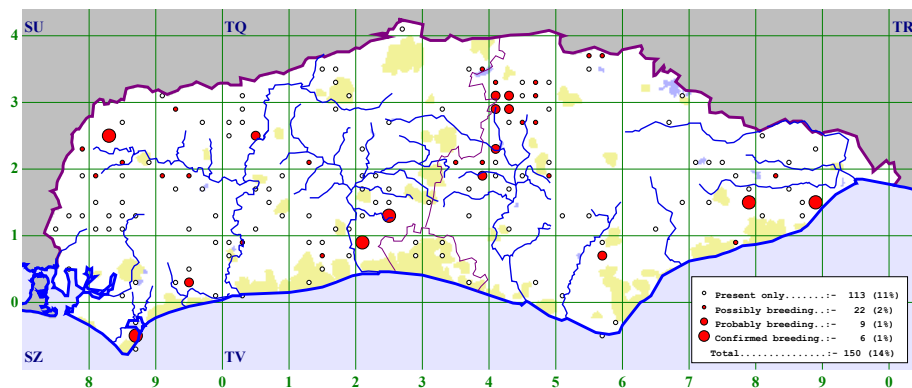
Strix aluco

Fairly common or common resident.

Tawny Owls were recorded from 150 tetrads spread throughout the county. Birds appeared to be present in areas wherever suitable nesting habitat was available. In the first winter period the majority of records were of calling birds, mostly males but also some females, with the maximum number being two apparent pairs heard in Mountfield on 24 Feb.

Breeding was confirmed in only six tetrads, compared to the average of 16 over the last five years, and was probable in a further nine. This species was also recorded from an additional 22 tetrads during the breeding season; cf. 69 in 2011. At Borden (Rogate) a pair using a nest box laid three eggs with two of these being recorded as hatching on 11 and 14 Apr respectively. The first record of young leaving the nest came from Church Norton on 13 May when one very large downy chick was seen, joined by a sibling the following day. At West Dean two adults with four

juveniles were heard in late June and an estimated four pairs bred at Pett Level marking the highest counts of the year.



Over 40% of the records of birds heard calling occurred during the summer and autumn. Thirty seven tetrads received their first record of this species for the year after the breeding season with many of these birds heard as they became more territorial in the autumn. During this period the highest counts were of threes at both Chelwood Gate and Bignor Hill. Birds were recorded roosting in a Barn Owl box as well as a variety of trees including Poplar, Norway Spruce, Yew, Leylandii and Scots Pine. An unringed bird found dead at Chichester GP was the only reported road casualty. [DG]

Long-eared Owl

Asio otus

Scarce resident and very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Birds were recorded from only three sites during the year with none recorded in the first winter period, continuing the dramatic decline of this species since 2006 when it was recorded from 20 sites during the year.

During the breeding season one bird was seen upright and alert in the carriageway of the A27 to the north of Brighton on 20 Apr. The only other records for this period were received from a number of observers of two fledged young and an adult in downland scrub in West Sussex between 11 and 28 May. These records were from an area where birds have regularly been recorded in the last decade and one observer commented that the young could be heard calling from 1 km away.

In the late autumn, one report was of a possible migrant at a near coastal site in the west of the county. The only report during the second winter period involved one seen in the area to the north of Brighton where the individual was observed in April.

The dramatic decline in numbers and distribution observed over the last six years is possibly due to the effects of the extreme cold weather and lying snow experienced in many of the winters since 2006. [DG]

Short-eared Owl*Asio flammeus*

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

The approximate monthly totals, taking account of possible duplication, were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
27	27	18	16	18	1	1	1	15	8	11

During the first five months of the year an estimated minimum of 38 individuals were noted in the county compared to a three year average of 17 birds. The high numbers wintering at the end of 2011 continued into 2012 with at least ten birds present at the start of the year along the coast and in the river valleys, with a maximum count of three at Rodmell. An influx into the county in the middle of January swelled numbers at wintering sites with up to five at Waltham Brooks and seven at Beeding Brooks. In early February numbers peaked with seven at Lidsey Rife (Barnham) and four at Waltham Brooks. Good numbers continued to be recorded in the main wintering areas throughout the spring and at least six passage migrants were seen including singles at Shoreham on 26 Apr and Pilsey Island on 18 May when a probable migrant was seen coming in off the sea.



Short-eared Owl, Church Norton, April 2012 (Andrew House)

Normally birds vacate their Sussex wintering grounds in March/April with occasional migrants moving through the county until early May. In 2012, however, a number of birds stayed on well into the summer including two at Rodmell Brooks until 22 May and one at Horse Eye Level (Pevensey) until the 27th. Interestingly, one bird summered in the Thorney Island/Pagham Hbr

areas and was last seen at Medmerry on 21 Jul. This is the first record of this species summering in the county since 1979. Short-eared Owls last bred in Sussex in 1922.

The first autumn migrant was seen on 14 and 15 Sep at Pagham Hbr after which no further migrants were noted until 6 Oct when one was present in the same area, which marked the start of migration in earnest. During the remainder of the month a minimum of 16 further birds were recorded mainly at coastal locations across the county, although all of these appeared to pass through without staying at any site for more than a couple of days. Migrants continued to be recorded into November with two at Rodmell and one at Pagham Hbr on the 8th.

After the large number of wintering birds recorded at the end of 2011 the numbers in the second winter period of 2012 returned to normal. At Thorney Island up to two birds wintered and at Pevensey Levels up to three were present from mid-November onwards. It is possible that the Thorney Island birds were those seen at Pagham Hbr on 10 Dec. At coastal and river valley sites elsewhere only single birds were recorded including one bird returning to Beeding Brooks on 2 Dec which remained at the site until the year end. [DG]

Nightjar

Caprimulgus europaeus

Fairly common but localised summer visitor rarely seen on migration. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

This species was recorded from 32 tetrads. The first records of the year were on the morning of 4 May, just one day later than the 10-year average arrival date, when two birds were seen to arrive separately in off the sea at Selsey Bill, and one of these or perhaps another was flushed from gardens, on a day of exceptional passerine arrival there. There were subsequent coastal records from Seaford on 7 May, Pagham Hbr on the 12th, where one was observed asleep all day in a bush, and Pett Level on 27 May. The first inland sightings were of a male and a female at Ashdown Forest on 5 May and a male there on the 8th; three were noted at Darwell Res on the 30th.

The estimated minimum number of birds and sites, as 1-km squares, were as follows:

	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
No. of birds	36	90	42	5	4
No. of sites	23	31	22	4	3

Although breeding was not confirmed it was probable in 15 tetrads. The annual Thames Basin and Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey identified 38 pairs or territories, compared to 52 in 2011; the majority of these (21) were at Ambersham and Heyshott Commons. Records from Ashdown Forest suggest that breeding was probable in ten 1-km squares and birds were present in suitable habitat in a further 12 squares.

Outside of the Wealden Heaths and Ashdown Forest areas, two birds were at Owlbeech Woods (Horsham) on 20 May with one there on 18 Jun and two on 6 Jul. One bird was at Darwell Res on 22 and 29 May with three there on 30 May and 1 Jun. Two churring males were at Rewell Wood (Arundel) on 23 May. One bird was at Broadwater Warren on 26 May and a bird was seen and heard churring at Memorial Common (Chailey) on 27 May and 4 and 28 Jun. One was at Wiggonholt Common (Pulborough Brooks) on 4 Jun with two there on 24 and 30 Jun. One bird was at Abbots Wood (Hailsham) on 13 Jun. This makes a total of approximately nine other breeding pairs or territories away from the Wealden Heaths and Ashdown Forest.

The last sighting from the Wealden Heaths was at Lavington Common on 10 Aug and from Ashdown Forest on 1 Sep when a pair was seen. From coastal areas, two were at Pett Level on 23 Jul and one injured bird was found at Seaford on 5 Sep; it had apparently been attacked by a cat and was taken to the East Sussex Wildlife Rescue and Ambulance Service. The final record of the year was of a bird at Pagham Hbr which was seen sitting on a concrete wall each day from 9 to 13 Sep, three days earlier than the 10-year average departure date. [SPS]

Common Swift

Apus apus

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

2011: The last Swift of the year was seen on 28 Sep, not 28 Oct.

2012: Swifts were recorded from 273 tetrads across the county. The first two records of the year came from Rye Hbr of single birds on 14 Apr, a day later than the 10-year average date but a week later than the first for 2011. Two birds were recorded at Brighton Waterhall on 16 Apr. There was then a five day gap until two were observed from Woods Mill (Henfield) followed by one at Worthing on 23 Apr. Ten records the following day involved a maximum of four at Chichester GP whilst on 25 Apr new birds were recorded at four sites with 15 at Weir Wood Res. Multiple records were received to the month's end including 15 double figure counts, four of these being 50 or above; the highest count of this period, however, was from Chichester GP of c.100 on 30 Apr.

Birds continued to arrive throughout May with 62 double figure and five triple figure counts; the most notable of these were 300 at Rye Hbr on the 21st and 240 at Warnham LNR on the 1st. Exceeding these, however, were the 1500 recorded at Pulborough Brooks on 7 May which was, by some margin, the highest count of the year.

Throughout June and early July large flocks were recorded, with well over 100 double figure counts but also 16 three figure counts; these included 700 N at Splash Point on 4 Jun, 400 at Pulborough Brooks on 1 Jul and 300 at Rye Hbr on 7 Jul.

Confirmed breeding records were received from just eight locations across seven tetrads; this is far fewer than for 2011 and hopefully is not an accurate reflection of the true breeding status of Swifts in the county. Probable breeding records were also far fewer than in the previous year, with 82 locations across 57 tetrads.

By early May nest sites were being visited by returning birds: in Washington on 8 May and in Horsham and Wakehurst Place on the 10th. On 12 May two eggs were recorded in a nest in Bognor Regis, whilst the first nest with young was recorded at Findon Park on 21 Jun, then shortly afterwards in Chichester on 25 and 26 Jun. Fledging was only recorded from one site, Uckfield, on 25 Jul.

In August, there were a fairly average 11 double figure counts, the highest being 40 at Selsey on 5 Aug; one hundred at Pett Level on 3 Aug was the only three figure count during the month.

The ten records in September involved either a single bird (7) or three (3) and the last record of the year came from Hastings, one on 19 Sep, more than three weeks earlier than the 10-year average date of 13 Oct. [DB]

Kingfisher*Alcedo atthis*

Scarce to fairly common resident and possibly very scarce winter visitor. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

Birds were recorded in 89 tetrads across the county, about 20% fewer compared with the previous year. Observations during the winter months, with the maximum number of birds recorded, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb		Nov	Dec
No. of birds	39	36		41	38
No. of inland sites	18	17		19	20
No. of coastal sites	13	14		10	7

The January and February records show modest increases in the numbers of birds and of inland sites from the previous year. During the early SWBS only three birds were seen in three different 1-km squares.

The only report of display behaviour was of a pair observed at Widewater (Lancing) on 12 Feb. The evidence suggests that Kingfishers experienced a dismal breeding season in 2012, probably due to the poor summer. Birds were seen at only 19 sites during the breeding season, compared with 44 in 2011.

Breeding was confirmed at just one inland site and they were observed in suitable breeding habitat at a further four sites. There were no reports of juveniles, but the Steyning RG ringed two young birds on 20 Oct.

On 14 Oct a bird was seen flying east 300 m offshore at Climping. The largest concentration of birds recorded in 2012 was four at Bewl Water on 18 Nov. In November and December the total number of birds recorded was similar to the total for 2011, but fewer of these birds were recorded at coastal sites. [CJR]

Bee-eater*Merops apiaster*

Rare vagrant; bred once in 1955. Schedule 1 species.

A minimum of seven birds in one year was marginally the best showing on record, the previous best having been six in 2002. The first record was of a call heard as one or more birds flew overhead at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on 19 May (RDME). It, or they, were not seen so the exact number is not known, but the record has been accepted by the SOSRC.

Another single bird was seen in flight at Trotton Marsh on the 26th (DJB), possibly associating with an eastwards movement of Swifts. However, on 17 Jun a flock of five was seen heading SSW at Ninfield (NR) and another five seen flying over Pound Fm (Blackham) the next day (WGH), albeit some 20 km distant, were probably the same birds.

Assuming that only seven birds were involved this year, the total this century moves on to 44 and the county total to 98 recorded since 1829. [JAH]

Hoopoe*Upupa epops*

Very scarce spring and even scarcer autumn passage migrant; has bred. Schedule 1 species.

There were six sightings reported in spring with the first being seen at Fairlight Wood campsite on 24 Apr, probably the same one seen the next day at Pett Village. In May, individuals were recorded at Combe Haven on the 3rd, at Storrington on the 4th and 5th and at Duddleswell (Ashdown Forest) on the 12th, and finally one was photographed in a garden near Hailsham on the 25th.

There were no autumn records. The total of five for the year compares unfavourably with the nine birds recorded in each of the previous two years and brings the county total this century (2000-2012) to 60. [SPB]

Wryneck*Jynx torquilla*

Very scarce passage migrant, mostly in autumn; last bred in 1944. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

There was one spring record from a Bodium garden on 9 Apr.

In the autumn a minimum of 13 birds was recorded. These were singles at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on 25 Aug, Cuckmere Haven on the 28th and Cissbury Ring on the 29th. In September one was at Chantry Hill on the 1st, one was between Castle Water (Rye Hbr) and Winchelsea Beach on the 2nd, one was at Ashdown Forest on the 3rd, and on the 4th there was one each at Rye Hbr and Hope Gap. There was one at Hodcombe (Beachy Head) from 6 to 10 Sept and one at Eastbourne on the 9th. It is assumed that the 11 records from The Severals (Church Norton) and Church Norton between 9 and 18 Sep involved a single bird. Final records were from Newhaven on 2 Oct and Pett Level on 6 Oct. The total compares with nine, 21 and 16 in the previous three years. [PJP]

Green Woodpecker*Picus viridis*

Fairly common or common resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Birds were recorded in 415 tetrads. The widespread distribution of this species can be shown from the results of the two county-wide surveys; during the first winter period the SWBS produced a total of 90 birds in 60 out of the 131 squares surveyed. However, the results in the latter part of the year yielded fewer birds with 56 from 46 of the 107 surveyed squares. During the BBS the species was recorded in 102 of the 149 surveyed squares; the sum of the maximum count in each square was 222 birds and the highest BBS count was seven near Cuckfield on 7 Apr.

During the first winter period the highest counts were 12 at Stocks Fm (Icklesham) on 26 Feb and 11 at Sayers Common on 15 Mar.

Breeding was confirmed in 12 tetrads and was probable in a further 37. The earliest records of birds at probable nest sites were at Boxgrove on 6 May, Broadbridge Heath on 13 May and Ladywell (Coombes) on 19 May. Fledged young were recorded at Weir Wood Res on 13 Jun and an occupied nest was noted at Pett Level on 15 Jun.

During the Thames Valley and Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey a total of 35 pairs or territories was identified. The annual breeding count total for Pagham Harbour was eight birds. At Warnham LNR a maximum of six birds was seen on 30 Jun with three juveniles noted on 27 Jun. Eight were seen at Pett Level on 8 Aug. [PJP]

Great Spotted Woodpecker

Dendrocopos major

Common resident.

The species was recorded from 415 tetrads, marginally more than last year. The widespread distribution and apparently healthy county population is perhaps best shown from survey results; during the SWBS in the first winter period a total of 134 were found in 66 of the 131 squares surveyed whilst in November and December the total was 67 birds from 42 of the 107 surveyed squares. During the BBS the species was found in 100 out of the 149 squares surveyed and the sum of the maximum counts from these surveys was 178 birds. Survey work provided some of the highest site counts with ten birds at Black Down (Fernhurst) on 14 Apr, at Wardley (Milland) on 21 Apr and at Pulborough Brooks on 1 Jul whilst nine were at Pallingham (Pulborough) on 15 Apr.

The first reports of drumming were from St Anne's Well Garden (Hove) and Ashplats Wood (East Grinstead) on 6 Jan and Weir Wood Res the next day. In the Thames Valley and Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey 43 pairs or territories were reported. Breeding was confirmed in 24 tetrads and was probable in a further 38. The first report of breeding was at St Anne's Well Garden (Hove) on 7 Apr where birds were feeding young on 18 May.

A total of 34 birds was seen on 13 of the 75 days of the Hastings Migration Watch with a maximum of eight on 19 Sept. [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 31 tetrads with a preponderance of records from three areas: Pulborough Brooks/Wiggonholt/Rackham Woods, Ashdown Forest, and Darwell Res.

Breeding was confirmed at just one site and was probable in seven. Drumming was first heard in March on the 13th at Pett Level, and then at Guestling on the 20th, and at Rackham Woods on the 22nd and 28th with at least three birds calling and drumming. There were also three each at Eridge Park on the 29th and at Pulborough Brooks on the 31st. At Iping Common on 5 Apr, a bird was reported to have twice performed a Nightjar-like display, and mating was observed on the Wadhurst Park Estate on 26 Apr. At Darwell Res there was activity close to a freshly excavated nest hole on 8 May with further records throughout the month (with a maximum of three birds), and a report on 13 Jun that the young were very close to fledging. Probable breeding was reported at High Hurstwood.

Birds were recorded on 19 dates between September and December, notably including one or two on 14 dates at Pulborough Brooks.

As this is a species of high conservation concern, all sightings should be reported with 4-figure or preferably 6-figure 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.

Five birds was the best year since 2000. The first arrival was a male at Church Norton on 7 May (RF) which was seen perched at 50 m. What was thought to be two young males were singing against each other in woodland suitable for breeding at a site in West Sussex on 16 May (SJCC, PJ); the possibility that one was a singing female, a not unknown capability, suggested to the observer that they might have been a pair; however, efforts to relocate them were not successful. A third male was initially only heard at Pett Level on 22 May (IDH, PEJ) but revealed itself later that morning and was watched flying into an oak tree. The fifth bird, a female or first year male, was seen and photographed at Winchelsea on 5 Jul (CHD). Such arrivals in May are typical for this species; 90% of all records have been of birds arriving in the three spring months April to June. [JAH]

Red-backed Shrike*Lanius collurio*

Very scarce passage migrant; formerly a breeding summer visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

A juvenile at Telscombe on 5 Sep (STM), the first since 2009, was the only record for the year. This brings the total for this century, following a review of records, to 28 (one record in 2001 was not published). This was a typical date; 68% of all dated records have arrived in the three months August to October, peaking in September. [JAH]

Great Grey Shrike*Lanius excubitor*

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

During the first winter period, one was seen on Ashdown Forest on New Year's Day and then again at various sites on Ashdown Forest on several dates from the 8th to the 23rd. Also between 8 and 23 Jan, including dates the bird was recorded on Ashdown Forest, one was seen and photographed at Weir Wood Res. On 28 Jan one was recorded at Glynde Reach, 24 km south of Ashdown Forest until the 31st and then again from 12 to 26 Feb. Assuming this was the same mobile bird, it reappeared on Ashdown Forest from 8 to 11 Mar. In between times another, probably different, individual was recorded at Adversane, over 30 km west, on 31 Jan. The final record for the period was one at Beachy Head on 24 Mar.

The only records in the second winter period were of one back on Ashdown Forest on 29 Sep and one at Gossops Green (Crawley) on 27 Nov.

Assuming that the birds at Weir Wood Res and on Ashdown Forest were different and that the Adversane one was also, the total for the first period would be three. These, with the September and November birds, would bring the year's total to five. [LEW]



Great Grey Shrike, Glynde, February 2012 (Peter Wilson)

Magpie

Pica pica

Very common resident.

Magpies were recorded from 465 tetrads, c.45% of the county total. During the first winter period there were 17 counts of 20 or more birds, the highest being of 74 at Warnham LNR on 25 Feb, which also held 71 on 14 Jan and 51 on 5 Mar. Elsewhere, the next biggest counts were of 36 at Pett Level on 26 Jan, 31 at Winchelsea Beach on 28 Jan, and 30 at Pett Level on 19 Mar. During the early SWBS a total of 681 was recorded from 121 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed.

Breeding was confirmed in ten tetrads and was probable in a further 23. Nest building was first noted at Chelwood Common on 6 Mar. The first apparently occupied nest was noted at Mewsbrook (Littlehampton) on 2 Apr where the first sighting of fledged young was recorded on 12 May. During the breeding season there were four counts of 20 or more birds, including one of 29 at Warnham LNR on 13 Apr and one of 26 at Pett Level on 26 Jun.

In the summer period there were three counts of 20 or more birds, the highest being of 24 in Pett Village on 23 Jul. In the autumn period there were 12 such counts, including 30 at Beachy Head on 5 Sep, 29 in Pett Village on 20 Sep and 21 at Pulborough Brooks on 1 Oct.

During the second winter period there were 14 counts of 20 or more birds, with the highest being 35 at Warnham LNR on 3 Nov. Elsewhere, 31 were seen at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) on 18 Nov, while counts of 27 were recorded on three occasions: at Westfield on 18 Nov, at Hove on 10 Dec, and at Pulborough Brooks on 17 Dec. During the late SWBS a total of 560 was recorded from 97 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed. [SL]

Jay*Garrulus glandarius*

Very common resident.

Jays were recorded in 356 tetrads, c.34% of the county total. During the first winter period the highest count was of ten at Pickham Fm (Pett Level) on 1 Mar. Otherwise, counts of seven were seen at Scaynes Hill on 22 Jan, Westfield on 27 Jan and Brighton Wild Park on 8 Mar. Some 75% of records were of one or two birds only. During the early SWBS a total of 114 was recorded from 54 1-km squares of the 131 surveyed.

Breeding was only confirmed in two tetrads, but was probable in a further 29. The earliest report of probable breeding behaviour was of a displaying bird noted at Ditchling Common on 11 Apr, while the confirmed breeding records were of recently fledged young at Weir Wood Res on 13 Jun and Chailey Common on 10 Aug. During this period the highest count was nine at Pulborough Brooks on 2 Apr. In the summer period the highest counts were of seven at Pulborough Brooks, again on 1 Jul and also seven at Pett Level on 13 Aug.



Jay, East Grinstead, June 2012 (Pat Upton)

In the autumn, much higher numbers were observed, including 25 double-figure counts (there was only one such record noted in 2011), with coastal movements reported from several sites. Nine records of 20 or more birds were noted, all within the fortnight 29 Sep to 12 Oct. Following counts at Hastings of 29 W on 29 Sep and 43 W on the 30th the highest count was 65 W there on 6 Oct. Elsewhere, four flocks totalling 30 birds were recorded flying WNW over Brighton Wild Park on 4 Oct. Other counts of 20 or more birds involved 42 at Pett Level on 30 Sep, with 26 there on 3 Oct, 27 at Pagham Hbr on 6 Oct, and 23 NW over Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) on 6 Oct followed by 26 there on the 10th.

During the second winter period there were two double-figure counts: 16 at Stansted Forest on 5 Nov and 11 at Guestling on 6 Dec. As in the first winter period, c.75% of records were of ones or twos only. During the late SWBS a total of 108 was recorded from 57 1-km squares of the 107 surveyed. [SL]

Jackdaw

Corvus monedula

Very common resident.

Jackdaws were recorded from 441 tetrads, 42% of the county total. During the first winter period there were 27 counts of 100 or more individuals. The highest count was 1000 moving west at Amberley Wild Brooks on 6 Jan. Other high counts were 500 at Shermanbury on 21 Jan, 400 at Warnham LNR on 14 Jan, 400 at Rodmell on 15 Jan, 400 at Pett Level on 5 Mar and 400 again at Warnham LNR on 16 Mar. During the early SWBS Jackdaws were recorded in 94 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed (71.8%) with a maximum count of 150 at Udimore on 17 Jan.

The earliest record of nest building was from Caldbec Hill (Battle) on 8 Mar where an individual was seen building in a chimney pot. Breeding was confirmed in just 19 tetrads and was probable in a further 19. The first nest with eggs was reported from Troutbeck (Eridge) on 16 Apr, although it was not until 5 Jun that the first fledged young were seen at Cliff End (Pett). Seven owl boxes were reported to have been used for nesting, with fledglings observed at six of these. A single nesting pair was reported at Pulborough Brooks. The highest counts of the summer period were 450 at Pett Level on 25 Aug, 413 at Hastings on 7 Aug and 300 at Rye Hbr on 18 Aug. There were two counts of 150, both at Cliff End on 18 Jul and 21 Aug and one of 140 birds at Pett Level on 17 Jul, as well as five records of 100 birds at various other locations.

During the autumn and second winter period the largest gathering reported was 2000 at Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) on 7 Sep. There were 700 birds at Pallingham (Pulborough), with records of 503 at Pulborough Brooks on 29 Oct and 500 at Steyning Levels on 17 Nov. During the late SWBS 2008 Jackdaws were recorded in 85 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed (78.2%) with a maximum count of 272 at Earnley on 26 Dec. [GNO]

Rook

Corvus frugilegus

Very common resident.

Rooks were recorded from 326 tetrads, c.31% of the county total. During the first winter period the highest counts were 250 at West Dean on 2 Mar, 200 at Rodmell on 15 Jan and 200 at Tottington (Small Dole) on 24 Feb. There were eleven more counts of 100 or more in this period. During the early SWBS Rooks were recorded in 63 of the 131 squares surveyed (48.1%) with a maximum count of 160 at Kirdford on 31 Jan.

Data recorded regarding rookeries and breeding were unsurprisingly limited in comparison with the dedicated breeding Rook survey undertaken in 2011. Nevertheless some notable records were provided by observers. The first record of nest building was from Ladywell (Coombes) on 16 Feb. Breeding was confirmed in 39 tetrads and was probable in a further single tetrad. At least 26 rookeries were identified with 20 or more nests and two with 100 or more nests. One particularly interesting record provided a direct comparison with the 2011 survey results: in the Arun Valley, across an area between Arundel and Littlehampton there were 582 apparently occupied nests, compared to 597 in 2011.

During the summer period the highest counts were 300 and 200, both at Sefter Fm (Rose Green) on 8 and 22 Jul respectively, and 200 at Rye Hbr on 18 Aug. There were three counts of 100, at Burnhouse Bostall (Keymer) on 22 Jul, at Pickham Fm (Pett) on 1 Aug and at Winchelsea on 11 Aug.

During the autumn and second winter period there were nine records of 200 or more birds; 500 were recorded at Berwick on 31 Dec and 300 were observed at Crutches Fm (Winchelsea) on 7 Sep. Counts of 200 birds were recorded at Steep Down (Lancing) on 10 Oct, Pulborough Brooks on 12 Oct, Pagham Hbr on 16 Oct and 10 Nov, Hayes Fm (Udimore) on 22 Nov, Salehurst on 24 Dec and Arlington Res on 30 Dec. During the late SWBS a total of 1638 Rooks was recorded in 51 of the 107 squares surveyed (46.5%) with a maximum of 200 at Udimore on 22 Nov. [GNO]



Rook, Pett Level, October 2012 (Barry Yates)

Carriion Crow

Corvus corone

Very common resident.

Carriion Crows were recorded in 503 tetrads, c.48% of the county total. During the first winter period there were three counts of 100 or more birds (compared with none last year and six in 2010). The highest count was of 193 at East Ashling on 27 Feb, followed by counts of at least 150 at Partridge Green on 12 Feb and 125 at East Guldeford Level on 8 Mar. The next highest counts were of 95 at Hargate Forest (Frant) on 17 Feb and 83 at Crawley on 2 Feb. During the early SWBS a total of 1650 was recorded from 126 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed; the maximum being the previously noted 193 at East Ashling on 27 Feb.

Breeding was confirmed in 15 tetrads and probable in a further 15. Nest building was first noted at West Tarring (Worthing) on 14 Mar, while the first report of an occupied nest came from

Brooklands (Worthing) on 30 Mar. An adult carrying food at Broadbridge Heath was seen on 13 May and parents feeding young on Ashdown Forest were recorded on the 29th. Fledged young were seen at Pett Level on the 31st. During the breeding season there were three counts of 100 or more birds: 277 at Pulborough Brooks on 30 Apr, 220 at Plashett Park (Isfield) on 31 May and 150 at Crowhurst on 7 Apr.

Post-breeding there were four large counts each of 100 birds; at Pulborough Brooks on 12 Oct, at Pagham Hbr on 21 Oct and 25 Nov and at Steep Down (Lancing) on 1 Nov. During the late SWBS a total of 1128 was recorded from 100 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed. [SL]

Raven

Corvus corax

Scarce and increasing breeding resident; first bred in modern era in 2001.

Ravens were recorded in 162 tetrads, fairly well distributed across the county. When Ravens started to breed in Sussex just over a decade ago the nests were located on the sea cliffs of East Sussex with a few nests found elsewhere in chalk quarries. Over the past few years they have moved into woodland and there can be few of the large estates that have not had a visit or two from a prospecting pair of Ravens. The records received were mostly from coastal localities and heavily wooded areas in the hinterland, with just the occasional record from chalk quarries. This is a species that is rapidly colonising the county and it would seem that any record of a pair of Ravens, regardless of the time of the year, could suggest local breeding within a few miles of that sighting. Although highly visible and very vocal at times they can be remarkably quiet and unobtrusive during the breeding season and a pair can easily go unnoticed.

The estimated minimum numbers, computed on the assumption that the highest number at any site during the month was the maximum there, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	63	48	58	60	39	9	34	34	65	44	47	31
No. of sites	38	28	31	36	21	7	17	21	38	29	32	22

These data give some idea of the frequency with which this species is now seen in the county.

During the breeding season, breeding was confirmed in two tetrads and was probable in a further seven. There were only two reports of confirmed breeding: one pair nested in a chalk pit near Lewes and another near Shoreham. Another report referred to fledged young with the presumption that they fledged from a nest close by and another to a family group which had probably nested on the East Sussex cliffs. However, and with some licence, it is reasonable to state that the data suggests somewhere in the region of 21 pairs inland and eight pairs on the coast. Since the county has an abundance of suitable woodland habitat this upward trend seems set to continue.

Multiple sightings are becoming more common, and sightings of four or more were as follows: four at East Marden on 19 Feb, five at Salehurst on 25 Feb, 17 and six at Beachy Head on 11 and 25 Mar respectively, six at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on 27 Apr, four at Cissbury Ring on 12 Jul, four at Kingley Vale on 22 Jul, four at Cuckmere Haven on 6 Aug, four at Troutbeck (Eridge) on 3 and 27 Sep, four at Holedean Fm (Henfield) on 17 and 30 Sep, four at Pulborough Brooks on 22 Sep and four at Southleigh Forest (Emsworth) on 8 Nov. [MEK]



Ravens, Beachy Head, March 2012 (John Cooper)

Goldcrest

Regulus regulus

Very common breeding resident, common passage migrant and winter visitor.

The species was recorded in 337 tetrads. In the first winter period a total of 115 Goldcrests was recorded in 46 of 131 1-km transects surveyed for the SWBS, with a maximum count of ten in Tilgate Forest on 11 Jan. Thirty were recorded in Stansted Forest on 7 Jan and the following day there were 20 at Old Lodge NR (Ashdown Forest).

Throughout the breeding season records came from suitable habitat across the county, with over 80 reported on Ashdown Forest, where a bird was seen carrying nest material on 29 Mar. On 2 Jun an adult was seen feeding three fledglings at Tilgate Forest, and an adult was also feeding a young bird at Cliff End (Pett) on the 15th. There were six singing birds in a 1-km route in West Dean Woods on 28 Jun, the same number were reported at Pulborough Brooks on 1 Jul, and at least ten were singing in a 1-km square at Blackdown (Fernhurst) on the 5th.

At Pett Level the species was present all year, with four pairs reported during the breeding season. More were at the site from September, and the monthly maxima in the autumn were 44 including 27 trapped on 29 Sep, 80 including 64 trapped on 13 Oct and 19 on 5 Nov, nine of which were trapped. In December the maximum number seen was eight on the 14th. Elsewhere there were nine autumn records between 7 and 26 Oct exceeding 20 birds; most were seen on the 19th when at least 50 were at Seaford Head and 32 at Church Norton.

Of 28 different birds trapped at Steyning during the year, five were caught between January and March, three birds in juvenile plumage were ringed between June and August, while the remaining 20 were found between September and December. At Cissbury only one was trapped prior to September, an adult male ringed on 29 May, which was only the third adult ringed in

spring at the site since 1991. A male was also heard singing there on 10 Jul, but it was not until 9 Sep that others arrived, and between that date and 17 Nov 77 different birds were handled, with a maximum of 22 on 4 Oct. During December the monthly maximum recorded at Pulborough Brooks was nine on the 17th and at Warnham LNR 11 on the 18th. The total of 66 was recorded in the late year SWBS from 29 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed. [VPB]

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.

In comparison with Goldcrests, Firecrests were much fewer in number, being recorded in 110 tetrads, and in only two of 131 1-km squares surveyed for the SWBS. In January there were over 40 reports from West Sussex sites, including Pagham Hbr, Arundel WWT, Pulborough Brooks and Coldwaltham SF. There were reports of singles from Preston Park and Stanmer Park in the Brighton area, but the only record from East Sussex was of three at Rye Hbr on the 31st. In February the species was recorded at 22 different sites, mostly involving one or two birds but there were three at Rewell Wood (Arundel) on the 14th, and up to seven were present at West Dean Woods on the 26th. During March and April there were records from 25 widespread sites with observation on 29 different dates; of note was one seen displaying against a Goldcrest at Duncton Common on 26 Mar and the highest number recorded on passage was four at Beachy Head on 18 Mar. In May six were noted in the Kingley Vale area on the 8th, three near South Harting on the 19th, and another three at Burton Park the following day, and the maximum heard at West Dean Woods was 15 on the 26th.

There were two confirmed reports of breeding; at Burton Mill Pond on 19 Jun a pair was seen carrying food, and juveniles were reported at Duncton Common on 1 and 26 Jun. There was probable breeding in West Dean Woods.

In the autumn, at Pett Level on 9 Sep one was trapped, and there were six more records before the end of the month. In October the species was seen on 12 different days there with a maximum of four on the 8th. Three were at both Pagham Hbr and Beachy Head on 10 Oct, four were reported at the latter site on the 13th and 21st and four were also at Seaford Head on the 23rd. At Cissbury two different birds were trapped; the first on 30 Oct was an adult female which had been ringed at the site on 29 Oct the previous year, and was the only subsequent year recapture of this species at the site. Two different birds were ringed at Ladywell (Coombes), on 14 and 23 Nov, and three were seen in gardens at Fairlight on the 12th. The only records from the last two months of the year at Pett Level were of two trapped on 13 Nov and one trapped on 21 Dec. There were sightings at 14 different locations in December, including two at Stoughton on the 13th, Burton Mill Pond on the 22nd and in a garden in Henfield on the 29th. In the second SWBS only one bird was recorded (in Friston Forest on 27 Dec) in 107 squares surveyed. [VPB]

Blue Tit

Cyanistes caeruleus

Abundant resident.

Blue Tits were recorded in 497 tetrads in 2012, 48% of the county total. Although this figure appears low, the abundant numbers of the species were shown in the SWBS in which in January and February the sum of the counts was 1913 birds in 121 of the 131 squares surveyed with a

maximum of 72 at Warnham. During this period there were 32 records of over 30 birds, with seven records of over 50. The highest counts were of 81 at Ashburnham Place (Battle) on 17 Feb, 72 at Warnham, already mentioned, on 19 Feb, and 62 at Partridge Green on 13 Feb. A pair was inspecting a nest box at Sompting on 22 Feb and birds were reported on nests in Washington on the 15 Mar and Littleworth (Partridge Green) on the 31st.

Breeding was confirmed in 43 tetrads with probable breeding in 28. The first fledglings were 11 seen at Pulborough Brooks on 7 May. Another five fledged from a nest box in Henfield on 19 May. Of note was another nest where 9-10 eggs hatched but all the chicks died six days later, possibly a result of the bad weather at the time. The only record of predation was of a squirrel seen carrying a possible chick near a nest box in West Tarring (Worthing). High counts during this period were of 21 at Ifield, 18 at Streat and 11 at Warnham LNR, all on 1 April. There were 53 reports of fledged young between 7 May and 23 Aug.

During the post-breeding period there were ten counts of 20 or more birds, with the highest being 31 at Broadbridge Heath on 23 Aug. The autumn period saw lower counts, with only three records of ten or more birds, the highest being 12 at Southwater CP on 1 Sep.

In the second winter period there were 14 counts of 30 or more, with the highest being 90 at Lyewood Common (Withyham) on 13 Dec, 64 at Kirdford on 29 Nov and 59 at Broadbridge Heath on 30 Oct. In the late SWBS 1043 birds were reported from 96 out of 107 squares surveyed. [PD]

Great Tit

Parus major

Abundant resident.

Great Tits were reported from 473 tetrads in 2012, 46% of the county total, although the abundance of the species was better shown in the first SWBS in which a total of 1087 birds was reported from 116 squares out of the 131 surveyed with a maximum count of 32 at both Washington and Northbrook Fm (Worthing). During the first winter period there were 32 reports in excess of 20, with the highest counts being 59 at Warnham LNR on 6 Jan, 45 at Sayers Common on 15 Mar, 43 at Pett Level on 1 Mar and 40 at Warnham LNR on 2 Feb.

The first evidence of breeding came from Lavender Platt (Ashdown Forest) with a single adult noted carrying food on 2 May. There were few reports of breeding success. The first report of fledged young came from Pulborough Brooks with 12 seen on 7 May. There were 40 reports of fledged young between 7 May and 15 Aug.

Post-breeding counts were poorer than last year with only 13 records of over ten birds received. The highest counts were of 41 at Southwater CP on 27 Aug and 29 at Pett Level on 7 Jul. Autumn counts, as in 2011, were slightly better with 29 records of ten or more birds and high counts of 31 at Southwater CP on 1 Sep, 31 at Bolney on 30 Sep and 28 at Broadbridge Heath and Cliff End (Pett) during October.

There were seven reports of over 20 birds during the second winter period, with the largest counts being of 40 at Warnham LNR on 23 Dec, 35 at Broadbridge Heath on 18 Dec and 32 at Pallingham (Pulborough) on the same date. In the second SWBS a total of 484 birds was reported from 81 squares out of 107 surveyed with a maximum count of 32 at Pallingham. [PD]

Coal Tit*Periparus ater*

Very common resident.

Coal Tits were reported from 215 tetrads in 2012, 21% of the county total. During the first winter period there were only five reports of over ten birds: 24 at Stansted Forest on 7 Jan, 23 at Peasmarsh on 11 Mar, 20 at Wiggonholt Common (Pulborough Brooks) on 16 Jan, 20 at Warnham LNR on 5 Mar and 17 at Beckley on 17 Jan. During the early SWBS a total of 99 was recorded from 34 of the 133 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum count of 17 at Beckley.

Breeding was confirmed in eight tetrads with probable breeding in a further ten. The first report of breeding activity was of a pair copulating on 2 Apr at West Tarring (Worthing). An apparently occupied nest was noted at St Leonards on 16 May and the first report of adults with fledged young was at Wiggonholt Common on 28 May. With the exception of these and eight birds at Pett Level on 27 Jun all other reports of confirmed breeding were on Ashdown Forest. The first report of fledged young there was of one being fed by an adult on 12 Jun at Lavender Platt (Ashdown Forest) several weeks later than in 2011.

As in 2011 post-breeding counts were low, with only ten reports of over five birds: the highest was 30 at Stansted Forest on 5 Nov then nine at Lavender Platt on 4 Sep and another nine at Brede High Wood on 20 Oct. During the late SWBS a total of 41 was recorded from 21 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum of five also at Beckley.

Birds showing characters of the nominate (continental) form *P.a. ater* were seen on 18 Oct at Church Norton (AH), the first the observer had recorded in the area for ten years, and at East Preston on 10 Nov on a garden feeder (GK). [PD]

Marsh Tit*Poecile palustris*

Scarce resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Marsh Tits were recorded, mostly in ones or twos, from 149 tetrads across the county where suitable damp woods occur. High counts during the first winter period were nine at Beckley on 17 Jan and six at Monkton Fm (Chilgrove) on 10 Jan.

During the breeding season, records were received from 161 sites but as Marsh Tit is a sedentary species, most sightings are probably from potential breeders regardless of date. Breeding was confirmed from only eight tetrads and probable in a further nine. The earliest date of confirmed breeding was of a parent with food on 7 May at Linchmere Common. Young in a dormouse nest box were recorded at Broadwater Warren RSPB on the 12th. The first fledglings were seen at Wisborough Green on the 19th and at Tegleaze Fm (Graffham) the next day. The highest count during the breeding season was of five at Broadwater Warren on 12 May.

During the second winter period the species was seen at 147 locations. The highest counts were of six at Brede High Wood on 20 Oct and five each at Warnham LNR on 8 Dec and at Weir Wood Res on the 17th.

As there is evidence of a decline in this species, observers are encouraged to submit all records, especially if breeding evidence is observed. [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 core coastal areas at opposite ends of the county, Chichester and Pagham Harbours in the west and Pett Level and Rye Hbr in the east. During the first winter period there were only four records outside these two core areas: two at West Rise Marsh (Eastbourne) on 5 Feb, 20 Mar and 28 Mar and one at Pevensey Levels on 28 Feb.

Counts outside the breeding season, from the eight sites where the species was recorded, are shown in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	22	18	19		29	23	70	42	15
Thorney Deepes	2	-	4		10	6	6	5	-
Thorney Island	-	-	-			1	-	-	-
Pagham Hbr	9	7	-		-	-	4	9	5
Newhaven	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	1
Eastbourne	-	2	2		-	-	2	-	1
Pevensey Levels	-	1	-		-	-	2	-	-
Pett Level	2	4	2		4	6	28	21	2
Rye Hbr	9	4	11		15	10	28	7	6

Breeding was confirmed by two pairs at Thorney Deepes one of which fledged six young. At least six pairs were present at Castle Water (Rye Hbr LNR) where breeding undoubtedly occurred and at Pett Level two or three broods were noted. Distinctive 'high flying', by six birds, which is associated with dispersal, was recorded at Thorney Deepes on 10 Oct. During the second winter period there was a record from Shinewater Lake (Eastbourne) of one heard on 2 Dec and one was seen at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) on 11 Dec. [MJC]

Woodlark*Lullula arborea*

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

This species was recorded from 54 tetrads. During the early SWBS there was one record from the 131 1-km squares surveyed, of three birds at Rake on 26 Feb; there were none recorded during the later survey.

A bird was in song at Lavington Plantation on 2 Jan and there were further records from this site on the 9th, 11th and 25th when there were two males singing. One was singing on Ashdown Forest on 6 Jan and there were four there on the 22nd. There were five at Broadwater Warren on 16 Feb, the first sighting there since the habitat restoration programme began, seven at Pett Level on 18 Feb, which was the highest count in the first winter period, and four at Blackdown (Fernhurst) on 19 Feb.

The annual Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey identified a total of 35 pairs or territories, an increase on the 28 in 2011 and 26 in 2010 (see page 215 for details). Breeding was confirmed in five tetrads across the county and was probable in a further 27. Birds were first seen carrying

food on Ashdown Forest on 11 Apr and family parties, including fledged young, were seen there on 27 Apr, 7 May and 7 Jun and other small flocks of seven and eight with young birds were also seen on Ashdown Forest on 31 Jul and 22 Sep. Breeding was confirmed on Ashdown Forest in seven 1-km squares and was probable in a further 22 but how many pairs were actually involved is uncertain. Elsewhere breeding was confirmed at Iping Common on 30 May and Stedham Common, where fledged young were seen on 17 Jun and 2 Aug. A pair was seen at Great Thorndean Fm (Warninglid) on 15 Mar and another at Legsheath Fm (Weir Wood) on 5 Apr.

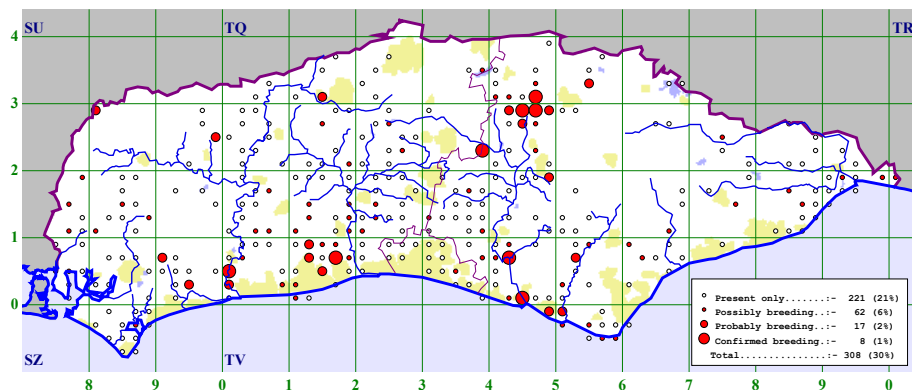
In the autumn, away from the breeding areas, single birds were seen at Cissbury Ring on 7 and 12 Sep, and two were at Pagham Hbr on the 20th and again on 13 Oct. In October, one was seen flying west at Atherington (Climping) on the 4th, five flew over Birling Gap on the 20th, another was at St Leonards on the 23rd and one was at Seaford on the 24th. At Hastings, a total of five was recorded during a 75 day migration watch, all in October and including three on the 24th. However, the highest numbers later were 11 at Compton on 5 Nov and 17 at Telscombe on 8 to 12 Dec feeding in stubble and, finally, four at West Marsden on 30 Dec also feeding in stubble. [SPS]

Skylark

Alauda arvensis

Very common but declining resident, and probably common passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Skylarks were recorded in 308 tetrads with a bias towards the west, probably related to observer cover. Thirteen Skylarks were seen on 1 Jan at Sefter Fm (Rose Green) with 32 birds there the following day and 30 on the 21st. Singing was first heard at Steep Down (Lancing) on 11 Jan. There were four at Beeding Brooks on 2 Jan, three there on the 29th, 11 at Twineham Place on the 11th, 24 at Pilsey Island (Chichester Hbr) on the 14th and 50 at Burpham on the 16th. There was a first winter period count of 283 on the Norfolk Estate (Arundel), a significant 52% decline over the 2011 winter total after eight years of increases. Other high counts during this period were 220 at Lewes Brooks on 12 Feb, 120 at Thorney Island (Chichester Hbr) on 27 Jan and 1 Feb, 120 at Pett Level on 5 Feb, 100 at Norton (Seaford) on 12 Feb, 85 at Round Hill (Hangleton) on 19 Feb, 65 at Newhaven on 5 Feb and 50 at Burpham on 16 Jan and nearby at The Burgh (Burpham) on 20 Feb. During the early SWBS there were sightings of 156 in 36 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed with the highest count of 21 at Seaford on 15 Jan.



Breeding was confirmed in eight tetrads and probable in a further 18. The former included Ford Station (Arun Valley) on 20 May where an occupied nest was seen, at Steep Down (Lancing) on 26 Jun, at Rodmell on 7 Jul, and at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) on 18 Jul, where recently fledged young were seen. Breeding on Ashdown Forest was confirmed in four 1-km squares and was probable in three more. Following the identification of six pairs or territories in 2011, the annual Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey identified just one, at Weavers Down (Liss). There were 372 pairs on the Norfolk Estate, a decline of 21% from 427 pairs in 2010 and 470 in 2011. Elsewhere, there were at least 35 pairs or territories at Rye Hbr, 11 at Pagham Hbr, five pairs at Pilsey Island and three at Bewl Water.

The highest summer count was of 40 at Burnhouse Bostal (Keymer) on 17 Jun where there was 'wall to wall Skylark song...' and 48 on downland near Worthing on 14 Jun. In the autumn there were observations at Climping of birds on eight days in October including 120 E on the 23rd. During the second winter period there were 90 at Rye Hbr on 24 Nov, 150 at Steep Down (Lancing) on 1 Dec and 150 at East Guldeford Level on 9 Dec. One was seen being taken by a Merlin at Pett Level on 4 Dec. During the late SWBS there were sightings of 86 birds in 17 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed with a highest count of 37 at Ripe on 2 Dec. The final records of the year were on 30 Dec of 12 at West Marden and 45 at Round Hill (Hangleton). [SPS]



Shore Lark, Cuckmere Haven, October 2012 (Luke Dray)

Shore Lark

Eremophila alpestris

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

The only record this year was of an adult at the First Sister (Cuckmere Haven) on 30 Oct (LC *et al.*), which raised the number recorded this century to eight. [JAH]

Sand Martin*Riparia riparia*

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

This species was recorded from only 65 tetrads, with a strong bias towards the western half of the county. The first record was of two at Arundel WWT and five at Pulborough Brooks on 16 Mar, a full 11 days later than the first returning bird of 2011, although only five days later than the 10-year average date. The following day one was noted at Warnham LNR, six were recorded at Pulborough Brooks and 12 at Rye Hbr. It was a further nine days before two flew N at Worthing on the 26th, one was at Pagham Hbr on the 30th and there were a further 57, which included 50 at Pulborough Brooks, on the 31st. Spring passage continued slowly with only 13 records in the first half of April. Observers at Arlington and Barcombe Reservoirs recorded counts of six each on the 3rd and 8th respectively, but even through the second half of April there were only four double-figure counts with a maximum of 32 N at Worthing on the 29th.



Sand Martin, Rye Harbour, September 2012 (Barry Yates)

The remainder of spring passage movement did not involve many particularly large counts, although 300 at Chichester GP on 4 May and 200 there on the 15th and 100 at Warnham LNR on 7 May were exceptions. During May there were just 13 counts ranging between ten and 60.

Three pairs were observed prospecting the artificial sand bank at Arundel WWT on 6 May. At West Heath Common, where up to 35 holes representing two colonies had been noted on 19 May, young in the nest were observed on 2 Jun and the first fledged birds appeared on 10 Jul. No nesting was recorded at Stedham, Minstead Quarry or Rye Hbr; neither were there any breeding attempts at Arundel WWT in the artificial sand bank, although during September birds were seen

prospecting holes there, perhaps for the following year or maybe for roosting purposes. This downward trend for Sand Martin puts it in danger of being lost as a breeding species in Sussex in the not too distant future unless its fortunes are reversed.

The first returning migrants were 40 at Medmerry on 21 Jul and by early August there was a minimum of 500 there on the 5th. The largest numbers in the autumn were recorded at Pett Level where counts built up from 100 on 25 July, to 300 in early August, 500 on 9 Aug, 900 on 13 Aug and 9000 on 16 Aug. Following this numbers fluctuated but other high counts included 1500 on 26 Aug, 2000 on 30 Aug, 9500 on 14 Sep and 1500 on 18 Sep. Elsewhere numbers were considerably lower.

The penultimate record of the year, of ten birds, came from Pagham Hbr on 19 Oct, close to the 10-year average date of 21 Oct. Two birds at Pett Level, however, represented the very last record on 11 Nov, a full three weeks later than the 10-year average date. [DB]

Barn Swallow

Hirundo rustica

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

Barn Swallows were recorded from 394 tetrads across the county. An earlier than usual first record for 2012 came from St Leonards on 1 Mar, 12 days earlier than in the previous year and just over a week earlier than the 10-year average date of 9 Mar. A week elapsed before the next record on 8 Mar of another individual, this time at Newhaven Tide Mills and then a further eight days before the third record of the year, one at Bewl Water on 16 Mar. It was not until the comparatively late date of 8 Apr that the first double-figure count was recorded of 28 at Barcombe Res.

Spring migration continued slowly with birds trickling rather than streaming in; almost all counts up to late April were of fewer than 30 birds, the exceptions being 50 N at Selsey Bill on 14 Apr and 100 at Chichester GP on 16 Apr. In the last week of April and into the first week of May, migration increased significantly with 30 counts of over 100 birds recorded in this period, most notably 1108 N and 677 N at Selsey Bill on 1 and 4 May respectively and 2000 at Pulborough Brooks on 3 May with 2500 there on the 7th. The last three figure count of the spring was 100 at Winchelsea Beach on 15 May.

Breeding was confirmed from just 12 tetrads and was probable in a further 11. The comparison with 2011 is stark (confirmed breeding in 158 tetrads with probable in 159), but probably represents the increased observer effort to record a breeding status during the BTO Bird Atlas 2007-11 project. The first report of birds observed on the nest was on 11 Apr at Keymer, a day earlier than in 2011. The first record of a nest with young was at Findon Park on 27 May and it was not until 17 Jul when fledging was first observed, at Arundel WWT; at the same site on 3 Aug a nest was found to contain four eggs.

Autumn migration was most prominent in September; following 500 at Winchelsea and 1000 at Pett Level on 2 Sep, 1700 at Fairlight and 3000 at Pagham Hbr on the 3rd and 1000 at Arlington Res on the 19th, other high counts later in the month included 2000 at Worthing on the 23rd, 3419 S in 2½ hr at Uckfield on the 27th, and 2383 at Hastings on the 29th. A further nine counts of 1000 or more were recorded in the autumn period. During an extended migration watch at Hastings from 7 Aug to 18 Nov a total of 9530 birds was recorded on 46 days.

During November approximately 180 were recorded with daily, widespread records until the 8th and highest counts of 16 at Waltham Brooks on the 4th and ten at Hastings on the 8th. Nineteen

were recorded on four dates between 11 and 17 Nov and one at Hassocks on the 18th represented the last record for 2012, two days earlier than last year and nine days earlier than the 10-year average date. [DB]

House Martin

Delichon urbica

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

This species was recorded from 221 tetrads, c.21% of the county total. The first record of the year was of a four birds at Pulborough Brooks on 17 Mar, a week earlier than 2011 but three days later than the 10-year average date of 14 Mar. One at Coldwaltham on 25 Mar, two at Newhaven on the 27th and singles at Pulborough Brooks and Pagham Hbr on the 31st were the remaining March records. Thereafter small numbers were recorded most days until the second half of April when there were 50 at Chichester GP on the 16th and on the 29th counts of 300 at Bewl Water, 100 at Pulborough Brooks and 74 at Rottingdean.

In the first week of May seven counts of 100 or more were returned, with a maximum of 1000 at Pulborough Brooks on the 7th. Three further three figure counts came from Chichester GP (200), Thorney Island (200) and Arundel WWT (100) all on 15 May, representing the last peak of spring migration.

Breeding was confirmed from 19 tetrads and was probable from a further seven, significantly lower figures than for 2011. Although birds were prospecting nesting sites in Chichester on 10 May and at Laughton on the 12th, the first confirmed occupied nest site was at Telscombe on 16 May. On the 20th artificial nests on a South East Water building were occupied at Barcombe Res. The earliest date recorded for a nest containing young came from Barcombe Res on 7 Jul. Young were still being fed in the nest on 4 Oct at Henfield.

Autumn migration began in earnest towards the end of August with 200 at Pett Level on the 20th followed by peak counts of 500 from Arundel WWT on the 31st and 200 on the same day at Eastbourne. During the first half of September there were 12 counts of 100 or more, with a maximum of 970 at Pett Level on 15 Sep. However, it was during the period from mid-September to mid-October that migration really peaked, with the highest single day count of 10,695 W past Hastings on 19 Sep. Other significant day totals during this time included 3400 at Fairlight on 18 Sep and 4370 there on the 29th and 1740 at Telscombe Cliffs on 22 Sep. An estimated 37,000 birds passed through Sussex during this mid-September to mid-October period. During an extended migration watch at Hastings, a total of 23,900 birds were recorded on 33 days between 14 Aug and 12 Nov. Migration quickly thinned out after the middle of October, with only seven double-figure counts until the last record for 2012. At Selsey Bill 18 W in two hours on 5 Nov and 15 at Eastbourne on 6 Nov were the only notable counts during the end of autumn migration. The last record was of a single bird at Littlehampton on 16 Nov, four days later than the 10-year average date, although eleven days later than in 2011. [DB]

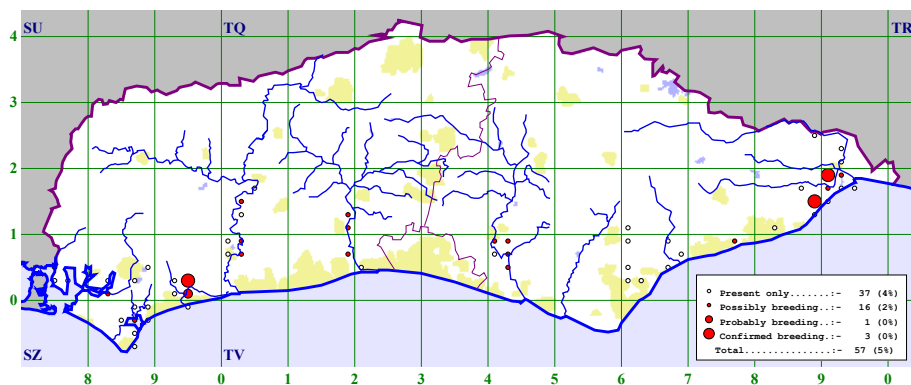
Cetti's Warbler

Cettia cetti

Scarce but increasing resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Cetti's Warblers were recorded in 57 tetrads during the year. During January and February there were reports from 21 different sites, an increase of eight over 2011. Main concentrations

were at Thorney Deepes (Chichester Hbr) which held six singing birds on 12 Jan, Rye Hbr where there were three at Carters Pit on the 15th, and Pagham Hbr where six were reported in the North Wall area on 6 Feb. Other sites where more than a single bird was found included Pett Level with four on 15 Jan and 23 Feb, Arundel WWT where the February maximum was four on the 21st, and Shinewater Lake (Eastbourne) which held three on the 29th. Among other sites where single birds were reported were the Brede Valley, Winchelsea Beach, Filsham LNR, West Rise Marsh (Eastbourne), Lewes Brooks, Southease, Beeding Brooks, Waltham Brooks, Lidsey, Apuldram and Fishbourne. There were five at Filsham LNR on 7 Apr, eight at Arundel WWT on the 12th and seven at Rye Hbr on the 14th. Five separate individuals were recorded on a WBBS survey along 4 km of Lidsey Rife on 20 Apr and five were at Waltham Brooks on the 22nd. Nine were reported singing throughout March and April at Thorney Deepes, a slight reduction on last year, but no young were found at the site this year, probably the result of adverse weather. However, some did manage to breed successfully; a pair was seen feeding young in gorse at Rye on 29 Jun, a possible family group were at Winchelsea on 11 Aug and parent birds were seen with young at Lidsey on the 25th. Breeding was also confirmed at Pett Level where four males held territory and fledged young were seen.



During November and December the species was recorded at just 13 sites and numbers were lower than earlier in the year; there were five at Pett Level, four at Thorney Deepes and Rodmell, and three at Arundel WWT, Crowhurst, Pagham Hbr and Rye Hbr. [VPB]

Long-tailed Tit

Aegithalos caudatus

Very common resident.

Long-tailed Tits were reported from 372 tetrads in 2012, 36% of the county total. During the first winter period there were 12 reports of 15 or more birds, with the highest counts being 40 at Lidsey Old Canal on 7 Jan, and 22 both at Pett Level on 5 Jan and also on a feeder in Henfield on 2 Feb. In the first SWBS 265 birds were reported from 63 out of 131 squares with a maximum of 13 at Pallingham (Pulborough).

Breeding was confirmed in 15 tetrads and probable in a further 21, fewer than in 2011. A pair was seen carrying lichen for nest building at Pett Level on 1 Mar. The earliest confirmed report of breeding was of a pair on a nest at Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) on 21 Apr. There was an adult observed food collecting at Littleworth (Partridge Green) on 6 May. The first report of fledged

young came from Ivy Lake (Chichester GP) on 15 May and there were 19 further records of fledged young until 25 Jul. The highest counts during this period were of 25 at Ivy Lake on 15 May, 16 at Chailey Common on 29 Apr and 12 at Arundel WWT on 8 Apr.

During the post-breeding period there were 22 records of 15 birds or more. The highest numbers were 50 at Pett Level on 7 Oct, 30 at Cliff End (Pett) on 15 Oct and autumn counts of 25 at Woods Mill (Henfield), Ashcombe Bottom (Lewes) and Pickham Fm (Pett). During the second winter period the highest counts were of 40 at Kirdford on 29 Nov, 30 at Church Norton on 3 Nov and 29 at Weir Wood Res on 16 Dec. In the second SWBS 282 birds were reported from 46 out of 107 squares surveyed, the aforementioned count at Kirdford being the highest. [PD]

Pallas's Leaf Warbler

Phylloscopus proregulus

Very scarce visitor, mostly in late autumn.

One trapped, ringed and photographed on downland near Pyecombe on 15 Nov (PM) was the only record. [JAH]



Yellow-browed Warbler, Worthing, February 2012 (Leigh Prevost)

Yellow-browed Warbler

Phylloscopus inornatus

Very scarce visitor; mostly in late autumn.

The nine birds recorded during 2012 equalled the number seen in 2008. One found in Worthing on 26 Feb, presumably overwintering somewhere, was seen there until 14 Mar (mo). In October, three were trapped and ringed at Pett Level on the 10th, 13th and 19th (RBRG), and another at

Brooklands (Worthing) on the 16th (DIS, RAI) was followed by another at Peacehaven on the 20th (AT), one at Hodcombe (Beachy Head) the next day (RHC, SAC) and one at Seaford Head on the 23rd (RCS). Finally, in November, one was at Pulborough Brooks on the 14th (PJR, EMR) which was thought to have been there for a few days when found. The county total for this century (2000 included) moves on to 75. [JAH]

Hume's Warbler

Phylloscopus humei

Very rare vagrant.

The record of one at Belle Tout Wood, Beachy Head, from 30 Oct to 4 Nov has been accepted by BBRC (JHM *et al.*). This represents the sixth county record and the first since one at the same location from 30 Dec 2007 to 14 Jan 2008. The previous records have all been of birds arriving in Nov (3) or Dec (2). Belle Tout Wood appears to be the prime location for this species with four of the six county records being of birds seen there. [DHH]

Wood Warbler

Phylloscopus sibilatrix

Very scarce and declining summer resident and passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

This species was recorded from only 25 tetrads. Although there was a welcome increase in records received, with some 65, nearly double that in 2011, sadly these only related to a small increase in individuals, 24 as opposed to 17 in 2011.

The earliest record was from Church Norton on 27 Apr, nine days later than the 10-year county average date. This was followed by birds at Brighton Wild Park and Selsey on the 30th. In May there was a defined influx early in the month, with sightings from some ten sites, and there were records, mostly of single birds, from Bexhill, Pagham Hbr, Buchan Park and, most notably, Ashdown Forest throughout the month.

Breeding was not confirmed anywhere and was only probable at two sites with birds holding territory on Ashdown Forest and at Buchan Park. Apart from these, territorial birds were singing at 11 other sites but only three of these were away from Ashdown Forest. The last birds were seen/heard on Ashdown Forest on 12 Jun and at Buchan Park on 21 Jun. A bird recorded at Warnham LNR on 28 Jul may have been either a wandering individual or one on return migration. Other returning migrants were one on 29 Jul and three on 7 Aug at Pett Level and one at Church Norton on 11 Sep. [TWP]

Chiffchaff

Phylloscopus collybita

Very common summer visitor and passage migrant; small numbers winter.

This species was recorded in 452 tetrads across the county. In January, there were several counts of 20 or more wintering at Coldwaltham SF with a minimum of 24 on the 6th and mainly singles at about 28 other sites. In February, it was recorded at slightly fewer sites but, in early March, two singing at Brighton Wild Park on the 8th were possibly new arrivals while at Pagham Hbr migrants were recorded from the 10th onwards with an influx of 20 on the 18th. Elsewhere, there was a monthly maximum of 12 at Pett Level, ten were seen at Arundel WWT and 15 at Warnham LNR on the 19th and 20 at Weir Wood Res on the 26th.

Arrivals continued throughout April and although there were many counts of double figures no major falls occurred. Breeding was confirmed in only six tetrads with probable breeding at a further 36.

It was difficult to determine when return migration started, because of the unseasonable conditions, but it was well under way by 1 Sep when 50 were counted at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) and 42 at Hastings. At Cissbury Ring 42 were recorded on the 10th, 75 were at Whitbread Hollow on the 12th, with 300 there on the 16th, and there were a minimum of 50 at the Breech Pool (Pagham Hbr) on the 17th. Other gatherings occurred at Whitbread Hollow, with 150 there on the 20th and 125 on the 21st, whilst at Climping there were 60 on the 27th, 62 at Cissbury Ring on the 28th and 92 at Hastings on the 29th while a count of 500 at Whitbread Hollow on 30th was the highest day count for the period. The month maximum at Pett Level was 462 on the 28th. There were many high counts recorded throughout October; the highest were at Pett Level where there were 121 on the 4th, 103 on the 6th, 93 on the 7th and 85 on the 8th. Other notable counts were 60 at Hastings on the 4th, 110 at Climping Gap and 70 at Seaford Head, all on the 7th. During November and December there were only single figure counts at about 20 sites with the highest number being eight at Lidsey SF on 17 Dec and at Arundel WWT on 20 Dec.

There were two records of birds showing characteristics of one of the eastern forms, *P.c. abietinus* or *P.c. tristis*: one with Common Chiffchaffs photographed at Eastbourne on 15 Nov (JFC, DRC), and another trapped and photographed at Pett Level on 4 Dec (IDH, PEJ). [TWP]

Willow Warbler

Phylloscopus trochilus

Common but declining summer visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Willow Warblers were recorded from 209 tetrads during the year. They were first recorded on Ashdown Forest on 21 Mar, three days later than the 10-year county average date. Up to the end of the month a further 17 were recorded at various sites. During early April there were many single figure counts but a conservative estimate of 30 at Pagham Hbr on the 3rd was noteworthy as was 60 there on the 12th. Another coastal fall occurred on the 13th with 125 at Beachy Head and 30 at Sidlesham Ferry whilst numbers started to build up on Ashdown Forest from the 12th. Immigration continued with, for example, 12 seen in gardens and coming in off the sea at Selsey Bill on 4 May.

In the breeding season, breeding was confirmed from only three tetrads and was probable in a further 19, a poor showing and, as with many other species, suffering from the appalling weather during the summer. There were three pairs at Pulborough Brooks but the majority of records during the breeding season came, as usual, from Ashdown Forest.

Return passage began in July with three at Pett Level on the 10th, two on the 13th and rising to 46 on the 30th with a monthly maximum of 81. Elsewhere there were six at Cissbury Ring, and one each was at Rye Hbr and Winchelsea Beach, all on the 28th. During August, at Pett Level high counts were 115 on the 3rd, 146 on the 4th, 132 on the 5th and 157 on the 7th. There was a fall of 30 at Cissbury Ring on the 3rd and 15 at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head). Other large counts occurred later with 50 at Whitbread Hollow and 128 at Hastings on the 7th, 50 at Cissbury Ring and 32 at Winchelsea Beach on the 10th. Cissbury Ring continued to attract them, with 30 on the 18th, as did Sheepcote Valley with 30 and Whitbread Hollow with 60 on 19th. An estimated 300 were in the entire Beachy Head area on the 19th. At Climping 30 were noted on the 20th and 20 were recorded at Fairlight on the 21st and another nice count of 65 occurred at Cissbury Ring on

the 23rd. In September, things were quieter but at Pett Level there were 62 on the 2nd and 61 on the 4th, 40 at Whitbread Hollow on the 3rd and 30 at Sheepcote Valley on the 5th. Thereafter numbers declined through to October during which a total of some 25 was recorded at various sites, the last being at Beachy Head on the 22nd.

The only record of a bird showing characteristics of the eastern continental form *P.t. acredula* was of one photographed at Horseshoe Plantation (Beachy Head) on 12 May (DC, JFC). [TWP]

Blackcap

Sylvia atricapilla

Very common summer visitor and passage migrant; scarce winter visitor.

Blackcaps were reported from 398 tetrads. During January and February there were reports from 33 different locations, nine fewer than in 2011, representing a minimum number of 37 individuals. A female seen in a garden at Keymer was recorded for 64 days up to 4 Mar and fed on apple slices and berries. Other individuals took ivy and honeysuckle berries. The reliance of the species on gardens during the winter months is borne out by just a single bird being recorded in SWBS counts in 147 1-km squares. Single birds were trapped on two different days at Pett Level during this period and one of a pair trapped on 24 Feb in West Worthing had been ringed at Sandwich Bay, Kent on 24 Sep 2011.



Blackcap, Hodcombe, February 2012 (Roger and Liz Charlwood)

The first male in full song was at Pett Level on 28 Feb, and others were heard from mid-March onwards, though the main influx followed during April. During the breeding season there were 49 pairs on the Norfolk Estate, 29 at Pagham Hbr, 11 at Thorney Island (Chichester Hbr), ten at Pulborough Brooks and five at Amberley, the last three sites holding slightly lower numbers than

in 2011. An adult female with a brood patch was trapped at Cissbury on 8 May; she had been ringed as an adult at the site in June 2007, hence was at least six years old. An adult carrying food was seen at Plumpton on 2 Jun and among 12 reported at Broadbridge Heath on 29 May was one with a banded demoiselle in its beak. A French ringed bird was controlled at Ladywell (Coombes) on 12 May.

Little movement was seen in August, though on 1 Sep 100 passed through Beachy Head, and 125 the following day. Numbers then increased, with 350 on the 16th and the month's maximum of 500 reported on the 30th. However, at Pett Level over 300 birds were trapped on five different days in September, with the highest total of 389 on the 30th; this compares unfavourably with a maximum day total of 1032 in September 2011. The Steyning RG handled 231 different birds at Cissbury, roughly one-third of the 2011 total, and at Steyning the comparison was 207 to 418. The number of first year birds compared to adults was also lower at 73% compared with 89% the previous year (Steyning RG data).

Reports during November and December were received from 20 different locations and comprised at least 24 birds. At Cissbury three first year females were trapped in early November, all weighing over 20 g, so possibly late departing migrants. [VPB]

Garden Warbler

Sylvia borin

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

Garden Warblers were recorded from 153 tetrads across the county. The first bird of the year was at Chailey Common on 29 Mar, just one day later than the earliest recorded arrival date and six days before the 10-year average date of 3 Apr. BBS observers recorded birds at Bosham on 7 Apr and at Stonegate on the 11th; thereafter the species was seen in small numbers on most of the remaining April days. Three at Pulborough Brooks on 15 Apr and six in Brede High Wood on 27 Apr were the highest numbers during the month. Others continued to arrive in early May: six were at Beachy Head on the 2nd, on the 4th four were seen at Selsey Bill, three were at Beachy Head and on the 20th one was seen resting in low shingle vegetation on Worthing Beach, having just arrived.

Breeding was confirmed from two tetrads and was probable in a further 13. The first territorial pair was noted at Blackcap (Plumpton) on 28 Apr but few sites held more than single birds in late May to June; among these were up to 12 on Ashdown Forest, a maximum of five at Stanley Common (Liphook), four at Levin Down, three at Rewell Wood (Arundel) and two at Sheffield Park. Breeding was confirmed at Cissbury North Scarp and Troutbeck (Eridge). As in 2011, none nested at Rye Hbr. There was just one pair at Pagham Hbr, three at Pulborough Brooks and breeding was probable in six 1-km squares on Ashdown Forest.

A very poor autumn passage was reported from Beachy Head, where the maximum numbers seen were 12 on 9 Aug and 11 on 19 Aug. Numbers ringed by the Steyning RG were lower than in 2011, with 15 different birds handled at Steyning and 14 at Cissbury though four of these were females with brood patches. At Pett Level, a single bird trapped on 7 May was the only one until 10 Jul, when they became more regular, though fewer in number than the previous year, with monthly maxima of nine on 24 Jul, 35 on 5 Aug and 14 on both 4 and 8 Sep.

After mid-September few birds remained in the county. There were two at Lewes on the 17th, one at Pett Level on the 18th and another at Climping Beach on the 27th. Six birds were recorded in October: one at Arundel WWT on the 1st, and five ringed at Pett Level between the 3rd and 12th, the last of the year, two days later than the 10-year average date. [VPB]

Barred Warbler*Sylvia nisoria**Very scarce autumn visitor.*

One found at Pett Level on 6 Sep (MRF, PEJ) was trapped, ringed and photographed. The county total moves on to 61 with 16 of them this century. This is typically an autumn migrant with all 61 occurrences in the three months August to October, 65% of which have been in September [JAH]

Lesser Whitethroat*Sylvia curruca**Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant.*

This species was recorded from 122 tetrads, more often in the west of the county than the east. The first bird of the year was at Lewes Racecourse on 6 Apr, five days earlier than the 10-year average date, and came as a surprise to the observer, whose first record of the species at the site in the previous two years had not been until the 24th. No more were seen until one at Rye Hbr on the 14th, and the first in the west of the county was at Sidlesham on the 21st.

During the breeding season there were nine pairs at Thorney Island, seven at Pagham Hbr, three at Pulborough Brooks, all fewer than those recorded in 2011. However, at Rye Hbr there were 12 pairs which was an increase of three, and there was one pair at Ladywell (Coombes). Other sites where more than a single bird was noted were Anchor Bottom (Upper Beeding) with five on 13 Jun, three at Pett Level on the 15th and two along the Downslink path at Henfield on the 23rd. Breeding was confirmed at only four of the above sites: Pulborough Brooks, Ladywell (Coombes), Henfield and Pett Level. Steyning RG reported low numbers this year, with just one individual trapped at Steyning on 1 Jul, though this was in juvenile plumage, and five different birds handled at Cissbury, including one female with a brood patch, although no juveniles were found at this latter site. Reduced numbers were also ringed at other sites with 252 birds ringed at Pett Level and 23 at Beachy Head, respective declines of 33% and 49% on the 2011 figures.

The first autumn record from Beachy Head was of six on 2 Sep, though numbers were very low, and this proved to be the maximum daily total there. At Pett Level the August maximum was 14 on the 20th and in September, 21 on the 1st. Six were recorded at Cissbury Ring on both 4 and 6 Sep, five were at Pagham Hbr on the 4th and three were at Pett Level on the 10th. The final sighting for West Sussex was of two birds at Pagham Hbr on 27 Sep and the last record of the year was a single bird at Pett Level on the 30th, 11 days earlier than 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 302 tetrads but was scarcer in the far east of the county. The first bird was noted at Weir Wood Res on 1 Apr, just a day later than the 10-year average date, and another was at Pulborough Brooks the next day. The first report from Rye Hbr came on 12 Apr, and by the 20th the species was recorded countywide. On 22 Apr nine were seen at Littlehampton GC, six at Stocks Farm (Icklesham), five at Lewes Racecourse and four in the Slipe Field (Pagham Hbr). Twenty on the 26th was the maximum seen in April at Sheepcote

Valley (Brighton) and there were good numbers on Ashdown Forest, where eight were seen in the Greenwood Gate area on the 27th. Some were still arriving on the coast in early May but on the 4th there was an exceptional fall of at least 40 at Selsey Bill, several of which were observed to ditch into the sea close to shore, only to be taken by a Herring Gull. The next day there were eight at Lychpole Hill, Twineham Green and Rottingdean, 12 at the North Wall (Pagham Hbr), 20 along Ferring Rife and 100 at Beachy Head.

During the breeding season, breeding was confirmed from 18 tetrads and was probable in a further 35. Breeding records were of 45 pairs at Thorney Island, 63 at Pagham Hbr, 120 on the Norfolk Estate, 13 at Pulborough Brooks and 39 at Rye Hbr. However, at all these sites, numbers were less than in 2011. Adults carrying food were first recorded on 12 May on Ashdown Forest and the first fledglings were noted there on the 27th. Steyning RG handled fewer birds than in 2011, with 42 at Cissbury compared with 105 in 2011 and only 21 at Steyning, where the total had been 104 the previous year. The percentage of young birds in relation to the total number ringed at these sites was also reduced, indicating a poor breeding season, as only 67% of the combined total were first year birds, whereas in 2011 this figure had been 87% (Steyning RG data). Comparable large declines from the high numbers ringed in 2011 were also evident from the results at other ringing sites; at Pett Level and Beachy Head the reductions in birds ringed were 3510 to 1302 (63%) and 597 to 196 (67%) respectively.

Autumn passage at Beachy Head was uninspiring; the maximum daily total there was 80 on 18 Aug and none were recorded after 15 Sep. At Pett Level there were six dates between 19 Aug and 12 Sep when 50 or more birds were recorded with a maximum of 85 on 20 Aug. Elsewhere, on 17 Sep, there were 12 at Cissbury Ring, three at Lower Standean and two at Lewes, and one at Ashdown Forest on the 29th was a late inland record. The final records from the west of the county were up to three seen at Pagham Hbr on 6 Oct, while in East Sussex two birds, one of which was trapped at Pett Level on the 11th, were the last of the year, 12 days earlier than the 10-year average date. [VPB]

Dartford Warbler

Sylvia undata

Scarce to fairly common but localised resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

This species was found in just 14 tetrads. The estimated minimum numbers and sites (1-km squares) were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	2	1	2	4	5	8	4	1	7	2	2	-
No. of sites	2	1	1	3	3	4	2	1	4	2	2	

The first record of the year was of a bird on Ashdown Forest on 9 Jan with further sightings on 14 and 15 Jan at a site some 3 km distant, assumed to be a different bird. In February, one was recorded on the 26th at Rake, in the far NW of the county, the only record away from Ashdown Forest in the first winter period.

In March, a single bird was recorded on the 26th on Ashdown Forest at the same site as the bird of 9 Jan. During the spring and summer months, birds were recorded at Weavers Down (Liss) and Chapel Common (Liphook). One, sometimes two, were frequently recorded on Iping Common between 22 Apr and 25 Jul. Single birds were noted on Ashdown Forest on three dates in the

period and at Hastings CP on three early dates with two there on 23 Jun and 23 Jul. The annual Thames Basin and Wealden Heath Breeding Bird Survey identified seven pairs or territories at three sites (see page 215 for details). Breeding was confirmed from just two areas, although in total there were a possible ten pairs or territories in the county.

In the autumn, three were recorded at Hastings CP on 3 Sep and one was also seen at Pagham Hbr where it, or another, was heard on 22 Oct. Two were on Lavington Common on 12 and 18 Sep and one was there on 30 Oct. There was a record from Pett Level of one on 22 Sep and the final records of the year were of a single bird at Thorney Deeps (Chichester Hbr) on 23 and 29 Nov and 1 Dec. It is to be hoped that with some decent weather during the breeding season and an absence of harsh winters this species can regain the numbers it had back in 2008. [SPS]

Grasshopper Warbler

Locustella naevia

Very scarce and declining summer visitor and fairly common passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

This scarce species was recorded from only 18 tetrads. The first arrival was at Bosham on 7 Apr, two days earlier than the 10-year average date, followed by single birds heard reeling at Church Norton and Thorney Island on 20 Apr. Another was at Waltham Brooks on the 27th, and on the 30th one was heard at Rye Hbr. During May and June there were few records, one at Combe Haven on 1 May, another at Beeding Brooks on the 13th, singles at Pagham Hbr on the 2nd and 16th and one at Rye Hbr on 1 Jun, though no breeding was suspected there. Two singing males were heard at Amberley Wild Brooks and another at Pulborough Brooks, but confirmation of breeding was not established. Perhaps this warbler is now virtually extinct as a breeding species in the county.

Autumn passage at Pett Level commenced on 19 Jul, though the monthly maximum was only seven. In August the maximum trapped on any one day at the site was 30 on the 27th, while in September the maximum was 24 on the 2nd and numbers reduced to single figures after the 6th. Only single birds were recording moving through Beachy Head between 3 Aug and 8 Sep, totalling just six for the autumn. There were three at Charleston Reedbed on 12 Sep, and one at Climping on the 22nd. Two were trapped in October at Pett Level, on the 4th and 6th, the latter being the final bird of the year, 12 days earlier than the 10-year average date. [VPB]

Melodious Warbler

Hippolais polyglotta

Very scarce visitor.

There was just one record in 2012. On the afternoon of 19 Aug one was seen and photographed at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) (DC, JFC, BK). This raises the number seen this century to 15, of which 11 have been at Beachy Head, and, following a review, to 66 records in total. [VPB]

Sedge Warbler

Acrocephalus schoenobaenus

Fairly common summer visitor and common passage migrant.

This species was recorded in 64 tetrads. The first bird was recorded at Rye Hbr on 27 Mar, one day earlier than in 2011 and one day earlier than the 10-year county average date. This was closely followed by another one there and one at Arundel WWT on the 29th. April started with

two at Rye Hbr on the 1st and two more (or the same) there the next day, but although recorded at some 20, mostly coastal, sites most were of ones or twos with the highest counts being six at Pett Level on the 19th and eight each at Rye Hbr on the 13th and Arundel WWT on the 24th. The monthly maximum at Pett Level was ten on the 27th.

In May, 14 pairs were located on Thorney Island and 45 pairs at Rye Harbour. During the breeding season, birds were present in 63 tetrads and breeding was confirmed in just four tetrads and was probable in only three, a sad state of affairs after the good numbers in 2011. At Pett Level the May maximum was 18 on the 11th and the June maximum was 19 on the 13th.

Migration was evident at the end of July when, at Pett Level, there were 117 birds on the 30th and this increased to 372 on 7 Aug. Six were at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on the same day. The September maximum at Pett Level was 218 on the 12th. There was a paucity of records, all in single figures, from a variety of other sites with the last record being of one at Pett Level on 14 Oct, one day later than the 10-year county average. [TWP]

Paddyfield Warbler

Acrocephalus agricola

Very rare vagrant.

One present at Pagham Hbr from 30 Jan to 13 Mar (IML, OM *et al.*) was seen by many observers despite proving extremely elusive at times. This was the fifth county record but the first in the west of the county with the four previous records all being in the Pett Level area. It was also a very late date for this species, as the previous four Sussex records have been in the last week of September or the first two weeks of October. The record has been accepted by the BBRC. [DHH]

Marsh Warbler

Acrocephalus palustris

Rare summer visitor and very scarce passage migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

A total of four birds was recorded from two separate locations. At one, a male which has been recorded for several years returned on 25 May and was singing continuously to the 28th; a female arrived on the 31st and the pair nested in an area of nettle and milk parsley. Both birds were feeding young regularly on 25 Jun but sadly the nesting area was cleared and the nest destroyed on the 28th, just 5-6 days prior to fledging. At the second site one was present on 1 Jun and another between 30 Jul and 26 Aug. [JAH]

Reed Warbler

Acrocephalus scirpaceus

Fairly common summer visitor and very common passage migrant.

This species was recorded in 108 tetrads. The first record was of two at Rye Hbr and one at Pett Level on 7 Apr, five days later than in 2011 and precisely the 10-year county average arrival date. These were quickly followed by a single bird at Woods Mill on the 8th and two at Sidlesham Ferry on the 11th. At Rye Hbr the number rose to five by the 12th and there were six at Toddington (Littlehampton) on the same day. Single figure counts continued throughout the month but then ten were counted at Pett Level on the 22nd and 11 at Yapton on the 27th. In May, some better figures were recorded as birds continued to arrive; there were 14 at Pagham Hbr on the 2nd, 12 at Pett

Level on the 4th and 14 at Beeding Brooks on the 13th. The monthly maximum at Sefter Fm (Rose Green) was 27 on the 19th while 32 were recorded at Pagham Hbr on the 22nd and 26 at Pett Level on the 31st by which date double figures had been recorded at a total of 15 sites.

During the breeding season, 56 pairs were counted on Thorney Island. Breeding was confirmed in only eight tetrads and was probable in only a further five. Thirty one were counted at Pett Level during May and 37 during June. At Rye Hbr, 143 pairs were mapped but the total was thought to be in excess of 200, a slight decline from 2011. At Pagham Hbr, 87 pairs were counted.



Reed Warbler, Atherington Pools, August 2012 (Bola Akinola)

Autumn migration began in late July with 90 at Pett Level on the 20th. There were two at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on the 22nd, followed by three there on 5 Aug and eight on the 9th. As usual over a hundred birds were ringed at Pett Level on several days during August and into September. Elsewhere there was a trickle of records for the rest of August and September but no coastal falls. During the first three weeks of October the species was recorded on most days at Pett Level with a maximum of 38 on the 10th whilst elsewhere just single birds were seen at Whitbread Hollow on the 10th and at Pagham Hbr on the 14th and 23rd. Finally there was one at Pett Level on 6 Nov, two on the 7th and the last on 9 Nov, five days later than the 10-year average. [TWP]

Great Reed Warbler

Acrocephalus arundinaceus

Rare vagrant.

A sound recording of a male in song at Pett Level on 2-4 May (IDH, PEJ) was the first in the county since one at Castle Water on 8 May 1998. The record has been accepted by the BBRC and brings the county total up to 17. [DHH]

Waxwing

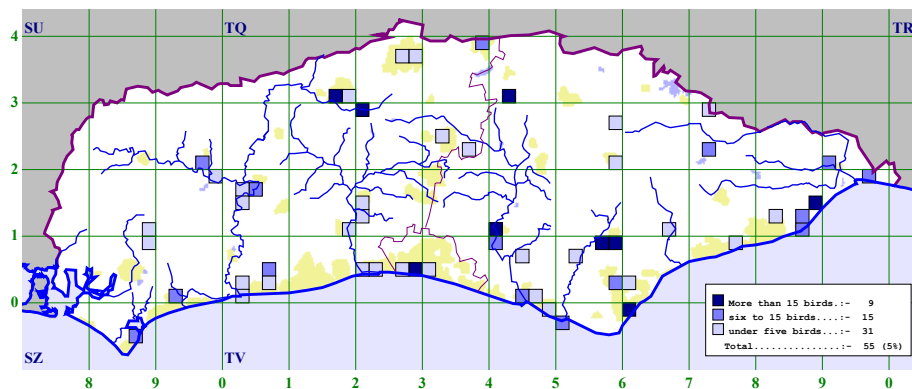
Bombycilla garrulous

Rare winter visitor.

There were only two records of Waxwings in the first winter period: a group of seven were at Robertsbridge on 7 Jan, while a single bird was at Horsham on 2 Feb. These continued the pattern of very low numbers established at the end of 2011 when there were also only two records.

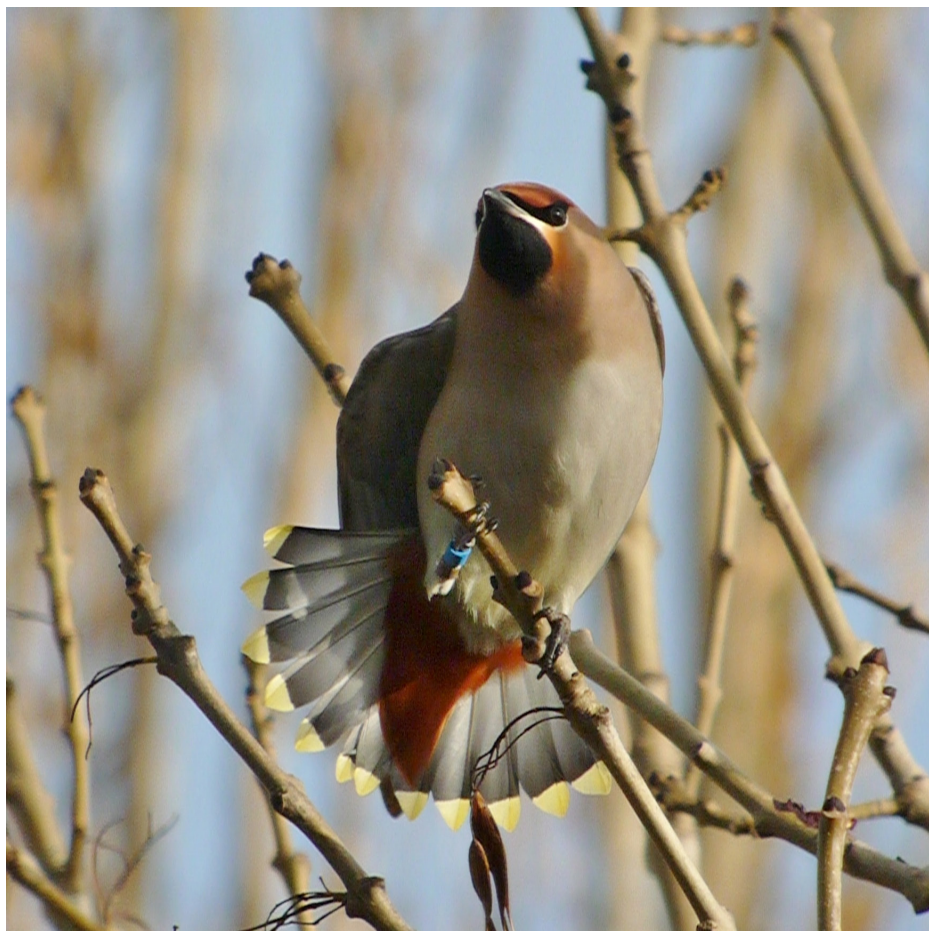
During the second winter period there was a minor irruption, just two winters since the previous one. The first bird was seen on 27 Oct at Hailsham. The next two records were of 16 on Ashdown Forest on 6 Nov and 14 at Rye on the 11th. However, it was a single flyover at Cedar Fm (Flimwell) on the 23rd which presaged the main irruption.

The distribution of Waxwings in 2012 is shown in the following map:



Numbers increased significantly from 27 Nov when four were seen at Eastbourne and one at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven). The birds in Eastbourne, though often mobile, frequented a site in Lismore Road but were also seen at Shinewater until 7 Dec and numbers varied from four down to one. However, a flock of 18 was found again on 18 Dec, increasing to a maximum of 20 on the 27th and finally 14 on the 29th. At Newhaven, following the first one on 27 Nov, the last one was recorded on 21 Dec; numbers fluctuated through seven on 28 Nov, ten on 8 Dec, a maximum of 15 on 10 Dec and finally one on the 21st. The other main area inhabited by Waxwings was near the Tesco store in Lewes. The first two were seen there on 7 Dec followed by ten on the 10th and then they were seen fairly regularly to the end of the month. Numbers varied, as usual for this mobile species, through a maximum of 20 on the 26th to a final 12 on the 30th.

Other sites where multiple sightings occurred included: Shoreham, where after the first alert for two on 27 Nov single birds only were seen on 7 Dec and the 26th; Seaford, where following one on 9 Dec there were three on 11 Dec; Pulborough Brooks, where 12 were sighted on 6 Dec but 11 flew off NE the following morning; and Hove/Portslade, where two on 7 Dec were followed two weeks later by no less than 24 on the 21st. Elsewhere, birds were recorded at some 35 sites spread from Goodwood Park in the west to Rye Bay in the east. The highest day counts were 30 at Horsham and St. Leonards Forest on 26 Dec (which might, of course, have been the same flock although several kilometres apart), 26 at Pett Level on 6 Dec, 24 at Hove/Portslade on the 21st, and 20 at Hailsham on the 23rd, Lewes on the 26th and Eastbourne from the 26th to 28th.



Waxwing, Lewes, December 2012 (Gareth Hughes)

The estimated minimum day counts, in date order, were as follows:

Month	November				December													
Date	27	28	30	2	5	6	10	11	18	21	23	25	26	27	28	29	30	
No. of birds	7	10	7	9	12	44	41	21	26	31	27	15	86*	31	46	32	18	

*assumes that 30 at Horsham are different from 30 at St. Leonards Forest c.4 km away the same day

The above numbers illustrate the variability of numbers at sites consequent on the inherent mobility of this species as it hunts for suitable foods.

The minimum weekly totals during the main irruption period by broad sites from west to east, where they equal or exceed ten birds in any week, were as follows:

Month	Nov	December			
Week no.	48	49	50	51	52
Dates	27-3	4-10	11-17	18-24	25-31
Petworth & Byworth	-	-	12	2	-
Littlehampton & Angmering	-	2	-	10	5
Pulborough Brooks & Coldwaltham	-	12	-	-	-
Horsham – Henfield	2	-	1	-	62*
Hove & Brighton	3	-	-	24	-
Haywards Heath – East Grinstead	4	12	-	-	-
Lewes	-	10	5	7	20
Newhaven Ouse Estuary Project	7	15	-	1	5
Arlington Res/Hailsham/Heathfield	1	1	-	20	1
Cuckmere Haven	-	-	1	-	15
Eastbourne	3	-	-	14	20
Combe Haven – Hastings	-	-	3	-	10
Rye Bay & Pett Level	-	31	18	-	-
Other sites	14	9	4	-	2

*assumes that 30 at Horsham are different from 30 at St. Leonards Forest c.4 km away the same day

Other sites in the table above include, with their maximum counts in parentheses, Church Norton (7), Goodwood (1), Bognor (6), Crawley (5), Shoreham-by-Sea (2), Seaford (3) and Boreham Street (1).

Due to the inherent mobility of this species and the variations in numbers at each site it is considered impractical to estimate the maximum number in the county during the irruption. [SJL, JAH]

Nuthatch

Sitta europaea

Common resident.

Nuthatches were distributed widely across the county with an increase in coastal observations. They were present in 313 of the tetrads, just over 30%. More than one third of all records came from Ashdown Forest and almost 25% from Pulborough Brooks; two other sites combined accounted for just over 20% of the records; statistics attributable to recording methods and effort rather than reflecting the concentrations of birds.

During the early SWBS a total of 119 birds was recorded in 53 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of six at any one location. Groups of five or more were recorded quite frequently with six counts of five, seven of six and three of both seven and eight birds. Maximum counts for this period included 11 at Peasmarch on 25 Feb, ten at Pulborough Brooks on both 30 Jan and 13 Feb, and nine at Stansted Forest on 3 Mar.

Breeding was confirmed in 25 tetrads and was probable in a further 17. It is interesting to note that the Nuthatch population has been very stable for the last decade (see BBS article on page 251). Nest building was observed at Bewl Water and Broadbridge Heath from 14 Mar, whilst only days later, on 17 Mar, an occupied nest was found at East Chiltington. By 12 May nests with young were at Ladywell (Coombes) and Haywards Heath and fledging was recorded from Frant on 27 May.

During the autumn some interesting records related to observations at or near the coast where the species is either considered scarce or has not been recorded before. These included Climping on 2 Sep, Whitehawk (Brighton) on the 13th, Pagham Hbr on 2 Oct and Littlehampton GC on the 20th. The highest counts through this autumn period were ten at Bolney on 30 Sep, and eight each at Battle on the 8th, Warringlid on the 20th and Broadbridge Heath on the 28th.

During the second winter period, maximum counts of 11 came from Pulborough Brooks on both 18 Nov and 17 Dec and another high count was of ten at Stansted Forest on 5 Nov. Nine further counts were received of between five and nine birds in this time. During the late SWBS a total of 92 Nuthatches were recorded from 38 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of six. At Cissbury North Scarp a female on 29 Sep was the first to be ringed at the site in 25 years. [DB]

Treecreeper

Certhia familiaris

Common resident.

Treecreepers were recorded in just over 24% (233) of the 964 tetrads wholly in Sussex, with a distribution centred very much in the middle of the county, but scattered from west to east fairly evenly. Most records from the first winter period were of single birds with fewer records of two; there were also nine records of three and five of four birds. Maximum counts during this time came from Pett Level, with six on 13 Mar and five on the 1st and five at Pulborough Brooks on 30 Jan. Slightly more unusual sightings came from Harry's Bush (Seaford Head) on 23 Mar, considered a possible migrant; and from Brighton Wild Park where the species is unusual but two were observed together on 31 Mar. During the early SWBS, a total of 29 birds was recorded from 22 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed, representing presence in almost 17% of squares.

Through spring and summer most records were of between one to three birds, but at Pulborough Brooks there were seven on 2 Apr and four on 7 May; five were noted from Ashburnham Place (Battle) on 27 May.

Breeding was confirmed from just nine tetrads with probable breeding from a further 14. Although singing birds were heard from as early as 10 Mar, at Burwash, it was not until 30 Apr that breeding was confirmed when an adult carrying food or a faecal sac was noted at Shermanbury. The first successful fledging was recorded from Broadbridge Heath on 13 May and continued throughout June.

Post-breeding dispersal probably accounted for the lower number of single-bird observations through August, including seven from Pett Level on 1 Aug; interestingly eight fledged young had been observed from the same location on 27 Jun. During the second winter period, subsequent observations recorded counts of between one and three birds but the majority related to single birds. During the late SWBS, a total of only 25 was recorded from 21 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed, representing a presence in 18% of the squares surveyed. [DB]

Wren

Troglodytes troglodytes

Abundant resident.

Wrens were reported from 475 tetrads in 2012, a reduction on 2011. During the early SWBS, 305 birds were found in 94 of the 131 squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 12 at Nutley on 19 Feb.

Monthly records for selected sites where recording was regular through the year were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sefter Fm (Rose Green)*	6	7	12	12	13	8	7	4	1	nc	nc	nc
Broadbridge Heath*	3	4	22	23	20	17	10	4	4	1	4	1
Warnham LNR	8	7	11	15	8	5	4	2	5	10	5	4
Hove*	8	6	33	28	13	22	8	11	10	nc	7	4
Poynings*	10	8	18	16	10	21	10	3	4	11	5	2
Lewes Race Course*	3	3	6	11	16	11	12	11	10	10	7	8
Lewes Railwayland	4	4	19	15	15	7	9	4	1	8	2	5
Pett Level	12	33	39	37	44	35	36	33	19	31	26	12

*also appeared in SxBR for 2010 and 2011

At Pett Level, Wrens were noted as 'more conspicuous' from the first week in February and rose to a spring peak earlier than at the other regularly monitored sites; were these immigrants from Europe at this coastal site? A bird at Clive Vale in urban Hastings on 7 Feb was the 'first one seen for years'.

Breeding was confirmed in 23 tetrads and was probable in a further 21. Two surveyed areas reported a substantial decline from 2011 in breeding pairs or territories: at Pagham Hbr from 87 to 67 and on the Norfolk Estate from 31 to 18. By contrast, the Rye Hbr total rose from 34 to 48. On 25 Mar a bird was watched entering a nest in a crevice in the trunk of a mature lime at West Dean and one was taking material into a nest box in Henfield on 11 Apr. Young were being tended at Rustington on 19 Apr and the first report of fledglings was from Barcombe on 22 May. At Henfield, a nest was found in the roof of a workshop on 12 Jul and four fledglings were in a garden there on the 25th.

In September the highest, and only double figure, count was 19 at Pett Level on 18 Sep; in October, however, numbers there reached 31 on the 30th and 30 were noted at Seaford Head on the 23rd. During the second winter period the highest counts came in mid-November: 20 were at The Old Airstrip (Ashdown Forest) on the 10th, 26 at Pett Level on the 12th and 27 at Cadborough (Rye) on the 16th. During the late SWBS, a total of 284 birds was noted in 78 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 18, again at Nutley, on 23 Nov. [CB]

Common Starling

Sturnus vulgaris

Common but declining resident, and very common to abundant winter visitor. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

The species was reported from 401 tetrads. Most reports were from the larger conurbations and the coast. In the first winter period numbers at the Brighton roosts were high (as at the end of the previous year) with 13,500 at the Palace Pier on 20 Jan and a further 2000 at West Pier. Elsewhere, four-figure flocks were only recorded just north of Lancing (1000 at Ladywell on 7 Jan, c.3000 on stubble and cattle pasture at Steep Down on 11 Jan, 2000 there on 26 Feb with 1000 on ploughed fields at Lancing Clump the same day), and at Iden (Rye) where 1000 were counted on 18 Jan. Three-figure flocks were reported from c.30 other sites. During the cold period in early February Starlings were noted at several sites to be associating with gulls and thrushes.

Starlings were found in 88 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed in the SWBS of the first winter period with a highest count of 238 at Billingshurst on 6 Jan.

Breeding was confirmed in 30 tetrads and was probable in a further eight; the first evidence being a bird carrying nest material on 24 Feb at Barcombe. The first fledged juveniles were found on 16 Apr at Waterhall (Brighton). Post-breeding flocks were in evidence from 15 May when there were flocks of 100 and two of 50 in the Winchelsea area. On 25 Jul 1000 were at Rye Hbr and 4000 roosted in a reedbed at Thorney Deeps two days later. Throughout July and early August a leucistic bird was present in the flock at Pagham Hbr.

On 7 Oct a flock of 40 was seen to fly in off the sea at Worthing and during the following five weeks there were many reports of flocks heading initially mainly between north and east until 25 October, after which almost all movements were westerly. The largest of these was over 2700 W at Flimwell on 6 Nov.

Four-figure flocks were seen at 12 sites in the last four months of the year. At Brighton, 11,500 roosted at the Palace Pier on 4 Nov, 6000 were there on 3 Dec and 10,500 were there on 23 Dec, while 2000 roosted at Black Rock on 2 Dec. A flock above Bexhill town centre on 28 Dec was estimated to contain 2000 birds. In the SWBS counts of the second winter period 1788 Starlings were counted in 58 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum of 375 at Laughton Place on 8 Dec. [ACG]

Rose-coloured Starling

Pastor roseus

Rare vagrant.

Three birds were recorded this year, all single spring adult males: the first was present and photographed in gardens at Selsey from 6 to 13 May (AH,BJ, OM *et al.*); the second was at Arlington Res on 27 May (JW); another male at Langney Point (Eastbourne) from 2 to 7 Jun (JRH, RJK, DW) was photographed in the finder's garden. In recent years almost all records of Rose-coloured Starlings have been of juveniles or females so three adult males in one year is unusual. The county total moves on to 38, 13 of them for this century. [ACG]

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 36 tetrads, mostly at or near coastal sites or downland prominences. Another fine spring total was followed by a poor autumn passage. The estimated minimum monthly totals, after allowing for possible duplication, were as follows:

Mar	Apr	May		Sep	Oct	Nov
1	13	7	-	3	66	1

The first bird of the year was a male recorded from Thorney Deeps on 25 Mar, three days earlier than the 10-year average date. This was followed by two at Seaford and also at Cliffe Hill (Lewes) on 3 Apr, and single birds at Hastings, Rye Hbr, Shoreham and Hoe Fm (Flansham) in the same week. Three were reported from Cissbury Ring between 12 and 14 Apr and another two

appeared briefly at Washington on the 30th. Single birds were reported from Beachy Head on 2 May and from Seaford on the 4th, two more at Birling Gap on the 5th and one at Upper Beeding the same day. A final spring bird was noted at Pevensey Levels on 7 May, one day later than the 10-year average date, making a spring total of 21, similar to last year's and a little above the 10-year average of 17.



Ring Ouzel, Cissbury Ring, April 2012 (Dave Sadler)

The first returning birds, an adult male and a first-year male, were seen at Beachy Head on 27 Sep, much later than the 10-year average date of 14 Sep, and a single at Edburton on the 29th was the only other September record. On 7 Oct a male was seen at Climping and another at Church Norton; the rush started on 10 Oct with three at Hastings, seven at Beachy Head, five on Cissbury Ring and four at Seaford Head. Later, another six were at Hastings, nine passed through the Seven Sisters and four through Climping. Twelve birds were recorded at Pett Level of which two were ringed there. Just one bird remained into November, calling at the Railway Reserve (Lewes) on the 14th and bringing the autumn total to 70 birds, 57% of the 10-year average and a long way from the 406 seen in 2005. [JHW]

Blackbird

Turdus merula

Abundant breeding resident; very common or abundant winter visitor; status uncertain as passage migrant.

Blackbirds were recorded from 526 tetrads. Despite a drop in records of 17%, presumably owing to the end of the atlas survey, the total bird count was unchanged from 2011 albeit with a different monthly distribution.

During the early SWBS 1287 Blackbirds were seen in 57 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum count of 43 at Washington. In the first winter period 25 or more birds were reported from 12 sites with peaks of 100 at Pett Level and 43 at Washington in January and 155 on the Norfolk Estate in February. During spring 14 sites held 25 or more birds with a peak of 43 at Pett Level in March and 63 in April.

In West Tarring (Worthing) a female was building a nest on 1 Apr, taking eleven days, by which time chicks were being fed in Partridge Green and Henfield. An early third brood was noted at Angmering on 23 Jun and another from Elmer (Middleton) on 30 Jul. There were few explicit reports of juveniles with most of them coming from the Steyning RG which trapped 29 at Cissbury Ring and 49 at The Mumbles (Steyning). Blackbirds probably benefited from wetter weather; on the Norfolk Estate there were 148 pairs, recovering from the drop to 108 last year. At Pagham Hbr, 43 pairs were recorded, at Rye Hbr 26 pairs and at Pulborough Brooks 8 pairs but outcomes were not declared.

In the autumn and second winter periods there were 60 counts of over 20 birds compared to 29 in 2011, the highest counts being 165 passing through Hastings in October, 120 at Seaford Head on 23 Oct, 75 at Climping the next day and more than 150 through Pett Level in mid-November. These peaks were much higher than in 2011 and the count in October was almost double the previous best for the month. During the late SWBS a total of 1218 was recorded from 107 1-km squares with a maximum count of 46 at Peacehaven on 7 Nov. [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 229 tetrads, 19 fewer than the previous year. A fine first-period total was followed by the lowest second winter total since 2001. During the early SWBS 1317 Fieldfares were counted in 57 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum of 110 at Warnham. The approximate monthly totals in the east and west sides of the county were as given in the table below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April		Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	4640	5476	1437	117		-	559	2222	1340
West of TQ30	1987	2363	817	88		-	221	535	481
East of TQ30	2653	3113	620	29		-	338	1687	859

The plethora of second-winter birds from 2011 continued into 2012 with a flock of at least 400 at Tinker's Marsh (Bewl Water) on 16 Jan and 300 at both Broadbridge Heath and Pett Level at the end of the month. There were 300 at Ticehurst on 6 Feb, 1000 at Iden (Rye) on the 18th and another 450 at Pett Level on the 23rd with 300 at Byworth (Petworth) on 3 Mar. Over 20 other flocks of 100 birds or more were noted during the first winter period which ended on 13 Apr, apart from a lone bird at Broadbridge Heath on 26 April, the 10-year average date, bringing the total to 11,670 birds, 14% above average.

The first returning bird appeared at Warnham LNR on 3 Oct, nearly a week later than the 10-year average of 27 Sep, and was followed by two at Pett Level on the 12th but numbers were low until 20 were recorded on Ashdown Forest and at Barcombe on the 20th. No more than 60 at a time were seen until flocks of 150 were seen at both Rodmell and on the Rother Levels on 8 Nov

followed by 150 at Pett Level on the 18th and 200 in the Brede Valley on the 19th and another 200 at Barcombe Cross on the 28th. Numbers in December were disappointing, peaking at 180 on the 12th at Pett Level with just three other records in three figures. The total second period count of 4121 is just 54% of the 10-year average, making a year total of 15,791 birds, 89% of the 10-year average.

During the late SWBS a total of 295 was recorded from 30 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum count of 75. Forty five birds were ringed during the year at Pett Level but none were retrapped. [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 436 tetrads, 42% of the county total, distributed evenly across the county. Records received fell by 25% though the numbers seen improved considerably. During the early SWBS 260 were seen in 82 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum of 12 in Warnham.

Unlike 2011, many sightings exceeded ten birds early in the year, including 23 around Pett Level and 24 around Brighton in January, shadowed by 96 on the extensive Norfolk Estate, 36 at Beeding Brooks, 23 at Battle, 22 at West Marsden in a game crop with kale, and thirties at Pett Level in February. Smaller numbers were reported thereafter other than 25 at Warnham LNR in mid-April.

The earliest confirmation of breeding came from Brighton Wild Park on 26 Mar where food was being carried, and the first fledgling was reported from Pett Level on 4 May. During the breeding season, 41 pairs were recorded on the Norfolk Estate, a recovery from 32 in 2011, 25 pairs were noted at Pagham Hbr and environs, ten pairs at Pulborough Brooks and there were seven territories at Rye Hbr.

Signs of migration appeared on 11 Oct with 14 at Pett Level and 30 at Lewes the next day. The Hastings Migration Watch team recorded seven in September, 198 in October, with a peak of 53 on the 24th, and another 40 in November. Ringing reports confirmed the peak in October though their highest individual days were in adjacent months. The Rye Bay RG ringed 264 birds, the Beachy Head RG ringed 20, the Steyning RG at Cissbury ringed 32 new birds and retrapped three from previous years, and at Steyning they ringed 18 new birds and retrapped two from previous years. At Ladywell (nr Coombes) just 15 different birds were trapped, three of which were ringed in earlier years.

During the late SWBS a total of 98 was recorded from 48 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum count of six. [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 268 tetrads, spread fairly uniformly across the county. In both winter periods counts were average. The approximate monthly totals in the west and east sides of the county were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
County total	1872	3530	1132	9		3	2949	1120	1149
West of TQ30	886	2183	486	9		-	957	316	549
East of TQ30	986	1347	646	-		3	1992	804	600

Counts in January were consistent with the previous December's with 100 birds at Beeding Brooks on the 12th, 234 at Ashdown Forest on the 22nd and 100 at Hellingly the next day. These preceded seven high counts in February which reached 150 at Troutbeck (Eridge) in the east on the 8th and 336 at Graffham and 142 at East Ashling on the 17th in the west. In early March 100 birds appeared at both Stansted Park and Isfield and 130 were counted at Pett Level on the 18th. During the early SWBS a total of 1230 was recorded from 55 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 336 at Graffham on 17 Feb. The final spring record was of eight at Northlands (Warnham) on 7 Apr, 19 days earlier than the 10-year average date of 26 Apr.

The only September bird was at Pett Level on the 28th, this being seven days earlier than the 10 year average date of 21 Sep. At the same site, 159 birds were recorded on 11 Oct and two weeks later 1000 were recorded at five sites, including 1000 passing through Beachy Head. Thereafter, only small numbers were seen apart from 200 at Rodmell on 8 Nov, 100 or so at Pett Level a week later and 120 at St Leonard's Forest on 17 Dec. The period total of 5687 birds was below the 10-year average (but would have been 50% above it without the bumper years of 2004 and 2005). During the late SWBS a total of 446 was recorded from 29 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 120 at St Leonards Forest on 17 Dec. A total of 50 birds was trapped and ringed, half of them at Pett Level on 15 and 16 Nov. [JHW]

Mistle Thrush

Turdus viscivorus

Common resident and partial migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Mistle Thrushes were recorded from 243 tetrads spread across the county, cf. 396 in 2011. For the fifth year running the number of records fell and the total seen in the second quarter was 40% below the average. The approximate monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	112	124	91	96	88	91	55	88	100	190	93	88

The first three months were disappointing with maxima of three pairs on Newtimber Hill (Poynings) on 21 Jan and also on 1 Mar with another six birds at East Rother on 11 Mar. During the early SWBS 38 were seen in 20 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum of four in Pallingham (Pulborough).

There were only a dozen explicit claims for breeding and the numbers involved were vague apart from four nests at Pett Level. However, an increase in birds flocking, noted in July and August, suggests reasonable breeding success as there were five reports of ten or more birds in that period, the highest being 20 at Salehurst on 31 Aug.

Migration was apparent from September with small flocks moving eastwards, including 20 at Battle on 13 Oct and 33 at Pett Level on the 24th, and also southwards with 27 at Selsey on 23 Oct. The Hastings Migration Watch recorded just 11 birds from six sightings out of 75 days watching

from August to November. Counts were meagre in the second winter period. During the SWBS a total of 31 was recorded from 19 squares of the 107 surveyed, with a maximum count of three. Just one bird was trapped, at Pett Level on 28 Aug. [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.

Spotted Flycatchers were recorded from 118 tetrads. The first spring arrival was seen on 30 Apr at Pagham Hbr, eight days later than the previous year and two days later than the 10-year average. Four birds were then seen on 1 May at Church Norton, another one at the North Wall (Pagham Hbr) on the 2nd and another on the 3rd at Selsey Bill. During the rest of May there was a steady influx with c.90 recorded across the county. The highest day counts were seven each at Cuckmere Haven on the 4th and Church Norton on the 10th and four at Broadwater Warren on the 13th.

Breeding was confirmed in only 10 tetrads and was probable in a further four compared with last year's 41 and 19 respectively. A pair was seen on 25 May at Lavender Platt (Ashdown Forest) possibly prospecting a nest site but the first indication of successful breeding was a nest with eggs at Byworth on 2 Jun and the first young were noted at Troutbeck (Eridge) on the 21st. Adults carrying food were seen at Ashdown Res on the 24th and at Bolney MP on the 26th. At Pulborough Brooks, two pairs were recorded but probably one pair bred successfully. Observers at Brighton (Whitehawk) recorded a possible pair on the 26th, the first recorded sighting there. On 7 Jul two probable pairs were recorded as breeding successfully at Pevensy Levels. Young were being fed on the 12th at The Burgh (Burpham) and also at Plaistow on the 22nd. Adults carrying food were seen at Lavender Platt on 25 Jul and Chelwood Gate (Ashdown Forest) on 11 Aug and adults with two fledglings were recorded at the dam end of Weir Wood Res on 8 Aug.

During the autumn migration, small numbers were recorded from coastal sites from late August onwards. During an extended migration watch at Hastings from 7 Aug to 18 Nov only 18 birds were recorded on seven days between 2 and 17 Sep, with a peak count of eight on 3 Sep, compared with 42 in a 17-day period last year. The highest day counts were 15 at Cissbury Ring on 24 Aug, 20 there on 4 Sep and 16 on the 9th. Counts of six were recorded at Devils Dyke and Church Norton on the 6th but numbers elsewhere were more usually of ones and twos. The last of the year was noted at Pett Level on 14 Oct.

Two ringing groups recorded very few birds: Beachy Head RG had only one in the autumn at Whitbread Hollow and the Steyning RG at The Mumbles trapped only one in 38 sessions. Fourteen were trapped at Pett Level. [PC]

Robin

Erithacus rubecula

Abundant resident; probably common passage migrant, mainly in autumn; status uncertain as winter visitor.

Robins were recorded in 503 tetrads, a marked reduction on the previous two years. Monthly records for selected sites where recording was regular through the year were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Broadbridge Heath*	16	17	15	17	8	9	7	2	10	18	4	14
Warnham LNR*	14	19	20	19	16	14	12	8	12	8	8	10
Lewes Race Course*	14	6	9	10	5	2	1	8	15	10	10	8
Lewes Railwayland	10	7	7	12	8	nc	3	5	17	30	10	6
Pett Level	41	49	43	32	38	29	23	46	62	92	65	32

*also appeared in SxBR for 2010 and 2011

During the early SWBS, 1120 birds were recorded in 124 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed. In 53 of the counts ten or more birds were noted; the maximum count was 31 at Warnham on 19 Feb. There were some 40 counts greater than 20; the highest counts were 67 at Sayers Common on 15 Mar, 50 at Pickham Fm (Pett) on the 1st and 51 at Hove on 6 Jan.

Breeding was confirmed in 41 tetrads and was probable in a further 17. There were 15 pairs on the Norfolk Estate and 32 pairs or territories at Pagham Hbr. Copulation was seen at Warnham LNR on 3 Jan. A pair displaying at Littleworth (Partridge Green) on 7 Feb had a nest on the 21st. Nest building was reported from Bognor Regis on 1 Mar and a nest with eggs was found on ladders in a garage at Blackstone (Henfield) on the 19th. One pair nested successfully in a potted conifer in the plant sales area at Wakehurst Place. Young were being fed at West Tarring (Worthing) on 2 Apr and fledged young were recorded at Bognor on the 24th.

Desultory attempts at song were heard at Three Corner Copse (Hove) on 24 Jul but proper autumn song was first heard at Horsham on 29 Aug and at Findon on 16 Sep.

One observer postulated that some at least of a total of 30 Robins (together with some Blackbirds) at Lewes Railway Land on 1 Oct included some migrants. Although 20 were recorded at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on 14 and 23 Oct it was adjudged a very poor autumn there. Notable counts in October included 150 at Seaford Head and 76 at Ecclesbourne Glen (Hastings) on the 23rd, the latter being the peak count during the Hastings migration watch which recorded a total of 494 on 33 different days. Observers at Climping commented that there was 'an obvious fall of migrants' there on 24 Oct but, unfortunately, no estimate of numbers was provided. On the same day 92 were at Pett Level. In the last months of the year, there were several records of birds singing at night despite cold and wet weather.

During the late SWBS, a total of 710 birds was recorded in 99 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 27 at both Pallingham (Pulborough) and Hartfield. Ten or more birds were found on 21 of the counts. [CB]

Common Nightingale

Luscinia megarhynchos

Fairly common summer visitor and infrequently seen passage migrant. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

This species was recorded from 145 tetrads, more frequently in the west than east at a ratio of 3:2. The first to be seen was at Darwell Res on 6 Apr, four days later than the 10-year average date, followed by one at Woods Mill the next day. There were then records every day from 11 Apr to 6 Jun. On 4 May a bird seen coming in from the sea at Selsey Bill, and stopped off briefly in nearby gardens. An intensive survey of Nightingale breeding was carried out in 2012; because it was felt that the poor weather might have affected the singing behaviour of male nightingales, the survey was extended into 2013. No interim results from 2012 are included here.

There were some high counts recorded during April and May. There were ten at Shortland Copse (Plaistow) on 24 Apr and 18 there on 19 May, 11 on 27 Apr were singing at Edburton and in Abbots Wood (Hailsham), 13 were singing in and around an old orchard west of Bolney on 12 May, 12 were at Laughton also on the 12th and 16 were at Dial Post on the 19th. The 12 singing in Vert Wood (Laughton) were all quite close to a ditch and tall trees and seemed to favour bramble undergrowth. By the end of April, nine birds were singing in the Bolney area, eight were established at Pulborough Brooks, eight more were recorded at Goose Green (Thakeham) and Laughton and there were numerous multiple counts from other sites.

In May, there were some 15 records of five or more including, on the 27th, five singing in, appropriately, Nightingale Alley in Brede High Wood, a known long time stronghold for Nightingales; there were reports from nearby areas, e.g. Etchingham, Northiam, Staplecross and Bodiam. Some observers were pleased to report the return of birds to areas where they had been feared lost; three singing near Ingrams Green (Midhurst) were the first for eight years. However, some birds seem to move on after prospecting a site; one singing at Blackstone (Henfield) on 1 May was not recorded after that.

Breeding was confirmed at three sites: at Pulborough Brooks eight pairs bred; at Amberley Wild Brooks three pairs bred; at Shortland Copse (Plaistow) fledged young were recorded on 22 Jul. Probable breeding was recorded in c.23 1-km squares. No less than 200 singing males were recorded during the season. The last records at breeding sites were from Shortland Copse where there was a family on 22 Jul, and Woods Mill on 30 Jul.

Two young birds were ringed at The Mumbles (Steyning) on 28 Jul and 18 Aug and 13 were trapped at Pett Level between 5 Aug and 9 Sep. There was one at Seaford Head on 10 Aug and one at Cissbury Ring on the 18th. It was a very poor autumn at Beachy Head: what was believed to be the same single bird was seen on six occasions between 22 Jul and 2 Sep. The last record for the year was of one trapped at Pett Level on 6 Sep, nine days earlier than the 10-year average date. [CB]

Bluethroat

Luscinia svecica

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

A first year male at Pett Level on 12 Nov (IDH, PEJ) was trapped, ringed and photographed. This record increases the total for this century to 11. This record was only the second for November; 82% of all records have been in the autumn with 61% in September. [JAH]

Red-breasted Flycatcher

Ficedula parva

Rare vagrant.

The only record was of one at Climping on 6 Oct (JMM, RNP, ES *et al.*). Although it stayed only one day it was, nevertheless, welcomed as the first since 2003. It raised the total this century to six and the county total to 30. [JAH]



Red-breasted Flycatcher; Climping, October 2012 (Luke Dray)

Pied Flycatcher

Ficedula hypoleuca

Scarce passage migrant; more numerous in autumn than spring. Has bred. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The approximate minimum monthly totals were as follows:

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
6	5	-	1	23	15	49

Numbers were an improvement on the previous year's 32 with a minimum of 49 birds recorded. This is lower than the 10-year average of 53 but higher than the 5-year average of 35.

Spring migration numbers were higher than last year. The first arrival was on 18 Apr at Friston Forest. This was 11 days later than the previous year and 14 days later than the 10-year average date. The next arrivals were not until 26 Apr when a first summer male was seen at Church Norton and another was at Winchelsea. These were followed by one in a Littlehampton garden on the 29th and, on the 30th, single birds at Rustington and Pett Level.

In May a total of four were seen: at Halsey's Fm (Sidlesham), Telscombe Tye, Cuckmere Haven and Belle Tout Wood (Beachy Head). There were no reports in June. Only one bird was reported in July, probably an early autumn migrant, on the 25th at South Chase (Ashdown Forest).

Autumn migrant numbers were, as usual, higher than in spring, with the first being seen on 9 Aug at Devil's Dyke followed by another at Peacehaven on the 10th and a further 21 during the month. Three birds were trapped at Pett Level during the month, two were seen at an equestrian

site at Lavington Common on the 11th, a female or juvenile was observed for a couple of hours “dipping” on a lawn in West Worthing on the 18th and, apart from single birds at ten other sites, the highest number recorded anywhere was an exceptional nine at Beachy Head on the 19th.

Numbers in September were also higher than last year’s with a minimum of 15 birds recorded. Apart from twos at Church Norton and Seaford Head, both on the 3rd, all other records were of single birds, including a female on the 4th flycatching on a lawn in Angmering. The last birds of the year were recorded at Rye Hbr and Seaford on 27 Sep, the same date as last year and three days earlier than the 10-year average date. The ringing group at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) commented that their single record was for a very poor autumn while observers at Hodcombe (Beachy Head) reported that this was their worst year for 46 years. [PC]

Black Redstart

Phoenicurus ochruros

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

This species was recorded from 71 tetrads, mostly coastal. The estimated minimum monthly totals and 5-year monthly averages for 2008 to 2012 were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	16	5	22	7	2	-	1	2	2	45	18	14
5-year average	13	10	19	8	3	1	1	1	4	28	26	12

The first record of the year was of one at Widewater (Lancing) on 2 Jan with a further record of possibly the same bird on the 21st. One was seen at Selsey Bill on 6 Jan and possibly the same in the caravan park at Selsey on the 8th. Another was seen at Southwick on 6 Jan and a female was on the beach at Hove on the 10th. Single birds were seen at Climping Gap on the 6th and the 24th. Four were recorded during the WeBS at Glyne Gap (Bexhill) on 11 Jan and a male was seen actively feeding high up on the cathedral at Chichester on 19 Jan. Single birds were at Telscombe Cliffs on 6, 27 and 31 Jan and five dates in February and on 16 Mar. There were fewer observations in February compared to the 5-year average. One was at Steyning on the 5th and 12th, a female was at New Erringham Fm (Shoreham) on the 11th and one was at Southwick Canal on 21 Feb.

Numbers increased in March as birds migrated and birds were recorded on most days from the 10th, mostly as single individuals at many coastal sites. Birds were recorded at Beachy Head on 11 days between 14 and 31 Mar with two on each of the 15th, 16th and 19th. Two were also seen at Selsey Bill on the 15th and three were at Splash Point (Seaford) on the 18th and 19th. Following two at Hodcombe (Beachy Head) on 4 Apr, spring passage ended effectively on the 12th with the only spring inland record of one at Cissbury Ring; the only other sighting that month was of one at Hastings CP on the 21st. A straggler was noted at Selsey Bill on 6 and 7 May but a singing male at Hastings CP on the 27th might have been summering somewhere locally but was not seen later.

In August, a juvenile male at Southwick on the 9th was considered by the observer to be a local fledgling; this was the only breeding record for the year. Other summer and early autumn records were few with single birds at Bexhill on 22 Jul, Beachy Head on 15 Sep and Pagham Hbr on the 28th. Autumn migration proper commenced on 9 Oct from which date birds were recorded almost daily through to about 18 Nov and then less frequently to 25 Dec. The significant increase in numbers in October considerably exceeded the 5-year average. Although many records were

still of ones or twos, six were noted at Telscombe Cliffs and at Seaford on 22 Oct, and birds were recorded at Climping Gap on ten dates between the 10th and 30th, including three on the 23rd.

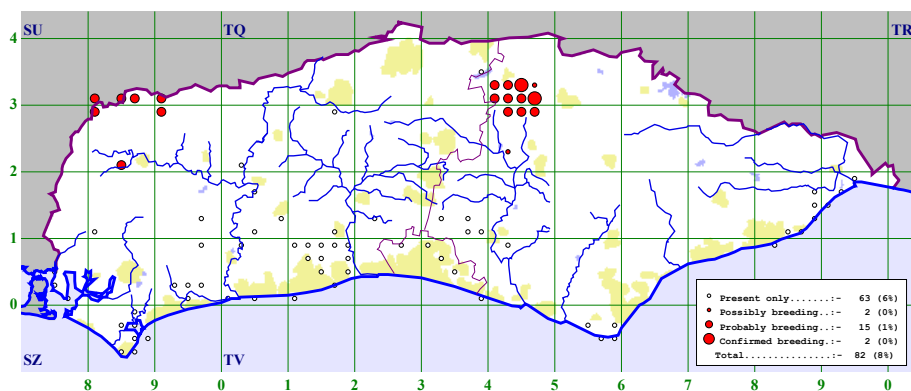
Inland records during October were one at Barnham on 22 Oct and two, a male and an immature, at High Cross Fm (Uckfield) from the 15th, with the male staying until the 17th and the immature until the 20th, watched from the editor's garden. In November, twos were noted at Selsey Bill on 1, 2, 5 and 17 Nov, inland at Coldwaltham on the 2nd and at Telscombe Cliffs on the 15th. In December the only multiple sighting was of two at Eastbourne on the 17th, single birds were noted at slightly inland sites of Stockbridge (Chichester) on the 6th and Barnham on the 18th, and sightings continued at Telscombe Cliffs with a single bird seen on five dates between 7 and 25 Dec, the final record of the year. [LEW]

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 in 82 tetrads. The first sighting of the year was from Selsey Bill on 30 Mar, just one day later than the 10-year average date. There were further coastal records from Pagham Hbr and Rustington on 31 Mar, and in early April again at Pagham Hbr and also Rye Hbr, both on the 7th. Inland, the first record was from Ashdown Forest where singing males were seen in early April from the 9th to the 12th and one was recorded at the Railwayland (Lewes) on 10 Apr. On 13 Apr males were recorded at Brighton Wild Park and Lidsey Lodge. The final spring record from the coast was a female at Pagham Hbr on 26 May. On 23 Apr eight birds were seen at Ashdown Forest and 17 birds were seen there on 13 May.



Breeding was confirmed in two tetrads and was probable or possible in a further 17. On Ashdown Forest, breeding was confirmed in at least three areas; a survey of the MOD land at Pippingford Park revealed 22 pairs, three pairs were recorded at the Old Lodge reserve on 7 Jun and, on 27 Jun, a male was seen with young at Townsend. During the annual Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey 13 pairs or territories were identified, an increase over the ten in 2011 and four in 2010 (see page 215). Six of the territories were at Linchmere and Stanley Commons.

During the migration period, the final sighting from Ashdown Forest was a female on 20 Sep. Elsewhere the final inland records were two birds at Long Furlong (Findon) on 22 Sep and single birds at Kingley Vale on 22 Sep and Pulborough Brooks on 28 Sep. The first coastal birds were

at Pett Level on 6 and 7 Aug. Four were seen at Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) on 5 Sep which had risen to seven on the 7th. At Cissbury Ring there were 14 on 23 Aug, 13 on the 24th, 12 on 2 Sep and an exceptional 35 on the 4th followed by 25 on the 6th. It appears there were at least 70 birds recorded in the county on the 4th, as well as the exceptional number at Cissbury Ring there were nine at Pagham Hbr, seven at Pett Level and five at both Chantry Hill and Pulborough Brooks.

Towards the end of October migrating birds were seen at Hastings on the 22nd, Selsey Bill on the 23rd and 24th, Brooklands (Worthing) on the 23rd, and a female at Chichester Hbr on 25 Oct. There was one very late record of a bird in a garden at Lancing on 26 Dec; the latest date on record for this species was 11 Dec 2000. [SPS]

Whinchat

Saxicola rubetra

Fairly common passage migrant. Rare summer visitor; last bred in 1999. Amber listed species of medium conversation concern.

Whinchats were recorded in 69 tetrads, slightly down on 2011 with a bias towards the coast. The minimum monthly numbers (excluding obvious duplicates) compared with the 5-year average 2008-2012 and the numbers of days they were recorded were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
No. of birds	2	4	43	1	1	100	167	25
5-year average	-	6	16	-	5	138	284	21
No. of days	2	3	10	1	1	18	23	12

Numbers in May were exceptional; it was the highest count for the past eight years and more than twice the next highest, 21 in 2005. Numbers in the autumn, however, were unexceptional.

The first record was of a single bird at Climping on 12 Mar, seven days earlier than last year and a remarkable 27 days earlier than the 10-year average date of 8 Apr. Most sightings during spring were of ones or twos, the exceptions being five at Cuckmere Haven, eight at Splash Point (Seaford) on 4 May, the highest count for the period, and five more at Littlehampton GC on the 7th. The last spring record was one at Beeding Brooks on 13 May.

The earliest returning bird was one at Edburton on 22 Jul, 11 days later than in 2011, but the next was not seen until 7 Aug at Pagham Hbr. The highest daily totals for the autumn period were ten at Long Down (Beachy Head) on 1 Sep, nine at Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) on the 5th, seven at Thorney Island on the 20th and seven at Lancing on the 3rd. These totals were lower than the previous year. During August, 24 individuals were trapped at Pett Level and in September, a further 18. The last record of the year was of a single bird at Wartling on 27 Oct, two days earlier than the 10-year average date. [PD]

Siberian Stonechat

Saxicola maurus

Very rare vagrant.

One present at Birling Gap, Beachy Head from 20 to 23 Oct (RJF, MRK *et al.*) was the fifth record for the county and the first since Siberian Stonechat was recognised as a separate species (see *Sussex Bird Report* 64:253). All five records have been in October. The record has been accepted by the BBRC. [DHH]



Siberian Stonechat, Birling Gap, October 2012 (Jake Everitt)

Eurasian Stonechat

Saxicola torquatus

Fairly common resident and partial migrant.

Stonechats were recorded from 115 of a possible 1039 tetrads wholly or partly in Sussex, with two thirds (61%) of these records coming from the Ashdown Forest area, the stronghold of this species. During the first winter period, in five of the 131 1-km squares surveyed for the SWBS ten Stonechats were recorded, with a maximum count of four. The highest count during the first winter period were six at Marl pits (Ashdown Forest) on 18 Mar, six at Camp Hill (Ashdown Forest) on Mar 24 and five at The Burgh (Burpham) on 2 Jan. At four other locations four birds were recorded: Lewes Race Course on 4 Jan, Seaford on the 15th, Pagham Hbr on 6 Mar and Waltham Brooks on the 25th.

There were virtually no records of spring movements; almost all the records received during this time related to breeding locations. Breeding was confirmed from 21 tetrads and was probable in a further 16 tetrads. Nest building was first observed on 15 Mar at Newhaven. Adults carrying food or faecal sacs were first noted on 21 Apr on Ashdown Forest. Fledged birds were first noted on 30 Apr on Ashdown Forest and continued to be recorded until the last of the year on 13 Sep. Breeding records came principally from the Ashdown Forest and the West Sussex heathlands. On Ashdown Forest, breeding was confirmed from 16 1-km squares and was probable in a further 11 but the number of pairs or territories is unknown. For details of the 23 pairs or territories identified during the Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey see page 215. Elsewhere breeding was confirmed at Waltham Brooks (two pairs), Amberley Wild Brooks, Rodmell, Newhaven Tide Mills (three pairs), South Heighton, East Dean (E) and Beachy Head; two pairs on the Norfolk Estate were probable breeders.

In the autumn the first migrant noted at Hastings was on 19 Sep and eight were counted on Beachy Head on the 30th. There was a notable movement on one particular day in October, the 7th, when over 40 birds were recorded. These included ten each at Thorney Island and Climping Gap/Littlehampton West Beach (assumed to be the same), eight at Pett Level, a further seven at Wick Bottom (Woodingdean) and five at Newhaven Tide Mills. Another six sites held between one and three birds all on this same day. During the SWBS in the second winter period a total of nine birds were recorded in five of the 107 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of four. The two highest counts during this period came from Lavington Common, where 12 were present on 22 Nov, and eight were recorded at Thorney Island on 3 Nov; the next largest count was of five on 29 Nov at Twineham Place. [DB]

Northern Wheatear

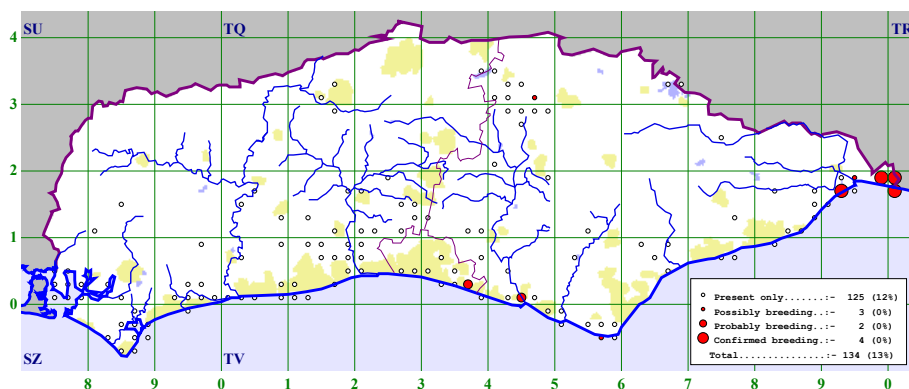
Oenanthe oenanthe

Very scarce breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant; very rare in mid-winter. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Northern Wheatears were recorded from 134 tetrads (c.13% of the county total), mostly coastal or near coastal, with an additional grouping of records on the Ashdown Forest. The minimum monthly totals, which may include some duplication, were as follows:

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
No. of birds	166	449	578	23	17	318	545	142	1
No. of days	14	23	21	9	8	25	29	24	1

Spring arrival commenced on 14 Mar with a lone bird at The Midrips. On the following day there were three records of single birds. Two of these were at coastal sites, Climping Gap and Newhaven and inland at Kithurst Hill (Storrington). On 16 Mar nine arrived at Newhaven, and 11 at Beachy Head on the 17th proved to be the highest tally for the month, with most of the subsequent records comprising one to four. On 3 Apr there was a major influx with 25 at Beachy Head, 22 at Seaford Head, 21 at Goring Gap and a count of 40 at Climping Gap. This area continued to be periodically favoured by larger groups of Northern Wheatears during April, with a record of 17 at Climping Gap on the 13th. Twelve at Ferring Rife on the 24th and a group of ten observed at Pevensey Levels on the 27th were the only other locations with double figure counts in April. Spring migration reached its peak during the first half of May with no fewer than 16 records of ten or more birds including seven counts of 20 or more. On the 4th there were 20 at Goring Gap and two counts of 25, at Lidsey Rife (Barnham) and Yapton. On the 5th 30 were seen at Birling Gap, 29 at Beachy Head on the 7th and 23 were at Horse Eye Level (Pevensey) on the 12th.



Breeding was confirmed from four tetrads and probable at a further two. On 13 May a male was seen displaying at a regular nesting site at Newhaven Tide Mills. The first sighting of fledged young was on 11 Jun at Rye Hbr near the river mouth. At Rye Hbr only four pairs nested, a marginal increase over 2011 (three pairs) and a continuation of a recent decline compared with 2009 and 2010 (12 and six pairs).

Autumn passage commenced in mid-July with a juvenile seen near Cissbury on the 17th. Further inland a sole bird was seen on Ashdown Forest on 19 Jul. Thereafter in July there were records of one or two birds at three coastal sites and one near-coastal location, with a further count of seven at The Midrips on the 22nd. Birds were recorded on 25 days of August. However, apart from notable counts of 40 at Beachy Head on the 11th and 65 at Climping Gap on the 31st, there was scant evidence of large movements, with all other records being in single figures. During September, birds were recorded on every day except the 23rd. There were about 20 double figure records, the highest of which were 35 at Beachy Head on the 9th, 22 at Seaford Head on the 3rd and 20 at Climping Gap on the 5th. Watching on 11 dates at this last site produced a total of 114 during the month.

Peak counts and dates during August and September were as follows:

Date	31 Aug	3 Sep	5 Sep	8 Sep	9 Sep	12 Sep	13 Sep
No. of birds	78	75	42	32	53	34	32

There were no double figure counts recorded during October, the majority being sightings of single birds. The highest counts were eight at Pett Level, six in the Beachy Head/Cuckmere area and five at Pagham Hbr, all on the 4th. There was only one record in November, a single bird seen at Rye Hbr on the 3rd.

There were records of three of the Greenland Wheatear subspecies *O.o. leucorhoa* on 20 Apr at Beachy Head, and an unspecified number at the same location on 7 May. There was only one autumn record of an individual at Pickers Hill (Balsdean) on 18 Sep. There have been 53 spring records for this subspecies since 1949 (29 this century) but only 22 autumn records (ten this century). [GNO]

Desert Wheatear

Oenanthe deserti

Very rare vagrant.

A confiding male on the beach at Splash Point (Worthing) from 24 to 26 October was the seventh record for the county but only the third this century (WJR *et al.*). The last record was of a female at Cooden Beach from 1 to 4 Nov 2006. The previous records have been in April (1), October (1) and November (4). The record has been accepted by the BBRC. [DHH]



Desert Wheatear, Worthing, October 2012 (Nick Bond)

Dunnock

Prunella modularis

Very common resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

Dunnocks were recorded in 416 tetrads, a substantial reduction from recent years. Monthly records for selected sites where recording was regular through the year were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sefter Farm (Rose Green)	7	6	6	6	6	2	3	1	2	nc	nc	nc
West Tarring (Worthing)	3	2	2	4	3	3	3	2	2	3	2	2
Warnham LNR	10	9	20	13	8	9	6	5	7	6	12	10
Round Hill (Hangleton)	8	8	10	4	nc	5	nc	3	5	21	12	4
Beacon Hill (Rottingdean)	5	nc	8	4	3	3	1	2	5	6	2	4
Lewes Race Course & Downs	5	14	7	7	4	3	1	1	1	1	3	4
Pett Level	15	39	29	24	18	16	10	10	13	21	16	12

Numbers elsewhere during the first winter were unremarkable: 59 birds were recorded on the Norfolk Estate in February; 31 were noted at Hove on 11 Mar; 28 at Patcham on the 13th; 19 at Roedean on 21 Feb; 18 at Brighton Wild Park on 12 Mar and 16 at Chichester GPs on 11 Mar. During the early SWBS a total of 357 was recorded from 96 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 17 at Peacehaven on 10 Jan. A bird was singing at Ferring Rife on 10 Jan and there were several reports of birds disregarding the harsh weather in February.

Breeding was confirmed in 15 tetrads and was probable in a further 19, a considerable reduction on the figures for 2011. Observers on the Norfolk Estate recorded 59 pairs, a good increase on the 38 of 2011; however, there were only 24 pairs at Pagham Hbr, where there were 37 in 2011. The 35 territories identified at Rye Hbr were consistent with numbers for the past few years. Although breeding pairs were present at Pulborough Brooks no count was undertaken. At West Tarring two young were being fed on a lawn on 19 Apr and others were mistakenly begging for food from a House Sparrow on 16 Jul; perhaps the same pair was feeding yet more young there on 24 Aug.

In the autumn 70 at Seaford Head on 7 Oct were thought to be largely migrants from the continent; 40 were noted there on the 23rd and ten on the 29th. Numbers recorded on an extended migration watch at Hastings only totalled 16 from six days in 75. Although there were counts in double figures from some ten sites during the final months of the year numbers generally remained low.

During the late SWBS a total of 174 was recorded from 64 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed, with the maximum of 13 at Peacehaven, again, on 7 Nov (as in 2011). [CB]

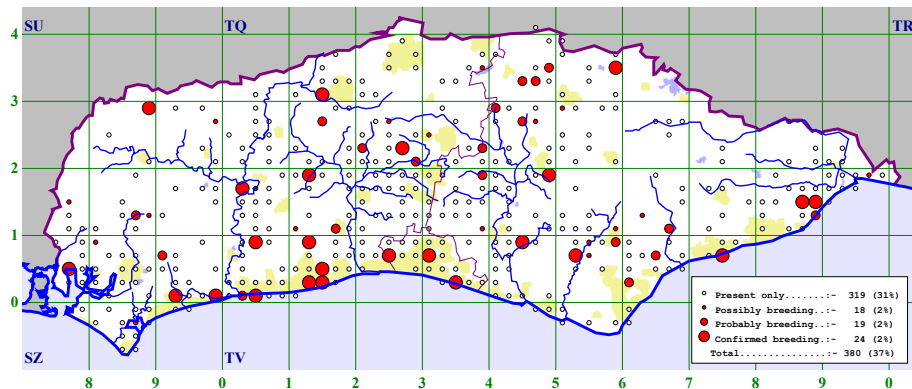
House Sparrow

Passer domesticus

Very common but possibly declining resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Reports of House Sparrows were received from 380 tetrads during the year. In the first winter SWBS a sum of maximum counts of 1192 was recorded in 82 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum of 50 at Rotherfield on 20 Feb.

Breeding was confirmed in 24 and probable in 19 tetrads. The first sign of breeding behaviour was at Manxey Levels (Pevensey) where four birds were inspecting nest boxes on 7 Feb and on 22 Feb nest material was being taken into nest boxes at Barcombe. The first hatched young noted were at Bexhill on 8 Apr. At least 20 pairs nested in Rye Hbr village. At Selsey House Sparrows displaced House Martins from their nest and at Worthing nestlings were calling from a swift box. An unusual sight was a flock of 35 at Uckfield on 13 May where all but two were male, prompting speculation that the females were sitting on eggs.



Post-breeding flocks were widespread with flocks of 100+ at Thorney Island on 11 Aug, Rye Hbr two days later, Newhaven on 16 Sep and West Worthing on 11 Nov. Several observers commented on increased numbers including one whose garden in Brighton has seen up to 100 visiting at any one time. In the second winter period SWBS a sum of maximum counts of 761 was recorded in 59 of 107 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum count of 60 at Westbourne.

A small flock at West Tarring (Worthing) contained a female with a white rump in February and a white-winged female in March, while at Byworth (Petworth) an almost completely white bird was found on 1 Nov. [ACG]

Tree Sparrow

Passer montanus

Much declined and now very scarce resident; scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

The species was recorded in 12 tetrads (15 in 2011), all in East Sussex. Tree Sparrows in Sussex seem now to be confined to very small numbers on Pevensey Levels, where the highest count was 13 on 2 Apr, and the low lying areas of the east of the county, where eight in the Brede Valley on 16 Jan was the highest count. Two were ringed at Pett Level on 6 Sep. It is pleasing to note that successful breeding was recorded on Pevensey Levels where adults were feeding audible young in a nest box on 25 May. In addition there was probable breeding recorded in two further tetrads. [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.

This species was recorded from 67 tetrads (cf. 85 in 2011), mostly at or near the coast. The first record was of 4 N flying over The Burgh (Burpham) on 11 Mar, 15 days earlier than the 10-year average date of 26 Mar. The next was on the more typical date of 1 Apr at Rye Hbr. Birds were recorded on 14 days in April involving 50 day counts with a maximum of six at Rye Hbr on the 11th and fours on four other dates, all again at Rye Hbr. In May, they were recorded on 12 days for a total day count of 68, including an exceptional 21 N over Selsey Bill on the 4th. Spring migration ended effectively on 12 May following which there were only four more records to 29 Jun. Monthly totals of spring migrants recorded at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

	April	May	Peak count
Selsey Bill	10	35	21 N on 4 May
Worthing	1	3	2 N on 1 May
Splash Point	-	1	
Birling Gap	1	2	2 N on 7 May

The only breeding record was of one pair that probably bred at Rye Hbr but it is likely that breeding evidence for this species is under-recorded. Apart from a single record at Rye Hbr of one on 7 Jul, which might have been one of the above birds, the first indications of return migration were two at Pett Level on the 22nd and two more at St. Leonards the following day followed by five adults feeding on the beach at Pett on the 28th. Numbers thereafter picked up noticeably during August; there were six counts of 50 or more with peak counts of 100 at Rye Hbr on the 20th, 80 at Climping Gap and 66 at Beachy Head on the 27th. During an extended migration watch at Hastings from 7 Aug to 18 Nov a total of 105 was recorded on 23 different days, with a peak count of 11 on 27 Aug.

In September numbers continued to increase; there were at least 12 day counts of 50 or more including 300 in a kale field at Cornish Fm (Beachy Head) on the 8th, 260 at Hodcombe (Beachy Head) on the 15th (the most there for many years) and 100 at both Church Norton and Rye Hbr on the 7th. At Climping Gap a large group remained for several days increasing from 50 on the 2nd to 70 on the 13th and 15th. A few autumn birds were seen as they crossed the Downs and one was on Press Ridge Warren (Ashdown Forest) on the 16th. Otherwise the vast majority were recorded at or near the coast. Numbers declined significantly in October as birds departed although 30 at Pulborough Brooks was outstanding for the month. Monthly totals of autumn migrants recorded at the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

	Aug	Sep	Peak count
Selsey Bill	8	40	80 on 27 Aug
Climping	146	390	70 on 3 Sep
Worthing	4	13	4 on 20 Sep

The last record was one which flew over central Brighton on 20 Oct, four days earlier than the 10-year average date of the 24th. [CB]

Two birds showing the characters of Channel Wagtail, a cross between Blue-headed Wagtail, (*M.f. flava*) and Yellow Wagtail (*M.f. flavissima*) were seen near Belle Tout (at Beachy Head) on 6 May (DC, JFC, BK). They were considered to be females or first year males and were consorting with a flock of some 40 'flava' wagtails. They were photographed. This is the first authenticated record of this hybrid in the county. [JAH]

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 in 144 tetrads, a reduction on the two previous years, divided almost equally between West and East Sussex. The estimated minimum monthly numbers recorded, assuming that taking the highest number recorded at each site was the minimum there, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	29	34	35	32	40	25	24	26	106	65	34	36
Highest no.	3	3	4	4	4	6	6	5	7	5	3	4
No. of sites	23	29	23	22	23	15	14	15	43	44	26	27

Numbers were generally low as many sites held only single individuals and the average per site was only 1.6 birds. The highest monthly counts were as shown above with, at Weir Wood Res, sixes in June and July and five in August. Presumably the seven at Hastings in September, five at Seaford Head in October and three at Pett Level in November were autumn migrants while the fours at Barcombe Res and Kings Barn (Steyning) in December were probably taking up residence for the winter.

Breeding was confirmed from only six tetrads and was probable in a further eight. Singing was first recorded on Ashdown Forest on 23 Apr when a male sang continually from an exposed horizontal tree branch. The first fledged young were seen at Salehurst on 2 May and others were noted at Slaugham on the 4th, at Arundel WWT on 2 Jun, Weir Wood Res on the 11th, Bewl Water on the 18th and St. Anne's Well (Hove) on the 20th.

Probably the first returning birds were juveniles noted at Thorney Deepes on 20 Jul and on the sea wall at Pett Level on the 25th. The Hastings Migration Watch tallied only 39 birds on 17 days out of 75, a marked reduction on 2011. There have been few records of urban over-wintering in recent years for reasons which are unclear. Is this a consequence of the pattern of observation, or does it reflect a real change? The late SWBS found four birds in just three of the 107 squares covered. These records were in line with those for 2011. [CB]

Pied Wagtail

Motacilla alba yarrellii

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Pied Wagtails were recorded from 333 tetrads, a reduction on the two previous years. In the first winter period, there were c.39 counts of 10 or more. The highest count was 200 in bushes at the Hickstead service station on the A23 on 28 Jan. The only substantial urban record was at East Grinstead Stn where 50 roosted on 9 Feb. As in 2011, Pied Wagtails were prominent at Broadbridge Heath: there were 70 there on 12 Jan reducing to 30 on 28 Feb.

Breeding was confirmed in nine tetrads and was probable in a further 11. The first young were seen at Troutbeck (Eridge) on 19 May, rather later than 1 May in 2011, and at Barcombe Res the next day. A pair at Holdean Fm (Henfield) was feeding young on 22 Jun and a pair at High Cross Fm (Uckfield) was feeding a second brood on 6 Jul.

In August, there were only seven double figure counts compared with 29 in 2011: 39 at Arlington Res on the 20th and 29 at Broadbridge Heath, again on the 29th and 47 on 4 Sep. In September the frequency of double figure counts increased and autumn passage was most notable at the end of the month. On the 24th 45 were recorded at Pulborough Brooks and on the 29th 130 W flew over Climping Gap and the next day 82 W flew past Selsey Bill. Inland, 28 were noted at Partridge Green. On 2 Oct at Rye Bay, 67 departed from an overnight roost but the dominant feature of the month was easterly movements involving not less than 625 birds on nine days with a peak count of 250 E at The Severals (Church Norton) on the 10th. Monthly totals recorded at the principal seawatching sites were 7 E at Selsey Bill, 340 E at Climping and 98 E at Worthing. A total of 525 were counted at Hastings from 29 days of observation during the migration watch from 7 Aug to 18 Nov, a rather lower count than in 2011.

During the late SWBS, 156 birds were tallied in 48 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 30 at Church Norton on 26 Dec. No substantial urban roosts were reported at the end of the year, despite the request in last year's report. Overall numbers were considerably lower than in recent years, with a maximum for the month of 55 at Newick on 24 Dec and only seven counts in double figures.

The first White Wagtail (*M.a. alba*) record was 1 N at Splash Point (Seaford) on 25 Mar followed by four at Sidlesham on the 27th and another at Splash Point on the 31st. Five further records involving six birds were received in April and early May, from North Stoke, Goring Gap, Littlehampton GC and Bewl Water. A female with three young was seen at Arlington Res on 17 May but the identity of the male was not known. In September one was reported from Sidlesham on 11 Sep and there were three records in October involving two at Church Norton on the 14th, one at Pulborough Brooks on the 22nd, and the last two at Hastings on the 23rd. [CB]

Tawny Pipit

Anthus campestris

Very scarce visitor; mostly in autumn.

The first record since 2008 was of one on Worthing Beach on 20 May (RAI, DM, DIS). It was watched amongst shingle vegetation for c.2 mins before flying off inland. This one brings the total since 2000 (inclusive) to 11. [JAH]

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 51 tetrads with 64% of records coming from Ashdown Forest, 30% from the Sussex Heaths and the balance mainly from coastal migration sites.

The earliest records were of single birds at Lavender Platt and Crow & Gate (both Ashdown Forest) on 29 Mar, one day earlier than the 10-year average date, and a further two at other sites on Ashdown Forest on the 30th. By the end of April a conservative additional 49 birds had been recorded at various sites on Ashdown Forest with a maximum of six at Lavender Platt. The only coastal migration record was of one at Hastings CP on 7 Apr. Further records were received for April from eight inland sites with highs of three at Poundgate (Ashdown Forest) on the 21st, Iping Common on the 22nd, Stedham Common on the 24th and Brede High Wood on the 27th.

During the breeding season, breeding was confirmed in two tetrads and was probable in a further 25. The highest concentration of territories was 16 found on MoD land at Pippingford Park (Ashdown Forest).

The first evidence of autumn migration was of birds recorded at Hastings on 7 Aug and Brighton Wild Park on 19 Aug. Migration watchers at Hastings recorded a total of 32 birds in the period 7 Aug to 18 Nov with a peak count of five on 23 Aug when ten were recorded at Cissbury Ring. Otherwise numbers elsewhere were usually of ones or twos with the only significant inland records being from Weir Wood Res with three birds on 23 Aug and four on 6 Sep.

The final record of the year was from Seaford Head on 10 Oct, 6 days earlier 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 in 198 tetrads across the county (19% of the county total), rather fewer than last year's 225. The approximate minimum number of bird days was as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	800	1051	1296	3849	69	83	99	1813	3034	3582	865	654
No. of days	25	24	29	24	18	20	20	17	25	28	25	25

Significant first winter period counts included 150 at Hastings CP on 5 Feb, 100 at both Crowhurst on 29 Jan and The Old Airstrip (Ashdown Forest) on 18 Feb and 80 at Lavington Common on 18 Mar. Twenty or more birds were recorded from a further 21 sites. During the first winter period 73 birds were recorded in 14 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed in the SWBS.

Spring migration figures from Selsey Bill included a total of 747 during March, with a maximum daily count of 308 N on 24 Mar while on 7 Apr 2126 N were recorded during a 6¼ hr seawatch. Also in April, 210 N were recorded from Worthing on the 8th in 3¼ hr.

During the spring and summer months the highest counts were six pairs at Pilsey Island on 4 May, 14 pairs at Medmerry during June and, at Burnt House Bostal (Keymer), ten birds were recorded on 17 Jun and 20 on 22 Jul. Breeding was confirmed in 11 tetrads and was probable in a further 12. The first record of a singing male was at the Horder Centre (Ashdown Forest) on 20 Feb. The earliest record of successful breeding was of adults carrying food or faecal sacs, seen at Beachy Head on 6 Jun followed closely by similar sightings at The Midrips on the 13th and Stonehill (Ashdown Forest) on the 19th. The first fledged young were recorded at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) on 18 Jul.

The first evidence of autumn migration was of 65 recorded at Cissbury Ring on 3 Aug but the first three-figure count was of 250 recorded at Climping on 19 Sep following which there were significant movements recorded at coastal sites. During an extended migration watch at Hastings a total of 1582 was recorded on 36 days between 7 Aug and 18 Nov. At Climping, 540 were recorded in September and 675 in October. During the same months the totals at Worthing were 189 and 335 whilst at Selsey Bill they were 126 and 85.

During the second winter period there were four counts of 45 or higher: 45 were recorded at the Old Airstrip (Ashdown Forest) on 1 Nov, 50 roosted at Lavington Common on 19 Nov, 50 were recorded at Chelwood Vachery (Ashdown Forest) on 2 Dec and, finally, 60 were seen flocking at Thorney Island on 12 Dec. During the SWBS conducted during November and December, 101 Meadow Pipits were recorded in 17 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed. [MDS]

Rock Pipit*Anthus petrosus*

Scarce resident and scarce winter visitor; very rare away from the coast.

Rock Pipits were recorded in 41 coastal tetrads from Thorney Island to Camber Sands, similar to last year. 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	41	40	13	6	7	9	-	14	10	60	35	22

During the first winter period, the highest counts were six on 6 Jan and ten on 23 Feb at Telscombe Cliffs, eight at Ovingdean on 25 Feb, five at Rottingdean on 24 Jan, four at Shoreham Hbr on 9 Jan and three at Fishbourne Channel on 22 Jan.

Breeding activity was recorded at only four sites. Display was noted at Seaford Head on 24 Mar, singing males were recorded at Saltdean on 10 Apr and Newhaven on 17 May and adults carrying food or fecal sacs were noted at Saltdean on 4 Jun and Cuckmere Haven on the 23rd.

In the autumn, migration watchers at Hastings from 7 Aug to 18 Nov recorded 11 birds on four different days with a maximum of eight on 23 Oct. An interestingly high count of 20 was recorded at Telscombe Cliffs on 23 Oct. During the second winter period the highest counts were from Chichester Hbr with eight in Fishbourne Channel on 15 Nov, five there on 30 Dec, four on 28 Nov and 1 Dec and four at East Head on 14 Nov while at Rye Hbr there were four on 13 Dec. [MDS]



Water Pipit, Portobello, February 2012 (Dave Sadler)

Water Pipit

Anthus spinoletta

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

There were accepted records for eight birds: one was watched in a ditch at Pett Level on 23 Jan (IDH), one at Portobello (Telscombe Cliffs) first seen on 11 Nov 2011 remained until 31 Mar by which time it was attaining its summer plumage (STM *et al.*), one was at Coldwaltham SF on 4 Feb (GB), three were seen at Crowhurst on 7 Apr and, finally, two were at Pett Level on 23 Oct (CHD). [MDS, JAH]

Chaffinch

Fringilla coelebs

Abundant resident, and probably very common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Chaffinch was recorded in 497 of the tetrads wholly or partly in Sussex, representing just under 50%. For such a common species this surely indicates that it is under-recorded as its habitat preferences are quite catholic, although the latest BBS trends do show a gradual decline in Sussex over the last 15 years (see BBS article page on 251).

During the early SWBS a total of 1220 birds was recorded from 117 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 150 at Udimore on 17 Jan. There were five counts of 100 or more in this first winter period. At Monkton the highest count was recorded, of 200 on 7 Jan (90 were also recorded here on the 28th), closely followed by 190 at the Norfolk Estate on 1 Feb. At Hayes Fm (Udimore) a count of 150 was made on 17 Jan, at Warnham LNR and Bewl Water counts of 100 were noted on 8 Feb and 26 Jan respectively.

Breeding was confirmed from just 16 tetrads and was probable in a further 30. Although singing birds were widely reported from early March onwards, nest building was not recorded until the 26th. Further evidence of nesting was not received until 2 May from Uckfield when food or a faecal sac was observed being carried by an adult; a nest containing eggs was recorded at Broadwater Warren on 8 May, whilst fledged young were seen on 19 May at Arlington Res. The last fledged young was noted from Findon on 28 Jul.

Autumn movements witnessed during October included the highest count of the year of 235 at Hastings on 23 Oct. Other notable counts during the month came from Seaford Head, with 200 on the 7th, Climping Gap, with 180 on the 24th, 160 on the 22nd and 120 on the 23rd, and Pagham Hbr with 100 on the 22nd.

In the second winter period during the late SWBS a total of 535 Chaffinches was recorded from 90 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed (83%), with a high of 41 at Kirdford on 29 Nov. Smaller numbers were recorded in the second winter period with few large flocks. Noteworthy amongst these, however, were 200 at Salehurst on 24 Dec where 150 had also been recorded on 28 Oct. The next highest count during this time was 60 from Warnham LNR on 28 Dec. [DB]

Brambling

Fringilla montifringilla

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Schedule 1 species.

Bramblings were recorded in only 52 tetrads during the year, with a slight bias towards the west. Approximate minimum monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	43	49	5	-		1	76	33	6
No. of sites	4	5	3	-		1	20	20	6

During the first winter period, while the majority of sightings were in single figures, there were 40 at Blackdown (Fernhurst) on 29 Jan and, in February, a flock of 30-40 at Petworth Park on the 2nd and 3rd. The last recorded sighting was of three birds in Stansted Forest associating with a small flock of Lesser Redpolls and Goldfinches on 20 Mar, a whole month earlier than the 10-year average departure date of 21 Apr.

The first bird to return was seen at Pett Level on 30 Sep, two days later then the 10-year average date of 28 Sep. Birds on passage were noted at a number of coastal sites early in October with 3 W at Hastings on the 4th, five at Seaford Head on the 7th and another five at Beachy Head on the 30th. The highest count inland was six at Cissbury Ring on 15 Oct. The highest count for the month was nine at Hastings on the 23rd and 30th.

In the second winter period, all records were in single figures with the highest counts being five at Hastings on 6 Nov and three at Kirdford on the 29th. [SPB]

Greenfinch

Chloris chloris

Very common resident and possibly fairly common passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.

Greenfinches were recorded from 378 tetrads, c.36% of the county total. During the first winter period a total of 386 was located in 73 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed for the SWBS, i.e. just over 50%, with a maximum of 22 at Oving on 19 Feb. There were 48 double figure counts in the first winter period ranging from ten to 20, with a further eight counts of 21 to 30. Other higher counts were 37 at Pett Level on 17 Mar, 34 there on the 26th and 31 on 28 Feb.



Greenfinches, Marsh Farm, July 2012 (Bola Akinola)

Breeding was confirmed from 13 tetrads, involving 20 records, and was probable in a further 11. There was a general paucity of records relating to breeding behaviour, with none of nest building or nests containing young. The first observation of fledged young came from Danehill

on 8 May; there were then further records right up until 23 Aug when an adult at Pagham Hbr was observed feeding a mature chick.

Post-breeding flocks were noted from across the county, the maximum being 30 at Woodingdean on 20 Jul. Autumn movements were observed from Climping Gap with a maximum of 120 (the second highest count of the year) on 24 Aug and 60 on the 28th.

A flock of 100 on the shingle spit at Pagham Hbr on 24 Oct had increased to 300, the largest count in the year, by 10 Nov but only 40 were there on the 23rd. These apart the most notable counts through November and December were 46 W at Selsey Bill on 3 Nov, 63 at the Ouse Estuary Project (Newhaven) on 18 Nov and 37 at Rye Hbr on 7 Dec. During the late SWBS, a total of 109 birds was recorded from 33 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed (31% of the total) with a maximum of 14 at Horsham on 30 Dec.

There were no observations during the year of any birds affected by trichomonosis, which may indicate that the disease is less prevalent now than in the past, although it would be premature to suggest that Greenfinch is making a recovery from this, as the most recent BBS trends show a continuing decline in Sussex (see BBS article page 251). [DB]

Serin

Serinus serinus

Very scarce passage migrant; may have bred. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern. Schedule 1 species.

An adult male at Beachy Head on 18 May (DC, JFC) was the only record for the year. This brings the county total since 2000 (inclusive) to 58. [JAH]

Goldfinch

Carduelis carduelis

Probably fairly common resident, common summer visitor and passage migrant and fairly common winter visitor.

Goldfinches were recorded from 419 tetrads spread fairly well across the county but with a bias towards the west. During the first winter period a total of 378 Goldfinches was recorded in 68 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed for the SWBS, representing just over 50%, with a maximum count of 48 at Westbourne (Emsworth) on 1 Feb.

The highest counts in this period were during February, with 175 and 80 at Stansted Forest on the 3rd and 9th respectively and 100 at Pagham Hbr on the 20th. A further 15 counts recorded between 25 and 70 birds, whilst over 50 double figure counts of between ten and 24 birds were received.

Confirmed breeding was appropriately recorded from eight tetrads and was probable in a further 14, just a fraction of those received for 2011. The latest BBS trends (see BBS article on page 251) indicate a gradual continued increase in the county population. The first sign of breeding came from Partridge Green on the early date of 14 Mar with an occupied nest, whilst nest building was observed in Bognor Regis on the 17th. At Broadbridge Heath on 13 May food was observed being taken into a nest, indicating the presence of young. Fledged young were noted from Partridge Green by the 18th and again on 20 Jun. Successful breeding continued to be observed throughout July, with the last record of fledged young being on 19 Aug on Ashdown Forest.

Autumn movements typically peaked during October when the largest day counts were 3000 at Pett Level on the 7th, 1600 there on the 24th and at Climping Gap 1010 E and 1950 E on the 20th and 24th respectively. The total of 7615 birds flying east at the last site on 17 days between 3 and 28 Oct is indicative of the scale of eastwards movements at this time. Likewise observers at Hastings recorded a total of 6809 between 19 Sep and 16 Nov with more than 500 birds recorded on six mornings and peaks of 921 E on Oct 24 and 970 E on Oct 27. These coastal movements continued, albeit on a smaller scale, into early November with 229 W at Selsey Bill on the 3rd being the largest number seen.

During the second winter period 57 double figure counts were received, including 80 at Pett Level on 29 Nov and the same number at The Burgh (Burpham) on 4 Dec. During the late SWBS a total of 219 was recorded from 43 of the 107 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum count of 30 at Horsham on 30 Dec. [DB]

Siskin

Carduelis spinus

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Very scarce breeder.

Siskins were recorded from 155 tetrads in total, split evenly between East and West Sussex. As in recent years, during the first winter period observers at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) reported good flocks with 100 on 13 Feb and 50 on the 26th. Elsewhere there were 40 at Ifield Mill Pond on 1 Jan and 50 at Salehurst on 21 Jan. There were 65 at Stansted Forest on 3 Feb reducing to 40 on the 9th, while 40 were recorded at Warnham LNR on 9 Mar.

Breeding was confirmed in two tetrads this year (four in 2011) and probable in a further eight (13 in 2011). At Salehurst a male and two recently fledged young were observed on 11 Apr and possibly the same birds again on 5 May. Siskins are early breeders and it is possible this may have been one of the wintering birds noted at Salehurst which chose to remain and presumably nested in March. The second confirmed record was of a recently fledged bird at Frant on 13 May. During the breeding season all the records were of single figures except for a migrant party of 20 on Iping Common on 5 Apr and ten at Blackdown (Fernhurst) on 5 May. Interestingly a juvenile was noted on a feeder in Runcton (Chichester) on 6 Sep.

Significant autumn migration was first noticed at coastal sites in late September; but it was not until October that numbers built up. Counts recorded at some of the principal seawatching sites were as follows:

		Sep	Oct	Nov	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	E	-	4	-	
	W	-	-	1	
Climping	E	118	775	68	185 E on 10 Oct
	W	-	-	-	
Worthing	E	-	91	-	45 E on 9 Oct
	W	-	-	-	

The highest counts elsewhere included 20 N at Thorney Island on 7 Oct, 44 E at Church Norton on the 21st and 30 W at Birling Gap on the 23rd. Visible migration was well monitored at Pett Level where 250 were noted on 29 Sep whilst during October there were records of 100 or more on ten days including 532 on the 6th and 290 on the 12th. During an extended migration watch at Hastings, 997 birds were recorded on 31 days between 17 Sep and 18 Nov with a peak

day count of 150 E on 6 Oct. In the second winter period, although the species was recorded widely, there were only six records of 30 or more including a flock of 40 at Pett Level on 19 Nov, 35 at Climping on the 15th and 30s at Herstmonceux on 10 Dec and Troutbeck (Eridge) on the 17th. [SPB]

Linnet

Carduelis cannabina

Common but decreasing resident and partial migrant. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Linnets were recorded in 245 tetrads throughout the year. During the first winter period there were 11 counts of 100 or more. There were 200 at Pilsey Sands (Chichester Hbr) on 6 Jan feeding in the sand dunes, 150 at Pagham Hbr on the 30th, 200 at Thorney Island (Chichester Hbr) on 1 Feb and at Pagham Hbr on the 12th, and 618 recorded during February on the Norfolk Estate. Later in the month there were 150 at Ticehurst on the 26th. During the early SWBS 93 birds were recorded from 11 1-km squares of the 131 surveyed. In March, the highest counts were of 100 at Thorney Island on the 10th and at Hastings CP on the 31st; otherwise counts were very much reduced.



Linnet, Church Norton, July 2012 (Andrew House)

During the breeding season, breeding was confirmed in 13 tetrads and was probable in a further 29 with Ashdown Forest being the stronghold of this species. Territorial activity was first noted in mid-March with singing males on the 11th on Ashdown Forest, whilst the first nest building activity was also recorded there on 10 Apr. The first record of successful breeding was noted, also on Ashdown Forest, on 12 May followed by 16 other records of fledglings until 23 Aug. During the Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey 52 pairs were found with the largest

counts being 11 at Iping Common and nine at Ambersham and Heyshott Commons (see page 215 for details). Compared to previous years it appears to have been a poor year in terms of breeding records, no doubt due in part to the inclement weather in late spring and summer. During June, 222 were recorded on the Norfolk Estate but in August the only triple figure count was of 120 at Chantry Hill on the 7th.

There were sizeable counts in the autumn with some visible migration noted along the coast, as shown below:

		Sep	Oct	Nov	Peak movement
Selsey Bill	E	-	400	-	400 E on 25 Oct
	W	60	-	31	60 W on 30 Sep
Climping	E	49	1280	-	240 E on 24 Oct
	W	-	-	-	
Worthing	E	-	46	60	45 E on 24 Oct
	W	-	-	-	
Splash Point	E	-	60	-	60 E on 25 Oct
	W	-	-	-	

Coastal movements additional to the above included 60 E as Church Norton on 21 Oct, 400 E there the following day and a peak day count at Hastings of 197 E on the 24th. Peak eastwards movements occurred on 24 and 25 Oct. Some sizeable counts were also obtained at inland sites. In September a flock of 320 was recorded at Burpham on the 8th. In October, numbers increased significantly. There were 1000 at Chilgrove on the 7th, 500 in the fields west of Selsey on the 13th and 300 at Keymer on the 4th, 110 at Woodingdean on the 12th and 100 at Pulborough Brooks on the 8th. Thereafter numbers dropped off as passage reduced and during November the only three figure counts were of 150 at Harting on the 11th and 100 at Woodingdean on the 21st. Similarly, in December, there were just two triple figure counts: 128 at Houghton on the 4th and 115 at Oving on the 18th. During the late SWBS, 287 birds were recorded from nine of the 107 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 128 at Houghton on 4 Dec. [SPB]

Lesser Redpoll

Carduelis cabaret

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

Lesser Redpolls were reported from 118 tetrads in 2012, 11% of the county total, significantly fewer than in 2011. There were some 16 reports of 30 or more birds in the first winter period, with the highest counts being 100 at Beckley Wood (Northiam) on 31 Jan and also at Chesworth Fm (Horsham) on 8 Mar; seven such counts came from Ashdown Forest. However, these counts were eclipsed by 250 at Broadwater Warren on 23 Mar. Of note were pairs seen in courtship flights over gorse at Camp Hill (Ashdown Forest) on 19 Mar. During the early SWBS a total of 44 was recorded from only five of the 131 1-km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 20 at Hargate Forest (Frant) on 17 Feb.

Breeding was confirmed in only two tetrads but was probable in a further ten. All these records were from Ashdown Forest where probable breeding was recorded in 14 1-km squares; the number of pairs is unclear. However, there were 40 birds counted at Camp Hill on 19 Mar, 18 at Misbourne on 16 Apr, 17 at Greenwood Gate on the 17th, 14 at the Old Airstrip on 12 Apr,

12 at Gills Lap on 16 May and 11 at King Standing on the 25th. There were also three reports of fledglings at two different sites and the first sighting of a probable family group was on 12 Jul at Camp Hill.

There were at least 12 records of 30 or more birds in the autumn with a maximum of 514 at Pett Level on 24 Oct, 60 at Arundel WWT on the 9th and 50 at Whitbread Hollow (Beachy Head) on the 20th. In the second winter period the highest count was 99 at Pett Level and c.50 at Warnham LNR on 8 Dec and Weir Wood Res on the 23rd. During the late SWBS a total of only 12 was recorded from only six of the 107 1-km squares surveyed. [PD]

Common Redpoll

Carduelis flammea flammea

Rare vagrant.

Only one was recorded in 2012: at Staple Ash Fm (Chilgrove) on 16 Feb (AH), associating with Lesser Redpolls. The county total since 1964 moves on to 62 and, for this century, to 52, including 23 in 2010 and 18 in 2011. [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 91 tetrads. Numbers reported in the first three months were greater than the previous year, with significant counts in January of 35 at Old Lodge (Ashdown Forest) on the 8th, 40 at Monkton (Chilgrove) on the 12th and also at Blackdown (nr Fernhurst) on the 29th with a monthly maximum of 50 and 24 at Wiggonholt Common (Pulborough Brooks) on the 28th and 20 at Vinehall (Mountfield) on 4 Feb.

Breeding was confirmed in three tetrads and was probable in nine. Adults with young were reported from Lavington Plantation on 27 Mar, Heyshott Common on 20 May and Duncton Common on 1 Jun. Nine pairs or territories were identified in the Thames Basin and Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey (see page 215 for details). During the summer there were counts of over 20 on 11 occasions with a remarkable 70 birds at Pett Level on 13 Jun, 55 at Blackdown on 14 May and 50 in West Dean Woods on 4 Jun. Numbers subsequently declined as shown by the monthly totals of highest counts at each location in each site.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
250	134	61	95	253	215	121	51	23	26	32	9

The table shows that numbers fell notably in the last five months with ten at Braeberry Hatch (Ashdown Forest) on 17 Aug, and 15 at Beauport Park (Hastings) on 14 Nov being the only double figure counts between August and December. [PJP]

Parrot Crossbill*Loxia pytyopsittacus**Very rare vagrant.*

A female was at Blackdown (Fernhurst) from 22 Jan to 18 Feb (DJB, GH). It was photographed and discussed in *Birding World* **25**:60-64. This was only the second record for the county; the first was one shot in St. Leonards Forest in March 1870 which is now in the Booth Museum (*Walpole-Bond* **1**:110), so a second sighting was long overdue and no doubt provided many a Sussex birder with a county first. An account of the finding of this bird appears on page 226. [JAH]



Parrot Crossbill, Blackdown, February 2012 (Michael McKee)

Common Rosefinch*Carpodacus erythrinus**Rare vagrant. Schedule 1 species.*

There was only one record: a first year female trapped at Pett Level on 6 Oct (IDH) and seen again on several dates to 27 Oct. The county total moves on to 31. [JAH]

Bullfinch*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Fairly common or common resident. Amber listed species of medium conservation concern.

The species was recorded in 273 tetrads. During the first winter period the highest counts were 20 at Arundel WWT on 14 Feb, 12 at Eartham Woods on 31 Jan, and ten at Pulborough Brooks on 17 Mar.

Breeding was confirmed in eight tetrads and was probable in a further 36. A bird was seen carrying nest material on 8 May at Kingley Vale and fledged young were seen at Crowborough GC on the 16th.

At The Mumbles (Steyning) seven different birds were trapped of which four were young and three adult birds, whilst at the North Scarp of Cissbury the 21 different birds trapped comprised 12 adults and nine young. One hundred and six were trapped at Pett Level during the year. [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 from only 17 tetrads, 14 of which were in West Sussex and most in the Chilgrove/West Dean area. The approximate monthly totals were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
40	1	10	1	3	-	-	3	-	4	6	8

In the first three months of the year there were 81 sightings recorded, mostly from various areas at West Dean Woods. Inevitably considerable duplication was involved and the highest counts were 29 on 14 Jan, eight on 22 Jan and seven on 10 Jan.

Spring records were of four birds from three different locations away from the traditional sites, including one considered to be in suitable breeding habitat. The only other possible breeding record was of a singing male on 12 Mar. As was noted in the 2011 Sussex Bird Report, there continues to be a lack of records during the breeding season.

Three flying west over Cissbury Ring on 9 Aug was the only record between 25 May and 27 Oct. During the last three months of the year, 13 day counts involved a total of probably no more than 13 different birds, assuming multiple records from West Dean were of the same individuals. Most of these were of single birds, although four were observed at West Dean on 27 Oct and 7 Nov, and eight on 16 Dec. The most interesting record of this period relates to a bird circling over Fairlight (Hastings) on 8 Nov, thought to be “in off the sea”, and therefore a candidate for a continental migrant from Europe. [DB]

Snow Bunting

Plectrophenax nivalis

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

The species was recorded in 17 tetrads. The two Snow Buntings which had been at Widewater (Lancing) since 15 Nov 2011 remained until 23 Feb and were joined from 14 Jan to 2 Feb by a handsome adult male. Of the five birds present at East Head on 7 Nov 2011 only one remained at the turn of the year. Numbers rose to three on 2 Jan and four on 28 Jan, their final day at the site. Elsewhere in the first winter period one was at Glynde Reach on 28 Jan, one inland at Dallington on 24 Feb and one at The Wicks (Camber) on 3 Mar.

The first sighting of the second winter period was of a male at Pett Level from 28 Oct to 3 Nov, followed by a female there on 11 to 12 Nov. One on the beach at Seaford from 16-19 Nov coincided with one at Rye Hbr on 17 Nov and one at Arlington Res from 17 to 21 Nov. Two were

at Langney Point (Eastbourne) from 23 to 28 Nov. In West Sussex one arrived at Church Norton on 29 Nov and remained in the area until 4 Dec. [ACG]

Lapland Bunting

Calcarius lapponicus

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

Only one bird was recorded this year: seen at Thorney Island on 14 Oct (CBC) before flying off west. The total since November 2000 is now 93, including the 78 of 2010/2011. [JAH]

Yellowhammer

Emberiza citrinella

Fairly common resident. Red listed species of high conservation concern.

Records were received from 276 tetrads. With the exception of Ashdown Forest, these were predominantly from the west of the county. In the first winter period, during the SWBS a total of 126 Yellowhammers was recorded from only 19 of the 131 1-km squares surveyed with a maximum count of 43 at Cocking on 23 Feb feeding in a maize game crop, a high figure for that site. Other large counts during the period were 80 at Honer Fm (Pagham) on 12 Feb, 32 at Devil's Dyke on 23 Jan and 30s at Lidsey Lodge on the 6th and Burpham on the 14th. On the Norfolk Estate 151 birds were recorded during this period, 'a large annual increase'.

In the spring, a total of at least 80, including flocks of 40 and 35, were noted at Manor Fm (West Dean) on 16 Apr. Fourteen feeding in a garden at Hassocks on 12 Apr elicited the comment that "a flock of 28 which first came with the snow three years ago has come back every winter/spring since and is growing".

The first song was noted on 13 Feb at Lavington Plantation and Poundgate (Ashdown Forest) and was widespread by the end of the month. Breeding was confirmed at Kidbrooke Pk (Ashdown Forest) and an adult was seen carrying food at Weir Wood Res on 5 Aug. Breeding was probable in a further 38 tetrads. An estimated 50 territories were identified during the Thames Basin and Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey (see page 215 for details). On Ashdown Forest 12 1-km squares contained a possible minimum of 26 singing males or territories. An estimated 19 pairs held territories on the Norfolk Estate, cf. 24 the previous year and at Pagham Hbr there were four pairs.

In the second winter period, during the SWBS a total of 24 was recorded from only ten of the 107 1-km squares surveyed, with five at Ringmer on 8 Dec the highest count. This emphasises how much less common this once widespread species has become. During this period double figure counts were received from 13 sites: the largest flocks were 30 at Flansham on 9 Nov and at Barnham on 4 Dec and, at Devil's Dyke, 35 on 18 Nov and two flocks totalling 55 on 30 Dec. Despite some increases in some areas both wintering and breeding figures are considerably poorer than in 2012. [ACG]

Reed Bunting*Emberiza schoeniclus*

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

Reed Buntings were recorded in 149 tetrads during the year. During the early SWBS a total of 19 was recorded from only six of the 131 1-km squares surveyed. In the first winter period numbers seemed to peak in the cold weather in early to mid-February. Double-figure flocks were seen at 17 sites, the largest being at Rodmell, where the highest counts were 100 on 3 and 12 Feb, and Pett Level, also with 100 on 3 Feb. Flocks of 20-50 were present around Pagham Hbr between 27 Jan and 20 Feb and smaller numbers were to be found in Ashdown Forest and other inland sites. On the Norfolk Estate 73 were located. In March and April Reed Buntings were reported from gardens in Uckfield and Buxted where they fed on or under bird tables and in late March a female fed from fat balls in a Henfield garden.

Breeding was confirmed from ten tetrads and was probable in a further 15. At Rye Hbr LNR 54 territories were mapped, and ten pairs were located at Pagham Hbr, six at Thorney Deepes with an additional pair on Thorney Island. At Stocks Fm (Icklesham) 21 adults and young were counted on 20 Jul. The one pair which has bred in recent years at Iping Common was not present. On Ashdown Forest breeding was confirmed in four 1-km squares and was probable in a further seven where there was a minimum of ten singing males or territories.



Reed Bunting, Bishopstone, March 2012 (Peter Wilson)

During the latter part of the year there was some evidence of passage. At Hastings 76 were recorded on 27 days of migration watches between 7 Aug and 18 Nov, with a highest day count of nine on 10 Sep, regarded as 'a modest passage'. The first flocks of the period were 27 at Crutches

Fm (Winchelsea) on 7 Sep and 18 at Pett Level on 28 Sep rising to 31 on 22 Oct and 50 on 6 Dec. The only other flocks in excess of 20 were 50 at Rodmell on 8 Nov, 50 at Pagham Hbr on 17 Nov and flocks of 24 and 20 at two sites in Ashdown Forest on 11 and 21 Dec respectively. As in the previous winter small numbers were noted from stubble and game strips, sometimes associating with Yellowhammers. During the late SWBS a total of nine was recorded from only four of the 107 1-km squares surveyed.

Although the cold weather in February brought some larger flocks, the picture overall was of reduced numbers breeding and remaining through to the end of the year. [ACG]

Corn Bunting

Emberiza calandra

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

Corn Buntings were recorded from 65 tetrads. Of all the records submitted, only 8% were for five or more birds and 78% were for only one or two. Records for downland habitats represented 42% of the total, the remainder involving records of usually single birds. For only two downland sites were there records for ten months of the year and one other for seven months.

In the first winter period the largest flocks were 80 on 30 Jan at The Burgh (Burpham) on the Norfolk Estate which also reported that a steady increase was apparent and a flock of 42 was around until May. Elsewhere, there were at least 40 on stubble at Steep Down (Lancing) on 11 Jan, 25 preparing to roost at Rodmell on 12 Feb, 13 at Devil's Dyke (Brighton) on 19 Feb, ten at Ditchling Beacon on 25 Jan and 16 at Winchelsea on 6 Jan. Near the coast up to four were seen at Pagham Hbr and up to five on the marshes east of Rye during this period. During the early SWBS nine birds were seen in three of the 131 1-km squares surveyed. On 31 Mar a Corn Bunting was seen to fly north over Brighton Wild Park and two were seen briefly at Selsey Bill on 22 Apr.

The first song was heard at Jury's Gap (Camber) on 25 Feb but some flocks persisted into May, e.g. ten on a game crop at Manor Fm (West Dean) on 6 Apr. Further evidence of an upturn in the fortunes of this species in the Lavant Valley was what was described as a 'mobile flock' of seven at Goodwood Park (a new site) on 22 May. On the Norfolk Estate an estimated 46 pairs were recorded, as in the previous year. Forty were counted on the Downs above Portslade on 17 May. On 11 May 35 were found on downland near Worthing and up to 25 were counted at Steep Down during the breeding season. An observer commented: 'wonderful to see and hear Corn Buntings on this site for first time in several years!', on locating ten on the Downs above Keymer. An association with barley was mentioned by several observers. Small numbers were found away from the Downs in the Oving area and three or four possible single territories elsewhere.

By early August flocks, no doubt including juveniles, were seen at several sites: 25 in barley at Steep Down on 7 Aug, 40 also in barley at Edburton on 10 Aug and 18 at Devil's Dyke on 18 Aug.

During the second winter period there were no large flocks, the highest numbers being 22 at Devil's Dyke on 28 Oct, 17 at Winchelsea on 13 Nov and 25 at East Guldeford Level (Rye) on 9 Dec. [ACG]

ESCAPES and FERAL BIRDS

All records of BOU Category D species, of apparently feral individuals of other species and of probable or certain escapes from captivity (but not those clearly in captivity) will be welcomed by the Hon. Recorder for this annual feature. 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. 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 2012 (unless stated otherwise). It should be noted that the identity of these birds is largely unchecked. A list of useful references can be found in SxBR **62**:210 (2009). This list is compiled by John Hobson 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 six sites; the highest count was 14 at Sutton End on 18 Jun and six at Cocking on 28 Apr. Up to three were at Ladywell (Coombes) where they were noted throughout much of the year. Elsewhere, two were noted at Sheffield Park on 20 May and single birds were seen at Church Norton on 18 May and Plumpton on 28 Jul.

Indian Peafowl

Pavo cristatus

Wild birds are restricted to the Indian subcontinent. A traditional favourite of ornamental gardens.

This species was recorded at just three sites. At two of these sites birds were seen during a Breeding Bird Survey visit: one bird at Balcombe and one near Hurstpierpoint on 2 May. Another bird was at Leechpool and Owlbeech Wood (Horsham) on 18 Aug.

Black-bellied Whistling Duck

Dendrocygna autumnalis

Breeds in southern USA and tropical Central to south-central South America and can be found year round in parts of southeast Texas and seasonally in southeast Arizona and Louisiana's Gulf Coast.

One was at Medmerry on 21 and 29 Jul.

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.

Most records of this species were of one bird; on only four days in the year were there two. In West Sussex, the year started with one at Pulborough Brooks but for only one day, 3 Jan; it then disappeared. The next sighting was of two at Selsey Bill on 14 Apr only, the only record of

two before the autumn. One was then at Chichester GP on 8 May and, on the 19th and 20th, was consorting there with a flock of Canada Geese but then, assuming it was the same bird, turned up at Thorney Deep (Chichester Hbr) on 31 May, the last spring date.

Meanwhile, in East Sussex, one seen at Pett Level on 1 Jan was seen on several dates to the 23rd, then again on 5 Feb and several dates to 13 Mar; it then disappeared. However, on the 26th one was seen at Troutbeck (Eridge), then twice in April and finally on 6 May. On 20 May, it or another was seen at Scotney GP. The next sighting was not until 23 Jun of one at Cuckmere Haven followed by two the next day at Scotney GP which were also recorded at Lydd West, so were possibly in Kent until recorded again on 22 Jul and 19 Aug. Possibly one of these was then seen at Arlington Res on the 22nd. The first autumn sightings were at Scotney GP on 16 Sep, at Bewl Water on the 19th and then variously at Pett Level until 30 Dec but with occasional sightings during this period at Cuckmere Haven.

The first summer record in West Sussex was of one at Fishbourne Channel (Chichester Hbr) on 14 Aug with a flock of Canada Geese; it was recorded there on and off until the 23rd when it appears to have moved to Pagham Hbr from 30 Aug to 8 Sep. Perhaps this bird had moved to Pulborough Brooks by 30 Sep to be joined by another, perhaps the one seen at Petworth Park on 17 Aug, as there were two there that day. Although two were again recorded on 15 Oct, all other sightings to 14 Dec were of one bird which was probably the one seen at Medmerry on the 16th, the final date.

It seems that there were up to four birds, two in each half of the county, during the year, all of them being fairly mobile.

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.

Five blue phase birds were at Jury's Gap on 25 Feb. On 4 Mar a flock of 31, including three blue phase birds, was at Scotney GP and then at Pett Level on the 8th but only seven were at the former site on the 11th. This is the largest number of this species recorded in the county; presumably the same flock was seen circling the Itchen Valley in Hampshire on 2 Mar and is considered to be part of a feral flock from Blenheim, Oxfordshire.

Six were seen flying east above Seaford Head on 12 Mar, in fields between there and Cuckmere Haven on the 13th, at Beachy Head the next day and at Scotney GP on the 16th. The final record was of three at Pulborough Brooks on 7 May.

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.

The record of one which lingered in the Adur Valley from 13 Dec into 2013 (ARK *et al.*) was accepted by the BBRC but placed in Category E as it was considered a likely escape. [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.

The long staying bird at Benbow Pond was seen on 29 Jan, 2 Sep and 15 Nov. Another was at Rye Hbr on 7 and 11 Nov and at Scotney GP on the 19th. One was at Chichester Canal on 11 Dec.

South African Shelduck*Tadorna cana*

Breeds in southern Africa, mainly in Namibia and South Africa. In the southern winter, many birds move northeast from the breeding range to favoured moulting grounds where sizeable concentrations occur.

A female bird at Arundel WWT on 20 Jan was accompanied by a male bird on 1 Feb, both being unringed, and were recorded there again on the 22nd. A pair, presumably the same, was then noted at Pulborough Brooks on the 27th and 23 Apr. A pair, presumably the same, was then seen back at Arundel WWT on 16 Aug. However, at Pulborough Brooks on 2 Sep three adult males were seen. Only one bird (unsexed) was at Petworth Park on 20 Sep but two were at Pulborough Brooks on 15 Oct. Finally, a pair was at Arundel WWT again on 14 Nov where they are not known to be part of the wildfowl collection but apparently often fly in to the site and join captive and pinioned South African Shelduck there.

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 birds were at Petworth Park on 14 Jan.

Paradise Shelduck*Tadorna variegata*

Very common resident in New Zealand.

A single bird was seen at Petworth Park on 14 Jan and an adult male at Pulborough Brooks on 27 Feb where two were seen on 30 May. Three were noted in Petworth Park on 17 Aug but only two there on 20 Sep.

Muscovy Duck*Cairina moschata*

Locally common resident in forest lakes of Central and South America. Widespread in its domesticated form.

Seven were at Swanbourne Lake (Arundel) on 11 Jan, 15 on the 23rd, 20 on 1 Feb but 13 on 20 Mar. Elsewhere, one was at Hampden Park Lake (Eastbourne) on 15 Jan, another at Widewater (Lancing) on 25 Jan and single birds were at Crosspost (Bolney) on 31 May and Fishbourne (Chichester) on 17 Nov.

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.

A single bird was at Pulborough Brooks on 10 Apr and adult females were at Punnett's Town (Heathfield) on 18 Apr and Crowhurst on 24 May. An adult female with eight ducklings was at Tilgate Park (Crawley) on 2 Jun.

Chiloe Wigeon*Anas sibilatrix*

Common resident in southern South America. Commonly kept in wildfowl collections.

An adult male was with Eurasian Wigeon in Pagham Hbr on 12 Jan, 27 Feb and 2 Mar.

Harris's Hawk*Parabuteo unicinctus*

Widespread throughout much of North America and the Caribbean; some move south to winter as far as Central America. Commonly kept in captivity.

One was seen at Chichester GP on 10 and 22 Mar without any apparent jesses. Another was at Church Norton on 28 Mar and at Chichester GP again on 10 Apr, 17 May, 14 Oct and 18 Nov.

Red-tailed Hawk*Buteo jamaicensis*

Breeds commonly throughout much of North America and the Caribbean; some move south to winter in Central America.

One was seen in the Cocking/Bepton area on 23 Feb, 21 Apr and 8 Jun.

Saker Falcon*Falco cherrug*

Breeds from eastern Europe eastwards across Asia to Manchuria. It is mainly migratory except in the southernmost parts of its range, wintering in Ethiopia, the Arabian peninsula, northern Pakistan and western China.

One was at Steyning on 21 Mar and two, without jesses, were chasing each other at The Burgh (Burpham) on 29 Jul.

Java Sparrow*Lonchura oryzivora*

Resident in Java and Bali but now uncommon in its native range. A popular cagebird, has been introduced in many other countries. Frequents open grassland and cultivation, was formerly a pest in rice fields. Evaluated as vulnerable by the IUCN.

One was at Pagham Hbr on 7 Sep.

Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) results for Sussex 2008-2012

For each species recorded, the number (n) of BBS squares in which that species was recorded in Sussex, and the percentage (%) of the total number of BBS squares surveyed in which that species was recorded, for the period 2008-2012. Species which have only been recorded in single squares have been omitted from the list, but are included in the total numbers of species recorded.

	Year (and total no. of squares surveyed)									
	2008 (135)		2009 (134)		2010 (138)		2011 (145)		2012 (149)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Mute Swan	19	14	18	13	16	12	18	12	17	11
Greylag Goose	8	6	14	10	11	8	16	11	15	10
Greylag Goose (domestic)	1	1	1	1			1	1	2	1
Canada Goose	27	20	38	28	28	20	41	28	40	27
Egyptian Goose					2	1	2	1	2	1
Shelduck	7	5	6	4	7	5	4	3	7	5
Mandarin Duck	6	4	6	4	5	4	7	5	5	3
Gadwall			2	1	2	1	3	2	1	1
Mallard	72	53	74	55	80	58	81	56	88	59
Mallard (domestic)	3	2	1	1	2	1	1	1		
Tufted Duck	7	5	7	5	6	4	8	6	9	6
Red-legged Partridge	17	13	19	14	23	17	17	12	16	11
Grey Partridge	3	2	2	1	2	1	7	5	3	2
Pheasant	111	82	104	78	110	80	121	83	118	79
Cormorant	12	9	15	11	14	10	12	8	18	12
Little Egret	7	5	6	4	7	5	7	5	5	3
Grey Heron	37	27	39	29	36	26	30	21	37	25
Little Grebe	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	3	2
Great Crested Grebe	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	2	3	2
Red Kite	2	1	1	1	1	1	4	3	1	1
Marsh Harrier	1	1	1	1	2	1			1	1
Sparrowhawk	28	21	12	9	13	9	16	11	13	9
Buzzard	37	27	39	29	47	34	60	41	74	50
Kestrel	48	36	33	25	36	26	42	29	41	28
Hobby	4	3	1	1	3	2	2	1	3	2
Peregrine	2	1	2	1			3	2	1	1
Moorhen	57	42	57	43	52	38	56	39	47	32
Coot	17	13	15	11	18	13	16	11	22	15
Oystercatcher	3	2	6	4	2	1	2	1	3	2
Lapwing	14	10	14	10	18	13	15	10	14	9
Whimbrel					2	1	1	1	1	1
Curlew	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	4	3
Redshank	2	1	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
Black-headed Gull	17	13	22	16	16	12	19	13	20	13
Mediterranean Gull	7	5	2	1	2	1	5	3	6	4
Common Gull	1	1	1	1	6	4	2	1	6	4

	Year (and total no. of squares surveyed)									
	2008 (135)		2009 (134)		2010 (138)		2011 (145)		2012 (149)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Lesser Black-backed Gull	15	11	13	10	14	10	12	8	12	8
Herring Gull	65	48	63	47	69	50	76	52	85	57
Great Black-backed Gull	2	1	6	4	6	4	5	3	3	2
Sandwich Tern	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	1
Common Tern	3	2	3	2	6	4	4	3	2	1
Feral Pigeon	29	21	33	25	42	30	34	23	39	26
Stock Dove	34	25	35	26	40	29	55	38	49	33
Woodpigeon	135	100	134	100	137	99	144	99	148	99
Collared Dove	87	64	88	66	87	63	88	61	89	60
Turtle Dove	6	4	10	7	5	4	7	5	7	5
Cuckoo	41	30	47	35	45	33	55	38	39	26
Barn Owl	3	2	7	5	5	4	1	1	3	2
Little Owl	5	4	3	2	6	4	4	3	4	3
Tawny Owl	5	4	3	2	9	7	5	3	10	7
Swift	35	26	47	35	41	30	42	29	42	28
Kingfisher	2	1			1	1			1	1
Green Woodpecker	101	75	85	63	90	65	97	67	102	68
Great Spotted Woodpecker	94	70	81	60	92	67	93	64	100	67
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker							2	1	1	1
Magpie	126	93	125	93	122	88	130	90	129	87
Jay	71	53	55	41	66	48	68	47	67	45
Jackdaw	103	76	106	79	109	79	121	83	120	81
Rook	72	53	67	50	76	55	80	55	85	57
Carriion Crow	131	97	130	97	134	97	139	96	143	96
Raven	2	1			1	1	4	3	4	3
Goldcrest	54	40	35	26	45	33	57	39	63	42
Firecrest	2	1	1	1	2	1	3	2	2	1
Blue Tit	131	97	129	96	132	96	142	98	145	97
Great Tit	129	96	124	93	128	93	139	96	137	92
Coal Tit	40	30	47	35	37	27	43	30	44	30
Marsh Tit	14	10	14	10	9	7	19	13	14	9
Woodlark	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1
Skylark	69	51	68	51	73	53	74	51	78	52
Swallow	92	68	85	63	89	64	107	74	100	67
House Martin	27	20	32	24	32	23	36	25	29	19
Cetti's Warbler	3	2	4	3	5	4	6	4	5	3
Long-tailed Tit	64	47	77	57	71	51	61	42	65	44
Chiffchaff	115	85	113	84	122	88	123	85	123	83
Willow Warbler	26	19	29	22	25	18	33	23	31	21
Blackcap	92	68	108	81	110	80	123	85	127	85
Garden Warbler	25	19	28	21	29	21	33	23	36	24
Lesser Whitethroat	18	13	15	11	18	13	18	12	9	6
Whitethroat	76	56	77	57	83	60	101	70	83	56

	Year (and total no. of squares surveyed)									
	2008 (135)		2009 (134)		2010 (138)		2011 (145)		2012 (149)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sedge Warbler	11	8	9	7	7	5	9	6	5	3
Reed Warbler	11	8	10	7	12	9	14	10	13	9
Nuthatch	44	33	56	42	64	46	67	46	73	49
Treecreeper	24	18	24	18	29	21	35	24	42	28
Wren	124	92	125	93	131	95	138	95	142	95
Starling	99	73	94	70	91	66	93	64	105	70
Blackbird	133	99	133	99	138	100	144	99	147	99
Song Thrush	119	88	118	88	122	88	122	84	129	87
Mistle Thrush	46	34	42	31	45	33	44	30	39	26
Spotted Flycatcher	2	1	5	4	4	3	7	5	2	1
Robin	129	96	131	98	134	97	142	98	146	98
Nightingale	9	7	5	4	11	8	12	8	16	11
Stonechat	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	2
Wheatear	5	4	5	4	3	2	2	1	6	4
Dunnock	114	84	108	81	113	82	110	76	117	79
House Sparrow	98	73	102	76	101	73	107	74	106	71
Yellow Wagtail	1	1	1	1			2	1		
Grey Wagtail	7	5	4	3	7	5	4	3	3	2
Pied/White Wagtail	56	41	66	49	53	38	55	38	55	37
Tree Pipit	5	4	1	1	2	1	4	3	1	1
Meadow Pipit	10	7	13	10	10	7	11	8	16	11
Chaffinch	131	97	129	96	135	98	142	98	146	98
Greenfinch	101	75	104	78	110	80	111	77	107	72
Goldfinch	80	59	79	59	99	72	103	71	107	72
Siskin	1	1	4	3	3	2	3	2	3	2
Linnet	44	33	49	37	45	33	46	32	49	33
Lesser Redpoll	1	1	4	3	1	1	3	2	1	1
Common Crossbill	2	1			2	1	2	1	4	3
Bullfinch	33	24	32	24	25	18	38	26	43	29
Yellowhammer	52	39	58	43	65	47	61	42	61	41
Reed Bunting	12	9	13	10	10	7	15	10	16	11
Corn Bunting	4	3	6	4	6	4	7	5	7	5
Number of species	127		115		119		128		123	

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE DATES OF SUMMER VISITORS, 2012

	First recorded date			Last recorded date		
	2012	1960 to 2011	10-yr average (\pm SD in days)	2012	1960 to 2011	10-yr average (\pm SD in days)
Garganey	10 Mar	2 Feb	4 Mar (\pm 14)	12 Oct	13 Dec	30 Sep (\pm 21)
Quail	12 May	6 Feb	13 May (\pm 11)	15 Sep	15 Nov ²	4 Sep (\pm 26)
Osprey	4 Apr	4 Mar	20 Mar (\pm 9)	25 Oct	9 Dec	24 Oct (\pm 12)
Hobby	7 Apr	21 Mar	5 Apr (\pm 7)	27 Oct	9 Nov	22 Oct (\pm 15)
Little Ringed Plover	22 Mar	6 Mar	16 Mar (\pm 6)	27 Sep	8 Oct	24 Sep (\pm 11)
Wood Sandpiper	23 May	11 Feb	1 May (\pm 23)	29 Sep	16 Nov	23 Sep (\pm 15)
Pomarine Skua	23 Apr	10 Mar	23 Apr (\pm 17)	1 Oct	31 Dec	9 Sep (\pm 70)
Little Tern	10 Apr	1 Apr	8 Apr (\pm 5)	5 Oct	4 Nov	27 Sep (\pm 14)
Black Tern	23 Apr	2 Apr	17 Apr (\pm 6)	2 Oct	16 Nov ³	8 Oct (\pm 16)
Common Tern	29 Mar	14 Mar	25 Mar (\pm 7)	3 Oct	26 Nov	27 Oct (\pm 12)
Roseate Tern	27 May	17 Apr	4 May (\pm 16)	12 Jun	5 Oct	2 Aug (\pm 32)
Arctic Tern	9 Apr	2 Apr	11 Apr (\pm 5)	1 Oct	31 Dec	26 Oct (\pm 14)
Common/Arctic Tern	25 Mar	10 Mar	5 Apr (\pm 8)	8 Oct	31 Dec	25 Oct (\pm 15)
Turtle Dove	21 Mar	5 Feb	9 Apr (\pm 13)	26 Sep	18 Dec	26 Sep (\pm 10)
Cuckoo	24 Mar	21 Mar ⁴	2 Apr (\pm 3)	11 Sep	23 Oct ⁵	18 Sep (\pm 14)
Nightjar	4 May	8 Apr	1 May (\pm 10)	13 Sep	5 Nov	15 Sep (\pm 10)
Swift	14 Apr	7 Apr	13 Apr (\pm 4)	19-Sep	24 Nov	13 Oct (\pm 22)
Wryneck	9 Apr	9 Mar	18 Apr (\pm 15)	6 Oct	2 Nov ⁶	2 Oct (\pm 9)
Sand Martin	16 Mar	27 Feb	10 Mar (\pm 8)	11 Nov	1 Dec ⁷	20 Oct (\pm 16)
Swallow	1 Mar	4 Feb	9 Mar (\pm 12)	18 Nov	28 Dec	24 Nov (\pm 10)
House Martin	17 Mar	1 Feb	14 Mar (\pm 13)	13 Nov	18 Dec ⁸	11 Nov (\pm 10)
Wood Warbler	27 Apr	7 Apr	17 Apr (\pm 6)	11 Sep	7 Oct	15 Sep (\pm 15)
Willow Warbler	21 Mar	4 Mar	18 Mar (\pm 6)	22 Oct	27 Nov ⁹	30 Oct (\pm 11)
Garden Warbler	29 Mar	28 Mar	3 Apr (\pm 4)	12 Oct	16 Nov	12 Oct (\pm 9)
Lesser Whitethroat	6 Apr	4 Apr	10 Apr (\pm 5)	30 Sep	18 Nov ¹⁰	11 Oct (\pm 11)
Whitethroat	1 Apr	19 Mar	31 Mar (\pm 5)	11 Oct	17 Dec	27 Oct (\pm 17)
Grasshopper Warbler	7 Apr	2 Apr	8 Apr (\pm 6)	6 Oct	1 Nov	16 Oct (\pm 6)
Sedge Warbler	27 Mar	23 Mar	28 Mar (\pm 4)	14 Oct	29 Oct	13 Oct (\pm 13)
Reed Warbler	7 Apr	2 Apr	6 Apr (\pm 4)	9 Nov	1 Dec	4 Nov (\pm 15)
Ring Ouzel	25 Mar	9 Feb ¹¹	29 Mar (\pm 8)	14 Nov	26 Dec	13 Nov (\pm 6)
Spotted Flycatcher	30 Apr	8 Apr	27 Apr (\pm 6)	14 Oct	18 Nov	14 Oct (\pm 9)
Nightingale	6 Apr	21 Mar	4 Apr (\pm 6)	6 Sep	1 Oct ¹²	16 Sep (\pm 11)
Redstart	30 Mar	5 Mar	26 Mar (\pm 10)	26 Dec ¹	11 Dec	25 Oct (\pm 10)
Whinchat	12 Mar	18 Feb	5 Apr (\pm 16)	27 Oct	2 Dec	29 Oct (\pm 8)
Wheatear	14 Mar	13 Feb	4 Mar (\pm 9)	3 Nov	31 Dec	11 Nov (\pm 9)
Pied Flycatcher	18 Apr	1 Apr	11 Apr (\pm 5)	27 Sep	1 Nov	1 Oct (\pm 8)
Yellow Wagtail	11 Mar	12 Feb	26 Mar (\pm 7)	20 Oct	23 Nov ¹³	24 Oct (\pm 8)
Tree Pipit	29 Mar	17 Mar	29 Mar (\pm 4)	10 Oct	9 Nov	15 Oct (\pm 10)

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.

DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL DATES OF WINTER VISITORS, 2012

	Last recorded date			First recorded date		
	2012	1960 to 2011	10-yr average (\pm SD in days)	2012	1960 to 2011	10-yr average (\pm SD in days)
Bewick's Swan	26 Feb	26 Apr	6 Mar (\pm 10)	14 Nov	6 Oct	13 Nov (\pm 18)
White-fronted Goose	14 Mar	25 May	22 Mar (\pm 30)	16 Sep	12 Sep	22 Oct (\pm 24)
Long-tailed Duck	12 Jan ¹	14 Jun	13 May (\pm 23)	3 Nov	12 Aug	1 Nov (\pm 15)
Velvet Scoter	19 May	15 Jun	17 May (\pm 15)	28 Oct	2 Aug	19 Oct (\pm 18)
Goldeneye	11 May	31 May	16 Apr (\pm 17)	27 Oct	6 Aug	7 Oct (\pm 27)
Smew	3 Mar	24 Apr	7 Mar (\pm 13)	11 Dec	22 Oct	26 Nov (\pm 17)
Goosander	14 Jun ¹	22 May	8 Apr (\pm 23)	18 Nov	12 Sep	29 Oct (\pm 18)
Black-throated Diver	26 May	21 Jun	22 May (\pm 8)	3 Oct	3 Aug	13 Oct (\pm 25)
Great Northern Diver	5 Jun	21 Jun	27 May (\pm 10)	6 Nov	16 Sep	20 Oct (\pm 17)
Red-necked Grebe	7 Apr	19 Jun	16 Apr (\pm 21)	18 Nov	13 Aug ²	21 Sep (\pm 22)
Hen Harrier	28 May	19 Jun	13 May (\pm 17)	11 Aug	4 Aug	30 Aug (\pm 16)
Purple Sandpiper	23 Mar ¹	4 Jun	8 May (\pm 10)	16 Oct	1 Jul	8 Aug (\pm 27)
Jack Snipe	18 Apr	19 May	17 Apr (\pm 13)	9 Oct	24 Aug	21 Sep (\pm 17)
Great Grey Shrike	24 Mar	5 May ⁴	1 Apr (\pm 18)	29 Sep	26 Sep ³	14 Oct (\pm 7)
Fieldfare	26 Apr	5 Jun	26 Apr (\pm 11)	3 Oct	6 Aug	29 Sep (\pm 11)
Redwing	7 Apr	26 May ⁵	16 Apr (\pm 9)	28 Sep	6 Aug	21 Sep (\pm 17)
Water Pipit	11 Apr	28 May	21 Mar (\pm 20)	23 Oct	1 Sep	29 Oct (\pm 9)
Brambling	20 Mar	12 May	23 Apr (\pm 7)	30 Sep	3 Sep	27 Sep (\pm 9)
Snow Bunting	3 Mar	6 May	3 Feb (\pm 34)	28 Oct	17 Sep	24 Oct (\pm 11)

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 for the current year 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 2012, West Sussex

	AC	BD	BH	CC	CL	HC	IC	LC	LS	SC	WC	WD	WH
Hobby	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Woodcock	4	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	2	1	1	-
Stock Dove	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	1
Turtle Dove	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nightjar	21	-	-	-	-	-	7	4	-	2	2	1	1
Green Woodpecker	4	-	1	4	3	2	2	2	1	1	5	8	2
Great Sp. Woodpecker	4	-	-	4	-	2	4	5	3	6	4	8	3
Woodlark	2	3	2	3	3	1	5	3	1	4	1	6	1
Skylark	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Tree Pipit	3	2	-	1	-	-	6	2	2	3	2	2	-
Meadow Pipit	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Common Redstart	-	2	-	2	-	-	1	-	6	-	-	2	-
Stonechat	5	2	-	1	-	-	5	3	1	-	2	3	1
Dartford Warbler	-	-	-	1	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	3	-
Common Whitethroat	-	1	2	3	-	-	2	3	-	2	10	2	2
Siskin	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Linnet	9	5	-	3	-	-	11	5	-	2	6	7	4
Lesser Redpoll	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Common Crossbill	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	4	1	1	-	-	-
Yellowhammer	10	-	1	2	2	-	6	9	2	3	7	2	6
Reed Bunting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Figures relate to pairs or territories. The hyphen (-) indicates that no territories were identified.

Key to sites:

AC: Ambersham and Heyshott Commons

BD: Blackdown (Fernhurst)

BH: Broad Halfpenny

CC: Chapel Common (Liphook)

CL: Coates Common and Lords Piece (Fittleworth)

HC: Hesworth Common

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.

CONTRIBUTORS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, 2012

We are grateful to the following observers for records for the 2012 *Sussex Bird Report*.

NB: For an explanation of the superscripts, see the footnote below the table.

B Acheson	N Bamford ^B	DJ Bowker ^T	GL Champion
D Agombar ^T	PC Bance ^W	AL Bowley	B Chapman
B Akinola	DG Barber ^{BH}	PS Bowley	CB Chapman ^T
J Aldred	E Barber ^T	R Bown ^{BCT}	SE Chapman ^{BCTW}
C Allen ^T	T Barber	L Boyd ^X	RH Charlwood
T Allen ^T	CJR Barfield ^{BCTW}	BR Boyland ^T	SA Charlwood
A Allum ^W	D Barker ^X	P Bradbeer	J-P Charteris ^T
AE Almeida ^{BW}	GK Barker ^T	RC Bradbury	MJ Chattaway ^{BCTW}
LEF Ambler ^{BCTW}	D Barnes	I Bradshaw	A Cheeseman
D Andrews ^W	RG Barnett ^{TW}	P Briggs	C Chown ^W
R Antonini ^X	S Bayley ^T	C Brooks ^{BCT}	J Christlieb
AC Armitage ^T	J Bayne ^T	M Brown ^T	V Clapperton ^X
G Armstrong ^T	BDS Sussex Group	P Brown	FC Clark ^T
P Armstrong ^T	VR Beaney ^T	R Brown ^T	JM Clark
J Arnott ^W	G Beck	SA Brown ^T	P Clark ^X
P Arnott ^W	J Beime ^T	JJ Bryant ^{BTW}	J Clarke ^{BC}
C Ash ^T	C Bentley ^W	D Buckingham ^{CT}	G Clarkson ^T
D Asher ^{BCT}	DP Bentley	C Buckle ^{BCT}	BR Clay ^{BCT}
P Ashley	VP Bentley ^{BCTW}	J Bujuk	PI Clay ^T
P Ashmore ^T	K Benyon-Tinker ^W	DJ Burges ^T	FA Clements ^T
J Atkinson	E Bew ^B	M Burgess ^T	G Clements ^T
L Atter	N Biddulph ^{BT}	SJ Burgess ^T	J Clements ^T
K Attree	SA Bigg	N Burgum ^T	A Clements-Partridge ^T
W Attridge	V Bignell ^T	R Burkmar ^T	P Clist
M Attwood	SM Bignold ST	ANM Burns ^{BT}	M Coath ^T
J Austen	P Billings ^T	J Butler ^T	C Cockburn ^W
P Austen	J Bills ^B	RA Butler ^{BW}	S Cocker ^W
BP Austin ^T	JH Bingley ^T	IM Calderwood ^T	G Coe ^X
D Austin ^T	M Bird ^T	T Callaway ^W	J Coit ^W
J Aylward ^T	Birdguides ^T	P Callis	MA Cole ^T
S Aylward ^T	J Birkett ^T	HJ Capper	PR Cole
JWP Bacon	J Black	WJ Capper	S Coleman ^T
M Baggs ^H	RA Black ^{BW}	S Card	LJ Coley
JTA Bagley ^E	J Blundell ^T	G Carrington	H Collings ^T
GR Bagnell	A Blunden ^T	A Carrington-Cotton ^T	CB Collins ^W
L Bailey ^T	D Boddington ^{BCTW}	HM Carter ^{BCTW}	M Collins ^{BT}
S Baines ^T	P Bolam	PD Carter ^T	MA Collins
JD Baker ^T	N Bond ^T	PM Carter ^T	P Collins ^T
R Baker ^T	PF Bonham	S Carter	R Comerford ^T
MS Baldwin ^T	G Boorman ^B	SJC Carter ^{BW}	M Comley ^{BCT}
CF Ball	A Borlase ^T	R Carver ^W	CR Conroy ^T
H Ball ^T	P Borrington ^T	A Cashford ^T	S Conway ^T
P Ballantine ^T	LD Bower ^T	A Caulkett	AS Cook
L Balmforth	NJG Bowie ^T	M Causer ^W	C Cooke ^T

C Cooper ^T	W Drew	T Flower ^T	T Godby ^T
D Cooper	E Drewett ^T	SR Foote ^T	JR Goodspeed ^T
DR Cooper	FJ Dummigan ^T	BF Forbes	H Gordon
J Cooper ^T	G Durey ^W	T Forbes ^T	W Gordon ^{TW}
JF Cooper ^T	B Dye ^T	A Ford	N Goulden
S Cooper ^T	MR Eade	N Ford ^T	JS Gowers ^T
C Corrigan ^{BT}	R Eade	R Forrest ^T	AS Grace
RW Coursey ^T	R Eagles ^T	TJ Forward ^T	MR Grace
JR Cowser ^{BCHSW}	AR Eales ^W	TM Forward ^X	G Grant ^T
BR Cox ^S	C Eames	P Fosterjohn ^T	J Grant ^T
JM Cox ^T	B Easlea	K Fountain ^T	R Greaves ^X
R Coyne	J Ede ^W	T Fowler ^{TW}	MA Grech ^T
S Coyne	RDM Edgar	CJ Fox	D Green ^{BCTX}
HM Crabtree ^{BCHTW}	M Edmonds ^{BT}	TP Fox ^{BCT}	P Green ^X
DE Crawley ^T	K Edney	J Fradd ^T	NM Greenaway ^W
J Crix ^T	K Eels	A Francis ^T	C Greenfield ^T
S Cro ^T	T Eldridge ^T	TJ Fraser ^{CT}	RR Greenhalf
A Cross ^T	IS Ellis ^T	M Freeland ^X	G Griffin ^W
CSU Horsham DC	M Emberson ^{BC}	MG Freeman ^W	S Griffin ^X
MJ Cuff ^T	MJ Emery ^W	R Freeman	AJ Griffiths
J Curson ^T	J Escott ^X	CD French ^T	D Griffiths ^T
L Curson ^T	C Evans ^T	RI French ^W	H Grover ^T
SPM Curson ^X	LGR Evans	DC Fry ^T	DJ Guar ^T
J Curtin ^W	MJ Evans ^{BCTW}	K Fuller	AJ Guest ^{BCT}
RC Dalrymple ^T	P Evans	NF Fuller ^{BCT}	J Guiver ^T
J Darbyshire ^X	SJ Evans ^W	TP Fuller ^T	AC Gutteridge ^{BCT}
J Darley ^W	GD Evans	WW Fuller ^{BCTW}	TJ Guy
C Davey ^X	GM Evans ^T	KM Galtry	PRJ Hadland ^{BCT}
S Davies ^T	P Everett	MA Galtry ^T	JA Hall
W Davies ^T	J Everitt ^{HT}	D Gardiner ^T	MP Hall ^T
A Davis ^X	RJ Fairbank	S Gardiner	S Halpin
C Davis ^{BCW}	MW Fairley ^T	A Gardner ^T	CH Hamilton ST
M Davis	A Falshaw	RDJ Gardner	J Hamilton ^S
MH Davis	S Farey ^W	J Garratt	P Hamilton
S Dawes ^W	M Farmer	N Gates	F Harmer ^T
J Day ^{TW}	C Farmer-Wright ^X	J Gearty ^T	P Harmes ^X
AF de Potier ^{TW}	LF Favret ^T	CM George ^{BCTW}	GO Harris ^T
CH Dean ^{BCHTW}	JA Feest	A Giacomelli ^{BCT}	RG Harris ^T
H Debansi	BJ Fellows ^{BW}	I Gibb	PR Harrison ^T
S Delahunt	C Ferris ^T	P Gibson ^T	V Harrison ^T
M Delaney ^T	J Fielding ^X	TE Gibson-Poole ^T	D Hart ^E
H Dennis	JE Fields ^B	B Gilbert	H Hart ^E
A Denyer ^T	L Filtress	S Gilbert ^W	R Hart ^T
P Denyer	SL Fisher ^T	KB Gillam	M Hartnell
J Dickens	S Flaw ^W	BR Gilmore	WG Harvey ^{BC}
JW Dodd	D Fletcher	J Glen ^T	R Hastings ^T
EJ Dowding ^T	MR Fletcher	J Glossop	R Hatch
L Dray	G Flinn ^T	J Glover ^W	JN Hawtree ^T

RM Haydon ^T	RJB Jackson ^T	W Kirby	MV Mansson ^X
G Heath	S Jacobs ^T	M Kirk ^T	JH Marchant ^{BCT}
GA Heath ^T	L Jaggard ^T	A Kirkwood ^W	M Marchant ^H
J Hemingway ^T	B James ^T	AR Kitson	C Marrable ^X
M Henderson ^{BCE}	BD James	AR Knight ^T	N Marriner ^T
N Henry	P James ^T	DC Knight ^T	S Marsdon ^{BT}
AP Hibberd ^B	CR Janman ^{BCT}	J Knight ^T	SK Marshall ^T
R Hill ^W	G Jarvis ^X	L Knight ^B	M Martin ^{BC}
S Hill	KM Jarvis ^T	R Knight	J Martin ^B
T Hince ^X	L Jarvis ^X	R Knight ^{CTW}	H Maryson ^T
G Hinchon	J Jefcut ^T	J Knightsbridge ^T	JM Maskell ^T
R Hirst ^B	B Jeffery ^T	DR Knowles ^{BCT}	AD Mason
RS Hitchen ^{BC}	M Jeffree	R Kroener	D Mason
RS Hoad ^{BCT}	TA Jeffries	KJ Kylo ^T	W Masters ^T
JA Hobson ^{BT}	Y Jenkins ^X	DC Lang ^{HW}	PD Matson
TN Hodge ^T	GG Jenner ^W	IM Lang ^{HW}	E McGregor ^W
V Hodge ^T	S Jennings ^T	P Langdown	PAF McKenzie Lloyd ^T
C Hoff	DJ Jode ^W	P Lawrance ^T	I McKerchar
AM Holden	A Johnson ^W	A Lawson ^X	M McManus ^{CTW}
PK Holland ^{BT}	CA Johnson ^B	H Leach ^T	DF McNair ^{BT}
D Hollow ^E	D Johnson ^T	HJA Lee ^{BCEW}	JR McSweeney ^T
RG Holmes ^{BT}	JM Johnson	PJ Lees ^W	P Mears ^T
J Holt ^W	PJ Johnson	C Leeves	DGJ Meech ^T
CA Holter ^T	RJ Johnson ^{HW}	MP LeGrys	P Meiners ^B
J Holter ^T	S Johnson	K Lerwill ^X	CW Melgar
C Hooker ^T	S Johnson ^T	SM Lewes ^H	CA Melhuish ^{BC}
CE Hope ^W	A Johnston ^{BCT}	T Lifton ^{BCT}	D Melville ^T
M Hopkins	S Jonas	A Lillywhite	R Menhenett ^W
JHM Horne ^{BC}	C Jones ^T	TJ Lincoln	J Mercer
R Horton ^T	GW Jones ^T	E Line ^X	N Merchant ^T
A House	MGM Jones ^T	SH Linington	P Meredith ^X
A Howard ^W	PE Jones ^{BCT}	I Lister ^T	M Merriman ^T
SM Howard ^T	RJ Jones ^T	DR Livett	SJ Message ^T
FI Howard-Brown ^T	SEI Jones ^T	AH Lloyd ^W	G Messingbird
DH Howey	M Joules ^T	C Lodge ^T	G Michelmores ^{BCT}
JR Howey	ME Kalaher	P Lomas ^T	C Milkins ^T
PH Hughes ^W	B Kay	M Love ^{BCT}	A Millar ^T
ID Hunter ^{CT}	R Kemp ^T	AR Loweth ^T	AM Miller ^T
S Hunter ^B	MR Kenefick	PJ Luffingham ^H	GK Mitchell ^T
NP Hutchinson ^{BTW}	R Kilby ^T	T Lux ^T	O Mitchell ^T
AM Hutson ^{CW}	AJ Killick ^T	G Lyons ^X	NB Mitchell ^T
G Huxley ^T	J Kington ^T	A Macdonald-Brown ^T	G Mitchelmore ^W
C Hyde Wear	DR King	B Mackintosh ^T	P Moon ^W
DJ Hyland ^T	JE King ^T	DJ Madgin ^T	C Moore
R Iredale ^T	JW King	S Mair ^T	J Moore
RA Ives	MN King ^{CT}	I Manfield ^T	NJ Moran ^T
L Jackson ^T	RJ King	L Mann ^T	H Morgan ^T
RA Jackson ^T	G Kinnard	RC Mann	G Morley ^W

R Morris ^W	RT Pepper ^T	N Redman	J Searle ^B
C Mortimer ^T	L Percival ^{CW}	B Reeve ^H	CM Seaton
BM Mortlock	A Perrett ^W	R Reeves	RC Self
PL Mulcahy ^T	A Perry ^{ET}	R Regan ^X	C Sell ^T
MF Mullen ^B	M Perry ^T	WJ Reid	J Sellwood ^T
M Mullins	R Perry	RF Rettke-Grover ^T	RJ Senior ^W
MJ Mullis ^T	CB Peverett ^T	Rye Bay RG ^T	MV Sennitt ^B
ST Munday ^T	AP Phillips	JP Richards ^T	K Sexton ^T
K Murphy ^{BCT}	MJ Phillips ^W	JE Richardson ^T	M Shaft ^H
D Mutters ^T	R Phillips ^T	L Richardson ^{BH}	RJ Shanks ^{BCT}
M Netherwood ^T	SM Phillips ^S	G Riches ^T	C Sharp
JA Newnham ^{BCTW}	A Piggot ^W	P Ridgeon ^T	MD Shaw ^{BCTW}
J Newton ^X	PJ Plant ^B	S Ridley ^T	CR Shawyer
M Newton	R Platt ^T	C Roach ^T	K Shea ^T
SJ Newton ^{BCT}	D Pledge ^T	GCM Roberts ^H	DR Shepherd
JL Nobbs ^{BCT}	D Plummer ^X	H Roberts ^W	J Shilitoe ^W
J Nolan	A Podmore ^W	M Roberts ^T	K Shilitoe ^W
A Norbury ^T	CR Poole ^{BCT}	S Robinson ^W	G Siddle ^W
JR Norman ^T	NJN Pope	R Roebuck ^X	IM Simpson ^{HW}
RK Norman ^T	S Posen ^T	BM Rogers ^E	KFW Simpson ^{BC}
D Norris	D Potter ^T	DP Rogers ^{BCT}	RN Simpson
A Nottage ^T	DA Potter	MD Rolfe ^T	SP Simpson ^{BCTW}
JA Nundy ^T	GR Potts	JL Roman ^T	T Simpson
C OFlynn ^T	HVD Prendergast ^T	IH Rookledge ^T	A Simpson MBE ^{WX}
G Osborne ^{BC}	L Prevost	C Rose ^W	A Skerl ^W
A Owen ^T	R Price ^X	T Rose ^T	A Skerl ^T
L Owen	R Price ^{BWX}	A Ross ^T	AJ Skinner ^{BCW}
MP Owen ^{BCT}	C Prince ^{HW}	J Ross ^T	B Smith
RC Owen	DM Pritchard ^T	BN Rossiter ^T	DI Smith
D Owers	H Pude ^T	H Rouse	PA Smith ^T
S Pagett ^W	J Pullen ^W	P Rouse ^T	RJ Smith ^T
S Pain	RN Pulley	H Rowe	S Smith
S Palme ^S	RHA Putnam ^T	E Rowsell ^{TW}	M Smith
A Parfitt ^{TW}	B Puttock ^{TW}	SJR Rumsey	S Smith
NM Parish ^T	AR Quinton ^T	MG Russell ^X	AC Smithen ^{BCTW}
A Parker	B Rainbow ^X	S Russell	D Sneller ^{CW}
J Parker ^T	H Ram	ND Rutherford ^{BCW}	TG Snow ^{BCT}
M Parker ^X	N Randon	CJ Rymer ^T	J Sorensen
TW Parmenter	D Ransome ^X	D Sadler ^X	F Southgate ^X
R Parsons ^W	NM Ratcliffe ^T	D Samsudin	R Spano ^X
RA Pask	J Rawles ^T	JF Sanderson ^{BC}	J Sparkes
J Patterson ^X	S Rayburn ^T	RF Sanderson ^T	P Spiers ^W
A Peachey ^T	EM Raynor	D Saunders ^T	GC Spinks
A Pearce ^W	GM Raynor	B Savill ^T	T Stachnicki ^T
R Peck ^T	PJ Raynor	AD Scott ^T	M Standen ^T
A Pedliham ^T	M Read	M Scott-ham ^{BHT}	E Standing
CJ Pennells ^{CT}	C Reay ^{CHT}	H Seabrook	I Standivan ^W
RF Penticost ^{BCW}	J Redford	T Seabrook ^{BCW}	J Stanton

A Stead	PM Troake	M Warren ^S	DC Williams ^S
MJ Stenning ^B	P Trodd	RF Warren ^T	H Williams
CL Stevens ^T	CE Trollope ^T	D Washington	M Williams ^T
L Stevens	D Trott ^T	M Washington	C Williamson ^T
PC Stevens ^W	JE Trowell ^W	MWR Washington	R Williamson ^W
P Stokes ^{BC}	WH Truckle	KW Waterfall ^T	RLC Williamson ^W
PJ Strangeman ^{BT}	M Turner ^{BCW}	T Waters ^W	J Willsher
R Street ^T	T Turner ^T	AB Watson ^{HT}	C Wilson
PA Sullivan ^T	P Turney	D Watson	G Wilson ^T
S Sutton ^H	S Tusa ^T	T Watson ^X	KD Wilson
L Taylor ^X	WM Twitchett ^T	PJ Webster ^T	TJ Wilson ^X
M Taylor	D Tyler ^T	SD Webster ^T	D Wiltshire ^T
R Taylor ^X	P Tyler ^T	DJ Wedd ^{BC}	I Wiltshire ^B
SR Taylor ^{BW}	R Tyrrell ^T	M Welcome ^W	JS Winder ^T
CR Tazzyman	ST Underdown ^W	PJ Wells	MR Wingrove ^T
S Teale ^X	J Underwood	AJ Wende ^T	LF Winter ^T
RC Theobald ^T	G Upton ^T	DR West ^{BC}	A Witts ^T
A Thomas ^T	ED Urquhart ^W	R West ^T	J Wood ^X
A Thomas ^B	A Utting	D Westlake ^T	V Wood ^{BC}
S Thomas	P Varkala ^T	JD Weston ^W	CW Woodburn ^W
T Thomas ^T	H Vaughan ^{BC}	AD Whitcomb	I Woodburn ^W
PS Thompson	FB Venn ^{BT}	PJ Whitcomb ^T	C Woodward ^W
RP Thompson ^T	C Vince ^W	C White ^T	I Woolsey
J Thraves ^T	S Vincent ^T	R White ^T	S Wootton
JE Tilbury ^B	C Vine ^W	R White	JA Worrall ^B
PA Tinning ^X	GJ Vine ^T	J Whitfield ^T	JM Worthington Wilde ^{BC}
PC Tinning ^X	B Wadge ^X	AM Whitman	CH Wright
F Titchener ^W	G Waldron ^T	JH Whitman	CMV Wright ^{BC}
R Tofts	CA Walker ^S	H Whittall ^B	J Wright ^W
M Tomlins ^W	D Walker ^W	K Whittleton ^T	K Wright ^W
E Tooth ^T	L Wallace	JA Wichall ^T	M Wright ^T
P Treagust ^X	SF Walsh	M Wiggins ^T	WWT
C Tremlett	JM Walters ^T	Wildcall Recorder ^X	BJ Yates ^W
S Trenerry ^T	LA Walther ^{CT}	D Wilkinson ^T	S Younger ^W
C Trew	HM Warne ^T	J Wilkinson ^T	
G Trew ^W	N Warne ^B	J Wilks	

The superscripts in the above table indicate the particular survey(s) in which contributors participated, as follows:

- 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 and database manager are especially grateful to the following team of helpers for coding and inputting the other records onto the computer: J Atkinson, CF Ball, Mrs VP Bentley, C Buckle, T Callaway, BR Clay, CB Collins, JR Cowser, DE Crawley, CH Dean, RDM Edgar, J Everitt, BF Forbes, MG Freeman, BR Gilmore, Ms H Gordon, Mrs P Green, G Heath, JA Hobson, AM Holden, CE Hope, A House, P Hughes, RA Ives, P Johnson, R Knight, IM Lang, S Linington, O Mitchell, Mrs BM Mortlock, A Parker, A Perry, H Prendergast, RN Pulley, GCM Roberts, Ms H Rouse, E Rowsell, Rye Bay Ringing Group, M Scott-Ham, Mrs IM Simpson, DI Smith, P Stevens, D Walker, Dr AB Watson, RF Watson, PJ Whitcomb, JH Whitman, TJ Wilson, I Woolsey and Dr BJ Yates.

SURVEYS

Society members again gave a great deal of their time during the year to a wide range of national, county and local surveys. Their invaluable support and contributions are acknowledged with grateful thanks. Details of the surveys and the Sussex organisers follow:

Breeding Bird Survey (BBS): This BTO annual national breeding survey, based on selected 1-km squares, is organised in Sussex by Dr Helen Crabtree, 3 Myrtle Cottages, Ardingly Road, Cuckfield, West Sussex, RH17 5HD (hcrabtree@gmail.com). Thanks are due to the 119 observers involved who are indicated by ^B in the above table.

Thames Basin and Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey: This continuing survey of heaths and heath woodlands (see table on page 215) is undertaken in collaboration with the RSPB and the bird clubs of Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey. The Sussex organiser is Alan Perry, Edgehill Barn, Byworth, near Petworth, West Sussex, GU28 0HR (alan@alanperry.uk.com). Thanks are due to the 10 observers involved who are indicated by ^E in the list of contributors.

Heronries Census: This long-standing national census was organised in Sussex during 2012 by Dr AB Watson, 83 Buckingham Road, Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex, BN43 5UD (barriewatson1@talktalk.net). Counts of known heronries are given in the systematic list. Thanks are due to the 24 contributors who are indicated by ^H in the above table. From 2013 this survey will be coordinated by Dr Helen Crabtree (contact details as above).

Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS): Monthly counts were carried out for this BTO/WWT/RSPB/JNCC survey and organised by Richard Bown, 49 Long Beach View, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN23 5NB (hr.bown@btinternet.com). Coordinating the counts in large areas has been undertaken by local reserve wardens as shown below. Thanks are due to these and the 140 counters who are indicated by ^W in the list of contributors.

Sussex Ornithological Society surveys: The completion of the breeding season survey of Rooks and a small survey of selected sites for Wood Warblers were organised by Richard Cowser, Beaver's Brook, The Thatchway, Angmering, West Sussex, BN16 4HJ (surveys@sos.org.uk) and the 10 participants are indicated by ^S in the list of contributors.

Sussex Winter Bird Survey (SWBS): This county survey based, like the BBS, on selected 1-km squares, was organised in Sussex for 2012 by Dr Helen Crabtree (contact details as above). Thanks are due to the 85 observers involved who are indicated by ^C in the above table.

Nightingale survey: This BTO study aimed to survey each tetrad where Nightingales had been previously recorded, plus some further randomly-selected tetrads. Any singing Nightingales found during two visits during the early spring were plotted onto pre-printed survey forms.

Nocturnal visits were also requested in occupied tetrads. This paper-based survey was organised by Dr Helen Crabtree (contact details as above) in Sussex. The survey was extended into 2013 and participants will be acknowledged when the survey has been completed.

Winter thrushes survey: This national online-only survey operating through the BTO website commenced in September 2012 and has been extended to cover the 2013-14 winter. Observers were invited to set up routes, based loosely on 1-km squares, for repeated winter walks and to record locations of all thrushes observed, including details about habitat and feeding activity. The survey was coordinated by Dr Helen Crabtree (contact details as above). Thanks are due to the observers involved who will be acknowledged on completion of the survey.

Coordination 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 (j.newnham1@ntlworld.com).

SUMMARIES OF OBSERVATIONS

We are grateful for summaries of detailed observations at Chichester Harbour from E. Rowsell; Thorney and Pilsey Islands from CB 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 and Ms J Glossop; Weir Wood Reservoir from Mrs BM Mortlock; Ashdown Forest from P Johnson; Telscombe Cliffs from DH Howey; Splash Point (Seaford) from BR Gilmore; Seaford Head from M Eade; Beachy Head from RDM Edgar and D & JF Cooper; Bewl Water from MG Freeman; Pannel Valley NR from Rye Bay Ringing Group; and Rye Harbour from Dr BJ Yates. We also thank Mrs P Green at 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 425 Sussex contributors to BirdTrack are marked with a ^T in the above table. The records from Birdguides for 2012 were channelled through BirdTrack. Thanks are due to the BTO for the county BirdTrack records, as well as county records for the Breeding Bird Survey and Wetland Bird Survey.

RINGING

Thanks are due to SF Walsh for maintaining detailed records of ringing in the county and to all ringers who contributed data.

NEW SPECIES for SUSSEX in 2012

There was no repeat of the 2011 rush of six new species being added to the county list, but the Hooded Merganser present in Pagham Harbour from 30 Oct to 17 Nov was new. Previous reports of this species have all been treated as escaped birds but this record has been accepted by BBRC as a genuinely wild bird and brings the Sussex total to 398. Being only the seventh record for Britain, the bird attracted observers from all over the country. The merganser proved elusive at times but most, although not all, visitors did manage to see it.

Although Parrot Crossbill is not a new species for the county, it is necessary to go back over 130 years to March 1870 for the only other record when one was shot in St Leonard's Forest and which is now in the Booth Museum.

The details surrounding the finding of these two birds are described on the following pages.

Hooded Merganser

Lophodytes cucullatus

A New Species for Sussex at RSPB Pagham Harbour

Owen Mitchell

I had been out birding on my local patch during the morning of 6 November 2012, but having seen nothing unusual headed home by early afternoon, certainly not expecting to do any further birding. That changed however when a couple of hours later a text message emanating from David Potter (DP) alerted me to a female Hooded Merganser present in the main harbour channel off the North Wall sluice at Pagham Harbour. It was by now late afternoon and I must admit the thought flashed through my mind that this was likely to be a waste of time and probably an escaped bird as many are kept in wildfowl collections, but given the date and the recent superstorm Sandy off the American east coast, I considered it worth a look. As I gathered up my optics and headed out the door, I quickly contacted Chris Janman (CRJ) who lived nearer the site than me and could give an early update; sure enough Chris got there before me and soon texted, confirming the bird was still there and looking good. I eventually joined him on site a few minutes later, just before the light started to fail.

On my arrival the bird, which was clearly a female-type Hooded Merganser, was actively feeding in the main saltwater channel, directly in front of me and at times coming as close as around 25-30 metres, before drifting back and further out. I also saw DP and Dave Shepherd (DS), and then a short while later Bob Coyne (RC) appeared. I spoke to them all and ascertained that DS had seen the bird fly in from behind the Breech Pool area and settle in the channel, when he drew DP's attention to it. They excitedly discussed the identification and agreed it was a Hooded Merganser, so DP began to take a series of excellent photographs, but they wanted confirmation of the sighting so fortunately (for me) made contact. RC then explained that he had originally found the bird in the same area about a week earlier when he was out walking with his wife; however it quickly disappeared from view then and he couldn't relocate it, so understandably he decided it wasn't worth publicising the news, mainly as he felt others would be likely to ridicule it or just dismiss it out of hand. I thanked them all for the information and for contacting me, then CRJ and I looked at some of the fine images on DP's camera. The bird looked to be fit and in fresh plumage, and whilst peering at the screen in slowly fading light did not make for conclusive evidence (especially without reading glasses!), we certainly could not see any sign of a leg ring, whilst one shot of the full open wing did not show any obvious irregularity attributable to wing-clipping or captivity. CRJ and I discussed the situation with DP, DS and RC; we all agreed it was time to put the news out, so began contacting others, also alerting the pager company.



Hooded Merganser, Pagham Harbour, November 2012 (David Potter)

So far so good: it was undoubtedly a Hooded Merganser, but what was the age of the bird? I hadn't had time to research at home before leaving and my memory banks were now on overload, so I admit my knowledge of this species' ageing and moult patterns was fairly minimal. Even so the general plumage tone was perhaps a shade duller overall than I expected of an adult female, the eye appeared to be a very dull reddish colour and the underwing was neat with some pale fresh fringing on the secondaries and slight pointing to the innermost secondaries. I wondered if

it might be a first-winter bird and expressed this view to the others whilst we continued to watch, but before long the light started to go and the bird swam into a side creek. One other observer, Chris Glanfield (CG), hurriedly arrived just in time, breathless and without binoculars having received the news as he left work; fortunately he was able to borrow my optics to see the bird, before it disappeared into the side creek. CG consulted his mobile phone app, to try and help establish the age of the bird, but we could not fully clinch it as it did not re-appear and the light then failed. However, the basic information from the phone app was at least supportive of a first-winter female (or perhaps male) as far as it went, which was far from conclusive.

As darkness fell it was time to head off home, make enquiries and review DP's photographic evidence. Driving homewards, my mind was in a whirl as I reviewed the situation: the identification was definite, it was unringed, feeding freely and not unduly tame; it was in fresh plumage which showed no obvious signs of captivity or feather damage, it was at a likely time of year for a vagrant, and it was quite possibly a first-winter bird. But hang on; this was Pagham Harbour on the south coast. Then again, why not; who could have predicted the Tufted Puffin in Kent a little while ago? There was one other thing though, of no scientific value whatever: a tingling feeling of cautious excitement was starting to build. Call it a gut feeling but my instincts were somehow telling me this was a good record of a wild bird!

Later that evening I contacted an acquaintance at the Arundel WWT and confirmed the bird was not one of theirs. I also discussed the sighting with several birders and sought their views, including that of Lee Evans (LGRE). He originally thought it might be an adult female due to the bird's darkish back, but made enquiries with his contacts in the USA and sent copies of DP's photographs. In short, my suspicions were proved correct and the decision came back in favour of a first-winter female. I include below a copy of this actual correspondence:

"Peter Pyle [US wildfowl expert] kindly responded to my request and after studying the open wing from Dave's excellent images, we both came to the conclusion that the Pagham bird is a FIRST-WINTER, probably female but males can also look like this until late December. There are no unringed Hooded Mergansers at Arundel WWT but they are abundant in captivity, even in private ornamental collections. However, there is a distinct emerging pattern with UK Hooded Merganser records, with a distinct bias towards November occurrences... too much of a coincidence me thinks, especially as this coincides with the peak period of passage for young Hooded Mergansers down the Eastern seaboard. I would say that this bird is a good 'un. All the very best, Lee Evans."

Armed with LGRE's information I then put out the news more fully late that evening, but next day there was no sign at all of the bird and it didn't show to the surprisingly small gathering of locals who had gone to see it. There was some disappointment but inevitably of course many birders just dismissed it as an escape at this stage, understandably so until all the facts are considered. Some ill-researched comments on the SOS website and elsewhere began to appear, discussing the long-staying Dorset bird (a male at Radipole) and other alleged tame individuals coming to bread, so I drafted a comment in response. I won't repeat it all here, but it ended with the following: "Yes there are many in captivity and I am not qualified to say whether this is one of them, but I still feel this is one worth going to see if it re-appears. You might just thank me!"

The following day, 8 November, to the relief of many, the Hooded Merganser was re-located back in the harbour channel near the sluice, feeding busily on crustaceans, crabs and small fish. At times it would feed apparently unconcerned by the growing band of observers and give good views, whilst at other times it would move much further away or fly off freely into the harbour interior and remain out of view. It sometimes associated with a small flock of Mallards or other wildfowl, but equally spent a good deal of time on its own, feeding actively. It was by now

national news and many initially-reluctant county and national listers made the effort to see it. Over the next week the bird continued to show, but on one day went missing again and often disappeared from view for periods of time on other days; it was noted to be free-flying and several times flew off over the reserve's North fields/Breech Pool, only to return later.

It was still present on the sluice channel on Saturday 17 November 2012, but that night there was a change in the weather with a sharp frost and clear starlit conditions developing; the morning of the 18th was clear, bright and sunny but the Hooded Merganser could not be re-located. It had gone, bang on cue, maintaining its credentials and as far as I'm aware it was not re-located elsewhere. Time then for the debates to start on whether this was a genuine wild bird and for the detractors to begin their theories: too tame, wrong location, escape potential too high? Certainly there have been up to three previous occurrences in the county, all of birds considered to have been obvious escapes from captivity, the last being a male in March 2011 on Sidlesham Ferry Pool which was widely believed to have been the Dorset bird on a brief excursion from Radipole. However, despite this I could see no good reason why this bird should be considered suspect, even though Pagham Harbour is perhaps not the most obvious of locations. Perhaps importantly I never saw it behaving in a manner suggestive of it being over familiar with humans and I didn't hear of any confirmed reports suggesting excessive tameness, feeding on bread, or other activity suggestive of captive origins. It was free-flying and generally wary, even though for periods of time it would approach fairly closely, usually when busily feeding. On balance then, I thought this a valid record, so I consulted with those already mentioned in this report and decided to have the courage of my convictions and submit it to the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC).

It seemed a long wait, but after due consideration it was formally accepted by the BBRC, and the rest, as they say, is history. Doubtless there will be a few who will still point to the escape potential of this species and feel it should not be added to the national record; that is their prerogative, but in all the circumstances I feel it rightly deserves its place there, and on the county record too - and on my list! It was the first record for Sussex and the seventh accepted British record.

Acknowledgements: I am most grateful to David Potter who alerted me to the bird's presence and then readily and freely provided some superb photographs which helped so effectively in the initial ageing and identification process. My thanks also to Bob Coyne and Dave Shepherd for their full information on the discovery of this bird, Chris Janman and Chris Glanfield for their assistance on site and Lee Evans for background enquiries, information and permission to use correspondence. Finally, my thanks to the staff at Pagham Harbour for their patience and to all others too numerous to mention who have helped in various ways.

Parrot Crossbill

Loxia pytyopsittacus

Finder's Account

Dave Burges

Many Sussex birders will know that Blackdown, running from its northern "root" in Surrey to its southern tip in West Sussex, is generally cited as the second highest point in South East England, at 280 metres above sea level. Much of the Weald, including the highest point in the region, Leith Hill, can be clearly seen from the many vantage points along this imposing Greensand ridge.

After exemplary heathland restoration by the National Trust, the ridge now comprises large areas of grazed heathland with retained stands of Scots Pine and scattered Birch, Rowan and

Whitebeam, and is well known for its impressive Beech hanger on the east-facing slopes. There is a scattering of small ponds, often the focus of migrant and wintering passerine activity, as well as providing excellent habitat for a range of dragonfly species.

In addition to its typical heathland and woodland bird communities (the current lack of Dartford Warblers notwithstanding) it can be a great place for visible migration in spring and autumn. Winter can, however, be very quiet indeed, especially in cold snaps with prolonged snow cover: hence the aforementioned lack of Dartford Warblers. However, given a good cone crop, Crossbills can be a feature of the site at almost any time of year, and have bred in small numbers in recent years.

I wasn't really expecting to see a great deal on my first visit of 2012 on 22 January, after a Christmas and New Year holiday in Central America. However, having walked in along the track from the end of Chase Lane, I almost bumped into a clearly large, bulky female Crossbill (these features noticeable even to the naked eye), sitting by the pond on the west side of the track.



Parrot Crossbill, Blackdown, February 2012 (Kris Webb)

The possible implications were immediately obvious, and through binoculars the large head and heavy-jowled appearance, and of course the size and shape of the bill were striking. The bird also exhibited a rather short-tailed, Hawfinch-like jizz. The plumage wasn't strikingly different to that of female Common Crossbill, but the grey "shawl" around its nape and upper mantle were noticeable, and probably enhanced the large-headed appearance.

Luckily the bird was quickly joined by some of the (at the time) numerous Common Crossbills on the site enabling a direct comparison. Whilst I hadn't previously seen Parrot Crossbill, this bird appeared to be a serious contender; a tentative conclusion confirmed once I had compared my hastily-taken field notes to the usual references when I got home. I was well aware that the

bird was likely to be the subject of some debate, and probably quite a draw too. A second opinion was clearly desirable, and I asked Gerry Hinchon if he could have a look at the bird as soon as possible. He caught up with the bird the following week, and agreed with my initial conclusion. In advance of releasing any news, I wanted to be certain that the National Trust would be content with a likely influx of birders. I was assured that this would be acceptable, so having looked at the bird again on 28 January, Gerry and I confirmed our views and released news of the bird that weekend. During the next week or so the bird was most frequently seen with Common Crossbills at or near the pond. Colder weather made its appearances less predictable, but it was seen until mid-February at least.



Parrot Crossbill, Blackdown, February 2012 (Michael Mckee)

A full discussion of the identification features of Parrot Crossbill, and photographs of this bird, can be found in *Birding World* **25(2)**:60-64. The only previous record of Parrot Crossbill in Sussex was a bird shot in St Leonard's Forest in March 1870 (*Birds of Sussex*).

A chance observation such as this makes you wonder how many other rarities are lurking undetected in the under-watched hinterland of Sussex!

[The bird at Blackdown, from 22 Jan to 16 Feb, was featured in *Birding World* but caused considerable debate. Members of the SOSRC carried out a great deal of research, reading identification papers in both British and foreign journals and obtaining opinions from experienced observers in this country and in Finland before accepting the record. DHH]

The Sussex Ringing Report for 2012

Sue Walsh

There was a marked decline during 2012 in the number of birds ringed in Sussex as compared to previous years. This reflects a decline across the whole of Britain and Ireland. It is thought that the main reasons were the weather which affected the number of times it was possible to ring birds as well as the poor breeding season which reduced the number of birds available to be trapped and ringed. The total number of birds ringed in Sussex was 12% down on the previous four-year mean and the lowest number since 2008. The decline is twice the national average which is 6%. The reduction in neighbouring Surrey is even greater at 16% whereas the figure for Kent is equal to the national average and that for Hampshire goes against the trend and shows an increase of 17%. This demonstrates how the figures can vary across the south-east. The details are shown in Table 1. (*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. All observations on species and numbers ringed refer only to those reported to the author or the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). Details of annual totals can be found on the BTO website at <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/ringing/publications/online-ringing-reports>).*

In contrast to the overall decline in Sussex the numbers ringed of some common species were maintained or increased in 2012. These species include Blackbird, Willow Warbler, House Martin, Jackdaw and Goldcrest.

A total of 114 species were reported as ringed in Sussex in 2012. This is lower than the record total of 120 species in 2011 but similar to the levels in 2010 and 2009 which were 115 and 112, respectively.

Table 1. *A summary of ringing totals in the counties of south-east England as compared to the totals for Britain and Ireland for 2008-2012.*

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Change in 2012 (%) compared with previous 4-year mean
Sussex	54,555	74,104	82,689	102,203	68,767	-12%
Surrey	15,343	17,240	18,403	22,676	15,546	-16%
Kent	26,690	25,746	29,329	34,048	27,126	-6%
Hampshire	11,768	12,869	19,029	25,384	20,318	17%
Britain and Ireland	828,326	930,325	1,100,713	1,151,461	942,754	-6%

Reports of birds ringed were received from 22 individuals and groups reporting a total of 68,767 birds ringed in Sussex in 2012. Nearly 78% (53,439) were ringed by Rye Bay Ringing Group (RBRG) at Pett Level which is a similar proportion of the county total to that reported in 2011. The 108 different species ringed by RBRG illustrates that they ringed all but six of the total number of species ringed in the county in 2012. The contribution of RBRG means that the total number of birds ringed in Sussex is significantly higher than the number ringed in the neighbouring counties in the south-east as shown in Table 1.

Rarities and notable records

There were a number of scarce species which were ringed during the year. Most of these were ringed by RBRG. These included three Yellow-browed Warblers, two Marsh Warblers, two

Water Pipits, one Barred Warbler, one Bluethroat and one Common Rosefinch. Elsewhere, near Pyecombe, a Pallas's Leaf Warbler was ringed by Pamela Mears. This species is rarely ringed in Sussex with previous records in 1995, 2004, 2009 and 2011.



Pallas's Leaf Warbler, near Pyecombe (Ann Hasler)

There are species which are commonly seen in Sussex but which are not often ringed. For a coastal county it is perhaps surprising that so few sea birds are ringed. Most seabirds are ringed at nesting colonies, restricting ringers in Sussex to Kittiwake and Fulmar colonies which nest on the dangerous chalk cliffs as well as gull and tern colonies and rubbish tips. Only four Herring Gulls and 36 Black-headed Gulls were ringed. Prior to 1994, much larger numbers of these birds were ringed as is shown by the totals for Sussex from 1979 to date. This is due to gull studies in earlier years at rubbish tips and a project by RBRG on Herring Gulls and Lesser Black-backed Gulls that has now ended. In 2012 one Fulmar was ringed, only the ninth ringed in Sussex since 1979. Also, two Common Gulls were ringed, the first since 2001. Some common species of raptors are also rarely ringed in Sussex. A total of four Common Buzzards were ringed during the year. Three of these were ringed as pulli by RBRG. A fully-grown bird was caught in Bignor in a chicken run and ringed by Martin Lanaway but only after it had killed three bantams including Elvis the cockerle!! It was released at a safe distance from the remaining chickens. A single Hobby was ringed, bringing the county total since 1979 to 26. Other infrequently ringed species included in the 2012 records were one Mandarin Duck, two Quail, one Little Grebe, one Turtle Dove, three Cuckoos, one Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, four Wrynecks, one Skylark, six Wood Warblers and four Common Crossbills.

There are some notable species which have been ringed in recent years but which were not ringed in 2012. These include Stone-curlew and Little Owl. Stone-curlews bred for the first time for many years in Sussex in 2010. Two chicks were ringed in 2010 and four in 2011. Unfortunately,

due to the adverse weather in 2012, the birds did not progress past the egg stage so there were no chicks to ring. Double-figure numbers of Little Owl were regularly ringed each year until 2002. From 2003 they were ringed each year in single figures but 2012 is the first year in which no birds have been reported as ringed at all. Table 2 shows those ringing totals for species which reflect declining numbers in Sussex. Detailed figures for the other species mentioned above can be found on the BTO website.

Table 2. Ringing totals for species which reflect declining numbers in Sussex. Birds of conservation concern are marked as: **red-listed; *amber-listed.

Species	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Sussex 1979-2012	Britain & Ireland 2012
Turtle Dove**		1	2	4	1	102	38
Common Cuckoo			3		3	79	75
Little Owl	5	6	3	2		295	499
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**	4	1		2	1	38	9
Wood Warbler		2	2	3	6	145	529

Table 3. Sussex ringing totals for the 20 most ringed species in 2012. Birds of conservation concern are marked as: **red-listed; *amber-listed.

Ranking	Species (with position in 2011)	2012		Total in 2011	Total in 2010
		Total	RBRG		
1.	Blackcap (1)	7904	6180	15,919	11,019
2.	Chiffchaff (3)	7868	7620	10,673	5899
3.	Sedge Warbler (2)	7757	6552	11,648	9879
4.	Reed Warbler (4)	5374	5091	8613	8739
5.	Barn Swallow* (6)	4909	4574	5671	4603
6.	Blue Tit (7)	4542	1612	5557	7381
7.	Sand Martin* (8)	4315	4314	4684	3035
8.	Willow Warbler* (10)	4130	3444	4094	4100
9.	Lesser Redpoll *(5)	2290	1814	7415	2678
10.	Goldfinch (11)	2067	893	2881	2061
11.	Common Whitethroat* (9)	1732	1302	4642	2282
12.	Great Tit (12)	1698	709	2545	2625
13.	House Martin* (19)	1122	1057	941	1257
14.	Robin (15)	1107	653	1171	1165
15.	Blackbird (18)	1103	656	952	1154
16.	Greenfinch (14)	903	445	1253	1054
17.	Goldcrest (25)	755	531	540	487
18.	Chaffinch (16)	715	393	1115	1069
19.	Wren (23)	642	391	723	590
20.	Duncock* (22)	599	304	737	788

Top 20 species ringed

Table 3 lists the 20 most ringed species in Sussex during 2012. It shows, too, the numbers of these species ringed by RBRG, demonstrating the considerable contribution this group makes to Sussex ringing. The 20 most ringed species account for 89% of all the birds ringed in Sussex

during 2012. This compares to 92% in 2011 and 89% in 2010. Blackcap remains at the top of the list as it has for the last four years although less than half the numbers were ringed in 2012 compared to the record year in 2011. New to the list of the top 20 species are Goldcrest, Wren and Dunnock which have displaced Grasshopper Warbler, Garden Warbler and Reed Bunting. In the years 1998 to 2008 the numbers of Grasshopper Warblers ringed each year averaged around 500 birds. Over the following three years the numbers increased to a county high of 1635 in 2011. The fall to 526 in 2012 returns the number ringed to the previous level. This reflects a similar pattern countrywide which is unsurprising as most birds are ringed at Rye Bay and are likely to be passage birds coming from other British breeding sites.

All the species in the list show a decline in numbers ringed compared to last year, with the exception of Willow Warbler, House Martin, Blackbird and Goldcrest. Willow Warbler moved back up the table after its fall last year, reaching a new record for the county in 2012. This is counter to the national trend which recorded an 11% fall in 2012 compared to 2011. Willow Warbler is doing badly as a breeding species in Sussex so this increase in numbers ringed shows again the importance of the county for the ringing of migratory warblers – in the case of Willow Warblers from Northern Britain.

Highs and lows

Apart from the top 20 species ringed there are other highs and lows shown by the ringing records (see Table 4). A record number of birds were ringed in 2012 for five species: Tree Pipit, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Firecrest, Nuthatch and Jay. In 2011 and 2012 there has been a marked increase in the number of Tree Pipits ringed in Sussex. The record number for this species of 112 almost doubled the previous record of 61 in 1998. Great Spotted Woodpecker and Nuthatch showed a 22% and 20% increase, respectively, over the 2011 totals. The 41 Jays ringed more than doubled the 2011 total of 18. The numbers of Firecrest ringed have slowly been increasing over the last four years to reach a high of 44 in 2012.

Other species were ringed in high numbers compared to previous years. An increase in the number of Collared Doves ringed brings the total to the highest level for that species since 2005. In the last four years there has been a marked increase in the numbers of Jackdaws reported as ringed. The majority were part of a project by RBRG which subsequently became a Retrapping Adults for Survival (RAS) project (see <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/ringing/surveys/ras>). Prior to 2009 these birds were typically ringed in single- or double-figure numbers. This increased to three-figure numbers from 2008 and went up in 2012 to the second highest level at 495. This follows a similar trend nationwide. The numbers ringed of Linnet (75) and Yellowhammer (53) are the highest totals since 1996. It was a good year, too, for Rook with higher ringing totals seen in only three previous years: 1996, 2007 and 2008.

Some species show a marked decline in the numbers ringed in 2012, significantly in excess of the general decline in the numbers ringed during the year. Before 1998 Mistle Thrush was typically ringed in double-figure numbers with a high of 112 in 1986. Since 1998 it has been more typical to see single-figure numbers being ringed with a low of one bird ringed in 2012. The 41 Cetti's Warblers ringed in 2012 is the lowest annual total for that species since 2002. Only two Bramblings were ringed which is the lowest figure since 2002. In recent years numbers of Bramblings ringed have been significantly higher reaching a high of 166 in 2004. At 416 the number of Reed Buntings ringed is the lowest total since 2001.

All these numbers are put into context in Table 4 which shows reported records in Sussex for each of the last five years and compares those figures with the totals ringed in Britain and Ireland in 2012 and the total numbers reported as ringed in Sussex since 1979.

Table 4. Numbers of notable species ringed in Sussex each year from 2008 to 2012 compared to totals for these species for Sussex 1979 to 2012 and Britain and Ireland for 2012. Birds of conservation concern are marked as: **red-listed; *amber-listed.

Species	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Sussex 1979-2012	Britain & Ireland 2012
Collared Dove	13	12	11	6	25	722	877
Great Spotted Woodpecker	64	50	93	115	140	1146	2416
Tree Pipit**	43	58	50	90	112	929	638
Mistle Thrush*	4	2	11	9	1	697	292
Cetti's Warbler	131	231	133	62	41	1192	474
Firecrest*	15	31	35	39	44	581	394
Nuthatch	94	60	88	89	107	2512	2614
Jay	14	14	37	18	41	537	865
Jackdaw	30	172	526	254	495	2242	2218
Rook	173	136	116	40	168	1431	505
Brambling	9	5	13	26	2	884	3108
Linnet**	34	38	49	46	75	3699	9878
Yellowhammer**	11	24	21	13	53	2582	6719
Reed Bunting*	598	1008	1472	811	416	16,358	10,695



Water Rail, Charleston Reedbed (Jake Everitt)

The most notable ringing totals for species in Sussex as a percentage of the national totals were for Sand Martin (42%), Grasshopper Warbler (39%), Sedge Warbler (38%), Rook (33%), Water Rail (25%), Reed Warbler (24%), Chiffchaff (24%), Jackdaw (22%), Blackcap (22%), Common

Whitethroat (18%) and Lesser Whitethroat (18%). The details for these species are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. *Highest ringing totals for 2012 as a percentage of the totals ringed in Britain and Ireland. Birds of conservation concern are marked as: **red-listed; *amber-listed.*

Species	Total for 2012 in Britain and Ireland	Total for 2012 in Sussex	Percentage of national total
Sand Martin*	10,332	4315	42%
Grasshopper Warbler**	1346	526	39%
Sedge Warbler	20,136	7762	38%
Rook	505	168	33%
Reed Warbler	22,246	5412	24%
Chiffchaff	32,394	7826	24%
Jackdaw	2218	495	22%
Blackcap	36,184	7890	22%
Lesser Whitethroat	1622	294	18%
Common Whitethroat*	9657	1737	18%

Nestlings

A total of 1770 nestlings was ringed in 2012. This is the lowest annual total reported since 2002. The low figure might have been expected given the low overall number of birds ringed during 2012. However, it is also the lowest percentage of total birds ringed during the year with only 2.6% of the total birds ringed being nestlings. In 2003, the percentage was 11% and this has been declining each year to 3.6% in 2010 and 2011. Nationally, the percentage of nestlings compared to the total number of birds ringed during the year is much higher but also shows a decline in recent years. In 2006 the national percentage was 20% and this has declined each year to 16% in 2012. In Sussex in 2012 a total of 38 species were ringed as nestlings which compares to 47 species in 2011. Of those 38 species six were ringed solely as nestlings. Thirteen species had 40% or more of their total ringed as nestlings which compares with 16 species in 2011, 17 in 2010 and 14 in 2009.

Table 6 shows the species for which more than 40% of the total ringed in Sussex were nestlings. There is a welcome appearance of Common Gull which has not been ringed in the county since 2001. This species is a very common winter visitor and passage migrant but scarce in summer. It bred in Sussex until 1963 and breeding has been attempted again since 2006. These are the first nestlings to have been ringed. Welcome, too, is the return of Avocet to this list which has not been ringed in Sussex since 2007, and this brings the county total to 16 since 1979. The number of Black-headed Gull nestlings ringed has increased substantially compared to the total of seven ringed in 2011. The birds are only ringed by RBRG when they nest on more accessible rafts and the numbers depend on which rafts the birds choose in a particular year.

Tree Sparrow is new to this list as a result of the project carried out by Richard Black (see below). Absences from the list compared to recent years include: Herring Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull and Stone-curlew - the reasons for which are mentioned above - and Grey Heron because the sites targeted by Sam Bayley (who has ringed most of these birds in recent years) were flooded.

Particular mention should be made of concentrated efforts by certain groups and individuals to ring nestlings. These include:

- RBRG: 647 nestlings of 28 species including three Common Buzzards, 12 Kestrels, two Avocets, four Oystercatchers, two Lapwings, 36 Black-headed Gulls, two Common Gulls, two Common Terns, 20 Barn Owls and one Tawny Owl, and clutches of five Reed Warblers, four Lesser Whitethroats, seven Marsh Tits and five Linnets;
- Reg Lanaway: 415 nestlings of ten species including ten Kestrels, 13 Barn Owls, 135 Barn Swallows, four Grey Wagtails and 24 Pied/White Wagtails;
- Barrie Watson and colleagues: 228 nestlings of eight species including one Kestrel, nine Stock Doves, 176 Barn Owls and seven Marsh Tits.

Table 6. *Nestlings ringed in Sussex during 2012 which number more than 40% of the total ringed for that species. Birds of conservation concern are marked as: **red-listed; *amber-listed.*

Species	Total ringed	Nestlings ringed	Percentage nestlings
Peregrine	9	9	100
Oystercatcher*	4	4	100
Avocet*	2	2	100
Black-headed Gull*	36	36	100
Common Gull*	2	2	100
Common Tern*	8	8	100
Tree Sparrow**	72	70	97
Barn Owl*	319	286	90
Kestrel*	36	28	78
Common Buzzard	4	3	75
Tawny Owl	10	7	70
Grey Wagtail*	8	4	50
Stock Dove*	38	16	42

Colour-ringing projects

Peregrines A Peregrine colour-ringing project, studying dispersal and survival rates, has been run in Sussex by Graham Roberts, Jon Franklin and Phil Everitt since 1998. All young from the SOS nestboxes on Sussex Heights apartment block in Brighton (39 chicks including three ringed in 2012) and Chichester Cathedral (42 chicks including four ringed in 2012) have been fitted with individually recognisable colour rings. Chicks at several other eyries have also been colour-ringed. Most have dispersed within south-east England (as far afield as Essex, London, Surrey and Hampshire) where some are now breeding. Male “Black 15”, ringed as a chick at Chichester Cathedral in May 2005, has bred at Sussex Heights since 2009, where he raised three young in 2012. Female “Black 03”, ringed in May 2002 from the very first brood at Chichester Cathedral, has bred annually in Sussex since 2006, and fledged three young in 2012. Several birds have died after hitting power lines, including one in Cambridge. Details of all sightings of colour-ringed Peregrines should be sent to Graham Roberts (Graham.C.M.Roberts@btinternet.com).

Tree Sparrows Tree Sparrows declined by 94% between 1970 and 2001. While numbers have stabilised and even recovered slightly in some parts of the country the species has continued to decline in south-east England. The RSPB, in partnership with the Sussex Wildlife Trust, Kent Wildlife Trust and Natural England, has begun a Tree Sparrow recovery project led by Richard Black in south-east England. The project concentrates on two population strongholds of Tree Sparrows in south-east England: Pevensey Levels (in East Sussex) and Romney Marsh (in Kent and East Sussex). The long-term aim is to help the Tree Sparrow population spread out from

these core areas by providing new areas with suitable winter food, summer food and, particularly, nest sites. Nest boxes and feeding stations have been set up at both sites. The ringing effort has two strands. The first of these is metal ringing of pulli during the breeding season which was done in 2012. The plan is also to colour-ring adults in 2013. Each bird will have a dark blue colour-ring with two letters on their right leg (and a BTO metal ring on the left leg). The ringing will enable the team to establish the stage or stages of the life cycle that are most affected by environmental change, and will potentially benefit wider Tree Sparrow recovery as well as Tree Sparrows in south-east England. In 2012 the provision of nest boxes at Pevensey resulted in the most successful breeding season recorded at the reserve, despite the dreadful weather, with 70 youngsters successfully fledging. One of these was subsequently re-trapped at Sandwich Bay in Kent having travelled 87 km in 148 days, an unusual dispersal distance for Tree Sparrows. A further four of those chicks are known to have been recruited into the Pevensey population. The 2013 ringing report will reflect the continuing results of this project. Details of all sightings of ringed Tree Sparrows should be sent to Richard Black (Richard.Black1@rspb.org.uk).

Recoveries

Listed below are a selection of the more interesting recoveries of ringed birds which were reported in 2012. They include a few late reports from earlier years. Both metal and colour-ringed birds have been reported by ringers and non-ringers and all are thanked for their contributions.

Most recoveries of **Gannets** in Sussex are of birds ringed in the Channel Islands. Thirty such birds have been recorded since records began in 1979. One was recovered in 2012. It was ringed as a nestling on Alderney on 24 Jun 2006 and found dead at Hove on 7 Jul 2012. The Channel Islands contain the nearest breeding colony of Gannets to Sussex around 200 km away, so it is perhaps to be expected that birds from this colony are regularly seen off the Sussex coast. Perhaps more surprising are the regular recoveries (although not in 2012) of birds from breeding colonies in Lothian, Scotland which are 600 km away.

A **Cormorant** ringed as a nestling in Denmark on 9 Jun 2011 was found dead at Pett Level on 18 Jan 2012 having travelled 813 km. This reinforces a pattern remarked on by Wernham *et al.* (2002) whereby most Cormorants ringed in continental Europe and subsequently recovered in Britain and Ireland have been ringed during the breeding season, mainly as nestlings, and recovered as immatures in south-east England outside the breeding season. These birds might return to the breeding colony to breed or continue inland to form new inland breeding colonies.

In 2012 two **Honey-buzzards** ringed as nestlings in Sussex were found freshly dead in France. One female, ringed on 4 Aug 2009, was found at Seine-et-Oise on 14 Jul 2012; the other bird, ringed on 10 Aug 2010, was found in Haute-Garonne on 15 Jun 2012. There were two late reports of older birds colour-ringed as nestlings in Sussex which were sighted just 22 and 45 km away from the sites where they had been ringed. One, ringed on 16 Aug 2005, was sighted nearly six years later on 30 Jul 2011 in Surrey. The other, ringed on 4 Aug 2001, was sighted in Sussex almost 10 years later on 19 Jul 2011. This is not far off the longevity record of 11 years and 10 days. As ringing records suggest these migrants arrive at their breeding grounds from mid-May and leave from mid-August one might assume these birds are not on migration and that some return to breeding grounds in Sussex whereas others favour new breeding grounds further south.

A **Red Kite** with a wing-tag fitted as a nestling in Hampshire in June 2010 was seen in Doddington (Kent) in March 2011 and again near Burpham (Sussex) in July 2012. This reinforces the wandering nature of immature birds of this species.

Two **Merlins** ringed on the same day as nestlings at different locations in Durham on 26 Jun 2012 were both caught by ringers at Pett Level a few weeks later. A female was recovered on

4 Sep and a male on 4 Nov. Only five Merlins have previously been recovered in Sussex: four ringed in the north of Britain and one ringed in Iceland.

There were late reports of sightings of a colour-ringed **Sanderling** at Goring Gap on 14 Feb 2011 and again at Hayling Island on 11 Sep 2011. This is the first reported recovery of a ringed Sanderling in Sussex. Recoveries elsewhere in Britain and Ireland of foreign-ringed birds of this species are mostly from Iceland and Norway and this bird was ringed in Iceland on 8 May 2010.

There have been several reports of **Dunlins** in past years which were ringed in northern Europe and recovered in Sussex. However, the first (late) report of a bird ringed in Portugal was recorded in 2012. This bird was ringed in Setubal on 22 Sep 2009 and caught by ringers at Pett Level on 7 Aug 2010.

Only three **Common Snipe** were ringed in Sussex in 2012 (two by RBRG) so it was interesting to see one which had hatched in 2011 ringed in Glyne Gap on 8 Jan and retrapped at the same site three weeks later on 29 Jan. Common Snipe are highly migratory, moving south in the winter. Birds which breed in the south of England tend to move to the continent, even as far as Africa (Wernham *et al.* 2002), so it is possible that this bird had bred in northern England or even Iceland, Scandinavia or Russia and had moved to sunny Sussex to avoid the harsher winters further north.

There was a late report of a **Black-headed Gull** seen in Dorset and Denmark in 2011. Originally ringed at Worthing in 1993 this bird has been colour-ring re-sighted 35 times between 1993 and 2011. It has spent winters (usually seen in December and January) at Radipole Lake in Dorset and summers (usually seen between March and September) on the continent in Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands.

There was a marked increase in the number of recoveries of **Mediterranean Gulls** with a total of 136 reported in 2012 compared to 37 in 2011. The total recoveries for 2012 is 35% of the total number of recoveries reported since 1979. All these birds originated in Europe as shown in Table 7. Most of these birds were re-sighted by RBRG, although several sightings of ringed birds were reported on the SOS website during the course of the year. An individual originally ringed in Belgium on 6 Jun 2003 has been re-sighted at the same site at Pett Level in 2009, 2010, 2011 and again on 7 Apr 2012. The recent colonisation of Sussex by this species was detailed in a paper in the 2011 Sussex Bird Report (Yates and Jones, 2011) and the increase in recoveries in 2012 is consistent with this trend.

Table 7. *Sussex recoveries of Mediterranean Gulls showing countries of origin.*

	Poland	Germany	Netherlands	Belgium	France	Hungary	Total
Recoveries in 2012	1	14	12	37	53	19	136
Total recoveries since 1979	3	27	48	153	117	38	386

There are only about 20 accepted records of **Caspian Gull** being sighted in Sussex so it is amazing that three of those birds have been colour-ringed and that two of those were seen in 2012. All three birds were ringed in Poland. Of the 2012 birds the first was seen at Exceat in the Cuckmere Valley on 16 Dec 2012. It was a male ringed near Krakow on 19 Apr 2011, seen later that year at Wessem in the Netherlands on 1 Aug and at nearby Maasbracht, Bunkerhaven on 11 and 25 Aug 2011. The second bird was ringed at Paczow and seen at Newhaven Harbour on 4 Dec 2012 and again on 23 Dec 2012 at Rye Harbour.

Barn Owls do not usually move more than 30 km but three of the birds recovered had moved significantly greater distances. All three were females ringed as nestlings. One was ringed near Lewes on 6 Jul 2007 was found freshly dead (hit by a car) 150 km away at Warminster (Wiltshire) on 13 Mar 2012. Another ringed on 19 Jul 2011 near Billingshurst was recovered eight months

later 99 km away in Swindon, again dead as a result of being hit by a car. A third, ringed near Slindon on 10 Jul 2011, was found freshly dead 92 km away in Kent on 26 Sep 2012. However, these apparent long-distance movements should be viewed cautiously. The first two birds were reported as road traffic accidents and it is possible they had been transported after being hit.

No individual **Goldcrest** or **Firecrest** ringed in Britain and Ireland has been recovered more than three years since ringing. These birds may not be long-lived but they can travel considerable distances. A first-year male Goldcrest was ringed in Sussex on 27 Sep 2012 and found freshly dead two days later and 227 km away in The Netherlands. A Firecrest ringed in Sussex on 28 Sep 2012 was caught by a ringer 23 days later and 392 km away at Land's End in Cornwall.

It is common for **Sand Martins** which were ringed in Scotland in June to early September to be recovered in Sussex on their journey south, mostly in September. Several are recovered in France, Spain, Germany, The Netherlands and the Channel Islands either as they make their way southwards or when they return the following spring. Looking at the 2012 records most are first- or second-year birds, occasionally in their third year. The longevity record shown on the BTO website is nearly eight years. The fastest journey recorded in 2012 was by an individual ringed at Inchture in Scotland on 4 Sep 2012 and caught by ringers eight days later at Pett Level having travelled 662 km, an average of 82.75 km per day.

Wood Warbler is a species rarely recovered in Sussex. An individual ringed in Shropshire on 12 Jun 2012 was caught by a ringer 55 days later on 6 Aug at Pett Level. All five previous recoveries are detailed on the BTO website.

Four **Chiffchaffs** ringed at Pett Level were recovered in Europe: two (ringed in 2012) in France and two (ringed in 2011) in Spain. The longest recorded journey was of a bird ringed at Pett Level on 13 Sep 2011 and caught by a ringer on 24 Jan 2012, 4129 km away in Djoudj in Senegal. Previously eight Chiffchaffs ringed in Sussex have been recovered by ringers in Senegal and one ringed there has been found back in Sussex. Most of these are likely to have stemmed from work to set up a ringing site in Djoudj. Another interesting recovery was of a bird ringed on 2 Sep 2011 at Pett Level and caught by a ringer exactly one year and three days later, 172 km due west of that location at Blashford Lakes in Hampshire. Either it had found new breeding grounds in 2012 or was following a different route south from breeding grounds further north.

Several **Willow Warblers** were recovered in Sussex while moving south on their autumn migration. For example, one juvenile ringed on 8 Jul at Insh in Scotland was caught by a ringer 750 km further south at Litlington on 1 Sep, and another first-year bird ringed in Tayside on 11 Aug was caught by a ringer, again at Litlington, 660 km away, 11 days later on 26 Aug. A bird ringed at Pett Level on 26 Jun was found dead 1523 km away in Portugal on 11 Sep.

Several **Blackcaps** ringed in Sussex were recovered on southward autumn migration to locations in France, Gibraltar and Algeria and returning in spring to locations in Yorkshire, Northumberland and Isle of Man. Some birds, however, show movements to and from eastward locations in the Netherlands and Belgium and some of those birds may represent the relatively new population of birds which breed in Europe and move westwards to winter in Britain (Wernham *et al.* 2002). One late reported bird, for example, was ringed in Vlieland, The Netherlands on 17 Sep 2010 and caught by ringers one year and one month later in Sussex on 17 Oct 2011.

A Christmas visitor was a colour-ringed **Waxwing** which was sighted at Lewes on Boxing Day. It was one of a group of Waxwings ringed at Newtown College in Powys in late November/early December. Birds from this group were subsequently reported to have dispersed widely in Britain from Leeds in the north, Shankill in the west, Lewes in the south and various locations in between (midwalesringers.blogspot.co.uk).



Waxwing, Lewes, December 2012 (Phil Winter)

A **Lesser Whitethroat** ringed at Pett Level on 3 Sep 2011 was recaptured by a ringer 3721 km away in Eilat, Israel on 25 Mar 2012, probably on its northerly migration route from its wintering grounds in East Africa. This fits well with the known migration strategy for this species (Wernham *et al.* 2002).

A **Common Whitethroat** ringed at Beachy Head on 16 Sep 2012 was recovered at Cerizay, France on 20 Sep. It was freshly dead, having been hit by a car, and had travelled 441 km in four days.

The number of **Sedge Warblers** ringed in Sussex and recovered abroad in 2012 (49) was less than half the 2011 total (100). As before, the vast majority (46) were recovered in France. One was recovered in the Channel Islands, one in Spain and one in The Netherlands. No birds ringed abroad were found in Sussex in 2012 compared to 20 in 2011 (including a late report of a bird ringed in Mauritania in 2010). A number were recovered on the Sussex coast on their way south from locations in Scotland and Wales.

Marsh Warblers are rarely ringed in Sussex (78 since 1979) and even more rarely recovered so it is notable that a bird ringed at Pett Level on 10 Jul 2006 was seen in East Sussex on 3 Jun 2012. The ring was read on the live bird in the field. Although the ring was only read in 2012, what is assumed to be the same bird (with a ring on the right leg) has returned to the same site each year since 2008. The minimum age of this bird at almost six years old is not far off the longevity record for this species of 7 years 10 months and 22 days. When the bird was ringed it was known to have hatched before 2006 but the exact year was unknown.

There were 23 recoveries of **Reed Warblers** either ringed or recovered abroad involving four other countries: France, Spain, Portugal and The Netherlands. The bird ringed in Portugal was only the fourth bird to be ringed in that country and recovered in Sussex. However, perhaps the most notable recovery, because it shows site fidelity, was of a male ringed in its first year in Sussex on 7 Sep 2005 and caught by a ringer at Great Meadow Pond in Windsor in June 2006, July 2007, May 2009 and again in May 2012. This bird has survived longer than the average life expectancy of three years but has a way to go before reaching the longevity record of nearly 13 years.

Blackbirds are mainly sedentary with only 3% moving more than 20 km from their breeding site (Wernham *et al.* 2002). Some birds, however, move to and from the continent. In 2012 two Blackbirds ringed in Sussex were recovered on the continent: a male bird ringed at Pett Level on 30 Oct 2011 was found dead on 16 May 2012, 205 km away at Aubry-Du-Hainault in northern France; another ringed on 7 Nov 2010 was found in Munster, Germany, 439 km away, on 13 May 2012. A third bird ringed as a first-year female in The Netherlands on 16 Oct 2006 was caught by a ringer in Warnham on 18 Jan 2012. This bird is longer-lived than the average lifespan of 3.4 years but is considerably younger than the record of over 14 years.

Of the other thrushes a **Song Thrush** ringed on 27 Nov 2007 was found freshly dead over four years later just 2 km away at Northiam on 13 Mar 2012, and a **Redwing** ringed at Cissbury Ring near Worthing on 2 Nov 2010 was found on 19 Feb 2012 having just been shot in Portugal. This is only the third Redwing ringed in Sussex to be recovered in Portugal.

There were three notable recoveries of **Robins**. The first was ringed as a juvenile on 4 Jul 2007 at Pett Level and found on 10 Dec 2012 just 2 km away. At 5 years and 5 months it was not far off the longevity record of 8 years months 30 days set in 1977. The other two birds were from The Netherlands and found freshly dead from injuries. A first-year bird ringed there on 28 Sep 2011 was recovered in Buxted three and a half months later on 14 Jan. The other was ringed on 19 Oct 2012 and found just five days later on 24 Oct at Bognor Regis.

House Sparrow is known as a sedentary species so a notable recovery was of an individual ringed as a juvenile male on 2 Jun 2011 in Kilnsea, East Yorkshire and retrapped by a ringer 304 km away at Lower Dicker in Hailsham on 1 Apr 2012. This distance record has only been exceeded countrywide on two occasions since 1961. Wernham *et al.* (2002) note that, typically, it is first-year birds which move these long distances, as once they have bred they remain faithful to the largely sedentary breeding colony for life.

A male **Rock Pipit** colour-ringed at Giske, Norway on 23 Mar 2012 was seen at Worthing on 29 Nov 2012. This is the first ever Sussex recovery of a Rock Pipit ringed in Norway (and only the third Sussex recovery of this species ringed abroad, the other two having been ringed in Sweden).

A notable long-distance journey is that of a female **Goldfinch** ringed on 19 Oct 2011 at Pett Level and caught by a ringer 662 km away near Dundee on 15 May 2012. Just one **Siskin** ringed in Sussex was recovered abroad. An adult female ringed at East Grinstead on 20 Feb 2011 was found long dead in Jylland, Denmark on 15 Jun 2012.

A total of ten **Lesser Redpolls** ringed in Sussex were recovered in Europe during 2012: one in Denmark (the first record), one in The Netherlands (the second record) and eight in Belgium. This number was almost one third of the total of Sussex birds recovered on the continent since 1979 (33). In addition, there was the first ever recovery in Sussex of a bird ringed abroad (France). This bird was ringed as a first-year bird on 17 Oct 2011 in La Neuville, France and recovered by ringers at Pett Level on 7 Oct 2012.

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Peregrine, Chichester Cathedral, June 2012 (Sandra Palme)

Nest recording in Sussex in 2012

Darrin Madgin

Nest Record Scheme

The Nest Record Scheme (NRS) is organised by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). The NRS gathers vital information on the breeding success of Britain's birds by asking volunteers to find and follow the progress of the nests of individual birds. The volunteers submit data in the form of nest records to the BTO. Each nest record details a single breeding attempt using simple, standardised descriptions and contains the following information: location, nest contents, visit dates, habitat and type of nesting site.

The data collected is used to produce trends in breeding performance, which the BTO use to identify species that may be declining because of problems at the nesting stage. The NRS data also allow the BTO to measure the impacts of pressures such as climate change on bird productivity.

Although nests of all wild birds can be recorded for the NRS, with volunteers adhering to a comprehensive code of conduct, some species are specially protected. These are species on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and include Peregrine, Barn Owl, Honey-buzzard and Kingfisher. Licences are required for monitoring these Schedule 1 species.

Nest recording in Sussex

In 2012 NRS volunteers in Sussex submitted 674 nest records in relation to 51 species (see Table 1 below). As can be seen from the table, Blue Tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*) was the species with the most nest records submitted (188), followed by Great Tit (*Parus major*) with 103 records submitted. The nest records for other selected species of interest are discussed below.

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*): A total of 81 nest records were submitted for Barn Owl. It is worth highlighting that there are a number of licensed volunteers who monitor Barn Owl nest boxes, and who are also BTO licensed bird ringers. These volunteers submit nest records as part of the subsequent data submission in relation to their ringing activities (see the Sussex Ringing Report for 2012 for further information). Species other than Barn Owl often nest in Barn Owl nest boxes, and as a consequence of Barn Owl boxes being monitored in Sussex, nest records are often submitted for these other species. Amongst the species known to have used Barn Owl boxes in Sussex are Jackdaw, Kestrel, Mandarin, Little Owl and, of particular note, Stock Dove (A.B. Watson *pers.comm.*). This accounts for the relatively high number (34) of nest records that were submitted in 2012 for Stock Dove.

Common Nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*): As can be seen from Table 1, there are a number of species that are known to breed in the county but for which nest records have not been submitted in 2012. Unfortunately, one such species is Nightingale, numbers of which are declining nationally. The BTO organised a national survey of breeding Nightingales in 2012, and although the survey results are still awaited, preliminary results for Sussex suggest at least 600 territories in Sussex (H. Crabtree *pers.comm.*); note that this is an estimated number of territories or singing males and is therefore not an estimate of the number of breeding pairs. Given this number of Nightingales present in the county, the lack of recent nest records in Sussex is disappointing, but this is thought to be due in part to the difficulty in finding Nightingale nests. A nest record has previously been submitted for Nightingale in Sussex. In May 2005 a Nightingale nest containing five nestlings was found in brambles at a site in East Sussex (R. Lanaway *pers.comm.*).

Table 1. *Numbers of nest records submitted for Sussex in 2012.*

Species name	Total for county	Species name	Total for county
Mute Swan	1	Dunnoek	5
Canada Goose	3	Robin	10
Mandarin Duck	4	Blackbird	26
Mallard	6	Song Thrush	4
Honey-buzzard	1	Reed Warbler	1
Sparrowhawk	1	Blackcap	2
Kestrel	5	Garden Warbler	1
Moorhen	2	Whitethroat	1
Coot	6	Chiffchaff	2
Oystercatcher	1	Willow Warbler	3
Little Ringed Plover	1	Long-tailed Tit	1
Lapwing	5	Blue Tit	188
Black-headed Gull	3	Great Tit	103
Common Tern	1	Marsh Tit	1
Stock Dove	34	Nuthatch	2
Woodpigeon	6	Treecreeper	1
Collared Dove	1	Jackdaw	11
Common Cuckoo	1	Starling	19
Barn Owl	81	House Sparrow	19
Tawny Owl	2	Tree Sparrow	23
Common Swift	6	Chaffinch	3
Barn Swallow	58	Goldfinch	2
Tree Pipit	1	Linnet	1
Grey Wagtail	1	Yellowhammer	1
Pied Wagtail	7	Reed Bunting	1
Wren	5		

Common Swift (*Apus apus*): In 2012 six Swift nest records were submitted. It was possible to monitor one of these nests in a nest box because a nest-box camera was installed, and one Swift was recorded as fledging from the nest on 9 August (H. Crabtree *pers. comm.*). This should encourage anyone with a nest box with a camera installed to join the Nest Record Scheme. This in turn will allow valuable information with regards to nesting birds to be obtained. The Sussex Ornithological Society is taking a positive approach with regards to provision and installation of Swift nest boxes, and it is hoped this may lead to an increase in the submission of Swift nest records in the future.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the NRS volunteers (P. Fenwick, D. Madgin, E. Bew, H. Crabtree, I. Standivan, I. Woolsey, J. Pritchard, A.B. Watson, K.S. Arthur, R. Lanaway, R. Sanderson, S. Roberts, T. Davis, J. Newnham, BIAZA Nest Recording Project, Friends of Warnham LNR and Rye Bay Ringing Group) who have submitted nest records for Sussex and to the BTO for supplying the summary information. Anyone wishing to record nests can make contact with the Nest Record Scheme at the BTO (<http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/nrs>).

Birds using Sussex offshore waters: results of studies related to a proposed offshore wind farm

David H Howey

Introduction

Apparently, on a clear day, from Beachy Head you can see an amazing 45 km to the south, but from the lower elevation of Selsey Bill the distance to the horizon would be less than a fifth of that. Of course, land-based observers cannot see birds at those distances. However, the occasional reports from yachtsmen and fishermen of petrels and shearwaters well offshore show that there are birds out there. Until now we have had no real indication of exactly what species and in what numbers birds are present beyond the limits of our vision. Some answers have been provided by the results of the marine ornithological studies contained in the E.ON Climate & Renewables UK Ltd. environmental statement in connection with the proposed Rampion offshore wind farm (Percival 2013). Thirty boat-based surveys (each lasting three days) were undertaken between March 2010 and February 2012. One survey was undertaken each month but with second surveys in March, April and May 2011. The survey area covered some 1000 km² as shown in Figure 1 below. Some of the results caused the Sussex Ornithological Society concerns, and these have been raised with the planning inspector. One of those concerns was the displacement of feeding birds, including Fulmars, Gannets, Kittiwakes and auks, if the wind farm was to be constructed. This article looks at the numbers of those species recorded during certain surveys and compares them with those recorded by land-based observers.

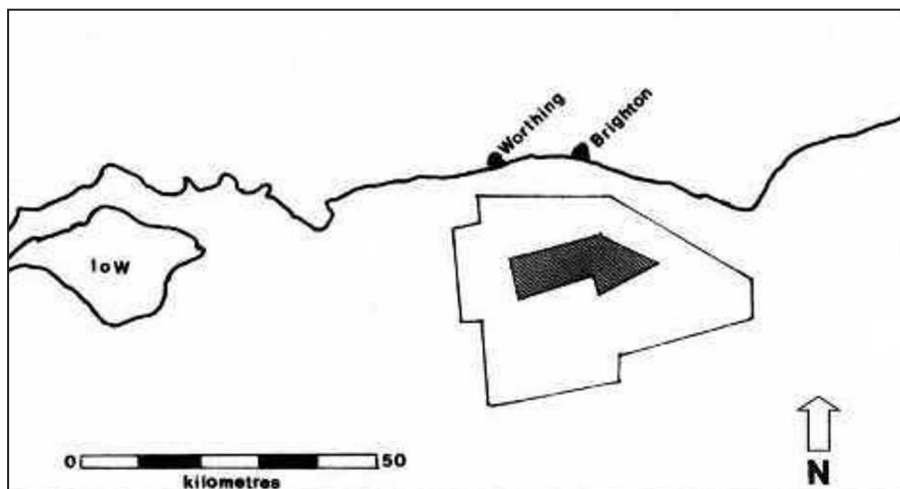


Figure 1. Site of the proposed Rampion offshore wind farm (dark shaded) and the survey area (outline) in relation to the Sussex coast and the Isle of Wight.

Fulmar *Fulmaris glacialis*

Fulmars are relatively scarce breeding birds in Sussex in variable numbers, with over 100 pairs in 2000 (Tasker 2004) but possibly now only a maximum of 50 pairs resident on the sea cliffs from November to September. Offshore gatherings of feeding birds viewable from land appear to

be confined to the long-sea outfall at Telscombe Cliffs, but here too the numbers vary from year to year, ranging from a maximum of 500 in 2007 to only 140 in 2010. The majority of the large movements of Fulmars also occur in the Telscombe Cliffs area but appear to be localised, as birds moving east are often not recorded at Splash Point only 11 km away. So where do these birds come from and where do they go?

Given the numbers of Fulmars recorded off Telscombe Cliffs it is clear that they are not all breeding locally. Fulmars forage over wide areas with Cramp and Simmons (1977) suggesting that breeding birds may travel 320 km from their nesting ledges. This would just about put Sussex within the range of some birds from the large breeding population in Cornwall. Alternatively, bearing in mind that Fulmars do not breed until they are 6-12 years old (Fisher 1952), it is more likely that most of those seen off the Sussex coast are non-breeding birds.

Large numbers of Fulmars were recorded during the surveys undertaken for E.ON, with totals of over 1000 during the three-day survey in May 2010 and again in July 2010. The largest three-day count was of a total of 1774 in May 2010. Although there would doubtless have been some duplication, the available data indicate that two-thirds of the total were recorded in one day. During those three days there were no significant gatherings off Telscombe Cliffs. The available data from the boat-based surveys show that 70% of the Fulmars were recorded as being on the sea and therefore presumably feeding. The overall distribution pattern shows that the Fulmars were mainly recorded in the southern half of the survey area (see Figure 2 below).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Although Gannets have never bred in Sussex they are seen offshore throughout the year with apparently increasing numbers wintering off our coast. Studies have shown that during the winter over 90% of the birds present are adults but by July adult and immature birds are present in almost equal numbers (Howey 2011). It has been suggested that the summering birds are from the colonies at Ortac and Les Etecs, Alderney, Channel Islands (Newnham 1987). Of course, Gannets in adult plumage are not necessarily breeding birds as they obtain their adult plumage in their fourth year but may not breed until two years later (Nelson 1997). Satellite-tagging studies of Gannets nesting on Alderney have shown that breeding birds from that colony do not forage to the east of the Isle of Wight (Soanes *et al.* 2013, Wakefield *et al.* 2013). This suggests that the majority of the Gannets summering off the Sussex coast are non-breeding birds from Alderney as such birds frequently summer near their natal colonies (Nelson 1978).

The boat-based surveys recorded over 1000 Gannets on each of eight occasions: once in June 2010, once in January 2011, twice in May 2011, once in June 2011, once in July 2011 and twice in October 2011. During the 54 days on which boat-based surveys were undertaken in 2011 the total number of Gannets recorded was 20,359, whereas only 7396 were recorded at Selsey Bill during the entire year. By far the largest count was of 6524 during the survey undertaken in the second half of October 2011. Again, some duplication will have been inevitable but the available data show that more than half of the three-day total occurred on just one day. During the period of the October 2011 survey, the only significant numbers of Gannets recorded by land-based observers involved 530 W off Worthing on the 19th. October is a time when large numbers of Gannets move west along the Sussex coast as they migrate to their wintering areas in the Bay of Biscay and further south (Wanless 2002). The available data indicate that on two of the three days of the October 2011 boat-based survey some 80% of the birds recorded were feeding or foraging in the area rather than simply passing through. Gannets were recorded throughout the whole of the survey area with the majority either within the site of the proposed wind farm or to the south of it (see Figure 2).

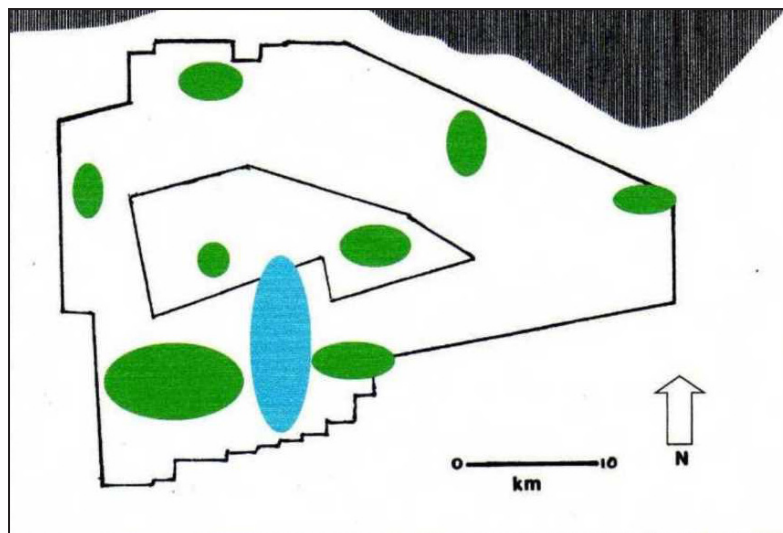


Figure 2. Main points at which Fulmars (blue) and Gannets (green) were recorded in the survey area during the boat-based surveys.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

With a breeding population of some 1100-1200 pairs, the Kittiwake colony at Seaford Head is of both local and regional importance. Although the colony represents only a quarter of one percent of the British total of breeding Kittiwakes, it is some 20% of the entire population of the south coast of England (Heubeck 2004).

The annual Sussex Bird Reports include regular records of Kittiwakes feeding offshore during the winter months but very few relating to the breeding season. Numbers of birds are frequently seen on the sea off Seaford Head, but based on the observations of the author, these are generally birds which are bathing or resting and not feeding. It is also noticeable that, although movements of Kittiwakes are recorded in the spring, autumn and winter, very few are seen at Telscombe Cliffs during the breeding season despite it being only 11 km from Seaford Head. There are certainly no parties of adult birds returning to the nesting cliffs with food for their young. Coulson (2011) states that some Kittiwakes regularly travel up to 60 km and some more than 90 km from the colony. One Kittiwake tagged on the Farne Islands, Northumberland, travelled 30 km from the colony on one date and 85 km on another date (Redfern 2011). So where do the Seaford Head birds feed? Again, data from the boat-based surveys provide some answers.

The data from the three-day boat-based surveys show that totals of over 1000 Kittiwakes were recorded on four occasions: once in January 2011, once in June 2011, once in December 2010 and once in December 2011. The winter concentrations correspond to those noted by land-based observers and are assumed to involve birds from more northerly colonies. Crucially, however, the largest count was during the breeding season in the first half of June 2011 when a total of 1329 was recorded during the three days of the boat-based survey. The available data show that on the first day of that three-day survey, almost half the birds were on the sea and not simply moving through. On all three of the survey dates, birds were also seen passing through the area and the recorded direction of flight is interesting. The available data show that 70% of the birds moving

through were travelling between south and west suggesting that there may be further feeding areas to the southwest in addition to that within the survey area. It is also interesting that very few of the birds passing through the survey area were heading towards Seaford. This suggests that birds leaving the colony to feed and those returning to the colony use different routes, which is similar to the pattern shown by the Farne Islands bird mentioned earlier.

The overall distribution pattern shows that Kittiwakes occurred throughout the survey area with a major concentration in the southwest corner of the survey area. The data show that not only is the area an important feeding ground for Kittiwakes but also that birds from Seaford Head would need to pass through the site of the proposed wind farm to reach it (see Figure 3 below).



Kittiwake, Seaford Head, May 2012 (Peter Wilson)

Common Guillemot *Uria aalge* and Razorbill *Alca torda*

The total number of auks recorded off the Sussex coast varies greatly from year to year. In the past ten years the total, which includes Common Guillemots (hereafter simply ‘Guillemots’), Razorbills and auks not identified to species, has ranged from a peak of 109,484 in 2003 to just 4712 in 2007, with an annual average of 36,407. In nine of the past ten years, Razorbills have outnumbered Guillemots and have done so overall by a ratio of 3:1. The majority of auks seen are moving offshore either dispersing from their breeding colonies or on feeding movements during which they fly back and forth along the Sussex coast.

The boat-based surveys undertaken for E.ON show a rather different picture. The three-day totals of auks exceeded 15,000 on five occasions: once in January 2011, twice in March 2011, once in April 2011 and once in February 2012. By far the largest total came from the three-day survey in early February 2012 when 33,081 auks were recorded. That three-day total exceeded the 20,393 recorded by land-based observers during the whole of 2012! The only significant counts

from land-based observations during the period of the February 2012 boat-based surveys were off Telscombe Cliffs where there were 1607 E and 835 W on the 5th and 1696 E and 136 W on the 6th.

The available data show that during the February 2012 boat-based survey, nearly 80% of the Guillemots, almost 60% of the Razorbills and over 70% of all the auks (Guillemots, Razorbills and those not recorded to species) were on the sea so were presumably feeding. Those recorded in flight were moving in a predominantly westerly direction on one date but easterly on another which is typical of feeding movements. The data show that Guillemots were recorded throughout the entire survey area with the main concentration in the northern third. Razorbills were concentrated towards the north where the water depth is 20 metres or less (see Figure 3 below).

One interesting difference between the boat-based surveys and land-based observations is the comparative numbers of Guillemots and Razorbills. As mentioned earlier, land-based observations show that on average Razorbills outnumber Guillemots by a ratio of 3:1. However, figures for the boat-based surveys show that Guillemots outnumbered Razorbills by a ratio of 6:1. This difference is not as anomalous as it might appear. In Britain there are eight times more breeding Guillemots than Razorbills (Merne 2004, Harris 2004). Given the relative numbers of the two species and their dispersal routes, the ratio recorded during the boat-based surveys is more in line with what might be expected (Howey 2008). Although both species feed on numerous types of fish of which sand-eels *Ammodytes* and sprats *S. sprattus* form a large portion of their diet, their feeding strategies differ. The preferred feeding depth of Razorbills is 2-3 metres with a maximum depth of 7 metres (Cramp 1985). The same author gives a maximum dive depth of 20-55 m for Guillemots although both Vermeer (1987) and Gaston (2004) quote depths in excess of 100 m. Consequently, Razorbills feed in the shallower waters closer to the shore and are therefore more likely to be within identification range of land-based observers. Conversely, Guillemots prefer the deeper water further offshore making them less likely to be identified.

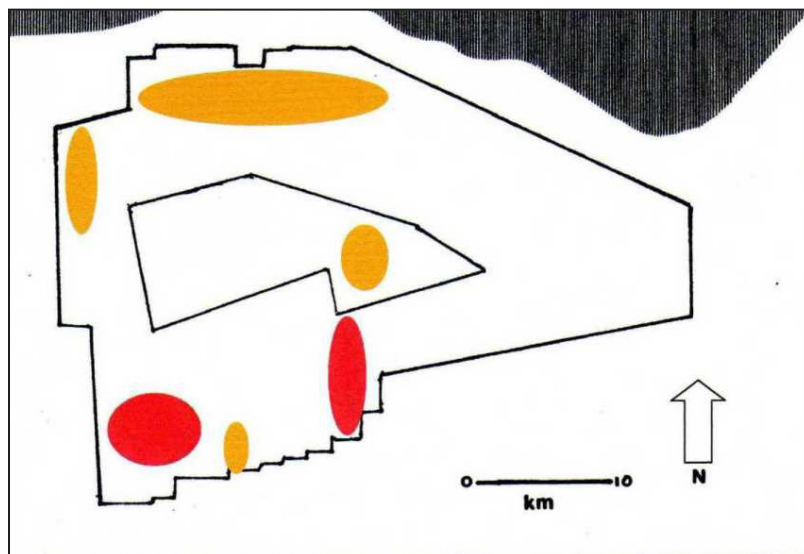


Figure 3. Main points at which Kittiwakes (red) and auks (amber) were recorded in the survey area during the boat-based surveys.

Other species

During the ninety days on which boat-based surveys were undertaken, 49 species were recorded. There is not sufficient space to give full details but some other seabirds warrant mentioning for differing reasons.

During the survey on 19 May 2011, the total of Storm Petrels *Hydrobates pelagicus* recorded was 27 whereas only one was seen by land-based observers during the entire year. Puffins *Fratercula arctica* are extremely scarce off the Sussex coast with only 24 recorded in the period 1994-2012, including only two in 2011, and with none at all in 2012, but in April 2011 a total of 27 was recorded in three days during boat-based surveys.

The spring of 2011 was a good one for Pomarine Skuas *Stercorarius pomarinus* with a total of 211 recorded by land-based observers between 30 April and 9 May, so it is interesting that the boat-based surveys on 19 and 25 May recorded a further 53 birds. In September 2011 only three Great Skuas *Stercorarius skua* were recorded by land-based observers, but a total of 148 was recorded during the boat-based surveys in the period 25-27 September. Were these birds involved in the easterly movement of 113 passing Beachy Head on 9 and 10 October? The E.ON surveys had been completed prior to the exceptional movements of Great Skuas along the south coast in the spring of 2012. However, data from Dorset, Hampshire, Sussex and Kent indicate that large numbers passed through the area of the proposed wind farm with the total of 657 passing Dungeness representing 2% of the entire world population (Wynn 2012).

The numbers of Brent Geese *Branta bernicla* passing through the survey area at times of peak migration were surprisingly low with just seven in April 2011 compared to 1202 passing Seaford during that month. Two other species recorded in surprisingly low numbers were Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* which was noted just twice (a total of 14 birds), and Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* with a total of just 20 and on only one occasion. There were no sightings at all of Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*.

Conclusions

From the results of the boat-based surveys undertaken for E.ON there are two very clear conclusions:

- The numbers of some seabirds a long way offshore far exceed those recorded by land-based observers. This applies not only to birds moving through the Channel but also to those feeding out of sight of land.
- The area surveyed is an important feeding ground for species such as Fulmars, Gannets, Kittiwakes, Guillemots and Razorbills.

Acknowledgements

The author thanks: Dr Steve Percival and E.ON Climate & Renewables UK Ltd for providing details of the marine ornithological surveys undertaken and for their permission to use the data; Dr John Newnham for producing details of sightings by land-based observers to allow comparisons to be made with the data from the marine ornithological surveys; and Dr Helen Crabtree and Dr John Newnham for making valuable comments on the draft of this article.

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Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) population trends in Sussex 1994-2012

Helen Crabtree

Introduction

The Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) is the main national scheme for monitoring population changes of common and widespread breeding birds. BBS population trends for the UK are produced by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) each year, and the results are widely used by government and non-governmental organisations to set conservation priorities. Population trends are also produced by the BTO each year for specific countries, regions and habitats within the UK. A large expansion in the number of squares covered by the BBS in Sussex since 2005 (Crabtree 2005) has led to it now being possible to calculate reliable population trends for common breeding species in Sussex, enabling the Sussex Ornithological Society to fulfil one of its most important objectives, that of monitoring the status of breeding birds in the county. Population trends and graphs for Sussex for the period 1994 to 2012 inclusive are presented here, and these update those published previously (Crabtree 2009) with the inclusion of more recent data.

BBS methodology and aims

The BBS was introduced in 1994 and is organised by the BTO, being jointly funded by the BTO, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). The survey uses a line transect method in randomly-selected 1-km squares. Each BBS observer is assigned one or more 1-km squares, and makes two early-morning visits to each of their squares during each breeding season, to count all the birds seen and heard along two 1-km transects. Visits are scheduled so that the first is in the early part of the breeding season (April to mid-May) and the second at least four weeks later (mid-May to the end of June). More information about the methods used is available at www.bto.org/bbs.

In order for the BBS data to be used as unbiased indicators of bird populations, the survey sites must be randomly distributed. The random selection of BBS squares is carried out by the BTO using an established strategy, and as far as possible the squares must be allocated to volunteer observers in the order in which they are generated. The aim is for as many as possible of the same 1-km squares to be surveyed every year, ideally by the same observers.

The total numbers of adult birds of each species detected in each 1-km square are calculated for each year, and these data are used to calculate population changes using standard statistical methods. The calculations take the maximum of the two counts (early and late) as the annual measure of relative abundance. The maximum was chosen as a simple means of simultaneously reflecting the abundance of residents and early migrants, which tend to be most easily detected on the first visit, and later migrants, which tend to be most abundant during the second visit. All squares that have been surveyed in at least two years are included in the analyses.

BBS coverage in Sussex

Figure 1 shows the numbers of BBS squares that have been surveyed in Sussex since the beginning of the scheme in 1994. From 1994 to 2004 the number of squares surveyed was low (with a maximum of 48 squares surveyed in 1999), and although the data obtained through BBS monitoring in Sussex was an adequate contribution to the national BBS dataset, it was not sufficient to allow any kind of population analysis within Sussex. In 2005 the BBS was significantly expanded in Sussex to allow calculation of county population trends for the commoner breeding

species (Crabtree 2005). This expansion was brought about by a large increase in the number of randomly-selected sites, and a corresponding large increase in the number of observers involved. An average of 132 squares have been surveyed every year during the period 2005-2012 inclusive, and it is highly likely that this level of coverage will be maintained or that the level will increase in coming years. Note the reduced number of surveys carried out in 2001 due to access restrictions during the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak.

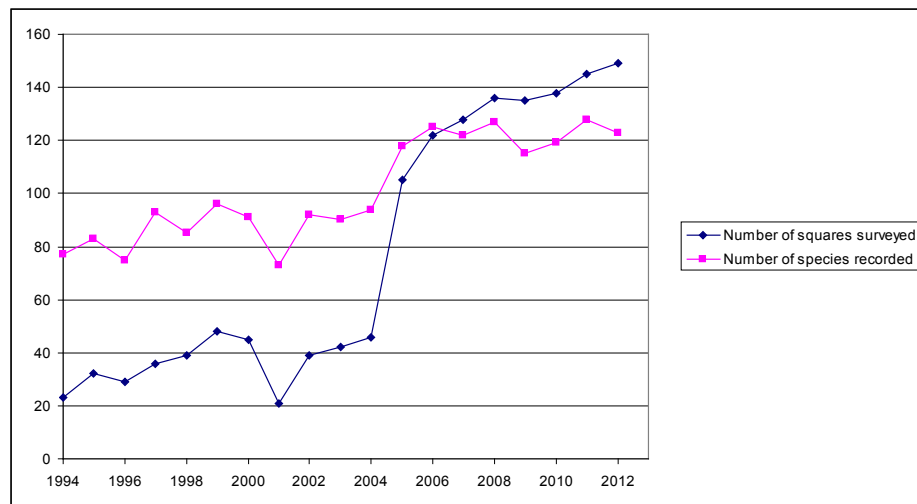


Figure 1. The numbers of BBS squares surveyed, and the numbers of species recorded, in Sussex during the period 1994-2012. Note the reduced number of surveys carried out in 2001 due to access restrictions during the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak, and the large expansion of the survey in Sussex in 2005.

Calculation of trends in Sussex

Population trends are calculated using a method developed by the BTO for county-level analyses, and report percentage changes in populations over the entire period since the beginning of the survey (1994-2012), as well as the most recent inter-year differences (2011-2012). Percentage changes since 1994, along with upper and lower 95% confidence limits, can be plotted each year to produce trend graphs. The percentage changes are usually presented on these graphs as indices, relative to an arbitrary index of 1.0 at the beginning of the survey in 1994. No indices are plotted for 2001, because data from the small number of squares surveyed during the FMD restrictions are likely to be unrepresentative and perhaps biased towards urban habitats. For county trends, monitoring is considered adequate if a species has a mean sample size of at least 30 squares over the period for which the trend is calculated, and in Sussex 37 species have mean sample sizes of at least 30 squares during the entire period 1994-2012 inclusive. Further discussion about the calculation of county population trends has been published previously (Crabtree 2009).

National population trends published for 1994-2012 (Risely *et al.* 2013) are calculated using smoothed data, a process that involves truncation of end points, so that long-term national trends are labelled 1995-2011. Trends calculated for Sussex are unsmoothed, as are all trends for 2011-2012.

Table 1. *Sussex population trends during 1994-2012 and 2011-2012. Trends are percentage changes, and statistically significant changes are marked with an asterisk (*). UCL, upper 95% confidence limit; LCL, lower 95% confidence limit for the 1994-2012 trend. The sample size is the mean number of squares per year in which each species was recorded during the period 1994-2012. Red-listed and amber-listed species of conservation concern (Eaton et al. 2009) are shown in the relevant colours.*

Species	Change 1994-2012 (%)	UCL	LCL	Change 2011-2012 (%)	Sample size
Mallard	149*	307	52	2	43
Pheasant	1	21	-17	-3	63
Moorhen	-3	65	-43	-7	31
Woodpigeon	2	16	-10	-6	79
Collared Dove	68*	102	40	19	50
Cuckoo	-71*	-53	-82	-75*	30
Green Woodpecker	59*	107	22	141*	55
Great Spotted Woodpecker	320*	530	180	11	51
Magpie	39*	80	8	1	71
Jay	-3	33	-29	73	37
Jackdaw	184*	261	123	42	61
Rook	94*	133	61	36	43
Carriion Crow	41*	85	7	-20	77
Goldcrest	93*	183	32	71	31
Blue Tit	60*	88	36	-10	77
Great Tit	10	31	-7	-36*	75
Skylark	-1	31	-24	21	44
Swallow	84*	143	40	2	53
Long-tailed Tit	-46*	-22	-63	-68*	37
Chiffchaff	12	46	-14	-19	66
Blackcap	92*	145	51	2	62
Whitethroat	324*	515	192	-6	47
Nuthatch	25	86	-16	3	37
Wren	-13*	-1	-23	-1	75
Starling	-53*	-35	-66	52	59
Blackbird	2	14	-9	-25*	79
Song Thrush	6	26	-11	9	71
Mistle Thrush	-91*	-85	-95	-47	30
Robin	-3	14	-17	24	77
Duncock	-35*	-20	-47	25	66
House Sparrow	19*	40	2	-7	59
Pied Wagtail	-66*	-49	-78	-45	34
Chaffinch	-41*	-33	-48	-20	78
Greenfinch	-51*	-37	-62	-23	63
Goldfinch	148*	221	91	8	49
Linnet	21	96	-26	-10	30
Yellowhammer	-48*	-29	-61	2	37

Sussex population trends 1994-2012

Sussex population trends for the period 1994-2012, for the 37 species with mean sample sizes of at least 30 squares, are presented in Table 1. Also presented are population trends for the period 2011-2012, which give an indication of very recent changes. 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 1994-2012 trend gives an indication of the accuracy of the population trend.

Of the 37 species for which trends are reported, ten have declined significantly and 15 have increased significantly since 1994. Trends are reported for seven red-listed species (Eaton *et al.* 2009) of which three have declined significantly and one has increased significantly since 1994.

Trend graphs for Sussex 1994-2012

Sussex trend graphs are plotted using the percentage changes each year since the start of the survey in 1994, presented as indices relative to an arbitrary index of 1.0 in 1994. The upper and lower 95% confidence limits for each year are also plotted as indices in the same way. The resulting graphs give good visual indications of the changing fortunes of breeding birds over the period 1994-2012. Trend graphs for all 37 species for which trends can be calculated in Sussex are given in Figures 2 to 7 below (a selection of the more interesting and informative graphs) or in Appendix 1.

Figure 2 shows the trend graph for 1994-2012 for Song Thrush, a red-listed species exhibiting a relatively stable population in Sussex since 1994, despite anecdotal reports of serious declines and also a documented decrease of 12% in the South East region since 1994 (Risely *et al.* 2013). In comparison, Figure 3 shows the trend graph for 1994-2012 for Mistle Thrush, an amber-listed species exhibiting a 91% decrease in Sussex since 1994, compared with a decrease of 57% in the South East region and a decrease of 31% in the UK over the same period (Risely *et al.* 2013).



Figure 2. Population trend graph for Song Thrush in Sussex during the period 1994-2012. Solid line, population index relative to an arbitrary index of 1.0 in 1994; dashed lines, upper and lower 95% confidence limits.

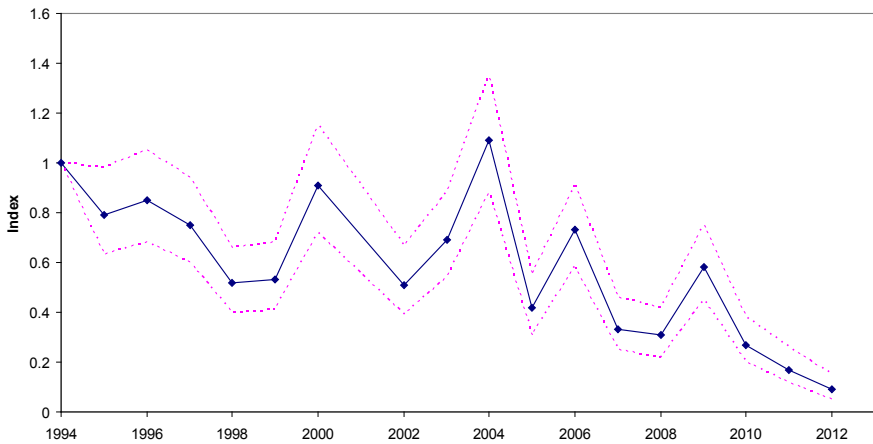


Figure 3. Population trend graph for Mistle Thrush in Sussex during the period 1994-2012. Solid line, population index relative to an arbitrary index of 1.0 in 1994; dashed lines, upper and lower 95% confidence limits.

Figure 4 shows the trend graph for 1994-2012 for Greenfinch, a species which is not currently of conservation concern but which shows a 51% decline in Sussex since 1994, compared with a 30% decline in the South East region and a 17% decline in the UK over the same period (Risely *et al.* 2013).



Figure 4. Population trend graph for Greenfinch in Sussex during the period 1994-2012. Solid line, population index relative to an arbitrary index of 1.0 in 1994; dashed lines, upper and lower 95% confidence limits.

There is some evidence (Robinson *et al.* 2010) that the start of the national Greenfinch population decline coincided with the emergence of the parasitic trichomonosis disease, and that declines have been most serious in areas of the country with the highest disease incidences. However, this same research describes Sussex as having a low incidence of trichomonosis whilst the rate of Greenfinch population decline is particularly high in the county. The research focuses very much on Greenfinch numbers in gardens, whilst BBS data is collected from all habitats, and it is probable that the reasons for the decline are more subtle and complex than simply the effects of parasitic disease and are possibly related to farming practices. It is also interesting to note that a significant decline is evident in the trend graph for Chaffinch in Sussex during the same period 1994-2012 (Figure 5). This is another species which is not currently of conservation concern, but it shows a 41% decline in Sussex since 1994, compared with increases in both the South East region and the UK over the same period.



Figure 5. Population trend graph for Chaffinch in Sussex during the period 1994-2012. Solid line, population index relative to an arbitrary index of 1.0 in 1994; dashed lines, upper and lower 95% confidence limits.

Figure 6 shows the trend graph for 1994-2012 for House Sparrow, a red-listed species exhibiting a relatively stable population in Sussex since 1994, despite anecdotal reports of serious declines and also a documented decrease of 35% in the South East region since 1994 (Risely *et al.* 2013). In comparison, Figure 7 shows the trend graph for 1994-2012 for Starling, a red-listed species exhibiting a 53% decrease in Sussex since 1994, matching similar decreases in the South East region and in the UK over the same period (Risely *et al.* 2013).

Trend graphs for all the remaining 31 species for which trends can be calculated in Sussex are given in Appendix 1. Some of these graphs show clear increases or decreases in populations, whilst some show fluctuations and probably indicate generally stable populations.

BBS reporting rates for Sussex 1994-2012

Some relatively common species are recorded in few BBS squares, or were recorded in very few BBS squares during the early years of the survey, and for these species BBS population trends

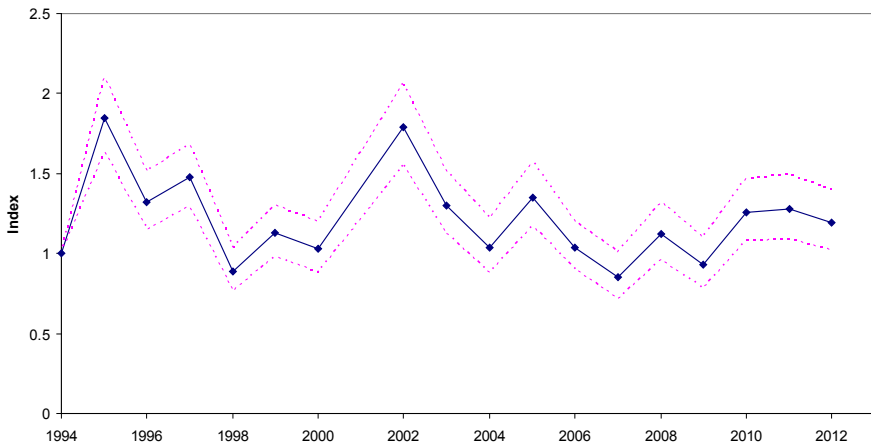


Figure 6. Population trend graph for House Sparrow in Sussex during the period 1994-2012. Solid line, population index relative to an arbitrary index of 1.0 in 1994; dashed lines, upper and lower 95% confidence limits.



Figure 7. Population trend graph for Starling in Sussex during the period 1994-2012. Solid line, population index relative to an arbitrary index of 1.0 in 1994; dashed lines, upper and lower 95% confidence limits.

cannot currently be calculated. Another method of using the BBS data to demonstrate population changes for these species is to plot the percentages of BBS squares in Sussex in which the species have been recorded each year since the start of the survey in 1994. These graphs do not take into account the numbers of individual birds recorded or a range of other factors that are used to calculate the BBS trends, and so are less meaningful than the BBS trend graphs, but these graphs can be useful visual indications of the changing fortunes of species within Sussex.

Figure 8 shows the BBS reporting rate for Kestrel during the period 1994-2012. The mean BBS sample size for this species in Sussex during the period 1994-2012 is only 22 squares, but this graph shows that Kestrels have been recorded in a relatively stable percentage of BBS squares during the period 1994-2012. If BBS coverage in Sussex continues at its current level for several more years, the mean BBS sample size for Kestrel will increase and it will hopefully be possible to calculate BBS trends for this species.

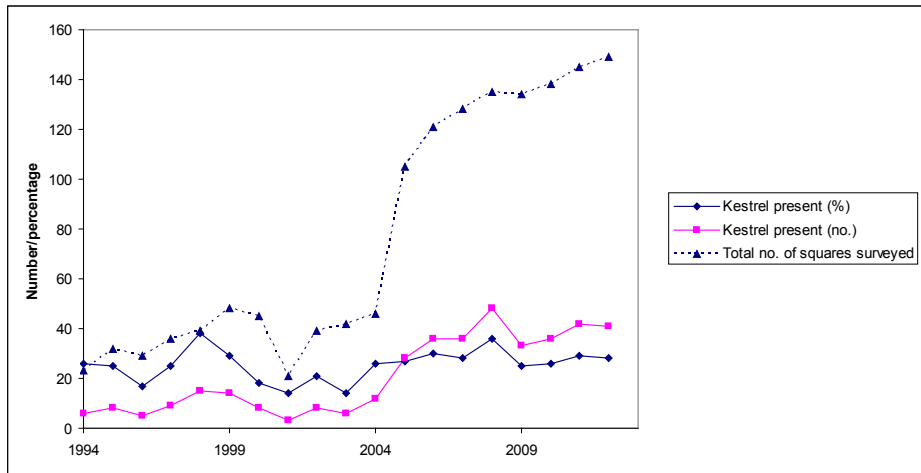


Figure 8. *The BBS reporting rate for Kestrel in Sussex during the period 1994-2012.*

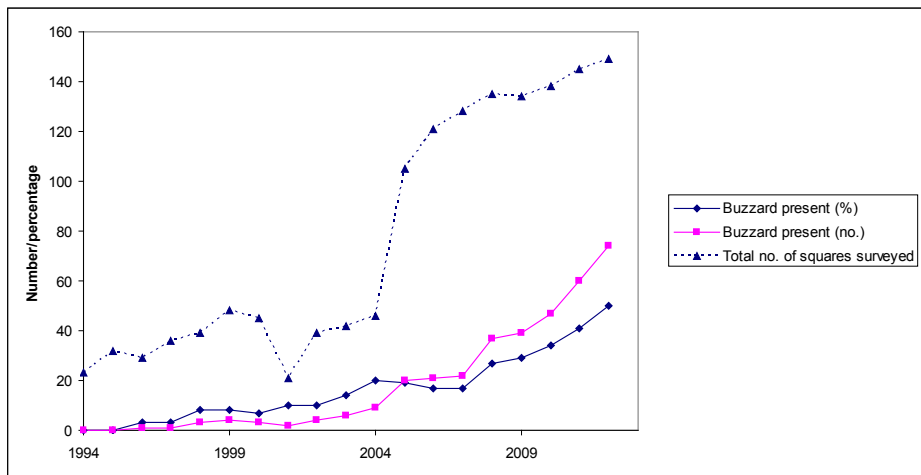


Figure 9. *The BBS reporting rate for Buzzard in Sussex during the period 1994-2012.*

Figure 9 shows the BBS reporting rate for Buzzard during the period 1994-2012. This species is known to have significantly increased in numbers in Sussex during recent years, and the graph

reflects this. However, despite this large increase in reporting rate, resulting in Buzzards having been recorded in 74 BBS squares in Sussex in 2012, this species was not recorded at all by the BBS in 1994 or 1995, and was recorded in very small numbers of squares during the period 1996-2004, meaning that the mean BBS sample size for this species in Sussex during the period 1994-2012 is only 20 squares. Currently it is not possible to calculate BBS trends for this species, although it is clear that there is no conservation concern in relation to this species.

Conclusions

Population trends for common breeding birds in Sussex during the period 1994-2012, derived from the results of the Breeding Bird Survey, have been presented here along with trend graphs showing population changes for all 37 species for which trends can currently be calculated in Sussex. Population trends will continue to be calculated every year, and these population trends and the accompanying trend graphs for increasing numbers of species will be published regularly by the Sussex Ornithological Society. In order for these population trends to continue to give reliable indications of the fortunes of breeding birds in Sussex, survey coverage needs to be maintained or increased, and new volunteers are welcomed and should contact the author.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks are due to all of the observers who take part in the BBS in Sussex, and all those who have taken part in the past, as well as to landowners and farmers who kindly allow volunteers to carry out BBS surveys on their land. Sincere thanks are due to Kate Risely at the BTO for providing the population trends and indices for Sussex, and for much information and advice.

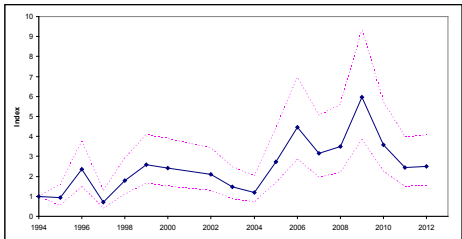
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Appendix 1

Population trend graphs for Sussex for the period 1994-2012 for the 31 species for which trends can be calculated in Sussex and which are not discussed above. Solid line, population index relative to an arbitrary index of 1.0 in 1994; dashed lines, upper and lower 95% confidence limits.

Mallard



Pheasant



Moorhen



Woodpigeon



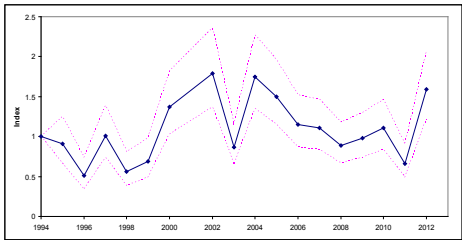
Collared Dove



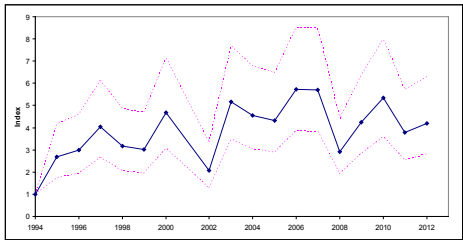
Cuckoo



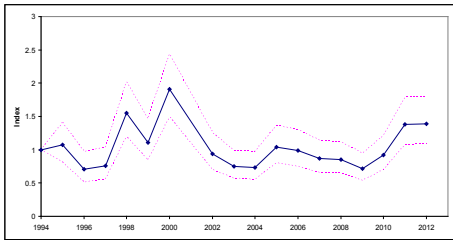
Green Woodpecker



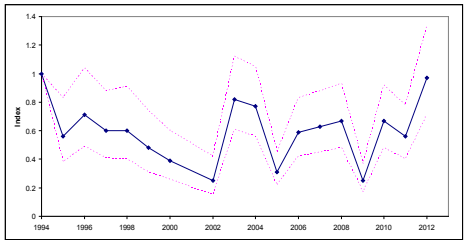
Great Spotted Woodpecker



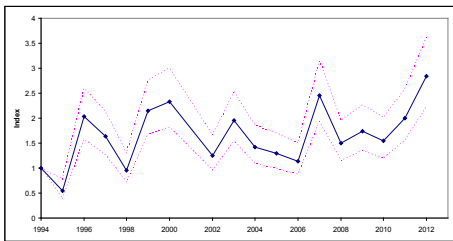
Maggie



Jay



Jackdaw



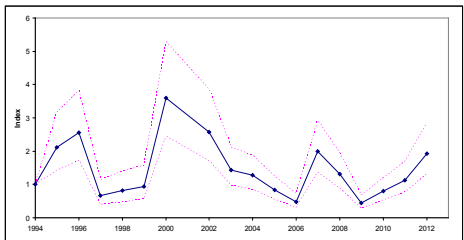
Rook



Carrión Crow



Goldcrest



Blue Tit



Great Tit



Skylark



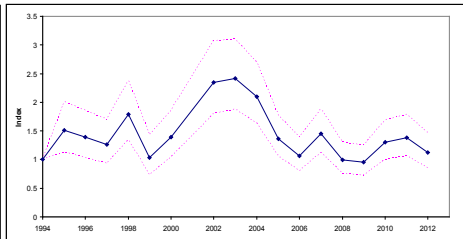
Swallow



Long-tailed Tit



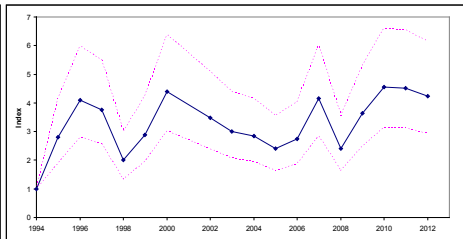
Chiffchaff



Blackcap



Whitethroat

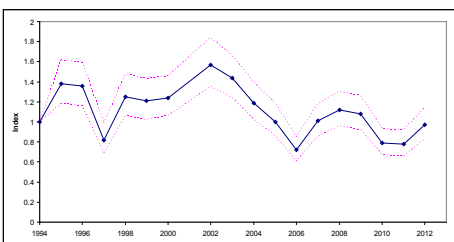
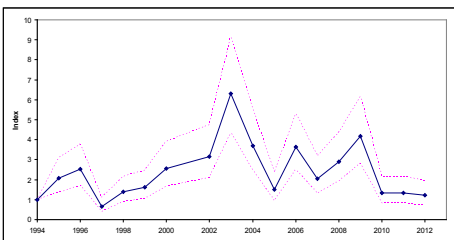
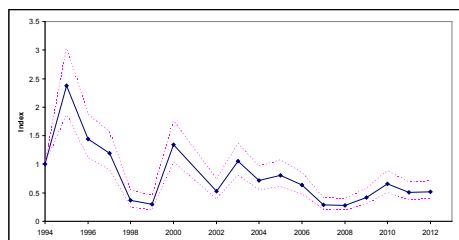


Nuthatch



Wren



Blackbird**Robin****Dunnock****Pied Wagtail****Goldfinch****Linnet****Yellowhammer**

Leucistic Grey Heron at Bewl Water

SOS Records Committee

If one glances only briefly at the photograph below one could be forgiven for thinking that it shows a Great White Egret *Ardea alba*.



However, on closer inspection the bird does not look quite right for a Great White Egret. It looks too cumbersome and large-bodied. The head appears too large and shows some black on the crown. Also, the neck is thick and not serpentine as in an egret. The bird is in fact a leucistic Grey Heron *Ardea cineria* photographed at Bewl Water on 29 May 2012 by Malcolm Freeman.

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	Cirl 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*.

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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 database. This has over two million records which are vitally important in helping us monitor our changing bird populations; they are also regularly used for conservation purposes.

What are the benefits of being a member of the SOS?

Membership of the SOS entitles you to receive four quarterly newsletters a year, plus a copy of the award-winning annual Sussex Bird Report, which has accounts of all the species recorded in Sussex during the previous year, as well as articles on recent Sussex bird surveys and on a variety of interesting Sussex ornithological matters. You can also attend the society's ever-popular conference each January and go on some 30 outings a year which are led by some of Sussex's best birders. Membership of the society is open to anyone and your membership fee contributes to our important conservation work to help Sussex's birds.



Visit our website www.sos.org.uk for information on the latest bird sightings in Sussex, and to find a wealth of information about the society and how to join us.

Index

Species in Systematic List

Auk, Little	124	Duck, Mandarin	24
Auk species	124	Duck, Ruddy	39
Avocet	77	Duck, Tufted	31
		Dunlin	89
Bee-eater	136	Dunnoek	186
Bittern, Eurasian	51		
Blackbird	172	Egret, Cattle	52
Blackcap	159	Egret, Great White	54
Bluethroat	178	Egret, Little	53
Brambling	194	Eider, Common	33
Bullfinch	201		
Bunting, Corn	205	Falcon, Red-footed	71
Bunting, Lapland	203	Fieldfare	173
Bunting, Reed	204	Firecrest	146
Bunting, Snow	202	Flycatcher, Pied	179
Buzzard, Common	68	Flycatcher, Red-breasted	178
Buzzard, Rough-legged	69	Flycatcher, Spotted	176
		Fulmar	45
Chaffinch	194		
Chiffchaff	157	Gadwall	25
Coot	75	Gannet	47
Cormorant	48	Garganey	29
Crane	76	Godwit, Bar-tailed	94
Crossbill, Common	200	Godwit, Black-tailed	93
Crossbill, Parrot	201	Goldercrest	145
Crow, Carrion	143	Goldeneye	36
Curlew	96	Goldfinch	196
Cuckoo, Common	129	Goosander	39
		Goose, Canada	19
Diver, Black-throated	43	Goose, Barnacle	20
Diver, Great Northern	44	Goose, Bean	17
Diver, Red-throated	42	Goose, Brent	21
Diver species	44	Goose, Egyptian	22
Dotterel	81	Goose, Greylag	18
Dove, Collared	127	Goose, Pink-footed	17
Dove, Stock	126	Goose, White-fronted	17
Dove, Turtle	127	Goshawk	67
Duck, Long-tailed	33	Grebe, Black-necked	63

Grebe, Great Crested	60	Linnet	198
Grebe, Little	59		
Grebe, Red-necked	62	Magpie	140
Grebe, Slavonian	62	Mallard	27
Greenfinch	195	Martin, House	154
Greenshank	100	Martin, Sand	152
Guillemot, Common	122	Merganser, Hooded	36
Gull, Black-headed	108	Merganser, Red-breasted	37
Gull, Caspian	114	Merlin	71
Gull, Common	111	Moorhen	74
Gull, Glaucous	115		
Gull, Great Black-backed	116	Nightingale, Common	177
Gull, Herring	113	Nightjar	134
Gull, Iceland	114	Nuthatch	168
Gull, Lesser Black-backed	112		
Gull, Little	109	Oriole, Golden	139
Gull, Mediterranean	110	Osprey	69
Gull, Sabine's	107	Ouzel, Ring	171
Gull, Yellow-legged	114	Owl, Barn	130
		Owl, Little	130
Harrier, Hen	66	Owl, Long-eared	132
Harrier, Marsh	65	Owl, Short-eared	133
Hawfinch	202	Owl, Tawny	131
Heron, Grey	55	Oystercatcher	76
Heron, Night	52		
Heron, Purple	56	Parakeet, Rose-ringed	129
Heron, Squacco	52	Partridge, Grey	40
Hobby	72	Partridge, Red-legged	40
Honey-buzzard	64	Peregrine	73
Hoopoe	137	Petrel, Leach's	47
		Petrel, Storm	47
Ibis, Glossy	57	Pheasant, Common	42
		Phalarope, Grey	103
Jackdaw	142	Pigeon, Feral	125
Jay	141	Pintail	28
		Pipit, Meadow	192
Kestrel	70	Pipit, Rock	192
Kingfisher	136	Pipit, Tawny	191
Kite, Red	64	Pipit, Tree	191
Kittiwake	107	Pipit, Water	193
Knot	84	Plover, Golden	81
		Plover, Grey	82
Lapwing	83	Plover, Kentish	81
Lark, Shore	151	Plover, Little Ringed	79

Plover, Ringed	80	Skua, Great	105
Pochard, Common	31	Skua, Long-tailed	105
Pochard, Red-crested	30	Skua, Pomarine	103
		Skylark	150
Quail	41	Smew	37
		Snipe, Common	91
Rail, Water	74	Snipe, Jack	91
Raven	144	Sparrowhawk	68
Razorbill	123	Sparrow, House	187
Redpoll, Lesser	199	Sparrow, Tree	188
Redpoll, Common	200	Spoonbill	58
Redshank, Common	101	Starling, Common	170
Redshank, Spotted	99	Starling, Rose-coloured	171
Redstart, Black	180	Stilt, Black-winged	77
Redstart, Common	181	Stint, Little	86
Redwing	174	Stint, Temminck's	86
Robin	176	Stonechat, Eurasian	184
Rook	142	Stonechat, Siberian	182
Rosefinch, Common	201	Stone-curlew	78
Ruff	90	Stork, Black	56
		Stork, White	56
Sanderling	84	Swallow, Barn	153
Sandpiper, Common	97	Swan, Bewick's	16
Sandpiper, Curlew	87	Swan, Mute	15
Sandpiper, Green	98	Swan, Whooper	17
Sandpiper, Pectoral	87	Swift, Common	135
Sandpiper, Purple	88		
Sandpiper, Terek	97	Teal, Eurasian	26
Sandpiper, Wood	101	Tern, Arctic	121
Scaup, Greater	32	Tern, Black	117
Scoter, Common	33	Tern, Common	119
Scoter, Velvet	35	Tern, Common/Arctic	121
Serin	196	Tern, Little	117
Shag	50	Tern, Roseate	120
Shearwater, Balearic	46	Tern, Sandwich	118
Shearwater, Cory's	45	Thrush, Mistle	175
Shearwater, Manx	46	Thrush, Song	174
Shearwater, Sooty	46	Tit, Bearded	149
Shelduck, Common	23	Tit, Blue	146
Shoveler	30	Tit, Coal	148
Shrike, Great Grey	139	Tit, Great	147
Shrike, Red-backed	139	Tit, Long-tailed	155
Siskin	197	Tit, Marsh	148
Skua, Arctic	104	Treecreeper	169

Turnstone	102	Warbler, Yellow-browed	156
		Waxwing	166
Wagtail, Grey	189	Wheatear, Desert	186
Wagtail, Pied	190	Wheatear, Northern	184
Wagtail, Yellow	188	Whimbrel	95
Warbler, Barred	161	Whinchat	182
Warbler, Cetti's	154	Whitethroat, Common	161
Warbler, Dartford	162	Whitethroat, Lesser	161
Warbler, Garden	160	Wigeon, Eurasian	24
Warbler, Grasshopper	163	Woodcock	93
Warbler, Great Reed	165	Woodlark	149
Warbler, Hume's	157	Woodpecker, Great Spotted	138
Warbler, Marsh	164	Woodpecker, Green	137
Warbler, Melodious	163	Woodpecker, Lesser Spotted	138
Warbler, Paddyfield	164	Woodpigeon	126
Warbler, Pallas's Leaf	156	Wren	169
Warbler, Reed	164	Wryneck	137
Warbler, Sedge	163		
Warbler, Willow	158	Yellowhammer	203
Warbler, Wood	157		



Hooded Merganser; Pagham Harbour, November 2012 (Trevor Guy)



Tawny Owl, Beachy Head, April 2012 (John Cooper)





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