

# AVON BIRD REPORT

## 2006

### AVON ORNITHOLOGICAL GROUP

Front cover: Garganey (male) taken at Chew Valley Lake in May  
Photograph by Gary Thorburn

Rear cover: Map of the Avon area computer generated by S. Godden, Dept. of  
Geography, University of Bristol.

Text drawings by: Phil Baber, Brian Slade, John Martin, Richard Andrews.

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## Editorial

As will be obvious, we have changed the size of this Report from A5 to B5. We thought long and hard before making this change as we realise that some readers would have preferred the old format to stay. There are three main reasons for the change:

- The ever-growing amount of material due to the increase in both the number and quality of the observations received,
- The wider pages will allow more detailed tables to be presented, this will develop over time,
- The wider pages will also allow the Report to open more easily, and so it should be easier to read.

There will also be a slight saving in paper as the proportion of print area to margin is increased. We welcome detailed comments but having made the main change we intend to stay with it for several years to come.

The prey of a pair of Peregrines in Bath has been studied over several years, and the paper in this issue by Ed Drewitt detailing these observations makes fascinating reading. It shows that aspects of some other species have not so far been recorded. For example more Woodcock were taken by this pair in the autumn of 2006 than are usually recorded in the whole of the Avon area in a year.

The second and final part of Andy Davis's survey of the unusual ornithological events over the past 60 years is also published in this issue, together with the first part published last year it gives an valuable historical perspective on the bird-life of our region over the past few decades.

Two further papers by Mark Dadds and Richard Bland, respectively, give insights into some unusual aspects of the lives of our Pheasants and their relationship with the Fox population, and the feeding behaviour of some Great Spotted Woodpeckers. There is also an interesting note on an aircraft/bird shrike by Chris Stone.

The third in our series of papers on the identification of 'difficult' species is on the Yellow-legged Gull and, as last year, it is written by John Martin. This species has only recently been "officially recognised", that is as a species in it's our right, and so this paper is timely.

No new species were added to the Avon list in 2006, but see below. Unusual sightings included a **Lesser Yellowlegs** in September (third record), a **Whiskered Tern** in May (third record), a **Red-billed Chough** (third record since 1900 and the first since 1942), and a **Common Rosefinch** (also a third record). Two sightings from earlier years should also be mentioned - both potentially first records. In May 2003 a North American **Northern Cardinal** was seen at Portbury, BOURC has accepted this record as an escape but in our opinion due to the nearness to the port ship-assistance cannot be completely ruled out. Finally, in November 2005 a **Frigatebird** species (probably **Magnificent**) was seen on Flat Holm to leave the island and head towards Weston-s-Mare and so into Avon waters. Unfortunately no Avon birders saw the bird as it (probably) passed up the Estuary.

Finally, as usual, I would like to thank over those who submitted records, both regular and description, and whether by paper or electronically. Electronic recording is gaining pace and we welcome this as it makes the work of producing the Report easier, and it saves paper too. Also thanks are due to all those who wrote parts of this Report for all their hard work and dedication. This applies to all members of both the editor's and recorder's committees, to Andy Davis and Keith Vinicombe, and especially to Jason Williams who prepares the final document for the printers.

H.E. Rose

## Species and subspecies for which descriptions are required

As well as the species listed below, we also require descriptions of all 'British Birds' rarities (see the BBRC website <http://www.bbrc.org.uk> for a list of species and details of how to submit these nationally – the ideal is to submit to BBRC and send a copy to the county recorder), and out-of-season migrants (for example a Whimbrel in January, or a Fieldfare in July). We also reserve the right to ask for supporting notes in the event of queries regarding any record. Full details can be found in the 2005 Report.

Whooper Swan	Rough-legged Buzzard	Red-rumped Swallow
Bean Goose	Osprey	Richard's Pipit
Pink-footed Goose	Red-footed Falcon	Tawny Pipit
American Wigeon	Merlin*	Red-throated Pipit
Green-winged Teal	Spotted Crake	Bohemian Waxwing
Red-crested Pochard+	Corn Crake	Bluethroat
Ring-necked Duck	Common Crane	Cetti's Warbler**
Ferruginous Duck	Stone-curlew	Aquatic Warbler
Greater Scaup	Kentish Plover	Marsh Warbler
Common Eider *	Eurasian Dotterel	Icterine Warbler
Long-tailed Duck	American Golden Plover	Melodious Warbler
Surf Scoter	Temminck's Stint	Barred Warbler
Velvet Scoter	White-rumped Sandpiper	Dartford Warbler+++
Red-breasted Merganser+	Purple Sandpiper*	Subalpine Warbler
White-headed Duck***	Pectoral Sandpiper	Greenish Warbler
Common Quail**	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Pallas's Leaf Warbler
Red-throated Diver	Red-necked Phalarope	Yellow-browed Warbler
Black-throated Diver	Grey Phalarope	Radde's Warbler
Great Northern Diver	Pomarine Skua	Dusky Warbler
Red-necked Grebe	Arctic Skua*	Wood Warbler ++
Slavonian Grebe	Long-tailed Skua	Firecrest
Black-necked Grebe#	Great Skua*	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Northern Fulmar*	Sabine's Gull	Bearded Tit
Cory's Shearwater	Ring-billed Gull	Willow Tit
Great Shearwater	Iceland/Kumlien's Gull	Eurasian Golden Oriole
Sooty Shearwater	Glaucous Gull	Red-backed Shrike
Manx Shearwater*	White-winged Tern	Great Grey Shrike
Balearic Shearwater	Little Tern	Woodchat Shrike
Wilson's Storm-petrel	Roseate Tern	Red-billed Chough
European Storm-petrel	Common Guillemot*	Hooded Crow
Leach's Storm-petrel	Razorbill	Rosy Starling
Northern Gannet*	Black Guillemot	European Serin
European Shag	Little Auk	Twite
Black-crowned Night Heron	Atlantic Puffin	Common Redpoll
Great Egret	European Turtle Dove	Arctic Redpoll
Purple Heron	Long-eared Owl	Common Rosefinch
White Stork	European Nightjar**	Hawfinch
Eurasian Spoonbill	Alpine Swift	Lapland Bunting
European Honey-buzzard	European Bee-eater	Cirl Bunting
Black Kite	Hoopoe	Ortolan Bunting
Eurasian Marsh Harrier	Eurasian Wryneck	Rustic Bunting
Hen Harrier	Greater Short-toed Lark	Little Bunting
Montagu's Harrier	Wood Lark	Corn Bunting+++
Northern Goshawk	Horned Lark	
# away from the three main reservoirs	* inland only	
** sight records of non-singing birds away from established breeding areas		
***category D, but descriptions required please	+ except males in breeding plumage	
++ autumn only	+++ away from breeding stronghold	

## Review of 2006

R.J. Higgins

### First Winter Period

The winter was dry and, by the standards of recent years, cold. Easterly and north-easterly winds, caused by continental high pressure systems, dominated for most of the period, with the exception of spells from Jan. 9th to 18th, and Feb. 12th to 17th when depressions brought south-westerlies.

The cold weather was probably responsible for some movement of wildfowl into the area. Eurasian Wigeon numbers were double those of the previous winter and the largest party of Greater White-fronted Goose in our area since 2000 was seen: 17 over Severn Beach on Feb. 20th. However, some species often associated with low temperatures were in short supply, with only one record of Tundra Swan and very poor numbers of Smew. The latter species may well have been displaced from the reservoirs by disturbance associated with the Ruddy Duck cull. Low water levels at the main reservoirs produced good counts of Eurasian Teal and Mallard, and Common Pochard numbers were also high. On the coast, counts of Common Shelduck were on the low side.

On the Estuary a slight increase in Dunlin numbers was welcome, and the highest count of this species for several years was made at Severnside. Common Redshank numbers were also good, but Black-tailed Godwit counts were down. The cold weather failed to produce any significant influxes of species such as Northern Lapwing and Jack Snipe, although Golden Plover numbers were slightly higher than usual. Two species close to the northern edge of their wintering range were undeterred by the weather: numbers of Common Sandpiper were high and three Spotted Redshanks were noted regularly on the coast, with a single record of another individual.

The rise in the population of Common Wood Pigeon continues and it was recorded at the highest rate yet by the WGS. A flock of 2,000 was recorded at Marshfield in January. The population of Common Starling, a species that in contrast has been in decline, improved slightly. A combination of the cold weather and a poor crop of beech mast produced higher than usual garden numbers of some species, including Eurasian Jay, Song Thrush, Common Bullfinch and Chaffinch. Numbers of migrant finches were good, with a flock of 500 Brambling at Wrington outstanding, but very few of this species were seen after Jan. 21st. Migrant thrush numbers, however, were unexceptional. Fieldfare enjoyed an average season and Redwing were few and far between. A poor breeding season in 2005 and the cold weather were probably responsible for low numbers of Long-tailed Tit and Eurasian Treecreeper. On the other hand, counts of three species favoured by mild winters – Stonechat, Common Chiffchaff and Blackcap – were good. In the case of the two warblers this was perhaps because they were forced by low temperatures into gardens. There was welcome news of two species of conservation concern. Linnets were recorded in good numbers, whilst an exceptional flock of 260 Corn Buntings was seen at Marshfield in January. A Corn Bunting at Wellow was the first seen here for many years.

The winter was unexceptional in terms of rare and scarce birds. The influx of Hawfinch that started at the end of 2005 continued, with a party of six at Yate proving very obliging, and birds, three in both instances, were also seen at Leigh Woods and Horwood Farm near Wickwar. The only other passerine records of note were of a single Firecrest at ASW on the first day of the year and a Dartford Warbler at Sand Point on the next day. Until recently Black-necked Grebes were virtually unknown in our area in the winter, and although they have been seen more frequently in the last few years a party at BG that reached five in February was exceptional. CVL produced a good sequence of gull records in January, with Caspian Gulls from 4th and on 17th, Ring-billed Gull on 12th and Kumelin's Gull from 21st. Two Great Bitterns were also present at the lake, but were very difficult to see.

### Spring

The weather in early March continued the pattern seen in the late winter, the cold northerly winds did not abate until 7th, and from 10th more cold winds, this time from the east, returned. The end of March and beginning of April saw warm, wet weather but cold conditions returned between April 4th and 10th. The rest of April and the first half of May were then warm, but there were storms with heavy rain from May 18th, followed by a spell of sunny but cold weather at the end of the month.

There was more evidence than usual of spring movement of wildfowl through our area. Northern Shoveler passage was evident at CVL in March and there were two large parties of Dark-bellied Brent Goose at Severnside: 68 on 25th and 32 on 29th. Common Scoter passage was strong, peaking on May 11th and shortly afterwards on 15th there were six Garganey at CVL.

The first seabird passage involved Black-legged Kittiwake, with large numbers in the Estuary between March 9th and 28th. Tern passage began shortly afterwards, with the earliest Common Tern on record being seen at Severn Beach on March 30th. Thereafter, however, tern passage was unexceptional, as was Little Gull passage but there were several records of Sandwich Tern between April 23rd and 28th, when spring passage of Arctic Skua was also strong. There were three pulses of Arctic Tern passage, on April 23rd and 29th, and on May 11th, with peak numbers of Common Tern on the last date. The strong south-westerlies in May resulted in a good series of seabird records. May 18th and 19th, in particular, saw good numbers of Northern Gannet, Northern Fulmar, European Storm Petrel, Great Skua and Arctic Tern at estuarine watch points. More unusually, these were followed by inland records of Northern Gannet at CVL and BL on May 24th and 25th, and of Northern Fulmar at CVL on 19th and 27th.

Spring passage of raptors through the Avon area was unremarkable, with the only significant records being of five Marsh Harriers in late April and early May. Passage of most wader species was also unremarkable, with strikingly low numbers of Grey Plover, Red Knot, Bar-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel and Common Sandpiper. The exception was a flock of 80 Bar-tailed Godwit seen flying through CVL on May 2nd – a record count for the site. Two Curlew Sandpipers were seen, and Sanderling passage peaked on May 14th, around the time when Garganey and Common Scoter were also passing through in numbers.

Cold weather and northerly airflows delayed the arrival of many passerines. A House Martin at Lawrence Weston on March 14th bucked the trend but Sand Martin was not seen until 21st and Northern Wheatear until 25th. Sizeable movements of most species did not then occur until mid-April, but the sudden switch to more favourable winds in this period produced large falls of some species. The largest arrival was between April 20th and 24th, when numbers of Barn Swallow, House Martin, Tree Pipit, Meadow Pipit, Yellow Wagtail, Common Redstart, Whinchat, Northern Wheatear, Ring Ouzel, Sedge Warbler, Eurasian Reed Warbler, Blackcap, Common Whitethroat, Willow Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher, Pied Flycatcher, European Goldfinch and Common Linnet all peaked. Shortly afterwards there were large arrivals of Common Swift and Lesser Whitethroat before the end of the month. Watchers enjoyed good numbers of Northern Wheatear and several less common migrants, including Turtle Dove, Tree Pipit, Yellow Wagtail, Common Redstart, Common Grasshopper Warbler and Pied Flycatcher.

The period also produced a good sequence of scarce species, many of whose arrivals were coincident with those of more common migrants. CVL continued its impressive sequence of gull records, with further Ring-billed Gulls from March 12th to 22nd and from 29th to 30th. The end of March also produced a White Stork, which visited our area from Somerset at the end of the month. Our third accepted record of Great Egret, at CI-Y on April 6th, then followed. The Avon area missed out on the influx of Laughing Gulls to western Britain in autumn 2005, but caught up on April 17th, when one flew through CVL. The same site then produced a Whiskered Tern on 28th and 29th. The period of main passerine migrant activity saw a good sequence of local rarity records. These started with the first Chough in our area for 65 years at Sand Point on April 19th, quickly followed by a Stone-curlew at Severnside on April 20th. Our first spring Eurasian Wryneck for ten years was then noted at Warmley from April 23rd to 25th. A Eurasian Spoonbill was seen at both OPS and Severnside on April 23rd, and possibly the same bird was also seen at Weston STW and CI-Y over the next three weeks. Continuing warm weather in early May kept the sequence of scarce birds going. A Common Redpoll was at Sand Point from May 4th, the same date that a Red-backed Shrike was seen at Winford. Possibly the same bird was seen at CVL later in the month on 29th. Sand Point produced a Common Rosefinch, our third ever accepted record, on May 9th. The stormy and colder weather in the second half of May saw the run of scarce birds come to an end.

### **Breeding**

Many breeding species, some of them already at a low ebb following the cold winter, were adversely affected by the cold and wet weather in the second half on May.

Waterbirds, however, had a fairly good year. Numbers of young Common Shelduck on the coast were high, whilst both Gadwall and Tufted Duck enjoyed a good year. At CVL, our most important site for breeding waterfowl, both Common Pochard and Common Coot bred in good numbers and three pairs of Water Rail held territories.

Common Buzzard was particularly affected by the weather. The number of pairs nesting was high, but fledgling survival was very poor. Common Kestrel is less well monitored, but low numbers later in the year suggested that it too suffered fledgling mortality. Eurasian Sparrowhawk, however, had its best season since 1997, whilst both Peregrine and Eurasian Hobby had average years. Tawny Owl showed signs of a substantial population decline and, although Barn Owls were present at a good number of sites, their breeding success was affected by poor weather in May. There was some evidence that Common Snipe at least attempted to breed in the Gordano Valley, but on the whole the year was very poor for breeding waders. Northern Lapwing, which had their worst year on record, gave particular cause for concern. Little Plover also had their second successive poor year.

The response of passerine populations to the cold winter was variable. Hedge Accentor and European Robin appeared unaffected, but numbers of Wren and Goldcrest were well down on the levels of the previous year. Long-tailed Tit numbers were also low, but they apparently had a good breeding season, in contrast to Coal, Blue and Great Tits, which were severely affected by wet weather in May. Populations of Wood Nuthatch and Eurasian Treecreeper were also at low levels. Most resident species of conservation concern also had poor years – Mistle Thrush continued to fall, as did Common Blackbird, whilst populations of Common Linnet, Common Bullfinch, Yellowhammer and Corn Bunting were very low. Reed Bunting, however, showed a slight improvement and the numbers of both European Greenfinch and European Goldfinch were the highest on record. Amongst the migrant species, Spotted Flycatcher and Common Cuckoo continue to give cause for concern but there were signs of a slight improvement in Willow Warbler numbers. Following a good spring for the species, Common Grasshopper Warblers were present at seven sites. Common Chiffchaff, however, had a poor year and Eurasian Reed Warbler success at CVL was poor.

Most scarce species also had a poor year, with no indication of breeding by Tree Pipit, Yellow Wagtail, Wood Warbler, Eurasian Tree Sparrow or Lesser Redpoll. Eurasian Siskin, however, may have bred in both the Blagdon and Dolebury areas. The southern fringe of our region also supported two pairs of European Nightjar. Stonechats, apparently unaffected by the cold winter, showed a further increase.

### Summer

June was exceptionally hot, with temperatures at their highest since 1976, although the end of the month was cool, with significant rainfall followed by a series of easterlies. July was also hot, although the settled weather was broken by rain and south-westerlies from 5th to 10th.

As usual, seabirds dominated records of unusual birds in mid-Summer. Numbers peaked on July 9th, when Manx Shearwater, Northern Gannet and European Storm-petrel were all seen on the coast in good numbers. Two summer records of Arctic Tern were unusual – an adult at Sand Bay on 20th and a first-summer at CVL on June 22nd, coinciding with the appearance here of four Black-tailed Godwits of the race *limosa*.

Red Kites were seen at several sites and a Long-eared Owl, probably suffering from low Field Vole populations, was seen at CVL on the morning of June 10th.

### Autumn

August was generally hot and dry with rainfall largely restricted to short downpours. Northerly winds dominated much of the first half of the month, with westerlies and north-westerlies in the second half. September was exceptionally hot, with winds first from the east, then more variable after 10th. The first twelve days of October were dominated by south-westerly air flows, followed by a brief period of easterlies, before a series of lows swept across the country over the last twelve days of the month.

The early summer rainfall was sufficient to keep water levels at the reservoirs high and this resulted in rather low numbers of most wildfowl. The peak count of Garganey at CVL, on Aug. 26th, was only five and counts of Gadwall were particularly low. Diving birds are less affected by water levels than surface-feeders and BL supported record numbers of Tufted Duck in August, whilst there was a good showing by Greater Scaup in September and October. Great Crested Grebe numbers at CVL have been low in recent years, a consequence of poor numbers of small coarse fish, but there were signs of a recovery in 2006, with a maximum count of 430 in October.

Wader passage was generally poor, with Grey Plover, Little Stint, Dunlin, Ruff, Spotted Redshank, Common Greenshank, Wood Sandpiper and Common Sandpiper all failing to reach average numbers. Two species provided an exception to this trend. There was a strong passage of Ringed Plover between Aug, 19th and

22nd, when 450 were present at Severnside. Common Redshank numbers were high, and a count of 485 at the Axe Estuary was the highest in our area for many years.

Passerine numbers were also unexceptional on the whole, with for example, no records of Pied Flycatcher. There were two significant peaks in passage in September. Between 9th and 11th the switch to easterly winds produced high numbers of House Martin, Tree Pipit, Common Redstart, Whinchat and Northern Wheatear. At the end of the month Barn Swallow and Yellow Wagtail passage peaked, the last Lesser Whitethroat, Common Whitethroat and Willow Warbler and the first Eurasian Siskin and Lesser Redpoll were seen, and the first influx of Meadow Pipits of the autumn occurred. The first Brambling were seen on Oct. 7th with Fieldfare appearing on the next day, and the last House Martin, Tree Pipit, Yellow Wagtail, Whinchat and Spotted Flycatcher were seen over the next week. Our latest ever Eurasian Reed Warbler was recorded on Oct. 29th, and the next six days saw strong passage of Wood Pigeon, Sky Lark and Common Starling.

For the second successive year the autumn did not live up to the spring as far as rare species were concerned. Generally settled weather in August led to a dearth of scarce migrants. In September, south-westerlies at the beginning of the month produced a Razorbill at Severn Beach and a European Shag at CI-Y. A small influx of Black-necked Grebes, an inland Arctic Skua at CVL and BL, a Eurasian Wryneck at Charlton and the appearance of four Firecrests coincided with easterlies flowing from a Baltic High in mid-month. The autumn of 2006 produced good numbers of Nearctic waders in southern Britain. Our area managed four Pectoral Sandpipers arriving between Sept. 14th and Oct. 1st and a Lesser Yellowlegs, the outstanding bird of the autumn, on the Axe from Oct. 7th to 10th. For a while it was accompanied by both a Common Greenshank and the year's only Wood Sandpiper. A Yellow-browed Warbler at PW and a Kentish Plover at Severnside were both found on Sept. 22nd. South-westerlies in October produced a Grey Phalarope on 7th and a Little Auk on 22nd, both at Severnside. Three Dartford Warblers were seen on the coast in the second half of the month and another Yellow-browed Warbler was at Sand Point on Oct. 27th, when four Wood Larks were seen at the Axe Estuary.

## Winter

November started with a period of high pressure, producing easterly winds and low temperatures, but the rest of the month was mild and very wet. These conditions continued into early December, but from the middle of the month cooler and dull weather dominated, until south-westerlies returned at year end.

Generally mild weather and high water levels at both CVL and BL conspired to produce low numbers of most duck, with Eurasian Teal and Mallard particularly affected. Northern Shoveler numbers were depressed by high levels of disturbance at CVL. Smew numbers were again very low, but Goosander, like Great Crested Grebe earlier in the year, was slightly more numerous at CVL than in recent years.

On the Estuary there was some evidence, as in the previous winter, of a slight recovery in Dunlin numbers but most wader species were present in small numbers, with Black-tailed Godwit particularly scarce. Generally mild weather was probably responsible for good numbers of Common Sandpiper, but also for poor numbers of Northern Lapwing, Jack Snipe and Common Snipe.

Once the autumn migration was over Brambling, Eurasian Siskin and Lesser Redpoll were all very scarce. Low populations of several resident species, including Common Blackbird, reflected poor breeding success. There were marked movements of Fieldfare on Nov. 1st and of this species and Redwing in mid-December, but overall numbers of both species were also poor, as were those of a rarer winter visitor, Water Pipit.

The first scarce bird of the period was a Northern Goshawk at Severnside on Nov. 9th. The beginning of December saw an influx of seabirds that proved to be one of the most memorable ornithological events of the year. The most prominent species was Leach's Storm-petrel. Severnside was the best site for this species, with daily records between Dec. 3rd and 8th. Numbers were hard to assess, but there was a minimum of 45 on 6th. Smaller numbers were seen elsewhere on the coast and inland a bird was seen briefly at CVL and corpses were found at Yatton and BL. Accompanying species at Severnside included good numbers of Great Skua, the second Little Auk of the year on 6th and a Pomarine Skua on 7th, with two European Shags at CI-Y. During the same period a Long-tailed Duck and a Red-necked Grebe appeared at CVL – the former stayed into 2007 whilst the latter was present for a few hours only. The westerly winds were responsible for a small influx of Great Northern Divers over a slightly longer period, with birds appearing at Severnside on 6th, CI-Y on 14th, Severnside on 25th and, most exceptionally, at Cumberland Basin on 28th. A Glaucous Gull at CVL on Dec. 23rd proved an exception to the general lack of birds of a northerly origin.



## Diurnal migration in October

R.L. Bland

There are complex movements in October as winter migrants from the Baltic arrive, and resident birds move south and west. Much of this movement takes place at night, and when winds are light it is at high level. In good conditions birds can be seen in the three hours after dawn, although it is not clear whether this is the tail-end of the night's movement or not. In 2005 there were dawn migration watches on Oct. 4th, 15th, 16th, 18th, 23rd, 26th, and 29th at five sites (OPS, Severn Bridge, New Passage, Wain's Hill (CI-Y) and Sand Point) totalling at least 27 hours. On the 16th there were counts totalling 15.5 hours at five sites.

The identification of passerines seen in the half light, moving very rapidly and often silently, is not an exact science, and the totals obtained are also not precise. It is also possible that the same birds are sometimes being counted as they move along the Estuary, as they generally fly fast. They also generally fly into the wind, so that on Oct 15th and 16th, when the largest numbers were seen, there was a moderate NE wind and all birds were flying steadily up the Estuary.

However the general pattern for passerines is clear from the table below. 26,900 birds of 25 species were counted at a rate of over 900 per hour. 75% were Chaffinches at a rate of 620 per hour. The totals have been rounded where appropriate.

Date (October)	4th	15th	16th	18th	23rd	26th	29th	Total	%
Time (hours)	2	5	15.5	2	1.5	1.5	na	27.5	
Skylark			34		6			40	
Meadow Pipit		6	10					16	
Pied Wagtail		12	35		3			50	
Blackbird			10	10				20	
Fieldfare		1	15	1				17	
Song Thrush	3	4	47	20				75	
Redwing	12	43	876	6		30	300	1270	6
Mistle Thrush	4	2	19			2		3027	
Chiffchaff		3						3	
Jay	20		6					26	
Jackdaw			80					80	
Starling			2484	1300	115			3900	17
Tree Sparrow			4					4	
Finch sp			645					650	3
Chaffinch	75	4010	8049	2150	360	2000	400	17050	75
Brambling		2	88	90			5	185	1
Greenfinch	200	220	610		40	200	100	1370	6
Goldfinch	50		147	20	35			250	1
Siskin	6	15	282	427		15	15	760	3
Linnet	12		45	4				60	
Lesser Redpoll	4	18	20			2		44	
Bullfinch	2	3	10			12		27	
Snow Bunting			3					3	
Reed Bunting	1		13	11				25	
Rate per hour	195	868	873	2020	369	1507		978	
Total	389	4339	13533	4039	553	2261	820	26920	

### Migrant date summary 1981 to 2006

	Earliest	Av 1981-2005	2006	Latest	Av 1981-2005	2006
House Martin	4 Mar '97	27 Mar	14 Mar	28 Nov '70	31 Oct	12 Oct
Wheatear	28 Feb '98	11 Mar	21 Mar	29 Nov '98	5 Nov	11 Nov
Sand Martin	25 Feb '90	13 Mar	21 Mar	18 Nov '76	5 Oct	21 Sep
White Wagtail	5 Mar '72	27 Mar	21 Mar	22 Nov '97	2 Oct	7 Oct
Swallow	7 Mar '78	22 Mar	22 Mar	16 Dec '70	3 Nov	26 Oct
Willow Warbler	9 Mar '72	26 Mar	25 Mar	25 Oct '81	24 Sep	24 Sep
Ring Ouzel	15 Mar '67	31 Mar	25 Mar	20 Nov '86	24 Oct	24 Oct
Lt Ringed Plover	16 Mar '02	7 Apr	29 Mar	18 Oct '76	15 Sep	5 Sep
Common Tern	30 Mar '07	12 Apr	30 Mar	28 Nov '82	6 Oct	19 Oct
Tree Pipit	16 Mar '92	2 Apr	4 Apr	24 Oct '71	27 Sep	10 Oct
Yellow Wagtail	15 Mar '70	7 Apr	4 Apr	2 Dec '03	12 Oct	23 Sep
Redstart	20 Mar '94	7 Apr	4 Apr	12 Nov '72	14 Oct	29 Oct
Pied Flycatcher	30 Mar '02	12 Apr	9 Apr	14 Oct '06	5 Sep	na
Cuckoo	20 Mar '83	13 Apr	12 Apr	23 Sep '83	23 Aug	18 Aug
Garden Warbler	20 Mar '03	14 Apr	12 Apr	21 Nov '93	24 Sep	29 Sep
Whimbrel	26 Mar '86	11 Apr	14 Apr	19 Nov '97	7 Oct	8 Oct
Whitethroat	31 Mar '68	15 Apr	14 Apr	22 Nov '87	27 Sep	30 Sep
Hobby	30 Mar '90	23 Apr	14 Apr	29 Oct '98	1 Oct	2 Oct
Grasshopper Warbler	28 Mar '97	16 Apr	15 Apr	28 Oct '73	18 Sep	29 Sep
Black Tern	2 Apr '82	24 Apr	15 Apr	23 Nov '86	10 Oct	31 Oct
Sedge Warbler	30 Mar '67	12 Apr	16 Apr	28 Oct '86	27 Sep	1 Oct
Swift	8 Apr '01	19 Apr	16 Apr	15 Nov '74	19 Sep	3 Sep
Reed Warbler	3 Apr '01	16 Apr	17 Apr	23 Oct '96	28 Sep	29 Oct
Lesser Whitethroat	3 Apr '57	20 Apr	17 Apr	22 Nov '98	2 Oct	24 Sep
Whinchat	19 Mar '74	20 Apr	20 Apr	9 Dec '07	16 Oct	9 Dec
Wood Warbler	31 Mar '68	21 Apr	21 Apr	18 Sep '77	19 Aug	na
Garganey	4 Mar '69	14 Apr	23 Apr	13 Dec '92	5 Oct	14 Sep
Spotted Flycatcher	16 Apr '83	2 May	24 Apr	27 Oct '87	25 Sep	10 Oct
Nightingale	7 Apr '61	21 Apr	27 Apr	12 Sep '77	23 Aug	16 Sep
Turtle Dove	5 Apr '70	1 May	NA	17 Nov '62	4 Sep.	NA
Average 27 species		9 Apr	8 Apr		2 Oct	6 Oct
Winter migrants						
Redwing	7 Aug '79	1 Oct	26 Sep	29 Apr '67	10 Apr	15-Apr
Brambling	3 Aug '68	9 Oct	7 Oct	30 May '86	18 Apr	22-Apr
Fieldfare	29 Aug '94	2 Oct	8 Oct	8 May '82	6 Apr	25-Apr

## Weather Report for 2006

R.L. Bland

2006 was characterized by a very cold late spring, exceptionally hot July and September producing the second-equal hottest autumn, very wet March, May and November, and dry January and April. Both temperature and rainfall for all other months lay within the limits of one standard deviation. Despite July having 40% more hours of sunshine than normal, the year as a whole had 10% fewer because of an exceptionally gloomy December. The overall mean maximum temperature was 14.7C which is 1.0C above the average since 1881. Overall rainfall was 944mm slightly above the average since 1853 of 891mm.

Year	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Av. Max C	14.6	14.2	14.6	14.1	13.8	14.3	15.0	14.3	14.4	14.7
Ten year av. C	13.7	13.8	13.8	13.8	13.8	14.0	14.2	14.3	14.2	14.4
Rainfall mm	877	1065	1106	1250	860	1178	758	951	896	955
Ten year av. mm	927	942	966	1003	995	1010	978	970	954	973

Table 1 Decadal average mean maximum temperature and rainfall

**Seasons – winter** The average temperature (for Dec.-Feb.) was 7.1C, the coldest since 1996/97. Rainfall was a little below average. There were 41 frost nights (Oct.-April), the last on April 10th, 19 nights were cold enough to create ice, and three days had lying snow. The coldest spell was from March 1st to 6th.

**Spring** (March-May) Temperature was almost identical to the long term average, although the period began with a very cold spell in March, delaying the onset of spring. There was 30% more rainfall than average, May had double the normal most falling from May 17th to 27th causing problems for single-brooded species.

**Summer** (June-Aug.) Average temperature at 22.4C was the hottest since 1994, dominated by an exceptional July, the hottest since 1983, and the third hottest July ever. Rainfall was a little below average.

**Autumn** (Sep.-Nov.) Average temperature at 16.1C was the hottest since 1959. All three months were warmer than normal, September by the largest proportion. November began with four frost nights, but became progressively warmer. Rainfall was a little above average as November was unusually wet.

**Seasonal Comparisons** To put the 2006 average temperatures into perspective, Table 2 shows the seasonal temperature extremes, with their year, and the average since 1881.

	2006	Min.	Max.	Average
Winter	7.1	1917 - 2.5	1920 - 10.6	7.6
Spring	12.7	1887 - 10.4	1893 - 16.6	12.9
Summer	22.4	1883 - 18.0	1976 - 23.9	20.1
Autumn	16.1	1915 - 10.6	1959 - 16.8	14.0
Annual	14.7	1892 - 12.1	1921 - 15.6	13.7

Table 2 2006 seasons compared with minimum, maximum and average since 1881

Table 3 shows the average monthly rainfall in each season for 2006, and compares it with the extreme figures and average since 1853.

	2006	Min.	Max.	Average
Winter	61	1964 - 21	1995 - 154	77
Spring	89	1893 - 17	1981 - 107	60
Summer	61	1995 - 11	1879 - 140	73
Autumn	103	1978 - 26	1935 - 173	87
Annual	944	1864 - 590	1882 - 1253	891

Table 3 Average monthly rainfall in mm for each season in 2006 compared with maximum, minimum and average since 1853

**Monthly temperatures** Nine months were warmer than the long-term average, three, January to March, were colder. Graph 1 shows the percentage differences.

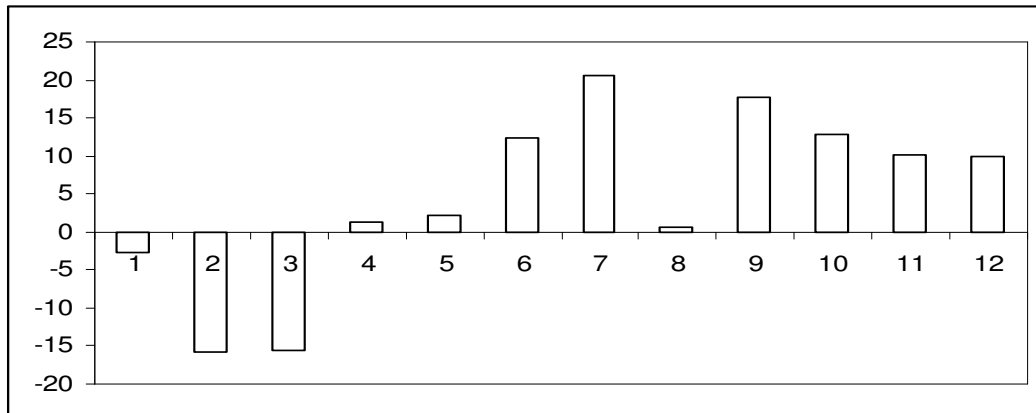


Chart 1 Monthly mean maximum temperature-percentage variation from long term average.

**Monthly rainfall** Six months were wetter than the long term average, six drier. Graph 2 shows the percentage differences.

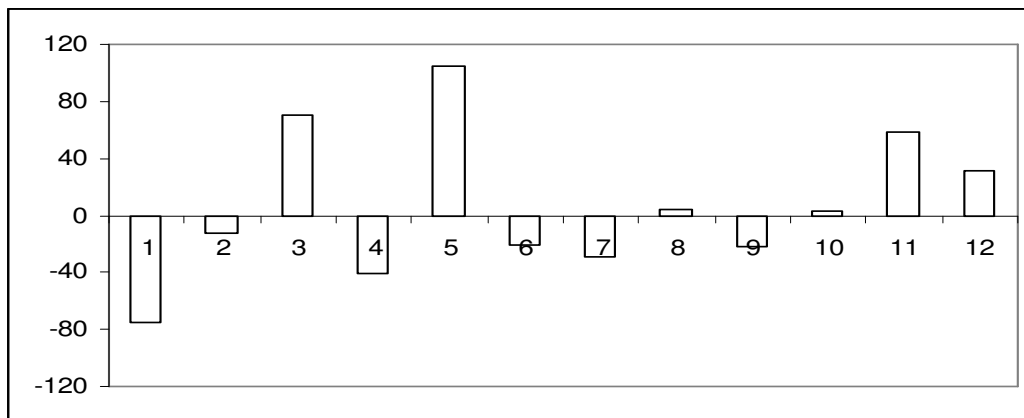


Chart 2 Monthly rainfall, percentage variation from long term average

### Monthly summary 2006

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Av.
Temp C	7	6.4	8.5	12.9	16.6	21.7	25.1	20.5	21.2	15.9	11.2	8.4	14.7
Rain mm	22	55	102	35	129	47	49	86	63	94	152	118	955

Table 4 2006 Monthly average temperatures and total rainfall

**January** The coldest since 2001, and driest since 1997. The tenth driest since 1853. Frost nights -10. Began with light easterly winds around a Baltic high with low temperatures to 9th. Low pressure and southerly winds brought a rapid rise in temperature to 18th. From 22nd a high pressure settled over the UK to the end of the month and brought light easterly winds and frosts.

**February** The coldest since 1996. Frost nights - 7. Began cold and dry, dominated by a European high to 12th. Low pressure then took over with SW winds from 12th to 17th, 20mm of rain on 15th and higher temperatures. From 18th temperatures fell as winds turned N and then E, around high pressure over Iceland.

**March** The coldest since 1996 and the wettest since 1998. Frost nights - 7. Began with very cold northerlies around a high over Iceland, with frosts. 7th to 10th saw a brief spell of warmer weather and westerly winds before east winds set in from 15th to 22nd. On 23rd low pressure in the Atlantic took charge, and strong west winds brought rain and rising temperatures reaching 15C on 30th.

**April** Driest since 1997. Frost nights - 5. Began warm but winds switched to NE on 4th, although day temperatures remained at around 10C. From 11th, W or SW winds set in and temperatures reached 16C on 21st. Winds then became light and variable for the rest of the month as high pressure dominated, the last five days were warm and sunny.

**May** Wettest since 1983. Began with S winds squeezed between a Baltic high and a west Atlantic low, temperatures reached 25C on 4th, and it remained fairly warm and sunny until 18th when a deep depression settled over the UK with strong SW winds and ten days of heavy rain. Temperature fell to 13C from 22nd to 24th, and this had severe consequences for many nesting species, especially owls. On 29th high pressure became dominant with N winds and sunshine, but temperatures remained low.

**June** Hottest since 1976, sunniest since 2001. Began dominated by high pressure, with warm sunny days and light winds. Temperature reached 28C on 10th. This was temporarily broken when 17mm of rain fell on 12th, then on 18th westerly winds produced cloud but almost no rain to 24th. There was an abrupt drop in temperature on 26th when 19mm of rain fell and easterlies dominated for the rest of the month.

**July** Hottest since 1983, 42% more sunshine than average. Began hot and sunny then, from 5th, west winds brought 39mm of rain on 6th, cloudy skies and lower temperatures to 10th. From 13th high pressure took control, and temperatures reached a maximum of 35C on 19th with almost 15 hours of sunshine. It remained hot and dry for the rest of the month.

**August** A depression produced 18mm of much needed rain on 1st, but no more fell until 18th in a thunderstorm. From 2nd to 14th winds were generally northerly, skies cloudy, and temperatures in the low 20s. From 15th to 23rd low pressure brought W or NW winds and slightly cooler conditions.

**September** Hottest since 1959. Began with strong warm SW winds, which switched to E from 10th with a high pressure system over the Baltic that kept conditions dull, warm and dry with variable winds to 20th. The rest of the month saw warm SE, and then, SW winds around a European high keeping conditions dry.

**October** Dominated by W or SW winds and dull but warm conditions to 12th. Easterlies took over around a Baltic high to 17th, and then a series of lows swept across the country from 18th to 31st with moderate to strong SW winds. Temperature fell to 14C on 25th for first time since May 24th.

**November** Wettest since 1992. Frost nights - 5. High pressure with cold E winds and clear skies brought four frost nights from 2nd to 5th. A warmer spell set in with W winds on 8th and the temperature reached 15C for the last time on 13th. It became very wet from 17th, with a continuous series of depressions and strong SW winds, and temperatures around 12C to the end of the month

**December** Frost nights - 2. From 1st to 15th dominated by strong warm SW winds bringing warm temperatures and wet conditions. On 16th high pressure abruptly settled over the country with light E winds and fog, and temperatures fell to 1C on 20th. There were nine days without a glimmer of sun from 18th to 26th. A low pressure over Iceland brought strong SW winds, rain and temperatures back to 12C in the last four days of the year.

#### Weather extremes of 2006.

Coldest day	Feb. 3rd - 0C
Hottest day	July 19th - 35C
Wettest day	July 6th - 39 mm
Sunniest days	July 18th, 19th and 23rd -14.7 hrs
Longest cold spell	March 1st to 6th
Longest hot spell	July 14th to 27th (13 days, bar two, at 25C+)
Longest dry spell	Jan. 21st to Feb. 12th (22 days)
Longest wet spell	May 16th to 27th (11 days)
Longest spell with sunshine	June 27th to Aug. 4th (39 days)
Longest spell without sunshine	Dec. 18th to 26th (9 days)
Days with more than 10 hrs sun	36 days
Days hotter than 25C	27 days
Days colder than 5C	39 days
Frost nights, annual total	33 nights
Days lying with snow	2 days
Storms	March 19th, Nov. 27th and Dec. 5th

## Introduction to Systematic List

The County of Avon, as an administrative unit, ceased to exist on April 1st, 1996. It was replaced by four 'unitary authorities' - South Gloucestershire (*SG*), Bristol (*BR*), Bath and North-east Somerset (*BA*), and North Somerset (*NS*). The area covered by these four administrative units corresponds almost exactly to the old County of Avon, and the area covered by this Report is also unaltered - we use 'Avon area' as a general term for this region. To aid comparisons with older Reports note that 'North Avon **NA**' corresponds to SG and BR north of the R. Avon, and 'South Avon **SA**' corresponds to BA, NS and BR south of the river.

### Conventions and abbreviations

Some frequently occurring place name abbreviations are as follows:

<b>ASW</b>	Avonmouth Sewage Disposal Works and its surroundings
<b>BG</b>	Barrow Gurney Reservoirs
<b>BL</b>	Blagdon Lake
<b>CI-Y</b>	Severn shore and environs between Clevedon and mouth the River Yeo (Clevedon Bay), and including the tidal part of the Yeo
<b>CVL</b>	Chew Valley Lake
<b>OPS</b>	Oldbury-on-Severn Nuclear Power Station and environs
<b>PW</b>	Portbury Wharf and the remainder of St. George's Wharf
<b>RPD</b>	Royal Portbury Dock (the dock area only)
<b>Severnside</b>	The Severn shore and environs from Aust to Chittening Warth inclusive
<b>Weston STW</b>	Weston-s-Mare Sewage Treatment Works and environs

There are now a number of surveys which monitor populations. They use different techniques, operate at different times of the year, and vary in the quantity of the information recorded, but they provide valuable information on population change, especially for the common species. The following abbreviations are used.

**BBRC** When attached to a record implies that the British Birds Rarities Committee has accepted the record.

**BBS** Stands for the BTO April to June **B**reeding **B**ird **S**urvey begun in 1994. In 2006, 216 one-km squares were visited, 14% of the Avon area. A total of 77,764 birds was counted of 113 species. The data are used in four ways. A population estimate derived from the counts is given for the commonest species. A distribution figure is given which is the percentage of the squares in which a species was observed. The percentage change in the counts from the previous year is given in a status chart. For common species a Population Change Index, with 1994 set at 100, is given showing the variation over the past ten years. Figures for 2001, when Foot and Mouth disease prevented an effective survey, have been interpolated.

**CABS** Stands for the **C**lifton **A**rea **B**ird **S**urvey. This is a weekly survey of ST 5673 begun in 1994. In 2006, 50 weekly counts were made, 8061 birds of 46 species counted at a rate of 143 per hour. For common species the percentage change from the previous year is given.

**WBC** Stands for **W**inter **B**ird **C**ounts. The survey began in 1997/98 winter. In 2005/06, as a result of efforts made for the BTO trial fieldwork for the new Atlas 99,000 birds of 91 species were counted in 403 hours at a rate of 246/hr. In 2006/07, 30,500 birds of 83 species were counted in 170 hrs at a rate of 180/hr. For common species the percentage change in the rate is given for both winters.

**WGS** Stands for **W**inter **G**arden **S**urvey. This survey began in 1973/4, and involves counts of birds using gardens between October and March. In 2005/06, 36 gardens participated counting some 39,000 birds of 53 species, with an average of 24 species per garden. Percentage changes in numbers present are recorded in the status chart.

In the passerine species accounts, the first table (chart) shows the percentage change for the surveys listed, compared with the previous year.

### Species Accounts

The systematic list follows the order given by Prof. H.K. Voous with later adjustments made by the British Ornithological Union. The nomenclature follows that of the BOU as given on their web site at [www.bou.org.uk](http://www.bou.org.uk).

### Status comments

The table below defines the status words used.

Status	Level of abundance	Breeding Numbers
Very rare	Five or less Avon area records	As per level of abundance
Rare	Less than annual; many years pass between records	
Very Scarce	Less than annual, but typically recorded every two or three years	
Scarce	Very small numbers recorded virtually every year	1 - 9
Uncommon	Recorded in low numbers each year	10 - 99
Fairly common	Occurs in reasonable numbers in suitable habitat	100 - 999
Common	Regularly occurs in good numbers in most suitable habitats	1000 - 9999
Abundant	Large numbers in all suitable habitats	10000 +

**Resident** A species whose population is largely sedentary, and occurs throughout the year (but may be augmented by passage migrants and/or winter visitors).

**Summer Visitor** A species which occurs in the Avon area during the late spring and/or summer, after migrating from its wintering areas. Most species that are summer/winter visitors also occur in Avon as passage migrants en route to/from other areas.

**Winter Visitor** A species which occurs in the Avon area during the winter months after migrating from its breeding areas in other parts of Britain or abroad.. These include species which do not occur during the summer (e.g. Fieldfare), or that already have a separate resident population in the Avon area (e.g. Starling).

**Passage migrant** A species which appears in the Avon area whilst on spring and/or autumn migration to or from its breeding/wintering ranges. Some species have protracted spring and autumn passage periods that can appear to 'overlap' in mid-summer (in most cases this is likely to involve immature birds or failed breeders). Some species are more numerous on spring passage than in autumn (or vice-versa). In such cases, an indication of abundance is given for both seasons.

**Introduced** A species with a self-supporting population derived from escapes from captivity or deliberately released individuals (BOU Group C).

**Vagrant** A species away from its normal range not usually seen in the Avon area.

**Storm/Wind-blown visitor** Used with seabirds that typically occur in Avon waters after having been blown up the Bristol Channel (and often from much further afield) as a result of strong winds. Season(s) of occurrence are also given. For most seabirds, seaduck and 'coastal' waders, a brief indication of abundance inland is usually given.

### Waterbird and Wader Status Tables

Reports for 1991 onwards have presented a database monitoring the progress of the common waterbird and wader species in the Avon area. This has been repeated in this Report. For each species under consideration, their main (and regularly watched) sites in the Avon area are chosen (for some only one site is considered). A status table presents a period average – an 'Avon index' -- which will be used to monitor

future progress. For the waterbirds the 'period average' is the average of the three highest monthly counts for the year or season in question, and is called 'the average maximum count'; for a short season (eg. moult) the average of the two highest counts is used. Note that in the 2004 and 2005 Reports the years in the duck status tables were wrong, they had been advanced by one year, this has been put right in this Report. For the waders the average of the monthly maximum counts for the season in question is given, and is called 'the average count'. Finally, for species with more than one site, an overall 'Avon average' is also provided. For some less common wader species the average of the maximum monthly counts for the year is given.

### Conservation status

For the commonest breeding species there is an estimate of the Avon breeding population (in pairs) derived from the BBS counts, and a percentage distribution figure that is the proportion of the 216 one-km squares in which the species occurred in 2006. This is followed by a percentage figure for the UK population change over the past 25 years, and a similar figure for the Avon area, usually over the past decade and also derived from the BBS. This gives a fairly precise indication of the conservation status.

For migrant species ten-year rolling average arrival and departure dates have been made annually since 1970. In general, arrival dates became progressively later as March and April temperatures fell during the period 1960 to 1990, and then progressively earlier as temperatures have risen since 1990. Each species has reacted differently to this change, and so turning points are given for each species. The same is done for departure dates. Some species have reacted to the changes by staying longer in the UK, whilst others have maintained the same length of stay. This method monitors the reaction of each species to climate change.

The term 'bird-days' means the cumulative daily totals for a given period, so for example 25 on day 1, followed by 100 on day 3 and 30 on day 7 gives 155 bird-days for the seven day period. For summer and winter visitors where there is adequate data, the first arrival, and last departure, dates for the 25 year period 1981 to 2005 are given following the status comments.





The following list is based on observations from members of the Bristol Naturalists Society, Bristol Ornithological Club, BTO (Avon region), and some individual birders. Initials are given only when written descriptions have been submitted or in special circumstances.

Fairly common resident; most winter in Bristol City Docks or in a roving flock around the R. Axe on the Avon/Somerset border. Summer moulting flocks occur at CVL, BL and the R. Axe.

1997/04 Av.	2005	2006
115	117	115

CVL. Moult period, July and August

**Main sites** The table below lists the maximum monthly counts at the main sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
CI-Y	9	23	4	3	20	19		12	6	7	4	11
Weston STW	68	94	66	32	4	4	4	4	5	9	9	
Bristol Docks	76	76	74	49	32	33	51	35	30	34	42	80
Backwell Lake	20	18	24	25	30	30	17	15	17	20	25	22
CVL	46	33	28	52	77	115	75	80	55	50	45	20
BL	26	21	20	25	19	29	15	45	45	35	3	4

This area was well observed during this period due to the presence of the Great Bustard from the Salisbury Plain re-introduction scheme.

*Breeding* The ten-year average is 119 and therefore 2006 was a normal year. A total of eight broods (38 young) was recorded at CVL. The numbers of cygnets should be regarded as a best estimate as it is often difficult to interpret records showing broods over several months from the same site.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
100	140	141	129	96	120	74	128	144	121
Mute Swan cygnets									

## TUNDRA SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

Uncommon and declining winter visitor and autumn passage migrant. Average first date Oct. 28th, last date March 2nd.

2006 was very poor after two years of improvement perhaps linked to the mild winter. There was only one sighting in the first-winter period. A small flock lingered at BL during November and a family group was at Bleadon for one day.

### *First winter period*

CVL - seven on Jan. 9th;

Bleadon - five (three adults) on Feb. 28th.

### *Second winter period*

BL - one on Nov. 3rd, seven from 4th to 17th decreasing to five from 18th until Dec. 1st.

The table shows the minimum numbers i.e. duplicate birds moving between different locations are excluded and bird-days recorded during the last decade, however the figures for 2003 and 2004 were heavily influenced by a small returning flock present at BL for long periods.

	1996/7	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	2005/06
Min. Number	41	7	20	22	43	18	27	47	47	18
Bird-days	160	71	22	22	120	18	908	687	180+	131

Tundra Swan – Winter counts

## BEAN GOOSE *Anser fabalis*

Rare winter visitor.

Thirteen (four adults and nine juveniles) were seen at the Top End of BL on Oct. 18th, first on the water and later in flight, they only stayed for about five minutes before leaving to W (AHD, RMI). The same group was seen and photographed on 20th, but again they were only present for a short time. All 13 were thought to be from the tundra breeding race (*em rossicus*).

This is the sixth record for the Avon area and the third for BL, ten were recorded here in February 1990 and one from January to March 1996.

## GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

European White-front *A.a.albifrons*. Uncommon and declining winter visitor and passage migrant.

Continuing the trend of recent years only a few records were received, however the group of 17 over Severn Beach was the largest flock since 2003 when 20 were noted at BL in February.

### *First winter period*

OPS - five on Feb. 21st and 25th;

Severn Beach - a flock of 17 flew inland over the beach on Feb. 20th.

### *Second winter period*

Northwick Warth - five on Dec. 19th.

**GREYLAG GOOSE** *Anser anser*

Uncommon introduced resident and summer moult migrant, mainly to CVL.

An increase was noted at CVL when compared to the last two years, however numbers remain below the long-term average. On the other hand numbers recorded elsewhere increased.

1998	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
8	17	12	20	10	11	4	1	5

CVL – annual maximum count

The table above gives the annual maxima at CVL in each year during the last decade and shows a long-term decline, note that this species no longer moults here.

Records were received from a further eight sites (*cf.* four in 2005) as follows:

OPS - two on April 22nd and May 14th, eight in flight on June 4th and one 10th;

Falfield - one on Feb 20th;

Severnside - ten on June 4th;

Axe Est. - five on March 12th;

Weston STW - two on March 8th;

Chipping Sodbury Golf Club - five on May 5th;

BG - one circled over No 2 tank on May 12th.

**CANADA GOOSE** *Branta canadensis*

Fairly common introduced resident; largely at CVL and BL; numbers increase during the summer moult. Uncommon breeder; breeding numbers continue to be heavily controlled at CVL by egg pricking.

Both status tables show below average counts in 2006 with numbers around half the ten-year average at CVL and BL. As usual birds move between CVL and BL after moulting at CVL.

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
1996/97 to 2003/04 Av.	132	256	194
2004/05	72	278	175
2005/06	61	124	93

September to March average maximum counts

1997 to 2004 Av - 669	2005 - 572	2006 - 507
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CVL June to August (moult period) average maximum counts

*Main sites*

Monthly maxima at the main sites are listed below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
CI-Y	17	2	7	11	5	8	8	66*	58	3	11	2
Backwell	24	7	19	16	10	12	6	4	13	14	64*	44
PW	4	6	13	9	12		1		12	20	23	12
Weston STW	150	81	32	27	4	2	73	43	43	1	97	
Keynsham	73	57	28	13				32			53	63
CVL	166	30	80	48	54	550	680	290	45	6	45	55
BL	55	220	33	8	17	17	31	115	126	137	174	125

\* Record counts at these site

*Canada Goose other sites*

Recorded from a further 19 sites (four fewer than 2005), whilst numbers may be decreasing at the main lakes, numbers elsewhere appear to be increasing. The significant counts were as follows:

Yate - 19 overhead on Sept. 27th;  
 Chipping Sodbury Golf Course - 22 on Sept.15th (on the 9th fairway!);  
 Sandford -15 on March 21st;  
 Portishead - twelve on Aug. 21st;  
 Frampton Cotterell - c.50 in flight on Aug. 30th;  
 Eastville Park, Bristol - ten (four adults) on July 27th;  
 Kenn Moor - 46 on Dec. 13th.

**Breeding** Recorded at eight sites with a total of c.39 goslings as follows:

OPS - two broods, one of six and the second of three;  
 Weston Moor - two sitting birds, no young seen;  
 Cl-Y - three young;  
 Backwell - two broods, one of three and the second of two;  
 Eastville Park - four adults with six young;  
 BL - two nests and a total of five young seen;  
 CVL - eleven young from four broods.

**BARNACLE GOOSE** *Branta leucopsis*

Scarce introduced resident; very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. It is often difficult to establish the origin of many birds with certainty, although wild birds have undoubtedly occurred.

Monthly maxima of feral birds at CVL and BL are given in the table below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
CVL	10		10	10	7	8	5	10				11
BL		10							11	11	11	

Monthly maxima at CVL and BL

Also recorded from a further four sites as follows:

Severn Beach - one with Canada Geese on June 19th;  
 New Passage - one on June 6th;  
 Near Cl-Y - one at the Plantation Lakes on April 1st;  
 Chipping Sodbury Golf Course - five on June 15th.

*Breeding*

Whilst nesting was noted at CVL no young were seen. No records from elsewhere.

**BRENT GOOSE** *Branta bernicla*

Dark-bellied Brent Goose *B. b. bernicla*. Uncommon coastal passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce/very scarce inland.  
 Pale-bellied Brent Goose *B. b. hrota*. Very rare winter visitor.

**Dark-bellied Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla bernicla*

A good year with total bird-days well above the ten-year average (86), however numbers were boosted by two large groups at Severn Beach in March.

*First winter period* All from Severnside:

Northwick Warth - one on May 10th;

Severn Beach - 68 on March 25th, 32 on 29th, two on April 30th, one on May 11th, 20th and 21st.

*Second winter period*

Northwick Warth - one on Oct. 13th and Nov. 10th, and two on 28th and Dec. 28th;

Severn Beach - one on Oct. 27th and two on Dec. 28th;

RPD - two on Dec. 28th;

CI-Y - two on Oct. 30th, five on 31st, two on Dec. 6th, with one on 10th (see Pale-bellied entry below);

Axe Est. - one on Oct. 22nd.

The table below shows bird-days per annum for the last ten years.

1996/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	2005/06
87	8	24	82	136	42	48	79	226	127
Total winter bird-days									

**Pale-bellied Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla hrota*

Following the single individual in 2005, two were seen in late autumn – a welcome showing for this rare sub-species in the Avon area.

CI-Y - two on Oct. 30th (AHD) (with two dark-bellied), on 31st (with five dark-bellied), and on Nov. 9th.

**EGYPTIAN GOOSE** *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

Very scarce visitors either from the UK feral population or direct escapes from captivity.

Four records probably involving two individuals: single birds at OPS on March 4th and Falfield on April 23rd, and at Duchess Pond, Bristol on May 4th and June 2nd.

**RUDDY SHELDUCK** *Tadorna ferruginea*

Scarce summer/autumn visitor of unknown origin; until recently moulting birds occurred at CVL.

There were no records in 2006.

**2005** - One at Sea Mills on March 26th, the date suggests that this individual was an escape.

**COMMON SHELDUCK** *Tadorna tadorna*

Fairly common resident; most migrate to moult. Uncommon inland (except at CVL). Uncommon breeder – has declined in the last five decades. Webs: the Estuary is currently ninth in international importance.

The status line shows slightly below average counts after a record for the 2004/05 winter.

1987/97 Av.	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07
155	178	137	108	(68)	110	87	152	203	105	147
CI-Y. Average of the three highest counts, brackets refer to incomplete counts during the F&M outbreak										

As usual counts built up from the beginning of the year, and after May they fell sharply as the birds left the area for their moulting grounds. Numbers overall appeared significantly lower than for previous years especially in the first-winter and spring periods.

*Common Shelduck winter and spring*

Counts north of the River Avon rarely reached three figures in this period, however south of the River counts of c.100 were recorded on a fairly regular basis, however numbers were well down on previous years. North of the River between 200 and 400 were seen in the last five years and south of the river counts around 500 were typical.

*Breeding*

Despite low numbers in the spring there was every indication that the region had the best breeding year for over a decade. In the total are included several youngsters that crash landed into a Ham Green garden and had to be escorted to safety!

Breeding was attempted on Steep Holm, but no young were seen.

	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
No. of young	96	149	148	141	(83)	70	154	144	123	162
Avon area - Total number of young										

*Autumn and winter*

In the second winter period there was a maximum of approximately 40 north of the R. Avon (*cf.* 100 in 2000, 40 in 2001, 35 in 2002, 45 in 2003, 110 in 2004 and 70 in 2005). South of the river the maximum count was of 415 at the Axe Est. in October, however this number is down on some previous years (*cf.* 395 in 2000, 800 in 2001, 575 in 2002, 680 in 2003, 575 in 2004, and 650 in 2005).

The table below gives monthly maxima at the main sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	9	21	38	63	36	25	21	14	9	12	6	15
Severnside	72	104	70		40				26			28
NW	44		52	76	102	130	158		58	100		48
PW/RPD			80	2	7	20						
CI-Y	90+	105	90	50	60	35	30	10	70	140	140	160
Axe Est./Weston STW	101	97	27	61	33	29	23	14	208	415	84	174
CVL	8	9	7	32	18	5	7	6	4	5	9	11

**MANDARIN DUCK** *Aix galericulata*

Uncommon introduced resident. Some records undoubtedly relate to escapes direct from captivity, rather than established feral birds.

An improvement upon last year. Records were received from five sites with notable numbers recorded at Heneage Court Lakes. The details are as follows:

Heneage Court Lakes - nine males and six females on Feb. 12th, eleven on 20th, two pairs still present on March 5th, one male and two females Aug. 22nd, and seven males and five females on Nov. 18th;

Lower Woods - pair on May 13th;

Orchard Pools, Severnside - a pair on March 12th, they appeared after a snowfall, and were quite timid and not ringed; this was the first record for the site;

Portishead Boating Lake - a male present throughout June;

BL - a male on July 15th, and another from Nov. 3rd to 8th – an unusual species for this site.

**2005** A pair was reported in suitable breeding habitat near Sandford on May 26th.

**EURASIAN WIGEON** *Anas penelope*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; rare in summer.

Webs: the Estuary is currently fourth in national importance (and 13th in international importance) for this species.

The status table shows average counts but an increase on Severnside and a continuing poor showing at CVL.

Year	Severnside	CVL	BL	Av.
1986/87 - 1995/96	226	264	262	251
1996/97 - 2003/04	381	164	155	207
2004/05	417	23	88	176
2005/06	538	70	82	230

September to March average maximum counts

In the first winter period there was a maximum of 2080 for the whole of the Avon area, almost double the figure for 2005, whilst the second period had a maximum of 1260 somewhat down on last year's figure of 1610. Low numbers continued to be noted at CVL, this is probably not due to the high water levels but because much of the northern edge of the lake has been opened up to the public and much of the grass around the southern edge has been replaced by trees or reeds. In both cases their feeding areas have been considerably reduced.

**Main Sites** The last in spring was a male at Weston STW from May 6th to 8th, and the first to return in the autumn was one at Northwick Warth on July 1st. A notable high count of 600 was recorded at New Passage on Feb. 2nd (although this was down on last year's count of 700 in November).

The monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	:	Jul	Aug.	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	520	590	440	60					28	200	510	200
Littleton	255	350	45						37	35	15	110
Severnside	500	600	450	9			1		131	400	400	200
PW	93	71							5	40	65	83
CI-Y	230	180	210	2					30	75	130	90
Axe Est/Weston STW	162	169	110	16	2				62	77	95	60
CVL	33	25	3	2				3	5	30	30	26
BL	113	88	92	2				2	18	24	16	48

**Other sites**

Records involving low counts were received from a further nine sites as follows:

ASW - one on Dec. 12th;

Sea Mills - one on Jan. 28th;

Clapton Moor - 40 on Feb. 26th and 17 on March 11th;

Weston Moor - one on Feb. 10th;

Eastville Park Lake - one on Jan. 26th and Feb. 8th;

BG - 18 on Sept. 16th and one on 28th;

Backwell Lake - four on Jan. 7th, rising to 15 on Feb. 18th, with four still present on March 5th;

R. Avon at Keynsham - three on Dec. 24th;

R. Chew at Keynsham - two on Dec. 21st and one on 28th.





**EURASIAN TEAL**     *Anas crecca*

Common winter visitor and autumn passage migrant to the coast and reservoirs, present in small numbers elsewhere. A few usually over-summer at CVL; bred at BL up to 1939, and near Clevedon in 1952.

Webs: the Estuary is currently twelfth in international importance for this species.

The status table shows good numbers at CVL in the 2005/06 winter.

Year	Sevenside	CVL	BL	Av.
1987/88 - 1995/96	187	1214	962	788
1997/97 -2003/04	198	567	279	348
2004/05	115	488	474	359
2005/06	186	1783	328	768

August to March average maximum counts

*Main sites*

On the coast numbers were close to the ten-year average. Counts at CVL were high in the first winter period. In the second winter period both CVL and BL recorded lower counts.

The total population in the first winter period peaked at about 2900, higher than in recent years, and in the second winter period at about 2000, significantly lower than in recent years.

*Other sites* Records were received from eight other sites, counts exceeded ten at the following:

Clevedon Moor - twelve on March 4th;

Weston Moor - 85 on Jan. 26th and 30 on Feb. 24th;

Puxton - 40 on Jan. 21st.

Monthly maxima as shown in the table below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	508	185	100	34	12	2	2	1	3	200	362	93
Littleton	37	110	60					22	130	270	80	90
Sevenside	140	200	145	80	30	1	5	70	320	290	200	250
PW/RPD	140								140	200	220	420
CI-Y	70	80	100	50				20	90	80	35	24
Axe Est.	125	69	67	37		1		9	50	45	69	60
ASW	45	44	12	6		1		12	16	40	70	32
BG	73	91	48			1	3		75	50	33	11
CVL	1505	955	135	12	3	33	100	105	145	180	515	110
BL	123	470	68	6			7	50	825	587	238	140
Chew Magna Res.	65	109	32							80	63	64

Separating late spring from early autumn records is always difficult. It seems likely that three at CVL on May 17th were early returning migrants as were two at OPS on June 3rd.

This species featured as a prey item for the Peregrines at St. Johns Church, Bath, with two in March and one in September.

## MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

Until 1900's a sparse breeder, numbers increased with the creation of BL in 1905 and then CVL in 1952. Now a common and widespread resident, autumn passage migrant and winter visitor. Fairly common breeder (by far our commonest breeding duck).

Webs: the Estuary is currently fourth in national importance for this species.

The status tables are as follows, they show a steady population:

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
1986/87 - 1995/96	741	352	547
1996/97 - 2003/04	469	207	388
2004/05	413	221	317
2005/06	609	231	420
November to March Average maximum counts			
Year	CVL	BL	Av.
1987 - 1996	645	241	443
1997 - 2004	749	336	543
2005	1153	385	769
2006	517	387	904
July to September average maximum counts			

**Main sites** In the late summer numbers were similar to those recorded in 2005. Low-water in the first winter period at CVL resulted in high counts for this species during the period. Coastal counts mirrored those in 2001 and 2002 in that they were generally low. Monthly maxima at the main sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	117	144	124	20	36	98	136	164	300	419	300	294
Littleton	11	8	7	3	20	43	43	167	95	70	25	10
Severnside	100	90	120	80	70	85	105	191	145	80	60	70
ASW	45	30	40	12			15	55	40	50	20	20
*Sea Mills	110	110	95	30	30	38	130	125	125	195	150	170
CI-Y	70	40	18	16	20	48	35	115	160	80	60	45
Sand Bay	15	4	6	6	5	8			11	6		9
Axe Est.	95	55	14	29	22	74	24	53	260	67	66	68
Weston STW	20	21	50	38	36	117	102	189	232	23	22	
Keynsham	50	25	62								53	35
Backwell Lake	32	23	20		15	42	51		100	100	70	97
Chew Magna Res.	42	26								21	70	43
CVL	500	510	330	280	185	315	405	590	555	415	510	345
BL	224	153	45	41	68	46	143	434	585	496	306	256

\*This is the stretch of the River Avon from the Cumberland Basin to Sea Mills.

**Other sites** Records were received for a further 17 sites and counts over 40 from sites not included in the table were as follows:

Aztec West pond - 71 on Aug. 8th;

Eastville Park - 105 on Jan. 20th;

Memorial Park, Keynsham - 118 on Jan. 5th and 220 on Dec. 25th.

**Breeding** At CVL, there were 22 broods (100 young), slightly better than last year; the table below shows breeding success at this site over the last decade.

	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Broods	21	35	18	27	19	11	29	16	17	22
Young	131	171	106	160	101	67	154	93	93	100

Numbers of broods and young at CVL

Elsewhere records were received of 43 broods and 236 young, somewhat down on last year's success. A late brood of ten small ducklings was noted in November at Hunstrete.

### **NORTHERN PINTAIL** *Anas acuta*

Wintering birds leave from mid-February to early April with autumn arrivals usually in mid-September. Uncommon autumn passage migrant and winter visitor; most occur at CVL in autumn. Webs: the Estuary is currently eleventh in international importance for this species although the birds mostly occur outside the Avon area.

As in 2005 numbers were generally on the low side throughout the Avon area although there were some sizable counts at the main reservoirs with an especially good count at BL in October, see table below. The last in spring was a late male at CI-Y from May 4th to 11th. The first to return were two eclipse males at CVL on August 14th.

Monthly maxima outside the breeding season at the main sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	:	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Severnside	3		14					7	3		7
OPS	2	4	6						8	6	2
CI-Y	1				1						
CVL	52	37	7	1			2	34	35	53	2
BL	2	2		1				35	77	5	

Records were also received from the following sites:

Littleton - two on Sept. 24th;

Filton - one on Jan. 24th;

Weston Moor - one from April 20th to 22nd;

Axe Estuary - one on Sept. 10th;

BG - two on Aug. 20th;

Litton Res - one on Feb. 5th.

The table below shows the maximum count (ranging from 15 to 150) in each year of the past decade:

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
30	39	15	150	36	67	70	47	140	77

Avon area - maximum count

### **GARGANEY** *Anas querquedula*

Scarce spring passage migrant and summer visitor, uncommon autumn passage migrant at CVL and BL, scarce elsewhere. Has bred. Average first date April 15th, last date Oct. 6th.

Spring records came from both coastal and inland sites although CVL dominated inland with the best series of records for many years. A male at OPS on April 23rd was the first of the spring.

*Spring and summer* The records are as follows:

OPS - one on April 23rd and on May 14th;

Severnside - one on May 8th;

Weston STW - one on June 16th;

CVL - a male on May 10th and 11th, three on 12th, two on 13th, five males and a female on 15th, four males on 16th, with five on 17th, three on June 10th and 11th, one on 14th and two on 29th;

BL - one on June 17th.

*Garganey - Autumn* Most records came from CVL where counts were again on the low side; the last of the year, a female, was noted here on Sept. 14th. The records were:

OPS - one on Aug. 10th;

BG - one on Aug. 3rd;

CVL - one on July 9th, then single juveniles noted from July 20th to Sept. 14th (a female) with five on Aug. 26th, see table on page 70;

BL - one on Sept. 4th.

The table below details the maximum autumn period counts at CVL from 1997 to 2006.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
6	9	3	5	4	3	5	1	8	5

CVL - maximum single count

## NORTHERN SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

Fairly common (but generally local) winter visitor and autumn passage migrant; usually common at CVL and BL in autumn/early winter. Scarce in summer; has bred at CVL with 40 pairs in 1959 (last in 1992), has also bred at BL.

Webs: CVL is currently fifth in international importance, whilst the Estuary and BL are both of national importance, for this species.

The status tables below show improved fortunes for this species.

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
1986/87 - 1995/96	191	63	127
1996/97 - 2003/04	220	31	126
2004/05	235	26	131
2005/06	373	75	224

November to February average maximum counts

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
1987 - 1996	321	164	243
1997 - 2004	317	131	224
2005	378	238	358
2006	200	254	227

August to October average maximum counts

The low December count at CVL was probably due to high water levels and disturbance by Pike fishermen.

*Main sites* As noted in the status tables the first-winter period reported above average counts. The monthly maxima at the regularly watched sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
ASW	30	34	19	14					3		24	36	10
OPS	18	218	20	17							8	15	10
PW	11	13	15							2	2	12	
Backwell Lake	20	5										13	12
Severnside	5	10	14	2	2	2	1		2	8	1	13	21
CI-Y	28	11	2										
Weston STW	35	15	31	33	2	1			2	27	16	28	11
BG		47	35	6				5	8	58	61	39	10
CVL	35	185	265	55				1	55	245	300	100	13
BL	47	131	55	4					131	542	89	7	7

*Other Sites* Reports were received of summering individuals and of wintering at two further sites as follows:

Littleton - one on Feb. 19th;

Severnside - two on May 11th, two on June 5th, and one on July 30th;

Clapton Moor - seven on Jan. 8th, 15 on 14th, nine on 22nd, and five on 28th;

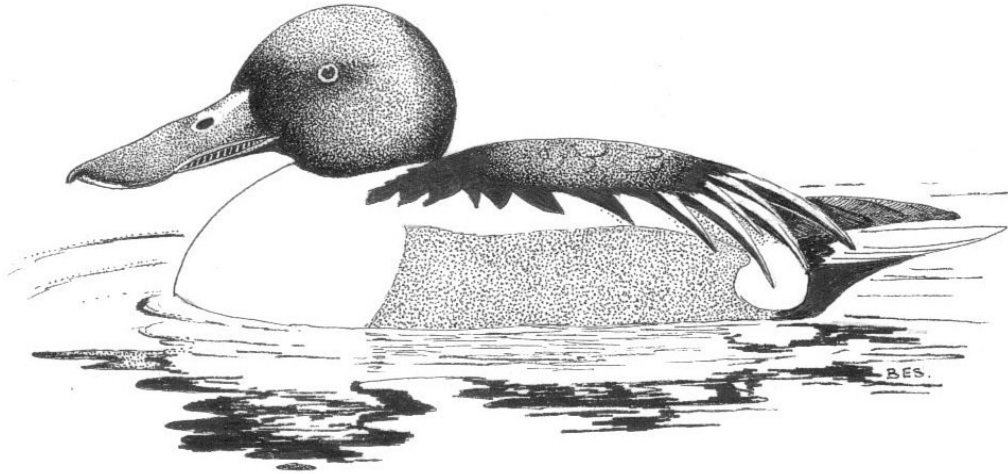
Weston STW - two on May 1st, and one on 3rd;

Chew Magna Res. - one on Nov. 21st, four on 25th, and two on 30th;

BL - one on June 10th.

### *Breeding*

As usual, present at CVL throughout the breeding season and, although there was a minimum of two pairs present, no young were seen. Breeding was last proved at this formerly important site in 1992.



## **COMMON POCHARD** *Aythya ferina*

Fairly common winter visitor and autumn passage migrant. Uncommon in summer; scarce breeder at CVL, has bred at BL.

Status table showing good counts in 2005/06.

Year	CVL	BL	BG	Av.
1986/87 - 1995/96	743	203	132	359
1996/97 - 2003/04	409	121	44	191
2004/05	429	32	63	141
2005/06	783	155	27	322

September to March average maximum counts (note: incomplete counts for BG)

### *Main sites*

An above average year. Nationally this species has experienced a decline during the last five years and again there were no records from OPS or Cromhall Quarry, and ASW only held low numbers - the winter record at this site is 105. However, Weston STW remains attractive, and numbers were up on those for 2002 to 2004.

Common Pochard - Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
ASW/Hoar Gout	3	3	3				1	1	1	3	10	6
Portishead	8	8	7								2	1
RPD									17	13	17	14
Weston STW	20	15	14	4		1	1	3	37	61	38	40
Backwell Lake	12	25	20									3
Chew Magna Res	2	3	1								4	5
BG		71	28					13	4	7	5	71
CVL	1580	930	345	22	25	60	25	55	535	550	825	1220
BL	79	117	29	6	6	17	108	150	26	27	436	591

#### *Other sites*

Records were received from two other sites as follows:

Severnside - three on March 21st and 22nd, and five on Dec. 18th;

Litton Res. - one on Feb. 5th, and another on Dec. 23rd (this bird had been ringed in France).

#### *Breeding*

As usual, recorded only at CVL and showing an improvement on recent years with four broods and 14 young:

	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
No. of Broods	5	7	5	12	1	6	3	2	1	4
No. of young	18	36	13	43	3	14	9	9	4	14

Breeding success at CVL - 1997 to 2006

### **RING-NECKED DUCK**     *Aythya collaris*

Rare Nearctic vagrant.

The male first noted in 1998 remained at ASW until April 28th, it then relocated to PW and was last noted May 4th. It spent the majority of the time at ASW or Hoar Gout, however it was prone to move with the Tufted Ducks and was seen on several occasions at PW from March 5th to 31st. This individual reappeared on June 7th at ASW and apart from brief visits to BG on July 28th and 30th, Aug. 1st to 14th, and 28th to Sept. 3rd it remained at ASW until the year end.

There were three first-winters, two males and female, at CVL in November 2005. One male and the female remained at this site until April 22nd.

### **FERRUGINOUS DUCK**     *Aythya nyroca*

Rare vagrant

CVL Small numbers have occurred at this site at various times in the past few years, often staying for long periods. They can be quite elusive.

BL A female was present for a period in October, it probably came from CVL.

## TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Common resident, winter visitor and double passage migrant. Now a scarce breeder, although 157 pairs bred at CVL in 1959.

Webs: CVL is currently twelfth in national importance for this species.

The status tables for the previous decade are as follows.

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
1986/87 - 1995/96	302	155	229
1996/97 - 2003/04	705	189	447
2004/05	574	90	332
2005/06	1281	224	753

October to March average maximum counts

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
1987 - 1996	387	274	331
1997 - 2004	705	428	567
2005	707	506	607
2006	565	630	598

July to September average maximum counts

### Main sites

Numbers were slightly down on last year with near-record counts at CVL due to the low numbers of juvenile coarse fish resulting in high numbers of invertebrates. The highest single counts were in January and November at CVL (1320 and 1325, respectively), and a record count for BL occurred with 1130 on Aug. 12th. An individual with a bill band put on at St. Philbert de Grand Lieu, Loire Atlantique, France in November 2004 was seen on several dates at CVL (Aug. 10th, Sept. 5th & 21st).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec.
OPS		4	10	11	27	15	30	7	3	1	2	
Severnside	4	5	5									8
ASW	37	44	24	22		15	19	22	26	33	32	24
PW	14	9	13	2	5		4		15	40	14	15
Weston STW	27	13	22	25	31	11	2	4	8	17	28	9
Backwell Lake	14	10	5	4	3							8
Chew Magna Res.	14	22	27	22						45	28	22
BG		57	37			11	215	260	160	100	47	74
CVL	1320	845	845	270	55	170	470	195	1030	1070	1325	705
BL	349	213	132	169	58	32	476	1131	284	626	101	126

Recorded at eight further sites as follows:

Tortworth Lake - 23 on Feb. 5th, and eleven on Oct. 1st;

Ham Green pond - two on Feb. 20th;

Eastville Park, Bristol - two on March 23rd, and on April 28th and 30th;

Cl-Y - two on May 11th, and single birds on July 2nd, Nov 2nd and 23rd;

Newton Park College, near Bath - seven on April 21st;

Litton Res. - three on Feb. 2nd;

Hunstrete - ten on Feb. 8th, two on 21st, six on April 20th, four on June 17th, and eight on Dec. 19th;

Chelwood - seven on July 30th.

*Tufted Duck breeding*

The number of sites was the same as in 2002 and 2003 but slightly better than that for 2004 and 2005, but brood numbers and young were significantly better. Pairs and numbers of young breeding at CVL showed a marked improvement (seven broods with a total of 30 young). Breeding was reported at a further five sites as follows: at OPS, three broods (21 young, all of which were predated), at ASW (one brood, five young), at BL (seven broods, 46 young), Hunstrete (one brood, seven young) and Chelwood (one brood, six young).

The table shows breeding records for the period 1997 to 2006.

	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
No. of sites	2	5	8	7	(1)	6	6	4	5	6
No. of broods	2	28	13	38	(7)	12	11	8	6	20
No. of young	9	138	78	187	(27)	72	72	42	25	115

Avon area breeding success for the last decade

**GREATER SCAUP** *Aythya marila*

Between 1860 and 1910 common to abundant on coast near Weston-s-Mare. Now scarce/uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor, but has occurred in most months. Most frequent at CVL.

An improvement on the last four years, the details are as follows:

*First winter period*

CVL - a first-winter female from 2005 was noted to April 27th, and a male was present from Jan. 4th to April 4th (KEV *et al.*).

*Second winter period*

Severnside - four first-winters on Sept. 3rd (BL);

BG - one male from Sept. 28th to Oct. 4th (CJS *et al.*);

CVL - one juvenile/first-winter female from Oct. 23rd to 31st (RMi, AHD) and an first-winter male on Nov. 15th (AHD, RMi);

BL - a juvenile/first-winter female on Oct. 12th (RMi) seen later at CVL.

The total number recorded per year in the period 1997 to 2006 is as follows:

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
11	7	21	9	11	6	5	5(7)	7	9

Avon area – total number of individuals

**COMMON EIDER** *Somateria mollissima*

Scarce winter visitor and scarce/uncommon passage migrant, but may occur in any month. Very rare inland.

Another exceptionally poor year with just one record: an immature male off Severn Beach on March 28th.

The table shows the numbers recorded annually over the last ten years.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
9	5	11	24	45	2	19	13	2	1

Avon area – total number of individuals



**LONG-TAILED DUCK** *Clangula hyemalis*

Scarce winter visitor; individuals at the reservoirs may stay for several months

One record: a juvenile was present at CVL from Dec. 4th into 2007 (RMI *et al.*).

The table shows the annual number of individuals over the last ten years.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
1	4	4	5	3	1	2	0	0	1

Avon area – total number of individuals

**COMMON SCOTER** *Melanitta nigra*

Uncommon spring, summer and autumn passage migrant; scarce winter visitor; normally a few inland records each year, mainly CVL.

A near-record year with the majority at Severnside, although the first record came from PW on March 13th, then recorded in every month except August until December with the last off Severn Beach on 11th. Recorded as follows:

Severnside - eight on March 27th, one on April 2nd and 6th, three on 16th, 48 on May 11th, three on 19th, one on June 22nd, 18 on July 8th, one from 13th to 21st with two on 16th, three on Sept. 18th, one on Oct. 15th and from 21st to 27th, one from Nov. 1st to 4th, two on 5th, and one on Dec. 7th and 11th;

PW - seven on March 13th, one on July 20th, and six on Dec. 5th;

Portishead - eight on March 28th, and two from Nov. 15th to Dec. 7th;

Cl-Y - 16 on May 12th, one on 28th, and six on July 2nd;

Sand Point - two on March 28th;

Weston-s-Mare - eleven on Oct. 31st;

BG - two on July 27th;

CVL - one on May 10th and July 5th, 14th and 18th, a male on Aug. 18th, one on Sept. 11th and Oct. 13th with two on 15th and from 21st to 23rd.

The table shows the number of birds recorded in each of the last ten years.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
32	24	43	52	34	143	26	58	86+	145

Avon area – total number of individuals

**COMMON GOLDENEYE** *Bucephala clangula*

Before 1900 a very rare winter visitor, now a fairly common winter visitor and spring passage migrant; numbers peak in late March and early April. Uncommon away from the main reservoirs, and scarce/very scarce in summer.

Below average counts are again shown by the status table below.

Year	CVL	BL	BG	Av.
1986/87 - 1995/96	54	11	23	29
1996/97 - 2003/04	88	15	10	44
2004/05	63	4	4	23
2005/06	65	9	10	28
October to February average maximum counts (note: no counts for BG in 2002/03)				
Year	CVL			
1987 - 1996	124			
1997 - 2004	103			
2005	64			
2006	175			

Spring (March to May) average maximum counts

*Common Goldeneye main sites*

Numbers at CVL were again average by recent standards, they were adversely affected by disturbance from both Pike anglers and the Ruddy Duck cull. Numbers were very low at BL and BG. At least two females (possibly three) summered, one at CVL and BL which may also have spent some time at BG (noted here on July 23rd), and another at PW and ASW. Apart from these individuals the last in spring were four at CVL on April 22nd. One reappeared at BG on July 23rd and stayed to the end of the year. Otherwise the first to return in the autumn were six at CVL on Oct. 12th. There were 90 here on Nov. 4th which was a high count this early in the month.

Monthly maxima at the regular sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
BG	12	15	14				1	1	1	1	11	19
CVL	105	65	175	90	2	2	2	2	2	18	90	125
BL	21	18	13	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	6	4

*Other sites* Recorded at a further two sites as follows:

OPS - two in December (no date provided);

Sevenside - one on Jan. 16th, two on 29th, and one on Nov. 30th.

Single summering individuals, all of which were females, noted as follows:

ASW - on June 7th, and again from 24th to July 14th;

PW - from March 11th to end of May;

BG - from June 25th to Sept. 24th;

CVL - a female from June 11th to 27th;

BL - on June 8th, from July 4th to 11th, and again on 21st, and from Sept. 2nd to 8th.

**SMEW** *Mergellus albellus*

Scarce winter visitor (almost always in single figures and usually only redheads) - numbers may increase in cold weather. Very rare in the Estuary.

Another poor year, in all likelihood the birds at BL and CVL were the same individuals. Records as follows:

*First winter period*

Sevenside - a redhead on Jan. 29th;

CVL - a female from Jan. 7th to 11th, and a male on Jan. 21st;

BL - a male and female on Jan. 7th, and a male on Jan. 8th and 14th.

*Second winter period*

CVL - a male on Dec. 30th and 31st, and a female on Dec. 31st;

BL - a male and female on Dec. 23rd, and a male on 29th.

The table below shows the annual maximum count at CVL from 1996/97 to 2005/06 winters:

1996/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	2005/06
21	10	16	8	11	5	9	8	2	2

CVL – total numbers

**RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** *Mergus serrator*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Most records in recent years are of regularly returning individuals at CVL.

A better year than 2005 for this species. In both winter periods a male was present at CVL. A male has been recorded here in most of the winters over the past 26 years. It was apparently absent during the 2004/05 winter but it was probably the one seen at BG.

As this bird (or birds) was not ringed there is no conclusive proof that the same individual has been involved throughout.

*First winter period*

Severnside - a female on May 10th;

CVL - a male from early January to March 13th;

BG - a male on Jan. 12th.

*Second winter period*

Severnside - a female on Oct. 30th;

CVL - a male (probably the individual seen in previous winters) from Oct. 12th to year end;

BL - a female on Oct. 26th.

**GOOSANDER** *Mergus merganser*

Fairly common winter visitor to CVL; now increasingly recorded from other sites, but still uncommon away from CVL. Very scarce in the Estuary.

Another poor year as the monthly maxima at the main sites given below shows.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Oct	Nov	Dec.
Severnside	1	1		2			1	1
CI-Y	4		5				2	
R. Avon, Keynsham	3		2					1
Backwell Lake	6	7	6	2			5	
CVL	28	11	2	2		2	11	20
BL	5	4	2			2		

The last in spring were two flying down river off Severnside on April 22nd and the first in autumn was a female at CVL on Oct. 12th. The last at CVL in the spring was noted on April 13th.

Elsewhere recorded from a further four sites as follows:

Backwell Lake - two on April 2nd and one on 19th;

Bleadon, R. Axe - one on Jan. 23rd;

BG - two on Jan. 2nd, one on Dec. 17th and three on 26th;

Hanham - three on March 13th.

**RUDDY DUCK** *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Common introduced winter visitor at CVL and BL; scarce elsewhere. A few over-summer, and breeding was first noted at CVL in 1961; now one or two pairs usually breed here and elsewhere. Culls take place at CVL, BL and possibly other sites by order of government agencies.

An average year, the monthly maxima at ASW, Weston STW, BL and CVL are tabulated below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
ASW						2	2	8	3	4	1	
Weston STW			2	2	1	1	2	3	1			
BL	67	172	49	14	15	10	11	29	27	59	85	15
CVL	190	25	45	4	8	13	10	40	65	65	50	140

Records came from two further sites, they are listed below:

PW - one from Nov. 19th to 26th;

Backwell Lake - one on June 22nd.

Breeding was confirmed at three sites (locations withheld): four broods with 18 young, although flooding caused the failure of three other nests. The Ruddy Duck cull continues to affect other species (*cf.* Goldeneye numbers at CVL in February and the relocation of the male Smew from BL to CVL on Jan. 21st). It would also appear to be a very costly way of moving the Ruddy Duck population from CVL to BL and back again!

**RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE** *Alectoris rufa*

Locally fairly common breeding resident but with large numbers released for 'sporting' purposes now accounting for many of the records.

Evidence of a recovery, or a large release, in the Marshfield area and an increase in BA.

*SG First winter period* Highest count from Marshfield was of 61 on Jan. 24th; small numbers recorded from six other sites.

*Breeding season* Recorded from eleven BBS squares and at least 22 were noted in the Marshfield area on June 30th.

*Autumn and second winter period* Few records; highest count from Marshfield was of 57 on Oct. 24th with small counts from three other sites.

*BA* Eight at Stowey Hill on April 12th with small numbers (maximum of four) noted at eleven other sites.

*NS* Small numbers (maximum of two) recorded from four sites. One at Weston STW from April 15th to 24th was the first record for the site.

**GREY PARTRIDGE** *Perdix perdix*

Uncommon, local and declining breeding resident. Small numbers may be released for 'sporting' purposes but far fewer than is the case with Red-legged Partridge, and it is to be discouraged as it clouds the status of the remaining wild birds.

No real sign of any improvement: all records received are listed below.

*SG - ST77* One on Jan. 7th at Marshfield, six 'probables' near West Kingston on Aug. 8th and a report from a single BBS square were the only records.

*SG - elsewhere* Two between Tormarton and Acton Turville on March 24th, and two at Doynton on April 12th. Also recorded from three BBS squares.

*BA* Reported from a single BBS square.

*NS* Good numbers at Weston STW; twelve on Jan. 8th, a pair on May 29th and June 17th, six on Aug. 8th, 24 (two adults with an exceptional 22 young, presumably from more than one brood) on Sept. 7th, 21 on Sept. 19th, 16 on Nov. 3rd and one on Dec. 6th. Three at Wrington on April 6th.

**COMMON QUAIL** *Coturnix coturnix*

Scarce summer visitor, and presumed breeder, to the north-east of the area. Rare passage migrant.

Another poor year.

All records received are listed below in date order:

The Dingle, Coombe Dingle (Bristol) - heard to call several times around midnight on June 10th;  
 Easton in Gordano - at least one calling on June 24th;  
 Marshfield - 'several' calling on June 30th, single calling on Aug. 7th;  
 Orchard Pools, Severn Beach - a bird flushed on July 16th was the first record for Severnside;  
 Wrington - called three times at dusk on July 17th;  
 West Kington - calling on Aug. 8th.

The table below shows the number of singing males in each year of the past decade.

Year	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
No. of singing males	22	14	4	3	4	4	2	16	5	5+

**COMMON PHEASANT** *Phasianus colchicus*

Fairly common but under recorded. BBS distribution 56%. UK population change 1994-2005 up 32%.

As in previous years, the species was poorly reported.

The highest count was 21 at Walton-in-Gordano on April 17th.

On Steep Holm a pair was seen at the end of April and a male on May 27th; calls were heard in July but there was no evidence of breeding.

A melanistic male was at CVL on Nov. 22nd.

*Breeding* Recorded from 66 BBS squares; 15 calling males were located at CVL.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
119	117	132	137	132	126	117	124	135	147

Avon BBS Index 1994 = 100

**GREAT NORTHERN DIVER** *Gavia immer*

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant to the larger reservoirs and the Estuary, sometimes staying for considerable lengths of time on the reservoirs.

A long-staying individual remained in the first-winter period. There was a significant influx in the second-winter period during a spell of westerly gales and coinciding with records of several other storm-driven species (*cf.* Leach's Storm-petrel). The details are as follows in date order:

BG - a juvenile remained from 2005 until Jan. 20th (CJS *et al.*);  
 Ladye Bay, Clevedon - one on Dec. 5th (RHu);  
 Severnside - one on Dec. 6th (RMi, RFR) and another on Dec. 25th (PDB);  
 Clevedon Boating Lake - a juvenile from Dec. 14th to 17th (JW *et al.*). On the last date it became entangled in a fishing line, but it survived and was seen to catch a Whiting (RMA);  
 Cumberland Basin - one on Dec. 28th (CR), a remarkable record this close to the centre of Bristol.

**DIVER SP** *Gavia sp*

One, probably a Red-throated, at Severnside on May 11th.

The table details annual totals for divers for the last decade:

	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Red-throated	1	1		1		1			1	
Black-throated				1			2			
Great Northern	2			4		3			2	6
Diver sp.				2			4		1	1

Avon area summary

**LITTLE GREBE** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Fairly common breeding resident, but occurs widely in rhynes and small to medium-sized pools. Numbers peak in late summer at the reservoirs before dispersing. Very scarce in the Estuary. BBS distribution 4%. UK 25-yr change down 76%.

1995/04 Av - 77	2005 - 78	2006 - 62
CVL - January to December average maximum counts		

Counts at CVL were low. This might be due in part to high water levels allowing birds to remain hidden in emergent vegetation, but the population was probably genuinely low, partly reflecting poor breeding success in recent years. At BL the exceptional counts in 2005 were not repeated in 2006 and numbers returned to more normal levels.

Monthly maxima from the main sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS		1					1			1		
Severnside	1	3	2	4	2	2	3			1	1	1
PW	5	2	9	9	8	4	8		25	33	10	9
R. Yeo, CI-Y	3	2	1				3			2		4
Axe Est./Weston STW	4	4	7	12	8	10	15	31	16	10	8	
Tortworth Lake		8		1						6		
ASW/Hoar Gout	1			3			3	4	6	1	1	2
BG		10	8									
CVL	23	35	15	5	8	8	15	40	65	80	35	30
BL	5	8	5	17	6	6	14	35	49	20	5	5

CVL is currently ranked fourth in Great Britain for this species, and BL seventh. BL now qualifies as a site of national importance for this species (Webs 2004/05).

**Other sites** Reported from a further eleven sites (*cf.* 17 in 2005). The maximum was five at Kenn Moor on Feb. 14th.

**Breeding** At CVL there was some improvement over previous years, but numbers remain low, with nine pairs producing six broods totalling ten young. Also recorded from a further five sites (*cf.* six in 2005) but probably under-recorded:

Chittening Warth - one juvenile seen;

ASW - one juvenile seen;

Weston STW - eight pairs produced nine broods (one pair being double-brooded) totalling 21 young; this is now the most productive breeding site in the Avon area;

Chew Magna Res. - two broods totalling four young;

BL - five broods totalling 15 young.

	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Broods	20	27	17	20	10	6	2	9	2	6
Young	31+	43	25	24	12+	9	2	13+	3	10

CVL. Broods and young, 1997 to 2006

**2005 Erratum:** The counts published for BL in the 2005 Avon Bird Report were incorrect. The correct counts are as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
BL	6	4	5	12	14	14	12	37	69	19	22	12

**GREAT CRESTED GREBE** *Podiceps cristatus*

Fairly common breeding resident, but occurs commonly at the reservoirs, particularly during the autumn moult and passage. Scarce elsewhere, including the Estuary.

Numbers at CVL recovered from very low levels in 2005 and preceding years, coinciding with anecdotal reports of a recovery in the coarse fish population.

1995/04 Av - 446	2005 - 250	2006 - 407
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CVL. January to December average maximum counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
BG		12	8			10	16	25	24		34	35
CVL	32	27	11	53		65	195	298	385	430	360	405
BL	11	2	12	30	47	45	60	154	54	56	99	45

Monthly maxima from the main sites

CVL is currently ranked third in Great Britain for this species (Webs 2004/05).

Recorded elsewhere as follows:

OPS - single birds in March, July and October, with two in June;

Severnside - single birds in February, July, November and December, with two on April 22nd and four on May 17th;

ASW - one on Jan. 26th and two on March 16th;

Weston STW - one from Jan. 13th until May was the first recorded at the site;

Chew Magna Res. - one on April 8th.

*Breeding*

The apparent recovery of the coarse fish populations at CVL resulted in an upturn in the species' breeding fortunes here, as shown in the table below. One juvenile was seen on the late date of Nov. 22nd.

	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Broods	7	23	29	36	24	5	2	6	0	20
Young	13	38+	44	64+	28	6	4	9	0	43

CVL Number of broods and young, 1997 to 2006

Elsewhere:

BL - four broods totalled six young;

Litton Resrs. - one brood of four.

**RED-NECKED GREBE** *Podiceps grisegena*

Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

One record: one at CVL on Dec. 7th (RJH).

The three most recent Avon area records, all at this site and all in November, were in 1995, 2002 and 2004.

**BLACK-NECKED GREBE** *Podiceps nigricollis*

Scarce passage migrant; wintered for the first time in 1998/99 and is becoming increasingly frequent in the winter. Almost always at freshwater sites and rare in the Estuary. Has bred.

An exceptional series of winter records was followed by an average autumn showing at the main reservoirs and Weston STW only.

Weston STW - one from Sept. 14th to 19th;

BG - four from Jan. 1st to 29th, with three still present on Feb. 7th, increasing to five from Feb. 15th to March 24th. Summer-plumaged adults on April 2nd and from July 10th to 16th, and a juvenile on Sept. 26th;

CVL - three winter records, perhaps relating to birds wandering from BG: two on Jan. 1st and single birds on Jan. 21st and Feb. 11th. The autumn passage began with a juvenile from Aug. 10th to Sept. 8th, with two from 9th to 21st and then one again until Oct. 3rd;

BL - three on Sept. 17th, then two from Sept. 18th to 28th, increasing to three again from Sept. 29th to Oct. 13th and four from 8th to 20th, with three remaining until 24th.

**SLAVONIAN GREBE** *Podiceps auritus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Almost always at freshwater sites, very rare in the Estuary.

The individual from 2005 remained at CVL until Feb. 9th (many observers).

The table details the rare grebes recorded in the last decade:

	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Red-necked						1		1		1
Slavonian	3	1	1	3	1		1	1	1	1
Black-necked	10	12	9+	7	25	11	5	9	6	14

Avon area – Grebe summary

**NORTHERN FULMAR** *Fulmarus glacialis*

Uncommon visitor, less common in winter. Usually storm-driven, but occasionally occurs in calm conditions in mid-summer. Rare inland.

After a below average showing in 2005, sightings were the best since 2000, with a particularly strong series of records in May, including two inland.

All coastal 2006 Northern Fulmar records are included in the table below:

	Feb	Mar	Apr	May												Jul	Sept		Oct
Date	15	3	2	13	30	1	18	19	20	22	23	24	25	26	27	9	3	7	6
Severnside				3			1	15	7	15	5	4	1	1	1		1		1
Ladye Bay		1		1		2	1	100	1	1	2			1	2	1		1	
Sand Point					1	2	52		11	23	4								
Anchor Head	1																	1	

The inland records were for CVL: single birds on May 19th (DA) and 27th (GTh), the first here since 1983.

**MANX SHEARWATER** *Puffinus puffinus*

Uncommon summer/autumn visitor, usually storm-driven, although large feeding flocks have occurred in calm anti-cyclonic conditions in mid-summer. As with most other seabirds, seldom recorded NE of the Second Severn Crossing. Rare inland.

Largely a below average year, but exceptional counts on two dates brought the bird-day totals up to a typical level. Interestingly, none was seen further up the Estuary at Severnside on either of these dates.

All 2006 records are listed below.

Severnside - single birds on May 19th and 20th, two on Oct. 5th and three on 6th – a poor showing for this site;

Portishead - eight on July 9th;

Ladye Bay - 90 on May 18th, 375 on July 9th, one on Sept. 3rd, two on 6th and one on 7th;

Sand Point - 450 between 08:15 and 11:00 on May 19th, three on 20th and 50 on 23rd, 480 on July 9th and one on Sept. 2nd with two on 3rd;

Anchor Head - one on April 13th, 130 on May 24th and three on 26th.

**EUROPEAN STORM-PETREL** *Hydrobates pelagicus*

Scarce storm-driven summer/autumn visitor to the Severn Estuary SW of the Second Severn Crossing; rare in winter and very rare inland.

A good sequence of coastal records during May and July (*cf.* Northern Fulmar, Manx Shearwater and Northern Gannet) resulting in the best bird-day count since 1998.

All 2006 records are listed below:

Severnside - three on May 19th, two on 20th, three on 24th, one on 26th, one on June 22nd and two on July 9th (RFR, PDB *et al.*);



Portishead - five on July 9th (PAB, SH);  
 Ladye Bay - one on May 23rd and eight on July 9th (RHu);  
 Sand Point - single birds on July 9th and 11th (PAB).



### LEACH'S STORM-PETREL *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

Scarce storm-driven visitor to the Estuary SW of the Second Severn Crossing mainly in autumn and winter. Usually in ones or twos but large numbers have occurred in wrecks. Very rare inland.

Strong south-westerly winds in early December produced the largest wreck since 1952, on a par with the influx of 1983 and exceeding that of 1989. Severnside produced the most records and many counts from here are probably under-estimates. The largest count of 45 on Dec. 6th was made by counting birds as they flew down river on the falling tide (SH); most others were single scans from Severn Beach.

All 2006 Leach's Storm Petrel records are listed below:

Severnside - eight on Dec. 3rd, 21 on 4th, ten on 5th, 45 on 6th, 20 on 7th, three (one killed by Great Black-backed Gull), and one found dead on 11th (many observers);  
 Ladye Bay, Clevedon - one on Dec. 4th (RHu). A petrel sp. pursued and eventually killed by a Great Skua on 5th was thought probably to be this species;  
 Weston-s-Mare - one off the front on Dec. 5th and three on 6th (PAB);  
 Yatton - one found dead on Dec. 7th (TR);  
 CVL - one on Dec. 7th (RMA);  
 BL - one found dead on Dec. 4th (NRM).

### NORTHERN GANNET *Morus bassanus*

Scarce/uncommon storm-driven visitor, mainly in spring and summer. Rare inland.

A huge improvement on 2005, with good sequences of records in May (cf. Northern Fulmar) and early July (cf. Manx Shearwater). The bird-day totals were the highest on record, although it should be noted that sea-watching effort is much greater now than in the past and the extent, if any, to which this reflects a long-term increase in occurrence cannot be determined.

All coastal 2006 records are included in the table below.

	Feb	March				April									
	15	25	28	31	11	13	18	23	26	28	29				
Severnside			5	1											
Battery Point		5													
Ladye Bay			16		15	2	3	35	6	3	4				
Sand Point		5					11	38							
Anchor Head	2														
	May										June	July		Sept	
	1	11	18	19	20	22	24	26	27	28	21	9	11	3	4
Severnside				20	3	3		1		1	3				1
Battery Point						2						1	23		
Ladye Bay			40	120	5							30		7	
Sand Point	5	4	50	49	20	4								1	
Anchor Head							9	4							
Steep Holm									1						

In addition there were two inland records on consecutive days, perhaps referring to the same individual: at CVL, one on May 24th; and at BL, a sub-adult on 25th (NRM).

## GREAT CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

NW European race *P. c. carbo*: Fairly common resident and winter visitor, especially to the main reservoirs; breeds in small numbers on Steep Holm and on Denny Island. UK ten year change 14%.

Continental race *P. c. sinensis*: The few earlier Avon records of this race are described little better than white-headed birds in spring; however, ringing controls (and close examination) of several individuals have proved that this race occurs occasionally.

The recovery in numbers at CVL seen in 2005 continued, presumably as a result of increasing coarse fish populations.

1995/04 Av - 154	2005 - 111	2006 - 121
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CVL January to December average maximum counts

The monthly maxima from the main sites are tabulated below, note the high count (81) at BG for Oct. 22nd.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	4	4	2	5	8	9	10	11	14	25	6	8
Severnside	2	2	1	2	1	2						
Sea Mills	7	6	7	8	4	3	7	6	7	10	3	14
CI-Y	1	1	1	3	3	5	3	3	3	3	3	0
Kenn Moor	7	6	3	2	3	1	6	5	6	7	5	6
Weston STW	2	2	9	5	5	1		5	1	9	2	
BG						8	16	16	17	81	54	4
CVL	53	114	47	45	22	14	41	55	110	65	105	140
BL	70	10	17	11	10	7	41	46	41	39	68	3
Loxton	13	8	11						10	12	10	14

Individuals showing characteristics of the race *sinensis* were noted at CVL on Feb. 1st, and Nov. 13th and 22nd (RMi).

*Other sites* Reported from a further nine sites, often involving birds over-flying. The largest count not in the table above was five over Batheaston By-pass on Jan. 15th.

*Breeding* A partial count at Steep Holm on May 12th revealed at least 64 occupied nests. A pair still had eggs in the nest on the late date of June 27th (AJP).

## EUROPEAN SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Very scarce visitor, mainly in autumn and winter (rare inland); sometimes storm-driven.

Two records, both from the CI-Y section of coast:

A juvenile on the Estuary off Clevedon on Sept. 10th (KEV);

Two first-winters on Clevedon Marine Lake on Dec. 12th and 13th, and again on 16th (KJH *et al.*).

### Tubenoses, Northern Gannet and European Shag in the Avon area during the last decade

	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Northern Fulmar	81	33	74	356	61	130	87	139	16	272
Cory's Shearwater	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Manx Shearwater	565	565	1081	269	98	586	1230	1920	40	1600
Storm Petrel	3	11	1	6/7	2	9/12	2	8	0	28
Leach's Storm Petrel	2	5	1	5	1	5/9	0	2	2	115
Northern Gannet	19	13	20	20	19	134+	102	152	46	570
European Shag	5	5	0	6/8	1	2	1	3	5	3

Avon area – Unusual seabird summary

**FRIGATEBIRD SP** *Fregata sp*

Very rare vagrant.

**2005** An adult male was reported flying over Flat Holm (Glamorgan) on Nov. 6th by one of the island's wardens. It was seen by her to leave to S and head into Avon waters in the direction of Weston-s-Mare. This record has been accepted by both BBRC and BOURC. A day later one, what was thought likely to have been this individual and identified as a Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens*, was found in an exhausted state by a farmer in a field near the Severn in Shropshire (Salop). It was taken to Chester Zoo where it later died in care. Unfortunately no Avon (or Gwent) birder saw the bird, but it seems likely that it flew up the Estuary on its way to Shropshire.

**GREAT BITTERN** *Botaurus stellaris*

Scarce winter visitor; mainly to CVL.

Recorded at CVL only, and it was much more elusive than in recent years. All records except where stated were of single birds. Seen in the first winter period on Jan. 21st, 24th (two) and 25th and Feb. 13th, and in the second winter period on Dec. 2nd and 11th.

**LITTLE EGRET** *Egretta garzetta*

Scarce resident, and scarce visitor mainly from late summer to winter. In line with the national trend, numbers have increased dramatically during the last few years.

Little Egrets were seen in 2006 at a wider range of sites than previously and this charismatic species has now become a familiar part of our avifauna.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
0	3	4	3	15	7	13	15	27	39

CI-Y and environs. Maximum count

The table below shows monthly maxima for the main sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Severnside	1		5	3	1	1	1	2	1	1	5	1
CI-Y and environs	4	4	21	39	7	8	11	16	20	15	7	5
Sand Pt./Bay				7	1							
Axe Est.	5	2	3	5	4	4	5	4	6	3	1	2
CVL		1			1		1	1	1		3	
BL				2	1			1	2	2	2	

**Other sites** Recorded from another 21 sites (*cf.* eleven in 2003, 14 in 2004 and 17 in 2005), the majority of them on the North Somerset Levels and Moors, with concentrations of records in January and November.

OPS - single birds in January, March, April, June, August and October;

Littleton Warth - one on Dec. 27th;

PW - single birds on May 12th, Aug. 27th, Sept. 6th and Nov 4th and 14th;

Portishead - single birds on Sept. 2nd and 3rd and seven in flight on Nov. 2nd;

Leap Valley, Downend - one to N on Nov. 4th – still an unusual record in this part of the region;

Pilning - two on April 13th;

Portbury - one on Nov. 11th;

Weston Moor - one on March 3rd;

Tickenham Moor - five on March 4th and one on 17th;

East of Nailsea - single birds on Jan. 31st and Feb. 11th and 13th;

Backwell Lake - single birds in January and February;

Chelvey - one on Jan. 31st;

Kenn Moor - eleven flying high to W on Jan. 21st, one on 28th, two on Feb. 21st and two on Nov. 4th;

BG - one on April 6th;

Winford Brook - one on Feb. 25th;

Congresbury - one on Jan. 8th;

Wrighton - two on Feb. 14th and 21st and two on Nov. 4th;

Puxton Moor - five on Jan. 21st;

Locking - one on Jan. 9th and three on Nov. 22nd; and Sandford - one on Feb. 27th.

**GREAT EGRET** *Ardea alba*

Very rare vagrant.

One record: one seen in flight off Ladye Bay, Clevedon on April 6th (RHu).

The first published record for the Avon area was of one at CVL on June 20th and July 11th 2003. It has now come to our attention that a bird seen from Flat Holm (Glamorgan) on the earlier date of Sept. 22nd, 2002 (P. Bristow) flew into Weston Bay and therefore constitutes the first record for our area [BBRC] (Eds.).

**GREY HERON** *Ardea cinerea*

Fairly common resident; uncommon as a breeding species. BBS distribution 29%. UK 25-yr change 19% increase. Local ten-yr change 38% increase.

Numbers at CVL remained low, despite increased populations of other fish-feeding species, probably as a consequence of high water levels. The Sea Mills area continues to attract good numbers.

	1997/04 Av.	2005	2006
CVL	15	20	12
Sea Mills	17	19	19

CVL and Sea Mills. Maximum counts

The maximum monthly counts from the main sites are as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	4	7	6	3	3	2	5	3	8	5	3	3
Sevenside	5	2	1	3	2	2						
CI-Y	2	1	1	2	1	1	4	3	5	2	1	2
Axe E./Weston STW	1	4	3	7	3	3	2	3	5	2	1	
R. Avon (Sea Mills)	19	11	7	3	1	6	8	12	13	17	19	17
BG						3	7	8	6	6	8	2
CVL	9	8	6	4	5	4	3	5	12	2	11	5
BL	11	7	3	1	2	1	5	4	4	5	5	6

*Other non-breeding records* Elsewhere recorded from a total of 33 sites (*cf.* 32 in 2005). Notable counts included eleven at Compton Dando STW on Jan. 16th, nine at Kenn Moor on Nov. 26th and eight here on Dec. 28th, and five at Litton Resrs. on Aug. 1st. Garden ponds were raided at Henleaze (Bristol), Clutton and Old Down.

*Breeding* The details are summarised in the table below which shows average numbers.

	Grid Ref	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Dodington	ST753802	0	0	0	0	nc	nc	0	nc	nc	nc
Ingst	ST598878	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	0	nc	nc	nc
Easter Compton	ST560811	7	8	6	9	6	8	8	7	8	0
Eastwood Farm	ST535715	4	10	10	12	12	16	25	25	25	25
Pill	ST530739									5	nc
Hanham Wood	ST641703	3	0	0		nc	7		0		12
Heath Farm	ST635708		2	2							
Newton Park	ST692640	5	7	7	7	6	7	5			8
Prior Park, Bath	ST634761										1
Paradise Bottom	ST546748	8	9	5	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
Denny Island, CVL	ST575607	33	30	33	35	43	31	33	29	29	25
Cleeve Wood	ST462662	37	47	47	44	49	45	52	45	45	33
Uphill Grange Wood	ST320582	3	0	1	1	nc	2	3			4
Clevedon Court Farm	ST4271					1	nc				
Total		104	113	111	112	118	116	126	106	104	108

**WHITE STORK** *Ciconia ciconia*

Rare vagrant. True status confused by the likelihood of escapes from captivity.

An individual was recorded on Bleadon Level from March 25th to 28th although it spent most of this time on the Somerset part of the Level (PAB, S & JP).

There are six previous Avon area records, probably involving eight birds: three Danish-ringed immatures at Combe Down in September 1971; one (probably one of the above birds) at Keynsham in September 1972; one at Paulton in August 1973; three over Knowle, Bristol in April 1993; one over CVL in May 2000; and one at Weston STW in July 2005.

**EURASIAN SPOONBILL** *Platalea leucorodia*

Very scarce passage migrant.

Four records, probably relating to the same wandering individual: one at both Severnside (*per* RFR) and OPS (PJH) on April 23rd, one at Cl-Y on May 16th (RHu, TRW), and one at Weston STW on May 11th and 13th (MSP).

Assuming that these records do refer to the same bird, this brings the total of Avon area records since 1920 to 23. The most recent was at Severnside in February 2004.

**RED KITE** *Milvus milvus*

Scarce passage migrant/winter visitor.

2006 was another good year, recorded at eleven sites with most in June, all sightings were of single birds.

*February* - the first of the year was over Norton's Wood, Gordano Valley on 16th;

*April* - a second calendar year over Herriott's Pool, CVL and nearby Burlledge Hill on 16th and 17th;

*May* - over the Avon Gorge to NE on 6th, a second calendar year over Herriott's Pool, CVL and nearby Burlledge Hill on 25th;

*June* - at PW on 3rd, Northwick Warth to E on 5th, the second Severnside record, circling over Kenn on 8th and Tormarton on 15th, on Steep Holm one flew up and down the south side then departed to N on 26th, the first record for the island;

*July* - at Weston, Bath to NE on 3rd and Bedminster Down, Bristol on 27th;

*September* - the last of the year over Boyd Valley, Wick on Sept. 10th.

**EURASIAN MARSH HARRIER** *Circus aeruginosus*

Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant.

An average year for this species, noted mainly on the coast, eight records all of single females or immatures (*cf.* seven in 2001, four in 2002, 14 in 2003, two in 2004 and eleven in 2005). The first was during late April and mid-May, with subsequent sightings at CVL from July to September. The details are as follows:

OPS - stayed for about half an hour then to NE on April 22nd (AJM);

Sand Point - to NE on May 11th (PAB);

Weston STW / Axe Estuary - quartering fields to the south on April 27th (MSP), during May one flew across the Estuary and landed in fields on the Somerset side on 12th (PAB), and to NW toward Brean Down, Somerset on 17th (PAB);

CVL - July 28th (RMi), Aug. 8th (AHD), and a juvenile at Nunnery Point on Sept. 17th (KEV).

**HEN HARRIER** *Circus cyaneus*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly to the coast.

A normal year, this species is now an infrequent visitor. In 1991 there was an exceptional number of sightings with a total of 50 bird-days recorded. In 2006 reported on just four dates (*cf.* two in 1999 & 2000, one in 2001, six in 2002 & 2003, three in 2004 & 2005) as follows:

Chelwood - a second-calendar year to NW on May 6th (RL);

West Littleton - an adult-type male on Aug. 26th (DJA);

Weston STW - a female/immature on Oct. 17th (PAB);

Ladye Bay, Clevedon - a male to NE on Oct. 22nd (RH).

### Scarce Raptors in the Avon Area

The table below summaries the bird-day totals in 2006 and the previous nineteen years.

Year	1987	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	1996
Honey Buzzard	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	0
Black Kite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Red Kite	0	8	0	2	0	1	2	2	1	3
Marsh Harrier	4	7	5	7	9	6	1	8	2	4
Hen Harrier	8	3	4	2	50	2	1	0	4	1
Montagu's Harrier	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	1	1
Goshawk	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Osprey	2	23	1	3	2	5	2	22	8	5
Red-footed Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0

Year	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Honey Buzzard	1	3	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Red Kite	6	1	2	5	1	4	6	3	17	13
Marsh Harrier	2	16	4	8	7	4	15	2	11	8
Hen Harrier	4	1	2	2	1	6	7	3	3	4
Montagu's Harrier	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
Goshawk	5	2	8	9	1	2	2	0	0	1
Osprey	4	7	2	14	7	4	3	4	10	6

#### NORTHERN GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

Scarce resident

One record, the first since 2003: a female was at Chittening Warth heading to SW on Nov. 9th (SH), this was the third Severnside record, the previous records were of a male in July 1997 and a first-calendar year male in August 1998.

#### EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Fairly common breeding resident, possibly also an uncommon passage migrant.

A normal year but well reported. A total of 577 records were received, a good response and better than the preceding five years, the most since 1993 when 582 records were received.

The 2006 records were fairly evenly spread over the year with most in April and typically the least number during June at the peak of the nesting cycle. The distribution of records in 2006 shows reasonably clearly the display, incubation and dispersal periods.

The table below details the distribution of records for 2006 and the previous five years:

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2001	45	34	39	37	22	11	35	41	30	48	24	29	395
2002	25	13	23	33	29	17	36	38	32	37	34	39	356
2003	49	35	52	47	24	11	30	44	37	39	38	32	438
2004	35	22	35	62	46	30	38	44	48	52	26	36	474
2005	43	37	49	51	38	24	38	45	63	58	38	49	533
2006	60	46	57	71	47	30	51	53	46	44	41	31	577

#### Breeding

In 1997 and from 1999 to 2003 JH carried out extensive field work in the southern 60 km<sup>2</sup> of ST 66, this gave a much clearer indication of the total breeding population and its relative stability, his figures are marked with an asterisk in the table below. The overall assessment of the number breeding in 2006 was the best since 1997, 16 in *SG*, 36 in *BA & NS* and eleven in and around *Bristol*.

Last year's apparent decline in *SG* was reversed and there was a reasonable improvement in *BA & NS*, but *Bristol* showed a slight fall.

The table below gives an assessment of breeding sites for 2006 and the previous nine years as well as the ten year average from 1987 to 1996.

	1987-96 Av	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
SG	10	10	12	8	8	8	7	12	16	10	16
BA & NS	27	50*	28	39*	36*	30*	32*	37*	30	29	36
Bristol	12	14	14	14	13	17	13	13	6	13	11
Total	49	74	54	61	57	55	52	62	52	52	63

In and around CVL three pairs were located, two within the confines of the lake and another nearby, these nests contained two, three and one young respectively.

*Other observations* Steep Holm: noted occasionally in April and September, also on May 29th, Oct. 7th and 8th, and from Nov. 1st to 7th.

*Prey species reported* A Black-headed Gull was taken at Oldland on April 23rd, two young Collared Doves were predated from a nest in a hedge at Old Down, Bath on Sept. 2nd, and a Little Grebe fell victim to an attack at Stratford Bay, CVL on Nov. 2nd. Elsewhere, species included Collared Dove again, Blackbird, Great Tit and House Sparrow.

### COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Fairly common breeding resident, possibly also an uncommon passage migrant, the population has steadily increased over the past decade or so, now regularly seen over suburban areas.

A somewhat mixed year, more pairs held territories but breeding success was poor.

Records received totalled 907, most in March and April during the display period, and few in December. Overall, this was a good number but less than in the preceding couple of years. The population is still increasing and now frequents areas that at one time would have been considered marginal. In some suburban localities reported to be very confiding, especially if unmolested.

Set out in the table below is the monthly distribution of records for 2006 and the previous five years.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2001	56	37	66	68	43	47	35	45	45	32	51	50	575
2002	28	50	88	96	66	53	62	68	72	55	35	39	712
2003	84	103	122	92	60	61	46	75	57	61	65	57	883
2004	61	54	103	114	105	93	80	84	68	67	60	41	930
2005	84	81	121	111	79	65	55	78	54	60	72	90	950
2006	98	67	110	155	81	89	56	57	69	44	49	32	907

*Breeding* RJP's study area, which covers some 75km<sup>2</sup> of Failand/Gordano reported good numbers but breeding success was very poor, 90 pairs held territories, two more than in 2005, only 37 of these were successful and 50 young fledged. The number of territories held was a record but by comparison the number of successful nests was very low. RJP commented that the ratio of successful nests to active nest sites was the worst for 19 years but 1998 was almost as bad. The table set out below gives an assessment of the number of breeding sites in the Avon area in 2006 and the previous nine years as well as the ten-year average from 1987 to 1996. Included are the results of RJP's studies in the Failand/Gordano area, and an estimate of numbers in the southern 60km<sup>2</sup> of ST66 based on JH's survey work from 1991 to 2004.

Year	1987-96 Av	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
SG	16	42	35	28	28	28	27	29	44	25	49
BA & NS	68	145	137	148	154	165	169	174	196	196	206
Bristol	1	3	3	4	4	8	8	9	12	16	14
RJP's Study Area											
Active nest sites	35	60	65	71	79	83	84	84	85	88	90
Chicks fledged	42	75	44	75	58	83	51	66	107	92	50
Successful nests	24	42	27	45	46	56	38	40	60	56	37
Brood success ratio	1.75	1.79	1.63	1.67	1.26	1.48	1.34	1.65	1.78	1.64	1.35

*Common Buzzard cont.*

At CVL four broods were located: at Herriott's Pool, Stratford Bay, Heron's Green Pool and Villice Bay.

*Large groups/counts* Between Jan. 2nd and Feb. 11th RJP noted gatherings in excess of ten at Tyntesfield Estate, numbers peaked at 13 and 15 on Jan 13th and 24th respectively; nearby, ten were present at Wraxall on Feb. 2nd. Elsewhere in the first half of the year, during March ten were seen over the Gordano Valley on 4th and eleven at Charlton Field on 31st. During April there were 16 at Burnett on 15th and 15 at Aust Warth on 27th. In the second half of the year, 15 were at BL on Sept. 5th and 14 at Winterbourne on Oct. 13th.

*Bristol* Noted as follows: over Totterdown on Jan. 3rd, City Centre on March 19th and Nov. 2nd, two high to ENE over Victoria Rooms, Clifton on April 11th, at St. Werburgh's on April 14th, during May two on 3rd and one the next day, to E on July 27 th, and in September at Bishopston to SE on 7th and Temple Quay on 28th, and finally at College Green on Nov. 25th.

*Other notes* On Steep Holm 27 were counted between May 3rd and Sept. 15th, most passed straight through but one was present from Aug. 1st to 14th.

*Pale morph birds* Near Marshfield on Jan. 30th, in March at Heron's Green, CVL, on 19th and Cl-Y on 26th, and an Osprey look-alike at Cl-Y during September.

**OSPREY** *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce passage migrant; most records are from the reservoirs.

A below average year for this species in the Avon area, six birds were noted on five dates (*cf.* seven in 2001, four in 2002, three in 2003, four in 2004 and ten in 2005) most in April and September at CVL as follows:

CVL - during April one to NW on 4th, at Moreton Bank to W and another with a fish half an hour later over Burledge Hill on 18th, and in September noted on 17th and 22nd;

Cl-Y - one fishing at Yeo Estuary on July 22nd (SH).

**COMMON KESTREL** *Falco tinnunculus*

Fairly common breeding resident.

A normal year and well reported, records received totalled 574 most in the first half year from January to May, very few in August and September, there were no large counts.

The table set out below gives the monthly total of reports for 2006 and the previous five years:

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2001	34	15	24	19	32	34	29	27	38	26	21	20	319
2002	12	24	33	49	32	45	45	30	53	45	25	46	439
2003	35	59	60	46	42	41	33	58	24	37	38	24	497
2004	24	27	22	42	30	30	37	51	34	46	27	47	417
2005	43	54	57	56	62	54	42	45	48	47	47	59	614
2006	76	53	60	60	57	43	42	27	28	44	47	37	574

*Breeding* Apparently a good year in the Avon area, pairs were reported from 108 sites (*cf.* 82 in 2005), 29 in SG, 72 in BA & NS and seven in and around *Bristol*. However, the low number of records received in the post breeding period, the lack of any large counts and notes on breeding success could indicate poor productivity (*cf.* Common Buzzard).

At CVL birds were present in the Stratford Lane and Villice Bay areas (*cf.* two in 2005).

At Lansdown four recently fledged young were seen near an Ash tree nest site on July 21st. Pole nest boxes were used successfully at Bleadon Level and near Compton Dando, two young fledged from each.

The table overleaf gives an assessment of breeding sites for 2006 and the previous nine years as well as the ten-year average from 1987 to 1996.



	1987-96 Av	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
SG	21	21	28	23	24	22	21	19	24	17	29
BA & NS	41	65	51	62	66	58	49	79	57	60	72
Bristol	9	10	9	6	9	7	9	11	5	5	7
Total	71	96	88	91	99	87	79	109	86	82	108

*Other notes* On Steep Holm one was seen frequently from Sept. 7th to 27th.

### **MERLIN** *Falco columbarius*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor; most are recorded on the coast; scarce inland.

A fairly good year for this species with a total of 92 bird-days (*cf.* 127 in 2004, the highest ever recorded, and 101 in 2005). During the year there were 43 bird-days in the first half year and 49 in the second half. Most were in January, February, March, October and November with eleven, ten, 14, 20 and 15 bird-days respectively. As usual, the majority of records were from Severnside with 57 bird-days, 26 in the first half year and 31 in the second half year.

The details are as follows, records refer to single female or immature birds unless stated otherwise, and give sites and dates when present:

#### *First half-year*

Severnside - noted on 26 dates from Jan. 2nd to April 28th most often in February and March but on only two dates in April, males seen on 20 dates;

CI-Y - Jan. 14th, March 2nd and 4th;

Sand Point/Bay - Jan. 25th, Feb. 25th a male and female on March 2nd, April 2nd, 6th, 9th and 14th;

Weston STW - Jan. 8th and 22nd, in March a male on 2nd and one on 12th.

#### *Second half-year*

Severnside - reported on 31 dates from Aug. 5th (the earliest date for the Avon area) to Dec. 20th most in October and November, and none in September, males were seen on 22 dates. Previous records during August include: 23rd in 1981 and 31st in 1996. The previous earliest autumn record for the Avon area was at Sand Point on Aug. 7th in 1990;

CI-Y - Oct. 8th, 15th, 22nd and 24th, Nov. 4th, Dec. 26th;

Sand Point/Bay - during September two on 24th and one on 30th, males on Oct. 23rd and Nov. 14th;

Weston STW - Sept. 10th, 11th and 19th, Oct. 7th, 9th and 10th.

#### *Inland*

During January noted at Shirehill on 21st (MH), near Easton-in-Gordano to SE on 31st (RJP), and at Burnett on Oct. 17th (JA).

The tables below gives the Avon area and Severnside bird-day totals for 2006 and the previous nine years and the ten-year average from 1987 to 1996.

Year	1987-96 Av	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Bird days per year											
Avon area	53	43	45	46	73	60	70	107	127	101	93
Severnside	19	23	26	23	36	34	32	59	98	53	57

### **EURASIAN HOBBY** *Falco subbuteo*

Uncommon passage migrant and scarce breeding summer visitor.

A normal year.

#### *Arrival*

First recorded at BL on April 14th. Elsewhere during April noted at Portbury two on 17th, St. Catherine's Valley and Winford on 21st, at CVL the next day (three days earlier than in 2005) with two on 29th, Downend on 23rd, Lower Failand on 27th, and Sand Point on 29th.

The earliest arrival dates during the preceding five years were all in April; 14th in 2001, 21st in 2002, 15th in 2003 and 2004, and 21st in 2005. The earliest arrival date was March 30th in 1990.

*Eurasian Hobby breeding* Confirmed at two sites in *NS* and two in *BA*.

*NS* - one pair fledged two young, two adults and a juvenile were seen at the other site;

*BA* - two sites were located, at one of these an adult was seen feeding three juveniles in September but the outcome of the other nest was unknown.

Breeding was suspected at a further six sites, two in each of the following areas, *SG*, *NS* and *BA*.

The table details breeding status both confirmed and suspected for 2006 and the previous nine years as well as the ten-year average from 1987 to 1996.

	1987-96 Av	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
<i>SG</i>	1.2	4	3	3	2	2	1	2	2	1	2
<i>NS</i>	1.4	3	4	3	4	3	2	2	4	4	4
<i>BA</i>	2.6	3	6	4	7	8	6	6	4	5	4
Total	5.2	10	13	10	13	13	9	10	10	10	10

*Other sightings* From April 14th to Oct. 2nd reported from a total of 39 localities, eight in *SG* and 26 in *BA* & *NS*. In *Bristol* noted over Avon Gorge on May 10th, Hengrove June 9th and Sept. 13th, in July over Montrose Avenue, Redland to NW on 7th and Whitchurch to W on 29th, and Southmead to NW on August 12th.

The table below gives the number of localities per month where birds were observed (including CVL):

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct
<i>SG</i>	1	3	5	2	3	2	0
<i>Bristol</i>	0	1	1	2	1	1	0
<i>BA</i> & <i>NS</i>	7	8	6	12	13	11	1
Total	8	12	12	16	17	14	1

*CVL* Regularly reported from this site, records received were mostly of single birds but two or three were sometimes seen. In September there were four on 6th, five on 15th and a record count of seven on 23rd. Subsequent to the first record on April 22nd noted on one other date in the month, then on ten dates in May, five in June, ten in July, eight in August and 20 in September, the last record was on Sept. 28th, three days earlier than 2005.

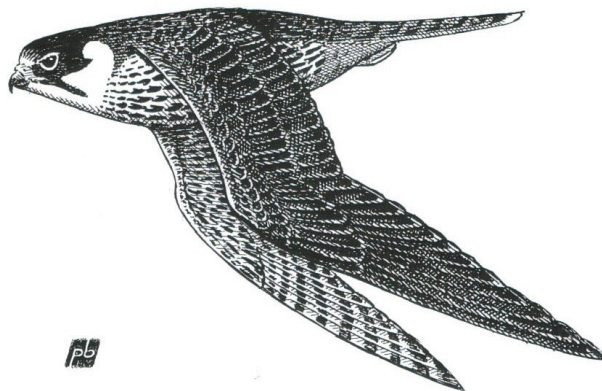
*Departure* The late records are as follows:

*SG* - OPS and Severnside on Sept. 23rd;

*NS* - BG and Clapton Moor on Sept. 24th;

*BA* - BL on Oct. 2nd.

The latest dates for the Avon area, most in October are as follows: 14th (Nailsea 1979), 16th (Aust Cliff 2004), 19th (CI-Y 1998), 21st (Iron Acton 1995), 29th (Backwell 1998), and Nov. 11th (Dundry 2005).





*Peregrine Falcon Inland (excluding CVL & BL)* Single birds unless stated otherwise:

*First half-year*

*Bristol* In January at Wills Memorial Building on 22nd and Knowle on 28th, Southville on Feb. 18th, College Green on March 31st and Bishopston on April 3rd and May 9th. Hotwells on May 3rd, in June at Shirehampton on 10th, Southmead Hospital and Temple Quay on 30th;

*SG* At Pilning on April 13th;

*NS* At Kenn Moor on Jan. 18th and Feb. 26th, BG on Feb. 5th with two on 25th, Winscombe on March 17th, and Yatton on May 6th;

*BA* During June seen at Clutton on 12th and 24th.

*Second half-year*

*Bristol* In July at Southville on 10th and Hotwells on 25th, during September two at College Green on 8th and Southmead on 25th. Castlemead Building on Oct. 2nd, in November at Totterdown on 18th and Hotwells on 27th;

*SG* At Rolls-Royce, Filton on Aug. 21st a very confiding juvenile female flew through an open roller shutter door and into the factory chasing a Feral Pigeon, it subsequently caught and dropped its prey, and then perched on a roof truss. These actions attracted much attention from those on the shop floor. Some five minutes later another Feral Pigeon flew across the work shop, it was pursued out of the factory, captured and taken onto a metal fire escape staircase where it was eaten;

At Pilning on Sept. 16th and Yate Rocks on Oct. 9th;

*NS* Two at Winscombe on Oct. 24th, Lulsgate on Nov. 18th and during December at BGR on 26th and 31st;

*BA* At Burnett on Aug. 28th and Oct. 17th, Queen Charlton on Sept. 5th, and Cameley on Oct. 17th. At Keynsham on Nov. 29th, Dec. 5th, 17th and 24th, Bathwick Hill, Bath on Dec. 2nd.

*Prey species* See article by Ed Drewitt on Pages 122 to 128.

## **WATER RAIL** *Rallus aquaticus*

Uncommon winter visitor, scarce in summer, and very scarce as a breeding species.

A good year with reports from 24 sites (*cf.* 16 in 2005) and a highest count of twelve (from CVL).

*Severnside* In the first winter period recorded as follows with single birds unless stated otherwise: from Chittening Warth (on eight dates up to April 1st, with two on Jan. 1st), Orchard Pools (on four dates up to March 17th), New Passage (on three dates in February), Aust Warth (on four dates in March) and Seabank Pools, Chittening (on March 17th). In second winter period recorded only from Chittening Warth (one on Nov. 1st and two heard on Dec. 17th) and Northwick Warth in December (two on 14th, 18th and 23rd with three on 17th).

*PW/RPD* At PW recorded in January (single birds on four dates with two on 12th), September (one on 1st), October (one on 29th) and December (one on three dates): at RPD one on one date in January, and two on single dates in February, March and October.

*CVL - Breeding* Present at three sites at the southern end of the lake, definite breeding noted at one of these. In addition a moulting juvenile was seen in late September.

*CVL - Autumn/winter* Maximum daily count was twelve on Nov. 15th – probably at least 15 were present around the lake.

*Other sites*

*SG* Recorded in both winter periods from OPS: eight dates in first winter period, with five on Jan. 21st, and six dates in second winter period with three on Nov. 26th. At Leap Valley, Downend single birds were seen on Jan. 7th and March 4th, two were heard on Oct. 29th and one was heard on Nov. 4th while at Emersons Green one was seen on Jan. 1st.

*BA* Two at Widcombe Common on Jan. 5th with single birds in Keynsham Park (Jan. 7th and 14th and March 14th) and Pixash Lane, Keynsham (Feb. 19th and March 23rd). The only record in the second winter period was of one at Chew Magna Res. on Dec. 14th.

NS Recorded as follows (single birds unless stated otherwise):

Backwell Lake - four dates in January (with three on 24th), three on Feb. 12th, two on Feb. 18th and on Nov. 8th;  
 Strawberry Line, Yatton - Jan. 14th and March 10th with two on Nov. 3rd and three on Nov. 29th;  
 Below Wains Hill, Cl-Y - Feb. 19th, Oct. 12th, Nov. 17th and 26th and Dec. 17th;  
 BL - Jan. 21st, Nov. 7th and Dec. 11th.  
 Sand Pt - two on Jan. 31st, March 1st and Nov. 5th (when heard calling from bushes on the slope);  
 Weston STW - Jan. 23rd and 30th, Feb. 4th, Sept. 14th and 19th and Oct. 20th;  
 Also recorded in January from Kenn Moor (21st) and Abbots Leigh (30th).

## COMMON MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Fairly common breeding resident. Seen in large numbers at the reservoirs in late summer/autumn. UK population change 1994-2005 up 20%. Webs status: CVL is currently 13th in national importance for this species.

Numbers are stable, despite the threat from Mink which is in fact diminishing.

The table below gives the monthly maxima at regularly counted sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	6	6	3	3	2	2	3	4	4	9	6	6
RPD		26	17								17	20
Portishead Boating Lake										10	14	
Backwell Lake	10	13	7	11		2	3		12	4	6	9
R Avon, Keynsham	36	38									20	29
CVL	30	55	20	11	1	2	20	65	85	60	90	30
BL	16	10	13	12	1		15	11	82	25	11	12
Weston STW	3	4	5	3	2		9	22	27	13	12	

The highest counts not listed above were 20 on the R. Avon between Totterdown and Netham in January, and 15+ at ASW and nine at Aztec West, both in August, otherwise smaller counts came from 20 other sites.

**Breeding** Recorded from 46 BBS squares (26%, it was 27% at the start of survey in 1995, so the figure has scarcely changed). Pairs with young were reported from eleven sites. The number of nests at CVL was low, possibly due to the expansion of reedbeds reducing the swampy areas.

## COMMON COOT *Fulcia atra*

Fairly common and widespread breeding resident, abundant in the autumn at the main reservoirs.

Webs status: CVL is currently fifth and BL 17th in national importance for this species.

There was a reduction in the size of the autumn moulting flock at BL, with no compensatory increase at CVL, although by historical standards the total numbers are still high. The table below shows the maximum count for each of the last ten years at the sites (the highest counts are often not in the same month at both sites).

Year	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
CVL	2260	2650	1980	3500	2360	3715	3285	3335	2210	2360
BL	950	1126	1129	1012	2846	1740	1990	2080	3151	1400

The table below gives the monthly maxima at regularly counted sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Tortworth		27		34						29		
OPS	5	6	6	5	5	6	8	6	3	1	1	1
ASW	8		2	4			3	4	6	6	2	6
PW		12		7	8				51	65	55	92
Backwell Lake	37	36	22	17	11	19	20	1	21	33	36	36
BG	94	87	43			35	85	124	160	210	130	120
CVL	445	655	545	520	460	825	1635	2360	1860	790	700	275
BL	1069	582	465	311	257	310	969	1184	1400	1094	30	140
Weston STW	71	61	25	31	30	22	97	89	86	67	90	

*Common Coot other records* 16 at Eastville Park in Dec. with small numbers recorded at nine other sites.

*Breeding* A much better year at CVL with 112 nests found and 34 broods (70 young) seen. Recorded from 16 BBS squares with breeding reported at (in alphabetical order): ASW (pair with three young), Backwell Lake (three young), BL (14 broods, 36 young), Eastville Park (sitting on eggs on March 15th), Nailsea Lake, OPS, Prior Park (Bath), PW (four broods) and Weston STW (14 pairs, six broods, 21 young).

Year	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
No. of young	211	292	162	254	119	110	91	n/c	9	70
No. of broods	68	105	63	100	53	50	41	n/c	4	34
No. of nests	94	114	84	100	110	88	116	121	n/c	112

No. of young, broods and nests at CVL for the last ten years

### EURASIAN OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor; scarce breeding species. Scarce inland.

YEAR	Severnside	CI-Y	Sand Bay	Axe Est.	Ave
1987/88 - 1996/97 Av.	22	11	29	89	38
1997/98 - 2004/05 Av.	78	21	9	65	43
2005/06	69	35	3	82	47
2006/07	53	29	42	83	52

August to February average counts

The status table above and the monthly maxima table below show only slight changes over the last two years. In 2006, counts at Severnside were down whilst those at Sand Bay showed a marked improvement, but this may partly be explained by better observer coverage. As has often been so in the past, the largest flocks were seen in autumn at the Axe Estuary. Apart from the breeding records listed below, the only other reports were of single birds at BL on July 28th, at BG on Aug. 14th and in flight over Winscombe in Sept. 8th.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Littleton W.	4	7	11	3	11	8	6	10	2	3	8	12
Severnside	95	90	74	40	2	5	7	25	45	42	70	74
PW	5		3		5		6	8				
Sea Mills, R. Avon	4	3	3	4	3	2	2					
CI-Y	44	28	32	36	20	15	18	26	33	42	28	21
Sand Bay	46	58	23	8	6		4			77	35	60
Axe Est.	128	58	13	86	6	2	20	136	130	106	47	41
Steep Holm				4	4	3	2					
CVL	1	1		1	1		2	6				

*Breeding* Nesting behaviour was noted at three sites as follows:

Avonmouth, May - one pair had a nest with three eggs and a second was displaying, outcomes of both are unknown;

Yeo Estuary (CI-Y), June and July - at least two pairs displayed and later distraction activity was noted, no eggs or young were seen;

Weston STW, June - a pair had a nest with three eggs, later two young were noted.

### PIED AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Scarce winter visitor/ passage migrant. Rare inland.

Four records of single birds as follows: at OPS on March 13th; at CVL on June 14th; at BL on Nov. 6th (perhaps surprisingly this was the first record for the site); and at Severnside on Dec. 2nd that had been ringed as a juvenile at Loire-Atlantic, France. This is the worst showing since 2000 for the Avon area, since then there were eleven bird-days in 2001, twelve in 2002, nine in 2003, six in 2004 and 14 in 2005.

**STONE-CURLEW** *Burhinus oedichnemus*

Rare passage migrant, breeds in small numbers in Wiltshire.

One record: one was flushed from tall grass at Northwick Warth on the evening of April 20th, it was seen later in flight (RF, PDB *et al.*). This is the eighth record for the Avon area (and the only one to have been seen by more than one observer), the two most recent were for Yeo Estuary (CI-Y) in April 1991 and New Passage (Sevenside) in July 1999.

**LITTLE PLOVER** *Charadrius dubius*

Uncommon passage migrant, generally more numerous in autumn. Scarce as a breeding species. Average first date April 6th, last date Sept.13th.

Noted at five sites, with breeding attempts at two – a fairly poor showing by recent standards. Present from March 25th to Sept. 5th, the maximum count was six. All records are given below.

Sevenside - noted on several dates from April 2nd to May 2nd with two on 6th, a pair on 14th and four on 21st, then one on July 16th and Aug. 16th with two on 24th and 26th (unusually seen on the shingle at Severn Beach);

PW - up to three were present from April 8th to 15th and a nest with three eggs was seen on 14th. Disturbance then caused the birds to desert, but six were noted on 18th. Thereafter two were present up to May 19th at least, copulation was noted and by 14th one bird was sitting on a nest with four eggs, final outcome unknown;

BG - the repair work on one of the tanks provided ideal breeding habitat for this species (and Lapwing). Five were reported on several dates from April 5th to May 3rd with seven on April 21st and six on May 1st, mating was noted in late April. During May and June two pairs bred. In July two juveniles were seen and it was thought that each pair had successfully reared one of them. They were last seen on 23rd, the emergent vegetation making it difficult to be sure. Three juveniles were noted on Aug. 27th, and Sept. 1st and 2nd, they were probably migrants and not locally bred;

CVL - one on April 5th, two on 29th, one on May 6th, and another on Aug. 26th. As with several other wader species a very poor year for this site;

BL - one on July 15th and 26th, three on Aug. 12th and 18th, and one on Sept. 5th.

**RINGED PLOVER** *Charadrius hiaticula*

Uncommon winter visitor, and fairly common passage migrant (most numerous in autumn). Small numbers occur inland on passage. Very scarce breeder. Webs status: in 2004/05 the Estuary was seventh in international importance for passage.

YEAR	OPS	Sevenside	CI-Y	Ave
1987/88 – 1996/97 Av.	270:28	352:16	163:21	262:22
1997/98 – 2004/05 Av.	77:14	266:14	102:15	148:14
2005/06	94:5	275:23	75:11	148:13
2006/07	37:2	375:26	103:13	172:14

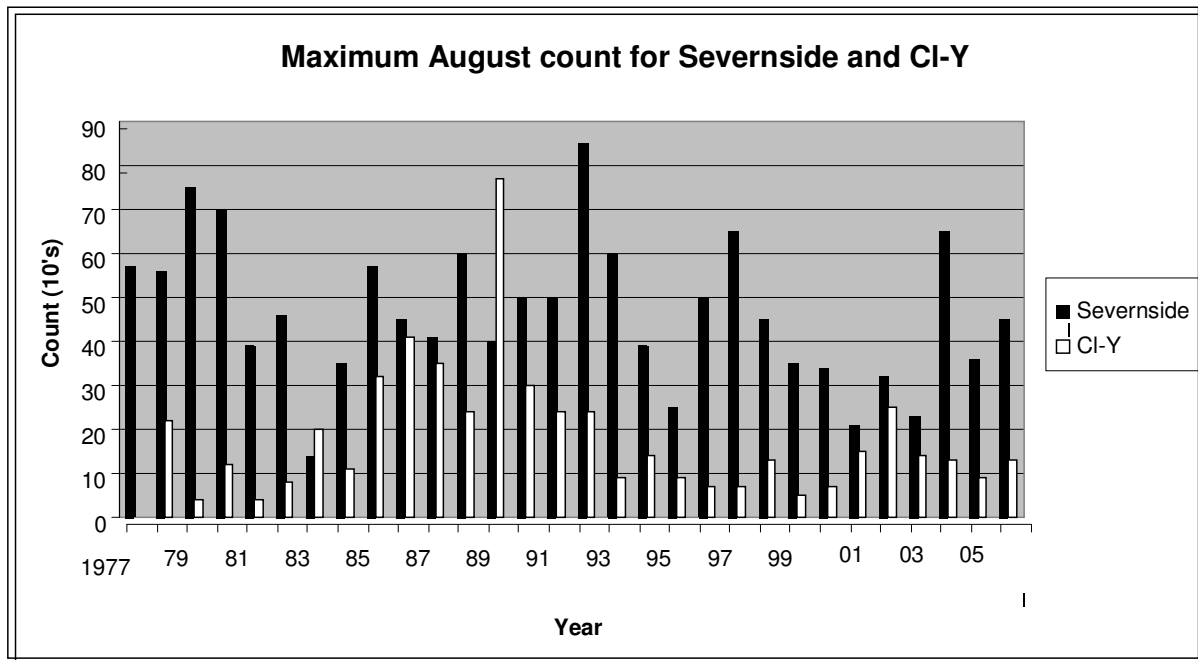
Autumn (Aug. & Sept.): Winter (Oct. to Feb.) average counts

Counts have been fairly constant over the past few years, see bar chart below. Those at OPS continue to be on the low side although the count of 22 on June 4th was high and probably referred to migrant high-arctic breeders. The 2006 autumn maximum (of 37) here was not the worst – the maximum in 2004 was only 23. With two exceptions all counts in 2006 were of 300 or less, 450 were recorded on Sevenside on both Aug. 19th and 22nd. The table below gives the monthly maxima at the main sites. Apart from the breeding records listed below, the only other report was of one on the R. Avon at Sea Mills on April 22nd.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	4		1	6	7	22	3	35	39	6		
Sevenside	17	22	19	30	70	4	10	450	300	45	22	24
PW	17	12			40		6	10	35	26	42	
CI-Y	10	10	7	14	38	10		130	75	15	14	10
Sand Bay				17	30			65	25			
Axe Est./Weston STW	28	15		6			15	19	34	30	20	20
BG				1	4			1	1			
CVL				3				1				
BL								15	5	1		

*Ringed Plover breeding* Unlike in the past two years no full survey was undertaken, but in May at least one pair was displaying and had a nest in Avonmouth docks.

The bar chart below gives an indication of how the autumn passage has varied over the past 30 years.



### **KENTISH PLOVER** *Charadrius alexandrinus*

Rare spring/autumn vagrant.

One record: a juvenile was at Severn Beach in the evening roost with Ringed Plover and Dunlin on Sept. 22nd (BL, JPM *et al.*). This is the 14th record for the Avon area and the fifth for the site, the previous records here were for May 1947 and 1949, August 1978 and May 2004.





Fairly common winter visitor and scarce passage migrant (usually more numerous in autumn).

Total of the maximum monthly counts for all main sites

Sightings not tabulated below included 25 at West Littleton Down on Jan. 26th, 16 at Wrington on March 5th, 24 at Stowey on April 6th, and 20 at Corston on Oct. 12th.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Littleton Warth	1		2	6			1		2
Sevenside	4	1	1			2	1	17	2
Cl-Y	2					2	1	1	2
Axe Est./Weston STW		25					10	80	3
Marshfield area	86			21				205	
Marksbury Plain	100								
Upper Langridge	315							190	240
Lansdown								170	92
Lulsgate area	7						71		
Burnett	300								
BL							200	220	

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Scarce inland on passage.

September to March average counts

Both the status table above and the monthly maximum table below show mainly poor counts in 2006 with especially poor passage numbers. The count of 48 at CI-Y was on March 2nd, and it is likely that most of those seen at Sand Bay were displaced from CI-Y as they were one-day sightings. Single birds were also seen at Weston STW on April 29th (second site record) and nearby at the Axe Estuary in December (date not given).

[illegible]

## NORTHERN LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Fairly common and widespread winter visitor and passage migrant; can become common in some winters. Uncommon breeding resident/summer visitor.

Webs status: in the list of national sites holding 5000 or more the Estuary is currently sixth.

Year	Sevenside	CI-Y	CVL	Av.
1987/88 – 1996/97 Av.	278	250	566	365
1997/98 – 2004/05 Av.	297	257	204	253
2005/06	459	368	343	390
2006/07	251	280	260	264

August to February average counts

By recent standards counts were mostly normal in 2006 as is shown by the status table above and the monthly maxima table below. The January total of about 7400 was slightly down on the figure for 2005 (8800) but up by about 1000 on the ten-year average, but the December total of about 3200 was only half of the figure for 2005 or the ten-year average – the weather was quite mild at the end of 2006. The largest flocks were seen at OPS early in the year, but the numbers involved were well down on the all-time record. The only count over 100 not included in the table was 1400 on Puxton Moor in January.

At the Peregrine site at St. John's Church, Bath, prey remains were noted as follows: two in July, one in August and five in October, also one was noted at the Peregrine site in central Bristol in December.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	1800	1700	70	1	2	11	4	2	11	300	540	1000
Sevenside	500	1620	200	3	3	3	7	4		100	200	530
ASW	350	240	250	7							80	
Sea Mills	330	370	175	11	6	34	50	70	67	88	135	115
PW	375	175		2			1				115	95
CI-Y	500	280	55	8	8	24	19	1	33	110	125	550
Axe Est./Weston STW	270	650	2	2	2		4	23	52	150	55	550
Keynsham	6	15									8	95
Bath Oxbow Reserve	45											40
Kenn Moor		60	2	2			60	24	32			
BG			60	2	6						17	20
CVL	1150	20	4	2	1	27	155	140	210	225	400	110
BL	850	360	5			3	15	50	82	180	370	315

**Breeding** Only 25 pairs showed any sign of nesting activity at twelve sites (there were 15 sites in 2005), and only six chicks (16 in 2005) were seen. This is the worst set of reports on record, see table below, but may partly be explained by less observer effort. Reports from the more northern part of our area came from only two observers.

1987-96 Av.	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
42-44	61-3	27	41-2	61	nc	42	52	38	44-7	25

Number of pairs of Lapwing displaying and/or nesting

All breeding records are listed below. As in previous Reports 'pair' implies that some breeding activity was noted, 'nest' implies that an adult was sitting on a nest, 'eggs' implies that the nest contents were counted, and 'juv' implies that at least one live chick was seen.

Avonmouth - one pair;

BG - seven chicks were seen on July 16th, due to emergent vegetation it was unclear how many pairs were involved;

Yeo Estuary, CI-Y - four pairs much harassed by Crows, one juv seen in June;

Farnborough - one pair;

Kenn Moor - one pair harassed by both Buzzards and Crows;

Maes Knoll - one pair;

Middledown Road, W. Littleton - two pairs but no aggression by Crows;

Norton Hawkfield - three pairs, two nests each had four eggs, and the third two eggs and two juvs;  
 PW - two pairs, first had four eggs and the second had three juvs;  
 Sutton Hill, Bishop Sutton - one pair;  
 Wallsend Lane, W. Littleton - two pairs, one nest had four eggs and the second had at least one juv;  
 Weston Moor - five pairs, later three pairs had nests with four, four and three eggs;  
 Weston STW - one pair;  
 Wrington - pair present up to May 3rd only.

### RED KNOT *Calidris canutus*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant, mostly in autumn. Scarce inland. Both races, *Islandica* (nearctic) and *Canutus* (Siberian), probably occur but there is no direct evidence.

1987-96 Av.	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
559	489	323	799	1055	(94)	542	386	411	1520	172

Total of the maximum monthly counts for the coastal sites

In 2005 good numbers (with flocks up to 500) were recorded on Severnside giving the high status count indicated above. This was not repeated in 2006, between 32 and 36 were present at this site from Sept. 7th to 22nd, otherwise all counts were of 22 or less.

The spring passage was particularly poor, and the count of 20 at CI-Y in May referred to a flock passing NE on 14th. Monthly maxima at all sites are tabulated below. It is perhaps surprising that this species, and some others (Bar-tailed Godwit for instance), occurs in very small numbers in the Avon area compared with those seen at many other estuary sites around the country.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS		1			1				1			1
Severnside	1	3		4				22	36	1		2
PW									2			
CI-Y	1	1	4		20	1	2	3	4	1	4	4
Sand Bay		2						4	20			
Axe Est.	2	7		1					19			1

### SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

Uncommon passage migrant, more often in spring than in autumn; very scarce winter visitor. Scarce inland.

The counts for 2006 were similar to those for 2004 and 2005, it was present from April 23rd to June 10th and also from July 26th to Oct. 7th, dates which are also similar to those for the previous two years. Up to three were seen on the Axe Estuary in December which is unusual. Noted at seven sites (six in 2005) and as normal most were seen on Severnside, the details are as follows.

OPS - nine on Aug 6th, one on several dates in September, and two on Oct. 7th;

Severnside - one on April 23rd, present on most days between May 10th and June 10th with six on the first of these dates, twelve on 14th, up to four until 28th, five on June 9th and two the following day; one on July 28th, up to eight throughout August, twelve on Sept. 4th, three on 6th, two on 8th and one on 11th;

PW - two on May 13th, four on 28th and one on July 26th;

CI-Y - one on April 30th and two on Aug. 28th – a poor showing for this site;

Sand Bay - two on Aug. 13th and 21st;

Axe Estuary - three on Dec. 23rd and two on 24th, note that this species is a regular winter visitor to Berrow, Somerset, which is only a few kilometres down the coast;

BG - single birds on May 9th and 26th, and on Aug. 1st;

CVL - single birds on May 4th and 17th, and on July 28th.

**LITTLE STINT** *Calidris minuta*

Passage migrant; very scarce in spring, scarce/uncommon in autumn, although may be quite numerous in some years. Rare in winter.

As in the past few years only small numbers were seen with just one sighting in August, most in September, but there were a few records for late autumn and one in December. It was noted at seven sites and the maximum count was four. All autumn birds specifically aged were juveniles except for one, an adult, at BL on Aug. 10th, the details are as follows.

OPS - single birds on Sept. 13th and 27th;

Severnside - one present from Sept. 4th to Oct. 21st with three on Sept. 17th, four on 22nd and two up to 25th. One on Dec. 30th was seen again in 2007;

PW - one on Sept. 2nd;

CI-Y - one present from Sept. 7th to Oct. 9th with four on Sept. 22nd and two on 27th and Oct. 5th;

BG - two on Sept. 16th and one on 17th;

CVL - one on Sept. 23rd;

BL - single birds on the following dates: Aug. 10th (an adult), 11th, Sept. 25th, Oct. 2nd, 10th to 23rd, and Nov. 5th, and 12th to 18th.

**PECTORAL SANDPIPER** *Calidris melanotos*

Very scarce vagrant, mostly nearctic but north-eastern palearctic cannot be ruled out.

At least 130 were reported on the country as a whole during the autumn of 2006 with a further 40+ in Ireland, of these four juveniles were recorded in the Avon area as follows.

Severnside - one from Sept. 23rd to 26th (RF, ADS *et al.*) with a second bird on 25th (JPM *et al.*);

CI-Y - one on Sept. 14th (RHu);

BL - one from Oct. 1st to 11th (many observers).

These are the 38th to 40th (48 birds in all) records for the Avon area since the first was seen in 1935 at BG, at least one has been reported in each year since 2001. Note that this species has recently bred in the UK for the first time.

**CURLEW SANDPIPER** *Calidris ferruginea*

Passage migrant; scarce in spring, scarce/uncommon in autumn. As with Little Stint, some autumns can be lean whilst others can record sizeable flocks. Very rare in winter. Webs status: in 2004/05 the Estuary was the second most important site.

The 2006 counts were similar to those for the past five years except that two were seen in late spring. The autumn records were from Aug. 23rd to Oct. 21st and the highest count was eight – a normal figure. The details are as follows.

OPS - two on Sept. 21st;

Severnside - one in summer plumage on June 10th and 11th, then juveniles on Sept. 5th (one), 16th and 17th (seven), 21st and 22nd (eight), 30th (four), Oct. 1st (six), 8th (three), dropping to one on 21st;

PW - one on Sept. 14th;

CI-Y - one in partial summer plumage on May 14th, then three juveniles on Sept. 22nd and four on 25th;

Sand Bay - an adult on Aug. 23rd.

**PURPLE SANDPIPER** *Calidris maritima*

Scarce winter visitor; has declined during the past decade and a half, but is now showing some signs of recovery. Very rare inland.

Counts were similar to those for the past few years, reports away from the two main current sites probably refer to displaced individuals. The details are as follows.

Severnside - one on Dec. 7th and 8th;

Battery Point, Portishead - three present up to early April with two on 16th and one on 29th, two on Nov. 16th. None was reported in December although up to four were seen in January 2007;

Birnbeck Island, Weston-s-Mare - seven in January and February, six in March and two on April 29th, six on Nov. 29th and seven on Dec. 8th;

Axe Estuary - one on Dec. 16th.

**DUNLIN** *Calidris alpina*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; uncommon in mid-summer. Small numbers occur inland on passage. Three races probably occur: *C. a. alpina* - mainly as a winter visitor, *C. a. schinzii* - mainly seen on passage, and *C. a. arctica* - probably a rare or very rare spring passage migrant almost certainly overlooked, no published records.

Webs status: the Estuary is currently recognised as the fifth most important site of International Importance in the UK.

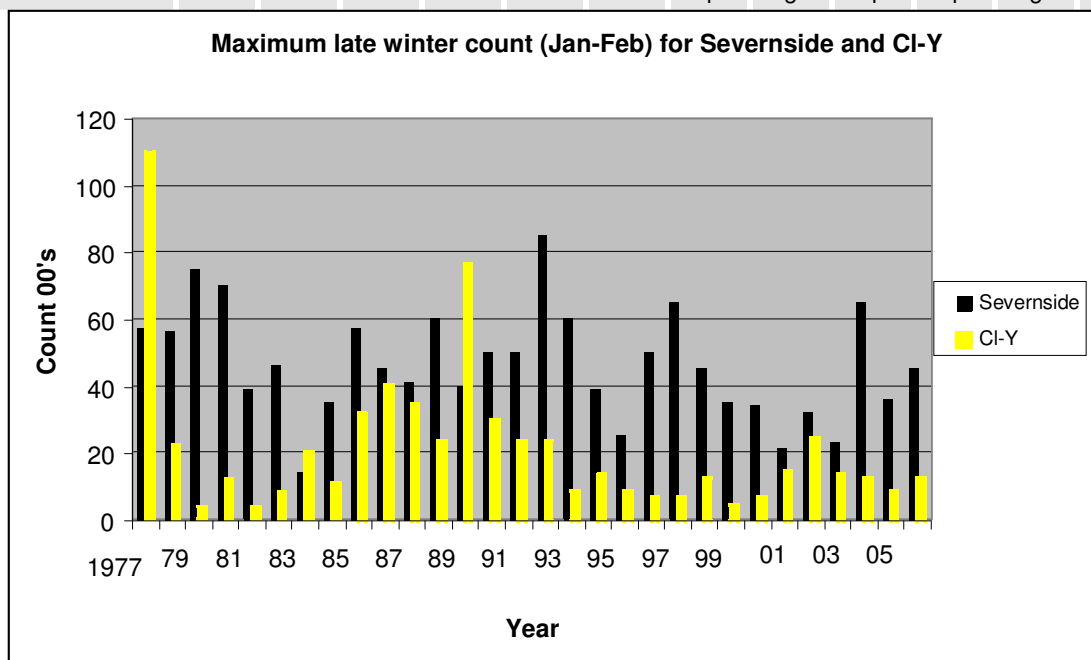
YEAR	OPS	Sevenside	CI-Y	Ave
1987/88 – 1996/97 Av.	369:976	490:2611	251:2366	370:1984
1997/98 - 2004/05 Av.	104:719	506:2531	191:1413	269:1554
2005/06	135:320	365:2560	290:551	263:983
2006/07	42:456	475:3260	132:976	216:1564

Autumn (Aug. & Sept.): winter (Oct. to Feb.) average counts

The status table above shows a weak autumn passage but a slight improvement in the counts for the 2006/07 winter period, see the bar chart below. Autumn passage was particularly poor at OPS and, although the CI-Y winter counts were better, they are still well down on those of a decade ago. The Sevenside winter figures are keeping up well, the count of 5100 (on March 2nd) was the best for some years. The second table below gives the monthly maxima at the main sites, note that the Sand Bay counts were a considerable improvement on those of the last three years, and the remarkable count of 800 at PW on May 13th. There were 1100 near Avonmouth Docks on Dec.18th, these were probably displaced from Sevenside or PW.

Five prey remains were found at the Peregrine site at St. John's Church, Bath in December.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	1200	1600	100	1	24	5	6	52	32	130	300	850
Littleton Warth	12	1	170							95	80	800
Sevenside	1000	2000	5100	38	120	4	25	450	500	300	4500	3500
R. Avon, Sea Mills	53	55	13								20	30
PW	245	90	120		800		75		120		550	400
CI-Y	700	850	1100	105	110	12	55	85	180	180	1400	950
Sand Bay	105	610	25	9	470				115		400	200
Axe Est.	900	1060	105	14	24		8	120	20	26	165	450
BG					1			4	3			
CVL	1			1	3		1	2	7		1	
BL							1	3	4	1	3	



**RUFF** *Philomachus pugnax*

Uncommon autumn passage migrant; scarce in winter and on spring passage.

2006 was another poor year for this species. A male was noted on Severnside on Jan.14th with another (or the same?) on March 14th. Otherwise all sightings were from Aug.12th to Oct. 23rd, and involved no more than three individuals. The autumn details are as follows.

OPS - one on Oct. 22nd and 23rd;

Severnside - two on Sept. 9th increased to three on 22nd to 25th, then two (male and female) again on 30th remaining until Oct. 2nd;

PW - one on Sept. 19th;

CI-Y - single birds on Aug. 12th and Sept 22nd;

Weston STW - one on Sept. 19th, 20th and 23rd;

CVL - a juvenile on Sept. 16th, as with some other wader species, a very poor showing at this site;

BL - one on Oct. 21st.

**JACK SNIFE** *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant; probably overlooked.

Webs status: in the 2004/05 winter the Estuary was the twelfth most important site in the UK for this species.

The table below summarises the counts at the main sites, it shows an average first-winter, and an unusually poor second-winter period. Present up to April 6th and from the late date of Oct.21st onwards, except that one was seen on Burlledge Hill, Bishop Sutton on the early date of Aug. 30th (DW); one was seen on Severnside of Aug. 25th and 26th in 2005.. There were also records from three sites in January not included in the table: two on Widcombe Common on 5th, and one on 13th and 27th, one at Compton Dando on 31st, and two at Congresbury Moor also on 31st. Also one was noted at CVL on April 6th.

One prey item of this species was found at the Peregrine site at St John's Church, Bath in November.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	:	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS			1				1
Severnside	1	2	2		1	1	1
PW	2	1	2				
CI-Y	2	2	6			1	2
Weston STW	7	6	1				
Clapton/Weston Moor	6	3					
Keynsham		2					

**COMMON SNIFE** *Gallinago gallinago*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; has undergone a decline in the last decade. Rare Breeder.

Webs status: the Estuary is currently the third most important coastal site in the UK for this species.

YEAR	OPS	Severnside	CI-Y	Av.
1987/88 – 1996/97 Av.	>8	11	14	-
1997/98 – 2004/05 Av.	53	19	15	29
2005/06	29	9	12	13
2006/07	30	13	13	19

November to February average counts

The status table above and the monthly maxima table below show little change over the past few years, the best counts again coming from the moors in the Gordano Valley. Also there was some breeding evidence, see below. Present up to May 1st (and breeders later) and from July 14th onwards, as with the previous species counts in the second winter period were on the low side. Reported from eight further sites, the most notable were: four on Widcombe Moor on Jan.13th, seven near Yatton on March 12th, and one on Steep Holm on Aug. 13th (only the third record here in ten years).

In March prey remains of six were found at the Peregrine site at St. John's Church, Bath with five at the same site in April.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	:	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Littleton W.	56	34	12	1			1		1	9	2	47
Sevenside	2	14	27	2	1			1	8	10	15	18
ASW		7	7					1			10	1
PW	21		10							9		39
CI-Y	16	10	27	1					3	4	12	6
Axe Est./Weston STW	12	13	4	3	1			3	8	21	5	11
Leap Valley, Downend	1	1	1	1							1	1
Keynsham	3	10	2								1	2
Batheaston Reserve	8		6				1		1	5	1	4
Clapton/Weston Moors	81	116		3	1					22	53	
Congresbury Moor	21	25										
CVL	4	4	1	2				1	25	5	21	
BL	26	17	23	18			1	1	12			8

**Breeding** Some activity was noted at two sites as follows.

Weston Moor - at least one bird was present for the first fortnight in May, 'drumming' was last heard at this site in 2000;

Weston STW - 'drumming' was noted at this site on May 3rd, this is the first time that any breeding activity has been noted at this site.

### **EURASIAN WOODCOCK** *Scolopax rusticola*

Uncommon winter visitor, but almost certainly overlooked. Has bred in the past.

There were 17 sightings (25 bird-days) in 2006, this compares with 18 in 2005 and an average of 24 for the previous four years. Noted up to April 15th (but with only one February record), and from Nov. 5th onwards; in 2005 the last and first dates were March 9th and Oct. 30th, respectively. The records are as follows with single birds unless stated otherwise.

**First winter period** January: Lower Woods on 3rd (three), Sevenside on 10th and 12th (two), Wrington on 24th, CVL on 28th and Chew Magna Res. on 29th; February: Stockwood Open Space on 7th; March: Sevenside on 16th, Hellenge Hill on 17th (four), Bourton Combe on 20th and Abbots Leigh on 21st; and at Burnett on April 15th.

**Second winter period** November: CVL on 5th, Westbury-o-Trym, Bristol on 9th (in flight), a Nailsea garden on 11th (last seen at this site in 1986), Lower Woods on 21st (three); and December: Kingston Seymour fishing lakes on 12th and Lower Woods again on 13th.

At St. John's Church, Bath, prey remains were recorded as follows: four in April, one in October, 14 in November and eleven in December. These figures are remarkable and suggest that a large number of individuals are passing through our area unrecorded.

### **BLACK-TAILED GODWIT** *Limosa limosa*

Two races occur. *Islandica* - Uncommon passage migrant; generally more numerous in autumn. Scarce in winter. *Limosa* - Rare visitor, definite records in June and July only.

1987-96 Av.	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
104	527	1197	518	249	(131)	302	1037	682	554	298

Total of the maximum monthly counts for the coastal sites

Four individuals of the race *limosa* were noted at CVL on June 22nd (KEV), the last time this race was recorded in the Avon area was in 1990 when four were seen also at CVL on July 14th. Otherwise all records refer to the race *islandica*.

The status table above and the monthly maxima table below show below average counts compared with the last three years especially at Sevenside and the Axe Estuary; in 2004 the highest count at the second of these sites was 165. The largest count in 2006, 48 at CI-Y on Nov. 23rd, was of a flock that took off from Woodspring Bay and headed inland. The only non-tabulated sighting was of two at Bleadon Level on May 11th. One in the Sevenside flock in November had been ringed at a site in Iceland in July. 2006.

*Black-tailed Godwit – monthly maxima*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Littleton Warth	15	10	1				1			6	1	
Sevenside	15	2	2	20	2		13	1	9	9	30	13
PW									3			
CI-Y			2				14		1	1	48	
Axe Est./Weston STW		2	3	28	20			4	4	3	3	1
CVL	1			9		4	13	12				
BL											1	

**BAR-TAILED GODWIT** *Limosa lapponica*

Passage migrant in varying numbers - usually uncommon, but can occur in good numbers on spring passage, often coinciding with easterly winds. Scarce in winter and inland.

1987-96 Av.	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
319	172	72	222	711	(116)	191	121	382	75	112

Total of the maximum monthly counts for the coastal sites

The run of poor years for this species in Avon continued in 2006 as is shown by the status table above and the monthly maxima table below, see comment under Red Knot. Noted on spring passage from March 23rd to May 15th. The highest count was of a flock of 80 at CVL on May 2nd, the birds were seen in flight over the lake in bad weather, they left to NW – this is the largest number ever recorded at the lake. Records for all sites are tabulated below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	:	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Littleton Warth	1			9	6					1	1	
Sevenside			3	36	20			1	9	1	1	1
PW					1							
CI-Y				4	4		1			1	2	1
Sand Bay/Axe Est.	1	3						1	1		1	
CVL					80							

**WHIMBREL** *Numenius phaeopus*

Passage migrant, uncommon in autumn, but fairly common in spring. Scarce summer visitor and very rare in winter. Uncommon inland on passage. Average first date April 10th, last date Oct. 8th.

Webs status: the Estuary is currently the fifth most important site in the UK for this species, in 2002 it was first.

YEAR	OPS	Sevenside	CI-Y	Av.
1987 -1996 Av.	15	27	102	48
1997 -2004 Av.	26	44	78	49
2005	55	55	99	70
2006	23	57	38	39

April and May average counts

The status table above shows a poor spring passage for 2006, that at CI-Y being the worst for at least 25 years; during this period the highest count was 180 in 1987. Autumn counts were normal, that is much lower than those for spring.

The main spring passage was from April 14th to May 23rd, and the autumn passage was from July 20th to Oct. 8th, and the highest count was 78 at Sevenside on April 15th.



	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
OPS/Littleton Warth	32	14			1		
Severnside	78	36		3	3	2	
PW	17	7		1	1	1	
CI-Y	48	28	3	11	5	1	1
Sand Bay	2	2			2	1	
Axe Est.	6	6	1	1	5		
CVL	2	2		1			
BL				1	5		

### EURASIAN CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant, uncommon in summer. A very rare breeder. Uncommon inland.  
 Webs status: in the list of sites of National Importance in the UK the Estuary is currently sixth for this species.

YEAR	OPS	S-side	CI-Y	Axe E.	Av.
1987/88 -1996/97 Av.	677	152	146	--	--
1997/98 -2004/05 Av.	310	181	165	62	180
2005/06	194	153	139	123	152
2006/07	188	173	129	36	131

August to February average counts

The status table above and the monthly maxima table below show slightly lower counts than normal with a particularly low figure for the Axe Estuary. One observer noted that although the monthly maxima were near normal, on many visits counts were well below these figures. Reports not tabulated were: one in flight over Clutton on June 18th and three on Steep Holm on July 27th. As usual there were no breeding reports.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	12	36	35	100	25	45	570	300	350	20	370	75
Littleton Warth	13	205	250				7	68	7	115	9	140
Severnside	120	160	150	40	10	90	180	180	240	130	170	190
Sea Mills	3	1	2	1			1	1	1	1	3	2
PW		58	40	18	3		45		82	38		
CI-Y	140	140	100	30	5	40	130	160	145	90	130	120
Sand Bay	70	63	92	13	20	8	55	35	100	35	4	40
Axe Est.	130	57	12	3		3	15	30	43	21	45	30
CVL		1	1	2	1		1		1			
BL								3	1			

### SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

Scarce autumn passage migrant and winter visitor, very scarce in spring.

Webs status: in the 2004/05 winter the Estuary was the second most important site in the UK for this species.

As has become normal in recent years most records are of long-staying wintering individuals with at least three in 2006. Otherwise a few were noted on autumn passage. The details are as follows.

OPS - single birds on Jan. 17th and in October and November (dates not given);

Severnside - a juvenile/first-winter on Oct. 13th;

PW - one on several dates from Feb. 21st to April 19th, then on Oct. 20th and Dec. 8th;

CI-Y - the usual wintering individual was present up to April 17th (when noted in nearly full breeding plumage) and from Nov. 12th into 2007 (its eleventh winter). Also an adult on Aug. 10th with two juveniles on 13th;

Axe Estuary/Weston STW - single birds on Jan. 2nd, Feb. 14th, March 21st and on various dates in April up to 19th, on Aug. 17th and 29th, Sept. 7th, Oct. 9th, and Dec. 16th;

CVL - a juvenile on Aug. 20th and 22nd;

BL - a juvenile on Aug. 18th.

**COMMON REDSHANK** *Tringa totanus*

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor; uncommon in summer, very scarce breeder. Uncommon inland.

Webs status: the Estuary is 13th in the list of sites of International Importance in the UK for this species.

YEAR	OPS	Sea Mills	CI-Y	Axe E.	Av.
1987/88 - 1996/97 Av.	72	105	123	--	--
1997/98 - 2004/05 Av.	36	93	105	237	118
2005/06	34	91	117	189	108
2006/07	35	91	168	270	141

August to February average counts

The status (see table above) of this species has been remarkably constant over many years, but in 2006 there was a notable increase.

At CI-Y this rise was at least partly due to the improved feeding conditions on the Yeo especially at Blake's Pool with its broken outer wall. Breeding is still a matter for concern, see below.

The main table gives the monthly maxima at all sites, the highest count was 465 at the Axe Estuary on Oct. 8th (360 was the highest count in 2005 and that was the best for many years).

The count of 280 at Severnside on March 16th was also high for this site, as was the count of 230 at Sea Mills on April 14th.



	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	25	40	42	10			3			73	57	43
Littleton Warth	52	60	55						15	100	6	25
Severnside	105	240	280	30	3	2	13	29	68	93	120	155
Sea Mills, R. Avon	80	50	90	230	1	8	36	110	145	115	85	60
PW	40	8	7	40	7		90	42	35	85	100	85
CI-Y	140	95	170	90	6	28	15	145	160	190	190	140
Sand Bay	160	40	25					1	1			10
Axe Est.	235	195	73	210	21	15	25	305	350	465	170	215
BG							1	1	1			
CVL			1			1	1		10	1		
BL				1						1		

**Breeding** Some activity noted at two sites as follows:

PW - one pair was displaying from April 8th onwards but no eggs or young were seen;

Yeo Estuary, CI-Y - in May and June two or three pairs were present, display and, later, distraction activity was noted, but as above no eggs or young were seen.

**COMMON GREENSHANK** *Tringa nebularia*

Uncommon passage migrant; more numerous in autumn than in spring. Scarce in winter.

	1987-96 Av.	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
CI-Y	6	72	9	10	7	9	10	8	5	3	4
CVL	12	2	9	1	1	5	4	23	4	5	1

Maximum single counts at CI-Y and CVL

For the third year running counts were below the long-term average and no count exceeded five. There was a small spring passage from April 22nd to May 14th, and the autumn passage lasted from July 9th to Nov. 5th. It is notable that individuals were reported at five sites in the first week of November.

The regular Sea Mills bird was present up to April 22nd, and probably from Aug.12th; this date was unclear as up to five (on Aug. 13th) were present at this site from this date until Sept.18th - the 2006/07 winter was its seventeenth (assuming that it has been the same individual throughout).

The table below gives the monthly maxima at the main sites, otherwise three were noted in Sand Bay on Aug. 30th and one was seen in flight over Winscombe on Oct. 16th.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	:	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Littleton W.							1	1	1	4		
Sevenside				1				2				
Sea Mills	1	1	1	1				5	3	1	1	1
PW									1			
CI-Y				1	1			4	3	2	1	
Axe Est./Weston STW				2	1		3	4	4	1	1	
BG							1	2	2			
CVL							1	2	1			
BL								2	3	1	1	

**LESSER YELLOWLEGS** *Tringa flavipes*

Very rare vagrant.

One record: a juvenile/first-winter was on the Axe Estuary from Oct. 7th to 11th [BBRC] (PAB *et al.*). It spent much of its time on the Somerset side but was seen on several occasions on the Avon side. This is the third record for the Avon area; the previous two were for CVL in September 1967 and ASW in October 1984.

**GREEN SANDPIPER** *Tringa ochropus*

Uncommon passage migrant; more numerous in autumn. Scarce winter visitor.

1987-96 Av.	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
94	99	70	50	74	100	110	124	70	76	76

Total of the maximum monthly counts for coastal and reservoir sites

The status table above and the monthly maxima table for all sites below show fairly average counts for 2006 compared with the previous two years. In 2006 no count was over six (ten in 2005), and birds were present up to April 20th and from June 8th onwards, this latter date was for one at CI-Y and is early for an autumn migrant.

The next sighting was of two at ASW on 25th. Compared with the previous year, in 2006 almost all records came from the 'main' sites listed in the table below. One was noted on Clapton Moor on Jan. 29th, and the record for December (on 8th) at Sevenside in the table overleaf was for Crook's Marsh, Hallen.

*Green Sandpiper cont.*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS							1		1	2		
Severnside		1		1			4	2	3	1		1
ASW	1					2	5	2	3	2		
PW		1		1			1		1			
CI-Y		1	2			1	1	2	1	1	1	
Axe Est.		3					2	4	1			
BG			1					1	1			
Compton Dando			1					1				
Chew Magna Res.	1	1									3	3
CVL	2	1	1	1			1	3	6	4	2	1
BL									3	2		

**WOOD SANDPIPER** *Tringa glareola*

Passage migrant, very scarce in spring and scarce in autumn, most frequent at CVL.

One record: a juvenile was seen on the Axe Estuary on Oct. 8th – the worst year since 2002. This very poor showing may partly be explained by the high water levels at some of the main reservoirs during the autumn.

1987/96 Av	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
5	7	7	8	8	3/4	1	7	7/8	8	1
Total numbers recorded										

**COMMON SANDPIPER** *Actitis hypoleucos*

Uncommon passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.

	1987-96 Av.	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Spring	68	24	70	57	66	(38)	65	65	56	57	29
Autumn	167	283	149	249	175	138	160	166	178	136	139
Total of the maximum monthly counts at the coastal and reservoir sites for spring and autumn passage											

The status table above and the monthly maxima table below indicate relatively poor showings in 2006 for spring and autumn passage, both below 50% compared with the best of the recent years. On the other hand, and perhaps because of the mild conditions, the numbers wintering were well up, the counts for the two sites on the R. Avon were considered to be minimum estimates as the birds move freely along the river between the Cumberland Basin and Shirehampton, and probably also occur at BG.

The main spring passage was from April 8th to May 15th, and the main autumn passage was from June 25th to Oct. 3rd. It is unclear whether a sighting at CI-Y on June 8th referred to a late spring, or early autumn, migrant, but note that a Green Sandpiper was also seen at this site on the same day. The highest Avon area count was 16 also at this site on July 23rd. Apart from those tabulated below single birds were seen at Eastville Park, Bristol on April 9th and 30th, at Backwell Lake on 27th, in flight over Emerson's Green on May 15th (seen over the Willy Wicket public house, this rather strange name is an old northern one for the Common Sandpiper!), and on Steep Holm on July 27th.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS				1	2		2	1	1			
Severnside				2	1	3	10	9	2	1		
ASW				1			3	1				
Sea Mills & New Cut, R. Avon		5	5	5	5	1	6	2	4	4	5	5
PW				1	1		5	4				
CI-Y				3	1	1	16	8	3			
Axe Est./Weston STW		1	1	3			2	4	7	1	1	
BG		1	1	1	2	4	10	10	6	1	2	3
CVL				5	2		11	4	2	1	1	
BL					1		2	5	2			

**RUDDY TURNSTONE** *Arenaria interpres*

Fairly common winter visitor/passage migrant. Scarce mid-summer and inland

YEAR	OPS	Severnside	CI-Y	Av.
1987/88 -1996/97 Av.	59	168	29	85
1997/98 -2004/05 Av.	53	137	28	73
2005/06	53	149	32	78
2006/07	35	160	28	74

August to February average counts

Counts for this species have varied only slightly over the past few years as the status table above and the monthly maxima table below show. As noted in previous Reports, some birds noted at Portishead may also have been seen on Severnside, but the coastline between Portishead and Clevedon provides good feeding conditions for this species and is rarely visited. On one recent walk along the coastal path between these sites a total of 66 was counted. Apart from those tabulated below single birds were also reported from Littleton Warth in February and on Dec. 23rd, at Sand Bay on Aug. 23rd, at the Axe Estuary on Sept. 16th, and at CVL on July 27th and Aug. 12th.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	80	80	60	65	1	1	16	24	26	50	29	54
Severnside	100	180	180	60	15		22	80	180	160	180	170
PW/Portishead	36	45	55					66	82	28	2	
CI-Y	28	32	36	29	15	2	3	12	24	35	32	22

**GREY PHALAROPE** *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Scarce, wind driven visitor, usually in autumn, very rare at other times. Most records are inland.

One record: a juvenile/first winter was seen on Oct. 7th floating on the evening tide just off Severn Beach (PDB). The table below gives the total number of individuals seen in the past decade.

1987-96 Av.	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
2	5	2	1	3	3	0	0	1	6	1

Avon area - Total number of birds

**AUTUMN MIGRATION AT CHEW VALLEY LAKE**

Status table.

1987-96 Av.	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
867	217	315	157	268	286	178	786	281	834	211

Excluding Lapwing, total wader maximum ten-day counts for CVL

As in previous Reports, the main table below gives the maximum count for Garganey, and each wader and tern species in each ten-day period from July 1st to Oct. 28th.

As indicated by the status table above, counts in 2006 were well down on those of the previous year, this is mainly due to the high water levels at the lake during the whole autumn period. There were no records for Golden or Grey Plover, Red Knot, Curlew Sandpiper, Jack Snipe, or Bar-tailed Godwit.

## Autumn Migration at Chew Valley Lake

	Jul			Aug			Sep			Oct		
	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-9	10-19	20-29	30-8	9-18	19-28	29-8	9-18	19-28
Garganey	1	1	1	1	1	5	1	1				
Eurasian Oystercatcher		2	1	6	2							
Little Plover						1						
Ringed Plover					1	1						
Northern Lapwing	nc	110	155	nc	140	nc	115	nc	210	nc	225	nc
Sanderling			1									
Little Stint									1			
Dunlin			1	2		1		1	7	2		
Ruff								1				
Common Snipe			1	4	3			11	25	17	2	
Black-tailed Godwit		4	13	12	10							
Whimbrel			1									
Curlew	1							1				
Spotted Redshank						1						
Common Redshank			1				10					1
Common Greenshank			1		1	2		1		1		
Green Sandpiper		1	1	2	3		1	2	6	4	1	2
Common Sandpiper	2	11	4	2	3	4	2	1	1	1		
Ruddy Turnstone			1		1							
Common Tern	6	4	6	1	8	3	3	128	1	2		2
Arctic Tern				2	4							
Little Tern								6				
Black Tern			27	9	2	1	1	139	20	6		6

**POMARINE SKUA** *Stercorarius pomarinis*

Scarce spring passage migrant and storm-driven autumn/winter visitor. Only one confirmed inland record (at CVL in 1999).

Two records this year, both from Severn Beach: two on May 1st (JPM, RFR *et al.*) and one on Dec. 7th (BL).

If we ignore the remarkable series of records in 2004 (59), this is a roughly average showing; see summary.

**ARCTIC SKUA** *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Scarce/uncommon spring passage migrant and storm-driven visitor (mainly spring or autumn). Rare inland (mainly at CVL).

A very good year - allowing for a large margin of duplication, an absolute minimum of 50 birds were recorded in 2006; with some excellent records during spring passage from March 26th to May 24th. Summer and autumn records were typically scattered; notable amongst which were two flying to W over BL on Sept. 17th (NRM) – they had been reported previously at CVL, but no confirmatory details from here were received.

The tables below shows all records received:

	Mar	Apr									
	28	1	2	17	18	20	23	26	28	30	
Severnside	1	1	1		4				1		
Battery Point	3							1			
Ladye Bay	2			4		1	2		1	1	

	May											Jul		Aug	Sep	
	1	5	6	8	14	18	19	20	22	23	24	9	11	19	2	17
Severnside	2			1			2	4	2		3	2		1	1	
Ladye Bay	2		1			1	3									
Sand Point	2	1			1		4	5	1	3	2		1			
BL																2

### **GREAT SKUA** *Stercorarius skua*

Scarce spring passage migrant and storm-driven visitor. Rare inland.

Another skua with a good number of records this year; unlike Arctic Skua, this species often appears during winter gales, as was the case in December when several were noted during the Leach's Storm-petrel influx.

	Feb	Mar		Apr	May			Jul	Sep	Oct		Dec					
	16	2	28	2	20	23	26	11	3	5	30	3	4	5	6	7	9
OPS				1													
Severnside			1	1						2		1				8	
RPD																2	
Battery Point									1					1			
Ladye Bay/CI-Y	2	1			1								1				
Sand Point					1	1		1									
Anchor Head											2				1		
BG																	1

The table above shows all records received. The individual at BG on Dec. 9th was the first for the site; it spent much of its time unsuccessfully trying to catch Tufted Ducks and Great Crested Grebes (SD *et al.*).

### **SKUA sp** *Stercorarius sp*

Skuas not specifically identified were reported as follows:

Ladye Bay, Clevedon - two on April 11th, and one on both 13th and 25th;

Sand Point - one on May 27th;

Anchor Head, Weston-s-Mare - one on Oct. 30th.

### **SKUA SUMMARY --- 1997 TO 2006**

	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Pomarine Skua	3	3	2	7	1	0	0	59	4	3
Arctic Skua	30+	122+	19	17	34+	45+	54	65	23	50+
Long Tailed Skua			1			1				
Great Skua	12+	17+	1	5+	11+	16+	16	26	10	26+
Skua sp.	2	3	2	1	3	1	1	58	11	6

Total number of skuas for the last ten years

### **MEDITERRANEAN GULL** *Larus melanocephalus*

Uncommon, but increasing winter visitor and passage migrant.

A continued strong showing, with records from 17 sites as shown in the table below. Note that, as in the 2005 Report, the table now shows monthly maxima rather than bird-days, as higher numbers are now being seen, and there is an increasing tendency for birds to linger at certain sites. For example, up to eight individuals were present during August in the Portishead area. For this reason it is not possible to give a decadal table, note that in 1997 it was recorded at only nine sites, half the current figure.

*Mediterranean Gull cont.*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS			1				2	1		1		
Littleton Warth									1			
Severnside	1	1	2				2	2	1	1	2	1
RPD	2	4	3									
PW										1		
Portishead	1							3	5	3	1	
Clevedon Bay	1								2			1
Axe Estuary/ Weston Bay		1	1			1						
Weston-s-Mare STW								1	1	1		
Corston/ Newton St. Loe	1											
Stanton Prior	1											
ASW	1										1	1
Sea Mills	2	3	1	1						1	1	3
Weston-in-Gordano										1		
Backwell Lake	1	1										
CVL	3	5	6			1	1	1	1	3	1	6
BL	2								1		1	1

**LAUGHING GULL** *Larus atricilla*

Very rare Nearctic vagrant.

At CVL, a summer-plumaged adult was watched briefly as it circled over Herriott's Pool at 09:00 on April 17th, it was first noted by the fourth observer on its call (BLa, RMI, CJS, KEV) [BBRC].

In autumn 2005 there was a record influx of Laughing Gulls into the UK, with several south-western counties (including Somerset) recording multiple occurrences. This individual was presumably on return passage having arrived in Europe the previous autumn. There is only one previous record for the Avon area – a summer-plumaged adult seen on the R. Avon at the New Cut, Bristol, on June 28th and July 7th, 1999.

**LITTLE GULL** *Larus minutus*

Uncommon passage migrant. Less frequent than ten or twenty years ago, when small flocks were regular during the spring at CVL. Nowadays, a few occur in spring, and one or two juveniles linger at the lakes in autumn; although in addition a few are now recorded during the winter months, particularly after westerly gales.

As seems to be the case in most years now, a disappointing spring passage, and an even more disappointing autumn passage; see the CVL average table below. Up to five lingered at CVL in spring making 2006 statistically the second-best of the decade, but in reality this was another mediocre year. Note the appearance of one or two during the December gales. The first two tables below show all counts.

	Jan				Feb		Mar						Apr					
	21	27	28	29	3	6	23	26	27	28	29	31	1	2	3	6	23	24
Severnside										2			1					2
CI-Y							1											
CVL	1	1	1	1	1	1		4		5	5	4	3	5	3	1	1	
BL									2	3			2	1				

	May	Aug			Sep						Nov		Dec				
	11	10	13	3	10	11	12	13	14	31	5	25	7	10	18	29	30
OPS																1	
Severnside	1												1	1			
RPD													1				
CVL		2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	1			1		2



The third table shows the average counts at CVL for the 1997 to 2006 and the average for the previous decade.

CVL	1987 -96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Av. of three highest counts Jan - Jun	6	16	6	7	1	1	1	13	2	2	5
Av. of three highest Counts Jul - Dec	4	1	2	1	1	1	15	1	3	1	2

CVL average counts

### BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*

Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant; small numbers of non-breeders remain throughout the summer. Huge winter roost at CVL.

Maxima from the regularly-counted sites, plus selected large counts elsewhere are shown in the table below. In addition, a record was received of c.200 hawking flying ants over Weston-s-Mare on July 17th - a regular occurrence during the summer, but very infrequently reported.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	250	700	2500	5	27	300	1500	1500	800	2500	350	2000
Littleton Warth	15	110	25			42	550	450	400	250		350
Severnside			400			100	200	400				
Cl-Yeo	300	300	80	4	2	25	420	520	450	275	200	300
Axe Estuary	59	41	40			105	485	419	180	50		56
Weston STW	115	54	146	17	7	144	192	248	220	177	160	
ASW	400		160			2	70	140	160	100	140	100
Sea Mills	600	1200	400	250	1	10	180	260	350	650	450	1200
Backwell Lake	220	330	290			1	2	12	110	265	245	85
Stantonbury Hill area												450
R. Avon (Keynsham)			90								650	1050
BG	150											
BL		950		63	6	2	65	180			83	350

This species does not breed in the Avon area, the nearest breeding colonies are in South Wales although there is no proof that 'our birds' bred here. Juveniles usually first appear in June and the table below gives the dates of the first occurrences for the past decade.

First juvenile dates	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
June	22nd	27th	20th	22nd	10th	23rd	15th	20th	21st	20th

### RING-BILLED GULL *Larus delawarensis*

Scarce Nearctic vagrant. Most records are from CVL; occasionally in winter, but nowadays one or two are expected to appear in the gull roost during spring passage in February or March. Very rare on the coast, and in summer anywhere.

As usual, CVL in the first quarter produced the only records, which are as follows:

An adult in the roost on Jan.12th (RMi, KEV);

At least one adult in the roost on March 12th (RMA), then subsequent records of single adult(s) on March 16th (RMA), 17th (RMi *et al.*), 21st (RMA, AHD) and 22nd (RMi, KEV);

A second-winter coming to breed in Heron's Green Bay on March 29th, and at Herriott's Pool on 30th (AHD, RMi *et al.*).

The median count for the past decade is two per year although none were seen in 1997, 2000 and 2005.

**MEW GULL** *Larus canus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce in summer. Largest flocks are usually on upland or flooded fields and birds are often thinly spread elsewhere. Huge winter roost at CVL.

The table below shows the main largest counts received, plus smaller counts from regularly-watched sites. As is the norm, the best counts were for feeding groups on farmland – also it seems that the large Keynsham flocks are to be expected whenever the Avon floods in winter. High counts at the reservoirs and OPS usually involve roosting birds, or those using the waters to preen and bathe after feeding. Once again, the paucity of records from built-up areas was illustrated by SD, who only saw the species twice all year in central Bristol (two single birds in the Cumberland Basin).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	300	500	2000	14			50	190	20	500	260	2000
Littleton Warth	1	15	15				1			1		12
Severnside	84	33	36			2	2	1	1	9	28	170
CI-Y		2										3
Axe Estuary	2	2	2									2
Weston STW	1				2			1	2			4
Yate Lower Common		330										
Marshfield area	1000	300								80	130	
Norton Hawkfield										200		
Cold Ashton										800		
R. Avon, Sea Mills	8	18	2	2						1	2	2
Backwell Lake			10									
Lansdown												176
Nr. Stantonbury Hill												950
Nr. Newton St Lowe	150											
Queen Charlton			250									
Charlon Fields											300	
BG (and surrounding area)	650	600										
Kensham, R. Avon											1100	450
Ubley	150											
BL	700										48	694

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus fuscus*

Western race *L. f. graellsii*: Common winter visitor, passage migrant and breeding resident.

Scandinavian race *L. f. intermedius*: Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant; almost certainly overlooked.

Baltic race *L. f. fuscus* (Baltic Gull): Very rare; there are no confirmed records due to the difficulties of separation from *intermedius*, although in recent years a few individuals strongly suspected of being *fuscus* have been recorded.

Monthly maxima from the regularly-watched sites, plus other flocks from elsewhere are shown below; as before, the peak counts from these (non-breeding) sites appear to be mainly in spring. Of note, PAB recorded 1700 flying to W over Sand Point on March 26th.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	70	50	32	50	5	53	57	14	23	12	3	200
Littleton Warth	17	57		2	2		6		11			40
CI-Y	6	10	60	50	8	6	4	2	2	4	2	2
Axe Estuary	13	4	9	26	9	13	12	42		5		2
Weston STW	1	7	46	62	63	28	30	8	5	3	2	
R. Avon, Sea Mills	50	45	10	12	1	25	3	6	31	30	29	
Stantonbury Hill area												60
Queen Charlton			29	99	39							
Keynsham, R. Avon area					37						14	98
BL			71	60	1	4	34	121	70	1	4	1

*Breeding:* On Steep Holm, c.425 pairs were estimated to be breeding this year in a survey carried out in mid-May (AJP). See also comments under Herring Gull.

*Ringing report:* A first-winter at BG on Oct.17th had been ringed as a pullus in the Netherlands on June 26th.

*L. f. intermedius:* Adults reported at CVL as follows: two in the roost on Jan. 12th, and five on Nov. 8th.

### **HERRING GULL** *Larus argentatus*

Western race *L. a. argenteus*: Common winter visitor, passage migrant and breeding resident; largest numbers occur near the coast, or around Bristol and Bath.

Scandinavian race *L. a. argentatus*: Uncommon winter visitor; infrequently recorded.

Monthly maxima from the regularly-watched sites are shown in the table below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	43	49	30	50	15	50	50	71	20	30	60	200
Littleton Warth	55	37		1	6		3		3	1		140
Cl-Y	8	12	35	30	38	42	15	10	8	16	15	12
Axe Estuary	162	33	17	10	35	33	5	2		24		10
Weston STW	40	7	80	40	102	34	92	50		3	4	
ASW	6		30	12			5	4	6	12		12
R. Avon, Sea Mills	40	2	8	7	4	20	1	3	6	10	19	
BL				2					16		1	1

*Breeding:* As usual, the only breeding details were supplied from Steep Holm, where AJP estimated c.925 pairs breeding in mid-May. He reported that during the very hot summer, many young and numerous adults of both Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gulls died.

The fortunes of this and the previous species on Steep Holm appear to be fluctuating in recent years. Following a crash in 2003, numbers seemed to recover in 2004, but since then populations of both species would appear to have declined by about 18%.

Surveys on Flat Holm (Glamorgan) indicate a similar drop over the same period.

*L. a. argentatus:* Four second-winter individuals of this Scandinavian race were recorded at CVL as follows: two on Feb. 1st, one on April 8th, 13th and 17th, and one on Dec. 16th.

### **Caspian Gull** *Larus argentatus cachinnans*

Very rare passage migrant/winter visitor. Despite careful searching, this race would appear to be a real rarity in the Avon area even though it is being recorded with increasing frequency in other parts of the UK.

Two were seen in 2006, both at CVL: a third-winter on Jan. 4th, 14th and 28th (KEV), and an adult on Jan. 17th (RJH) which was also seen here on Feb. 4th, 2007 (KEV).

In addition, there are two previously unpublished records both for CVL as follows:

**2002** - a second-summer/third-winter on Sept. 25th (KEV).

**2004** - an adult on Sept. 26th (KEV).

These two records came from virtually the same spot on Herriott's Pool and were almost exactly two years apart, so it seems likely that they refer to the same individual.

The 2002 record therefore becomes the first for the Avon area, pre-dating that for Harnhill Tip on Nov. 16th and Dec. 6th, 2002. Thus there are currently five Avon area records, all of which are shown above.

**YELLOW-LEGGED GULL** *Larus michahellis*

Uncommon passage migrant, summer visitor and winter visitor; most occur in the autumn at CVL, but now increasingly recorded elsewhere.

Monthly maxima are shown below; all records received are included in the table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS								1				
Sevenside								1				
RPD		1	1									
Weston Bay area		1	1									
BG							1	1		1		
CVL	1	2	1	3	1	2	7	3	4	2	3	
BL							1	2	4	3	3	

A relatively quiet year for this recently-split species and the lack of December records is notable – even the peak of five at CVL on July 29th was a little lower than what we have come to expect as a yearly maxima. The closure of the Harnhill Tip has probably affected the Sevenside numbers.

**KUMLIEN'S GULL** *Larus glaucooides kumlieni*

Very rare Nearctic winter visitor - all recent records are presumed to relate to the same returning individual.

What is assumed to be the same, regularly-returning adult since 2002 was seen again in the CVL roost on Jan. 21st and 22nd (RMI, KEV) and Feb. 18th (RMA, RMI *et al.*). An individual which may have been different to the above (with a weaker primary pattern) was seen in the roost on March 19th (RMA, RMI *et al.*), although it was viewed at such a distance that it was not possible to be absolutely sure. This race of Iceland Gull was first reported in the Avon area in April 1982. There are no records for the 2006/07 winter.

**GLAUCOUS GULL** *Larus hyperboreus*

Very scarce winter visitor; occurs less often than Iceland Gull.

An immature, thought probably to be a juvenile, was seen at long range in the CVL roost on Dec. 23rd (RMA, RMI, KEV). There were only two records of this species during the 1990's. Since then it has fared better with five so far, all juveniles: at CVL in December 2000, at the Axe Estuary in April 2001, at CVL again in March and April 2002, and on Sevenside in December 2002.

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus marinus*

Uncommon breeding resident - breeds in small numbers on Steep Holm. Generally scarce elsewhere (perhaps surprisingly so); seldom recorded inland away from the reservoirs.

Monthly maxima at each site where the species was recorded are tabulated below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	5	4	3	10	2	3	3	2	4	3	4	2
Littleton Warth		5				1		2	1			
Sevenside	2	4	2	2		1	1	2	2	2	2	1
RPD									1			
Portbury Wharf					1	1						
Portishead	2	2	4		1			1				
CI-Y	2	2	4	3		3		3	6	2	2	2
Sand Bay								1		2	2	
Axe Estuary	1	1					2	2	4	2		1
Weston STW					1			1				
R. Avon, Sea Mills	7	4	5	2	2	3	6	6	6	5	2	4
Bristol (city)	1	1	1	1	1		3	1		1		1
BG				2		1	4	5	4	4	4	1
CVL	4	2	3	11	6	6	11	5	7	8	4	3
BL	2	2	2	2	4	2	2	3	6	4	2	3

For the first time, CVL was the main site in the Avon area. Following a record count of 18 here last September, 2006 saw many counts in excess of the two or three that are normally recorded; a corresponding increase in the number of records at BL and BG is also noteworthy. It would seem that the big summer counts at OPS are now well and truly a thing of the past.

**Breeding** On Steep Holm, AJP reported ten occupied nests on June 27th, only five of which held a total of eight young. The table below gives the estimated (by AJP) number of nests here during the past decade.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
15+	20+	18	26	29	30	10	13	9	10

Steep Holm Breeding data – 10 year table

## BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

Mostly a storm-driven visitor; usually uncommon, but large flocks are sometimes blown into the Estuary in winter, spring and summer. Scarce inland, almost exclusively at CVL.

The table below shows all records received:

	Mar									Apr				
	9	10	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	2	11	13	17	29
OPS														
Sevenside	200	200	80	80	550	500		60	30	6	85			
Portishead											1			
Ladye Bay						14				100			20	
Sand Point														2
Anchor Head		1												
CVL						2	1					4		

	May							Sep		Oct
	1	18	19	20	22	23	24	3	7	31
OPS	2									
Sevenside	1	200	120			21		2		
Ladye Bay		30	10						15	
Sand Point	40	240		101	4	15				
Anchor Head										200
CVL							1			

	Nov		Dec							
	23	26	3	5	6	7	11	13	14	31
OPS										
Sevenside	1	20	20	2		35		2	9	
Portishead						1				
Ladye Bay			40	67						
CI-Y					1					
Anchor Head			75	2	1					1
Axe Est.					1					
CVL							1			

Recorded on a total of 34 dates, the same as in 2005. Some high counts in March at Sevenside made this the best year (based on average numbers) of the past decade – the table below shows average counts and the number of days it was recorded at this site, the main one in the Avon area, since 1997:

Sevenside	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Av of three highest counts	147	157	266	157	53	317	303	263	166	416
Number of dates recorded	28	19	23	22	27	36	22	30	29	22

Sevenside average maximum counts

**BLACK TERN** *Chlidonias niger*

Uncommon passage migrant; most frequent in the autumn when occasional influxes occur. Most records are from CVL.

After a poor spring passage, the return migration in the autumn could best be described as average. At the main site, CVL, a regular presence during September, including the appearance of a couple of reasonable flocks meant that this species (along with Common Tern) was one of the few passage migrants that appeared in anything like normal numbers at CVL this autumn – see the table on page 70.

	Apr			May				Jul		Aug			
	15	21	25	4	12	13	15	25	26	2	18	19	20
Severnside				3									
Ladye Bay			1										
CVL	1	1			2	1	1	19	8	9	1	1	1

	Sep															
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	22	23	24
BG		9														
CVL	1	41	30	6	7	4	16	21	3	2	9	9	2	3	2	2
BL		3						1								

	Sep					Oct										
	27	28	29	30	1	3	4	20	21	23	26	27	28	29	30	31
CVL	1	1	1	3	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
BL						1										

The table above details every record received, whilst the one below shows average spring and autumn counts at CVL over the last eight years:

CVL	1999	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Av of three highest counts Apr - Jun	3	8	6	1	3	2	2	1
Av of three highest counts Jul - Oct	43	10	90	13	36	70	31	30
CVL average counts								

**WHISKERED TERN** *Chlidonias hybridus*

Very rare continental vagrant - three records (four individuals) between April and June.

A second-summer was seen at CVL on April 28th and 29th. It was watched during the afternoon and evening of 28th in the Woodford Bank/Villice Bay area of the lake, and briefly early the following morning. (AHD, RMi *et al.*) [BBRC].

There are two previous records for the Avon area, both also at CVL – one on June 24th and 25th, 1959, and two on May 29th, 1983 (one of which remained to 31st).

**SANDWICH TERN** *Sterna sandvicensis*

Scarce/uncommon passage migrant – most are recorded on the coast.

An average year, recorded on ten dates as shown below:

	Mar	Apr				May		Jul	Sep	Oct
	28	1	23	25	28	5	13	6	12	21
OPS										2
Severnside		1				1		1		
Ladye Bay			1	2	2		1			
Sand Point			6							
Axe Estuary	2									
CVL									2	

A ten-year summary is given in the table on page 81. The October record (for 21st) is the second latest for the Avon area, the latest was for Sand Bay with one on Oct. 23rd, 1987.

**COMMON TERN** *Sterna hirundo*

Passage migrant; a few birds occur throughout the summer. Generally uncommon, but large flocks have been recorded in the estuary some years.

All of the records received are shown in the table below:

	Mar	Apr						May								
	30	2	13	15	16	21	22	2	4	8	11	12	13	18	19	22
Severnside	1			5			6		4		100				1	1
Battery Point							2									
Anchor Head					1											
Sand Point														1		
CVL		1	3	23	1	19	4	18		2	1	2	1			

	Jun						Jul								Aug						
	11	12	13	22	25	29	2	12	14	15	16	17	25	26	27	3	13	18	19	20	22
BG							1	1													
CVL	3	2	1	1	1	3	6	1				3	2	1	2	1	1	4	3	3	
BL									2	1	2					1					1

	Aug			Sep																Oct		
	24	31	3	4	5	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	30	1	8	19		
S-side	4	1	1		1				16													
CVL				2	1	6	3	40	5	23	43	4	2	1	1	1	1	2		2		
BL					15	3		1														
Axe Est.																			1			

The record for March 30th at Severnside was the earliest ever for the Avon area.

The table shows a reasonably steady spring passage, although not spectacular by any means; see also the comments under Common/Arctic Tern. At CVL, there was a noticeable improvement after a poor 2005, with 247 bird-days recorded in 2006; the second highest total since 1999. The averages table below confirms that 2006 was a good year at the lake:

CVL	1999	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Av of three highest counts Apr - Jun	6	6	33	11	28	3	11	20
Av of three highest counts Jul - Nov	28	15	24	37	24	37	9	35
CVL average counts								

**ARCTIC TERN** *Sterna paradisaea*

Usually an uncommon passage migrant, but large flocks are occasionally recorded in the Estuary during favourable weather conditions in spring; otherwise generally occurs in smaller numbers than Common Tern. Unlike that species it is very scarce in mid-summer. Often appears after westerly gales.

There was an unusually early record of two at BL on April 2nd. The majority in spring passed through in three waves – on April 23rd, on 29th, and from May 2nd to 4th. Autumn passage was very poor indeed, although interest was maintained by two unusual June records: one at Sand Bay on 20th (PAB) and a first-summer at CVL on 22nd (KEV). Unlike Common Tern, which is a widespread breeding species in southern England, Arctics are not expected in June.

	Apr						May							Jun		Aug		Sep	
	2	14	15	22	23	29	1	2	4	18	19	20	22	2	9	10	11	16	17
Severnside				2					80										
Ladye Bay					20														
Sand Point					16	31			16	2		1							
CVL		2	2		15	2	3	21			2		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
BL	2																		

The table above shows all records specifically identified as Arctics (but see Common/Arctic Tern below).

**COMMON/ARCTIC TERN** *Sterna hirundo/paradisaea*

Unusually, unidentified terns formed the bulk of this year's spring passage, as shown below. Note that most specifically identified *sterna* terns, see the two entries above, were noted during the passage movements on April 23rd, 28th/29th and May 4th were Arctics, whereas only Commons were noted on May 11th.

	Apr						May		Aug	
	22	23	24	25	28	29	4	11	2	19
OPS										7
Sevenside	13	300	24			3	80	150		
Battery Point						35				
Ladye Bay				30	170	75				
Sand Point		4				11		9		
CVL									3	

**LITTLE TERN** *Sternula albifrons*

Scarce/uncommon passage migrant; most records are from the coast. Generally the scarcest of the five 'common' terns.

An excellent year, after a very poor showing in 2005. All records are given in the table below; the high counts of *circa* eight at Ladye Bay, six at Sevenside, and five at CVL are noteworthy, particularly the latter.

	Apr		May						Sep	
	23	28	1	4	13	18	28	29	11	14
Sevenside				6				1		
PW							1			
Ladye Bay		c.8								
CI-Y			1							
Sand Point						1				
Weston STW					1					
CVL	1								5	1

The unusual terns and auks table below gives a summary of the records for the past decade.

**COMMON GUILLEMOT** *Uria aalge*

Scarce storm-driven visitor throughout the year; no inland records.

A good year for this wind-assisted visitor; most records corresponded with high winds that often produce other seabirds in the Estuary. Allowing for one or two in the table to have been recorded twice, approximately eleven would be a reasonable estimate for this year:

	Jan	Mar		Apr		May			Dec			
	1	27	28	3	4	22	23	24	8	13	14	17
OPS												1
Sevenside	1	1	1	1					1	1	1	
Ladye Bay							2					
Sand Point						1						
Anchor Head								1				
Axe Estuary					1							

**RAZORBILL** *Alca torda*

Very scarce/scarce storm driven visitor, rare in summer. Occurs in smaller numbers than Common Guillemot. No inland records.

One record: one was seen floating down river past Severn Beach on Sept. 2nd (PDB).

This species has been recorded in six of the last ten years, see table below.



**LITTLE AUK** *Alle alle*

Very scarce storm-driven winter visitor, usually at Severnside. Very rare inland (the only auk species recently recorded inland, but there are no CVL records!)

Two Severnside records: one was seen in flight and briefly on the water off Severn Beach on Oct. 22nd (PDB, JO), and another was watched in strong winds off Chittening Warth on Dec. 6th (SH) during the Leach's Storm-petrel invasion.

About 15 have been seen in the Avon area during the past 30 years, those in the last decade are given in the table below.

<b>Unusual Terns and Auks --- 1997 TO 2006</b>										
	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Wh-winged Tern						1			1	
Sandwich Tern	18	11	14	12	23+	20	86	13	6	21
Roseate Tern	1				1					
Little Tern	1	3	5	4	6+	2+	16	6	1	26
Guillemot	2	10	2	9	6	10	8	7	1	11
Razorbill	2				1	2		1	1	1
Guillemot/Razorbill		1	1	4	25	16	3			
Black Guillemot		1								
Little Auk		2			1	1				2
Puffin	1					2				

Total number of unusual terns and auks for the past ten years.

**FERAL PIGEON** *Columba livia var*

Introduced, common to abundant resident, mostly found in urban areas. BBS distribution 47%. Breeding population in Bristol estimated at 1300 pairs. Local ten-yr change: down 40%. UK population change 1994-2005 up 7%.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	WBC
%Change	-75	37	23	-29	189

Although the species is not well monitored by BBS, there are suggestions of a 15% increase in the last ten years.

Very few records were received and only two largish flocks were reported: 120 at Charlton Fields, Keynsham on Sept. 15th and 90 at Cheltenham Road Arches (Bristol) on Dec. 7th.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
154	168	143	128	108	86	99	98	96	120

Avon BBS Index 1994 = 100

**STOCK PIGEON** *Columba oenas*

Fairly common and increasing breeding resident. BBS Distribution 24% and on a declining trend. UK population change 1994-2005 up 9%.

An average year.

*Flocks* The only double figure counts were as follows (in date order):

70 at Burnett on Jan. 6th, 13 at OPS on Jan. 7th and 15th, 190 at Shirehill on Jan. 30th, twelve at Dundry on April 18th, 20 at Chapel Pill Farm on April 29th, 14 at Weston STW on May 17th, 18 at CVL on May 18th, 13 at Burnett on June 13th, 37 at Marshfield on Oct. 14th (with 42 there on 24th and 20 on 29th), 15 at OPS on Oct. 22nd, twelve at CVL on Oct. 28th, 30 at OPS on Nov. 26th and 13 at Chittening Warth on Dec. 30th.

Noted in smaller numbers at a further 21 sites.

*Breeding* Evidence was received from CVL (four sites), Severnside, Chewton Keynsham and Weston Wood.

## COMMON WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Abundant and increasing breeding resident. BBS distribution 100%. BBS population estimate 16800 breeding pairs. UK population change 1994 - 2005: up 19% Local ten-yr change: up 44%.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	WBC
%Change	45	24	5	-11	-21

Numbers in WGS were the highest yet.

*January to April* Although few records were received there were some notable counts as follows: at Marshfield, 1300 on Jan. 7th with 2000 on 21st, at Shirehill, 220 on Jan. 30th, at Chapel Pill Farm, 500 on Jan. 21st and 300 on March 11th, and at Keynsham, 175 on Feb. 10th with 64 on April 24th.

*Breeding* Only noted from five sites, a very poor return given the size of the local breeding population.

*Migrants* Not much evidence of movements this year; at Sand Point from Oct. 28th to Nov. 4th there were counts of 100+ most days with 340 on Oct. 30th and 350 on Nov. 4th, on Oct. 29th there were 200 to S at the Axe Est. and 33 to W at Leap Valley, Downend. During November, ten arrived on Steep Holm from the mainland on 2nd, 320 passed to W at Leap Valley on 4th and 240 passed in the same direction at Sand Point the next day. On 12th there were 50 going to W at Leap Valley and then 100+ to S at Clevedon on 20th.

More unusually, there was some evidence of movement to NE with 40 at Henbury on Nov. 28th and 40 at Leap Valley on Dec. 1st.

*July to December* Some good sized flocks as early as late July/August with 70 at Nailsea on July 27th, 250 near Marshfield on Aug. 2nd and 140 at Weston STW during August. Later in the winter the only three figure count was of 100 at Chapel Pill Farm on Nov. 19th.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
121	122	126	127	135	144	137	142	139	163

Avon BBS Index 1994 = 100

## EURASIAN COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common breeding resident. BBS distribution 71%. BBS population estimate 3500 breeding pairs. UK population change 1994-2005 up 38%. Local ten-yr change; up 30%.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	WBC
%Change	38	-10	16	-11	-13

Few records were received, the only double figure counts being 15, all perched in a garden tree, at West Littleton on Feb. 26th and 35 at Cold Ashton on Oct. 14th.

A leucistic bird was at Northwick Warth on May 15th.

On Steep Holm there were single birds on Feb. 11th and May 31st.

*Breeding* In February nesting was recorded at Vauxhall Bridge (Bristol) and nest building was noted in Bishop Sutton. Conversely a pair had two young on a nest in an Odd Down garden on Aug. 30th and a young bird had just left a nest in a Keynsham garden on Oct. 12th.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
159	156	178	180	181	184	179	188	168	152

Avon BBS Index 1994 = 100

**EURASIAN TURTLE DOVE** *Streptopelia turtur*

Scarce passage migrant. Last breeding record in 1983. UK 25-yr change: down 77%.

In line with recent years only three acceptable records of single birds were received:

OPS - April 22nd (PJH, AJM *et al.*);

CVL - May 16th (JA *et al.*);

Rangeworthy - present in a garden from May 22nd to 26th (WM).

The table below gives total annual bird-days and number of individuals recorded over the last ten years.

Year	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
No. of bird-days	5	9	3+	6	2	3	3	10+	5	7
No. of individuals	5	6+	3+	6	2	3	3	1	2	3

Avon area ten year summary

**ROSE-RINGED PARAKEET** *Psittacidae krameri*

Status uncertain, some records may refer to wanderers from the substantial home counties feral population.

Four or five records, either escapes or feral, as follows:

Chittening Warth - one on Jan. 14th;

Wains Hill area, Cl-Y - one or two seen in 2005 and on Jan. 12th, 24th and 30th, and Feb. 3rd and 21st (as noted in last year's Report, these birds stayed for a long period and so it is possible that there were either feral or genuinely wild);

College Green, Bristol - one on Feb. 27th;

Eastville Park, Bristol - one on July 31st.

**COMMON CUCKOO** *Cuculus canorus*

Uncommon and declining (since early 1980s) spring migrant and breeding summer visitor. Very scarce after July. Nationally it is Amber Listed (moderate decline) but the latest data meet the Red Listing criteria (rapid decline). UK population change 1994 - 2005: down 29%. Local ten-yr change: down 89%.

Ten-yr av. first date April 7th in 1973, 15th by 1994, 12th today. Ten-yr av. last date Aug. 31st in 1970, increasing to Sept. 10th in 1983, but falling back to Aug. 5th today. As a result the total time spent was 143 days in 1970, increased to 153 in 1983, but has fallen to an apparent 115 days today.

Another poor year.

First noted at CVL on April 12th (*cf.* 12th in 2003, 11th in 2004 and 6th in 2005), with other early arrivals at PW on 14th, at Whitchurch on 19th and at Sand Point on 20th.

The table below gives bird-days, records and sites for 2006 (with figures for 2005 shown in brackets).

	April	May	June	July	August
Bird-days	12 (24)	50+ (60+)	10 (10)	1 (1)	2 (2)
Records	14 (24)	35 (42)	11 (9)	1 (1)	2 (2)
Sites	9 (15)	17 (26)	8 (7)	1 (1)	1 (2)

A recently fledged juvenile was seen at OPS on July 19th and a juvenile was noted feeding on caterpillars in a Pilning garden on Aug. 17th and 18th, the last record for the year.

Birds were reported in just 5% of the BBS squares (*cf.* 43% in 1994) with 15 counted in 550 hours of observation.

Remains were found at the Peregrine site at St. John's Church, Bath of one in April and another in May.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
89	68	48	35	30	25	15	20	17	8

Avon BBS index 1994 = 100

**BARN OWL** *Tyto alba*

Breeding resident, uncommon after long-term decline, but slowly recovering locally in recent years and benefiting from conservation effort in several areas.

A total of 119 records from 44 sites was received, for both the highest counts in the last ten years (see table below).

Birds were regularly seen at the following sites (in alphabetical order): Aust Warth, Burnett, Compton Dando, CVL, Olbury, PW and Siston Common. The sightings at Aust Warth were the first on Severnside for four years; and those at Olbury were the first since 2000.

Although most sightings were of single birds, there were four at Aust Warth on Oct. 4th.

**Breeding** A poor year possibly related to an earlier crash in vole numbers. In the Cam Valley pairs were present at ten sites early in the season but only two of these bred; one pair with a single chick and the other pair with three. In *NS* only one nest was reported (four chicks ringed); and in *BA* two chicks were ringed at a nest and there was evidence of breeding at another site.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
65	65	56	38	24	65	88	93	94	119
35	29	n/c	25	20	30	35	38	43	44

Avon area - total number of records and sites per year

**LITTLE OWL** *Athene noctua*

Introduced in the 19th century. Fairly common breeding resident. UK 25-yr change: none.

A good total of 147 records received from 49 sites, see table below.

Recorded in every month of the year, with no particular bias to any period, but only a few sites had regular sightings, principally Aust and Northwick Warths, OPS, Whitchurch and Wrington.

**Breeding** Records were received from the following sites (in alphabetical order):

Chew Magna - juvenile food calling on July 17th;  
 Hawkesbury Common - adult and juvenile on Aug. 27th;  
 Kenn - pair with two young on July 24th;  
 Thornbury Castle - pair with two young in late July;  
 West Kington - nest located in a barn and young heard on June 14th;  
 Widcombe Common - fledged young on Aug. 19th.

At Churchill on Aug. 31st one was caught by a Kestrel, but released when the farmer investigated what the shrieking was about. In Bath one was not so lucky, with a corpse being noted at the Peregrine site at St. John's Church in April.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
178	142	134	149	94	141	126	128	114	147
54	57	n/c	64	39	47	58	48	48	49

Avon area - total number of records and sites per year

**TAWNY OWL** *Strix aluco*

Fairly common breeding resident. UK 25-yr change: down 24%.

A high total of 235 records received, although from only 57 sites which was lower than in recent years (see table below).

Recorded in every month, particularly during the period from July to November, although regular reports only came from (in alphabetical order): Clevedon, Clutton, CVL, Easton-in-Gordano, Whitchurch and Wrington.

As usual most records were of calling birds, some in daytime, there were only 15 sight records.

An adult was found dead on the A37 at Hursley Hill on Aug. 14th.

**Breeding** A poor breeding year - the only records were as follows:

Nailsea, East End - juvenile heard on July 1st;

Wains Hill, CI-Y - juvenile seen on July 26th;  
Easton-in-Gordano - juvenile heard on July 20th.

**Counts** The highest count outside the breeding season was of ten in the Wrington area in October (when numbers in the area were reported to be 'back to normal after last year's low point').

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
183	129	136	149	124	145	125	227	220	235
40	54	n/c	65	50	55	54	66	89	57

Avon area - total number of records and sites per year

### LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Scarce/very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Very rare in summer, bred successfully in 1991.

Two records: The first was reported from a hedge at Northwick Warth on the evening of April 21st. When first seen it was only two metres from the observer who noted its striking bright orange eyes (PDB)! The second was at CVL on the morning of June 10th, it was perched on a post on Moreton Bank and was still here three hours later (KEV *et al.*). This second record was exceptional for mid-summer and was possibly linked to a crash in vole numbers earlier in the year; *cf.* Barn Owl.

These are the first Avon area records since February 2003 (near Weston-s-Mare) and the first at CVL since February 1989.

### SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly on the coast.

A total of 79 records from twelve sites was received, representing 100 bird-days (*cf.* 41 records and 54 bird-days in 2004 and 56 records and 105 bird-days in 2005). In the first-winter period noted until May 13th (9th in 2005), and in the second-winter period noted from Oct. 14th. The highest count was of six at Sand Bay on Feb. 18th.

**First winter period** As usual most records were coastal as follows (single birds unless noted):

Aust Warth - March 29th, with two on 30th and 31st, April 1st and May 9th;  
Severn Beach - Feb. 24th, March 19th and April 8th;  
Chittingen Warth - Jan. 14th (two), single on Feb. 26th with three on 28th and March 2nd, single birds on March 1st, 3rd and 4th with four on 14th, and two on 16th, 19th, 30th and 31st. During April single birds on 8th, 14th, 15th and 22nd with two on 16th;  
RPD - Feb. 12th, and March 11th and 17th;  
CI-Y - Feb. 19th;  
Sand Bay - Jan. 17th with two on 2nd and 21st and three on 31st, Feb. 2nd, 25th and 26th with six on 18th and four on 28th, and two on March 1st and 4th;  
Uphill - April 2nd and 22nd;  
Weston STW - April 5th;  
Bleadon Level - Jan. 2nd.

Inland records came from Westerleigh Common (Yate) on March 11th and Prospect Stile, near Bath, on May 13th.

**Second winter period** All records were coastal as follows:

Aust Warth - single birds on ten dates in October and four dates in both November and December with two on Nov. 3rd and Dec. 28th;  
Northwick Warth - Oct. 14th, a richly coloured individual subsequently seen at Aust Warth on 17th and 27th;  
CI-Y - Nov. 30th, a poor showing for this site;  
Axe Est - Oct. 15th with two on 22nd.

The table below gives the monthly summary for 2006.

Month	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	:	Oct	Nov	Dec	2006
Records	7	10	19	12	2		17	8	5	79
Bird-days	11	20	28	11	2		16	7	6	100
Max. count	3	6	4	2			2	2	2	6

**EUROPEAN NIGHTJAR** *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Very scarce passage migrant and occasional breeding summer visitor.

Two records: two males were heard churring at Burrington Ham between May 17th and July 14th, and a migrant flushed at Northwick Warth on Sept. 9th (BL) was the first record for Severnside. Sightings of migrants are quite rare in the Avon area, the last was in 2002. Also three birds were ringed at Burrington Ham on the Somerset/Avon border one in late May and two on June 14th.

Records over the last ten years are as follows:

Year	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Churring males	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	3	1	2
No. of reports	0	0	3	3	0	1	0	6	1	8

Avon area ten year summary

**COMMON SWIFT** *Apus apus*

Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant. BBS distribution 59%. BBS population estimate 2050 pairs. UK population change 1994 - 2005: down 21%.

Ten-yr av. first date April 18th in 1970, 25th in 1980 and 17th today. Ten-yr av. last date Sept. 21st in 1970, Oct. 6th in 1979, Sept. 14th in 1990 and 19th today. Total time spent 155 days in 1970, 165 by 1979, 145 in 1990 and 155 today.

An average year.

**Arrival** First noted at both CVL and Bishop Sutton on April 16th (15th in 2005) with one at CVL the next day. On 18th there were 27 at BL and on 19th records came from four sites (including one visiting a nest site in Hanham). On 23rd there were 40 at CVL, with 200 here on 26th, 500 on 28th and 750 on 30th, by when birds were widespread.

**Summer flocks** There were c3000 at CVL on May 2nd with 500 here on 4th and 1000 on 6th. Again flocks of c3000 at CVL on 18th and 20th with c1000 at BL on 25th. The only other large flock at CVL was c1000 on June 13th. Other three figure counts away from CVL or BL were 100 moving to N at Sand Pt. on May 8th, 150 at Weston STW on 17th (with 100 here on 20th) and 300 moving in a steady passage at Severn Beach on July 8th. A partial albino (with white mantle and rump, and white underbody with brown flecking on the flanks) was seen at CVL on May 26th; this is presumed to be the same individual as seen in previous years.

**Breeding** As usual seriously under reported with records only from Hotwells, Henleaze and Redland.

MVH again submitted a detailed log from the Montrose Avenue area of Redland with the first birds arriving on April 22nd (24th in 2005) and the last departing before Aug. 14th (21st in 2005). Overall there were rather lower numbers than in 2005, which was probably due to poor weather, especially in early July.

**Departure** Although some observers noted departure as early as July 19th, there were still 200 at CVL on Aug. 13th.

The last three records were as follows: Aug. 28th, five at Weston STW and one over Leap Valley, Downend; Aug. 31st, seven at Weston STW; and Sept. 3rd, one also at Weston STW.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
104	105	109	92	85	80	89	91	67	77

Avon BBS Index 1994 = 100

**COMMON KINGFISHER** *Alcedo atthis*

Fairly common breeding resident, distributed in small numbers on waters throughout the area. UK population change 1994 - 2005: down 5%.

Recorded from 74 localities (cf. 86 in 2005) during the year.

January to March records came from 31 sites but regular reports (four or more) only noted at Winford Brook, Backwell Lake and CVL. All records related to single birds apart from two on the R. Avon at Keynsham on Jan. 8th.

**Breeding** Although records for the period April to June came from BL, Chew Magna, Chitterning Warth,

Compton Dando, CVL, Eastville Park, Keynsham, R. Avon New Cut, Northwick Warth, Olbury Court Est., Publow, Saltford, Widcombe and Winford Brook, the only actual evidence of breeding came from R. Chew, south of Herriott's Pool (a juvenile seen on July 30th) and Lords Wood, Pensford (a family part of three seen on July 15th).

As usual recorded more widely (50 sites) from July to the end of the year. Regular reports of one or two from Backwell Lake, BL, CVL, R. Avon at Keynsham, Keynsham Mill Grounds, New Passage and Winford Brook. There were three together at Lords Wood on July 15th.

Remains of single birds were found at the Peregrine site at St. John's Church, Bath in June and August.

### EURASIAN WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*

Very scarce autumn passage migrant. Very rare in spring.

A reasonable showing with three records of single birds, including the first for spring since 1997:

North Common, Warmley - in gardens from April 23rd to 25th (many obs.);  
Charlton Fields, Keynsham - Sept. 15th (JA, AHD *et al.*);  
Sand Pt. - Oct. 9th (PAB).

Records over the last ten years are as follows:

Year.	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
No. of individuals	3	1	2	2	1	2	3	1	1	3

Avon area ten year summary

### GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Fairly common breeding resident, increasing nationally and probably locally. BBS distribution 54%. UK population change 1994 - 2005: up 31%. Local ten-yr change; up 17%.

	WBC	BBS	WBC
%Change	11	3	-4

A total of 231 records was received, from 93 sites (*cf.* 165 records from 75 sites in 2002, 323/127 in 2003, 236/103 in 2004 and 333/127 in 2005) - this excludes BBS data from 103 sites.

**Breeding** There were 77 records from 57 sites during April, May and June, distributed as follows:

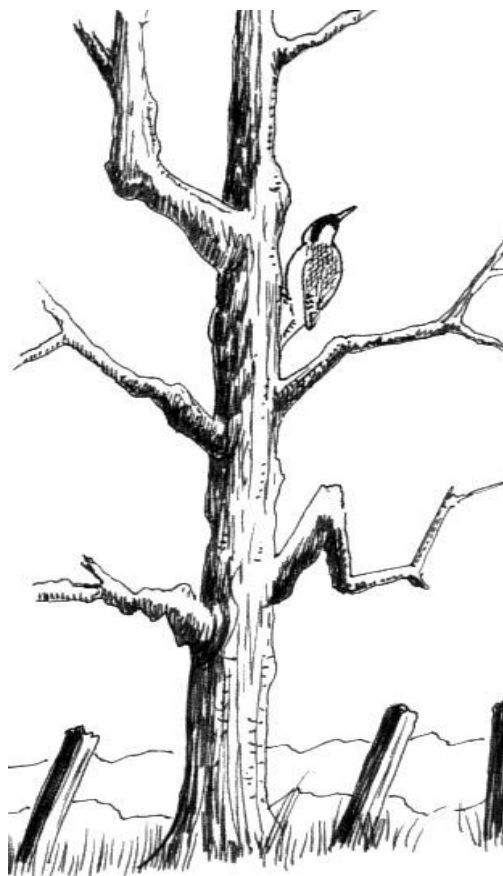
April - 39 records from 30 sites (*cf.* 26 sites in 2004 and 61 sites in 2005);

May - 21 records from 21 sites (*cf.* 17 sites in 2004 and 53 sites in 2005);

June - 17 records from 14 sites (*cf.* 6 sites in 2004 and 36 sites in 2005).

At CVL five singing males were located (*cf.* three in 2005), and juveniles were seen here and at Nailsea, Stanton Prior, Thornbury and Westbury-on-Trym.

Remains were found at the Peregrine site at St. John's Church, Bath in March, May (twice) and August (twice).



1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
103	134	92	112	112	111	107	121	113	105

Avon BBS Index 1994 = 100

**GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER** *Dendrocopos major*

Fairly common breeding resident increasing nationally and locally. BBS distribution 41%. UK population change 1994 - 2005 change: up 120%. Local ten-yr change: up 44%.

A total of 193 records was received from 80 sites (*cf.* 226 records from 66 sites in 2002, 172/76 in 2003, 149/77 in 2004 and 339/173 in 2005).

Regular monitoring of a Banwell garden showed a male present for 37 weeks and a female for 39 weeks, both using a peanut feeder.

Three were seen heading to S, presumably on migration, at Severn Beach on Oct. 12th.

**Breeding** Drumming was reported from Jan. 1st until April 28th (April 2nd in 2005) at 19 sites. At CVL there were probably seven pairs (*cf.* seven in 2004 and six in 2005) and nests or juveniles were reported from Banwell, Leap Valley (Downend), Dolebury Warren Wood, Keynsham, Saltford, Thornbury and Wrington.

Drumming was heard again in Weston-s-Mare on Oct. 29th and from Ashcombe Park, Weston-s-Mare and Ridge Woods, N. Yate in December.

Remains were found at the Peregrine site at St. John's Church, Bath in April, May, June, July (four times), August (four times), September (seven times) and October (eight times), that is at least 26 birds were taken.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
110	87	95	116	117	118	135	123	138	169

Avon BBS Index 1994 = 100

**LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER** *Dendrocopos minor*

Uncommon, declining and elusive breeding resident. Last definitely bred in 2003. Recently Red Listed because of rapid national decline.

In line with recent trends only two records were received as follows:

R. Avon, Keynsham - a male was seen and heard on April 24th and heard again on 25th;  
CVL - a male on Nov. 15th.

Total number of bird-days and individuals over the last ten years is as follows:

Year	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
No. of bird-days	18	9	9	7	c10+	c16+	c20+	3	7	3
No. of individuals	13+	8	7	6	5	11	9	3	7	2

Avon area ten year summary

**WOOD LARK** *Lullula arborea*

Very scarce passage migrant, rare in winter.

One record: four were noted at the Axe Estuary during a migration watch on Oct 27th (PAB), a good number had been reported in southern England around the same time.

In the last decade this species was recorded at Severnside in October 2001 and November 2003, and six were noted near Long Ashton also in November 2003.

**SKY LARK** *Alauda arvensis*

Declining common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. BBS Avon population estimate, 5200 pairs. BBS distribution 41%. UK 25-year change: down 61%. Local ten-yr change: down 9%.

	WBC	BBS	WBC
%Change	-55	26	43

**Winter 2005/06** Smaller flocks were noted than in early 2005 with maxima of 55 at Northwick Warth on Jan. 8th and 50 at OPS on 15th, Marshfield on 24th and Weston STW during the month. Elsewhere in the first two months of the year flocks of between 14 and 40 were noted at Compton Dando, Cl-Y, Knowle Hill, Portbury, Rangeworthy and Tickenham Moor. There were still 40 at Northwick Warth on March 12th.



**Breeding** First song was noted on Jan. 17th. Song was widely reported from March to May with one on the Downs in Bristol in April and again in June and July perhaps unusual. Numbers were generally small, however, with 16 singing birds at Weston STW, six at CI-Y and near Easton-in-Gordano, and five at Newton Park College were the most reported. 22 at Northwick Warth on May 8th was a notable concentration. Only two singing birds in a two hour walk at West Kington in mid-June, although one in potential breeding habitat at Coalpit Heath on June 23rd was the first the observer has seen in spring or summer for twelve years. 'Many' were reported in the Tormarton area.

**Autumn/Winter** The first obvious migrants were two at Leap Valley, Downend, on Sept. 24th then small numbers here on several dates until a peak movement of 25 on Oct. 29th. At Charlton Fields 40 moved to E on Oct. 15th and 35 in the same direction next day. 18 at Northwick Warth on Sept. 30th and 25 on Oct 14th increased to 30 on Nov. 4th. 114 at Weston STW on Oct. 29th was the largest flock to date at the site and the largest of the autumn. At the end of the year there were 60 at Compton Dando on Dec. 8th and counts of 19 to 30 at CI-Y, Easton-in-Gordano, Lansdown Racecourse, PW and Stowey.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
94	89	89	74	75	75	73	73	92	85

Avon BBS Index 1994 = 100

## **SAND MARTIN** *Riparia riparia*

Fairly common passage migrant; local and uncommon breeding summer visitor. BBS distribution 2%. UK ten-yr change: down 46%. Ten-yr av. first date: March 17th in 1970, 22nd by 1980, 10th today. Ten-yr av. last date: Oct. 12th in 1970, 2nd by 1990, 7th today. Days present: 209 in 1970, 199 in 1990, 212 today.

Another poor spring passage.

**Arrival and passage** A late arrival with the first at Weston STW on March 21st. Single figure counts were then noted at a small number of sites until 28th, when 110 were at BL and 250 at CVL followed by 300 at CVL next day. There were 600 at CVL at 08.00hrs on April 1st (but only 100 remained by mid-day) then 1,000 here, the peak count of the spring, on 2nd, just 200 remaining on 4th and the rest of the month producing no more than 50 at this site apart from 350 on 13th. Hundreds were at BL in rain on 11th. On the coast birds passing through included 36 in two hours at Severnside and 30 to E at Sand Point on 15th, then 45 in three hours at Severnside on 22nd. On these dates there were 75 and 128 respectively at Weston STW, ten at CVL on 2nd and one here on 6th were the only reports received for May.

**Breeding** Three or four active nest holes were noted at the traditional site in Batheaston in June.

**Return passage and departure** Two at New Passage on June 17th were probably the first returning birds and at least ten more were noted, mostly at coastal sites by the end of the month. Low numbers recorded at several sites in July with 50 at CVL on 7th and 20 at Severn Beach on 15th the only double figure counts. The trickle of migrants continued in August with 120 at CVL on 21st. September opened with 30 at CVL on 2nd, then 55 here and 40 at Weston STW on 3rd, 25 at CVL on 8th and 150 here on 21st but no other count exceeded 15. One at CVL on Oct. 6th was the only record for the month and the last of the year.

## **BARN SWALLOW** *Hirundo rustica*

Common to abundant passage migrant and common breeder. BBS distribution 71%. BBS Avon population estimate, 7400 pairs. UK 25-yr change: down 2%. Local ten-yr change: down 14%. Ten-yr av. first date: March 28th in 1970, April 1st by 1975, March 19th by 1995, and 20th today. Ten-yr av. last date: Nov. 10th in 1970, Oct. 30th by 1990, Nov. 9th today. Days present: 227 in 1970, 215 in 1975, 234 today.

**Arrival** The first sightings of the year were of single birds at CVL on March 22nd and 24th and BL on 25th, followed by two at Backwell Lake on 27th and one or two at four sites the next day. Small numbers were reported daily thereafter and noticeably more widely from April 4th. Larger numbers did not appear until mid-month with 40 at Sand Point on 9th, 100 at Steep Holm on 12th, 1,500 at CVL and 180 at Portishead Boating Lake on 13th, 70 at New Passage next day and 300 at PW on 19th. 300 at Portishead in two hours on 15th, 150 at Severn Beach on 21st and 520 at Severnside from 06.45-09.45hrs on 22nd were all moving up channel. Widely reported in May with 500 at CVL on 2nd the only large concentration.

**Breeding** At Compton Martin three pairs raised 33 young during the summer, 15 young (in three broods) being raised by the most successful pair.

**Barn Swallow return passage and departure** A roost of 500, mainly juveniles, was noted at CVL on July 2nd. 1500 roosted here on July 20th and 1000 on 27th. On the last date there was also a roost of 800 on Congresbury Moor. Return passage peaked in from mid to late September as usual with 5,000 at Steep Holm on 16th, 550 to SE in 30 minutes at Weston STW on 26th and 720 to S in 2.5 hours on Severnside on 30th. Good numbers remained into early October with up to 70 at various sites in the first week. After this 21 passed Sand Point on 10th only six more were reported with the last at Severn Beach on 26th.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
123	98	130	129	124	117	122	155	123	140

Avon BBS Index 1994=100

## HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

Common passage migrant and breeder. BBS Avon population estimate, 4300 pairs. BBS distribution, 38%. UK 25-yr change: down 65%. Local ten-yr change: down 31%.  
Ten-yr av. first date: March 30th in 1970, April 1st in 1990, March 23rd today. Ten-yr av. last date: Nov. 15th in 1970, Oct. 25th by 2000, 29th today. Days present: 230 in 1970, 216 days by 1980, 220 today.

**Arrival** One reported at Lawrence Weston Moor on March 14th – a very early date, the next being over two weeks later when three were at CVL on 29th. Reported regularly in April from 1st when one was at CVL, but in low numbers until mid-month with 20 at Steep Holm on 12th the first double figure count. Elsewhere numbers remained low during the month with the largest count of 60 moving up channel in three hours at Severnside on 22nd. The peak spring count at CVL was 300 on May 6th.

**Breeding** 41 nests noted at Sidcot, a number described by the observer as rather below average. There were 17 occupied nests at Sea Mills Station with a further two nests on nearby houses. Breeding was also reported from a handful of other sites.

**Post-breeding and departure** There were regularly 100 or so over Wrington in August and up to 40 noted daily at Old Sodbury during September (described as the best year since 1991 by the observer), probably breeding birds plus their offspring. Isolated counts included 70 at Failand on Aug. 24th, 210 over a Weston-s-Mare garden on 28th, 600 at CVL on Sept. 3rd and 200 at Kilcott Lake on 17th. Large numbers were on the move by mid-September with 150 to S in 30 minutes at OPS on 9th then 1000 here on 23rd including a gathering of 500 around the reactor building and many moving to S. Steep Holm logged 3100 between Sept. 6th and Oct. 4th with an impressive 2000 on 26th. Few reports after the first week of October but at Pooles Wharf, Hotwells a brood fledged as late as Oct. 12th, the last record of the year and an early departure.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
92	68	71	83	73	63	75	75	65	63

Avon BBS Index. 1994=100

## TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Uncommon passage migrant and very scarce breeder. UK 25-yr change: down 81%.  
Ten-yr av. first date: April 7th in 1970, March 31st by 1995, April 2nd today. Ten-yr av. last date: Oct. 5th in 1970, Sept 26th in 1990, 29th today.

The good spring passage total was influenced by almost daily coverage of the best site this year.

**Spring** The first record was of three at Sand Point on April 4th followed by one at Northwick Warth next day. Sand Point produced 79 bird-days in spring from the first mentioned above until the last on May 16th. Numbers peaked at twelve on April 15th and again on 18th with two thirds of the total between April 15th and 23rd. Other sites included Charlton Fields, CVL, Dolebury, Lawrence Weston Moor, OPS, Weston STW and Severnside and collectively produced a further 31 bird-days in spring with a peak of four at the last on 15th.

**Breeding** In May three males were singing at Burrington Ham (KEV).

**Autumn** The first was one over New Passage on Aug. 5th. Sand Point again dominated with 20 noted between Aug. 9th and Sept. 11th with a peak of three on Aug. 27th and Sept. 9th plus late sightings of one or two on Oct. 9th and 10th. Other records were of one at Puxton Moor on Aug. 22nd, four on Steep Holm on 24th, one at Severn Beach on 26th and another at Charlton Fields on Sept. 17th.

	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Spring	52	18	61	179	54	25	68	24	61	111
Autumn	46	12	26	32	6	12	22	14	37	30

Passage: total individuals

**MEADOW PIPIT** *Anthus pratensis*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. A few breed. BBS distribution 4%. UK 25-yr change: down 46%.

**2005/06 Winter** In the first two months of the year the largest numbers reported were 65 at Weston STW in January, 50 near Puxton on 21st, 40+ at Bishop Sutton on Feb. 5th and 45 at Weston Moor on 18th. Smaller flocks of between 11 and 36 were recorded at Churchill, Congresbury and Wrington.

**Spring** Passage was underway by at least March 11th when 21 moved up channel at Severnside in an hour. Flocks around this time included 30 at Bishop Sutton on March 1st, 25 at Yatton on 3rd and 30 near Sandford on 21st. In April fewer were reported apart from 100 at Northwick Warth on 20th and 32 up channel there in three hours on 22nd. Elsewhere 20 were at Charlton Fields on April 8th. One on Steep Holm on May 27th was presumably a late migrant.

**Breeding** Nine at Burrington on June 8th was one of very few reports in the breeding season. Two pairs were noted in summer at Weston STW and singing birds were present in small numbers on the salt marshes at Severn Beach, Northwick Warth and Aust Warth in the spring.

**Autumn passage** Six at Northwick Warth on Sept. 5th were perhaps some of the first migrants followed by twelve at Severn Beach on 9th and five at CVL on 15th. Larger numbers were on the move later in the month with 26 over Leap Valley, Downend, on 23rd and the same number next day. The first big influx was on 25th when 140 were at Northwick Warth. There were 110 here on Oct. 2nd and 100 on 14th. Other counts during October included 30 at Wavering Down on 4th, 50 at BG on 7th, 80 at CI-Y on 8th and 15th and 65 at Chittening Warth on 11th.

**2006/07 winter** 36 at Weston STW in December was the only flock reported at the end of the year.

**ROCK PIPIT** *Anthus petrosus*

*A.p.petrosus* - Uncommon breeding resident on the coast. Fairly common and more widespread as a coastal passage migrant and winter visitor; scarce inland on spring or autumn passage. Wintering birds include an unknown proportion of the subspecies *A.p.littoralis*.

**First winter period** In January and February there were up to ten at Severn Beach, eight at both Portishead and Littleton Warth and up to four at Anchor Head, CI-Y, Chittening Warth, New Passage and Aust Warth. One on the tidal Avon opposite Underfall Yard on Feb. 10th and one at New Cut on 21st might refer to the same individual, unusual this far up the river.

**Spring** On March 3rd, 18 were flushed into view by a high tide at Portishead as were at least ten at Chittening/Severn Beach. 15 were at PW on 12th but numbers dwindled and later in the month no more than four were reported from the usual coastal sites.

**Breeding** On Steep Holm present at four traditional sites with breeding proved at one and probable at another two. Two were at Clevedon Pier on June 11th and a nest was located but with the outcome unknown. Three at Sand Point on April 20th presumably represented breeding birds. Bred at Wain's Hill where one was seen carrying food on July 1st. One or two throughout July at CI-Y might have involved the Wain's Hill birds.

**Autumn and winter** Returning birds seen from Sept. 23rd when one was at Northwick Warth then three at Severn Beach on 28th. A bird heard at CVL on Oct. 6th was perhaps most likely to have been this species rather than Water Pipit judging by the date but was not definitely assigned to either by the observer. No other reports from the reservoirs this year. The highest count at the end of the year was eight at Portishead on Nov. 26th with up to five at CI-Y, Chittening Warth, Severn Beach and Littleton Warth. One was at Sea Mills on Nov. 12th. The low bird-day total for December probably represents observer apathy.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	2006
Bird-days	55	33	53	6	6	10	9	0	7	16	18	5	218

Total bird-days by month

**Scandinavian Rock Pipit** *Anthus petrosus littoralis*

Probably very scarce or rare passage migrant/winter visitor.

One at Severn Beach on March 3rd (PDB, JPM). This is the ninth published record for the Avon area since the first in 1994. All have occurred between March 3rd and April 8th. Individuals of this race might well be present in winter but are only safely identified as they moult into summer plumage.

**WATER PIPIT** *Anthus spinoletta*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant to CVL, scarce on the coast.

A poor year both inland and at the coast.

*Inland sites* Recorded only at CVL where there were four on Jan. 4th and three on 9th but then no more until March when one were noted on 7th, 24th and 26th. In autumn single birds were seen on Oct. 12th and 29th followed by two on Nov. 3rd, one on 10th, five on 15th, and one on 16th and 21st on Dec. 19th. The low numbers were mainly due to the high water levels.

*Coastal sites* One was at Cl-Y on Feb. 18th and again on March 16th and 18th. At RPD there were one or two on four dates from Jan. 7th to March 17th. One was at Chittening Warth on Feb. 4th and one, perhaps the same, at nearby Severn Beach on the big high tide on March 3rd. Later in the year the only record was of one at Severn Beach on Nov. 4th.

**YELLOW WAGTAIL** *Motacilla flava*

*M. f. flavissima*. Uncommon passage migrant and very scarce summer visitor. UK 25-yr change: down 66%.

Ten-yr av. first date: March 30th in 1970, April 9th by 1990, 7th today. Ten-yr av. last date: Oct. 5th in 1970, 22nd by 1980, 12th today.

*Spring* The first were single birds at Sand Point on April 4th and 10th, followed by one at Weston STW on April 10th and 11th then, on 15th, two were there, one was at Sand Point and two at Severn Beach. Small numbers, up to five, then noted at various coastal sites during the rest of the month plus twelve at Northwick Warth on 20th, 15 at Sand Point on 21st and eleven up channel at Severnside from 06.45 to 09.45hrs on 22nd. The only records away from the coast in April were single birds on three dates at Charlton Fields and at CVL on 24th and 29th.

Passage continued into May with up to three at various coastal sites and a peak of six at Northwick Warth on 11th, after which only two more were seen with the last at Sand Point on 28th. Spring passage involved about 125 birds (*cf.* 59 in 2003, 121 in 2004 and 67 in 2005).

*Breeding season* No records this year. The last confirmed breeding was in 2002.

*Autumn* Return passage began on July 21st when one was at New Passage. Six more were seen during the month followed by a further 42 in August, most of them on Severnside and Sand Point/Middle Hope including the peak of five on Severnside on 30th and at Middle Hope on 31st. A further 75 or so were seen in September divided between coastal sites and CVL. Numbers at the latter built up to seven on 13th whilst there were 13 around cattle at Middle Hope on 4th and 14 here on 9th. The last was one at Wessex STW on Oct. 7th and 8th. About 125 birds were recorded in autumn this year (*cf.* 132 in 2003, 368 in 2004 and 160 in 2005).

**GREY WAGTAIL** *Motacilla cinerea*

Fairly common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. BBS distribution 9%. UK 25-yr change: down 12%. Local ten-yr change; stable.

*Winter* Records of small numbers came from about 57 localities (co-incidentally the same as in 2005) outside the breeding season with a maximum of five at Northwick Warth on Oct. 23rd (a date when migrants were probably involved) and four at three sites.

*Migrants* At Leap Valley, Downend the first of the autumn was seen on Aug. 19th with another on Sept. 9th and three over on Oct 1st. Otherwise under-recorded as a migrant with one to S over Clevedon on Sept. 10th, one over New Passage on 29th and another to ENE over Battery Point during a migration watch on Oct. 15th.

*Breeding* Bred at CVL and Sea Mills with breeding season records from a further six localities.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
63	68	51	93	120	140	109	83	110	93

Avon BBS index 1994=100

**WHITE/PIED WAGTAIL** *Motacilla alba***White Wagtail** *M. a. alba*

Uncommon passage migrant.

Ten-yr av. first date: April 1st in 1970, 5th in 1985, March 26th today. Ten-yr av. last date: Sept. 27th in 1970, 18th in 1980, Oct. 17th today. These results have been influenced by one or two exceptionally late birds.

A very poor year in both spring and autumn.

*Spring passage* The first was an early individual reported at BG on March 2nd and 4th, it was followed by one at Portishead Boating Lake on 21st, one at Severn Beach on 28th and 29th, and three at CI-Y on 30th. April opened with two at BG on 1st then two at CVL on 2nd and one here on 4th.

Five were at BG on 9th with one next day, two at PW on 13th, one at OPS on 17th, six at Northwick Warth on 20th, two here on 21st (when there were four at BG) and three next day, with the last of the spring were two at Severn Beach on May 4th and one at CVL next day.

*Autumn passage* Autumn records comprised four at CI-Y on Aug. 24th, an adult male at CVL on Sept. 3rd, one here on 19th, two on 21st and a first-winter at Charlton Fields on Oct. 7th.

	Mar	Apr	May	:	Aug	Sep	Oct
Bird-days	7	24	3		4	4	1

Monthly bird-day totals

**Pied Wagtail** *M.a yarrelli*

Common breeding resident, winter visitor, and uncommon migrant. BBS distribution 39%. UK 25-yr change: down 5%. Local ten-yr change; up 33%.

*Winter 2005/06* The largest gatherings in the first two months were 80 by the R. Chew on Feb. 16th, 72 on playing fields at Chew Valley School on 6th, 40 in fields near Long Ashton on Jan. 20th and over Fishponds next day, and 30 at Cabot Park on Feb. 13th. A pre-roost gathering of at least 250 at OPS on March 17th might have been swelled by migrants.

*Spring migration* One moved up-channel in an hour at Severnside on March 11th with seven more in three hours on April 22nd. A noisy flock of 40+ flying over Bishop Sutton on the evening of April 16th were probably going to roost.

*Breeding season* No significant breeding records received.

*Autumn migration and second winter period* A regular flock on Northwick Warth in August peaked at 40 on 8th and probably included local birds and their young. In September there were 27 on 8th and 35 at BG on 9th, 24 at Bristol Airport on 17th and 25 at Winscombe on 27th. Migrants in October included 45 to ENE at Battery Point from 07.00-11.30hrs and 55 down channel at New Passage from 07.30-09.30hrs both on 15th.

In the second winter period the only day-time flocks reported were both on New Year's Eve when there were 23 at Widcombe Common and eleven in Morrison's car park at Fishponds. There was a pre-roost gathering of 150 at CVL on Oct. 7th. The OPS roost reached 300 in December.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
103	129	119	95	114	131	138	115	154	104

Avon BBS Index 1994=100

**BOHEMIAN WAXWING** *Bombycilla garrulus*

Very scarce irruptive winter visitor.

**2005** One record: one at Severn Beach on Nov. 20th, 2005 (PDB). This record was erroneously omitted from last year's report – *Eds*.

None was reported in 2006.

**WHITE-THROATED DIPPER** *Cinclus cinclus*

Uncommon breeding resident, present on many suitable streams. UK 25-yr change: down 3%. Ten-yr local change: stable.

The best bird-day total for over a decade was boosted by 69 bird-days from Winford Brook and nearby sites (RMI), but otherwise a rather poor year.

North of the Avon reported from Willsbridge Mill (nest in April), Golden Valley, Wick (two in April and one in September), Blaise Castle Estate (one in June) and Broadmead Brook, West Kingston (nr. Marshfield) in July. Two on the R. Frome in Chipping Sodbury in November were unusual (the river was in flood at this time).

South of the Avon most records came from Winford Brook, where it was noted in every month except June. Birds were display flighting here in late March and early April, two were in a territorial dispute in November and song was heard again in December. Also noted at Chew Stoke (in March), Compton Dando (January, March and April), Keynsham (January), Wollard (January and March), Publow (January and March), Midford (January and September) and Pensford (July).

	1998	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Bird-days	66	79	72	39	29	38	56	51	89

Avon area - total bird-days

**WINTER WREN** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Abundant breeding resident. BBS Avon population estimate 47,000 pairs, BBS distribution 97%. England 25-yr change: up 36%. Local 10-yr change: down 2%.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	WBC
%Change 2005-06	-9	-8	-17	-20	-6

A population fall caused by the cold first winter period.

The falls in the winter 2005/06 survey counts suggest a poor breeding season in 2005, and the cold weather itself caused the biggest drop in numbers since the 1996/97 winter. In Clifton numbers were at their lowest level since 1994 from early in the year through to the end of the breeding season, when they were briefly back to average, before dropping back in the autumn. The year-on-year fall of 20% brought the annual figure to its lowest level since monitoring began. Song was recorded on 84% of CABS visits, and was almost continuous from Feb. 13th.

There was a report from Warmley of a pair nesting in a kitchen extractor fan outlet, which presumably created ideal conditions. There were at least 16 territories on Steep Holm, but success appeared low.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
81	92	107	109	107	105	102	99	103	86

Avon BBS Index 1994=100

**HEDGE ACCENTOR** *Prunella modularis*

Abundant breeding resident. BBS Avon population estimate 19,500 pairs. BBS distribution 94%. England 25-yr change: down 27%. Local 10-yr change: up 33%.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	WBC
%Change 2005-06	6	9	-2	-4	6

Another stable year.

The cold winter had no noticeable effect on the population which has been stable for the past eight years. Song was recorded from Dec.11th, 2005, and was virtually continuous until the start of July. There were occasional song records again from mid-November onwards.

In total it was recorded on 55% of CABS visits. There were twelve territories on Steep Holm, a normal number by recent standards.

Very surprisingly a total of 17 was among prey items caught by the Peregrines at St John's Church, Bath, between September and November. The implication must be that they were caught in flight probably at night.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
107	93	122	117	117	117	124	116	120	118

Avon BBS index 1994=100

**EUROPEAN ROBIN** *Erithacus rubecula*

Abundant breeding resident and passage migrant. BBS Avon population estimate 34,000 pairs. BBS distribution 96%. England 25-yr change: up 55%. Local 10-yr change: up 12%.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	WBC
%Change 2005-06	-2	2	2	8	3

A stable year. They were unaffected by the cold spring, and seem to have had a good breeding season, although low numbers were recorded in the last quarter in Clifton. Song was continuous from the start of the year to mid-June, and began again at the start of August. It was recorded on 90% of CABS visits. Two pairs bred on Steep Holm.

There was an abrupt influx on Dundry on Sept. 16th when 39 were present.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
110	119	126	122	119	115	119	118	120	122

Avon BBS index 1994=100

**COMMON NIGHTINGALE** *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Scarce breeding summer migrant; Scarce/very scarce passage migrant. Local 10 yr change: down 70%. Ten-yr av first date: April 20th in 1970, 25th by 1980, 21st today.

The first record was from PW on April 27th. On May 2nd one was heard at Stockwood Reserve, the first since 1989. On 10th another was heard and seen at CVL. On 16th three were singing at Inglestone and on 21st one was heard in a hedgerow near Tormarton. Five pairs bred in Lower Woods, but no full survey was undertaken which may account for the lower totals. On Sept.16th there was a very unusual autumn migrant record from Dundry (DN).

Av 1987-1996	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
18	6	18	14	6	7	5	2	3	11	5

Avon area - estimate of total numbers of pairs attempting to breed

**BLACK REDSTART** *Phoenicurus ochrurus*

Scarce/uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Rare in summer; in recent years may have bred in 1986 and 1994.

A second consecutive poor year.

*Winter/spring* A male was at Weston-s-Mare Lake from Feb. 14th to 28th, and a female was at Long Ashton on April 7th with another at Portishead Police HQ on 11th.

*Autumn* On June 24th a female/immature was seen at RPD. On July 17th a female/immature was seen at OPS, and again on 20th. In October birds were noted from various sites in Clevedon on 23rd, 27th and 29th. On Dec. 4th one was at the Royal Hotel, Portishead, and on 10th a male was at OPS.

Av 1987-1996	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
13	40	23	6+	22	80	17	25	24+	16	12

Avon area - total bird-days

**COMMON REDSTART** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Uncommon passage migrant and very scarce summer visitor. England 25-yr change: up 93%.

Ten-yr av first date: April 6th in 1970, 13th in 1980, 5th now. Ten-yr av last date: Sept. 28th in 1970, Oct. 22nd by 1980, stable around Oct. 14th since 1986. Total time spent averages 187 days, with an increasing trend since 1987.

A very good spring passage, and an average autumn one.

*Spring* Passage began on April 4th, peaked on 21st, when 14 of the total of 65 were seen, and finished on 26th. In 2004 the peak was on 17/18th, and in 2005 it was on 19th.

The first seen was a male at Queen Charlton on 4th. On 5th males were seen at both Sand Point and Wooscombe Bottom, and individuals were noted at four sites on both 8th and 9th. In the next five days only two were seen, but on the 15th there were three different individuals, on the 16th, five, and on 19th, nine, including the first identified female. There were eight on 20th and 14 on 21st, but only four in the following three days, and the last was at Sand Point on 26th. Two late individuals were noted, both females, at Sand Point on May 6th and on June 3rd.

*Common Redstart cont.*

Of the records, 37 were from the coast, but there were reports from 13 inland sites, and it is probable that the passage was on a broad front.

**Autumn** The first was a juvenile at OPS on Aug. 12th, and a male was seen here from 13th to 15th. There was a trickle of reports for the remainder of August, and a minor peak when seven were seen at four sites on Sept. 10th. The last record of the normal passage was of two at Severn Beach on the customary date of Sept. 14th.

There were then two unusually late records, at Weston-in-Gordano on Oct. 22nd and at PW on 29th, although neither came into the historic last five late date range, which begins on Oct. 31st.

	Av 1987-96	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Spring	26	17	15	8	32	25	37	26	49	34	65
Autumn	33	50	27	17	27	21	27	35	30	26	36

Avon area - total birds recorded on spring and autumn passage

**WHINCHAT** *Saxicola rubetra*

Uncommon passage migrant, usually more numerous in autumn. Formerly bred, now rare in mid-summer. England ten-yr change: down 32%. Ten-yr av first date: April 12th in 1970, 22nd by 1994, 20th now. Median spring passage date: 2004 May 1st, 2005 May 3rd. Ten-yr av last date: Oct 10th in 1970, 21st by 1990, 15th now. Median autumn passage date: 2004 Sept. 10th, 2005 Sept. 7th. Average time spent 180 days, no trend.

A normal spring and an above-average autumn passage.

**Spring** The passage, totalling 48 birds, began abruptly on April 20th, peaked on 21st, and there was a second minor peak on May 3rd/4th. The median date was a week earlier than for the last two years, on April 23rd.

The first birds were seen at Failand and Sand Point on April 20th, and on 21st eleven were recorded from eight widely scattered sites. Four were seen on 22nd and six on 23rd, and then very few until May 3rd and 4th when five were seen on each day. The last was one at PW on May 14th.

**Autumn** A juvenile was noted at OPS on July 6th, but the next was not seen until Aug. 11th. Passage, totalling 138 birds, continued at a low level throughout August, peaked between Sept 9th and 18th, when 69 were seen, with a further ten on 21st. A few trickled through until the last two on Oct. 9th, rather early by recent standards. The median date was Sept. 12th. An exceptional group of ten was seen at Charlton Fields on Sept. 15th, and there were six here on 21st and five on 24th.

	Av 1987-96	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Spring	43	27	44	60	73	50	22	45	46	41	48
Autumn	114	148	44	65	184	121	180	188	71	90	138

Avon area - total birds recorded on spring and autumn passage

**STONECHAT** *Saxicola torquata*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant and scarce breeding species. England ten-yr change: up 184%. Local ten-yr change: has begun to breed again.

About 60 wintered, observed spring passage in March totalled 157, there was evidence for a maximum of twelve breeding pairs, and an autumn passage of 341.

**First winter period** In January, a maximum of about 58 individuals were present at 24 sites of which twelve were inland. In February perhaps 35 were present at 15 sites, six inland.

**Spring passage.** In March there was a clear passage which peaked between March 11th and 15th when 98 different birds were recorded, including 17 at PW on 14th. In all 162 were counted.

**Breeding** There were records indicating probable breeding by eight pairs at six sites: Felton Common, Kenn Moor, Sand Point, Weston Moor, Walton Moor and OPS. Breeding season records also came from a further four sites: Langridge, Clapton Moor, Burrington and Weston STW. The cold winter does not seem to have affected the population.

**Autumn passage** 68 were recorded in September, and passage was continuous throughout October, peaking between 7th and 17th when 103 were reported, including ten at Chittering Warth on 11th.

**Second winter period** In November up to 55 individuals were reported from 22 sites and in December up to 42 were noted from 19 sites.



	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Max. Jan/Feb	15	26	22	36	30	25	38	44	48	57
Breeding prs	0	1	2	2	5	3	3	8	11	12
Max. Nov/Dec	25	32	27	59	47	58	40	45	62	55

Avon area - apparent number of individuals present in the two winter periods and total breeding pairs

## NORTHERN WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Fairly common passage migrant, mainly on the coast. UK ten-yr change: up 2%.

Ten-yr first date: March 10th in 1970, became later to 16th in 1988, then sharply earlier to 6th in 2000, since when it has become later to 10th now. Ten-yr av last date Oct. 31st in 1970, 23rd in 1979, then steadily later to Nov. 5th today.

An unprecedented spring passage.

**Spring passage** A huge passage of 1894 birds began exceptionally late (the latest since 1985) on March 25th, and was slow and spasmodic right through April until a very large wave from 19th to 24th when at least 956 were counted in six days. The median date was April 20th. A second minor wave from May 2nd to 4th saw 130 in three days which may have been partly from the Greenland population. After that ones and twos continued to be recorded through to May 31st; there were two June records.

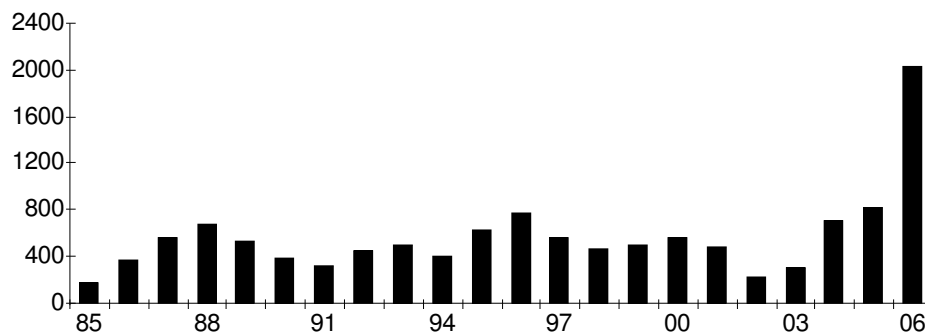
On March 21st a bird was seen at Failand, and another at CVL. On 25th ten were recorded at Dundry, and ten on the coast, and passage was then continuous, although numbers were low, except on Dundry. On April 15th, 90 were seen at eight sites, and on 19th, 97 were counted on Dundry and 40 at Sand Point. On 21st, 416 were counted, including 113 on Severnside, 70 at Sand Point, 70 at Queen Charlton and 62 at Dundry. After that the largest numbers were seen at Queen Charlton and Dundry rather than the coast. The second wave from May 3rd to 5th was largely coastal. Sightings continued daily until 16th with a further 22 to the end of the month. One was noted at Sand Point on June 4th, and the last, a male, was at CI-Y on 11th.

**Autumn passage** On return passage a more normal 560 was counted, with three distinct waves, the small first one peaking around Aug. 21st, the largest peaking between Sept. 7th and 10th, and the third was more drawn out lasting from Sept. 23rd to Oct. 2nd. The median date was Sept. 15th. The dates of these peaks are very similar to those for 2005, and presumably involved different populations. Small numbers continued to be seen throughout October.

Passage began with a female at CI-Y on July 23rd and there was one on 28th at OPS. They were seen daily from Aug. 15th, but numbers remained less than ten at any site until Sept. 8th when 24 were seen at Sand Point, but the largest subsequent count anywhere was 15. From Oct. 4th no count was greater than five. There were daily sightings to Oct. 26th, two at Sand Point on 29th, and then single birds here on Oct. 20th, Nov. 8th, 9th, 10th, and the last on Severnside on 11th.

	Av 1987-96	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Spring	526	564	474	503	571	491	219	338	820	814	1894
Autumn	353	459	340	452	565	338	518	603	546	651	560

Avon area - spring and autumn passage total bird-days.



Wheatear - Spring passage total bird-days 1985-2006

**RING OUZEL** *Turdus torquatus*

Scarce passage migrant, very scarce in autumn, mostly on or near the coast. 25-yr av. first date: March 31st, last date Oct. 25th.

A good spring passage and a normal autumn one.

The first, a male, was seen at Aust Warth on March 25th, and another at Aust Service Station on April 3rd. Further males were seen at Middle Hope on April 9th, and Sand Point on 20th. Two were at Sand Point on 21st, one of which stayed until 24th. A colour-ringed female was found at Severn Beach on 21st, and a male there on 23rd.

In the autumn a male at Maes Knoll on Dundry on Oct.15th during a migration watch was the only record.

	Av 1987-96	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Spring	11	7	7	3	11	2	3	5	3	3	10
Autumn	1	2	0	0	1	2	1	2	1	19	1

Avon area -spring and autumn passage, total bird-days

**COMMON BLACKBIRD** *Turdus merula*

Abundant resident, passage status uncertain. BBS Avon population estimate 38,000 pairs. BBS distribution 100%. England 25-yr change: down 8%. Local ten-yr change: up 18%.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	WBC
%Change 2005-6	45	37	-2	7	-43

A poor breeding season.

The 2005 breeding season seems to have been a good one as an increase was noted by both 2005/06 WGS and WBC. However it was a cold winter, and BBS figures showed a slight fall. CABS recorded average numbers to the end of the breeding season, but breeding success seems to have been poor as autumn and winter numbers were below average, and records for the 2006/07 winter suggest a substantial fall. The first song was recorded on Jan. 9th, and nest building on Feb. 4th. However, the first fledged young were not seen until April 16th. Four pairs bred on Steep Holm. Song was noted on 27% of CABS visits, from April 2nd to June 25th. The warm weather in early December produced records of song on 5th, 15th, 16th and 19th.

*Migration* There was an unusual record of 35 at Dundry on March 25th, presumably migrants. In the autumn a group of twelve was recorded here on Oct. 5th; there were 21 at Northwick Warth on 28th and a fall of 50 at OPS on Nov. 19th.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
120	120	133	127	125	124	120	115	122	120

Avon BBS Index 1994=100

**FIELDFARE** *Turdus pilaris*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; can occur in large numbers in hard winters.

Ten-yr av first date: Oct. 11th in 1970, falling to Sept. 22nd by 1995, then becoming later to Oct. 12th today. Ten-yr av last date: April 18th in 1970, falling to March 30th in 1976, then rising to April 21st in 1995, and 15th now. Days present; 176 in 1970, 192 by 1976, falling to 161 by 1997, 181 today.

The first winter was average, whilst the second was poor.

*2005/06 winter* WBC showed a rate of 21.2/hr, 7% higher than in the previous winter. In January the largest flock was 840 at Burnett on 16th, and there were 500 in Wild Country Lane near BG on 21st. Other records were of 150 or less. One was seen guarding a Cotoneaster bush against all-comers, like a Mistle Thrush, at Banwell. In February the largest flocks were 250 at Bagstone, and 240 at Aust Warth. In March flock sizes were lower still, the largest being 130 at Queen Charlton on 27th. Very small numbers were seen in April, the last two records were also from Queen Charlton, four on 21st and one on 25th, ten days later than the ten-year average.

*Second half-year* A very late and slow arrival. The first record was of four at Clevedon on Oct. 8th, and the next was of 35 at Wain's Hill, Cl-Y, during a migration watch on 15th. There were no other reports until 26th when one was at Sand Point and two at OPS. Suddenly on Nov. 1st there was a huge morning movement:

500 were recorded at Clevedon. From 2nd to 5th there were many reports, the largest being of 400 on 4th at Burrington. Quite small flocks were recorded in the rest of November, although 200 were seen at Sand Point moving SW on 19th. In December there were few reports until 15th when "hundreds" were reported at Weston STW, and there were 1000 here on 18th. "Hundreds" were again seen at Cl-Y on 24th, 300 at Compton Dando on 26th, and 1000 at Marshfield on 31st. Apart from the occasional substantial groups, the general impression was that their absence was notable.

1997/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	2006/07
8.8	10	24.3	11.2	17.3	9.9	14.3	19.8	21.2	4.0

Rate per hour recorded by WBC

## SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Common breeding resident, which declined in the 1980s. Status as a passage migrant and winter visitor uncertain. BBS Avon population estimate 6000 pairs. BBS distribution 80%. England 25-yr change: down 30%. Local 10-yr change: up 43%.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	WBC
% Change 2005-6	-24	36	-8	-5	35

Slightly lower numbers.

The cold winter was probably responsible both for the higher counts in WGS gardens, as birds sought shelter, and for the lower BBS figures, because the winter weather led to population losses.

CABS showed little change overall. Song was continuous from Dec. 24th to April 17th, and occasional until June 3rd. It began again on Nov. 12th. In all, birds were heard on 49% of visits. The song of one at OPS in May incorporated an Oystercatcher alarm into its repertoire. Two pairs bred on Steep Holm.

Twelve were present at OPS on Oct. 14th, and ten flew over Sand Point on 17th. Between Nov. 2nd and 14th, 115 were recorded migrating across Sand Point.

	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
BBS	80	96	113	119	118	117	114	115	115	107
CVL	12	21	12	14	16	25	15	10	15	10

Avon BBS index 1994=100, and numbers of singing males around the perimeter of CVL

## REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Can occur in large numbers in hard winters.

Ten-yr av. first date: Sept. 29th in 1970, growing later to Oct. 5th by 1988, falling fairly steadily to Sept. 25th now. Ten-yr av. last date: Around April 12th from 1970 to 1997, falling to 4th now. Days present constant at about 190.

Despite the cold winter very few were present in the first winter period. Some substantial movement was noted in October and December, WBC figures were the lowest since 2002/03.

*Winter 2005/06* The WBC rate at 13.4/hr was 22% lower than the previous winter, and about half the rate of the Winter Atlas. The largest flocks reported in January were 100 at New Passage on 25th and at Lower Langford on 30th. In February just one flock of 100 was reported, on 21st, from the Long Ashton Park and Ride. In March 120 were on Dundry on 17th and 400 at Compton Dando on 18th. There were only two April records, one at OPS on 2nd and 49 at Burnett on 15th, ten days later than the average for the past decade.

*Second half-year* For the third year running the first record was from Steep Holm where 15 were seen on Sept. 26th. The next were four here on Oct. 7th and one at Leap Valley, Downend, on the same date. Small numbers were recorded on the migration watch day, 16th, and the first real influx came on 24th when hundreds moved south over Dundry by day, and SW by night. 200 were at OPS on 26th, the same number was at Aust the following day, and 300 were at Sand Point on 29th and 30th. In November smaller numbers were noted on the coast but there were 300 at Kenn Moor on 4th. In December there was a large movement, with Fieldfares, between the 15th and 18th, and hundreds were present at Cl-Y on 24th. 300 were seen at Compton Dando on 26th and finally, 1500 were seen flying to W at Dundry on Dec. 31st.

At the Peregrine site at St. John's Church, Bath, the remains of nine were found in October and twelve in November.

1997/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	2006/07
7	9.7	12.3	12.3	12.2	4.9	11.2	17.2	13.4	8.1

Rate per hour recorded by WBC

**MISTLE THRUSH** *Turdus viscivorus*

Uncommon breeding resident, passage migrant and probable winter visitor. BBS Distribution 28%. England 25-yr change: down 41%. Local ten-yr change: down 50%.

The WBC in 2005/06 recorded 161 in 400 hours, a slight increase on the previous winter. BBS found them in only 28% of squares and counted 117 in 550 hours, the lowest rate yet. There were six flocks of more than ten, the largest, 43, seen at Clapton Moor on Sept. 1st. A total of 30 was seen on Kenn Moor on July 15th, and 19 at Wrington on Oct. 8th.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
88	63	65	61	62	62	71	48	53	43

Avon BBS index 1994=100

**CETTI'S WARBLER** *Cettia cetti*

Uncommon resident, scarce winter visitor, and passage migrant. First definitely bred in 1995.

An average by current standards.

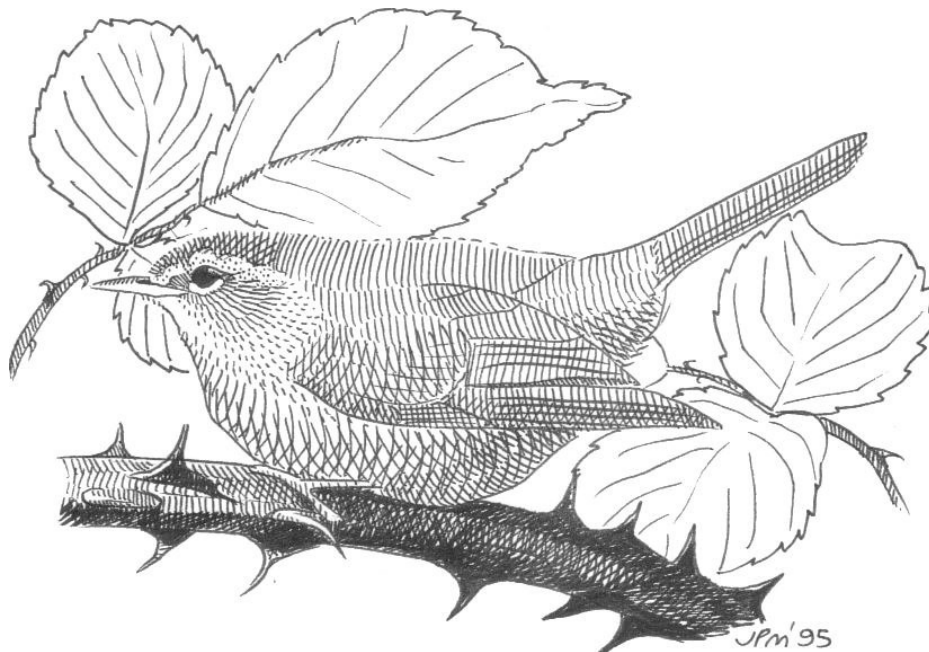
CVL There were 22 singing males around the lake in June (cf. 17 in 2005).

*Elsewhere* In May and June, singing males were recorded from the following ten sites, listed in alphabetical order: Aust, Backwell Lake, BL, Blake's Pool (Cl-Y), OPS, Sand Bay, Severn Beach, Uphill, Weston Moor, Weston STW (five territories) and Weston-s-Mare airfield.

Outside the breeding season calls were heard at the following nine additional sites: Avonmouth STW, Cabot Park, Congresbury Moor, North Weston, PW, RPD, Sandford, Wolvershill, and Yatton.

	1994	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
CVL Singing males	2	1	2	4	8	12	10	12	14	18	15	17	22
Other Records	5	19	4	5	14	18	57	24	51	31	78	67	103

Avon area - singing males at CVL, and total records from other sites, 1994-2006



**COMMON GRASSHOPPER WARBLER** *Locustella naevia*

Uncommon passage migrant; scarce breeding summer visitor. UK 10-yr change: up 59%. Ten-yr av first date: April 20th in 1970, falling to 14th in 1981, and 16th now. Ten-yr av last date: as autumn records are rare, this has fluctuated around Sept. 17th.

The best spring passage since 1984 at least, and there was some evidence of possible breeding.

*Spring* Passage began abruptly on April 15th with reports of one on Severnside, five at Sand Point and nine at Weston STW. There was a steady passage to 24th, 22 being recorded at nine mainly coastal sites. A further ten were recorded to May 8th.

*Breeding season* In late May and June singing males were heard at Congresbury Moor, The Niatts (ST5985) and two at Lower Knowle Farm (ST5884), and there were three territories at Weston STW. There was no direct evidence of successful breeding.

*Autumn* Six were caught by GVRs in September, the last on the 29th – the only records.

	Av 1987-96	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Spring	14	9	15	9	23	13	20	6	39	37	47
Autumn	na	8	31	7	11	38	24	12	6	29	6

Avon area - spring and autumn passage records

**SEDGE WARBLER** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. BBS distribution 9%. BBS population estimate 500 pairs. England 25-yr change: down 2%. Local ten-yr change: down 11%.

Ten-yr av first date: April 12th in 1970, becoming later to 18th in 1978, then steadily earlier to 11th today. Ten-yr av last date: Sept. 26th in 1970, rising to Oct. 6th in 1988, and stable around Sept. 21st since 1996. Days present: Fluctuating around the average of 167.

An average year by current standards.

*Spring* First noted on April 16th at Chittening Warth, passage peaked on 23rd and 24th, when a total of 23 was recorded from seven widespread sites.

*Breeding* There were breeding season records from 32 one-km squares including 80 singing males in ST58 found in a careful study by MD, demonstrating vividly how under-recorded this species has been in recent years. BBS counted 103 in 550 hours. Eleven singing males were found around CVL. There were 16 territories at Weston STW.

*Autumn* There was a small passage between Aug. 14th and 27th, and again from Sept. 9th to 21st. GVRs caught 53 in September including eleven on 6th and twelve on 15th. The last was found on Oct. 1st at Chittening Warth.

**EURASIAN REED WARBLER** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. BBS distribution 11%. BBS population estimate 1200 pairs. England 25-yr change: up 62%. Local ten-yr change: up 130%

Ten-yr av first date: falling steadily from April 26th in 1970, to 11th today. Ten-yr av last date: increasing from Sept. 24th in 1970, to Oct. 1st today. Days present: increasing sharply from 145 in 1970 to 175 today.

A poor breeding season.

*Arrival* Reported from April 17th (the latest date since 1999), and passage probably peaked at the very end of the month, although there were too few records to be certain.

*Breeding* Recorded from 66 one-km squares in the breeding season. 94 singing males were reported in a special study in ST58, 15 pairs were present at Weston STW, twelve on Congresbury Moor, 30 at OPS, eight at CI-Y and Weston Moor, and six at Walton Moor. BBS counted 173 in 550 hrs.

At CVL, DW found 148 nests and ringed 41 broods, although most early broods failed. Thirteen of 128 young ringed were re-trapped.

*Autumn passage* GVRs caught 43 in September, the last on 28th. The last was found at CVL on Oct. 29th, the latest date ever. Previous latest dates were Oct. 23rd in 1996 and 19th in 1997.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
252	268	218	243	247	349	159	282	137	148

CVL - nests found by DW

**BLACKCAP** *Sylvia atricapilla*

Common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. BBS Avon population estimate 8400 pairs. BBS distribution 75%. It is now also a common winter visitor, most frequently recorded in gardens. England 25-yr change: up 121%. Local ten-yr change: up 18%.

	WGS	BBS	CABS
% Change 2005-06	42	-8	-41

A record first-winter period.

*Winter 2005/06* A record total of 4604 Blackcap-days was recorded from 531 apparent individuals. The winter pattern was normal, with a rapid build up through November and December, and then numbers held stable between January and March. Indeed there was virtually no fall off at the end of March and a number of gardens recorded birds into April. One found sick at St Austell, Cornwall, on Jan. 19th had been ringed in Timsbury on Nov. 27th, 2005.

Song was recorded in Henbury on Feb. 5th, and regularly thereafter, and there were increasing records of song in March. Almost no records suggested summer arrivals before the end of March, virtually all being apparently from gardens, although this was not always made explicit. Over-wintering continued to be reported daily up to April 15th, and there were garden records, although possibly of summer visitors, on the 20th and 21st.

*Spring arrival and breeding season* Nine were recorded at five non-garden sites on April 1st, including four in Priors Wood. But the influx was slow to gather pace until 8th when 21 were counted at six sites. A second wave passed through from 20th to 22nd. 20 were noted at Sand Point on 20th, twelve at PW on 21st, and 20 at OPS on the following day. 30 were found here a week later on 29th.

In the breeding season there were 30 singing males at Stockwood Reserve, and 31 around CVL. They were present in 75% of BBS squares, and in slightly lower numbers. CABS recorded song from March 25th to July 16th, and on 35% of visits.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
108	138	155	146	147	147	132	153	156	144

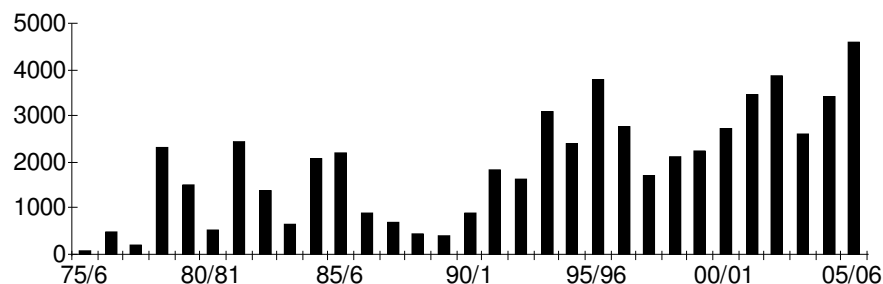
Avon BBS index 1994=100

*Autumn passage* GVRs caught 794 in September including an extraordinary 172 on 8th. In October there were records of up to six on twelve days at coastal sites. No apparent pattern to the movement was detected.

*Second winter period* The first garden record of a possibly wintering bird was on Oct. 4th, and there were records of four others in gardens by the end of the month. 30 Blackcap-days were recorded in November, and 92 in December.

Av 1986/7-1995/6	1996/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	2005/06
1608	2770	1716	2103	2233	2728	3472	3875	2603	3395	4584

Avon area - total Blackcap-days counted in winter



Overwintering Blackcaps, 1975/76 to 2005/06

**GARDEN WARBLER** *Sylvia borin*

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. BBS distribution 7%. England 25-yr change: up 15%. Local ten-yr change: down 72%.

Ten-yr av. first date: falling from April 24th in 1970, to April 12th today. Ten-year av. last date: Fluctuating around Sept. 27th throughout. Days present: Increasing from 149 in 1970, to 167 today.

Another very poor year.

The first was noted from Sand Point on April 20th, and a total of 35 apparently on passage were recorded from then until May 7th.

In the breeding season they were noted at six sites and in 17 BBS squares. BBS counted 29 in 550 hours, the lowest rate yet. However 28 were found around CVL, double the 2005 count, and equal to the previous highest count in 2001.

GVRs caught eleven in September, the last on 29th.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
136	114	88	70	60	50	64	73	71	36

Avon BBS Index 1994=100

**LESSER WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia curruca*

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. BBS distribution 21%. England 25-yr change: down 34%. Local ten-yr change: up 81%. Ten-yr av first arrival date: April 24th in 1970, falling slowly to 20th now. Ten-yr av last date: Sept. 15th in 1970, Sept 22nd in 1985, Oct. 1st today. Days present: 144 days in 1970, 165 now.

BBS results were better than in 2005.

The first arrived on April 17th at Sand Point, and passage peaked between 24th and 30th. Some of the May records from the coast may have been migrants.

Reported from 62 one-km squares in the breeding season, 39 of them BBS squares. 72 were counted by this survey in 550 hrs, an average rate.

There were regular passage records from mid-August, and a small second peak on Sept. 9th and 10th. The last was one at Northwick Warth on 24th.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
56	100	155	100	107	115	85	95	62	100

Avon BBS index 1994=100

**COMMON WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia communis*

Common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. BBS Avon population estimate 2900 pairs. BBS distribution 55%. England 25-yr change: up 48%. Local ten-yr change: down 22%.

Ten-yr av first date: April 12th in 1970, becoming later to 19th by 1994, and then sharply earlier to 12th today. Ten-yr av last date: Fluctuating around Sept 27th. Days present: fluctuating around 165.

**Arrival** The first spring records were of single birds at PW and CVRS on April 14th, and the passage peaked on 22nd when 36 were recorded from four sites, and again on 29th when 50 were recorded at OPS. Passage continued into early May, up to 25 were recorded.

**Breeding** BBS reported them in 55% of the squares surveyed. In the breeding season there were 23 territories at Stockwood Reserve, 13 at Weston STW, seven at PW, and singing males were recorded from 26 other sites, and from 106 BBS squares.

**Autumn** There were 15 at Sand Point on Aug. 5th, and passage continued throughout August, peaking mid-month. GVRs caught ten in September, including six on 15th. There was a minor peak in records on Sept. 9th and 10th, and the last was caught at GVRs on 30th.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
97	84	81	80	86	92	61	73	77	75

Avon BBS Index 1994=100

**DARTFORD WARBLER** *Sylvia undata*

Used to be rare, now a scarce passage migrant/resident. Has bred on the Avon/Somerset border.

One was reported at Sand Point on Jan. 2nd (PAB) and another at Severn Beach on April 1st (PDB). In the autumn single birds were seen at Sand Point on Oct. 16th, 17th and 29th and in November on 2nd and 5th. (PAB). The autumn records probably involved just three individuals.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
4	4	2	3	0	1	2	1	4+	5+

Avon area - total birds seen

**YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER** *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Formerly a rare vagrant, now a very scarce autumn visitor.

Two records: one at PW on Sept. 22nd (SH) and another at Sand Point on Oct. 24th and 27th (JTh *et al.*). These are the 14th and 15th records for the Avon area since the first in 1986 when five were reported. The table below gives the number seen during the past ten years

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
0	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	2	2

Avon area - total birds seen

**WOOD WARBLER** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Uncommon spring passage migrant. Rare on autumn passage. Last bred in 1996. UK 10-yr change: down 68%. Ten-yr av. first date: April 18th in 1973, 24th 1986 18th by 1988, and around 21st since. There are too few departure dates to create an average.

A poor spring passage and, as is now usual, no autumn records. (Since 1990 there have been just five autumn records, the most recent in 2003).

The first reports were of two at Eastville Park and one at Wain's Hill (CI-Y) on April 21st. The other records were: one at Dolebury Warren on 27th; one was at Walton-in-Gordano on May 1st; three on 3rd, at Severn Beach, in an orchard at Chittening, and in Weston Woods; and finally two on 4th, at Keynsham and Sand Point.

	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Spring	11	16	15	12	na	10	8	9	8	10

Avon area - passage totals

**COMMON CHIFFCHAFF** *Phylloscopus collybita*

*P. c. collybita* (nominative race) Common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. BBS Avon population estimate 6200 pairs. Also an uncommon winter visitor, and therefore possibly an uncommon resident. Distribution 75%. England 25-yr change: up 152%. Local ten-yr change: down 38%. Change since 2005 down 14%.

*P. c. abietinus* Rare vagrant.

*P. c. tristis* Very rare vagrant, but may be overlooked due to strong similarity to previous subspecies.

**Winter 2005/06** A total of 240 was recorded during this period, the third highest ever. In January, 79 were reported from 27 sites, representing at least 53 individuals. Song was recorded on 13th and 23rd, and they were found in four gardens. In February, 37 were seen at 13 sites, representing at least 24 individuals. Song was recorded on 4th, 6th, and 16th, and they were noted in two gardens.

**Spring passage and breeding season** On March 3rd there was one in a Redland garden and another at Weston STW. On 3rd two were at BL and one at Orchard Pools (Severnside). But passage then more or less dried up, and only 13 were recorded to 24th. On 25th nine were seen at seven sites, and there were similar numbers on 26th and 27th, then on 28th a total of 32 was seen at eleven sites. Passage peaked on April 1st when 16 were seen at Dundry, and continued for at least two weeks; 15 were seen passing Sand Point in 5.5 hours on 15th for instance.

Four were recorded as prey at the Peregrine site on ST John's Church, Bath, in April.

In the breeding season 15 singing males were recorded at Stockwood Reserve, (*cf.* 23 in 2005), and 31



were around CVL. BBS recorded a second year of decline, by 14%, back to the level of 1999. CABS recorded song between April 17th and June 25th, and on 25% of visits.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
124	133	73	90	93	96	119	141	84	72

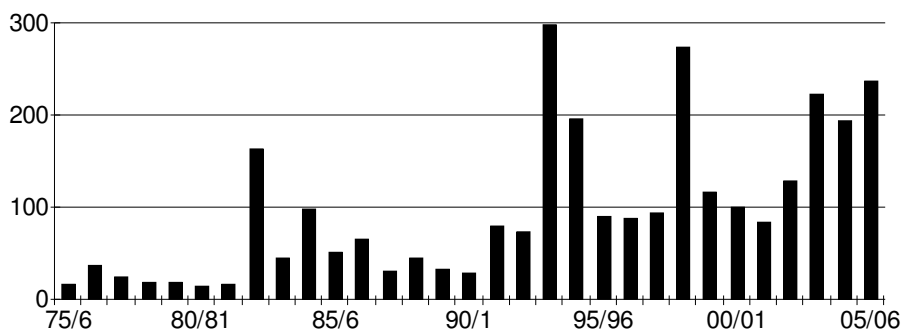
Avon BBS index 1994=100

**Autumn passage** Ten were recorded on Steep Holm on Aug. 13th, and there were reports of 80 from coastal sites during the rest of August. In September passage peaked between 4th and 17th. GVRs caught a total of 99 during the month, including 33 on 15th. 63 were recorded at BL on 5th, with 50 at Dundry on 14th and 15th. Passage tailed off rapidly at the end of September, and much smaller numbers were seen irregularly during October.

**Winter** In November, 46 were recorded from 24 sites. This included 15 from Sand Point, which implied a continuing passage. In December 15 were recorded at eight sites.

Avg 1986/87-1995/96	1996/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	2005/06
94	87	93	273	117	100	83	129	209	193	236

Avon area - winter total individuals counted



Overwintering totals, 1975/76 to 2005/06

### Eastern Chiffchaff *P. c. abietinus/tristis*

Two or three records of single individuals, either *abietinus* or *tristis*: at CVL on Jan. 12th, at Chew Stoke STW (R. Chew) on Feb. 15th (RMI) – this may have been the same as the CVL bird, and again at CVL on Dec. 31st (RMA). In most years in the last decade at least one or two from one or other of these subspecies has been recorded in the Avon area.

### WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. BBS distribution 32%.

England 25-yr change: down 55%. Local ten-yr change: down 56%.

Ten-yr av first date: April 1st in 1970, falling to March 24th by 1981, rising back to April 1st by 1993 and falling steadily to March 23rd today. Ten-yr av last date: Sept. 14th in 1970, Oct. 3rd by 1986, then falling back to around Sept. 21st in 1992, and Sept. 25th now. Days present: 167 in 1970, rising to 191 in 1981, falling to 172 in 1992 and then increasing to 187 today.

Some improvement in 2006.

**Arrival** The first two were heard and seen at OPS on March 25th, and on 28th six were recorded at four sites. There was a fall of 30 at Eastville Park on April 4th and 107 were found here on the 8th.

50 passed through Sand Point in 5.5 hours on 15th and 49 were reported from Weston STW on the same day. The main peak came on 20th to 21st when 460 were estimated from 17 widely scattered sites. There were almost no subsequent records.

*Willow Warbler breeding*

Birds were present in 61 BBS squares, almost double the previous year, although some may have been passage birds, and at a 40% greater rate. There were 13 singing males at Burrington Ham but most sites had only one or two, and there were none around CVL but see below.

At CVL, two were recorded by KEV giving song that combined that of the Willow Warbler and the Chiffchaff. This has been reported irregularly before, and may occur more often than is recognised because it is vital to be certain that the same bird is giving both calls.

The first was at Nunnary Point between April 22nd and May 5th, and the second was behind the main reedbed on 13th. In all cases the song began Chiffchaff-like and ended sounding like a Willow Warbler.

*Departure* GVRs caught 41 in September, including ten on 4th. The last was reported from Sand Point on Sept. 24th.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
123	103	113	107	80	56	33	63	39	54

Avon BBS index 1994=100

**Warblers at CVL 1997-2006**

The table below gives an estimate of the warbler breeding population at CVL over the past decade; all counts were carried out in a standardised way by KEV. The commonest warbler, Reed Warbler, is treated differently under that species.

	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Sedge Warbler	57	6	17	16	7	18	4	7	11	11
Garden Warbler	27	25	19	20	28	26	17	15	14	28
Blackcap	36	31	34	29	29	40	32	23	23	31
Chiffchaff	51	37	23	34	18	35	35	29	25	30
Willow Warbler	13	8	21	9	5	0	2	6	6	0

CVL. Singing males within the perimeter of the lake

**GOLDCREST** *Regulus regulus*

Common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. The population suffers badly in harsh winters. BBS distribution 31%. BBS population estimate 2000 pairs. England 25-yr change: down 16%. Local ten-yr change: down 23%.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	WBC
% Change 2005-06	5	-9	-40	-41	36

Numbers fell quite sharply as a result of the cold first-winter period.

In the 2005/06 winter it was recorded in 49% of WGS gardens, but in lower numbers than in the previous winter. In the breeding season they were present in 31% of BBS squares, a steep drop, and numbers were also down by 40%, presumably caused by the cold winter and early spring. Six were present on Steep Holm from Oct. 4th to Nov. 5th. CABS figures for the whole year showed a similar drop in the numbers recorded by BBS.

One was a prey item at the Peregrine site at St John's Church, Bath, in August, which seems extraordinary.

	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
BBS	105	89	86	97	107	117	149	135	135	81
CVL	11	12	15	19	6	14	13	6	10	15

Avon BBS Index (1994=100) and singing males round CVL

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

The following acceptable records were received:

Jan. 1st - Avonmouth STW (JPM, PDB);

March 29th - Sand Point (PAB):

Sept. 8th - Sand Point (PAB);

Sept. 26th - GVRS, two caught and ringed (LFR);

Sept. 28th - Dial Hill, Clevedon (RJ H):

Nov. 2nd, 3rd, 8th and 10th - Sand Point (PAB):

Nov. 26th - Stapleton (Bristol) (TS);

Dec. 4th - CVL (DNo):

Dec. 5th - CVL (BNo):

Dec. 18th - Northwick Warth (RFR).

The table below gives a summary of the total number of individuals seen over the past decade.

Avon area - total birds

**2005** Two records: One at Leap Valley, Downend, on Jan. 23rd, Feb. 13th and March 13th (ADJ), and one near Bristol Zoo on Nov. 24th (MW-S, CJ).

Ten-yr av. first date: April 30th in 1970, increasing to May 5th by 1988, then falling back to May 1st today. Ten-yr av. last date: Sept. 24th in 1970, falling to 17th by 1988 and rising to 30th today. Days present: 147 days in 1970, falling to 135 by 1988, then rising sharply to 153 today.

Another very poor year.

Spring passage was late and small. Two were seen at Sham Castle, Bath on April 21st and one in a Mangotsfield garden on 24th. No others were seen until nine at seven sites on May 3rd. A further 44 were seen to the end of May.

BBS counted 14 in eight squares. Between June and the end of July there was one record of adults feeding young, and one of a family party where a pair had been seen maintaining territory earlier. Records came from just six sites, apart from the BBS records.

*Autumn Passage* Thirty-two were counted from Aug. 6th to Oct. 10th, when the last was noted at OPS. A passage bird was seen in a Redland garden on Sept. 11th, the first since 1988. One was noted on Steep Holm on Oct. 7th.

In all a total of 109 was recorded from 41 different sites, including BBS squares. This is almost identical to the low total in 2005.

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Avon area - total individuals counted

**PIED FLYCATCHER** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Uncommon passage migrant, scarce in autumn, and rare summer visitor; bred in 1988. UK 10-yr change: down 35%.

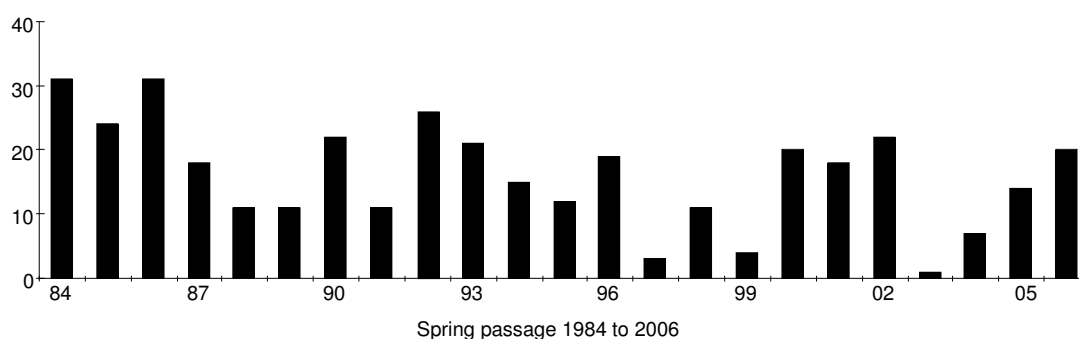
Ten-yr av first arrival date: April 20th in 1970, falling to 11th today. Until recently there have been very few autumn records, but over the past 25 years the average last date is Sept. 7th.

A good spring passage, but no autumn birds.

*Spring passage* On April 9th one was seen at Failand, and the next was at BL on 13th. There were records of 21 more until May 2nd, nine of them on 20th and 21st.

	Avg 1987-1996	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Spring	17	3	15	4	20	18	22	1	7	14	22
Autumn	4	6	1	4	2	6	2	3	1	12	0

Avon area - Total spring and autumn passage

**BEARDED TIT** *Panurus biarmicus*

Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor, almost exclusively at CVL. Bred there in 1991.

One record: a ringed male at CVL on April 1st and 8th (KEV *et al.*).

The most recent records of this surprisingly unusual species for the Avon area are as follows (single birds unless stated otherwise): at CVL in January and March 1999, April 2000, November 2002 and several dates in 2003 with three in March, and at Severnside in March 2004.

**LONG-TAILED TIT** *Aegithalos caudatus*

Common breeding resident. BBS distribution 42%. BBS population estimate 1500 pairs. England 25-yr change: up 60%. Local ten-yr change: up 14%.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	WBC
% Change, 2005-06	-20	-12	-7	70	-1

A fall in the population caused by the cold first-winter period.

In the 2005/06 winter both WGS and WBC showed lower counts, probably related to a poor breeding season in 2005 and the unusually cold winter. BBS figures confirmed a fall. However the CABS year-on-year increase suggested that 2006 was a good breeding season.

There were 14 records of flocks of 15 or more in the second half of the year and a series of reports in October suggested migratory movement. These included 30 at PW on Oct. 9th, 34 at Sand Point on 10th, 30 at OPS on 16th, 30 at Sand Point on 29th, and 20 at OPS on the same day.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
100	93	93	125	133	142	138	150	122	114

Avon BBS index 1994=100

**MARSH TIT** *Parus palustris*

Uncommon breeding resident. BBS distribution 5%. BBS population estimate 250 pairs. England 25-yr change: down 30%.

A normal year.

In the 2005/06 winter WBC counted 20 in 400 hours (*cf.* 23 in 268 hours in 2004/05). In BBS, 18 were counted in seven squares during 500 hours. These figures emphasise the elusiveness of the species.

Between April and June records were received from the following eleven sites (in alphabetical order): Compton Dando, CVL, Folly Farm, Kings Wood, Leigh Woods, Lower Woods, Priors Wood, Tyntesfield, Wavering Down, Wellow and Winscombe.

By using information from all records and surveys, this species was found to be present in 35 one-km squares. 13 of these were new since 1998, and it has been found in 155 of the area's 1500 one-km squares in the last nine years. Note that the table below does not suggest a declining trend.

1998	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
39	35	21	20	48	27	58	37	35

Avon area - annual total of one-km squares in which this species was seen

**COAL TIT** *Parus ater*

Common breeding resident, probably also a passage migrant. BBS distribution 25%. pairs. England 25-yr change: down 4%. Local ten-yr change: up 33%

	WGS	BBS	CABS
% Change 2005-06	6	-15	23

Further decline from the high levels in 2004.

In the 2005/06 winter it was present in 42% of WGS gardens, and in similar numbers to the previous winter. BBS results suggested a further fall from the 2004 peak, perhaps partly caused by the cold winter.

Very surprisingly for such a tiny bird, one was taken as prey by the Peregrines at St. John's Church, Bath, in November.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
71	74	71	79	105	137	141	148	113	94

Avon BBS Index 1994=100

**BLUE TIT** *Parus caeruleus*

Abundant breeding resident. BBS Avon population estimate 38,500 pairs. BBS distribution 98%. England 25-yr change: up 15%. Local ten-yr change: down 9%.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	WBC
% Change 2005-6	-15	-5	-8	3	-3

A poor year.

In the winter of 2005/06 both WBC and WGS showed a small decline, confirmed by BBS survey, suggesting that the cold winter had taken a toll. The very cold wet weather at the end of May reduced the number of young that fledged, and CABS figures remained low throughout the late summer and autumn, even though the final figure for the whole year was a little up on 2005.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
110	101	101	94	97	100	94	100	103	95

Avon BBS index 1994=100

**GREAT TIT** *Parus major*

Abundant breeding resident. BBS Avon population estimate 33,000 pairs. Distribution 97%.

England 25 yr change: up 43%. Local ten- yr change: up 47%.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	WBC
% Change 2005-06	-22	7	13	-17	9

No change in 2006.

This species seems to be faring better than the Blue Tit. In the 2005/06 winter WGS numbers were almost at their highest in thirty years. The BBS ratio between the two is now 50 Blue Tits to 36 Great Tits whereas in 1998 it was 50 to 23. CABS evidence suggests that it survived the winter very well, but that fewer than normal young were produced, and counts in the second half of the year were below 2005 levels. The first fledglings were seen just after the very wet week in late May. Song was recorded on 41% of CABS visits from Jan. 29th to June 1st.

97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
98	94	100	103	102	101	102	105	104	117

Avon BBS Index 1994=100

**WOOD NUTHATCH** *Sitta europaea*

Fairly common/common breeding resident. Scarce away from established sites. BBS distribution 13%. BBS population estimate 1000 pairs.

England 25-yr change: up 89%. Local ten-yr change: up 100%.

A poor year, perhaps influenced by the cold winter and lack of Beech mast.

In the 2005/06 winter, 46 were counted in 400 hours by WBC, sharply down on the previous winter. Present in 9% of WBS gardens, and in the highest numbers yet recorded. In the breeding season BBS recorded them in 13% of squares, the lowest since 2002, and at a lower rate than in 2005.

Using all records and surveys this species was reported from 34 one-km squares in 2006, well down on 2005. Nine squares were new since 1998. It has been reported from 222 of the 1500 squares in the region in the last nine years.

	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
1-km Squares	nc	52	42	26	21	59	69	80	87	34
BBS Index	93	73	72	86	90	94	203	186	179	138

Total number of one-km squares in which this species was reported, and the BBS index 1994=100

**EURASIAN TREECREEPER** *Certhia familiaris*

Common breeding resident; possibly an uncommon passage migrant. BBS Distribution 9%. BBS population estimate 700 breeding pairs. England 25-yr change: down 16%.

Some evidence of decline.

In the 2005/06 winter, WBC counted 21 in 400 hours, half the rate of the previous winter.

In the breeding season BBS counted 33 in 500 hours in 18 squares, a rate 25% down on 2005. The fall might be attributed to the cold winter as it is similar to that for Long-tailed Tit and Goldcrest.

Using all records and surveys it was reported from only 26 one-km squares in 2006, twelve of them new since 1998. The species has been seen in 182 one-km squares in the past nine years, but is almost certainly more widespread as it is reported from an average of 15 new squares each year. This is partly the result of wider BBS coverage.

1998	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
42	36	18	19	35	49	26	61	26

Avon area - annual total of one-km squares in which this species was reported

**RED-BACKED SHRIKE** *Lanius collurio*

Vagrant summer visitor, formerly bred, last in 1975.

Two records of single males in May: at Winford on 4th (MPa *per* TR) and at CVL on 29th (DW). Note that it is possible only one individual was involved. Two were also seen in 2003, at Corston in June and Severn Beach in August. Half a century ago this species was not uncommon in the Avon area, but prior to 2003 the last record was for June 1988 at Frampton Cotterell.

**EURASIAN JAY** *Garrulus glandarius*

Fairly common breeding resident. BBS distribution 39%. BBS population estimate 700 pairs. England 25-yr change: down 5%. Local ten-yr change: up 40%.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	WBC
% Change 2005-06	-12	61	0	12	12

In the 2005/06 winter they were recorded in 77% of WGS gardens, the highest proportion in thirty years, and in the largest numbers, probably related to the total absence of Beech mast. The low WBC figure may relate to the largely rural counts in this winter.

However, despite the cold winter, BBS recorded no change in numbers in the breeding season, and CABS year-on-year figures suggest that there was some population increase.

There was an unusual record from Sand Point on May 6th of eleven birds coming in off the sea.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
84	76	54	96	114	133	176	156	116	117

Avon BBS Index 1994=100

**BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE** *Pica pica*

Common breeding resident. BBS Avon population estimate 3600 pairs. Distribution 96%. England 25-yr change: up 51%. Local ten year change: up 20%.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	WBC
% Change 2005-06	-16	19	-1	18	2

Another average year.

In the 2005/06 winter numbers reported by WGS were up, but BBS showed a slight fall. CABS year-on-year results showed a rise based on unusually high numbers in the autumn, suggesting a good breeding season.

In January there were roost records of 20 at Winscombe and 25 at OPS. Nest building was also recorded in this month, and in November. In February a group of 37 were seen by the Kennet and Avon Canal. In March there was a roost of 30 at Henbury. 30 were recorded at OPS in August.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
86	88	86	90	82	75	77	77	74	73

Avon BBS Index 1994=100

**RED-BILLED CHOUGH** *Pyrhcorax pyrrhcorax*

Very rare vagrant

One record: one that had been ringed in a nest on the Gower peninsula in 2004 appeared at Sand Point on April 19th and 20th (PAB *et al.*). There were also two unconfirmed reports, one on 26th, that it was seen/heard at Cl-Y and the Clevedon seafront at this time.

There are only two previous Avon area records, they are of single birds over the Avon Gorge in July 1900, and at Sandford in December 1941 staying into 1942.

**EURASIAN JACKDAW** *Corvus monedula*

Common breeding resident; uncommon passage migrant. BBS Avon population estimate 9,000 pairs. Distribution 80%. England 25-yr change: up 66%. Local ten-yr change: up 2%.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	WBC
% Change 2005-06	-33	14	2	-6	-23

An average year.

In the 2005/06 winter they were recorded in their largest numbers ever in WGS gardens. A flock of 2500 was noted at Marshfield on Feb. 26th and another of 750 at West Littleton on the same day.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
107	113	109	108	109	111	98	97	106	108

Avon BBS index 1994=100

**ROOK** *Corvus frugilegus*

Common breeding resident. Avon population count 7400 pairs. Distribution 44%. England ten-year change; up 1%. Local ten-yr change; down 40%.

In the 2005/06 winter they were counted at a higher rate than in any year since 1997/98, but this may reflect the efforts made in rural areas. 500 were noted at OPS on Jan. 1st and 1500 at Marshfield on Feb. 26th. BBS showed a fall of 20% on 2005, but the figure was higher than that for 2003. This species is not well monitored by the BBS. The small rookery inside the Bristol City boundary at Shirehampton that had five nests in 2005 fell to three this year.

**CARRION CROW** *Corvus corone*

Common breeding resident. BBS Avon population estimate 8200 pairs. Distribution 98%. England 25-yr change: up 52%. Local ten-yr change: stable.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	WBC
% Change 2005-06	8	-8	5	0	-29

The population appears to be stable, but many birds are non-breeders.

In the 2005/06 winter they were present in 86% of WGS gardens; twenty years ago it was 38%. The WBC rate was the highest since 1998/99, although that may have been influenced by the observer effort in rural areas. The BBS rate was the highest since 1995. Up to 105 were recorded at Weston STW. There was a strange record of birds stealing windscreen wiper blades in Paulton in September.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
113	111	116	114	108	103	94	95	111	116

Avon BBS Index 1994=100

**COMMON RAVEN** *Corvus corax*

Scarce breeding resident, and uncommon passage migrant. BBS distribution 10%. England ten-yr change: up 280%. Local ten-yr change: very rapid increase.

Widely reported in all months, often in pairs, and a number of flocks were recorded. In date order, these included: 14 at Sand Point on March 11th, eight at Wrington on July 17th, 13 at Burlledge on Sept. 3rd, eleven at a sheep carcass at CVL on 9th with eight over Burlledge Hill at the same time, eleven at Keynsham Mill on Oct. 26th, eight flying to W over Pill on Oct. 27th, 15 at Marshfield on Nov. 19th, and five at another sheep carcass on Aust Warth on Dec. 1st.

**Breeding** Reports were received from twelve nest sites, seven of which raised 24 young including three on Steep Holm. Clearly many pairs are not being reported. Site names are not published here because of their close association with Peregrines, but 39 sites in the region have reported breeding attempts since 1993.

They were reported in 16 BBS squares, the highest number yet, although some of these may have been on the second count after May 15th when nesting has usually finished. 1996 was the first year that BBS recorded them at all. They are now recorded at the same rate as that for Sparrowhawk.

	Av 1987-1996	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Breeding pairs	0	4	6	6	8	10	9	12	19	19	12

Avon area - total reported breeding pairs



**COMMON STARLING** *Sturnus vulgaris*

Still abundant breeding resident, declining rapidly; passage migrant and winter visitor. BBS Avon population estimate 16,700 pairs. Distribution 77%.

England 25-yr change: down 78%. Local ten-yr change: down 42%

	WBC	WGS	BBS	WBC
% Change 2005-06	3	0	5	-73

The population may have stabilised.

In the 2005/06 winter WBC numbers were up, and they were counted at the highest rate since 1998/99. They were present in 69% of WGS gardens, and in the same numbers as 2004/05. A total of 6000 was seen going to roost at Aust Warth on Feb. 2nd, and 10,000 at New Passage on March 26th which may have been associated with return migration. BBS records showed a slight increase. The first fledgling was noted in May 25th, although a record of 600 juveniles at OPS on 27th suggests that many had fledged earlier.

There were 2000 at Weston STW in September. Migration was noted at Sand Point from Oct. 4th to Nov. 14th. During the migration watch of Oct.15th they were noted passing at a rate of 307 per hour, and formed 30% of the total numbers seen. There was also a huge movement of 9500 on 30th.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
86	69	69	54	50	45	36	40	34	39

Avon BBS Index 1994=100

Av 1987/8-1995/6	1996/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	2005/06
8.0	6.6	5.4	6.1	5.6	4.6	3.9	4.8	4.2	4.3	4.2

WGS - average number per garden per week in winter

**HOUSE SPARROW** *Passer domesticus*

Still abundant but declining breeding resident. BBS Avon population estimate 45,000 pairs. BBS distribution 69%.

England 25-yr change: down 68%. Local ten-yr change: up 17%.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	WBC
% Change 2005-06	29	-10	-9	-49

The increase in WBC records in the 2005/06 winter may be explained by the emphasis on counts in rural areas rather than in Bristol. They were present in only 63% of WGS gardens, the lowest proportion in thirty years, and in lower numbers than a year ago. BBS showed a small decrease.

97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
125	113	113	103	107	112	118	121	124	113

Avon BBS Index 1994=100

Avg 1987/8-1995/6	1996/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	2005/06
6.0	5.3	3.6	5.8	4.2	3.5	3.2	3.9	4.0	4.1	3.7

WGS - average numbers per garden per week in winter.

**EURASIAN TREE SPARROW** *Passer montanus*

Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Now probably extinct as a breeding species.

England 25-yr change: down 96%.

Another very poor year.

All records received are listed as follows: one was seen on Jan. 14th at Wrington, one was noted on Dundry on April 5th with another on 8th. Two were recorded at Sand Point on five days between May 11th and 18th. Four flew over Sand Point on Sept. 9th and one flew over Clevedon on 27th.

	1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Bird-days	200	152	207	31	6	288	72	52	40	18
Sites	13	11	14	7	3	9	7	3	4	4

Avon area - total individuals counted and sites

**CHAFFINCH** *Fringilla coelebs*

Abundant breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. BBS Avon population estimate 15,100 pairs. BBS distribution 99%. England 25-yr change: up 29%. Local ten-yr change: down 27%.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	WBC
% Change 2005-06	65	76	0	49	-10

An average year.

In January there were up to 2000 at Wrington between 7th and 21st. 500 were recorded at Marshfield on 7th and up to 120 at OPS. First song was heard on Feb. 5th. In March diurnal migration was seen on Dundry when 58 birds flew over on 25th, and at Sand Point between 26th and 31st when up to 50 were recorded daily flying to W.

Both WGS and WBC recorded exceptional numbers. The fact that it was a cold winter, and there was no Beech mast, may well explain these differences. In the breeding season the BBS recorded no change at all, which emphasises the fact that the birds seen in the winter were migrants. Song was recorded on 33% of CABS visits, and was continuous from March 5th to June 25th.

In October visible migration was recorded on an almost daily basis between 13th and 30th. They formed 63% of the birds counted during the migration watches on 15th, and were recorded at a rate of 649 per hour. The largest count that morning was of 4385 passing over Sand Point. At the same site 750 were counted on 26th, 2200 on 30th and 500 on Nov. 15th. At least 24,000 were counted passing up or down the Estuary during October. In future years the new wind turbines at Avonmouth will form a potential threat to this passage which will need to be carefully monitored.

There were no large feeding flocks recorded in the second winter period, despite the very healthy Beech crop. However the large year-on-year increase recorded by CABS was caused by above average numbers from late October onwards.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
108	101	105	103	102	101	101	100	95	95

Avon BBS Index 1994 = 100

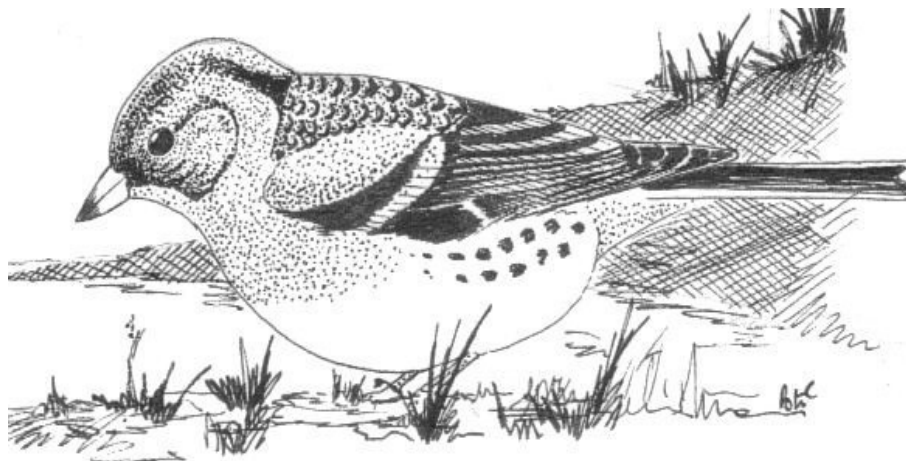
**BRAMBLING** *Fringilla montifringilla*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Ten-year av first date: Sept. 26th in 1970, rising to Oct. 12th by 1985, and Oct. 8th today. Ten-year av last date: April 5th in 1970, 25th by 1987, 13th today. Days present 185 in 1970, 191 in 1995, 182 today.

The best winter since 1993/94.

2005/06 winter

There was an exceptional passage of over 500 birds in October 2005, but only small numbers were recorded inland until January. A flock of 100 was found in an unharvested Sunflower field on Jan. 7th, at Nates Lane, Wrington, and it built up to 500 by 21st, associating with 2000 Chaffinches. There were also up to 200 at Compton



Dando and 50 at Burnett. Probably no more than 800 were present in the region at the maximum, and the bird-day totals reflect observer coverage. However, the mobility of the species is emphasised by the fact that after Jan. 21st the only records were of ones and twos in gardens, sometimes semi-resident. The last were two over Sand Point on April 15th and one at CVL on 22nd.

*Second winter period* The first record was of one at Leap Valley on Oct. 7th. The next were seen on 15th, three at Sand Point and two on Severnside. Eleven more were recorded in October and 24 from the coast in November. The only inland records were of two taken as prey by the Peregrines at St John's Church, Bath, and four others at inland sites.

Av. 1986/87-95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	2005/06
457	275	468	442	140	18	109	103	270	20	3065

Avon area - total bird-days October-March

## EUROPEAN GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

Common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor. BBS Avon population estimate 15,000 pairs. BBS distribution 97%. England 25-yr change: up 33%. Local ten-yr change: up 42%.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	WBC
% Change 2005-06	-15	10	8	17	-14

Further population growth.

WBC recorded a fall in the 2005/06 winter, perhaps because counts were concentrated in rural areas, but WGS showed the second highest numbers in thirty years, probably related to the absence of Beech mast. In January a flock of 100 were present at Wrington with Bramblings and Chaffinches.

During the breeding season BBS counted them at the highest rate since 1994. Song was recorded on 51% of CABS visits between Jan. 29th and July 16th. The year-on-year increase recorded reflects higher than usual numbers from January to April, and below average figures after the breeding season.

In October 105 were recorded on passage between 4th and 14th, 600 were seen on 15th and 305 between 16th and 30th.

97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
134	166	141	148	150	152	165	167	157	170

Avon BBS Index 1994=100

Avg 1987/8-1995/6	1996/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	2005/06
1.7	2.5	2.7	2.8	2.9	3.1	3.2	3.8	5.3	4.3	4.7

WGS - average number per garden per week

## EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor. BBS Avon population estimate 7,100 pairs. BBS Distribution 79%. England 25-yr change: down 7%. Local ten-yr change: up 89%.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	WBC
% Change 2005-06	65	0	19	117	-5

Another good year. Present in 63% of WGS gardens, the second highest proportion ever, but with the same numbers. WBC counts rose back to the level of the 2003/04 winter. Flocks of up to 100 were reported in January and February at six sites. 70 were recorded moving to W at Sand Point on March 28th, and there was a series of coastal movements in April, culminating in 475 heading to NE in three hours on Severnside on 22nd. BBS recorded them at the highest rate ever, and showed an increase of 20% on 2005.

Only small numbers were recorded on passage in October. The largest subsequent flock was 50 at Kenn Moor on Nov. 27th and the same number at Keynsham on Christmas Eve. The CABS year-on-year change demonstrates a remarkable increase. They used to be seen very occasionally, but they are now regular in this survey, and seen at roughly the same rate as in the BBS survey.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
69	76	83	83	83	83	92	93	111	131

Avon BBS Index 1994=100

Av 1987/8-1995/6	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	2005/06
11	31	81	30	76	72	100	45	60	83	83

WGS - numbers per 100 garden-weeks

**EURASIAN SISKIN** *Carduelis spinus*

Irruptive winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce in summer. England ten-yr change: down 34%.

2005/06 was the best winter since 1997/98, but almost none was seen in the last three months of 2006.

*Winter 2005/06* There was a huge passage in October 2005, and around 400 were recorded in both November and December. This total doubled in January. Flocks of 80 were seen at Compton Dando, 60 by the R. Avon at Keynsham, 50 on Kenn Moor, 50 by the R. Chew below the CVL dam and another 50 around CVL itself, 45 at Wrington, 40 at Burnett and RPD, and many smaller groups. In February numbers fell although there were still 60 on Kenn Moor, 50 by the R. Chew, and 35 at Ashcombe Park, Weston-s-Mare. In March there was a further drop, but large numbers moved into gardens. 50 were recorded in Sidcot gardens, 40 in Oldland Common, 20 in Blagdon Village, 16 in a Stoke Bishop garden, and 12 in Keynsham.

WBC recorded 381 in 400 hours. They were recorded in 29% of WGS gardens. Monthly totals (excluding gardens from January to March) are tabulated below.

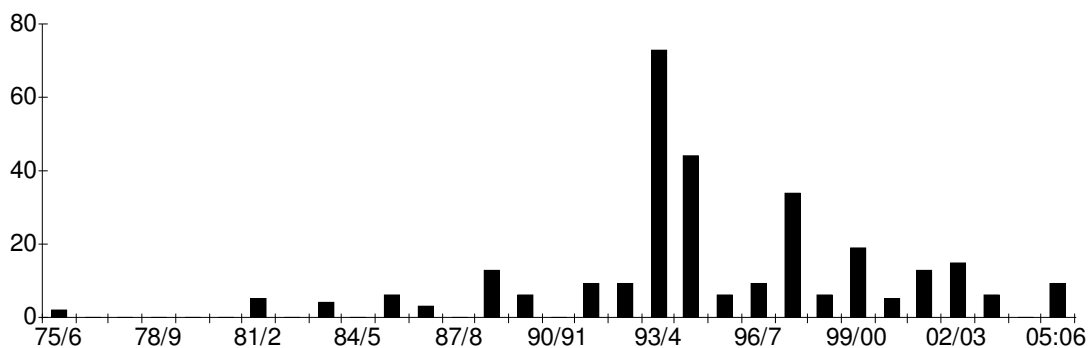
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Total birds	1479	420	485	815	269	208
Total gardens				8	6	21

*April to August* Up to five was recorded in nine gardens throughout April. Otherwise most of the records were of migrants on the coast. In May four males were still present at Blagdon on 28th and there were passage records from Sand Point on 13th, 16th and 31st. On that date a male was seen displaying at Mendip Lodge Wood, and two were noted at Dolebury on June 18th. Males were noted at Blagdon on 13th and 14th, and eight were there on July 15th. It seems highly likely that the species is breeding in the region, but there has been no proof yet.

*Autumn passage and winter* The first passage birds were two at Sand Point on Sept. 29th, and there were two at Wain's Hill (Cl-Y) on 30th. 71 were recorded in October, mainly from the coast, and 19 in November. In December there were just four records.

Av 1987/88-95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	2005/06
2267	2499	4932	1012	2945	783	3520	1938	1060	73	3683

Avon area - total individuals counted in six winter months, October-March



Siskin average numbers per garden/week in WGS gardens 1975/6-2005/6

**COMMON LINNET** *Carduelis cannabina*

Common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor. BBS Avon population estimate 4700 pairs. BBS distribution 31%. England 25-yr change: down 48%. Local ten-yr change: down 48%.

Some large winter flocks.

In the 2005/06 winter, WBC figures showed a small increase. It should be noted that the rate at which they are now seen in winter is almost three times the Winter Atlas figure. In January there were flocks totalling 940 reported from ten sites, the largest, 300 at Elm Farm, Burnett. 200 were noted at Marshfield in February.

In April there were records of migrants moving up channel, including 235 in three hours on 22nd at Severnside.

BBS recorded them in only 31% of squares (the figure was 51% in 1999), and at the lowest rate yet. In the light of the Goldfinch increase in recent years the continued decline apparent in the table below is disturbing. Flocks of up to 75 reappeared at CI-Y in July, with up to 60 in August. There was a flock of 100 at Maes Knoll (Dundry Hill) on Sept. 16th and 160 at Northwick Warth on 30th.

In October small numbers were reported on passage, but 200 were at BG on 17th, 120 at Weston STW and 104 at Burnett on 26th, and 250 at Marshfield on 29th. In November 300 were found at Marshfield on 3rd.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
79	68	67	59	56	53	45	49	52	41

Avon BBS Index 1996=100

### LESSER REDPOLL *Carduelis cabaret*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce in summer.

England 25-yr change: down 97%.

2005/06 was the best winter since the present recording system began.

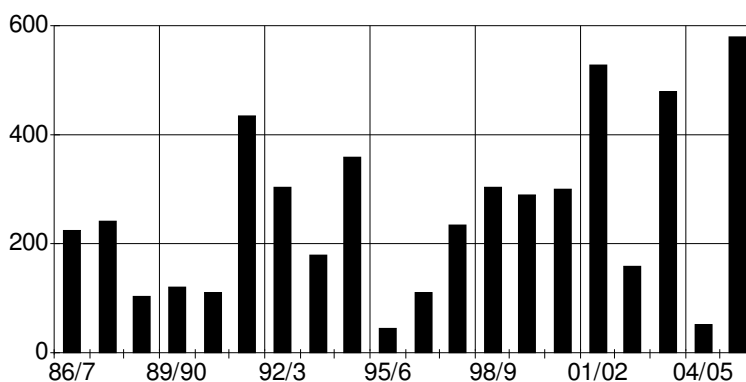
*Winter 2005/06* During the autumn of 2005 reasonable numbers were recorded. In January 105 were noted at 21 widespread sites across the region in small groups of up to ten. In February there were just 43, but in March numbers were back up to 90, but a larger proportion were of coastal records presumably passage birds. Passage continued through April when 111 were recorded, mainly on the coast, and 107 were seen up to May 16th.

There were no breeding season records.

*Second half-year* Autumn passage began with five at CI-Y on Sept. 27th, but it was very spasmodic, and only 38 were recorded in October. Four were seen in November and 19 in December.

Av 1987/88-95/96	1996/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	2005-06
212	111	235	303	289	300	526	159	481	51	578

Avon area - winter totals October to March



Lesser Redpoll winter totals 1986/7-2005/6

### COMMON REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*

Uncertain, but probably a very scarce or rare vagrant.

One record: a male of the nominative race *flammea* (Mealy) was seen on several occasions at Sand Point from May 4th to 15th (PAB). The three most recent reports are: in 2004, one at Thornbury in February and two at Severn Beach in April, and in 2005, one at Stapleton (Bristol) in December.

**COMMON CROSSBILL** *Loxia curvirostra*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Numbers vary from year to year; can be virtually absent in some years, but large flocks occur in irruption years.

One on Jan. 6th at Long Ashton magistrate's court was the only record (DN).

1987	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	1996
2	1	5	275	185	0	234	74	1	0
1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
344	0	20	17	12	100	100	4	130	1

Avon area - total annual bird-days

**COMMON ROSEFINCH** *Carpodacus erythrinus*

Very rare vagrant.

A first-summer male was seen and heard singing and calling at Sand Point on May 9th (PAB).

There are just two previous records: one was seen with what were thought to be brood patches at Stantonbury Hill in August 1985, and the second was in the Gordano Valley in September 1999.

**COMMON BULLFINCH** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Fairly common breeding resident. BBS distribution 33%.  
England 25-yr change: down 45%. Local ten-yr change: down 29%.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	WBC
% Change 2005-06	1	28	-28	-28	-44

A poor year, although many came into gardens during the cold first-winter period.

In the 2005/06 winter they were recorded in 34% of WGS gardens, the highest proportion ever and in even higher numbers than in the previous winter. WBC recorded them at the same high rate as the previous winter, that is double that of the Winter Atlas.

They were noted eating buds between April 18th and 29th in Mangotsfield, which they only do when other foods have run out. It may be that the very sharp fall recorded by BBS, the lowest rate since 1999, is related to the poor autumn harvest and the cold winter. CABS also showed a 28% year-on-year fall.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
158	83	116	106	128	147	175	143	158	112

Avon BBS Index 1996=100

**HAWFINCH** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Rare vagrant, formerly bred.

An extraordinary three months from January to March.

On Dec. 18th, 2005 one was seen in Brimsham Park, Yate, and again on 20th (MAJ *et al.*). Three were seen here on Jan. 31st (PM) and six on Feb. 2nd (RMi) and 11th (KEV). This was to be the largest count, but they continued to be recorded there until five on March 11th (RFR *et al.*).

Also three were seen in Leigh Woods on Jan. 4th with one still present on Feb. 10th (RJH), and three were at Horwood Farm on March 10th (JPM).

In the autumn one was reported from Leap Valley, Downend, on Nov. 4th (ADJ).

It is not at all clear how many individuals were involved during the year, but it cannot be fewer than 13.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
7	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	12	13-17

Avon area - total number of individuals

**YELLOWHAMMER** *Emberiza citrinella*

Common but declining breeding resident, possibly uncommon passage migrant. BBS Avon population estimate 2150 pairs. Distribution 23%. England 25-yr change: down 55%. Local ten-yr change: down 45%.

An average year.

In the 2005/06 winter, WBC numbers were sharply up, but this was caused by repeat sightings of a flock of up to 100 near Stony Littleton. The largest winter flocks reported were 120 at Marshfield and 25 at OPS.

In the breeding season BBS found them in just 23% of squares, the lowest proportion yet, but at the same rate as in 2005. Using all breeding season records they were found in 80 one-km squares, 47% of the total number of 169 squares in which they have been found since 1999. Half of its distribution occurs in the three ten-km squares ST56, ST66 and ST77.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
106	86	71	77	71	65	52	54	58	58

Avon BBS Index 1994=100

**REED BUNTING** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Uncommon breeding resident, and passage migrant. BBS distribution 9%. England 25-yr change: down 40%. Local ten-yr change: down 13%.

Possible signs of some recovery. The best year at CVL since 2002.

In the winter of 2005/06 a total of only 20 were noted in 400 hours of recording. In January it was reported from 18 sites. There were up to 20 at the sunflower field in Wrington, 20 at Aust Warth, 19 at Sand Bay, 17 at Weston STW, 15 at Birnbeck Island, 13 at Portbury Wharf, eleven at RPD, ten at Clapton Moor and 38 from 12 other sites, suggesting a wintering population of at least 160.

In the breeding season records were received from 37 sites. These included 31 singing males at CVL, 17 possible pairs in ST58, nine pairs at Weston STW, six at BL, and 35 other pairs. In addition, 86 birds were recorded in 41 BBS squares. This suggests a population of at least 200 breeding pairs.

Since 1998 it has been reported in the breeding season from 102 one-km squares, nine new in 2006, of which four were in ST58. This suggests that careful observation in suitable sites would reveal a larger population than has been observed.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
86	48	50	44	38	32	29	57	86	75

Avon BBS index 1996=100

1997	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	2005	2006
35	37	21	30	24	36	29	20	13	31

CVL - total singing males

**CORN BUNTING** *Emberiza calandra*

Local and uncommon breeding resident; confined to arable areas in the east of the county. Rare elsewhere as a passage migrant/winter visitor. BBS distribution 1%. Winter population about 50. England 25-yr change: down 86%. Local ten-yr change: probably stable.

A very large winter flock, and poor breeding season results.

In January a flock of 260 was noted in a careful count by RJH at Marshfield, and smaller numbers were noted through to late March. There was an unusual record of one at Severn Beach on April 1st. One was also noted at Wellow (ST7459) on April 14th, the first for the southern part of the Avon area for many years.

In the breeding season a maximum of twelve singing males was recorded from eight different one-km squares, around Marshfield, and at Bodkin Hazel Wood. This is the lowest breeding total since 2001, and a sharp contrast with the winter flocks. It may reflect a real fall in the population, or insufficient observer cover.

Around 60 were noted at Marshfield in October and November.

1997	98	99	00	01	02	2003	04	05	2006
29	16	41	16	11	21	18	18	23	12

Avon area - total singing males

## ESCAPED AND RELEASED BIRDS

### TRUMPETER SWAN *Olor buccinator*

North America

CVL - one on Feb. 17th.

### CHINESE GOOSE *Anser cygnoides*

Asia

Bristol Docks - one or two present all year.

### BAR-HEADED GOOSE *Anser indicus*

Asia

Battery Point, Portishead - two on April 18th;

CI-Y - one on March 20th and Sept. 7th;

Backwell - one on Feb. 24th and 28th, April 28th and 29th and May 14th;

Weston Moor - two on April 14th and 19th;

CVL - one on April 3rd.

### FULVOUS WHISTLING DUCK *Dendrocygna bicolor*

Tropics

CVL - one on April 6th.

### CAPE SHELDUCK *Tadorna cana*

Africa

New Passage, Severnside - one on Feb. 10th.

### WOOD DUCK *Aix sponsa*

North America

Bristol Docks - the male that has been resident for several years was seen intermittently up to June.

### CHILOE WIGEON *Anas sibilatrix*

South America

Weston STW - a male noted on April 19th with a female Mallard.

### MUSCOVY DUCK *Cairina moschata*

Central &amp; South America

Bristol Docks - two on Nov. 18th;

Nr. Easter Compton - one on Dec. 5th.

### WHITE-CHEEKED PINTAIL *Anas bahamensis*

North America

Northwick and Aust Warths - one on various dates from Sept. 23rd to Oct. 16th.

### GREAT BUSTARD *Otis tarda*

Eurasia

Bleadon Level - a female (with orange wing-tags numbered 15) was released from the Salisbury Plain re-introduction scheme in July 2004. It was first seen in Somerset (near Middlezoy) on Jan. 15th and was present in the Avon area, mainly on Bleadon Level, from Feb. 9th until March 25th.

### PEACOCK *Pavo cristatus*

Asia

Engine Common - a male noted on Sept. 16th;

Elmdale Gardens Estate, Fishponds - a male seen regularly from October onwards.

### ZEBRA FINCH *Taeniopygia guttata*

Australasia

PW - one on April 26th.

### BUDGERIGAR *Melopsittacus undulatus*

Australasia

New Passage - one on Aug. 1st;

St. Johns Church, Bath - one taken as Peregrine prey on Sept. 16th.

### NORTHERN CARDINAL *Cardinalis cardinalis*

North America

**2003** A male was seen and photographed on a garden feeder at Portbury on May 27th. This record has now been accepted by both BBRC and the BOU Records Committee. BOU considers the bird to be of captive origin and places it in Category E, which does not form part of the British List. But due to the proximity of the site to RPD, the possibility of ship assistance cannot be totally ruled out for this partial migrant that is rather uncommon in captivity, especially as a ship from North America had arrived in the dock three days before.



## HYBRIDS

It should be noted that the parentages reported in this section are what seemed to the observer(s) to be the most likely, actual proof of parentage from the nest is in most cases lacking.

### **CANADA GOOSE x GREYLAG GOOSE**    *Branta canadensis x Anser anser*

CVL - one paired with a Greylag Goose. One or two also seen on May 12th, June 11th and 29th, July 13th 20th and 29th, Sept. 5th and Oct. 21st;

### **AYTHYA HYBRIDS**

During the year at least 13 different *aythias* which the observers considered to be hybrids were reported as follows. All records relate to CVL unless stated otherwise.

(a) The regularly returning male, first seen in 2003, that is considered probably to be a Greater Scaup x Tufted. This individual resembles a Greater Scaup, the principal difference being the bulge on the rear of the crown. It was seen on several dates in January, September and December.

(b) A male, first seen in 2005, which is similar to Common Pochard but has pale brown flanks and mantle, and is considered probably to be a Common Pochard x Ferruginous. It was seen on several dates in January and early February, and again in November on 5th, 7th and 20th.

(c) A male, with a rufous brown head and a grey mantle, was regular from January to July and again on Sept. 22nd and Nov. 11th. It resembled individuals that in the past have been reported as Tufted x Common Pochard.

(d) A female, resembling a Lesser Scaup with a domed head-shape and a large facial blaze, was present on Jan. 26th and Feb. 20th.

(e) A male, similar to a dark-mantled Common Pochard, was seen on Feb. 10th.

(f) A male, showing characters of a Canvasback, was seen on May 17th. This is presumably the same individual seen in the second half of 2005 that was considered to be a Canvasback x Common Pochard.

(g) A juvenile/female, showing characters of both Tufted and Ferruginous Duck, was seen on Oct. 31st.

(h) A male, resembling a Redhead, was seen on Nov. 4th with a different individual on 25th.

(i) At BL, a male on Sept. 2nd was submitted as a Tufted x Greater Scaup.

(j) Female types were noted on Jan. 11th and 17th, Feb. 10th, Oct. 15th, Nov. 15th and Dec. 18th with probably three individuals involved.

In order to avoid possible duplication it would be useful if observers of possible hybrids could submit brief details of what the bird looked like. (Eds.) This subsection was compiled by RMI.

### **HERRING GULL x LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL**    *Larus argentatus x Larus fuscus*

CVL - an adult on Nov. 13th;

BG - one Dec. 12th and 18th;

St. Phillips, Bristol - noted on July 13th paired with a Lesser Black-backed Gull, three hybrid young raised.

## Contributors of Records

There are two methods for submitting records – by using record cards or electronically. Record cards are available from the Recorder (address inside front cover) and should be sent to him on completion. Alternatively, pieces of A4 paper cut into four equal parts (that is, A6) can be used - one species per card please. Electronic records should use an 'excel' or similar file and be sent to Richard Bland at [richardbland@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:richardbland@blueyonder.co.uk)

All records are kept (they are stored by BRERC in Bristol) and are used in conservation and scientific enquiries, sometimes of considerable importance to the bird-life of the area. The records are stored by species, and so it is mainly for this reason that we ask for one species per record card, it also helps the editors in their work. This is not a problem with excel files as these can be sorted electronically although it helps if lists use the same species order as in this Report.

AOG wishes to thank the following observers for submitting records, also please accept our apologies and inform the editor if your name should have been included on this list.

J Aldridge, A Allen, R M Andrews, D J Angell, R Angles, I Arden, V C Arthur, R. Artinsall, S Ashton, B Atkinson, M Atkinson, R H Avery, D P Ayers, N Ayers, D Baillie, M Baker, A Barrett, E J Barrett, N H Barrett, P J Basterfield, R Belson, F Benton, J R Best, R Billingham, J J Bimson, J R Binstead, M E Blackford, M M Blackwell, R L Bland, P J Blenkins, M Boulton, G & J M Blowfield, A E Bone, A Bolam, N Boosey, W O S Bourne, P D Bowerman, J. Bowker, D W Bowring, P A Bowyer, C T & P Boyce, J Bracey, M E Bridge, J D Brooke-Taylor, D Brummage, R Buck, J Buckler, J Budd, D Bull, M & R Bulmer, J F Burton, J Callard, J Cant, P Capsey, H Capon, A J Carey, D Carter, P J Chadwick, B Channon, C Chapman, D A Chapman, R Chappell, B. Charnock, B Charrock, D C Chavasse, S Chubb, J Clarke, L J Clark, M Coates, R W Coles, A D M Cole, K Cook, H Cooper, J F Copeland, P Coslett, T Court, D J Cox, K Cox, R. Cox, C Craig, P D Craig, R & A Crawford, D C Crawshaw, N J & B A Crocker, J Croasdel, N Crocker, R S Cropper, J W & M E Crouch, D A C & N Cullen, J Cumming, R M Curber, J A Czarnuszewicz, G Dale, M Dadds, D Davies, G Davies, J Davies, S Davies, A H Davis, M I Daw, A Dawson, P & L Delve, G M Dicker, E Drewitt, G Dring, M Drinkwater, A Dudman, J Durnell, B Dursley, P Dykes, W Earp, B Edge, B Eldridge, R Emondson, R J Emery, R Erickson-Hull, N Evans, P G Evans, P G Farmer, A Feast, B Fellows, A Fisher, R N Fleetwood, P Fletcher, A Foan, K Ford, T L Ford, A Fournier, D Foster, V G Fowles, M Frame, R Franklin, S Fremantle, D French, D Friend, J J Garrigan, A W Gibbs, C Gillard, M E Gillard, M H R Glover, R C Gilbert, K Giles, R W Giles, A Goldsmith, T Gosland, J Gould, J I Gowers, B M J Gray, P A Gregory, M & J Griffiths, P Gooding, J C Gutsell, R Haggett, S Hale, K J Hall, R J Halsey, M J Hamzii, P J Hancocks, N Hankins, M J Hannagan, A Harman, G & A Harman, G Harris, M. Harris, N Harvey, M Hawker, J Hayden, R Hayes, R Hayman, P J Hazelwood, M E Hedges, M Henry, J Helps, B Heppell, M Hill, R J Higgins, P Hilton, M F H Hobbs, P Holbrook, C Holloway, R G L Holmes, J Holt, H Horton, D J Horlick, P Howat, K Howard, D J Hudson, I Hull, M J Humphris, M Hunt, R Hunt (RHu), J M C Hutchinson, R J Ingram, M A Jackson, C James, D James, R Jarrold, D & M Jennings, M John, D M Johnson, H Johnstone, M Johnstone, G Jones, A D Jordan, D J Jordan, A Jowitt, M Keithley, A Kelly, P R A Kelly, R Kelsh, W King, M A Kingston, A C Kirchner, B S Kirk, P Ladd, R D Lambert, W Lambson, B Lancaster, J Lance, P Laughey, B Laughton, R Laughton, S Laver, D Lawrence, J Lay, A J Leaver, G R Leaver, J Lees, A M Leggatt, R Leslie, A M Levinson, E L Lewin, J Lewis, T W G Lewis, C Leyman, S Lockett, A S Lodge, D Lott, I Lucas, J A Lyddon, L Maber, G Maitland, L J Manton, P E Marshall, B Martin, J P Martin, C Maslen, S Mason, C F Matthews, J B Maxwell, T & J McLellan, R McDonald, T McGrath, J McGreal, A Mears, W Middlemast, A J Middleton, R Mielcarek (RMi), J S Millman, A D Mitchell, R Miles, M Mobbs, M J Morgan, C Morris, B Moss, A Moulin, A B Naish, F Neate, P J Neate, M Nemes, D & F Nevitt, P New, C & J Newman, S E Newson, E G M Niblett, S Noble, P Norfolk, V E Norman, D Northover, H E Norton, J Offord, S Ogden, R L Oliver, J M Ortin, J J Packer, B Page, R Palmer, C Parker, A J Parsons, C A Partridge, M I Pearce, B Pegum, D J Perriman, N J Philips, A Pickering, M J Pinker, M Plenty, A P Polack, M S Ponsford, J Poole, N Pople, P Porter, M J Powde, S Preddy, J & S E Prince, M Pullin, R J Prytherch, P Quinn, F Quinney, S H Rawlings, J Rawlinson, C Ray, G W Raynor, R F Reader, G Redfern, S J M Reece, D L Reynolds, J Rhodes, G W Rich, B Rideout, T Riddle, C Rigg, L F Roberts, B Roberts-Wray, D Robson, P Rock, H E Rose, I Rose, J O B Rossetti, R R Rowe, C. Rudge, R Scantlebury, A D Scott, G L Scott, S J Scott, M Searle, E A Shackleton, A & J Shand, A J Shearman, M A & T B Silcocks, B H Simmonds, J Slavin, J Smallacombe, E Smith, L W Smith, T Smith, A H Sparks, D E Stainer, C F Stapleton, R N Staples, I Stapp, R Steer, D R Stoddard, C J Stone, M P Storrar, I E Stowell, G Suter, L Sweaney, R. Symes, H Taffs, M J Tanner, K Targett, J O Taylor, M Taylor, M V & S M Taylor, P J Taylor, D Teague, M Thomas, J E Tindale, B Tizard, G Thorburn, J A Thorogood, D Tombs, J P Tottle, T Townshend, C Tremellen, C Trott, D Trump, N A Tucker, C Tuckett, J Tully, D K Turner, R Venables, J Vickers, T Vincent, K E Vinicombe, N Voaden, P J Vokes, P Vowles, A J Wade, P Walkden, J Ward, D Warden, G Warren, R E Warriner, A Wayland, N Webb, D Webber, R Webber, J Weir, S F Whitaker, A P White, D K White, R J White, C Whiting, D Whittle, E M Wightman, J Wilkinson, J J Williams, T R Williams, M J Willmott, S Wilton, T Wilton, J Withey, M B Wood, P Woodbridge, A Woodhall, M Woodman-Smith, R J Worlock, L Wyatt, S F Young, G Youdale, Bath Natural History Society, BG Ringing Group, Cam Valley Wildlife Group, Chew Valley Ringing Station(CVRS), and Gordano Valley Ringing Group (GVRG).

## The Diet of a Pair of Urban Peregrines *Falco peregrinus* during their first Breeding Season in Bath in 2006

Edward Drewitt

### Introduction

Since the 1980s, the population of Peregrines *Falco peregrinus* in much of the UK has been steadily rising and they have been returning to or taking up new territories in urban locations (Ratcliffe 1993; Dixon 2000; Crick, Banks & Coombes 2004). In south-west England, Peregrines are now found in most cities and large towns, using buildings to perch, feed and roost during the non-breeding months (Nick Dixon pers. comm.). Only a few sites have birds staying throughout the summer months and breeding. It is unknown where the non-breeders spend this period.

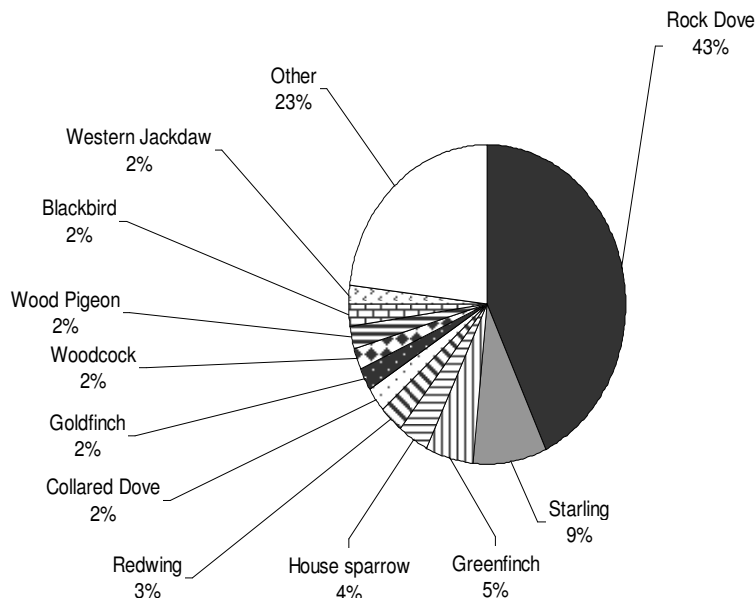
The Peregrine's relatively recent arrival within towns and cities has encouraged huge interest from local communities. Despite this, little is known about their ecology and behaviour. Research over the last 20 years in other parts of Europe and more recently in Bristol has been helping to improve our knowledge about urban-dwelling individuals.

John Tully researched the diet of Peregrines in Bristol during the 1990s (Tully 1998). Since then I have been studying the prey from Peregrines living in Bristol, Bath, Exeter (via Nick Dixon, Ecologist) and Derby (via Nick Brown, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust). Similar studies at comparative European sites have also been published but using much smaller sample sizes (n): Poland (n=486, Rejt 2001), France (n=268, Marconet 2003), Germany (n=128, Schneider and Wilden 1994; n= 626, Sömmer 1989) and Italy (n=46, Serra *et al.* 2001).

Peregrines have been using the city of Bath as a non-breeding site since the late 1990s. A pair showed signs of breeding behaviour in 2000 but did not nest until 2006, following the erection of a nest box by the Hawk and Owl Trust on St. John's Church in 2004.

I have been studying the diet of the Peregrines in Bath since 2000. During this period, they regularly used St. John's Church and nearby buildings such as Bath Abbey from late July through to the following April. Where they went between May and early July is unknown. Usually two birds have been present, one of each sex. In the winter of 2002, only a male was roosting at the church.

Fig. 1. The Diet of the Peregrines in Bath in 2006 (by frequency (%)), n = 1396

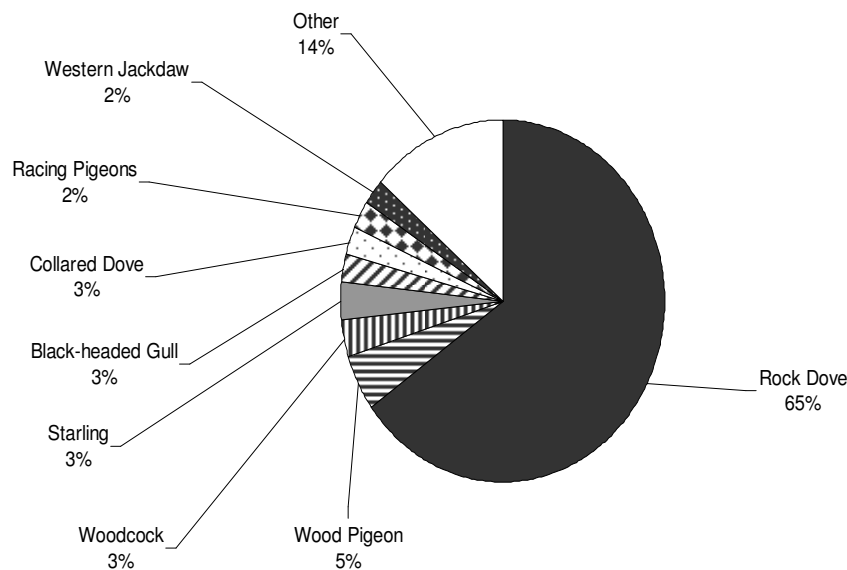


During the early part of the breeding season in 2006, up to three Peregrines were seen around St. John's Church. One of these was a juvenile. The adults' acceptance of the younger bird suggests one or both of the adults may have previously bred elsewhere, and that this was one of their offspring. During February and March 2006, it was evident that the pair was showing signs of courtship and mating. By the end of March eggs had been laid.

In 2006, the pair raised four chicks and all survived to fledging. This number of chicks was surprisingly high for a first attempt at breeding at a new site. Whether one or both birds have bred elsewhere previously is unknown. After fledging, one chick was taken into care by the Hawk Conservancy Trust, Andover, Hampshire. It was much weaker than its siblings and vulnerable on the ground. After being in care for a few months it was discovered to have a 'natural' complication with its spine and was put to sleep. The three healthy chicks left the nest successfully and revisited the site throughout November/December 2006 and into 2007.

For the first time in Bath, the presence of Peregrines all year round allowed a full 12 months collection of prey data.

Fig. 2. The Prey of the Peregrines in 2006 (by weight (%)), n=1396



## Method

Throughout 2006, prey was collected on a daily basis by Louise Hazleton, a volunteer for the Hawk and Owl Trust. The base of the church, adjacent car park, road, paths and flat roof below the church spire were surveyed for prey. With close scrutiny, dropped or discarded material, including whole or part carcasses, feathers, heads/skulls, wings, legs, rings and pellets were retrieved.

The remains were bagged, dated and subsequently identified as to species, sex and sometimes age using personal knowledge, experience and specialised identification books (Jenni & Winkler 1994; Brown, Fergusson & Lees 2003). Any feathers that proved difficult to identify to species level were checked against bird skins at Bristol's City Museum & Art Gallery and two websites that display wings and feathers (Slater Museum of Natural History [www.ups.edu/x5662.xml](http://www.ups.edu/x5662.xml) and a Dutch feather website [www.michelklemann.nl/verensite/start/index.html](http://www.michelklemann.nl/verensite/start/index.html)). The identity of the remains were identified and confirmed by myself. Any species difficult to identify due to very few or small remains available had their identification confirmed by additional professionals at Bristol's City Museum & Art Gallery. All identifications that have been confirmed were of 100% certainty.

To avoid duplication of prey, careful identification of remains was required over a period of days and sometimes a week or more after an individual was discovered. Some prey is cached and eaten over a period of time or feathers may be lodged up high and later blown out by the wind. This means that sometimes remains of individuals could be found on more than one day.

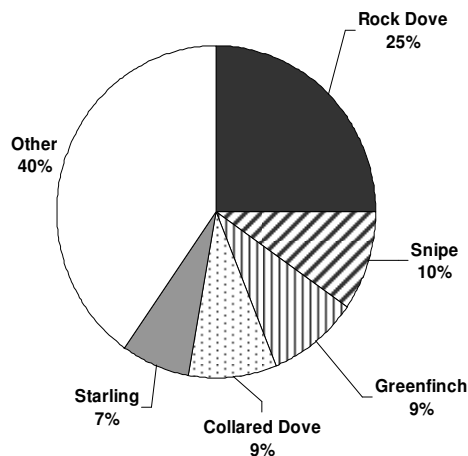
The minimum number of individuals was counted by looking for duplications of the same wing feathers, legs, wings or heads as well as feathers from different sexes or different aged birds. The condition of the feathers and weather related damage are important in determining whether remains are very fresh and slightly older.

The daily feather remains are laid out and sorted into individuals and compared both for that day and the following day or more. If a head of a bird is found one day, a leg the next, and a wing the day after from the same species, then unless there is any other supporting material (eg loose, duplicated feathers from wings or tail) this will be recorded as one individual. Often there will be three legs, or feathers from more than one bird present which show more than one individual of a species has been eaten. If feathers of the same species appear a few days later or a week later then they are carefully examined for condition and duplication with previous remains.

I have tested this method on a number of occasions. For example, in Exeter in 2000, I determined the number of individuals of Redwings *Turdus iliacus* and Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris* through the feathers and wings remains alone. In the autumn, after the gutter clearance had been done, I then counted up all the skulls retrieved from the clearance. The number of individuals counted for each method pretty much matched – there were slightly more individuals counted using the skulls compared to the wings/feathers. This may mean I am often undercounting rather than over-counting individuals.

Another example was in 2006 when I was carefully looking at the feather remains of Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* again from Exeter. I was going to count one individual before discovering three Eurasian Sparrowhawk wings in the same bag! While prey remains don't represent all what a Peregrine is eating, I suspect that with what is found it is an under-estimate rather than over-estimate of individuals counted.

Fig. 3. Diet of the Peregrine in Bath, Jan to Apr 2006 (by frequency %), n=144



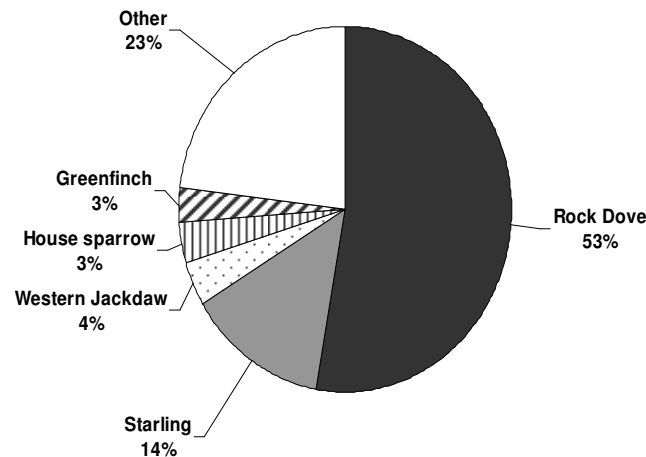
In Derby, in winter 2006, I tested this method again with Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola* and Red Knot *Calidris canutus*. I determined the number taken by feathers dropped over a five-week period. At the end of this period there was an opportunity for the roof and feeding area to be visited by Nick Moyes, Derby Museum & Art Gallery. The woodcock and knot corpses and/or heads found during this visit and throughout the period were counted and the figure matched what I had counted using the feather remains.

Many of the smaller passerine feathers are found out of the moulting season and are so most likely to have been plucked by one of the Peregrines. Those found during the moult months are not usually found singularly as you would expect if moulted. They sometimes have a bottle-neck shape to their quill end which is sometimes a little bent and a dark tip of dried blood. They often have tear marks or indentations in the quills where the bill of the Peregrine has damaged the feather. The smaller bird feathers get blown away very easily and are often recovered only on the day of plucking – often the next day they will have disappeared.

Most prey remains can be identified through the above methods. The two unidentified remains in this study were from feathers that came from the very outer wing of passerines (primary 2) – these are sometimes the

most difficult to identify if they are not with other supporting material. Usually they are accompanied by matching inner wing feathers and can therefore be identified.

Fig. 4. Diet of the Peregrines in Bath, May to August 2006 (by frequency %) , n=698



## Results

In total, 1395 birds and 1 mammal were found in 2006. This was a 306% increase on the total prey collected from 2000 to 2005 before breeding took place (n=456).

Of this total in 2006, 52 bird species and one mammal species were recorded and ranged in size from the Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* (5.7g) to Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* (1,100g) (given weights from Snow & Perrins 1998). The only mammal taken was a Brown Rat *Rattus norvegicus*.

Rock Doves *Columba livia*, comprising domestic and feral pigeons were the most important prey species, 43% of prey by frequency and 65% by weight (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2). Other significant prey species were Starlings (9% by frequency and 3% by weight), Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris* (5% by frequency and 1% by weight), House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* (4% by frequency and 1% by weight) and Redwing (3% by frequency and 1% by weight).

The quantity of prey taken throughout the year varied significantly ( $\chi^2 = 354.64$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $P > 0.01$ ). 50% of the total prey collected was caught by the Peregrines between May and August 2006.

The majority of prey could be allocated to a month when found. Sometimes less fresh prey items were found and could not be allocated to a specific month. 1392 prey items were allocated to one of three parts of the year – 144 January to April, 698 May to August and 550 September to December. Fig. 3-5 show how the respective proportions of species changed throughout 2006.

Fig. 6 shows the changes in abundance of Rock Doves, Western Jackdaws *Corvus monedula* and Starlings during the Peregrines' breeding season. Fig. 7 gives the monthly variation Great Spotted Woodpeckers *Dendrocopos major*, Greenfinches and House Sparrows. These showed particularly notable peaks in the Peregrines' diet. For these and a few other species, the differences throughout the year were highly significant (Fig. 8). Eurasian Jays *Garrulus glandarius* appeared to be found in large numbers throughout the summer but unlike other species there was no obvious peak.

Only one aviary bird, a Budgerigar *Melopsittacus undulatus* was taken as prey during 2006. This was the first for this site since the study began.

## Discussion

This study shows just how much prey can be collected if a Peregrine site is visited daily. It allows for greater accuracy when recording the diet of urban-dwelling Peregrines. To put this in perspective, it has taken ten years of weekly collections to get just over 2000 prey items from an urban breeding site in Exeter, Devon. In Bath, 1396 prey items have been collected in a year and over 1975 prey items collected since the study began in 2000.

During June and July, when the chicks were most demanding, the remains of up to 8 different individual Rock Doves were being recorded daily. These were probably brought back semi- or unplucked. Other pigeons were seen being delivered fully plucked (Louise Hazleton pers. comm.). The latter must have been from other plucking sites and suggest the overall number of prey delivered was much higher than recorded by feathers, wings, etc alone.

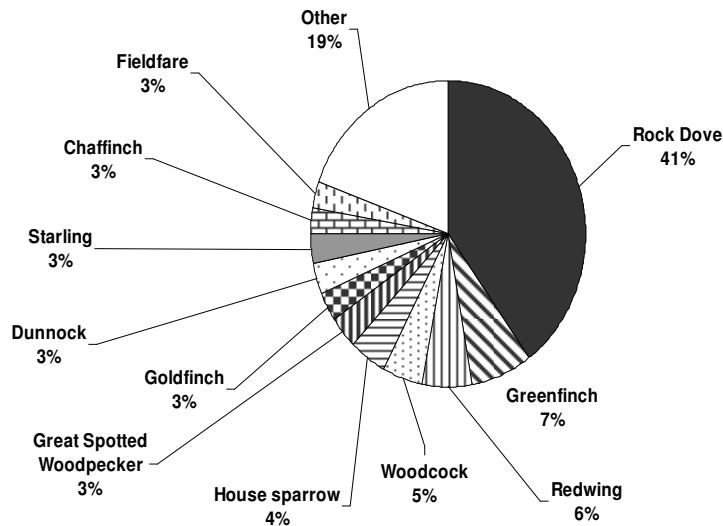
The study reveals the importance of Rock Doves to urban-living Peregrines throughout the year and especially during the breeding season. The proportion of Rock Doves (43%) in this study is higher than that for Exeter in the same year (31%) and for other urban sites in Europe (Sömmer 1989; Schneider & Wilden 1994; Rejt 2001; Serra *et al.* 2001; Marconet 2003). This higher proportion may result from both a large sample size in Bath and differences in availability of Rock Doves between the regions.

Throughout 2006, 19 Racing Pigeons were recorded – 1% of the total Rock Dove prey. This low figure in Bath may reflect both a lack of movement of Racing Pigeons over Bath and a low number of pigeon fanciers living in the city. It may also be that the local Rock Doves (feral street pigeons) living in the city are far easier to catch. There are generally far less feral pigeons living in Bath (1422) compared to Bristol (9500 including Avonmouth) (Tully 2006). Many of these will originate from post-war escapees from dove-cotes and more recently 'street-hatched' birds bred from 'homing pigeons' that have not returned to their lofts (Tully 2006).

The Peregrines appeared to select certain prey species when they are most abundant in the area. Black-headed Gulls *Larus ridibundus*, Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Jays, Common Kingfishers *Alcedo atthis*, Woodcock, Western Jackdaws and Dunnocks *Prunella modularis* were targeted in relatively high numbers over short periods of one to four months. For example, out of 25 Black-headed Gulls, the majority (19) were taken during July and August.

All but one were juvenile birds arriving in Bath for the first time. While Great Spotted Woodpeckers were taken throughout the summer months, highest numbers were taken in September and October as shown in Fig. 7. Similar patterns arose for other species such as the Greenfinch and appeared to coincide with when the young of these species are dispersing from nest sites or migrating through the area (Wernham *et al.* 2002).

Fig. 5. Diet of the Peregrines in Bath, September to December 2006 (by frequency %), n=550



Urban-dwelling Peregrines hunt prey at night, utilising light pollution to see birds flying overhead (Van Geneijen 2000; Kladny 2001; Marconot 2003; Huang & Severinghaus 2005; DeCandido & Allen 2006). Birds that migrate at night over the cities are therefore vulnerable to predation. It is possible that the 31 Woodcock taken in Bath were caught at night. The same is thought to be the case for the Little Grebes *Tachybaptus ruficollis* and a Jack Snipe taken in 2006. In previous years, Water Rails *Rallus aquaticus*, Moorhens *Gallinula chloropus*, a Quail *Coturnix coturnix*, and a Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* have also been taken.

These birds are normally secretive, shy, and unavailable to hunting Peregrines during the day. However, they are all known to migrate at night (Cramp 1977; Cramp & Simmons 1980; Hayman *et al.* 1986; Jehl 1993; del Hayo *et al.* 1996; Jehl 1998; Jordan 2001; Snow & Perrins 1998, BWP Update 1998, BWP Update 2004). These records also reveal how some secretive species in the region may otherwise go unrecorded by observers. Other notable species included some very small passerines. Daily collection of prey allowed small bird feathers and remains to be detected. With weekly collections these are often blow away and go unrecorded.

In recent years Northern Lapwings *Vanellus vanellus* and European Golden Plovers *Pluvialis apricaria* have not appeared in the diet in Bath. However, during the autumn and winter of 2006, the remains of 10 Northern Lapwings were found, revealing their presence in the region.

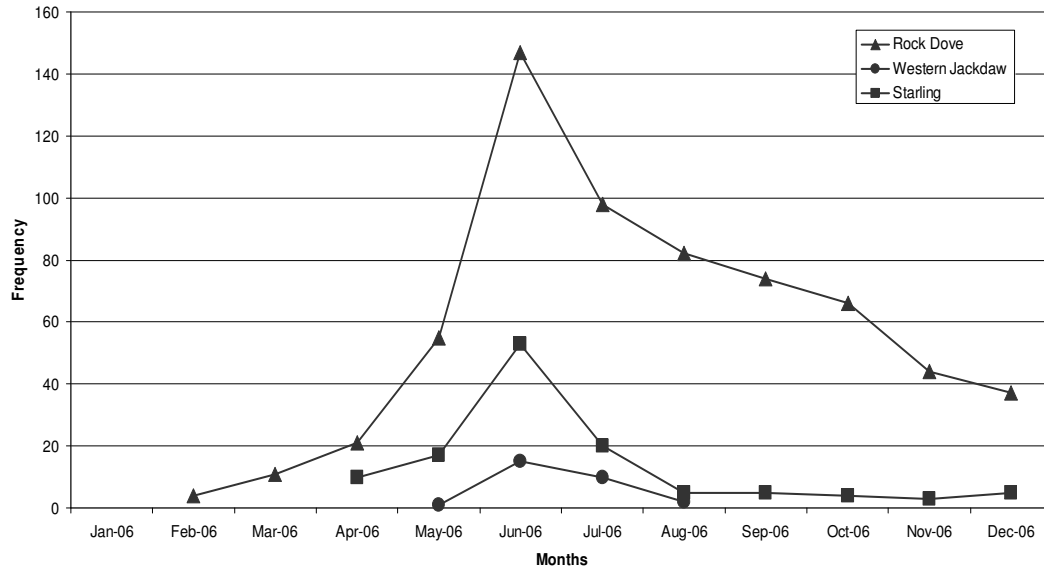
A recent study has shown that Northern Lapwings and European Golden Plovers are wintering further east in England and this may explain why these two species have been missing from the Peregrines' diet in Bath (Gillings *et al.* 2006). No European Golden Plovers were detected at all in 2006.

A Leach's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* in December was not an unexpected find due to the unprecedented numbers in the region, mainly on the coast. It was interesting that no Common Swifts *Apus apus* were found in the diet in 2006.

In Exeter, Common Swifts are commonly taken by the breeding Peregrines – they took at least 14 in 2006. Why they should be absent in the Bath diet is a mystery. It may be that fewer Common Swifts live in Bath during the summer, Common Swift remains have just not been found or the Bath Peregrines just do not specialise in catching them!



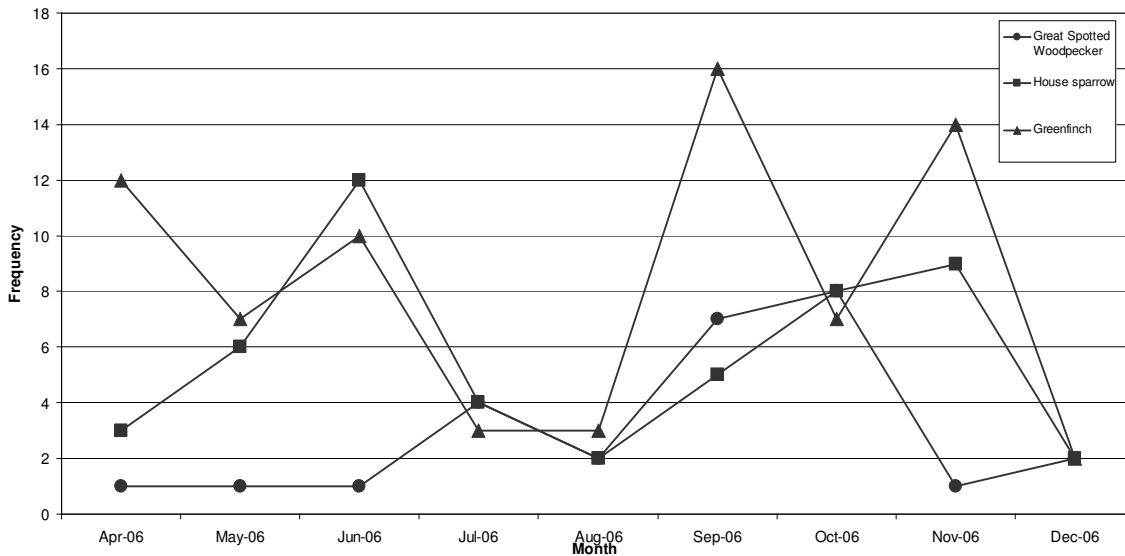
Fig. 6. Change in frequency of Rock Dove, Western Jackdaw and Starling during 2006



The collection of prey at Bath will continue and allow a detailed picture to evolve as to how Peregrines are living in towns and cities. Our next step will be to see how the abundances of prey species living in Bath compare with their importance in the diet.

Other sites such as Exeter and Derby are also contributing to my studies so there are more exciting times ahead discovering what Peregrines eat. The Bath Peregrine family are providing an important opportunity for people living or visiting Bath to see these birds of prey at close quarters and obtain an insight into their private lives. A huge vote of thanks goes to Father Tom Gunning of St. Johns Church and his colleagues for supporting the Peregrines and to the volunteers from the Hawk and Owl Trust who have spent a lot of time and effort monitoring the family.

Fig. 7. Change in frequency of Great Spotted Woodpecker, House Sparrow and Greenfinch during 2006



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## Unusual Ornithological Events in the Avon Area from 1981 to 2005

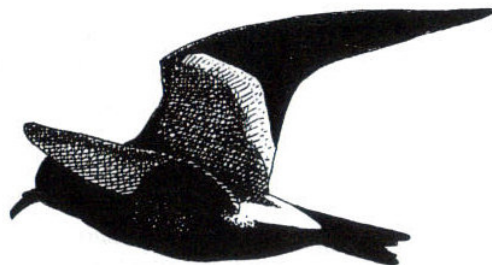
A. H. Davis

This paper is essentially an historical reference for unusual ornithological events in the region which is now referred to as "the Avon area" (the first part, for 1945 to 1980, was published in the 2005 Avon Bird Report). The main aim of this paper, and that of the first one, is to document in one place the more important influxes, heavy passages, seabird "wrecks" and other interesting movements of various species by presenting the salient details of the event followed by one or more reference. With some of the events, the birds recorded in the Avon area were part of a much wider movement throughout the country. Here, the national details and references are presented first, followed by local details and references. Other unusual events, and those more extraordinary in our recording area than elsewhere in the country, are briefly documented followed by a reference. The abbreviations used for frequently occurring place names are the same as in body of this Report.

Unusual avian events are often linked to the weather. The period covered by this paper includes a series of cold winters in the 1980's with 1981/82 being memorable for extremely low temperatures, when many passerines died as a result of the severe cold. Anti-cyclones that form over central or eastern Europe in spring can bring south-easterly winds which cause migrants bound for breeding areas there to drift towards Britain; for example the displacement of Red-footed Falcon and other species in May and June 1992. Strong or persistent winds at any time of year often produce various species of seabird along the coast and sometimes inland. In early September 1983, south-westerly gales brought unprecedented numbers and variety of seabirds to the Avon area. In mid-October 1987, the famous storm became well known for the unprecedented numbers of Sabine's Gulls and Grey Phalaropes displaced across southern Britain including the Avon area. South-westerly gales in December 1989 caused a Leach's Storm-petrel "wreck" in south-western England and south Wales, the first of this magnitude to be noted at this time of year. A small number of scarce species appear in Britain irregularly but in years when breeding success has been good but food in their normal winter quarters is scarce, there may be major influxes of, for example, Waxwings or Crossbills. The period covered by this paper saw large influxes of both species and also an unusual influx of Jays in the autumn of 1983 which was linked with the widespread failure of the autumn acorn crop that year.

The period covered by this paper has shown a huge increase in those interested in birds and bird-watching. In 1981, 156 observers sent records to the Avon Bird Report. In 2005, 452 observers were included in the list of contributors, a stark contrast to the 21 contributors to the 1945 BNS Bird Report.

My grateful thanks go to B. Lancaster, R. Mielcarek, H. E. Rose and K. E. Vinicombe for reading and commenting on an earlier version of this paper.



1981	<p>Large wreck of seabirds in late April following north-east gales and blizzards on April 25th/26th. Many seabirds were noted inland mainly in the Midlands and central-southern England. The most frequently reported species were Arctic Tern, Kittiwake and Gannet.</p> <p>In the Avon area, CVL held six Arctic Terns, a Fulmar and at least 50 Kittiwakes on April 26th.</p> <p>National Ring-billed Gull influx involving 55 individuals.</p> <p>Locally, a first-winter bird at CVL was only the second to be recorded in the Avon area.</p>	<p>Nightingale and Sharrock (1982)</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 1981</p> <p>Vinicombe (1985)</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 1981</p>
1981/82	<p>Nationally, very cold weather in December and January.</p> <p>The Avon area experienced the cold spell from Dec. 8th to Jan. 15th. Five Bitterns and an influx of Hen Harriers and Short-eared Owls were the avian highlights. Many passerines such as Wrens, Dunnocks and Robins died in the severe conditions. On Dec.12th,1981, temperatures fell to -25 C. A sudden thaw on 13th, with heavy rain and spring tides boosted by westerly winds caused much flooding along the Severn Estuary. On 19th, when the remaining flood waters had frozen there were very high numbers of Lapwings (2500), Black-headed Gulls (8500), Common Gulls (300) and Fieldfares (2400) at CI-Y.</p>	<p>Avon Bird Report, 1981,1982</p> <p>Rose(1992)</p>
1982	<p>Exceptional autumn Curlew Sandpiper passage in the Avon area. Counts of up to 55 on Severnside (on Sept. 29th) and 21 at CVL (on Sept.12th).</p>	<p>Avon Bird Report, 1982</p>
1983	<p>An unprecedented influx of four first-summer Whiskered Terns in Britain late May/June, included one at CVL from May 29th to 31st. There was also an adult with the younger bird at the same site on the 29th only.</p> <p>A "flight" of seabirds to the Severn coastline and inland waters in early September. South-westerly gales brought unprecedented numbers and variety of seabirds to the Avon area. The main species involved were Manx Shearwater (32 at New Passage, 27 at SGW and 16 at CI-Y on the 4th), Storm- petrel (12 at NP on 4th, two at CVL on 3rd and one at BL on the same day), Leach's Storm-petrel (40 at NP on 3rd, seven at CVL and one at BL on the same day), Gannet (32 at NP on 4th, one at CVL on the same day), Sabine's Gull (at NP, three on 3rd, five/six on 4th, two on 5th, one at Oldbury on 6th (all but two were adults). In Somerset, there were probably between 20 and 25 Sabine's Gulls in the Parrett Estuary from 3rd to 5th.</p>	<p>British Birds 77:536</p> <p>Avon Bird Report,1983</p> <p>Avon Bird Report,1983</p> <p>Bristol Ornithology 18:117-123</p> <p>Ballance (2006)</p>

1984	<p>National irruption of Jays in October. There were huge numbers noted on the east and south coasts of England with the largest numbers in Cornwall.</p> <p>In the Avon area, 420 bird-days were recorded. Widespread reports during October, including 40 on Severnside, 34 at Cotham, Bristol on 5th, 29 at Abbot's Leigh on 6th and 22 at Blagdon on 23rd.</p> <p>Influx of Glaucous and Iceland Gulls. Large numbers of Iceland Gulls, in particular, were recorded in several English counties in early 1984.</p> <p>In the Avon area, three Glaucous (two on coast, adult at CVL) and at least four, possibly seven, Iceland Gulls were noted in the first winter period (four at CVL, two coastal records and one inland near Bath).</p> <p>Unprecedented spring movement of Bar-tailed Godwits, Little Gulls and terns along the Avon area coast in late April - early May. Maximum day counts for the main species were: Bar-tailed Godwit (2430 on April 27th), Common /Arctic Tern (428 on April 30th), Black Tern (123 on May 4th), Little Gull (127 on May 2nd) and Whimbrel (220 on April 27th). These birds were deflected from their normal route along the south coast of England by easterly winds that dominated the period. Inland at CVL, 74 Little Gulls were noted on 1st with 67 on 2nd. And on 2nd at the same site, 20 Arctic and 36 Common Terns were seen briefly. Also associated with the same movement was a Kentish Plover at Portbury Wharf on April 28th and another at Cl-Y on May 3rd and a Temminck's Stint at Oldbury on April 29th.</p> <p>In Hampshire, an unprecedented total of 10862 Bar-tailed Godwits passed along the coast, with an exceptional day count of 5511 on April 29th, at Hurst Beach alone.</p> <p>Good numbers of waders in the autumn at CVL due to low water levels. Maximum count in brackets: Oystercatcher (20), Ringed Plover (110), Little Stint (27), Curlew Sandpiper (14), Dunlin (65), Ruff (25), Snipe (83), Black-tailed Godwit (17), Spotted Redshank (five), Greenshank (38), Common Sandpiper (32), Turnstone (ten). A Marsh Sandpiper visited CVL and BL from Aug. 20th to 27th. Two cold snaps in January and February.</p>	<p>John and Roskill (1985)</p> <p>Bristol Ornithology <b>18</b> Avon Bird Report, 1983</p> <p>Brown and Grice (2005)</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 1984</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 1984</p> <p>Brown and Grice (2005)</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 1984</p>
1985	<p>Very cold weather on the continent and in Britain in January and February saw large flocks of Lapwings (3500 at Axe Estuary in January, 4300 at Keynsham in February), huge numbers of Fieldfares (4000 at Abbot's Leigh in mid-January) and Redwings (3500 at Long Ashton on Jan.12th) moving into and through the area. Many Wigeon and Mallard arrived in the cold spell in January and the Avon area shared in a country-wide influx of Smew from the Netherlands (max.14 on the R. Avon at Keynsham on Jan. 20th). The freezing of the reservoirs scattered waterfowl to the rivers and the coast. A Slavonian Grebe appeared in Bristol City Docks and a flock of 32 Dark-bellied Brent Geese was at BL. There was a good number of Twite on the coast (up to 30 at Cl-Y in January).</p>	<p>Avon Bird Report, 1985</p>

1985/86	<p>Exceptional irruption of Siskins in the Avon area.</p> <p>Birds started to appear strongly in September. During October, several flocks of up to 50 were noted with up to 135 on Steep Holm. Many birds were seen in November (max.150 on Kenn Moor) and December (175 at Saltford). In January, records were widespread. There were counts of 530 along the R. Chew and 414 along the R. Avon in the area of Keynsham and flocks of up to 150 along other rivers. From mid-February many birds frequented gardens.</p>	Avon Bird Reports, 1985,1986
1986	<p>A bitterly cold late January and February caused a wide dispersal of waterfowl from partly frozen reservoirs. Birds appeared along the coast, in Bristol City Docks and along the R. Avon from Bristol to Bath. Woodcock appeared in unusual places away from their usual woodland habitats, and Fieldfares and Redwings were noted in large numbers.</p> <p>National influx of Yellow-browed Warblers.</p> <p>In the Avon area, five were noted from Sept.27th (Uphill) to Dec.13th ( Charcombe, Bath ). Other records were from Steep Holm on Sept.27th/28th, another on Oct. 2nd to 4th and one at CVL on Nov.15th.</p>	<p>Avon Bird Report,1986</p> <p>Baker and Catley (1987) Avon Bird Report,1986 Merritt,1986</p>
1987	<p>A cold spell in mid-January.</p> <p>A ten-day cold spell from the 11th and bitter cold over north-west Europe caused many birds to move away from the severe conditions. By Jan. 24th, Wigeon numbers reached an amazing 10000 in the Avon area with 7000 on Severnside. There was an influx of Velvet Scoters (a record seven at BL on 18th and a pair on Severnside on 25th) and two Red-throated Divers found themselves inland at CVL and on the R.Avon at St.Philips, Bristol. A small influx of Long-eared and Short-eared Owls occurred (four of the former, five of the latter).</p> <p>A Quail influx, mainly in July. Up to 14 singing birds were noted at the traditional area north of Marshfield. Three others were noted elsewhere.</p> <p>High numbers of Temminck's Stints noted in Britain in May. There were at least 60 reports which included eight at Cley, Norfolk.</p> <p>Locally, one was at CVL on May 20th, only the second spring record for the area.</p> <p>The famous October storm. A severe storm on the night of October15th/16th brought large number of seabirds, particularly Sabine's Gulls (250) and Grey Phalaropes (200) to southern Britain, with record numbers appearing inland.</p>	<p>Avon Bird Report,1987</p> <p>Avon Bird Report,1987</p> <p>British Birds, <b>80</b>:462</p> <p>Avon Bird Report,1987</p> <p>Hume and Christie (1989)</p>

1988	In the Avon area, four to six Sabine's Gulls were seen (at CVL and on the coast) and a series of Grey Phalarope records came from CVL where there were five off the main dam on 18th. A Leach's Storm-petrel (18th) and an Arctic Skua (16th) both at CVL were the only other noteworthy seabirds at this time. A Pectoral Sandpiper was present at CI-Y on the 16th.	Avon Bird Report, 1987
	Spring influx of Red Kites into Britain.	
	In March, south-easterly winds brought a notable influx of Red Kites to mainly southern and midland counties in March. Further birds were noted in April. It was thought that these birds were probably bound for eastern Europe after wintering in south-western Europe but were drifted to our shores by the adverse winds.	British Birds <b>81</b> :7:348
	In the Avon area, five spring records involving up to six birds from March 26th to April 23rd.	Avon Bird Report, 1988
	An unprecedented influx of Scaup to the Avon area from mid-June to mid-July involving eight birds (three males and one female at CVL and four males at New Passage). There was a larger than usual number noted in the autumn/winter with a flock of 24 female/juveniles at CI-Y on Oct. 30th.	Avon Bird Report, 1988
	An unprecedented autumn passage of Long-tailed Skuas in Britain.	Dunn and Hirschfield (1991)
	Only one record in the Avon area, an adult at New Passage on Sept. 26th.	Avon Bird Report, 1988
	Unprecedented influx of Curlew Sandpipers in Britain.	Kirby <i>et al.</i> (1989)
	In the Avon area, largest numbers were at the following sites with maximum counts in brackets: OPS (13), Severnside (17), RPD (56) and CI-Y (32). Very small numbers were noted at inland sites.	Avon Bird Report, 1988
	Unusual numbers of "Sea" Ducks in November and December. In November the following were noted: 44 Common Scoters at RPD on 19th, an Eider on R. Avon at Keynsham on 20th with seven on Severnside on 30th and six Long-tailed Ducks at CVL on 27th (seven on Dec. 4th).	Avon Bird Report, 1988
1989	Exceptional national Quail influx. An estimated 2600 calling birds were recorded in 670 ten km. squares during 1988-91 atlas work making this, by far, the largest documented influx.	Spencer <i>et al.</i> (1991) British Birds <b>82</b> :577 and 633-634
	In the Avon area, in the traditional area north of Marshfield, at least 18 males were heard singing and probably 25 or more were present. Also, birds were heard at four other sites.	Avon Bird Report, 1989

1990	<p>First ever autumn influx of Little Egrets in Britain and Ireland. An unprecedented influx occurred in the latter half of 1989, mainly in south-west and southern England.</p> <p>In the Avon area, one at Cl-Y from Aug.14th to 22nd was the first record since 1965.</p> <p>Leach's Storm-petrel "wreck" in December mainly in south-western England. Gales caused an influx from Dec.17th onwards with over a 100 recorded from Cornwall and Devon, 80 from Somerset, eleven from South Glamorgan and 30 from Sussex.</p> <p>In the Avon area, live birds were noted at NP as follows: six on Dec.17th, four on 21st, two on 22nd, twelve on 23rd and six on 24th. One was seen inland at CVL on 17th. Three dead birds were found in Weston Bay. The gales also brought one Storm-petrel to Severn Beach on 17th and three dead birds were found in Weston Bay on 23rd.</p>	<p>Combridge and Parr (1992)</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 1989</p> <p>Powell(1990)</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 1989</p>
	<p>An exceptional passage of terns along the Avon coast in spring. From April 21st to May 13th a very strong passage of terns was noted from the Severnside coast with at least 6500 Common /Arctic, 2000 Black, 28 Sandwich, and 74 Little Terns logged. On May 1st, a Roseate was seen and on 3rd a White-winged Black was noted. At CVL on May 2nd, 110 Common and 115 Black Terns were counted.</p>	<p>Avon Bird Report, 1990</p>
	<p>A large Crossbill irruption nationally.</p>	<p>Nightingale and Allsopp (1991b)</p>
	<p>In the Avon area, 274 bird-days recorded from June 12th to November. The largest flock was 60 at Abbot's Leigh. It was the largest influx locally on record.</p>	<p>Avon Bird Report, 1990</p>
1991	<p>Owls and other species on set-a-side south of Keynsham. Large numbers of Field Voles on set-a-side farmland between Burnett and Compton Dando attracted many owls and three Hen Harriers from May to the end of the year. At least one pair of Long-eared Owls bred raising six young, six pairs of Tawny Owls bred, eight Short-eared Owls frequented the area during December and three different Hen Harriers were noted (male in early May and two juveniles in November).</p> <p>An unprecedented influx of Long-tailed Skuas in September. Very large inshore movements were noted from Sept. 5th to 12th with most on the east coast of Britain but also unusually high numbers were seen on the east and south Irish coasts.</p> <p>A juvenile at CVL from Sept. 6th to 17th was the only Avon area record.</p>	<p>Aldridge (1991) Avon Bird Report (1991)</p> <p>Allsopp and Nightingale (1992)</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 1991</p>



1992	<p>Nationally many Little Auks were noted along the south coast of England from late December 1990 to early January 1991.</p> <p>Locally, bird/s noted at NP on Jan. 5th, 6th, 9th and 10th. An ailing individual was found in a Severn Beach garden on the 6th.</p> <p>There was another movement of Little Auks in November when large numbers moved south along the British east coast in mid-October with smaller numbers along the south coast in early November.</p> <p>In the Avon area, one was seen at NP on Nov. 2nd and one was found dead at Weston-s-Mare on 13th.</p> <p>Large numbers of Dotterel in the Avon area. Unprecedented numbers recorded in one field near Tormarton from May 8th to 11th. Twelve were discovered on 8th with two seen the next morning but by late afternoon numbers had risen to 14. One was present on 10th with two on 11th.</p> <p>Record invasion of Red-footed Falcons to Britain and North-west Europe during late May and June.</p> <p>120 birds were seen in Britain and Ireland, the highest ever annual total. Influxes also occurred in neighbouring areas of the Continent, especially in Denmark and the Netherlands. The influx coincided with a strong south-easterly airstream, a product of a vast anti-cyclonic weather system.</p> <p>In the Avon area just one bird was noted, a first-summer male near Stanton Wick (from May 30th to June 3rd) but eleven birds were seen in Somerset from May 18th to June 24th mainly on the Levels.</p> <p>As might be expected with strong south-easterlies at this time of year, other scarce species arrived in Britain at the same time as the falcons. About 100 Golden Orioles arrived in the second half of May, and Icterine Warblers arrived in numbers.</p> <p>In the Avon area, an Icterine Warbler was seen and heard in a Bristol garden at Bentry on 15th, a Golden Oriole was noted in the Gordano Valley on 16th and 17th, and a Great Reed Warbler appeared at CVL on 18th.</p> <p>Strong tern passage on the Avon coast and inland on Sept. 11th. In strong south-west winds, 378 Common Terns flew south-west off Severnside, at Cl-Y 150 were seen with 100 at Axe Estuary and 100 counted inland at CVL. Also, 43 Black Terns were noted in the movement off the Severnside coast and an unusual flock of 13 Little Terns were seen. 51 of the former species were at CVL on the 11th and a single Little was present at this site on the same date.</p>	<p>British Birds <b>84</b>:326-327</p> <p>Avon Bird Report,1991</p> <p>British Birds <b>85</b>:103</p> <p>Avon Bird Report,1991</p> <p>Avon Bird Report,1992</p> <p>Nightingale and Allsopp (1992) British Birds <b>89</b>:496</p> <p>Avon Bird Report,1992 Balance (2006)</p> <p>Nightingale and Allsopp (1994a)</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 1992 Dadds (1992) Aldridge (1992)</p> <p>Avon Bird Report,1992</p>
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1993	<p>Another strong Crossbill irruption in the Avon area, 234 bird-days noted from July to early December. Most were seen at Abbot's Leigh (77 in August, 72 in October).</p> <p>Exceptional inland movement of Eiders across the Midlands and northern counties of England.</p> <p>Locally, the following records were associated with this movement: eight at OPS on Oct. 31st, one at CVL on Nov. 2nd (first record at the site), and one at Cl-Y on 7th/8th.</p>	<p>Avon Bird Report, 1993</p> <p>Dennis(1994)</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 1993</p>
1994	<p>An invasion of Ruddy Shelducks into Fenno-Scandia in summer coincided with the occurrence of flocks in Britain and elsewhere in Europe outside the species' normal range.</p> <p>In the Avon area five birds were noted at CVL as follows: two on June 20th, a third on 21st and two more on July 16th. All stayed to 23rd, a pair to Aug.14th.</p> <p>Unprecedented numbers of Richard's Pipits (342) in Britain during the autumn.</p> <p>In the Avon area two or three birds noted at Woodspring Bay and Sand Point at the end of October and one early that month at the last named site.</p>	<p>Vinicombe and Harrop (1999)</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 1994</p> <p>Nightingale and Allsopp (1995)</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 1994</p>
1995	<p>Large autumn influx of Spotted Crakes in Britain.</p> <p>In the Avon area probably five different birds noted at CVL from Aug.13th to Sept.22nd.</p> <p>Unprecedented influx of adult White-rumped Sandpipers in Britain during late July and August.</p> <p>One was at Severn Beach from Aug. 21st to 30th. One was also noted on the Welsh side of the Estuary at Goldcliff, (Gwent), in August.</p>	<p>British Birds <b>89</b>:581</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 1995</p> <p>British Birds, <b>89</b>:500, <b>90</b>:472</p> <p>Avon Bird Repot, 1995</p>
1996	<p>Influx of "Tundra" Bean Geese mainly to the east coast of England, in response to freezing conditions on the continent.</p> <p>Locally, one at BL and CVL from Jan. 27th to March 21st.</p> <p>Massive influx of Waxwings into Britain and Ireland during the first-winter period.</p> <p>In the Avon area between eight and 20 birds noted from Feb. 7th to April 4th from six different sites. Most records came from the coast (Portishead, Clevedon and Weston-s-Mare).</p>	<p>Nightingale and Allsopp (1997).</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 1996</p> <p>Nightingale and Allsopp (1997)</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 1996</p>

1997	<p>Record numbers of Black-throated Thrushes in England in the first-winter period. Single birds were noted in Worcestershire, Cambridgeshire, Lancashire and Norfolk and also a first-winter was seen well at Victoria Park near the centre of Bristol on Feb. 6th to 9th.</p> <p>A huge influx of Common and Arctic Redpolls into Britain from late 1995 to April 1996.</p> <p>No Arctic Redpolls were seen in the Avon area but there were two records of Common Redpolls, two at Ashton Court on March 23rd and one at CVL on April 12th/13th.</p> <p>Exceptional national autumn influx of Little Stints.</p> <p>In the Avon area, peak numbers were seen in late September. Highest numbers recorded at BL (max. 46 on Sept. 29th/30th), OPS (max.17), BG and Axe Estuary (max.16 at both sites). On Sept. 26th, over 500 counted in Somerset (215 at Steart and 110 at Cheddar Res.).</p> <p>An exceptional autumn influx of Firecrests in Britain.</p> <p>It was the best year ever locally, with a minimum of 17 birds noted. The autumn saw at least 13 individuals reported from Sept. 22nd to Dec. 29th, up to four at Sand Point on Sept. 30th and others were noted at seven sites.</p> <p>Large concentrations of Smew had gathered in Britain at the end of 1996, no doubt driven out of the continent by freezing conditions. By January they had reached impressive numbers (over 700 in the country with peaks of 53 at Dungeness in Kent, and 41 at Wraybury in Berkshire).</p> <p>In the Avon area, noted at two coastal sites (very unusual) and on the R.Avon at Keynsham (up to four). At the reservoirs, up to six noted at BG, two at BL and a record 21 at CVL (on Feb.11th).</p> <p>Large national irruption of Crossbills. For some areas, it was their best year ever.</p> <p>In the Avon area, it was the largest influx ever recorded with 344 bird-days. The largest flocks were 30 at Barrow Hill from July 3rd to 10th and the same number at Goblin Combe on Sept.11th.</p> <p>Exceptional autumn passage of Sabine's Gulls in Britain and Ireland from mid-August onwards. On Aug. 28th, 347 were counted off Brandon Head (Ireland). On the Continent, it was the best ever autumn in Denmark and in the Netherlands, unprecedented numbers were seen mid-October.</p>	<p>British Birds <b>90:497</b></p> <p>Elliott(1996)</p> <p>Riddington <i>et al.</i>(2000)</p> <p>Avon Bird Report,1996</p> <p>Nightingale and Allsopp (1997).</p> <p>Avon Bird Report,1996</p> <p>Balance (2006)</p> <p>Nightingale and Allsopp (1997)</p> <p>Avon Bird Report,1996</p> <p>Nightingale and Allsopp(1998)</p> <p>Avon Bird Report,1997</p> <p>Nightingale and Allsopp (1998)</p> <p>Avon Bird Report,1997</p> <p>Nightingale and Allsopp (1998)</p>
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1998	In the Avon area, five birds were seen, three inland at CVL and two on Severnside from Aug. 29th to Oct. 11th.	Avon Bird Report, 1997
	Fall of waders at CI-Y on Aug. 27th when 72 Greenshanks, eight Spotted Redshanks, 35 Knot and smaller numbers of other waders were seen after heavy rain.	Avon Bird Report, 1997
	Unprecedented influx of Desert Wheatears into Britain. In the autumn (October to December) 17 were seen including a male locally at CI-Y on Nov. 19th.	British Birds <b>91</b> :502-503 Hunt(1997)
	Exceptionally strong inland passage of Arctic Terns in early May.	Nightingale (1999)
	Locally, a total of 2460 were counted off Sand Point and 1300 off Severn Beach on 2nd. Sixty were seen at CVL on 1st.	Avon Bird Report, 1998
1999	Heavy autumn passage of Little Stints and Curlew Sandpipers.	Nightingale(1999)
	Little Stint: locally, small numbers were recorded inland (max. nine at CVL), most sizeable gatherings were on the coast (up to 35 at Weston STW).	Avon Bird Report, 1998
	Curlew Sandpiper: numbers noted mainly on the coast (up to 15 at the Axe Estuary and up to 14 at OPS).	
	Great Grey Shrike influx into Britain during the autumn of 1998 which started unusually early in October.	Nightingale (1999)
2000	None were seen in the Avon area during 1998 but a first-winter was seen at ASW from Jan. 24th to April 2nd, 1999.	Avon Bird Report, 1999
	Unprecedented autumn passage of juvenile Red-necked Phalaropes during late August/early September	Fraser and Rogers (2001)
	In the Avon area, two juveniles were seen well at BL on Aug. 25th/26th.	Avon Bird Report, 1999
	A large influx of Iceland Gulls into Britain and Ireland during the first winter/spring.	British Birds, <b>94</b> :572
2000	In the Avon area, up to six individuals were seen from January to April from three coastal and two inland sites (CVL and Filton).	Avon Bird Report, 2000
	Unprecedented influx of Honey Buzzards into Britain from mid-September to early October. At least 1600 individuals were recorded with 221 noted in Essex, 186 in Kent, 130 in Yorkshire, 113 in Hampshire and 101 in Dorset.	Fraser and Rogers (2002)
	Locally, only three were recorded: two at CVL on Sept. 28th and one at Nailsea on 29th.	Avon Bird Report, 2000

2001	<p>Late October storm from 28th to 30th with strong south-westerly winds and heavy rain caused flooding in many areas of England. It caused an unusual influx of Storm- petrels to Hampshire and Dorset in particular.</p> <p>In the Avon area, five Storm-petrels were seen on 30th with three at CVL and two off Severn Beach. The storm also grounded five Pomarine Skuas at Sea Mills on 29th and three Leach's Storm-petrels were noted (one Severn Beach, two at CVL).</p>	<p>Brown and Grice(2005)</p> <p>Avon Bird Report,2000</p>
	<p>Moderate irruption of Waxwings across Britain.</p> <p>In the Avon area, six noted at Clevedon on Jan. 9th, four from Feb.12th to March 8th. At Odd Down, Bath, two on Jan.18th/19th.</p>	<p>Nightingale and McGeehan (2002)</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 2001</p>
	<p>Very high numbers of Black Redstarts recorded in the Avon area. Eighty bird-days were noted throughout the year with most in the first-winter/spring period.</p>	<p>Avon Bird Report, 2001</p>
	<p>An exceptional year for Black-necked Grebes in the Avon area. At least nine birds were recorded in spring and 16 were seen in the autumn including a flock of six at CVL on Aug.19th.</p>	<p>Avon Bird Report, 2001</p>
	<p>Record numbers of Grey Phalaropes (1039) in Britain. This was the best year for this species since detailed record collection at a national scale began.</p> <p>In the Avon area, three birds were noted in October at ASW (5th-8th), CVL (6th) and BL (12th).</p>	<p>Fraser and Rogers (2003)</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 2001</p>
2002	<p>Unprecedented spring/early summer influx of Rose-coloured Starlings into Britain and Ireland.182 birds were recorded. The influx was most marked in south-west England (34 in Cornwall, 17 in Scilly and 13 in Devon).</p>	<p>Fraser and Rogers (2004)</p>
	<p>Locally, three adults were seen briefly at Clevedon on June 8th.In neighbouring Somerset three adults noted on 2nd at Brean Down were probably the same birds.</p>	<p>Avon Bird Report, 2002</p> <p>Ballance (2006)</p>
	<p>Large movement of Little Gulls on the English south and east coasts from mid October to early November, after strong south-easterly winds.</p>	
	<p>In the Avon area, apart from one individual on the coast on Oct. 26th, all records were from CVL, where an unprecedented passage was noted from Oct. 21st to Nov. 3rd. Birds were passing through during this time but peak counts were made on Oct. 31st (15) and Nov. 3rd (16).</p>	<p>Avon Bird Report, 2002</p>

2003	<p>A modest influx of Cranes into Britain, including ten in Warwickshire.</p> <p>In the Avon area, five adults noted at Tortworth from Feb. 25th to March 2nd. They were also seen in Gloucestershire.</p> <p>Record influx of juvenile Pectoral Sandpipers in Britain and Ireland. 261 birds were recorded in September and October.</p> <p>Locally, three juveniles seen in September: one at Weston STW, one at BL (seen later at the next named site) and two at CVL. In Somerset three were seen together at Meare Heath on Sept. 23rd/24<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p>Large Yellow-browed Warbler influx (350 birds recorded).</p> <p>In the Avon area two, one at Clifton, Bristol from Oct. 23rd to 27th and another at Cl-Y from Nov. 4th to 7th.</p> <p>Large Water Pipit influx in the Avon area: 17 seen going to roost on Nov. 18th at CVL. Also two at BL on 19th, one on Dec. 21st and up to two at RPD from Nov. 15th to Dec. 21st. Good numbers were also seen in Somerset (twelve at Meare Heath on Dec. 6th).</p>	<p>Brown and Grice (2005).</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 2003</p> <p>Lees and Gilroy (2004): Fraser and Rogers (2006)</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 2003 Ballance (2006)</p> <p>Brown and Grice (2005) Avon Bird Report, 2003</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 2003 Ballance (2006)</p>
2004	<p>Unprecedented numbers of Dusky Warblers over-wintering in Britain. Single birds were noted in Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Suffolk and the Avon area.</p> <p>The first for the area was at RPD from March 6th to April 13th. A further record came from BG on May 1st and one was noted at Slimbridge (Glos.) on the 2nd.</p> <p>A large spring influx of Subalpine Warblers into Britain. Twenty individuals were recorded, mainly from mid-April to mid-May.</p> <p>A female was seen briefly at Severn Beach on May 2nd, the first record for the Avon area.</p> <p>The largest Pomarine Skua numbers in spring ever recorded in the Avon area. On May 4th at Severnside, a flock of eight flew north on the morning high tide. On the evening tide, an unprecedented flock of 28 was seen. Nine were noted on April 19th and also two on 13th, three on 30th and one on May 3rd. At Sand Point, three noted on April 13th, one was at Cl-Y on May 3rd.</p> <p>Notable spring influx of Temminck's Stints in Britain.</p> <p>One at Severn Beach on May 13th, was only the third Avon area spring record.</p>	<p>British Birds, <b>98</b>:679-680</p> <p>Stone and Vinicombe (2005), Avon Bird Report, 2004</p> <p>British Birds, <b>98</b>:677</p> <p>Martin (2005), Avon Bird Report, 2004</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 2004</p> <p>British Birds <b>97</b>:369</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 2004</p>

2005	<p>Unprecedented irruption of Waxwings to Britain and Europe.</p> <p>In the Avon area, about 10900 bird-days recorded between Dec. 30th, 2004 and April 26th, 2005. The highest count was 377 at Easton, Bristol on Jan. 23rd.</p> <p>The largest influx of Yellow-browed Warblers ever recorded in the UK.</p> <p>In the Avon area, two records: one at CVL on Sept. 24th, another at Sand Point from Oct. 6th to 8th.</p> <p>Exceptional influx of Hawfinches in the autumn/ first-winter period 2006.</p> <p>Locally, twelve noted October to December.</p> <p>Fall-out from hurricane Wilma in early November.</p> <p>The tail end of hurricane Wilma and the associated strong south-west winds brought an array of rare and unusual birds to Britain .These included an unprecedented arrival of Laughing and Franklin's Gulls and well over 120 Grey Phalaropes.</p> <p>In the Avon area, the most amazing record was a male Frigatebird which was seen to leave Flat Holm (South Glamorgan) and fly towards Weston-s-Mare into Avon waters on Nov. 6th. Also, several Grey Phalaropes appeared inland, three Ring-necked Ducks were located at CVL from the 5th and an Upland Sandpiper was noted at Cl-Y from the 12th.</p>	<p>Nightingale and McGeehan (2005)</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 2005, Bland(2006)</p> <p>Nightingale and McGeehan (2005)</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 2005</p> <p><a href="http://Birdguides.com">Birdguides.com</a> 2006, Hawfinch bonanza</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 2005</p> <p><a href="http://Birdguides.com">Birdguides.com</a> Review of the week, Nov. 3rd-9th, 2005</p> <p>Avon Bird Report, 2005, 2006</p>
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## The affect of the 1990s sarcoptic mange epidemic in Foxes *Vulpes vulpes* on Common Pheasants *Phasianus colchicus* in the Avon area

Mark Dadds

### INTRODUCTION

My garden at Fishpool Hill is located about 200m beyond the north-western edge of urban Bristol in ST5779. The birds using this garden have been regularly monitored for about 20 years as part of the Winter Garden Bird Survey (WGS) organised by Richard Bland. The objective of the survey is to record birds consistently in the garden from the beginning of October to the end of March. The recording regime I use is: 15 minutes early in the morning for two days each week. Table 1 shows the number of Pheasants recorded during these timed observations. The figures are the minimum numbers of different birds seen in the garden each year during the timed counts in January-March and October-December.

1986	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	5	8	9	9	8	2	2	0

Table 1. WGS counts of Common Pheasants in a Fishpool Hill garden, 1986-2006

The appearance and build up of Pheasant numbers from 1998-2001, and their decline and disappearance from 2003-2005, seemed likely to be due to the outbreak of *sarcoptic mange* in the Bristol Fox population during the 1990s.

### FOX POPULATION DATA

During this time, casual observations of the local Foxes showed an increasing incidence of mange infected Foxes, followed by their total disappearance, and then by their gradual return.

A more precise measure of the impact of mange on the local Fox population was obtained from the work carried out by the University of Bristol (UoB). They have been studying Foxes in Bristol since 1977. From 1990 a study area of approximately 1.5 km<sup>2</sup> in the north-west of the city has been monitored particularly intensively (Baker *et al.*, 2000). This area had one of the highest Fox densities in Bristol, and prior to 1994 the population had been rising due to the increasing number of householders who put food out specifically for Foxes. The first infected Fox appeared in this study area in the spring of 1994, and within two years the study population had been wiped out. It was estimated that over 90% of all the Foxes in Bristol during this time had died. Since then mange has persisted in the population, but at a much lower level, allowing the fox population to slowly start to recover. (Baker *et al.*, 2000; Baker *et al.*, 2001; Soulsbury *et al.*, 2007).

A graph of the Fox density (adults/km<sup>2</sup>) in the north-west Bristol study area for selected seasons in the period 1990 to 2006 is shown in Figure 1 (Baker *et al.*, 2001; Soulsbury *et al.*, 2007; C. Soulsbury, *pers com.*). The Fox population in the Fishpool Hill area is expected to have been significantly lower than that in the UoB study area, but due to its relatively close proximity (three kilometres) the trend is likely to have been very similar (C. Soulsbury, *pers com.*). The WGS Pheasant numbers from Fishpool Hill are shown on the same graph.

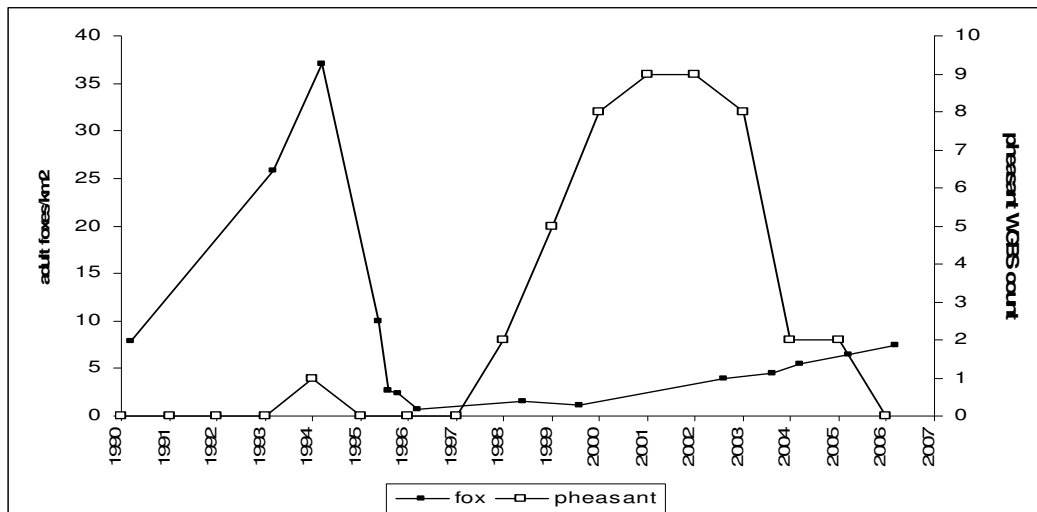


Figure 1. Fox density at UoB study area in north-west Bristol and number of Pheasants recorded in WGS at Fishpool Hill from 1990 to 2006.

## OTHER SOURCES OF PHEASANT POPULATION DATA

The entries under Pheasant in this Report (ABR) going back to 1992 typically state that the species is poorly reported with few records received. The only long term records are of breeding season males at CVL (Table 2). No counts appear in ABR for 2003 and 2004, although breeding at CVL was confirmed for 2004.

1992	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	2005
9	10	1	4	1	3	6	5	11	13	11	-	-	20

Table 2. Number of calling male Pheasants at CVL 1992-2005

The data available from the Avon Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) consists of 3246 breeding season surveys of one km squares in the Avon area, starting with 50 squares surveyed in 1994 and nearly 200 in 2006. This was analysed by dividing the surveyed squares into three categories using, as a guide, the map of the recording area featured on the back cover of this Report. The three categories were:

- Urban Bristol: that is those one km squares that lie completely within the outer boundary of urban Bristol (including Patchway/Bradley Stoke and Avonmouth);
- Outer Bristol: that is those one km squares which have the urban Bristol outer boundary line pass through them;
- Rest of Avon: that is all other one km squares.

The results are shown in Table 3.

Year	1994	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
Urban Bristol													
1 km squares	4	10	11	14	16	16	34	64	60	62	64	52	66
Pheasants	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Outer Bristol													
1 km squares	1	2	2	2	2	3	18	32	33	38	39	37	42
Pheasants	2	0	0	0	0	6	12	7	25	17	17	24	24
Average	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.7	0.2	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.6
Rest of Avon													
1 km squares	58	78	82	86	90	92	90	10	96	100	102	122	117
Pheasants	103	136	171	173	192	228	270	22	254	277	305	340	417
Average	1.8	1.7	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.5	3.0	2.2	2.6	2.8	3.0	2.8	3.6

Table 3. Number of one km squares surveyed, number of Pheasants counted, and average number of Pheasants per surveyed square for the years 1994-2006. Where a square has been surveyed more than once in a year (nearly all were surveyed twice a year) the visit recording the highest number of Pheasants has been used. The marked decline in counts for the Rest of Avon in 2001 is due to restricted access in many squares as a result of foot and mouth disease.

Figure 2 below shows the Pheasant population change over the whole of England based on BTO BBS data for the period 1994 to 2004 (Baillie *et al.*, 2006). It also shows the BBS data for the Rest of Avon from Table 3, plotted on the same basis, that is the population in any one year is expressed as a percentage of the corresponding 2003 value.

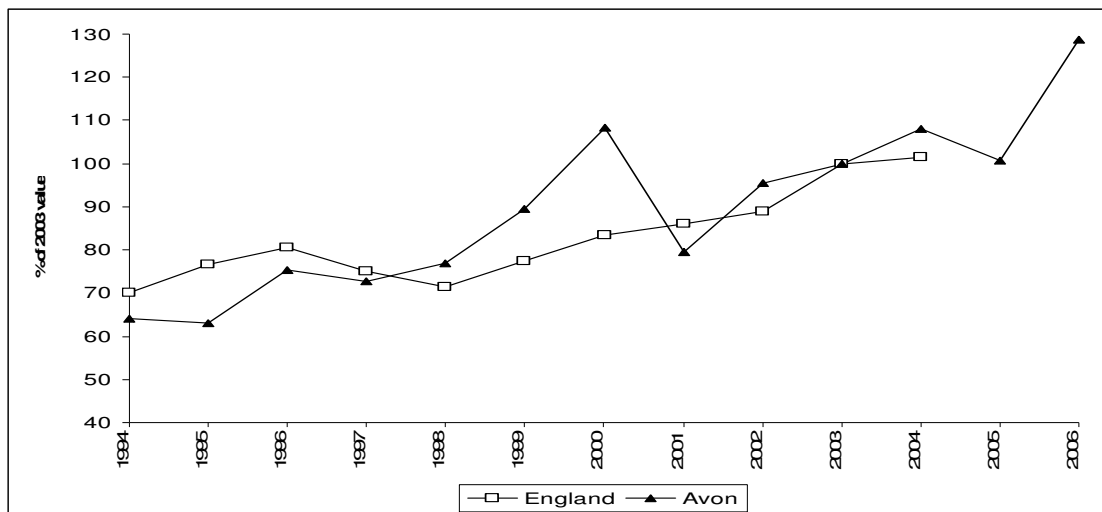


Figure 2. Relative Pheasant population levels for England 1994-2004 (from BTO BBS) and the Rest of Avon group 1994-2006 (from Avon BBS).

The data for the individual one km squares was examined. Only a minority of these started to be surveyed at the beginning of the Avon BBS in 1994, and of these not all have been surveyed in every year since. Some show sudden and sustained changes in the number of Pheasants recorded, but these are usually where there has been a change of recorder who presumably has used a different route to walk the square whilst carrying out the survey. One square in the Outer Bristol group stands out as it shows marked similarities to the Fishpool Hill WGS data. This is ST6269 (Stockwood Open Space). It has been surveyed continuously from 1995 to 2006 by the same observer, who was able to supply additional information from this site on the numbers of calling males recorded each year since 1990. These two datasets are shown in Table 4.

year	1990	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	2006
BBS	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	2	1	1	3	2
males	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	3	5	4	5	4	4	5	2*

Table 4. Stockwood, BBS Pheasant counts 1995 to 2006 and number of calling male Pheasants 1990 to 2006.

\* the result of a less thorough survey so may be an underestimate.

Figure 3 shows the result of plotting the Table 4 data after merging the two datasets together. This has been achieved by expressing the count in each dataset as a percentage of the highest value in its dataset, and then taking the average where two figures exist for the same year. The Fishpool Hill WGS is also shown in order to facilitate comparison.

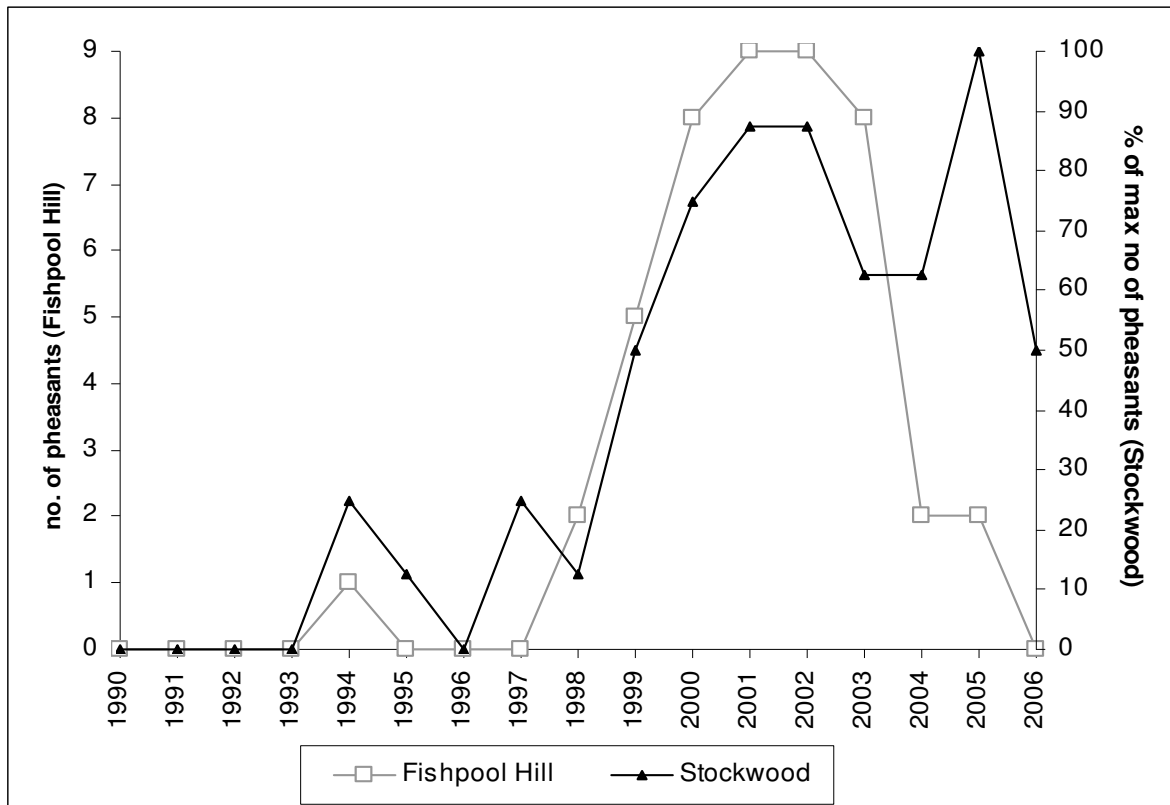


Figure 3. Number of Pheasants at Stockwood (merged BBS data and counts of calling males) and number of Pheasants recorded in WGS at Fishpool Hill from 1990 to 2006.

Table 5 shows the BBS Pheasant counts for some of the other Outer Bristol one km squares. These were only surveyed for between two and seven of the 13 BBS years. None of these surveys were undertaken before 2000. The counts that have been made all loosely fit into the pattern of Pheasant distribution seen at Fishpool Hill. These squares also all reside in tetrads in which no Pheasants were found during the breeding bird surveys carried out in 1988-91 (Bland & Tully). Only representing 25% of a tetrad will mean the chances of detecting a Pheasant in a one km square will be reduced when a tetrad is surveyed, but calling males are audible up to almost 1.5 km under favourable conditions (Cramp & Simmons 1980).

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
ST5281	-	-	4	-	-	-	1
ST5382	-	-	4	-	-	2	-
ST5670	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
ST6076	-	0	-	-	1	-	0
ST6178	-	-	7	3	1	1	2

Table 5. One km squares in Outer Bristol group for which the few years surveyed during the Avon BBS loosely fit the Fishpool Hill/Stockwood pattern, and are in tetrads for which no pheasants were recorded 1988-91.

ST5281 Avonmouth docks industrial estate and Severn shore

ST5382 Seabank Power Station and Chittenning Warth

ST5670 Ashton Marsh and Ashton Vale

ST6076 Lockleaze South

ST6178 Abbeywood

Of the Rest of Avon squares individually examined there are a variety of patterns shown – no Pheasants, level trends, upward trends, downward trends, fluctuating, but only a handful that show similar patterns to Fishpool Hill/Stockwood. The figures for a couple of examples from this latter group are shown in Table 6. ST3758 is an area of farmland and woodland on the Mendips north of Christon, and ST5472 contains Ashton Court, Beggar Bush Lane and farmland to the north west. ST5472 resides in a tetrad for which no Pheasants were recorded in the 1988-91 breeding survey. They have been plotted alongside Fishpool Hill WGS counts in Figure 4.

	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	02	03	04	05	06
ST3758	2	1	1	4	4	7	4	9	7	3	3	4
ST5472	-	-	2	2	5	3	1	2	1	0	0	0

Table 6. Avon BBS pheasant counts for the one km squares ST3758 and ST5472.

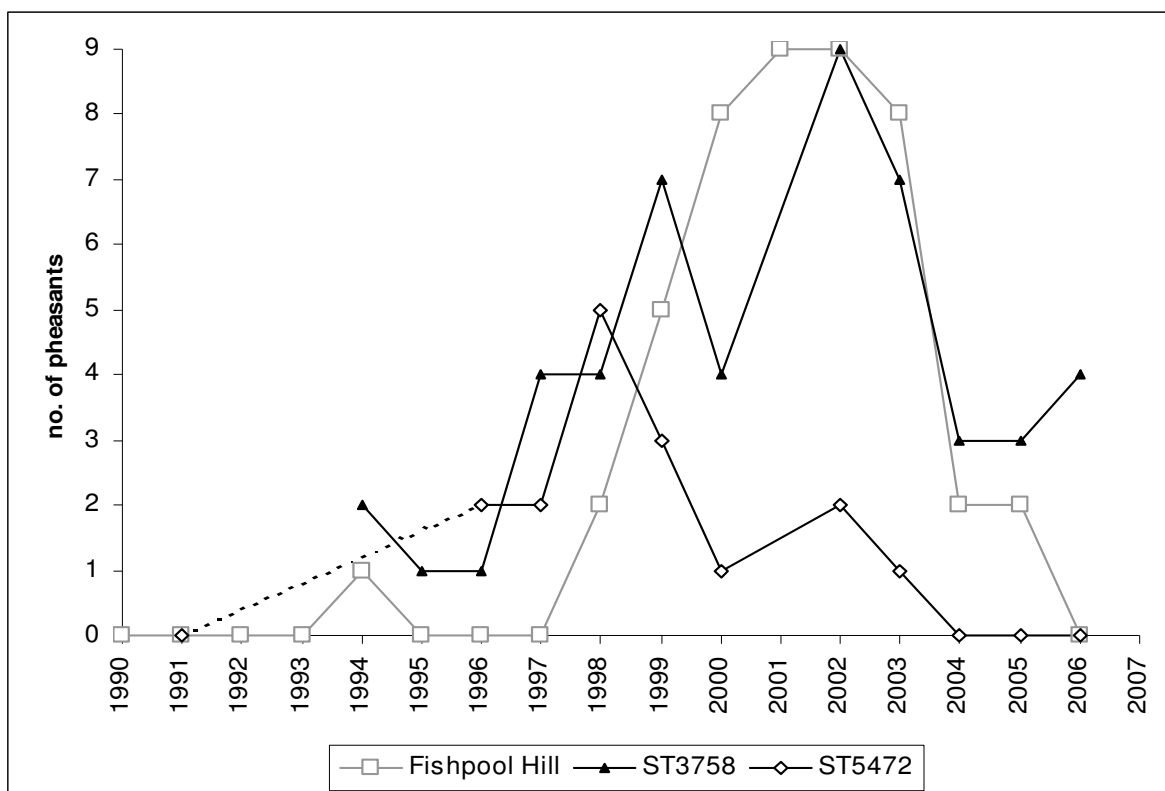


Figure 4. Two of the few BBS examples from the Rest of Avon group that show similar population changes to the Fishpool Hill WGBS results. The 1 km square ST5472 is in a tetrad that recorded no pheasants in the 1988-91 breeding survey, hence the broken line from 1991 to 1996.

## DISCUSSION

The graph showing WGS counts of Pheasants at Fishpool Hill and Fox density in Bristol (Figure 1) shows that within a couple of years of the Fox population crash in 1994/95, Pheasants were able to re-colonise the Fishpool Hill area rapidly. Although clearly this must have initially been through immigration, it was also driven by successful breeding within the area. On one occasion during this period several small but flight capable young and an accompanying adult female were flushed from the WGS surveyed garden (date not recorded, *pers ob.*), and on Aug. 15th, 2003 two half-grown juveniles were observed at Fishpool Hill climbing on Bramble bushes to eat blackberries (ABR). By 2002 the Fox population appears to have recovered to a level whereby it caused the Pheasant population to go into decline, resulting in the elimination of all Pheasants in the area by 2006.

Of the three categories used to analyse the Avon BBS data, Fishpool Hill falls into the Outer Bristol group.

Unsurprisingly the results for Urban Bristol show that virtually no Pheasants occurred within the city. Only two were recorded, one in 1999 at ST6673 (West Kingswood & Warmley) and the other in 2003 at ST5278 (Avonmouth Trading Estate).

The results for Outer Bristol do not demonstrate any clear trend, and suffer from a dearth of squares surveyed in the first half of the period. The peaks in 1994 and 1999 are the result of a relatively Pheasant-rich square surveyed in these years but not surveyed during the years in between.

The plot of the results for the rest of Avon (Figure 2) broadly indicate a linear progression. There is a suggestion of a small peak in 2000, but this has been exaggerated by the trough the following year which is probably an anomaly caused by foot and mouth access restrictions imposed in 2001. Using a line of best fit (Microsoft Excel generated linear trendline) gives an increase of 86% in this Pheasant population from 1994 to 2006. The BBS results for England as a whole are similar, but its best fit-line gives an increase of 41% from 1994 to 2004 (2005/6 figures not available), whereas Avon BBS for the same period is 66%.

There is very little data available on the spread of mange through Avon and its impact on the fox population. There is no obvious impact on Pheasant numbers in the Rest of Avon as a whole (Figure 2) suggesting that the mange impact on Avon's rural foxes was far less than that within Bristol. However, there may have been hotspots within the region where Foxes were impacted enough so that Pheasant numbers were able to temporarily increase (Figure 4). If these Pheasant increases are due to mange induced fox mortality, their widely spaced peaks (1998 and 2002) must be an indication of how long mange took to spread to its maximum extent within Avon. The 2002 peak belongs to ST3758 which is the Rest of Avon square which most closely matches Fishpool Hill, yet of all the one km squares covered in the Avon BBS, ST3758 is almost the furthest from Bristol. Contrary to this seemingly slow spread within the area, it would have taken only a fraction of this time to spread from one side of the area to the other as its progression from southern England to well into Scotland took little more than ten years (Soulsbury *et al.* 2007). All this said, it is still not possible to gauge the contribution of other factors on these results such as the release of hand-reared birds.

The patterns of occurrence of Pheasants at Fishpool Hill and Stockwood from 1990 to 2004 (Figure 3) are remarkably similar, even to the extent that they both show a small temporary Pheasant presence in 1994. The main difference between the two is the disappearance of the Fishpool Hill population by 2006, whereas the Stockwood population manages to hold on. Since the early 90's more scrub cover has started to develop in various parts of the Stockwood site (J Holmes, *pers com.*) which may well be the explanation. In this respect the area around Fishpool Hill has not changed significantly over the period. The main determining factor for the number of Pheasants occurring in the UK is the release of artificially reared birds for shooting (Baillie, 2006), but it is exceptional for released birds to move more than 1.5 km from the point of release (Cramp & Simmons, 1980). The closest Pheasant rearing to the Stockwood site known by the observer is about four kilometres away and I am unaware of any within at least two kilometres of Fishpool Hill, so this probably is not a major contributory factor to the population fluctuations observed at these two sites.

The absence of relatively close release sites is probably the main reason why there were no birds found at these Outer Bristol locations before the mange epidemic. Studies conducted in rural southern England have found the number of Pheasants killed by Foxes each year would not be replenished by the estimated number of young the remaining Pheasants would be expected to successfully raise. It was concluded that the Pheasant population was only maintained by the immigration of hand-reared birds from neighbouring areas (Reynolds & Tapper 1995, Baker *et al.* 2006). It remains to be seen if the improvement in the

Pheasant habitat quality at Stockwood (more scrub) enables them to persist at that site, or if the increasing Fox population will eventually get the upper hand.

The data in Table 5 suggests that the pattern of Pheasant occurrence recorded during the mange epidemic on the north-west (Fishpool Hill) and south-east (Stockwood) edges of Bristol may have occurred elsewhere on the periphery of the city. There seems little doubt the epidemic was responsible for the two BBS records of Pheasant in Urban Bristol, and for the odd record considered unusual enough to make it into this Report, such as the Hartcliffe garden record on Feb. 16th, 2003. This is in ST5867, which falls into the Outer Bristol group.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## Yellow-Legged Gull Identification in Avon

John Martin

### Introduction - what is Yellow-legged Gull?

Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*) has recently been awarded specific status by the BOU (Sangster *et al.*, 2005). It is one of the notoriously complex group of large white-headed gulls that include the locally common Herring and Lesser Black-backed gulls *L. argentatus* and *L. fuscus*. British birders have been identifying Yellow-legged Gull with increasing frequency since the work Rob Hume (Hume, 1978) and Peter Grant (Grant, 1982) almost 30 years ago.

They breed from the Aegean and Black Sea coasts of Turkey and Romania in the east, across central Europe to about 52° north, and to the Atlantic coast of Iberia in the west. The race *L. m. atlantis* occupies at least the Azores, while those on Madeira, the Canary Islands and Atlantic coasts of Morocco and Iberia are probably closer to nominate *michahellis*, although of controversial taxonomic status (Malling Olsen, 2003). Recently Yellow-legged Gulls have spread north up the Atlantic coast of France as far as Normandy and have even bred in southern England. They are frequent and even locally abundant post breeding visitors to parts of southern England with peak numbers from July to September. They are less common through the winter and least so in spring. Generally they become less common further north and west in Britain but there are records north to Scotland and west to Ireland.

In some older bird books this species is not even mentioned but its identification is reasonably well covered in the most modern field guides (e.g. Svensson *et al.*, 1999), and more thoroughly in specialist books (e.g. Howell and Dunn, 2007; Malling Olsen, 2003) and papers (e.g. Garner, 1997; Vinicombe 2007). This note neither attempts to set out definitively how to identify Yellow-legged Gull, nor does it contain anything new or ground-breaking. Instead it suggests ways of becoming more confident at identifying the species in an Avon context, drawing extensively on the excellent advice about learning the gulls in the introduction to Howell and Dunn (2007), as well as flagging up some identification pitfalls.

Three photographs accompanying this paper are reproduced after page 128.

### Local patterns of occurrence

Yellow-legged Gull can occur in Avon in any month but the local status mirrors the national picture with a late summer and autumn peak, small numbers remaining through the winter and fewer still in spring. CVL is the best site, where from July to October the first Herring type gull you find stood on a buoy out in the lake is likely to be this species. Anywhere that large gulls gather is likely to produce at least the occasional individual although the species is amazingly scarce in central Bristol where years of study of the city's numerous large white-headed gulls in the 1990s produced hardly any Yellow-legged Gulls (M T Elliott *pers. comm.*).

### Identifying large white-headed gulls

Large white-headed gulls form a group that is taxonomically complex and variable in appearance, particularly in immature plumages. As with other difficult identification problems the key is thorough knowledge of the common confusion species in this case Herring and Lesser Black-backed gulls.

Such familiarity will only be gained by taking time to study them in the field. Start with adults and concentrate on plumage, bill size shape and pattern, eye colour, leg colour, moult, behaviour and so on – make notes and if possible take reference photographs. Learn variations in size, structure and winter head streaking and get used to studying primary patterns. This is not easy at first but becomes easier with practice. When you are comfortable with adults move on to the immatures.

Late summer is a good time to start looking at young birds and the middle of Bristol is as good a place as any. CVL is also a good place as the birds are readily attracted to bread – and take plenty! At this time of year juvenile Herring and Lesser Black-backed gulls are in fresh plumage and are often with their parents which can be of some help in identification. Beware of young birds of one species giving their high pitched begging call to adults of the other – they will try it on with any adult big gull! Follow their moults through the autumn and into their faded and worn plumages the following summer. You will always find birds that are not

easy to identify to one or the other species but do not worry, to quote Howell and Dunn – ‘the proportion of unidentifiable gulls never falls to zero’.

### Adults

Adult Yellow-legged Gulls have mantles that are darker than local (*argenteus*) Herring Gulls but paler than local (*graellsii*) Lesser Black-backed Gulls, usually a little closer to the latter. The Kodak Grey Scale is a widely used method of quantifying shades of grey ranging from 0 (white) to 20 (black). The values measured for Yellow-legged Gull in Howell and Dunn (2007) are 6-8.5 for Yellow-legged compared with 9-11 for *graellsii* Lesser Black-backed and 4-5 for *argenteus* Herring gulls.

They also have yellow legs (!), reddish orange eye rings, bright yellow bills with an obvious red or orange spot on the gonys and deeper yellow eyes than many Herring Gulls. Head streaking is light and fine, often confined to a mask around the eye that extends onto the crown, but is sometimes more extensive. Head streaking is most marked when they are in fresh plumage in late summer and has often bleached to give birds a white headed appearance in late autumn when most Lesser Black-backed and Herring gulls have rather heavy head and neck streaking. They have rather extensive black in the primaries compared with most Herring Gulls and usually a single medium sized mirror on the outer primary (p10) with a smaller one on p9. The division between the black and grey is rather squarely cut off across the wingtip. Structurally they consistently have a thick heavy bill that has a marked gonydeal angle and a strongly decurved tip giving it a blunt appearance. The head can look quite thick-set and square although the neck is often smoothly contoured. They are quite long-winged and well proportioned being chunkier than most Lesser Black-backed Gulls. These features should all be looked for as in isolation none is diagnostic and all vary to some extent.

### Interpretation and variation

Perceived mantle colour varies according to the angle of the bird to the observer. It is easiest to judge in flat even light and can be particularly difficult in bright sunlight, or at dusk when greys tend to look darker and different shades become ‘compressed’. Ideally you want Yellow-legged, Lesser Black-backed and Herring gulls lined up, facing the same way, sideways on in cloudy but fairly bright conditions to facilitate comparison of mantle tones. Unfortunately this can not always be arranged!

Leg and other bare part colours vary in brightness according to season. Legs can sometimes be quite washed out and almost colourless when moulting in late summer and should be at their brightest on birds in breeding condition. Eye ring colour is not easy to see unless the bird is very close and in good light. Again its brightness and prominence is seasonally variable.

Male gulls are on average bigger, bigger-billed and heavier looking than females – the difference can be striking. Thus not all Lesser Black-backed Gulls are small, sleek and slender – some big males can be distinctly chunky!

### Northern Herring Gull

Adult Yellow-legged Gulls often stand out from the crowd in late autumn when they tend to be strikingly white headed at a time when both Herring and Lesser Black-backed gulls have rather heavy head and neck streaking. A white headed, dark-mantled Herring type gull in November however might not be a Yellow-legged Gull. Northern *argentatus* Herring Gulls have a mantle tone (Kodak Grey Scale 5.5-7) that overlaps with Yellow-legged Gull (6-8.5). Although most have particularly heavy winter head and neck streaking they can occasionally be white-headed as early as November. In some parts of the Baltic many *argentatus* Herring Gulls have yellow legs (Jonsson, 1998), as was the case in most of the dozen or so adults I saw on Oulu Tip, Oulun Lääni, Finland, in May this year.

In Avon *argentatus* Herring Gulls are rather scarce winter visitors and only a few are reported each winter. Furthermore only a small proportion of such birds would be white headed in early winter and far fewer still would have yellow legs. I have only seen one yellow-legged presumed *argentatus* in Britain in the past 30 years, at Westport Lake, Staffordshire on Jan. 9th, 1987: a big chunky individual with dull yellow legs and quite heavy brown head streaking that never even briefly suggested Yellow-legged Gull. While it is therefore pretty safe to assume a white-headed, dark-mantled, yellow-legged big gull in Avon in November is Yellow-legged you should ideally make sure by checking the primary pattern. Distant birds in roosts in fading light where other features cannot be checked are best ignored.



### Hybrids

Lesser Black-backed and Herring gulls do occasionally interbreed. With large mixed populations in Bristol it is not surprising that hybrids seem to be relatively frequent here. I have seen several presumed hybrids in and around Bristol over the years. At some times of year and at some sites they might even be at least as frequent as Yellow-legged Gulls. They can show many of the features of the latter with intermediate mantle shade, yellow legs and more black in the primaries than Herring Gull. Head streaking is a good clue when present with the pattern and strength resembling the parents rather than Yellow-legged Gull. This is only of use when the streaking is present, of course, and its absence does not rule out a hybrid. In addition, and with potentially even more tricky consequences, Yellow-legged can interbreed with both Herring and Lesser Black-backed, while back crosses have also been recorded causing further complications.

Some presumed hybrids from Belgium described by Peter Adriaens illustrate the problem. The parent species of these presumed hybrids were usually unknown but the offspring closely resembled Yellow-legged Gull differing in subtle ways such as having broader white tertial crescents (unlike either of the presumed parents, oddly), usually slightly darker grey more bluish tinged upperparts, and in details of the primary pattern. There was usually a large amount of black on the outermost three to four primaries (except for rather large white mirror(s) on p10(9)) but comparatively little black on p6 or 5, no more than in *argenteus* Herring Gull. Such birds would very easily be passed over as Yellow-legged Gulls.

### Caspian Gull

This taxon was until recently treated as a race (*cachinnans*) of Yellow-legged Gull. BOU currently treats it as a race of Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus cachinnans*) but it is best treated as a separate species *L. cachinnans*. It has proven to be a scarce but regular visitor to Britain with most records from the East, from South Yorkshire southwards, to Kent, mainly in autumn and winter. It is rare in the west and there are only a few records from Avon.

It is actually not likely to be mistaken for Yellow-legged Gull in adult plumage when its different shape and structure (lanky, long-legged and long-winged with a small head and slender body), bare part colours and shape (small usually dark eye and slender rather pointed bill, legs usually greyish-flesh rather than yellow) and primary pattern (complete white tip to p10, black band on p5 and long grey tongues eating into the black of the wing tip) along with a usually paler mantle (although with some overlap with paler Yellow-legged Gulls - Kodak Grey Scale 5-6.5). Some *argentatus* Herring Gulls are more likely to pose identification problems and this complex issue is very well treated in Jonsson (1998). It is more feasible that an adult-looking Yellow-legged Gull with a complete white tip to p10 (frequent in birds from the eastern parts of the range) and dark eye (frequent in sub-adults) might be taken for a Caspian Gull. Young individuals can be more difficult but classic first winter Caspian Gull is a distinctive and striking bird.

### Immatures and moult timing

As Yellow-legged Gulls breed early in the year the juveniles are independent significantly before those of our local breeding species. They can arrive in our area from July onwards and by August many have already started their moult to first winter plumage. The most obvious early sign of moult is the appearance of new scapulars, often pale grey with a dark anchor mark (a pattern matched by many Herring and some Lesser Black-backed Gulls). Their plumage is often already a bit worn, most obvious on the tertials, at a time when most local Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gulls are recently fledged in fresh full juvenile plumage.

By late August and September young Lesser Black-backed Gulls start replacing scapulars so moult and wear gradually become less useful features thereafter. A young Yellow-legged Gull can be very similar to a young Lesser Black-backed Gull and some are probably not safely distinguished. Interestingly some young northern Herring Gulls can be very similar to some Yellow-legged Gulls and they are a definite identification pitfall later in the winter.

A typical first winter Yellow-legged Gull shows the same structural features as adults with a heavy blunt black bill with a distinct gonydeal angle and protruding nail being a good feature on many. They tend to be white headed with a dark mask around the eye. The body is also white with often distinct breast streaking, and not infrequently neat bars or chevrons down the flanks and on the lateral undertail coverts. The dark wing coverts contrast with the new paler scapulars (a pattern matched by other gulls). The greater coverts are often strongly barred and have more extensive dark bases towards the outers creating a partial dark bar. The tertials are often rather narrowly fringed white with minimal notching (if any) confined to near the tip and they are abraded by late summer. Their underwings are usually quite dark but can sometimes be much paler

(inviting confusion with Caspian Gull). The paler window on the inner primaries is a good feature being less obvious than in Herring but more so than in most Lesser Black-backed Gulls although overlapping with the latter.

In subsequent immature plumages birds can be more easily picked out on mantle colour with the grey tone much as that of adults. Eliminating hybrids is more difficult with fewer plumage features available on which to base the identification, although structural features are of course still useful. Ruling out immature hybrids can be very difficult. More study is required on birds of known age and parentage to find out exactly what they look like.

Space precludes anything other than a very brief outline of Yellow-legged Gull identification here and study of the references listed is recommended. It is also important, of course, to get out and start learning in the field. The study of gulls can become something of an obsession if you are not careful – but why not, when you can learn something new every time you go out? Sometimes however it seems that the more one learns about large white-headed gulls the *less* confident one becomes about their identification – it occasionally seems to be a bell-shaped learning curve.

### Acknowledgements

Thanks to all those who have shared their views and knowledge of large white-headed gulls with me over the years, too numerous to list here in full but in particular Mashuq Ahmad, Martin Elliott, Steve N.G. Howell, Brian Small and Keith Vinicombe. Particular thanks to KEV for useful comments on an earlier draft of this paper. Any glaring errors are entirely my fault for not paying enough attention to them.

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## A Gull Incident at CVL

Chris J. Stone

At about 08.30 on Jan. 15th I was driving past Villice Bay, CVL, when I became aware of several gulls along the road, apparently in distress. I stopped the car and investigated, and I found that they were Black-headed and Mew Gulls. They had broken wings, and in one case (a Mew Gull) the wing was completely missing. I quickly collected up the gulls and put them in my car where they remained fairly subdued. I considered ringing the RSPCA but then I noticed that more were in the field opposite Villice Bay. When I scanned this field I could see that these gulls were similarly injured. Some were obviously dead, including one or two that had been predated.

The field was quite small with hedges surrounding it, and the gulls could not escape being unable to fly. So I transferred the gulls in my car to this field, I did not enter it as I did not want to distress the gulls further. I then called the RSPCA and departed. Less than an hour later I was back at the site, and a few minutes after this an inspector from the RSPCA arrived and I departed. Although I had found only about 20 gulls, looking over a larger area he found 35 gulls, and he passed the problem Natural England (Defra) to investigate.

The following report was received from Alan Britton of Natural England (Defra).

"On Jan. 16th Defra Bristol was informed about the incident described above as there was the possibility that pesticides were involved, and so a visit was made by Defra staff the same day. The bodies of 23 Mew and twelve Black-headed Gulls were observed, many with broken right wings. Some of the bodies were taken to a Defra laboratory for post-mortem. A visit to Villice Bay was made on 17th. No abnormal weather patterns had been evident during the previous few days. About 150 gulls were observed feeding/loafing in a field adjacent to the site of the incident. No feathers were found on the nearby road, suggesting that the gulls had not been in collision with a road vehicle. This area is about seven km south-east of Bristol International Airport and during the visit several light aircraft were observed over the incident area at a height of about 250m on the landing approach to the airport.

The post mortem results on the gulls revealed a pattern of trauma damage, particularly in the pectoral musculature, consistent with 'bird-strike syndrome'. It therefore seems likely that the gulls were either in collision with an aircraft using the nearby airport, or may have been injured in the jet stream from an aircraft. This case was reported to Bristol International Airport as a 'Bird Strike' incident."

Considering the closeness of the airport to CVL, it is perhaps surprising that no incident like this has been reported before. Any observations of a similar nature would be welcome (*Eds*).

## Sapsucking by Great Spotted Woodpeckers

R.L.Bland

In BWP, Volume 4, the fact that Great Spotted Woodpeckers drill holes in trees to gather the sap is noted. Most of the observations come from Europe, and the habit is apparently largely restricted to March and April, and is commonest on the sunny side of the trunk. The peck marks cut through the bark into the *Xylem* tissue, and are usually 3 to 4 cm apart.

The earliest published observation in England of this habit was in 1930 by V.C. Wynne-Edwards who noticed a Small-leaved Lime in Leigh Woods that had a series of parallel peck marks around its trunk. H. Tetley took a photograph of the tree, and this was reproduced in an article in *British Birds* in 1933. In 1983 N.J. Gibbs wrote a summary of what was known also in *British Birds*. The trees used included Lime, Elm, Sycamore, Oak, Poplar and Wych Elm.

The habit appeared to be quite widespread, with reports from the Forest of Dean, Savernake Forest, Norfolk, Wentbridge, and even Scotland. He noted that the damage to the tree was permanent, and the traces can be found in the timber many years after the attack. The size of the peck marks in the bark slowly widen as the tree grows, and eventually, as the bark roughens, become obliterated. The trees affected are usually young, with smooth bark. However it is clearly a comparatively rare activity, as there are very many apparently suitable trees that are unaffected.

I found a Small-leaved Lime tree in Leigh Woods some ten years ago which had the peck marks, see photograph after page 128. The tree had a single trunk, whereas the Tetley photo was of a twin-trunked tree, and for a while I assumed that this was the only local example, as I saw no others in Leigh Woods. In May 2006 I found a number of other examples, all on Small-leaved Lime, in Prior's Wood, and in June I found young Small-leaved Limes, only 20 years old at most, planted in the grounds of Lacock Abbey (Wiltshire) that had also been affected. Some of the puncture marks were clearly recent, but others must have been made some years ago. Despite looking for evidence on young trees of many other species I have never found evidence on any tree other than a Lime.

Any observations either of other tree species affected, or actual sightings of sap-sucking taking place would be welcomed. (*Eds.*)

## The Breeding Birds of the Avon Region 2006

**A SURVEY BY MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH TRUST FOR ORNITHOLOGY [AVON REGION],  
BRISTOL NATURALISTS SOCIETY AND BRISTOL ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB**

J. Tully & R.L. Bland

### Introduction

This Avon area report includes all data from the four local authorities, Bath & North East Somerset [BA], Bristol [BR], North Somerset [NS] and South Gloucestershire [SG] as well as a section of Somerset [SO] which is north of the OS line ST50 and east of the line ST80, an area is about 350 sq km. This report has only been possible due to the skill and dedication of many members of the British Trust for Ornithology, Bristol Ornithological Club and the Bristol Naturalists' Society. The survey started in 1994 and most surveyors have covered ten or more breeding seasons.

### Method

The method used is that of the BTO Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). The surveyors are birdwatchers who are able to recognise all the species by sight and/or song. They walk 2km within a square kilometre, early in the morning when bird activity is at its greatest and record all birds seen or heard. Two recording visits are made, one between April 1st and May 15th, and a second at least four weeks later and before the end of June.

### Results

The 129 surveyors spent over 552 hours counting 77,764 birds of 113 species (112 in 2005) to establish the numbers and distribution of breeding bird species of the Avon area. They visited 216 square kilometres that is 13.5% of the total area. The distribution of the coverage was 40 sq km in BA, 68 in BR, 39 in NS, 48 in SG and 21 in SO. These figures represent a record year of surveying.

Table 1 summarises the counts and percentage distribution of each species. The method of this survey does not accurately count the number of pairs breeding. However, if they are in the area in reasonable numbers during the spring then they are likely to breed. This method avoids the need to disturb the birds by inspecting the nests. Note that the BBS is still using the old Voous order and English names.

Species	number	dist.	Species	number	dist.
Little Grebe	10	2	Tree Pipit	8	1
Great Crested Grebe	11	1	Meadow Pipit	107	6
Cormorant	74	15	Rock Pipit	6	<0.5
Little Egret**	9	2	Yellow Wagtail*	2	1
Grey Heron	157	27	Grey Wagtail	27	8
Mute Swan	250	13	Pied Wagtail	120	30
Canada Goose	174	12	Dipper	1	<0.5
Egyptian Goose**	2	<0.5	Wren	3659	97
Shelduck	118	7	Dunnock	1440	94
Gadwall	4	1	Robin	2734	96
Mallard	1076	54	Whinchat**	2	1
Garganey**	2	<0.5	Stonechat	9	2
Shoveler*	7	<0.5	Wheatear**	40	6
Pochard*	1	<0.5	Blackbird	5708	100
Tufted Duck	43	3	Song Thrush	897	80
Goldeneye**	1	<0.5	Mistle Thrush	117	28
Goosander**	2	<0.5	Cetti's Warbler	20	3
Ruddy Duck	2	<0.5	Grasshopper Warbler*	1	<0.5
Sparrowhawk	50	19	Sedge Warbler	103	9
Buzzard	250	46	Reed Warbler	173	11
Kestrel	74	23	Lesser Whitethroat	72	21

Species	Number	Dist.	Species	Number	Dist.
Hobby	1	<0.5	Whitethroat	475	55
Peregrine	6	2	Garden Warbler	29	7
Red-legged Partridge	46	6	Blackcap	844	75
Grey Partridge	15	3	Wood Warbler*	1	<0.5
Pheasant	763	56	Chiffchaff	839	75
Moorhen	187	26	Willow Warbler	209	32
Coot	156	10	Goldcrest	166	31
Oystercatcher	10	2	Spotted Flycatcher	14	4
Little Ringed Plover	2	<0.5	Long-tailed Tit	282	42
Grey Plover**	1	<0.5	Marsh Tit	18	3
Lapwing	28	4	Coal Tit	147	25
Snipe*	3	1	Blue Tit	2781	98
Black-tailed Godwit**	1	<0.5	Great Tit	1958	97
Whimbrel**	9	2	Nuthatch	94	13
Curlew**	5	2	Treecreeper	33	9
Redshank*	9	1	Jay	162	39
Common Sandpiper**	4	1	Magpie	2026	96
Black-headed Gull**	23	5	Jackdaw	3994	80
Common Gull**	1	<0.5	Rook	2444	44
Lesser Black-backed Gull	2220	68	Carrion Crow	4622	98
Herring Gull	1410	59	Raven	42	10
Great Black-backed Gull	6	1	Starling	5425	77
Feral Pigeon	2103	47	House Sparrow	4600	69
Stock Dove	214	24	Chaffinch	2948	99
Woodpigeon	7507	100	Brambling**	2	<0.5
Collared Dove	1407	71	Greenfinch	2886	97
Cuckoo	15	6	Goldfinch	1052	79
Little Owl	4	2	Siskin**	15	1
Tawny Owl	3	1	Linnet	504	31
Swift	1001	59	Lesser Redpoll**	1	<0.5
Kingfisher	9	4	Bullfinch	149	33
Green Woodpecker	238	54	Yellowhammer	310	23
Great Spotted Woodpecker	176	41	Reed Bunting	86	9
Skylark	774	40	Corn Bunting	5	1
Sand Martin	320	<0.5	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>77764</b>	
Swallow	1704	71	<b>Time [mins]</b>	<b>33162</b>	
House Martin	657	44	<b>Birds per hour</b>	<b>141</b>	

Table 1 contains three types of birds – definite breeders with no mark, possible breeders with a \* and non-breeders with \*\*. The method of survey does not count shy, nocturnal or rare species that are known to nest or possibly nest within the Avon area.

Barn Owl and Ringed Plover need to be added as definite breeders. Possible nesters not recorded in the survey were Quail, Water Rail and Nightjar.

The total of 91 breeding species and 10 possibles is a measure of the biodiversity of breeding bird species in the Avon area during 2006.

<b>Table 2a -Highest counts Avon</b>			<b>BA</b>	<b>BR</b>	<b>NS</b>	<b>SG</b>
1	Woodpigeon [1]	7507	1	1	2	1
2	Blackbird [2]	5708	2	3	3	4
3	Starling [3]	5425	9	2	1	5
4	Carrion Crow [5]	4622	4	6	5	2=
5	House Sparrow [4]	4600	8	4	4	9
6	Jackdaw [7]	3994	3	13	10	2=
7	Wren [6]	3659	5	7	6	8
8	Chaffinch [10]	2948	6	18	7	6
9	Greenfinch [12]	2886	12	9	8	10
10	Blue Tit [8]	2781	11	10	9	11
11	Robin [11]	2734	10	12	11	12
12	Rook [9]	2444	7	-	14	7
13	Lesser Black-backed Gull [13]	2220	20	8	15	-
14	Feral Pigeon [14]	2103	-	5	-	-
15	Magpie [15]	2026	14	11	19	15
16	Great Tit [16]	1958	13	16	13	14
17	Swallow [17]	1704	15	-	12	13
18	Dunnock [18]	1440	17=	17	18	17
19	Herring Gull [20]	1410	-	15	17	-
20	Collared Dove [19]	1407	-	14	16	-

2005 positions in brackets and 2006 positions in the 4 local authorities.

<b>Table 2b - Percentage distribution AV</b>			<b>BA</b>	<b>BR</b>	<b>NS</b>	<b>SG</b>
1=	Blackbird [100%]	100%	100	99	100	100
1=	Woodpigeon [99%]	100%	100	100	100	100
3	Chaffinch [99%]	99%	100	97	97	100
4=	Blue Tit [98%]	98%	98	99	97	98
4=	Carrion Crow [98%]	98%	100	97	100	98
6=	Great Tit [96%]	97%	100	97	97	94
6=	Greenfinch [96%]	97%	100	99	97	96
6=	Wren [98%]	97%	93	97	100	96
9=	Magpie [93%]	96%	95	100	97	94
9=	Robin [97%]	96%	98	97	90	96
11	Dunnock [90%]	94%	95	97	97	88
12=	Jackdaw [78%]	80%	85	75	82	81
12=	Song Thrush [85%]	80%	90	68	82	85
14	Goldfinch [70%]	79%	80	76	82	73
15	Starling [78%]	77%	68	88	67	77
16=	Blackcap [82%]	75%	83	74	77	77
16=	Chiffchaff [81%]	75%	75	68	85	79
18=	Collared Dove [72%]	71%	63	93	59	63
18=	Swallow [71%]	71%	93	29	82	94
20	House Sparrow [71%]	69%	60	75	62	73

2005 percentages in brackets and 2006 distributions in the 4 local authorities

Table 2b gives the percentage distributions of the top 20 species. Any species with over 90% is probably universal.

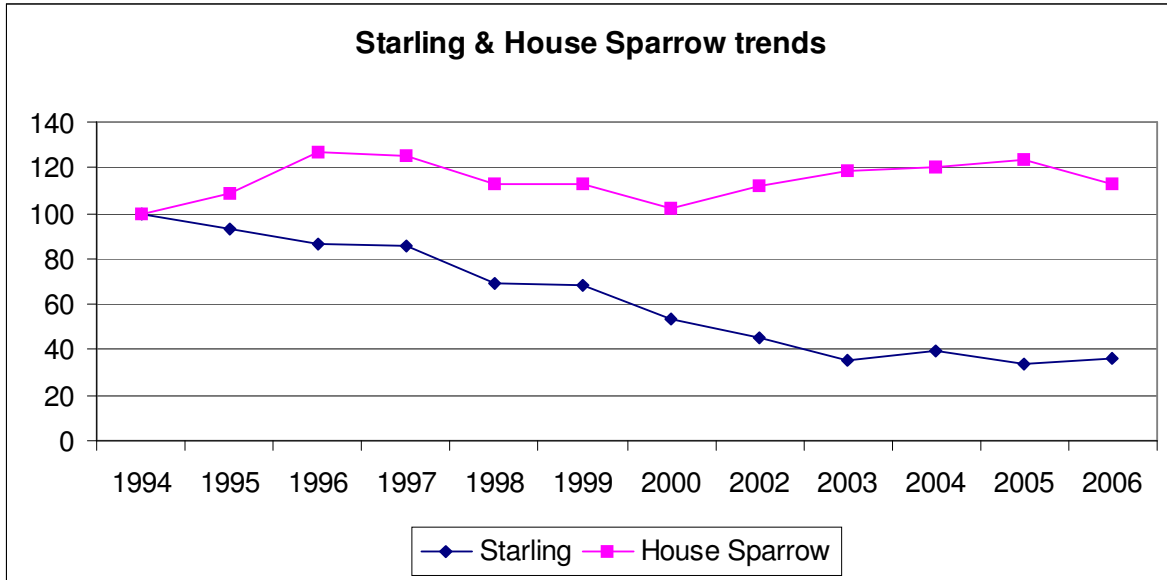
<b>AVON PERCENTAGE CHANGES 1994-2006</b>												
<b>species</b>	<b>94/95</b>	<b>95/96</b>	<b>96/97</b>	<b>97/98</b>	<b>98/99</b>	<b>99/00</b>	<b>00/02</b>	<b>02/03</b>	<b>03/04</b>	<b>04/05</b>	<b>05/06</b>	<b>1994-06</b>
Mallard	-17	0	-11	14	0	2	0	13	8	-26	-16	<b>-35</b>
Lesser Black-backed Gull	unk	25	13	3	20	-13	60	-13	14	-21	-14	<b>64</b>
Herring Gull	unk	-10	-15	36	-6	38	17	-20	44	-5	3	<b>78</b>
Feral Pigeon	42	13	-4	9	-15	-10	-33	16	-2	-1	23	<b>19</b>
Woodpigeon	-4	20	6	1	3	1	12	-5	4	-1	5	<b>48</b>
Collared Dove	20	18	12	-2	14	1	3	-3	5	-10	16	<b>96</b>
Swift	23	-14	-2	1	4	-16	-13	12	2	-26	-8	<b>-38</b>
Skylark	15	-12	-7	-5	0	-17	2	-3	0	26	-7	<b>-14</b>
Wren	11	-32	12	11	15	2	-4	-4	-3	4	-17	<b>-15</b>
Duncock	14	-6	0	-13	31	-4	0	6	-7	3	-2	<b>17</b>
Robin	7	18	-13	8	6	-3	-6	4	-1	1	2	<b>22</b>
Blackbird	5	7	7	0	11	-5	-2	-3	-4	6	-2	<b>20</b>
Song Thrush	1	-9	-13	20	18	5	-2	-2	0	1	-8	<b>6</b>
Blackcap	-9	5	13	28	12	-6	1	-10	16	2	-8	<b>44</b>
Chiffchaff	11	-1	13	7	-45	23	7	25	18	-40	-14	<b>-27</b>
Blue Tit	-9	17	3	-8	0	-7	6	-5	6	3	-8	<b>-5</b>
Great Tit	-10	13	-4	-4	7	3	-3	2	2	-1	13	<b>17</b>
Magpie	-7	-8	1	2	-2	4	-17	3	0	-4	-1	<b>-27</b>
Jackdaw	10	-17	17	6	-4	-1	3	-12	0	10	2	<b>9</b>
Carrion Crow	19	-2	-3	-2	5	-2	-10	-9	1	17	5	<b>16</b>
Starling	-7	-7	-1	-19	-1	-22	-15	-21	12	-15	5	<b>-64</b>
House Sparrow	9	16	-1	-10	0	-9	9	6	2	3	-9	<b>13</b>
Chaffinch	-2	8	2	-6	3	-1	-3	1	-1	-5	0	<b>-5</b>
Greenfinch	12	16	3	24	-15	5	2	9	1	-6	8	<b>69</b>
Note 2000/01 change unknown due to foot & mouth restrictions												<b>% change</b>

**Note- BBS is a relatively poor monitor of colonial species like Mallards, gulls and hirindines.**

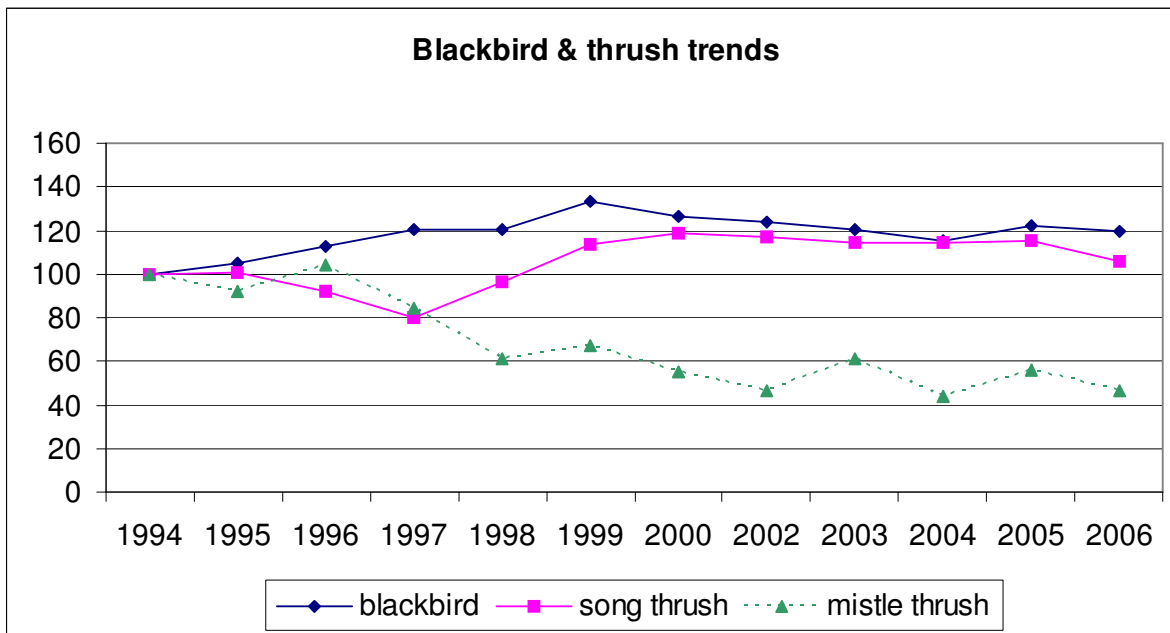
The percentage changes of the most numerous species are based on 160 squares that were covered in 2005 and 2006 by the same observer. Ten of the 24 species above increased, 13 decreased and one had no change. Increases of over 10% were recorded in Feral Pigeon, Collared Dove and Great Tit and decreases of over 10% in Mallard, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Wren and Chiffchaff.



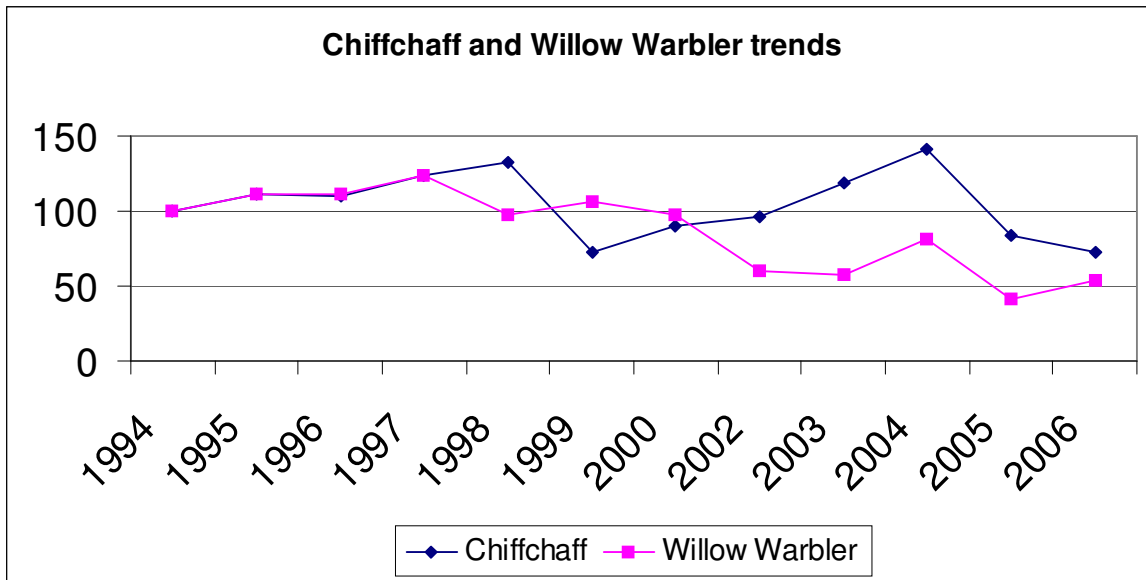
### Comments on recent trends, selected species



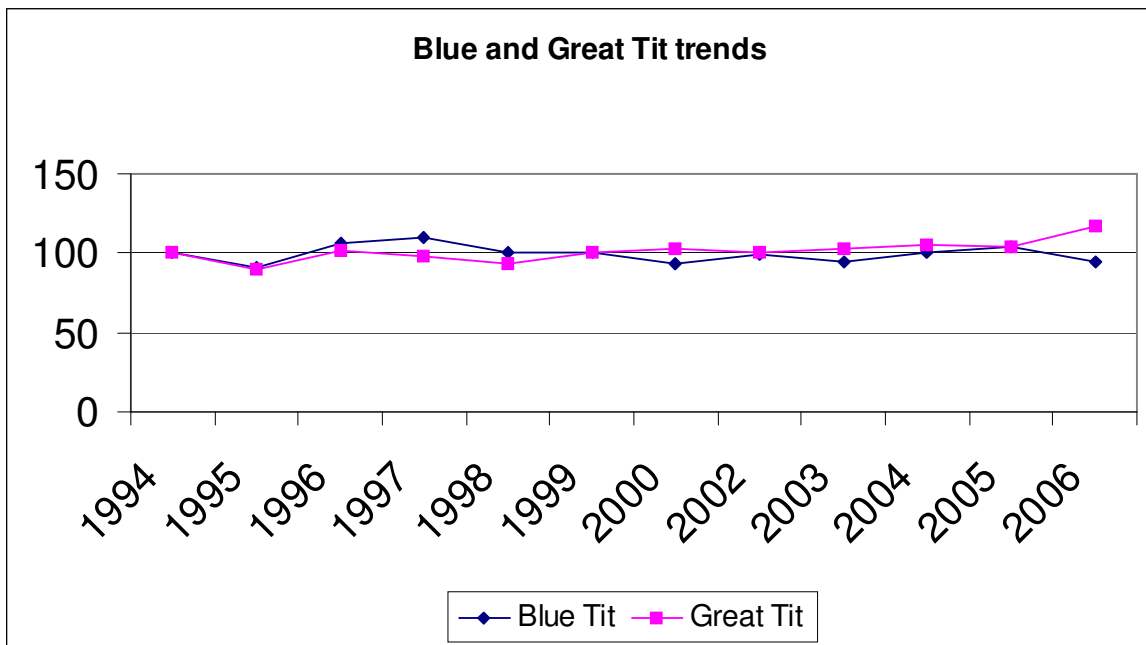
The House Sparrow and Starling show differing trends over the last 11 years. The House Sparrow has decreased in the last year but is still above the 1994 population. Starling has shown a steep decline over the period, but had a slight increase in the past year.



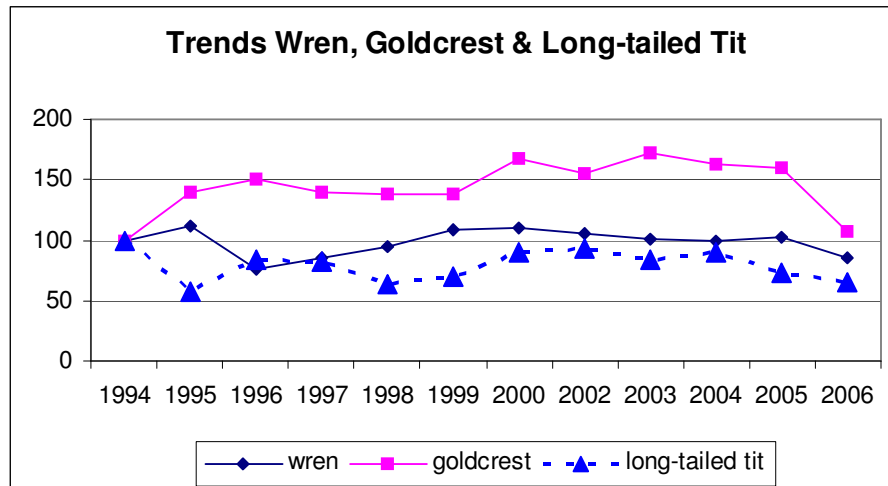
Blackbird seems fairly stable at about 20% above its 1994 level, whereas Song Thrush after an initial decline has been doing well with a slightly worrying decline in the last year. Mistle Thrush is a species causing concern with a fairly steady decline to its present value of 46% of its 1994 numbers.



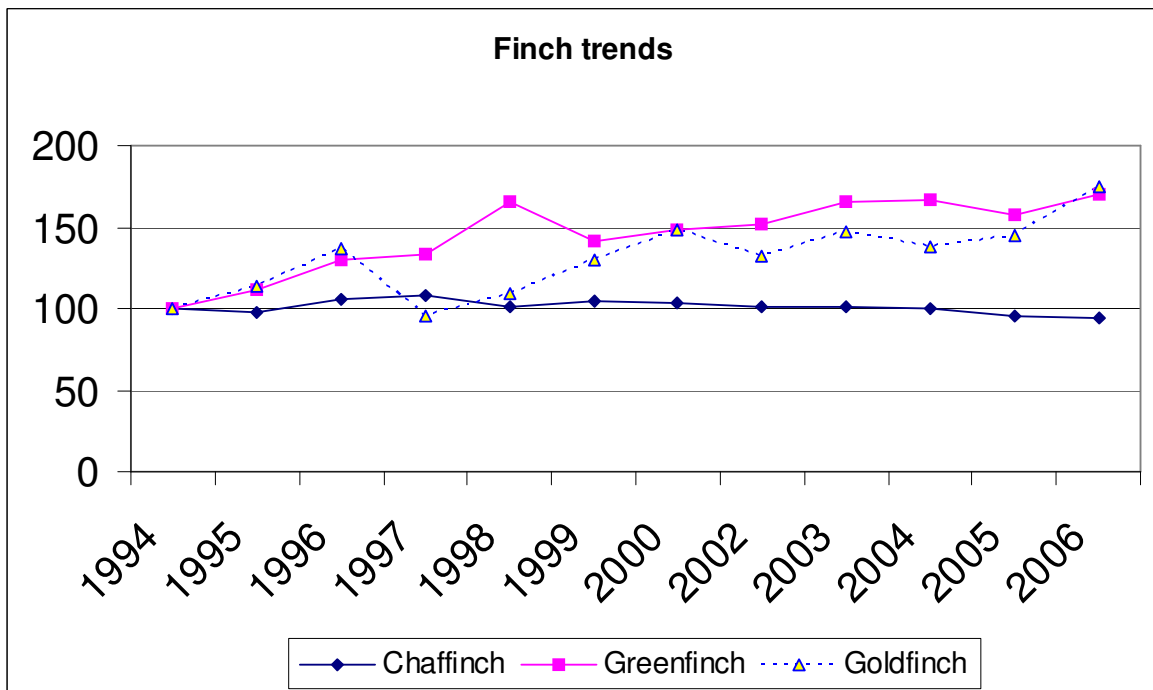
This year has seen another decline in Chiffchaff numbers but a slight increase in Willow Warbler. Chiffchaff has had a see-saw trend with large variation since 1994 whereas the Willow Warbler has had a steady decline over the medium term.



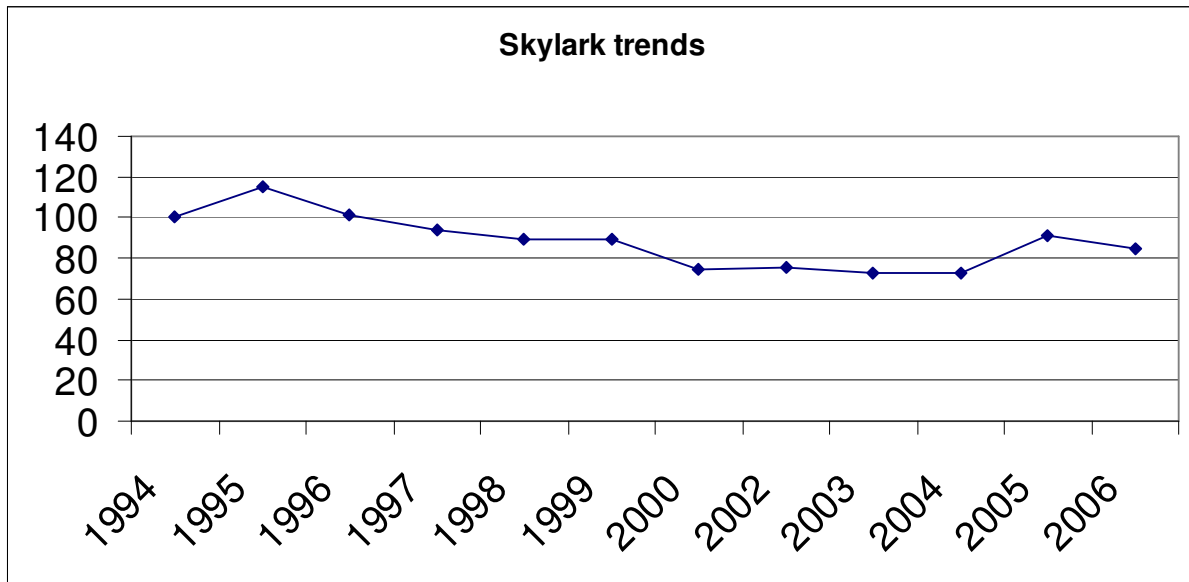
Both Blue and Great Tits have shown remarkably little variation since 1994. However, Great Tit numbers have increased significantly in the last year. There have been more reports of double broods in this species lately and it will be interesting to see if such a change has a significant effect in the near future.



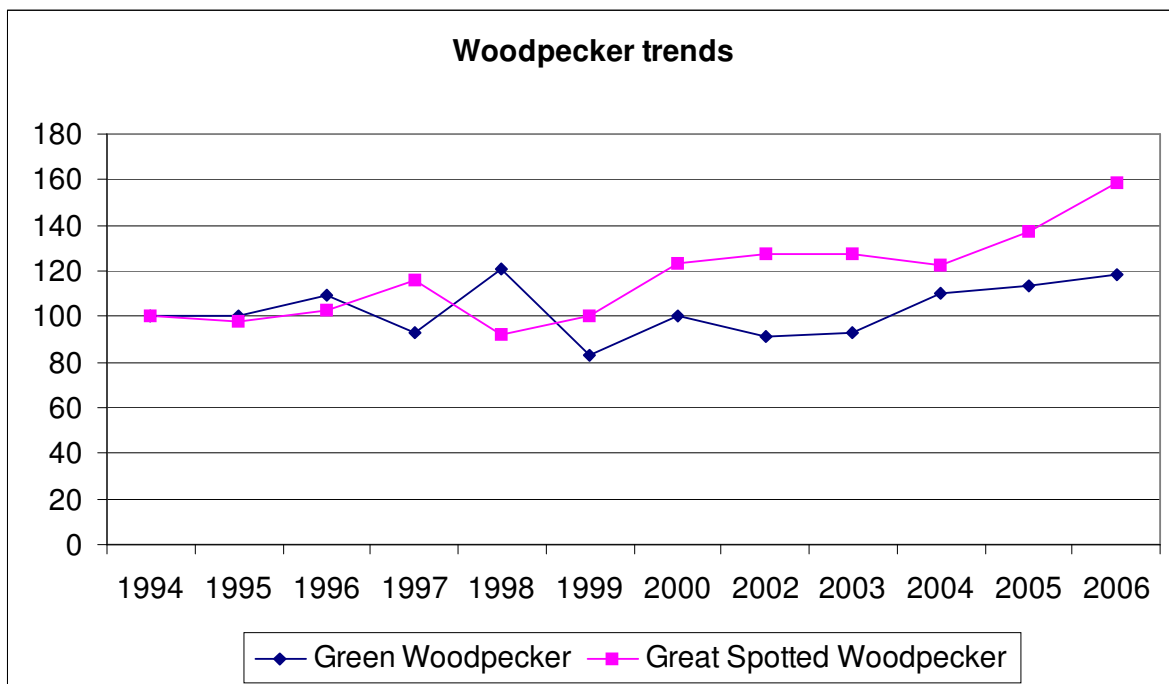
The winter was the coldest for some time, but not severe. It has affected three of our small insect eating species Goldcrest, Wren and Long-tailed Tit. All showed varying declines over the year, with the lightest, Goldcrest, being the most severe.



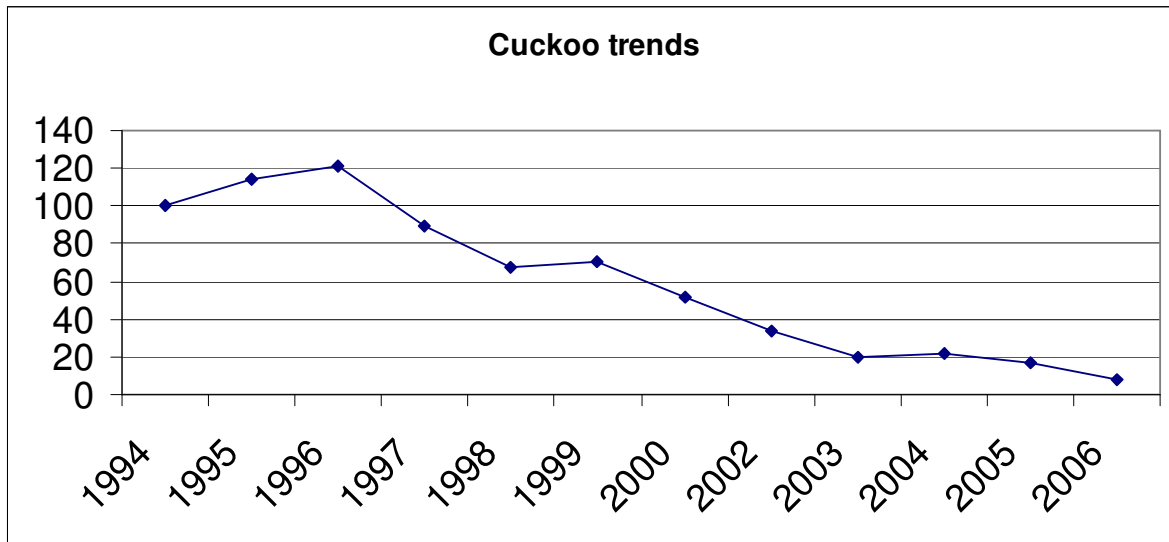
Chaffinch has been stable since 1994 but Greenfinch numbers have improved steadily and are now 70% above the 1994 levels. Probably the huge increase in Sunflower seed feeding has been a contributory factor. Goldfinch also seem to have benefited from Nyjer seed feeders and have shown similar increases.



Skylark has declined slightly this year but is still almost 10% above the all time low of 2004. Let us hope that in the future we do not return to the depressing days of 2000 to 2004.

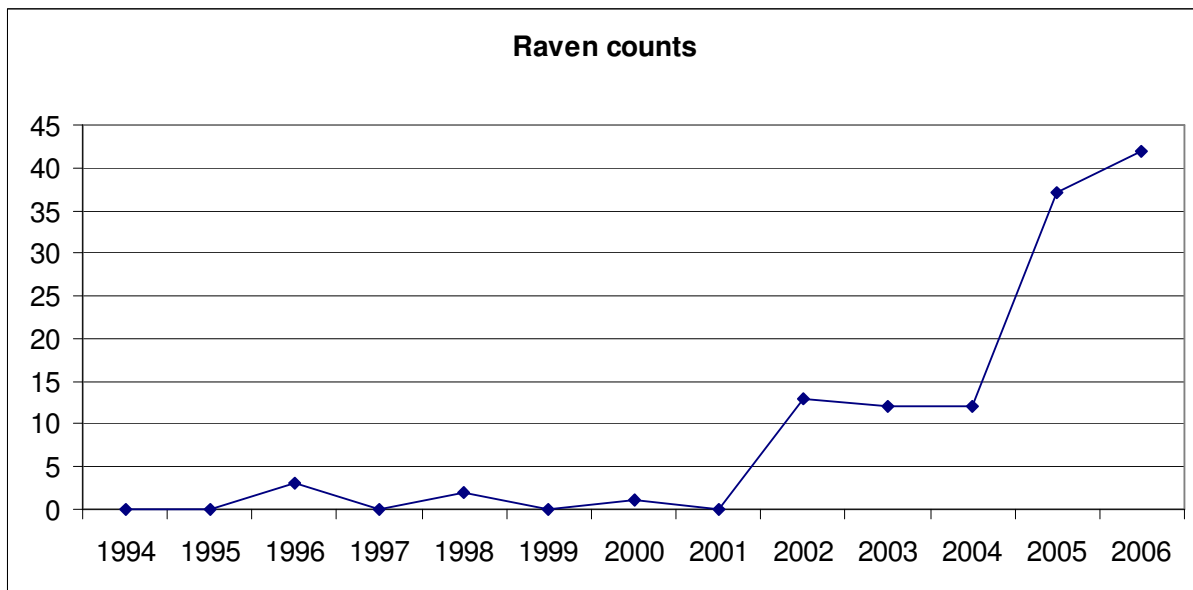


Woodpeckers have fared well since 1994 with Great Spotted showing a clear increasing trend and the Green less so, but with a definite increasing trend.



The Cuckoo is a cause for serious concern with a 92% decline since 1994. The decline has continued in the last year. In 1994 a Cuckoo was recorded in every 4 hours of birdwatching, in 2006 it takes 37 hours to record a Cuckoo in the Avon area.

Indeed this year no Cuckoos were recorded in the B&NES survey of 110 hours of birdwatching!



Raven is still relatively uncommon locally and the above is **not** a graph of its index but of the total number of BBS records showing its dramatic increase since 2000.

#### Avon's breeding populations – 2006

This year we have estimated the breeding populations of the common species within the four local authorities. The figures are contained in the table below.

Together with all the other breeding species, we estimate a total of 420,000 breeding pairs in the old Avon area.

Breeding pairs Avon	BA	BR	NS	SG	total
Wren	12000	7000	13000	15000	47000
House Sparrow	8000	12000	14000	11000	45000
Blue Tit	8000	6000	11000	13500	38500
Blackbird	8500	6500	11000	12000	38000
Robin	8000	4500	9500	12000	34000
Great Tit	8000	4500	10500	10000	33000
Dunnoch	5000	3000	6000	5500	19500
Woodpigeon	4000	2800	4000	6000	16800
Starling	2700	3000	6000	5000	16700
Chaffinch	4200	1200	4200	5500	15100
Greenfinch	3000	2200	4400	5400	15000
Swallow	1700	-	3600	3800	9100
Jackdaw	2800	750	1500	4000	9050
Blackcap	1900	1100	2400	3000	8400
Carrion Crow	1600	1100	2000	3500	8200
Rook	2600	-	1800	3000	7400
Goldfinch	1700	-	2800	2600	7100
Chiffchaff	1200	600	2000	2400	6200
Song Thrush	1600	500	1700	2200	6000
Linnet	900	-	1400	2400	4700
Skylark	1300	-	500	2500	4300
House Martin	1400	100	1200	1100	3800
Magpie	800	800	800	1200	3600
Collared Dove	800	800	1000	900	3500
Whitethroat	700	-	800	1400	2900
Yellowhammer	1000	-	250	900	2150
Swift	900	250	400	500	2050
Total for old Avon					407050

## Avon Ringing Report 2006

L.F. Roberts

The total number of birds ringed in 2006 was 7565 (of 60 species), compared with 7196 ringed (67 species) in 2005. The highlight of the ringing year was the addition of European Nightjar to the Avon ringing list (DN/WW ringed three near Burrington on the Avon/Somerset border). Also of note were two Firecrests caught together at Walton Moor in the Gordano Valley.

### Species Totals

Table 1 below shows the top twenty species ringed in Avon in 2006 (2005 position shown in brackets) and the percentage change in the ringing total between 2005 and 2006. Year-on-year changes may partially reflect ringing effort and/or catching conditions.

Pos.	Species	Total	%	Pos.	Species	Total	%
1 [1]	Blackcap	1,192	19	11 [11]	Canada Goose	174	-13
2 [5]	Barn Swallow	1,051	161	12 [13]	Sand Martin	150	-2
3 [2]	E. Reed Warbler	691	-19	13 [9]	Lesser B-b Gull	131	-40
4 [3]	Blue Tit	653	-20	14 [12]	European Robin	112	-30
5 [4]	Great Tit	626	-17	15 [33]	House Martin	90	350
6 [10]	Sedge Warbler	473	121	16 [20]	Garden Warbler	88	38
7 [6]	European Greenfinch	425	11	17 [17]	Long-tailed Tit	84	-21
8 [7]	Common Chiffchaff	331	-2	18 [16]	Winter Wren	83	-35
9 [8]	Willow Warbler	299	11	19 [26]	House Sparrow	63	70
10 [8]	Chaffinch	239	57	20 [18]	Common Blackbird	60	-33

Table 1 – Top 20 species

For the second year running, Blackcap occupied the top spot following a very strong autumn passage (and generally good catching conditions) in the Gordano Valley. In second place, the Barn Swallow total, the highest since 1996, is a reflection of good roost catches at CVL and high numbers of nestlings ringed at a number of sites. Good numbers of Sedge and Garden Warbler were also ringed following a recent run of poor results.

Despite an overall increase (5%) in the total number ringed, however, a number of common resident species registered their lowest ringing totals in the Avon area since the 1996 Report, namely Winter Wren, Hedge Accentor, European Robin, Common Blackbird, Song Thrush, Goldcrest, Long-tailed Tit, Coal Tit, Blue Tit, Eurasian Treecreeper and Common Bullfinch.

According to the BTO, 2006 was poor for breeding birds for the second successive year, with overall production of young below average (BTO News 267). Heavy rain in May resulted in only 587 Reed Warblers being ringed at CVL, compared with 1016 in 2004 and 818 in 2005 (CVRS 15th Report, 2004-2006).

At CVRS, a Tree Pipit was ringed for the first time since 1985. There were also record highs for Water Rail (three), Eurasian Jay (five) and European Greenfinch (371). On the negative side, the Common Kingfisher total (six) was the lowest since 1984. There were also relatively low catches of Cetti's Warbler (13, lowest since 1996, compared with 33 in 2005), Long-tailed Tit (lowest since 1991) and Reed Bunting (16, lowest ever recorded). Reed Bunting declines at CVL reflect a nationwide decline of this red-listed (and UK BAP) species in habitat where it really ought to be doing well or at least holding its own.

In the Gordano Valley, record numbers of Willow Warbler (269) and Great Tit (187, mainly nestlings) were ringed. Other notable catches were Cetti's Warbler (second record) and Firecrest (second and third records). But there were also low points for a number of resident species including Hedge Accentor, Common Blackbird and Common Bullfinch (record low annual catch for each species).

## Ringing Sites

The main ringing sites in Avon for which ringing returns were received for 2006 were as follows:

**Bath City Centre** (PR) – 22 nestlings / two species. Lesser Black-backed Gull 13, Herring Gull 9.

**Barrow Gurney** (TWGL) – 117 Barn swallow nestlings.

**Bleadon Level** (LFR) – two Stock Pigeon nestlings.

**Blagdon** (WW) – 117 Barn swallow nestlings.

**Burrington** (DN/WW) – three European Nightjars.

**Bristol City Centre** (PR) – 154 nestlings / two species. Lesser Black-backed Gull 118, Herring Gull 36.

**CVL** (CVRS) – 4,038 / 45 species incl. Canada Goose 174, Water Rail 3, Common Kingfisher 6, Sand Martin 150, Barn Swallow 670, Cetti's Warbler 13, Sedge Warbler 350, Eurasian Reed Warbler 587, Lesser Whitethroat 18, and European Greenfinch 371.

**Gordano Valley NNR** (GVRG) – 2,319 / 37 species incl. Barn Owl 4, House Martin 71, Meadow Pipit 17, Grasshopper Warbler 12, Blackcap 963, Lesser Whitethroat 6, Common Whitethroat 39, Common Chiffchaff 188, Willow Warbler 269, and Firecrest 2.

**Lower Failand** (TWGL) – 60 nestlings / two species. Blue Tit 47, Great Tit 13.

**Royal Portbury Dock** (TWGL) – 37 nestlings / two species. Blue Tit 13, Great Tit 24.

**Timsbury area** (CM) – 278 / 19 species incl. Grey Wagtail 10.

**Wrington** (DN/WW) – 136 / 7 species incl. Chaffinch 110, Brambling 2.

**Upper Farm, Failand** and other sites, mainly the Lulsgate area (RC/JE) – 355 / 13 species. incl. Barn Swallow 222 nestlings, House Sparrow 50 nestlings, and Siskin 36.

Contributors: R.P.Clevely, Chew Valley Ringing Station (CVRS), J. Eatough, Gordano Valley Ringing Group (GVRG), T.W.G. Lewis, C. Matthews, D. Nevitt, L.F. Roberts, P.Rock, C.Sperring, and W. White.

## Selected Recoveries

Table 2 below lists all notable recoveries received from the BTO since publication of the 2005 Report.

### Conventions:

Age: P = pullus (nestling), 1y = juvenile / first year, Ad = adult. Recovery Codes: +F= shot or killed, R= controlled (caught and released), VV=ring number read in field, X = found dead or dying

Species Ring No	Age Code	Date Ringed Date Rec'd	Place Ringed Place Rec'd	Distance (km)	Duration (days)
Canada Goose 5169071	1y +F	07/07/1992 27/02/2006	CVL, Avon River Exe, Devon	94	4,938
L. B-backed Gull Green2 "MY"	P VV	15/07/1996 01/01/2007	Bristol Banjul, <b>THE GAMBIA</b>	4,400	
See comments below					
Herring Gull Green3 "LY"	P VV	29/06/2005 Various 2006	Bristol Aviles, <b>SPAIN</b>	912	
See comments below					
Barn Swallow V245311	1y R	04/08/2006 04/09/2006	CVL, Avon Icklesham, Sussex	235	31



Species	Age	Date Ringed	Place Ringed	Distance	Duration
Ring No	Code	Date Rec'd	Place Rec'd	(km)	(days)
Meadow Pipit	3	28/09/2001	Walton in Gordano, Avon		
P967425	R	03/07/2006	Highland Region, <b>Scotland</b>	805	1,739
Blackcap	1y	22/09/2002	Walton in Gordano, Avon		
R360392	X	09/04/2006	Gironde, <b>FRANCE</b>	768	1,295
Blackcap	1y	07/09/2005	Walton in Gordano, Avon		
T126851	R	04/04/2006	Charente-Maritime, <b>FRANCE</b>	647	209
Blackcap	1y	23/09/2005	Walton in Gordano, Avon		
T127500	X	12/02/2006	Minho, <b>PORTUGAL</b>	1,139	142
Garden Warbler	1y	11/06/2006	CVL, Avon		
T816925	R	06/08/2006	Beachy Head, Sussex	212	56
Sedge Warbler	Ad	16/08/2004	Lot-et-Garonne, <b>FRANCE</b>		
BB75159	R	01/05/2005	CVL, Avon	804	258
Sedge Warbler	1y	04/09/2003	Fareham, Hants		
P876875	R	04/08/2006	CVL, Avon	112	1,065
Sedge Warbler	1y	23/07/2005	CVL, Avon		
T554816	R	02/09/2005	Finnisterre, <b>FRANCE</b>	397	41
Sedge Warbler	1y	30/08/2005	CVL, Avon		
T555713	R	31/07/2006	E.Chevington, Northumberland	445	335
Sedge Warbler	1y	04/08/2006	CVL, Avon		
V244552	R	08/08/2006	Icklesham, Sussex	235	4
Sedge Warbler	1y	30/07/2006	CVL, Avon		
V244956	R	10/08/2006	Icklesham, Sussex	235	11
E. Reed Warbler	P	10/06/1999	CVL, Avon		
N482008	R	04/06/2006	Palencia, <b>SPAIN</b>	1,039	2,490
E. Reed Warbler	1y	29/06/2003	CVL, Avon		
R523072	R	13/05/2006	Stanford Res., Northampton	161	1,049
E. Reed Warbler	1y	25/07/2004	CVL, Avon		
R790202	R	30/08/2004	Leon, <b>SPAIN</b>	1,038	36
E. Reed Warbler	1y	07/08/2004	CVL, Avon		
R790764	R	30/04/2006	Bedfont Lake, Greater London	151	631
E. Reed Warbler	1y	08/07/2005	CVL, Avon		
T554657	R	06/08/2005	Donges, Loire-Atlantique, <b>FRANCE</b>	447	29
E. Reed Warbler	1y	05/08/2006	CVL, Avon		
V245062	X	28/08/2006	Mayenne, <b>FRANCE</b>	383	23
E. Reed Warbler	1y	12/09/2006	CVL, Avon		
V245826	R	05/10/2006	Alava, <b>SPAIN</b>	936	23

Table 2. Recoveries

There were 14 recoveries of Canada Geese (all shot) ringed at CVL, mainly to the S and SW and within 100km of CVL. One recovered in 2006 at the River Exe, Devon, was ringed at CVL in 1992. Blackcaps ringed in the Gordano Valley were recovered in France (two) and Portugal. Sedge and Reed Warblers ringed at CVL were recovered in France (four) and Spain (two). Also of note, a Meadow Pipit ringed as a juvenile in 2001 in the Gordano Valley was recovered during the 2006 breeding season in Scotland (Highland Region), providing some indication of the likely origin of some of our passage and wintering Meadow Pipits.

Finally Peter Rock reports from the Bristol gull ringing scheme (further details below) that a Lesser Black-backed Gull (Green2 "MY") was recorded for the third winter running (06/07 winter) in The Gambia. Also very noteworthy was a sighting of a Herring Gull (Green3 "LY") in Spain, the first ever sighting (in 26 years) of a Bristol-ringed Herring Gull in Spain.

### Bristol Gull Ringing Scheme

Peter Rock has contributed the following details in relation to the Bristol gull colour-ringing scheme:

“Green3 “LY” was the first Bristol Scheme Herring Gull recorded in Spain after 26 years of ringing, but less than 3 weeks later the second (ringed in Bridgend) was recorded near Bilbao. Historically, Herring Gulls from the Severn Estuary region have tended to be sedentary (i.e. moving less than 100 km from their hatch site), but in recent years rather more have been moving farther.

A good many Lesser Black-backed Gulls ringed in Bristol have travelled to France, Spain, Portugal and North Africa, but Green2 “MY” is a special bird in that it was recorded in The Gambia for the third winter running and back here in between times. It has migrated a known distance of 22,000 km, but if it had done the same migrations since hatching in 1996, it would have covered just short of 100,000 km.

With the interest in the large gulls growing in all parts of Europe in the last 10 years, recoveries of Bristol scheme Lesser Black-backed Gulls have increased proportionately (Fig.1 below).

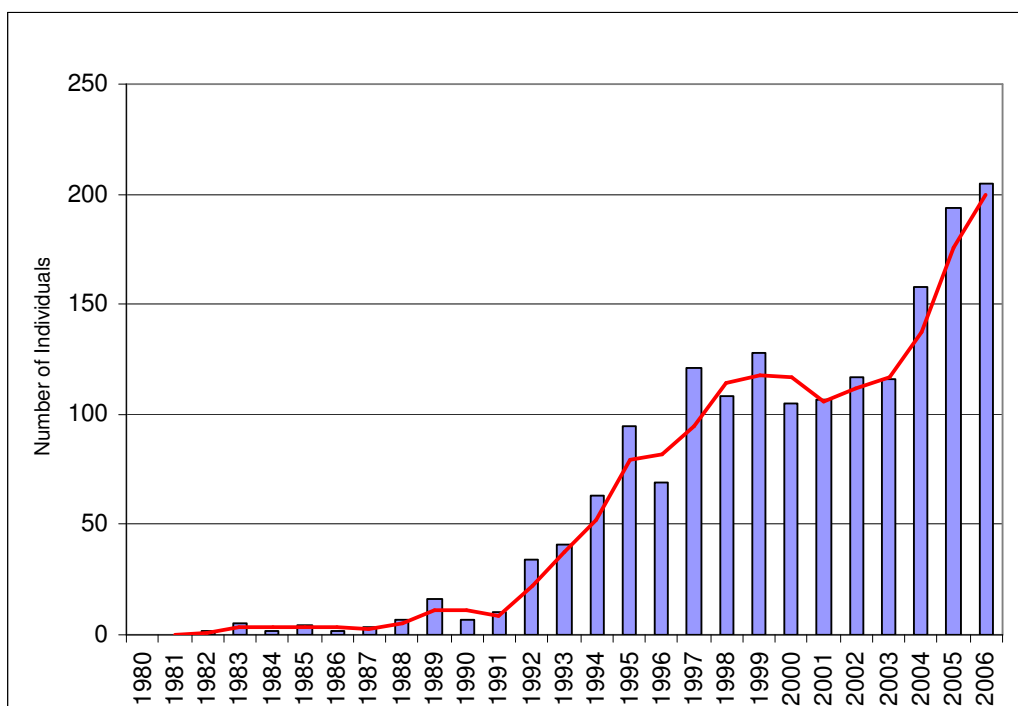


Figure 1. Foreign Recoveries of Bristol-ringed Lesser Black Backed Gulls

Whilst foreign recoveries are interesting, it is local records that are vital to our understanding. Nestlings have also been colour-ringed in Bath since 2001, in Cheltenham since 2002, in Worcester, Cardiff and Bridgend since 2003, Barry since 2005 and Gloucester in 2007.

The request (as ever) is that wherever gulls are congregating, please do look closely at them – some will be carrying rings and identifying rings helps to put important pieces into the jigsaw. Bristol Scheme colour-rings are 37 mm tall and always on the RIGHT leg (BTO metal ring on left leg). They show two engraved letters, latterly with a colon between the letters. Please send all sightings to: Peter Rock, 7 Parkside Avenue, Winterbourne, Bristol, BS36 1LU. Tel. 01454 856717 or email [pete.rock@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:pete.rock@blueyonder.co.uk)

Table 3 below lists all the colour combinations used in Bristol and elsewhere on Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gull nestlings since 1990.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Ring Colour</b>	<b>Letter Colour</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cohort Name</b>
1980	Yellow	Black	-	<i>Yellow1</i>
1981	Orange	Black	-	<i>Orange1</i>
1982	White	Black	-	<i>White1</i>
1983	Sky Blue	Black	-	<i>Sky</i>
1984	Green	White	-	<i>Green1</i>
1985	Mauve	White	-	<i>Mauve</i>
1986	Black	White	-	<i>Black1</i>
1987	Red	White	-	<i>Red1</i>
1988	Pale Green	Black	-	<i>Pg1</i>
1989	Mid Blue	White	-	<i>Blue1</i>
1990	Brown	White	-	<i>Brown</i>
1991	Orange	White	-	<i>Orange2</i>
1992	White	Red	-	<i>White2</i>
1993	Yellow	Black	-	<i>Yellow2</i>
1994	Black	Yellow	-	<i>Black2</i>
1995	Orange	Black	-	<i>Orange3</i>
1996	Green	White	-	<i>Green2</i>
1997	White	Blue	-	<i>White3</i>
1998	Dark Blue	White	-	<i>Blue2</i>
1999	Red	White	Stop “.” between letters	<i>Red2</i>
2000	Orange	Green	Colon “:” between letters	<i>Orange4</i>
2001	Yellow	Black	Colon “:” between letters	<i>Yellow3</i>
2002	Pale Green	Black	Colon “:” between letters	<i>Pg2</i>
2003	White	Green	Colon “:” between letters	<i>White4</i>
2004	Blue	Orange	Colon “:” between letters	<i>Blue3</i>
2005	Green	White	Colon “:” between letters	<i>Green3</i>
2006	Black	Yellow	Colon “:” between letters	<i>Black3</i>
2007	White	Red	Colon “:” between letters	<i>White5</i>

Table 3. Colour-rings used In Bristol and elsewhere on Herring and Lesser Black-Backed Gull nestlings

**Systematic List of Birds Ringed in 2006**

Species annual ringing totals for the period 2003 to 2006 are given in Table 4 below, together with the average number of birds ringed annually for the period 2003-2005.

<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>3YA</b>
Mute Swan		1	8	9	3
Canada Goose	200	200	200	174	200
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	11	1	4	1	5
Common Buzzard	8	7		1	5
Common Kestrel	4	4			3
Water Rail		1		3	<1
Common Moorhen		4	2	1	2
Common Coot		2	3		2
Ringed Plover		25	5		10
Common Snipe	1				<1
Northern Lapwing		1	8	3	3
Green Sandpiper	1				<1
Common Sandpiper	1	1			<1
Lesser Black-backed Gull	179	154	219	131	184
Herring Gull	47	31	58	45	45
Stock Pigeon		4		2	1
Common Wood Pigeon	5	2	3		3
Eurasian Collared Dove	2	4			2
Common Cuckoo			1		<1
Barn Owl	18	12	19	11	16
Tawny Owl	3	4	8		5
European Nightjar				3	0
Common Kingfisher	20	14	16	6	17
Green Woodpecker	2		1	1	1
Great Spotted Woodpecker	5	13	12	10	10
Sand Martin	97	65	153	150	105
Barn Swallow	446	388	403	1,051	412
House Martin	24	46	20	90	30
Tree Pipit	1		1	1	1
Meadow Pipit	1	5	4	17	3
Grey Wagtail	2	8	8	10	6
Pied Wagtail		2	13		5
Bohemian Waxwing			26		9
White-throated Dipper	5				2
Winter Wren	165	93	128	83	129
Hedge Accentor	118	75	142	49	112
European Robin	194	118	159	112	157
Common Redstart	3	1	3		2
Whinchat			1		<1
Stonechat			1	1	<1
Northern Wheatear			2		<1
Common Blackbird	151	81	90	60	107
Fieldfare	3	3		1	2
Song Thrush	42	39	43	26	41
Redwing	20	28	3	5	17
Cetti's Warbler	34	35	33	14	34
Common Grasshopper Warbler	5	4	17	12	9
Sedge Warbler	251	274	214	473	246

<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>3YA</b>
Eurasian Reed Warbler	1,050	1,053	848	<b>691</b>	984
Blackcap	599	694	1,004	<b>1,192</b>	766
Garden Warbler	63	77	64	<b>88</b>	68
Lesser Whitethroat	26	15	25	<b>24</b>	22
Common Whitethroat	31	42	30	<b>47</b>	34
Wood Warbler	2				<1
Common Chiffchaff	448	450	339	<b>331</b>	412
Willow Warbler	234	220	270	<b>299</b>	241
Goldcrest	90	77	46	<b>31</b>	71
Firecrest				<b>2</b>	
Spotted Flycatcher	4	4	4		4
Pied Flycatcher			1		<1
Bearded Tit	1				<1
Long-tailed Tit	162	128	107	<b>84</b>	132
Marsh Tit	6	7	8	<b>1</b>	7
Coal Tit	112	91	69	<b>39</b>	91
Blue Tit	699	1,173	813	<b>653</b>	895
Great Tit	598	700	750	<b>626</b>	683
Wood Nuthatch	9	9	12	<b>1</b>	10
Eurasian Treecreeper	55	19	16	<b>12</b>	30
Eurasian Jay	4	4	1	<b>5</b>	3
Black-billed Magpie	1		1	<b>2</b>	<1
Eurasian Jackdaw	4	9	6	<b>8</b>	6
Carrion Crow	1				<1
Common Starling	34	51	24	<b>19</b>	36
House Sparrow	50	60	37	<b>63</b>	49
Chaffinch	180	135	152	<b>239</b>	156
Brambling		6	2	<b>2</b>	3
European Greenfinch	468	369	384	<b>425</b>	407
European Goldfinch	203	134	32	<b>27</b>	123
Eurasian Siskin	20	24		<b>37</b>	15
Common Linnet	1		9		3
Lesser Redpoll	3		19		7
Common Bullfinch	104	41	45	<b>29</b>	63
Reed Bunting	51	46	54	<b>32</b>	50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,382</b>	<b>7,388</b>	<b>7,196</b>	<b>7,565</b>	<b>7,322</b>
<b>Species</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>66</b>

Table 4. Species Totals 2003 - 2006

Gazetteer					
Abbots Leigh	5373	NS	Burrington	4759	NS
Abbots Pool	5373	NS	Burrington Ham	4858	NS
Anchor Head	3062	NS	Cabot Park, Bristol	5280	BR
Ashcombe Park, Wsm	3362	NS	Cam Brook	7460	BA
Aust Warth	5689	SG	Cameley	6157	BA
Avon Gorge	5673	BR	Chapel Pill	5376	NS
Avonmouth Docks	5178	BR	Charlton Field	6366	BA
Avonmouth Sewage Works ASW)	5379	BR	Chelvey	4668	NS
Axe Estuary	3159	NS	Chelwood	6861	BA
Backwell Lake	4769	NS	Chew Magna Res.	5663	BA
Bagstone	6987	SG	Chew Valley Lake (CVL)	5760	BA
Banwell	4059	NS	Chipping Sodbury	7282	SG
Barrow Gurney Res. (BG)	5368	NS	Chittening Warth	5382	SG
Batheaston Reserve	7867	BA	Churchill	4459	NS
Battery Point	4677	NS	Clapton Moor Reserve	4573	NS
Birnbeck Island	3062	NS	Cleeve Wood Reserve	4666	NS
Bishop Sutton	5859	BA	Clevedon	4071	NS
Bishopston, Bristol	5875	BR	Clevedon-Yeo (CI-Y)	3868	NS
Blagdon Lake (BL)	5159	BA	Clifton Down, Bristol	5673	BR
Blaise Woods	5678	BR	Clifton, Bristol	5773	BR
Blake's Pools Reserve	3666	NS	Clutton	6259	BA
Bleadon	3456	NS	Coalpit Heath	6780	SG
Bodkin Hazel Wood	7884	SG	Cold Ashton	7572	SG
Bourton Combe	5068	NS	Combe Dingle, Bristol	5577	BR
R. Boyd	6972	SG	Compton Dando	6464	BA
Brimsham Park, Yate	7083	SG	Compton Martin	5457	BA
Brislington, Bristol	6270	BR	Congresbury Moor	4363	NS
Bristol City Docks	5872	BR	Corston	6965	BA
Bristol International Airport	5065	NS	Corston Field	6864	BA
Burlledge Hill Reserve	5858	BA	Cromhall	6990	SG
Burnett	6665	BA	Crooks Marsh	5482	SG
Cumberland Basin, Bristol	5772	BR	Ladye Bay	4072	NS
Denny Island, CVL	5760	BA	Lady's Wood	7385	SG
Dodington	7579	SG	Langford	4560	NS
Dolebury Warren Reserve	4659	NS	Langridge	7369	BA
Downend, Bristol	6577	BR	Lansdown	7268	BA
Doynton	7274	SG	Lawrence Weston Reserve	5478	BR
Dundry	5566	NS	Leap Valley, Downend	6577	BR
Dyrham Park	7475	SG	Leigh Woods	5573	NS
East Wood, Portishead	4777	NS	Littleton Pits Reserve	5991	SG
Easter Compton	5782	SG	Littleton Warth	5890	SG
Easton-in-Gordano	5175	NS	Littleton-on-Severn	5990	SG
Eastville Park, Bristol	6175	BR	Litton Resrs.	5855	BA
Eastwood Farm, Bristol	6371	BR	Locking	3659	NS
Emerson's Green	6776	SG	Long Ashton	5470	NS

Gazetteer					
Failand	5773	NS	Lords Wood	6363	BA
Farnborough	6660	BA	Lower Woods	7487	SG
Fishponds, Bristol	6376	BR	Lulsgate	5065	NS
Flax Bourton	5069	NS	Maes Knoll	6066	NS
Folly Farm Reserve	6060	BA	Mangotsfield	6576	SG
Frampton Cotterell	6682	SG	Marksbury Plain	6661	BA
Golden Valley	6870	SG	Marshfield	7873	SG
Hallen	5580	BR	Mendip Lodge Wood	4759	NS
Ham Green Lake	5375	NS	Middle Hope	3366	NS
Hanham	6472	SG	Midford	7660	BA
Harnhill Tip, Elberton	6088	SG	Nailsea	4770	NS
Hellenge Hill Reserve	3457	NS	New Passage	5486	SG
Henbury, Bristol	5678	BR	Newton Park	6964	BA
Henleaze, Bristol	5876	BR	Newton St. Loe	7064	BA
Hérons Green, CVL	5559	BA	North Weston	4674	NS
Herriott's Pool, CVL	5758	BA	Northwick Warth	5587	SG
Hoar Gout	5380	BR	Norton Hawkfield	5964	NS
Horwood Farm	7387	SG	Norton Wood, Gordano	4272	NS
Hotwells, Bristol	5772	BR	Old Down	6187	SG
Hunstrete Lake	6462	BA	Old Sodbury	7581	SG
Inglestone Common	7688	SG	Oldbury Court, Bristol	6376	BR
Iron Acton	6883	SG	Oldbury Power Station (OPS)	6094	SG
Kenn Moor	4368	NS	Oldland Common	6771	SG
Keynsham	6568	BA	Orchard Pool	5485	SG
Keynsham STW	6669	BA	Oxbow Reserve, Bath	7766	BA
Kilcott	7889	SG	Paradise Bottom	5574	NS
Kings Wood, Congresbury	4564	NS	Paulton	6556	BA
Kingston Seymour	4066	BA	Pensford	6263	BA
Pill	5276	NS	Stowey	5959	BA
Pilning	5585	SG	Sutton Wick, CVL	5759	BA
Portbury	4975	NS	Temple Quay	5972	BR
Portbury Wharf (PW)	4877	NS	The Niatts	5985	SG
Portishead	4676	NS	Thornbury	6490	SG
Portishead Lake	4677	NS	Tickenham Moor	4471	NS
Priors Wood	4974	NS	Timsbury	6658	BA
Prospect Stile	7168	BA	Tormarton	7778	SG
Publow	6264	BA	Tortworth	7093	SG
Puxton Moor Reserve	4063	NS	Totterdown	6071	BR
Queen Charlton	6367	BA	Tyntesfield	5170	NS
Rangeworthy	6986	SG	Ubley	5358	NS
Redland, Bristol	5875	BR	Uphill	3259	NS
Royal Portbury Dock (RPD)	5077	NS	Upper Langridge	7269	BA
Saltford	6867	BA	Wain's Hill	3970	NS
Sand Bay	3365	NS	Walton Moor	4372	NS
Sand Point	3165	NS	Warmley	6773	SG
Sandford	4259	NS	Wavering Down	4056	NS

Gazetteer					
Sea Mills, Bristol	5576	BR	Wellow	7358	BA
Seabanks Pool	5382	SG	West Littleton	7675	SG
Severn Beach	5384	SG	Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol	5777	BR
Severnside	5383	SG	Westerleigh	7080	SG
Sham Castle	7765	BA	Weston airfield	3460	NS
Shepperdine	6295	SG	Weston in Gordano	4474	NS
Shirehampton	5376	BR	Weston Moor Reserve	4473	NS
Shirehill Farm	7876	SG	Weston STW	3157	NS
Sidcot	4257	NS	Weston, Bath	7266	BA
Siston	6674	SG	Weston-super-Mare	3261	NS
Snuff Mills, Bristol	6276	BR	Whitchurch	6167	BR
Somerdale, Keynsham	6569	BA	Wick	7072	SG
Southmead, Bristol	5878	BR	Wick St. Lawrence STW	3665	NS
Southville, Bristol	5771	BR	Widcombe common	5757	BA
St John's, Bath	7464	BA	Winford	5465	NS
St Werburghs, Bristol	5974	BR	Winscombe	4257	NS
St. Catherine's Valley	7770	BA	Wolvershill	3860	NS
Stantonbury Hill	6763	BA	Woollard	6364	BA
Stapleton	6176	BR	Wooscombe Bottom	6365	BA
Steep Holm	2360	NS	Wraxall	4972	NS
Stockwood Reserve	6269	BR	Wroughton	4762	NS
Stoke Bishop, Bristol	5676	BR	Yatton	4365	NS
Stony Littleton	7356	BA	Yeo Estuary	3666	NS