

AVON BIRD REPORT

2007

AVON ORNITHOLOGICAL GROUP

Front cover: Bar-Tailed Godwits. Photograph by Paul Bowerman.

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

Text drawings by B. Slade and anon.

Typeset in WORD 2007 and printed by Healeys, Ipswich

ISSN Number – 0956-5744

CONTENTS

| | | |
|---|---------------------------|-------------|
| BTO advert | | Front cover |
| Avon Ornithological Group (AOG) | | Front cover |
| Editorial | H.E. Rose | 3 |
| Notes on species for which documentations is required | | 4 |
| Description species | | 5 |
| A review of 2007 | R.J. Higgins | 7 |
| Weather in 2007 | R.L. Bland | 11 |
| Introduction to systematic list | | 15 |
| Contributors of records | | 18 |
| Systematic list | | |
| Swans and geese | J. Williams | 19 |
| Ducks | M.S. Ponsford | 23 |
| Game birds | R. Mielcarek | 35 |
| Divers to Spoonbill | R.J. Higgins | 36 |
| Raptors | B. Lancaster | 43 |
| Water Rail to Coot | R. Mielcarek | 49 |
| Waders | H.E. Rose | 51 |
| Skuas to Auks | R.M. Andrews | 66 |
| Doves to Woodpeckers | R. Mielcarek | 76 |
| Passerines, Larks to Dipper | J.P. Martin | 83 |
| Passerines, Wren to Buntings | R.L. Bland | 89 |
| Escaped, released and hybrid birds | J. Williams & R Mielcarek | 112 |
| The Birds of Clifton Downs 1931 | A. Morley | 115 |
| The Diet of Breeding Peregrines in Bath | E. Drewitt | 127 |
| An Analysis of Barn Owl Pellets 2004-8 | L.F. Roberts | 133 |
| Glossy Ibis at Chew Valley Lake | A.H. Davis & G. Thoburn | 137 |
| Eastern Chiffchaff in the Avon area | J.P. Martin | 138 |
| Breeding Birds of the Avon area 2007 | R.L. Bland & J. Tully | 141 |
| BTO Plover Survey | R.L. Bland | 148 |
| Avon Ringing Report | L.F. Roberts | 149 |
| Gazetteer | | 154 |
| Index | | 157 |
| Advertisement | | Back cover |
| Map of the Avon area | | Cover |

Editorial

About a decade ago a new taxonomic order for all bird species on earth based on DNA analysis was proposed. Some parts of this have been implemented, for instance the systematic list in this Report now begins with Mute Swan. As a by-product of this process it was also proposed to standardise the English names of all species occurring in the English-speaking world. This has caused much controversy, in fact more than that for the main taxonomic changes. Birders seem to be innately conservative, and they found some of the new names distasteful to put it mildly.

The BOU amongst others was advocating the new nomenclature, but it seems to me that it should have 'tested the water' before embarking on these proposals for it has now effectively gone back to the old familiar names that we all love and have grown up with. I am reminded of the old nursery rhyme about the Grand Old Duke of York who marched his troops to the top of the hill, and then marched them down again! Anyway, there are now TWO lists of English bird names, the first is called the 'British English list' and it contains the names we have been using for many years, and the second is called the 'International English list', it contains the controversial new names like 'Little Plover' and 'Mew Gull'. And it is suggested that publications which are mainly aimed at a British audience should use the 'British list', whilst those that are aimed at a wider international audience should use the 'International list'. With the unanimous approval of my committee we have, in this Report, returned to the standard familiar English names, and we intend to keep with them for the foreseeable future.

It would be of considerable interest to know what bird populations were present in our area in, say, 1900, or 1700, or ... For example, has the Black-headed Gull always been as common as it is now? Although many authors have written about British birds for at least four centuries, there is very little quantitative data available prior to 1945 - any detailed information collected before this time is welcome. For this reason we are re-publishing a paper on the Birds of Clifton Down written by Averil Morley in 1931. It is well written and, apart from the information it contains, it gives a vivid picture of the methods used and the attitudes to birds at that time.

The remaining papers include a second instalment of Ed Drewitt's account of the diet of the Bath Peregrines, a note by Andy Davis on the Glossy Ibis occurrence at CVL - a new species for our area, the fifth paper on our series on the identification of 'difficult species', this time on the *tristis* subspecies of the Chiffchaff and again written by John Martin, and a paper by Lyndon Roberts on Barn Owl pellets. Also as usual we have the BBS Report by Richard Bland and John Tully, and the ringing report by Lyndon Roberts. Finally we have a long-delayed Index of papers that have appeared in this Report since its first edition in 1979.

As I noted above one new species was added to the Avon list in 2007: Glossy Ibis, see paper on page 133. Other unusual sightings included Lesser Scaup (third and fourth records), Cattle Egret (third record), and Spotted Sandpiper (third record). Note the date given in the **2006** Report for the Common Rosefinch sighting at Sand Point should be June 9th, not May 9th.

As usual it is a pleasure to thank all those who contributed records – the Report would be impossible without them, and all those who have helped to prepare this Report, especially Jason Williams, our technical editor.

On Oct.1st, 2008, John Martin took over from me as the Avon Bird Recorder. We are grateful to him for agreeing to take on this work. Records can be sent to him electronically at

avonbirdrecorder@googlemail.com

or posted to him at 34 Cranmoor Green, Pilning, Bristol, BS35 4QF. Standard electronic records can also be sent to Richard Bland at

richardbland@blueyonder.co.uk

Harvey Rose

A guide to the records required by the Avon Bird Report.

Apart from the rarities, for which we require a description, we welcome records of every observation of the following groups, species and sub-species:-

Bewick's Swan, all geese and ducks, all raptors, Red-legged and Grey Partridge, Water Rail, all waders, Yellow-legged Gull, Little and Great Black-backed Gull, Kittiwake, all terns, Ring-necked Parakeet, Cuckoo, all owls, Kingfisher, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Sand Martin, Tree and Rock Pipit, Yellow and Grey Wagtail, Dipper, Nightingale, Black Redstart, Redstart, Whinchat, Stonechat, Wheatear, Ring Ouzel, Cetti's Warbler, Grasshopper Warbler, Dartford Warbler, Wood Warbler, Spotted and Pied Flycatcher, Marsh Tit, Tree Sparrow, Brambling, Siskin, Lesser Redpoll, Crossbill, and Snow, Reed, and Corn Bunting.

For the common birds we would also like the following records, which will be especially helpful during the four years of the BTO National Atlas, 2007-2011.

- Breeding season site records, and evidence of breeding, for all species with the code **B**, for breeding site, in the list below.
- All **first** and **last** sightings of summer and winter visitors, indicated by **D**, for date, in the list below, also all records of passage or cold-weather movements, including rates per hour for any species.
- Size and site of all roosts at any time of year, and feeding flocks at any time of year that exceed the value in the **F** (for lock) in the list below.
- All records of winter visitors present in summer, or summer visitors in winter, including Blackcaps and Chiffchaff in winter, Black-headed Gulls or Mew Gulls in summer, indicated by **S** or **W** in column B.
- All records of any unusual activity, including early or late song, display, aggression, and plumage, or birds at unusual sites, or unusually early or late breeding.
- All regular counts, such as monthly maxima or bird-days, from well-watched sites including gardens.
- All records of birds that have obviously or probably escaped from captivity.

Listed below are the commoner species with three coded columns. The column headed B means *breeding site* and evidence is required. The D column indicates that *first and last dates* are required, and the F indicates that all records of groups/flocks of the given size or greater are required.

| | B | D | F | | B | D | F |
|--------------------------|---|---|----|--------------------|---|---|-----|
| Mute Swan | B | | 10 | Mistle Thrush | B | | 10 |
| Pheasant | | | 10 | Sedge Warbler | B | D | |
| Little Grebe | B | | 5 | Reed Warbler | B | D | |
| Great Crested Grebe | B | | 5 | Blackcap | W | D | |
| Cormorant | B | | 5 | Garden Warbler | B | D | |
| Grey Heron | B | | 5 | Lesser Whitethroat | B | D | |
| Moorhen | B | | 10 | Common Whitethroat | B | D | |
| Coot | B | | 10 | Chiffchaff | W | D | |
| Black-headed Gull | S | | 50 | Willow Warbler | B | D | |
| Mew Gull | S | | 20 | Goldcrest | B | | |
| Lesser Black-backed Gull | B | | 30 | Long-tailed Tit | | | 15 |
| Herring Gull | B | | 30 | Nuthatch | B | | |
| Feral Pigeon | | | 50 | Treecreeper | B | | |
| Stock Pigeon | B | | 10 | Jay | B | | 10 |
| Wood Pigeon | | | 50 | Magpie | | | 10 |
| Collared Dove | | | 20 | Jackdaw | | | 50 |
| Swift | B | D | 10 | Rook | | | 50 |
| Green Woodpecker | B | | | Carrion Crow | | | 50 |
| Great Spotted Woodpecker | B | | | Starling | | | 100 |
| Skylark | | | 20 | House Sparrow | | | 20 |
| Barn Swallow | | D | 20 | Chaffinch | | | 20 |
| House Martin | B | D | 20 | Greenfinch | | | 20 |
| Meadow Pipit | B | | 10 | Goldfinch | B | | 20 |
| Pied Wagtail | B | | 10 | Linnet | B | | 20 |
| Fieldfare | | D | 20 | Bullfinch | B | | |
| Redwing | | D | 20 | Yellowhammer | B | | 10 |

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 | Girl 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 2007

R.J. Higgins

First Winter Period

The winter was exceptionally mild and wet. Westerly and south-westerly winds dominated for most of the period, with only a short period of high pressure bringing cold conditions from Jan. 21st to Feb. 9th. The winter ended with strong south-westerly winds from Feb. 21st to 28th.

Wildfowl numbers were, unsurprisingly, low in the mild weather. Wigeon and Teal totals were approximately half those of the same period in 2006, and the wet conditions were responsible for high water levels at the reservoirs and low counts here of Gadwall, Mallard and Shoveler. Amongst the less common species, Bewick's Swan, White-fronted Goose, Eider and Smew were notably scarce. Low counts of Shelduck are less easy to link to the weather and therefore more worrying. Few wildfowl species had a good winter in our area, but there was a reasonable sequence of Dark-bellied Brent Goose records and Goldeneye numbers at CVL recovered from recent low levels.

On the Estuary Dunlin numbers increased for the second winter running, with Severnside and CI-Y both attracting flocks of 4,000 or more in February. Redshank numbers remained high at most sites, but fell at the Axe. Curlew also fell here, but otherwise enjoyed a good winter with, for example, 320 at Littleton Warth in January. The gradual increase in Oystercatcher numbers continued but Black-tailed Godwit continued to decline. The fortunes of the more widespread species were mixed. As might be expected in a mild winter, Lapwings counts were low, with numbers half those recorded in 2006, itself a poor year, and Jack Snipe was scarce. Common Snipe, however, was more numerous than in recent winters with a high count of 185 in the Gordano Valley in January, and Golden Plover was also relatively numerous, especially in February. As has been customary in recent years, several less common species were recorded. The usual Greenshank wintered on the River Avon, and at least two Spotted Redshanks and eight Common Sandpipers were noted, with one record of a Little Stint. A party of 17 Ruff that flew through CVL on Jan. 6th was exceptional and unfortunately did not presage a good year for this species.

The population of Wood Pigeon was again high, whilst the species that it replaced as our most abundant winter bird, Starling, resumed its long-standing population decline after a slightly better 2005/06 winter. Several of our more widespread resident species, including Wren, Blackbird, Mistle Thrush and Chaffinch, were present in lower numbers than usual, with Mistle Thrush at its lowest level on record and giving particular cause for concern. The numbers of several insectivorous species, including Goldcrest, Long-tailed Tit and Coal Tit were also low. There were, however, encouraging signs that the survival rate of Wren was high. Migrant passerines were without exception in short supply, with exceptionally poor numbers of Fieldfare, Redwing, Brambling, Siskin and Lesser Redpoll. Fieldfare numbers were the lowest on record, and approximately one-sixth of those recorded in the 1999/00 winter. Blackcap and Chiffchaff numbers were unexceptional and Stonechat also showed a slight fall, but all three species are common by historical standards.

The winter was unexceptional in terms of rare and scarce birds. A Long-tailed Duck remained at CVL from 2006, but was elusive. The only Firecrest of the winter was recorded at Banwell on Jan. 5th. Mid-January produced records of Shag and Caspian Gull, with a Pale-bellied Brent Goose at New Passage on 25th. February began with a Ring-billed Gull, whilst the cold weather at the beginning of the month coincided with records of a Yellow-browed Warbler at Filton and a Chiffchaff of one of the Eastern sub-species at CVL. The return to westerly winds produced an Iceland Gull at CVL on Feb. 11th, and another Caspian Gull was found here on 24th. Two species that are becoming more common were well represented, with four records of Red Kite in January and a peak count of 31 Little Egrets around CI-Y in February.

Spring

Wet and mild weather continued for much of the spring, with south-westerly winds dominating until March 19th, after which the winds were northerly for the rest of the month. April was dominated by high pressure with light, mostly easterly winds, and like March was exceptionally warm. May, however, was cool and wet after the first week, with westerly winds through most of the month and northerlies at the end. As in 2006 there was evidence of Shoveler passage in March at CVL, probably because low winter numbers made the small spring influx, which peaked at 48, more obvious. Garganey counts were low, but there was a good sequence of records at CVL and, less usually, Backwell Lake. Common Scoter passage was reasonable, but no Eiders were recorded.

Seabird passage was slow getting underway, with species such as Little Gull, Kittiwake and Sandwich Tern that normally dominate early movements being notably scarce. However, as strong low pressure systems moved across the area in the period May 6th to 8th good numbers of several species were seen on the coast. Counts of Fulmar, Manx Shearwater and

Gannet were high, and there was an exceptional record of nine Pomarine Skuas at Severnside. Spring passage of raptors included four Marsh Harriers between April 14th and May 5th, five Red Kites in April and five Ospreys between March 28th and April 30th. The most notable wader passage involved Bar-tailed Godwit, which was seen in large numbers moving up the Estuary for the first time since 2000, a total of 800 were recorded from April 28th.

The strong south-westerly winds in the first week of March produced some early records of migrants with the first migrant Chiffchaff being noted on 1st, exceptionally early records of White Wagtail on 1st, 4th and 9th, the first Sand Martin of the year on 5th, when Stonechat passage peaked, and the first Wheatear on 8th. There were then influxes of Chiffchaff from March 11th to 13th and Sand Martin from 15th to 17th, but passage generally slowed until the end of the month when the period 27th to 30th saw further influxes of Chiffchaff and Sand Martin, the first influx of Wheatear, the peak passages of Meadow Pipit and White Wagtail and the first records of Swallow, Tree Pipit and Sedge Warbler. The record of the last-named is the earliest on record in our area. The busy period continued into the first two days of April, which produced the first Willow Warbler and Yellow Wagtail and peak Pied Wagtail passage, but there was then a short lull. The 6th and 7th saw the last records of Redwing and Lesser Redpoll and the first of House Martin and Whitethroat. On 9th the first Ring Ouzel of the year was seen, marking the start of the best passage of this species in a decade. Mid-April, from 12th to 15th, saw the first records of Redstart, Grasshopper Warbler, Reed Warbler and Lesser Whitethroat and notable influxes of Swallow, Sand Martin, Tree Pipit, Whitethroat and Willow Warbler. The six days from 20th to 25th then produced the first Whinchat and Wood Warbler of the year and large movements of Tree Pipit, Wheatear, Grasshopper Warbler, Reed Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat and Willow Warbler. At the end of the month, coinciding with the large movement of Bar-tailed Godwit, there were further influxes of several species, including Lesser Whitethroat and Whitethroat and the year's first Spotted Flycatcher. The cold and wet weather in May then put an end to most passage, but the spring's largest numbers of Whinchat were recorded on 2nd and the spring's only Pied Flycatchers were recorded on 19th. The latter species was not alone in appearing in very poor numbers; Wood Warbler also had its worst passage on record and numbers of Tree Pipit, Whinchat, Redstart, Yellow Wagtail and Spotted Flycatcher were also notably low, with only Ring Ouzel and Grasshopper Warbler bucking the trend with above-average numbers. Good weather in April may have meant that many birds simply overflowed our area unnoticed, but several of these species have shown long-term downwards trends.

The number of scarce visitors was also low, particularly when compared to 2006 and several other recent years. The first notable record of the spring was of a Green-winged Teal on the Axe Estuary from March 2nd to 11th, which was replaced by another Nearctic duck, a Lesser Scaup at BL, from 11th to 20th. The season's only Firecrest was seen at Severnside on 16th and a Ring-billed Gull was found at CVL on 24th. April and May were particularly disappointing, with the best records being two Black-necked Grebe at CVL on April 5th and nine Pomarine Skuas at Severnside on May 19th.

Breeding

Populations of many breeding species were already lower than in the early half of the decade following the cold 2005/06 winter and cold and wet weather in the second half of May 2006. Although the mild 2006/07 winter resulted in high survival of most resident species, excessively wet weather during the 2007 breeding season meant that breeding success for many species was poor. Waterbirds had a mixed season. The number of Great Crested Grebe broods at CVL, following a good winter for this species, was exceptionally high. The number of Mallard and Pochard broods here was also high. Shoveler bred for the first time since 1992, with eight young surviving to fledge; significantly the brood was on the pool at Heron's Green, away from the attentions of Pike on the main lake. Gadwall and Tufted Duck, however, had a poor year generally and Shelduck success on the coast was again poor.

Common Buzzard, after a slight dip in 2006, showed a modest increase in nesting pairs. Kestrel and Sparrowhawk had average years, whilst both Peregrine and Hobby bred in good numbers. Tawny Owl records suggested a slight increase after a substantial decline in 2006, but both Barn Owl and Little Owl declined. The number of Lapwing territories was at its lowest since records began, with particularly worrying declines seen in the Cotswolds and the Gordano Valley. There was no evidence that Snipe or Redshank bred and Little Ringed Plover was noted at only one site. Oystercatcher attempted to nest at three sites, as in 2006, but with poor success. Avonmouth Docks held the region's only breeding Ringed Plover, with an impressive nine territories held here.

Several of the common passerine species, including Wren, Dunnock, Blackbird and the four common tit species, were noted in good numbers but apparently had a poor season. Our two common finch species, Chaffinch and Greenfinch, both had poor seasons with numbers of the former at their lowest level on record. The fortunes of migrant species were mixed. Sedge Warbler and Whitethroat bred in good numbers, whilst Reed Warbler and Garden Warbler were amongst species having a poor season. The upward trend in both passage and breeding Grasshopper Warbler continued, with eleven territories held, the highest number in 25 years. None of the three migrant species that have undergone huge falls in recent years recovered: Cuckoo numbers were low, Spotted Flycatcher were noted at half as many sites as in 2006 and Willow Warbler numbers remained low, although at least there was no further fall. Most resident species of

conservation concern fared slightly better. There were slight increases in the populations of Reed Bunting and Yellowhammer, whilst Skylark, Mistle Thrush and Corn Bunting numbers were steady. There was a slight fall in Linnet numbers, however, and no suggestion that Grey Partridge bred.

Amongst the scarcer species there were once again no breeding records for Tree Pipit, Tree Sparrow, Siskin or Lesser Redpoll. Yellow Wagtail may have bred near Tormarton and a Wood Warbler was recorded at Wetmoor in June. As in 2006 two pairs of Nightjar were located on the Mendips. Stonechats, following several years of consistent increases, fell slightly but another species that benefits from mild winters, Cetti's Warbler, was slightly more numerous. There were very few records of Quail and only seven Nightingales were found, although survey effort for the latter species was lower than in recent years. Black Redstart attempted to breed at RPD, but was unsuccessful.

Summer

The summer of 2007 will be remembered for its exceptional rainfall. The first half of June was, in fact, dry and dominated by light north-easterly winds but wet weather began with southerly winds during the middle of the month and continued to the end of the month and throughout July. The winds in July were generally south-westerly. Most recent years have seen significant influxes of seabirds to the Estuary and 2007 was no exception. Most were noted between July 4th to 6th when high numbers of Fulmar, Manx Shearwater and Gannet were seen. On 6th an impressive total of 16 Storm Petrels were seen at Severnside, whilst the following day produced an inland Gannet at CVL. An Osprey at CVL on June 22nd was unusual but a summer passage of Common Scoter is more expected and 15 were noted at Severnside on June 28th, with 23 at CVL on July 7th. A Black-tailed Godwit at CVL on June 20th was assigned to the Icelandic race *limosa*, a typical date for this form.

Autumn

August was cold, with little wind during the first half of the month and light northerlies dominating the second half. September was also cool and dominated by light northerlies and easterlies as was October, although that month was slightly warmer than average. After the summer's deluge, the below average rainfall in all three months was very welcome. A combination of early summer rainfall and engineering works kept water levels at the reservoirs high and numbers of most wildfowl were therefore low. Great Crested Grebe numbers at CVL continued their recovery, however, and the third highest count on record was made in September. The suggestion that Tufted Duck numbers were high in recent years because low coarse fish populations allowed aquatic invertebrates to thrive seemed fairly robust. However, the recovery in fish populations did not appear to affect Tufted Ducks adversely and a peak of 1,460 was recorded, also in September. Dabbling duck numbers were almost universally lower than usual, although a count of 60 Pintail at CVL in October provided an exception. As in 2006 Garganey were scarce.

The high water levels at the reservoirs meant that there were no inland records of many waders, including Little Stint and Curlew Sandpiper, and passages of several other species, including Ruff, Greenshank, Green Sandpiper, Wood Sandpiper and Common Sandpiper were poor. On the coast passage was variable. Ringed Plover was numerous at Severnside in August and there was a marked influx of Sanderling on August 15th and 16th. Curlew Sandpiper peaked at seven at Severnside and five at CI-Y on Sept. 13th, whilst 23rd saw a notable passage of waders. At PW, 220 Knot, five Little Stint and one Curlew Sandpiper were seen and 60 Black-tailed Godwits were recorded at OPS, with 29 of this species visiting CVL the next day. The outstanding feature of the autumn passage of passerines was, unfortunately, that it was exceptionally poor. A combination of factors is probably to blame, including a poor breeding season caused by the summer's appalling weather, especially in areas of Britain to our north, and generally fine and settled conditions allowing birds to migrate over our area unseen. Whatever the causes, the numbers of Pied Flycatcher, Redstart, Ring Ouzel and Whinchat were the worst, or equal worst, on record, and numbers of Skylark, Sand Martin, Wheatear, Mistle Thrush and Chaffinch were very low. Some species, Tree Pipit and Yellow Wagtail for example, appeared in average numbers but no species had a better than average autumn.

The first Wheatear of the autumn was seen on July 4th, with Redstart, Whinchat and Yellow Wagtail all appearing over the next ten days. August was generally quiet apart from a reasonable passage of Yellow Wagtail and Wheatear between 22nd and 24th. The first two weeks of September saw the peak movements of Tree Pipit, Lesser Whitethroat and Chiffchaff, followed by a fall of Goldcrest on 16th. Early departures of some species were noted, including Lesser Whitethroat on 20th. The few days around Sept. 23rd, which saw a notable passage of waders, also saw peaks in the passages of Wheatear, Swallow and Linnet, the last record of Spotted Flycatcher and the first of Siskin. As winds switched to the north around Sept. 29th the first Redwing, Fieldfare and Lesser Redpoll, and last Sand Martin and Tree Pipit were seen, and there was a strong passage of House Martin. Oct. 3rd to 5th was another busy period, with peaks in the passages of Swallow, Chiffchaff, Pied Wagtail, Siskin, Lesser Redpoll and Chaffinch, and the last Sedge Warbler and first Brambling of the season. The next flurry of activity was between 12th and 18th when the last Reed Warbler, Swallow and House Martin were recorded and strong passages of Fieldfare, Stonechat and Lesser Redpoll were noted.

The general dearth of passerine migrants on the coast was reflected in a shortage of scarce visitors here, but despite an almost complete lack of many regular migrants at CVL there was an impressive succession of scarce species here in early August. This started with the lake's second, and our area's third, Spotted Sandpiper from Aug. 7th to 9th. A Spoonbill visited briefly on the first of these days, whilst a Black-necked Grebe and a Spotted Crake that appeared during the same period and a Red-crested Pochard that was seen on 13th were more predictable. The settled weather made the appearance of an adult Sabine's Gull here on Aug. 22nd rather unexpected. The focus of interest then moved away from CVL, with a Wryneck at Dundry on Sept. 5th and a Turtle Dove nearby at BG on 11th. BL continued its monopoly on Lesser Scaup sightings with a male, possibly the bird seen in the previous autumn and spring, arriving on Sept. 30th and staying until Nov. 21st. Two Slavonian Grebes here on Oct. 4th were unusually early and did not linger. The autumn's two best birds on the coast, a Lapland Bunting at Northwick Warth on Oct. 2nd and 3rd and a Yellow-browed Warbler at Sand Point on 7th, then followed. The second Sabine's Gull of the year, a juvenile, was at CVL on Oct. 9th and the site retained its run of form with a Cattle Egret, part of a large influx into southern England, from 11th to 13th. A Firecrest was at Kingsweston Down on Oct. 27th and BG had a brief period in the limelight with a Great Northern Diver from 21st to 28th and four Red-crested Pochard on 30th.

Winter

The weather in November was settled and dry, with light northerly winds, except when a depression brought south-westerly winds and heavy rain for three days from 18th. The dry calm weather returned but came to an abrupt end at the beginning of December, which saw heavy storms on 1st and again a week later. The month was generally mild, but there was a period of moderately cold weather from 8th to 21st.

Water levels at the reservoirs remained high and counts of most waterbirds here were therefore low, although Pochard numbers at CVL were reasonable. Goosander showed signs of a recovery here, but were vulnerable to disturbance, and Cormorant numbers were also high. There was a good sequence of Scaup records at BL, peaking at six on Dec. 1st. The cull of Ruddy Duck is clearly having an effect, with generally small flocks at both reservoirs and it may also be at least partly responsible for a complete absence of Smew records. On the coast dabbling ducks were more numerous, with twice as many Wigeon as in the comparable period of 2006 and an exceptional count of 2,000 Teal at RPD in November. Mallard numbers were low, however, both on the Estuary and inland. There was continued evidence of an improvement in Dunlin numbers, in contrast to an overall decline in the Severn Estuary, with maxima of 4,000 at Severnside, 3,000 at PW, 2,250 at CI-Y and 1,200 at Sand Bay. Oystercatcher numbers were also high and most of the other more common species were present in reasonable quantity. Grey Plover was unusually numerous at OPS. Wintering plovers inland showed contrasting fortunes, with good flocks of Golden Plover in the Lansdown / Upper Langridge area but low numbers of Lapwing. Although the latter species was reasonably numerous on the coast the population overall was about half the ten year average. Scarcer wintering waders were represented by two Greenshank and one Spotted Redshank; a record of the latter at CVL on Dec. 7th was unusual for this time of year.

Fortunes of breeding passerine species were mixed. Dunnock and Wren were both present in good numbers, respectively twice and three times those recorded 25 years ago. Blackbird had a poor breeding season but twice as many were recorded as in the previous winter, perhaps due to immigration. Starlings were counted at twice the rate of the 2006/07 winter, but numbers are approximately 25% of those counted a quarter of a century ago. Chaffinch numbers have fallen by 40% over the same period, although no decline was detected over the last twelve months. Greenfinch, which had increased dramatically, has fallen back to levels seen historically. Linnet, despite a decline as a breeding bird, has increased five-fold as a wintering species over 25 years, perhaps because milder winters have changed migratory patterns. Most migrant species, including Redwing, Siskin and Brambling, were noticeably more numerous than in the previous winter, but Fieldfare were scarce.

The run of rare birds at CVL continued into the winter with a Glossy Ibis right at the start of the period on Nov. 2nd and 3rd. At Severnside a Snow Bunting, now a much less regular visitor than it used to be, was seen on 4th, with a Pomarine Skua on 8th and a Little Auk during stormy weather on 17th. The year's only Long-eared Owl was seen at Abbott's Leigh on the latter day. Bristol then produced three Firecrest, with two close to the autumn Kingsweston bird at Blaise from Nov. 22nd into December and a single bird at Arnos Vale on Dec. 7th. A Chiffchaff of one of the eastern races was found at Keynsham STW in early December. Divers have been scarce at CVL in recent years and have tended to stay for a few hours only, but the presence of three long-staying birds in the shape of a Red-throated from Nov. 24th and two Great Northern, from 27th and Dec. 15th respectively, was a further reflection of increased coarse fish populations here. Strong winds in December produced a Leach's Petrel off Portishead on 7th and another at Severnside on 29th, with a Grey Phalarope found dead at the latter site on the last day of the year. A group of five Velvet Scoters appeared at CVL on 16th. BL was the third of the reservoirs to be graced by a Red-crested Pochard when a male appeared here on 30th and a Pale-bellied Brent Goose was seen at CI-Y on the same day.

WEATHER REPORT FOR 2007

R.L.Bland

2007 was an unusual year in many ways. It began with a warm winter, followed by the second warmest spring since 1881, then the wettest three months of May, June, July ever, a cool summer and an ordinary autumn. April was sunnier than August. Also in total 235 (64%) days had no rain, but it was one of the fifteenth wettest years since 1853. The overall mean maximum temperature was 14.5C which makes it the sixteenth warmest year since 1881. Overall rainfall was 1107mm compared with the average since 1853 of 891mm, making it the tenth wettest year since 1853.

| Year | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Av. Max C | 14.2 | 14.6 | 14.1 | 13.8 | 14.3 | 15.0 | 14.3 | 14.4 | 14.7 | 14.5 |
| Ten year av. C | 13.8 | 13.8 | 13.8 | 13.8 | 14.0 | 14.2 | 14.3 | 14.2 | 14.4 | 14.4 |
| Rainfall mm | 1065 | 1106 | 1250 | 860 | 1178 | 758 | 951 | 896 | 955 | 1107 |
| Ten year av. mm | 942 | 966 | 1003 | 995 | 1010 | 978 | 970 | 954 | 973 | 997 |

Table 1. Decadal average mean maximum temperature and rainfall

Seasons

Winter (Dec.-Feb.) Temperature average 9.0C which was the warmest since 1998/99. Rainfall at 123mm was well above average and the wettest since 1998/99. There were 17 frost nights (October to April), the last on March 21st. Four nights were cold enough for ice to form, and two days had lying snow. The coldest spell was from Jan. 22nd to 26th.

Spring (March-May) Temperature average was 14.9C, second only to 1893 (16.6C) which was the highest ever recorded, and it was caused by an extraordinary April, averaging at 17.4C. Rainfall was close to the average, but there was almost none in April, whilst May had 163mm, just missing the 164mm record set in 1869.

Summer (June-Aug.) Temperature average 19.4C was a little below normal, but identical to 2002. Rainfall in June and July was very heavy, although it came in occasional downpours, and Bristol avoided the worst of the floods. August was dry. However the spring and summer of 2007 proved to be a disastrous breeding season for many birds.

Autumn (Sept.-Nov.) Temperature average 14.9C was identical to spring, and a little above average, September was up by the largest proportion. November began with four frost nights, but became progressively warmer. Rainfall was below the long-term average, September being particularly dry.

Seasonal comparisons

To put the 2007 seasonal average temperatures into perspective, Table 2 shows the seasonal temperature extremes, with their year, and the average since 1881.

| | 2007 | Min | Max | Av. |
|--------|------|-----------|-----------|------|
| Winter | 9.0 | 1917 2.5 | 1920 10.6 | 7.6 |
| Spring | 14.9 | 1887 10.4 | 1893 16.6 | 12.9 |
| Summer | 19.4 | 1883 18.0 | 1976 23.9 | 20.1 |
| Autumn | 14.9 | 1915 10.6 | 1959 16.8 | 14.0 |
| Annual | 14.5 | 1892 12.1 | 1921 15.6 | 13.8 |

Table 2 2007 seasons compared with minimum, maximum and average since 1881

Table 3 shows the average monthly rainfall in each season for 2007, and compares it with the extreme figures and average since 1853.

| | 2007 | Min | Max | Av. |
|--------|------|----------|-----------|-----|
| Winter | 123 | 1964 21 | 1995 154 | 77 |
| Spring | 79 | 1893 17 | 1981 107 | 60 |
| Summer | 101 | 1995 11 | 1879 140 | 73 |
| Autumn | 55 | 1978 26 | 1935 173 | 87 |
| Annual | 1107 | 1864 590 | 1882 1253 | 891 |

Table 3 Average monthly rainfall in mm for each season in 2007 compared with maximum, minimum and average since 1853. The annual figures are

for the year.

Monthly temperatures

In 2007 nine months were warmer than the long term average, three, June July and August, were colder. Except for April the differences for all months were inside the normal standard deviation.

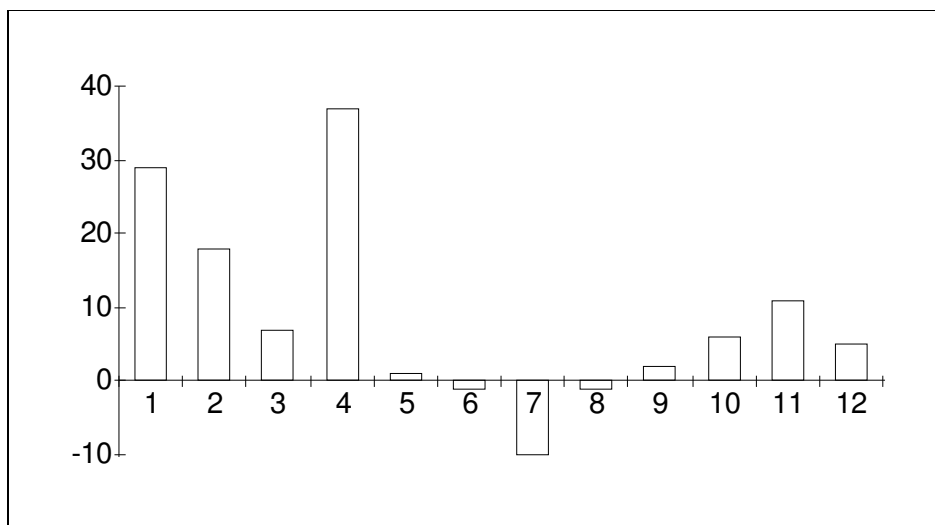


Chart 1 Monthly mean maximum temperature-percentage variation from average.

Monthly rainfall

In 2007 seven months were wetter than the long term average, five drier. January, February, May, June, July and December were all wetter than the standard deviation range, and April was drier.

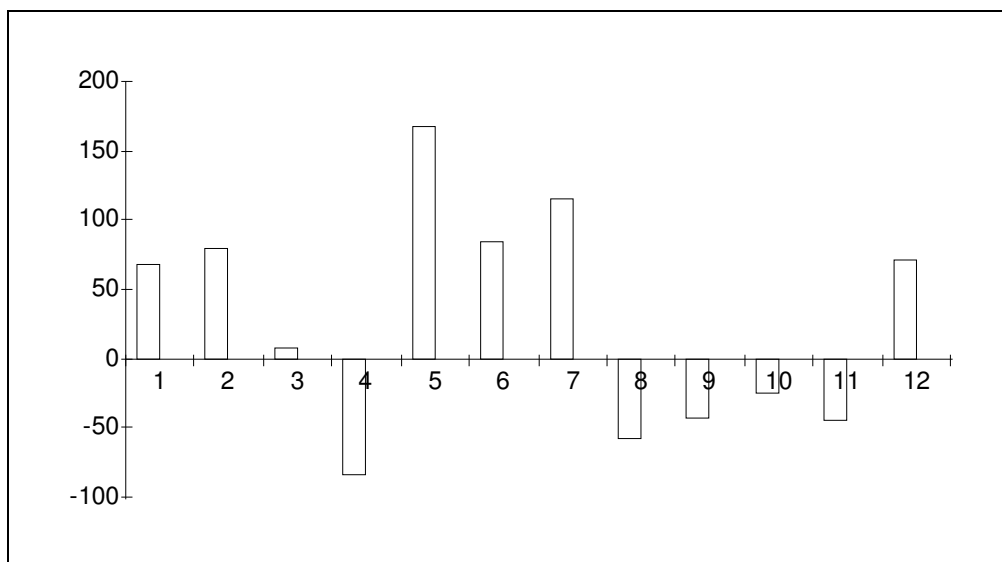


Chart 2 Monthly rainfall-percentage variation from long term average

Monthly summary 2007

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Av. |
|---------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|------|
| Temp C | 9.3 | 9.0 | 10.8 | 17.4 | 16.5 | 19.1 | 18.8 | 20.3 | 18.4 | 14.9 | 11.3 | 8.3 | 14.5 |
| Rain mm | 139 | 111 | 65 | 10 | 163 | 114 | 153 | 37 | 46 | 71 | 49 | 149 | 1107 |

Table 4 2007 Monthly and year average temperatures and total rainfall

January 9.3C, the warmest since 1999, rain 139mm, the wettest since 1995. Three frost nights. First three weeks were dominated by westerly winds flowing between an Iceland low and a Spanish high. On 21st the wind turned northerly as high pressure developed over the UK, temperatures fell to 2C on 23rd, and ponds were iced briefly. High pressure and light winds dominated the rest of the month.

February 9.0C, the warmest since 2002, rain 111mm, the wettest since 2002. Five frost nights. Began cold, frosty and dry, and was dominated by east winds, culminating briefly with snow and ice on 7-9th. On 10th winds switched to the south-west and the temperature rose, reaching 12C on 20th influenced by southerly winds between low pressure in the Atlantic and high in the Baltic. The last week saw strong westerly winds.

March 10.8C, the warmest since 2003, rain average at 65mm. Two frost nights. Began with a wet week and strong south-westerly winds, and temperatures around 12C. On 19th winds switched to the north, and remained there or easterly for the rest of the month, controlled by a Baltic high. This created some very bright days (ten hours of sun on 27th), temperatures then fell to 5C on 20th but recovered to 14C (for the first time in the year) on 26th.

April 17.4C, the warmest since the record set in 1893 (17.9C), rain 10mm the driest since 1984 (3mm). Sunshine hours averaged 7.6hr per day, the sunniest since 1997, and 2.5 hrs a day above average. No frosts. Entirely dominated by high pressure, with very light winds mostly from the east. Temperature reached 18C on 2nd and 21C on 14th and 30th. Ten days had more than eleven hours of sunshine.

May 16.5C (most unusually colder than April) an average month, rain 163mm, the second wettest month since 1869 (164mm). This included the wettest week (7-13th) since November 2000 (156mm), when 117mm fell. Began hot and dry with north-easterly winds but low pressure systems dominated from 6th with strong south-westerly winds, no sun, and temperatures falling to 14C on 9th, 13th and 16th. On 21st winds switched to the north around a high-pressure ridge, and temperatures reached 21C briefly on 23rd and 24th before falling to 11C on 27th, with north winds and 17mm of rain.

June 19.1C, close to average, but coldest since 2002. Rain 114mm, wettest since 1998. This included 26mm falling in an hour on 19th, and the second wettest week of year with 66mm June 19-25th. Began with a warm spell, reaching 23C on 2nd and 24C on 10th, with light north-easterly winds and a shallow pressure gradient, and no rain until 13th. Two days had twelve hours of sunshine.

On 14th the winds switched to the south, and low pressure systems with strong south-west winds swept across the country, bringing rain almost daily, and flooding to several parts of the country. Temperatures stayed around 18C but fell to 15C on 25th with 31 mm of rain. Sunshine average was only 3.6 hours a day compared with a recent average of almost six hours a day.

July 18.8C, two degrees below average and coldest since 1993, rain 153mm, the wettest since 1968, (when there was severe flooding in Bristol) and sixth wettest since 1853. The combined rainfall for May, June and July was 430mm; the next highest figure for these three months was 350mm in 1924. The whole month was dominated by a succession of depressions and westerly winds, temperatures around 19C. Sunshine reached double figures on only seven days, and it rained on twenty days.

August 20.3C, coldest since 1998, rain 37mm, lowest since 2003. Began with a warm dry spell reaching 27C on 5th (warmest day of the year), and light winds with a shallow pressure gradient. On 19th winds shifted to the north, and high pressure set in that dominated the rest of the month. There was a brief spell of hot weather from 22-25th with blue skies, and a top temperature of 25C.

September 18.4C, coldest since 2001, but just above the long-term average, rain 46mm, half the average. Dominated by high pressure and very light winds from the north or east, warm and dry conditions. From 25th temperatures fell as cold north-easterly winds replaced those from the south-west.

October 14.9C, just above average, rain 71mm, below average. Two frost nights. Dominated throughout by high pressure and light winds mainly from the east. Temperatures fell slowly. The weekly average fell below 15C on 20th, after 28 weeks above it, three weeks longer than normal.

November 11.3C, warmest since 2003, above average, rain 49mm, lowest since 1988, and half the average. Five frost nights. The high pressure of late October continued to dominate, with no rain, and light north or north-westerly winds to 18th, when a low pressure system brought south-west winds and 42mm of rain in three days, high pressure then returned at the end of the month.

December 8.3C, an average figure, rain 149mm, wettest since 1999, almost double average. Eight frost nights. Began with a storm and 40mm of rain on 1st, wettest day of year, and there was a further storm on 7-8th. Then high pressure returned, with frosty nights, occasional ice on ponds and light south-easterly winds to 21st. Temperatures fell to 2C on 16th, 20th and 21st, but low pressure and south-west winds took charge for the rest of the month.

Weather Extremes

The table below gives figures for extreme annual events over the past decade, enabling the remarkable events of 2007 to be put in perspective. There seems to be no pattern in these figures, except that the number of days without sun increased from around 50 to around 100. It is also interesting that, contrary to common perception, two days in every three have no rain at all. 2007 had a very cool summer, but was close to the top of both the number of days with more than ten hours sun, and the number of days without any sun.

| | | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 | |
|-------------|------|------|----|------|----|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------------|
| Hottest | C | 29 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 26 | 32 | 28 | 30 | 35 | 27 | Aug 5 |
| Coldest | C | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | Jan 23 |
| Wettest | mm | 21 | 28 | 55 | 55 | 60 | 45 | 45 | 47 | 39 | 40 | Dec 1 |
| Sunniest | hr | 14 | 14 | 15.5 | 14 | 14.9 | 15.1 | 13.9 | 14.8 | 14.7 | 14.1 | Aug 1 |
| Longest dry | days | | | | | | | | 14 | 22 | 24 | Mar1- Ap2r3 |
| Longest wet | days | | | | | | | | 7 | 11 | 8 | Jul29- Jul6 |
| Frost | days | 25 | 29 | 28 | 46 | 14 | 49 | 30 | 32 | 33 | 25 | |
| Snow | days | | | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 2 | |
| Storms | days | | | | | | | | 1 | 3 | 6 | |
| < 25C | days | 8 | 20 | 12 | 15 | 3 | 22 | 13 | 14 | 27 | 1 | |
| > 5C | days | 12 | 9 | 13 | 34 | 17 | 25 | 15 | 26 | 39 | 18 | |
| <10hr sun | days | 31 | 41 | 32 | 45 | 30 | 42 | 19 | 38 | 36 | 45 | |
| No sun | days | 59 | 44 | 51 | 62 | 78 | 56 | 90 | 89 | 107 | 99 | |
| No rain | days | | | | | | 263 | 231 | 248 | 234 | 238 | |

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 the term 'Avon area' to describe 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:

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| ASW | Avonmouth Sewage Disposal Works and its surroundings |
| BG | Barrow Gurney Reservoirs |
| BL | Blagdon Lake |
| CI-Y | Severn shore and environs between Clevedon and mouth the River Yeo (Clevedon Bay), and including the tidal part of the Yeo |
| CVL | Chew Valley Lake |
| OPS | Oldbury-on-Severn Nuclear Power Station and environs |
| PW | Portbury Wharf and the remainder of St. George's Wharf |
| RPD | Royal Portbury Dock (the dock area only) |
| Severnside | The Severn shore and environs from Aust to Chittening Warth inclusive |
| Weston STW | 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 2007, 207 one-km squares were visited, 13% of the Avon area. A total of 76,648 birds was counted of 106 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. The index for common species has been reset to 100 for 1998 to show the change over the past decade. The 2001 figures (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, 7693 birds of 49 species were counted at a rate of 1mm 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, 30,700 birds were counted by 15 observers. 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 2006/07, 32 gardens participated over 807 recording-weeks counting some 28,000 birds of 51 species, with an average of 22 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, see comments given in the Editorial on page 3.

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 every 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 1983 to 2007 are given following the status comments.

CONTRIBUTORS OF RECORDS

From Oct.1st, 2008, there are some new procedures for record submission. As before electronic records of common species should be sent to Richard Bland at richardbland@blueyonder.co.uk, and use an 'excel' or similar file system. Electronic records of unusual species, those needing descriptions (see page 4), should be sent to John Martin at avonbirdrecorder@googlemail.com. Also all paper records should be sent to John at 34 Cranmoor Green, Pilning, Bristol, BS35 4QF. If you need any blank recording slips please contact John.

All records are kept (they are stored by BRERC in Bristol) and they are used in conservation and scientific enquiries, sometimes of considerable importance to the bird-life of the area. They are stored by species, and so it is for this reason that we ask for one species per record slip, this also helps the editors in their work. This is not a problem with electronic files as these can easily be sorted 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 you have submitted records and your name is not 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 Atkenson, 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 Blenkiron, 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 Feest, 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 Laughy, 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 Nelmes, 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).

SYSTEMATIC LIST

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.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

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.

| 1997/98 to 2004/05 | 2005/06 | 2006/07 |
|--------------------|---------|---------|
| 101 | 80 | 85 |

Bristol City Docks. Maximum count during winter periods

| 1997/04 Av. | 2006 | 2007 |
|-------------|------|------|
| 106 | 115 | 98 |

CVL. Moulting period, July and August

The number of birds over-wintering in Bristol Docks again showed a small increase from the previous winter, however numbers are still below the long term average. The CVL moulting count showed a marked decrease (c.15%) from the previous year and was below the long term average.

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 |
|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|
| Cl-Y | 6 | | 3 | 14 | 16 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 12 |
| Weston STW | 50 | 128 | 18 | 8 | | 19 | 9 | 7 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 80 |
| Bristol Docks | 82 | 85 | 52 | 28 | 21 | 25 | 23 | 18 | 44 | 55 | 46 | |
| Portishead Marina | | 19 | 14 | 4 | 17 | | 16 | 14 | | 17 | 15 | 19 |
| Kenn Moor | 30 | 33 | 36 | 3 | | | | | | 6 | 10 | 10 |
| Backwell Lake | 21 | 16 | | 32 | 18 | 10 | 10 | | | 10 | | 41 |
| CVL | 35 | 35 | 42 | | 76 | 95 | 100 | 95 | 100 | 60 | 45 | 40 |
| BL | 4 | 12 | 12 | 8 | 20 | 24 | 21 | 6 | | 20 | 20 | |

Other sites Recorded from a further 16 sites (15 in 2006), with significant counts from Bleadon Level with 45 in January, 19 at Tickenham Moor in July, 18 at Nailsea Moor in January and eleven at PW in April.

Breeding - The ten-year cygnet average for the Avon area is 122, therefore 2007 was a normal year; see table below. A total of six broods was seen at CVL totalling 27 young; a female ringed here in 1993 bred at this site in 1997, 1999, 2003, 2004 and 2007. The numbers of cygnets quoted should be regarded as a best estimate as it is often difficult to interpret records showing broods over several months from the same site.

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|-----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 140 | 141 | 129 | 96 | 120 | 74 | 128 | 144 | 121 | 123 |

Avon - total number of cygnets

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

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

Following the very poor showing in 2006 this was the worst year for at least a decade with only two reports received, no birds stayed.

First winter period

Aust Warth on the Jan. 3rd - five flew over.

Second winter period

CVL - six adults seen in flight Oct. 25th, which were later noted at BL.

| | 1997/98 | 98/99 | 99/00 | 00/01 | 01/02 | 02/03 | 03/04 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 2006/07 |
|-------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| Min. Number | 7 | 20 | 22 | 43 | 18 | 27 | 47 | 47 | 18 | 11 |
| Bird-days | 71 | 22 | 22 | 120 | 18 | 908 | 687 | 180+ | 131 | 11 |

Winter counts - bird days

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

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

The recent trend of very low numbers continued with only four sightings (six birds) from three different sites.

First winter period

BL - one from March 23rd until April 1st and another individual on 19th;

CVL - one from March 10th to 25th.

Second winter period

Northwick Warth - three on Nov.15th.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Uncommon introduced resident and summer moult migrant,

After the increase in 2006, numbers at CVL declined again this year with only one sighting of a single individual.

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| 8 | 17 | 12 | 20 | 10 | 11 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 1 |

CVL - annual maximum count

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

Records were received from a further ten sites (*cf.* eight in 2006) as follows:

Falfield - twelve on March 13th;

OPS - nine on April 6th, two on 22nd and May 14th, eight in flight on June 4th, one 10th, and 17 on Sept. 29th;

Savage's Wood (Stoke Gifford) - six on April 20th;

Abbey Wood - eight on Feb. 16th;

Northwick Warth - one on April 29th;

Portishead Boating Lake - three on Sept. 3rd;

Cl-Y - one on July 12th;

Weston STW - eleven in February (date not given);

BL - one on Jan. 1st, and four on March 27th.

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.

The status tables show that the numbers at CVL once again decreased when compared with the long-term average. However there was a recovery in numbers at BL, but again were still below the long-term average.

As usual flocks move between CVL and BL after moulting at CVL.

| Year | CVL | BL | Av. |
|------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| 1997/98 to 2004/05 Av. | 121 | 247 | 184 |
| 2005/06 | 61 | 124 | 93 |
| 2006/07 | 51 | 192 | 122 |

September to March average maximum counts

| | | |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|
| 1998 to 2005 Av - 660 | 2006 - 507 | 2007 - 415 |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|

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 |
|-----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|
| OPS | 14 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 15 | | 72* | 12 | 9 | 7 | 8 |
| Portishead Docks | | | | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 13 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 12 |
| Cl-Y | 22 | 17 | 17 | 10 | 6 | 20 | | 38 | 95 | | 51 | 48 |
| Backwell | | | 21 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | | | 5 | 9 | |
| PW | 12 | 8 | | | 27 | | 12 | | 12 | | | |
| Weston STW | | 5 | 4 | 5 | | 4 | 12 | 51 | 56 | 5 | | 138 |
| Axe Est. | 77 | 6 | 4 | 2 | | | | 180 | | | | |
| Keynsham | 63 | 40 | 28 | | | 7 | | 4 | 66 | | | 58 |
| CVL | 25 | 125 | 80 | | 24 | 435 | 590 | 220 | 65 | 1 | 1 | 60 |
| BL | 204 | 191 | 33 | 14 | 67 | 151 | 186 | 208 | 193 | 287 | 216 | 221 |
| Kendleshire Golf club | | | | | | | | 103 | 35 | 35 | | |

*site record

Other sites

Recorded at a further 17 sites (two fewer than in 2006 and six fewer than 2005), the significant counts were as follows:

Falfield - ten on March 10th;
 Severn Beach - 13 on June 13th;
 New Passage - 20 on June 14th;
 Leap Valley, Downend - 20 on Sept. 1st;
 Clevedon - 30 flew over the town centre on Dec. 5th;
 Coalpit Heath - 23 flew over on Aug. 21st;
 Wrington - 85 on Oct. 8th and 19th.

Breeding Confirmed at only three sites (eight in 2006), however the total number of goslings was not recorded.

PW - one pair bred, number of young unknown;
 CVL - four broods with a total of 16 young;
 Bathampton - two nests, number of young unknown.

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 | | 11 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 11 | | | |
| BL | 11 | | | | 1 | 1 | | | 11 | 11 | 11 | 11 |

Monthly maxima at CVL and BL

Breeding

CVL - one pair was noted on Herriott's Pool on May 24th with five goslings. They were not seen subsequently.

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*

Another good year with the total number of bird-days above the long-term average which is now 92. Unlike 2006 there was only one large flock to boost the bird-day count, mainly the area had several long staying individuals.

First winter period

Northwick Warth/New Passage - one on Jan. 12th, 25th and 28th;
 Severn Beach - one on March 21st and 18 on 28th.

Dark-bellied Brent goose - first winter period, cont.

PW - one on March 26th;
 CI-Y - one on Feb. 13th and two on 24th;
 CVL - one present from Jan. 14th until March 11th;
 BL - one present from Jan. 26th until Feb. 10th.

Second winter period

OPS - one on Nov. 4th;
 Aust Warth - one on Nov. 7th;
 New Passage - one on Nov. 10th and 12th;
 Severn Beach - two on Oct. 12th;
 CI-Y - six on Nov. 10th and 11th, two on Dec. 3rd, one on 16th and two again on 30th.

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

| 1997/98 | 98/99 | 99/00 | 00/01 | 01/02 | 02/03 | 03/04 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 2006/07 |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| 8 | 24 | 82 | 136 | 42 | 48 | 79 | 226 | 127 | 147 |

Avon - Total winter bird-days

Pale-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota*

For the third year in a row reports were received for this sub-species, perhaps establishing a trend of a few individuals utilising the Estuary to over-winter. Records were received for the first and second winter periods as follows:

New Passage - one on Jan. 25th, the first record here since 1995 (PDB *et al.*);
 CI-Y - one (with two Dark-bellied) on Dec. 30th, the third year running at this site (HER).

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

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

One record as follows:

BL - one from Nov. 30th until Dec. 16th

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 an improved situation when compared to the previous two years.

| 1997/98 | 98/99 | 99/00 | 00/01 | 01/02 | 02/03 | 03/04 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 178 | 137 | 108 | (68) | 110 | 87 | 152 | 203 | 105 | 147 | 172 |

CI-Y. Average of the three highest counts, brackets refer to incomplete counts during the F&M outbreak

As is usual numbers build up from the beginning of the year before declining after May when the birds leave the area for their moulting grounds. An improvement in numbers was seen this year, perhaps as a result of the better breeding success in 2006.

Winter and spring

Once again counts north of the River Avon only occasionally reached three figures during this period, however a better picture exists south of the River. The last two years have seen increasing numbers during the winter which may indicate a reversal of the long term decline mentioned in previous reports. The installation of Weston STW may be a factor in the decline as less organic matter is now going into the bay.

Breeding

It appears that this year was a poor one for breeding with the lowest number of chicks seen for five years, this followed the very good (by recent standards) year in 2006. In 2007 a total of 15 broods were seen with 105 chicks, this gives an average brood size of seven [in 1994 the average brood size was 5.56, compared with over 7 in the 1960's], perhaps indicating that the brood size has improved but the number of breeding pairs has fallen. North of the River Avon 64 young were seen, south of the River numbers were very disappointing with only 41 young. There was no breeding at CVL.

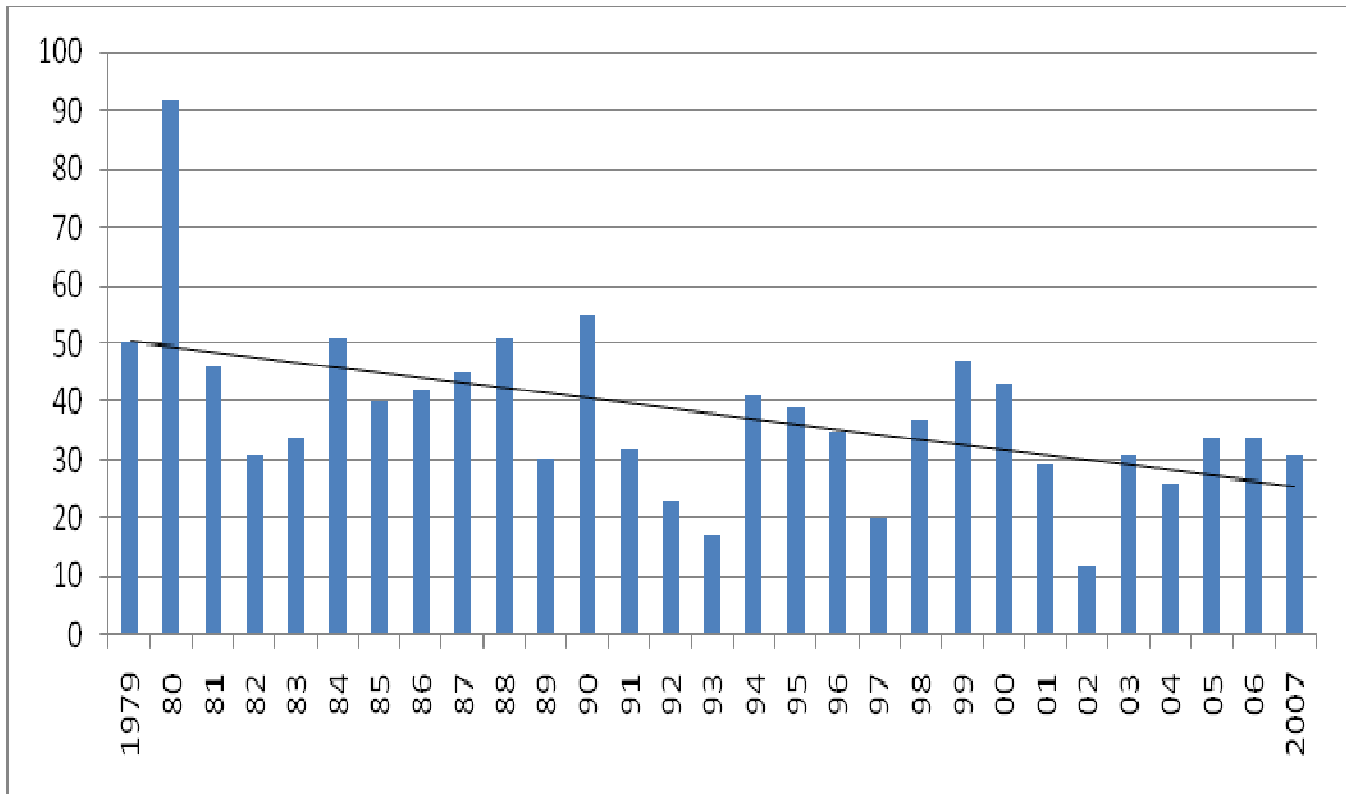
| | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|--------------|------|-----|-----|------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| No. of young | 149 | 148 | 141 | (83) | 70 | 154 | 144 | 123 | 162 | 105 |

Avon area - Total number of young

Autumn and winter

In the second winter period the maximum count north of the River Avon was 130 at Northwick Warth in December, which is a return to more normal numbers (*cf.* 40 in 2006).

South of the river the maximum count was again at the Axe Est. in October with 400 noted, which again shows a decline on previous years as can be shown in the chart below, however the ten-year trend line is level indicating that perhaps this is a normal variation in numbers.



CI-Y – total number of pulli for each year since 1979 with trendline

The table below gives monthly maxima at the main sites:

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| OPS | 25 | 17 | 22 | 51 | 20 | 6 | 7 | | | | | 17 |
| NW | 117 | 92 | 110 | 90 | 90 | 50 | 44 | | | | | 130 |
| CI-Y | 100 | 120 | 255 | 84 | 60 | 60 | 25 | 7 | 45 | 140 | 110 | 40 |
| Axe Est./Weston STW | 104 | 51 | 102 | 30 | 20 | 57 | 7 | | | 400 | | 6 |
| CVL | 10 | 4 | 20 | 32 | 34 | 4 | | 1 | | | | 8 |

MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata*

Uncommon introduced resident.

A slight improvement upon last year. Records were received from six sites with the highest numbers recorded at Heneage Court Lakes. It would be interesting to determine if this species breeds at either Heneage Court Lakes or Tortworth Park. The details are as follows:

Heneage Court Lakes - five males and four females on Jan. 21st.

Tortworth Park - two males and two females on March 2nd, one male and one female on April 5th;

Kingston Seymour - one male on Nov. 4th;

Woodchester Park - two males, one female on May 1st;

Kingsgate Park - one male on Jun. 8th;

Plantations Lake - one male on Nov. 11th.

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

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

WeBS: There are eight sites of international importance followed by 17 of national importance, the Estuary is fourth on this second list.

The status table shows average counts and a continuing poor showing at CVL.

| Year | Sevenside | CVL | BL | Av. |
|-------------------|-----------|-----|-----|-----|
| 1987/88 - 1996/97 | 226 | 264 | 262 | 251 |
| 1997/98 - 2004/05 | 365 | 174 | 163 | 204 |
| 2005/06 | 538 | 70 | 82 | 230 |
| 2006/07 | 337 | 18 | 50 | 135 |

September to March average maximum counts

In the first winter period there was a maximum of 1200 for the whole of the Avon area, considerably below the figure of 2080 in 2006, whilst the second period had a maximum of 1690 a similar figure to 2005 and an increase on 2006. This species was formerly the commonest duck at CVL in the 1960's with around 1500 in most winters, it has now, to all intents and purposes, disappeared as a winter visitor to the lake (the high count of 70 in December was down to a small flock that soon moved on). This is almost certainly related to the maturation of the lakeside margins, however the final straw for this species was the opening up to the public of most of the north end of the lake.

Main Sites

The last in spring was a female at BL on April 17th, and the first to return in the autumn was a male at BL on July 19th. Again the highest count of the year was on Sevenside, 600 in December.

The monthly maxima at the main sites were:

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | : | Jul | Aug. | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| OPS | 370 | 367 | 240 | 40 | | | | 6 | 200 | 270 | 463 |
| Littleton | 20 | 125 | 45 | | | | | 2 | 11 | 201 | 290 |
| Sevenside | 450 | 500 | 70 | 3 | | | | 22 | 200 | 500 | 600 |
| PW | 100 | | 20 | | | | 6 | 35 | 75 | 63 | |
| CI-Y | 110 | 110 | 110 | 10 | | | | 9 | 90 | 130 | 170 |
| Axe Est/Weston STW | 100 | 95 | 20 | | | | | 23 | 37 | 90 | 73 |
| BG | | | | | | | 2 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 9 |
| CVL | 18 | 4 | | 2 | | 1 | 3 | 11 | 6 | 20 | 88 |
| BL | 69 | 95 | 49 | 10 | | 1 | | 20 | 10 | 22 | 72 |

Other sites

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

ASW - one on Jan. 27th;

Sea Mills - two on Dec. 12th;

Backwell Lake - six on Nov. 1st, five on 4th, three on 28th, rising to 14 on Dec. 12th with two still present on 29th;

Kingsgate Park - two in December;

Kendleshire Golf Course - one on Sept. 27th;

Keynsham Memorial Park - one on Jan. 23rd, one on Feb. 4th, and one on Nov. 5th;

R. Avon at Keynsham - seven on Jan. 7th still present on 23rd, one on Nov. 5th;

R. Chew at Keynsham - one from Oct. 25th to 27th;

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

Until 1915 a rare winter visitor, then none until 1937. Now a fairly common resident, winter visitor and late summer/autumn moult visitor, most numerous in autumn. First bred at CVL in 1958 with eleven broods in 1961, now uncommon as a breeding species.

Webs: CVL is currently eighth in national Importance for this species.

The status tables are as follows, they show below average figures for BL:

| Year | CVL | BL | Av. |
|-------------------|-----|----|-----|
| 1987/88 - 1996/97 | 75 | 42 | 59 |
| 1997/98 - 2004/05 | 39 | 20 | 29 |
| 2005/06 | 78 | 57 | 68 |
| 2006/07 | 30 | 6 | 18 |

October to March average maximum counts

| Year | CVL | BL | Av. |
|-------------|-----|-----|-----|
| 1988 - 1997 | 189 | 57 | 123 |
| 1998 - 2005 | 205 | 193 | 199 |
| 2006 | 122 | 78 | 100 |
| 2007 | 213 | 30 | 122 |

July to September (moult period) average counts

Main sites Below average counts in the winter periods were noted at both CVL and BL with some movement between the two sites, however a good number arrived at both sites in July and moved on later in the autumn. The monthly maxima were:

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| OPS | | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | | |
| Sevenside | 46 | 40 | 31 | 13 | | 6 | 5 | | 23 | 21 | | |
| ASW | 21 | 4 | 12 | 14 | 10 | 3 | | 4 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 6 |
| PW | 6 | | | 7 | 2 | | | 10 | | 16 | | 13 |
| Weston STW | 20 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 1 | | | 2 | 7 | 9 | 19 | 13 |
| CVL | 17 | 12 | 8 | 22 | 55 | 150 | 200 | 245 | 195 | 20 | 35 | 4 |
| BL | 1 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 22 | 73 | 15 | 2 | 8 | 12 | 5 |

Recorded at a further five sites.

Tortworth Park - two on Feb. 3rd;

Clapton Moor - one on Jan. 24th;

BG - two on Sept. 23rd, four on Nov. 17th, six on 24th;

Kingsgate Park - six throughout January and February, four on March 9th, one on April 22nd, and four in December;

Keynsham R. Avon - one Jan. 7th to 12th;

Breeding

Another slightly above average year with breeding at three sites. At ASW, one pair raised four young from one brood, whilst another pair was present at PW. At CVL there was one brood (five young). The table below shows the number of broods at CVL during the last decade.

| | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|--------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| Broods | 6 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 1 |

Number of broods at CVL

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 ranked twelfth in the UK and is of international importance for this species.

The status table shows numbers in the 2006/07 winter were well below average.

| Year | Sevenside | CVL | BL | Av. |
|-------------------|-----------|------|-----|-----|
| 1987/88 - 1996/97 | 187 | 1214 | 962 | 788 |
| 1997/98 - 2004/05 | 222 | 425 | 249 | 299 |
| 2005/06 | 115 | 488 | 474 | 359 |
| 2006/07 | 234 | 151 | 237 | 207 |

August to March average maximum counts

Main sites

On the coast numbers were above the ten-year average. Counts at CVL were significantly lower in the first winter period. In the second winter period a high count of 2000 in November at PW gave the figures a more positive appearance. The total population in the first winter period peaked at about 1500 (almost half of last years total), and in the second winter period it peaked at about 2550, slightly up on last years figures (although as mentioned above this was due in large part to the high number at PW in November).

Other sites

Records were received from seven other sites, with counts exceeding ten at the following:

Severn House Farm - 50 on Feb. 14th, 80 on Dec. 17th;

Newton Park - 14 on Jan. 8th;

Keynsham, R. Avon - 19 on Jan. 23rd.

Teal monthly maxima as shown in the table below:

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| OPS | 249 | 205 | 58 | 65 | | 3 | | 115 | 67 | 100 | 70 | 100 |
| Littleton | 220 | 175 | 85 | 27 | | | | | 35 | 313 | 60 | 245 |
| Severnside | 390 | 230 | 120 | 60 | 35 | 2 | 2 | 140 | 335 | 200 | 140 | 200 |
| PW/RPD | 360 | | 105 | | | | | | 55 | 140 | 2000 | 200 |
| CI-Y | 60 | 90 | 40 | 24 | | | | 7 | 15 | 20 | 40 | 75 |
| Axe Est. | 70 | 58 | 50 | 7 | | | | 3 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 75 |
| ASW | 32 | 8 | 15 | | | | | | 2 | 6 | 16 | |
| BG | 44 | 47 | 41 | 15 | | 1 | | 20 | 35 | 40 | 70 | 79 |
| CVL | 50 | 80 | 20 | 14 | 3 | 10 | 22 | 85 | 320 | 360 | 205 | 165 |
| BL | 40 | 10 | 5 | 3 | | 5 | 4 | 33 | 29 | 34 | 84 | 128 |
| Chew Magna Res | 46 | 48 | 24 | | | | | | | 36 | 12 | 39 |

Separating late spring from early autumn records is always difficult. It seems likely that three at OPS on June 8th were early returning migrants.

The Bath Peregrines took 17 during the year, most in the first winter period, but also one in July.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL *Anas carolinensis*

Rare Nearctic vagrant

A male present on the Axe Estuary spent much of its time on the Somerset side but was noted on the Avon side on March 2nd (GD), 4th (KEV) and 11th (RC).

This bird constitutes the 13th Avon area record, the last being a male seen briefly at BL in December 2002, it was the fourth record for the coast (*cf.* PW in January 2002).

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 lower than average population:

| Year | CVL | BL | Av. |
|--|------|-----|-----|
| 1987/88 - 1996/97 | 741 | 352 | 547 |
| 1997/98 - 2004/05 | 459 | 202 | 331 |
| 2005/06 | 609 | 231 | 420 |
| 2006/07 | 300 | 270 | 285 |
| November to March Average maximum counts | | | |
| Year | CVL | BL | Av. |
| 1988 - 1997 | 1218 | 716 | 967 |
| 1998 - 2005 | 793 | 340 | 567 |
| 2006 | 517 | 387 | 452 |
| 2007 | 640 | 125 | 388 |
| July to September average maximum counts | | | |

Main sites

In the late summer numbers were again below average. High-water levels in both winter periods at CVL resulted in low counts for this species.

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 | 234 | 64 | 25 | 55 | 64 | 70 | 73 | 172 | 235 | 183 | 143 | 336 |
| Littleton | 38 | 36 | 5 | 4 | 15 | 98 | 41 | 140 | 174 | 74 | 31 | 20 |
| Severside | | | | 5 | | 135 | 40 | 135 | | 53 | | |
| ASW | 24 | 12 | 12 | 20 | 24 | | 20 | 15 | 6 | 25 | 10 | 2 |
| *Sea Mills | 140 | 115 | 75 | 37 | 25 | 50 | 50 | | | 85 | 90 | 90 |
| CI-Y | 45 | 40 | 12 | 16 | 40 | 40 | 35 | 140 | 130 | 70 | 30 | 40 |
| Axe Est. | 37 | 30 | 22 | 7 | 7 | 91 | | | | | | |
| Weston STW | 24 | 17 | 37 | 26 | | 41 | 82 | 147 | 145 | 65 | 27 | 27 |
| Keynsham | 155 | 142 | | | | | | | | 194 | | |
| BG | 24 | 20 | 31 | 40 | | 56 | 51 | | | 41 | 8 | 2 |
| CVL | 215 | 205 | 225 | 22 | 160 | 465 | 710 | 595 | 615 | 440 | 260 | 360 |
| BL | 147 | 61 | 39 | 79 | 49 | 82 | 162 | 133 | 79 | 200 | 171 | 180 |
| Chew Magna Res | 46 | 23 | 15 | | | | | 25 | | | | |

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

Other sites

Records were received for a further 64 sites and counts over 40 from sites not included in the table were as follows:

Avonmouth Docks - 220 on Dec. 31st;

Portishead Boating Lake - 210 on Nov. 18th, and 50 on 27th;

Backwell Lake - 47 on Nov. 28th;

Bath University - 60 on Oct. 9th;

Three Brooks N.R - 60 on July 21st.

Breeding At CVL, there were 29 broods (176 young), significantly better than for the last three years; the table below shows breeding success at this site over the last decade.

| | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|--------|------|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|----|----|-----|------|
| Broods | 35 | 18 | 27 | 19 | 11 | 29 | 16 | 17 | 22 | 29 |
| Young | 171 | 106 | 160 | 101 | 67 | 154 | 93 | 93 | 100 | 176 |

Numbers of broods and young at CVL

Elsewhere records were received of 59 broods and 327 young, an improvement on last year's figures (43 broods and 236 young). Breeding was probably attempted on Steep Holm but was unsuccessful, and more unusual nest sites were noted on a log jam under a bridge on the R. Frome and at BL in a tree by a Kestrel box.

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 they mostly occur outside the Avon area.

As in 2006 numbers were generally on the low side throughout the Avon area although there were some sizable counts at CVL with an especially good count here in October, see table below. This species is now often seen in better numbers than Wigeon at this site. The last in spring were two at Severside on April 15th. The first to return was a male at CVL on June 23rd.

Monthly maxima at the main sites were as follows:

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | : | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|
| Severside | 22 | 35 | 1 | 2 | | 1 | 3 | 6 | | |
| OPS | | 18 | | 2 | | | | 5 | | 2 |
| CVL | 6 | 13 | 3 | 3 | | 1 | 45 | 60 | 35 | 26 |
| BL | 5 | 6 | | | | | 4 | 3 | 4 | |

Records were also received from the following sites:

Littleton - two on Feb. 3rd, two on Oct. 7th;

Weston STW - one on Feb. 10th, one from Aug. 30th to Sept. 2nd;

BG - one on Oct. 23rd.

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

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|-----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 39 | 15 | 150 | 36 | 67 | 70 | 47 | 140 | 77 | 60 |

Pintail 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 only came from inland sites and as usual CVL provided the majority of records, a male at this site on March 26th was the first of the spring.

Spring and summer The records are as follows:

Backwell Lake - a male on May 1st which was very unusual for this site;

CVL - single males were noted on March 26th and 27th, April 3rd, 5th, 16th, May 3rd to 11th, 20th and 22nd. Two males were present on April 8th and May 7th;

BL - one on April 4th and a male on May 5th.

Autumn Another poor year where nearly all the records came from CVL, the last of the year was noted here on Aug. 29th. The records were:

CVL - two on Aug. 14th, one on 22nd, 26th and 29th;

BL - one on Aug. 1st.

The table below details the maximum autumn period counts at CVL from 1998 to 2007.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 9 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 8 | 5 | 2 |

CVL - maximum single count

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, 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 a marked downturn in the fortunes for this species.

| Year | CVL | BL | Av. |
|-------------------|-----|----|-----|
| 1987/88 - 1996/97 | 191 | 63 | 127 |
| 1997/98 - 2004/05 | 216 | 33 | 125 |
| 2005/06 | 373 | 75 | 224 |
| 2006/07 | 35 | 8 | 22 |

November to February average maximum counts

| Year | CVL | BL | Av. |
|-------------|-----|-----|-----|
| 1988 - 1997 | 339 | 152 | 246 |
| 1998 - 2005 | 322 | 127 | 225 |
| 2006 | 200 | 254 | 227 |
| 2007 | 125 | 136 | 131 |

August to October average maximum counts

The low counts at CVL were probably due to high water levels and disturbance by anglers.

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 | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ASW | 28 | | | | | | | | | 14 | 26 | 36 |
| OPS | 16 | 14 | 6 | 8 | | | | | | 2 | 1 | 9 |
| PW | 13 | 18 | | 5 | | | | | | 5 | 7 | |
| Backwell Lake | | | | | | | | | | | 28 | 15 |
| Sevenside | 11 | 26 | 6 | 3 | | | 3 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 12 | 9 |
| CI-Y | | 9 | | | | | | | | | 8 | 1 |
| Weston STW | 20 | 20 | 2 | 1 | | | | 4 | 6 | 13 | 14 | 10 |
| BG | 7 | 14 | 11 | | | | | 15 | 41 | 46 | 27 | 39 |
| CVL | 11 | 16 | 48 | 25 | 3 | 10 | 9 | 35 | 180 | 160 | 110 | 25 |
| BL | 10 | 9 | 32 | 57 | 2 | | | 23 | 247 | 137 | 113 | 44 |

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

Littleton - two on Dec. 4th;

Sevenside - two on July 31st;

Avon Gorge – one in flight on Sept. 8th;

Bucklands Pool - five on Nov. 1st;

Chelvey - five on Feb. 13th;

Keynsham R.Avon - one on Jan.19th, female on 23rd;

BL - pair present from May 5th to 31st;

Chew Magna Res. - pair on Oct. 18th with male still present on 24th.

Breeding

Present at CVL throughout the breeding season where a pair had a brood of eight young all of which fledged; the first confirmed breeding here since 1992.

2006 Erratum The figure of 218 in the main table for OPS in February should be 28.

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

Uncommon visitor, most often in autumn. True status as a continental visitor obscured by feral birds and escapes.

Following a blank year in 2006, recorded from three sites as follows:-

BG - one male and three females on Oct. 30th (RMA);

CVL - juvenile male on Aug. 13th (RMA, RMi *et al.*) and 14th (KEV);

BL - eclipse male on Dec. 30th (NRM).

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 but only average ones in 2006/07.

| Year | CVL | BL | BG | Av. |
|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1987/88 - 1996/97 | 743 | 203 | 132 | 359 |
| 1997/98 - 2004/05 | 411 | 146 | 50 | 202 |
| 2005/06 | 783 | 155 | 27 | 322 |
| 2006/07 | 585 | 200 | 17 | 267 |

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.

Pochard - Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ASW/Hoar Gout | 10 | 7 | | | | 2 | | 2 | | | 2 | 6 |
| Portishead | 13 | 26 | 11 | | | | | | | | 7 | 9 |
| RPD | 24 | 9 | 2 | | | | | | 3 | 3 | 7 | 220 |
| Weston STW | 39 | 30 | 9 | 5 | | 1 | 4 | 5 | 18 | 40 | 36 | 25 |
| Backwell Lake | 10 | | | | | | | | | | 9 | 5 |
| BG | 21 | 6 | 2 | | | | 2 | 10 | 70 | 83 | 71 | 92 |
| CVL | 655 | 230 | 80 | 45 | 60 | 60 | 75 | 50 | 140 | 170 | 380 | 600 |
| BL | 185 | 129 | 8 | 12 | 9 | 27 | 70 | 77 | 22 | 42 | 68 | 154 |
| Chew Magna Res | 8 | 7 | 4 | | | | | | | 1 | | 6 |

Other sites

Records were received from five other sites as follows:

Sevenside - eight on Jan. 26th, two on Feb. 3rd, one on Jun. 22nd and one on Oct. 21st;

Bristol Zoo - one on Oct. 21st;

Bucklands Pool - one on Nov. 1st;

Kingsgate Park - one on Nov. 8th, and one on Dec. 20th;

Breeding

Recorded at CVL which showed a further improvement on recent years with six broods and 35 young, breeding was also confirmed at ASW with one brood of two young:

| | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|---------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| No. of Broods | 7 | 5 | 12 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 6 |
| No. of young | 36 | 13 | 43 | 3 | 14 | 9 | 9 | 4 | 14 | 35 |

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 the end of January, it then relocated to PW for most of March and April. It spent the majority of the early summer at ASW until July 16th, however it was prone to move with the Tufted Ducks and was seen on several occasions at PW on May 1st to 3rd. This individual then appeared on July 18th, 19th and 23rd at BG and apart from brief visits to ASW on July 21st, October 10th and most of September it remained at PW until the year end.

FERRUGINOUS DUCK *Aythya nyroca*

Rare vagrant.

CVL A first-summer male was noted on many dates between June 6th and Nov. 10th (AHD *et al.*), and an adult female was seen on June 20th (RMI) and Aug. 19th and 20th (JPM *et al.*).

BL A male on June 16th (RMC).

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 decades are as follows.

| Year | CVL | BL | Av. |
|-------------------|------|-----|-----|
| 1987/88 - 1996/97 | 302 | 155 | 229 |
| 1997/98 - 2004/05 | 649 | 196 | 424 |
| 2005/06 | 1281 | 224 | 753 |
| 2006/07 | 803 | 233 | 518 |

October to March average maximum counts

| Year | CVL | BL | Av. |
|-------------|-----|-----|-----|
| 1988 - 1997 | 392 | 286 | 339 |
| 1998 - 2005 | 748 | 405 | 577 |
| 2006 | 565 | 630 | 598 |
| 2007 | 755 | 486 | 621 |

July to September average maximum counts

Main sites

Numbers were slightly above average and despite the fact that coarse fish fry were plentiful at CVL (this usually results in low numbers of invertebrates) Tufted Duck numbers were also high. The largest single count was in September at CVL (1480).

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec. |
|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|-----|------|
| OPS | 2 | 8 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 10 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | |
| Sevenside | 3 | 4 | | | | | | | | | | |
| ASW | 38 | 24 | 27 | 20 | 18 | 20 | 11 | 18 | 32 | 28 | 20 | 68 |
| PW | 19 | 19 | 19 | 10 | 9 | | 17 | | 41 | | 27 | 40 |
| Weston STW | 11 | 8 | 10 | 23 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 11 | 11 | 6 | 6 | 12 |
| Backwell Lake | 10 | | 6 | 2 | | | | | | | 5 | 10 |
| BG | 85 | 78 | 66 | 49 | 10 | 26 | 253 | 283 | 143 | 117 | 99 | 112 |
| CVL | 565 | 455 | 695 | 405 | 115 | 175 | 585 | 200 | 1480 | 1125 | 960 | 925 |
| BL | 176 | 147 | 221 | 256 | 91 | 36 | 323 | 750 | 385 | 482 | 591 | 301 |
| Chew Magna Res | 16 | 24 | 21 | 13 | | | | | | 4 | 11 | 25 |

Recorded at 14 further sites as follows:

Tortworth Lake - five on Feb. 4th, eight on March 4th, seven on April 1st and three on July 1st;
 Littleton - one on Oct. 7th;
 Wick Warth - three on June 17th;
 Portishead - one on Nov. 11th, one on Dec. 27th;
 Cl-Y - two on Oct. 5th, one on Nov. 15th;
 Barrow Common - five on May 12th;
 Bucklands Pool - two on Nov. 23rd;
 West Town - six on April 5th, two on 11th, ten on 26th and two on May 26th;
 Weston Moor - one on Feb. 24th;
 Butcombe - 21 on May 12th;
 Kingsgate Park - one on Jan. 8th;
 Newton Park College, near Bath - four on Jan. 8th, ten on Feb. 11th, eight on 27th and two on March 28th;
 Hunstrete - 19 on Feb. 6th, seven on April 27th.

Breeding

Pairs and numbers of young at CVL showed a marked decline (one brood with two young). Breeding was reported at a further three sites as follows: at PW (one brood, five young), Weston STW (one brood, six young) and Chew Magna Reservoir (one brood, three young). A very poor year.

The table shows breeding records for the period 1998 to 2007.

| | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|---------------|------|----|-----|------|----|----|----|----|-----|------|
| No. of sites | 5 | 8 | 7 | (1) | 6 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 4 |
| No. of broods | 28 | 13 | 38 | (7) | 12 | 11 | 8 | 6 | 20 | 4 |
| No. of young | 138 | 78 | 187 | (27) | 72 | 72 | 42 | 25 | 115 | 16 |

Avon area breeding success for the last decade

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

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

A very good year with an excellent series of records at BL in the second winter period.

The details are as follows:

First winter period

CVL - females on Feb. 27th (AHD) and from April 14th to 16th.

Scaup - Second winter period

PW - first winter male on Nov. 10th, and 17th, and Dec 1st (CJS);

CVL - three males on July 7th, still present on the 13th, one on 14th, all three again on 15th (KEV), three juveniles from Oct. 29th to Nov. 3rd (RMI, AHD).

BL - juvenile on Nov. 6th (RMI, AHD). Females/juveniles as follows: two from Nov. 10th to 22nd, five from 23rd to 30th, six on Dec. 1st, three from 2nd to 25th, and four from 26th into 2008 (NRM). Also a first-winter male from Nov. 10th into 2008, and an adult male on Nov. 17th (NRM).

The total number recorded per year in the period 1998 to 2007 is as follows:

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|------|----|----|------|
| 7 | 21 | 9 | 11 | 6 | 5 | 5(7) | 7 | 9 | 18 |

Avon area – total number of individuals



LESSER SCAUP *Aythya affinis*

Very rare Nearctic vagrant

There have only been two previous Avon area records, both remarkably in the same year (2000) and even more remarkably both found by the same individual as the finder of this year's birds. In all likelihood the spring individual relocated to Cheddar Reservoir (Somerset) for a short period in March after its departure from BL.

Two records: both males at BL, first from March 11th to 20th, and second from Sept. 30th to Nov. 21st (NRM *et al.*) [BBRC].

EIDER *Somateria mollissima*

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

Another poor year with just two records, it is almost certain that these records relate to the same pair of birds.

RPD - male and female flying south Jan. 13th;

PW - male and female Jan. 16th.

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

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| 5 | 11 | 24 | 45 | 2 | 19 | 13 | 2 | 1 | 2 |

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: the juvenile recorded at CVL in 2006 stayed into 2007 and was last noted on Feb. 16th (RMI *et al.*).

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

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| 4 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 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.

An above average year, the first record came from Severnside on March 17th with the last off Severn Beach on November 19th. Recorded as follows:

OPS - four on July 21st;
 Severnside - a pair on March 17th, eight on May 1st, 15 on June 28th, one on Nov. 4th, one on 17th and eleven on 19th;
 PW - one on April 20th;
 Portishead - seven on April 21st;
 Weston-s-Mare - two on July 1st;
 CVL - five on April 7th, one on June 27th, 23 on July 7th, one on Oct. 3rd and 13th, and one on Nov. 14th, 15th and 21st.

A record not previously mentioned in this report concerns a large flock of 43 at BL on March 31st, 2005, the annual total below for 2005 has been amended to reflect this. The table shows the numbers recorded in each of the last ten years.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|-----|----|----|------|-----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 24 | 43 | 52 | 34 | 143 | 26 | 58 | 129+ | 145 | 85 |

Avon area – total number of individuals

VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca*

Rare/scarce winter visitor, very rare inland

One record: CVL - five juveniles/first winters on Dec. 16th (RMA *et al.*).

With no inland records after January 1987 until one was noted at BG in December 2004, this species has now occurred at CVL in 2005 and 2007.

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 (winter) | CVL (Spring) | BL (winter) | BG (winter) | Av. (winter av.) |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 1987/88 - 1996/97 | 54 | 92 | 11 | 23 | 29 |
| 1997/98 - 2004/05 | 95 | 98 | 17 | 11 | 41 |
| 2005/06 | 65 | 89 | 9 | 10 | 28 |
| 2006/07 | 87 | | 9 | 15 | 37 |

Average maximum counts (note: no counts for BG in 2002/03)

Main sites

Numbers at CVL were higher than last year although they were still below average, disturbance from both Pike anglers and the Ruddy Duck cull is probably still affecting the counts. Numbers were very low at BL but better at BG. The last of the wintering flocks (a female at Severnside) left on May 1st. At least two females summered, one at CVL and another at PW and ASW. The returning female at PW probably relocated to ASW (as it has done in previously), as in other years the majority of late summering records concern females. An eclipse male reappeared at CVL on June 29th and stayed until July 8th. The main flocks did not reappear until mid-October. Monthly maxima at the regular sites were:

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| BG | 25 | 19 | 20 | 3 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 14 |
| CVL | 85 | 115 | 162 | 80 | 1 | 2 | 2 | | | 28 | 50 | 50 |
| BL | 7 | 25 | 5 | 4 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 16 | 15 |

Other sites Recorded at a further five sites as follows:

OPS - one female on Jan. 27th;
 Severnside - one female on May 1st;
 ASW - a female from June 17th to July 1st;
 PW - the returning female from 2006 until end of May;
 CI-Y - one male on Nov. 17th;
 BG - a female from July 5th to Oct. 18th;
 CVL - a female from May 31st was joined by an eclipse male on June 29th which remained until July 8th;
 BL - a female on July 19th was still present in late September.

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, the record from BG was the first at this site for five years. Recorded as follows:

First winter period

BG - a redhead on Feb. 4th;

CVL - the pair from 2006 remained until Jan. 27th, with the female until Feb. 15th, and two redheads on March 4th, 5th and 6th;

BL - two females on Feb. 23rd, one on 24th, and two on March 1st and 2nd.

There were no records in the second winter period.

The table below shows the annual maximum count at CVL from 1997/98 to 2006/07 winters:

| 1997/98 | 98/99 | 99/00 | 00/01 | 01/02 | 02/03 | 03/04 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 2006/07 |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| 10 | 16 | 8 | 11 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| 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.

In both winter periods a male was present at CVL. A male has been recorded here in most of the winters over the past 27 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

Sevenside - a female on Feb. 15th;

CVL - a male from early Jan. to March 6th;

BL - a male on Feb. 4th.

Second winter period

CVL - a male (probably the individual seen in previous winters) from Nov. 9th into 2008.

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 | : | Nov | Dec |
|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|
| CI-Y | 7 | 1 | 4 | | | | |
| Backwell Lake | 6 | 4 | 6 | | | | 1 |
| CVL | 26 | 28 | 12 | 3 | | 30 | 43 |
| BL | 5 | 3 | 2 | | | 2 | 2 |

The last in spring were a male and two females at CVL on April 9th and the first in autumn were six at BG on the very early date of Aug. 31st.

Elsewhere recorded from a further four sites as follows:

Loxton, R. Axe - one on March 8th;

BG - six on Jan. 6th, seven on Jan. 8th, two on Feb. 11th, five on 23rd and six on Aug. 31st;

R. Avon, Keynsham - one in January;

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 and BL by order of government agencies.

A below average year, before the cull began counts of 700 were regular at CVL; the monthly maxima at ASW, BL and CVL are tabulated overleaf.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | June | July | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ASW | 2 | | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| BL | 53 | 40 | 13 | 11 | 14 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 38 | 61 | 103 | 96 |
| CVL | 75 | 10 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 11 | 20 | 15 | 20 | 11 | 15 |

Non-breeding records came from one further site:

PW - one on Jan. 25th;

Breeding was confirmed (locations withheld): four broods with 12 young.

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.

There was some evidence of a decline in the first part of the year.

SG First winter period The maximum count at Marshfield was 29 during February; elsewhere there were 16 at West Littleton Down on Jan. 14th, but none were reported from any other site.

Breeding season Reported from seven sites with a maximum count of twelve on May 29th at Marshfield. There was an unusual record of one at Chittingen Warth on April 9th.

Autumn and second winter period A remarkable count of 119 was made at Marshfield on Dec. 17th (almost certainly due to birds being released).

BA Seven were seen at Stony Littleton on June 2nd with smaller counts (maximum of five) from 18 other sites (including Kensington Meadows in Bath). One at CVL on April 9th was only the fourth site record. There was evidence of birds being released in the Keynsham area – on Dec. 20th several were seen in a pen.

NS Only reported from Wrington (one in April) and near Felton Common (two feeding on bird seed on a garden wall in December).

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.

Only ten records were received, the lowest in the last decade; all are listed below.

SG - ST77 A high count of 16 on Oct. 7th and three on Nov. 27th.

SG - elsewhere At Horton recorded on May 14th (four) and Dec. 14th (ten). There was an unusual record from Chittingen Warth of one flushed from scrub on Dec. 24th (SH);

BA Recorded in February at Burnett (one on 1st, two on 3rd).

NS No evidence of breeding at Weston STW this year, the only records being in June (two on 8th and one on 29th) and September (two on 9th).

The table below shows the number of records received in each year of the past decade.

| Year | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|-------------------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| No. of records received | 34 | 21 | 46 | 33 | 24 | 16 | 12 | 15 | 18 | 10 |

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

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

A poor year, with only one record received - three calling males at Marshfield on June 22nd.

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

| Year | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|----------------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| No. of singing males | 14 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 16 | 5 | 5+ | 3 |

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

Fairly common but under recorded. BBS distribution 54%. UK population change 1994-2005 up 32%.

A good number of reports, mainly via BirdTrack.

The highest counts were: 'hundreds' near Hawkesbury Upton on Aug. 21st, 36 near Horton on May 14th and 28 at West Kington on April 20th.

Only one female was recorded on Steep Holm so possibly they no longer breed on the island.

Unusual records were of a melanistic male at CVL on Jan. 20th, an albino near Horton on Feb. 15th, and melanistic and leucistic birds in the same field at Marshfield on Nov. 25th. A male was seen in an urban garden at Frampton Cotterell on March 3rd.

Breeding 16 calling males at CVL and young seen at Batheaston NR were the only reports.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 100 | 113 | 117 | 112 | 108 | 100 | 106 | 114 | 126 | 132 |

Avon BBS Index 1998 = 100

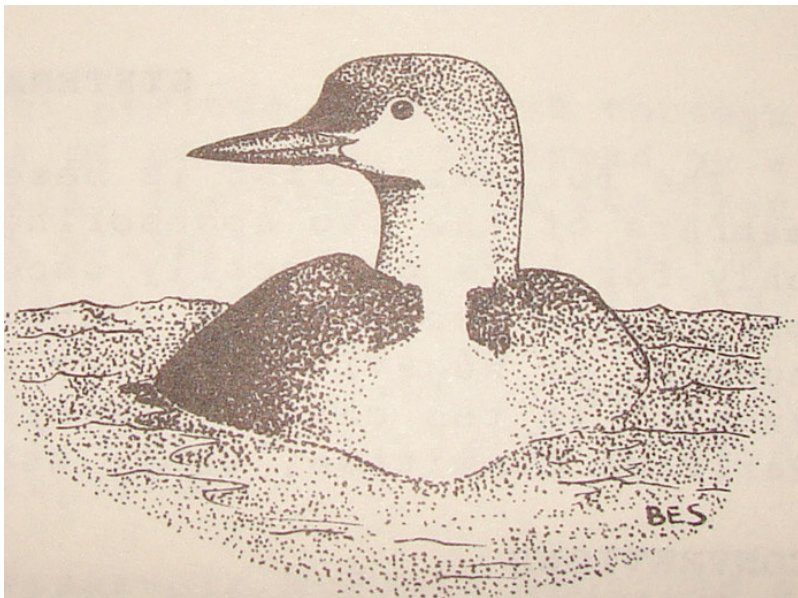
GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*

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

The second winter-period produced three individuals: an early arrival at BG and two long-stayers at CVL, where coarse fish populations have recovered (*cf.* Great Crested Grebe). These were the first long-staying divers here since a Red-throated in 1997, and the first long-staying Great Northerns here since 1986.

BG - an adult, in summer plumage, from Oct. 21st to 28th (many observers). It was the same individual seen at Coate Water (Wilts.) on 19th, based on photographic evidence of bill markings etc., and possibly also at Grafham Water (Cambs.) on the same day.

CVL - an adult from Nov. 27th to Dec. 12th (DJA, RMI *et al.*), followed by a juvenile from Dec. 15th into 2008 (KEV *et al.*).



RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant to the larger reservoirs and the estuary; sometimes storm-driven.

Two records in 2007; for the previous records see table below.

Sevenside - one on Dec. 14th (PDB); an unidentified diver seen on 9th was probably this individual;
CVL - one oiled bird from Nov. 24th to 26th (RMA *et al.*).

DIVER SP *Gavia sp*

One record: one off Portishead on May 8th.

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

| | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|----------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| Red-throated | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | | 1 | | 2 |
| Black-throated | | | 1 | | | 2 | | | | |
| Great Northern | | | 4 | | 3 | | | 2 | 6 | 3 |
| Diver sp. | | | 2 | | | 4 | | 1 | 1 | 1 |

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%.

CVL is currently ranked third in Great Britain for Little Grebe, and BL seventh. BL now qualifies as a site of national importance for this species (The Wetlands Bird Survey 2005/06).

| | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| 1996/05 Av - 75 | 2006 - 62 | 2006 - 63 |
| CVL - January to December average maximum counts | | |

Counts at CVL remained low following a poor year in 2006, and numbers at BL, which enjoyed a record year in 2005, were also low. Along the coast OPS, PW and CI-Y also saw poor counts, but autumn numbers at Weston STW were good. Torrential rains in the summer are likely to have had an adverse effect on this species' breeding success.

Monthly maxima from the main sites

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Severnside | | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | |
| PW | 7 | 5 | 8 | 10 | 7 | | | | | | 2 | |
| Portishead | 4 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 2 | | | | | | 3 | 3 |
| R. Yeo, CI-Y | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | 1 |
| Axe Est./Weston STW | 3 | 4 | 8 | 16 | 9 | 5 | 5 | 32 | 25 | 17 | 12 | 4 |
| Tortworth Lake | | 4 | 5 | 2 | | | 8 | | | | | |
| ASW/Hoar Gout | 4 | | 1 | | 1 | | | 5 | 5 | 3 | | 2 |
| BG | 12 | 10 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 18 | 22 | 26 | 21 | 13 |
| CVL | 25 | 7 | 15 | | 8 | 12 | 25 | 60 | 80 | 50 | 40 | 25 |
| BL | 1 | 16 | 12 | 12 | 10 | 14 | 2 | 24 | 29 | 18 | 11 | 5 |

Other sites Reported from a further ten sites (*cf.* 17 in 2005 and eleven in 2006). The maximum counts were nine at Chew Magna Res. on Oct. 24th and four at Oakham Farm Pond, Portbury on Jan. 13th.

Breeding At CVL numbers remained low, with six broods totalling at least nine young. Also recorded from a further eight sites (*cf.* six in 2005 and five in 2006) but probably under-recorded:

Northwick Warth - a brood of four juveniles;
 Weston-s-Mare STW - nine pairs were present, producing six broods totalling eight young;
 Tortworth Lake - two young seen being fed by three adults;
 Chipping Sodbury golf course - one brood of two young;
 ASW - two juveniles seen;
 Weston Moor - a brood of two young on a new pond on a former landfill site;
 Chew Magna Res. - a single brood of one young;
 BL - two broods totalling three young (*cf.* five broods totalling 15 young here in 2006).

| | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|--------|------|----|----|-----|----|----|-----|----|----|------|
| Broods | 27 | 17 | 20 | 10 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 2 | 6 | 6 |
| Young | 43 | 25 | 24 | 12+ | 9 | 2 | 13+ | 3 | 10 | 9+ |

CVL. Broods and young, 1998 to 2006

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

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

CVL is currently ranked fifth in Great Britain for this species (The Wetland Bird Survey 2005/06).

The increase in numbers at CVL noted in 2006 continued in 2007 due to a recovery in the coarse fish population. The September count here was the highest since 2000 and the third highest on record.

| | | |
|------------------|------------|------------|
| 1996/05 Av – 444 | 2006 - 407 | 2006 - 527 |
|------------------|------------|------------|

CVL. January to December average maximum counts

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| BG | 18 | 10 | 12 | 12 | 13 | 5 | 12 | 20 | 34 | 42 | 18 | 15 |
| CVL | 380 | 60 | 85 | | 120 | 185 | 355 | 465 | 665 | 450 | 285 | 240 |
| BL | 21 | 17 | 23 | 39 | 21 | 32 | 50 | 116 | 63 | 88 | 42 | 17 |

Monthly maxima from the main sites

Recorded elsewhere as follows:

OPS - two on June 16th;

Sevenside - single birds in April, May, June, October and December;

PW - one on May 26th;

Weston STW - a pair was present from Feb. 22nd to April 1st, but there was no evidence of any breeding attempt;

River Avon at Avonmeads - one on March 13th;

Chew Magna Res. - single birds in February, March and April.

Breeding

The recovery of the coarse fish populations at CVL resulted in a continued upturn in the species' breeding fortunes here. The number of nests found by DW, 42, was almost twice the previous highest total, but some of these were lost in summer floods. (Note that DW does not check the entire lake margin, and his nest counts do not correspond exactly to the brood totals in the table below.).

| | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|--------|------|----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| Broods | 23 | 29 | 36 | 24 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 20 | 38 |
| Young | 38+ | 44 | 64+ | 28 | 6 | 4 | 9 | 0 | 43 | 62+ |

CVL. Great Crested Grebe broods and young, 1998 to 2006

Elsewhere:

The only other site was BL, where three broods produced six young.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

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

Only recorded at CVL, where one record in the spring was followed by a poor autumn showing:

CVL - two on April 5th. The autumn passage began with a juvenile from Aug. 7th to 17th, followed by two adults and a juvenile on 30th to Sept. 4th, then a different adult from 6th to 14th, and two adults and a juvenile (different to the juvenile previously present) on 18th, with one adult remaining until Oct. 17th.

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus*

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

One record: two first-winter birds at BL on the evening of Oct. 4th (NRM).

The table overleaf details the numbers of scarce and/or rare grebes for the last decade:

| | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|--------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| Red-necked | | | | | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | |
| Slavonian | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Black-necked | 12 | 9+ | 7 | 25 | 11 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 14 | 9 |

Avon - Total numbers recorded

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 good year in 2006, there were few sightings, with records restricted to two periods, in mid-May and early-July. All coastal records are included in the table below:

| | May | | | July | | | | | | | |
|-------------|-----|----|----|------|----|----|----|---|---|---|----|
| | 6 | 7 | 8 | 12 | 15 | 18 | 19 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 10 |
| Sevenside | 3 | 3 | 4 | | | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | 1 |
| Portishead | | | 22 | 1 | | | | | | 1 | |
| Ladye Bay | 3 | 15 | | | | | | 1 | 4 | 1 | |
| Sand Point | | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| Anchor Head | 2 | | | | 4 | | 1 | | | 8 | |

One inland record at CVL: a single individual on July 4th (DA, AHD, RMi).

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. Seldom recorded NE of the Second Severn Crossing. Rare inland.

As with most seabirds, a generally poor year, but one exceptional day at Anchor Head contributed over half of the year's bird-days, resulting in an above average year total. All records were for mid-May and early July (*cf.* Fulmar).

All 2007 records are listed below -

Sevenside - 18 on 8th and three on 19th May, 150 on July 2nd, 36 on 4th and one on 6th, and one on Sept. 24th;

Portishead - 26 on May 8th;

Ladye Bay - twelve on May 7th, 25 on 8th and 38 on 19th, 60 on July 4th and 130 on 6th;

Sand Point - 50 on May 19th;

Anchor Head - one on May 6th, 49 on June 25th, six on July 4th and 600 on 6th;

Steep Holm - ten to west on May 19th.

The remains of one were found at the Peregrine site in Bath on Sept. 23rd.

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.

An exceptional day on July 6th (*cf.* Manx Shearwater) but otherwise a poor year, with only one record outside July. All 2007 records are listed below.

Sevenside - three on July 4th, two on 5th, twelve on 6th, two on 7th (PAB, BL, JPM, RFR), and one on the exceptionally late date of Dec. 29th (PDB);

Ladye Bay - four on July 6th and three on 26th. (RHu).

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.

After an exceptional year in 2006, 2007 was much poorer, producing only two records as listed below.

Sevenside - one on Dec. 29th (PDB *et al.*, *cf.* Storm Petrel);

Portishead - one on Dec. 7th (BA).

GANNET *Morus bassanus*

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

A rather poor year, with records virtually restricted to early to mid-May and early July (*cf.* Fulmar and Manx Shearwater). After a record year in 2006, the bird-day totals were closer to average, although observer effort may have been slightly lower. All coastal 2007 records are included in the table below;

| | April | May | | | | | June | July | | | | | |
|---------------|-------|-----|----|----|----|----|------|------|---|---|----|---|----|
| | 9 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 12 | 19 | 25 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 26 |
| Sevenside | | 3 | 8 | 5 | 1 | | | | 1 | 2 | | 1 | |
| Battery Point | 8 | | | 9 | | | | | | | | | |
| Ladye Bay | | 12 | 46 | 11 | 1 | | | 11 | | 4 | | | 3 |
| Anchor Head | | 16 | | 3 | 8 | 8 | 5 | | | 2 | 26 | | |
| Steep Holm | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | |

In addition there was one inland record, coinciding with a good day on the coast:

CVL - one on July 6th.

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 were described little better than white-headed birds in spring; however, ringing controls (and close examination) of several individuals have proved that this race occurs regularly in small numbers.

The recovery in numbers at CVL seen in 2005 and 2006 continued, presumably as a result of increasing coarse fish populations. However, numbers at some coastal sites, notably OPS, were poor.

| | | |
|--|------------|------------|
| 1996/05 Av – 139 | 2006 – 121 | 2007 – 186 |
| CVL January to December average maximum counts | | |

The monthly maxima from the main sites are tabulated below:

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| OPS | | | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | | | | | | |
| Sea Mills | | | 10 | 10 | | | | | | 10 | | 11 |
| CI-Y | | 3 | | 2 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Kenn Moor | 12 | | | | | | | 3 | | | | |
| Weston STW | 18 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| BG | 25 | 58 | 17 | 10 | 10 | 17 | 12 | 20 | 15 | 24 | 12 | 21 |
| CVL | 120 | 60 | 50 | | 20 | 25 | 30 | 70 | 105 | 160 | 225 | 174 |
| BL | 15 | 54 | 8 | 10 | 20 | 13 | 25 | 24 | 22 | 21 | 32 | 48 |
| Batheaston | 5 | 11 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 11 | 9 | 10 |
| Loxton | 11 | 12 | 7 | | | | | | | 14 | 10 | 15 |

Birds showing characteristics of the continental race *sinensis* were seen at CVL on Jan. 5th and Dec. 19th.

Other sites Reported in small numbers from a further ten sites, often involving birds over-flying.

Breeding A count at Steep Holm on May 5th revealed 106 occupied nests. The twelve nests that could be checked had an average of 2.75 young per nest. A pair still had pulli in the nest on the late date of Aug. 12th (AJP).

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

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

As in 2006, two records, both from CI-Y as follows, possibly relating to the same individual.

Single individuals on Jan. 13th (RHu) and 19th (KJH).

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

| | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|----------------------|------|------|-----|----|------|------|------|----|------|------|
| Fulmar | 33 | 74 | 356 | 61 | 130 | 87 | 139 | 16 | 272 | 79 |
| Cory's Shearwater | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Manx Shearwater | 565 | 1081 | 269 | 98 | 586 | 1230 | 1920 | 40 | 1600 | 1216 |
| Storm Petrel | 11 | 1 | 6/7 | 2 | 9/12 | 2 | 8 | 0 | 28 | 27 |
| Leach's Storm Petrel | 5 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5/9 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 115 | 2 |
| Gannet | 13 | 20 | 20 | 19 | 134+ | 102 | 152 | 46 | 570 | 195 |
| Shag | 5 | 0 | 6/8 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 2 |

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

Scarce winter visitor; mainly to CVL.

As usual recorded only at CVL, where as in 2006 it was much more elusive than in previous years; perhaps high water levels allow them to remain hidden. One record: a single bird seen on Dec. 22nd.

CATTLE EGRET *Bubulcus ibis*

Very rare vagrant.

One at CVL from Oct. 11th to 13th (RMA *et al.*) was the first record from the site, and the third for the Avon area [BBRC]. It frequented the Heron's Green area where it fed both with cattle and on the lake margin, and on one occasion was attacked (unsuccessfully) by a Peregrine.

The previous accepted records are from Littleton in April 1993 and Kingston Seymour in January to April 2005, with two further records of escaped birds.

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.

Analysis of both numbers at the main sites and the scatter of other records suggests that the increase in this species slowed in 2007, at least temporarily.

| 1997 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| 0 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 15 | 7 | 13 | 15 | 27 | 39 | 31 |

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 |
|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Sevenside | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| CI-Y and environs | 25 | 31 | 13 | 16 | 5 | 8 | 8 | 13 | 22 | 15 | 13 | 7 |
| Axe Est. | 3 | 3 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 3 | | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| CVL | | | | | | | 1 | 10 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| BL | | | 2 | | | | | | | 4 | 10 | 8 |

Other sites Recorded from another twelve sites (*cf.* eleven in 2003, 14 in 2004, 17 in 2005 and 21 in 2006), possibly reflecting decreasing enthusiasm for reporting this species.

Away from the reservoirs, the coast and the North Somerset Levels it remains a scarce bird.

Oldbury-on-Severn - two on Jan. 16th;

Littleton Warth - one on Sept. 9th and another on Nov. 10th;

Steep Holm - one flying over on May 29th was the second record for the island;

Leap Valley, Downend - following one record in 2006, two in 2007, single birds flying over on May 4th and 10th, a reflection of intensive coverage of this site;

Little Egret cont.

Pilning - one on Nov. 2nd;
 Nailsea - one on Nov. 24th;
 Kenn Moor - four on Feb. 8th;
 BG - five flying over on May 6th, and one on Oct. 10th;
 Wrington - five to the north-west on June 26th;
 St Georges, Weston-s-Mare - one on Dec. 30th;
 Hewish - one on July 8th;
 Bathampton - one on April 30th.

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 some coastal sites were low, but all three main reservoirs produced good counts at the end of the year.

| | 1996/05 Av. | 2006 | 2007 |
|-----------|-------------|------|------|
| CVL | 16 | 12 | 18 |
| Sea Mills | 17 | 19 | 22 |

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 | | | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | |
| CI-Y | 1 | 2 | | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| Axe E./Weston STW | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | | 2 | 1 | |
| R. Avon (Sea Mills) | 22 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 10 | 4 | 10 | 6 | 13 | 6 |
| BG | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 13 |
| CVL | 10 | 8 | 16 | | 6 | 12 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 9 | 18 |
| BL | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 17 | 12 |

Other non-breeding records Elsewhere recorded from a total of 25 sites (*cf.* 33 in 2006). At Steep Holm, although four were seen on June 11th, the total number of records was only 15, half the 2006 total.

Breeding The details are summarised in the table below.

| | Grid Ref | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|---------------------|----------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Easter Compton | ST560811 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 8 | 0 | |
| Eastwood Farm | ST535715 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 12 | 16 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | |
| Pill | ST530739 | | | | | | | | 5 | | |
| Hanham Wood | ST641703 | 0 | 0 | | | 7 | | 0 | | 12 | 16 |
| Heath Farm | ST635708 | 2 | 2 | | | | | | | | |
| Newton Park | ST692640 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 5 | | | 8 | 4 |
| Prior Park, Bath | ST634761 | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Paradise Bottom | ST546748 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Denny Island, CVL | ST575607 | 30 | 33 | 35 | 43 | 31 | 33 | 29 | 29 | 25 | 36 |
| Cleeve Wood | ST462662 | 47 | 47 | 44 | 49 | 45 | 52 | 45 | 45 | 33 | 48 |
| Uphill Grange Wood | ST320582 | 0 | 1 | 1 | nc | 2 | 3 | | | 4 | 8 |
| Clevedon Court Farm | ST4271 | | | | 1 | nc | | | | | |
| Total | | 113 | 111 | 112 | 118 | 116 | 126 | 106 | 104 | 108 | 113 |

GLOSSY IBIS *Plegadis falcinellus*

Very rare vagrant.

The first record for the Avon area was of a first-winter at CVL mid to late-afternoon of Nov. 2nd and early morning of 3rd (GTh, AHD *et al.*) [BBRC]. It was subsequently seen at Catcott and Greylake, Somerset and in Devon. Spring 2007 had seen an exceptional influx of this species into Britain, including a flock of 17, the second largest on record, at Frampton-on-Severn, Gloucs. However, the age of this individual indicates that it was not part of this influx. See paper on page 133.

SPOONBILL *Platalea leucorodia*

Very scarce passage migrant.

One record, at Herriott's Pool, CVL, seen briefly on Aug. 7th (PS).

This brings the total of Avon area records since 1920 to 24. The most recent were four records, probably of the same individual, along the coast in April and May 2006.

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

Scarce passage migrant and visitor.

An increasingly frequent visitor most often seen between April and June. 2007 was the best year to date, recorded at 19 sites (cf. nine in 2006).

January - near Thornbury on 1st, Weston Big Wood to S on 14th, at Winterbourne on 23rd, and Aust Warth to N the next day;

March - at CVL two to SW on 14th and one the next day;

April - Marshfield to S on 7th, at Aust Warth to SE and OPS to N on 14th, New Passage on 27th and circling over Clevedon the next day;

May - at Herriott's Pool, CVL to S on 5th, East Harptree to E on 26th and at the Avon Gorge on 31st;

June - Leyhill on 1st, at Keynsham to NW and Stoke Bishop on 4th, Portbury Village to NE on 7th, and at CVL to N over Burlledge Hill the next day, at Kenn on 12th and Tytherington on 16th;

October - Iron Acton to E on 6th;

November - at Flax Bourton on 19th.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

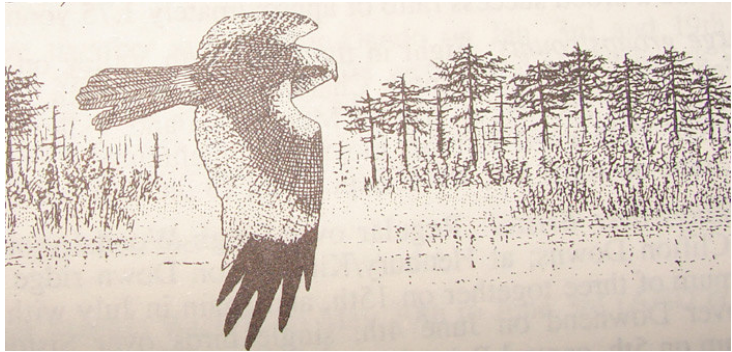
Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant.

An average to poor year for this species, noted mainly at CVL, just six records all of single females or immatures (cf. four in 2002, 14 in 2003, two in 2004, eleven in 2005 and eight in 2006). The first records were during April away from CVL, all subsequent sightings were at CVL in early May, and then August and September, the details are as follows:

Northwick Warth - one to NE on April 14th (JPM, ADS);

Tickenham Ridge - to SSE on April 28th (RJP, LFR);

CVL - May 1st (AHD) and 5th (RMi), Aug. 2nd (RJP *et al.*), to E being mobbed by a Raven on Sept. 29th (DA).

**HEN HARRIER** *Circus cyaneus*

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

A normal year, this species is an infrequent visitor. In 1991 there was an exceptional number of sightings with a total of 50 bird-days recorded. In 2007 it was reported on just four dates (cf. six in 2002 & 2003, three in 2004, 2005 and 2006) most in October and one in November as follows:

CVL - a female/immature at a Starling roost on Oct. 14th (RMA, DA);

Blagdon Village - a female/immature to W being mobbed by a Raven on Oct. 21st (NM);

Aust Warth - a first-calendar year on Oct. 22nd (BL, ADS);

Marshfield - a female/immature on Nov. 26th (MH).

MONTAGU'S HARRIER *Circus pygargus*

Rare summer visitor and passage migrant.

2006 A second calendar-year female seen by RL at Chelwood moving to NW on May 6th.

This record was published as Hen Harrier in the *Avon Bird Report* for 2006. Subsequently, photographs were sent to Dick Forsman and the correct identification was established.

Scarce Raptors in the Avon Area

The table below summaries the bird-day totals in 2007 and the previous nineteen years.

| Year | 1988 | 89 | 90 | 91 | 92 | 93 | 94 | 95 | 96 | 1997 |
|-------------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| Honey Buzzard | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Black Kite | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Red Kite | 8 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| Marsh Harrier | 7 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| Hen Harrier | 3 | 4 | 2 | 50 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 4 |
| Montagu's Harrier | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Goshawk | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| Osprey | 23 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 22 | 8 | 5 | 4 |
| Red-footed Falcon | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| Year | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|-------------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| Honey Buzzard | 3 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Red Kite | 1 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 17 | 11 | 24 |
| Marsh Harrier | 16 | 4 | 8 | 7 | 4 | 15 | 2 | 11 | 8 | 6 |
| Hen Harrier | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Montagu's Harrier | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Goshawk | 2 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Osprey | 7 | 2 | 14 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 10 | 6 | 12 |

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

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

A rather typical year all round. A total of 482 records was received, fewer than in the preceding two years but still a good tally. The 2007 records were evenly spread over the year with most in April during the display period but the other trends indicating incubation and dispersal were not evident.

The table below details the distribution of records for 2007 and the previous five years:

| Year | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Total |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| 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 |
| 2007 | 42 | 44 | 48 | 69 | 30 | 47 | 44 | 32 | 22 | 34 | 35 | 35 | 482 |

Breeding

In 1997 and from 1999 to 2003 JH carried out extensive field work in the southern 60 km² 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 assessment of the number breeding in 2007 was average, eleven in SG, 34 in BA & NS and ten in and around Bristol.

In general there was a slight decline across the Avon area but this was most notable in SG with numbers near to 2005.

The table below gives an assessment of breeding sites for 2007 and the previous nine years as well as the ten year average from 1988 to 1997.

| | 1988-97 Av | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|---------|------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|------|
| SG | 10 | 12 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 12 | 16 | 10 | 16 | 11 |
| BA & NS | 30 | 28 | 39* | 36* | 30* | 32* | 37* | 30 | 29 | 36 | 34 |
| Bristol | 12 | 14 | 14 | 13 | 17 | 13 | 13 | 6 | 13 | 11 | 10 |
| Total | 52 | 54 | 61 | 57 | 55 | 52 | 62 | 52 | 52 | 63 | 55 |

In and around CVL three pairs were located and four young fledged (*cf.* three in 2006 with seven young fledging). A down covered chick was found at Woodford Lodge on July 9th but as there was no nest close by, it was taken into care.

Other observations Steep Holm, the only records were in the autumn, noted on nine dates from Aug. 29th to Oct. 31st. At Duchess Pond, Bristol a female was grounded and mobbed by eleven Magpies on Feb. 3rd.

Prey species reported Just three prey species were noted and they were as follows: Feral Pigeon in January and March, then during July one was seen with a freshly caught Swift at BL on 1st, and a male took a couple of House Sparrow from a Bishop Sutton garden at the end of the month.

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Fairly common breeding resident, possibly also an uncommon passage migrant, the population has steadily increased since the late 1980s, now regularly seen over suburban areas.

An average year, breeding success was better than in 2006 but still lower than in the preceding three years. Records received totalled 1042, the most to date, and as usual many of these were in March and April during the display period, few were noted in November and December. Overall the population seems to have stabilised but two more territories were found in RJP's study area.

Set out in the table below is the monthly distribution of records for 2007 and the previous five years:

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Total |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| 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 |
| 2007 | 75 | 83 | 154 | 164 | 89 | 102 | 62 | 66 | 52 | 88 | 52 | 55 | 1042 |

Breeding RJP's study area, which covers some 75km² of Failand/Gordano had a reasonable year, 92 pairs held territories, two more than in 2006, 52 of these were successful and 80 young fledged. The number of territories held was a record but 40 of these failed to produce any young.

The table set out below gives an assessment of the number of breeding sites in the Avon area in 2007 and the previous nine years as well as the ten year average from 1988 to 1997. Included are the results of RJP's studies in the Failand/Gordano area, and an estimate of numbers in the southern 60km² of ST66 based on JH's survey work from 1991 to 2004.

| Year | 1988-97 Av | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|---------------------|------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| SG | 19 | 35 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 27 | 29 | 44 | 25 | 49 | 39 |
| BA & NS | 81 | 137 | 148 | 154 | 165 | 169 | 174 | 196 | 196 | 206 | 213 |
| Bristol | 1 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 12 | 16 | 14 | 12 |
| RJP's Study Area | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Active nest sites | 37 | 65 | 71 | 79 | 83 | 84 | 84 | 85 | 88 | 90 | 92 |
| Chicks fledged | 45 | 44 | 75 | 58 | 83 | 51 | 66 | 107 | 92 | 50 | 80 |
| Successful nests | 26 | 27 | 45 | 46 | 56 | 38 | 40 | 60 | 56 | 37 | 52 |
| Brood success ratio | 1.73 | 1.63 | 1.67 | 1.26 | 1.48 | 1.34 | 1.65 | 1.78 | 1.64 | 1.35 | 1.54 |

At CVL, five nests were located and breeding was confirmed at four.

Large groups/counts There were very few large counts reported, eleven were noted at Chewton Wood on Jan. 25th, at the Tyntesfield Estate on Feb. 10th and at Clevedon on Aug. 24th. The largest was 15 at Bishop Sutton on March 9th.

Bristol One over the Centre on Feb. 18th, during March at Redland to E on 13th and six over The Royals, Blaise Castle Estate on 26th. In the second half of the year at Victoria Park, Bedminster on July 10th, at Frogmore Street on Aug. 3rd and at Bedminster Bridge to SW on Nov. 26th.

Other notes On Steep Holm there were twelve reports between April 30th and Sept. 12th. One stayed in the sycamore wood for at least a week from June 12th, apparently predating gull chicks, possibly the same individual was suspected of taking gull chicks in 2006.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce passage migrant; most records are from the reservoirs.

A good year for this species in the Avon area, nine were seen on twelve dates (*cf.* four in 2002, three in 2003, four in 2004, ten in 2005 and five in 2006) most in April.

The first of the year was over the A4174 at Downend to N on March 28th (JPM) and at Northwick Warth to N on April 13th (RJE). Noted at BG on May 4th (RMi), and Lansdown to S on June 7th (DA).

CVL - during April on 16th and 17th, one to W on June 22nd, a juvenile on Aug. 31st and on the following two days, it departed over Burlledge Hill to SE at 14.00 hrs on Sept. 2nd;

BL - noted on April 30th and the last record of the year on Oct. 23rd.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Fairly common breeding resident.

An apparently normal year but well reported, records received totalled 658, the most since 1994 when 723 records were received. They were fairly evenly spread across the year but relatively few in February and from July to September, there were no large counts.

The table set out below gives the monthly total of reports for 2007 and the previous five years:

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Total |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| 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 |
| 2007 | 57 | 36 | 50 | 53 | 71 | 65 | 43 | 43 | 44 | 72 | 56 | 68 | 658 |

Breeding A reasonably good year in the Avon area, pairs were reported from 100 sites (*cf.* 108 in 2006), 25 in SG, 68 in BA & NS and seven in and around *Bristol*. Although a high number of records were received there was not an equivalent increase in the assessed number of breeding sites.

At CVL seen near the Dam (*cf.* Stratford Lane and Villice Bay areas in 2006).

At Congresbury a pair was noted prospecting a nest box on May 29th. At Webb's Heath four young fledged from a nest box in June and two juveniles were seen at the Yeo Estuary in early June.

The table below gives an assessment of breeding sites for 2007 and the previous nine years as well as the ten year average from 1988 to 1997.

| | 1988-97 Av | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|---------|------------|------|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|-----|------|
| SG | 22 | 28 | 23 | 24 | 22 | 21 | 19 | 24 | 17 | 29 | 25 |
| BA & NS | 47 | 51 | 62 | 66 | 58 | 49 | 79 | 57 | 60 | 72 | 68 |
| Bristol | 9 | 9 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 9 | 11 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 7 |
| Total | 78 | 88 | 91 | 99 | 87 | 79 | 109 | 86 | 82 | 108 | 100 |

Other notes On Steep Holm, one present from Oct. 6th to 8th was believed to be the same individual throughout.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

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

A poor year for this species with a total of 76 bird-days (*cf.* 101 in 2005 and 93 in 2006). During the year there were 38 bird-days in the first half year and 38 again in the second half. Most were in February, October and November with 14, twelve and 19 bird-days respectively. As usual, the majority of records were from Severnside with 69 bird-days, 36 in the first half year and 33 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 36 dates from Jan. 5th to April 29th most often in February, males seen on 31 dates, probably the same individual;

CI-Y - Feb. 8th.

Second half-year

Severnside - reported on 31 dates from Oct. 2nd to Dec. 26th most in October and November, males were seen on 23 dates, probably the same individual, a male and female noted on two dates, Nov. 16th and 18th;

PW - Nov. 7th;

CI-Y - Oct. 23rd, Nov. 8th and 25th.

Inland

At Keynsham on March 4th and a male at Burnett on Nov. 6th (JA).

The tables below gives the Avon area and Severnside bird-day totals for 2007 and the previous nine years and the ten year average from 1988 to 1997.

| Year | 1988-97 Av | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------------|------------|------|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|----|------|
| Avon area | 51 | 45 | 46 | 73 | 60 | 70 | 107 | 127 | 101 | 93 | 76 |
| Severnside | 19 | 26 | 23 | 36 | 34 | 32 | 59 | 98 | 53 | 57 | 69 |

Avon - Bird-days per year

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

Uncommon passage migrant and scarce breeding summer visitor.

A normal year.

Arrival

First recorded in late April at Stockwood Vale on 26th, the next day at Charlton Field and Kenn Moor, then at BL on 28th and Redwick the following day. In early May single birds were noted at Flax Bourton and CVL on 2nd, and Severn Beach on 3rd.

The earliest arrival dates during the preceding five years were all in April; 21st in 2002, 15th in 2003 and 2004, 21st in 2005 and 14th 2006. The earliest arrival date ever was March 30th in 1990.

Breeding Confirmed at two sites in *NS* and two in *BA*.

NS - one pair fledged four young, two males and two females, another pair fledged a single juvenile.

BA - two sites were located, at one of these one juvenile fledged but the outcome of the other nest was unknown.

Breeding was suspected at a further eight sites two each in *SG* and *BA*, and four in *NS*.

The table details breeding status both confirmed and suspected for 2007 and the previous nine years as well as the ten year average from 1988 to 1997.

| | 1988-97 Av | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|-----------|------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| <i>SG</i> | 1.5 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| <i>NS</i> | 1.6 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 6 |
| <i>BA</i> | 2.8 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| Total | 5.9 | 13 | 10 | 13 | 13 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 12 |

Other sightings From April 26th to Oct. 17th reported from a total of 35 localities, eleven in *SG* and 21 in *BA* & *NS*. In *Bristol* noted at Lawrence Weston Moor on June 24th and 26th, at Hengrove on July 25th, and three at Whitchurch on Aug. 9th.

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 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| <i>Bristol</i> | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>BA</i> & <i>NS</i> | 4 | 11 | 8 | 12 | 11 | 6 | 0 |
| Total | 5 | 15 | 15 | 17 | 15 | 7 | 1 |

Hobby cont.

CVL Regularly reported from this site, records received were mostly of single birds but two or three were sometimes seen. Subsequent to the first report on May 2nd noted on nine other dates in May, eight in June, twelve in July, 13 in August and 16 in September, the last record was of two on Sept. 26th, two days earlier than 2006.

Departure

During October the only reports were from Severnside, one was noted on six dates from Oct. 7th to 19th. The late records were as follows:

SG - Severnside on Oct. 19th;

NS - Flax Bourton on Sept. 23rd;

BA - CVL one from Sept. 23rd to 26th with two on the last date.

The latest dates for the Avon area, most in October are: 14th (Nailsea 1979, Severnside 2007), 15th (Severnside 2007), 16th (Severnside 2004 and 2007), 17th (Severnside 2007), 19th (Cl-Y 1998, Severnside 2007), 21st (Iron Acton 1995), 29th (Backwell 1998), and Nov. 11th (Dundry 2005).

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

Uncommon resident and winter visitor; scarce breeder.

Breeding A productive year.

In the Avon Gorge a pair nested successfully on the Clifton/Durdham Down side. Three juveniles fledged, two males and a female. The Clifton/Durdham Down side of the Avon Gorge has been used with varying degrees of success from 1997 to 1999, from 2001 to 2004 and in 2006.

On Steep Holm a pair was present on Feb. 3rd, unfortunately, the female flew into a cliff and died, the corpse is now at Bristol City Museum. One to three individuals frequented the island to the end July but there was no evidence of breeding. On Aug. 12th five birds, two adults and three juveniles, arrived from the direction of Brean Down, Somerset. The juveniles were often seen until Sept. 29th but during October and November there were no more than two birds at any time. Of interest: on Aug. 1st a large feeding area was found containing the remains of more than 14 large gulls. It also contained the remains of a Great Spotted Woodpecker.

St. John's Church in Bath was used successfully for the second successive year, three eggs were laid but only two hatched, both young were ringed; see paper on page 123.

At Wick Quarry a downy chick was noted in late May and two juveniles were seen in June.

Undisclosed sites.

SG Present at four sites (*cf.* four in 2006 and four young fledged), three of these were on man-made structures, one of which was used successfully in 1987, 2005 and 2006, at this site a recently fledged juvenile was seen to flutter to the base of the structure, it then attempted flight for possibly a second time but landed on the water where it floundered for some ten minutes before drowning. At the other two sites, one of which was used successfully for a second successive year, three juveniles fledged, a pair frequented the other but there was no evidence of breeding.

At another site a nest containing three eggs was noted on April 27th, two juveniles fledged on June 20th.

NS Located at three sites (*cf.* seven in 2005 when seven young fledged, five in 2006 when two young fledged). At one of these sites a chick hatched prior to April 30th and had fledged by mid-June. At another site two juveniles were reported in mid to late June and three were seen on July 4th. Copulation was reported from a third site but there was no further evidence of breeding.

BA Reported from one site (*cf.* two in 2006 when one young fledged), four juveniles fledged, two males and two females but two were found dead early in August.

The table below details the breeding success of this species in the Avon area in 2007 and the previous nine years as well as the ten year average from 1988 to 1997.

| Year | 1988-97 Av | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|-------------------------|------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| No. of sites occupied | 2.1 | 7 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 13 | 8 | 9 | 14 | 15 | 12 |
| No. of birds fledged | 3.7 | 17 | 19 | 6 | 11 | 25 | 13 | 17 | 13 | 13 | 21 |
| No. of successful nests | 1.5 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 10 | 5 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 9 |

Non-breeding records

OPS, Severnside and CI-Y - Frequent at these well watched sites, noted throughout the year with 109, 145 and 74 bird-days respectively.

Possibly under recorded at some of the other coastal sites and surprisingly there were no reports for the Sand Point/Sand Bay area.

The table below details the monthly bird-days for other coastal sites, CVL and BL.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Total |
|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Avonmouth | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| RPD/PW | | 1 | | 2 | | | | | | | | | 3 |
| Portishead | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Weston-s-Mare | | | | | 4 | 2 | | | | | | | 6 |
| Weston STW | | | 1 | 1 | | | 2 | | | 1 | | | 5 |
| CVL | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 23 |
| BL | 1 | | 3 | | | | 1 | 1 | | 3 | | 2 | 11 |

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

First half-year

Bristol Over Park Street on Jan. 1st, Sea Mills on Feb. 3rd and May 19th, Moorgrove Wood on March 11th, and noted at Hengrove on May 2nd and 4th;

SG During January at Iron Acton on 13th and Pilning on 27th, at Downend to S on March 31st, in April two at Chipping Sodbury on 7th, at Tytherington on 13th and Pilning on 21st, at Frampton Cotterell on May 11th and Horton June 23rd;

NS In February at Locking on 6th and two at Kenn Moor on 13th, during April at Yatton on 11th and Wrington on 20th, over Portbury Village on 28th and to W the next day, and at Burrington on May 28th;

BA Noted at Chew Magna reservoir on Jan. 7th, Clutton and nearby Temple Cloud on Feb. 26th, then at Stanton Drew on May 20th and Upper Weston, Bath on June 12th.

Second half-year

Bristol During July over Castle Park on 8th, at Lawrence Weston on 10th and Broad Plain on 29th, at St. Mary Redcliffe on Aug. 13th and the City Centre on Dec. 17th;

SG Only reported during August, at Westerleigh on 3rd, West Littleton the next day and at Downend on 11th;

NS During July at Sandford on 19th and Yatton on 27th, at BG Res. on Aug. 16th and 17th, at Locking on Sept. 28th, in November at Bleadon Hill on 20th and Wrington on 28th, during December at Hutton on 10th and Flax Bourton on 19th. A number of reports at Yatton during the last two months of the year, on four dates from Nov. 2nd to 16th and seven dates from Dec. 13th to 30th, two seen on 20th and 23rd;

BA At Burnett on Aug. 23rd, at Newton St. Loe on Sept. 9th, then in December at Lansdown on 17th and Norton Hawkfield on 31st.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

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

A good year, with reports from 23 sites (24 in 2006) and a highest count of 22 (from CVL).

Severnside In the first winter period recorded as follows (single birds unless otherwise stated); from Northwick Warth (seven dates up to March 21st, with two birds on three dates), Severn Beach (one on March 21st), Orchard Pools (four dates up to March 21st), Seabanks Pool (three dates in March), Chittening Warth (Jan. 1st). In the second winter period recorded from Aust Warth (Oct. 27th and Dec. 9th), Northwick Warth (five dates), New Passage (Oct. 12th/13th), Severn Beach (Oct. 27th, Nov. 4th and Dec 15th/16th) and Chittening Warth (three dates in November).

PW/RPD At PW recorded in February (a single bird on one date), March (two dates with two birds on 26th), August (a single bird on one date), September (single birds on two dates), October (two on 26th) and November (max. of four). At RPD recorded in October (two on 20th), November (two on 4th) and December (single birds on two dates).

CVL - Breeding Not recorded (with no records submitted for March, May, June or July) but probably overlooked.

CVL - Autumn/winter Surveys by KEV located nine in January/February (which was probably an under estimate) and 41 between October and December, with probably 50 present; the high total probably due to high water levels making birds easier to see/hear. The highest day count was 22 on Nov. 9th but that was the only double figure count.

Water Rail - Other sites

SG Recorded at OPS up to March 18th (with a maximum of seven on March 3rd) and again from Oct. 13th (but with no count over two). Also recorded at Leap Valley, Downend on Oct. 21st, Nov. 24th and Dec. 22nd (two).

BA Only recorded at Widcombe Common (March 10th), Keynsham Mill Grounds (Dec. 4th), Batheaston NR (Dec. 1st and 15th), and Kennet and Avon Canal (Dec. 26th).

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

Backwell Lake - Jan. 15th and Nov. 28th (two);
 BL - April 14th and June 20th. Probably three present during September, five during November and four during December;
 Cl-Y - Jan. 25th, Feb. 27th, Oct. 8th, Nov. 20th and 29th and Dec. 17th;
 Gatcombe, Long Ashton - Dec. 23rd;
 Moor End Spout, Nailsea - Nov. 9th;
 Strawberry Line, Yatton - Jan. 2nd, Oct. 19th and Dec. 24th;
 Walton Moor - April 8th;
 YACWAG Res, Yatton - Oct. 19th.

The Bath Peregrines took eight birds during October and November..

SPOTTED CRAKE *Porzana porzana*

Very scarce passage migrant. Most records from CVL in August and September.

One record: CVL, Heron's Green Pool on Aug. 8th (R Mi *et al.*).

This is in line with the recent average; the table below shows the number of individuals seen each year.

| 1988-1997 Av. | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|---------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| 1 | 5/6 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

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.

The maximum counts at both of the main sites (CVL and BL) were well down on previous years, as can be seen from the table below:

| Year | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|------|
| CVL | 145 | 130 | 185 | 165 | 105 | 245 | 125 | 80 | 90 | 55 |
| BL | 42 | 53 | 60 | 129 | 75 | 132 | 46 | 105 | 82 | 30 |

Maximum counts at CVL and BL (the highest counts are often not in the same month at both sites) for last ten years

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

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| OPS | 5 | 4 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 10 | 13 |
| Abbeywood | 6 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 11 | | 5 |
| RPD | 26 | 29 | | | | | | | 18 | 23 | 33 | 16 |
| Backwell Lake | | | | | | | | | | | 4 | |
| R Avon, Keynsham | 33 | 35 | | | | | | | | | 12 | 18 |
| CVL | 20 | 20 | 15 | 8 | 4 | 35 | 35 | 55 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 30 |
| BL | 3 | 8 | 16 | 10 | 5 | 4 | 10 | 24 | 27 | 25 | 30 | 25 |
| Weston STW | 6 | 4 | 7 | 10 | | 1 | 1 | 11 | 16 | 10 | 9 | 3 |

The only double figure counts not in the above table were 15 at Walborough on Oct. 7th, ten at Lambridge on Feb. 4th, ten at Keynsham Memorial Park on Oct. 16th, and ten at Woodlands Golf Course on Nov. 25th.

Breeding Early breeding took place at Keynsham Memorial Park with young seen on March 2nd. Pairs were also at Batheaston NR (two young), Castle Wall (pair had three broods), CVL (21 nests), Frenchay (three pairs), Headley Park

(three juveniles), Keynsham Century Pond (four young), Newton Park, Novers Park, Pill (two young), Portishead Boating Lake (one young), Queen Charlton (three juveniles), St Phillips (eight pairs), Tockington (young), Weston STW (four broods, eight young), Winford Brook (pair had three broods) and Wraxall (four young).

The Bath Peregrines took ten through the year.

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.

An increase in the size of the autumn moulting flock was noted after last years decline.

| Year | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| CVL | 2650 | 1980 | 3500 | 2360 | 3715 | 3285 | 3335 | 2210 | 2360 | 2095 |
| BL | 1126 | 1129 | 1012 | 2846 | 1740 | 1990 | 2080 | 3151 | 1400 | 2323 |

Maximum counts at CVL and BL (the highest counts are often not in the same month at both sites) for last ten years

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

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|
| Tortworth | | 25 | 22 | 24 | | | 13 | | | | | |
| OPS | 3 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | | | 2 | | 2 | 1 |
| ASW | 12 | 10 | 8 | | 6 | 5 | | 12 | | | | |
| Abbeywood | 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | | 2 |
| PW | 75 | | 38 | | | | 33 | | 38 | 53 | 30 | 20 |
| Backwell Lake | 32 | 15 | 12 | 12 | 19 | | | | | 25 | 65 | |
| BG | 80 | 73 | 55 | 42 | 44 | 58 | 101 | 155 | 238 | 237 | 251 | 293 |
| CVL | 195 | 415 | 335 | n/c | 445 | 1120 | 1920 | 2095 | 1730 | 1430 | 1150 | 465 |
| BL | 191 | 450 | 260 | 278 | 217 | 369 | 874 | 2323 | 1065 | 889 | 666 | 300 |
| Weston STW | 90 | 29 | 31 | 26 | | 42 | 88 | 95 | 85 | 53 | 65 | 47 |

Other records 45 at Walborough on Jan. 9th (with 50 here on Oct. 7th), 22 at Lawrence Weston on June 8th, and 16 at Severn Beach on Dec. 20th. A pair at a farm pond at Smallcombe, Bath on Feb. 24th were in an unaccustomed location.

At BG one found dead on May 27th had been ringed at Bredons Hardwick, Hereford & Worcester, in February 2001.

Breeding At CVL an average year, probably related to fluctuating water levels and bad weather. There were early broods at both Chittening Warth (three chicks on March 30th) and Littleton (two small juveniles on March 31st). Nesting also at Backwell Lake (two nests, three young), BL (nine broods, 14 young), Cl-Y (two pairs), Litton Res., Naish House (two young), Oakham Farm Portbury (two young), Pill (one young), Publow, PW (two broods, three young), Tortworth Lake (seven broods, ten young), West Littleton (two broods, three young) and Weston STW (seven broods, twelve young).

| Year | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|---------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| No. of young | 292 | 162 | 254 | 119 | 110 | 91 | n/c | 9 | 70 | 91+ |
| No. of broods | 105 | 63 | 100 | 53 | 50 | 41 | n/c | 4 | 34 | 41 |
| No. of nests | 114 | 84 | 100 | 110 | 88 | 116 | 121 | n/c | 112 | 91 |

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

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

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

| YEAR | Sevenside | Cl-Y | Sand Bay | Axe Est. | Ave |
|-----------------------|-----------|------|----------|----------|-----|
| 1987/88 - 1996/97 Av. | 22 | 11 | 29 | 89 | 38 |
| 1997/98 - 2005/06 Av. | 77 | 23 | 9 | 67 | 44 |
| 2006/07 | 58 | 29 | 42 | 78 | 52 |
| 2007/08 | 75 | 34 | 44 | 114 | 67 |

August to February average counts

Oystercatcher cont.

The slow but steady rise in the population of this species in the Avon area continued in 2007 with all coastal sites showing an improvement as indicated by the status table on the previous page. The increase was especially noticeable at the Axe Estuary. This appears to be a local phenomenon as the national Webs figures have shown little change over the past decade. The main monthly maxima are tabulated below, the only other records received were for BG with one on July 12th and 29th, for Walton-in-Gordano with eight passing through on Aug. 4th, and for Avonmouth Docks, just across the river from PW and not far from Severnside, with 18 on Dec. 31st.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| OPS/Littleton W. | 8 | 10 | 12 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 1 | | 1 | 10 | 2 |
| Severnside | 84 | 77 | 40 | 38 | 32 | 26 | 30 | 55 | 66 | 70 | 78 | 91 |
| PW | | | | 2 | 1 | | | 2 | | | 6 | |
| Sea Mills, R. Avon | | 2 | | 3 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| CI-Y | 23 | 27 | 27 | 26 | 44 | 8 | 13 | 29 | 38 | 42 | 42 | 27 |
| Sand Bay | 16 | 22 | 33 | 2 | 13 | 2 | 14 | 17 | 30 | 13 | 62 | 77 |
| Axe Est. | 96 | 36 | 62 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 71 | 134 | 116 | 156 | 122 |
| Steep Holm | | 2 | | | 2 | 4 | | | | | | |
| CVL | 3 | | | 1 | 2 | | 2 | 1 | | | | |

Breeding Nesting behaviour was noted at three sites as in 2006, the details are as follows:

Avonmouth Docks/RPD - three pairs bred: at Avonmouth one pair had three young in early June and another pair were probably successful (long grass made it impossible to check), and at RPD a pair was guarding a nest with two eggs in late May, final outcome unknown;

Yeo Estuary (CI-Y) - three pairs were present during the summer months showing some breeding activity, and two nests were found in late June with three and two eggs, respectively, but no young were seen;

Steep Holm - two pairs were noted from February to May at sites where breeding has occurred in the past but no young were reared.

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Scarce winter visitor/ passage migrant. Rare inland.

As in 2006 there was a poor showing with only three records involving six individuals: one at the Axe Est. on April 15th, four adults at the mouth of the R. Yeo (CI-Y) on Sept. 12th, and one on Severnside on Dec. 18th and 22nd - another was noted at this site in December 2006.

There were eleven bird-days in 2001, twelve in 2002, nine in 2003, six in 2004, 14 in 2005, but only four in 2006.

LITTLE RINGED 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 as in 2006, but breeding was only recorded at two. There were no reports from PW or Lulsgate where breeding has been noted in the past. Present from April 7th to Aug. 29th (March 25th to Sept. 5th in 2006), the maximum count was seven. Details of all records are given below.

OPS - one on April 7th and a juvenile on Aug. 24th;

Severnside - two at Northwick Warth on April 17th, one on 24th and 28th, two at Severn Beach on May 5th, and a pair on June 17th;

CI-Y - single juveniles on July 12th and 16th, and on Aug. 29th;

Portishead area - one on a nest on May 31st;

BG - the continuing repair work on the tanks has provided ideal breeding habitat for this species (and Lapwing). Seven were reported on April 10th with three still present on May 4th. A pair was reported with four young on July 7th;

CVL - single juvenile(s) on Aug. 1st, 3rd and 4th.

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 2005/06 the Estuary was eighth in national importance for passage.

| YEAR | OPS | Sevenside | CI-Y | Ave |
|-----------------------|--------|-----------|--------|--------|
| 1987/88 – 1996/97 Av. | 270:28 | 352:16 | 163:21 | 262:22 |
| 1997/98 – 2005/06 Av. | 79:14 | 278:15 | 104:15 | 154:15 |
| 2006/07 | 37:2 | 375:26 | 103:13 | 172:14 |
| 2007/08 | 69:4 | 330:21 | 120:12 | 173:12 |

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

Average counts for this species have been reported fairly constantly over the past decade, and this continued into 2007, but they are still down on those of twenty years ago. Over the same period the national Webs trend was fairly constant during the 1990s but has shown a decline by about 20% since then. The main table below gives the monthly maxima at all sites, as usual the highest counts were for Sevenside in August with 500 noted during the last week. The June counts were for the first week and probably refer to high Arctic breeders. None were reported from Sand Bay where sizable flocks have been seen in the past.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | | May | | Jun | Jul | Aug | | Sep | | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|------|-------|-----|-----|------|-------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| | | | | 1-15 | 16-30 | 1-15 | 16-31 | | | 1-15 | 16-31 | 1-15 | 16-0 | | | |
| OPS | | | | | 5 | 8 | | | 7 | 26 | 49 | 89 | 10 | 9 | 1 | 4 |
| Sevenside | 23 | 12 | 2 | 30 | 43 | 100 | 110 | 55 | 2 | 450 | 500 | 160 | 6 | 40 | 23 | 17 |
| PW | | | | | 11 | 2 | | | 12 | | 2 | 6 | 23 | 52 | 28 | 32 |
| CI-Y | 12 | 12 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 28 | 14 | 24 | | 48 | 160 | 150 | 32 | 18 | 4 | 12 |
| Axe Est./Weston STW | 3 | | | 1 | | 17 | | | | | | 29 | 31 | 35 | 30 | 60 |
| CVL | | | 1 | | | 1 | | | | 2 | 1 | | | | | |

Breeding

At Avonmouth Docks a remarkable nine pairs bred. One nest was deserted but eggs were laid in the remaining eight and at least five were successful with a total of eleven live young seen. Nine pairs were also recorded here in 2004 with six in 2005, no full survey was undertaken in 2006 when only one was recorded.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

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

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1987/97 Av. | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 1217 | 1776 | 1013 | 1989 | (992) | 2025 | 2020 | 3310 | 1475 | 2460 | 3336 |

Total of the maximum monthly counts for all main sites

Some large flocks were reported. Although those at Upper Landridge and Lansdown are listed separately in the main table below, it seems almost certain that the same flocks occurred at both sites and this has been reflected in the status total above. Nevertheless this total is the highest for many years. The largest single count was 500 at CI-Y on Feb. 3rd and involved several flocks passing through (NE) over a period of about three hours. The table below gives the monthly maxima at the main sites. Present up to April 5th, a few were seen from Aug. 16th but in the second winter period no count over ten was noted before mid-October. Non-tabulated records included 40 at Saltford on Jan. 15th, one at CVL on April 5th (none were seen here in the autumn), 37 at Bannerdown, near Bath, on Oct. 7th, and 120 at Burnett on Nov. 6th.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | : | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| OPS/Littleton Warth | | 120 | | | | | | | 2 | |
| Sevenside | 3 | 150 | | | | | 1 | 2 | | 2 |
| CI-Y | 170 | 500 | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | |
| Marshfield area | | | | | | | | | | 37 |
| Marksbury Plain | | | | | | | | | 170 | 17 |
| Upper Langridge | 150 | | 265 | | | | | 190 | 155 | 250 |
| Lansdown | 150 | 470 | 450 | 30 | | | 6 | 190 | 350 | 250 |

The Bath Peregrines took seven between September and December with most (three) in November.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

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

Status table:

| YEAR | Severnside | CI-Y | Ave |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------|-----|
| 1987/88 - 1996/97 Av. | 9 | 39 | 24 |
| 1997/98 - 2005/06 Av. | 9 | 26 | 17 |
| 2006/07 | 6 | 21 | 13 |
| 2007/08 | 8 | 33 | 21 |
| September to March average counts | | | |

Counts were generally slightly up on the past few years as is shown by the status table above. Nationally up to 2006, numbers have declined by about 40% during the last decade.

Unusually OPS saw some good numbers during the second winter period; three arrived at the end of September and this number had risen to 30 by the end of October, many of which remained into 2008.

The table gives the monthly maxima, the last in spring were two at CI-Y on May 20th and the first in autumn was one at Severn Beach on July 31st. The only other records were: one at PW in October and December, and another in flight over Whitchurch on Aug. 11th.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | : | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| OPS/Littleton W. | | | | 4 | | | | | 3 | 30 | 18 | 15 |
| Severnside | 4 | 15 | 1 | 4 | 4 | | 1 | 1 | 8 | 16 | 4 | 1 |
| CI-Y | 38 | 36 | 15 | 2 | 2 | | | 4 | | 22 | 38 | 42 |

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 fourth after five sites of international importance.

Status table:

| Year | Severnside | CI-Y | CVL | Av. |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------|-----|-----|
| 1987/88 – 1996/97 Av. | 278 | 250 | 566 | 365 |
| 1997/98 – 2005/06 Av. | 315 | 269 | 224 | 269 |
| 2006/07 | 251 | 337 | 260 | 283 |
| 2007/08 | 215 | 439 | 92 | 249 |
| August to February average counts | | | | |

Nationally there has been a 20% rise over the past five years which has not been mirrored in the Avon area. The status table shows a slight drop, but the winter period counts were well down as follows.

The total number seen in January was about 3520, this is half the figure for 2006 which was itself down (by 10%) on the ten-year average; also the December total was 3640 which was about the same at the 2006 figure but only half of the ten-year average figure.

The main reason for the discrepancy is that the totals in both winter periods for the east of the region were well down. The table below gives the monthly maxima for the well-watched sites, none exceeded 1000 but counts of this size were noted at OPS in December (on 29th), and at CI-Y in both January (1st and 31st) and December (27th).

Counts over 100 not tabulated included 130 at Easter Compton in January, 225 at Hallen in February, 100 at Petty France in October, 115 at Marshfield and 120 at Burnett in November, and 110 at Stowey and Backwell, 350 at Hewish and 150 at Puxton in December.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| OPS/Littleton | 600 | 800 | 50 | 4 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 29 | 390 | 400 | 1000 |
| Sevenside | 490 | 480 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 1 | | 12 | 120 | 230 | 700 |
| ASW | 120 | | | | | | | 3 | 10 | | | 100 |
| Sea Mills | 130 | 180 | 1 | 1 | | 21 | 8 | 18 | 35 | 105 | 105 | 96 |
| PW | 240 | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 105 | 120 |
| CI-Y | 1000 | 650 | 18 | 12 | 10 | 10 | 39 | 22 | 8 | 140 | 850 | 1000 |
| Axe Est./Weston STW | 330 | 100 | | | | | | | | 50 | | |
| Keynsham | 6 | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 | 22 |
| Bath Oxbow Reserve | 40 | 70 | | | | | | | | | | 60 |
| Kenn Moor | | 40 | | | | 3 | 1 | | | | | |
| BG | 65 | 60 | 5 | 5 | | 2 | 1 | | | 2 | 38 | 190 |
| CVL | 300 | 300 | | | | 2 | 20 | 14 | 60 | | 155 | 165 |
| BL | 80 | 3 | | | | | 3 | | | 30 | 40 | 22 |

Breeding 2007 was the worst year ever for breeding of this species in the Avon area with numbers down by two-thirds on the average for the last ten years, see table below. One observer noted that changing farming practices in the east of the area are having a disastrous effect on breeding numbers. On the other hand no reports were received from the Gordano Valley, where five pairs were reported in 2006, and from some other sites. Observers are asked to submit all records of this species during the breeding season. (Eds.)

| 1987-97 Av. | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|-------------|------|------|----|----|----|----|----|------|----|------|
| 44-46 | 27 | 41-2 | 61 | nc | 42 | 52 | 38 | 44-7 | 25 | 14-5 |

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. The Bath Peregrines took four: one in February and November and two in December.

Doynton - up to four birds present in April and May;
 Hallen Marsh - three pairs in late April but only one after May 10th;
 Kenn Moor - one pair fledged at least one chick;
 Lawrence Weston Bowl - two pairs;
 M4/M5 interchange (north of) - one pair;
 Queen Charlton - distract display noted and one small chick seen in early June;
 Yeo Estuary (CI-Y) - four or five pairs, one pair had two chicks in late June.

KNOT *Calidris canutus*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant, mostly in autumn. Scarce inland. There are two races, *Islandica* (nearctic) and *Canutus* (Siberian), it is not known to which race the majority of our birds belong but almost certainly both occur.

| 1987-97 Av. | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|-------------|------|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|------|
| 553 | 323 | 799 | 1055 | (94) | 542 | 386 | 411 | 1520 | 172 | 595 |

Total of the maximum monthly counts for the coastal sites

The status figure for 2007 given above is about average but a single count in September made up over a third of this total. This count was of 220 noted at PW on 23rd, 90 were also seen here on 9th. The table below gives the monthly maxima at the coastal sites. Good numbers were noted at CI-Y over a period of about a month in late winter/early spring period. The only other records were: an adult at CVL on Sept. 4th and five at Weston STW on 16th.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| OPS | | 1 | | 3 | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Sevenside | 2 | 1 | 10 | 8 | 4 | | | 25 | 12 | 5 | 4 | |
| PW | | | | | | | | 5 | 220 | | | |
| CI-Y | 1 | 65 | 170 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 28 | 12 | 2 | 4 | 4 |

The Bath Peregrines took six during the autumn: three in September, two in November and one in December.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

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

Apart from one of 33, total counts were slightly down on those of the past three years. It was noted at five sites (six in 2005 and seven in 2006) from May 1st to June 11th, and from July 17th to Sept. 2nd with a single individual a month later. The details are as follows:

OPS - one on July 28th was the only record;

Sevenside - one on May 1st increasing to nine by 13th with similar counts until a flock of 33 was seen on 30th, 16 were still present on the next day and eleven in June 1st with one remaining until 11th. Two were noted on July 27th, five on Aug. 15th, two again on 19th, and a single late bird on Oct. 2nd;

CI-Y - two were noted on May 15th and 17th, and on June 4th. Ten (nine juveniles and one adult) were seen in a flock with several other wader species on Aug. 16th, and the last was one on Sept. 2nd;

BG - two on May 9th and one on 25th (note, almost an exact repeat of the 2006 spring sightings here);

CVL - two on May 11th, and one on 28th and July 17th.

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.

There were two winter period records, a very poor showing in spring, and the autumn passage lasted from Aug. 29th to Oct. 23rd. It was noted at four coastal sites only and the largest count was five. All autumn birds specifically aged were juveniles, the details are as follows.

OPS - one on Sept. 22nd and two on Oct. 6th;

Sevenside - single birds present from Sept. 25th to Oct. 7th with two on 6th – a poor showing for this site;

PW - five on Sept. 23rd (*cf.* Knot), one on 24th, and two on 29th and on Oct. 19th and 20th;

CI-Y - one on Feb. 22nd and March 4th (note that up to seven were present at Slimbridge, Gloucestershire, at this time), another on May 1st and 3rd, two on Aug. 29th and one on Sept. 13th;

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.

Counts were down on the past few years, it was noted at only four sites between Aug. 25th and Oct. 2nd, the maximum count was seven. The details are as follows:

OPS - an adult on Aug. 29th and a juvenile on Sept. 22nd;

Sevenside - one on Aug. 25th, two on 28th rising to seven by Sept. 13th then dropping to two by Oct. 2nd, all were juveniles except for single adults on Sept. 1st and 9th;

PW - one on Sept. 23rd (see Knot);

CI-Y - one on Aug. 31st, five on Sept. 13th, two on 17th and one on 25th, all juveniles.

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.

Again reports were similar to those for the past few years, although none were received for February and there was an unusual record for CI-Y of one on Sept. 13th and 16th. The remaining records are as follows.

Battery Point, Portishead - four were present in January, six in March and up to April 22nd, four remained until May 8th and the last seen was one on 15th. One reappeared on Nov. 14th with three on 27th, four were present throughout December and unto 2008;

Birnbeck Island, Weston-s-Mare - there were eight in January, nine in March (on 8th) and seven on April 3rd. Three reappeared on Nov. 13th, then six on 29th and seven on Dec. 14th.

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 passage migrant almost certainly overlooked, no published records.

Webs status: the Estuary is currently recognised as the sixth 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 - 2005/06 Av. | 107:725 | 490:2497 | 196:1564 | 265:1595 |
| 2006/07 | 42:456 | 475:3260 | 132:1316 | 216:1677 |
| 2007/08 | 31:694 | 475:2350 | 260:2925 | 255:1990 |

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

Some improvement in the fortunes of this species in the Avon area was noted in 2007, see the status table above. Up to 2006 the national picture still showed a slow but steady decline. Winter counts were up at both CI-Y and Sand Bay, the autumn passage was normal, and higher than average counts were recorded during the spring passage in May – 2000 at Sevenside on May 13th and 14th was the best spring count since 1985 when 2000+ were noted at CI-Y and 1200 at Sevenside.

The second table below gives the monthly maxima at all sites, note that the general improvement was not repeated at the Axe Estuary where the second winter counts were particularly poor.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--------------------|------|------|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|
| OPS | 250 | 500 | 5 | 8 | 325 | | 35 | 40 | 21 | 270 | 850 | 1000 |
| Littleton Warth | 135 | 300 | 15 | | | | | 7 | 2 | | 9 | 700 |
| Sevenside | 4000 | 4300 | 300 | 350 | 2000 | 30 | 90 | 250 | 700 | 750 | 4000 | 3000 |
| R. Avon, Sea Mills | 100 | 46 | 1 | | | | | | | | 9 | 41 |
| PW | 800 | | | | 170 | | 55 | | 300 | | 3000 | 1500 |
| CI-Y | 1600 | 4000 | 1200 | 30 | 360 | 32 | 70 | 220 | 300 | 175 | 2250 | 1400 |
| Sand Bay | 300 | 500 | | | | | 40 | | | | 1200 | 1000 |
| Axe Est. | 200 | 130 | | | 73 | | | | 12 | 25 | 40 | 70 |
| BG | | | 1 | | 2 | | | | | | | |
| CVL | | | | 1 | 3 | | | 1 | | | 1 | |

The Bath Peregrines took one on Jan. 10th.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

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

Apart from counts in January (17) and October (eight), 2007 continued the run of below average numbers for this species in the Avon area.

There were three sightings in the first winter period, a single record in spring, and the generally poor autumn passage lasted from Aug. 16th to Oct. 9th. The details are as follows:

OPS - six on Oct. 7th, eight on 8th, six again on 9th and one on 14th;

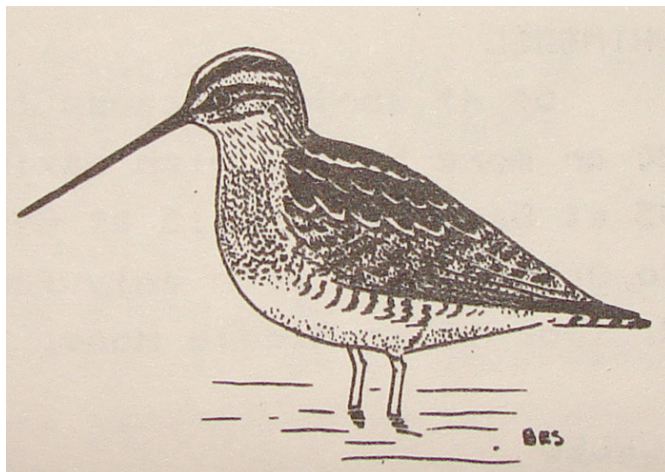
Sevenside - one on Northwick Warth on Jan. 13th and Feb. 20th, one on Aug. 16th and 17th, two on 29th, one on Oct. 2nd, four (two males and two females) on 14th, and two on 15th;

CI-Y - a single bird on Sept 29th;

BG - one on May 5th – the only spring record in the Avon area;

CVL - a flock of 17 flew through without stopping on Jan. 6th. Eight were recorded here in February 1994 (again only on one day), small flocks have wintered here in the past, for instance in 1978.

The Bath Peregrines took 26 Snipe during the year (this compares with eleven in 2006) - in every month except January and July. Single birds taken in May and June suggest that some summering occurred which was otherwise unrecorded.



WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

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

Excluding the Bath records (see below) seventeen sightings (20 bird-days) were recorded in 2007, the same number of sightings was noted in 2006 but with five more bird-days. The average number of sightings for the previous five years is 23. With one exception they were present up to Feb. 25th – an early last date, and from Oct. 20th although most were seen in February and November.

The records are as follows with single birds unless stated otherwise.

First winter period January: Chittening Warth on 14th and 16th, and Wooscombe Bottom, near Compton Dando, on 22nd; February: Wooscombe Bottom again with two on 3rd and one on 25th, Abbey Wood, Bristol, on 21st, and Henbury on 23rd.

Second winter period October: CVL on 20th; November: CVL again with two on 18th, Steep Holm on 12th, ASW (in flight) on 15th, Long Ashton on 16th, Leigh Woods on 17th, and Southville, Bristol (in flight) again on 17th; and December: Batheaston Nature Res. on 1st, CVL with two on 7th, and Chittening Warth on 14th.

The Bath Peregrines took 14 (*cf.* 30 in 2006) with two in January and February, one in April and October, six in November, and two again in December.

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.

| 1987-97 Av. | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|---|------|-----|-----|-------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 142 | 1197 | 518 | 249 | (131) | 302 | 1037 | 682 | 554 | 298 | 192 |
| Total of the maximum monthly counts for the coastal sites | | | | | | | | | | |

A single individual of the race *limosa* (marked with a double star in the table below) was noted at CVL on June 21st (RMI, KEV *et al.*). In 2006, four were recorded here just two days later, but prior to that this race had not been reported in the Avon area since 1990 when four were seen also at CVL in July.

Records for the race *islandica*. Excluding 2001 (the Foot and Mouth year) the status line count for 2007 was the lowest for ten years, and more than half of this figure is accounted for by three single-day sightings of flocks passing through without stopping; these are marked with a star in the table below.

Nationally the population has been rising for many years. So, apart from these single sightings, 2007 was a very poor year indeed for this species in the Avon area. Monthly maxima for all sightings are tabulated below. In July the flock at PW was noted on 18th, and in September the flock at OPS to NE on 23rd (two were here on 15th), and the September flock at CVL was noted on 24th only.

Black-Tailed Godwit cont.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| OPS/Littleton Warth | | | | 1 | | 8 | 8 | 9 | 60* | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Sevenside | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | 4 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| PW | | | | 1 | | | 37* | 13 | 1 | | | |
| CI-Y | | | | | | | 5 | 5 | 9 | 1 | | |
| Axe Est./Weston STW | | | | 4 | 4 | | | 14 | 1 | 1 | | 1 |
| CVL | | | | | | 1** | 1 | 1 | 29* | | | |

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.

| 1987-97 Av. | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|-------------|------|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|------|
| 306 | 72 | 222 | 711 | (116) | 191 | 121 | 382 | 75 | 112 | 1309 |

Total of the maximum monthly counts for the coastal sites

Every few years when the weather conditions are right (mainly when the winds are from NE, *cf.* terns) large numbers are seen on spring passage, so it was in 2007 when at least 800 appeared in the Estuary on April 28th, some stayed for up to a week but most had left by May 5th. See photograph on the front cover of this Report.

During the last 30 years this phenomenon occurred in 1984, 1990, 1993 and 2000. Nationally there has been a 40% drop in numbers over the past five years.

Otherwise counts were small as has become normal, this can be seen in the monthly maxima table below. There were no inland sightings. At low tide on Sept. 5th a flock of 40 godwits were reported off the Yeo Estuary (CI-Y), they could not be specifically identified but were thought to be this species. Ten 'Bar-tails' were noted at this site on 13th.

| | Jan | Feb | : | Apr | May | : | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---------------------|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| OPS/Littleton Warth | | | | 160 | 6 | | 1 | 25 | 1 | 1 | |
| Sevenside | 1 | 1 | | 550 | 270 | | | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| PW | | | | 80 | | | | 4 | | | |
| CI-Y | | | | 130 | 62 | | | 10 | 2 | | |

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 eighth most important site in the UK for this species, in 2002 it was first.

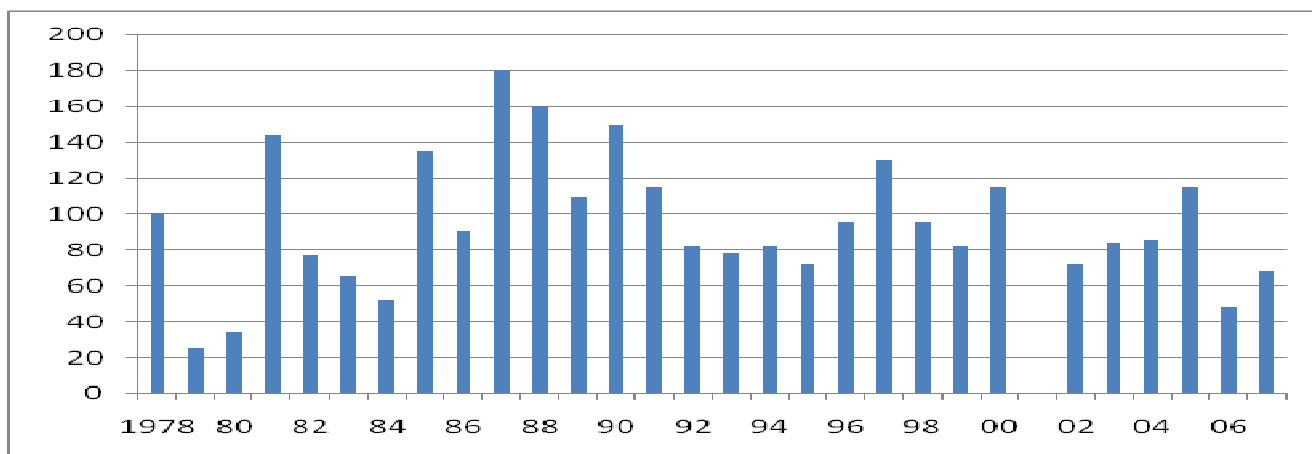
| YEAR | OPS | Sevenside | CI-Y | Av. |
|----------------|-----|-----------|------|-----|
| 1987 -1996 Av. | 15 | 27 | 102 | 48 |
| 1997 -2005 Av. | 29 | 45 | 80 | 52 |
| 2006 | 23 | 57 | 38 | 39 |
| 2007 | 12 | 22 | 53 | 29 |

April and May average counts

Numbers of this species continue to decline, the 2007 spring was the worst since detailed records began some 30 years ago. Apart from one of 68 on May 3rd at CI-Y, no count was over 40. This is a worrying trend as the Severn Estuary is one of the main spring sites in the UK for this species, see graph below.

The second table overleaf gives the monthly maxima at the main sites, birds were present from April 11th (at OPS) to Sept. 25th (at CI-Y). There were also five inland records: single birds at BG on April 27th and July 17th, one in flight over Pilning on May 5th, five feeding in a field at Queen Charlton on May 4th, and one seen with a few Curlew at Abbots Leigh on Sept. 5th.

| | Apr | | May | | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep |
|---------------------|------|-------|------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | 1-15 | 16-30 | 1-15 | 16-31 | | | | |
| OPS/Littleton Warth | 1 | 11 | 13 | | | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| Sevenside | 1 | 20 | 23 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| PW | | 6 | 6 | | | 2 | 2 | |
| CI-Y | 1 | 38 | 68 | 9 | 3 | 11 | 5 | 1 |
| Sand Bay | | 8 | 18 | | | | 2 | 1 |
| Axe Est. | | 1 | 5 | | | | | |
| CVL | | 2 | 4 | | | 1 | 6 | |



CI-Y -- Maximum single count for each of the past 30 years

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 eighth for this species.

| YEAR | OPS | S-side | CI-Y | Axe E. | Av. |
|----------------------|-----|--------|------|--------|-----|
| 1987/88 -1996/97 Av. | 677 | 152 | 146 | -- | -- |
| 1997/98 -2005/06 Av. | 297 | 178 | 162 | 64 | 175 |
| 2006/07 | 188 | 173 | 129 | 36 | 131 |
| 2007/08 | 316 | 186 | 127 | 25 | 163 |

August to February average counts

The status table above and the monthly maxima table below show an improvement of the figures for those of 2006, but the OPS counts have been higher in the past and the Axe Estuary counts are again a cause for concern. Nationally there has been a 20% decline in numbers over the past five years. The monthly maxima at the main sites are tabulated below. There were just two other records: two at BG on June 2nd and one on Kenn Moor on Sept. 9th.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| OPS | 62 | 20 | 65 | 10 | 1 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 22 | 26 |
| OPS roost | | 130 | 300 | 225 | 3 | 125 | 500 | 1200 | 550 | 180 | | 60 |
| Littleton Warth | 320 | 12 | 70 | 12 | 2 | | 19 | 2 | 110 | 34 | 80 | 100 |
| Sevenside | 265 | 205 | 130 | 140 | 6 | 36 | 170 | 295 | 210 | 195 | 190 | 110 |
| Sea Mills | | 1 | | 2 | | | | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| PW | 60 | | 1 | 19 | | | 40 | | 45 | 52 | | 29 |
| CI-Y | 150 | 120 | 100 | 40 | 12 | 75 | 165 | 145 | 120 | 110 | 120 | 125 |
| Sand Bay | 75 | 53 | 11 | 3 | 17 | 19 | 5 | 115 | 125 | 63 | 8 | 2 |
| Axe Est. | 65 | 12 | 17 | 1 | | 3 | 16 | 15 | 11 | 31 | 30 | 27 |
| CVL | | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | 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.

In recent years this species has become mainly a scarce winter visitor with few passage records. In 2007 it was recorded at six sites, and up to April 19th and from July 28th into 2008. The details are as follows:

OPS/ Littleton Warth - one on Oct. 3rd, 23rd to 28th and on Nov. 10th;

Sevenside - one on April 16th, then single birds from Sept. 29th to Oct 7th with two on 2nd, 27th and 28th and on Nov. 12th;

PW - one on April 17th, one on Aug. 27th to Sept. 1st, and again one on Dec. 30th;

CI-Y - the usual wintering individual was present up to April 15th, and from Oct. 14th into 2008 (its twelfth winter);

Weston STW - one up to April 19th (when it was in full breeding plumage), and from Nov. 3rd into 2008;

CVL - an adult on Aug. 24th, a juvenile on 25th, and one on Dec. 7th – an unusually late date for this site.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

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

Webs status: the Estuary is currently second of the sites of national importance after eleven sites of International Importance.

| YEAR | OPS | Sea Mills | CI-Y | Axe E. | Av. |
|-----------------------|-----|-----------|------|--------|-----|
| 1987/88 - 1996/97 Av. | 72 | 105 | 123 | -- | -- |
| 1997/98 - 2005/06 Av. | 36 | 93 | 106 | 232 | 117 |
| 2006/07 | 35 | 113 | 168 | 250 | 141 |
| 2007/08 | 49 | 81 | 179 | 212 | 130 |

August to February average counts

The constancy of this species in the Avon area has been commented upon before, counts in 2006 were up but those for 2007 were nearer the long term average as the status table above and the monthly maxima table below show. Nationally numbers have also been fairly constant although there was a slight dip in 2006. The high count of 520 for CI-Y in October marked with a star in the table below was for 27th only, possibly birds from Sand Bay and/or Axe Estuary had been disturbed and so flew the short distance to the Yeo Estuary, all other October counts here were of 160 or less. The April Sea Mills count (of 225 on 6th) was also on the high side but a similar sized flock was noted at this site in April 2006. On the other hand the Axe Estuary counts were down on those of 2006.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|
| OPS | 36 | 30 | 22 | 6 | | | 1 | 1 | 22 | 70 | 65 | 75 |
| Littleton Warth | 68 | 60 | 60 | 20 | | | | 30 | 44 | 60 | 75 | 59 |
| Sevenside | 185 | 145 | 110 | 16 | | 7 | 27 | 75 | 140 | 140 | 100 | 160 |
| Sea Mills, R. Avon | 120 | 155 | 150 | 225 | | 6 | 2 | 45 | 100 | 92 | 86 | 80 |
| PW | 55 | | 43 | 20 | | | 210 | 225 | 220 | 70 | 30 | 38 |
| CI-Y | 190 | 160 | 215 | 130 | 8 | 32 | 62 | 28 | 35 | 520* | 260 | 170 |
| Sand Bay | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 130 |
| Axe Est. | 120 | 97 | 220 | 155 | | | | 250 | 285 | 215 | 285 | 100 |
| BG | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | | |
| CVL | | | 2 | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | |

Breeding Activity only noted at one site (two in 2006):

Yeo Estuary, CI-Y - as in 2006 two or three pairs noted in May and June, some display was reported, but no eggs or young were seen.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

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

| | 1987-97 Av. | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|-------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| CI-Y | 10 | 9 | 10 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| CVL | 11 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 23 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 |

Maximum single counts at CI-Y and CVL

For the fourth year running counts were below the long-term average and no single count exceeded three (five in 2006). Nationally there has been a slow but steady rise in numbers over many years. They were present up to May 1st including a very small spring passage involving just four individuals, and from July 4th into 2008, with probably no more than 15 reported during the autumn passage.

The regular Sea Mills bird was present up to April 14th, and from Aug. 12th (the same date as in 2006) into 2008. During the autumn and second winter period on many occasions it was joined by a second individual.

The table below gives the monthly maxima at all sites.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | | May | : | Jul | Aug | | Sep | | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|---------|-----|---|-----|--------|---------|--------|---------|-----|-----|-----|
| | | | | 1-15 | 16 – 30 | | | | 1 – 15 | 16 – 31 | 1 – 15 | 16 – 30 | | | |
| OPS/Littleton W. | | | | | 1 | | | | 2 | 1 | | | | | |
| Sevenside | | | | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | | | |
| Sea Mills | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | 2 | | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| PW | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| CI-Y | | | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | | | |
| Weston STW | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| BG | | | | | 1 | | | | 1 | | | 1 | | | |
| CVL | | | | 1 | | | | 1 | 2 | | 1 | | | | |
| BL | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

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

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|------|----|----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|------|
| 1987-97 Av. | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 94 | 70 | 50 | 74 | 100 | 110 | 124 | 70 | 76 | 76 | 51 |

Total of the maximum monthly counts for coastal and reservoir sites

The status table average given in the table above was the lowest on record, only 1999 was similar. They were present up to April 9th with a late record of one at Hallen on May 3rd, and from June 23rd into 2008. Five were at ASW in the late summer and four were at OPS on Aug. 2nd, otherwise no counts exceeded three.

The second table below gives the monthly maxima at the main sites. Otherwise two were noted on the R. Chew on Jan. 25th, and single birds were noted near PW on March 30th, at BL on July 30th and at Littleton Warth on Aug. 12th.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | : | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| OPS | | | | | | | 2 | 4 | | 2 | | |
| Sevenside | 1 | | | | | | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| ASW | 1 | | | | | 5 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 2 | | |
| CI-Y | | | 1 | | | | | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Weston STW | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | |
| Batheaston Nature Res. | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | 1 | 1 | | 2 | |
| Chew Magna Res. | 2 | | 2 | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| CVL | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | | | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

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

There were just two records possibly involving the same individual: one heard calling at CVL on Aug. 8th and a juvenile here on 12th. As for 2006, this was a poor showing, see the ten-year table given below.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|------|----|----|-----|----|----|-----|----|----|------|
| 1987/97 Av | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 5 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 3/4 | 1 | 7 | 7/8 | 8 | 1 | 1/2 |

Total numbers recorded

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

Uncommon passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.

| | 1987-97 Av. | 1998 | 98 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|--------|-------------|------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Spring | 64 | 70 | 70 | 70 | (38) | 65 | 65 | 56 | 57 | 29 | 38 |
| Autumn | 178 | 149 | 249 | 175 | 138 | 160 | 166 | 178 | 136 | 139 | 141 |

Total of the maximum monthly counts at the coastal and reservoir sites for spring and autumn passage

Counts in 2007 were similar to those of 2005 and 2006 but down on the long-term average as is shown by the status table above. Also as in 2006 eight or nine wintered, the spring passage was on the poor side whilst the autumn passage was only slightly below normal. The main spring passage was from April 10th to May 20th, and the autumn passage was from June 25th to Sept. 22nd; one noted at CI-Y on June 10th was probably a very early returning migrant. The table gives the monthly maxima at the main sites. The largest count was 17 noted at BG on July 15th. Other reports included single birds at Backwell Lake in April and May, Henbury, Broom Hill and Wrington in July, and Littleton Warth and Westerleigh Common in August.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | | Aug | | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | | | | | | | 1-15 | 16-31 | 1-15 | 16-31 | | | | |
| OPS | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | 2 | 6 | 3 | 3 | | 1 | | |
| Sevenside | | | | 3 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 11 | 6 | 7 | 2 | | | |
| ASW | | | | 4 | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| Sea Mills & New Cut, R. Avon | 5 | 6 | 5 | 5 | | 2 | 3 | 9 | 10 | | 7 | 6 | 6 | 4 |
| PW | | | 2 | 3 | | | 3 | 8 | 2 | | 1 | | | |
| CI-Y | 1 | | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 11 | 12 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 1 | | |
| Axe Est./Weston STW | 1 | 1 | | 2 | 1 | | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | | |
| BG | 1 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 17 | 15 | 10 | 11 | 7 | 1 | | |
| CVL | | | | 5 | 3 | | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | | |
| BL | | | | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 | | |

SPOTTED SANDPIPER *Actitis macularia*

Very rare vagrant.

One record: an adult in breeding plumage at CVL from Aug. 7th to 9th (KEV *et al.*). [BBRC] This is the third record for the Avon area, one was recorded also at CVL in October 1982, and another at BG in November 2003.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

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

| YEAR | OPS | Sevenside | CI-Y | Av. |
|----------------------|-----|-----------|------|-----|
| 1987/88 -1996/97 Av. | 59 | 168 | 29 | 85 |
| 1997/98 -2005/06 Av. | 53 | 138 | 28 | 73 |
| 2006/07 | 57 | 160 | 28 | 82 |
| 2007/08 | 29 | 142 | 31 | 67 |

August to February average counts

Nationally there has been a slow but steady decline in numbers over the past 20 years which has not been mirrored in the Avon area. The status table average for 2007 is slightly down, this is probably not significant as it just reflects the fact that the some of the early autumn counts were below average; possibly the birds arrived later affected by adverse weather conditions. It is also possible that they are spreading out from their regular site at Sevenside both north to OPS and south to PW. At this latter site they roost on the navigation buoys at the mouth of the dock, and so are not easy to count. The table gives the monthly maxima at the main sites. There were only two other records: one on Steep Holm on April 6th – only the second record for the island (the first was in September 1962), and two at Littleton Warth on Aug. 12th.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| OPS | 105 | 135 | 71 | | 1 | | 9 | 21 | 35 | 20 | 30 | 34 |
| Sevenside | 190 | 160 | 180 | 115 | 15 | 1 | 60 | 115 | 150 | 110 | 170 | 210 |
| PW/Portishead | | 20 | | 26 | | | 20 | 42 | 90 | 90 | 40 | 1 |
| CI-Y | 33 | 38 | 45 | 38 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 10 | 18 | 36 | 44 | 35 |

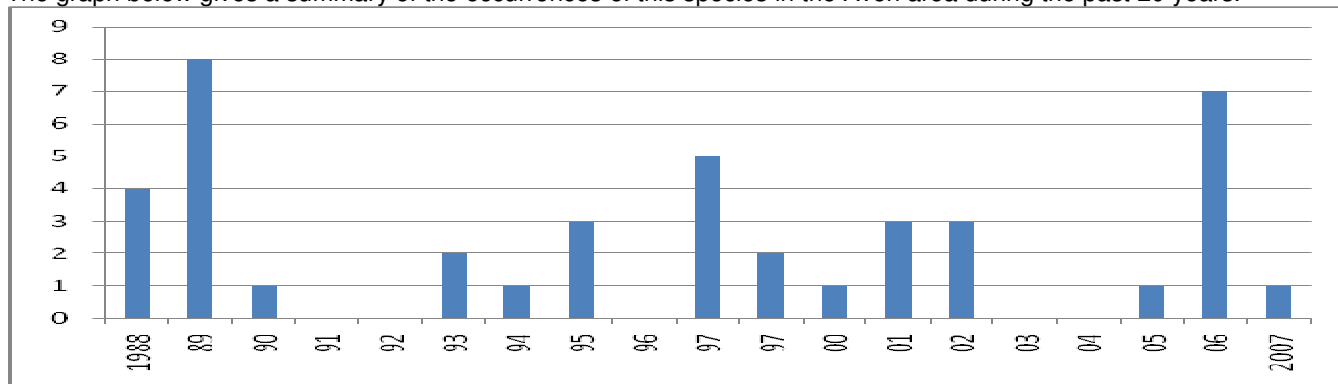
GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius*

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

One record: partial remains of one was found near Severn Beach on Dec. 31st (ED).

2005 There is also a late record of one at BL on Nov. 12th and 13th (NRM). Note that different individuals were also noted at this site on Nov. 5th and 6th, and on 15th and 16th.

The graph below gives a summary of the occurrences of this species in the Avon area during the past 20 years.

**AUTUMN MIGRATION AT CHEW VALLEY LAKE (CVL)**

Due to the generally high water levels autumn wader numbers at CVL very poor, even compared with previous autumns when the water levels were also high, 2006 for example; see table below.

| 1988/97 av. | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 |
|-------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 808 | 315 | 157 | 268 | 286 | 178 | 786 | 281 | 834 | 211 | 134 |

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

As in previous reports the table below gives the maximum count in each ten-day period from July 1st to Oct. 28th, and also includes our only migrant duck, Garganey. For the terns see the table on page 73. There were no records of Golden or Grey Plover, Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Bar-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel or Turnstone.

| | 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 | | | | | 2 | 1 | | | | | | |
| Oystercatcher | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Little Ringed Plover | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Ringed Plover | | | | 2 | | 1 | | | | | | |
| Lapwing | nc | nc | nc | 20 | 14 | 40 | nc | 60 | 10 | nc | nc | nc |
| Knot | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| Sanderling | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Dunlin | | 1 | 2 | 3 | | | | | 1 | | | |
| Snipe | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 8 | | |
| Black-tailed Godwit | | | | | 3 | | | | 29 | | | |
| Whimbrel | | | | 6 | 1 | | 2 | | | | | |
| Curlew | 1 | | | | | 7 | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| Spotted Redshank | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| Redshank | 5 | | | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| Greenshank | | | | | 2 | | 1 | | | | | |
| Green Sandpiper | | | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 |
| Wood Sandpiper | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Common Sandpiper | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | |

AUTUMN WADER MIGRATION ON THE COAST

Using the same ten-day counting method as for CVL above, the table below delineates the autumn coastal wader migration at the two best-watched sites – Severnside and CI-Y.

Only those species or races that occur on passage are included; for Dunlin, it is likely that all three Western Palearctic races occur (in widely varying proportions, probably most belong to the race *schinzii* but there is no direct evidence) on passage, whilst the wintering population involved almost exclusively individuals of the race *alpina*.

| | | 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 |
| Little Ringed Plover | CI-Y | | 2 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ringed Plover | SS | | | | 97 | 450 | 500 | 160 | | | 40 | | 14 |
| | CI-Y | | | | 2 | 55 | 160 | 150 | 32 | 20 | 22 | 14 | 11 |
| Golden Plover | SS | | | | | | | 1 | | | | 2 | |
| | CI-Y | | | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | | |
| Grey Plover | SS | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | 8 | 14 | 16 |
| | CI-Y | | | | | | 1 | 4 | | | | 13 | 14 |
| Knot | SS | | | | 1 | 18 | 25 | 15 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 2 | |
| | CI-Y | | 1 | | | 28 | 8 | 5 | 12 | 12 | | 2 | 2 |
| Sanderling | SS | | | 2 | | 5 | 1 | | | | 1 | | |
| | CI-Y | | | 1 | | 10 | | 1 | | | | | |
| Little Stint | SS | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | | |
| | CI-Y | | | | | 1 | 2 | | 1 | | | | |
| Curlew Sandpiper | SS | | | | | | 2 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 1 | | |
| | CI-Y | | | | | | | 1 | 5 | 1 | 1 | | |
| Dunlin | SS | 5 | 15 | 52 | 90 | 210 | 250 | 350 | 700 | 70 | 100 | 120 | 750 |
| | CI-Y | 1 | 70 | 90 | 45 | 70 | 160 | 300 | 210 | 75 | 30 | 35 | 175 |
| Ruff | SS | | | | | 1 | | | | | 2 | 4 | |
| | CI-Y | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| Black-tailed Godwit | SS | | 4 | 5 | | 3 | 5 | 1 | | | | 2 | 1 |
| | CI-Y | 1 | | | 5 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 9 | | | 1 | |
| Bar-tailed Godwit | SS | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | CI-Y | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 1 | |
| Whimbrel | SS | | 3 | 3 | | 3 | 1 | | | | | | |
| | CI-Y | 1 | 3 | 5 | 11 | 5 | 6? | | 1 | 1 | | | |
| Spotted Redshank | SS | | | | | | | | | | 2 | | 1 |
| | CI-Y | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Greenshank | SS | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | | | | | |
| | CI-Y | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | | | |
| Green Sandpiper | SS | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | 1 | | |
| | CI-Y | | | | | 3 | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Common Sandpiper | SS | 3 | 11 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 2 | | | | | |
| | CI-Y | 2 | 12 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | |

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus*

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

Five accepted records this year, all from Severn Beach: one on May 6th (JPM, RFR); nine on May 8th (PDB, RFR); one on May 19th (JPM, RFR); a second-year on June 3rd (BL, RFR) and another adult on Nov. 8th (PDB, SH).

The annual totals table on the next page shows that this is the second-best year of the last decade.

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*

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

Another good spring passage was responsible for a high total again this year; allowing for duplication, a minimum of 51 birds was seen in 2007.

The table below shows the records for April and May. The remaining records were as follows: Severnside, three on June 28th, and single birds on July 2nd and Nov. 13th (a late date for this species), also three were seen from the ss Balmoral three kms. off Sand Point on Sept. 3rd.

| | Apr | | | | | | May | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|-----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|---|---|---|---|----|---|----|----|----|----|--|
| | 15 | 19 | 24 | 25 | 27 | 30 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 10 | 12 | 18 | 28 | |
| OPS | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| Severnside | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 10 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 1 | | |
| Portishead | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | 2 | | | | | |
| Ladve Bay | | | | | | | 1 | | | | 3 | 2 | | 2 | | | | |

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua*

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

The table below of all records shows a pretty unremarkable year – in fact no count exceeded one!

| | Jan | | | | Apr | | May | | | | Jul | Sep | Oct |
|---------------|-----|---|----|----|-----|----|-----|---|----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| | 1 | 4 | 12 | 18 | 25 | 29 | 3 | 8 | 13 | 10 | 9 | 4 | 22 |
| OPS | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | 1 |
| Severnside | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Battery Point | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| Ladye Bay | | | | | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | |

SKUA sp. *Stercorarius sp.*

Four records of unidentified skuas were received this year - a flock of three past Battery Point on April 30th, and two at Ladye Bay on the same date, then single birds here on May 6th and 10th.

SKUA SUMMARY 1998 - 2007

| | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 |
|------------------|------|----|----|-----|-----|----|----|----|-----|----|
| Pomarine Skua | 3 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 59 | 4 | 3 | 13 |
| Arctic Skua | 122+ | 19 | 17 | 34+ | 45+ | 54 | 65 | 23 | 50+ | 51 |
| Long-tailed Skua | | 1 | | | 1 | | | | | |
| Great Skua | 17+ | 1 | 5+ | 11+ | 16+ | 16 | 26 | 10 | 26+ | 13 |
| Skua sp. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 58 | 11 | 6 | 7 |

Total number of skuas for the last ten years

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

Uncommon, but increasing winter visitor and passage migrant.

Another wide scatter of records; the monthly maxima table below shows that records were received from 23 sites in 2007 – more than ever before.

The continued regular presence in late summer in the Portishead/RPD area was in contrast to the very poor summer at CVL; of note also were the birds at Somerdale in spring (a site record), feeding with large flocks of Black-headed Gulls on flooded football fields.

Monthly maxima at each site (all records received) are overleaf.

[illegible]

| | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | : | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| No days recorded | 6 | | 5 | 2 | | 4 | 10 | 13 | 3 |
| Maximum count | 1 | | 4 | 1 | | 1 | 3 | 7 | 1 |

CVL Little Gull counts

The final table below shows the average counts at CVL for 2007 and the previous decade:

| | 1997 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|----------------------------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| Av of 3 highest counts Jan - Jun | 16 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 13 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Av of 3 highest counts Jul - Dec | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 15 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 5 |

SABINE'S GULL *Larus sabini*

Very scarce autumn passage migrant; most occur during or after westerly gales, but has occurred in calm weather. Very rare as a spring passage migrant.

There were two records of this sought-after 'sea' gull, both at CVL; a summer-plumage adult seen briefly on Aug. 22nd (DJA), and a juvenile on Oct. 9th (JP, SP *et al.*).

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*

Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant; small numbers of non-breeding birds remain throughout the summer. Huge winter roost at CVL.

Monthly maxima from the well-recorded sites (or those attracting large numbers which are covered with some regularity) are shown below. In addition, a flock of c.500 was seen hawking flying ants over Ashbourne Park, Weston-s-Mare on July 14th, with 50 doing the same here on July 19th.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--------------------|------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|------|
| OPS | 250 | 1000 | 1000 | 35 | 19 | 59 | 1000 | 1300 | 2500 | 500 | 100 | 1000 |
| Littleton Warth | 200 | 45 | | 18 | | | 140 | 465 | 850 | 635 | 150 | |
| Severnside | 1000 | | 7 | 27 | 20 | 35 | 200 | | | | | |
| Cl-Yeo | 2000 | 550 | 90 | 7 | 2 | 170 | 500 | 650 | 420 | 200 | 230 | 350 |
| Axe Estuary | 330 | | | 6 | | 135 | | | | | | |
| Weston Bay | 750 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Weston STW | 159 | 61 | 1 | 6 | | 13 | 28 | 135 | 550 | 277 | 131 | 130 |
| ASW | 180 | 5 | | | | | 3 | 20 | 65 | | 220 | 600 |
| Sea Mills | 900 | 1000 | 300 | | | 25 | 200 | 400 | 300 | 350 | 300 | 700 |
| Backwell Lake | 230 | 650 | | | | | | | | 240 | 220 | |
| Somerdale | 1700 | | 1300 | | | | 250 | | | | | |
| R. Avon (Keynsham) | 2000 | 943 | 550 | | | | 60 | | 100 | | 84 | 134 |
| BG | | | | | | | | | | | 50 | 550 |
| BL | 200 | 200 | 50 | 2 | | 5 | 63 | 150 | 219 | 1500 | 269 | 1000 |

Other records

A completely white bird was seen at CVL on Feb. 3rd and 17th. The first juvenile was seen at Herriott's Pool, CVL on June 16th. Another juvenile seen here on Aug. 19th had been colour-ringed as a nestling at the Cotswold Water Park on June 12th.

The Bath Peregrines took 26 during the year at least one in every month except June.

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.

Typically, recorded only at the CVL gull roost: adults were seen on Feb. 2nd, 3rd and 4th (RMI *et al.*); March 24th (RMA) and Dec. 31st (RMA).

Two or three were recorded in most years during the last decade although none were seen in 2000 or 2005 and five were recorded in 2004.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce in summer. Largest flocks are usually on upland or flooded fields and are often thinly spread elsewhere. Huge winter roost at CVL.

The table below shows records from sites which are counted regularly or recorded in large flocks; as usual, most of the big counts came from daytime feeding areas, with the coastal 'local patches' in the lower Estuary being very poorly-represented. The large numbers in the Somerdale/Keynsham area, as usual, were due to flooding along the River Avon (cf. Black-headed and Mediterranean Gulls). As with Black-headed Gull no counts were received from CVL.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | : | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--------------------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| OPS | 800 | 1000 | 120 | 2 | 1 | | 57 | 105 | 100 | 7 | 20 | 300 |
| Littleton Warth | 250 | 15 | | 32 | | | | | 6 | | | |
| Severnside | 150 | 120 | 60 | 9 | 22 | | | 3 | 1 | 28 | | 15 |
| CI-Y | 4 | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| Axe Estuary | 5 | 1 | 6 | | | | | | | | | |
| Weston STW | 1 | | 2 | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| Sea Mills | 3 | 10 | 2 | | | | | | | | 4 | 2 |
| Ingst | | | | | | | | | | | | 270 |
| Lansdown | | 410 | | | | | | | | 110 | | |
| Norton Hawkfield | | | | | | | | | | | | 390 |
| Wrighton/Lulsgate | | 500 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Queen Charlton | 150 | | | | | | | | | | 35 | |
| Chew Magna/Stoke | | 350 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Somerdale | 2000 | | 600 | | | | | | 1 | | | 82 |
| R. Avon (Keynsham) | 3700 | 120 | 440 | | | | | | | | | |
| BL | 51 | 5 | 1 | | | | | | 2 | 7 | 71 | 500 |

Other records

An adult with a primary pattern not unlike that of a Kumlien's Gull (*Larus glucooides kumlien*) was seen at CVL on Feb. 17th.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

Western race *L. f. graellsii*: Common winter visitor, passage migrant and breeding resident. In addition to the colony on Steep Holm, there are large urban colonies in Bristol and Bath and in towns along the Severn Estuary.

Scandinavian race *L. f. intermedius*: Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant; almost certainly overlooked.

Main sites: Monthly maxima at the regularly-recorded sites are shown in the table below:

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| OPS | 20 | 100 | 25 | 80 | 25 | 9 | 2 | 17 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| Littleton Warth | 1 | 4 | | 22 | 21 | | | 1 | 5 | 1 | | |
| CI-Y | 6 | 16 | 30 | 35 | 45 | 4 | 12 | | 4 | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| Axe Estuary | 7 | 5 | 14 | 24 | 37 | 6 | | | | | | |
| Weston STW | 4 | 6 | 51 | 71 | 53 | 15 | 13 | 54 | 6 | 2 | 7 | |
| Sea Mills | 3 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 37 | 2 | | 6 | | | | |
| Queen Charlton | | 100 | 57 | 33 | | | | | 29 | | | 15 |
| R. Avon (Keynsham) | 65 | 22 | 29 | | | | | | | | 11 | |
| Somerdale | 180 | | 170 | | | | | | | | | 15 |
| BL | 14 | 24 | 345 | 89 | 73 | 40 | 5 | 43 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 10 |

Other notes: An apparently healthy juvenile, presumably locally-bred, took up residence on a pontoon in Bristol docks, where it remained through the winter. It did not moult into first-winter plumage, and retained very fresh juvenile plumage into 2008. At CVL on Oct. 6th, an adult was watched fighting with a Great Cormorant (which tried to drown the gull) – the gull was left in an exhausted state and later died.

Intermedius: Single adults recorded as this race were seen at CVL on Jan. 22nd, Feb. 7th and 11th, March 15th and 19th. One with a broken wing was present at Herriott's Pool from late summer; it underwent very little moult following its injury and became increasingly worn and tatty – it was last seen on Dec. 1st and was presumed to have died subsequently. An adult was seen at BG on Oct. 23rd.

Fuscus/intermedius: At CVL, an adult showing characteristics consistent with the race *fuscus* was watched and photographed at Herriott's Pool on the evening of April 17th (AHD, RMI, KEV). This follows a similar record of one in the same place on April 23rd and 24th, 2003. *Fuscus* records are considered by BBRC, but due to the difficulties of ruling out small dark *intermedius* they do not consider this taxon safely diagnosable without tangible proof of origin (for instance, a ringed individual).

Breeding: On Steep Holm, AJP counted c.434 pairs on May 5th (similar to 2006, but *cf.* 521 in 2004) – a decrease reflected in the Flat Holm (Glamorgan) population. Survival rates of young were noted as being very poor in 2007.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

Western race *L. a. argentatus*: Common winter visitor, passage migrant and breeding resident; largest numbers occur near the coast, or around Bristol and Bath. In addition to the colony on Steep Holm, there are large urban colonies in Bristol and Bath and in towns along the Estuary.

Scandinavian race *L. a. argentatus*: Uncommon winter visitor; infrequently recorded.

Main sites: Monthly maxima at the regularly-recorded sites are shown in the table below:

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| OPS | 50 | 100 | 25 | 200 | 20 | 16 | 1 | 8 | 10 | 30 | 30 | 15 |
| Littleton Warth | | 7 | 2 | 13 | 15 | | | 1 | 6 | | 14 | |
| CI-Y | 16 | 25 | 60 | 80 | 130 | 8 | 10 | 12 | 20 | 6 | 20 | 8 |
| Axe Estuary | 42 | 9 | 36 | 3 | 132 | 11 | | | | | | |
| Weston STW | 13 | 36 | 126 | 123 | 137 | 27 | 3 | 428 | 347 | 73 | 38 | 42 |
| ASW | | | 4 | 12 | 6 | | 12 | | | 18 | 8 | 24 |
| R. Avon (Sea Mills area) | | 3 | 100 | | 35 | 6 | | | | | | 100 |
| BL | 3 | 2 | 10 | 2 | 4 | 2 | | | 19 | 29 | 9 | 20 |

Argentatus: Dark-mantled adults are occasionally seen in the roost at CVL; this year recorded on Dec. 1st and 12th (two birds) and one on 29th.

Breeding: At Steep Holm on May 5th, AJP reported c.1250 pairs, confirming the overall increase in numbers. As with Lesser Black-backed Gull, survival rates of young were very poor this year.

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 at each site (all records received) are shown

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Sevenside | | | | | | | | 2 | | | | |
| RPD | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| PW | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| BG | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | |
| Somerdale | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| R. Avon (Keynsham) | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Queen Charlton | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| BG | 1 | | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | |
| CVL | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| BL | 1 | | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Ubley | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | |

Although there were records from more sites than usual, counts were low as in 2006, especially at CVL. Is this species really on a downturn or are we suffering from 'Yellow-legged Gull fatigue'?

CASPIAN GULL *Larus cachinnans*

Rare passage migrant/winter visitor.

A first-winter was seen at CVL on Jan. 13th (RMi, KEV), 20th (RMA, AHD) and Feb. 24th (KEV), it was also noted in Somerset. This is the sixth record for the Avon area.

Despite the increased awareness of the identification of this newly-split species, it remains a rare bird in our area. Frustratingly for our local gull enthusiasts, sites in the Midlands are producing Caspian Gulls with increasing regularity, but it seems that they just do not like flying any further south west than Oxfordshire!

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucooides*

Scarce/very scarce winter visitor; occurs more frequently than Glaucous Gull.

A juvenile was seen in the gull roost at CVL on Feb. 11th (RMi, KEV).

During the last decade none were seen in four years and one in another four, but six were noted in 2000 and three in 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.

As in 2006, the main site was again CVL, with a maximum count of ten on Aug. 19th. The birds at Kenn Moor, Somerdale and Ubley were noteworthy – this is still a scarce bird anywhere inland away from the three main reservoirs.

Monthly maxima at each site (all records received) are shown

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| OPS | 3 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Littleton Warth | 3 | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| Sevenside | 1 | 2 | 4 | 3 | | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Avonmouth | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| RPD | | | | | | | | | 3 | | | 2 |
| Portbury Wharf | | | 2 | 2 | | | | | | | | |
| Portishead | | | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| CI-Y | 1 | 2 | 2 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Axe Estuary | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Weston STW | | 1 | 1 | 4 | | 1 | | | | | | |
| ASW | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| R. Avon (Sea Mills-Cumberland Basin) | 3 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | | 2 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| R. Avon (Bristol) | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 2 |
| R. Avon (Keynsham) | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Kenn Moor | | | | | | | | 2 | | | | |
| Somerdale | | | 2 | | | | | | | | | |
| BG | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 2 | | 3 |
| CVL | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 7 | 10 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 2 |
| BL | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Ubley | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | |

Breeding On Steep Holm, AJP located eleven occupied nests on June 15th, but only three juveniles were seen.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

Usually a storm-driven visitor; uncommon, but large flocks are sometimes blown into the Estuary. Scarce inland, usually only at CVL.

Although a normal number of records was received, with a typical spread throughout the year, counts from the main site, Sevenside, were low, with only one count exceeding 100. The table below shows all records received, whilst the second table shows that in terms of numbers, this was the second poorest year in the last decade:

| | Jan | | | | | | | Feb | | Mar | | | | | Apr | | May | | |
|------------|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|-----|---|----|----|----|-----|----|-----|----|----|
| | 1 | 9 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 18 | 21 | 27 | 28 | 6 | 9 | 11 | 16 | 18 | 9 | 17 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| OPS | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Sevenside | 15 | 50 | 15 | 32 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 50 | 60 | 1 | 1 | | 30 | | 8 | 1 | 1 | 25 | 14 |
| Battery Pt | | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| Ladye Bay | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 15 | | | 15 | | |
| CVL | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |

| | May | | | | | Jul | | Aug | Sep | | | Nov | | | | Dec | |
|-----------|-----|----|----|----|----|-----|---|-----|-----|----|----|-----|---|----|-----|-----|----|
| | 10 | 12 | 13 | 17 | 25 | 2 | 4 | 25 | 20 | 24 | 28 | 3 | 9 | 10 | 17 | 2 | 29 |
| OPS | | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | 2 | 110 | 95 | |
| Sevenside | | 8 | | 1 | 5 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | 7 |
| Avonmouth | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| RPD | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | 35 | |
| Ladye Bay | 31 | 40 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 50 | 40 | |
| CI-Y | | | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| CVL | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | | |

In addition to the records tabulated, one was found dead on the tideline at CI-Y on April 1st.

| Sevenside | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|-------------------------|------|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Av. of 3 highest counts | 157 | 266 | 157 | 53 | 317 | 303 | 263 | 166 | 416 | 88 |
| No of dates recorded | 19 | 23 | 22 | 27 | 36 | 22 | 30 | 29 | 22 | 27 |

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

Uncommon passage migrant; most frequent in the autumn when occasional influxes occur. Most records are from CVL.

A poor year. The table below shows all records received; with the exception of a small influx on July 20th, all counts were in single figures.

Of note this year was a nil-return from Sevenside:

| | Apr | | May | | | | Jul | | Aug | | Sep | | | | Oct | | |
|------------|-----|----|-----|---|----|----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|---|---|
| | 29 | 30 | 3 | 4 | 13 | 23 | 20 | 21 | 10 | 20 | 13 | 14 | 24 | 25 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| Battery Pt | | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CVL | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 28 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 2 | | 1 | 1 |
| BL | | | | | | | 17 | | | | | | 1 | | 2 | 1 | 1 |

The table below shows average counts at CVL (the main site) since 1999:

| | 1999 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|---------------------------------------|------|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| Av. of 3 highest counts Apr - Jun | 3 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Av. of 3 highest counts Jul - Oct | 43 | 10 | 90 | 13 | 36 | 70 | 31 | 30 | 13 |
| No of dates recorded (total for year) | 25 | 29+ | 40 | 12 | 25 | 46 | 17 | 42 | 15 |

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

Scarce/uncommon passage migrant – most are recorded on the coast.

Another tern seen in low numbers this year; in fact the four birds seen in 2007 (but see below) make this the poorest year since two were recorded in 1995. The records are as follows.

Severn Beach - one on May 18th;

Ladye Bay - one on May 1st;

CVL - two on April 24th.

The Bath Peregrines took one on May 4th.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Passage migrant, a few birds occur throughout the summer - generally uncommon, but large flocks have been recorded some years.

As with the previous two species, a poor year; recorded from April 14th to Sept. 29th. All records received away from CVL are shown in the table below; of note was the single bird seen over Prospect Site (Lansdown) on June 12th, flying towards Swineford.

| | Apr | | | May | | | | Jun | | | Jul | | | Aug | | | | Sep | | |
|----------------|-----|----|-----|-----|---|----|----|-----|----|----|-----|---|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|
| | 14 | 28 | 30 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 24 | 12 | 26 | 30 | 1 | 6 | 30 | 8 | 11 | 22 | 27 | 20 | 24 | 29 |
| Severnside | 6 | 2 | 60 | | 5 | | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | 3 | | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | 1 |
| Ladye Bay | | | 150 | 65 | | 46 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Prospect Stile | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| BG | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| BL | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | |

CVL Records from the main site, CVL, are summarised in the table below. Although the species was recorded on a reasonable number of dates, 2007 was characterised by very low counts and an early end to the main autumn passage. A bird-day total of 124 was the second-poorest since 1999.

The second table (below) confirms that both passage periods, especially autumn were well below average:

| | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep |
|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| No. of days recorded | 2 | 8 | 7 | 20 | 13 | 3 |
| Maximum count | 3 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 2 |

The final table gives data for the past decade.

| | 1999 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|----------------------------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| Av. of 3 highest counts Apr -Jun | 6 | 6 | 33 | 11 | 28 | 3 | 11 | 20 | 5 |
| Av. of 3 highest counts Jul -Nov | 28 | 15 | 24 | 37 | 24 | 37 | 9 | 35 | 6 |

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

Usually an uncommon passage migrant, but can occasionally occur in large flocks in the Estuary under favourable conditions in spring; otherwise generally occurs in smaller numbers than Common Tern. Often occurs after westerly gales.

In contrast to its congeners, Arctic Tern was recorded in reasonably good numbers in 2007, particularly in the autumn, as the tables below show.

Records were received from April 24th to Oct.13th; the 'hit and miss' big spring flocks in the Severn Estuary were evidently a 'miss' this year! All records away from CVL, the most regular site this year, are shown below:

At CVL, regular coverage produced records on a total of 28 dates this year, with a good autumn passage:

2006 Part of the table in last year's *Report* (on page 70) was incorrectly printed; a corrected table appears below:

The 2007 tern autumn ten-day totals seen at CVL are listed below.

COMMON/ARCTIC TERN *Sterna hirundo/paradisaea*

[illegible]

LITTLE TERN *Sternula albifrons*

Scarce/uncommon passage migrant; most records are from the coast. Generally the scarcest of the five 'common' terns.

Three accepted records; please note that a brief description is required to support records of this species in Avon (*E*ds).

Severn Beach - two on May 1st (PDB, RFR);

CVL - one on May 12th (RMA, DJA), and one on July 21st (RJH).

COMMON GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge*

Scarce storm-driven visitor throughout the year; no inland records.

Recorded on four dates as follows:

OPS - one on Sept. 22nd (unusual here);

Severnside - single birds on Jan. 12th, April 25th and Sept. 4th.

COMMON GUILLEMOT/RAZORBILL *Uria aalge/Alca torda*

One at Severn Beach on May 12th.

LITTLE AUK *Alle alle*

Very scarce storm-driven winter visitor, usually at Severnside. Very rare inland (the only auk species recently recorded inland, but no CVL records!)

One was seen at close range on the water and several times in flight off Severn Beach on Nov 17th (JPM, PDB *et al.*).

Unusual Tern and Auk Ten-year Table

| | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|-------------------------|------|----|----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| White-winged Black Tern | | | | | 1 | | | 1 | | |
| Sandwich Tern | 11 | 14 | 12 | 23+ | 20 | 86 | 13 | 6 | 21 | 4 |
| Roseate Tern | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| Little Tern | 3 | 5 | 4 | 6+ | 2+ | 16 | 6 | 1 | 26 | 4 |
| Guillemot | 10 | 2 | 9 | 6 | 10 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 11 | 4 |
| Razorbill | | | | 1 | 2 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Guillemot/Razorbill | 1 | 1 | 4 | 25 | 16 | 3 | | | | 1 |
| Black Guillemot | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Little Auk | 2 | | | 1 | 1 | | | | 2 | 1 |
| Puffin | | | | | 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 | 191 | 61 | -5 | -18 | 90 |

More records were received than in previous years, mainly via Bird Track.

Largish flocks were reported on the derelict SWEB building in Bath (148 on Jan. 6th) and Stockwood Vale (70 on Sept. 22nd). At Five Arches, Radstock there was a flock of up to 60 birds all year.

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 100 | 90 | 123 | 134 | 145 | 140 | 163 | 125 | 116 | 116 |

Avon BBS Index 1998 = 100

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Fairly common and increasing breeding resident. BBS Distribution 29%. UK population change 1994-2005: up 9%.

A good year with records from 90 sites (*cf.* 33 in 2006).

Flocks The largest count received was of 68+ at Caswell Cross, Portbury on Nov. 2nd. Regular at OPS, with a maximum count of 60 on Jan. 2nd and smaller numbers in the second winter period (up to 25). Also regular at Weston STW with a maximum count of 26 in March.

On Steep Holm one flying along the south side on May 19th was the first record for more than 20 years.

Breeding Evidence was received from CVL (four singing males), Combe Down (singing male in June), Weston STW (pair bred in an owl box) and Weston Wood (singing in February, April and July).

2006 At Weston STW a flock of 81 was feeding on dumped grain on March 25th, with 74 still present on April 5th.

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Abundant and increasing breeding resident. BBS distribution 100%. BBS population estimate 18,300 breeding pairs. UK population change 1994 - 2005: up 19% Local ten-yr change: up 48%.

| | WBC | WGS | BBS | CABS | WBC |
|---------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| %Change | -21 | -9 | 4 | 27 | 129 |

A large number of records were received, mainly via BirdTrack.

January to April Very few sizeable flocks were reported: c400 at CVL on Jan. 6th, 150 at Corston on Feb. 27th, 120 at Batheaston NR on April 5th, 100 at West Littleton on April 6th, 90 at Queen Charlton on March 31st and 81 at Priors Wood on Jan. 13th. Rather unusually one at Clutton on Feb. 2nd was calling at 0300!

Breeding Only noted from five sites: Henbury (adult feeding young on Feb. 17th), Leap Valley, Downend (young on June 10th), North Yate (young on April 27th), Steep Holm (fresh eggshell in September) and Weston STW (six pairs).

Migrants Not much evidence of movements was seen this year, mainly in late October and November: 210 to S over Downend on Oct. 21st, 50 over Henbury on 30th, 100+ over Clevedon on Nov. 2nd and 4th, 540 to W over Downend on 3rd, and 500 to E over Stoke Bishop on 10th.

June to December Some good sized flocks were seen early in the period with 350 near Swineford on June 23rd and 350 at Chapel Pill Farm on Aug. 30th.

Later there were 200 at OPS on Nov. 25th, 200 at Abbots Leigh on Nov. 30th, 360 at Keynsham on Dec. 17th and 230 at Norton Hawkfield on 31st.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 100 | 104 | 105 | 120 | 135 | 135 | 138 | 139 | 147 | 148 |

Avon BBS Index 1998 = 100

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common breeding resident. BBS distribution 78%. BBS population estimate 3300 breeding pairs. UK population change 1994-2005: up 38%. Local ten-yr change: up 23%.

| | WBC | WGS | BBS | CABS | WBC |
|---------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| %Change | -15 | -13 | -15 | 6 | 42 |

Although a high number of reports were received no large flocks were recorded. On Steep Holm single birds were noted on May 25th and Oct. 4th.

Breeding Pairs were nest building in Redland in January and on St Valentine's Day in Winscombe. At Buchanan's Wharf, Bristol, a pair had two young by March 19th. In December a pair was copulating in a Keynsham garden on 24th.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 100 | 115 | 134 | 141 | 151 | 167 | 159 | 136 | 139 | 123 |

Avon BBS Index 1998 = 100

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

Scarce passage migrant. Last breeding record in 1983. UK 25-yr change: down 77%.

Only two records of single birds (but see below) were received, as follows:

Marshfield - seen in flight on the evening of June 2nd (AHD);

BG - a first year on Sept. 11th (TEB).

The table below gives total annual *bird-days* and number of individuals over the last ten years.

| Year | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|-------------------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|------|
| No. of <i>bird-days</i> | 9 | 3+ | 6 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 10+ | 5 | 7 | 2 |
| No. of individuals | 6+ | 3+ | 6 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 |

The Bath Peregrines took one on Oct. 10th.

RING-NECKED PARAKEET *Psittacula krameri*

Status uncertain, some records may refer to wanderers from the substantial home counties feral population.

Reported again from the Clevedon area – seen at Blakes Pool, Cl-Y on Nov. 27th, and subsequently in a Clevedon garden on several dates in December.

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 12th. Ten-yr av. last date Aug. 5th.

A better year than 2006 in terms of bird-days – see table below. However only 17 were counted in 536 hours of BBS surveying and it is no longer appropriate to calculate an Avon BBS index for the species.

| Year | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|-------------------------|------|------|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| No. of <i>bird-days</i> | 139 | 105+ | 102 | 38 | 66 | 93 | 74 | 97 | 75 | 100 |

Total bird-days for each of the last ten years

First noted at PW on April 11th (*cf.* 11th in 2004, 6th in 2005 and 12th in 2006). Other early arrivals were at CVL on 15th, Severn Beach on 16th, and two at Failand on 17th.

The only record after June 13th was of a juvenile at CVL between September 10th and 19th. This is the first September record since 1997 and the latest record since 1994 (when one was seen on 22nd).

The table below gives a month-by-month breakdown of bird-days, records and sites for 2007 (with figures for 2006 shown in brackets).

| | April | May | June | July | August | September |
|-----------|---------|----------|---------|-------|--------|-----------|
| Bird-days | 39 (12) | 43 (50+) | 16 (10) | 0 (1) | 0 (2) | 5 (0) |
| Records | 35 (14) | 43 (35) | 15 (11) | 0 (1) | 0 (2) | 5 (0) |
| Sites | 17 (9) | 19 (17) | 9 (8) | 0 (1) | 0 (1) | 1 (0) |

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 91 records from 26 sites was received, the number of sites being well down on recent years (see table below).

Regularly seen at the following sites (in alphabetical order): BL, Compton Dando, Congresbury Moor, CVL and PW.

One flew across the M32, near the Eastville junction, on the evening of Jan. 24th. Corpses were found at CVL in February (road casualty) and December (cause of death unclear).

Breeding In NS two pairs bred, both with five young; in BA a pair bred, again with five young. No information was received from the Cam Valley area.

| Year | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|----------------|------|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|------|
| No. of records | 65 | 56 | 38 | 24 | 65 | 88 | 93 | 94 | 119 | 91 |
| No. of sites | 29 | n/c | 25 | 20 | 30 | 35 | 38 | 43 | 44 | 26 |

Barn Owl - 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 total of 134 records was received from 46 sites, a slight reduction in the number of sites compared to recent years (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 Langford, OPS, PW, Queen Charlton and Wrington. Although the species used to be regular at CVL the only sighting during the year was on Jan. 19th.

Whilst most records related to single birds there were up to four at Wrington in October and November, and three at OPS on Oct. 23rd.

Breeding Records were received from the following sites (in alphabetical order): Chew Magna, Dundry (three pairs), Queen Charlton (one young), Saltford (pair mating in February) and Thornbury Castle (two young).

| Year | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|----------------|------|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| No. of records | 142 | 134 | 149 | 94 | 141 | 126 | 128 | 114 | 147 | 134 |
| No. of sites | 57 | n/c | 64 | 39 | 47 | 58 | 48 | 48 | 49 | 46 |

Total number of records and sites per year

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Fairly common breeding resident. UK 25-yr change: down 24%.

A total of 293 records was received from 95 sites, both of which were the highest counts in recent years (see table below).

Recorded in every month, particularly from May onwards, although regular reports only came from (in alphabetical order): BL, Alexandra Road (Clevedon), Easton-in-Gordano, Mount Beacon Bath, Nailsea and Wrington.

Breeding A good breeding year with records from: BL (two young ringed), Brockley Combe, Burrington Combe, CVL, Goblin Combe, Hill Road (Clevedon), Kenn Moor, Morgans Hill, Nailsea (two young), Sheep Wood, Stowey Bottom, Westbury-on-Trym (one young) and Wrington (three broods with probably five young).

Counts The highest counts outside the breeding season were from Wrington, with seven on Jan. 28th and nine on Sept. 4th.

| Year | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|----------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| No. of records | 129 | 136 | 149 | 124 | 145 | 125 | 227 | 220 | 235 | 293 |
| No. of sites | 54 | n/c | 65 | 50 | 55 | 54 | 66 | 89 | 57 | 95 |

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.

One record: a single bird in a dense hedge at Abbots Leigh on Nov. 17th (RJH).

This follows two records in 2006. During the last 20 years the species was recorded annually up to 2003 but there were no records in 2004 or 2005.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly on the coast.

A total of 101 records representing 99 bird-days (*cf.* 56 records and 105 bird-days in 2005 and 79 records and 100 bird-days in 2006) was received.

A poor first-winter period but a better second-winter period. The highest count was of five at Aust Warth on Dec. 9th.

First winter period Single birds noted at only five sites (*cf.* eleven in 2006) and not seen after April 14th (*cf.* May 13th in 2006):

Aust Warth - ten dates in January and four dates in February (last on 13th);
 Severn Beach - Jan. 6th;
 Cl-Y - March 15th;
 Sand Pt - flew to N on April 11th;
 Weston STW - April 14th.

Second winter period Noted from Sept. 13th (*cf.* Oct. 14th in 2006) at seven sites (*cf.* four in 2006), as follows:

OPS - single birds on Oct. 28th and Nov. 3rd;
 Thornbury Pill - single on Oct. 28th
 Aust/Northwick Warths - four dates in September, 19 dates in October and 18 dates in December. Two birds seen on 13 dates, three birds on eight dates with five present on Dec. 9th;
 Severn Beach - single on Oct. 21st;
 RPD - single one on Nov. 17th;
 Cl-Y - single birds on Oct. 28th, Nov. 5th, and Dec. 24th and 30th;
 Marshfield - the only inland record, a single bird on Dec. 25th.

The table below gives the monthly summary for 2007.

| Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | : | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | 2007 (2006) |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|------|-----|-----|-----|-------------|
| Records | 15 | 4 | 1 | 2 | | 1 | 19 | 31 | 30 | 101 (79) |
| Bird-days | 11 | 4 | 1 | 2 | | 1 | 9 | 32 | 41 | 99 (100) |
| Max. count | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 5 (6) |



NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Very scarce passage migrant and occasional breeding summer visitor.

At Burrington Ham churring was heard on June 1st (pair), June 2nd (two males), July 10th (three) and July 13th (one). On June 3rd, at nearby Rod's Pot on the border with Somerset, one male was churring in Avon and three birds were trapped and ringed – one of these had been ringed at the same site in 2006.

Records over the last ten years are as follows:

| Year | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|----------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| Churring males | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| No. of reports | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 8 | 2 |

SWIFT *Apus apus*

Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant. BBS distribution 56%. BBS population estimate 2000 pairs. UK population change 1994 - 2005: down 21%. Local ten-yr change: down 23%. Ten-yr av. first date April 17th. Ten-yr av. last date Sept. 19th.

Arrival The first were two over CVL on April 17th (16th in 2006). There were then no records until 20th when six were over Brislington and two over Breach Hill, near Chew Stoke; on 21st there were 24 over CVL and birds at three other sites. On the evening of 22nd 77 were counted in an hour over Redland and on 23rd there were 100 at CVL; one over Stoke Bishop the same day was about ten days earlier than normal.

Summer flocks Large flocks were regularly noted at CVL in windy conditions during May with c1,000 on 10th, c3000 on 11th, c1500 on 14th, a phenomenal c10000 on 16th, c5000 on 28th (when also c1000 at BL) and c1500 on 29th. The only large flock during June was c2500 on 7th but in July there were c2500 on 4th, c1000 on 5th and c1000 on 25th and 26th. On July 27th, 300 were counted in 40 minutes at Keynsham moving to SW.

Breeding Again seriously under recorded with records only from Blagdon, Hanham, Hotwells and Redland. Observers in Clevedon, Old Sodbury and Stoke Bishop commented on the poor numbers.

In the Montrose Avenue area of Redland the first birds arrived on April 21st (*cf.* 22nd in 2006) and the last departed on Aug. 8th (*cf.* 14th in 2006) with the majority leaving at the end of July.

Departure After 20 at CVL on Aug. 4th, the last three records were as follows: six at Redland on Aug. 8th, one over Bishop Sutton and CVL on 18th, and three over Tyndalls Park, Bristol on Sept. 5th.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|----|----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 100 | 112 | 107 | 100 | 92 | 120 | 110 | 81 | 72 | 77 |

Avon BBS Index 1998 = 100

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 80 localities (*cf.* 74 in 2006) during the year.

January to March records came from 33 sites but regular records (four or more) only came from CVL, R. Avon at Keynsham and Winford Brook. All records related to single birds apart from two at Blackhorse on Jan. 7th and a pair on Winford Brook on March 9th.

Breeding Although records for the period April to June came from 23 sites, there was no actual evidence of breeding. In fact all the records related to single birds apart from two at Publow on May 18th and two at Frenchay on June 7th.

As usual recorded more widely (53 sites) from July to the end of the year. Regular reports of one or two came from BG, Batheaston NR, BL, CVL, Kenn Moor, Keynsham Mill Grounds, New Passage, R. Avon at Keynsham, RPD, Winford Brook and Weston TSW. The Bath Peregrines took one in June.

WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*

Very scarce autumn passage migrant. Very rare in spring.

One record: a single bird on Sept 5th, seen from East Dundry Lane (between East Dundry and Whitchurch) (DN). Initially seen from a moving car, the observer was able to return an hour later, relocate the bird and watch it for 20 minutes.

Records over the last ten years are as follows:

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| Year. | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| No. of individuals | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 |

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Fairly common breeding resident, increasing nationally and probably locally. BBS distribution 46%. UK population change 1994 - 2005: up 31%. Local ten-yr change: down 20%.

| | | | |
|---------|-----|-----|-----|
| | WBC | BBS | WBC |
| %Change | 0 | -19 | -40 |

An extremely good year with a total of 529 records from 235 sites, both well in excess of any count in the last ten years as can be seen from the following table.

| Year | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|----------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| No. of records | 370 | 215 | 223 | 137 | 165 | 323 | 236 | 333 | 231 | 529 |
| No. of sites | 100 | n/c | 87 | 63 | 75 | 127 | 103 | 127 | 93 | 235 |

Green Woodpecker total number of records and sites per year

Breeding There were 220 records from 132 sites during April, May and June (*cf.* 77 records from 57 sites in 2006), distributed as follows:

April - 87 records from 67 sites (*cf.* 26 sites in 2004, 61 sites in 2005 and 30 sites in 2006)

May - 62 records from 54 sites (*cf.* 17 sites in 2004, 53 sites in 2005 and 21 sites in 2006)

June - 72 records from 58 sites (*cf.* 6 sites in 2004, 36 sites in 2005 and 14 sites in 2006).

At CVL six singing males were located (*cf.* five in 2006) and juveniles were seen at Hicks Gate (Winterbourne), the southern edge of Keynsham (two), Lawrence Weston, Morgans Hill (Nailsea, two), Portishead Lake Grounds (two), Ridge Woods (Yate), Stoke Bishop (three), Stockwood Vale, and near Tortworth Lake.

In Clutton the call was copied by the local Starlings.

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|------|
| 100 | 77 | 93 | 89 | 85 | 82 | 92 | 102 | 98 | 80 |

Avon BBS Index 1998 = 100

The Bath Peregrines took six during the year, two in March, April and August.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Fairly common breeding resident increasing nationally and locally. BBS distribution 48%. UK population change 1994 - 2005 change: up 120%. Local ten-yr change: up 144%.

A total of 415 records was received from 191 sites, both easily the highest figures in the last ten years – see table below.

| Year | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|----------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| No. of records | 325 | 280 | 142 | 113 | 226 | 172 | 149 | 339 | 193 | 415 |
| No. of sites | 80 | n/c | 62 | 53 | 66 | 76 | 77 | 173 | 80 | 191 |

Total number of records and sites per year

Regular monitoring of a Banwell garden showed a male and female present for 34 weeks feeding on a peanut feeder, only being absent from late August until mid-October. A female visited a Thornbury garden daily from May 17th to July 26th. Conversely a bird in a Redland garden on Jan. 5th was the first record in over 30 years of watching.

Breeding In the spring drumming was reported until April 28th (same date as in 2006) at 28 sites (*cf.* 10 in 2003, 7 in 2004, 14 in 2005, and 19 sites in 2006.). At CVL there were ten pairs (*cf.* six in 2005 and seven in 2006), including two nests with young. Nests or juveniles were also reported from a Banwell garden (two juveniles), Eastwood near Portishead, Keynsham Memorial Park and Kingsgate Park. In addition isolated drumming was heard on June 3rd at Blagdon and Aug. 5th at Kings Wood, Congresbury.

A bird flying to N at Chittening Warth on Oct. 19th was presumed to be a migrant.

Drumming was heard again in Ashcombe Park, Weston-s-Mare from Dec. 14th.

In Portishead, an adult was flushed while trying to gain access to a nest box containing a pair of breeding Blue Tits. In the autumn, at CVL, a male damaged eight nest boxes after they had been cleaned out – it was seen inside one box having enlarged the entrance hole.

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 100 | 118 | 127 | 134 | 143 | 163 | 148 | 181 | 199 | 244 |

Avon BBS Index 1998 = 100

The Bath Peregrines took 17 during the year (26 in 2006) through the year with most (five) in October.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos minor*

Uncommon, declining and elusive breeding resident. Last bred in 2003. Recently Red Listed because of rapid national decline. **H**

The run of poor numbers of sightings continued with only three records, as follows:

Wrighton - one, possibly two, seen and heard drumming and calling on Feb. 26th – the first at the site for 13 years;

Almonsbury - one seen on April 8th;

CVL - heard at Herriotts Pool on Oct. 3rd.

Total number of *bird-days* and individuals over the last ten years are as follows:

| Year | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|-------------------------|------|----|----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|------|
| No. of <i>bird-days</i> | 9 | 9 | 7 | 10+ | 16+ | 20+ | 3 | 7 | 3 | 3 |
| No. of individuals | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 9 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 3 |

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 The largest flocks in the first winter period were of 200 on setaside land at Charlton Field on Feb. 8th, up to 150 at Marshfield throughout January, 35 on salt marsh at the Axe Estuary on Jan. 13th, 30 at Chew Magna on 15th, 28 at Portbury Wharf on 23rd and 25 at Stowey on 21st. Flocks of 20 were reported from CI-Y, Cold Ashton and flocks of 41 and 38 at Weston STW in the first two months of the year.

Breeding First song was noted on Feb. 13th. Song was widely reported from March to June although numbers were generally small with ten singing birds at both Easton-in-Gordano and Bleadon Level, with 25 at Weston STW being the most reported. The highest number during the BBS transects was the 27 recorded at Dunkirk on the first visit.

Autumn/Winter The first autumn gatherings were of 10 at CI-Y on Sept. 27th and 25 at the Axe Estuary on Oct. 3rd. Other double figure counts in October were of 30 at the Yeo Estuary on 15th and 11 at Portbury on 17th. Visible migration numbers were very poor this year with no double figure counts reported. At Leap Valley, Downend, for example, only four were reported in the autumn compared with a peak on 25 over in one day in 2006. In November there were up to 100 at Marshfield, 58 at Weston STW 32 at PW and 20 at Queen Charlton on 17th, 30 at CI-Y on 29th and 11 near Easton-in-Gordano on 6th. In December numbers at Marshfield reached 200, 98 including a partial albino were at Oldbury on 31st, 50 at Norton Hawkbury also on 31st, 30 at Felton Common on 18th, and up to 25 at CI-Y all month.

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| 100 | 96 | 87 | 75 | 63 | 68 | 72 | 91 | 82 | 84 |

Avon BBS Index 1998 = 100

The Bath Peregrines took 21 through the year with most in October (seven) and November (three).

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.

An earlier arrival than last year but yet another poor spring passage with even poorer numbers in autumn.

Arrival and passage The first were three at BL and one at CVL on March 5th, those at BL still present next day when another flew west at Flax Bourton. CVL then had six on 10th and there were 10 at CI-Y next day. By 15th numbers at CVL had reached 70, increasing to 90 by 17th when there were also 42 at BL. A further influx at the end of the month saw 40 at Northwick Warth on 28th, 47 at Weston STW on 29th and up to 250 at BL on 30th. Numbers at the lakes were generally poor in a very warm and sunny April with isolated counts of 220 at CVL on 5th and 150 at BL on 25th. Numbers on the coast were also poor with just a trickle at most sites and a maximum of 157 at Weston STW on the 6th and 30 at PW on two dates. In May there were 100 at CVL on 11th and 30 at BG next day but no other count exceeded ten. One at Northwick Warth on 29th might have been the last spring migrant.

Sand Martin breeding Five nests were reported in drain holes on the River Avon at Keynsham and only two active nest holes were noted at the traditional site in Batheaston in July.

Return passage and departure One at CVL on June 16th was probably the first returning bird with a few noted elsewhere during the month and numbers at CVL reaching 14 by 27th. CVL was the only site where significant numbers were reported in July with a peak of 60 on 6th. In August reports came from a mere three sites and none involved double figures. Small numbers were noted passing coastal sites and gathering at the lakes in September with 50 at CVL on 19th and 100 there on 24th being much the largest counts. Two days later all but ten had gone from CVL and then the last few were birds at BL on 28th, Northwick Warth on 29th (twelve to SE), OPS on 30th and the Axe Estuary on Oct. 3rd.

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 at both Portbury Wharf and Northwick Warth (seven) on March 28th, followed by five at Weston STW and another at Portbury Wharf on 29th and one at BL the next day. Reported more widely and almost daily in low single figures in early April apart from 10 at CVL on 4th. More significant numbers appeared on 13th when 65 moved up channel at New Passage in 50 minutes and 23 were at OPS, and 52 were noted at Weston STW on the 30th. There were no large concentrations at the reservoirs during the sunny and warm April weather although there were 100 at OPS on 29th. Unsettled conditions in mid-May resulted in some higher counts with at least 1000 at BL and 1500 at CVL on 10th, increasing to 3000 at the latter site on the next day. 1000 were still present on 15th. BG held an estimated 700 on 12th. There were still 150 here on May 28th and 250 at CVL on June 14th.

Breeding Widely reported but no significant records apart from some comments about the poor season in the exceptionally wet summer.

Return passage and departure A total of 60 were at CVL by July 20th and a similar number gathered on wires and roofs at Doynton on Aug. 1st. A pre-roost gathering of 200 was at Herriott's Bridge, CVL just before dusk on Aug. 11th and 120 roosted in Great Reedmace at Northwick Warth on 23rd. There were 200 at OPS on Aug. 23rd. Birds were clearly on the move in early September with 103 to E at Charlton Fields on 9th and 650 at CVL next day. The last third of the month as usual saw many on the move with 200 at Leap Valley, Downend on 22nd, 120 at S at Portishead (into a strong headwind) and 100 at Stowey Hill on 24th, 200 at CI-Y on 27th, 300 at RPD next day, 300 at OPS and 150 at CVL on 29th and 147 through NP on 30th. The biggest movements this year were in early October with 1850 at the Axe Estuary and an estimated 8000 at Steep Holm on 3rd, with 5000 at the latter next day and 2000 on 5th. By mid month most had gone with just five at New Passage on 14th, one at CI-Y next day and 28 at the Axe Estuary on 16th but none thereafter.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 100 | 140 | 122 | 108 | 94 | 85 | 130 | 123 | 132 | 188 |

Avon BBS Index 1998=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 A late arrival with the first two to NE at Aust Warth on April 7th followed by three at New Passage on 11th and then noted at three sites on 12th and more widespread in low single figures from 13th onwards. The first double figure count was of 50 at CVL on April 23rd but no larger counts were made until mid May when poor weather concentrated birds at the reservoirs.

There were counts of 400 at BG on May 12th, 100 at CVL on 9th and 13th and then 500 there on 14th and 16th. Later in the month there were still 250 at BG on 27th and 300 at CVL next day. An unusual record on Steep Holm concerned three on May 12th that entered the barracks where they flew around catching flies (AJP).

Breeding Five pairs were in nest boxes at Bishop Sutton by the end of April. Three nests noted quite close to the middle of Bristol in Cranbrook Road, Redland in August. 26 were at Sea Mills Station in late July with the same number of occupied nests as last year. Breeding was again reported from a handful of other sites.

Post-breeding and departure A total of 140 moved to SW at Keynsham on July 27th in 40 minutes although whether this involved early departing birds or a local movement is hard to say. 1000 gathered at CVL on August 19th in poor weather but no other reports of more than 40 during the month. September concentrations included 200 over Bristol Docks on 7th, 200 at OPS next day with 300 there on 15th, 120 at Thornbury Pill on 18th, good numbers at CVL from mid-month with 1000 on 26th and a similar number at OPS on 30th. Sept. 30th was also the peak day of the year at Leap Valley Downend with 65, while 145 moved through New Passage. There were still good numbers in early October with 300 at Thornbury Pill on 2nd and estimates of 2000 at Steep Holm on 3rd with 1500 here next day. Nearly all had gone by the end of the first week with six at the Axe Estuary on 16th the last of the year and an early departure.

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|----|----|------|
| 100 | 100 | 113 | 102 | 92 | 104 | 106 | 93 | 83 | 136 |

Avon BBS Index. 1998=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.

An average passage in both spring and autumn.

Spring The first was at Northwick Warth on March 28th followed by one on Steep Holm on April 6th. No more were noted until 14th but small numbers were regularly reported from then until early May with peaks of seven at Sand Point on April 20th with eight here the next day. Birds were less regular after the first week of May but there were three at Sand Point on 13th and late birds at Northwick Warth on 28th and Sand Point (five) on 30th. Song was noted from migrants at Portbury Wharf on April 15th (KEV) and Northwick Warth on 22nd (JPM). A Peregrine victim was recorded at St John's Church, Bath also on April 15th (ED). The spring passage totalled 55 with most at Sand Point again. In addition to localities mentioned above recorded from OPS, Sand Bay, Middle Hope, Uphill and Washingpool Farm.

Breeding Three singing birds were at Burrington Ham on April 22nd, a pair was noted here on June 6th and a singing male on 16th. Breeding was proved here on June 6th when birds were seen carrying food for young and removing a faecal sac from the nest site (PJC).

Autumn A total of 25 noted in the autumn from Aug. 23rd (OPS) until Oct. 3rd (Axe Estuary). The peak was in early September with two at OPS and three at the Axe Estuary on 1st and four near Prospect Stile on 6th. All other records were of single birds and only one was after Sept. 15th. Other autumn records came from Charlton Field, Lansdown, Middle Hope, New Passage, North Stoke and Sand Point.

| | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|--------|------|----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|------|
| Spring | 18 | 61 | 179 | 54 | 25 | 68 | 24 | 61 | 111 | 55 |
| Autumn | 12 | 26 | 32 | 6 | 12 | 22 | 14 | 37 | 30 | 25 |

Passage: total individuals

The Bath Peregrines took one on April 15th.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. A few breed. BBS distribution 4%. UK 25-yr change: down 46%.

2006/07 Winter In January the largest flocks were 60 at Thornbury Pill and 40 at nearby OPS on 27th, 30 at Sidcot on 15th, 25 at Littleton Warth on 20th and 22 at Charlton Field on 30th. February flocks included 60 at Cl-Y on 11th, 47 at Wrington on 1st, 40 at Bathampton Oxbow on 4th, 32 at BL on 10th, 30 at Kenn Moor on 13th, 26 at Cross on 19th and 25 at Winterhead on 1st. Smaller flocks of between 10 and 20 were noted in the first two months of the year at Compton Dando, Congresbury Moor, Kenn Moor, Walborough and Weston STW.

Spring 30 at Kenn Moor on March 9th might have been migrants. Birds were certainly moving later in the month with 80 to NE in an hour at Severn Beach on 24th, 19 grounded by Portishead Boating Lake with a steady passage overhead on 26th and a huge passage on 27th with 1200 to NE at Chittening Warth in 2 hours (RJH). 30 were at Manor Road Community Woodland next day and 35 at OPS on the last day of the month. Smaller numbers trickled through into April, 38 were noted at Weston STW on the 9th with six to NE and 25 grounded at Northwick Warth on 20th.

Breeding In the breeding season two, including a singing male, were on Bleadon Hill on May 24th, five at Burrington Ham on 28th, one at East Tanpit Wood on June 12th and BBS reports came from Culverslade and Rushmead Lane. Singing birds were again present in small numbers on the salt marshes at Severn Beach, Northwick Warth and Aust Warth in the summer. A family party of an adult and three juveniles was at Blake's Pool on July 16th.

Meadow Pipit Autumn passage Nine at Northwick Warth on Sept. 1st might have been migrants or local breeders but an increase to 23 at OPS on 9th would certainly have involved migrants. Later in the month there were 40 at OPS on 27th and a small influx of 18 at PW on 22nd. The highest counts in September came from Weston STW with 63 on the 27th, Leap Valley, Downend where 115 were logged moving to S on 22nd and a further 112 on 30th (ADJ). Movements continued through October with peak counts of 100 at BG on 13th, 60 at CI-Y on 11th, 50 at Weston STW on 3rd, 50 at CVL on 18th, 50 at OPS on 27th and 48 at Charlton Fields on 14th. Counts of 20 to 40 during the month came from PW and Walborough. A poor autumn passage on Steep Holm with a total of only 24 logged between Sept. 12th and Oct. 31st.

2007/08 winter The largest flocks in the last two months of the year were of 25 near Winscombe on Nov. 1st, 30 at Banwell on 10th, 26 at CVL on 21st and 35 at Yatton on Dec. 30th.

The Bath Peregrines took 15 mainly during the migration periods.

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 twelve at Portishead, nine at Severn Beach and Chittening Warth (some overlap likely between these adjacent sites) and eight at Littleton Warth. One or two were also noted at the Axe Estuary, CI-Y and OPS. Last reported at Weston STW on April 28th.

Breeding On Steep Holm again present at four sites with breeding proved at one. Five pairs were located at Portishead in May, all feeding young and three of them nesting in the wall of the marina. A pair was taking food to a nest at Wain's Hill in July and there were three singing males on Sand Point in June.

Autumn and winter Two at CI-Y on Aug. 12th were likely to be local birds. Returning migrants appeared from Sept. 22nd when two were at OPS. There were nine at the Axe Estuary by Oct. 3rd and ten at Severn Beach/Chittening by 12th. The highest count was of 16 flushed out by a high tide at Portishead on Nov. 26th. One or two were noted at Severn House Farm, Littleton Warth and Thornbury Pill at this time. Single birds were seen well up the Avon again at Southville from Nov. 19th to 28th and at the Cumberland Basin on Dec. 3rd (RMA).

Inland one was at CVL on Oct. 12th, 13th and 18th with two here on 15th.

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant to CVL, Scarce on the coast.

Another poor year inland but a more normal series of records from the coast.

Inland sites One was at BG on Dec. 31st. Otherwise recorded only at CVL where there were single birds on four dates in January and one or two regularly from Feb. 23rd until the last of the spring on April 4th. The first returning bird was noted on Oct. 31st then one or two noted on eight dates in November and five in December. Again the high water levels were probably the reason for the poor numbers. With perhaps just two wintering birds in each winter period this was significantly worse than last year's poor showing.

Coastal sites At Severnside one or two were at Severn Beach/Chittening Warth on three dates in January and another there on March 21st and 24th. One was at CI-Y on Feb. 26th and three were at the traditional site of Weston STW on Feb. 22nd (the highest count anywhere in the county this year). The first in autumn was at New Passage on Oct. 20th with probably the same individual at Severn Beach later the same day and another back at Weston STW next day. One or two then noted at Severn Beach on six dates from Nov. 4th to the end of the year.

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 two at Severn Beach on April 1st. No more were seen until 15th when three flew up channel at Littleton Warth and one was at Portbury Wharf. Small numbers were then regular at the usual coastal sites until the end of the month with birds seen at The Axe Estuary, CI-Y, OPS, Sand Point, Severnside and Weston STW with a peak of five over Severn Beach on 29th. Passage fizzled out in early May with ones and twos at some of the same sites plus BG. The highest counts of the spring were isolated influxes of seven to E at Sand Point on 13th and, the last of the spring, twelve in the Sand Point/Middle Hope area on 30th. Spring passage involved about 86 birds (*cf.* 59 in 2003, 121 in 2004, 67 in 2005 and 125 in 2006) and is summarised in the table below.

| Date | Apr 1-10 | Apr 11-20 | Apr 21-30 | May 1-10 | May 11-20 | May 21-31 |
|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Bird-days | 2 | 19 | 29 | 10 | 13 | 13 |
| Max count | 2 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 12 |

Yellow Wagtail - Migrants in spring

Breeding season The only record in the breeding season was from Parks Farm, near Tormarton, where there were two on April 22nd, a male holding territory on June 6th and two including the territorial male on 12th.

Autumn Return passage began on July 21st when one was at New Passage, as was the case in 2006, and four juveniles were here and one at Severn Beach on the last day of the month. Ones and twos were seen during the first half of August but eight were at New Passage on 6th.

Passage peaked in the last half of August and the first few days of September with twelve at Middle Hope (Sand Bay) on Aug. 24th and eight at Northwick Warth. Numbers at the latter then dropped before rising again to seven on Aug. 31st and ten on Sept. 1st and 2nd. Only single birds were seen after the first week of September including the only record from CVL all year, on 16th. The last was a late bird at OPS on Oct. 7th.

Birds were noted in autumn at the Axe Estuary, Bitton, CVL, OPS, Portishead, Sand Point, Severnside, Westerleigh and Weston STW. The bird-day total of 156 somewhat overestimates the number of individuals involved, mainly because of the flock on Northwick Warth in late August and early September. It compares with 132 in 2003, 368 in 2004 and 160 in 2005 and 125 in 2006.

| Date | Jul 21-31 | Aug 1-10 | Aug 11-20 | Aug 21-30 | Sep 1-10 | Sep 11-20 | Sep 21-30 | Oct 1-10 |
|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Bird-days | 6 | 21 | 22 | 55 | 41 | 10 | 0 | 1 |
| Max count | 4 | 8 | 4 | 12 | 10 | 4 | 0 | 1 |

Yellow Wagtail - Migrants in autumn

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 and migrants Records of small numbers came from about 75 localities outside the breeding season (breeding season taken here as March to July). This is an increase on the past two years but is likely to reflect coverage rather than a genuine increase. KEV noted that the species was less common around central Bristol than in recent years. Most records involved one or two birds but three were recorded on eleven occasions (all from August to November), four on four occasions (August to December), five at BL on Aug. 8th, six at New Passage on Sept. 2nd and twelve at BG on Oct. 13th. The autumn dates for all the peak counts suggest that migrants were involved.

Very small numbers of visible migrants were noted again in September and October with a peak of three over Leap Valley, Downend, on Sept. 29th. On Steep Holm single migrants were noted on Aug. 3rd and 17th.

Breeding Bred at Newton Park, OPS (first record for the site), Willsbridge, Woollard and Yeo Bank Farm with breeding season records from a further 44 localities, massively up on last year because of the inclusion of BBS and Birdtrack data.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 68 | 51 | 93 | 120 | 140 | 109 | 83 | 110 | 93 | 140 |

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 records.

A very poor year in both spring and autumn, see overleaf.

White Wagtail Spring passage Two very early records concerned a female at CVL on March 1st (KEV) with perhaps the same bird on 6th, and four at CI-Y on 4th (HER). Another was reported at Portishead Boating Lake on 9th before a more usual flurry of records towards the end of the month from the Axe Estuary, BG, Portishead and Severnside with eight at Portishead on 26th. In April up to three were seen at BG, CVL, OPS, Severnside and Uphill/Axe Estuary with an isolated count of five at BG on 6th and only two after 20th. The only May record was of one at BG on 12th and 17th.

Autumn passage Autumn records comprised one at BL on Aug. 12th, one at the Yeo Estuary on Sept. 2nd, two at the Axe Estuary on 18th and 19th and one at CVL on 27th.

| Date | Mar 1-10 | Mar 11-20 | Mar 21-31 | Apr 1-10 | Apr 11-20 | Apr 21-30 | May 1-10 | May 11-20 |
|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Bird-days | 7 | 0 | 14 | 9 | 9 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Max count | 4 | 0 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

Spring records

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 a pre-roost gathering of 150 at Herriot's Bridge, CVL on Jan. 14th, 120 at OPS on Feb. 18th, 80 at Severn Beach on Jan. 10th, 53 at the River Avon, Keynsham on 12th and 52 at Flax Bourton on 11th.

Spring migration In March there were 53 on horse paddocks at Severn Beach on 6th, 43 at Queen Charlton on 9th, 20 at OPS on 29th, 17 at New Passage on 5th and 15 on the River Avon at Keynsham on 6th. Some of these parties would have involved migrants as would an increase to 70 at OPS on April 2nd. Up to three visible migrants were noted moving over the coast on two dates in mid-April.

Breeding season Again no significant records received.

Autumn migration and second winter period Up to 20 gathered at OPS in late July and August. In September there were 40 at Bishop Sutton on 2nd and at OPS on 23rd, 37 at ASW on 23rd and 30 at two other sites. Over Leap Valley, Downend 18 moved to S on Sept. 30th. Tiny numbers, up to four, were reported as visible migrants in October on four dates. Only noted as an autumn migrant on Steep Holm between Sept. 22nd and Nov. 25th with a peak of 15 on Oct. 5th. 63 at Weston STW on Sept. 7th were part of the roost at a supermarket in Weston-s-Mare

Roost numbers really built up during October with 60 at Congresbury Moor on 30th (pre-roost), 80 at Radstock on 3rd, and 200 at OPS on 18th increasing to 400 by 23rd. On the evening of the Nov. 3rd, 110 were noted at Weston STW flying towards the Weston-s-Mare roost. About 300 noted in a pre-roost gathering at Herriott's Bridge, CVL on Nov. 3rd, 370 counted roosting at Somerdale, Keynsham on Dec. 12th and still 220 roosting at OPS on Nov. 17th. Otherwise only small numbers noted towards the year's end with 40 at Portbury on Nov. 11th the highest daytime count.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 100 | 87 | 63 | 70 | 77 | 77 | 71 | 84 | 51 | 67 |

Avon BBS Index 1998=100

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus*

Uncommon breeding resident, present on many suitable streams. UK 25-yr change: down 3%. Ten-yr local change: stable.

Another good bird-day total was again boosted by 44 bird-days from Winford Brook where it was noted throughout the year with an adult feeding a juvenile in May and one singing in flight in October (RMI), but otherwise a rather poor year.

North of the Avon reported from R. Boyd at Wick (from March to June, with nest building noted), R. Frome in Chipping Sodbury (one in January, February and November), and Willsbridge Mill (singing in January and one in December).

South of the Avon, apart from Winford Brook, records came from Chew Stoke (one in April), Compton Dando (one in August), Lambridge, Bath (pair mating in March), Iford Bridge (three in October), Midford (one in June), Pensford (one in April), and Publow (two in February, one in August and October). The most unusual record concerned one flying across the road at Hartcliffe, Bristol, on Jan. 1st (DF).

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| Bird-days | 79 | 72 | 39 | 29 | 38 | 56 | 51 | 89 | 77 |

Avon area - total bird-days

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Abundant breeding resident. BBS Avon population estimate 53,000 pairs, BBS distribution 99%. England 25-yr change: up 36%. Local 10-yr change: up 8%.

| | WBC | WGS | BBS | CABS | WBC |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| %Change 2006-07 | -4 | -31 | 9 | 25 | -6 |

A better year than 2006. The 2006/07 WGS showed a fall, which was a feature of garden use for many species. Winter survival was clearly good, as BBS showed an increase, but it may have been a poor breeding season caused by the cold summer, as CABS totals in the second half of the year were well below average, even though the year-to-year changes in the CABS figures were up. WBC figures for the 2007/08 winter also show a decline, but were a third higher than during the First Winter Atlas 25 years ago. Song was recorded on 88% of CABS visits, and was almost continuous from the start of the year, with a brief three week break from the end of November to mid-December. There were at least 18 territories on Steep Holm.

| | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|------|
| BBS | 100 | 115 | 118 | 124 | 130 | 122 | 121 | 123 | 96 | 108 |
| Steep Holm | nc | 30 | nc | 9 | 25 | nc | 9 | 19 | 16 | 18 |

Avon BBS Index 1998=100

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Abundant breeding resident. BBS Avon population estimate 18,500 pairs. BBS distribution 92%. England 25-yr change: down 27%. Local 10-yr change: up 44%.

| | WBC | WGS | BBS | CABS | WBC |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| %Change 2006-07 | 0 | -23 | -4 | 5 | 9 |

Another stable year.

Despite the slight decline registered by BBS, spring CABS numbers were higher than in any previous year. However there was a poor breeding season as autumn numbers were well below average. On the other hand results from the 2007/08 WBC suggest an increase, and are at a rate double that recorded in the First Winter Atlas. Song was recorded from Jan. 1st to July 22nd, and then fitfully from Nov. 4th, in all on 66% of visits.

On Steep Holm it is the commonest passerine, with around 30 pairs. There was a population collapse in 2000, but it recovered to 21 pairs in 2004 and, although there were fewer in 2005 and 2006, a total of 20 was recorded in 2007, but the success rate was low. There was an extraordinary record from Horwood Farm (Wickwar) of an adder brooding the eggs in a nest. The nest survived and produced four chicks.

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 100 | 126 | 130 | 144 | 157 | 167 | 148 | 153 | 155 | 144 |

Avon BBS index 1998=100

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Abundant breeding resident and passage migrant. BBS Avon population estimate 38,000 pairs. BBS distribution 100%. England 25-yr change: up 55%. Local 10-yr change: up 19%.

| | WBC | WGS | BBS | CABS | WBC |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| %Change 2006-07 | 2 | -8 | 6 | -21 | 36 |

The fall in garden numbers recorded by WGS during the 2006/07 winter was ascribed to the warmth of the winter and the good autumn harvest, but the numbers recorded by WBC were normal. However, CABS numbers for the first three months of the year were the lowest since the survey began in 1994, although there was some mid-summer recovery. Autumn numbers, which are normally the annual peak as birds set up winter territories, was again at a survey minimum. On the other hand BBS like-for-like change showed a small increase and WBC counts for 2007/08 winter suggest very good numbers which were not only an advance on the previous winter, but almost three times higher than during the First Winter Atlas. Song was heard on 90% of CABS visits, but there was a three week break in July. On Steep Holm three territories were noted, and three young fledged.

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 100 | 105 | 104 | 107 | 110 | 115 | 116 | 110 | 110 | 119 |

Avon BBS index 1998=100

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, 22nd today.

The first record was of two at Horwood Farm (Wickwar) on April 17th, and then one was noted at Severn Beach on 20th. Five hours of observation in Lower Woods on April 25th and 30th produced none, but two different singing males were located here on May 9th, and there was an estimate of five pairs around Horwood Farm. One was found on a BBS survey at Webbs Heath, near Warmley, on May 13th. No formal survey was attempted in Lower Woods this year, so actual totals may have been higher.

| Av 1988-1997 | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|--------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| 15 | 18 | 14 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 11 | 8 | 6 |

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 it may have bred in 1986 and 1994.

Breeding, previously suspected, was proved for the first time, but unfortunately the nest failed.

A female/immature was noted at BG on March 25th. A female was seen at RPD on May 20th and again on 24th. Subsequently one was seen carrying food into a group of shipping containers, which presumably held the nest. Unfortunately the containers were moved soon after and there were no further sightings.

In August one was present in RPD from 11th to 15th, and another on Sept. 12th. A female was seen at OPS on Oct. 23rd, one at Avonmouth Docks on Dec. 8th and 12th, and possibly the same individual was at RPD on 14th and 15th. One was present in a Keynsham garden throughout December.

| Av 1988-1997 | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|--------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|------|
| 18 | 23 | 6+ | 22 | 80 | 17 | 25 | 24+ | 16 | 12 | 33 |

Total bird-days

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, 6th now. Ten-yr av last date: Sept. 28th in 1970, Oct. 22nd by 1980, stable around Oct. 12th 1986-2002, and Oct. 17th now. Total time spent averaged 187 days until 2000, 194 days now.

The worst spring passage since 1999.

Spring passage A very small passage began on April 13th, when seven were present at PW, and eleven more were seen to 24th. There was a record from Lansdown on May 5th and the Gordano Valley on 20th.

Autumn passage The smallest passage recorded in past 22 years. In July one was recorded at New Passage on 11th and 13th, a male at Sand Bay on 24th, and a juvenile at New Passage on 30th. In August there were five records from Severnside, and three inland, and in September one on 8th at New Passage and one at Middle Hope on 15th. The last two records were on Oct. 11th at the Axe Estuary and 26th at OPS.

| | Av. 1988-97 | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|--------|-------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| Spring | 22 | 15 | 8 | 32 | 25 | 37 | 26 | 49 | 34 | 65 | 18 |
| Autumn | 33 | 27 | 17 | 27 | 21 | 27 | 35 | 30 | 26 | 36 | 16 |

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, 21st now. Ten-yr av last date: Oct 10th in 1970, 21st by 1990, 15th now. Average time spent 180 days to 2002, 173 now.

A poor spring passage, and a very poor autumn passage, the details are given overleaf.

Spring A small late passage, totalling 31, began with two at OPS on April 22nd. There were daily records from 27th to May 4th, peaking on May 2nd, which was the median date, nine days later than last year.

Autumn The smallest passage, 33, recorded in the past 22 years. On July 15th one was seen at Northwick Warth, and five more were seen in July. In August there were records from 23rd to the end of the month and eleven sightings were scattered through September. In October five were seen on 7th, one on 8th and the last two on 10th at Aust Warth.

| | Av. 1988-97 | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|--------|-------------|------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|-----|------|
| Spring | 42 | 44 | 60 | 73 | 50 | 22 | 45 | 46 | 41 | 48 | 31 |
| Autumn | 121 | 44 | 65 | 184 | 121 | 180 | 188 | 71 | 90 | 138 | 33 |

Total birds recorded on spring and autumn passage



STONECHAT *Saxicola torquatus*

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.

Fewer than in 2006. A maximum of 44 was recorded in the first winter period, and 63 in the second. There was a very poor March passage of just 33 bird-days, and breeding season evidence of pairs in seven sites. Autumn passage totalled 299 bird-days.

First winter period In January a maximum of 44 was present at 17 sites, eight of them coastal. In February this fell to 33 at 15 sites, five coastal.

Spring passage In March passage was small and brief, ending on 11th and peaking on 5th with nine individuals.

Breeding Records were received from the following eight sites, but no definite breeding evidence was noted except for a juvenile at the last site. Coastal sites were Chittering Warth, Sea Mills, Cl-Y, and Sand Point and inland sites were Nailsea, Congresbury Moor, Burrington and Weston STW.

Autumn passage 39 were recorded in September, and passage was continuous throughout October, and up to Nov. 4th, with peaks between 12th and 19th when 89 were reported, although the highest count was 18 at OPS on 6th.

Second winter period In November up to 63 individuals were reported from 27 sites, nine of them coastal and in December up to 34 from 15 sites, seven coastal. Some of the new inland sites were associated with counts for the new BTO Atlas.

| | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|----------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| Max Jan, Feb | 26 | 22 | 36 | 30 | 25 | 38 | 44 | 48 | 57 | 44 |
| Breeding pairs | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 8 | 11 | 12 | 7 |
| Max Nov, Dec | 32 | 27 | 59 | 47 | 58 | 40 | 45 | 62 | 55 | 63 |

Apparent number of individuals present in the two winter periods and total breeding pairs

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.

Although not the lowest on record, spring and autumn passage were both below recent and long-term average numbers.

Spring passage The first were two seen on March 8th, the earliest first date since 2003. It is quite striking that this species first dates have on average become later rather than earlier as February temperatures in Britain have become warmer, implying that weather elsewhere controls the timing of passage. The next was seen on 14th, but passage proper did not start until March 26th, a day later than last year. From then to the last noted on May 29th a total of 450 bird-days were recorded. The peak came between April 23rd and 25th when 128 were counted. The median date was 23rd, three days later than that for last year. The usual second wave in May, presumably of birds bound for more northerly breeding areas, came between May 12th and 24th, but only totalled 42. One showing the characteristics of the Greenland race (*leucorhoa*) was noted at Northwick Warth on June 10th (BL).

Autumn passage The first returning migrant was seen on July 4th at CI-Y, but only eleven more were seen to the end of the month. Passage was more or less continuous through August and September with a peak between Aug. 22nd and 24th when 23 were counted and a much larger wave occurred between Sept. 22nd and 25th when 73 were counted. They continued to be recorded in small numbers right through October and eight were seen as late as 23rd. The last was recorded on Nov. 5th at CI-Y, a normal last date.

| | Av. 1988-97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|--------|-------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|
| Spring | 525 | 474 | 503 | 571 | 491 | 219 | 338 | 820 | 814 | 1894 | 450 |
| Autumn | 350 | 340 | 452 | 565 | 338 | 518 | 603 | 546 | 651 | 560 | 332 |

Spring and autumn passage total bird-days

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. 24th.

The fourth best spring passage since 1985, but there were no autumn sightings.

There were no March records. The first, a male, was seen at Aust Warth on April 9th, a late first date, and there was another report from the same site on 11th. Between 12th and 16th eight bird-days were recorded on Severnside, and one at OPS on 15th. On 17th one was at CVL, the second lake record, and three at Christon, near Banwell. On 18th one was at Aust. There were three late records, two at OPS on 28th and one here on 29th.

| | Av. 1988-97 | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|--------|-------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| Spring | 13 | 7 | 3 | 11 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 10 | 20 |
| Autumn | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 19 | 1 | 0 |

Spring and autumn passage, total bird-days

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Abundant resident, passage status uncertain. BBS Avon population estimate 39,300 pairs. BBS distribution 100%. England 25-yr change: down 8%. Local ten-yr change: up 28%.

| | WBC | WGS | BBS | CABS | WBC |
|----------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| %Change 2006-7 | -41 | -36 | 1 | -17 | 96 |

During the first winter period numbers, recorded by both WBC and WGS, were down on the previous year, but BBS recorded no change during the breeding season. The first fledglings were recorded on April 30th, but the subsequent cold and wet weather in May and June resulted in a very poor breeding season overall, CABS recording the lowest numbers ever in September and October. On Steep Holm only ten pairs bred producing four juveniles. Rather abruptly numbers increased in November and December, possibly caused by immigrants. An exceptional record of 50 on Steep Holm on Nov. 2nd rather supports this. The WBC figures for the 2007/08 winter show a doubling from the low levels of the previous winter. The figure was also 62% above that recorded in the First Winter Atlas. The Bath Peregrines took 33.

CABS recorded the first song on Feb. 4th, and singing continued until June 26th.

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 100 | 111 | 118 | 127 | 136 | 129 | 129 | 126 | 121 | 128 |

Avon BBS Index 1998=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 in 2005, 9th 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 in 2005, 177 today.

The first winter period was very poor, and the second was little better.

2006/07 winter WBC showed a rate of 3.4/hr, the lowest recorded since the survey began. The highest rate was in the 1999/00 winter, at 24.2/hr. In January the largest flock was 1000 at Marshfield on 1st. In February the maximum was 100 at Keynsham on 28th. In March the largest flock of the winter at this site, 240, was seen on Felton Common on 8th. A total of 210 were seen in the first week of April, and the last records were of six at Haydon Hill on 15th, and two at Charlton Field on 17th, an average last date, but see below.

Second half-year Steep Holm recorded the first arrival on Sept 29th, and the next was seen at Sand Point on Oct. 7th. Passage proper began on 13th, when six were seen, and there were 115 at OPS on 14th. Passage remained at a fairly low level through the rest of October, it peaked in early November, when 370 were seen at Weston STW, and a hundred others were noted elsewhere. The last large flock was 300 at Tytherington on Nov. 8th. In December mostly small numbers were reported, the largest flock being 500 at Marshfield on 25th.

| 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 | 3.4 |

Rate per hour recorded by WBC

The Bath Peregrines took 53 during the (extended) winter periods including one in May (on 7th) and another in September.

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 5600 pairs. BBS distribution 84%. England 25-yr change: down 30%. Local 10-yr change: up 39%.

| | WBC | WGS | BBS | CABS | WBC |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| % Change 2005-6 | 41 | -42 | -4 | -43 | -3 |

A poor year.

This species was only rarely recorded in gardens during the first winter period, numbers were slightly down in BBS, and it seems to have been badly affected by the cold wet May. However, there were more pairs around CVL than in any years since 1998. CABS counts were close to the minimum throughout and song was only recorded on 34% of visits, mainly between Jan. 14th and April 8th. There was renewed song between June 10th and July 14th, a very late date, presumably indicating a late brood. Song was again heard very briefly on Nov. 19th and 23rd. WBC numbers for the winter 2007-08 showed a small decline on the previous winter, although they were only slightly below those of the First Winter Atlas.

| | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| BBS | 100 | 125 | 136 | 151 | 162 | 142 | 153 | 152 | 133 | 139 |
| CVL | 21 | 12 | 14 | 16 | 25 | 15 | 10 | 15 | 10 | 20 |

BBS index, 1998=100, and numbers of singing males round the perimeter of CVL

The Bath Peregrines took 18 during the year.

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. 17th in 2005, 29th now. Ten-yr av last date: Around April 12th from 1970 to 1997, falling to 5th now. Days present constant at about 190.

Both winter periods were poor.

Winter 2006/07 The WBC rate at 7.9/hr was the lowest since 2002/03. In January the largest flock was 300 at OPS on 13th, and the same number was present here on Feb. 23rd. In March the largest flock was 120 on 11th at Blagdon, and only 110 others were counted in the rest of the month. In April a total of 14 was reported to the 6th, and the remains of one were found as Peregrine prey on 19th at St John's Church, Bath, the latest "departure" date since 1995.

Redwing second half-year For the third year running the first record was from Steep Holm where 15 were seen on Sept. 29th, with 34 on Oct. 3rd. On 4th they were heard over Kingsdown (Bristol), three were seen in a Redland garden and 22 were noted at Wrington. During the rest of October flocks of up to 110 were seen widely across the region, but there were no big movements. In November and December the same pattern continued. The maximum flock size was 200 seen on the Clifton Downs on Nov. 20th, and the same number was seen at Marshfield on Dec. 25th. WBC results show a rate of 10.8/hr, slightly greater than the previous winter.

| 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 | 7.9 |

Rate per hour recorded by WBC

The Bath Peregrines took 85 during the (extended) winter periods including six in April and two in September.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Uncommon breeding resident, passage migrant and probable winter visitor. BBS Distribution 27%. England 25-yr change: down 41%. Local ten-yr change: down 35%.

The WBC in 2006/07 recorded only 42 in 170 hours of observation, the lowest rate since the start of the survey. BBS found them in only 27% of squares, the smallest proportion since 1994 but they were counted at the same rate as in the previous year. Thirteen flocks of more than ten were seen between mid-June and early September. The largest was 22 at Stowey on July 13th.

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|-----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|------|
| 100 | 103 | 96 | 97 | 99 | 113 | 75 | 84 | 68 | 65 |

Avon BBS index 1998=100

CETTI'S WARBLER *Cettia cetti*

Uncommon resident, scarce winter visitor, and passage migrant. First definitely bred in 1995. BBS distribution 2%.

The expansion continues.

CVL There were 21 singing males around the lake in June, and records from every month in the year.

Elsewhere In May and June there were records of a maximum of 21 singing males from eight sites: BL, Blake's Pools (CI-Y), Bleadon Level, Easton-in-Gordano, Congresbury Moor, RPD, Weston STW and Wick Warth.

Outside the breeding season calls were heard at the following three additional sites: Avonmouth STW (ASW), Backwell Lake, and PW.

| | 1994 | 95 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|-------------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|------|
| CVL Singing males | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 12 | 10 | 12 | 14 | 18 | 15 | 17 | 22 | 21 |
| Other Records | 5 | 19 | 4 | 5 | 14 | 18 | 57 | 24 | 51 | 31 | 78 | 67 | 103 | 130 |

Singing males at CVL, and total records from all other sites, 1994-2007

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.20th.

There was some breeding evidence.

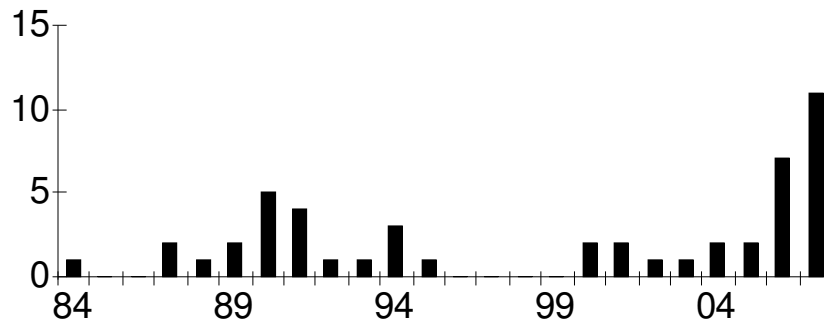
Spring Passage began on April 14th when two were recorded at Weston STW, peaked on 22nd when six were recorded at three sites, and continued to 29th, although there were records which probably referred to passage birds on May 3rd and 5th (four).

Breeding season In late May and June singing males were heard at Backwell Hill and Backwell Lake, BL, CVL, Congresbury Moor, Kingston Seymour, The Niatts (ST5985), two territories at Lower Knowle Farm (ST5884), and two territories at Weston STW, a total of eleven possible breeding territories. This is the largest number of breeding season records in the past 25 years. There was no direct evidence of successful breeding.

Autumn There were three records of single birds on Aug. 27th at Severn Beach, Sept. 13th at Sand Bay and 15th at Northwick Warth.

| | Av. 1988-97 | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|-----------------|-------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| Spring | 14 | 15 | 9 | 23 | 13 | 20 | 6 | 39 | 37 | 47 | 32 |
| Breeding season | 1.8 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 11 |
| Autumn | 6 | 31 | 7 | 11 | 38 | 24 | 12 | 6 | 29 | 6 | 3 |

Spring and autumn passage and breeding season records.



Grasshopper Warbler - Breeding season records 1984-2007

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. BBS distribution 12%. BBS population estimate 500 pairs. England 25-yr change: down 2%. Local ten-yr change: up 11%.

Ten-yr av first date: April 12th in 1970, becoming later to 18th in 1978, then steadily earlier to 10th 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.

The best year since 1999.

Spring Passage began exceptionally early. Two were seen on March 30th on Severnside, a date which equals the previous earliest record set in 1967. Possibly the same were seen again on April 2nd at this site, and one was noted at Chittening Warth on April 7th and 8th. Individuals were then noted on 13th, 14th, 15th, 17th, 20th and 21st, but passage proper started abruptly on 22nd when 22 were seen at seven separate sites. There was a second peak on 28th when 31 were seen.

Breeding A total of 17 territories were found at Weston STW and seven pairs were at CVL. In a detailed study of parts of ST58, M. Dadds found 64 pairs, illustrating the extent to which this species is normally under-recorded. 16 pairs were found on Bleadon Level, ten on the Strawberry Line Reserve at Yatton, and six on Chittening Warth. There were records of a further 25 at 17 sites. BBS recorded it in 12% of squares, the highest proportion and in the highest numbers since 1999.

Autumn Passage was recorded throughout August, and two were on Sept. 16th by CVRS. The last record came from CVL on Oct. 6th, the latest since 1986.

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 53%

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 14th when one was heard at CVL, but few were seen before 22nd when 16 were recorded from six sites after which it was widespread.

Breeding A total of 142 singing males were reported in a special study in ST58, 28 at Aust, 23 pairs were present at Weston STW, 17 on Congresbury Moor, 14 at RPD, 13 at Bleadon Levels, twelve at CI-Y, eleven at OPS, and ten at BL. At CVL, DW found only 59 nests because of the dreadful weather. They were reported from a further 28 one-km squares.

Reed Warbler - Autumn passage There was a series of sightings through July, August and September with little clear pattern to them. The last were one at CVL on Oct 13th and two here on 15th. On Dec.16th, RMA saw a warbler in the reeds near one of the hides at CVL. The sighting was close but rather brief, and so positive identification was not possible, but it was clearly an unstreaked *acrocephalus* warbler. On Dec. 27th/28th, 1971 two observers had a similar close but brief sighting and, as with this one they were unable to give a positive identification.

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 268 | 218 | 243 | 247 | 349 | 159 | 282 | 137 | 148 | 59 |

Nests found at CVL by DW

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. BBS Avon population estimate 9300 pairs. BBS distribution 77%. It is now also a common winter visitor, most frequently recorded in gardens.

England 25-yr change: up 121%. Local ten-yr change: up 16%.

| | WGS | BBS | CABS |
|------------------|-----|-----|------|
| % Change 2006-07 | -42 | 12 | 11 |

Winter 2006/07 A total of 2753 bird-days was recorded between October and March which was down on the record previous winter. This is a little below the average for the past decade, although well above the previous decade average. The ten-year trend line has been rising steadily since 1990/91. The winter pattern was normal, with a build up through November and December, peaking in the first week of January, then falling back until Jan. 20th. A new peak built up on Feb. 8th, followed by a steady fall to the end of the month, the March totals held steady.

Song was recorded on five occasions in February, then regularly from March 3rd. Most records were from gardens, but three singing males in East Woods, Portishead, on March 21st and one at CVL on 25th may have been migrants. Over-wintering continued to be recorded in gardens in April, the last in Keynsham on 6th, Stoke Bishop on 8th, and Whitchurch on 11th.

Spring arrival and breeding season One was recorded at BL on April 1st, a male at Stanton Prior on 3rd and one at Chittening on 4th, but passage was very slow until 19th when ten were recorded from four sites and on 21st, 33 were recorded from eight sites, and they were widespread after that.

In the breeding season there were 34 singing males at Stockwood Reserve, and 35 around CVL. They were present in 77% of BBS squares, and in slightly higher numbers than in 2006. CABS recorded song from Feb. 25th to July 7th, on 38% of visits.

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 100 | 112 | 109 | 116 | 127 | 114 | 122 | 122 | 103 | 116 |

Avon BBS index 1998=100

Autumn passage There were occasional records from July through to the end of September. In October a total of 31 birds from largely coastal sites were noted, as well as the first in gardens. In November one was seen at OPS on 3rd, and two on Steep Holm on the same day, but otherwise all records were from gardens.

Second winter period In November 34 bird-days were recorded and 319 in December.

| Av 1987/8-1996/7 | 1997/98 | 98/99 | 99/00 | 00/01 | 01/02 | 02/03 | 03/04 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 2006/07 |
|------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| 1796 | 1716 | 2103 | 2233 | 2728 | 3472 | 3875 | 2603 | 3395 | 4584 | 2753 |

Total winter bird-days

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. BBS distribution 10%. England 25-yr change: up 15%. Local ten-yr change: down 63%.

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 in 2005, 162 today.

Another very poor year, the details are given overleaf.

Two were recorded on April 17th, one at Hengrove and one at Saltford. A total of 22 apparently on passage were reported from then to May 7th, an even smaller passage than in 2006.

In the breeding season they were noted at 19 sites. Compared with 2006, BBS recorded them at a slightly higher rate. A total of 27 were found around CVL, almost the same as last year.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 100 | 77 | 61 | 51 | 44 | 56 | 64 | 63 | 33 | 38 |

Avon BBS Index 1998=100

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. BBS distribution 19%. England 25-yr change: down 34%. Local ten-yr change: stable. Ten-yr av first arrival date: April 21st in 1974, 19th 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.

On April 12th single birds were recorded at four sites, the earliest first record since 2001 and a week earlier than average. This species is remarkable in that its first arrival date has, on average, been April 20th for the past forty years, despite very sharp changes in April temperature in Bristol. Passage peaked between April 17th and 22nd, and there was a small second peak on 28th and 29th. Only one was reported around CVL, but there were seven pairs at Weston STW, two at Stockwood, and reports of up to four singing males from 49 other sites.

BBS recorded them at the same rate as in 2006, and in the same proportion of squares (19%) as in 1994. Their apparent numbers fluctuate considerably from year to year, in part a reflection of the small numbers recorded, in part the success of the previous breeding season. There were regular passage records throughout August and into early September, and a small second peak on Sept. 9th and 10th. The last were three at PW on 20th, ten days earlier than the recent average.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|-----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 100 | 155 | 100 | 107 | 115 | 85 | 95 | 62 | 100 | 100 |

Avon BBS index 1998=100

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. BBS Avon population estimate 2900 pairs. BBS distribution 52%. England 25-yr change: up 48%. Local ten-yr change: down 12%.

Ten-yr av first date: April 12th in 1970, becoming later to 19th by 1994, and then sharply earlier to 11th today. Ten-yr av last date: Fluctuating around Sept 27th. Days present: fluctuating around 165.

Another good year.

Arrival The first spring record was one in song at OPS on April 7th. The next was at Saltford on 10th. Passage proper began with a rush of records of single birds at five sites on 15th. There was a surge on 22nd, but the peak came between April 27th and May 5th, rather later than usual.

Breeding It was present in over half the BBS squares, and recorded at the same rate as in 2006. There were 18 territories at Stockwood Reserve, eight at Weston STW, six at PW, Knowle Hill and the Strawberry Line Reserve, and three bred around CVL. 52 were found in a survey of the Hallen area.

Autumn A few were recorded irregularly throughout August, but with no clear pattern. The last three were on Sept. 7th at Charlton Field, 8th at OPS and 11th at Portishead.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|----|-----|-----|----|----|----|----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 100 | 96 | 95 | 101 | 109 | 72 | 87 | 92 | 89 | 88 |

Avon BBS Index 1998=100

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Formerly a rare vagrant, now a very scarce autumn visitor.

Two records of single birds: at Abbey Wood, Filton on Feb. 4th (AP *et al.*), and at Sand Point on Oct. 7th (KJH). This is an average showing, see table below, but note this species was first recorded in the Avon area in 1986.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

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.

The worst year yet.

In April three were reported in song at OPS on 21st, one at the same site on 25th, and one was singing at Chittingen Warth on 27th. There was a single breeding season report from Lower Wetmoor on June 9th, the first record at this time of year for some time.

| | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|----------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| Spring | 16 | 15 | 12 | na | 10 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 10 | 5 |
| Passage totals | | | | | | | | | | |

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

P. c. collybita (nominative race). Common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. BBS Avon population estimate 8600 pairs. Also an uncommon winter visitor, and therefore possibly an uncommon resident. Distribution 83%. England 25-yr change: up 152%. Local ten-yr change: down 23%. 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 2006/07 A total of 117 bird-days was recorded between November and the end of February, well below the previous winter, but closer to the recent average. In January, 39 bird-days were reported from nine sites, representing at least 22 individuals. In February, 17 bird-days were reported from five sites, representing at least eight individuals. Song was recorded on 28th.

Spring passage and breeding season One was recorded at Chittingen Warth on March 1st and three were in song at OPS on 3rd. Records built to a peak between 11th and 13th and there was another peak between 27th and 29th.

In the breeding season 23 singing males were recorded at Stockwood Reserve, and 38 were around CVL. BBS recorded a second year of decline, by 14%. CABS recorded song between April 17th and June 25th, and on 25% of visits.

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|-------------------------|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|----|----|------|
| 133 | 73 | 90 | 93 | 96 | 119 | 141 | 84 | 72 | 115 |
| Avon BBS index 1998=100 | | | | | | | | | |

Autumn passage About ten were recorded on Steep Holm daily during August and September, and up to 30 in October. There were reports of a total of 80 from coastal sites during August. In September passage peaked between 12th and 16th, and then between Sept. 29 and Oct. 7th, and there were occasional records for the rest of the month.

Winter In November, 31 were recorded from ten sites and in December 36 from eight sites.

| Av. 1987/88-1996/97 | 1997/98 | 98/99 | 99/00 | 00/01 | 01/02 | 02/03 | 03/04 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 2006/07 |
|----------------------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| 96 | 93 | 273 | 117 | 100 | 83 | 129 | 209 | 193 | 236 | 117 |
| Winter total individuals counted | | | | | | | | | | |

Eastern Chiffchaff *P. c. abietinus/tristis*

Two records, specific race not known - one at CVL on Feb. 7th (RMi), and one at Keynsham STW on Dec. 21st (AHD).

Eastern Chiffchaff *P. c. tristis*

One record - one seen and heard calling at Northwick Warth on March 11th (PDB, JPM *et al.*). A paper discussing this record and subspecies can be found on page 134.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. BBS distribution 29%.

England 25-yr change: down 55%. Local ten-yr change: down 51%.

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 186 today.

Arrival Passage was late and light. The first was reported from BL on April 1st, and four were present at CVL on 4th. Numbers remained very low until 11th, there was some movement to 15th, and then a second wave on 21st and 22nd.

Breeding BBS recorded them at the same rate and in the same proportion of squares as in 2006, so the decline may have been halted. There were seven pairs around CVL, but none were recorded at CI-Y, or in a surveyed area in Hallen.

Departure There were a few reports during August, and eleven were recorded in September, the last from Leap Valley, Downend on 29th.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 100 | 109 | 104 | 80 | 54 | 32 | 61 | 38 | 53 | 49 |

Avon BBS index 1998=100

Warblers at CVL 1991-2007

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. Reed Warbler, is treated differently under that species.

| | Av 1991-97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|----------------|------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| Sedge Warbler | 35.4 | 6 | 17 | 16 | 7 | 18 | 4 | 7 | 11 | 11 | 7 |
| Garden Warbler | 28.8 | 25 | 19 | 20 | 28 | 26 | 17 | 15 | 14 | 28 | 27 |
| Blackcap | 27 | 31 | 34 | 29 | 29 | 40 | 32 | 23 | 23 | 31 | 35 |
| Chiffchaff | 29.4 | 37 | 23 | 34 | 18 | 35 | 35 | 29 | 25 | 30 | 38 |
| Willow Warbler | 13.7 | 8 | 21 | 9 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 7 |

CVL. Singing males within the perimeter of the lake

SPRING AND AUTUMN PASSERINE MIGRATION

| | Mar 1-15 | Mar 16-31 | Apr 1-15 | Apr 16-30 | May 1-15 | May 16-31 |
|---------------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Redstart | 0 | 0 | 13 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| Whinchat | 0 | 0 | 1 | 13 | 17 | 0 |
| Wheatear | 3 | 14 | 74 | 263 | 65 | 29 |
| Ring Ouzel | 0 | 0 | 10 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Grasshopper Warbler | 0 | 0 | 3 | 24 | 5 | 0 |
| Sedge Warbler | 0 | 2 | 7 | 92 | 0 | 0 |
| Reed Warbler | 0 | 0 | 3 | 91 | 0 | 0 |
| Blackcap | 0 | 0 | 56 | 180 | 0 | 0 |
| Garden Warbler | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 7 | 0 |
| Lesser Whitethroat | 0 | 0 | 29 | 153 | 45 | 0 |
| Whitethroat | 0 | 0 | 7 | 154 | 136 | 0 |
| Chiffchaff | 81 | 150 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Willow Warbler | 0 | 0 | 100 | 84 | 64 | 0 |

Spring Passerine migration in 2007 by fortnights.

| | Jul1-15 | Jul 16-31 | Aug 1-15 | Aug 16-31 | Sep 1-15 | Sep 16-30 | Oct 1-15 | Oct 16-31 |
|--------------------|---------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Redstart | 2 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Whinchat | 1 | 5 | 1 | 9 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 0 |
| Wheatear | 5 | 10 | 33 | 67 | 48 | 111 | 58 | 26 |
| Sedge Warbler | 2 | 5 | 17 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Reed warbler | 34 | 16 | 30 | 15 | 14 | 22 | 5 | 0 |
| Blackcap | 0 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 54 | 26 | 24 | 14 |
| Lesser Whitethroat | 0 | 0 | 9 | 24 | 25 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Spotted Flycatcher | 0 | 0 | 2 | 11 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Whitethroat | 0 | 0 | 11 | 27 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Chiffchaff | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 91 | 90 | 84 | 20 |
| Willow Warbler | 0 | 4 | 23 | 8 | 7 | 4 | 0 | 0 |

Autumn passerine migration in 2007 by fortnights.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. The population suffers badly in harsh winters. BBS distribution 34%. BBS population estimate 2000 pairs.

England 25-yr change: down 16%. Local ten-yr change: up 39%.

| | WBC | WGS | BBS | CABS | WBC |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| % Change 2006-07 | 17 | -50 | 53 | -22 | -49 |

In the breeding season they were present in 34% of BBS squares, a figure that has changed little since 1994. Numbers were up a little on the previous year, and close to the long term average. There was no evidence of breeding on Steep Holm, but ten were present during September and October.

| | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|-----|------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|------|
| BBS | 100 | 96 | 108 | 118 | 131 | 167 | 152 | 152 | 91 | 139 |
| CVL | 12 | 15 | 19 | 6 | 14 | 13 | 6 | 10 | 15 | 12 |

Avon BBS Index (1998=100) and singing males round CVL

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapilla*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

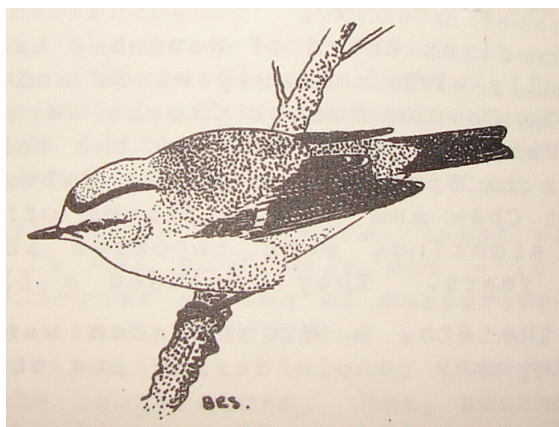
Note that this is a "description species", and a number of reports were received without adequate details. Observers are asked to provide at least a brief reason for their identification (*Eds*).

Five records involving six individuals were received as follows in date order; note that three were from the Bristol area.

Banwell Jan. 5th (JTh);
 Severn Beach March 16th (PDB);
 Kings Weston Down Oct. 27th (TWM);
 Blaise Estate (Bristol) Nov.22nd to 24th with two on 24th and Dec. 9th, and one again on 27th (BL);
 Arnos Vale (Bristol) Dec. 7th (KS-S).

Although down on 2006 this is an average showing for the Avon area as the table below shows.

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|-------------|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|--------|------|
| 5 | 1 | 6 | 14 | 8 | 15+ | 4 | 6 | 9 - 14 | 6 |
| Total birds | | | | | | | | | |

**SPOTTED FLYCATCHER** *Muscicapa striata*

Uncommon passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. BBS distribution 1%. BBS population estimate 50 breeding pairs.

England 25-yr change: down 82%. Local ten-yr change: down 80%.

Ten-yr av first date: April 30th in 1970, increasing to May 5th by 1988, then falling back to April 29th 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 154 today.

A further sharp decline, the details are given overleaf

There was a very poor spring passage. Two were seen at RPD on April 29th, and then one at Shirehampton on May 10th. Eight others were seen to the end of May.

Only three were recorded by BBS in over 500 hours, in only two squares. During June and July they were recorded from eight sites, and juveniles were seen at Lansdown and Walton NNR.

Autumn Passage A total of 23 was counted during August and September, the last at OPS on Sept. 22nd.

In all, a total of 58 was recorded from 24 different sites, about half the number present in 2006.

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 133 | 134 | 175 | 160 | 151 | 222 | 128 | 108 | 109 | 58 |

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.

The worst year ever.

The only reports were of two at Savages' Wood (ST68) on May 19th, and one from New Passage on Aug. 5th.

| | Av. 1988-1997 | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|--------|---------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| Spring | 15 | 15 | 4 | 20 | 18 | 22 | 1 | 7 | 14 | 22 | 2 |
| Autumn | 5 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 12 | 0 | 1 |

Total Spring and Autumn passage

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Common breeding resident. BBS distribution 53%.

England 25-yr change: up 60%. Local ten-yr change: up 74%.

| | WBC | WGS | BBS | CABS | WBC |
|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| % Change, 2006-07 | -6 | -19 | 43 | -51 | -18 |

In the 2006/07 winter both WGS and WBC showed a small fall, but BBS figures showed an increase. CABS numbers fell to the lowest since the survey began in 1993, and it seems to have been a poor breeding season.

There were 13 records of flocks of 15 or more in the second half of the year. The largest, 27, was recorded at Shirehampton on Oct. 24th, although 30 were counted at CVRS on Oct.19th, but these may not have been in a single flock.

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 100 | 100 | 134 | 142 | 152 | 148 | 161 | 131 | 122 | 174 |

Avon BBS index 1994=100

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Abundant breeding resident. BBS Avon population estimate 40,500 pairs. BBS distribution 99%. England 25-yr change: up 15%. Local ten-yr change: down 7%.

| | WBC | WGS | BBS | CABS | WBC |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| % Change 2006-7 | 2 | -4 | -9 | -25 | -9 |

A poor breeding season.

BBS figures showed a small decline for a second year. The summer breeding season was very poor because of the cold wet weather, and it seems probable that losses were high after fledging as well. CABS figures suggested a steep fall. Autumn counts were the lowest since the survey began in 1994, and WBS counts showed a 9% fall.

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 100 | 98 | 92 | 100 | 108 | 107 | 110 | 112 | 100 | 93 |

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Abundant breeding resident. BBS Avon population estimate 29,500 pairs. Distribution 97%. England 25 yr change: up 43%. Local ten-yr change: up 41%.

| | WBC | WGS | BBS | CABS | WBC |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| % Change 2006-07 | 10 | -5 | -11 | 1 | -21 |

A poor breeding season, and a fall in population after years of increase.

In the 2006/07 winter WGS numbers were slightly down, and BBS confirmed this decline, which came after nine years of almost continuous growth. CABS showed no change, but results from WBC showed a 21% fall. This was probably the result of the very cold and wet summer. Song was recorded on 34% of CABS visits from Jan. 28th to May 26th.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 100 | 106 | 114 | 121 | 128 | 136 | 146 | 142 | 156 | 141 |

Avon BBS Index 1998=100

COAL TIT *Periparus ater*

Common breeding resident, probably also a passage migrant. BBS distribution 29%. pairs. England 25-yr change: down 4%. Local ten-yr change: up 43%

| | WGS | BBS | CABS |
|------------------|-----|-----|------|
| % Change 2006-07 | -28 | 13 | -38 |

A further decline from the high levels in 2004. As was the case for many species the numbers recorded by WGS fell in the 2006/07 winter, but BBS results suggested a small increase. The index shows rather violent fluctuations because of the very small sample; the population is probably fairly stable.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 100 | 96 | 106 | 115 | 137 | 190 | 199 | 152 | 127 | 143 |

Avon BBS Index. 1998=100

MARSH TIT *Poecile palustris*

Uncommon breeding resident. BBS distribution 3%. BBS population estimate 250 pairs. England 25-yr change: down 30%.

A normal year.

In the 2006/07 winter WBC counted 15 in 170 hours (*cf.* 20 in 400 hours in 2005/06). In BBS, 22 were counted in six squares during 536 hours of survey. 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 36 one-km squares. 18 of these were new since 1998, and it has been found in 174 of the area's 1500 one-km squares in the last ten years. Note that the table below does not suggest a declining trend.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 39 | 35 | 21 | 20 | 48 | 27 | 58 | 37 | 35 | 36 |

Annual total of one-km squares in which this species was seen

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Fairly common/common breeding resident. Scarce away from established sites. BBS distribution 15%. BBS population estimate 1000 pairs. England 25-yr change: up 89%. Local ten-yr change: up 89%.

In the 2006/07 winter, 45 were counted in 170 hours by WBC, a very similar rate to that of BBS. In the breeding season BBS recorded 93 in 536 hours, the same rate as in 2006, and in 31 squares. Using all records and surveys this species was reported from 54 one-km squares in 2007, and 14 squares were new since 1998. It has been reported from 230 of the 1500 squares in the region in the last ten years.

| | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|----------------|------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| One-km Squares | | | | 21 | 59 | 69 | 80 | 87 | 34 | 54 |
| BBS Index | 100 | 98 | 118 | 123 | 128 | 278 | 255 | 244 | 189 | 189 |

Total number of one-km squares in which this species was reported, and the BBS index. 1998=100

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Common breeding resident; possibly an uncommon passage migrant. BBS Distribution 7%. BBS population estimate 700 breeding pairs. England 25-yr change: down 17%.

This is a highly elusive species that is extremely difficult to monitor. The evidence from timed surveys suggests that it takes about twenty hours of bird-watching to find one. But they are also seen year after year in the same woodland habitats. In the 2006/07 winter, WBC counted 13 in 170 hours, a similar rate to that of the previous winter. In the breeding season BBS counted 28 in 536 hours in 15 squares, much the same as in 2006. Using all records and surveys it was reported from 41 one-km squares in 2007, 15 of them new since 1998. The species has been seen in 197 one-km squares in the past nine years, but is almost certainly more widespread.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 42 | 36 | 18 | 19 | 35 | 49 | 26 | 61 | 26 | 41 |

Annual total of one-km squares in which this species was reported

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Fairly common breeding resident. BBS distribution 42%. England 25-yr change: down 5%. Local ten-yr change: up 100%.

| | WBC | WGS | BBS | CABS | WBC |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| % Change 2006-07 | 33 | -28 | 29 | -9 | -47 |

In the 2006/07 winter numbers using gardens fell abruptly from the very high levels of the previous winter. The fluctuation in numbers is probably related to the size of the Beech crop. WBC numbers were just higher than any previous year, but this confirms the very steady increase that has seen BBS figure double in the past decade. There was just one record of a "courtship" group, eleven together at Ashbourne Park in Weston-s-Mare on March 28th.

Results from the 2007/08 WBC show a fall suggesting a poor breeding season, although the rate is still over 10% higher than during the First Winter Atlas.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 100 | 71 | 127 | 150 | 175 | 232 | 205 | 153 | 154 | 200 |

Avon BBS Index 1998=100

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Common breeding resident. BBS Avon population estimate 3350 pairs. Distribution 91%.

England 25-yr change: up 51%. Local ten year change: up 15%.

| | WBC | WGS | BBS | CABS | WBC |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| % Change 2006-07 | 9 | 18 | 0 | 24 | 4 |

Another average year.

In the 2006/07 winter numbers reported by WGS reached the highest level since the survey began in 1973/4. WBC results were slightly up on the previous winter, but the rate was no higher than it was at the start of the survey ten years ago. There were no flocks of over 20 during the first winter.

BBS showed no change, and has been essentially stable for the past four years. CABS year-on-year results showed a rise, but this was a recovery from the previous year, and the general population level was still below that of most years back to 1995. A pair was present on Steep Holm but there was no evidence of breeding.

Large flocks. There was a flock of 25 at OPS on June 26th, 23 at Nailsea on July 15th, 56 at OPS on Aug. 2nd and 30 here on Oct. 6th, 28 at Keynsham on Nov. 25th, 23 close by at Somerdale on Dec. 18th, and 25 at Batheaston on 25th.

Results from the 2007/08 WBC suggest a slight increase, and the figure is 63% above that of the First Winter Atlas.

The impression that the population is constantly increasing is based on the fact that they are clearly using gardens more during the winter, there has only been an 8% rise recorded by BBS since 1994. However, the existing population is clearly well over 50% above what it was 25 years ago.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 100 | 104 | 120 | 121 | 122 | 130 | 116 | 117 | 121 | 115 |

Avon BBS Index 1998=100

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Common breeding resident; uncommon passage migrant. BBS Avon population estimate 8500 pairs. Distribution 84%.

England 25-yr change: up 66%. Local ten-yr change: up 13%.

| | WBC | WGS | BBS | CABS | WBC |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| % Change 2006-07 | -2 | 15 | 3 | 2 | -45 |

An average year.

In the 2006/07 winter the WGS reported them in both the highest proportion of gardens, and in the largest numbers ever. WBC showed a very slight decline. A flock of 1500 was noted at CVL on Feb. 19th. 300 were roosting at Bailbrook, Bath in January, 240 were recorded going to roost at Wrington on March 7th, and 300 were at Henbury on 16th. We rarely receive roost records, and it would be nice to have more data. BBS suggested a slight increase. 408 were recorded at Elm Farm, Burnett on June 26th.

In the autumn there were more records from Henbury of 200 on 9th and 350 on 29th. A flock of 400 was recorded at Tytherington on Nov. 8th, 500 were at Keynsham on 10th and there was a roost of 1000 at CVL on 21st.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 100 | 98 | 98 | 101 | 104 | 102 | 99 | 106 | 108 | 113 |

Avon BBS index 1998=100

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Common breeding resident. Avon population count 6800 pairs. Distribution 45%.

England ten-year change; up 1%. Local ten-yr change; down 49%.

The largest winter flock recorded was 70 on Jan. 30th at Hayden Hill. BBS recorded a slight increase, but as the index shows it appears that numbers have fallen by half in the decade. BBS does not monitor this species well, but the provisional results of the 2007/08 WBC suggest that numbers are now 70% below their levels in the First Winter Atlas. A roost of 300 was recorded on Dec. 31st at Jobs Green Farm, Oldbury.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 100 | 87 | 93 | 75 | 61 | 47 | 53 | 61 | 49 | 51 |

Avon BBS Index 1998=100

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Common breeding resident. BBS Avon population estimate 8400 pairs. Distribution 99%.

England 25-yr change: up 52%. Local ten-yr change up 5%.

| | WBC | WGS | BBS | CABS | WBC |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| % Change 2006-07 | -30 | 33 | -9 | -12 | 54 |

The population appears to be stable, but many are non-breeders.

In the 2006/07 winter they were present in 90% of WGS gardens, the highest proportion yet, and also in the highest numbers ever. The WBC rate fell from the unusual levels of the previous winter to a more normal level. A flock of 200 was seen at OPS on Feb. 18th and there were 110 on ploughed land at Keynsham on April 1st. The same number was recorded at CI-Y on April 21st.

The BBS showed a slight decline, but the population has been essentially stable for the past decade. Two pairs nested on Steep Holm. 200 were recorded at Elm Farm, near Burnett on June 26th.

In the 2007/08 winter WBC showed a rise back to the 2005/06 level, and this represents a 34% increase on the population recorded in the First Winter Atlas.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|-----|-----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 100 | 107 | 106 | 104 | 103 | 95 | 98 | 111 | 108 | 105 |

Avon BBS Index 1998=100

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Scarce breeding resident, and uncommon passage migrant. BBS distribution 12%.
England ten-yr change: up 280%. Local ten-yr change: Up 700%.

Widely reported in all months, often in pairs.

Breeding Reports were received from eight nest sites, seven of which raised 25 young. They did not breed this year on Steep Holm or at Wickwar, where they have bred for the past twenty years. Site names are not published here because of their close association with Peregrines, but 41 sites in the region have reported breeding attempts since 1993.

They were reported from 24 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.

Unlike last year there were no reports of large flocks. The largest group was eight seen on Oct. 17th at Burlledge Hill. In the 2007/08 WBC they were recorded from 26% of the tetrads.

| | Av 1988-1997 | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|-------------------------------|--------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| Breeding pairs | 2 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 10 | 9 | 12 | 19 | 19 | 12 | 8 |
| Total reported breeding pairs | | | | | | | | | | | |

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Still abundant breeding resident, declining rapidly; passage migrant and winter visitor. BBS Avon population estimate 14,500 pairs. Distribution 76%.
England 25-yr change: down 78%. Local ten-yr change: down 29%

| | WBC | WGS | BBS | WBC |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| % Change 2006-07 | -74 | -5 | -3 | 158 |

The population may have stabilised.

In the 2006/07 winter they were present in only 55% of WGS gardens, the lowest proportion ever, and at an average of 4.0 birds per garden-week, almost back to the low level of 2001/02. WBC figures were spectacularly low, but the figures are not based on like-for-like comparisons. The largest winter flock was 400 seen on Feb. 16th at Kenn Moor.

BBS, however, showed only a slight further fall, suggesting a population that has been stable for the last four years. It is not yet clear how good or bad the breeding season was for them. There was a record of a second brood from Frampton Cotterell that fledged on June 16th. The first juvenile flock, of 60, was seen at Westerleigh on May 19th.

A flock of 400 was recorded at OPS on June 24th, and 900 at New Passage on Aug. 4th. A roost at CVL reached 1000 on Oct. 3rd, rising to 2000 on 27th, and to an estimated 20,000 on Nov. 11th.

A second roost developed on the Welsh side of the Estuary in December, and the numbers travelling across from Aust rose from an estimated 5000 on 1st to 100,000 on 16th. This is much the largest roost gathering recorded in the Avon area for at least 30 years.

In the 2007/08 WBC the rate was over twice that in the 2006/07 winter, but similar to that of 1999/2000, although still 58% below that recorded in the First Winter Atlas.

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|-------------------------|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| 100 | 104 | 95 | 96 | 97 | 86 | 74 | 73 | 73 | 71 |
| Avon BBS Index 1998=100 | | | | | | | | | |

| Av. 1988/9-1996/7 | 1997/98 | 98/99 | 99/00 | 00/01 | 01/02 | 02/03 | 03/04 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 2006/07 |
|--|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| 7.8 | 5.4 | 6.1 | 5.6 | 4.6 | 3.9 | 4.8 | 4.2 | 4.3 | 4.2 | 4.0 |
| WGS - average number per garden per week in winter | | | | | | | | | | |

The Bath Peregrines took 102 during the year with most in June (30).

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Still abundant but declining breeding resident. BBS Avon population estimate 41,300 pairs. BBS distribution 72%.
 England 25-yr change: down 68%. Local ten-yr change: up 32%.

| | WBC | WGS | BBS | WBC |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| % Change 2006-07 | -55 | -21 | -2 | 151 |

In the 2006/07 winter they were present in 61% of WGS gardens, the lowest proportion since 1973/4 when the survey began, and average number per garden fell to 2.9, a 21% fall, and the lowest figure yet. WBC recorded them at a rate that showed a sharp fall mainly because the counts of the previous winter were exceptional.

BBS showed a small decline, but to a level identical with that in 1995. It may have been a poor breeding season, but the WBC figures for 2007/08 winter suggest a considerable increase, and a population level scarcely different from that recorded in the First Winter Atlas.

Thus the varied attempts to monitor this species, which remains one of the commonest in the Avon area, simply show the difficulty of obtaining conclusive evidence.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 100 | 99 | 102 | 115 | 130 | 156 | 140 | 146 | 135 | 132 |

Avon BBS Index 1998=100

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Av. 1988/9-1996/7 | 1997/98 | 98/99 | 99/00 | 00/01 | 01/02 | 02/03 | 03/04 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 |
| 6.0 | 3.6 | 5.8 | 4.2 | 3.5 | 3.2 | 3.9 | 4.0 | 4.1 | 3.7 | 2.9 |

WGS - average numbers per garden per week in winter.

The Bath Peregrines took 51 during the year with most in July (10).

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Now probably extinct as a breeding bird.
 England 25-yr change: down 96%.

About to become extinct in the Avon area.

There were just five records, all of single birds as follows: at Northwick Warth on April 7th and 12th, at Savage's Wood, Bradley Stoke, on 22nd, at Northwick Warth again on Sept. 9th, and by CVRS on Dec. 22nd. This is the worst series of records ever, even worse than during the Foot and Mouth problems in 2001.

| | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|-----------|------|-----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|----|------|
| Bird-days | 152 | 207 | 31 | 6 | 288 | 72 | 52 | 40 | 18 | 5 |
| Sites | 11 | 14 | 7 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 |

Total individuals counted and sites

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Abundant breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. BBS Avon population estimate 14,700 pairs. BBS distribution 97%.
 England 25-yr change: up 29%. Local ten-yr change: down 23%.

| | WBC | WGS | BBS | CABS | WBC |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| % Change 2006-07 | -12 | -8 | -7 | -16 | -13 |

A poor year; every measure suggests a decline.

In the winter of 2006/07 WBC recorded a small fall in numbers seen, as did WGS. There was only one record of more than 45, a flock of 260 near North Stoke on Jan. 25th.

In the breeding season the BBS showed a 7% fall, to the lowest level since the survey began in 1994. This is a worrying trend. Previously, although the population had shown some variation, it was essentially stable. It may be that the parasitic disease that spread in the autumn of 2006 has had a significant effect on numbers.

It appears to have been a poor breeding season, as CABS year-on-year figure showed a 16% decline which included a 24% decline in the last three months of the year. Song was recorded on 28% of CABS visits, and was continuous from Feb. 4th to June 16th.

The normal October passage was reduced in scale. The best count was of 2100 in an hour and a half on 6th at New Passage. The next biggest was 300 heading east at OPS on 24th

In the 2007/08 winter WBC showed no change, but the rate was 40% lower than it was during the First Winter Atlas. The largest flock recorded was 200 at Marshfield on Dec. 25th

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 100 | 99 | 95 | 92 | 90 | 82 | 87 | 84 | 82 | 77 |

Avon BBS Index 1998 =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.

A poor year.

Winter 2006/07 A complete contrast with the previous winter. None were counted by WBC, and apart from 24 on the coast in November 2006, there was a single record of one near Bath on Jan. 25th. Another was recorded on March 24th as a prey item for the Peregrines of St John's Church, Bath.

Second winter period The first record was of two at Chittening Warth on Oct. 6th, and two were seen at CVL the following day, and there was then a gap until two were at New Passage on 20th.

In November there were records of 28 from ten sites. In December a total of 79 were recorded, including 20 in a Bath garden on 26th and 25 at Marshfield on 30th.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| Av 1987/88-96/97 | 1997/98 | 98/99 | 99/00 | 00/01 | 01/02 | 02/03 | 03/04 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 2006/07 |
| 410 | 468 | 442 | 140 | 18 | 109 | 103 | 270 | 20 | 3065 | 25 |

Total bird-days October-March

The Bath Peregrines took one in March and three in October, this is surprising as no Chaffinches were taken.

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

Common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor. BBS Avon population estimate 11,900 pairs. BBS distribution 93%.

England 25-yr change: up 33%. Local ten-yr change: down 9%

| | WBC | WGS | BBS | CABS | WBC |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| % Change 2006-07 | 10 | -6 | -25 | -30 | -53 |

A substantial population decline.

In the 2006/07 winter WBC recorded a slight increase. WGS recorded a slight fall in numbers (6%), and there were some records of birds with the parasitic disease that was widely reported from some areas of the country.

BBS made it clear that this disease has caused a substantial population decline by 25%, and this was combined with a very poor breeding season. CABS counts over the whole year were 30% down and, most significantly, 63% down in the last three months of the year when the numbers recorded were the lowest since 1996.

The 2007/08 WBC showed a 53% fall, interestingly back to just above the level recorded in the First Winter Atlas.

Song was recorded on 42% of CABS visits between Feb. 4th and June 16th.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 2006 | 2007 |
| 100 | 90 | 90 | 100 | 107 | 113 | 117 | 111 | 122 | 91 |

Avon BBS Index 1994=100

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| Av. 1988/9-1996/7 | 1997/98 | 98/99 | 99/00 | 00/01 | 01/02 | 02/03 | 03/04 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 2006/07 |
| 1.9 | 2.7 | 2.8 | 2.9 | 3.1 | 3.2 | 3.8 | 5.3 | 4.3 | 4.7 | 4.4 |

WGS - average number per garden per week

The Bath Peregrines took 70 during the year with about ten in March, April and May, and 15 in September. The parasitic disease mentioned above may have made them easier to catch.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor. BBS Avon population estimate 5,900 pairs. BBS Distribution 74%.

England 25-yr change: down 7%. Local ten-yr change: up 49%.

| | WBC | WGS | BBS | WBC |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| % Change 2006-07 | 0 | 1 | -13 | 16 |

In the 2006/07 winter they were recorded by WBC at the same rate as the previous winter, and were present in 52% of WGS gardens, and in the same numbers as in 2005/06. Flocks of up to 40 were recorded in January but there were fewer in February. A flock of 60 was recorded at OPS as late as April 29th.

BBS recorded them at a lower rate than in 2006, but the index, see below, still shows a remarkable increase in the population over the past decade. The BTO has suggested that this is clearly a consequence of the success of garden feeding stations. The first fledglings at a feeder were recorded on June 23rd.

Flocks of up to 40 were recorded in August, and up to 200 at OPS in September. On Steep Holm there was a 'fall' of up to 200 on Sept. 16th, and some remained here until Nov. 26th.

At Charlton Field 95 were noted on Oct. 14th, but 49 was the largest flock reported in November and December.

The 2007/08 WBC counted them at a slightly higher rate than in the previous winter, but this was five times the rate of the First Winter Atlas. They were present in 90% of tetrads, whereas they were only found in 56% in the earlier survey.

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 100 | 109 | 109 | 109 | 109 | 121 | 121 | 146 | 172 | 149 |

Avon BBS Index 1998=100

| Av 1988/9-1996/7 | 1997/98 | 98/99 | 99/00 | 00/01 | 01/02 | 02/03 | 03/04 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 2006/07 |
|------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| 14 | 81 | 30 | 76 | 72 | 100 | 45 | 60 | 83 | 83 | 84 |

WGS - numbers per 100 garden-weeks

The Bath Peregrines took 29 during the year with most in April and September.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Irruptive winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce in summer.

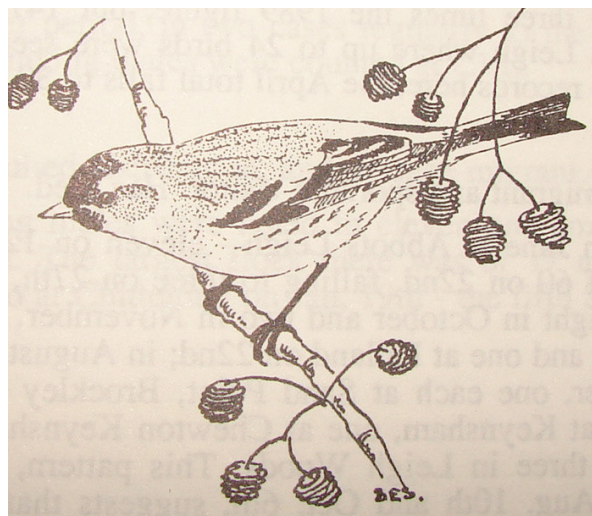
England ten-yr change: down 34%.

None in the first winter, but a good passage in October.

Winter 2006/07 In sharp contrast with the 2005/06 winter, there were almost no sightings this winter. WBC counted three in 170 hours. One was heard in January, seven in February and two in March. There were two records in the first week of May, one from Northwick Warth, and another from BL.

There were no breeding season records.

Autumn passage The first record came from Clevedon on Sept. 22nd, and six sites reported 109 on Oct. 6th. A total of 510 were reported from 16 sites during October.



Winter In November 218 were recorded, none from gardens. The largest flock was 29 on 30th. In December 223 were recorded, eight from three gardens.

| Av. 1988/89-96/97 | 1997/98 | 98/99 | 99/00 | 00/01 | 01/02 | 02/03 | 03/04 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 2006/07 |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| 2358 | 4932 | 1012 | 2945 | 783 | 3520 | 1938 | 1060 | 73 | 3683 | 104 |

Total individuals counted in six winter months, October-March

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

Common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor. BBS Avon population estimate 2700 pairs. BBS distribution 30%. England 25-yr change: down 48%. Local ten-yr change: down 43%.

A poor year compared with 2006. In the 2006/07 winter, WBC figures showed a 36% increase, but in January and February the largest flock recorded was 70 at Compton Dando on Jan. 17th. In March 170 were seen at Queen Charlton on 1st and 140 at Easton-in-Gordano on 5th.

BBS recorded them in only 30% of squares, (the figure was 51% in 1999), and at a rate that was slightly lower than in 2006. Flocks of up to 70 reappeared at Cl-Y in June, and there were 100 at OPS on Sept. 15th. There were 260 at Weston STW on Aug. 10th and 180 here on Sept. 2nd. On Steep Holm 400 were recorded between Sept. 22nd and 26th, and 150 were still present on Oct. 8th. At PW, 90 were reported on 29th. From the start of November until the end of the year the largest flock was 65 seen at Middledown Farm on Nov. 3rd, but on Dec. 30th, 300 were reported from Marshfield. However, the 2007/08 WBC showed a 44% increase on the previous winter, a rate that was the highest yet recorded by the survey, and almost five times the level of the First Winter Atlas. There may have been substantial migration into the region, but the discrepancy between these figures and the breeding population (which appears to have declined by 43% since 1994) is not readily explained.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 100 | 99 | 86 | 83 | 79 | 66 | 72 | 77 | 60 | 57 |

Avon BBS Index 1998=100

LESSER REDPOLL *Carduelis cabaret*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce in summer. England 25-yr change: down 97%.

Winter 2006/07 Between November and February there were records of only 33 bird-days, a stark contrast with the previous winter.

Spring Passage Just 13 were recorded on passage during March and up to April 7th.

There were no breeding season records.

Autumn passage Between Sept. 30th and Oct. 31st, 103 bird-days were recorded, 70 of them from the coast. Largest numbers were recorded on Oct. 6th and 16th, and the direction of movement, when recorded, was as often to NE as it was to SW.

Second winter. In November, 15 bird-days were recorded and 25 in December. The largest group were 10 near Yatton on Dec. 13th.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| Av. 1988/89-96/97 | 1997/98 | 98/99 | 99/00 | 00/01 | 01/02 | 02/03 | 03/04 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 2006/07 |
| 201 | 235 | 303 | 289 | 300 | 526 | 159 | 481 | 51 | 578 | 33 |

Winter totals October to March

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Fairly common breeding resident. BBS distribution 33%. England 25-yr change: down 33%. Local ten-yr change: up 35%.

| | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| | WBC | WGS | BBS | CABS | WBC |
| % | -50 | -48 | 0 | 23 | -11 |

The exceptional numbers seen in the winter of 2005/06 were not repeated in 2006/07. BBS showed no change and CABS recorded a small increase. Figures for the 2007/08 winter suggest no change in the population, a similar number to that recorded in the First Winter Atlas of twenty-five years ago. Furthermore the proportion of tetrads in which they were present was also virtually the same, at 57%. This is rather higher than the BBS figure (33%), and this may simply be because they are even more elusive in the summer than they are in winter. The BBS index shows abrupt changes because the totals counted are small.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 100 | 139 | 130 | 150 | 177 | 210 | 172 | 190 | 135 | 135 |

Avon BBS Index 1998=100

Very scarce vagrant

During the past decade this species has been recorded in 1999, 2001, 2002 and 2003 when five individuals were noted.

Scarce winter visitor, formerly more numerous.

Snow Bunting - winter totals since 1985/6, note the 2007 record is not included in the graph

England 25-yr change: down 55%. Local ten-yr change: down 27%.

An average year.

First winter In January and February flocks of up to 100 were seen at Queen Charlton and 22 at Elm Farm, Burnett.

In the breeding season BBS found them in 25% of squares, and at a slightly higher rate than in the previous year. Using all breeding season records they were found in 65 one-km squares, 21 of them new, 30% of the total number of 216 squares in which they have been found since 1998. Note that half of its distribution occurs in the four ten-km squares ST56, ST66 and ST77 and 78.

Second winter The largest flocks were 50 at Corston and 30 at South Stoke in November, 40 at Backwell and 35 at Marshfield in December.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 2007 |
| 100 | 83 | 90 | 83 | 76 | 60 | 63 | 67 | 68 | 73 |

Avon BBS | Index 1998=100

[illegible]

ESCAPED AND RELEASED BIRDS

SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*

North America

BL - one on Oct. 27th

CHINESE GOOSE *Anser cygnoides*

Asia

Bristol Docks - one or two present all year.

BAR-HEADED GOOSE *Anser indicus*

Asia

OPS - one on March 10th;

NW - one flying to S on March 10th;

Portishead - a juvenile on Aug. 14th;

CI-Y - two on April 5th and one on Sept. 5th;

PW - three from March 26th until 31st (these individuals were probable hybrids);

Backwell - one on April 7th;

CVL - one on Feb. 19th, and April 17th and 18th;

BL - one on June 16th.

MUSCOVY DUCK *Cairina moschata*

Central & South America

Bristol Harbour - two present most of the year;

Saltford - one on June 23rd;

Frampton Cotterell - one on June 28th.

RED GROUSE *Lagopus lagopus scotica*

Scotland

Long Ashton - one of unknown origin was found dead in the road on Oct. 12th. It was considered that the probability of this being a genuinely wild individual was very low.

PEACOCK *Pavo cristatus*

Asia

Fishponds - the male seen in 2005 was also seen on Jan. 2nd, and April 2nd and 29th;

BUDGERIGAR *Melopsittacus undulatus*

Australasia

Steep Holm - one on June 12th.

Shirehampton - one on July 17th was re-homed!

PARAKEET sp.

Bristol, New Cut - one heard calling as it flew away from the observer on July 6th.

RED-RUMPED PARAKEET *Psephotus haematonotus haematonotus*

Australasia

Sutton Wick - a male seen well on Sept. 12th.

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 on June 2nd, with presumably the same bird present at BL the following day.

COMMON SHELDUCK x ? *Tadorna tadorna* x ?

2006 - One seen regularly at New Passage and Northwick Warth between June 29th and Sept. 24th was considered probably to be a hybrid Shelduck x Ruddy Shelduck, although Shelduck x Cape Shelduck could not be eliminated. It was also seen in Gwent.

AYTHYA HYBRIDS

During the year several different *Aythya*s were seen which the observers considered to be hybrids. Unless stated otherwise all records relate to CVL, where there was a marked influx in the autumn.

(a) The regularly returning male, first seen in 2003, that is considered probably to be a Scaup x Tufted. This individual resembled a Scaup, the principal difference being the bulge on the rear of the crown. It was regularly seen up until April 11th, on Aug. 26th and 27th when in eclipse, and again on Oct. 13th, Nov. 9th and 21st and Dec. 27th.

- (b) A female, considered to be a Tufted x Scaup, was present on Jan. 19th.
- (c) The regularly returning male, showing some characters of Canvasback, that is considered probably to be a Canvasback x Pochard. It was regularly seen from Jan. 1st to 19th and again from Oct. 28th to Nov. 8th.
- (d) A male, like a Tufted but with a green head and pale grey flanks, on April 5th.
- (e) A male, like a Pochard but with a bill like a Redhead, on May 28th.
- (f) A large male, showing the rounded head shape of a Scaup and plain grey mantle and bill pattern of a Pochard, was regularly seen from Aug. 28th to Nov. 17th.
- (g) A female, resembling a Pochard but with a large white facial blaze, was regularly seen from Sept. 14th to Dec. 9th (and again in January 2008).
- (h) Females, resembling Scaup but with a bulge on the rear of the crown, on Sept. 20th, Oct. 6th and Dec. 1st.
- (i) A pair, both considered to be Tufted x Scaup, on Oct. 13th and Nov. 9th.
- (j) A male, resembling a Tufted Duck but with no tuft and a reddish cast to the head, on Oct. 16th and 18th.
- (k) At BG a female, resembling a Pochard but with white loreal spots similar to a Tufted, was regularly seen from Oct. 23rd to Oct. 31st and again on Nov. 23rd. Two similar looking juveniles (and considered to be siblings) at CVL on Sept. 15th with one again on Nov. 8th.
- (l) At BG a male, resembling a Scaup, on Oct. 30th.
- (m) A male with a pale mantle, a plum coloured head and a bright red eye, was present from Nov. 8th to Dec. 15th.
- (n) A male, resembling a Redhead, on Nov. 13th, 14th, 17th and 30th; it even called and displayed like a Redhead. However the head peaked above the eye (indicating a Pochard influence), the whole body had brown tones, particularly noticeable on the mantle and flanks and the black at the base of the bill was too extensive for a typical Redhead.
- (o) A male, similar to the above but with a chestnut breast, on Nov. 18th, 19th and 21st. This was assumed to be a Pochard x Ferruginous Duck.
- (p) A male, considered to be a Tufted x Pochard, on Nov. 17th and 21st.
- (q) At BL a male, with a pale mantle and a reddish head, was present from Sept. 14th to Oct. 13th.

In order to avoid possible duplication it would be useful if observers of possible *Aythya* hybrids could submit brief details of what the bird looked like.

GOLDENEYE x BARROW'S GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula x Bucephala islandica*

A female at CVL from Dec. 22nd into 2008 was thought to be this hybrid.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL x BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus melanocephalus x Larus ridibundus*

An adult at CVL on Feb. 17th.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL x COMMON GULL? *Larus melanocephalus x Larus canus?*

An adult Common Gull showing head markings normally associated with winter Mediterranean Gull, at CVL on Feb. 5th.

HERRING GULL x LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus argentatus x Larus fuscus*

CVL – single adults on Jan. 26th, Feb. 11th and 24th, Nov. 3rd and Dec. 12th;
St Phillips, Bristol – adult on Feb. 6th near site where it nested in 2006.

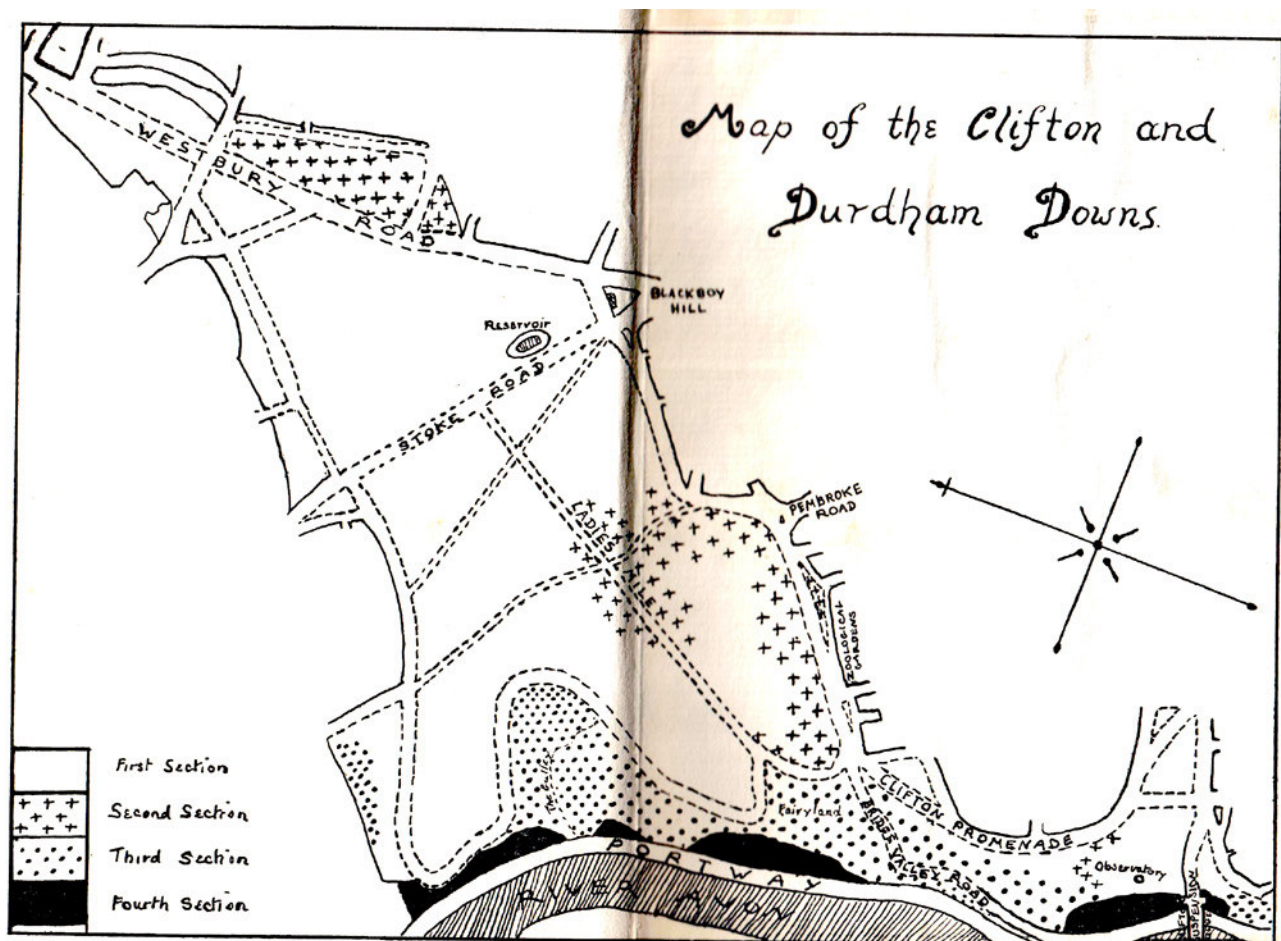
The Birds of Clifton Downs 1931

Averil Morley (1913-1957)

Averil Morley was born in Bristol in 1913. She wrote the paper that follows in 1931, at the age of 18, having given a talk at a meeting of the Bristol Naturalists' Society. The paper was privately printed and is now rare. We are re-printing it to make it more widely known, and because it represents, in two ways, a world that has vanished. Firstly, although the Downs are still there, and they continue to be used by many bird species, the mix has altered profoundly, a vivid illustration of the complex processes of change that are always at work. A paper on the current status of the bird-life of the Downs is planned for the 2008 *Avon Bird Report*. Secondly, bird watching has changed profoundly too, and Averil's personality comes across very clearly.

She was to become a significant national ornithologist. She was Secretary to the Edward Grey Institute in Oxford in 1938, and stayed there until 1942. While there she completed a card index on all of the material in the Alexander Library, and carried out field studies in Bagley Woods on Marsh Tits which resulted in a series of papers in *British Birds* published in Volumes 35, 42, 43, and 46. From 1955 to her early death in 1957 she served on the Scientific Advisory Committee of the BTO, and was a pioneer female ornithologist. In 1946 she wrote of book of poems called *The House in the Wood*, including one about her beloved Marsh Tits.

She married and spent some years in the Western Highlands, but she much preferred the neighbourhood around Oxford, and to write about the birds of parks and suburbs. Her obituary which appeared in *British Birds* (1957) notes that she was gentle and retiring, but firm and elegant. She wrote of what she saw with sensitivity and insight. Thus in many ways the pamphlet which is reproduced below set her on her life's course.



BIRD LIFE ON CLIFTON DOWNS

Forward

The following is the amended text of a paper read before the Ornithological Section of the Bristol Naturalists' Society. Its very nature necessarily makes it incomplete, therefore I would be most grateful if any of my readers would send me further observations on the bird life of the Downs

My sincere thanks are due to K. B. Rooke and K. D. Smith for much helpful information.

AM

In spite of many handicaps, the Clifton Downs still manage to retain some of the characteristics of their tribe: - a certain wildness, a windy, a rolling greenness, which conveys a much greater sense of space than their legitimate 400 odd acres warrant. Once upon a time of course they were far larger than this, but gradually the city has spread over the intervening meadows, and, climbing up the slopes would have obliterated them entirely if an enlightened Corporation (that *rara avis*!) had not preserved the remnant forever in 1861.

References to their natural history before that date are few and far between. A Mr. Owen in 1754 described them as lonely wastelands 'covered with fern and furze' and the cliffs were 'rough, craggy and romantick beyond imagination,' while a Mr. Manby in 1804 described the cliffs as being 'clothed in feathery foliage, the gaudy residences where little warblers tune their lay, making a perpetual concert of their melody,' and mentions especially thrushes, larks, Linnets and Nightingales. Early in the twentieth century a Mr Playne* wrote a very useful little book on local birds, which gives a good idea of bird life on the Downs before the War.

The Downs can be divided into four sections, each with its own bird type.

The **first section** is the bare, grassy, high plateaux that occupy the largest part of the Downs, in summer but scantily stocked with Mistle Thrushes, Rooks, Crows and a few pairs of Chaffinches; in winter supporting a larger but variable population of flocks.

The **second section** is composed of ground as free as the first from thick undergrowth, but which is covered with hawthorn trees. It is chiefly occupied by residents, but is more populous in winter when the Redwings and other immigrant thrushes arrive.

The **third section** supports trees and a heavy undergrowth of bushes and creepers (calcareous scrub). A typical example is Fairyland. In May and June these areas are packed to overflowing with birds, in winter they support a few nomadic bands of tits and stray finches.

The **fourth section** is the cliffs, which, though comprising but a small part of the Downs, have a distinctive ornithological character of their own.

There are two things which strike the observer on the Downs: 1. How very different are the species from those found in the neighbouring country. Within half a mile of the Downs on the Stoke Bishop side, Ring Doves, Stock Doves, Magpies, Jays, Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Nuthatches, Yellowhammers, Tree Pipits are regular nesting species, species which are never seen, or make spasmodic and rare appearances on the Downs; and 2. The number and variety of the birds that are present. Most people imagine the bird life of the Downs to consist of a few sparrows; one or two pairs of long suffering Blackbirds and thrushes; perhaps a Wren and Hedge Sparrow in the remotest parts. Yet I have counted sixty species that are either residents or summer or winter visitors, birds of passage, occasional, or rare wanderers. Though the list of birds is hum drum enough when contrasted with those more favoured tracts, I think it is little known that Hawfinches are regular winter visitors; that Lesser Whitethroat, Blackcap and Garden Warbler are summer visitors, the latter being common; that the list of migrants across the Downs include Curlew, Redshank, Snipe, Moorhens, and Wheatears.

There are three main causes which keep down both the number and variety of birds. The first is the continual presence of human beings. I am convinced that if the Downs were to become deserted it would not be long before the lark and Lapwing, Meadow and Tree Pipit, the Wheatear, were breeding on the grassy uplands; and the Nightjar would be back again on the Avon slopes, nesting, as it does on the duplicate slopes across the river.

* *Some Common Birds of the neighbourhood of Clifton* by Herbert C. Playne. 6d. net. Published by J Baker & Son.

The second cause is the cutting down and clearing away the great gorse and bracken tracks that once covered the Downs. This clearance, done to make room for playing fields, has especially affected the first section; reduced a good many Hawfinches to one small pair; entirely driven away the Yellowhammers and Stonechats (which nest in Stoke Bishop and along the Tow-path); and caused a great diminution in the numbers of Whitethroats, Linnets and other small birds.

The third cause is the lack of any regular water supply. There is not one spring or stream or pool on the Downs. This must affect the bird population both directly and indirectly, water providing a great abundance of food and cover.

Even in the last thirty years the variety of nesting birds has been depleted by six species. According to Mr Playne's handbook Lesser Redpolls, Yellowhammers, Skylarks, Wheatears, Nightingales and Cuckoos all bred on the Downs. Now, like the Lesser Redpoll they have vanished altogether; or, like the Skylarks make infrequent and rare appearances; or, as with Wheatears, appear only at non-breeding seasons. I venture to predict that thirty years hence the Common Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, Linnet, Hawfinch, Blackcap, Marsh Tit, Long tailed Tit will no longer nest on the Downs.

I propose to describe to you the bird life on the Downs during the seasons, so that you will know roughly what you may expect, and have an idea of the bird ecology the four sections according to the time of year.

AUTUMN

Autumn is a time of change. Flocks of shabby Starlings and sparrows stay for a few days then hurry away. In the first fortnight of October the last Willow Warblers and Chiffchaffs filter slowly through the Downs. One of the ways by which they leave is the line of back gardens of the houses in Pembroke Road. In the early morning one may hear the birds singing their last songs or see them flitting among the trees. They have been heard as far as the end of Pembroke Road, by which way they go after that nobody knows at present.

The stragglers of the great House Martin and Swallow army are now seen for the last time, wearily winging their way south. These birds have none of the joyousness of the August migratory bands that twitter and play together in an unhurried progress. I ones and twos and threes they hurry southwards undeterred by furious winds and heavy rains.

The late autumn is notable for the curious recurrence of spring song, feebly delivered however, and doomed to die at the approach of winter, save for spasmodic resurrections on warm, sunny days in that seasons. Every species exhibits it. The Rook's horrible, high breeding squeal is heard again in the elms; Crows, Mistle Thrushes, Blackbirds, thrushes, Wrens, Hedge Sparrows, wagtails and tits all give echoes of their songs, especially in the early morning. Robins of course are notorious. The Chaffinch is peculiar in that both in October, and in February, when he begins to sing again, he cannot summon up enough energy to finish the phrase. In the spring this incompleteness vanishes, but in October he gives up in disgust and is heard no more until the next year. Eliot Howard notices the same behaviour in warblers in the first week of July-a new lease of singing accompanied by a period of courtship although there is no second brood.

Particularly in autumn I have noticed sub-songs. Standing by some bush, you may hear a still small voice, a mere thread of sound, as if the singer was Lilliputian in size or was singing a long way off; yet he will be only two or three feet from you, a Robin, a thrush, a stalwart Mistle Thrush. When one hears it, one can readily believe the assertion of an eighteenth-century ornithologist, that Nightingales were known to dream in their sleep, when they warble very low and quietly.

Robins at this season engage in strenuous fights. Hedge Sparrows also are fierce combatants, and I have seen on the Downs and also in Abbots Leigh what are presumably struggles for winter territory.

The greatest feature of this season is of course migration, the problems of which have crucified so many ornithologists, from Democritus Junior to De Lamain. I have already mentioned the passing of the summer visitors, and will now deal with immigrants and birds of passage.

The first frost of October, by bringing the Green Woodpecker into the second section, produces the simplest form of this phenomenon. Sometimes as many as eight are spread out at wide intervals under the hawthorns, large, handsome birds, olive green with golden rumps and crimson crowns. Whenever I see them thus on the ground, I am reminded of an odd notation of an ornithologist who wrote a child's book of birds in 1792, wherein he declared that a woodpecker, 'when he finds an ant-hill, he thrusts out his long red tongue, and lays it on the ground. The ants think it perhaps to be a worm, of which they are very fond, and settle upon it in great numbers. The woodpecker then draws in his tongue and,' as the observer sadly notes, 'eats them all.' These birds probably come from Stoke Bishop and Leigh Woods. From such humble beginnings it is conjectured that the wonderful journeys of terns have been evolved.

Storms, by driving their prey to lower depths, force the Black headed Gull and the larger Herring Gull to come to the Downs for food always within the confines of the first section. With them feed flocks of Rooks and Jackdaws, whose satanic black dress contrasts vividly with the deceitfully angelic whiteness of the gulls.

After several days of severe storms there may well be over five hundred feeding on the grassy plateaux, so closely packed together that some parts are white at a distance; but if snow falls they disappear.

The roving bands of tits and Goldcrests exhibit a more developed stage of migration. The flocks are composed of Great Tits, their white cheeks accentuated by the encircling black which runs down the middle of their primrose-coloured breasts and bellies like a trickle of black paint; Blue Tits, 'pocket cherubs,' with the same green-blue backs and wings as their larger relations, but with blue crowns instead of black; Coal Tits, distinguished from Marsh Tits (which are also present) by the white patch on the nape of the neck breaking into the black cap, and the double bar on the olive-brown wing; the Long tailed Tit, with an extraordinarily long tail for such a small person, and a white stripe down the middle of his head; and, tiniest of all, the Goldcrest, baptized with fire if anybody is.

These bands have no definite destination, their direction seems dictated by caprice. This is also the guiding principle of the flocks of Chaffinches which appear in the autumn, though their movements may have sometimes a slight connection with weather conditions. Some of these flocks are definitely composed of males or females only. Some years are peculiar for the large number of such one-sex flocks, the male bands then predominating.

Except for the Bullfinches which stay in family parties, most of the finches are away in the winter, so that between the visitations of the flocks (which get fewer and fewer as the season advances) only a few odd pairs are to be seen in the hawthorns, while the Linnets desert the Downs entirely.

Another migrant who passes through the Downs at this time is the willy wagtail-Pied Wagtail for those grave and sedate persons who despise the nursery name. Though wanderers continue to appear during the winter, by far and away the largest number are seen in autumn. They travel singly or in devoted pairs, hunting for food along the leaf-strewn gutters of the roads, their dapper black and white plumage now dull and suffused with yellow, their long tails incessantly wagging up and down. Let some learned mathematician compute how many times they thus wag them in their lives.

In the same season Skylarks sometimes appear, both solitary and in flocks, with one or two odd Meadow Pipits. Some years there are none at all, sometimes only one, other years there are parties of six or eight. Their musical call note is just the cry, for the wide, grassy uplands of the first section, where only they are to be found. It is indeed a pity that they cannot breed here.

If you are lucky you may see two or three extremely shy Yellowhammers. The sunny golden head of the male will always identify him, but the warm brown mantle, the long white marks on the outer tail feathers (conspicuous in flight), the call note 'tchik' will help too. Do not be too optimistic however. So far the average is one record in six years!

In August and early September small parties of Wheatears are to be seen on the first section, generally already in their reddish-brown winter dress. As they perch on the outcrops of stone or tufts of grass one is strongly reminded of their relationship to the Robin, their plump watchfulness being his on a larger scale. From the limited number seen I conjecture that the Downs are on the outskirts of a line of migration near by.

In autumn there is a good deal of migration by night. I can recognise distinctly the cries of Curlew and Redshank, but there are a great many other notes, trills and whistles to which I can attach no name. Dunlin almost certainly must be present as these birds are found on the banks of the Avon with Curlew and Redshank, and perhaps Coot, for latterly these birds have begun to appear on the Zoo lake. Undoubtedly Moorhens migrate over the Downs, for besides making rare but regular appearances in autumn and winter on the Zoo lake,

I once actually saw a bird delicately pecking the grass near the tunnel ventilator by Pembroke Road. Snipe evidently migrate over the Downs too, for once one was found with a broken neck a few yards from the Westbury road having presumably collided with the tram-wires. Lesser and Greater Black backed Gulls, which appear commonly on the Avon, are almost bound to cross the Downs in migration, but have not yet been caught 'red handed.'

I have left till last the interesting migrations of the thrush tribe, because, though they begin in October, they extend into, and are a definite feature of the winter months.

WINTER

As early as the end of September the first batch of immigrant Mistle Thrushes arrive. These birds look yellower and paler than the residents. The white spots on the outer edge of the tail, the silvery under wing coverts are conspicuous in flight. In exceptionally severe and bitter weather they are present in large numbers with huge hordes of immigrant thrushes, Redwings and Starlings.

T.A. Coward says that along the west coast of England there is in spring and autumn a migratory movement of dark and apparently small Song Thrushes, but their destination is unknown. I have several times seen flocks in Stoke Bishop answering to this description, in the autumn but only once I have I seen such a flock on the Downs, though immigrant flocks of ordinary Song Thrushes always arrive each autumn.

In the winter after a night of rain, the clouds sometimes roll away in the morning, and when the sun comes out he discovers a rain-drop hanging from every blood-red berry, and turns them all into countless flashing rubies and diamonds garlanding the bare black branches. On such a morning the immigrant thrushes will gather in some bush and babble musically together. These babblings are very like the efforts of Redwings, sweet and unhurried, with no depth or power and with none of the characteristic thrush phrases. It is significant that the same morning will inspire the resident birds to sing a totally different song, the loud, ringing proper thrush song of the spring.

The first ten days of November see the arrival of some Redwings, a kind of thrush with chestnut flanks and a pale yellow eye stripe. They are variable in their date, insisting on high-pressure conditions in Scandinavia before they commence their migrations. Some of the flocks that appear in the hawthorns are birds of passage. With them come great numbers of Starlings, many Mistle Thrushes and Blackbirds, so that the whole flock may number three or four hundred birds. The noise they make, the chattering of the Starlings, the babble of the Redwings, the harsh cries of the Mistle Thrushes can be heard some distance away.

During cold spells and just after them, Redwings can be numbered in hundreds. I have counted five hundred in a group alone. Hunger often then makes them so tame they can almost be caught by hand. They congregate under the trees where the ground is free from snow, and seemingly are determined to keep their spirits up, for nothing can drown their talkativeness. All through December passage movements take place according to the weather.

Fieldfares in ones and twos and threes, are to be found with the other flocks. They are very shy, and the whole time they are on the Downs seem ill at ease and unhappy. Only in abnormally cold weather such as comes once or twice in five years, are they to be found in flocks. Whether they cross the Downs in April on their way north I do not know, though large flocks of these birds with Redwings, Ring Ouzels and Starlings travel north in April up the low-lands between the Mendips and the sea.

December shews incipient signs of spring. In the first week of the month Mistle Thrushes begin to sing again. Male Blackbirds I have seen fighting as if it was March; and if it is very mild, sparrows will toy suggestively with straws. One December I saw a Wheatear on the Downs; as sometimes they manage to winter in Cornwall, it was more probably a bird that had not been out of England than a migrant from abroad who had miscalculated the time. Redwings begin their community singing, and the noise made by these and immigrant thrushes is very spring like. The foolish creatures do not realise their troubles are not yet over. February frosts will cut off the song and silence these premature efforts.

Hard weather in winter will bring the Meadow Pipit on the first section and even, perhaps, one or two Rock Pipits, miserable ragged little things, creeping about in the snow. Even in the coldest of weather birds love a bath. I have actually seen Starlings break the ice on the puddles with blows from their wings for their ablutions. After heavy falls of rain it is amusing to see the battles between Rooks and Jackdaws for the possession of the one or two puddles which seem to be decreed bathing places.

Sometimes in the places occupied in summer by the warblers (the third section) there is in winter a wily visitor, the Jay. Never venturing out of the protection of the trees, he only betrays his presence by a softened churr of alarm and slips away, like the little boy in the proverb, who is heard and not seen.

But of all the winter visitors to the Downs, the *pièce de résistance* is the Hawfinch. The Hawfinch and the Peregrine buttress us against the pitying scorn of our friends when they write to us familiarly of Whooper Swans and nesting Dartford Warblers and Waxwings (though by the way, to be always hunting after rarities is bad ornithology). The Hawfinch is a late-comer. I have never seen it before December. Its chief haunt is the hawthorns by the tunnel ventilator near Pembroke Road. Its chestnut mantle, white wing-bars and white spots on the tail-feathers are conspicuous, while in some lights its beak too is as white as pearl.

In January the flocks of tits still rove at random, but there are unmistakable though rare signs of spring jealousy. A male will drive away another from a tree where a female is feeding, and then will fly round her with soft little cries. In five minutes the incident is forgotten and the flock flies on amicably, but the quarrel will break out with increasing frequency until in April they are split into pairs.

The last week of the month, if it is mild, will bring forth the Green Woodpecker's spring song-not as advanced by one ancient ornithologist, to lure insects and grubs in the tree towards the bark, but to lure his mate to his side and to proclaim territory. A pair of Starlings for whole days together will clamber in and out of a hole in an elm or ash. As tits will do in a mild March. By the middle of February Jackdaws leave the flock and do the same, with a great many bows and 'quips' and much fanning of the tail. The male Carrion Crow of the one and only pair on the Downs, now proclaims to all and sundry the limits of his territory; while in the rookery by the Reservoir is now heard the grating squeal of the Rook. Far more welcome is the song of the Mistle Thrush. The thrush's though joyful, is domestic; the Blackbird is a tame luxuriante; the Blackcap laughs ecstatically at a secret of his own; but the Mistle Thrush combines sweetness and purity with a wild forlornness suggestive of desolate and wind blown places.

Early in the morning thrushes will fight, striking at each other with their claws; Wrens also shew excitement, chasing each other over the bramble bushes like big brown bees; Hedge Sparrows begin their energetic battles; and the unfinished song of the Chaffinches' alluded to before continues to be heard as if the birds were doubtful as to whether it was really spring. Wise virgins. The Fieldfares, the flocks of Mistle Thrushes and Redwings shew that winter has not gone. Every year in February there are ten days or so of bitter winds and snow, usually the coldest period of the year. All thoughts of spring are forgotten, and the birds that had been so full of vigour and ardour now creep miserably in the bushes in an effort to find food. Every hawthorn blossoms with Redwings, and the air is full of the sound of their soft flight call, 'see-ip.'

SPRING

After the cold period is over, spring fights and songs recommence with fresh energy. March is one of the most interesting months, being to residents what May is to summer visitors. The last of the winter visitors now depart. In their last days on the Downs they display signs of spring impulses, thus the community-singing of the thrushes cease while Redwings begin to indulge in such choruses. Sometimes, on a particularly warm March morning, one will separate himself from his brethren, and perching on top of a hawthorn, utter a babbling, unhurried, but sweet edition of the thrush's song. There is something rather sad in listening to this prelude, which will so soon be mingling all the summer long with the surge of the wind in some unknown pine forest far away in a strange country.

The courtships and battles of thrushes and Blackbirds are noisy affairs. The Blackbirds however are not so fierce and courageous as the thrushes, much of their combats consisting of the males (and females too) running after each other, now one, now the other being the aggressor. But the thrushes fight beak and claw, throw themselves into strange tense attitudes and strike, seemingly to wound. Furiously and vociferously they dash into the bushes, uttering a confused, incoherent version of alarm and roosting chuckle, which slips into an unhurried gabbled song and finally subsides into silence. Or they run after each other with bodies pressed low on the ground, whether in war or love I do not know.

The male Blackbird picks up pieces of dead grass in his excitement, sometimes when chasing another male. Once I saw a very charming episode between a pair. The female was washing herself in a puddle, on the brink of which stood her mate, singing a sub-song specially for her, interspersed with bobbing bows.

The amorous Hedge Sparrows now fling caution to the winds, and wave their little wings like banners, displaying the smoke blue under coverts; the male Chaffinches sing all day, frequently chasing each other and the females; the Greenfinches begin their pretty nuptial flight which shews off the dandelion-yellow on their wing and tails.

The most interesting finch of March is the Hawfinch. In February and during the early part of March they spend all day together, quiet shy birds, with a clear flight-call 'tik tik.' In the middle of the month a change comes over their behaviour. Certain birds, presumably the males, sit on top of the hawthorns in conspicuous positions (whereas before their great object had been to remain hidden) and call the flight call. Very soon, however, a single 'tik' is not sufficient to express their growing passion. It develops into a double 'tik tik' repeated at steadily diminishing intervals until it is all joined up to form a trill, like that of the Goldfinch and Greenfinch.

By the end of the month the once happily united flock are busy chasing each other-unfortunately I cannot tell the sex of the combatants. By the first week of April the flock is distinctly split up into pairs, though all still live in the same grove. Between male and female there is now a new call note a gentle 'seep.' In March and April great numbers pass through,

as many as thirty or forty birds being seen, and the rapid 'tiking' that arises then from every side gives the impression that the bushes are full of little clocks.

It is often difficult to see the Rook's courtship as so much is performed in the tree-tops, but when he comes down to the ground he is then a conspicuous creature as he crawls towards the object of his desire with trailing wings and flitted tail, cawing pitifully rather like a young bird begging for food. This common courtship is seen again with the Starling where the female perches on the edge of a chosen nest hole, and with quivering wings receives food from her mate.

March, like September, brings forth rare wanderers. Not long ago in this month there occurred a so far unique record of the Ring Ouzel. It was a blustery day. On a stunted hawthorn, a solitary female with all her feathers blown the wrong way by the wind, sat miserably crying 'tuk tuk tuk,' the embodiment of forlorn bewilderment. Her presence is explained I think by the fact that in the previous November, an extremely late date for which there is no accounting, two flocks passed through Stoke Bishop, and I suppose this female was now trying to find her way back by the same route.

If the autumnal migration of Wheatears across the Downs is not abundant, the normal spring migration is hardly discernible at all. On rare occasions, however, a flock appears. While they are here they have an unhappy time, for their habit of roosting on the ground makes them fine sport for the dogs being taken for a final run in the evening. The dogs are attracted to the Wheatears' white rumps, which, as the birds spin over the grass in alarm, are very noticeable in the dusk.

The very rare occasions on which the Raven has been seen in the Avon Gorge have so far all occurred in March and April. This bird is said to be on the increase in Somerset. What Te Deums would arise from our midst, what rejoicing and thank-offerings, if a pair established themselves on the cliffs! Yes, says the cynic, and what numbers letting themselves down by ropes to take the eggs, as they have already tried to do (unsuccessfully as yet thank God) in the case of the Peregrine!

Towards the end of March we hear one of the most welcome sounds in Nature, the voice of the herald of summer. He has no gorgeous tabard to proclaim his high calling-so few really important people have ever. Buff breasted, brown backed is the Chiffchaff, with creamy eye stripe over his small dark eye. It is good to hear his simple song valiantly piercing the bluster of a March wind. Though April passes through the Downs without a single primrose and hardly a violet, she is not, luckily, so deficient in nests, and there is many a bush and bramble-clump that hides an unsuspected nest of Blackbird, thrush or finch. April sees too the arrival of many of the summer visitors, a few laggards waiting until May.

SUMMER

May is the most delightful month on the Downs. There is the wonderful display of masses of hawthorn, snow like in its abundance. In song I know nothing to equal it. Stand at the top of the Gully on a May morning! The whole place seems alive and quivering with music. Mistle Thrushes are heard singing a long way off, the distance enhancing the 'other-worldness' of their voices. Below in the crowded valley the lovely, lazy contralto of the Blackbirds is a contrast to the energetic and ringing peals of the thrushes; while the slow trickling song of the Robins is different again from the sweet impetuosity of the Wrens; the clear pure jingling of Greenfinches; the musical scramble of Whitethroats; the simple notes of Chiffchaffs; the languid ramblings of Garden Warblers; the Marsh Tit singing like a peal of bells; the well beloved notes of the Cuckoo; and this from the darkest, most sunless depths of the Gully, the dionysic song of the Blackcap-all this wonderful pattern of music woven on to the refrains of Willow Warblers and Chaffinches, the two commonest birds at this time of year, surpasses in quantity and quality any other chorus of birds of which I know. One hardly misses the vanished Nightingales.

Morning is the time for angels, midnight is for hobgoblins. Tawny Owls are abroad on the Downs at all seasons and nests there too. There is a strange appeal to their ghostly halloos to the Old Man in the Moon. Little Owls are few, and when they do come it is generally in the autumn or spring. They have been seen in the cliffs, and probably come more often than is thought, for they breed in Ashton Park and Leigh Woods.

From Leigh Woods comes another visitor that was here in the winter, the Jay, bent on evil purposes. He sneaks over to the quiet and sheltered spots, hoping to commit his malefic deeds unseen, but his presence is sometimes so heartily objected to by thrushes and finches that he is often forced to cross the river again, followed by a crowd of angry little birds even to the other side. Mr Playne mentions another visitor, the Nightjar, that came across the river in the summer evenings, but I am certain this bird never comes now.

The commonest bird on the Downs in summer is the Chaffinch. In every section he is well to the fore. Every clump of hawthorns whether in the most frequented parts of the first section or the most exposed in the fourth has its small pink-breasted owner.

The next commonest finch is the Greenfinch. An eighteenth century ornithologist said that the male of this species, during incubation, amuses his mate by flying in little circles round and round the nest! I have not noticed the Downs' Greenfinches displaying so much devotion to their mates as that. The Bullfinches surpass them and most other birds in conjugal love. The blue-backed and deep pink-breasted male never leaves the side of the more sober-coloured female while she is enjoying a respite from incubating, and hovers around her when she is settling herself again on the eggs. When the latter are hatched the parents even then will not leave each other, but search for food and return to the nest together, calling, as they flit among the bramble bushes, their gentle cry, 'whib.'

As the Bullfinch is the best husband so, among the small birds is the Chiffchaff one of the worst. He refuses to help feed the family, and while the harassed mother is anxiously guarding her roving brood in strange pastures, he still clings to the old territory, singing although there is no need. The Willow Warblers are much more numerous than the Chiffchaffs. The ratio is four pairs to one. So does the Garden Warbler numerically surpass the Blackcap.

One summer I made a point of finding all the Garden Warblers and Blackcaps by listening to their songs, and then tracking the singer and examining him carefully. I found nine pairs of Garden Warblers and only two pairs of Blackcaps, all of them, except for a wandering Garden Warbler, not included in the nine pairs, on the Avon slopes, the principle domain of the warblers. Though my knowledge is not exhaustive, I think in Abbots Leigh and Stoke Bishop Blackcaps are commoner than Garden Warblers. It is interesting to note that Mr Playne in his handbook thirty years ago made no mention of Garden Warblers at all, but speaks of the plenitude of Blackcaps on the Downs. Either he was mistaken in the identity of the singers, which is extremely unlikely, or else the Garden Warbler is a recent breeder who is gradually pushing the Blackcap out of the Avon slopes.

The most pugnacious warbler is the Common Whitethroat. One May a pair of Lesser Whitethroats successfully reared a brood in the Gully plateaux (by which I mean the 'corridor' between the road and the Avon slopes on the left of the Gully). They returned there next year, but a pair of Common Whitethroats who had arrived first, fiercely objected to the appearance of their cousins. There were frequent fights accompanied by villainous hisses and churrs, but by May 14th the Lesser Whitethroats yielded to the larger birds and retired to a territory in Fairyland where there were none of their tormentors to worry them. I am glad they were not driven away altogether, for they are the only pair the Downs possess. The Common Whitethroat is one of the most incessant singers; he sings his refrain fourteen times to the minute compared with the Chaffinch's seven and the Willow Warbler's five times.

All through the first ten days of May, Swallows, both singly and in parties, migrate across the Downs. This migration is the most noticeable of all that occur here in spring and summer. Bands of House Martins accompany the Swallows. This species now builds in Stoke Bishop not a hundred yards from the Downs, and are often to be seen hawking insects over the grass. As early as the last week in June large flocks of young birds are to be seen flying south, winter's *memento mori*. Swifts sometimes join the House Martins in their hawking especially in the evening. At this time of day occurs too those strange aerial sports in which the birds circle upwards almost out of sight, and there wheel screaming in dizzy circles or dash madly about the cliffs in frenzied excitement.

The Jackdaw is the dominant bird of the cliffs. Hundreds must nest in the crevices, almost equal in numbers to the hordes in the Cheddar Gorge. Strangely enough, Greenfinches, Chaffinches, Great Tits and Blue Tits all nest in the fourth section too. Any little patch of hawthorn and privet on the cliff surface will support a Chaffinch or Greenfinch or a pair of Wrens. The tits nest in the crevices a few feet from the top. Though in a perilous position, the young ones are safer than those nestlings couched in a hole in some elm branch, for sometimes in a wind the rotten bough gives way and the entire brood is killed.

The lords of the Gorge are the Peregrines. June is devoted to the education of their young. One of the old birds, with some newly-killed victim in its talons, lures the young ones to fly after it, who try to snatch away the prize by turning on their backs in mid-flight and striking from underneath, a difficult feat. It is a fine sight to see the old birds flying and wheeling about the Gorge. Though the female is larger than her mate, she lacks his slate-blue back. As they sweep past the cliffs you may be able to see the yellow cere and dark moustachial streak.

Though families of Coal Tits are seen on the Downs at the end of June, a nest has not actually been found there. Certainly they breed very close to them in Clifton and Stoke Bishop. Marsh Tits however, nest in the third section.

With the Hawfinch and Wood Warbler there is only one pair of nesting birds to represent their species; but in the Hawfinch's case this pair and their family are the last of a species that was once quite common as a breeding bird on the Downs, with the Wood Warbler the pair are the first of a, let us hope, breeding species, for they have only just begun to breed in this area. Linnets are represented in slightly more abundance, but in proportion the years have brought about a

much heavier decline than with the Hawfinch, for these birds were once the commonest on the Downs, the clearance of which must have caused a tremendous drop in their numbers.

Two doubtful nesters are the Wood Pigeon and the Green Woodpecker. They are to be seen all through the summer on the Downs, the Green Woodpecker especially, his breeding call often heard. But their presence does not mean to say they nest, for, during the first fortnight of May, there is generally a Cuckoo loudly proclaiming his ardour, only to disappear half-way through the month. Probably Cuckoos are also lost breeders to the Downs. Luckily the tiny Goldcrests still manage to nest among the yews and pines in the Gully where one may hear their thin wheezy call-notes as they search the branches for insects.

One of the last summer visitors to arrive is the Spotted Flycatcher. These birds prefer to nest on the edge of the Downs, near houses, for which they often forsake their former summer quarters. A pair are always faithful, however, to the Gully plateau. Watching these silent and unferocious birds, it is difficult to believe that old-time naturalists included this species in the carnivorous birds of prey. In common with other summer visitors, if their arrival has been delayed through low pressure, their courtship is a lightning affair, and building will start three or four days after the birds are first seen. Sometimes you may find their nests built on top of an old thrush's or Blackbird's.

The exuberance of summer is short-lived. The last week in June is a sad contrast to the first, and to me July and August are the least interesting months of the year on the Downs. Instead of the wild out-pouring of song that was formerly such a marked feature, all is now soberly silent save for a Chiffchaff's half-hearted efforts at singing and the harsh lisping of a band of tits, while the thrushes have the dawn-chorus to themselves. Perhaps it was this state of silence which once made a hen Chaffinch endeavour to mend matters in Fairyland by singing herself. She sang well, twice giving a rendering of the male's song, but mostly contenting herself with a sweet trill.

Large flocks of young and old Chaffinches and Greenfinches now feed under the trees, sometimes joined by the wary Bullfinches. A few young sparrows and Chaffinches awake pathetic memories of early summer by begging their parents for food

Sparrows have a pretty habit now of rising a foot or so in the air to the level of the grass, whether to pick off insects or seeds I do not know. When a flock is thus engaged it gives the effect of a brown fountain rising and falling, now here, now there.

In August, if it were not for the flocks of finches and tits, the Downs would seem very empty, for the warblers have practically all gone, and the Swallows and Swifts follow their example. The whole atmosphere of this month is embodied in the following occurrence on the last day of one July, when on a gray, heavily misted morning, I watched on the Downs a long ribbon of Swifts flying from the north east to the south west, one after the other, as if following some invisible path, a huge attenuated stream, appearing out of the mists, soon to disappear again, as silent as the crowned ghosts of 'Macbeth.'

COMPLETE LIST OF RESIDENTS (R.), SUMMER VISITORS (S.V.), WINTER VISITORS (W.V.), BIRDS OF PASSAGE (B.P.), OCCASIONAL (Occ.), RARE WANDERERS (R.W.) and as far as possible the sections on which they are found. Dominant birds are printed in black type.

| Name | Sections | | | | Scientific Name | |
|-------------------|----------|---|---|---|---------------------------------|------|
| Blackbird | - | 2 | 3 | - | <i>Turdus merula</i> | R. |
| Blackcap | - | - | 3 | - | <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i> | S.V. |
| Black headed Gull | 1 | - | - | - | <i>Larus ridibundus</i> | Occ. |
| Blue Tit | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | <i>Parus caeruleus</i> | R. |
| Brambling | - | 2 | - | - | <i>Fringilla montifringilla</i> | R.W. |
| Bullfinch | - | 2 | 3 | - | <i>Pyrrhula nesa</i> | R. |
| Carrion Crow | 1 | - | - | - | <i>Corvus corone</i> | R. |
| Chaffinch | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | <i>Fringilla coelebs</i> | R. |
| Chiffchaff | - | 2 | 3 | - | <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i> | S.V. |
| Coal Tit | 1 | 2 | 3 | - | <i>Parus ater</i> | Occ. |

| Name | Sections | | | | Scientific Name | |
|----------------------------|----------|---|---|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Common Whitethroat | - | 2 | 3 | - | <i>Sylvia communis</i> | S.V. |
| Cormorant | | | | | <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> | R.W. |
| Curlew | | | | | <i>Numenius arquata</i> | B.P. |
| Fieldfare | 1 | 2 | - | - | <i>Turdus pilaris</i> | Occ. Winter |
| Garden Warbler | - | - | 3 | - | <i>Sylvia borin</i> | S.V. |
| Goldcrest | 1 | 2 | 3 | - | <i>Regulus regulus</i> | R. |
| Goldfinch | | | | | <i>Carduelis carduelis</i> | R.W. |
| Greater Spotted Woodpecker | - | - | 3 | - | <i>Dryobates major</i> | R.W. |
| Great Tit | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | <i>Parus major</i> | R. |
| Greenfinch | - | 2 | 3 | 4 | <i>Chloris chloris</i> | R. |
| Greenland Wheatear | 1 | - | - | - | <i>Oenanthe oenanthe leucorrhoa</i> | R.W. |
| Green Woodpecker | - | 2 | 3 | - | <i>Picus viridis</i> | Occ. all year |
| Grey Wagtail | | | | | <i>Motacilla boarula</i> | R.W. |
| Hawfinch | - | 2 | 3 | - | <i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i> | R. chiefly W.V. |
| Hedge Sparrow | - | 2 | 3 | - | <i>Prunella modularis</i> | R. |
| Herring Gull | 1 | - | - | - | <i>Larus argentatus</i> | Occ. |
| House Martin | 1 | - | - | - | <i>Delichon urbica</i> | B.P. |
| House Sparrow | 1 | 2 | 3 | - | <i>Passer domesticus</i> | Occ. all year |
| Jackdaw | 1 | - | - | 4 | <i>Corvus monedula</i> | R. |
| Jay | - | - | 3 | - | <i>Garrulus glandarius</i> | Occ. |
| Kestrel | | | | | <i>Falco tinnunculus</i> | R.W. |
| Lapwing | | | | | <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> | B.P. |
| Lesser Whitethroat | - | - | 3 | - | <i>Sylvia curruca</i> | S.V. |
| Linnet | 1 | - | 3 | - | <i>Acanthus cannabina</i> | S.V. |
| Little Owl | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | <i>Carine noctua</i> | Occ. |
| Long tailed Tit | 1 | 2 | 3 | - | <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i> | R. |
| Magpie | | | | | <i>Pica pica</i> | R.W. |
| Marsh Tit | 1 | 2 | 3 | - | <i>Parus palustris</i> | R. |
| Meadow Pipit | 1 | - | - | - | <i>Anthus pratensis</i> | Occ. |
| Mistle Thrush | 1 | 2 | 3 | - | <i>Turdus viscivorus</i> | R. W.V. |
| Moorhen | | | | | <i>Gallinula chloropus</i> | B.P. |
| Nuthatch | - | 2 | - | - | <i>Sitta coesia</i> | R.W. |
| Peregrine Falcon | - | - | - | 4 | <i>Falco peregrinus</i> | R. |
| Pied Wagtail | 1 | - | - | - | <i>Motacilla lugubris</i> | B.P. |
| Raven | - | - | - | 4 | <i>Corvus corax</i> | R.W. |
| Redshank | | | | | <i>Tringa totanus</i> | B.P. |
| Redwing | 1 | 2 | 3 | - | <i>Turdus musicus</i> | W.V. |
| Ring Ouzel | 1 | - | - | - | <i>Turdus torquatus</i> | R.W. |
| Robin | - | 2 | 3 | - | <i>Erithacus rubecula</i> | R. |

| Name | Sections | | | | Scientific Name | |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|---|-------------------------|---------------|
| Rock Pipit | 1 | - | - | - | Anthus petrosus | R.W. |
| Rook | 1 | 2 | - | - | Corvus frugilegus | R. |
| Skylark | 1 | - | - | - | Alauda arvensis | Occ. winter |
| Snipe | | | | | Capella gallinago | B.P. |
| Sparrowhawk | | | | | Accipiter nisus | R.W. |
| Spotted Flycatcher | - | 2 | 3 | - | Muscicapa striata | S.V. |
| Starling | 1 | 2 | 3 | - | Sturnus vulgaris | R. B.P. |
| Stock Dove | 1 | - | - | - | Columba oenas | R.W. |
| Swallow | | | | | Hirundo rustica | B.P. |
| Swift | 1 | - | - | 4 | Micropus apus | B.P. |
| Tawny Owl | 1 | 2 | 3 | - | Strix aluco | R. |
| Thrush | 1 | 2 | 3 | - | Turdus philomelos | R. |
| Treecreeper | 1 | 2 | 3 | - | Certhia familiaris | Occ. |
| Wheatear | 1 | - | - | - | Oenanthe oenanthe | B.P. |
| White Wagtail | | | | | Motacilla alba | R.W. |
| Willow Warbler | - | 2 | 3 | - | Phylloscopus trochilus | S.V. |
| Wood Pigeon | 1 | 2 | 3 | - | Columba palumbus | Occ. all year |
| Wood Warbler | - | - | 3 | - | Phylloscopus sibilatrix | S.V. |
| [Willow Tit <i>Parus borealis</i> | Evidence that this bird has appeared not quite conclusive] | | | | | |
| Wren | - | 2 | 3 | 4 | Troglodytes troglodytes | R. |
| Yellowhammer | - | 2 | - | - | Emberiza citrinella | R.W. |

Many birds appear in several capacities, e.g. the Mistle Thrush, which is a Resident, Bird of Passage and Winter Visitor; but only the dominant capacity has been given.

The following birds have been sighted so close to the Downs, often only 100 yards away, that they might easily appear there: - Lesser Redpoll, Stonechat, Tree Sparrow, Turtle Dove, Yellow Wagtail; while the following almost certainly migrate over the Downs though not yet proved to do so: - Dunlin, Great Black backed Gull, Lesser Black backed Gull, Ringed Plover.

The Diet of Breeding Peregrines in Bath, 2007

Ed Drewitt

Introduction

Peregrines *Falco peregrinus* have been using St John's Church in the centre of Bath since the late 1990s. A nest box was erected in 2004, and successful nesting took place in 2006. Four chicks hatched of which three fledged. In 2007, the pair again bred successfully, laying three eggs and raising two chicks. The latter were ringed on May 21st both with a standard BTO ring and a blue colour ring with black letters AA and AB. Chick AA stayed at the church with its parents throughout the year and into spring 2008. AB has not been seen since summer 2007.

Starting in 2000 we have been collecting data on the prey taken by these Peregrines; see Drewitt 2007 and Drewitt & Dixon 2008. In this paper we summarise the diet of the Bath Peregrines throughout 2007.

Method

Prey remains have been collected almost daily from the ground beneath St John's Church by Louisa Hazelton, a volunteer for the Hawk and Owl Trust. With close scrutiny, dropped or discarded material, including whole or part carcasses, feathers, heads/skulls, wings, legs, rings and pellets were retrieved. This is described in more detail in the 2006 *Avon Bird Report* (Drewitt 2007).

Results

In 2007 the remains of 1255 birds were collected from 54 species (Appendix 1). The most important prey type was the Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*, comprising 35% of prey by frequency and 61% by weight (Figures 1 and 2). Racing pigeons comprised 2% of prey by frequency and 3% by weight.

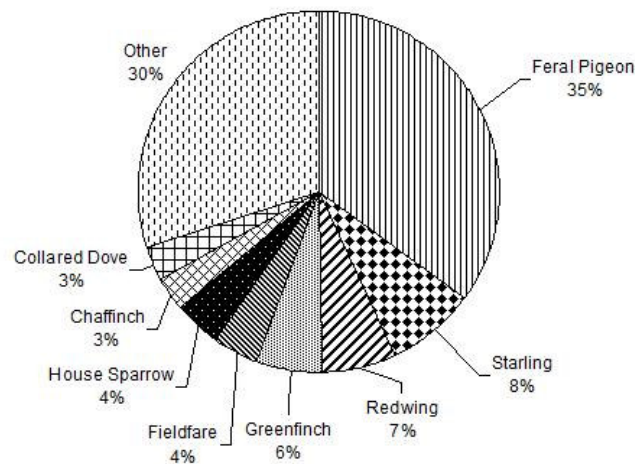


Figure 1: Prey taken by Peregrines in Bath by frequency in 2007 (n=1255)

After Feral Pigeons, Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris*, Redwings *Turdus iliacus* and Greenfinches *Carduelis chloris* were the most common prey species (Figures 1 and 2). Woodpigeons *Columba palumbus* and Black-headed Gulls *Larus ridibundus* were also important in the diet by weight (Figure 2).

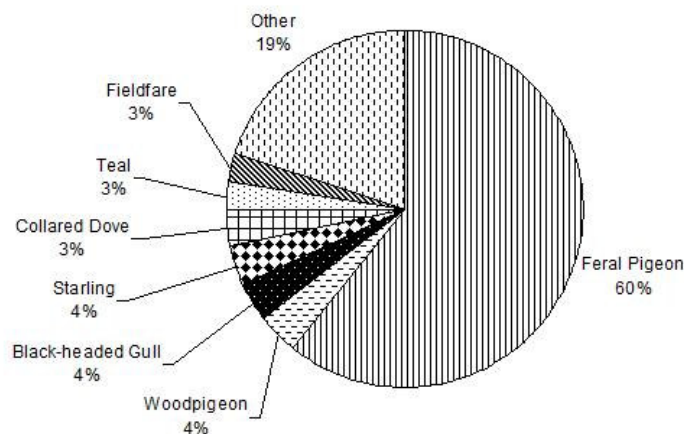


Figure 2: Prey taken by Peregrines in Bath by weight in 2007 (n=1255)

Figure 3 shows the seasonal abundances of Feral Pigeons, Starlings, Redwings and Greenfinches. These show distinct peaks and troughs for Feral Pigeons and Starlings with the largest numbers eaten during the Peregrines' breeding season. Greenfinches were taken less during the breeding season and peaked in the autumn. Redwings decreased through the early part of the year, disappeared entirely during their absence from the UK and increased again during the autumn months.

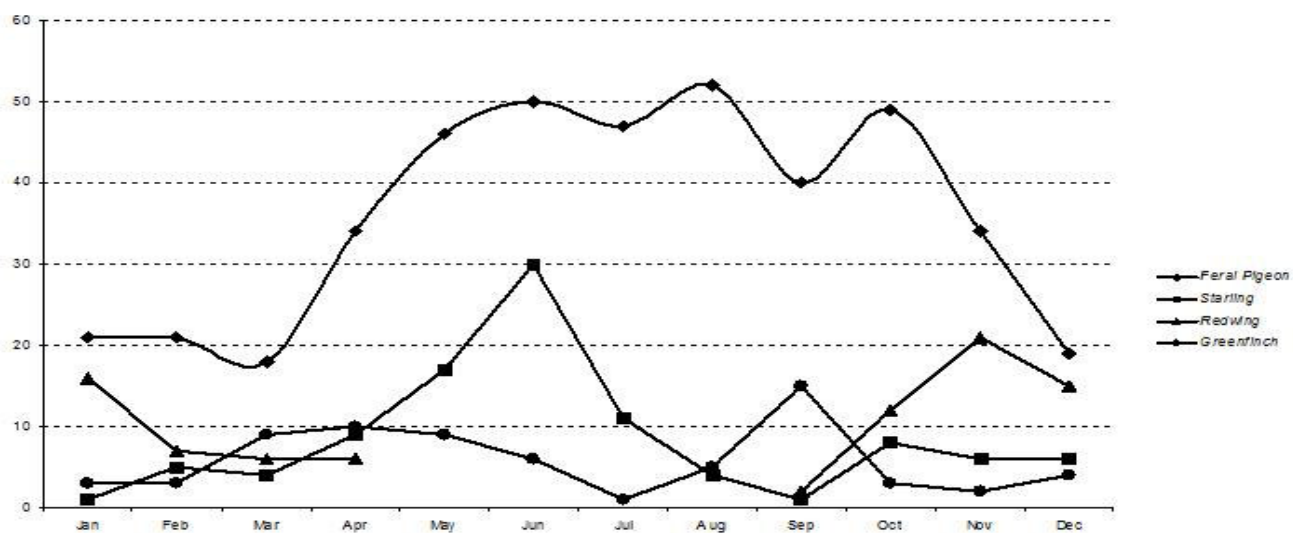


Figure 3: Seasonal variation of four species of prey in the Peregrines' diet in Bath during 2007

Species rarely recorded in the diet of urban Peregrines included a juvenile Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus* (September), a Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis* (May), a juvenile Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* (October), a Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* (April), and Yellowhammers *Emberiza citrinella* (October/November). A Budgerigar *Melopsittacus undulatus* was also eaten in April.

Species that are taken at night continued to feature in the diet mainly through the autumn and winter months. While 52% less Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola* were found than in 2006, many other species were discovered including Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*, Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* and Knot *Calidris canutus*. Water Rail, Moorhen, Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, Knot, Redwing and Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* were taken in significantly larger numbers compared with 2006 (see Table1).

Table 1: Prey species eaten by the Peregrines in Bath in 2007 that were probably taken at night (N) or a mixture of at night and daytime (ND).

| Species | Period of day | 2006 | 2007 | % change | χ^2 |
|--------------------|---------------|------|------|----------|---|
| Little Grebe | N | 6 | 1 | 83% ↓ | No significant difference |
| Black-necked Grebe | N | 0 | 1 | ↑ | No significant difference |
| Water Rail | N | 0 | 8 | ↑ | Significant difference, $\chi^2 = 8$ p > 0.05 |
| Moorhen | ND | 0 | 10 | ↑ | Significant difference, $\chi^2 = 10$ p > 0.01 |
| Golden Plover | ND | 0 | 7 | ↑ | Significant difference, $\chi^2 = 7$ p > 0.05 |
| Lapwing | ND | 10 | 4 | 60% ↓ | No significant difference |
| Knot | ND | 0 | 6 | ↑ | Significant difference, $\chi^2 = 6$ p > 0.05 |
| Dunlin | ND | 4 | 1 | 75% ↓ | No significant difference |
| Jack Snipe | N | 1 | 3 | 67% ↑ | No significant difference |
| Snipe | ND | 25 | 26 | 4% ↑ | No significant difference |
| Woodcock | N | 31 | 15* | 52% ↓ | No significant difference |
| Turtle Dove | ND | 0 | 1 | ↑ | No significant difference |
| Dunnock | ND | 19 | 13 | 32% ↓ | No significant difference |
| Blackbird | ND | 30 | 31 | 3% ↑ | No significant difference |
| Fieldfare | ND | 18 | 54 | 36% ↑ | Significant difference, $\chi^2 = 18$ p > 0.01 |
| Song Thrush | ND | 9 | 18* | 50% ↑ | No significant difference |
| Redwing | ND | 39 | 84 | 46% ↑ | Significant difference, $\chi^2 = 16.46$ p > 0.01 |
| Brambling | ND | 2 | 4 | 50% ↑ | No significant difference |

*While the numbers of Woodcock, Song Thrushes *Turdus philomelos* and Dunnocks *Prunella modularis* taken between 2006 and 2007 were not significant it is still worth noting that these numbers are high. In previous years prior to 2006, Woodcock, Song Thrushes and Dunnocks have either been recorded in very small numbers or not at all (unpublished data).

Discussion

The prey remains collected throughout 2007 continued to provide a detailed picture of what urban-dwelling Peregrines in Bath were eating. The 10% fewer prey items brought to the site in 2007 compared to 2006 can be accounted for by the smaller brood size and poor weather during the nesting season. During heavy, persistent rain, the female will brood the chicks or wait for the rain to ease. They will often rely on stored food from a cache if fresh prey runs short (Ratcliffe 1993).

Feral Pigeons remained important in the diet of the Peregrines in Bath as a common and staple resource. Racing Pigeons remained low in the diet, and probably reflect both a lack of movement of Racing Pigeons over Bath and the low number of pigeon fanciers living in the city. It is also possible that the local Rock Doves (feral street pigeons) are far easier to catch. There are generally far fewer feral pigeons living in Bath (1422) compared to Bristol (9500 including Avonmouth) (Tully 2006).

Numbers of Feral Pigeons fluctuated throughout the summer months and remained high during the period when the Peregrine chicks were in the nest and fledging. The large drop in pigeons eaten in September may relate to the disappearance of one the young birds and therefore less food being eaten. Starlings peaked during June when the chicks were fledging and the population of Starlings was supplemented by juvenile birds. Similar patterns arose for other species

such as the Greenfinch and appeared to coincide with the juvenile dispersal from nest sites or migration through the area (Wernham *et al.* 2002).

Wood Pigeons are now more common around Bath. They have increased by 44% in the Avon area over the past decade (Mielcarek 2006). Despite this, they still only feature in relatively small numbers in the Peregrine diet. Only 18 (1.43%) were taken in 2007. While they make up a larger proportion of the diet by weight (4%), low captures such as this have been widely recorded at other Peregrine sites. This is thought to be due to their large size as well as the abundance and manner of flight of Feral Pigeons which make easier targets (Ratcliffe 1993). Interestingly though, in Bath during 2007, 67% of Woodpigeons were captured between April and August. Other research through the twentieth century shows that Woodpigeons are taken mostly during the autumn and winter months (Ratcliffe 1993). In Bath, Peregrines were taking Woodpigeons during their peak demand for food at a time when populations of this prey species are much higher than they were. Note that much of the research on this aspect of their biology was undertaken some time ago when the populations were lower (Mielcarek 2006).

The abundance and diversity of species probably taken at night reflects the opportunistic behaviour of Peregrines. The exact movements and numbers of nocturnal migrants may vary from year to year depending on weather conditions and success of the breeding season prior to winter. If conditions are harsh in mainland Europe and bird species such as Water Rail had a good breeding season, then we may expect more of them as migrants to be moving into the UK. Sudden cold spells in the UK may also cause birds to move between habitats to find more suitable conditions to feed and roost (Wernham *et al.* 2002).

While Peregrines may catch Little Grebes *Tachybaptus ruficollis* at night, they may also be using diurnal hovering techniques over water to catch them as they return to the water's surface after diving. This has been observed by Nigel Hewitt and Stuart Croft at St Just in Roseland, Cornwall in January 2008, and may also account for the occurrence of Little Grebes in the diet during months when this species is unlikely to be migrating or moving large distances overland. They observed a Peregrine hovering over the spot where seven Little Grebes had just dived. After hovering for about 15 seconds, it began repeatedly diving low over the water, from a height of only six metres, apparently reaching the bottom of its dive in the hope of coinciding with a grebe resurfacing.

This continued for two to three minutes despite continual harassment by Black-headed Gulls. It then appeared to give up, departing over the headland, only to reappear thirty seconds later diving at high speed towards the same spot. This high-speed approach was repeated from the opposite direction before the bird eventually departed (Nigel Hewitt pers. comm.). A Peregrine hovering over water in this way was also shown on the BBC's Autumnwatch programme in 2007 (pers. obs.).

The appearance of Knot in the diet suggests that the Peregrines may be intercepting wading birds as they are migrating overland near Bath. Knots were found in September (3), November (2) and December (1). Similar occurrences were reported in Derby and Coventry in the winter of 2006/07 (unpublished data). There is always the possibility that they are travelling to the Estuary to catch such species or hunting them at water bodies such as CVL. The Sandwich Tern was also probably migrating overland in May. Although rare inland they have been taken by Peregrines in South Wales and they sometimes pass through CVL (Andrews 2007; Wernham, *et al.* 2002; Andrew Dixon pers. comm.).

The Manx Shearwater was a young bird taken on the Sept. 23rd. Its primary feathers were just coming out of pin and had almost finished growing. This individual may have become disorientated (Farrell, Hibbert & Reay 2002). Similar occurrences were noted on Sept. 27th, 1995 and Oct. 2nd, 1997 when the remains of Manx Shearwaters were found below a Peregrine site in Bristol (Nick Williams pers. comm.).

The continued abundance of Woodcock, Song Thrushes and Dunnocks in the diet may be due to the daily collection of prey since 2006 and the changes in populations of these species during the autumn and winter months. The increases in 2006 and 2007 may also be due specialised hunting by the Bath Peregrines (Ratcliffe 1993; Werner *et al.* 2002).

The Bath Peregrine family is 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, his colleagues and the congregation of St. Johns Church for supporting the Peregrines, and to the volunteers from the Hawk and Owl Trust who have spent a considerable amount of time and effort monitoring the family.

A more detailed paper giving a comparison between the diet in the 2006 and 2007 breeding season (May to July) will be appearing in the proceedings of a European conference that was held in Poznan, Poland in September 2007.

Bibliography

Andrews, R.M. 2007. *Avon Bird Report 2006*. (Sandwich Tern). Avon Ornithological Group, Bristol. p78.

Drewitt, E. 2007. The Diet of the Pair of Urban Peregrines *Falco peregrinus* during their first breeding season in Bath 2006. *Avon Bird Report 2006*. Avon Ornithological Group, Bristol. pp123-130.

Drewitt, E and Dixon, N. 2008. Diet and prey selection of urban-dwelling Peregrine Falcons *Falco peregrinus* in Southern England and a review of their night hunting. *British Birds*. **101**:58-67.

Farrell, I., Hibbert, R. & Reay, P. 2002. *Devon Bird Report 2001*. (Manx Shearwater). Devon Bird Watching and Preservation Society, Devon. p33.

Mielcarek, R. 2007. *Avon Bird Report 2006*. (Wood Pigeon). Avon Ornithological Group, Bristol. p82.

Ratcliffe, D. A. 1993. *The Peregrine Falcon*. Second Edition. Poyser, London.

Snow, D.W., & Perrins, C.M. 1998. *The Birds of the Western Palearctic: Concise Edition*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

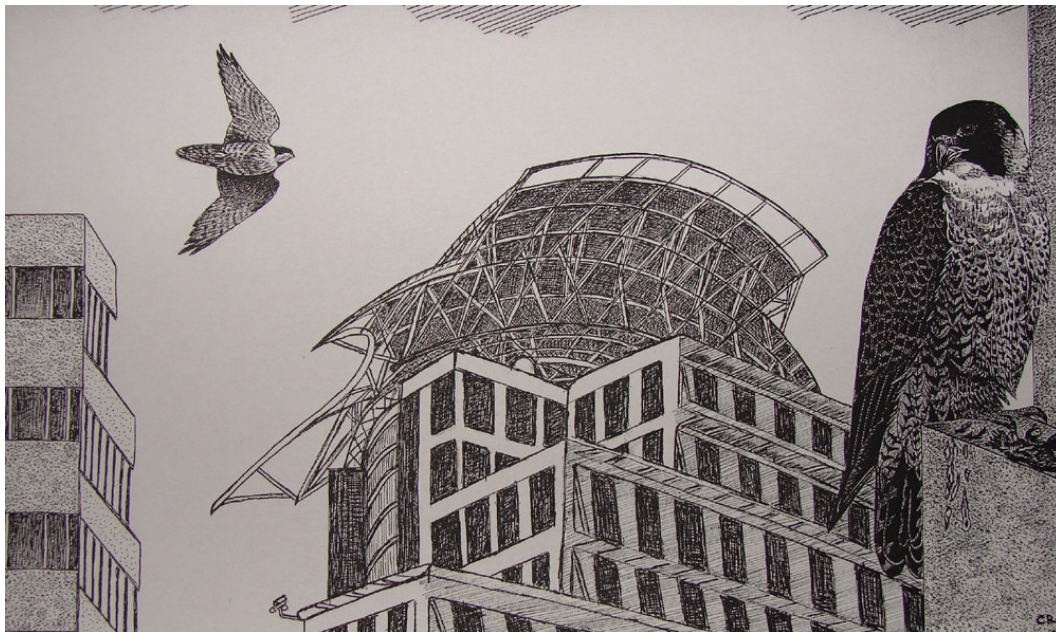
Tully, J. 2006. A Historical Perspective of Today's Avon Area Feral Pigeon Population and the Dovecote Pigeons of c.1780. *Avon Bird Report 2005*. Avon Ornithological Group, Bristol. pp171-175.

Wernham, C.V., Toms, M.P., Marchant, J.H., Clark, J.A., Siriwardena, G.M. and Braille, S.R. (Eds). 2002. *The Migration Atlas: movements of the birds of Britain and Ireland*. T. & A.D. Poyser, London.

Appendix 1. Prey species of Peregrines from remains found at St. John's Church, Bath in 2007. Average weights taken from Snow & Perrins (1998); all measurements of mass in gms.

| Species | Numbers taken | Unit mass | Number of items (%) | Total biomass (%) |
|--------------------------|---------------|-----------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Teal | 17 | 325 | 17 (1.35) | 5525 (2.56) |
| Mallard | 1 | 1100 | 1 (0.08) | 1100 (0.51) |
| Little Grebe | 2 | 161.5 | 2 (0.16) | 161.5 (0.15) |
| Manx Shearwater | 1 | 417 | 1 (0.08) | 417 (0.19) |
| Water Rail | 8 | 130 | 8 (0.64) | 1040 (0.48) |
| Moorhen | 10 | 330 | 10 (0.8) | 3300 (1.53) |
| Golden Plover | 7 | 220 | 7 (0.56) | 1540 (0.71) |
| Lapwing | 4 | 230 | 4 (0.32) | 920 (0.43) |
| Knot | 6 | 135 | 6 (0.48) | 810 (0.38) |
| Dunlin | 1 | 47.5 | 1 (0.08) | 47.5 (0.02) |
| Jack Snipe | 3 | 70.5 | 3 (0.24) | 211.5 (0.10) |
| Snipe | 26 | 110 | 26 (2.07) | 2860 (1.33) |
| Woodcock | 15 | 300 | 15 (1.20) | 4500 (2.09) |
| Black-headed Gull | 26 | 300 | 26 (2.07) | 7800 (3.62) |
| Sandwich Tern | 1 | 245 | 1 (0.08) | 245 (0.11) |
| Feral Pigeon | 437 | 300 | 437 (34.820) | 131100 (60.85) |
| Stock Dove | 3 | 300 | 3 (0.240) | 900 (0.42) |
| Wood Pigeon | 18 | 449 | 18 (1.43) | 8082 (3.75) |
| Collared Dove | 35 | 205 | 35 (2.79) | 7175 (3.33) |
| Turtle Dove | 1 | 140 | 1 (0.08) | 140 (0.06) |
| Budgerigar | 1 | 28 | 1 (0.08) | 28 (0.01) |
| Swift | 1 | 43.5 | 1 (0.08) | 43.5 (0.02) |
| Kingfisher | 1 | 40 | 1 (0.08) | 40 (0.02) |
| Green Woodpecker | 6 | 185 | 6 (0.48) | 1110 (0.51) |
| Great Spotted Woodpecker | 15 | 85 | 15 (1.20) | 1275 (0.59) |

| Species | Numbers taken | Unit mass | Number of items (%) | Total biomass (%) |
|-----------------------------|---------------|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Sky Lark | 20 | 38 | 20 (1.59) | 760 (0.35) |
| House Martin | 1 | 19 | 1 (0.08) | 19 (0.01) |
| Tree Pipit | 1 | 23.5 | 1 (0.08) | 23.5 (0.01) |
| Meadow Pipit | 15 | 18.5 | 15 (1.20) | 277.5 (0.13) |
| Pied Wagtail | 8 | 21 | 8 (0.64) | 168 (0.08) |
| Dunnock | 13 | 20.5 | 13 (1.04) | 266.5 (0.12) |
| Blackbird | 31 | 102.5 | 31 (2.47) | 3177.5 (1.47) |
| Fieldfare | 54 | 100 | 54 (4.30) | 5400 (2.51) |
| Song Thrush | 18 | 82.5 | 18 (1.43) | 1485 (0.69) |
| Redwing | 84 | 62.5 | 84 (6.69) | 5250 (2.44) |
| Blackcap | 2 | 23.5 | 2 (0.16) | 47 (0.02) |
| Chiffchaff / Willow Warbler | 2 | 9 | 2 (0.16) | 18 (0.01) |
| Blue Tit | 5 | 11 | 5 (0.40) | 55 (0.03) |
| Great Tit | 9 | 18 | 9 (0.72) | 162 (0.08) |
| Jay | 1 | 165 | 1 (0.08) | 165 (0.08) |
| Magpie | 7 | 227 | 7 (0.56) | 1589 (0.74) |
| Jackdaw | 12 | 220 | 12 (0.96) | 2640 (1.23) |
| Starling | 102 | 75 | 102 (8.13) | 7650 (3.55) |
| House Sparrow | 51 | 31 | 51 (4.06) | 1581 (0.73) |
| Chaffinch | 40 | 23.5 | 40 (3.19) | 940 (0.44) |
| Brambling | 4 | 23.5 | 4 (0.32) | 94 (0.04) |
| Greenfinch | 70 | 28.5 | 70 (5.58) | 1995 (0.93) |
| Goldfinch | 29 | 16.5 | 29 (2.31) | 478.5 (0.22) |
| Siskin | 1 | 14.5 | 1 (0.08) | 14.5 (0.01) |
| Linnet | 9 | 18.5 | 9 (0.72) | 166.5 (0.08) |
| Bullfinch | 10 | 21 | 10 (0.80) | 210 (0.10) |
| Yellowhammer | 2 | 30.5 | 2 (0.16) | 61 (0.03) |
| Reed Bunting | 4 | 20.5 | 4 (0.32) | 82 (0.04) |
| Unidentified passerine | 4 | 32 | 4 (0.32) | 128 (0.06) |
| | 1255 | | 1255 (100) | 215436 (100) |



An analysis of Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) pellets collected in the Avon area, 2004 – 2008

L.F. Roberts

One of the quite useful things about owls is that they regurgitate their food remains in the form of pellets, allowing their diet to be studied. Like most owls, Barn Owls eat their food whole. However, because their gastric juices are less acidic than those of diurnal birds of prey, they are unable to break down the bones and teeth of small mammals and the chitinous remains of insects (Sparks & Soper, 1970). Barn Owl pellets comprise indigestible food remains bound together by a fir matrix. They typically measure 30-70mm (length) by 18-26mm (width). Compared with the pellets of other British owls, they are highly distinctive, being dark (black), compact and shiny when fresh and have a smooth exterior. The pellets are often found in large heaps in outbuildings and under trees and in nest boxes used for roosting or nesting (Mead, 1987). As Barn Owls rarely hunt more than 1km from their roost/nest sites (Sawyer, 1987), the prey species found in pellets tend to reflect local abundance, although variation in prey caught between sites is also influenced by habitat composition and structure (Glue, 1974).

This short article presents the results of an analysis of pellets collected over a 5-year period between 2004 and 2008, from six sites in Avon area and one on the Wilts/Avon border. In addition, pellets were obtained from unspecified locations in Avon and Somerset, comprising 8% of the prey items analysed. The six Avon sites were as follows (AWT denotes an Avon Wildlife Trust Reserve): Avonmouth Sewage Treatment Works (ST57, AWT), Bleadon Level (ST35), Clapton Moor (ST47, AWT), Folly Farm (ST66, AWT), Portbury Wharf (ST47) and Weston Moor (ST47, AWT). The bulk of the pellets were analysed under supervision by undergraduate students at Bristol University, with most of the more unusual prey items being re-checked for accuracy of identification. Standard methods for analysing pellet contents were used, as published by The Mammal Society (Yalden, 2003). Essentially, this involves the examination of skeletal remains, especially the jawbone, which can be used to identify most small mammal species.

Barn Owls are well distributed but uncommon throughout rural Britain, but are generally restricted in range to lower altitudes, where milder winter conditions typically prevail. Populations are highest in areas adjacent to major rivers, wetlands and costal marshes. A feature common to all agricultural habitats inhabited by Barn Owls, whether traditionally or intensively farmed, is the presence of unmanaged (and especially wet) grassland margins (Sawyer, 1987). In Britain, the Barn Owl is at the northernmost limit of its global range. In Avon, the population has fluctuated over the last thirty years or so (there was a severe decline following the winter of 1981/82, for example), but following a period of general decline there are now signs of a recovery. In 2006, Barn Owls were recorded from 44 sites in Avon, which was the highest count for ten years (AOG, 2007). A conservative estimate would be 20 pairs breeding in Avon (R. Bland, pers. comm.).



The Barn Owl is adapted to feed on small mammals in open habitat, but has no food preference as such (Bunn *et al.*, 1982). It is not surprising, therefore, that Field Vole (*Microtus agrestis*) and Common Shrew (*Sorex araneus*) are the main prey species found in Barn Owl pellets in Britain, as these species are two of the most abundant small mammals to be found in the open habitats over which Barn Owls typically hunt (Harris *et al.*, 1995)¹. Wood Mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*) and Bank Vole (*Clethrionomys glareolus*), while common, are encountered less often, being woodland and hedgerow species. However, these and other secondary prey species, tend to be taken more frequently when there is a dearth of Field Voles (Ticehurst, 1935). When vole populations collapse (as they do periodically), it has been shown that Barn Owls may change their hunting grounds altogether in response to the loss of their main prey item. For example, Barn Owls may switch to mixed farmland areas, where Brown Rats (*Rattus norvegicus*) are more abundant in hedge banks and hay-stacks (Glue, 1967).

A marked seasonal variation in the diet of Barn Owls has been demonstrated by Webster (1973), Short-tailed Field Vole numbers being highest in autumn and winter and Common Shrew numbers highest in spring and summer. However, according to Glue (1967), such variation is highly influenced locally by habitat structure and factors such as grazing pressure. For example, at one study site in Hampshire, Short-tailed Field Voles accounted for at least 74% of prey (by weight) throughout the year (Glue, 1967). Prey composition can also differ significantly between pellets collected at nest (chick) and roost (adult) sites. Adult pellet contents tend to be dominated by smaller items such as Common Shrew and Pygmy Shrew (*Sorex minutus*). This is because adults keep smaller items for themselves rather than expending energy flying back to the nest site for such a low return (Askew, 2005).

A comprehensive analysis, covering all regions of the British Isles, was published by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) in 1974, which included a regional breakdown of prey items found in Barn Owl pellets (Glue, 1974). In SW England, the commonest prey items were Field Vole (49.7%), Common Shrew (24.1%) and Wood Mouse (10.9%), more or less mirroring the national breakdown (see Table 1 below). Together, these three species accounted for 84.7% of prey items.

More recently, the Mammal Society *National Owl Pellet Survey (NOPS)*, which commenced in 1993, identified 21 small mammal prey items from 125,925 pellets (to end April 2005) (Love, 2006). Once again, the major prey species identified were Common Shrew, Field Vole and Wood Mouse, together accounting for 79.8% of prey items. Minor prey species - Bank Vole, Harvest Mouse (*Micromys minutus*), House Mouse (*Mus domesticus*) and Pygmy Shrew - accounted for another 17.5% of prey items, taking the combined total of 7 small mammal species to 97.3% of prey items. Unusual items identified were attributable to bats (Chiroptera) of six species, Hazel Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*), Mole (*Talpa europaea*), Water Shrew (*Neomys fodiens*), Weasel (*Mustela nivalis*), Yellow-necked Mouse (*Apodemus flavicollis*), and juvenile Water Vole (*Arvicola terrestris*), Brown Rat and Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*).

The ongoing National Owl Pellet Survey has revealed annual and regional variations in the relative contribution of each prey species, but in most years the percentage contribution from Field Vole has exceeded the combined contribution of the other two major prey species (Common Shrew and Wood Mouse). The percentage contribution of Field Vole in terms of prey value (or biomass) averages 57.4%, compared with a 43.4% contribution to the total of all prey items. The biomass contribution of the three major prey species combined currently (results to 2005) stands at 85.5%.

However, comparison of the BTO and NOPS datasets reveals a significant change in Barn Owl diet within the last 50 years (Love *et al.*, 2000). The main difference has been the widespread decrease in the percentage contribution of Common Shrew versus an increase in Pygmy Shrew. Also, numbers of *Apodemus spp.* and Bank Vole have increased as a percentage of all prey items. The magnitude of these changes is subject to regional variation and the drivers are thought to be agricultural intensification and other changes in land management (Wood Mouse, for example, has responded very well to set-aside measures), although climate change could also be a factor. An increase in species diversity was also noted between the two major surveys, with higher predation occurring on minor prey species. Optimal foraging theory suggests that increases in less profitable species taken, such as Pygmy Shrew (weighing only 4g, compared with a Field Vole at 20g), are likely to reflect an overall reduction in prey abundance (Stephens & Krebs, 1986), which could have a reducing effect on the population.

Turning to the data collected from pellets collected in Avon, these are summarised in Table 2 below, which also includes (for comparison) data from the two national studies referred to above and further local pellet sample from Weston Moor (Trump, 2004).

¹ Estimates (in millions) of the population of some small mammals species in England are as follows: Bank Vole 17.7; Common Shrew 41.7; Field Vole 17.5; Harvest Mouse 1.4; House Mouse 4.5; Pygmy Shrew 8.6; Water Shrew 1.2; Wood Mouse 19.5; Yellow-necked Mouse 0.6 (Harris *et al.*, 1995).

| Species identified from pellet remains | Percentage of all prey items found | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|---------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| | BTO, England | BTO, SW | NOPS | Avon | Trump |
| | 1960-71 | | 1993-2005 | 2004-2008 | 2003 |
| <i>Major prey spp.</i> | | | | | |
| Common Shrew | 24.7 | 24.1 | 19.8 | 12.6 | 23.8 |
| Field Vole | 48.1 | 49.7 | 43.4 | 68.7 | 65.9 |
| Wood Mouse | 9.9 | 10.9 | 16.6 | 6.9 | 3.2 |
| Sub-total | 82.7 | 84.7 | 79.8 | 88.2 | 92.9 |
| <i>Minor prey spp.</i> | | | | | |
| Bank Vole | 4.2 | 4.8 | 5.5 | 4.9 | 2.4 |
| Brown Rat | 2.2 | 0.2 | n/a | 0.4 | 0.0 |
| Harvest Mouse | 0.7 | 0.4 | n/a | 0.5 | 0.0 |
| House mouse | 1.3 | 0.8 | n/a | 0.8 | 0.0 |
| Mole | 0.2 | <0.1 | n/a | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Pygmy Shrew | 4.7 | 6.0 | 8.9 | 4.3 | 4.8 |
| Water Shrew | 1.3 | 2.1 | n/a | 0.5 | 0.0 |
| Water Vole | 0.2 | 0.2 | n/a | 0.1 | 0.0 |
| Bird species | 2.4 | 0.7 | n/a | 0.3 | 0.0 |
| Others | n/a | n/a | n/a | 0.2 | 0.0 |
| Prey items | 34,013 | 9,572 | 125,925 | 1,995 | 126 |
| Notes: n/a = data unavailable | | | | | |

Table 1: Analysis of Barn Owl pellets by prey species: results of national, regional and local surveys

Ten small mammal species were identified in the Avon sample, of which Harvest Mouse and Water Vole were notable, both being scarce/declining in Avon, or at least poorly recorded. Other prey items identified were Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*) and a low number of bird species with weights (estimated from humerus length) ranging from 20 to 90g (equivalent to small songbirds up to thrush size). At first sight, the results from the Avon sample appear to parallel those from the national surveys. However, looking at the data more closely, there are two differences. First, at 88.2%, the three major prey species (Common Shrew, Field Vole and Wood Mouse) account for a higher proportion of all prey items than either the BTO survey (82.7%) or NOPS (79.8%) samples. And second, the ratio of Field Vole to Common Shrew and Wood Mouse, is much higher (at 3.5) in the Avon sample than it is in either the BTO survey (1.4) or NOPS (1.2). So, overall, the major prey species seem to feature more heavily in the Avon sample, particularly Field Vole. There was, however, considerable variation between the key sites in Avon from which pellets samples were collected, as illustrated in Table 2 below.

| Species | Bleadon Level 2004-2008 | Folly Farm, AWT 2006, 2007 | Portbury Wharf 2005-2008 | Colerne 2007 |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Common Shrew | 8.7% | 7.2% | 6.0% | 30.6% |
| Field Vole | 72.7% | 67.2% | 83.5% | 49.8% |
| Wood Mouse | 8.6% | 12.4% | 2.4% | 4.3% ⁽²⁾ |
| Total | 90.0% | 86.8% | 91.9% | 84.7% |
| (n, prey items) | (631) | (250) | (249) | (235) |
| FV Ratio ⁽¹⁾ | 4.2 | 4.4 | 10.9 | 1.4 |
| Notes: ⁽¹⁾ ratio of Field Voles taken to the combined total of Common Shrew and Wood Mouse ⁽²⁾ at the Colerne site, both Bank Vole and Pygmy Shrew were more important prey items than Common Shrew, accounting for 5.1% and 8.9% of prey items respectively. | | | | |

Table 2: Comparison of prey species between key sites

At all four sites, Field Vole is clearly represented as *the* major prey species. At Folly Farm, Wood Mouse is evidently an important secondary prey species, whereas Field Vole is less important, relative to other sites. At Portbury Wharf, this trend is reversed, with Field Vole featuring very significantly as a major prey species. At Bleadon, relative abundance of Common Shrew, Field Vole and Wood Mouse is more or less in line with the average for all of the Avon sites combined. And finally, at Colerne, Field Vole is least represented in the results, relative to secondary and minor prey species such as Bank Vole, Pygmy Shrew and Wood Mouse. So, clearly, there are significant differences between the sites. These are likely to be habitat related and are worthy of further investigation in the future. As climate change takes hold it will be interesting to see how availability of different prey species changes and whether this has a limiting effect on the recovering Barn Owl population, locally and nationally.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to: Chris Sperring (The Hawk & Owl Trust) for providing a 'mixed bag' of owl pellets; to Tim McGrath (Avon Wildlife Trust) for allowing me to collect pellets from various AWT Reserves; to David Trump for giving me the results of his 2003 analysis of pellets taken from Weston Moor; and finally, particular thanks to Gareth Jones (Bristol University, School of Biological Sciences) for organising much of the pellet analysis and providing me with the results.

Line drawing by Dan Powell, RSPB.

References

- AOG (2007). *Avon Bird Report 2006*. Avon Ornithological Group.
- Askew, N. (2005). *A study of Barn Owl foraging*. Barn Owl Bulletin No.3 (Winter 2005). BTO/The National Barn Owl Monitoring Programme (BOMP).
- Bunn, D. S. *et al.* (1982) *The Barn Owl*. Poyser, Calton.
- Glue, D. E. (1967) Prey taken by the Barn Owl in England and Wales. *Bird Study* 14: 169-183.
- Glue, D. E. (1974) Food of the barn owl in Britain and Ireland. *Bird Study* 21: 200- 210.
- Harris, S. *et al.* (1995). *A Review of British Mammals: Populations Status and Conservation Estimates of British Mammals other than Cetaceans*. JNCC, Peterborough.
- Love, R. A. (2006). *Show your bones*. Barn Owl Bulletin: Winter 2006. British Trust for Ornithology.
- Love, R. A. *et al.* (2000). Changes in the food of British Barn Owls (*Tyto alba*) between 1974 and 1997. *Mammal Review* 30: 107-129.
- Sawyer, C. R. (1987). *The Barn Owl in the British Isles: Its Past, Present and Future*. The Hawk Trust, London.
- Sparks, J. & Soper T. (1970). *Owls: Their Natural and Unnatural History*. David & Charles, Newton Abbot.
- Ticehurst, C. B. (1935) On the food of the barn owl and its bearing on barn owl population. *Ibis* 13: 329-335.
- Stephens, D. W. & Krebs, J. R. (1986). *Foraging Theory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Trump, D. (2004). *The Barn Owl Tyto alba, field margins and small mammals*. Unpublished MSc Thesis. Napier University, Edinburgh.
- Webster, J. A. (1973) Seasonal variation in mammal contents of barn owl castings. *Bird Study* 20: 185-196.
- Yalden, D. W. (2003). *The Analysis of Owl Pellets*. 3rd Edition. The Mammal Society.

GLOSSY IBIS at Chew Valley Lake, a new species for the Avon area

A H DAVIS and G THOBURN

At 15.20 hrs on Nov. 2nd, I was watching the gulls on Herriott's Pool, CVL, when a gentleman approached to me to ask if I had seen the ibis on the island with the Cormorants. I replied no and quickly made my way across the road to join his wife who was watching the bird. When I reached her, she told me the bird had just flown off and she could not see it. Their description fitted Glossy Ibis perfectly! They had, evidently, seen one in Devon a few years ago. I could see birders in Stratford Hide so I drove to that part of the lake as quickly as I could. G Thoburn was in the hide with his parents, Mr. and Mrs Thoburn and R Barnes but they had not seen any sign of a bird resembling a Glossy Ibis. I went to look in Stratford Bay with RB and, while searching there, GT *et al.* saw the bird fly past the hide, it was indeed a Glossy Ibis! (GT took a few good flight photos as it flew from left to right). RB and I missed it! The bird vanished so we decided to position ourselves on Herriott's Bridge to see if the bird would reappear. This move paid off as the Glossy Ibis amazingly flew in from the south at 17.00 hrs and continued low over our heads towards the Stratford Islands on the main lake. For a while we could not see it on the ground but suddenly R Mielcarek spotted it feeding on the mud to the left of the island. Although the light was fading, the bird was seen well for a few minutes.

The following morning at 07.00hrs, R Laughton located the ibis in front of Stratford Hide, evidently roosting in a clump of willows. A small group of local observers quickly joined him and they enjoyed close views for ten minutes before it flew off towards Herriott's Pool. It was observed here briefly before it flew off again high to the south-east. It was noted at Catcott on the Somerset Levels later that same morning, and eventually took up residence at Greylake (Somerset) from Nov. 7th to 16th, when many close photographs were taken. A broken median covert feather on the right wing confirmed this bird to be the same as the CVL individual, *per* R M Andrews. It was last noted at West Alvington (Devon) from Nov. 18th to 21st.

Description

My notes (AHD) refer to the bird in flight and briefly feeding in fading light.

Similar size to a Little Egret (this species was not present). The whole plumage was dark brown, there were no pale areas anywhere on the bird. Legs and feet extended well beyond the tail in flight. The legs/feet projection was approximately the same as the distance from the wing edge to tail tip. The neck was thin, extending out at the front, the head was small and oval in shape. The bill was long and down-curved, pale in colour, and about the same length as the extended neck and head. The belly was described in my scribbled notes as a squashed "u" shape. Wings were long and quite broad but narrowing at the tip. Wing-beats were shallow and fairly rapid with an occasional short glide. The bird flapped and glided on markedly bowed wings.

At rest in the gathering gloom, the distinctive Curlew-like shape, the all-dark plumage, the long down curved bill (approx. two and a half times the length of the head), and the fairly long dark legs became apparent.

This record, the first for the Avon area, has been accepted by BBRC.

Late April /early May 2007 saw an unprecedented influx of the species into the UK. A flock of 17 was seen at Frampton/Slimbridge from April 20th to early May and seven was noted on the Lizard, Cornwall from 21st to May 3rd. Other records included five at the Hayle Estuary (Cornwall) on April 24th, and single birds were noted in Devon at West Alvington from April 22nd to May 1st and at Braunton Burrows on 29th. In Sussex, one was noted at Pagham from April 30th to May 1st, and further north, seven were seen in Cheshire on May 5th. Interestingly, a juvenile was photographed a few miles south-east of CVL on a small pool at Ston Easton, Mendip (Somerset) on Nov. 28th, 1996 (Ballance, 2006).

Reference

Ballance D.K. A History of the Birds of Somerset Isabelline Books, 2006.

SORTING OUT 'EASTERN CHIFFCHAFFS' IN THE AVON AREA

John P Martin

Introduction

In late autumn and winter small numbers of Chiffchaffs *Phylloscopus collybita* which look and sound 'different' occasionally appear alongside our more familiar olive-brown and yellowy toned nominate race individuals. These usually pale brown/greyish and buffish or whitish looking birds have often been recorded under the blanket heading of 'Eastern Chiffchaff' in this Report. The short note below, based on recent published work (Dean and Svensson, 2005) on Siberian Chiffchaff *P. c. tristis* (hereafter *tristis*) and a note by Andy Stoddart (for county bird recorders), suggests a way forward for more precise recording of these sightings.

Recent local records

During the past ten years (1997-2006) this Report has listed a total of twelve 'Eastern' Chiffchaffs which were considered to be either *P. c. abietinus* ('Scandinavian' Chiffchaff, hereafter *abietinus*) or *tristis*. Of these only one, at Emerson's Green from Jan. 1st to March 28th, 2005, was published as an unequivocal *tristis* (but see below). Another four were listed as *tristis* but with some caveats in the wording as follows:

- A Bishopston garden on Jan. 3rd, 1997 'considered to be of this form';
- CVL on Nov. 26th and 30th, 1998 'identified as this ssp.' [note the date correction - this was published erroneously as 2nd and 30th];
- Keynsham STW on Feb. 21st and 28th, 1999 'but *abietinus* not ruled out';
- CVL on Feb. 15th, 2003 '*abietinus* or *tristis* (probably the latter)'.

At least five more were listed as *abietinus/tristis*: Bishopston on Jan. 16th, 2001; Emerson's Green on March 27th and April 2nd, 2005 (in addition to that published as *tristis*); Weston Moor Oct. 7th, 2005; CVL on Jan. 12th, 2006 with perhaps the same individual at Chew Stoke STW on Feb. 15th; and CVL on Dec. 31st, 2006.

Just two were trapped: at GVRs on Sept. 15th and Oct. 4th, 2001 were listed as 'showing characters of [*abietinus*]'.

The wording shows commendable caution with, for example, a reluctance to assign non-calling birds to *tristis*. With the right documentation, however, we should be able to be more positive about at least some claims in future.

The national picture

Establishing the status in Britain of *tristis* has long been problematic. Key to this problem is the correct identification of the form – the difficulties of separating true Siberian *tristis* (largely from east of the Yenisey River) and so-called '*fulvescens*' (from the West Siberian Plain and generally regarded as a western component of *tristis*) from *abietinus* (from Scandinavia and Russia west of the Urals) continue to plague both observers and records committees. In particular, it has become obvious that different observers (and indeed different records committees) hold different perceptions of what constitutes true *tristis* and therefore apply different threshold criteria for acceptance of the local record.

The recording of this form across Britain can therefore best be described as uneven and has never been attempted nationally.

Context

Three factors have now combined to help us move forward. Firstly, the work of Dean and Svensson (2005) has provided welcome insight into the identification of this form. Secondly, the rise of digital photography has greatly increased the availability of good quality images in the field (although it should be noted that capturing colours accurately can often prove problematic). Similar improvements in sound recording technology have also made recording bird calls and song increasingly feasible.

Identification

Safe identification of Chiffchaffs requires close and careful observation of plumage tones as well as a careful evaluation of vocalisations. The following is basically a summary of the conclusions of Dean and Svensson, although any differences

of interpretation represent my own views. The traditional notion that any Chiffchaff lacking green in the crown and mantle, and lacking yellow in the face and underparts, can be labelled *tristis* has now been significantly refined. It needs to be borne in mind that it can be difficult in the field to detect the sometimes small traces of green or yellow shown here by some individuals.

Dean and Svensson (2005) concluded that true *tristis* is defined additionally by the presence of brownish hues on the upper parts, and warm buff in the supercilium, ear-coverts, breast-sides and flanks. The 'brown and buff' hues of such classic *tristis* can recall those of Booted Warbler *Hippolias caligata*. They argued that '*fulvescens*' is similar in appearance although may show limited yellow or olive tones. But whether such individuals are actually from the west of the range of true *tristis*, or represent variation within it, is a moot point. They also highlighted the problem of 'grey and white' Chiffchaffs which, in contrast, have hues that recall Eastern Bonelli's Warbler *P. orientalis*. Whilst matching one traditional image of *tristis*, such individuals lack the brown and buff hues now linked with the form, and therefore cannot be assigned to it. Whether this type can be referred to as eastern *abietinus*, to an intergrade population, or even originate from a little-studied region within the range of *tristis* is as yet unclear – we simply do not know where they come from or what they are. For an image of a bird of this type see the 2005 edition of this Report where the Emerson's Green individual (plate opposite page 129) shows greyish upperparts, prominent green wings panels and whitish underparts and supercilium. The photograph, see after page 128, does seem to be a little flared out, perhaps exaggerating the white around the face but no buff tones are evident here. Compare and contrast the appearance in the photograph of this individual with the one given in the November 2007 Portland Bird Observatory report of a 'classic' *tristis*. In summary the identification of *tristis* rests on the following criteria:-

1. The presence of brown tones in the upperparts

The upperparts brown tones are not warm or rusty and are more likely to be perceived as cold or neutral, even grey-brown but are still distinct from the paler and purer 'grey' of the so-called 'grey and white' Chiffchaffs.

2. The presence of warm buff in the supercilium and ear-coverts

The ear coverts are often distinctly warm toned and colour washes in the supercilium should be distinctly buff, and never yellow.

3. The presence of buff at the breast-sides/flanks

A similar buff tone is usually present as a wash on the flanks. This might be flared out in bright sunlight or in over-exposed photographs but the underparts should not be a Bonelli's-like brilliant white.

4. Very black-looking bill and legs

This feature is typical of *tristis* but note that some good *tristis* may show a paler tone at the base of the lower mandible and along the cutting edges of the bill.

5. A thin piping Bullfinch-like or Dunnock-like call

This should be neither rising nor falling in pitch (although there is a brief descent in pitch at the end which contributes to the plaintive quality of the note). The calls of the *abietinus* may differ from the familiar rounded 'hweet' of our local birds, and are often more plaintive, thin but rising in tone and are not monosyllabic. Do not be fooled by (young?) nominate individuals in late summer and early autumn with plaintive squeaky but usually faltering and uneven calls. Such calls seem to be given less frequently later in the autumn and I think this perhaps reflects birds maturing and presumably learning the more standard 'hweet' notes.

6. A song markedly different from western Chiffchaffs

The full song of *tristis* is more complex and differently structured from the simple song of nominate race, and is quite varied with as many rising as falling notes. It is best appreciated in a recording and is hard to put into words. Note that young wintering birds, perhaps especially early in the season, might not give a fully 'crystallised' song but a rather more hesitant version. These 'plastic songs' are produced by young birds that gradually learn the full version from others of their species. This might well not be possible for a lone wintering *tristis*, so slight deviations from the classic full *tristis* song do not necessarily mean that the individual in question is an intergrade or mixed singer.

The Way Forward

2008 has been designated as a 'trial year' in order to gain a deeper understanding of the British status of *tristis*. BBRC is therefore seeking submissions of all Chiffchaff records for 2008 that are considered to be *tristis* according to the criteria outlined above. Submissions may take any of the following forms but observers and recorders should try to ensure that as many categories of evidence as possible are secured. It is worth emphasising that any records committee assessing

claims of *tristis* will be reliant on descriptions and photographs which accurately capture critical plumage tones. The precise analysis and description of such tones is therefore vital.

Field Descriptions

Field descriptions will be an important source of information but (particularly if unaccompanied by drawings, photographs or recordings) must be very detailed and focus specifically on a full and precise evaluation of plumage tones. Notes should demonstrate that views were good enough and over a long enough period to assess the bird's true appearance, and that a full account has been taken of the effect of light conditions on perceived tones. Care should be taken with descriptions and names of colours.

Photographs

Observers are encouraged if at all possible to take photographs of any putative *tristis*. Furthermore, every effort should be made to obtain photographs which accurately represent the bird's plumage tones. These may best be taken in dull, flat light rather than in bright sunshine. An accompanying note setting out to what extent the photographs accurately portray the bird's appearance would be particularly useful.

Sound Recordings

Sound recordings of calling and/or singing birds should be obtained wherever possible. Modern mobile phones/mp3 players/ipods can often capture adequate recordings. A good description of the call and/or song would suffice but it is important to give as full a description as possible including the tone, pitch and any upward or downward inflection of the call. It is also worth familiarising oneself with the calls and songs of these forms from various recordings now widely available. Wintering *tristis* are often annoyingly reluctant to call but migrants may be quite vocal. In late winter and spring, but also sometimes in autumn, they may also be heard singing.

Process

In 2008, recorder's committees are requested to assess all claims of *tristis* against the above criteria and then submit all those which meet, or come close to meeting them, to BBRC, together with a list of those which clearly fall outside the criteria but which are nevertheless claimed by local birders as *tristis*.

Records will then be examined outside the 'mainstream' flow of BBRC business by a small team made up of Alan Dean, Colin Bradshaw, Andy Stoddart, Grahame Walbridge and myself. Following the review, conclusions will be presented to BBRC in 2009 with recommendations on how the occurrence of this form might best be documented in future.

References

Constantine, M. *et al.* (2006). *The Sound Approach to Birding*. The Sound Approach.

Dean, A. R. and Svensson, L., (2005). '*Siberian Chiffchaff*' revisited. *British Birds* **98**: 396-410.

THE BREEDING BIRDS OF THE AVON REGION 2007

**A SURVEY BY MEMBERS OF THE
BRITISH TRUST FOR ORNITHOLOGY [AVON REGION]
BRISTOL NATURALISTS SOCIETY
BRISTOL ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB**

R. L Bland and J. Tully

Introduction

As in the previous few years 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. This survey started in 1994 and most surveyors have covered ten or more breeding seasons.

Method

The method used is that of the British Trust for Ornithology's Breeding Bird Survey. The surveyors are birdwatchers who are able to recognise all the species by sight and 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 131 surveyors spent over 536 hours counting 76,648 birds of 106 species to establish the numbers and distribution of breeding bird species of the Avon area. They visited 207 square kilometers, that is 12.9% of the total area. The distribution of the coverage was 37 sq km in BA, 61 in BR, 43 in NS, 44 in SG and 22 in SO.

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.

| Species | number | dist. | Species | number | dist. |
|---------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|
| Little Grebe | 12 | 3 | Meadow Pipit | 78 | 4 |
| Great Crested Grebe | 32 | 1 | Rock Pipit | 8 | 1 |
| Cormorant | 77 | 13 | Yellow Wagtail* | 3 | <0.5 |
| Little Egret** | 1 | <0.5 | Grey Wagtail | 35 | 9 |
| Grey Heron | 121 | 27 | Pied Wagtail | 153 | 36 |
| Mute Swan | 166 | 11 | Wren | 3982 | 99 |
| Greylag Goose** | 3 | 1 | Dunnock | 1295 | 92 |
| Canada Goose | 212 | 9 | Robin | 2855 | 100 |
| Shelduck | 87 | 4 | Nightingale | 1 | <0.5 |
| Gadwall | 6 | <0.5 | Whinchat** | 3 | 1 |
| Mallard | 1082 | 50 | Stonechat | 8 | 2 |
| Shoveler | 2 | <0.5 | Wheatear** | 19 | 5 |
| Pochard | 6 | <0.5 | Blackbird | 5841 | 100 |
| Tufted Duck | 72 | 3 | Song Thrush | 912 | 84 |
| Ruddy Duck | 13 | <0.5 | Redwing | 1 | <0.5 |

| Species | number | dist. | Species | number | dist. |
|--|--------|-------|-----------------------|--------------|-------|
| Buzzard | 193 | 45 | Cetti's Warbler | 24 | 2 |
| Kestrel | 53 | 18 | Sedge Warbler | 106 | 12 |
| Merlin** | 1 | <0.5 | Reed Warbler | 140 | 11 |
| Hobby | 5 | 2 | Lesser Whitethroat | 68 | 19 |
| Peregrine | 5 | 2 | Whitethroat | 455 | 52 |
| Red-legged Partridge | 65 | 9 | Garden Warbler | 30 | 10 |
| Grey Partridge | 11 | 2 | Blackcap | 916 | 77 |
| Pheasant | 779 | 54 | Wood Warbler* | 1 | <0.5 |
| Moorhen | 187 | 28 | Chiffchaff | 1101 | 83 |
| Coot | 240 | 8 | Willow Warbler | 189 | 29 |
| Oystercatcher | 16 | 1 | Goldcrest | 249 | 34 |
| Ringed Plover | 1 | <0.5 | Spotted Flycatcher | 3 | 1 |
| Lapwing | 32 | 5 | Long-tailed Tit | 389 | 53 |
| Snipe* | 1 | <0.5 | Marsh Tit | 22 | 3 |
| Whimbrel** | 24 | 1 | Coal Tit | 159 | 29 |
| Curlew** | 4 | 1 | Blue Tit | 2495 | 99 |
| Common Sandpiper** | 1 | <0.5 | Great Tit | 1722 | 97 |
| Black-headed Gull** | 47 | 2 | Nuthatch | 93 | 15 |
| Common Gull** | 4 | <0.5 | Treecreeper | 28 | 7 |
| Lesser Black-backed Gull | 2219 | 69 | Jay | 201 | 42 |
| Herring Gull | 1745 | 55 | Magpie | 1881 | 91 |
| Great Black-backed Gull | 3 | 1 | Jackdaw | 4037 | 84 |
| Feral Pigeon | 2039 | 47 | Rook | 2464 | 45 |
| Stock Dove | 179 | 29 | Carrion Crow | 4333 | 99 |
| Woodpigeon | 7326 | 100 | Raven | 45 | 12 |
| Collared Dove | 1219 | 78 | Starling | 5132 | 76 |
| Cuckoo | 17 | 6 | House Sparrow | 4387 | 72 |
| Little Owl | 7 | 3 | Tree Sparrow | 3 | 1 |
| Tawny Owl | 9 | 3 | Chaffinch | 2678 | 97 |
| Swift | 1038 | 56 | Greenfinch | 2077 | 93 |
| Kingfisher | 10 | 3 | Goldfinch | 883 | 74 |
| Green Woodpecker | 190 | 46 | Linnet | 460 | 30 |
| Great Spotted Woodpecker | 208 | 48 | Bullfinch | 143 | 33 |
| Skylark | 774 | 41 | Yellowhammer | 325 | 26 |
| Sand Martin | 21 | 2 | Reed Bunting | 77 | 10 |
| Swallow | 2354 | 70 | Corn Bunting | 17 | 2 |
| House Martin | 1051 | 41 | TOTAL | 76648 | |
| Tree Pipit | 11 | <0.5 | Time [mins] | 32177 | |
| Note - distributions are given to the nearest 1% | | | Birds per hour | 143 | |

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 Black Redstart need to be added as definite breeders. Possible nesters not recorded in the survey were Water Rail and Nightjar.

The total of 95 breeding species and 5 possibles is a measure of the biodiversity of breeding bird species in the Avon area during 2007.

Table 2a -Highest counts Avon

| Table 2a -Highest counts Avon | | | BA | BR | NS | SG |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | Woodpigeon [1] | 7326 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| 2 | Blackbird [2] | 5841 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| 3 | Starling [3] | 5132 | 9 | 2 | 2 | 6 |
| 4 | House Sparrow [5] | 4387 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 11 |
| 5 | Carrion Crow [4] | 4333 | 4 | 7 | 7 | 2 |
| 6 | Jackdaw [6] | 4037 | 3 | 10 | 9 | 5 |
| 7 | Wren [7] | 3982 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 7 |
| 8 | Robin [11] | 2855 | 8 | 11 | 8 | 8 |
| 9 | Chaffinch [8] | 2678 | 6 | 19 | 10 | 9 |
| 10 | Blue Tit [10] | 2495 | 10 | 12 | 11 | 10 |
| 11 | Rook [12] | 2464 | 11 | - | 16 | 4 |
| 12 | Swallow [17] | 2354 | 14 | - | 6 | 13 |
| 13 | Lesser Black-backed Gull [13] | 2219 | - | 8 | 15 | - |
| 14 | Greenfinch [9] | 2077 | 15 | 13 | 12 | 12 |
| 15 | Feral Pigeon [14] | 2039 | - | 5 | - | - |
| 16 | Magpie [15] | 1881 | 17 | 9 | 17 | 15 |
| 17 | Herring Gull [19] | 1745 | - | 15 | 18 | - |
| 18 | Great Tit [16] | 1722 | 13 | 16 | 14 | 14 |
| 19 | Dunnock [18] | 1295 | 20 | 17 | 19 | 18 |
| 20 | Collared Dove [20] | 1219 | - | 14 | - | - |

2006 positions in brackets and 2007 positions in the 4 local authorities.

Table 2b - Percentage distribution AV

| Table 2b - Percentage distribution AV | | | BA | BR | NS | SG |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1= | Blackbird [100%] | 100% | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| 1= | Robin [96%] | 100% | 100 | 100 | 100 | 98 |
| 1= | Woodpigeon [99%] | 100% | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| 4= | Blue Tit [98%] | 99% | 100 | 100 | 98 | 98 |
| 4= | Carrion Crow [98%] | 99% | 100 | 100 | 95 | 100 |
| 4= | Wren [97%] | 99% | 100 | 100 | 98 | 95 |
| 7= | Chaffinch [99%] | 97% | 100 | 92 | 95 | 100 |
| 7= | Great Tit [97%] | 97% | 97 | 97 | 98 | 95 |
| 9 | Greenfinch [97%] | 93% | 97 | 95 | 95 | 89 |
| 10 | Dunnock [94%] | 92% | 92 | 97 | 93 | 80 |
| 11 | Magpie [96%] | 91% | 89 | 100 | 84 | 91 |
| 12= | Jackdaw [80%] | 84% | 95 | 79 | 81 | 86 |
| 12= | Song Thrush [80%] | 84% | 89 | 69 | 77 | 98 |
| 14 | Chiffchaff [75%] | 83% | 86 | 69 | 88 | 93 |
| 15 | Collared Dove [71%] | 78% | 73 | 92 | 63 | 77 |
| 16 | Blackcap [75%] | 77% | 84 | 69 | 79 | 84 |
| 17 | Starling [77%] | 76% | 73 | 87 | 65 | 70 |
| 18 | Goldfinch [79%] | 74% | 86 | 66 | 81 | 61 |
| 19 | House Sparrow [69%] | 72% | 68 | 79 | 70 | 68 |
| 20 | Swallow [71%] | 70% | 89 | 25 | 84 | 91 |

2006 percentages in brackets and 2007 distributions in the 4 local authorities

Note percentages are to the nearest 1%

Table 2b gives the percentage distributions of the top 20 species. Any species with over 90% is probably universal.

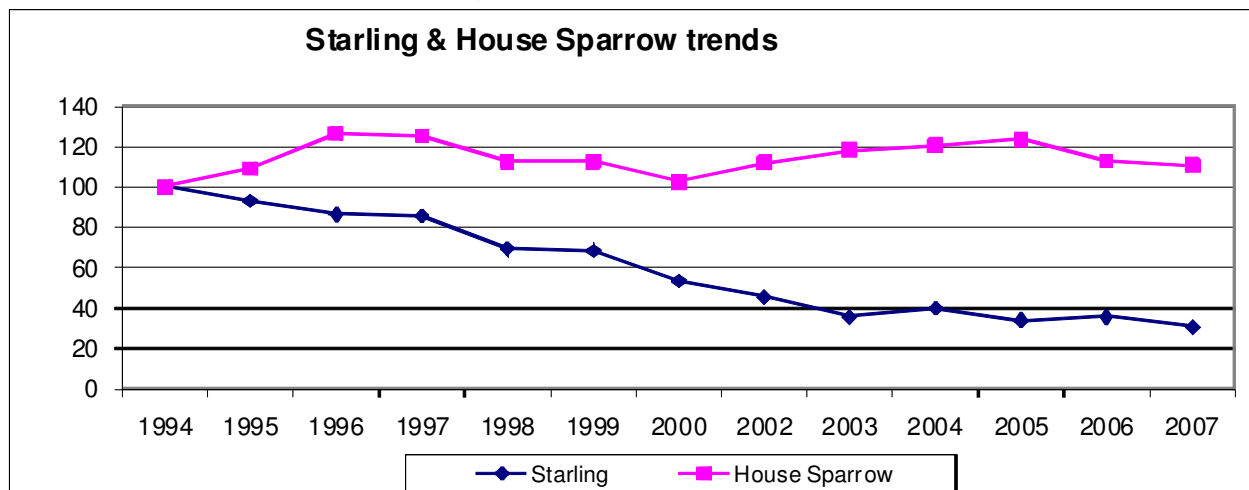
AVON PERCENTAGE CHANGES 1994-2007

| species | 94/95 | 95/96 | 96/97 | 97/98 | 98/99 | 99/00 | 00/02 | 02/03 | 03/04 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 1994-07 |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| Mallard | -17 | 0 | -11 | 14 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 13 | 8 | -26 | -16 | 7 | -30 |
| Lesser Black-backed Gull | unk | 25 | 13 | 3 | 20 | -13 | 60 | -13 | 14 | -21 | -14 | 8 | 77 |
| Herring Gull | unk | -10 | -15 | 36 | -6 | 38 | 17 | -20 | 44 | -5 | 3 | 24 | 121 |
| Feral Pigeon | 42 | 13 | -4 | 9 | -15 | -10 | -33 | 16 | -2 | -1 | 23 | -5 | 13 |
| Woodpigeon | -4 | 20 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 12 | -5 | 4 | -1 | 5 | 4 | 53 |
| Collared Dove | 20 | 18 | 12 | -2 | 14 | 1 | 3 | -3 | 5 | -10 | 16 | -15 | 67 |
| Swift | 23 | -14 | -2 | 1 | 4 | -16 | -13 | 12 | 2 | -26 | -8 | 10 | -32 |
| Skylark | 15 | -12 | -7 | -5 | 0 | -17 | 2 | -3 | 0 | 26 | -7 | -2 | -16 |
| Wren | 11 | -32 | 12 | 11 | 15 | 2 | -4 | -4 | -3 | 4 | -17 | 9 | -7 |
| Dunnoch | 14 | -6 | 0 | -13 | 31 | -4 | 0 | 6 | -7 | 3 | -2 | -4 | 12 |
| Robin | 7 | 18 | -13 | 8 | 6 | -3 | -6 | 4 | -1 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 29 |
| Blackbird | 5 | 7 | 7 | 0 | 11 | -5 | -2 | -3 | -4 | 6 | -2 | 1 | 21 |
| Song Thrush | 1 | -9 | -13 | 20 | 18 | 5 | -2 | -2 | 0 | 1 | -8 | -4 | 2 |
| Blackcap | -9 | 5 | 13 | 28 | 12 | -6 | 1 | -10 | 16 | 2 | -8 | 12 | 61 |
| Chiffchaff | 11 | -1 | 13 | 7 | -45 | 23 | 7 | 25 | 18 | -40 | -14 | 27 | -7 |
| Blue Tit | -9 | 17 | 3 | -8 | 0 | -7 | 6 | -5 | 6 | 3 | -8 | -9 | -14 |
| Great Tit | -10 | 13 | -4 | -4 | 7 | 3 | -3 | 2 | 2 | -1 | 13 | -11 | 4 |
| Magpie | -7 | -8 | 1 | 2 | -2 | 4 | -17 | 3 | 0 | -4 | -1 | 0 | -27 |
| Jackdaw | 10 | -17 | 17 | 6 | -4 | -1 | 3 | -12 | 0 | 10 | 2 | 3 | 13 |
| Carrion Crow | 19 | -2 | -3 | -2 | 5 | -2 | -10 | -9 | 1 | 17 | 5 | -9 | 5 |
| Starling | -7 | -7 | -1 | -19 | -1 | -22 | -15 | -21 | 12 | -15 | 5 | -14 | -69 |
| House Sparrow | 9 | 16 | -1 | -10 | 0 | -9 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 3 | -9 | -2 | 11 |
| Chaffinch | -2 | 8 | 2 | -6 | 3 | -1 | -3 | 1 | -1 | -5 | 0 | -7 | -11 |
| Greenfinch | 12 | 16 | 3 | 24 | -15 | 5 | 2 | 9 | 1 | -6 | 8 | -25 | 27 |

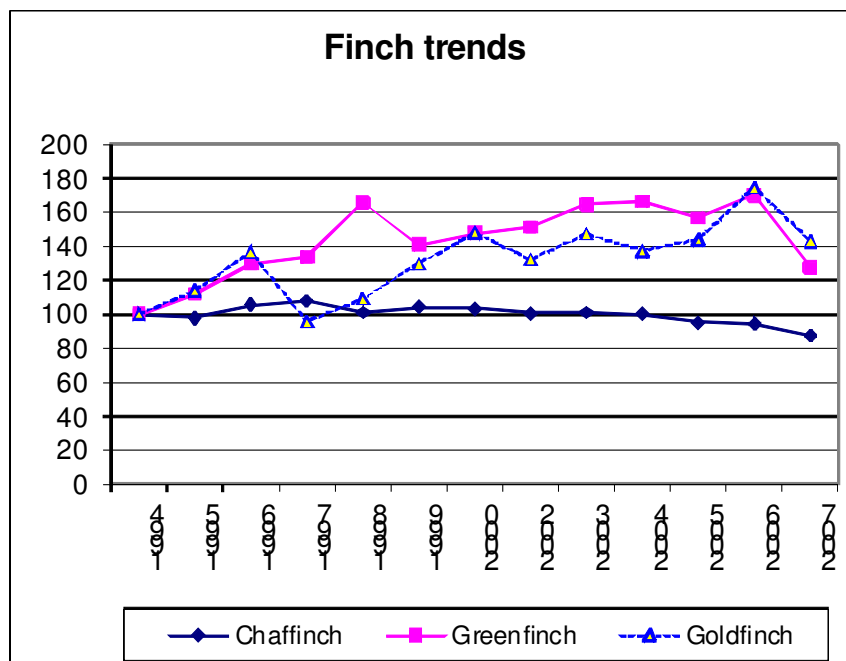
Note 2000/01 change unknown due to foot & mouth restrictions

% change

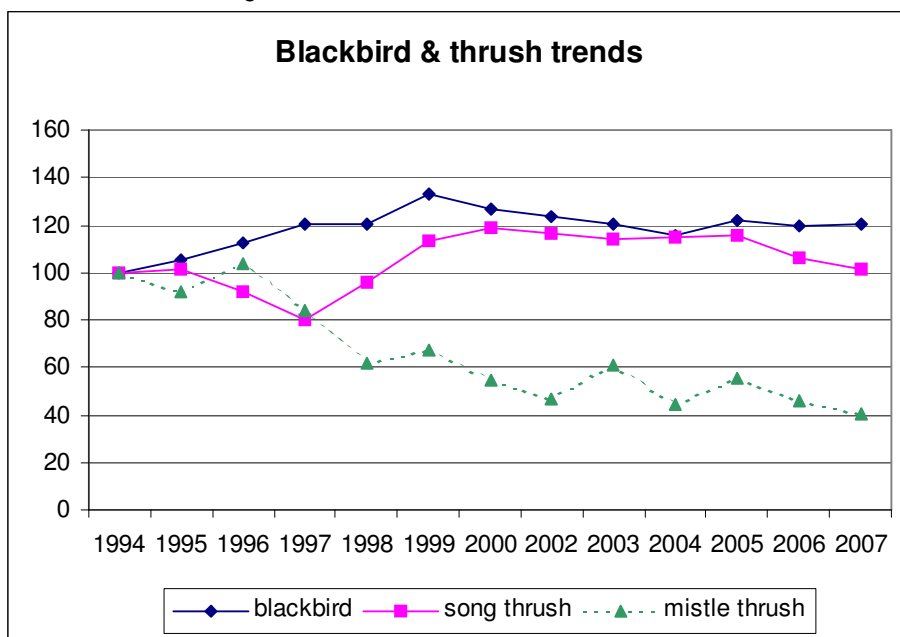
The percentage changes of the most numerous species are based on 168 squares that were covered in 2006 and 2007 by the same observer. Eleven of the 24 species above increased, 12 decreased and one had no change. Increases of over 10% were recorded in Herring Gull, Swift, Blackcap and Chiffchaff and decreases of over 10% in Collared Dove, Great Tit, Starling and Greenfinch.

Comments on recent trends, selected species

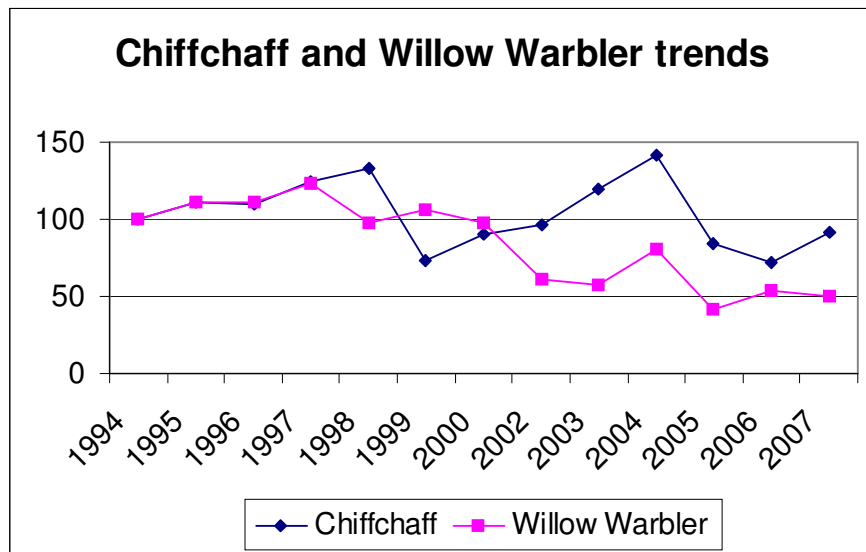
The House Sparrow and Starling show differing trends over the last 13 years. The House Sparrow has decreased in the last year but is still above the 1994 population. Starling continues its decline.



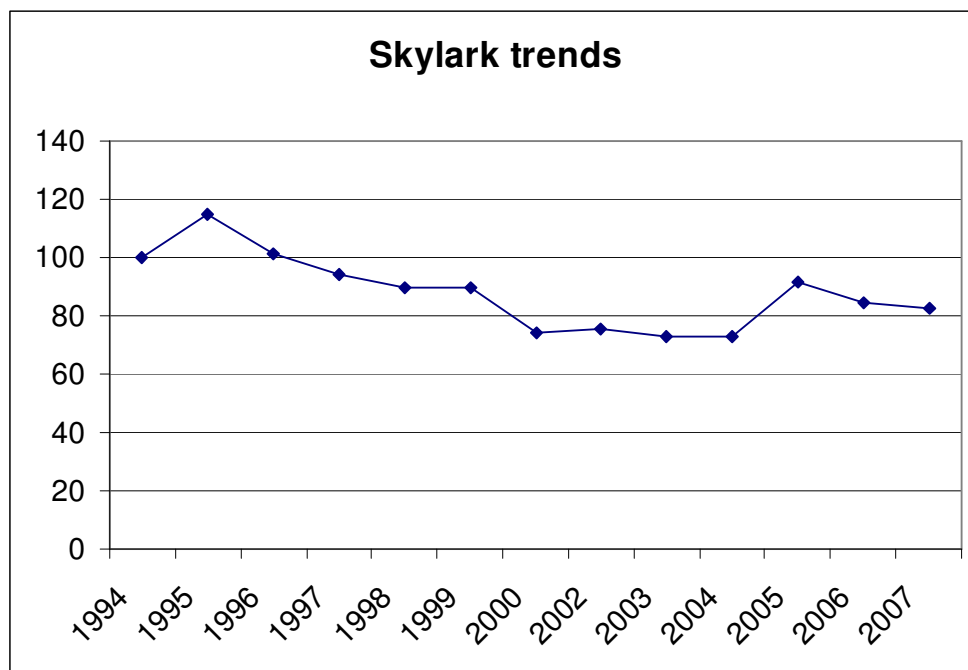
The Greenfinch decline this year was pretty drastic throughout the region, with a decline of 22% in B&NES, 17% in Bristol, 27% in North Somerset and 27% in South Glos, the overall decline in Avon being 25%. Is this the first sign of Trichomoniasis having a significant effect? However, Greenfinch is still well above its 1994 levels. The graph also raises the question whether it affects its near relatives of Goldfinch and Chaffinch. The latter has been the most stable of all the local common species and is now showing a small decline.



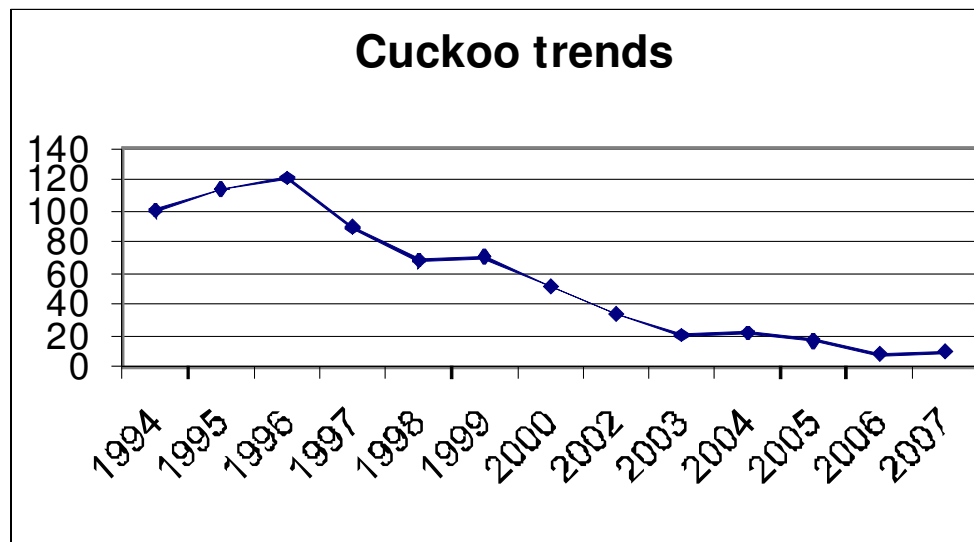
Blackbird seems fairly stable about 20% above its 1994 level, whereas Song Thrush has declined for a second year and is now back to its 1994 level. Mistle Thrush is still causing concern with a fairly steady decline to its present value of 40% of its 1994 numbers.



This year has seen an increase in Chiffchaff numbers, continuing the seesaw pattern, whereas the Willow Warbler has continued its steady decline.



Skylark continues to be a cause for concern with a slight decline in the last year but it has not returned to its all-time low of the depressing days of 2000 to 2004.



The Cuckoo still remains at a very low level but had a very small increase in 2007. At least, there was a record of one bird in B&NES but it took 103 hours of birdwatching to find it!

Avon's breeding populations – 2007

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 | 12500 | 8500 | 14000 | 18000 | 53000 |
| House Sparrow | 7800 | 11000 | 13500 | 9000 | 41300 |
| Blue Tit | 9000 | 5500 | 11000 | 15000 | 40500 |
| Blackbird | 8800 | 7000 | 11000 | 12500 | 39300 |
| Robin | 9000 | 5000 | 12000 | 12000 | 38000 |
| Great Tit | 7500 | 3000 | 9000 | 10000 | 29500 |
| Dunnoek | 5000 | 2500 | 5000 | 6000 | 18500 |
| Woodpigeon | 4000 | 3000 | 3800 | 7500 | 18300 |
| Chaffinch | 4200 | 1000 | 4000 | 5500 | 14700 |
| Starling | 2000 | 3500 | 4200 | 4800 | 14500 |
| Greenfinch | 2500 | 1800 | 3600 | 4000 | 11900 |
| Swallow | 2200 | - | 6000 | 3500 | 11700 |
| Blackcap | 2000 | 1000 | 2800 | 3500 | 9300 |
| Chiffchaff | 2200 | 700 | 2500 | 3200 | 8600 |
| Jackdaw | 2500 | 900 | 1600 | 3500 | 8500 |
| Carrian Crow | 1900 | 1000 | 2000 | 3500 | 8400 |
| Rook | 1700 | - | 1100 | 4000 | 6800 |
| House Martin | 1200 | 100 | 3500 | 1500 | 6300 |
| Goldfinch | 2200 | - | 1900 | 1800 | 5900 |
| Song Thrush | 1400 | 500 | 1700 | 2000 | 5600 |
| Skylark | 1600 | - | 600 | 2400 | 4600 |
| Magpie | 650 | 800 | 700 | 1200 | 3350 |
| Collared Dove | 600 | 700 | 900 | 1100 | 3300 |
| Whitethroat | 900 | - | 800 | 1200 | 2900 |
| Linnet | 800 | - | 1000 | 900 | 2700 |
| Swift | 900 | 200 | 400 | 500 | 2000 |
| Yellowhammer | 900 | - | 200 | 900 | 2000 |
| Total for old Avon | | | | | 411450 |

BTO Plover Survey 2007

R.L.Bland

In the summer of 2007 there was a national survey of breeding Little Ringed and Ringed Plovers. A total of 23 tetrads in the region was surveyed for Little Ringed Plover and 17 for Ringed Plover.

These included all sites that had reported either one of these species in the recent past, and a number of potential sites identified from maps by the BTO.

Three pairs of Little Ringed Plover were found, all at BG. Eleven pairs of Ringed Plover were found, ten of them at Avonmouth Docks and one at RPD. All of these sites were areas used to store new vehicles in transit. As many of these vehicles were not moved for several weeks there was minimal human disturbance.

The outcomes of these breeding attempts are given in the main systematic list under the relevant species.

No other surveyed tetrad showed any sign of breeding activity.

AVON RINGING REPORT, 2007

L. F. Roberts

A total of 6,569 birds representing 69 species were reported ringed in the Avon area in 2007, compared with 7,565 birds and 60 species in 2006. This was a fall of 11% in the annual total. Ringing activity in Avon seems to be on the decrease, with only three sites currently being operated on a regular basis. Consequently, ringing totals have fallen from an average of c.10,000 in 1996-2001 to c.7,500 in 2002-2007.

The returns for 2007 were generally poor, reflecting both low songbird productivity and poor catching conditions. Although the breeding season got off to a good start, following a mild winter and with mostly sunny and dry weather in March and April, most of May (and much of June and July) was cool and wet. While owls and diurnal raptors had a productive season, boosted by peak populations of small rodents (*BTO Nest Record News*, June 2008), 2007 was a 'washout' season for most songbird species, with intense downpours flattening the nests of *Acrocephalus* warblers in particular. Of the 25 species monitored by the BTO Constant Effort Site (CES) ringing scheme, seven had their worst breeding season since the scheme began 25 years ago. One notable exception was Long-tailed Tit, with productivity at an all-time high, probably due to this species having an earlier breeding season than the other tit species (*BTO News*, March/April 2008). Locally, judging from nest box returns, Great Tit also seemed to have had a good breeding season in 2007, being unaffected by the inclement weather.

At CVL, record numbers of Barn Owl, Fieldfare, Great Tit and Greenfinch were ringed. Raven was ringed for the first time here (a pair bred on Denny Island) and a Tree Sparrow, now very scarce in Avon and probably extinct as a breeding species, was ringed after an absence of 25 years from the CVL ringing list. An interesting historical aside is that, in 1976, there was a catch of 150 Tree Sparrows in a stubble field at CVL, together with one Little Bunting! Other highlights at CVL in 2007 were: Water Rail four (the highest total since 1965), Swallow 622 (including the 15,000th for this site) and Siskin eleven (best catch since 1967). Cetti's Warbler returned to good numbers with 27 ringed, following a significant drop in 2006. Reed Warbler numbers improved a little on 2006 (and 2008 could well see the 30,000th Reed Warbler ringed at CVL), but the annual total of 700 was still significantly below the 15-year average. Heavy downpours in May resulted in only 128 nestling Reed Warblers being ringed around the Lake. This was the lowest total since 1995, when large-scale ringing of Reed Warbler nestlings commenced here. During this period, the average annual number of nestlings ringed was 373 (maximum 658 in 2002). Also on the downside, only 2 Kingfishers were ringed, the lowest total at the CVL since 1982. Annual totals for Sedge Warbler and Garden Warbler totals (at 141 and 38) were also unusually low, the lowest since 1980 and 1981 respectively. Finally, on the plus side, and despite the very poor breeding season for most species, a record number (436) of Great Tits was ringed at CVL in 2007, of which 370 were nestlings. It was also a record year for Greenfinch, with 401 birds ringed, 289 of these being caught in the newly constructed Heligoland Trap.

In the Gordano Valley, a Firecrest was ringed on Nov. 25th, only the fourth record for this site. Also, there were record high annual totals for Great Tit (mainly pulli ringed at nest boxes) and Reed Bunting (autumn dispersal/passage). As at CVL, however, very low numbers of Reed and Sedge Warbler were ringed and Garden Warbler registered a record low catch (this once relatively common breeding and passage species now becoming quite scarce). For the first time since 1991, no Lesser Whitethroats were ringed in the Gordano Valley.

Species Totals

Table 1 below shows the top 20 species ringed in the Avon area in 2007 (2006 position shown in brackets) and the percentage change in the ringing total between 2006 and 2007. *Year-to-year changes may partially reflect ringing effort and/or catching conditions.*

| Pos. | Species | Total | % | Pos. | Species | Total | % |
|--------|----------------|-------|-----|---------|-----------------|-------|-------|
| 1 (2) | Swallow | 787 | -25 | 11 (17) | Long-tailed Tit | 162 | +93 |
| 2 (5) | Great Tit | 748 | +19 | 12 (14) | Robin | 150 | +34 |
| 3 (3) | Reed Warbler | 734 | +6 | 13 (18) | Wren | 101 | +22 |
| 4 (1) | Blackcap | 682 | -43 | 14 (20) | Blackbird | 83 | +38 |
| 5 (4) | Blue Tit | 637 | -2 | 15 (29) | Goldfinch | 79 | +193 |
| 6 (7) | Greenfinch | 472 | +11 | 16 (21) | Dunnock | 78 | +59 |
| 7 (8) | Chiffchaff | 388 | +17 | 17 (43) | Redwing | 76 | +1420 |
| 8 (10) | Chaffinch | 216 | -10 | 18 (13) | Lesser B-b Gull | 66 | -50 |
| 9 (9) | Willow Warbler | 209 | -30 | 19 (26) | Reed Bunting | 61 | +91 |
| 10 (6) | Sedge Warbler | 171 | -64 | 20 (11) | Canada Goose | 51 | -71 |

Table 1. Top Twenty Species Ringed

Ringing Sites

The main ringing sites in Avon, for which returns were received for 2007, were as follows:

- **Abbey Wood MOD** (RC, for GVRG): 5 Mute Swans (all juveniles).
- **Avonmouth and Royal Portbury Docks** (LFR): 34 nestlings / 3 species incl. Ringed Plover 5.
- **Bath** (PR): 15 nestlings ringed / 2 species. Lesser Black-backed Gull 13, Herring Gull 2.
- **Barrow Gurney** (RC): 50 Swallow nestlings.
- **Bleadon Level** (LFR): 9 nestlings / 2 species. Kestrel 5, Stock Dove 4.
- **Blagdon Lake / Ubley** (WW): 19 birds / 5 species incl. 18 nestlings as follows - Kestrel 4, Barn Owl 5, Tawny Owl 5 (two broods), Swallow 4.
- **Burrington** (DN / WW): European Nightjar 4 (3 adult males and one juvenile).
- **Bristol** (PR): 67 nestlings / 2 species. Lesser Black-backed Gull 53, Herring Gull 14.
- **Chew Valley Lake** (CVRS): 4,106 / 52 species incl. Canada Goose 51, Water Rail 4, Barn Owl 5, Kingfisher 2, Swallow 622, Cetti's Warbler 27, Sedge Warbler 141, Reed Warbler 700 (128 nestlings), Garden Warbler 38, Chiffchaff 236, Rook 3, Raven 4, Tree Sparrow 1.
- **Gordano Valley NNR** (LFR / GVRG): 1,585 / 38 species incl. Tree Pipit 2, Redstart 1, Stonechat 3, Cetti's Warbler 1, Grasshopper Warbler 8, Blackcap 534, Willow Warbler 171, Firecrest 1, Marsh Tit 4, Lesser Redpoll 13.
- **Timsbury area** (CM): 378 / 22 species incl. Great Spotted Woodpecker 3.
- **Upper Farm, Failand** and other sites, mainly in the **Lulsgate / Redhill** areas (RC / JE): 275 / 18 species. incl. Great Spotted Woodpecker 5, Swallow 91 nestlings, Fieldfare 15 and Redwing 58.
- **Various sites** (CS, Hawk & Owl Trust): 26 nestlings / 2 species. Barn Owl broods ringed at Compton Dando (two sites), Lower Failand, Monkton Combe and Siston; Tawny Owl broods ringed at Goblin Combe and Kelston.

Contributors: R.P.Clevely, Chew Valley Ringing Station (CVRS), J. Eatough, Gordano Valley Ringing Group (GVRG), C. Matthews, D. Nevitt, L.F. Roberts, P. Rock, C. Sperring, W. White.
Selected Recoveries

Amongst the CVL highlights were Reed Warbler movements to and from Belgium and Sedge Warblers from Belgium and to France. A Blackcap ringed in the Gordano Valley was controlled in France, after 12 days. Another GV-ringed Blackcap ringed in September 2006 was controlled in Spain (Cadiz) in November 2007. In terms of longevity, a Buzzard ringed at Tickenham in 1998 and found dead at Nailsea in 2006, is worth mentioning, but is by no means exceptional. Also, as Buzzards seldom disperse very far, a record of a nestling ringed near Weston in Gordano in 2003 and found dead at Tintern (Gwent) is notable.

A Garden Warbler ringed in Scotland in August 2006 was controlled in the Gordano Valley, 17 days later. In all likelihood, this bird probably covered the distance in one night but the record is, nevertheless, of some interest.

Finally, a juvenile Robin ringed in the Gordano Valley in July 2007 was killed by a cat on Guernsey (Channel Islands) two months later. Table 2 below lists all notable recoveries received from the BTO since publication of the 2006 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. Table 2 below. Recoveries.

| Species Ring No | Age Code | Date Ringed Date Rec'd | Place Ringed Place Rec'd | Distance (km) | Duration (days) |
|--------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Canada Goose | Ad | 01.07.97 | CVL | | |
| 5190272 | +F | 01.09.06 | CVL | <1 | 3,349 |
| <i>Shot</i> | | | | | |

| Species Ring No | Age Code | Date Ringed Date Rec'd | Place Ringed Place Rec'd | Distance (km) | Duration (days) |
|--------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|---|------------------|--------------------|
| Buzzard GF37242 | P X | 25.06.98 25.11.06 | Chummock Wood, Tickenham Nailsea | 3 | 3,075 |
| <i>Drowned in water trough</i> | | | | | |
| Buzzard GN25996 | P X | 21.06.03 04.05.08 | Weston in Gordano Tintern, Gwent | 27 | 1,779 |
| Lapwing DB87405 | 1y R | 27.04.00 28.08.06 | Walton in Gordano Middleton, Lancs. | 282 | 2,314 |
| Robin V415982 | 1y X | 18.07.07 17.09.07 | Walton in Gordano Guernsey, Channel Islands | 225 | 61 |
| <i>Taken by cat</i> | | | | | |
| Cetti's Warbler P559835 | 1y R | 09.08.03 12.05.07 | Berrow, Somerset CVL | 28 | 1,372 |
| Sedge Warbler 8505600 | 1y R | 11.08.04 04.08.06 | Vlaanderen, BELGIUM CVL | 415 | 723 |
| Sedge Warbler R109402 | Ad R | 28.07.02 23.04.06 | CVL Lundy Island, Devon | 143 | 1,365 |
| Sedge Warbler R760356 | 1y R | 16.08.06 06.09.06 | Flamborough Head, Humberside Walton in Gordano | 348 | 21 |
| Sedge Warbler T816205 | Ad R | 30.04.06 07.08.06 | CVL Loire Atlantique, FRANCE | 482 | 99 |
| Reed Warbler N255799 | 1y R | 09.09.05 20.05.07 | Leon, SPAIN CVL | 1,030 | 649 |
| Reed Warbler R109345 | 1y R | 06.08.02 19.04.07 | CVL Palencia, SPAIN | 1,039 | 1,717 |
| Goldcrest BNN307 | 1y R | 15.10.06 27.01.07 | Spurn Point, Humberside CVL | 312 | 104 |
| Blackcap T849403 | 1y R | 08.09.06 20.09.06 | Walton in Gordano Pas-de-Calais, FRANCE | 318 | 12 |
| Blackcap T849520 | 1y R | 09.09.06 22.09.06 | Walton in Gordano Icklesham, Sussex | 251 | 13 |
| Blackcap T849613 | 1y R | 10.09.06 16.11.07 | Walton in Gordano Cadiz, SPAIN | 1,719 | 432 |
| Blackcap V292698 | 1y R | 22.09.07 23.09.07 | Uskmouth, Gwent Walton in Gordano | 14 | 1 |
| Blackcap V415560 | 1y R | 03.09.07 28.09.07 | Walton in Gordano Icklesham, Sussex | 251 | 15 |
| Blackcap V698001 | 1y R | 15.09.07 27.09.07 | Walton in Gordano Icklesham, Sussex | 251 | 12 |
| Garden Warbler V164111 | 1y R | 09.08.06 26.08.06 | Highland Region, Scotland Walton in Gordano | 688 | 17 |
| Chiffchaff BKY015 | 1y R | 01.10.05 23.04.07 | Walton in Gordano Grampian Region, Scotland | 639 | 569 |
| Chaffinch N822546 | Ad X | 27.03.99 11.08.07 | Walton in Gordano Tickenham | <1 | 3,059 |
| <i>Hit glass</i> | | | | | |
| Greenfinch TB64828 | Ad R | 04.11.06 11.04.07 | CVL Alnwick, Northumberland | 449 | 158 |

Systematic List of Birds Ringed in 2007

Species annual ringing totals for the period 2004 to 2007 are given in Table 3 below, together with the average number of birds ringed annually for the period 2004-2006.

| Species | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 3YA |
|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|-----|
| Mute Swan | 1 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 6 |
| Mallard | | | | 4 | 0 |
| Canada Goose | 200 | 200 | 174 | 51 | 191 |
| Sparrowhawk | 1 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Buzzard | 7 | | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Kestrel | 4 | | | 10 | 1 |
| Water Rail | 1 | | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| Moorhen | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Coot | 2 | 3 | | 0 | 2 |
| Ringed Plover | 25 | 5 | | 5 | 10 |
| Snipe | | | | 1 | 0 |
| Lapwing | 1 | 8 | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| Common Sandpiper | 1 | | | 0 | <1 |
| Lesser Black-backed Gull | 154 | 219 | 131 | 66 | 168 |
| Herring Gull | 31 | 58 | 45 | 16 | 45 |
| Stock Dove | 4 | | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| Wood Pigeon | 2 | 3 | | 0 | 2 |
| Collared Dove | 4 | | | 0 | 1 |
| Cuckoo | | 1 | | 0 | <1 |
| Barn Owl | 12 | 19 | 11 | 32 | 14 |
| Tawny Owl | 4 | 8 | | 13 | 4 |
| Nightjar | | | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| Kingfisher | 14 | 16 | 6 | 2 | 12 |
| Swift | | | | 2 | 0 |
| Green Woodpecker | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Great Spotted Woodpecker | 13 | 12 | 10 | 13 | 12 |
| Sand Martin | 65 | 153 | 150 | 19 | 123 |
| Swallow | 388 | 403 | 934 | 787 | 575 |
| House Martin | 46 | 20 | 90 | 30 | 52 |
| Tree Pipit | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Meadow Pipit | 5 | 4 | 17 | 2 | 9 |
| Grey Wagtail | 8 | 8 | 10 | 0 | 9 |
| Pied Wagtail | 2 | 13 | | 15 | 5 |
| Waxwing | | 26 | | 0 | 9 |
| Wren | 93 | 128 | 83 | 101 | 101 |
| Dunnock | 75 | 142 | 49 | 78 | 89 |
| Robin | 118 | 159 | 112 | 150 | 130 |
| Redstart | 1 | 3 | | 1 | 1 |
| Whinchat | | 1 | | 0 | <1 |
| Stonechat | | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Wheatear | | 2 | | 0 | 1 |
| Blackbird | 81 | 90 | 60 | 83 | 77 |
| Fieldfare | 3 | | 1 | 27 | 1 |
| Song Thrush | 39 | 43 | 26 | 37 | 36 |
| Redwing | 28 | 3 | 5 | 76 | 12 |
| Cetti's Warbler | 35 | 33 | 14 | 28 | 27 |
| Grasshopper Warbler | 4 | 17 | 12 | 8 | 11 |
| Sedge Warbler | 274 | 214 | 473 | 171 | 320 |
| Reed Warbler | 1053 | 848 | 691 | 734 | 864 |

| Species | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 3YA |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Blackcap | 694 | 1,004 | 1,192 | 682 | 963 |
| Garden Warbler | 77 | 64 | 88 | 46 | 76 |
| Lesser Whitethroat | 15 | 25 | 24 | 10 | 21 |
| Whitethroat | 42 | 30 | 47 | 21 | 40 |
| Chiffchaff | 450 | 339 | 331 | 388 | 373 |
| Willow Warbler | 220 | 270 | 299 | 209 | 263 |
| Goldcrest | 77 | 46 | 31 | 39 | 51 |
| Firecrest | | | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Spotted Flycatcher | 4 | 4 | | 0 | 3 |
| Pied Flycatcher | | 1 | | 0 | <1 |
| Long-tailed Tit | 128 | 107 | 84 | 162 | 106 |
| Marsh Tit | 7 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| Coal Tit | 91 | 69 | 39 | 28 | 66 |
| Blue Tit | 1,173 | 813 | 593 | 637 | 860 |
| Great Tit | 700 | 750 | 589 | 748 | 680 |
| Nuthatch | 9 | 12 | 1 | 0 | 7 |
| Treecreeper | 19 | 16 | 12 | 15 | 16 |
| Jay | 4 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| Magpie | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Jackdaw | 9 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 8 |
| Rook | | | | 3 | 0 |
| Carriion Crow | | | | 2 | 0 |
| Raven | | | | 4 | 0 |
| Starling | 51 | 24 | 19 | 43 | 31 |
| House Sparrow | 60 | 37 | 63 | 20 | 53 |
| Tree Sparrow | | | | 1 | 0 |
| Chaffinch | 135 | 152 | 239 | 216 | 175 |
| Brambling | 6 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| Greenfinch | 369 | 384 | 425 | 472 | 393 |
| Goldfinch | 134 | 32 | 27 | 79 | 64 |
| Siskin | 24 | | 37 | 11 | 20 |
| Linnet | | 9 | | 0 | 3 |
| Lesser Redpoll | | 19 | | 18 | 6 |
| Bullfinch | 41 | 45 | 29 | 44 | 38 |
| Reed Bunting | 46 | 54 | 32 | 61 | 44 |
| TOTAL | 7,388 | 7,203 | 7,656 | 6,569 | 7,314 |
| Species | 64 | 67 | 60 | 69 | 64 |

Table 3. Species Totals 2004 – 2007 and 3-Year Average (2004-2006)

| 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 |
| Burledge 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 |
| Farmborough | 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 | Wrington | 4762 | NS |
| Stoke Bishop, Bristol | 5676 | BR | Yatton | 4365 | NS |
| Stony Littleton | 7356 | BA | Yeo Estuary | 3666 | NS |

An Index of articles in the Avon Bird Report 1978-2007

This index contains a list of the individual papers and notes published in the Avon Bird Report between 1978 and 2007, but it does not include details of the BBS or ringing reports.

| Author | Title | Year | Page |
|-----------------|---|------|---------|
| Bland, R.L. | Kestrels in the City of Bristol | 1979 | 42-43 |
| Thomas, R.G. | The Status of Waders on Severnside | 1979 | 44-48 |
| Rose, H.E. | Birds of Tidal Avon | 1980 | 6 |
| Kemp, M.S. | Status of Nightjar in Avon | 1982 | 49 |
| Rose, H.E. | Breeding waders of wet meadows | 1982 | 45-47 |
| Thomas, R.G. | Status of Curlew Sandpiper | 1982 | 47 |
| Bland, R.L. | Over-wintering warblers | 1983 | 44-45 |
| Hammacott, H.R. | Mute Swan census, 1983 | 1983 | 46 |
| Kemp, M.S. | Status of Cirl Bunting in Avon | 1983 | 49-53 |
| Prytherch, R.J. | Buzzard survey 1983 | 1983 | 45-46 |
| Rock, P. | Roof-nesting Gulls | 1983 | 42-43 |
| Thomas, R.G. | Status of Little Stint | 1983 | 47-48 |
| Vinicombe, K.E. | Broad-billed Sandpiper at Oldbury | 1983 | 40-41 |
| Bland, R.L. | BTO Winter Atlas | 1984 | 46-50 |
| Lancastle, B. | Franklin's Gull at Severn Beach | 1984 | 42-43 |
| Vinicombe, K.E. | Yellow-legged and Northern Herring Gulls at CVL | 1984 | 44-45 |
| Ashton, L.P. | A Visit to BL in May 1925 | 1985 | 46 |
| Hammacott, H.R. | Swifts in a Bristol roof | 1985 | 45 |
| Rose, H.E. | Unusual birds in Avon | 1985 | 47-50 |
| Hammacott, H.R. | Thirty years of nest records | 1986 | 52-54 |
| Merritt, A. | Yellow-browed Warblers in Avon | 1986 | 46-47 |
| Rose, H.E. | Stonechat in Avon | 1986 | 50-51 |
| Taylor, S.M. | Hawfinches in retrospect | 1986 | 51 |
| Vinicombe, K.E. | Terek Sandpiper in Avon | 1986 | 48 |
| Bland, R.L. | Tetrad breeding survey 1985-87 | 1987 | 43-63 |
| Bland, R.L. | Birds in Gardens | 1988 | 53 |
| Bland, R.L. | Heron 1954-88 | 1988 | 54 |
| Lacy, N.T. | Migration notes from New Passage | 1988 | 55 |
| Merritt, A. | Balearic Shearwater in Avon | 1988 | 52 |
| Taylor, S.M. | Bird-life of Leigh Woods, 1909 | 1988 | 56 |
| Davis, A.H. | Ehrenberg's Redstart | 1989 | 56 |
| Lancastle, B. | Seabirds in Upper Severn | 1989 | 57-65 |
| Bland, R.L. | BTO Mute Swan census | 1990 | 88 |
| Bland, R.L. | BTO Tawny Owl census | 1990 | 88 |
| Bland, R.L. | Rooks in Avon 1990 | 1990 | 86-87 |
| Clark, N.A. | Origins of Dunlin wintering in Avon | 1990 | 81-85 |
| Merritt, A. | Changing face of Avon I | 1990 | 89 |
| Vinicombe, K.E. | Semi-palmated Sandpiper at OPS | 1990 | 77-80 |
| Aldridge, J. | Set-aside in South Avon | 1991 | 85-86 |
| Bland, R.L. | BTO Tawny Owl survey | 1991 | 94-95 |
| Bland, R.L. | Migration watch 1991 | 1991 | 95-96 |
| King, J.B.M. | Constant effort ringing at CVL | 1991 | 92-93 |
| Vinicombe, K.E. | Bearded Tit in Avon | 1991 | 87-89 |
| Aldridge, J. | Great Reed Warbler at CVL | 1992 | 101-102 |
| Arnold, J. | Scarlet Rosefinch on Stantonbury Hill | 1992 | 102-103 |
| Bland, R.L. | First and last migration dates | 1992 | 83-96 |
| Bland, R.L. | History of Corn Bunting in Avon | 1992 | 97-99 |
| Dadds, M. | Icterine warbler at Brentry | 1992 | 100-101 |

| | | | |
|-----------------|--|------|---------|
| Bland, R.L. | Decline of the Song Thrush | 1993 | 110-114 |
| Lancastle, B. | Eastern race of Yellow Wagtail | 1993 | 115-116 |
| Tully, J. | Starlings in Bristol 1992-1993 | 1993 | 101-109 |
| Tully, J. | 1993 Pilot for BBS | 1993 | 119-120 |
| Vinicombe, K.E. | 1993 Gull roost survey | 1993 | 117-118 |
| Martin, J.P. | Yellow-rumped Warbler | 1994 | 112-114 |
| Martin, J.P. | Changing face of Avon II | 1994 | 118-119 |
| Mulcock, P. | Blackcaps in a Bristol garden | 1994 | 103-108 |
| Preddy, S. | American Golden Plover | 1994 | 109-112 |
| Bland, R.L. | ST5673 | 1995 | 111-114 |
| Lewis, T.W.G. | Siskins in a Bristol Garden | 1995 | 109-110 |
| Rose, H.E. | Rare birds in Avon | 1995 | 103-108 |
| Andrews, R.M. | Citrine Wagtail | 1996 | 124-126 |
| Elliott, M.T. | Black-throated Thrush in Victoria Park | 1996 | 123-124 |
| Hill, M. | Birds in a Redland garden, 1987-96 | 1996 | 115-122 |
| Rose, H.E. | Pallas' Warbler at Clevedon | 1996 | 127 |
| Hunt, R. | Desert Wheatear at Clevedon | 1997 | 137-138 |
| Tully, J. | Diet of urban Peregrines | 1997 | 129-136 |
| Bland, R.L. | House Sparrow densities in Bristol | 1998 | 145-148 |
| Martin, J.P. | Changing face of Avon III | 1998 | 149-151 |
| Rose, H.E. | Lapwing survey 1998 | 1998 | 152 |
| Tully, J. | Winter feeding flocks of Feral Pigeon | 1998 | 139-144 |
| Andrews, R.M. | American Black Tern at Weston STW | 1999 | 151-155 |
| Bland, R.L. | Timing of arrival of summer migrants 1920-1998 | 1999 | 141-149 |
| Lancastle, B. | Seabirds in Upper Severn estuary | 2000 | 139-167 |
| Lancastle, B. | Cory's Shearwater | 2000 | 177-179 |
| Milbourne, N.R. | Lesser Scaup at Blagdon | 2000 | 179-180 |
| Rose, H.E. | Avon List | 2000 | 168-176 |
| Tully, J. | House Sparrows of Southmead | 2000 | 181-182 |
| Bland, R.L. | Avon Common Bird Census 1962-1999 | 2001 | 133-144 |
| Davis, A.H. | Laughing Gull at Bedminster | 2001 | 145-146 |
| Hall, K.J. | Aberrant Grey Heron at BL | 2001 | 148-149 |
| Martin, J.P. | Scandinavian Rock Pipit at CVL | 2001 | 150-152 |
| Tully, J. | House Sparrow nest survey Southmead | 2001 | 153 |
| Voaden, N. | Baird's Sandpiper | 2001 | 146-147 |
| Bland, R.L. | Waders of wet meadows | 2002 | 154 |
| Bland, R.L. | The earliest bird records | 2002 | 151-153 |
| Martin, J.P. | Caspian Gull at Harnhill Tip | 2002 | 145-150 |
| Rose, H.E. | A century ago | 2002 | 171 |
| Vinicombe, K.E. | Kumlien's Gulls in Avon | 2002 | 139-144 |
| Bland, R.L. | BTO Woodcock Survey | 2003 | 142 |
| Davis, A.H. | Great White Egret | 2003 | 138 |
| Vinicombe, K.E. | Baltic Gulls at CVL | 2003 | 139-141 |
| Warden, D. | Reed Warblers at CVL | 2003 | 129-137 |
| Bland, R.L. | BTO Nightjar survey | 2004 | 196 |
| Bland, R.L. | BTO Swallow Survey | 2004 | 197 |
| Bland, R.L. | BTO Gull roost survey | 2004 | 194-195 |
| Martin, J.P. | Subalpine Warbler | 2004 | 169-171 |
| Prince, J. | Birds of Backwell Lake | 2004 | 172-179 |
| Roberts, L.F. | Breeding status of Ringed Plover | 2004 | 162-166 |
| Stone, C.J. | Dusky Warbler | 2004 | 167-168 |
| Vernon, J.D.R. | Rook population of Avon county | 2004 | 147-156 |
| Vinicombe, K.E. | Identifying Goshawks | 2004 | 157-161 |
| Bland, R.L. | The Tawny Owl Survey | 2005 | 204 |

| | | | |
|--------------|--|------|---------|
| Bland, R.L. | The Winter Garden Survey- thirty years on | 2005 | 205 |
| Bland, R.L. | The Waxwing Invasion | 2005 | 182-187 |
| Davis, A.H. | Unusual ornithological events in the Avon Area | 2005 | 155-171 |
| Hunt, R. | Upland Sandpiper at Channel View Farm | 2005 | 180-181 |
| Martin, J.P. | Identification of Marsh and Willow Tits | 2005 | 176-179 |
| Tully, J. | Historical perspective of Feral Pigeon populations | 2005 | 171-175 |
| Drewitt, E. | The diet of urban Peregrines in Bath | 2006 | 123-130 |
| Davis, A.H. | Unusual ornithological events in the Avon Area | 2006 | 131-144 |
| Dadds, M. | Effect of Fox mange on Pheasant populations | 2006 | 145-150 |
| Martin, J.P. | Yellow-legged Gull Identification | 2006 | 151-154 |
| Stone, C.J. | A Gull incident at CVL | 2006 | 155 |
| Bland, R.L. | Sap-sucking by Great Spotted Woodpeckers | 2006 | 156 |
| Morley, A. | Bird Life of Clifton Downs | 2007 | 115-125 |
| Drewitt, E. | The diet of breeding Peregrines in Bath | 2007 | 127-132 |
| Roberts L.D. | An analysis of Barn Owl pellets | 2007 | 133-136 |
| Davis, A.H. | Glossy Ibis at CVL | 2007 | 137 |
| Martin, J.P. | Identifying Eastern Chiffchaffs in the Avon area | 2007 | 138-140 |
| Bland, R.L. | BTO Plover Survey | 2007 | 148 |

