AVON BIRD REPORT

2009

AVON ORNITHOLOGICAL GROUP
September 2010

CONTENTS

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Front cover: Whitethroat (R. M. Andrews).
Rear cover: Map of the Avon area computer generated by S. Godden, Dept. of Geography, University of Bristol.

Text drawings by R.M. Andrews, M. Hayes, J.P. Martin, A. Merritt, B.E. Slade and the late L.A. Tucker

Editorial

The taxonomy of British birds has been the subject of much debate since the first British list was produced over four centuries ago; for a detailed account of this debate see *A History of Ornithology* (*New Naturalist* 104) by Peter Bircham published by Collins in 2007. The latest changes to the list introduce a major re-ordering of the passerines – the song birds. As this affects the common garden and farmland birds familiar to all of us it seems only right to comment on these changes and describe the main features of the new structure.

These changes are the result of DNA analysis, they provide an accurate idea of how the various groups have developed over time and how they are related to one-another. It is sanctioned by the BOU (British Ornithological Union) and is clearly an on-going process, so we can expect some more changes probably in the non-passerine groups in the near future. One such change was made in 2009, the grebes now follow the egrets, herons and Spoonbill and come directly before the diurnal raptors beginning with Honey Buzzard. It is to be hoped that the passerine changes discussed below will be fixed for the next few years at least.

In general the orders of the main passerine groups (genera) have not been changed markedly in themselves, it is their relative positions to one-another that have been altered. There are a number of exceptions including the 'crests' (Gold and Fire), Long-tailed Tit and Dunnock that have been moved out of their traditional groups and into new ones; see below. In general I have ignored vagrants and concentrated on the common species. So after some North American species the first Avon area entries in the new BOU passerine list are

Golden Oriole, the shrikes and the corvids including Magpie, Jay and Raven

In the taxonomic system that prevailed up to the middle of the last century the corvids were placed early in the list, so we have come full circle here. Next come

The crests and the tits including Bearded Tit listed last

So Goldcrest and Firecrest are now thought to be more closely related to the tit family than to the warblers. Following these we have

The larks, Swallow and the martins

This group used to head the passerine list so they have been displaced from this position by the two groups above. Next we have the relatively large group of

The warblers which include Long-tailed Tit

The single tit species is now placed at the head of the warblers after Cetti's Warbler. The order of the main genera in this group has also been changed. So after Long-tailed Tit we now have *Phylloscopus* including Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler, then *Sylvia* including Blackcap and Whitethroat, followed by *Locuststella* and *Hippolais* including Grasshopper and Icterine Warblers, and finally *Acrocephalus* including Sedge and Reed Warbler. Note this new group does not include the flycatchers.

An assorted collection follows which includes

Waxwing, Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Starling and Dipper

But note not Dunnock. Another big group follows which includes

The thrushes, Robin, the chats and Wheatear

This group is now not thought to be closely related to the warblers but it does include the flycatchers. Spotted Flycatcher is placed between the thrushes and Robin, whilst Pied Flycatcher comes at the end of the list after Wheatear. Next come

The sparrows including Dunnock

followed by

The wagtails and pipits

So these two groups now come well down the main list and are fairly distant from the hirundines. From now on the list has a more familiar look with the

Finches including Chaffinch, the redpolls, and Hawfinch

coming next, followed lastly by

Buntings including Snow Bunting, Yellowhammer and Corn Bunting

This is the current last entry for us in Avon. The complete BOU list actually ends with the North American wood warblers. For this Report we have used the new list.

During part of 2009 and the whole of 2010 access to two major ornithological sites in Avon has been severely curtailed, they are Avonmouth Sewage Works (ASW) and Steep Holm. Some records were received for 2009 but it is likely that virtually none will be forthcoming for 2010. This will have a considerable impact on this Report in the future. It is to be hoped that these access problems will be sorted out soon, and that records from these important sites can again appear in this Report.

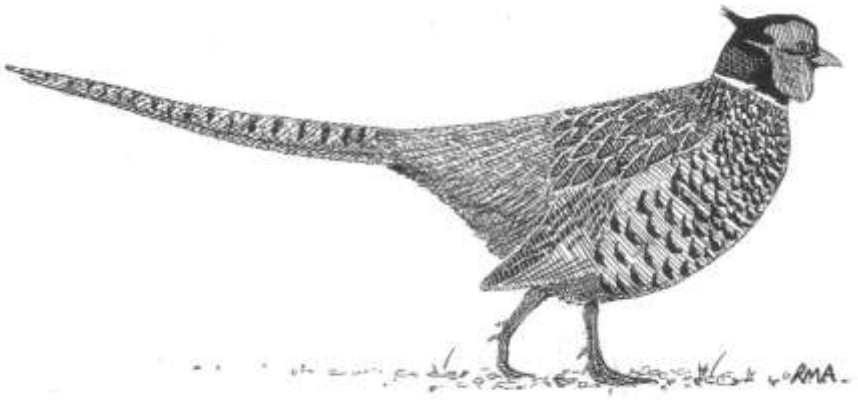
Note also that some of the wildfowl average maximum counts for the last decade have been recalculated so that for this Report onwards they are consistent with the definition given on page 19.

During the past year two active birders whose names or initials have appeared many times in this Report died, they were Trevor Silcocks and Mike Taylor. In their younger days they were both active ringers, and Mike was president of the BTO from 1981 to 1984 and edited this Report for several years up to 1990. Obituaries will appear in *Nature in Avon*, our sincere condolences go to their families. As we go to press the death of another active birder has been announced, Margaret Searle. She was Chairman of the Bristol Ornithological Club from 1999 to 2001, and its secretary from 2003 to 2009.

We have a number of interesting papers in this Report, I will single out three. The first is by Hugh Boyd with considerable assistance from Richard Bland, it discusses the question: Is the changing weather affecting the arrival and departure times of our migrants. Hugh was born in Bristol and undertook his first ornithological work locally, he was the warden on Lundy Island in 1948 and 1949, but he has spent most of his life in Canada. The second main paper, by Rupert Higgins, is the first part of a survey of wildfowl of Chew Valley Lake (CVL) over the past fifty years, it is hoped that the second part will appear in next year's Report. The third paper is by Mark Dadds, it describes his detailed survey of the breeding of Reed, Sedge and Grasshopper Warblers at a site near Almondsbury which now forms part of the Forest of Avon.

As usual it is a great pleasure to thank all those who have helped to make this Report possible. First and most important, thanks go to all those who submitted records either electronically or on paper, no Report would be possible without them. Secondly, I would like to thank all those involved in the preparation and production of this Report, they are listed on the inside front cover. Special thanks go to Richard Bland, John Martin and Steve Hale who spent many hours preparing the electronic records for the editors to work with, and to Richard Mielcarek – our technical editor – who spent many long hours in front of his PC getting this Report into its excellent final shape.

Harvey Rose (Editor)



Pheasant by Richard Andrews

From the Recorder

This is the second Report for which I have been 'Area Bird Recorder'. I think the title is possibly a little misleading for although it has proved to be quite a demanding role there are others who seem to have even more to do and without whose help the job would be impossible.

The job has become more complicated in the digital age because there are now so many ways in which records can be submitted. Some observers still use the old paper slips - not everyone has internet access or even owns a computer. The preferred methods are either to use the spreadsheet that can be downloaded from the BOC website or to report sightings to Steve Hale, the BOC webmaster, who will load them onto the BOC website. The last is particularly useful and is increasing in popularity, judging by the growing list of sightings posted daily. This relies on a few busy people, notable Steve Hale, who not only update the sightings page but collate all the records onto a spreadsheet. If you have posted your records here you do not need to send them in again. Records arrive in various other formats including direct e-mails to me. I can add these to a spreadsheet of my own, for eventual merging into one large data set at the end of the year, but it is not the most convenient format. Others use Word documents, which are acceptable but the data is again not so easy to collate. Records can also be entered onto the BTO's Birdtrack system. This is very useful as the data is made available to us, Richard Bland is dealing with an increasing volume of records from this source, as well as from the BTO itself.

Some observers have their own websites, with almost daily updates on sightings for particular locations. These are great sources of information and we do make some effort to trawl them for records. As the websites are by their nature somewhat ephemeral we cannot pick up every record from them. We would rather have the records submitted by known observers (some websites collate records from various often un-named observers). We will publish records of local rarities that are supported by website details and photographs but cannot do so for unsupported records.

Dealing with records of area rarities is an important part of my job. A list of species for which documentation is required is given on page 15. Several species have been removed from this list in the past few years, mainly because they have become too frequent to be considered rare now. They are:

Red-breasted Merganser – regular at CVL.

Red-crested Pochard – increasingly regular. The main problem is the occasional hybrid so particular care is needed with females and immatures.

Scaup – regular at the reservoirs. The main pitfall is lookalike hybrids with some long-staying and well-known individuals at the reservoirs that closely resemble this species. To our knowledge these have not been reported as true Scaup in recent years but if we suspect they might have been we will request supporting details.

Storm Petrel (notes still required for inland records) – this species is now fairly regular in the Estuary in summer in small numbers, especially after westerly winds. Bear in mind they can be outnumbered by Leach's in some years in late autumn and are always exceptional in winter, in which case we are likely to request supporting notes. It was of course the kiss of death to remove this species from the list last year as there was just one record in 2009!

Little Tern – regular on the Estuary and at CVL. Observers should take care with autumn records in particular when juvenile Arctic Tern, which can look surprisingly small, might be an occasional pitfall for the unwary.

Osprey – regular on both passages at the reservoirs and increasingly elsewhere, reflecting the increasing British breeding population.

Marsh Harrier – regular migrant that is frequent at CVL and regular but scarce elsewhere.

Merlin (including inland) – inland records are now relatively frequent.

Firecrest – regular with almost 20 reports from 2008, all of which were acceptable. The main problem might be with birds heard but not seen. We ask observers not to submit call-only records and to add supporting notes or, better still, recordings if they were in song but not seen.

In addition various species that required notes only if seen in one part of the area (e.g. away from the reservoirs in the case of Black-necked Grebe) have in the main been dropped. As always we might ask for supporting details for an exceptional record, such as an out-of-season migrant. So it is as well to bear this in mind and if in doubt take some field notes or photographs or both. As with records of any species you should of course only submit records if you are 100% sure of the identification.

Photographs are a great way to document scarce birds and are very welcome as part of the submission. If they allow a firm identification then all that is required in addition is some basic detail of where and when the photo was taken and the circumstances of the observation. Can I make a plea not to include photographs in Word documents – for me they are *far* easier to deal with if sent as separate jpeg files.

There was at least one addition to the county list this year. An adult Pacific Diver called in briefly at Severn Beach after eluding many observers further up the estuary for a few days, see paper on page 149. This came just two days after the *Fregetta* petrel (either White-bellied or Black-bellied Storm-petrel) at the same site, which I was lucky enough to co-find with four Midlands birders. This record is still under consideration by the national committees at the time of writing but will be the first European

record of the genus if accepted. Severnside's most purple patch!

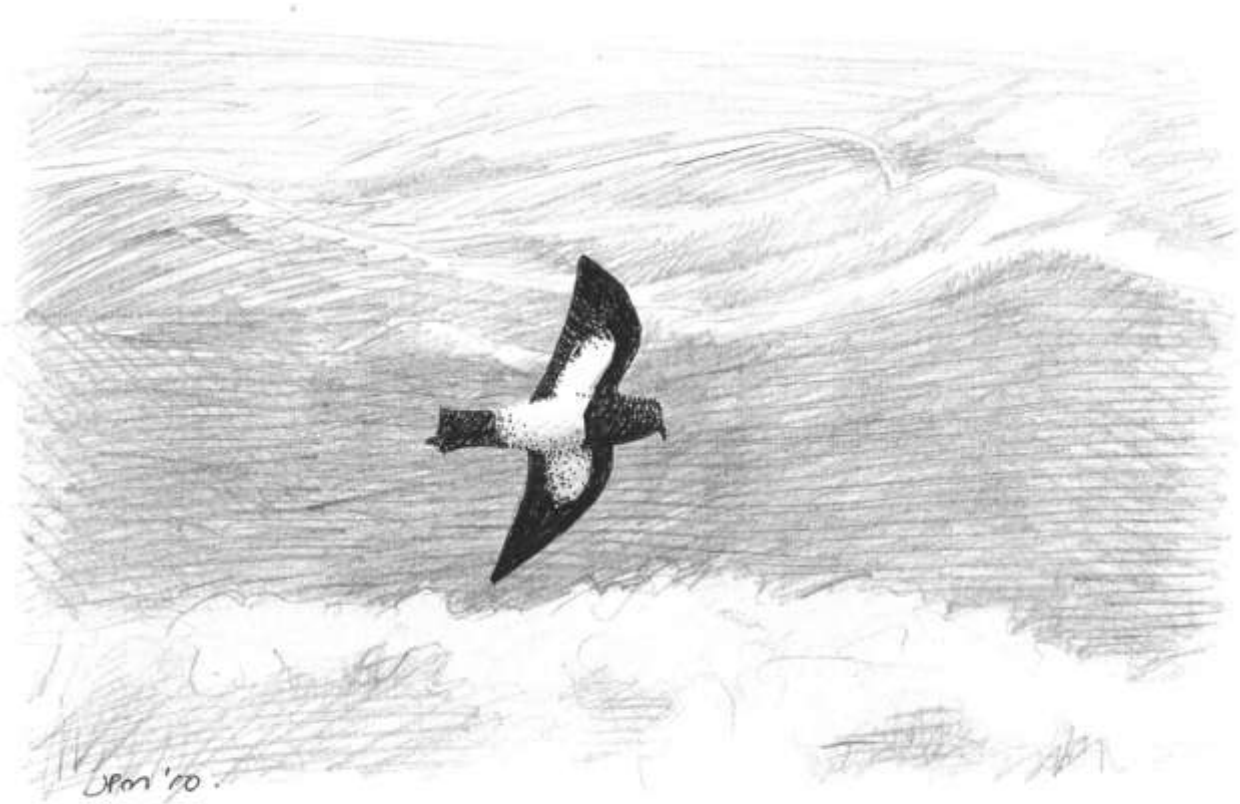
We cannot have too many quality birds on the list, so, as if to balance the diver, we have lost Hawk Owl following a BOURC review (Harrop, 2010). The bird, of the North American form *caparoch*, was said to have been shot near Yatton on Aug. 25th or 26th, 1847 and the skin is still in the Brighton Museum. It was found unacceptable because of the dubious circumstantial evidence including a four-year delay in reporting and an indirect association with the infamous Tadcaster rarities. Late August is also considered too early for a natural occurrence.

I must close by thanking everyone who has helped over the year, in particular Richard Andrews, Richard Bland, Andy Davis, Steve Hale, Rupert Higgins, Brian Lancastle, Richard Mielcarek and Harvey Rose plus all the section writers and the hundreds of observers who sent in records.

John Martin

Reference

Harrop, A. H. J., 2010. Records of Hawk Owls in Britain. British Birds **103**, May 2010, 276-283



Fregetta sp. by John Martin

Review of 2009

R.J. Higgins

In many respects 2009 was a disappointing year for birds. Cold weather early in the year failed to produce much by way of bird movements, but it did increase mortality of several species. This, coupled with poor weather in the summer of 2008 meant that many common species had a poor breeding season. Passage of many waders, terns and passerines was also below average, for some of the passerines in particular this may be a worrying reflection of declines in their UK breeding populations. Scarce birds were also in short supply, but rarity-wise the year was rescued by two short periods. The first, in late September, produced our second records of two Nearctic wader species and our first of Grey-headed Wagtail. The second, at the end of November, produced an exceptional sequence of storm-driven sea birds.

First Winter Period

In a distinct contrast to recent years the winter was cold, with January being the coldest since 1997 and snow lying for 13 days from Feb. 3rd.

The response of wildfowl to the cold weather was inconsistent. Two species often associated with cold weather, Bewick's Swan and White-fronted Goose, were both very rare and a third, Smew, was once again absent as were scarce grebes and divers. There were, however, influxes of Teal and Wigeon and, outstandingly, a count of 115 Brent Goose at Severn Beach on Jan. 31st was an Avon area record. There were also record counts of Red-crested Pochard, at BL and CVL on 5th and 6th respectively, probably the result of dispersal of British feral populations. BL also produced a good sequence of Scaup records, whilst Shelduck numbers on the coast were high.

Waders did not show any consistent response to the cold weather either. There were counts of 100 Snipe at both Sand Bay and the Axe Estuary and a slight increase in Lapwing numbers, but no apparent influx of either Golden Plover or Jack Snipe. More Woodcock than usual were seen, largely the result of an outstanding series of records in the Severnside area. On the Estuary itself improved counts of Dunlin at Axe Estuary and Sand Bay only partially compensated for very low numbers at Severnside. Grey Plover and Knot were reasonably numerous, but counts of Black-tailed Godwit and Curlew were low. There was the usual scatter of records of less common species, including about 14 Green Sandpipers, about seven Common Sandpipers and two each of Little Stint, Spotted Redshank and Greenshank.

Many passerines moved into gardens during the snow in mid-February, with notable influxes of Starling, Blackbird, Fieldfare, Song Thrush, Redwing and Brambling. These garden records, however, masked the low populations overall of Starling and Blackbird, with other common species present in low numbers including Dunnock and House Sparrow. The response to the cold weather of the usually vulnerable insectivorous species varied; Long-tailed Tit, Blackcap and Stonechat numbers seemed unaffected, but Chiffchaffs disappeared from late January and Wrens were scarce. Seed-eating species had mixed fortunes; the increase in the Goldfinch population continued and there were flocks of 700 Linnet and 80 Corn Bunting at Marshfield, but no sign of any recovery in the Greenfinch population. Brambling, Siskin and Redpoll were all present in reasonable numbers. Amongst less common species, CVL proved attractive to Water Pipits and approximately eight Firecrests and five Black Redstarts were recorded, but these paled into insignificance compared to a major influx of Hawfinch: Oldland, Yate and Keynsham all had small flocks of this enigmatic species.

The only scarce species remaining from 2008 was the Siberian Chiffchaff at CVL, but a Long-eared Owl put in an early appearance at Aust on Jan. 1st. The first week of the year also produced two Dartford Warblers, at BG and PW, and a Ring-billed Gull at CVL. There was a Mealy Redpoll at Severnside on 18th and a flock of Waxwing, peaking at 14, frequented Nailsea intermittently for three weeks from Feb. 16th. Perhaps the only scarce bird whose appearance can be directly linked to the cold weather was Whooper Swan, which for once outnumbered Bewick's with three at CVL on 21st.

Spring

The weather through much of the early spring was unimpressive. The first half of March was dominated by westerlies, but northerlies and north-easterlies took over in the second half of the month and throughout April. May began with three weeks of westerlies and it was not until the last week of this month that there was any prolonged warm weather.

Few notable wildfowl records were made, but there was a reasonable passage of Garganey from March 17th to May 14th, and two Black-necked Grebes at CVL for a few days from April 27th.

By the standards of the Avon area the raptor passage was good. Outstanding was Red Kite, which appeared in unprecedented numbers with a peak in early and mid-May. An Osprey on March 22nd was followed by three in early April and eight Marsh Harriers were recorded between mid-April and mid-May. The first Hobby of the year was recorded on April 19th, an average date.

Spring passage of almost all waders was weak, with Ringed Plover, Knot, Sanderling, Dunlin and Whimbrel all notable for their scarcity. Common Sandpiper was an exception, with a reasonable passage peaking on April18th, coinciding with the

peak passage of Dunlin and preceding the maxima of Bar-tailed Godwit and Whimbrel by five days. Later in the spring mid-May saw the largest numbers of Ringed Plover and Sanderling as well as the first spring Wood Sandpiper since 1996, at Severnside.

One of the first signs of spring is often the appearance of scarce gulls in amongst the less obvious passage of the commoner species. This year, however, there were no records of either Iceland or Glaucous Gull and the maximum count of Mediterranean Gull at CVL was only two. A passage of Kittiwake was recorded, with peaks on March 8th and 22nd, but this was poor and Little Gull was also scarce. Tern passage too was unexceptional, but there was a discernible peak of Little, Black and Sandwich, accompanied by good numbers of Arctic Skua, in mid-May, coinciding with the maxima of some wader species.

The first passerines arrived promptly, with Sand Martin on March 1st, followed by Chiffchaff two days later. It was not until mid-month that passage picked up, however; this period produced the first Swallow, House Martin and Wheatear, together with good numbers of Chiffchaff and Meadow Pipit. The rest of the month was quiet and it was not until the last few days that Swallows arrived in strength and the first Willow Warbler and Ring Ouzel were seen. Passage remained slow in the northerly winds but the first few days of April saw the first Whitethroat, Reed Warbler, Redstart, Yellow Wagtail and Tree Pipit, together with a record of four Tree Sparrow at OPS on 4th. There was then a flurry of activity on 10th, which saw the first Garden, Grasshopper and Sedge warblers, with the first Lesser Whitethroat and an influx of Whitethroat the next day. Mid-month saw even more activity, as Cuckoo, Swift, Whinchat and Pied Flycatcher were all seen for the first time and Brambling for the last. Fieldfare lingered until May 1st and it was not until 17th that the first Spotted Flycatcher was seen; House Martin passage was still strong on that day. Overall it was a poor spring for many species, producing notably low numbers of Swallow and Spotted Flycatcher. The less common species were mostly particularly scarce: only one Pied Flycatcher was seen, numbers of Whinchat and Yellow Wagtail were the lowest and of Tree Pipit the equal-lowest on record. The Wood Warbler passage improved, however, and Grasshopper Warblers were exceptionally common.

The spring was also rather disappointing for scarce species. A *tristis* Chiffchaff was seen at Keynsham on March 11th may have wintered locally. A Ring-billed Gull was seen at Sea Mills on 13th; the poor nature of the gull passage at CVL is emphasised by the site's failure to produce this species. For once Sea Mills was again the place to be the next day, when a Temminck's Stint was found. This species overwintered at Slimbridge (Glos) in the 2007/08 winter and it seems likely that the Sea Mills bird had also over-wintered locally. CVL provided some compensation in the form of the return of the regular Ferruginous Duck on 18th and three Whooper Swans were seen at Weston-s-Mare the next day. The start of April continued the wintery theme with a Mealy Redpoll at Yatton on 2nd and a Pale-bellied Brent Goose at Severnside on 8th. More seasonal interest was provided by two Spoonbills at OPS on 12th and by Hoopoes at Bourton on 16th and Doynton on 22nd. Less evocative of southern Europe were an unusual inland record of Purple Sandpiper at CVL on 18th, another Pale-bellied Brent Goose at Severnside on 25th and a Bearded Tit at OPS on 26th. A Wryneck at nearby Thornbury, also on 26th, was an unusual spring record, possibly linked to the north-easterly winds. Severnside then produced another Mealy Redpoll on May 3rd. Overshooting vagrants were very thin on the ground and a Purple Heron at CVL on 10th was an exception to this trend. Thirteen Pomarine Skuas accompanied the peak tern passage in mid-month and, finally, a second Ferruginous Duck was at CVL on 17th.

Breeding

The poor weather in summer 2008 and the cold winter, by recent standards, affected the populations of many breeding species and overall 2009 was a poor year although, as ever, there were exceptions. Some of these exceptions were waterfowl. At our main site, CVL, Gadwall had their best year since 1998 and Mallard since 1991, and two pairs of Water Rail probably bred. Shoveler also bred here, but although there was a reasonable number of Pochard broods survival rates were low. Both breeding grebe species were largely unsuccessful. Elsewhere Mute Swan and Tufted Duck had poor years and Mallard numbers were only average but Shelduck had a reasonable year and Mandarin bred. 2009 was a record year for Cormorant on Steep Holm.

The rise in the Buzzard population seems to have stalled, but the population remains high. Sparrowhawk, Kestrel and Hobby all had reasonable years but Peregrine had its worst since 2001. There was an upsurge in Tawny Owl records, although whether this represents a population recovery is questionable, but evidence of a decline in Little Owl numbers was convincing. Barn Owl had a good year.

Waders presented an almost uniformly bleak picture. The decline in the Lapwing population continues, and Oystercatcher and Ringed Plover were also less numerous than in recent years. Little Ringed Plover again bred at one site only and there was no proof that either Redshank or Snipe nested.

Many passerine species struggled in 2009, with even Collared Dove now showing worrying evidence of a decline. Responses to the cold winter varied. As might be expected there was a strong fall in Goldcrest numbers and Wrens also declined, although they appeared to have a good breeding season. Kingfisher did not seem to be adversely affected and there was a sharp rise in the Coal Tit population. Blue Tit declined slightly again but Great Tit, apparently less affected by wet summer weather, were as numerous as in 2008. Cuckoo and Mistle Thrush have both declined rapidly in recent years and there was no sign of any improvement in the fortunes of either, although the population of the latter did not fall further. The Starling population also continued its decline, but Rook numbers appeared

to have stabilised at a low level. There was little good news about any farmland birds, but the declines in Stock Dove, Skylark and Reed Bunting numbers may have ceased and Corn Bunting may have increased slightly. The Yellowhammer population fell further, however, and it seems that Grey Partridge is nearing extinction in our area.

There were few breeding records of scarce species. Quail were heard in above average numbers and Yellow Wagtail bred again. Nightjar were heard at two sites in the Mendips, where there was also a singing Tree Pipit.

Summer

June started with a spell of hot weather and easterly winds, which returned after cooler conditions and westerly winds in the middle of the month. Easterlies continued through the early part of July, but the last two weeks of the month were excessively wet.

As usual wildfowl numbers started to build over the period, with the first returning Teal on June 17th and more Gadwall at CVL than in recent years. The first Wigeon were seen on the unusually early date of July 3rd. The usual mid-summer passage of Common Scoter was very poor, but Eider were seen at Severnside on July 6th and 15th after a blank year for the species in 2008. A Black-necked Grebe at BG on 10th was unusually early.

Mid-summer in recent years has often seen strong westerlies producing a good sequence of seabird records, but in calmer conditions in 2009 sea-watchers were disappointed. There were no records of either Fulmar or Storm Petrel, and Manx Shearwater and Gannet were both seen on two dates only. There were, however, two records of Arctic Skua, on June 17th and July 23rd, with a Little Tern on the first date.

There was a small invasion of Crossbill over the summer and two Turtle Dove were noted at Cl-Y on June 4th. Black Redstart were seen at RPD but did not breed, and two Yellow Wagtail at nearby Portishead were also probably non-breeders.

The period was unexceptional in terms of scarce birds, the best being an American Wigeon at Weston STW on June 6th. A Cattle Egret was seen at BL on 8th and a month later there was a Bittern at Weston STW; summer records of this species have been very unusual, but may perhaps become more frequent as the Somerset Levels population grows.

Autumn

The autumn was dry almost throughout. Winds in August were generally either southerly or westerly, whilst September was dominated by northerly and easterly airflows. Low pressure systems moved over the area in the first and last weeks of October, with easterlies in the middle of the month.

Low water levels at CVL resulted in good numbers of wildfowl here, with above average, although not exceptional, counts of Teal, Mallard and Shoveler. Tufted Ducks were numerous at both CVL and BL, but Moorhen and Coot were abundant at the former and rare at the latter. Great Crested Grebe numbers were high at CVL, as they have been for several years, whilst the September Little Grebe count here was a site record. There was an average Garganey passage from Aug. 7th to Oct. 8th and one record of Red-crested Pochard.

The coast failed to produce a single record of Black Tern but a reasonable inland passage peaked on Aug. 24th. Common Tern was reasonably numerous, but Arctic Tern was very scarce. There was a record count of Great Black-backed Gull at CVL in August.

Five Marsh Harrier and nine Osprey were seen between mid-August and mid-September, closely followed by the year's only Hen Harrier on Sept. 19th. The last Hobby was seen on Oct. 13th.

The only wader species that had a comparatively strong showing in autumn 2009 was Wood Sandpiper, which was recorded at five sites between July 22nd and Sept. 4th. There was a marked peak in Ringed Plover in the second half of August. Low water levels at CVL meant that some species were present here in reasonable numbers, with the largest count, 31, of Common Sandpiper for many years made on Aug. 21st and a good Green Sandpiper passage peaking earlier in the month. Ruff and Greenshank were both more frequent here than in recent years, but the latter was very scarce on the coast. Spotted Redshank was not recorded at CVL, however, and was rare elsewhere. It was a poor year for calidrids in general, with low numbers of Dunlin and Knot and hardly any Curlew Sandpiper. Little Stint was slightly more numerous than in recent years, but still scarce by historical standards.

Autumn passerine passage was not as disappointing as the spring passage, but even so species such as Whinchat were scarce and there were only two records of Ring Ouzel. The passage of Tree Pipit was the second worst on record, but there was an improvement in Spotted Flycatcher numbers. The first Wheatear was seen on July 14th but the first obvious migration of the season was in early August, Tree Pipit was first seen on 2nd, when one of the autumn's two Wood Warblers was seen, and a Pied Flycatcher was found. Redstart passage began on 8th. During the same period the poor Willow Warbler passage began, and numbers of Lesser Whitethroat peaked. Yellow Wagtail was most numerous on 22nd and Redstart over the following week. The autumn's last Swift and second Pied Flycatcher were seen on Sept. 4th, and on the same day there were 4,000 House Martin at CVL. The main Blackcap passage began on 6th. There was a further pulse of activity on 19th, which produced the autumn's first Lesser Redpoll and last Garden Warbler, Yellow Wagtail and Tree Pipit, and the first large movement of Meadow Pipit. Two days later Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat and Spotted Flycatcher were seen for the last time, and there was a large movement of Wheatear over the same period. Arrivals from the north continued with an influx of Song Thrush on 26th and the year's first Redwing on Oct. 1st, whilst the last Sand Martin,

Sedge Warbler and Reed Warbler were seen in the first few days of the month. Mid-October saw the peak of poor passages of Redwing and Chaffinch, accompanied by the autumn's first Brambling and Fieldfare, a record of Tree Sparrow, four Firecrest and an influx of Blackcap. The final record of a summer visitor was on Nov. 26th, when the a late Swallow was seen.

Scarce bird interest at the beginning of the period was provided by three Cattle Egret at CVL from July 31st but August, usually a busy month, was exceptionally quiet, presumably a consequence of largely settled weather and light winds. It was not until the end of the month that noteworthy birds were seen, a Spoonbill at Cl-Y on 28th and a Grey Phalarope at Severnside on the last day, but things then picked up with 18 Pale-bellied Brent Geese here and a Spoonbill at CVL on the next day. Early September provided further interest, with both Weston STW and CVL being visited by Grey Phalarope on 4th and our area's second Glossy Ibis frequenting the latter site from 6th. There was then a further lull until 20th, when two Wryneck were found, but the last week of the month provided some real excitement. Two Nearctic waders, the only two of the year, were seen in our area for the second ever time, a Long-billed Dowitcher at CVL from 23rd and a Semi-palmated Sandpiper at New Passage on 26th. They were accompanied by birds from different points of the compass on the latter date, four Glossy Ibis at CVL and our first Grey-headed Wagtail at New Passage. Things then quietened down and October, another month that is traditionally busy, was also rather disappointing. It started with a Spotted Crake at CVL on 1st, followed by a Ring-necked Duck at BL on 4th and three Whooper Swans at BG on 8th, but there was then a lull until Severnside's first record of Glossy Ibis on 14th. The second half of the month was even quieter, with the only record of note being three Snow Bunting at Cl-Y on 31st.

Second Winter Period

The area was swept by low pressure systems at the start of the winter, resulting in the equal wettest November on record. In distinct contrast December was the coldest since 1996, with temperatures plummeting from 11th and snow at the year end.

The cold end to the year did produce a marked influx of Bewick's Swan but there were no White-fronted Goose and numbers of Wigeon, another species often associated with cold weather, were average. During the early part of the period there were good numbers of Pintail and Shoveler at CVL, but these left as the reservoir filled. November also saw the highest count of Cormorant here since 2001 and the arrival of a Smew, after two blank winters for this species. Goosander were once again scarce, however.

Redshank and Curlew were numerous on the Estuary but otherwise wader numbers were low, with Knot, Dunlin and Black-tailed Godwit all notably scarce. The cold weather produced the first widespread movement of Golden Plover over our area for some years on Dec. 23rd, but the accompanying movement of Lapwing was much less marked. Less common species wintering included approximately seven Common Sandpiper, 14 Green Sandpiper, two Spotted Redshank and one Greenshank.

The period was unexceptional for passerines. There were marked movements of Woodpigeon on Nov. 2nd and Dec. 23rd and on the latter date 2,000 were counted at Weston STW. Fieldfare were notably scarce and it was a poor winter for Brambling, but there were around 13 Black Redstart, a high total, and a more average four Firecrest. The fortunes of wintering warblers were mixed. Blackcap was present in average numbers but Chiffchaff, probably as a result of cold weather in the previous winter, was distinctly scarce. We did, however, have our first records of wintering Lesser Whitethroat. Stonechat showed only a slight decline after the freezing conditions earlier in the year and Dunnock numbers were high. The low water levels at CVL early in the winter produced 20 Water Pipit, the highest count since 1972. There were good flocks of two bunting species in December: 46 Reed at Weston STW on 24th and 120 Corn at Marshfield on 12th.

Early November produced few scarce birds, with a Long-tailed Duck at CVL from 4th and a Richard's Pipit at Northwick on 14th the highlights. Storms at the end of the month, however, produced perhaps the most remarkable few days in our area's history. A Grey Phalarope at CVL on 20th was a foretaste, but was eclipsed by events between 22nd and 29th. During this period birds recorded included a Red-throated Diver, probably four Great Northern Diver, one Storm Petrel, a minimum of 19 Leach's Petrel, three Shag, four Pomarine Skua, two of them inland at CVL, one Arctic Skua, at least six Great Skua, at least 200 Kittiwakes daily, at least five Little Gull and a Little Auk. Two extreme rarities were the highlights, however. The first was a petrel of the genus *Fregetta*, which is fraught with both identification and taxonomic problems, off Severn Beach on 25th. The record has been accepted by BBRC and is under consideration by BOURC; if accepted it would be the first record of this group of birds in Europe. The petrel probably originated in the South Atlantic but the next rarity, two days later, came from the north-east Pacific. A Pacific Diver had been present in the upper Severn Estuary in Gloucestershire for several days and was probably the bird seen, also at Severn Beach and also briefly, on 27th. The appearance of an exceptional flock of 35 Guillemot off Sand Point a few dates later on Dec. 6th was probably linked to these events. The only non storm-driven scarce bird recorded over this period was a Great Grey Shrike at Lower Woods on Nov. 23rd. These frustrating events, for most of the area's observers, were followed by a distinct lull. A second Great Grey Shrike was found at Flax Bourton on Dec. 12th and finally, a Cattle Egret at CVL from 27th caused less of a stir than it would have done a few years ago.

Weather Report for 2009

R.L. Bland

The year 2009 was the coldest since 1996, but its average temperature was almost exactly the same as the average since 1853. It began with a cold winter, the coldest since 1996, an average spring, a second cold summer and a warm autumn.

Rainfall was exceptional in July, and November equalled the record for the wettest November on record in 1929, and it was also for the wettest month since 1853. Overall rainfall for the year was 986mm compared with the average since 1853 of 895mm.

Year	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Av. Max °C	14.1	13.8	14.3	15.0	14.3	14.4	14.7	14.5	13.7	13.6
Ten year av. °C	13.8	13.8	14.0	14.2	14.3	14.2	14.4	14.4	14.3	14.2
Rainfall mm	1250	860	1178	758	951	896	955	1107	1150	986
Ten year av. mm	1003	995	1010	978	970	954	973	997	1005	993

Table 1. Decadal average mean maximum temperature and rainfall

Seasons

Winter (Dec. to Feb.) The average temperature was 6.4 ºC, the coldest since 1995/96. Rainfall, at 65mm a winter month, was below average. There were 49 frost nights (October to April), the last on March 5th, 23 nights cold enough to create ice, and twelve days with snow lying. The coldest spell, of 14 days below 5 ºC, was from Dec. 27th to Jan. 10th, followed by ten days from Feb. 1st to 9th.

Spring (March to May) Average temperature was 13.6 ºC, a little above the long-term average of 12.9 ºC. Rainfall at 47mm a month was drier than average.

Summer (June to Aug.) Average temperature, at 19.8 ºC, was very close to the long-term average. However, it was again a wet summer, and July was the wettest since 1940, pushing the summer average per month to 101mm, actually identical to that of 2008.

Autumn (Sept. to Nov.) Average temperature at 14.9 ºC was warmer than average, and September was unusually dry, but the record rain in November made up for this.

Seasonal comparisons

	2009	Min (year)	Max (year)	Av. since 1853
Winter	6.4°	2.5° (1917)	10.6° (1920)	7.4°
Spring	13.6°	10.4° (1887)	16.6° (1893)	12.9°
Summer	19.8°	18.0° (1883)	23.9° (1976)	20.2°
Autumn	14.9°	10.6° (1915)	16.8° (1959)	14.0°
Annual	13.6°	12.1° (1892)	15.6° (1921)	13.6°

Table 2 2009 season average temperatures compared with minimum, maximum and average since 1853

	2009	Min (year)	Max (year)	Av. since 1853
Winter	65	21 (1964)	154 (1995)	78
Spring	47	17 (1893)	107 (1981)	60
Summer	101	11 (1995)	140 (1879)	73
Autumn	112	26 (1978)	173 (1935)	87
Annual	1150	590 (1864)	1253 (1882)	894

Table 3 Average monthly rainfall in mm for each season in 2009 compared with minimum, maximum and average since 1853.

Monthly deviation from the average since 1853

Temperature January and December were much colder than normal, all other months were very close to average.

Rainfall Seven months were below average, particularly September, but this was made up by spectacular downpours in July and November.

	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Temp	-20	-8	9	8	-1	5	-7	-3	1	8	11	-29
Rain	8	-16	-22	-25	-10	0	168	-42	-73	-34	190	2

Table 4 2009 - Monthly percentage deviation from the monthly norm

Monthly summary 2009

	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Av.
Temp °C	5.8°	7°	10.9°	13.8°	16.1°	20.2°	19.4°	19.7°	18.1°	15.2°	11.3°	5.6°	13.6°
Rain mm	91	52	47	43	56	62	193	49	21	63	252	57	986

Table 5 2009 - Average temperature and total rainfall for each month

January 5.8 ºC, the coldest since 1997. Rainfall, 91mm, was average. 15 frost nights. The first twelve days were dominated by east winds and high pressure, then SW winds around Icelandic lows took over. A storm on 17th felled a few trees.

February 7.0 ºC, just below the average of 7.6 ºC. Rainfall 52mm, below the 62mm average, much of it falling as snow, which lay for 13 days from 3rd to 15th, the longest since 1985/86. There were ten frost nights, and 15 sunless days. The month was dominated by high pressure, but in the first half the winds were from the north or east, and in the second from the west.

March 10.9 ºC, a degree above average, with three frost nights. Rainfall below average at 47mm, all in six days. The first half was dominated by west winds, the second by high pressure and east or north winds.

April 13.8 ºC, a degree above average, and two frost nights. Rainfall 38mm. Dominated by high pressure over the Baltic or Iceland giving north or east winds. Temperature peaked at 18 ºC on 20th and 24th.

May 16.1 ºC, close to average. Rainfall 56mm, a little below average. Dominated by low pressure and light westerly winds for three weeks, and the last week saw high pressure push temperatures up to 24 ºC at the end of the month.

June 20.2 ºC, a degree above average. Rainfall 62mm, average. The first and last weeks were hot with easterly winds, and between these weeks there was a long dry period with westerly winds and lower temperatures. Almost all the rain fell in two days in the first week.

July 19.4 ºC, a degree below average, and colder than June. Rainfall 193mm, almost all in the last two weeks, the second wettest (only 1940 was worse) since 1853. Dominated throughout by westerly winds and low pressure systems.

August 19.7 ºC, a little below average. Rainfall was 49mm, well below the 85mm average. Generally a dull month with light south or west winds.

September 18.1 ºC, rainfall 21mm. By the end of the month there had been seven almost rainless weeks, which began to affect vegetation. Dominated by high pressure and east or north winds.

October 15.2 ºC, a degree above average, rainfall 63mm. Low pressure dominated for the first week and last ten days, and the middle saw high pressure and easterly winds, and the temperature fell to 12 ºC on 15th.

November 11.3 ºC, close to the average, rainfall 252mm, equalling the previous record set in 1929. Also the equal wettest single month since 1853. Only eight days had no rain. No frost nights. Dominated by low pressure and westerly winds. Temperature fell to 7 ºC briefly on 9th.

December 5.6 ºC, coldest since 1996, rainfall 90mm, close to average. Snow fell on 21st and lasted for six days. Twelve frost nights. Temperature fell abruptly on 11th, and remained low with north or east winds and high pressure over the UK or Greenland.

Weather Extremes

The table below gives figures for extreme annual events over the past decade, enabling the extreme events of 2009 to be put in perspective. There seems to be no pattern in these figures, except for the number of days with no sun increased from around 50 to around 100, and the amount of rain which fell on the wettest day dropped by about a third. It is also interesting that, contrary to common perception, two days in every three have no rain at all.

		2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009	Data for 2009
Hottest day	°C	30	30	26	32	28	30	35	27	28	28	July 1st
Coldest day	°C	3	2	0	1	3	0	0	2	2	-1	Feb 2nd
Wettest day	mm	55	55	60	45	45	47	39	40	35	36	July 30th
Sunniest day	hr	15.5	14	14.9	15.1	13.9	14.8	14.7	14.1	14.9	14.7	May 31st
Longest dry period	days						14	22	24	16	20	Feb 11th-Mar 2nd
Longest wet period	days						7	11	8	8	8	Nov 23rd-30th
Frost, nights	days	28	46	14	49	30	32	33	25	44	42	
Snow	days	4	0	0	0	6	2	2	2	1	19	
Storms	days						1	3	6	4	1	
Hotter than 25°C	days	12	15	3	22	13	14	27	1	7	5	
Colder than 5°C	days	13	34	17	25	15	26	39	18	14	37	
More than10hrs sun	days	32	45	30	42	19	38	36	45	29	49	
No sun	days	51	62	78	56	90	89	107	99	95	95	
No rain	days				263	231	248	234	238	228	265	

Table 6 Extreme annual events over the past decade

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, Red-legged and Grey Partridge, Fulmar, Manx Shearwater, Gannet, Bittern, Little Egret, all raptors, Quail, Water Rail, all waders, Kittiwake, Little, Mediterranean, Yellow-legged, and Great Black-backed Gulls, all terns, Ring-necked Parakeet, Cuckoo, all owls, Nightjar, Kingfisher, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Firecrest, Marsh Tit, Sand Martin, Cetti's, Wood, Dartford and Grasshopper Warblers, Dipper, Ring Ouzel, Spotted Flycatcher, Nightingale, Black Redstart, Redstart, Whinchat, Stonechat, Wheatear, Pied Flycatcher, Tree Sparrow, Yellow and Grey Wagtail, Tree, Rock and Water Pipits, Brambling, Siskin, Lesser Redpoll, Crossbill, and Snow, Reed, and Corn Buntings.

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.

a) Breeding season site records, and evidence of breeding, for all species with the code **B** in the list below.
b) All **first** and **last** sightings of summer and winter visitors, indicated by **D** in the list below.
c) All records of passage or cold-weather movements, including rates per hour, for any species.
d) Size and site of all roosts at any time of year.
e) Feeding flocks at any time of year that exceed the value **F** in the list below.
f) All records of winter visitors present in summer, or summer visitors in winter, particularly Blackcaps and Chiffchaff in winter, and Black-headed Gulls and Common Gulls in summer (indicated by **S** or **W** in column B).
g) All records of unusual activity, including early or late song, display, or aggression. Also unusual plumage, or birds at unusual sites, or unusually early or late breeding.
h) All regular counts, such as monthly maxima or bird-days, from well-watched sites including gardens.
i) All records of birds that have obviously or probably escaped from captivity.
j) All records of birds considered to be hybrids.

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

Species and Subspecies for which Descriptions are Required

Whooper Swan
Bean Goose
Pink-footed Goose
American Wigeon
Green-winged Teal
Ring-necked Duck
Ferruginous Duck
Common Eider *
Long-tailed Duck
Surf Scoter
Velvet Scoter
Quail**
Red-throated Diver
Black-throated Diver
Great Northern Diver
White-billed Diver
Fulmar*
Cory's Shearwater
Great Shearwater
Sooty Shearwater
Manx Shearwater*
Balearic Shearwater
Wilson's Storm-petrel
Storm-petrel*
Leach's Storm-petrel
Shag
Black-crowned Night Heron
Cattle Egret
Great Egret
Purple Heron
White Stork
Spoonbill
Red-necked Grebe
Slavonian Grebe
Honey-buzzard
Black Kite
Hen Harrier
Montagu's Harrier
Goshawk
Rough-legged Buzzard
Red-footed Falcon
Spotted Crake
Corn Crake
Crane
Stone Curlew
Kentish Plover
Dotterel
American Golden Plover
Temminck's Stint
White-rumped Sandpiper
Purple Sandpiper*
Pectoral Sandpiper
Buff-breasted Sandpiper
Red-necked Phalarope
Grey Phalarope
Pomarine Skua
Arctic Skua*
Long-tailed Skua
Great Skua*
Sabine's Gull
Ring-billed Gull
Caspian Gull
Iceland/Kumlien's Gull
Glaucous Gull
White-winged Black Tern
Roseate Tern
Guillemot*
Razorbill
Black Guillemot
Little Auk
Puffin
Turtle Dove
Long-eared Owl
Nightjar**
Alpine Swift
Bee-eater
Hoopoe
Wryneck
Golden Oriole
Red-backed Shrike
Great Grey Shrike
Woodchat Shrike
Chough
Hooded Crow
Willow Tit
Bearded Tit
Short-toed Lark
Woodlark
Shore Lark
Red-rumped Swallow
Greenish Warbler
Pallas's Warbler
Yellow-browed Warbler
Radde's Warbler
Dusky Warbler
Wood Warbler +
Barred Warbler
Dartford Warbler
Subalpine Warbler
Icterine Warbler
Melodious Warbler
Aquatic Warbler
Marsh Warbler
Waxwing
Rose-coloured Starling
Bluethroat
Red-breasted Flycatcher
Richard's Pipit
Tawny Pipit
Red-throated Pipit
Serin
Twite
Common Redpoll
Arctic Redpoll
Parrot Crossbill
Common Rosefinch
Hawfinch
Lapland Bunting
Cirl Bunting
Ortolan Bunting
Rustic Bunting
Little Bunting

* inland only
** sight records of non-singing birds away from established breeding areas
+ autumn only

Subspecies

We also require descriptions for claims of scarce subspecies – this applies to any subspecies which is not normally recorded in Avon. As a guide the list below shows the 'recognisable' scarce subspecies that have been seen in the Avon area

Greenland White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris*
Pale-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota*
'Continental' Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa limosa*
Baltic Gull *Larus fuscus fuscus*
'Nordic' Jackdaw *Monedula monedula monedula*
Scandinavian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita abietinus*
Siberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*
Greenland Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe leuchorroa*
Blue-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava flava*
Scandinavian Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus littoralis*

As well as the species and subspecies listed on the previous page, we also require descriptions for;

- all 'British Birds' rarities (see the BBRC website http://www.bbrc.org.uk for a list of such species and details of how to submit these – 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 Goosander in July). The table below lists the earliest and latest recorded dates for regular migrants.

We also reserve the right to ask for supporting notes in the event of queries regarding any record.

Record earliest and latest dates for Migrants in the Avon area

Summer migrants	Earliest	Latest
Garganey	4 Mar '69	13 Dec '92
Hobby	30 Mar '90	29 Oct '98
Little Ringed Plover	14 Mar '10	18 Oct '76
Whimbrel	26 Mar '86	19 Nov '97
Black Tern	2 Apr '82	23 Nov '86
Common Tern	1 Apr '00	28 Nov '82
Cuckoo	20 Mar '83	23 Sep '83
Swift	8 Apr '01	15 Nov '74
Sand Martin	23 Feb '08	18 Nov '76
Swallow	7 Mar '78	16 Dec '70
House Martin	4 Mar '97	28 Nov '70
Wood Warbler	31 Mar '68	18 Sep '77
Willow Warbler	9 Mar '72	25 Oct '81
Garden Warbler	20 Mar '03	21 Nov 93
Lesser Whitethroat	3 Apr '57	22 Nov '98
Whitethroat	31 Mar '68	22 Nov '87
Grasshopper Warbler	28 Mar '97	28 Oct '73
Sedge Warbler	30 Mar '67	28 Oct '86
Reed Warbler	3 Apr '01	16 Nov '09
Ring Ouzel	15 Mar '67	20 Nov '86
Spotted Flycatcher	16 Apr '83	27 Oct '87
Nightingale	7 Apr '61	12 Sep '77
Redstart	20 Mar '94	12 Nov '72
Whinchat	19 Mar '74	12 Nov '67
Wheatear	28 Feb '98	29 Nov '98
Pied Flycatcher	30 Mar '02	14 Oct '06
Yellow Wagtail	15 Mar '70	2 Dec '03
White Wagtail	1 Mar '07	22 Nov '97
Tree Pipit	16 Mar '92	24 Oct. '71
Winter migrants		
Fieldfare	29 Aug '94	8 May '82
Redwing	7 Aug '79	29 Apr '67
Brambling	3 Aug '68	30 May '86

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.

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
Cl-Y	Severn shore and environs between Clevedon and mouth of the River Yeo (Clevedon Bay), and including Blake's Pool and 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

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

WeBS The Wetland Bird Survey which aims to monitor all non-breeding waterbirds in the UK to provide the principal data on which the conservation of their populations and wetland habitats is based.

There are 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.

BBS Stands for the BTO April to June **B**reeding **B**ird **S**urvey begun in 1994. In 2009, 182 one-km squares were visited and a total of 62,573 birds was counted by 120 observers at a rate of 130 birds per hour. 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 2009, 52 weekly counts taking 66 hours were made, 3,630 birds of 48 species were counted at a rate of 110 birds 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. The data for 2008/09 was the result of the second Winter Atlas season, in which observers spent exactly two hours twice during the winter in 140 tetrads across the county, 37% of the surface area. 535 hours were spent and 122,500 birds counted at a rate of 229 per hour. 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 2008/09, 33 gardens participated over 823 recording-weeks counting some 35,277 birds of 51 species. Percentage changes in numbers present are recorded in the status chart.

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

For many passerine species the populations revealed by the new BTO Atlas survey are compared with the same information from the Winter Atlas 1981-84 and the Breeding Atlas 1988-91.

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.

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.

In the tables of maximum monthly counts a blank means that no count was submitted.

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 wildfowl 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 wildfowl the period average used is the average of the three highest monthly counts for the season in question, and is called **'the average maximum count'**; for a short season (e.g. moult) the average of the two highest counts is used.

For the waders the average of the monthly maximum counts for the season in question is given, and is called **'the average count'**. 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.

WeBS status

In the status line we give the WeBS status for those waterbirds whose Avon area populations are of national or international importance.

By definition a site is of International Importance for a particular species if at least 1% of the estimated world population occurs regularly for at least part of the year at the site. So for example the Severn Estuary is currently second in International Importance for Lesser Black-backed Gull, that is second in the UK someway behind Morecombe Bay which is first. National Importance is defined similarly except that the word 'world' is replaced by 'UK'.

Conservation status and migration dates

Where appropriate there is a statement of recent population change locally and in the UK.

For the commonest breeding species there are two tables. The upper one gives the percentage population change since the previous year as recorded by four different surveys. The lower one gives the BBS index for the past decade, and the BBS distribution in 2009, and, for a few species, a population estimate derived from the BBS survey. This is more precise information about current conservation status than the widely used "traffic light" system.

For migrant species the average arrival dates, departure dates, and total time spent, over the past forty years, are given, with the total variation in range, and the trend. The main reason for this choice is that recording has been more precise during this forty year period than previously, there has been almost daily observations of key sites by able birders.

Contributors of Records

Since Oct.1st, 2008, there have been some new procedures for record submission. Electronic records of common species should be sent to Richard Bland at richardbland@blueyonder.co.uk, using an `excel' or similar file system. Electronic records of unusual species, those needing descriptions (see page 15), 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. Blank recording slips are available from the Editor, address on inside front cover.

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 for paper records 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 (JA), R M Andrews (RMA), D J Angell (DJA), R Angles, R. Artingstall, P Atkey, B Atkinson, M Ayers, S Ayers, P Baber (PBa), M Bailey (MB), M Baker, J Barnett, A Barrett, M Barton, R Belson, G Beynon, R Billingsley, R Bingham, S Blackmore, R L Bland, G T Blowfield, L J Bond, T E Bond (TEB), P D Bowerman (PDB), J. Bowker, D W Bowring, P A Bowyer (PAB), D Brooke-Taylor, R & R Brown, J H Bryce, R Buck, P Buckle (PBu), J Budd, D Bull, J F Burton, Cam Valley Wildlife Group (CVWG), H Capon, S Carey, I Carnew, V Castle, P J Chadwick, M Chaffey (MC), D Chalk, B Channon, C B Chapman, N Chapman, P Chapman, A Chapple, A Chard, A Clark (AC), C Clist, A Cole, F Collins, K Cook, J F Copeland, N J Crocker, P Croom, R S Cropper, D A Cullen, J Cumming, R M Curber (RMC), M Dadds (MDa), C Dale, G Davies, S Davies (SD), A Davis (AD), A H Davis (AHD), E Davis, P & L Delve, A Dickie (ADi), M Dimery (MDi), M Dodd, J Douglas, G Down, E Drewitt, G Dring, A Dudman, R Dungey (RD), P E Dykes, W Earp, B Edge, E Ellis (EE), D Emery, R Emery, C Evans, P Evans, T Evans, P G Farmer, J Fiddock, R Fleetwood (RF), G Flinn, I Flower (IF), R Ford, T L Ford, S Forest, A Fournier, K Fox, D French, J J Garrigan, A Gaunt (AG), F Gibbs, R Giles, S Gilliard, C Goatcher, S Gooch, M Gorely (MGo), M Grant, M Grantham, B M J Gray, R & R Greer (R&RG), J C Gutsell, M Hale, S Hale (SH), C Hall, K J Hall, R J Halsey, N Hankins, M Hannagan, J Hansford, A Harrison, N Harvey, M Hayes (MH), R Hayman, P J Hazelwood (PJH), B Heppell, A P Herbert, R J Higgins (RJH), M Hill, M F H Hobbs, R Hobbs, P Holbrook, J Holmes (JH), D Horlick, S Hughes-Games, R Humphreys, M Hunt, R Hunt, M A Jackson, P James, M Jenkins, H Johnstone, M Johnson, A E Jones (AEJ), C Jones, G Jones (GJ), A D Jordan (ADJ), A Jowitt, R Kelsh, S Kemp, D A Knights, W King (WK), B S Kirk, C Klee, R Koil, A Kydd, P Ladd, B Lancastle (BL), B Laughton, R Laughton (RL), J Lees, A M Leggatt, A Levinson, S Lockhart, G Lonsdale, G & J Lucena (G&JL), H Lupton, L & E Maber, B Macdonald (BMac), P Mansfield, S K Marshall, B Martin, J P Martin (JPM), R & T Mason, P Masters, J B Maxwell, H Maynard, R G Mayne, T McClellan, T McGrath, J D McGreal, D McLaughlin, S Mackie (SM), A Mears (AM), R Medland, W Middlemist, A J Middleton, R Mielcarek (RMi), N R Milbourne (NRM), J S Millman, R Miles, H Montague, J Moon, A Morgan, C Morris, R G W Morris, J Mortin, F Moulin (FM), A J Musgrove, S Mynard, P J Neate, D Nevitt (DN), E G M Niblett, B Nicholls, E Nisbet, V E Norman, N Oakes, J Oakley, K Oliver, R L Oliver, J & P Ottley (J&PO), M Overy, B Page, R Palmer (RP), P Parmenter, S Parry, R Partner, A J Parsons, D M Pearce (DP), M Pearce, J Percival, H Perrett, D J Perriman, C Perry, A Pester, D Playle, M Plenty (MP), M S Ponsford (MSP), J & M Powell, J & S E Prince, R J Prytherch (RJP), R Pyrah, P Quinn (PQ), F Quinney, C Ray, R F Reader (RFR), T Riddle, L F Roberts, D I Robertson, K Robson, P Rock, M Rogers (MRo), H E Rose (HER), C Ross, M G Rowan (MGR), M J Saffery, M Sampson, R Scantlebury, A D Scott, A Shand, J Shepperd, A Shewry, the late T B Silcocks, G & J Skinner (G&JS), O Smart, J Smith, P Soothill, J Sparks, R & J Staples, C F Stapleton, B Steadman, L Steele, R Steer, K & H Stenner, A Sterry, D R Stoddard, G Stoddart, C J Stone (CJS), G Suter, K Sutton-Spence, R G Symes, H Taffs, M Taylor, D Teague, M Thomas, V Thomas, G Thoburn, J Thomas (JT), J A Thorogood, J R Tottle, C Tuckett, J Tully, G Upton, C Vines, K E Vinicombe (KEV), P J Vokes, D H Wall, D Warden, G Warren, N Watson, P Watson, D Wawman, R Weeks, A West, H J W West, P White, R J White, J Widgery, K Wilbraham, A Wilkins, B Williams, J Williams, K Williams, R Williams, H Willmott, M B Wood, T Worsfold, G Youdale, S F Young, S Zamse.

Information and images from the following websites were used to help confirm and expand some records:

Birdwatching at Oldbury Power Station (OPSweb) – www.phazelwood.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/OPS.htm
Clevedon & Portishead Birds – www.clevedon-portisheadbirds.com
CVL Birding – www.cvlbirding.co.uk
Birding South Gloss (SGweb) – www.thebirdsofsouthgloucestershire.co.uk
Severnside Birds (SBweb) – www.severnsidebirds.co.uk
Weston Birds and Moths (WBweb) – www.birdlist.co.uk

SYSTEMATIC LIST

The following list is based on observations from members of the Bristol Naturalists Society, Bristol Ornithological Club, BTO (Avon region), and 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 and several other sites.
WeBS status: the Severn Estuary is tenth in the list of sites of International Importance

1999/00 to 2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
101	72	85

Bristol City Docks. Maximum winter count

2000/07 Av.	2008	2009
108	107	115

CVL. Moult period, July and August

Although the number wintering in Bristol City Docks increased from the 2007/08 winter, the counts here were still below the long term average. Conversely the CVL moult count increased on the 2008 figure and was above the average for the last decade.

The long-term trend is upward with data from the recent Atlas surveys showing a substantial population expansion, and BBS data is showing an increase of over 50% since 1994.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cl-Y	10	4	7	12	18	18	18	8	6	9	14	7
Weston STW	5	4	5	4	4	7	9	6	8	18	11	49
Bristol Docks	85	74	66	24	28	25	28	38	10	34	36	51
Portishead Marina	29	28	31	23	24	24	19	26	17	7	15	15
Kenn Moor	12	13	12					3				
Tickenham Moor	19		20	18								17
Backwell Lake	8	11		25	24	24	19	10		11	21	25
BG	7	5	6	4	10	5	2	14	9	7	9	3
CVL	26	37	51	51	55	90	115	115	115	110	80	42
BL	8	2	9	8	10	18	14	13	14	15	24	6

Other sites Reported from a further 50 sites (*cf.* 50 in 2008) but only one count was in double figures with 25 at PW on Oct. 24th.

Breeding A poor year. Breeding was confirmed at the following sites (number of cygnets in brackets): Backwell Lake (two nests, only one cygnet), R. Avon, Bath (six), Priory Park, Bath (pair on nest), Bathampton Toll Bridge (six), BL (four), at five sites in Bristol - City Docks (nest failed), Bedminster (nest failed), Hotwells (nest failed), Redcliffe Bridge (one) and St Phillips (nest with 5 eggs), Broomhill (pair with nest), Camely (five), R. Yeo, Congresbury (four), CVL (eight broods, 30 cygnets), Gordano Valley (several pairs nested), R. Avon, Keynsham (three), Northwick Warth (six), Newton St Loe (three), Portishead Marine Lake (six), Orchard Pools, Severn Beach (five), PW (pair on nest), Weston STW (six) and Yatton Moor (two).

1990/99 av.	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
113	129	96	120	74	128	144	121	123	121	88

Number of cygnets

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

Uncommon and declining winter visitor and autumn passage migrant.
WeBS status: the Severn Estuary is fifth in the list of sites of International Importance

A poor first-winter period with no birds staying but a much better second winter period.

First winter period

CVL – single adult on Feb. 23rd.

	1999/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	2008/09
Min. Number	22	43	18	27	47	47	18	11	7	6
Bird-days	22	120	18	908	687	180+	131	11	8	10

Winter counts and bird-days

Bewick's Swan - Second winter period

OPS – 17 flew upriver on Dec. 24th;

Aust Warth – two flew to NE on Dec. 18th;

Severn Beach – three flew downriver on Nov. 14th;

CVL – four adults arrived on Nov. 5th and were joined by a family party of three (one juvenile) on 11th; all seven were then seen intermittently until 24th. A family party of four (two juveniles) visited for a short period on Dec. 18th.;

BL – four adults on Nov. 10th, the CVL birds.

WHOOPER SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

Very scarce winter visitor.
Description species

An exceptional year with birds in both winter periods.

First winter period

CVL – three adults on Feb. 21st (RMi *et al.*);

Weston-s-Mare – three adults in flight on March 19th were subsequently seen at Weston STW, flying in from Somerset in the late afternoon, on both 22nd and 29th (MSP *et al.*).

Winter	1999/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	2008/09
No. seen	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	8

Number of individuals seen each winter

Second winter period

BG – three adults on Oct. 8th (TEB, MC *et al.*).

In addition an adult wild swan over Kingston Seymour on Nov. 20th (RF) and a first-winter over Leap Valley, Downend on Dec. 28th (ADJ) were both thought to be this species, rather than Bewick's, by the observers.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons albifrons*

European White-front *- Uncommon and declining winter visitor and passage migrant.*
Greenland White-front *A.a. flavirostis - Very rare with records in November 1993 and December 1964.*
WeBS status: the Severn Estuary is first in the list of sites of National Importance

A poor year with just two records, both in the first winter period.

Aust Warth – two flew to N on Feb. 3rd;

BL – a juvenile on Jan. 18th.

	1999/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	2008/09
No. seen	129	8	2+	22	2	7+	28	8	3	8

Number of individuals each winter

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Uncommon introduced resident and former summer moult migrant.

Records were received from twelve sites (*cf*. seven in 2008); many of the records in recent years are of short staying individuals. Details as follows (all single birds unless otherwise stated):

OPS – four on March 21st and one on Aug. 22nd;

Northwick Warth – Feb. 22nd;

ASW – three on April 22nd;

Portishead Marina – March 10th;

CI-Y – two on March 13th and one on Nov. 19th;

Weston STW – two to S on Dec. 23rd;

Heneage Court, Falfield – four on March 24th;

Bathampton Meadows – Nov. 28th to Dec. 12th;

R. Avon, Keynsham – two, possibly three, in flight on Dec. 22nd;

BG – a vocal individual on Dec. 22nd, possibly same as CVL;

CVL – two on April 8th, one from 18th to 22nd and one on Dec. 17th;

BL – June 13th.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Fairly common introduced resident, largely at CVL and BL where numbers increase during the summer moult. Uncommon breeder.

WeBS status: CVL is 23rd in the list of sites for 2007/08.

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
1999/00 to 2006/07 Av.	113	265	189
2007/08	65	241	153
2008/09	84	315	200

Average of the three highest monthly maxima in the winter period (September to March)

2000 to 2007 Av	2008	2009
694	295	385

CVL – Average of the two highest monthly maxima in the moult period (June to August)

The status tables show that wintering numbers again increased, particularly at BL, but the numbers moulting at CVL, although an increase on 2008, are still below the long term average. However significant flocks are starting to be recorded regularly from other sites and the species is becoming more widespread (see table showing the number of sites over the last ten years below).

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	67	53	14	4	24	6	13	58	24	46	71	13
Littleton Warth			2	8	13			43	22	46	29	
Portishead Marina	9	9	6	6			21		22			21
PW	7	9	6	8	10			26	8	26	27	22
Cl-Y	34	36	8	8	11	9	14	104	3	108	80	42
Weston STW	109	21	6	8	8	7	74	47	62		43	61
Axe Est.			4	4					11		5	2
Backwell Lake	3			5	1	1					3	50
R. Avon, Keynsham	102	56					120		154	143	47	43
Batheaston NR	145	120	51	50	21	14	8	8	35	26	44	10
CVL	110	35	65	40	50	415	355	80	445	110	60	4
BL	323	295	62	24	84	134	222	420	123	208	261	190

Other sites Recorded at a further 36 sites, with counts over 20 as follows:

Thornbury Pill – 65 on Jan. 16th;

Heneage Court, Falfield – 50 on Aug. 16th;

New Passage – 23 from Aug. 8th to 11th and 22 on Sept. 19th;

Frampton Cotterell – 83 in flight to NE at dusk on Sept. 10th. A flock was heard regularly in the evening in the area;

Kendalshire GC – 27 on July 21st;

Keynsham – 55 to SW on the evening of Sept. 14th, 135 on 19th heading for Avon Wildlife Park at dusk;

Bathampton Meadows – max of 109 in January, 32 on April 3rd, 60 on Nov. 28th increasing to 84 on Dec. 12th with 55 still on 20th but none by end of year;

Weston Moor – 25 on Aug. 8th and 30 on Sept. 6th;

Weston-s-Mare – 22 on Aug. 18th.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
25	23	26	23	31	29	26	28	53	48

Number of sites recorded from each year

Breeding Another good year with successful breeding at the following sites (number of goslings in brackets); OPS (five), Portishead Marina (five), Bristol City Docks (eight), Kendalshire GC (five), R. Avon, Keynsham (at least two broods and ten goslings), PW (two pairs bred, five goslings), Hunstrete (five), Batheaston NR (four), CVL (four broods, 19 goslings), BL (one brood with five goslings), Cl-Y (two). It was also attempted, unsuccessfully, at Weston STW and Atlas data suggests breeding may have occurred in a further 15 tetrads. Observers are encouraged to report all breeding attempts by this species.

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Confirmed sites	2	5	2	4	5	6	8	3	10	12
Nests/broods	3	6	7	13	9	9	14+	7	19+	18+
Young	13	29+	36	50+	41	35	39	16+	72	73

Breeding details

The Ringing Report on page 165 gives details of the movements of local Canada Geese.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

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

The feral flock that commutes between CVL and BL again increased in size.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
7	13	17	21	14	12	11	11	17	19

Maximum count from CVL/BL

Monthly maxima of feral birds at CVL and BL

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
CVL	17	16	15	14	9	6	3	5	5		17	10
BL	17	17				5		18	18	18	19	19

The only other records were of single birds at Heneage Court, Falfield on Aug. 16th and R. Avon, Keynsham on Oct. 4th – 11th with the Canada Goose flock.

Breeding Two pairs bred at CVL on Herriott's Pool (five goslings on May 21st but only one survived to fledging).

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

Dark-bellied Brent Goose *B. b. bernicla*.

Uncommon coastal passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce/very scarce inland.

Two exceptionally large flocks in the first winter period with evidence of a large movement on Jan. 31st; the count of 115 at Severn Beach was a new record for the Avon area. The previous record was of 70, also at Severn Beach, in March 2005.

First winter period

OPS – 61 flew upriver at 08.15 on March 14th;

Severn Beach – 115 on Jan. 31st (counted from photographs of two separate flocks), with one on March 23rd, two on 26th and two on April 25th;

PW – 33 on Jan. 31st;

Cl-Y – ten on Jan. 31st.

1999/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09
82	136	42	48	79	226	127	147	38	226

Total winter bird-days

Second winter period (single birds unless stated otherwise)

OPS – Sept. 19th;

Northwick Warth – Oct. 27th with three from Dec. 2nd to 7th;

Severn Beach – Oct. 9th and Nov. 6th;

Sand Pt – two on Nov. 28th;

Axe Est. – Oct 27th;

CVL – an adult arrived from W on Nov. 10th and departed to W 15 minutes later.

Pale-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Description sub-species

An excellent year – previous records have related to one or two individuals in winter whereas this year the records are of birds on passage. Details as follows:

In April at Severn Beach, one in the afternoon of 8th then moved to Chittening Warth before departing to SW at 18.15 (PDB, JPM *et al.*) and one on 25th (PDB, BL, RFR).

An exceptional flock of 18 on Sept. 1st at Severn Beach again soon departed to SW, this time at 17.00 (PDB, JPM *et al.*).

This sub-species is becoming regular in our area, having been recorded in four out of the last five years. The only other record comes from 1995 (an individual identified retrospectively from the photograph opposite page 64 of the 1995 ABR), which has never been formally published, the details are as follows:

1995 Northwick Warth – one on Feb.12th.

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 seventh in the list of sites of International Importance for 2007/08.

An average year.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	25	52	40	76	43	26	25	16	11	2	6	14
Severn Beach/NW	46	90	98	85	60	58		4			22	24
Littleton Warth	21	17	54	13	42	35	12	11	11		1	6
Cl-Y	90	90	150	60	70	25	30	30	220	220	60	35
Sand Bay	110	115	115		5	7	2		38	200	450	240
Axe Est./Weston STW	63	57	98	69	23	23	14	21	221	479	26	72
CVL	18	14	19	32	25	20	14	7	1	2	8	19

Recorded at a further twelve sites (17 in 2008).

First winter period and spring The numbers north of the Avon were only average whilst those to the south remained high (although the numbers at Cl-Y were below average).

	1999/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	2008/09
North of R. Avon	150	60	89	195	116	90	104	117	130	90
South of R. Avon	287	303	542	434	470	360	650	415	630	500

Highest winter count at a single site (October - February)

99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	2008/09
108	(68)	110	87	152	203	105	147	120	90

Cl-Y. Average of the three highest counts (October - February), brackets refer to incomplete counts during the F&M outbreak

Breeding An average year with 123 juveniles seen on the coast, consisting of ten at OPS, ten at Littleton Warth and 34 from four broods on Severnside (so 54 to the north of the Avon) plus 34 from four broods at RPD/PW and 35 at Cl-Y (so 69 to the south). Also bred inland at CVL where there were four broods with 37 young, of which nine fledged. In addition a pair with three chicks was in a Portbury garden on July 5th.

1990/99 av.	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
102	141	(83)	70	154	144	123	162	116	181	163

Avon area - Total number of young

Autumn and second winter period Numbers north of the Avon were again low whilst to the south numbers remained relatively high.

MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata*

Uncommon introduced resident, occasional breeder.

A very good year for this species with a widespread series of records, breeding was confirmed with a record of three broods seen on an atlas visit to Dodington Lakes.

Records as follows;

OPS – one on Aug. 8th, 9th and 23rd, one on Sept. 18th, 19th, 26th and again on Oct. 10th;

Shepperdine – one on Aug. 23rd;

Midford Brook – one on Jan. 11th;

Heneage Court – pair on March 24th, nine males May 17th;

Dodington Lakes – 20 including eight juveniles on June 19th;

Avon Wildlife Park, Keynsham – two on Sept. 14th;

Keynsham (R.Avon) – one on Oct. 4th;

Batheaston N.R – male on March 27th;

Pensford (R. Chew) – male on Jan. 11th;

CVL – male on Feb. 10th, 11th and 19th;

Camerton – one on June 7th.

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

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

WeBS: There are five sites of International Importance followed by 17 of National Importance, the Estuary is sixth on this second list.

Year	Severnside	CVL	BL	Av.
1989/90 – 1998/99	232	246	221	233
1999/00 – 2006/07	509	80	154	248
2007/08	500	49	76	208
2008/09	683	46	70	266

Average of the three highest monthly maxima in the winter period (September to March)

The January count of 2460, which is the total of the monthly maxima for January given in the main table below, was a significant improvement on last year's count of 1060. This was due in no small part to the high numbers at Severnside. The December count calculated in the same way was 1700 which is similar to last year's total of 1760.

Although at a national level there has been a long-term trend showing an increase in wintering numbers of 71% this has not been reflected locally to the same extent.

Main sites The last in spring was a pair noted at Seven Beach on April 26th and the first to return were four at CVL on the early date of July 3rd. The highest count of the year was again on Severnside,1070 in January.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Aug.	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	500	183	80	1		3	79	58	143	300
Littleton Warth	345	80	45				25	29	75	160
Severnside	1070	350	120	1			26	80	500	800
PW	139	80		2		18	10	25		61
CI-Y	210	160	90	2			45	65	105	110
Axe Est/Weston STW	65	26	8				53	60	25	159
BG	2	5					1	3		3
CVL	30	3	20	3		2	110	70	1	40
BL	99	43	59	9			32	10	16	67

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

Backwell Lake – four on Dec. 17th;

Kingsgate Park – six on Jan. 5th;

Keynsham – two on Jan. 9th and four on Feb. 18th.

AMERICAN WIGEON *Anas americana*

Rare Nearctic vagrant.
Description species

A female was photographed at Weston STW on June 6th (*per* WBweb), the fifth record for our area and the first since an adult male was at Chew Magna Reservoir on May 13th, 1988.

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 20th in National Importance for this species.

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
1989/90 – 1998/99	68	38	53
1999/00 – 2008/09	57	47	52
2007/08	35	10	22
2008/09	38	14	26

Average of three highest monthly maxima in the winter period (October to March)

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
1990 – 1999	167	70	119
2000 – 2007	219	168	193
2008	195	67	131
2009	290	48	169

Average of the two highest monthly maxima in the moult period (July to September)

The status tables show average counts roughly in line with recent trends.

Main sites As with many other species of surface feeding ducks, *cf.* Wigeon, there were markedly below average counts in both winter periods. The summer count from CVL showed a notable improvement, however the recent decline at BL continued.

Nationally there has been a long-term increase of 396% but this has not been reflected within the Avon area to the same extent, with only a long-term increase in summering numbers evident.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	2	1										
Severnside	4	4	9	3	2						8	26
ASW	36	31	22	6	6		9	18	38		31	24
PW		21								9	17	
Weston STW	8	8	6	3	1	1				11	20	30
CVL	30	7	15	15	15	210	120	295	285	170	60	52
BL	30	2	4	7	6	33	92		3	39	17	2

Recorded at a further five sites as follows:

Sea Mills – one on Dec. 19th;

Cl-Y – one on Oct. 21st, four on Dec. 17th and 20th,;

Walton Moor – pair on Jan. 4th;

Backwell Lake – eight on Jan. 30th, two on Sept. 4th and on Nov. 6th;

BG – one on Aug. 31st, two on Dec. 12th and 13th.

Breeding Another above average year, with breeding at three sites. At ASW there were two broods with seven young, at BL two broods whilst there were five broods at CVL with a total of 32 young, the highest number since 1998 when there were six.

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Broods	3	4	1	3	2	4	4	1	3	5

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 eighth in the sites of National Importance.

Year	Severnside	CVL	BL	Av.
1989/90 - 1998/99	131	1176	829	712
1999/00 - 2006/07	274	876	510	553
2007/08	245	295	82	207
2008/09	287	242	73	214

Average of the three highest monthly maxima in the winter period (August to March)

Main sites Although overall numbers were again below average (see table overleaf) the maximum counts for January and December of 2467 and 1463 (see Wigeon) were both well above last year's figures. Whilst small numbers are often present throughout the summer at CVL late spring birds involved a pair at CVL on May 1st. Returning individuals were first noted away from CVL at ASW on June 17th.

Other sites Records were received from 16 other sites with counts exceeding ten at the following:

Dyers Common – 16 on Jan. 19th and 18 on Feb. 18th;

Weston Moor – 24 on Jan. 3rd and 50 on 31st;

Congresbury Moor – 16 on Dec. 21st;

Batheaston N.R – 17 on Feb. 5th.

Teal con't

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	600	39	68	17				134	85	45	100	200
Littleton Warth	145	180	49						35	130	130	115
Severnside	300	130	55	3				23	180	170	80	100
P W	470	550							110	90	200	308
Cl-Y	110	130	40	3	1			10	39	40	30	85
Axe Est.	57	109	45	4			1	8	37	50	5	159
ASW	60	18	6			1	1	9	25			
BG	61	33	31	11				2	60	65	40	142
CVL	435	60	20	11	2	20	33	278	1245	1425	995	270
BL	164	4	11				7	10	45	28	50	63
Chew Magna Res	65	43	38							11		21

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 sixth in the list of sites of National Importance.

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
1989/90 - 1998/99	602	303	453
1999/00 - 2006/07	514	251	382
2007/08	318	167	243
2008/09	378	67	223

Average of three highest monthly maxima in the winter period (November to March)

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
1991 - 1999	895	519	707
2000 - 2007	791	414	602
2008	590	176	383
2009	1103	273	688

Average of the two highest monthly maxima in the moult period (July to September)

Main sites In the late summer numbers were significantly better than those of 2008. Nationally this species has declined with the ten year trend showing a decrease in the wintering population of 12%, within the Avon area the decline has been substantially higher. However, the BBS paints a more positive picture with little sign of the decline in the breeding population that is apparent nationally.

Ringing recoveries have shown that the longevity record for this species is 20 years, 5 months and 17 days. In 2009 the following birds were recovered in our recording area, an adult male ringed on Jan. 20th, 2004 (at Slimbridge) was shot at Aust on Dec.12th, and a first-year male, again ringed at Slimbridge, on Oct. 10th, 2009 was shot at Charfield barely a month later on Nov. 14th.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	210	68	19	37	30	76	103	146	97	165	236	200
Littleton Warth	55	27	10	23	22	78	51	70	79	95	75	28
Severnside	80	80	120	60	34	160		138				10
ASW	12	8	16	25	25		10	33				
*Sea Mills	92	22	16	11		12	25		18	31	39	30
Cl-Y		30	8	20	35	45	25	140	110	70	60	40
Weston STW	50	33	27	27	40	141	169	344	173	104	58	49
CVL	395	365	245	260	210	440	880	1025	1180	1080	780	445
BL	54	43	46	62	62	132	227	319	150	125	121	174
Chew Magna Res		10								4		10

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

Other sites Records were received for a further 42 sites and counts over 40 from sites not included in the table were as follows:

Dyers Common – 42 on Jan. 19th;

Weston Moor – 170 on Jan 31st, 300 on Sept. 6th;

Avon Wildlife Park, Keynsham – 43 on Sept. 21st, 148 on Oct. 19th;

Keynsham (R. Avon) – 78 on Jan. 9th, 74 on Nov. 8th, 53 on 24th, 72 on Dec. 8th, and 160 on 25th;

Bath University Lake – 80 on Aug. 3rd and 82 on Nov. 20th.

Breeding At CVL there was a significant increase in the number of broods, more than in any year since 1991.

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Broods	27	19	11	29	16	17	22	29	21	38
Young	160	101	67	154	93	93	100	176	130	213

Numbers of broods and young at CVL

Elsewhere records were received of 42 broods and 224 young, similar to 2008 (44 broods and 226 young); this includes 21 broods and 102 young at BL

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

Wintering birds leave from mid-February to early April with autumn arrivals usually appearing 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.

There were better numbers at the principal site, CVL, although this species remains rather scarce elsewhere. The last in the first-winter period were two at CVL and one at Weston STW both on March 21st, and the first of the autumn was a juvenile at CVL on Aug. 27th. Both dates are fairly typical for this species.

The tables below show maximum counts at CVL and monthly maxima at other regular sites.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
14	36	50	70	31	140	53	60	29	70

Annual maximum counts at CVL

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Severnside	4	1						3	1	3
OPS		1								
CVL	45	7	4			1	35	68	70	23
BL	2						4		5	

Records were also received from the following five sites:

Littleton – one on Jan. 17th;

PW – one on Jan. 2nd;

Cl-Y – three on March 13th;

Weston STW – single birds on March 21st, Sept. 15th and Dec. 24th;

Keynsham (R. Avon) – seven on Feb. 12th.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
150	36	67	70	47	140	77	60	29	70

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.

Migration dates: Forty year average first date April 9th. Forty year average last date Oct. 3rd.

A good scattering of records at both inland and coastal sites during the spring, the first of the year were at PW and CVL on March 17th, the last of the year were two at CVL on Oct. 8th. .

Spring and summer The records are as follows:

ASW – male from March 23rd until 31st;

PW – four from March 17th until 31st, three still present April 7th;

Weston STW – male on April 26th;

CVL – male from March 17th until 23rd, females on 22nd and April 2nd. Male on 12th and a female on May 14th.

Autumn The records are as follows:

BL – eclipse male July 16th to 30th, male on Aug. 8th to 11th, joined by a female on 11th and two on 22nd.

CVL – one on Aug. 7th, 9th, 16th and 18th, three on 19th, one on 21st and 29th. Four on Sept. 1st, one on 2nd, two on 3rd and 5th, three on 7th, four on 8th. One from Sept. 17th to 19th, two on 20th, one on 21st, 23rd and 24th, two on 26th and one on 27th. Finally one on Oct. 3rd and two on 8th.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
5	4	3	5	1	8	5	2	2	4

CVL, maximum single count of Garganey

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 sixth in the list of sites of International Importance, and the Estuary is eighth in International Importance.

The status tables below show a significant improvement compared with last year.

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
1989/90 - 1998/99	189	59	124
1999/00 - 2006/07	285	36	160
2007/08	92	56	74
2008/09	125	113	119

Average of three highest monthly maxima in the winter period (November to February

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
1990 - 1999	279	148	214
2000 - 2007	328	230	279
2008	180	11	96
2009	418	61	239

Average of the two highest monthly maxima in the moult period (August to October)

Main sites As noted in the status tables counts were generally below average again, the exception being the January count at BL. High water levels at CVL clearly played a part in the fortunes of this species although this site still attracts the most significant numbers within the area. As with many of our other surface feeding ducks increases in wintering numbers at a national level (the ten-year trend showing an increase of 26%) are not reflected locally.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
ASW	54	61	22					9	11		51	18
OPS	28	17	7	7		4		6	1			3
PW	40	18				3		4				12
Backwell Lake	21										16	
Severnside	14	6	2	2					4	40	2	6
CI-Y	6			1						4		
Weston STW	14	10	11	2			1	6	8	18	6	27
BG	62	45	1			1		19	81	49	30	9
CVL	270	35	45	60	5	12	15	68	400	435	350	20
BL	200	8	76		2		1	24	38	83	9	23

Other sites Reports were received from five other sites:

Littleton – two on Feb. 8th;

Congresbury (R. Yeo) – two on Jan. 5th, 35 on 10th;

Wick Warth STW – four on Oct. 31st;

Banwell Rhyne – one on Jan. 10th;

Somerdale (Keynsham) – one on Feb. 13th.

Breeding One pair at CVL fledged eight young.

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

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

A record year at CVL, and the Avon area. Seven (four males and three females) on Jan. 6th (CJS, RMi *et al.*), a new site record count, were followed by two males and a female on March 21st (AM *et al.*). In autumn a juvenile from Aug. 7th to 25th (RJH *et al.*) and possibly the same individual then re-appeared on Sept. 8th and was seen intermittently until Oct. 8th (RMi, DN, GJ *et al.*). Later in the autumn a pair on Oct. 30th (DJA, RMi *et al.*) with a juvenile on Nov. 2nd (RMi *et al.*).

The previous CVL record was five on March 10th, 1974.

Also recorded at BL – a group of five (adult male, adult female and three juveniles) on Jan. 5th (AHD, RP, RMi *et al.)* was also a site record.

The now large feral population at the Cotswold Water Park must account for many records, and the two high counts in January at CVL and BL most probably relate to birds dispersing from CWP, which was frozen at the time. Continental birds probably still occur however, and the August juvenile again coincided with a small influx of Black Terns.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
2	1	5	1	5	6	0	6	5	19

Maximum number of individuals

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

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

WeBS: CVL is currently seventh in the list of sites of National Importance, and the Severn estuary is ninth.

At a national level the ten-year trend shows a decrease of 41%; although there is some evidence of a decline locally it is not to the same extent.

Year	CVL	BL	BG	Av.
1989/90 - 1998/99	483	205	85	258
1999/00 - 2006/07	626	179	57	287
2007/08	440	120	94	218
2008/09	515	172	192	293

Average of the three highest monthly maxima in the winter period (September to March)

Main sites The table below summarises the main counts. Note that the counts at CVL showed some improvement in both winter periods.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
ASW/Hoar Gout	6	11	1				2		2	1	11	9
Portishead	12	12	10							2	3	7
RPD	11	9							1			12
Weston STW	19	16	15	4	2	2	3	13	65	15	27	30
Backwell Lake	3											
BG	97	63	22			3	2	27	16	66	65	78
CVL	510	505	85	39	40	55	115	175	480	645	1065	685
BL	127	105	20	17	7	59	88	50	33	91	236	164
Chew Magna Res	11	8	7							1		6

Other sites A record was received from one other site as follows, it was the only report from the Estuary:

Severnside – one male on Dec. 16th.

Breeding The only breeding record came from CVL where there were two broods totalling four young of which only two fledged.

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
No. of broods	12	1	6	3	2	1	4	6	2	2
No. of young	43	3	14	9	9	4	14	35	9	4

Breeding success at CVL

RING-NECKED DUCK *Aythya collaris*

Rare Nearctic vagrant.
Description species

An adult drake was at BL on Oct. 4th and 5th, and from 10th to 31st (NRM *et al.*); it then moved to CVL from Nov.1st to 5th (SM *et al.*), with further sightings here on 26th and Dec. 3rd.

Most records in the last decade relate to a regular male that toured various sites between 1998 and February 2008; with a second male noted in the summers of 2001, 2002 and 2003. New arrivals have subsequently been seen in 2005 (a group of three, two of which remained into 2006) and 2008 (eight at CVL).

FERRUGINOUS DUCK *Aythya nyroca*

Rare vagrant, but up to two birds (involving three individuals) have been present intermittently at CVL each year since 2000 – possibly bred in 2006.

Description species

A drake was at CVL from March 18th (RJH *et al.*); a second drake was seen on May 17th (RMA, GJ). One was then seen regularly until Nov. 28th, see photograph opposite. Sightings were regular, although by no means daily, and there were gaps of up to a week with no sightings of what could sometimes be an elusive bird (or birds).

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 ninth in the list of sites of National Importance.

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
1989/90 - 1998/99	311	176	244
1999/00 - 2006/07	885	228	556
2007/08	1003	458	731
2008/09	785	489	637

Average of the three highest monthly maxima in the winter period (October to March)

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
1990 - 1999	407	303	355
2000 - 2007	828	510	669
2008	810	745	778
2009	890	434	662

Average of the two highest monthly maxima in the moult period (July to September)

Main sites The largest single count was 1480 at CVL in October, slightly higher than in 2008 (1350 in September). Nationally this species has declined and winter counts have shown an overall decrease (5% during the last ten years) however it continues to prosper in the Avon area.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec.
OPS	4	5	5	11	28	10	10	2				2
ASW	48	38	39	15	14	28	31	27	76		33	23
PW	4	13		16		10	2	15	19	14		14
Weston STW	23	14	29	31	18	18	1	7	15	6	39	21
Backwell Lake	12			2								
BG	71	51	56	22	16	59	230	285	135	96	80	72
Hunstrete Lake					14	10					3	
CVL	315	810	650	315	85	65	325	445	1335	1480	1150	660
BL	217	216	242	185	52	72	327	540	217	593	489	329
Chew Magna Res	10	24	13	9						6		18

Recorded at a further ten sites, the only double figure count was as follows:

Newton Park Lake (Bath) – twelve on Jan. 17th.

Breeding Pairs and numbers at CVL were better (four broods, 19 young) than in 2008 but were still low. Elsewhere breeding was recorded at OPS (one brood, six young), PW (three broods, twelve young),and BL (one brood, two young).

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
No. of sites	7	(1)	6	6	4	5	6	4	5	4
No. of broods	38	(7)	12	11	8	6	20	4	8	9
No. of young	187	(27)	72	72	42	25	115	16	55	29

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.

Another very good year with an excellent series of records from BL again, the increase in records is reflected in its change in description status as it is no longer considered a rarity in the Avon area, the details are as follows:

Scaup First winter period

Cl-Y – first-winter female on Jan. 10th;

CVL – female on Jan. 6th, male on Feb. 21st, female on March 21st and 29th, with a pair on 28th;

BL – two males on Jan. 1st and 2nd, then one until Feb. 20th. This bird was joined by two females on March 1st, two males and three females on 4th, then a male and two females seen on most days until 13th, rising to seven (three males, three females and one first winter) on 14th. Only four present (one male and three females) on March 19th, three (one male and two females) on 20th, a pair on 21st, last noted on 22nd.

Second winter period

CVL – female on Oct. 9th, first-winter male on 18th, three (first-winter male, two first-winter females) on 28th, joined by an adult male on 29th, two on 30th. Three females from Nov. 16th to 22nd, one remaining until 23rd.

BL – two males (adult and first-winter) and a female on Nov. 1st, with one male seen intermittently until year end.

Year	1999/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	2008/09
No. seen	22	14	7	4	8	8	6	9	24	23

Number of individuals seen each year (July – June)

EIDER *Somateria mollissima*

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

After a blank year in 2008 there was just two records from Severnside: a female on July 6th, and a female and immature male on 15th.

This is in line with recent trends as the table below shows.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
24	45	2	19	13	2	1	2	0	2

Avon area – total number of individuals

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*

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

One record: a juvenile at CVL from Nov. 6th to the year end, it was often elusive (DJA, AHD, RMi *et al.*).

The table below of records for the last decade shows that one record per year is now normal.

Year	1999/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	2008/09
No. seen	3	3	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	1

Number of individuals seen each year (July – June)

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

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

A below average year, the first being seven flying up the channel at Cl-Y on Jan. 25th, the last were at CVL on Dec. 2nd. The records are as follows:

OPS – one on Aug. 14th;

Severnside – two on May 8th, three on 14th, one Sept. 20th, 21st and 26th and one on Nov. 14th;

Ladye Bay – four on May 14th, 15 on July 7th and one on 24th;

Cl-Y – seven on Jan. 25th (see above);

Anchor Head – two on May 6th;

CVL – three on April 17th, two Sept. 15th, nine on Nov. 14th, two on Dec. 1st with one remaining on 2nd.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
52	34	143	26	58	129	145	85	75	53

Total number of individuals

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 although bred at CVL in 2008.

The status tables shows fairly constant total winter population over the last twenty years.

Year	CVL	BL	BG	Total
1989/90 – 1998/99	65	10	21	96
1999/00 – 2006/07	82	16	12	110
2007/08	87	23	16	126
2008/09	70	36	18	124

Average of the three highest monthly maxima in the winter period (October – February)

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
145	126	80	100	85	178	175	162	170	105

Highest count at CVL in period March - May

Main sites Although there has been little change in the fortunes of this species as a winter visitor, records away from the main sites are still notable. A female summered at CVL but unlike 2008 there was no evidence of breeding.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
BG	14	17	13							13	12	14
CVL	70	80	105	7	2	2	1	1	2	29	65	35
BL	45	44	22	7				1	1	7	28	19

Other sites Recorded at a further four sites as follows:

Severnside – single birds on Jan. 3rd and 6th, and on Oct.9th;

PW – one on Jan. 1st, two on 24th and 26th, two on Feb. 6th;

Anchor Head – two on April 8th;

Weston STW – one March 1st to 7th.

At CVL a male was coming to bread on Herriotts Pool on Feb. 7th.

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.

After a blank year in 2008 the following was the first record since March 2007.

CVL – a juvenile on Nov. 1st, then seen on a number of dates and last noted on 29th.

The table below shows the annual maximum count at CVL for the 1999/00 to 2008/09 winters:

1999/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	2008/09
8	11	5	9	8	2	2	4	0	0

CVL total numbers

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

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

The returning male has now been present for 30 winters (although we have no proof that the same individual was involved).

First winter period

CVL – male from 2008 last noted on March 18th;

Second winter period

Sand Point – two on Dec. 3rd;

CVL – the returning male from Oct. 18th to year end.

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.

The CVL status table below shows the 2008/09 winter was in line with the ten-year average of 35.

1999/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	2008/09
22	26	65	25	55	27	22	24	54	32

CVL - Average of two highest monthly maxima in the winter period (December to February)

However the highest count for the calendar year 2009, of 21, was the third lowest in the last ten years and significantly lower than the record count of 283 on Feb. 23rd, 1996.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
20	75	55	57	52	17	28	43	65	21

Annual maximum counts at CVL

There has been a significant decline nationally, by approximately a third during the last ten years. Locally there is some evidence of a later arrival, for example in the past the first autumn birds would often appear in late September.

The last in spring were eight at CVL on March 28th and the first returning bird was noted on Nov. 2nd at CVL.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites						
	Jan	Feb	Mar	:	Nov	Dec
Cl-Y	6	13	3			1
Backwell Lake	11		1			9
CVL	18	6	17		5	21
BL	10	8	2			11
BG	12	10	3		1	8

This species tends to use the larger reservoirs as roosting sites, often returning at dusk having spent the day on rivers in the region, this may result in some duplication as individuals may be noted at one site during the day before returning to BG, CVL or BL at night.

Elsewhere recorded from a further eight sites as follows:

OPS – four on Feb. 6th;

Severnside – three on Jan. 2nd;

Sand Point – one on Nov. 6th;

Uphill – one in flight on Jan. 10th, three on 11th;

River Yeo (Wemberham) – one on Jan. 6th;

River Avon (Bath) – one on Jan. 2nd, two on Jan. 3rd;

River Avon (Keynsham) – twelve on Jan. 9th, five on Dec. 22nd;

Batheaston NR – one on Jan. 2nd.

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Once common introduced winter visitor at CVL and BL; scarce elsewhere. A few over-summer. Culls take place at CVL and BL by order of Defra.

WeBS – CVL is fourth in the list of sites of National Importance although recent culls must surely affect this position.

Regular culling, both locally and across the country, has reduced the population considerably; before the cull began counts of 700 were regular at CVL. Defra reports that, since 2006, 80 have been shot at CVL and 203 at BL. Some 246 of these were accounted for in the first two years (on eight visits) with six subsequent visits resulting in a further 37 killed as diminishing returns have inevitably begun to set in.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
ASW	4	4	2	4	2		3					
BL	12	17	36	7	4	6	4	4	3	4	3	4
CVL	45	35	14	3	3	1	2	2	7	10	9	34

Records were received from one further site:

BG – 14 on Jan. 9th, 16 on 10th, one on Feb. 14th and five on Nov. 1st.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

Locally fairly common breeding resident but large numbers released for 'sporting' purposes.

Poor numbers in the first half of the year but better numbers in the second half, particularly in BA where possibly birds released.

First winter period (January – March) Reported from eight sites. In *SG* from the Marshfield area (20 on Jan. 1st, 25 on 11th, 19 on Feb. 24th and 50 on 26th) and Horton (one on March 10th); in *NS* in the Gordano Valley (two on March 28th) where this is a good local record, and in *BA* from Corston Field (three on Jan. 4th), Inglesbatch, near Bath (three on Jan. 18th), Bath University (one on March 12th), Camerton (one on March 13th), and Tunley Farm (one on March 23rd and 26th).

Breeding season (April – June) Noted in eight tetrads in ST77 with a maximum count of just six in the Marshfield area on April 18th. In *SG* away from ST77 noted at Horton (one on May 9th), Hawkesbury Upton (one on April 2nd), and Inglestone Common (two on May 21st). In *BA* noted from Avon Wildlife Park, Keynsham (two on April 24th), Sleight Farm, Clutton (two nearby on June 18th), Compton Dando (two on April 28th), Farmborough Common (one on April 29th and two on May 1st), Hinton Charterhouse (four on April 11th with up to 16 reported by locals), Peasedown St John (four on May 4th and one on June 10th), the Stanton Prior area (two on May 2nd and one on 26th), Sutton Hill up to four on two dates in May, Tunley Hill (two on April 6th and one on 9th, and two on June 1st), and Upper Swainswick (one on April 13th).

Autumn and second winter period (July – December) In ST77 noted on 37 days with at least 475 bird-days recorded, but otherwise no records from *SG* or *NS*. In *BA* recorded at Stowey Quarry (two on Sept. 12th), Sleight Farm, Clutton (16 on Sept. 12th), Bishop Sutton (37 on Sept. 19th) and by R. Avon, Keynsham (one on Dec. 9th).

Year	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
No. of sites - SG	1	5	6	1	3	n/a	6+	1	7	3
No. of sites - NS	5	1	4	0	0	4	4	2	2	1
No. of sites - BA	9	12	10	8	14	8	12	19	12	18

Number of sites away from ST77

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Uncommon, local and declining breeding resident. Small numbers may be released for 'sporting' purposes.

The decline continues. Observers are encouraged to submit all records of this species, with six figure grid references, in order that its declining status can be monitored.

SG – Marshfield area:

Down Road – one on Jan. 23rd;

Northfield Lane – two on Feb. 22nd and 27th, one on March 7th, two on April 12th and 18th, two on May 20th and one on 23rd;

Doncombe Valley – two on April 4th.

SG – elsewhere Frampton End Road – two on Jan. 4th.

BA:

Avon Wildlife Park, Keynsham – two on Sept. 21st;

Priston – one on Feb. 25th.

NS:

Weston STW – one on March 21st and one on April 18th;

Clapton-in-Gordano – two on April 11th and one on May 3rd;

Portbury – two on June 1st at Gale's Farm, near Caswell Lane.

2008 – five at Norton Hawkfield (BA) on Feb. 24th.

Year	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
No. of records received	46	33	24	16	12	15	18	10	8	16
No. of sites - SG	5	2	6	3	1	2	5	2	3	1
No. of sites - NS	2	2	3	2	1	3	2	1	2	3
No. of sites - BA	3	3	3	4	1	1	1	1	1	2

Number of records and sites away from Marshfield area

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

Scarce summer visitor, and presumed breeder, to the north-east of the area. Rare passage migrant.
Description required for sight records of non singing birds away from Marshfield area.

Around ten records were submitted from the Marshfield stronghold; local information suggests that singing males were present between May 25th and Aug. 21st with the maximum number of bird-days of 35 peaking in July at 15 (*per* SGweb).

SG – Marshfield area:

Middledown Lane – three on June 5th;

Tormarton Road – three on June 6th, one on July 2nd, three on 9th and one on 20th;

Down Road – one heard on July 25th with five others in the area;

Shirehill – one heard on Aug. 2nd, three heard on 9th and five on 13th.

SG – elsewhere One at Dyrham on July 5th calling (singing) loudly.

BA At Compton Dando one flushed on May 17th (PQ) and one heard on June 18th.

1990/99 av.	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
12	3	4	4	2	16	5	5+	3	5	10

Number of singing males each year

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

Fairly common but under recorded. Very large numbers are released for 'sporting' purposes.

Widely recorded in small numbers.

The only counts in double figures were: twelve on Jan. 4th at OPS, 26 on March 10th at Horton, twelve on April 2nd at Hawkesbury Upton, 18 on April 23rd at Shirehill, Marshfield, 15 males on June 1st at CVL with a flock of 14 here on Oct. 4th, ten on Oct. 18th at Charlton Fields, 17 on Dec. 1st at Elm Farm, Burnett, and eleven on Dec. 26th on Walton Moor.

A melanistic bird was seen at CVL on Nov. 14th.

Breeding Two reports; a female with eight young at Aust Warth on July 9th and two adults with ten young at CVL on Aug. 27th.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	96	92	85	90	97	107	112	102	93

Avon BBS Index (BBS Distribution 58%)

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

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

An average year with one record: one at CVL from Nov. 25th to Dec. 8th (RMA *et al.*).

PACIFIC DIVER *Gavia pacifica*

Very rare vagrant.

This species was added to the Avon area list when one was seen briefly at Severn Beach on Nov. 27th (MH, RFR *et al.*), before flying off to SW [BBRC].

This species was first identified in Britain in January 2007, when one in Yorkshire was quickly followed by further birds in Cornwall and Pembrokeshire. The Severn Beach bird had previously been seen on a few occasions between Slimbridge and Sharpness, Gloucestershire, from Nov. 18th to 25th. See article on page 149.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant to the larger reservoirs and the Estuary, sometimes staying for a few months at the reservoirs.
Description species

2009 produced two records associated with early winter gales:

CVL - a juvenile on Nov. 23rd (RMi *et al.*);

BL – a juvenile on Dec. 30th and 31st (SD, AHD, RMi *et al.*).

DIVER sp. *Gavia sp.*

Recorded as follows:

Ladye Bay – one, probably Great Northern, on April 8th – an unusual spring record;

Sand Point – single birds, all probably Great Northern, on Nov. 24th, 26th and 28th.

Divers in the Avon area

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Red-throated	1		1			1		2	1	1
Black-throated	1			2						
Pacific										1
Great Northern	4		3			2	6	3	5	2
Diver sp.	2			4		1	1	1	2	4

Annual totals for divers

FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis*

Uncommon visitor, scarce in winter. Usually storm-driven, but occasionally occurs in calm conditions in mid-summer. Rare inland.
Description required for inland records.

As in 2008 there was a slightly below-average showing for this species, partly due to largely settled weather in mid-summer. All records are included in the table below:

	March	April	May					Aug	Sept	Oct		Nov	
	23	21	4	5	6	8	26	28	3	3	25	23	24
Severnside			1			2	1	1	1	1		1	1
RPD						2							
Ladye Bay				2				7					
Sand Point											1		
Anchor Hd.	3	6			3								

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.
Description required for inland records.

Calm weather in mid-summer resulted in a poor year for this species, with few records in either June or July and large numbers noted on one day only, May 15th. The table below shows all 2009 records:

	April	May					June	July	Sept		
	27	4	8	11	15	16	19	7	1	3	5
Severnside	1	3							1	2	1
Ladye Bay/Cl-Y			5			4*	14	75			
Anchor Head		26		44	200	4					

*The May 16th birds were seen off Blackstone Rocks.

The April sighting at Severnside is the second earliest in the last ten years, the earliest being on April 13th, 2006 at Anchor Head. There are, however, records for both January and February in earlier decades.

WHITE-BELLIED or BLACK-BELLIED STORM-PETREL *Fregetta sp.*

Following southwesterly gales, one was seen off Severn Beach from about 0825 to 0835 on Nov. 25th (ADi, AG, R&RG, JPM) and seen again more distantly by about 20 observers for a few minutes at around 0930 – see drawing on page 6.

The genus is distinctive in terms of flight and plumage, but specific identification is fraught with difficulty and the taxonomy is also in need of review.

The record has been accepted by BBRC and is now under consideration by BOURC for admission to the British List. Full details will be published in due course should it be accepted.

STORM PETREL *Hydrobates pelagicus*

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

There was only one record in 2009, in marked contrast to the high numbers in the three previous years. As with other seabirds low winds in mid-summer were probably responsible for the dearth of records:

Severnside - one on Nov. 18th.

LEACH'S 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.
Description species

2009 was the second best year for this species in the last decade, the result of a wreck during strong winds in late November. Assessment of the total number involved is difficult.

The figures given below are the maximum on view at any one time, which probably under-represents the daily totals by a significant margin.

Severnside – minimum numbers were: one on Nov. 18th, followed by four on 23rd, six on 24th, four on 25th and four on 26th (many observers). At least one was taken by a large gull on 25th.

GANNET *Morus bassanus*

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

There were poor numbers in 2009, a result of settled weather in mid-summer (*cf.* Fulmar, Manx Shearwater and Storm Petrel) but early winter gales produced a good sequence of records. There were four records, probably only involving two birds, at the reservoirs. The table shows all coastal records in 2009:

	Mar	April		May		July		Aug	Sep	Oct		Nov					Dec
	27	8	21	4	8	19	30	28	26	25	26	23	24	25	26	27	4
Severnside							1	1	1		1	2	2		2	1	2*
Portishead	5		3							1		5	1				
Ladye Bay		8			6	1				1				1			
Sand Point															2		
Anchor Head		5		4													

*The Dec. 4th birds were tide-line corpses.

The four inland records are as follows:

BG – an adult on April 18th (RMi *et al.)* and a juvenile on Oct. 18th (SD);

CVL – a juvenile on Oct. 18th (AHD, KEV) seen leaving towards BL, followed by another juvenile on 24th, which could have been the same bird (DJA, RMA, JPM);

BL – a juvenile on Oct. 18th and 19th, the bird seen at BG and CVL (NRM).

CORMORANT *Phalocrocorax carbo*

Fairly common resident and winter visitor, especially to the main reservoirs; breeds in small numbers on Steep Holm and on Denny Island. Two races occur:
P. c. carbo - previously dominated all records and probably still accounts for all breeding birds.
P.c. sinensis - now equally common amongst non-breeding birds.

UK ten-year change up 14%.

At CVL the high November count, when large numbers were roosting on exposed mud at Denny Island, was the highest since 275 were present in November 2001. The record count of 305 in 1995 was also made in November. This resulted in an improvement in the annual average, otherwise counts were unexceptional.

Elsewhere both winter periods saw good counts at BG.

1998/07 Av	2008	2009
140	168	197

CVL January to December average maximum counts

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	3	7	4	5	8	5	6	8	10	7	4	7
Severnside	3	4	3	4	3	4					11	2
CI-Y	1		1	2	2		6	7	13	15	1	1
Weston STW	6	6	6	4	6	3	1		1	1	1	2
Kenn Moor	13	14	6	7	3	2	5	2	3	3	11	14
BG	109	13	11	8	11	10		41	37	21	40	120
CVL	105	85	80	40	35	30	35	60	155	165	270	55
BL	28	37	16	5	6	10	20	35	40	40	45	
Batheaston	20	18	8	6	5	3	4	2	12	14	14	18
Loxton	8	8									6	

Careful checking at CVL by RJH, RMi and KEV revealed that at least half of the Cormorants present, and possibly more, belong to the continental race *sinensis*. The large flock in November was not checked, but there is no reason to believe that a lower proportion of *sinensis* was present then. Checks by KEV also showed that *sinensis* dominates amongst the Cormorants present on the New Cut, Bristol, and birds of this race were also recorded at BG and Chew Magna Res.

Other sites Recorded from a wide scatter of sites, normally in small numbers and often as birds flying over. The highest counts were 26 to S over Puxton on Sept. 23rd; 13 to NE over Pilning on Oct. 1st (note that this exceeds the annual maximum at nearby Severnside); and eleven on R. Avon at Keynsham in January, where six were present in November and five in December. Small numbers regularly fed in Bristol's Floating Harbour, where a maximum of five was counted in November.

Counts from Kenn Moor have been omitted in some previous Reports. Annual maxima here have shown a steadily increasing trend, with six in November 2004, seven in December 2005, seven in January and October 2006, twelve in January 2007 and 13 in November 2008. See table above for 2009 counts.

Breeding There were 107 occupied nests at Steep Holm, the highest total yet recorded here. Nine nests examined had a total of 28 young, an average of 3.1 young per nest, and 245 adults were counted here on June 23rd. Just outside our area, there were 60 pairs on Denny Island (Gwent).

A colour ringed bird (green PJZ) at CVL on Oct. 3rd was ringed on Denny Island in the Bristol Channel in June 2003. It had previously been at CVL in June 2004 and July and August 2005 but was also seen in Leicestershire in 2004 and 2007.

SHAG *Phalocrocorax aristotelis*

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

There were three records with acceptable descriptions in 2009, all noted during the late November gales:

Severnside – one, probably a juvenile, on Nov. 23rd and 24th (JPM, RFR *et al.*);

CVL – one on Nov. 26th (DJA *et al.*).

One ringed as a nestling on Great Saltee, County Wexford on May 20th, 1985 was recovered at Severn Beach on Nov. 23rd.

Tubenoses, Gannet and Shag in the Avon area

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Fulmar	356	61	130	87	139	16	272	79	62	40
Cory's Shearwater	1				1					
Manx Shearwater	269	98	586	1230	1920	40	1600	1216	1680	380
Storm Petrel	6/7	2	9/12	2	8		28	27	25	1
Leach's Petrel	5	1	5/9		2	2	115	2	1	24
Gannet	20	19	134+	102	152	46	570	195	172	57
Shag	6/8	1	2	1	3	5	3	2	5	2

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

Scarce winter visitor; mainly to CVL. Bred in 1997, and now occasionally recorded in the summer months.

A wider than usual scatter of records, probably a reflection of successful breeding on the Somerset Levels to the south of our region.

Backwell Lake – one on March 16th;

Kenn Moor – one on Aug. 8th, possibly the individual recorded at Weston STW;

Weston STW – one on July 8th;

CVL – two were seen on Jan. 4th, followed by single birds on six dates between 5th and Feb. 24th. In the second winter-period single birds were seen on the unusually early date of Oct. 18th and again on 21st, and on two dates between Nov. 26th and the year end.

CATTLE EGRET *Bubulcus ibis*

Rare vagrant.
Description species

In line with the recent upturn in records nationally, including successful breeding in the Somerset Levels in 2008, there were three records involving five birds in 2009, exceeding the total of all previous sightings.

BL – one in summer plumage on June 8th (RMC, RMi, NRM *et al.*);

CVL – two adults and a juvenile on July 30th, with the juvenile present on 31st, one adult and the juvenile from Aug. 1st to 6th, and the juvenile remaining until Aug. 11th (RMi *et al.*) – see photograph opposite page 40. Also one from Dec. 27th into 2010 (RMA *et al.*).

The previous Avon area records of wild birds are from Littleton Warth in April 1993, from Kingston Seymour in January to April 2005, and from CVL in October 2007.

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

Uncommon 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.

The steady increase in numbers ceased in 2007, but there was a very wide scatter of records in 2009. Numbers at CVL in October and November were a record for this site. Recorded from a total of 38 sites (*cf.* 17 in 2003, 20 in 2004, 23 in 2005, 26 in 2006, 17 in 2007 and 24 in 2008).

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
3	15	7	13	15	27	39	31	32	24

Cl-Y and environs. Maximum count

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	2			1	1	1		1	2	3		
Littleton Warth			1						1	1		
Severnside	1	2	2	1	3	3	2	5	3	3	1	2
Cl-Y and environs	12	8	12	4	5	6	7	15	18	15	8	24
Sand Bay					1			5	5	2		
Axe Est	2	5	6	3	8	4	4	6	5	5	4	1
BG	1	1					1	1	1	1	1	1
CVL	1	2	2	4	2	2	6	8	9	12	11	4
BL	2			1	3		4	8	2	2	1	1

Other sites Reported in small numbers from 15 further sites across the levels and moors of North Somerset. The highest counts were eight in a rhyne at Locking on Jan. 5th, four at Congresbury Moor on Feb. 21st, four at Yatton on Dec. 26th, three on the River Banwell on Oct. 29th, and three at Clevedon Moor on Dec. 9th.

Elsewhere in the region birds were reported as follows:

Oldbury-on-Severn – one on Feb. 6th;

Littleton-on-Severn – single bird on March 14th;

Thornbury Pill – one on Sept. 9th;

Almondsbury – one on Dec. 18th;

Hoar Gout – one on Aug. 10th;

Leap Valley, Downend – single birds on Jan. 10th and 24th;

Little Egret con't
Wraxall – one on Feb. 3rd;

Keynsham – one on Dec. 22nd;

R. Avon at Bath – one on July 19th and 20th;

Bathampton Meadows – single birds on July 6th and Nov. 1st;

Winford Brook – single birds on March 16th, Aug. 31st and Dec. 20th;

Chew Magna Resr. – two on Dec. 29th;

Burnett Elm Farm – one on Sept. 28th;

Sandford – single birds on Jan. 9th and Dec. 13th.

A colour ringed bird, seen at CVL between July 20th and Oct. 1st, had been ringed as a nestling at Sowley Pond, Hants on May 22nd, 2009 – see photograph opposite page 168.

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.

The status table shows increased numbers at CVL, probably due to low water levels producing good feeding conditions, but an ongoing decline in the Sea Mills area.

	1998/07 Av.	2008	2009
CVL	18	20	28
Sea Mills	20	13	8

Maximum counts

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	3	2
Severnside	6	6	5	1	2	3		5	5			
Cl-Y	1		2	3	2	8	3	3	4	1	3	
Axe Est./Weston STW	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	7	7	3	2	3
R. Avon (Sea Mills)	2	1					3	13	1	7	3	5
BG	3	3	1	3	3	6		8	9	5	5	4
CVL	23	5	8	7	14	27	20	12	30	15	21	10
BL	5	4	5	4	1	6	7	7	6	2	4	3

Other non-breeding records Recorded from a wide scatter of other sites, often as single birds flying over. The maximum counts not in the table above were ten in the Conham area of Bristol on May 31st and counts of four at Weston Moor on Jan. 31st, Congresbury Moor on June 7th, ASW on June 29th and Keynsham Somerdale on Nov. 17th.

Breeding The table below shows the number of occupied nests recorded at known heronries in our region:

	Grid Ref	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Widcombe Manor	ST761633										2
Dodington Lakes	ST753802										3
Newton Park	ST692640	7	6	7	5			8	4		2
Hanham Wood	ST641703			7		0		12	16		0
Eastwood Farm	ST635713	12	12	16	25	25	25	25	25	34	25
Prior Park, Bath	ST634761							1	1	2	1
Denny Island, CVL	ST575607	35	43	31	33	29	29	25	36	51	39
Easter Compton	ST560811	9	6	8	8	7	8	0	0	0	0
Paradise Bottom	ST546748	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pill	ST530739						5	5	5	5	7
Cleeve Wood	ST462662	44	49	45	52	45	45	33	48	42	45
Clevedon Court Farm	ST4271		1								
Uphill Grange Wood	ST320582	1		2	3			4	8	4	4
Weston STW	ST313571									4	
Total		112	118	116	126	106	104	113	143	142	128

Occupied nests

PURPLE HERON *Ardea purpurea*

Very rare vagrant.
Description species

A single bird, believed to be in its second-calendar year was at CVL on May 10th (MGR, RMi *et al*), where it spent most of its time on Heron's Green Pool – see photograph opposite page 40.

This is the ninth accepted record from our area, the previous two, both at CVL, being from June to July 1983 and in May 2001.

GLOSSY IBIS *Egretta garzetta*

Very rare vagrant.

The autumn of 2009 saw a large influx of this species into the UK, many originating from Coto Donana, Spain. Twenty five were present at Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, from Sept. 4th and the gradual dispersal of this group probably accounts for the Avon area records below, all of which were immatures:

CVL – one from Sept. 6th to 12th (RMi *et al.*) [BBRC] – see photograph opposite page 41, and a brief visit from four on 26th (RMA *et al.*) [BBRC]. Two of the four were carrying white darvic rings (L9M and N4C); N4C had been ringed as a nestling in the Petite Camargue, France, on May 15th, 2009 while L9M had been ringed in Donana, Spain;

Severnside – one on Oct. 14th (PBu, PBa, PDB) [BBRC]. It was seen flying from Severn Beach to Northwick Warth, where it landed for a few minutes before flying off to NE.

There is only one previous record from our area – one at CVL in November 2007.

SPOONBILL *Platalea leucorodia*

Very scarce passage migrant.
Description species

Three records, involving four birds, were received in 2009 probably making this the best year on record for this species in our area:

Shepperdine – two on the Estuary on April 12th (*per* OPSweb);

Cl-Y – one briefly on Aug. 28th (*per* HER);

CVL – a sub- adult on Sept. 1st (RMi *et al.*), see photograph opposite page 48.

This brings the total of Avon area records since 1920 to 29. The most recent were a series of four sightings in April and May 2006, a single bird in August 2007 and one at OPS and Severnside in September 2008.

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.

WeBS status: CVL is fourth in the list of sites of National Importance.
BBS distribution 4%.
UK 25-yr change down 76%.

1998/07 Av	2008	2009
69	55	135

CVL - January to December average maximum counts

Autumn numbers at CVL were exceptional – the 180 counted on Sept. 18th was a record for the site, and probably the most ever recorded at an inland site in Great Britain. Settled weather in the early summer, which allowed good waterweed growth, and low water levels were probably responsible. Numbers at BL were low, possibly because of the good conditions at CVL. Autumn numbers at Weston STW were again high and PW is also becoming an important site for this species.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Severnside	1	1	1	2	2	2			1			
PW	3		8	1	1	2	10	22	12	13		5
Axe Est./Weston STW	2	6	18	15	5	9	21	28	27	15	2	4
Tortworth Lake		2	1				3	8	2	6		
ASW/Hoar Gout	1	2	1			2		4	6	2		5
BG	16	17	11			1		14	31	27	23	19
CVL	10	10	15	10	20	15	85	110	180	115	60	30
BL	6	16	4	4	3	3	9	10	17	15	22	10

Little Grebe Other sites Reported from a further 23 sites (*cf.* eleven in 2006, ten in 2007, 15 in 2008). Many of these were on the North Somerset Levels and Moors, and there were records from the R. Avon at Totterdown, Bath, Batheaston and Warleigh and from the R. Frome at Lincombe Barn. The highest counts not in the table above were of nine at Chew Magna Resr. on Oct. 16th, six at Kenn Bridge on Jan. 1st, and four on Weston Moor on March 21st. This species had the dubious distinction of being the fifth most numerous prey item of the Peregrines at St John's Church, Bath, with an extraordinary 14 taken in the course of the year, presumably using the floodlights at night.

Breeding At CVL numbers were again very low, possibly due to pike predation; Weston STW remains our most important site. Breeding was verified at four sites away from CVL (*cf.* eight in 2007 and six in 2008), and suspected at a further two, as follows:

PW – a brood of two young;

Weston STW – six broods totalling ten young;

Tortworth Lake – a brood of one;

ASW – two broods;

Naish House Pond – breeding suspected;

Weston Moor – breeding suspected.

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Broods	20	10	6	2	9	2	6	6	3	3
Young	24	12+	9	2	13+	3	10	9+	4	5

CVL. Broods and young

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.

WeBS status: CVL is fourth in the list of sites of National Importance.

As in 2007 and 2008 the August count at CVL was only 25 below the maximum on record. The continued good counts here are probably due to the increase in the coarse fish populations.

1998/07 Av	2008	2009
454	613	565

CVL. January to December average maximum counts

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
BG	21	17	20	27	29	27	31	47	57	50	25	20
CVL	50	70	140	160	185	250	405	665	595	435	335	355
BL	6	15	39	26	33	36	33	25	53	9	17	2

Recorded elsewhere as follows:

Severnside – two on Jan. 7th, single birds on Feb. 14th and April 19th, two at Orchard Pools from April 23rd to 27th and one here from May 1st to 7th, and two on July 4th;

Portishead Boating Lake – one from Dec. 11th to 18th;

Axe Estuary – four on Nov. 22nd;

ASW – single bird throughout January and on Feb. 24th, and a pair on March 24th and May 19th (see under Breeding below);

Bristol Docks – one off Poole's Wharf on Nov. 10th, very unusual here;

Players Golf Club, Tormarton – two on April 20th;

Chew Magna Resr. – single birds on March 17th and April 14th, unusual here.

Breeding A poor year at CVL, probably because of dropping water levels in the late summer.

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Broods	36	24	5	2	6	0	20	38	20	8
Young	64+	28	6	4	9	0	43	62+	26+	12

CVL. Great Crested Grebe broods and young

Breeding elsewhere: At least one pair attempted to breed at BL but no young were seen, and a pair reared three young at ASW.

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. Bred in 1998.

A reasonable year, with one spring record and a good sequence of autumn and early winter records. However, no count exceeded two. Recorded as follows:

BG – one, in summer plumage, on the unusually early date of July 10th remained until 25th (see photograph opposite page 48), another on Aug. 15th, and one from Nov. 5th to 12th;

CVL – two from April 27th to May 1st, a juvenile on Aug. 19th, another juvenile from Sept. 24th to Nov. 20th, when it was joined by another bird, the two remaining until Dec. 20th;

BL – one on Sept. 21st and 22nd, possibly the individual then seen at CVL, and one on Nov. 7th.

Scarce Grebes in the Avon area

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Red-necked			1		1		1			
Slavonian	3	1		1	1	1	1	2	1	
Black-necked	7	25	11	5	9	6	14	9	10	8

Annual totals

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

Uncommon passage migrant and increasingly frequent visitor.

An excellent year and the best to date in the Avon area. The number of records received doubled from 2008, most were in the period March to June, recorded at 35 sites (*cf.* 22 in 2008), eight in *SG*, 24 in *BA* and *NS* and three in *Bristol*. During the year there were 62 bird-days (*cf.* 31 in 2008), most frequently noted at CVL and to the north of Bath with six and eleven bird-days respectively.

Records refer to single birds unless stated otherwise.

February – the first record of the year at Cl-Y on 4th, then at CVL on 17th and 24th;

March – two over Dundry on 2nd, on 15th at Cadbury Heath and West Littleton with two at Kenn Moor and Shirehampton, on 17th at Doynton, Oakham Farm near Portbury, and Easton in Bristol, and at Swineford on 19th;

April – at Wraxall on 1st, Kelston Park two days later and Shirehampton on 4th and 5th, noted the following day at BG, this was the second record for this site. At Upper Weston, Bath on 7th, on 16th over Black Rock Quarry, Portishead, and two at Clifton/Durdham Down in Bristol, and one over Blagdon Village on 22nd;

May – OPS and Cowhill near Oldbury-on-Severn on 2nd, at Severnside on 5th, 6th and 13th, CVL on 11th, the next day at Yate and Upper Langridge. In the Gordano Valley on 13th and 25th, Portishead on 14th, Folly Farm on 17th, and Lansdown on 25th. On 30th at Upper Weston, Bath and Blagdon Village;

June – at Portishead on 1st, two days later at Newton Park and Staple Hill, on 13th at Cl-Y, Hewish and Upper Weston, Bath, at the latter site also seen on 17th and 21st. In the Gordano Valley on 17th and 27th, over Clifton/Durdham Down, Bristol on 22nd, and Compton Dando on 26th;

July – at Upper Weston, Bath on 2nd, two days later at Swineford, Tickenham Moor on 10th, Hanham on 20th and Camerton on 28th and 29th;

August – CVL on 9th and at Hewish three days later;

September – CVL on 10th and 28th;

December – over Congresbury Moor on the last day of the year.

2008 – a second calendar-year at Keynsham on May 16th.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

Scarce visitor and passage migrant.

Another excellent year and the best to date in the Avon area with a total of 51 bird-days (*cf.* 29 in 2008). Most records were from CVL in January with a total of 31 bird-days, two, both in their second calendar year, were present during the first eleven days of the month, one remained until 29th and was subsequently seen on just two dates in February. These records followed the December 2008 series when one was present from 17th to the year end which was joined by another on 28th and 29th.

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

Marsh Harrier First half-year

Severnside – April 13th and 15th;

Portishead – at Battery Point one flew in from the Estuary then to S on April 25th;

Bath – at Upper Weston to N on April 14th;

CVL – the January records are listed above. Noted in February on 8th, 10th and 17th, in March on 7th and 19th, and during May on 3rd, 12th, 14th and 15th;

BL – Jan. 10th and May 25th;

Weston STW – April 26th.

Second half-year

Cl-Y – to NW along the River Yeo on Sept. 10th;

CVL – juveniles in August on 15th, 16th and 19th, in September on 7th and 8th, two on Dec. 12th and one the following day.

2008 – at OPS on April 5th and to NE on May 3rd.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

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

A poor year with just a single record, a juvenile flew in from the Estuary then to SE over Northwick Warth on Sept. 19th (BL, RFR).

HARRIER sp. *Circus sp.*

Females or immatures at OPS on April 19th (MP) and Aug. 11th (WK), both were probably Hen Harrier.

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

Very scarce visitor and resident.
Description species

Despite a relatively healthy population nearby in the Forest of Dean and Lower Wye Valley this species remains a very scarce visitor and resident in the Avon area.

Since 2008 a pair has been regularly reported from a site in *SG*. At present it is not the committee's intention to publish full details but further information such as evidence of breeding success would be welcome as this species is monitored nationally by the Rare Breeding Birds Panel (*Eds*).

Scarce Raptors in the Avon Area

Year	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Honey Buzzard	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Red Kite	5	1	4	6	3	17	11	24	31	62
Marsh Harrier	8	7	4	15	2	11	8	6	29	52
Hen Harrier	2	1	6	7	3	3	3	4	14	1
Montagu's Harrier	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	0
Goshawk	9	1	2	2	0	0	1	0	3*	0*
Osprey	14	7	4	3	4	10	6	12	13	14

Bird-day totals for the last 20 years

* Bird-day totals exclude records from the *SG* site.

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

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

A very poor year with just 367 records received, the least since 2002 when the total was slightly lower at 356. As in 2008, the spread of records across the year was reasonably even, most were in April and September both parts of the display and dispersal periods but neither was particularly significant. Few were noted at the peak of the nesting cycle in June and July, or during the last quarter of the year.

The table below shows the distribution of records for 2009 and the previous five years:

Monthly distribution of records													
Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
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
2008	48	41	49	49	43	37	33	59	33	39	34	37	502
2009	39	33	43	29	36	28	20	37	45	18	22	17	367

Breeding The assessment of the number breeding in 2009 was less than the preceding year but was closer to the norm. The *SG* total was similar to 2007 but has fallen from the 2008 peak. The totals were 13 in *SG*, 32 in *BA* and *NS* and ten in and around *Bristol*.

	1990-99 Av	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
SG	11	8	8	7	12	16	10	16	11	24	13
BA and NS	31	36	30	32	37	30	29	36	34	35	32
Bristol	12	13	17	13	13	6	13	11	10	9	10
Total	54	57	55	52	62	52	52	63	55	68	55

Breeding sites

Three pairs were found around CVL but the number of young fledged was not reported (*cf*. three in 2006, 2007 and 2008 when seven, four and four young fledged, respectively).

Prey species reported Few reports but notes referred to a few Blackbirds and a Wood Pigeon.

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.

Another average year, overall breeding success appeared to be slightly higher than in the preceding couple of years. Records received totalled 885, the lowest since 2003, many of these were in the display period during April and May but few were noted in November. As stated in recent reports, "the overall population seems to have stabilised" and this year just two more territories were found in RJP's study area.

Monthly distribution of records													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
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
2008	88	113	114	110	104	85	55	60	67	42	39	63	940
2009	76	59	90	145	102	91	48	66	78	51	32	47	885

Breeding RJP's study area, which covers some 75km^2 of Failand and Gordano, had an average year, 99 pairs held territories, two more than in 2008 which was a record. Of the 79 nests that were checked 47 were successful, 73 young fledged and the remaining 32 failed to produce any young.

The table set out below gives an assessment of the number of breeding sites in the Avon area in 2009 and the previous nine years as well as the ten-year average from 1990 to 1999. Included are the results of RJP's studies in the Failand/Gordano area, and an estimate of numbers in the southern 60km^2 of ST66 based on JH's survey work from 1991 to 2004.

Year	1990-99 Av	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
SG	24	28	28	27	29	44	25	49	39	45	46
BA and NS	101	154	165	169	174	196	196	206	213	202	211
Bristol	2	4	8	8	9	12	16	14	12	9	8

Breeding sites

Year	1990-99 Av	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Active nest sites	47	79	83	84	84	85	88	90	92	97	99
Chicks fledged	50	58	83	51	66	107	92	50	80	47	73
Successful nests	30	46	56	38	40	60	56	37	52	33	47
Brood success ratio	1.70	1.26	1.48	1.34	1.65	1.78	1.64	1.35	1.54	1.42	1.55

RJP's Study Area

Buzzard con't
At CVL, nine nests were found (*cf.* five in 2007 and 2008) breeding was confirmed at seven of these but the number of young fledged was unknown.

Large groups/counts Most counts in double figures were noted from late February to late May and then on single dates in August and September. They were: ten at Weston Big Wood on Feb. 25th, in March ten at Northwick Warth on 4th and 15th, eleven at Severn Beach on the latter date and Clevedon on 29th. During April ten at CVL on 4th and Northwick Warth on 11th, then in May at Clutton on 24th and Marshfield on 31st. Twelve were seen at CVL on Aug. 8th and ten at Weston Moor on Sept. 6th.

Steep Holm One on March 31st, later in the year the corpse of a juvenile was found on Sept. 5th, it was assessed to have died ten days earlier. In 2008 no records were received from the island but there were 32 during 2006 and 2007.

Bristol Often noted over suburban areas on the periphery of the city, records elsewhere were as follows. Over Horfield Common to W on Jan. 24th, during April two over Totterdown on 2nd, one over Henleaze two days later, then at Redland on 15th and Cotham on 28th. At the Feeder Canal on May 20th, nearby at St. Philips on Sept. 29th, at Henleaze and Redland to E on the last day of the year.

Other notes Pale morphs. One with pale underwing coverts at BL on March 14th, another between Over and Pilning on July 12th and at St. Thomas's Head on Oct. 29th.

Ringing recovery One recently killed and thought to have been hit by a vehicle was found between Portbury and Clevedon on Jan. 10th. It was ringed as a nestling at Failand on June 14th, 1996. The BTO longevity record for this species is 24 years, 7 months and 5 days.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*
Scarce passage migrant; most records are from the reservoirs.

Another good year and the best since 1994. Most were reported between mid-August and mid-September, all records refer to single individuals.

CVL – The first record was on March 22nd at Nunnery Pt., in August noted on 9th, 22nd, 23rd and 24th, then on Sept 12th.

Elsewhere – In April at Cameley/Temple Cloud area on 2nd and 3rd, Cl-Y to N on 15th and Lower Knole Farm, Almondsbury on 19th. During August at Woolley near Bath to S on 9th, Clifton/Durdham Down, Bristol on 22nd, Northwick Warth to S at 10.25am on 29th, noted shortly afterwards over Pilning. One over New Passage to S on Sept. 12th.

Other notes The reports from the Cameley/Temple Cloud area on April 2nd and 3rd were of a satellite tagged individual named 'Beatrice' and her full life history and migration details can be found on the Highland Foundation for Wildlife's website at www.roydennis.org. 'Beatrice' had wintered along the Rio Guadiaro on SE coast of Andalusia, Spain having arrived there on Sept. 1st in 2008, her northward migration commenced on March 6th. She reached the English Channel coast near Cherbourg, France at 10am on April 2nd, four hours later she was over Compton Bay, Isle of Wight and by 7pm she was perched in trees near Cameley having flown 230 kilometres during the day. The next day fog was believed to have prevented an early departure and 'Beatrice' was still at the roost site at 11am, an hour later reported as perched on a wooded hillside to E of Temple Cloud. Migration commenced shortly afterwards and at 1pm she was at a height of 282 metres over north Bristol heading to NNW. The migration route continued via Ross-on-Wye, Hereford, Tenbury Wells and Much Wenlock, she eventually roosted on the north side of a 'distinctive hill' near Beeston Castle, Cheshire. Arrival at the Speyside nest site was on April 5th.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*
Fairly common breeding resident.

An average year for this species with breeding activity noted at 90 sites, somewhat lower than in the preceding three years. The number of records received was similar to 2007 but this was much lower than in the 2008 when the total was the highest ever at 754, only in seven years have records received exceeded 700, see second table below.

The first table below gives the monthly total of reports for 2009 and the previous five years. Although records were quite evenly spread across the year many were in April and June, with few in February and November:

Kestrel con't

Monthly distribution of records													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
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
2008	67	81	74	76	65	70	64	49	45	54	47	62	754
2009	45	35	62	81	48	91	50	60	55	55	35	50	667

Years when the total number of records received exceeded 700							
	1984	1985	1988	1989	1993	1994	2008
Total records received	738	720	750	736	721	723	754

Breeding An average year in the Avon area, noted in the breeding season at 90 sites, 31 in *SG*, 53 in *BA* and *NS* and six in *Bristol*, this was the lowest number in *BA* and *NS* since 1998 when reported at 51 sites. In the preceding three years present at over 100 sites (*cf.* 108 in 2006, 100 in 2007 and 103 in 2008).

CVL, two pairs were believed to be present on the west side of the lake but their breeding success was unknown.

In *Bristol* present for the second successive year at 'A' Bond, Hotwells, this site was also used in 2005.

	1990-99 Av	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
SG	22	24	22	21	19	24	17	29	25	36	31
BA and NS	52	66	58	49	79	57	60	72	68	63	53
Bristol	9	9	7	9	11	5	5	7	7	4	6
Total	83	99	87	79	109	86	82	108	100	103	90

Breeding sites

Other notes On Steep Holm a female or immature was noted on Oct. 18th.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

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

An average year for this species in the Avon area with a total of 84 bird-days (*cf.* 143 in 2008). During the year there were 62 bird-days in the first half-year and 22 in the second half. Most were in January, February, March, April and December with 17, 22, 14, 9 and 10 days, respectively. As usual many of the records were from Severnside with 65 bird-days, 50 in the first half-year but just 15 in the second half-year.

The details are as follows, records refer to single females or immatures unless stated otherwise, and give sites and dates when present. Counts at Cl-Y were well down on those of a few years ago:

First half-year

OPS – Jan. 3rd and 17th;

Severnside – reported on 44 dates from Jan. 1st to April 28th, males were seen on 34 dates, probably the same individual, a male and female were noted on Feb. 15th, March 13th and 20th, the following day a male and two females were present;

Cl-Y – Feb 7th and March 31st;

Axe Estuary/Weston STW – Feb. 7th and 15th, a male was noted on the former date.

Second half-year

Severnside – reported on 14 dates from Sept. 2nd to the year end, on three dates in September, one in October, two in November and eight in December, a male was seen on Dec. 4th and 31st, a male and female on 24th;

PW – Sept. 27th;

Cl-Y – Oct. 15th and Dec. 17th;

Axe Estuary/Weston STW – Aug. 23rd. The earliest record for the Avon area was at New Passage on Aug. 5th in 2006, other Avon area records for August were: 7th in 1990, 23rd in 1981 and 31st in 1996.

Inland - First half-year

Marshfield on Jan. 15th, Feb. 2nd, 3rd and 5th, at Dundry on Jan. 3rd and near Pilning on 19th.

Inland - Second half-year

In November at CVL on 5th and BL the next day, and at North Level, Puxton on 11th.

Year	1990-99 Av	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Avon area	52	73	60	70	107	127	101	93	76	143	84
Severnside	20	22	34	32	59	98	53	57	69	93	65

Merlin - Bird-days per year

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

Uncommon passage migrant and scarce breeding summer visitor.

Migration dates: Forty-year average first date April 25th. Forty-year average last date Oct. 2nd.

Another normal year in the Avon area.

Arrival First recorded in April at CVL, two on 19th and 27th, single birds on 25th and 28th. Elsewhere, in *SG* at Lower Woods on 21st and 26th, Severn Beach on the latter date, *NS* at Sand Point on 22nd, Weston-s-Mare to E the next day, BG on 25th and 26th, PW on the former date, BL on 28th, and in *BA* at Clutton on 25th.

The earliest arrival dates in the preceding five years were all in April: 15th in 2004, 21st in 2005, 14th in 2006, 26th in 2007 and 17th in 2008.

Breeding Confirmed at four sites one in *SG*, two in *NS,* and one in *BA*.

SG – one site was located and one young fledged.

NS – two sites were located and these were just over two kilometres apart, three and one young fledged respectively.

BA – one site was located and two young fledged.

Breeding was suspected at a further nine sites one in *SG* and four in both *NS* and *BA*.

	1990-99 Av	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
SG	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2
NS	2	4	3	2	2	4	4	4	6	3	5
BA	4	7	8	6	6	4	5	4	4	5	5
Total	8	13	13	9	10	10	10	10	12	10	13

Breeding status both confirmed and suspected

Other sightings From April 19th to Oct. 13th reported from a total of 41 localities, 14 in *SG* and 24 in *BA* and *NS*, and in *Bristol* over Montrose Avenue, Redland on June 1st and July 15th, at Whitchurch on July 28th, and Withywood on Aug. 18th.

Number of localities per month where birds were observed (including CVL)							
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct
SG	2	6	3	3	6	5	0
Bristol	0	0	1	2	1	0	0
BA & NS	7	8	16	9	11	9	1
Total	9	14	20	14	18	14	1

CVL Regularly reported at this site with one or two often seen, three reported on May 14th, Aug. 29th and Sept. 6th. First report of two on April 19th, a day earlier than in 2008 then on three other dates in April, six in May, three in June, five in July, eleven in August and 16 in September. The last record of the year was on Oct. 13th, three days later than 2008, when one was seen chasing a small falcon probably another Hobby.

Departure There was just one report in October, the late records were as follows:

SG – Marshfield on Sept. 13th;

NS – Congresbury Moor on Sept. 28th;

BA – CVL on Sept. 25th, 27th and Oct. 13th.

The latest dates for the Avon area, all but one in October, were: 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 poor year with the lowest number of young fledged since 2001.

In the Avon Gorge a pair nested successfully on the Clifton/Durdham Down side but only one chick fledged, this was the lowest productivity since 2000 when the pair failed. Last bred on the Leigh Woods side of the Avon Gorge in 1996 and 2005.

Year	1990-99 Av	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
No. of juveniles fledged	2	0	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	5	1

Breeding success in the Avon Gorge

On Steep Holm one or two were often present from March 30th to Oct. 4th but breeding did not occur.

St. John's Church, Bath was used for the fourth consecutive year, four eggs were laid, two chicks hatched both were ringed but one died, the other fledged successfully. See paper on page 153 regarding the diet of this pair.

Wick Quarry Here three young were reported in the nest on June 11th, all fledged (*cf*. two in 2007 and 2008).

Other undisclosed sites

SG Present at three sites (*cf*. three in 2008 and four young fledged) all were on man-made structures. One was used successfully for the fourth consecutive year and two young fledged. Frequent at the other two sites but there was no evidence of breeding success. Six were seen interacting together at one of the sites on Feb. 22nd.

NS Located at four sites (*cf.* two in 2008 and four young fledged), at one of these a single egg was laid but it failed to hatch, failure was recorded at two of the others and at the fourth site two juveniles fledged.

BA Reported from one site (*cf.* one site in 2008 pair failed to breed) yet again they were unsuccessful at this locality.

Bristol Noted at one site and two fledged successfully.

Year	1990-99 Av	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
No. of sites occupied	3.5	7	6	13	8	9	14	15	12	11	13
No. of birds fledged	7.3	6	11	25	13	17	13	13	21	20	11
No. of successful nests	3	3	4	10	5	8	8	7	9	7	6

Breeding success

Non-breeding records OPS, Severnside and Cl-Y – Frequent at these well-watched sites, noted throughout the year with 136, 127 and 59 bird-days, respectively.

Possibly under recorded at the other coastal sites.

Monthly bird-days for other coastal sites, CVL and BL

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Littleton Warth			1								1	2	3
RPD/PW	1			1									2
Portishead	2			1									3
Sand Point/Sand Bay				1				1	1			1	4
Weston-s-Mare	1	2	1			5	2	1	1				13
Weston STW		1	1	4	1	1	1	3	2	1		1	15
CVL	6	2	1	2	2		1	1	9	6	4	5	39
BL		1	2	1	1				1	2	1	1	10

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

First half-year

Bristol On Jan. 12th over the Bristol Royal Infirmary at 10am, also noted nearby at Marlborough Street and College Green on the same day, during February at Temple Meads on 11th and at St. Anne's the next day, at Temple Quay on 18th, Brislington on 21st, at Bedminster on April 23rd and 24th, over R. Avon at Southville on June 23rd and over Redland on 28th;

Bath Reported over the city centre and at St John's Church nest site from Feb. 2nd;

SG During January at Yate on 3rd, Marshfield on 6th and Tormarton on 21st, at Bromley Heath on Feb. 7th and Westerleigh on March 22nd. In April at Hanham on 16th and Lower Woods on 26th, during May at Gaunt's Earthcott on 9th and Yate on 16th and 22nd, and at Fishpool Hill on June 16th;

NS In January at Congresbury Moor on 5th and at BG on 10th and 31st, nearby at Dundry on 15th and two the next day at Lulsgate, at Wrington on 6th, three on Feb. 3rd and June 20th. At Cadbury Camp on Feb. 22nd, at Tickenham on March 7th and Yatton on April 29th;

BA At Lower Littleton on Feb. 15th, at Keynsham on Feb. 16th, April 5th and 20th, nearby at Charlton Fields on April 28th. At Saltford on March 31st and April 8th.

Peregrine Second half-year

Bristol During July at Netham on 13th and Hotwells on 22nd, in November perched on St. Mary Redcliffe Church on 10th and over Bishopston the next day, at Stokes Croft on 25th, on a Bonded Warehouse at Hotwells on 28th, and two at St. Philip's on Dec. 8th;

Bath At St. John's Church on July 31st, two on Sept. 15th and two on Dec. 16th. At St. Luke's Church on Nov. 27th and Dec. 5th;

SG In July at Downend on 11th and Sept. 13th, at Abbey Wood on 31st. Two at Tormarton on Aug. 16th, at Over on Sept. 22nd, and Chipping Sodbury on Dec. 13th;

NS At Yatton on July 31st and Sept. 13th, during August two at Wrington on 5th, at Kenn Moor on 24th, Congresbury Moor on 29th, Oct. 1st and 2nd, and Dec. 11th. Also at BG on Dec. 12th;

BA At Keynsham on Nov. 8th, Dec. 1st, 9th and 21st, nearby at Burnett on Dec. 18th. Also at Paulton on Nov. 22nd.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

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

An average year with reports received from around 20 sites peaking with 15 from CVL in January. The highest single count was 4+ from Moreton Hide on Feb. 12th.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
16	15	18	16	14	16	24	23	23	20

Number of sites reported from each year

CVL – Reported from January to the end of March and again from the end of June to the year end with day counts from the whole lake of nine on Jan. 7th; four on Feb. 7th; eight on 19th; and twelve on March 18th. On Jan. 10th, four were coming to bird seed, jam sandwiches, and a road-kill Pied Wagtail put down for them at Herriotts.

CVL – Breeding Recorded at six sites around the lake with at least two males singing and at least 2 juveniles subsequently recorded.

CVL – Autumn/winter 2009/10 Present in good numbers when water floods the main reed beds; in 2009 water levels were generally low generating average figures.

Year	2000/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	2009/10
Est. winter pop'n	41 (50)	8	44	3+	n/a	n/a	15	41	36	30

CVL wintering (Nov. - Feb.) population

Severnside – first winter period Single birds unless stated otherwise:

Northwick Warth – Jan. 17th and 26th, and Feb. 8th;

Severn Beach – Jan. 3rd and 18th, Feb. 15th, and March 13th and 15th;

Chittening Warth – Jan. 1st (two), 7th, Feb. 8th (three), 10th, 15th, 17th and 28th, and March 14th, 15th and 17th;

Grebe Pond – Jan. 17th and Feb. 7th;

Orchard Pools – March 1st, 5th, 13th, 16th and 22nd.

Severnside – second winter period:

Northwick Warth – Dec. 28th;

Severn Beach – Oct. 23rd and Dec. 10th;

Chittening Warth – Dec. 27th.

PW Two on Jan. 7th with single birds on 1st, 18th, 26th and 28th; two on March 1st with single birds on 5th and 12th; one on Oct. 5th with sightings to the 21st, and one on Nov. 6th and 17th.

SG One or two regular at OPS with six records in January, eight in February, one in March and October, two in November and one in December. Two birds noted in January and December.

Also recorded from Leap Valley, Downend where single birds were noted on Feb. 7th, Dec. 24th, 26th and 30th with two present on 31st; two on Dyer's Common on Feb. 24th; and one at Emersons Green on Dec. 26th.
BA Single birds at Keynsham on Jan. 29th and March 10th; and at Dundas Aquaduct on Dec.26th.

NS Recorded from seven sites in 2009 as follows (*cf.* four in 2005, eight in 2006 and 2007 and ten in 2008):

Axe Estuary – one on Feb. 15th;

Backwell Lake – one on Jan. 7th;

BL – one on Jan. 1st, 23rd and 24th, two on 2nd with three on 4th; one on Feb. 7th and 15th with two on 20th; one, a male on March 6th; one on Sept. 22nd; one on Oct. 16th and 31st, up to four on 18th with two on 27th; one on Nov. 8th; one on Dec. 19th with two on 12th and 31st;

Cl-Y – one on March 8th; one on Blake's Pool on Sept. 28th and Dec.11th;

Congresbury Moor – single birds on Feb. 20th and on Dec. 21st;

Weston Moor – two on Jan. 31st;

Weston STW – one on Jan. 17th, one on March 6th; two on 11th; three on Aug. 25th with one on 29th, two on Sept. 28th; two on Oct. 1st with one on 31st, two on Nov. 28th, and one on Dec. 30th.

SPOTTED CRAKE *Porzana porzana*

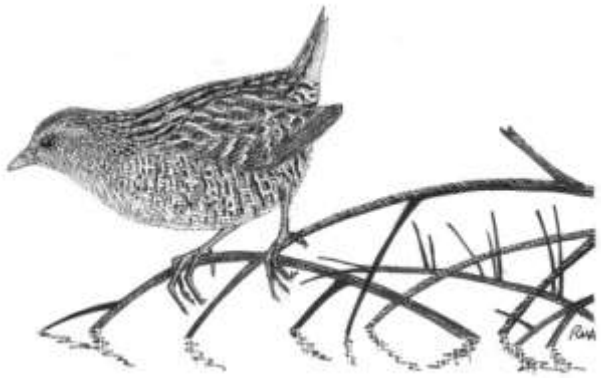
Scarce passage migrant. Most records from CVL in August and September.
Description species

A Spotted Crake was seen briefly at CVL on a small pool in the nature reserve near the ringing station early on Sept. 26th and again on Oct. 1st (MB).

This is the eleventh individual to be recorded in the Avon area in the last ten years with notable absences in 2002 and 2006.

Year	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
No. of individuals seen	1	2	0	2	1	1	0	1	2	1

Number of individuals recorded



MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Fairly common breeding resident. Seen in large numbers at the reservoirs in late summer/autumn.

WeBS status: CVL is currently 13th in the list of sites of National Importance.
Population change in England 1996-2006; up 10%.

The counts at CVL were up on previous years but again lower than average at BL. The higher counts were probably due to ease of counting caused when low water forces birds into the open.

Year	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
CVL	185	165	105	245	125	80	90	55	70	180
BL	60	129	75	132	46	105	82	30	21	38

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

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	3	4	5	3	3	5	5	3	3	3	2	2
R Avon, Keynsham	40	31									17	35
CVL	25	20	20	10	10	25	65	125	180	135	85	35
BL	21	8	6	5	5	2	38	16	19	8	16	13
Weston STW	4	3	5	6	2	6	12	14	24	18	11	6

Recorded in small numbers from another 41 sites (55 in 2008). Double figure counts were noted as follows: ten at Emersons Green on Jan. 1st with twelve on both June 27th and Aug. 8th; twelve at Backwell Lake on Jan. 2nd, ten on Aug. 14th, and Nov. 6th; 35 at Avon Wildlife Park on Jan. 15th, 41 on Feb. 4th and eleven on Oct. 14th; ten between Temple Meads and Netham on May 1st; eleven Axe Estuary (Severn) on Aug. 23rd with 22 on Sept. 20th; ten at Walborough on Oct. 26th; 16 at Chew Magna Reservoir on Oct. 29th; twelve at Keynsham Memorial Park and 18 at Keynsham Mill Grounds on Dec. 8th.

Moorhen Breeding Breeding confirmed at CVL (14 pairs nested) and BL, with ten additional sites (*cf.* 19 in 2008) as follows: Backwell Lake (two young on Aug. 14th and three young on Aug. 31st), Redcliffe Bridge, Bristol (two young on June 8th), Compton Martin (adult with five juveniles on Aug. 8th), Conham, River Avon (two young on May 31st), Emersons Green (ten young), Oveston Village Pond (one young on Aug. 8th), Tortworth Lake (one young on Aug. 8th), Weston Moor (one young on Aug. 8th), Weston STW (six juveniles) and Winford Brook (three juveniles).

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	96	93	80	121	113	142	147	151	105

Avon BBS Index

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 seventeenth in the list of sites of National Importance.
Avon BBS Index 2009 = 89 2009 BBS distribution 8%.

A mixed year by recent standards as the first table below shows. Good growths of water weed due to calm settled weather in early summer led to higher numbers at CVL this year.

Year	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
CVL	3500	2360	3715	3285	3335	2210	2360	2095	2020	3050
BL	1012	2846	1740	1990	2080	3151	1400	2323	1403	970

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

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Tortworth		22	26				15	21		22		
OPS	1	1	1									
ASW	12	8		1	2		4					
PW	8			3			30				23	
Backwell Lake	21			7	10	4				25	35	36
BG	198	89	62	21	20	91	187	240	155	169	80	73
CVL	270	290	340	395	435	1470	1910	2760	3050	2090	885	355
BL	400	313	203	251	230	463	446	970	600	544	210	371
Axe Estuary	8	31	13	15			38	98	93	120	14	57
Weston STW	16	31	16	17	28	25	63	101	127	134	59	62

Other records Recorded from a further 24 sites (36 in 2008) with highest counts from; Chew Magna Reservoir (maximum count of 16), Newton Park (ten), and Walborough (60).

Breeding Bred at Backwell Lake (two broods, six young), BL (five broods), CVL (27 broods), Orchard Pools (two broods), Prior Park Batch, Tortworth (seven broods, 17 young), Weston STW (seven broods, 17 juveniles), Yeo Bank Farm, CI-Y (two juveniles);

Year	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
No. of young	254	119	110	91	102	9	70	91+	61	77+
No. of broods	100	53	50	41	44	4	34	41	28	27
No. of nests	100	110	88	116	121	n/c	112	91	96	67

No. of young, broods and nests at CVL

A colour ringed individual was noted on April 18th at CVL having been ringed at Radipole RSPB Reserve in Dorset on Nov. 1st, 2008. On May 22nd one was heard calling at 22.50 as it flew over a Whitchurch garden.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

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

YEAR	Severnside	CI-Y	Sand Bay	Axe Est.	Ave
1989/90 - 1998/99 Av.	34	13	27	79	38
1999/00 - 2006/07 Av.	78	24	12	76	47
2007/08	75	34	33	124	67
2008/09	79	30	22	78	52

August to February average counts

The status table above shows only minor changes in the fortunes of this species over the past few years, but the high Axe Estuary count in 2007/08 was not repeated in 2008/09. Also the monthly maxima table below suggests that the 2009/10 figures will also show little major change. Less breeding activity was noted as detailed below. The only non-tabulated report was of one at BG on Aug. 10th.

Monthly maxima at main sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	25	20	10	4	3	4	11	4	1		1	3
Littleton Warth	27	2	8	3		4		1			9	8
Severnside	90	105	80	44	38	18	55	42	55	42	93	100
PW/RPD			35	2	2		7		1	7		2
Cl-Y	26	24	23	32	24	9	12	42	47	39	38	24
Sand Bay	26	20	19	12	5		2	1		1+	36	30
Axe Est.	48	42	69	25	44	1	54	100	91	32	17	96
CVL		1	1		1		4	2				
BL		1		1	1		3	1	2			1

Breeding Nesting activity was noted at three sites (five in 2008), the details are as follows:

PW – a nest, first seen on April 25th, produced two chicks by May 28th, one disappeared on June 2nd and the second was still present on 20th; a pair was nesting again on July 3rd, outcome unknown;

Cl-Y – at least two pairs were displaying intermittently from late April to early June but no nests were found or young seen;

Steep Holm – one to three were present from late March to July and a nest with three eggs was noted on June 10th, it was predated by 20th probably by gulls.

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Scarce winter visitor/ passage migrant. Rare inland.

An average series of sightings was reported in 2009 but no count was over two, and all sightings were from coastal sites, the details are as follows. The table gives the total number of individuals seen in each year during the past decade.

Severnside - one (on Aust Warth) on Jan. 1st and 3rd, one on Aug. 2nd, two on 23rd, and one on Sept. 13th;

PW – single birds on Aug. 12th and 13th, and on Sept. 12th and 13th;

Cl-Y – one on March 15th.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
4	11	12	9	6	14	4	6	15	8

Total number of individuals per year

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

Uncommon passage migrant, generally more numerous in autumn. Scarce as a breeding species.

Migration dates: Forty year average first date April 7th. Forty year average last date Sept. 17th.

As in 2008 noted at six sites, one of which was new, from March 14th (see the OPS entry below) to Sept. 23rd, although there was only one sighting between May 3rd and July 10th. Breeding occurred at BG. In the **2008 Report** it was stated that there were no successful nests at this site in 2008, but late information indicates that this was wrong. A pair did produce four chicks in late April which did not survive probably being predated. The details for 2009 are given below.

OPS – one on March 14th, this is the earliest date that this species has occurred in Avon (the previous earliest was 16th, in 2001 at Severnside), also two on 29th, and one on April 6th;

ASW/ Hoar Gout – three on March 30th, two on April 3rd and one on 21st;

Severnside – single birds on April 7th, July 15th and 24th, and Sept. 18th;

Cl-Y – single birds on July 21st and 23rd, and Aug. 6th;

BG – two on March 31st, then three or four up to April 20th, two on June 1st and again on July 10th. A nest with four eggs was noted in early April which produced four chicks that did not survive (as in 2008 they were probably predated). A second nest contained another four chicks on July 10th, it was thought that they all survived;

CVL – one on April 6th and two on 11th, then one on Aug.15th, two juveniles from 30th to Sept. 6th, and one on 23rd.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

Uncommon winter visitor, and fairly common passage migrant (most numerous in autumn). Small numbers occur inland on passage. Scarce breeder.

Two races: *hiaticula* breeding Canada and N W Europe and *tundrae* breeding N Scandinavia to Siberia. Most occurring in Avon are *hiaticula* but a few *tundrae* may occur.

WeBS status: In 2007/08 the Estuary was 14th in National Importance for passage (there are six sites of International Importance).

Counts in the first-winter period were as usual mainly in single figures, but the figures to hand suggest that the second-winter period produced some slightly better counts. The spring passage was weak, the only count over 60 was 110 noted at Severn Beach on May 17th. The autumn passage was more normal as is shown by both

tables below, as in 2008 better than average counts were reported from Cl-Y, the highest here being 310 on Aug. 23rd.

YEAR	OPS	Severnside	Cl-Y	Ave
1989/90 - 1998/99 Av.	27:193	16:339	21:110	21:214
1999/00 - 2006/07 Av.	10:47	16:279	14:101	13:142
2007/08	6:66	21:170	14:230	14:155
2008/09	3:119	7:203	10:240	7:187

Ringed Plover - Winter (Oct. to Feb.): Autumn passage (Aug. and Sept.) average counts

The second table below summarises the counts for the main sites. The only non-tabulated reports were twelve at Littleton Warth on Aug. 23rd, one at BG on May 10th and at BL on Aug. 1st.

Fortnightly or monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	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– 30			
OPS	2	1			1	19			3	7	170	68	6	13	6	7
Severnside	6	8	4	7	10	60	110	70	5	130	350	55	20	13	14	10
PW	12	21			2					60	135	120	51	2	25	19
Cl-Y	11	8	4		8	36	28	4	11	38	310	170	75	15	27	13
Sand Bay						43					90					
Axe E./Weston STW		15									9	28			40	50
CVL						1				1	11	4	3	13		

Breeding As in 2008 nesting was only recorded in Avonmouth Docks where four or five pairs attempted to breed, that is had nests containing some eggs. Most were unsuccessful but one pair did produce three chicks which survived. This compares with nine nests in 2007 and eight in 2008.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

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

1990/99 Av.	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
1156	1989	(992)	2025	2020	3310	1475	2460	3336	1790	1966

Total for the year of the maximum monthly counts for all main sites

Up to late December counts were normal as is shown by the tables and the details given below. But at the onset of the cold weather just before Christmas there was clearly a major movement through our region, unfortunately mostly on a day when many birders (especially coastal) were otherwise engaged. The following counts were received for Dec 23rd, some of flocks feeding and some of flocks passing through.

ASW – 13
Blaise Estate, Bristol – 20
Bishopston, Bristol – 11
Redland Green, Bristol – 50
Keynsham – 17
Clutton – 30
CVL – 14
Yatton – 35
Weston STW – 300

The remaining records from the regularly watched sites are tabulated below. Birds were present up to April 10th, and from Aug. 28th onwards except that two were noted at Cl-Y on June 4th.

Monthly maxima at regularly watched sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	23	10								5
Severnside		23					1	1	1	
Cl-Y	1	50				8	1	4		1
Wrington	7			21						
Tog Hill			205							72
Marshfield*	27		200	100				300	47	
Lansdown	67		36	36				130		120

* including West Littleton Down

The Bath Peregrines took seven during the year, see page 153.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

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

YEAR	Severnside	Cl-Y	Ave
1989/90 -1998/99 Av.	12	34	23
1999/00 - 2006/07 Av.	9	23	16
2007/08	8	33	21
2008/09	5	18	12

September to March average counts

A poor year. Noted up to May 15th, and from Aug. 9th onwards, so unusually there were no records for nearly three months during the summer. As normal the highest counts came from Cl-Y where February was the best month. Away from this site the only counts over four were 18 at Severnside on Oct. 20th and 30 at Sand Bay on Nov. 24th which may have included birds displaced from Cl-Y. The table below summarises the counts, the only non-tabulated count was of one at PW on April 10th.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	:	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Littleton Warth	1								2		
Severnside	3	1		2	4			2	18	1	2
Cl-Y	32	52	16				3	6	16	20	31
Sand Bay	4									30	

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 2007/08 the Estuary was tenth in National Importance (there are five sites of International Importance).

Year	Severnside	Cl-Y	CVL	Av.
1989/90 - 1998/99 Av.	329	268	461	353
1999/00 - 2006/07 Av.	278	277	216	257
2007/08	215	474	108	266
2008/09	262	680	347	428

August to February average counts

The status table suggests that good numbers were present in the 2008/09 winter which was on the cold side. No clear idea is available for the 2009/10 winter yet as the severe cold spell only started at the end of 2009. About 7760 were present in January 2009, this compares with 4840 in 2008 and a ten-year average of about 7000. In December the figure was 3450, as noted above the cold weather only really set in during the last week of the year. This figure is up on that for 2008, which was 2770, but in line with the ten-year average of about 3600. Note that as has become the norm no large flocks were seen outside the winter periods.

The main table below summarises the counts from the well-watched sites. The largest flocks in the first-winter period were 1000 at CVL, moving S, on Jan. 15th and 2000 at Cl-Y on the 25th. In the second-winter period the largest flock was again from Cl-Y with 850 on Dec. 27th. This last count was probably a cold-weather movement but, unlike Golden Plover, no major movements were noted in the last ten days of the year. Non-tabulated counts of 50 or more included in January: Dyer's Common 660, Englishcombe (Bath) 50, Flax Bourton 190 and Winford 175; and in December: Doynton 100, Wick 200, Keynsham 50, Bishopston (Bristol) 50 moving SW (on 21st), Kenn Moor 120 and Congresbury Moor 165.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	760	750	2	1	3	2	2	18	42	300	200	490
Littleton Warth	5	91	1							68	14	
Severnside	350	1000	2	1			1	1	2	60	165	300
ASW				1			11	11				110
R. Avon, Sea Mills	350	180	1	1			28	35		60	85	100
PW	250	195				5						205
Cl-Y	2000	2000	24	10	10	12	42	2	13	95	185	800
Axe Est./Weston STW	650	80	5						30	63	100	350
Wrington	175	102										57
Batheaston Oxbow Reserve		140										40
BG		80	3		1	1	4	4	6	5		160
CVL	1000	20		2	2	30	63	55	52	142	350	170
BL	250	150				5	10	16	16	50	17	6

Lapwing Ringing report One colour-ringed as a chick on the Ouse Washes in Cambridgeshire in July 2001 was seen at CVL on Sept. 12th when it was over eight years old.

Breeding The recent decline that began in 2006 continued into 2009. Nesting activity was only recorded at seven sites (ten in 2008), the details are given below. Single birds were noted at ASW on April 30th, at Marshfield on May 17th and at Rudgeway on 26th, but as these were one-day sightings they are not included in the totals tabulated below. Also 22 were reported at Sleight Farm on June 22nd, this farm used to be a breeding site, but again as there were no reports prior to this date these birds are not included in the totals.

All reports of this species during the breeding season, however minor, are welcome. (*Eds*.)

1990/99 Av.	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
46	61	Nc	42	52	38	44-47	25	14-15	11-20	11+

Number of pairs either present, displaying and/or nesting

All breeding season records are listed below.

OPS – up to four were present between April and June, distraction display in June suggested that at least one nest had been successful in a maize field at the site;

Cl-Y, Dowlais Farm – this site which is managed under the Higher Level Stewardship scheme providing scrapes and raised water levels, is now probably the best in Avon! At least three pairs nested successfully. Three chicks were noted on April 24th with two still present on May 10th, one or two new chicks were noted on May 27th, and finally another new chick was seen on June 18th;

Norton Hawkfield – one nest was reported in May;

Doynton – two were present on April 2nd;

Sutton Hill – up to six birds were seen displaying from late April to early June;

Norton Malreward – two were present on May 9th;

Compton Dando – three were noted on May 12th.

KNOT *Calidris canutus*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant, mostly in autumn. Scarce inland.

Two races, *islandica* (nearctic) and *canutus* (Siberian), occur in the UK. Recent research suggests that birds of the latter race only occur in small numbers on the east coast. So it seems likely most occurring in Avon are *islandica*.

Webs status: In 2007/08 the Estuary was 14th in the list of sites of International Importance.

1990/99 Av.	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
548	1055	(94)	542	386	411	1520	172	595	293	462

Total for the year of the maximum monthly counts for coastal sites

The status line shows an average year, but more than half of the total was made up by two counts in January, at Sand Bay (200, a good count for this site) on 3rd and at Cl-Y (60) on 15th. As last year there was virtually no spring passage and the autumn passage was weak, the only count over 14 was of 30 at Cl-Y on Sept. 3rd. The main table summarises the counts, none was noted between May 25th and Aug. 1st.

Monthly maxima at coastal sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	:	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	1						4	1	1		
Severnside	7	5	50	6	1		14	7	1		
PW								2			15
Cl-Y	60	21	3	1			14	30	2	1	8
Sand Bay/Axe Est.	200	2						1			2
CVL								4	1		

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

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

Counts were in line with those of the past few years, that is generally on the low side. Apart from one or two noted at the Axe Estuary in March and December, all sightings were between April 19th and May 24th, and between July 15th and Sept 21st, the largest count was 14 at Sand Bay on May 14th. The details are as follows, note that the highest counts during spring passage at most sites were on May 13th or 14th.

OPS – single birds on Aug. 16th and Sept. 3rd;

Severnside – ten on April 24th, one on 30th, two on May 7th and 8th, nine on 14th, one on July 15th, three on 19th and two on 27th, five on Aug. 1st, four on 2nd, three on 11th, and one or two until 21st, one on Sept. 2nd and four on 6th;

PW – one on April 19th;

CI-Y – three on May 13th and one on 24th, two on Aug. 11th, 23rd and 27th, and one on Sept. 3rd and 21st;

Sand Bay – 14 on May 14th;

Axe Estuary – one on March 15th, two on Dec 22nd and one on 23rd;

BG – one on Aug. 23rd;

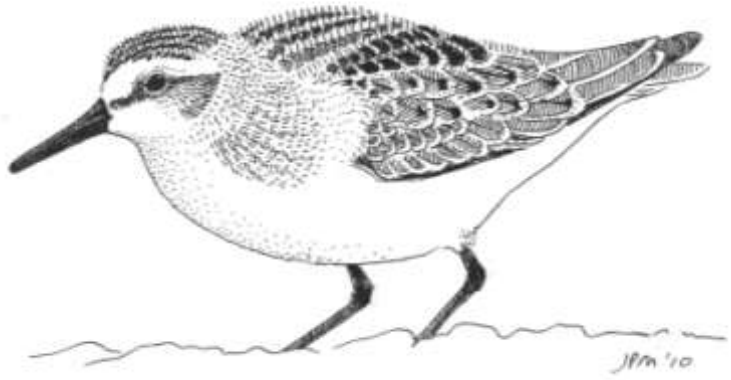
CVL – two on May 13th, three on 14th, and single birds on July 25th and 30th.

SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER *Calidris pusilla*

Very rare vagrant

One record: a juvenile seen with a small group of Dunlin and Ringed Plover at Northwick Warth and New Passage on Sept. 26th (BL, JPM *et al*.) [BBRC] – see photograph opposite page 65.

This is the second record in the Avon area, the first was at OPS on Aug. 12th and 14th, 1990.



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.

The poor run of sightings of this species during the past few years is clearly shown on the graph overleaf, and 2009 showed no real improvement. The average of the monthly maxima counts for the past 25 years is 40 per year, in 2009 it was 15 a very slight improvement on the 2008 figure of 14. In 2009 two were present in the first-winter period, there were two spring records, and the weak autumn passage was from Aug. 1st to Sept. 25th. The details are as follows.

OPS – one on Aug. 2nd;

Severnside – one noted on several dates from Jan. 31st to Feb. 15th, two on Aug. 1st (adults) and one on 24th – an especially poor showing for this site;

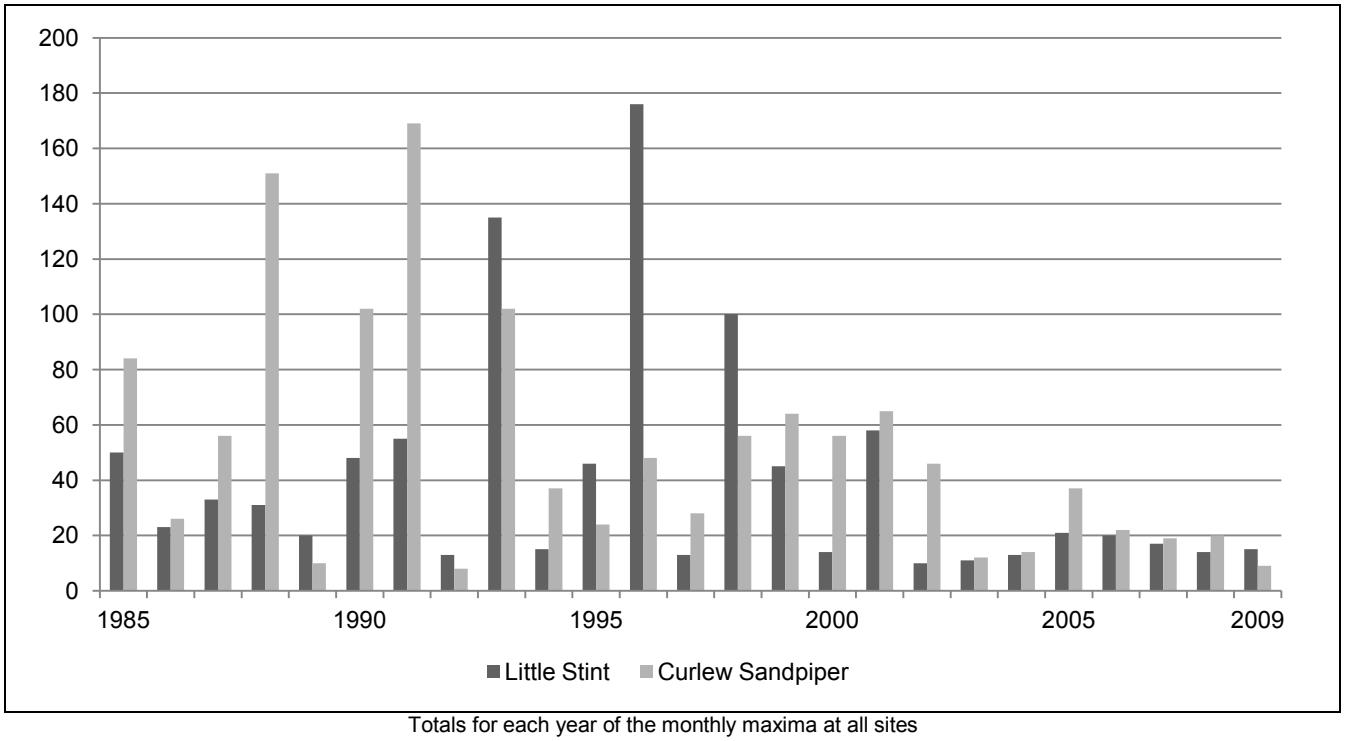
PW – single birds on April 10th (probably a late winter visitor) and Sept. 19th;

CI-Y – single birds on Jan. 15th and 29th, Aug. 20th to 23rd, and Sept. 17th;

Sand Bay - one on May 12th;

BG – one on Sept. 20th;

CVL – up to three including one adult between Sept. 21st and 25th.



Totals for each year of the monthly maxima at all sites

TEMMINCK'S STINT *Calidris temminckii*

Rare vagrant
Description species

One record: one in winter plumage on the river bank at Sea Mills on March 15th (MRo). The observer noted that it did not interact with the other waders present keeping near the vegetation and away from the shoreline.

This is the twentieth Avon area record (23rd bird), and the first since May 2004. It is also the first for the site and the first to be seen outside the main passage periods, this may be part of a trend as one wintered at Slimbridge (Glos.) in the 2008/09 winter.

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 2007/08 the Estuary was the second most important site.

The graph above of monthly maxima totals for the past 25 years above shows the continuing poor showing of this species. In 2009 the monthly maximum count was nine, this compares with an average of 51 over the period of the graph. In 2009 all records were for September, and no count was over three. The details are as follows, all were juveniles.

OPS – one on 16th;

Severnside – three on 2nd, two on 15th with one on several dates until 26th;

PW – two on 19th, three on 20th and two again on 21st;

CI-Y – one from 17th to 21st;

CVL – one on 10th.

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.
Description required for inland records.

Noted at the same three sites as last year up to May 1st and from Nov. 8th onwards, but unusually there was also one inland spring record. The details are as follows, they are very similar to those of 2008:

Battery Point, Portishead – four in January, three in February, four in March and in April up to 8th, and lastly one on May 1st, then three from Nov. 18th with four after Dec. 19th;

CI-Y – single birds on Jan. 1st, Feb. 1st and 16th, and Nov. 8th;

Birnbeck Island, Weston-s-Mare – eight in January, six in February, seven in March, and four in April, last seen here on 29th, then five from Nov. 24th and seven in December;

CVL – one on April 18th on the causeway at Heron's Green – the first record for this site since November 2005, and the first inland spring record for Avon.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; uncommon in mid-summer. Small numbers occur inland on passage.
Three races occur:
C. a. alpina breeding N Scandivania to Siberia - mainly occurs as a winter visitor,
C. a. schinzii breeding N W Europe - mainly seen on passage
C. a. arctica breeding N E Greenland - probably a regular migrant in small numbers, mainly in late spring.

WeBS status: In 2007/08 the Estuary was ninth in International Importance, it was fifth in 2004/05.

YEAR	OPS	Severnside	Cl-Y	Ave
1989/90 - 1998/99 Av.	1050:302	2563:439	3322:157	2312:299
1999/00 - 2006/07 Av.	600:52	2080:487	1098:233	1259:257
2007/08	714:100	2350:225	2925:178	1996:168
2008/09	620:178	1242:130	1768:280	1193:196

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

The status table above shows that counts for the 2008/09 winter period were well down with the Severnside totals particularly poor, although both Sand Bay and the Axe Estuary recorded some good sized flocks. Data available so far for the 2009/10 winter period suggests no marked improvement. In 2009 the spring passage was also on the low side, the highest count (280 at Severnside) was for the relatively early date of April 17th. Autumn passage was also low, and again Severnside came off badly. The main table below summarises the counts for the main sites. Otherwise the only report was of four at BL on Aug. 1st.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	800	400		20	17		7	180	175	18	200	500
Littleton Warth	475	620	2				1		80	2	550	800
Severnside	1000	3000	150	280	190	30	85	150	110	100	3000	2000
R. Avon, Sea Mills	38	35	2								2	16
PW	400	700		26			75	135	400	85	1100	1900
Cl-Y	3000	3000	850	25	180	6	210	280	280	120	4400	2100
Sand Bay	1500	2000						40				1500
Axe Est.		2000	5					5			330	445
BG								2	1	1		
CVL	1		1		9	1	1	4	13	8	57	1

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

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

There was a slight improvement in 2009 compared with the previous year, this was mainly accounted for by a small flock noted at CVL in late autumn. One occurred in March, otherwise all sightings were from Aug. 19th to Nov. 27th. The details are as follows.

Severnside – one on Sept. 26th;

Cl-Y – one on Sept. 10th;

CVL – a female from March 21st to 24th, two on Aug. 19th, one on 21st and between Sept. 10th and 24th, an adult male and a juvenile male on many dates during October; two from Nov. 3rd to 24th with three on 7th and one remaining until 27th;

BL – one from Oct 18th to 27th.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
35	47	26	26	10	35	11	35	3	12

Total for the year of the maximum monthly counts

JACK SNIPE *Lymnocryptes minimus*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant; probably overlooked.

WeBS status: In 2007/08 the Estuary was the ninth most important site.

Counts were again normal, although there were some better numbers on Severnside, mainly on Northwick Warth, in the first-winter period. It was reported up to March 27th and from Oct. 2nd onwards, note none in April.

Monthly maximum counts from the main sites are tabulated overleaf.

The remaining reports were of single birds in January at Dyer's Common (19th), Leap Valley (10th) and Westerleigh Common (14th), in February at Keynsham STW (18th), Yatton (20th) and Sand Bay (12th), on Oct 31st at the Batheaston Oxbow Reserve, and on Nov. 21st and 22nd at OPS.

Jack Snipe con't

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites							
	Jan	Feb	Mar	:	Oct	Nov	Dec
Severnside	4	9	7		4	2	1
PW	2	1	3			2	1
Cl-Y	2	2	1			1	3
Axe Est./Weston STW	1	2					
CVL		1			5	1	

The Bath Peregrines took four during the year, see page 153.

SNIPE *Gallinago gallinago*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; has undergone a decline in the last decade. Rare Breeder.
Two races: *gallinago* (palearctic) and *faeroeensis* (breeding N Isles and Iceland). Most in Avon are from the race *gallinago* but an unknown, but probably very small, number of *faeroeesis* may also occur.

WeBS status: In 2007/08 the Estuary was the fourth most important site.

YEAR	OPS	Severnside	Cl-Y	Av.
1989/90 – 1998/99 Av.	>12	14	16	14+
1999/00 – 2006/07 Av.	52	15	15	27
2007/08	41	27	15	28
2008/09	20	21	29	23

November to February average counts

An average year, recorded at 22 sites. It was present up to April 16th, and from Aug. 3rd onwards, with the best counts in the first-winter period. Two counts of at least 100 were noted in the western part of the region: at the Axe Estuary on Jan. 31st and at Sand Bay on Feb.12th. The table below summarises the counts at the well-watched sites. The remaining reports of four or more were as follows: In January on Clevedon Moor, with 32 on 2nd, and at Churchill Common, with 14 on 9th; four were at Hengrove Park, Bristol, on March 6th; seven were on Walborough Common on Oct. 26th; and in December on Weston Moor, with 30 on 6th, and at Westerleigh Common, with nine on 9th.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites										
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	30	15	1			3	8	2	3	2
Littleton Warth	23	32	4			3	2	3	1	2
Severnside	21	44	12	6		6	7	6	9	9
R. Avon, Sea Mills									2	6
PW	42	42	31	1			3	10	60	50
Cl-Y	22	30	8			1	2	13	24	18
Sand Bay		100								
Axe Est./Weston STW	100	2					4			3
Dyer's Common	14	56								
Leap Valley, Downend	8	5	1							
Oxbow Reserve, Batheaston	6	27	4	3			3	4	3	1
Yatton/Kenn Moor	17	26								
Congresbury Moor	12	26	9							
CVL	9	12	11	12		6	22	59	50	15
BL	1	2	5					2	10	3

The Bath Peregrines took 14 during the year, see page 153.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

Very rare vagrant

One record: a juvenile at CVL from Sept. 23rd to Oct. 2nd (DJA *et al.*). It was mostly seen in Stratford Bay and from Herriotts Bridge often with a group of Snipe, due to the low water levels it was usually rather distant [BBRC] - see photograph opposite page 65.

This is the second record for the Avon area, the first was a series of sightings at CVL and BL from September 1977 to January 1978. There have also been two one-day records of Dowitcher sp., the first was at Aust Warth in October 1977, and the second was at CVL on Oct. 28th, 1978. For some unexplained reason this last record has never been published in this Report, the record was accepted by BBRC in 1980.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

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

A total of 43 was noted in 2009, this compares with 17 in 2007, 14 in 2008, and an average of 22 per year for the past decade. Sixteen of these were in January and unusually eleven (of the 43) were single sightings for Severnside with five in January, two in February, one on March, one in April (on 25th, a late first-winter date), and two in December. The remaining records are as follows, all of single birds unless stated otherwise.

First-winter period In January at Dyer's Common, PW, Stoke Gifford, Wellsway, Clapton Moor (two), Flax Bourton, Kenn Moor, CVL (two), Weston STW and Wooscombe Bottom; in February at Kingston Seymour, Chew Hill, CVL, Barrow Hill, Lansdown (three) and Batheaston Oxbow Reserve; and March at Pill, Leigh Woods, Foxhall Farm (Charlcombe), Blagdon (two), and Wooscombe Bottom (two).

Second-winter period In October at Prospect Stile (on 16th); in November at OPS, Perfect Bite (Cl-Y), Arnos Vale (two), and BL; and in December at Rocks East Woodland (ST 7870), Lower Woods, Bitton, and Kelston,

As in previous years, the Bath Peregrines took quite a few, nine in 2009. This compares with 30 in 2006, 14 in 2007 and seven in 2008; see page 153.

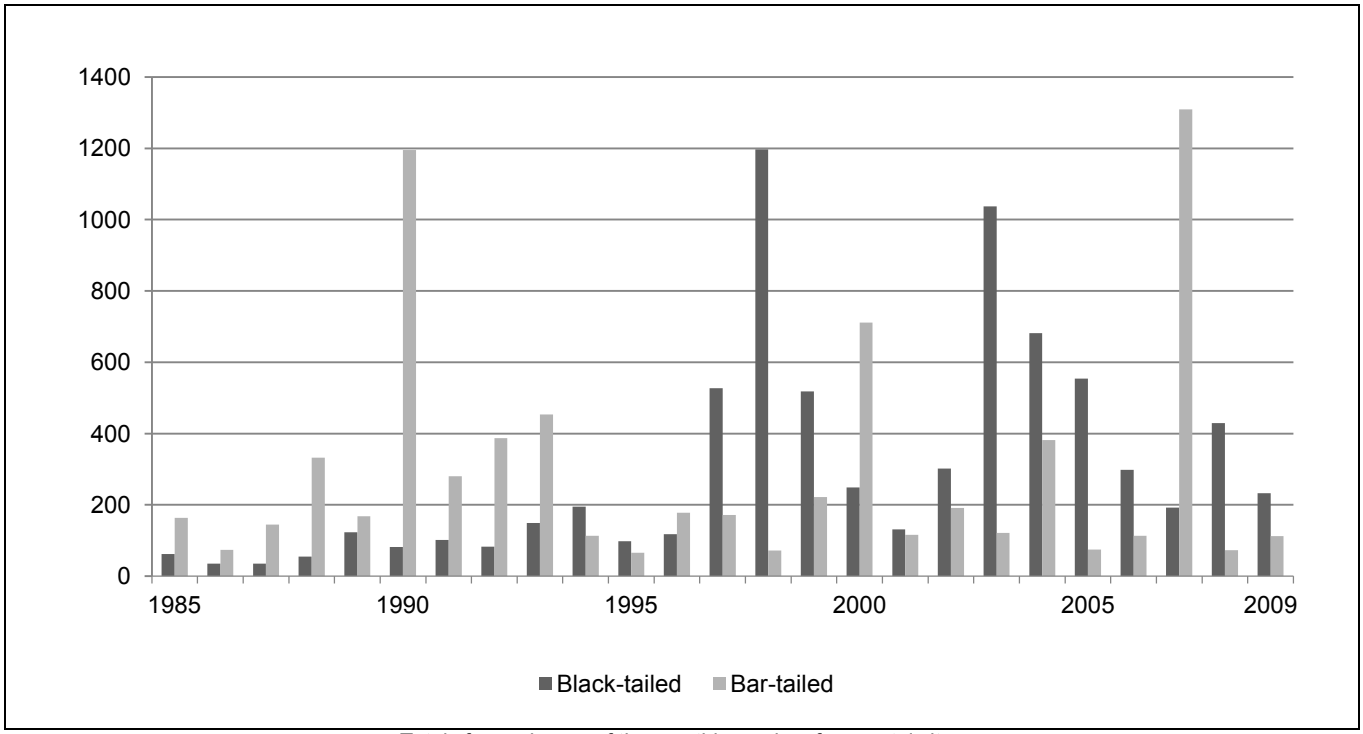
BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

Limosa l. islandica (breeding N Isles and Iceland) - *Uncommon passage migrant; generally more numerous in autumn. Scarce in winter.*
Limosa l. limosa (breeding W Europe and east) - *Rare visitor, definite records in June and July only*.
On a world scale this species is described as "Near threatened".

Counts were down on those of the past few years, this is shown by the graph below. Also as last year nearly half of the total of the monthly maximum counts (233) was accounted for by a single flock of 94 seen at Severnside on Oct. 20th. A decade ago we thought that counts over 100 might become a regular feature of the avifauna of the Avon area, but it seems that for the moment this is not to be. Apart from the flock mentioned above, in 2009 no count was over 16, and most birds were noted in the more northerly parts of our region or at CVL during the autumn. The table below summarises all counts received.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Littleton Warth				1			2	14	14	5	10	1
Severnside	16	7	1	4	4	2	5	10	5	94		
PW							7	1	1			
Cl-Y				4			3	7	4	5		
Axe Estuary			1					1				
CVL	1			2	1	2	14	15	5	6	3	1



Totals for each year of the monthly maxima for coastal sites

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.

There was a slight improvement in 2009 compared with 2008, but counts were about 65% below the 25 year average as is shown in the graph on the previous page. But note that 8000+ were recorded in April 1984. There was a weak spring passage in late April, otherwise all totals were in single figures.

The coastal counts are tabulated below, note that all of the maximum April counts were for 25th or 26th. The only other records were for CVL with a female on April 29th, and one on Aug. 24th and 27th, and Nov.18th.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted coastal sites

	Jan	Feb	:	Apr	May	Jun	:	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
OPS		1		34	1					1	
Littleton Warth				17						5	
Severnside	3			13	10			2		3	1
Cl-Y				8	3	1		2	2	2	
Axe Estuary				1	5						

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.

Two races: *phaeopus* (breeding Iceland, Europe and east) and *hudsonicus* (breeding Canada). All Avon records are for the race *phaeopus*. There is one record of *hudsonicus* for the Welsh side of the Severn Estuary.

WeBS status: In 2007/08 the Estuary was the fifth most important site, in 2002/3 it was first.
Migration dates: Forty year average first date April 12th. Forty year average last date Oct. 3rd.

YEAR	OPS	Severnside	Cl-Y	Av.
1990 -1999 Av.	27	25	79	44
2000 -2007 Av.	26	56	71	51
2008	21	34	44	30
2009	15	40	51	35

April and May average counts

The trend of lower counts noted in the past few years continues, this is shown in the status table above. In 2009 the three highest counts were 48 at Severnside on April 22nd, 72 at Cl-Y on 24th, and 62 at Littleton Warth on 26th. In the past the highest counts were usually noted at the very end of the month, or into May – traditionally this species was called a “May bird”. It was first noted on April 12th (at Cl-Y), and the main spring passage was complete by May 13th. As usual a few summered, and there was a small autumn passage which had ended by Sept. 21st. The table summarises the counts at the main sites. The only non-tabulated records were of one feeding in a field at Dundry on May 7th and another at the Axe Estuary on 10th.

Maxima at main sites

	Apr		May		Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
	10-20	21-30	1-10	11-31				
OPS	3	8	22	4	1	1	5	1
Littleton Warth		62		3			1	
Severnside	17	48	31	6		5	6	1
PW		12			3	9		
Cl-Y	2	72	25	30	3	9	7	1
Sand Bay		43	8				1	
CVL		2				1	1	2
BL		1	1			1		

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

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

WeBS status: In 2007/08 the Estuary was eighth in National Importance (there are two of International Importance).
On a world scale this species is described as “Near threatened”.

YEAR	OPS	S-side	Cl-Y	Axe E.	Av.
1989/90 - 1998/99 Av.	646	177	153	74	263
1999/00 - 2006/07 Av.	225	176	158	67	157
2007/08	329	171	127	32	165
2008/09	160	134	155	28	119

August to February average counts

Curlew counts for the 2008/09 autumn/winter period were well down as shown by the status table on the previous page, but the figures in the main table suggest that the 2009/10 autumn/winter counts will be more normal. The Axe Estuary, which used to be one of our main sites, now only holds quite small numbers. Also as last year no timings were given for the OPS counts, so it was not clear if the figures refer to evening roosts or not. The table below summarises the counts. There was also one on Walborough Common on Oct. 26th. As is now usual no breeding activity was reported.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	200	80	10	160	14	30	50	315	400	315	100	405
Littleton Warth	280	180	32	1			15	5	260	15	70	115
Severnside	120	200	80	78	2	110	200	130	220	250	120	130
R. Avon, Sea Mills	3	7	2							2	7	2
PW	20		19	5		7	100	73	77	32	46	28
Cl-Y	110	130	96	22	2	15	90	225	160	160	140	90
Sand Bay	32	65	102		40	48	12	130	80	40	40	45
Axe Est.		30	6			2	7		20	32	7	51
CVL			1	1			3	1	2			1

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

Uncommon passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.

	1990/99 Av.	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Spring	65	70	(38)	65	65	56	57	29	38	93	65
Autumn	186	175	138	160	166	178	136	139	141	184	186

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

The recent improvement noted in 2008 was maintained in 2009, although not so many wintered. The spring passage was normal, most birds passed through between April 6th and May 14th, and the highest count was twelve at BG on April 18th. The main autumn passage was from July 19th to Oct. 9th when ten were noted at CVL, the highest count was 31 – nowadays a very good count – again at this site on Aug. 21st.The main table below summarises the counts. The only non-tabulated records were: single birds by R. Avon at Keynsham on April 24th, at Sand Bay on July 28th and Aug. 22nd, and two on Puxton Moor on Dec. 24th.

Fortnightly or monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		May	Jun	Jul		Aug		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
				1-15	16-30			1 -15	16 -31	1 -15	16 -31				
OPS				3	5			2		8					
Littleton Warth				3	1				1		1				
Severnside		1		1	4	1	2	14	16	9	2	1			
ASW				3	2			11							
R. Avon*	4	4	4		1				1	2	7	4	4	6	4
PW					3		1	3		2	4				
Cl-Y	1			1	3	8	3	11	10	16	5	6	2	1	
Axe Est./Weston STW		1	1								1				
BG					12	8	2	5	12	18	6	1			
CVL				1	6	4		5	9	11	31	6	10		
BL					4	1	2	2	5	3	3	1			

R. Avon* includes the river bank at Sea Mills and the New Cut (Southville).

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

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

1990/99 Av.	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
91	74	100	110	124	70	76	76	51	63	94

Total for the year of the maximum monthly counts for coastal and reservoir sites

The status line shows some improvement in 2009, but this was entirely due to lower water levels and so better feeding conditions at CVL during the autumn which produced some respectable counts including 18 on Aug. 8th. Apart from this, counts were in line with those of the past few years – unspectacular! Birds were present up to April 17th (at Severnside, a late date), and from June 8th (at CVL) onwards, the main table overleaf gives the counts at the well-watched sites. Non-tabulated single sightings were as follows: In January, on Kenn Moor on 5th, at Yatton on 6th when two were present, and at Crook's Marsh (Bristol) on 23rd; in August at Dundry on 13th and Publow on 21st; and at Walborough Common on Oct. 26th.

Green Sandpiper con't

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS								3		1		
Severnside				1				2	1	1	1	
ASW	3		1				7	3	1		2	1
Over	1		1									1
PW	1					1	1	1	1			
Cl-Y			1				3	2	1	2	1	
Tickenham Moor	1							1				
Chew Magna Res.	1		1							1		
CVL	1	2	3	3		1	2	18	12	13	8	4
BL							1	1		1		

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

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

One or two were noted in both winter periods up to April 26th and from Nov. 9th onwards, and three individuals were noted on autumn passage – so a poor showing all round! As last year all sightings were of single birds on the coast. The details are as follows:

OPS – one on Sept. 16th;

Severnside – single birds on April 18th and 19th, and Oct. 31st;

PW – one noted on six occasions up to April 26th, and another on Aug. 15th and 18th;

Cl-Y – one on twelve occasions up to April 15th (usually noted up the R. Yeo, so probably distinct from the individual above), then from Dec 19th into 2010 (a late date, although there were probable sightings on Nov. 5th and 15th);

Axe Estuary/Weston STW – one on Nov. 9th and 10th, and on Dec. 23rd.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

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

	1990/99 Av.	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Cl-Y	13	7	9	10	8	5	3	4	3	4	4
CVL	10	1	5	4	23	4	5	1	2	1	7

Maximum single counts at Cl-Y and CVL

In 2009 counts on the coast were especially poor but due to favourable conditions those at CVL showed some improvement. As usual Sea Mills held two birds up to March 17th (an early last date), and one from Aug. 15th into 2010, although two were again seen on Aug. 22nd, Sept. 17th and Oct. 19th. Otherwise none was seen before June when single birds were noted at Cl-Y on 4th and 7th, at CVL on 3rd and at BL on 7th. These were probably summering non-breeders. Autumn passage was from July 3rd (two on Severnside) to Sept. 20th (one at CVL). As noted above passage was poor on the coast, for example all counts at Cl-Y were of single birds except for a flock of four on Aug. 6th. The table below summarises the counts. The only other report was of one at PW on Aug. 20th.

Fortnightly or monthly maxima at regularly counted sites														
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Jun	Jul		Aug		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
							1-15	16 -31	1 - 15	16 - 31				
OPS											1			
Severnside				1			2	1	2	1	1			
R. Avon, Sea Mills	2	2	2						1	2	2	2	1	1
Cl-Y						1			4	1	1			
Weston STW										2				
CVL						1	1		7	6	1			
BL						1	1							

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

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

At least nine were recorded, this is well above the average of five per year; see the graph below. There was one spring record, the first since 1996 and the first for Severnside since May 1993. The details are as follows.

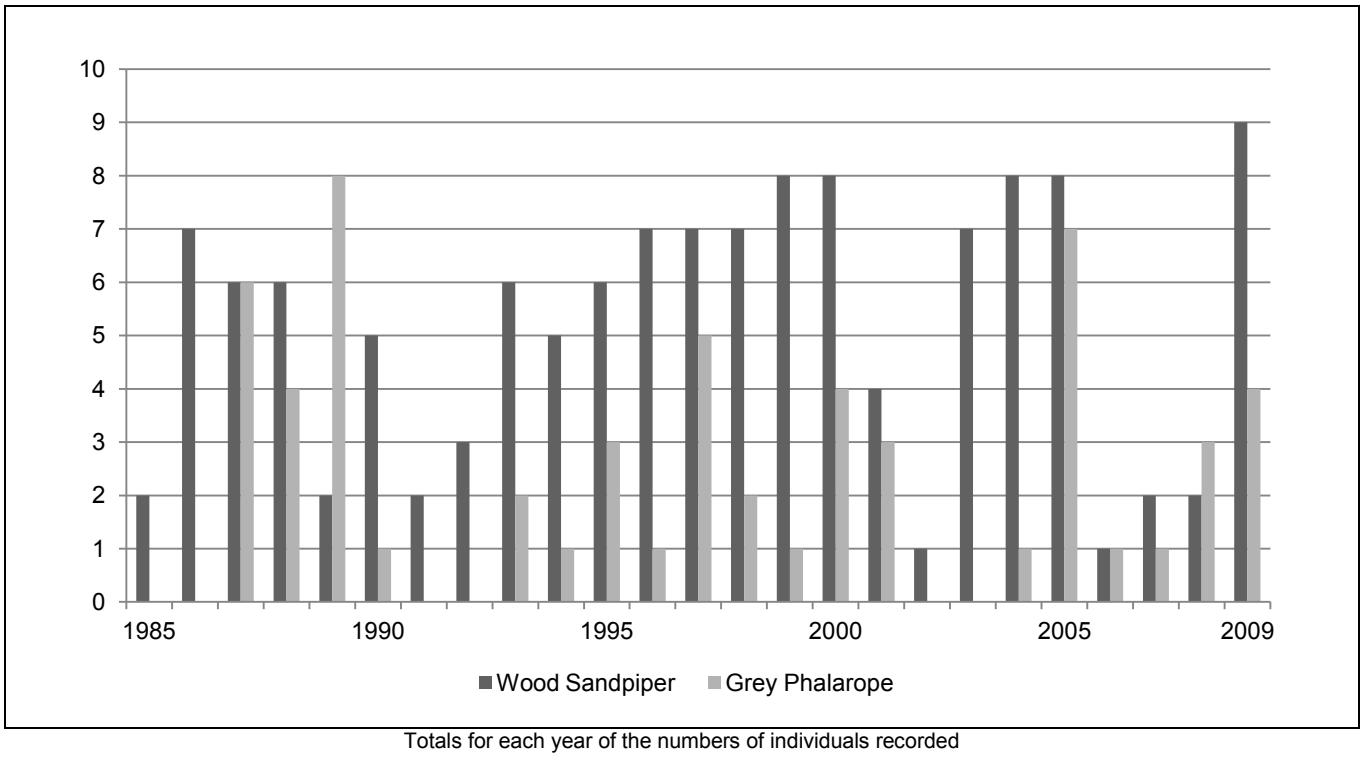
OPS – a juvenile seen from Aug. 18th to 23rd;

Severnside – one on May 13th (RFR), two on July 22nd, and a juvenile on Aug. 20th;

PW – an adult on Aug. 1st, and one from 5th to 7th, it was not clear if these records referred to the same individual or not;

CI-Y - two on Aug. 22nd;

CVL - a juvenile from Sept. 4th to 9th.



Totals for each year of the numbers of individuals recorded

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor; uncommon in summer, very scarce breeder. Uncommon inland.
Two races*: totanus* (breeding Europe to east) and *robusta* (breeding Iceland). It is assumed that most in Avon are from the race *totanus*, but an unknown proportion of *robusta* almost certainly occur.

WeBS status: In 2007/08 the Estuary was fifteenth in National Importance (there are eleven sites of International Importance).

YEAR	OPS	Sea Mills	CI-Y	Axe E.	Av.
1989/90 - 1998/99 Av.	65	84	114	156	105
1999/00 - 2006/07 Av.	33	100	115	219	117
2007/08	50	80	179	195	126
2008/09	85	85	173	233	144

August to February average counts

The 2008/09 status figures above show a slight improvement, and it seems likely that the 2009/10 figures will be similar or possibly slightly better. Counts in the 300-400 range were noted at CI-Y in the autumn/second winter period (probably due to good feeding conditions in the Yeo Estuary/Blake's Pool area), and at the Axe Estuary in the later part of the first-winter period and in September. The table below gives the monthly maxima at the main sites. There were also three non-tabulated inland records, they were on Walborough Common with six on Oct. 26th, at the Yatton Reserve with three on Dec. 23rd, and on Congresbury Moor with six on 26th.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	19	15	10	20			2	55	63	40	45	25
Littleton Warth	67	75	84				47	14	80	80	75	75
Severnside	140	100	90	36	1	2	40	40	52	105	170	150
Sea Mills, R. Avon	75	60	150				30	96	120	84	95	34
PW	155	110	75	80		70	110	110	285	170	115	110
CI-Y	150	240	190	85	6	4	44	80	110	340	390	270
Sand Bay	35	90							1		50	180
Axe Est.	155	400	305	160		5	1	100	400	60	38	250
BG			1			1	1					
CVL	1		1			2	2	4	4		3	
BL						2	2	2				

Redshank Breeding As in 2008, breeding activity was only noted at CI-Y, now on the Dowlais Farm scrape rather than at the mouth of the Yeo. Display was noted but no evidence of a successful nest was received.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

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

YEAR	OPS	Severnside	CI-Y	Av.
1989/90 – 1998/99 Av.	62	145	29	79
1999/00 – 2006/07 Av.	49	134	26	70
2007/08	39	135	31	68
2008/09	39	135	33	69

August to February average counts

The status line counts for 2007/08 and 2008/09 winter periods are remarkably similar, but it seems likely that the 2009/10 counts will show a slight decline – see the table below. Unusually, in 2009 there was a two-month period during the summer (from May 18th to July 16th) when none was recorded. The table below gives the counts at the main sites, as usual it is likely there was some overlap between the OPS and Littleton counts, and between the Severnside and PW counts. The only other record was of one at BG on Sept. 4th.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	:	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	45	50						10	35	46	7	28
Littleton Warth	19		24					2	4	17	12	12
Severnside	160	200	120	5	20		31	73	80	80	110	100
PW		25	140	45			5	40	50		65	
CI-Y	38	29	43	3	1		11	18	38	34	34	36
CVL							1	1	2			

GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius*

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

There were two sightings on the coast and another two at CVL during the autumn and early winter period, all were of single juvenile/first winter birds. The graph on page 67 gives the number of individuals recorded during the past 25 years, it shows that four is an average count. The details are as follows:

Severnside – on Aug. 31st (PDB, JPM, RFR et al.);

Weston STW - on Sept. 4th (MSP);

CVL – on Sept. 4th (RMi et al.) and Nov. 20th (several observers).

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Scarce spring passage migrant and storm-driven autumn/winter visitor. Very rare inland.
Description species

A very good year.

In spring, at Severn Beach, there were two pale-morph adults on May 14th (BL, JPM) and eleven (ten pale and one dark-morph) on May 15th (PDB, BL, JPM).

A late autumn influx produced:

Severn Beach - a pale-morph immature (second calendar year or older) on Nov. 25th and 26th (DN, SBWeb *et al.*) – see photograph opposite page 72;

CVL - an adult pale-morph on Nov. 22nd (JT) followed by an immature, probably second calendar year, from Nov. 29th to Dec. 7th (DJA, RMi, *et al.*) which killed and ate Common Gulls during its stay – see photograph opposite page 72.

An adult pale-morph at Beachley (Gloucestershire) from at least Nov. 26th to Dec. 9th feeding on a sheep carcass, was seen to fly into Avon waters on at least Nov. 29th (RMA, BL, JPM).

There is only one other recent inland record for the Avon area, at CVL in 1999. There is an earlier record of one found dead at Chew Magna in the autumn of 1879.

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*

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

A good year with, allowing for duplication, a minimum of 47 seen.

Spring passage The first was noted on April 5th and the largest numbers passed on May 8th and 16th; by the end of May at least 38 had been seen. All April and May records are tabulated below;

	April					May								
	5th	8th	12th	18th	24th	3rd	5th	6th	7th	8th	14th	15th	16th	26th
Aust Warth			1											
Severn Beach				3						10	3	3	6	2
Battery Pt		2							1					
Ladye Bay	1				2						2			
Sand Pt						1								
Anchor Hd.							1	2						1

Additional records involved one at Severn Beach on June 17th and an adult seen from a boat between Weston-s-Mare and Steep Holm on July 23rd.

Autumn passage In August an adult and two juveniles were at New Passage on 18th, two dark-phase birds flew downriver at OPS on 27th and one was seen from both Battery Pt. and Ladye Bay on 28th. The storms in November produced single birds at Ladye Bay on 22nd and 25th, and Sand Pt. on 26th and 28th (all treated as the same individual in the statistics).

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua*

Scarce spring passage migrant and storm-driven visitor. Rare inland.
Descriptions required for inland records

An average spring passage was followed by an excellent series of winter records.

Spring passage (single birds unless stated otherwise):

Anchor Head, Weston-s-Mare – April 8th;

Severn Beach – May 8th;

Ladye Bay, Clevedon – two on May 28th.

Additional records came from Ladye Bay, Clevedon on July 19th and Severn Beach on Oct. 3rd.

It is unclear how many different birds were involved in the winter storms (counted as six in the statistics); all November and December records are tabulated below.

	November							December	
	14th	22nd	23rd	24th	25th	26th	27th	3rd	6th
Northwick Warth		1	4						
Severn Beach			4	3	1				
Chittening Warth	1								
Avonmouth			2						
Battery Pt			1		2				
Ladye Bay	1					4			1
Cl-Y			2						
Sand Pt.			3			2	2	1	2

Two inland records: from CVL, on Sept. 4th (AM), and a juvenile on Oct. 20th (RMA *et al.*).

SKUA sp. *Stercorarius sp.*

Three records of five unidentified Skuas, as follows:

Severn Beach – two on May 9th, either Pomarine or Arctic;

Ladye Bay – single on July 7th;

Sand Pt. – two to NE upriver on Oct. 24th, probably Arctic.

Skuas in the Avon area

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Pomarine Skua	7	1	0	0	59	4	3	13	3	17
Arctic Skua	17	34+	45+	54	65	23	50+	51	37	47
Long-tailed Skua			1						1	
Great Skua	5+	11+	16+	16	26	10	26+	13	4	14
Skua sp.	1	3	1	1	58	11	6	7		5

Total number of skuas for the last ten years

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

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

Recorded on 33 dates this year (23 in 2008). Spring passage was relatively poor but there were large numbers in the Estuary during storms in November and early December.

Spring passage There were double figure counts on the following dates (all at Severn Beach unless otherwise stated); March 4th (20), 8th (140), 22nd (130), and 23rd (40), April 8th (60 at Battery Pt.), May 4th (30 at Anchor Head), 5th (33 at Anchor Head), 14th (60), and 15th (140).

Autumn passage The only record was a juvenile at Battery Pt. on July 6th.

Inland records Only recorded at CVL on March 9th (adult and first-winter), Nov. 4th and 5th (adult), and 20th (first-winter).

Winter records Storms in November and early December forced good numbers into the Estuary. Counts of 100 or over were recorded on the following dates (all from Severn Beach unless otherwise stated); Nov. 14th (200), 16th (200), 18th (100), 23rd (300 with 140 at Sand Pt.), 24th (200 with 90 at Sand Pt.), 26th (150 with 100 at Sand Pt.), 28th (200 at Sand Pt.), and Dec. 6th (100 at Ladye Bay).

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Av. of 3 highest counts	157	53	317	303	263	166	416	88	170	233
No. of dates recorded	22	27	36	22	30	29	22	27	23	19

Severnside – data over last ten years

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

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

WeBS status: CVL is second in the list of sites of International Importance for 2007/08.

Our commonest wintering gull, widely reported throughout the area.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	150	500	300	19	18	370	500	1160	1000	600	500	300
Littleton Warth	295	300					620	450	120	125	190	190
Severnside	500	600	180				400	500				
Cl-Y	200	200	50		4		240	650	480	250	375	600
Sand Bay	330	225	20			175	315	1600	880	625	70	500
Axe Estuary	131	43	41	7	2	10	253	536	324	88	306	127
Weston STW	143	492	63	6	32	333	219	95	635	175	230	181
Sea Mills	110	32	300				110	118	46	60	480	220
R. Avon, Keynsham		574	170								280	200
BG	1000	1000										
BL	117	113	1850				41	165	65	500	248	

At CVL there was some evidence of a spring passage in March, with 2000 flying to N on 10th and 1150 arriving from the S at 11.20 on 12th (note also the high March count for BL in the table above, which was on 14th).

The first juvenile of the summer was at CVL on June 20th with another here next day and one on the R. Avon at Southville on 23rd. In August flocks were observed ‘anting’ – c80 over Stoke Bishop on 4th and c70 over New Passage on 5th.

At RPD some birds roosted on the Estuary and fed inland, with 3,500 flying onto the Estuary at dusk on Nov. 16th and 5,000 flying inland at dawn on 19th.

Other records A partial albino with white mantle and scapulars but grey coverts was at CVL on Feb. 3rd.

A colour-ringed bird (white LKW), seen in the City Docks on Jan. 8th, had been ringed as a nesting in Estonia. It regularly winters in Amsterdam and summers in Estonia but has also been seen in Poland and Latvia, a total of five countries visited! Another seen in the City Docks, on Feb.23rd (white UE5), was ringed in Copenhagen as an adult in March 1992; it was regularly seen in Copenhagen up until 2001 and was then sighted in Bristol in February of 2002 and 2003 but had returned to Copenhagen by March in both years. It was also in Bristol in November 2007 and in Copenhagen in September 2008.

LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Uncommon passage migrant; scarce in winter.

A below average year.

Spring passage A poor spring passage, with the first record (five at CVL) on March 20th, four further dates in March, eleven dates in April and the last (one at BG) on May 2nd. There were only five records away from CVL and no count over five.

Autumn passage Autumn passage was largely confined to CVL; elsewhere there were three adults at the Yeo Est. on Oct. 23rd followed by a series of records in November as follows:

BL – two on 14th with one next day;

Severn Beach – adult on 14th, with a first-winter on 23rd;

Sand Pt. – six on 15th;

Avonmouth Docks – one on 23rd;

Ladye Bay – four on 25th.

CVL summary									
	March	Apr	:	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
No. of days recorded	3	10		1	1	2	3	6	2
Maximum count	5	3		1	1	2	4	2	2

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Av. of 3 highest counts Jan - Jun	1	1	1	13	2	2	5	3	6	3
Av. of 3 highest counts Jul - Dec	1	1	15	1	3	1	2	5	1	3

CVL – average counts

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

Uncommon, but increasing winter visitor and passage migrant.

Recorded at 20 sites (*cf.* 23 in 2007 and 2008), with the highest count from RPD. There are signs that the local expansion has slowed or peaked; conversely the species may now be so regular that observers no longer bother to report it. Observers are encouraged to continue to report all sightings of this species.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS		2	1				4	1				1
Severnside	1		1			2	4	2	1	1		
ASW	1		1					1		1		3
RPD	6	4	3				1		1	2	2	1
Portbury	2	4									1	
Portishead area	1	1					1		2			
Weston STW						3	1		1	1		1
Sea Mills	1	1									1	1
BG	1	2								1		
CVL	4	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	4	3
BL					1			1			1	1

An unusual record was of an adult in the City Docks on Feb. 4th.

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
No. of sites	17	16	14	16	17	14	17	23	23	20
Max count	4	n/a	n/a	8	5	11	6	8	7	6

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 (c18,000) winter roost at CVL.

WeBS status: CVL is fifth in the list of sites of National Importance for 2007/08.

As usual, most records were thinly spread, as this species leads a nomadic life in winter, only appearing in numbers where suitable feeding conditions are found.

Common Gull con't

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	200	300	70		1		7	63	20	100	100	50
Severnside		27	65	1	4						40	65
R. Avon, Keynsham		50									50	350
BL	184	282	73							5	27	

There were no records between May 22nd (one at OPS) and June 25th (one at CVL) showing how scarce the species is in summer. Otherwise, generally under-recorded, with reports from a further 33 sites, most of which were only single or double-figure counts. The only three or four figure counts were as follows;

Chew Magna Res. – 250 on Jan. 8th, with 90 on 26th;

Maes Knoll, Dundry – 350 on Feb. 23rd;

Englishcombe, Bath – 185 on Jan. 18th;

Lansdown – 200 on March 16th;

Marshfield – 2000 on Feb. 22nd with 400 on March 22nd;

Kington Down Farm (ST77) – 300 on Jan. 20th;

Sand Pt. – 100 on Nov. 24th;

Ladye Bay, Clevedon – 100 on Dec. 6th.

Other records Aberrant birds recorded at CVL as follows – a leucistic first-winter on Jan. 15th and a first-winter with a grey head and breast on Nov. 14th.

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.
Description species.

An average year numbers-wise but, unusually, one record away from CVL. Details as follows:

Sea Mills - an adult on March 14th (HER);

CVL – an adult on the ice at Herriott's Pool on Jan. 3rd, 4th and 5th (AHD, RMi *et al.*), was perhaps the same bird reported here again on 24th (J&PO).

Rare gulls in the Avon area

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Sabine's Gull		2+			2	1		1		
Laughing Gull							1			
Franklin's Gull	1								1	
Ring-billed Gull		2	2	3+	3+			2+	3+	2+
Caspian Gull			2		1		2	1	1	
Iceland Gull	6		3	1		1	3+	1	2	
Kumlien's Gull			1	1	1	1	1			
Glaucous Gull	1	1	2				1		1	

Total number of rare gulls for the last ten years

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 smaller colonies in other towns.

WeBS status: the Estuary is second and CVL is fourth in the list of sites of International Importance for 2007/08.

Although the urban breeding population, of both this species and Herring Gull, continues to increase (see paper on page 157), numbers away from the breeding sites are generally small.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	100	3	25	15	35	40	21	9	80	3		
Littleton Warth	15	5	10	1				8	1		2	3
Cl-Y	20	4	30	4	10	6	4	8	3	4	2	
Axe Estuary	7	2	4	21	2	2	6	15	17	13	92	5
Weston STW	3	35	20	27	37	66	38	24	25	20		2
Sea Mills	1		6	2		6	1	6	6	2	7	6
BL	6	8	411	99	60	2	6	85		10	20	26

The only three figure count away from CVL not included in the table above was of 150 at Marshfield Cemetery on Aug. 14th.

At CVL there were good numbers on Herriott's Pool in May (300 on 25th) and June (650 on 12th, 160 on 16th and 200 on 21st).

Breeding A survey of Bath and North East Somerset revealed 668 pairs in Bath, 14 pairs in Midsomer Norton and six pairs in Keynsham. On Steep Holm c450 pairs bred which is about average (previous accurate counts from here revealed 402 pairs in 1999, 521 pairs in 2004 and 434 pairs in 2007).

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	131	162	83	199	148	145	149	138	131

Avon BBS index (BBS distribution 63%)

Other records In recent years the species has been increasingly recorded by the WGS survey in gardens in winter; at Bishop Sutton an adult and juvenile visited a garden bird table almost daily during July and August.

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

Recorded only at CVL, with adults on May 5th and 25th, June 21st, Sept. 29th, Oct. 13th and 27th, and an adult and a third-winter on Nov. 21st.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

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

WeBS status: the Estuary is 15th and CVL is 16th in the list of sites of International Importance for 2007/08

Despite breeding at many urban sites, inland counts are never particularly large. Another species which the WGS survey is increasingly recording in gardens in winter.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	350	7	100	18	35	113	28	16	80	5	3	30
Littleton Warth	75	10	27	2	3			2	4	6	11	20
ASW	20	4		28	60		2					
Cl-Y	70	10	70	12	15	15	10	16	10	4	8	45
Axe Estuary		19	9	25	10	7	2	4	26	32	26	5
Weston STW	76	158	147	160	112	44	12	86	83	62	93	80
Leap Valley, Downend	23	7	10	2	3	1	6	5	15	12	37	32
BL		8	50	16	4			31		10	78	26

Reported from a further 30 sites, although the only three figure counts away from CVL were 150 at Marshfield Cemetery on Aug. 14th and 100 in a field near Blagdon on April 27th.

Breeding There were 289 pairs in Bath, three in Midsomer Norton and one pair in Keynsham (*cf*. Lesser Black-backed Gull). On Steep Holm c1300 pairs bred suggesting this colony is slowly increasing (previous accurate counts revealed 956 pairs in 1999, 1125 pairs in 2004 and c1250 in 2007).

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	94	89	48	121	89	95	122	102	138

Avon BBS index (BBS distribution 58%)

Other records On July 3rd a mixed flock of c200 Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gulls were observed 'anting' over Stoke Bishop.

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

The only record was from CVL, an adult on Jan. 10th.

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.

Only regularly recorded at CVL and BL.

Monthly maxima at regular sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CVL	1	2	1	1	3	2	3	6	5	4	1	1
BL	2		1		1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1

Recorded from seven other sites; OPS (three different individuals in July, third-winter on 12th, adult on 18th and juvenile on 20th), Severnside (adults on March 2nd and July 24th and first-winter on Aug. 23rd), ASW (adult on Feb. 23rd), RPD (Sept. 13th), Durdham Down (March 31st), Cl-Y (Jan. 31st) and Weston-s-Mare (adult on roof on Aug. 3rd).

The mid-summer maximum counts have declined in recent years.

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
No. of sites	8	4	6	9	5	7	7	11	11	9
Max count	9	n/a	15	n/a	9	9	5	4	5	6

Number of sites and maximum count at any one site

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Uncommon breeding resident - breeds in small numbers on Steep Holm. Generally uncommon elsewhere (perhaps surprisingly so); seldom recorded inland away from the reservoirs.

Again the reservoirs produced the majority of the records, particularly at CVL in the autumn with a new site record count of 21 in August, the highest count in the Avon area since 22 at OPS in February 2004.

Monthly maxima at regular sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	5	4	3	4	2	3	6	5	3	3	3	3
Littleton Warth	10	1						1			1	
Severnside	2	2	1	3			1	2		1		
Cl-Y	3	1		1	2	2	2	2	1	4	2	1
Sand Bay		6	2					2				2
Weston STW	1	1		1	1		1		2	1		
BG	2	2	2		2	3	2	3	5	2	3	4
CVL	4	1	4	8	11	7	9	21	16	12	3	4
BL	2	2	3	2	2	3	4	5	5	3	3	2

Occasional records came from a further six sites – only one of which was inland, the Locking area, with four on May 3rd and one on June 21st.

Breeding There were 13 pairs in the regular Steep Holm colony and also 30 pairs on Denny Island in the Bristol Channel.

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
No. of sites	14	9	12	12	13	12	15	20	17	15
Max count	8	7	6	5	22	18	11	10	9	21
Steep Holm pairs	26	29	30	10	13	9	10	11	n/a	13

LITTLE TERN *Sternula albifrons*

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

An average year with five records involving seven birds, as follows:

New Passage – two adults early morning on Sept. 8th;

Severn Beach – one on June 17th;

CVL – in May, one on 8th, three on 15th, with one the next day.

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

Uncommon passage migrant; most frequent in the autumn when occasional influxes occur. Most records are from CVL.
American Black Tern *C. n. surinamensis - Very rare with one record in October 1999*

Migration dates: Forty year average first date April 25th. Forty year average last date Oct. 11th.

A below average year with records only from the reservoirs.

Spring passage A poor year but, unusually, with records continuing into June; the only records were, in May at CVL, one on 14th and 15th, and nine on 31st, and in June at BG, one on 6th and another on 16th.

Autumn passage A better autumn passage started on Aug. 4th with an adult at CVL, followed by five on 6th, four on 7th and one on 8th. The next were four at CVL on 22nd with six here and seven at BG the following day; ten arrived at CVL on 24th with six staying until the 27th. One was at BL on 29th and 30th with a juvenile at CVL from 31st until Sept. 3rd. The final record was a flock of 14 at CVL on Sept. 19th.

The ten-year table below summarises the records for the main site – CVL.

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Av. of 3 highest counts Apr - Jun	8	6	1	3	2	2	1	2	5	3
Av. of 3 highest counts Jul - Oct	10	90	13	36	70	31	30	13	10	10
No of days recorded (total for year)	29+	40	12	25	46	17	42	15	14	17

Average counts at CVL

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

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

An average year with six records involving 15 birds.

Spring passage The first record was of six at Ladye Bay, Clevedon on April 8th, with two flying upriver at Severn Beach on 17th. In May there were two at Ladye Bay on 14th with two at OPS on 16th and one to S at Severn Beach the same day.

There were two at BL on July 21st.

Unusual Terns in the Avon area

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Little Tern	4	6+	2+	16	6	1	26	4	15	7
White-winged Black Tern			1			1				
Sandwich Tern	12	23+	20	86	13	6	21	4	35	15
Roseate Tern		1								

Total number of unusual terns for the past ten years.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

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

Migration dates: Forty year average first date April 12th. Forty year average last date Oct. 4th.

A poor spring, particularly on Severnside, was followed by a better autumn passage with a couple of large flocks.

The first in spring was one at CVL on April 6th, with the last in autumn being one at the same site on the late date of Oct. 28th. The highest count was a flock of 80 at CVL on Aug. 19th.

Summary for CVL							
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
No. of days recorded	7	4	2	9	13	8	1
Maximum count	2	9	4	5	80	14	1

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Av. of 3 highest counts Apr - Jun	6	33	11	28	3	11	20	5	17	5
Av. of 3 highest counts Jul - Nov	15	24	37	24	37	9	35	6	38	38
No. days recorded (total for year)	30	51	43	35	27	32	44	53	61	44

Average counts at CVL

Only twelve records away from CVL with the following of note;

New Passage – 35 on the evening of Sept. 8th left to SW at 17.25 hrs;

Common Tern con't
Avonmouth, M5 bridge – three on Aug. 2nd;

Weston STW – one on Sept. 5th was only the second record for the site;

R. Avon, Bath – one on May 16th;

BG – five on Aug. 10th.

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 in smaller numbers than Common Tern. Often appears after westerly gales.

A poor year, particularly on Severnside, with most records from CVL.

On the Estuary the only records were as follows:

OPS – one on April 25th;

New Passage – adult on Aug. 28th and juvenile on 29th;

Severn Beach – 13 on April 19th and first-winter on Sept. 3rd;

Ladye Bay, Clevedon – seven on May 12th.

CVL The table below sets out all records at CVL - of note was a first-summer on June 22nd (RMi):

Apr	May		June		July	August							September					October	
27	11	15	18	22	30	1	4	12	18	26	29	30	1	3	5	15	16	2	4
7	3	6	1	1	7	6	3	3	2	1	3	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1

The only other record was of one at BL on May 9th.

COMMON/ARCTIC TERN *Sterna hirundo/paradisaea*

The only unidentified records were;

Severn Beach – 100 on April 26th on the evening tide;

Battery Pt. – three downriver on April 21st;

Sand Pt. – 35 flying upriver on May 2nd;

Anchor Head – three to N on April 21st (possibly same as Battery Pt.).

GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge*

Scarce storm-driven visitor throughout the year; no inland records prior to 2008.
Descriptions required for inland records

Two records, both from Sand Pt.: two on May 10th and an unprecedented 35 on Dec. 6th (PAB). To put the latter into perspective the highest record in the last 30 years, also from Sand Pt., was of eight on May 31st, 1993.

LITTLE AUK *Alle alle*

Very scarce storm-driven visitor, usually at Severnside. Very rare inland.
Description species

One accepted record, from Severn Beach on Nov. 26th (DN *et al.*).

A number of reports from the same site around this date remain unsubmitted.

Unusual Auks in the Avon area

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Guillemot	9	6	10	8	8	1	11	4	3	37
Razorbill		2	2		1	1	2			
Guillemot/Razorbill	4	25	16	3				1		
Little Auk		1	1				2	1		1
Puffin			2							

Total number of unusual auks for the past ten years.

FERAL PIGEON *Columba livia var*

Introduced, common to abundant resident, mostly found in urban areas.

	WBC	WGS	CABS	WBC	England 96-06
% Change	-37	2	8	-37	-5

BBS data (which is the most reliable for an overall view) for 2008 showed a worrying 31% decline. Thankfully this plateaued in 2009 with the BBS index remaining the same. Despite this, reasons need to be found as to why the population has halved in only five years.

The only three figure flocks in 2009 were 100 at Walborough on Oct. 26th and at Keynsham also in October, with 140 on 4th and 130 on 13th. The regular flock at Five Arches, Radstock peaked at 60 on Oct. 2nd.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	110	119	114	133	102	94	94	64	64

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 38%, Breeding population in Bristol estimated at 1300 pairs)

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Fairly common but declining breeding resident.

Population change in England 1996-2006: down 2%.

Widespread in small numbers. Bird Atlas surveying suggests a substantial decline locally over the last 30 years. However since 2001, BBS data tells us that the population has stabilised, albeit at a lower level than previously.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	88	76	64	53	61	68	57	66	63

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 24%)

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
9+	11	16	22	17	30	33	90	73	64

Number of sites in Avon

Flocks Numbers were well down on last year; there were only seven records of double-figure flocks. Marshfield recorded 15 in Jan., 11 in May and 20 in July, the latter the largest flock of the year for Avon. Other double-figure flocks were 16 at Compton Dando and 14 at Queen Charlton, both in March, 15 at Dunkirk in June and 17 in November at OPS.

There were no records credibly attributable to any movement.

Breeding Three records of potential breeding were received, one proven, all using nest boxes. A pair were seen at Weston STW in March and again in October; one was on eggs in a box at BL in April and one was in an owl box at PW in June. Since this species was recorded between April and June at 52 sites, it is likely that breeding is significantly under-recorded. Readers are again encouraged to submit all breeding records (*Eds*).

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Abundant and increasing breeding resident.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	England 95-07
% Change	9	-2	4	18	35

An average year.

January to May Large flocks were noted as follows; several reports from the Tormarton area, peaking at 500 on Jan 20th, 175 at Burnett on Feb. 27th, 300 at OPS on 28th, 150 feeding on ash buds at Widcombe Common on April 2nd, and 220 still in a flock at Norton Hawkfield on 25th.

Breeding As usual very few records submitted; single pairs with young were noted at Pill, Keynsham Somerdale, Steep Holm and OPS.

Migrants The only records involving perceived movements were of 44 to NE over OPS on Oct. 17th, 600 to S over Keynsham on Nov. 2nd, 40 to S over BL on Nov. 5th and 200 to S over Weston STW on Dec. 23rd.

June to December October saw an autumn build-up of flocks with 250 in Keynsham on 4th, 200 near Thornbury on the same date, 370 at Compton Dando on 17th, 350 at OPS on 19th and 200 at Bleadon on 25th. 250 were at Clevedon on Nov. 6th, with 700 at Clevedon Court Wood on 7th and 370 at Downend, also on 7th. Weston STW had three-figure counts on several dates, culminating in a peak of 2000 on Dec. 23rd.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	114	128	128	132	132	140	141	138	137

Woodpigeon Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 100%, BBS population estimate 19,000 breeding pairs)

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common breeding resident.

	WBC	WGS	CABS	WBC	England 95 - 07
% Change	-11	-8	-33	-17	28

The only double-figure counts received were twelve at Shirehampton on Oct. 15th, 13 at Wick St. Lawrence on Oct. 31st, 18 at Cl-Y on Nov. 8th and 14 at Wrington on Dec. 17th.

Breeding The only reports of breeding were three nests, one near the Feeder Road, one at St. Anne's and one in Leap Valley, Downend, all in Bristol.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	106	112	124	119	101	103	92	82	74

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 68%, BBS population estimate 2900 breeding pairs)

The fall in numbers (-9.7% in one year) recorded by the BBS survey is, if part of a long term decline, highly significant. Since the population has fallen 40% in a mere six years, alarm bells should be being rung for this currently still familiar species.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

Formerly a fairly common summer visitor, but has undergone a steep decline, and our last breeding record was in 1983. It is now only a scarce passage migrant.

Description species

Population change in England 1996 - 2006: down 57%.

As has now become the norm there were again low numbers, with the only record as follows:

Cl-Y – two together in flight over Yeo Bank Farm on June 4th (HER).

It would be nice to sound an optimistic note but sadly the data suggests otherwise.

2008: one photographed in a garden in Sandford in May (IF), the precise date not known.

Year	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
No. of bird-days	6	2	3	3	10+	5	7	2	3	2
No. of individuals	6	2	3	3	1	2	3	2	3	2

Total annual bird-days and number of individuals

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).
Population change in England 1996 - 2006: down 46%.
Migration dates: Forty year average first date April 12th. Forty year average last date Aug. 27th.

After the hint of a possible recovery in 2007, 2009 was another disastrous year.

Year	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
No. of bird-days	102	38	66	93	74	97	75	100	74	43
No. of records	86	32	58	87	69	78	63	98	70	43

Total bird-days and records

First noted at Shepperdine on April 12th (*cf.* 6th in 2005, 12th in 2006, 11th in 2007 and 13th in 2008).

For the first time, no records were received of multiple birds at any site.

Regular records throughout the breeding season were received from BL, Burrington, OPS and Weston STW. Astonishingly, there were only five reports from CVL for the whole year.

After the middle of June there were only four records, and only one of those was logged as a juvenile. Perhaps this hints at poor breeding success as a contributory cause to the dramatic decline of late.

The last record of the year was a bird on Tickenham Moor on June 28th, a very early last date.

	April	May	June	July
Bird-days	10 (15)	18 (49)	13 (9)	0 (1)
Records	10 (15)	18 (45)	13 (9)	0 (1)
Sites	9 (10)	9 (17)	8 (9)	0 (1)

Month-by-month breakdown of 2009 bird-days, records and sites (2008 in brackets)

Recent studies (see BTO News for July-August 2010) have suggested that the main reasons for the decline of this species are likely to be lack of key food resources (mainly caterpillars) during the breeding season and/or deterioration of conditions along migration routes or on overwintering grounds in sub-Saharan Africa, and not a lack of host numbers or host nest availability. It is also of interest to note that numbers in Scotland have not dropped as much as those in England or Wales.

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.

An excellent total of 137 records, the highest in the last decade. These came from 41 sites (with the Cam Valley treated as one site), an average number for recent years.

Regularly seen at the following sites (in alphabetical order): BL, Congresbury Moor, CVL, Nailsea Wall, PW and Yatton. Surprisingly there was only a single record from Weston STW.

Breeding In *NS* four pairs bred, of which one pair raised five young. An analysis by CVWG, part of whose study area is in Somerset with the rest in BA, showed 13 pairs were present at the start of the season, of which eleven bred producing a minimum of 27 young; single birds were present at four other sites. A further two breeding sites were discovered retrospectively. In the rest of BA at least four pairs bred, with one of these pairs raising two young, another pair five young, and the third pair four young.

Year	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
No. of records	38	24	65	88	93	94	119	91	115	137
No. of sites	25	20	30	35	38	43	44	26	35	40

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: Minus 46%.

The commentary in last year's Report highlighted that many observers had noted a decline Owl yet the number of records and sites did not support this. Unfortunately, for 2009 the number of records dropped by 37% giving clear, if not scientific, signs for concern. The number of sites reported, although registering a significant drop, returned to the average level for the past decade. The true position is therefore far from clear and the future fortunes for this species should be carefully monitored.

Year	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
No. of records	149	94	141	126	128	114	147	134	139	87
No. of sites	64	39	47	58	48	48	49	46	66	49

Total number of records and sites per year

BBS data gives us a sound scientifically proven method, however the method is not designed to monitor night-flying species, and it is unreliable for small sample sizes – this species was only found in 3% of transects in Avon. The fact that the data shows a 100% increase on 2008 clearly illustrates how we must not always take data on face value.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	108	116	34	64	69	25	34	34	69

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 3%)

Birds were recorded regularly at Congresbury Moor, Langford, Marshfield/West Littleton, OPS, PW and Wrington.

Breeding The only records were from Dundry, of the regular two pairs around the village, and a pair throughout the summer at Marshfield that raised one juvenile.

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Fairly common breeding resident.

UK 25-yr change: - 25%.

An average total of 276 records but from 111 sites, the highest number in the last decade.

Tawny Owl Breeding It was encouraging to receive many more records of breeding than of late. A total of 13 sites recorded breeding including three broods at Ashton court (of 2, 2 and 1 young), three broods at Wrington (of 2-3, 2-3 and 1 young) and two pairs at BL. In addition, as part of the Bristol Birdwatch survey, they were reported hooting at night from 231 gardens (not counted in the table below).

Counts The highest count was again from Wrington with nine recorded on Sept. 20th and again on Oct. 26th. There were a further 20 records of three birds or more.

Year	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
No. of records	149	124	145	125	227	220	235	293	213	276
No. of sites	65	50	55	54	66	89	57	95	81	111

Total number of records and sites per year

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Very rare in summer, bred successfully in 1991.
Description species

A single record this year:

Aust Warth – one on roadside fence posts at dusk on Jan. 1st then flew inland (BMac).

The following table shows the records for the last ten years.

Year	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
No. of individuals seen	3	2	3	3	0	0	2	1	2	1

Number of individuals seen

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly on the coast.

A good showing in the first winter period, but significantly fewer records during the second winter period. Most of the records came from the Aust Warth/Northwick Warth area, where the birds in the early part of the year proved particularly popular.

	2005	06	07	08	2009
Bird-days	105	100	100	260	105
Records	56	79	102	186	100

When interpreting the number of records, it should be borne in mind that, whilst in recent years there has indeed been a move to this species regularly wintering on our coasts, some of the increase in records more truly reflects increased numbers of observers going to see them.

First winter period:

OPS – one on April. 13th;

Aust Warth/Northwick Warth – 60 records documented a maximum of three birds at this site, being regularly recorded up until April 25th. There was then one late record, of a single bird on May 25th; there was a curious gap in records between February 15th and March 13th. It was noteworthy that three birds were present on April 8th, the same date that another three birds were present at Chittening Warth. Six birds were again recorded in this area on April 12th;

Severn Beach/Chittening Warth – up to three birds on ten dates between Jan. 18th and April 19th;

Cl-Y – one on Jan. 29th and one on March 15th.

There were no summer records this year.

Second winter period:

OPS – one on Dec. 5th;

Aust Warth/Northwick Warth – The first bird of the autumn was noted here on Sept. 16th. A single bird was then recorded on a further three dates in September and five dates in October.

The only inland record for the year was of one near Marshfield on Sept. 23rd.

Monthly breakdown												
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	:	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	2009 (2008)
Records	28	10	12	29	1	0		8	10	0	2	100 (186)
Bird-days	25	15	15	36	1	0		6	5	0	1	105 (260)
Max. count	2	3	3	6	1	0		1	1	0	1	6 (5)

Bird-days = the sum of the maximum daily counts for each site

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Very scarce passage migrant and occasional breeding summer visitor.
Description required for sight records away from the Mendips

An average year. Reports came from the usual two sites on the north slopes of the Mendips, Burrington Ham (present from 28th May, with up to two churring males in June) and nearby Rod's Pot on the Somerset border (a male churring throughout the summer).

Year	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Churring males	1	0	0	0	3	1	2	3	1	3
No. of reports	3	0	1	0	6	1	8	5	3	4

SWIFT *Apus apus*

Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

Population change in England 1996 - 2006: down 25%.
Migration dates: Forty year average first date April 20th. Forty year average last date Sept. 20th.

Survey data shows no significant change from 2008 except that BBS detected a reduction in distribution from 61% to 49%.

Arrival The first birds, 20 in total, were seen at CVL on April 18th. Two were back on territory in Chew Magna on April 22nd, then there was a more significant arrival on 25th, with 500 at CVL and small numbers at several widespread locations. On 26th, 82 were seen in 75 minutes over Redland. However, strong arrivals were not noted at Weston until May 5th, and Keynsham not until May 10th.

Summer flocks All the flocks of 250 or more were at CVL. The peak counts were 2000 on May 8th, 1000 on 12th, 3000 on 15th, 1000 on 17th and 1500 on June 18th.

Breeding Although some noted a reduction in numbers breeding, this was offset by others who saw more than usual. The BBS data showed no significant change from last year. Reports suggest that this species has ceased to breed in Stoke Bishop and the downward trend in the breeding population of Bishop Sutton continued, with only 4 pairs in the village centre.

Departure Most departed during late July and early August, with the last three-figure count of 100 at CVL on 4th. Small numbers were still being seen throughout the region until the end of August. The last of the year were seen on Sept. 4th, with four at CVL, one in Clifton and four at Weston-s-Mare.
At CVL on May 9th a partial albino with white belly, rump and back was noted.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	93	86	112	103	76	67	72	55	59

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 49%. BBS population estimate 2000 pairs)

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Fairly common breeding resident, distributed in small numbers on waters throughout the area.

Population change in England 1996 - 2006: up 24%.

An average year, with records from 75 sites, close to the average for the preceding five years.

During the first winter period, January records started off strongly, with 30 records from 19 sites (*cf.* 23 sites in 2004, 30 in 2005, 31 in 2006, 33 in 2007, and 26 in 2008). However the onset of the cold weather saw February with only six records from six sites. March saw a slight recovery to eight records from five sites but the impact is clear. CVL was generating regular reports, but there were no further reports after Jan. 9th until May. There was no noticeable movement to coastal records as might have been expected during the cold weather; rather, records seem to be concentrated on the major rivers. Most reports were of single birds but three were seen together at BL and Kenn Moor.

Breeding Records for the period April to June came from 25 sites (*cf.* 17 in 2004, 13 in 2005, 16 in 2006, 23 in 2007 and 40 in 2008). Although this is well down from last year's figure, it still represents an improvement on the previous four years. It would therefore appear that the impact of the cold weather in the early part of 2009 may not have significantly affected population levels. The only evidence of breeding was two nests found on the River Chew, at Widcombe and Publow. Birds together were recorded from a further six sites (*cf* seven in 2008).

Post-breeding dispersal as usual created a rise in the number of records, peaking in September. Recorded from a healthy 58 sites (*cf.* 36 in 2004, 67 in 2005, 50 in 2006, 53 in 2007 and 55 in 2008). Perhaps less competition during the breeding season helped to create higher productivity. Regular reports of one or two came from BL, CVL (where three were recorded together on six dates during August and September, four seen on Oct. 5th and three on 14th), Frome Valley, Keynsham, Kenn Moor, New Passage, OPS, Weston STW and Winford Brook.

Year.	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
No. of sites	46	36	52	n/c	56	86	74	80	95	75

Kingfisher Number of sites each year

HOOPOE *Upapa epops*

Very scarce spring migrant, rare in autumn
Description species

As last year, there were two spring records:

Bourton - one photographed in a front garden on April 16th (RD);

Doynton - one on April 22nd (MGo).

Previous records in the last ten years were in September 2002 from Norton Hawkfield, in May 2003 from Weston STW, in August 2004 from Yate, and in April 2008 from Dyrham and Aust Warth/Severn Beach. Up to 1995 the species was recorded almost annually.

WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*

Scarce autumn passage migrant. Very rare in spring.
Description species

A reasonable showing, with a rare spring record and two in autumn:

Thornbury – one in a garden on April 26th (AD per SGweb);

Kingston Seymour – one near the sea wall on Sept. 20th (DN). (There were two here in 2008);

Kewstoke – one in a garden on Sept. 20th and 21st (G&JS).

Previous spring records in the last 30 years have been in 1979 (April 14th on Sand Point), 1984 (May 1st in Whitchurch), 1997 (April 13th in a Bishop Sutton garden), and 2006 (April 23rd to 25th in a Warmley garden).

Year.	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
No. of individuals	2	1	2	3	1	1	3	1	7	3

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Fairly common breeding resident, increasing nationally and probably locally.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	England 95-07
% Change	-3	-33	N/A	-17	56

A good year with a total of 453 records from 209 sites.

Year	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
No. of records	223	137	165	323	236	333	231	529	524	453
No. of sites	87	63	75	127	103	127	93	235	227	209

Number of records and sites each year

Breeding There were 191 records from 121 sites during April, May and June (*cf.* 77 records from 57 sites in 2006, 220 from 132 sites in 2007 and 241 from 130 sites in 2008), distributed as follows:

April – 60 records from 47 sites (*cf.* 26 sites in 2004, 61 in 2005, 30 in 2006, 67 in 2007, and 63 in 2008);

May – 74 records from 65 sites (*cf.* 17 sites in 2004, 53 in 2005, 21 in 2006, 54 in 2007, and 67 in 2008);

June – 57 records from 52 sites (*cf.* 6 sites in 2004, 36 in 2005, 14 in 2006, 58 in 2007 and 53 in 2008).

There were very few records of actual breeding: at CVL five pairs were located (*cf.* five in 2006 and six in 2007 and seven in 2008), a pair successfully raised young at both Ubley and OPS, and a female was at a nesthole in Blackhorse.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	96	92	88	99	110	105	85	115	112

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 55%)

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Fairly common breeding resident increasing both nationally and locally.

Population change in England 1996 - 2006: up 92%.

A reduction in records received, down from 372 last year to 317, however the number of sites was slightly up.

Year	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
No. of records	142	113	226	172	149	339	193	415	372	317
No. of sites	62	53	66	76	77	173	80	191	172	181

Total number of records and sites per year

Compared to 2008, BBS data gives a drop in distribution of 5% and a drop in numbers of 32%. However local surveys gave a different story – the CABS and the Bristol area WGS show significant increases in both the number of birds and their distribution. Looking back at the data for this species, there have been significant annual fluctuations in the number of records received; the likely causes are either varying observer effort and/or varying breeding success as the number of sites has not fallen, indeed this number for 2009 is the second highest for the past ten years.

Breeding Drumming was recorded up to June 1st at 13 sites (*cf.* seven in 2004, 14 in 2005, 19 in 2006, 28 in 2007, and 23 in 2008). At CVL there were 13 pairs (*cf.* six in 2005, seven in 2006, 10 in 2007 and seven in 2008). Breeding was recorded from Abbotts Leigh, CVL, Downend, Goblin Combe, St. Anne's Park and Ubley. Drumming was recorded again from Aug. 11th.

An interesting record was of a bird coming in off the estuary and landing in Sand Point Wood on Oct. 17th.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	106	112	128	117	142	157	191	191	128

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 39%)

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos minor*

Scarce, declining and elusive breeding resident. Last breeding record was in 2003. Red Listed because of rapid national decline.

A slight recovery from last year, with two singing males and a mid-summer record.

Saltford - heard singing by the River Avon on April 8th;

Pensford - one seen in a garden, June 20th and 21st;

CVL – a male seen, or heard drumming, on seven dates from March 18th to April 13th. The bird was noted to have a metal ring so was presumably the individual trapped and ringed at this site in September 2008.

Year	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
No. of bird-days	7	10+	16+	20+	3	7	3	3	2	10
No. of individuals	6	5	11	9	3	7	2	3	1	3

Total number of bird-days and individuals

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

Very scarce winter visitor.
Description species

Two records of single birds: Lower Woods on Nov. 23rd (G&JL), and Flax Bourton on Dec. 12th (GJ, AEJ).

These are the 24th and 25th Avon records. Long-staying wintering individuals were seen at ASW in 1999 and 2000, on Severnside in 2004, and there were individual records from Lansdown in March 2005 and Cl-Y in October 2008.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Common breeding resident.

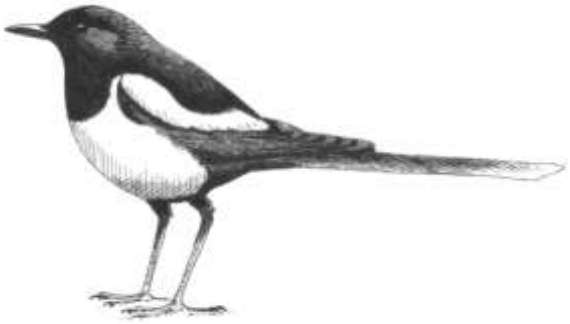
	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 97-07	England 97-07
% Change	-45	4	-4	-19	15	-4

Since 1994 BBS has shown no clear population trend although numbers have been lower in the past two years, and CABS figures were markedly down. However, they were present in almost every WGS garden, and once again in higher numbers than ever before. Numbers were constant throughout the winter, and did not show any peak during the February cold snap.

Large flocks Flocks of ten or more were recorded on 24 occasions, all but two outside the breeding season. The largest, 35, was at Keynsham on Jan. 23rd.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	101	102	109	97	98	101	97	89	85

Avon BBS Index (BBS Distribution 92%, BBS Avon population estimate 3450 pairs)



JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Fairly common breeding resident.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 97-07	England 97-07
% Change	-2	17	12	-28	81	11

WGS recorded them in the highest numbers ever, although in a lower proportion of gardens than in the previous winter. BBS counts recovered to the levels of 2007.

A group of six were seen displaying together on April 6th at Bishop Sutton.

Ringing Return One ringed on Feb. 16th, 2002 at Walton-in-Gordano was found dead in the Gordano Valley almost seven years later on Jan. 12th. The UK longevity record is 16 years.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	119	138	183	162	120	122	158	137	154

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 40%)

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Common breeding resident; uncommon passage migrant.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 97-07	England 97-07
% Change	132	-6	-1	11	6	27

The population is stable.

WGS recorded a fall, but the total number recorded was the second highest since 1975. In January there was a roost of up to 1300 at Monmouth Hill Wood (ST5984). A summer roost of 500 was recorded at BL on June 15th, and 200 were noted going to roost at OPS on Dec. 12th. A flock of 730 was recorded at Compton Dando on Dec. 27th.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	103	107	105	101	108	111	115	125	124

Avon BBS index (BBS distribution 86%, BBS Avon population estimate 8900 pairs)

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Common breeding resident.

BBS England 97-07 change, down 3%, local, down 38%.

BBS records suggest the population is stable, but counts remain well below those recorded in 2000, and this was confirmed by the 2005 regional roost count. Atlas surveys over two summers found them in 62% of tetrads, slightly less than the 74% of the winter survey, and identical to that in 1992 Breeding Atlas.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	82	65	50	56	66	52	54	55	57

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 47%, Avon population count 8000 pairs)

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Common breeding resident.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 97-07	England 97-07
% Change	-8	9	10	-16	-2	11

A stable population.

In the first winter period there were regular flocks of 150 at Keynsham, and 300 at Easton-in-Gordano. Five pairs nested around Weston STW, but a non-breeding flocks peaked at 160 at the end of June. A total of 120 was seen on the coast at Cl-Y in August and 200 were at Wrington in September. A pair nested successfully on Steep Holm, raising three juveniles.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	98	97	89	92	104	102	98	95	105

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 100 %, BBS Avon population estimate 8200 pairs)

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Uncommon breeding resident, and possibly an uncommon passage migrant.

BBS distribution 10%.
BBS England 97-07 change up 22%.

Atlas breeding season results from 380 tetrads give a maximum total of 216 birds which is similar to the 272 recorded during the winter, and suggests that there may be up to 100 breeding pairs. They were recorded in 90 tetrads during the counts, and roving records came from a further 62 tetrads, giving a grand a total of 152 tetrads. Because this species fledges its young at the start of May, which then roam widely, not all of these records can be presumed to be breeding pairs, but this very wide distribution supports the evidence from the counts.

BBS counted 54 in 29 of the squares covered (16%) and the table below shows the steadily increasing percentage in the past decade. There was specific evidence of probable breeding from 13 sites, including two at CVL, and they also bred successfully on Steep Holm.

Outside the breeding season family groups of up to eight are not infrequent, but up to 20 were recorded at Marshfield, twelve at Burledge, ten travelling SE at Cl-Y, and eleven were seen at Hartcliffe Way, S Bristol on Jan. 9th.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
1	na	5	4	4	9	10	12	10	16

BBS distribution; percentage of one-km squares in which Raven were recorded.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. The population suffers badly in harsh winters.

	WBC	BBS	CABS	Local 97-07	England 97-07
% Change	-31	-43	-66	18	26

There has been a steep population fall, a combination of a poor breeding season in 2008 and the February cold snap in 2009. BBS figures almost halved, and distribution was the lowest recorded since 1994. The numbers around CVL fell from 18 singing males last year to four this year, and the total ringed in the region fell from 74 to three. Two seasons of summer Atlas work found them in 44% of tetrads, rather fewer than the 59% found during the winter.

In January one was recorded regularly feeding on a fat ball in a Long Ashton garden. This appears to be a new habit. They have also been recorded on *Mahonia* flowers, and may, like Blackcap, be sipping nectar.

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
BBS	100	110	121	154	140	140	84	129	106	50
CVL	19	6	14	13	6	10	15	12	18	4

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 21%)

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapilla*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

This species is now a regular winter visitor in small numbers to a number of sites.

In the first winter period there was a minimum of eight as follows. In January one was present at Orchard Pools, near Severn Beach, on 1st, 10th and 11th, two on 25th and one on 26th and 30th, and seen again from Feb. 21st to 28th. Also in January one was by the Malago Brook on 12th, 16th, 26th and 31st, and again on Feb. 20th (possibly the bird that was present here from Oct. 27th, 2008). One was seen at PW on Jan. 24th, Bristol Grammar School on 25th, at Blaise on 25th, and on Feb. 8th and 15th. One visited a Montpelier garden on Feb. 14th, and one was present at Keynsham STW on 18th and 19th and again from March 3rd to 14th. In March two were present at Orchard Pools to the 17th.

In October one was at Middle Hope on 13th, one at Chittening on 15th and two at Weston Woods on 25th. In November one was at Ashcombe Park (Weston-s-Mare) on 5th, and again on Dec. 30th, one was at CVL on Nov. 7th and Dundry on 21st. Finally one was seen at Blaise on Nov. 29th, and again on Dec. 23rd and 28th.

Winter	1999/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	2008/09
No. seen	5	8	10	6	13	7	2	10	10	19

Number of individuals seen each winter

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Abundant breeding resident.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 97-07	England 97-07
% Change	-27	-13	3	-18	-16	1

The WGS results are the consequence of two poor breeding seasons in 2007 and 2008, but they appear to have fairly regular cycles of abundance.

First fledglings were recorded on May 25th, slightly later than the average of the previous seven years of 23rd. At Bishop Sutton only seven of 40 broods failed. A number of large tit parties, maximum 50, were recorded in a Redland garden during August and September suggesting an excellent breeding season.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	109	118	116	120	122	109	101	90	92

Avon BBS index (BBS distribution 97%, BBS Avon population estimate 35600 pairs)

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Abundant breeding resident.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 97-07	England 97-07
% Change	-18	4	-3	7	33	36

The population has risen over the past decade.

In recent years it has coped rather better with the cool summers than the previous species. In the 1990s the normal population relationship, shown by both WGS and BBS counts, and by the numbers ringed, was two Blue Tits to one Great Tit. This has fallen steadily and all three totals now give a ratio of around 11:10.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	106	112	119	128	125	137	124	130	125

Avon BBS Index (BBS Distribution 95%, BBS Avon population estimate 29,300 pairs)

COAL TIT *Periparus ater*

Common breeding resident, probably also a passage migrant.

	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 97-07	England 97-07
% Change	28	49	-12	50	8

WGS numbers tend to fluctuate with the Beech crop which was non-existent in 2008/09 winter, so that higher numbers in gardens were expected. The sharp increase in BBS figures implied that it had a good breeding season in 2008, and that many birds survived the February cold snap well.

Atlas work over two seasons found them in 34% of tetrads in the summer compared with 47% in winter, probably an indication of their greater visibility in winter, as they are not a migratory species. The breeding season figure compares well with 21% in 1992.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	135	174	180	188	144	120	135	90	135

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 29%)

WILLOW TIT *Parus montanus*

Very scarce resident.
Description species

One record: one was seen and heard at Lower Woods on Nov. 29th (BL).

In the past twenty years there have been twenty accepted records, the last from Lower Woods in July 2005. It is just possibly an elusive resident at this site.

MARSH TIT *Poecile palustris*

Uncommon breeding resident.

BBS distribution 3%.
BBS England 97-07 change, down 21%, local, down 60%.

Atlas evidence suggests there has been a population decline, but it is an elusive species that is very hard to monitor. Of 38 sites in which it was recorded in 1998, 16 have had no subsequent record, but since then they have been recorded in 196 other one-km squares in the region, and every year new squares are added to the total. In 2009 they were found in 35 one-km squares, twelve of which were new since 1998. It is striking that, on average over the past decade, it has been recorded each year in only 12% of the sites in which it probably exists.

New sites included Dundas Aqueduct, Hawkesbury Upton, Tormarton, Cleaves Wood, Backwell Down, Hutton, and most surprising Northwick Warth, which is especially strange given their sedentary nature.

There were breeding season records from Cadbury Hill, Blagdon, Burledge, Cadbury Camp, Folly Farm, Leigh Woods, Lower Woods and Inglestone, Monkswood, St Catherine's Valley, Wrington Warren, Combe Dingle and Saltford.

In winter additional records came from Portbury and Priors Wood, and Bourton Combe.

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Total squares	21	20	52	26	58	37	35	36	30	35
New squares	14	13	23	6	29	27	9	13	6	22

Annual total of one-km squares and new squares in which this species was seen

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus*

Very scrace passage migrant and winter visitor, almost all recorded at CVL.
Description species

A **2008** record - A male at OPS on April 26th (MP, PJH).

The first Avon record was of a flock of 50 (!) at CVL in November 1965, and a pair bred here in 1991. In 1999, 2000, and 2002 there were winter records, and in 2003 one was trapped with a brood patch. Since then the only records have been one on Severnside in March 2004 and one at CVL in April 2006.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

Declining but still common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

	WBC	BBS	Local 10 year	UK 25 yr
% Change	-31	-6	-5	-61

Winter 2008/09 Once again some large flocks were noted in the Marshfield area. There were 200 at Rushmead Farm on Jan. 1st and an exceptional 1000+ in the area in snowy conditions on Feb. 5th (*per* SGweb). Elsewhere in the first two months 155 were at Weston STW on Feb. 7th, 60 near the River Avon at Keynsham on Jan. 19th, and 40 at Dundry on Jan. 2nd, Tormarton on 21st and PW on Feb. 10th. There were also up to 35 at Cl-Y, 25 at Weston-s-Mare, 22 at Compton Dando and 18 at OPS at this time. A partial albino was at Littleton Warth on Jan. 10th (JPM) and, presumably the same individual, was at nearby OPS on Nov. 14th (PJH).

Skylark Breeding Singing was reported from Feb. 22nd and breeding season reports were received from at least 58 localities. Locally common, with larger counts of 18 territories at Weston STW in June, 25 birds at Easton-in-Gordano in May, and lower double figure counts from eleven one-km squares during BBS recording.

Autumn/Winter At New Passage/Northwick Warth eleven were noted on Sept. 20th with numbers increasing to 21 by 26th. There was more evidence of migration in October with 45 at Littleton Warth and 13 over OPS in three hours on 10th; 50 at Charlton Field on 15th; 17 to SE over Dundry next day; 21 to NE over OPS in 160 minutes on 17th; 19 to SW over New Passage in an hour, a steady stream to S over CVL on 28th, and 99 at Weston STW on 31st. In the last two months the largest flocks, in date order, were: 60 at PW on Nov. 19th, 44 near Keynsham on 29th, 49 at Compton Dando on Dec. 12th, 50 at Chewton on 20th and 165 at Weston STW on 24th. Otherwise no flock exceeded 30.

A surprisingly high total of 17 were recorded as Peregrine victims at St John's Church, Bath during the year. This might in part have been due to hard weather movements.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	86	72	78	82	104	94	97	95	95

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 41%, BBS Avon population estimate 3900 pairs)

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Fairly common passage migrant; local and uncommon breeding summer visitor.

BBS distribution 2%. UK ten-yr change: down 46%.
Arrival and departure data
40 year average first date March 15th, range 30 days. No trend 1970-88, then 13 day fall to 1998, stable since.
40 year average last date Oct. 7th, range 30 days, trend stable since 1984.
40 year average time spent 206 days, range 20 days, trend falling by 15 days 1970-87, then rising by 17 days 1987-1997.

Arrival and passage The first were four at Weston STW on March 1st followed by one at CVL on 4th, three here on 6th and 7th but no more until mid-month. On March 13th there were three at Cl-Y and 13 at CVL then birds were at six sites next day including 30 at CVL. Modest numbers were noted for the rest of the month with peaks of 80 at PW on 19th and 70 at CVL on 25th but no more than twelve at a handful of other sites. Early April produced peaks of 60 at Weston STW on 4th and 300 at CVL on 9th but there was no repeat of the exceptionally high counts of last year. Numbers were then much lower apart from 150 at CVL on 27th and the highest count elsewhere was just 22 at Severnside on 10th and 18th. Passage continued into May with 50 at CVL on 8th and the last spring migrant was at CVL on 20th.

Breeding Numbers reported at the regular site in Batheaston were small, with just four attending nest holes in late June. Up to eight adults were seen at the artificial nesting wall at BG. One pair raised two broods, both of four young, and a second pair raised one brood of three. At Somerdale, a traditional breeding site, there were five on April 16th and three on June 1st. Along the R. Avon east of Somerdale two pairs probably bred with four often seen well into May, and two on June 28th. In central Bristol one was seen possibly flying into a nest hole on the Floating Harbour in Avon Street on June 22nd and at least two pairs were nesting in drainage holes on Feeder Road, St. Phillip's Marsh in the first week of August.

Autumn passage and departure Three at OPS on June 13th were probably the first returning birds and later in the month there were nine at Northwick Warth on 23rd and twelve at Weston STW on 24th. In July, passage numbers built up with 60 at CVL on 20th and up to 20 at eight other sites. Numbers were much lower in the first half of August with single figure counts from several sites then more in the last week with 100 at CVL on 26th. In September there were 100 at CVL on 3rd with 75 remaining on 15th while 100 were reported at Weston STW also on 15th. The last at CVL were 25 on 17th apart from a late bird here, the last of the year, on Oct. 5th.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Common to abundant passage migrant and common breeder.

UK 25-yr change: down 2%. Local ten-yr change: down 14%.
Arrival and departure data
40 year average first date March 24th, range 30 days, trend falling by 12 days 1976-1996 stable since.
40 year average last date Nov. 4th, range 40 days, no trend.
40 year average time spent 224 days, range 20 days, trend rising by 20 days 1976-2002.

Arrival The first of the year was one at Cl-Y on March 17th. Birds were next noted at both Tickenham and PW on 19th, CVL on 20th then daily from 25th and widespread from 29th. At Weston STW there were 19 on 29th and 50 at BL on 30th. April numbers were modest with the following three figure counts, in date order: 200 at CVL on 9th; 100 here, 149 through Weston STW and 145 to NE in 95 minutes at Severnside on 15th; 280 at Weston STW, 300 at both Kingston Seymour and, to N, at New Passage on 18th; and 150 at CVL on 27th. In May an estimated 300 passed Sand Point on 3rd, the spring peak of 400 was noted at BG on 4th and 80 were at CVL on 15th.

Breeding Widespread but no significant records reported.

Autumn passage and departure In July there were 500 at OPS on 1st. In August numbers generally did not build up until the end of the month but 985 were counted moving to S over Dundry on the morning of 10th in seven five minute spot counts, with birds still moving in smaller numbers in the afternoon leading to an estimate of roughly 10000 for the day (DN). Otherwise the peak was just 250 at CVL on 28th. In September the peak count was 615 to SE at Weston STW on 26th. Otherwise there were up to 250 at CVL on two dates until mid-month and elsewhere up to 100 at OPS until 19th, at Hawkesbury Upton on 16th and at Cl-Y on 19th. There were still 180 at CVL on Oct. 6th but thereafter no more than 25 (CVL on 9th). Then only seven records from Oct. 11th to the end of the month with the last two to E at Kewstoke on 29th, apart from two very late birds to W at Severn Beach on Nov. 26th (DN).

One ringed as a first-year at CVL on July 31st, 2007 was found dead 9,382 kms away in South Africa on Nov. 20th.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	89	77	70	106	101	108	154	105	119

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 73%, BBS Avon population estimate 8000 pairs)

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

Common passage migrant and breeder.

UK 25-yr change: down 65%. Local ten-yr change: down 31%.
Arrival and departure data
40 year average first date March 28th, range 30 days, trend fall of 12 days 1988-2002.
40 year average last date Nov 1st, range 40 days, trend fall by 20 days 1970-2008.
40 year average time spent 219 days, range 10 days, trend stable since 1978.

Arrival Early birds were reported singly at Cl-Y and Severnside on March 17th but then no more until two at BL on 27th; one at CVL on 29th and 30th and 30 at BL on 30th; and one at New Passage on 31st. Small numbers noted at three sites in early April then a large early influx of 200 at CVL on 9th (RJH). Much smaller numbers were noted elsewhere during the month with a modest peak of 18 to NE in 95 minutes at New Passage on 15th, a day when there were also 100 at CVL. In early May there were 200 at BG and 70 at Keynsham STW on 4th. Birds were apparently still arriving in mid-May with 300 at CVL on 17th.

Breeding Several reports of reduced numbers at breeding sites. Estimates by AC from three areas of North Somerset suggested numbers were only about a third of those of 2004, but returns from other sites painted a less bleak picture. At the colony in the Portishead Pier area birds were not back in strength until late May, by which time there were at least 37 occupied nests on two buildings. Disappointingly owners of at least one of the new buildings erected wire mesh to prevent birds using their property. At least 55 fresh/intact nests, with young still present in several, were counted on Sept. 20th, this count fitted in with EGMN's suggestion of a 10% decline here since 2008. Three days later the birds had departed. Six nest boxes at Bishop Sutton were used successfully, with six second broods, one third brood recorded, and 42 young ringed compared with 24 in 2008 (DW). There were at least ten nests at Sea Mills station in July. Nine nests were active in Wrington until Sept. 30th with all but one fledging young. Ten nests were on Pooles Wharf, Bristol this year with the last young fledging on Oct. 2nd.

Post-breeding and departure CVL held 350 by July 17th. Numbers rose in August with peaks of 850 at OPS on 6th and 250 at CVL on 28th. Numbers at CVL again rose to exceptional levels in early September with 2000 on 4th (KEV) with 750 remaining here on 16th and there were 500 at Worlebury Hill on 15th and 16th. At NP 35 were still present on Sept. 30th but numbers dropped abruptly in early October. There were just low single figure counts early in the month apart from 25 at CVL on 6th, and after four at Pill on 11th, there was none until a late bird, the last of the year, at Sand Point on Nov. 10th.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	91	82	92	93	82	73	120	83	59

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 31%, BBS Avon population estimate 3430 pairs)

CETTI'S WARBLER *Cettia cetti*

Uncommon resident. First definitely bred in 1995.

BBS distribution 2% BBS England 97-07 change, up 80%.

The expansion continues.

CVL There were 28 singing males around the lake, the highest total yet.

Elsewhere In the breeding season a total of 33 singing males were recorded from the following sites in alphabetical order. ASW, Banwell, BL, Chittening Warth, Cl-Y and Blake's Pools, Hoar Gout, Locking, PW, RPD, Weston STW, Wick, and Yatton.

In addition outside the breeding season there were regular records from Backwell Lake, and individual records from New Passage, Congresbury and Wick Warth.

Cetti's Warbler ringing returns One originally ringed at Berrow, Somerset, on Aug. 9th, 2003 was recaptured at CVL in May 2007 and again on Aug. 6th. The total ringed in 2009, 68, was 50% greater than any previous year.

	1995	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
CVL singing males	1	2	4	8	12	10	12	14	18	15	17	22	21	21	28
Other singing males						3	2	4	3	7	14	14	21	32	33
Sites						3	2	4	3	5	13	10	8	18	19

Singing males at CVL, and breeding season singing males from other sites.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Common breeding resident.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 97-07	England 97-07
% Change	-23	79	-4	54	62	13

The slight fall recorded by BBS was probably the result of the February cold snap.

In the 2008/09 winter they were present in all WGS gardens, and in the largest numbers ever. A peak came over the New Year, and there was a second peak coinciding with the February cold snap.

Two summers of Atlas work found them in 60% of tetrads compared with just 26% in 1992. CABS had above average numbers during the first nine weeks of the year, and again in November and December suggesting a good breeding season. There were five records of flocks of 15 or more in January and February, four such flocks July to September, and six in the autumn and winter, the largest 20, on Dec.20th at Midford, all suggesting a good breeding season.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	107	114	110	120	98	91	130	140	135

Avon BBS index (BBS distribution 52%)

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Uncommon spring passage migrant. Rare on autumn passage. Last bred in 1996.
Descriptions required for autumn records

UK 97-07 change: down 51%.
Migration dates:
Forty year average arrival date April 11th range 20 days, no trend.

A marginally better year.

There were seven spring records, and two in the autumn as follows:

In April a male at New Passage on 14th, another at CVL on 18th, two at Wain's Hill, Cl-Y, on 21st, one at Wrington on 23rd, and one at Chittening Warth on 24th. On May 14th, one was at Seabank Pools, Severn Beach.

In August one at Almonsdbury on 2nd (MDa) and one at PW on 24th (CJS).

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	2008	2009
Spring	12	na	10	8	9	8	10	5	3	7

Passage totals

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

P. c. collybita Common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. Also an uncommon winter visitor, and therefore possibly an uncommon resident.

BBS England 97-07 change, up 30%, local down 16%.

Winter 2008/09 In January 17 were counted at seven sites: ASW, CVL, Chew Stoke STW, Portishead, Severn Beach and in gardens in Montpelier and Portishead. In February seven were present at five sites, and four of them were seen after the cold snap. The sites were ASW, Chew Stoke STW, Keynsham STW and a Weston-s-Mare garden. It is clear that these birds wander between sites, and it is not easy to assess how many may be present. Both the total number of wintering individuals and the total number of sites they use have declined since 2006, when a maximum of 53 probable individuals were seen in January and February. There is now a concentration at sewage treatment plants, and fewer are recorded in gardens; this probably reflects the cold temperatures in December 2008 and February 2009.

Spring passage and breeding season The first March record was of three, one in song, on 3rd at Chew Stoke STW, which may have been wintering birds. Up to two were present at Orchard Pools, Severn Beach, from 6th to 8th, one on 9th at ASW and four on 10th and 11th at Keynsham STW. Passage proper got under way on 14th

when 21 were recorded at eight widely separated sites. Passage peaked on 21st when 45 were recorded from ten sites.

Over two summers Atlas observers found them in 93% of tetrads, slightly higher than in 1992 when the figure was 85%.

BBS recorded a decline, probably caused by the poor breeding season in 2008.

Around the perimeter of CVL 45 singing males were recorded, the highest number yet.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	106	112	147	168	104	87	117	132	117

Avon BBS index (BBS Distribution 88%, BBS Avon population estimate 8800 pairs)

Autumn passage They were reported in some numbers from early August on the coast. Passage seems to have peaked on Sept. 19th when 25 were caught at CVRS and 30 reported from New Passage. They continued to be recorded in small numbers from Weston STW until mid-October and at OPS until 28th.

Winter In November there were reports of ten from eight sites, and in December 18 were recorded from eleven sites. Three were recorded on Dec. 28th and 30th after the snow had cleared.

Siberian Chiffchaff. *P. c. tristis*
Rare winter visitor.
Description subspecies

The *fulvescens* type *tristis* from 2008 remained at CVL until Jan. 3rd.

One was at Keynsham STW, from at least March 11th to 15th (AHD, BL, JPM *et al.*).

Eastern Chiffchaff. *P.c. abietinus/tristis*
Scarce winter visitor.
Description required

An eastern type bird, either *abietinus* or *tristis* but not a classic example of the latter was at BG on Nov. 18th (TEB) and perhaps the same on Dec. 21st staying into 2010 (SD, CJS).

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Common passage migrant and declining breeding summer visitor.

BBS England 97-07 change, down 30%, local, down 59%.
Migration dates:
Forty year average first date March 26th, range 25 days, trend seven days earlier 1992-present.
Forty year average last date Sept. 23rd, range 30 days, trend stable.
Forty year average time spent 183 days, range 40 days, trend increase by 15 days 1992 to present.

An increasing proportion of all records are of passage birds.

Breeding numbers have clearly declined markedly over the past decade as is shown by the BBS index given in the table below. The ringing totals seem to show a different picture but over the past 25 years they have also shown a major decline.

The very low numbers in 2008 and 2009 are mostly likely to be weather related, the mid-summer rains will have destroyed many broods of this mainly ground nesting species.

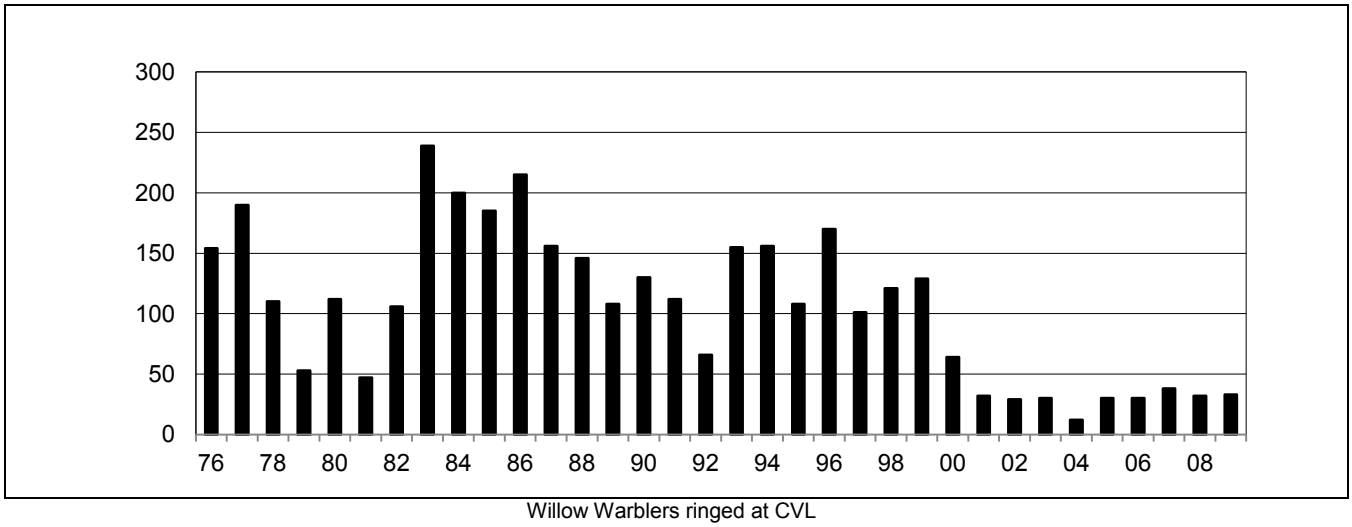
Arrival The first spring arrival was seen on March 22nd at CVL, and the next four were noted at three sites on 30th. There was a passage peak on April 11th when 30 were counted at eight sites.

The first nest with young was found on May 25th. In the breeding season there were just three pairs around CVL.

Departure Autumn passage began on Aug. 6th, but no more than five were recorded at a site, and the last was seen on Sept. 23rd at PW, a normal last date.

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
BBS index	100	75	52	31	59	36	51	47	43	43
Ringing Total	202	182	222	234	220	270	299	209	39	86

Avon BBS index and Ringing totals (BBS distribution 31%)



Willow Warblers ringed at CVL

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. It is now also a fairly common winter visitor, most frequently recorded in gardens.

	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 97-07	England 97-07
% Change	11	9	9	32	32

A stable breeding population.

Winter 2008/09 WGS recorded them in 81% of gardens, a distribution similar to that of Collared Dove and Coal Tit, and the totals were 11% up on the previous winter. In the last two winters Atlas observers have found them in 50% of tetrads, with most records from urban regions. Total bird-days have continued to be recorded, but differences between winters are almost certainly more a function of the number of observers submitting records than of any real population change.

Spring arrival and breeding season Probable summer migrants were seen at CVL on March 22nd, BL on 23rd, and OPS on 28th. On April 4th one was recorded at New Passage and seven at OPS, and passage was then continuous. Over-wintering birds were recorded in at least two gardens to 5th.

In the breeding season numbers recorded by BBS were up, but the population has been broadly stable over the past decade. A record 49 were in song around CVL.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	108	117	105	113	112	95	106	96	105

Avon BBS index (BBS distribution 79%, BBS Avon population estimate 9100 pairs)

Autumn passage There were occasional records through July and August, but the main passage was between Sept. 6th and 19th. GVRS caught 113 between 6th and 12th, and 58 on 19th. A total of 25 at Sand Point on Oct. 17th was the last large passage count. On 21st the first record of a probable wintering bird was noted in a Redland garden.

Second winter period In November 31 bird-days were recorded from 14 gardens and in December 393 from 50 gardens.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

BBS England 97-07 change, down 22%, local, down 69%.
Migration dates:
Forty year average first date April 15th, range 30 days, trend stable.
Forty year average last date Sept. 25th, range 60 days, trend stable.
Forty year average time spent 164 days, range 60 days, trend stable.

The first was recorded on April 10th on a BBS survey just north of BL, and five were seen on 18th.

In the breeding season singing males were recorded from 16 sites, and 32 were recorded in 19 one-km squares by BBS. There were 37 singing males around the perimeter of CVL, the highest total since the survey began.

Records came from the coast throughout August and September. The last were seen on Sept. 19th at both New Passage and Frampton Cotterell.

Two summers of Atlas work has found them in just 15% of tetrads, compared with 19% in 1992, confirming a slight local decline.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	85	71	92	104	102	54	61	72	72

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 11%)

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

BBS England 97-07 change, up 27%, local, up 80%.
Migration dates:
Forty year average first date April 11th, range 20 days, trend six days earlier since 2000.
Forty year average last date Sept. 27th range 40 days, trend later by 15 days 1970-1990, stable since.
Forty year average time spent 159 days, range 40 days, stable since 1990.

A stable population.

Single birds were seen at CVL and OPS on April 11th, and reports were widespread from 16th.

BBS counts were slightly down on the previous year. In two seasons Atlas observers found them in 153 tetrads, 38% of the total, which is a higher proportion than BBS, which records them normally in about 17% of squares.

They were regularly reported from Severnside from Aug. 8th, and the main passage was over by 23rd. Small numbers continued to be recorded until the last which was seen at at New Passage on Sept. 21st.

Wintering birds One was seen at Bristol Docks on Dec. 4th, and another in a Brislington garden from Dec. 9th to 25th. The previous latest date was Nov. 22nd in 1998. Late autumn and winter records of this species might involve forms from further east, whose identification is complex, challenging and still being unravelled. We urge observers to document such occurrences as fully as possible with notes, photos and sound recordings. Full details should be taken of any birds trapped and ringed at these times.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	107	115	85	95	62	101	100	100	93

Avon BBS index (BBS distribution 17%)

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

BBS England 97-07 change, up 10%, local down 23%.
Migration dates:
Forty year average first date April 14th, range 20 days, trend later by six days to 1994, earlier by nine days since.
Forty year average last date Sept. 26th, range 30 days, trend stable.
Forty year average time spenty.164 days, range 40 days, trend a ten day increase from 1995 to present.

Arrival The first was seen at Locking on April 4th, the equal second earliest Avon date. The earliest is March 31st in 1961 and 1968. The next was at CVL on 9th. On 10th there were individuals at OPS and Chittening, and they were subsequently widespread.

Breeding Atlas work over two summers found them in 71% of tetrads compared with the 53% in which they are found in BBS and with 52% in the 1992 Atlas. BBS numbers were close to the recent average. There were eight breeding pairs around the perimeter of CVL, and 17 at Weston STW, and a breeding pair was found at Hengrove Park, Bristol.

Autumn Migrants were reported regularly on the coast during August, with a peak on 22nd. The last was seen at New Passage on Sept. 21st.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	108	115	76	92	97	93	92	76	91

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 53%, BBS Avon population estimate 2850 pairs)

DARTFORD WARBLER *Sylvia undata*

Formerly rare, now a scarce visitor. Has bred.
Description species

Two records: one at BG on Jan. 2nd and 3rd (SD *et al*.) – see photograph opposite page 89, with its plucked feathers found (by RMA) on 4th, and another at PW, on 7th (SH).

During the breeding season there was no sign of any at their breeding site on the Mendips just inside Somerset.

1990	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
0	0	1	1	0	1	2*	6*	2	2	3	0	1	2	1	9	5	0	2	2

Total annual records; * indicates a breeding record.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

Uncommon passage migrant; scarce breeding summer visitor.

England 10-yr change, down 25%.
Migration dates:
Forty year average first date: April 16th, range 20 days, no trend.
Forty year average last date Sept 18th, range 40 days, no trend.

An average year.

Spring Passage On April 10th one was heard at PW and two at Weston STW. At the Lower Knole Farm site the first bird was heard on 12th and numbers built up to at least five by 29th, in a young conifer copse. There were coastal records of presumed migrants up to May 10th. The total of 67 bird-days included five at Sand Point on April 22nd and three at Cl-Y on 26th, and 19 records from Lower Knole Farm.

Breeding season At Lower Knole Farm an estimated nine possible pairs were reported (see paper by M Dadds on page 137). There were singing males at BL and Prospect Style during late May and June.

Autumn On Aug. 22nd six birds, four of them juvenile, were seen at Lower Knole Farm, and one was seen at New Passage on 29th.

	Avg 1990/99	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Spring	15	23	13	20	6	39	37	47	32	29	67
Breeding season		2	2	1	1	2	2	7	11	4	6
Autumn	12	11	38	24	12	6	29	6	3	6	7

Spring and autumn passage and breeding season records.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

BBS distribution 12%. BBS population estimate 500 pairs.
BBS England 97-07 change, down 10%, local down 5%.
Migration dates:
Forty year average first date April 13th, range 24 days, trend eight days earlier from 1987.
Forty year average last date Sept. 28th, range 30 days, trend, fell by 15 days between 1986 and 1996, since fairly stable.
Forty year average time spent 168 days, range 40 days, no trend.

An average year.

Spring On April 10th two were heard at Weston STW, one at Chittening Warth and one at Severn Beach. On 12th the first singing male was present at Lower Knole Farm, and this built rapidly to twelve by the end of the month. An unusual record was of one singing in Castle Park, central Bristol, on 18th.

Breeding In ST58 a detailed survey found 62 breeding pairs in May and June, including 19 territories at Lower Knole Farm. See paper by M Dadds on page 137. There were also 20 at CVL and eleven at Weston STW. Breeding season records were received from 22 other sites and 95 were counted by BBS.

Autumn Juveniles were still being fed at Lower Knole Farm in early August. Nine seen on Aug. 8th at New Passage were perhaps the start of the passage. Seven were ringed at GVRS on Sept. 12th and there were almost daily records on the coast to Sept. 29th. The last was at PW on Oct. 4th.

Ringing totals were back to normal after a very poor breeding season in 2008.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

BBS distribution 12%. BBS population estimate 1200 pairs.
BBS England 97-07 change, up 14%, local, up 91%
Migration dates:
Forty year average first date April 18th, range 30 days, trend continuous fall in date by 15 days since 1972, so that recent average date is April 10th.
Forty year average last date Sept. 28th, range 50 days trend later by 15 days since 1974
Forty year average time spent 164 days, range 50 days, trend continuous increase by 25 days since 1975.

A good year.

Arrival The first was recorded at CVL on April 5th, the same date as last year, and the next was a singing male at the same site on 8th, and six were heard on 11th.They were widespread from 26th.

Breeding It was a far better breeding season than in 2008, and over 700 juveniles were ringed. A detailed survey of ST58 found 149 pairs at 20 sites (see paper by M Dadds on page 137). There were records of 103 singing males from nine other sites, including 15 at Weston STW, 21 at the Yatton Reserve, 15 at both RPD and OPS, and 18 at ASW. Atlas observers in the summer found them in 15% of tetrads, compared with 7% in 1992, confirming the spread recorded by BBS.

Autumn passage Records were frequent in August, mainly from Lower Knole Farm, and they were recorded here until Sept. 12th. One was ringed at GVRS on Sept. 19th, when another was seen at New Passage. The last was recorded at Weston STW on Oct. 1st.

Warblers at CVL

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Sedge Warbler	16	7	18	4	7	11	11	7	41	20
Garden Warbler	20	28	26	17	15	14	28	27	29	37
Blackcap	29	29	40	32	23	23	31	35	45	49
Chiffchaff	34	18	35	35	29	25	30	38	38	45
Willow Warbler	9	5	0	2	6	6	0	7	9	3

Singing males within the perimeter of CVL counted by KEV using a standardised method

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*

Scarce irruptive winter visitor. Erratic locally with a big influx in winter 2004/05.
Description species

A flock was seen in Nailsea on five dates from Feb. 16th to March 15th with a peak of 14 on March 5th (EE *et al*.). This somewhat elusive group is presumed to have included some of the birds seen here in December 2008.

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Fairly common/common breeding resident. Scarce away from established sites.

BBS distribution 12%.
BBS England 97-07 change, up 38%, local, up 48%

In the Atlas summer survey they were found in 19% of tetrads, a slight improvement on the 14% in 1992.

Since 2000 this species has been reported in 243 of the 1500 one-km squares in the region, and 22 of the 65 one-km squares in which it was recorded this year were new since 2000. To illustrate how elusive the species is, it has been seen only once in 129 of the squares (53%), and it has only been recorded every year in just one square. New sites continue to be added to the list at an average of 17 a year. Annually it is recorded on average in just 22% of the sites it probably occupies.

Records mainly came from traditional woodland sites, but included Brentry, Chew Stoke, Cleeves Wood, Midford, Rainbow Wood, West Harptree, and Whidcombe Brake. Three pairs were found in Eastwood, Portishead, and twelve were counted in Brockley Combe, six were seen mobbing a Tawny Owl in Burrington Combe, and one, described as the eighth Severnside record, was seen here on Sept. 20th.

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Total squares	25	21	59	69	80	87	34	54	42	65
New squares	14	12	22	27	28	26	9	13	6	22

Total number of one-km squares in which this species was reported.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Common breeding resident; possibly an uncommon passage migrant.

BBS Distribution 7%.
BBS England 97-07 change, down 13%, local, down 50%.

Since 1998 it has been found in 223 (15%) of the 1500 one-km squares in the region, and this year it was recorded in 44 of them, fourteen new. Because it is elusive it has only been recorded once in 125 squares, 55%, and it has been recorded in four or more years in only 28 squares (12%). New sites continue to be added to the list at an average of 15 a year. It is striking that, annually, on average it is recorded in just 16% of the sites it probably occupies.

In the breeding season it was seen at 26 sites, including eleven pairs holding territories around the perimeter of CVL, and a pair bred successfully on the tiny Littlewood Reserve on Kenn Moor. In winter they were found in some unusual sites including a housing estate in North Yate, and one on the dam wall at BL.

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Total squares	18	19	35	49	26	61	26	41	36	44
New squares	12	7	16	28	13	27	11	14	10	14

Annual total of one-km squares in which this species was reported

Note
The three elusive woodland species, Marsh Tit, Nuthatch and Treecreeper were recorded in 2009 from a combined total of 101 sites, but all three were only recorded from four sites, Lower Woods, Leigh Woods, Folly Farm and Wrington Warren, which is probably related more to the degree of observation of these sites than to their real distribution. There are about 120 one-km squares in the region with significant woodland areas, and the majority of them are rarely visited. The returns from the Atlas show the three species to be present in a combined total of 225 tetrads.

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Abundant breeding resident. Probably the commonest breeding bird in the region.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 97-07	England 97-07
% Change	-29	-5	-9	-5	10	25

The combination of a poor breeding season in 2008, shown by the drop in both WBC and WGS counts, and a cold winter led to a fall of 9% in the breeding population. However 2009 was a better breeding season, and autumn numbers as measured in Clifton were almost double those of 2008.

Song was again recorded on 85% of CABS visits, and was more or less continuous from Feb. 14th to Nov. 15th. There were at least 28 territories on Steep Holm, similar to the 2008 figure but productivity seems to have been down.

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
BBS Index	100	105	110	103	102	104	82	91	87	79
Steep Holm territories	nc	9	25	nc	9	19	16	18	28	28

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 97%, BBS Avon population estimate 50,400 pairs)

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Still abundant breeding resident, declining rapidly; passage migrant and winter visitor.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	Local 97-07	England 97-07
% Change	22	-12	-5	-43	-35

The resident population continues to fall.

WGS numbers doubled during the February cold snap, but overall the winter average was the lowest yet, although it was present in 72% of gardens. There were winter roosts of 10,000 at CVL in November and 2000 at BL, and reports of a small roost on Horfield Common, which may have been just a gathering point. Feeding flocks of 1000 were recorded at Pucklechurch in January and 3000 at Marshfield in November. There were up to 400 every month at Weston STW.

During October diurnal migration was reported from Sand Point on 13th and 300 were seen heading NE at OPS on 17th.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	101	102	91	79	77	78	75	49	47

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 69%, BBS Avon population estimate 9500 pairs)

1989/90-1998/9 Av	1999/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	2008/09
7.5	5.6	4.6	3.9	4.8	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.0	4.5	3.9

WGS - average number per garden per week in winter

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus*

Uncommon breeding resident, present locally on suitable streams and rivers.

UK 25-yr change: down 3%. Ten-yr local change: stable.

Once again most were reported by RMi with 67 records at the Winford Brook. Present throughout the year here, they were gathering nest material from Feb. 21st. A juvenile, probably just pre-fledging, was found dead in the water in late April. They were successful at the second attempt, two juveniles being seen together on June 14th. The large number of records of this pair is very welcome, but it does skew the number of birds-days for the recording area, hence the revisions to the table below.

North of the Avon breeding was proved at the Golden Valley Nature Reserve, Wick (adults taking food to the nest in April and May) and Willsbridge Mill (fledged young in May). One was seen at Trym Bridge, Westbury-on-Trym on May 7th, a former breeding site where birds have not been recorded since 2004.

Dipper con't

South of the Avon noted at: Compton Dando (single birds in June and July); Hunstrete Lake (a juvenile in May); Midsomer Norton (one in May); Pensford (one in January and May), and Publow (two in March, and single birds in May and June).

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Bird-days	72	39	29	38	56	51	89	77	84	173
Localities	12	11	12	13	14	10	13	12	8	9

Avon area - total bird-days and number of reported sites

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

Scarce passage migrant, very scarce in autumn, mostly on or near the coast.

Migration dates:
Forty year average v first date: March 31st, range 30 days, with no long term trend.
Forty year average last date Oct. 19th, but many years have no observation.

Only four spring records: March 31st one at Aust, April 6th one at Clevedon and a female at OPS, and April 15th one at Wain's Hill, Cl-Y.

In the autumn three were seen at Northwick Warth on Sept. 1st, and one to SE over Dundry on Oct. 16th.

	1990/99 Av	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Spring	13	11	2	3	5	3	3	10	20	2	4
Autumn	1	1	2	1	2	1	19	1	0	2	4

Spring and autumn passage, total bird-days

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Abundant resident, passage status uncertain.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 97-07	England 97-07
% Change	-22	1	-3	-10	24	20

BBS counts suggest that local populations grew between 1994 and 2002, and have since fallen back by 15%. CABS records show the same pattern, but in 2009 it was recorded in both the lowest numbers over the breeding season and the lowest numbers overall since the survey began (in 1994). 2008 was clearly a poor breeding season, and the fall in WBS is an indication of this, as is the small fall in BBS.

During the 2008/09 winter numbers recorded by WGS peaked in early January and again during the February cold snap, when totals were 50% higher than the whole winter average. An influx of 40 was noted at New Passage on Jan. 24th, and 13 were in a garden between Jan. 6th and 8th, but no similar observations were noted during the February cold snap.

First song was recorded in spring on Feb. 7th, and unusually also on Dec. 9th at Coalpit Heath, before the snow fell. CABS recorded song on 29% of visits, between April 4th and June 28th. A diary of spring events kept for 50 years from 1948 had 28 first song dates for Blackbird, ranging between Jan. 17th and April 2nd, with an average of Feb. 19th.

The first complete nest was recorded on Feb. 22nd, and the first nest with eggs on March 5th. The first fledgling seen was recorded on May 13th, a late date given the observer's average over the previous seven years of May 1st. The lack of early fledglings implies that early nests probably all failed.

On Steep Holm there were only twelve territories, down on recent years.

CABS had low numbers throughout the autumn, suggesting that the July rainfall may have damaged the last broods.

In the second winter period 20 were recorded at Blake's Pools on Oct. 13th, ten at OPS with Redwings on 18th and 30 at New Passage on 27th. 30 were recorded at OPS on Nov. 7th and 36 here on Dec. 30th.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	107	115	109	109	106	103	108	103	100

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 100%, BBS Avon population estimate 39,500 pairs)

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; can occur in large numbers in hard winters.

Migration dates:
Forty year average arrival date Oct. 4th range 60 days, trend to earlier dates by 15 days 1969-1995 and to later dates by 15 days since.
Forty year average last date April 14th, range 40 days, no trend
Forty year average time spent 191 days, range 50 days, no trend.

2008/09 winter Atlas counts showed that numbers were a little lower than in the previous winter. Some 4500 were recorded in the region on Nov.15th and 16th, 2008, but there were few in December. In January the largest flock size was 800 at OPS on 11th, but the largest February flock was only 150. They were present in 38% of gardens in the WGS, and the average numbers over the winter was three times the usual number because of an abrupt surge during the February cold snap. 250 were recorded at Marshfield on March 14th and 320 at West Littleton nearby on 19th. Two were reported at CVL on April 3rd and the last was seen in Easton-in-Gordano in May 1st, the equal second latest last date, last recorded in 1954. The record last date is May 8th in 1982.

Second half-year The first arrivals appeared abruptly on Oct. 14th when 30 were seen flying SW at Abbeywood, and two were seen in Warmley. There were a few other October records. Some 200 were seen at Marshfield on Nov. 2nd, and 900 were here on Dec. 12th, but there were no other reports of substantial flocks.

1999/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	2008/09
24.3	11.2	17.3	9.9	14.3	19.8	21.2	3.4	12.2	9.6

Rate per hour recorded by WBC

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Common breeding resident, which declined in the 1980s. Status as a passage migrant and winter visitor uncertain.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 97-07	England 97-07
% Change	-19	-18	-11	64	49	29

Cold winters always have a greater impact on Song Thrushes than on Blackbirds. Also the 2008 cold wet summer was a poor breeding season, as implied by the falls in WBC and WGS figures. The 11% BBS decline is also a measure of this, reducing numbers back to the level of 2000.

There was an unusual record of 19 on Jan. 3rd at Portbury, and an influx of ten at Chittening on Feb. 8th during the cold snap. WGS numbers initially peaked at the start of January, a usual feature, but then jumped threefold during the second week of February, illustrating the importance of gardens for over-winter survival during snow.

CABS recorded song from Feb. 14th until July 12th, and on 42% of visits. Song peaked in mid-March and again in the second half of May, implying many second broods. A total of 27 pairs bred around the perimeter of CVL. There were three territories on Steep Holm, and two pairs bred.

The breeding season Atlas survey found them present in 88% of tetrads, similar to the 84% in winter, which is at least an improvement on the 69% figure in the last breeding Atlas.

In September there was an early morning influx of 33 at New Passage on 26th, and another of 17 was reported at OPS on Dec. 19th. Song was first recorded at Clifton on Nov. 15th, and again on Dec. 9th.

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
BBS	100	110	119	104	112	111	98	102	115	102

Avon BBS index (BBS distribution 89%, BBS Avon population estimate 6050 pairs)

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Can occur in large numbers in hard winters.

Migration dates:
Forty year average first date Sept. 30th, range 25 days, slight trend to earlier date from 1990.
Forty year average last date April 10th, range 30 days , no trend.
Forty year average time spent 190 days, range 30, no trend.

Winter 2008/09. Atlas counts suggest lower numbers than in the previous winter. Mid-November 2008 saw counts totalling 500, but few flocks were reported in December. The largest flock in January was 1000 at OPS on 11th and there were 600 at Wrington on Feb. 10th. Three flocks totalling 520 were seen at different sites on 15th, after the thaw. In March there were 110 at CI-Y on 1st, 80 at CVL on 12th and 80 at Langford on 23rd. The

last record was of one at CVL on April 5th. They were present in half of the gardens in the WGS, and numbers quadrupled in the first two weeks of February when snow was on the ground.

Second half-year The first was seen at Bishopston on Oct. 1st, and there was a substantial passage from 11th to 18th when small parties were seen at many sites travelling in a variety of different directions. After that the largest single flock was 250 at Westerleigh on Nov. 5th.

1999/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	2008/09
12.3	12.3	12.2	4.9	11.2	17.2	13.4	7.9	17.1	10.8

Rate per hour recorded by WBC

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Uncommon breeding resident, passage migrant and probable winter visitor.

BBS England 97-07 change, down 19%, local, down 53%.

The decline continues.

Singing males were recorded from Jan. 17th through to early March. BBS recorded it in fewer squares and at a lower rate than in any year since the survey began in 1994. Records from two summers of Atlas surveys revealed its presence in 40% of tetrads, more or less identical to the figure for the last breeding Atlas.

A flock of 14 was recorded on July 6th at Walton Moor, and there were 16 on Aug. 21st at Keynsham and eleven on Sept. 19th at Hinton. Almost all other records were of ones or twos from a wide variety of sites. Song was recorded from November onwards.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	101	102	117	78	87	71	67	74	57

Avon BBS index (BBS Distribution 25%)

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

Uncommon passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

BBS distribution 3%. BBS England 97-07 change, down 35%, local down 66%
Migration dates:
Forty year average first date May 2nd, range 25 days, trend later by seven days 1972-1993, earlier by 5 days since.
Forty year average last date Sept 25th, range 45 days, trend later by 15 days 1988 to present.
Forty year average time spent 148 days, range 60, falling by ten days 1970-1988 and rising by 20 days since.

Probably a better breeding season, and the population is perhaps stable.

The first was seen on the very late date of May 17th when three were at Kingston Seymour and two at Marshfield, a further 13 were seen from nine sites to the end of the month, a poor passage. In June and July there were 18 sightings from 14 sites, including three breeding pairs. During August, 30 were seen including five family parties. There was quite a good passage in September; 31 were recorded, 14 from 12th to 16th, and the last on 21st.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
175	160	151	222	128	108	109	58	98	97

Total birds

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Abundant breeding resident and passage migrant.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 97-07	England 97-07
%Change	-29	-1	2	9	20	25

A steady increase has been noted over the past four years, despite two cold wet summers and the cold snap in February.

CABS numbers were above average in the first three months, but it seems to have been a poor breeding season as later in the year numbers were below normal. Song was recorded on 92% of CABS visits, and was only broken by a rest throughout July.

One pair nested on Steep Holm but the eggs were predated. In September there was an influx here of ten that stayed for a month.

Ringing report One ringed on Flat Holm as a juvenile on Aug. 25th, 2008 was found dead in Weston-s-Mare on March 31st.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	103	106	111	111	106	106	114	116	118

Avon BBS index (BBS distribution 99%, BBS Avon population estimate 43,000 pairs)

NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Scarce breeding summer migrant; Scarce/very scarce passage migrant.

England 25 yr change down 45%. local down 80%.
40 yr average arrival date April 12th. There has been no trend at all in this date, but the tiny number of records in recent years render a first arrival date meaningless.

There were only five records. A bird on passage was heard in Bath on April 30th. During the breeding season two were heard in song at Inglestone on May 8th. One was in song at Horwood Farm on May 5th, 21st and June 14th. On the last date there was no sign of alarm or distraction.

1988/99 Av	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
14	6	7	5	2	3	11	8	6	5	3

Estimate of total numbers of pairs attempting to breed

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Scarce/uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Rare in summer; it bred unsuccessfully in 2007.

The total of 111 bird-days was the highest yet recorded.

In January a male was seen at Anchor Head and a female/immature at Somerdale on 6th and possibly the same bird in a Keynsham garden from Feb. 13th to 16th. On 15th there were reports from Marshfield and Severn Beach. On March 3rd a female was noted at Keynsham and on 4th one was at Aust Warth.

There were breeding season reports from RPD, where they bred in 2007, on April 16th, June 7th, and July 11th but no evidence of breeding.

In September a female/juvenile was at Midsomer Norton on 12th, and in October on 11th on a roof in Whitchurch, on 20th at Alveston, and at OPS there was a female/juvenile on 26th and a male on 29th. In November one at Bath from 3rd to 5th, a pair at Avonmouth Docks on 11th, one at BG on 14th, at Mangotsfield on 15th, at Portishead on 16th, at RPD on 18th, at Severn Beach on 20th, and at BL on 22nd. In December they were recorded on 4th at Portishead, on 10th at RPD, one was present at Worle from 11th to 22nd, one was at Easton from early in the month to 31st, one at Avonmouth Docks on 15th and one at OPS on 27th. An adult female was seen in a Yatton garden from Dec. 18th into 2010.

1990/99 Av	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
28	22	80	17	25	24+	16	12	33	45	111

Total bird-days

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Uncommon passage migrant and very scarce summer visitor.

BBS England 97-07 change, down 13%.
Migration dates:
Forty year average first date April 8th, with a range of 25 days, and no trend over time.
Forty year average last date Oct. 13th, with a range of 35 days, and no trend over time.
Total time spent averaged 188 days, with a range of 60 days, and no trend.

A normal year.

Spring passage The first passage record was from Steep Holm on April 2nd, the last on April 20th single birds at both PW and CVL, and total passage was 28, sixteen between 13th and 18th.

Breeding season One was at Black Rock Quarry, Portishead on May 31st.

Autumn passage Ran from Aug. 8th to Sept. 13th, and totalled 17 birds, half being seen between Aug. 23rd and Sept. 1st. Unusually six records were from inland sites, including the Kelston roundabout.

	1990/99 Av	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Spring	32	32	25	37	26	49	34	65	18	26	28
Autumn	25	27	21	27	35	30	26	36	16	20	17

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.

BBS England 97-07 change: down 34%.
Migration dates:
Forty year average first date April 18, range in recent years ten days, no trend.
Forty year average last date Oct 14th, range 42 days. A slight trend to earlier last dates since 1989.
Average time spent 178, range 30 days, no trend.

Both spring and autumn passage were below average.

Spring The worst spring passage yet recorded, but in line with the declining population trend. The first record was on April 14th at PW, and, although only four days before the average date, it was the earliest record since 1978. The next was on April 23rd at Northwick Warth, and eight more birds passed through by the end of the month. A total of eight was seen in May, the last on the 19th, a typical end of passage date.

Autumn Over the years autumn passage has normally been three times the size of spring, but last year it was 5.3 and this year 4.9, which perhaps reflects two good breeding seasons for the species. One was seen in July and five in early August but passage proper began on Aug. 21st. A total of 17 was seen up to Sept. 11th, and then there were twelve on the 12th and 22 on 19th, and eleven on 20th. There were 17 more to Oct. 3rd, and then a long gap to the last bird on Oct. 19th at Aust.

	1990/99 Av	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Spring	44	73	50	22	45	46	41	48	31	24	18
Autumn	119	184	121	180	188	71	90	138	33	127	88

Total birds recorded on spring and autumn passage

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquatus*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant and scarce breeding species

England ten-year change: up 184%. Local ten-year change: has begun to breed again

Distinctly lower numbers bred.

First winter period A maximum of around 51 individuals was recorded at 26 sites, twelve inland and 14 coastal.

Spring passage During March a total of 48 was reported, from 12 sites, four of them inland. The largest group was eight on 31st at Cl-Y. There was no pattern to the movement.

Breeding During the breeding season birds were recorded from seven sites, but there were only two reports of family parties.

Autumn passage Began on Sept. 16th, and 112 were recorded between then and the end of October. Half of the total was observed between Oct. 16th and 31st.

Second winter period A maximum of around 50 was recorded at 22 sites, twelve of them coastal, in November and December.

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Max Jan, Feb	36	30	25	38	44	48	57	44	55	51
Breeding pairs	2	5	3	3	8	11	12	7	15	2
Max Nov, Dec	59	47	58	40	45	62	55	63	69	50

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 and at traditional inland sites.

BBS England 97-07 change, down 8%.
Migration dates;
Forty year average first date March 11th, range 24 days. The trend became later to 1988, earlier to 2000 and later since.
Forty years average last date Nov. 1st, range 40 days. Trend later by ten days since 1979.
Forty year average time spent 235 days, range 30 days, no trend.

Both spring and autumn passage were lower than last year, but close to long term averages.

Spring passage Spring passage, totalling 418, was close to the recent average. The first sightings were on March 14th, later than the previous two years, when three were seen at CI-Y, two at Dundry and three at Weston airfield. As usual the passage consisted of a series of waves, possibly representing different populations, the first peaking on March 31st, the second running from April 13th to 18th, a third from April 23rd to 26th and finally from May 7th to 10th. The last bird was seen on May 24th at CI-Y.

Autumn passage Totalled 495, fewer than last year. As the table below shows autumn passage is not often much larger than spring, but in 2009 it was 20% greater, compared with 35% in 2008, possibly implying good breeding seasons in both years. The first returning bird was a juvenile on July 14th, at RPD, and the next were two at CI-Y on 26th. Again the passage was in waves, the first peaking from Aug. 22nd to 31st, the second and largest from Sept. 18th to 20th, and a final much smaller peak from Oct. 8th to 10th. Passage appeared to have finished by Oct. 23rd, but there were two reports in November, one at New Passage on 3rd, and one at Sand Point on 9th that stayed to the 17th. There have been five later last dates.

	1990/99 Av	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Spring	504	571	491	219	338	820	814	2036	450	496	418
Autumn	347	565	338	518	603	546	651	560	332	670	495

Spring and autumn passage total bird-days

A washed out individual at RPD on Oct. 10th prompted thoughts of Isabelline Wheatear but was smaller than a nearby Northern. It showed a long primary projection and rather fine bill while plumage details, such as the bold supercilium being buffer in front of the eye and the pale lores, confirmed the identification. Its cold and rather greyish plumage tones were unusual (and also not right for Isabelline) - see photograph opposite page 97.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Uncommon passage migrant, scarce in autumn, and rare summer visitor; bred in 1988.

UK 10-yr change, down 49%.
Migration dates:
Forty year average first date April 14th, range 25 days, trend earlier by ten days 1976-2002, then later.

A very poor year.

In the spring there was just one record: one at Siston Common on April 15th.

In the autumn a bird was at New Passage on Aug. 10th and 11th, and one in a Weston-s-Mare garden on Sept. 4th.

	1990/99 Av	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Spring	15	20	18	22	1	7	14	22	2	22	1
Autumn	4	2	6	2	3	1	12	0	1	0	2

Total Spring and Autumn passage

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Abundant breeding resident.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 97-07	England 97-07
% Change	-22	-2	4	18	23	19

2008 was a poor breeding season, and this is reflected in the WBC and WGS counts. CABS figures for the first three months were well below average, but it was an excellent breeding season, and autumn numbers were two thirds higher than in 2008.

Song was recorded on 44% of CABS visits, and was more or less continuous from Jan. 25th to July 12th. On Steep Holm it was the commonest passerine, there used to be around 30 pairs, but since 2000 there have been fewer and in 2009 only 16 pairs were noted.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	110	121	129	114	118	120	111	97	101

Avon BBS index (BBS distribution 92%, BBS Avon population estimate 18,400 pairs)

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Still abundant but declining breeding resident.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	Local 97-07	England 97-07
% Change	-14	-30	0	15	-14

It was present in 66% of WGS gardens; twenty years ago the figure was 90%. Numbers were the lowest yet recorded by the survey and imply a 60% fall in twenty years.

A pair nested at Weston STW for the first time, and 120 were present on Sept. 16th, a record for the site, and proof that some do disperse in the summer.

A number of gardens recorded normal maximum counts during the year of 20 to 30, and 60 were seen on the Flax Bourton cycle track on July 1st.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	114	127	152	137	142	131	129	112	112

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 68%, BBS Avon population estimate 41,000 pairs)

1989/90-1998/9 Av	1999/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	2008/09
5.8	4.2	3.5	3.2	3.9	4.0	4.1	3.7	2.9	3.4	2.3

WGS - average numbers per garden per week in winter.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Very scarce passage migrant and scarce winter visitor. Now probably extinct as a breeding bird.

BBS England 97-07 change up 22%.

In line with recent trends there were only two records, both probably on passage:- four on April 4th at OPS and one at Wain's Hill on Oct.17th.

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Bird-days	31	6	288	72	52	40	18	5	2	5
Sites	7	3	9	7	3	4	4	3	2	2

Total individuals counted and sites

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

M. f. flavissima. *Uncommon passage migrant and very scarce summer visitor*.

UK 25-yr change: down 66%.
Arrival and departure data
40 year average first date April 6th, range 15 days, trend later by ten days 1970-1991, stable since.
40 year average last date Oct. 14th, range 30 days, no trend.
40 year average time spent 191 days, range 10 days, trend erratic fall by 10 days 1970-2008

Spring The first was at Northwick Warth on April 3rd with further single birds at PW on 10th, Aust Warth on 12th and Portishead on 15th. The five at Northwick Warth next day was the highest count of a dire spring passage with three at Cl-Y on 19th the next best count. Otherwise passage comprised a trickle of ones and twos with no particular pattern until the last at Severnside on May 18th. This was an odd, rather washed out bird with pale greyish ear coverts, crown and nape suggesting possible influence of nominate *flava*. Other locations were: CVL; Littleton Warth; OPS; PW; Severn Beach and Tormarton, the last a potential breeding site. The total spring passage of about 25 was the worst ever - less than half the previous worst year of 2003 (cf. 59 in 2003, 121 in 2004, 67 in 2005, 125 in 2006, 86 in 2007, 164 in 2008).

Spring migrants					
Date	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10	May 11-20
Bird-days	2	11	4	3	5
Max count	1	5	2	2	2

Breeding season A male carrying food at Marshfield on July 6th was proof of breeding for the second year on the row. A record of two at Portishead seafront on June 30th was unusual but must have involved wandering birds. An adult and four juveniles at Weston STW on July 30th was the only record of the year here, but how far they might have wandered is a moot point and they are treated as migrants in the table.

Autumn The first of autumn were single birds at Littleton Warth, OPS and Northwick Warth on July 25th, plus three at the last site next day. This small influx might have produced the Weston STW individuals noted above. Birds were as hard to find in early August with just three records from two coastal sites in the first half of the month. Six at Northwick Warth on Aug. 18th signalled the start of a small influx peaking on 22nd with 17 at Northwick Warth, 16 at OPS and 14 at Cl-Y. Next day there were nine at Littleton Warth, six at Sand Point and still 15 at Northwick Warth then eight at OPS on 24th. Numbers fell rapidly thereafter and apart from seven at

Yellow Wagtail con't
Cl-Y on 27th there were just one or two at five sites to the month's end. In September there was a small influx at Elm Farm, Burnett where there were twelve on 11th and six next day. Otherwise no more than three were seen at six other sites, the last being on 19th when there were three at Littleton Warth and one at Northwick Warth.

Apart from the sites mentioned above also recorded in the autumn at BG, CVL, Dundry, Marshfield, Sand Point and Weston STW. The autumn total of 147 is the fourth lowest on record in recent years (cf. 132 in 2003, 386 in 2004, 160 in 2005, 125 in 2006, 156 in 2007 and 102 in 2008).

Autumn migrants								
Date	Jul 11-20	Jul 21-31	Aug 1-10	Aug 11-20	Aug 21-30	Sep 1-10	Sep 11-20	Sep 21-30
Bird-days	0	11	4	6	95	6	25	0
Max count	0	5	2	6	17	3	12	0

Grey-headed Wagtail *M. f. thunbergi*
Very rare vagrant.

One record: an adult female at Northwick Warth on Sept. 25th (BL, JPM) was watched at close range for several minutes, feeding around cattle on the salt marsh. This is the first record for our recording area. See article on page 151.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*
Fairly common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

UK 25-yr change: down 12%. Local ten-yr change; stable.

Winter and migrants Again widely reported, with winter records coming from many sites across the area including reservoirs, streams and rivers, sewage works, gardens, and town and city centres. The vast majority of winter records related to one or two birds, four at BG on Dec. 5th being the largest winter count.

One at New Passage on July 5th was probably part of an early post breeding dispersal. The largest numbers during autumn migration were in September with the highest counts being eight at BG on 11th and 20th, six at Middle Hope on 10th, and five at New Passage on 20th.

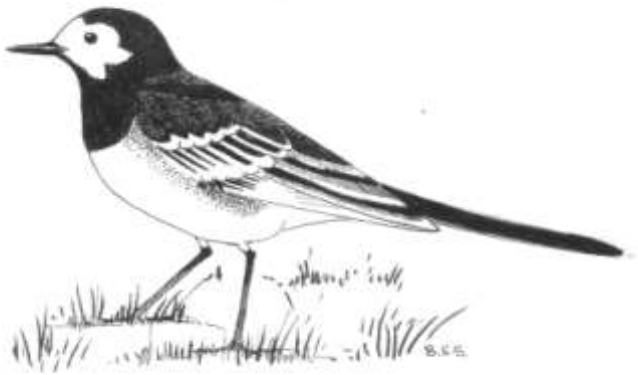
Breeding Breeding season reports from at least 39 atlas tetrads with proved breeding records from several of them. KEV noted four singing males, at least one them paired, in central Bristol in late May and early June. Birds were noted here regularly throughout the year.

WHITE/PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*
Pied Wagtail *M.a yarrelli*
Common breeding resident, winter visitor, and passage migrant.

UK 25-yr change: down 5%. Local ten-yr change; up 33%.

Winter 2008/09 The largest numbers reported at the start of the year were in the Keynsham area with 120 by the R. Avon on Feb. 12th and 50 at the Sewage Works on 18th. The only other double figure counts received were of 30 at Chew Valley School on Jan. 28th, 20 at Hanham High School on 21st and up to 13 at Weston STW in January, the highest counts of the year here.

Spring migration At Saltford there were 34 on March 14th and 24 at Northwick Warth on 17th was the peak of a small influx of migrants around this time. At OPS there were counts of 25 to 30 on various dates between March 22nd and April 19th.



Breeding season Widely reported in the breeding season, the first juveniles were noted at Blagdon on May 17th and CVL on May 20th. Two adults and two juveniles visited a Blagdon garden daily to feed on cheese.

Autumn migration and second winter period Signs of post breeding gatherings with eleven at PW and ten at Cl-Y on July 23rd. In August numbers at OPS peaked with 40 on 30th and there were up to 24 at New Passage (1st) and 15 at Severn Beach (21st). In September there were regular reports of up to 25 at OPS. Numbers here built up during October to peak at 150 on 31st. Individuals were established at their wintering sites by November and December with peak counts of up to 50 at OPS, 50 at Keynsham STW and 49 at Saltford STW.

A colour ringed bird at CVL on Dec. 28th had been ringed as a first-year male at Slapton, Devon on Oct. 17th, 2008.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	110	121	121	112	132	80	106	121	99

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 36%)

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.
Forty year average first date March 27th. Forty year average last date Sept. 28th.

Another generally poor spring but with a reasonable influx in mid-April. A poor autumn with, for example, none identified on Severnside despite regular checking of the Pied Wagtail flocks here.

Spring passage The first were two at Saltford on March 14th followed by a single bird at BG on 19th. No more were seen until April with one to three at BG, CVL and Cl-Y from 6th to 13th. Four at both CVL and Portishead on 15th heralded the peak passage. Twelve at Severn Beach on 17th; nine at both BG and Portishead, and five at CVL next day, three at Cl-Y on 20th but only two single birds thereafter, at New Passage on 21st and BG on 24th.

Spring records						
Date	Mar 11-20	Mar 21-31	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10
Bird-days	3	0	12	50	2	0
Max count	2	0	3	12	1	0

Autumn passage The first of the autumn were two at Cl-Y on Sept. 3rd followed by one at CVL next day and, the last of the autumn, three here on Oct. 9th.

RICHARD'S PIPIT *Anthus richardi*

Very scarce autumn migrant, exceptional in winter.
Description species

One record: one flew over New Passage, calling, on Nov. 14th (BL).

This brings the all-time total for our area to about 25, the last being in 2005.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Uncommon passage migrant and very scarce breeder.

UK 25-yr change: down 81%.
Arrival and departure data
40 year average first date April 4th, range 20 days, trend fall by 19 days 1974-94, stable since.
40 year average last date Oct 1st, range 50 days, no trend.
40 year average time spent 180 days, range 15 days, no trend.

The equal worst spring and equal second worst autumn on record. The poor numbers were not helped by the paucity of reports from the best site, Sand Point, but this declining summer migrant appears to be in trouble.

Spring The first were three at Hengrove Park, Bristol on April 6th, followed by one at Aust Warth on 11th, one at New Passage on 12th, three at Wain's Hill on 14th, one at Severn Beach on 16th, two at Thornbury Pill on 19th, seven at Sand Point on 22nd, and one at BG on 24th. Numbers remained low during May with one at Severnside on 4th, four here on 15th and one at Sand Point on 19th and 20th.

Breeding One was heard singing at Dolebury Warren on June 2nd. Two here on Aug. 3rd might either have been migrants or local breeders.

Autumn The first of the autumn was at New Passage on Aug. 2nd. There followed single birds at Almondsbury on 6th and 19th; two at Northwick Warth and two at Sand Point on 22nd; one over Emerson's Green on 25th;

one at Cl-Y on 29th; one at Burrington Ham on Sept. 1st; one at Weston STW on 14th, and the last of the year at Cl-Y on 19th.

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
Spring	179	54	25	68	24	61	111	55	48	25
Autumn	32	6	12	22	14	37	30	25	23	12

Tree Pipit Passage: total individuals

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. A few breed.

BBS distribution 4%.
UK 25-yr change: down 46%.

2008/09 Winter Numbers in January were modest with double figure counts reported only from three coastal sites: 35 at Littleton Warth on 10th; 30 at Cl-Y on 29th, and 20 at OPS on 24th. February counts were even lower with 21 at Elm Farm, Burnett on 21st and up to 20 at OPS through the month.

Spring On March 6th, 30 at BG were probably migrants. By mid-month passage was underway with 16 to NW at Keynsham on 17th, and an influx of 250 to Northwick Warth and 100 to Littleton Warth next day. On March 20th, 110 moved to NE over New Passage in 75 minutes and 42 were noted at North Weston/Portbury Ditch. Next day saw the spring peak of 46 at Weston STW. Birds continued to move through until at least mid-April with 35 at Elm Farm, Burnett on 1st, 45 to NE over Severn Beach in an hour on 15th, and 40 at OPS on 17th.

Breeding From May to July small numbers were reported at Littleton Warth, OPS, Severnside, Weston STW and Woodpring Bay, where ungrazed or lightly grazed upper salt marsh is the favoured habitat. Birds were also reported from Marshfield and Middle Hope at this time.
Autumn passage The first migrants were five to S over Dundry on Aug. 27th. Passage picked up in early September with 20 at Weston STW on 7th, 30 at OPS and 31 at Cl-Y on 10th. By mid-month 40 were at Marshfield on 13th and 20 at Almondsbury on 16th. On 19th there were 100 at both Littleton Warth and New Passage with a further influx of 175 at Northwick Warth on 27th. Inland, 13 moved to S at CVL on 24th and there were 44 at Compton Dando on 28th. At Weston STW 46 were noted on Oct. 1st. The highest October counts again came from the coast with 150 at New Passage on 9th and 120 at Littleton Warth next day. Other counts of between 20 and 50 during the month came from Charlton Field, Cl-Y, CVL, OPS and Walborough, but with no obvious pattern.

2009/10 winter In the second winter period there were few reports in double figures with up to 50 at OPS, 40 at CVL and 20 at Cl-Y in the last two months of the year.

Four were recorded as Peregrine victims at St John's Church, Bath during the year.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

A.p.petrosus - Uncommon breeding resident on the coast. Fairly common and more widespread as a coastal passage migrant and winter visitor; scarce inland on spring or autumn passage.
A.p.littoralis Wintering birds are assumed to include an unknown proportion of this subspecies, some of which become identifiable in spring.

First winter period and spring passage In January and February present at the usual coastal wintering sites with peak counts: 19 at Portishead seafront (flushed into view by a big tide); 14 at Littleton Warth; five at Chittening Warth; four at Cl-Y; three at OPS and two at Severn Beach. None noted wintering in Bristol this year.

An inland migrant was at CVL on the typical dates of March 21st and 23rd.

Breeding In the Portishead area five pairs were present around Battery Point, one at the marina and two on the sea wall in April. Four pairs were feeding young in the area in early June. A pair was feeding four juveniles at Avonmouth Docks on July 10th (SH). Also noted in the breeding season at Cl-Y, Clevedon marina lake and the Axe Estuary. No reports were received from Steep Holm this year.

Autumn and winter Outside the breeding areas single birds were at Severn Beach on Aug. 21st, New Passage on 23rd and more unusually inland at BG on 31st (SD). Small numbers were at several coastal sites during September with the highest counts around breeding sites and five at Cl-Y on 17th. Numbers remained low on the coast with no more than three reported during the October apart from eight at Portishead on 17th. With birds settled on their wintering grounds in the last two months there were up to twelve at Portishead; ten at PW; eight at Cl-Y; six at Sand Point; four at Littleton Warth and Severn Beach; three at Aust and one regularly at OPS.

Inland two were at CVL on Oct. 8th with single birds on 9th, 15th and 18th; and one at BG on 11th. More unusually, one flew over Oldland Common, calling, on Oct. 30th (RL).

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant to CVL, Scarce on the coast.

Reasonable numbers at CVL in the first winter period, despite high water levels. Extensive areas of mud here in the autumn resulted in the best numbers for some years. There was a more normal series of records from the coast in the first-winter period but few in the autumn - was this simply because they were all at CVL?

Inland Only recorded from CVL where small numbers were reported occasionally through January with peaks of five on 23rd and six on 28th. They either departed or became more elusive in February with three noted on 2nd and 12th. In March sightings were again sporadic with a peak of three on 18th and 22nd plus one or two on four other dates with the last on 24th.

Low autumn water levels at CVL produced much better conditions than for a number of years. Three arrived on the typical date of Oct. 23rd and had built up to five by 27th. Numbers continued to rise during November with eight on 4th, eleven on 12th and a peak of 20 (eight from Stratford Hide and twelve at Moreton) on 26th. This was the highest count since the record of 21 on March 28th, 1972. Rising water levels in December saw greatly reduced numbers but up to four were seen regularly to the end of the year.

Coastal sites On Jan. 1st single birds were noted at Cl-Y and Sand Bay (to 3rd) with two at Severn Beach. Only the last site subsequently produced regular sightings with a single bird or birds noted here and at neighbouring Chittening Warth until the last at the second site on April 7th and Severn Beach next day. Away from here there was another Severnside sighting at Cake Pill, Aust on March 22nd. Otherwise the only records in the first winter period were of single birds at PW on Jan. 24th and Cl-Y on Feb. 15th and March 31st.

In contrast to the high autumn numbers at CVL the only coastal records were of single birds at Weston STW on Oct. 31st and PW on Nov. 27th.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Abundant breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 97-07	England 97-07
% Change	-15	-11	-14	-38	-32	13

The slow decline in the breeding population continues, but the wintering population seems fairly stable.

In the first winter WGS numbers were down, but they were still the second highest ever recorded. Numbers peaked around the New Year, and there was a secondary peak coinciding with the February freeze. There were five records of flocks of over 100, the largest, 400, on Jan. 7th was at Marshfield, with 250 still here on March 14th.

Records of first song between 1948 and 2000 in Clifton give an average date of Feb. 8th, but show no close correlation with January temperature. The first 15 years are all before the end of January, and all but two of subsequent years are after it. The first song record in 2009 was on Feb. 7th and CABS recorded it until June 28th, on 31% of all visits.

The fall in BBS figures may be related to the very poor breeding season in 2008, but it also seems to be part of a trend that has seen a 34% fall since 1994. None was reported on Steep Holm.

It was a second poor October for diurnal migration. There were records from Dundry of 20 and 50 moving south on 15th and 16th, and 75 to SW at New Passage on 28th. In the winter the largest flock was 250 at Compton Dando on Dec.18th.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	97	95	86	92	89	87	81	77	66

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 93%, BBS Avon population estimate 12,150 pairs)

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Migration dates:
Forty year average first date Oct. 7th, range 40 days, no trend.
Forty year average last date April 16th, range 40 days, trend later by 20 days 1970-86, and earlier since by 15 days.
Forty year average time spent 186 days, range 15, trend later by seven days to 1986, earlier by twelve days since.

Winter 2008/09 They were present in 19% of WGS gardens, and were mainly recorded between Feb. 7th and 19th, the second week of the snow, and the week after. All records were of ones and twos until Feb.15th when 15 were seen at Marshfield. In March the only significant record was the penultimate one, a flock of 40 at Marshfield on 28th. The last was two at Marshfield on April 14th.

Brambling Second winter period The first were four moving south over Dundry on Oct. 15th and three others were seen later that month. Just 20 more were recorded in the following two months, with a maximum flock of six at CVL.

Ringing report A first-year female ringed at Failand on March 31st, 2008 was found dead in SE France on March 7th, 549 km SE.

1988/89-97/98 Av	1999/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	2008/9
405	140	18	109	103	270	20	3065	25	246	242

Total bird-days October-March

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

Common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 97-07	England 97-07
% Change	-13	2	0	-46	6	15

The breeding population appears to have stabilised at a level a third below that in 2000, and the wintering population is a third below its peak in 2003/04.

WGS records showed a peak in numbers at the time of the February freeze, and the overall average was marginally higher than the previous winter, which suggests that, despite the poor breeding season in 2008, numbers have stabilised, and the BBS results tend to confirm this.

Atlas work over two summers found them in 91% of tetrads, better than the 81% in the winter Atlas, and better than the 66% in the last breeding Atlas.

CABS recorded song between Feb. 7th and May 10th. A series of first song records in Clifton over the last 50 years produced an average date of Feb. 22nd.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	109	119	126	131	124	136	101	65	65

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 87%, BBS Avon population estimate 9000 pairs)

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	Local 97-07	England 97-07
% Change	22	-17	10	63	35

The increase continues.

It was present in 72% of WGS gardens in the 2008/09 winter, although in slightly smaller numbers than the previous winter, but still ten times as many as twenty years ago. Numbers peaked over the New Year, and only showed a small increase during the February cold snap.

Spring diurnal migration was seen on April 15th when 220 flew N at Severn Beach in an hour, 230 were recorded moving at Sand Point on 22nd, with 160 to W here on May 1st, and 300 on 15th at Severnside.

Atlas work over two summers found them in 86% of tetrads, almost the same as in winter, and a big improvement on the 55% recorded in the 1992 Atlas.

Flocks built up to 100 by the end of August at OPS, 100 were present at Marshfield on Sept. 15th, and 155 were on the coast at Littleton on Oct. 10th. No flocks were recorded above 100 in November or December.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	100	99	110	111	133	157	136	181	195

Avon BBS Index (BBS Distribution 77%, BBS Avon population estimate 8300 pairs)

1988/9-1997/8 Av	1999/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	2008/09
2.5	7.6	7.2	10.0	4.5	6.0	8.3	8.3	8.4	31.1	25.9

WGS - Average numbers per garden per week.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Irruptive winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce breeding species.

BBS England 97-07 change: down 7%.

Increasingly seen in almost every month of the year.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
54	279	150	37	53	7	8	0	3	62	45	53

Monthly bird-days

Winter 2008/09 A second good winter. During January there were up to 100 at CVL, and 50 were seen on Kenn Moor and 30 on Weston Moor increasing to at least 50 in February. Flocks were smaller in March, but records were much more widespread and included some gardens. They were present in 25% of WBC gardens, but in far smaller numbers than in the previous winter. Many April records came from migrants on the coast.

Breeding season (May and June) There were records from Abbotts Leigh, Bath, Blagdon, Clevedon, and Whitchurch, and of juveniles from Bath, Weston-s-Mare, Cleeve and Rowberrow.

Autumn passage There were three September records, and numbers built up in October, with widespread sightings from inland as well as the coast.

Winter The largest count in November was ten at BL and 17 were seen here in mid-December. Otherwise small numbers were widely reported.

Ringing recoveries One ringed at Failand on Feb. 23rd was caught at Sandwich Bay, Kent, on March 15th, 282 km east; another ringed at Failand on the following day was caught on March 23rd in Inverness, Scotland, 675 km north. One ringed at Failand on March 24th, 2008 was caught on March 29th on the Wirral, Merseyside, 219 km north.

1989/90-98/9 Av	1999/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	2008/09
2957	2945	783	3520	1938	1060	73	3683	104	1419	1463

Total individuals counted in six winter months, October-March

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

Common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor

BBS England 97-07 change, down 25%, local, down 51%.

During the first winter there were 300 at Burnett, 200 at Compton Dando, 250 at Lansdown, and a flock at Marshfield that reached a maximum of 700 in early March.

Atlas work over two summers recorded them in 41% of tetrads, many more than the 20% recorded in the winter survey, but fewer than the 50% in which they were recorded in the 1992 Breeding Atlas. The variations in BBS counts are related to the fact that they breed socially, and stay in flocks later than many other species, so that the numbers recorded by observers can fluctuate sharply. The 2008 figures were probably an aberration.

In the autumn there were 200 at New Passage on Sept. 11th, 500 at Marshfield on Nov. 2nd, and 100 at both PW and Compton Dando on 7th, but very few were reported in December.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	96	91	77	83	89	70	66	105	63

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 29%, BBS Avon population estimate 3150 pairs)

LESSER REDPOLL *Carduelis cabaret*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce in summer. Records received as 'Redpoll' are included in this account, and so a few may actually refer to Common Redpolls.

England 25-yr change, down 97%.

A better winter close to the recent average.

Winter 2008/09 A total of 237 bird-days was recorded, 70 of them in a Whitchurch garden in February. The only flock was a group of up to 20 in the mill grounds at Keynsham in February.

Spring Passage During March 81 bird-days were recorded, mostly inland rather than on the coast, and including one singing male in Leap Valley, Downend. In April 77 bird-days were recorded, 60 of them on the coast, and during May 85 bird-days were recorded at Sand Point, 52 of them on 13th, and 27 from elsewhere, including an Abbots Leigh garden on 12th. The last possible passage bird was one at Sand Point on June 8th.

Lesser Redpoll Autumn passage Passage began with one flying south over Pilning on Sept. 19th and the next was one at Leap Valley on Oct. 11th. Ten more bird-days were recorded to the end of the month.

Second winter In November and December a total of 34 bird-days were recorded.

1989/90-98/9 Av	1999/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	2008/09
220	289	300	526	159	481	51	578	33	101	237

Winter totals November to February

MEALY (COMMON) REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, formerly rare, but more regularly reported in recent times.
Description species. This species hybridises with Lesser Redpoll, so intergrades are possible which should be considered in any write-up.

Three records, this compares with two in 2008: one feeding on Great Willowherb seed heads at the Orchard Pools, Severn Beach, Jan. 18th (JPM *et al*.); a strikingly pale male was photographed at a garden feeder in Yatton on April 2nd (FM); and one was at Chittening Warth on May 3rd (BL).

CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, whose number vary very sharply from year to year

Two were at Lansdown on Feb. 28th, and one at Sand Point on April 22nd.

In July four were seen at Combe Dingle on 15th, nine on 22nd at Goblin Combe, eight on 23rd in Clifton, and one on 25th at Lower Knole Farm, near Almondsbury. At the same time 46 were seen on Rowberrow Warren, just outside the Avon area. In August there were three at Blagdon on 8th and one over Dundry on 14th.
In October one to S over Dundry on 16th, one over Combe Dingle on 21st, and six at CVL on the same day. Seven at Ashcombe Park, Weston-s-Mare, on 25th and one at Pilning to SW on 28th. They continued to be recorded from Rowberrow during October and November. Finally there were two at Wrington Warren on Dec. 17th.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
17	12	100	100	4	130	1	0	90	47

Total annual bird-days

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Fairly common breeding resident.

	WBC	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 10	England 25 year
% Change	27	0	-19	-60	-29	-3

BBS counts so few that the index fluctuates wildly, and there has been very little apparent change in the population since 1994. Atlas recorders in the summer found them in 44% of tetrads, compared with 32% in the 1992 Atlas, but less than the 59% in which they were found in winter. This probably demonstrates how more elusive they are in summer rather than any change in their population.

Most records were of pairs, but ten were reported feeding on Rowan berries at Leap Valley on Aug. 29th and 25 were seen at CVL on Dec. 18th.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	118	136	162	133	147	104	104	123	100

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 31%)

HAWFINCH *Cocothraustes cocothraustes*

Scarce winter visitor, formerly bred.
Description species

There was an exceptional influx in the first winter period. Up to eleven, including at least one ringed individual, were seen at Oldland, from Jan. 29th to at least April 1st (AHD, MDi *et al*.) – see photographs opposite page 97. Up to 14 were present at Keynsham from Feb. 24th to at least April 3rd (JA *et al*.). Up to four were at Kingsgate Park, Yate, from Feb. 12th to 26th (DP), where they had been first seen on Dec. 11th and 12th, 2008. One was at Thornbury on Feb. 17th (MP).

Birds were also reported at Hawkesbury Upton on Jan. 7th; Ringswell Common on 15th; Whitchurch on 27th; a Chew Stoke garden (two) on Feb. 7th with one here on March 18th, and at CVL on April 2nd.

Year	1999/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	2008/09
No. seen	0	0	0	1	1	0	23	2	1	36

Number of individuals seen each year (July – June)

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Scarce winter visitor formerly more numerous

One was seen at Cl-Y on Oct. 29th, three were here on 30th and a female on Nov. 2nd. One flew over Aust on Dec. 2nd, and an immature was at Cl-Y on 6th.

1989/90-99/00 Av	2000/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	2009/10
7	4	0	0	18	11	0	0	1	0	5-6

Total individuals

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

Common but declining breeding resident, possibly uncommon passage migrant.

BBS England 97-07 change, down 15%, local, down 41%.

First winter Flocks of up to 150 were present at Marshfield to the end of March, and 100 at Marksbury Plain.

Two years of Atlas summer surveys recorded them in 32% of tetrads, rather more than the 21% recorded during the winter. However the figure is a sharp fall on the 47% result in the 1992 Atlas, emphasising the way their distribution is shrinking. This confirms the distribution pattern recorded by BBS which was 51% of squares in 1994 and just 26% in 2009. In the breeding season BBS showed a sharp fall, but the low numbers counted are subject to wide fluctuations.

Second winter The largest flock reported was 20 at Chewton Keynsham on Dec. 20th.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
100	92	84	67	70	75	75	81	102	77

Avon BBS Index (BBS distribution 26%, BBS Avon population estimate 1750 pairs)

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Uncommon breeding resident, and passage migrant.

BBS England 97-07 change, up37%, local, down 22%.

A stable population

There were 30 at Marksbury Plain in January and in February 20 at Weston STW, and 15 in stubble at Lower Knole Farm near Almondsbury, and there were a number of garden records in March.

BBS counted 45 in 10% of the squares visited, at a slightly lower rate than normal. So few are recorded that the index fluctuates erratically. There were 30 singing males at CVL, as has become usual, and there were 26 singing males at Weston STW, nine on Clevedon Moor, three on Clapton Moor, and 25 from fourteen other sites, a minimum total of 93 probable breeding pairs.

In two summers Atlas observers found them in 15% of the tetrads, which compares with their presence in 13% of tetrads in the 1992 breeding Atlas. The observers counted 101, an average of just three in each occupied tetrad. These sightings tend to confirm the small size of the population, perhaps 150 pairs, and also show that its distribution is largely unchanged in twenty years.

On Dec. 24th, 46 were counted at Weston STW, the highest count of the year.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
30	24	36	29	20	13	31	32	31	30

CVL total singing males

CORN BUNTING *Miliaria calandra*

Local and uncommon breeding resident; confined to arable areas in the east of the region. Rare elsewhere as a passage migrant/winter visitor.

BBS distribution 2%. Winter population about 90.
BBS England 97-07 change, down 13%. Local ten-yr change, none.

The population is possibly increasing.

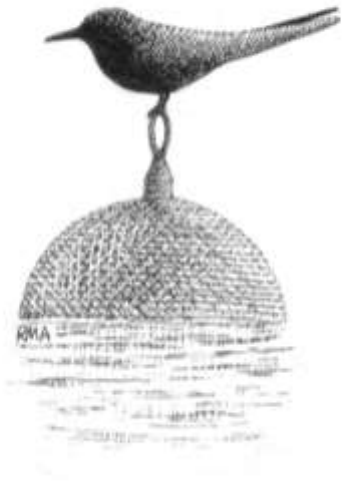
The usual winter flock at Marshfield contained 80 individuals in January.

BBS counted 28 in seven squares, the best count yet. Records came from 18 different one-km squares on the Cotswolds, in eleven different tetrads and in three ten-km squares, and suggest a population of at least 40 pairs, although many records are imprecise about site, and whether birds were in song or not.

On Dec. 12th there was a flock of 120 at Marshfield, suggesting a better breeding season than in 2008.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
16	11	21	18	18	23	12	NA	NA	40

Total singing males



ESCAPED AND RELEASED BIRDS

BLACK SWAN *Cygnus atratus* Australia
Portishead Marina – one on March 21st.

CHINESE (SWAN) GOOSE *Anser cygnoides* Asia
Bristol Docks – one present all year, with two on Feb. 11th.

BAR-HEADED GOOSE *Anser indicus* Asia
Portbury Wharf – one on Aug. 19th;

Portishead – two present between Sept. 5th and 10th.

CVL, Stratford Bay – one on Jan. 27th.

MUSCOVY DUCK *Cairina moschata* Central & South America
Bristol Docks – a female present all year;

Oveston Village Pond – one on Aug. 2nd with two on Oct. 4th;

Avon Wildlife Park, Keynsham – two males and three females present early in the year, with two broods seen in the summer. Both the males and one of the female reported to have been taken by Foxes. Gulls took most of the young but one juvenile survived, with the original two females, into the late autumn at least. Birds are fed grain at this site.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta* N. Europe
One, wearing a small white plastic ring, was seen at CVL on Jan. 5th, 10th and 19th and Feb. 7th..

WOOD DUCK *Aix sponsa* N. America
Backwell Lake – a male and female on at least Oct. 9th, Nov. 6th and Dec. 25th with both present into the New Year. It was noted that both birds had been 'wing-clipped'.

GREAT BUSTARD *Otis tarda* Eurasia
West Harptree – one on Jan. 30th sporting a 'pink' tag on the right wing (presumed same as below);

North Widcombe – one on Feb. 7th, wing-tagged red 28, flew S over CVL and landed behind Herriott's Pool – see photograph opposite page 168. This female had been released in 2008 as part of the re- introduction programme;

Puxton Moor – red 28 again, on June 8th.

SENEGAL PARROT *Poicephalus senegalus* Africa
Victoria Park, Bedminster – an adult on Oct. 29th and Nov. 2nd, seen feeding on Norway Maple seeds.

COCKATIEL *Nymphicus hollandicus* Australia
Keynsham – one on Feb. 21st.

PARAKEET spp
Bristol Docks – one on Sept. 7th flying to NW harried by Herring Gulls.

GUINEA FOWL *Numida meleagris* Africa
Keynsham – five present on the R. Chew at Chewton Place on Nov. 6th.

EAGLE OWL *Bubo bubo* Eurasia
First noted on Woodland Road in Bristol from mid-September 2008 this male was not seen for the first three weeks of January 2009 in its 'usual' tree or Royal Fort Gardens. However, on Jan. 20th it had returned and it was photographed roosting on a gargoyle on the School of Biological Sciences. It is possible that the owl had been here all along as it was very well camouflaged. Alternatively it may have moved to other areas of the city to hunt during the sub-zero temperatures recorded in the first few weeks of 2009. During this cold spell the rats and squirrels it was hunting in Clifton may have altered their behaviour.

Throughout the spring the owl was frequently heard during the evenings. In late April and early May it was often seen being heavily mobbed by crows and magpies. On the afternoon of May 10th it was discovered on the ground below a window of the Engineering Building; it is thought it had hit the window. Not long after he died and was taken away by the RSPCA. It is not certain whether the owl was being mobbed by crows at the time or was reacting to its own reflection in the window (which has reflective film).

HYBRIDS

It should be noted that the parentages reported in this section are what seemed to the observer(s) to be most likely.

CANADA x GREYLAG GOOSE *Branta canadensis x Anser anser*

CVL – one on June 15th and Sept. 8th;

BL – one on Aug. 3rd and Dec. 31st.

CANADA x CHINESE GOOSE *Branta canadensis x Anser cygnoides*

BL – one on Feb. 7th.

AYTHYA HYBRIDS

Unless stated otherwise all records relate to CVL. Although an effort has been made to document individuals it is possible there may be some duplication.

(a) A male at BL from Jan. 2nd to 19th appeared to be a classic Ferruginous/Pochard type.
(b) A male, very similar to a Scaup but with a 'domed' head shape, was noted at BL from Jan. 16th until April 23rd.
(c) An apparent Tufted/ Pochard at BG on Jan. 28th.
(d) A female Pochard with a grey breast and a white facial blaze was present at BG on Jan. 30th.
(e) An apparent Pochard/ Ferruginous, like a female Pochard but with a reddish head and breast and white under tail coverts, on Feb. 14th.
(f) A male, very similar to a Scaup but with a slightly peaked head shape and too much black on the bill tip on Feb. 21st and March 24th, 27th and 28th, with probably the same bird again on Sept. 27th and Oct. 3rd.
(g) A female Scaup lookalike was noted at BL on March 14th and April 18th.
(h) Tufted/ Pochard present on March 18th.
(i) A female very similar to a Scaup, but the head shape was wrong and there was too much black on the bill tip, on March 24th, 27th and 28th; again on Oct. 22nd.
(j) A male Scaup lookalike was noted at BL from June 7th to July 4th and again on Oct. 10th and 11th possibly the individual noted in January.
(k) The regularly returning male, showing some characters of Canvasback and considered to be Canvasback x Pochard on June 16th and 21st for the 17th year, again on Aug. 9th.
(l) A female, like a Pochard but with a large facial 'blaze' on Sept. 22nd and 30th and Dec. 3rd possibly the bird seen in 2007 and 2008. A similar bird but with a brighter facial blaze was noted on Oct. 8th.
(m) Large Scaup-like male, dark grey mantle on Sept. 27th, Oct. 2nd and 3rd.
(n) Tufted/ Scaup on Oct. 9th.
(o) Male, similar to Pochard, but with the grey areas washed with brown on Nov. 3rd and 5th.
(p) At BL a male Scaup lookalike from Oct.16th to Dec. 19th.
(q) An individual that looked like a juvenile Scaup but with a bill resembling an adult male on Dec. 10th.
(r) At Backwell Lake a Scaup-type seen on Dec. 14th.
(s) One present on Dec. 31st.

In order to help track individuals it would be very useful if observers of Aythya hybrids could include some descriptive notes of the bird's appearance.

HERRING x LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus argentatus x Larus fuscus*

A low number of records this year.

CVL – Fourth calendar year individuals were noted on Jan. 29th and July 15th; two adults present on Oct. 14th with an apparently different adult on Oct. 15th; also a further adult was seen on Nov. 26th.

MEDITERRANEAN x BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus melanocephalus x Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

CVL – one, an adult on Jan. 31st (RMA, JPM).

Migration Summary

Commentary

The average arrival date of the following 29 summer migrant species over the past forty years is April 10th, but this year the average is four days earlier, at April 6th. The average departure date over forty years and in 2009 is Oct 3rd. These changes may reflect both more accurate recording, and the fact that the forty year average March-April temperature was 11.4 °C, whereas in 2009 it was 12.4 °C, and it is common for a degree difference in temperature to cause a roughly five day difference in the timing of natural events.

Migrant first arrival and last departure dates for 2009					
Summer migrants	**arrival**	**average***	**departure**	**average***	**Comments**
Sand Martin	March 1st	March 15th	Oct. 5th	Oct. 7th	Third earliest arrival
Little Ringed Plover	March 14th	April 7th	Sept. 23rd	Sept 17th	Earliest arrival yet
Wheatear	March 14th	March 11th	Nov. 17th	Nov. 1st	Late departure
White Wagtail	March 14th	March 27th	Oct. 9th	Sept 28th	Early arrival
Swallow	March 17th	March 24th	Nov. 26th	Nov. 4th	Late departure
House Martin	March 17th	March 28th	Nov. 10th	Nov. 1st	Early arrival
Garganey	March 17th	April 9th	Oct. 8th	Oct 3rd	Early arrival
Willow Warbler	March 22nd	March 26th	Sept. 23rd	Sept. 23rd	
Ring Ouzel	March 31st	March 31st	Oct. 16th	Oct. 19th	
Redstart	April 2nd	April 8th	Sept. 13th	Oct. 13th	Early departure
Yellow Wagtail	April 3rd	April 6th	Sept. 19th	Oct. 14th	Poor numbers, early departure
Whitethroat	April 4th	April 14th	Sept. 21st	Sept. 26th	Second earliest arrival
Reed Warbler	April 5th	April 18th	Oct. 1st	Sept. 28th	Third earliest arrival
Tree Pipit	April 6th	April 4th	Sept. 19th	Oct. 1st	Very poor numbers
Common Tern	April 6th	April 12th	Oct. 28th	Oct 4th	Late departure
Sedge Warbler	April 10th	April 13th	Oct. 4th	Sept. 28th	
Grasshopper Warbler	April 10th	April 16th	Aug. 29th	Sept. 18th	Early departure
Garden Warbler	April 10th	April 15th	Sept. 19th	Sept. 25th	
Lesser Whitethroat	April 11th	April 11th	Sept. 21st	Sept. 27th	First overwintering
Whimbrel	April 12th	April 12th	Sept. 21st	Oct 3rd	
Cuckoo	April 12th	April 12th	June 28th	Aug 27th	Very early departure
Whinchat	April 14th	April 18th	Oct. 19th	Oct. 14th	
Wood Warbler	April 14th	April 11th	Aug. 24th	NA	Fifth earliest arrival
Pied Flycatcher	April 15th	April 14th	Sept. 4th	NA	Only three records
Swift	April 18th	April 20th	Sept. 4th	Sept 20th	Early departure
Hobby	April 19th	April 25th	Oct. 13th	Oct 2nd	Late departure
Nightingale	April 30th	April 12th	NA	NA	Only five records
Black Tern	May 14th	April 25th	Sept. 19th	Oct 11th	Very late arrival
Spotted Flycatcher	May 17th	May 2nd	Sept. 21st	Sept. 25th	Very late arrival
Winter migrants	**departure**		**arrival**		
Redwing	April 4th	April 10th	Oct. 1st	Sept. 30th	
Fieldfare	May 1st	April 14th	Oct. 14th	Oct. 4th	Second latest departure
Brambling	April 14th	April 16th	Oct. 15th	Oct. 7th	

NB. Species are listed in the order in which they first arrived in 2009
* average of last 40 years – see individual species account for more details

Spring Passerine Migration

During the first ten days of March winds were strong and generally westerly, but from 15th to 23rd high pressure dominated, bringing light north or easterly winds, and this brought in early migrants, especially Wheatears. From 24th to 28th pressure was low and winds strong, but from 29th to April 2nd high pressure and NE winds took over. From April 3rd to 14th winds were light and southerly, and most species first records fell in this period. From 14th to 19th winds turned easterly, and temperatures were low. From 20th to 24th temperatures rose rapidly with light SE winds, and then fell back under the influence of westerlies for the rest of the month. The first half of May was dominated by high pressure, light westerly winds, and warm dry conditions, but from 14th to 19th there was a deep depression bring rain and strong SW winds and much lower temperatures. From 20th it was warm and dry and increasingly sunny with light easterly winds at the very end of the month. It is no surprise that the average arrival date of 29 species was four days earlier than the average over the past forty years.

Thirteen passerine and semi-passerine species were an average of a week early, and only two, Wheatear and Pied Flycatcher, were later. This makes the very late arrival of the Spotted Flycatcher all the more unusual.

	Mar 1-15	Mar 16-31	Apr 1-15	Apr 16-30	May 1-15	May 16-31
Wood Warbler	0	0	1	5	2	0
Ring Ouzel	0	4	3	0	0	0
Spotted Flycatcher	0	0	0	0	0	15
Redstart	0	0	17	11	0	0
Whinchat	0	0	1	9	7	1
Wheatear	19	89	75	118	99	8
Pied Flycatcher	0	0	1	0	0	0
Tree Pipit	0	0	13	9	9	2

Total numbers recorded in each period

Autumn Migration at Chew Valley Lake

Water levels at the lake were on the low side for most of the autumn period, so providing good to excellent feeding conditions. This is shown by the 2009 figure (569) in the first table below. But as has been pointed out before, although this is a good figure and in line with those of the past decade, it is still only a quarter of those recorded in the 1970s and 1980s when the water levels were also low.

1990/99 Av.	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	2009
690	268	286	178	786	281	834	211	134	108	569

Excluding Lapwing, total of all wader maximum ten-day counts at CVL between July 1st and Oct. 28th

As in previous reports the table below gives the maximum count for each species in each ten-day period from July 1st to Oct. 28th.

	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												
Oystercatcher		1	2		2							
Little Ringed Plover					1		2		1			
Ringed Plover			1	1	2	11	3	4	3	2		13
Golden Plover										1		1
Lapwing	63	19	30	nc	52	70	45	52	nc	70	142	nc
Knot							4				1	
Sanderling			1									
Little Stint									3			
Curlew Sandpiper								1				
Dunlin	1	1	1	1	2	5	13	7	5	3	8	1
Ruff					2			1	1	1	2	
Jack Snipe												4
Snipe					2	6	5	15	22	12	13	59
Long-billed Dowitcher									1	1		
Black-tailed Godwit	14	3			6	15	5	1	4	6	6	2
Bar-tailed Godwit						1						
Whimbrel		1	1			1			2			
Curlew	3			1				2				
Common Sandpiper	5	3	9	11	13	31	7	3	4	2	10	
Green Sandpiper	2	1	4	18	5	9	7	12	12	12	13	3
Greenshank		1		2	7	6	3		1			
Wood Sandpiper							1					
Redshank	2	1	1	1	4	2	3	1				
Turnstone		1	1			1	2	1				
Grey Phalarope							1					
Little Gull	1				2			2	4			2
Black Tern				5		10	1		14			
Common Tern	2	2	5	3	80	19	14	3	2			1
Arctic Tern			2	6	3	1	2	2		1		

Maximum count in each ten day period

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 coastal sites – Severnside (SS) and CI-Y.

It is fairly similar to that for 2008 published in last year's Report, although no Spotted Redshanks were seen. Counts of Ringed Plover and Dunlin, the main species, were much the same over the two years, the latter apparently favouring CI-Y rather than Severnside in 2009. As with the CVL table there was a slight counts peak during the last ten days of August, although the Common Sandpiper peak at the coast was at the beginning of the month.

		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	SS			1	1								
	CI-Y		1	1					1				
Ringed Plover	SS			5	20	350	200	80	20		2		13
	CI-Y			11	28	200	310	170	40	75	15	8	6
Golden Plover	SS									1	1	1	
	CI-Y						8		1	1		4	
Grey Plover	SS									2		1	18
	CI-Y				1	3	3		1	1	6	16	4
Knot	SS				14	2	2	3	4	7		1	
	CI-Y						14	30	9		2		
Sanderling	SS		3	2	5	3	2	4					
	CI-Y					2	2	1		1			
Little Stint	SS				2		1						
	CI-Y						1		1				
Curlew Sandpiper	SS							3	2	1			
	CI-Y				5				1	1			
Dunlin	SS		14	46	120	150	100	40	29	110	84	70	100
	CI-Y		3	210	160	200	280	280	160	190	130	120	130
Ruff	SS									1			
	CI-Y								1				
Black-tailed Godwit	SS			5			10	5	1		4		94
	CI-Y			3	7		6	4					5
Bar-tailed Godwit	SS						2				1		3
	CI-Y						2			2			2
Whimbrel	SS	2	3	5	3	6		1					
	CI-Y	2	1	9	7	6	5	1	1	1			
Common Sandpiper	SS	14	12	3	16	4	2	1	1				
	CI-Y	11	11	10	16	2	5	2	1	6			
Green Sandpiper	SS				2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	CI-Y			3	2			1	1		2		
Greenshank	SS	2		1	2	1	1	1					
	CI-Y				4		1	1	1				

Maximum count in each ten day period

Reed Warbler by John Martin

Changes in the Dates of Earliest and Latest Sightings of Long-distance Migrants in Avon and their Associations with Climate Variations in England, the Mediterranean region and Africa.

H.J. Boyd and R.L. Bland

1 Summary

From 1966 to 2008, eight of 22 species have gradually arrived earlier and one (Whinchat) later. Eleven species were seen earlier when West Mediterranean springs were warm. Seven arrived earlier in years when winter or spring values of the North Atlantic Oscillation were positive and high, this is associated with wet winter conditions in western Africa, and with dry and warm winters in western Europe. After their African wintering areas had received more rain than usual, three species arrived earlier and five later. Big increases in the extent of dry zones in western Africa in recent years may help to account for the growing scarcity of several species and slower advances in their arrival in Avon. In 36 of 39 years, Swallows were seen in Avon several days before they were seen at south coast observatories. Latest sighting dates of 19 species showed much greater year-to-year variation than first sightings. Over the entire period the departures of six species showed significant time trends, three leaving Avon earlier and three later. Autumn weather seemed to have little influence on the timing of departures. Between 1978 and 2004, twenty species appeared in Avon and Suffolk at similar times, but were last seen in Suffolk from five to 30 days later than in Avon.

2 Introduction

Bland (1999) described changes in the arrival dates of long-distance migrants in the Avon area, hereafter referred to as 'Avon', between 1920 and 1995. In 2004 he summarized decadal changes in departure dates as well as arrival, and obtained an index of the 'time spent' in Avon by each species, defined as the difference between the mean dates of arrival and departure. This report adds Avon records for 1996-2008, then considers the effects on arrival dates in Avon of variations in winter and spring temperature and rainfall in: (a) Central England; and (b) the areas around the Mediterranean where most English-breeding and African-wintering migrants stop in spring. Variations in seasonal rainfall in different regions of Africa have also affected the timing of spring migration, although their effects are partially obscured by responses to the conditions that the migrants meet further north.

3 Materials and methods

a**) Arrival and departure dates.**
The records of first and last sightings of summer migrants have been recorded in detail and with increasing accuracy by many of the 500 or more contributors to this Report. Bland (1999) discussed the limitations of these data, especially in the early years of recording (1920-1960) when there were far fewer observers than there have been in recent years.

In the absence of studies covering the entire periods of arrival and departure, these "earliest" and "latest" sightings provide the only practical indicators of the beginning and end of the periods spent in Avon each year.

Departure dates of migrants have received much less attention than arrivals, in part because absence is harder to determine than presence. The departure schedules of adult females and males may differ, while the readiness of juveniles to leave must be affected by the dates of nesting and the end of parental care, which are rarely known. It seems likely that most late sightings are of juveniles. Only 'land birds' are considered here. Although there are long-distance migrants among the waders seen in Avon, few of them breed here.

b) Climate records
Most of the records of temperature used in this paper were found on the Climate Research Unit (CRU) website: www.cru.uea.ac.uk. The Central England series of monthly temperatures (CET) and the England & Wales rainfall series (EWR) are taken to represent the conditions in Avon. The CRU also provides historical seasonal values of temperature and rainfall in four regions around the Mediterranean.

The CRU site and the American website www.cpc.noaa.gov/data/teledoc/ publish series of 'tele-connections'. These consist of index numbers derived from monthly differences in mean sea level pressure (MSLP) between pairs of weather stations, and they reflect the intensity, speed and direction of pressure systems passing across much of the Northern Hemisphere. The North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO), investigated by Hurrell (1995), is the most widely used. Two others, reflecting pressure patterns across Europe, were also used here: the East Atlantic Pattern (EA), a leading mode in all months, and the Scandinavian Pattern (SCA), a leading mode from August to May. The positive phase of the EA is associated with above-average surface temperatures in Europe and with below-average precipitation across southern Europe. The positive phase of the SCA is associated with below-average temperatures across western Europe, above-average precipitation across central and southern Europe, and low precipitation across Scandinavia. In recent years both of these patterns have alternated rapidly between positive and negative phases, unlike the NAO, which has usually remained in one phase for several years before switching. Monthly mean temperatures at eight Mediterranean weather stations were taken from www.tutiempo/en/net. As some of these values are only available from 1973 onwards, analyses of the influence of surface temperatures were limited to the period between 1973 and 2008.

Annual and seasonal rainfall amounts in different parts of the African continent were found at http://jisao.washington.edu/data_sets/sahel and http://www.cpc.noaa.gov/products. In most of Africa rainfall is highly seasonal, often concentrated in late summer and autumn. Rainfall amounts affect local habitat conditions in the boreal winter and early spring, this must in turn affect the ease with which migrants can reach physiological fitness to move north. After some trials, temperature variations in Africa have not been used, as they have much less impact than autumn rainfall on habitat conditions in late winter and early spring.

Note on statistics

Estimates of correlation between sighting dates and weather indices are the only statistics used here. We have followed a common convention in treating probability values of less than 0.05 [1 in 20] as indicative of statistically significant differences in frequencies from those that might have come about by chance. A probability of less than 0.01 [1 in 100] is indicated by *, and a probability of less than 0.001 is indicated by **.

4 Results

a) Breeding status of long-distance summer migrants in Avon

Before reviewing changes in the dates of arrival and departure of long-distance migrants in Avon, it is useful to consider their status as breeding birds in the area, and to compare their relative abundance here and in England and Wales as a whole (Table 1). Reductions, or increases, in breeding populations may be linked to their well-being in their winter quarters and on passage, as well as to their breeding success. Relationships between local or national abundance and the timing of arrivals and departures are unlikely to be straightforward. There is insufficient information to determine any relationships between numbers and migration dates at all precisely. Nor should that be expected, given the limitations of first and last sightings as indicators of the complete patterns of entry to, and exit from, the region.

The earliest arrivals of abundant species seem most likely to be detected promptly, although in Avon the scarce Pied Flycatcher is looked for eagerly. Departures of scarce species (e.g. Cuckoo, Nightingale or Wood Warbler) have quite often not been noticed. The autumn passage of species that no longer breed locally (e.g. Tree Pipit, Yellow Wagtail) has also escaped notice in some years. Most long-distance migrants have decreased greatly in recent years, not only in Avon but across England and the United Kingdom as a whole (Table 1).

Species	Breeds?	Avon Pop. change	UK Pop. Change
Cuckoo		Steep decline	1967-06 Down 61%
Swift			1995-05 Down 22%
Sand Martin			Fluctuates
Swallow			No trend
House Martin			Possible decline
Tree Pipit	No longer	Steep decline	1967-06 down 83%
Yellow Wagtail	No longer	Steep decline	1967-06 down 72%
Nightingale		Steep decline	1967-06 down 43%
Redstart	No	Steep decline	Fluctuating
Whinchat	No	Non-breeder	Long decline
Wheatear		Non-breeder	Possible decline
Grasshopper Warbler		Occasional breeder	See-saw, recent peak 1997
Sedge Warbler			No trend
Reed Warbler		Increase	Up 80%
Lesser Whitethroat		No change	1995-05 down 44%
Whitethroat		Two crashes	Large fluctuation
Garden Warbler		Decline	Shallow decline
Wood Warbler	No longer		1995-06 down 58%
Willow Warbler		Recent steep decline	1967-06 down 58%
Spotted Flycatcher		Steady decline	1967-06 Down 87%
Pied Flycatcher	No	Decline	1994-06 Down 40%

Table 1. Recent changes in abundance of long-distance migrants breeding in Avon , and in England & the UK.

Table 1 shows that nearly all of the recent changes in status observed in Avon have been matched over most of the United Kingdom, so are unlikely to be due to local causes alone. The one-line summaries of changes in the UK are much simplified; different types of surveys have sometimes given conflicting results, while the percentage changes may vary considerably, especially with the different spans of years for which they are available.

What Table 1 does not show is that the recent population declines are not limited to long-distance migrants. Many residents and short-distance migrants are scarcer, while a few have also increased.

b) Arrivals in and departures from Avon in 1966-2008

Table 2 summarises mean arrival and departure dates over the whole period 1966 to 2008 (43 years).

The first column gives the mean first-arrival date for the whole period, 1966 to 2008; the third column gives the mean first- arrival dates for 1996 to 2008; the fifth column gives the mean date when last seen for the whole period; and the seventh column gives the same data for the more recent period 1996 to 2008. Columns 2, 4, 6 and 8 give the standard deviation (SD) – the higher this figure is, the wider is the variation in the relevant dates. The greater variability of the last dates compared with those of the first sightings is again apparent. The final two columns record statistically significant time trends.

Eight species were arriving earlier by the end of the period. Five species showed a clear trend to later departure, and two to earlier. Four species showed both earlier arrival and later departure, and House Martin both arrived and departed earlier.

	First seen 66-08		First Seen 96-08		Last Seen 66-08		Last Seen 96-08		Arrival	Departure
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Trend	Trend
Wheatear	Mar. 11	5.5	Mar. 11	5.3	Oct. 31	11.4	Nov. 5	12.6		Later
Sand Martin	Mar. 15	8.6	Mar. 11	6.1	Oct. 7	12.1	Oct. 9	25.2	Earlier	
Swallow	Mar. 24	8.8	Mar. 20	6.0	Nov. 4	15.1	Nov. 9	15.0	Earlier	Later
Willow Warbler	Mar. 26	7.3	Mar. 23	3.9	Sep. 23	13.7	Oct. 3	2.0	Earlier	Later
House Martin	Mar. 28	8.1	Mar. 23	7.4	Nov. 1	15.2	Oct. 25	17.0	Earlier	Earlier
Tree Pipit*	Apr. 4	7.2	Apr. 3	4.7	Oct. 1	13.9	Sep.30	10.4		
Redstart	Apr. 6	7.5	Apr. 4	5.3	Oct. 13	15.8	Oct. 11	14.9		
Yellow Wagtail*	Apr. 6	6.7	Apr. 6	5.0	Oct. 13	18.8	Oct. 9	18.3		
Cuckoo	Apr. 12	6.9	Apr. 12	6.0	Aug. 27	21.5	na			
Pied Flycatcher	Apr. 12	6.8	Apr. 14	5.6	Sep. 8	17.0	Sep. 8	20.3		
Sedge Warbler	Apr. 13	6.6	Apr. 11	6.3	Sep. 28	10.0	Sep. 30	13.1		
Whitethroat	Apr. 15	5.7	Apr. 12	3.8	Sep. 26	9.8	Oct. 2	13.8	Earlier	Later
Garden Warbler	Apr. 15	9.1	Apr. 14	6.3	Sep. 25	16.7	Sep. 20	8.2		Earlier
Nightingale	Apr. 15	5.3	Apr. 15	5.4	na		na			
Grasshopper Warbler*	Apr. 16	5.2	Apr. 14	3.8	Sep. 19	13.8	Sep. 19	10.9	Earlier	
Reed Warbler	Apr. 16	8.6	Apr. 10	5.2	Sep. 27	12.5	Oct. 6	13.5	Earlier	Later
Swift	Apr. 18	5.1	Apr. 18	3.4	Sep. 21	20.5	Sep. 23	18.6		
Wood Warbler*	Apr. 18	6.2	Apr. 18	4.9	na		na			
Whinchat	Apr. 20	7.7	Apr. 20	2.9	Oct. 14	11.8	Oct. 15	8.8		
Lesser Whitethroat	Apr. 23	4.5	Apr. 20	3.5	Sep. 27	15.4	Sep. 29	20.5	Earlier	
Spotted Flycatcher	May 1	6.7	Apr. 30	4.5	Sep. 25	10.2	Sep. 27	11.0		

Table 2. Arrival and departure in Avon, comparing data for 1966 to 2008 with that for 1996 to 2008. Species marked * used to breed in Avon, now they are either scarce or very scarce breeders, or are only seen on passage.

c) Are arrival dates in Avon similar to those in other parts of England?

Table 3 overleaf shows mean first sighting dates in Avon, for the period 1966 to 2008, compared with those at Portland Bird Observatory and in Hampshire for the period 1959 to 2005, in Essex for the period 1961 to 2002, and in Leicestershire for the period 1942 to 1991.

It suggests that summer migrants arrive at much the same dates in the south of England. Most species seem to have been seen slightly earlier in Avon and Hampshire than at Portland, where the area searched is small. In the east, most arrivals have been somewhat earlier in Essex (coastal) than in Leicestershire (inland).

	Avon 1966-08	Portland 1959-05	Hants 1959-05	Essex 1961-02	Leics 1942-91
Sand Martin	Mar. 15	Mar. 25	Mar. 27	Mar. 21	Mar. 24
Wheatear	Mar. 11	Mar. 11	Mar. 12	Mar.18	Mar. 24
Swallow	Mar. 24	Mar. 29	Mar. 23	Mar. 31	Apr. 2
House Martin	Mar. 28	Apr. 8	Mar. 31	Mar. 31	Apr. 2
Willow Warbler	Mar. 26	Mar. 31	Mar. 26	Mar. 29	Apr. 2
Tree Pipit*	Apr. 4	Apr. 6	Mar. 31	Apr. 7	Apr. 12
Redstart	Apr. 6	Apr. 5	Apr. 5	Apr. 8	Apr. 16
Yellow Wagtail*	Apr. 6	Apr. 7	Apr. 2	Mar. 28	Apr. 3
Reed Warbler	Apr. 16	na	Apr. 16	Apr. 18	May 1
Sedge Warbler	Apr. 13	Apr. 16	Apr. 9	Apr. 8	Apr.19
Cuckoo	Apr. 12	Apr.19	Apr. 4	Apr. 9	Apr.14
Whitethroat	Apr. 15	Apr. 15	Apr. 11	Apr. 12	Apr. 19
Grasshopper Warbler*	Apr. 16	Apr. 13	Apr. 14	Apr. 18	Apr. 20
Garden Warbler	Apr. 15	Apr. 20	Apr.13	Apr. 20	Apr. 24
Pied Flycatcher	Apr. 12	Apr. 19	Apr. 15		
Nightingale	Apr. 15	na	Apr. 16	Apr. 12	Apr. 27
Swift	Apr. 18	Apr. 23	Apr.18	Apr. 20	Apr.26
Wood Warbler*	Apr. 18	Apr. 22	Apr. 22	Apr. 28	Apr. 27
Lesser Whitethroat	Apr. 23	Apr. 23	Apr. 18	Apr. 18	Apr. 18
Whinchat	Apr. 20	Apr. 16	Apr. 17	Apr. 21	Apr. 23
Spotted Flycatcher	May 1	Apr. 28	Apr. 29	May 1	May 4
Mean	Apr. 9	Apr. 11	Apr. 7	Apr. 8	Apr. 14

Table 3 Mean first sighting dates in Avon, 1966-2008, compared with those at Portland Bird Observatory and in Hampshire in 1959-2005, in Essex in 1961-2002, and in Leicestershire 1942-1991. See legend to Table 2 for *.

d) Arrival dates of Swallows in Avon and at coastal bird observatories

The website of Sparks and Loxton (at www.ecn.ac.uk/iceuk//indicators/29.htm: 2006), compared the arrival dates of Swallows in Britain between 1959 and 2004 with the mean Central England temperatures in the early spring from February to April, and found that Swallows were first seen later in cool springs. The indicator that they used was the average date when the Swallow is first observed at four coastal bird observatories (Dungeness, Portland, Bardsey and Calf of Man). This seems to be the mean of the four records, not the earliest sighting.

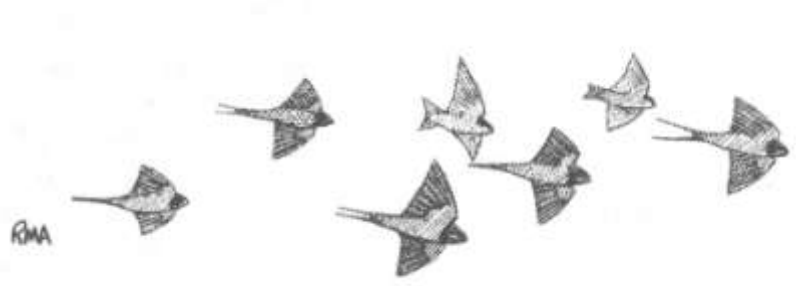
In the years 1966-2004, when records of arrivals in Avon overlapped with those at the coastal observatories, sightings in Avon were earlier than the mean for the observatories in 36 of 39 years. This might be expected if the birds returning first to Avon were those making for sites they had occupied previously, while those seen first on the coast were "of no fixed address".

e) Length of stay of summer migrants

Table 4 on the next page compares the 'time spent' (the difference in days between the mean date of arrival and departure) in Avon at the beginning of the whole period, that is between 1966 and 1977, with the date at the end, that is between 1996 and 2008. Purely passage species are included even though they are not spending much of the time in the region.

Over the entire period, there were 17 species for which departures as well as arrivals were detected in nearly all years. For eight of them the mean length of stay increased by at least five days, those of Redstart and Spotted Flycatcher by as much as 15 days, and those for Reed Warbler by 20 days. In contrast House Martin, Cuckoo, and Garden Warbler spent less time, although this probably relates to the decline in numbers and hence of last observations for the latter two species.

Of 17 species whose arrivals and departures were recorded in Hampshire as well as Avon, all but Grasshopper Warbler and Redstart spent, on average, longer in Hampshire.



	Time spent 1966-77			Time spent 1996-08				Time spent 1959-05
	Mean	sd	Trend	Mean	sd	Trend	Diff	Hants
Sand Martin	204	4.1	Less	201	12.8	Less		212
Wheatear	227	11.7		237	16.6		+10	242
Swallow	219	25.5	More	231	28.0	More	+12	249
House Martin	220	10.3		208	34.1	More	-12	235
Willow Warbler	180	34.7		185	7.3		+5	196
Redstart	178	27.2		193	10.1		+15	171
Reed Warbler	154	23.2		174	11.9		+20	187
Sedge Warbler	166	24.5		169	10.7			186
Cuckoo	145	23.0		130	9.3		-15	164
Whitethroat	159	11.2		168	10.6		+9	178
Grasshopper Warbler*	159	3.6	More	155	8.7	More		155
Garden warbler	175	22.8		164	16.4		-11	171
Pied Flycatcher	146	10.1		145	2.2			166
Swift	155	16.4		154	5.5	Less		169
Lesser Whitethroat	153	19.4		163	16.8		+10	168
Whinchat	179	8.4		176	10.2	Less		197
Spotted Flycatcher	139	15.6		153	11.2		+14	157
Mean	174			177				188

Table 4. Mean 'time spent' (in days) in Avon between 1966 and 1977, and between 1996 and 2008. Differences between periods is shown only where they are greater than four days. The trend column shows the presence or absence of time trends within each of the sub-periods.

A comparison between recent arrival and departure dates in Avon with those in Suffolk (Table 5) suggests that from 1978 to 2004 the times of arrival were similar but that the latest sightings were not. Only Grasshopper Warbler and Spotted Flycatcher had mean departure dates that were later in Avon than in Suffolk. Most species were seen much later in Suffolk, on average by 19 days. Many of the birds seen late along the east coast may have bred, or been reared, in areas further north. Northern birds on autumn passage are probably seen less often in Avon.

	Avon 1978-04 First	Suffolk 1978-04 First	Avon 1978-04 Last	Suffolk 1978-04 Last
Wheatear	Mar. 11	Mar. 12	Oct. 18	Nov. 8
Sand Martin	Mar. 13	Mar. 17	Oct. 6	Oct. 26
Swallow	Mar.22	Mar. 27	Nov. 4	Nov. 26
Willow Warbler	Mar. 27	Mar. 27	Sep. 28	Oct. 24
House Martin	Mar.28	Mar. 28	Nov. 1	Nov. 24
Redstart	Apr. 4	Apr. 7	Oct. 10	Oct. 26
Cuckoo	Apr. 12	Apr. 8	Aug. 25	Sep. 25
Pied Flycatcher	Apr. 12	Apr. 26	Sep. 4	Oct. 5
Sedge Warbler	Apr. 13	Apr. 3	Sep. 27	Oct. 10
Whitethroat	Apr. 15	Apr. 12	Sep. 27	Oct. 21
Grasshopper Warbler*	Apr. 16	Apr. 10	Sep. 19	Sep. 14
Garden warbler	Apr. 17	Apr.17	Sep. 27	Oct. 26
Reed Warbler	Apr. 18	Apr. 15	Sep. 27	Oct. 24
Swift	Apr. 19	Apr. 15	Sep. 20	
Whinchat	Apr. 20	Apr. 25	Oct. 16	Oct. 28
Lesser Whitethroat	Apr. 21	Apr. 18	Oct. 1	Oct. 16
Spotted Flycatcher	May. 3	Apr. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 11
Mean	Apr. 8	Apr. 7	Oct. 1	Oct. 19

Table 5. Mean earliest and latest sighting dates in Avon and in Suffolk in 1978-2004.

f) Seasonal Weather and Timing of Migration - Spring temperatures and first sighting (arrival) dates in 1973-2008

Although Central England seasonal temperatures have been estimated since the 17th century, temperature measurements in some parts of Europe and Africa were not made until much later. As noted earlier, the period from 1973 to 2008 has been used here because the data from some weather stations is only available on the internet from 1973 onwards.

The negative relationships shown in Table 6 between arrival dates and spring temperatures demonstrate that eight species were seen significantly earlier in warmer springs. Nearly all the other species also showed weaker negative links.

Species	CET	West Med
Swift		-0.55**
Sand Martin	-0.54**	-0.74**
Swallow	0.41*	-0.40*
House Martin	-0.55**	-0.45*
Tree Pipit	-0.42*	-0.34
Nightingale	-0.35	-0.41*
Redstart		-0.35
Wheatear	-0.32	
Sedge Warbler	-0.30	-0.55**
Reed Warbler		-0.53**
Pied Flycatcher	-0.32	-0.35

Table 6. Association between arrival dates in Avon and spring (March-April) temperature changes in England (CET) and at stations around the West Mediterranean in 1973-2008. Entries only where P < 0.05, * P < 0.01, ** P < 0.001.

Associations between arrival dates and mean spring temperatures at different groups of stations around the whole Mediterranean Basin are shown in Table 7.

Ten species showed significant negative relationships with western Mediterranean temperatures. Table 7 suggests that fewer species responded to temperatures in the east of the Mediterranean region. Cuckoo apparently arrived later when spring temperatures in the east and south of the Mediterranean region were relatively high. Sedge Warbler, which showed relatively strong negative correlations with temperatures in the west, also showed a positive correlation with eastern temperatures. The only significant correlation between first sightings of Wheatear and Mediterranean spring temperatures was a positive one with the temperatures on the north side of the Basin.

	SW Spain	W Med	E Med	N Med	S Med
Cuckoo			0.38		0.40
Swift	0.35	-0.55*		-0.53*	
Sand Martin	-0.39	-0.74**			
Swallow	-0.37	-0.40			
House Martin	-0.32	-0.45*		-0.32	
Tree Pipit		-0.34		-0.47	
Nightingale		-0.41			
Redstart		-0.35			
Wheatear				0.38	
Sedge Warbler		-0.55*	0.36		-0.33
Reed Warbler	-0.32	-0.43			
Pied Flycatcher	-0.35				

Table 7. Significant associations between arrival dates in Avon, 1973-2008, and March-April temperatures in different regions around the Mediterranean. Entries only where P < 0.05, * P < 0.01, ** P < 0.001. SW Spain = Malaga; W. Med = mean of Marseille, Tunis, Bologna; E. Med = mean of Athens, Alexandria, Ben-Gurion airport (Israel); N. Med = mean of Marseille, Bologna, Athens; S. Med = mean of Tunis, Alexandria, Ben-Gurion.

These results suggest that the majority of migrants returning to Avon travel across the western Mediterranean.

g) Influence of African rainfall on arrival dates

Most long-distance migrants traveling from southern Africa to England need to stop in southern Europe to feed before completing their spring journeys. This reduces the chance of detecting associations between appearance in England and departure from Africa, especially as little is yet known about the timing of departures from wintering areas, or where, and for how long, birds may stay in Africa after beginning to migrate.

The state of the environment in Africa in the (boreal) late winter and early spring is more likely to have been determined by rainfall amounts in the preceding summer and autumn than by fluctuations in seasonal temperatures which are relatively small and never severely cold. Consequently we have used rainfall amounts in the previous summer and autumn as proxies for habitat states, on the assumption that wet autumns are more favourable than drought for plant growth and insect abundance in late winter and early spring.

Table 8 includes only eight species, although ranging from Swallows to warblers. Here again a negative relationship indicates earlier arrival after wetter seasons, except in the final column which shows relationships with the Southern Oscillation (SO). This is a measure of the mean sea level pressure over the southern Atlantic Ocean which has been shown to affect the weather over much of western Africa. In this case the positive signs indicate that arrivals are earlier when the values of the SO are positive. Sand Martin and Pied Flycatcher also showed positive associations with rainfall in southern Africa where they do not winter. If these anomalies are not related to chance, perhaps they are due to inverse relationships between rainfall amounts in western and southern Africa.

	Sahel	Sahel-Sudan	Southern Africa	West Africa	Southern Oscillation
Number of years recorded	43	29	26	16	43
Sand Martin			0.38		
House Martin					0.31
Yellow Wagtail		-0.43			
Redstart					0.32
Sedge Warbler	-0.39	-0.47		-0.53	
Garden Warbler		0.34			
Wood Warbler		-0.33			
Pied Flycatcher			0.33		

Table 8. Associations between first sighting dates in Avon and rainfall in different regions of Africa in the previous summer and autumn: (a) Sahel 1966-2008; (b) Sahel-Sudan,1966-1994; (c) Southern Africa, 1966-1991; (d) West Africa, 1979-1994; (e) Southern Oscillation index June-August, 1966-2008. Entries only where P < 0.05, * P < 0.01.

Large-scale climate changes have altered the spatial variability of rainfall across the four major climate regions of western Africa during the 20th century (Djomou, Monkam & Lenouo, 2009), with massive effects on the landscape. Since the late 1960s the surface area of semi-arid land has doubled while wetland has halved. These changes may be responsible for some of the large reductions in English bird populations. As the distribution of English-breeding passerines in western Africa is still not known in much detail, it is not yet practicable to relate changes in their arrival dates in Avon to these extensive changes in winter habitats with any precision. Dare (2009), after Wernham *et al.* (2002, page 884) lists ten species as wintering in the affected areas (Table 9).

Species	Wintering area	Change in arrival date (days) Devon 1927-65	Change in arrival date (days) Devon 1965-2007	Change in arrival date (days) Avon 66-78 to 96-08
Wheatear	Sahel sub-desert	3	-6	-8
Whitethroat	Sahel sub-desert	-2	-3	-4
Sedge Warbler	Sahel riverine		-8	-10
Sand Martin	Sahel riverine	-7	-17	-8
Reed Warbler	Savannah Riverine		-11	3
Whinchat	Sudan Savannah		-2	-3
Tree Pipit	Guinea Savannah	-5	-20	3
Redstart	Guinea Savannah		-9	0
Garden Warbler	Guinea Savannah	-1	-12	3
Willow Warbler	Guinea Savannah		-10	-5

Table 9. Species wintering in West Africa whose abundance and arrival dates in England are likely to have been affected by extensive increases in semi-arid areas, especially since 1960. The changes in their arrival dates in Devon are those estimated by Dare (2009). The final column shows comparable changes in Avon, estimated as the difference between the mean arrival dates in 1966-1978 and in 1996-2008. See Table 1 for summaries of the changes in their English populations.

The estimated advances in arrival dates since the 1960s shown in the last two columns of Table 9 are very different. In Devon, all ten species were arriving earlier by 2007, by up to 20 days. In Avon, six species were arriving from three to 20 days earlier by 2008, but three species were arriving (3 days) later, with one unchanged. Although some of these differences may be due to different methods of estimation (Dare used regression analysis), it seems likely that there are biological differences too. Little is yet known about passerine site fidelity in winter. In regions subject to wide fluctuations in rainfall and vegetation states, flexibility might be a better strategy than attachment of adults to sites they had used previously. In any event, it seems likely that some birds breeding in Avon and in Devon winter in distinct areas although methodological differences may also explain the variability.

h) Arrival dates and the North Atlantic Oscillation and other tele-connections

Soon after Hurrell (1995) devised the NAO, an index based on differences in mean sea level pressure between stations close to the Azores High (e.g. Gibraltar) and the Icelandic Low (Reykjavik), it became fashionable to attempt to relate biological variations to the positive or negative phases of the NAO. Several studies of migration timing have found highly significant links between timing of spring migration and the state of the NAO in the preceding winter, although others have not.

Here, first sightings in Avon of six species showed significant negative correlations with the winter NAO (Table 10). This implies earlier arrivals when the winter NAO was in a positive phase, ie pressure was high over Iceland and low in the Mediterranean. The NAO is usually taken to reflect the passage of weather systems across the north Atlantic and Europe. However, these systems also affect the north of the southern Atlantic Ocean and western Africa.

It seemed possible that other tele-connections could help to identify where the interactions between movements of England-bound migrants and pressure systems might occur. Only two yielded clear links (Table 10). Four species were associated

with variations in the East Atlantic Pattern, EAP, (three negative, one positive) and three (all positive) with the Scandinavian Pattern, SCA. The scarcity of these links precludes any extensive exploration of associations between arrivals and spring weather in different regions of Europe.

	NAO	EAP	SCA
Cuckoo			0.33
Sand Martin	-0.40	-0.46*	0.31
House Martin	-0.35	-0.42	
Tree Pipit	-0.32	-0.36	
Wheatear	-0.37		
Sedge Warbler	-0.38		
Whitethroat			0.34
Garden Warbler	-0.30		
Wood Warbler		0.34	

Table 10. Significant associations between arrivals in Avon in 1966-2008 and values of the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO), the East Atlantic Pattern (EAP) and the Scandinavian Pattern (SCA) in the preceding winter (Dec-Mar). Entries only where $P < 0.05$. * $P < 0.01$.

5 General discussion

The possibility of a permanent change to a warmer climate has stimulated a great deal of interest in the ways in which migrants react to changes in the environment, and arrival and departure dates have been examined in the hope of finding convincing evidence that species do respond. However this article demonstrates the complexities of the various changes in climate that birds experience both in their winter quarters and during migration, and the problems associated with accurate observation of arrival and even more of departure. The range of differences between county records appear to be greater than the reality that they are seeking to describe; changes in both the populations of different species, and in the numbers of observers and the technology available to them, affect the original records. The choice of time periods within which to measure changes in both temperature and dates can strongly affect the perceived change. It should be no surprise that, as a result, there appear to be very few generalizations that can be reliably made, and that individual species have highly individual reactions. In some ways the number of species whose arrival has remained almost entirely unchanged over time, despite substantial annual variation in weather conditions both in the UK and in Africa is more remarkable than the number whose dates can be correlated with temperature.

The growth in the use of Bird-track which provides not merely first and last dates on a nationwide basis but also describes the size and pattern of migration, ought in future to give a statistically valid account of the ways in which migrants react to the weather they encounter, and its changing patterns over time.

6 Acknowledgements

This article is based on the observations of hundreds of individuals who have sent their records to the Editors of this Report over the past fifty years, without whose efforts there would be neither knowledge nor understanding.

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Wildfowl Numbers at Chew Valley Lake 1960-2010
Part 1 – Swans, Geese and Dabbling Ducks

R. J. Higgins

Introduction

Chew Valley Lake (CVL) is the only site wholly within Avon that has international nature conservation designations for bird interest. Of the species considered here the lake is of international importance for Shoveler and of national importance for Gadwall. CVL is a drinking water reservoir, which has been owned and operated by Bristol Water plc since 1956. It covers 500 hectares and is relatively shallow, with an average depth of only 4.25m. Its catchment consists predominantly of permanent grasslands on mildly calcareous clays, mostly derived from underlying Mercia Mudstones and Lias, and has changed relatively little since the lake was flooded. The lake is eutrophic (nutrient rich) and supports significant summer growths of several submerged macrophytes, including Canadian Pondweed (*Elodea canadensis*), various narrow-leaved pondweeds (*Potamogeton spp*), water-crowfoots (*Ranunculus spp*), Spiked Water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*), Rigid Hornwort (*Ceratophyllum demersum*) and stoneworts (*Chara spp*), the extent of which varies from year to year. Beds of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) now dominate much of the lake margin, having become progressively more extensive over the decades.

The lake is stocked with large numbers of Brown Trout (*Salmo trutta*) and Rainbow Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and also supports large populations of coarse fish, especially Roach (*Rutilus rutilus*) and Perch (*Perca fluviatilis*). Water levels on the main lake fluctuate massively according to rainfall and water abstraction, so that in some years large expanses of mud are revealed, often with lush growth of ruderal (weedy) plant species. Herriott's Pool is a major exception to this and its stable water levels mean that it has a very distinct ecology, reflected in a bird population that is often quite different from that of the rest of the lake.

The wildfowl at CVL have been counted since the lake was first flooded. This paper summarises trends in the populations of the regularly occurring swans, geese and dabbling ducks from that date until the present. It is anticipated that a similar paper covering diving ducks, grebes, Cormorant, Coot and Moorhen will appear in the 2010 Avon Bird Report.

Methods

This paper is based largely on the results of monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts, which have covered all of the species considered here since the inception of the scheme in 1959. WeBS counts have been supplemented by various additional sources of data. The late Bernard King counted the lake in the years before WeBS and some of these records have been extracted from Bristol Bird Report, 1954-1959. There is insufficient detail to include this information in the graphs, but reference is made to significant counts in the text. Keith Vinicombe carried out frequent counts, independent of the WeBS scheme, from 1966 until he took over as WeBS counter in 1980. These data have been used to provide counts for months not covered by WeBS and for periods when the WeBS counts were considered incomplete.

The counts consulted provide monthly maxima for each species. For every year a mean peak has been calculated by averaging the maxima in the three months during which each species was most numerous; this method is comparable to that used in the Avon Bird Report for producing an annual index. For presentation in the graphs below five year means have been used, giving a total of ten means over the fifty year period under consideration, each calculated from 15 monthly counts.

Species that have occurred regularly and in significant numbers are considered here. White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*, was frequent in the first few years of the reservoir's history, peaking at 300 in February/March 1956, but has been uncommon since and is not considered here.

Species Accounts

The trends in numbers shown for each species are presented and described in this section. A discussion of possible reasons for the trends is presented in the following section.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

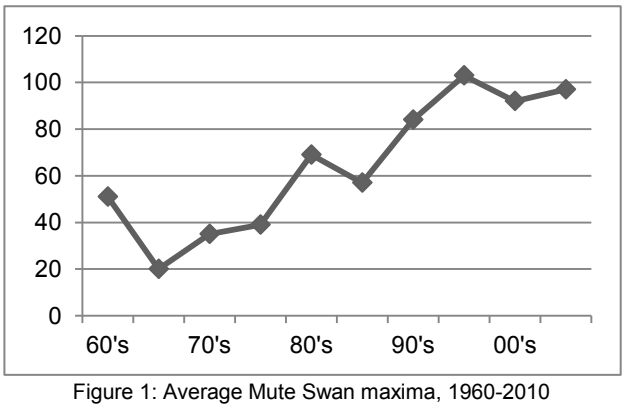

Figure 1: Average Mute Swan maxima, 1960-2010

Mute Swan shows a trend of generally increasing abundance at CVL since the 1960s. Limited information is available on numbers of this species during the 1950s, but there are published counts of 46 in September 1956 and 98 in 1957. Numbers then fell in the 1960s and reached a nadir in 1968/69, when the maximum count was 23 in September but no more than three were present in any other month. Subsequently there was a steady increase until the mid-1990s, when the highest count in the best year on record, 1996/97, was 166 in July.

Since then numbers have fallen slightly but the annual maximum in nine of the last ten years has exceeded 100, a threshold that was not reached throughout the 1960s and 1970s. The seasonality of records has changed little: a moulting flock builds up in July and August and declines slightly in September, and then more rapidly in October as macrophytes die-back. Very few are present in mid-winter. Herriott's Pool is a key area for this species and typically now holds as many as 70% of the lake's Mute Swans.

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

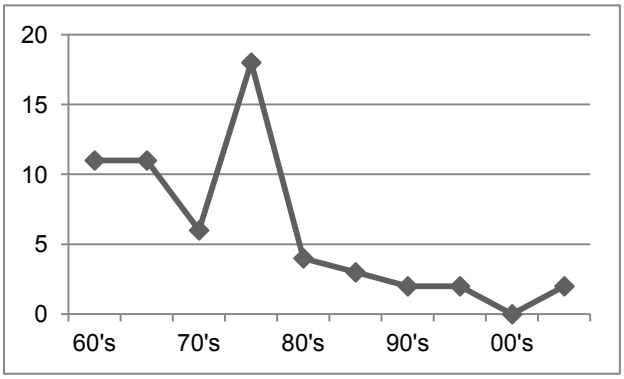

Figure 2: Average Bewick's Swan maxima, 1960-2010

The trend in Bewick's Swan numbers at CVL is one of gradual decline, masked by a startling increase in the second half of the 1970s. The high average then is largely due to exceptional numbers following the drought years of 1975 and 1976, when ideal feeding conditions attracted a peak count of 141. The species has become less frequent, as well as less numerous: it was recorded in the course of WeBS counts in every year but one of the 1960s but during the decade 2001-2010 it was only recorded twice. Nevertheless, Bewick's Swans still appear in periods of low water, as evidenced by counts of eleven in December 2005 and seven in November 2009. As might be expected, annual maxima have generally occurred in early to mid-winter, between the birds' arrival from Siberia and the disappearance of food sources as water levels rise.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

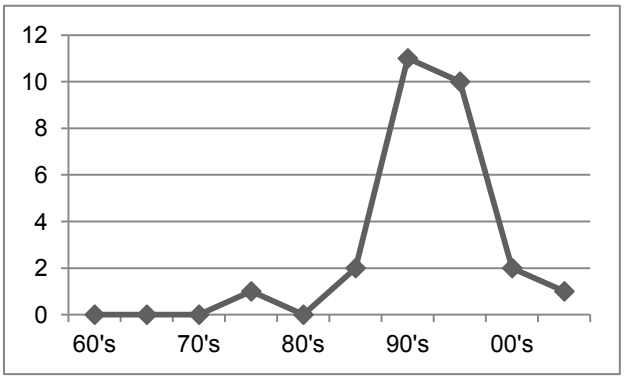

Figure 3: Average Greylag Goose maxima, 1960-2010

The Greylag Geese recorded at CVL are all assumed to be of feral origin. The species was not recorded here at all during WeBS counts until 1974/75, when a single individual over-wintered, and it was not until the late 1980s that Greylags were regularly recorded. A small flock then built up, with peaks usually occurring during the mid-summer moult period. The maximum count was 33 in July 1997. Thereafter a rapid decline began in 2000 and the species has now returned to its previous status as an irregular visitor.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

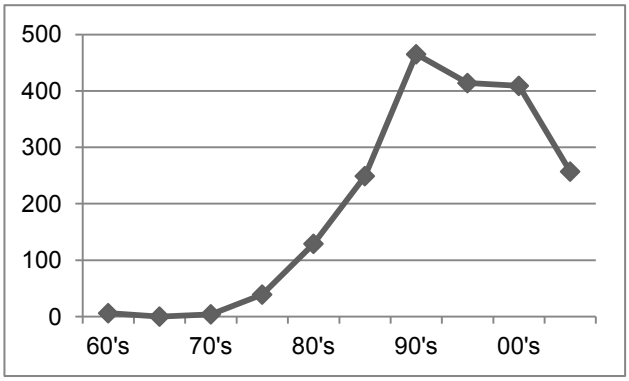

Figure 4: Average Canada Goose maxima, 1960-2010

Although the first Canada Goose recorded at CVL was in March 1956 it was for many years an irregular visitor to CVL, with no records during WeBS counts in seven years during the 1960s. The means for this decade would be even lower were it not for a then exceptional count of 47 during January 1962. The species became steadily more frequent during the 1970s but it was not until 1980 that numbers reached 100. They then rose rapidly and peaked at 905 in June 1996 but have since fallen significantly and the peak count in 2009 had fallen to 415. During the early years peak counts were often made in mid-winter but the largest counts since the mid-1980s have been during the late summer moult period, when ringing recoveries have shown that birds arrive from Dorset, Devon and Wiltshire. In recent years most Canada Geese have left the lake during the autumn and wintering birds now prefer Blagdon Lake; Canada Goose can be hard to find at CVL at this season.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

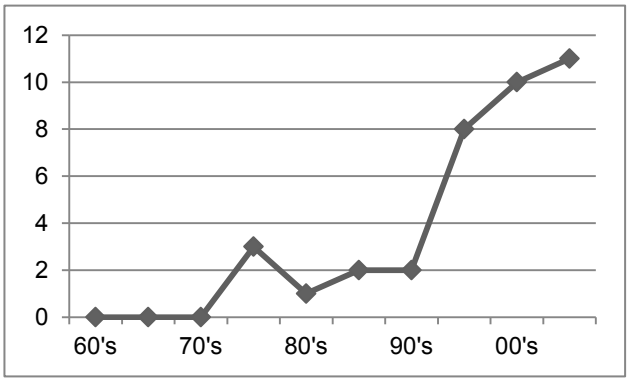

Figure 5: Average Barnacle Goose maxima, 1960-2010

All of the records of Barnacle Goose considered here are probably attributable to feral birds, although there have been some showing indications of wild origin, notably a lone bird and a separate party of five in 1995. The first WeBS record of this species at CVL was in December 1981 but it was not until 1993, when a flock of 14 moulted here, that more than two were recorded. Breeding was attempted in 1998 and has been successful in several years

since 2001. Numbers have risen slightly but have yet to exceed twenty. Maximum counts are generally made either in late summer or mid-winter, with intervening months often failing to produce records as the small flock moves to Blagdon Lake.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

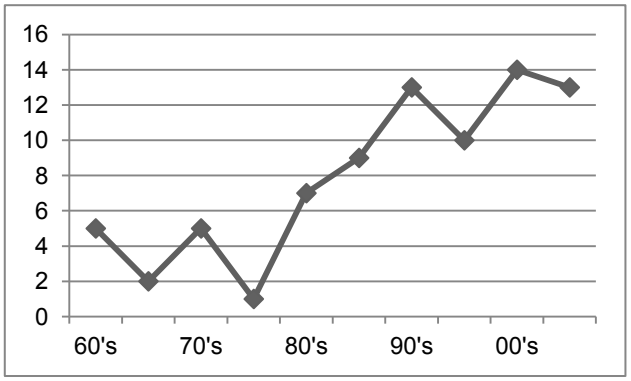

Figure 6: Average Shelduck maxima, 1960-2010

Shelduck has become markedly more numerous at CVL in recent decades. There are records for every year under consideration but it is not until 1974 that more than ten were counted. Numbers then slumped, with no more than three recorded in any month between 1976 and 1982 and even in 1996/97 the maximum count was only six. The mean maximum is now in excess of ten times the level recorded in the late 1970s. Shelduck are almost always concentrated on Herriott's Pool, although hatches of insects in spring may lead to wide dispersal of feeding birds across the main lake. The species breeds at CVL in small numbers and it seems likely that the birds recorded are almost all born here. Shelduck were generally thought to be heavily dependent on the estuarine snail *Hydrobia ulvae*, but recent research has shown that this is not necessarily the case (Anders *et al.* 2009). A more catholic diet must be necessary to allow survival at CVL. The seasonal pattern of Shelduck occurrence at CVL is unlike that of other wildfowl species and has remained constant through the period under review. Numbers are lowest during the late summer and autumn, when they depart to moulting grounds, with birds returning in the late autumn rising to a peak in spring.

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

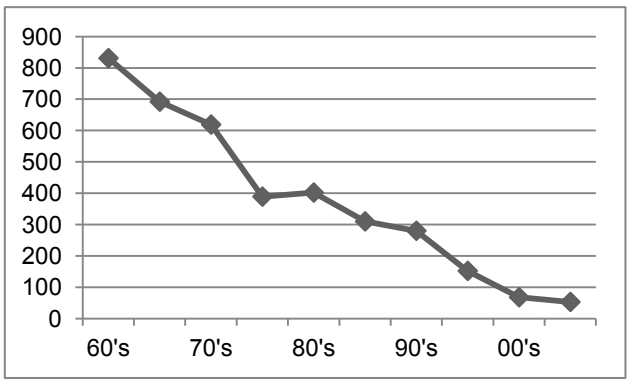

Figure 7: Average Wigeon maxima, 1960-2010

There has been a very clear and virtually consistent decline in Wigeon numbers at CVL. In the lake's early years the annual maximum regularly exceeded 1,000, but this total has not been reached since 1987. In 2007/08, the worst winter on record, the highest WeBS count was a mere 18, in marked contrast to the record 1,325 in January 1962. There has also been some change in the seasonality of annual maxima. Small numbers of Wigeon arrive at any time from late June with the main arrivals occurring in September and October. In the past numbers would rise steadily to a maximum in January, but peak counts in recent years have often been within the period September to November.

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

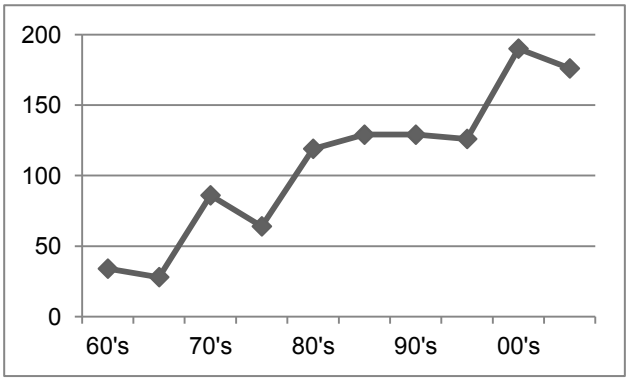

Figure 8: Average Gadwall maxima, 1960-2010

Gadwall has become much more numerous at CVL, as it has nationally, since it was first recorded here in October 1955. The highest count in the 1950s was 30 in September 1958 and during the 1960s there were several years when the maximum WeBS count failed to reach twenty, but maxima in recent years have typically been in the region of 200 to 300 birds. The increase in numbers has not been steady, with a stable period between 1980 and 2000 followed by a steep increase to 2005 and a slight fall since then. Small numbers of Gadwall are present at CVL in the breeding season, with breeding success varying from year to year. Large numbers then arrive to moult in mid-summer when they are one of the harder species to count, since flightless birds often spend the day hidden in cover and an evening visit may be necessary to gain a true picture of numbers on the lake. In the late summer in particular Herriott's Pool is of key importance to this species and the lake's whole population may be concentrated here. Numbers then fall through the autumn as waterweed disappears and very few remain in mid-winter, when counts of fewer than ten are not unusual.

TEAL *Anas crecca*

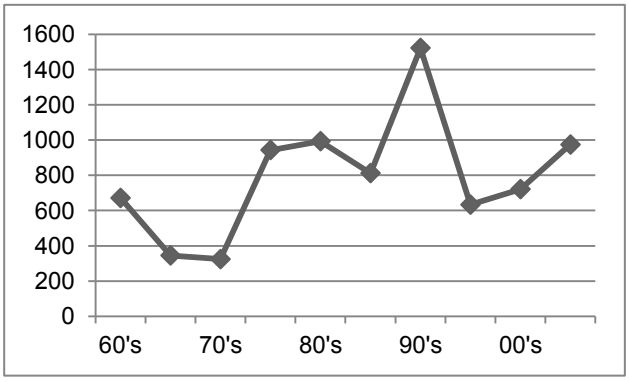

Figure 9: Average Teal maxima, 1960-2010

Teal numbers at CVL fail to show any clear trend, but there is some indication of an increase, particularly between the late 1960s to early 1970s and the present. There was a large peak during the early 1990s, when there was an exceptional count of 5,500 in January 1991, close to the record maximum of 5,600 in December 1984. By contrast the maximum count in 1969/70 was only 141. These huge variations are linked to changes in the lake's water level (see the discussions section below). The seasonality of the annual maxima has changed. Between 1960 and 1985 the maximum count was typically in January and 17 of the 25 annual maxima were in the mid-winter months of December to February. Since 1985 the annual maximum has typically occurred earlier in the season, with 15 of the 25 annual maxima occurring in the autumn months of September to November. The graph below shows the change in seasonality:

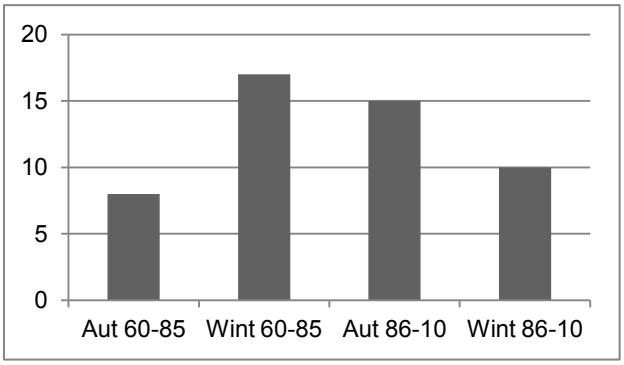

Figure 10: Seasonality of Teal maxima, autumn and winter 1960-85 and 1986-2010

Furthermore, in the earlier period annual maxima occurred in February in four years and only once in September; in the later period no maxima occurred in February and eight in September.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

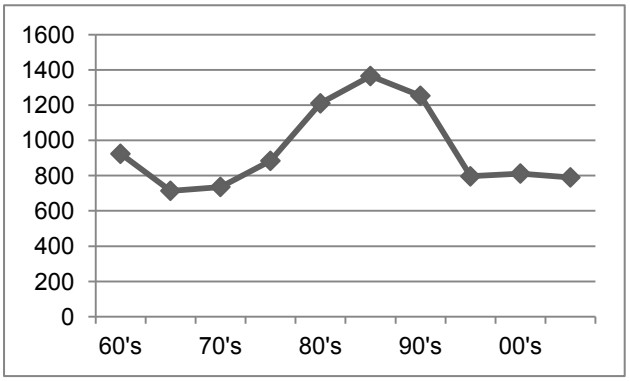

Figure 11: Average Mallard maxima, 1960-2010

Mallard numbers have shown marked trends. High counts in the 1950s, for example 1,390 in September 1959, were followed by a decline during the 1960s and a period of relative stability until 1980. Counts then rose sharply to a peak during the period 1980 to 1995, when the maximum counts were 1,900 in September 1982 and 1,970 in August 1990. Counts then fell rapidly in the period 1990 to 1995 and have remained fairly stable since then.

In the worst year of this period, 2008/09, the highest count was 625 in July, but the following year saw numbers remain over 1,000 between August and October, with a maximum of 1,180 in September. Maxima have typically occurred between August and October.

As with Teal there has been some shift in the timing of the peak. During the 25 years between 1960 and 1985 the annual maximum was during August or July only twice, and in November, December or January seven times. Between 1986 and 2010 the annual maximum was during July or August 16 times and in November, December or January only once (in November 2003). The trend is shown in the following graph:

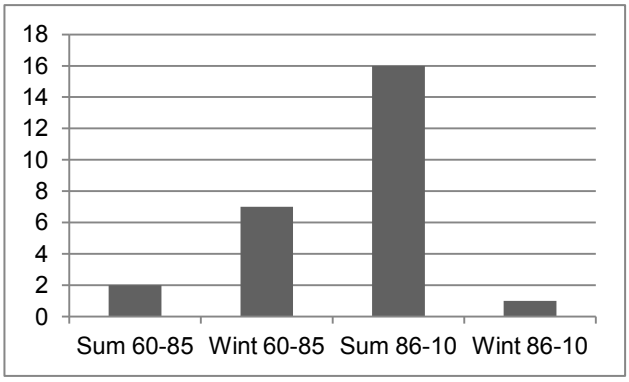

Figure 12: Seasonality of Mallard maxima, late summer and winter 1960-1985 and 1986 to 2010

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

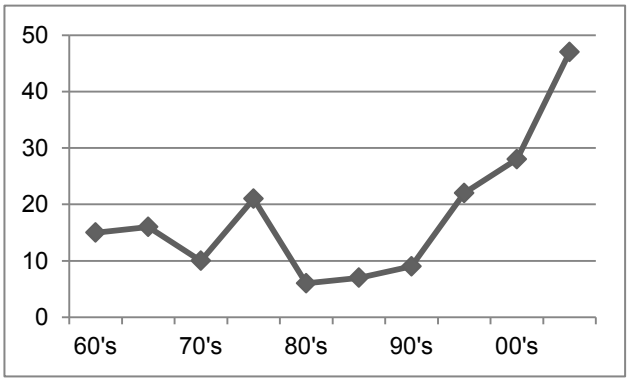

Figure 13: Average Pintail maxima, 1960-2010

Pintail has never been a numerous species at CVL, but following a fallow period between 1980 and 1995 it has become much more common. The worst year on record for this species was 1987/88, when the highest WeBS count was only three. By contrast, each of the five years between 2005/06 and 2009/10 saw annual maxima in excess of thirty. The highest count in the best year, 2005/06, was 140 in October. The only period that has seen comparable numbers was following construction of the reservoirs, when the annual maxima between 1954, and 1959 were 70, 12, 38, 32, 74 and 25. Pintail are usually concentrated on Herriott's Pool and in excess of 90% of the birds on the lake are usually here. However, during periods of low water the east shore can be favoured and most of the 140 counted in October 2005 were present here. In the earlier decades annual maxima were typically in November and December. Maxima in recent years have shown a tendency to be slightly earlier, in October, but the trend is less pronounced than that exhibited by Teal and Mallard.

GARGANEY *Anas quequedula*

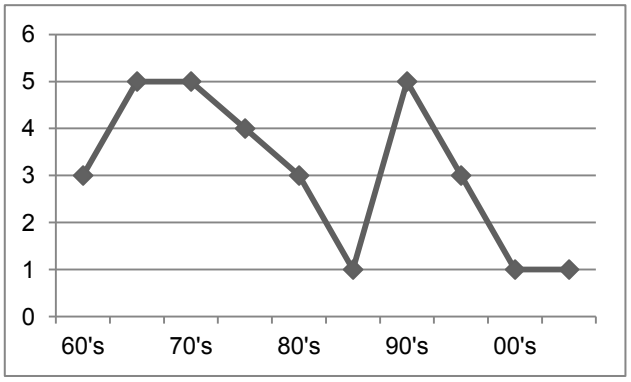

Figure 14: Average Garganey maxima, 1960-2010

Numbers of Garganey at CVL are significantly lower than those of the other species considered here. These low numbers mean that drawing conclusions regarding trends is difficult, but there is evidence of a decline since the millenium. No WeBS count during this period has exceeded five, whereas this figure was exceeded every year between 1990 and 1995. It is difficult to detect any reason for this decline and a previous lean period, between 1984 and 1990, was followed by high counts during the early 1990s, so the decline may not be permanent. The peak month for Garganey has been August throughout.

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

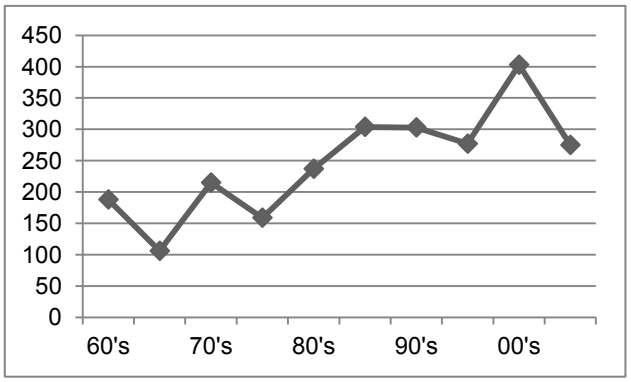

Figure 15: Average Shoveler maxima, 1960-2010

Shoveler is the only species for which CVL is of importance in an international context. The graph shows fluctuations in numbers, but the overall trend is upwards. Numbers rose through the 1950s, from a maximum of 145 in 1954 to 477 in March 1958. The 1960s then saw a striking decline in Shoveler numbers at CVL. Counts in 1966/67 were unusually high, with a maximum of 360 in February, but the highest count in 1965/66 was only 40. In more recent years 1994/95 was notably poor, with a maximum of only 100, but annual maxima have typically been in excess of 200. The threshold for qualification for international importance, 400, has been exceeded in twelve of the last twenty years. The record count was 865 in November 1995, with an only slightly lower count in December 2001. As with several other dabbling ducks there has been a marked shift in the seasonality of records. In early decades maxima were usually in mid-winter, but they have occurred progressively earlier in the year, with October now the typical month for peak counts. The trend is shown in the following graph:

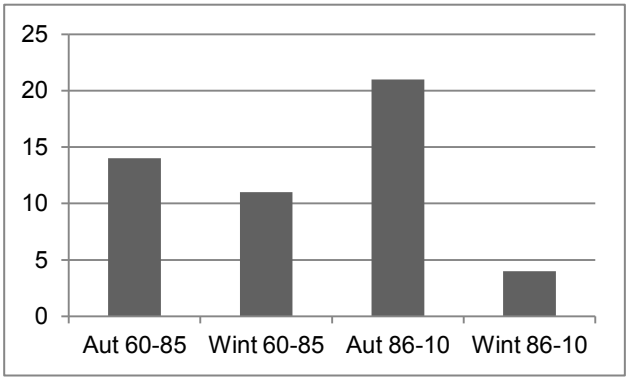

Figure 16: Seasonality of Shoveler maxima, autumn and winter 1960-1985 and 1986-2010

DISCUSSION

It is clear from review of the results presented above that numbers of the species under consideration at CVL have fluctuated drastically, and that different species show wildly different trends. There are probably several factors causing these trends; unfortunately data on several of these factors are either absent or incomplete, but likely factors are considered in the following paragraphs.

National Population Trends

Only a small proportion of the waterfowl counted at CVL were fledged here. Some congregate here from surrounding waterbodies but the majority are migrants from further afield in Britain or from elsewhere in Europe. It might be expected, therefore, that trends seen at CVL simply mirror international and national trends. However, comparison with national data shows that this is not the case for most species. For example, numbers of wintering Wigeon in GB have risen steadily over the period under consideration (Holt *et al.* 2009). Conversely, the dramatic increase in Pintail at CVL has taken place against a background of broadly stable GB numbers (Holt *et al.* 2009).

The trends of some species at CVL are comparable to the national picture. The GB population of Mute Swan has more or less doubled since 1980 (Holt *et al.* 2009), whilst the CVL has shown a slightly greater rise since then. The halt in the rise around 2000 is shown by both the CVL and GB populations. The increase in the GB population is attributed to a succession of mild winters and the ban on lead fishing weights and shot instituted progressively through the 1980s (Sears & Hunt 1991).

The GB and CVL trends in Mallard also appear comparable. The GB population rose slightly from 1960 to 1990, but has since fallen by around 33% (Holt *et al.* 2009). The CVL population shows a similar but more dramatic trend, with a decrease since 1990 of approximately 40%. The decrease in the GB population has been attributed to Mallard remaining further north and east in Europe, for example in Sweden (Nilsson 2008). This consideration applies to wintering birds, however, and it seems unlikely that it affects the late summer and autumn peaks now seen at CVL. Unlike other ducks, Mallard is largely a farmland species, breeding on farm ponds and ditches and feeding on

winter stubbles. At least some of the population changes may therefore have been caused by the changes in farming practices that have damaged populations of other farmland birds.

The trends shown by some introduced species at CVL are also comparable to national trends. These are so distinctive that they are considered under a separate heading.

Introduced Species

The pattern that would be expected of a newly established population of an introduced species would be an initial period of exponential growth, followed by a plateau as carrying capacity is reached.

The most numerous of the introduced species, Canada Goose, was a perfect example of this trend until recently. The period of exponential growth lasted from 1975 until 1995, when there was a slight fall followed by a decade of reasonable stability. Subsequently, however, there has been a sharp fall, which is difficult to account for. Canada Geese at CVL feed in mid to late summer on submerged macrophytes and algae in the lake. There has been no comparable fall in counts of other species exploiting this food source, indeed some have increased. Bristol Water plc controlled breeding numbers by egg-pricking for some years, but most of the moulting Canada Geese at CVL breed in Dorset and Devon. The GB population has shown no similar decrease, with the trend being one of continued increase (Holt *et al.* 2009).

The trend in Barnacle Goose at CVL is more similar to the trend shown by the GB population of naturalised birds, which has underwent exponential growth after 1960, a slowing off from about 2000, and a resumption in rapid growth in 2007/08 (Holt *et al.* 2009). This is similar to the pattern seen at CVL, where there has been a slowing in the rate of increase over the last 15 years.

The GB population of Greylag Goose has grown steadily (but not exponentially) in recent decades (Holt *et al.* 2009). At CVL a rapid increase was followed by an equally rapid fall. Although the feeding ecology of this species at CVL is similar to that of Canada Goose, the fall in Greylag numbers started earlier and is more drastic than experienced by that species. At present there is no obvious explanation for this trend.

The GB population of Gadwall is thought to originate largely from introduced birds (Fox 1988), but the migratory nature of the population may indicate that there is a substantial ancestory of wild birds (Cabot 2009). CVL was one of the first sites in the country to have a feral breeding population. The increase here has to some extent mirrored the national trend, with a comparable ten-fold increase since 1965. The GB population, however, has not shown the increase apparently seen at CVL since 1995 (as noted above, counts of Gadwall at CVL should be treated with caution due to the difficulty of counting moulting birds). It is possible that the increase at CVL is due to a decline in inter-specific competition with the declining Canada Goose population, since the longer neck of that species presumably means that it exploits submerged vegetation more efficiently than Gadwall.

Breeding Success

Non-breeding numbers of wildfowl at CVL greatly exceed those breeding here, but since Mute Swan, Canada Goose, Barnacle Goose, Shelduck, Gadwall, Mallard and Shoveler have all bred at the lake it is conceivable that breeding success here influences numbers of these species.

This does not appear to be the case for most species. Firstly, the number of broods is small and is insufficient to have a significant influence on the much larger non-breeding numbers. Secondly, there is a lack of correlation between trends. For example, Gadwall has become substantially less common as a breeding species, and Shoveler effectively extinct (Vinicombe 2010), over a period when their non-breeding populations have risen.

The evidence does, however, suggest possible correlations between breeding success and overall numbers in Shelduck and Mallard.

The average number of Shelduck broods per year over the period 1967 to 1995 was below one. Since then the average number of broods per year has been almost three (Vinicombe 2010). This may account, at least in part, for the increase in Shelduck numbers since 1985, which is in marked contrast to the decline seen in the GB population (Holt *et al.* 2009).

Mallard is the most numerous breeding duck at CVL, and both breeding and non-breeding numbers have fallen. The following graph shows average numbers of Mallard broods during five year periods from 1970 to 2009 (Vinicombe 2010):

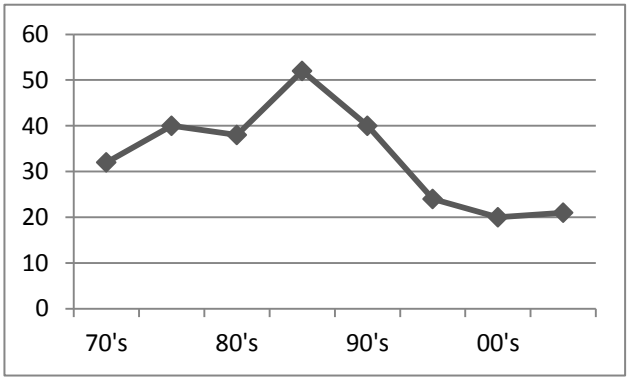

Figure 17: Average number of Mallard broods, 1970-2010

Comparison of this graph with the non-breeding numbers shown in Figure 11 (note that the breeding graph starts at a later date than the non-breeding graph) shows that both rose and then fell, but breeding numbers actually rose during the period that non-breeding numbers fell. This suggests that other factors are responsible for changes in overall numbers. Furthermore, the numbers of broods recorded (which have varied between eleven in 2002 and 60 in 1990) have not been sufficient to explain the variations in non-breeding numbers.

Water Levels

Water level is the single most important factor determining wildfowl numbers at CVL. If summer rainfall is at or below average, and if Bristol Water plc abstract water from the lake, water levels at CVL drop rapidly, exposing large areas of mud from July onwards. As the water level drops aquatic plants and associated invertebrates are available for dabbling ducks to feed on. Ruderal (weedy) plant species are quick to form lush growths on exposed mud and many of these species, such as oraches (*Atriplex spp*) and bistorts (*Persicaria spp*) produce large quantities of oil-rich seeds, providing another rich food source.

The autumn water level is the key factor determining numbers of most of the species considered here. Species showing a particularly strong association with water levels include Bewick's Swan, Wigeon, Mallard and Pintail, but the species with the strongest relationship is Teal.

The following graph shows the relationship between the maximum count of Teal and the maximum drop below full water level for each year between 1990 and 2005:

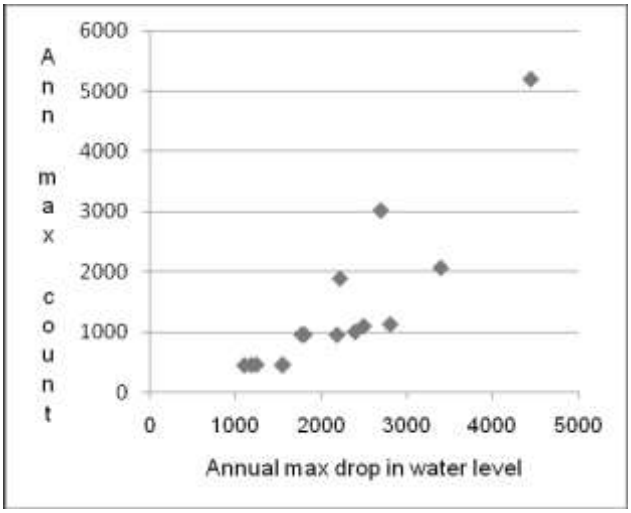

Figure 18: The relationship between annual Teal maxima and annual maximum water draw-down

The highest numbers of Teal are present when ruderal vegetation that has grown on mud exposed during prolonged summer droughts is inundated by rapidly rising water in mid-winter.

For some other species the relationship is less clear. Shoveler feed largely on invertebrates filtered from the water so it would be predicted that their numbers would be less influenced by low water levels than those of the seed-eating Teal.

The following graph, showing maximum Shoveler numbers against maximum water drop shows that the relationship is indeed very weak:

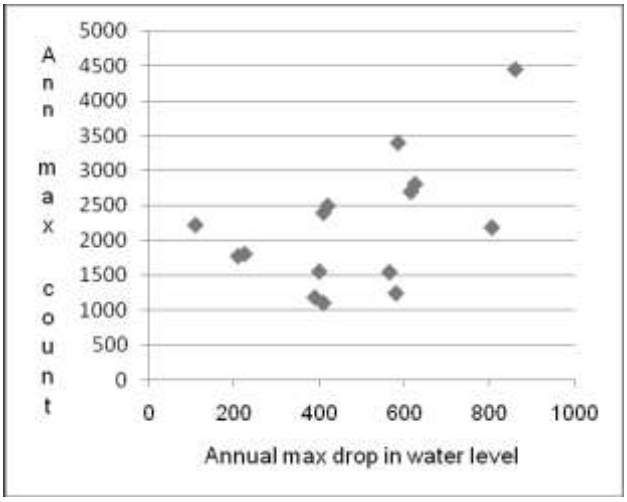

Figure 19: The relationship between annual Shoveler maxima and annual maximum water draw-down

Ecological Factors

Ecological relationships between populations of plants, fish, invertebrates and of birds, which are in turn influenced by physical factors such as water chemistry and weather, are key in determining the population size of all species of waterfowl at the lake. CVL is a relatively young ecosystem and it is inevitable that there will have been dramatic changes in its ecology during the period under consideration. Unfortunately there is little or no quantitative information on most of these factors and much of what follows must therefore be unverifiable speculation.

A well known phenomenon exhibited by many artificial water bodies is an initial burst in productivity as the inundated terrestrial vegetation decays, followed by a downturn before aquatic species become established. This is reflected in the data for species such as Mute Swan, Teal, Mallard and Shoveler, which decline from initially high populations to troughs in the mid to late 1960s.

The species showing the most obvious ecological influence upon its population is Wigeon. This species favours sites where there is direct access from its favoured feeding habitat, open grassland, to open water, which is used as a refuge. In its early years CVL provided ideal feeding habitat for this species. As the lake has matured these open grassy habitats have been colonised by common reed and the lake has become progressively less suitable for Wigeon, reflected in its progressive population decline.

Availability of aquatic macrophytes is important for many wildfowl, either because they exploit them directly as a food source or because beds of vegetation provide habitat for aquatic invertebrates. Growth of these plants in the lake is highly variable. Settled sunny weather in the early summer favours the development of large beds of waterweed, whereas strong winds and fluctuations in water level suppress macrophyte growth. There is probably also a relationship with algal blooms, influenced by water chemistry, with high phosphate levels promoting algal blooms, which suppress macrophyte growth.

Quantitative vegetation surveys carried out in 1972 (Wilson *et al.* 1975) and in 2003 (Environment Agency 2003) suggest a dramatic increase in the density of macrophyte growth on the lake. The earlier study found beds of macrophytes, all dominated by Fennel-leaved Pondweed (*Potamogeton pectinatus*) in limited areas only, in the mouth of Villice Bay, off Moreton Point and off Twycross. Macrophytes were entirely absent from areas that now support important growths of several species, including Heron's Green, Herriott's Pool and the entire southern end of the lake. The lack of waterweed in the lake (when compared to BL) was attributed to high phosphate levels and greater exposure to wave action. It might be, however, that the sparse growth recorded then reflected the immature ecosystem. It was noted in 1972 that the macrophyte vegetation of the lake had "not changed much over the last six or seven years" but over the following 31 years the changes were dramatic. The 2003 survey mapped macrophytes across six transects in the central part of the lake. Macrophyte abundance was assessed at 60 sample points on a scale of 0-3 where 0 signifies no vegetation and 3 signifies abundant vegetation as follows: 0 – no samples; 1 – ten samples; 2 – 19 samples; and 3 – 27 samples, revealing moderate to dense growths of macrophytes across the whole lake. My own observations support the assessment that macrophyte growth in the lake has increased substantially over the last 30 years. There are now large growths across several areas where none was present in 1972, and several species that were absent in 1972, including Canadian Pondweed, Rigid Hornwort and water-crowfoot species are now locally abundant. Such an increase would provide a partial explanation for increases in the populations of Mute Swan, Gadwall, Teal and Pintail, which feed on aquatic macrophytes and their seeds. A trend towards greater macrophyte growth may also benefit Shoveler, since the *Daphnia* and other invertebrates on which they feed find refuge from fish predation in beds of waterweed.

Changes in vegetation may also explain the trend towards maxima of several dabbling ducks occurring earlier in the season. The reed-free vegetation of much of the shoreline in early decades would have provided a rich mid-winter seed source for feeding ducks from grasses and ruderal plants. As reed spread around the lake this food source would have been lost and food availability for seed-eating species in mid-winter would have declined. However, an increase in aquatic macrophyte vegetation would have provided a rich food source in the late summer, resulting in the shift towards the autumn maxima seen in several species.

Disturbance

Bristol Water plc were pioneers in encouraging recreation at their reservoirs and CVL is a popular leisure destination. Wildfowl are known to be intolerant of disturbance in many situations and a gradual increase in visitor numbers may have been expected to have an adverse impact on population sizes.

One form of disturbance that must have had some influence on bird numbers, wildfowling, ceased in 1964. Sailing has been allowed on the northern part of the lake since the late 1960s, over a larger area in winter than in summer. Although the area of lake used has not changed, personal observation suggests that there has been an increase in mid-week activity. Angling for trout is an important activity and there has been some extension of the season in late autumn. Pike fishing is now allowed, both in the late autumn (October and November) and the late winter (February). The area available for public access has gradually increased, following construction of a picnic site in the north-eastern corner of the lake in the early 1970s. This was followed by the construction of a second picnic site to the south, the opening of a nature trail on the east shore in the mid-1980s and the opening of Woodford Bank to the public in 2000.

It might be expected that this increase in activity would have led to a progressive decline in bird numbers. The results above show that this has not been the case and numbers of many species have increased over this period. The only change that can be partially attributed to disturbance is the ongoing decline in Wigeon numbers since 2000. This is because disturbance at Woodford Bank, the only part of the shore that allows direct access to grassland, has increased. However, ecological factors had already caused a major decline in Wigeon numbers at CVL and it is unlikely that Woodford Bank alone would support more than 200 birds if left undisturbed.

There are probably two major reasons why the populations of most species have been resilient to increased disturbance. First is the fact that most development has occurred in areas that are relatively unattractive to birds, either by accident or design. Thus sailing and the picnic sites use the deeper northern end of the lake, avoiding more productive areas such as Herriott's Bridge, Herons Green and Villice Bay. Although the nature trail around Twycross is adjacent to an area that is extremely important for birds, measures to minimise disturbance to wildfowl were incorporated into its design and have been largely successful.

Second is the fact that many birds have become more tolerant of disturbance. Over the lake's lifetime levels of both organised shooting and casual persecution have declined through most of Britain and wildfowl generally have become more approachable since they no longer associate people with danger. This allows wildfowl to utilise areas from which current levels of disturbance would otherwise exclude them. The now regular sight of previously wary species such as Pochard and Shoveler feeding within a few feet of people at Herriott's Bridge and Herons Green reflects this greater adaptability.

Nonetheless, there is a danger that increased recreational pressure may damage the lake's ornithological interest. If this is to be avoided it is important that areas free from disturbance are retained, especially during periods when large numbers of birds are present.

Climate Change

It is interesting, as well as topical, to analyse the trends seen here to detect the influence of climatic amelioration. A simplistic hypothesis might be that since most waterfowl at CVL migrate here from the north and east, there would be a decline in numbers as winters become milder. There are tentative signs that such a change is responsible for declines in the GB populations of several wader species (Holt *et al.* 2009). The maxima of most wildfowl at CVL, however, occur in late summer and autumn. It seems less likely that these birds should become less numerous due to climate change.

The one apparent exception to this lack of effect is Bewick's Swan. The results above show a marked decline in numbers of this species, even leaving aside the exceptional counts in the late 1970s. This is consistent with a gradual decline in numbers wintering in south-west England as a whole, and in particular at Slimbridge (Gloucestershire). This is attributed to generally milder winters allowing birds to stay at sites in eastern England and the Netherlands, closer to the breeding grounds (Holt *et al.* 2009).

It is possible that changes may be apparent in seasonality rather than abundance: if change climate was influencing waterfowl at CVL it could be expected that birds would arrive later in the autumn and then stay longer into the winter, in the absence of cold weather to encourage departure. In fact, as the data for Mallard, Teal and Shoveler show, there is a clear trend towards maxima occurring earlier in the autumn. This does not fit in with any reasonable hypothesis relating to climate change.

With the excep tion of the decline in Bewick's Swan, no trends relating to climate change have been identified, although this might change in the future.

Acknowledgements

This paper is entirely dependent on the dedication of my predecessors in the arduous task of counting wildfowl at CVL, particularly the late Bernard King, Roy Curber and Keith Vinicombe. The last-named also provided much additional information and commented on a draft of this paper, as did Dawn Lawrence. Andy Davies extracted information from Bristol Bird Reports 1954-59. Richard Mielcarek rendered the graphs presentable.

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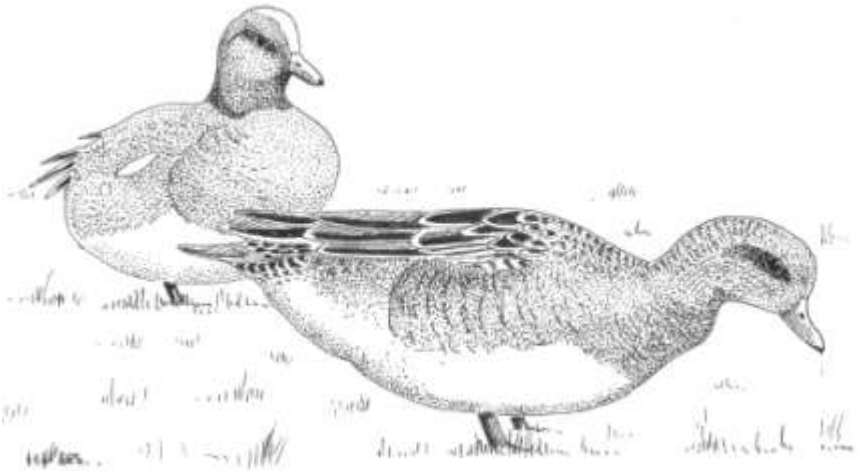

Wigeon by Brian Slade

Population Estimates for Reed, Sedge and Grasshopper Warblers in ST58

M. Dadds

Introduction

In the autumn of 2005 I revisited the Lower Knole Farm area in ST58. Since my previous visit a number of years before, I found the site had been transformed by widespread tree planting as a result of its incorporation into the Avon Community Forest in 2001/02. This new area of woodland is now called Ellen's Wood (www.forestofavon.org.uk).

Subsequent visits during the breeding season of the following year revealed the presence of surprising numbers of Reed Warblers. In 1986 I had previously recorded just one in the corresponding tetrad during survey work for the Avon Breeding Bird Atlas. Reed Warblers had been increasing over this period; up 62% in England over the last 25 years, and up 53% locally over the last 10 years (Avon Bird Report 2008).

Additional ST58 sites where Reed Warblers might possibly occur were also surveyed. Likely sites were identified initially using OS maps. Subsequently less obvious sites were identified by studying Google Earth and the web site which is now known as www.bing.com/maps. The resolution of these aerial images can be sufficient to identify very small water bodies and even small areas of reed growth. The overlapping habitat preferences of Reed Warblers and Sedge Warblers meant the latter species was also often encountered, as were occasional Grasshopper Warblers.

Locations of observations were marked on maps carried in the field. These results were subsequently transferred to the same map images displayed by a bespoke computer program, along with details of each observation. Locations on maps were recorded by pointing and clicking with a mouse, enabling the tedious job of working out eight digit grid references to be automated. This large volume of data was stored on a database and at the end of the breeding season was extracted into a file in the format required for submission of bulk records to the Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre. The data could also be redisplayed for selected map, species and date combinations, in order to facilitate the identification of individual territories.

After visiting a number of sites one or more times over a couple of breeding seasons, thoughts turned to estimating the population sizes for ST58. It was apparent that where multiple visits were made to individual sites, a different subset of the total breeding population was usually observed on any one day. Consequently, where only one or two visits were made to a site, it must mean that only an unquantified proportion of the site population is recorded. A more intensive study at a single site was undertaken before attempting to extrapolate actual observations into population estimates for (the Avon part of) ST58.

Method

Following a pilot study in 2008, the Lower Knole Farm area was selected as the study site for 2009. As well as having good numbers of Sedge and Reed Warblers present, its incorporation into the Avon Community Forest meant that the public footpaths in the area were supplemented by a network of permissive footpaths.

The Lower Knole Farm site was surveyed twice a week from April 5th until Sept. 16th, 2009 (48 visits). Each survey started at about sunrise, and the same route was walked each time (see Figure 2 on page 140). All locations where any of the three warbler species were encountered were marked on a map, and the numbers, sex, age and behaviour recorded. At times the survey route was left in order to locate more precisely the position of a bird that could be heard but not seen, and also to look for evidence of breeding at territories not situated on the survey route. The survey route would then be rejoined at the point at which it was left and the survey continued.

Two data sets were gathered. The first was a count of the number of possible territories for each species on the survey date as a result of observations made whilst walking the survey route. Any observations made when the survey route was temporarily left (for the reasons described above) were excluded from these counts.

The second data set included all observations from all surveys and was used to determine the total number of territories for each species within the survey area. The exceptions to this were observations made whilst not on the survey route that identified probable territories that were never detected from the survey route.

The data gathered were analysed in order to establish if predictions could be made about the number of territories likely to exist in an area based on the number of territories perceived in that area on a given date.

The 2008 pilot study was carried out at a different site in ST58. This ran from April 20th until Aug. 30th. The number of surveys averaged nearer twice every nine days (31 visits). The later start date meant that the first Sedge Warblers had already arrived by the date of the first survey. Although roughly the same area was surveyed on each visit, it was not always possible to follow exactly the same route.

Results

Reed and Sedge Warblers

Analysis of the data gathered for the whole 2009 breeding season resulted in the identification of 19 Reed Warbler territories and 19 Sedge Warbler territories. The minimum level of evidence used to define a probable territory was that used for the Atlas, ie registration of territorial behaviour (song etc.) at the same place on at least two different days a week or more apart. Tables 1 and 2 on page 142 show the registrations for the 38 territories identified. Registrations with particularly strong evidence of territory/breeding are marked with the letters S, N, F and J where:

S = advertising song, ie continuous or more or less continuous loud song (and/or song flight for Sedge Warbler)

N = seen carrying nesting material

F = seen carrying food

J = dependent juveniles seen, ie not fully fledged, being fed or food begging calls heard

Although the carrying of food is good evidence of breeding, caution is required when allocating the observation to a particular territory. Catchpole (1972) calculated that 82% of the food fed to Sedge Warbler nestlings was foraged from outside the territory, and for Reed Warblers the figure was 94%. Consequently this observation was only allocated to a territory when observed concurrently with agitated behaviour indicating that the warbler's nest was close by.

The data suggests that at least 13 Reed Warbler pairs managed to raise at least one brood to the point where the young left the nest. This includes territory 11 where no juveniles were seen, but adults carrying food on two dates 14 days apart were noted, and chicks left the nest after ten days. Four pairs were double brooded (nos. 4, 9 15 and 16). Likewise at least ten pairs of Sedge Warblers raised at least one brood to the same stage, and three were double brooded (nos. 1, 5 and 7).

Tables 1 and 2 also illustrate the different arrival patterns for these two species: the first Sedge Warblers arriving before the first Reed Warblers (by about ten days in this study), and Reed Warblers arriving over a much longer time period than Sedge Warblers, ie eight weeks versus four and a half weeks in this case. A similar pattern of arrivals was shown for the 2008 pilot study, except for an even more drawn out arrival of Reed Warblers (ten weeks). The territory counts for the 2008 pilot were 24 Reed Warbler and twelve Sedge Warbler.

In 2009 the first Reed Warbler arrived in the study area sometime between April 19th and 22nd. The first of the year reported for the ST58 coastal strip was on April 15th (www.severnsidebirds.co.uk). The last one seen in the study area was on Sept. 12th, and the latest breeding activity seen was on Sept. 1st when two dependent broods were present.

The first Sedge Warbler arrival was sometime between April 8th and 12th. The website www.severnsidebirds.co.uk reported its first Sedge Warbler on April 10th. The last Sedge Warbler seen at the study site was on Aug. 30th, and the latest breeding activity seen was an adult feeding at least three juveniles on Aug. 13th.

Figure 1 opposite is a map of the 2009 Lower Knole Farm study site showing the location of all Reed Warbler encounters. Observations that have been assessed as all belonging to the same territory have been grouped within a grey ellipse. These are not intended to indicate territory size or shape. The larger ellipses tend to be for territories where double brooding seems to have taken place, and also r where juveniles still being fed have wandered away from the nest but are still detectable from the survey route. However, it is still conceivable that a large ellipse could have contained two territories, and insufficient evidence was gathered to distinguish between them.

The incidence of wandering broods seems to be more frequent later in the breeding season when there are far fewer occupied territories. The last Reed Warbler brood found in the 2008 pilot study was still being fed by the parents in the middle of August. On one occasion it moved 200m along a hedgerow bordered rhine in about 15 minutes.

Figure 2 on page 140 shows the same information for Sedge Warblers.

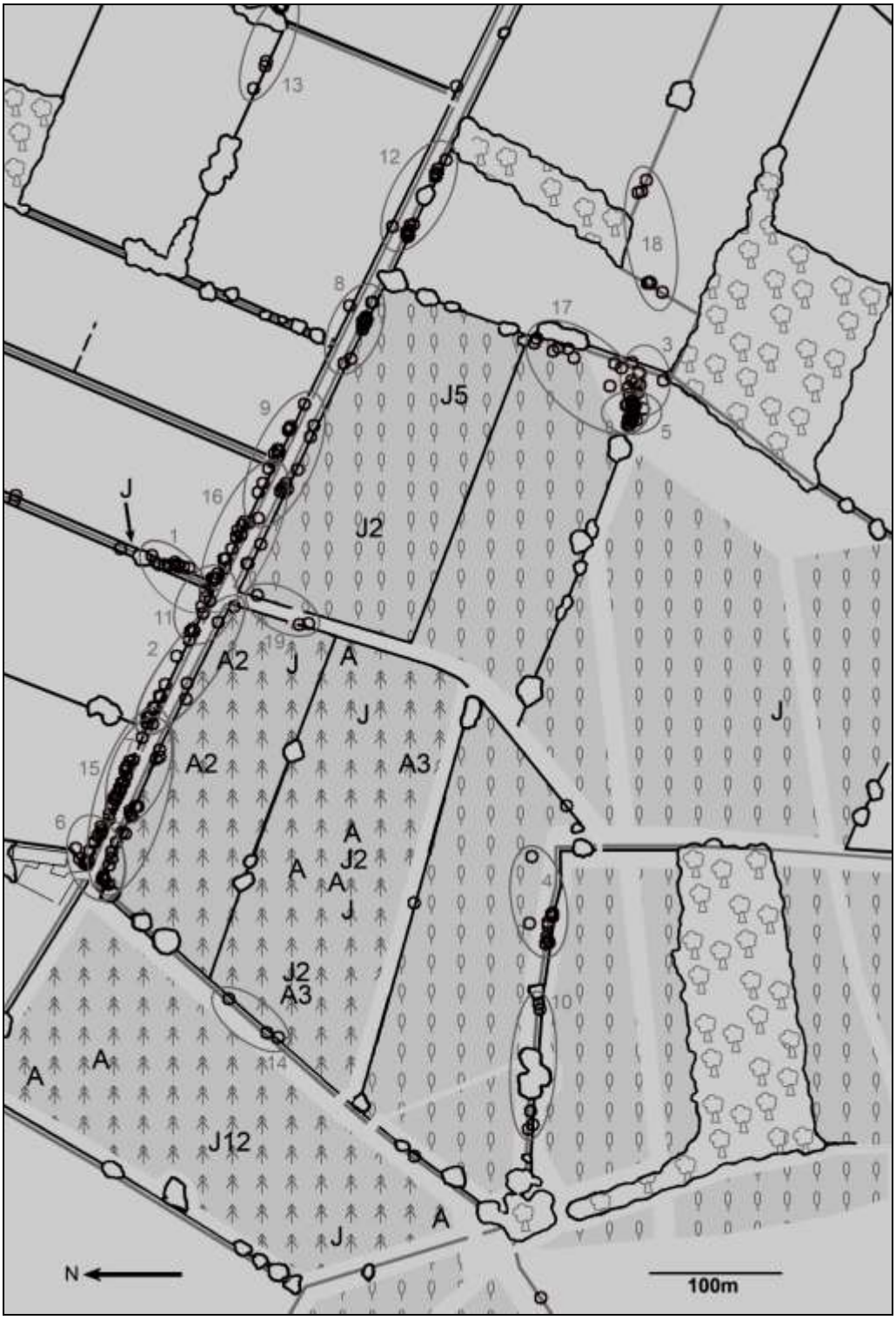

Figure 1 Map of 2009 Lower Knole Farm study area showing locations of Reed (**O**) and Grasshopper Warbler (**A**,**J**) encounters.

Key to Figures 1 and 2

Encounters assessed as belonging to the same territory are enclosed by a grey ellipse and numbered as in Table 1 for Reed Warblers and Table 2 for Sedge Warblers.

O	Reed/Sedge Warbler observation		
A	singing Grasshopper Warbler observation in the period April 12th to May 5th (where followed by a number, this is the number of days recorded singing in that period at that location)		
J	as **A**, but for the period June 3rd to July 22nd	→	survey route
	predominantly deciduous plantation predominantly coniferous plantation		mature woodland
	hedgerow + tree		major rhine

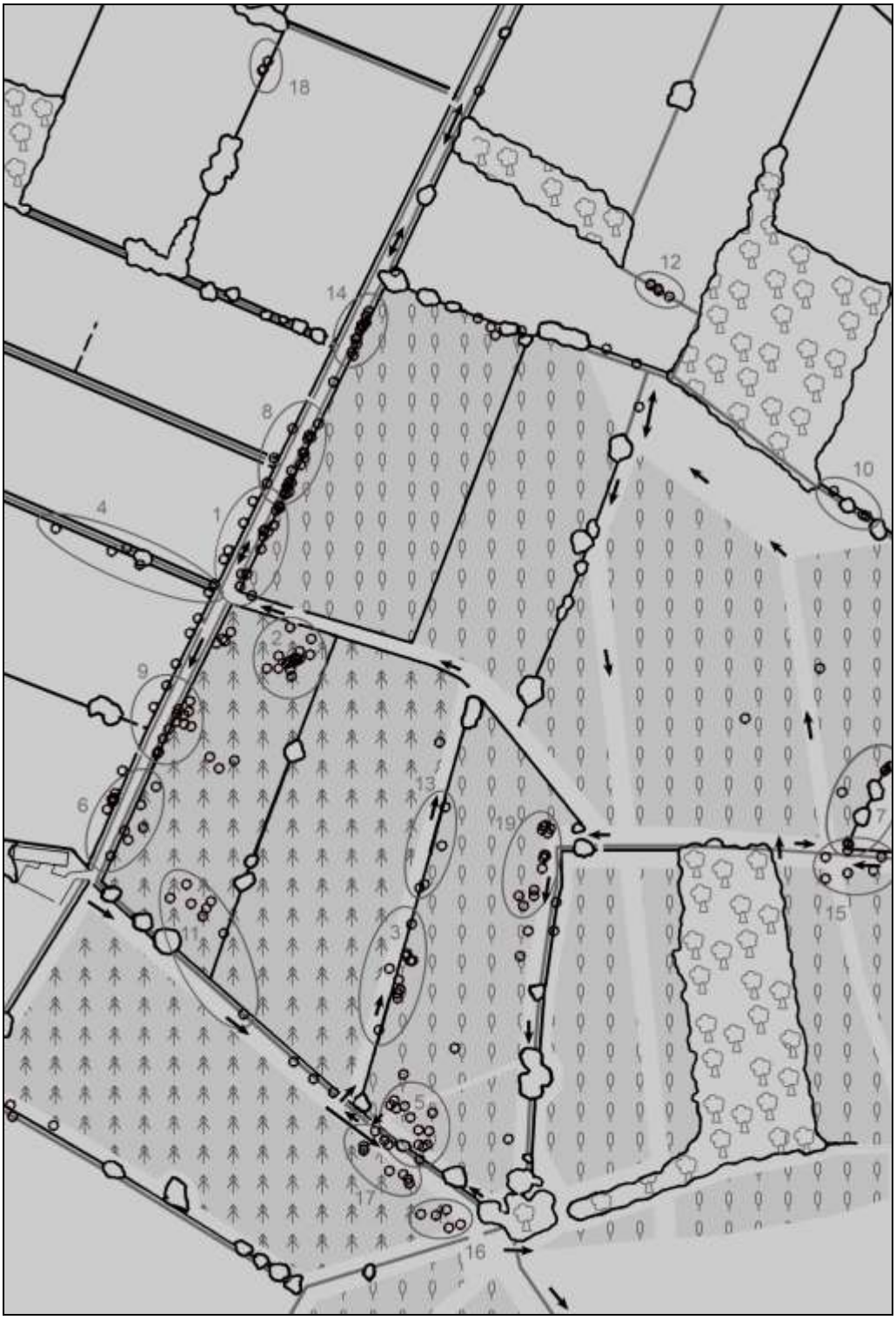

Figure 2 Map of 2009 Lower Knole Farm study area showing locations of Sedge Warbler (**O**) encounters.

Figure 3 opposite shows a graph of the number of possible Reed Warbler territories observed on each survey date. The number of territories is expressed as a percentage of the total number of territories found in the breeding season. Trend lines for the two years are shown for all survey dates from the latest date where zero was recorded at the beginning of each breeding season until Aug. 30th, as this was the date of the last survey in 2008. Neither trend line is an especially close fit to its data (for 2008 R^2 = 0.69 and for 2009 R^2 = 0.75) but they enable crude comparisons to be made. The maximum daily count values for both trend lines occur on June 23rd, at 48% for 2008 and 51% for 2009. (R^2 is a statistical measure of how closely a regression line fits its data; an R^2 of 1.0 (100%) indicates a perfect fit whereas 0.0 means no correlation at all).

Figure 4 shows the same data for Sedge Warbler observations, with the number of territories observed each day again expressed as a percentage of the total number found in the season. Trend lines for each year are very poor fits, so are not shown.

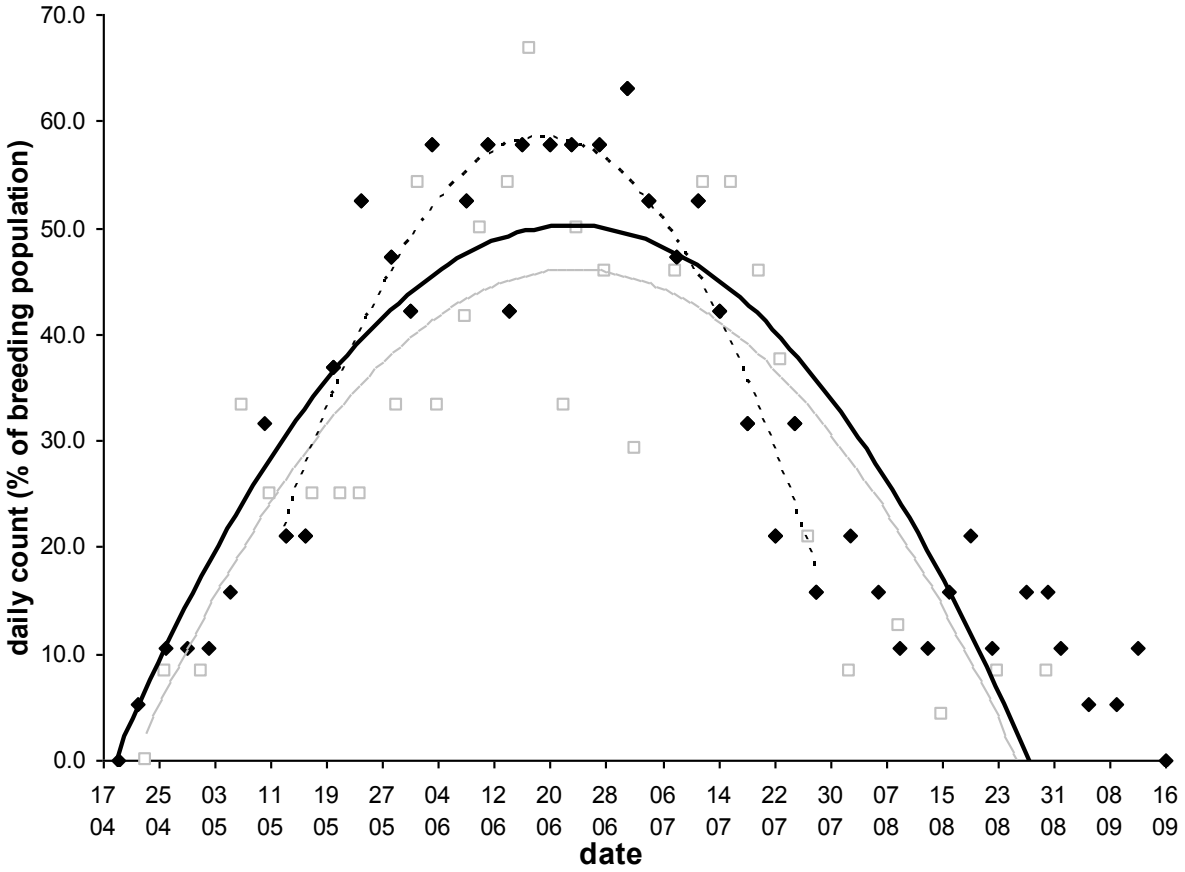

Figure 3 Graph showing number of possible Reed Warbler territories observed on each survey date during the 2009 (♦) Lower Knole Farm survey and the 2008 (□) pilot survey. Day counts are expressed as a percentage of the total number of territories found in the season.

trendline for 2009 data, until Aug. 31st

trendline for 2008 data, until Aug. 31st

trendline for 2009 data, from May 13th until July 28th (used for estimating process)

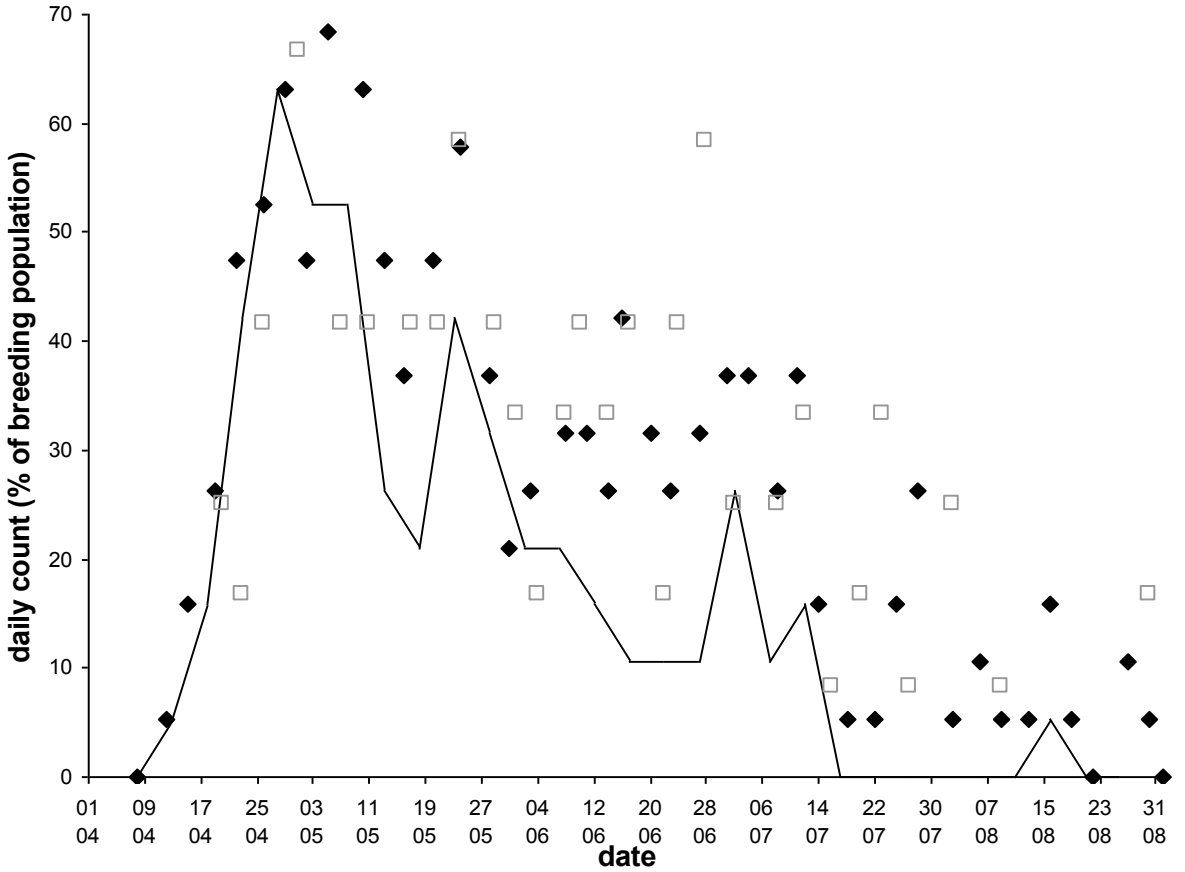

Figure 4 Graph showing number of possible Sedge Warbler territories observed on each date during the 2009 (♦) Lower Knole Farm survey and the 2008 (□) pilot survey. Day counts are expressed as a percentage of the total number of territories found in the season. Solid line is the number of Sedge Warblers heard in full song on each survey date in 2009.

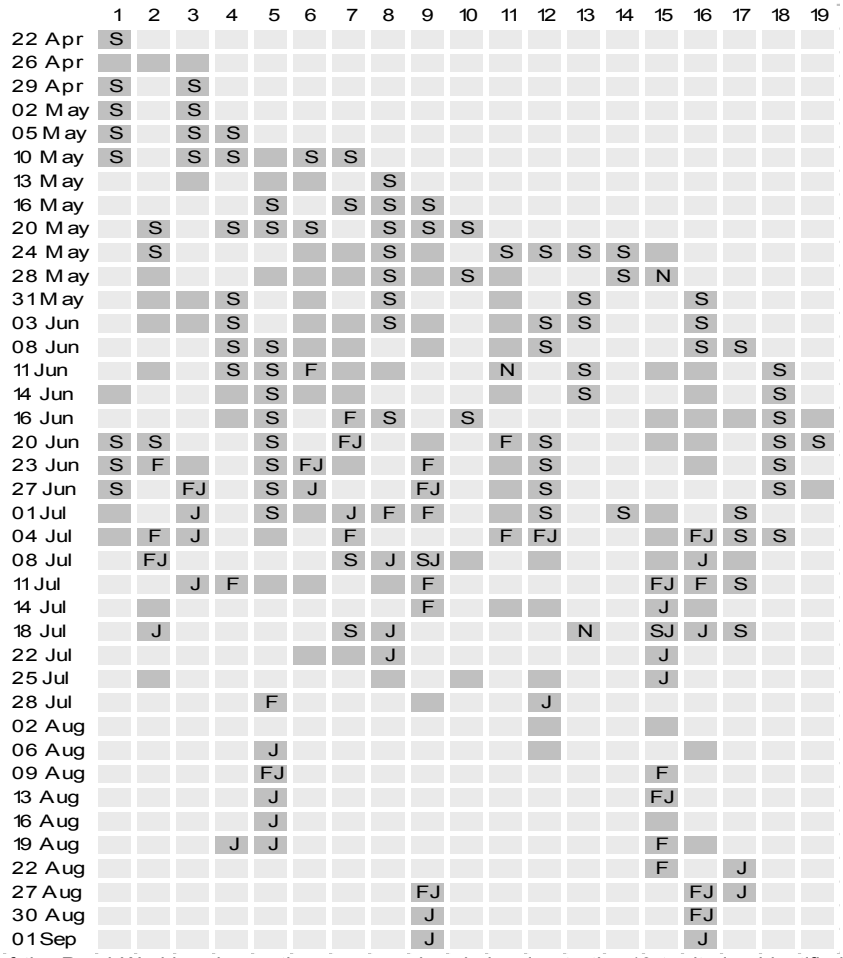

Table 1 Survey dates of the Reed Warbler observations assessed as belonging to the 19 territories identified at Lower Knole Farm in 2009. Observations are indicated by the darker squares. The letters denote significant observations: S = advertising song, N = carrying nesting material, F = carrying food and J = dependent juvenile(s).

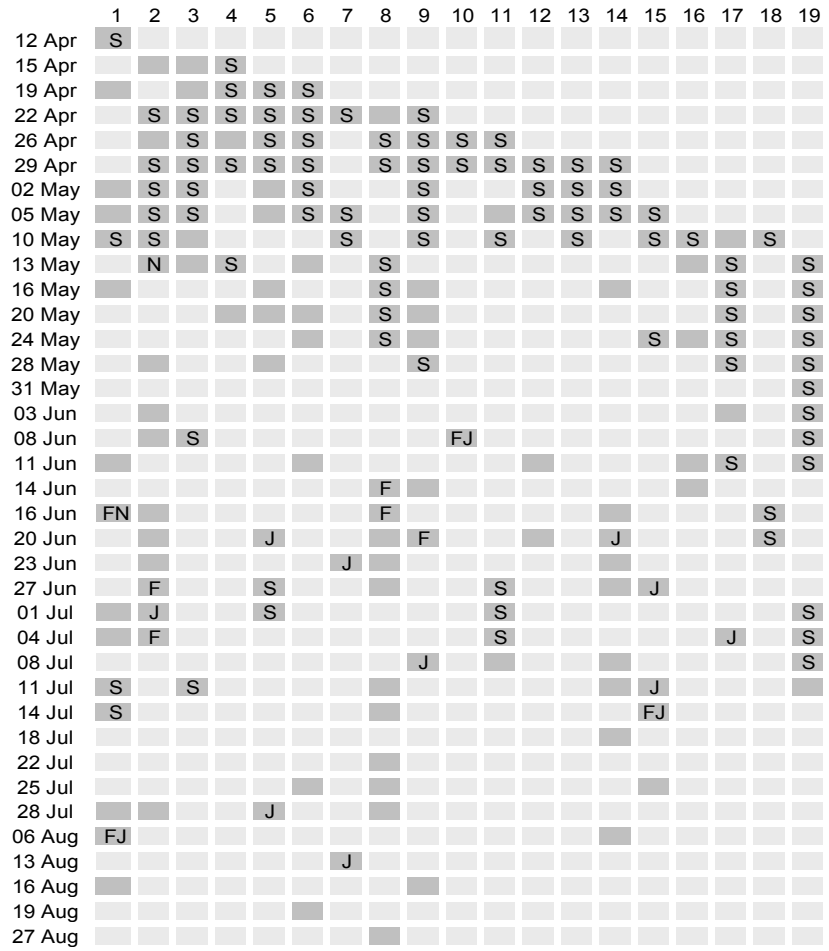

Table 2 Survey dates of the Sedge Warbler observations assessed as belonging to the 19 territories identified at Lower Knole Farm in 2009. Observations are indicated by the darker squares. The letters denote significant observations where S = advertising song, N = carrying nesting material, F = carrying food and J = dependent juvenile(s).

Grasshopper Warbler

The first Grasshopper Warbler encountered at Lower Knole Farm in 2009 was on April 12th, a day before the first of the year was found in the ST58 coastal strip (www.severnsidebirds.co.uk). A total of 55 bird-days was recorded during surveys of the study site, with another six recorded just outside this area. The last Grasshopper Warbler seen was on Aug. 22nd.

Almost all the encounters with Grasshopper Warblers during the 2009 Lower Knole Farm study were of singing birds. They were singing during two distinct periods: in every survey from April 12th until May 5th, and all but one surveys between June 3rd and July 22nd. The locations of these singing birds are shown in Figure 1. The April/May locations are marked with A's, and the June/July locations with J's.

This pattern of singing contrasts with that shown in the only other area in ST58 where Grasshopper Warblers are reasonably regularly recorded, ie the coastal strip. Figure 5 compares these two areas by showing the maximum daily count recorded in each seven day period from April to July. For the coastal strip, figures for the last three years were used, they were extracted from www.severnsidebirds.co.uk. The distributions are what one would expect to see for a temporarily stopping over passage population (coastal) and a double brooded breeding population (Lower Knole Farm). Grasshopper Warblers cease diurnal singing some time between initial pairing and the start of incubation, then temporarily resume some time after the first brood leaves the nest until the second breeding cycle is underway (Booth 1916, Swanberg 1945). Grasshopper Warbler has bred in the Severnside area in the recent past; in 2002, and possibly again in 2004 (Avon Bird Report).

Fully fledged juveniles are not separable from adults on colour or patterning of the plumage, but as adults only have a partial summer moult once breeding has finished, the two age classes are distinguishable by the condition of their plumage given reasonable views (Cramp 1992).

On June 23rd a singing adult was noted, near where a second bird was briefly seen that appeared to have very fresh plumage, and so was very probably a juvenile.

On July 28th a noticeably worn adult appeared in conifers, it gave a two to three second burst of song, then flew the short distance to the hedgerow bordering the plantation, where it continued with two to four second long bursts of song for about a dozen times over a period of one or two minutes. Meanwhile, from where the adult was first seen, a second Grasshopper Warbler appeared which in the brief view it gave again appeared to have very fresh looking, neat plumage. The song pattern of the adult is noteworthy as there is nothing comparable described in The Birds of the Western Palearctic (Cramp 1992), hereinafter referred to as BWP.

On Aug. 22nd at exactly the same place, two very wet bedraggled birds appeared (not aged, condition probably due to very heavy dew), along with a third bird that on this occasion afforded much more prolonged views than usual. This bird showed no signs of moult or any feather wear apart from some abrasion on the very tip of its tail, and was considered to be a juvenile. It seems probable that this was the same bird (or from the same brood) as that seen on July 28th, but would certainly have attained independence well before the later date. A second equally smart bird also considered to be a juvenile was seen about 40m away. Later the same morning two more juveniles were seen together in a bush about 300m away, again allowing prolonged views and exhibiting the same plumage condition, including the slightly abraded tail tips.

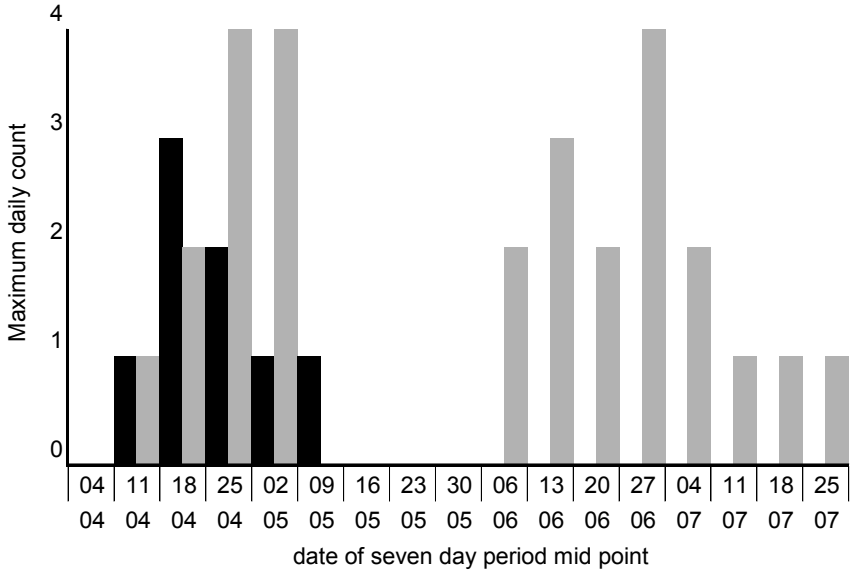

Figure 5 Graph comparing numbers of Grasshopper Warblers recorded in 2009 at Lower Knole Farm study site (grey) and the ST58 coastal strip during 2007-2009 (black).

Territory Assessment Considerations

Reed Warbler

BWP describes the Reed Warbler's mating system as typically monogamous, with males very occasionally bigamous, and typically producing two broods in southern England.

The easiest way to distinguish two adjacent territories is to have two males both engaged in 'advertising' singing, ie loud, strident, continuous or near continuous song. This denotes as yet unpaired males, but once paired with a female the amount of singing drops dramatically. Most still participate in the dawn/dusk choruses (Brown and Davies 1949). Regular song output may increase slightly up until the time or just after the chicks leave the nest, but this is still insignificant compared to the pre-pairing level of song.

A sustained burst of song may be given by a paired male in response to the singing or territory incursion of a rival male, or other disturbance such as a human intruder nearing a nest with chicks (Calvert 2005). At these times having a bill crammed full of food has no affect on the birds ability to deliver its song (personal observation).

Females are also known to sing occasionally; usually just a few seconds when an incubating bird is leaving its nest (Brown & Davies 1949), but also in response to any sudden disturbance (Cramp 1992). Catchpole (1973) noted several instances of females singing with their mates during territorial disputes.

Consequently where song is noted from birds in close proximity to each other, each bird heard can not automatically be assumed to belong to a separate territory, and has to be assessed on the 'characteristics' of the song, any other behaviour noted, and in the light of previous and subsequent observations at the same location.

Calvert (2005) found an average of 21.5% of pairs (range 0-36%, over a 15 year period) attempted a second brood. Similarly up to a third of pairs at Chew Valley Lake are estimated to produce a second brood (Warden 2003).

Sedge Warbler

The mating system is described in BWP as typically monogamous, males occasionally bigamous, and promiscuous to an unknown extent. The number of broods is usually one, sometimes two (mainly in west of range).

Studies of colour ringed populations of Sedge Warblers have found average annual polygyny rates in the UK of 0% (Catchpole 1971) and 7.7% (Buchanan & Catchpole 2000); in Poland 0.6% (Zajac & Solarz 2004), 7.3% (Borowiec & Lontkowski 1988) and 9% (Bell *et al.* 1997); and in Sweden 14% (Hasselquist & Langefors 1998). In the longer term studies where annual rates average > 0, there are usually individual years where no polygyny is detected.

Typically the pattern of polygynous behaviour is for a male to sing until it attracts a mate and then to cease singing until the first female starts egg incubation. The male then resumes singing in the same or, more likely, a new, nearby territory in order to attract a second female. If successful, the male may well be involved in assisting the first female feeding the first brood while the second is being incubated, and then he abandons the first female to assist with the second brood after it hatches. But there is much variation in the degree of overlap of the two breeding cycles. Males that resume singing on a separate territory are more likely to succeed in attracting a second female (Zajac *et al.* 2008).

Extreme examples of polygyny include two records of males pairing with three different females in the same breeding season. In one the breeding attempt with the third female was abandoned after nest building but before eggs were laid (Hasselquist & Langefors), and in the other, pairing with the third female occurred after predation of the nest of the second female (Buchanan & Catchpole 2000). First prize has to go to the male that apparently raised two broods with each of two females in one year (Alker & Redfern 1996).

In Sweden polyandry was observed in one out of the three years studied, when three out of 17 females raised two broods in succession with different males (Hasselquist & Langefors 1998).

Investigations using DNA analysis have also demonstrated significant levels of extra-pair paternity. For example, 8.4% of all eggs in a UK population were found to have been fertilised by a male that was not the male the female had paired with, which affected one or more eggs in 34% of clutches (Buchanan & Catchpole 2000). Similar results were obtained in a Swedish study: 7.5% of all eggs and 22% of clutches (Hasselquist & Langefors 1998).

For the Lower Knole Farm study, if polygyny was occurring it would not be possible to detect in a survey technique that relies on just periodic observation of an unmarked population of identical looking birds. However, there is some evidence that resumption of singing by males in order to at least attempt the attraction of a second mate was occurring. Of the 223 Sedge Warbler observations plotted on the map in Figure 2, 36 have not been allocated to any of the 19 territories identified, and of these, 26 were males in full song and/or display flights. Some of these account for the small clusters outside of the encircled 19 territories shown in Figure 2, and have been interpreted as temporary secondary territories rather than primary territories.

Grasshopper Warbler

There have been far fewer detailed studies of this species compared to the other two, but its mating system is considered in BWP to be predominantly monogamous and typically double brooded. Glue (1990) makes a reference to a study of a small French population that was found to rear at least two broods and possibly three. Triple brooding has been observed in Cumbria (Callion *et al.* 1990).

A bird that sang all the way through to mid-July was considered by Booth (1916) to have failed to attract a mate. One of the Lower Knole Farm birds was singing on every survey date bar one from June 8th until July 22nd. This suggests that its first brood failed and in the process its mate was lost due to predation or desertion. Analysis of BTO nest record cards shows a failure rate of 35% (Glue 1990).

Even where abundant, Walpole-Bond (1934) considered it rare to find pairs nesting much less than 50 yards apart. Van der Hut (1986) found the average size of territories to be 0.26 hectares, which if assumed to be circular in shape, would be 58 metres in diameter, which compares favourably with Walpole-Bond's observations. However, there was a wide range of territory sizes found, ranging from diameter equivalents of 12m to 95m. Of two paired males closely monitored by Swanberg (1945), one usually sang 60 to 70m from the nest, and the other at times up to 100m from its nest, but more usually at a distance of 25 to 50m. Callion *et al.* (1990) found a male that always sang within 10m of its first and second nest.

Van der Hut (1986) found shifting of territorial boundaries within the season in response to the rapid growth of areas of herbaceous vegetation (willow herbs and nettles) making these areas unsuitable habitat. This loss was partially offset by incorporation of adjacent more suitable areas of vegetation, but he also found that territories decreased in overall size between the first period of singing and the second, by an average of 62%.

The distance between the nests used for first and second broods have been reported as within 40 yards (Booth 1916), 35m (Swanberg 1945), and 5m (Callion *et al.* 1990). For the case of triple brooding referred to above, the second and third nests were 10 m apart, and both were within 20m of where the first brood was seen being fed, having already left the nest.

BWP lists breeding densities reported from various habitat types and locations from within the Western Palearctic. The highest density mentioned is 97 pairs per km^2 in marshes in northern France – twice that of the next highest density listed.

Shrubb (1979) reported densities of up to 30 pairs per km^2 in Sussex forestry plantations, which equates to 0.3 pairs per hectare. Parmenter (1982) in subsequent surveys of the same areas found much lower levels, thought due to many of the plantations concerned being more than ten years old, so no longer suitable for Grasshopper Warblers. The area of the coniferous part of the plantation at Lower Knole Farm is about eleven hectares

Population Estimates for ST58

Reed Warbler

Figure 3 on page 141 suggests that walking round a site like Lower Knole Farm at any time during the breeding season it is exceptional to observe activity at more than 60% of the Reed Warbler territories likely to exist during that breeding season. Further, activity is most likely to be observed in the second half of June; the more earlier or later than this the lower the number of observations likely to be made.

In addition to Lower Knole Farm and the 2008 pilot study area, a further 22 sites elsewhere in ST58 were surveyed on one or more occasions between 2006 and 2009. The assumption is made that the number of observations made at a site compared to the total number of territories for the season at that site, will exhibit a similar temporal relationship as that recorded at Lower Knole Farm. It is also assumed that populations at each site were relatively stable between 2006 and 2009. This was obviously not the case for one site, where five were observed in 2006, two in 2007, and none subsequently. This site was excluded from the estimate calculation.

The dashed line in Figure 3 is the trend line for that portion of the 2009 data (May 13th to July 28th) that spans most of the survey dates (day/month) for these 22 sites in ST58, and is also the period for which a trend line best fits the data ($R^2 = 0.82$). The equation for this trend line is: $y = -0.026683x^2 + 2133.7446x - 42656688$

Where the dates of the surveys from the 22 sites were within the range May 13th to July 28th, the date was converted to a 2009 date and then fed into the trend line equation above as x in order to derive y. The value y is the estimated percentage of the total number of breeding territories for that site likely to be encountered on that day. So if the value of y came out as 50% for day x and seven Reed Warbler territories had been encountered on that day, then the estimated number of territories for the season at that site would be 14. For the few surveys that took place outside of the date range May 13th to July 28th, the equation for the trend line for the whole of 2009 (solid black line in Figure 3) was used.

(Data analysis and production of the graphs subsequently produced was carried out using the software Microsoft Excel where the displayed dates are actually held as integers which are the number of days since the beginning of the 20th century (eg 1/1/1900 = 1, 13/5/2009 = 39946). The first date X is set to this integer value.

An inflated figure could potentially be calculated, especially early in the season when migration is well underway, if a site survey had coincided with an influx of temporarily stopping-over passage birds. In order to try and mitigate this as far as possible, April and May survey dates were checked against the web site www.severnsidebirds.co.uk to see if abnormal numbers of Reed Warblers had been reported on these days. No Reed Warbler surveys were rejected following these checks.

An average figure was calculated for sites that were surveyed on more than one date. Some larger survey sites did not receive the same coverage each time they were visited, so these were broken down into smaller areas for the purposes of estimating the total number of breeding season territories and calculating averages.

By way of example, the reed beds and pools in the coastal strip to the south of Stup Pill were surveyed on May 18th, 2008. Reed Warblers were encountered at 13 different locations. The Excel integer value for May 18th as a date in 2009 is 39951. Setting x to 39951 in the equation for the trend line results in a value of y = 31%. So if the 13 observations on that day represent 31% of the estimated number of territories in a season for the Stup Pill area, the total number for Stup Pill is estimated as 42. The same area was surveyed on June 13th, 2009 when 17 possible territories were found. Following the same calculation, the estimated number of territories for the Stup Pill area comes out as 30. The average of these two estimates is then taken, giving a final estimate of 36.

Summing the averages for all ST58 sites gives an estimated Reed Warbler population for the 10 km square (excluding the Welsh north west corner) of 497 pairs.

This Report for 2008 gives an estimate of 1200 for the number of pairs in Avon. Warden (2003) estimated that the Chew Valley Lake population had risen to about 900 pairs by 2000. The local ten year change for the species is given as 53% (ABR 2008). ABR also regularly reports several sites where the number of singing birds is well into double figures. For the last BTO breeding bird survey from 1988 to 1991, of the 25 Avon tetrads where Reed Warblers were found, only one was in ST58, and at that time the total Avon population was estimated as 400 pairs (Bland & Tully). The ST58 estimate presented in this paper (approx 500 pairs) in conjunction with the ten year old Chew estimate and the perceived increase in the local population, suggests that 1200 pairs is an underestimate for the Avon population, and that it is probably in excess of 2000 pairs.

Sedge Warbler

Compared to Reed Warbler, Sedge Warbler arrivals, commencement of advertising song and subsequent cessation of song as a result of pairing with the later arriving females, is highly synchronised. This results in a much more pronounced peak in advertising song activity – the type of behaviour that is most easily detected. A study at Attenborough Nature Reserve between 1966 and 1968 found on average that the number of singing males in the breeding population peaked at 60% in the five day period May 6th to 10th (Catchpole 1973). The solid line on the graph in Figure 4 shows the number of males in full song at Lower Knole Farm in 2009, again expressed as a proportion of the breeding population. It peaks at 63%, but at an earlier date than the Attenborough study. This is probably due to phenological differences between then and now. The first recorded arrival dates of Sedge Warblers in the Bristol area has been advancing on average by 0.15 days/year (Sparks *et al.* 2007), which over 40 years equates to six days.

Figure 4 suggests that if a site is surveyed at a time that coincides with the early breeding season peak in Sedge Warbler activity, then 60 to 70% of the total number of territories for the season could be detected. However it is not possible to predict the precise timing of this peak as it is likely to vary from year to year in the same way that first arrival dates do.

In addition to Lower Knole Farm and the 2008 pilot study area, a further 16 Sedge Warbler sites elsewhere in ST58 were surveyed on one or more occasion between 2006 and 2009.

In the absence of a trend line with a reasonably good fit to the data in Figure 4, instead of trying to derive y (ie the estimated percentage of the total number of breeding territories for that site likely to be encountered on that day), all survey dates between April 22nd and May 24th have somewhat arbitrarily been allocated a value of y = 60%. The ten points plotted for the 2009 Lower Knole Farm data between these two dates average 53%, and the dates of the 2006 to 2009 site counts have a reasonably even spread between these two dates, so 60% is considered to be a conservative value to be used for estimating. A fifth of the 2006 to 2009 surveys used for the Sedge Warbler ST58 estimate took place between May 25th and 31st, and for these a value of y = 50% was used.

As with Reed Warblers, the dates of Sedge Warbler surveys were checked against the website www.severnsidebirds.co.uk in order to establish if there were abnormal numbers of Sedge Warblers present on that day. This resulted in the rejection of one Sedge Warbler survey.

Application of these factors to all accepted 2006 to 2009 surveys, and then totalling calculated site averages, gives an estimated Sedge Warbler population for ST58 of 124 territories. The 1988 to 1991 Breeding Bird Survey [BBS] recorded Sedge Warblers in 39 Avon tetrads (Bland & Tully), of which seven (18%) were in ST58. The latest population estimate for Avon (ABR 2008) is 500 pairs, and this is not challenged by the ST58 results presented here.

Grasshopper Warbler

Unlike for Reed and Sedge Warblers, it is far from obvious how many Grasshopper Warbler territories there were based on the distribution of encounters during the 2009 breeding season at the study site (see Figure 1). Four separate birds were all singing on the same survey day on three occasions (April 26th, April 29th and June 27th). In addition, birds were also encountered singing outside of the survey area at two sites, one to the east and one to the west. Each was at least 300m from the nearest recorded location within the survey area, and the bird to the east was singing on the same day as its nearest neighbour within the study site.

Making the assumption that birds found singing (on different days) at least 200m apart are different individuals, and only separating closer birds if they are found singing at the same time, then analysing the two periods of song activity separately results in about seven territories being identified in each period within the study area. This implies that the first period observations at this site probably did not include any temporarily stopping over passage birds. Only in a few cases are the Period 2 singing locations very close to the Period 1 locations. A couple of Period 2 locations have no obvious corresponding Period 1 location, one being over 200m away from the nearest Period 1 song post, and the other nearly 300m. The implication is that for these birds singing was not detected during the first period of song activity. On arrival in the spring males start singing, but tend to cease once paired. The first females arrive later than the first males, so the earliest males are liable to sing the longest. Conceivably, some later arriving males do not have to wait for females to arrive, so quickly attract a mate resulting in a much shorter period of high song output which may not have coincided with one of the twice weekly site surveys. Reed Warblers' advertising song diminishes for the same reason; Brown and Davies (1949) found that some late arriving male Reed Warblers found a mate within only a few hours.

Some second period birds were only recorded singing on one day. Booth's (1916) detailed account of a breeding pair of Grasshopper Warblers recorded a first period of singing of about 14 days, and only four days in the second period. Again, with only approximately twice weekly surveys, a bird following this pattern is only likely to be recorded on one day in the second period. One of the peripheral Grasshopper locations found in 2008 was of a singing bird on one date only (June 24th) at a site regularly visited throughout the breeding season.

This gives a potential population within the 2009 study area of nine territories, about seven of which were concentrated within the eleven hectares of coniferous plantation, equivalent to a density of 0.64 pairs per hectare (or 64 per km^2). Compared to the breeding densities listed in BWP, this is towards the top end of the range. However, most of the BWP densities appear to be calculated for localities rather than for areas of homogeneous Grasshopper Warbler favourable habitat.

A breeding bird census on marshland in Holland recorded Grasshopper Warbler territories at a density of 0.8 per hectare. When the study area was broken down into its different habitats based on soil moisture content and vegetation types, most of the territories were found to be confined to only a few of these habitat types, within which territory densities as high as 3.1 per hectare were calculated (Van der Hut 1986).

The Lower Knole Farm conifer plantation density of 0.64 territories per hectare is more than twice that recorded in young Sussex forestry plantations (0.3/ha). The latter occurred predominantly on the lighter, freer draining downland soils (Shrubb 1979). The Avon site is flat, and crisscrossed by rhines, probably making the area comparatively more productive as far as the warblers' invertebrate prey is concerned.

Within the study area there is a further 20 hectares of plantation consisting of deciduous trees. Of this, four hectares achieved canopy closure some time ago. Grasshopper Warblers have not been found in these areas, and they actually support a few pairs of Willow Warblers now. The remaining 16ha of deciduous plantation still appears to support a few pairs of Grasshopper Warblers but at a much lower density than the coniferous areas.

Figure 6 overleaf shows the location of all Grasshopper Warblers found in ST58 in 2006 to 2009, apart from those occurring within the coastal strip. It is notable that despite widespread coverage of ST58, they have only been found within an area of about two km^2 centred on Lower Knole Farm (out of an Avon ST58 land area of about 58 km^2). It seems likely that the birds around the edge of this area are occupying suboptimal habitat, and their relatively low numbers are only maintained by overspill from the birds breeding in the conifer plantation. This optimal habitat is probably saturated in terms of the number of Grasshopper Warbler territories it can support. In time this population will decline as the conifers start to reach the size whereby the canopy starts to close over making the habitat unsuitable for Grasshopper Warblers. Typically this is at about ten years, but at Lower Knole Farm the conifer growth rate appears to be very uneven, with small patches where trees have died, patches where there are healthy looking trees still less than four feet, and various other heights up to the size where canopy closure is imminent. Grasshopper Warblers may well persist at this site for at least another five years.

I estimate the current breeding population in ST58 as eight to twelve pairs.

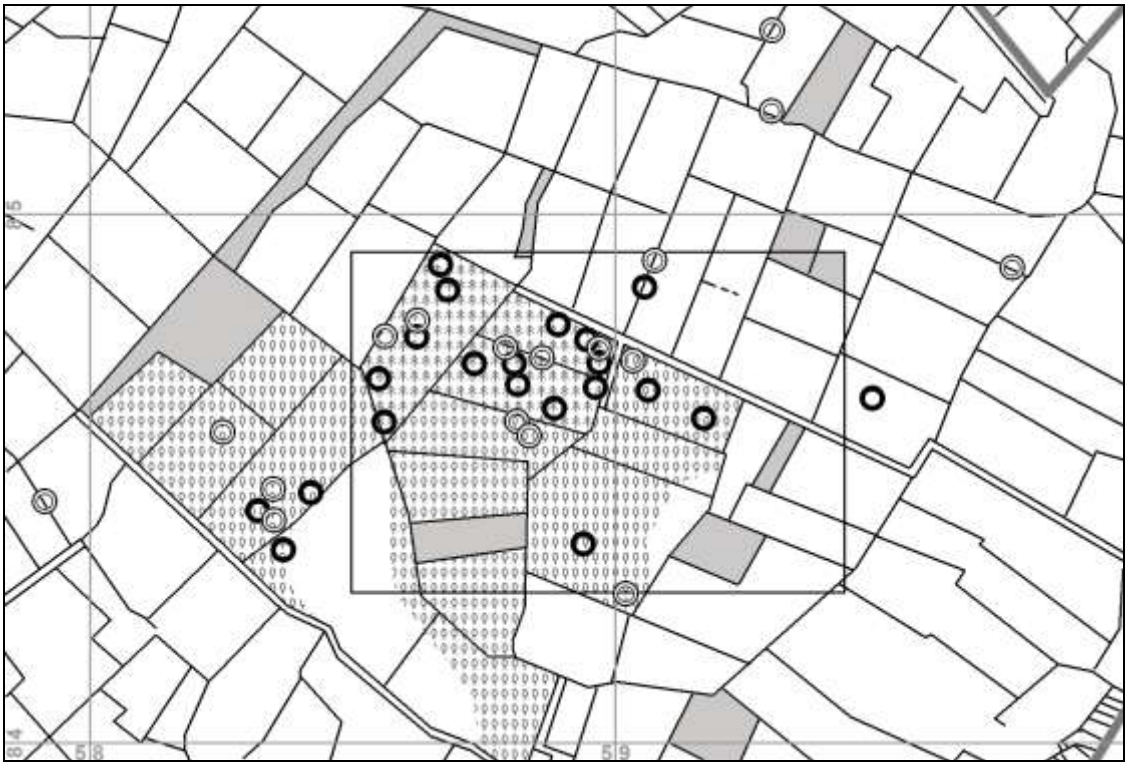

Figure 6 Locations of ST58 inland singing Grasshopper Warblers in 2006-2008 (white circles) and in 2009 (black circles). A circle may represent multiple observations on different days at or very close to a location. The central rectangle is the 2009 Lower Knole Farm study site shown in Figures 1 and 2.

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PACIFIC DIVER – New to Avon

M. Hayes

Pacific Diver *Gavia pacifica* is a medium sized member of the diver family, of the genus *gavia*, from the order *gaviiforme* and was once considered to be conspecific with Black-throated Diver which it closely resembles.

The first UK record occurred in January 2007 when a juvenile was identified at Farnham GP in Yorkshire where it was present from Jan. 12th until Feb. 4th. It was rapidly followed by reports of two additional birds both in February 2007; an adult in Mount's Bay, Penzance in Cornwall and another juvenile from Llys-y-Fran Reservoir in Pembrokeshire. A second-winter at Llys-y-Fran Reservoir in Pembrokeshire and an individual in Cornwall in 2008 were presumed to be returning birds from 2007.

In 2009 two Pacific Divers were recorded in Britain and remarkably just one day apart; the first was an adult on the R. Severn between Sharpness and Fretherne in Gloucestershire on Nov. 18th, the second, also an adult, was found the following day (Nov. 19th) at Carnsew Basin, Hayle in Cornwall.

The Gloucestershire bird

On Wednesday Nov. 18th, 2009 a Diver spp. was identified on the R. Severn between 08:50 - 09:05 from the WWT at Slimbridge and was later seen at Sharpness and Lydney whilst moving down river on a falling tide. It was confirmed on 19th from video footage taken at the time to have been an adult Pacific Diver. There were no sightings of the diver on 20th or 21st but it was relocated briefly in poor weather conditions off Fretherne at 15:40 on 22nd where it was subsequently lost to view and not seen again before dusk. With no confirmed sightings of the bird after 22nd from the upper reaches of the R. Severn in the Slimbridge WWT area it was presumed to have moved on. With that assumed departure a chance maybe it would reappear further down the Estuary from one of the well watched areas on Severnside where in recent days seabirds of all persuasions were receiving an extensive 'grilling'.

So, on Nov. 27th I found myself back at Severn Beach at around 10:15 hoping to 'latch' on to some lingering seabirds after the massive excitement of recent days. Such 'goodies' as Storm Petrel, Leach's Petrel, Grey Phalarope, Pomarine Skua and Little Auk had all been present but paled into insignificance by the appearance Britain's first 'fregetta' Storm Petrel (an extralimital vagrant from the southern oceans) on the morning of the 25th. Surely lighting would not strike twice in the same place..? Or would it…?

I was greeted by a pretty flat calm sea, very little wind, glorious sunshine and almost perfect light (the buildings some ten kilometres distant at Goldcliff were quite clearly visible in stark contrast). One or two other birders were present but not much has been seen; a 'Pom' had been noted around 09:00 but nothing since. It was around 10:45 that what appeared to be a Black-throated Diver came 'whizzing' under the Second Severn Crossing from 'up north' at about 400 metres range heading parallel with the shore line in a south-westerly direction before 'landing' on the water in the English Lake area directly out from the slipway on the Binn Wall. Knowing the significance of Black-throated Divers on the Estuary (there have been just three reported; two adults on May 6th, 1991 off New Passage and a winter adult off Severn Beach on Dec. 1st 2000) I was hoping this one would drop on to the water giving a chance better views. Well swelp me it did just that…!

Initial impressions were, in flight, of a starkly contrasting black and white diver with a clear demarcation between upper and lower parts, and when on the water in bright sunshine on a fairly calm sea other more defining details were noted. Quickly putting the other birders on to it the salient features started to emerge. A sleek rounded head lacking any angularity, a clear thin dark 'throat strap', the lack of any rear flank patches, when in flight a complete 'vent strap' and at rest on the sea a few white scapulars all pointing to adult winter Pacific Diver. At 11:00 it lifted off the water and was watched flying strongly south-west towards Denny Island and Portishead to disappear into the distance. In the fifteen or so minutes of its stay it was seen to be feeding quite actively spending most of the time on the surface, although it was seen to dive on a couple of occasions.

Description

Size and Structure:

Compared to Black-throated Diver, Pacific Diver is slightly smaller, more delicate looking with a dainty appearance more akin to that of Red-throated Diver.

A Black-throated Diver type, its size and structure coupled with the sharply contrasting plumage, bill held horizontal not angled slightly upwards was enough to rule out Red-throated Diver, Great Northern and White-billed Divers.

There was a sleeker, daintier overall 'feel', a rounded look to the head and a sleeker profile which potentially eliminated Black-throated Diver.

Bill and Head:

A sharply defined all dark dagger of a bill held was always held horizontally. The forehead appeared black to eye level with the crown, nape and hind neck showing brownish-black. Below the eye, in a side on profile, the throat and fore neck were white with a clear narrow (and diagnostic) dark chin strap. The head had a smooth rounded look lacking any of the angularity associated with both Black-throated and Great Northern Divers. These features combined gave the bird a softer, more gentle appearance.

Upperparts:

Generally showing black in the mantle but several white scapulars were visible possibly indicating an adult either retaining some summer plumage or beginning its moult into summer plumage. The upperparts to just above the water line showed a clean dark line lacking any obvious 'flank' patches, also diagnostic.

Underparts:

Whilst at rest on the water the underparts appeared wholly white but in flight and directly away from our position an obvious dark vent strap was visible. Reinking and Howell (1993) reported that 90% of specimens of Pacific Diver examined showed a complete vent strap and Roberson (1989) showed at least an incomplete vent strap. Birch and Cin-Ty Lee (1997) state that in their examination of Black-throated Diver no specimens revealed a complete vent strap but that those displaying a partial vent strap were all less extensive compare to those on the most poorly marked Pacific Diver.

Discussion

Pacific Divers *Gavia pacifica* breed on the deep lakes of the arctic tundra in Alaska, northern Canada east to Baffin Island and Russia east of the Lena River. And unlike other divers, they migrate in flocks that winter primarily on the west coast of N. America south to Baja California, but also China, Japan, North and South Korea, and Mexico.

Divers were thought historically to be one of the oldest northern hemisphere bird groups; an idea that grew from their similarity of shape and probably habits between divers and the entirely unrelated and extinct Cretaceous order *hesperornithiformes,* in particular *enaliornis*, which was apparently an ancestral and Plesiomorphic member of that order. In prehistoric times, divers had a more southerly distribution with fossils found in California, Florida and Italy.

The European name 'diver' comes from the bird's habit of catching fish by swimming calmly along the surface and then abruptly plunging into the water.

The North American name 'loon' probably originates from the identical Scottish term and seems to be a reference to the bird's movements out of the water or its drawn-out calls. It is also an adoption of the Old Norse term lōmr, which may mean 'lame ones'.

Today there are five recognised species of diver, all of which occur in Britain; White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii*, Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*, Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*, Pacific Diver *Gavia pacifica* and Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*. There are also several 'forms'; Green-throated Diver *Gavia arctica viridigularis* from north-eastern Siberia, Purple-throated Diver *Gavia arctica susshkini* from Asia in the Black-throated Diver group; *Gavia stellata squamata* from the Red-throated Diver complex (although probably invalid) and *Gavia immer elasson* from the Great Northern Diver group also known as Lesser Black-billed Diver.

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GREY- HEADED WAGTAIL – New to Avon

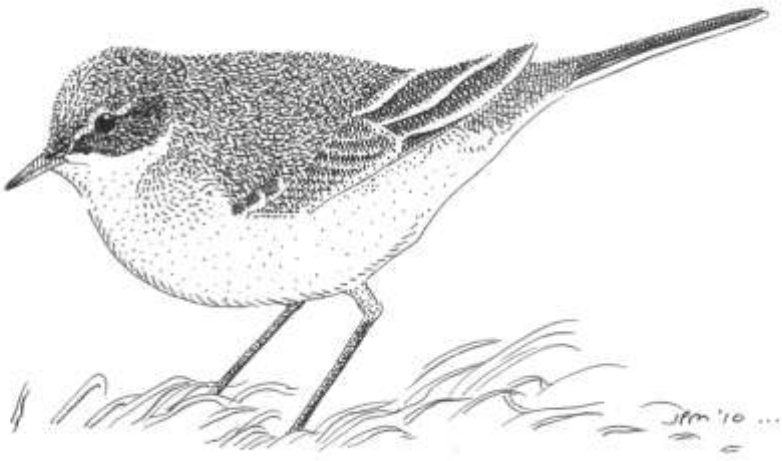
Motacilla flava thunbergi

J. P. Martin

On the morning of Sept. 26th I had been birding at New Passage and Northwick Warth since 07.30 and was joined by BL. It was quite a 'birdy' morning with decent numbers of common migrants including 20 Chiffchaffs, eight Blackcaps and an influx of at least 33 Song Thrushes. We were even inspired to check around the old tip by Green Lane before heading back along the Warth towards New Passage for the high tide. We both heard a Yellow Wagtail call and the bird duly dropped in nearby - a nice record these days and likely to be the last of the year. I remarked that the bird seemed to have a dark hood and was worth further scrutiny. It was with Meadow Pipits at first then got separated from them and fed amongst the cattle. It showed well at times down to 25*m* or less but was frequently lost in the longer grass. Nonetheless careful scrutiny showed that it really did have a dark grey hood with a tiny suggestion of a pale supercilium and was overall rather dark and cold toned above. Its calls were usually similar to *flavissima* but on at least one occasion were distinctly zippy (perhaps merely a response to stress). I obtained a recording of some of the calls but unfortunately we were unable to get any photographic images. We both took field notes and I made some sketches of the bird. By now we were fairly happy it was a Grey-headed Wagtail (race *thunbergi*) but phoned the news out as a 'probable' because we were not sure if this form should show a slight supercilium.

The bird was clearly a '*flava* wagtail' of some kind. The lores and ear coverts were solidly dark grey with no paler area below the eye. The forehead, crown and nape were a slightly paler grey. There was a small short narrow pale supercilium starting just in front of the eye and ending just behind it. The mantle was similar in shade to the crown and rather cold grey-brown in colour, lacking any obvious olive and not contrasting in tone much with the wings. There were two indistinct slightly paler wing-bars and somewhat more obvious white fringes to the dark centred tertials. The tail was dark with a lot of white in the outer feathers. The underparts were a pale creamy colour (JPM) or pale yellowish with the throat somewhat paler (BL). The bill was black and the legs dark.

After a while we lost track of it and decided to check out the waders a New Passage. We met PDB and suggested to him that the wagtail was worth seeing in the hope that he would be able to photograph it. Unfortunately he could not find it, and we called him back prematurely as we had found a Semi-palmated Sandpiper on the rising tide – what a morning! The wagtail was not seen again although the 'semip' showed well through the late morning and afternoon.



Discussion

The identification of *flava* wagtails is not always easy and autumn individuals are notoriously difficult. This is not the case with all races, however, and *thunbergi* is easier than some other forms. The essential reference is Alström and Mild (2003). They mention reports of a rather wide zone of intergradation of *thunbergi* with nominate *flava* (Blue-headed Wagtail) in Northern Europe. They also note, however, that intermediates are actually rather infrequent with many birds in zones reported to hold intermediate populations (e.g. southern Finland) being all or nearly all pure *thunbergi*.

The Northwick Warth bird appeared to be an adult female, being basically too colourful for a first-winter (also lacking bold whitish wing bars or any dusky marks in the malar area or on the breast as shown by most first-winter birds) and not bright enough for an adult male. Alström and Mild state that adult females differ from *flava* in having a less clear-cut supercilium (sometimes just a short stripe behind the eye or lacking all together), slightly darker crown and especially the ear coverts which often lack the pale sub-ocular patch found in most *flava*. Our bird fitted this description perfectly – not all autumn *thunbergi* are as easily separated from *flava* - it was very similar to the adult females illustrated on Plates 145 and especially 146 in Alström and Mild (2003).

Autumn female *feldegg* (Black-headed Wagtail) could be a pitfall as some individuals might look quite like the Northwick bird. They should have black rather than dark grey ear coverts, or at least have a significant element of black. Calls should also be consistently zippier whereas ours gave mainly unremarkable *flavissima*-like calls and the zip call just once, perhaps when slightly alarmed.

Key points in favour of *thunbergi* were:

- solidly dark grey ear coverts lacking a pale area below the eye,
- grey forehead, crown and nape, slightly paler than the ear coverts,
- short narrow pale supercilium (although we thought this problematic at the time it is in fact typical of female *thunbergi*),
- possibly darkish rather cold toned mantle, although not mentioned in the literature it is shown in at least some photos.

The race *thunbergi* has a wide summer range breeding from central and northern Scandinavia east to eastern Siberia as far as the Kolyma River, and wintering in much of sub-Saharan Africa east to Indochina and south-eastern China. In Britain they are mainly a scarce but regular migrant on the east coast and the Northern Isles. Most are seen in spring peaking in mid to late May with far fewer reported in autumn.

Reference

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The Diet of Breeding Peregrines in Bath, 2009

E. 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. In 2009, four eggs were laid, two hatched and one survived. It was a female, and it was colour-ringed on May 16th.

Since 2000 I have been collecting data on the prey taken by these Peregrines, see Drewitt (2007) and Drewitt and Dixon (2008). In this paper I summarise the diet of the Bath Peregrines during 2009.

Method

Prey remains were collected at least once a week 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 further detail in Drewitt (2007).

Results

In 2009 the remains of 346 birds were collected from 48 confirmed species (Appendix).

The most important prey type was the Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*, comprising 42% of prey by frequency and 64% by weight (Figures 1 and 2). Only one racing pigeon (0.29% by frequency) was recorded in the diet throughout the whole of 2009.

After Feral Pigeon, Skylark *Alauda arvensis*, Redwing *Turdus iliacus*, Starling *Sturnus vulgaris,* Little Grebe *Tachybaptus rufficollis* and Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* were the most common prey species (Figures 1 and 2). Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*, Teal *Anas crecca* and Little Grebe were also important in the diet by weight (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Prey taken by Peregrines in Bath by frequency in 2009 (n=346)

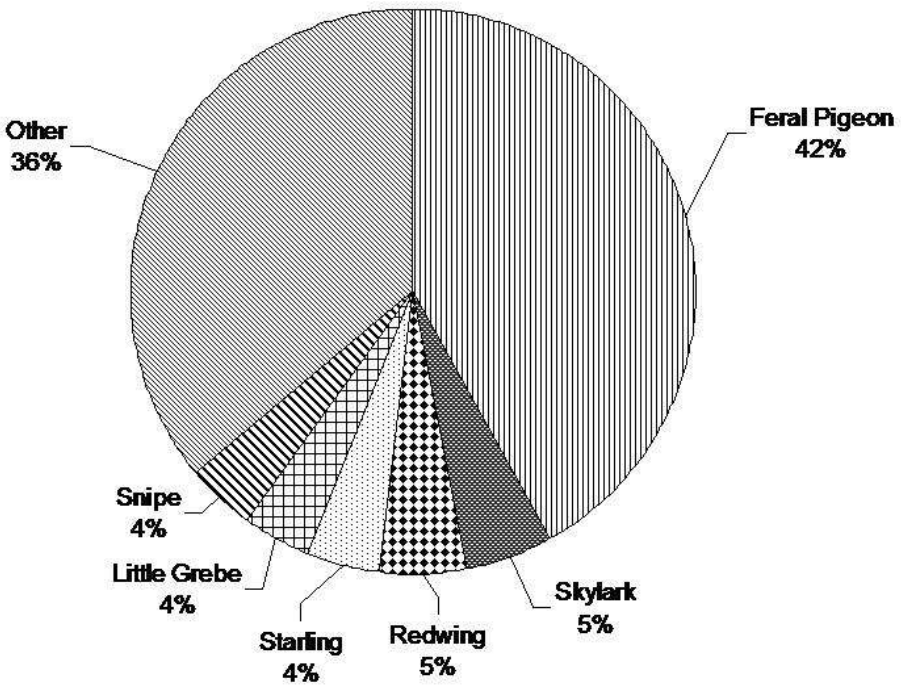
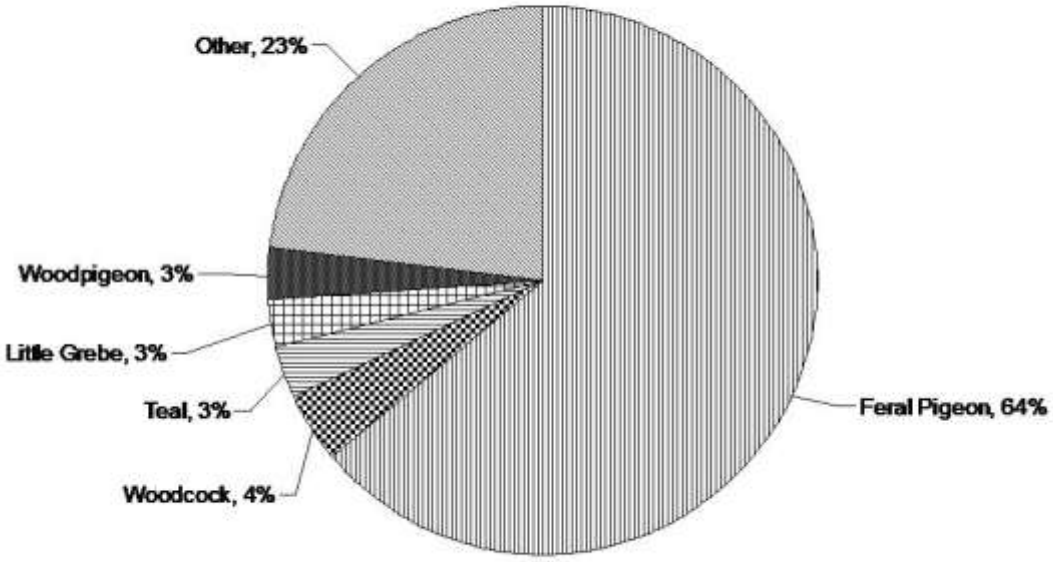


Figure 2: Prey taken by Peregrines in Bath by weight in 2009 (n=346)



Species rarely recorded in the diet of urban Peregrines in Bath included two Quail *Coturnix coturnix*, Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*, Sanderling *Calidris alba*, Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*, Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*, Redshank *Tringa tetanus*, Raven *Corvus corax*, Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca,* three Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*, Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*, Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus,* two Wheatear *Oeananthe oceananthe* and Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*.

Discussion

The prey remains collected throughout 2009 continued to provide a detailed picture of what urban-dwelling Peregrines in Bath were eating. Although fewer prey items were collected compared to earlier years (2006: 1396; 2007: 1255; 2008: 466) the prey species found were still very diverse and provided important information on just what the Peregrines were eating. Of particular note was the abundance of Little Grebe and Skylark in the diet, perhaps associated with the colder winters both early 2009 and late 2009. The weather conditions may have caused both species to migrate through the area in greater numbers (Wernham *et al.* 2002). The number of Starlings taken has been lower in 2008 (13) and 2009 (15) compared to over 100 eaten in 2006 and 2007. This may reflect fewer visits by the volunteer to the site but it may also reflect changing patterns in the abundance of Starlings in the area. The Starling was therefore the fourth most common prey item in 2009 compared to second in 2007 and earlier years. Redwings meanwhile remained an abundant component of the diet in the autumn and winter months although still showed a reduction probably due to fewer visits made to collect prey items.

The Sanderling coincided with at least four also taken by the Peregrines in Exeter in the autumn and may have reflected a sudden wave of this species through the West of England. The Spotted Crake, like many other species such as Little Grebe and Woodcock, was most probably taken at night while on migration (Wernham *et al.* 2002; Drewitt & Dixon 2008).

The Bath Peregrines provide 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 lot of time and effort monitoring the family.

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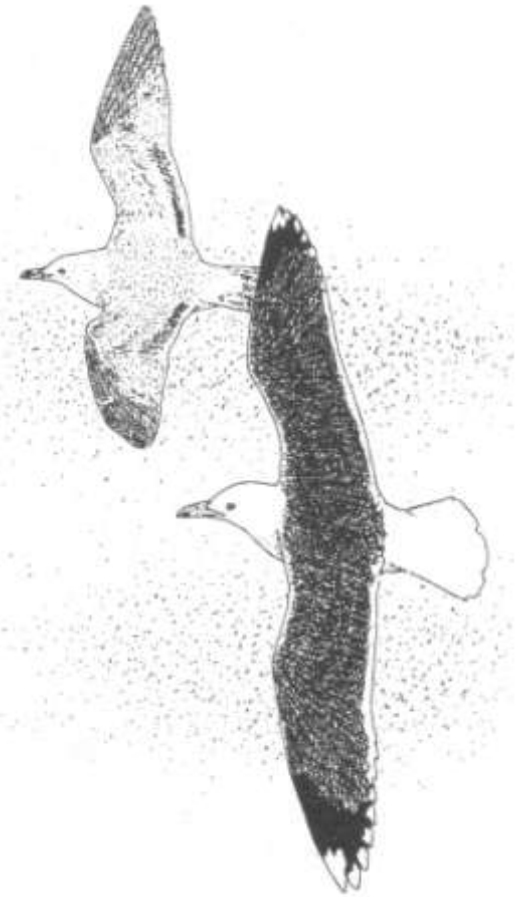
Appendix

Species	Numbers taken	Unit mass	Number of items (%)	Total biomass (%)
Teal	7	325	7 (2.02)	2275 (3.39)
Quail	2	105	2 (0.58)	210 (0.31)
Little Grebe	14	161.5	14 (4.05)	2261 (3.37)
Water Rail	2	130	2 (0.58)	260 (0.39)
Spotted Crake	1	90	1 (0.29)	90 (0.13)
Moorhen	1	330	1 (0.29)	330 (0.49)
Ringed Plover	1	64	1 (0.29)	64 (0.10)
Golden Plover	7	220	7 (2.02)	1540 (2.29)
Lapwing	1	230	1 (0.29)	230 (0.34)
Sanderling	1	57	1 (0.29)	57 (0.08)
Dunlin	1	47.5	1 (0.29)	47.5 (0.07)
Jack Snipe	4	70.5	4 (1.16)	282 (0.42)
Snipe	14	110	14 (4.05)	1540 (2.29)
Woodcock	9	300	9 (2.60)	2700 (4.02)
Black-tailed Godwit	1	320	1 (0.29	320 (0.48)
Common Sandpiper	1	55	1 (0.29)	55 (0.08)
Redshank	1	117.5	1 (0.29)	117.5 (0.18)
Common Tern	2	130	2 (0.58)	260 (0.39)
Feral Pigeon	145	300	145 (41.91)	43500 (64.81)
Stock Dove	1	300	1 (0.29)	300 (0.45)
Woodpigeon	4	449	4 (1.16)	1796 (2.68)
Collared Dove	6	205	6 (1.73)	1230 (1.83)
Swift	3	43.5	3 (0.87)	130.5 (0.19)
Great Spotted Woodpecker	2	85	2 (0.58)	170 (0.25)
Skylark	17	38	17 (4.91)	646 (0.96)
Meadow Pipit	4	18.5	4 (1.16)	74 (0.11)
Dunnock	2	20.5	2 (0.58)	41 (0.06)
Robin	2	17.5	2 (0.58)	35 (0.05)
Stonechat	1	15	1 (0.29)	15 (0.02)
Wheatear	2	23.5	2 (0.58)	47 (0.07)
Blackbird	9	102.5	9 (2.60)	922.5 (1.37)
Fieldfare	3	100	3 (0.87)	300 (0.45)
Song Thrush	8	82.5	8 (2.31)	660 (0.98)
Redwing	16	62.5	16 (4.62)	1000 (1.49)
Mistle Thrush	2	125	2 (0.58)	250 (0.37)
Blackcap	1	23.5	1 (0.29)	23.5 (0.04)
Lesser Whitethroat	1	12	1 (0.29)	12 (0.02)
Whitethroat	3	19	3 (0.87)	57 (0.08)
Spotted Flycatcher	1	17	1 (0.29)	17 (0.03)
Blue Tit	2	11	2 (0.58)	22 (0.03)
Jay	1	165	1 (0.29)	165 (0.25)
Jackdaw	3	220	3 (0.87)	660 (0.98)
Raven	1	647.5	1 (0.29)	647.5 (0.96)
Starling	15	75	15 (4.34)	1125 (1.68)
House Sparrow	5	31	5 (1.45)	155 (0.23)
Chaffinch	4	23.5	4 (1.16)	94 (0.14)
Greenfinch	4	28.5	4 (1.16)	114 (0.17)
Goldfinch	4	16.5	4 (1.16)	66 (0.10)
Yellowhammer	1	30.5	1 (0.29)	30.5 (0.05)
Unidentified wading bird	1	110	1 (0.29)	110 (0.16)
Unidentified passerines	2	32	2 (0.58)	64 (0.10)
	346		**346 (100)**	**67118.50 (100)**

Prey species of Peregrines from remains found at St. John's Church, Bath in 2009. Average weights taken from Snow & Perrins (1998); all measurements of mass in g.



Urban Gulls Breeding in Bath

P. Rock

Bath's urban gull population has grown from 258 pairs in 1998 to 907 pairs in 2009 (Rock 2009a). The apparently steady growth of the population masks the sometimes markedly differing, annual percentage population increases.

Breeding density is highest in the city centre, Green Park and Locksbrook areas with minor, but growing numbers of pairs along the outskirts of the city and at Claverton Down (the University).

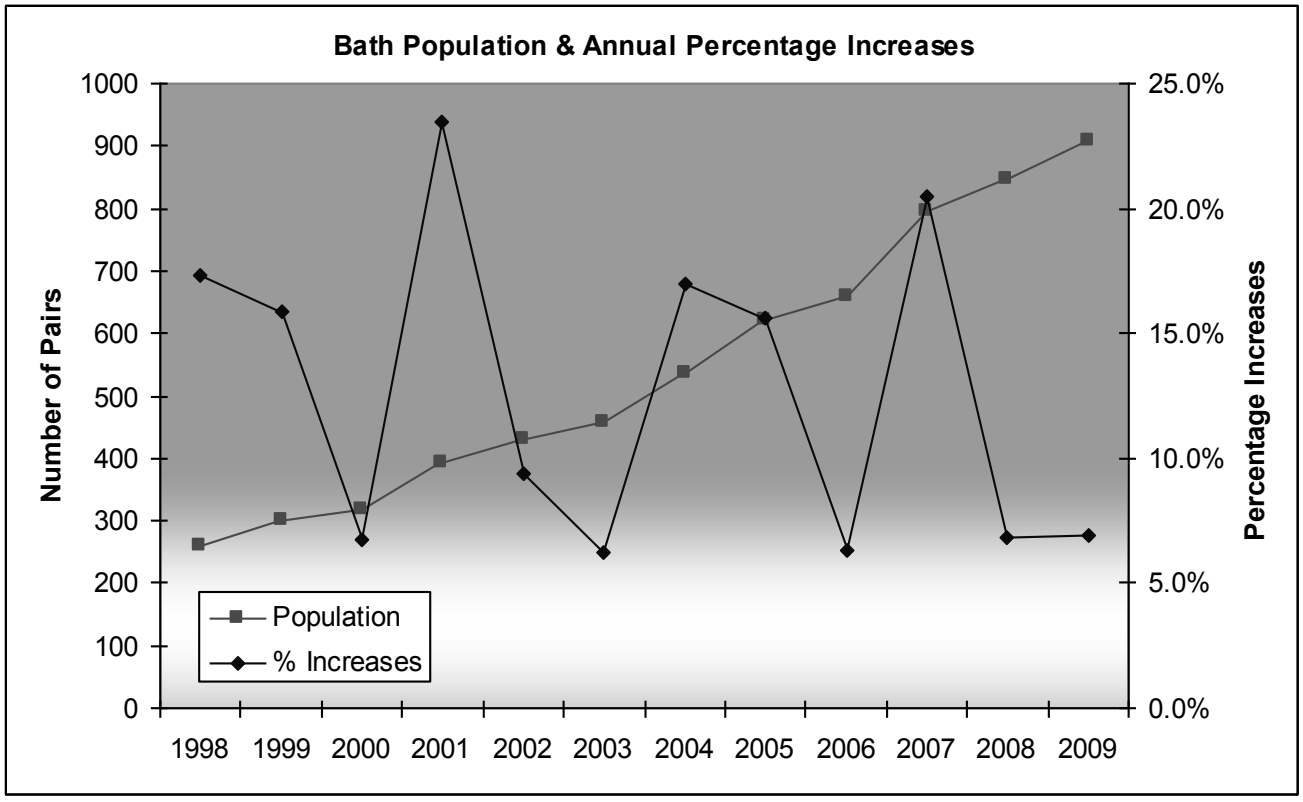
Needless to say, as the population has grown, so has the number of complaints to the local authority with the upshot being that the Bath MP (Don Foster) broke new ground by outlining the issue and its problems in Westminster in April 2009.

Both Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gulls breed on rooftops in Bath but, as yet, there have been no breeding attempts by Great Black-backed Gulls as in Gloucester since 2007 (Rock 2009b). In line with other urban colonies in the Severn Estuary Region, Lesser Black-backed Gulls are out-performing Herring Gulls and the ratio by which they outnumber Herring Gulls has widened from 2.0:1 in 2001 to 2.8:1 in 2009. Thus, there were 668 pairs of Lesser Black-backed Gulls and 239 pairs of Herring Gulls.

As a matter of interest, although Herring Gulls have declined seriously (>60%) in the last 30 years and have now been Red Listed, they are quietly increasing in towns.

In 2009 I looked at the rest of B&NES for the first time. Midsomer Norton/Radstock supported 17 pairs and Keynsham seven pairs. But by far the most populous colony was at Paulton – or, at least it would have been had the old Purnell's print works not been demolished over the winter 2008/09. As is invariably the case after recent demolitions, gulls tend to hang around the site and most will not breed in that season. Counts of birds present suggested that the population would have been at least 100 pairs and may have been as high as 150 pairs. Fortunately, I was able to read 14 rings. It will be interesting to discover where these birds relocate in 2010.

A sad story concerns YELLOW2 FC (LBB ringed in 1993) which was breeding on the old HMSO warehouse in 1997 when it was demolished. And, now, for the second time in its life, has been displaced again as a consequence of redevelopment!



References

Rock, P. 2009a. Roof-Nesting Gulls in Bath. Follow-up Survey summarising surveys from 1995. Report to Bath & North-East Somerset Council.

Rock, P. 2009b. Roof-Nesting Gulls in Gloucester. Follow-up Survey summarising surveys from 2002. Report to Gloucester City Council.

Grey Heron by Antony Merritt

The Breeding Birds Survey (BBS) for 2009

A Survey by Members of the
Bristol Naturalists Society
Bristol Ornithological Club
British Trust for Ornithology [Avon Region]

R. L. Bland and J. Tully

Introduction

This Avon Region 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 latitude line ST50 and west of the longitude line ST80 -- an area of about 350 sq km. It has only been possible due to the skill and dedication of many members of the British Trust for Ornithology, Bristol Ornithological Club and the Bristol Naturalists Society. The survey began 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 (BBS). The surveyors are birdwatchers who are able to recognise all common species by sight and/or song. They walk two kilometres in a one-km square early in the morning when 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 120 surveyors spent over 480 hours counting 62,573 birds (63,225 in 2008) of 108 (112 in 2008) species to establish the numbers and distribution of the birds breeding in the Avon Region. They visited 182 one-km squares, that is 10.8% of the total area. The distribution of the coverage was 35 sq km in BA, 41 in BR, 43 in NS, 42 in SG, and 21 in SO. There was one new species for the Avon BBS this year, namely Mandarin Duck.

Table 1 overleaf summarises the counts and percentage distribution of each species. The method of this survey does not accurately count the number of pairs breeding. However, if they are in the area in reasonable numbers during the spring, then they are likely to breed. This method avoids the need to disturb the birds by inspecting the nests. Note that for this survey in 2009 we have kept to the Voous species order, and not changed to the new BOU order used in the systematic list on pages 21 to 114. The table contains three types of birds – definite breeders with no mark, possible breeders with an asterisk * and non-breeders with two asterisks **. The survey method does not count shy, nocturnal or rare species that are known to nest, or possibly nest, within the Avon region.

Barnacle Goose, Ringed Plover, Nightingale and Siskin need to be added as definite breeders. Possible nesters not recorded in the survey were Quail, Little Ringed Plover, Water Rail, Nightjar and Dartford Warbler. The total of 96 breeding species and 9 possible breeders is a measure of the biodiversity of breeding bird species in the Avon region during 2009.

Table 2 shows the 20 most abundant species in 2009 (2008 positions in brackets) with their relative abundance in each of the four local authorities.

Table 3 shows the 20 most widespread species in 2009 (2008 positions in brackets) with their distribution in each of the four local authorities. Any species with over 90% distribution is probably universal.

Table 4 shows the percentage changes for last year and since 1999, for the most numerous species

Historic data 1994-2009

The historic BBS data for Avon continues to grow with 849,832 birds counted in over 6000 hours in the field by a collective team of about 200 birdwatchers. A total of 142 species have been recorded, this figure excludes species of suspected or certain domestic origin.

This year the cumulative total for Woodpigeon has exceeded that for Starling, the counts being 70,790 and 69,774 respectively. These two figures alone represent 16.5% of the total.

This large amount of data is available to amateurs carrying out local studies and we welcome requests for information.

Species	Number	Dist %	Species	Number	Dist %
Mute Swan	149	16	Goldcrest	88	21
Canada Goose	122	14	Blue Tit	2047	97
Shelduck	112	4	Great Tit	1568	95
Mandarin Duck	10	2	Coal Tit	143	29
Gadwall	4	1	Marsh Tit	15	4
Mallard	982	52	Skylark	678	41
Pochard	4	1	Sand Martin	2	1
Tufted Duck	78	3	Swallow	1625	73
Ruddy Duck*	1	1	House Martin	462	31
Red-legged Partridge	71	11	Cetti's Warbler	3	1
Grey Partridge	2	1	Long-tailed Tit	367	52
Pheasant	576	58	Chiffchaff	987	88
Little Grebe	5	2	Willow Warbler	156	31
Great Crested Grebe	33	3	Blackcap	811	79
Cormorant	80	18	Garden Warbler	32	11
Little Egret**	13	4	Lesser Whitethroat	60	17
Grey Heron	98	25	Whitethroat	406	53
Red Kite**	1	1	Grasshopper Warbler	3	1
Sparrowhawk	26	13	Sedge Warbler	95	11
Buzzard	210	53	Reed Warbler	107	12
Kestrel	41	16	Nuthatch	73	12
Hobby	4	2	Treecreeper	26	7
Peregrine	1	1	Wren	3095	97
Moorhen	121	25	Starling	2873	69
Coot	150	8	Dipper	1	1
Oystercatcher	26	2	Blackbird	4840	100
Lapwing	9	2	Song Thrush	819	84
Snipe*	1	1	Redwing**	5	1
Bar-tailed Godwit**	1	1	Mistle Thrush	83	25
Whimbrel**	9	2	Spotted Flycatcher	6	2
Curlew**	14	1	Robin	2656	99
Redshank*	1	1	Whinchat**	1	1
Common Sandpiper**	3	1	Stonechat	15	3
Black-headed Gull**	113	3	Wheatear**	14	3
Common Gull**	4	1	Dunnock	1059	92
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1757	63	House Sparrow	3431	68
Herring Gull	1779	58	Tree Sparrow*	2	1
Great Black-backed Gull	13	4	Yellow Wagtail	4	1
Feral Pigeon	1247	38	Grey Wagtail	25	8
Stock Dove	173	24	Pied Wagtail	131	36
Woodpigeon	6380	100	Tree Pipit	9	1
Collared Dove	876	68	Meadow Pipit	65	8
Cuckoo	4	2	Rock Pipit	3	1
Barn Owl	1	1	Chaffinch	1963	93
Little Owl	8	3	Greenfinch	1204	87
Tawny Owl	4	2	Goldfinch	1141	77
Swift	766	49	Linnet	401	29
Kingfisher	8	3	Lesser Redpoll**	1	1
Green Woodpecker	220	55	Bullfinch	123	31
Great Spotted Woodpecker	124	39	Yellowhammer	279	26
Magpie	1489	92	Reed Bunting	45	10
Jay	178	40	Corn Bunting	28	4
Jackdaw	3888	86			
Rook	2309	47	**Total**	**62573**	
Carrion Crow	4144	100	**Time [mins]**	**28858**	
Raven	54	16	**Birds per hour**	**130**	

Table 1

	Most abundant		BA	BR	NS	SG
1	Woodpigeon [1]	6380	1	1	1	1
2	Blackbird [2]	4840	2	2	3	4
3	Carrion Crow [4]	4144	5	4	6	5
4	Jackdaw [3]	3888	3	9	8	2
5	House Sparrow [5]	3431	7	5	2	9
6	Wren [6]	3095	4	6	7	7
7	Starling [7]	2873	9	7	4	8
8	Robin [8]	2656	6	11	5	6
9	Rook [10]	2309	15	-	13	3
10	Blue Tit [11]	2047	10	12	9	10
11	Chaffinch [9]	1963	8	-	11	11
12	Herring Gull [16]	1779	-	13	19	17
13	Lesser Black-backed Gull [12]	1757	-	8	15	-
14	Swallow [15]	1625	12	-	12	12
15	Great Tit [13]	1568	11	16	10	14
16	Magpie [14]	1489	13	10	17	13
17	Feral Pigeon [17]	1247	-	3	-	-
18	Greenfinch [18]	1204	-	17	16	15
19	Goldfinch [20]	1141	16	-	14	-
20	Dunnock [-]	1059	19	19	18	19

Table 2

	Most widespread		BA	BR	NS	SG
1=	Blackbird [100%]	100%	100	100	100	100
1=	Carrion Crow [100%]	100%	100	100	100	100
1=	Woodpigeon [100%]	100%	100	100	100	100
4	Robin [98%]	99%	100	98	100	100
5=	Blue Tit [98%]	97%	97	98	98	98
5=	Wren [99%]	97%	100	93	100	95
7	Great Tit [96%]	95%	91	95	95	95
8	Chaffinch [99%]	93%	97	80	95	98
9=	Dunnock [90%]	92%	94	93	93	86
9=	Magpie [89%]	92%	94	98	93	88
11	Chiffchaff [87%]	88%	89	76	95	93
12	Greenfinch [86%]	87%	89	88	86	86
13	Jackdaw [86%]	86%	94	85	81	86
14	Song Thrush [89%]	84%	91	68	86	88
15	Blackcap [78%]	79%	83	68	86	86
16	Goldfinch [79%]	77%	83	66	84	71
17	Swallow [73%]	73%	86	27	79	93
18	Starling [74%]	69%	69	83	53	71
19=	Collared Dove [72%]	68%	57	88	58	71
19=	House Sparrow [69%]	68%	63	83	49	71

Table 3

Species	08/09	99/09		08/09	99/09
Mallard	12	-11	Blackcap	10	3
Lesser Black-backed Gull	-7	-11	Chiffchaff	-7	31
Herring Gull	15	165	Blue Tit	-7	-23
Feral Pigeon	4	-41	Great Tit	-8	1
Woodpigeon	-5	21	Magpie	-7	-21
Collared Dove	-11	-12	Jackdaw	-1	-1
Swift	2	-52	Carrion Crow	10	-3
Skylark	-6	-23	Starling	-8	-68
Wren	-5	-17	House Sparrow	-1	-1
Dunnock	-2	-14	Chaffinch	-15	-31
Robin	0	11	Greenfinch	0	-37
Blackbird	-6	-12	Goldfinch	10	54
Song Thrush	-12	-6			

Table 4

The percentage changes of the most numerous species are based on 165 squares that were covered in both 2008 and 2009 by the same observer. In the most recent year, seven of the 25 species above increased, 16 decreased, and two remained unchanged. Over the medium term of 10 years, seven species have increased and 18 decreased. The most notable medium term increases are for Herring Gull at 165% and Goldfinch at 54%, offset by Starling decreasing by 68% and Swift decreasing by 52%.

The relatively cold 2008/09 winter seems to have had only a slight effect on some of the smaller birds, Wren for example, but the poor 2008 breeding season may have also contributed to the declines of both Blue and Great Tit. There has been a major change in the ratio of Blue to Great Tits, it has declined linearly from over 2.2 Blue to Great in the mid-1990s to 1.3 in 2009. More and more Great Tits are now double brooded, and the competition for scarce food during the last few breeding seasons seems to have favoured the larger species.

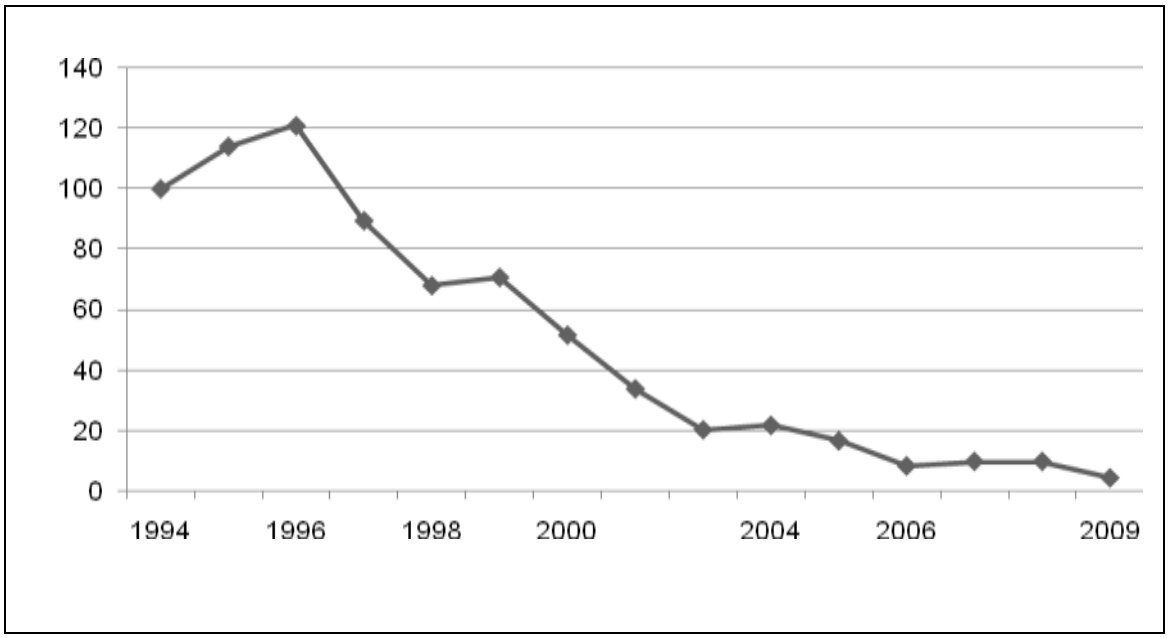
Estimated breeding populations

The table below shows the estimated 2009 breeding populations, in pairs for the commoner species. Together with all the other breeding species, we estimate a total of 405,000 breeding pairs in the Avon area.

Breeding pairs - Avon	BA	BR	NS	SG	total
Wren	13500	8000	13400	15500	50400
Robin	10500	5000	12500	15000	43000
House Sparrow	7200	7800	16000	10000	41000
Blackbird	10000	7000	10000	12500	39500
Blue Tit	7800	4800	10000	13000	35600
Great Tit	7000	3500	10000	8800	29300
Woodpigeon	4500	3000	4300	7200	19000
Dunnock	4300	2500	5000	6600	18400
Chaffinch	3300	850	3300	4700	12150
Starling	2000	1600	3100	2800	9500
Blackcap	1700	1400	2700	3300	9100
Greenfinch	1700	1200	2500	3600	9000
Jackdaw	2400	800	1900	3800	8900
Chiffchaff	2500	700	2200	3400	8800
Goldfinch	2500	-	2800	3000	8300
Carrion Crow	2000	1200	2000	3000	8200
Rook	900	-	1500	5600	8000
Swallow	2000	-	2200	3800	8000
Song Thrush	1500	600	1750	2200	6050
Skylark	1200	-	700	2000	3900
Magpie	750	750	750	1200	3450
House Martin	900	80	750	1700	3430
Linnet	1400	-	750	1000	3150
Collared Dove	500	750	750	900	2900
Whitethroat	1000	-	650	1200	2850
Swift	900	200	400	500	2000
Yellowhammer	650	-	-	1100	1750
Total					395630

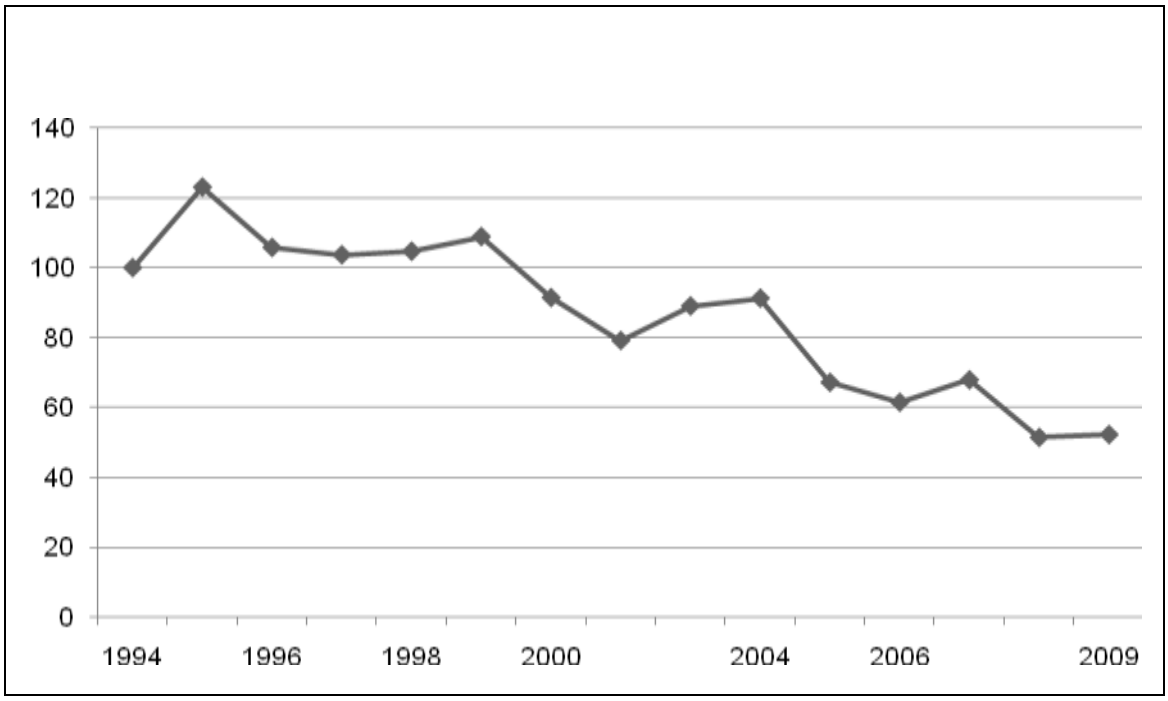
Comments on recent trends of selected species

Cuckoo trends



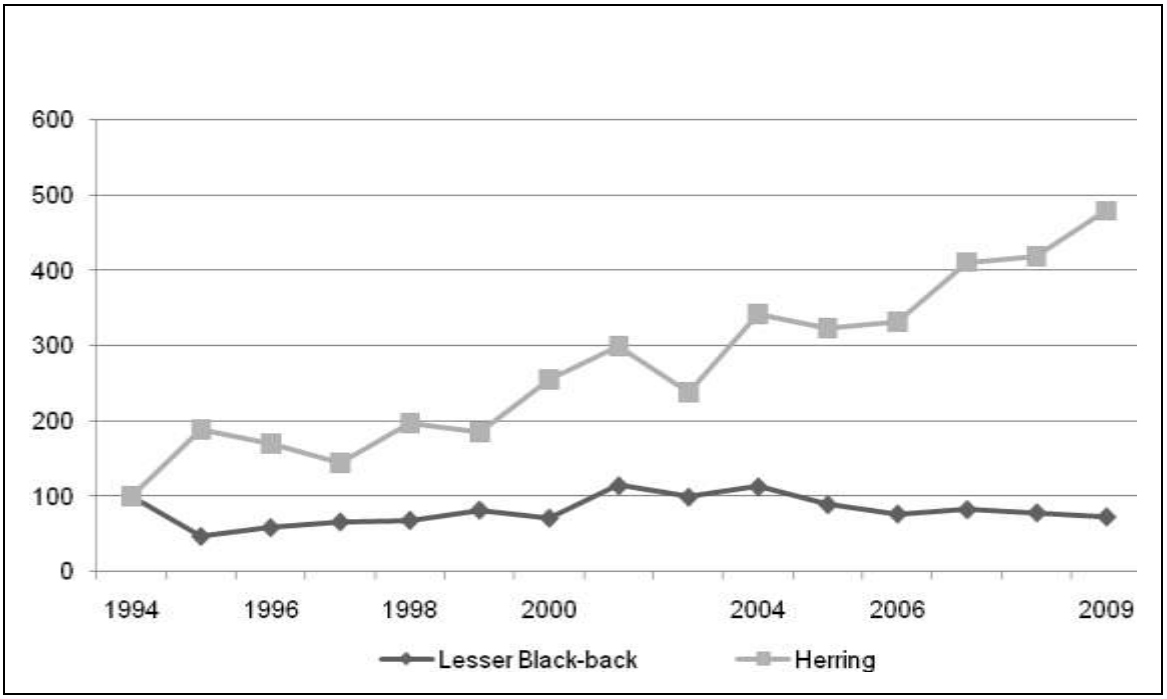
The Cuckoo is a major cause for concern with only four recorded in the whole of this year's survey, it took 120 hours of birding to record a single individual. In 1995 we were recording birds at a rate of one in every 2.5 hours! This species could become extinct in our region -- it would be a great pity if future generations of birdwatchers in Britain were unable to hear its striking spring calls. The BTO has been putting effort and money into studying the causes of this decline, and hopefully some action may be possible to reverse this trend.

Swift trends



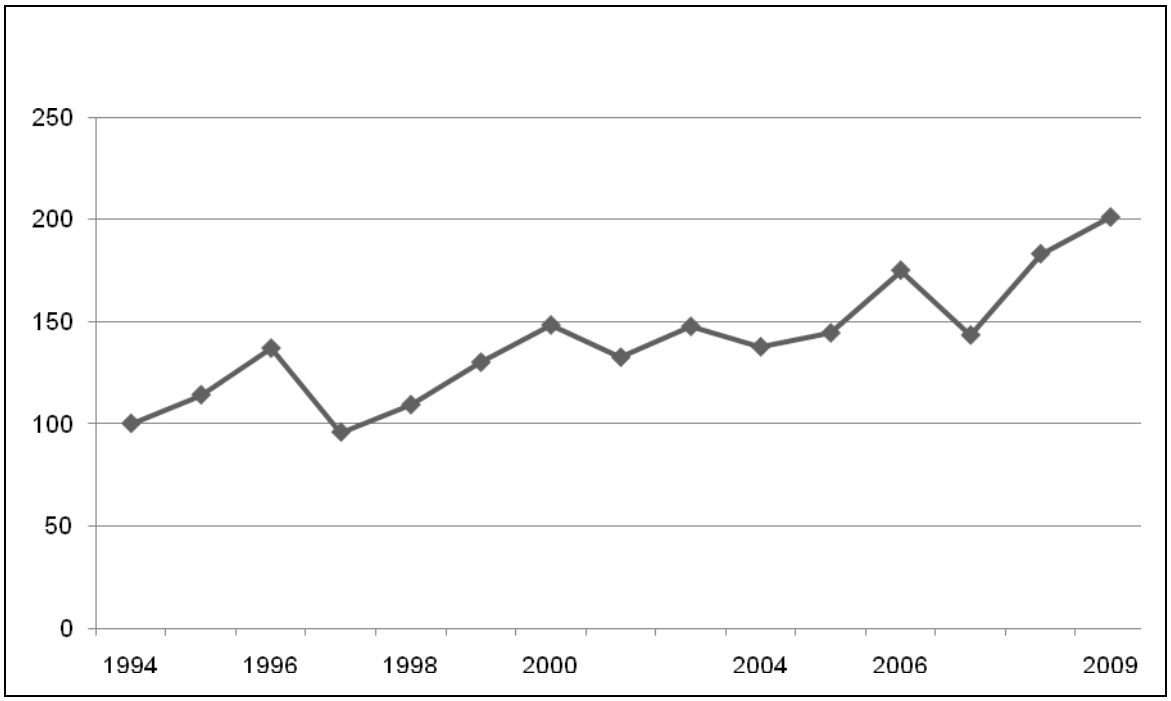
Swift is a very difficult species to census. The BBS is as good a way as any, and it is clear that there is a downward trend in its fortunes. The availability of flying insect food is crucial, but it may be with a species which relies on traditional nest sites, mainly in roofs, that it should have a similar nest site protection scheme as that given to the bat population. There are many suitable nest boxes which could be installed when a roof is modernized and this could possibly offset the effect of removing roof access. Unfortunately, it is not easy to be sure that a particular nest site is being used and, perhaps, birdwatchers should make it a priority to record all such sites.

Large Gull trends



The local trends in Lesser Black-back and Herring Gulls breeding numbers are very different, with the Lesser Black-back being relatively unchanged since 1994 whilst the Herring Gull has shown a massive increase. This is a very strange result for the Herring Gull when one considers that, nationally, it has been placed on the Amber list of declining species, local evidence does not support this move. Our records are dominated by counts in Bristol, perhaps the national figures do not take urban areas sufficiently into account when looking at trends.

Goldfinch trends



The delightful Goldfinch has been increasing steadily and is now at double the numbers of 1994.

Please note that in all the graphs above no data is given for 2001, the year of the Foot and Mouth outbreak.

Avon Ringing Report, 2009

M. Bailey and E. Drewitt

In 2009 the British Trust for Ornithology celebrated 100 years of bird ringing in Britain and Ireland. A fact that was used by the BTO staff to raise public awareness of the scheme with ringing related events being featured by popular television programmes such as the BBC's Countryfile and Autumn Watch. One of the spin-offs was a large number of enquiries via the BTO's website for information about training. The Chew Valley Ringing Station, in particular, has benefitted from this interest and has seen a welcome increase in the number of trainees. A good sign considering the noticeably ageing population of ringers in the area! The ringing station also had a new website in 2009 thanks to ringer and web designer Paul House. The site can be found at www.chewvalleyringingstation.co.uk.

The top 20 list of ringed species (Table 1) has seen the usual jockeying for position. The improved breeding season in 2009 certainly helped the Blue Tits, Great Tits and Sedge Warblers, and reflects a genuine increase in their populations. Other changes though were due more to chance with, for example, roost catches of Swallows being lower than usual whereas the number of Canada Geese increased with a successful roundup at CVL. One species that fared particularly well was Cettis's Warbler and was only one position short of joining the Top 20 table. Goldcrests on the other hand had an appalling year with only three new birds being ringed.

Peter Rock's Bristol and Bath based colour ringing study of urban nesting gulls has continued to generate an enormous number of sightings, both at home and abroad. A very small sample of these is included in the list of recoveries such as the Herring Gull GJ69239 reported at the end of 2008, some 24.5 years after being ringed as a nestling in Bristol in 1984. The more sedentary nature of Herring Gulls is apparent in the lack of any foreign recoveries for this species and is in contrast to the Lesser Black-backed Gulls wide ranging forays along the west coast of Europe and Africa.

2009 was a poor breeding season for Peregrines and many chicks died. As a result, the colour ringing of Peregrine chicks was restricted and only three chicks were ringed in Avon. However, the first ever chick ringed as blue AA in Bath in 2007 was the breeding male at the same site in 2009 and successfully reared with his mate one chick out of a clutch of four eggs. It is thought the breeding female is also his mother – the results of a DNA test for both birds are still pending.

The late winter/early spring ringing at Failand in 2008 produced several interesting recoveries with a Brambling in France and Siskins moving in various directions throughout the UK. The majority of Canada Goose recoveries came from the usual 'killing grounds' to the south-west in Cornwall, Devon, and Somerset. However, the recovery of a bird ringed as an adult at CVL in 1986 and found at Ebberston Hall, North Yorkshire was notable both in terms of longevity and direction.

There were no 'rarities' caught in 2009 although a Yellowhammer at CVL was only the second record for the site.

Species Totals

Table 1 below shows the top 20 species ringed in the Avon area in 2009 (2008 positions shown in brackets), and the percentage change in the ringing total between 2008 and 2009. *Year-to-year changes may partially reflect ringing effort and/or catching conditions.*

Pos.	Species	2009	%	Pos.	Species	2009	%
1 (1)	Reed Warbler	1086	23	11 (22)	Canada Goose	162	135
2 (4)	Blue Tit	810	33	12 (11)	Robin	146	-8
3 (3)	Great Tit	710	6	13 (13)	Long-tailed Tit	146	6
4 (5)	Chiffchaff	435	5	14 (10)	Wren	110	-35
5 (6)	Blackcap	426	12	15 (12)	Dunnock	91	-41
6 (7)	Greenfinch	300	4	16 (18)	Lesser B-b Gull	89	-22
7 (19)	Sedge Warbler	253	161	17 (30)	Willow Warbler	86	121
8 (2)	Swallow	242	-71	18 (24)	Reed Bunting	86	59
9 (14)	Goldfinch	226	75	19 (17)	Blackbird	77	-36
10 (9)	Chaffinch	183	9	20 (33)	Sand Martin	76	117

Table 1. Top Twenty Species Ringed

Notable recoveries received from the BTO since the publication of the 2008 Report. These include records that are of interest for their distance and longevity.

Conventions: Age: P = pullus (nestling), 1y = juvenile / first year, Ad = adult. M = Male, F = Female, Recovery Codes: +F= shot or killed, R= controlled (caught and released), VV=ring number read in field, X = found dead or dying.

Species Ring No.	Age/sex Code	Date Ringed Date Rec'd	Place ringed Place recovered	Distance (km)	Duration Years
Canada Goose					
5185655	Ad M	04-07-1995	CVL		
	VV	19-08-2000	Sherborne Lake: (Dorset)	43	5.1
	X	31-05-2009	Witham Friary: (Somerset)	25	13.9
5213638	Ad F	27-06-2000	CVL		
	X	18-01-2009	Blagdon Lake:	5	8.6
L03965	Ad	08-07-1986	CVL		
	X	20-11-2009	Ebberston:(North Yorkshire)	351	23.4
L05875	Ad M	07-07-1987	CVL		
	X	13-05-2009	CVL	3	21.9
5243708	Ad F	30-06-2009	CVL		
	+F	07-11-2009	Winkleigh: (Devon)	109	0.4
5251853	Ad	27-06-2006	CVL		
	+F	07-12-2009	West Charleton: (Devon)	141	3.4
5254339	Ad	24-06-2008	CVL		
	+F	25-11-2009	Bude:(Cornwall)	144	1.4
5254369	Ad	24-06-2008	CVL		
	X	17/04/2009	Wembworthy: (Devon)	103	0.8
Mallard					
GN79928	Ad M	20-01-2004	Slimbridge: (Gloucestershire)		
	+F	02-12-2009	Aust: (Avon)	22	5.9
Cormorant					
5194793	P	17-05-2007	Abberton Reservoir: (Essex)		
	VV	18-05-2008	CVL	246	1.0
	VV	03-10-2009	CVL	246	2.4
Shag					
1222418	P	20-05-1985	Great Saltee:(Wexford)		
	?	23-11-2009	Severn Beach: (Avon)	280	24.5
Buzzard					
GF54443	P	14-06-1996	Failand: (Avon)		
	X	10-01-2009	Portbury / Clevedon:(Avon)	5	12.6
Osprey					
1337918	P M	09-07-2001	Perth Area:(Tayside)		
	VV	12-04-2005	CVL	564	3.8
Coot					
GC60018	1y F	01-11-2008	Radipole Lake: (Dorset)		
	VV	18-04-2009	CVL	83	0.5
Lesser Black-backed Gull					
The following birds were among the oldest recovered in 2009:					
GH67400	P	28-06-1991	Bristol: (Avon)		
	VV	02-07-2009	Ferrol: (Coruna) Spain	982	18.0
GH67491	P	29-06-1991	Bristol: (Avon)		
	VV	13-07-1995	Hempsted: (Gloucestershire)	49	4.0
	R	07-02-2009	Stoke Orchard:(Gloucestershire)	64	17.6
GJ69459	P	06-07-1985	Central Bristol: (Avon)		
	VV	15-09-1988	Throckmorton: (Hereford & Worcs)	85	3.2
	C	01-11-1988	Tewkesbury: (Gloucestershire)	65	3.3
	VV	27-09-1989	Throckmorton: (Hereford & Worcs)	85	4.2
	VV	09-09-1994	Hempsted: (Gloucestershire)	48	9.2
	VV	07-08-2001	Hempsted: (Gloucestershire)	48	16.1
	VV	06-09-2003	Hempsted: (Gloucestershire)	48	18.2
	VV	27-10-2005	Hempsted: (Gloucestershire)	48	20.3
	VV	14-05-2009	Hempsted: (Gloucestershire)	48	23.9

The following birds were recovered abroad in 2009:

GC13342	P	20-06-2007	Bristol: (Avon)		
	VV	16-04-2009	Dakhla Peninsula: Western Sahara	3300	1.8
GF85062	P	30-06-1997	Bristol: (Avon)		
	VV	20-11-2001	Medina Sidonia: (Cadiz) Spain	1686	4.4
	VV	26-11-2007	Medina Sidonia: (Cadiz) Spain	1686	10.4
	VV	24-02-2009	Guernsey: Channel Islands	217	11.7
GN49279	P	30-06-2003	Bristol: (Avon)		
	VV	14-06-2006	Stoke Orchard: (Gloucestershire)	65	3.0
	VV	06-09-2007	Matosinhos: Portugal	1233	4.2
	VV	25-08-2008	Valdovino: (Coruna) Spain	963	5.2
	VV	05-03-2009	Guernsey: Channel Islands	217	5.7
	VV	09-08-2009	Ferrol: (Coruna) Spain	982	6.1

Herring Gull

The following birds were among the oldest recovered in 2009:

GF17352	P	26-06-1993	Bristol: (Avon)		
	VV	22-05-1994	River Plym, Plymouth: (Devon)	158	0.9
	VV	03-04-2003	Hempsted: (Gloucestershire)	48	9.8
	VV	26-07-2005	Hempsted: (Gloucestershire)	48	12.1
	VV	05-03-2009	Hempsted: (Gloucestershire)	48	15.7
GJ69239	P	27-06-1984	Bristol: (Avon)		
	VV	19-12-2008	Hempsted: (Gloucestershire)	48	24.5

Jay

DA79325	1y	16-02-2002	Walton in Gordano: (Avon)		
	X	12-01-2009	Gordano Valley: (Avon)	0	6.9

Swallow

V389669	1y	31-07-2007	CVL		
	X	20-11-2009	Bultfontein: (Orange Free State) Republic of South Africa	9,382	2.3

Cetti's Warbler

P559835	1y	09-08-2003	Berrow: (Somerset)		
	R	12-05-2007	CVL	28	3.8
	R	06-08-2009	CVL	28	6.0

Chiffchaff

CVB227	1y M	05-11-2008	Start Point: (Devon)		
	X	11-03-2009	St Werburghs, Bristol: (Avon)	158	0.3
DCN616	1y	19-09-2009	CVL		
	R	28-09-2009	Sandwich Bay: (Kent)	280	<0.1

Blackcap

V858931	2y M	22-06-2008	CVL		
	R	29-03-2009	Portland Bill:(Dorset)	90	0.8

Sedge Warbler

V960652	1y	23-08-2008	Holyland, Pembroke: (Dyfed)		
	X	15-05-2009	Portishead: (Avon)	149	0.7
X191080	1y F	24-08-2008	Sandwich Bay: (Kent)		
	R	10-05-2009	CVL	280	0.7

Robin

P866311	1y	25-08-2008	Flat Holm: (Glamorgan)		
	X	31-03-2009	Weston-s-Mare: (Avon)	12	0.6

Chaffinch

V329102	1y F	23-01-2007	Ballaugh: (Isle of Man)		
	R	20-12-2009	CVL	357	7.8

Brambling

V837413	1y F	31-03-2008	Upper Farm, Failand: (Avon)		
	X	07-03-2009	Bazoches-sur-le-Betz: (Loiret) France	549	0.9

Siskin

V837319	1y F	24-03-2008	Failand: (Avon)		
	R	29-03-2009	Bidston, Wirral: (Merseyside)	219	1.0

X224267	Ad M	23-02-2009	Failand: (Avon)		
	R	15-03-2009	Sandwich Bay: (Kent)	282	0.1
X224290	1y F	24-02-2009	Failand: (Avon)		
	R	23-03-2009	Drummond: (Highland Region)	675	0.1
Reed Bunting					
V929141	1y M	01-08-2008	CVL		
	R	12-06-2009	Corsham Lake: (Wiltshire)	35	0.9

Details of additional ringed birds that were seen locally in 2009 are given in the Systematic List for the following species: Mallard, Cormorant, Little Egret, Glossy Ibis, Osprey, Lapwing, Black-headed Gull and Pied Wagtail

Systematic List of Birds Ringed in 2009

Species annual ringing totals for the period 2006 to 2009 are given in Table 2 below, together with the average number of birds ringed annually for the period 2006-2008.

Species	2006	2007	2008	2009	3YA
Mute Swan	9	6	7	2	7
Canada Goose	174	51	69	162	98
Mallard	0	4	6	3	3
Sparrowhawk	1	3	4	1	3
Buzzard	1	1	0	0	1
Peregrine	0	2	4	3	2
Kestrel	0	10	1	0	4
Water Rail	3	4	4	2	4
Moorhen	1	3	5	6	3
Coot	0	0	0	4	0
Ringed Plover	0	5	0	0	2
Lapwing	3	0	0	0	1
Snipe	0	1	0	0	0
Lesser Black-backed Gull	131	66	114	89	104
Herring Gull	45	16	20	21	27
Stock Dove	2	4	0	0	2
Wood Pigeon	0	0	3	3	1
Barn Owl	11	32	17	9	20
Tawny Owl	0	13	0	0	4
Nightjar	3	4	0	0	2
Swift	0	2	0	2	1
Kingfisher	6	2	10	21	6
Green Woodpecker	1	1	1	1	1
Great Spotted Woodpecker	10	13	16	14	13
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	0	0	1	0	0
Magpie	2	1	3	1	2
Jay	5	2	1	4	3
Jackdaw	8	9	6	0	8
Rook	0	3	0	0	1
Carrion Crow	0	2	0	0	1
Raven	0	4	0	3	1
Goldcrest	31	39	74	3	48
Firecrest	2	1	2	0	2
Blue Tit	593	637	608	810	613
Great Tit	589	748	670	710	669
Coal Tit	39	28	40	54	36
Marsh Tit	1	4	12	3	6
Skylark	0	0	1	0	0
Sand Martin	150	19	35	76	68
Swallow	934	787	847	242	856
House Martin	90	30	39	65	53
Cetti's Warbler	14	28	41	68	28
Long-tailed Tit	84	162	138	146	128

Yellow-browed Warbler	0	0	2	0	1
Wood Warbler	0	0	2	0	1
Chiffchaff	331	388	415	435	378
Willow Warbler	299	209	39	86	182
Blackcap	1,192	682	379	426	751
Garden Warbler	88	46	35	54	56
Lesser Whitethroat	24	10	20	16	18
Whitethroat	47	21	27	21	32
Grasshopper Warbler	12	8	8	1	9
Sedge Warbler	473	171	97	253	247
Reed Warbler	691	734	884	1086	770
Nuthatch	1	0	8	4	3
Treecreeper	12	15	18	14	15
Wren	83	101	168	110	117
Starling	19	43	81	25	48
Blackbird	65	98	127	77	97
Fieldfare	1	25	5	2	10
Song Thrush	26	38	55	42	40
Redwing	5	71	10	14	29
Mistle Thrush	0	0	0	4	0
Spotted Flycatcher	0	0	5	0	2
Robin	112	150	159	146	140
Redstart	0	1	0	0	0
Stonechat	1	3	0	0	1
Wheatear	0	0	3	0	1
Dunnock	49	78	153	91	93
House Sparrow	63	20	5	5	29
Tree Sparrow	0	1	0	0	0
Grey Wagtail	10	0	5	1	5
Pied Wagtail	0	15	124	0	46
Tree Pipit	1	2	0	0	1
Meadow Pipit	17	2	37	3	19
Chaffinch	239	216	168	183	208
Brambling	2	0	47	0	16
Greenfinch	425	472	289	300	395
Goldfinch	27	79	129	226	78
Siskin	37	11	285	55	111
Linnet	0	0	3	0	1
Lesser Redpoll	0	18	123	6	47
Bullfinch	29	44	44	58	39
Yellowhammer	0	0	0	1	0
Reed Bunting	32	61	54	86	49
TOTAL	7,351	6,580	6,812	6,359	6917
Species	60	69	68	60	64

Table 2

Cirl Bunting by the late Laurel Tucker

Fifty Years Ago

H. E. Rose

The Bristol Bird Report for 1959 ran to 28 pages, and was the result of observations made by 82 birders at least three of which also submitted records in 2009 to this Report! The Report developed fairly slowly following the Second World War, and by the late 1950s it was providing a reasonably comprehensive account of the birdlife of the Bristol District as it was called. Below we list some of the 1959 records using the species order current at that time.

SLAVONIAN GREBE – two spring records at the main reservoirs, one (at CVL) in full plumage.

GANNET – one was found dead at Severn Beach in October. Apart from a few single Kittiwakes, most of which were also found dead, this was the only 'non-Auk seabird' recorded in 1959.

POCHARD – total numbers for the region peaked at over 2000 in mid-December.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE – three at Cl-Y and twelve at CVL early in the year with ten here in December (1500 were recorded at Slimbridge in March).

OSPREY – one at CVL in August and another over Steep Holm in September, these would have been quite unusual at the time.

GOLDEN PLOVER – late autumn counts included 120 at BL, 100 at Lulsgate, 30 at Cl-Y and 130 at the Axe Estuary.

TEMMINCK'S STINT – one was noted at CVL in mid-September.

GREY PHALAROPE – a juvenile was seen on short grass by the roadside on Lansdown Hill in mid-October. It stayed at this site for two days even though a stream was only 150m away.

WHISKERED TERN – one of the few 'rare' birds noted in 1959 was at CVL in June.

LITTLE TERN – one at Cl-Y in June was the only tern recorded from the Estuary.

AUKS – as with Gannet mostly found dead in the autumn, **Razorbill** at Sand Bay and swimming off Steep Holm, and **Puffin** also at Sand Bay and Weston-s-Mare.

NIGHTJAR – noted near Tortworth and on Inglestone Common during the summer.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER – breeding season records from eight sites, also one on Brean Down in September which may have been a migrant.

WHINCHAT – frequently seen on the coast, also breeding season records from Kenn Moor, Walton Moor, Woodspring Bay and CVL.

REDSTART – perhaps surprisingly only one record from Steep Holm in early October.

WOOD WARBLER – four singing males in Blaise Castle Woods.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE – males noted in early summer at Kewstoke and near Banwell.

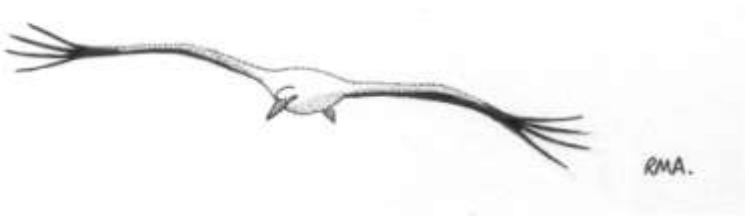
CORN BUNTING – apart from some Cotswold records singing males reported from Hambrook (Bristol), Saltford and Sand Point.

CIRL BUNTING – noted in all seasons at several sites including Durdham Downs (Bristol), Kewstoke, and Uphill; the Durdham Downs bird was in song.

SNOW BUNTING – widely reported in the second winter period including eight at Cl-Y, up to 27 at Sand Bay, 30 on Brean Down, and one at BL.

HOUSE SPARROW – at least seven were seen with other finches passing through Steep Holm in early October.

TREE SPARROW – recorded from at least twelve sites including four in the breeding season.



White Stork by Richard Andrews

Gazetteer

R.L. Bland

All sites mentioned in the Systematic List are given below, in alphabetical order. Each site has a four figure map reference (in the 100-km square ST), showing the one-km square in which it stands and a two letter code showing the Unitary Authority in which it lies: BA for Bath and North East Somerset, BR for Bristol, NS for North Somerset and SG for South Gloucestershire. Sites around the edge of Chew Valley Lake have CVL placed after them, and those that are part of Bristol but outside the Unitary Authority area have Bristol after them. Sites that are abbreviated in the text have the abbreviation placed after them in brackets.

Abbey Wood, Bristol	6178	SG	Chelvey	4867	NS
Abbots Leigh	5373	NS	Chelwood	6861	BA
Almondsbury	6084	SG	Chew Magna Res.	5663	BA
Alveston	6388	SG	Chew Stoke	5661	NS
Anchor Head	3062	NS	Chew Valley Lake (CVL)	5760	BA
Arnos Vale	6071	BR	Chittening Warth	5382	SG
Ashton Park	5572	NS	Churchill	4459	NS
Aust	5789	SG	Clapton Moor Reserve	4573	NS
Aust Cliff	5689	SG	Claverham	4466	NS
Aust Warth	5689	SG	Claverton	7864	BA
Avon Gorge	5673	BR	Cleeve Wood Reserve	4666	NS
Avon Wildlife Park	6768	BA	Clevedon	4071	NS
Avonmouth Docks	5178	BR	Clevedon-Yeo (Cl-Y)	3868	NS
Avonmouth Sewage Wks (ASW)	5379	BR	Clifton Down, Bristol	5673	BR
Axe Estuary	3159	NS	Clutton	6259	BA
Backwell Lake	4769	NS	Compton Dando	6464	BA
Badocks Wood, Bristol	5777	BR	Denny Island, CVL	5760	BA
Banwell	3958	NS	Dolebury Warren Reserve	4558	NS
Barrow Gurney Res. (BG)	5368	NS	Downend, Bristol	6577	BR
Barrow Hill	5167	NS	Doynton	7274	SG
Bath	7564	BA	Dundry	5566	NS
Bath University	7764	BA	Dunkerton	7159	BA
Bathampton	7766	BA	Durdham Down, Bristol	5674	BR
Bathampton Meadows	7766	BA	Dyers Common	5583	SG
Batheaston Reserve	7867	BA	East Harptree	5655	BA
Bathford	7966	BA	Easton-in-Gordano	5175	NS
Bedminster	5871	BR	Emerson's Green, Bristol	6776	SG
Bishop Sutton	5859	BA	Englishcombe	7162	BA
Bishopston, Bristol	5875	BR	Failand	5773	NS
Blackberry Hill, Bristol	6177	BR	Falfield	6893	SG
Blagdon Lake (BL)	5060	NS	Farmborough	6660	BA
Blaise Woods	5678	BR	Felton Common	5265	NS
Bleadon Hill	3657	NS	Filton, Bristol	6079	SG
Blind Yeo	3969	NS	Fishponds, Bristol	6376	BR
Bloomfield, Bath	7463	BA	Flax Bourton	5069	NS
Brandon Hill, Bristol	5772	BR	Folly Farm Reserve	6060	BA
Brentry	5879	BR	Frampton Cotterell	6682	SG
Brislington, Bristol	6270	BR	Frome Valley	6377	BR
Bucklands Pool	4769	NS	Goblin Combe Reserve	4765	NS
Burledge Hill Reserve	5858	BA	Gordano Valley	4473	NS
Burnett	6665	BA	Hall End	7086	SG
Burrington	4759	NS	Hallatrow	6357	BA
Butcombe	5161	NS	Hanham	6472	SG
Cadbury Camp	4572	NS	Happerton Farm	5274	NS
Cameley	6157	BA	Hawkesbury Upton	7687	SG
Camerton	6857	BA	Haydon Hill	6953	BA
Castle Green, Bristol	5973	BR	Henbury, Bristol	5678	BR
Chapel Pill	5376	NS	Hengrove Park, Bristol	6069	BR
Charfield	7292	SG	Henleaze, Bristol	5876	BR
Charlton Field	6366	BA	Hicks Gate	6369	BA
Charmy Down	7670	SG	High Littleton	6458	BA

Hinton Blewitt	5956	BA
Hinton Charterhouse	7758	BA
Hoar Gout	5380	BR
Horfield, Bristol	5977	BR
Horton	7584	SG
Horwood Farm	7387	SG
Hotwells, Bristol	5772	BR
Hunstrete Lake	6462	BA
Hursley Hill, Whitchurch	6165	BA
Iford	7959	BA
Inglestone Common	7688	SG
Iron Acton	6883	SG
Jubbs Wood	5174	NS
Kendleshire	6679	SG
Kenn	4169	NS
Kenn Moor	4368	NS
Kewstoke	3364	NS
Keynsham	6568	BA
Kingsgate Park, Yate	7181	SG
Kingston Seymour	4066	BA
Ladye Bay	4072	NS
Langford	4560	NS
Lansdown	7268	BA
Leap Valley, Downend	6577	BR
Littleton Warth	5890	SG
Locking	3659	NS
Longwell Green	6571	BA
Lower Knole Farm	5884	SG
Lower Littleton	5563	BA
Lower Woods	7487	SG
Lulsgate	5065	NS
Marksbury	6662	BA
Marshfield	7873	SG
Middle Hope	3366	NS
Midford	7660	BA
Midsomer Norton	6655	BA
Montpelier	5974	BR
Moorgrove Wood	5578	SG
Nailsea	4770	NS
New Passage	5486	SG
Newbridge, Bath	7165	BA
Northwick Warth	5587	SG
Oldbury Power Station (OPS)	6094	SG
Orchard Pool	5485	SG
Over	5982	SG
Oxbow Reserve, Bath	7766	BA
Parks Farm, Tormarton	7879	SG
Paulton	6556	BA
Pill	5276	NS
Pilning	5585	SG
Portbury	4975	NS
Portbury Wharf (PW)	4877	NS
Portishead	4676	NS
Prior Park, Bath	7663	BA
Publow	6264	BA
Puxton Moor Reserve	4063	NS
Redhill	4963	NS
Redland, Bristol	5875	BR
Redwick	5585	SG
Regil	5363	NS
Rickford	4959	NS
Rowberrow	4658	NS
Royal Portbury Dock (RPD)	5077	NS
Saltford	6867	BA
Sand Bay	3365	NS
Sand Point	3165	NS
Sea Mills, Bristol	5576	BR
Severn Beach	5384	SG
Severnside	5383	SG
Shepperdine	6295	SG
Shirehampton	5376	BR
Shirehill Farm	7876	SG
Siston	6674	SG
Sneyd Park, Bristol	5575	BR
Snuff Mills, Bristol	6276	BR
St Andrews Park, Bristol	5975	BR
St Annes, Bristol	6272	BR
St. Phillips Marsh, Bristol	6072	BR
Stanton Drew	5963	NS
Stanton Prior	6762	BA
Stantonbury Hill	6763	BA
Steep Holm	2360	NS
Stockwood Reserve	6269	BR
Stoke Bishop, Bristol	5676	BR
Stowey	5959	BA
Stup Pill	5282	BR
Sutton Hill	5958	BA
Swineford	6968	BA
The Niatts	5985	SG
Thornbury	6490	SG
Tickenham	4571	NS
Timsbury	6658	BA
Tormarton	7778	SG
Totterdown	6071	BR
Tunley	6959	BA
Tyntesfield	5171	NS
Tytherington	6788	SG
Ubley	5358	NS
University of West of England	6277	BR
Uphill	3259	NS
Walborough	3157	NS
Walton Common Reserve	4273	NS
Warmley	6773	SG
Welton Vale	6755	BA
West Harptree	5656	BA
West Littleton	7675	SG
Westerleigh	7080	SG
Weston Moor Reserve	4473	NS
Weston STW	3157	NS
Weston-s-Mare	3261	NS
Whitchurch	6167	BR
Wick	7072	SG
Wick Warth	3566	NS
Wickwar	7288	SG
Willsbridge Reserve	6670	SG
Winford	5465	NS
Woodspring Bay	3566	NS
Woollard	6364	BA
Wooscombe Bottom	6365	BA
Worlebury Hill	3162	NS
Wrington	4762	NS
Yate	7182	SG
Yatton	4365	NS
Yeo Estuary	3666	NS

Alphabetical Index of Species Accounts